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**BRAZIL: AUTHORITIES SEEK TO PUNISH PRO-BOLSONARO RIOTERS**

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AP PHOTO



**Indonesia** Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said yesterday his country would invest in the development of Indonesia's new capital on Borneo island, which both nations share. Anwar made his first overseas trip to Jakarta since taking office in November, saying at least 10 Malaysian companies have committed to invest in Nusantara, the new capital that was chosen in 2019 to replace Jakarta, some 2,000 kilometers away.

AP PHOTO



**Pakistan** A United Nations conference drummed up funds and other support to help Pakistan cope with the fallout of last summer's devastating flooding, which the U.N. chief António Guterres called a "climate disaster of monumental scale" that killed more than 1,700 people in the immediate aftermath. Millions are still living near contaminated and stagnant flood waters. Many countries chipped in to better help Pakistan pull together an estimated \$16.3 billion that's needed to help the country rebuild and recover.

AP PHOTO



**Ukraine** Officials at a vocational school dismissed claims by Russia that hundreds of Ukrainian troops were killed in a missile strike there, saying yesterday that a rocket merely blew out windows and damaged classrooms. Russia specifically named the vocational school in Kramatorsk as the target of an attack. The Russian Defense Ministry said its missiles hit two temporary bases housing 1,300 Ukrainian troops in the city, killing 600 of them, late Saturday.

AP PHOTO

# SMILING TO CHINESE

**Thailand welcomes Chinese tourists' return with red carpet and the proverbial smiles**

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**K-POP BLACKPINK ADDS MACAU SHOW IN WORLD TOUR**

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**SAILING BIG BOYS WINS MAIN TROPHY IN INT'L REGATTA**

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SAILING

# BIG BOYS, ZHONGSHAN, AND LC SAILING TEAM WIN 2023 REGATTA

RENATO MARQUES

**B**IG Boys Sailing Team, Zhongshan Sailing Team, and LC Sailing Team have won this year's MGM Macao International Regatta respectively in the categories of Macao Cup International Regatta (Beneteau First 40.7 unified design group), the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Cup Regatta (IRC group) and the International Catamaran Invitational (Hobie 16 unified design group).

After four days of sailing races in the waters surrounding Macau, the three teams were finally crowned overall champions on Sunday evening.

The final race round was contested in the Macao Cup International Regatta and the Greater Bay Area Cup Regatta on Sunday with team ExeQute Racing making a commanding start and maintaining the lead until the finish line, followed by WanBooFish Sailing Team and SJTU Storm Riders Pan-Pacific Chuancheng Team.

Nonetheless, with more points scored over the four days of races, Big Boys Sailing Team won the overall champion's title, while the late



surge by ExeQute Racing propelled the team to second place overall. In the third position, placed Blue Water.

On the category disputing the Greater Bay Area Cup (GBA) Regatta, Zhongshan Sailing Team won the final race from Odyssey of the Sea Club and the ZiYu Sailing Team, securing this year's overall title in complete dominance. Guangzhou Nansha Sailing Team and Odyssey of the Sea Club finished in second and third place overall, respectively.

In the International Catamaran Invitational group, which counted with three rounds of races on Sunday, Wan Ning Meng Zhi Team finished the campaign on top winning the first and third rounds granting also the fourth-day daily award. Still, it was not enough to

beat the performance of the LC Sailing Team that with a win second race of the final day secured enough points to win the overall champion's title. Windseekers and Cat Fever teams placed second and third, respectively.

On Friday's second race of the GBA Cup Regatta, Zhongshan Sailing Team and Shanghai Senior Sailors were involved in a collision, damaging the Shanghai Senior Sailors vessel that had to be towed back to the docks.

The incident did not cause injuries to any of the team members involved. The crews were taken to land by a rescue boat that attended the incident, unscathed.

The jury later attributed the daily second place to Shanghai Senior Sailors.

COURTS

# BONJOUR SUBSIDIARY ORDERED TO DISSOLVE

**A** subsidiary of a cosmetic chain store founded in Hong Kong with operations in Macau has been ordered to dissolve by a court of law in its home base.

The judgment was handed down yesterday morning, Hong Kong media reported yesterday.

The Hong Kong High Court declared bankrupt the founder of Hop Fung Lung Limited – formerly known as Bonjour Cosmetic Wholesale Center Limited – a subsidiary of Bonjour Holdings Limited. The founder is Wilson Ip.

It was revealed to the court that the defendant is in debt of over HKD20 million. The judgment was made in the absence of the defendant.

Another hearing concerning

the bankruptcy proceedings of Ip's spouse, Chung Pui Wan, and son, Tarzan Ip, will be opened Feb. 7.

In relations to the bankruptcy, the subsidiary company was also ordered by the court to be dissolved under unpaid debts worth HKD3.9 million.

The parent company noted in an announcement dated December 22, 2022 that "trading in the shares of the Company on the Stock Exchange has been suspended with effect from 1:00 p.m. on 16 June 2022 and will remain suspended until the Company fulfils the Resumption Guidance."

For the time being, the company has not yet explained if the operations of the cosmetic chain will be affected by the dissolution order. **AL**



TRAVEL

# Japan, Germany impose Covid rules on travelers from Macau

**J**APAN and Germany have joined a growing list of countries and regions requiring travelers from Macau to take a Covid-19 test prior to boarding their flight, as China battles a nationwide outbreak of the coronavirus after easing restrictions that were in place for much of the pandemic.

The announcement is an extension of rules applying to entries from China.

According to the Japanese health authorities, from Thursday, travelers from Macau will need to present a negative Covid-19 test within 72 hours of departing for Japan, and undergo another test or antigen test upon entry.

German authorities announced similar measures wherein arrivals from Macau must present a negative polymerase chain reaction or rapid anti-

gen test result.

Last week, Japan has backtracked on a Covid-19 restriction that barred flights from Hong Kong and Macau from landing at any airport in the country. Two weeks ago, the Japanese government stated that direct flights from Hong Kong and Macau would no longer be accepted by Narita, Haneda, Kansai and Chubu Centrair airports. The statements

also requested airlines refrain from increasing the number of flights. In another statement, the Hong Kong government said, "the HKSAR Government welcomes the relaxations, but emphasises that follow-ups with the Japanese authorities will continue in the hopes that Japan rescinds all restrictions targeting Hong Kong flights, which will reduce the impact on travellers." **LV**

# BLACKPINK ADDS MACAU SHOW IN ASIA LEG OF WORLD TOUR

**K**-POP group Blackpink is slated to perform their "Born Pink" world tour on May 20 and 21 at the 16,000-capacity Galaxy Arena, becoming the first foreign group to perform in Macau since the onset of the pandemic.

The announcement came alongside the newly announced shows in Kaohsiung, Taiwan on Mar. 19 and Singapore on May 14.

The K-pop titans recently kicked off their Asia tour with two shows in Bangkok, Thailand, and will host a concert in Hong Kong on Jan. 13, 14 and 15 before hitting

the Mrsool Park in Riyadh on Jan. 20.

The rest of their Asia tour will be in Abu Dhabi, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Koahsiung, Manila, Singapore and Macau.

A post published by Galaxy on its social media stated that presale opens on Feb. 4 and a public sale on Feb. 5.

Ticket prices have yet to be announced.

Galaxy Arena is located at Galaxy's Phase III and includes 1,500 hotel rooms, casino space, a 16,000-capacity arena and 400,000 square feet MICE space. **LV**

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ASSISTANT EDITOR\_Lynzy Valles  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS\_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS\_Alex Torrão, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Seguí DESIGNER\_Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS\_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES\_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacaoNews, Xinhua SECRETARY\_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

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ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
Kowie Goldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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# Labor bureau to retain job-matching as main employment strategy

ANTHONY LAM

**M**ORE job-matching sessions are expected to begin this year with the aim of lowering the local unemployment rate to a pre-Covid level, Chan Un Tong, vice director of the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL), has recently hinted.

Pushing the unemployment rate down to the pre-Covid level is the target of the bureau, Chan pointed out.

Following border normalization, the official expects all trades to gradually revive. Therefore, more job-matching sessions covering a wider array of trades will be organized so as to get more people employed.

The frequency of sessions will remain at a minimum of three sessions per week. He added that in the middle of this month, there will be a session organized in association with local leisure enterprises. In addition, seminars will also be held to familiarize jobseekers with trade practices and insights, so that they will feel more prepared when interviewing for the jobs.

Believing that more positions



in a broader area will be offered, the official is optimistic about the effects of the prospective job-matching sessions.

Despite refraining from making an estimate on this year's unemployment rate, the official pointed out that both jobseekers and employers are optimistic

over the city's economic outlook for this year.

Responding to negative comments about the efficacy of past job-matching sessions, Chan disclosed that the average successful matching rate across all sessions held last year ranges between 40% and 50%. Online and

constant matching services fostered a much lower success rate, at only about 20%.

Further, Chan suggested that this might be caused by the unfamiliarity of jobseekers with positions offered or the fact that they lacked the skills required for the positions. Last year, many job-

seekers were forced to change career tracks because they could not find jobs matching their experience.

To solve the problem, the official revealed that the bureau would organize even more trade-focused job-matching sessions.

On the other hand, the official disclosed that job-matching sessions targeting the aviation industry will be on the table, in light of reinvigorated international travels.

Chan admitted that he was not knowledgeable about the job conditions in the aviation industry, when questioned if the industry had laid off workers during the Covid-19 restriction period.

He said that each airline company has had different tactics managing their human resources.

He then moved to discuss the exit mechanism concerning non-local workers, saying that no surge in applications for non-local workers has been seen recently. He stressed that non-local workers act as a supplementary workforce to the local workforce, and the bureau would prioritize matching local people with jobs.

## CRIME

# Currency exchange scams are back

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Judiciary Police (PJ) has recorded over the last weekend a total of three cases of scams in currency exchange related to casino activities in Macau, a PJ spokesperson revealed yesterday at the regular joint press conference of the police forces.

In one of the cases, a man from the mainland allegedly lost some HKD25,000 after having exchanged RMB for HKD in casino chips with a suspect who is also a mainland resident.

According to the PJ, the two met at a casino, and, after a first transaction in the amount of HKD90,000 was



completed without any problems, they met again on the following day as the victim wanted to exchange another HKD50,000.

After transferring the money (in RMB) to the suspect via WeChat Pay, the suspect then claimed that did not

have enough chips, and handed only HKD20,000 to the victim, saying that he needed to find one of his friends to obtain the remaining HKD30,000. In reality, he fled the scene and blocked the victim from We-

Chat in an attempt to escape, but the victim found him later in another casino in the NAPE area and confronted him.

At this time, he handed another HKD5,000 to the victim and wanted to issue a debt declaration for the re-

maining HKD25,000 but the victim did not accept it and they started arguing noisily, attracting the attention of the casino security, who called the police.

The suspect told later the PJ that he had come to Macau to try to get money to pay his son's medical expenses, amounting to HKD260,000.

In the other two cases, the victims, while attempting to exchange RMB for HKD currency to gamble in the casino, were given fake HKD banknotes, having reportedly lost some RMB90,509. As in the first case, both the victims and the suspects are tourists from the mainland.

## CITY RECORDS HIGHEST NUMBER OF TOURISTS SINCE JUNE OUTBREAK

**M**ACAU has logged its highest number of tourist arrivals on Jan.8 since the outbreak in June, recording nearly 40,000 visitors.

Jan.8 was the day the city eased border restrictions that have been in place for nearly three years, leading to an increase of 153.5% compared with the daily arrivals in the same month a year ago.

Of the 39,643 arrivals, 32,860 came from the mainland, representing an increase to the daily average of 134.9% over last year. 5,630 came from Hong Kong tourists, an increase to the daily average of 298.6% over last year, albeit from a low case.

Since Sunday, nucleic acid test results for Covid-19 are required for visitors entering Macau from the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

In accord with the latest border measures, Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) activated its advance promotional plan tailored for Hong Kong as a tourist market. On Sunday, 10 KOLs from Hong Kong were invited to visit Macau for a two-day trip.

Yesterday the city recorded 35,479 tourist arrivals. LV



GBA  
**HENGQIN'S HAIQIN BRIDGE  
OPENED TO TRAFFIC**

Recently, Hengqin's Haiqin Bridge was opened to traffic. So far, Hengqin Financial Island has completed the construction of five bridges for entry/exit. It marks that the area has also completed the construction of all municipal infrastructure and supporting projects. Being the gateway towards Hengqin Financial Island and inland waterways, the Haiqin Bridge is located at the entrance of Hengqin's artificial river, with the main arch of the steel structure of the bridge body at 58 meters height, 192 meters span and almost 1,100 tons weight. Hengqin Financial Island covers an area of 130,000 square meters and connects to the outside through five bridges. The infrastructure facility is aimed at enhancing the development of Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

**RECORD NUMBER OF LOCAL HIGH  
SCHOOL STUDENTS APPLY FOR MAINLAND  
UNIVERSITIES**

More than 1,400 senior high school students in the SAR sat the entrance exam for universities in the Chinese mainland on Saturday, a record high number, according to the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ). A total of 109 mainland universities will recruit 1,339 Macau students; nine universities were added to the list thanks to support from the Ministry of Education. The Ministry aims to help Macau develop its major industries and nurture talents on science and engineering, the bureau said. The first round of results will be released Sunday. Students who do not receive offers from their preferred universities may continue to apply to others.

# DISCUSSION ON ASSISTED REPRODUCTION KICKS OFF

**T**HE sourcing of gametes and details of donations were the core of the first parliamentary committee meeting discussing the city's first medically assisted reproduction technology bill.

Yesterday, the 2nd Standing Committee of the parliament commenced its review of the bill. President Chan Chak Mo and Secretary Lam Lon Wai revealed that the first discussion focused mainly on the source of gametes, the regulation of donation, the definitions of surrogacy and embryos, etc.

The two lawmakers pointed out that the bill has no reference as to which entity will be responsible for overseeing gamete donors and donations. For example, committee members were concerned with the nationality, identity and health conditions, among other factors, of prospective donors. The lawmakers



also wondered about the times of donations, ages of donors, rights and duties of donors, among other criteria.

It was asked if the government would clarify the details with Executive Regulations in the future.

In terms of surrogacy, the lawmakers also found discrepancies between the proposed provision and the existing provisions in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Macau aligns with mainland China in that it bans surrogacy

entirely. However, surrogacy is allowed in Taiwan, while only commercial surrogacy is banned in Hong Kong.

In addition, the lawmakers also sought clarification on the definition of an embryo. **AL**

AD

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# Parliamentary committee ponders sandwich-class housing role in overall policy

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE parliamentary committee responsible for the sandwich-class housing bill has requested clarification on the relation between the types of housing and the overall housing policy.

Yesterday, the committee held a press conference after the first meeting discussing the bill. The media event was led by committee president, Vong Hin Fai and secretary Leong Sun Lok.

The lawmakers revealed that yesterday's meeting covered articles one to 11. Members of the committee were mostly concerned with the goal of the legislation, according to the local paper the Macao Daily News. They even compared the bill to the Economic Housing Law and noted that the target of the bill was stated as "helping Macau SAR residents." The lawmakers demanded a clarification from the government on the lack of an unambi-



guous goal.

Meanwhile, the committee members also wondered why the government had copied the same provision about the use of the housing units directly from the Economic Housing Law.

The lawmakers pointed out that technically, sandwich-class housing is privately owned, although it cannot be

resold, leased or used by non-owners with compensation during the first 16 years after acquisition.

They queried why only the owners and their core household members will be permitted to reside in the units, but not extended household members or friends, hinting that a visiting friend who stays the night may incur a penalty for the owner.

## RESIDENTIAL PRICES STILL ON THE DECREASE

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE overall residential property price index for September to November 2022 decreased by 0.2% over the previous period (August - October 2022), at 249.8, recent data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) shows.

Realtors have been indicating real estate prices will remain low despite the expectation of better tourism prospects, as easing of Covid measures have limited effect on the real estate market.

The index for Taipa & Coloane (248.1) fell by 1.2% while that for the Macau Peninsula (250.2) stayed flat over the previous period.

The index for existing residential units (267.5) went down by 0.1% from the previous period; the index for those in Taipa & Coloane (297.9) dipped by 0.8%, while the index for those in the Macau Peninsula (259.8) held steady.

Analyzed by age of building, the index for residential units of buildings between 6 and 10 years old decreased by 1.8%, whereas the index for those between 11 and 20 years old grew by 0.7%. Meanwhile, the index for pre-sale residential units (287.0) dropped by 2.8%.

In comparison with September - November 2021, the overall residential property price index fell by 6.3%, with the indices for Taipa & Coloane and the Macau Peninsula dropping by 7.4% and 6.1% respectively.

Recently, realtor Centaline Macau predicted that the property market will recover slowly in 2023 even with the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions in this part of the world.

The realtor expects improvements to be seen only as early as the second quarter of the year.

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COVID-19

## PFIZER'S PAXLOVID NOT INCLUDED IN CHINA'S NATIONAL INSURANCE

CHINA's health care authorities declined to include Pfizer's COVID-19 treatment drug in a national reimbursement list that would have allowed patients to get it at a cheaper price throughout the country, saying it was too expensive.

Paxlovid, an oral medicine developed by New York-based drugmaker Pfizer, has been widely sought after in China since the country began phasing out its "zero-COVID" restrictions and a surge of infections started sweeping through the country. Although it is supposed to be prescribed by medical professionals, that hasn't stopped people scrambling to purchase it on their own through any means at their disposal — including buying generic Indian versions of the drug through the internet, according to local media reports.

Health care policymakers can leverage bulk purchases to lower prices in negotiations with pharmaceutical companies that, in turn, can net a steady source of revenue. A drug must be included on the reimbursement list to be covered by the national insurance scheme. China will include two other COVID-19 drugs: the Chinese-made antiviral Azvudine and the Chinese herbal blend medicine Qingfei Paidu Granules, said the National Healthcare Security Administration in a statement last weekend.

Paxlovid will still be available for use for those patients who can afford it. Paxlovid and Azvudine are prescription drugs used to prevent mild COVID-19 cases from becoming more severe.

While the Chinese government has blocked the import of non-Chinese-made vaccines like the Pfizer mRNA shot, relying on domestically made vaccines, it nonetheless approved the company's COVID-19 drug for import in February 2022.

The country is grappling with a major COVID-19 wave, as the virus has swept through major cities like Beijing and Chengdu. Sunday marked the first day in almost three years that visitors would no longer have to quarantine when traveling into China. **MDT/AP**



A large screen showing a Chinese People's Liberation Army Airforce is placed outdoor outside a mall in Beijing

DIRE STRAIT

## CHINA HOLDS LARGE-SCALE JOINT STRIKE DRILLS AIMED AT TAIWAN

HUIZHONG WU, TAIPEI

THE Chinese military held large-scale joint combat strike drills starting Sunday, sending war planes and navy vessels toward Taiwan, both the Chinese and Taiwanese defense ministries said.

The exercises coincided with the visit of a group of German lawmakers who landed in Taiwan yesterday morning. Leading the delegation is the Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, who leads the German Parliament's Defense Committee.

The German lawmakers will meet with Taiwan's Tsai

Ing-wen, as well as Taiwan's Security Council head and the Mainland Affairs Council, which handles issues related to China.

China has stepped up its pressure on Taiwan's military in recent years by sending warplanes or navy vessels on an almost-daily basis toward the self-ruled island.

China claims sovereignty over the island, which split from the mainland in 1949 after a civil war.

Sunday's exercises have continued into yesterday, Taipei said, monitoring Chinese warplanes and navy vessels on its missile systems.

China's actions "have severely disrupted the peace and stability in the Taiwan Straits and surrounding waters," the island's government said.

Over the course of 24 hours between 6 a.m. Sunday to 6 a.m. Monday morning, China's People's Liberation Army flew 57 warplanes and four ships toward Taiwan, the Ministry of Defense said in a statement yesterday morning. Twenty-eight of those planes crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial boundary that both sides had previously stood by.

China announced the drills around 11 p.m. Sunday, saying their "primary target was to practice land-strikes and sea assaults," according to a statement from Shi Yi, a spokesperson for the PLA's Eastern Theater Command.

At the end of December, China sent a record 71 planes and 7 ships toward Taiwan, the largest such scale exercise in 2022.

Taiwan will hold its annual two-day military drills starting tomorrow. The exercise ahead of Lunar New Year holidays is aimed at showcasing its defense capabilities. **MDT/AP**

DIPLOMACY

## New foreign minister Qin heads to Africa for first trip

CHINA's new Foreign Minister Qin Gang is starting his term with a weeklong trip to five African countries, the Foreign Ministry announced yesterday.

Qin, who until recently was ambassador to the United States, will visit Ethiopia, Gabon, Angola, Benin and Egypt from Jan. 9-16, spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a daily media briefing. In Egypt, Qin will also meet the secretary-general of the Arab League.

The new foreign minister

is following in the footsteps of his predecessors, who have for more than three decades started each year with a trip to Africa.

"It shows that China attaches great importance to the traditional friendship with Africa and the development of China-Africa relations," Wang said.

The U.S. is battling China for influence in Africa, with President Joe Biden making an appeal to African leaders at a summit in Washington in December. China has become a major

trading partner with the continent and investor in infrastructure and mining projects.

Qin, 56, was appointed foreign minister on Dec. 30. He succeeded Wang Yi, 69, who has replaced Yang Jiechi as the government's top foreign policy official.

Wang's new position has not been announced, but a recent article by him on the Foreign Ministry website described him as director of the ruling Communist Party's foreign affairs office, the post that Yang held. **MDT/AP**



Qin Gang, then ambassador to the United States (center) talks to players before a WNBA 2022 regular season match between New York Liberty and Chicago Sky, in New York, last July

THAILAND

# With high hopes, kingdom welcomes Chinese tourists' return

CHALIDA  
EKVITTHAYAVECHNUKUL &  
TIAN MCLEOD JI, BANGKOK

**T**HREE Cabinet ministers welcomed Chinese tourists with flowers and gifts as they arrived yesterday at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport after China relaxed travel restrictions.

The high-profile event reflected the importance Thailand places on wooing back Chinese travelers to help restore its pandemic-battered tourism industry — before COVID-19 struck, they comprised about one-third of all arrivals.

Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and the ministers of transport and tourism were among those applauding as 269 passengers on Xiamen Airlines Flight MF833 from Xiamen in southeastern China entered the terminal. It was one of the first flights arriving in Thailand since Beijing eased its coronavirus-related travel restrictions as of Sunday.

The travelers received garlands and small gift bags, and were greeted by a big banner saying "China and Thailand are one family, Amazing Thailand always warmly welcomes our Chinese family."

"I'm feeling good," said Simon Zou from Tianjin in northeastern China. "I can feel the hospitality of Thai people. We were given some small gifts. I feel very happy."

Asked what he plans to do in Thailand, he replied: "Eat! Have fun! And experience Thailand's culture."



A Thai official gives a garland to Chinese tourists as they arrive at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Samut Prakarn province yesterday

"The number of tourists from China and other parts of the world traveling to Thailand tends to increase continuously," Anutin told reporters at the airport. "This is a good sign for the Thai tourism sector, which generates income, adds value to the economy, creates jobs and opportunities for people."

The arrival was heralded by Thai authorities as a symbolic step towards restoring the country's lucrative tourism sector. But it also exposed how tricky it is for tourist-hungry nations to navigate the coronavirus issue.

As the Chinese tourists arrived, Anutin announced at the airport that visitors would not be required to show COVID-19 vaccination certificates.

Just two days earlier, the Trans-

port Ministry had issued a detailed list of revised requirements for visitors from abroad, including the need to show proof of vaccinations.

The announcement by the transport authorities itself was a sudden turnaround from what had been Thailand's policy since October, when it dropped nearly all pandemic-related requirements for visitors from abroad.

Anutin said the only requirement retained from the Transport Ministry's revised rules was that proof of insurance is needed for visitors coming from countries that require coronavirus tests before they return home. That condition would apply mostly, if not exclusively, to China.

On Sunday, Beijing lifted a mandatory quarantine for arrivals

from abroad imposed when the pandemic began three years ago. The move is expected to unleash large pent-up demand for outbound travel.

But so far few flights have been restored. Yesterday, a check of arrivals at regional airports found only a handful of flights coming from China. The largest share were traveling to South Korea.

A resurgence of infections in China and the relaxed rules led the United States and some countries in Europe and East Asia to tighten rules for travelers from China, raising accusations of discrimination from Beijing. Taking pains not to offend China, Thai officials have emphasized that Thai rules apply to all countries.

Other countries in Southeast Asia also normally host large num-

bers of tourists from China, though not on Thailand's scale. Most abolished entry requirements and have stuck with that policy, publicly declaring there was no need to single out visitors from China for new restrictions. Malaysia and Indonesia said they were screening incoming travelers for fever, a common, non-intrusive procedure.

Wang Zhiying from Beijing, one of yesterday's arrivals in Bangkok, said she used to travel to Thailand every year but had not since the pandemic broke out.

She said she believed that other countries' COVID-19 policies "are quite strict."

"If they only do this to Chinese people, it would make us uncomfortable. Thailand is friendly and the landing visa is available so we chose Thailand as our first overseas destination when we can go abroad," said Wang, whose family planned to head south to a seaside resort after a few days in Beijing.

In 2019, before the pandemic, around 11 million Chinese visited Thailand each year and tourism industry-related revenue accounted for about a fifth of the country's GDP. Tanes Petsuwan, deputy governor for International Marketing in Asia and the South Pacific for the Tourism Authority of Thailand, said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Last year, 10 million visitors were expected, but 11.8 million actually came, mostly after restrictions were lifted in October.

"The TAT earlier projected there will be around 20 million international visitors this year, but it has adjusted that to 25 million thanks to the Chinese," Tanes said.

He said he expects arrivals to reach or surpass pre-pandemic levels in the next two to three years, possibly reaching 40 million by 2025. **MDT/AP**

PHILIPPINES

# Defense chief quits in latest security shakeup

**T**HE acting Philippine defense chief has resigned, officials said yesterday, in the latest in a series of top-level changes in the country's security establishment that has sparked speculation of renewed military unrest.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. accepted "with deep regret" the resignation of defense officer-in-charge Jose Faustino Jr. and offered the top defense post to Carlito Galvez Jr., another retired general who has been involved in peace talks with insurgent groups, presidential spokesperson Cheloy Garafil said.

Galvez has accepted the



Philippine Army commander, Lt. Gen. Jose Faustino Jr., center, is injected with the Sinovac vaccine at Fort Bonifacio, Metro Manila, Philippines, on March 2, 2021

offer, Garafil said without providing other details, including why Faustino, a former military chief of staff, decided to resign.

Marcos on Saturday cut short the term of military chief of staff Lt. Gen. Bartolome Bacarro, whom he had appointed five months ago,

and replaced him with a retiring general without explaining the surprise move.

Faustino is a supporter of Bacarro and the two were classmates at the Philippine Military Academy. Bacarro received the highest military award for combat bravery as a young army officer

and his three-year term was supposed to continue until August 2025.

The appointment of military chiefs is a sensitive issue. The military has a history of restiveness, failed coup attempts and corruption scandals, and has faced accusations of human rights violations. Efforts have been made for years to instill professionalism in the military and insulate it from the country's traditionally chaotic and corruption-tainted politics.

Lt. Gen. Andres Centino, a military chief of staff whom Bacarro replaced in August last year, was reinstated by Marcos to the top

post of the 144,000-strong armed forces. Centino, who was due to retire next month, was chosen over a dozen senior generals and will have a fresh three-year term.

A new law that took effect last year fixed the term of the military chief of staff to three years to allow the top general more time to initiate reforms and press a years-long campaign to modernize the underfunded military, which faces Muslim and communist insurgencies and increasingly aggressive actions by China in the disputed South China Sea, where the Philippines claims contested islands,

islets and reefs along with other nations.

Bacarro's sudden removal sparked speculation of renewed military restiveness after the national police went on alert over the weekend. But national police spokesperson Col. Jean Fajardo denied the move was linked to any military restiveness and said personnel were placed on "heightened alert" mainly to secure an annual religious gathering in Manila.

Bacarro's removal followed a decision by the national police chief, Gen. Rodolfo Azurin Jr., to tender his resignation on Thursday after Marcos's interior secretary appealed to nearly 1,000 police generals and colonels to quit to allow a committee to investigate top officials involved in illegal drugs. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Protesters, supporters of Brazil's former President Jair Bolsonaro, storm the the National Congress building in Brasilia

BRAZIL

# Authorities seek to punish pro-Bolsonaro rioters

DAVID BILLER,  
RIO DE JANEIRO

**B**RAZILIAN authorities were picking up pieces and investigating yesterday after thousands of ex-President Jair Bolsonaro's supporters stormed Congress, the Supreme Court and presidential palace then trashed the nation's highest seats of power.

The protesters were seeking military intervention to either restore the far-right Bolsonaro to power or oust the newly inaugurated leftist Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in scenes of chaos and destruction reminiscent of the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

Rioters donning the green and yellow of the national flag on Sunday [yesterday, Macau time] broke windows, toppled furniture, hurled computers and printers to the ground. They punctured a massive Emiliano Di Cavalcanti painting in five places, overturned the U-shaped table at which Supreme Court justices convene, ripped a door off one justice's office and vandalized an iconic statue outside the court. The monumental buildings' interiors were left in states of ruin.

In a news conference yesterday, Brazil's minister of institutional relations said the buildings would be inspected for evidence including fingerprints and images to hold people to account, and that the rioters apparently intended to spark si-

milar such actions nationwide. Justice Minister Flávio Dino said the acts amounted to terrorism and coup-mongering and that authorities have begun tracking those who paid for the buses that transported protesters to the capital.

"They will not succeed in destroying Brazilian democracy. We need to say that fully, with all firmness and conviction," Dino said. "We will not accept the path of criminality to carry out political fights in Brazil. A criminal is treated like a criminal."

So far, 300 people have been arrested, the federal district's civil police said on Twitter.

In the months that followed Bolsonaro's Oct. 30 electoral defeat, Brazil was on edge—leery of any avenue he might pursue to cling to power. Bolsonaro had been stoking belief among his hardcore supporters that the electronic voting system was prone to fraud—though he never presented any evidence. And his lawmaker son Eduardo Bolsonaro held several meetings with Trump, Trump's longtime ally Steve Bannon and his senior campaign adviser, Jason Miller.

Results from Brazil's election—the closest in over three decades—were quickly recognized by politicians across the spectrum, including some Bolsonaro allies, as well as dozens of governments. And Bolsonaro surprised nearly everyone by promptly fading from view. He neither conceded defeat nor emphatically

cried fraud, though he and his party submitted a request to nullify millions of votes that was swiftly dismissed.

Still, Bolsonaro's supporters refused to accept results. They blocked roads and camped outside military buildings, urging the armed forces to intervene. Protests were overwhelmingly peaceful, but isolated threats of terrorism—including a bomb found on a fuel truck headed to Brasilia's airport—had prompted security concerns.

Two days before Lula's Jan. 1 inauguration, Bolsonaro flew to the U.S. and took up temporary residence in Orlando. Many Brazilians expressed relief that, while he declined to participate in the transition of power, his absence allowed it to occur without incident.

Or so it had been, until Sunday's havoc.

"Bolsonarism mimics the same strategies as Trumpism. Our Jan. 8—an unprecedented manifestation in Brazilian politics—is clearly copied from Jan. 6 in the Capitol," said Paulo Calmon, a political science professor at the University of Brasilia. "Today's sad episodes represent yet another attempt to destabilize democracy and demonstrate that the authoritarian, populist radicalism of Brazil's extreme right remains active under the command of former President Bolsonaro, the 'Trump of Latin America.'"

U.S. President Joe Biden tweeted that the riots were

an "assault on democracy and on the peaceful transfer of power in Brazil," and that he looked forward to continue working with Lula.

In a news conference from Sao Paulo state, Lula read a freshly signed decree for the federal government to assume control of security in the federal district. He said that the so-called "fascist fanatics," as well as those who financed their activities, must be punished, and also accused Bolsonaro of encouraging their uprising.

Bolsonaro repudiated the president's accusation late Sunday. Writing on Twitter, he said peaceful protest is part of democracy, but vandalism and invasion of public buildings are "exceptions to the rule." He made no specific mention of the protesters' actions in Brasilia.

"He is evidently the intellectual mentor of what is happening, so he cannot dissociate from it," said Mario Sérgio Lima, political analyst at Medley Advisors. "These groups were created by him, by the radicalism he imposed on politics. There is no way to undo that. ... It seems his group has already crossed the Rubicon."

One video showed a group of protesters pushing through a police barricade with limited struggle, and only a few officers deploying pepper spray. Another showed officers standing by as protesters stormed Congress, including one recording images on his phone. MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 1996 KING OF JORDAN IN HISTORIC TEL AVIV VISIT



King Hussein of Jordan has made his first public visit to Israel's largest city, Tel Aviv, in the latest indication of the new warmth between the two countries.

The King, an experienced pilot, flew a Jordanian army helicopter to the Sde Dov air base near Tel Aviv, where he was met by Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

At a ceremony to honour the chief negotiators who brokered the 1994 Israeli-Jordanian peace talks, Mr Peres said: "We still face all kinds of challenges: the greatest of them is not to let the galloping prospect of peace pass us by."

"I would like to say how happy we are to have the opportunity to be with our friends, our partners in building and laying the foundations for a comprehensive peace in this region," replied the King.

Israel and Jordan ended 46 years of war with a peace treaty in 1994 backed by US President Bill Clinton. The deal drew condemnation from Jordanian Palestinians, who make up 60% of the population.

PLO officials were critical of today's visit by the King, saying he should first have visited lands under Palestinian rule.

There was extremely tight security as King Hussein's motorcade made its way through Tel Aviv.

A quarter of Israeli police - 6,000 officers - were deployed to protect him, and central Tel Aviv was paralysed as police closed off roads and diverted traffic.

Thousands of Israelis turned out to watch him go by, giving him an enthusiastic welcome with Jordanian flags and banners greeting the King in Arabic.

King Hussein did hold talks with Mr Peres, but diplomats stressed the main purpose of the visit was symbolic rather than political.

Later, he flew to Beit Gavriel on the shore of the Sea of Galilee for talks with Mr Peres and US Secretary of State Warren Christopher, whose shuttle diplomacy in the region continues tomorrow with a visit to the Syrian capital, Damascus.

Jordan has been largely diplomatically isolated since taking a neutral stand in the Gulf War of 1991.

However, the peace agreement with Israel and King Hussein's increasing opposition to the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, have brought the country back into the international fold.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Shimon Peres lost the 1996 Israeli elections to Binyamin Netanyahu, who campaigned against the Rabin-Peres peace programme.

The Israel-Jordan peace treaty of 1994 continues to hold fast, however, despite its continuing unpopularity with many in the region.

In September 2002, Jordan and Israel agreed on a plan to pipe water from the Red Sea to the shrinking Dead Sea that straddles the two countries.

The project, costing \$800m, was the two nations' biggest joint venture to date.

And 18 months later, in March 2004, the two nations agreed a joint project to build a desert science centre on their shared border.

King Hussein of Jordan died of cancer in 1999.

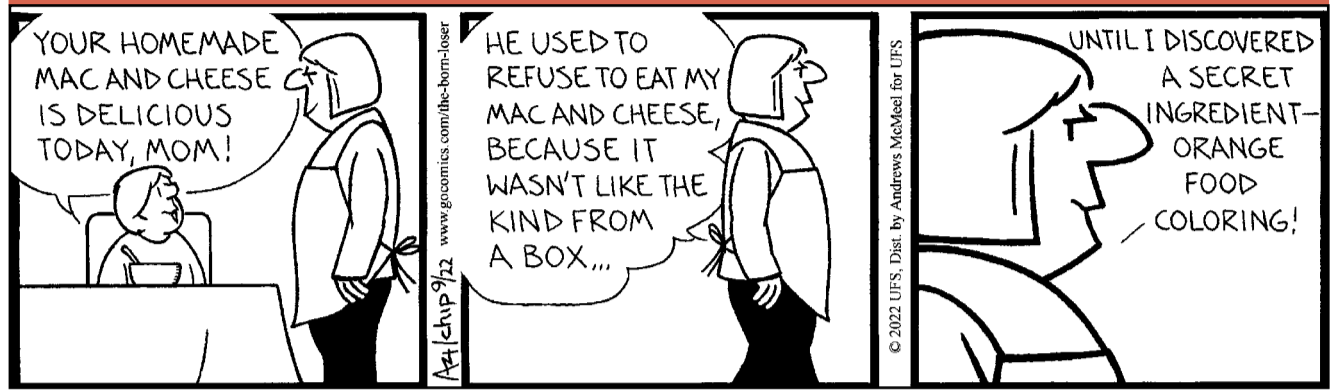


MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

<p><b>ARIES</b>    <b>Mar. 21-Apr. 19</b>                  You can expect to face opposition on the home front. Don't overspend on friends or children. Your lover will be annoyed with your participation.</p>	<p><b>TAURUS</b>    <b>Apr. 20-May. 20</b>                  You can make rewarding connections through the organized groups you associate with. You can prosper if you invest in property or mutual funds.</p>
<p><b>GEMINI</b>    <b>May. 21-Jun. 21</b>                  Uncertainties about your living arrangements may be unnerving. You will meet a person who may turn out to be more than just a friend. Sudden changes regarding colleagues may surprise you.</p>	<p><b>CANCER</b>    <b>Jun. 22-Jul. 22</b>                  Changes in your home may be disruptive and upsetting. You have done all you can to sort things out a personal level. You will expand your circle of friends if you join groups.</p>
<p><b>LEO</b>    <b>Jul. 23-Aug. 22</b>                  Your high energy will enable you to enlist the help of those in a position to back you. Get together with friends and catch up on reading and letter writing.</p>	<p><b>VIRGO</b>    <b>Aug. 23-Sep. 22</b>                  Your self confidence will attract members of the opposite sex. Do something special for them. You need to reevaluate your situation.</p>
<p><b>LIBRA</b>    <b>Sep. 23-Oct. 22</b>                  A trip to visit relatives should be rewarding. You can make personal changes that will enhance your appearance and bring you greater popularity.</p>	<p><b>SCORPIO</b>    <b>Oct. 23-Nov. 21</b>                  Good friends will give you honest answers. You can make money if you put your mind to it. Concentrate on spending quality time with children.</p>
<p><b>SAGITTARIUS</b>    <b>Nov. 22-Dec. 21</b>                  Don't let others bait you into arguments. Avoid arguments with relatives who might be conservative and outdated. You will have difficulties spreading yourself between your work and your home.</p>	<p><b>CAPRICORN</b>    <b>Dec. 22-Jan. 19</b>                  Your creative talent may well be recognized by others today. Do not jump to conclusions concerning your romantic partner. Opportunities for romance are present.</p>
<p><b>AQUARIUS</b>    <b>Jan. 20-Feb. 18</b>                  You may have difficulties with in-laws or family members. Your determination may make you a little overbearing when dealing with others.</p>	<p><b>PISCES</b>    <b>Feb. 19-Mar. 20</b>                  Don't avoid situations that may deteriorate; try to mend them. You will communicate easily and should be able to accomplish all that you set out to do.</p>

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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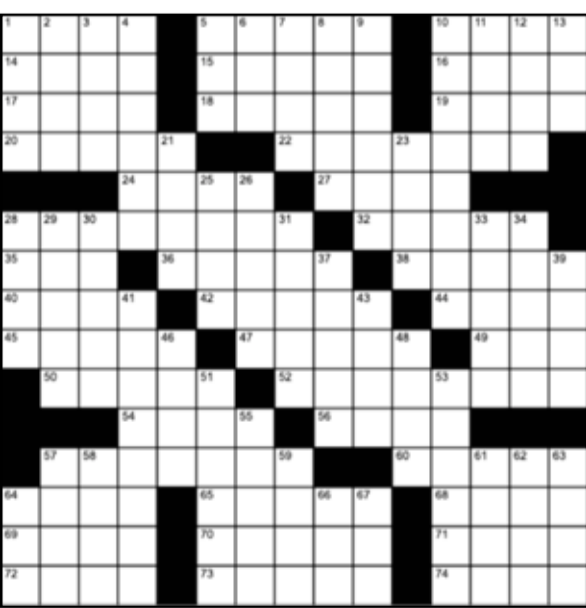
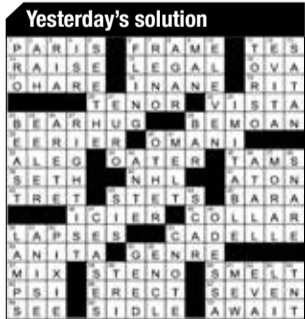
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-6	5	fine
Changchun	-14	0	fine
Chengdu	8	13	overcast
Chongqing	7	16	cloudy
Fuzhou	12	17	rain
Guangzhou	14	17	rain
Guiyang	4	17	cloudy
Haikou	16	20	rain
Hangzhou	7	10	cloudy
Harbin	-21	-5	fine
Hefei	2	12	cloudy
Nanjing	3	12	cloudy
Shanghai	7	12	fine
Taipei	16	19	cloudy
Wuhan	3	16	fine
Hong Kong	17	18	rain
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	-13	-10	cloudy
Frankfurt	4	7	rain
Paris	11	11	rain
London	6	13	rain
New York	1	7	cloudy

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS** 1- Angers; 5- Govt. security; 10- Pierce portrayal; 14- Carry; 15- Fuel transport; 16- Boxer Max; 17- Pleasingly pretty; 18- Entreaties; 19- Coscencat's reciprocal; 20- Moor; 22- Art of public speaking; 24- Island dance; 27- Arouse; 28- Type of FDR chat; 32- Horselike African mammal; 35- Colorful card game; 36- Aids; 38- Thaw before takeoff; 40- Nintendo rival; 42- Demon; 44- Architect Mies van der \_\_\_; 45- Blow one's top; 47- Humdinger; 49- Singer Shannon; 50- Home on the range; 52- Asymmetry; 54- Hammett hound; 56- Peace Nobelist Wiesel; 57- Soup made with beets; 60- Suckle; 64- Author \_\_\_ Stanley Gardner; 65- Dull; 68- Regretted; 69- Potter's oven; 70- Rub out or remove from memory; 71- Comply; 72- Coup d' \_\_\_; 73- Mikhail's wife; 74- Capone foe;

**DOWN** 1- Need a scratch; 2- Libertine; 3- Bluesy James; 4- Do a slow burn; 5- Summit; 6- Zip; 7- Muffin topper; 8- Rips; 9- Fake; 10- Shock \_\_\_; 11- Den; 12- Repudiate; 13- Modern art?; 21- Silence; 23- Bound; 25- Willingly; 26- Wing it; 28- Melt together; 29- Inactive; 30- Scoundrel; 31- Sporting blades; 33- \_\_\_ Janeiro; 34- Flu symptoms; 37- Reptile; 39- Electric fish; 41- Obvious; 43- Shootout; 46- Actress Harper; 48- One of a matching pair; 51- One engraving; 53- Nerve cell; 55- Now, in Nogales; 57- Londoner, e.g.; 58- Spicy stew; 59- Baht spender; 61- Yokel; 62- Gets the picture; 63- Ice cream brand; 64- Barely make, with "out"; 66- Battleship letters; 67- Cry \_\_\_ River;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

- Emergency calls 999
- Fire department 28 572 222
- PJ (Open line) 993
- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- Customs 28 559 944
- S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IAM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
- Airport 59 888 88
- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
- Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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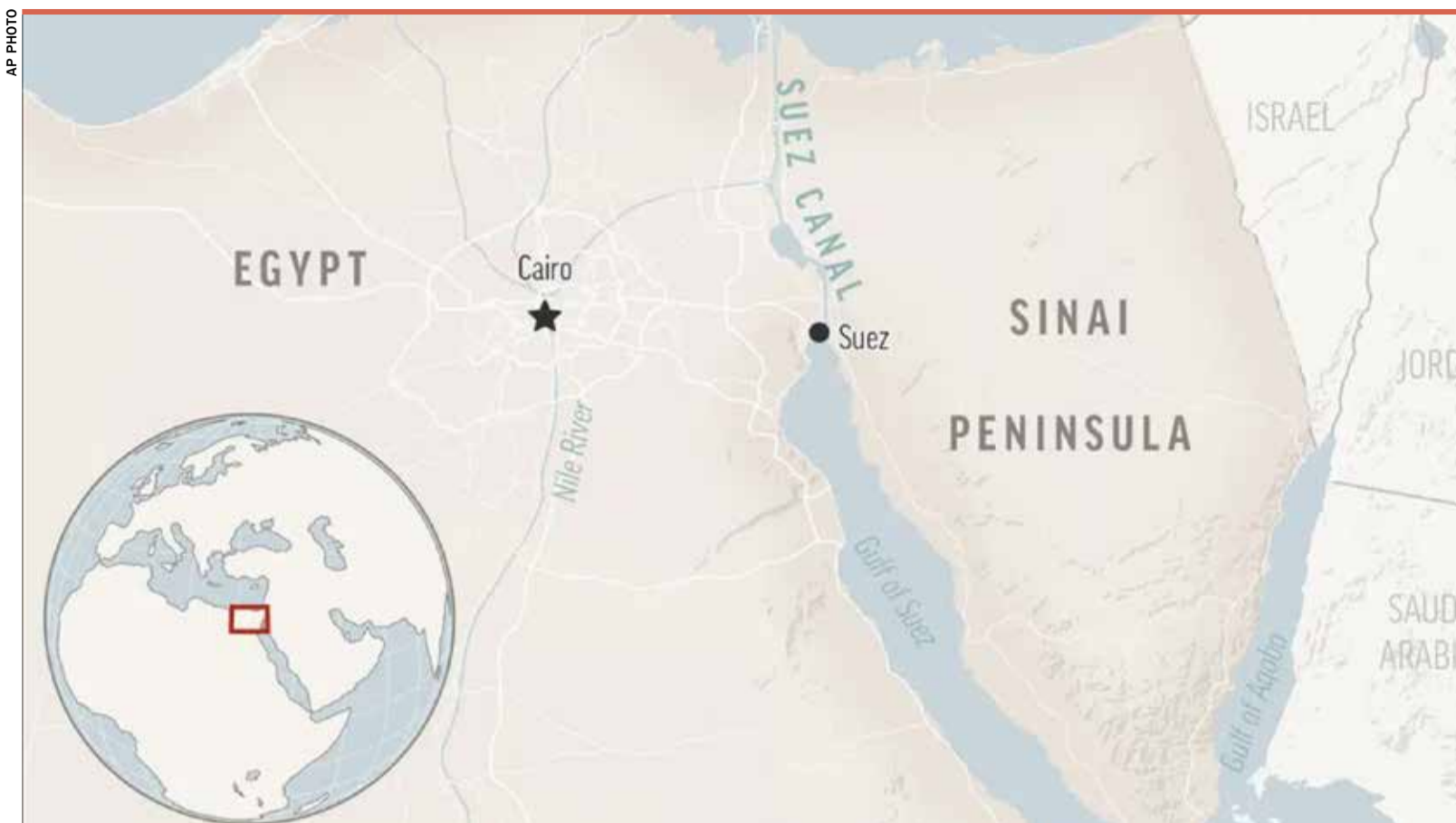


**AD**

**Soi Cheung**  
 HKD 3,980,000 1 bed 1 bath

**Nam Long**  
 HKD 3,780,000 1 bed 1 bath

**Vai Cheung**  
 HKD 2,700,000 2 beds 1 bath



A locator map for Egypt with its capital, Cairo

SHIPPING

# GROUNDING SHIP REFLOATED IN EGYPT'S SUEZ CANAL: OFFICIALS

SAMY MAGDY, CAIRO

EGYPTIAN authorities said a cargo ship carrying corn that went aground early yesterday in the Suez Canal was refloated and traffic through the crucial waterway was restored.

Adm. Ossama Rabei, head of the Suez Canal Authority, said the Marshall Islands-flagged MV Glory suffered a sudden technical failure while transiting through the canal, and the authority deployed four tugboats to help refloat it.

He said the vessel, which is owned by Greek firm Primera Shipping Inc., was part of a north-bound convoy heading to China before it broke down at the 38 kilometer mark of the canal, near the city of Qantara in the province of Ismailia.

After being refloated, the vessel was towed to a nearby maritime park to fix the problem, Rabei said. The canal's media office shared images showing the vessel being pulled by tugboats.

Rabei did not elaborate on the nature of the technical failure. Parts of Egypt, including

its northern provinces, experienced a wave of bad weather Sunday.

He said in a statement that traffic in the canal resumed after the ship was refloated and 51 vessels were expected to pass through the waterway in both directions yesterday.

"Traffic through the Canal was uninterrupted as 26 North-bound vessels are already in the waterway and (a) South-bound convoy will resume its journey right upon the SCA tugboats-assisted transit of MV GLORY," Rabei said.

Marwa Maher, a media of-

ficer with the canal authority, told The Associated Press the vessel ran aground around 5 a.m. local time and was refloated five hours later.

Canal services firm Leth Agencies said the Glory ran aground near Qantara and posted a graphic that suggested the ship was against the west bank of the canal, pointed south and not wedged across the channel.

Satellite tracking data analyzed by the AP showed the Glory running aground in a single-lane stretch of the Suez Canal just south of Port

Said on the Mediterranean Sea.

The Glory wasn't the first vessel to run aground in the crucial waterway. The Panama-flagged Ever Given, a colossal container ship, crashed into a bank on a single-lane stretch of the canal in March 2021, blocking the waterway for six days.

The Ever Given was freed in a giant salvage operation by a flotilla of tugboats. The blockage created a massive traffic jam that held up \$9 billion a day in global trade and strained supply chains already burdened by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Ever Given debacle prompted Egyptian authorities to begin widening and deepening the waterway's southern part where the vessel hit ground.

In August, the Singaporean-flagged Affinity V oil tanker ran aground in a single-lane stretch of the canal, blocking the waterway for five hours before it was freed.

The Joint Coordination Center listed the Glory as carrying over 65,000 metric tons of corn from Ukraine bound for China.

The Glory was inspected by the Joint Coordination Center off Istanbul on Jan. 3. The center includes Russian, Turkish, Ukrainian and United Nations staffers.

Opened in 1869, the Suez Canal provides a crucial link for oil, natural gas and cargo. It also remains one of Egypt's top foreign currency earners. In 2015, the government of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi completed a major expansion of the canal, allowing it to accommodate the world's largest vessels.

Built in 2005, the Glory is 225 meters long and 32 meters wide. **MDT/AP**

## CORPORATE BITS

### Galaxy to pay one-month bonus to staff Jan. 18



Galaxy Entertainment Group has announced that a one-off bonus equivalent to one month of

salary will be awarded on Jan. 18 to eligible team members ranking as senior managers and below.

In a press statement, the move is "to thank team members for their hard work and commitment during the past year," which will cover around 98% of its team members.

"Recognizing team members as valuable assets, GEG has been creating opportunities for team members to facilitate their professional and personal development through multi skilling and diversifying capabilities," the gaming operator said.

GEG said it looks forward to continuous growth for its team members by "seizing opportunities."

### Sands Shopping Carnival wins Brand Exhibition Award



The 2022 Sands Shopping Carnival has won the Brand Exhibition Award in the Macao Convention and Exhibition Commendation Awards 2022.

Now in its seventh edition, the Macao Convention and Exhibition Commendation

Awards are organized by the Macao Convention and Exhibition Association (MCEA) and have been held since 2015.

The Brand Exhibition Award recognizes exhibitions that deliver outstanding performance in

terms of planning, curation, and service quality; set an example for brand exhibitions; and make a positive impact on the development of the local MICE industry.

Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd., said: "For the 2022 carnival, we were very pleased to receive our exhibitors' gratitude for our prompt rescheduling of the carnival to September in response to Macao's June 18 Covid outbreak. They praised the event's popularity, its comprehensive arrangements and its supporting facilities, which helped exhibitors increase their revenues."



FOOTBALL

# Messi vs. Mbappé Part II: World Cup stars chase Ballon d'Or

JEROME PUGMIRE, PARIS

**L**IONEL Messi finally has something Kylian Mbappé already had with a World Cup winners' medal. Now Mbappé wants what Messi has won many times: the Ballon d'Or.

After their fascinating duel in a wild World Cup final, the tournament's best player Messi and its top scorer Mbappé are firm front-runners to win the next men's Ballon d'Or.

Call it Messi vs. Mbappé part II, and it continues Wednesday when the Paris Saint-Germain teammates face Angers in a French league game. Messi was given an extended break back home in Argentina after the World Cup, but has resumed full training and PSG coach Christophe Galtier hopes he'll be ready to play.

Because they play for the same team, their rivalry could intensify over the rest of this season.

The 35-year-old Messi has won a record seven Ballon d'Or trophies given to the best player in Europe. Only five Frenchmen — including Zinedine Zidane and Karim Benzema — have won it but the 24-year-old Mbappé has never been on the podium.

Mbappe made his

goals clear while at the ceremony when Benzema won: "For me, of course it's an objective to win one or many of them. But of course there's a process to reach that. I think I'm on the right track."

A challenger this time could be prolific Manchester City striker Erling Haaland, but he didn't play at the World Cup — let alone star in it — after Norway failed to qualify.

Mbappé won the 2018 World Cup with France when he was just 19. Messi waited agonizingly long to get his hands on the Jules Rimet trophy, losing in the 2014 final. He did so in style last month, when Argentina beat France to win its third World Cup title in arguably the most intense final in the tournament's 92-year history.

Messi's two goals in the final capped a remarkable tournament where he scored seven times, finished as the best player, and reached a whopping 98 goals overall for Argentina.

The good news for Argentina fans is that he wants to play a little while longer wearing the Albicelste jersey.

Mbappé, meanwhile, became only the second player to score a hat trick in a World Cup final and finished one ahead of Messi on eight goals as tourna-

ment's top scorer — the first to reach that haul since Brazil's Ronaldo in 2002.

Mbappé's overall tally of 12 World Cup goals puts him level with Brazil great Pelé — and one behind Messi and Frenchman Just Fontaine, the single-tournament record holder with 13 in 1958.

Former West Germany striker Gerd Mueller (14), Ronaldo (15) and record holder Miroslav Klose of Germany (16) are well within Mbappé's sights considering the young Frenchman may have three more World Cups ahead of him.

By the 2026 World Cup, Mbappé should also be well in front as France's all-time leading men's scorer. He currently has 36 goals and World Cup teammate Olivier Giroud leads Les Bleus with 53.

By the time the next World Cup comes around, Messi will be nearly 39 and perhaps retired from soccer altogether.

So the coast is clear for Mbappé to pulverize World Cup scoring records.

But before he starts thinking about that he has the pressing matter of a first Ballon d'Or to win, and it's a tall order with Messi as his main rival. But what a treat in store for French soccer fans if they both keep raising

their game.

Mbappé played for PSG 10 days after losing the fi-

nal in Qatar, showing great determination to put that defeat behind him.

The Ballon d'Or race has the makings of a classic contest between the teammates, since they were both in fine form for PSG before heading to the World Cup.

Mbappé tops the league scoring charts with 13 goals and Messi is tied with PSG teammate Neymar for the most assists (10). Mbappé is co-top scorer in the Champions League with seven goals, while Messi again heads the assists chart with four.


Messi won the Champions League four times with former club Barcelona, where he became a superstar and scored 672 goals before joining PSG last season.

PSG has never won the Champions League and this could prove a key factor in Ballon d'Or consideration — especially if Mbappé leads the French giant to the European title.

If Messi doesn't play Wednesday at home, PSG's next game is at Rennes on Sunday.

"He had an extraordinary World Cup with a lot of physical effort and challenges," Galtier said. "We hope he's ready for (Angers)." **MDT/AP**

AD



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OPINION

World Views

David Riedman, U. Central Florida  
 MDT/The Conversation



THE YOUNGEST SCHOOL SHOOTERS IN US HISTORY

Barely a week into the new year, a 6-year-old boy shot his teacher at Richneck Elementary School in Newport News, Virginia, becoming one of the youngest school shooters in the nation's history. While details of the case are still emerging, his teacher remains hospitalized with serious injuries. David Riedman, creator of the K-12 School Shooting Database, discusses the relative rarity of school shooters under age 10 and the likely aftermath of the event.

This is the 17th shooting involving a student under the age of 10 at a school since 1970 – the first year for which my database keeps track. Most of these shootings were not intentional. But in 1975, a 9-year-old student at the Pitcher School in Detroit was in a fight with a 13-year-old, left campus, got a rifle from his house and came back to the school and shot the student in the head, killing him.

In 2000, a 6-year-old boy fatally shot his 6-year-old classmate, Kayla Rolland, in their classroom at Buell Elementary School in Michigan while their teacher lined up other students in the hallway. The shooting followed a dispute on the playground.

How do kids this young typically get guns?

In most school shootings, the gun is taken from the student's home or from the house of a friend or relative. In the 2000 shooting at Buell Elementary, the student's uncle pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter and was sentenced to prison for a minimum of two years for leaving a firearm in an easily accessible place.

The 6-year-old shooter did not face charges due to his age.

The most striking part of this shooting is that it appears to be intentional. While many details remain unknown, it is likely that the student had the gun with him the entire day, possibly multiple days, before shooting his teacher. In many states, the legal system assumes that young children are not capable of the thought and planning that goes into committing a violent crime. In Virginia, the minimum age to charge someone with a felony is 14 years old.

Do schools need to start searching first graders?

Despite the attention that they generated, school shootings at any age are relatively rare. There have been 17 shootings involving kids under 10 publicly reported across a 52-year period. More than 50 million students attend schools every year, and fewer than 300 of them shoot someone on campus.

When most guns that end up in schools come from the home, I'd argue it is the responsibility of parents, relatives and older siblings to make sure that every firearm is locked, secured and accounted for.

While much attention is focused on the shooter and teacher, a classroom full of first graders witnessed their classmate shoot the teacher. She was critically injured, which means that it was likely a gruesome scene. These students will all need extensive counseling to understand and deal with this trauma. For the other students, teachers and parents, this is also a traumatic experience, and many students may no longer want to go to school.

What does this case suggest for school safety in the US broadly?

There were 302 shootings in school property in 2022, more than in any other year since 1970. Since 2017, the number of shootings each year has significantly increased. This pattern matches the spiking rates of violent crime and gun crime across the country. It is important to remember that most shootings at schools are committed by current or former students, not outsiders breaking into the building. Because of this, school security plans need to include all levels of schools and shootings by all ages of students.

[Abridged]

Portugal hired former Belgium coach Roberto Martínez to lead its national team yesterday.

The Spaniard replaces Fernando Santos, who quit in December after Portugal's elimination against Morocco in the quarterfinals of the World Cup. Santos left amid the controversy of benching Cristiano Ronaldo in the knockout stage of the tournament in Qatar.

Martínez ended his six-year stint with Belgium after the team's disappointing group-stage elimination at the World Cup, when he again failed to lead the nation's golden generation to a triumph.

He arrives to a Portugal team filled with talented players like Ber-

nardo Silva, Bruno Fernandes and João Félix, but also amid doubts over the future of the 37-year-old Ronaldo, who is now playing in Saudi Arabia.

The 49-year-old Martínez coached Belgium to a third-place finish at the 2018 World Cup. The Belgians were ranked No. 1 by FIFA for four years during Martínez's tenure but never won a major tournament despite having talented players like Eden Hazard, Kevin de Bruyne and Romelu Lukaku, the country's all-time leading scorer.

Martínez had said he made the decision to leave Belgium before the World Cup in Qatar.

AP PHOTO



PRINCE HARRY ACCUSES ROYALS OF COMPLICITY IN MEGHAN'S PAIN

PRINCE Harry has accused the royal family of being complicit in his wife Meghan's anguish, claiming his stepmother Camilla, the queen consort, had leaked private conversations to the media in order to burnish her own reputation.

In interviews broadcast yesterday [Macau time], Harry accused members of the royal family of getting "into bed with the devil" to gain favorable tabloid coverage, singling out Camilla's efforts to rehabilitate her image with the British people after her longtime affair with his father, now King Charles III.

"That made her dangerous because of the connections that she was forging within the British press," he told CBS. "There was open willingness on both sides to trade information. And with a family built on hierarchy, and with her, on the way to being queen consort, there was gonna be people or bodies left in the street."

Harry spoke to Britain's ITV and CBS's "60 Minutes" to promote his book, "Spare," which is due to be widely released Tuesday. It has already generated incendiary headlines with its details of bitter family resentments.

He repeated his claim on ITV that there was "concern" in the royal family about his unborn child's skin color after he married biracial American actress Meghan Markle. Harry and Meghan first mentioned the incident during an interview with Oprah Winfrey in 2021, but they haven't identified the family member who expressed concern.

Harry insisted the family wasn't racist, but said the episode was an example of unconscious bias, adding that the royal family needed to "learn and grow" in order to be "part of the solution rather than part of the problem."

"Otherwise unconscious bias then moves into the category of racism," Harry said. He said that "especially when you are the monarchy – you have a responsibility, and quite rightly people hold you to a higher standard than others."

"Spare" explores Harry's grief at the death of his mother in 1997, and his long-simmering resentment at the role of royal "spare," overshadowed by the "heir" — older brother Prince William. He recounts arguments and a physical altercation with William, reveals how he lost his virginity

and describes using cocaine and cannabis.

He also says he killed 25 Taliban fighters while serving as an Apache helicopter pilot in Afghanistan — a claim criticized by both the Taliban and British military veterans.

"Spare" is the latest in a string of public pronouncements by Harry and Meghan since they quit royal life and moved to California in 2020, citing what they saw as the media's racist treatment of Meghan and a lack of support from the palace. It follows the Winfrey interview and a six-part Netflix documentary released last month.

In the ghostwritten memoir, Harry, 38, describes the couple's acrimonious split from the royal family after their request for a part-time royal role was rejected.

The television interviews are just two of several given by Harry that are set to pile more pressure on the royal family. He is also appearing on "Good Morning America" and "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert."

Royal officials haven't commented on any of the allegations, though allies have pushed back on the claims, largely anonymously. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Serbia NATO-led peacekeepers in Kosovo have rejected a demand from Serbia that its security forces be allowed to return to the breakaway province amid ongoing tensions. Serbia's president said yesterday [Macau time]. The KFOR peacekeepers, who deployed in Kosovo in 1999 after the NATO alliance's bombing forced the Serbian army and police out of the territory, said in their response that there's no need for the return of the Serbian forces, President Aleksandar Vucic (pictured) said.

AP PHOTO



Mexico U.S. President Joe Biden walked a muddy stretch of the U.S.-Mexico border and inspected a busy port of entry yesterday [Macau time] on his first trip to the region. At his first stop, Biden observed as border officers in El Paso demonstrated how they search vehicles for drugs, money and other contraband. Next, he traveled to a dusty street with abandoned buildings and walked along a metal border fence that separated the U.S. city from Ciudad Juarez.

AP PHOTO



Film The prize for best film of the year at the National Board of Review Awards went to "Top Gun: Maverick." Martin McDonagh's "The Banshees of Inisherin" took home the most trophies. But the night belonged to its best-director honoree, Steven Spielberg, and the parade of tributes paid to the 76-year-old filmmaker. Colin Farrell, there to accept the award for best actor for his performance in "The Banshees of Inisherin," said the experience of first watching "E.T." was the most euphoric of his life, ranking it even above the births of his two children.