

## Test events for National Games to be held in May & June

Tony Wong

Test competitions for the Macau events to be held in the upcoming 15<sup>th</sup> National Games will take place next month and June, the local preparatory office for the 15<sup>th</sup> National Games announced in a press conference yesterday.

According to yesterday's press conference, some of the spectators for the upcoming test events will be arranged by the preparatory office, while for the other spectators, the preparatory office will distribute tickets to local residents free of charge.

Addressing yesterday's press conference, Pun Weng Kun, who heads the preparatory office, said that details about the arrangements for distributing the tickets will be announced in due course.

The 15<sup>th</sup> National Games will be jointly hosted by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau between November 9 and 21.

Macau will host five of the 15<sup>th</sup> National Games' competition events.

While the games' opening and



Pun Weng Kun (third from right), who heads the preparatory office of the local preparatory office for the 15<sup>th</sup> National Games, Fu Si Na (third from left), deputy head of the preparatory office, address yesterday's press conference at the Macau East Asian Games Dome in Cotai, flanked by representative of four local sports associations. – Photo: MPDG

closing ceremonies will be held in Guangzhou on November 9 and in Shenzhen on November 21 respectively, competition events in Macau will be held between November 7 and 20.

The five competition events to be hosted by Macau will comprise 3x3 Basketball, Men's U18 5-a-side

Basketball, Karate, Table Tennis and Women's Volleyball.

The schedule for Macau's competition events in November is as follows: Table Tennis at Galaxy Arena in Cotai on November 7-20; 3x3 Basketball at Wynn Palace's open-air lawn on November 12-15;

Men's U18 5-a-side Basketball at Studio City in Cotai and Tap Seac Multisport Pavilion in the Macau peninsula on November 10-18; Women's Volleyball at The Venetian Arena and the Macau East Asian Games Dome in Cotai on November 7-19; and Karate at the Macau Forum

complex in Zape on November 6-8.

According to yesterday's press conference, the schedule for the test events in May and June will be as follows: Men's U18 5-a-side Basketball at Tap Seac Multisport Pavilion in the peninsula on May 10-11; Women's Volleyball at the Macau East Asian Games Dome in Cotai on May 31 and June 1; Table Tennis at the Macau East Asian Games Dome on June 14-15; 3x3 Basketball at the Macau East Asian Games Dome on June 21-22; and Karate at the Macau Forum complex in Zape on June 21-22.

During yesterday's press conference, Fu Si Na, deputy head of the local preparatory office said that the operations of the upcoming test events will be jointly planned by her office and the nation's respective sporting associations for the five competitions.

According to Fu, Macau's respective sporting associations will arrange for athletes to take part in the upcoming test events for the five competitions. ■

## Aramco, BYD unveil car technology alliance

SHANGHAI –Saudi Aramco and the Chinese electric vehicle giant BYD announced yesterday an agreement to work together on what they called new-energy vehicle technologies.

The Saudi oil giant is already a partner with Renault of France and the Chinese automaker Geely in a joint venture to produce thermal engines.

Its subsidiary Saudi Aramco Technologies Company (SATC) is now teaming up with the Chinese EV and hybrid vehicle giant, although terms of the accord were not specified.

In a joint statement the companies said the deal aimed to "foster the development of innovative technologies that enhance efficiency

and environmental performance."

It was issued as the Shanghai Motor Show opened yesterday.

Saudi Aramco, the world's largest producer of oil, "is exploring a number of ways to potentially optimise transport efficiency, from innovative lower-carbon fuels to advanced powertrain concepts," said Ali A. Al-Meshari, its senior vice president of Technology Oversight and Coordination.

Luo Hongbin, BYD senior vice president, said "SATC and our cutting-edge R&D capabilities in new energy vehicles will break the boundaries of geography and mindset to incubate solutions that combine highly-efficient performance with a lower carbon footprint." – AFP



Palestinian clergy members hold Mass for late Pope Francis at the Holy Family Church in Gaza yesterday. – AFP

## Pope Francis died of a stroke: Vatican

VATICAN CITY – Pope Francis died of a stroke, causing a coma and "irreversible" heart failure, according to his death certificate released by the Vatican yesterday.

The 88-year-old Catholic leader died at the Vatican yesterday morning (local time), almost a month after being discharged from five weeks in hospital with double pneumonia. (More on pages 5, 8 & 10-14) – AFP

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

The Macau Post Daily

### China, Indonesia hold 1<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Meeting of Joint Foreign & Defense Ministerial Dialogue

China and Indonesia held the First Ministerial Meeting of Joint Foreign and Defense Ministerial Dialogue in Beijing yesterday.

– Story on p. 7

### Asian scam centre crime gangs expanding worldwide: UN

Asian crime networks running multi-billion-dollar cyber scam centres are expanding their operations across the world as they seek new victims and new ways to launder money, the UN said yesterday.

– Story on p. 8

### Himalayan snow at 23-year low, threatening 2 billion people: report

Snowfall in Asia's Hindu Kush-Himalayan mountain range has reached a 23-year low, threatening nearly two billion people dependent on snowmelt for water, scientists warned in a report yesterday.

– Story on p. 9



## LRT suspended for 2 hours due to electricity malfunction

30 passengers stranded on train

Tony Wong

The Light Rapid Transit (LRT) service was suspended for about two hours on Easter Sunday due to a malfunction of its electricity supply system, which caused a train to stall on the track near the Jockey Club Station, leaving about 30 passengers stranded until LRT staff arrived to escort them to the station.

In a statement on Sunday, the government-owned LRT operator, Macau Light Rapid Transit Corporation Limited (MLM), deeply apologised for the inconvenience caused to passengers, pledging to further examine the rail system and improve its method of announcing incidents and informing prospective passengers about ongoing breakdowns and other incidents.

According to the statement, the malfunction of the LRT's electricity supply system began shortly after 11 a.m. on Sunday, causing the service between Taipa Line's Barra Station and Union Hospital Station to be suspended, while the section between East Asian Games Station and Taipa Ferry Terminal Station remained in service.

The services on Seac Pai Van Line and Hengqin Line were not

affected by the malfunction, the statement said.

The LRT service on the Taipa Line gradually resumed at 1:11 p.m., the statement said.

He LRT statement did not reveal for how long the passengers remained trapped during the malfunction.

The Fire Services Bureau (CB) said in a statement on Sunday that after receiving reports shortly before 11:30 a.m. about LRT passengers being trapped in an LRT train on the track near the Jockey Club Station, several fire engines and ambulances were sent to the scene.

When firefighters arrived at the station, the statement said, the passengers who were trapped in the train had already been safely escorted by LRT staff to the station's platform. About 30 passengers were stranded during the period.

A local man in his fifties felt unwell while he was trapped in the train, but his condition improved after being rescued by LRT staff, the statement said, adding that he declined to be taken to hospital.

Sunday's malfunction of the LRT system came after it was affected by a breakdown in September last year and another one in October. ■



This photo shows the LRT train stalled on the track near the Jockey Club Station on Sunday. – Photo courtesy of TDM

## Police arrest local businessman for rape

Ada Lei

A local man was arrested on Friday for allegedly raping his female employee, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Siu Keong said during a special press conference yesterday.

Cheong identified the suspect as a 33-year-old businessman surnamed Ieong. The victim is a young woman from the mainland who has been working as a non-resident worker (NRW) for Ieong since last week, handling promotional and sales activities.

According to Cheong, on Friday evening, the victim accompanied Ieong to host company clients, during which they drank alcoholic beverages. At 9 p.m., the victim felt intoxicated and repeatedly demanded to go home, but Ieong forcibly took her back to the company, claiming it was for "urgent business." The victim was unable to stay awake and fell asleep at a desk. Ieong then suggested she move to a sofa to sleep, and when she refused, he dragged her there, removed her clothing, and raped her. The victim attempted to resist but was too intoxicated to escape. After the assault, she ran to the bathroom, locked herself in, and called the police. After the rape, Ieong returned to his flat and



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the hooded suspect to a PJ van outside the PJ headquarters in Zape yesterday. – Photo: Ada Lei

went back to the company with his domestic helper, along with cleaning supplies, attempting to clean the scene. However, Ieong was caught red-handed by the Public Security Police (PSP), who then transferred the case to the Judiciary Police (PJ).

Under questioning, Ieong refused to cooperate and physically attacked a police officer, resulting

in minor injuries to the officer. The victim underwent a medical examination, which revealed injuries to her hands, and a test confirmed that Ieong had raped her. Cheong did not elaborate on what type of test was performed.

Ieong was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday, facing a rape charge. ■

## 12 vendor stalls in Iao Hon gutted by fire

Tony Wong

A dozen vendor stalls in Iao Hon district were gutted by fire on Sunday night, the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has announced.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau licenses, manages and oversees the operation of vendor stalls.

The vendor-stall area in Iao Hon is one of several such areas overseen by the bureau.

The Fire Services Bureau (CB) said on Sunday night that the fire erupted shortly before 8:30 p.m., after which firefighters extinguished it at around 9 p.m.

No one was injured in the fire. About 30 residents living nearby self-evacuated during the fire.

The Fire Services Bureau said that the blaze was possibly caused

by an electrical short circuit in one of the stalls.

An IAM statement on Sunday night said that the fire affected 24 vendor stalls in total, 12 of which were gutted. The stalls are permanent, side-by-side structures.

The statement also said that seven of the affected 24 stalls were vacant, i.e., non-operational at the time of the fire.

In a follow-up statement yesterday, the Municipal Affairs Bureau said that of the 12 stalls completely gutted by the fire included one that was vacant.

Yesterday's IAM statement said that the bureau will arrange for the vendors of the 11 stalls to operate in other vacant stalls in the area.

The statement said that the

Municipal Affairs Bureau will soon repair the gutted stalls.

Yesterday's statement also said that the bureau will soon implement a new fire prevention measure for the Iao Hon vendor-stall area, according to which the bureau will switch off the area's main power supply every night after its operating hours, with the aim of preventing fire caused by a short circuit in any of the stalls.

The statement also said that the measure will also be implemented for other vendor-stall areas later.

Sunday's blaze came after a number of vendor stalls built in a row located opposite the former greyhound racetrack in Fai Chi Kei were gutted by a fire in January 2023. ■



Firefighters battle a blaze at the area of vendor stalls in Iao Hon on Sunday night. – Photos courtesy of TDM

### Published since Aug 2004

- Director & Chief Editor – Harald Brüning
- Office Manager – Sally Chong
- Marketing Manager – Kevin Cheung King Lok
- Managing Editor – Maria Cheang Ut Meng
- Editors – Lesley Wells, Johnny Un
- Senior Reporter – Tony Wong
- Reporters – Rui Pastorin, Ada Lei, William Chan
- Chief Graphic Designer – Simon Wang
- Graphic Designer – Colin Zhong
- Administrative Assistants – Ester Mak, Carl Leong
- Printed by Tipografia Welfare Lda., 82-86 Rua dos Pescadores
- Wire services – AFP, Xinhua
- Chatbots: Poe, DeepSeek

MACAU POST

### Macau Weather

CLOUDY APART FROM SUNNY PERIODS.

FORCE 3 TO 4 SOUTH TO SOUTHWESTERLY WINDS. RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 65% AND 98%.



24°C~30°C

Source: SMG



# Hugo Calderano, Sun Yingsha win ITTF World Cup



This photo provided by the Sports Bureau (ID) and released on Sunday shows Brazil's Hugo Calderano during the finals for the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) Men's and Women's World Cup Macao 2025 presented by Galaxy Entertainment Group at the Galaxy Arena in Cotai.

**Rui Pastorin**

Brazil's Hugo Calderano and China's Sun Yingsha took home the top prizes in Sunday's finals for the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) Men's and Women's World Cup Macao 2025 presented by Galaxy Entertainment Group.

The week-long competition was held at Galaxy Arena in Cotai.

Calderano, 28, emerged victorious against World No. 1 Lin Shidong from China, who

started strong, leading with a score of 6-11. However, the Brazilian caught up and went on to win the following four consecutive games, with his scores being 11-7, 11-9, 11-4, 11-5, according to a statement on the ITTF website.

The Brazilian had also beaten China's Wang Chuqin, ranked World No.2 in the ITTF men's category, during closely fought battles at the semifinals.

The statement noted that Calderano made history by being the first Brazilian and Pan



Sun Yingsha competes during Sunday's ITTF finals at Galaxy Arena. – Photos: Sports Bureau (ID)

American player to win the ITTF Men's World Cup that was launched back in 1980. The inaugural event was held in Hong Kong, and the first champion was Guo Yuehua of China.

He is the first non-Chinese player since the 2017 Men's singles World Cup winner Dimitrij Ovtcharov of Germany to win a major men's singles tournament, the statement added.

Meanwhile, World No. 1 in the ITTF women's category Sun Yingsha from China

defended her title against her fellow compatriot Kuai Man, winning four consecutive games and scoring 11-9, 11-6, 11-9, 11-6.

Calderano and Sun were awarded the Evans Cup and Hammarlund Cup respectively, according to a Sports Bureau statement released yesterday morning.

The week-long ITTF-sanctioned event, which made its Macau debut last year, featured a total of 96 paddlers, with 48 male and female athletes vying for top prizes. ■

## Weekend market 'Barra Mart' has 21 local brands, runs to May 11

**Rui Pastorin**

"Barra Mart" kicked off on Saturday, with the weekend market showcasing offerings for members of the public for the coming weekends through May 11.

Located at Barra Kitchen, which is just a few steps away from A-Ma Temple, the outdoor market features a total of 21 local brands showcasing their products, among which are organic vegetables, artworks, handmade soaps, flowers, toys, food and coffee, while there is also a play area for children.

Moreover, Saturday's opening event featured music performances and a live painting session by Guangzhou-born artist Dawn Jian (簡丹), who grew up in the US.

"This market isn't just a weekend shopping experience – but also an opportunity for cultural exploration and community connection", with the event also inviting fairgoers to slow down and explore every corner of the market, according to a statement by "Coloane Day", which organises the Barra Mart in conjunction with integrated resort operator MGM.

The statement added that there will be special offers at Barra Mart, with coupons for discounts available at all participating retailers' physical stores, as well as at partner shops such as "Coloane Day", "Seng Ip Pen & Lighter" and "Café Voyage".

The market is open at weekends from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. ■



Booths run by local brands showcase their offerings at Barra Mart at Barra Kitchen on Saturday. – Photos: Rui Pastorin



## Orbis Raffle Charity Sale 2025 starts today



This image downloaded from the Orbis Macau website promotes the Orbis Raffle Charity Sale 2025 that starts today.

**Rui Pastorin**

The annual Orbis Raffle Charity Sale stars today, continuing to raise funds for the non-governmental organisation's (NGO) sight-saving work.

According to an Orbis statement yesterday, raffle tickets are priced at 10 patacas each, with the over two-month long raffle aiming to raise vital funds to support its "global paediatric sight-saving programmes and sustainable training initiatives in communities where access to eye care is limited or unavailable – particularly with specialised paediatric care".

The statement pointed out that there are around 90 million children and adolescents living with some form of vision loss, with over 80 million of them living in countries where access to paediatric eye care is scarce or unavailable.

The statement said that those joining this year's raffle have a chance to win prizes, of which there are 97 up for grabs, such as luxury hotel experiences, round-trip air tickets, and dining and cash vouchers. The prizes, with support from gift sponsors, have a total value of over 433,000 patacas.

Tickets can be bought at Orbis Macau's office on Rua de S. Domingos (板樟堂街), along with nine other sales points in both Macau and on Taipa until June 30, according to the statement. More details can be found on the Orbis Macau website.

One also has the option to buy e-raffle tickets via <https://macaffle.orbis.org/>

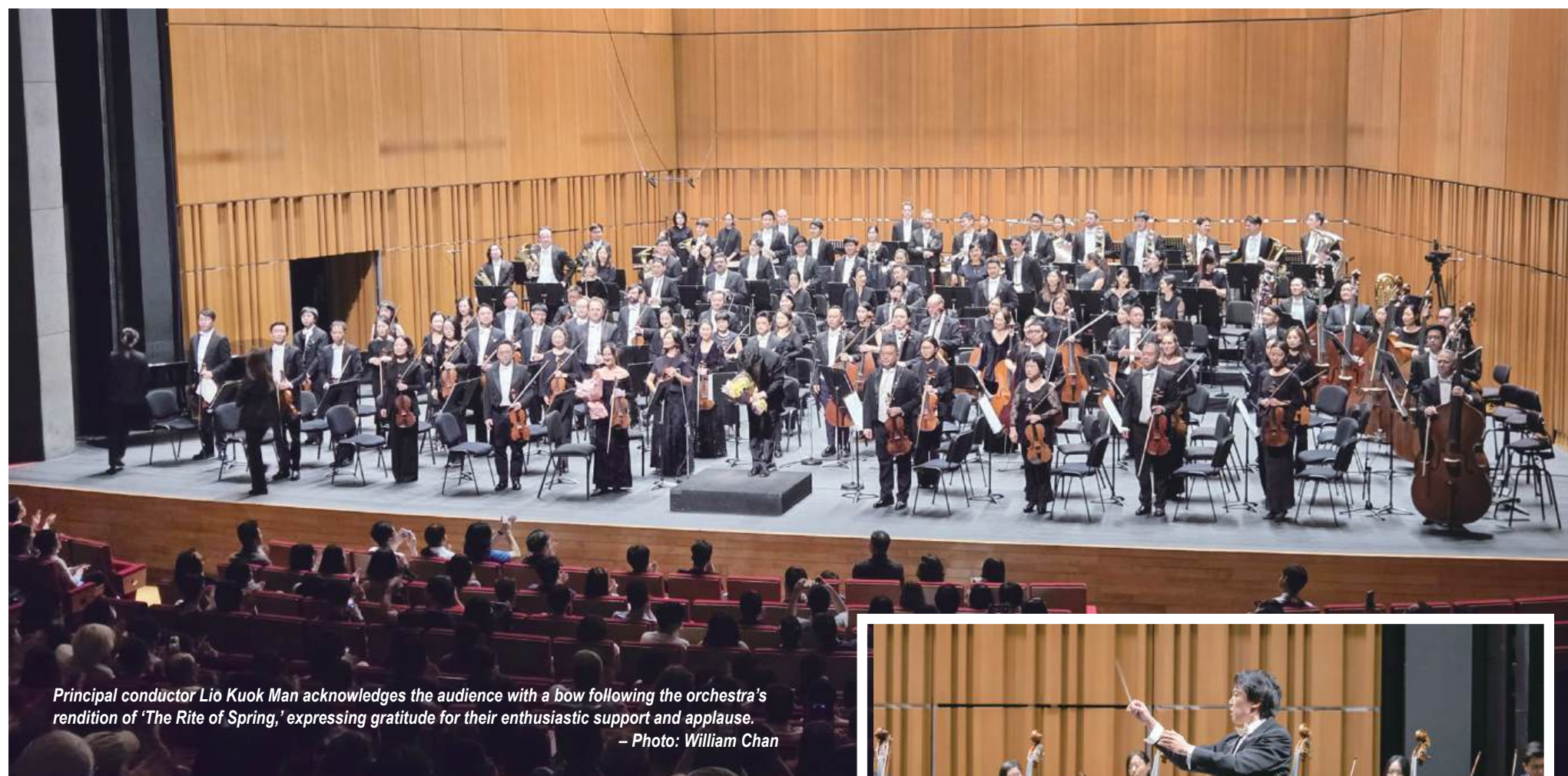
The lucky draw will be held on July 4, with results to be announced on Orbis Macau's website and social media platforms on July 9.

The statement added that the public's accumulated support provides the necessary resources to "drive Orbis' sight-saving mission, allowing more local eye care teams to be empowered with the skills and know-how to treat and prevent avoidable visual impairment and blindness for more children in need".

More information can be found on [www.orbis.org/moraffle](http://www.orbis.org/moraffle)

One can also find information on or sign up for the NGO's Monthly Donation Programmes via <https://donationmac.orbis.org/mdp>, while enquiries can be made by calling 2830 0787. ■





## Macao Orchestra's debut 'The Rite of Spring' performance hits the right tone

Review by William Chan

The Macao Orchestra's performance of Igor Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring" on Saturday night at the Macau Cultural Centre (CCM) was one of the most outstanding classical performances I have witnessed in recent years. It was also the orchestra's debut performance of the Russian composer's signature and particularly demanding piece.

Seated in the last four rows of the Grand Auditorium, I was reminded of its limitations as a concert hall, a point frequently acknowledged within the local music community. Macao Orchestra's principal conductor, Lio Kuok Man, has emphasised the need for more music venues to boost the city's musical development in a past interview with the *Post*.\*

Remarkably, "The Rite of Spring" transcended these limitations, its powerful resonance reaching even the farthest-back seats. This was not solely due to the large orchestra required for the piece, which includes nearly 100 musicians, but also due to the technical prowess of the performers. The trumpet section, in particular, was exceptional, maintaining its brilliance despite the distance. Musical mentors of myself often advise aiming the sound to the back of the hall, a challenging endeavour that the orchestra achieved with remarkable success.

Executing a piece as complex as "The Rite of Spring" requires cohesion among the musicians, a feat made even more challenging by the auditorium's specific acoustics. This was a rare opportunity to witness such a complex performance, as non-local orchestras coming to Macau certainly hesitate to tackle challenging pieces in foreign environments. The Macao Orchestra, performing at the Grand Auditorium monthly, is perhaps the most suitable ensemble for this ambitious undertaking.

To appreciate the impact of "The Rite of Spring," some historical context is necessary. Its premiere on May 29, 1913, at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, was marked by chaos and tumult, provoking a riot due to its avant-garde nature. Enthusiastic supporters clashed with outraged traditionalists, leading to a night of shouting and even physical altercations. Although the ballet's choreography by Vaslav Nijinsky was not featured in Saturday's performance, the orchestration alone was enough to convey the primal and raw themes of nature and sacrifice.

While the element of surprise may have diminished over the past century, the technical challenges of the piece remain. Conductor Lio Kuok Man's ability to navigate these challenges with the orchestra is a testament to his skill. As the first Chinese assistant conductor with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Lio is indisputably Macau's most prominent conductor. Under his leadership, the orchestra executed the intricate piece with finesse and integrity in line with Stravinsky's vision, maintaining coherence within the chaotic orchestration.

Lio's contributions extend beyond the music itself to his ambitions for the Macao Orchestra. In a recent interview, he described his then upcoming performance as a significant milestone for both the orchestra and its members.\*\* Despite the challenges since the establishment of Macao Orchestra Company Limited in 2022, Saturday's concert was a landmark event, featuring 40 guest musicians, including vital roles like the concertmaster and associate concertmaster, as well as French pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet, who delivered a remarkable performance of Saint-Saëns's Piano Concerto No.5.

Earlier this month, concerns were raised about the orchestra's budget deficit after a local online media outlet published the orchestra's budget, leading to a heated online debate about government funding. Lio, who is also the orchestra's music director, undoubtedly considered the potential risks to his reputation and the orchestra's future funding options, yet he chose to



Lio Kuok Man conducts the Macao Orchestra on Saturday night at the Macau Cultural Centre's (CCM) Grand Auditorium. — Photos provided by Macao Orchestra



pursue this ambitious performance. His trust in the orchestra's capabilities, alongside his own, garnered enthusiasm from the audience and respect by many who wish the orchestra success. For the first time, I left the concert with an insatiable desire to hear more, testament to the extraordinary impact of the performance.

\* <https://www.macaupostdaily.com/news/16484>

\*\* <https://www.macaupostdaily.com/news/24261>



## HK doctor backs plan to ban konjac from mini jelly cups

HONG KONG – A family doctor in Hong Kong has voiced support over a government proposal to ban konjac\* from mini jelly cups, saying it would reduce the risk of choking among children.

Konjac is a chewy substance which is added to desserts or used as a thickener. According to the Centre for Food Safety (CFS), the ingredient's choking risk is exacerbated when served in mouth-sized jelly cups, which are often slurped.

Last year, a coroner suggested a ban of the product, after hearing the case of a girl who choked to death while consuming the confectionary at school.

The CFS now proposes banning konjac from containers less than 4.5cm in length or width.

All other pre-packaged konjac-containing jellies not covered by this rule must also come with a label, warning consumers of the choking risk.

Speaking on an RTHK programme yesterday, Dr Lam Wing-wo sided with the proposals.

"I think this is a good direction. The proposals can help prevent

such tragic incidents," he said.

"But I think the most important part is to educate parents. Some parents think konjac is very attractive, or it contains dietary fibre, but for children, the nutrition value of konjac is very low."

Dr Lam explained how konjac leads to choking.

"Konjac does not dissolve in water quickly. So when you eat it and you are unaware that it blocked your throat, it will almost immediately block the airway and lead to lack of oxygen," he said.

Lawmakers will discuss the proposal on Thursday. A ban would take effect six months after the amendments to the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations are passed, with the labelling rule to follow half a year later.

– RTHK, MPD

*\*Konjac is the name of a foul-smelling plant grown in Asia, aka devil's tongue and voodoo lily. Konjac is also the name of various food products made from the plant, including gelatin, used to make noodles and candies, and as a food supplement for weight reduction. – Source: Wiktionary*

## Police nab HK man for stealing over 700 phones

Ada Lei

A man from Hong Kong was arrested on Saturday for stealing 706 second-hand mobile phones, totalling HK\$1.859 million (1.913 million patacas), Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Cheong Siu Keong said during a special press conference yesterday.

Cheong identified the suspect as a 27-year-old man surnamed Cheung, who told the police that he is jobless. The victims are a local middle-aged man and a Hong Kong middle-aged woman.

According to Cheong, the two victims together purchased 706 second-hand mobile phones valued at HK\$1.859 million from a local trading firm. Since they were not in Macau, they entrusted a man, who was still at large at the time of the press conference, to receive and store the phones in a flat in the northern district. The female victim received a message at 3 a.m. on Friday from the man, claiming that he had received and stored the phones. However, he returned to the flat at 5 a.m. and carried the 706 phones in two suitcases to a hotel lobby in Cotai. There, the man handed over the suitcases to Cheung and another accomplice. The



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the hooded suspect to a PJ van outside the PJ headquarters in Zape yesterday. – Photo: Ada Lei

man then left Macau through the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge checkpoint, while Cheung and his accomplice went to their guestroom and then left with a number of bags and backpacks. Afterwards, the duo left Macau through the Barrier Gate checkpoint with the 706 phones. The man then demanded HK\$500,000 to return the phones to the victims, but they refused and reported the case to the police. The police later discovered two empty suitcases in the guestroom, indicating that

the phones had meanwhile been transferred to the mainland.

The police apprehended Cheung on Saturday at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge checkpoint as he was re-entering Macau. Under questioning, Cheung refused to cooperate. Cheong noted that at the time of the press conference the police were still looking for the two other suspects and the whereabouts of the stolen phones.

Cheung was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) yesterday, facing a theft charge. ■

## Chinese, Mozambican hospitals hold remote medical consultation on complex cases

MAPUTO – A successful international remote medical consultation was held yesterday between West China Hospital of Sichuan University and Maputo Central Hospital in Mozambique, as part of ongoing medical cooperation under the 25<sup>th</sup> Chinese medical team in the country.

The session brought together specialists in surgery, orthopaedics, neurosurgery, and emergency medicine from both hospitals. Participants included Chinese experts from West China Hospital, members of the Chinese medical team stationed in Mozambique,

and department heads from surgery, orthopaedics, and neurosurgery on the Mozambican side.

Four medical cases were reviewed during the consultation, with discussions centering on diagnosis, treatment strategies, surgical challenges, and constraints in medical resources.

"This is a very important opportunity for us," said Barnabe António Deusse, director of the orthopaedics department of Maputo Central Hospital, adding that the consultations not only provide access to modern medical insights but also practical solutions for

managing complex cases amid resource constraints.

"It's encouraging to know we can count on a second opinion and expert support when faced with difficult situations. We are always ready to collaborate and present cases for further discussion... We hope there will be more in the future," said Barnabe.

The session concluded with remarks by Atilio Morais, chief of surgery at Maputo Central Hospital, who underscored the value of such exchanges in enhancing clinical expertise and strengthening international medical cooperation.

– Xinhua

## China to sanction UD personnel acting egregiously on HK-related issues: FM spokesperson

BEIJING – China has decided to sanction the US congressional members, officials and heads of NGOs who have acted egregiously on Hong Kong-related issues, foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said yesterday.

Guo made the remarks at a daily press briefing when asked if China will take countermeasures after the United States announced sanctions on several officials of the Chinese central government's agency in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and the government

of the Hong Kong SAR.

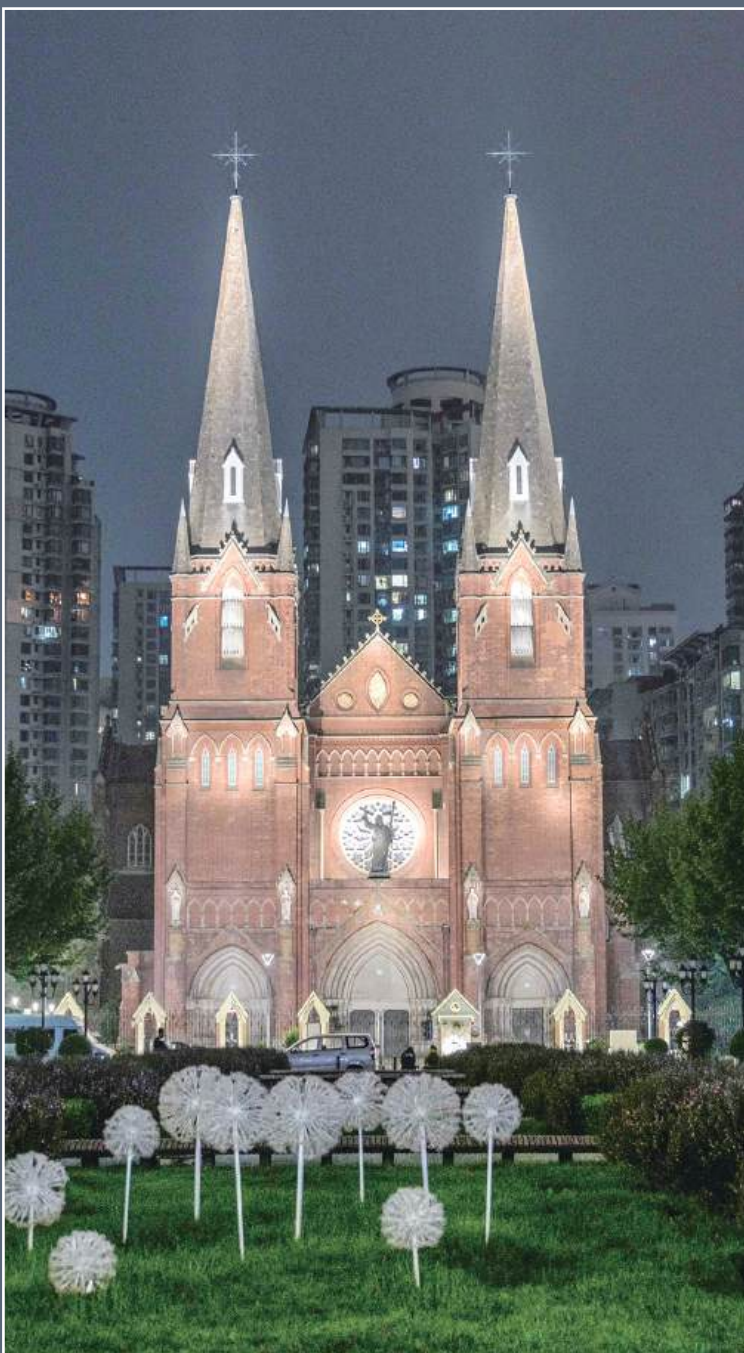
Guo noted that the United States' illegal unilateral sanctions on six officials of the Chinese central government's agency in the Hong Kong SAR and the government of the Hong Kong SAR is a severe interference in China's domestic affairs, including Hong Kong affairs, and a violation of principles of international law and basic norms governing international relations.

In accordance with the Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law of the People's Republic of China, China

has decided to sanction the US congressional members, officials and heads of NGOs who have acted egregiously on the Hong Kong-related issues, Guo said.

"Our message to the United States is that Hong Kong is China's Hong Kong and Hong Kong affairs brook no US interference," Guo said, adding that the United States' erroneous practice on the Hong Kong-related issues will for sure meet China's resolute response and reciprocal countermeasures.

– Xinhua



The Saint Ignatius Cathedral is illuminated in Shanghai's Xuhui district in Shanghai yesterday, following the news of Pope Francis's death earlier in the day. – Xinhua



# China accelerates services opening-up, injects more certainty into world

## Analysis

BEIJING—China is accelerating the opening-up of its services sector through measures such as fast-tracking the implementation of pilot projects, expanding related coverage, and enhancing stress testing and the replication of successful practices, the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) said yesterday.

Against the backdrop of rising unilateralism and protectionism globally, China’s push to expand voluntary opening-up in an orderly manner represents its concrete efforts to inject more certainty and stability into the world, Ling Ji, vice minister of commerce and deputy China international trade representative, said at a press conference.

The State Council has recently approved a plan that aims to expand comprehensive pilot programs to accelerate the services industry’s opening-up, which includes 155 pilot tasks across key areas such as the opening of key services sectors and the promotion of industrial innovation and development, Ling said.

Specifically, pilot tasks include removing foreign ownership caps in services areas such as app stores and internet access within the telecommunication sector.

In the health care sector, pilot tasks include supporting foreign doctors in opening clinics in

China, allowing overseas medical professionals to practice in the country on a short-term basis, encouraging the establishment of foreign-funded nursing schools, and permitting the creation of non-profit medical and elderly care institutions through donations.

In the financial sector, pilot tasks include supporting the development of international factoring services and attracting overseas insurance companies, sovereign funds, pension funds, certification and verification agencies, and environmental, social and governance (ESG) funds to provide financing, investment and technical services for green projects.

In the commerce, trade and cultural tourism sectors, foreign-invested travel agencies will be allowed to offer outbound tourism services, while the transportation sector will explore new multimodal transport models to support the export of new energy vehicles and power batteries, Ling said.

Since 2015, the central government has approved 11 provinces and cities, including Beijing and Hainan, to carry out pilot programs, continuously expanding institutional opening-up with regard to rules, regulations, management and standards. This is fostering a world-class business environment that is market-oriented, law-based and internationalized,

and is providing foreign-invested enterprises in China with diverse application scenarios and a stable, open policy environment for investment and operations.

The newly released plan says that nine additional cities, including Ningbo and Xiamen, will be permitted to carry out comprehensive pilot programs.

Bai Ming, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, noted that the nine cities boast relatively high levels of openness in the services sector, as well as unique industrial characteristics, with some specializing in lifestyle services and others focusing on productive services, which will facilitate differentiated exploration.

The services sector is a key area for foreign investment in China. In the first quarter of the year, the actual use of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the services sector totaled 193.33 billion yuan (US\$26.83 billion), accounting for more than 70 percent of the country’s total FDI, according to the latest MOC data.

In 2024, the 11 provinces and cities participating in the pilot programs attracted 293.2 billion yuan in FDI in the services sector, accounting for roughly half of the national total in that category.

— Xinhua

# Chinese agriculture poised for breakthroughs in new quality productive forces

BEIJING—A new report projects systemic breakthroughs in China’s new quality productive forces in terms of agriculture over the next decade, with grain yield per unit area expected to increase by 7.8 percent.

The China Agricultural Outlook Report (2025-2034), released at the 2025 Agricultural Outlook Conference held at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) in Beijing yesterday reviewed China’s agricultural market performance in 2024 and forecast production, consumption, trade and price trends for major farm products in the course of the next decade.

The report highlighted structural optimization in China’s agricultural supply during 2024 – marked by steady modernization progress and quality development. Notable achievements included enhanced supply of green and high-quality products, with 139,000 new crop germplasm resources collected, 1.07 million livestock genetic materials preserved, and 120,000 aquatic genetic materials documented.

Agricultural technology and infrastructure continued to strengthen in 2024, contributing more than 63 percent to productivity growth, the report said. High-quality crop variety coverage exceeded 96 percent, while comprehensive mechanization reached 75.4 percent. Over 5.33 million hectares of high-standard farmland were newly developed or upgraded, bringing total coverage to 66.67 million hectares.

According to the report, China’s agricultural green development has progressed significantly – with livestock waste utilization reaching 79.4 percent, crop straw utilization exceeding 88 percent, and agricultural film recycling surpassing 80 percent.

The decade-long forecast predicts fundamental improvements in rural revitalization and agricultural modernization. Grain production capacity will achieve both quantitative and qualitative enhancements, with the cultivated area stabilizing at 119 million hectares by 2034.

Supported by accelerated technological advancement and promotion of high-yield, stress-resistant crop varieties, grain yield is projected to rise 7.8 percent to 6,311 kg/ha by 2034. Corn and soybean yields are expected to reach 7,350 kg/ha and 2,775 kg/ha, respectively, the report said.

It noted that rising consumer demand for premium, healthy and diversified agricultural products aligns with China’s economic growth and living standard improvements.

The report also said that agricultural trade patterns will optimize through deeper global supply chain integration – with grain imports expected to decline to 113 million tonnes by 2034. Vegetable and fruit exports are forecast to grow annually by 2.6 percent and 8.8 percent, respectively, maintaining international competitiveness.

Organized by the Agricultural Information Institute of the CAAS, the conference emphasized enhancing comprehensive production capacity to address external uncertainties. It also emphasized advancing AI and emerging technologies to strengthen monitoring systems, reaffirming commitment to building China into an agricultural powerhouse.

The event featured high-level discussions on food security, smart agriculture development, trade coordination mechanisms, and AI-powered market monitoring, reflecting current industry focus areas. — Xinhua

# Chinese scientists develop world’s smallest untethered terrestrial-aerial micro-robot

BEIJING – Enabling robots to walk, run, jump, fly, climb and “lock” into arbitrary shapes in real-time is crucial for expanding their application scenarios.

A research team from Tsinghua University in Beijing has developed a thin-film-shaped small-scale actuator which enables micro-robots to continuously transform their shapes and “lock” into specific configurations, much like the “Transformers” seen in the famous series of science fiction action films, and thereby significantly enhancing their environmental adaptability. This breakthrough has been published online in *Nature Machine Intelligence*, a leading international journal.

“By integrating this actuator with our Lego-inspired design strategy, we created the world’s smallest and lightest untethered terrestrial-aerial micro-robot known in the relevant literature, measuring just 9 centimeters in length and weighing 25 grams,” said Zhang Yihui from Tsinghua University’s School of Aerospace Engineering and the State Key Laboratory of Flexible Electronics Technology.

Actuators, the “heart” of micro-robots, are devices with controllable shape-morphing capability.

“Developing untethered, ultra-compact micro-robots with complex shape-morphing capabilities is



This photo taken on January 2 shows untethered terrestrial-aerial micro-robots developed by a research team from Tsinghua University, in Beijing.

— Xinhua

extremely challenging,” Zhang explained.

Existing actuators measuring under five centimeters in size typically face challenges in achieving continuous shape morphing and locking, severely limiting miniaturization and untethered control of multimodal robots.

Through innovative synergistic material-structure design, Zhang’s team developed a miniature actuator as small as a few millimeters in size. Serving as a “morphable exoskeleton,” it can integrate functional components like sensors and motors to build complex robotic systems.

Notably, this actuator can be electrically controlled to continuously morph into any desired shape and then “lock” the deformed configuration, which was difficult to achieve with previous small-scale actuators.

“Using the Lego-inspired design strategy, we constructed an untethered terrestrial-aerial micro-robot capable of agile aerial flight and land movement, and with a speed of up to 1.6 meters per second on the ground,” Zhang said.

In addition, the team also developed a 4.5-centimeter-high, 0.8-gram mini-“Transformer” actuator employing more than ten actuator units, as well as a multi-functional wheeled robot that can morph into “sports car,” “winged car,” and “van” modes.

Inspired by grasshoppers and other insects, researchers incorporated biological morphologies and locomotion capabilities into their designs.

This work offers new ideas and routes for the development of micro-robots. “Future applications include equipment diagnostics, geological surveys, and hazardous environment operations,” Zhang said. “The actuator can also be used in bio-electronic devices, enabling the development of deployable implantable medical devices and VR/AR haptic interfaces.” — Xinhua

# China’s latest heritage survey highlights modern-era sites, architecture

BEIJING – China’s ongoing fourth national cultural heritage survey will prioritize the identification of historic sites and architectural works from the modern era, according to a directive that the National Cultural Heritage Administration made public yesterday.

The circular urges local authorities to step up their investigations of modern-era buildings with regional features, distinctive styles, special functions, or historic value – especially those tied to local industrial or community development, or designed by prominent architects.

It stipulates that qualifying sites should be documented and added to the national heritage protection system, regardless of previous designation status.

It also calls for strengthened efforts to identify cultural relics linked to major phases of contemporary

Chinese history, including the legacy of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the country’s reform and opening-up period, and the evolution of socialism.

A separate circular from the survey’s leading group office issued on the same day emphasizes intensified discovery work in historically significant areas such as old city centres, famous towns and villages, heritage districts, and traditional rural settlements.

All structurally intact buildings built before 1911 should be surveyed and protected if they meet relevant criteria.

Launched in 2023 and running through 2026, the ongoing survey is China’s first national cultural heritage survey in over a decade, marking a major nationwide effort to reassess and expand the country’s cultural relics inventory. — Xinhua



# Wang Yi holds talks with Indonesian counterpart

BEIJING – Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks with his Indonesian counterpart Sugiono in Beijing yesterday.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, said China and Indonesia have reached an important consensus on building a China-Indonesia community with a shared future that has regional and global influence, and on upgrading the cooperation pattern from “four pillar” cooperation covering political, economic, people-to-people exchange and maritime aspects, to “five-pillar” cooperation with the addition of security as the fifth

pillar, opening up broad prospects for China-Indonesia cooperation.

He said the two sides should strengthen cooperation on anchoring high-quality collaboration, upholding free trade, developing emerging industries, and expanding livelihood-focused partnerships.

Noting that this year marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bandung Conference, Wang said that amid the US-instigated global trade war and headwinds battering economic globalization, China and Indonesia, as upholders of economic globalization and trade liberalization, should take

historic initiative to enhance mutual trust and cooperation.

Wang said that the two countries should work together to promote the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and the Bandung Spirit, safeguard the multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core, defend international fairness and justice, and send a signal of unity and openness to the world, further demonstrating the regional and global influence of China-Indonesia relations.

Noting that China is Indonesia’s largest trading partner and a major source of foreign investment, Sugiono said Indonesia has always regarded the country as one of

its most crucial partners, and that bilateral relations have maintained strong momentum over the years.

Noting that this year marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Indonesia, Sugiono said Indonesia attaches great importance and is committed to deepening comprehensive relations with China across all fields.

He added that Indonesia looks forward to enhancing exchange with China at all levels, and to expanding practical cooperation on trade, investment, agriculture, fisheries, health care, clean energy, scientific innovation as well as people-to-

people and cultural exchange. Indonesia is also looking forward to continuously strengthening its comprehensive strategic partnership with China, and to promoting more dynamic, resilient regional development and prosperity.

On the same day, a reception was held in Beijing to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bandung Conference.

The event was attended by Wang Yi, Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun, Sugiono and Indonesia’s Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin. – *Xinhua*

## Healthcare sector sees progress in expanding foreign participation

BEIJING – China’s healthcare sector is making steady progress in opening up to foreign investment and expertise, with more than 150 joint-venture and wholly overseas-invested medical institutions now operating nationwide, a senior health official said yesterday.

Over 1,500 healthcare professionals from outside the mainland are currently practicing in mainland China on a short-term basis, said Jiao Yahui, a senior official with the National Health Commission (NHC), at a press briefing in Beijing.

These developments come as China rolls out policies and measures to expand foreign participation in its health care services sector, in part of a broader effort to open up the country’s services industry.

The latest moves include allowing qualified foreign doctors and those from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan to open clinics in designated pilot regions. The measures also support short-term practice for overseas medical professionals, with streamlined and simplified approval processes.

These actions fall under a work plan to expand access to China’s services sector for foreign investment and professionals, which was released last week by the Ministry of Commerce (MOC).

With data security and patient privacy safeguarded, the plan also encourages the joint development and sharing of health and medical databases. It calls for the increased standardization of clinical data and improved sharing between hospitals.

Together with previous pilot efforts such as a move to permit the establishment of wholly foreign-owned hospitals, these new moves highlight China’s ongoing commitment to opening up its health care system, Jiao said. “Our goal is to introduce high-quality medical resources to better serve the diverse and personalized health care needs of both Chinese citizens and foreigners living in the country, while complementing the public health care system,” Jiao noted.

Looking ahead, the NHC will work to promote commercial health insurance as a means of supporting overseas-funded medical institutions. It also aims to encourage these institutions to adopt China’s version of international hospital accreditation standards, enabling alignment with global health insurance systems, according to Jiao.

In late 2024, China introduced a pilot program allowing the establishment of wholly foreign-owned hospitals in nine major cities, including Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin. – *Xinhua*

## China, Indonesia hold 1<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Meeting of Joint Foreign & Defense Ministerial Dialogue

BEIJING – China and Indonesia held the First Ministerial Meeting of Joint Foreign and Defense Ministerial Dialogue in Beijing yesterday.

Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Defense Minister Dong Jun chaired the meeting, together with Indonesia’s Foreign Minister Sugiono and Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin.

Wang said the two heads of state have met twice in the past year, and jointly outlined a blueprint for the development of China-Indonesia relations in the new era. Under the personal attention of the two heads of state, China and Indonesia have established and launched the Joint Foreign and Defense Ministerial Dialogue, he added.

Noting that this is the first Joint Foreign and Defense Ministerial Dialogue between China and a foreign country, Wang said it reflects the high level of strategic mutual trust between the two countries, and also further enriches the connotation of a China-Indonesia community with a shared future with regional and global impact.

Wang called on the two sides to push bilateral relations to higher level, under the strategic guidance of the important consensus reached by the two heads of state.

Dong said China is willing to work with Indonesia to implement



Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Foreign Minister Wang Yi (second from right), Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun (right), Indonesia’s Foreign Minister Sugiono (second from left) and Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin attend a reception marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bandung Conference, in Beijing yesterday. – *Xinhua*

the consensus reached by the leaders of both countries and build a new pattern of defense and security cooperation characterized by deeper strategic mutual trust, better institutional frameworks, more robust coordination, and stronger foundation in addressing challenges.

Sugiono noted that Indonesia is willing to work with China to further strengthen political mutual trust, enhance exchanges at all levels, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, and strengthen communication and collaboration within multilateral frameworks.

Sjafrie expressed Indonesia’s

willingness to enhance cooperation with China in fields including defense and maritime security to maintain regional peace and stability.

The two sides engaged in in-depth communication on international and regional issues of mutual concern.

After the meeting, Wang and Sugiono signed a memorandum of understanding on establishing a comprehensive strategic dialogue mechanism between the Chinese and Indonesian governments.

During the meeting, the two sides signed documents on cooperation in maritime security and other areas.

– *Xinhua*

## China’s first 1,000-kW battery-powered locomotives rolled out in Dalian

DALIAN – China’s first batch of 1,000-kilowatt battery-powered locomotives officially rolled off the production line at CRRC Dalian Co. Ltd. yesterday in Dalian, Liaoning Province.

Equipped with high-capacity lithium iron phosphate batteries, the first batch of 10 locomotives will be used for transportation at steel enterprises.

Featuring liquid-cooled, fast-charging technology, the locomotives

support ultra-high-power charging of up to 680 kilowatts, achieving a full charge in just 70 minutes.

The liquid-cooled charging pile system ensures efficient, stable charging by enabling rapid heat dissipation.

CRRC Dalian is an affiliated company under CRRC Corporation, China’s top train manufacturer and the world’s largest supplier of rail transit equipment. – *Xinhua*

## Philippines’ military drills with US opposed by regional countries: FM spokesperson

BEIJING – The Philippines’ decision to conduct large-scale military drills with the United States has been detested and opposed by regional countries, a foreign ministry spokesperson said in Beijing yesterday.

Spokesperson Guo Jiakun made the remarks in response to the annual military drills between the United States and the Philippines, which started yesterday. The exercise has come as Beijing and Manila are in a dispute over the South China Sea.

“With the world being hit by unilateralism, protectionism and bullying, countries in this region

have been calling for greater solidarity, coordination, and joint efforts to keep the region stable and respond to challenges,” noted Guo at a daily news briefing.

Against this backdrop, the Philippines chose to conduct the large-scale military drills with this country outside the region and brought in strategic and tactical weapons to the detriment of regional strategic stability and regional economic prospects, which puts them on the opposite side of regional countries, said Guo.

“This act has been detested and

opposed by regional countries,” he added.

Guo noted that the Taiwan question is purely China’s internal affair and is at the core of China’s core interest.

China firmly opposes any country using the Taiwan question as an excuse to strengthen military deployment in the region, heighten tensions and confrontation, and disturb regional peace and stability, Guo stressed.

“We urge relevant sides not to make provocation on the Taiwan question. Those who play with fire will perish by it,” said the spokesperson. (More on Philippines on p.8) – *Xinhua*