

# Xia visits Hengqin, urging Macau to grasp spirit of Xi's speeches

Tony Wong

Xia Baolong, who heads both the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office (HKMWO) of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO), paid a two-day fact-finding visit to the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin on Friday and Saturday where he visited a number of industrial parks, tech companies and other facilities with the aim of gaining a better understanding of Hengqin's latest urban and industrial development, and he also convened a meeting urging the Macau government to comprehend the spirit of President Xi Jinping's important speeches to ensure the effective implementation of its campaigns to appropriately diversify Macau's economy and boost Hengqin's development.

The HKMWO and HKMAO released a statement on Saturday night announcing details of Xia's two-day "investigation and research" tour.

After completing his various site visits to Hengqin, according to the statement, Xia convened a meeting there on Saturday morning where Macau Secretary for Economy and Finance Anton Tai Kin Ip briefed him about the Macau government's economic policies and strategies for this year. In addition, the statement said, Xia exchanged views with Tai as well as other officials from the mainland and Macau attending the meeting on Macau accelerating its appropriate economic diversification, advancing the in-depth cooperation zone's development, and better integrating itself into the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA).

Continued on p.6



State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO) Director Xia Baolong (centre) tries out medical equipment at a health tech company in Hengqin on Friday. — Photos: HKMAO

## Sam meets Heilongjiang top leader, vowing to boost ties

Tony Wong

During his three-day visit to Heilongjiang's provincial capital Harbin, Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai met

with Communist Party of China (CPC) Heilongjiang Provincial Committee Secretary Xu Qin on Saturday morning where they exchanged views on strengthening



Communist Party of China (CPC) Heilongjiang Provincial Committee Secretary Xu Qin (right) meets with Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai in Harbin on Saturday. — Photo: GCS

cooperation between both sides, according to a statement by the Macau Government Information Bureau (GCS) on Saturday.

Sam travelled to Harbin on Thursday where he attended the opening ceremony of the 9<sup>th</sup> Asian Winter Games on Friday. He returned to Macau on Saturday afternoon.

The opening ceremony was held at the Harbin International Conference, Exhibition and Sports Centre on Friday night, which was officiated by President Xi Jinping.

On Friday afternoon, according to a GCS statement that day, Sam visited the space museum of the Harbin Institute of Technology with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the nation's space programme.

Sam mentioned, according to the statement, that the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) government was dedicated to leveraging Macau's role – as a platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries – to facilitate closer exchanges and cooperation

between Heilongjiang and Portuguese-speaking countries, thereby better serving the national development strategy.

Both sides agreed that since the inclusion of Harbin and seven other provincial and regional capitals in the mainland's Facilitated Individual Travel Scheme to Hong Kong and Macau – which began on May 27, 2024 – the exchanges between Heilongjiang and Macau have become increasingly frequent, and economic and trade relations have grown closer, showing a positive trend.

Sam also said he hoped that the two places would further strengthen cooperation in education, tourism, sports training, and the traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) industry, creating broader opportunities for collaboration.

Heilongjiang ("Black Dragon River"), the nation's eastern- and northernmost province with a about 32 million inhabitants, lies some 3,000 kilometres northeast of Macau. ■

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

The Macau Post Daily

### Xi calls for promoting full revitalization of nation's northeast

President Xi Jinping has urged Jilin Province to further implement the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee's strategic arrangements for the full revitalization of the nation's northeast in the new era and to play a bigger role in advancing Chinese modernization. — Story on p. 7

### Palestinians back on key Gaza road as Israel withdraws

A long line of cars, tuk-tuks, small lorries and carts stretched along Gaza's Salaheddin Road yesterday after Israel withdrew its forces from a strategic area bisecting the territory. — Story on p. 10

### Lula pushes mega-oil project as Brazil prepares to host COP30

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has amped up pressure for a major oil project to go ahead at the mouth of the Amazon River, despite criticism from eco-activists as the country prepares to host UN climate talks in November. — Story on p. 12

# Health Bureau logs 2 deaths from flu, incl 35-year-old woman

Yuki Lei

A 35-year-old local woman on a ventilator died of acute myocarditis\* on Friday, just five days after she was diagnosed with the flu – and the Health Bureau (SSM) said in a statement later that day that the victim had been at high risk for the flu and had not received the current seasonal flu vaccine.

According to the SSM statement, the victim fell ill with fever and cough on January 31 and was diagnosed with Influenza A last Monday at the public Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre. She was hospitalised after experiencing chest pain and sought treatment at the public hospital's emergency department on Thursday.

The SSM statement noted that as of Friday Macau had already recorded seven severe flu cases this year, including two deaths due to complications from influenza.

The other victim was a 69-year-old local woman, who had also not been vaccinated against this year's seasonal influenza and suffered from a raft of chronic illnesses. She was pronounced dead on Thursday after suffering from Influenza A with pneumonia.

In view of the rising number of

flu cases, the number of residents receiving flu jabs at public health centres and health stations has increased, with more than 5,400 shots of vaccine provided in two days, according to another statement from the SSM yesterday.

A total of over 5,400 residents received influenza vaccinations this past weekend, of which over 3,300 were vaccinated by non-appointment, the statement said.

In its separate statements, the bureau reiterated its appeal to all those who have not yet been inoculated against the flu to get their shots as soon as possible – free of charge for local residents at public health centres and stations, while non-local residents, including blue card holders, can receive their flu vaccination at the private Kiang Wu Hospital and Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) Hospital, as well as the Workers' Medical Clinic on Rua do Bispo Medeiros at their own expense. ■

*\*Acute myocarditis is an inflammation of the heart muscle (myocardium) that occurs suddenly and can affect the heart's ability to pump blood effectively. It can be caused by various factors, including viral infections, autoimmune diseases, bacterial infections, and exposure to certain toxins or drugs. – Poe*

## Medidas de prevenção da infecção de gripe e de outras doenças transmissíveis

This poster provided by the Health Bureau (SSM) last week warns the public against the flu and urges precautions such as getting one's seasonal flu jabs every year.

# Cabbie dies after crashing into railing

Ginnie Liang

A 44-year-old taxi driver died after hitting roadside barriers near the entrance to the public car park on Rua de Francisco Xavier Pereira (俾利喇街) near Mong In Building (望賢樓) on Friday night, according to a Public Security Police (PSP) statement yesterday.

According to the statement, PSP officers received a report from a resident who witnessed a taxi crashing into the roadside railing at a slow speed near the Mong In Building public car park in Areia Preta at 7:17 p.m. on Friday.

Upon arrival, firefighters found the injured male unconscious in the taxi, who was not breathing and had no pulse and no superficial injuries on his body. He died at around 8:30 p.m. after being rushed to the public Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre for emergency treatment, the statement said.

No passengers were in the taxi at the time of the accident, the statement said. PSP officers are investigating the cause of the accident and the illness of the driver.

Macau Radio Taxi Services Limited (Macau Taxi) expressed regret over the incident in a statement yesterday and said it will cooperate with the family in making follow-up arrangements.

The company also said that the driver suddenly felt unwell and passed away on the night of the incident while off-duty, and called on all drivers to keep up with their regular medical check-ups to prevent the recurrence of similar tragedies.

## Bus driver feels unwell and hits roadside barriers

In addition, a 63-year-old local bus driver hit the kerb at the section



This photo taken on Friday night shows a taxi that hit a railing at the entrance to the public car park on Rua de Francisco Xavier Pereira (俾利喇街) near Mong In Building (望賢樓). – Photo courtesy of TDM

in front of the Lotus Bridge in Taipa on Friday morning, causing one passenger and himself to be injured, according to a Public Security Police (PSP) separate statement on Friday.

The driver had a chest contusion, while a 44-year-old Filipino female passenger sustained a head contusion, the statement said, adding that both were conscious and stable and were rushed to the public Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre for treatment.

According to the statement, the male driver told the police that he suddenly felt unwell when driving, causing the accident to happen.

Nine roadside barriers, a street sign and a fire hydrant were damaged during the accident, the statement said, adding that the driver passed a breathalyser test.

The bus involved in the accident incurred front-end damage and a shattered windscreen and was later removed by a tow truck, the statement said.

## Three-vehicle collision on Friendship Avenue, 2 injured

In addition, a local coach driver in his fifties was arrested on Friday for failing to maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front, causing a chain-reaction crash involving a car, a taxi and a coach on Avenida da Amizade (友誼大馬路) near Oceanus casino, leaving two people injured, according to a Public Security Police (PSP) in a separate statement on Friday.

According to the statement, two passengers in the taxi suffered neck injuries and were taken to the public Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre for treatment.

All three drivers involved are local residents and all passed breathalyser tests.

The coach and the taxi incurred significant damage, with the coach's front windscreen shattered and the taxi's rear severely dented, scattering glass in the road, the statement said. ■

# Gambler held against her will for 34 hours over HK\$50,000 debt: police

Yuki Lei

A female gambler was held against her will for about 34 hours at a residential flat in Zape by three loan sharks after she failed to repay a HK\$50,000 debt to them, but she was eventually released after her family paid the debt for her, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Ho Wai Lok said on Friday.

According to Friday's special press conference, the Judiciary Police arrested a member of the gang – a 52-year-old mainland man surnamed Wang – on Wednesday night when he re-entered Macau via the Barrier Gate checkpoint. He was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) on Friday, facing a range of charges, including usury, illegal imprisonment, and causing bodily harm.

In October last year, for gambling purposes, the mainland woman asked for a loan of HK\$50,000 from the trio on condition that she would repay the gang HK\$55,000 plus 20 percent of each of her winnings as "interest". The victim was then taken by the loan sharks to a casino in Zape, where she paid

HK\$20,000 in "interest" to the trio. After a night of intense gambling, the victim lost all the money she had borrowed from them and was falsely imprisoned at the suspect's rented flat in Zape.

Ho quoted the victim as noting that she was beaten on the head, arms and legs during her 34 hours of unlawful imprisonment, all of which had been filmed and sent to her family members until they

repaid the money she had owed the loan shark.

Under questioning, the jobless suspect told the police that he had received HK\$1,000 in "commission" for guarding and falsely imprisoning the victim as well as for collecting "interest" from her during her gambling sessions.

As noted by Ho, the other two suspects were still at large at the time of Friday's press conference. ■



The hooded suspect from the mainland is escorted by Judiciary Police (PJ) officers from the PJ headquarters in Zape to a police vehicle on Friday. – Photo courtesy of TDM

### Published since Aug 2004

- Director & Chief Editor – Harald Brüning
- Office Manager – Sally Chong
- Marketing Manager – Kevin Cheung King Lok
- Managing Editor – Maria Cheung Ut Meng
- Editors – Lesley Wells, Johnny Un
- Senior Reporter – Tony Wong
- Reporters – Rui Pastorin, Yuki Lei, Ginnie Liang, William Chan
- Chief Graphic Designer – Simon Wang
- Graphic Designer – Colin Zhong
- Administrative Assistants – Ester Mak, Carl Leong
- Printed by Tipografia Welfare Lda., 82-86 Rua dos Pescadores
- Wire services – AFP, Xinhua



### Macau Weather

**COLD. FINE APART FROM CLOUDY PERIODS. FORCE 3 TO 4 EAST TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS. RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 40% AND 85%.**



11°C~19°C

Source: SMG

## Subsidised crèches open for enrolment next month

Ginnie Liang

Local subsidised crèches will accept enrolment from March 1 to 26, and the enrolment list will be announced on May 2, Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) said in a statement yesterday.

Of the subsidised crèches that will be admitting children this year, all will accept online applications, except for four that require self-submission of applications, the statement said, adding that parents can apply for more than one subsidised crèche for their children, but they can only choose one after they have been admitted.

For the convenience of parents, there is a pre-registration service in the online application, through which parents can obtain a “Child Enrolment Registration Code”, which parents can use to enrol their children in different subsidised crèches without having to input the information repeatedly, the statement said.

For parents wishing to transfer their children to another crèche after they have already enrolled in one, they need to withdraw before enrolling them in a new crèche, the statement said, adding that parents can download the transfer statement and authorise a friend or relative to complete the transfer procedure on their behalf, which can be accessed on the government’s official childcare services information website at [www.childcare.ias.gov.mo](http://www.childcare.ias.gov.mo).

For more information, members of the public can contact the IAS’s Child and Youth Services Department on 8399 7783 during office hours. ■

## 80 pct of library users satisfied with public libraries: survey

Yuki Lei

The findings of a Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) survey show that nearly 80 percent of the respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with Macau’s public libraries, indicating that public libraries are increasingly recognised for their comprehensive range of services.

Commissioned by the Macao Polytechnic University (MPU), the survey was conducted with a total of 1,200 questionnaires, sent out between July 10 and August 31 last year, targeted at Macau’s population in general, including residents, students, parent-child groups, different ethnic groups and non-resident workers (NRWs), but only 1,006 valid questionnaires were returned.

The findings show a rising user rate of public libraries and the popularity of e-reading in Macau. Among the respondents, 73 percent indicated that they have used public library services, while another 80 percent said they had read books in the past year, with their annual reading volume and time spent at a medium level. In terms of e-reading, nearly 70 percent of the respondents have the habit of reading e-books or other e-resources.

According to the findings, the service hours, distribution locations, service attitude and efficiency of public libraries were favourably assessed by the respondents, who expressed their willingness to recommend public libraries to their friends and relatives, accounting for about 70 percent of the respondents.

Dissatisfaction with libraries was mainly due to their automated retrieval service and book reservation service, as well as the insufficient publicity of library activities.

The findings noted that the libraries’ borrowing systems were generally appreciated, but still 25.25 percent of the respondents expressed



This photo taken on Saturday shows the entrance to the public library in Taipa Central Park.

– Photo: Tony Wong

hope for the extension of longer borrowing periods, especially for non-local students.

The findings quoted respondents’ expectations on the enhancement of paper book services in public libraries focused on increasing the variety of books and speeding up the availability of new books, as well as the libraries’ online network coverage and convenience of the service. They also expressed various expectations on the enhancement of e-book lending services in public libraries, such as increasing the variety of e-books, optimising their e-book system and speeding up the availability of new books being their major demands.

The findings also show that respondents generally recognised the important role of public libraries in promoting reading culture and supported their role in developing Macau into a “City of Reading”.

According to the findings, respondents’ expectations for future development focused mainly on enhancing cooperation among libraries, bookshops, communities, enterprises and schools, organising international book fairs and upgrading both their software and hardware facilities

Friday’s IC statement, released along with the findings of the survey, highlighted the bureau’s commitment to continue strengthening the promotion of the government’s “City of Reading” concept, enhance the awareness and participation of all people in reading, and formulate differentiated promotional strategies targeting local residents, non-resident workers and students.

In addition, the bureau vowed to enrich its libraries’ collection resources, especially e-books and digital resources, while also organising more diversified and international reading campaigns. ■

## Classic car & motorbike parade marks CNY

Yuki Lei

The Sports Bureau (ID) and Automobile General Association of Macao-China (AAMC) held yesterday their annual Chinese New Year (CNY) motorcycle and classic car parade, with 22 classic cars and 50 motorbikes setting off from the Macau Grand Prix (MPG) Building in Zape at 2 p.m., crossing Sai Van Bridge to various points in Taipa, Cotai and Coloane, including Estrada do Istmo, before arriving via Friendship Bridge at the square in front of the Macau Science Museum in Nape for public display.

AAMC Vice President Roberto Carlos Osório told reporters on the sidelines of the parade that the event had been well received and that the inclusion of a new vintage car attraction for the first time had been welcomed by classic car owners, adding that the cars were “historic and rare”, well-maintained and worthy of public appreciation.

Osório also said that he was satisfied with the effectiveness of this year’s event, adding he expected to hold such a parade again next year.

One of the participants was José Tavares, the former president of the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), who expressed his satisfaction with the event, saying that it was an opportunity for the public to learn more about the charms of motorcycling, and also a chance for motorists to interact and get to know each other.

Speaking to reporters outside the Macau Science Centre, Tavares said that the whole parade lasted for less than half an hour: “The trip was quite short”, adding he hoped that the government would support and approve the extension of the event to Hengqin in the future. ■



José Tavares, the former president of the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), talks to reporters at the Macau Science Centre after his motorbike ride yesterday.



Automobile General Association of Macao-China (AAMC) Vice President Roberto Carlos Osório speaks to reporters at the Macau Grand Prix (MPG) Building about yesterday’s motorcycle and classic car parade.

Participating cars and motorbikes set off from the Macau Grand Prix (MPG) Building yesterday. – Photos: Yuki Lei & MPDG



Photos taken by Adrian Vallesteros at the exhibition venue yesterday.

# GalaxyArt brings together talents from the GBA at 'Boom and Bloom Exhibition'

**Adrian Vallesteros**

An exhibition titled "Boom and Bloom: A Journey of Wishes and Rebirth" is taking place at GalaxyArt at the Galaxy Macau resort in Cotai, bringing together talents from the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

The exhibition runs until March 9 and is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. The free-admission exhibition showcases the talents of three artists from the GBA, offering a fusion of creativity that forms an interactive experience.

According to a recent statement displayed at the exhibition, it features collaborative works by local Macau artist Sanchia Lau, Shenzhen artist Ray Chan, and Hong Kong curator Gary Mok.

The artists' intellectual properties\* are introduced in this exhibition, with their artistic concept shared by Chan

as reinterpreting traditional Chinese New Year blessings by fusing pop art with youth-orientated trends, as noted in the statement, which also notes that the exhibition combines modern design with auspicious Chinese symbols, which in turn create a meaningful connection between tradition and contemporary art that resonates with younger audiences.

The statement credits Mok with creating the exhibition's tranquil and enthralling background. It is reminiscent of a traditional Chinese garden which parallels Chinese-style architecture accompanied by vibrant plants and flora, the statement points out. This setting enhances the impact of Chan's Shake Money Tree, which, according to the statement, "centres around a fortune-attracting pine tree, symbolising the harmonious coexistence of wealth and nature while emphasising the importance of financial management."

Additionally, Lau's Wishing Doll "reflects a profound understanding of the pursuit of dreams," further enriching the exhibition's thematic depth. Through their collaboration, Lau is quoted by the statement as saying that the merging of the Shake Money Tree and Wishing Doll represent "love and wealth."

The gallery statement emphasises that the exhibition comprises three thematic art pieces of "Boom and Bloom" and five exhibits from the "Shake Money Tree" series. The statement names the three exclusive designs as: "Joy and Glory", "Boom and Bloom", and "A Propitious Omen".

\*According to the WIPO website, intellectual property (IP) "refers to creations of the mind, such as inventions; literary and artistic works; designs; and symbols, names and images used in commerce".



# Health Bureau urges senior citizens to avoid hypothermia

Ginnie Liang

In response to the cold weather expected in the next few days, the Health Bureau (SSM) urged members of the public on Friday to avoid hypothermia, i.e., prolonged exposure to very cold temperatures, and to bundle up, senior citizens and patients with chronic diseases in particular.

An SSM statement quoted the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) as forecasting that under the impact of a strong monsoon, local temperatures would remain low over the next few days. In the early morning yesterday, the mercury fell to 10.4 degrees Celsius. At midnight last night, the temperature stood at around 13.0 degrees.

The bureau also urged people and associations responsible for caring for the elderly and patients with chronic diseases to take appropriate care measures, such as ensuring that they are wearing more clothes with dry, light, comfortable, breathable and warm materials, keeping warm at home, eating food that is high in calories and easy to digest, such as hot milk, soup, congee and noodles, and doing appropriate exercises indoors or in sunny areas to protect themselves from the cold weather.

The statement underlined that in order not to interfere with blood circulation and movement, the clothing

should not be excessively bulky and tight. The statement added that if senior citizens have incontinence, they should have their wet nappies and trousers changed frequently.

Hot water bottles, electric gel heating pads and electric blankets should not be used by people that are heat intolerant, such as those suffering from diabetes and myelopathy (a disorder in which the tissue of the spinal cord is diseased or damaged), the statement added.

The bureau urged the public not to be deceived into believing that alcohol can keep the body warm, adding that although alcohol can dilate blood vessels that enables people to feel warm immediately after drinking, it will accelerate the loss of body heat afterwards.

The bureau also urged the public to pay close attention to weather changes, especially when the temperature drops sharply in a short period of time, and be alert to prevent hypothermia due to the cold.

The statement pointed out that maintaining the right amount of exercise can generate heat energy in the body, help maintain body temperature, keep joints flexible, and improve blood circulation.

The statement stressed that family members and relatives should care for and assist the elderly and encourage and remind them to take



This image taken from the Macau Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau's (SMG) website last night urges residents to bundle up when the Yellow cold weather alert has been issued.

appropriate measures against the cold, whilst for those who live alone or are ill, their neighbours are asked to call or visit them regularly, so as to reduce the chance of accidents.

If residents find any person suffering from hypothermia, or experiencing symptoms such as muscle stiffness, slow heartbeat, confusion or impaired awareness, they should get the person to a hospital for treatment as quickly as possible, or call the emergency hotline 999 or the Fire Service Bureau (CB) on 2857 2222.

The statement underlined that callers should describe the patient's current address and condition such

as hypothermia, age, gender and symptoms such as being awake, confused or unconscious, when calling the police, so that the ambulance can arrive as soon as possible, while medical units can make appropriate preparations in advance.

## Cold shelter opens as mercury drops

The city's temporary cold weather shelter located at E1 Bairro da Ilha Verde Building on Rua Leste da Ilha Verde (青洲東街34號青洲坊大廈E1) opened on Friday, the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) said in a Friday statement.

The shelter opened in response to

the hoisting of the Yellow cold weather alert by the observatory on Friday.

According to the local observatory, the Yellow low temperature alert will remain in force today, and the weather today will be cold, partly cloudy, and there will be a big difference in temperature between day and night, with a temperature ranging between 11 to 19 degrees Celsius.

As the winter monsoon eases, the forecast for the middle of this week will be influenced by an easterly jet stream, and temperatures will start to rise, around 14 to 20 degrees Celsius, with increasing clouds and a few rain patches with mist from tomorrow to Thursday, the observatory forecast yesterday.

The IAS statement noted that the shelter will provide facility users with a mattress and a quilt, as well as food and beverages free of charge.

Customarily, the shelter stays open between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m. when the temperature falls to 14 degrees or lower.

The bureau urged residents to keep an eye on senior citizens who live alone, suffer from chronic diseases or frail health, and to be ready for the cold weather.

Enquiries about the shelter can be made by calling 2827 0939 during office hours or 6399 1963 during non-office hours. ■

## Tap Siac Craft Market in Spring calls on operators, workshops

Rui Pastorin

The Tap Siac\* Craft Market in Spring is set to be held in April, with the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) \*\* again calling on applications from interested stall operators and proposals for creative handicraft workshops.

Applications are free of charge.

The free-admission craft market will take place in Praça do Tap Seac (塔石廣場) from April 24 to April 27 and May 1 to 4.

A Friday statement from the bureau noted that those interested can send in applications until February 26, adding that there will be 220 handicraft and creative gastronomy stalls.

Applicants from Macau, Malaysia and Singapore can apply via [www5.icm.gov.mo/craftmarketV2](http://www5.icm.gov.mo/craftmarketV2),

while those from the mainland, Hong Kong and China's Taiwan region can find more details on [www.craftmarket.gov.mo](http://www.craftmarket.gov.mo), the statement said.

For creative handicraft workshops, applicants can submit proposals until February 19 by emailing [apply.DPICC@icm.gov.mo](mailto:apply.DPICC@icm.gov.mo) or directly to the bureau's headquarters in Praça do Tap Seac (塔石廣場).

Application rules, the e-application form, along with the criteria for proposals can be found at the craft market website

\*Tap Siac is the bureau's alternate spelling for "Tap Seac", which is where the craft market is held in the spring and the autumn.

\*\*The post had also reported on IC's call for stall operators and workshops on Thursday. ■



This photo taken in November last year shows stalls and fairgoers at Tap Siac Craft Market in Autumn. - Photo: Rui Pastorin

## Final CNY parade takes place in northern district

Rui Pastorin

The second and final float parade of the "Parade for Celebration of the Year of the Snake" was held on Saturday and featured 17 floats.

The Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) said in a statement on Saturday that the parade set off from Estrada Marginal da Ilha Verde (青洲河邊馬路) and ended in Iao Hon Market Garden, gathering spectators along the way. The floats ranged from those by various government entities to Macau's six integrated resort (IR) operators.

Moreover, performances were also presented in Iao Hon Market Garden, including those presented by Macau's six IR operators and insurance company Prudential Hong Kong Limited (Macau Branch), as well as by local and Hong Kong artistes, according to the statement.

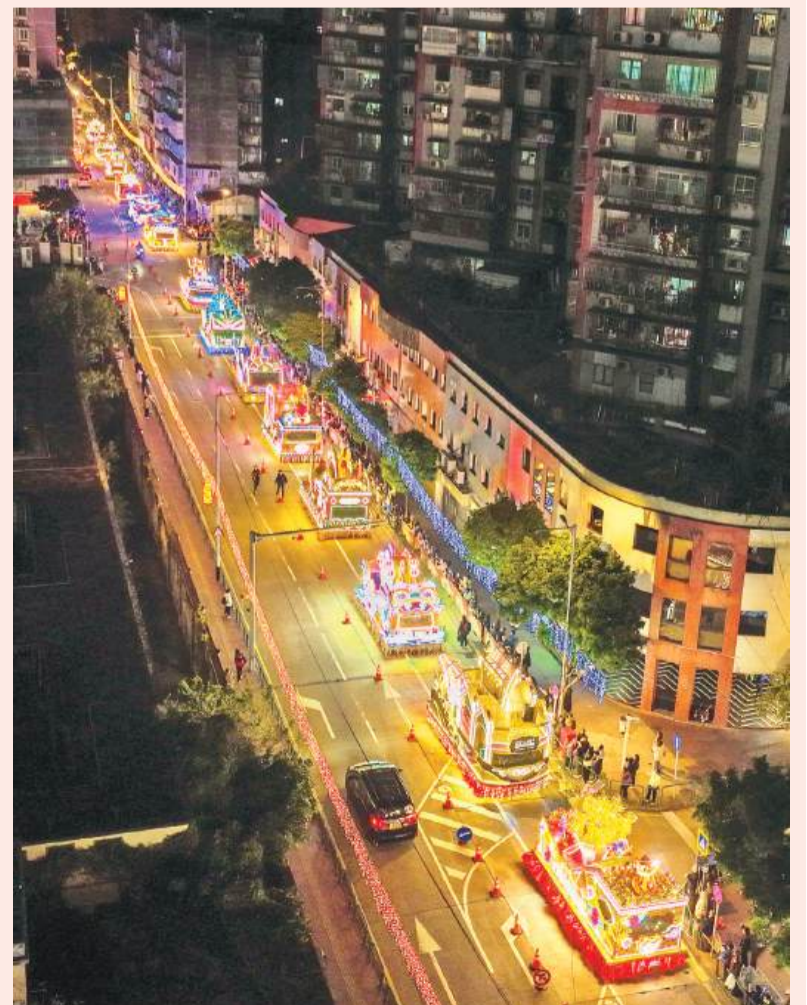
The statement added that the floats will be on display in Praça do Tap Seac (塔石廣場) until this Sunday, illuminated from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., the statement said. The statement noted that members of the public can also take part in the WeChat mini-programme "The Snake dazzles for the Joyful Spring Festival" until February 12 for a chance to enter lucky draws and win one of the nearly 60,000 prizes on offer.

Moreover, on Wednesday, the

day of the Lantern Festival and the final day of the Chinese New Year (CNY) celebrations, the 15-minute CNY Fireworks Display finale is set to take place off the waterfront overlooked by the Macau Tower

Convention & Entertainment Centre

More details on the festivities can be found on the trilingual <https://www.macaotourism.gov.mo/en/article/cny/parade-2025>. ■



This handout photo taken and provided on Saturday by the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) shows the various parade floats during the "Parade for Celebration of the Year of the Snake" on their way to Iao Hon Market Garden.

# CPI growth accelerates in January on holiday spending

BEIJING – Consumer inflation rose faster in January, driven by surging demand for travel, dining and shopping during the Spring Festival holiday, the country's most celebrated festival.

Mainland China's consumer price index (CPI), a main inflation gauge, was up 0.5 percent year on year in January, up from a 0.1 percent increase in December, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said yesterday.

NBS statistician Dong Lijuan attributed the year-on-year CPI rise to higher service and food prices during the holiday and a rebound in gasoline prices.

In breakdown, service prices rose 1.1 percent year on year last month, while food prices

climbed 0.4 percent.

On a monthly basis, the CPI expanded 0.7 percent in January, with service prices accounting for more than half of the overall CPI increase, contributing about 0.37 percentage points.

The core CPI, which excludes food and energy prices, rose 0.6 percent from a year ago in January, up from a 0.4 percent increase in December 2024.

The holiday economy remained strong, with tourism and consumer spending hitting record highs. According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the country saw a record 501 million domestic tourist trips during the eight-day holiday, which concluded on Tuesday, up 5.9 percent year on year.

Tourist spending reached a record high of over 677 billion yuan, a 7 percent increase from the previous year.

Meanwhile, key retail and catering enterprises tracked by the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) reported a 4.1 percent year-on-year rise in sales during the holiday, reflecting steady consumer momentum.

The holiday consumer market was vibrant and thriving, with a strong momentum in service consumption, MOC spokesperson He Yongqian told a press conference on Thursday.

To stimulate domestic demand and support economic recovery, the central authorities launched a major program in 2024 to promote

large-scale equipment upgrades and consumer goods trade-ins. This program encourages factories to replace old machines with more advanced ones, while individual consumers can enjoy subsidies on automobiles, home appliances and more.

Fueled by these policies and festive consumer enthusiasm, spending on food, festive goods, and smart home appliances was particularly robust during the Spring Festival holiday. Sales of home appliances and communication devices at key retailers tracked by the MOC rose by over 10 percent year on year.

As the policy promoting trade-ins for consumer goods continues to expand and various consumption-

boosting activities unfold, the consumer market is expected to maintain steady growth in the first quarter, He added.

Yesterday's data also showed the country's producer price index (PPI), which measures costs for goods at the factory gate, went down 2.3 percent year on year in January, flat with that in December last year. On a month-on-month basis, the PPI dropped 0.2 percent in January.

Dong attributed the decrease to the off-season industrial production during the holiday period.

Analysts forecast that driven by proactive macroeconomic policies and the steady recovery of domestic demand, the CPI and PPI are expected to sustain their moderate rebound throughout 2025. –Xinhua

## Xia visits Hengqin, urging Macau to grasp spirit of Xi's speeches



State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO) Director Xia Baolong (right) talks with Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon (front, second from left) at the "Music on the TM River" complex in Hengqin on Friday. Cheong heads the zone's executive committee.

*Continued from p.1*

According to a follow-up statement by Tai's office on Saturday night, Xia underlined during the meeting in Hengqin on Saturday morning that the various important speeches made by Xi during his inspection visit to Macau and Hengqin in December last year have provided clear directions and crucial guidance for Macau's appropriate economic diversification and Hengqin's development, urging the Macau government to thoroughly study and understand the spirit of Xi's speeches to ensure their effective implementation.

On Friday afternoon, the HKMWO-HKMAO statement said, Xia visited the "Music on the TM River" complex\* where he was briefed by officials of the zone's executive committee about Hengqin's urban planning and development as well as its industrial development.

The zone's top decision-making body is its management committee, which is jointly headed by Guangdong Governor

Wang Weizhong and Macau Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai.

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.

Afterwards, the statement said, Xia headed to the Traditional Chinese Medicine Science and Technology Industrial Park of Cooperation between Guangdong and Macau with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the Guangdong-Macau cooperation on promoting the development of the traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and Big Health industries, where he visited the Guangdong TCM Laboratory to know more about Guangdong-Macau cooperation on advancing the TCM industry-academia-research collaboration and its industrialisation.

Xia also visited a health tech company to gain an understanding of its product research and development as well as its marketing campaign, the statement said.

On Saturday morning, the statement said, Xia visited Hengqin's

cross-border e-commerce and livestreaming industrial park with the aim of gaining a better understanding of its role in driving the development of Macau's e-commerce industry and supporting Macau young people's employment and entrepreneurship.

Afterwards, the statement said, Xia headed to the Novotown, a shopping, entertainment and education multipurpose complex where he visited a tech company with the aim of gaining an understanding of Hengqin's industrial clustering.

Industrial clustering refers to the geographic concentration of interconnected businesses in a particular industry or similar ones.

\* TM refers to Tianmu, a river running through the central part of Hengqin island. The "Music on the TM River" is a 16-storey multipurpose complex located on a small artificial island in the Tianmu River. The complex houses a conference centre, exhibition spaces, science and innovation centres, offices, hotels, and other commercial facilities. ■

## Chinese initiatives, leadership crucial to coping with major challenges of our time

*Commentary by Fabrizio Hochschild\**

The Chinese New Year falls at a time with the world on the move, but the outlook is troubling. There is growing tension between major countries, rising protectionism and a looming threat of trade wars. This can hasten the trend toward a more fragmented global order with less predictability, greater inequality and slower progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Amidst global rivalries, we are distracted and falling behind in addressing the three major challenges of our time: climate change, the resurgence of conflicts and governance of runaway emerging technologies.

2024 was the hottest year on record, with average temperatures rising 1.6 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This is the second consecutive year that global temperatures have reached unprecedented highs. The target of the 2015 climate accord was to limit warming to an average of 1.5 degrees Celsius. A one-off breach does not yet violate the Paris Climate Agreement goal, but experts are skeptical that we can limit warming to 1.5 degrees in the coming decades.

The effects are already with us and will only worsen with torrential rains, more intense tropical cyclones in some parts of the world, and worsening droughts and forest fires causing deaths, displacement and unprecedented destruction. But several governments have slowed or reversed commitments to combat climate change.

Geopolitical uncertainties further weaken the prospects for enhanced international

cooperation to address the trend. According to UN studies, direct war-related deaths, refugee numbers, military spending and terrorist incidents have all reached historic highs in recent years. Amidst heightened rivalry among major countries, the UN Security Council, its most powerful body, has proved unable to reach an agreement on how to effectively respond.

Global uncertainties are also being fueled by runaway technologies, whose social and political impacts remain unclear. For the first time, technology – notably advanced AI applications – threatens to replace capacities once thought to be uniquely human.

New technologies know no borders. What are the ethical implications? How will they affect the job market, crime and global security? International cooperation on these challenges is in its infancy and failing to keep up with the rapid pace of technological change.

We have entered the Year of the Snake, which symbolizes wisdom, flexibility and adaptability. In times of threats and uncertainties, these qualities will be essential to fostering global stability, progress on sustainable development and multilateral cooperation in the year ahead.

Chinese initiatives and leadership, inspired by these values and a willingness to forge bridges over growing divides, will be crucial to bringing the world back on track to face the most urgent challenges of our time.

–Xinhua  
\*Fabrizio Hochschild is a former under-secretary-general of the United Nations.

## Rescuers race against time to find survivors after deadly landslide in SW China

CHENGDU – Braving the cold, rescuers are making all-out efforts to find survivors after a landslide in Sichuan Province left one dead, 28 missing and two injured.

The landslide occurred at about 11:50 a.m. on Saturday in Jinping Village, which is located in Junlian County in the city of Yibin.

Yesterday morning, firefighters from multiple regions across Sichuan assembled to continue the rescue operation.

At the rescue site, which has been divided into 10 search grid zones, multiple excavators have been deployed at the lower end of the landslide, while rescuers equipped with search dogs and life detectors conduct a thorough search.

“The rescue operation faces three major challenges: cold and damp weather, slippery roads and narrow passages due to rain, and the risk of secondary collapses at the site,” said Li Zhuo, head of the fire and rescue brigade in Yibin.

Advanced equipment, including slope monitoring radars, drones and oblique aerial cameras, has also been deployed in the rescue operation.

The landslide also buried 10 residential houses and a production building.

So far, 360 people from 95 households have been evacuated, with temporary shelters set up. The two injured people are receiving treatment at a hospital in Junlian.

Due to continuous rainfall and geological conditions, the landslide has transformed into debris flows, which, according to a preliminary assessment, have resulted in an accumulation of debris stretching approximately 1.2 kilometers and having a total volume of over 100,000 cubic meters.

The landslide body is approximately 10 to 20 meters thick and about 100 meters wide.

On the national level, the Ministry of Emergency Management on Saturday launched a Level-III emergency geological disaster response, while the national commission for disaster prevention, reduction and relief has activated a Level-IV national disaster relief emergency response.

China has a four-level emergency disaster relief response system, with Level IV being the lowest and Level I the highest.

The central authorities also allocated 80 million yuan to support disaster relief and recovery efforts in Sichuan.

Sichuan has mobilized 949 personnel from the military, armed police, firefighting, emergency response, transportation, medical, telecommunication, and other forces to carry out or assist the rescue efforts.

In addition, engineering rescue equipment and emergency supplies have been dispatched to conduct rescue assessments, search and rescue operations, and emergency investigations.

Local authorities have provided 30 generators, 100 cotton tents, 400 beds, and 1,100 quilts to ensure the essential needs of the affected people.

“We have prepared ample cotton clothing and shoes for the affected residents to ensure they stay warm,” said Gao Jianzhong, Party secretary and executive vice president of the Yibin Red Cross Society.

Considering the ongoing temperature drop, continuous rainfall and landslide conditions, local authorities have designated danger zones in Jinping Village and surrounding areas.

Real-time monitoring has also been implemented for the mountain slopes on both sides of the landslide, with designated emergency evacuation routes and signals in place, to prevent secondary disasters and ensure the safety of rescue operations, local authorities said. —Xinhua

## ‘Ne Zha 2’ tops all-time China box office admissions with 160 million tickets sold

BEIJING – The animated juggernaut “Ne Zha 2” has become the most-watched film ever by total viewers in Chinese box office history, surpassing 160 million admissions (including presales), according to data from ticketing platform Maoyan.

Yesterday, the sequel dethroned the 2017 actioner “Wolf Warrior 2,” which had long held the record with 159 million admissions, to claim the title of China’s most-watched film in box office history.

The milestone comes just a day after “Ne Zha 2” shattered another record, becoming the first film globally to cross the US\$1-billion mark in a single market on Saturday, according to box office tracker Beacon.

The film had already overtaken “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” to become the highest-grossing film ever in a single market, amassing over

6.79 billion yuan (US\$947 million) in China by 9:11 p.m. on Friday.

A follow-up to the 2019 animated sensation “Ne Zha,” the sequel has captivated audiences with its breathtaking visuals, rich storytelling, and deep cultural resonance.

The record-breaking run makes “Ne Zha 2” not just a box office titan but a cultural phenomenon, further underscoring China’s ability to produce homegrown blockbusters that strike a chord with domestic audiences.

Industry analysts are now watching closely to see if “Ne Zha 2” can sustain its momentum and set even higher benchmarks in the days ahead. Maoyan has revised its domestic box office forecast for the film upward to over 10.87 billion yuan, setting it on course to become the first Chinese film ever projected to surpass the 10-billion-yuan threshold. —Xinhua

## Xi calls for promoting full revitalization of nation’s northeast

CHANGCHUN – President Xi Jinping on Saturday urged Jilin Province to further implement the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee’s strategic arrangements for the full revitalization of the nation’s northeast in the new era and to play a bigger role in advancing Chinese modernization.

Xi, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks after listening to a work report from the Jilin Provincial Committee of the CPC and the provincial government in Changchun, capital city of Jilin.

Stressing that Jilin must focus on high-quality development, Xi urged the province to unwaveringly take the real economy as the cornerstone and achieve coordinated development through transforming traditional industries, strengthening competitive industries, and cultivating new quality productive forces.

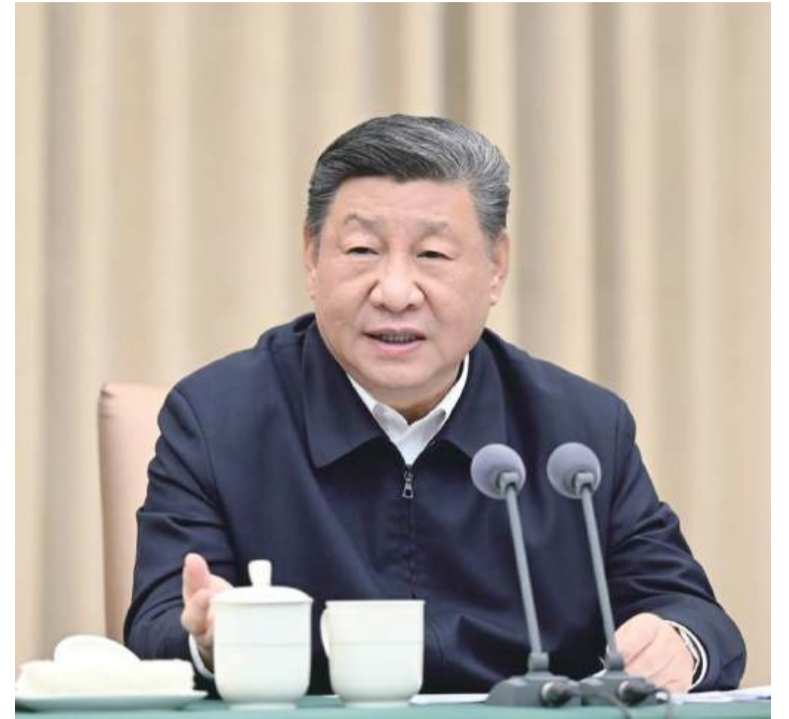
Efforts should also be made to translate technological breakthroughs into real productivity, he said.

Xi noted that the comprehensive deepening of reform and opening up is crucial for the full revitalization of northeast China.

Related policies and regulations must be fully implemented in the process of deepening the reform of state-owned assets and enterprises and promoting the development of private economy, he said.

Xi stressed the importance of fostering a first-rate business environment that is market-oriented, law-based and internationalized, and building a higher-standard open economy.

He encouraged Jilin to prioritize the development



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, delivers an important speech after listening to the work report from the Jilin Provincial Committee of the CPC and the provincial government in Changchun, Jilin Province, on Saturday. —Xinhua

of modern and large-scale agriculture, and to achieve coordinated advancements in applying technologies, promoting green development, improving quality and nurturing well-known brands in the sector.

Northeast China, consisting of the provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning, has long been a key industrial and agricultural base, particularly in the early days of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The revitalization of northeast China is a major strategy adopted by the CPC Central Committee for the country’s overall development.

As a multi-ethnic province, Jilin should fully implement the Party’s theories and policies concerning ethnic groups and the Party’s fundamental guidelines for the work related to religious affairs, advance the building of

a community for the Chinese nation, and promote exchanges and interactions among different ethnic groups, Xi said.

He also urged the implementation of measures to guard against and defuse risks in key fields and maintain social stability.

Noting that high-quality development should be guided by high-quality Party building, Xi called for consistent efforts to tackle pointless formalities and address misconduct and corruption that occur at people’s doorsteps.

Cai Qi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and director of the General Office of the CPC Central Committee, attended the work report meeting.

—Xinhua, MPD

## China lodges solemn representations to Panama over withdrawal from BRI cooperation with China

BEIJING – Assistant Foreign Minister Zhao Zhiyuan on Friday summoned Miguel Humberto Lecaro Bárcenas, Panama’s ambassador to China, to lodge solemn representations over Panama’s decision to not renew its Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation with China on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Panama recently announced the termination of the Memorandum of Understanding on the BRI, to which the Chinese side expressed deep regret, Zhao said.

Under the framework of the BRI, pragmatic cooperation between China and Panama has rapidly developed across various sectors and achieved a series of

fruitful results, bringing tangible benefits to Panama and its people, Zhao noted.

More than 150 countries actively participate in the BRI, with achievements benefiting the people of various nations, including Panama, Zhao said. “Any attempts to reverse course on the BRI and go against the expectations of the Chinese and Panamanian peoples do not align with the vital interests of Panama.”

China respects Panama’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and advocates for equality among countries of all sizes, mutual respect, and credibility in commitments, Zhao stressed.

China firmly opposes the United States wantonly undermining China-Panama relations and discrediting and undermining cooperation under the BRI through pressure and threats, Zhao said.

China-Panama relations are never targeted at any third party and should not be disturbed by any third party, Zhao said, adding that it is hoped that Panama will exclude external interference and make the right decision based on the overall situation of bilateral relations and the long-term interests of the two peoples.

Lecaro Bárcenas said that Panama values its relationship with China and will promptly report to its government. —Xinhua