

DSEDТ vows to promote 18 jewellery shops in Iao Hon

Armando Neves

The Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSEDТ) announced in a statement yesterday that it launched, in conjunction with the Macau Goldsmiths' Guild, a programme called "Jewellery Street in Iao Hon" on Monday, vowing to promote 18 jewellery shops in Iao Hon district.

According to the statement, the programme is leveraging key opinion leaders' (KOL) traffic dominance of the Douyin* and Xiaohongshu (officially known in English as RedNote but colloquially widely known as and "Little Red Book") social media platforms to boost promotional campaigns for Iao Hon District's certified gold jewellery shops.

The bureau noted in the statement that the so-called "Jewellery Street" benefits from prime its proximity to the Barrier Gate Macau-Zhuhai border checkpoint, in walking-distance for tourists, as a strategic advantage to boost customer shop visits and spending by both residents and visitors in the northern district.

The bureau said in the statement that this Year of the Snake includes both a "Double Spring** and Leap Month", meaning that in traditional Chinese culture, such a year is considered especially auspicious for weddings and other major life events. Therefore, the bureau said, it anticipates that the initiative



This undated handout photo shows an unidentified KOL from Douyin (aka TikTok) shooting a promotional video clip with a her mobile in a jewellery shop in Iao Hon district. – Photo: GCS

will attract gold jewellery shoppers to visit and splash out in the district.

The statement noted that the bureau has created a map, showcasing 18 Consumer Council (CC) "Certified Shop" gold jewellery shops and connecting them with nearby specialty retailers, restaurants, and tourist attractions to offer a seamless shopping and cultural experience in the peninsula's northern district, the statement said.

According to the statement, recent economic revitalisation activities in the northern district such as Flora Fête with Sanrio characters and Northern District Market, have gained momentum, so that the bureau plans to leverage the summer holiday season by linking multiple promotional campaigns, enhancing visitor experiences, creating synergies, and boosting the district's commercial vitality.

To better integrate tourism and shopping resources in Iao Hon district, the bureau has added a designated "Jewellery Street in Iao Hon" portal to its website: https://www.dsedt.gov.mo/zh_MO/web/public/pg_yh_gs, featuring all 18 "Certified Shop" gold jewellery shops along with curated specialty shops, restaurants and attractions - providing residents and tourists with a convenient trip planning tool, the statement said. ■

*Known in the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Macau as TikTok, Douyin (抖音 – "Shaking Sound") is a social media and short-form online video platform owned by mainland Chinese-based Internet company ByteDance. It hosts user-submitted videos, which may range in duration from three seconds to 60 minutes. It can be accessed through a mobile app or through its website. – Wikipedia

** "Double Spring" (双春) refers to a lunar year that contains two "Start of Spring" (立春) periods within the same Chinese calendar year. This occurs due to the misalignment between the lunar calendar (based on moon cycles) and the solar calendar (based on the sun). The Chinese lunar year has ~354 days, while the solar year has ~365 days. To reconcile this, a Leap Month (闰月) is added every few years, causing some years to have two "Start of Spring" dates. – DeepSeek

Child dies as heat records broken in Spain and Portugal

MADRID – A two-year-old died in northeast Spain yesterday after being left in a car for several hours during a heatwave that has pounded the country and neighbouring Portugal.

Emergency services in Valls, in the Tarragona region, were alerted in the early afternoon but were unable to resuscitate the child, a police spokesperson told AFP.

"Everything seems to indicate that it was negligence on the father's part. The child spent the entire morning in a locked car under the sun," they added.

"It was heatstroke. Even an adult would have died."

Temperatures in Valls reached up to 32 degrees Celsius in the shade yesterday morning (local time), according to the national meteorological agency Aemet.

Spain has been hit for several days by intense heat that has spread across the Iberian peninsula to France, Italy, the Balkans and Greece, triggering health warnings and alerts over the risk of forest fires.

Several areas of the country have seen the thermometer rise to well above 40C and record highs for the month of June.

Aemet said earlier yesterday that Spain had had its hottest June on record, with an average

temperature of 23.6C – beating the previous high of 22.8C set in 2017.

On Saturday, two road workers died of suspected heatstroke in Córdoba, in the south, and Barcelona, in the northeast.

In Portugal, the country recorded its highest-ever single-day temperature in June – 46.4C – on Sunday in Mora, some 100 kilometres east of Lisbon.

Eight Portuguese inland regions remained yesterday on the second-highest alert with the highest risk of forest fires, especially woodland areas in the centre and north of the country. (More on p.12) – AFP



A kid poses for photos with panda decorations at a celebratory event held in Victoria Park in Hong Kong yesterday. Celebrations were held in the city to mark the 28th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland yesterday. (More on p.5) – Xinhua

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Xi stresses building unified national market, promoting marine economy's high-quality development

President Xi Jinping yesterday stressed efforts to advance the building of a unified national market and promote the high-quality development of the marine economy.

– Story on p. 7

Trump hails new 'Alligator Alcatraz' migrant detention centre

US President Donald Trump revelled in a new Florida migrant detention centre dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz" yesterday, joking that any escapees would be taught to run away from the reptiles to avoid being eaten. – Story on p. 11

Mexican Congress approves reform for missing person searches

The Mexican Congress approved a reform on Monday to strengthen the process of searching for missing persons, using a biometric population registry. – Story on p. 12

Local man loses HK\$406,000 in AI investment scam: police

Ada Lei

A middle-aged local man has fallen victim to an online AI investment scam, losing HK\$406,000 (418,000 patacas), Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Chao Teng Hin said during a regular press conference yesterday.

According to Chao, the victim met a woman through WhatsApp in April, and they began chatting via the social media platform. During their conversations, the woman recommended some AI investment tools, claiming that they could enhance his chances of success in stock trading. She later invited him to join a WhatsApp group where members of the group purportedly shared investment strategies and stock analyses.

On May 22, a member of the group contacted the victim, urging him to invest in an AI project, claiming that by depositing a certain amount of money, the system could trade stocks for him automatically and make a profit. The victim believed the scammer and followed the latter's instructions to download a mobile app called INST-SI, and made six bank transfers from May to June, totalling HK\$406,000 to various Hong Kong bank accounts designated by the scammer.

However, when the victim discussed the investment project

with his family, he became suspicious and then discovered that the account balance was zero. He immediately contacted the app's purported customer service for an explanation and asked to withdraw his funds, but the "customer service" continually delayed responding to his request with various excuses – and no repayments were made.

Finally realising that it was a scam, the victim reported a total loss of HK\$406,000 to the police yesterday. ■



Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Chao Teng Hin looks on during yesterday's regular press conference.

– Photo: Ada Lei

Local man loses HK\$115,200 in concert ticket scam: police

Ada Lei

A young local man has lost HK\$115,200 (118,600 patacas) in a concert ticket scam, Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesman Chao Teng Hin said during a regular press conference yesterday.

According to Chao, on June 18, the victim purchased a front-row ticket for HK\$14,000 to a concert in Hong Kong on June 27 through Telegram. However, on June 24, the seller contacted him, claiming that the ticket price had risen, requesting an additional transfer of HK\$6,000. After the additional transfer, the scammer did not provide the ticket but asked for another HK\$6,000, raising the ticket price again. Trusting the scammer, the victim complied again and transferred

the additional HK\$6,000.

By June 27, after multiple transfers, the victim still had not received the concert ticket. The victim then requested a refund, but the scammer told him that he needed to recharge his MPay account and transfer additional funds to an Alipay account before any repayment could be processed.

Following the scammer's instructions, the victim recharged his MPay account and transferred additional funds more than 30 times. Including the initial ticket purchase and the two additional fees, he transferred a total of HK\$115,200.

Finally realising he had been scammed, the victim reported a total loss of HK\$115,200 to the police on Sunday. ■

Cultural Affairs Bureau pledges to 'optimise' library facilities



Leong Chon Kit (left), a deputy convenor of the Taipa and Coloane Community Service Consultative Council, and committee member Si Lai Kuan pose during yesterday's press briefing after the council's closed-door meeting with Cultural Affairs Bureau's (IC) officials at the Seac Pai Van Community Complex (石排灣社區綜合大樓) in Coloane.

– Photo: Ida Cheong

Ida Cheong

Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has pledged to "optimise" public libraries' facilities, considering that some of its libraries have insufficient equipment and facilities, Taipa and Coloane Community Service Consultative Council member Si Lai Kuan said yesterday.

Si made the remarks during a press conference after a regular closed-door meeting at the Seac Pai Van Community Complex (石排灣社區綜合大樓) in Coloane yesterday.

For instance, Si said, the public libraries in Taipa and Coloane enjoy high visitor numbers but are affected by insufficient seating and outdated facilities. For instance, Si pointed out, the children's section of Taipa Library is usually overcrowded after school, and also faces hardware issues such as old air conditioning units.

Si said that the IC official who attended yesterday's closed-

door meeting said that Taipa Library's seating would be increased, while equipment such as computers and air conditioning units would be gradually replaced while, at the same time, self-service options would be promoted.

Leong Chon Kit, a deputy convenor of the Taipa and Coloane Community Service Consultative Council, told reporters in a post-meeting briefing that a comprehensive review of all public libraries hardware was planned, including updating ageing computer equipment, reorganising book layouts and improving environmental equipment, such as the recent space adjustment at Seac Pai Van Library to add seats. Moreover, Leong said, book selection at the Coloane Library would be adjusted, taking into account the age demographics of the outlying islands (Taipa and Coloane), which would, for instance, increase the number of books on health and wellness issues.

Leong pointed out that about 73 percent of local residents have utilised public library services. In 2024, public libraries recorded over 2.7 million visits, representing a 9 percent year-on-year increase, Leong underlined, adding that the number of book borrowers saw a 3.5 percent year-on-year increase, while the volume of physical book and audiovisual borrowings remained unchanged from 2023 levels, according to a 2024 survey commissioned by the Macau Polytechnic University.

Leong added that about 80 percent of the survey's respondents had read at least one book within the past year, with the annual reading volume and time spent reading remaining, however, "at moderate levels", adding that residents awarded an average score of 4 out of 5 to Macau's public libraries, while about 80 percent of the respondents expressed satisfaction or high satisfaction with public library services overall. ■

Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs nabs trucker for smuggling 14 Apple iMacs

Armindo Neves

Zhuhai's Gongbei Customs has announced in a statement that its officers have caught a truck driver attempting to smuggle 14 Apple iMacs from Macau into the mainland at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge Zhuhai border checkpoint.

According to the statement, on June 14 at noon, during the supervision of cargo inspections at the Zhuhai checkpoint of the delta bridge, customs officers discovered that a truck registered as "empty" and with licence plates from Guangdong and Macau, was being driven in an unusual pattern in an attempt to evade customs checks.

The statement said that as a result, officers intercepted the truck. Upon inspection, the officers found 14 undeclared Apple iMac computers hidden under a pallet in the vehicle's cargo area.

According to the official Apple website, the 14 units retail at 122,401 patacas in Macau. The computers have been handed

over to the relevant departments for further processing in accordance with regulations, the statement said.

In the statement, Gongbei Customs reminded the public that according to relevant regulations,

evading customs supervision by hiding and taking goods subject to taxes into the mainland constitutes smuggling. If the circumstances are severe enough to constitute a crime, criminal liability will be pursued. ■



This undated handout photo provided by Zhuhai Gongbei Customs shows a man pointing at the 14 Apple iMacs seized by Gongbei customs officers at the Zhuhai border checkpoint of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Zhuhai on June 14.

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OCCASIONAL SHOWERS.
A FEW THUNDERSTORMS AT FIRST.
FORCE 3 TO 4 EAST TO SOUTHEASTERLY WINDS WITH GUSTS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 70% AND 98%.



26°C~31°C

Source: SMG

Casino takings rise 19 pct to 21 billion patacas in June

Staff Reporter

Macau's 30 casinos generated gross gaming revenue (GGR) of 21.06 billion patacas last month, representing a year-on-year growth of 19.0 percent, the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) announced yesterday.

However, month-on-month, GGR in June dipped by 0.6 percent from the 21.19 billion patacas recorded in May. June marked Macau's second-highest GGR so far this year and produced the highest year-on-year growth rate among the first six months. Only in May and June did local casinos' GGR exceed 21 billion patacas. In the first half of the year, GGR rose by 4.9 percent year-on-year to 118.77 billion patacas.

Macau's government-concessioned gaming industry is run

by six rival integrated resort (IR) operators: Sands, Galaxy, SJM, Melco, Wynn, and MGM. Under their concession agreements with the government, the IR operators are required to strengthen their non-gaming attractions and support Macau's cultural heritage promotion and old-quarter renewal projects. The operators pay 35 percent of their GGR as direct gaming tax to the government, in addition to an additional 5.0 percent in levies for funding a range of public causes. However, the gaming law, amended in 2022, allows the government to lower the additional levies (officially termed "contributions") for various reasons, such as when operators expand their foreign client markets or face unforeseen adverse developments affecting their business operations.

In the first quarter of this year, according to the latest available official gaming statistics, baccarat generated 84.6 percent of local casinos' GGR among their 16 games of chance. Gaming machines produced 5.6 percent of GGR in the first three months, while roulette, Europe's classic game of chance, generated a mere 0.53 percent.

Meanwhile, according to the latest available data from the Financial Services Bureau (DSF), tax receipts from the six gaming concessionaires reached 37.104 billion patacas in the first five months of the year, an increase of 0.25 percent year-on-year. Gaming tax receipts accounted for 85.6 percent of the government's total revenue (current + capital receipts) between January and May. ■

Four Seasons celebrates Global Wellness Day with 'Float in Harmony'

Rui Pastorin

Four Seasons Hotel Macao recently celebrated Global Wellness Day with its "Float in Harmony" event hosted at the Cotai resort's lagoon pool.

Global Wellness Day, this year themed "#ReconnectMagenta"*, was observed on June 14.

A recent statement from the luxury hotel operator said that the



This undated handout photo recently provided by Four Seasons Hotel Macao shows guests participating in the floating sound bath during the "Float in Harmony" event held in celebration of last month's Global Wellness Day.

event, powered by HSBC Life, invited guests "on a rejuvenating sensory journey designed to inspire deeper connection with oneself, with others, and with the natural world".

The statement said that the day started with an "energy-cleansing ritual" in the Pure Air Bubble developed by Barcelona-based royal brand Natura Bissé, which allows one to breathe "99.99 percent purified air". Meanwhile, the event highlight was a "floating sound bath" led by the founder of Hong Kong-based The Extra Club, Mish Wu, during which guests drifted across the pool while "enveloped in harmonic vibrations and meditative tones" in a calming atmosphere.

The event "underscored the importance of mindful living and holistic well-being, perfectly aligned with Four Seasons' commitment to uniting the essence of luxury and wellness, and the brand promise of HSBC Life in promoting a healthy lifestyle", the statement concluded. ■

* A colour which is close to an equal mixture of red and blue which is an additive secondary colour but a subtractive primary colour evoked by the combination of red and blue light. – Wiktionary

MPU students win multimedia design software contest



This undated handout photo provided by the Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) yesterday shows its students displaying Macau's flag during the recently held "12th Macao Student Multimedia Design Software Skills Competition".

Rui Pastorin

The Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) said in a statement yesterday that its students took the champion, first runner-up and second runner-up positions in the tertiary category of the recent "12th Macao Student Multimedia Design Software Skills Competition".

The "12th Macao Student Multimedia Design Software Skills Competition", along with the "17th Macao Student Office Software Skills Competition", were recently held by the Macao Productivity and Technology

Transfer Centre (CPPTM) and the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ), according to the statement, drawing 458 students to compete across four categories: Excel, PowerPoint, Word, and Adobe Multimedia Design.

The statement said that Bachelor of Social Work programme student Ruan Xingyu came out on top during the Adobe multimedia design contest category's tertiary group, being set to represent Macau at the "Adobe Certified Professional World Championship" in Orlando,

US, that is slated to take place between July 27-30. She will be competing against other students from around the world.

The second and third runner-up spots were meanwhile taken by Bachelor of Arts in Design students Tang Hio Cheng and Lam Wai Wa, the statement noted.

In addition to certificates, the CPPTM website said that winners of the contest will also be awarded a cash prize, with the champion set to receive 4,000 patacas in addition to a full sponsorship for the competition in Orlando. ■

USJ launches social work master's degree programme focusing on mental health

Rui Pastorin

The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) has recently launched its new Master of Social Work in Mental Health programme, which has been designed in response to the "urgent demand for mental health professionals" in Macau, the private tertiary education institution said in a statement yesterday.

With applications for the 2025/2026 academic year open until August 29, the Catholic university said that the two-year programme, which adopts an evidence-based approach, is the city's first master's degree programme specifically dedicated to mental health. It aims to "nurture professionals who have the practical and research capabilities needed to contribute to the development of mental health services" in the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

The curriculum, according to the statement, focuses on global and regional issues, mainly within Macau and elsewhere in

the 11-city GBA, with the aim of "consolidating the professional learning skills and scientific research abilities of those who are currently working in Macau and its neighbouring social service systems".

Moreover, graduates will be trained to conduct research towards

professional problems and social phenomena, the statement noted.

The course programme's language of instruction is English or Chinese.

The statement said that one can find more details and information by visiting USJ's website on <https://www.usj.edu.mo/en/admissions/> ■



This handout photo downloaded from the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) website last night shows its Ilha Verde campus.

Another locally bottled water exceeds bacterial standards: IAM

Tony Wong

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) said in a statement last night that 18.9-litre potable water containers from another local manufacturer have been found to exceed official bacterial standards.

This came after the local O'Sum brand's 18.9-litre potable bottled water containers were found last month to exceed official bacterial standards.

Last night's statement said that the bureau yesterday tested samples taken from 18.9-litre potable bottled water containers from five other local bottled water manufacturer, one of which has been found to have excessive levels of coliform bacteria and Pseudomonas aeruginosa.

The statement said that the problematic products were not supplied to hospitals and schools, neither were they sold in the retail market.

The problematic product announced last night was the local NK brand's 18.9-litre potable water containers, which were bottled on Monday. ■



This undated handout photo downloaded from the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute's (IPIM) website yesterday shows an 18.9-litre container of the locally bottled water brand NK.

Local media veteran documents Taiwan's Baishatun Mazu Pilgrimage

Interview by William Chan

Marco Ku (古金元), a veteran journalist and cameraman with 30 years of experience in Macau's media industry, recently talked to the *Post* about his firsthand account of participating in Taiwan's traditional Baishatun Mazu Pilgrimage (白沙屯媽祖進香) in early May.

The Baishatun Mazu Pilgrimage honours Mazu—the sea goddess and a central deity in Chinese folk religion - whose worship is especially vibrant in coastal communities. What sets this pilgrimage apart is its unpredictable route. Unlike other religious processions, the journey's path, rest stops, and schedule are not preplanned; instead, they are believed to be guided by Mazu herself, as her palanquin bearers respond to her spiritual enlightenment.

Ku noted that the pilgrimage begins at Baishatun Gongtian Temple (白沙屯拱天宮 - "White Sand Village Temple Saluting the Heavens") in Miaoli County, northern Taiwan. The destination changes annually but often includes Zhenlan Temple (鎮瀾宮 - "Temple that Calms the Waves") in Dajia, Taichung, or other Mazu temples. Each year, the Baishatun Gongtian Temple determines the pilgrimage dates and rituals through poe divination (擲筊)* on the 15th day of the 12th lunar month, which is February 12 this year.

"To keep up with the pilgrimage's spontaneous movements, the organisers provided us with GPS trackers, allowing us to follow the goddess's palanquin in real time," Ku added.

Ku described the streets on the first day of the pilgrimage (May 1) around Baishatun Gongtian Temple as "packed with pilgrims from across Taiwan," all gathered for the annual event. Volunteers handed out free snacks and drinks - a tradition called "offering blessed food" (發福食) - to support weary walkers and express communal care.

Mazu's palanquin departed at 11:25 p.m. drawing crowds despite the late hour. Though Ku said he couldn't witness the departure due to safety controls, he noted that the "festive, carnival-like atmosphere" along the route was grand and heartwarming.

According to Ku, this year's pilgrimage broke records, attracting over 300,000 participants. Many devotees told Ku that the journey was not just a religious event but a "physical and spiritual trial" - a way for younger generations to reconnect with their land through walking.

What struck Ku most was the remarkable orderliness and cleanliness of the event. Volunteers diligently collected rubbish, and pilgrims upheld a spirit of mutual aid. "The pilgrimage wasn't just about faith," Ku reflected. "It was a masterclass in civic responsibility - a testament to the local people's love for their community."

For Ku, the Baishatun Mazu Pilgrimage transcended religion, becoming a profound encounter with the Chinese region's humanity and cultural beauty.

** In Chinese folk religion and Taoist traditions, poe divination (擲筊 - "Divination Blocks") is a traditional method of seeking divine guidance from deities like Mazu. It involves casting two crescent-shaped wooden or bamboo blocks to receive yes/no answers from the gods, a binary sacred practice. - DeepSeek*



This photo taken last year shows Marco Ku filming in Macau.

- Photo provided by Ku



"Along the route, volunteers distribute 'blessed food' (福食) to fellow pilgrims—a gesture of support and warmth for those undertaking the arduous journey."



Devotees from across Taiwan arrive at Baishatun Gongtian Temple on May 1 to join Mazu's pilgrimage on foot."



"Tens of thousands of Mazu devotees, including pilgrims following the deity, arrive at Chaotian Temple in Yunlin County—the final destination and the peak gathering point of the entire pilgrimage. Chaotian Temple is a renowned local shrine also dedicated to Mazu. Alongside Baishatun's pilgrimage, Dajia Mazu in Taichung hosts a similar procession, drawing massive crowds of worshippers."



"Baishatun Gongtian Temple in Tongxiao Township, Miaoli County, is the starting point of Baishatun Mazu's pilgrimage. The temple, also dedicated to Mazu, is a major pilgrimage site for devotees."



"During the return journey, Baishatun Mazu stops at Yongyuan Temple in Taichung as a resting point. Devotees gather to catch a glimpse of the goddess and seek her blessings."

- Photos taken by Marco Ku during his trip in Taiwan early May, and photo descriptions by Ku as well

Macao to host festive events marking 20th anniversary of World Heritage listing

The Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) will launch a series of activities to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the “Historic Centre of Macao” being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, according to a statement by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) yesterday.

From July to December, a total of 20 intriguing activities featuring more than 50 sessions will be held, with an official launch ceremony scheduled for July 15 at Dom Pedro V Theatre.

Various world heritage sites in Macao will be transformed into urban parks, photo check-in spots, night tour spaces, and literary trails. During the summer vacation, the department

noted that it will host activities for children, including the “world heritage doctor” internship, a world heritage exploration tour, and family reading activities.

The local government said that Macao will also host an international cultural forum on civilizational dialogue, bringing together global experts to explore issues related to cultural heritage conservation and exchange, highlighting Macao’s role as a bridge between Chinese and Western cultures.

The “Historic Centre of Macao,” comprising over 20 monuments and urban squares interwoven in the heart of the city, was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2005. — Xinhua



A couple pose for photos at a celebratory event held in Victoria Park in Hong Kong yesterday. Celebrations were held in the city to mark the 28th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland yesterday.

— Xinhua

HK enjoys broad prospects, a promising future: FM spokesperson

BEIJING — With the firm support of the motherland, the protection of the “One Country, Two Systems” policy, the dedication of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government, and the concerted efforts of all sectors of society, Hong Kong has broad prospects and a promising future, a foreign ministry spokesperson said in Beijing yesterday.

Spokesperson Mao Ning made the remarks at a regular press briefing, noting that over the past five years since the promulgation and implementation of the Law on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong SAR, Hong Kong’s legal framework has been strengthened, social stability and unity have improved, and the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong residents in accordance with the law have been fully protected.

Mao said that the baseless and malicious smears by certain Western politicians and anti-China organizations against the “One Country, Two Systems,” along with their attacks on Hong Kong’s rule of law, fully expose their ill intent to undermine stability in Hong Kong.

She noted that with a high level of security, Hong Kong is able to achieve high-quality development

and the city’s GDP has grown for nine consecutive quarters. It has ranked among the top three international financial centers in the world, and has reclaimed a spot among the top three in global competitiveness rankings.

As the world’s third-largest recipient of foreign direct investment, Hong Kong tops the world in terms of fundraising from IPOs since the beginning of this year, ranks first in the world in air cargo shipping and fourth in the International Shipping Center Development Index, and is among the top 10 in talent competitiveness, with many foreign chambers of commerce recommending increased investment in the city, Mao said.

These data show that Hong Kong’s economy is highly resilient and vibrant, and its international appeal continues to grow, she added.

“Today marks the 28th anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to the motherland. We believe that with the steadfast support of the motherland, the safeguard of ‘One Country, Two Systems,’ the dedication of the government of the HKSAR and the joint efforts of the whole society, Hong Kong enjoys broad prospects and a promising future,” Mao said.

— Xinhua

Govt to improve design of ballots aiming to make it easier for voters to indicate choice



Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL) President Seng Ioi Man (3rd from right) addresses yesterday’s press briefing at the Public Administration Building, flanked by fellow commission members (from left to right) Louie Wong Lok I, Mak Kim Meng, Lai U Hou, Ng Wai Han, and Daisy Ho In Mui.

— Photo: GCS

Tony Wong

The Legislative Assembly Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL) said yesterday that it will increase the spacing between candidacy lists on the ballot papers for the upcoming direct and indirect legislative elections, compared to the ballot papers for the elections four years ago, with the aim of making it easier for voters to ensure that they correctly indicate their choice on the ballots.

The 2025 direct and indirect legislative elections will take place on September 14.

CAEAL President Seng Ioi Man made the remarks while speaking to reporters after chairing a regular closed-door meeting of the commission at the Public Administration Building on Rua do Campo.

There will be a total of 84 candidates fielded by eight electoral lists vying for the 14 directly-elected seats at stake, while a total of 14 candidates fielded by six indirect election lists will vie for the 12 seats at stake — if their respective qualifications are all finally confirmed by the commission.

Seng said yesterday that the commission will further improve the design of the ballot papers for the 2025 direct and indirect elections, with the aim of further reducing the number of invalid ballots by making it easier for voters to be able to clearly indicate their choice on the ballot papers.

Seng noted that the candidacy lists for the direct election are printed on the ballot papers from the top to the bottom based on their numerical order to be determined by a draw, which will be held the day after the commission announces its final list of accepted candidates.

Seng pointed out that the tick boxes for each candidacy lists have been printed in blue on the ballot papers since the 2017 direct and indirect elections with the aim of making them more visible, adding that the tick boxes on the ballots for the upcoming elections

will also be printed in blue.

Seng said that with the aim of making it easier for voters to be able to clearly and correctly indicate their choice on the ballot papers, the commission has decided to further increase the spacing between candidacy lists on the ballot papers for the 2025 direct and indirect elections, compared to the ballot papers for the 2021 elections.

Seng also reminded the public that voters can only use the polling stamps provided in the polling booths to indicate their choice on the ballots as otherwise the ballots will be deemed invalid.

Seng also noted that a Braille option will be provided as usual at polling stations in the upcoming elections in order to enable visually-impaired voters to correctly indicate their choice on the ballot papers.

Meanwhile, Seng also noted that after posting the preliminary lists of candidates on the ground floor of the Public Administration Building on Rua do Campo on Saturday, the commission has now started assessing the qualifications of the candidates, including verifying the genuineness and validity of the documents submitted by the candidacy lists and their respective eligibility for standing in the upcoming elections.

Seng said that the commission has also passed the candidates’ personal information to the Macau Special Administrative Region’s (MSAR) Committee for

Safeguarding National Security, which will now assess whether the candidates uphold the MSAR Basic Law and bear allegiance to the MSAR.

After the vetting process, Seng noted, the commission will announce its list of accepted candidates by July 15, adding that if no objections to the commission’s decision are lodged, the commission will announce its final list of accepted candidates by July 18, while if appeals are lodged to the Court of Final Appeal (TUI) against the commission’s decision, the commission will announce the final list by July 31 following the court’s ruling, based on the respective regulations concerning the electoral process.

However, Seng pointed out that according to the Legislative Assembly Election Law, no objections to the Committee for Safeguarding National Security’s appraisal can be lodged, while no appeals to the Court of Final Appeal against the committee’s appraisal can be lodged either.

More specifically, Seng noted that if his commission decides to disqualify a legislative election candidate after the Committee for Safeguarding National Security has concluded that he or she does not uphold the MSAR Basic Law or has been disloyal to the MSAR, the respective candidate cannot lodge an objection to the commission’s decision or lodge an appeal to the Court of Final Appeal against his commission’s decision. ■



This screenshot of a demonstrative video produced and uploaded by the Government Information Bureau onto YouTube in 2021 shows the sample of a ballot paper for the 2021 direct legislative election.

Europe Recalibrated: Strategic Pathways for Global Relevance

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The global order is undergoing a profound transformation. The United States, long a proponent of liberal trade and multilateralism, has increasingly adopted mercantilist and nationalist trade policies, emphasizing domestic manufacturing, reciprocal tariffs, and strategic decoupling from China (European Union Institute for Security Studies [EUISS], 2025). This shift challenges the European Union (EU) to rethink its strategic posture. To safeguard its economic and geopolitical interests, the EU should reproach the United Kingdom for its divergence from European norms, deepen ties with Canada and Brazil, establish an effective common defense policy and industry, and improve relations with China.

1. Reproaching the UK - Preserving European Cohesion: Since Brexit, the United Kingdom has charted an independent foreign policy path, often aligning more closely with US strategic interests, particularly in defense and Indo-Pacific engagement (European Commission, 2025). However, recent developments—such as renewed cooperation on regulatory standards in areas like plant and animal health—signal a potential for constructive re-engagement. Rather than focusing solely on reproach, the European Union should pursue a strategy of positive conditional alignment, encouraging the UK to re-anchor itself within a European framework of shared values and strategic interests. This approach would involve deepening sectoral cooperation in areas of mutual benefit, such as climate action, digital regulation, and research innovation, while maintaining firm expectations on adherence to European standards in data protection, environmental policy, and human rights. The EU could also explore structured dialogues on foreign and security

policy, particularly in light of shared concerns over global instability and the need for transatlantic coordination. By offering a pathway for closer alignment—without compromising on principles—the EU can reinforce cohesion, reduce fragmentation, and demonstrate that constructive engagement yields tangible benefits. This strategy not only strengthens the European project but also positions the EU as a pragmatic and principled actor in managing post-Brexit relations.

2. Strengthening Relations with Canada and Brazil (MERCOSUR): In response to US protectionism, the EU must diversify its trade and diplomatic partnerships. Canada, a G7 democracy with shared values and a robust trade agreement with the EU (CETA), is a natural partner. The EU is currently conducting an ex-post evaluation of CETA, signaling its intent to deepen this relationship (European Commission, 2025). Enhanced cooperation in digital trade, green technology, and AI governance would benefit both parties. Brazil, under President Lula da Silva, has re-embraced multilateralism and environmental diplomacy. The EU-Mercosur agreement, though controversial, offers a framework for deeper engagement. By addressing environmental concerns and ensuring sustainable development clauses, the EU can unlock access to Latin America's largest economy while promoting its values abroad (EUISS, 2025). Furthermore, finalizing the agreement would strengthen the EU's presence in a region where China's influence is growing rapidly. It would also provide European companies with preferential access to a market of over 260 million people, enhancing competitiveness in sectors such as agriculture, automotive, and pharmaceuticals. A balanced and enforceable trade deal with Mercosur would not only diversify the EU's economic partnerships but also reinforce its credibility

as a global advocate for fair and sustainable trade.

3. Creating an effective Common Defense Policy and Industry: Toward Strategic Autonomy - The EU's reliance on NATO and, by extension, the US, for its security is increasingly precarious. The unpredictability of U.S. foreign policy and its transactional approach to alliances underscore the need for European strategic autonomy. A common EU defense policy would enable more coherent responses to crises, reduce duplication, and enhance deterrence. It would also allow the EU to act independently in regions where U.S. interests diverge from European ones, such as the Sahel or the Indo-Pacific. The Strategic Compass initiative and the European Defence Fund are steps in this direction, but a more unified and binding framework is needed (EUISS, 2025). Moreover, the EU should integrate its defense industry into its broader trade and industrial strategy. By treating defense as a pillar of economic sovereignty, the EU can stimulate innovation, create high-skilled jobs, and reduce dependency on non-European suppliers. A coordinated defense industrial policy would also enhance the EU's leverage in global trade negotiations, particularly in dual-use technologies and cybersecurity. Exporting European-made defense technologies under strict ethical guidelines could strengthen strategic partnerships, especially with countries like Canada and Brazil. This approach would not only bolster the EU's security but also reinforce its position as a global economic and geopolitical actor.

4. Improving Relations with China: Pragmatic Engagement - The EU's trade with China is vast and growing, particularly in green technologies and digital infrastructure (European Commission, 2025). Rather than decoupling, the EU should pursue a policy of “de-risking,” maintaining economic ties while protecting critical sectors.

Constructive engagement on climate change, global health, and WTO reform is essential. Improved relations with China would also provide the EU with leverage in its dealings with both Washington and Beijing, reinforcing its role as a balancing power in a multipolar world (EUISS, 2025). To achieve this, the EU must adopt a dual-track approach: assertive in defending its values and interests, yet open to cooperation where mutual benefits exist. For instance, joint ventures in renewable energy, electric vehicles, and battery technology could accelerate the EU's green transition while reducing dependency on fossil fuels. Additionally, the EU should push for greater market access and reciprocity in sectors like digital services and pharmaceuticals. Establishing structured dialogues on cybersecurity, AI ethics, and supply chain resilience would also help manage strategic risks. By engaging China through a rules-based framework, the EU can promote stability, reduce the risk of economic fragmentation, and ensure that its global competitiveness is not undermined by geopolitical tensions.

5. Engaging the Global South - Building Equitable Partnerships for a Multipolar Future: As the global balance of power shifts, the European Union must deepen its engagement with the Global South—not only as a matter of economic diversification but as a strategic imperative. Countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America are asserting greater agency in global governance, trade, and climate diplomacy. The EU should position itself as a reliable and equitable partner by promoting inclusive development, fair trade, and sustainable investment. This engagement must go beyond traditional aid models. The EU should co-develop infrastructure, digital connectivity, and green energy projects through initiatives like Global Gateway, offering a transparent and values-based alternative to other global powers.

Strengthening partnerships with regional organizations such as the African Union, ASEAN, and CELAC can also enhance multilateral cooperation on issues ranging from food security to migration and health resilience. Moreover, aligning trade and investment policies with the development goals of partner countries will foster long-term trust and mutual benefit. By supporting local value chains, technology transfer, and education, the EU can help unlock the potential of emerging economies while reinforcing its own strategic autonomy. A robust partnership with the Global South will not only expand the EU's influence but also contribute to a more balanced and cooperative international order.

The EU must respond decisively to the evolving global landscape. The mercantilist and nationalist turn in US trade policy is not a temporary deviation but a structural shift. In this context, the EU should reproach the UK to uphold European unity, strengthen ties with Canada and Brazil to diversify its partnerships, create an effective common defense policy and industry to ensure strategic autonomy, and improve relations with China and global south to maintain global relevance. These actions are not merely reactive—they are essential steps toward a more resilient, sovereign, and influential European Union.

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Artistes perform during the high-speed railway track-laying completion ceremony at the Yan'an Railway Station in Yan'an, Shaanxi Province. Track-laying for a high-speed railway linking Xi'an and Yan'an in Shaanxi completed yesterday. Once launched, the new railway will shorten the trip between Xi'an and Yan'an from 2.5 hours to around one hour. — Xinhua

Chinese firms in UK are partners, not security threats: Chinese ambassador

LONDON — Chinese Ambassador to the United Kingdom (UK) Zheng Zuguang emphasized on Monday that Chinese companies investing in the UK pose no threat to national security but are partners contributing to economic growth.

Speaking at the Net Zero Finance Innovation Summit of City Week 2025 in London, Zheng addressed an audience of over 300 attendees, including British lawmakers and financial leaders.

He called for a “fair, just, and non-discriminatory” approach from the UK towards Chinese enterprises and cautioned against ideological labeling and an overstretching of the national security concept.

“Chinese businesses do not come

to the UK to destroy your economy or harm your national security. Instead, they have come to grow with your economy, create jobs and tax revenues, and seek win-win results,” Zheng said.

He stressed that closer cooperation with China in trade, finance, technology, and education would help the UK achieve its economic growth goals, reduce the cost of living, and accelerate its transition to a net-zero economy.

Zheng also reaffirmed China's openness to foreign investment, praising British firms for their long-term contributions to the Chinese economy. “China highly commends the contributions by foreign businesses and embraces businesses from around the world, including the UK,” he noted.

— Xinhua

Xi stresses building unified national market, promoting marine economy's high-quality development

BEIJING – President Xi Jinping yesterday stressed efforts to advance the building of a unified national market and promote the high-quality development of the marine economy.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks at a meeting of the Central Commission for Financial and Economic Affairs (CCFEA), which he heads.

In his speech at the meeting, Xi emphasized that building a unified national market is essential for creating a new development pattern and promoting high-quality

development, urging strengthened coordination and cooperation to build synergy in related work.

Xi stressed that advancing Chinese modernization requires promoting the marine economy's high-quality development and forging a Chinese path of leveraging marine resources to achieve strength.

It was noted at the meeting that the basic requirement for advancing the building of a unified national market is to unify underlying market institutions, market infrastructure, government conduct, regulatory enforcement, and markets of production factors and resources, while continuously expanding opening up both

internally and externally.

Efforts must be made to regulate enterprises' disorderly price competition in accordance with laws and regulations, standardize government procurement as well as tendering and bidding processes, regulate local governments' investment attraction practices, and facilitate sales of export-oriented products at domestic market.

It is also imperative to improve fiscal and taxation systems, statistics and accounting systems, and credit systems to foster a unified national market, and to refine evaluation frameworks for high-quality development and system for assessing officials' performance.

To promote the high-quality development of the marine economy, there should be a greater focus on innovation-driven growth, efficient coordination, industrial renewal, harmony between human and the sea, and win-win cooperation, according to the meeting.

It also emphasized increasing policy support and encouraging private capital participation in the marine economy.

China should boost its capacity for marine technological innovation, strengthen, optimize and expand its marine industries, enhance marine ecological protection, and promote global cooperation in marine scientific research, disaster

prevention and mitigation, and the blue economy, the meeting said.

Li Qiang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, Chinese premier and deputy director of the CCFEA, Cai Qi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, a member of the CPC Central Committee Secretariat and a member of the CCFEA, and Ding Xuexiang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, Chinese vice premier and a member of the CCFEA, attended the meeting.

– Xinhua

China's lunar 3D printing breakthrough paves way for Moon 'houses' built from soil sourced on-site

HEFEI – A groundbreaking 3D printing system developed by Chinese scientists has explored using only on-site-sourced lunar soil to build habitats, paving the way for the large-scale, on-site construction of lunar research stations.

The Deep Space Exploration Laboratory in Hefei, Anhui Province, has successfully prototyped a lunar regolith 3D printer that eliminates the need for Earth-sourced construction materials, according to Yang Honglun, a senior engineer at the lab.

He revealed that the system uses a high-precision reflective concentrator and flexible fiber-optic energy transmission to achieve temperatures hot enough to fuse lunar regolith.

"This printing breakthrough has validated the feasibility of using lunar soil as the sole raw building material, enabling true in-situ resource utilization and eliminating the need to transport any additional materials from Earth," he said.

Also among the printing system's key innovations is flexible manufacturing, which enables brick production and the customized molding of complex structures.

A preliminary test of the prototype's lunar regolith forming process has been completed on the ground surface. Tests of its ability to melt and form lines, surfaces, bodies and complex structures have also been completed, and tests of the technical feasibility of the prototype's solar concentrating technology, optical fiber bundle energy transmission and lunar regolith melting system have been systematically completed.

In the early stages of the research team's work, the core challenge was achieving reliable solar energy concentration and regolith shaping under the extreme conditions of the lunar environment.

After extensive testing, the multidisciplinary team – spanning the fields of planetary science, materials science, mechanical engineering, energy dynamics, thermal physics and optics – solved critical problems in energy capture, transmission and molding.

As for future applications, Yang said the prototype could manufacture lunar regolith structures, supporting the construction of lunar roads, equipment platforms and buildings, and enabling large-scale, sustainable lunar exploration and resource utilization.

It also validates key technologies for lunar energy capture and material extraction, laying the technical foundations for the construction of lunar energy systems.

The lab – also known as Tiandu, named after one of the three main peaks of the province's Yellow Mountain – is a national-level scientific research platform built by the China National Space Administration, the Anhui provincial government, and the University of Science and Technology of China.

It is a new model for China's deep-space research and operates with corporate-like autonomy in research direction, fund usage, talent and salary management, according to Li Hang, head of the lab's board office.

Since its official launch in June 2022, Tiandu has provided robust support for the successful implementation of major projects such as the Queqiao-2 relay satellite and the Chang'e-6 lunar mission, which returned humanity's first-ever sample from the far side of the moon.

Looking ahead, the lab is developing the world's first Mars sample research facility and is inviting collaboration. "We welcome scientists from home and abroad to conduct research in Hefei," Li said.

– AFP

Belgium, China vow to deepen ties, boost mutual trust



Belgium's Prime Minister Bart De Wever (right) shakes hands with visiting Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, in Brussels yesterday.

– Xinhua

BRUSSELS – Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever met with Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Brussels yesterday, pledging to deepen exchanges and enhance mutual trust with China.

De Wever noted that Belgium and China have enjoyed a long history of exchanges, with vibrant local-level friendly communications, and that Belgium plays a gateway role in Europe-China cooperation.

Recalling his multiple visits to China, De Wever said he was deeply impressed by China's development achievements. Despite differing perspectives, he stressed the importance of enhancing exchanges and increasing mutual trust in the face of the current complex geopolitical landscape.

Moreover, he reaffirmed Belgium's commitment to multilateralism and support for a greater autonomous Europe while expressing the hope that the upcoming EU-China leaders' meeting will yield positive results.

De Wever also stressed that Belgium firmly adheres to the

one-China policy, and this stance will not change.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, highlighted Belgium's unique role in the European integration process and China-EU relations as a founding member of the European Union (EU) and host of the EU headquarters.

Wang said that China appreciates the rational and pragmatic China policy pursued by the new Belgian government and is willing to work with Belgium to carry forward the traditional friendship and advance the all-round partnership of friendly cooperation between the two countries in a steady and sustained manner.

Meanwhile, Wang said China remains committed to high-quality development and high-level opening-up, welcoming more Belgian enterprises to China to develop their businesses and hoping that Belgium will likewise provide Chinese companies investing in Belgium with a fair, secure, and predictable business environment.

Wang also said this year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the EU, which carries significant meaning as a bridge between the past and the future. The half-century-long journey of China-EU engagement has fully demonstrated that the two sides can achieve mutual respect and win-win cooperation, he added.

Amid a complex and volatile international landscape, Wang said, China and the EU, as two major forces, markets, and civilizations in the world, should uphold the positioning as partners and the main theme of win-win cooperation, strengthening communication, enhancing understanding and consolidating mutual trust to jointly safeguard multilateralism and the free trade system. Together, they should serve as an "anchor of stability" of the world and act as reliable and strong partners who support and empower each other.

The two sides also exchanged views on issues including Ukraine.

– Xinhua