

Macau, Zhuhai police bust 'guess who I am' fraud gang, nab 18

26 victims lose 1.11 million patacas



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers escort the hooded suspects to a police vehicle outside the PJ headquarters in Zape yesterday. - Photo: Maria Cheang Ut Meng

Staff Reporter

Local police and their Zhuhai counterparts have jointly busted a cross-border "guess who I am" phone fraud gang when 13 gang members were arrested in Macau while five others were arrested in Zhuhai, the Macau Judiciary Police (PJ) announced during a special press conference yesterday.

According to the press conference, 26 Macau residents had been defrauded by the gang since it started operating October last year, losing 1.11 million patacas in total.

The 13 gang members arrested in Macau comprise eight males and five females, aged between 24 and 61.

The 13 suspects, who were separately arrested by PJ officers on Tuesday, comprise nine Macau residents, two mainlanders, and two Vietnamese working in Macau.

According to the press conference, the gang's "division of labour" was based on a clearly defined criminal hierarchy.



The five gang members arrested in Zhuhai included the gang's mastermind. They had been separately arrested by the Zhuhai police at different times since last month.

The 13 suspects arrested in Macau include the male owner of a shop in the peninsula's northern district selling smartphones and two employees working as salesmen.

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Shenzhou-20 crewed spaceship docks with space station combination

BEIJING – China's Shenzhou-20 crewed spaceship successfully docked with the space station combination late last night, according to the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA).

The spaceship made a fast, automated rendezvous and docking with the radial port of the space station's core module Tianhe at 11:49 p.m. The whole process took approximately 6.5 hours, said the CMSA.

The astronaut trio aboard the spaceship will then enter the Tianhe module. Meanwhile, the Shenzhou-19 crew members are ready for their arrival.

The spaceship, atop a Long March-2F carrier rocket, blasted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China earlier yesterday afternoon. (More on p.6) - Xinhua

The nation's astronauts Chen Dong (right), Chen Zhongrui (centre) and Wang Jie attend a send-off ceremony at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China yesterday. - Xinhua



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China, Kenya elevate ties as Xi, Ruto hold talks

President Xi Jinping held talks with Kenyan President William Ruto in Beijing yesterday, with the two sides agreeing to elevate their ties to a China-Kenya community with a shared future for the new era. - Story on p. 7

Moving heaven & earth to make bread in Gaza

In Gaza, where hunger gnaws and hope runs thin, flour and bread are so scarce that they are carefully divided by families clinging to survival. - Story on p. 10

US opposes 'dangerous' anti-fossil fuel policies at global summit

An international summit on the future of energy security opened in London yesterday with stark opposition from Washington, which called policies to phase out fossil fuels "harmful and dangerous". - Story on p. 11

Foreign visitors enjoy Macau: Vox pop

Rui Pastorin

Foreigners accounted for 6.9 percent of all visitors to Macau in the first quarter, according to official records, and as the city continues to work its way towards attracting more international visitors, the *Post* again wanted to hear their thoughts and opinions on Macau as a travel destination, with another round of street interviews conducted around the city centre yesterday afternoon.

A good first impression

Snapping photos around Largo do Senado, Max, a 19-year-old from Germany who is currently studying in Singapore, travelled to Macau with his father. Originally, Max said that they just wanted to take a trip to different cities across the mainland together, but Macau and Hong Kong, from where they had just arrived, had also popped up on their radar as they found both places to be interesting. And even though both men had only been in Macau for about an hour when they spoke with the *Post*, Max said he had a good first impression, noting that he was very amazed so far.

Though they had not done intensive research on Macau, Max said that he found the city to be very interesting, particularly because of its architecture and the European influence present in an Asian context, along with being well preserved. In the next three days that he and his father will be here, the youngster said he hopes to explore the city further and try delicacies like egg tarts.

'Where is Macau? Is it in Africa?'

At the Ruins of St. Paul's, two Russians

in their twenties were cooling down from yesterday's heat. Currently staying in Hong Kong, the pair said they had only been in Macau for a few hours, but found it to be an interesting place to visit, one that they had just decided to travel to out of sheer curiosity.

Both men admitted that neither of them were really familiar with Macau, but being able to come here, they said, was almost like an "achievement", being akin to being in a place that some might not know much about or where it even is. "Where is Macau? Is it in Africa?", one of them joked. However, both agreed that it is a place worth visiting.

'People are friendly, smile very much'

Meanwhile, another group of Russian visitors, this time from Siberia, were enjoying the sun on the steps of the Ruins of St. Paul's, with one of them, a 40-year-old woman named Anna, saying that they liked it here. Staying in Macau for two days, Anna said: "I think people are friendly, smile very much". "It's warm here, warmer than Siberia", while also remarking that she liked seeing the mix of cultures found in the architecture and culture. When asked if it would be a place that she would recommend to other groups, Anna answered with a resounding "yes!"

Good food and many tourists

Andy, 29, said that he last visited Macau a decade ago and coming back yesterday for a quick day trip, the Hongkonger said that there were still "a lot of good food and restaurants, and a lot of tourists", while a lot of attractions



Tourists explore, take photos or just take a rest at Macau's UNESCO World Heritage-listed Ruins of St. Paul's yesterday afternoon.

– Photo: Rui Pastorin

continued to be well maintained.

Overall, Andy also said he found Macau to be a tourist-friendly city, but noted that navigating and getting around was not always as easy or convenient, though he found that this got better once arriving at more touristy areas.

Recommendations to others

Meanwhile, Ana and Jason, two Filipino tourists in their twenties, are staying in Macau for two nights after having just finished their stay in Hong Kong. For them, a highlight was being able to visit the Ruins of St Paul's,

which Ana referred to as "one of the best spots in Macau".

For other Filipinos visiting Macau, Jason said that visiting the Ruins of St Paul's and resort hopping were activities, just as they were doing right now, that they would recommend. Ana added that food was another highlight, particularly the local delicacies that one can find when walking up to the Ruins of St Paul's, in addition to finding other photo spots and shopping. They added that both were looking forward to what the next two days might bring. ■

Applications open for cultural and creative products for Macao Pavilion at China (Shenzhen) ICIF

Adrian Vallesteros

A recent statement from the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) noted that the 21st China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industries Fair (ICIF) will take place late next month in Shenzhen, with applications open for the Macao Pavilion that will be set up at the event.

According to the statement, the bureau is inviting local cultural and creative companies to submit products that feature elements of Macau's World Heritage or Intangible Cultural Heritage for display and consignment at its Macao Pavilion. The application period, which began on Wednesday, will close on May 4.

The statement underlined that the ICIF is a "national and comprehensive cultural industries fair" that showcases Macau's "unique cultural heritage, the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, major

cultural events and performances, as well as creative innovations". This annual pavilion gives local businesses a stage to show their products while also enhancing the city's cultural influence.

The statement emphasised that all consigned products must incorporate elements of Macau's World Heritage or Intangible Cultural Heritage, with each applicant allowed to submit a maximum of 10 different product types. Selection will be based on criteria such as representation of Macau's heritage attractions, originality, aesthetic appeal, and diversity.

Application regulations and forms can be obtained and submitted via survey.miceregssystem.com/2025icif.php. Alternatively, applicants may email their application form to cnicifmcpes@gmail.com by May 4. One can call 6868 6057 for enquiries during office hours. ■

Macau, Zhuhai police bust 'guess who I am' fraud gang, nab 18

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According to yesterday's press conference, the modus operandi of the gang was that the shop owner and his two employees stole customers' personal information by secretly taking photos of their ID cards so that they could use the information to buy pre-paid SIM cards.

In Macau, the purchase of pre-paid SIM cards requires real-name registration.

Moreover, according to the press conference, the two Vietnamese non-resident workers (NRWs) also stole their compatriots' personal information when they helped them fill in application forms for certain services.

In addition, the five gang members also illicitly obtained other people's personal information by buying it online.

After purchasing pre-paid SIM cards in Macau, the quintet transferred them to their fellow members in the mainland, who then used the cards to make phone calls to potential victims.

According to the press conference, the gang had purchased over 800 pre-paid SIM cards in Macau with illicitly obtained personal information since it started operating.

Other suspects arrested in Macau were carrying out other tasks such as money laundering and receiving money from the gang's victims.

The gang received money from



Judiciary Police (PJ) officers display evidence on the sidelines of yesterday's press conference in a pressroom at the PJ headquarters.

– Photo: Maria Cheang Ut Meng

its victims in Macau in over 150 accounts on different local online payment platforms, including MPay, created without real-name registration.

After receiving money from the victims, gang members in Macau bought gold jewellery with some of the ill-gotten money, while they also converted some of the money received from the victims into yuan, after which the items of gold jewellery and cash were delivered to gang members in the mainland, according to the press conference.

Money worth over 400,000 patacas had been laundered since

the gang's operation.

When PJ officers launched their operation on Tuesday, according to the press conference, they seized 140 pre-paid SIM cards, 24 smartphones, three computers, as well as cash in yuan, HK dollars and patacas equivalent to 64,000 patacas in total.

The 13 locally arrested suspects have meanwhile been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) where they face range of charges such as organised crime membership, fraud, computer forgery, illegal use of other people's ID documents, and money laundering. ■

Published since Aug 2004

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IC chief opens Tap Siac Craft Market in Spring

Ida Cheong

The annual Tap Siac Craft Market in Spring, organised by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), opened yesterday and will take place in two segments, from yesterday through Sunday and from May 1 to May 4 in the eponymous square.

It was announced during the opening ceremony that there are over 200 handicraft and gastronomy stalls operated by cultural and creative industry entities from Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, South Korea, China's Taiwan region, Macau, the mainland and Hong Kong showcasing and selling a wide range of original cultural and creative products, including daily necessities, clothing and accessories, handicrafts, as well as natural and handmade products.

Meanwhile, various music performances by musicians from Macau, the mainland and Hong Kong, as well as over 60 creative handicraft workshops are also being held. Successful applicants for the workshops are advised to attend on time.

The opening ceremony, which was held in the square yesterday, was officiated by Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) President Delan Leong Wai Man; the deputy director of the Department of Publicity and Culture of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR, Bai Bing; Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) President Chao Wai Ieng; Cultural Development Fund (FDC) President Cheong Kin Hong; and the director of the Livelihood Affairs Bureau of the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, Fong Fong Tan.

Singer Lily Chan (陳潔麗) performed at the opening ceremony.

Addressing yesterday's opening ceremony, Leong noted that coinciding with the "Culture City 2025 of East Asia—Macao, China", the Craft Market in Spring welcomes returning participants from Japan and South Korea, alongside newcomers from Malaysia and Thailand, all of whom will exchange creative experiences, promoting mutual learning among cultures, thus further expanding Macau's international "circle of friends".

Leong went on to say in her speech that as the Cultural Affairs Bureau has proactively encouraged the city's cultural and creative industries' expansion outside Macau in recent years, the "Craft Market in the Greater Bay Area" project will be expanded to the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin and Hong Kong this year, with the aim of accessing broader markets.

Additionally, last month the Cultural Affairs Bureau organised an IP Authorisation Lecture and the participation of cultural and creative entities from Macau in the Hong Kong International Licensing Show, aiming to elevate Macau's creative brands, enhance industry competitiveness and promote the sustainable development of the cultural and creative industries.

The Tap Siac Craft Market is held from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays, and from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

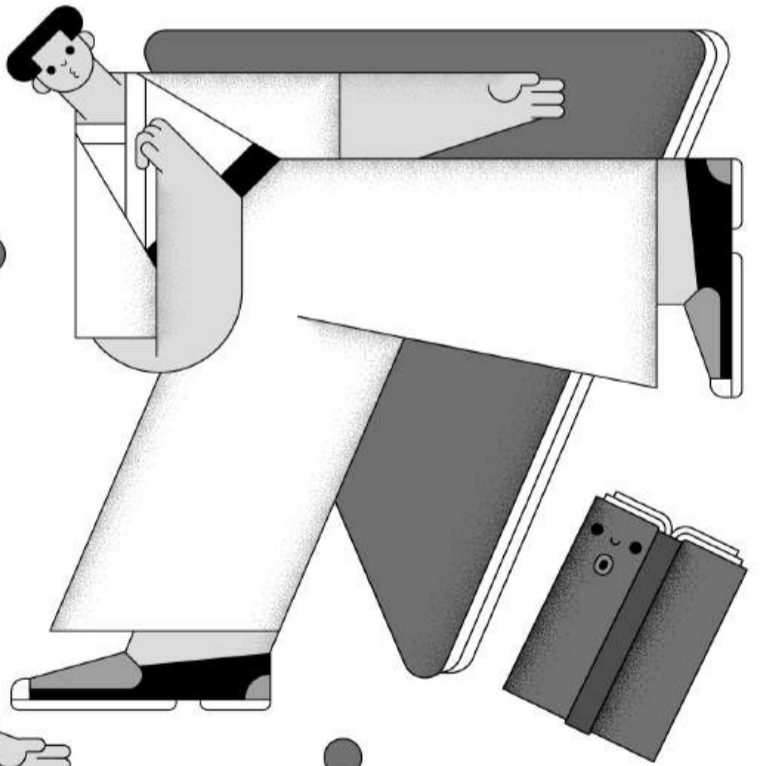
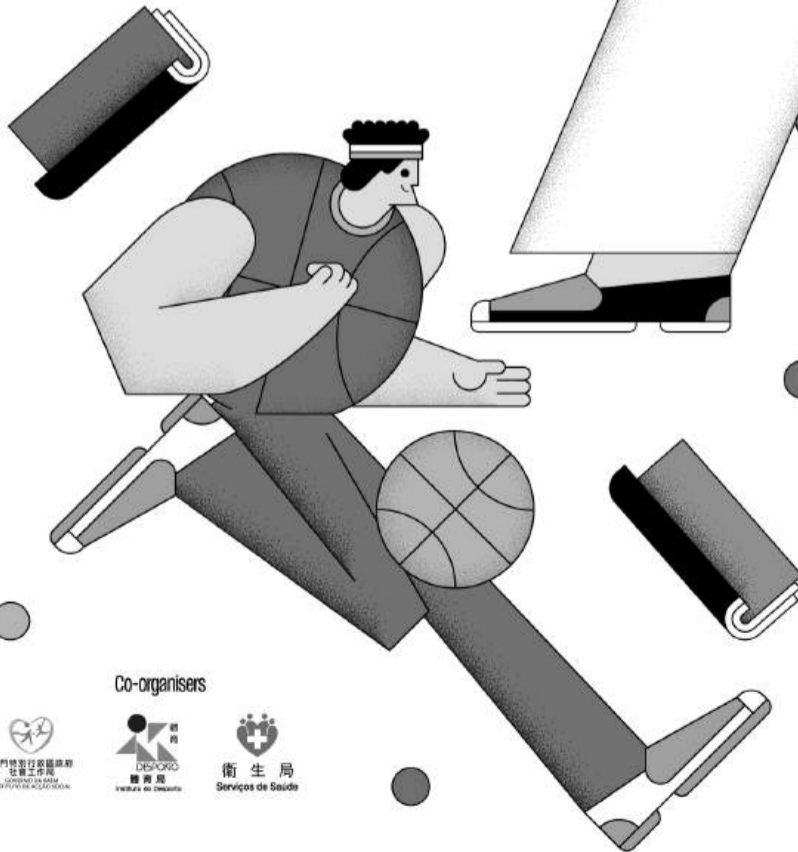
Tap Siac is the Bureau's alternative spelling for Tap Seac. ■



Visitors walk around the just-opened Tap Siac Market in Spring yesterday afternoon. - Photos: Ida Cheong

Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) President Delan Leong Wai Man speaks at the opening ceremony of Tap Siac Craft Market in Spring held yesterday in Praça do Tap Seac.

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Sands China to bring back its popular Outdoor Sketching Workshop



This undated handout photo provided by Sands China yesterday shows local artist Lam Chi Ian during last year's Outdoor Sketching Workshop.

Rui Pastorin

Integrated resort operator Sands China will bring back its popular Outdoor Sketching Workshop and an artwork exhibition at the erstwhile Iec Long Firecracker Factory and the Taipa Houses heritage complex, the company said in a statement last night.

The statement noted that the free sketching workshops will be held at the historic sites on Sunday and May 3, 10 and 17, with art masters Lai Ieng, Lio Man Cheong, Lee Tak Seng and Lam Chi Ian again invited to lead participants, who will also have an opportunity to engage in artistic exchanges.

The event, which follows up on last year's successful inaugural event, aims to "encourage local residents and visitors to deeply experience the charm of Macau through sketching, enhancing their art skills while connecting with each other", according to the statement.

Those joining the workshops will also be able to showcase their works at the Nostalgic House of the Taipa Houses, the statement said. Meanwhile, Sands China will invite the

Macau Band Directors Association for a wind ensemble performance from May 3-5 at 3:30-4:30 p.m. daily at the erstwhile Iec Long Firecracker Factory's Chun Su Mei entrance.

Sands China Executive Vice Chairman Wilfred Wong Ying-wai was quoted by the statement as saying: "With the Labour Day Golden Week approaching, Sands China is dedicated to leveraging the unique urban oasis atmosphere of our two revitalisation districts by hosting diverse events in partnership with prominent local artists and young musicians, such as the Outdoor Sketching Workshop and the wind ensemble performance, deepening the roots of arts and culture in the local community and the historic areas".

He added: "We will continue making great efforts in injecting new elements into the districts, strengthening the integration of arts and culture with tourism to further develop Macau's multicultural charm and artistic vitality."

One can learn more about the company's revitalisation initiatives on www.sandschina.com/the-company/scl-community-revitalization-programme.html

Ponte 16 presents 'Gacha Bloom Fiesta'

Adrian Vallesteros

In celebration of Easter and the spring travel season, Ponte 16 said in a recent statement that it is hosting the "Gacha Bloom Fiesta" until May 13, transforming its outdoor plaza into a colourful spring wonderland.

The statement noted that the initiative aims to support the local government's "Tourism+" initiative, which aims to enhance and diversify Macau's tourism sector.

The event features a six-metre-tall interactive gacha machine alongside a tulip floral display, aiming to create an experience that "elevates the festive spirit and invigorates tourism" on the Macau peninsula, the statement said.

The statement emphasised that during the event, participants who make a single eligible purchase at designated restaurants at Ponte 16 or at selected "OLA"* partner merchants will receive a voucher to spin

the giant gacha machine at the Outdoor Plaza – where every spin guarantees a prize. With over 3,000 prizes valued at 360,000 patacas in total, participants can win rewards, including a stay at Sofitel Macau at Ponte 16, gold jewellery, dining vouchers, and more, according to the statement.

Additionally, visitors can capture moments with photos of the tulip display and the giant gacha machine. By sharing these photos on social media with the designated hashtag, participants can unlock exclusive complimentary gifts.

For more details, please visit Ponte 16's website at: <https://www.ponte16.com.mo/en/promotions/promo-fab/2268-20250415-en>

*According to its website, OLA澳優遊 is a one-stop platform featuring travel information and promotions <https://ola.com.mo/en/>



This recent handout photo provided by the Ponte 16 integrated resort in the Inner Harbour area shows the "Gacha Bloom Fiesta" installation, featuring a six-metre-high giant gacha machine and tulip floral display.

G-Dragon to perform gig at Galaxy Arena

Rui Pastorin

South Korean rapper, singer and songwriter G-Dragon*, aka "King of K-pop", is set to perform for two nights at the 16,000-seat Galaxy Arena in Cotai in June, according to a statement yesterday by integrated resort operator Galaxy Macau.

The statement said that the concerts, "G-DRAGON 2025 WORLD TOUR [Übermensch] IN MACAU" will be held on June 7 and 8, with Macau being the fifth stop of the artist's tour.

The tour marks G-Dragon's first concert tour in eight years, according to Wikipedia.

G-DRAGON, according to the statement, made his long-awaited return with his third solo studio album, *Übermensch***, in February, announcing the start of his world tour, which launched with two sold-out shows at Goyang Stadium in South Korea on March 29 and 30.

The statement said that Macau will be the fifth stop after Tokyo and Bulacan in the Philippines, and Osaka.

The statement said that the concert is a collaboration between Galaxy Corporation, AEG Presents, TME Live, and CHESSMAN, presented by Galaxy Macau and sponsored by HSBC, Trip.com Group and HopeGoo.

Pre-sale tickets can be purchased from Monday at 12 noon, while general sale will be from 12 noon on April 30, according to the statement. Tickets are priced between

899 patacas and 2,399 patacas and will be available on Galaxy Ticketing and Cityline.

*G-Dragon, whose real name is Kwon Ji-yong, made his debut in 2006, gaining fame as the leader of South Korean boy band BigBang, which went on to become one of the best-selling boy bands in the world, according to Wikipedia.

**Coined by influential German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, the term literally translates to "overman" or "superman".



This poster provided by integrated resort operator Galaxy Macau promotes the G-DRAGON 2025 WORLD TOUR [Übermensch] IN MACAU to be held at Galaxy Arena in June.



Thai actress and singer Rhatha Yaya Phongam performs at the "2025 Amazing Songkran in Macau" event at Vista at MGM COTAI last week. – Photo: MGM

Rui Pastorin

Integrated resort operator MGM recently hosted the "2025 Amazing Songkran in Macau" dinner at Vista in MGM COTAI, which gathered 200 guests from Thailand.

This year, Songkran was celebrated between April 13 and 15.

According to a recent statement from MGM, the company has been celebrating the festival with Thai guests since 2019. Thailand, the statement added, is one of the company's important international target markets.

For the dinner, the statement said that MGM prepared traditional Thai boat noodles, seafood platters, and specially curated Sino-Thai fusion dishes, as well as a lucky draw session, all at a venue

that featured festive Thai decorations. Thai actress and singer Rhatha Yaya Phongam was also invited by MGM to perform at the celebration

During her speech at the event, MGM Senior Vice President of Global Marketing Frederica Fok said: "MGM is committed to working with the Macau government to promote the city as an international travel destination. Last year, we saw a 15 percent increase in the number of Thai visitors to our properties. We have achieved this through the establishment of our Bangkok office, targeted marketing promotions, and a collaboration with the EM District [a large shopping complex in Bangkok] earlier this year, all of which have helped raise awareness of the MGM brand in Thailand."

Radio taxi company's ride-hailing app to cover black taxis

Tony Wong

Common taxis will soon join the mobile ride-hailing app for the city's current radio taxi company, Macau Radio Taxi Services Limited, a senior representative overseeing the app's operation, Sunny Wang Pei Shen, said yesterday.

Wang made the remarks while speaking to reporters at The Plaza Restaurant after a ceremony marking the establishment of a new association representing taxi drivers and other employees in the industry, San Ieng Taxi Employees Association of Macau, of which Wang is the founder.

Wang was previously the general manager of Macau Radio Taxi Services Limited. She now works as a consultant for the company.

The association was established earlier this year. Yesterday's event was also the swearing-in ceremony

for the first term of the association's board members.

Wang said that her aim was for the inclusion of common taxis into the app to get off the ground during the upcoming Labour Day holidays.

Common taxis – as opposed to radio taxis – are colloquially known as “black taxis” (“hak dik” in Cantonese), as the colour of common taxis is black.

The city's current radio taxi company, Macau Radio Taxi Services Limited, came into service in April 2017. Its current 300 radio taxis are not allowed to pick up those hailing a cab in the street. To use the company's ride-hailing service, prospective passengers can phone its call centre or use its own mobile ride-hailing app.

In addition to being allowed to pick up passengers while travelling

around the city, black taxis are also legally allowed to provide a radio taxi service. For instance, the Macau Taxi Drivers Mutual Help Association headed by Tony Kuok Leong Son is currently running a taxi call service – 2828 3283. Kuok told the *Post* earlier this year that a few hundred of the city's black taxis are covered by his association's radio taxi service.

Wang told reporters yesterday that about 400 black taxis will join the radio taxi company's ride-hailing app initially, underlining that the company will continue to ask more drivers to join.

Wang noted that after the app's new function gets off the ground, prospective passengers can also choose to book black taxis through the app, in addition to booking the radio taxi company's vehicles.

Macau Radio Taxi Services Limited

commissions a local IT company to operate its ride-hailing app.

Yesterday's event also included the signing of a cooperation agreement between the app's operator and the newly established San Ieng Taxi Employees Association of Macau for the joint operation of a programme to train black taxi drivers to use the app.

Wang also underlined that drivers of black cabs will not need to pay to join the app.

The association's president, Dina Chan Un Kuan, is the current general manager of Macau Radio Taxi Services Limited.

The licences of 100 of the company's 300 radio taxis are scheduled to expire on September 30 this year, while the licences of the other 200 radio taxis are scheduled to expire on May 31, 2028.



Sunny Wang Pei Shen, a senior representative overseeing the operation of Macau Radio Taxi Services Limited's mobile ride-hailing app, speaks to reporters at The Plaza Restaurant in Zape yesterday. – Photo: Tony Wong

The company's first 100 came into service on April 1, 2017, while the other 200 came into operation on December 1, 2019. ■

Macau emergency medical team heads to Myanmar for post-quake support

At the invitation of the World Health Organization (WHO), the China International Medical Emergency Team (Macao) departed for Myanmar yesterday to carry out a 14-day mission focused on post-earthquake emergency medical coordination and technical support.

On March 28, a 7.9-magnitude earthquake struck Myanmar, causing mass destruction. According to Macau's Health Bureau, the deployment of the medical team was made at the invitation of the WHO, with the consent from the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council and the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs of China, under the coordination of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China in the Macao SAR, and with the support of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR and the local government.

The team's main tasks include assessing medical resource gaps in the affected areas, optimizing data coordination processes, providing standardized protocols for trauma care and infectious disease control, and evaluating the feasibility of Myanmar establishing its emergency medical teams, the Health Bureau told Xinhua.

“This mission represents a collaborative effort between the WHO, the Myanmar government, and our team to explore feasible solutions for medical support in the aftermath of the earthquake,” said O Leong, team coordinator and head of international cooperation at the Health Bureau, noting it is the first time Macau has participated in international cooperation in this format.

The China International Medical Emergency Team (Macao) was certified by the WHO in 2019. In 2020, the team joined the national emergency medical rescue team in missions to Algeria and Sudan to assist in the COVID-19 response. – Xinhua

Philippines' collusion with US undermines regional interests: defense spokesperson

BEIJING – A Chinese defense spokesperson yesterday said the Philippines' collusion with the United States to make provocations – conducting so-called patrols and exercises and deploying strategic and tactical weapons, seriously undermines the common interests of regional countries.

“We firmly oppose any country strengthening military deployment in the region and provoking

tensions and confrontation under the excuse of the Taiwan question,” Zhang Xiaogang, spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense, told a press conference.

Zhang made the remarks in response to recent media reports about the deployment of an anti-ship missile system in the Philippines for the first time – believed by some analysts to be intended to simulate a blockade of

the Bashi Channel in the event of a crisis in the Taiwan Strait.

China always holds that military cooperation between countries should not target or hurt the interests of any third party, nor should it jeopardize regional peace and stability, Zhang stressed.

“The South China Sea should be a sea of peace, cooperation and friendship,” he added.

– Xinhua

137th Canton Fair draws over 190,000 overseas buyers: MOC

BEIJING – The 137th edition of the China Import and Export Fair, also known as the Canton Fair, had attracted more than 190,000 overseas buyers from 218 countries and regions as of midday yesterday, data from the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) showed.

The second phase of this edition of the fair kicked off on Wednesday, focusing on the theme of quality home furnishings. At a regular press conference yesterday, MOC spokesperson He Yadong

noted that with increasing levels of innovation and eco-friendliness, the projects on display are attracting rising interest from global buyers.

More than 2,400 exhibitors in this phase are recognized as national-level high-tech enterprises, “little giants” enterprises, or national single champions of manufacturing industry, an increase of 100 companies compared with the same period last year, the spokesperson said.

“The bustling crowds and

vibrant negotiations at the Canton Fair vividly reflect the global businesses' confidence in China's economic prospects, providing a strong boost to the country's foreign trade momentum,” He said.

This edition of the fair, held in Guangzhou from April 15 to May 5, is organized into three themed phases. The first focused on advanced manufacturing, the second on quality home furnishings, and the third on products that promote a better quality of life. – Xinhua

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STOCK MARKETS

HK stocks close 0.74 pct lower

HONG KONG – Hong Kong's stock market ended lower yesterday with the benchmark Hang Seng Index down 0.74 percent to close at 21,909.76 points.

The Hang Seng China Enterprises Index fell 0.73 percent to end at 8,056.85 points, while the Hang Seng Tech Index fell 1.46 percent to end at 4,975.89 points. – Xinhua

China launches Shenzhou-20 manned spaceship for new diverse in-orbit tasks

JIUQUAN – China successfully launched the Shenzhou-20 crewed spaceship yesterday, sending three astronauts to its orbiting space station for a six-month mission.

The spaceship, atop a Long March-2F carrier rocket, blasted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China.

About 10 minutes after the launch, the spaceship separated from the rocket and entered its designated orbit. The astronauts are in good condition, and the launch of the Shenzhou-20 crewed spaceship is a complete success, according to the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA).

The spaceship will then perform a fast, automated rendezvous and docking with the Tiangong space station complex, and the Shenzhou-20 crew will conduct an in-orbit handover with the Shenzhou-19 crew.

The space station complex has entered the docking orbit, with good working conditions that meet the requirements for the rendezvous and docking with the spaceship and the entry of the astronauts, the CMSA said.

The Shenzhou-20 crew, consisting of mission commander Chen Dong, and astronauts Chen Zhongrui and Wang Jie, will

undertake a range of tasks, including space science experiments, application tests, extravehicular activities, and cargo handling.

Their mission also involves installing protective devices against space debris, and deploying and retrieving extravehicular payloads and equipment. They will also participate in science education, public outreach, and other onboard experimental activities.

LIFE SCIENCE EXPERIMENTS

The new life science experiments to be carried out by the trio will involve zebra fish, planarians and streptomyces.

Notably, the Shenzhou-20 mission marks China's first space-based investigation into the regeneration of planarians, an organism known for their extraordinary ability to regrow organs, said Lin Xiqiang, spokesperson for the CMSA, at a pre-launch press conference on Wednesday.

"This project will enhance our understanding of fundamental mechanisms of regeneration at the individual level and could provide insights into human health issues related to space-induced injuries," said Lin.

He added that the Shenzhou-20 mission will further zebra fish experiment based on the zebra fish-hornwort co-cultivation ecosystem established during the Shenzhou-18 mission, and seeks to clarify how protein homeostasis regulates bone mass decrease and cardiovascular dysfunction caused by microgravity.

As for streptomyces, which can serve as critical players in soil health and plant resilience, the related experiment will study the expression patterns of microbial active substances and enzymes in space environments to lay the foundation for developing microbial technologies and products utilizing space resources, he added.

In addition to the three biological experiments, the crew will also conduct 59 space science experiments and technology tests, covering fields such as space life science, microgravity physical science, and new space technologies. Breakthroughs are expected in areas like the cultivation of vascularized brain organoid chips, and the study of preparing high-temperature superconducting material in space.

China's space station has now hosted over 200 scientific projects, with nearly 2 tonnes of scientific materials and applied equipment sent

to orbit and nearly 100 experimental samples returned to Earth.

"Currently, we are conducting space science experiments according to plan, with all projects progressing smoothly," said Lin.

ASTRONAUT TRAINING

Lin told the press that the country's fourth group of astronauts are being trained in fundamental spaceflight theory and a range of exercises, including psychological training and training on adapting to the space environment, along with specialized training sessions.

Among this group, astronauts from the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions selected as payload specialists are expected to make their first spaceflight as early as 2026.

According to Lin, China will select and train two Pakistani astronauts for space missions, and one of them will serve as a payload specialist on a future Chinese space station flight.

China is also discussing with other nations regarding potential foreign astronauts participating in the country's future space station missions.

Shenzhou-20 is the 35th flight mission of China's manned space



The Shenzhou-20 crewed spaceship, atop a Long March-2F carrier rocket, blasts off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China yesterday.

– Xinhua

program and the fifth manned mission during the application and development stage of China's space station.

It also marks the 571st flight mission of the Long March carrier rocket series and the 20th flight mission of the Shenzhou spaceship. – Xinhua

Bush China Foundation chair calls for closer US-China collaboration, exchanges

BEIJING – Neil Bush, founder and chair of the George H. W. Bush Foundation for US-China Relations (Bush China Foundation), has called for deepened cooperation and broader exchanges between the two countries to jointly address global challenges.

Noting the myriad pressing issues facing humankind, Bush said in an exclusive interview with Xinhua that the world's top two economies need to deepen cooperation in areas such as public health, climate change and food security, and find more areas of collaboration.

Neil Bush is the son of former US President George H. W. Bush. He was in Beijing to attend the preparatory meeting for the 2025 International Symposium on the Peaceful Use of Space Technology – Health, to be held in Hainan Province in December.

Bush told Xinhua that he hopes to see more bilateral exchanges at all levels between the United States and China to build mutual understanding, clear up misperceptions, and promote collaboration in more fields.

"We should encourage even more Chinese students to come to America, and I wish more American students would be open-minded about coming to China to be educated," he said.

On US-China economic ties, Bush stressed that bilateral trade has been a key driver of growth for both countries.

Official data showed that

trade between the two countries has surged from less than US\$2.5 billion in 1979 to nearly US\$688.3 billion in 2024.

"It's been through globalization that we have received the benefits from each other and grown independently, but grown successfully in a win-win environment," he said.

He said the Bush China Foundation, an organization dedicated to advancing US-China relations, has been working to promote bilateral relations following George H. W. Bush's legacy of building relations through dialogue and empathy.

"My father was a big believer in bringing people together," Bush said. "So we created win-win relationships all over the world, including in China."

"The Bush China Foundation is built on that same thesis that we need to bring people together in respectful dialogue to establish better understanding that can lead to more collaboration," he added.

Besides his advocacy for more robust US-China ties, Bush also shared with Xinhua his reflections on his long-standing connection with China and how he has witnessed the country's remarkable transformation over the decades.

In 1975, 20-year-old Bush visited China for the first time. He recalled that during his five-week trip in China, "everybody was very friendly," although the country was still poor.

That journey marked the beginning of his lifelong

connection with China. Since then, he has been to the country "probably around 180 times."

On his recent visits, Bush has been particularly struck by China's commitment to green development.

"I'm impressed to see so many green tags on cars indicating electric vehicles," he said, adding that local Chinese officials often highlight the green initiatives and projects underway in their provinces and cities during the visits.

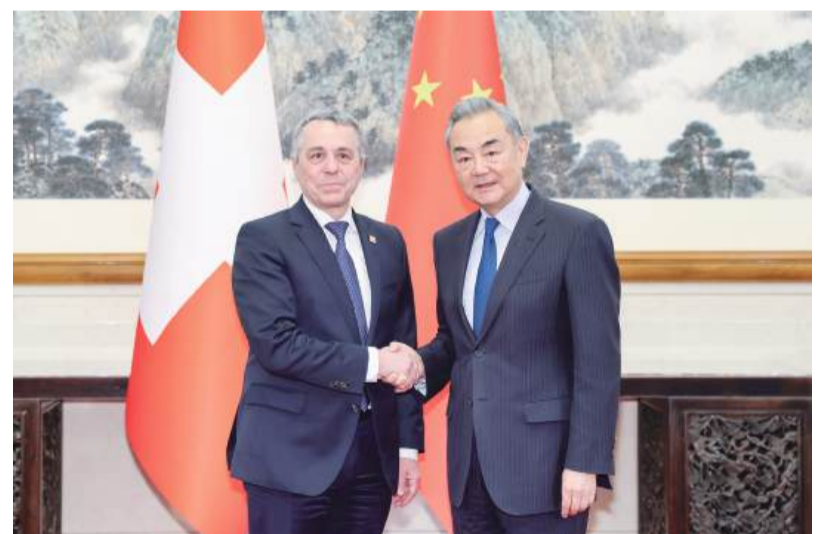
He has also observed steady progress in China's clean energy sector, as well as the technological advances in artificial intelligence and robotics sectors. "Industries supporting solar, wind, hydrogen, and other technologies are developing very maturely here in China, which could benefit the world."

Bush said that witnessing China's transformation into a major economic power has been "one of the most amazing experiences" of his life.

This "amazing transformation," as he pointed out, is also reflected in the international business community's confidence in the country.

He cited a recent report from the American Chamber of Commerce in South China, which showed that 58 percent of foreign companies surveyed ranked China among their top three investment priorities, while 76 percent of the companies intended to reinvest in China in 2025, with a notable 74 percent of the American companies planning reinvestments. – Xinhua

Chinese, Swiss FM's hold talks, calling for upholding multilateralism, free trade



Foreign Minister Wang Yi (right), also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, shakes hands with Swiss Federal Councilor and Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis in Beijing yesterday. – Xinhua

BEIJING – Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Swiss Federal Councilor and Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis in Beijing yesterday.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, said that as firm supporters of multilateralism and free trade, China and Switzerland should work together to address the challenges of deglobalization, safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of all countries, and maintain the international economic and trade order, as well as the basic norms governing international relations.

China welcomes more Swiss enterprises to invest and start

businesses in China, and looks forward to Switzerland continuing to provide an open, fair and non-discriminatory business environment for Chinese-funded enterprises, Wang noted.

Cassis expressed a willingness to strengthen cooperation with China with a rational and pragmatic attitude, and to accelerate the negotiations on upgrading the bilateral free trade agreement. The international community should join hands to defend multilateralism and free trade, he said.

The two sides also exchanged in-depth views on issues such as the Ukraine issue and the situation in the Middle East. – Xinhua

China, Kenya elevate ties as Xi, Ruto hold talks

BEIJING – President Xi Jinping held talks with Kenyan President William Ruto in Beijing yesterday, with the two sides agreeing to elevate their ties to a China-Kenya community with a shared future for the new era.

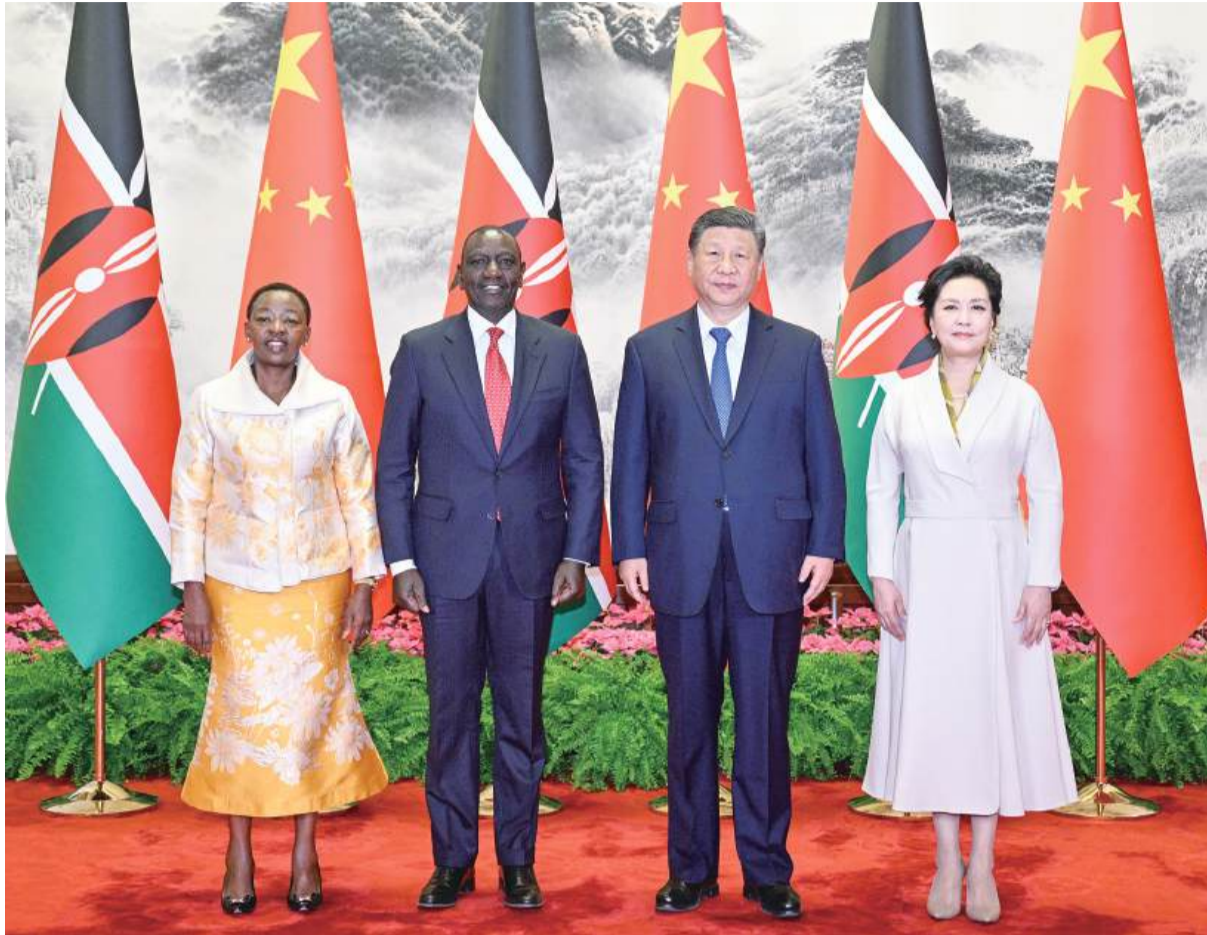
Noting that the move is a strategic choice for both sides, Xi said that in response to the historical trend and the trend of the times, China is willing to work with Kenya to create an example in the all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era, and lead the development of China-Africa relations and the forging of solidarity and cooperation among Global South countries.

China and Kenya should continue to firmly support each other in safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests, firmly support each other in exploring development paths that suit their respective national conditions, and deepen exchanges of experience in state governance, Xi said.

He called on the two sides to enhance regular policy communication, build connectivity at a higher level, promote sustainable trade, explore diversified financial integration, carry forward the friendship forged through generations, and be leaders in advancing high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

Xi said China's supersized market has always kept its door open to high-quality products from Kenya, adding that China encourages more capable Chinese enterprises to invest and start businesses in Kenya.

As important members of the Global South, China and Kenya should take concrete actions to firmly



President Xi Jinping (second from right) and his wife Peng Liyuan (right) pose for a group photo with Kenyan President William Ruto (second from left) and his wife Rachel Ruto in Beijing yesterday. Xi held talks with Ruto, who is on a state visit to China, in Beijing yesterday. – Xinhua

safeguard the international system with the United Nations at its core, promote extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit in global governance, and practice true multilateralism, Xi said.

Xi said China is willing to work with African countries, including Kenya, to achieve more early results of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation to better benefit the African people, and promote high-quality China-Africa cooperation to lead Global South cooperation.

Stressing that there are no winners in tariff and trade wars, Xi said China is willing to work with other countries to address various challenges through solidarity and cooperation, safeguard legitimate rights and interests, uphold international trade rules, and maintain international fairness and justice.

Ruto said Kenya and China have always adhered to sincere treatment and mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, and are all-weather strategic cooperative partners. Kenya firmly adheres to the one-China policy and insists that Taiwan

is an inalienable part of China's territory.

Ruto expressed gratitude to the Chinese government and people for their selfless assistance to Kenya's efforts in improving infrastructure and responding to natural disasters, adding that Belt and Road projects such as the Mombasa-Nairobi Railway have effectively promoted Kenya's national development.

He said Kenya is willing to work with China to build a community with a shared future, comprehensively strengthen the

synergy between their economic and social development strategies, strengthen cooperation on trade, investment, infrastructure construction and science and technology, and enhance exchanges in education, culture and tourism.

Cooperation between Africa and China is conducive to Africa's peaceful development, and Kenya is willing to closely coordinate and cooperate with China to implement the outcomes of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Ruto added.

Ruto said that trade wars undermine the existing international rules and order, and that Kenya appreciates China's role as a stabilizer in the current volatile situation and China's efforts to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Global South countries.

After the talks, the two heads of state witnessed the signing of 20 cooperation documents in areas such as the Belt and Road Initiative, new and high technology, people-to-people and cultural exchanges, economy and trade, and media.

The two sides issued the Joint Statement Between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Kenya on Creating an Inspiring Example in the All-Weather China-Africa Community with a Shared Future for the New Era.

Prior to the talks, Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, held a welcoming ceremony for Ruto and his wife, Rachel Ruto, at the square outside the east gate of the Great Hall of the People.

Xi and Peng also hosted a welcoming banquet for Ruto and Rachel in the Golden Hall of the Great Hall of the People at noon yesterday. – Xinhua

No economic, trade negotiations held between China, US: MOC

BEIJING – There have not been any economic and trade negotiations between China and the United States, a Ministry of Commerce (MOC) spokesperson said yesterday, adding that any claims of progress in economic and trade talks between the two countries are groundless and lack factual basis.

Spokesperson He Yadong made the remarks at a regular press briefing when answering a relevant question.

China's stance remains consistent as it maintains an open attitude toward consultation and dialogue. However, any form of consultations and negotiations must be conducted in an equal manner on the basis of mutual respect, He said.

"We Chinese are not troublemakers, but we will not flinch when trouble comes our way. Intimidation, threat and blackmail are not the right way to engage with China," He said.

The trade war was unilaterally and wantonly initiated by the United States, He said, adding that China urges the United States to correct its erroneous practices, show sincerity if it wants to hold talks, and return to the

right track of equal-footed dialogue and consultation so as to jointly promote the stable, healthy and sustainable development of China-US economic and trade cooperation.

The abusive imposition of additional tariffs by the United States violates basic economic and market principles, and has not only failed to solve the domestic problems of the United States but has also severely undermined the international economic and trade order, and disrupted normal business operations and the daily consumption of the people, He said.

Such US acts have incurred strong opposition from the international community and within the United States itself, He said, adding that it is for the doer to undo the knot.

He said the unilateral tariff imposition measures were initiated by the United States, and if the US side truly wants to solve the issue, it should face up to the rational voices from the international community and from within the United States, lift all unilateral tariffs on China, and find ways to address differences through dialogue based on equality. – AFP

China says US Pentagon chief's remarks hype up 'China threat'

BEIJING – A defense spokesperson yesterday said the United States should discard its "persecutory delusion" about the Chinese military.

Zhang Xiaogang, a spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense, made the comments in response to recent remarks by US military and defense officials warning of China's growing military capabilities, including US Defense Secretary Pete

Hegseth who reportedly said China's hypersonic missiles could destroy all US aircraft carriers in 20 minutes.

"We have a sober understanding of our own development and hope that the US side will cast away its 'persecutory delusion' and stop using others as excuses," the spokesperson said.

"Some people in the United States always view the Chinese military through tinted glasses

of bias, cooking up the so-called 'Chinese military threat.' I believe this is precisely what obstructs exchanges between the two countries' militaries," Zhang said.

The spokesperson stressed that non-conflict, non-confrontation and peaceful coexistence are the most fundamental common interests between China and the United States, as well as a shared expectation of people around the world. – Xinhua

Interest in learning Chinese remains very high among Russians: Russian FM spokesperson

MOSCOW – Interest in learning the Chinese language remains high among Russians, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova said yesterday.

Answering a question from Xinhua about the recent United Nations Chinese Language Day, Zakharova said that interest in Chinese culture, literature, and the Chinese language remains very high in Russia, while more and more young people in China are

showing an interest in learning Russian.

Language education holds a special place in Russian-Chinese humanitarian cooperation, Zakharova noted, adding that the demand for professionals fluent in both Russian and Chinese has been increasing as Russia-China relations continue to develop rapidly across a wide range of fields.

Both countries actively support cooperation in language education,

the spokesperson said, adding that such cooperation is an important component of bilateral relations and plays a consistent role in strengthening trust and friendship.

She also highlighted ongoing efforts between Russia and China to create favorable conditions for expanding cooperation between universities, strengthening academic exchanges, nurturing talent, and sharing experiences.

– Xinhua