

# Xia praises Sam's 'courageous' actions in firmly implementing Xi's important speeches

Yuki Lei

Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai met with Xia Baolong, director of both the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, in Beijing yesterday, during which, according to a statement by the Government Information Bureau (GCS), Xia pointed out that Sam had shown "courage" in his post and "accomplished significant and pioneering work" since becoming chief executive on December 20 last year.

Sam departed for Beijing on Monday to attend the opening of the third session of the 14<sup>th</sup> National People's Congress (NPC) to be held this morning.

Yesterday's GCS statement quoted Xia as saying during the meeting that since his assumption of office, Sam has led the governing team in firmly implementing the spirit of the series of important speeches by President Xi Jinping during his visit to Macau – on December 18-20 last year – as well as the central authorities' decisions and deployments, praising him for his courageous actions, the significant and pioneering work he has accomplished, and "the best spiritual characteristics he has demonstrated".

Xia also said he believes that Sam's government will, through its efforts to unite and lead various sectors of the community in fully and accurately

implementing the principle of "One Country, Two Systems", give full play to Macau's unique position and advantages, and practically strengthen its positioning as "One Centre, One Platform, One Base", appropriately advance the development of a diversified economy, particularly the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin. He emphasised the importance of creating new opportunities for Macau's development by participating in and contributing to Chinese-style modernisation.

The GCS statement highlighted Sam's gratitude to Xia for conveying the central authorities' care and expectations for Macau, saying that his government has been making every effort to prepare his upcoming 2025 Policy Address by actively listening to the views and suggestions of various sectors of the community, aiming to promote the sustainable development of Macau through good governance and effective policies, enhance people's well-being, and better respond to Xi's "ardent" expectations for the special administrative region (SAR).

According to the statement, at the meeting, Sam briefed Xia on the local government's efforts to implement the spirit of Xi's important speeches, noting that five special cross-sectoral leading and working groups have been set up to strengthen the government's top-level leadership and coordination while enhancing its governance. ■



This handout photo provided by the Government Information Bureau yesterday shows the State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO) Director Xia Baolong (right) meeting with Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai in Beijing



Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks during a news conference about the US tariffs against Canada yesterday on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Trudeau said that US President Donald Trump imposed tariffs on Canada to destroy the country's economy to make it easier for the US to annex its northern neighbour. The extraordinary warning about Trump's perceived threat to Canadian sovereignty came as the US president delivered on his vow to impose 25 percent tariffs on all Canadian goods. – AFP (More on p.11)

## Fitch affirms Macau's long-term credit ratings at 'AA'

The international credit rating agency Fitch Ratings yesterday affirmed the credit ratings of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR), including long-term foreign and local currency issuer default ratings, at "AA" with a "stable" outlook.

The New York City-based agency said it expected Macau's economic prospects to be bolstered by the continued expansion of its tourism sector with increased non-gaming investment, the favorable relaxation of travel policies for visitors from the Chinese mainland, and the enhancement of its tourism infrastructure.

According to Fitch's rating definitions, ratings in the "AA" category denote a very strong fiscal position for payment of financial commitments, and the capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.

– Xinhua, MPD

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### China opens 'two sessions' with commitment to high-quality development amid challenges

The annual "two sessions," a highly anticipated event on China's political calendar, began yesterday with the opening of the annual session of the country's top political advisory body. – Story on p. 7

### Arab leaders meet to hash out Gaza plan as Hamas urges against displacement

Arab leaders gathered in Cairo yesterday to discuss an alternative to US President Donald Trump's widely condemned plan to assume control of war-battered Gaza, with Hamas urging them to "thwart" efforts to displace Palestinians from their land. – Story on p. 10

### 60 pct of adults will be overweight or obese by 2050: study

Nearly 60 percent of all adults and a third of all children in the world will be overweight or obese by 2050 unless governments take action, a large new study said yesterday. – Story on p. 12

# Fire in New City Garden estate caused by gas blast: CB

Yuki Lei

A fire broke out in Block 2 of New City Garden housing estate on Monday night, injuring five people, including two children and a woman who sustained burns and required emergency treatment – and the Fire Services Bureau (CB) said yesterday it believed the fire was the result of a liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) leak.

The fire was reported to the Fire Services Bureau at about 9 p.m. on Monday night, with smoke billowing from the scene and the sound of an explosion being heard. Firefighters responding to the scene extinguished the blaze using open hoses at the flat located on the 19<sup>th</sup> floor of the building. Burn marks were found in the living room, bedrooms, and kitchen, while part of the corridor on that floor had been blackened by smoke. CB Vice Commissioner Lam Chon Sang said on Monday night that the building was equipped with centralised LPG.

Five individuals, aged between two and 66, were injured in the



This undated handout photo provided by the Fire Services Bureau (CB) yesterday shows its officers inspecting a residential flat's gas appliances.

accident. Among them, a two-year-old boy and an eight-year-old girl as well as a 55-year-old woman were rushed to the public Conde de S. Januário Hospital Centre with burns, while a female passer-by and a resident were sent to hospital for treatment of injuries caused by

falling objects and smoke inhalation respectively.

## Each household banned to store more than 3 fuel tanks: firefighter

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of an association event yesterday, Ng Wai Kit, a CB officer, reminded the public that if they detect any LPG leakage in their homes, they should remain calm, switch off the LPG mains, and leave the scene quickly, urging them not to touch any switches to avoid creating sparks that could lead to an explosion. He also referenced the LPG storage regulations in Macau, which prohibit the storage of more than three full or empty tanks with a total capacity exceeding 90 cubic centimetres in each dwelling.

Ng stressed that when making emergency calls, callers should always provide clear information about the location and condition of the fire, allowing attendants to make accurate judgments before



Undated file photo of chemical engineer Matt Lei Chong In. – Photo courtesy of Lei

issuing rescue orders. He also warned the public to avoid taking a lift when escaping the scene and to use staircases instead. Additionally, he emphasised the importance of covering one's mouth and nose with a damp cloth and crawl as low as possible when encountering dense smoke.

In case an escape is not possible, Ng underlined the importance of finding a room facing the road, closing the door and sealing the cracks with a wet towel, while notifying the bureau of the location as soon as possible.

## Chemical engineer stresses govt-public-business tripartite cooperation

A local chemical engineer, Matt Lei Chong In, yesterday emphasised the need for tripartite cooperation between the government, the public and the business sector in promoting the safe use of fuel gas. He noted that many households in Macau use gas appliances, adding

that relying solely on the Fire Services Bureau's annual safety inspections of gas appliances and its awareness-raising campaigns makes it challenging to effectively manage the safety of residential gas appliances.

In his written remarks to the *Post*, Lei pointed out that although the "Technical Regulation on Gas Line Supply Facilities in Buildings", issued in 2021, clearly outlines safety standards – stating that kitchen cabinets underneath built-in gas appliances must not be connected to neighbouring cabinets and must have permanent ventilation openings of at least 80 square centimetres in total – "many households still have hidden issues", such as inappropriate installation locations.

Lei suggested that the government, such as the Fire Services Bureau, take the lead and intervene to advise and rectify the situation of households with safety hazards and, at the same time, provide assistance through professional businesses, such as gas supply companies, to provide qualified technicians to assist the public in replacing the appliances regularly, so that residents would not have to worry about "excuses", such as high expenses, and ignore issues that ultimately could cost them their life.

He also reminded the public that the rubber hoses connecting LPG cylinders to cookers should be replaced every three years to prevent ageing and cracking, as it could lead to gas leaks and safety incidents. If conditions permit, it is recommended to replace rubber hoses with metal ones to extend their lifespan and enhance safety, Lei underlined. ■

## Woman falsely accuses man of rape: police

Ada Lei

A mainland woman has been arrested by the Judiciary Police (PJ) for falsely accusing a man of rape, PJ spokesman Cheong Un Hong said during a regular press conference yesterday.

The 25-year-old woman surnamed Yan claimed to be self-employed.

The Judiciary Police received a referral from the Public Security Police (PSP) on Saturday about a suspected rape case. According to Cheong, Yan met an elderly man from the mainland on a social media platform about a month ago and they became friends. They travelled to Macau together last Wednesday, and Yan stayed in the man's hotel room. Between Wednesday and Friday, Yan and the man had sexual relations four times. Yan reported to the Public Security Police (PSP) on Saturday that she had been raped by the man.

The police discovered that the information provided by Yan was inconsistent with the details of the case. After Yan claimed to have been raped four times, she did not report the incident immediately



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

but continued to accompany the man for outdoor activities. Moreover, there are indications of a financial dispute between them, and a medical examination also confirmed that there were no obvious signs of injuries caused by resisting sexual intercourse.

Cheong noted that Yan has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) where she faces a charge of making a false report. ■

## Registration open for Macao Biodiversity Data Science Challenge

Rui Pastorin

Local students and other local residents can now register for the 2025 Macao Biodiversity Data Science Challenge, with applications open until March 30 for its "Individual Challenge" category and until April 30 for the "Team Challenge" category.

The challenge aims to "raise the interest of local students and the public [in general] in biodiversity, thus enhancing their scientific literacy and environmental awareness", a joint Monday statement by co-organisers Macau Science Centre (MSC) and integrated resort operator Sands China noted.

The statement added that the challenge aims to contribute to the collection of biodiversity data in Macau and on a global scale through the participants' observations and data analyses.

Participants will observe and document local wildlife species, upload the data and photos to the iNaturalist app and provide suggestions for "innovative biological protection



This handout photo provided by Sands China on Monday shows Sands China Associate Director of Sustainability Stephanie Zhao (趙潔; from left to right), Director of Education and Exhibits Department of the Macau Science Centre (MSC) Oscar Leong (梁思聰) and local biologist and environmental educator Danny Leong Chi Man during a briefing session on February 24 at the centre in Nape.

measures", according to the statement.

The statement added that free training courses and online resources will be provided by the MSC, while Sands China will provide transport for the "Individual Challenge" participants between April 25 and 28 to "facilitate their exploration of the natural environment" in Macau.

The results, according to the competition website, will be announced in mid-July, while an awards ceremony is slated to be held on July 22.

Further information, including registration details, contest regulations and the challenge's schedule, can be found on [www.msc.org.mo](http://www.msc.org.mo) ■

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### Macau Weather

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20°C~26°C

Source: SMG

# Tourism industry boosts employee promotion rates: survey

Yuki Lei

The Macau Management Association (MMA) has conducted an annual survey on the employment mobility of local residents, the findings of which point out that the recovery of tourism-related industries following the three-year COVID-19 pandemic has led to a decrease in the proportion of local employees who have not been promoted in recent years, as well as an increase in the willingness of local residents to pursue career development in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA).

The association sent the findings to the *Post* yesterday.

The association conducted the online survey between May and August last year, collecting 1,042 valid questionnaires. The findings were released yesterday on the MMA premises.

According to the findings, the industry structure of the local job market has, by order of relative importance, shifted from traditional sectors such as catering, wholesale and retail, and banking in 2022 and 2023 to hotel operations, catering, and wholesale and retail last year.

The findings point out that more emphasis has been placed on internal talent development, and promotion channels have been increased in the post-pandemic era, while the proportion of respondents who have not been promoted has decreased “significantly”, falling from 66.43 percent in 2023 and 58.76 percent in 2022 to 44.38 percent last year.

Concurrently, the findings also point out that staff members’ focus on improving their employment conditions has similarly shifted



Representatives from the Macau Management Association (MMA) and Macau Institute of Management (MIM) President Samuel Tong Kai Chung (right) look on during yesterday's press conference about their recent survey, on the MMA premises in Zape. — Photo: MMA

from concerns about “stress” and “balancing salary and benefits” in 2023, indicating that “pay has become a more prominent core demand” for employees. However, the report quoted respondents as pointing out that “there’s relatively less room for a pay rise after changing jobs”, with last year only 57.74 percent of respondents saying that they have received a pay increase after job-hopping, a decrease from 70.68 percent in 2023.

The findings also noted that 17.34 percent of the respondents said they had changed jobs after the COVID-19 pandemic, an increase from 13.21 percent in 2023. However, the report also reveals that the proportion of respondents who had “no definite plan to job-hop in the coming year” rose from 65.04 percent in 2023 to 74.2 percent in 2024, indicating that employees are increasingly

inclined toward employment stability in the short term.

In terms of cross-district employment intentions, the findings show that due to increased news coverage and newly implemented policy guidance, the acceptance of Greater Bay Area mobility by local residents has increased, from 7.05 percent in 2023 to 14.68 percent last year. “But it is still low overall”, the report noted, suggesting that the government proactively create a “highland” for international high-end talents in the Greater Bay Area and promote cooperation among cities in the Greater Bay Area in the cultivation, acquisition, and mobility of talents. The report also stresses the importance of expediting the convergence of professional qualification regulations and the mutual recognition of vocational and

professional qualifications within the cities in the Greater Bay Area.

Citing respondents’ views that enterprises should retain employees by means of “salary increases in conjunction with benefit enhancements” and “clear promotion systems”, as well as by improving the working environment, providing on-the-job training, increasing the flexibility of leave and enhancing internal communication, the association suggested that enterprises optimise the structure of remuneration and benefits, establish transparent promotion channels and career development planning, strengthen induction training\* and professional skills upgrading, reduce work pressure by paying attention to the mental health of employees, and try to adopt the allocation or subscription of share options as a motivational method to adjust the originally rather simple employer-employee relationship to a partnership relationship, so as to attract and retain quality employees.

The association also emphasised the need for employees to enhance their self-improvement and career planning, to develop cross-sectoral generic skills, and to understand the development policies of the Greater Bay Area in preparation for cross-border employment. ■

\* *Induction Training refers to the process of introducing new employees to an organisation, its culture, policies, procedures, and work environment. It is designed to help new hires acclimate to their roles, understand their responsibilities, and integrate smoothly into the workplace. — DeepSeek*

## Telecom bill aims to streamline licensing procedures: telecom chief

Tony Wong

Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT) Director Derby Lau Wai Meng said yesterday that the government was still drafting a telecommunication bill to streamline its administrative procedures for the licensing of different telecom services with the aim of attracting more potential investors to the sector.

The government does not yet have a schedule as to when it will complete the drafting process, Lau said.

Lau made the remarks while speaking to reporters at the bureau’s Communications Museum (CMM) after attending a ceremony where her bureau presented awards to the winners of three competitions organised for school students in celebration of the museum’s 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the bureau’s 141<sup>st</sup> anniversary.

The three competitions were a writing contest for primary students, a scientific and artistic design contest for primary students, and a contest for secondary students to design and make electronic devices.

According to previous news reports, the government’s new telecommunication bill aims to establish a “quadruple play” system, which refers to a service model combining cable television, internet access, fixed line and mobile communication services together.

Some lawmakers and civic leaders have slammed the government for still having failed to establish a “quadruple play” system after proposing it many years ago.

Speaking to reporters yesterday, Lau said that the government’s ongoing efforts to reform the city’s telecommunication sector comprises two main components, namely the drafting of its new telecommunication bill, and the liberalisation of the use of telecom concession assets.

Lau said that the bill is still being discussed and drafted, adding that one of the government’s current proposals to be included in the bill is



Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT) Director Derby Lau Wai Meng speaks to reporters at the Communications Museum (CMM), located on D. Maria II Hill, yesterday.

to streamline its administrative procedures for licence applications and the issuing of such licences for different telecom services, such as expanding the scope of telecom services to be covered by a streamlined process where the government can issue licences after receiving applications from potential operators without having to launch a public tender.

Lau said that this proposal aimed to attract more potential investors to Macau’s telecom sector.

Under an application-based system for issuing licences for telecom services without launching a public tender, there would be no specific number of the maximum number of operators, for which, Lau underlined, the government would ensure the balanced development of the market with the aim of preventing unhealthy competition.

After several extensions, the government’s concession asset agreement with telecom operator CTM was initially scheduled to expire in September last year, but it was then extended again, this time for one more year,



A schoolgirl, one of the winners of the writing contest for primary students, reads out her “letter written to Santa Claus” during yesterday’s ceremony. — Photos: Tony Wong

because of which it is now slated to expire on September 30 this year, when the assets are slated to revert to the government.

The existing agreement authorises CTM to continue exclusively manage the city’s telecom concession assets.

Macau’s other telecom service providers are paying CTM to use its telecom concession assets.

Lau said that the government was now assessing and sorting out CTM’s concession assets, adding that the government was studying the ways on how the city’s telecom service providers could pay to use the assets in a fair way after the agreement expires.

### Still 10,000 users of 3G

Meanwhile, Lau also revealed that currently there are still about 10,000 users of 3G services in Macau.

There will be no more 3G services in Macau from early June this year as no telecom operators applied for the renewal of their 3G licences.

Lau said that the about 10,000 users include individuals and companies, adding

that some of them are inactive users.

Lau underlined that her bureau has told the respective telecom operators to ensure that their existing 3G customers can smoothly switch to other services.

Macau currently has three telecom operators running mobile telecommunications services, CTM, China Telecom (Macau), and Hutchison Telephone (Macau), after SmarTone (Macau) announced in August last year the cessation of its services in Macau.

However, only CTM and China Telecom are running 5G services in Macau, while Hutchison Telephone is only running 4G services here.

The government said early this year that all SmarTone customers had switched to CTM by then. Consequently, SmarTone, the service cessation of which will formally take effect on June 5 this year, currently does not have any customers in service.

Lau also underlined yesterday that CTM will employ all the affected SmarTone staff opting to make the switch. ■

# Lio Kuok Man discusses his journey, upcoming Brahms series

Interview by William Chan

Lio Kuok Man, the Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Macao Orchestra (OM), gave his insights to the *Post* last week about his journey with the local orchestra and the upcoming Brahms performances.

Since assuming his role in October 2022, Lio has been dedicated to pushing musical boundaries for both himself and his fellow musicians. Over the past two years, Lio pointed out, he has initiated numerous projects aimed at exploring new artistic directions. One standout event was the inaugural outdoor concert, “Starry Symphony at the Lawn,” with US trumpeter Chris Botti, held at the Macao Cultural Centre’s plaza, where audiences enjoyed music in a relaxed, picnic-like atmosphere. Lio remarked, “Music should not be confined to concert halls; it can also take place outdoors, creating a communal experience.”



In addition to the outdoor concert, the Macao Orchestra, under Lio’s baton, has integrated ballet into musical performances, notably transforming the “Butterfly Lovers’ Violin Concerto” (梁祝)\* through dance. Last October, the Macao Orchestra collaborated with the Hong Kong Ballet for the world premiere of the show in Hong Kong, followed by a successful performance in Macau in November. Lio expressed his enthusiasm for continuing to explore diverse genres, noting that other cities have expressed interest in hosting their performances.

## Brahms week

The orchestra will host a mini-Brahms festival from this Friday through Sunday, as well as on the following weekend (March 14 and 15). This festival will feature the German composer’s symphonies and all of his concertos, with five solo guest musicians performing with the orchestra. Lio said he has also invited local composer Lam Bun Ching to write a short overture for each concert, thereby promoting local music and harmonising it with the classics.

All “Tribute to Brahms” concerts will take place at the Grand Auditorium, except for this Sunday’s concert entitled “Tribute to Brahms – Free Flow Chamber Music Sunday” in the Small Auditorium. Lio emphasised the charm of free-flow chamber music, a quintessential aspect of Brahms’ style of music and a performance arrangement that is rarely seen nowadays. “Each of the four shows will last approximately 45 minutes. Instead of having them sit through the whole session, audiences can select their preferred performances while enjoying coffee and snacks during the intermission,” Lio said.

## Future performances: Mahler & Stravinsky

Lio envisions substantial advancements for the local orchestra, with an emphasis on diversifying performances and elevating overall skill levels. Featuring Mahler’s Symphony No. 1, “Titan,” in their upcoming June concert exemplifies this vision, as the work is considered a benchmark of orchestral excellence. “In the near future, we hope to perform at least one Mahler piece each year,” he said, highlighting his dedication to challenging the orchestra and enhancing its prestige.



Niu Niu (left), Chinese piano soloist for Brahms concerto on Friday, and Macao Orchestra (OM) Music Director and Principal Conductor Lio Kuok Man perform a piano duet at the Macao Cultural Centre (CCM) at the new concert season opening last August. – Photos provided by Lio Kuok Man

**序幕之夜**  
UMA NOITE DO PRÓLOGO  
NIGHT OF GRAND PREMIERE

07/03/2025  
20:00  
星期五  
Sexta-feira/Friday

**浪漫田园**  
PASTORAL ROMÂNICO  
ROMANTIC PASTORAL

08/03/2025  
20:00  
星期六  
Sábado/Saturday

澳門文化中心綜合劇院  
Centro Cultural de Macau- Grande Auditório  
Macao Cultural Centre Grand Auditorium

演出時間連中场休息約1小時30分鐘  
Aproximadamente 1 hora e 30 minutos, incluindo um intervalo  
Approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes, including one interval

凡購買「致敬布拉姆斯系列」交響音樂會4張門票，不限票價，可免費獲得2張《致敬布拉姆斯-室內樂聆聽星期日》全日所有場次的專業會員票（額滿即止）  
Ao adquirir 4 bilhetes (sem restrição de preço) para concertos sinfónicos da série "Homenagem a Brahms", é possível receber gratuitamente 2 bilhetes para todas as sessões do concerto "Homenagem a Brahms - Música de Câmara de Domingo", até esgotarem.

For the purchase of four tickets, you will receive two free tickets for all concerts of the "Tribute to Brahms - Free Flow Chamber Music Sunday" at any price, while stocks last.

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**牛牛的鋼琴前弦**  
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14/03/2025  
20:00  
星期五  
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**永不褪色的琴譜**  
PARTITURA DE PIANO INTEMPORAL  
THE GREAT MUSIC SCORES

15/03/2025  
20:00  
星期六  
Sábado/Saturday

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Poster for upcoming Tribute to Brahms concert.



Moreover, the upcoming performance of Stravinsky’s “Rite of Spring” next month represents a significant milestone for the Macao Orchestra, marking their first venture into this revolutionary masterpiece. Lio underscores the technical challenges presented by the piece, which necessitates a larger ensemble and a higher level of musicianship, reflecting his enthusiasm for the impending challenges and their potential to further develop the players.

All tickets can be purchased on Macau Ticket website on: [macauticket.com/TicketWeb2023/programme/P-055060](http://macauticket.com/TicketWeb2023/programme/P-055060)

P.S.

*Johannes Brahms (1833-1897): A German composer and pianist of the Romantic era, Brahms is celebrated for his mastery of classical forms and rich, lyrical compositions. His works blend emotional depth with structural rigor, earning him a place among the “Three Bs” of classical music (Bach, Beethoven, Brahms).*

*Gustav Mahler (1860-1911): An Austrian composer and conductor, Mahler is renowned for his expansive symphonies that explore existential themes and incorporate diverse musical influences, from folk tunes to modernist elements. Mahler’s music profoundly influenced 20<sup>th</sup>-century composers.*

*Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971): A Russian-born composer, Stravinsky is one of the most influential figures in 20<sup>th</sup>-century music, known for his stylistic evolution and groundbreaking works like The Rite of Spring, which revolutionised rhythm and harmony. - Source: DeepSeek*

*\*The “Butterfly Lovers’ Violin Concerto” is a renowned piece of classical music composed in 1959 by Chinese composers He Zhanhao and Chen Gang. It is based on the famous Chinese legend of the Butterfly Lovers, which tells the tragic love story of Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai. - Source: Wikipedia*

# Int'l tourists talk about how likely they would recommend Macau: vox pop

**Kristina Vallesteros, Rui Pastorin**

As Macau continues to work towards attracting visitors from around the world, the *Post* was curious to know about the experiences of foreign visitors exploring the city's offerings, as well as how likely they were to recommend visiting Macau to others. To find out more, street interviews were conducted with several tourists around the city centre yesterday afternoon, all noting that although they are only here for a short period, they were mostly happy to be here.

## 'Just come and enjoy'

A couple from Brazil said they were enjoying their 2-day trip to Macau, and when asked how likely they would be to recommend it to other visitors, they responded: "Just come and enjoy...they are not gonna regret it".

Residing in Hong Kong, the couple noted that they visited Macau out of curiosity and, coming from a Portuguese-speaking country, they wanted to learn more about the city, its background, as well as see some of its Portuguese influences. "It's quite lovely".

The couple noted that it was hard to say which part about their

quick trip that they enjoyed the most. On the one hand, they noted, there are beautiful, historic places like the city centre that stand out during the day and are surrounded by culture. On the other hand, they found going around the integrated resorts in Cotai to be an enjoyable experience at night. "All of these places are quite beautiful."

## A worthwhile day trip

Rotter, a Swiss man who was on a day-trip from Hong Kong with his wife and mother-in-law, found his experience in Macau to be "quite good". In terms of whether or not he would recommend the city to other travellers, the 30-year-old said that there wasn't a simple answer.

"I guess I would recommend it because it's a cool, short trip from Hong Kong. I'm not sure if I would travel from Switzerland especially to Macau, but from Hong Kong, a day-trip, of course".

Caroline, Rotter's mother-in-law who planned the trip, also told the *Post* that it was a worthwhile experience to take a day-trip here, particularly because "it's not that far to travel from Hong Kong to Macau".

The 63-year-old added that this marked the first time that she had

returned to Macau in around 30 years, commenting on how much the city has changed since she was last here. "It has changed so much. I barely remember or recognise it because it is now so modernised", while there are also many more people.

## 'I love Macau!'

Craig, aged 40, was originally preparing for a trip to Hong Kong when he first discovered Macau. The English "adrenaline junkie" was drawn in by the bungee jumping activity Macau has to offer, and ultimately decided to take a quick one-day detour during his Hong Kong trip. The bungee jumping experience had been the highlight of his day, he noted.

He added that he was able to enjoy vegan food here in Macau. He heavily praised Puffin' Café, a vegan and vegetarian restaurant, for their food and service. Craig said he would definitely recommend people to come visit Macau, adding: "I love Macau! Everyone's friendly. The weather's beautiful."

## 'All the things that tourists need'

Similar to Craig, Nuneo was also taking a short trip to Macau from



Visitors look around the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ruins of St. Paul's yesterday afternoon. — Photo: Rui Pastorin

Hong Kong. His first impression was that Macau is a "very safe place with good stores" and respectful people. As a Portuguese tourist, he "felt very good as Macau has a mix of Portuguese and Chinese culture".

Nuneo had only been walking around during his day-trip, noting the "interesting details of Portuguese culture" he found in Macau. He particularly enjoyed visiting the Ruins of Saint Paul's, noting that he felt that it was "nice having modern buildings mixed with historical buildings."

Other than going to historical monuments, Nuneo was also able to experience local culture through shopping, local food and the people. "The prices are not very expensive. The people are very polite. It could be a very good experience to come here", recommending people from all over to visit a city he described as "fantastic".

He added: "What I see, I like. I think that Macau has all the things that tourists need. Good food, good shopping, good history, and it's safe and very clean! So, perfect!" ■

## IAM cleans rodent infested areas in Iao Hon market cooked food area

**Ginnie Liang**

Iao Hon Municipal Market's cooked food centre was found to be infested with rodents yesterday, and the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) sent officials to conduct deep cleaning and disinfection, according to an IAM statement yesterday.

According to online footage, rodents have recently been seen scurrying along the air-conditioning ceiling pipes in the cooked food area, which is located on the third floor of the Iao Hon Municipal Market.

Upon receiving the report, the bureau dispatched inspectors to the cooked food area in the wet market, and also carried out comprehensive inspections of its other markets and cooked food centres to strengthen anti-rodent and environmental hygiene measures in the affected areas, the statement said.

The statement did not say whether the cooked food centre needed to be closed down for disinfection and cleansing.

The bureau ordered the management company of the wet market to properly manage the cooked food areas on a daily basis while also placing more rodent bait and traps in the public stall area, and to use diluted bleach to clean and disinfect the ceiling pipes.

In addition, the bureau also requested the stallholders to step up cleansing and rubbish disposal at their stalls, and order their staff to inspect the hygiene condition of their stalls, so as to maintain the overall environmental hygiene of the cooked food centre. ■



This handout photo provided by the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) shows IAM inspectors at the Iao Hon Municipal Market's cooked food centre cleaning the ceiling pipes of the air-conditioning equipment yesterday.

## Police nab local-mainland duo for fake employment

**Ada Lei**

A man from the mainland and a local man were arrested on Friday for their alleged involvement in fake employment, Public Security Police (PSP) spokeswoman Kong Chi Ian said during a regular press conference yesterday.

The mainland man surnamed Han, who is in his forties, was illegally hired as a delivery worker by the local man surnamed Choi, who is in his fifties. Choi owns a cleaning supplies shop in Areia Preta (黑沙環).

According to Kong, the Public Security Police (PSP) received recently a referral from the Judiciary Police (PJ) stating that a mainlander, Han, who was suspected of engaging in illegal online gambling activities, was also believed to be involved

in fake employment. Han found a job in Macau through a mainland employment agency, working as a delivery worker for Choi in a restaurant, as he had claimed. However, the registered workplace address for Han's job was a cleaning supplies shop, not the restaurant that Han had claimed. Han was summoned on Friday to assist in the investigation, while Choi was arrested on the Macau side of Hengqin checkpoint on the same day.

Under questioning, Choi admitted to arranging fake employment for Han in July 2024 to avoid losing the non-resident worker (NRW) quota for his shop. He also said that Han had never actually worked for him and claimed that there was no financial gain involved. However,



Public Security Police (PSP) spokeswoman Kong Chi Ian looks on during yesterday's regular press conference. — Photo: Ada Lei

Han refused to cooperate.

The duo have been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing charges of involvement in arranging fake employment, according to Kong. ■

## Flu weakens, new coronavirus active again: SSM

**Ginnie Liang**

Though the influenza virus in Macau has dropped below the alert level, the new coronavirus has become active again, the Health Bureau (SSM) said in a statement yesterday, reminding high-risk groups, including senior citizens, people with severe chronic underlying diseases and those with low immunity, to have the JN.1 new coronavirus vaccination as soon as possible, and seek medical treatment with antiviral medication as soon as possible after infection.

According to the bureau, the number of emergency department visits in the recent week has decreased compared to the previous week, with an average of 1,190

visits per day, while the number of influenza-like illness (ILI) visits has increased compared to the previous week, with an average of 83 visits per day, which indicates that respiratory viruses are still active in Macau at the moment.

Moreover, data shows that the positive rate for new coronaviruses in the last week was 13.7 percent, a significant increase from 3.8 percent in the previous week, and is expected to remain active in the coming weeks, the statement said, while the positive rate for influenza viruses has been on a downward trend, from 10.5 percent in the previous week to 5.4 percent in the latest week, which is below the alert level of 13.1 percent.

According to the bureau, the overall respiratory infectious disease situation in Macau is stable, with a number of respiratory viruses, all of which are known to be common pathogens, prevalent.

A total of 46 clusters of influenza-like illnesses have been recorded so far in 2025, the statement said, adding that there have been no critical or fatal cases of the new coronavirus in Macau so far this year.

The statement also pointed out that the treatment of anti-coronavirus medication can prevent the virus from replicating, and taking antiviral medication within five days after infection with the new coronavirus can effectively reduce the risk of serious illness and death. ■

# AI terminal push set to empower China's new tech consumption

**Analysis**

BEIJING – Earbuds providing real-time bidirectional translation and simultaneous interpretation, speakers featuring a digital assistant capable of consecutive conversations, and air conditioners with flexible airflow functions.

These are among the new products released by some of China's tech firms, and while coming from different brands, they share one prominent feature: empowered by artificial intelligence (AI).

Amid the recent AI boom, accelerated by the application of DeepSeek, many Chinese consumer electronics and home appliance manufacturers have raced to incorporate AI technologies into their products in a bid to tap the huge potential of the new consumption market.

China's tech firm Xiaomi said last week that it will spend about one quarter of its 2025 research and development investment in AI-related fields. Honor, another well-known smart device maker, announced on Monday its strategy of becoming a leading global AI terminal ecosystem company.

"The AI revolution will reshape a new paradigm in the terminal industry, fundamentally transforming our productivity, society and even culture in

unprecedented ways," said Honor CEO Li Jian.

Global market research firm International Data Corporation (IDC) forecast that shipments in China's smart terminal market will grow by 4 percent in 2025, with total shipments of AI personal computers, AI tablets and AI smartphones expected to increase by 20 percent year on year.

In addition to traditional consumer electronics, the augmented reality (AR) glasses are set to become the next focal point in smart terminal integration, IDC noted.

Rokid, a technology company based in east China's Hangzhou, has gained market attention recently for its new AR glasses that enable wearers to deliver speeches smoothly by playing the script thanks to AR technologies.

On e-commerce platforms, "AI Voice" has become a filter option for home appliances such as televisions. Many consumers indicated in product reviews that smart features are a key consideration when making purchasing decisions.

Hisense has officially integrated DeepSeek AI services in its television products, making its TV products capable of DeepSeek-based smart conversations. Other major TV manufacturers, including Changhong, Skyworth and TCL, have announced the incorporation

of the DeepSeek AI service in select products as well.

The Chinese government has voiced support for the development of the AI terminal sector to leverage its role in boosting consumption.

Last month, a State Council executive meeting called for enhanced efforts to promote AI-related spending and develop new consumer products, scenarios and trends.

The nation's tech hub Shenzhen announced an AI terminal industry development plan on Monday, aiming to lift the market scale to over 800 billion yuan by 2026, with the output of AI terminal products surpassing 150 million units.

This initiative also seeks to build more application scenarios for AI terminal products in fields such as smart manufacturing, smart finance, smart cities, smart elderly care and smart governance.

AI-empowered consumption not only reconstructs consumption experience through technological empowerment, but also stimulates demand and supply through technological integration, said Lao Guoling, head of the research center for e-commerce with Shanghai University of Finance and Economics.

"It is expected to become a crucial link connecting domestic demand growth and consumption upgrading," Lao added. —Xinhua

# Bonne Maman jam 'possibly mouldy': IAM



This file photo provided by the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) yesterday shows the French-made jam products under the brand of "Bonne Maman" possibly contaminated with mould.

**Ginnie Liang**

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) said in a statement yesterday that three batches of French-made jam products under the brand of "Bonne Maman" have possibly been contaminated with mould, urging the public to stop eating the product.

According to Japan's Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA), the statement noted, the problematic products consist of 225 grams of jam with a best-before date of 2026.04.30, namely the brand's Blueberry Jam, Chestnut Cream, and Raspberry Jam.

The statement underlined that the bureau has alerted the local food sector about the issue, while having dispatched its officials to inspect the retail market to prevent the problematic products from being sold.

The bureau also urged the retail food sector, which may have the product in stock, to take the initiative to remove it from their shelves while notifying the bureau for possible follow-up.

**Pharma bureau recalls a batch of TCM drink with excessive Cadusafos**

In addition, the Pharmaceutical Supervision and Administration

Bureau (ISAF) said in a statement yesterday that the Hong Kong Health Department has announced recently that the decoction pieces of a traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), Round Leaf Chastetree or Beach Vitex Fruit (蔓荆子), were found to contain Cadusafos exceeding the limit, because of which the bureau has ordered drug importers to recall the product.

According to the statement, the problematic product, with the batch number of 241108, was exported to Macau last December for sale in local TCM pharmacies and clinics.

Round Leaf Chastetree or Beach Vitex Fruit is the mature fruit of Vitex rotundifolia. In TCM, according to DeepSeek, the fruit and leaves of Vitex rotundifolia are used for their anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and hormone regulation properties. They are used to treat headaches, fever, and skin conditions.

Cadusafos is a chemical insecticide and nematocide often used against parasitic nematode populations. It is used on food crops such as tomatoes, bananas and chickpeas. The compound is highly toxic to nematodes, earthworms and birds but poses no carcinogenic risk to humans, according to Wikipedia. ■



This file photo provided by the Pharmaceutical Supervision and Administration Bureau (ISAF) yesterday shows the Round Leaf Chastetree or Beach Vitex Fruit (蔓荆子) used in TCM.

# Exhibition highlights creative journey of blockbuster 'Ne Zha 2'



This photo taken on Monday shows the façade of an exhibition on the creative journey of Chinese animated blockbuster "Ne Zha 2", in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province. —Xinhua

CHENGDU – An exhibition about the Chinese animated blockbuster "Ne Zha 2" opened on Monday in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province, offering visitors an in-depth look at the film's creation process.

The exhibition, themed "Break or Lose It," features original character sketches, iconic scenes and a milestone wall tracing the film's record-breaking success. Director Jiaozi's hand-drawn posters are also on display.

After his visit yesterday morning, local resident Chen

Jie, 28, praised the exhibition for revealing the dedication of the filmmaking team.

"The care and passion behind every detail of the movie are truly inspiring," said Chen, an interior designer. "The movie is a source of pride for Chengdu and a testament to the potential of Chinese cinema."

The exhibition also features immersive audiovisual experiences, allowing attendees to relive key moments from the film.

Running until June 1, the exhibition is organized by

Chengdu Coco Cartoon Co. Ltd., which co-produced the movie.

Zheng He, a staff member involved in the exhibition, said that the event has been warmly received by the public – with all 1,000 daily visitor slots fully booked for yesterday and the coming weekend.

"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.

—Xinhua

## STOCK MARKETS

### Hang Seng Index closes 0.28 pct lower

HONG KONG – Hong Kong's stock market ended lower yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index down 0.28 percent to close at 22,941.77 points. The Hang

Seng China Enterprises Index dipped 0.62 percent to 8,367.47 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index shed 0.22 points to end at 5,535.64 points.

—Xinhua



# China opens 'two sessions' with commitment to high-quality development amid challenges

## Analysis

BEIJING – The annual “two sessions,” a highly anticipated event on China’s political calendar, began yesterday with the opening of the annual session of the country’s top political advisory body.

The annual session of the nation’s top legislature, the National People’s Congress (NPC), is set to begin this morning.

Offering a critical window into China’s development roadmap for 2025, the final year of its 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (2021-2025), the sessions hold profound significance as the world’s second-largest economy accelerates its shift toward high-quality development and advances Chinese modernization.

This year’s “two sessions,” the first since last July’s reform-themed third plenary session of the 20<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), are expected to shape the country’s policy direction amid an increasingly complex and challenging domestic and global landscape.

## KEY POLITICAL GATHERINGS

President Xi Jinping and other leaders attended the opening meeting of the third session of the 14<sup>th</sup> National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), held at the Great Hall of the People.

Wang Huning, chairman of the CPPCC National Committee, delivered a work report on behalf of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee.

The country’s top political advisor said China has accomplished its main economic and social development targets for 2024, applauding the major achievements made in the country’s modernization drive.

During the eight-day sessions, the Chinese premier, top legislator, top political advisor, chief justice and top procurator will present



The third session of the 14<sup>th</sup> National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) kicks off at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday in the presence of President Xi Jinping (center, front), flanked by senior leaders Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang, Li Xi and Han Zheng on the rostrum. – Xinhua

work reports. Lawmakers will review the government’s annual budget and development plan, and deliberate an amendment to the law on deputies to the NPC and local people’s congresses.

In parallel, ministers from various government departments will hold interviews and press conferences to engage with the public, clarify policies, and address pressing concerns.

This year’s “two sessions” are expected to foster consensus and enhance confidence as China strives to further deepen reforms and achieve the goals outlined in the 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan.

## MACROECONOMIC POLICY SHIFT

This year’s economic growth target, along with an array of widely-watched key macroeconomic indicators for 2025, including the deficit-to-GDP ratio and the inflation target, is expected to be unveiled in

the government work report at the start of the NPC session.

In 2024, China achieved its growth target of around 5 percent, largely thanks to significant macroeconomic measures designed to counter economic headwinds.

Despite the challenges China’s economy has faced in recent years, it is projected to contribute about 30 percent of global economic growth in 2024, making it the largest source of growth for the world economy.

While China’s economy has demonstrated resilience, challenges and problems such as insufficient domestic demand and external pressures persist.

Amid evolving challenges, China has signaled a shift in its macroeconomic stance. Months before the “two sessions” at the tone-setting Central Economic Work Conference, policymakers pledged to roll out more proactive macro policies this year. Notably, they adopted a “moderately loose”

monetary policy, significantly departing from the “prudent” approach over the past 14 years.

China has also pledged to actively use the room for a higher deficit, increase the issuance of local government special-purpose bonds, continue to issue ultra-long special treasury bonds and increase transfer payments from the central government to local governments. The specifics of these pro-growth measures will also be a key focus of this year’s “two sessions.”

## DOMESTIC DEMAND, TECH INNOVATION

The Central Economic Work Conference also outlined key priorities, including boosting consumption, to shore up China’s economy.

Jiang Ying, Deloitte China chair and a member of the CPPCC National Committee, believed that in 2025, the challenges China’s economy will face, brought about by the reshaping of the international

order and geopolitical conflicts, are becoming increasingly complex. “To address these challenges, China will emphasize achieving high-quality growth driven by domestic demand and technological innovation,” she stated.

China has a supersized domestic market and a complete industrial system, with ample room for the upgrades of demand, said Lou Qinqian, spokesperson for the third session of the 14<sup>th</sup> NPC, at a press conference held yesterday.

“To boost the greater stability and resilience of China’s economy, it’s important to reduce the negative impact of external economic shocks while promoting a shift in growth drivers from external demand to domestic demand,” said Jin Penghui, director of the People’s Bank of China (PBOC) Shanghai Head Office.

“This includes boosting consumption and upgrading consumption patterns, particularly by unlocking potential in areas such as services, health and digital consumption,” added Jin, an NPC deputy.

Over the past month, Chinese tech start-up DeepSeek has made global waves with its open-source, widely popular chatbot, fueling expectations that this year’s “two sessions” will highlight the development of new quality productive forces, particularly in areas like AI.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) shows that in 2024, China’s total spending on research and development (R&D) amounted to 3.61 trillion yuan (US\$503.2 billion), securing its position as the world’s second-largest spender on R&D.

Yan Chunhua, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and a national lawmaker, told Xinhua that the applications of these technologies in their respective sectors will create new quality productive forces, fueling the high-quality development of China’s economy and society.

– Xinhua



## Wang Huning calls for pooling wisdom, strength for modernization

BEIJING – Wang Huning, who heads the nation’s top political advisory body, called for more efforts to pool wisdom and strength for Chinese modernization as its members kicked off their annual gathering yesterday.

More than 2,000 political advisors attended the opening meeting of the third session of the 14<sup>th</sup> National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. The agenda for the session was reviewed and approved yesterday.

President Xi Jinping and other leaders including Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang, Li Xi and Han Zheng were seated on the rostrum.

Wang, chairman of the CPPCC National Committee, delivered a report of the top political advisory body’s standing committee.

Wang said China has accomplished its main economic and social development targets for 2024, applauding the latest achievements made in the country’s modernization drive.

He summed up the political advisory body’s work over the past year, saying that political advisors offered suggestions on major issues including deepening reform and advancing Chinese modernization.

The year 2025 marks the final year of the 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (2021-2025), and it is also a pivotal year for the country to further deepen reform comprehensively, Wang said.

He called on political advisors to pool the wisdom and strength of all Chinese people, both at home and abroad, contribute to the fulfillment of the goals and tasks set in the Plan, and lay a solid foundation for a good start to the country’s next five-year plan.

“Let us rally the support of the people, build greater consensus, and pool wisdom and strength for advancing Chinese modernization,” he said.

Jiang Zuojun, vice chairman of the CPPCC National Committee, presented a report on the handling of proposals submitted by political advisors since the last session of the top political advisory body in March 2024.

The CPPCC National Committee received 6,019 proposals from its members over the past year, of which 5,091 were accepted for processing. The response rate for accepted proposals stood at 99.9 percent.

A significant number of opinions and suggestions have been turned into policies and measures, driving economic and social progress over the past year, he said.

– Xinhua, MPD



Wang Huning, chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee, delivers a work report on behalf of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee at the opening meeting of the third session of the 14<sup>th</sup> CPPCC National Committee at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday. – Xinhua