

Macau's CNY visitors exceed 1.2 million in 7 days

Tony Wong

Macau recorded some 1.21 million visitor arrivals during the first seven days of the Chinese mainland's nine-day Chinese New Year (CNY) "Golden Week" holiday period this year, representing a daily average of 173,212, according to data released by the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) yesterday.

This year, the Chinese mainland's Spring Festival holiday period lasts nine days for the first time, beginning on February 15, the day before the eve of the Chinese New Year of the Horse.

The Year of the Horse began on Tuesday last week.

Today, the seventh day of the Year of the Horse, is the last day of the Chinese mainland's CNY holiday period this year.

Last year, the Chinese mainland's Spring Festival holiday period lasted eight days, beginning on the eve of the Chinese New Year of the Snake.

According to the latest MGTO data released yesterday, Macau recorded 131,960 visitor arrivals on the first day of this year's Spring Festival holiday, 85,894 on the second day, 147,031 on the third day, 186,537 on the fourth day, 227,905 on the fifth day (the third day of the Year of the Horse), 218,968 on the sixth day, and 214,187 on the seventh day (last Saturday).

The visitor-arrival data released by MGTO were slightly adjusted from the visitor-arrival data released by the Public Security Police (PSP), which run Macau's immigration service.

Consequently, Macau recorded 1,212,482 visitor arrivals during the first seven days of the Chinese mainland's nine-day Spring



Tourists crowd Rua de S. Paulo yesterday, a narrow pedestrian-only street near the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ruins of St. Paul's landmark. - Photo: Tony Wong

Festival holiday this year, i.e., between Sunday and Saturday last week, representing a daily average of 173,212 during the period.

Macau sets single-day record of visitors during this year's CNY

The 227,905 visitor arrivals recorded on the third day of the Year of the Horse set a new record of single-day number of visitor arrivals, breaking the previous record set on the third day of the Year of the Pig in pre-pandemic 2019, at 226,326.

The number of visitor arrivals recorded during the first seven days of this year's Spring

Festival holiday period is not comparable with the number recorded during the first seven days of last year's Spring Festival holiday period, because last year's holiday period began on the eve of the CNY while this year's holiday period began on the day before the eve of the CNY.

According to the data released on the MGTO website, the number of visitor arrivals recorded on the third day of the Year of the Horse (2026) represented a 4.0 percent increase from the number recorded on the third day of the Year of the Snake (2025).

The number of visitor arrivals recorded on the fifth day of the Year of the Horse represented a 13.3 percent increase from the number recorded on the fifth day of the Year of the Snake, according to the MGTO data.

During the first seven days of this year's nine-day Spring Festival holiday in the mainland, according to the MGTO data, Macau recorded 932,752 visitor arrivals from the Chinese mainland, accounting for 76.9 percent of the total.

Customarily, Macau's CNY public holiday lasts three days. This year, it was between Tuesday and Thursday last week. ■

'Devouring hydra': French cinema stars warn AI is 'plundering' industry

PARIS – Just days before France's version of the Oscars, thousands of French actors and filmmakers have warned that AI tools are "plundering" talent across the industry.

"We are facing a profound upheaval in our profession with the arrival of artificial intelligence," said the op-ed in *Le Parisien*, which was signed by some 4,000 artists.

Signatories included many of French cinema's brightest and best, such as actors

Swann Arlaud, Franck Dubosc and Elodie Bouchez.

While AI was "extraordinarily valuable in certain fields", they said it was a "devouring hydra for artists like us".

The op-ed, released ahead of the 51st edition of the French film industry's César Awards, warned of the rise of "unauthorised voice cloning" which has taken the industry by storm.

"Not a week goes by without an artist sounding the alarm over the brutal

competition AI is inflicting on their work," it said.

It also pointed to the hundreds of lesser-known artists who "can't afford to refuse a contract" and sign away their voices to AI "despite the risks to their image and their future".

"This organised plundering is not hypothetical – it's happening here and now. It's intolerable and it's taking place before our very eyes."

The artists called for a clear "legal

framework" so that AI can "coexist with artistic work, with the protection of copyright and related rights".

In recent months, the industry has introduced various initiatives to tackle the threat posed by AI and the flood of content replicating artists and their voices almost perfectly.

In January, eight French voice actors sent formal notices to two US companies that had cloned their voices without consent. - AFP

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US Secret Service kills man trying to access Trump Florida estate

US Secret Service agents and a sheriff's deputy fatally shot a man armed with a shotgun who breached the security perimeter of President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida yesterday. - Story on p.14

Andrew's arrest hands King Charles fresh royal crisis

King Charles III has been left wrestling with a new test after the arrest of his brother Andrew, the latest in a series of painful personal shocks to mar his reign. - Story on p.15

Lula urges Trump to treat all countries equally

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva urged his US counterpart Donald Trump yesterday to treat all countries equally after the US leader imposed a 15 percent tariff on imports following an adverse Supreme Court ruling. - Story on p.16

CNY holidays lead to mixed reactions: vox pop

Khalel Vallo

Yesterday, the sixth day of the Year of the Horse, the *Post* interviewed three locals and a foreign tourist to gauge whether their expectations of the holiday period matched reality.

While visitor numbers appeared to be very strong across major tourist areas, spending patterns and crowd distribution told a more nuanced story.

The Chinese New Year (CNY) began last Tuesday. The Chinese mainland's nine-day CNY public holiday ends tonight. Macau's three-day CNY public holiday lasted between Tuesday and Thursday last week.

Marjorie, 32, who works in a café near Rua do Campo, described business during the holiday period as "steady" but below last year's turnover. "Actually, it's not really that bad. It's still okay. It reached more than our daily quota, but it's much less compared to last year during the Chinese New Year," she said.

For the first time, Marjorie's café opened on the third day of the



Tourists sample free of beef jerky at a shop on Rua de S. Paulo close to the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ruins of St. Paul's and Na Tcha Temple last night.

— Photo: Khalel Vallo

Spring Festival, a departure from its usual three-day closure. However, she noted that the additional opening did not translate into stronger-than-expected gains. "Even the aunties [regular female customers] they would normally give out lai see [but this time they didn't], she said, adding that she also observed a subtle cultural shift, suggesting that

holidaymakers' customary spending felt more restrained this year.

Meanwhile, 20-year-old Stephanie spent much of the holiday with her family at Galaxy Macau in Cotai. She described heavy crowds at restaurants, cinemas and on buses. However, Stephanie was surprised by what she perceived as lighter casino traffic than normal during

the Spring Festival, as the Chinese New Year is also known. "I went to the casino, only to find it wasn't crowded at all, as if no one wants to gamble" she remarked.

Stephanie also attended a stand-up comedy show that, she said, was watched by an audience of 10,000, adding that crowd control even in Cotai was well managed. However, regarding the Tap Siac CNY market, she visited it on an afternoon and found the atmosphere lacking compared to the evenings. "It looks kind of strange without illuminations," she said, reiterating her earlier criticism that many stalls were selling "Taobao content". Even for original goods, Stephanie said, she felt "the quality was not as good as those in the biannual Craft Market event last year".

Adam, 21, took a quiet approach to the CNY holiday period. "The first three days, I basically just stayed at home," he said, avoiding large crowds. However, he observed through social media that tourist

numbers were high. He recalled seeing packed border checkpoints while passing through them a day before the holiday, with travellers heading to Macau and Hong Kong. Compared with last year, Adam said, he was less inclined to join festivities. "Last year, I was more informed and more willing to go outside, but this year, due to work, I focused more on my part-time duties," he said, adding that previous crowd experiences made him reluctant to venture out.

Meanwhile, 23-year-old Jean described his experience as satisfying. He watched the fireworks with his girlfriend and introduced her to the origins of CNY traditions. "It was worth it despite the crowded area," he said. While noting that this year felt even more crowded than during his previous visit, he stressed that the overall experience remained positive.

Marjorie and Stephanie were interviewed by the *Post* in an article published on January 30 — <https://www.macaupostdaily.com/news/27297>. ■

Police apprehend mainland woman for exchanging fake banknotes

Armindo Neves

The Judiciary Police (PJ) apprehended a woman from the Chinese mainland for exchanging fake banknotes on the first day of the Year of Horse, PJ spokesman Cheong Siu Keong said during a special press conference on Wednesday.

Cheong identified the suspect as a 30-year-old woman surnamed Yan who claimed to be jobless.

Around midnight on Tuesday, a gambler at a casino in Cotai wanted to exchange 29 HK\$1,000 banknotes into gaming chips at a gaming table. Cheong said that the table's dealer noticed that the colour of the banknotes appeared unusual, later confirming that the 29 banknotes were counterfeits. Casino security then reported the case to the police. Cheong said that the gambler told the police that she had obtained the banknotes earlier that day in a casino toilet after being approached by an individual identified as Yan, who offered to exchange them for 25,955 yuan.

PJ officers arrested Yan at the casino, according to Cheong, and seized 51 counterfeit banknotes at her hotel guestroom in Cotai.

Upon examination, Cheong said, all 80 notes were confirmed to be fakes, lacking watermarks



Evidence displayed at the PJ headquarters in Zape on Wednesday shows 80 counterfeit HK\$1,000 notes and a smartphone. — Photo: Armindo Neves

and security threads, adding that the printing quality was crude, with all authentic features missing.

Cheong said that PJ officers seized the counterfeit notes as well as a mobile phone as part of the investigation.

Cheong also said that regarding whether Yan is involved in other cases and the source of the counterfeits, the Judiciary Police are continuing their investigation.

Yan has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP), facing charges of fraud and exchanging counterfeit currency. ■

Police bust mainlander for stealing, gambling away girlfriend's money

Armindo Neves

The Judiciary Police (PJ) arrested a man from the Chinese mainland for stealing and gambling away his girlfriend's money on Chinese New Year's Eve, PJ spokesman Cheong Siu Keong said during a special press conference on Wednesday.

Cheong identified the suspect as a 44-year-old man surnamed Wu who claimed to be jobless.

Cheong said that on Valentine's Day, February 14, a mainland woman and her boyfriend, Wu, checked into a hotel guestroom in Cotai and put HK\$500,000 in cash into the in-room safe.

On Monday, Chinese New Year's Eve, Cheong said that when the victim woke up she discovered that the money had vanished and Wu was uncontactable, prompting her to report the case to the police. Upon investigation, Cheong said, PJ officers intercepted Wu in the evening, adding that Wu admitted to stealing the money and gambling it all away in a casino in the city centre.

Wu was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) on Wednesday, facing a theft charge.

Police nab mainlander for stealing gaming chips involving HK\$700,000 from friend

Meanwhile, the Judiciary Police (PJ) nabbed a man from the Chinese mainland for stealing gaming chips worth HK\$700,000 from a male friend, PJ spokesman Cheong Siu Keong said during a special press conference on Wednesday.

Cheong identified the suspect as a 36-year-old business man surnamed Zhang.

According to Cheong, the victim arrived in Macau on February 10 for gambling and stayed in a Cotai hotel guestroom booked by Zhang. In the early morning of Chinese New Year's Eve, last Monday, Cheong said that the victim placed a bag containing HK\$700,000 in gaming chips on a chair in the room before going to bed. Upon waking up on Tuesday morning, the victim found that Cheong had returned to



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the hooded theft suspect surnamed Wu to a PJ van outside the PJ headquarters in Zape on Wednesday.

— Photo: Armindo Neves

the room, confessing that he had gambling away all the HK\$700,000 worth of chips, according to Cheong, adding that the victim reported the matter to the police right away.

Zhang confessed that he had returned to the room around 7 a.m. on that day, stolen the chips and then gambled them away in the casino.

Zhang was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) on Wednesday, facing a theft charge. ■

Police bust mainland man for drug-trafficking & drug-taking

Armindo Neves

The Judiciary Police (PJ) arrested a man from the Chinese mainland for drug-trafficking and drug-taking last Monday, Chinese New Year's Eve, PJ spokesman Cheong Siu Keong said during a special press conference on Wednesday.

Cheong identified the suspect as 39-year-old man surnamed Wu who claimed to be jobless.

On February 16, Cheong said that PJ officers received a report from a hotel in Cotai that a hotel employee had discovered suspected

drug paraphernalia while cleaning a guestroom. Upon arriving at the scene, PJ officers arrested Wu, and seized 127.2 grams of crystal meth, 38.2 grams of ketamine, 35 ecstasy pills, what appeared to be a kind of "red drug powder", drug taking paraphernalia, packaging tools and HK\$20,000 — suspected proceeds from selling drugs.

Cheong said that the total value of the confirmed drugs was around 426,000 patacas.

According to Cheong, the investigation revealed that Wu

entered Macau through the local airport on February 11. Due to strong indications that Wu was involved in drug use and trafficking, Cheong said that at the time of Wednesday's press conference PJ officers were still tracing the source of the narcotics and looking for other individuals possibly connected to the case.

Wu was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) on Wednesday, facing charges of drug-trafficking, drug-taking, and possession of drug taking paraphernalia. ■

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Wynn is delighted to welcome a magnificent Year of the Horse with the vibrant art piece "Ni Shang Tian Ma," created by Master of Dunhuang Culture Chang Shana with inspiration from the Mogao Cave chariot horse.



‘Flowing Memory’ exhibition at Creative Macau presents 40 oils

Interview by Rui Pastorin

Christopher Lei Weng Kuong is continuing to showcase a raft of oil paintings in his exhibition “Flowing Memory: The Artistic DNA of Macau in the Eyes of a Painter”, which is now entering its final six days at Creative Macau in Nape.

With 40 paintings on show, each piece was created over a period of around four years until 2025, most presenting layers for observers to peel back and take a closer look.

Having opened earlier this month, Lei told the *Post* during the recent launch ceremony that the exhibited works can be summed up into four concepts: “DNA”, which refers to a chapter in the 19th century that he highlighted as serving as an important base of Macau oil painting; the dialogue between the past and the present, along with time and space; Macau’s recent stories that features pieces with the city’s events and happenings; and lastly, the “stable scenery” that observes the world.

Introducing the artworks, Lei said that the exhibition starts with pieces presenting “DNA” that shows a junction between East and West, with an example depicted in the piece displayed at the forefront titled “Studio of 19th Century” that shows interaction between British artist George Chinnery (1774-1852) with Chinese artists and students. Lei said that works in this section also presents exchanges of or introductions to techniques, among others, along with those that show how Chinnery brought with him ideas from Britain and how it affected oil painting in Macau and elsewhere in southern China. It also presents how techniques and themes have evolved, showing a crossover or “transcendence” of culture.

Following this is a dialogue between time and space, where one will continue to find a dialogue between the past and present, along with works featuring other historic figures, the city’s landmarks in their past and present state, as well as pieces like “Carousel Crossing” and “Tunnel Crossing” that allows one to reflect on the ideas. Highlighting the importance for dialogue between the past and present, Lei said: “Something that happened in the past can also happen nowadays. So, every time, we do not need to just have a very clear-cut line between these two things”, asking the question: “Why not put these two things together?”, with Lei doing his best to present this idea in his ongoing exhibition.

Another area sees pieces depicting recent Macau events and performances such as those during the Lusofonia Festival, but Lei also takes the scope outside of Macau with a set of works depicting moments from around the world. These include pieces that depict moments from the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2021 painting titled “Refugees”, where Russian photographer Sergey Ponomarev’s Pulitzer Prize winning image is turned into a large oil painting, with the artist receiving the photographer’s permission to do so, being “very generous to let me use this”, he said.

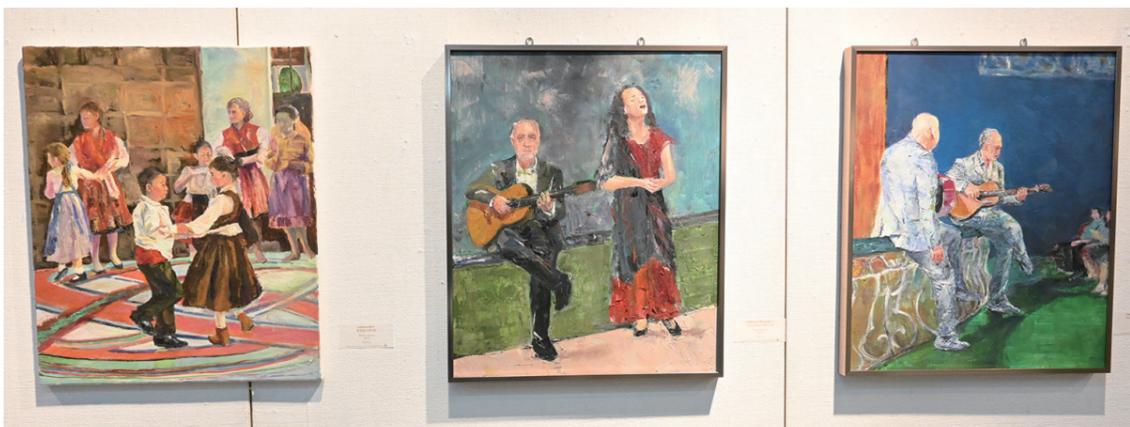
The last of the paintings sees Lei present oils using Macau’s still and “relatively stable things” that don’t move, with scenery and nature as subjects. “These are drawings from life. The idea is that we have relatively stable things that don’t move. The scenery always stands here looking at the world”, according to Lei.

Lei concluded his remarks to the *Post* with a reflection on time. Time flies, he said, but even if it does, its moments will always exist, whether in our minds, imagination or “any invisible space” where something might have happened or existed. “Some people will probably think about the past very much, but don’t be sad. It exists in your mind, right?”, Lei concluded.

More information on the exhibition and its opening in a previous Post article on <https://www.macaupostdaily.com/news/27368>. ■



Local artist Christopher Lei Weng Kuong poses next to his painting “Studio of 19th Century” during the recent opening ceremony for his exhibition at Creative Macau, which ends on Friday.
– Photos: Rui Pastorin



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Sam visits shops, public facilities during CNY

Tony Wong

Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai paid fact-finding visits to a raft of businesses and public facilities across the city on Friday, i.e., the fourth day of the Year of the Horse, according to a statement released by the Government Information Bureau (GCS) on that day, which quoted Sam as saying that the local government is committed to maintaining public order and safeguarding the lives and property of residents and visitors.

The statement also quoted Sam's commitment to supporting local small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in upgrading and modernising their operations, and to working closely with the private sector to promote steady growth in Macau's community economy.

On Friday morning, the statement said, Sam, visited the area around the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ruins of St. Paul's, Rua da Palha, Rua de S. Domingos, and the city's main square, Largo do Senado, accompanied by Secretary for Economy and Finance Anton Tai Kin Ip, Secretary for Security Chan Tsz King, and other top officials, where Sam was briefed by senior police officers about the police forces' crowd control measures implemented around the Ruins of St. Paul's, the city's most popular tourist attraction, during the CNY holiday period.

Sam extended Spring Festival greetings and talked with owners



Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai (right) shakes hands with a woman in Largo do Senado, the city's main square, on Friday.

— Photos: GCS

and staff of a number of shops and businesses in the areas.

The Chinese New Year is also known as the Spring Festival.

Sam also visited the police station run by the Public Security Police (PSP) on the ground floor of the building located next to S. Domingos Church.

According to the statement, Sam also visited the commercial part of the building displaying and selling "Made in Macau" products on other floors, which once housed the Macau Government Information Bureau (GCS) and the local bureau of Portugal's wire service Lusa, next to the church.

Afterwards, the statement said, Sam went to Taipa where he visited

the revamped Taipa wet market building, accompanied by Secretary for Administration and Justice Wong Sio Chak. Sam talked with stallholders in the market's newly-established "Gastronomy + Culture and Creativity Zone" with the aim of gaining a better understanding of their business operations, where he was also briefed by officials about the government's initiative to upgrade traditional wet markets and promote their long-term sustainability.

Subsequently, the statement said, Sam, accompanied by Tai, visited shops and businesses in Taipa Village with the aim of gaining a better understanding of their business operations.



Accompanied by Secretary for Administration and Justice Wong Sio Chak (right), the chief executive (second from right) talks with operators of a stall in Taipa Market's newly-established "Gastronomy + Culture and Creativity Zone" on Friday.

Afterwards, the statement said, Sam paid a fact-finding visit to the open-air public carpark located on the plot of the former Flying Eagle Training Base in Coloane Village which opened late last year, where Sam was briefed by Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raymond Tam Vai Man about the operation of the newly-opened open-air public carpark.

Subsequently, Sam walked to the nearby Coloane Pier, extending Chinese New Year greetings to residents along the way and talking to shop owners, the statement said.

Finally, the statement said, Sam visited the nearby Lai Chi Vun shipyards area where a Spring Festival market was being held,

with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the government's initiative to revitalise the area.

Sam also inspected the ongoing public project to build flood prevention facilities off the coast of Coloane Village.

Meanwhile, Sam also inspected various public facilities on Tuesday last week, the first day of the Chinese New Year, including the public Conde de São Januário Hospital, a CEM substation in the Outer Harbour district, the headquarters of public bus operator Transmac, the Areia Preta fire station, the Judiciary Police (PJ) headquarters in Zape, and the Hengqin joint border checkpoint, according to a GCS statement that day. ■

Macau Tower's CNY Charity Walk draws over 2,000 people



This photo provided by Macau Tower on Thursday shows Skypark Macau Tower Sales Director Elsa Law (2nd row, third from left), Macau Tower Executive Manager Francis Lam (2nd row, fourth from left), and Macau Red Cross Management Council Vice President Lei Ka Man (2nd row, fifth from left) posing with the top three winners of each "Strike it Rich" category of the Chinese New Year (CNY) Charity Tower Walk held earlier that day.

Rui Pastorin

The Macau Tower Convention & Entertainment Centre's 15th edition of its CNY (Chinese New Year) Charity Tower Walk took place on Thursday, with the event this year gathering over 2,000 participants.

According to a Macau Tower statement released on that day, the event, which raised funds for the Macau Red Cross, kicked off with the full-course 1,298 step "Strike it Rich", which started from the ground floor all the way up to the 61st floor, in the morning. First-timer Timothy

Ho Chun Ting, who travelled from Hong Kong, emerged as champion of the Men's category with a time of 7 minutes and 59 seconds. The Women's category, meanwhile, was won by Ruby Mak at 11 minutes and eight seconds, joining the event with her mother and daughter this year, the statement said.

Taking home the top prize for the Junior category, meanwhile, was Danny Leong at 11 minutes and 30 seconds. In all, the full course event saw around 600 participants across the three divisions. The full-course event

was then followed by the half-course "Shortcut to Riches" in the afternoon and started from the 38th floor and ended at the observation deck, according to the statement.

The event has drawn over 20,000 participants since its inception in 2009. The statement quoted Macau Tower Executive Manager Francis Lam (林柱光) as saying: "Marking the 15th edition of the Charity Tower Walk, the event has grown into one of Macau's most cherished festive traditions, thanks to the tremendous support and enthusiastic participation of all sectors over the years." ■

Sam delivers CNY message for Year of the Horse

Full text released last Monday by the Office of the Chief Executive on Chinese New Year's Eve

Dear fellow Macao residents and friends,

As we bid farewell to the Year of the Snake and welcome the Year of the Horse, all families are ready to ring out the old and ring in the new together. On behalf of the Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR), I would like to extend my heartfelt Chinese New Year greetings to all fellow residents and friends at home and abroad who support and attach great importance to the development of Macao.

May the Year of the Horse bring us health, happiness and prosperity!

According to Chinese culture, the horse symbolises loyalty, bravery, the pioneering spirit, and enterprising and unrestrained boldness. These are the spirits we need to advocate in face of future challenges.

Looking to the Year of the Horse, we must gallop at the forefront with indomitable spirit to strive for advancements in all areas for Macao. We must persevere unrelentingly to address livelihood issues practically and improve people's well-being.

Dear fellow residents, dear friends:

The universe operates with ceaseless vitality; a noble person should constantly strive to strengthen himself. The implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle is a successful story composed by generations of Macao people. I firmly believe that with the strong leadership of President Xi Jinping and the central authorities, as well as the strong backing of the great motherland, so long as we have the courage to pursue reform and break new ground, leverage the institutional advantages of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, we will open up new horizons and achieve new heights.

The new year chimes for the Year of the Horse are about to ring. At this moment, spring is in the air. Macao, a shining pearl on the palm of our great motherland, is glowing with brilliance. I wish our motherland auspiciousness and harmony; I wish Macao prosperity and stability; I wish all fellow Macao residents peace and happiness. To all civil servants and everyone who remain dedicated to serving the community during the festival and their families, please accept my heartfelt respect and gratitude!

I wish everyone good health and vitality. May all your wishes come true!

CNY car parade features nearly 60 classic cars

Ida Cheong

The annual Chinese New Year (CNY) motorcycle and classic car parade took place yesterday, featuring 24 motorcycles and 32 classic cars, starting from the Macau Grand Prix (MPG) Building, travelling through the Macau peninsula and Cotai, and returning to the peninsula, ending in front of the Macau Science Centre in Nape for public display.

The one-day event was co-organised by the Sports Bureau (ID) and Automobile General Association of Macao-China (AAMC).

Macau Vintage Vehicle Culture Association (MVV) Chairman Lam Chung In told reporters on the sidelines of yesterday's parade that his group has documented around 1,700 classic vehicles in Macau that are at least 25 years old, dating back to before 2000, adding that around 80 percent of the classic cars are still roadworthy. His association also regularly organises activities such as classic car parades, aiming to share the joy of driving classic cars with residents and tourists, promoting Macau's unique classic car culture, Lam said.

Lam showcased one of his prized collection during yesterday's event: a 1978 Chevrolet Camaro from US, the only one of its kind in Macau, Lam said, adding that he acquired the vehicle in 2010 and has overseen



Macau Vintage Vehicle Culture Association (MVV) Chairman Lam Chung In poses with his classic car on the sidelines of Chinese New Year (CNY) motorcycle and classic car parade outside the Macau Science Centre (MSC) in Nape yesterday.

- Photos: Ida Cheong

its meticulous restoration over several years. He pointed out that his car is a second-generation prototype of the legendary "Bumblebee". Lam said that

the car's vibrant colour and its appearance in the eponymous film has made it a significant attraction for tourists and residents alike.

While sourcing parts for



Sports Bureau (ID) Development Department Chief Chao Kuok Wai speaks to reporters outside the Macau Science Centre (MSC) in Nape about yesterday's motorcycle and classic car parade.

maintaining his Bumblebee is not particularly difficult, the restoration process proved highly challenging, such as lacking modern computer components and relying heavily on

manual mechanics skills, Lam added.

Sports Bureau (ID) Development Department Chief Chao Kuok Wai told reporters during yesterday's parade that although the classic cars displayed yesterday look old, they perform "excellently", holding strong appeal for both locals and visitors, adding that the annual CNY recreational event, held for several years now, has established itself as a distinctive attraction and signature activity in Macau.

All CNY events in the series attract active participation from many residents and sports enthusiasts, Chao said, adding that the Sports Bureau will continue organising similar festive sport and recreational activities throughout the remaining days of the 15-day CNY period, aiming to celebrate the holiday with the community and further promote the concept of universal sport participation. ■



Participating cars and motorbikes set off from the Macau Grand Prix (MPG) Building yesterday.



2026 SJM Macao Int'l Dragon Boat Races set for June at Nam Van

Khalel Vallo

The 2026 SJM Macao International Dragon Boat Races will be held on June 13, 14 and 19 at Nam Van Lake Nautical Centre, according to a statement by the Sports Bureau (ID) on Friday.

The traditional annual event is jointly organised by the bureau, SJM Resorts, S.A. (SJM) and the Dragon Boat Association of Macao-China (DBAMC), the statement said.

The races, a longstanding highlight of Macau's sporting calendar, will once again coincide with the Duanwu* Festival, the statement added.

The festival is also known as the Dragon Boat Festival.

According to the statement, the competition will begin with local small dragon boat races on June 13, followed by local standard dragon boat races on June 14.

The "Macao International Invitation Standard Dragon Boat Race" and the "Macao University Student Invitation Standard Dragon Boat Race" will take place on June 19, the day of the Dragon Boat Festival.

The statement noted that associations and organisations may submit team entries online

at www.cmdragonboat.org.mo from 10 a.m. today until 10 p.m. on March 7 using an online team account, adding that teams with existing accounts are not required to create new ones.

Teams that have successfully obtained an account may register for specific race categories from 10 a.m. on March 9 through 10 p.m. on March 15, the statement said, adding that registration for each category will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.

In order to help teams prepare for the competition, official training sessions will commence in mid-March.

Further details, including race regulations, will be announced in due course. More information is available on the official website at www.macaodragonboat.com or via the "Macao Major Sporting Events" Facebook page and the bureau's WeChat platforms. ■

* "Duanwu" can be translated as "the beginning of the fifth month," indicating both a specific time in the lunar calendar and the onset of summer. The festival is celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth month and is associated with various customs, including dragon boat racing and eating sticky rice dumplings. - Poe



This undated handout photo provided by the Sports Bureau (ID) on Friday shows racers competing at a Dragon Boat Race in Nam Van.

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IAM offers decorative flowers today

Ida Cheong

Aiming to make good use of green resources, the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) will distribute post-Chinese New Year (CNY) decorative flowers to the public free of charge at two locations today, the bureau said in a statement yesterday.

The statement noted that that distribution will start at 11 a.m. in the peninsula's Iao Hon Market Garden and at 3 p.m. in Flower

City Garden in Taipa, with the objective to extend the plants' life and promote awareness of a green living environment. All plants will be available on a first-come, first-served basis while stocks last.

The plants to be distributed are *Ixora chinensis* (Chinese Ixora)*, the statement added.

Customarily, the bureau displays various types of festive flora alongside streets and alleys during public holidays and significant

occasions to beautify the city and enhance residents' quality of life, the statement said, adding that after the festivities, some of the decorative plants are recovered and replanted. Withered or non-replantable plants are sent to local composting facilities for processing, returning to nature, the bureau said.

Additionally, depending on their condition, some plants are given to the public free of charge, the statement added.

The bureau reminded the public in the statement that all distributed flowers and plants are intended for ornamental purposes only and should not be consumed. For enquiries, please contact the IAM service hotline on 2833 7676. ■

* *Chinese Ixora*, scientifically known as *Ixora chinensis*, is a flowering shrub native to tropical Asia. – Poe



This undated handout photo provided by the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) yesterday shows the *Ixora chinensis* (Chinese Ixora) to be distributed in Iao Hon Market Garden in the peninsula's northern district and Flower City Garden in Taipa today.

China's robot revolution in motion

Commentary by Xu Ying*

When Unitree's G1 humanoid robot executed a flawless 720-degree backflip on the stage of the Spring Festival Gala, it was easy to read the moment as spectacle. The somersault was crisp, the landing controlled, the applause immediate. Yet the performance signified something far more consequential than acrobatic novelty. It crystallized a broader transformation: China's deliberate evolution from the world's factory floor into a central architect of next-generation robotics.

Western headlines described the event as a "robotic revolution". But revolutions are, by nature, often chaotic. What is unfolding in China is neither spontaneous nor accidental. It is the cumulative result of strategic planning, vertically integrated supply chains, state-backed research ecosystems, and a cultural preference for applied experimentation over isolated theorizing.

Machines that think on their feet

The most visible expression of this shift is technological. In 2025, humanoid robots on public stages moved stiffly, executing pre-programmed folk dances with mechanical caution. By 2026, the G1 demonstrated fluid martial arts sequences – precise spins, controlled landings, and dynamic recoveries from imbalance. The difference was not merely aesthetic; it reflected a structural leap in embodied intelligence.

On paper, the hardware is formidable. The G1's joints deliver peak torques approaching 500 newton-meters, enabling explosive movement and stable recovery. Its carbon-fiber frame keeps total weight under 50 kilograms without sacrificing structural integrity. High-density batteries nearing 400 watt-hours per kilogram extend operational endurance while maintaining agility. These figures matter because they narrow the gap between mechanical output and human biomechanics.

But raw power alone does not produce grace. The decisive breakthrough lies in sensor fusion and adaptive control. Inertial measurement units, force sensors embedded in the feet and joints, and visual SLAM systems** continuously update the robot's understanding of its posture and surroundings. During the televised backflip, observers noted a subtle knee adjustment on landing – a micro-correction executed in milliseconds. That tiny movement symbolized something larger: the ability of machines to respond autonomously to unpredictable physical conditions.

Even more telling was the synchronized choreography of more than fifty robots, operating with latency measured in mere milliseconds. Coordinating multi-agent systems at such speed requires distributed AI architectures capable of balancing centralized planning with decentralized execution. This is not simply about one robot performing well; it is about coordinated fleets acting in



Humanoid robots dance at a Chinese New Year gala at the UN headquarters in New York City on February 12.

– Xinhua

concert – an ability with implications that extend far beyond a gala stage.

From laboratory prototype to industrial ecosystem

Technological sophistication means little without industrial scalability. Here, China's advantage becomes structural.

The robotics sector benefits from an integrated supply chain that compresses development cycles and lowers costs. Domestic AI chipmakers, sensor manufacturers, and precision component suppliers operate in dense geographic clusters, particularly in provinces like Zhejiang and Guangdong. This proximity reduces procurement delays, accelerates iteration, and allows rapid refinement from prototype to production.

Cost competitiveness is equally critical. By leveraging mature manufacturing infrastructure and economies of scale, Chinese humanoid robots are often produced at significantly lower costs than their Western counterparts. This price differential does more than expand export potential; it accelerates domestic adoption across sectors.

China's robotics industry, now measured in the tens of billions of dollars, uses public demonstrations as high-intensity testing environments. Events such as the Spring Festival Gala function as real-world stress tests. Robots must navigate dynamic lighting, complex choreography, crowded backstage logistics, and live broadcasting pressures. Failures are visible; performance must be robust. This approach—testing systems in demanding, unscripted conditions—compresses the gap between research and deployment.

The results are visible in expanding applications. Humanoid and semi-humanoid systems are moving into eldercare facilities, logistics centers, and electric vehicle assembly lines. The same dynamic balance algorithms that enable a backflip also allow

robots to traverse uneven terrain in disaster response or maintain stability while carrying loads on factory floors.

International expansion underscores this transition. Chinese robotics firms are increasingly active in European and Asian markets, supplying both hardware platforms and integrated solutions. As export shares rise, China is no longer merely assembling machines; it is shaping usage norms and technical expectations.

Competing models of innovation

The divergence between China and the West is not reducible to technical capability alone; it reflects contrasting innovation cultures.

Silicon Valley and European research institutions often prioritize incremental validation, extensive peer review, and controlled laboratory testing. This model excels in foundational breakthroughs and rigorous standardization. China, by contrast, has embraced scenario-driven innovation: deploy early, test under pressure, iterate rapidly. High-stakes public applications become catalysts rather than endpoints.

This difference has practical consequences. Dynamic balance, multi-agent coordination, and real-world adaptability are strengthened when systems confront messy environments rather than idealized lab conditions. Over time, such exposure compounds into durable capability advantages.

There is also a standards dimension. As Chinese robots proliferate in global markets, their communication protocols, operating architectures, and component interfaces may become de facto norms. Standards are not merely technical agreements; they embed influence. Control over ecosystems – software platforms, update pipelines and hardware compatibility – shapes long-term dependency structures.

In this sense, robotics becomes a contest of ecosystems. The question is no longer simply who builds better machines, but whose technological frameworks ultimately define the parameters of industrial automation and intelligent systems worldwide.

Beyond the stage: A technological civilization

The backflip was theater, but its longer arc points toward daily life. Aging demographics, labor shortages, and the demands of disaster resilience create structural incentives for humanoid deployment. Robots capable of navigating human environments – stairs, cluttered rooms, unpredictable surfaces – can complement existing automation beyond controlled settings.

China frames this expansion in terms of "human-machine harmony", envisioning robots not as replacements but as collaborators. There is also a philosophical undertone to this vision. Integrating advanced AI with cultural concepts of balance and systemic interdependence suggests an ambition to embed robotics within a broader social narrative, rather than treat it as purely another instrumental technology.

Whether that vision materializes remains uncertain. Ethical governance, labor displacement, and international trust will shape the trajectory. But the direction is unmistakable: robotics is no longer peripheral to China's development strategy. It sits at the intersection of industrial upgrading, demographic management, and global technological positioning.

The opening move

The 720-degree backflip was not an endpoint. It was a signal – a demonstration that China's robotics ecosystem has reached a threshold where power, intelligence and manufacturability converge. The performance condensed years of research, supply-chain coordination, and policy alignment into a few seconds of controlled rotation in midair.

If the past decades defined China as the workshop of the world, the coming era will test its capacity to become one of its principal engineers. In that unfolding contest, the choreography of machines on a holiday stage may prove to have been less a moment of entertainment than a quiet prologue.

*Xu Ying is a Beijing-based commentator. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

– Courtesy of China Daily
**Visual SLAM (Simultaneous Localization and Mapping) refers to a technique used in robotics and computer vision to enable a device (like a robot or drone) to create a map of an unknown environment while simultaneously keeping track of its own location within that environment using visual input from cameras. – Poe

Top nuclear power obliged to cut its arsenal

China Daily Editorial

The specter of nuclear weapons remains one of the most daunting challenges to global peace and security, with recent developments casting a glaring spotlight on the United States. The country's irresponsible actions, including its refusal to extend the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty after its expiration early this month, threaten to dismantle decades of progress in nuclear nonproliferation.

Yet in order to justify its renegeing on nuclear nonproliferation commitments, the US has made unfounded accusations against China regarding nuclear testing to pave the way for its own resumption of nuclear tests. "Because of other countries' testing programs, I have instructed the Department of War to start testing our Nuclear Weapons on an equal basis," the US leader said last October in a post on his Truth Social site. "That process will begin immediately."

US Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Thomas DiNanno, too, made unwarranted remarks at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva recently, accusing China of having conducted a nuclear explosive test in June 2020. This prompted Robert Floyd, executive secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, to clarify in a statement that the International Monitoring System of the organization did not detect any event consistent with the characteristics of a nuclear weapon test explosion at that time.

The remarks made by the US in regard to nuclear testing are nothing but lies told to serve the country's own dangerous agenda at the cost of other nations' security and global stability.

The baseless claims that China is conducting "covert" nuclear tests serve as a pretext for the US to abandon a moratorium on nuclear testing it has upheld since 1992.

As Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian pointed out, the US' distortion and slander of China's nuclear policy are essentially "political manipulation", through which it aims to evade its own nuclear disarmament responsibilities. In fact, it is the US that is "the biggest source of disruption to both the international nuclear order and global strategic stability".

Indeed, the US has consistently undermined international efforts to promote nuclear disarmament. Its reluctance to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as its recent threats to resume testing, stands in stark contrast to the global consensus on the need to prevent nuclear proliferation.

By refusing to adhere to the nonproliferation framework, the US is effectively dismantling the very architecture that has constrained the nuclear threat for decades.

The series of US maneuvers, which portend a significant shift in its nuclear policy, threaten to reignite a nuclear arms race that the world can ill afford. The narrative that the US propagates – of needing to resume testing to match the capabilities of other nations – is not only false and misleading but also dangerous.

The implications of this are profound, as it paves the way for an unrestrained arms buildup, not only by the US, but also by other nuclear powers, thereby increasing the risk of nuclear conflict.

Independent estimates clearly show that the US and Russia possess the largest nuclear arsenals, each having an inventory of around 5,500 nuclear warheads, with China maintaining a significantly smaller stockpile.

Meanwhile, the US has spent trillions of dollars upgrading its nuclear triad and maintains a first-use policy. The country also applies double standard when it comes to nuclear nonproliferation, seriously disrupting global strategic balance and stability. The rhetoric of "nuclear parity" is only a smokescreen designed to obscure the US' true intention of achieving unchallenged nuclear dominance.

The international community must recognize the US' actions for what they are: a strategic ploy to destabilize global security and maintain its hegemony through an arms race it hopes will be debilitating for other countries. This ambition poses a direct threat to the delicate balance of power and undermines the collective efforts of nations committed to peace and security.

It is thus imperative that countries join hands in opposition to the US' actions. Diplomatic efforts should be intensified to hold the US accountable and to reinforce the importance of existing treaties and agreements that promote nuclear disarmament. The international community should also work together to establish new frameworks that address the evolving challenges of nuclear proliferation in the 21st century.

With the US prioritizing national supremacy over global stability, the shadow of nuclear conflict once again threatens to loom over the world. For the world to be free from the fear of nuclear apocalypse, it is crucial for the international community to stand firm in opposing the US' nuclear agenda.

– Courtesy of China Daily

Group of Friends of Global Governance calls for safeguarding UN Charter, int'l rule of law

UNITED NATIONS – At a time when the world is filled with uncertainty and instability, coupled with mistrust and rising polarization, the international community must safeguard the UN Charter and uphold the international rule of law, the Group of Friends of Global Governance said on Wednesday.

At the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, the group said in a joint statement that faced with major choices between peace and conflict, progress and regression, order and chaos, the world once again stands at a new crossroads.

Against this backdrop, the full implementation of the mandate of the special committee – to strengthen the role of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, the development of cooperation and the promotion of the norms of international law – "is more urgent than ever," said the statement, delivered by China on behalf of the 49 members of the Group of Friends of Global Governance.

"The Charter is the fundamental guideline for conducting international relations and the cornerstone of the international order. The basic norms of international law, including sovereign equality, non-interference in internal affairs, and the prohibition of the use of force, as enshrined in the Charter, must be respected and implemented," the group said.

"All States, regardless of size, strength or wealth, are equal. Mutual respect and peaceful coexistence should prevail," it said, calling upon all parties to uphold the international order underpinned by international law, ensure an equal and consistent application

of international norms, and reject double standards and selective application.

The group called for practicing genuine multilateralism and taking an action-oriented approach, emphasizing that multilateralism remains the core concept of the existing international system and order, and the United Nations serves as the central platform for global governance.

It also called for upholding the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with Chapter-VI of the UN Charter and opposing unilateral sanctions. Article 33 of the Charter sets out multiple means of dispute settlement, and the right to freely choose means of dispute settlement should be respected, the group pointed out.

"Any attempt to impose one's will upon others by coercion, threat or use of force in international relations must be rejected," the group said.

In the statement, the group noted the establishment of the International Organization for Mediation in October 2025 in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, which provides additional options for the peaceful settlement of international disputes, and the adoption of the Security Council's Resolution 2788 on the peaceful settlement of disputes.

"The Group of Friends of Global Governance stands ready to work with all parties to jointly safeguard the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, support the central role and preserve the intergovernmental character of the United Nations, and promote a more just, inclusive and equitable global governance system," the statement said.

– Xinhua



Artists perform Yingge dance in Puning, Guangdong Province, yesterday. The Yingge dance, or "dance to the hero's song," is a traditional folk dance of Guangdong Province which has enjoyed growing popularity nationwide in recent years. As many shops in Puning chose to open their doors to start the new year's business yesterday, the sixth day of the Chinese New Year, Yingge dance teams staged performances across the city to convey their best wishes for a prosperous start of the new year.

– Xinhua

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When the global helm shifts

Commentary by Marcus Vinicius de Freitas

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's speech at this year's World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland, offered an honest portrayal of the anxiety now gripping advanced economies amid a historical transition that can no longer be managed through slogans. Heard from the perspective of the Global South, it is useful not because it "discovers" anything new, but because it exposes, with the involuntary frankness typical of liminal moments, what has become the true conflict of our time: not a dispute over rules, but over who has the right to name reality.

One should begin with the obvious. Canada may have a vocation for nuance, but it has no vocation for geopolitical divorce. Borders, trade flows, production chains and the inescapable gravitational pull of Washington function as a civilizational fact. What is "interesting" about Canadian autonomy is precisely its condition as a rhetorical exception: it may exist, provided it does not alter the underlying structure. Reality, as always, enters through the kitchen door. This is why the Global South listens to Davos with respect, but without enchantment: it has seen this film before – and has paid far too high a price for the ticket.

The decisive point, however, does not lie in Carney himself. It lies in the reaction to what he symbolizes. The transition of the international order has become, in Western vocabulary, a kind of "administrative apocalypse". Everything is framed as "rupture", "collapse", and "disorder". Curiously, while the West was steering the process, the same phenomenon was called "transition", "adjustment" and "modernization". When the hand that holds the helm changes, language changes with it. What was "evolution" yesterday has become "threat" today; what was "reform" has become "risk"; what was "leadership" has become "decline". It is not the world that has panicked: it is the narrative monopoly that has been broken.

There is in this a component of strategic psychology – and of historical irony. The post-1945 order did, indeed, fulfil important functions: it rebuilt economies, institutionalized mechanisms and organized much of global trade. But it also served, with remarkable efficiency, to universalize language while

particularizing practice; to proclaim rules and administer them selectively; to speak of law while operating through exception; to invoke values while practising coercion. The Global South knows this mechanism not through theory, but through history: sanctions, conditionalities, tutelage, interventions, and the perpetual invitation to "integrate", provided it never becomes a protagonist.

What the West has often called "order" was, in practice, uniformity under coercion. Multipolarity, by contrast, may represent a historical opportunity for institutional harmony: multiple voices, real rules, less arbitrary application, and a system in which "universal" is no longer synonymous with "Western".

For this reason, alarmism is, to a large extent, a reflection of a sense of lost control. When the center sets the rhythm, change looks civilized; when the center loses centrality, change is described as barbarism. It is an aesthetic of decline: the same water that yesterday was the "current of progress" is today labeled "turbulence". The problem is not the water; it is who has lost the vessel.

That said, the Global South cannot fall into the easy comfort of criticism. Transition is not a moral prize; it is a test of capacity. And capacity requires a project. A Global South that merely celebrates Western weakening without constructing alternatives reproduces old forms of dependency by other means. The task, therefore, is a deliberate shift from rule-taker to rule-maker – an exercise in political engineering.

This project must begin by overcoming fragmentation, the most sophisticated form of domestication. As long as Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia negotiate separately, they will be treated as markets rather than as poles of power. Coordination among regional mechanisms, common positions on structural issues, and sustained bloc diplomacy are the minimum conditions for genuine influence. It further demands the conquest of technological sovereignty, for the 21st century has transformed data into territory. Control over infrastructure, cloud systems, and algorithms now enables power to be exercised without a single shot being fired. Digital dependence is the new frontier of colonization – invisible extraction, externally captured value, and externally defined rules. The Global

South must build its own infrastructure, regulatory capacity, and the capability to engage tech giants without kneeling.

Concurrently, financial emancipation is non-negotiable. The prolonged centrality of the dollar and of the Bretton Woods institutions has turned the monetary system into an instrument of coercion and exported instability.

Diversifying currencies, strengthening regional banks and expanding local-currency settlement mechanisms are not ideological gestures against the West, but foundational acts of sovereign prudence. So too must transnational justice be redefined: climate, public health and food security cannot remain objects of charity. They must be translated into operational obligations, with predictable financing, so that solidarity becomes structural rather than poetic. Finally, institutional and symbolic reform is essential. Legitimacy has its own geography. Institutions that claim universality while remaining anchored in the hierarchies of 1945 carry that hierarchy in their DNA. Reforming representativeness and decision-making mechanisms – and openly debating the very geography of power – is therefore part of the necessary reconstruction.

The central point is this: there is no reason for despair. History is not an eternal building; it is a cycle of architecture. International orders have beginnings, middles, and ends – and maturity lies in accepting this temporality without hysteria. What must end is not cooperation, but the pretence that it exists only under the command of a center.

The message from Carney in Davos has been heard. The Global South, however, listens with one fundamental difference: it does not seek to replace one command with another. It seeks to transform command into governance. And herein lies the inevitable irony: what most unsettles is not the changing world, but the prospect of one that becomes genuinely plural – without asking permission.

**The author is a visiting professor at the China Foreign Affairs University, and senior fellow at the Policy Center for the New South.*

The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

– Courtesy of China Daily

Ride with films: Year of the Horse sees movie-inspired tourism surge in China

Analysis

BEIJING/SHANGHAI – Blockbusters are doing more than leading the holiday box office at the beginning of the Year of the Horse in China – they are reshaping holiday travel patterns, fueling a nationwide boom in movie-inspired tourism.

According to online ticketing platforms, the total Spring Festival box office revenue (including pre-sales) had surpassed 4 billion yuan by Saturday, with the racing-comedy "Pegasus 3" topping the charts.

Notably, the momentum of "Pegasus 3" extends well beyond cinemas. Data from travel platform Qunar showed that hotel bookings in Garze, Sichuan Province – one of the film's primary shooting locations – surged 40 percent compared to last year's Spring Festival holiday, while bookings in another shooting site, Delingha, Qinghai Province, jumped 71 percent.

"As soon as I finished watching 'Pegasus 3,' I rushed to plan a family spring trip to Garze to check in the racetrack featured in the film," said Shanghai car enthusiast Xia Lin. She has been a devoted fan since the "Pegasus" franchise was launched in 2019.

The film has also sparked a new wave of themed city tours in Shanghai, where the metro line, bridge, park and city landmarks appearing in the film have become fan-favorite check-in (photo opportunity) spots.

"During this year's Spring Festival season, the driving effect of films on culture and tourism has come earlier than usual," said Yang Han, a researcher at Qunar's Big Data Research Institute.

Thanks to the popularity of the previous two installments, fans of the "Pegasus" franchise have held high expectations for its storyline and visuals. A considerable number of them planned their trips before the release of the latest installment, he said.

The comic-adapted film "Blades of the Guardians," directed by renowned action choreographer Yuen Woo-ping and featuring martial arts stars Jet Li and Wu Jing, has also sparked strong interest in the dramatic but less-traveled desert landscapes of northwest China's Xinjiang. Data from Qunar showed that searches for desert sightseeing and desert highway tours climbed 60 percent ahead of the film's release.

Beyond the appeal of creativity in the film industry, the convergence of film and tourism during this Spring Festival holiday appears more systematic and policy-driven.

The China Film Administration has launched a series of initiatives in 2026, including campaigns such as "Travel with Films," "Taste Cuisine with Films," and "Shopping with Films." Local governments also responded with consumption vouchers, themed routes and cross-sector promotions.

In Guangdong Province, the release of prominent director Zhang Yimou's spy thriller "Scare Out" has catalyzed a province-wide travel-with-films campaign. The province unveiled 60 film-themed travel routes spanning 21 cities, integrating screenings with dining, retail and cultural promotions.

In Shanghai's Hongkou District, 11 cinemas partnered with dozens of commercial and cultural venues to create immersive "New Year in the Movies" experiences, offering ticket-stub discounts and interactive installations. In Sichuan, movie consumption vouchers worth more than 4 million yuan were distributed from Feb. 8 to 19, combining film discounts with dining and tourism subsidies.

Experts noted that this "film+" model reflects a maturation of China's holiday consumption structure. Spring Festival moviegoing -- once primarily entertainment -- has evolved into a ritualized cultural activity intertwined with family reunions and experiential travel.

"A film's value lies not only in its box office performance, but also in the ripple effects it generates across tourism, catering and other sectors," said Hou Keming, a professor at the Beijing Film Academy. "The economic and cultural impact now extends far beyond the screen."

– Xinhua, MPD



Tourists enjoy themselves at the indoor ice-and-snow theme park within the Harbin Ice and Snow World theme park in Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang Province, yesterday. The indoor ice-and-snow theme park opened on Sunday, following the closure of the outdoor Harbin Ice and Snow World, which officially ended its 27th edition on Saturday. *– Xinhua*

Spring Festival travel rush passes halfway mark with 5.08 billion trips

BEIJING – The nation’s 2026 Spring Festival travel rush had passed its halfway point as of Saturday, with inter-regional passenger trips reaching 5.08 billion in the first 20 days, the Ministry of Transport said yesterday.

Of this total, road trips accounted for 4.76 billion, while railways handled 258 million trips. Waterways and civil aviation recorded 19.99 million and 47.52 million passenger trips, respectively.

The annual travel surge, known as chunyun (“spring transport”) and often described as the world’s largest human migration, is expected to generate a record 9.5 billion inter-regional passenger trips during the 40-day period running from Feb. 2 to March 13 this year, according to previous estimates.

The Spring Festival is also known as the Chinese New Year (CNY). – Xinhua



Passengers check in at the waiting hall of Huaibei Railway Station in Huaibei, Anhui Province, yesterday. – Xinhua

AI-powered virtual technologies elevate Chinese filmmaking via grand realism, efficiency

Analysis

HANGZHOU – Inside a studio featuring the world’s largest single-structure LED at an AI virtual film base in Deqing, Zhejiang Province, a Hong Kong football-themed film was being made.

A 50-meter-diameter curved screen rendered the main stadium of Hong Kong’s Kai Tak Sports Park in real-time, with tens of thousands of digital spectators cheering as goals were scored, creating an immersive experience akin to being in the real stadium.

Using advanced artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual production technologies, this film base enables crews to retrieve different scenes on screen and blend virtual and physical elements to recreate such iconic landscapes digitally, according to the facility owner Versatile Media, a virtual production company based in Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province.

“Shooting on location is difficult and expensive, especially for long periods,” noted Niu Cong, a project coordinator with Versatile Media. “The virtual studio, with its ample space and systemic advantages, fulfills creative needs. That’s why we bring a whole stadium indoors.”

More filmmakers are now turning to AI virtual production, according to Niu.

The Deqing facility, notably, reflects a broader push to integrate AI into filmmaking. Across China, studios are adopting AI and other digital tools.

“For a period drama, we used to spend three months building sets, only to later tear down 80 percent of them,” Niu said. “Now, virtual assets stay in digital libraries and can be reused. Lighting and coordination are also easier.”

Since its official opening in July 2025, the Deqing film facility has hosted over 30 film projects. Its advanced virtual filming system has quickly made this new base a sought-

after industry hub. In 2026 alone, nearly 10 companies have signed contracts to settle there.

The base is also moving into AI-generated short dramas. It has 89 such projects planned for this year, using its own AI platform for these endeavors.

In Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province, meanwhile, the local film and television base has built a large constant-temperature water scene filming studio. Utilizing digital intelligence technologies, it creates realistic giant waves for films, offering a one-stop solution for the shooting of water scenes.

The studio can simulate more than 200 wave types via computer, with a width of 35 meters and wave height up to 3 meters. Underwater shooting depth reaches 11 meters. Water can also be heated to 32 degrees Celsius in 24 hours, while all water conditions can be remotely adjusted by operators.

This studio has served multiple film productions, providing realistic water scenes without the need for post-production visual effects. It also deploys underwater robots to assist with filming.

In Chongqing Municipality, a digital set workshop uses an automated platform to swap scenes via a mouse click. Switching takes less than a second, boosting shooting efficiency by 55 percent and cutting large-scale set costs by 90 percent.

These technological shifts are fundamentally changing how films are made in China.

“The application of AI technology is not just an innovation at the tool level. It also brings a revolution to the filmmaking workflow,” said Wang Shu with the China Science Writers Association.

“AI-powered film and TV creation will further propel the industry toward greater efficiency and intelligence,” Wang added.

– Xinhua

GGI affirms voice of Global South: think tank executive director

Interview by Xinhua writers Shi Song, Wang Qibing and Ma Ruxuan

GENEVA – The China-proposed Global Governance Initiative (GGI) shows that countries in the Global South are capable of making proposals for building an orderly global governance system, and that their voices should be genuinely heard, said Carlos Correa, executive director of the South Centre.

Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the South Centre serves as the intergovernmental think tank of the Global South, committed to advancing shared interests among Southern nations.

Serving as the executive director of the South Centre since July 2018, Correa has consistently highlighted the importance of the multilateral trading system at international forums. He also said that China’s economic development has injected momentum into global economic recovery.

In a recent interview with Xinhua, Correa noted that the majority of the world’s population lives in Global South countries, which account for an important share of global GDP. However, in many cases, the influence of Global South countries is not fully reflected in the outcomes of international negotiations.

Although developing countries have called for reforms for many years, little progress has been made, and their interests have yet to be safeguarded, said Correa.

The China-proposed GGI is very important as it demonstrates that countries in the Global South are capable of making

proposals for building an orderly global governance system, said Correa, noting that supporting the initiative and working around the principles it proposes is relevant for developing countries.

The current crisis in the international system is largely caused by some countries’ unilateral measures, Correa told Xinhua, pointing to recent violations by the United States of the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in the UN Charter.

Correa noted that the United States has arbitrarily imposed tariffs based on its own interests and political considerations, severely undermining trust in the multilateral system.

Efforts are needed to address the current lack of trust in order to strengthen the international system and ensure that the principles on which it is based are preserved, acted and enforced, said Correa, calling on countries affected by unilateral actions to respond in a “more organized” manner and act in solidarity with other nations in confronting these measures.

Correa told Xinhua that the South Centre supports the establishment of a multilateral system that reflects the interests of all countries, and that such a system not only benefits the Global South but is also crucial for the world as a whole.

To make global governance fairer, members of the international community must first of all respect the rules, he said, noting it is also necessary to adjust certain rules to ensure that the voices of Global South countries are genuinely heard. – Xinhua

