



'Community Consumption Grand Prize' to return March 24

Yuki Lei

The Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED), in conjunction with the Macau Chamber of Commerce (ACM), announced on Saturday that a new round of the "Community Consumption Grand Prize" campaign will run from March 24 to June 1, offering e-wallet holders vouchers with a face value of up to 200 patacas and 300 patacas in discounts for Senior Citizen Macau Pass Card holders – and ACM President Frederico Ma Chi Ngai said in a speech that the upcoming campaign aims to "sustain the positive business growth trend" observed during this year's Chinese New Year (CNY) holiday.

This will be the third large-scale consumer promotion campaign jointly launched by the government and the chamber, with a budget of 2.95 billion patacas and the participation of about 22,000 business operators – similar to the number in the last campaign.

Addressing a joint press conference at the ACM Building in Zape on Saturday, DSED Director Yau Yun Wah cited the results of the two previous campaigns, pointing out that the turnover of participating business operators in local communities, as well as their transactions over weekends, recorded "significant" increases during the campaign periods. Referring to the campaign launched in September last year, he added that the



Representatives from the organising entities of the upcoming "Community Consumption Grand Prize" campaign, including Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED) Director Yau Yun Wah (behind, second from left) and Macau Chamber of Commerce (ACM) President Frederico Ma Chi Ngai (behind, third from left), pose during Saturday's press conference at the ACM headquarters in Zape about the details of the Grand Prize consumer promotion campaign, which will run from March 24 to June 1. – Photo: Maria Cheang Ut Meng

redemption of e-vouchers for that campaign exceeded 220 million patacas, driving consumption of over 1.1 billion patacas, resulting in a leverage of about five times.

He added that the economic benefits generated from March's campaign are expected to be similar to those of last year.

E-vouchers no longer to be used at large-scale enterprises, such as supermarkets

According to the press conference, the rules of the upcoming campaign are similar to

those of last year's event, with the exception that the electronic offers can no longer be used for buying goods from large supermarket chains and shops in integrated resorts, nor for paying water and electricity bills, Yau said: "All these changes are aimed at enhancing the promotion of consumer development in the community".

Similarly, from Mondays to Fridays during the 10-week-long campaign, e-wallet users who spend 50 patacas or more at participating small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will have three chances

per week to win coupons, which will be available in denominations of 10 patacas, 20 patacas, 50 patacas, 100 patacas and 200 patacas for use on weekends. Their e-payment platform will automatically validate one or more coupons after users spend three times the total value of the coupons, i.e., business operators will no longer need to split the bill for their customers in order to help them utilise all their offers before the new round of e-voucher draws. The offer will be valid for one week each time.

Continued on p.2

Conservatives win German vote as far-right makes record gains



Friedrich Merz, leader of Germany's victorious Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and likely next chancellor, addresses supporters in Berlin after the first exit polls in the German general election yesterday. – AFP

BERLIN – Germany's conservatives won yesterday's elections, with their leader Friedrich Merz set to become the next chancellor, followed by the far-right AfD in second place after record gains, according to exit polls.

If confirmed in the final count, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) roughly doubled its score to at least 19.5 percent, boosted by fears over immigration and security after a spate of deadly attacks blamed on asylum seekers.

Merz's CDU/CSU alliance won at least 28.5 percent, said the first exit polls from two public broadcasters, crushing the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) of the outgoing chancellor, Olaf Scholz, which were looking at around 16 percent.

Merz – a long-time party rival of ex-chancellor Angela Merkel – has vowed a crackdown on irregular immigration. He hopes to win back votes from the AfD and halt its rise.

For now, the AfD – basking in the vocal support of key allies of US President Donald Trump – is set to stay in opposition. All other parties have vowed to keep it out of power and behind a "firewall" of non-cooperation.

But its jubilant leader Alice Weidel hailed the "historic" result and again said her party was ready to govern with the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU).

Before Merz, 69, takes over from the now caretaker chancellor Scholz, he will have to forge a new coalition government in Europe's top economy, an often drawn-out process he has vowed to complete by Easter.

This threatens to leave Berlin paralysed for weeks to come as the Trump administration has forced head-spinning change on the world scene and among European allies, especially over the Ukraine war which has raged for three years.

"The world out there is not waiting for us and it is not waiting for lengthy coalition talks and negotiations," Merz said after claiming victory, calling for a new government "as quickly as possible".

To build a majority, Merz would be expected to reach out first to the SPD, though without Scholz, who has led Germany's traditional workers' party to a historically poor result.

To gain enough seats, Merz may also reach out to the Greens, who scored at least 12 percent in the exit polls, although the CDU's Bavarian sister party the CSU has so far rejected this.

Much depends on the fate of smaller parties in the complex parliamentary arithmetic of the Bundestag. Several hovered around the five-percent cutoff mark for re-entry into the Bundestag and feared for their survival. – AFP

(More on p.11)

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The Macau Post Daily

China outlines key tasks to deepen rural reforms, advance rural revitalization

China unveiled its "No. 1 central document" for 2025 yesterday, outlining priorities to deepen rural reforms further and solid steps to advance all-around rural revitalization.

– Story on p. 7

France makes arrests after deadly 'Islamist' knife attack

French police have made several arrests since a man went on a stabbing rampage, killing one and wounding several others in what President Emmanuel Macron called an "Islamist terrorist act", anti-terror prosecutors told AFP yesterday.

– Story on p. 11

France still seeking to block EU-Mercosur trade deal: Macron

France is still trying to assemble a "blocking minority" within the European Union to prevent a trade deal with four South American countries from coming into force, President Emmanuel Macron said on Saturday.

– Story on p. 12

Working abroad: from OFWs' perspective

Vox pop by Adrian Vallesteros and Rui Pastorin

Filipinos make up the second largest non-local group in Macau's labour force, just behind the Chinese mainlanders.

Data on the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) website shows that as of the end of last year, Macau had a total of 30,912 non-resident workers from the Philippines, while there is also a considerable number of Filipinos who are Macau residents. With many working far from home, the *Post* wanted to hear their stories, interviewing several in the city centre to know more about their lives as overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in Macau.

Loralie has been in Macau for just three months. The 46-year-old domestic helper said she was happy with her new job, saying, "All good, all good" when asked about her experience.

When asked about missing home and the Philippines, she expressed her difficulties, saying she calls her son and daughter whenever she misses them. She remarked: "It's hard, but of course it's a necessity [to work here]". And when discussing the challenge of being so far away from home, she noted: "We need to endure."

She advised anyone considering going overseas to think twice before moving to somewhere far away. However, if they really don't have a choice, "they need to be strong."

Faye, a 53-year-old domestic helper who has been in Macau for nine years, shared the same sentiment regarding the difficulties of being away from family. She chose Macau because she felt the work here would be "lighter" than in Hong Kong.

She added that when she misses home, she contacts her family through video calls, and when asked by the *Post* about the advice she would give to anyone considering working abroad, she emphasised the importance of sacrifice, saying that people come here to earn a decent income and provide for their families.

Both Loralie and Faye share their experiences of the struggles of missing home and family. However, interviewees Michael, Martin and James said that when they miss the Philippines, they say they can just go back. One of them added: "You won't really miss it because you can always call."

The trio have been working in Macau as cleaners, with James starting to work here in 2012 until

2014, returning again in 2016. Michael, meanwhile, began working here in 2016, while Martin started in 2018. They all enjoy working in Macau, with one of them noting that, as foreign workers, they don't experience discrimination here: "It feels like you have rights here." They also mentioned having a sense of community in Macau due to the presence of so many Filipinos.

The other realities of working abroad

Jenny has been in Macau since 2019. But this isn't her first stint of working abroad, having already worked in places like Qatar and Jordan across a nearly 26-year period. Despite this, being away from home does not get any easier for the 45-year-old, who said that homesickness was at times unavoidable because of her kids.

Starting off in Macau as a cleaner at an integrated resort to now working at a restaurant, life in Macau has been "okay" for Jenny, who noted that although her salary isn't that high, it's better than what she could make back home, although she has not been back since 2019. And with one of her kids finishing college, she said she hopes to keep working before she decides to go back.

For a younger generation in the Philippines, she said that, if possible, they should prioritise studying. "It's hard to work abroad, you have to make a lot of sacrifices. That's why I keep telling my kids that I don't want them to have the same experience as I have... I want them to be able to study, finish and find a good job rather than facing the same situation".

Sharing a similar experience was Franco, who said he has been employed in Macau for 13 to 14 years, working in logistics before moving on to being a carpet technician. Macau was a viable choice for him when he decided to work abroad, citing factors like local government policies and its close proximity to home, where he has four kids.

Distance is among the things he says he feels regarding his kids back home, which is at times pronounced when he calls them and have a "one question, one answer" situation.

"Sometimes they ask why I am so far away and I try to make them understand that it's so that they would have a better tomorrow", said the 46-year-old, adding that it was all for them. He often advises his first-born child to do his best back home so that he can find a job there rather than experiencing life away from family.

If they have a good job back home, then don't need to leave, he said. Otherwise, moving abroad is an option, but be ready to take on the outcome it'll have in terms of family, Franco said, adding that though going abroad will not break a family apart, it may happen. ■

Dolphin carcass washes up at Hac Sac, IAM already cremated



This handout photo provided by the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) on Saturday shows two IAM officials measuring the dolphin carcass washed ashore at Hac Sa Beach in Coloane.

Yuki Lei

A dolphin carcass was found on Hac Sa ("Black Sand") Beach on Saturday, and the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) said in a statement that the carcass "has been cremated".

According to Saturday's statement, the carcass was identified as a subadult porpoise, male, 1.48 metres in length.

Upon receiving the report about the carcass on Saturday afternoon, the statement noted, the bureau immediately dispatched

officials to the scene. The carcass was found to be rotten and emitted a strong odour, leading IAM officials at the scene to believe it had been dead for some time before drifting ashore on the tide.

The bureau stated that "as the body had decomposed, the Municipal Affairs Bureau cremated it for hygienic reasons".

In the statement, members of the public who find stranded dolphins are urged to inform the bureau by calling the hotline on 2833 7676. ■



A customer buys products from a shop in the city centre that mainly sells Filipino products. - Photo taken last night by Rui Pastorin

'Community Consumption Grand Prize' to return March 24

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Senior Citizen Macau Pass Card holders may top up for concessions from next Thursday

Yau pointed out that, after collecting the feedback from the last campaign indicating that the elderly encountered difficulties in using e-wallets and participating in related activities, the upcoming campaign will introduce additional senior citizen discounts. Holders of the new version of the Senior Citizen Macau Pass Card can from next Thursday (March 6) top up their cards at service points to receive concessions totalling up to 300 patacas, in which a discount of five patacas will be applied to a purchase of 10 patacas, and so on. The maximum amount is determined based on the average discounts received for each e-wallet user in the last campaign, Yau added.

According to Yau, it is estimated that about 10,000 of some 128,000 Senior Citizen Macau Pass Cards will need to be replaced with the new version at the service venues of various social organisations and the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) in order to receive the concessions

- the locations of which will be announced in due course.

During the press conference, Yau warned senior citizens against SMS phishing scams, underlining that Macau Pass would not send any text messages regarding the renewal of their cards.

Speaking to the *Post* after Saturday's press conference, Ma said that the campaign aims to boost local consumption following the CNY holiday and to promote stable socio-economic development, underlining that the campaign was just a short-term initiative to help businesses cope with economic fluctuations, but in the long run, it would depend on enterprises to adapt to changes in consumption trends.

The final Grand Prize lucky draw is slated to be held after the campaign. The lucky draw's date and amounts will be announced in due course, government sources last time. All the consumers taking part in the campaign will be automatically entered into the draw.

Last time, the Macau Chamber of Commerce's Grand Prize amounted to 100,000 patacas in cash. In addition, there will also will be a cash prize paid out every week. ■

Published since Aug 2004

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- Wire services - AFP, Xinhua



Macau Weather

COLD, CLOUDY APART FROM SUNNY PERIODS. FORCE 3 TO 5 NORTH TO NORTHEASTERLY WINDS WITH GUSTS, BECOMING EASTERLIES. RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 50% AND 85%.



12°C~19°C

Source: SMG

Sam vows to focus on livelihood issues in 2025 Policy Address: GCS



These handout photos provided by the Government Information Bureau (GCS) on Friday show Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai (centre) addressing separate meetings with members of the Macau General Union of Neighbourhood Associations (left) and the Association of Returned Overseas Chinese Macau.

Yuki Lei

The Macau General Union of Neighbourhood Associations and the Association of Returned Overseas Chinese Macau met with Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai on Friday, after which the Government Information Bureau (GCS) stated that Sam would seriously consider the views and suggestions from the two groups on his governance and use them as references for the compilation of his 2025 Policy Address, quoting him as underlining that he would propose a policy focused on livelihood issues while adhering to the principle of keeping expenditure within the limits of revenues.

According to two separate GCS statements, Sam thanked the two groups for their active participation in putting forward their views and proposals on his governance. The Macau General Union of Neighbourhood Associations (commonly known as Kai Fong in Cantonese) has consolidated residents' views into a 14-point proposal submitted to the government, covering areas such as national security, disaster prevention and mitigation, transport, assistance to small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), diversified industries and people's livelihoods, whereas the Association of Returned Overseas Chinese

Macau (known in Cantonese as "gwai kiu") expressed concerns about, according to the GCS statement, attracting high-end talents to Macau, improving the government's policy on investment immigration, promoting urban regeneration, revitalising the Inner Harbour Terminal, advancing the development of modern financial services, and emphasising the development of the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

The two meetings received "positive" responses from Sam, Secretary for Economy and Finance Anton Tai Kin Ip, Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak and Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raymond Tam Vai Man, respectively, the statement underlined.

Macau General Union of Neighbourhood Associations

Speaking to the media after the meeting, Kai Fong President Chan Ka Leong said that Sam and the three portfolio policy secretaries responded "positively" to his group's views on reflecting to the government the community's desire for increased subsidies and pensions for senior citizens, an enhanced education allowance for students, and the introduction of a childcare subsidy to

encourage childbearing. He quoted Sam as saying at the meeting that "the government would actively consider them".

On economic and industrial diversification, Chan quoted Sam as saying that the government planned to launch exploratory projects in the area of science and technology through a fund-led approach. Regarding its SME assistance programme, the government aims to adopt both short-term and medium- to long-term measures, such as by organising revitalisation programmes similar to the city's centre "Arraial na [Rua dos] Ervanários" open-air fun fair also in the northern district, as well as in the southern district. Additionally, he noted, the government intends to enhance the city's six revitalisation quarters to strengthen their business connections, while also developing landmark cultural and tourism districts where possible, with a view to stimulating spending by residents and tourists alike.

Association of Returned Overseas Chinese Macau

Meanwhile, Association of Returned Overseas Chinese Macau Vice President Lai Kuong Hou told reporters that the government has placed great importance on establishing

large-scale international scientific research headquarters in Macau, as well as on the development of culture and tourism, while also encouraging his group to leverage their strengths to help Macau establish connections with overseas countries.

According to the GCS statement, during the meeting, the group's president, Bi Chi Kin, urged the government to embrace the global trend of digitalisation and promote artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance government decision-making and achieve innovation in scientific governance. He also suggested that the government organise Macau's traditional festivals and celebrations overseas, as well as optimise tourism support for Macau by launching a local food map and conducting a study on the feasibility of legalising online ride-hailing services.

The association also suggested that the government study the establishment of a "Belt & Road" science academy in Macau to develop an international scientific research team. Furthermore, they recommended exploring the tourism-related advantages offered by the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge and considering policy support for the public listing of Macau-invested hardware enterprises. ■

3 middle school students steal 2 phones to sell in mainland: police

Yuki Lei

The Public Security Police (PSP) arrested three secondary school students on Tuesday for stealing mobile phones on two separate occasions at a basketball court and later reselling the two devices in the mainland for 600 yuan and 3,000 yuan, respectively.

According to a regular police press conference on Friday, the two teenage victims left their phones unattended on benches at two basketball courts on the peninsula while they played last Saturday and Sunday respectively, one of them reporting a loss of 18,000 patacas.

With the assistance of the citywide CCTV surveillance system and footage from the basketball courts, the Public Security Police identified the three suspects as underage males surnamed Lam, Lei, and Ip, who are classmates.

The Public Security Police intercepted Lam on Rua Seis do Bairro Iao Hon (祐漢新村第六街), and summoned Lei and Ip to a PSP station on Tuesday.

Under questioning, Lam admitted to collaborating with Lei and Ip in the thefts, saying that one sale earned them 620 yuan, while they got 3,000 yuan for the other one. For their roles in both cases, he added, Lei and Ip received "commission" of 20 yuan and 300 yuan, respectively, for transferring the income from the sales of the two stolen phones to Lam.

The trio's cases have been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) and the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) for further action and follow-up. ■

MUST applies to extend campus to Hengqin

Ginnie Liang

Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) President Joseph Lee Hun-wei said yesterday that the private university has submitted an application to the government to extend its campus to the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

Established in 2000, MUST's campus is located on Avenida Wai Long (氹仔偉龍馬路) in Taipa, covering an area of about 210,000 square metres, with over 23,000 students, nine faculties, nearly 100 degree programmes and four national research platforms.

Lee made the remarks during MUST's on-campus Open Day event yesterday, which was held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., featuring booths and activities such as campus tours, performances, an outstanding achievements exhibition, and programme introduction and admission consultation.

Lee noted that the extension plan has been prepared for years, though the application was only submitted at the end of last year.

He acknowledged that MUST lacks space for its future development, and

that if the application is accepted by the relevant authorities, its positioning will focus on strengthening the scientific exchange and cooperation with the mainland, especially Hengqin and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Bay Area (GBA).

Lee underlined that the new campus will further serve the nation's development needs, aiming to tie in with the development of the Macau government's plan for appropriately diversifying the city's economy by transferring industry-academia-research results of various disciplines such as traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and high-tech, as well as environmental sciences and engineering.

Lee also pointed out that the campus will launch several new undergraduate programmes, namely the Global Operation Management, Acupuncture and Tui-Na*, as well as Biomedical Sciences.

In the upcoming 2025/2026 academic year, Lee expects that MUST will enrol about 7,000 new students, including undergraduate and master's programmes, which will be similar to that in the previous academic years.

More details can be found on <https://openday2025.must.edu.mo> ■

*According to Wikipedia, Tui Na is a hands-on body treatment that uses Chinese Daoist principles in an effort to bring the eight principles of traditional Chinese medicine into balance.



Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) President Joseph Lee Hun-wei talks to reporters on the sidelines of its on-campus Open Day on Avenida Wai Long (氹仔偉龍馬路) in Taipa yesterday. — Photo: Ginnie Liang

ABOUT The Young Post

The Macau Post Daily's The Young Post will be published every Monday to present and discuss topical issues that may interest not only the younger but also all the other generations.

DeepSeek R1 After 1 Month: Significance & Implications

Hoi Sio Hong, Form 4, Chan Sui Ki Perpetual Help College

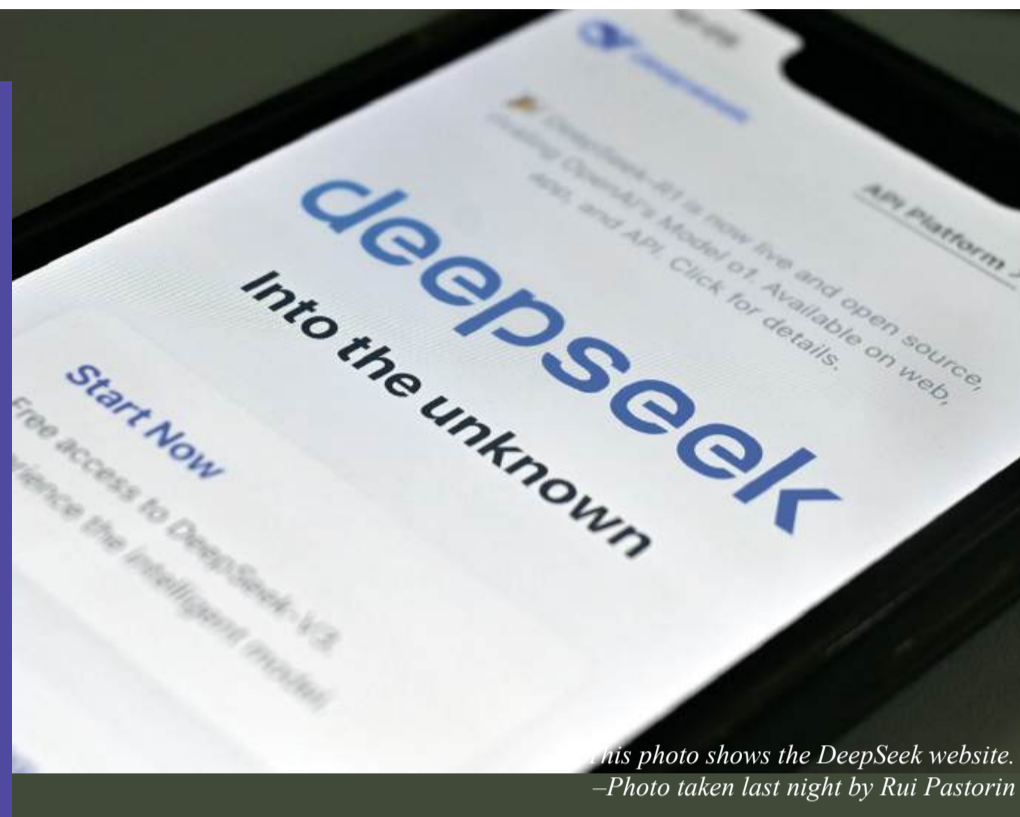
The launch of DeepSeek R1, a cutting-edge AI (artificial intelligence) model developed by Chinese firm DeepSeek, has ignited discussions far beyond the tech world. Its implications span education, economics, and geopolitics, signalling a pivotal shift in how artificial intelligence is developed, deployed, and democratised. Here's why these matter—and what it means for the future of global innovation.

Revolutionising Education: Beyond Rote Learning

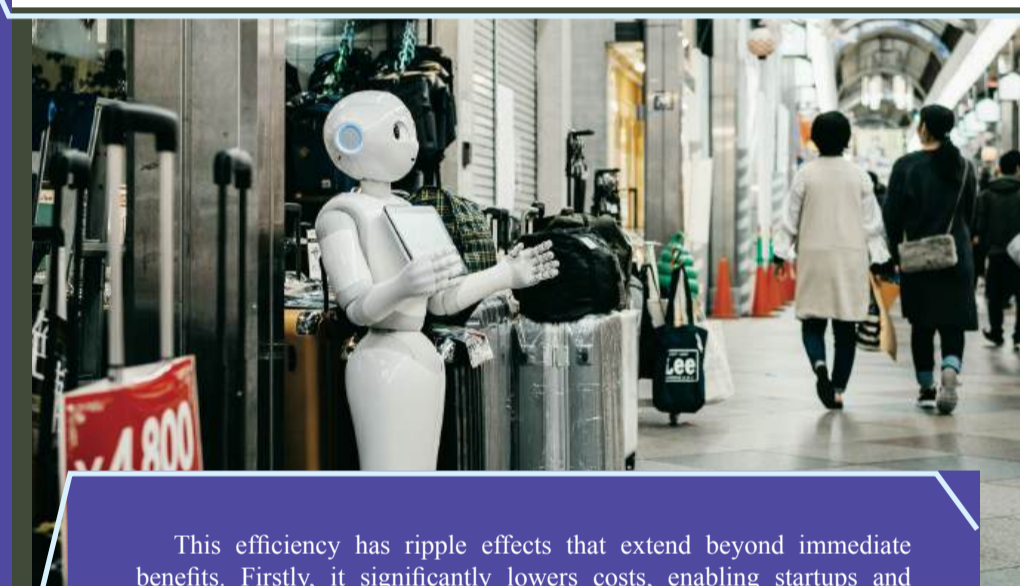
At its core, DeepSeek R1's "DeepThink" function offers students a transformative tool for problem-solving. Unlike traditional AI models that simply generate answers, DeepThink guides learners through step-by-step reasoning, mimicking the Socratic method. For example, a student tackling calculus can see not just the solution to an integral but the logic behind each substitution and rule application. This fosters critical thinking over memorisation, a skill increasingly vital in a world where AI handles routine tasks. Yet challenges remain: over-reliance on AI risks undermining independent learning, necessitating balanced integration into curricula.

The Efficiency Revolution: Smaller, Faster, Cheaper

DeepSeek R1's most disruptive innovation lies in its efficiency. By leveraging new techniques, it achieves performance comparable to larger Western models (e.g., OpenAI's GPT-4) at a fraction of the cost. This challenges the traditional "bigger is better" paradigm, shrinking the performance gap between smaller and larger models. In addition, training such a model could cost under US\$1 million—a fraction of the US\$100 million+ budgets for leading US counterparts.



This photo shows the DeepSeek website.
—Photo taken last night by Rui Pastorin



This efficiency has ripple effects that extend beyond immediate benefits. Firstly, it significantly lowers costs, enabling startups and small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to deploy AI without the need for expensive cloud infrastructure. Additionally, the reduced energy consumption associated with these models aligns with global carbon neutrality goals, contributing to a more sustainable future. Furthermore, the ability for models to run on smartphones or low-power devices enhances accessibility.

Geopolitics: The US-China AI Race Intensifies

DeepSeek's rise underscores China's strategic push for AI sovereignty. By prioritising domestic models, Chinese firms sidestep reliance on US-controlled technologies amid escalating tech decoupling. For instance, Huawei and Xiaomi now integrate DeepSeek into their AI assistants.

Meanwhile, the US faces pressure to respond. OpenAI's accelerated release of GPT-4.5/5 and recent stock market jitters reflect anxiety about maintaining leadership.

While DeepSeek R1 highlights China's ambitions, the broader question is whether efficiency-driven AI will spur global collaboration or deepen divides. Optimists envision a future where open-source, efficient models benefit humanity—think climate modelling or medical research. Pessimists warn of a fractured ecosystem where US and Chinese AI stacks compete for global influence, akin to the 5G rivalry.

Conclusion: AI for All?

DeepSeek R1 is more than a technological leap; it's a catalyst for reimagining AI's role in society. As nations grapple with ethics, equity, and competition, one truth emerges: the future of AI won't be shaped solely by those who build the largest models, but by those who make AI work smarter, greener, and for everyone.

Fun fact: This very article was crafted through a collaborative conversation between a curious student and DeepSeek's AI, demonstrating how human-AI teamwork can turn abstract ideas into actionable insights—and maybe even spark a newspaper column!



Photo courtesy by Unsplash

2025MIECF to take place next month

Rui Pastorin

The 2025 Macao International Environmental Cooperation Forum & Exhibition (2025MIECF) is slated to be held at The Venetian Macao Cotai Expo from March 27-29, with a statement from the organisers noting that over 40 listed companies and over 100 international exhibitors are expected to be in town.

During the three-day event, the Robot Dog B2*, which the statement said is “renowned in the international robotic industry for its remarkable capabilities”, will make an appearance in Macau for the first time, while the event will also feature the world’s first solar-powered and wireless charging system for shared electric bikes, among other innovative technologies.

The statement added that the Macau government-hosted event, this year themed “Innovation and Green Development – Solutions to Build Beautiful Cities”, aims to “establish a proactive green platform through various debut projects”. It will span over 12,000 square metres with five exhibition areas and feature three Green Forums on green transition development, technological innovation, and environmental exchange and cooperation in the Pan-Pearl River Delta Region, as well as five thematic matching sessions, the statement said.

2025MIECF will also see the “Debut Economy Projects Zone” and the “Green Future Industry Zone” for the first time, while the Pan-Pearl River Delta Region Pavilion, Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Environmental Protection Industries Exhibition Area, and Green and Low-Carbon Projects Zone are also featured, according to the statement.

The statement added that Secretary General of “ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability” Gino Van Begin, has also been invited as a keynote speaker.

ICLEI is the acronym of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, which is based in the former West German capital Bonn.

More details can be found on <https://www.macaomiecf.com> or “MIECF” on WeChat. ■

*The Robot Dog B2 is produced by *Unitree Robotics*, a Chinese company specialising in the development and manufacturing of advanced robotics, particularly quadruped robots. *Unitree Robotics* is known for its innovative and high-performance robotic products, including the B2 model, which is designed for various applications such as research, education, and industrial use. – *DeepSeek*



This poster provided by the organisers on Friday promotes next month’s 2025 Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum & Exhibition (2025MIECF).

Enough internship places for medical students for next 3 years: O Lam

Ginnie Liang

There will be more than 600 students graduating from medical-related programmes every year from this year to 2027, and there will be more than 800 internship places in public and private medical institutions for the new graduates every year, which will be sufficient for the next three years, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Wallis O Lam said on Friday.

O made the remarks during an oral interpellation plenary session on Friday in the legislature’s hemicycle, adding that the estimate was based on the internship situation in the past three years.

O added that if the internship places turned out to be not enough, the government’s public entities would provide some extra places for the internships, and with the government’s continuous effort in merging its procedures to expedite the qualifying examinations and internship arrangements for healthcare professionals, the

internship programme for healthcare professionals this year would be able to start two to four months earlier than that of the previous batch.

According to O, the Peking Union Medical College Hospital (PUMCH) will start its recruitment process for different positions in view of the gradual introduction of more medical services at its facility in Macau, adding that the hospital expected the total number of staff members to reach 700 by the end of the year, of which about 390 will be medical staff.

O also said she did not rule out that the Peking Union Medical College Hospital (PUMCH) will send additional medical experts to Macau as appropriate.

O also noted that according to the government’s second five-year plan, Macau should reach a ratio of three doctors and 4.2 nurses per 1,000 population by 2025, pointing out that in 2023 Macau already had a ratio of 2.9 doctors and 4.4 nurses per 1,000 population. ■

Govt ponders Macau Science Centre’s expansion: O Lam

Tony Wong

The government is considering the possibility of using a plot next to the Macau Science Centre (MSC) complex on the Nape waterfront for the future expansion of the science popularisation facility.

Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Wallis O Lam revealed the option during Friday’s plenary session in the legislature’s hemicycle when she replied to oral interpellations from lawmakers.

Replying to an oral interpellation by legislator Alan Ho Ion Sang, O underlined the Education and Youth Development Bureau’s (DSEDJ) close cooperation with the Macau Science Centre aiming to create an extracurricular science popularisation classroom at the facility.

In addition, O said, the government is also planning to use part of a future education activity centre in the Zone A land reclamation area as a facility for students to practise scientific knowledge that they have learnt at school.

Lawmaker Chui Sai Cheong,



This photo taken earlier this month shows the Macau Science Centre (MSC) and its nearby Kun lam Statue Waterfront Leisure Area. – Photo: Tony Wong

also the legislature’s vice-president, suggested during the plenary session that the government use an undeveloped plot next to the Macau Science Centre complex for its future expansion, adding that the future phase two of the Macau Science Centre would become a new landmark in the future, attracting more visitors to the facility

promoting science popularisation. O said that Chui’s suggestion was fine, adding that the facility’s possible expansion would enable it to better leverage its potential.

O said that her portfolio would discuss with the public entity tasked with urban planning the possibility of using the adjacent plot to expand the Macau Science Centre’s facilities. ■

Warm-up shelter in Ilha Verde opens

Tony Wong

The government opened its hypothermia shelter located in Block 4 of the Bairro da Ilha Verde Building yesterday evening after the observatory issued the Yellow cold weather alert.

A statement by the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) yesterday said that the warm-up shelter will continue operating until the weather gets less chilly again.

The Bairro da Ilha Verde Building is a subsidised home-ownership scheme (HOS) estate in Ilha Verde district.

The observatory has a two-level alert system for cold weather: “Yellow” for “cold” and “Orange” for “very cold” weather. The government’s cold-weather shelter opens when at least the Yellow warning has been issued.

Blankets, food and drinks are

provided for those seeking shelter from the cold weather. The stay at the shelter is free of charge.

According to the website of the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG), the weather station has forecast that the city’s temperature will range between 12 and 19 degrees Celsius today, while the temperature is forecast to range between 14 and 18 degrees Celsius tomorrow. ■

DSEDJ mulls advancing student career planning from senior high school to Form 3: O Lam

Ginnie Liang

The Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) is studying the feasibility of advancing career planning from the senior high school level to Form 3, i.e., the third and last year of junior high school, to help students plan their future career blueprints as early as possible, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Wallis O Lam said on Friday.

O made the remarks during an oral interpellation plenary session on Friday in the legislature’s hemicycle, adding that the new measure aims to enable Form 3 students to understand Macau’s shortage of human resources and the future employment trends ahead of time, so that they can have a more appropriate choice of study programmes in senior high school or even at university.

The career planning programme for Form 3 students will include different themes each month, covering the expected demand for talents in the near future, and the employment trends for different industries, O said.

After students graduate from university and enter the job market, O said, the government will try to provide internship opportunities not just in local enterprises, but also those in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area (GBA), providing access for students to high-quality enterprises and understand more about the employment environment.

As for young people starting out in the workplace, the government will launch a joint employment programme with the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL), with the aim of providing support for those choosing the GBA as their career starting point.

During Friday’s plenary session, some lawmakers raised concerns about difficulties encountered by young people with no practical working experience when finding jobs.

DSAL Employment Department Chief Lei Lai Keng said the bureau provides over 1,000 internship places each year, among which, most are provided by Macau’s integrated

resorts, adding that about 640 students can be expected to be employed right after completing their internships.

Lawmaker-cum-banker Ngan Iek Hang pointed out that as Macau’s industries are not diversified enough and the employment choices for young people are limited, and it is difficult to find full-time jobs offering professional career and good development prospects as well as higher salaries, asking the government about its measures to further protect the employment rights of young people and implement the ratio of local staff employed by enterprises.

Lei responded that in order to further consolidate Macau’s aspired position as a World Centre for Tourism and Leisure, the government needs to make more flexible and pragmatic adjustments in human resources, adding that it was not appropriate to set a fixed ratio or impose inappropriate restrictions on the number of locals to be employed by local enterprises. ■

'Ne Zha 2' dominates Australian cinemas 2 weeks on

Li Huizi, Zhang Jianhua

CANBERRA – The Hoyts Sunnybank cinema in Brisbane, Australia's third largest city, presented 14 sessions of the Chinese animated film "Ne Zha 2" yesterday, significantly more than other popular films including "Captain America: Brave New World" which was shown in eight sessions.

While Sunnybank has a concentrated Chinese diaspora population, Brisbane cinema Event Garden City Mt Gravatt showed "Ne Zha 2" in 11 sessions, the same as "Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy."

About two weeks after the release and pre-screening of the Chinese animation blockbuster, mainstream Australian cinemas have greatly increased their screening schedules of "Ne Zha 2" across the country due to strong demand from local audiences, with a majority of the seats taken in most sessions.

"Ne Zha 2" entered the top three at Australia's weekend box office in its debut last week in 91 cinemas, following "Captain America" and "Bridget Jones" last weekend, according to box office reporting company Numero last Monday.

WHERE WAS THE MARKETING

Peter Koevari, director of GP2 Entertainment, a Brisbane-based independent film production company, attended the opening screening of "Ne Zha 2" and was shocked by how little promotion this film received, although "the cinema was absolutely packed out and the film was excellent."

"Fantastic sound, fantastic imagery and characterization ... but ... where was the marketing?" said Koevari who is also director at Queensland-based FilmLab Academy. His voice-acting students recently tried their hand at dubbing a trailer for "Ne Zha 2."

Following the tale of an iconic boy god from Chinese mythology, "Ne Zha 2," the highest-grossing animated movie of all time globally, has seen its box office revenue worldwide, including presales, surpass 13 billion yuan (about US\$1.8 billion), according to ticketing platforms on Saturday.

"The film is breaking records worldwide at exceeding levels, but it hasn't really been marketed at all in the West – there wasn't even a poster up and the trailers cannot be seen anywhere. The only people that know about this are those in the Chinese community or those who know people in the Chinese community... Just imagine how this film



This photo taken on February 13 shows a huge poster for the Chinese mega-blockbuster "Ne Zha 2" displayed at a shopping mall in Sydney, New South Wales, eastern Australia.

– AFP

would be doing if it was marketed properly," Koevari said.

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHIES

"Ne Zha 2: The Sea's Fury," the sequel to the 2019 Chinese blockbuster "Nezha: Birth of the Demon Child," is more than a high-octane, action-packed and visually stunning animated spectacle, full of hilarious moments and thrilling fight scenes. Beneath all that, it's something much deeper: a bold re-imagining of Chinese traditional mythology, cultural history and philosophies, said Hong Yanyan, PhD candidate in communication and media studies at the University of Adelaide.

Ne Zha carries the weight of Eastern cultural essence – Daoist balance, Confucian ethics, Mohist resistance, Legalist reform and the strategic wisdom of The Art of War, Hong said.

In Daoist philosophy, evil and good, often

known as Yin and Yang, are not absolute, but are rather shifting, interconnected forces, which is embodied in Ne Zha's character in the film, she said, adding the film proves that even the smallest, most underestimated individual can change the world.

Maryam, a viewer from Adelaide, said, "The movie really made me think about how good people are not always good, and bad people are not always bad, which made me really even look into human nature more deeply."

"Ren" ("benevolence"), a core Confucian virtue, is reflected in the film's emotional climax when Ne Zha is struck by the "heart-piercing curse," a brutal spell that covers his body in ten thousand thorns, causing unbearable pain and keeping him under control by targeting his heart. Ne Zha's human mother, Lady Yin, clings to him as his thorns pierce her skin – yet she refuses to let go.

"It's a moment of heartbreak, parental love and inner awakening. As his mother takes her final breath, in Ne Zha's grief, his body shatters into a million pieces. And then, he is reborn," Hong said.

She also highlighted the most profound transformation which comes from the dragon prince Ao Bing, whose once-imposing father Dragon King releases his grip: "Your path is yours to forge." The weight of tradition gives way to something new, reflecting a changing China where younger generations are defining their own paths, she added.

Beyond Daoist and Confucian ideals, Ne Zha 2 also weaves in Legalist reform and Mohist* resistance, she said, adding these philosophies challenge rigid hierarchies, or in Ne Zha's case, "divine order," and advocate for collective justice. The celestial-demon war itself plays out like a lesson in Sun Tzu's Art of War.

PENETRATING CULTURAL BARRIERS

"Ne Zha is undoubtedly another success story. People love the imaginative and legendary old story, and the high-tech special effects give the movie a new charm," Associate Professor Gong Qian at the School of Education of Curtin University told Xinhua.

Despite the expansion of the Chinese community in Australia, young people's enthusiasm for Chinese culture is still some way off compared to their affinity for Japanese and Korean culture, she said.

While lion and dragon dances, kung fu, dragon boats and Chinese festivals, often with fixed ritual times, are not easily integrated into the daily lives of Australians, Chinese vlogger Li Ziqi's short videos, the video game "Black Myth: Wukong," the TV series Three-Body, and TikTok are popular among Australian young people because they are more modern forms of art and entertainment, Gong added.

Ne Zha has a "coolness" that easily penetrates cultural barriers and enters the hearts and minds of Australians, Gong said, adding there are still countless intellectual properties (IPs) in Chinese culture that need to be developed.

– Xinhua

*"Mohism" refers to an ancient Chinese philosophy founded by Mozi (Mo Di) during the Warring States period. Mohism emphasizes universal love, impartiality, and utilitarianism, advocating for the welfare of all people and opposing excessive luxury and warfare. – DeepSeek

Parkinson's possible to be blocked thanks to Chinese scientists' breakthrough research

SHANGHAI – Chinese scientists have discovered a novel therapeutic target for Parkinson's disease, a neurodegenerative condition with high disability and mortality rates, and have successfully identified a potentially effective small molecule drug.

The breakthrough, achieved by a team from Huashan Hospital affiliated with Fudan University in Shanghai, holds promise for early intervention in Parkinson's disease, offering patients renewed hope for delaying its progression. The research was published in the prestigious academic journal Science on Friday.

The battle against Parkinson's disease, the second most common neurodegenerative disorder after Alzheimer's, has been ongoing for years. There are approximately 3 million Parkinson's patients in China, roughly half of the global total.

People diagnosed with Parkinson's disease may initially experience a reduced

sense of smell and sleep disorders, eventually developing more severe movement-related symptoms. As the disease progresses, the effectiveness of medications often declines, leading to a significant deterioration in quality of life.

Unfortunately, previous drugs and surgical therapies have only addressed the symptoms of Parkinson's disease, failing to prevent its progression. As a result, further in-depth research into the disease's pathophysiology and targeted treatments is crucial, according to the scientists.

After five years of persistent efforts, the team identified FAM171A2 as a key risk gene for neurodegeneration. Using artificial intelligence, they screened over 7,000 approved compounds and pinpointed bemcentinib, an anti-cancer agent currently in clinical trials, as a promising lead candidate.

The small molecule drug has been shown

to effectively block the binding between FAM171A2 and the pathogenic protein, according to the research team.

Yu Jintai, leader of the team, said that, based on an international patent, they will focus on the pre-clinical research and development of small-molecule drugs, antibodies and gene therapies for Parkinson's disease in the coming years, with the aim of advancing clinical trials and applications to develop an innovative therapeutic system.

People over the age of 60 are more susceptible to Parkinson's disease. As China's population continues to age, this new medical breakthrough has sparked hope within both the academic and medical communities, as well as among patients, with the expectation that the research will have practical applications in the near future.

"The experimental results have helped us accurately figure out the pathophysiological

mechanisms of Parkinson's disease, creating a real chance of overcoming a battle that has long seemed insurmountable," said Wang Jian, director of the neurology department at Huashan Hospital, which is also a national medical center for neurological diseases.

A referee for Science praised the discovery as a "holy grail" in Parkinson's research, highlighting its potential to lead to therapies that can block the spread of pathology and, consequently, the disease itself.

Neurological diseases, particularly those affecting the brain, such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, have become a major global public health and social challenge.

Chinese experts have called for greater efforts in brain science research, noting that it will be crucial for developing new treatment methods, enhancing early diagnosis, detection and intervention, and ultimately improving the quality of life for patients.

– AFP