

# 'Macau still faces significant pressure in developing diversified industries & innovative capacity': Sam

Yuki Lei

Chief Executive (CE) Sam Hou Fai yesterday chaired for the first time a plenary meeting of the Economic Development Council, during which he remarked that Macau's key economic indicators have remained on an "upward" trend over the past year, but in the face of rapid changes in the international situation, the city was still facing significant pressures in the development of its diversified industries and innovative capacity, urging the councillors to capitalise on the opportunities presented by the central authorities' vigorous push toward Chinese-style modernisation and national rejuvenation, as well as its commitment to high-quality development, jointly promoting Macau's economy to enter a new phase of development.

"From our internal perspective, on the one hand, we anticipate that the dominance of the gaming industry in the economic sector is a structural issue which is likely to be difficult to change fundamentally over a considerable period of time," said Sam, who pointed out that the scarcity of resources, the monotonous structure of visitor sources, the imbalance in financial revenue, and the lack of innovation were still the "oldest problems" faced by Macau: "We must confront these issues and seek ways to improve or even resolve them."

Yesterday's nearly two-hour meeting was originally planned to be attended by 41 members of the government-appointed council, but in the end only 37 were present, resulting in an attendance rate of 90 percent. The meeting was held in the morning at the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking



Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai (centre), Secretary for Economy and Finance Anton Tai Kin Ip (left) and Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED) Director Yau Yun Wah address yesterday morning's plenary meeting of the government-appointed Economic Development Council, at the Forum Macao Complex in Nam Van. - Photos: Yuki Lei

Countries, also known as Forum Macao, in Nam Van.

In his speech prior to the closed-door meeting, Sam noted that both the internal and external environments influencing Macau's development have been experiencing, and will continue to endure, significant and complex changes, adding that, from an international

perspective, the rise of unilateralism and protectionism in recent years has posed challenges for Macau – a highly open and externally orientated micro-economy, making it difficult for the city to stand on its own feet: "We are largely dependent on tourism and gaming, but the competitive landscape is intensifying. The risks and challenges of this

evolution are clear and cannot be overlooked". He underlined that, as an economy primarily reliant on integrated tourism and leisure and highly dependent on mainland visitors, Macau must give greater attention to the formulation and adjustment of policies to address the current challenges.

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## Putin praises US-Russia talks as 'first step' to restoring ties

MOSCOW – Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday he rated talks between the United States and Russia in Saudi Arabia "highly", describing them as a "first step" to restoring relations with Washington.

Officials from the two nuclear powers met in the Saudi capital Riyadh on Tuesday, their first high-level meeting in more than three years.

"I was briefed [on the talks]. I rate them

highly, there is a result," Putin said at a drone factory in Saint Petersburg.

"In my opinion, we made the first step to restore work in various areas of mutual interests."

Putin added that US President Donald Trump was starting to receive "objective information", without elaborating, but cautioned the two sides needed to build trust to resolve the conflict.

"It is impossible to solve many issues, including the Ukrainian crisis, without increasing the level of trust between Russia and the United States," the Russian leader added.

Since coming to office last month, Trump has effectively ended the previous US administration's policy of isolating Russia.

At a press conference on Tuesday, Trump echoed many of Russia's talking points on

the three-year conflict in Ukraine, blaming Kyiv for having "started" the fighting and suggesting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was hugely unpopular.

Meanwhile, Trump said on Tuesday he would "probably" meet Putin before the end of the month. Trump responded "probably" to a question on the subject as he was leaving a press conference at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. - (More on p.11) - AFP

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### State Council issues action plan to stabilize foreign investment in 2025

The State Council yesterday issued an action plan to stabilize foreign investment in 2025, which was approved by a recent State Council executive meeting.

- Story on p. 6

### Hamas says ready to free all hostages at once in Gaza truce phase two

Hamas signalled yesterday that it was willing to free all remaining hostages held in Gaza in a single swap during the next phase of the ongoing ceasefire agreement.

- Story on p. 10

### Brazil's chief prosecutor charges Bolsonaro over failed coup plot

Brazil's chief public prosecutor on Tuesday formally charged far-right former president Jair Bolsonaro and 33 others over an alleged coup attempt after his 2022 election loss.

- Story on p. 12



# Macao Water reports 'record high' 100 million m<sup>3</sup> supply in 2024

Rui Pastorin

Macao's water supply increased by 5.6 percent last year compared to 2023, while pumpage is estimated to grow by around 3 percent this year, Macao Water Executive Director Nacky Kuan Sio Peng told reporters yesterday.

Kuan made the remarks during an interview prior to the start of yesterday's 2025 Media Spring Luncheon and the kick-off ceremony for the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations hosted at the Macao Tower Convention and Entertainment Centre.

Kuan further elaborated on the increase during her speech, noting that the local water pumpage in 2024 rose to a "record high" of 100 million cubic metres, which was mainly driven by the local tourism industry's recovery. She added that the expected growth in water usage this year was due to the development of the New Urban Zone Area A and Macao's economic development.

Kuan also told reporters during the group interview before the luncheon that Macao Water's "Subsidy Programme for Repairing Service Connections of Low-rise Buildings"\* was found to help

solve hygiene issues in buildings such as leaks, while also aiding in reducing the pipeline water loss rate. Originally set to end in March, Macao Water has decided to extend the subsidy plan for another three years, aiming to assist more members of the public. Its scope will be expanded through inspections or reports from the general public in the future, Kuan noted.

Around 700 buildings have been invited to join the plan, according to Kuan, which, she said, accounts for 20 to 30 percent of low-rise buildings. Moreover, Kuan said she believed that as members of the public's water usage awareness is higher, consciousness of the need for water conservation has risen as well, along with the management of internal property repairs. Macao Water, Kuan added, believes that participation is expected to rise by 20-30 percent.

Meanwhile, yesterday's kick-off ceremony also saw the announcement of a series of online and offline activities to be organised this year for Macao Water's 90th anniversary, with a water treatment plant Open Day and online quizzes among the activities to be on offer. ■



Macao Water Executive Director Nacky Kuan Sio Peng speaks with reporters before the start of yesterday's 2025 Media Spring Luncheon and the kick-off ceremony for the water utility's 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations.

- Photo: Rui Pastorin

\*According to the Macao Water website, the programme (低層樓宇總供水設施維修資助計劃 in Chinese) aims to "encourage homeowners of low-rise buildings to properly repair and maintain the shared water supply facilities of their properties".

# Police nab Philippine man for theft-by-finding

Ginnie Liang

The Public Security Police (PSP) transferred a Philippine man to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for his theft-by-finding charge on Monday, involving a mobile phone worth around 10,000 patacas and 100 patacas in cash, a PSP spokesperson said yesterday in a regular press conference.

The suspect in his fifties is a Philippine domestic helper working in Macau, the spokesperson said.

According to the spokesperson, PSP officers received a report on Sunday that the victim's phone worth about 10,000 patacas was lost, along with the 100 patacas in cash inside the case of the phone, which was suspected to have been picked up by someone and taken from a chair outside a restaurant on Calçada do Gamboa (夜嘢斜巷).

After scrutinising the police forces' citywide CCTV camera system, the Public Security Police identified the suspect and arrested him on Monday near Rua de Santo António (花王堂街) and found the phone in his pocket, the



This undated photo provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) yesterday shows PSP officers escorting the Philippine theft suspect to a police station.

spokesperson said.

Under questioning, the suspect admitted to picking up the phone and keeping the money, the local victim had lost, and acknowledged that he did it out of greed, the spokesperson said. ■

# Local woman cheated out of HK\$110,000 in bogus proxy order: police

Ada Lei

A local middle-aged woman has lost HK\$110,000 in a purported proxy order to buy paint, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Sio Keong said in a regular press conference yesterday.

According to Cheong, a female staff member of a security staff company received an online call on Monday from someone who claimed to be a "staff member of a secondary school" in Macau.

The caller told the staff member that the school wanted the company to provide security services and switched to WhatsApp to call her. Meanwhile the caller also mentioned that the school planned to order paint worth HK\$110,000, but there was a conflict with the supplier. The caller asked the woman to order the paint on the school's behalf instead. As she was eager to clinch the security service contract, she

transferred HK\$110,000 for the purported proxy order to buy paint for the school to the given Hong Kong bank account.

The victim could not reach the caller afterwards so she contacted the school. It was only then that she discovered that the case was fraudulent and reported the case to the police on Tuesday. ■



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Sio Keong looks on during yesterday's regular press conference.

- Photo: Ada Lei

# PJ urge residents to be wary of 'celebrities' sharing fraudulent investment info

Ginnie Liang

In a recent surge of online investment scams, the Judiciary Police (PJ) have discovered a new scheme involving fraudulent advertisements on social media platforms that endorse certain investment platforms which promise substantial returns to lure victims into clicking on embedded links, according to a PJ statement yesterday.

These ads, which mimic legitimate news articles, feature interviews with well-known local celebrities and claim that the celebrities have endorsed certain investment platforms, the statement said, adding that once victims click on the links, they will be prompted to register on counterfeit investment platforms, where their personal information is harvested for fraudulent purposes.

Initially, some victims may even receive small payouts to build credibility, only to find themselves unable to withdraw funds after investing larger sums, the statement said, adding that by the time they realise they have been deceived, the scammers have vanished, leaving behind financial losses and compromised personal data.

In response to the threat, the PJ's Anti-Fraud Coordination Centre has issued a strong warning to the public, urging residents to remain vigilant about and sceptical of unsolicited investment opportunities promoted by unverified sources online, the statement said, emphasising that individuals should never transfer money or provide personal details to strangers, regardless of how convincing their claims may appear.

AMCM condemns fake news involving legal action against public figures

Meanwhile, the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) has issued a clarification regarding a series of false claims circulating online alleging that it has initiated legal proceedings against several well-known public figures, according to an AMCM statement yesterday.

The bureau emphasised that the claims are baseless and urged the public to remain vigilant, advising against believing or sharing such misleading content to avoid falling victim to scams or suffering financial losses.

AMCM condemned the actions of individuals responsible for creating and disseminating false

information, the statement said, it also warned that the bureau reserves the right to pursue legal action against those who damage its reputation through such malicious activities.

The AMCM statement further reminded members of the public to exercise caution when encountering suspicious online content, the statement said, adding that individuals who may have clicked on related links and provided personal information, bank card details, account information, or passwords are advised to contact the Judiciary Police's Anti-Fraud Enquiry Hotline on 8800 7777 or the Emergency Hotline on 993 immediately to seek assistance and safeguard their financial security.

In addition, public broadcaster TDM yesterday also released a statement addressing the misinformation, in which it clarified that a recently circulated image, depicting a TDM Portuguese news reporter hosting a programme several years ago, has been accompanied by fake dialogue between the reporter and an interviewee.

TDM stressed that the dialogue is entirely fictitious and that the image and its associated content have no connection to the broadcaster, the statement said. ■

**提防假冒本澳名人新聞 警惕來歷不明投資建議**

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This poster provided by the Judiciary Police (PJ) yesterday urges residents to be vigilant about the recent investment scam.

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### Macau Weather

**CLOUDY APART FROM SUNNY INTERVALS.**  
**FORCE 3 TO 5 EASTERLY WINDS.**  
**TEMPERATURE WILL RANGE BETWEEN 16 °C AND 20 °C.**  
**RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 65% AND 90%.**



16°C~20°C

Source: SMG



# 'Ne Zha 2' released in 7 local cinemas, with nearly 50 screenings on Saturday



Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) President Deland Leong Wai Man (left) and David Ding Kai, general manager of Sil-Metropole Organisation Ltd – a co-distributor of "Ne Zha 2" in Hong Kong and Macau – deliver their respective speeches during yesterday's premiere at Emperor Cinemas of the Lisboeta integrated resort in Cotai. – Photos: Yuki Lei



Filmgoers for "Ne Zha 2" mega-blockbuster queue while entering Emperor Cinemas at Lisboeta in Cotai before the film's premiere yesterday evening.

Yuki Lei

China's mega-blockbuster animated film "Ne Zha 2" premiered in Macau yesterday, on the sidelines of which a representative of the film's co-distributors in Hong Kong and Macau, David Ding Kai, general manager of Sil-Metropole Organisation Ltd., told reporters that the film will be released in seven local cinemas from Saturday, with about 50 showings that day.

"There's no specific end-day [set for the film run in local cinemas]; we'll continue to show it as long as there's demand," said Ding, according to whom, excluding ticket packages arranged for local associations, about 30 percent of the movie's tickets available in 40 percent of the local cinemas have already been pre-sold before the movie's local release starting this Saturday.

In terms of his box office expectations, Ding said: "It's hard to predict box office performance

[in Macau] at this time, but we hope to perform well... If the audience responds positively, we may consider adding more showings".

According to Ding, the film, distributed by Mandarin Motion Pictures, Intercontinental Film Distributors, Sil-Metropole Organisation and Emperor Motion Pictures, will be released locally in Putonghua with "no Cantonese dubbing for the time being" but including English and Chinese subtitles.

Under the guidance of the National Film Administration (NFA), and with the support of the Central People's Government Liaison Office in Macau and relevant local public entities, the premiere took place at Emperor Cinemas at the Lisboeta integrated resort (IR) in Cotai yesterday evening.

Delivering a speech during the ceremony, Ding said: "We feel honoured to present such a high-quality work to Macau," adding

the co-distributors believe that the film will provide cinemagoers with an exceptional audio-visual experience, allowing them to appreciate the allure of Chinese animated films and the richness of traditional Chinese culture.

Also addressing the premiere, Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) President Deland Leong Wai Man said that the success of "Ne Zha 2" has provided a significant revelation for the local film and television industry, as it is encouraging industry practitioners to draw more from Chinese culture in their future creations, incorporating elements of Chinese heritage into animated films and other productions through innovative approaches, showcasing the richness of long-standing Chinese culture and further developing Macau as a base for cultural exchange and cooperation, where "Chinese culture is the mainstream and diverse cultures coexist".



This photo taken yesterday shows "Ne Zha 2" audience members waving their tickets before the start of the movie.

After five years of production, the film, which includes thousands of special effects shots and over 10,000 special effects elements, was released on January 29, the first day of the Chinese New Year. Since its debut, it has shattered box office records in China's film history, having reached more than 12.4 billion yuan as of Tuesday. It currently holds the

"crown" of the No. 1 animated film at the global box office.

The premiere was also attended by Central People's Government Liaison Office in Macau Publicity and Culture Department Director-General Wan Sucheng, along with other representatives from local and mainland broadcasting organisations. ■

## 'Macau still faces significant pressure in developing diversified industries & innovative capacity': Sam

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### 'An old issue and a new challenge we need to face directly'

Sam also highlighted the common challenges faced by local small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), noting that the new economic cycle and shifts in consumption patterns, concepts, and demographics have presented significant obstacles for Macau. He said: "We must effectively address the insufficient and unbalanced development of Macau's economy during the recovery process," adding that the failure to diversify industries in line with community expectations, the shared difficulties of local SMEs, and the need for collaboration to promote economic development are all urgent issues that require resolution: "How to successfully develop Hengqin through Guangdong-Macau cooperation, thereby enhancing Macau's economic progress, is an old issue and a new challenge that we must directly face rather than avoid".

As the inaugural year of his government, Sam reiterated the importance of earnestly

implementing President Xi Jinping's remarks on the "One Country, Two Systems" principle and Macau's initiatives, specifically highlighting the need to promote the city's economic development with a focus on reform and innovation, with the aim of achieving new breakthroughs in the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

### Transitioning from recovery to high-quality development

He also said that Macau's economy was currently at a crucial stage, transitioning from recovery to high-quality development, pledging that the government will

unite and lead various sectors of the community to actively integrate Macau's development positioning of "One Centre, One Platform, One Base"\*, while establishing it as a hub for international high-end talent, with a view to generating momentum and empowering Macau's economy in the long term by connecting with the global landscape.

Meanwhile, wrapping up the closed-door meeting for the media, councillor Manuel Iok Pui Ferreira said that both Sam and Secretary for Economy and Finance Anton Tai Kin Ip made it clear that the government's focus this year will be on coordinating efforts across the portfolios of the five local secretaries

and promoting the integration of different areas, with the aim of driving the appropriately diversified development\*\* of Macau's economy in a "more innovative and impactful" manner, enhancing the community's business environment, while also ensuring the sustainable development of enterprises.

Wu also quoted Tai as saying that, based on the suggestions from several fellow members, relevant policies would be formulated according to the strengths and constraints of the city's neighbourhoods, such as the introduction of international branded intellectual properties (IPs). He added that due to significant

changes in the consumption patterns of tourists and residents alike, the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED) will implement measures to assist SMEs in enhancing their digital transformation, with details to be announced in due course. ■

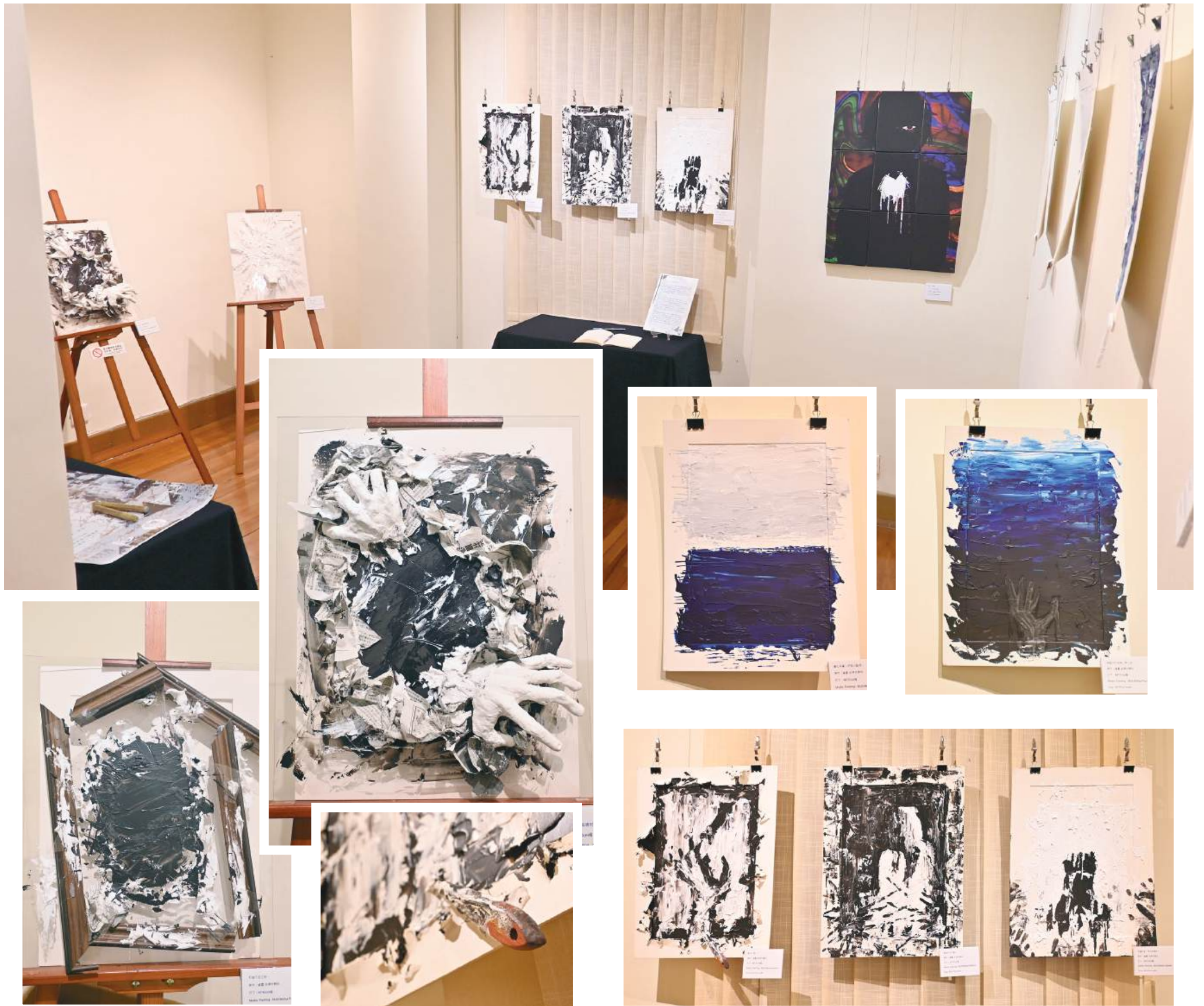
\*The government's "One Centre, One Platform and One Base" policy refers to its determination to further develop Macau's role as a World Centre of Tourism and Leisure and an economic and trade cooperation platform for China and Portuguese-speaking countries as well as a cultural exchange and cooperation base.

\*\* Appropriately diversified development refers to the framework of the government's "1+4" appropriate economic diversification model, which aims to consolidate and diversify the development of the city's tourism and leisure industry while putting special emphasis on promoting the development of four diversified industries, namely 1) big health, 2) modern finance, 3) high-tech, and 4) MICE as well as culture and sports.



37 members of the Economic Development Council attend yesterday's plenum. – Photo: Yuki Lei





# 10 works by artist Kris Chan on display at 10 Fantasia Gallery

**Rui Pastorin**

A local artist named Kris Chan (陳鑫) is displaying her works at the 10 Fantasia Gallery on Calçada da Igreja de S. Lázaro (瘋堂斜巷), aiming to enable exhibitiongoers to understand how complex family dynamics can impact a person’s physical and mental state and personality, along with how certain memories can be unforgettable, according to a statement from the gallery’s website.

The statement noted that Chan, a high school senior graduate who is passionate about art and sees painting to be an extension of emotion, is exploring the desire for

redemption, reflecting on friction between family, family interactions, and communication, altogether leading to feelings of discomfort.

Titled “Break of likeness” and located at the gallery’s room C03, the exhibition is presented until February 28. A total of 10 artworks are on display, most of which are mixed media, while a digital drawing is also being showcased. The statement added that the exhibition also marks the first time that the artist used a palette knife for her works.

Each of the works incorporate the artist’s inner feelings and are untitled. The artworks are also aimed at being

thought provoking, as well as “touch on common points in people’s hearts” and convey deep emotions that words cannot express, according to the statement.

Those interested may view the works at the free-admission gallery from Tuesdays to Sundays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., with details also available on the gallery’s website.

*\*A palette knife is a blunt, flexible tool with a rounded or pointed tip, primarily used in painting. It features a straight handle and a thin, steel blade, designed for mixing colours on a palette, applying paint to a canvas, or creating textured effects. – DeepSeek*

Photos: Rui Pastorin





# Sam vows to boost Macau's bridge role between China & PSCs

Tony Wong

The Permanent Secretariat of Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macao) held a Spring Festival reception yesterday where Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai pledged in a speech that the local government will continue to fully leverage Macau's unique advantages to ensure its important role as a bridge between the two sides.

The Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries is known as Forum Macao for short.

Forum Macao's Permanent Secretariat is headquartered in Macau.

In addition to Sam, Forum Macao's Permanent Secretariat Secretary-General Ji Xianzheng also made a speech during yesterday's reception.

Alongside Sam and Ji, the reception, held at Forum Macao's headquarters near Macau Tower, was also attended by six other senior representatives on the rostrum, namely Edmund Ho Hau Wah, Macau's first chief executive and now vice-chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee, Central People's Government Liaison Office in Macau Deputy Director Lyu Yuyin, Foreign Ministry Deputy Commissioner Sun Xiangyang, Legislative Assembly (AL) President Kou Hoi In, Court of Final Appeal (TUI) President Song Man Lei, and Secretary for Economy and Finance Anton Tai Kin Ip.

Forum Macao comprises China, its initiator and prime mover, and nine Portuguese-speaking countries – Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde (Cape Verde), Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Timor-Leste (East Timor).

Forum Macao accounts for about one-fifth (21 percent) of the world's around eight billion people. Its 10 member states are located on four (Africa, Asia, Europe and South America) of the world's seven continents. Two of its members (China and Brazil) are members of BRICS. Six (Angola, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea and Cabo Verde) are members of the African Union (AU), while Portugal is a member of the European Union (EU) and Brazil is a member of the Southern American trade bloc Mercosul/Mercosur. Timor-Leste

is an ASEAN candidate member state. Except Portugal, all the others belong to the Global South.

In his speech, Sam noted that Forum Macao was launched in October 2003 in Macau, with its Permanent Secretariat established here in 2004. Since then, Sam noted, Forum Macao has held six Ministerial Conferences in Macau, during which six action plans for economic and trade cooperation were signed.

Forum Macao's sixth Ministerial Conference was held in April last year. Due to the three-year COVID-19 pandemic and schedule issues, Forum Macao's previous, fifth Ministerial Conference, supposed to be held at three-year intervals, took place in Macau in October 2016.

As an important platform for cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs), Sam said, Forum Macao has been playing a significant role in fostering cooperation between the two sides in fields such as economy, trade, culture, and education.

Sam noted that the total import and export of goods between China and PSCs continued to grow last year, amounting to US\$225.179 billion, during which fruitful results were also achieved in exchanges and cooperation between the two sides in various fields such as humanities, science and technology, education, health, and tourism, the chief executive said.

Sam also expressed his gratitude to Forum Macao's Permanent Secretariat for its extensive work and important role in promoting trade and investment, human resources cooperation and cultural exchange between China and PSCs as well as in leveraging Macau's role as a service platform for commercial and trade cooperation between the two sides.

## Sam underlines President Xi's 'important instructions'

Sam noted that President Xi Jinping paid an inspection visit to Macau in December last year to attend the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Macau's return to the motherland and the inauguration ceremony of the Macau Special Administrative Region's (SAR) sixth-term government where he gave various important instructions, including his hope for Macau to build itself into a platform for higher-standard opening up.

In his speech yesterday, Sam



Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai (left) and Forum Macao's Permanent Secretariat Secretary-General Ji Xianzheng address yesterday's Spring Festival reception at Forum Macao Complex. – Photos: GCS



quoted Xi's requirement for Macau to further step up two-way opening, facilitate all-round mutually-beneficial cooperation with PSCs, play an active role in high-quality Belt and Road (B&R) cooperation, make more friends across the world, and act as an important bridge for the nation's high-standard opening up.

Xi has required Macau, as a place where Chinese and Western cultures merge, to promote international people-to-people exchanges, better present Macau and China as a whole to the world, and turn the city into an important window of exchanges between Chinese and Western civilisations, Sam pointed out.

Sam pledged that his government, in compliance with the spirit of Xi's important instructions, will continue to

support and collaborate with Forum Macao's Permanent Secretariat in fully leveraging Macau's unique advantages to effectively enhance its role as a bridge between China and PSCs.

Sam underlined that his government will ensure the implementation of the results made and consensus reached at Forum Macao's sixth Ministerial Conference, further expanding cooperation between China and PSCs in areas such as trade, investment and industrial development, increasing the size of economic and trade cooperation between the two sides, and driving their cooperation to new heights.

## Ji stresses Forum Macao's 'promising prospects'

Meanwhile, delivering his

speech, Ji noted that many high-level reciprocal visits were conducted between China and all the nine PSCs last year, fostering and consolidating bilateral relations.

Ji underlined that during Forum Macao's sixth Ministerial Conference held in April last year, the respective ministers of China and the nine PSCs pledged to jointly ensure the implementation of the Action Plan for Economic and Trade Cooperation (2024-2027), after which a follow-up meeting was held in December last year in Beijing, attended by officials from about 30 public entities from the mainland authorities and the Macau government, with the aim of studying how to ensure the effective implementation of the results made at Forum Macao's 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference.

Ji also noted that trade in goods between China and PSCs reached a record high of US\$225.2 billion last year.

Ji also underlined that since its establishment, Forum Macao has made significant contributions to promoting friendly exchanges and cooperation between China and PSCs through the organisation of six Ministerial Conferences and the implementation of six action plans for economic and trade cooperation.

Ji said that looking at the world, China currently remains an important engine of global economic growth, because of which prospects for cooperation between China and PSCs will continue to be promising. ■

## Police nab mainlander purporting to be police officer

Ada Lei

A man from the mainland was arrested on Tuesday for pretending to be a police officer and scamming a male mainlander out of HK\$60,000, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Sio Keong said during a special press conference yesterday.

The 22-year-old suspect surnamed Tang works as an e-commerce entrepreneur.

According to Cheong, Tang approached a man from the mainland on Tuesday in a smoking lounge at a casino in Cotai, offering the man a favourable illegal currency exchange deal. The man showed interest and followed Tang to another hotel lobby in Cotai, bringing chips worth HK\$60,000 with him.

When the man took out the chips worth HK\$60,000, Tang immediately claimed to be a "Macau police officer" and showed him a "police warrant card" in a black wallet with the word "Judiciary" on it. Tang told the man that he had violated Macau's laws on illegal currency exchanges. Tang "seized" all the chips from the man and ordered the victim to leave. He also "prohibited" the man from entering the casino again.

The victim realised that he might have been scammed after discussing

it with a friend and reported the case to the police later that day. With the assistance of the Public Security Police, Tang was intercepted at the Barrier Gate checkpoint on the same day. It was later confirmed that Tang is not a member of the Judiciary Police (PJ).

Under questioning, Tang admitted to committing the crime, saying that he had been planning it since last November. He told the police that after obtaining the chips, he went to another casino in Cotai and transferred all the money to his mainland bank account through an

unknown person. He told the police that he purchased the fake warrant card involved in the case for 40 yuan online. He brought it with him when he came to Macau this time. He also told the police that since the end of 2024, he had lost approximately HK\$309,000 in gambling. The police seized the fake warrant card in a black wallet with the word "Judiciary" written on it.

Tang has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing a fraud charge and a charge for impersonating a police officer, according to Cheong. ■



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

## STOCK MARKETS

### Hang Seng Index closes 0.14 pct lower

HONG KONG – Hong Kong stock market ended lower yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index down 0.14 percent to close at 22,944.24 points.

The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index dipped 0.15 percent to end at 8,463.1 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index edged up 0.59 percent to close at 5,672.24 points. – Xinhua