



THE COOPERATION ZONE ANNOUNCED A FINANCIAL SUPPORT SCHEME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM INDUSTRY AND RELATED BUSINESSES

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INTERNATIONAL BANKING ASSETS IN MACAU SHRUNK BY 6.4% IN Q2

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BEIJING DENOUNCES US, S.KOREA, JAPAN SUMMIT AT CAMP DAVID

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AP PHOTO



Indonesian domestic workers and activists began a hunger strike yesterday to protest against the parliament's delay in passing a bill to protect domestic workers. Sunrise-to-sunset fasting protests were happening simultaneously in the capital, Jakarta, and other major cities and will be held every day until the bill is passed, said Lita Anggraini of the National Advocacy Network for Domestic Workers.

AP PHOTO



Malaysia Former Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin was acquitted by the high court of four corruption charges yesterday, just days after his opposition bloc expanded its influence in local elections. Muhyiddin, 76, said the high court ruled in favor of his application to overturn four charges of abusing his power to obtain 232.5 million ringgit in bribes for his Bersatu party. He was charged in March and still faces three charges of money laundering involving 200 million ringgit.

AP PHOTO

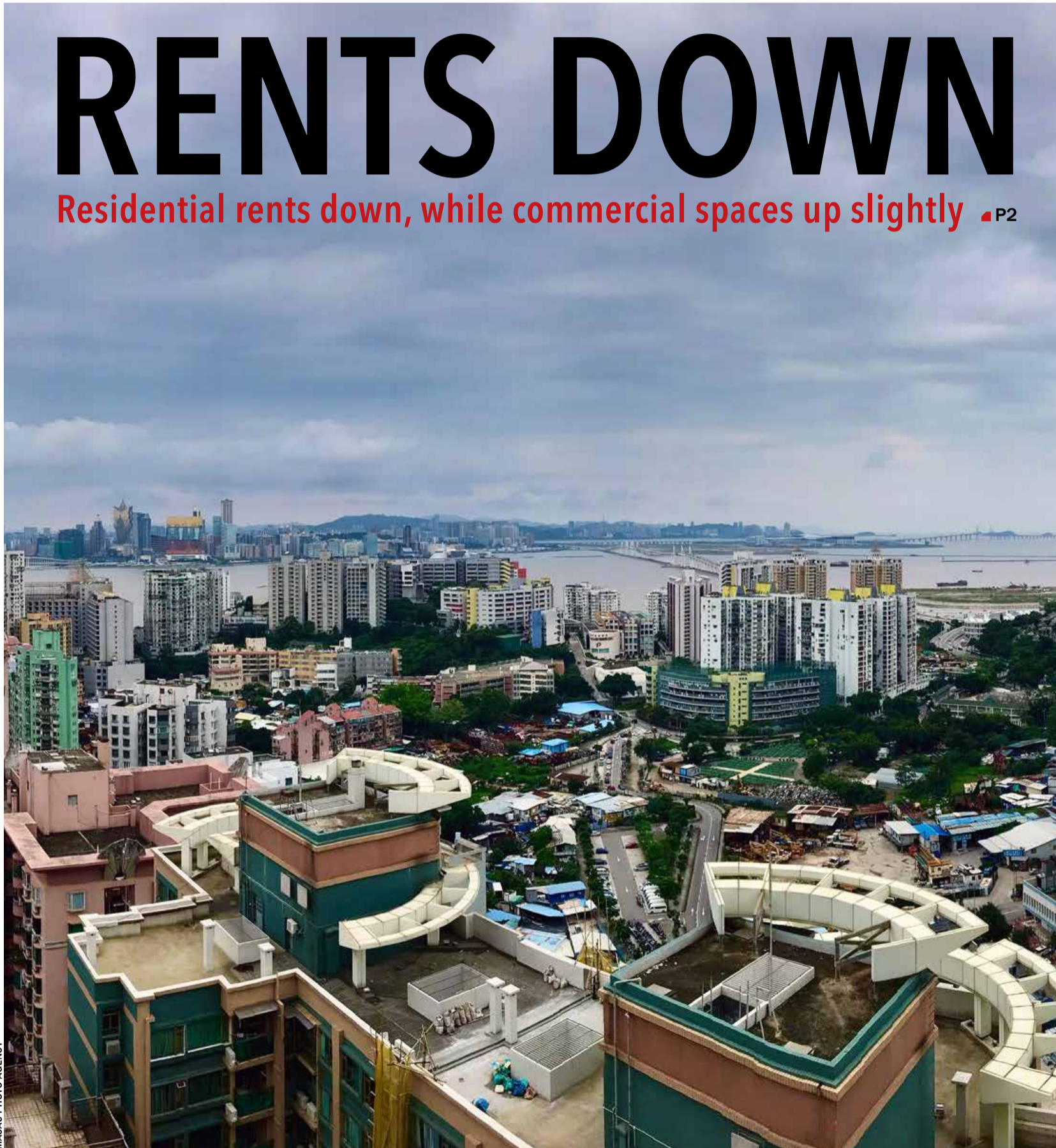


India Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India's economy will be among the top three in the world within five years, as he marked 76 years of independence from British rule yesterday. Wearing a flowing, multi-colored turban, Modi addressed the country from New Delhi's 17th century Mughal-era Red Fort, saying his government had lifted over 130 million people out of poverty and that India's growing prosperity was an opportunity for the world.

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RENTS DOWN

Residential rents down, while commercial spaces up slightly P2



MACAU PHOTO AGENCY

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
GOV'T REDUCES OPERATIONAL COSTS DUE TO RENT

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GAMING
JP MORGAN FORECASTS AUGUST TO HIT ANOTHER GGR HIGH

P3

FIRST GROUP OF MACAU MEDICAL PERSONNEL BEGIN TO PRACTICE IN HENGQIN

The first group of four Macau medical personnel completed their professional registration and received practice certificates in the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin. Fong Fong Tan, deputy director of the Livelihood Affairs Bureau in the Cooperation Zone, stated that with the development of diverse industries in Hengqin, the health industry is expanding in the Cooperation Zone. According to Fong, the issuance of the first batch of practice certificates will encourage Macau medical personnel to develop their careers in Hengqin.

UM WELCOMES 4,400 NEW STUDENTS IN 2023/2024 ACADEMIC YEAR

The University of Macau (UM) held the Convocation and First Lecture of University of the 2023/2024 academic year, welcoming 4,400 new students. UM has enrolled more than 1,900 undergraduates and nearly 2,500 postgraduates in the new academic year. It has also launched several degree programs, including a Bachelor of Law in Chinese Law and Global Legal Studies, as well as six postgraduate programs in philosophy, artificial intelligence, robotics and autonomous systems, coastal environment and safety, innovative materials, and medicinal administration. Moreover, the university presented a range of scholarships and assistantships to nearly 700 new students to support their holistic development.

TAIWAN COURT REJECTS LEVO CHAN'S APPEAL FOR RESIDENCY RIGHT

Former junket boss Levo Chan's residency in Taiwan was revoked by a Taiwan court, according to media reports. In January 2022, Chan applied for an extension to stay based on family reunion grounds after being granted his residence permit in August 2020. However, the request for extension was denied due to his previous role as an advisor for Jinjiang, Fujian. He then filed an appeal but was denied. The court ruled that his residency permit be cancelled. Earlier this year, the former Tak Chun junket boss planned to flee to Taiwan as he caught wind that Macau prosecutors were building a case against him, a local court heard.

PROPERTY

RESIDENTIAL RENT DOWN, WHILE COMMERCIAL SPACES UP SLIGHTLY

AVERAGE rent for those with an area between 50 and 99.9 square meters and for those with a floor area between 100 and 149.9 square meters is MOP128 and MOP118 respectively, both down by 0.8% quarter-to-quarter.

For non-residential units, the average rent per square meter of usable area for shops increased by 0.4% quarter-to-quarter to MOP490 in the second quarter, with rental prices for those in Baixa de Macau (MOP687) and NAPE & Aterros da Baía da Praia Grande (MOP626) rising by 6.7% and 0.6% respectively.

Previously, international realty agency JLL Macau called for the government to drop some of the existing market-cooling measures to assist with economic revival. The call was based on the assumption that in the second half of this year, real property prices in Macau would see an average drop of 5% from existing levels that were already 10% short of the historical high.

For JLL, many of these tough measures were formulated some 10 years ago and were no longer appropriate given that the "ba-



ckdrop and the market have become so different."

On the other hand, the average rent for shops in NATAP (MOP409) and Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida (MOP349) dropped by 1.7% and 1.4% respectively.

The average rent per square meter of usable area for office units went down by 1.6% quarter-to-quarter to MOP305, which

le that for industrial units held steady at MOP122.

In comparison with the second quarter of 2022, the average rent for shops grew by 1.9%, while the average rent for residential units, office units and industrial units decreased by 5.8%, 4.4% and 0.8% respectively.

Centaline Property recently issued a statement noting that the demand for commercial

rental spaces in Old Taipa is gradually rebounding, with rent prices recovering up to 80% of pre-Covid levels. With the current vacancy rate being less than 3%, the realtor observed that vacant shops located along streets such as Rua Correia da Silva and Rua dos Clérigos are now difficult to find. As such, businesses are now turning to the less busy streets in the district. LV

FINANCE

International banking assets in Macau shrunk by 6.4% in Q2

RENATO MARQUES

AT the end of the second quarter (Q2) of this year, total international banking assets decreased 6.4% from the previous quarter (Q1) to MOP2,124.8 billion, the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) reported.

Within this total, external assets fell by 7.2% from Q1 to MOP1,546.4 billion, while local assets in foreign currencies dropped by 4.3% to MOP578.5 billion.

Concurrently, the major component of international assets, external non-bank loans, de-

creased by 7.7% to MOP624.0 billion.

The same report from AMCM also noted that at end-June 2023, the share of international assets in total banking assets decreased to 84.7% from 85.6% at end-March 2023, while the share of international liabilities in total banking liabilities fell to 82.6% from 83.4%.

Non-local currencies continued to be the dominant denomination in international banking transactions, with the shares of the pataca in total international assets and total international liabilities being 0.9%

and 0.6% respectively.

The Hong Kong dollar, the US dollar, the renminbi, and other foreign currencies accounted for 32.4%, 42.9%, 20.4%, and 3.5% of total international assets, while their respective shares in total international liabilities were 34.6%, 37.7%, 23.6% and 3.4%.

At the end of the first half of the year, the majority of external assets and liabilities of the local banking sector were related to Asia, with the mainland and Hong Kong accounting for 40.5% and 26.1% of total external assets respectively.

Portuguese-speaking coun-

tries and countries along the "Belt and Road" accounted for shares of 0.8% and 11.0% respectively.

On external liabilities, Hong Kong and the mainland accounted for 42.6% and 37.9% of the total respectively, while Portuguese-speaking countries and countries along the "Belt and Road" represented 0.6% and 6.8% respectively.

Besides Hong Kong and the mainland, major banking assets and liabilities are also located in the Cayman Islands, Singapore, and the UK.

The compilation of International Banking Statistics follows the methodology advocated by the Bank for International Settlements to facilitate Macau's participation in the "Locational International Banking Statistics" project of the international organization.

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Gov't reduces operational costs due to rent

RENATO MARQUES

THE government has announced that it is reducing rent and operational costs as much as possible for the office buildings where government departments are located.

In a reply to a written inquiry from lawmaker Leong Sun Iok, the director of the Financial Services Bureau (DSF), Iong Kong Leong said that such expenses have been dropping since 2019, with several services being relocated from rental offices to government-owned spaces.

Iong said that in 2019, the cost of leasing offices, warehouses, and parking spaces totaled approximately 70 million patacas. This amount dropped to 69 million patacas in 2020, 62 million patacas in 2021, and 57 million patacas last year.

The DSF director noted that rental expenses have dropped

by 18.6% when comparing 2022 to 2019. According to the latest forecast for this year, the estimated expenditure on rent is expected to be 54 million patacas.

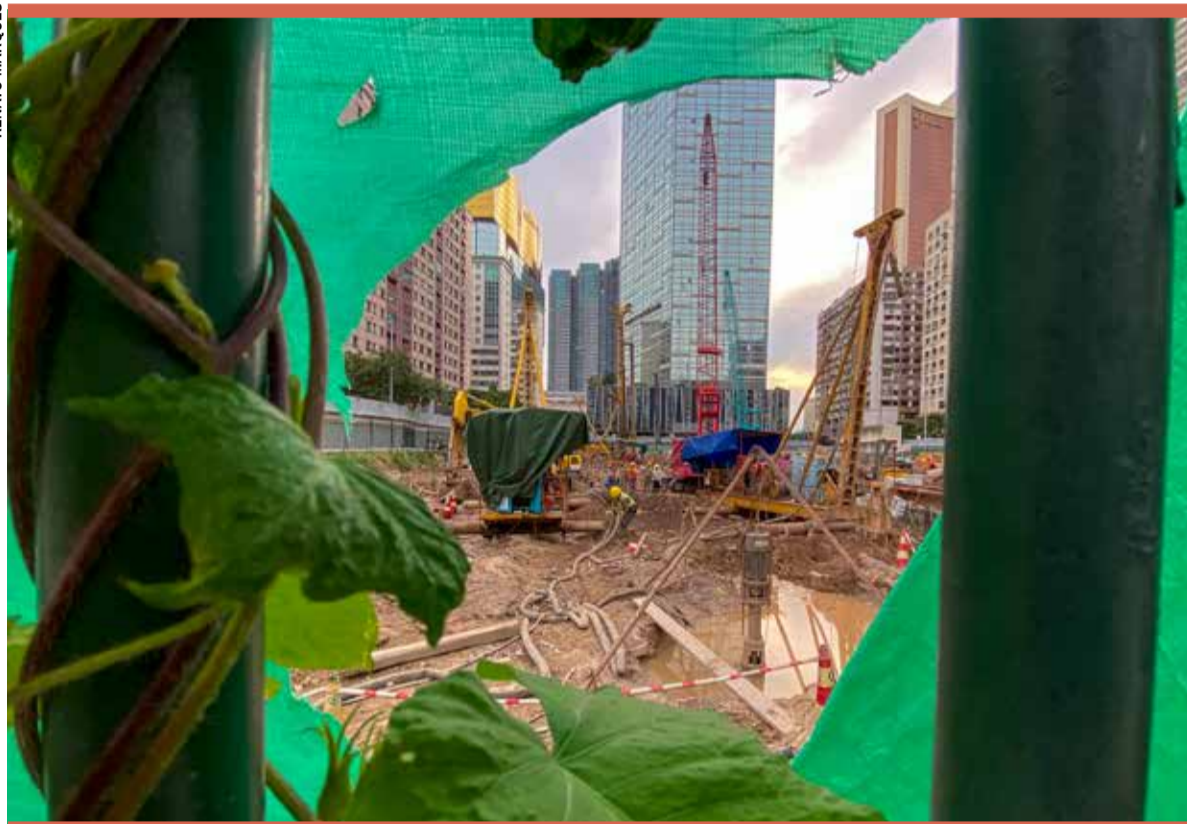
Iong also said the reduction in rental expenses will likely continue in the future as more government-owned spaces, currently under construction, are completed.

Listing some of the most significant projects – both planned and already under construction – Iong referenced the public facility building to be located at the land plot B6 of Zone A of the new landfills and the public office buildings being built at the plots 12 (A2/G) and 25 (A1/G) of NAPE.

There are also office buildings planned for the plot of land located near the former Co-tai Border Post and at Q-1D of ZAPE, recently discussed at the Urban Planning Committee.

According to DSF, in total, the facilities are expected to

RENATO MARQUES



create a usable area of over 130,000 square meters.

Iong also noted that, once

complete, priority will be given to the services that are currently located in rented spaces

as relocating such services will rapidly reduce the government's rental expenditure.

GAMING

JP Morgan forecasts August to hit another high in gaming revenue

RENATO MARQUES

ANALYSTS from the financial services firm JP Morgan Securities (Asia Pacific) Limited are forecasting that August will break the gross gaming revenue (GGR) record that was only set in July.

According to a report issued by the brokerage company about the first 13 days of this month, the local gaming market operators should have made some MOP7.2 billion, a sum that equates to a daily average of MOP553 million.

The report by the analysts DS Kim, Mufan Shi, and Selina Li also notes "Last week's GGR increased 7% week-on-week to MOP570 million-plus per day, compared to the approximately MOP530 million in the past few weeks, reflecting recovery from the bad weather," they said, referring to the heavy rainfall and threats of typhoon warnings. Most recently, the typhoons passing in the area did

RENATO MARQUES



not directly affect Macau. Macau's last signal 8 was raised in mid-July during the passage of typhoon Talim.

According to JP Morgan analysts, even more important than the forecast of another record month is the fact that mass GGR has recovered to become between 90 to 95% of pre-pandemic levels. They again suggested that they "expect it to ramp up to

100-percent-plus recovery by October."

July has so far been the best month for casinos in Macau since January 2020, with a monthly result of MOP16.662 billion (+9.6% from the previous month).

A week ago, the same brokerage company stated that, based on the results of the first six days of the month, revenues were slightly lower than

in July, but July results were partially offset by the typhoon Talim disruption.

Macau also saw a record-breaking result in the number of visitors entering the region on a single day (139,000), with visitor arrivals over the weekend recording the highest average daily arrivals since 2020, and the hotel occupancy rate also exceeding 90%.

GBA

COOPERATION ZONE ISSUES FINANCIAL SUPPORT SCHEME FOR CULTURAL INDUSTRY

STAFF REPORTER

THE Cooperation Zone has announced a financial support scheme for the development of the cultural tourism industry, providing assistance to the cultural tourism industry and related sectors.

The assistance will also issue a one-time bonus to hotel companies, travel agencies and tour guides who have qualified for the scheme.

The relevant support measures include a one-time payment of up to RMB5 million to enterprises and star-rated hotels that have been rated as national or provincial tourist resorts; and a one-time payment for travel agencies that meet the annual operating income and the number of tourists they receive.

Qualified tour guides in the Hengqin-Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone can receive a maximum of RMB30,000

At the same time, support is also provided for Macau cultural and tourism enter-

prises to settle in the Cooperation Zone. Such support measures include a one-time payment of RMB100,000 for enterprises that have been rated under Macau's 'Star Tourism Service Recognition Program' and who have operated for one year under the program.

Tour guides from Hong Kong and Macau will also be given a one-time payment between RMB20,000 and RMB 30,000.

Enterprises, institutions, and Macau associations that jointly organize cultural tourism forums, engage in cultural tourism promotion, and other exchange activities in the Cooperation Zone will receive a one-time reward of up to RMB200,000.

For companies in the Cooperation Zone that promote research tourism, healthcare tourism, and coastal tourism, or develop film and television, or fashion industries – especially documentaries and variety shows that positively reflect Hengqin and Macau or are shot in both regions – can receive a maximum subsidy of MOP300,000.

DSAT CLAIMS 86,000 VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS NOT ADEQUATELY CANCELED

RENATO MARQUES

THE Transport Bureau (DSAT) claims that approximately 86,000 vehicle registrations have not been properly canceled by the motor vehicle registration department. As a result, the same license plate number cannot be reused on the registration of another vehicle, representatives from the DSAT said to the Legislative Assembly First Standing Committee. The committee met on Monday to discuss the new bill on motor vehicle registration in detail.

According to the president of the committee, lawmaker Ella Lei, the new law will allow DSAT to resolve this matter and remove the registration data of vehicles that have been retired from use or otherwise disposed from the registry, so the license plate numbers can be reused.

According to the rules



in Macau, which follow the previous Portuguese system of issuing vehicle license plates, the numbering previously used an "M" as the primary letter followed by a combination from A to Z, and numbers from 0001 to 9999.

Due to the lack of available new numbers, in September of 2021, DSAT scrapped the use of the first fixed "M" and began issuing license plates with a combination of two letters starting from "AA" to allow for more combinations.

Once in force, the new law will allow DSAT to reuse registration numbers and revert to following the original system.

According to Lei, the government expects the new law to commence during the first quarter of next year.

STATS

IAS RECORDS NINE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES IN Q1

STAFF REPORTER

THE Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) has received reports of nine cases of domestic violence in the first quarter of this year.

According to IAS deputy director, Tang Yuk Wa, fewer than 10% of the victims were men.

Suspected cases of domestic violence in 2022 stood at 39, 19 of which were domestic violence cases involving a spouse, while 16 involved children, and three involved the elderly.

Data from the Women and Children's Affairs Committee showed that the average monthly number of suspected domestic violence cases was 3.3, a significant drop from 2021 figures (81).

Meanwhile, in a meeting with Hong Kong and mainland social

service workers, Caritas said that its support hotline service, launched in 2015, has seen significant increases in the number of callers.

According to data provided by the association, the number of calls increased from 3,417 in 2018 to 4,529 last year.

Earlier this year, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) expressed concerns over the city's inadequate protection against domestic violence and high reporting rate.

"The Committee is concerned that the laws against domestic violence do not apply to same-sex couples. It is also concerned about reports of insufficient application with low investigation and low prosecution rates despite a high report rate," the CESCR concluded.

AD

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EVENTS

CHINESE EXPERT IN GREEN FINANCE TO BE MIECF2023 KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Escholar and expert Professor Lan Hong will be the keynote speaker for the 2023 Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum & Exhibition (2023MIECF).

She is slated to deliver a speech on deepening co-operation on green finance and working together to achieve carbon neutrality at the opening ceremony tomorrow.

The speech tackles how to drive forward carbon reduction and create development opportunities through green finance.

Lan is the deputy director of the Eco-finance Research Centre of the Renmin University of China, deputy director of the Green Finance Branch of the Chinese Society for Environmental Sciences, and deputy director of the Green Finance Professional Committee of the China Association of Environmental Protection Industry.



Professor Lan Hong

Every year, MIECF invites prominent figures in global environmental sectors to give keynote addresses to lead the discussion on the latest developments in related fields to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and opinions.

With the theme, "Building an Ecological Civilization Through Innovative Initiatives," the four-day event aims to promote international exchanges and co-operation on environmental protection among different

sectors.

In a press conference yesterday, the organizer, Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute, said that this year's exhibition covers an area of more than 10,000 square meters, with a total of nearly 500 booths in seven exhibition areas, attracting more than 400 exhibitors. The exhibitors increased by more than 50%. 40 of these are overseas exhibitors, equating to 73% of overseas exhibitors prior to the pandemic.

Sands China supports Art Macao 2023 with vibrantly coloured artworks to inspire enthusiasm, hope and exhilaration

IN echoing the theme of Art Macao 2023, “The Statistics of Fortune,” Sands China has adopted a unique approach to exhibiting during a year defined by ‘restart’ and ‘hope.’ “Meet the Magic: In celebration of Disney 100 by Philip Colbert and Jason Naylor” is an exhibition featuring two renowned artists who have brought with them bursts of bright colours that represent the creation of hope and happiness, generating an exuberant atmosphere and cultural vitality for the community – tourists and residents alike.

“We’d like to use this opportunity to restart,” said Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd. “Colbert’s Mickey Lobster and Naylor’s OPN HEART and TECHNICOLOR Mickey installations serve as goodwill ambassadors that welcome guests visiting our resorts with crisp, magnificent colours and styles – greeting residents and visitors and showing Macao’s friendliness.”

He added: “The ‘Statistics of Fortune’ theme is thought-provoking; Disney is a century-old classic deeply rooted in the hearts of the people – something that was by no means predictable by big data. This inspired the exhibition team to look to Disney for inspiration when curating this special exhibition.”

Free to the public, the Meet the Magic exhibition features British contemporary pop artist Philip Colbert and American graffiti artist Jason Naylor each presenting their unique artistic interpretations of Mickey, in celebration of Disney’s 100th anniversary.

Philip Colbert is an artist who uses his mastery of pop art to revolutionize centuries of legends into his iconic larger-than-life lobster character, while Jason Naylor is known for employing a kaleidoscope of street-art colours to transform giant installations.

For this exhibition, their outdoor installations, each over 5 metres, are on display at Le Jardin and The Venetian Macao’s lagoon area, where they seamlessly merge innovation with a classic style. In addition, their vibrant indoor artworks



have transformed The Venetian Macao’s hotel lobby into a lively pop art showcase for this summer.

Co-organised with Forward Fashion Holdings, Meet the Magic’s grand display of large-scale artworks expresses Colbert’s and Naylor’s boundless creativity, conveys a message of positivity, explores timeless classics from a fresh perspective, and infuses contemporary hues into

traditional art forms.

As an extended venue for the exhibition, The Londoner Macao is featuring the brand new ASCE Diverse and Explorative Art Hub on Level 2, showcasing Disney’s commemorative products launching in Macao for the first time; the space also presents Colbert’s and Naylor’s new original works, providing a unique opportunity for all to enjoy the world of art.

“We’d like to show the world how culturally diverse Macao is and that we embrace all art forms. [...] It’s more than simply expanding the non-gaming aspect of our business. We are contributing to creating a more colorful spectrum of life in Macau,” said Dr. Wong.

“I think residents and tourists can expect a more vibrant Macau in the coming year,” he added.

THE INFLUENTIAL ARTISTS OF “MEET THE MAGIC”

Philip Colbert is a British contemporary artist who has gained a global following for his cartoon lobster persona and his masterful hyper pop history paintings, earning him the moniker the “godson of Andy Warhol.”

His work has received widespread acclaim in museums and galleries worldwide for his energetic new approach to painting and pop art theory.

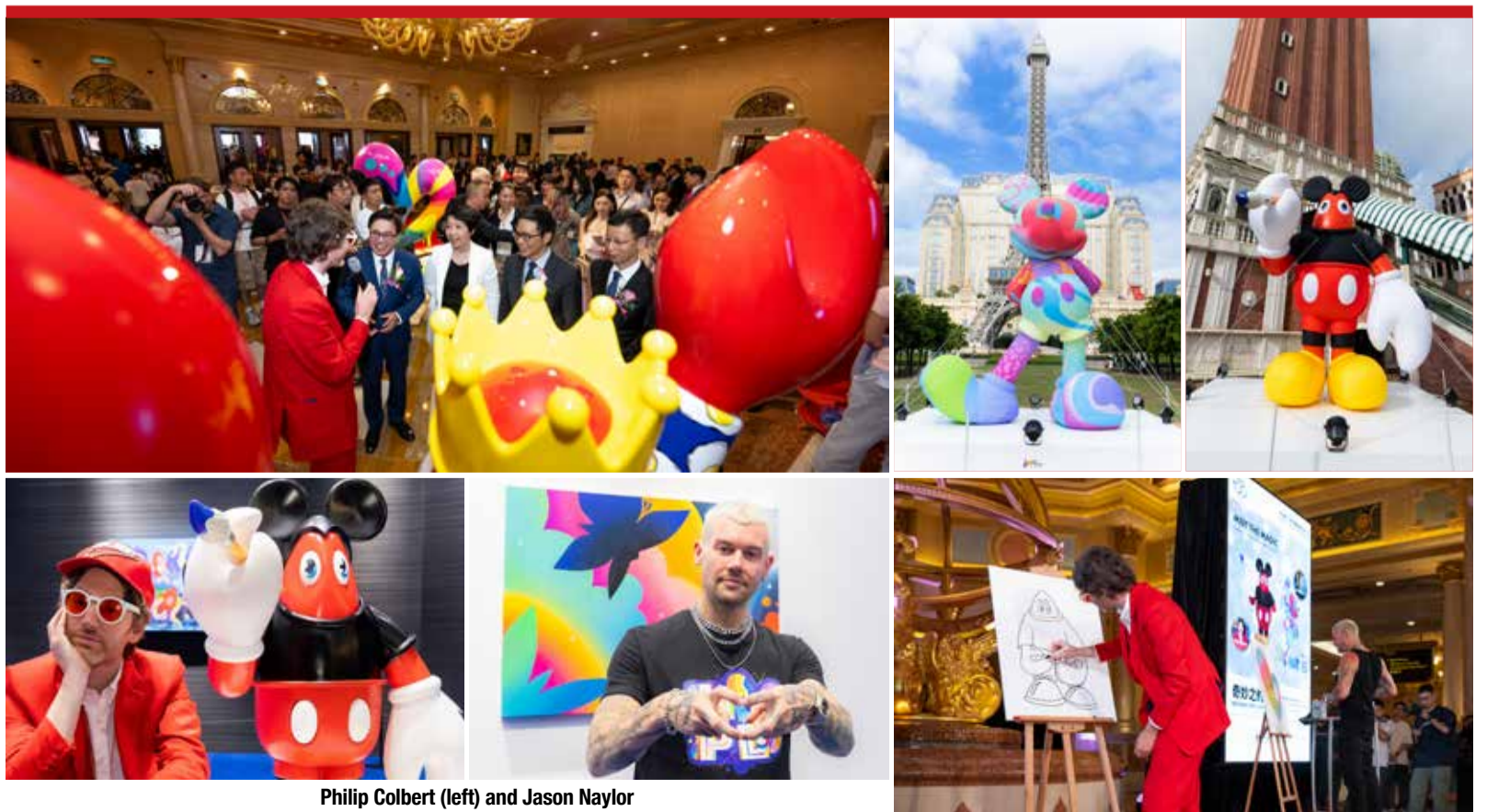
“My goal is to make people feel good, to spread kindness and love. If they feel good, they’ll pass that on; it’s a ripple effect,” he said when commenting on his artworks.

“Collaborating with Disney is really an interesting concept [...]. I am very excited to be part of the Meet the Magic show organized by Sands China, part of Art Macao 2023 [...],” said Colbert.

Jason Naylor is an internationally renowned and award-winning American graffiti artist, designer, and creative director based in New York City. His work consists of bright colours and rich blacks, and regularly contains messages of love and positivity, as he believes that kindness is the key to success.

Naylor said: “The emotions that matter to me are the positive ones. I want to spread positive vibes, optimism, love, and kindness, and I do it using bright colours. Bright colours actually help people to feel good [...] I want what you feel to be something positive.”

He added: “I’m absolutely thrilled to bring my OPN Heart to the vibrant city of Macau. [...] The culture in this dynamic city with history is incredibly unique and rich with great inspiration. I’m just genuinely grateful to be a part of this artistic celebration.”



Philip Colbert (left) and Jason Naylor

ECONOMY

No update on surging youth unemployment as economic decline deepens

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

CHINA'S government suspended giving an update on a possible spike in unemployment among young people as official data yesterday showed an economic decline deepened in July.

Meanwhile, the central bank cut a key interest rate in a sign of growing official urgency about shoring up economic growth that fell sharply in the three months ending in June.

Youth unemployment is sensitive after a survey in June found a record 21.3% of potential urban workers aged 16 to 24 couldn't find work after an economic rebound following the end of anti-virus controls fizzled out.

Publication of unemployment by age group "is suspended while the National Bureau of Statistics considers how it measures data," according to a bureau spokesperson, Fu Linghui. Fu said a survey found overall unemployment among urban workers was 5.3%, up 0.1 percentage points from June.

"The employment situation is generally stable," Fu said at a news conference.

Growth in consumer spending decelerated to 2.5% over a year earlier in July from the previous month's 3.1%, according to Fu.

Growth in factory output slowed to 3.7% from 4.4%, according to yesterday's data, as export demand plunged after U.S. and European central banks raised interest rates to cool inflation. Investment in factories, real estate and other fixed assets rose 3.8%, down from June's 3.4%.

"A decision to discontinue the youth unemployment figures just after they hit a record high doesn't inspire confidence," said Capital Economics in a report.

The People's Bank of China cut the interest rate on a one-week loan to banks to 1.8% from 1.9%.

"Today's cuts suggest that the authorities' concern about the state of the macroeconomy is mounting," said Robert Carnell of ING in a report. "But that doesn't mean that they are about to undertake unorthodox policy measures."

Economic growth slid to 0.8% over the previous quarter in the three months ending in June from 2.2% in the January-March period. That is equivalent to 3.2% annual growth, which would be among China's weakest in decades.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping's government is trying to revive economic activity without resorting to a large-scale stimulus, possibly for fear of reigniting a rise in debt levels they worry are dangerously high.

AP PHOTO



That is hampered by a slump in China's vast real estate industry following tighter government controls on debt levels at developers. Buyers are reluctant to commit when they are worried about possible job losses and whether construction of apartments they pay for might be suspended.

The ruling Communist Party is trying to revive business and consumer confidence by promising

to help entrepreneurs but has yet to announce major spending or other policy changes. Xi's government also is trying to revive interest among foreign investors, but business groups says companies are redirecting or delaying investments due to uncertainty about their status following an expansion of anti-spying rules and calls by Xi and other leaders for national economic self-reliance.

Exports in July plunged by an unusually large margin of 14.5% from a year earlier.

The country's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Qiang, expressed confidence in May that the country can hit the ruling party's annual growth target of "about 5%." Growth in the second half of the year would need to be markedly stronger than the first half to achieve that. **MDT/AP**

WEATHER

Vast swath of northeastern China threatened by flooding as rivers rise above warning levels

Avast swath of northeastern China is threatened by flooding as at least 90 rivers have risen above warning levels and 24 have already overflowed their banks, state media reported yesterday.

Crews are standing by to defend homes and farmland across the Songliao Basin north of Beijing, which encompasses more than 1.2 million square kilometers (482,200 square miles).

The area includes parts of four provinces and several major cities with a total population of almost 100 million. Tens of thousands have already been moved to safety.

XINHUA



Road repair works in the aftermath of flood waters from an overflowing river in Mayan Township of Shangzhi City in Heilongjiang, last week

Reservoirs have been partly drained and overflow areas prepared to

handle the high waters, the reports said. Ten rivers are already running at his-

torically high levels, they said.

Much of China is having

a particularly damp summer, with 142 people killed by flooding in July and dozens more this month.

In the western city of Xi'an, the death toll from a landslide rose by three to 24 yesterday with three others still missing. Rescue teams totaling 980 people with dogs were continuing the search.

The mudslide and a flash flood Friday evening also damaged a highway and knocked out power to 900 households.

Parts of China suffer heavy rains and flooding every summer, but this year other areas have also been affected, including the capital, Beijing. That's

partly the result of two massive typhoons that battered Japan and the Korean Peninsula.

Beijing avoided more severe damage by diverting water into neighboring Hebei province, drawing the ire of residents there whose crops and homes were heavily damaged.

China's deadliest and most destructive floods in recent history were in 1998, when 4,150 people died, most of them along the Yangtze River but also many along the Nen and Songhua rivers in the Songliao Basin.

In 2021, more than 300 people died in flooding in the central province of Henan. Record rainfall inundated the provincial capital of Zhengzhou, turning streets into rushing rivers and flooding a subway line, trapping passengers in the cars. **MDT/AP**

SOUTH KOREA

Yoon calls for strong security cooperation with US, Japan ahead of Camp David summit

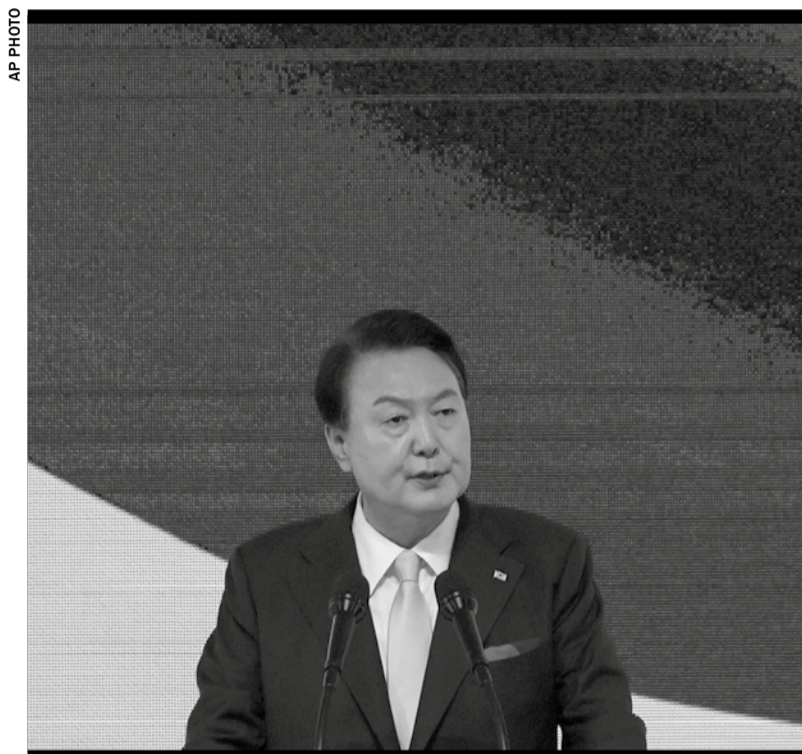
HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL,
SOUTH KOREA

SOUTH Korea's president called for deeper security cooperation with the U.S. and Japan to address North Korea's nuclear threat, saying yesterday that his upcoming summit with the U.S. and Japanese leaders at Camp David will "set a new milestone in trilateral cooperation."

It will be the first time for the leaders of the three countries to gather specifically for a trilateral summit, rather than on the sidelines of international meetings. This suggests they are serious about boosting their ties in the midst of complex regional challenges such as North Korea's advancing nuclear arsenal and Washington's strategic rivalry with Beijing.

In their summit Friday at the U.S. presidential retreat in Maryland, President Joe Biden, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida are expected to announce plans for expanded military cooperation on ballistic missile defense and technology development, according to two senior Biden administration officials.

The summit "will set a new milestone in trilateral cooperation contributing to peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula and in the Indo-Pacific region," Yoon said in a televised speech in Seoul.



The speech marked the 78th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japan's 35-year colonial rule in 1945. Past South Korean presidents commonly used Liberation Day speeches to ask Japan to make fresh apologies for its colonial actions. But Yoon, a conservative who has pushed to resolve historical grievances as a way to boost Seoul-Washington-Tokyo cooperation, instead explained why improved ties with Japan were needed.

Yoon said the seven rear bases provided to the U.S.-led U.N. Command by Japan serve as "the greatest deterrent" that keeps

North Korea from invading South Korea. He said a North Korean invasion would trigger an immediate, automatic intervention by the U.N. Command and that the bases in Japan have the necessary land, sea and air capabilities.

"As partners that cooperate on security and the economy, South Korea and Japan will be able to jointly contribute to peace and prosperity across the globe while collaborating and exchanging in a future-oriented manner," Yoon said.

He said the importance of Seoul-Washington-Tokyo security cooperation is growing on the Ko-

rean Peninsula and in the region.

"In order to fundamentally block North Korea's nuclear and missile threats, the Republic of Korea, the United States and Japan must closely cooperate on reconnaissance assets and share North Korean nuclear weapon and missile data in real time," Yoon said.

When they met at the margins of a regional conference in Cambodia in November, Yoon, Biden and Kishida said they intended to share North Korea missile warning data to improve each country's ability to detect and assess the threat posed by incoming missiles. In June, their defense chiefs said they recognized efforts to activate such a data-sharing mechanism before the end of the year.

The Camp David summit is expected to anger North Korea, which has argued that U.S. moves to bolster military cooperation with South Korea and Japan are pushing it to reinforce its own military capability. North Korea views U.S.-led military drills on and near the Korean Peninsula as an invasion rehearsal.

BEIJING DENOUNCES SUMMIT

China, which is intensely sensitive to what it perceives as other countries ganging up on it, denounced the summit.

"China opposes relevant countries forming various cliques and their practices of exacerbating confrontation and jeopardizing

other countries' strategic security," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a briefing yesterday. "We hope the countries concerned will go with the trend of the times and do something conducive to regional peace, stability and prosperity."

South Korea has maintained that its push to strengthen its alliance with the U.S. and participate in U.S.-led regional initiatives won't target China, its biggest trading partner.

Worries about North Korea's nuclear program have grown since the North openly threatened to use nuclear weapons in conflicts with its rivals and conducted about 100 missile tests since the start of last year. Many of the missiles were nuclear-capable weapons that place both South Korea and Japan within striking distance and could potentially reach the U.S. mainland. South Korea and Japan together host about 80,000 U.S. troops.

In response to North Korea's missile tests, the United States and South Korea have expanded their military drills and resumed some trilateral training involving Japan.

South Korea, the U.S. and Japan have held a trilateral leaders' meeting a total of 12 times since 1994, but all were on the sidelines of international conferences, according to South Korea's presidential office.

This week's trilateral summit comes as ties between Seoul and Tokyo have eased significantly in recent months. In March, Yoon took a major step toward resolving bilateral wrangling over colonial-era Korean forced laborers, despite vehement opposition at home by some victims and his liberal rivals. Yoon has argued that Seoul and Tokyo share challenges such as the intensifying U.S.-China competition and global supply chain problems as well as North Korea's nuclear program. **MDT/AP**

JAPAN

A strong tropical storm is lashing parts of country disrupting holiday travel

A strong tropical storm lashed central and western Japan with heavy rain and high winds yesterday, causing flooding and power blackouts and paralyzing air and ground transportation while many people were traveling for a Buddhist holiday week.

The storm weakened from Typhoon Lan early in the morning and made landfall near Cape Shionomisaki in the central

prefecture of Wakayama, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency. Yesterday afternoon, it was just south of Fuku-chiyama city and had sustained winds of up to 90 kph as it headed north. It was then expected to veer east toward Hokkaido over waters between Japan and the Korean Peninsula, the JMA said.

NHK public television said 20 people, many of

them elderly, were injured in five prefectures near the storm's path — Hyogo, Osaka, Kyoto, Shiga and Wakayama.

The storm caused rivers to overflow, damaged some buildings and paralyzed traffic. In Maizuru in northern Kyoto prefecture, a flooded river sent muddy water flowing into some houses. In Nara, just south of Kyoto, scaffolding on one building collapse

d, and a partial wall collapse at a train station in Tsuruhashi halted local train services.

Local municipalities advised more than 230,000 residents to take shelter in safer buildings such as community centers.

Up to 35 centimeters (13.7 inches) of rainfall was forecast in the Tokai region in central Japan through Wednesday morning. The JMA urged residents in the

area to avoid unessential outings and warned of potential mudslides, flooding and thunderstorms.

More than 50,000 homes were without power in nine prefectures in the central and western regions earlier yesterday, but electricity had been restored to three-quarters of them by late afternoon.

The storm hit Japan in the middle of the Bon Buddhist holiday week, affecting many Japanese who were traveling to visit their families and relatives, as transportation and event operators in the storm's predicted path decided to suspend services.

Central Japan Railway Co. said Shinkansen bullet

train operations between Nagoya in central Japan and Okayama in western Japan were suspended yesterday, and service between Tokyo and Nagoya was reduced. Expressways in the region were also closed, and hundreds of domestic flights were canceled.

Representatives from 10 prefectures canceled their plans to attend an annual memorial marking the Aug. 15 end of World War II. Games scheduled to be played yesterday in Japan's hugely popular annual high school baseball tournament, held at Koshien stadium in Hyogo prefecture, were postponed to today. **MDT/AP**

USA | EXPLAINER

How a law associated with mobsters is central to charges against Trump

FULTON County District Attorney Fani Willis opened her investigation into Donald Trump after the release of a recording of a January 2021 phone call between Trump and Georgia's secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger.

Trump suggested during the call that Raffensperger, a Republican and the state's top elections official, could help "find" the votes needed to overturn his narrow loss to Democrat Joe Biden.

More than two years later, the indictment brought this week by a grand jury went far beyond that phone call, alleging a web of crimes committed by Trump and others. Willis used Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations, or RICO, law to charge Trump and 18 associates for allegedly participating in a wide-ranging conspiracy to overturn the state's 2020 election results.

She told reporters late Monday that she intended to try all 19 defendants together and noted her prosecutors' experience with racketeering cases, saying this was the 11th RICO case brought by her office. Willis became district attorney in 2021.

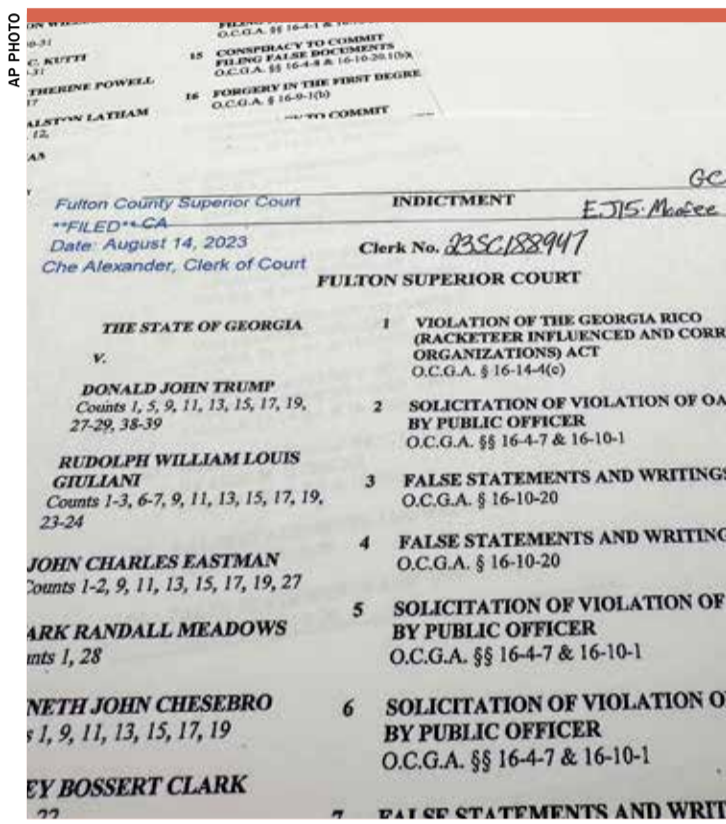
Here's a look at how the law works:

HOW LAW AGAINST MOBSTERS APPLIES TO TRUMP?

The federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act originated in 1970 as a tool to fight organized crime. The law enabled prosecutors to target people in positions of authority within a criminal organization, not just lower-level people doing the dirty work.

But its use was never meant to be limited exclusively to organized crime. The U.S. Supreme Court noted in a 1989 opinion that the law was drafted "broadly enough to encompass a wide range of criminal activity, taking many different forms and likely to attract a broad array of perpetrators."

Within a few years of the



The indictment in Georgia against former President Donald Trump

federal law taking effect, states began passing their own RICO laws. Generally speaking, RICO laws allow prosecutors to charge multiple people who commit separate crimes while working toward a common goal.

WHAT DOES GEORGIA'S RICO LAW SAY?

Georgia's RICO Act, adopted in 1980, makes it a crime to participate in, acquire or maintain control of an "enterprise" through a "pattern of racketeering activity" or to conspire to do so. It's important to note that the alleged scheme does not have to have been successful for a RICO charge to stick.

An "enterprise" can be a single person or a group of associated individuals with a common goal. "Racketeering activity" means to commit, attempt to commit — or to solicit, coerce or intimidate someone else to commit — one of more than three dozen state crimes listed in the law. At least two such acts are required to meet the standard of a "pattern of racketeering activity," meaning prosecutors have to prove that a person has engaged in two or more related criminal acts as part of their participation in an

enterprise to be convicted under RICO.

The U.S. Supreme Court has said that federal RICO allegations must show continuity, that is to say a series of related underlying acts over an extended period of time, not just a few weeks or months. But the Georgia Supreme Court has made clear there is no such requirement in the state law.

WHY USE THE RICO STATUTE?

"I'm a fan of RICO," Willis said during a news conference in August 2022 as she announced a RICO indictment against more than two dozen alleged gang members.

Willis has said jurors want to know all the facts behind an alleged crime and that a RICO indictment enables prosecutors to provide a complete picture of all the alleged illegal activity. A narrative introduction allows prosecutors to tell a story that can include a lot of detailed information that might not relate to specific crimes but is relevant to the broader alleged scheme.

RICO charges also carry a heavy potential sentence that can be added on top of the penalty for the underlying acts.

In Georgia, it's a felony conviction that carries a prison term of five to 20 years; a fine of \$25,000 or three times the amount of money gained from the criminal activity, whichever is greater; or both a prison sentence and a fine.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES IN USING RICO STATUTE?

J. Tom Morgan used the Georgia RICO statute to prosecute a corrupt sheriff when he was the district attorney in DeKalb County, which neighbors Fulton County. He said one challenge is explaining to a jury what the RICO law is and how it works.

"Everybody knows what a murder case is, what a rape case is, what a theft case is. But RICO is not in the everyday vernacular," he said. "You don't see a RICO charge on a television show about crime."

DOES WILLIS HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH RICO CASES?

Yes. When she was an assistant district attorney in the Fulton County district attorney's office, Willis was a lead prosecutor in a RICO case against a group of Atlanta public school educators in a cheating scandal. After a months-long trial, a jury in April 2015 convicted 11 former educators of racketeering for their roles in a scheme to inflate students' scores on standardized exams.

Since becoming district attorney in January 2021, she has brought several RICO indictments against alleged gang members, including several high-profile rap artists.

Lawyer John Floyd, a nationally known RICO expert in Atlanta, helped Willis with the school cheating case. Soon after opening the investigation into potential illegal meddling in the 2020 election in Georgia, she engaged him to serve as a special assistant district attorney to help with any racketeering cases her office might pursue. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1977 ROCK AND ROLL 'KING' PRESLEY DIES



Elvis Presley, whose singing and style revolutionized popular music in the 1950s, has died.

Presley, 42, was discovered slumped in a bathroom at his mansion in Memphis, Tennessee on Tuesday.

He was rushed to the Baptist Memorial Hospital in Memphis but was pronounced dead on arrival.

The Tennessee state pathologist, Dr. Jerry Francisco, said a post mortem examination of the singer's body had revealed he died of cardiac arrhythmia - a form of heart attack.

"The precise cause has not yet been determined for the cardiac arrhythmia," Dr Francisco said.

"It may take several days to several weeks to determine that specific cause and in some cases it never is determined."

The three-hour examination uncovered no sign of any other diseases or any drug abuse, Dr Francisco added.

Presley was divorced from his wife Priscilla in 1973 but it was rumoured that he had recently become engaged to Ginger Alden, 20.

She was reportedly spotted wearing a \$50,000 (£20,315) diamond engagement ring from Presley.

Ms Alden and other members of his entourage were at Graceland when he collapsed.

There had been indications of Elvis Presley's declining health for some time.

Earlier this year the singer had cancelled several performances in Louisiana and returned to Memphis suffering what his doctors termed "exhaustion".

No arrangements have been announced yet for his funeral which is scheduled for Friday.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Thousands gathered to file past Elvis Presley's body which lay in state at his mansion, Graceland, the day after his death.

Although it was officially stated that he died of heart failure there has always been speculation that an overdose of cocaine and barbiturates also played a part.

Since his divorce from Priscilla in 1973 he had relied heavily on prescription drugs and was known to be a junk-food addict, gaining a considerable amount of weight.

During his lifetime he sold over 300 million albums and made 33 films.

His death has been lucrative for the "Elvis industry".

In 2001 he came top in US magazine Forbes' poll of "Richest Deceased Celebrities".

It put Elvis estate's earnings in 2000 at \$35m (£23m) - \$15m (£10m) of it from Graceland admission fees.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Take time to deal with the concerns of children. You may find yourself changing crowds. Your involvement with groups will raise your self esteem.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20

You need to get involved in groups that offer physical activities. Be sure to use your charm and diplomacy when dealing with potential new clients.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21

Use your high energy and dynamic approach to win favors from superiors. Renovations to your domestic scene will pay high rewards.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Emotional upset at work will set you back. You should be doing something special with children. Travel opportunities must be taken advantage of.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You can meet new and exciting friends who will provide mental stimulation. Concern yourself with legal matters and formulating contracts rather than finalizing your objectives.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Your need to be in a leadership position will help you surpass any rivals you might encounter. You can meet potential new mates, but make sure that they aren't already committed to someone else.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Avoid disputes with family; their complaints can't change anything anyway. Turn your present relationship around or start a new one.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Find ways to make extra cash. Start making things or reusing rather than buying ready made. Try to calm down and listen to your partner's complaints.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You may find it difficult to communicate with someone at work. You may find yourself in a predicament with family members.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Relationships may be hard to handle. Help an older member with a problem that faces them. Watch your weight gain due to water retention.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18

If you're uncertain of your feelings, keep your opinions to yourself. You will be erratic and quite likely to make personal mistakes.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Don't jump the gun; you may find yourself getting angry at the wrong person. Renovations to your domestic scene will pay high rewards.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

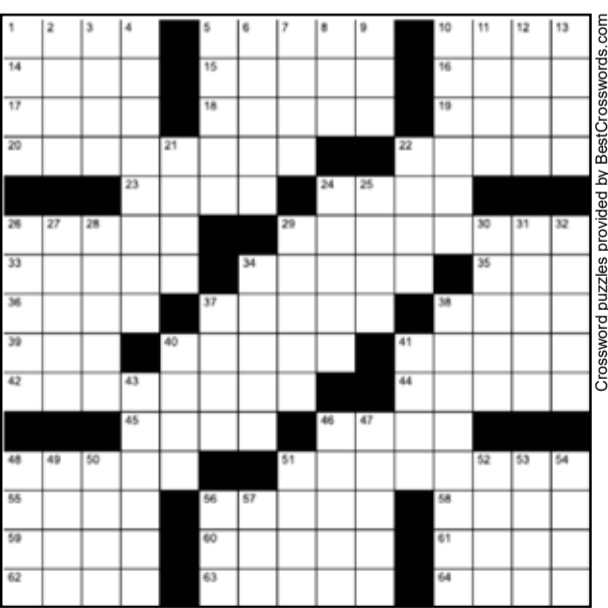
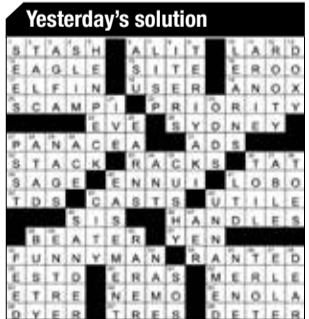
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	24	34	cloudy
Changchun	20	30	fine
Chengdu	24	33	showers
Chongqing	29	37	fine
Fuzhou	27	35	rain
Guangzhou	26	34	thunderstorms
Guiyang	20	30	showers
Haikou	26	33	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	25	33	rain
Harbin	21	30	cloudy
Hefei	23	33	thunderstorms
Nanjing	25	32	fine
Shanghai	27	33	rain
Taipei	26	30	rain
Wuhan	24	35	fine
Hong Kong	28	32	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	15	27	overcast
Frankfurt	18	28	thunderstorms
Paris	18	28	cloudy
London	15	25	overcast
New York	22	29	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- ___-Ball; 5- Follow, as advice; 10- Drama; 14- Small gull; 15- Dark tertiary color; 16- Chantilly product; 17- Time to give up; 18- Bridal path; 19- Editor Wintour; 20- Performs surgery; 22- Scoff; 23- Stares at; 24- Exultation; 26- Home ___; Culin movie; 29- Makers; 33- Flat circular plates; 34- Song of joy; 35- Filled pastry crust; 36- Beehive State; 37- Philosopher Kierkegaard; 38- "Shane" star; 39- Albanian coin; 40- Apportion; 41- Big; 42- Peaceful; 44- External; 45- Yours and mine; 46- Small fastener; 48- Light wood; 51- Knockout punch; 55- ___ soup yet?; 56- Bergen dummy; 58- Actor Lugosi; 59- Large jug or pitcher; 60- Male duck; 61- Regan's dad; 62- Actress Sofer; 63- Lustful deity; 64- Vogue rival;

DOWN 1- WWII battle site; 2- Retain; 3- Bald eagle's relative; 4- Establish firmly; 5- Diminish; 6- Weeps; 7- Throw; 8- Hooter; 9- Compass dir.; 10- Heavenly body; 11- Alley; 12- Skin disorder; 13- Planetary revolution; 21- Affirmative votes; 22- Actor Connerly; 24- Welcome; 25- The Tower of Pisa does this; 26- Mature; 27- Unit of volume; 28- City near Kobe; 29- Christmas song; 30- Dizzying designs; 31- Crest; 32- Passover meal; 34- Ancient Greek city-state; 37- Insult; 38- Praiseworthy; 40- Marine shade; 41- Rich soil; 43- Cosa ___; 46- Like a tree trunk or a jipping dog; 47- U-Haul competitor; 48- Coffin support; 49- ___ forgive our debtors; 50- Legal claim; 51- Warmth; 52- Faint, with "over"; 53- Airline to Tel Aviv; 54- Hard to find; 56- Radical '60s grp.; 57- Heston's org.;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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Nam Long
HKD3,988,000 2 beds 1 bath

Va Fat
HKD 3,980,000 2 bed 1 bath

AD



MUSIC

THREE WAYS AI IS TRANSFORMING MUSIC

JASON PALAMARA,
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

EACH fall, I begin my course on the intersection of music and artificial intelligence by asking my students if they're concerned about AI's role in composing or producing music.

So far, the question has always elicited a resounding "yes."

Their fears can be summed up in a sentence: AI will create a world where music is plentiful, but musicians get cast aside.

In the upcoming semester, I'm anticipating a discussion about Paul McCartney, who in June 2023 announced that he and a team of audio engineers had used machine learning to uncover a "lost" vocal track of John Lennon by separating the instruments from a demo recording.

But resurrecting the voices of long-dead artists is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what's possible – and what's already being done.

In an interview, McCartney admitted that AI represents a "scary" but "exciting" future for music. To me, his mix of consternation and exhilaration is spot on.

Here are three ways AI is changing the way music gets made – each of which could threaten human musicians in various ways:

1. SONG COMPOSITION

Many programs can already generate music with a simple prompt from the user, such as "Electronic Dance with a Warehouse Groove."

Fully generative apps train AI models on extensive databases

of existing music. This enables them to learn musical structures, harmonies, melodies, rhythms, dynamics, timbres and form, and generate new content that stylistically matches the material in the database.

There are many examples of these kinds of apps. But the most successful ones, like Boomy, allow nonmusicians to generate music and then post the AI-generated results on Spotify to earn money. Spotify recently removed many of these Boomy-generated tracks, claiming that this would protect human artists' rights and royalties.

The two companies quickly came to an agreement that allowed Boomy to re-upload the tracks. But the algorithms powering these apps still have a troubling ability to infringe upon existing copyright, which might go unnoticed to most users. After all, basing new music on a data set of existing music is bound to cause noticeable similarities between the music in the data set and the generated content.

Furthermore, streaming services like Spotify and Amazon Music are naturally incentivized to develop their own AI music-generation technology. Spotify, for instance, pays 70% of the revenue of each stream to the artist who created it. If the company could generate that music with its own algorithms, it could cut human artists out of the equation altogether.

Over time, this could mean more money for giant streaming services, less money for

musicians – and a less human approach to making music.

2. MIXING AND MASTERING

Machine-learning-enabled apps that help musicians balance all of the instruments and clean up the audio in a song – what's known as mixing and mastering – are valuable tools for those who lack the experience, skill or resources to pull off professional-sounding tracks.

Over the past decade, AI's integration into music production has revolutionized how music is mixed and mastered. AI-driven apps like Landr, Cryo Mix and iZotope's Neutron can automatically analyze tracks, balance audio levels and remove noise.

These technologies streamline the production process, allowing musicians and producers to focus on the creative aspects of their work and leave some of the technical drudgery to AI.

While these apps undoubtedly take some work away from professional mixers and producers, they also allow professionals to quickly complete less lucrative jobs, such as mixing or mastering for a local band, and focus on high-paying commissions that require more finesse. These apps also allow musicians to produce more professional-sounding work without involving an audio engineer they can't afford.

3. INSTRUMENTAL AND VOCAL REPRODUCTION

Using "tone transfer" algorithms via apps like Mawf, musicians can transform the sound of one instrument into another.

Thai musician and engineer Yaboi Hanoi's song "Enter Demons & Gods," which won the third international AI Song Contest in 2022, was unique in that it was influenced not only by Thai mythology, but also by the sounds of native Thai musical instruments, which have a non-Western system of intonation. One of the most technically exciting aspects of Yaboi Hanoi's entry was the reproduction of a traditional Thai woodwind instrument – the pi nai – which was resynthesized to perform the track.

A variant of this technology lies at the core of the Vocaloid voice synthesis software, which allows users to produce convincingly human vocal tracks with swappable voices.

Unsavoury applications of this technique are popping up outside of the musical realm. For example, AI voice swapping has been used to scam people out of money.

But musicians and producers can already use it to realistically reproduce the sound of any instrument or voice imaginable. The downside, of course, is that this technology can rob instrumentalists of the opportunity to perform on a recorded track.

AI'S WILD WEST MOMENT

While I applaud Yaboi Hanoi's victory, I have to wonder if it will encourage musicians to use AI to fake a cultural connection where none exists.

In 2021, Capitol Music Group made headlines by signing an "AI rapper" that had been given the avatar of a Black male cyborg, but which was really the work of

Factory New non-Black software engineers. The backlash was swift, with the record label roundly excoriated for blatant cultural appropriation.

But AI musical cultural appropriation is easier to stumble into than you might think. With the extraordinary size of songs and samples that comprise the data sets used by apps like Boomy – see the open source "Million Song Dataset" for a sense of the scale – there's a good chance that a user may unwittingly upload a newly generated track that pulls from a culture that isn't their own, or cribs from an artist in a way that too closely mimics the original. Worse still, it won't always be clear who is to blame for the offense, and current U.S. copyright laws are contradictory and woefully inadequate to the task of regulating these issues.

These are all topics that have come up in my own class, which has allowed me to at least inform my students of the dangers of unchecked AI and how to best avoid these pitfalls.

At the same time, at the end of each fall semester, I'll again ask my students if they're concerned about an AI takeover of music. At that point, and with a whole semester's experience investigating these technologies, most of them say they're excited to see how the technology will evolve and where the field will go.

Some dark possibilities do lie ahead for humanity and AI. Still, at least in the realm of musical AI, there is cause for some optimism – assuming the pitfalls are avoided. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

FOOTBALL | WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

A semifinal is the here and now for the Australia-England rivalry, not the Ashes

JOHN PYE, BRISBANE

Wednesday, 18:00
Australia v England
H 1.91, D 7.5, A 3.5

ODDSCHECKER.COM

THIS is Australia's Matildas against England's Lionesses. The Women's World Cup semifinals. The here and the now.

Both teams want to be clear, it's not one of those clashes for the Ashes that have come to represent an intense international sporting rivalry dating back to the 1800s.

That began with the burning of some bails — small wooden pegs that sit atop cricket stumps — after a team of English gentry lost to a squad of colonial upstarts from Australia.

This is about an Australia team led by superstar striker Sam Kerr — who has been injured for most of the tournament but will play some part in the game — against England defender Millie Bright and her European champions.

AP PHOTO



Kerr and Bright are teammates at Chelsea and have combined to win titles for the London-based club, but they're playing off here for a spot in the World Cup final against Spain.

England lost semifinals at the 2015 and 2019 Women's World Cups. Australia is into the final four for the first time, and aiming to be just the second host to win the title on home soil.

Women's soccer has been making its own history in England, where the Lionesses' run to the European Championship title in 2022 captured the nation's attention. And it's making history in Australia, where the Matildas have twice attracted crowds exceeding 75,000 in this tournament and will again tonight.

The 7-6 penalty shootout win over fifth-ranked France last Satur-

day in Brisbane was the highest-rating program on Australian television in 2023. Local media reported that the shootout pulled the biggest domestic audience for a sports event since the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

As much as fans and the media have tried to frame it a fresh chapter in the Ashes, an England squad with a Dutch head coach and a Matildas roster with a Swedish head coach have repeatedly said their biggest rivalries in women's soccer extend well beyond these two countries.

As soon as England had clinched a 2-1 comeback win over Colombia in the quarterfinals to ensure a match against Australia, coach Sarina Wiegman was asked what she knew about the Ashes rivalry. She said she'd check with the team and staff.

On Tuesday, at a pre-match news conference in Sydney that ran into the 21st minute of Spain's 2-1 semifinal win over Sweden in New Zealand, Wiegman said the feedback related to cricket and

rugby and netball, and "we didn't feel that rivalry that much."

Bright said she couldn't think of a previous England vs. Australia encounter, in any sport, sticking in her memory. What she's looking forward to is playing in front of a capacity crowd at Stadium Australia, despite knowing her opposition will have overwhelming support.

"As an England team there's always pressure and it's something you embrace," she said.

Bright recalled the extra lift big crowds gave England in the European Championship.

"It's the semifinal. It's the World Cup," she said. "You want that environment, you want it to be intense, you want it to be noisy."

England's only loss under Wiegman, who guided the Netherlands to the final in 2019, was against Australia in a friendly in April.

For 10th-ranked Australia, that 2-0 away win was part of a sequence that also included wins over Spain and France that boosted confidence. **MDT/AP**


AD

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OPINION

The Conversation

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DISCRIMINATION TOOK A HEAVY TOLL ON ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS DURING PANDEMIC

Experiencing discrimination significantly harmed the well-being of Asian and Asian American college students in the U.S. during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

That's the key finding of our study, which compared over 6,000 survey responses from Asian and Asian American students who took the National College Health Assessment – an annual survey of student health behaviors – in the fall of 2019 and the fall of 2020. Our study focused on only on Asians and Asian Americans. Others have found that both Asian and Native American ethnic groups experienced the highest rates of COVID-19-related discrimination.

We found that Asian and Asian American students experienced high levels of stressors during the COVID-19 pandemic. By fall 2020, 9% had a loved one who had died from COVID-19, 7% reported experiencing discriminatory behavior because of the pandemic, and 61% had pandemic-related financial stress. Compared with 2019, Asian students in 2020 reported significantly more insomnia and psychological distress.

We then determined what factors most accounted for students' poor mental health. We also tested whether the impact of these factors changed with the stressors of the pandemic.

In 2019, 11 factors were significant predictors of suicidality – that is, thoughts of suicide and attempts – in Asian students. Some of these factors are variables mental health professionals know to screen for: diagnosed depression, loneliness, and higher alcohol and drug use. But we found other significant predictors of suicidality – food insecurity, hours of screen time and experiencing discrimination – that are not often assessed in health settings. We also found variables that protected mental health. These included sleeping well, exercising and spending time with loved ones.

In 2020, only three factors were significant predictors of suicide – depression, loneliness and discrimination. The impact that experiencing discrimination had on suicidality also almost doubled, and there were no longer any significant protective factors.

We wanted to understand the experiences of Asian and Asian American students for two reasons. First, Asian college students are the racial group with the greatest unmet mental health need. Only 20% of Asian college students diagnosed with a mental health disorder receive treatment, compared with 40% of students overall.

Second, in 2020 there was a sharp increase in anti-Asian hate incidents. For example, the nonprofit Stop AAPI Hate, which tracks incidents of hate and discrimination against Asian Americans, saw a jump in reported incidents from about 3,800 annually before the pandemic to over 6,600 after the first year of the pandemic.

These incidents came at a time when former President Trump was associating COVID-19 with Asians by calling it "the China virus" or "kung flu."

From 2016 to 2020, suicide was the leading cause of death among Asian adolescents. To reduce deaths from suicide, researchers must first understand what individual factors increase or decrease its likelihood.

Our research shows that experiencing loneliness and discrimination significantly harmed Asian students' mental health. This finding is true in typical years, such as 2019, but especially in times of acute social turmoil.

These findings provide insight on how universities and health care providers can better support students' mental health by addressing the psychological impact of experiencing racism.

Now that researchers better understand what predicts psychological distress in Asian American students, the next steps are to apply this information. Future research is needed to understand better how therapy that supports healing from racial discrimination could support students' mental health.

Research should also evaluate how treatments aimed at improving sleep quality could support Asian students' mental health. These interventions could improve mental health especially in times of social turmoil.

HAWAII WORKS TO IDENTIFY 99 CONFIRMED DEAD AFTER MAUI WILDFIRES AS TEAMS INTENSIFY SEARCH

THE BUZZ

Hawaii officials worked painstakingly to identify the 99 people confirmed killed in wildfires that ravaged Maui and expected to release the first names yesterday, even as teams intensified the search for more dead in neighborhoods reduced to ash.

A week after a blaze tore through historic Lahaina, many who survived have started moving into hundreds of hotel rooms set aside for displaced locals while donations of food, ice, water and other essentials have poured in.

Crews using cadaver dogs have scoured about 25% of the search area, the police chief said Monday. Gov. Josh Green asked for pa-

tience and space to do the search properly as authorities became overwhelmed with requests to visit the burn area.

"For those people who have walked into Lahaina because they really wanted to see, know that they're very likely walking on iwi," he said at a news conference on Maui, using the Hawaiian word for "bones."

Just three bodies have been identified so far and officials will start releasing names yesterday, according to Maui Police Chief John Pelletier, who renewed an appeal for families with missing relatives to provide DNA samples.



Car is seen on the site of a shooting, in the small Bosnian town of Gradacac

THOUSANDS IN BOSNIA PROTEST AGAINST VIOLENCE AFTER MAN LIVESTREAMED KILLING OF EX-WIFE ON INSTAGRAM

THOUSANDS of Bosnians took to the streets yesterday [Macau time] to demand authorities act to curb violence against women after a man last week shot and killed his ex-wife while streaming the slaying live on Instagram.

Protests were held simultaneously in several Bosnian cities. In Sarajevo, the capital, a huge crowd of people walked through the city center to press for more protection for women, curbing of violent media content and control of police work in cases of violence.

Participants carried banners reading "Silence is approval," "We won't live in fear" or "Stop femicide." Protesters in Sarajevo held up a huge banner reading "Sarajevo against violence," echoing a slogan of monthslong street protests in neighboring Serbia.

"Today Sarajevo is saying no to violence and showing support to all the victims of violence," said Mayor Benjamina Karic, who was at the front of the marching protesters.

Bosnia's Human Rights Minister Sevlid Hurtic called for legal changes to

enable strict punishment for violence against women and femicide.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said: "We are horrified by the fact that the murder of a woman was livestreamed via a social network, which is one of the latest attacks in a streak of femicide and severe cases of gender-based violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

"Femicide, the intentional killing of women and girls based on their gender, represents a glaring and grave violation of human rights," Dujarric said.

Bosnia's citizens were angered in particular because of reports that the women who was killed Friday in the northeastern town of Gradacac had reported harassment and violence to the authorities, and because the shooter had a police record.

The man posted a video on Instagram on Friday morning, telling viewers that they would see a murder live. The video then shows him taking a gun and firing a bullet into a woman's forehead as the cry of child is heard from somewhere nearby. The video later was removed

from Instagram.

The shooter, identified as Gradacac resident Nermin Sulejmanovic, also killed two more people and wounded three others before killing himself. Bosnian media said Sulejmanovic, 35, was a bodybuilder and fitness coach with past arrests on charges of drug smuggling and attacking a police officer.

The victim, Nizama Hecimovic, was buried in Gradacac; several thousand people attended her funeral.

Violence against women is widespread in Bosnia and elsewhere in the Balkans where societies are mainly conservative and male-dominated. The region also is still reeling from a series of bloody conflicts in the 1990s that followed the breakup of the former Yugoslavia.

Bosnia remains ethnically tense and impoverished after the 1992-95 conflict that killed 100,000 people. In Serbia, two mass shootings in May triggered street demonstrations calling for an end to the culture of violence, fueled by mainstream media and officials. **MDT/AP**

Russia's central bank made a big interest rate hike of 3.5 percentage points yesterday, an emergency move designed to fight inflation and strengthen the ruble after the country's currency reached its lowest value since early in the war with Ukraine. The decision to bring the key rate to 12% was announced after a meeting of the bank's board of directors was called a day earlier as the ruble declined. The fall comes as Moscow increases military spending and Western sanctions weigh on its energy exports.



Russian forces unleashed a barrage of missiles on regions across Ukraine yesterday morning, killing civilians and damaging civilian infrastructure. The barrage came just hours before top Russian military officials and their counterparts from Asia, the Middle East and Africa gathered outside Moscow for a security conference, where the fighting in Ukraine is likely to dominate the agenda. Moscow's war in Ukraine is nearing the 18-month mark.



UN Twenty United Nations and other international organizations yesterday called for peace, access to humanitarian support and respect for human rights in Sudan at the four-month mark of a war that has led to food shortages, death and injury, and sexual violence, among other troubles. Spokeswoman Margaret Harris of the World Health Organization appealed to the global community to do more, saying at a U.N. briefing in Geneva: "The world is ignoring the dire needs."

Finland's former Prime Minister Alexander Stubb said yesterday he will run as a candidate in the presidential election early next year, in a race that also includes a popular former Finnish foreign minister who was a key negotiator of the Nordic country's recent membership in NATO. Stubb, 55, who headed the Finnish government in 2014-2015 and later served as foreign minister, said he was "both honored and thankful for the trust bestowed upon me."