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AFTER A HIATUS OF THREE YEARS, THE INTERNATIONAL FIREWORKS DISPLAY CONTEST IS RETURNING TO THE SKIES OF MACAU NEXT WEEK FOR ITS 31ST EDITION

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TYPHOON SAOLA TO AFFECT MACAU AS IT HEADS TOWARD TAIWAN, SOUTHERN CHINA

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US, CHINA AGREE TO DISCUSS EXPORT CONTROLS AS RAIMONDO VISITS TO WARM UP CHILLY TIES

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Hong Kong A group that promotes the Cantonese language shut down yesterday after Hong Kong authorities said an essay submitted to a literary competition three years ago violated the national security law. Andrew Chan, chairperson of the Societas Linguistica Hongkongensis, said in a Facebook post that national security officers visited his former home, where his family lives, without a search warrant last week when he was out of town. The officers asked him to remove the fictional essay in question from his group's website immediately, he said.

AP PHOTO



Australia Eight U.S. Marines remained in a hospital in the Australian north coast city of Darwin yesterday after they were injured in a fiery crash of a tiltrotor aircraft that killed three of their colleagues on an island. All 20 survivors were flown from Melville Island 80 kilometers south to Darwin within hours of the Marine V-22 Osprey crashing at 9:30 a.m. Sunday during a multinational training exercise, Northern Territory Chief Minister Natasha Fyles said. All were taken to the Royal Darwin Hospital, and 12 had been discharged.

AP PHOTO



Hawaii An evacuation order following a brush fire that burned 10 acres on Maui was lifted by emergency officials last weekend. The fire prompted Maui authorities to temporarily evacuate residents from a neighborhood of Lahaina, just a few miles from the site recently ravaged by blazes, before firefighters brought it under control. The Maui County Emergency Management Agency announced in a social media post that the evacuation ended at 5 p.m. and residents could return home.

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GROSS LOSS

Social security investments record MOP8b loss in 2022 P4



ARTS

MUSIC FESTIVAL TO RETURN WITH INT'L LINEUP, MASTER MUSICIAN JOE HISAISHI P5

FRANCISCO JOSÉ LEANDRO
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
UNIVERSITY OF MACAU

GOLDMAN Sachs estimates that in 2050, the Asia GDP will reach 90.6 Trillion USD (except developing markets) and the World total GDP will be 227.9 Trillion USD. In the similar vein, the World Economic Outlook (IMF, 2023), estimates that in 2028, the BRICS GDP (PPP) will reach 33.65% and the G7 GDP will represent 27.77% of world GDP.

Therefore, it seems the near future will be driven by Asian economic development, and within five years, BRICS will become a leading economic force. In the context of this future scenario, BRICS announced its transformation into BRICS+, expanding its membership from 4 (2009) to 5 (2011) and again to 11 (2023): Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Argentina, Iran and Ethiopia. What shall the international community read from these recent developments? The answer develops within three lines of reasoning.

FIRSTLY, RECOGNITION

The BRICS mechanism began with the meeting of the BRIC Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in 2006. In 2009, it was upgraded to summit level to be hosted once a year. By 2023, the BRICS leaders have convened 15 high level formal meetings.

In 2009, the 1st BRICS Summit was held in Yekaterinburg - Russia, meaning that the pure investment idea was then converted into a multilateral cooperation mechanism. In April 2010, the BRIC leaders convened the 2nd BRICS Summit in Brasilia - Brazil. The agenda items covered the international situation, international and regional hotspot issues, the international financial crisis, BRIC cooperation, G20 affairs, climate change and UN reform. In April 2011, South Africa participated, for the first time, in the 3rd BRICS Summit held in Sanya - China.

The theme is "Broad Vision, Shared Prosperity", and the agenda items covered the international situation, international economy and finance, development issues and BRICS cooperation. Therefore, "BRICS" with a small letter "s" thus changed into "BRICS" with a capital letter "S". In March 2012, the BRICS leaders convened the 4th BRICS Summit in New Delhi

- India, under the theme of "BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Security and Prosperity", with agenda items including global governance and sustainable development.

In March 2013, the BRICS leaders convened the 5th BRICS Summit in Durban - South Africa, under the theme of "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialization". This summit also opened a new door for a dialogue between the BRICS leaders and the African leaders.

In July 2014, the BRICS leaders convened the 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza - Brazil, under the theme of "Inclusive Growth: Sustainable Solutions", with agenda items covering political coordination, sustainable development and inclusive growth.

In July 2015, the BRICS leaders convened the 7th BRICS Summit in Ufa - Russia, under the theme of "BRICS Partnership—a Powerful Factor of Global Development", with agenda items including international political and economic issues and BRICS cooperation. In October 2016, the group convened the 8th BRICS Summit in Goa - India, under the theme of "Building Responsive, Inclusive, and Collective Solutions".

The agenda items covered the international political and economic situation, global governance, agriculture and BRICS internal cooperation. On the sidelines of the summit, the BRICS leaders had a dialogue with the member state leaders of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

In September 2017, the group convened the 9th BRICS Summit in Xiamen - China, under the theme of "BRICS: Stronger Partnership for a Brighter Future". The agenda items covered international political and economic situation, global governance, and sustainable development and BRICS cooperation.

In July 2018, the 10th BRICS Summit took place in Johannesburg - South Africa, under the theme of "BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the Fourth Industrial Revolution".

In November 2019, the 11th BRICS Summit was organized in Brasilia - Brazil, under the theme of "BRICS: Economic Growth for an Innovative Future". During the summit, BRICS leaders jointly attended the closing ceremony of the Business Forum and held closed-door meetings, open mee-

BRICS+

RECOGNITION, EQUILIBRIUM

tings and dialogue sessions with the Business Council and the New Development Bank. In November 2020, the 12th BRICS Summit took place via live video link and was organized by Russia. The central theme was "BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Shared Security, and Innovative Growth". The agenda items covered BRICS cooperation in combating COVID-19, international and regional situations, and global economic governance.

In September 2021, the 13th BRICS Summit was organized by India via video link under the theme of "BRICS@15: Intra BRICS cooperation for continuity, consolidation, and consensus". The agenda items covered further cooperation in combating COVID-19, promoting pragmatic cooperation and addressing global and regional hotspot issues. In 2022, the 14th BRICS Summit, chaired by China, has capitalized on the continuous expansion of the working areas, putting again in the center of the South-South debate the fight against poverty and the innovation for sustainability, in the context of the SDG and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Finally, in August 2023, hosted by South Africa, the 15th BRICS Summit, chaired by President Ramaphosa, was committed to Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism. A perfect occasion to announce the enlargement to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Argentina, Iran, and Ethiopia.

This sequence of events, culminating with the accession of six new sovereign states from Africa, South America, Middle East and Central Asia, demonstrates consistency, sense of purpose, political commitment and external recognition. Furthermore, it also demonstrates that the international community has validated the existence of BRICS, as an alternative platform for new patterns of South-South cooperation, as well as a balancing mechanism, in the context of the construction of a fair economic global order.

SECONDLY, EQUILIBRIUM

According to the report prepared at the request of the BRICS Trade and Investment Working Group under the China Presiden-



cy in 2022, BRICS is the world's most important economic bloc, representing more than one quarter of global GDP, and 42 % of the world's population.

In 2022, BRICS represented 23% of the global economic flows, 18% of the global trade in goods, 25% in foreign investment and their GDP surpassed G7 (Table 1). In 2014, the BRICS established the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement, designed to provide financing support for infrastructure building and sustainable development – These institutions are supporting a number of projects namely, renewable

energy projects in Brazil, railway network upgrade programs in India and new toll roads in Russia. The New Development Bank has approved over 80 projects and disbursed approximately 30 billion U.S. dollars in loans. The NDB is funded by the five BRICS member states in an equal manner, and all five members have an equal voting right and there is no one-vote veto.

The enlargement will bring new solutions for continuity but the differences between the new member states, might be leading to other forms of decision-making. The NDB does not impose harsh conditions while pro-

TABLE 1: COMPARATIVE % OF GLOBAL GDP SHARE

	1992	2002	2012	2022	2028 (est.)
BRICS	16.45%	19.34%	28.28%	31.67%	33.65%
G7	45.80%	42.34%	32.82%	30.31%	27.77%

Source: IMF, World Economic Outlook (2022)

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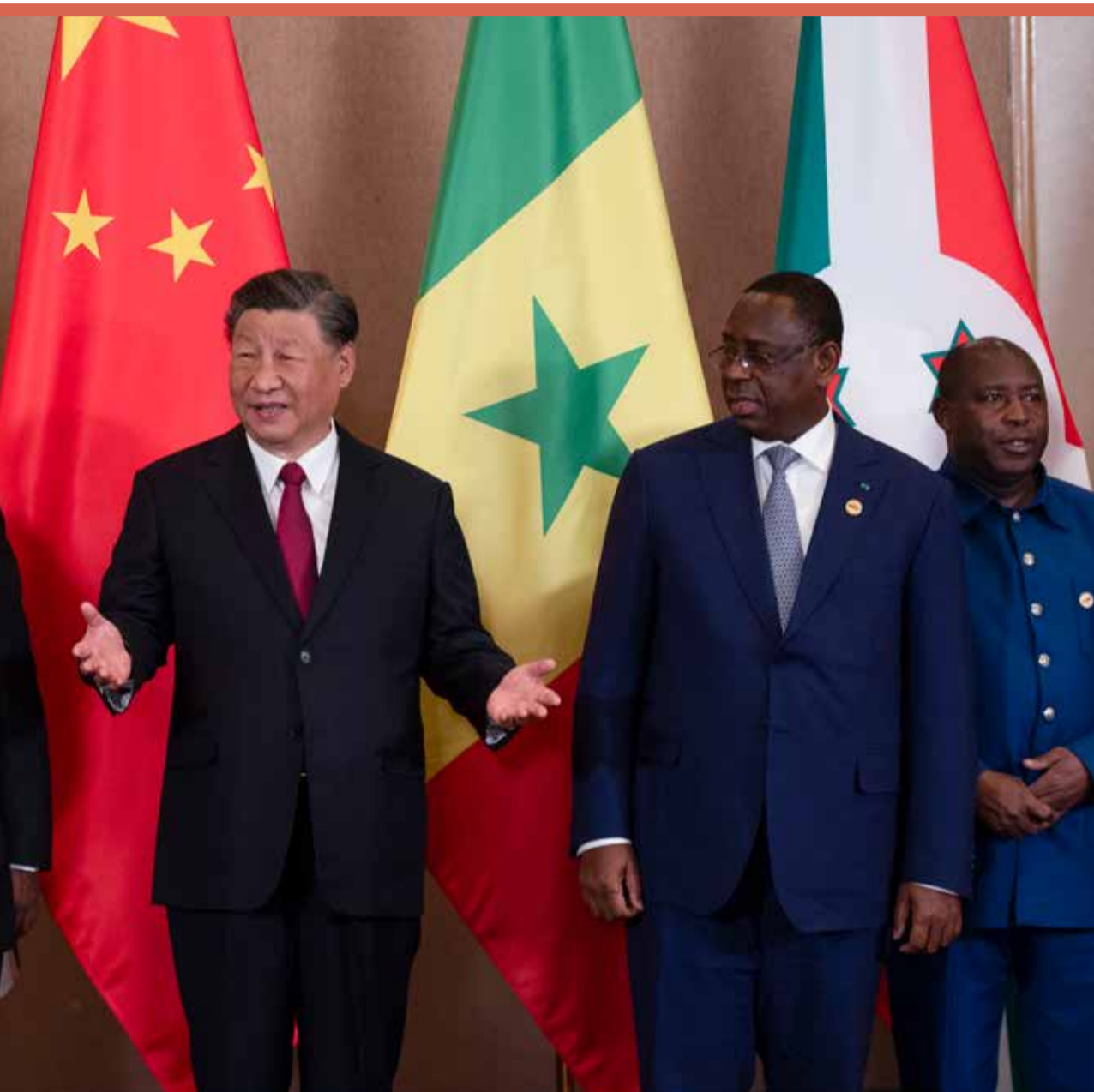
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AND INCLUSIVE MULTILATERALISM



viding infrastructure financing to the member states and other emerging market economies and developing countries. Internally, the NDB is a platform for a better integration of the resources of the BRICS countries, enlarging the effect of investments. Externally, the NDB brings the member states and other developing countries closer, and enables mutual development. At the same time, the NDB may become a complement to those present international financial institutions under the Bretton Woods system, thus, is possible to increase the voice of the BRICS in global governance.

The background of the BRICS cooperation was the 2007-2008 global financial crisis. The crisis showed the major problem of the existing global governance practice – the insufficient voice and representation of developing countries on the global stage.

The BRICS is seen as an attempt by emerging developing economies to participate in global governance. For example, all the BRICS countries are members of the G20. The BRICS leaders have formed an unofficial practice of meeting up right before the G20 Summit, so as to achieve convergence in major issues. They try to stand on a common ground in the G20 Summit, and

fight for rights of the developing countries against the developed countries.

Since its inception, the BRICS worked on sectoral cooperation in many areas, namely - science and technology, trade promotion and facilitation, banking, investment, energy, health, education, health, innovation, agriculture, and fight against transnational crime.

Currently, sectoral cooperation accounts for more than 30 subject areas – In all these areas, the organization has adopted a global vision. Among these cooperation areas, the Brazilian President Lula da Silva has insisted, again in Johannesburg, to create a single currency.

What we will witness in the near future, probably won't be a creation of a new international currency, but the reinforcement of the de-dollarization, in particular in what regards bilateral and multilateral trade agreements in non-dollar currencies. BRICS had been very clear standing against dollar hegemony, taking advantage of their balance of trade payments surplus (in 2022, BRICS as a whole, ran a trade surplus of 387 billion).

President Xi addressing the summit has clearly pointed out the direction for the new areas of

cooperation, namely digital economy, green economy, supply chain (...) innovation (...) artificial intelligence, education, and people-to-people cooperation.

Nevertheless, BRICS is continuously extending their areas of cooperation, and security is one of them. In 2011, all the five BRICS countries were members, either permanent or non-permanent, of the United Nation Security Council (UNSC). They expressed their opinion on international security through their votes in the UNSC.

BRICS countries questioned about the proposition of “the Responsibility to Protect”, and showed their opposition to military intervention in international affairs. In Johannesburg the dominant security concern has been to build the basis of peace in the case of Ukraine armed conflict.

It is true that the developed

countries are still dominant in global governance. However, the BRICS countries have successfully made the world realize the fact that, the voice of developing countries can no longer be ignored.

These enlargement is reinforcing that idea. All these reasons allow us to anticipate that BRICS would not exist without China and its existence as well as this latest enlargement holds the potential to steering global development and seeking a new Era of equilibrium, particularly in whole global financial architecture.

LASTLY, INCLUSIVE MULTILATERALISM

The five member states are dispersed geographically and the 11 members will continue to be. Their 11 economies are in different development stages and they often disclosed discrepancies in ideology and in a number of bilateral matters. However, what the recent enlargement demonstrates is clear: despite all differences and all challenges that the constitution of an economic block of this kind implies, BRICS opened the door to six new sovereign states, without preconditions, in relation to their political systems or economic resilience.

Their differences have been mitigated to continuously promote new possibilities, innovative approaches and turning in-depth and diversified over time. BRICS is reinforcing its political appeal, attracting more states, expanding markets, and promoting South-South cooperation.

Its internal mechanisms and external interactions with other states and international organizations has become an inspiration to endorse higher levels of multilateral cooperation at regional and global spheres. Table 2, depicts precisely the comparative perspective of global initiatives led by China and US. In the case of China initiatives, all are multilateral, without preconditions.

The United Nations Secretary-General, addressing the BRICS Summit, stated: “I have come to the BRICS summit with a simple message: In a fracturing world overwhelmed by crises, there is simply no alternative to cooperation” (Guterres, UN, 2023). Indeed,

cooperation among dissimilar political units, and enlargement to more political units, not sharing the same political and economic characteristics, is probably risky, but it is certainly, token of their willingness to advance higher levels of inclusive multilateralism. BRICS+ is asserting a new level of political and economic influence, in ways that have caught many skeptics off guard.

Restrain from intervening other members' internal affairs, and seeking to find the “greatest common factor” among them, seems to be key elements for success. They walk together on a mutually beneficial and win-win pathway. Nevertheless, this greatest common factor, is probably the leading cause of a sort of economic decolonization, as it is the first time in history, that an initiative is developing itself as an alternative to Bretton Woods and at the same time pushing for reforms at the International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization and World Bank. This new pattern of international and multilateral relationship is worth to be further investigated.

Finally, when in 2001, Goldman Sachs' Global Investment Research Division published: “Build Better Global Economic BRICs,” and coined the acronym for the four countries (BRIC), they could not imagine that this organization would reshape the world economy.

In 2003, another BRICS-oriented research followed from Goldman Sachs. This time (2003), “Dreaming with BRICs: The Path to 2050,” (Global Economics Paper No: 99), Goldman Sachs (page 2) stated: “The results are startling. If things go right, in less than 40 years, the BRICS economies together could be larger than the G6 (France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, and the United Kingdom) in US dollar terms. By 2025 they could account for over half the size of the G6. Currently (2003), they are worth less than 15% (...).” Indeed, they did not get the number right, but they certainly anticipated correctly the importance of BRICS in terms of global economy and the transformational impact of their existence. As President Xi mentioned in his address to XV BRICS Summit, “Victory is ensured when people pool their strength; success is ensured when people put their heads together” (Chinese adage).

TABLE 2: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES OF GLOBAL INITIATIVES

Multilateral, led by China, India and Russia		Multilateral, led by China		
Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)	BRICS ↓ G20	Global Development Initiative (GDI)	Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)	
G7		Asia Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC)	Blue Dot Network	Global Gateway
Build Back Better World (B3W)				
Multilateral, led by US		Led by Japan and India	Led by US, Japan and Australia	Led by European Commission

SOCIAL SECURITY INVESTMENTS RECORD MOP8B LOSS IN 2022

ANTHONY LAM

THE Social Security Fund (FSS) lost nearly MOP8 billion in investments and currency exchange last year, pushing its gross expenditure to MOP14 billion, a leap of 144.87% year-over-year.

To justify its poor performance, the FSS has blamed the Russia/Ukraine war, European and US sanctions on Russia that have subsequently impacted the supply chain, global inflation, US interest rate hikes, drops in global stock and debt markets, as well as other financial factors.

According to its annual report, the FSS recorded major losses in its investments last year. This is despite complying with cautious and steady principles.

Numerically, the fund has total assets amounting to about MOP85.8 billion. MOP43.9 billion are in time deposits and the other MOP41.9 billion are in investments in global financial markets.



Its time deposits have yielded about MOP638 million in returns. However, the fund lost about MOP7.8 billion in its financial investments, after deducting fund management fees.

Last year, the total investment loss of the fund was about MOP7.2

billion. Calculated according to the proportion of fixed deposits and financial investment funds, the average return on investment (ROI) rate last year was about -7.46%, in contrast to 5.92% in the previous year, which is a significant drop.

Looking back over the past

five years, the overall investment has still made a profit of about MOP10.8 billion. The five-year average annualized rate of return is 2.58%.

Last year, the income of the fund was about MOP2.8 billion, a drop of 71.18% year-over-year. The

main source of income is government funding, including gaming appropriation, the 1% common sharing and 3% appropriation of the central budget execution balance. The total income of the above three appropriations was about MOP1.2 billion, accounting for about 43.57% of total annual revenue.

Interest and dividend income totaled about MOP885.5 million, accounting for 31.4% of the total annual income. The contribution income of the social security system was about MOP378.29 million, and the annual external employment fee (income) was about MOP320.31 million. The two income items together accounted for about a quarter of the total annual income last year.

The fund recorded about MOP13.95 billion in expenditure, with MOP5.67 billion having gone to social security payments and social subsidies. The rest was accounted to loss in investments and currency exchange.

The fund also noted that last year had seen a leap in the number of applications for unemployment subsidy due to a couple of lengthy lockdowns and lack of tourism activities.

Pereira Coutinho wants AL Public Finances Committee to analyze investment flops

RENATO MARQUES

LAWMAKER José Maria Pereira Coutinho is unhappy with news that government investments made through the Social Security Fund recorded a loss of 8 billion patacas last year and has called for a "deeper analysis" of the issue by the Legislative Assembly (AL), he said in an interview to TDM Radio.

He said the AL's Follow-up Committee for Public Finance Affairs should analyze the money lost from the government investments made through public funds to determine the reasons and discover ways to prevent losses happening again.

The lawmaker said there is currently a problem with this government keeping public expenditure under control.

Pereira Coutinho has called on the Committee of the upcoming



legislative year to dedicate itself almost exclusively to addressing government investments and results so that "things get clearer and more transparent."

Additionally, he wants the government to try to reduce public

expenditure, particularly in public works that are done repeatedly and are a waste of money.

The poor investment performance from the government in 2022 has long been reported, including by the

Follow-up Committee for Public Finance Affairs that, in November last year, cited the report of the first half of 2022 when saying that government investment plans had recorded net losses of about 8.3 billion patacas.

At the time, the president of the Committee, lawmaker Wong Kit Cheng said it was the first time such a loss had happened.

Citing the government report on the question, the lawmaker said the government had blamed the loss on "instability in the international markets."

She added that when compared with the same period in 2021, government investments declined in value 59.2%.

Leading the drop at that time was already the Social Security Fund with MOP7.63 billion lost, as well as the Pensions Fund, which also recorded a significant devaluing (MOP1.91 billion).

A similar result was seen regarding investments made through the Macau Financial Reserve that lost some MOP17.4 billion, citing the same reasons.

'GHOST MONTH' ACCOUNTABLE FOR 15 FIRES IN 10 DAYS: CB

RENATO MARQUES

OVER the first 10 days of the "Ghost Month," which began on the seventh month of the lunar calendar or Aug. 16, there have been 15 fires, the Fire Services Bureau (CB) has reported.

During this period, Buddhists and Taoists celebrate by orchestrating ghost-feeding ceremonies, which includes folding joss paper ingots and other cultural customs designed to ease the suffering of the dead and prevent mischievous encounters with restless spirits.

The month is dedicated to paying tribute to those who have died, namely the family ancestors.

A big part of the tradition

includes the burning of "offerings" to them as well as to the lost souls frequently found on the streets of Macau.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau has installed dedicated containers to burn the offerings but residents of Macau do not generally go to these locations and instead perform their ceremonial activities in the street or even inside apartment buildings' common areas, which often results in unintended fires.

The peak of the celebrations takes place at the 15th day of the month which, this year, falls on Aug. 30 (Wednesday).

Authorities are calling on citizens to respect the rules to avoid setting fires due to the risk of fire mismanagement.



EVENTS

Music festival to return with int'l lineup, master musician Joe Hisaishi

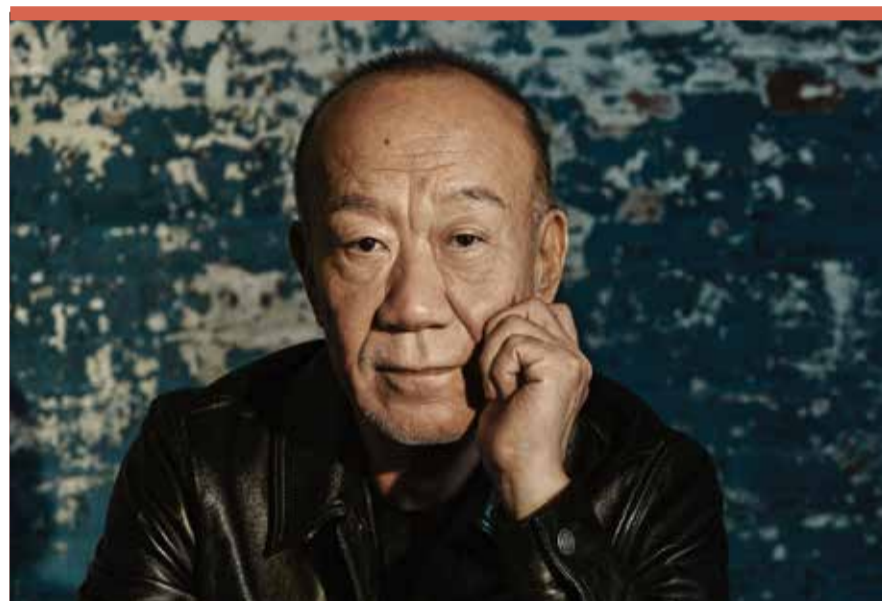
ANTHONY LAM

AFTER a three-year hiatus, the Macao International Music Festival will return this year in its 35th edition, hosting for the first time globally acclaimed musician Joe Hisaishi.

Japanese musician Hisaishi is the creator behind the captivating music for renowned feature animation creator Hayao Miyazaki, co-founder of Studio Ghibli and maker of classic films such as My Neighbor Totoro, Castle in the Sky, Howl's Moving Castle, Spirited Away and The Wind Rises.

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) held a press conference to announce this year's program yesterday.

In his first-ever Macau tour, Hisaishi will stage three concerts, each with its own theme, to cater to audiences from in and outside of the city. Discussing the three concerts, the director of Culture, Leong Wai Man, said



Joe Hisaishi



audiences at the three concerts would be listening to three different types of works by the master musician. She said the musician does not only make movie scores, but all kinds of music. Therefore, the concerts will showcase his talents in a variety of music.

Program director of the festival, Lio Kuokman, said that when he negotiated with Hisaishi, the master musician said he wanted to present different kinds of music in Macau. Considering his experience, age and experience in Macau, he has decided to give some-

thing different to the city.

The series will kick off with Music Future, a concert reflecting the maestro's passion for minimal music, a form and technique he has nurtured since his university years. It will be played by musicians from Macao Orchestra.

In the second concert, Hisaishi will join with Japan Century Symphony Orchestra and violist Antoine Tamestit to present symphonies composed by Schumann, Beethoven and Hisaishi himself.

The concluding concert of the series, titled Spirited Away, will see a hybrid of the Japanese and the Macau orchestras playing a Beethoven piece and two Hisaishi pieces – DA-MA-

-SHI-E and Spirited Away Suite.

This festival will also see jazz diva Stacey Kent showcasing "Songs from Other Places", which will include a piece she made especially for Macau – Tango in Macao. She will perform with her husband, saxophonist and flutist Jim Tomlinson, a jazzy evening featuring some of her most loved scores.

Opera will also return to this festival with Opera in Two Acts by Gioachino Rossini, The Barber of Seville, and María de Buenos Aires, inspired by the only tango opera written by the great Argentine composer Astor Piazzolla.

The full program and ticketing information are available on the IC website.

IC LEONG: SANDS CHINA CHIEFLY SPONSORS VENUES, HISAISHI REQUESTS FORMAL SETTING

IT was announced at yesterday's press conference that this year's International Music Festival is budgeted at MOP33 million. When asked how much Sands China Ltd (SCL) is sponsoring, director of Culture Leong Wai Man refrained from making any disclosure, but said that the resort operator "is chiefly sponsoring venue usage."

Viewing the venue lineup, SCL is sponsoring the usage of its Parisian Theatre for two shows of María de Buenos Aires - Tango Opera by Astor Piazzolla and its Venetian Theatre for a show by Stacey Kent.

While predicting the popularity of Joe Hisaishi's three shows by observing the popularity of his previous shows around the world, Leong was asked if the bureau had considered holding the concerts at larger

venues owned by SCL, rather than at the Cultural Centre's Grand Auditorium with only 1,000 or so seats. She responded that the concerts would be quite formal. She also quoted the program director of the festival, chief conductor and music director of Macao Orchestra, Lio Kuokman, as saying that the master musician from Japan requested the concerts be held at a formal theater with on-par auditory quality.

It was revealed that Lio had been in touch with Hisaishi to encourage him to stage shows in Macau.

The culture official was also asked if it was a shift in focus that has led to two consecutive years of not holding pop concerts by show business singers. She said some of the events this year fit the popular appetite, so the pop culture element has not been dropped. **AL**

GOV'T CONSTANTLY REVIEWS SPONSORSHIPS

THE director of Culture, Leong Wai Man, refrained from making comments on suspected corruption in sponsorship granted by Cultural Development Fund, citing investigations under

way as reason. In addition, she emphasized that "continually reviewing sponsorships is part of the work that the Macau government has constantly been doing."

WEATHER

Typhoon Saola expected to enter Macau as it heads toward Taiwan, southern China

A typhoon has dumped heavy rain in the northern Philippines but did not reach land as it moved toward southern Taiwan. It is currently headed towards China's southern coast.

According to the Meteorological and Geophysics

Bureau (SMG), the typhoon will be within 800 km from Macau tomorrow night.

In the northern Philippines, flooding in low-lying villages displaced more than 2,300 people, most of whom sought shelter in government evacuation

centers. No casualties have been reported.

The typhoon advanced with maximum winds of 155 kph and gusts of up to 190 kph, according to the Philippine weather bureau.

The Chinese port city of Xiamen, across the strait

from Taiwan, suspended ferry services from today.

Typhoon Saola was expected to further weaken and may hit the southern tip of Taiwan tomorrow.

Most weather maps put the typhoon on course toward Hong Kong and sou-

thern China later this week.

Taiwan's weather bureau said it expects to issue a sea warning and possibly a land warning as the typhoon approached.

Also, as another tropical cyclone Typhoon Haikui in the northwest Pacific ocean

is moving towards the East China Sea, it might interact with Typhoon Saola later this week.

"There are still uncertainties about the trajectory and the location of making landfall of Saola. The SMG will closely monitor the development of the tropical cyclones," said the bureau.

Last month, Typhoon Doksuri hit the northern Philippines, displacing thousands, before making landfall and causing deadly floods in China. **LV**

AUGUST SEEING AROUND 100,000 DAILY TOURISTS

The city is seeing an average daily number of visitors of 100,000 this month, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has estimated, in what is projected to be the highest number in a single month after the pandemic. Speaking on the sidelines of an event, MGTO director Helena de Senna Helena said that the number of Hong Kong tourists visiting Macau has basically returned to pre-pandemic levels, and it is expected that the number of Hong Kong tourists visiting Macau will exceed the number recorded in 2019. According to the official, the city is also currently seeing more family tourists and tourists are no longer concentrated in traditional tourist areas.

MACAU-HK AIRPORT BUS OPERATES TOMORROW

The bus service between the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the Hong Kong International Airport will commence tomorrow. The operating hours of the first phase of the service are from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. There will be one bus every hour from Hong Kong and Macau. The journey will take about 45 minutes. The fare is MOP280 for adults and MOP210 for older adults and children.

PUBLIC WARNED AGAINST TEXT MESSAGES IMPERSONATING DHL

Members of the public are being warned about text messages impersonating international courier chain DHL, the Judiciary Police (PJ) announced yesterday in a statement. The messages claim recipients must provide information to receive a parcel. The recipients are asked to follow a hyperlink to provide the so-called missing information and to process the requisite payment. The PJ said similar scams have resulted in victims losing cash and personal data.

HENGQIN TO BUILD A HIGHLAND FOR HIGH-TECH INNOVATION

According to the Economic Development Bureau of Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, 10,000 technology enterprises have registered in the Zone, including nearly 800 Macau-funded ones. Since the establishment of the Zone, a number of platforms, such as the four state key laboratories in Macau and the Sci-tech Exchange and Cooperation Center for China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (PSCs), have established their branches in Hengqin to transform their research. Last October, a study institution for brain and intelligence of Guangdong Institute of Intelligence and Technology was set up in Macau, aiming to attract global talent, projects and capital to the Zone.



FIREWORKS COMPETITION BACK AFTER HIATUS

RENATO MARQUES

AFTER a hiatus of three years, the Macao International Fireworks Display Contest is returning to the skies of Macau next week for its 31st edition.

At a press conference held yesterday, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) presented the details of the event that spans from Sept. 9 to Oct. 7 and that aims to take advantage of the National Day "Golden Week" to attract more visitors to Macau.

As in the past, firework companies from ten countries will

compete for the best fireworks performance.

This year, as usual, the six integrated resort enterprises are partner entities for the event that also includes some outreach programs.

At the press conference, MGTO director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes said the MGTO is committed to deepening integration across "tourism +".

She added that the return of this event, one of the most iconic from the pre-pandemic program, "not only creates a magnificent extravaganza for residents and visitors, but also sym-

bolizes reconnection between Macau and the world, while life all over the globe is returning to normalcy."

Senna Fernandes also expressed hopes that the "colorful experiences brought by the [fireworks] contest can fascinate travelers of 'tourism + event' at different corners of the city."

10 FIREWORKS SHOWS OVER FIVE WEEKENDS

As in previous years, the contest will stage 10 fireworks shows, each lasting about 18 minutes, over the five evenings starting Sept. 9, and then continuing through to Sept. 16 and

23, Oct. 1 (National Day) and closing Oct. 7.

The contest participants will be representing Australia, Switzerland, Austria, Russia, Philippines, Japan, China, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Germany. The contestants from Switzerland, Austria, Russia, Philippines and China are making their debut, while the other five teams have previously entered the contest.

Following the last two fireworks shows on Oct. 7, a prize-giving ceremony will be hosted to reveal the winners.

The first show of the evening will take place at 9 p.m., followed by a second (from a different team) at 9:40 p.m.

The MGTO recommends residents and visitors spread out over the five common viewing points including the Kun Iam Ecumenical Centre to Leisure Area of Kun Iam Statue Waterfront, the waterfront at the Macao Science Center, Anim'Arte NAM VAN, Avenida de Sagres (next to Mandarin Oriental, Macau) and Avenida do Oceano in Taipa.

WINNER CHOSEN VIA ONLINE VOTING

To enhance residents' and visitors' engagement in the shows, spectators will be able to vote via online promotional posts or by scanning the QR code at fireworks-viewing zones. The votes will help determine the winner and allow voters to enter a lucky draw to win prizes and special offers by merchants. Voters who voted for the eventual winner will automatically be eligible for a final lucky draw.

CRIME

Police arrest duo over imprisonment, extorting debtor

STAFF REPORTER

THE police have arrested two mainland residents who were suspected of usury, imprisoning, beating and extorting debtors.

According to the authorities, the duo imprisoned the victim, who owed them RMB468,000, to which HKD5,000 interest was added every day.

Before being confined in a hotel room, he had paid HKD70,000 in interest.

While locked in the



hotel room, he was blackmailed to pay another RMB150,000 to

200,000 in addition to the debt. He was beaten, threatened with a

knife to his neck, forced to stand in a room and forbidden to eat or

drink.

According to the police, the process was videotaped. During the period, the victim was forced to hand over his documents, mobile phone and bank card password, and a further RMB284,000 was transferred.

The victim asked security guards for help in the hotel lobby last Saturday.

That day, police arrived at the scene and intercepted the two mainland men and women.

The police said that two people were found to have overstayed at the same time. They confessed to lending money to the victim to do business, but denied loan sharking and imprisonment for extortion.

TRADE

US, China agree to discuss export controls as Raimondo visits to warm up chilly ties

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

COMMERCE Secretary Gina Raimondo said she and her Chinese counterpart agreed yesterday to exchange information on U.S. export controls that frustrate Beijing and set up a group to discuss other commercial issues, but neither side appeared ready to make concessions on disputes that have plunged relations to their lowest level in decades.

Raimondo said she and Commerce Minister Wang Wentao agreed during a four-hour meeting to launch an "information exchange" on export controls. She said they also will set up a "working group" of officials and private sector representatives to "seek solutions on trade and investment issues."

A key Chinese complaint is limits on access to processor chips and other U.S. technology on security grounds that threaten to hamper the ruling Communist Party's ambition to develop artificial intelligence and other industries. The curbs crippled the smartphone business of Huawei Technologies Ltd., China's first global tech brand.

Raimondo said the information exchange will hold its first meeting today.

"The United States is committed to being transparent about our export control enforcement strategy," Raimondo told reporters at Ambas-



Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao (second left) and U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo (second right) speak during a meeting with Chinese at the Ministry of Commerce in Beijing, yesterday

sador Nicholas Burns's official residence.

"We are not compromising or negotiating in matters of national security," she said. "But this is meant to be a dialogue where we increase transparency."

Earlier, Wang told Raimondo that Beijing is ready to work together to "foster a more favorable policy environment for stronger cooperation" and "bolster bilateral trade and investment." Wang gave no details of possible initiatives.

Beijing broke off dialogues with Washington on military, climate and other issues in August 2022 in retaliation for a visit to Taiwan by then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi of the House of Representatives. China claims the self-ruled island as part

of its territory and objects to foreign governments having contact with it.

The visits take place under an agreement made by Xi and President Joe Biden during a meeting last November in Indonesia. The Chinese state press has given them positive coverage, but Beijing has given no indication it might change trade, strategic, market access and other policies that irk Washington and its Asian neighbors.

In June, Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Xi for 30 minutes during a visit that was postponed from February after a Chinese surveillance balloon entered U.S. airspace. The Chinese leader called on Washington to change policies on Taiwan and other issues and rebuffed

a request to resume military-to-military cooperation.

Last week, on the day Raimondo's visit to Beijing was announced, Washington removed 27 Chinese companies from a blacklist that limits access to U.S. technology.

The decision "may have helped grease the wheels for Raimondo's trip," said Anna Ashton and Kylie Milliken of Eurasia Group in a report.

It suggests Washington "is making modest but measurable progress with Beijing in re-establishing limited government-to-government communication," Ashton and Milliken wrote. "Raimondo's visit could produce additional progress."

Meting with Wang, Raimondo

defended the Biden administration's "de-risking" strategy of trying to increase domestic U.S. production of semiconductors and other high-tech goods and to create additional sources of supply to reduce chances of disruption. Beijing has criticized that as an attempt to isolate China and hamper its development.

"It is not intended to hinder China's economic progress. We believe a strong Chinese economy is a good thing," Raimondo told the Chinese minister. "We seek healthy competition with China. A growing Chinese economy that plays by the rules is in both of our interests."

Wang visited Washington in May. The U.S. government invited Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Washington, but plans for that have not been announced.

Raimondo also was due to meet China's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Qiang, and other officials.

The Biden administration also has taken steps that are likely to rankle Beijing.

In June, Biden added 59 Chinese companies including military contractors and semiconductor manufacturers to a list of entities Americans are prohibited from investing in.

Last week, Washington approved a \$500 million arms sale to Taiwan including infrared tracking systems for advanced F-16 fighter jets. **MDT/AP**

TAIWAN

Foxconn's Terry Gou will seek top post as an independent

TERRY Gou, who founded Apple supplier Foxconn, said yesterday he will run as an independent candidate in Taiwan's main election, ending months of speculation.

At a news conference, Gou criticized the governing Democratic Progressive Party, saying its policies have "brought Taiwan into the risk of war" with China, which claims the self-ruled island democracy as part of its territory.

"I will definitely not allow Taiwan to become the next Ukraine," he added.

He said Taiwan also needs new approaches on the economy and other matters at home. "Domestically, the national policy direction is filled with all

sorts of mistakes. There's no way to solve the difficulties of Taiwanese industry and people's livelihoods," he said.

Gou's Foxconn, formally known as Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., is a major supplier to Apple and has many factories in China that manufacture iPhones.

Ideologically, Gou is most in line with the Kuomintang, the opposition party that is friendly to China.

Gou has long had political aspirations. He lost in the Kuomintang primary in 2019 and tried again this year, but the party selected New Taipei City Mayor Hou Yu-ih as its candidate. Back in May, Gou said on his Facebook page that he would

support Hou's candidacy.

Experts say Gou is unlikely to become a frontrunner.

Gou's speech emphasized unity because he has received criticism that he was splitting the vote, Hsiao Hsu-Tsen, a former deputy secretary-general of the leader's office who often comments on Taiwanese politics. This decision to run — "It's a demonstration of his political power."

Since he is running without the backing of a major political party, Gou must gather public signatures to qualify for the ballot.

That is a high barrier to meet, as it requires 1.5% of the voting population in Taiwan, which is about 290,000 signatures, said

Yeh-lih Wang, a professor of politics at National Taiwan University.

The other candidates for the Jan. 13 election are former Taipei city mayor Ko Wen-je of the Taiwan People's Party and current deputy leader Lai Ching-te of the ruling DPP. Incumbent Tsai Ing-wen is serving her second term in office and cannot seek another.

Currently, Lai is the front-runner, with Ko and Hou trailing in various polls.

Gou meanwhile has never garnered more than 20% of support in polls that pit him against the other three, said Wang, the political science professor.

"He always thought that he could be the one who would unite the opposi-



Terry Gou

tion," though that's unlikely, Wang said.

Gou said he felt he has something to contribute on the issues that matter to Taiwan's people.

"I have not seen substantive discussions of policy recently, especially on

the topics of cross straits relations (with China), economic development or international relations," he said.

Gou said he would work for Taiwanese society's unity because unity was critical to Taiwan's future. **MDT/AP**

JAPAN

Removing Fukushima's melted nuclear fuel harder than release of plant's wastewater

MARI YAMAGUCHI, OKUMA

AT a small section of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant's central control room, the treated water transfer switch is on. A graph on a computer monitor nearby shows a steady decrease of water levels as treated radioactive wastewater is diluted and released into the Pacific Ocean.

In the coastal area of the plant, two seawater pumps are in action, gushing torrents of seawater through sky blue pipes into the big header where the treated water, which comes down through a much thinner black pipe from the hilltop tanks, is diluted hundreds of times before the release.

The sound of the treated and diluted radioactive water flowing into an underground secondary pool was heard from beneath the ground as media, including The Associated Press, toured the plant in northeastern Japan for the first time since the water release began.

"The best way to eliminate the contaminated water is to remove the melted fuel debris," said Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings spokesperson Kenichi Takahara, who escorted Sunday's media tour for foreign media.

But Takahara said the scarcity of information from inside the nuclear reactors makes planning and development of the necessary robotic technology and a facility for the melted fuel removal extremely difficult.

"Removal of the melted fuel debris is not like we can just take it out and be finished," he said.

The projected decades-long release of treated water has been strongly opposed by fishing groups and criticized by neighboring countries. China immediately banned imports of seafood from Japan in response. In Seoul, thousands of South Koreans rallied over the weekend to condemn the release, demanding Japan to keep it in tanks.

Japan's Foreign Ministry



South Korean lawmakers (from left) Kang Eun-mi, Woo Wonshik and Yang Jung-suk, hold placards which reads "Withdraw the discharge of the wastewater from Fukushima nuclear power plant into the ocean" during a protest in Iwaki, Fukushima

issued a travel advisory to Japanese citizens to use extra caution while in China. It said "act of harassment, including massive phone calls, have targeted to the Japanese embassy, consulate and Japanese schools in China," and it urged Japanese in China to stay away from those places and from protests of the water release, and not to talk loudly in Japanese to avoid attention.

Managing the ever-growing volume of radioactive wastewater held in more than 1,000 tanks has been a safety risk and a burden since the plant was wrecked by a massive earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011. The tanks are already filled to 98% of their 1.37 million-ton capacity.

Releasing the water into the sea is a milestone for the decommissioning of the plant, which is expected to take decades. But it is just the beginning of the challenges ahead, such as the removal of the fatally radioactive melted fuel debris that remains in the three damaged reactors, a daunting task if ever accomplished.

The plant's operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, started releasing the first batch of 7,800 tons from 10 of the group B tanks, among the least radioactive water at the plant.

They say the water is treated and diluted to levels that are safer than international standards, and so far, testing by TEPCO and government agencies has found no detectable radioactivity in seawater

and fish samples taken after the release.

The Japanese government and TEPCO say releasing the water is an unavoidable step in the decommissioning of the plant.

Since the earthquake and tsunami destroyed the plant's cooling systems and caused three reactors to melt, highly contaminated cooling water applied to the damaged reactors has leaked continuously to the buildings' basements and mixed with groundwater. Some water is recycled to cool the nuclear fuel, while the rest is stored in the tanks.

The release started at the daily pace of 460 tons and moves slowly. TEPCO plans to release 31,200 tons of treated water by the end of March 2024, which would empty only 10 tanks because the site will continue to produce radioactive water.

The pace will quicken later and about 1/3 of the tanks will be removed over the next 10 years, freeing up space for the plant's decommissioning, said TEPCO executive Junichi Matsumoto, who is in charge of the treated water release. The water will be released over 30 years, but as long as melted fuel stays in the reactors, it requires cooling water under the current prospect.

About 880 tons of radioactive melted nuclear fuel remain inside the reactors. Robotic probes have provided some information but the status of the melted debris remains largely unknown, and the amount could be even larger,

says Takahara, the TEPCO spokesman.

A trial removal of melted debris using a giant remote-controlled robotic arm is set to begin in Unit 2 later this year, though it will be a very small amount, Takahara said.

Spent fuel removal from the Unit 1 reactor's cooling pool is set to start in 2027. The reactor top is still covered with debris from the explosion 12 years ago and needs to be cleaned up after putting a protective cover to contain radioactive dust.

Inside the worst-hit Unit 1, most of its reactor core melted and fell to the bottom of the primary containment chamber and possibly farther into the concrete basement. A robotic probe sent inside the Unit 1 primary containment chamber has found that its pedestal — the main supporting structure directly under its core — was extensively damaged.

Most of its thick concrete exterior was missing, exposing the internal steel reinforcement, prompting regulators to ask TEPCO to make risk assessment.

The government has stuck to its initial 30-to-40-year target for completing the decommissioning, without defining what that means. Rushing the schedule could cause more radiation exposure to workers and more environmental damage. Some experts say it would be impossible to remove all the melted fuel debris by 2051 and would take 50-100 years, if achieved at all. MDT/AP

this day in history

1992 VIOLENCE MARS GERMAN ANTI-RACIST RALLY



A protest march against right-wing attacks on refugees in Germany has ended in violence after demonstrators clashed with police.

It happened after about 15,000 people gathered in the town of Rostock in eastern Germany for the rally organized by a coalition of left-wing groups.

The rally in Rostock was one of a number taking place in Germany on Saturday to protest about neo-Nazi violence.

Heavy security and bad weather initially seemed to discourage major clashes between the protestors and neo-Nazis.

But as evening approached trouble developed and some marchers attacked police with smoke bombs, stones and bottles.

Police, who said hundreds of left-wing "troublemakers" were among the demonstrators, retaliated with water-cannon and baton charges.

About 75 people were arrested.

The protest came a week after gangs of neo-Nazis stormed and set fire to a hostel for asylum-seekers on a Rostock housing estate.

Local people cheered and applauded as the rioters forced the evacuation of the mainly Vietnamese refugees.

About 200 Romanian gypsies who had been camped outside the hostel were also forced to leave.

Police officers were accused of doing nothing to stop the violence.

Copy-cat attacks later took place against refugees in a number of other German towns and cities.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 there was an upsurge in neo-Nazi activity. The problem was particularly severe in eastern Germany which suffered from high unemployment and huge social changes after the collapse of communism. In the early 1990s there were several cases of black African refugees being killed by neo-Nazi thugs in the streets of eastern German towns. Almost a year before the problems in Rostock, asylum seekers were driven from their homes in the eastern town of Hoyeswerda by right-wing attacks. The German government has made efforts to crack down on racist activity but in 2001 a 40% year-on-year increase in racist attacks was reported.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 You may find that your quick wit and charm will help you in obtaining allies. You've been hurt before and could be again if you don't play hard to get. Protect your interests legally if necessary.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
 Don't overlook that fact that someone you care about may be hiding something. Consider making pleasure trips or participating in entertainment that will require energy.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
 Socially, you need a fast paced form of entertainment. Minor health problems may flare up if you haven't been taking care of yourself or have been burning the candle at both ends.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Sudden trips will take you by surprise. Your efforts will be rewarded handsomely. Too much work and no play will not only result in fatigue and frustration but also loneliness, too.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Empty promises could be likely where work is concerned. You will be able to dazzle others with your obvious charm and your outgoing nature.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Don't gossip. You will be moody and react poorly to issues concerning your mate. Try to get away with your mate. You may want to take a look at your direction in life.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Your attitudes at work will open new avenues for you. Romance and social activity will be a promising combination. Don't let siblings put pressure on you.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Your emotional state will vacillate. Children or friends may try to talk you into lending them money. Health problems may prevail if you haven't been getting enough rest.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Be discreet with private information. Pleasure trips will promote romance. You will find good buys and you will lift your spirits. Don't expect anyone else to pay your bills for you.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Emotional relationships will be plentiful if you attend group activities. You can make extra money. Rewards will be yours if you put in the overtime required.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Take care of the needs or responsibilities of elders. You will be well looked upon due to your compassionate and giving nature. You will be a bit of a spendthrift today.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Sudden changes will occur through communications with friends or in-laws. Your mate may be distressed if you refuse to make a commitment. You will be in a high cycle regarding work.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

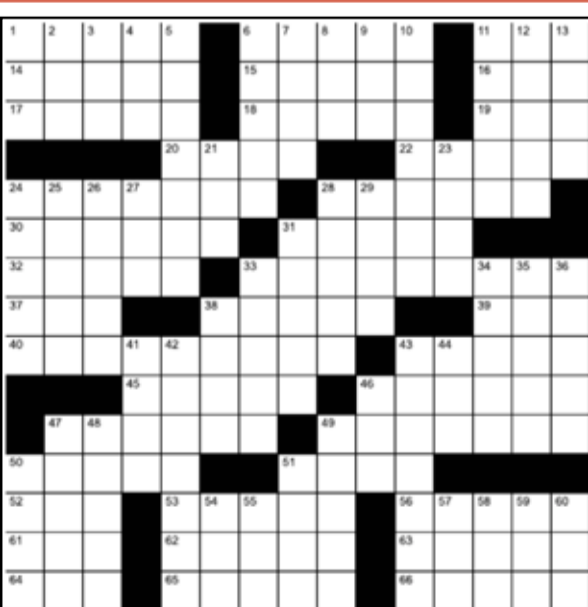
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	19	29	fine
Changchun	18	20	rain
Chengdu	21	24	showers
Chongqing	21	30	cloudy
Fuzhou	26	33	rain
Guangzhou	25	32	rain
Guiyang	17	23	cloudy
Haikou	26	31	rain
Hangzhou	21	23	rain
Harbin	17	20	rain
Hefei	19	28	fine
Nanjing	21	28	cloudy
Shanghai	23	25	rain
Taipei	26	30	cloudy
Wuhan	19	29	cloudy
Hong Kong	27	31	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	12	17	rain
Frankfurt	11	19	rain
Paris	13	22	overcast
London	10	22	overcast
New York	21	24	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Singer Yma; 6- Sudden convulsion; 11- Broke bread; 14- Author Calvino; 15- Shinto temple gateway; 16- Metro area; 17- Law of Moses; 18- First name in photography; 19- Yank's foe; 20- Bern's river; 22- Bridge declaration; 24- Quiver; 28- Flower parts; 30- One stroke under par; 31- Red fluorescent dye; 32- Writer of lyric poetry; 33- Verve; 37- Genealogy word; 38- Shut; 39- Heston's org.; 40- Of times past; 43- Citrus hybrids; 45- Island off Venezuela; 46- Thoroughfare; 47- Italian sausage; 49- Soon; 50- Dutch painter Jan; 51- High-pitched tone; 52- DDE opponent; 53- Chalice; 56- Silly; 61- Colorful card game; 62- Horizontal; 63- Lofty nest; 64- Chop off; 65- Pitchers; 66- Prestigious prize;

DOWN 1- Make a lap; 2- ___-Aztec languages; 3- Do damage to; 4- In the manner of; 5- Live together; 6- Gaze fixedly; 7- Corn bread; 8- ___ longa, vita brevis; 9- Sprechen ___ Deutsch?; 10- Citizen army; 11- Hearing-related; 12- Head lock; 13- Goes back; 21- Draft choice; 23- Huff and puff; 24- Steak order; 25- Bill attachment; 26- Great Lakes tribesmen; 27- Rx writers; 28- Composure; 29- Salinger girl; 31- ___ Gay; 33- Cover story; 34- Bay; 35- Bay window; 36- Beastly; 38- Pal; 41- Story, often rooted in folklore; 42- Argue; 43- Visionary; 44- Boxer's warning; 46- Pronoun for a ship; 47- Pad user; 48- Author of fables; 49- Vends; 50- First king of Israel; 51- Coffin support; 54- Remote button; 55- Hail, to Caesar; 57- Classical beginning; 58- Short trader?; 59- Never, in Nuremberg; 60- Grown elver;



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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 HKD 3,980,000 2 bed 1 bath

Supreme Flower City
 HKD 22,000/mth 4 bed 3 bath

AD



RUGBY | ANALYSIS

TIME IS RIGHT FOR FRANCE TEAM TO EMULATE LES BLEUS WITH WC TRIUMPH

JEROME PUGMIRE, PARIS

WINNING the World Cup for the first time in October would finally elevate France's rugby team alongside the more illustrious Les Bleus in terms of nationwide standing.

It's an old debate in France:

Which is really the national sport, soccer or rugby?

The soccer team is more successful in the international arena after winning two World Cups, two European Championships and reaching three other major finals.

But while soccer fans quickly

fall out of love with their national team, rugby supporters have tended to remain loyal and the atmosphere more passionate at Stade de France.

The rugby crowd is as quick to cheer France as it is to drown the stadium in whistles if things start going badly. There was a lot of

whistling in the previous decade but the passionate support endured and was rewarded last year with a 10th Grand Slam in Six Nations history and the world No. 1 ranking.

Playing a World Cup on home soil will give France, three times a runner-up at rugby's premier event, a massive boost.

And Les Tricolores have the people's support. Thousands of fans remained at their seats at Stade de France on Sunday, long after France won its last World Cup warmup against Australia, to applaud captain Antoine Dupont and his team as they did a lap of honor under a haze of red, white and blue smoke.

"The enthusiasm people have for us has been talked about. We will have to grasp it," Dupont said. "We've got loyal fans, people want to get behind us. We have to take this positive energy and leave the rest aside. I hope their passion pushes us on."

Host teams tend to do well at the Rugby World Cup. This is the third edition where France will host games, but the first for an entire tournament.

France has always reached at least the quarterfinals, getting within one win of the title in 1987, '99 and 2011, all far from home. But expectations for the upcoming tournament are at their highest ever thanks to an exciting

and innovative four-year buildup under coach Fabien Galthié.

"In terms of the French public and the excitement that's building, we know there's a 90% approval rating for the hosting of the tournament," World Rugby chief executive Alan Gilpin said. "We're anticipating a very special celebration of both rugby and of France."

Soccer's star players are more well known in France than their counterparts in rugby, which maintains more of a link with its traditional past. Perhaps things are changing. France's players had their names on their jerseys for the first time this month — something their soccer counterparts have been doing for many years.

France opens the tournament with a huge test against three-time champion New Zealand at Stade de France on Sept. 8. The pool match has been hyped since the draw in December 2020.

France is led by Dupont, the 2021 world player of the year and three-time Six Nations MVP. It is a far superior side than the one which last hosted in 2007, although losing star flyhalf Romain Ntamack to injury is a significant setback.

The Dupont-Ntamack combination started in the 2019 Six Nations and was established by the time of the 2019 World Cup.

MDT/AP

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C&C RECEIVED THE 1ST SILVER
"DEIGNAN AWARD"
FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN MACAU (2023)



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

BASKETBALL

S.Sudan's 7-foot-1 Khaman Maluach becomes one of youngest to play in WC

SOUTH Sudan's 16-year-old Khaman Maluach scored one point and played 16 minutes in his team's 89-69 victory over China yesterday to become one of the youngest to ever play in the basketball World Cup.

The 7-foot-1 Maluach, who is widely considered a 2025 NBA draft prospect, turns 17 next month. The only players younger than Maluach in World Cup history were Ivory Coast's Georges Lath (16 years, 3 months in 1986) and China's Gao Ailun (16 years, 9 months in 2010).

Underdogs like South Sudan and Cape Verde picked up wins yesterday to stay in contention for the second round. New Zealand and Ivory Coast also stayed alive.

Five teams have already advanced to the second round: Latvia, Canada, Germany, Montenegro, and Lithuania. Eleven places are still open while Tokyo Olympic silver medalist France was knocked out on Sunday.



South Sudan center Khaman Madit Maluach (6)

GROUP B

SOUTH SUDAN 89, CHINA 69

At Manila, Chicago Bulls guard Carlisle scored 21 points as South Sudan beat China to record its first-ever World Cup victory. Kuany Kuany added 16 points for South Sudan (1-1), which had the edge throughout and shot 15 of 30 from 3-point range.

After a scoreless debut in the first game, Minnesota Timberwolves sixth man Kyle Anderson top-scored

with 22 points for China (0-2), which lost its opener to Serbia 105-63.

South Sudan plays Serbia on Wednesday in its final group game and China faces Puerto Rico.

GROUP F

CAPE VERDE 81, VENEZUELA 75

At Okinawa, Betinho Gomes scored 22 and Will Tavares added 20 to lead Cape Verde (1-1) over Venezuela (0-2). Ivan Almeida added 18.

Cape Verde is the lowest ranked team in the tournament according to FIBA rankings, but they don't look like it.

Venezuela led at the half 46-33, but was held to only 29 points in the last two quarters. David Cubillan led Venezuela with 15 and Jhorman Zamora added 14.

Cape Verde faces Slovenia on Wednesday and Georgia plays Venezuela.

GROUP C

NEW ZEALAND 95, JORDAN 87 OT

At Manila, Izayah Le'afa sco-

red 23 points and Shea Ili added 15 as New Zealand (1-1) kept alive its hopes of reaching the second round. Jordan (0-2) faces a game Wednesday against the United States.

Rondae Hollis Jefferson hit a 3-pointer with 10 seconds to go, and then made his free throw after being fouled to send the game into overtime at 85-85. Jordan was out-scored 10-2 in overtime.

Former NBA player Hollis Jefferson led Jordan with 39 points and had nine rebounds. Freddy Ibrahim added 22.

New Zealand plays Greece on

Wednesday for a place in the final 16

GROUP G

IVORY COAST 71, IRAN 69

In Jakarta, Solo Diabate made three late free throws as Ivory Coast edged Iran. With Iran leading 69-68, Diabate drove to the lane and drew a foul with six seconds left. He had an additional free throw after Iran coach Hakan Demir received a technical foul.

Nisre Zouzoua scored 17 points for Ivory Coast (1-1), who lost playmaker Bazoumana Kone to an ankle injury early in the third quarter.

Behnam Yakhchali led Iran (0-2) with 19 points but missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer. Former NBA center Hamed Haddadi had 9 points and 8 rebounds before fouling out late.

Ivory Coast plays Brazil on Wednesday in its final group game and Iran meets Spain. **MDT/AP**

TODAY'S SLATE

Group A	Angola (1-1) vs. Dominican Republic (2-0)	Philippines (0-2) vs. Italy (1-1)
Group D	Egypt (0-2) vs. Mexico (0-2)	Montenegro (2-0) vs. Lithuania (2-0)
Group E	Germany (2-0) vs. Finland (0-2)	Australia (1-1) vs. Japan (1-1)
Group H	Lebanon (0-2) vs. France (0-2)	Canada (2-0) vs. Latvia (2-0)

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OPINION

The Conversation

Huaiyu Chen Arizona, State University



WITH FEWER THAN 1,500 CATHOLICS IN MONGOLIA, POPE FRANCIS' UPCOMING VISIT BRINGS ATTENTION

Pope Francis is set to make the first-ever visit to Mongolia, a country with fewer than 1,500 Catholics, all of whom have come to the faith since 1992. But the pope's visit is a reminder that the country has a long and complex history with Christianity, among many other faiths.

Mongolia has only 3.4 million people, and at least 87.4% are Buddhists. The small Catholic community came into existence after this landlocked country, bordered by Russia to the north and China to the south, began to abandon its communist ideology and embraced different religions. At that time, it also restored diplomatic relations with the Vatican and welcomed Catholic missionaries.

But Catholicism has been known to the Mongols since the early 13th century. As a scholar of religions in Asia, I am aware that Nestorianism, a Christian tradition commonly known as the Church of the East, reached the periphery of the Mongolian plateau as early as the eighth century, long before the Mongols became active in that area. Several old tribes in the Mongolian steppes were converted to Nestorianism around 1000 C.E.

The Mongol Empire was founded by Genghis Khan in 1206 after he conquered all the other nomadic tribes on the Mongolian Plateau. Later on, the empire extended from Mongolia to the Eastern Mediterranean regions.

Initially the Mongols practiced a Shamanic religion, worshipping the God Tengri. However, to be able to rule all conquered subjects across the vast empire, Genghis Khan issued the "Great Yasa," a regulation allowing people under his regime the freedom to freely practice their faiths. Under the Mongol Empire, people practiced Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

The visits of Catholic missionaries also prompted many Mongol Nestorians to start going on pilgrimages to West Asia as a way to expand their influence beyond their comfort zone under the Mongol Empire.

In 1287 a Nestorian monk, Rabban Bar Sauma, embarked on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem from Khanbaliq, near modern Beijing. Later Sauma's student Rabban Markos became a patriarch with a title Yabballaha III, or the chief of the Nestorian Church, in the Mongol-ruled Ilkhanate Empire in modern-day Iran.

At the same time, the Catholic missionaries also started to expand their influence in Central Asia. In 1307 a Franciscan priest, John of Montecorvino, built a Catholic church in Khanbaliq and became the patriarch under the order of Pope Clement V. He had converted about 6,000 people in Mongolia by 1313.

Over the next few centuries, the religious landscape in Mongolia continued to change, depending on who was ruling the region.

Many Mongols converted to Tibetan Buddhism during the later part of the 13th-century reign of the Kublai Khan, another grandson of Genghis Khan, who favored the religion. But after 1368, when the Mongols withdrew from central China and left Khanbaliq, the practice of Tibetan Buddhism and Catholicism was suppressed. The Nestorian community gradually disappeared and never revived again.

However, under the Qing dynasty that ruled China and Mongolia in the 17th century, Buddhism was revived. But again, in the 20th century Mongolian politics changed drastically when the country adopted communism following the Soviet Union's intervention, and the practice of Buddhism declined again.

After Mongolia became a democracy in 1992, Mongols were allowed to freely practice their faiths again: Buddhism began to flourish, and Catholic missionaries arrived in the country and built a small Catholic community.

When the pope visits this complex religious terrain, his visit will be significant from the geopolitical and religious perspective.

Overall, I argue that the pope's groundbreaking visit to Mongolia might send important signals in East Asia and, in particular, to the much larger Catholic community in China.

[Abridged]

BIDEN IS 'OLD,' TRUMP IS 'CORRUPT': AP-NORC POLL THE BUZZ

President Joe Biden is "old" and "confused," and former President Donald Trump is "corrupt" and "dishonest." Those are among the top terms Americans use when they're asked to describe the Democrat in the White House and the Republican best positioned to face him in next year's election.

Unflattering portraits of Biden and Trump emerge clearly in a new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, which asked an open-ended question about what comes to mind when people think of them.

For Biden, the largest share of U.S. adults — including both Democrats and Republicans — mentioned his age. At 80, Biden is just three

years older than Trump, but many Americans expressed real concerns about his ability to continue as president.

Trump, meanwhile, has been indicted in four cases featuring 91 total criminal counts and elicits words such as "corrupt" and "crooked" (named by 15%), along with "bad" and other generally negative comments (11%). Not far behind are words like "liar" and "dishonest" (8%). Another 8% offered generally positive comments like "good," though.

A deeper look doesn't improve things much for Biden or Trump.

And while many of the criticisms reflect a familiar partisan divide, the poll shows neither man is immune to criticism from within his own party.



UKRAINE WAR, PROPAGANDA-STYLE, IS COMING TO RUSSIAN MOVIE SCREENS. WILL PEOPLE WATCH?

THE movie centers around a renowned violinist from Belgium arriving in Kyiv to perform. The date is February 2022, and his trip is upended as Russia starts bombing Ukraine. The musician survives a series of "inhuman crimes and bloody provocations by Ukrainian nationalists," and he wants to tell the world "what it was really like."

"The Witness" — a state-sponsored drama that premiered in Russia on Aug. 17 -- is the first feature film about the 18-month-old invasion. It depicts Ukrainian troops as violent neo-Nazis who torture and kill their own people. One even wears a T-shirt with Hitler on it; another is shown doing drugs. It also has the main character's young son wondering: "Isn't Ukraine Russia?"

It's the narrative the Kremlin has been promoting since the first days of the war — all packaged up in a motion picture.

The release of "The Witness" comes after Russian authorities announced a plan to boost production of movies glorifying Moscow's actions in Ukraine and is part of a growing number of propaganda films.

But in an era of instantaneous information and

disinformation in wartime and other times, two questions present themselves: Are propaganda films actually effective? And are they any good?

Whether such films will attract viewers is a big question. Similar movies have been box-office disasters. Plus, sociologists say the public interest in following the war has waned, and people these days mainly want to escape from the gloom and doom of news from Ukraine.

"We regularly hear (from respondents) that it's a huge stress, a huge pain," says Denis Volkov, director of the Levada Center, Russia's top independent pollster. Some Russians, he says, insist they "don't discuss, don't watch, don't listen" to the news about Ukraine in an effort to cope with that stress.

Film is an important medium that governments have used to shape patriotic messages — from the early days of the Soviet Union to wartime use by Nazi Germany and Italy, and even by the United States during and immediately after World War II. In more modern times, North Korea founder Kim Il Sung and his son and successor, Kim Jong Il, presided over a regular output of propa-

ganda movies.

State-sponsored propaganda films have also been employed in the Middle East to varying degrees of success. Syria's civil war, for instance, became a focal point of Ramadan TV soap operas in the past decade, including some that were supportive of Syrian President Bashar Assad. Iran regularly funds films glorifying hard-liners and paramilitary forces it backs across the region.

In today's Russia, propaganda as fiction isn't a haphazard effort. Russian authorities speak openly about their intention to bring the Ukraine war — or, rather, the Russian narrative around it — to the big screen.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered the Culture Ministry to ensure theaters screen documentaries about the "special military operation," as the Kremlin calls its war in Ukraine. The ministry also has prioritized themes when allocating state funding for films. These include "heroism and selflessness of Russian warriors" in Ukraine and "battling modern manifestations of the Nazi and fascist ideology" — a false accusation Putin makes about Kyiv's leaders. MDT/AP



USA Trump's campaign says he has raised \$7.1 million since Thursday when he was booked at the Fulton County Jail in Georgia on charges that he illegally schemed to overturn the 2020 election in the state and became the first former president in U.S. history to ever have a mug shot taken. A spokesman said that, on Friday alone, the campaign brought in \$4.18 million — its highest-grossing day to date. The record haul underscores how Trump's legal woes have been a fundraising boon for his campaign, even as his political operation has spent tens of millions on his defense.



USA A masked white man fatally shot three Black people inside a Jacksonville, Florida, Dollar General store in a predominately African-American neighborhood on Saturday, in an attack where he used a gun painted with a swastika, officials said. The shooter, who had also posted racist writings, then killed himself. Jacksonville Sheriff T.K. Waters told a news conference that the attack that left two men and one woman dead was definitely "racially motivated."



Zimbabwe's main opposition leader yesterday [Macau time] alleged "blatant and gigantic fraud" in the country's election after President Emmerson Mnangagwa was declared the winner and international observers reported an atmosphere of intimidation against voters. The returns from the latest troubled vote in the southern African nation were announced Saturday night, two days earlier than expected. Opposition leader Nelson Chamisa's Citizens Coalition for Change party (pictured) said it would challenge the results as "hastily assembled without proper verification."