

# ‘Minimum wage review doesn’t necessarily mean upward adjustment’: DSAL chief

Yuki Lei

Macau’s statutory minimum wage rate is reviewed by the government every two years and adjusted in accordance with the city’s economic development, and Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) Director Wong Chi Hong yesterday emphasised the role of the minimum wage to strike a balance between employers and employees, as well as the local social development, reaffirming that “a review does not necessarily mean an upward adjustment”.

Chaired by Secretary for Economy and Finance Anton Tai Kin Ip, the government-appointed Social Affairs Coordination Standing Committee (CPCS) held yesterday afternoon its first closed-door plenary meeting for this year at the World Trade Centre Macau (WTCM) in Nape. Wong made the remarks during a post-meeting press briefing.

Wong said: “...the review of the minimum wage is not necessarily an upward adjustment, but a review, in which we are currently gathering the necessary information and preparing the report [on the minimum wage], in the hope that it can be submitted to the committee for discussion at the earliest possible time,” pointing



Secretary for Economy and Finance Anton Tai Kin Ip (centre) addresses yesterday's plenary meeting of the government-appointed Social Affairs Coordination Standing Committee (CPCS) at the World Trade Centre Macau (WTCM) in Nape. – Photo: Yuki Lei

out that labour rights and interests should take into account the employers’ affordability.

According to local laws and regulations, the city’s minimum wage rate shall be reviewed for the first time two years after the law has come into effect and every two years thereafter. Macau has implemented the Law No.5/2020 Minimum Wage for Employees since November 1, 2020, and has raised the minimum hourly salary rate to 34 patacas from 32 patacas on January 1 last year.

When asked by reporters repeatedly about the minimum wage adjustment schedule, Wong said that this year’s plan focuses only on the review of the minimum wage, “to the best of my ability and in coordination with the Labour Affairs Bureau, and I hope to submit the report to the committee for discussion as soon as possible”, adding that the bureau hoped to find the greatest social consensus by listening to the views of both employers and employees.

According to Wong, in addition to the review of the minimum wage rate, the work plan for this year also includes the limits of compensation arising from work-related accidents and occupational diseases.

## ‘Minimum wage & various limits on compensation are protection for employees’: labour rep

Speaking to reporters after the about 30-minute-long meeting, a

labour representative on the Social Affairs Coordination Standing Committee, Fong Ka Fai, vice-chairman of the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM – commonly known as Gung Luen in Cantonese), pointed out that the minimum wage and the various limits on compensation serve as forms of protection for employees, suggesting that the government establish an automatic adjustment mechanism, such as by adjusting the city’s minimum wage to match inflation or changes in consumer prices, with the view of further protecting low-income groups from economic hardships. He added: “I think the most important thing is how to improve Macau’s economy”.

According to Fong, the committee’s labour representatives also urged the government during the meeting to increase the minimum days of paid maternity, paternity and annual leave for employees, and enhance the support for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), making it possible to increase the opportunities for local residents to start their own business and look for employment, so as to promote the development of Macau’s economy.

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## Thailand to cut power, fuel supply, internet at Thai-Myanmar border to combat online scams

BANGKOK – Thailand will cut electricity, fuel supply, and internet services to five areas in Myanmar along the Thai-Myanmar border starting this morning, Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai announced yesterday.

Phumtham, who also serves as the defense minister, made the announcement after chairing a meeting of the National Security Council yesterday afternoon.

Speaking to reporters, he said that online fraud has caused serious harm to Thai citizens and become

a national security issue. The Thai government’s investigation found that these five connection points are linked to online scam activities.

“Starting from 9 a.m. on Wednesday (today), electricity, fuel supply, and internet services will be cut off to Myanmar-based power distributors at all five connection points,” he said, adding that Thai authorities have notified their Myanmar counterparts of the decision.

According to Thai media reports, the five affected supply

points are located within Myanmar’s border regions, including Myawaddy in Shan State.

Thailand first approved electricity exports to Myanmar in 1992 and 1994, with power supplied by the Provincial Electricity Authority. Under the agreements, Thailand reserves the right to unilaterally terminate electricity supply if the recipient violates regulations, without bearing liability for compensation.

– Xinhua



Fireworks in celebration of the Chinese New Year, aka Spring Festival, illuminate the sky over the southern tip of the Macau Peninsula last night. – Xinhua/Cheong Kam Ka

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## China to impose additional tariffs on certain US products

China will impose additional tariffs on certain US products starting next Monday, the Customs Tariff Commission of the State Council said yesterday.

– Story on p.7

## Case of UK baby killer nurse under review

The case of a British nurse sentenced to life imprisonment for killing seven newborn babies is being reviewed by an independent commission as medical experts yesterday argued there was no evidence to support her conviction for murder.

– Story on p.10

## Chinese experts help Guinea-Bissau farmers harvest high-quality rice

As China is marking the Spring Festival – The Year of the Snake, a team of Chinese rice-planting experts is observing the holiday with a unique mission in central Guinea-Bissau.

– Story on p.12



# HK man nabbed for DUI, local man caught for selling him ketamine



Public Security Police (PSP) spokesman Wong Chi Weng looks on during yesterday's regular press conference at the PSP pressroom in Zape.

— Photo: Ginnie Liang

**Ginnie Liang**

A Hong Kong man has been arrested for DUI after taking ketamine, a Public Security Police (PSP) spokesman Wong Chi Weng said during a regular press conference yesterday, while a local man has been arrested for selling the ketamine to him.

The Hong Kong suspect surnamed O told the police that he's jobless. He is in his forties.

The suspect who allegedly sold O the drugs is a local man surnamed Iao who told the police he is a labourer. He is also in his forties.

According to Wong, at around 1 a.m. on Sunday, January 26, PSP officers on patrol in Fai Chi Kei

district checked a car whose driver, O, appeared to be in a daze.

Officers searching O's car found three sealed plastic packs of white powder and white powder wrapped in paper, totalling 4.28 grams, which O admitted belonged to him. O also admitted that he has a drug habit, Wong said, adding that the white powder was later confirmed to be ketamine.

O said that he bought the drug from a stranger he had met online who claimed that he could provide drugs, and O made an appointment with him to meet on January 25 at 9 p.m. at the coach parking area in front of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge checkpoint building,

where he bought four packs of ketamine from him for HK\$2,500, Wong said.

O then drove to Fai Chi Kei where, after stopping the car alongside the kerb, he took some of the drugs that he had just bought, until the PSP officers appeared, Wong said, adding that he told the officers that he was only taking but not selling drugs.

O was then taken to the public hospital for a urine test, which came back positive for ketamine, Wong said.

After scrutinising the police forces' citywide CCTV surveillance system, Wong said, PSP officers succeeded in identifying the person

who sold O drugs, and arrested him, Iao, on January 28 at around 7 p.m. at the Qingmao pedestrian checkpoint when he was about to re-enter Macau.

Under questioning, Iao claimed that he was not aware that O had taken the drugs, and also denied that he had sold drugs to anyone, Wong said, adding that Iao told the police that O was his friend, but O told the police that he had not known Iao before the drug deal.

Both have been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP). O faces charges of drug taking and driving under the influence (DUI), while Iao faces a charge of drug trafficking, Wong said. ■

## MUR to host Sunday lantern-fest at Macau New Neighbourhood in Hengqin

**Ginnie Liang**

Macau Urban Renewal Limited (MUR) is slated to host the "Celebrating Lantern Festival at MNN [Macau New Neighbourhood]" event in Hengqin this Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The statement released by MUR on Monday noted that the Lantern Festival, also known as the Chinese Valentine's Day, falls on the fifteenth day of the first month in the lunar calendar, next Wednesday, coinciding with the first full Moon following the Chinese New Year (CNY). Traditionally, the festival also marks the end of the CNY festivities.

MNN Square, the statement said, will be decorated with a lantern corridor where revellers can solve lantern riddles for prizes. Two family-friendly lantern-making workshops will also take place at the festival. The free-admission workshop is available on a first-come, first served basis.

Moreover, CNY-themed installations and interactive attractions will also be set up there, the statement said. MNN homeowners can invite Macau residents not living there to participate in the event where they can get a "mystery welcome



This poster provided by Macau Urban Renewal Limited (MUR) on Monday promotes its upcoming Lantern Festival event to be held this Sunday.

gift" and play mini-games for prizes which, however, are subject to availability and while stocks last.

Sugar painting demonstrations, food stalls offering delicacies from different regions, and live lion dance performances will also be available, the statement added.

To get there, the statement said, visitors can take the complimentary MNN shuttle bus, which runs every 15 minutes, departing from the North Gate 2 bus pick-up area on Level L2 at the mainland side of Hengqin Port (border checkpoint). ■

## Police bust illegal currency exchange dealer

**Ada Lei**

A man from the mainland was arrested on Monday for engaging in illegal currency exchange, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Ho Wai Lok said during a regular press conference yesterday.

The 39-year-old suspect surnamed Liu told the police that he is jobless.

According to Ho, PJ officers on patrol saw Liu providing an illegal currency exchange deal to a male gambler in a casino in Zape on Monday afternoon.

Liu and the gambler were apprehended on the spot. The gambler then turned witness in the case and claimed to have received illegally exchanged money from

Liu and an accomplice twice.

According to Ho, the gambler exchanged 9,800 yuan into chips worth HK\$10,000 in a deal with Liu's accomplice. And after winning HK\$30,000, he handed Liu HK\$30,000 in gambling chips and Liu transferred 28,500 yuan to the gambler's account in return.

The police seized casino chips worth HK\$74,000 from Liu, including the chips from the gambler. Liu and his accomplice made a profit of 950 yuan in total from the two deals.

Liu was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday, facing an illegal currency exchange charge, according to Ho.

At the time of the press



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Ho Wai Lok looks on during yesterday's regular press conference.

— Photo: Ada Lei

conference, according to Ho, the police were still looking for Liu's accomplice. ■

## 'Minimum wage review doesn't necessarily mean upward adjustment': DSAL chief

*Continued from p.1*

### 'Govt should maintain current minimum wage rate': business sector rep

Meanwhile, a business sector representative, Vong Kok Seng, vice president of the board of directors of the Macau Chamber of Commerce (ACM), said that the minimum wage should not be tied to the city's median wage but, instead, it should take into account the unique pressures faced by businesses and the service quality across different industries, suggesting that the government maintain the current minimum wage rate. He added: "An increase in the minimum wage will definitely undermine the business pressure of some industries, such as catering, retail, insurance and real estate, and affect the quality of their services as well as the competitiveness of the city's tourism".

Vong also said that the government should put in place a mechanism whereby service providers, notably those with long-term service contracts, could adjust their service charges in accordance with the rise in the statutory



Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) Director Wong Chi Hong (centre) poses during yesterday's press briefing after the committee's closed-door meeting at the World Trade Centre Macau (WTCM) in Nape.

— Photo: Yuki Lei

minimum wage. He also suggested that the government provide tax exemptions or incentives for employers to adapt to the situation.

According to Vong, during the meeting business representatives expressed concern about the imbalance in Macau's economic development. Taking the tourism industry as an example, he said that although the number of visitor arrivals to the city has increased, "different districts have different business results,

with consumption and revenues not increasing proportionally", hoping that the government would step up its efforts to create a balanced business environment as soon as possible.

Vong also commented on the review of the various limits of compensation for work accidents and occupational diseases, saying that an annual review might not be necessary due to the absence of much fluctuation and change in the current economic situation. ■

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MACAU POST

### Macau Weather

**COLD.**  
**FINE APART FROM CLOUDY PERIODS.**  
**FORCE 2 TO 4 EAST TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS.**  
**RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 45% AND 85%.**



12°C~20°C

Source: SMG



## Macau logs this year's 2<sup>nd</sup> imported malaria case

William Chan

Macau has recorded this year's second imported case of malaria, the Health Bureau (SSM) announced in a statement yesterday.

According to the statement, the patient is a 40-year-old man from the mainland who works in Nigeria. On January 24, the patient returned to the mainland and subsequently developed symptoms including fever, diarrhoea, and abdominal pain. After self-medicating, the symptoms alleviated.

On Thursday, he experienced fever again and sought medical care in the mainland. He entered Macau on Monday, despite continuing to experience symptoms, leading him to seek treatment at the emergency department of the public Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre, where he was diagnosed with malaria and hospitalised for further treatment.

When the statement was released yesterday afternoon, the patient's condition was stable, and the family members travelling with him had not developed similar symptoms.

This is the second imported malaria case reported in Macau this year.

Malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal communicable disease caused by a group of malaria parasites, scientifically known as Plasmodium, the statement noted.

Malaria is transmitted to humans through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes, and while it cannot be spread directly between people, it can be transmitted through contaminated blood, organ transplants, shared needles, or from mother to child during pregnancy or childbirth, the statement said.

The statement also noted that the incubation period for different malaria parasites varies, typically ranging from 7 to 30 days after a mosquito bite, but in some cases, the incubation period can extend for months. Symptoms include intermittent fever, chills, sweating, headaches, fatigue, and muscle pain, with severe complications potentially leading to anaemia, organ failure, seizures, confusion, and death if not treated promptly. ■

## Teams can submit entries for dragon boat races from today

Rui Pastorin

The Sports Bureau (ID) said in a statement yesterday that team entries for the "2025 SJM Macao International Dragon Boat Races" open from 10 a.m. today and run until 10 p.m. on February 19.

The statement noted that the races are slated to take place in May at the Nam Van Lake Nautical Centre, starting off with local small dragon boat races on May 24.

Moreover, the Macao Standard Dragon Boat Race open category and women's category, as well as a newly-organised standard boat mixed category will take place on May 25. Lastly, May 31, the day of the Duanwu Festival (aka the Dragon Boat Festival), will see the Macao International Invitation Standard Dragon Boat Race and the Macao University Student Invitation Standard Dragon Boat Race.

Interested associations or organisations can submit their entries via [www.cmdragonboat.org.mo](http://www.cmdragonboat.org.mo).



This undated handout photo provided by the Sports Bureau (ID) shows paddlers racing during a previous SJM Macao International Dragon Boat Races competition.

[org.mo](http://www.cmdragonboat.org.mo) and create an online team account, while those who already have an existing account do not need to submit a new entry.

Teams that are approved can register for specific race categories online from 10 a.m. on February 20 to 10 p.m. on February 26.

The statement added that the training period is slated to start at the end of this month.

Regulations will be announced in due course, while more details can be found on [www.macaodragonboat.com](http://www.macaodragonboat.com) or on the bureau's social media pages. ■

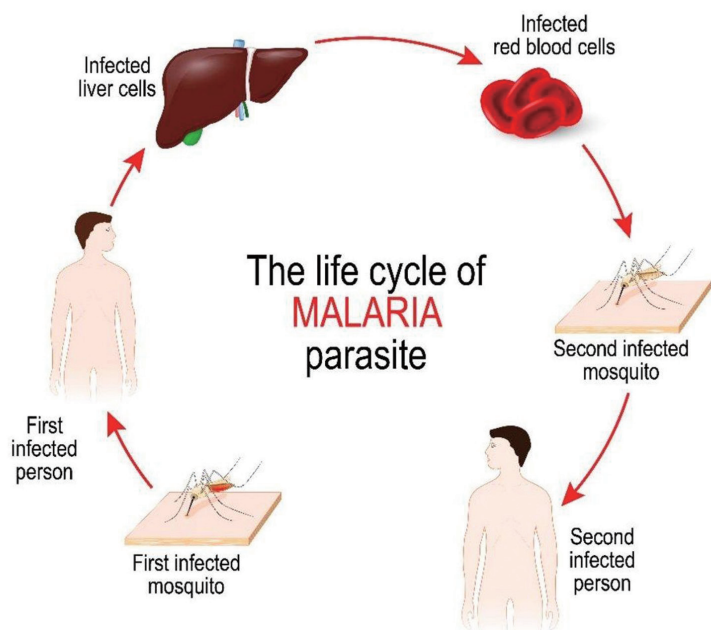


Image courtesy of Horiba

## 87.8 pct of residents use electronic means for proof of life

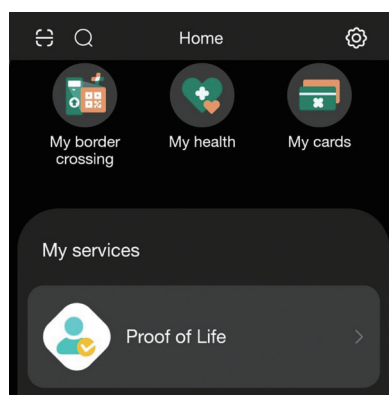
William Chan

The Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP) said in a statement yesterday that as of Sunday, of the 162,000 residents who have completed their proof of life this year, 142,000, or 87.8 percent of them, completed the process electronically.

Specifically, 98,000 used the "Macao One Account", accounting for 69.1 percent of the electronic submissions, representing an increase of 9,000 compared to 89,000 who used the "Macao One Account" during the same period last year.

The statement noted that the 10 percent increase in the "Macao One Account" usage underscored the popularisation of online processing of proof of life, effectively promoting senior citizens' awareness and use of electronic services.

The statement added that the



This screenshot of the "Macao One Account" yesterday shows the proof-of-life procedures.

"Macao One Account" has integrated commonly used services for the elderly. Those who have not yet applied for their pension payments and allowances, including old-age pensions and disability pensions, can opt to use the "Macao One Account" to handle the procedures. ■

## Health Bureau calls for flu jabs

Yuki Lei

The Health Bureau (SSM) said yesterday that it recorded last month five influenza patients who required ventilatory support, three of whom were unvaccinated, and in the light of this the bureau urged the public, once more, to take proper personal precautions during the influenza peak season and to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Macau's flu season has reached its peak since December last year, and Areia Preta Health Centre Chief Chou Mei Fong said in a media interview yesterday she expected the flu virus to remain active this month.

According to Chou, the number of daily attendances at emergency departments and the city's public health centres in the past week dropped slightly compared to the week before the Chinese New Year holiday, with daily attendances of about 1,200 to 1,300 – 80 percent of whom were adults and the remainder were kids, while in terms of the number of influenza-like illnesses reported at the public Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre and the private Kiang Wu Hospital, the positivity rate of influenza was less than 10 percent.

However, Chou was quick



Image courtesy of the European Academy of Paediatrics

to point out that "the figure only mirrors the situation during the Chinese New Year holiday" when more residents travelled outside Macau, adding she expected another surge of influenza after the Chinese New Year holiday ends later this week.

Chou underlined that people at high risk, including senior citizens, chronically ill patients, pregnant women and young children, are more likely to suffer serious complications or may even die after being infected with the influenza virus. She identified the five influenza patients in critical

condition as local residents aged between 38 and 86, four of whom have a history of chronic illness, and one a smoker, saying that two of them, as of yesterday, with severe influenza were still on ventilators, while the 86-year-old died on Monday due to other illnesses.

Chou also urged those who plan to travel elsewhere to confirm the locations of medical institutions there beforehand, avoid going to crowded places, pay attention to personal protection, and seek medical attention as soon as possible in case of respiratory symptoms. ■

## Police nab gambler stealing chips worth HK\$126,000

Ada Lei

The Judiciary Police (PJ) arrested a female gambler from the mainland on Saturday for stealing casino chips worth HK\$126,000 from a gaming table at a casino in Cotai, PJ spokesman Ho Wai Lok said during a regular press conference yesterday.

According to Ho, the 43-year-old suspect, surnamed Peng, gambled on a table with chips worth HK\$126,000. After losing, she grabbed the chips from the gaming table and put them in her bag. The dealer discovered that Peng had taken the chips off the table and reported the case to the police.

Peng was then intercepted by the security guards and transferred to the police. Under questioning, Peng admitted to stealing chips from the table.

Peng was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) on Monday, facing aggravated theft charges, according to Ho. ■





## Over 160 gold & silver artworks on display at Tap Seac Gallery

**Adrian Vallesteros**

A free-admission exhibition titled “Shining Art – Gold and Silver Handicraft Exhibition of Hebei and Guizhou Provinces” is being held at Tap Seac Gallery in Praça do Tap Seac until February 23.

A statement from the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) displayed at the gallery notes that the exhibition is part of the “Quintessence of Traditional Handicraft Art” series, organised by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Beijing, and it is an important part of the “Spring Festival Celebration”. The statement underlines that the exhibition features more than 160 pieces/sets of gold and silver jewellery and handicrafts. The artwork displayed focuses on both provinces’ unique artisan techniques, with Hebei Province featuring cloisonné\* and filigree inlay\*\*, and Guizhou Province highlighting Miao\*\*\* silver jewellery craftsmanship, characterised by complex processes and designs that reflect Miao cultural significance.

A statement displayed at the gallery quoted Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) President Deland Leong Wai Man as saying that the exhibition aims to “help Macau citizens deepen their understanding of the traditional culture, intangible cultural heritage items and folk customs of Hebei and Guizhou provinces, while also promoting cultural exchanges and friendship between people of the three regions.”

The gallery statement from the bureau also points out that free admission workshops will be held this weekend to provide locals with a chance to learn more about the two provinces’ artistry in gold and silver.

The gallery is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, and guided tours, in both Cantonese and Putonghua, are available during the weekends.

\*According to Wikipedia, a cloisonné is an ancient technique for decorating metalwork objects with coloured material held in place or separated by metal strips or wire, normally of gold

\*\*“Chinese filigree inlay art is a delicate kind of jewellery metalwork, usually of twisted threads made of gold, silver, and copper, soldered together and arranged in artistic motifs with mounted gems. The complicated craft is mainly used for the making of imperial luxury ornaments.” - Source: China Today

\*\*\* Wikipedia notes that the word “Miao” is used to designate some ethnic minority groups living in southern and southeast China. ■



Photos taken yesterday by Adrian Vallesteros





## Macau's CNY visitors exceed 1 million in 6 days

Tony Wong

Macau recorded over one million visitor arrivals in the first six days of the mainland's eight-day Chinese New Year (CNY) "Golden Week" holiday this year, according to data released by the Public Security Police (PSP).

This year, the mainland's Spring Festival "Golden Week" holiday began last Tuesday, on the eve of the Chinese New Year of the Snake.

Yesterday was the last day of the mainland's CNY "Golden Week" holiday this year.

Last year, the mainland's eight-day Spring Festival Golden Week holiday began on the first day of the Year of the Dragon.

According to immigration statistics released by the Public Security Police, Macau recorded 78,998 visitor arrivals on the first day of this year's Spring Festival holiday, 131,896 on the second day, 172,783 on the third day, 219,119 on the fourth day, 218,396 on the fifth day, 189,158 on the sixth day, and 162,216 on the seventh day.

According to calculations based on the PSP immigration statistics, Macau recorded a total of 1,010,350 visitor arrivals during the first six days of this year's Spring Festival holiday, and a total of 1,172,566 visitor arrivals during the first seven days.

### CNY visitor arrivals exceed 1-million benchmark on Sunday night

More specifically, according to PSP real-time immigration statistics, Macau recorded 184,212 between 00:00 a.m. and 9 p.m. on the sixth day of this year's Spring Festival

Golden Week holiday, because of which the city had already recorded 1,005,404 visitor arrivals as of 9 p.m. on Sunday during this year's CNY holiday period, exceeding the one-million benchmark.

Last year, the one-million benchmark was broken at 5 p.m. on the sixth day of the 2024 CNY holiday period.

According to calculations based on the PSP immigration statistics, the average daily number of visitor arrivals during the first seven days of the mainland's Spring Festival "Golden Week" holiday this year stood at 167,509.

During the first seven days of the mainland's eight-day Spring Festival holiday last year, Macau recorded a daily average of 175,995 visitor arrivals, according to PSP immigration statistics released at that time.

### Macau sets post-COVID-19 single-day record of visitors during this year's CNY

In terms of single-day numbers, the about 219,000 visitor arrivals recorded on the fourth day of the mainland's Spring Festival Golden Week holiday this year, i.e., the third day of the Year of the Snake, as well as the around 218,000 visitor arrivals recorded on the following day, exceeded the previous post-pandemic record of some 217,000 visitor arrivals on the third day of the Year of the Dragon in 2024.

Macau's highest single-day number of visitor arrivals was recorded on the third day of the Year of the Pig in pre-pandemic 2019, at some 226,000. ■



This photo taken yesterday shows the view from the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ruins of St. Paul's crowded with Chinese New Year visitors. — Photo: Rui Pastorin

## Businesses mostly happy with CNY holiday sales

Vox pop by Rui Pastorin

Yesterday marked the last day of the mainland's Chinese New Year (CNY) holiday, with some businesses in the city centre, including two previously interviewed prior to the start of the eight-day holiday period, telling the *Post* that most of their sales expectations were met and even exceeded.

### Exceeding expectations

Catherine, the general manager of the Old House Gallery near the Ruins of St. Paul's, was happy about their performance over the holiday period, with sales both meeting expectations, which the *Post* was told by part owner Fong in a previous interview was hoped to be at least 70 percent, and even exceeding them. Selling postcards and souvenirs, among others, Catherine said that around 10-15 items were sold out during the period, while more people also checked out the gallery's exhibition room after shopping.

"Foot traffic was quite good for us, for the business, which was twice or triple what it is on normal days. So, it's pretty good", highlighting that the shop saw the most people during the third day of CNY and exceeded even the weekend before the start of CNY that they had initially anticipated to be the busiest, according to Catherine.

Customers and sales were also more than double the expectations of 44-year-old Paula, a staff member of a shop selling Portuguese culinary delights who told the *Post* before the holiday that they were hoping to see a 60 percent increase in sales. "It was more than 60 percent, more like 100!" Paula said. "It was like five times what we make every day" during the four-day period, seeing long queues in front of the shop. The shop's sales and customer base yesterday returned to normal,



A family of visitors snap a selfie yesterday afternoon in front of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ruins of St. Paul's. — Photo: Rui Pastorin

expecting to see busier days during the upcoming weekends.

### Better than last year, hoping for more

Moreover, a business selling miniature artworks and souvenirs that usually sees an equal number of locals and tourists had also experienced better sales than expected, according to its owner surnamed Lou. "It's the holiday, so we had a lot of tourists come to Macau and [some] locals were on holiday", the 32-year-old said, and with more people out and about with families, there were more customers than usual.

Business was also better for a souvenir shop at the Ruins of St. Paul's, according to a 65-year-old employee surnamed Chan. "A lot of tourists from the mainland came to our shop, so business was very good", pointing out that sales were a little bit better compared to last year's holiday period. In the long run, however, Chan said she hopes that Macau could draw more visitors from outside the mainland such as the US, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea.

Echoing an improvement in sales over last year was Selina,

a part owner of a nearby shop, attributing this to now selling more Macau products and souvenirs. The 46-year-old was quick to add, however, that they are only able to cover the costs while their receipts are not as large as before, noting that the shop's rental has also increased. Selina further noted that sales were expected to go down again as the holiday ends.

"Business was alright because this year's CNY holiday saw more tourists. So many of them would come in to look at clothes or choose things", said a local woman in her twenties who works in a retail shop. The business only opened this year and she said that she hopes that the shop would continue to do well even after the holiday period.

Another business that remained open during the holiday was a perfume shop that mainly has a Filipino customer base. A 39-year-old sales assistant noted that though business was just alright over the holiday, there were more customers from the mainland visiting the shop compared to other days. "It's good that there were a lot of tourists". ■

## Housing Bureau HQ redevelopment completed

Tony Wong

The project to redevelop the headquarters of the Housing Bureau (IH), located near the Fai Chi Kei waterfront, has been completed, the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) has announced on its website.

The Public Works Bureau is the public entity tasked with organising and overseeing public construction projects.

The redevelopment project demolished the original 10-floor building in 2019 and constructed a new one with 23 floors on the same site.

After the demolition, the redevelopment of the Housing Bureau's headquarters was carried out through two separate tenders – a tender for its pile foundation, and a tender for its basement and superstructure.

The project's pile foundation work got off the ground in January 2021 and was completed in January 2022, after which the construction

of the new building's basement and superstructure started in August 2022.

The Public Works Bureau announced on its website last week that the building's basement and superstructure has been completed.

According to the DSOP website, the basement and superstructure work cost 257 million patacas.

However, the cost of the new building's pile foundation work is not available on the DSOP website.

After the Housing Bureau's original headquarters was demolished for redevelopment, its main office was temporarily relocated to the ground floor of the nearby Cheng Chong Building in Ilha Verde, a subsidised homeownership scheme (HOS) estate.

According to the DSOP website, the site where the Housing Bureau's redeveloped headquarters is located covers about 1,430 square metres. The new building has a gross floor area of about

26,000 square metres.

The bureau's redeveloped headquarters is located at the junction of Rua Norte do Patane (沙梨頭北街) and Travessa Norte do Patane (沙梨頭北巷), near the east-side waterfront of Patane North Bay.

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

In the run-up to the completion of the redevelopment project of the Housing Bureau's headquarters, the bureau launched a public tender in June last year for the new building's internal design and decoration, which is now still being carried out for a price tag of 116.68 million patacas.

Consequently, the redevelopment of the bureau's headquarters cost about 370 million patacas not including the unknown cost of its pile foundation work. ■

## STOCK MARKETS

### Hang Seng Index closes 2.83 pct higher

HONG KONG – Investors in Hong Kong's stock market greeted the second trading day of the Year of the Snake with much optimism, with the benchmark Hang Seng Index soaring 2.83 percent to close at 20,789.96 points.

The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index jumped 3.51 percent to end at 7,643.63 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index surged 5.06 percent to end at 4,977.38 points.

Paul Chan Mo-po, financial secretary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government, said at a ceremony on Monday that he is "cautiously optimistic" about Hong Kong's stock market in the Year of the Snake.

Stock exchanges in the Chinese mainland remained shut for the Chinese New Year holiday and will resume trading today.

— Xinhua