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electronics

THE DIGITAL IDENTITY GENERATED ON THE GOVERNMENT ONE ACCOUNT APP WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR BORDER CLEARANCE PURPOSES IN MACAU FROM TODAY

▲ P2

MACAU TO HOST ANOTHER EVENT AT THE YEAR'S END WITH WYNN MACAU SNOOKER MASTERS

▲ P4

CHINA DEMOGRAPHICS: OVER 5% OF WOMEN REMAIN CHILDLESS AT 49

▲ P8



AP PHOTO



NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said yesterday he has called a meeting of senior officials from Turkey, Sweden and Finland for July 6 to try to overcome Turkish objections to Sweden joining the military alliance. The meeting is a last-ditch effort by Stoltenberg to deal with one of the final obstacles to Sweden's membership before a major summit the following week. Sweden's membership would be a highly symbolic moment and another indication of how Russia's war in Ukraine is driving countries to join the Western alliance.

AP PHOTO



EU Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg and will be key figures at the European Union summit, underscoring the importance the 27 EU leaders attach to protecting their eastern flank from Russian aggression and beefing up Ukraine's defense capabilities. Zelenskyy is set to address the gathering by video link and Stoltenberg will have an early lunch at the spring summit for leaders.

AP PHOTO



UNESCO's 193 members states are gathering for a two-day meeting in Paris aimed at voting on the United States' plans to rejoin the U.N. cultural and scientific agency after a decade-long dispute sparked by the organization's move to include Palestine as a member. The U.S. announced earlier this month, that it wanted to return, five years after it withdrew from the agency during the presidency of Donald Trump.

More on backpage

MDT ANALYSIS

U-TURN TRICK

Uncountable factors play a role in tourism statistics, including job-seeking 'tourists' that U-turn while waiting for permits



REAL ESTATE

NORTHBOUND VEHICLE POLICY IMPACTS BOTH COMMERCIAL, RESIDENTIAL MARKETS

▲ P3



IPIM TO SHOWCASE PRODUCTS FROM LUSOPHONE COUNTRIES IN UPCOMING EXPO

The Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) will set up the "PSC Mart – Portuguese-speaking Countries Products and Services Experience Zone" at the 11th Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo (MITE), where 20 Macau enterprises will exhibit and market featured products from Portuguese-speaking countries and Macau. Pavilions and platforms will be showcased at the venue to facilitate the development of SMEs in Macau by "leveraging the MICE+ Tourism synergy." This is the fourth consecutive year that the IPIM has set up an exhibition zone at MITE, which will be held from June 30 to July 2.

EXPORT UP SLIGHTLY TO MOP1.2B

Total merchandise exports amounted to MOP1.17 billion in May 2023, up by 2.6% year-on-year. The value of re-exports (MOP1.02 billion) rose by 3.8%, of which re-exports of items for casino and beauty, cosmetic and skincare products skyrocketed by 3,348.2% and 56.3% respectively. Last month, exports of diamond and diamond jewelry, and garments dropped by 56.4% and 31.7% respectively, data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) shows. From January to May this year, the total value of merchandise exports dropped by 16.6% year-on-year to MOP5.18 billion.

MPU AMONG FINALISTS FOR THE AWARDS ASIA 2023

The Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) was one of the eight finalists for the Award of "Excellence and Innovation in the Arts" in The Times Higher Education (THE) Awards Asia 2023 held recently. MPU created the project "Sensory Ethnography in Arts Programme: A Journey of Experimenters in Promoting Cultural and Creative Arts through Media Technology," promoting mainstream Chinese culture and the multicultural arts education in Macau through the integration of sensory ethnography into education in the arts. Through lectures, experimental practices and exhibitions, the learning platform has successfully transformed art experiences and media technologies into 13 experimental projects that have promoted the city's cultural creativity.

XINHUA



ONE ACCOUNT

DIGITAL IDENTITY ELIGIBLE FOR THOSE LEAVING MACAU FROM TODAY

ANTHONY LAM

THE digital identity generated on the government One Account app will be available for border clearance purposes in Macau from today, the government announced at a press conference yesterday morning.

Chao Wai leng, director of the Identification Services Bureau (DSI), disclosed that all Macau ID holders – about 740,000 of them – will be eligible to use the new functionality from today at six local border checkpoints. The checkpoints include the Border Gate, the Outer Harbour, the Inner Harbour, the Taipa Maritime Terminal, the airport and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge towards Hong Kong.

To use the new function, users must update the app on their devices.

Parents will also be able to bind their children's digital identities to their app for use in various circumstances.

Macau permanent ID holders with a Chinese or Portuguese nationality must use their physi-

cal ID cards to enter Hong Kong, the DSI director stated.

Explaining why the digital identity cannot be used at the Qingmao Border checkpoint and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge to Zhuhai, the DSI director reiterated the fact that juxtaposed border clearance facilities are installed at these checkpoints. Further negotiations with mainland authorities are needed to determine the feasibility of using digital identity at these checkpoints.

Adding to that, Ng Sou Peng, deputy commander of the Public Security Police Force (PSP), the juxtaposed facilities are shared between Guangdong and Macau, so their operations must comply with the laws of both jurisdictions.

Not to be confused with the digital identity card, the government has been emphasizing that the digital identity takes the form of a QR code on a designated section on the One Account app. To ensure its security, the DSI has introduced several anti-counterfeiting features on the

page of the function.

These functions include watermarked texts, continually updated times, a dynamic ID number, date and time, dynamic stripes, as well as a regularly updated QR code. It is this code that will facilitate users' border clearance in Macau.

Moreover, the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP) announced in a statement yesterday that a new password will be introduced to access the digital identity function and the My Health function on the One Account app to raise the security level of the app.

When users pick the functions, a prompt will appear to ask them to set a password. They will have the options to set a password or skip the procedure. They will also be allowed to reset the password if it is forgotten.

During the first-phase release of the function, all public service offices will accept the QR code for application procedures. According to Chao, this will help eradicate the need for form filling and save time. Counter

staff will use the QR code to access personal data stored on the DSI server to achieve a result similar to form filling.

Besides public services offices, certain private services will also accept the digital identity for verification purposes. These services include online bank account opening, password reset, loan application, cellphone service applications, internet service applications, among other services.

The China Travel Service will also start accepting the digital identity for bookings to renew the Home-Traveling ID.

From Aug. 1, the new function will be applicable to private medical arenas that accept medical vouchers. In September, its application will be expanded to private education spaces that operate government-subsidized continuing education programs, where check-in and outs with ID cards are mandatory.

The DSI director also disclosed that the new version of the Macau ID will be rolled out from Dec. 15.

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REAL ESTATE

Northbound vehicle policy impacts both commercial and residential markets

ANTHONY LAM

THE Northbound Travel for Macau Vehicle policy has negatively affected both the commercial and residential realty markets, a regional realtor disclosed in a statement yesterday.

Local businesses, especially caterers, have voiced their difficulties amid the roll-out of the policy. They noted that many local residents choose to dine in Guangdong on weekends. Several social media groups have also seen posts praising the breadth and quality of dining options in neighboring Zhuhai, persuading people to eat in Zhuhai instead.

Jack Lei, regional sales director of the commercial sector at Centaline Property in Macau stated that amid revivals in the real property market after the resumption of normal travel, the northbound vehicle policy has impacted rental prices in traditional residential districts such



as the North and the Fai Chi Kei districts.

According to him, larger shop spaces suitable for hospitality

and dining in these districts have seen their tenants requesting rental reductions between 15% and 20%. There has also been an in-

crease in the sales of businesses and number of shop spaces being re-leased.

Shop sale prices in such districts have also seen a price reduction of 10% on average, incentivizing more people to buy instead of rent. Selling prices of shops in tourism districts stayed robust, and when combined with weak supply, sale transactions have been slim in number.

The realtor estimated that 131 transactions on the sale of shop spaces were recorded in the first half of the year, 16% lower year-on-year. Meanwhile, there were about 1,500 deals closed in the first half of this year for shop leases, with tourism districts seeing the highest activity.

Office spaces should expect tougher challenges as government offices will gradually be relocated to private spaces, the realtor warned.

In the residential market, properties in the traditional residential districts have seen a falling

number of transactions, Jimmy Lo, senior regional sales director said. He estimated the city would see about 1,800 residential property sales in the first six months of the year.

The rental market for residential properties has warmed up with about 15% to 20% in rentals, as external workers and businesspeople started returning to Macau.

Discounts offered for brand-new residential properties have attracted many buyers to opt for new constructions. The market of large residential properties has remained weak, the realtor added.

Looking towards mainland China, Roys Ho, principal director for the realtor's Hengqin branch, expects the mainland property markets to only thrive in first-tier and strong second-tier cities, as well as special policy regions. Property markets in Zhuhai have a better forecast due to various supportive policies, he added.

AD

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FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY DOES NOT RULE OUT INSPECTING FOOD IMPORTS FROM JAPAN

As Japan considers disposing of allegedly nuclear-contaminated water from Fukushima into the nearby ocean, stricter measures will be implemented on fresh and live food from the city, O Lam, vice president of the Municipal Affairs Bureau's Administrative Council, has said during a recent municipal affairs meeting. The official did not rule out the possibility of conducting sampled inspections on all food imported from Japan. Earlier, the official disclosed that once the water is disposed of, the bar on imports will be expanded to nine major prefectures.

HOTEL GUEST NUMBER LEAPS 140% Y-O-Y MAY

A total of 1,104,000 guests checked in Macau's hotel establishments in May, leaping 140.3% year on year, the statistics department said on Wednesday. The latest Statistics and Census Service report showed that guests from the Chinese mainland and the Hong Kong SAR jumped by 133.0% and 818.3% year on year to 793,000 and 199,000, respectively. The average occupancy rate of guest rooms in May rose by 44.6 percentage points year on year to 78.9%, showed the report. The number of visitors arriving on package tours totaled 79,000 in May.

ARTS & CULTURE

GOV'T TO MOVE PROGRAMS PLANNED FOR OLD COURT BUILDING TO NEW BLACK BOX THEATER

RENATO MARQUES

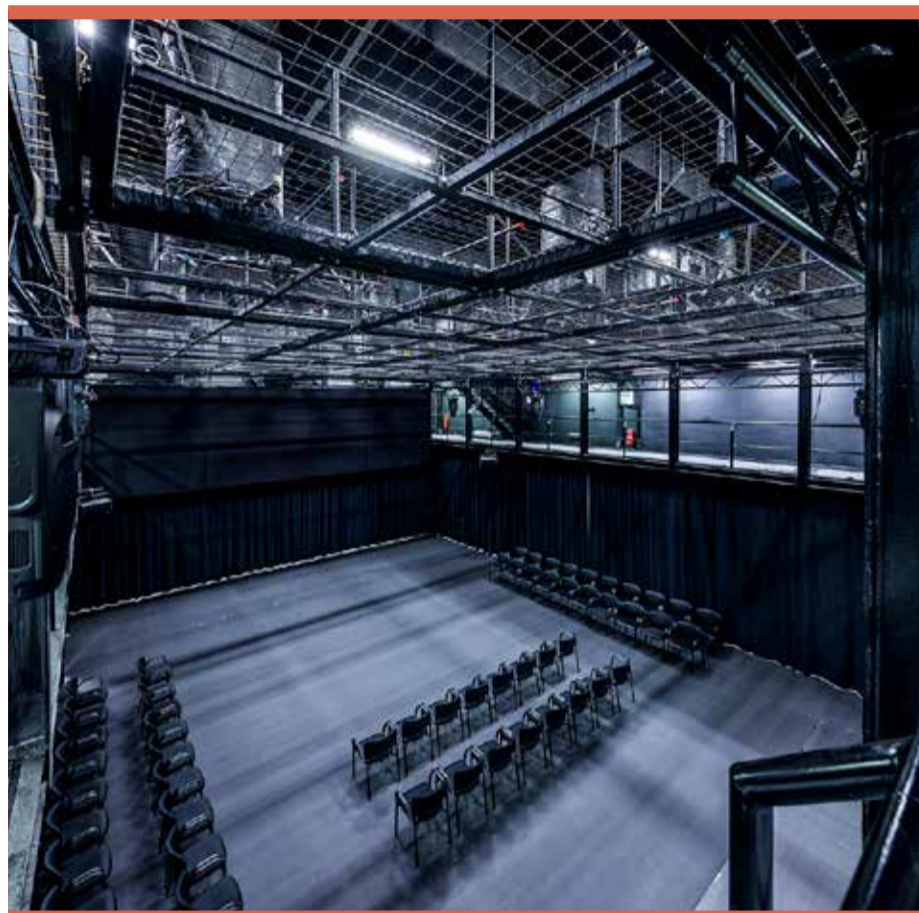
DUE to open during the first half of next month, the Black Box Theatre of the Macao Cultural Centre (CCM) will showcase all performances already scheduled for the Old Court Building space, the president of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), Deland Leong, announced during Wednesday's plenary meeting of the Cultural Development Consultative Committee.

During the meeting, Leong stated that as the new space at the CCM is ready and will open its doors soon, the IC decided to move the programs of the groups and companies that have had already rented the space at the Old Court to the brand-new venue. The aim is to provide better conditions and more

capacity for audiences since the theatre includes two multi-function rooms with a capacity for 140 and 160 spectators, respectively.

The same official noted that the new space is more flexible and the stage can be changed according to the needs of the shows and the audience, adapting to the scenography of the shows, which makes it more suitable for artists to develop innovative performances and provides more production possibilities for experimental theater shows.

The new Black Box Theatre is a three-story building that connects with the CCM and occupies a total area of 3,110 square meters. The design is minimalist, opting for less public space and non-essential decorative elements to make full benefit of the architectural space.



Financial Reserve with growing trend this year following gaming results

THE Macau Financial Reserve accounts have recorded growth this year, with the first five months of 2023 showing a positive balance of MOP13.45 billion, according to an official report published on the go-

vernment's official gazette by the Monetary Authority of Macao.

The good results appear to be driven by the gaming industry that has climbed steadily month-on-month, achieving some

MOP49.4 billion in gross revenue and that in the first four months of this year.

With the May results being even better and with high hopes for the summer holidays, it is expected that

the Financial Reserve will continue to grow more over the next few months.

At the end of April, the total balance of the accounts was MOP569.93 billion, with the basic reserve account reaching

MOP152.06 billion, while the extraordinary reserve account amounted to MOP404.42 billion.

Nonetheless, due to the government recently needing to access these reserves to compensate the lack of income from the gaming industry over the pandemic period, the balance of the reserves is still some MOP73 billion below the balance reached at the end of 2021 (MOP643b). **RM**

SPORTS

MACAU TO HOST ANOTHER EVENT AT THE YEAR'S END WITH WYNN MACAU SNOOKER MASTERS

RENATO MARQUES

SCHEDULED to take place this year from December 25 to 29, the first-ever Wynn Macau Snooker Masters hopes to attract billiards fans to Wynn Palace's Grand Theatre to see some of the top world players at the game.

In a press conference held on Wednesday afternoon, the organizers announced the event that will take place later in the

year in the presence of five world-class snooker players who will be part of the four-day tournament.

The roster of invited players includes Ronnie O'Sullivan, a seven-time World Snooker Championship winner; Ding Jun Hui, the first Asian player to reach the top of the world snooker ranking; and Marco Fu, a Hong Kong player recognized as a Global Chinese Outstanding Youth. Additional contestants in-

clude other famous names at the game such as Judd Trump, Jack Lisowski, Mark Williams, Kyren Wilson, and Si Jia Hui.

Players will compete for the champion's prize money of GBP150,000 (MOP1.53 million).

At the event, Linda Chen, president and vice chairman of the board of Wynn Macau Ltd said, "The objective of Snooker Masters is to actively support the government's '1+4' diver-

sification development strategy and to contribute to the growth of Macau's sports culture and tourism industry. In addition, this esteemed event is also part of our long-term plan to bolster Macau's influence in the international sports scene."

During the event, the competitors also had the opportunity to provide insights into their preparation and showcased some of their trick shots.



WHO ARE THE 'OTHERS'?

Asians and North Americans top list of foreign visitors to Macau so far this year

RENATO MARQUES

OFTEN statistically labeled as "others" during the major holidays and celebratory seasons in Macau, foreign visitors occupied just a small percentage (3.8%) of all the visitors to Macau in the first five months of this year.

Since the figure is low, it is often statistically presented as one group, failing to identify which markets are contributing more to the rise of international visits in Macau, a goal clearly stated as being one of the main aims for Macau for both the government as well as the gaming concessionaires.

According to the official statistics released by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), the record of foreign nationals' entries to Macau is divided into 29 different categories, most of them representing countries, in the cases where the number justifies it, the remaining ones being grouped by continent.

THE TOP 3

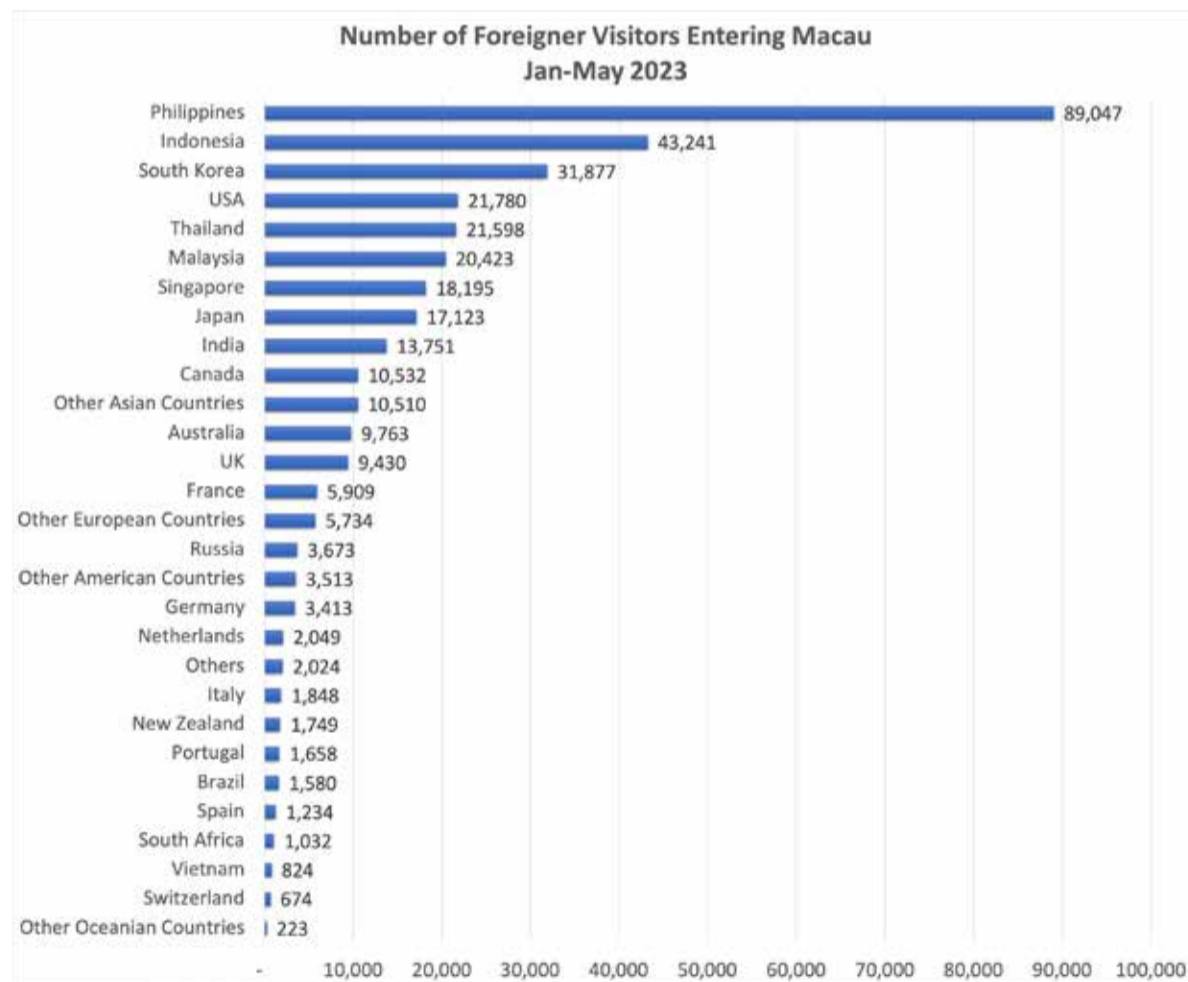
Without many surprises, the top 10 countries contributing most to the number of entries of foreign visitors in Macau are the Asian countries. At the top, we have the Philippines which contributed 89,047 entries from January to May this year. This figure is more than double the second highest contributor, which is Indonesia (43,241).

The top 3 closes with South Korea, with 31,877 visitors. Currently and according to information by the Civil Aviation Authority (AACM), there are direct flight routes between Macau and the cities of Seoul (Air Macau and Jin Air) and Busan (Air Busan) with the first two currently operating seven flights a week but planning to double this capacity from July 1. As for the Busan route, this is currently suspended, but is expected to resume with three weekly flights from July 25.

THE TOP 4-10

Surprisingly, or not, occupying the fourth position of the ranking of those supplying more international visitors to Macau is the first non-Asian country of the rank, the United States of America, with some 21,780 visitors.

The list continues with more Asians, in the case of Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore with, respectively, 21,598, 20,423, and 18,195 visitors. Following



this group closely is Japan with 17,123.

Another surprise appears in the ninth position with India, bringing some 13,751 people to Macau. Once a traditional market source for Macau, India's surprising entry into the top 10 comes mostly from the fact that visitors from this Asian country often reached Macau via the traditional tour groups that have been away from Macau since the Covid-19 pandemic started. Additionally, Macau does not have any direct flight to India, a factor that also

influences the tourist visitation from most Asian countries.

Completing the top 10 is another North American country, with 10,532 Canadians visiting Macau in the first five months of this year.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS

In the 12th position comes Australia with a 9,763-strong contribution to international visitation to Macau. The 11th position is occupied by the first continent group of countries stated

as "Other Asian countries" with 10,510.

It is necessary to scroll down to the 13th position to find the first of the European countries, a place occupied currently by the United Kingdom with 9,430 visitors. The UK is followed on the list by France although the latter has significantly fewer visitors (5,909). Still, the number of visitors from France is slightly higher than a group of other European countries combined (5,734) which ends the top 15.

Note the few Portuguese

(1,658) which is barely half of the number of Germans (3,413). Low figures were also recorded by the Spanish (1,234), Brazilians (1,580), and Italians (1,848).

In reality, the number of visitors arriving from all European countries (Russia included) only totals 35,622, which is just about 10% of all international visitors to Macau.

Notable also is South Africa (1,032), the only African country singled from the ranking.

UNCOUNTABLE FACTORS PLAY A ROLE IN STATISTICS

Certainly not coincidentally, the first two places on the ranking of foreign visitors to Macau are occupied by the Philippines and Indonesia. Definitely contributing to this result are a large number of non-resident workers, especially those working in the neighboring region of Hong Kong. Since the pandemic restrictions subsided, these workers returned to use Macau, for obvious reasons (related to proximity as well as no visa requirements), as the preferred destination to exit Hong Kong while waiting for working permit renewals, the so-called "U-turns."

The same is happening with some former workers as well as new workers who are now returning to jobs in Macau using a similar method while seeking jobs in Macau.

This is due to the enforcement of the new law on hiring non-resident workers that do not allow a person entering Macau on a tourism visa to apply for a work visa while staying in the territory.

Seeking concrete data to support and provide clarity regarding these types of cases the Times contacted both immigration services in Macau and Hong Kong.

While the Public Security Police Force, in a written reply to the Times, said that "the department does not possess statistic data on the matter," the Immigration Department of Hong Kong (IMMD) said in a phone communication that the services "do not monitor such type of cross border activity," an official named Sunny remarked.

The same official said the IMDD only produces and issues statistical reports on the number of visa permits issued, by type, not being able to provide data on "for example, the number of foreign workers who come to Macau, returning to Hong Kong right after."

PUBLIC BUS FIRMS REPORT LOSSES OF OVER MOP50M IN 2022

Public bus firms Transmac and TCM reported losses of more than 50 million patacas in 2022, according to their financial reports. Transmac suffered losses of MOP27.37 million, much more than the MOP8.32 million in losses reported in 2021. TCM, meanwhile, suffered losses of MOP23.6 million. Transmac and TCM have purchased 160 new electric buses last year, 200 of which are from TCM.

ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION ON THE RISE

Electricity consumption in the first half of this year has increased by 6.6% year-on-year. According to a report issued by TDM, the CEM Customer Advisory Committee chairman Vong Kok Seng attributed the increase to the surge of tourist arrivals in Macau, leading to an increase in the electricity consumption of major hotels. It is expected that there will be an increase in electricity consumption throughout the year. He said CEM has no plan to adjust the electricity tariff, noting that electricity bills in Macau have not been raised for 23 years and are relatively low compared major cities in the world.

GBA

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON ZHUHAI-MACAU TRANSLATIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

STAFF REPORTER

THE Zhuhai-Macao Translational Medical Center and Institute broke ground at the Fifth Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University in Zhuhai recently.

The center, being built at a cost of 2 billion yuan (\$279 million), will become a complex for the treatment of major diseases and translational medicine research. According to a statement by Zhuhai authorities, the center “integrates clinical research-oriented diagnosis and treatments, industry-oriented technologies, and data-intensive support platforms.”

The center will have a total floorage of 102,325.91 square meters (25 acres) and accommodate 1,000 patient beds, among which 300 beds will be reserved for medical research purposes.

The project will cast eyes on innovative breakthroughs in areas of cardiovascular and cere-

brovascular diseases, tumor diseases, infectious diseases, new marine materials, and medicines, as well as advanced medical manufacturing.

It is expected to fully upgrade the medical technology and biomedicine innovation centers on the west bank of the Pearl River Estuary, thus enhancing medical services for people in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Upon operation, the project will establish the first high-level translational medicine center on the west bank of the Pearl River Estuary, providing medicine, education, production, and research services at a higher level for Zhuhai and Macau residents.

Gao Song, an academican of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and head of Sun Yat-sen University, spoke highly of the remarkable outcomes that the Fifth Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University has made in recent years. He expressed the



hope that this project will lead Zhuhai's health industry to realize integrated and leapfrog development. It is expected to also assist in constructing the Guan-

zhou-Zhuhai-Macao Sci-tech Corridor, further supporting Zhuhai in its efforts to become a modernized and international special economic zone.

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YURI KAGEYAMA, TOKYO

US guitar maker Fender opens flagship store in Tokyo banking on regional growth

FENDER, the guitar of choice for some of the world's biggest stars from Jimi Hendrix to Eric Clapton, is opening what it calls its "first flagship store" in its 77-year history.

The American guitar manufacturer has chosen for its location Tokyo's Harajuku, a hot spot for Japanese youngsters who love animation, outlandish fashion and, of course, American music. The store was unveiled to reporters Thursday ahead of its official opening Friday.

Asia-Pacific is on track to become the biggest music market in the world by 2030, and more stores are planned for the region, Fender says. The company's revenue in Japan has recorded double-digit percentage growth each year since 2015.

"I've played various brands, but what I like about the Fender is its power to help you play at more than 100% of your ability, letting you become aware of your potential and take up new challenges," said Erino Yumiki, a guitarist, songwriter and one of the world's many Fender artists.

"Sometimes music gets me down, but music has also saved me. The music I have encountered through my life is who I am," said Yumiki, who owns about a dozen Fender guitars.

Although Tokyo already has many new and used guitar shops, the flagship store is designed to serve as a kind of museum-cum-amusement park for Fender lovers.

Fender says the social restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic set off a guitar boom. Its revenue in the COVID-19 years



ballooned from \$500 million to nearly \$1 billion.

Some 30 million people picked up an electric or acoustic guitar for the first time during those years, and even if one in 10 keeps playing — as surveys show the statistics to be — it's still solid revenue, says Fender Musical Instruments Corp. Chief Executive Andy Mooney.

Mooney, who plays guitar in a band, knows a thing or two about marketing, having worked at Nike for 20 years and shaping the Michael Jordan campaign. That was

followed by 11 years at Disney, where he oversaw consumer products.

Mooney said the redefinition of sneaker retailing that happened at Nike is exactly what Fender is going through now.

The three-story store in Harajuku is filled with Fender guitars, basses and amplifiers, including some exclusive products. The basement has a concert space and coffee shop.

Musical newcomers find some stores intimidating but the Tokyo store will be friendly, Fender says,

with most salesclerks being women.

There's a clothing area called "F Is For Fender." And the top floor is devoted to a shop for custom-made guitars, where so-called "master builders" in the U.S. will make guitars to order.

"The aging population has the time and the money to really get these custom-made instruments they've always wanted to buy for most of their lives but couldn't afford when they were younger," said Mooney, noting the potential appeal to the whole spectrum of

the Japanese population, not just the youngsters usually associated with guitar-playing.

Yumiki, Miyavi — who acted in Angelina Jolie's "Unbroken" — and about a dozen other Japanese star guitarists took the stage on Thursday, strumming together in the guitars' equivalent of a drumroll, to celebrate the store's opening.

Fender makes guitars in Japan, including Stratocasters, which have earned a reputation for quality. The made-in-Japan guitars will be on sale alongside those made in the U.S. and Mexico. The more affordable guitars sell for about 110,000 yen (\$760).

The popularity of guitars is also being fueled by greater consumption of guitar-related content online, such as on TikTok, drawing in amateurs who play guitar as a hobby.

Fender President for Asia-Pacific Edward Cole says the tens of millions of tourists expected to flock to Japan every year are also being targeted, as are the brand-savvy consumers of Japan.

Fender wants to position itself with its new store as Chanel, Apple and other major international brands did in Tokyo, he added.

"We want people to come in here, and we want them to fall in love with the idea of playing music," he said. **MDT/AP**

GAMING

Internet gambling would be given 5 more years under latest change in New Jersey

WAYNE PARRY,
ATLANTIC CITY

INTERNET gambling in New Jersey would be allowed to take place for at least five more years under the latest proposal by state lawmakers.

Yesterday (Macau time), legislators abandoned a move they made a day earlier to drastically cut the extension of internet casino gambling in the state. An original bill reauthorizing online betting would have given it another 10 years, but lawmakers sliced that to just two years on Tuesday.



After an outcry from groups in southern New Jersey, their political allies and business groups in southern New Jersey, lawmakers amended the bill yet again to extend internet gambling for five years.

But the rationale for

the original change — and its modification on Wednesday — remained a mystery to many in the seaside gambling resort. No explanation was given for either of the changes, and top Democratic leaders did not respond to requests for comment Tuesday and Wednesday.

"We're all trying to figure out what happened," said Don Guardian, a Republican Assemblyman and former mayor of Atlantic City.

The Chamber of Commerce of Southern New Jersey praised the latest change, saying the business group "is incredibly

pleased that the General Assembly shifted away from a drastic and unexpected two-year internet gaming reauthorization through 2028. Although not the 10-year window the bill's sponsor originally intended, this adjustment still allows for the sports betting industry to grow and thrive in New Jersey with a five-year security in its operating ability."

There was some speculation among Atlantic City casino and political officials that the move might represent potential leverage over the city in terms of possibly raising the amount of gambling taxes collected by the state in the future. That rate is 8% on in-person winnings from gamblers at casinos, 13% for online sports betting, and 15% for internet gambling. **MDT/AP**

DEMOGRAPHICS

OVER 5% OF CHINESE WOMEN REMAIN CHILDLESS AT 49

AROUND 5.2 percent of Chinese women who had reached the age of 49 remained childless in 2020, according to a study released by the China Population and Development Research Center on Wednesday.

The rate is lower than the 11 percent from the United States and 19 percent from European Union countries, said the study.

It added that well-educated women, as well as those living in urban areas, northeastern provinces and regions seeing extremely low fertility levels, were more likely to have never given birth by 49.

“With accelerating urbanization, development of higher education and continuous delays in marriage and childbearing, China’s lifetime childlessness rate is expected to continue rising in the future,” said the study.

It said that the rising trend of lifetime childlessness could further push down China’s overall fertility level and its birthrates, and impact the realization of an appropriate fertility level.



Researchers of the study call for paying attention to the phenomenon and devising response

strategies in advance.

For the first time in decades, China has fewer people than it

did at the start of last year, according to official figures released in January.

The world’s most populous country has worried for years about an aging population’s effect on the economy and society, but the population was not expected to go into decline for almost a decade.

The National Bureau of Statistics reported that the country had 850,000 fewer people at the end of 2022 than the previous year. The tally includes only the population of mainland China, excluding Hong Kong and Macau as well as foreign residents.

In South Korea, recent data shows that births kept falling for the 89th straight month in April, boosting concerns about a demographic cliff.

The number of newborn babies was 18,484 in April, down 12.7 percent from the same month of last year, according to Statistics Korea. It marked the lowest April figure since relevant data began to be compiled in 1981.

The newborns have been on the decline since December 2015 as more young people delayed or gave up on having children due to economic difficulties such as high housing prices and education costs. The low birth rate fueled worry about the demographic cliff, which refers to a sharp fall in the heads of households eventually leading to a consumption cliff. **MDT/AGENCIES**

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FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN MACAU (2023)



AUTOMOBILE

Threatened by shortages, electric car makers race for supplies of lithium for batteries

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

THREATENED by possible shortages of lithium for electric car batteries, automakers are racing to lock in supplies of the once-obscure “white gold” in a politically and environmentally fraught competition from China to Nevada to Chile.

General Motors Co. and the parent company of China's BYD Auto Ltd. went straight to the source and bought stakes in lithium miners, a rare step in an industry that relies on outside vendors for copper and other raw materials. Others are investing in lithium refining or ventures to recycle the silvery-white metal from used batteries.

A shortfall in lithium supplies would be an obstacle for plans to ramp up sales to tens of millions of electric vehicles a year. It is fueling political conflict over resources and complaints about the environmental cost of extracting them.

“We already have that risk” of not being able to get enough, GM's chief financial officer, Paul A. Jacobson, said at a Deutsche Bank conference in mid-June.

“We've got to have partnerships with people that can get us the lithium in the form that we need,” Jacobson said.

Ford Motor Co. has signed contracts stretching up to 11 years into the future with lithium suppliers on two continents. Volkswagen AG and Honda Motor Co. are trying to reduce their need for freshly mined ore by forming recycling ventures.

Global lithium output is on track to triple this decade, but sales of electric SUVs, sports cars and sedans that rose 55% last year threaten to outrun that. Each battery requires about eight kilograms (17 pounds) of lithium, plus cobalt, nickel and other metals.

“There will be a shortage of EV battery supplies,” said Joshua Cobb, senior auto analyst for BMI.

Adding to uncertainty, lithium has emerged as another conflict in strained U.S.-Chinese relations.

Beijing, Washington and other governments see metal supplies for electric vehicles as a strategic issue and are tightening controls on access. Canada ordered three Chinese companies last year to sell lithium mining assets on security grounds.

Other governments including

AP PHOTO



Indonesia, Chile and Zimbabwe are trying to maximize their return on deposits of lithium, cobalt and nickel by requiring miners to invest in refining and processing before they can export.

GM is buying direct access to lithium by investing \$650 million in the Canadian developer of a Nevada mine that is the biggest U.S. source. In return, GM says it will get enough for 1 million vehicles a year.

Conservationists and American Indians are asking a federal court to block development of the Nevada mine, which the Biden administration has embraced as part of its clean energy agenda. Opponents say it might poison water supplies and soil and pollute nesting grounds for birds.

Despite rising output, the industry may face shortages of lithium and cobalt as early as 2025 if enough isn't invested in production, according to Leonardo Paoli and Timur Gul of the International Energy Agency.

“Supply side bottlenecks are becoming a real challenge,”

Paoli and Gul said in a report last year.

Automakers might be putting in their own money to reassure “notoriously risk-averse” miners, according to Alastair Bedwell of GlobalData. He said miners are reluctant to “go all out” on lithium until they are sure the industry won't switch to batteries made with other metals.

Even if they do, developing lithium sources is a yearslong process.

Worldwide lithium resources are estimated at 80 million tons by the U.S. Geological Survey.

Bolivia's are the biggest at 21 million tons, followed by Australia with 17 million and Chile with 9 million.

Forecasts of annual production range as high as 1.5 million tons by 2030. But demand, if EV sales keep rising at double-digit annual rates, is forecast to increase to up to 3 million tons.

EV sales took off in 2021, more than doubling over the previous year to 6.8 million, according to EV Volumes, a research firm. Last year's sales rose to 10.5 million.

China accounted for 60% of last year's sales, two-thirds of production and three-quarters of battery manufacturing.

President Joe Biden last year announced an official goal for half of all new cars sold in the United State to be electric or other zero-emissions technology by 2030.

As sales rise, so does official anxiety, especially in Washington and Beijing, about access to lithium and other minerals and the potential for strategic competition.

Volkswagen's battery unit, PowerCo, signed an agreement with Canada last August to develop suppliers of “critical raw materials” including lithium, cobalt and nickel.

The German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, in a statement welcomed cooperation with “close friends” on “raw material security.”

China's government has accused the United States, Canada, Japan and other governments of misusing phony security concerns to hurt Chinese competitors in electric cars, smartphones, clean energy and other

emerging technologies.

Other governments welcome Chinese investment. China's biggest lithium producer, Ganfeng Lithium Co., bought Argentina's Lithea Inc. last year for \$962 million.

About two-thirds of the world's lithium comes from mines. That involves crushing rock and using acids to extract metals. It leaves toxic heaps of chemical-laced tailings.

The rest is extracted from salt lakes or salt flats. That can require vast evaporation ponds.

The industry is working on technology to extract lithium from hot springs and clay deposits with less environmental impact.

As they ramp up supplies, automakers face another bottleneck: Lack of refining capacity to purify raw lithium into battery material.

Tesla Inc. is building a refinery in Texas. Others including BMW AG are buying stakes in refiners.

As for GM, “I don't know” whether it will build its own refinery, Jacobson said. **MDT/AP**

JAPAN-SOUTH KOREA

FINANCE MINISTERS AGREE TO RESUME CURRENCY SWAP AGREEMENT AS TIES WARM

JAPAN and South Korea agreed yesterday to revive a currency swap agreement for times of crisis, in the latest sign of warming ties as the countries work to smooth over historical antagonisms.

Japanese Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki announced the agreement after meeting with his South Korean counterpart, Choo Kyungho. It was the first time the two countries have held annual financial talks in seven years, though Suzuki and Choo also met in South Korea in May.

Suzuki told reporters that the 3-year currency swap agreement would help reinforce trust in the financial stability of the two countries as a fallback in an emergency. But he emphasized that Japan is fully prepared to deal with fluctuations in the Japanese yen, which has weakened sharply against the U.S. dollar in the past year.

The \$10 billion swap arrangement expired in 2015 and had not been renewed. Largely symbolic, it allows the South Korean and Japanese central banks to exchange currencies for each country's reserves of U.S. dollars to provide extra liquidity, or cash supplies, in case of a crisis.

The two major Asian economies, both U.S. allies, have recently mended ties as they contend with challenges posed by China and North Korea, despite



Japanese Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki, left, and South Korea's Economy and Finance Minister Choo Kyungho, in Tokyo, yesterday

tensions over issues left over from Japan's 35-year occupation of the Korean Peninsula before and during World War II.

From July 21, Japan plans to reinstate South Korea as a preferred nation with fast-track trade status. That will essentially end

a four-year trade dispute that began in July 2019 when Japan removed South Korea from its "white list" of countries given fast-track approvals in trade as ties deteriorated over compensation for Japanese wartime actions.

Japan's tightening of trade con-

trols against Seoul was in apparent retaliation for South Korean court rulings in 2018 that ordered Japanese companies to compensate Korean workers for abusive treatment and forced labor during World War II.

Japan also tightened export

controls on key chemicals used by South Korean companies to make semiconductors and displays, prompting South Korea to file a complaint with the World Trade Organization and remove Japan from its own list of countries with preferred trade status.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida met in March in the first formal summit between the two countries since 2015.

Japan colonized the Korean Peninsula between 1910 and 1945, imposing Japanese names and language on Koreans and conscripting many into forced labor or prostitution in military brothels before and during World War II. Japan gave \$800 million to South Korea's then-military-backed government under a 1965 accord to normalize relations which was mainly used on economic development projects driven by major South Korean companies. A semi-government fund set up by Tokyo offered compensation to former "comfort women" when the government apologized in 1995, but many South Koreans believe the Japanese government should take more direct responsibility for the occupation.

The two sides also have a longstanding territorial dispute over a group of islands controlled by South Korea but claimed by Japan. **MDT/AP**

Sri Lanka spares banks in its \$ 19.8 billion local debt restructuring plan

KRISHAN FRANCIS,
COLOMBO

SRI Lanka will spare banks from being part of its local debt restructuring plan because of the possible impact on deposits, while the bulk of the burden will be shared by the Central Bank and superannuation funds, officials said yesterday.

Sri Lanka's Cabinet a day earlier approved a plan to restructure nearly half of its \$42.1 billion local debt following a bailout agreement with the International Monetary Fund. A special Parliament sitting has been convened for Saturday to seek approval for the plan.



The government has announced a bank holiday until next week to prevent any speculation-triggered bank run.

Central Bank governor Nandalal Weerasinghe said the treasury bills owned by the bank will be converted into treasury bonds with a

longer maturity period and the same has been proposed to superannuation funds. If those funds are unwilling to be part of the

plan they may have to pay a 30% tax instead of the 14% special treatment effective now.

Sri Lanka is also seeking to reduce nearly \$17 billion of its \$41.5 billion foreign debt through restructuring.

Sri Lanka announced last year that it was suspending repayment of foreign loans because of a severe foreign currency crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, excessive borrowing by the government and efforts by the central bank to stabilize the Sri Lankan rupee with scarce foreign reserves.

Sri Lanka sought the support of the IMF, which approved a bailout package in March, through which \$3 billion will be disbursed in stages.

Sri Lanka's economic crisis, the worst in its history, caused severe shortages of food, medicine, fuel, cooking gas and electricity

last year. That led to massive street protests that forced President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to flee the country and resign.

Meanwhile the World Bank announced yesterday that its directors have approved \$700 million in financing for Sri Lanka's projects on economic stability and support for the poor and vulnerable.

Out of the approved fund, \$500 million will support reforms that help improve economic governance and enhance growth and competitiveness. It will provide budget support in two equal tranches against agreed prior actions, the bank said in a statement. The other \$200 million seeks to support Sri Lanka in providing better-targeted income and livelihood opportunities to the poor and vulnerable and improving the social protection system. **MDT/AP**

France will deploy 40,000 police officers to quell violence that followed deadly police shooting

SYLVIE CORBET & ALEX TURNBULL, NANTERRE

FRANCE will deploy 40,000 police officers overnight to quell violence that engulfed cities and towns in the wake of a deadly police shooting, France's interior minister said yesterday.

Scores of police officers have been injured, according to ministers.

The justice minister, Éric Dupond-Moretti, gave a figure of 130 police officers injured.

"All this has to stop," the minister declared. He gave no details about the types and seriousness of the injuries.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin, who oversees the police, later gave a higher figure of 170 injured.

He said none of the injuries were life-threatening.

A French police officer who shot and killed a 17-year-old driver will be investigated for voluntary homicide, following two days of fires and violent protests, prosecutors said yesterday.

Overnight, protesters set cars and public buildings ablaze in Paris suburbs and unrest spread to some other French cities and towns, despite increased security efforts and the president's calls for calm.

The killing of 17-year-old Nahel during a traffic check Tuesday, captured on video, shocked the country and stirred up long-simmering tensions between young people and police in housing projects and other disadvantaged neighborhoods around France.

Nahel's surname has not been released by authorities or by his family. In earlier statements, lawyers for the family spelled the name Nael.

Nanterre prosecutor Pascal Prache said that based on an initial investigation, he concluded that "the conditions for the legal use of the weapon were not met."

Two magistrates have been named to lead the in-



Police forces clash with youths in Nanterre, outside Paris, yesterday

vestigation, he said. Under the French legal system, which differs from the U.S. and British systems, magistrates often assigned to lead investigations.

Prache said he requested that the officer be held in custody. That decision is to be made by another magistrate.

In a separate case, a police officer who fatally shot a 19-year-old Guinean man in western France earlier this month was handed preliminary charges of "voluntary homicide," according to a statement by the local prosecutor on Wednesday. The man was fatally shot by an officer as he allegedly tried to escape a traffic stop. The investigation is still ongoing.

Clashes first erupted Tuesday night in and around the Paris suburb of Nanterre, where Nahel was killed, and the government deployed 2,000 police to maintain order Wednesday. But violence resumed after dusk.

Police and firefighters struggled to contain protesters and extinguish numerous blazes through the night that damaged schools, police stations and town halls or other public buildings, according to a spokesperson for the national police. The national police on Thursday reported fires or skirmishes in multiple cities overnight, from Toulouse in the south to Lille in the north, though

the nexus of tensions was Nanterre and other Paris suburbs.

Police arrested 150 people around the country, more than half of them in the Paris region, the spokesperson said. She was not authorized to be publicly named according to police rules.

The number of injured was not immediately released.

Scenes of violence in France's suburban areas echo 2005, when the deaths of 15-year-old Bouna Traoré and 17-year-old Zyed Benna led to three weeks of nationwide riots, exposing anger and resentment in neglected, crime-ridden suburban housing projects.

The two boys entered a power substation to hide from police in the Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois, and were electrocuted.

French President Emmanuel Macron held an emergency security meeting Thursday about the violence.

"These acts are totally unjustifiable," Macron said at the beginning of the meeting, which aimed at securing hot spots and planning for the coming days "so full peace can return."

Macron also said it was time for "remembrance and respect" as Nahel's mother called for a silent march Thursday in his honor on the square where he was killed.

Multiple vehicles were set ablaze in Nanterre and protesters shot fireworks

and threw stones at police, who fired repeated volleys of tear gas. Flames shot out

of three stories of a building, and a blaze was reported at an electrical plant. Fire damaged the town hall of the Paris suburb of L'Ile-Saint-Denis, not far from France's national stadium and the headquarters of the Paris 2024 Olympics.

The police officer accused of the killing is in custody on suspicion of manslaughter and could face preliminary charges as soon as Thursday, according to the Nanterre prosecutor's office.

French activists renewed calls to tackle what they see as systemic police abuse, particularly in neighborhoods like the one where Nahel lived, where many residents struggle with poverty and racial or class discrimination. Government officials condemned the killing and sought to distance themselves from the police officer's actions.

Macron called the killing "inexplicable and inexcusable" and called for calm. "Nothing justifies the death of a young person," he told reporters in Marseille on Wednesday. MDT/AP

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MIGRATION

UK appeals court rules that plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda is unlawful

JILL LAWLESS, LONDON

A British court ruled yesterday that a government plan to send asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to Rwanda is unlawful, delivering a blow to the Conservative administration's pledge to stop migrants making risky journeys across the English Channel.

In a split two-to-one ruling, three Court of Appeal judges said Rwanda could not be considered a "safe third country" where migrants could be sent.

But the judges said that a policy of deporting asylum seekers to another country was not in itself illegal. The government is likely to challenge the ruling at the U.K. Supreme Court. It has until July 6 to lodge an appeal.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has pledged to "stop the boats" — a reference to the overcrowded dinghies and other small craft that make the journey from northern France carrying migrants who hope to live in the U.K. More than 45,000 people arrived in Britain across the Channel in 2022, and several died in the attempt.

The U.K. and Rwandan governments agreed more than a year ago that some migrants who arrive in the U.K. as stowaways or in small boats would be sent to Rwanda, where their asylum claims would be processed. Those granted asylum would stay in the East African country rather than return to Britain.

The U.K. government argues that the policy will smash the business model of criminal gangs that ferry migrants on hazardous journeys across one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

Human rights groups say it is immoral and inhumane to send people more than 4,000 miles (6,400 kilometers) to a country they don't want to live in, and argue that most Channel migrants are desperate people who have no authorized way to come to the U.K. They also cite Rwanda's poor hu-



Britain's Home Secretary Suella Braverman pauses, during a press conference in the capital Kigali, Rwanda Saturday, March 18, 2023

man rights record, including allegations of torture and killings of government opponents.

Britain has already paid Rwanda 140 million pounds (\$170 million) under the deal, but no one has yet been deported there.

Britain's High Court ruled in December that the policy is legal and doesn't breach Britain's obligations under the U.N. Refugee Convention or other international agreements, rejecting a lawsuit from several asylum-seekers, aid groups and a border officials' union.

But the court allowed the claimants, who include asylum-seekers from Iraq, Iran and Syria facing deportation under the government plan, to challenge that decision on issues including whether the plan is "systemically unfair" and whether asylum-seekers would be safe in Rwanda.

In a partial victory for the government, the appeals court ruled Thursday that the U.K.'s international obligations did not rule out re-

moving asylum-seekers to a safe third country.

But two of the three ruled Rwanda was not safe because its asylum system had "serious deficiencies." They said asylum seekers "would face a real risk of being returned to their countries of origin," where they could be mistreated.

Lord Chief Justice Ian Burnett — the most senior judge in England and Wales — disagreed with his two colleagues. He said assurances given by the Rwandan government were enough to ensure the migrants would be safe.

The government of Rwanda took issue with the ruling, saying the nation is "one of the safest countries in the world."

"As a society, and as a government, we have built a safe, secure, dignified environment, in which migrants and refugees have equal rights and opportunities as Rwandans," said government spokeswoman Yolande Makolo. "Everyone relocated here under this partnership will benefit from this."

Yasmine Ahmed, U.K. director of Human Rights Watch, said the verdict was "some rare good news in an otherwise bleak landscape for human rights in the U.K."

She urged Home Secretary Suella Braverman, the minister in charge of immigration, to "abandon this unworkable and unethical fever dream of a policy and focus her efforts on fixing our broken and neglected migration system."

Even if the plan is ultimately ruled legal, it's unclear how many people could be sent to Rwanda. The government's own assessment acknowledges it would be extremely expensive, coming in at an estimated 169,000 pounds (\$214,000) per person.

But it is doubling down on the idea, drafting legislation barring anyone who arrives in the U.K. in small boats or by other unauthorized means from applying for asylum. If passed, the bill would compel the government to detain all such arrivals and deport them to their homeland or a safe third country. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1985 BEIRUT ORDEAL ENDS FOR US HOSTAGES



All 39 Americans being held captive by the Shia Muslim Amal militia in Lebanon have been released, after almost three weeks in captivity.

Their freedom was secured after intervention by the Syrian President Hafiz al-Assad. The White House said no deal had been done with the captors.

The hostages were driven in a Red Cross convoy from Beirut to Syrian capital Damascus, 17 days after the plane they were on was hijacked by two members of the extremist Islamic Jihad group.

Most of the passengers were freed hours after the Lebanese gunmen diverted the TWA Rome - Athens flight to Beirut on 14 June, demanding the release of 766 Shia Muslims imprisoned in Israel.

But 40 Americans were forced to remain on the plane. One of their number - US Navy diver Robert Stethem - was killed on the first day of the crisis and his body dumped on the airport tarmac.

Thirty-five of the Americans were imprisoned in various Beirut safe-houses by the Amal militia for most of their ordeal, but four were being held by the radical Hezbollah group.

The freedom of these men is reported to have been obtained by President Assad, who contacted two of the most extreme Shia leaders to order their release.

The group finally left for Damascus at 1545 (1245 GMT) after 24 hours of confusion and uncertainty about whether they would be freed.

Some of the hostages praised their treatment by the Amal militia, saying it had guaranteed the group's safety and looked after their welfare.

The hostages' spokesman, Allyn Conwell, told reporters at a news conference they were all very relieved to be free.

"For anyone and everyone who has prayed for us, talked for us, waited for us or hoped for us - we thank you from the bottom of our hearts," he said.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The hostages were safely transferred to Frankfurt and then to the US after their release. The White House said it knew the identity of the two original hijackers, but the men have never been brought to justice. The American Diplomatic Security Service is still offering a reward of \$5m (£3.17m) for information leading to their capture. The US Navy named the warship USS Stethem after the sailor killed by the gunmen during the hijack.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Pleasure trips should be on your agenda. Your unique approach to life will interest others. Try not to lend or borrow money today. If they're too demanding, reconsider this union.

TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Be careful not to exaggerate when interacting with your lover. Do not lend money to friends, or contribute more than necessary to groups unworthy of your cash.

GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You can make the most headway if you put in some overtime. Loss or theft may occur if you are careless with your belongings. Abrupt changes concerning your professional position are evident.

CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Your goals will be in reach if you direct your energy wisely. You will be entertained and intrigued by the logic foreigners possess. Take the time to help those less fortunate.

LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Don't be too quick to spend money. If you're preoccupied, be careful while operating a vehicle or any kind of equipment or machinery. Try to be patient and understanding.

VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Take a second look; difficulties with appliances, water, or electricity in your home may be evident. You can find solutions if you are willing to communicate. Your pilgrimage may end up being fruitless.

LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Be aware that joint financial ventures could fall apart. Take advantage of moneymaking ventures. Take work home but be sure to spend some time with your mate.

SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Don't even bother trying to get their approval on the things you want to do. You may want to look into warm vacation spots. Your ability to deal with others will help you in getting the support you need.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You can make or break your personal relationship today. You may find your nights sleepless due to bad dreams. Travel and communication will be lucrative for you.

CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Pleasure trips should be on your agenda. If you have to deal with large institutions, be careful not to make waves. Try to get every one involved; it will help bring you closer together.

AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

If you can mix business with pleasure much can be accomplished. Talk to someone you trust in order to see the whole picture. You may have difficulties with in-laws or family members.

PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You mustn't take on other people's responsibilities or you may find yourself irritable and exhausted. Deception and confusion regarding your status in society is likely.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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EASY+

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MEDIUM

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HARD

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4						8		
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					3			5

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	23	38	fine
Changchun	18	31	fine
Chengdu	22	35	thunderstorms
Chongqing	24	33	rain
Fuzhou	26	35	thunderstorms
Guangzhou	26	35	cloudy
Guiyang	22	29	showers
Haikou	27	35	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	27	32	rain
Harbin	18	29	cloudy
Hefei	23	28	rain
Nanjing	25	27	rain
Shanghai	26	29	rain
Taipei	25	31	rain
Wuhan	25	30	rain
Hong Kong	29	32	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	14	18	rain
Frankfurt	13	26	rain
Paris	17	25	cloudy
London	17	20	cloudy
New York	20	28	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Similar; 5- Actress Long; 8- Wrinkly fruit; 12- New Haven students; 13- Pardon; 15- Bird feed; 16- Nair rival; 17- Skirt; 18- Super; 19- Promotion in rank; 22- Indian holiday resort; 23- Bind; 24- Prophet; 26- Attractive route; 29- Pertaining to the skin; 31- ___ Jima; 32- "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" musical; 34- Rock and Roll Hall of Fame architect; 36- Actor Julia; 38- Elicit; 40- Gregory Peck role of 1956; 41- ___ con pollo; 43- Novelist Calvino; 45- Doctrine; 46- Zealot; 48- Edit; 50- Cotton deseeders; 51- Chile ___ carne; 52- Maiden name indicator; 54- Sudden disaster; 61- Environmental sci.; 63- Speed; 64- Romance lang.; 65- Sewing case; 66- Signed; 67- Zip; 68- Medicinal amount; 69- Compass reading; 70- Lean;

DOWN 1- Actress Olin; 2- ___ Three Lives; 3- Capital of the Ukraine; 4- Fancy home; 5- Campbell of "Scream"; 6- Mosque leader; 7- Helper; 8- Country bordered by Canada and Mexico; 9- Earthly; 10- Carson's successor; 11- Thought; 13- Accept delivery of; 14- Keyed up; 20- Baseball team; 21- Actress Hatcher; 25- Actress Thompson; 26- Body of honeybees; 27- Brave; 28- Honda model; 29- Capital of Senegal; 30- Minimum; 31- Nest egg letters; 33- Little one; 35- Big Blue; 37- Burt's ex; 39- Voted into a seat; 42- Brass component; 44- Scent; 47- Japanese beer brand; 49- Choose by divine election; 52- Requirement; 53- Prefix with plasm; 55- Makes brown; 56- Requests; 57- Simmer; 58- Egyptian deity; 59- ___ but known...; 60- Gusto; 62- Canard;

Yesterday's solution

EDGER	GALAS	RUM										
RIODE	ELECT	ESA										
ANODE	QATER	BUC										
	GARN	IDRAL										
ARATING	BRAILLE											
SAVING	PURITE											
CLING	PLANETOID											
ASA	TRACE	JIMA										
PANTOMIME	POLAR											
FANTANE	ALLEGE											
ARILENE	SNEERED											
TOTEM	ATTN											
SRA	ODDLY	IGUIT										
REL	RURAL	SUPER										
ADO	TNRE	HOARY										

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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

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AD

The Art of Giving

Lurdes de Sousa *



A ROLE FOR PHILANTHROPIES: THE ROAD MAP TO A NEW GLOBAL FINANCING PACT

FRANCE'S summit for a New Global Financing Pact just ended in Paris. Although no legally binding agreement per se was presented, the summit was nonetheless important as it contributed to the agenda on issues facing the Global South, creating narratives for a road map leading to the next meetings and namely the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, the SDG Summit, the G20 in New Delhi, the COP 28 in Dubai.

Who attended the summit? Dozens of heads of state and government from the Global South to G20 countries and the usual faces from the world of the United Nations and international financial institutions and amongst them Ajay Banga, the newly elected president of the World Bank, Kristalina Georgieva from IMF and Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General.

The summit for a New Global Financing Pact conveyed, in Paris, on 22 and 23 June, with the aim of discussing the long lasting efforts on reforming the mechanisms on development and its financing with emphasis on the reform of the so called 'Bretton Woods institutions' (World Bank and IMF). Why the debate around financing the Global South is so severely attacking the Bretton Woods institutions? Mostly because the institutions, created after World War II, are now faced with other kind of challenges such as extreme poverty, environment and biodiversity or in other words, as French President Macron, put it in his opening remarks, the summit is guided by "the principle that no countries should have to choose between poverty alleviation and protecting the planet". Amongst one of the highly attended intervention was the intervention of Chinese premier Li Qiang, a crucial player in the South-South cooperation.

In the face of the global development-financing gap, Li Qiang pointed out the call on the international community to cooperate and act to jointly solve the problems of developing countries, especially vulnerable countries. China, in a pragmatic move, proved to be a key player, during the gathering, in the \$6.3 billion debt restructuring with Zambia (China is the largest official creditor to Zambia, with \$4.1 billion owed to the Export-Import Bank of China alone). The country, pragmatic engagement in finding solutions for the Global South, owns to the fact, as premier Li Qiang stressed in his remarks, that development global issues concerns are reflected on China self-trajectory with the record of lifting 770 million people since 1978 out of extreme poverty (World Bank and the Development Research Center of the State Council, the People's Republic of China. 2022. Four Decades of Poverty Reduction in China: Drivers, Insights for the World, and the Way Ahead. Washington, DC: World Bank). Indeed a remarkable record for a country that is very consistently working to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030

What did the summit achieved and announced? Some milestones such as Debt suspension clauses for loans from the World Bank and a \$100 billion target in Special Drawing Rights for vulnerable countries within the IMF as part of a new vision statement for multilateral development banks. Collaterally it debated a various range of themes from gender smart finance, financing digital infrastructure to accelerate transitions – sustainability, connectivity, resilience, Financing for SDGs solutions, through MDBs, Sovereign Wealth Funds and Development Partners amongst others.

A reinforced commitment and role for Philanthropies

Most interestingly, the summit did stress the idea of mobilizing additional financial resources, especially from the private sector and private philanthropies as part of the new global financing pact. As the Financial Times framed it in an article published on 20th June, 'the green transition won't happen without financing for developing countries'.

'At a time when there are growing financing needs to address climate, nature and development challenges, it is essential that foundations come together to leverage philanthropy's comparative advantage, including to help mobilize private capital through new instruments and innovative blended finance' the final statement of philanthropies stated.

It's the opportunity for the non-state actors to further mobilize and scale up financing to tackle structural barriers to meet the SDGs and Agenda 2030, for which philanthropies are not new comers, according to OECD (2022), philanthropic action to address climate change has significantly increased in recent years rising to an estimated \$1.5 billion in 2021.

Unlocking additional concessional resources, through philanthropy's financial contributions, will be key to achieve the global objectives of poverty alleviation and addressing the effects of climate change. Climate shocks and emergencies, such as pandemics, curb the financial capacity of Low- and Middle-Income Countries to invest in a just, resilient, country-led and low-carbon or net zero transitions.

It's time for philanthropies around the world to contribute to win the battle against poverty and vulnerabilities for a safer, cleaner and equitable world for the Next Generation.

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Macau Daily Times is the official media partner of the Associação Internacional de Filantropia (Macau).

AP PHOTO



Harrison Ford in a scene from "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny."

DRIVE IN

HARRISON FORD GETS A SWASHBUCKLING SENDOFF IN 'INDIANA JONES AND THE DIAL OF DESTINY'

LINDSEY BAHR, MDT/AP
FILM WRITER

THE magic of Indiana Jones belongs wholly to Harrison Ford. Apparently, he doesn't even necessarily need Steven Spielberg behind the camera, though, to be fair, the foundation was well-laid for a veteran like James Mangold to step in. But there is no Indy — none that we care about anyway — without Ford.

In this way, it's hard not to go into "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny," in theaters Friday, without a sense of melancholy — not exactly the ideal state of mind for what should be, and mostly is, a fun summer blockbuster. But it certainly adds a poignancy to the whole endeavor whether the film merits it or not.

If only it didn't start with that pesky de-aging technology (the best it's ever looked but it remains unsettling), giving us a 45-year-old Indiana Jones doing some of the wildest stunts we've ever seen our beloved archeology professor attempt — atop a speeding train to boot. This sequence is ostensibly there to introduce the film's MacGuffin, Archimedes Antikythera, a real celestial calculation machine with extraordinary predictive capabilities that in the film is bestowed with some otherworldly powers.

But we know the real reason: It's there to let us gaze at that familiar face and to go on one last adventure with the Indy we grew up with, before being thrust back reality with a nearly 80-year-old Ford (he's

81 in July) playing a 70-some-thing Indy.

This isn't inherently sad, but Dr. Jones is certainly reintroduced in the most unglamorous way possible: Sleeping on a reclining chair in a sad New York apartment, a glass of something alcoholic in his hand and threadbare boxer shorts on his person. He's depression personified, retiring from the university where the kids barely pay attention to him anyway (long gone are the "I love you" eyelids), estranged from Karen Allen's Marion and watching the world go space crazy around him.

We'll have to see him work back up to his adventuresome self. No training montages required, thankfully, just a plane ticket, his classic uniform (still fits!) and his old improvisational spirit. The cumbersome plot strains to justify and give meaning to the search for the Antikythera: The FBI is on the hunt for it, as is Nazi scientist Jürgen Voller (Mads Mikkelsen) for whom the war hasn't ended, and the daughter (Phoebe Waller-Bridge) of Indy's late partner Basil (Toby Jones) who was driven mad by the gadget. It's a bit much, as are many of the overly elaborate and strangely murky-looking action sequences from the train in 1944 to a deep-sea diving sequence with killer eels. The movie hits its action high notes when it sticks to the tactile classics, like a brilliantly executed rickshaw chase in Tangier.

Waller-Bridge's Helena is

an enormously enjoyable character, too — a brilliant archeologist herself who chosen a more glamorous, dangerous and decidedly black market kind of existence, selling stolen antiquities to the world's wealthiest and working her way out of debt. She's introduced as a wild card and a lot of the tension is derived from whether Indy should trust her. It's a very good non-romantic pairing of sharp-witted old souls, a generation apart. But you'd think in an almost two-and-a-half-hour film there might have been more time for one of our returning favorites, like John Rhys-Davies Sallah (he does get a few good moments).

I'm not sure anyone had an especially burning need to know what Indiana Jones was up to lately, but at least it gives everyone a chance to end on a higher note than "Kingdom of the Crystal Skull." Or maybe Ford just needed some closure on one of his iconic characters so that everyone will stop asking him about them.

"Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" might not be "Raiders" or "The Last Crusade" but it's solid, swashbuckling summer fare and a dignified sendoff to one of cinema's most flawless castings.

"Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny," a Walt Disney Co. release in theaters Friday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for, "language, action, sequences of violence, smoking." Running time: 144 minutes. ★★★★★

TASTE OF EDESIA

Teatime Indulgence

IRENE SAM, MDT

TO avoid the sweltering midday sun, relishing a beautifully crafted tea set in the elegant surroundings of **The Lounge** at JW

Marriott is an option. The Afternoon Tea Set is a three-tier culinary experience that hits every part of the palate. Headlined savory items such as Wagyu Beef Cheek Sliders, Grilled Spicy Thai Pork Collar, Seafood Chimichan-

ga and Laksa Linguine with King Prawn, the set also offers Foie Gras and Honeycomb and Mini Charcuterie and Cheese, as well as sweet treats including Rabbit Pudding, Mini Pavlova Trio and Coconut Mango Mont Blanc.



Summer detox

THIS summer, Banyan Tree Spa Macau presents "Green Detox" spa treatment. The relaxing journey aims to help release tension and stress, enabling the body and mind to return to tranquility. It is also a part of the healing wellness journey that is an integration of sustainable personal development practices that help us find balance.

Through the experience, Banyan Tree Spa Macau leads one into a peaceful state of mind

to restore inner strength and power. It begins with a Matcha and Coconut Body Scrub that gently draws the impurities from the skin, followed by the nourishing Honey Avocado Body Wrap that sooth every inch of the body, preparing one for the detox massage ahead. Completing the treatment, the Restorative Detox massage features a soft and delicate pressure massage around the lymph nodes to further bolster immune system. IS

OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

STRATEGIC
INDEPENDENCE
PROMOTES WIN-WIN
CHINA-NEW
ZEALAND TIES

When President Xi Jinping visited New Zealand in 2014, he wrote in a signed article published in The New Zealand Herald that “the two countries have set many records in China’s relations with developed countries” and called for “an even better future” for bilateral relations.

Nine years have passed and relations have indeed prospered. New Zealand was the first Western nation to sign a memorandum of cooperation with China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, which it did in 2017. And despite the immense pressure from the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainties caused by the Ukraine crisis, the two nations upgraded the protocol of their bilateral free trade agreement in 2021, which came into effect as scheduled in April 2022. China is benefiting New Zealand with its photovoltaic and wind power industries, while being a main customer of the latter’s dairy products. The trade volume in goods between the two countries reached \$25.2 billion in 2022.

With President Xi meeting New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins on Tuesday, the two nations, which celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations half a year ago, have now opened a new chapter for their relations. The healthy and mutually beneficial relations between the two countries have much to do with New Zealand keeping aloof from the US-led China bashing.

On Tuesday, Hipkins said that differences should not define relations between the two countries, adding that what is important is to maintain candid exchanges and mutual respect.

In September 2021, after US President Joe Biden announced that the United States and the United Kingdom would help Australia acquire nuclear-powered submarines, New Zealand stressed that it would not lift the ban on nuclear-powered ships entering its territorial waters.

Just as President Xi said, the two sides should continue to see each other as partners instead of rivals and opportunities rather than threats, and should consolidate the foundation for bilateral relations.

According to a release of the meeting between Xi and Hipkins, the two sides have agreed to keep expanding cooperation in economy and trade, education, technology, tourism as well as people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

By demonstrating its willingness to carry forward the friendly and cooperative relations that it has forged with China, New Zealand is setting a good example for other developed countries, some of which follow the US’ lead without giving a thought to why they are doing so and whether it is the right thing to do. Although a member of the US-led Five Eyes Alliance, New Zealand has maintained its dignity and earned respect by shunning the gung ho participation in the US’ “Indo-Pacific” strategy that has brought so much shame on Australia, Canada and the UK.

RUSSIA OUTLAWS CRITICAL NEWS OUTLET IN CONTINUED CRACKDOWN ON DISSENT

THE BUZZ

Russian authorities declared a news outlet critical of the Kremlin an “undesirable” organization, effectively banning it from operating in Russia as part of a continued crackdown on dissent.

Novaya Gazeta Europe was founded by former journalists of the prominent independent Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta that was stripped of its media license last year. It operates from outside Russia.

Prosecutor General’s office accused the outlet of “creating and disseminating materials to the detriment of the interests” of Russia — namely, “false information about alleged wide-spread violations of the rights and freedoms of citizens in Russia, accusations against our

country of unleashing an aggressive war on Ukraine, of committing war crimes against civilian population, and of repressions.”

Labeling the publication “undesirable” outlaws its operation in Russia and exposes its journalists, others working with it and its donors to criminal charges.

Last week, Russian authorities slapped the label on the World Wide Fund for Nature and prominent rights group Agora. Earlier this year, the environmental pressure group Greenpeace was forced to close its Russian division after Moscow declared it to be an undesirable organization.

HEALTHCARE

DOZENS IN 16 STATES CHARGED WITH HEALTH CARE FRAUD SCHEMES, INCLUDING \$1.9B IN BOGUS CLAIMS

LINDSAY WHITEHURST & TOM MURPHY, WASHINGTON

THE Justice Department has charged dozens of people in several health care fraud and prescription drug schemes, including one totaling \$1.9 billion and a doctor accused of ordering fake ankle braces for a patient whose leg had been amputated, officials said Wednesday.

The scheme involving the submission of nearly \$2 billion in bogus claims is one of the largest health care fraud cases ever brought by the Justice Department, the agency said. It’s one of several announced as part of a crackdown in states around the country.

In total, 78 people in 16 states were charged in a series of separate cases, which also included an alleged scheme to buy back HIV medication from patients and then resell the pills.

The defendants targeted vulnerable people and used the money they made to buy exotic cars, jewelry and yachts, federal investigators said. The federal government seized millions of dollars in cash, automobiles and real estate as part of the crackdown.

“The Justice Department will find and bring to justice criminals who seek to defraud Americans and steal from taxpayer-funded programs,” Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement.

In one case filed in the Southern District of Florida, investigators said they found nearly \$2 billion in fraudulent telemedicine claims submitted to government-funded coverage programs like Medicare and Medicaid, which mainly cover people age 65 and over and those with low incomes,



Attorney General Merrick Garland speaks at a press conference to announce arrests and disruptions of the fentanyl precursor chemical supply chain, June 23, 2023 in Washington

respectively. No attorneys were listed Wednesday for the three men charged in connection with the online platform DMERx, and a message left with a parent company was not immediately returned.

Those cases involved templates for fake doctor orders for braces and pain creams that were used in exchange for kickbacks and bribes, investigators said.

In another telemedicine fraud case, prosecutors say a Washington state doctor, David Antonio Becerril, signed more than 2,800 fraudulent orders, including ankle braces for a patient whose leg had been amputated years before. He’s accused of taking less than 40 seconds to review and sign each order. One of his attorneys, William Portanova, declined to comment.

In some cases, computer software produced fake doctor’s orders and patients were never examined or had only a brief

conversation with the physician, said Omar Perez Aybar, special agent in charge of the Miami regional office for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ inspector general.

“There were providers and patients all across the country,” he said.

In another case, a Brooklyn man is accused of working with other people to buy more than \$150 million in prescription drugs, including HIV medications from suppliers who bought back medication from patients. Steven Diamantstein is accused of re-labeling the drugs for sale. His defense attorney, Zach Intrater, said Diamantstein has pleaded not guilty to the charges and “looks forward to contesting them in court.”

The investigation involved coordination among several agencies, including the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration and state Medicaid fraud units, Perez Aybar said. MDT/AP



Belarus An opposition activist says that he has provided the International Criminal Court with materials allegedly detailing President Alexander Lukashenko’s involvement in the forcible transfer of Ukrainian children to Belarus, accusations angrily rejected by Minsk. Lukashenko has been Moscow’s closest ally, allowing the Kremlin to use Belarusian territory to send troops and weapons into Ukraine, welcoming a continued Russian military presence in Belarus and the deployment of some of Russia’s tactical nuclear weapons there.



UK A committee of British lawmakers yesterday slammed allies of Boris Johnson in Parliament for trying to interfere with their investigation into whether the former prime minister lied about rule-flouting parties in his office during the coronavirus pandemic. The House of Commons Privileges Committee said senior Conservatives, including past Cabinet ministers under Johnson, “took it upon themselves to undermine procedures of the House of Commons.”



Canadian wildfires will send worsening smoky air across the country and neighboring United States in coming days after recent heavy rains in Quebec missed the places where the fires are most active, officials said. Smoke from the wildfires has lowered curtains of haze on broad swaths of Canada and the United States, pushing into southern Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, and moving into parts of West Virginia.