

Local NPC deputies, CPPCC members keen to push GBA & Hengqin development

Yuki Lei

The 14th National People's Congress (NPC) and the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) have convened their third sessions in Beijing, which will kick off tomorrow and today respectively – and before departing for their sessions, several local NPC deputies and CPPCC members briefed reporters yesterday at the local airport on the proposals and suggestions they plan to present, focusing on the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA) and the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

The third session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee will kick off at 3 p.m. today and conclude next Monday morning, lasting six days. According to Xinhua, the main agenda of the conference includes listening to and deliberating about the reports concerning the work of the Standing Committee of the National Committee of the CPPCC and the members' proposals; attending the third session of the 14th NPC, listening to and discussing the central government work report as well as other relevant reports; and deliberating on and passing several resolutions, including the political resolution of the third session, the resolution on the Standing Committee's work



Local National People's Congress (NPC) deputies Ho Sut Heng (from left to right), Kevin Ho King Lun, Vong Hin Fai, Chen Hong and Ng Siu Lai pose after speaking to the media at the local airport yesterday morning. – Photo combo: Yuki Lei

report, and the resolution on the examination of proposals submitted since the second session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee.

Xinhua reported that the third session of the 14th NPC will be held tomorrow, with its press conference slated for 12 p.m. today at

the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Eleven local NPC deputies and 27 local members of the CPPCC National Committee gathered at the local airport yesterday morning to travel to Beijing for the two sessions. Before their departure, five representatives from each

group spoke to the media, with their concerns covering youth employment, elderly care, the appropriately diversified development of Macau's economy, and measures to encourage childbearing.

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Legislative elections slated for Sept 14



Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL) President Seng Ioi Man (centre) speaks during yesterday's press briefing at the Public Administration Building, flanked by Deputy Commissioner Against Corruption (CCAC) Wong Kim Fong (third from right) as well as five CAEAL members (from left to right) Louie Wong Lok I, Mak Kim Meng, Lai U Hou, Ng Wai Han, and Daisy Ho In Mui. – Photo: Tony Wong

Tony Wong

This year's direct and indirect legislative elections are scheduled to be held on Sunday, September 14, the government announced yesterday.

The polling date for the eighth-term Legislative Assembly (AL) of the Macau Special Administrative (MSAR) was announced in a chief executive order published in the Official Gazette (BO) yesterday. The order was signed by Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai on Friday last week.

The direct and indirect legislative elections are customarily held on a Sunday.

The MSAR Legislative Assembly election, which is held every four years, comprises direct and indirect elections. The current legislature has 33

members, comprising 14 deputies directly elected by universal suffrage, 12 deputies indirectly elected by registered association representatives and seven deputies appointed by the chief executive.

Permanent residents, irrespective of nationality and place of birth, aged at least 18 have the right to vote. Election candidates must be permanent residents aged at least 18.

Candidacy lists' spending cap remains unchanged

Meanwhile, according to a separate executive order published in the gazette yesterday, each candidacy list can spend up to 3,549,622 patacas on their 2025 election campaign, unchanged

from the amount stipulated by the government for the 2021 hustings. The order was also signed by Sam on Friday last week.

Meanwhile, the Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL) yesterday announced its schedule for events and formalities related to the 2025 direct and indirect legislative elections.

Schedule

On Thursday, the commission will start to distribute application forms for those wishing to establish nomination committees on behalf of those seeking to run in the elections. The deadline for the nomination-committee applications will be June 6.

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

The Macau Post Daily

China hits new landmark in global quantum computing race

Chinese scientists unveiled a superconducting quantum computer prototype named "Zuchongzhi 3.0" with 105 qubits yesterday, marking a breakthrough in the nation's quantum computing advancements.

– Story on p. 7

Kremlin says Zelensky needs to be forced to make peace

The Kremlin yesterday accused President Volodymyr Zelensky of not wanting peace, following a clash last week between the Ukrainian leader and US President Donald Trump.

– Story on p. 11

1st Oscar for Brazil adds zest to Rio Carnival extravaganza

Rio de Janeiro's massive Sambadrome erupted in noisy celebrations on Sunday as the news broke that Brazil won its first Oscar, in the middle of the first day of its famous samba parades.

– Story on p. 12

Police bust mainlander for drug use

Ada Lei

A man from the mainland was arrested on Friday for using drugs, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Un Hong said during a regular press conference yesterday.

The 53-year-old suspect surnamed Zhang claimed to be a businessman.

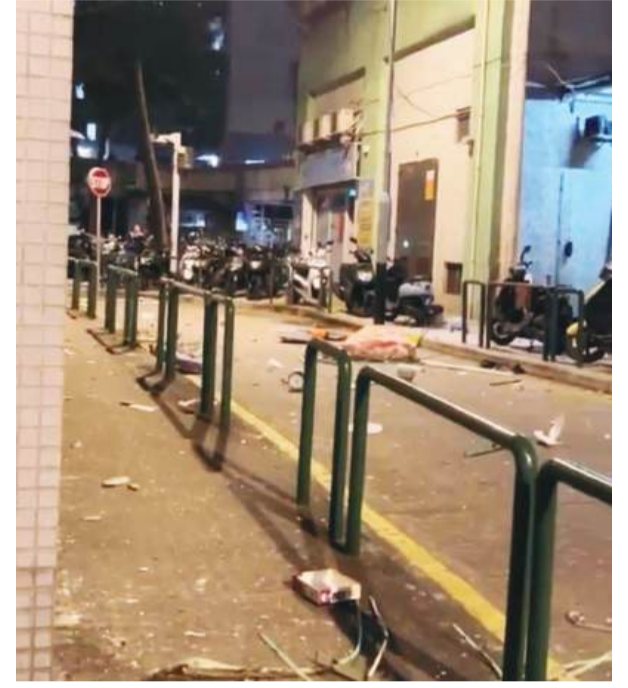
According to Cheong, a housekeeper at a hotel in a Cotai casino discovered a bottle that was apparently being used to take drugs in a guestroom, after which the hotel reported the case to the police on Friday. The police arrested Zhang in the guestroom later that day and found the bottle and drug paraphernalia containing traces of drugs. The

police tested the bottle and the drug paraphernalia using a rapid drug testing machine, which indicated the presence of methamphetamine, commonly known as ice. However, no drugs were discovered.

Cheong noted that Zhang admitted to using drugs and tested positive for methamphetamine. He also told the police that he had purchased the methamphetamine from a man in the casino for HK\$2,500, but he didn't know the amount of ice he had received.

Zhang has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing charges of drug use and possession of drug-taking paraphernalia. ■

5 hurt in fire at New City Garden estate, incl 2-year-old boy



These photos circulating on Facebook show last night's fire at Block 2 of the New City Garden housing estate in Toi San district and broken glass and debris strewn across the street from the building.

Yuki Lei

A fire broke out in Block 2 of New City Garden housing estate on Rua de Lei Pou Ch'ôn last night, injuring four individuals, the youngest of whom is two years old.

According to the Fire Services Bureau (CB), the blaze erupted in a flat on the residential building's 19th floor in Toi San district. Firefighters responding to the scene extinguished the fire using open hoses in about 14 minutes and conducted smoke extraction operations. About 16 dwellers self-evacuated. The corridors of the flat involved and an adjacent flat were affected, showing signs of smoke damage.

There were five victims aged between two and 66, three with burns to their hands and feet. A woman, a two-year-old boy and

an eight-year-old girl were rushed to the public Conde de S. Januário Hospital Centre for emergency treatment of burns. A 20-year-old female passerby suffered a laceration on her right arm after being hit by a falling object, while a 66-year-old woman suffered from smoke inhalation, both required hospital treatment.

Speaking to the media at the scene, CB Vice Commissioner Lam Chon Sang said that members of the public reported hearing a loud noise at the site of the fire. Online pictures show broken glass and debris strewn across the street from the scene.

A video shows the flames in the ill-fated flat, with smoke billowing out. According to Lam, the firefighters arriving at the scene found that both of the building's lifts were out of service and had to access the

flat on foot. A total of 16 fire engines and ambulances, with 58 firefighters, were sent to the scene.

The cause of the fire was still under investigation late last night. Lam said that the building primarily uses centralised liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), which was turned off at the mains immediately upon the firefighters' arrival. He added that the respective LPG company and the Housing Bureau (IH) have been notified about the incident to conduct further investigations.

The site was temporarily cordoned off, and several bus routes had to be re-routed as a result.

The Social Welfare Bureau said in a statement that at least 30 affected residents took refuge at the Macau Federation of Trade Unions Toi San Community Centre following the incident. ■

Police nab local man & mainlander for sham marriage

Ada Lei

The police have busted a bogus marriage case, in which a local man and a woman from the mainland were arrested on Sunday, Public Security Police (PSP) spokeswoman Kong Chi Ian said in a regular press conference yesterday.

Kong identified the "couple" as a local man surnamed Kou and a mainland woman surnamed Yang. Kou is in his sixties while Yang is in her fifties; they told the police that they're jobless.

According to Kong, the Public Security Police (PSP) received a referral from the Judiciary Police (PJ) stating that a mainland woman, Yang, who was suspected of engaging in illegal online gambling activities, was also believed to be involved in a sham marriage. The police confirmed

that Yang held a family visit entry permit, which was inconsistent with her activities in Macau. She was summoned on Sunday to assist in the investigation, and Kou accompanied her.

Under questioning, Yang admitted that they met in a casino in 2021 and registered their marriage in the mainland in April 2024. The purpose of the marriage was to facilitate her gambling activities in Macau. Kou told the police that he and Yang never lived together after the marriage, but that their "arrangement" had not involved any financial benefits.

The suspects have been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing document forgery charges, according to Kong. ■



This undated handout photo provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) yesterday shows the two suspects (centre) being escorted by PSP officers to a police station.

Police nab 2 mainlanders for false imprisonment

Ada Lei

A man and a woman from the mainland were arrested on Sunday for falsely imprisoning a mainland couple, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Un Hong said during a regular press conference yesterday.

The 39-year-old female suspect surnamed Hu is a teacher. The 37-year-old male suspect surnamed Zhang claimed to be jobless. The two victims are a 38-year-old man surnamed Peng who is a non-resident worker (NRW) working as a kitchen assistant in a barbecue restaurant in Cotai, and his 35-year-old wife surnamed Liu who claimed to be jobless.

According to Cheong, the Judiciary Police received a referral about a false imprisonment case from the Public Security Police (PSP) on Sunday. In November, Hu and Zhang discovered that Peng was working in Macau and earning extra money through illegal currency exchange. They were interested in currency exchange activities. Therefore, Zhang gave Peng 80,000 yuan, while Hu gave Peng 200,000 yuan to invest in currency exchange

activities in Macau. In return, Peng promised to pay Zhang 400 yuan and Hu 600 yuan each day.

However, Peng then gambled away all their money and stopped making payments to them at the end of December. On Friday, Zhang and Hu told a woman, who at the time of the press conference was on the run, to go to the barbecue restaurant where Peng was working in Macau to find him, after which the woman took him to a room rented by Hu and Zhang. They took Peng's ID and forced him to call his wife, Liu, to tell her to meet them in the room. They threatened that if Peng did not repay the money, they would send him to Southeast Asia to work there or harm his two sons. They also forced him to sign an IOU, threatening that he and his wife would not be allowed to leave. Eventually, Peng contacted his coworkers at the barbecue restaurant for help. The police rescued Peng and Liu and arrested Zhang and Hu on Sunday.

Under questioning, Peng told the police that he had made a profit of HK\$20,000 from the currency exchange deals.



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Un Hong looks on during yesterday's regular press conference. - Photo: Ada Lei

Hu and Zhang were transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday, facing charges of false imprisonment, unlawful retention of a person's identification documents, and coercion. Additionally, Hu, Zhang, and Peng also face charges of illegal currency exchange activities. ■

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Macau Weather

HUMID. CLOUDY APART FROM SUNNY INTERVALS. MIST AND FOG. A FEW SHOWERS LATER. POSSIBLE THUNDERSTORMS LATER. FORCE 2 TO 4 SOUTH TO SOUTHEASTERLY WINDS. RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 70% AND 100%.



20°C~26°C

Source: SMG

Chris Stowers talks about new book 'Shoot, Ask...and Run!'

Interview by Rui Pastorin

A book launch for British photographer Chris Stowers' "Shoot, Ask ... and Run!" was held on Sunday night at Livraria Portuguesa ("Portuguese Bookshop") at 16 Rua de São Domingos (板樟堂街), where attendees were able to get insights into its author, his new book and hear some of its excerpts.

Having had a career that spans nearly 40 years, Stowers, who was at the launch, was previously based in Hong Kong and shot photos for the now defunct English-language news magazine *Asiaweek* for 10 years. He joined Panos Pictures Photo Agency in 1992, having travelled to over 70 countries to date. His work has appeared in publications such as the *South China Morning Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Economist*, *Forbes*, *Businessweek*, *National Geographic Traveller*, and *The New York Times*. He has photographed moments from war-torn Bosnia and the Indian Ocean Tsunami, along with various events, portraits, travel and lifestyle shots, to name a few.

Speaking to the *Post* prior to the start of the presentation, Stowers' latest book, which was released in January, is the second in a series of travel memoirs that he is developing.

Remarking on its title, Stowers, who now lives in Taiwan, said that it was derived from advice he had received from a photojournalist he met in war-torn Peshawar, Pakistan in 1987, the first time he had ever been in a warzone.

"There were a lot of photographers hanging around

and I was just a young kid with a camera" noted Stowers, adding that one of them liked his pictures and said that he had potential. But he was given the advice to shoot, ask, and run, wherein you shoot the picture before the person sees you, which can make for candid and authentic moments, asking them if they happen to notice you, and being prepared to run such as when the subject is armed and does not like having their picture taken. "So shoot, ask, run. And this is advice I carried on".

He added that though he does not always follow this advice, it is usually good advice to take, even today.

The book, according to information provided by the "Portuguese Bookshop", sees Stowers paint "a harsh, humorous and very human picture of media life in Asia - and beyond - during the boom years of the early 1990's".

However, Stowers pointed out that the book is not all about war photography, but also about the life of a young photographer in his twenties, his earlier adventures and some mistakes he made, adding: "It's an education, how to become a photographer". And through it, he hopes to attract a younger audience and perhaps think about becoming a photographer while also not thinking of it as a glamorous job. "It's a bit dangerous, but it's exciting and not for everybody."

A third book is in the works, Stowers said, in which he plans to tell more stories. ■



British photographer Chris Stowers delivers a presentation during the launch of his latest book "Shoot, Ask ... and Run!" at Livraria Portuguesa ("Portuguese Bookshop") on Rua de S. Domingos. — Photo: Rui Pastorin

Sam to attend NPC opening session in Beijing

Yuki Lei

Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai arrived in Beijing yesterday for the opening of the third session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) to be held tomorrow, with his duties being temporarily assumed by Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon.

According to a statement by the Government Information Bureau (GCS) yesterday, Sam plans to stay in Beijing for four days until Thursday.

The bureau stated that "while Sam is away, Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon will be Acting Chief Executive".

Meanwhile, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Wallis O Lam in her capacity as a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), travelled with her fellow CPPCC members and the 12 local National People's Congress (NPC) deputies to Beijing yesterday morning.

The annual sessions of the NPC and CPPCC National Committee are collectively known as the "two sessions". ■



This file photo shows Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai addressing the first work meetings of the Leading Group on Public Administration Reform and the Leading Group for the Promotion of the Construction of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin last month. — Photo: GCS

Local association calls for increased organ donation registration

Ginnie Liang

Macau Medical Women's Association (AMMM) President Chan Man said yesterday that the organ transplantation technology in Macau is already in place, but it is difficult to start organ transplant matching as there are very few sources in Macau, so she hopes that more people will participate in the organ donation registration in the future.

Chan made the remarks during a press conference held by "Gathering Talents Elegant Gathering Charity Association" (聚賢雅集慈善會) yesterday, adding that members of the public who are willing to register for organ donation should also inform their family members, so as to help those in need according to the donors' wishes smoothly.

Chan said that Macau started to promote organ donations at a very early stage, and the government continues to send staff to study organ transplantation overseas. However, it was impossible to directly use donor organs for transplantation due to legal constraints until recent years, but organ transplantations can finally be carried out in Macau nowadays, when the issue of organ donations has gained renewed attention, Chan pointed out.



This poster downloaded from the social media platform of "Gathering Talents Elegant Gathering Charity Association" yesterday promotes its upcoming "Organ Donation Awareness Campaign" event in Praça da Amizade (友誼廣場) on Saturday.

During yesterday's conference, the association announced that it will organise an "Organ Donation Awareness Campaign" in Praça da Amizade (友誼廣場) on Saturday, with the aim of raising community awareness of organ donations and encourage more people to participate in this meaningful initiative, while representatives from the Health Bureau (SSM) will also be invited to answer residents' questions, with an on-the-spot registration service available for residents to sign up.

"Gathering Talents Elegant Gathering Charity Association"

President Tsang Pui Pek said that there are many people waiting for transplants due to organ failure every year, but some of them may die because of not being able to get the right organ before it is too late.

Tsang also said that in recent years, local society has become more aware of organ donations, but there are still many misunderstandings and concerns, and her association hopes that through public awareness campaigns, more people will understand that organ donations not only save lives, but also improve the quality of life of many patients. ■

Four Seasons Hotel Macao launches 'Fit and Fabulous'

Adrian Vallesteros

Luxury hotel operator Four Seasons Hotel Macao said in a recent statement that it launched a new wellness initiative called "Fit and Fabulous" on Saturday, which also set in motion the unveiling of its comprehensive wellness offerings.

The event began with an Animal Flow session titled "No Holding Back," which was powered by athletic apparel retailer lululemon. The statement pointed out that the event was held on the hotel's lawn in Cotai. The session was open to "health enthusiasts" to engage in mindful movements and

connections. Then, following the session, attendees were introduced to the newly launched "Balanced Menu", which has been designed under the guidance of the Four Seasons' global nutritionist team.

Additionally, the statement highlighted the introduction of "Nature's Secret", a new signature treatment available at The Spa of Four Seasons Hotel Macao. This treatment includes a foot bath, exfoliating scrub, and massage, utilising a blend of rosemary, buttermilk, sea salt, and coconut oil.

The statement also noted that guests can now participate in the

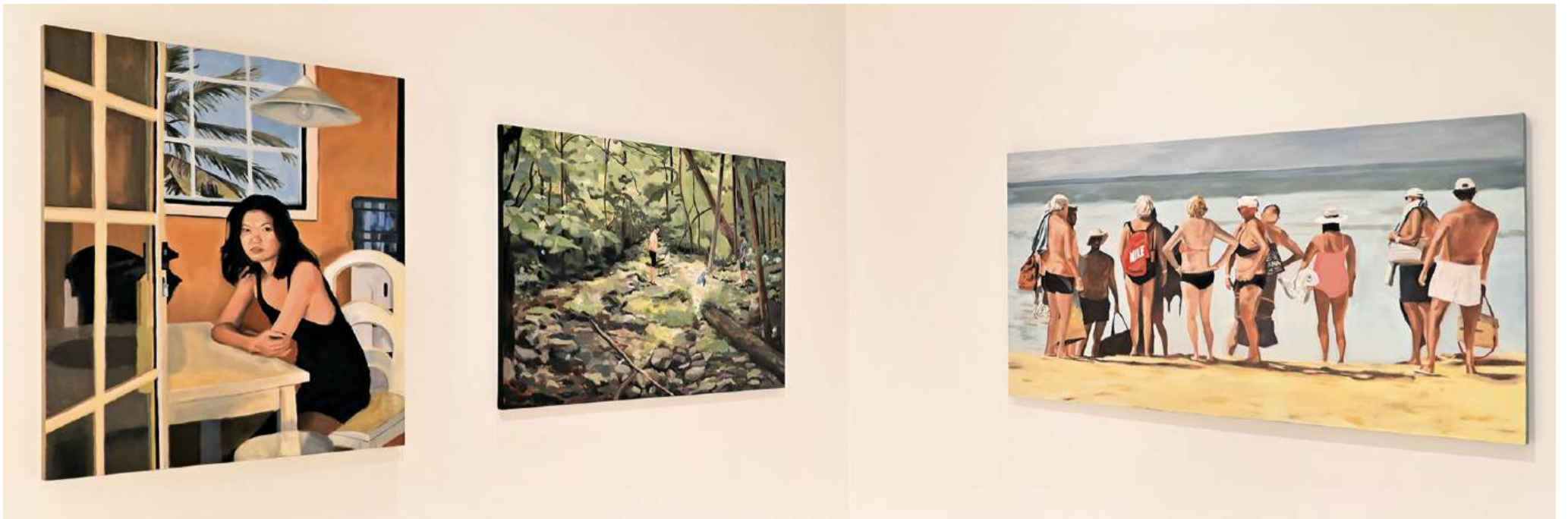
Fit & Fabulous Retreat, which offers a "holistic wellness journey". This retreat combines luxury accommodation, personalised spa treatments, healthy dining options, and various fitness programmes, including personal training and yoga.

Moreover, the statement pointed out that the Four Seasons Hotel Macao has recently gained recognition as the first hotel in Macau and among the first 100 properties globally to receive Forbes Travel Guide's Responsible Hospitality Verified accolade.

For further details or reservations, one can contact 2881 8888. ■



This handout photo provided by Four Seasons Macao yesterday shows participants in the luxury hotel's "Fit and Fabulous" wellness event on Saturday.



Exhibition gathers 5 artists in 'People Matter'

Rui Pastorin

An exhibition entitled "People Matter" is being held at the Artelli art space at the City of Dreams (COD) in Cotai, gathering five artists of different backgrounds and ages to showcase their works until March 31.

Artelli is located at the integrated resort's The Showroom.

Featuring 23 works exploring portraiture and created through mediums such as oils and acrylics, the five artists showcasing their works are Macanese architect and artist Carlos Marreiros, artist Konstantin Bessmertny and painter Crystal W.M. Chan, all of whom are representing Macau in the exhibition.

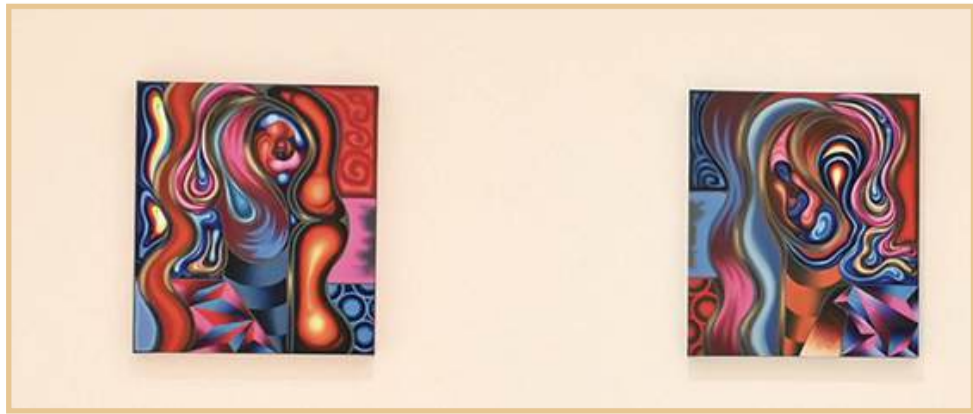
The other artists exhibiting their work are artist and anthropologist Benjamin Kidder Hodges, who is from Richmond, Virginia and is based in Macau, Issei Suzuki from Tokyo and interdisciplinary artist Jonni Cheatwood who is from Los Angeles.

The exhibits present each artists' concepts and narrative approaches "interpreting the essence of portraiture through the interplay of the artist, the painted figure and the constructed environment in the painting", according to a statement on the gallery's website.

The statement added that exhibitiongoers are invited to gain insight into the artists' "perspectives and continuing the endless imagination about the human experience".

Those interested can visit the exhibition from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily. Admission is free.

Photos: Rui Pastorin



Local NPC deputies, CPPCC members keen to push GBA & Hengqin development

Continued from p.1

NPC deputies

Civic leader Ho Sut Heng said: "In Macau, particularly in our in-depth cooperation zone [in Hengqin], I am very concerned about how to make it more convenient for our citizens to start businesses there, find employment, and improve their quality of life. I believe it is necessary for the relevant administrative authorities to engage in in-depth discussions to ensure clarity of policy and future prospects, which will boost confidence and promote better integration." She also emphasised the necessity of improving the local vocational training system to help employees adapt to the changes brought about by the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI).

Businessman Kevin Ho King Lun said: "I believe the focus of this year's two sessions is primarily on the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin and how we can secure more support from the central authorities for the construction of its second phase." Citing President Xi Jinping's clear guidance on Hengqin's future development during his visit to Macau at the end of last year, as well as his speech delivered in Hengqin regarding the need to better utilise the advantages of Macau's "One Country, Two Systems" principle, Ho stressed that for Hengqin's future development, Macau should advocate for the central authorities to implement innovative legislation specific to Hengqin, ensuring these laws better align with those of Macau and the international community.

Lawyer Vong Hin Fai said: "As Macau deputies to the NPC, we are particularly concerned about how to facilitate the appropriately diversified development of Macau's economy and its further integration into the overall situation of the nation's development in the upcoming two sessions. In particular, we would like to explore the development of Hengqin and promote deeper integration between the systems of Hengqin and Macau." He also stressed that Macau should better utilise its advantages of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, consolidate its positioning as "One Centre, One Platform and One Base", and leverage its strengths



Local members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Mok Chi Wai (from left to right), Frederico Ma Chi Ngai, Alvis Lo Iek Long, Lam Lon Wai and Cheong Meng Seng pose after speaking to the media at the local airport yesterday morning. — Photo combo: Yuki Lei

in economic and trade exchanges with Portuguese-speaking countries to assist the nation's related work.

School principal Chen Hong said: "I'm particularly concerned about the In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin... I hope we can truly integrate [Macau and Hengqin], especially by finding ways to make life more convenient for our residents in terms of youth employment and children's education." She also expressed concern about the implementation of the nation's Education Law and the forthcoming National Preschool Education Law, expressing her hope that, regarding the children of Macau residents studying in Hengqin, classes for mainland students could be established, allowing Macau and mainland students to study together to facilitate their exchanges and integration.

Civic leader Ng Siu Lai said: "We are all very concerned about the development of the Greater Bay Area, especially the situation of Macau in the In-Depth Cooperation Zone, such as the convenience of immigration clearance for residents and their living conditions there." She also expressed concern about issues related to the ageing population and sub-replacement fertility, adding she believed that Macau's practice of "ageing in place" could serve as a reference for the whole nation in promoting community-based elder care, suggesting using Hengqin as a demonstration base to implement

Macau's approach and methodology for "ageing in place" in the Greater Bay Area, with a view to addressing Macau's elder care challenges while also providing valuable experience for the rest of the nation.

CPPCC members

Building contractor and developer Mok Chi Wai expressed particular concern about the promotion of the In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, emphasising the need to enhance the integration of Macau and Hengqin through the alignment of rules and regulations, with a view to making immigration clearance more convenient for Macau residents travelling between the two places. He also expressed his hope that Macau can fulfil its role as a "China-Portuguese-speaking countries platform", thereby contributing more significantly to the whole country and the development of the cooperation zone.

According to businessman Frederico Ma Chi Ngai, the topics of his concern likewise are mainly focused on the development of the In-Depth Cooperation Zone, particularly on Hengqin-Macau integration, emphasising the joint development of the two places in the areas such as "big health" and "high-tech". Among other things, Ma pointed out that Macau and Hengqin have already laid a good foundation for the development of their "big health" industry. It was expected, he said, that in the future the co-development of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) could be further explored to include Chinese medical treatment in addition to pharmaceutical products. As for the development of the high-tech industry, he said that in recent years Macau has been committed to chip design, while Hengqin has endeavoured to promote the development of cross-border e-commerce, hoping that the governments of the two sides could have more relevant supporting

facilities to help cross-border e-commerce continue to develop in Hengqin. He added: "For example, the ongoing upstream cargo terminal built by the Macau International Airport in the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin is conducive to promoting the development of the aviation logistics industry in Macau, aiming to radiate to the west of Guangdong and other regions through Hengqin".

Physician Alvis Lo Iek Long said his suggestions would focus on health issues and the integration of Macau's youth into the nation's development, particularly through the In-Depth Cooperation Zone and the Greater Bay Area (GBA) initiatives. He expressed his desire to promote healthy lifestyles, especially in sport, in light of the upcoming National Games in November: "The nation has made significant efforts to promote fitness for all, and I hope to leverage this opportunity to help the people of Macau cultivate healthy lifestyles and develop the habit of regular exercise in a more systematic and comprehensive manner".

Focusing on Macau's economic development, school vice-principal Lam Lon Wai said he would propose to promote Macau's further integration and collaboration with the Hengqin In-Depth Cooperation Zone and the Greater Bay Area. His proposals also include establishing a vocational skills training institute in the zone, in partnership with mainland e-commerce companies, to help Macau cultivate talents for relevant kinds of employment. Additionally, according to his proposals, he aims to discuss with the mainland authorities the feasibility of securing more resources that align with the Macau government's needs, thereby facilitating the integration of resources and services within the Greater Bay Area.

Emphasising the importance of a favourable business environment

in attracting foreign investors, businessman Cheong Meng Seng said that the search for new opportunities and development space was currently the main task for Macau. He noted that the existing economic conditions were not ideal, warning: "If we continue to do things as we have in the past, we will not be able to attract quality capital resources," stressing the need for collaborative efforts among the government, businesses, and the public, particularly in facilitating capital inflow and enterprise development. Additionally, he pointed out that many of Macau's laws were outdated: "We need to make bold reforms and seek new avenues for development".

Meanwhile, as reported by public broadcaster TDM, the spokesman for the third session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee, Liu Jieyi, underlined that the CPPCC National Committee will continue to support the development of the Greater Bay Area, and help Hong Kong and Macau achieve better development in integrating into the nation's overall development. ■

*The government's "One Centre, One Platform and One Base" policy refers to its resolve to further strengthen Macau's role as a World Centre of Tourism and Leisure, an economic and trade cooperation platform for China and the Portuguese-speaking countries, and a cultural exchange and cooperation base, according to previous local government statements.

**Ageing in place refers to the ability of individuals to live in their own homes and communities safely, independently, and comfortably as they age, rather than relocating to assisted living facilities or nursing homes. This concept emphasises maintaining a high quality of life and autonomy for older adults by providing the necessary support, services, and modifications to accommodate their changing needs. — DeepSeek

STOCK MARKETS

Hang Seng Index closes 0.28 pct higher

HONG KONG – Hong Kong's stock market ended mixed yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index up 0.28 percent to close at 23,006.27 points.

The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index climbed 0.03 percent to end at 8,419.69 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index dipped 0.58 percent to close at 5,535.86 points. — Xinhua

'Ne Zha 2' makes history as first non-Hollywood film to surpass US\$2 billion

Analysis by Xinhua writer Zhang Yunlong

BEIJING – Chinese animated blockbuster "Ne Zha 2" has become the first non-Hollywood film to exceed US\$2 billion in global earnings, including presales, according to data from ticketing platform Maoyan.

The milestone, reached as of yesterday afternoon, came just 33 days after its release on January 29 during the Chinese New Year and 13 days after it surpassed Disney's 2024 film "Inside Out 2" to become the highest-grossing animated movie of all time.

This achievement adds to the film's growing list of accolades, including being the first to gross US\$1 billion in a single market and the first non-Hollywood title to enter the billion-dollar club.

Directed by Yang Yu, known as Jiaozi, the sequel to the 2019 animated hit "Ne Zha" – which grossed 5 billion yuan and topped the Chinese box office that year – now ranks seventh on the all-time global box office charts, just behind Marvel's 2018 film "Avengers: Infinity War."

The film's unprecedented box office success, with over 98 percent of the revenue generated on the Chinese mainland according to Maoyan data, has redefined the ceiling for single-film earnings in Chinese cinema.

"This success has not only boosted the confidence of creators but also showcased the resilience and immense growth potential of the Chinese market," said Lai Li, a Maoyan analyst.

"Ne Zha 2" continues the tale of the iconic boy god from Chinese mythology, as Ne Zha and his ally Aobing struggle to rebuild their physical forms and secure their fate with the help of the immortal Taiyi Zhenren.

The film's rich storytelling, jaw-dropping visuals, and universal themes of defiance, fate, and self-confidence have captivated audiences worldwide. Rao Shuguang, president of the China Film Critics Association, praised the film for seamlessly blending traditional Chinese mythology with modern storytelling, creating a narrative that speaks to contemporary sensibilities.

Chen Xuguang, director of the Institute of Film, Television, and Theatre at Peking University, hailed "Ne Zha 2" as "a miracle and a peak in Chinese cinema, a record that may remain unbroken for a long time."

"Ne Zha 2" has not only boosted the morale and confidence of Chinese filmmakers but also drawn new audiences back to theaters from other entertainment mediums," Chen told Xinhua.

The film's technical mastery is equally staggering, featuring nearly 2,000 special effects shots and



Two girls pose in front of a poster during the local premiere of the Chinese animated fantasy adventure film "Ne Zha 2" at The Projector movie theater in Singapore on Sunday. "Ne Zha 2" will be officially released in Singapore on Thursday. – Xinhua

contributions from 138 animation studios. This collaborative effort exemplifies the strength of China's creative ecosystem and heralds a new era of aesthetic and industrial standards for the country's film industry, he said.

In North America, "Ne Zha 2" has grossed an estimated US\$18 million after three weekends, according to Comscore. Released by CMC Pictures in Mandarin with English subtitles across over 600 theaters, the film has consistently ranked in the top five at the North American box office, becoming the highest-grossing Chinese-language film in the region since 2006.

Sheila Sofian, a professor at the University of Southern California and a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, praised the film's production design, sound design, and music, calling it "mind-blowing" and noting its universal appeal, in a video interview shared by China Media Group.

The film's success has also injected much-needed optimism into China's film industry, which saw a 23 percent decline in earnings in 2024 compared to 2023 and a 34 percent drop from its pre-pandemic peak in 2019. Driven by "Ne Zha 2," China's box office revenue hit a record high during the 2025 Spring Festival

holiday and has since experienced robust growth.

Dong Wenxin, a film critic and manager of a cinema in Jinan, Shandong Province, told Xinhua that the film's success has been a boon for the industry. "Friends in the business have told me their theaters have already hit 50 percent of their annual box office goals over the first two months of 2025," she said.

Beyond its commercial triumph, "Ne Zha 2" is poised to serve as a cultural bridge, offering global audiences a window into China's rich mythology and traditions. According to Shi Anbin, director of the Israel Epstein Center for Global Media and Communication at Tsinghua University, films like "Ne Zha 2" and video games like "Black Myth: Wukong" are part of a broader cultural renaissance in which ancient tales are reimagined through a modern lens.

In a video interview, Jiaozi reflected on the personal journey the "Ne Zha" films have taken him on, from a passion project to a global phenomenon. "The first step was creating something I loved, and domestic audiences loved it too," he said. "Over time, I've worked to improve it, to refine my craft. I believe that one day, new ideas, deeper meanings and new soul will emerge from it, and the whole world will be able to appreciate it."

– Xinhua

Marine & Water Bureau logs 34 vessel accidents in 2024

Ginnie Liang

The Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) announced in a statement yesterday that 34 vessel accidents were officially recorded in Macau waters last year, involving stranding, collision of vessels and vessel fires, of which seven were passenger ships.

The bureau held a meeting to discuss with passenger ferry companies the points to note when navigating with a view to minimising the risk of accidents, as well as sharing and exchanging different experiences to raise the awareness of passenger ship companies on safe navigation, with the attendance of representatives from TurboJET, Cotai Water Jet, and Yuet Tung Shipping, as well as the passenger service operators cooperating with the ferry operators.

During the meeting, the bureau introduced the recent changes in the navigational environment in Macau waters and reminded shipping companies to pay attention to the key points of navigation, including the need to pay attention to the sea conditions at all times when operating high-speed passenger ferries, and to strictly comply with the rules of navigation and collision avoidance, so as to ensure navigational safety.

The bureau also said that fog often occurs in Macau in spring, resulting in poor visibility on the sea surface, and for reasons such as typhoon prevention and sheltering, or marine works, the bureau would

implement navigational control measures, the statement said, adding that passenger ferry companies must maintain safe speed, and cooperate with the navigational instructions given by the bureau's Vessel Traffic Management Centre, so that they can enter and exit the port in an orderly manner.

In addition, the bureau said in a separate statement yesterday that some ferry services from Macau to Zhongshan, Shekou and Shenzhen airport were suspended due to the foggy weather yesterday to ensure passenger safety.

The statement did not say when the ferry services will be resumed.

According to the statement, the bureau will keep a close watch on weather changes, properly monitor and control the sea lanes, while maintaining close coordination with shipping companies to adjust sailings in a timely manner to ensure navigational safety.

The bureau anticipated that the weather in Macau may remain foggy in the next few days, which may cause delays or suspension of ferry services, the statement said, reminding members of the public who need to use marine passenger transport services to check with the shipping operators about the ferry schedules and ticketing conditions, and to use the official "Macao Maritime Info" mobile phone application to keep up-to-date on the conditions at the various ferry terminals in Macau, so as to make proper travel arrangements in advance. ■

Legislative elections slated for Sept 14

Continued from p.1

Each registered voter is entitled to endorse the nomination committee of only one candidacy list.

According to the Legislative Assembly Election Law, only political associations and nomination committees have the right to nominate candidacy lists for the direct-election process.

For directly-elected seats, a nomination committee shall contain at least 300 and no more than 500 registered voters, while regarding the indirect election, each nomination committee must be formed by at least 20 percent of the associations in the respective functional constituency, according to the law.

According to the schedule, candidacy lists and their respective political platforms must be submitted to the commission by June 26, after which the commission will publish a list of provisionally accepted candidacy lists two days later.

If no objections against the commission's decision are lodged, it will announce its list of formally accepted candidacy lists on July 18, according to the schedule.

Before the polling day on September 14, the 14-day official election campaign period will run from August 30 and September 12.

Complaint hotline & online platform

Meanwhile, the Electoral Affairs Commission and the

Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) announced yesterday the setting-up of a hotline for complaints that might arise in the run-up to and during the legislature's direct and indirect elections in September.

The launch of the hotline, which starts operating today, was announced by CAEAL President Seng Ioi Man and CCAC Deputy Commissioner Wong Kim Fong during a press briefing after the meeting of officials from the two commissions at the Public Administration Building on Rua do Campo.

The hotline (2899 7733) will run 24/7. In addition, the two commissions have also set up an online platform for citizens to submit their complaints. The online platform, which started operating yesterday, can be accessed on the CCAC website.

Yesterday's post-meeting media briefing was the first one after the Electoral Affairs Commission was established two months ago.

The commission tasked with overseeing the 2025 direct- and indirect-election process was set up in late December last year.

Including its president Seng, the commission consists of six members.

The other five members are Lai U Hou, a public prosecutor, Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP) Director Ng Wai Han, Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) Vice President Mak

Kim Meng, Financial Services Bureau (DSF) Deputy Director Daisy Ho In Mui, and Government Information Bureau (GCS) Deputy Director Louie Wong Lok I.

Seng, a judge of the Court of Second Instance (TSI), also noted during yesterday's press briefing that the upcoming direct and indirect legislative elections will be the first ones after the Legislative Assembly Election Law's new amendments took effect in April last year, which aim to ensure the full implementation of the "patriots governing Macau" principle and improve the administrative procedures for the organisation of the legislative elections.

Consequently, Seng said, the upcoming elections will be of significant importance.

According to the Legislative Assembly Election Law's amended version, when the Electoral Affairs Commission is assessing legislative election candidates' qualifications, it will be required to request the Committee for Safeguarding National Security of the MSAR to assess whether all the candidates uphold the MSAR Basic Law and bear allegiance to the MSAR.

Seng also pledged yesterday that his commission will fully heed the appraisal made by the Committee for Safeguarding National Security, when deciding the qualifications of legislative election candidates. ■

China's democracy serves the people, safeguards development

Commentary

BEIJING – As China's "two sessions" approach, the world has once again turned its eyes to Beijing. This major political event will unveil economic and social development plans for the year and demonstrate how Chinese democracy serves the country and its 1.4 billion people.

The annual sessions of the National People's Congress, the top legislature, and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee, the top political advisory body, constitute key practices of China's whole-process people's democracy. Within a sound institutional framework, Chinese democracy enables the people to exercise their extensive and tangible democratic rights in terms of elections, consultations, decision-making, management and oversight.

Unlike the political instability seen in some Western democracies, where policy shifts can occur abruptly with changes in leadership, China's system ensures that national governance is stable, predictable and efficient.

China's whole-process people's democracy integrates two major democratic models – electoral democracy and consultative democracy. Contrary to the claims of some Western critics pointing the finger at elections in China, the country's democratic elections are extensive and free from the influence of money politics. In the latest round of election wrapped up in 2022, 2.62 million county and township-level deputies to people's congresses were elected by more than 1 billion voters through "one person, one vote," creating one of the world's largest democratic practices.

Chinese democracy is also unique in its exercise of democratic consultation, which is a distinctive advantage of China's socialist democratic politics. As a specialized body for socialist consultative democracy, the CPPCC practices people's democracy in political consultation, involving representatives from all political parties, people's organizations, ethnic groups and social sectors.

There are many vivid examples

of Chinese democracy benefiting the people, which speaks volumes about the effectiveness of China's democratic process. Chinese democracy ensures that the people are masters of the country and their needs and concerns are addressed. For example, village infrastructure and facilities are enhanced with the support of local lawmakers and the government. Many disputes at community level are resolved via meetings involving consultation or mediation.

The whole-process people's democracy is designed to promote sound governance, boost national development, and improve the well-being of the people. China has achieved remarkable feats through this system, including maintaining rapid economic growth, eradicating absolute poverty, and ensuring long-term social stability.

By safeguarding Chinese people's equal rights to participation and development, upholding social equity and justice, and ensuring responsive public policies, the whole-process people's democracy enhances people's well-being as well as their sense of fulfillment and happiness.

According to Ipsos Global Happiness 2023, 91 percent of interviewed Chinese said they were either very happy or rather happy, topping the 32 surveyed countries. From 2013 to 2023, China's happiness levels increased by 12 percentage points, while many developed nations experienced a decline.

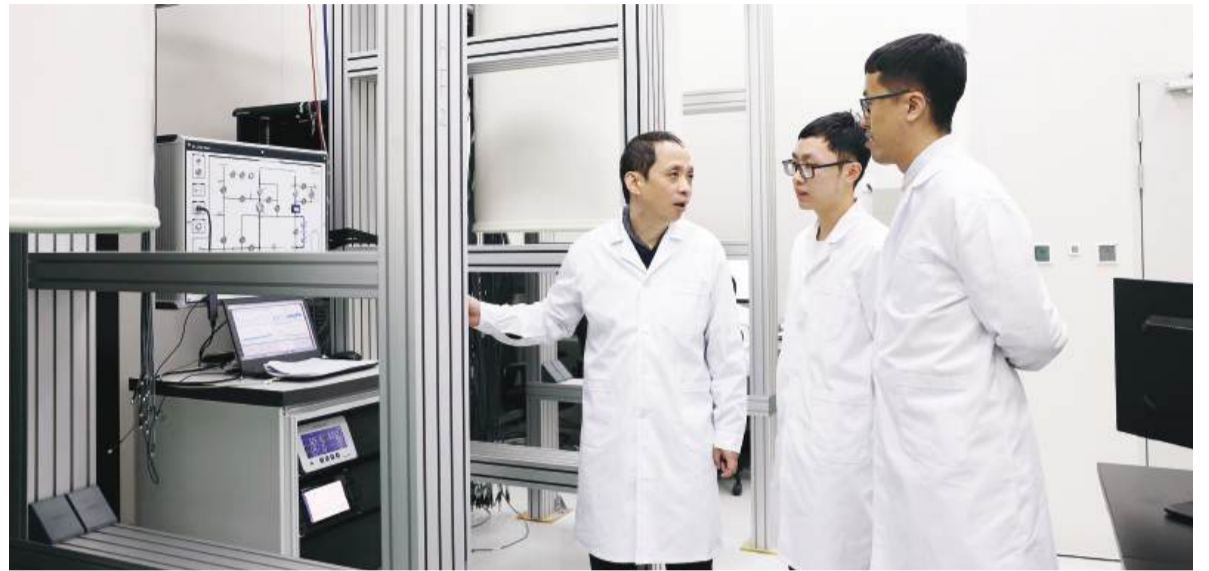
No two leaves are identical, and it is only natural for things to differ. The same is true for democracy. As a common value, democracy manifests in various forms around the world, shaped by distinct histories and cultures.

Therefore, no democracy can be touted as universally applicable. Different countries should develop their own versions of democracy suited to their own national conditions.

China's democracy deserves recognition and respect. The whole-process people's democracy enriches the global democratic landscape and serves as an inspiration for other countries in their exploration of democratic paths.

– Xinhua

China hits new landmark in global quantum computing race



Chinese quantum physicist Zhu Xiaobo (first from left) talks with his students at a laboratory in Hefei, Anhui Province, yesterday. Chinese scientists unveiled a superconducting quantum computer prototype named "Zuchongzhi 3.0" with 105 qubits yesterday, marking a breakthrough in China's quantum computing advancements. The achievement also sets a new record in quantum computational advantage within superconducting systems. – Xinhua

HEFEI – Chinese scientists unveiled a superconducting quantum computer prototype named "Zuchongzhi 3.0" with 105 qubits yesterday, marking a breakthrough in the nation's quantum computing advancements.

The achievement also sets a new record in quantum computational advantage within superconducting systems.

Developed by Chinese quantum physicists Pan Jianwei, Zhu Xiaobo and Peng Chengzhi, "Zuchongzhi 3.0" features 105 readable qubits and 182 couplers. It processes quantum random circuit sampling tasks at a speed quadrillion times faster than the world's most powerful supercomputer and 1 million times faster than Google's latest results published in *Nature* in October 2024.

Quantum computational advantage, also known as "quantum supremacy," refers to the point where quantum computers outperform the most advanced classical supercomputers in specific tasks. This milestone not only validates the feasibility of quantum computing but also serves as a direct indicator of a nation's research strength in this field.

Currently, China and the United States are the two

global frontrunners in quantum computing research, with each country alternately achieving groundbreaking advancements.

In 2019 and 2020, the United States and China, respectively, launched their quantum computing prototypes, "Sycamore" and "Jiuzhang," achieving quantum supremacy. In 2021, China successfully developed a 66-qubit programmable superconducting quantum computing system named "Zuchongzhi 2.1," making it the first country to achieve a quantum computational advantage in two mainstream technical routes.

According to the research team, "Zuchongzhi 3.0" significantly enhances key performance metrics compared to its predecessor, "Zuchongzhi 2.1," achieving a globally leading level of quantum computational power.

The study was published online in the journal *Physical Review Letters*. Peer reviewers praised the work, calling it "benchmarking a new superconducting quantum computer, which shows state-of-the-art performance" and "a significant upgrade from the previous 66-qubit device."

The global scientific community has outlined a three-

step roadmap for experimental quantum computing development. The first step is achieving quantum supremacy; the second step involves developing quantum simulators with hundreds of controllable qubits to tackle real-world problems beyond the capabilities of supercomputers; and the third step focuses on substantially improving qubit control precision, integration scale and error correction to develop programmable, general-purpose quantum computers.

Quantum advantage represents a critical foundation for near-term applications and scalable quantum error correction, both of which are essential for the future of practical quantum computing.

The research team of "Zuchongzhi 3.0" is actively exploring various directions, including quantum error correction, quantum entanglement, quantum simulation and quantum chemistry.

According to Zhu, the team is currently conducting surface code error correction research with a code distance of 7. After making progress, they will extend it to 9 and 11, paving the way for large-scale qubit integration and control.

– Xinhua

China hopes for sustainable, lasting solution to Ukraine crisis: spokesperson

BEIJING – China hopes that the relevant parties can find a sustainable and lasting solution to the Ukraine crisis that takes into account each other's concerns, a foreign ministry spokesperson said yesterday.

Spokesperson Lin Jian made the remarks at a daily press briefing when asked to comment on talks between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, which turned into a heated exchange last Friday.

Lin said that China will continue to play a constructive role for the

political settlement of the Ukraine crisis and the realization of peace.

In response to a question about whether China would send peacekeepers to Ukraine as some analysts have suggested, Lin said China did not start the Ukraine crisis, nor is it a party to it.

"We support all efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of the crisis," Lin said, noting that China hopes that the relevant parties can find a sustainable and lasting solution that takes into account each other's concerns.

– Xinhua

SHANGHAI – Visitors watch a collaborative dual-arm robot demonstration at the 2025 Shanghai International Machine Tool Exhibition in Shanghai yesterday. The fair kicked off yesterday at the National Exhibition and Convention Center in Shanghai. Featuring the participation of about 1,200 domestic and international enterprises from the industry, the exhibition focuses on presenting processing solutions tailored for high-demand sectors like new energy vehicles, electronic equipment manufacturing, and aviation equipment. Visitors have



the opportunity to explore an array of displays, highlighting core functional components of CNC machine tools, laser processing equipment, sheet metal grinding tools, as well as a variety of related products and cutting-edge technologies. CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machine tools are automated machining systems that use computer programming to control the movement and operation of machine tools.

– Xinhua/DeepSeek