

# CAM vows to leverage Hengqin resources, launch One ID



CAM Board of Directors Chairman Ma lao Hang addresses yesterday's Chinese New Year media luncheon at MGM COTAI. – Photos: CAM



CAM Executive Committee Chairman Simon Chan Weng Hong gives a presentation on the airport operator's development plan for this year during yesterday's luncheon.

## Maria Cheang Ut Meng

Local airport operator CAM vowed yesterday to leverage its Hengqin resources, further advance its core projects such as further expanding and upgrading its facilities and introducing smart security equipment and One ID – unified identification system that aims to simplify and streamline the process of user authentication across various services at the airport.

CAM Chairman Simon Chan Weng Hong revealed details of the company's development, expansion and reclamation projects in a presentation during yesterday

afternoon's Spring Festival luncheon hosted at MGM COTAI for local media representatives and Macau-based correspondents.

Chan, a former president of the Civil Aviation Authority of Macau (AACM), said he expected the Hengqin Upstream Cargo Terminal project to kick off in the first quarter of this year and be completed next year, apart from "systematically implementing infrastructure upgrade initiatives."

According to the Macau International Airport Development Plan 2025, a summary of which was released to the media yesterday, Guangdong Hengqin Macau International

Airport Logistics Co. Ltd. successfully bid for a 66,700 square metre plot of land for logistics use in November 2024, which will be constructed for the Upstream Cargo Terminal of the Macau International Airport in Hengqin in conjunction with COSCO Shipping.

An upstream cargo terminal refers to a facility that handles the initial stages of cargo movement, typically associated with the transportation and storage of goods before they are shipped to downstream locations (such as distribution centres or retail outlets).

Chan also said that the airport's 2025 expansion and reclamation drive includes

three major sub-projects – Runway Pavement Rehabilitation Project; Upgrade Project for the Departure Security Channels and Departure Areas, and Transit Corridor and Arrival Channel Renovation, "all aimed at continually enhancing the service capacity" of the airport.

According to Chan, the Runway Pavement Rehabilitation Project is slated to start in the fourth quarter, while the renovation of the departure security channels and departure areas is planned to begin in the current quarter, "with improvements anticipated by mid-year and completion targeted for the third quarter."

*Continued on p.2*

## Trump speaks to Putin, says Ukraine talks to start 'immediately'

WASHINGTON – US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke by phone yesterday and agreed to immediately start talks to end the Ukraine war, in an extraordinary thaw in relations that could leave Kyiv out in the cold.

Trump described the call as "lengthy and highly productive" in a post on Truth Social, saying that the two leaders had even agreed to visit each other's nations to address the deep tensions since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

The Kremlin separately said the call lasted nearly one-and-a-half hours and that

Putin and Trump had agreed that the "time has come to work together," with a long-term solution for the Ukraine war in reach.

"I just had a lengthy and highly productive phone call with President Vladimir Putin of Russia," Trump said, adding that they had discussed Ukraine, the Middle East, artificial intelligence (AI) and other subjects.

He said they agreed that "we want to stop the millions of deaths taking place in the War with Russia/Ukraine" – with Trump using an unconfirmed figure for the toll in the Ukraine conflict.

"We agreed to work together, very

closely, including visiting each other's Nations," said Trump. "We have also agreed to have our respective teams start negotiations immediately" on Ukraine.

Trump had promised to end the Ukraine war before taking office and has been pushing for a peace settlement while remaining coy until now about any possible contact with Putin.

Trump said that "we will begin by calling President Zelensky, of Ukraine, to inform him of the conversation."

The Ukrainian presidency later confirmed that Zelensky had a phone call with Trump. – AFP

## Trump says Ukraine's Zelensky 'wants to make peace'

WASHINGTON – Donald Trump said yesterday that his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky wanted "peace," after the US president spoke to Russia's Vladimir Putin about talks to end the Ukraine war.

"I just spoke to President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine. The conversation went very well. He, like President Putin, wants to make PEACE," Trump said on Truth Social, adding that Zelensky would meet US Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Munich tomorrow. – AFP



### China warns Philippines of dangers of prolonged US missile system deployment

China yesterday urged the Philippines to deliver on its promise to withdraw the US Typhon missile system from its territory, warning that failing to do so would put its own security and national defense at the mercy of others. – Story on p. 8

### 'Make California Great Again': Danes dream of buying golden state

In the wake of US President Donald Trump's threats to take control of Greenland, some Danes are California dreaming, offering to buy the golden state and infuse it with a Nordic vibe and universal health care. – Story on p. 11

### Brazil says 'will not enter trade war' with US

Brazil has no intention of entering a trade war with the United States, a federal government minister said on Tuesday after US President Donald Trump imposed a 25-percent levy on steel. – Story on p. 12

# Phone-in programme mulls minimum stay to benefit from 'wealth-sharing' handout

Yuki Lei

The government's "wealth-sharing" handout scheme was launched in 2008 and since then all Macau ID card holders have been entitled to an annual cash premium – and a community leader yesterday urged the government to set up a minimum number of days per year that beneficiaries would have to remain in Macau in order to be able to receive the cash handout, while an economist said that the effect of issuing cash handouts to people not residing in the city on stimulating local consumption was "limited".

Public broadcaster TDM's Chinese-language radio station "Ou Mun Tin Toi" hosted its regular current affairs phone-in programme, "Ou Mun Gwong Cheung", yesterday morning to discuss the government's "wealth-sharing" handout scheme. The phone-in programme was addressed by Macau General Union of Neighbourhood Associations (Kai Fong) Social Affairs Committee Vice Chief Leong In Pong, Macau Economic Association Vice President Henry Lei Chun Kwok, and Macau Comprehensive Social Studies Association Chairman Nelson Kot Man Kam.

The handout scheme has been implemented for 17 consecutive years, with each local permanent resident currently entitled to 10,000 patacas, while non-permanent residents receive 6,000 patacas.

"The 'wealth-sharing' handout scheme was initiated [by then Chief Executive Edmund Ho Hau Wah] in response to the financial turmoil in Macau at that time and to address price inflation, among other issues," Lei said, pointing out that in light of the government's decision to advance the scheme from July to April in response to the challenging socio-economic environment during the three-year COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022), "the scheme has evolved into a form of financial assistance for grassroots residents".

He also said that the handout scheme could enhance people's sense of gain, yet he also pointed out that it might lead to rising prices, which would be detrimental to the overall interests of Macau, "due to the fact that certain groups – such as people not residing in Macau who choose to save the amount in local banks until they return specifically to Macau to withdraw it, resulting



Pedestrians walk past the Financial Services Bureau (DSF) on Avenida da Praia Grande yesterday. The bureau handles the government's annual "wealth-sharing" handout payments. – Photo: Yuki Lei

in limited effects on boosting consumption in Macau".

Lei said that the government should legislate to stipulate the basic eligibility requirements for receiving the handout and to set up a mechanism for adjusting the amount of the handout in response to the aspirations of the community, while enhancing the stability of the scheme. He also urged the

government to study the feasibility of increasing the rates for minors and the elderly.

Regarding views in the community that some of the beneficiaries have moved away from Macau for many years but are still eligible for the handout, with some even holding other nationalities, Kot said that the scheme favoured low-income earners, suggesting

that the government review the eligibility criteria of the scheme beneficiaries, while considering adjusting the amount of the wealth-sharing handouts according to different income groups.

Citing official statistics that about 48,000 beneficiaries applied for their handout cheque to be sent by post to countries overseas last year, Leong urged the government to take the Non-Mandatory Central Provident Fund system as reference by requiring its beneficiaries to stay in Macau for a minimum number of 183 days per year, so that the handout could be better utilised in the local community.

Leong also said that quite a number of residents were still facing economic challenges, calling on the government to relaunch its consumption card, e-commerce incentive and other pecuniary support programmes to stimulate the local economy.

He said that as the handout scheme was supposed to be a universal measure, careful consideration should be given to whether there should be any biased targets, such as children, the elderly and low-income earners. ■

## 4,000 kids expected to enrol in K1 for new academic year

Ginnie Liang

Central District Community Service Consultative Committee Deputy Convener Wu Hang San said yesterday that while the central registration for first-time kindergarten enrolment (K1) for the 2025/2026 academic year is

underway, the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) estimated that about 4,000 children will be eligible for first-year kindergarten enrollment in the upcoming academic year.

Wu made the remarks during a press conference after a regular closed-

door meeting at the Patane Municipal Market Complex yesterday, with the attendance of DSEDJ officials.

Wu quoted the bureau as saying that due to a recent decline in the number of children reaching school age, the bureau has been actively engaging with schools to enhance cross-school collaboration and improve the quality of education, as well as discussing strategies to support schools in response to changing birth rates.

Wu said that the bureau has been addressing the decline in school-age populations by considering factors such as school size, curriculum development, and teacher transitions, adding that through strengthened inter-school cooperation, the bureau aims to set clear development directions for schools and enhance educational quality.

Wu also quoted the bureau as saying that it will utilise a flexible class size mechanism, allowing 25 to 35 students per class, to adjust overall class sizes.

Additionally, support measures such as the Education Fund and School Development Subsidy Scheme will help mitigate the impact of the declining birth rate on schools, Wu said.

The bureau also emphasised its commitment to promoting healthy and harmonious family values among students, with plans to launch positive publicity campaigns targeting parents and the general public to foster a supportive environment for children's growth in Macau, according to Wu. ■



Central District Community Service Consultative Committee Deputy Convener Wu Hang San (right) and committee member Lei Kit lan, look on before briefing reporters after yesterday's closed-door meeting with representatives from the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) at Patane Municipal Market Complex.

## CAM vows to leverage Hengqin resources, launch One ID

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Chan also said that "in the future, the Taipa Ferry Terminal and the Taipa Ferry Terminal Heliport, as well as the Macau International Airport will achieve seamless connectivity, facilitating coordinated sea and air transport, so as to enhance travel convenience for passengers in the surrounding areas, thereby providing critical transportation support for the development of the Greater Bay Area".

Chan also said he expected the single-runway airport to reach a passenger movement of 8.5 million this year, compared to last year's 7.6 million, which would result in a year-on-year growth of nearly 12 percent. Last year's passenger volume rose by 48.3 percent year on year.

On the cargo front, Chan expected an increase from 108,107 tonnes last year to 113,000 tonnes this year, i.e., an expected year-on-year growth of 4.5 percent.

Chan also announced the launch of the airport's One ID system this year, which by using facial recognition technology, allowing passengers to "show their face" at different checkpoints or touchpoints to verify their identity, without having to repeatedly present their travel documents and boarding passes, enabling "token enrolment", i.e., the process of registering a security token or device that is used for

authentication or authorisation purposes, involving facial image, passport information and boarding pass data at check-in counters, Common Use Self-Service (CUSS) Kiosks, auto bag drops, security channels, immigration counters, and self-boarding gates.

Meanwhile, CAM Chairman of the Board of Directors Ma Iao Hang said in a speech at the start of the luncheon that the company's total revenue last year is estimated to have reached 1.47 billion patacas, a year-on-year growth of 5.1 percent, or 81 percent of the revenue recorded in pre-pandemic 2019.

CAM Marketing Director Eric Fong Hio Kin told reporters on the sidelines of the luncheon that his company was negotiating with AirAsia the launch of new routes from Macau. He also said that CAM was in talks with Qatar Airways, Emirates and Turkish Airlines in an attempt to attract more tourists from the Middle East to Macau. Fong said that for the time the focus was on arranging regular charter flights from the Middle East.

Ma said that this year "multiple infrastructure projects aimed at enhancing safety, improving efficiency and optimising services will be launched, thereby providing passengers with a safe, more convenient, and comfortable travel experience".

The airport will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on November 9. ■

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MACAU POST

### Macau Weather

TEMPERATURE FALLING SLIGHTLY. CLOUDY APART FROM SUNNY INTERVALS.

LIGHT RAIN AT FIRST. FORCE 3 TO 5 NORTH TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS WITH GUSTS.

RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 60% AND 98%.



14°C~20°C

Source: SMG

# IAM to restructure part of Hac Sa wooded area in Q1

Yuki Lei

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) held a community forum for Taipa and Coloane yesterday, announcing its forestry restructuring project for the first quarter of this year on about one hectare of wooded area in Hac Sa Reservoir Nature Park, including clearing withered trees, vines and Mikania micrantha\*, excavating trees and improving soil, as well as replanting the area with native tree species.

According to the bureau, the project will be launched in response to numerous collapsed or withered trees covered by lianas, which pose a serious threat to the trees' growth.

"Given that the wooded area is within Hac Sa Reservoir Nature Park, we aim to begin the forestry restructuring project in the first quarter of this year to prevent further landscape deterioration, loss of ecological functions, and potential risks to the surrounding healthy woods. The project will prioritise clearing withered trees, vines, and Mikania micrantha, building a small access road, drilling holes in the soil, improving



Members of the public attend yesterday's community forum for Taipa and Coloane at Seac Pai Van Activity Centre, which was hosted by several Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) officials, including its President Chao Wai Ieng (third from right) and Administrative Committee member To Sok I (right). - Photo: Yuki Lei

soil, and planting around 1,000 new seedlings by mid-March," IAM Administrative Committee member To Sok I said during yesterday's community forum at Seac Pai Van Activity Centre.

To added that the tree seedlings will be primarily native to Macau.

"We plan to plant native broad-leaved tree species that are suitable for growth, have a long life and are highly resistant to adversity, including Bauhinia variegata (orchid tree), Schima superba, Syzygium cumini (java plum), Liquidambar formosana, Elaeocarpus sylvestris

and Ilex rotunda, among other native tree species".

Seven members of the public registered to speak at yesterday's forum, where they presented various concerns and suggestions to the bureau's officials, including IAM President Chao Wai Ieng, on

setting up lifts at the footbridge at the junction of Avenida Dr. Sun Yat Sen and Rua de Tai Lin; installing a parent-child toilet at the Flower City Park playground, where improvement measures are underway; and create ancillary facilities for the Giant Panda Pavilion in Seac Pai Van Park, among others.

A member of the public also expressed concern that some residents have released saltwater fish in the wetlands at the Taipa Houses Museum, affecting the cityscape and environment. Chao responded that the bureau has been carrying out relevant inspections, but due to the large amount of coastal waters in Macau, IAM officials "may not be able to arrive at each site upon receiving relevant reports and take enforcement actions", stressing that the bureau would continue to raise the public's awareness of environmental protection through education campaigns. ■

\* Mikania micrantha, commonly known as bitter vine or Chinese violet, native to tropical America, is a perennial vine. - Poe

## 24/7 govt self-service centre opens in 'Three Lamps' Complex Building

Ginnie Liang

A new 24/7 government self-service centre officially opened yesterday on the ground floor of the Three Lamps Complex Building on Rotunda de Carlos da Maia (colloquially known as "Three Lamps" roundabout - 三盞燈), which aims to provide convenient access to a wide range of government services for residents in the area at any time of the day or night, seven days a week, according to a Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP) statement yesterday.

The self-service centre is equipped with various automated kiosks from multiple government departments, including the Identification Services

Bureau (DSI), Public Security Police Force (PSP), Financial Services Bureau (DSF), offering identity document applications, social welfare enquiries, tax-related services, municipal services, voter registration, transportation, and immigration services, totalling nearly 70 services from 12 government entities, the statement said.

Among the key features are the DSI's self-service document application and collection kiosks, multi-functional self-service kiosks, and the "Smart Pickup" locker system, which allows residents to collect government documents 24/7, the statement said.

The "Smart Pickup" service,

launched in June 2024, has already been used nearly 10,000 times, demonstrating its popularity and convenience, the statement said.

Prior to the official opening, a cross-entities working group invited representatives from local community organisations and neighbourhood associations to tour the facility, the statement said, adding that nearly 30 attendees were given a detailed introduction to the centre's functions and facilities.

The statement also announced that, starting yesterday, the "Smart Pickup" lockers have been installed at both the Three Lamps and Flora Garden self-service centres. This expansion ensures that all 24-hour government self-service centres across Macau now offer document pickup services.

Residents can visit the dedicated webpage at [www.dsi.gov.mo/esevice](http://www.dsi.gov.mo/esevice) for more information. For enquiries, they can contact the DSI hotline on 2837-0777 or 2837-0888.

### SSM launches 'My Health 2.0' on Macao One Account

In addition, the Health Bureau (SSM) yesterday introduced an upgraded version of its "My Health" feature on the Macao One Account app, which includes additional functions and an optimised user interface, focusing on health management, according to an SSM statement yesterday.

The updated feature allows users to receive health reminders, such as notifications for medical check-ups and vaccinations. It also enables residents to track trends in their medical test results, including key indicators like cholesterol and blood sugar levels, the statement said. ■

## Galaxy gets 'record-breaking' 9 five-star awards in FTG 2025 list



This image provided by Galaxy Macau yesterday shows its sprawling property in Cotai.

Rui Pastorin

Integrated resort (IR) operator Galaxy Macau said in a statement yesterday that it has received a "record-breaking" nine Forbes Travel Guide (FTG) Five-Star accolades in the 2025 Star Awards.

The statement noted that Galaxy Macau is "the integrated resort with the most Five-Star hotels under one roof of any luxury resort company worldwide for the third consecutive year" and is the only luxury resort with five FTG Five-Star hotel ratings in the world.

The 2025 Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star Awards received were: Raffles at Galaxy Macau (Five-Star Award winner for its first year in operation); Galaxy Hotel (Five-Star Award winner for the third consecutive year); Banyan Tree Macau (Five-Star Award winner for the 12th consecutive year); The Ritz-Carlton, Macau (Five-Star Award winner for the 9th consecutive year); Hotel Okura Macau (Five-Star Award winner for the fourth consecutive year); Banyan Tree Spa (Five-Star Award winner for the 12th consecutive year); The Ritz-Carlton Spa (Five-Star Award winner for the 9th consecutive year); Yamazato (Inaugural Five-Star Award winner);

and 81/2 Otto e Mezzo BOMBANA (Five-Star Award winner for the third consecutive year).

The statement quoted President, Standards & Ratings, FTG Amanda Frasier as saying: "The team have demonstrated a unique and unwavering commitment to elevating the guest experience with staff as passionate as they are exacting in the delivery of their service, year after year."

Kevin Kelley, Chief Operating Officer - Macau of Galaxy Entertainment Group was quoted as saying: "Galaxy Macau's record-breaking performance in the 2025 Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star Awards is a testament to our continuous commitment to delivering an exceptional luxury service experience to our sophisticated guests, made possible by the tireless dedication and unwavering passion of our team."

"We are honoured to be recognised by Forbes Travel Guide and look forward to continuing to raise the bar for luxury hospitality worldwide, while further reinforcing Macau's status as a 'World Centre for Tourism and Leisure'.", Kelley added. ■

\* More on tomorrow morning's corporate page.



These photos taken yesterday show the new 24/7 government self-service centre on the ground floor of the Three Lamps Complex Building on Rotunda de Carlos da Maia (colloquially known as "Three Lamps" roundabout - 三盞燈).

- Photos: Tony Wong



Revellers take part in the different activities in last night's "Celebration of the Chinese New Year of the Snake" at Albergue SCM.

- Photos: Rui Pastorin



# Macau Culture Friends Circle unites community CNY party

Interview by Rui Pastorin

The free admission "Celebration of the Chinese New Year of the Snake" party, an annual event, was hosted at Albergue SCM\* at Igreja de S. Lázaro (瘋堂斜巷) last night, with various activities held for revellers of all ages.

Yesterday marked the Lantern Festival, which indicates the end of the Chinese New Year (CNY) celebrations and is held on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month of the lunar calendar, during the full moon.

Organised by CAC - Círculo dos Amigos da Cultura de Macau ("Circle of the Friends of Macau's Culture"), last night's event saw the distribution of festive snacks, which had many queuing up for, along with music performances and a free eight-session workshop entitled DIY Frog\*\* Button Accessory Workshop that started in the afternoon.

CAC President Carlos Marreiros, told the *Post* in an interview last night that the event has been held for more than 15 years and is one of two parties that the group holds

annually, with the other being the Mid-Autumn Festival themed party.

Marreiros, an architect by profession and artist by passion, said that every year the CNY party gathers people to eat, especially round-shaped food such as the traditional tangyuan, which are sweet glutinous rice balls filled with ingredients like sesame or red bean. Moreover, being in Macau, the event also sees "encounters of culture", with Portuguese and Macanese delicacies also available, Marreiros pointed out.

"We are happy, as organisers, to see so many people participating", including those who come every year, according to Marreiros. He added that the people who attended last night were of all ages and from different walks of life, being happy to be able to eat and chat with others.

Moreover, last night's event saw the launch of two simultaneous exhibitions. The first is entitled "An Alluring Inheritance of Beauty: Chinese Cheongsam Exhibition", which showcases 16 cheongsams\*\*\* from different periods

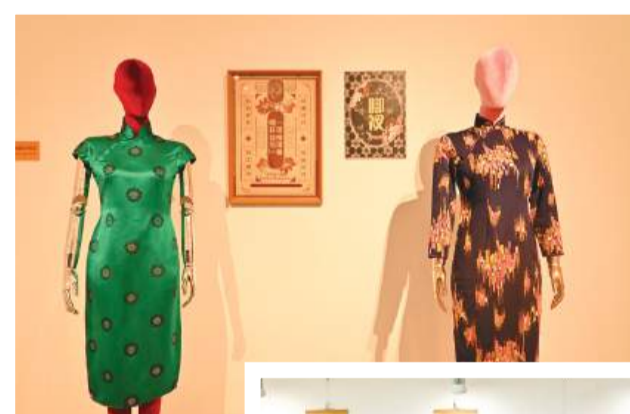
at Gallery A2 until March 16 and is held in collaboration with the Hong Kong Design Institute (HKDI).

The second exhibition, which will be on until February 23, is the "Chinese Calligraphy Art Exhibition 2025", which showcases the works of calligraphy master Choi Chuen Heng, who was also present at yesterday's event. Aside from extending CNY wishes, those attending were also able to watch Choi in action as he painted and interacted with attendees in Hall D1, the exhibition venue.

\*SCM stands for Santa Casa da Misericórdia ("Holy House of Mercy"), Macau's oldest charitable organisation.

\*\*AI (Artificial Intelligence) chatbot Poe notes that frog buttons refer to "a type of decorative button often used in traditional Chinese clothing, particularly on garments like qipaos or cheongsams".

\*\*\*According to Wiktionary, cheongsam is a tight-fitting Chinese formal woman's dress, usually brightly coloured, patterned and/or embroidered, with a split to the thigh.



# Diocese plans to redevelop funeral parlour

**Tony Wong**

Macau's Catholic diocese has applied to the government for permission to launch a project to redevelop its funeral parlour, the urban condition draft plan for which was discussed in a regular meeting of the Urban Planning Council (CPU) yesterday.

The city has two funeral parlours, Kiang Wu Funeral Parlour and Diocesan Funeral Parlour. They are located next to each other, on the northernmost section of Avenida do Almirante Lacerda (罅些喇提督大馬路), i.e., opposite the east side of the former greyhound racetrack (Yat Yuen Canidrome).

Kiang Wu Funeral Parlour, the city's main one, is owned by Kiang Wu Hospital Charitable Association. It was redeveloped several years ago.

Yesterday's meeting was chaired by Lands and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU) Director Lai Weng Leong, where the urban condition draft plans for several plots were discussed. The meeting, held on the DSSCU premises, which lasted 45 minutes, was open to the media.

Urban condition draft plans for particular plots, for both public and private projects, are drawn up by DSSCU officials.

Urban condition draft plans must be discussed and approved by the government-appointed Urban



This photo taken yesterday shows part of the Diocesan Funeral Parlour, including its columbarium (left), on Avenida do Almirante Lacerda. — Photo: Tony Wong

Planning Council, a consultative body tasked with advising the government on its urban planning policies, to become formally valid, after which the respective plots must be developed in compliance with the terms listed in their urban condition plans.

After DSSCU officials have drawn up urban condition draft plans, they will be uploaded onto the DSSCU website for individuals or entities concerned as well as members of the public to submit their opinions and suggestions first, after which the draft plans together with the collected opinions will be discussed in a regular CPU meeting.

As the diocese plans to redevelop its Diocesan Funeral Parlour, DSSCU officials have drawn up the urban condition draft plan for the plot on which the funeral parlour is located, which was uploaded onto the DSSCU last month for opinion collection and was discussed during yesterday's CPU meeting.

The Diocesan Funeral Parlour on the plot, covering 1,225 square metres in total, currently comprises three buildings, one of which is used for a columbarium.

According to the plot's urban condition draft plan discussed and approved during yesterday's

meeting, the Diocesan Funeral Parlour redevelopment project will be subject to a construction height limit of 20.5 metres.

According to the draft plan, the land concessionaire will be required to relinquish a two metre wide area along the rectangular plot's entire side facing the road, to be used for widening the pavement outside the parlour.

However, the government-proposed relinquished area will cover a part of the current columbarium, in response to which the diocese has submitted its opinion for the draft plan, saying that over 90 percent of

the places for holding urns in the columbarium have been used so that it would be very difficult to relocate the urns elsewhere.

In its submitted opinion, the diocese said that, consequently, its redevelopment plan for the funeral parlour would not include the current columbarium, requesting that the government exempt the redevelopment project from the land relinquishment.

In addition, the diocese said that the redevelopment also plans to keep some part of the boundary wall on the plot facing the pavement, but the wall is on the government-proposed relinquished area. The diocese said that the boundary wall features architectural characteristics.

The land concession, the duration of which is not mentioned in the draft plan, granted by the government to the diocese is free of charge.

During yesterday's meeting, a number of councillors asked about the government's proposed requirement for the land concessionaire to relinquish the two-metre-wide area in its redevelopment project.

In reply, Leong Io Hong, who heads the DSSCU Urban Planning Department and attended the meeting, noted that floral tributes are placed outside the parlour along the pavement while funerals are held, adding that the land relinquishment aims to widen the pavement making it easier for pedestrians to walk. ■

## Police bust local man for smuggling, selling drugs

**Ada Lei**

The Judiciary Police (PJ) arrested a local man for smuggling drugs from Hong Kong yesterday morning, involving 44.2g of cocaine with an estimated street value of about 84,000 patacas, according to a special press conference held yesterday.

During the press conference at the PJ headquarters in Zape yesterday, the PJ spokesman, Leng Kam Lon, identified the suspect as a local man also holding a Hong Kong ID, surnamed Wong, who is in his thirties. He told the police that he is jobless.

According to Leng, the Judiciary Police acted upon intelligence that a Hong Kong drug trafficking gang had arranged for its members to sell drugs in Macau. The police identified Wong and arrested him at the Macau side of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Port (border checkpoint).

The police found 108 packs of cocaine which weighed 44.2 grams, with an estimated street



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the drug suspect from the PJ headquarters in Zape to a PJ vehicle after yesterday's special press conference. — Photo: Ada Lei

value of about 84,000 patacas. Under questioning, Wong admitted to having been hired by a Hong Kong drug gang, and having received HK\$5,000 as payment for smuggling drugs to Macau, as well as HK\$2,000 per day as payment for selling drugs in Macau.

Leng noted that Wong had been to Macau about a fortnight ago to sell drugs. The Judiciary Police (PJ) transferred Wong to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday, where he is facing charges of selling drugs, according to Cheong. ■

## Police bust illegal currency exchange dealer

**Ada Lei**

A woman from the mainland was arrested on Tuesday for engaging in an illegal currency exchange deal, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Leng Kam Lon said during a special press conference yesterday.

The 51-year-old suspect surnamed Cai told the police that she is jobless.

According to Leng, the police received a report about an illegal currency exchange activity from a casino in Cotai on Tuesday. The police later that day confirmed that Cai had given chips worth HK\$50,000 to a gambler, while the gambler had transferred 48,500 yuan to Cai through WeChat.

The police discovered that Cai had repeatedly engaged in illegal

currency exchange activities in the same casino in Cotai since last month. Cai exchanged money with two other gamblers in February, exchanging 14,700 yuan for HK\$15,000 and 19,500 yuan for HK\$20,000.

Under questioning, Cai claimed to have made a profit of HK\$1,040 from the three illegal currency exchanges. The police confiscated chips worth HK\$50,000 from the gambler. The police also found HK\$200,000 in cash, chips worth HK\$81,000, and a mobile phone used in the illegal deals on Cai.

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



This handout photo provided by the Judiciary Police (PJ) yesterday shows evidence such as HK dollar banknotes and casino chips displayed during yesterday's special press conference at the PJ headquarters in Zape.

## STOCK MARKETS

### Hang Seng Index closes 2.64 pct higher

HONG KONG — Hong Kong's stock market ended higher yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index up 2.64 percent to close at 21,857.92 points. The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index gained 2.75 percent to end at 8,058.08 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index jumped 2.7 percent to 5,281.18 points. — Xinhua

## Police bust 4 mainlanders in drug case

Ada Lei

Two male and two female mainlanders were arrested on Monday for trafficking and taking drugs, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Leng Kam Lon said during a regular press conference yesterday.

The 54-year-old male suspect surnamed Ma claimed to be a businessman. The 41-year-old female suspect surnamed Qu, the 44-year-old female suspect surnamed Cheng and the 29-year-old male suspect surnamed Gao all claimed to be jobless.

According to Leng, a housekeeper at a hotel in Cotai discovered a bottle that he or she suspected was being used to take drugs in a guestroom, and reported the case to the police

on Monday. The police arrested Ma in the guestroom and discovered that the bottle that had been modified with two straws inserted.

Under questioning, Ma told the police that Qu, who he said had provided sexual services to him, had sold him methamphetamine (also known as ice). The police arrested Qu later that night near the hotel and found 0.6 grams of ice on her. While searching Qu's flat, the police arrested Cheng, Qu's flatmate, who allegedly also provided sexual services and sold drugs.

Leng noted that Qu and Cheng admitted to selling drugs and providing sexual services in Macau. They told the police that they

bought the drugs from Gao. The police arrested Gao near the hotel, and found eight packs of ice on him which weighed 6.2 grams. The police also seized 0.5 of a gram of ice, eight magu pills (another form of ice), and drug paraphernalia that he had hidden in the centre of Taipa.

According to Leng, the estimated street value of the seized drugs is about 19,000 patacas. All suspects tested positive for methamphetamine.

The four suspects have been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing charges of drug use and possession of drug-taking paraphernalia. Qu and Gao are also facing additional charges of selling drugs. ■

## What's the proper English equivalent for the Chinese New Year

Feature

BEIJING – As the Lantern Festival took place yesterday, the traditional celebrations for the Chinese New Year or Spring Festival, in 2025 draw to a close. This year's Spring Festival is the first one since its inscription on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

With the Spring Festival gradually gaining global recognition and popularity, opinions vary on whether the festival should be called "Spring Festival" or "Chinese New Year," with some also advocating for the term "Lunar New Year."

So, how should the festival be accurately referred to in English?

### SPRING FESTIVAL: LITERAL EXPRESSION

The term "Spring Festival" is a literal translation of the Chinese word "Chunjie." The character "Chun" means "spring," symbolizing renewal and new beginnings, while "Jie" means "festival."

When applying for UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the Chinese working group used the direct translation "Spring Festival," and the term was also officially adopted in the published document.

On UNESCO's website, it states: "In China, the spring festival marks the beginning of the new year. It falls on the first day of the first month of the Chinese calendar and involves a variety of social practices to usher in the new year, pray for good fortune, celebrate family reunions and promote community harmony. This process of celebration is known as 'guonian' (crossing the year)."

Therefore, using "Spring Festival" in various contexts is appropriate, as it accurately reflects the festival's cultural significance and aligns with its official recognition. For example, an annual TV program broadcast live and watched by billions worldwide on Chinese New Year's Eve is titled "The Spring Festival Gala."

### CHINESE NEW YEAR: CAPTURING CULTURAL DEPTH

However, some argue that "Spring Festival" may lack the cultural depth and significance conveyed by "Chinese New Year." Unlike "Spring Festival," the term "Chinese New Year" better captures the essence of "guonian," which symbolizes bidding farewell to the old year and welcoming the new.

Meanwhile, the celebrations are deeply rooted in Chinese traditions, such as the reunion dinner, probably the most important meal of the year, where the whole family gathers, as well as the giving of "hongbao" (red envelopes) and the lighting of firecrackers, all of which symbolize good fortune, happiness and prosperity.

Advocates of "Chinese New Year" also argue that the festival has been celebrated in China for millennia, reflecting its profound historical and cultural heritage.

Zhang Wenzhou, a senior researcher on public relations at the Communication University of China, said that the term "Chinese New Year" has been widely used for a long time in the English-speaking world and aligns more closely with the festival's historical and cultural reality.

In sum, "Chinese New Year" resonates more strongly with the festival's cultural and historical significance, making it a more meaningful choice for many. For people unfamiliar with the festival, "Chinese New Year" provides an easy and direct way to identify the celebration.

Regardless of the cultural and linguistic nuances of "Spring Festival" and "Chinese New Year," both terms are acceptable and can be used interchangeably in most contexts.

### LUNAR NEW YEAR: A BROADER YET POTENTIALLY MISLEADING TERM

Then, how about "Lunar New Year?"

Some claim that "Lunar New Year" is a more inclusive expression, recognizing the shared celebrations across cultures and fostering cross-cultural understanding, especially among countries in East and Southeast Asia, while "Chinese New Year" may be seen as too narrow.

"Lunar New Year" can broadly refer to the traditional New Year celebrations observed in various Asian cultures, such as Korea's "Seollal," Vietnam's "Tet" and Mongolia's "Tsagaan Sar."

What should be noted is that Spring Festival is based on the traditional Chinese calendar, which is emphasized in UNESCO's document. Combining both lunar and solar elements, the traditional Chinese calendar is a lunisolar system, instead of a pure lunar calendar.

Shi Wei, a council member of the Shanghai Astronomical Society, said that from the calendrical perspective, the term "Lunar New Year" is scientifically inaccurate.

In other words, the Chinese calendar is not the same as the lunar calendar, and therefore "Chinese New Year" should not be equated with "Lunar New Year."

The debate over whether to call the festival "Spring Festival," "Chinese New Year" or "Lunar New Year" may persist, but one thing is certain: Spring Festival is now becoming a festival celebrated worldwide.

Up to now, nearly 20 countries have designated the Spring Festival as an official holiday. The "Happy Chinese New Year" celebrations worldwide, organized by the Chinese Ministry of Culture and Tourism, have been held annually for 25 consecutive years. This year, the event featured nearly 500 diverse performances and exhibitions across more than 100 countries and regions.

The next Spring Festival will fall on Feb. 17, 2026. Don't forget to wish your Chinese friends and yourself a "Happy Spring Festival!"

– Xinhua

## Centuries-old delicacy leaps into global kitchens

Feature

FUZHOU – Legend has it that the aroma of a simmering stew caused a meditating Buddha to leap over a temple wall, giving rise to the name of the famed Fujian dish Fotiaoqiang, or "Buddha Jumps over the Wall," a culinary marvel that combines dozens of luxe ingredients in a single clay pot.

Once reserved for elite banquets and elaborate kitchen rituals, this "King of Fujian Cuisine" is now leaping into homes around the world, driven by China's booming ready-to-eat food industry and a push to popularize traditional cuisine.

For centuries, Fotiaoqiang has symbolized abundance and reunion in the culture of the eastern coastal province of Fujian. Its broth, distilled from a variety of materials including abalone, sea cucumber and aged wine, embodies a harmony of textures and flavors achieved through days of steaming, frying, and slow-braising each ingredient separately.

"The magic lies in preserving each component's distinct flavor while merging them into one dish," said Yang Weihua, a master chef and inheritor of the intangible cultural heritage.

However, this complex preparation process once made it a rarity, even in local restaurants. "We would only prepare it by reservation as sourcing rare ingredients alone takes days," Yang added.

The rise of China's pre-made meal industry, with annual output value estimated at 500 billion yuan, has redefined the market. In factories like Fujian Hydewin Marine Science and Technology Development Co. Ltd., automation and bulk sourcing have turned Fotiaoqiang into an affordable food.

"We procure ingredients globally so that we can cut costs without compromising quality," said company chairman Ou Yubin.

In addition, the company has

developed a series of automated production equipment, with digital systems precisely managing every stage of the process – from adding ingredients to simmering, freezing, and packaging – ensuring consistent flavor in every product.

"The company runs two automated production lines for Fotiaoqiang pre-made meals, with an annual output capacity of up to 12 million servings," said Ou. "Once the product reaches consumers, they only need to heat it for a few minutes to savor the authentic flavor of Fotiaoqiang."

Fuzhou, the provincial capital, is home to more than a dozen companies that produce Fotiaoqiang pre-made meals, with an annual output value of about 1.5 billion yuan across the entire industry.

These products are exported to over 10 countries and regions, including those in Europe, America, and Southeast Asia, bringing the "taste of home" to overseas Chinese communities, said Zheng Lixing, secretary-general of a local Fotiaoqiang industry association.

In 2022, Fujian authorities rolled out the country's first safety and quality standards for pre-made Fotiaoqiang, mandating strict controls on ingredients, pricing tiers, and additives. "Consumers expect convenience, but they also demand authenticity," Zheng noted.

Companies also experiment with spin-offs like Fotiaoqiang instant noodles and rice bowls, targeting younger, busier diners. The industry is eyeing a national market worth 100 billion yuan.

For Fotiaoqiang inheritors like Yang the chef, the mass-produced version is a bittersweet evolution. "Nothing replaces the craftsmanship of slow cooking," he said. Yet he acknowledges the trade-off. "If industrialization preserves our heritage and feeds food enthusiasts, maybe Buddha wouldn't mind jumping over that wall again."

– Xinhua



This undated file photo shows a bowl of "Buddha Jumps Over the Wall" stew. – Photo courtesy of tayste