



Xi lauds China's solid progress despite challenges in Year of Dragon

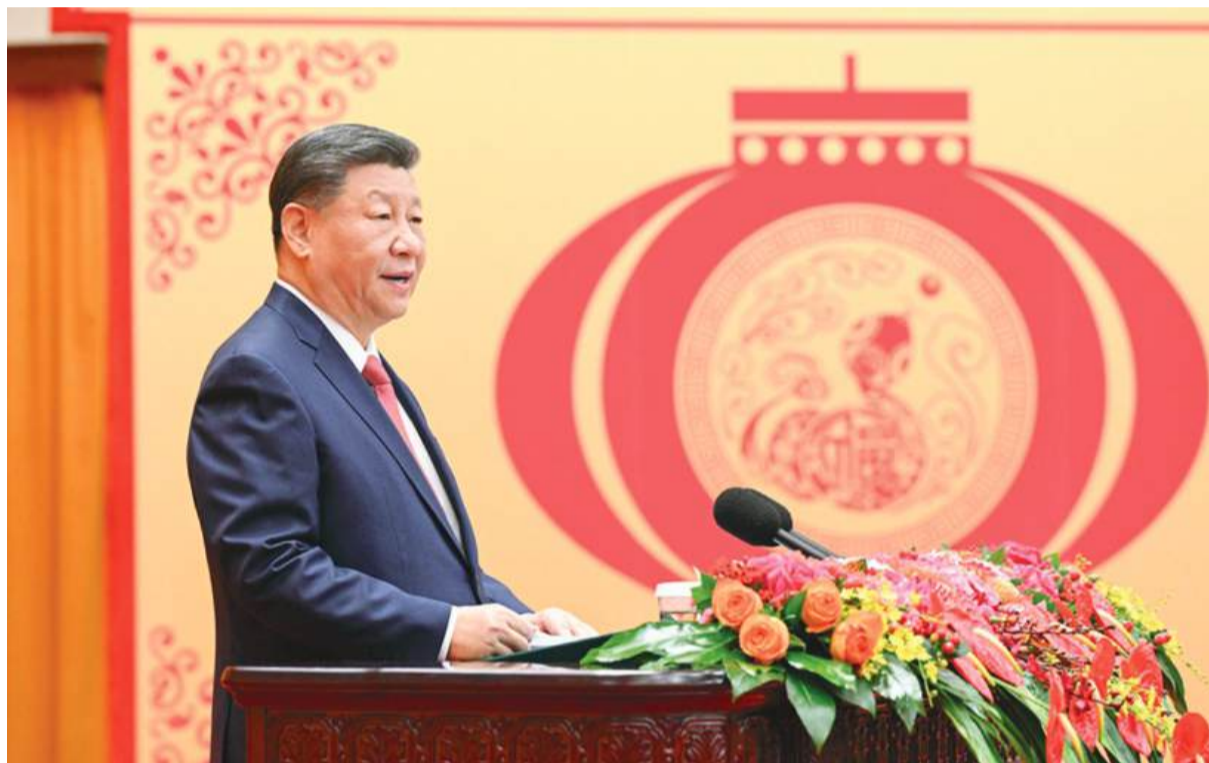
BEIJING – President Xi Jinping yesterday noted solid progress the country has made in advancing Chinese modernization amid “complex and challenging” situations over the past twelve months at a high-level reception to ring in the Chinese New Year.

“In the Year of the Dragon, we demonstrated vitality and a can-do spirit. We endured storms and saw the rainbow,” said Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC).

Faced with complex and challenging situations, China responded with composure and implemented a range of comprehensive measures, overcame difficulties and forged ahead with determination, Xi said at the reception held by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council to usher in the Year of the Snake, which begins tomorrow.

At the reception attended by over 2,000 people, Xi extended Spring Festival greetings to the Chinese people of all ethnic groups, compatriots in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Macao Special Administrative Region and Taiwan, and overseas Chinese.

Over the past year, China effectively implemented existing



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), delivers a speech at a high-level reception to ring in the Chinese New Year at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday. The CPC Central Committee and the State Council co-hosted the reception yesterday. – Xinhua

policies and proactively introduced a package of incremental policies, which helped promote the recovery of the economy, Xi said.

China achieved remarkable progress in technological and industrial innovation, with new quality productive forces forging ahead steadily. China's employment and consumer prices also remained stable, Xi said.

From a global perspective, China remained a major engine for the world's economic growth, he said.

China dealt with major natural disasters with strong and effective measures, Xi said, adding that Team China achieved its best overseas performance at the Paris Olympics and the country has injected more positive energy into safeguarding

world peace and stability and promoting human development and progress.

Xi hailed the journey over the past year as “extraordinary” and the achievements “very encouraging.”

“We proved once again through our hard work that no difficulty or obstacle will hold back the Chinese people in their pursuit of a better life,” Xi said. “Our historical

course to build a strong country and rejuvenate the nation will not be blocked.”

“We will undoubtedly break new ground in reform and development as long as we strengthen our conviction and confidence, confront problems and obstacles directly, and tackle risks and challenges without hesitation,” Xi added.

In 2025, China will further deepen reforms across the board, expand high-standard opening up, guard against and defuse risks in key areas and external shocks, and promote sustained economic recovery, Xi said.

Suggestions for the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030) will be formulated and China will continue to strive towards grand goals, he stated.

China will continue to improve people's living standards and ensure that more benefits of modernization are shared among all the people in a more equitable way, Xi added.

The snake symbolizes wisdom and vitality in Chinese culture, Xi said, expressing his hope that Chinese people of all ethnic groups will stay confident, hopeful and forge ahead with an enterprising spirit.

Li Qiang presided over the reception. Other senior officials Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang, Li Xi and Han Zheng were also present at the event.

– Xinhua

Major Coca-Cola recall in Europe over chlorate content: company

BRUSSELS – The European bottling unit of giant soda maker Coca-Cola yesterday said it has ordered a major recall of Coke, Sprite, Fanta and other beverages after checks identified high levels of chlorate.

The recall concerns cans and glass bottles distributed in Belgium, the Netherlands, Britain, Germany, France and Luxembourg since November, Coca-Cola Europacific Partners Belgium told AFP, adding that while it did “not have a precise figure” a “considerable quantity” of drinks were affected. – AFP



UK confirms 'rare' human case of bird flu

LONDON – A “rare” human case of bird flu has been detected in England, the UK Health and Security Agency (UKHSA) announced yesterday.

“The person acquired the infection on a farm, where they had close and prolonged contact with a large number of infected birds. The risk to the wider public continues to be very low,” the agency said in a statement.

The individual, who caught the A(H5N1) infection in England's West

Midlands, is “well” and has been admitted to a High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) unit, UKHSA said in a statement.

The birds were infected with the DI.2 genotype, which is different to strains circulating among mammals and birds in the United States, it added.

“The risk of avian flu to the general public remains very low despite this confirmed case”, said Susan Hopkins, Chief Medical Adviser at UKHSA.

There has been no evidence so far that the A(H5N1) influenza strain can spread from human to human.

“While avian influenza is highly contagious in birds, this is a very rare event and is very specific to the circumstances on this premises,” said UK Chief Veterinary Officer Christine Middlemiss.

“We are seeing a growing number of avian flu cases in birds on both commercial farms and in backyard flocks across the country. – AFP

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The Macau Post Daily

Trump declassifies JFK, RFK, MLK Jr assassination files

Trump signed an executive order yesterday declassifying files on the 1960s assassinations of president John F. Kennedy (JFK), his brother Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK Jr). – Story on p. 10

Auschwitz commandant's house opens for 80th anniversary

Overlooking a gas chamber and a crematorium at Auschwitz, a large house inhabited by the Nazi death camp's commandant is to become a centre for the global fight against anti-Semitism and extremism. – Story on p. 11

Colombia backs down on deportations after Trump threats

Colombia on Sunday backed down and agreed to accept deported citizens sent on US military aircraft, hours after President Donald Trump threatened painful tariffs to punish the defiance to his mass deportation plans. – Story on p. 12

Local man smuggles cannabis worth 800,000 patacas in 3 pairs of sneakers from Bangkok: police

William Chan

A local man has been arrested for smuggling cannabis from Bangkok to Macau hidden in three pairs of sneakers, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Chong Kam Leong said during a special press conference yesterday.

The 49-year-old suspect, surnamed Pinho, works as a clerk. Chong did not reveal Pinho's nationality.

According to Chong, PJ officers observed Pinho behaving suspiciously after he arrived at the local airport and intercepted him for a routine luggage check at 6:40 p.m. on Saturday. Inside his backpack, the police found three pairs of sneakers, containing a total of 10 packs of cannabis buds and three electronic cigarettes containing cannabis oil. The police also found drug-taking

paraphernalia in his luggage.

Chong noted that the total weight of the cannabis was 800 grams, with an estimated street value of 803,000 patacas. Later, the police also found nine packs of rolling papers in Pinho's flat in Taipa.

Under questioning, Pinho refused to cooperate. He tested positive for cannabis consumption.

Pinho was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday, facing various drug-related charges, Chong said. ■



Evidence seized from the suspect such as cannabis, drug paraphernalia, and three pairs of sneakers is displayed at the Judiciary Police (PJ) headquarters yesterday.

HK, mainland uni students fall for fake police scams

William Chan

Two male university students, from Hong Kong and the mainland, have separately been defrauded out of HK\$155,000 and HK\$580,000 in fake police scams, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Chong Kam Leong said yesterday during a regular press conference.

In the first case, the Hong Kong victim received a phone call earlier this month from someone claiming to be a mainland police officer. The "officer" told the victim that his mainland phone number was involved in spreading fraudulent messages, and demanded the victim stay in a mainland hotel room for a covert "investigation".

The victim complied and stayed in the hotel room for 11 days, during which he deposited a total of HK\$155,000 into the scammer's bank account for an alleged "asset review". The victim only discovered that he had been scammed after discussing the



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Chong Kam Leong looks on during yesterday's regular press conference. - Photo: William Chan

issue with his peers and reporting the case to the police on Friday.

In the second case, the mainland victim was also accused by a bogus mainland police officer of spreading fraudulent phone messages in the mainland. He transferred HK\$580,000 to the fraudster for the same purported "asset review" reason, only to find out later after talking to a friend that he had been scammed. ■



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the local drug trafficking suspect to a police vehicle outside the PJ headquarters in Zape yesterday. - Photos: William Chan

Police nab 2 local men & woman in sham marriage case

Ada Lei

The police have busted a bogus marriage case involving a "couple" and the man's brother, in which two local men and a woman were arrested on Thursday, Public Security Police (PSP) spokesman Lei Chan Hong said in a regular press conference yesterday.

Lei identified the "couple" as a local man surnamed Lam and a mainland woman surnamed Cao. Lam is in his sixties and works as a delivery driver, while Cao is in her forties, working in catering. The third suspect is Lam's younger brother who claimed to be jobless.

According to Lei, Cao paid 160,000 yuan (177,065 patacas) to a female intermediary to arrange a fake marriage in 2016 in order to acquire Macau ID cards (BIRs) for her and her son. Lam received 140,000 yuan from the intermediary for agreeing to engage in a fake marriage with Cao. They registered their marriage in the mainland in 2016.

At Lam's request, his brother



This undated handout photo provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) yesterday shows the three suspects being escorted by PSP officers to a police station.

made false statements to the Identification Services Bureau (DSI) about their marriage in 2020. Lam then arranged for Cao and her son to get non-permanent resident IDs in 2021, which permitted them to stay in Macau. Cao's 11-year-old son is now studying in Macau.

The police arrested Cao and Lam on Thursday at the Hengqin Port and Barrier Gate checkpoints

respectively, and arrested Lam's brother in a flat in the northern district. Under questioning, Cao and Lam admitted that they had never lived together as a couple, and Lam's brother admitted making false statements about their marriage.

The trio have been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing document forgery charges, according to Lei. ■

Police nab mainlander exchanging fake money

Ada Lei

A man from the mainland was arrested on Friday for being involved in a counterfeit money case, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Chong Kam Leong said in a regular conference yesterday.

Chong identified the suspect as a 45-year-old man surnamed Ding. He told the police that he is a designer.

According to Chong, a casino in Zape reported to the police on Friday that earlier that day Ding had attempted to obtain gaming chips with four counterfeit HK\$1,000 notes from a dealer on a gaming table.

The police who arrived at the scene discovered that the banknotes had a different texture to genuine

banknotes, as well as having the word "COPY" on them. The police also discovered 75 more counterfeit banknotes in his backpack, all having the same serial number.

Under questioning, Ding refused

to cooperate and only told the police that he had acquired the fake notes in the mainland.

Ding has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing a fraud charge. ■



Fake HK dollar banknotes are displayed in a press room of the Judiciary Police (PJ) headquarters in Zape yesterday. - Photo: Ada Lei

Chinese New Year holidays

Due to it being the Chinese New Year holidays, *The Macau Post Daily's* editing team will be off from today and will return to work on Sunday so the print edition of your favourite newspaper will be on the newsstands again on the morning of Monday, February 3. However, our digital edition on our website <https://www.macaupostdaily.com/> will be updated 24/7. Our local news and editorials as well as commentary by national media organisations are also available on various LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook accounts. *The Macau Post Daily's* office will be closed until Monday.

We wish all our readers, advertisers, distributors and contributors a happy, healthy and prosperous Year of the Snake and a pleasant holiday.

All government offices will be closed from this afternoon and will reopen next Monday. Banks will be closed from tomorrow and will reopen again next Monday.

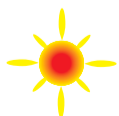
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Macau Weather

COLD AND VERY DRY. FINE. FORCE 3 TO 5 NORTH TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS WITH GUSTS. RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 20% AND 60%.



9°C~18°C

Source: SMG

CNY parades participants are raring to go: MGTO chief

Yuki Lei

The Parade for Celebration of the Year of the Snake will take place between January 31 and February 16, including two float parades this Friday and next Saturday, i.e., on the third and 11th day of the Chinese New Year (CNY), and Macau's veteran tourism chief said yesterday that most of the performance troupes have arrived in Macau and "everyone is ready for [the parade]".

Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes made the remarks during yesterday's Chinese traditional blessing ceremony wishing the upcoming event good luck.

An MGTO statement yesterday pointed out that the meaning behind the theme of this year's CNY event, Parade for Celebration of the Year of the Snake, is to symbolise that Macau, "a pearl in the palm of the motherland", is moving forward to a "new era" of prosperity for all trades and industries under the influence of the "golden snake's intelligence and fortune".

The two float parades will set off from Sai Van Lake Square and Estrada Marginal da Ilha Verde (青洲河邊馬路) at 8 p.m. on Friday and next Saturday respectively, featuring 17 floats and more than 1,300 performers from Macau and elsewhere.

Senna Fernandes said: "This year, we will be seeing some first-time participants [in the annual CNY float parades], including troupes from Colombia and India, and of course, some local performers, with more than 1,300 performers in total".

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the ceremony, the tourism chief briefed the media once again on the highlights of this year's parade: "As one of the key highlights



Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes (centre) dots a lion's eyes during yesterday's traditional blessing ceremony at Sai Van Lake Square.

- Photos: Yuki Lei

of this year's parade, [troupes from] four 'Culture Cities of East Asia' selected in 2025, comprising Macau, Zhejiang Province's Huzhou City, Japan's Kamakura City and South Korea's Anseong City, will join together [in the opening performance of the parade on Friday] to present special performances, which everybody should be looking forward to."

According to MGTO, this time the spectator stands are situated in Sai Van Lake Square, Avenida Dr Sun Yat-Sen (孫逸仙大馬路), the front square of the Kun Iam Ecumenical Centre (觀音蓮花苑) and the roundabout in front of the Macau Science Centre, as well as the viewing area of the Roman amphitheatre at the Macau Fisherman's Wharf, providing more than 4,300 seats. The tourism chief said: "We're sure there'll be a lot of residents and tourists along the way, and we're hoping to bring everyone a great show this year".



Senior officials from the Macau Government Tourism Office and other public entities, as well as performers of the Parade for Celebration of the Year of the Snake, pose during yesterday's ceremony.

Senna Fernandes added that appropriate arrangements would be made depending on the prevailing weather conditions.

'Slight increase in hotel room rates this year': tourism chief

Meanwhile, journalists asked her about rising hotel room rates, to which Senna Fernandes responded that MGTO continuously monitors the rates: "If there are any rates exceeding MGTO's benchmarks, we will have a raft of follow-up actions or penalties". She added that MGTO has a mechanism that requires hotels to notify them prior to any rate increase: "There's a slight increase from last year".

The eight-day CNY Golden Week in the mainland this year runs from January 28, i.e., today to February 4, i.e., next Tuesday, and Senna Fernandes told reporters that as

of last week, Macau's hotel reservation rate had already reached 90 percent, adding she expected the hotel occupancy rate of this year's CNY holiday to reach 95 percent: "Some days it might even go to 98-99 percent".

She also encouraged mainland visitors to make good use of their multiple-entry Macau permits to stay in hotels in the surrounding areas of Macau, such as Hengqin, and even in some of the neighbouring cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA): "I think that in the future, we will always be moving towards the GBA development as a whole".

According to the tourism chief, MGTO seized 186 illegal inns last year, a significant increase compared to 2023 but about the same compared to pre-pandemic 2019. She urged property owners to pay attention to whether their flats are being used by tenants or their friends to provide illegal accommodation. ■



金鱗昇輝 歡樂春節



2025 Chinese New Year Activities

Gigantic Golden Dragon Parade

29/1 11:00-13:00
Ruins of St. Paul's → A-Ma Temple



Community Roadshow

29-30/1 10:30-18:15
Splendid performances presented by the dragon and lion dance teams, Mak Mak and performance groups from Culture City of East Asia, Mainland China, Hong Kong and Overseas at 16 designated locations across Macau, Taipa and Coloane

Parade for Celebration of the Year of the Snake

31/1 20:00-21:45

Sai Van Lake Square → Av. Dr. Sun Yat-Sen → Macao Science Center → Macau Fisherman's Wharf

8/2 20:00-21:30

Estrada Marginal da Ilha Verde → Av. do Conselheiro Borja → Estrada do Arco → Estrada da Areia Preta → Av. de Venceslau de Moraes → Rua Quatro do Bairro da Areia Preta → Av. da Longevidade → Rua do Mercado de Iao Hon → Iao Hon Market Park

Chinese New Year Fireworks Displays

31/1 21:45
4/2 21:00
12/2 21:00



Waterfront by Macau Tower

Parade Float Exhibition

1-7/2
Macau Fisherman's Wharf



9-16/2
Tap Seac Square






MACAO GOVERNMENT TOURISM OFFICE

-Photos taken on Sunday by Rui Pastorin



Prince Kung's Palace Museum CNY painting collection on display in Barra

Rui Pastorin

The “MGM X Prince Kung’s Palace Museum Exhibition and Workshop” is being hosted at the Former Barra Slaughterhouse Site in Barra district and features a collection of works presented in Macau for the first time.

Prince Kung’s Palace Museum*, aka Prince Gong’s Mansion and Prince Kung Mansion, is a tourist attraction in Beijing’s Xicheng District. It is a national first-class museum, according to an MGM statement provided on Sunday.

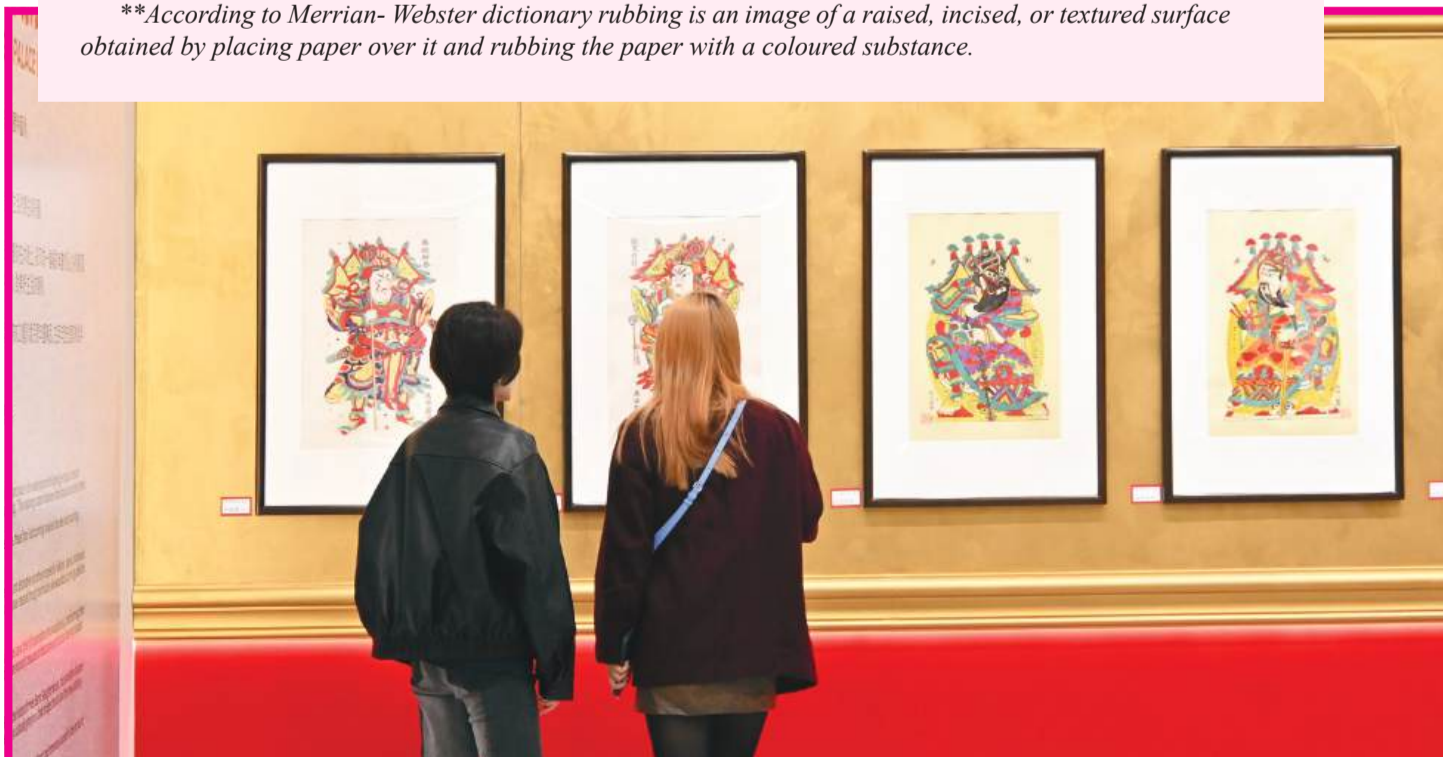
The exhibition and workshops are event highlights of the integrated resort (IR) operator’s “Barra Lucky Blessing Market” (*More on p.5*). The MGM statement noted that the exhibition displays a total of 22 Chinese New Year (CNY) paintings, which is a collection from the museum. They are showcased “in a bid to deliver blessings of joy and luck to the public while promoting traditional Chinese culture”, the statement noted.

Meanwhile, the “New Year Painting Creative Workshop” enables visitors to create their own Lunar New Year Prints through rubbing** and using modern reinterpretations of the museum’s collection of CNY works, according to the statement.

The exhibition is on until February 25. Those interested may visit the exhibition and workshop daily from 12 noon to 8 p.m.

**According to Wikipedia, Prince Kung’s Mansion was constructed in 1777 for prominent court official Heshen (1750 to 1799). It was later renamed after Manchu prince and influential statesman Prince Gong (1833-1898), who lived there in the late 19th century.*

***According to Merriam-Webster dictionary rubbing is an image of a raised, incised, or textured surface obtained by placing paper over it and rubbing the paper with a coloured substance.*



Businesses have mixed bag of expectations for CNY turnover: vox pop

Yuki Lei and Rui Pastorin

The Chinese New Year (CNY) is nigh and Macau's tourist hotspots are already attracting huge crowds, with some shops and eateries reporting long queues.

The *Post* yesterday spoke with several local business operators in the city centre and Taipa to gauge their expectations about CNY visitors' spending habits and the business environment in general, some describing the situation as "many visitors but not much spending", while others said that "it's busier than normal".

The Year of Snake begins on Wednesday, January 29, with the mainland's eight-day CNY Golden Week to end next Tuesday, on February 4.

According to the Public Security Police (PSP), more than 700,000 people entered and left Macau on Sunday, 280,000 of them tourists. As of 5 p.m. yesterday, the number of arrivals and departures at the city's checkpointed totalled 361,709, of which 151,192 were tourists, with mainlanders making up the largest number of arrivals, at 122,966.

Looking ahead

"These past few days have been comparatively busy" said Wong, a local shop assistant at a food souvenir shop in the city centre. Asked how it compared to last year's CNY holiday, Wong, who is in her fifties, noted that overall, it has been busier than normal. She also seemed optimistic about sales throughout the CNY holiday, saying: "People buy our products because they think they taste good. So, I think that's a guarantee".

Meanwhile, for Danny, whose business selling snacks and drinks caters more to tourists than locals, and Ip, a friend who frequents his shop, it was hard to gauge how business will be at the moment [yesterday], especially on a weekday and before the CNY holiday even starts. It was also hard to predict how it will compare to the previous year, he said. However, Ip was quick to add:



Crowds of visitors stroll around Taipa's Rua do Cunha (官也街) yesterday afternoon. – Photo: Yuki Lei

"Normally this street is pretty busy, so definitely business will pick up during the holiday". Danny does not have an overall strategy for attracting more tourists to his business, but as musicians, Ip suggested playing music, which had drawn a queue of people before. "There were about 50 people who queued to hear us play the guitar," said Ip.

Lower expectations among some in city centre

Other businesses expressed lower expectations. For Leong, who operates a stall selling local snacks, business has just been "normal" despite the recent influx of tourists, adding that his location is not exactly ideal. "There are very few people in this street", adding most of them go to the area around Largo do Senado, while noting, in general, business has been worse compared to last year. However, the 32-year-old said he expects more people come to the area during the holiday, suggesting that putting more decorations around the street could help bring in more customers.

Meanwhile, Michelle's retail business is targeting locals. And like Leong, she does not have high expectations. "Last year was better", Michelle, who is in her thirties, noted, attributing the decline in sales to more locals

travelling to the mainland and shopping there, along with the rise of online shopping. There are also fewer tourists walking into her shop compared to before, when they would buy a lot of clothes, she said, adding: "I don't know how I can attract more tourists to visit my shop, but I hope the government can help small-and medium-sized enterprises [SMEs] more" through things like promotions.

Crowds descend on Taipa

Meanwhile, the streets of Taipa, especially Rua do Cunha (官也街), were also crowded with tourists yesterday and, according to the *Post's* observation, there were long queues at shops selling "street food" such as Portuguese egg tarts, beef offal, ice-cream, and mochi.

Leong, who works at a restaurant on Rua do Regedor (地堡街), said she has seen a "dramatic" increase in pedestrian traffic since last week, resulting in "about 40 percent more revenue than on weekdays", mainly from Guangzhou, Jiangmen Shanghai and Xi'an, with Shanghai customers accounting for the majority.

According to Leong, this is the first time since the opening of the restaurant during the Mid-Autumn Festival in September last year that she felt a significant growth in business, and she expected the



A visitor holding a child poses under the festive Chinese New Year (CNY) decorations in the city centre yesterday afternoon. – Photo: Rui Pastorin

area to continue to see an increase in both footfall and her turnover over the CNY holiday period. However, she was quick to add that she was worried that the business would revert to the previous "zero" movement of people after the long mainland holiday break colloquially known as "Golden Week".

In an effort to attract more patrons, Leong said the restaurant has already launched a cold beverage promotion and would consider introducing other different promotions and concessions in the future to tackle the off-season after the Chinese New Year. Leong also said she expected the restaurant to benefit from the upcoming "Old Taipa" pedestrianisation.

Certain "Old Taipa" streets will be pedestrianised from tomorrow to next Tuesday, with the aim of ensuring the orderly movement of people and traffic in the area during the CNY period, providing them with a comfortable and safe environment, according to the Transport Bureau (DSAT).

Although some businesspeople and their staff are joyful about the CNY holiday, others are woeful about it. Yan, who works in a pharmacy in the area, said that there has been an upward trend in visitor traffic in the past two weeks but "it has not been very helpful to business", adding

that after the three-year COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the unfavourable working environment, people were reluctant to splash out, resulting in poor turnover. He added that with the peak of influenza, there is, however, increased demand for medicines for colds, fever and coughs.

Ou, a shopkeeper of a food souvenir shop, said she did not feel any increase in the number of foot traffic in the area, which was "more or less the same as on normal weekends", adding she expected the amount of foot traffic to increase significantly only after the third CNY day, i.e., on Friday. Like Yan, Ou said she has seen people's consumption behaviour becoming more "sensible" and buying less after the pandemic: "Customers now mainly buy small quantities of food for their own consumption".

Also owning a food souvenir shop on Rua do Cunha, another female shopkeeper said that "the shops here are not doing well," except particular street-food shops and large-branded food souvenir shops, adding: "Although there are a lot of people, it does not mean that the business turnover of the shops will increase". She also pointed out that "if business is not good in the tourist areas, it will be even more difficult to do business in local neighbourhoods". ■

MGM hosts 'Barra Lucky Blessing Market' for CNY

Rui Pastorin

Integrated resort (IR) operator MGM held an opening ceremony for its "Barra Lucky Blessing Market" on Sunday at the Former Barra Slaughterhouse as part of its "MGM Barra District CNY [Chinese New Year] series, with various activities and events on offer throughout its run.

Located in Barra district, the pet-friendly event sees collaborations with Prince Kung's Palace Museum, Japanese illustrator Shinri Murakami as well as local creative retail brand "Bookand." for activities such as exhibitions, a limited time pop-up café and a "Weekend Market" featuring products such as handicrafts, woodwork and clothing. It can

accommodate up to 35 small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Moreover, there are also Chinese New Year (CNY) activities, along with a "Music Festival" that features bands from Macau, Hong Kong and China's Taiwan region. The two exhibitions comprise the Shinri Exhibition X Bookand Pop-up Café, which is on until March 23, and the Prince Kung's Palace Museum Exhibition and Workshop.

"The event blends Chinese intangible cultural heritage, trendy illustrations, CNY creative market and live music", according to the statement.

Speaking with reporters at the venue on Sunday, MGM Brand Marketing Senior Vice President Catarina Lio (廖顯琦) told the *Post*

that the event marked the first time that MGM had opened up the entire former abattoir for the activities.

Lio also told reporters that MGM had hosted 14 events in the A-Ma Temple area last year and that their data records show that over 400,000 people visited the area, adding that weekends saw a range between 3,000 to 5,000 visitors, while there were around 1,500 to 2,000 visitors during weekdays.

Meanwhile, there are different dates for the current activities, with the weekend market set to run again from Friday through Sunday for the second week, while performances for the Music Festival will take place on Saturday. More details on the "Barra Lucky Blessing Market" are available on www.mgm.mo. ■



Shoppers browse goods on sale at the Weekend Market, an event highlight of the "Barra Lucky Blessing Market", at the Former Barra Slaughterhouse on Sunday. Barra means "Harbour Entrance" in Portuguese. – Photo: Rui Pastorin

Weather to remain cold during CNY: observatory

Ginnie Liang

As a winter monsoon is currently affecting Macau's weather, it is expected to remain cold and very dry over the next few days during the Chinese New Year (CNY) period, the Macau Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) said in a statement yesterday.

A Yellow cold weather alert was issued by the observatory yesterday morning at 6:50 a.m., which remained in effect early this morning. The temperature yesterday recorded was the lowest since 2025, dropping to just 9.4 degrees Celsius - 6 degrees lower than on Sunday morning, the observatory said.

The weather in the next few days will be cold and very dry, with today's Lunar New Year's Eve and tomorrow's first day of Chinese New Year (CNY) expected to be cold and sunny, the statement said, adding that northerly winds of force 4 to 5 are anticipated, occasionally reaching force 6 with gusts, while temperatures will range between 10 and 17 degrees Celsius, with relative humidity between 20 and 55 percent.



This poster provided by the Macau Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) yesterday reminds residents to bundle up and stay warm in the wake of the Yellow cold weather alert.

On the second and third days of the CNY, rain is expected, with temperatures rising slightly. However, mornings and evenings will remain quite cold.

The bureau advised the public to wear warm clothing, as significant temperature differences between day and night are expected, particularly during early mornings and late evenings.

The statement also said that the chilly weather may increase the risk of hypothermia, respiratory issues, or cardiovascular diseases, especially for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, young children, pregnant women, and individuals with chronic illnesses.

Additionally, the public is reminded to ensure proper ventilation and safety when using heaters or electric blankets indoors. ■

One more critical flu case: 62-year-old man

Ginnie Liang

The Health Bureau (SSM) announced in a statement last night that one more critical case of influenza was reported yesterday, a 62-year-old local man inflicted with various chronic diseases.

According to last night's statement, the 62-year-old man came down with a fever and shortness of breath yesterday when he was also coughing up phlegm.

The man was rushed to the public Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre yesterday, where he was tested positive for the influenza A virus in his respiratory specimen, the statement said.

In addition, the statement said, a chest X-ray at the public hospital centre also showed that he was suffering from pneumonia,

because of which he was in a critical condition, put on a ventilator, the statement said.

The statement said that the patient has had the latest seasonal influenza jab and his family members did not have any symptoms.

According to the bureau, the influenza virus in Macau is now active, exceeding the alert level and has entered its peak. Residents are urged to pay more attention to the threat, the statement said, adding that residents who have not been vaccinated, especially pregnant women, young children, the elderly and the chronically ill, are more prone to serious complications or even death after being infected with the influenza virus and should get their flu jab as soon as possible. ■

Zhuhai Customs nabs woman smuggling 320 bottles of Botox



This undated handout photo provided by the Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs yesterday shows the 320 bottles of botulinum toxin customs officers seized at the Zhuhai checkpoint of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB) from a woman arriving from Macau on January 18.

Ginnie Liang

Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs said in a statement yesterday that its officers have intercepted a woman trying to smuggle 320 bottles of botulinum toxin from Macau to Zhuhai through the Zhuhai checkpoint of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HZMB) on January 18.

According to the statement, Zhuhai Customs officers saw a woman wearing a grey jacket and a long skirt, carrying a satchel and a suitcase, behaving abnormally when she passed through the metal detector at the Zhuhai checkpoint of HZMB.

Customs officers immediately intercepted her and discovered that her legs appeared to be abnormal. After further inspection, officers seized 320 bottles of botulinum toxin tied around her thighs, knees and calves.

The woman confessed to the fact that she was trying to evade customs inspection by smuggling the goods into mainland.

Gongbei Customs stressed that Botulinum toxin is a special item, and travellers carrying it into the

mainland should obtain the "Entry/Exit Special Articles Hygiene and Quarantine Approval Form" and accept customs inspection in accordance with the laws on hygiene and quarantine, the statement said.

Those who evade customs inspections by hiding and carrying articles restricted to enter or leave the mainland are smuggling, and if the situation is serious and constitutes a crime, they will be investigated for criminal responsibility according to the law, the statement said.

Botulinum toxin is a medication used for therapeutic and cosmetic purposes, which is in the neurotoxin class of medications, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

According to the NHS' Hull Teaching Hospital website botulinum toxin is a drug which causes muscles to relax. It is naturally produced by a bacterium called Clostridium Botulinum. More commonly known by the brand name "Botox", it is now manufactured for use as a medical treatment for a number of neuromuscular conditions. ■

Hengqin gets new officials

Tony Wong

The Macau Government Information Bureau (GCS) said in a statement yesterday evening that according to the website of the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, the composition of its management committee and executive committee has been adjusted, according to which Guangdong Governor Wang Weizhong and Macau Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai are the management committee's dual directors, while Macau Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon is the management committee's executive deputy director as well as the executive committee's director.

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

The zone was inaugurated in September 2021.

The zone's executive committee, which is run under

the management committee, is the body tasked with the zone's daily functioning and execution of tasks.

According to the Master Plan of the Development of the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin published by the State Council in September 2021, the zone's management committee is run under a dual director system, jointly led by the governor of Guangdong Province and the chief executive of the MSAR, with an executive deputy director appointed by the MSAR, and other deputy directors appointed through negotiation between Guangdong and Macau.

According to the master plan, the head of the zone's executive committee is appointed by the MSAR government, while Guangdong Province and Zhuhai City appoint their respective representatives to the committee.

The change of officials of the zone's management committee and executive committee, which was also referred to by yesterday's

GCS statement, has been made accordingly following the change of the MSAR government. Sam succeeded Ho Iat Seng as the MSAR's chief executive on December 20 last year, coinciding with the 25th anniversary of Macau's return to the motherland.

Previously, the zone's management committee was jointly headed by Wang and Ho, the then chief executive.

Cheong, who was reappointed as the MSAR's secretary for administration and justice for Sam's administration, continues to be the executive deputy director of the zone's management committee.

Previously, the zone's executive committee was headed by Lei Wai Nong, Macau's then secretary for economy and finance, but this time the post has been taken up also by Cheong. The MSAR's current secretary for economy and finance, Anton Tai Kin Ip has become one of the deputy directors of the executive committee. ■



Cars drive past a residential neighbourhood in Hengqin near its joint checkpoint with Macau last month. - Photo: Tony Wong



Party and state leaders Xi Jinping (center), Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang, Li Xi and Han Zheng attend a high-level reception to ring in the Chinese New Year at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday. The Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council co-hosted the reception.

— Xinhua

Xi sends CNY card in return to friends in Iowa

BEIJING – President Xi Jinping yesterday sent a Chinese New Year (CNY) card in return to friends in the US state of Iowa, saying that China and the United States share extensive common interests and broad space for cooperation and can become partners and friends.

Xi said in the reply card that the warm reception he received when he visited the beautiful state of Iowa 40 years ago is still fresh in his memory.

China and the United States can achieve mutual success and common prosperity for the benefit of both countries and the world at large, Xi said.

The president expressed his hope that the two peoples will pay more visits to each other and have more exchanges, jointly write new stories of friendship between the two peoples, and make new contributions to the development of China-U.S. relations.

Earlier, 58 people from Iowa, including friends Luca Berrone, Gary Dvorchak and Sarah Lande, former US ambassador to China Terry Branstad and his wife, former president of the World Food Prize Foundation Kenneth Quinn, as well as representatives of teachers, students and parents from Iowa who participated in the initiative of inviting 50,000 young Americans to China for exchange and study for a five-year period, jointly sent a

Chinese New Year card to President Xi.

In the card, they recalled Xi's first visit to Iowa in 1985 and extended New Year greetings to President Xi in the Year of the Snake.

The representatives of teachers, students and parents thanked Xi for putting forward the "50,000 in Five Years" initiative, shared their feelings about visiting China, and expressed their expectations to visit China again.

— Xinhua

Qingmao checkpoint's YoBuy shopping centre to remain open during CNY: IPIM

Tony Wong

The government's Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) said yesterday that the Guangdong & Macao Branded Products Expo Centre, a newly opened shopping centre located on the sixth floor of the Macau-side building of the Qingmao joint border checkpoint in Ilha Verde, will remain open throughout the upcoming Chinese New Year (CNY) holiday period, during which different CNY celebratory events will be held there.

The Year of the Snake begins tomorrow.

During the CNY holiday, the statement said, IPIM's mascot Pou Kong Ieng will be at the shopping centre, which is also officially known as YoBuy (名優匯).

Pou Kong Ieng, which in Cantonese means an owl speaking Portuguese, is IPIM's mascot aiming to promote local specialties and products and those from Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs).

After a one-month trial operation, YoBuy opened on December 27 last year, with a total area of 5,000 square metres. The centre currently includes a supermarket, pharmacies, and souvenir shops, as well as outlets selling locally designed cultural and creative products and those from Guangdong.

Featuring a food court, the shopping centre also includes a display and exhibition area promoting local branded products as well as those from Guangdong and from Portuguese-speaking countries, aside from facilities for conducting e-commerce livestream promotions to endorse and sell products.

The Qingmao pedestrian checkpoint is a Macau-Zhuhai joint border checkpoint, which came into use in September 2021. The Macau-side building of the Qingmao checkpoint is a 20-storey multipurpose high-rise, with the first several floors used for checkpoint and immigration purposes as well as transport facilities. Except the newly opened Guangdong & Macao Branded Products Expo Centre on the sixth floor, other floors of the building are used as office spaces of various government entities.

The government initially earmarked three floors of the building, the sixth, seventh and eighth floors, for the Guangdong & Macao



This undated handout photo released by the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) yesterday shows its mascot Pou Kong Ieng posing in the YoBuy shopping centre on the sixth floor of the Qingmao checkpoint's Macau-side building.

Branded Products Expo Centre, before finally deciding to use only one floor. The seventh and eighth floors are now used for government office spaces.

Initiated by IPIM, YoBuy is a commercial project developed and operated by state-owned Guangdong Nam Yue Group, where shops and outlets have been leased out to various businesses including local small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Yesterday's IPIM statement said that with the aim of celebrating the first Chinese New Year following its official opening, the Guangdong & Macao Branded Products Expo Centre will remain open throughout the upcoming CNY holiday period.

The statement said that with the one-month anniversary of YoBuy's official opening as well as the CNY holiday, IPIM will arrange for its mascot Pou Kong Ieng to "work as a promotion ambassador" for the centre where it will "interact" with shoppers and other visitors. ■

Li urges work to ensure safe passenger transport, smooth logistics during holiday

BEIJING – Premier Li Qiang yesterday emphasized the need to safeguard safe, smooth travel for the public during the Spring Festival travel rush, as well as the efficient operations of transport logistics.

Li, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks when inspecting Ministry of Transport work for the holiday travel season.

The Spring Festival travel season is a time when happy journeys are made for families to come together, and this year's travel rush is expected to hit a record high number of such journeys, posing another test for the country's transport system, Li said.

He urged smooth, efficient passenger transport based on the scientific analysis of passenger flow patterns. Adjustments should be made to increase the number of train services, optimize schedules, and extend operating hours, allowing travelers to reach their destinations in a timely manner, Li said.

China has recently experienced

widespread rain, snow and cold weather, significantly impacting transport, he noted, calling for work to monitor weather changes, provide forecast and warning information through multiple channels, and stay prepared to respond to emergencies to minimize the impact of severe weather on public travel.

After he was briefed on foreign trade and express logistics services at ports during the holiday travel rush, Li said that efficient port cargo transportation is a significant advantage for China's foreign trade, and that it is important to maintain effective port logistics to ensure the timely delivery of overseas orders during the holiday.

He highlighted the country's smooth logistics network, urging express delivery firms to allocate labor and transport resources effectively to meet the basic delivery service needs of the public.

Efforts should be made to ensure the supply of essential materials during the peak travel period, such as food, coal for electricity and heating, and holiday necessities, he said.

— Xinhua

Wang Yi calls on China, India to foster cooperation, not division

BEIJING – China and India should strive for mutual understanding, support and collaboration, rather than fostering suspicion, alienation and consuming each other, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said yesterday.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks during a meeting with India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri in Beijing.

Noting that since the leaders of the two countries met in Kazan last year, the two sides have earnestly implemented the important consensus reached by the leaders, carried out active interactions at all levels, and accelerated the process of improving China-India relations, Wang said both sides should seize the opportunity to meet each other halfway and explore more substantive measures.

The improvement and development of

China-Indian relations are fully in line with the fundamental interests of the two countries and peoples, and are conducive to safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of the Global South countries and contributing to the peace, stability, development and prosperity of Asia and the world, Wang added.

Misri said that India and China have carried out a series of useful dialogues and communications in accordance with the consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries in Kazan, properly managed and resolved differences, and promoted the resumption of pragmatic cooperation in various fields.

India is willing to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with China, and will fully support China's work as the presidency of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Misri added.

— Xinhua