



THE HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATE IN MACAU THROUGHOUT 2022 WAS DOWN TO 38.4%, ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL STATISTICS

P5

PJ RECORDS 30% FEWER GAMING-RELATED OFFENSES, CRIME DOWN OVERALL

P3



P7



New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins said he's selected a team of lawmakers to lead the country that will focus on the everyday concerns of New Zealanders such as the rising cost of living. Hipkins, who was sworn in to the top job last week after the surprise resignation of Jacinda Ardern, announced his new Cabinet lineup yesterday, keeping some lawmakers in their previous roles while demoting or promoting others.



EU Most of the world continues to fail to fight corruption with 95 % of countries having made little to no progress since 2017, a closely watched study by an anti-graft organization found yesterday. Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index also found that governments hampered by corruption lack the capacity to protect the people, while public discontent is more likely to turn into violence.



USA Prosecutors planned to file felony charges of involuntary manslaughter today in the fatal shooting of a cinematographer by actor Alec Baldwin (pictured) during a rehearsal on the set of a Western movie in 2021. Cinematographer Halyna Hutchins died shortly after being wounded at a film set ranch on the outskirts of Santa Fe, New Mexico, in Oct. 21, 2021.

THE CHINA FACTOR

IMF upgrades outlook for the global economy in 2023, China's opening is the major factor P10



AP PHOTO

CITY
I AM TO RENOVATE SEAC PAI VAN PARK

P4

GBA
MACAU, HONG KONG SEEK CLOSENESS: HO IAT SENG

P5

FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS

US DEBT DEFAULT COULD TRIGGER DOLLAR'S COLLAPSE AND SEVERELY ERODE AMERICA'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC MIGHT



MICHAEL HUMPHRIES
TOURO UNIVERSITY

IT'S a case of déjà vu all over again on the debt ceiling debate.

Republicans, who regained control of the House of Representatives in November 2022, are threatening to not allow an increase in the debt limit unless they get unspecified spending cuts in return. In so doing, they risk pushing the U.S. government into default.

Brinkmanship over the debt ceiling has become a regular ritual – it happened under the Clinton administration in 1995, then again with Barack Obama as president in 2011, and more recently in 2021.

As an economist, I know that defaulting on the national debt would have real-life consequences. Even the threat of pushing the U.S. into default has an economic impact. In August 2021, the mere prospect of a potential default led to an unprecedented downgrade of the nation's credit rating, hurting America's financial prestige as well as countless individuals, including retirees.

And that was caused by the mere specter of default. An actual default would be far more damaging.

DOLLAR'S COLLAPSE

Possibly the most serious consequence would be the collapse of the U.S. dollar and its replacement as global trade's "unit of

account." That essentially means that it is widely used in global finance and trade.

Day to day, most Americans are likely unaware of the economic and political power that goes with being the world's unit of account. Currently, more than half of world trade – from oil and gold to cars and smartphones – is in U.S. dollars, with the euro accounting for around 30% and all other currencies making up the balance.

As a result of this dominance, the U.S. is the only country on the planet that can pay its foreign debt in its own currency. This gives both the U.S. government and American companies tremendous leeway in international trade and finance.

No matter how much debt the U.S. government owes foreign investors, it can simply print the money needed to pay them back – although for economic reasons, it may not be wise to do so. Other countries must buy either the dollar or the euro to pay their foreign debt. And the only way for them to do so is to either to export more than they import or borrow more dollars or euros on the international market.

The U.S. is free from such constraints and can run up large trade deficits – that is, import more than it exports – for decades without the same consequences.

For American companies, the dominance of the dollar means

they aren't as subject to the exchange rate risk as are their foreign competitors. Exchange rate risk refers to how changes in the relative value of currencies may affect a company's profitability.

Since international trade is generally denominated in dollars, U.S. businesses can buy and sell in their own currency, something their foreign competitors cannot do as easily. As simple as this sounds, it gives American companies a tremendous competitive advantage.

If Republicans push the U.S. into default, the dollar would likely lose its position as the international unit of account, forcing the government and companies to pay their international bills in another currency.

LOSS OF POLITICAL POWER TOO

Since most foreign trade is denominated in the dollar, trade must go through an American bank at some point. This is one important way dollar dominance gives the U.S. tremendous political power, especially to punish economic rivals and unfriendly governments.

For example, when former President Donald Trump imposed economic sanctions on Iran, he denied the country access to American banks and to the dollar. He also imposed secondary sanctions, which means that non-A-

merican companies trading with Iran were also sanctioned. Given a choice of access to the dollar or trading with Iran, most of the world economies chose access to the dollar and complied with the sanctions. As a result, Iran entered a deep recession, and its currency plummeted about 30%.

President Joe Biden did something similar against Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine. Limiting Russia's access to the dollar has helped push the country into a recession that's bordering on a depression.

No other country today could unilaterally impose this level of economic pain on another country. And all an American president currently needs is a pen.

RIVALS REWARDED

Another consequence of the dollar's collapse would be enhancing the position of the U.S.'s top rival for global influence: China.

While the euro would likely replace the dollar as the world's primary unit of account, the Chinese yuan would move into second place.

If the yuan were to become an a significant international unit of account, this would enhance China's international position both economically and politically. As it is, China has been working with the other BRIC countries – Brazil, Russia and India – to accept the yuan as a unit of account. With

the other three already resentful of U.S. economic and political dominance, a U.S. default would support that effort.

They may not be alone: Recently, Saudi Arabia suggested it was open to trading some of its oil in currencies other than the dollar – something that would change long-standing policy.

SEVERE CONSEQUENCES

Beyond the impact on the dollar and the economic and political clout of the U.S., a default would be profoundly felt in many other ways and by countless people.

In the U.S., tens of millions of Americans and thousands of companies that depend on government support could suffer, and the economy would most likely sink into recession – or worse, given the U.S. is already expected to soon suffer a downturn. In addition, retirees could see the worth of their pensions dwindle.

The truth is, we really don't know what will happen or how bad it will get. The scale of the damage caused by a U.S. default is hard to calculate in advance because it has never happened before.

But there's one thing we can be certain of. If Republicans take their threat of default too far, the U.S. and Americans will suffer tremendously. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

REACHING OUT!

+25,000

Like us on facebook.com/mdtimes



 MacauDaily 澳門每日時報

DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
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

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys 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**Advertisement** advertising@macaudailytimes.com**For subscription and general issues:**

general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

CRIME

PJ records 30% fewer casino-related offenses last year

ANTHONY LAM

ABOUT 30% less crimes related to casinos were recorded year-on-year in 2022, the Judiciary Police (PJ) stated in its annual criminal report.

To be exact, the police logged 965 cases that involved casinos last year.

Cases of usury for gambling, related deprivations of freedom of movement, and fraud and robbery connected with currency exchange syndicates have all decreased year-on-year, the police added.

The main reason behind the drop was the decrease in tourists and gaming activities, according to the police analysis.

The gambling crime coordination center and criminal investigations stationing mechanism under the police maintain 24-hour operations. Routine and spot inspections inside and outside casinos are constantly conducted to curb gambling-related crimes and surrounding illegal activities.

Close contact is maintained with the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) and casino operators to conduct joint inspections and to create a linkage mechanism to strengthen the crackdown on fake websites that fraudulently use the name of local casino operators.

Efforts have also been exerted to cooperate with the Public Security Police Force (PSP) and casino operators to curb illegal currency or monetary exchange activities. Last year, the joint for-



ces intercepted more than 3,500 currency-exchanging syndicates members. The names of 126 people were reported to the DICJ to prohibit them from entering local casinos.

The PJ admitted that currency exchange fraud using replicated or counterfeited bank notes had risen. In the hopes of controlling the situation, the PJ pledged to further crackdown on such crimes and run campaigns against this type of crime.

Further to this effect, the PJ held six workshop sessions on preventing casino-related crimes last year. A total of 277 trade practitioners attended the sessions. The PJ considered it a means of promoting police-public cooperation.

Amid the promulgation of the reviewed Gambling Law and its supporting laws and regulations, the PJ "exerted great efforts" in cracking down on criminal syndicates. It also revealed that the government was preparing to commen-

ce the legislative process for illegal gambling and related crimes.

The PJ sees these efforts as part of an effort to promote the healthy development of the local casino market and provide "strong legal tools" to prevent and crack down on gambling-related crimes.

"This is the first year of a new development stage for the gambling industry in Macau. Based on the positive cooperation with relevant government departments in the past, the PJ will strive to encourage the industry to fulfil its responsibility of maintaining national and regional security," the PJ concluded.

SEX OFFENSES UP

On sex-related crimes, the PJ pointed out that such crimes have increased in recent years.

In particular, cases involving those under the age of criminal responsibility were transferred to the prosecution last year, many of whom were involved in sex-rela-

ted crimes. The situation deserves public attention, the police added.

The city saw 21 rape cases last year, nine cases short from the previous year. Nonetheless, the number of sex crimes against the underaged nearly doubled year-on-year, reaching 21 cases in 2022. The number of sexual harassment cases also doubled year-on-year.

Cases concerning pornography depicting minors reached 176 cases, 33 more than the previous year.

The PJ pledged that it would deepen cooperation with the social welfare and education sectors to better educate children on protecting themselves.

CRIME DOWN OVERALL

The Judiciary Police said that it had recorded a total of 8,612 criminal cases in 2022, a drop of 10.1% from a year earlier.

Among the cases, a total of 4,470 were investigated and reported, a decrease of 9.1% compared with the figure of 2021, PJ added in a statement.

The Judiciary Police transferred 1,265 suspects for prosecution in 2022, 30.9% lower than that of 2021.

Serious crimes remained at a low level, with one homicide case and one serious assault reported in the whole year of 2022, according to the press release.

Meanwhile, fraud, information and drug-related crimes in 2022 also registered drops from a year earlier, it added.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FUND APPROVES MUST SATELLITE CORE MISSIONS

The National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) has approved funding for the core missions of the MUST I satellite. The missions are expected to cost approximately 20 million Chinese yuan. It is the first time that the NSFC has issued funding to a non-mainland project. The satellite will be launched in May this year. The core missions will cover six areas, namely solar activities and energetic particles, research and simulation of the inner dynamics of terrestrial planets, mantle and ocean electromagnetic induction research, lithospheric magnetic field research, and high-precision research into the earth's magnetic field.

LIGHT FESTIVAL INSTALLATIONS TO REMAIN TILL THIS WEEKEND

Officially referred to as "Light Up Macao 2022", the annual light festival in Macau will feature installations up until February 5. The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) explained that it would attract more residents and tourists to various districts to take pictures and encourage greater consumer spending and activity. The MGTO wants to create synergies between the events that will be held this weekend, including a fireworks display and the San Ma Lo pedestrian zone. The Lunar New Year lantern display and shopping festivals across the city will continue for this weekend and after.

NEW ROUND OF CENTRALIZED RAT SALE TO START FEB. 3

The sixth round of the centralized sale of SARS-CoV-2 rapid antigen test (RAT) kits will start on February 3 and end on February 16, the government's Covid-19 taskforce announced. Each eligible person will be allowed to acquire 10 RAT kits during the period, regardless of the quantity in each package. Each purchase will be priced at MOP40. Points of sale include authorized chemist shops and service points of three local associations. Macau ID holders, blue card holders and non-local students at local universities are eligible to purchase with their IDs.

COMMUNITY

Health Bureau registers less suicides last quarter

RENATO MARQUES

THE Health Bureau (SSM) has recorded a total of 15 suicides in Macau in the last quarter of 2022 - October to December (Q4), according to a statement from the SSM.

The figure represents a drop both when compared to the previous quarter (-20%) and year-on-year with the same quarter of 2021 (-46.7%).

The majority of the cases recorded were local residents (80%), while non-

residents comprised the remaining 20%.

Those who passed away in this period were aged between 22 and 96 years old.

The SSM stated that data analysis showed that "the main and potential causes of suicide are chronic or physiological illnesses, mental illnesses, casino games or financial problems," without specifying how many cases related to each causes.

According to the World Health Organization, more

than 700,000 people died by suicide every year worldwide, and suicide was the cause of death in one in every 100 deaths.

The SSM also notes that even though the causes for suicide are complex and often involve mental illness, psychological, socioeconomic, and family factors, as well as relationship issues and genetic predispositions. "It is worth emphasizing that suicide is preventable and all sectors of society must unite in suicide preven-

tion," the bureau warned.

The SSM provided advice, stating that "To help reduce the incidence of suicide, residents should connect with, communicate with, and care about the people around them in their daily lives and encourage those who are struggling emotionally to actively seek professional help."

The bureau also added that mental health services are available to residents, who may access these services at the healthcare

centers of Tap Seac, Fai Chi Kei, Areia Preta, Ilha Verde, Jardins do Oceano, Nossa Senhora do Carmo - Lago, Praia do Manduco and Seac Pai Van.

Additional services are also paid for by non-profit associations, such as the "Kai Fong" Association and the Women's General Association of Macau.

The SSM calls on anyone experiencing emotional distress to call the Caritas Life Hope Hotline (2852 5222) to access counseling services.

CULTURE

LARGEST COLLECTION OF HISTORICAL TRAVEL RECORDS ABOUT MACAU NOW IN PRINT

RENATO MARQUES

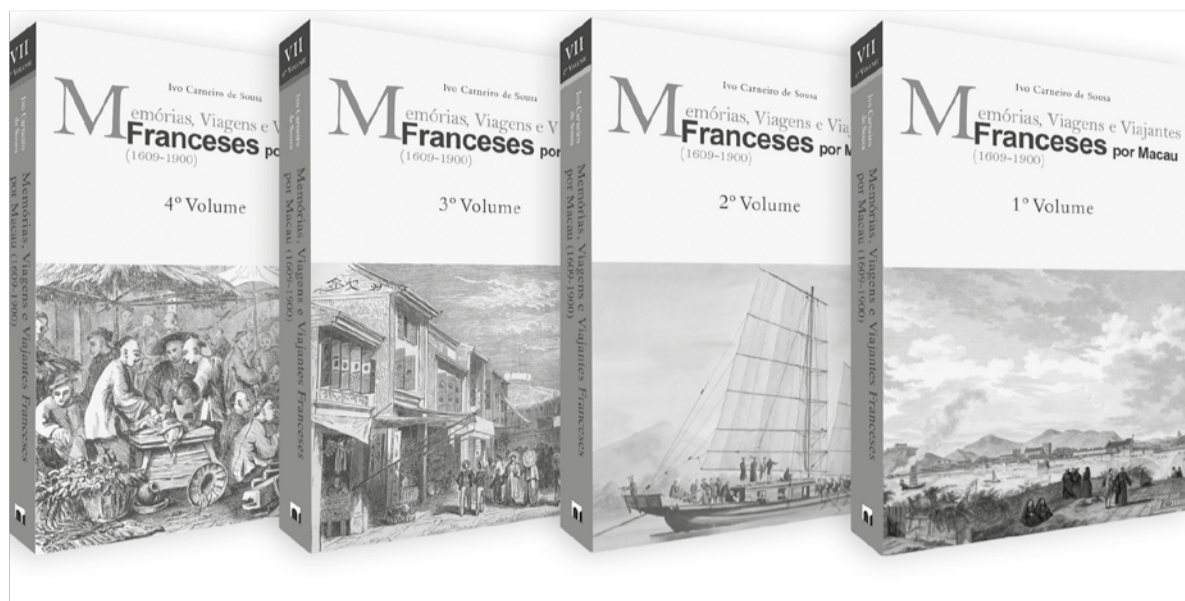
FRENCH Memories, Travels and Travelers in Macau (1609-1900) is the title of the most recent publication by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC).

Currently the largest collection of historical written travel records and notes about Macau, the book is the result of a decade of research by historian Ivo Carneiro de Sousa. The publication draws from the records of central, regional, and private libraries as well as historical archives in France.

Presented in four volumes, the compendia compiles and analyzes 295 written accounts of Macau between the years 1609 and 1900. The book is only available in Portuguese.

The written materials originated from a wide range of authors and editors, from prestigious maritime travelers to missionaries, soldiers, diplomats, Navy doctors, geographers, journalists, and scientists as well as from the earliest assumed tourists to the region.

The vast quantity of documents shed light on different



aspects of social and economic life in Macau, including accounts of local people and spaces, over this almost 300-year period.

As the author noted in the introduction, the collection starts from the brief journey and the modest memory of Henri de Feynes' passage through Macau on his way to Canton in 1609. It ends with very extensive and detailed reports from 1900 written by historian George Weulersse, who

was at the time on a traveling fellowship from the University of Paris. The reports depict the most varied aspects of society, from factories to funerals, monuments to people, and demographic information and the economy.

The relevance of Macau at this time was tied to the fact that the territory was an essential point of access for French nationals to imperial China.

Several chapters use the methodologies of cultural history

to examine the tremendous intellectual, diplomatic and political efforts that forged progressively closer links between France and Macau. The story culminates in 1859 with the active presence of ambassadors appointed as plenipotentiary ministers in China, who transformed the French legation in the city into one of the main arenas of elite and cosmopolitan society at that time.

One of the many episodes de Sousa highlights relates to

the years between 1857 and 1862, with the French military participation in the so-called Second Opium War, which led to the construction of a military hospital in Macau to treat over 2,000 injured French nationals.

The book also helps to foster an understanding of the French perspective of the city, which then inform the texts and images selected to highlight Macau's cultural heritage and history.

The author is a professor, researcher, historian, and director of the East-West Institute for Advanced Studies. As a Doctor of Portuguese Culture (1993) and Associate of History (1999) from the University of Porto, he is a specialist in cultural and religious history, with an emphasis on Macau, East-Timor, and Southeast Asia.

The book is available for purchase for 920 patacas at the Printing Bureau, Archives of Macao, Macao Museum of Art, and Plaza Cultural Macau, among other booksellers. It is also available at the IC Online Book Shop.



CITY

IAM to renovate Seac Pai Van Park

ANTHONY LAM

PLANS will be compiled to improve the environment and facilities of the Seac Pai Van Park in Coloane, a municipal officer announced yesterday.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) held a regular plenary of its Municipal Affairs Advisory Committee yesterday. Certain members of the committee expressed concerns over the condition of the park.

In response to these questions, Mak Kim Meng, member

of the IAM's Municipal Affairs Administrative Committee, recapped that a design firm was commissioned last year to produce the general design of the park and hill behind it.

Drafting of the plan has commenced, with conclusions expected soon. The main objective of the project is to refine the park's equipment, facilities and layout. Bird cages will also be redesigned to fit the new arrangements.

It was also revealed that the Fai Chi Kei Hawker Zone will

be fixed by end of March. Part of the hawker zone was aflame earlier this month.

Prior to the plenary, eight advisory committee members made pre-agenda speeches. As part of this, Cheng Son Meng recommended the IAM commence the construction of the second phase of the Southern Promenade on the Macau Peninsula as soon as possible, citing public opinions in support of his suggestion.

He added that the first phase of the promenade – between the Macao Science Center and the Kun Iam Ecumenical Centre – has proved popular, attracting around 600,000 users in its year and a half of operation.

He also suggested the bureau include skateboarding grounds as part of the second phase.

In addition, Lam Ka Chun suggested the IAM introduce themes to future parks, such as a sporting park, to imbue each park with uniqueness. Facilities that encourage both exercise and fun for children should also be introduced.

The IAM also held a lucky draw to determine the prize winners for an earlier activity celebrating the Basic Law.

TRAFFIC

NUMBER OF LICENSED VEHICLES UP BY 0.8% IN 2022

The number of licensed motor vehicles in Macau totaled 249,581 at the end of December 2022, representing an increase of 0.8% year-on-year, the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) reported in a statement.

In the same statement, DSEC noted that the average number of heavy motorcycles also rose (+2.1%) while the number of light automobiles number grew by 0.6%.

December 2022 was an exceptional month, with new registrations of motor vehicles increasing by 9.3% year-on-year to 1,225, of which 46.5% (570) were electric vehicles (EVs).

Although there was an increase in the total number of vehicles in Macau, new vehi-



cle registrations have been slowing down in 2022, with the number of motor vehicles registered last year dropping 15.1% year-on-year to 10,603.

Among these, DSEC notes that 2,647 vehicles registered last year were EVs, while the number of light, fuel-powered automobiles dropped by almost 26%.

Cross-border traffic in 2022 (3,786,449

trips) also decreased by 6.6% year-on-year, of which light automobile trips (3,424,523) fell by 7.2%.

Conversely, the handling of containerized cargo by land surged by 58.1% year-on-year, with cargo passing through the checkpoint of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge making up 97.9% of the total. **RM**

GBA

CE meets with HK investment representative

CHIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng this week held a meeting with a delegation led by Chairman Peter Lam Kin-ngok of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) to discuss future collaboration.

Lam is also member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

In his opening speech, the head of the government highlighted that physical movement between people from Macau and Hong Kong resumed swiftly after the border normalization on January 8, following the change in strategy against Covid-19 near the end of last year.

The masses of tourists from Hong Kong who visited Macau in the Lunar New Year holidays are a vivid expression of the closeness between the two cities, the

CE added. While emphasizing the importance of Macau-Hong Kong relations, the CE highlighted that further collaboration will facilitate the development of the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

Ho also boasted that Macau had a rich and thriving industry across various areas, especially the meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) sector, which was supported by performance venues and auxiliary facilities. In addition, all resorts comply with government requirements to develop non-gambling elements and explore foreign markets.

In response, Lam emphasized that foreign promotions in the future should focus on the GBA instead of individual cities. He highlighted the complementary nature of each of the cities in the GBA as an attractive factor to further develop the region. **AL**



HOSPITALITY

HOTEL OCCUPANCY IN 2022 AT JUST 38.4%, THE SECOND LOWEST RATE EVER

RENATO MARQUES

THE hotel occupancy rate in Macau throughout 2022 was 38.4%, according to an official release from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

The figure represents a drop of 11.7% year-on-year when compared to 2021, and is the second lowest hotel occupancy ever recorded in Macau after the 28.6% registered in 2020.

This is also only the second time since 1997 that the hotel occupancy rate in Macau has dipped below the 50% mark, a fact that is solely attributable to the border restrictions imposed throughout the year and especially in the second half of 2022.

The number of hotel guests has also fallen by 22.8% year-on-year to

5,113,000, largely due to a decrease in the number of guests from the mainland by 3,867,000 (-28.1%).

The occupation rate dip was only partially offset by the increase in the number of local guests, which reached 907,000 (+1.5%).

Unaffected by these decreases, the average length of stay remained stable at 1.8 nights.

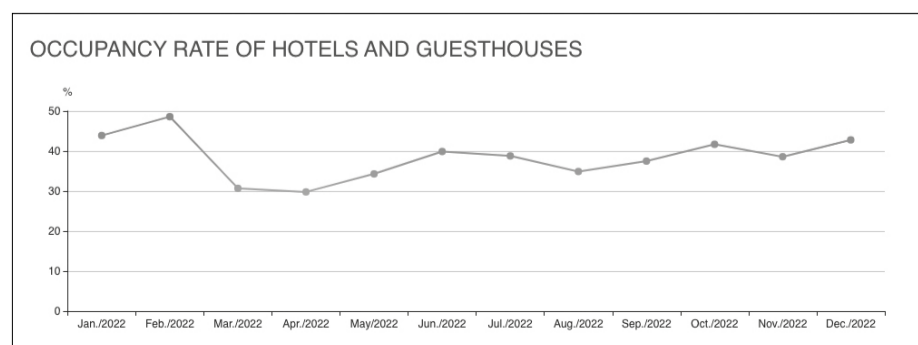
In December 2022, the average occupancy rate of guest rooms dropped by 12% year-on-year to 42.8%, when compared to the same month of 2021. Dropping less than average in the sector were the 5-star hotels, which dipped by 13.9% to 39.2%.

In the same month, the number of hotel guests fell by 29.8% year-on-year to 457,000. Again, the most significant drop was

seen in the guests from the mainland, which stood at 343,000 (-35.4%).

This month, the number of local guests (77,000) also fell significantly (-9.9%).

The number of visitors joining local tours surged by 101.2% year-on-year to 6,100, contributing massively to some stability in the tourism sector in December last year. The number of residents purchasing outbound services (measured in bookings for transport, accommodation, and sightseeing tours) through travel agencies declined by 41.6% to 5,800. Across 2022, the number of local tour visitors dropped by 10.8% year-on-year to 36,000, while the number of residents purchasing outbound services through travel agencies plunged by 68.4% to 47,000.



K KTRANZ
TRANSLATIONS LIMITED

ACCURATE, TIMELY & COMPETITIVE TRANSLATIONS

Languages:
ENGLISH, CHINESE, PORTUGUESE, JAPANESE, KOREAN, SPANISH, FRENCH, ARABIC, RUSSIAN

Services:
TRANSLATIONS, PROOFREADING, COPYWRITING, DATA INPUT, NEWS MONITORING

We translate +10,000 words a day

Contact: Ms. Amy Yang
Email: amy@ktranz.com.mo
Tel: +853 2871 6081/2 Fax: +853 2871 6084
Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR



In this undated photo released by Miao Yu, Miao Yu and his wife Xie Fang garden in Orlando, Florida

MIAO YU

FORMER SHANGHAI BOOKSELLER'S WIFE XIE HIT WITH 'EXIT BAN'

KANIS LEUNG, HONG KONG

CHINESE police have prevented a woman from returning to her home in Florida in an effort to compel her husband to return to China, she wrote in a letter he made public.

The case appears to be the latest example of Chinese authorities placing an "exit ban" on a person's relatives to pressure them to return.

In an appeal to authorities, Fang Xie, 51, wrote that the police have told her that she is "innocent" but that she cannot leave until her husband, a former bookseller who left China after his store was shut down for political reasons, gives himself up.

She was barred from boarding a plane in Shanghai last August, her husband Miao Yu said, and hasn't been able to leave China since.

Exit bans, which critics have likened to hostage-taking, have affected both Chinese citizens and foreigners. The U.S. government includes exit bans as a risk in its travel advisory for people going to China.

Yu declined to provide contact information for his wife, citing concerns about her safety. He did, however, arrange for an Associated Press journalist to

join a call between them in which she confirmed that she wrote the letter but declined to comment further.

The Shanghai Public Security Bureau did not immediately respond to faxed questions and a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said she was not aware of the case.

But Chinese prosecutors have previously described the practice of using exit bans on family members to pressure wanted people to return. Prosecutors, in notes about the case of a former Chinese businessman who was accused of stealing \$6 million and had moved to Canada, wrote that they set up a special task force to "vigorously squeeze his survival" and placed exit bans on his son, daughter-in-law and ex-wife as part of a campaign to "control his relatives and shake his emotional support."

Many countries can bar people accused of crimes or needed as witnesses to legal proceedings from leaving. But scholars say China's use of travel bans exceeds these international norms.

Yu ran one of Shanghai's best-known independent bookstores until 2018, when local authorities prevented his Jifeng Bookstore from renewing its lease, effectively pushing it out

of business. At that time, Yu said, a representative of the public security bureau told him his shop had hosted "too many sensitive scholars" and "sensitive talks."

The couple moved to America in 2019, when Yu began a master's degree in political science, and Xie came as the spouse of a student visa holder. They settled in Florida to accompany their children who go to school there. Yu is now studying journalism in Orlando and said he has not remained active in politics since going overseas.

Xie returned to Shanghai to care for her ailing mother in 2022, and Shanghai police told her about the ban two days before she planned to return home in August. Xie tried to leave anyway, but airport border officials stopped her from leaving, saying she was "suspected of endangering national security," he said.

But police told her a different story, she wrote in an appeal to authorities that Yu published on social media about two weeks ago.

"You clearly told me that I am innocent," she wrote. "Once my husband returns to China for an investigation then this can be exchanged for my freedom to leave."

Yu, who had been planning a trip to China to visit relatives and friends after his wife's return, canceled his own plans.

The couple believes that the issue is three pseudonymous articles which the police accuse Yu of publishing from the United States, about Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and those involved in China's 1989 pro-democracy protest movement.

Yu said he is not the author of the articles, but the police told Xie that they traced them to an IP address associated with Yu.

Yu said his wife can live normally inside China and spends most of her time at her Shanghai home.

The couple speak daily, using the Chinese messaging service WeChat. But separation has been hard on them.

In her letter, Xie writes that she worries about her daughters, who are applying for university this year. "When adolescents lose their mother's love, it will lead to lifelong regrets."

Yu said he feels guilty that his work affected his wife, who did not work at the Jifeng Bookstore. It feels like having an "open wound," Yu said in a video interview from their home in Florida. "I don't know when I will be able to

hug my wife and when I will be able to go back to my hometown safely and freely."

Over the past six months, Yu said, he thought about going back to China in exchange for his wife's freedom. He did not go ahead out of fear that his children would be left alone if the authorities banned both of them from leaving. Their twin daughters turned 18 years old this month, he added. They also have a 22-year-old son.

Yu published his wife's letter on WeChat without telling her in advance, he said. It disappeared several hours after he first posted on WeChat but attracted attention from Chinese media outlets. A similar post on his Twitter account drew nearly 170,000 views.

The next day, local police told Xie that her husband's move would make it more difficult to resolve the situation, he said.

Feng Chongyi, a professor of China Studies, University of Technology in Sydney who was prevented from leaving China in 2017, said Chinese authorities regularly make such threats, but argued that publicity through media campaigns played a key role allowing him and others to leave after exit bans.

Yu said he decided to speak to the media because he hoped to gain the U.S. government's attention ahead of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's early February trip to China. "It's a very small hope. But now, I don't have any other good hopes here," he said. **MDT/AP**

MARI YAMAGUCHI &
HARUKA NUGA, TOKYO

DEFENSE

NATO chief wants firmer ties with Japan to defend democracy

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, in Japan as part of his East Asia tour, said "our security is closely interconnected" and called for stronger ties with Japan as Russia's war on Ukraine raises global dangers and shows that democracies need stronger partnerships.

Japan has been quick to join the U.S.-led economic sanctions against Russia's war on Ukraine and provided humanitarian aid and non-combative defense equipment for the Ukrainians.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has sounded alarm that Russia's aggression in Europe could happen in Asia, where concerns are growing over already assertive China and its escalating tension near Taiwan. Japan also has significantly stepped up ties with NATO recently.

"The war in Ukraine also demonstrates that our security is closely interconnected," Stoltenberg said during his visit at the Iruma Air Base north of Tokyo, where he started his Japan visit yesterday after arriving late Monday from South Korea.

"If President (Vladimir) Putin wins in Ukraine it will be a tragedy for the Ukrainians, but it will also send a very dangerous message to authoritarian leaders all over the world because then the message will be that when they use military force they can achieve their goals," he said. "So the war in Ukraine matters for all of us."

Stoltenberg said his visit to Japan "is a way to further stren-

AP PHOTO



NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg delivers a speech to personnel of Japan Self-Defense Forces at Iruma Air Base in Sayama, northwest of Tokyo, yesterday

gthen the partnership between NATO and our highly valued partner Japan."

Japan, already a close ally of the United States, has in recent years expanded its military ties with other Indo-Pacific nations as well as with Britain, Europe and NATO amid growing security threat from China and North Korea.

Japan issued a new national security strategy in December stating its determination to build up its military and deploy long-range missiles to preempt

enemy attacks in a major break from its post-World War II principle that limited itself to self-defense. Japan also hopes to further ease restrictions on arms export to strengthen the country's feeble defense industry.

While in South Korea on Monday, Stoltenberg called for South Korea to provide direct military support to Ukraine to help Kyiv to fight off the prolonged Russian invasion. So far, Seoul has only provided humanitarian aid and other support, citing a long-standing policy of not supplying wea-

pons to countries in conflict.

Stoltenberg also met with South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on Monday and discussed Seoul's commitment to support Ukraine and NATO's possible role in dissuading North Korea from its growing nuclear ambitions following an unprecedented number of ballistic missile tests in 2022, Yoon's office said.

Stoltenberg on Sunday mentioned U.S. intelligence reports accusing North Korea of providing weapons to Russia to su-

pport its war in Ukraine.

North Korea condemned his visits to South Korea and Japan, saying that NATO was trying to put its "military boots in the region" and attempting to pressure America's Asian allies into providing weapons to Ukraine.

In a statement released by the state-run Korean Central News Agency, North Korea criticized increasing cooperation between NATO and U.S. allies in Asia as a process to create an "Asian version of NATO" that would raise tensions in the region. **MDT/AP**

DIPLOMACY

China scoffs at new Czech president's phone call with Taiwan

CHINA yesterday accused Czech President-elect Petr Pavel of challenging its hard line on national sovereignty by affirming ties with self-ruled Taiwan in a phone call with the island's leader.

The call on Monday represents a symbolic breach of China's attempts to cut off the already highly restricted foreign relations of the self-governing democracy, which Beijing claims as its own territory with no right to independent diplomatic recognition.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said Pavel had acted in "defiance of China's repeated dissuasion and complaints" and "trampled on China's red line."

"China strongly opposes and deplores this and has made solemn complaints

AP PHOTO



Tsai Ing-wen

with the Czech side," Mao said at a daily briefing, adding that the Czech Republic should take steps to "undo the negative impact of this incident so as to avoid irreparable damage to China-Czech relations."

Pavel, a retired army general, will succeed controversy-courting Milos Zeman

in the largely ceremonial but prestigious post. Over his decade in office, Zeman has drawn criticism for his stances favoring Russia and China, authoritarian states that have strengthened relations since last year's invasion of Ukraine in a joint challenge to the U.S. and its allies.

Pavel, who ran as an

independent, is a former chairman of NATO's military committee, the alliance's highest military body. He fully endorsed the Czech Republic's military and humanitarian support for Ukraine in its fight against Russia's invasion and stresses the importance of the country's membership in the Euro-

pean Union and NATO.

Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala responded to the criticism from Beijing, saying, "The policy of the Czech Republic towards China has not changed and is in line with the policy of our allies. Czechia respects and represents its own one-China policy."

"As a sovereign state, it is us who decide whom we call or whom we meet. We traditionally have good economic, educational and research relations with democratic Taiwan. It is also necessary to respect that China is an important Asian trading partner. We continue in our tradition and we are stressing the need to protect common democratic values," he wrote in a tweet.

In the call, Taiwanese leader Tsai Ing-wen said

the two sides "enjoy deep ties and share the values of freedom, democracy, and human rights," the official Central News Agency said, quoting spokesperson Lin Yu-chan.

Taiwan "looks forward to deepening exchanges and cooperation with the Czech Republic in key areas, including semiconductor design, talent cultivation in cutting-edge technologies, and supply chain restructuring," Lin was quoted as saying.

China in recent years has upped its threat to bring Taiwan under its control, by force if necessary, prompting new sales of tanks and missiles to the island by key ally the U.S. and steps by Tsai's administration to extend compulsory military service and bolster the domestic defense industry. **MDT/AP**

PAKISTAN

Death toll from mosque suicide bombing rises to 88

RIAZ KHAN, PESHAWAR

THE death toll from a suicide bombing at a mosque in northwestern Pakistan rose to 88 yesterday, officials said. The assault, on a Sunni mosque inside a major police facility, was one of the deadliest attacks on Pakistani security forces in recent years.

More than 300 worshippers were praying in the mosque in the city of Peshawar, with more approaching, when the bomber set off his explosives vest on Monday morning. The blast ripped through the mosque, killing and injuring scores and also blew off a part of the roof.

What was left of the roof then caved in, injuring many more, according to Zafar Khan, a police officer. Rescuers had to remove mounds of debris to reach worshippers still trapped under the rubble.

More bodies were retrieved overnight and early yesterday, according to Mohammad Asim, a government hospital spokesman in Peshawar, and several of those critically injured died. "Most of them were policemen," Asim said of the victims.

Bilal Faizi, the chief rescue official, said rescue teams were still working yesterday at the site as more people are believed trapped inside. Mourners were burying the victims at different graveyards in the city and elsewhere. The bombing also wounded more than 150 people.

It was not clear how the bomber was able to slip into the walled compound in a high-security zone with other government buildings and get to the mosque — an indication of a major security lapse.

The investigation will show "how the terrorist entered the mosque," said Ghulam Ali, the provincial governor in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where Peshawar is the capital.

"Yes, it was a security lapse," he added.

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif visited a hospital in Peshawar after the bombing and vowed "stern ac-



Security officials and rescue workers search bodies at the site of suicide bombing, in Peshawar

tion" against those behind the attack.

"The sheer scale of the human tragedy is unimaginable. This is no less than an attack on Pakistan," he tweeted. He expressed his condolences to the families of the victims, saying their pain "cannot be described in words."

Authorities have not determined who was behind the bombing. Shortly after the explosion, Sarbakaf Mohmand, a commander for the Pakistani Taliban — also known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP — claimed responsibility for the attack in a post on Twitter.

But hours later, TTP spokesperson Mohammad Khurasani distanced the group from the bombing, saying it was not its policy to target mosques, seminaries and religious places, adding that those taking part in such acts could face punitive action under TTP's policy. His statement did not address why a TTP commander had claimed responsibility for the bombing.

Pakistan, which is mostly Sunni Muslim, has seen a surge in militant attacks since November, when the Pakistani Taliban ended their cease-fire with government forces.

Earlier this month, the Pakistani Taliban claimed

one of its members shot and killed two intelligence officers, including the director of the counterterrorism wing of the country's military-based spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence. Security officials said Monday the gunman was traced and killed in a shootout in the northwest, near the Afghan border.

The TTP is separate from but a close ally of the Afghan Taliban. It has waged an insurgency in Pakistan in the past 15 years, seeking stricter enforcement of Islamic laws, the release of its members in government custody and a reduction in Pakistani military presence in areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province it has long used as its base.

The Pakistani Taliban are the dominant militant group in the province, and Peshawar has been the scene of frequent attacks. In 2014, a Pakistani Taliban faction attacked an army-run school in Peshawar and killed 154, mostly schoolchildren.

The regional affiliate of the Islamic State group has also been behind deadly attacks in Pakistan in recent years. Overall, violence increased since the Afghan Taliban seized power in neighboring Afghanistan in August 2021, as U.S. and NATO troops pulled out of

the country after 20 years of war.

The Pakistani government's truce with the TTP ended as the country was still contending with unprecedented flooding last summer that killed 1,739 people, destroyed more than 2 million homes, and at one point submerged as much as a third of the country.

The Taliban-run Afghan Foreign Ministry said it was "saddened to learn that numerous people lost their lives" in Peshawar and condemned attacks on worshippers as contrary to the teachings of Islam.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who is on a visit to the Middle East, tweeted his condolences, saying the bombing in Peshawar was a "horrific attack."

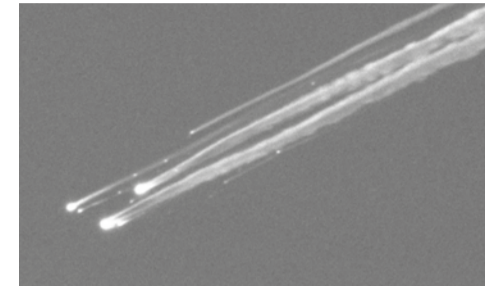
"Terrorism for any reason at any place is indefensible," he said.

Condemnations also came from the Saudi Embassy in Islamabad, as well as the U.S. Embassy, which said that the "United States stands with Pakistan in condemning all forms of terrorism."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called the bombing "particularly abhorrent" for targeting a place of worship, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2003 COLUMBIA SHUTTLE DISINTEGRATES KILLING SEVEN



The US space shuttle Columbia has broken up as it re-entered the Earth's atmosphere killing all seven astronauts on board.

This is the first time there has been an accident on landing in the 42 years of American space flight.

President George Bush told a nation in shock: "The Columbia is lost. There are no survivors."

Six of the seven astronauts were US citizens. They were Rick Husband, William McCool, Michael Anderson, David Brown, and female astronauts Laurel Clark and Indian-born Kalpana Chawla.

The seventh - fighter pilot Colonel Ilan Ramon - was Israel's first astronaut and was carrying with him a miniature Torah scroll of a Holocaust survivor.

Columbia disintegrated just 16 minutes before it was due to land at Cape Canaveral in Florida.

At 0900 local time (1400 GMT) Mission Control lost all data and contact with the crew.

The US space agency Nasa then sent search teams to the Dallas-Fort Worth area amid reports of "a big bang" and TV pictures showing smoke and fireballs in the sky.

In an emotional announcement, Nasa's administrator Sean O'Keefe, said: "This is indeed a tragic day for the Nasa family, for the families of the astronauts and likewise, tragic for the nation."

Flags at the Kennedy Space Center have been lowered to half-mast.

Debris from the shuttle is scattered across eastern Texas and western Louisiana and has crashed into car parks, forests, backyards, a reservoir, a rooftop and a dentist's office.

Nasa has temporarily suspended shuttle flights. Shuttle programme manager Ron Dittmore told a news conference in Houston, Texas, "We will not fly again until we have this understood. Somewhere along the line we missed something."

[...] The shuttle was the world's first reusable space vehicle and Columbia was the oldest of a fleet of four and flew her maiden voyage in April 1981.

Her sister ship Challenger exploded soon after take-off 17 years ago killing six astronauts and schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Three days later President Bush led a memorial service to the seven astronauts at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.

In a statement the families of the astronauts insisted the tragedy should not hamper future space programs.

An independent investigation team spent months studying data recovered from computers tracking Columbia's final moments, and thousands of pieces of recovered debris.

The final conclusions of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board, published in August 2003, confirmed the view that a breach of the shuttle's heat shield on take-off caused it to break up on re-entry. But it was also highly critical of Nasa itself, saying management blunders were as much to blame as technical problems for the destruction of the shuttle. It also said that while the space shuttle was not inherently unsafe, a number of mechanical changes should be made in order to ensure safety before flights resume.

It made 29 major recommendations aimed at both a short-term return to space and continuing exploration in the long term.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You are likely to reveal information unintentionally. Find ways to mellow out. If you put your mind to it, you could entertain or host a multitude of social events.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
It might be best not to spend your money on luxuries today. Be sure to think twice before you say something that might hurt your partner's feelings.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Get help to finish a project if you need it. Spend time getting to know each other. Get involved in creative projects that will enhance your earning power.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You will be able to make changes regarding your living arrangements. Relatives will be cordial. You should teach children some of your unique creative talents.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Be sure to spend time helping children with projects that are too difficult for them to accomplish alone. Don't expect anyone else to pay your bills for you.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Upgrading at this point is not a bad plan. Partnerships will be successful. You can make money if you are careful not to let it trickle through your fingers.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
You can form new partnerships, but don't move too quickly; things may not be as they appear. Don't overdo it. Don't lend to people who have given you negative vibes.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Don't let your health suffer because of abuse. You will be able to work with fine detail today. You need to concentrate on the areas where you can make a difference.

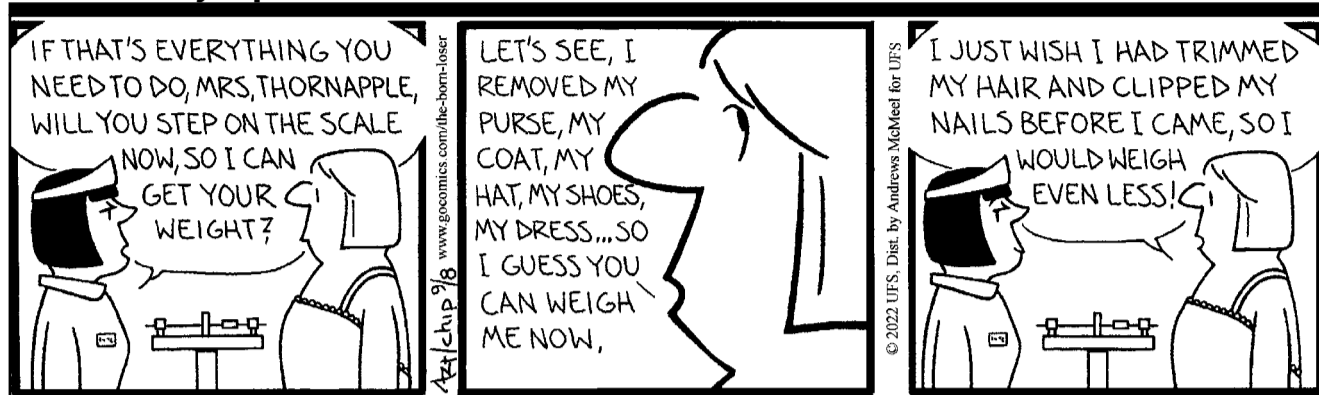
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Don't let coworkers get wind of your ideas or they might try to take credit for your hard work. Your ability to deal with humanitarian groups will enhance your reputation.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
You are best to be discreet. You should avoid getting involved in the personal problems of colleagues. Don't overreact to someone's advances.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
You're in a high cycle for romance. Do not sign your life away. Drastic financial losses may be likely if you lend money. Your ability to deal with humanitarian groups will enhance your reputation.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Evasion is likely if you aren't direct about your feelings. Take advantage of moneymaking ventures. Involvement in fitness clubs will be conducive to engaging romantic connections.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY					EASY+				
2	3	9		1 5	7			9	
6			2	7	6	3		2	
5		6	4	2 3			5 7	1 6 8	
7 6 4				9	7		6 3		
8				5	8		4 7 9		5
	2			6 1 8			1 2		7
3 8	1	7		4	5 3 8	2 9			
		6	3	7			6		5 2
7 2			6 5	1		2			8

MEDIUM					HARD				
4 7		9		6 2					7
2			5		6			9	2 8
		6		9	2 7				1
2			8	3	7	8 9			6
	4			2			3 1		
5		2		1	5		6 7		1
7			9			8			7 5
		1		5	1 2	9			4
4 6		7	1 2		4				

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-2	4	cloudy
Changchun	-14	-7	snow
Chengdu	6	16	cloudy
Chongqing	6	18	cloudy
Fuzhou	7	20	cloudy
Guangzhou	11	23	overcast
Guiyang	6	15	cloudy
Haikou	15	23	cloudy
Hangzhou	3	16	fine
Harbin	-19	-9	snow
Hefei	2	12	fine
Nanjing	3	12	cloudy
Shanghai	5	12	overcast
Taipei	11	21	fine
Wuhan	0	16	cloudy
Hong Kong	18	21	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	-2	0	snow
Frankfurt	5	6	cloudy
Paris	6	9	cloudy
London	6	11	overcast
New York	-2	4	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Ark passenger; 4- Burrowing animals; 9- Slip; 14- Modern art?; 15- To talk, usually in a pompous manner; 16- Truman's birthplace; 17- Purity; 19- Suggest; 20- Ascends; 21- Beat; 23- Planetary revolution; 24- Hi hi; 27- Ladies of Sp.; 30- Kitchen gadgets; 32- Spanish aunt; 33- Unlocked; 37- ___ of thousands; 39- Diary; 40- Feminine; 42- Prescribed amounts; 43- Newsmen; 44- CPR giver; 45- Congenital displacement of an organ; 48- Unit of currency in Iran and Yemen; 50- El Greco's birthplace; 51- Charles Lamb's pen name; 55- Suckle; 57- Golf clubs; 58- Failed to; 60- Filled with amazement; 64- Surround; 65- Gets under control; 66- ___ kwon do; 67- Wearies; 68- Tale; 69- Compass reading;

DOWN 1- Like a sasquatch; 2- Golfer with an army; 3- Brainy bunch; 4- Soft shoes; 5- Galena, e.g.; 6- PC linkup; 7- Catchall abbr.; 8- Do a slow burn; 9- Meager; 10- Lanterns; 11- Of great significance; 12- Indian dish; 13- Trick ending?; 18- Done, to Donne; 22- Organ of hearing; 24- Dynamic beginning; 25- Vichyssoise ingredient; 26- On in years; 28- Bridal path; 29- Lustful deity; 30- Plain writing; 31- Mead subject; 33- Milk container; 34- Model Campbell; 35- Onlooker; 36- Actor Vigoda; 38- Popular rental; 40- Cried; 41- Mayberry moppet; 43- Lobster eggs; 46- IV units; 47- Picks up the check; 49- Sudden forward thrust; 51- Sin; 52- Awkward boors; 53- Early Peruvians; 54- Cockeyed; 56- Hwys.; 57- ___-bitsy; 58- Summer hrs.; 59- Second sequel tag; 61- Buddhist temple; 62- Comedian Philips; 63- Sun. talk;



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



It's prime time to **BUY & RENT!**

有關樓宇廣告詳情, 請向職員查詢
For more information on advertising laws, please speak to one of our representatives.

RENT

CONTACT US
& SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY!

hello@jmlproperty.com
www.jmlproperty.com

f jmlmacau @jmlproperty

Jade Garden
HKD 15,380,000 4 beds 3 bath

Hellene Gardens, Daisy
HKD 9,588,000 4 beds 3 bath

Sun Yick
HKD 7,080,000 2 bed 1 bath

AD

AP PHOTO



REPORT

IMF UPGRADES OUTLOOK FOR THE GLOBAL ECONOMY IN 2023

PAUL WISEMAN,
WASHINGTON

The outlook for the global economy is growing slightly brighter as China eases its zero-COVID policies and the world shows surprising resilience in the face of high inflation, elevated interest rates

and Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine.

That's the view of the International Monetary Fund, which now expects the world economy to grow 2.9% this year. That forecast is better than the 2.7% expansion for 2023 that the IMF predicted in October, though down

from the estimated 3.4% growth in 2022.

The IMF, a 190-country lending organization, foresees inflation easing this year, a result of aggressive interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve and other major central banks. Those rate hikes are expected to slow the consumer de-

mand that has driven prices higher. Globally, the IMF expects consumer inflation to fall from 8.8% last year to 6.6% in 2023 and 4.3% in 2024.

"Global conditions have improved as inflation pressures started to abate," the IMF chief economist, Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, said at a news conference in Singapore. "The road back to a full recovery with sustainable growth, stable prices and progress for all has only started."

A big factor in the upgrade to global growth was China's decision late last year to lift anti-virus controls that had kept millions of people at home. The IMF said China's "recent reopening has paved the way for a faster-than-expected recovery."

The IMF now expects China's economy — the world's second-biggest, after the United States — to grow 5.2% this year, up from its October forecast of 4.4%. Beijing's economy eked out growth of just 3% in 2022 — the first year in more than 40, the IMF noted, that China has expanded more slowly than the world as a whole. But the end of virus restrictions is

expected to revive activity in 2023.

Together, China and India should account for half of this year's global growth, while the United States and Europe contribute 10%, according to Gourinchas.

"China's reopening is certainly a favorable factor that's going to lead to more activity," Gourinchas said. "But this is in the context in which the global economy itself is slowing down."

The IMF's 2023 growth outlook improved for the United States (forecast to grow 1.4%) as well as for the 19 countries that share the euro currency (0.7%). Europe, though suffering from energy shortages and higher prices resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, proved "more resilient than expected," the IMF said. The European economy benefited from a warmer-than-expected winter, which held down demand for natural gas,

Russia's economy, hit by sanctions after its invasion of Ukraine, has proved sturdier than expected, too: The IMF's forecast foresees Russia registering 0.3% growth this year. That would mark an improvement from a contraction of 2.2% in 2022. And it's well above the 2.3% contraction for 2023 that the IMF had forecast for Russia in October.

The United Kingdom is a striking exception to the IMF's brighter outlook for 2023. It has forecast its economy will shrink 0.6% in 2023; in October, the IMF had expected growth of 0.3%. Higher interest rates and tighter government budgets are squeezing the British economy.

"These figures confirm we are not immune to the pressures hitting nearly all advanced economies," Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt said in response to the IMF forecast. "Short-term challenges should not obscure our long-term prospects — the U.K. outperformed many

forecasts last year, and if we stick to our plan to halve inflation, the U.K. is still predicted to grow faster than Germany and Japan over the coming years."

The IMF noted that the world economy still faces serious risks. They include the possibility that Russia's war against Ukraine will escalate, that China will suffer a sharp increase in COVID cases and that high interest rates will cause a financial crisis in debt-laden countries.

Asked about the impact of U.S. efforts to limit Chinese access to advanced processor chip technology due to security concerns, Gourinchas cautioned that curbs on semiconductor trade and government pressure to pull back industries to within their own borders and limit reliance on foreign partners "potentially could be harmful to the global economy."

"Diversification of supply chains is much more important in trying to improve resilience, improve growth, improve standards of living, rather than moving toward re-shoring or 'friend shoring,'" Gourinchas said.

The global outlook has been shrouded in uncertainty since the coronavirus pandemic struck in early 2020. Forecasters have been repeatedly confounded by events: A severe if brief recession in early 2020; an expectedly strong recovery triggered by vast government stimulus aid; then a surge in inflation, worsened when Russia's invasion of Ukraine nearly a year ago disrupted world trade in energy and food.

Three weeks ago, the IMF's sister agency, the World Bank, issued a more downbeat outlook for the global economy. The World Bank slashed its forecast for international growth this year by nearly half — to 1.7% — and warned that the global economy would come "perilously close" to recession. **MDT/AP**

DUFFY'S IRISH PUB

THE BEST OF IRELAND, HERE IN MACAU!

FREE Limo Service from 6PM (Tues-Sun)

BROADWAY FOOD STREET, C-6002 - 6004, TAIPA, MACAU BROADWAY HOTEL, ROTUNDA DO DIQUE DESTA, TAIPA

@duffysmacau PLEASE CALL US AT: 2884 5212 FOR RESERVATIONS

CHINESE FACTORY ACTIVITY REBOUNDS, ADDING TO RECOVERY SIGNS

CHINESE factory activity rebounded in January from three months of contraction, adding to signs the world's second-largest economy might be recovering from a painful slump, an official survey showed yesterday. A monthly purchasing managers' index issued by the Chinese statistics agency and an industry group rose to 50.1 on a 100-point

scale on which numbers above 50 show activity growing. That was an unusually large gain of 3.1 points from December's 47. China's economic growth sank to 2.9% over a year earlier in the final three months of 2022, but economists point to increased investment and improved consumer spending as signs activity is recovering.

TENNIS

Djokovic back at top of ATP rankings; Sabalenka No. 2 in WTA

HOWARD FENDRICH,
MELBOURNE

NOVAK Djokovic's Australian Open championship returned him to a rather familiar spot: No. 1 in the ATP rankings.

His four-place rise from No. 5 to replace Carlos Alcaraz at No. 1 is the largest jump to the top spot in the 50-year history of the computerized rankings for men's tennis.

"You never know how much more time you have left, so, of course, I nurture and celebrate these moments of becoming No. 1 again and Grand Slam champion," the 35-year-old Djokovic said after beating Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-3, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5) in the final at Melbourne Park on Sunday night, "even more than I have, maybe ever in my career. I don't take it for granted."

Aryna Sabalenka's first major title moved her up from No. 5 to a career-best-equaling No. 2 in



Novak Djokovic of Serbia hugs the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup in the locker-room winning the Australian Open last weekend

the WTA rankings, behind only three-time major champion Iga Swiatek.

Ons Jabeur, twice a finalist at Slams in 2022, went from No. 2 to No. 3, followed by No. 4 Jessica Pegula, No. 5 Caroline Garcia and No. 6 Coco Gauff.

The player Sabalenka beat in Saturday's Australian Open final, Elena Rybakina, makes her top 10 debut at No. 10, up from No. 25.

This marks Djokovic's 374th week leading the ATP, adding to his record. He earned a 10th title at the Australian Open and tied

Rafael Nadal with 22 Grand Slam trophies.

Alcaraz slid to No. 2. He had become the youngest man to be No. 1 when he took over at age 19 after winning the U.S. Open last September. Alcaraz missed the Australian Open because of a leg injury.

Nadal, who hurt his left hip flexor during a second-round loss to Mackenzie McDonald of the Uni-

ted States, dropped from No. 2 to No. 6.

Tsitsipas went from No. 4 to No. 3 because of his run in Melbourne; he would have been No. 1 for the first time if he had managed to win the title. Casper Ruud, a two-time Grand Slam runner-up who lost in the second round to Jenson Brooksby of the United States, went from No. 3 to No. 4. Andrey Rublev is No. 5 after getting to the quarterfinals.

Cracking the top 20 for the first time is Tommy Paul, a 25-year-old American who reached his first Grand Slam semifinal before exiting against Djokovic. Paul's showing in Melbourne lifted him 16 spots from No. 35 to No. 19.

He is one of 10 U.S. men in the top 50, something that last happened in 1995. **MDT/AP**

ATP RANKING TOP 10

Rank	Player	Country	Points
No.1	Novak Djokovic	Serbia	7070
No.2	Carlos Alcaraz	Spain	6730
No.3	Stefanos Tsitsipas	Greece	6195
No.4	Casper Ruud	Norway	5765
No.5	Andrey Rublev	Russia	4200
No.6	Rafael Nadal	Spain	3815
No.7	Felix Auger-Aliassime	Canada	3715
No.8	Taylor Fritz	USA	3410
No.9	Holger Rune	Denmark	3046
No.10	Hubert Hurkacz	Poland	2995

AD

We bring high quality of medical service to Macau

General Surgery : Dr. Fok Manson, Dr. Lai Cheuck Seen Edward, Dr. Lau Wing Kee Peter, Dr. Kwong Man, Dr. Nie Fu Zhong, Dr. U Chong San, Dr. Lei Chin Chong

Breast Surgery : Dr. Leong Iat Lun

Urology : Dr. Lo Kwong Yin Richard, Dr. Zhao Yun Qiao

Paediatric Surgery : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

Paediatrics : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

Obstetrics & Gynaecology : Dr. Fong Kuan Iu

Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery : Dr. Lam U Lin

Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

ENT : Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang

Cardiology : Dr. Jin Chun, Dr. Leong Man Kin

General Medicine : Dr. Ng Kam Hong, Dr. Lam Weng Chio

Dietitian : Chan Lai U Joey

Avenida da Praia Grande No 599, Edifício Comercial Rodrigues 14 e 15 Andar, em Macau
T. 2832 2298 / 2832 2229 Website: www.peddermacau.com
Opening Hours: Mon - Fri 10:00 - 19:00 Sat 10:00 - 14:00 Sun & PH closed

BENFICAMACAU
ACADEMY
澳門賓菲加體育學校

FOOTBALL

BASKETBALL

DAILY TRAININGS

OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**BIRTH REGISTRATION
 CHANGES BETTER
 PROTECT RIGHTS**

Sichuan province's newly-amended regulation on birth registration requires no marriage certificate for anyone to register the birth of a baby. Which means a single parent or unmarried couple does not have to worry about getting a birth certificate for their babies born out of wedlock.

This is not the first local regulation of its kind. Some other localities such as South China's Guangdong province and East China's Anhui province have also revised their relevant regulations so that a marriage certificate is not required to register a birth.

As a matter of fact, articles in China's Civil Code and Marriage Law stipulate that babies born outside of marriage enjoy the same rights as those of married couples. What some local governments have been doing in this regard has just put into practice the stipulations of the national statutes.

The main purpose of removing the marital status restriction from the birth registration regulations is to better protect the rights of those who have children without getting married.

Traditionally, a child of unmarried parents was looked down upon as illegitimate. It used to be difficult for an unmarried woman or couple to get a birth certificate for a child, which in turn made it difficult to get a household registration and an ID card for the child. Lifting restrictions on the registration of births from outside a marriage better protects the rights of women and those born out of wedlock. Every woman has the right to choose to have a baby, whether married or not. Her decision should be respected and her rights should be protected.

Such a change in this regard is also in line with the change in people's ideas about marriage. An increasing number of young people do not consider marriage the only choice for establishing a family, and some do not regard marriage as a prerequisite for having a baby.

On the part of a local government, to register a birth and provide a birth certificate is not a discretionary power to prohibit a citizen from making his or her own choice, so long as such a choice is not against the law. The change to the regulations will also shift the focus of the birth registration work to encourage fertility willingness, officials said.

The latest statistics show that China's population shrank by 850,000 last year, the first negative growth in six decades. As the pace of its population's aging becomes faster, it is imperative for the country to stabilize its population growth rate, which dropped to 6.66 per 1,000 people last year.

In such circumstances, local governments should do whatever they can to encourage people to give birth to babies. The latest changes to local birth registration regulations are a move in that direction.

China's foreign minister appealed to his Dutch counterpart to defend free trade after the Netherlands and Japan agreed to cooperate with U.S. restrictions on Chinese access to advanced processor chip technology due to security concerns.

The foreign ministry gave no indication yesterday whether Qin Gang directly addressed the controls in the phone call with Wopke Hoekstra. But a ministry spokeswoman repeated complaints made earlier against the United States that other governments were trying to hurt Chinese companies.

Qin said the Netherlands and China "should jointly maintain the stability of the international industrial chain and supply chain," said Mao Ning.

Hoekstra said on Twitter he talked with Qin on Monday but gave no details. The United States is trying to block China from acquiring the most powerful chips and technology to help its fledgling industry make them. Washington says they can be used in weapons and to facilitate the ruling Communist Party's surveillance and human rights abuses.

Without naming the United States, Mao said other governments have "deliberately blockaded and hobbled Chinese companies." She made a similar complaint against Washington on Monday.

"Such bullying and hegemonic practices seriously violate market principles and international trade order," Mao said.

AP PHOTO



The final Boeing 747 lands at Paine Field following a test flight

**BOEING BIDS FAREWELL
 TO AN ICON, DELIVERS
 LAST 747 JUMBO JET**

**GENE JOHNSON,
 SEATTLE**

BOEING bids farewell to an icon yesterday: It's delivering its final 747 jumbo jet.

Since its first flight in 1969, the giant yet graceful 747 has served as a cargo plane, a commercial aircraft capable of carrying nearly 500 passengers, a transport for NASA's space shuttles, and the Air Force One presidential aircraft. It revolutionized travel, connecting international cities that had never before had direct routes and helping democratize passenger flight.

But over about the past 15 years, Boeing and its European rival Airbus have introduced more profitable and fuel efficient wide-body planes, with only two engines to maintain instead of the 747's four. The final plane is the 1,574th built by Boeing in the Puget Sound region of Washington state.

A big crowd of current and former Boeing workers is expected for the final send-off. The last one is being delivered to cargo carrier Atlas Air.

"If you love this business, you've been dreading this moment," said longtime aviation analyst Richard Aboulafia. "No-

body wants a four-engine airliner anymore, but that doesn't erase the tremendous contribution the aircraft made to the development of the industry or its remarkable legacy."

Boeing set out to build the 747 after losing a contract for a huge military transport, the C-5A. The idea was to take advantage of the new engines developed for the transport — high-bypass turbofan engines, which burned less fuel by passing air around the engine core, enabling a farther flight range — and to use them for a newly imagined civilian aircraft.

It took more than 50,000 Boeing workers less than 16 months to churn out the first 747 — a Herculean effort that earned them the nickname "The Incredibles." The jumbo jet's production required the construction of a massive factory in Everett, north of Seattle — the world's largest building by volume.

The plane's fuselage was 225 feet (68.5 meters) long and the tail stood as tall as a six-story building. The plane's design included a second deck extending from the cockpit back over the first third of the plane, giving it a distinctive hump and inspiring a nickname, the Whale. More romantically, the

747 became known as the Queen of the Skies.

Some airlines turned the second deck into a first-class cocktail lounge, while even the lower deck sometimes featured lounges or even a piano bar.

"It was the first big carrier, the first widebody, so it set a new standard for airlines to figure out what to do with it, and how to fill it," said Guillaume de Syon, a history professor at Pennsylvania's Albright College who specializes in aviation and mobility. "It became the essence of mass air travel: You couldn't fill it with people paying full price, so you need to lower prices to get people onboard. It contributed to what happened in the late 1970s with the deregulation of air travel."

The first 747 entered service in 1970 on Pan Am's New York-London route, and its timing was terrible, Aboulafia said. It debuted shortly before the oil crisis of 1973, amid a recession that saw Boeing's employment fall from 100,800 employees in 1967 to a low of 38,690 in April 1971. The "Boeing bust" was infamously marked by a billboard near the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport that read, "Will the last person leaving SEATTLE - Turn out the lights." **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



USA As five Memphis police officers attacked Tyre Nichols with their feet, fists and a baton, others milled around at the scene, even as the 29-year-old cried out in pain and then slumped limply against the side of a car. Just like the attack on George Floyd in Minneapolis nearly three years ago, a simple intervention could have saved a life.

AP PHOTO



Brazil Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has filed a request for a six-month visitor visa to stay in the U.S., indicating he may have no immediate intention of returning home, where legal issues await. The application was first reported by The Financial Times, citing Bolsonaro's immigration lawyer, Felipe Alexandre. The lawyer's firm, AG Immigration, confirmed the report.

AP PHOTO



Italy A decade ago this year, the head of the EU's executive branch stood, visibly shaken, before rows of coffins holding the corpses of migrants drowned off the Italian island of Lampedusa. "That image of hundreds of coffins will never get out of my mind. It is something I think one cannot forget. Coffins of babies, coffins with the mother and the child that was born just at that moment," Jose Manuel Barroso, then president of the European Commission, said in 2013.

AP PHOTO



Congo Pope Francis is opening a six-day visit to Congo and South Sudan today [Macau time], aiming to bring a message of peace to two countries riven by poverty, conflict and what Francis has called a lingering "colonialist mentality" that still considers Africa ripe for exploitation.