



LAWYER SERGIO CORREIA CALLS 'FOR PORTUGAL TO REMEMBER ITS COMMITMENT TO MACAU' IN PÚBLICO NEWSPAPER AS HO IAT SENG VISITS THE COUNTRY P5

JAPAN'S FIRST CASINO TO HAVE NO IMPACT ON MACAU GAMING OPS: EXPERT P4

CHINA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH ACCELERATED IN THE LATEST QUARTER AS CONSUMER FLOCKED BACK TO SHOPS P9

AP PHOTO



and rival forces they have been battling since the weekend, agreed yesterday to a temporary, 24-hour cease-fire, Arab media reports said. The fighting since Saturday has plunged the Sudanese capital of Khartoum and other areas of the country into chaos. Millions of Sudanese in Khartoum and in other major cities have been hiding in their homes, caught in the crossfire as the two forces battle for control.

AP PHOTO



Japan Top diplomats from the Group of Seven wealthy democracies vowed a unified front against Chinese threats to Taiwan and Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, saying at the close of their meetings yesterday that they were committed to boosting and enforcing tough sanctions against Moscow. The G-7 communique laying out their commitments also included strong words over an unprecedented run of North Korean missile tests.

AP PHOTO



USA-Japan Stepping gingerly over the lawn in their spiky heels, first lady Jill Biden and Yuko Kishida, the wife of Japan's prime minister, planted a cherry tree at the White House yesterday [Macau time] to honor decades of friendship between their countries. "This is how you always plant a tree," Jill said, laughing about their shoes as she and Yuko shoveled soil around the base of a Yoshino cherry tree sapling on the south grounds.

More on backpage

REGAINING MOMENTUM

Transactions and pricing of commercial properties are expected to rise by up to 20% in the second quarter, signaling 'full prosperity'



P3

MDT ARCHIVE

GAMING
BACCARAT
ACCOUNTS
FOR 84%
OF Q1 GGR



P4

PHAM BINH DAM
CONSUL
CALLS
FOR MORE
VIETNAMESE
WORKERS
IN MACAU

P3

JOURNALISM

DEFAMATION IS AT THE HEART OF DOMINION'S LAWSUIT AGAINST FOX NEWS – BUT PROVING IT IS NO SMALL FEAT

NICOLE KRAFT

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

The aftershocks of the 2020 presidential election continue to reverberate in politics and the media, building to an crescendo in a high-profile defamation lawsuit.

The trial is slated to begin the week of April 16, 2023, in the case of U.S. Dominion, Inc. v. Fox News Network. The lawsuit rests on whether false claims Fox hosts and their guests made about Dominion's voting machines after President Joe Biden was elected were defamatory. Dominion is suing Fox for US\$1.6 billion.

Fox News hosts said on air that there were "voting irregularities" with Dominion's voting machines – while privately saying that such claims were baseless.

The statements have already been proved false. Delaware Superior Court Judge Eric M. Davis ruled on March 31, 2023, that it "is CRYSTAL clear that none of the Statements relating to Dominion about the 2020 election are true."

The question now is whether the statements harmed Dominion's reputation enough to rise to the level of defamation.

I am a longtime journalist and journalism professor who teaches the realities and challenges of defamation law as it relates to the news industry. Being accused of defamation is among a journalist's worst nightmares, but it is far easier to throw around as an accusation than it is to actually prove fault.

UNDERSTANDING DEFAMATION

Defamation happens when someone publishes or publicly broadcasts falsehoods about a person or a corporation in a way that harms their reputation to the point of damage. When the false statements are written, it is legally considered libel. When the falsehoods are spoken or aired on a live TV broadcast, for example, it is called slander.

To be considered defamation, information or claims must be presented as fact and disseminated so others read or see it and



must identify the person or business and offer the information with a reckless disregard for the truth.

Defamation plaintiffs can be private, ordinary people who must prove the reporting was done with negligence to win their suit. Public people like celebrities or politicians have a higher burden of proof, which is summed up as actual malice, or overt intention to harm a reputation.

The ultimate defense against defamation is truth, but there are others.

Opinion that is not provable fact is protected, for example.

Neutral reportage – a legal term that means the media reports fairly, if inaccurately, about public figures – can legally protect journalists.

But Davis rejected both of those arguments in the federal Dominion case.

Davis determined Fox aired falsehoods when it allowed Trump supporters to claim on air that Dominion rigged voting machines to increase President Joe Biden's number of votes. He also said that these actions harmed the Dominion's reputation.

PROVING ACTUAL MALICE

The primary question for the jury will be whether Fox broadcasters knew the statements were false when they aired them. If they did, it would mean they acted with actual malice, the stan-

dard required to prove a case of defamation for a public person, entity or figure.

The U.S. Supreme Court established actual malice as a legal criterion of defamation in 1964 when L.B. Sullivan, a police commissioner in Alabama, felt his reputation had been harmed by a civil rights ad run in The New York Times that contained several inaccuracies. Sullivan sued and was awarded \$500,000 by a jury. The state Supreme Court affirmed the decision and the Times appealed.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1964 that proof of defamation required evidence that the advertisement creator had serious doubts about the truth of the statement and published it anyway, with the goal to harm the subject's reputation.

Simply put, the burden of proof shifted from the accused to the accuser.

And that is a hurdle most cannot overcome when claiming defamation.

WHY PROVING DEFAMATION IS SO HARD

It is incredibly hard to prove in court that someone set out to do harm in publishing facts that are ultimately proved to be untrue.

Most times, falsehoods in a story are the result of insufficient information at the time of reporting.

Sometimes an article's inaccur-

racies are the result of bad reporting. Other times the errors are a result of actual negligence.

This happened when Rolling Stone magazine published an article in 2014 about the gang rape of a student at the University of Virginia. It turned out that many parts of the story were not true and not properly vetted by the magazine.

Nicole Eramo, the former associate dean of students at the University of Virginia, sued Rolling Stone, claiming the story false alleged that she knew about and covered up a gang rape at a fraternity on campus. They reached a settlement on the lawsuit in 2017.

NOT MEETING THE MALICE STANDARD

There are also some recent examples of a defamation lawsuit's not meeting the actual malice standard.

This includes Alaskan politician Sarah Palin, who sued The New York Times over publication of an editorial in 2017 that erroneously stated her political rhetoric led to a mass shooting. The jury said the information might be inaccurate, but she had not proved actual malice standard.

Long before he was president, Donald Trump had a 2011 libel suit dismissed after a New Jersey appeals court said there was no proof a book author showed actual malice when he cited three unnamed sources who estimated

Trump was a millionaire, not a billionaire.

It is so difficult for public figures to meet the actual malice standard and prove defamation that most defamation defendants spend most of their legal preparation time trying to prove they are not actually in the public eye. Their reputations, according to the court, are not as fragile as that of a private person.

Private people must prove only negligence to be successful in a defamation lawsuit. That means that someone did not seriously try to consider whether a statement was true or not before publishing it.

DEFAMATION CASES THAT WENT AHEAD

Some public figures, however, have prevailed in proving defamation.

American actress Carol Burnett won the first-ever defamation suit against the National Inquirer when a jury decided a 1976 gossip column describing her as intoxicated in a restaurant encounter with former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger was known to be false when it was published.

Most recently, Cardi B won a defamation lawsuit against a celebrity news blogger who posted videos falsely stating the Grammy-winning rapper used cocaine, had herpes and took part in prostitution.

THE CASE OF DOMINION

Whether Dominion can prove actual malice is up for the jury to decide, but Fox pundits have helped the plaintiff's case by acknowledging they knew information was false before they aired it and leaving a copious trail of comments such as, "this dominion stuff is total bs."

Fox's position is that despite knowing claims made by guests about Dominion were false, the claims were newsworthy.

Does this qualify as actual malice or simply bad journalism?

The decision could send quivers through the political media landscape for years to come.

MDT/THE CONVERSATION

www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

REACHING OUT!

+25,000

Like us on [facebook.com/mdtimes](https://www.facebook.com/mdtimes)




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 Torrao, 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 DESIGNERS_Miguel Bandeira, Rebeca Almeida | 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

CENTALINE

Realtor confident in shop transactions, prices

ANTHONY LAM

A regional realty agency expressed confidence in the number of transactions and pricing of shops within the Greater Bay Area (GBA) in the second quarter of the year, at a press conference yesterday.

The resumption of normal travel within the GBA has boosted first-quarter purchase prices and rentals within the area, Centaline Property pointed out. With further relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions and resumption of normalcy, the second quarter will even see higher prices, the realtor added.

The agency expects that the number of transactions and pricing of GBA shops will rise by 20% and 10% on average respectively, signaling "full prosperity".

Citing data that shows escalating tourist arrivals, spending, tourism price index and gross gambling revenue (GGR), Roy Ho, senior director of the realtor's Macau

and Hengqin areas, pointed out that many shop space owners in Macau have decided to lease their space instead of sell, after witnessing the momentum following the return to normal commercial conditions.

According to Ho, this change of mentality caused a fall in supply and pushed prices up. Foreseeing the second quarter, the realtor executive predicts only a 20% increase in the number of transactions due to the lack of supply.

He added that both local and external investors are eyeing local shop spaces.

On lease, Jack Lei, senior regional sales director for industrial and retail properties of the agency, recapped that in the first quarter, Macau has logged 52% more concluded shop lease deals year-over-year, reaching 365 transactions.

Of these cases, 14 saw monthly rent surpassing HKD200,000 per month and two exceeding HKD1 million per month. A single building at the Largo do São Domin-

ANTHONY LAM



gos was rented for HKD2 million per month.

Rentals at tourism and casino districts, meanwhile, recorded rises ranging between 75% and 178% on average, with some of

them rising by three to four fold. Despite the rise, average rents in tourism and casino districts have seen falls of 27% and 32% respectively from pre-Covid prices.

Rentals in these districts are ex-

pected to further rise for 15-20%, considering several upcoming holidays. Rentals in livelihood districts, however, will be relatively stable as local residents are expected to travel outside Macau.

Vietnam Consul expresses hopes of increasing workers in Macau

STAFF REPORTER

THE Consul General of Vietnam in Hong Kong and Macau Pham Binh Dam has recently visited Macau for the first time since the pandemic, and has expressed hopes of increasing the number of Vietnamese workers in the region.

During talks with the Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, both leaders talked about cooperation between Vietnam and Macau, including in numerous industries such as trade, labor, tourism and investment, as cited in a report issued by Vietnam Investment Review.

Pham has repeatedly shown his desire to reinforce his partnership with Macau, saying that the potential for collaboration was "huge" and had "not been fully tapped."

The Consul General highlighted the importance of the 7,000 Vietnamese people living and working in Macau, which were around 15,000 before pandemic, qualifying them as "skilled and hard-working"



and noticing their "positive contribution to Macau's economy."

Pham made several proposals to improve their reception, such as exchanging business delegations, participating in trade events, and removing visa restrictions for Vietnamese visitors.

In addition, Consul General of Vietnam in Hong Kong and Macau had a meeting with representatives of the Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), during which he encouraged Macau and Vietnamese businesses to explore cooperation opportunities through

either visits or participation in trade fairs in both Vietnam and Macau.

The Vietnamese Consul said he was "willing to help connect and support businesses on both sides."

During the two days, Pham also had meetings with leaders of Galaxy Entertainment Group and Melco Resorts & Entertainment Limited.

Latest government data shows that there are 7,369 Vietnamese workers in the SAR, which is a 26% decrease compared to February last year. The latest figure is nearly half the figure recorded in 2020 when there were 12,491

Vietnamese workers in Macau.

In 2020 the consulate said that some Vietnamese non-resident workers returned to Macau after the Chinese Lunar New Year break to discover they had lost their jobs.

This came after the temporary closure of the hospitality and catering venues had led to layoffs among non-resident workers in the SAR. During the Covid-19 outbreak, a number of migrant workers were reported to have been dismissed from their jobs or were tricked into signing statements that resulted in their dismissal.

CRIME

MORE PEOPLE FALLING VICTIM TO PHONE SCAMS, THE LATEST INVOLVING BLACK PINK TICKETS

RENATO MARQUES

AN increasing number of people in Macau have falling victim to phone and online scams in recent days, the Judiciary Police (PJ) reports.

In the wake of the scam involving a purported gift of loyalty points from CTM (which continues to find new victims), according to PJ, a new scam has appeared involving tickets for the concerts by South Korean Pop music band "Black Pink," scheduled to take place in Macau next month.

In the latest report from the PJ, the force noted that a 24-year-old woman reported to the police that she had been scammed while trying to purchase tickets for a concert ostensibly on sale on the internet.

She attempted to acquire three tickets for the concert, involving a total cost of 12,900 patacas.

After she had transferred a deposit in the equivalent of 3,300 patacas, she realised that she had lost contact with the seller and that the money had been lost, subsequently reporting the case to the authorities.

The PJ also reported that one more person has fallen victim to the CTM point exchange scam, which is sent to mobile phones in Macau via SMS.

In this case, a 43-year-old man reported to the PJ that his son, who is studying on the mainland, had received a message about prizes available for points redemption and filled in the information required by the scammers, providing his father's credit card information. He later discovered that the card had been unlawfully used for two transactions involving a sum of over 3,000 patacas.

VACCINATED 8-YEAR-OLD GIRL IDENTIFIED AS SEVERE FLU PATIENT

An eight-year-old local schoolgirl is in critical condition at the public hospital's Pediatric Intensive Care Unit after being diagnosed with influenza and related complications, including lung infections, acute necrotizing encephalopathy and brain hemorrhaging. She received a flu vaccination on Nov. 18 last year. On Apr. 5 the girl visited her relatives in Guangxi Province and started suffering from a fever on the evening of Apr. 7, when she received out-patient services. The next morning, she started vomiting and fell into a coma while being admitted to the hospital. As her condition did not improve, she was sent to the public hospital in Macau on Apr. 15.

MACAU STUDENT LOSES 4K IN SCAM IN MAINLAND

A local man who is studying at a university in mainland China has been scammed of over MOP4,100. One day he received a message purporting to be sent from a Macau telecom operator regarding membership points for his phone account. He was asked to click on a link. Believing it to be authentic, he clicked the link and provided his father's credit card information. Afterwards, his father received two text messages concerning outgoing credit card transactions. The father immediately reported the incident to the Judiciary Police.

MOBILE PAYMENT UP 40% LAST YEAR

260 million mobile payment transactions were made last year, amounting to MOP26 billion, which is an increase of 40% compared to 2021, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong said. This growth can be explained by pandemic effects and government promotional activities, which led many locals to abandon cash and credit cards and instead opt for mobile payment methods. Member of Board of Directors in Monetary Authority Macao (AMCM) Lai Hang Kun also revealed that the use of Simple Pay will be extended to buses. "The relevant institutions are now conducting a trial of this scheme. We will cooperate with the work of the Transport Bureau and announce the relevant details in due course," Lai said.

IFTM TO HOST OPEN DAY SUNDAY

The Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM) will hold its Open Day on April 23 at the Forward Building of its Taipa Campus from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Visitors, particularly students graduating from targeted secondary schools, will be guided by ambassadors and addressed at program and admission stations. Seminary, program sharing sessions and lucky draws will be organized both online and offline, and numerous workshops within theme of eco-craft will also be set up. Shuttle buses will run every half hour to facilitate access to the Open Day from Taipa Central Park to Taipa Campus and from Mong-Há Campus to Mong-Há Hill.

JAPAN'S FIRST CASINO TO HAVE NO IMPACT ON SAR'S GAMING OPS: EXPERT

LYNZY VALLES

THE approval of Japan's first license to operate a casino will not have a direct impact on the city given the difference in its target market.

MGM Resorts International was granted a license late last week after the government approved the controversial plan to open the country's first casino in the city of Osaka as the Japanese government seeks to lure more foreign tourists.

The resort will be operated by Osaka IR KK, established by the Japanese subsidiary of U.S. casino operator MGM Resorts International, Japan's Orix Corp. financial services group, and a number of regional investors.

"We don't believe there will be much direct impact as Japan is likely to go for the VIP segment, which Macau no longer targets," said Ben Lee, managing partner of IGamiX Management & Consulting to the Times.

Macau's gaming operators have been focusing on targeting the mass market, particularly after the crackdown on junkets that brought VIP clients



to the city's casino floors.

Although the gaming sector of the region is recovering after nearly three years of low profits, there remains some anxiety about whether the VIP and premium market will ever return.

It is unclear whether Beijing will allow these visitors frequent visits, which was the case before the pandemic.

Currently, gaming concessio-

naires are required to diversify their non-gaming elements as part of its pledge to the government and as required in their contracts following the recent massive overhaul of the SAR's gaming laws.

Meanwhile, Lee said, "The Japanese have previously said they do not want to be swamped and will target the upper tier Chinese."

Pre-pandemic, Chinese visitors to Japan have been growing. Official figures show that in 2019, there were 9.6 million arrivals from the mainland.

The number of Chinese tourists has increased four-fold from 1.4 million in 2012 to 7.4 million in 2017, overtaking South Korea as the biggest source market. In 2018, they numbered more than 8.3 million.

GAMING

Baccarat accounts for 84% of all GGR during Q1, VIP still lagging behind

RENATO MARQUES

THE Baccarat card game continues to be the game of choice for most casino patrons in Macau, generating a Gross Gaming Revenue (GGR) of 29.1 billion patacas in the first quarter (Q1) of this year. The figure represents 84.1% of all GGR from Q1 which has reached, according to official statistics from the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ), as much as 34.6 billion patacas.

Although Baccarat was always the game of preference in Macau with its revenues surpassing any other games by far, currently, and breaking the pattern of the recent past, the share of the game belonging to the so-called mass market is much lar-



ger than that of the VIP market, which has been lagging behind since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Of the 29.1 billion patacas generated by the game, the mass market generated a share of

70.5% (20.51 billion patacas). This is more than twice the VIP share, which, although also showing a significant recovery, has for the time being only accounted for 8.57 billion patacas of the total accumulated GGR.

To recall, the figure for Q1 2023 is only 15.6% shy of the total GGR for VIP Baccarat in 2022 (10.15 billion patacas).

The first time that the share of VIP Baccarat dipped below the share for mass Baccarat was in

2020, when the VIP generated 26.28 billion patacas compared to the 26.94 billion patacas of the mass market share.

The popularity of Baccarat is not limited to Macau but also extends to other markets where the game used to be less popular. Experts believe that the rise in the game's popularity is due to the fact that the house, represented by the banker, has less of a competitive edge compared to other casino card games.

By comparison, the second most popular casino game in Macau after Baccarat is Slot Machines, returning a GGR of just 2.45 billion patacas in Q1: a figure that represents only 8.4% of the revenue of Baccarat and 7.1% of the total GGR of all casino games over the same period.

MGTO prepares for May 1 holiday with additional audits of operators

TO ensure the quality of the service paid to visitors, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has said that it is preparing additional audits of several tourism operators, including establishments, transportation providers, and tour guides, among others.

The additional inspection has the purpose of preventing tourism-related disputes as well as finding any situations of illegality or wrongdoing, especially concerning illegal tour guides and taxi drivers, MGTO's deputy director Ricky Hoi said. Hoi noted that MGTO is collaborating with the police authorities as well as other government departments on this task.

The same official also mentioned that only six cases of illegal tour guides (previously reported) have been found so far this year.

All the cases related to the unauthorized operation of mainland guides in Macau have been forwarded through the communication mechanism between the tourism authorities of Macau and the mainland.

Hoi also advanced that MGTO has so far received around 2,300 applications for group tour subsidies. Since last Saturday, Macau has received the first of 14 such tours, which did not originate on the mainland.



FIRST SUBSIDIZED FOREIGN TOUR GROUP ARRIVES

The city's first subsidized foreign tour group arrived on April 15.

The tour group was from Thailand.

The MGTO is running a subsidization scheme to attract tourists to Macau not only for individual travel plans, but also for tours groups.

The non-greater China source market is a key market for the Macau government after Covid-19.

Meanwhile, it was revealed that

the MGTO has continued operating transport perks between Macau and Hong Kong, which are also applicable to non-Hong Kong entrants. However, the plan no longer provides perks to Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge shuttle bus passengers.

On this matter, Hoi explained that invitations were sent to all transport operators, but each of them enjoys the discretion whether to participate or not.

On extending the stay of tourists, the MGTO, in reply to lawmaker Wong Kit Cheng's in-

quiry, said that it would escalate its cooperation with the tourism trade in compiling multiple-stop trip products.

Multiple-trip trip is a conceptual term widely used by the government and the local tourism trade to refer to tours comprising more stops than only an origin and a destination.

MGTO BRINGS LIGHT SHOW TO LISBON

In its promotional trip to Portugal, the MGTO has brought the locally well-received annual light

and video mapping show to the capital city of Lisbon.

The Light Up Macao: Macao Tourism Video Mapping Show is the first overseas presence of the event branded Light up Macao held by MGTO at home.

The Portuguese shows will be held from today until April 22 at 8:30 p.m., 9:00 p.m., 9:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. every evening. Each session lasts about 12 minutes.

Images are projected upon the facades of major architecture at the Square of Commerce, to showcase Macau's tourism elements and unique strengths for local residents. In terms of the design concept, the mapping show consists of four chapters, namely Encounter of Chinese and Portuguese cultures, Heritage and Gastronomy, Deepening the cross-sectoral integration of Tourism + as well as the "1+4" Strategy in support of appropriate economic diversification, among other elements.

Promotional stalls have also been set up in the Portuguese capital to promote Macau. The MGTO said the Experience Macao Unlimited – Macao Promotion in Lisbon represents the city's first physical tourism promotion in Europe after the pandemic. It is being held at the Square of Commerce from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily until April 22. **RM/AL**

HO IAT SENG IN PORTUGAL

Lawyer calls 'for Portugal to remember its commitment to Macau' in Público newspaper

IN an opinion article published yesterday by major Portuguese daily Público, local lawyer Sérgio de Almeida Correia highlights the upcoming visit of the Chief Executive (CE) of Macau to Portugal starting on April 18th, and urges the Portuguese authorities to remember their commitment to Macau as per the bilateral international treaty, the Luso-Chinese Joint Declaration (DCLC), signed on April 13, 1987.

He emphasizes that while the visit is important, it should not overshadow the essential issues that need to be addressed.

Correia stresses the need for the Portuguese authorities to analyze the current



Lawyer Sérgio de Almeida Correia

situation in Macau in light of the changes that have been introduced in recent years, particularly with re-

gard to points (4) and (5) of the second part of the DCLC.

In his Público's article,

he calls for an evaluation of whether the social and economic systems, as well as the way of life, have remained unchanged since 1987, and whether and to what extent personal freedoms such as expression, press, assembly, association, movement, migration, and strike are respected.

The veteran lawyer also stresses the importance of assessing the use of the Portuguese language in the government bodies, the legislative branch, and courts of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR), and whether it aligns with the agreed-upon and defined systems and freedoms for the residents.

Correia acknowledges

that initially, between 1999 and 2012, there were no significant changes in the social, economic, and legal fabric of Macau, and the Basic Law (LB) played its role despite some new elements introduced by different actors.

He credits the remarkable economic development of Macau to the intelligent approach taken by the authorities in Beijing and the first CE, Edmund Ho, who was a banker from one of the most powerful traditional families in Macau with a global outlook and appropriate training.

However, he points out that without proper control mechanisms in place, this development has become

unbalanced, one-sided, and allowed for a phenomenon of "neocolonization by dubious capital, accompanied by uncontrolled speculation and corruption."

Correia emphasizes that it is crucial for the Portuguese authorities to remember their commitment to Macau as per the DCLC and to assess whether the principles of the treaty have been upheld.

He cautions against complacency and calls for a thorough evaluation of the current situation in Macau, including the preservation of the systems and freedoms that were promised to the residents of Macau.

Finally, Correia concludes by stating that it is essential for Portugal not to forget its historical ties with Macau and to ensure that the spirit of the Joint Declaration is upheld in the bilateral relationship between Portugal and China. **PC**

SPORTS

SECOND DAY OF WTT: MORE ELIMINATIONS NARROW THE PATH INTO THE ROUND OF 16

RENATO MARQUES

THE World Table Tennis (WTT) Champions Macao 2023 tournament, which started on Monday, continued yesterday with the second day of the Round of 32.

In the men's group, the day started with extremely competitive matches, all of which were decided in the last set.

Nonetheless, Lin Yun-Ju, Anton Kallberg, and Dimitrij Ovtcharov all vanquished their opponents Shunsuke Togami, Qiu Dang, and Lim Jonghoon, 3:2.

The victory of Swedish Mattias Falck over the German Benedikt Duda came a little easier, with Falck winning 3:1.

Later in the evening, the Chinese athletes took to the stage at the infinity arena at Tap Seac Multisports Pavilion with Lin Shidong (China) taking on Tomokazu

Harimoto (Japan) as well as the most anticipated debut of the public favorite, Ma Long (China), who faced the Nigerian Quadri Aruna. The day closed with the men's group with the match between Andrej Gacina (Croatia) and Wang Chuqin (China).

In the women's group, the Chinese Chen Xingtong was eliminated at the hands of the Romanian Bernadette Szocs in a 3:1 defeat, and the Korean Jeon Jihee beat the Brazilian Bruna Takahashi by the minimum margin (3:2).

In the last matches of the evening, Qian Tianyi (China) faced Miyuu Kihara (Japan), and Chen Meng (China) battled with Hong Kong's Doo Hoi Kem.

The first part of the tournament program today is still dedicated to the final encounters of the Round of 32, with the first matches of the Round of 16 to follow later in the day.



RESULTS OF MEN'S SINGLES - ROUND OF 32

Shunsuke Togami (JPN)	2	3	Lin Yun-Ju (TPE)
Dang Qiu (GER)	2	3	Anton Kallberg (SWE)
Lim Jonghoon (KOR)	2	3	Dimitrij Ovtcharov (GER)
Benedikt Duda (GER)	1	3	Mattias Falck (SWE)
Lin Shidong (CHN)	2	3	Tomokazu Harimoto (JPN)
Ma Long (CHN)	3	1	Quadri Aruna (NGA)
Andrej Gacina (HRV)	0	3	Wang Chuqin (CHN)

RESULTS OF WOMEN'S SINGLES - ROUND OF 32

Jia Nan Yuan (FRA)	3	1	Suthasini Sawettabut (THA)
Xiaoxin Yang (MCO)	0	3	Shin Yubin (KOR)
Jeon Jihee (KOR)	3	2	Bruna Takahashi (BRA)
Sofia polcanova (AUS)	0	3	Wang Manyu (CHN)
Bernadette Szocs (ROU)	3	1	Chen Xingtong (CHN)
Qian Tianyi (CHN)	3	0	Miyuu Kihara (JPN)
Chen Meng (CHN)	3	0	Doo Hoi Kem (HKG)

AD

britcham 澳門英國商會
British Chamber of Commerce in Macao

britcham "Earth Day Quiz Night"

Welcome to Earth Day Quiz Night! In celebration of Earth Day on 22nd April, we're inviting you to join us for a networking, fun and educational evening.

Put your eco-friendly thinking caps on and celebrate our planet by testing your knowledge and skills about all things environmental and sustainable. Get ready for tough questions on climate change, renewable energy, sustainable living, and wildlife conservation. Form a team to take on the challenge. Not only will you be fighting for the planet, but the team with the highest score will also win a grand prize. Let's celebrate Earth Day in style and become more aware and involved in protecting our planet for generations to come. Don't miss out on this fun opportunity and show your support for a more sustainable future!

Date : 27th April 2023 (Thursday)
Time : 7pm - 9pm
Venue : Old Taipa Tavern (OTT) 2nd Floor
Fee : MOP\$280 (Members) / MOP\$350 (Non-Members)

Advance booking is required. No refund for cancellation 48 hours prior to the event.
Email: ivone@britchammacao.org or call +853 6331 1124

Sovereign Members: **LEOP STON'S BAKERY**
Sterling Members: **BNU**
Noble Members: **Sniper Capital**
Principal Media Partner: **Times**
Branding Adviser: **CONDE**

Other members: **CESL Asia**, **CTM**, **DSL lawyers**, **金沙中國**, **Friends of Britcham**, **BCM**, **ZEKO**

仁德 CENTRO MEDICO PEDDER
仁德醫療中心

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 lo

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

AUTO SHANGHAI

Volkswagen unveils electric luxury sedan at China auto show

JOE MCDONALD, SHANGHAI

VOLKSWAGEN unveiled an electric luxury sedan that promises a 700-kilometer battery range as global and Chinese automakers displayed their latest SUVs, sedans and muscle cars yesterday at the world's biggest auto show.

Auto Shanghai 2023 reflects the intense competition in China's fast-growing electric vehicle market after the ruling Communist Party poured billions of dollars into promoting the technology. China accounted for two-thirds of global electrics sales last year.

Brands including General Motors, BMW and Nissan and Chinese rivals BYD Auto and NIO unveiled dozens of new EVs in the cavernous Shanghai exhibition center. Brands touted faster charging, satellite-linked navigation and entertainment, and the future possibility of self-driving technology.

Volkswagen's ID.7 sedan, the new flagship model for its electric vehicles, was one of 28 models displayed by the German automaker, half of them electrified.

"We are turbo-charging our electric campaign," said the CEO of VW's passenger car brand, Thomas Schaefer, who rode onto the stage aboard an electric minibus. Schaefer said VW plans to release another 10 electric models in the next three years.

The show is the auto industry's first full-scale sales event in its biggest market since 2019 following



Volkswagen's ID.7 Vizzion, its new electric flagship sedan, is unveiled in a world premiere on the eve of the Auto Shanghai 2023 show in Shanghai

the end of anti-virus controls in December that blocked most travel into and out of China.

Automakers are looking to China to drive sales growth at a time of slack American and European demand, but that requires them to pour money into creating competitive models that can appeal to Chinese buyers in a crowded market.

Established global brands face pressure from ambitious Chinese newcomers and to meet government sales quotas for electrics. Many are forming partnerships to split soaring development costs.

China is "playing a leading role in the industry's electric and digital transformation," said Ford Motor Co. CEO Jim Farley in a recorded message played on a video screen.

Electrics accounted for just

over a quarter of the 23.6 million SUVs, sedans and minivans sold last year in China while sales of traditional gasoline-powered vehicles declined.

GM debuted an electric SUV, the Buick Electra E5, ahead of the auto show. Toyota Motor Co. unveiled two new models for its bZ line of zero-emissions vehicles. Honda Motor Co. premiered a new prototype for its China-focused electric brand, e:N.

Toyota also displayed a prototype self-driving taxi developed with China's Pony.ai, a leading competitor in the country's fast-evolving autonomous vehicle industry.

Chinese luxury electric brand NIO Inc., which competes with Tesla Inc. at the premium end of the market, unveiled its latest SUV, the ES6, and an update of its

flagship sedan, the ET7. Both have digital cockpits and an onboard computer with connections for tablet computers and other devices.

BMW AG showed an all-electric lineup including two new models, the i7 M70L and XM Label Red. The German sport luxury brand's M760Le had its China debut.

Automakers also highlighted China's growing role as a source of exports and innovation, especially EVs.

NIO and BYD Auto are among a growing group of Chinese EV brands that are starting to sell in foreign markets. BYD Auto exports to Europe and opened a dealership in Japan this year. NIO started selling in Europe in 2021 and says it plans to serve 25 countries by 2025.

Global brands all have design centers in China and increasingly are drawing on Chinese talent for engineering, software and other development.

VW is adding as many as 2,000 employees to a research and development center in the eastern city of Anhui to work on "intelligent connected vehicles," Schaefer said. He said a separate software unit would add up to 1,200 employees this year.

"We are gaining innovative strength by taking on local R&D responsibility," Schaefer said. "Our guiding principle: Developing in China for China."

The organizers said automakers would debut 100 new models, 70 of them electric, according to Chinese media.

Drivers in China bought 5.4 million all-electric vehicles last year — about two-thirds of the global total of 8 million — plus 1.5 million gasoline-electric hybrids. This year's EV sales are forecast to rise another 30%.

Beijing is winding down government support and shifting the burden to automakers by requiring them to earn credits for EV sales.

China's BYD Auto, which competes with Tesla for the title of world's biggest-selling EV brand, displayed the U9 supercar from its luxury Yangwang brand and an SUV, the U8. The automaker says the U9, with a 1-million-yuan (\$145,000) sticker price, can accelerate from zero to 100 kph in two seconds.

Another Chinese EV brand, Aion, part of state-owned GAC, announced rapid charging technology it said needs as little as five minutes to power up a battery to go 200 kilometers.

Aion also unveiled a system it said can remove a drained battery and install a fresh one in as little as two minutes. The company said that would be quicker than filling a gasoline tank, eliminating a drawback to EV ownership.

China's auto sales peaked in 2017 at 24.7 million but collapsed in 2020 to 20.2 million after dealerships closed as part of efforts to contain COVID-19. They are recovering but have yet to return to the pre-pandemic level.

For drivers who aren't ready to give up fossil fuels, state-owned BAIC unveiled a hulking, American-style pickup truck, the Mars, with a 6.8-liter diesel engine. The company boasted that with its flaring wheel wells, the Mars is 2.1 meters wide.

The ruling party's support for EV development is part of plans to gain wealth and global influence by transforming China into a creator of profitable technologies. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

MGM donates another MOP300,000 to Holy House of Mercy's Welfare Shop



MGM donated MOP300,000 to the Macau Holy House of Mercy (SCMM)'s Welfare Shop project for the 11th consecutive year — in a bid to fund the distribution of food

hampers to nearly 400 local households in need.

To date, MGM has donated an aggregate of MOP3.3 million to the project, the gaming operator

said in a statement.

For another year, MGM has specially designed a portable and reusable handcart for the food hamper distribution; this year, the design has undergone an upgrade, where the handcart has become more compact and functional for everyday use.

Each food hamper contains daily necessities such as rice, noodles, canned food, oatmeal, cooking oil, etc. — packed by MGM's management team members and over 30 Golden Lion volunteers. The food hampers will be delivered to local families in need, as referred by FAOM, UGAMM, SCMM, and the Associação dos Familiares Encarregados dos Deficientes Mentais de Macau.

CEM employees visit exhibition on national security education



CEM organized its staff to visit the National Security Education Exhibition, led by Bernie Leong, chairman of the Executive Committee.

After visiting the exhibition, Leong stated that CEM staff "always remember that national security is the top priority and work

hard to ensure the safe and stable supply of electricity in Macau," as cited in a statement.

"We must take a comprehensive view of national security and guide all works accordingly, guarantee electricity for Macau's safety and development in all fields, and contribute to the well-being and happiness of Macau residents," said Leong.

Every year, CEM organizes different teams of employees to visit the National Security Education Exhibition, including management, communication facilitators, Occupational Health and Safety Committee members, first aiders and representatives from various departments.

SECURITY

ALLEGED SECRET CHINESE POLICE STATION IN NEW YORK LEADS TO ARRESTS

LARRY NEUMEISTER,
NEW YORK

TWO men were arrested Monday on charges that they helped establish a secret police station in New York City on behalf of the Chinese government, and about three dozen officers with China's national police force were charged with using social media to harass dissidents inside the United States, authorities said.

The cases are part of a series of Justice Department prosecutions in recent years aimed at disrupting Chinese government efforts to locate in America pro-democracy activists and others who are openly critical of Beijing's policies and to suppress their speech.

One of three cases concerns a local branch of the Chinese Ministry of Public Security that had operated inside an office building in Manhattan's Chinatown neighborhood before closing last fall amid an FBI investigation. The two men who were arrested were acting under the direction and control of a Chinese government official and deleted communication with that official from their phones after learning of the FBI's probe in an apparent effort to obstruct the inquiry, according to the Justice Department.

Though China is believed to be operating secretive police outposts in countries around the globe, Justice Department officials said these arrests were the first of their kind anywhere in the world.

"This is a blatant violation of our national sovereignty," Michael Driscoll, the head of New York's FBI field office, said at a news conference announcing the cases.

The men, identified as "Harry" Lu Jianwang, 61, of the Bronx, and Chen Jinping, 59, of Manhattan, both U.S. citizens, were arrested at their homes on Monday morning. A lawyer for Lu declined to comment. An email message seeking comment was left with a lawyer for Chen.

At no point did the men register with the Justice Department as agents of a foreign government, U.S. law enforcement officials said. And though the secret police station did perform some basic services, such as helping Chinese citizens renew their Chinese driver's licenses, it also served a more "sinister" function, including helping the Chinese government locate a pro-democracy activist of Chinese descent living in California, officials said.

"New York City is home to New York's finest: the NYPD," said U.S. Attorney Breon Peace, the top federal prosecutor in Brooklyn, whose office brought the cases.



AP PHOTO

A six story glass facade building (center) is believed to be, according to U.S. authorities, the site of a foreign police outpost for China in New York's Chinatown

"We don't need or want a secret police station in our great city."

Justice Department officials in recent years have prioritized prosecutions of what's known as "transnational repression," in which foreign governments work to identify, intimidate and silence dissidents in the U.S.

A signature case concerning China was announced in 2020, when the Justice Department charged more than a half-dozen people with working on behalf of the Chinese government in a pressure campaign aimed at coercing a New Jersey man wanted by Beijing into returning to China to face charges.

In January, the Justice Department charged three men in an alleged plot that originated in Iran to kill an Iranian American author and activist who has

spoken out against human rights abuses there.

"In America, the law protects all of us equally from persecution, violence and threats of violence," said David Newman, a top official in the Justice Department's national security division.

"As authoritarian governments — whether the PRC, Russia, Iran, or others — become more brazen in their efforts to trample the rights and liberties that are the bedrock of our democracy, the Department of Justice will redouble its efforts to defend our democracy, our democratic institutions, and our sovereignty," Newman said, using an acronym for the People's Republic of China.

In a separate scheme announced yesterday (Macau time), the Justice Department charged 34 officers in the Ministry of Public

Security with creating and using thousands of fake social media accounts on Twitter and other platforms to harass dissidents abroad.

Prosecutors say the defendants, all part of a specialized task force that worked out of a police facility in Beijing, "also used social media to spread Chinese government propaganda on subjects including racial justice protests in the U.S., Russia's war against Ukraine and human rights issues in Hong Kong." All of the defendants remain at large and are believed to be living in China.

In addition, prosecutors announced that eight Chinese government officials who are believed to be currently living in China were charged with directing an employee of a U.S. telecommunications company to remove

Chinese dissidents from the company's platform.

Jin Xinjiang, also known as Julien Jin, a former China-based Zoom executive, was among 10 people charged in an amended complaint. He was initially charged in December 2020, when authorities alleged that he tried to disrupt a series of Zoom meetings in May and June of that year that were meant to commemorate the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre.

At the time, Jin served as Zoom's primary liaison with Chinese government law enforcement and intelligence services, regularly responding to requests by the Chinese government to terminate meetings and block users on Zoom's video communications platform, authorities said. **MDT/AP**

SECURITY

BEIJING CALLS US ACCUSATIONS OF POLICE STATIONS 'GROUNDLESS'

CHINA denied all accusations of an overseas police presence, saying yesterday that the United States was making "groundless accusations" after U.S. law enforcement arrested two men in New York for establishing a secret police station.

"The relevant claims have no factual basis, and there is no such thing as an overseas police station," spokesperson for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Wang Wenbin said.

U.S. authorities arrested two men, identified as "Harry" Lu Jianwang, 61, and Chen Jinping, 59, both U.S. citizens, on Monday. Under the direction of an official in China, the two men allegedly set up a station where they offered some basic services, such as helping Chinese citizens renew their Chinese driver's licenses.

Wang said China does not interfere in other countries' sovereignty.

China has shown that it is willing to target its own citizens even after they have left China for various reasons, whether political or economic. The Associated Press has previously reported that a Chinese woman was detained in Dubai at a Chinese-run detention facility.

In recent years, Beijing has been running two separate campaigns to bring suspects wanted mostly for economic crimes back to China as part of an anti-corruption drive. It has begun flexing its muscles abroad to bring people back home, "whether through the use of extradition treaties or unofficial methods," according to media reports in the West.

"China firmly opposes the smear and political manipulation by the U.S., who maliciously fabricated the narrative of so-called cross-border suppression and blatantly prosecuted Chinese law enforcement officials," Wang said. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin

ECONOMY

Growth accelerates with consumption boost

CHINA'S economic growth accelerated in the latest quarter as consumer flocked back to shops and restaurants following the abrupt end of anti-virus controls.

The 4.5% growth in gross domestic product from January to March compared to the same period in 2022 was the fastest in the past year, and outpaced the 2.9% growth in the previous quarter, according to government data released yesterday.

But authorities cautioned that China will likely face import and export pressures in the coming months amid an uncertain international economic environment, and also warned of inadequate domestic market demand in the world's No. 2 economy.

Fu Linghui, the director general of China's National Bureau of Statistics, said yesterday that authorities will implement various policies to "stabilize growth" and stimulate domestic demand, as well as help support the development of emerging industries.

The higher-than-expected rise in GDP for the quarter comes amid a rebound in consumption, as people flocked to shopping malls and restaurants after "zero-COVID" restrictions were removed at the end of 2022. Analysts initially pegged economic growth to be about 4%.

Earlier this year, China's government set this year's economic growth target at "around 5%," a conservative target that will only be met if GDP grows faster in the months ahead.

In March, total retail sales

AP PHOTO



of consumer goods went up by 10.6% year on year, and grew 7.1 percentage points compared to the first two months of the year.

"The combination of a steady uptick in consumer confidence as well as the still-incomplete release of pent-up demand suggest to us that the consumer-led recovery still has room to run," said Louise Loo, an economist at Oxford Economics in a note.

But while consumption and retail sales have grown, other economic indicators with weaker growth such as industrial output and fixed-asset investments indicate an uneven recovery. Slowing price indices also point toward inadequate demand.

Industrial production output, which measures activity in the manufacturing, mining and utilities sectors, grew by 3.9% in

March compared to the same time last year.

Fixed-asset investment — in which China invests in infrastructure and other projects to drive growth — rose by 5.1% in the first three months of 2023 compared to the same period last year. The growth was down from 5.5% in the first two months of the year. Private investments were also

weak, growing just 0.6%.

China's exports surged in March, according to data earlier this week, although this could be the result of suppliers catching up in fulfilling orders disrupted during COVID-19. In the first quarter, exports grew 8.4%.

The unemployment rate in urban areas fell to 5.3% in March, down 0.3% from the month before. But youth unemployment jumped to 19.6%, a near-record high.

Investors are expected to scrutinize China's first-quarter economic data for indicators of recovery following years of harsh lockdowns and a crackdown on the industries such as technology and real estate.

Last year's growth fell to 3%, hampered by anti-virus controls that caused snap lockdowns and kept millions at home, sometimes for weeks on end.

GDP is expected to accelerate on a year-on-year basis given Shanghai's COVID-19 lockdowns last year, which impacted the economy, according to Oxford Economic's Loo, who said that growth is expected to slow in the second half of the year.

"The fading of consumption momentum, the winding down of fiscal stimulus, and a weaker incoming external demand would put downward pressure on domestic growth in H2," she said.

On Monday, China's central bank kept rates on its one-year policy loans unchanged. Last week, it had vowed to step up support for the economy and maintain ample liquidity to support growth. **MDT/AP**

ENERGY

US-China split may weaken growth and fuel inflation: Lagarde

THE fragmentation of the world economy into rival blocs led by the United States and China threatens to destabilize global commerce, increase inflation and weaken growth, Christine Lagarde, the president of the European Central Bank, warned yesterday [Macau time].

Speaking to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, Lagarde said that economic data dating to 1900 shows that "geopolitical risks led invariably to higher inflation."

Costs tend to mount, she said, as countries stop or reduce trading with rivals and seek supplies at home or from allied countries. She added that it can be difficult to sever ties: Europe, for example, relies on China for 98% of its rare earth minerals, which are used in

AP PHOTO



Christine Lagarde, president of the European Central Bank

cellphones and computer hard drives, among other products.

If world supply chains were to split along geopolitical

lines, Lagarde warned, consumer prices could rise 5% in the near term and 1% in the long run.

Lagarde also said the

United States could not take for granted the U.S. dollar's continued role as the go-to currency for world trade, though for now it remains

unchallenged. China, Russia and other countries are seeking to wean themselves off dependence on the United States, which has sought to use its dominance to impose sanctions, most notably on Russia after its invasion of Ukraine last year.

A more splintered and less efficient world economy, Lagarde said, will make it harder for central banks to contain inflation. They will need help from government policymakers, who must find ways to control costs by improving the efficiency of supply chains and by conserving energy.

Lagarde, who began leading the ECB in 2019 after eight years as head of the International Monetary Fund, held out hope that this goal can be accomplished. She pointed to the challenge Europe had faced

after Moscow cut off natural gas supplies after it invaded Europe.

Aided by an unusually warm winter, Europe succeeded in saving energy, finding alternative energy supplies and opening liquefied natural gas terminals that permitted access to sea-bound imports from the United States and other countries much faster than expected.

To combat inflation exacerbated by the Ukraine war's disruption of energy and food markets, the ECB has aggressively raised interest rates.

"It is beginning to work," Lagarde said.

Inflation in the 20 countries that share the euro currency slowed in March to 6.9%, the lowest level in a year, down from a peak of 10.6% in October. **MDT/AP**

SOUTH KOREA

J-HOPE BECOMES SECOND BTS MEMBER TO JOIN THE ARMY

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

J-HOPE, a member of K-pop sensation BTS, entered a South Korean boot camp yesterday to start his 18-month compulsory military service, becoming the group's second member to join the country's army.

There was heated public debate in 2022 over whether to offer special exemptions of mandatory military service for BTS members, until the group's management agency announced in October that all seven members would fulfill their duties.

In December, Jin, 30 and the oldest member of BTS, became the band's first member to enter the army after revoking his request to delay his conscription.

South Korean TV footage Tuesday afternoon showed what they called a black minivan likely carrying J-Hope moving into the boot camp in Wonju, about 90 kilometers (55 miles) east of Seoul. Hybe Corp., the parent company of BTS' management agency Big Hit Music, later confirmed the 29-year-old singer entered the camp.

Dozens of fans showed up near the base after arriving via rented buses wrapped with large photos of J-Hope and words hoping for his safe service. Authorities mobilized soldiers and police officers to maintain order, and there were no immediate reports of safety-related accidents. Big Hit Music had pleaded with fans, who call them-

AP PHOTO



BTS' J-Hope

selves the "Army," not to come to the site due to safety reasons.

"I love you, Army. I'll see you again," J-Hope, whose real name is Jung Ho-seok, said Monday in a message posted on the online fan platform Weverse, with photos of

himself with a military buzz cut.

Five other younger BTS members — RM, Suga, Jimin, V and Jungkook — are to join the South Korean military one by one in the coming years. That means the world's biggest boy band is expect-

ed to reconvene as a group again a few years later.

In South Korea, all able-bodied men are required by law to perform 18-21 months of military service under a conscription system meant to deter aggression

from rival North Korea.

The law gives special exemptions to athletes, classical and traditional musicians, and ballet and other dancers if they have obtained top prizes in certain competitions and are assessed to have enhanced national prestige. K-pop stars and other entertainers aren't subject to such privileges.

That has caused an intense domestic debate over whether it was time to amend the law to expand exemptions to entertainers like BTS members. Jin, who turned 30 in December, had faced an impending conscription because the law disallows most South Korean men from further delaying their services after they turn 30.

Lawmakers bickered over the issue at the National Assembly, while a series of public surveys showed sharply split opinions over possible service exemptions for BTS members. Defense Minister Lee Jong-Sup said at the time that it would be "desirable" for BTS members to implement their duties to promote fairness in the country's military service.

Exemptions or dodging of military duties are a highly sensitive issue in South Korea, because the draft forces young men to suspend their studies or professional careers.

Formed in 2013, BTS expanded its popularity in the West with its 2020 megahit "Dynamite," the band's first all-English song that made BTS the first K-pop act to top Billboard's Hot 100.

Hybe Corp. said in October that each member of the band for the time being would focus on individual activities scheduled around their military service plans. **MDT/AP**

MALAYSIA

Michelle Yeoh seeks new challenges after Oscar win

MICHELLE Yeoh says she is looking for new challenges including as a producer, as she credited perseverance, hard work and passion for her historic Oscar win last month.

The 60-year-old became the first Asian to win the Academy Award for best actress for her performance as a laundromat owner in "Everything Everywhere All at Once." The movie won a total of seven awards, including best picture.

Returning to her native Malaysia to celebrate her mother's birthday, Yeoh said she felt a sense of relief after clinching the award.

"It was a roller coaster ride that started last year when the movie first came out. It was a whole year of not knowing, wanting, hoping, wishing," she yesterday told a news conference.

"During the journey, everyone was asking, 'Do you want the Oscar?' I said, hell, yes, of course I want the Oscar. Who doesn't? I am not going to beat around the bush and say no because it represents so much to so many of us."

Yeoh reiterated that her Oscar victory was a "beacon of hope" for Asian women.

"It shows us it can be done and all of you can do it," she said.

Yeoh, who started her career in Hong Kong before becoming a Hollywood star, said she was blessed to have been able to work on diverse movies and with "forward thinking filmmakers to fight for what I truly believe in — representation, diversity, especially empowerment of women." She said she refuses to be boxed in stereotypical roles but believes in pushing the envelo-

pe in her career.

While she has no interest in directing, she said she may branch out again as a producer.

"Directors have no life. I love my life too much," she said in jest. "I love producing. I have produced before and now I can start to do so again ... now I am able to branch out more because people have started to listen, and appreciate what you can bring forward. As an actor, I love what I can do. I am so lucky to be able to say it's not a job, it's really a passion."

"I am always looking for a challenge," she said. "I believe there is so much to do in our part of the world. All of us collectively. Don't isolate yourself. Don't feel that I must always tell my story. We are collaborators, we are storytellers. Let's work together and do great things."

MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh holds up the Oscar statuette during a press conference in Kuala Lumpur, yesterday

INDIA

'Mangrove Man' fights to salvage sinking shores

GAURAV SAINI, VYPIN ISLAND

ON the receding shorelines of low-lying Vypin Island off India's western coast, T. P. Murukesan fixed his eyes on the white paint peeling off the damp walls of his raised home and recounted the most recent floods.

"The floods are occurring more frequently and lasting longer," he said. The last flood was chest-height for his young grandson. "Every flood brings waters this high, we just deal with it."

Sea level rise and severe tidal floods have forced many families in Murukesan's neighborhood to relocate to higher grounds over the years. But the retired fisherman has almost singlehandedly been buffering the impacts of the rising waters on his home and in his community.

Known locally as "Mangrove Man," Murukesan has turned to planting the trees along the shores of Vypin and the surrounding areas in the Kochi region of Kerala state to counter the impacts of rising waters on his home.

Tidal flooding occurs when sea level rise combines with local factors to push water levels above the normal levels. Mangroves can provide natural coastal defenses against sea level rise, tides and storm surges, but over the course of his life forest cover in the state has dwindled.

Murukesan said he grew up surrounded by beautiful, abundant mangroves that separated islands from the sea. Now, only

fragmented patches of mangroves can be seen in Kochi, the state's financial capital.

"They protected our houses against floods, sea erosion, and storms, used to be an inseparable part of our life, our ecosystem," he said. "Only these can save us."

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is part of a series produced under the India Climate Journalism Program, a collaboration between The Associated Press, the Stanley Center for Peace and Security and the Press Trust of India.

Murukesan said he has planted over 100,000 mangroves. He plants saplings on alternate days and does most of the work himself. Some help comes in the form of saplings from the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, a non-government organization based in Chennai, India.

His efforts come up against a strong trend in the opposite direction.

Ernakulam district, which includes Kochi, has lost nearly 42% of its mangrove ecosystems, including major decreases in the southern Puthuvypeen area in Vypin, according to a study released last year by the Indian Space Research Organization and the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies.

Mangrove cover in the state has reduced from 700 square kilometers (435 square miles) to just 24 square kilometers (15 square miles) since 1975, according to the Kerala Forest department.

"The construction of coastal roads and highways has severely

damaged mangrove ecosystems in the state," said K K Ramachandran, former member secretary of the Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority, a government body mandated to protect the coastal environment. "There should be an incentive for people who are making efforts to protect them."

Murukesan's dedication to the cause has won him praise, awards and the audience of senior politicians but not incentives beyond the immediate benefits to his home.

He said the mangroves he planted in and around the area in 2014 have grown into a dense thicket and are helping reduce the intensity of tidal flooding, but he's nevertheless continuing his efforts.

Despite the thousands of new mangrove trees, other factors like climate change mean tidal floods have become more frequent and severe, sometimes keeping children from going to school and people from getting to work. It's all mentally exhausting, Murukesan and his wife, Geetha, said.

"I have to travel a lot to collect seeds. My wife helps me in the nursery as much as she can. I am tired but I cannot stop," he said.

Geetha said they do the tough work "for our children," preserving the forest for decades to come.

"It keeps us going," she said.

Vypin is at high-risk for tidal flooding, said Abhilash S, director of the Advanced Centre for Atmospheric Radar Research at the Cochin University of Science and



Technology.

"The sea level has risen and has damaged freshwater supplies. Sea erosion and spring tides have worsened. Coastal flooding is a common occurrence now," he said. "The carrying capacity of the backwaters has reduced due to sediment deposition and encroachment, and the rainwater enters residential areas during the monsoon season."

Backwaters in the state of Kerala are networks of canals, lagoons and lakes parallel to coastal areas, unique ecosystems that help provide a buffer to rising sea levels.

According to the World Meteorological Organization, global mean sea level rose by 4.5 millimeters per year between 2013 and 2022. It's a major threat for countries like India, China, the Netherlands and Bangladesh, which comprise large coastal populations.

NASA projections show that Kochi might experience a sea level rise of 0.22 meters (8.7 inches) by 2050, and over half a meter (nearly 20 inches) by 2100 in a middle-o-

f-the-road climate warming scenario.

"Many families have left," Murukesan said.

Fishing families living within 50 meters (55 yards) of the shore get a financial assistance of 10 lakh rupees (\$12,000) through a rehabilitation scheme run by the Kerala government. Only few of those not covered under it have means to relocate to safer places.

Some fishing families shift to government shelters in the monsoon season and return after it ends. A few have built stilt houses that stand on columns to fight tidal floods.

Murukesan knows the sea is rising, but it's the backwaters that make him more anxious. The backwaters have become shallow due to the silt deposited by heavy floods. During heavy rain events, the water inundates the island.

"We are caught between the sea and the backwaters. They are likely to swallow the island in some years, but I am not going anywhere," he said. "I was born here, and I will die here."

AFGHANISTAN

Reclusive Taliban leader releases end-of-Ramadan message

THE reclusive top leader of the Taliban released a message yesterday lauding the changes in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover and the measures they imposed after seizing the country following two decades of war.

The statement from Hibatullah Akhundzada was made public ahead of the Eid al-Fitr holiday later this week that marks the end of the fasting Muslim month of Ramadan.

Akhundzada, an Islamic scholar, rarely appears in public or leaves the Taliban heartland in Afghanistan's



southern Kandahar province. He surrounds himself with other religious scholars and allies who oppose

education and work for women.

In recent months, Akhundzada appears to

have taken a stronger hand in directing domestic policy, banning girls' education after the sixth grade and barring Afghan women from public life and work, especially for non-governmental organizations and the United Nations.

The message was distributed in five languages: Arabic, Dari, English, Pashto and Urdu. The Taliban, Akhundzada says, have taken "significant reform measures" in culture, education, the economy, media and other fields.

"The bad intellectual and moral effects of the 20-

year occupation are about to finish," he said and extolled "living in the light" of Sharia, or Islamic law.

This, he instructed Afghans, would lead to the "well-being of our world and the hereafter, as well as eternal happiness, success and salvation of our society."

Despite initial promises of a more moderate rule than during their previous stint in power in the 1990s, the Taliban have imposed harsh measures since seizing Afghanistan in August 2021 as U.S. and NATO forces were pulling out.

The Taliban have also barred women from public spaces, like parks and gyms, and cracked down on media freedoms. The measures have triggered a fierce international uproar, increasing the country's isolation at a time when its economy has collapsed — and worsening a humanitarian crisis.

Akhundzada reiterated his call for other countries to stop interfering in internal affairs, and said that the main goal of the Taliban struggle was implementing Islamic law in Afghanistan. MDT/AP

BRAZIL

Brasilia's welcome of Russian minister prompts US blowback

CARLA BRIDI & AAMER MADHANI, BRASILIA

RUSSIA'S Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov yesterday [Macau time] expressed gratitude to Brazil for its approach in pushing for an end to hostilities in Ukraine — an effort that has irked both Kyiv and the West, and by afternoon prompted an unusually sharp rebuke from the White House.

Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has refused to provide weapons to Ukraine while proposing a club of nations including Brazil and China to mediate peace.

On Sunday, Lula told reporters in Abu Dhabi that two nations — both Russia and Ukraine — had decided to go to war, and a day earlier in Beijing said the U.S. must stop “stimulating” the continued fighting and start discussing peace. Earlier this month, he suggested Ukraine could cede Crimea to end the war, which the spokesperson for Ukraine's foreign ministry, Oleg Nikolenko, and others rejected.

After meeting Brazil's foreign minister, Lavrov told reporters in a short press conference that the West has engaged in “a rather tough struggle” to maintain its dominance in world affairs, including economics and geopolitics.

“As for the process in Ukraine, we are grateful to our Brazilian friends for their excellent understanding of this situation's genesis. We are grateful (to them) for striving to contribute to finding ways to settle it,” Lavrov said, sitting alongside his Brazilian counterpart, Mauro Vieira.

Lula's recent comments, particularly ascribing any blame to Ukraine for Russia's invasion in Feb. 2022, run counter to the position held by the European Union, the U.S. and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. And any talk of a ceasefire is viewed as an opportunity for Russia to regroup its forces for a new offensive. Zelenskyy told The Associated Press last month that a loss anywhere at this stage in the war could put Ukraine's hard-fought momentum at risk.



Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov arrives to Itamaraty Palace in Brasilia

Vieira, for his part, told reporters that Brazil sees sanctions against Russia as causing negative impacts for the global economy, particularly developing nations, and that Brazil supports an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine.

Following the meeting, National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby blasted Brazil's approach to the war and for its officials having met Lavrov and Russia's Vladimir Putin in person, while thus far only speaking to Ukrainian officials by phone.

“Brazil has substantively and rhetorically approached this issue by suggesting that the United States and Europe are somehow not interested in peace or that we share responsibility for the war,” Kirby told reporters in Washington. “In this case, Brazil is parroting Russian propaganda without at all looking at the facts.”

Kirby said the Biden administration hoped Lula and others will urge the Russians “to cease the bombing of Ukrainian cities, hospitals and schools, halt the war crimes and the atrocities and, quite frankly, to pull back Russian forces from Ukraine.”

Both foreign ministers were meeting with Lula in the afternoon.

As part of his effort to end the war, Lula also has withheld munitions to Ukraine, despite a request from Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Lula has said that sending supplies would mean Brazil entering the war, which he seeks to end.

His administration is seeking to simultaneously develop ties with China, Europe and the U.S. while keeping an open door to Russia. However, his recent remarks may have undermined his effort to secure these competing objectives, said Christopher Garman, managing director for the Americas at political risk consultancy Eurasia Group.

“It's not a good look, when you have the Russian chancellor side by side, and it's the Russian position,” Garman said by phone. “The optics do diminish Brazil's credibility as an independent arbiter, but I think that the import is larger precisely because of the current storms that Lula stoked with his comments in China and the UAE.”

There were already indications that Moscow had appreciated Lula's stance. One of roughly 50 leaked classified documents on the platform Discord that have been viewed by the AP said that, as of late February,

Russia's foreign affairs ministry supported Lula's plan to establish a club of supposedly impartial mediators, as it “would reject the West's ‘aggressor-victim’ paradigm.” The item cited electronic surveillance as the source.

Critics have argued that Brazil's position aims to avoid confronting a key supplier of fertilizer for its soybean plantations, exports from which are largely destined for China. Both Russia and China hold permanent seats on the U.N. Security Council, and Brazil for decades has sought to join them. Lavrov told reporters that Russia is backing Brazil's bid.

Vinicius Vieira, an international relations professor at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, a university and think tank, said Lula's comments on Ukraine have been “badly calibrated” and that saying Kyiv should cede Crimea would appear to favor Russia.

“The issue of fertilizers is fundamental, but that would be well resolved with Brazil staying neutral, calling all sides to speak, but without saying Ukraine owes something to Russia,” Vieira said.

After his stay in Brazil, Lavrov will travel to Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1993 WACO CULT SIEGE ENDS WITH INFERNO



At least 70 people are feared to have died in a fire at the besieged headquarters of the Branch Davidian sect near Waco, Texas.

The fate of the cult's leader, David Koresh, is still unknown.

The White House said the blaze had been started deliberately by those inside after the FBI began a dawn assault.

Tear gas canisters and stun grenades were fired into the cult's compound and an armoured vehicle moved in to demolish the walls.

Three hours later they broke down the main entrance.

At one point reports said the cult members had agreed to come out but then reneged on the deal.

When the fire started at around 1200 local time (1800GMT) several children were believed to be inside with David Koresh and his followers.

By the time firefighters arrived the fire had taken a firm hold on wooden buildings inside the compound.

The fire worsened when the cult's store of munitions exploded.

Eight cult members escaped but David Koresh is not believed to be among them.

The cult's buildings been surrounded since February when four agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) were killed as they attempted to arrest Mr Koresh on firearms charges.

It was hoped Mr Koresh would give himself up last week but he sent FBI agents a message saying he had not yet received his orders from God.

The Branch Davidians descend from a breakaway group from the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

President Bill Clinton said yesterday he had advanced warning of the assault on the compound.

But the president added that newly-appointed Attorney-General Janet Reno made the decision to begin the operation.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Approximately 77 cult members, including David Koresh, died in the fire.

Some cult members, including David Koresh, were found to have died of gunshot wounds.

The FBI was criticised for what were seen as heavy-handed tactics to end the siege and newly-appointed Attorney General Janet Reno was forced to defend her decision to use tanks and tear gas.

In January 1994 11 surviving Branch Davidians were put on trial.

They were all cleared of the most serious charges relating to the deaths of the four government agents.

Five were convicted on the lesser charge of voluntary manslaughter.

In July 2000 a government-appointed investigator cleared the FBI of any blame in starting the fire after hiring a specialist firm to stage a re-enactment.

In September of the same year a \$675m (£433m) claim against the US Government by relatives of those who died and survivors was thrown out by a judge.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Take the initiative and go after your goals. Driving too fast or double parking will result in difficulties with officials. Situations you can't change should be forgotten for the present.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Renovations or purchases made for your home will payoff. Help if you can, but more than likely it will be sufficient just to listen. Try to avoid any drastic decisions concerning personal legal matters.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Be inquisitive about unfamiliar circumstances. Don't overreact to someone's advances. You must use discretion when talking to others. Gambling should not be an option.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You will be able to make changes regarding your living arrangements. Don't make large purchases or investments. Develop some of your good ideas.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Get out and enjoy some entertainment. Check your personal papers and make sure everything is in order. Work quietly behind the scenes for best results.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Don't let relatives get the better of you. Concentrate on spending quality time with children and friends. Moves will be hectic but favorable in the end.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Make sure that you have all the pertinent facts before taking action. Be fair, not colorful. Self-deception is likely. You can make rewarding connections through the organized groups you associate with.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Romantic encounters will develop through colleagues. You may find out that someone is trying to undermine you. Matters pertaining to work must be completed before you leave.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Try not to push your philosophies on others. Opportunities for love will develop while traveling or while attending religious functions. Set aside any decisions regarding your personal life today.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Get involved in competitive sports. Friends will appreciate your attention and playful nature. You can enjoy your involvement in organizations that make charitable contributions.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Don't do something silly just to get back at your mate. Don't hesitate to sign up for creative courses or physical fitness programs. You can make positive changes in your home.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
You can make wonderful contributions to any organization that you join. Cultural activities will prove to be quite enlightening for everyone. Enjoy some socializing today.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

	5					1		
3		2						
		7	8					
						7	4	
				6		2		
	1			3				
	2	4						
7						8		
						1		

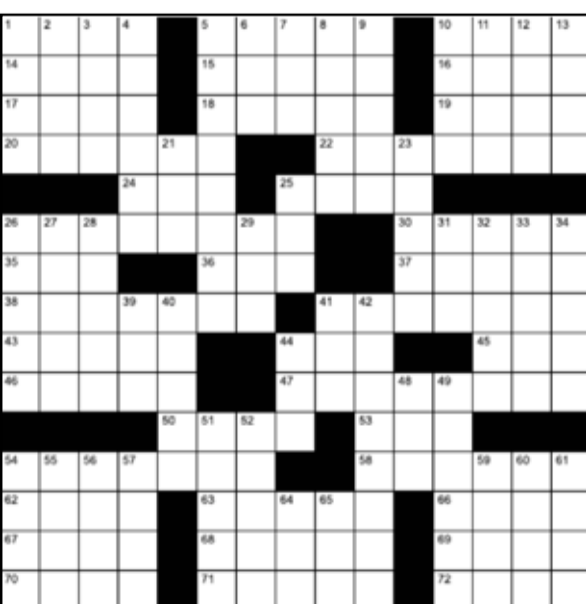
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	10	27	cloudy
Changchun	5	23	cloudy
Chengdu	19	31	rain
Chongqing	20	32	fine
Fuzhou	22	26	rain
Guangzhou	23	27	rain
Guiyang	15	28	cloudy
Haikou	26	35	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	20	23	rain
Harbin	5	20	fine
Hefei	19	29	cloudy
Nanjing	17	28	cloudy
Shanghai	18	24	rain
Taipei	20	25	rain
Wuhan	18	30	cloudy
Hong Kong	24	27	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	5	17	overcast
Frankfurt	4	15	overcast
Paris	7	19	overcast
London	6	14	overcast
New York	9	18	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Raw materials; 5- Broadcast; 10- Ella specialty; 14- List from which to choose; 15- With cunning; 16- Timber wolf; 17- Take ___ from me; 18- Unsoiled; 19- Spicy stew; 20- Night flight; 22- Enticed; 24- Sprinted; 25- Capone's nemesis; 26- Republic in SE Asia; 30- Passed out; 35- Reproductive cells; 36- Biblical verb ending; 37- Brown-furred aquatic carnivorous mammal; 38- Underwater missile; 41- Waterfall; 43- Roofing items; 44- Former nuclear agcy.; 45- Bigger than med.; 46- Take as one's own; 47- Linseed; 50- Bridge seat; 53- Gidget portrayer Sandra; 54- Australian shrub; 58- Bars legally; 62- Olive genus; 63- Water vapor; 66- Faux pas; 67- Oil of ___; 68- Actress Palmer; 69- Mogul capital until 1658; 70- Defense grp. since 1949; 71- ___ Gay; 72- Makes brown;

DOWN 1- "A Jug of Wine..." poet; 2- Network of nerves; 3- Geraint's lady; 4- Majestic; 5- Climbed; 6- Out of sorts; 7- Cereal grass; 8- Delight; 9- Units of force; 10- Swill; 11- Young male horse; 12- Fully qualified; 13- Tailless amphibian; 21- Center Ming; 23- Windows predecessor; 25- Slang refusal; 26- Terra ___; 27- Evade; 28- Danny's daughter; 29- How was ___ know?; 31- List-ending abbr.; 32- ___ of Two Cities; 33- Flat shelf; 34- Cornered; 39- Vim; 40- Adlai's running mate; 41- Animation unit; 42- Professors, collectively; 44- P.m.; 48- Crosses (out); 49- Attacks; 51- Brides walk down it; 52- Glossy fabric; 54- Blessing; 55- ___ breve; 56- Cool; 57- Deck; 59- Gymnast Korbut; 60- Fishing reel; 61- Pampering places; 64- "Evil Woman" band; 65- The works;



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



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

有關樓宇廣告及查詢，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 13,988,000 4 beds 3 bath

Nova Park
HKD 9,900,000 2 beds 2 bath

Manhattan
HKD 18,800/mth 4 bed 2 bath

AD

HISTORY

JIMMY CARTER AND PLAYBOY: HOW 'THE WEIRDO FACTOR' ROCKED '76

BILL BARROW, PLAINS (GA.)

JIMMY Carter already had drawn months of media scrutiny as a devout Southern Baptist running for president. Then the 1976 Democratic nominee brought up sex and sin as he explained his religious faith to Playboy magazine.

Carter was not misquoted. But he was certainly misunderstood, as his thoughts in the wide-ranging interview were reduced in the popular imagination to utterances about “lust” and “adultery.”

Nearly a half-century later, as the 98-year-old Carter receives hospice care in the same south-Georgia home where he once spoke with Playboy journalists, interviewer Robert Scheer still believes Carter was treated unfairly. He recalls the former president as a “real” and “serious” figure whose intent was smothered by the intensity of a campaign’s closing stretch.

“Jimmy Carter was a thoughtful guy,” Scheer, now 87, told The Associated Press. “But that got lost here. I’ve never seen a story like it. It was worldwide. ... It just never went away.”

Political disaster ensued. Rosalynn Carter was suddenly being asked whether she trusted her husband. The fallout, in Carter’s words, “nearly cost me the election.”

Carter spent five-plus hours with Playboy across several months — “more time with you than with Time, Newsweek and all the others combined,” the nominee told Scheer and Playboy editor Barry Golson.

The resulting Q&A spanned 12,000 words, and Scheer added thousands more in an accompanying story. Carter discussed military and foreign policy, racism and civil rights, political journalism and his reputation as a “vague” candidate.

“They weren’t interested in sensationalized stuff,” Scheer said of Playboy.

Hugh Hefner’s iconic publication reached an estimated 20 million-plus readers each month with its pictorials of nude women. But the magazine chronicled American culture as well, with its branded “Playboy Interview” featuring such power players as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., John Lennon, Malcom X and leading newsmen Walter Cronkite.

Carter, unafraid of nuance, proved he belonged among them, Scheer said.

The nominee’s most-remembered comments came at the end of their final session. Standing outside Carter’s front door, Gol-

AP PHOTO



Democratic presidential nominee Jimmy Carter speaks to reporters on his arrival at Hobby International Airport in Houston on Friday, Sept. 24, 1976

son pressed Carter on whether his piety would make him a “rigid, unbending president” unable to represent all Americans.

The Baptist deacon responded with an 823-word soliloquy on human imperfection, pride and God’s forgiveness. He said he believed in “absolute and total separation of church and state” and explained his faith as rooted in humility, not judgment of others.

Quoting Matthew 5:27-28, Carter explained that Jesus Christ considered an offending thought equivalent to consummated adultery, and by that standard, he was in no position to judge a man who “shacks up” and “screws lots of women,” because he had “looked on many women with lust” and, thus, “committed adultery many times in my heart.”

Scheer called it a “sensible statement,” reflecting Carter’s Baptist tradition: “He was saying, look, I’m not going to be some fanatic. ... I’m not this perfect guy.”

Playboy realized Carter provided explosive material — and not just about sex. Citing President Lyndon Johnson’s handling of Vietnam, Carter included the last Democratic president alongside disgraced Republican Richard Nixon as guilty of “lying, cheating and distorting the truth.”

The magazine decided to send the full Q&A text to about 1,000 media outlets in late September, ahead of the usual October publication date for the November edition.

The idea, Scheer explained,

was to allow time for fair coverage rather than drop bombshells days before the election.

Headline writers, satirists and late-night television pounced anyway, labeling it Carter’s “lust in my heart” interview. “Saturday Night Live,” then a fledgling NBC sketch comedy show, had a field day. One political cartoonist depicted Carter lusting after the Statue of Liberty.

He lamented to NPR in 1993 that the Playboy interview morphed into “the No. 1 story of the entire 1976 campaign.”

Headline writers, satirists and late-night television pounced, labeling it Carter’s ‘lust in my heart’ interview

“I was explaining Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount,” Carter wrote wistfully in a 2015 memoir.

As a candidate, Carter’s faith had endeared him to many fellow white evangelicals and cultural conservatives. That made him a difficult foil for Republicans, who wanted to cast Democrats as out-of-step with most of America. The flip side, Scheer noted, was the many young voters and urban liberals — key Democratic constituencies — who “wondered if he was this Southern square.”

“Hamilton Jordan (Carter’s campaign manager) had always called Carter’s faith ‘the weirdo factor,’” said media historian Am-

ber Roessner, a University of Tennessee professor who has written extensively on Carter. “Talking to Playboy was their way to prove he wasn’t some kind of prude.”

Scheer, who was with Carter as part of his traveling press corps, said Playboy’s early text release sparked a frenzy.

“Reporters were scrambling, asking me, ‘Bob, what is this?’” he recalled.

Traveling press focused initially on Carter’s criticism of Johnson, who had died in 1973. It was a juicy detail because Carter was headed Texas to campaign with Johnson’s widow.

Carter initially told reporters he was taken out of context. Scheer “ran back to the plane to get the tapes,” and effectively caught the nominee violating his pledge never to make a “misleading statement.”

Lady Bird Johnson skipped Carter’s Texas events, Scheer said. Carter apologized to her by telephone.

When his commentary on adultery ballooned, Carter insisted the exchange had been off-the-record, throwaway banter as Scheer and Golson prepared to leave.

“He was still wearing the mic!” Scheer told AP.

The way the story morphed “ended up making Carter seem like a creep,” Roessner said.

Rosalynn Carter fashioned a pat response: “Jimmy talks too much, but at least people know he’s honest and doesn’t mind answering questions.” And, no, she never worried about his fidelity.

“The only lust I worried about was that of the press,” she wrote in 1984, recounting how her discipline finally cracked when a reporter asked whether she ever committed adultery.

“If I had,” she replied, “I wouldn’t tell you.”

Ford, who had been gaining on Carter but still trailed badly, leveraged the story. The Republican president was an Episcopalian, soft-spoken about religion, but he invited leading evangelical pastors to the White House the day after the interview’s release, including the Rev. W.S. Criswell of Dallas First Baptist Church.

Criswell later declared from his pulpit that he had asked Ford: “Mr. President, if Playboy magazine were to ask you for an interview, what would you do?” Ford’s reply, according to Criswell: “I was asked by Playboy magazine for an interview — and I declined with an emphatic ‘No!’”

Thousands of his parishioners roared.

The Rev. Billy Graham, the nation’s top evangelist, and the Rev. Jerry Falwell, the rising leader of the so-called Religious Right, also blitzed Carter. National media, including The AP, highlighted criticism from Christian pastors from around the country.

Roessner, the daughter of a Protestant pastor, said Carter’s Playboy comments were clumsy, “but if anyone should have understood the context ... it should have been the ministers.”

She recalled Carter’s resentment during a 2014 interview she conducted with him. Decades of global humanitarian work had by that time afforded the former president a profile above politics, yet “almost 40 years later, it was clearly something he held on to,” she said. He was “still incredibly frustrated by what he felt was unfair coverage and response.”

The 1976 campaign was the first after Nixon’s resignation, driven by reporting from The Washington Post, and many journalists were demonstrating a new level of distrust of politicians, especially one Scheer described as “wearing his religion on his sleeve.”

Those same news organizations largely ignored what the soon-to-be president said about them, Roessner noted.

“The traveling press have zero interest in any issue unless it’s a matter of making a mistake,” Carter told Playboy. “There’s nobody in the back of this plane who would ask an issue question unless he thought he could trick me into some crazy statement.”

Scheer, at least, asked plenty of policy questions, and, looking back, he pointed to Carter’s narrow victory just weeks later.

“Whatever they said, I think it did exactly what they wanted to accomplish,” Scheer said. “That doesn’t mean they weren’t nervous.” **MDT/AP**

ATHLETICS

Boston Marathon debuts nonbinary division

CAL Calamia waited extra long to run the Boston Marathon. Being able to enter as a nonbinary athlete made it worth the delay.

"To be able to do it in this way, in this category, makes it so much more special," said Calamia, who had hoped to run in 2020, when the race was canceled because of COVID-19, and in 2021, when Calamia was sidelined by a soccer injury. "Knowing how much work has gone into getting this category – in a way, that was already a win."

Calamia, 26, of San Francisco, advocated for the new division and ran with a transgender flag patch on their singlet. Twenty-seven runners registered as nonbinary; Calamia was



second to Kae Ravichandran of Vermont, who finished in 02:38:57.

Spectators who recognized Calamia from pre-race news coverage shouted encouragement.

"All over the place," they said. "I heard people shouting my name and I didn't even know who they were."

The next goal, Calamia

said: prize money for the nonbinary division. The men's and women's winners — Evans Chebet and Hellen Obiri — received \$150,000 apiece; wheelchair, masters and para divisions also receive payouts.

"It doesn't have to be, like, Evans Chebet money," they said.

The Chicago Marathon added a nonbinary division in the fall. So has the London Marathon, which is Sunday.

"I just hope it grows," Calamia said. "We're here. Trans people are here. We're not going anywhere. I hope other races continue to add this category." MDT/AP

BASKETBALL

CHINA CLUBS DISQUALIFIED FOR MATCH-FIXING

TWO clubs have been kicked out of China's basketball league amid suspicions of match-fixing.

The ruling came after the Chinese Basketball Association judged the Jiangsu Dragons and Shanghai Sharks engaged in unsportsmanlike conduct during a playoff series last week.

They will also be suspended from this year's regular season, fined the equivalent of \$5 million, and have their managers and coaching staff barred from the league for up to five years.

Fan and media attention was drawn to a last-minute, come-from-behind win by Shanghai following a series of turnovers in the last of their three games to reach the quarterfinals.

In Friday's Game 3 of the first round of the playoffs, the Jiangsu Dragons led the Shanghai Sharks 100-96 with 1 minute, 36 seconds left to play.

The Dragons then committed five straight turnovers over the next minute, giving the Sharks a 10-point lead. The game ended in a 108-104 win for Shanghai and a 2-1 victory in the series, sending the Sharks into the quarters.

The CBA, headed by NBA great Yao Ming, announced on Saturday it wanted reports from both teams on their conduct during the series.

Basketball remains enormously popular in China, mostly because of Yao's storied NBA career. Basketball remains enormously popular in China, mostly because of Yao's storied NBA career. That's despite a year-long ban on NBA games being shown in the country after a team executive angered Beijing with remarks supporting Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement. MDT/AP

現在發售 NOW ON SALE

生活藝術雜誌 LIVING & ARTS MAGAZINE

MACAUCLOSER

體育先機
A SPORTING CHANCE

憑藉優越的地理位置和先進完備的設施，澳門有鑒成為亞洲地區的一個主要體育重鎮

WITH ITS GREAT LOCATION AND IMPRESSIVE FACILITIES, MACAU COULD STILL BECOME A MAJOR SPORTING HUB IN THE REGION

生活藝術雜誌 LIVING & ARTS MAGAZINE
MACAUCLOSER

The Roadhouse Macau
WELCOMES YOU!

FREE
Limo Service
from 5PM
(Tues-Sun)

WE DELIVER!

FOOD / DRINKS / LIVE MUSIC

THE ROADHOUSE MACAU, R/C, SHOP E-G016-G019, BROADWAY HOTEL, ROTUNDA DO DIQUE DESTE, TAIPA

@theroadhousemacau PLEASE CALL US AT: 2875 2945 FOR RESERVATIONS

OPINION

World Views

Howard Manly, The Conversation



**YET ANOTHER CASE OF
 MISHANDLING CLASSIFIED
 DOCUMENTS AND
 ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF
 THE ESPIONAGE ACT**

The stunning arrest of 21-year-old Massachusetts Air National Guardsman Jack Teixeira on charges of illegally sharing U.S. intelligence has once again renewed questions on the handling of classified documents.

Since the discovery a decade ago of top-secret documents leaked by Edward Snowden, questions on the vulnerability of the nation's most sensitive intelligence were only intensified after a variety of classified papers were found earlier this year in the possession of former U.S. President Donald Trump at his home at Mar-a-Lago in Florida.

Teixeira is accused of the "alleged unauthorized removal, retention and transmission of classified national defense information." He has not entered a plea as yet to the charges involving the leaking of U.S. intelligence, including documents on Russian efforts in Ukraine and spying on U.S. allies.

The charges carry a maximum penalty of up to 15 years in prison.

Over the years, The Conversation U.S. has published numerous stories exploring the nature of classified documents – and how different motivations play a part in an individual's decision to mishandle the nation's secrets. Here are selections from those articles.

Before coming to academia, Jeffrey Fields worked for many years as an analyst at both the State Department and the Department of Defense.

In general, Fields writes, classified information is "the kind of material that the U.S. government or an agency deems sensitive enough to national security that access to it must be controlled and restricted."

Of the three levels of classification, a "confidential" designation is the lowest and contains information whose release could damage U.S. national security, Fields explains.

The next level is "secret" and refers to information whose disclosure could cause "serious" damage to U.S. national security.

The most serious designation is "top secret" and means disclosure of the document could cause "exceptionally grave" damage to national security.

On April 14, 2023, U.S. prosecutors charged Teixeira in connection with violations of the Espionage Act.

Joseph Ferguson and Thomas A. Durkin are both attorneys who specialize in and teach national security law. They explain the Espionage Act.

Typically, violations of the act apply to the unauthorized gathering, possessing or transmitting of certain sensitive government information and fall under 18 U.S.C. section 793.

Ferguson and Durkin also urge patience before rendering judgment on any case involving violations of the Espionage Act, in part because of the classified nature of the potential evidence and the risk that further exposure would have on U.S. national security.

"The Espionage Act is serious and politically loaded business," they write. "These cases are controversial and complicated in ways that counsel patience and caution before reaching conclusions."

Cassandra Burke Robertson is a scholar of legal ethics who has studied ethical decision-making in the political sphere.

She points out that criminal prosecutions alone may not be the only way to prevent the flow of classified information.

It all depends on an individual's motivation.

But unlike Snowden, Reality Leigh Winner or Chelsea Manning, Teixeira does not appear to have wanted to right a perceived wrong or become what is known as a whistleblower.

In cases where the motive is unclear, Robertson suggests that a potential deterrent is establishing a workplace environment that encourages employees to bring potential ethical and legal violations to an internal authority for review.

Known as internal whistleblowing, such actions may prove effective in not only protecting classified information from reaching the public but also prevent another national security embarrassment.

China's foreign minister told his Israeli and Palestinian counterparts that his country is ready to help facilitate peace talks between the two sides, in its latest effort at mediation in the region.

In separate phone calls to the two officials, Qin Gang expressed China's concern over intensifying tensions between Israel and Palestinians and its support for a resumption of peace talks, the Foreign Ministry said in statements issued yesterday [Macau time].

Last month, Saudi Arabia and Iran reached a deal in China to restore diplomatic ties that were cut off in 2016. It was a dramatic moment of diplomacy for China that Beijing touted as evidence of its

ability to be a diplomatic player in the Middle East.

Qin stressed in his talks with Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen that Saudi Arabia and Iran have set a good example of overcoming differences through dialogue, a statement about that phone call said.

He told Cohen that Beijing encourages Israel and the Palestinians to show political courage and take steps to resume peace talks. "China is willing to provide convenience for this," he was quoted as saying.

Israel and the Palestinians have not held substantive peace talks on ending the century-long conflict in over a decade.



**CBC 'PAUSING' TWITTER
 AFTER 'GOVERNMENT-
 FUNDED MEDIA' LABEL**

ROB GILLIES, TORONTO

THE Canadian Broadcasting Corporation paused its use of Twitter yesterday [Macau time] after the social media platform owned by Elon Musk stamped CBC's account with a label the public broadcaster says is intended to undermine its credibility.

Twitter labelled CBC/Radio-Canada "government-funded media" — the same label that prompted National Public Radio in the U.S. to similarly quit Twitter last Wednesday.

"Twitter can be a powerful tool for our journalists to communicate with Canadians, but it undermines the accuracy and professionalism of the work they do to allow our independence to be falsely described in this way," CBC spokesman Leon Mar said in a statement announcing the change Monday afternoon.

"Consequently, we will be pausing our activity on our corporate Twitter account and all CBC and Radio-Canada news-related accounts," the statement said.

CBC has sent a letter to Twitter asking the company to re-examine the designation. Musk later tweeted about it and changed it to "69 percent Government-funded media."

CBC does not meet those criteria, Mar argued, because it is publicly funded through a parliamentary appropriation that is voted upon by all members of Parliament, and its editorial independence is protected in law in the Broadcasting Act.

The CBC's board of directors determines how the funding it receives is spent. In 2021-22, the CBC received more than \$1.2 billion Canadian (US\$900 million) in government funding.

Opposition Conservative Party of Canada Pierre Poilievre had urged Twitter to label CBC. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau criticized Poilievre for what he called an "attack on a foundational Canadian institution."

Twitter initially had labelled NPR's main account as "state-affiliated media," a term also used to identify media outlets controlled or heavily influenced by authoritarian governments, such as Russia and China. Twitter later changed the label to "government-funded media," but to NPR — which relies on the government for a tiny fraction of its funding — it's still misleading.

Twitter earlier responded to a request for comment about why the label was applied and whether it would be removed or

changed with an auto-generated email bearing a poop emoji.

Twitter, more than any of its rivals, has said its users come to it to keep track of current events. That made it an attractive place for news outlets to share their stories and reinforced Twitter's moves to combat the spread of misinformation. But Musk has long expressed disdain for professional journalists and said he wants to elevate the views and expertise of the "average citizen."

Musk has also abruptly suspended the accounts of individual journalists who wrote about Twitter late last year, claiming some were trying to reveal his location.

Twitter earlier in April removed the verification check mark on the main account of The New York Times, singling out the newspaper and disparaging its reporting after it said it would not pay Twitter for verification of its institutional accounts.

Twitter also used to tag journalists and other high-profile accounts with blue check marks to verify their identity and distinguish them from impostors. But Musk has derided the marks as an undesired status symbol and plans to take them away from anyone not buying a premium subscription. **MDT/AP**



USA Elliot Mintz (pictured), a longtime insider with John Lennon and Yoko Ono, will release a memoir next year that will weave in behind-the-scenes moments with the famous couple. The U.S. publisher Dutton and British publisher Transworld announced the deal with Mintz, who first met Lennon and Ono in the early 1970s and remained close to Ono after Lennon's murder in 1980. The book is currently untitled.



Russian President Vladimir Putin visited command posts of the Kremlin's forces fighting in Ukraine, as the war approaches its 14th month and Kyiv readies a possible counteroffensive with Western-supplied weapons. A video released by the Kremlin and broadcast by state television showed Putin arriving by helicopter at the command post of Russian forces in southern Ukraine's Kherson province and then flying to the headquarters of the Russian National Guard in Luhansk province.

Iran's president yesterday reiterated threats against Israel while marking the country's annual Army Day, though he stayed away from criticizing Saudi Arabia as Tehran seeks a détente with the kingdom. The comments by Ebrahim Raisi came as fighter jets and helicopters flew overhead in Tehran, and as Iranian submarines sailed across its waters during a ceremony carried live by state television.

UK SNP treasurer Colin Beattie has been arrested by police investigating the party's finances, BBC reported yesterday. Beattie, 71, has been taken into custody and is being questioned by Police Scotland detectives. A spokesman for the force said the arrest was made in connection with the continuing investigation into the funding and finances of the SNP. It comes two weeks after former SNP chief executive Peter Murrell - Nicola Sturgeon's husband - was also arrested.