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**A LOCAL WOMAN IN HER 60S LOST THE EQUIVALENT OF MOP13.64M IN A FRAUDULENT CRYPTOCURRENCY INVESTMENT SCHEME, PJ REPORTS**

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# RECOVERY NOT TO TAKE LIGHTLY

In spite of a smooth economic recovery, association warns Prosperity Index is still at 'dissatisfactory levels' P3

AP PHOTO



**North Korean** leader Kim Jong Un was to tour a Russian aircraft plant that builds fighter jets and then visit the country's Pacific Fleet, but his exact whereabouts remained uncertain, as Seoul yesterday expressed "deep concern and regret" that his visit has focused on expanding military cooperation. Washington has warned that the summit between Kim and Putin could lead to a deal for North Korea to supply ammunition for Moscow's war in Ukraine. There's widespread concern in Seoul that North Korea in return would receive advanced weapons technologies from Russia.

AP PHOTO



**Australia** The government has proposed tougher restrictions on former defense military personnel who want to train foreign militaries as the nation prepares to share nuclear secrets with the United States and Britain. Defense Minister Richard Marles (pictured) introduced legislation into the Parliament on Thursday aimed at safeguarding military secrets. Last year, he ordered the Defense Department to review standards after reports that China had approached former Australian military personnel to become trainers.

AP PHOTO



**Myanmar** The younger son of Aung San Suu Kyi says he has always avoided talking to the media, but this time is different. He's increasingly worried about his imprisoned 78-year-old mother's health and about Myanmar's violent political crisis, which he calls desperate. "I'd just really like to have some form of contact with her so that I know that she's OK, because at the moment she has no access to her legal counsel," Kim Aris said yesterday [Macau time] in a video interview with AP from his home in London.



**GBA**

## HO LAT SENG REITERATES NATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF GREATER BAY

P2



MUSIC FESTIVAL

# IC IMPOSES VERIFICATION MEASURES ON JOE HISAISHI SHOW BOX OFFICES

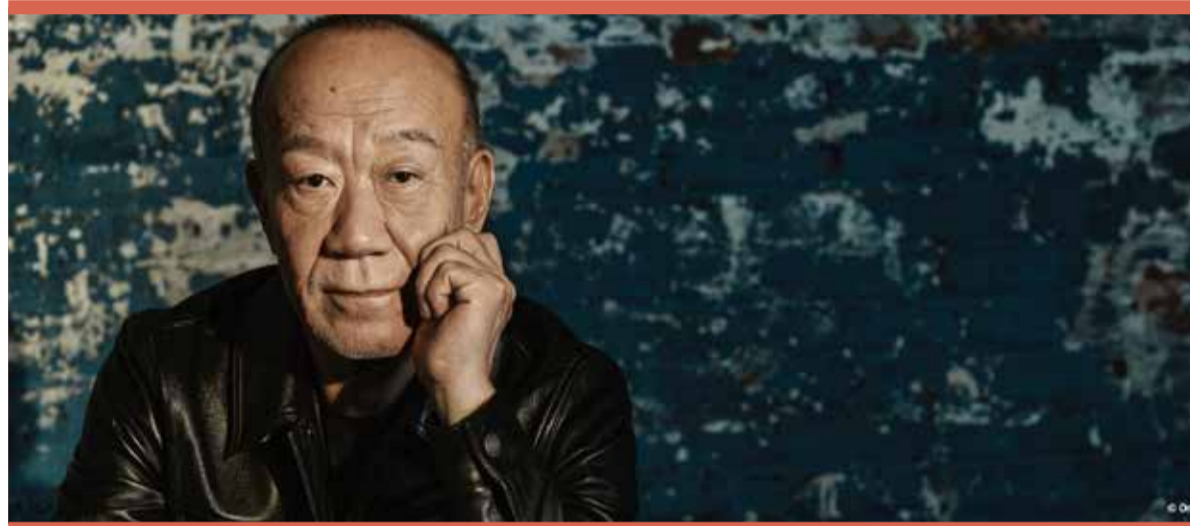
ANTHONY LAM

**I**N an attempt to combat ticket scalping, Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has announced that ticketing and admission with identity verification will be imposed on Joe Hisaishi's shows in Macau.

Acclaimed Japanese master musician Hisaishi will have three concerts in Macau as part of the lineup for the 25th Macao International Music Festival.

Knowing his popularity amount local people, the IC has employed a raffle system for the shows' box office. Only raffle winners will be able to buy tickets to the shows.

Upon announcement of the raffle results some days ago, numerous people on facebook started to try and scalp tickets. In response to the situation, the IC



announced late Wednesday evening the introduction of identity verification during ticketing and admission.

It added that scalped tickets or tickets used for commercial promotions will be voided, and

no refund will be provided. Ticket holders must have the same name as the person who won the raffle and bought the tickets, or otherwise would not be permitted to enter the show.

The bureau has also contacted

the police as per the situation. The Judiciary Police (PJ) issued a statement yesterday afternoon reminding members of the public of the identity verification requirement, as well as warning them against counterfeit tickets.

Although many people showed support for the IC's decision, just as many complained about the late notice. A social media user declared that he managed to win a set of two tickets to a Hisaishi show, but he had always intended to gift them to his young nephew. Currently, he has no idea how to explain the new rules to his nephew, and the nephew may not be able to go.

Prior to the revelation of raffle winners, the IC has not expressly mentioned the requirement of identity verification.

Former lawmaker Sulu Sou has also commented on an IC social media post, questioning whether the bureau management had forgotten about the existence of scalped tickets before the revelation of ticket winners.

The IC told the Times in a reply to a query yesterday that they are "following up the situation and will announce updates in due course."

Tickets to FIMM's Hisaishi concert were subscribed by 68,000 people.

CRIME

# Local woman loses over MOP13.6 million in cryptocurrency scam

RENATO MARQUES

**A** local woman in her 60s is reported to have lost the equivalent of MOP13.64 million in a fraudulent cryptocurrency investment scheme, the Judiciary Police (PJ) informed.

According to the PJ, the woman met a man through a mobile communication application (app) back in April this year.

During the initial contact, the man said to wanted to rent a house in the same place where the woman had rented and wanted some advice.

After they became acquainted and started to chat, the scammer offered the victim a part in a scheme to invest in the cryptocurrency Tether.

Following instructions from the "friend," she downloaded an app and created an account to start investing.

Over the course of about four months, she transferred money to this account on several occasions to purchase Tether and make in-



vestments. She also told the PJ that she had successfully withdrawn profits from the first two investments, so she trusted the scheme.

Last month, the victim was persuaded to invest at a larger scale, lured with the potential of huge profits, but she later found out that she could not withdraw the apparent earnings.

She then received a notification that the transaction she had attempted had failed and that consequently the account had

been frozen for security reasons.

As commonly happens in this kind of case, a large sum was then requested to "unfreeze" the account.

After she tried by several means to recover her investments, she discovered that she had lost contact with the man who invited her to the scheme. At this point she realized that she had been scammed and filed a complaint with the PJ.

In these cases, the police can rarely identify the suspects.

# CE REITERATES NATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF GBA

**T**HE Greater Bay Area (GBA) is of national importance and is an engine for national development, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng said yesterday at the opening of the first Business Conference on Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development.

"The construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is a major national strategy personally planned, deployed and promoted by President Xi Jinping," Ho said. "It is of great significance to the country's implementation of the innovation-driven development strategy and expansion of opening up to the outside world."

Speaking on Macau's position in this national strategy, the

head of the local government said, "as one of the core cities in the GBA, Macau has the advantages of an international free port, a low tax system and an extensive economic and trade network."

Ho also reiterated that the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin is a new platform for Macau's diversification. Apart from national policies supportive of the Zone's development, the Macau and Guangdong governments will continue devising policies to advance the construction of the Zone, "turning it into a hot location for GBA development," adding that the management system at the Zone will be continuously improved. **AL**



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ANTHONY LAM

# Economic group suggests vigilance despite smooth economy

**D**ESPITE the city's smoothly recovering economy, underlying factors may fluctuate, Macau Economic Association (MEA) warned yesterday in a statement.

Amid its announcement on the latest Prosperity Index, the group warned that at least three indicators for the index remain at dissatisfactory levels. The three factors are the stock prices of the six casino operators, the Chinese Consumer Confidence Index and the total employed population of China.

On the other hand, high interest rates are also a critical factor of which the market should be mindful. Inter-bank Offered Rates in both Hong Kong and Macau have remained at an escalated level, raising costs of capitalization for both businesses and individuals. The situation discourages investment and consumption.

Meanwhile, the increase in size of non-performing loans and constantly tightening net interest margin have also led to decrease in banks' revenues from operations and the probability of expanding provision.

Proving its observations with



figures, the group reiterated that the city's overall rate of non-performing loans had risen to 2.18% for July. The rate concerning non-residents rose

to 2.79%, which is a new high.

September is traditionally a low season for travel as summer holiday ends. The suspension of casinos early this month

in response to Super Typhoon Saola has also posed risks to gross gaming revenue for the month.

Despite this fact, the group

remains optimistic for local tourism in October as it is the month of Chinese National Day on the one hand, and on the other, 51% of mainland residents who travelled in the first half 2023 have been to Macau.

The group expects the city's economy to be vibrant in the coming months with a series of festive or celebratory events as the year edges towards its conclusion.

Therefore, it forecasts the city's Prosperity Index for August to November to be between 6.0 to 6.2 points.

Looking back, the group revealed that the index for July is 5.9 points. The score was supported by satisfactory, if not overheated, performances in hotel occupancy rate, total employed population, as well as unemployment rate. Having risen for eight consecutive months, local currency supply measured in M2 has reflected improved intentions for investments, the group added.

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GAMING

# HIGH ROLLERS BACK ON GAMING TABLE AS JUNKET AGENTS RETURN

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE casino's VIP sector is "surprisingly strong due to the return of the junket agents" under a new arrangement to lure high-rollers to the gaming tables.

According to Ben Lee, managing partner at IGamiX, in July, the VIP ratio clawed back up to 30% of pre-Covid 2019 levels, as cited in a report issued by Nikkei Asia.

Gross revenue generated from VIP gamblers surged 41.9% in the second quarter, amounting to MOP12.16 billion.

As the influx of visitors returns, revenues are on the rise in the VIP sector, showing unexpected growth following the city's crack-down on the previously thriving junket industry.

One of the most significant crackdowns came with the swift downfall of Suncity Group back in January 2022, which once handled as much as HKD180 billion

MDT ARCHIVE



staked by high rollers in its VIP rooms in a single month, which underscores China's severe crack-down in the world's largest gaming hub.

In the city's biggest gaming law overhaul, junket agents will only be able to grant credit to gamblers to play in the local casinos if such promoters have a formal

contract with the concessionaire allowing such an activity.

Junkets have historically provided a service that is part-upscale travel agent and part-money

changer for big spenders in Macau.

The deposits of these companies serve as a guarantee that they comply with their legal obligations and will pay any fines that may be incurred because of their activities.

Back in December 2021, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng admitted that the existence of junket operators was a "problem" for Macau.

Under the new law, each junket licensee is required to provide a guarantee of MOP1.5 million, while the highest junket commission rate is capped at 1.25% of the total rolling amount.

The junket agents are just "keeping their relationships with the players warm in Macau until such time as they all can leave for other countries," Lee said.

An anonymous analyst has said that Beijing's crackdown and higher taxes make Macau only a temporary location for agents to maintain customer relationships because they have "nowhere else to go," as cited in the report.

Data from the China Tourism Academy shows that Macau is the top destination, with 50.9% of Chinese outbound tourists in the first half of the year.

## Wynn to showcase supercars, Chinese wine amid new marketing branding

ANTHONY LAM

**A** supercar exhibition and a Chinese wine competition will be held under new branding, local resort operator Wynn Resorts S.A. announced on Wednesday evening.

Officially referred to as Wynn Signature, it now presents as a lifestyle brand, the resort operator added.

From October 1 to end-November this year, the Wynn Signature – 2023 Hypercar Exhibition will display 16 limited-edition supercars at the Wynn Palace and Wynn Macau integrated resorts.

The resort operator boasted that the exhibition will offer close-up views of these supercars, some of which are being presented for the first time in Macau. These cars will include McLaren's first-ever GT McLaren Speedtail; Bugatti's ultimate piece – the Bugatti Chiron; and the Pagani Huayra BC, of which there is only 20 units worldwide.

Meanwhile, early next year, the resort operator will hold a Chinese grape wine competition to present a satisfactory range of Chinese vino and promote China as a new vineyard.

The "Wynn Signature – Chinese Wine Competition," is set to take place from March to April 2024



and will serve as a platform for Mainland Chinese wine industry professionals to network and promote the future development of China's wine industry.

Wynn will invite a number of wine experts from China and abroad to serve on a judging panel to award the most outstanding Chinese wines, wineries and individuals who have contributed to the wine industry both in China and internationally.

The competition will establish

a platform for advancing China's wine industry by building greater networking opportunities and forging new collaborations, while also giving Chinese wine global recognition, expanding markets and promoting cross-industry integration.

The resort operator also emphasized that the new branding will bring together the world's top brands to present epicurean, resort and other experiences, aiming to attract a more esteemed clientele.

## NETO VALENTE TO HEAD PORTUGUESE SCHOOL FOUNDATION

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE lawyer Jorge Neto Valente will be the new president of the Macau Portuguese School (EPM) Foundation, replacing Roberto Carneiro, who presided over the Foundation since its creation, TDM Radio reported, citing sources in Lisbon.

The board of directors will also see the new appointment of João Capaz Coelho, representing the Portuguese Ministry of Education, and Patrícia Ribeiro, director of the Portuguese Institute of the Orient (IPOR).

As for the role of vice president of the Board, Miguel de Senna Fernandes should continue in the post, representing the Association for Macanese Education (APIM).

A fifth member of the Board will be selected by the other members.

Neto Valente has also recently been appointed to take part from the members of the first Advisory Council for the Portuguese consulate for Macau and Hong Kong.

One of the hot topics that the Macau Portuguese School Foundation has been having to deal with over the past few



years relates to the facilities and location of the current EPM school, in the Macau city center, which does not allow expansion while the number of students from the school, namely those of Chinese ethnicity continue to grow.

For this school year, which started earlier this week, the school has listed a total of 748 students, which represents a year-on-year increase of 6.4%.

## WHOLE PERSON DEVELOPMENT

# Dedicated graduation ceremony highlights Melco's commitment to talent development

**M**ELCO Resorts & Entertainment's systematic approach to talent growth is implemented through its comprehensive Whole Person Development philosophy. Through innovative programs, Melco provides colleagues with an array of multi-level learning opportunities to enhance their professional skills and encourage lifelong learning, helping them establish fruitful careers. Late last month, a dedicated Whole Person Development Graduation Ceremony was hosted at City of Dreams to celebrate the life-transforming achievements of more than 200 colleagues graduating from the company's various academic programs, including those of:

- 13 YOU-niversity graduates
- 55 Back to School graduates
- 14 Culinary Foundation Acceleration Program graduates
- 14 Scholarship recipients
- 153 Diploma / Advanced Diploma Program graduates

Guests of Honor included Mr. Kong Chi Meng, Representative of the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture and Director of the Education and Youth Development Bureau; Mr. Shi Shuzheng, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Education and Youth Work of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR; Mr. Wong Chi Hong, Director of the Labour Affairs Bureau; Mr. Ricky Hoi, Acting Director of the Macao



Government Tourism Office; Ms. Ng On Lou, Acting Head of the Research and Data Analysis Division of the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau; Mr. Frederico Ma Chi Ngai, President of the Macao Chamber of Commerce; Dr. Fanny Vong, President of the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies; Dr. Cheang Hong Kuong, Principal of Escola Seong Fan da Associação Comercial de Macau; and Dr. Connie Loi, Vice President of the Macao Insti-

tute for Tourism Studies. The Guests were welcomed by Melco representatives including Mr. Lawrence Ho, Chairman & CEO; Ms. Akiko Takahashi, Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff to Chairman and CEO; Dr. Kent Wong, Chief Advisor; Mr. David Sisk, Chief Operating Officer – Macau Resorts; and Dr. Raymond Lo, Senior Vice President, Property General Manager of Altira Macau & Mocha Clubs.

"COVID-19 prevented us

from hosting celebratory ceremonies in the past few years – which makes [the graduation] event even more meaningful – especially when it highlights the perseverance and dedication our colleagues have shown in the face of the many challenges brought on by the pandemic. I hope our colleagues will continue to practice lifelong learning and to go on achieving prosperity and success both personally and professionally" said Mr. Lawrence

Ho, Chairman & CEO of Melco.

Melco's Learning Academy has offered over 500 learning programs per year since it was established in 2010. Among them, the Back to School Program provides colleagues who left school prematurely with the opportunity to gain their High School Diploma by undertaking formal education in-house at Melco alongside their employment. Melco was the first local integrated resort operator to launch such a program back in 2010. In addition, since 2015, Melco Learning Academy launched the Melco YOU-niversity Program in partnership with Edinburgh Napier University, a fully funded program for selected colleagues to study for a bachelor's degree while working. Colleagues who successfully graduate from the Melco YOU-niversity Program attain a Bachelor of Arts in International Business Practice.

During the event, Mr. Kong Chi Meng, Representative of the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture and Director of the Education and Youth Development Bureau congratulated the Melco graduates on their achievements. He added, "Talent cultivation is of paramount importance to the success of an enterprise. We appreciate Melco's robust and continued support in cultivating talents among its employees through a series of comprehensive learning programs to enhance their professional skills and provide them with career development opportunities."



**Mr. Hou Lei**  
School program graduate

"During the pandemic, I participated in Melco's Foundation Acceleration Program, and was fortunate enough to work in different departments, all of which helped to broaden my horizons. Noticing that my peers were moving forward

in their careers, I decided to step out of my comfort zone to apply for a place in the company's Back to School program. As a father of four kids, everyone tells me that I am blessed. It was when my 4th baby was born that I told myself I could also be their role model by pursuing my dreams through lifelong learning."



**Mr. Charles Chan**  
Melco YOU-niversity graduate

"In late 2017, my mother was admitted to hospital. Here, she told me that her greatest regret was her inability to support me in completing my degree. I comforted her by promising

that I would fight my way through to enroll and graduate from company-sponsored Melco YOU-niversity program – and that she need not feel regretful. This, sadly, turned out to be my last conversation with my beloved mother as she passed away that same night. Amid

my deepest pain and grief, I swore to keep my final promise by completing my college degree. By mid-2018, I was selected to participate in YOU-niversity program. The birth of my first son in early 2019 also gave me a new goal for my studies. I wanted to become his role mo-

del by completing my bachelor's degree in my 40s so that he, too, would understand that learning is a lifelong journey. With the company's support, I have also completed my Master of Business Administration in Gaming Management since. I am very thankful."

### ID UNVEILS NEW SCHEME TO ALLOW HIGHER TURNOVER OF LIN FONG SWIMMING CLASSES

The Sports Bureau (ID) will not allow swimmers who participate in the classes of the "Sports for All" program at the Lin Fong swimming pool to renew their memberships, forcing new registrations and draws every semester, the president of ID, Pun Weng Kun said on the sidelines of the presentation of the 2023 Macao International Marathon. Pun said that the measure was introduced to allow more and different users to take part in the classes. He also noted that, even if existing users are not selected when they attempt to newly register, they can continue to use the facility on their own by acquiring entry tickets for the schedules of public use.

### IC TO HOLD CONCERT FEATURING LOCAL BANDS AT LAI CHI YUN

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) will hold evening concerts at Lai Chi Yun Shipyards - Plots X11-X15 in the second half of each month, between July and November, gathering musicians to present a variety of music performances featuring multiple music genres, promoting exchange. Following the concert "Lively and Poetic Melodies" in August, the concert "Local Bands" will be held at 4 p.m. tomorrow, featuring local bands Catalyser, GIMME5 and Single Path.

### MURALS FROM CHINA'S TANG DYNASTY EXHIBITED IN MACAU

Murals from China's Tang Dynasty, a time period over 1,000 years ago, are being exhibited in the city, aiming to teach local residents more about traditional Chinese culture. The exhibition is being held at the City University of Macao (CUM), vividly showcasing the lives of young people in the Tang Dynasty. Liu Jun, rector of CUM, said teachers and students are encouraged to actively participate in the side events of the exhibition and make efforts to inherit and carry on traditional Chinese culture. The exhibition will continue until Sept. 26.

### FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES AT MOP220B

The Monetary Authority of Macao announced yesterday that the preliminary estimate of the SAR's foreign exchange reserves amounted to MOP220.6 billion at the end of August. The reserves increased by 1.4% from the previous month's revised value of MOP217.4 billion. Macao SAR's foreign exchange reserves at end-August 2023 represented 11 times the currency in circulation or 88.0% of pataca M2 at end-July 2023.

# MICRO CONNECT, HAO YUE TO INVEST IN CATERING IN MACAU

ANTHONY LAM

**I**NVESTMENT firm Micro Connect Group has signed an agreement with mainland Hao Yue Catering Group Company Limited to establish a restaurant in Macau, the firm has announced in a statement.

The statement noted that the "Joy" restaurant, owned by Hao Yue, will be the first time Micro Connect will invest in a store in Macau, and will be a milestone in the group's overseas investment.

The two companies held an agreement-signing ceremony in Macau on Wednesday.

Previously, the investment firm pledged that it would help local caterers in their capitalization and expansion of business.

Hao Yue is a mainland catering firm that has spent 20 years in the industry and is a market leader in meat processing, according to mainland websites. It has also been said that the cate-



ring firm aims at establishing an industry chain for health food products.

Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong, who attended the ceremony, described Micro Connect as an example of striving for development in Macau. He hopes that the investment firm can utilize Macau as a platform to blend international capital and physical economies to support the development of both mainland China and the

SMEs of Macau.

Referring to the fact that 96% of local enterprises have become reliant on mobile payments, the senior official also expressed his hopes that these enterprises would "precisely combine" social capital with everyday accounts to explore wider markets.

Gary Zhang, founder and CEO of Micro Connect and CEO of MCEX, said that with the group's investment debut in Macau, he hopes the digitalization of Ma-

cau's consumer industry will be improved, facilitating integration of the digital and physical economy, and driving the digital revolution of the Macau economy.

The group added that in the future, it will continue helping local brands in Macau expand to the mainland Chinese market and introduce high-quality mainland Chinese brands to Macau, promoting the internal and external circulation of consumption.

# Survey shows e-sports gambling common among high schoolers

STAFF REPORTER

**A** survey has shown e-sports gambling is a common addictive behavior among more than half of junior high school students surveyed, while drinking is the main addictive behavior among college students.

A survey co-conducted by the Bosco Youth Service Network acquired data from 1,148 junior high school students and 177 college students from September to November last year.

Research shows it is common for middle school students to engage in addictive behaviors,



with more than 56.6% of middle school students having participated in addictive behaviors, but that only 3.4% have ever sought help.

Compared with the 2017 study, the num-

ber of junior high school students surveyed who drank, smoked and gambled was significantly lower, but drug abuse increased significantly, from 0.3% to 1.3%.

In the past 30 days,

21.8% of teenagers said they had been cyberbullied, 17.3% had viewed pornographic websites and 7% to 20.6% had sent or received pornographic messages from others, respectively.

The survey also found junior high school students and college students spend between six and eight hours on the internet.

As for college students, 59.3% of college students said they had participated in addictive behaviors, and drinking was the most common. Almost 70% of college students said they had drunk alcohol.

In the past 30 days,

10.2% of college students have been cyberbullied, 41.8% have viewed pornographic websites and 9% and 14.7% have reported sending or receiving sexually explicit messages from others.

The Bosco Youth Service Network stated that young people are easily exposed to emerging gambling activities, and it recommended that local authorities continue to pay attention to participation trends, provide preventive education and early intervention to reduce the chance of addiction.

Addictive behaviors share some common high-risk factors, such as suicidal thoughts and emotional conditions, the study claims. The association also called for society to focus on supporting the mental health of young people.

# LAWMAKERS CONCERNED ABOUT 25-YEAR CIVIL AVIATION LICENSE

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE number of licenses for the provision of civil aviation services will be established by the Chief Executive and the maximum validity period of these licenses is 25

years, as announced yesterday in a Third Standing Committee meeting.

According to Vong Hin Fai, president of the committee, the number of future licenses will be determined by the CE. In addition, licensed airlines

are required to prepare a business plan every five years and submit it to the CE for approval. The government hopes to use this to supervise the airlines' operations.

Vong also stated that some members are con-

cerned that the 25-year license period is too long. If the licensed company encounters service or other problems midway, but the situation is not serious enough to cancel the license, the government may have to tolerate it for 25 years.

The government responded that the licenses in some countries are indefinite, but it will use the

comparative method to review the license periods in neighboring countries or regions before making a decision. As for renewal, the government agrees that renewal matters need to be regulated, but hopes to leave it to the government that takes over in the future to consider the renewal period in light of Macau's actual situation or economic conditions.

ANALYSIS

# Chinese brands should go global but stay local

MIKE BASTIN\*, CHINA DAILY

**F**INANCIAL and market power will always be the key business objective of any branded product or service. Yet brands need to pay greater attention to the branding process, especially if they are micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

All too often “brands” and “branding” are assumed to be the sole preserve of large multinational companies that have global reach. This false assumption often leads to a view that MSMEs can only compete on price and functional aspects of their product or services. Which is incorrect.

The fact is that SMEs, even micro business, have an inherent competitive advantage against even well-known brands that have a global reach.

But it is not finance alone that helps build brands. Establishing that crucial emotional, often cultural, connection with consumers is precisely what turns a product into a brand, and it is the presence of more established local brands that will help develop a more sustainable Chinese economy.

Chinese SMEs actually enjoy an inherent advantage against their larger, domestic and foreign competitors in terms of brand. Adding local elements and local flavor to an MSME brand is often much easier than it is with global brands.

The product-to-brand journey of many Chinese MSMEs, therefore, has to revolve around their local culture and cultural heritage as much as possible. Also, an increasing number of Chinese consumers, especially Chinese Gen Z'ers, are attaching greater value to Chinese cultural flavor in the brands they consume.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the exciting rise of Chinese fashion designers and their brands. For example, the likes of Chen Peng, Qi Yueqi and Wang Yuhan often light up fashion weeks around the world with their intricate, subtle use of traditional Chinese elements such as local flowers and local embroidery techniques and styles.

Of course, the effective use of Chinese social media, and key opinion leaders (KOLs) and key opinion consumers (KOCs) is critical to successful brand building in China, and here too Chinese MSMEs are at a distinct advantage, as they have better knowledge of the local KOLs and KOCs, and can infuse their local brands with local cultural capital.

But this localization approach, with subtle blending of traditional local cultural elements and modern aesthetics, does not only apply to fashion and related brands. Chinese MSMEs across product and service categories and industries can, and should, capitalize on positioning their branded products or services as offerings that allow

consumers to closely attach themselves to their cultural heritage, but with a modern twist.

For Chinese MSMEs, the often subtle difference between KOLs and KOCs is very important. Key opinion consumers, by definition local consumers, are not only more attractive as powerful and credible local brand associates, but also can be far more easily identified by Chinese MSMEs than larger counterparts.

A brand's ability to anticipate and quickly adjust to the ever-changing demands of consumers, especially Gen Z'ers, and the ever-advancing digital technology, will also decide how successful it is. However, the MSME brands which use local elements to add value to their products are better placed to anticipate and adapt to change.

Chinese MSME brands can understand local changes far better than the larger, corporate brands, both Chinese and Western, because they have their ear to the ground. But why is the role of MSMEs so important in any economy's sustainable development and modernization?

There are many reasons for that, and the most tangible of all is that the MSMEs usually employ a far higher percentage of the workforce and their combined output usually accounts for a large percentage of a country's GDP.

More important, it is the contribution to the culture of creativity and entrepreneurship that

SONG CHEN/CHINA DAILY



represents the greatest, most significant contribution of MSMEs. These smaller and more versatile companies' fruitful reliance on creativity and innovations should inspire larger brands to promote innovations to create new products and services.

Chinese MSMEs have become vital to the continued development and modernization

of the Chinese economy. They are ideally placed to infuse their brands with a strong local flavor that will resonate with Chinese consumers. As such, the rising Chinese brands, especially fashion brands, should also go global but stay local.

**\*MA Fashion Marketing and Branding programme leader at the University of Southampton's Winchester School of Art**

## CORPORATE BITS

### Sands China wins PATA Gold Award for Sands Retail Academy



Sands China has won in the PATA Gold Awards 2023, gaining recognition for its outstanding talent development programme, the Sands Retail Academy, in the Human Capital Development

Initiative category. It is Sands China's second consecutive year winning the PATA Gold Award. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd., said: "This award is a testament to

Sands China's unwavering commitment to developing the retail sector and nurturing professional talent for Macau's tourism industry. [...] The company has made substantial investments in the community it serves, with the ultimate goal of supporting Macau's development as a world centre of tourism and leisure."

Sands China established the Sands Retail Academy in 2013 to cultivate and develop Macau's tourism professionals.

Since its inception, the academy has organised over 1,500 training sessions, benefiting more than 11,000 retail professionals in Macau.

### MGM to present music and gourmet festival with Chef Nic



A music and gourmet festival jointly presented by MGM and Chef Nic will make its return this year on December 9 and 10 at MGM Cotai.

MGM, together with Chef Nic and his team, will once

again curate a multisensory "fork n' roll" festival combining gourmet food, music and fun.

"MGM Chef Nic Gastronomic Music Fest" brings together iconic singers and bands from Asia, mainland China

and Hong Kong, headlined by Nicholas Tse's high-octane rock 'n' roll performance, alongside Chinese rock band Tarzan, pop stars Hailey Liu and Young Cao, Hong Kong band Dear Jane, pop singers Edmond Leung and Gin Lee, rising stars Panther Chan and MC Cheung, and girl group XiX as a support act.

Hubert Wang, president and chief operating officer of MGM China Holdings Limited, said, "leveraging MGM's expertise in creating original and diverse cultural tourism offerings and merging with Chef Nic's avant-garde gourmet lifestyle, the festival celebrates a holistic way of art of living in a new era."

ADVERTORIAL

## SANDS CHINA NEWS

### Sands Performing Arts Program Successfully Concludes 2023 Season

Sands China's **Sands Performing Arts Program 2023** brought 10 top-notch national and international performances to Macao from May to August, attracting over 11,000 audience members.

This year's program of performances concluded following the successful staging of the mesmerising dance drama and winner the 17th Wenhua Grand Prize, **Poetic Dance: The Journey of a Legendary Landscape Painting** Aug. 24-28 at The Venetian Theatre. In addition to this show, the Sands Performing Arts Program 2023 showcased a series of captivating performances: the Kunqu Opera play "The Peony Pavilion," performed May 16 at The Venetian Theatre during the final round of the China Theatre Plum Blossom Award competition; a unique, high-tech performance of the wildly acclaimed and legendary Cantonese opera *Floral Princess* July 28-30 at The Venetian Theatre; and Vienna-based quartet Janoska Ensemble's unique interpretations and improvisations of classical pieces Aug. 19 at The Parisian Theatre.

Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd., said: "We are pleased to leverage our diverse resources through the Sands Performing Arts Program, continually bringing world-class performance art projects from the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, and Europe, as well as promoting artistic exchange between Macao and other regions. Our goal is to create a vibrant atmosphere for art appreciation while expanding our audience base, thus laying a solid foundation for the development of Macao's local creative and cultural industries.

"By hosting exchange activities with top international artists during their visits, we also hope to increase local community participation in arts and culture. This helps further solidify Macao's international image as a cultural destination. We are fully committed to supporting the Macao SAR government's policy of moderate economic diversification and its 'tourism+' and 'culture+' initiatives, and we will continue introducing eagerly anticipated world-class art projects to enrich the cultural and artistic experience for both Macao residents and visitors."

The **Sands Performing Arts Program** is aimed at broadening the scope of performing arts in Macao by introducing and promoting premier national, local and overseas performing art projects, aligning with the Macao SAR government's vision for the integrated tourism and leisure industry.

## DIPLOMACY

# Cambodia's new PM ally China on his first

SOPHENG CHEANG &  
KEN MORITSUGU, BEIJING

**C**AMBODIAN Prime Minister Hun Manet arrived in Beijing yesterday on his first official trip abroad since taking office last month. The visit is a demonstration of his country's warm relations with China, its closest political and economic ally.

He is expected to meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping and other officials in the capital and then attend a trade and investment expo this weekend in southern China, according to Cambodia's Foreign Ministry.

A statement said the two countries' leaders will discuss tightening relations for a shared future with the building of a "Cambodia-China Community," strategic directions for their bilateral relations and regional and international matters.

Photos posted on Chinese so-

cial media by state broadcaster CGTN showed Manet and his wife Pich Chanmony walking down the stairs from the plane to a red carpet on the tarmac, where they were greeted by two children, a Chinese official and others.

Manet later laid a wreath at a monument in Beijing's Tiananmen Square that honors those who died fighting foreign invaders and in the protests and battles that brought China's ruling Communist Party to power in 1949.

Cambodia is a key Chinese diplomatic partner and supporter in regional and international forums. It helps dampen criticism of Beijing within the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, several of whose members are engaged in territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea.

China has gained important influence in Cambodian politi-

## TRADE

# BEIJING SAYS EU PROBE INTO CHINESE EVS EXPORTS, SUBSIDIES IS PROTECTIONIST

**C**HINA'S Commerce Ministry has protested a decision by the European Union to investigate exports of Chinese electric vehicles, saying yesterday that it is a "protectionist" act aimed at distorting the supply chain.

The EU announced Wednesday it will probe government subsidies provided to Chinese automakers that the EU contends keep EV prices artificially low.

China has become the biggest market for electric vehicles after investing billions in subsidies to gain an edge. Automakers like BYD and Geely have quickly gained market share after launching sales of EVs to Japan and Europe.

"What I want to emphasize is that the investigation measure that the European Union plans to take is to protect its own industry in the name of fair competition," Commerce Ministry spokesperson He Yadong said at a briefing in Beijing.

"It's naked protectionist behavior that will seriously disrupt and distort the global automotive industrial chain and supply chain including the European Union,

and will have a negative impact on China-EU economic and trade relations," he said.

In a statement, the ministry urged the EU to create a "fair, non-discriminatory and predictable" market environment.

In China, EV prices start as low as 100,000 yuan (\$14,500) for a compact SUV with a 400-kilometer range on one charge.

Yesterday, Cui Dongshu, head of the China Passenger Car Association, also opposed the investigation in comments written on his WeChat social media account.

"I personally firmly oppose the EU's evaluation of China's new energy vehicle exports, not because it has received huge state subsidies, but because China's industrial chain is highly competitive," Cui said.

He said that China had phased out new energy subsidies in 2022.

Cui urged the EU to take an "objective view of the development of China's electric vehicle industry" instead of using what he said are economic and trade tools to increase the costs of Chinese electric vehicles in Europe. **MDT/AP**





# Hun Manet visiting close st official trip abroad



Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet

cs and its economy, as seen in the numerous Chinese-funded projects, hotels and casinos in the capital Phnom Penh and elsewhere around the country.

China's state banks have financed airports, roads and other infrastructure built with Chinese loans. More than 40% of Cambodia's \$10 billion in foreign debt is owed to China.

After his meetings in Beijing, Manet will go to the 20th ASEAN-China Expo in Nanning, a regional capital in southern China not far from the border with Vietnam, the Cambodian Foreign Ministry said.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang will also attend the expo, along with the prime ministers of Malaysia, Vietnam and Laos and senior government officials from Indonesia and Thailand, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said.

The expo promotes cooperation between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in trade, investment and tourism.

Cambodia's close relations with Beijing were cultivated by Hun Manet's father, Hun Sen, who stepped down last month as prime minister after almost four decades. His Cambodia People's Party has had a stran-

glehold on power, fostered by Hun Sen's autocratic rule and adroit political maneuvers that crippled any effective opposition.

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi had visited Cambodia to reaffirm his country's commitment to its ally shortly after Hun Sen announced his retirement plan.

Hun Manet, Hun Sen's eldest son, had been army commander before succeeding his father. He was educated at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, but is widely expected to maintain arms-length relations with Washington.

The U.S. has shown disapproval of Hun Sen's undemocratic moves and is also uneasy over the expansion of a Gulf of Thailand naval port Cambodia and China started last year.

Hun Sen consistently denied that Cambodia had granted China the right to set up its own military base at Ream Naval Base.

China's Defense Ministry announced yesterday that the military would hold an annual joint exercise in Cambodia from mid- to late September to enhance their coordinated action and emergency response capabilities in medical services. MDT/AP

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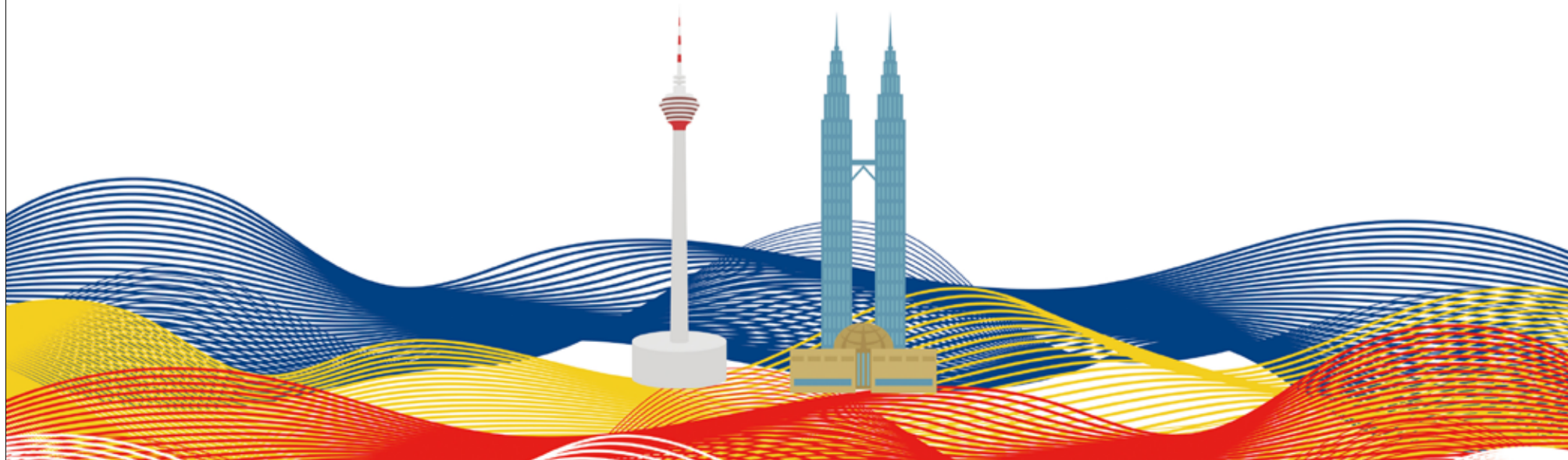
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## MALAYSIA DAY

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TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA



INDONESIA

# New industrial park on Borneo, feted as 'green,'

VICTORIA MILKO,  
JAKARTA

A vast industrial park being built on the tropical island of Borneo that has attracted billions of dollars in foreign and domestic investment is damaging the environment in an area where endangered animals live and migrate.

The showcase Indonesian project also initially will be partly powered by coal, according to an environmental impact assessment ordered by one of its developers and reviewed by The Associated Press, but not yet made available to the public.

The project championed by President Joko Widodo reflects Indonesia's struggle to balance profiting from its rich natural resources and meeting its environmental goals.

The environmental impact assessment commissioned by PT Kalimantan

Industrial Park Indonesia, which operates a large part of the current development, describes what is happening in the 15,000-hectare area, where plumes of dust mushroom into the sky along the Celebes Sea as heavy equipment fells trees and razes paddy fields.

It says the project's coastal zone is a conservation and migration area for green turtles, hawksbill turtles and killer whales. Hawksbill turtles are listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, while green turtles are considered endangered.

His wooden boat rocking as excavators and construction trucks roar nearby, fisherman Erwin laments the constant ship traffic delivering supplies to the remote area.

"We are looking for fish further and further away from the beach because there are lots of ships in the



The construction site of the Kalimantan Industrial Park Indonesia (KIPI) is visible in Mangkupadi, North Kalimantan

area driving fish away," said Erwin, who like many Indonesians uses only one name.

"If (the industrial park) is built, I don't know what the future holds but it's clear that it will definitely have an

impact (and) hurt my income."

#### NATIONAL PROJECT

The Kalimantan Industrial Park is a "national strategic project" meant to

make Indonesia a major producer of strategic resources. Plans call for eventually doubling its size to some 30,000 hectares, making it one of the world's biggest industrial zones.

"This is the largest green industrial park in the world and this is the future of Indonesia," Indonesian President Joko Widodo said during a Feb. 2 visit to the project. "If this is realized

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



# will be powered by coal, report says



Kampung Baru village lies on the edge of the construction site of the KIPI

well, everyone will flock here, any industry related to green products will definitely look to this area.”

Indonesia is the world's largest nickel producer and has major reserves of aluminum, tin and copper. All are used in technologies vital to the green energy transition, such as electric vehicle batteries and solar panels.

To build its own industrial base, the country has phased out exports of most raw materials for processing and downstream manufacturing. The government has banned nickel ore exports, requiring it be processed domestically. The Green Industrial Park is an extension of that ambition.

As demand for critical materials soars in the transition to cleaner energy, many countries are torn between reaping their natural wealth and meeting environmental goals, said Aimee Boulanger, executive director of the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance.

“We see this stress and tension in Chile, the United States, Brazil and other countries where these materials are mined,” she said. “In a world already living with climate stress, each of these countries is grappling with how to be part of the solution while also protecting clean water, healthy fisheries, Indigenous people's rights and habitat for other species pushed to the edge.”

The project's blueprint includes a smelter to make aluminum for electric vehicles and other factories to

produce petrochemicals, batteries for EVs and polycrystalline materials used in solar panels. A port will accommodate ships hauling materials and goods to and from the zone.

About \$132 billion is needed to develop the park, according to Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, the coordinating minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment. He and other Indonesian officials have done roadshows in the United States, European Union, United Arab Emirates and China to court investors. Pandjaitan did not respond to questions sent by AP.

Several companies that have invested in the project or committed to participating have pledged to end reliance on fossil fuels such as oil and coal and to eliminate carbon from their supply chains.

## FOREIGN INVESTMENT

South Korean automaker Hyundai has signed an memorandum of understanding to buy aluminum from Adaro Minerals Indonesia, part of the coal-mining Adaro Group, which has pledged \$728 million to build the smelter.

Australia-based Fortescue Future Industries has agreed to study the possibility of producing ammonia and hydrogen, according to a report by an Indonesia-based think tank, the Center of Economic and Law Studies (CELIOS), which was released yesterday.

China-based battery maker CATL has invested

\$5.1 billion, while several other Chinese manufacturers have invested in petrochemical plants, the CELIOS report says.

The environmental, social and governance policies of companies involved in the project, including Hyundai, CATL, Fortescue and Adaro, all include commitments to decarbonization.

Adaro and Fortescue did not respond to questions or requests for comment sent by AP. AP was unable to locate contact information for CATL.

In an email, Hyundai said it signed a non-binding agreement with “the intention of solely procuring low-carbon aluminum using hydroelectric power generation.”

The industrial zone will eventually run on hydro and solar power, government officials say.

But CELIOS's analysis says coal-fired plants will provide a significant amount of the power it uses, including some 1,425 to 1,900 MW for the aluminum smelter that is advertising “green aluminum.”

A hydropower plant along the Kayan River in North Kalimantan is due to be finished in 2030. The smelter is expected to go online in early 2025.

Indonesia is receiving billions of dollars in international support for meeting its climate change commitments, including a \$20 billion Just Energy Transition Partnership deal with the U.S., Japan and other

major economies.

Construction of new coal plants is allowed under a presidential decree for national infrastructure projects like the Kalimantan industrial park. But it's contrary to those goals, critics contend.

“A lot of the world is still reliant on coal-fired power plants. But I wouldn't call it 'green' and I wouldn't call it a best practice. It's certainly something that we should be moving away from, not building more of,” Boulanger said.

According to Market Forces, an Australia-based financial watchdog tracking climate finance, two major banks, DBS Singapore and Standard Chartered, have withdrawn funding for Adaro's smelter project.

“We are unable to discuss any specific names or transactions. Since 2019, the bank has committed to stop financing any new coal-fired power assets,” DBS said

in a statement.

Adaro is a client, Standard Chartered said, but the bank “no longer finances new or expanding coal-fired power plants, coal mines or dedicated coal infrastructure.”

“We have established a detailed pathway including interim 2030 targets for the most carbon-intensive sectors, with a particular focus on supporting clients in transition,” spokesperson Piers Townsend wrote in an email.

## ENVIRONMENT AND TRADITION

Industrial parks should not rely on new power generation using fossil fuels, said Binbin Mariana, a campaigner at Market Forces in Indonesia. The withdrawal of funding for the smelter was a “strong signal that this project is not green,” she said. “All investors must be concerned that a smelter marketed as 'green' and 'low-carbon' for aluminum

is relying on new coal fired power plants for its early stage.”

The project has raised other concerns. Some people living in the area told The AP their land was seized or they were facing pressure from PT KIPI and local officials to move, and offered unfair prices. PT KIPI did not respond to a request for comment.

Residents hope the project may bring jobs, but worry they will lose their traditional livelihoods as fishermen, farmers and increasingly, eco-tourism hosts as dust and ash smother their fields. An analysis by CELIOS of PT KIPI's environmental impact assessment forecasts the the problems will worsen once the project begins operating.

“The effects of hot water waste contamination, coal-fired power plant fly ash, rising air temperatures, project smoke, noise, sea dredging, and spilt coal/fuel spills will cause the sea to become murky, which will cause tourism (industry) to decrease and the quality and quantity of (fish) catches to significantly decrease,” it said. **MDT/AP**

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AP PHOTO



In this photo provided by the Odesa Regional Prosecutor's Office, a burning tracks are seen in Odesa

PUTIN'S WAR

# Ukrainian attack damages two ships, injures 24 people, sets port on fire in Crimea

DASHA LITVINOVA  
& ILLIA NOVIKOV, KYIV

A Ukrainian attack on a strategic shipyard in Russian-annexed Crimea wounded 24 people, damaged two ships undergoing repairs and caused a fire at the facility, Russian authorities reported.

The attack in the port city of Sevastopol, which serves as the main base for Russia's Black Sea Fleet, took place as Moscow offensives killed at least three civilians and injured 14 across Ukraine, the president's office said.

A pre-dawn drone onslaught in southern Ukraine's Odesa region damaged port and civilian infrastructure in the region's Izmil district, about 350 kilometers across the Black Sea from Sevastopol, and wounded seven people, three seriously, Gov. Oleh Kiper said.

Russian attacks on residential areas in 10 cities and villages in the Donetsk region killed three people and wounded three. Fighting in the Zaporizhzhia region injured one resident in Orikhiv, while shelling in southern Kherson damaged homes and a kindergarten, the government said.

The skirmishes occurred as Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted North

Korean leader Kim Jong Un during a summit that the U.S. has warned could lead to a deal to supply arms to Moscow's depleted troops in Ukraine. Kim offered his full support for Russia's "just" fight and said the two reached an agreement to deepen their "strategic and tactical cooperation and solidarity in the struggle to defend sovereign rights and security."

The Crimean Peninsula, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014 in an act that most of the world considered illegal, has been a frequent target since Putin ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than 18 months ago.

Last month, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy vowed to do all he could to bring back Crimea and has urged international allies to support the effort.

On Monday, Ukraine claimed it had recaptured strategic gas and oil drilling platforms in the Black Sea that Russia seized in 2015. Russia had used the platforms for electronic warfare equipment and to launch helicopters, and Ukraine said getting control of them would help it regain Crimea.

The attack on the Sevastopol Shipyard appeared to be one of the biggest in recent weeks. Russia's Defense Ministry said Ukraine launched 10 cruise missiles at the shi-

pyard and three sea drones at Russian ships in the Black Sea.

The shipyard is of strategic importance to Russia because vessels in its Black Sea fleet are repaired there.

Seven missiles were shot down, and all the sea drones were destroyed, the Russian military said, but some of the missiles damaged two ships that were being repaired at the shipyard.

Mikhail Razvozhayev, the Moscow-appointed governor of Sevastopol, said on Telegram that the resulting fire injured 24 people. He posted a photo showing the shipyard in flames with smoke billowing over it.

A senior Ukrainian official posted a picture of the burning port on social media and described the strike as a "professional and meaningful statement" in its efforts to keep a crucial shipping corridor open to deliver grain to Asia and Africa.

Putin recently said he wouldn't renew a landmark deal allowing Ukraine to export grain safely through the Black Sea until the West meets Moscow's demands on its own agricultural exports.

"The demilitarization of the Russian Black Sea fleet is a real long-term guarantee of security for regional trade routes and the 'grain corridor,'" said Mykhai-

lo Podolyak, an adviser to Zelenskyy. "This is the only correct response to Russia's attempts to turn hunger into a weapon and the only way to ensure uninterrupted grain supplies to the countries of the east and Africa."

Ukraine's RBC-Ukraine news outlet reported, citing unnamed sources in Ukrainian military intelligence, that an amphibious landing ship and a submarine were damaged in the attack. Some Russian messaging app channels made the same claim.

The Russian Defense Ministry said the Russian warships damaged at the Sevastopol shipyard would be fully repaired and return to naval service.

In other developments, Romania said it is investigating what appear to be fragments of a drone similar to those used by Russia, near its border with Ukraine on the Danube River. It's the third time over the past week that the NATO member has found suspected drone remains amid recent attacks by Russian forces on Ukraine's ports across the river from Romania.

The discoveries have rattled residents nearby, but NATO Deputy-General Secretary Mircea Geoana said there's no chance the nation will be drawn into the war. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1964 THE SUN NEWSPAPER IS BORN



The Sun newspaper is published today for the first time.

It is replacing the Mirror Group's Daily Herald, which has been losing readers and advertising revenue for several years.

The newest arrival on Fleet Street is promising to follow a "radical" and "independent" agenda - unlike its predecessor which had strong ties to the Labour party. The TUC sold its 49% stake in the paper in 1960.

Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) and the International Press Corporation (IPC) took over ownership of the Herald in 1961.

It was previously owned by Odhams Press, which had seen it reach a circulation of two million in 1933, the highest in the world at the time.

In a bid to broaden the Herald's appeal once more, MGN, is relaunching the paper as the Sun, with the slogan "A paper born of the age we live in".

Editor Sydney Jacobson said his new paper would be "totally independent, no ties with any party or movement... totally free to make up its own mind."

The paper's launch coincides with the announcement of a general election next month.

Prime Minister Sir Alec Douglas-Home, whose Conservative party has been in power for 13 years, will be up against the man described as Labour's thrusting new grammar school boy, Harold Wilson.

Asked where his party's loyalties would lie in the coming election battle, Mr Jacobson replied: "The Sun is a radical newspaper. Can a radical newspaper support the present government?"

It is a competitive time for newspapers. Faced with rising costs, the Daily Sketch was the first to raise its cover price from 3d to 4d in June, but others are expected to follow suit.

The Daily Mirror - The Sun's stablemate - has a current circulation of five million but even so it is not expected to be able to resist the price increase beyond the end of the year.

The Mirror Group is splashing out on free beer and christening mugs for new babies to promote the Sun's arrival and Herald's demise.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Five years after its arrival on Fleet Street, the Sun was up for sale partly because of losses dating back to its predecessor, the Herald.

As a broadsheet, the paper was attracting a daily readership of one million.

There were two key players interested in buying: the millionaire Labour MP Robert Maxwell and the right-leaning Australian newspaper proprietor Rupert Murdoch, who already owned The News of the World.

Mr Murdoch clinched the deal and immediately relaunched the Sun as a tabloid - shortly followed by the introduction of the Page Three girls. In 1978 The Sun overtook its closest rival The Mirror in the circulation war.

In 1986 Mr Murdoch introduced new print technology and moved the Sun to Wapping.

In 1997 the Sun returned to its Labour roots and backed Tony Blair for Prime Minister.

In early 2006 the paper's circulation was 3.1 million.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Plan to visit friends or relatives. You won't be well received by superiors or by your spouse. Entertainment should include sports events or physical activities.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
It's a good time for long awaited relationships to begin. You will feel compelled to do some traveling. Someone envious of your popularity may challenge you to a debate.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
Don't let others restrict you from saying how you feel about family issues. You need to get out and have some fun to reduce tension. It won't take much to upset your lover.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Avoid letting family get involved in your personal life. Be prepared to overcome frustrations and obstacles at work. Secret affairs may only cause complications in your life.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
Don't do something silly just to get back at your mate. Do you really want to start something with someone you can't reason with?

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Get involved in groups that will help you meet established individuals. Your greatest enjoyment will come through social activities and pleasure trips.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Entertainment should include sports events or physical activities. You can make excellent investments if you are in the right place at the right time.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
You are best to concentrate on work. Try to ease any disappointment by making amends. Chances are you split up the last time because you didn't really want to make a commitment.

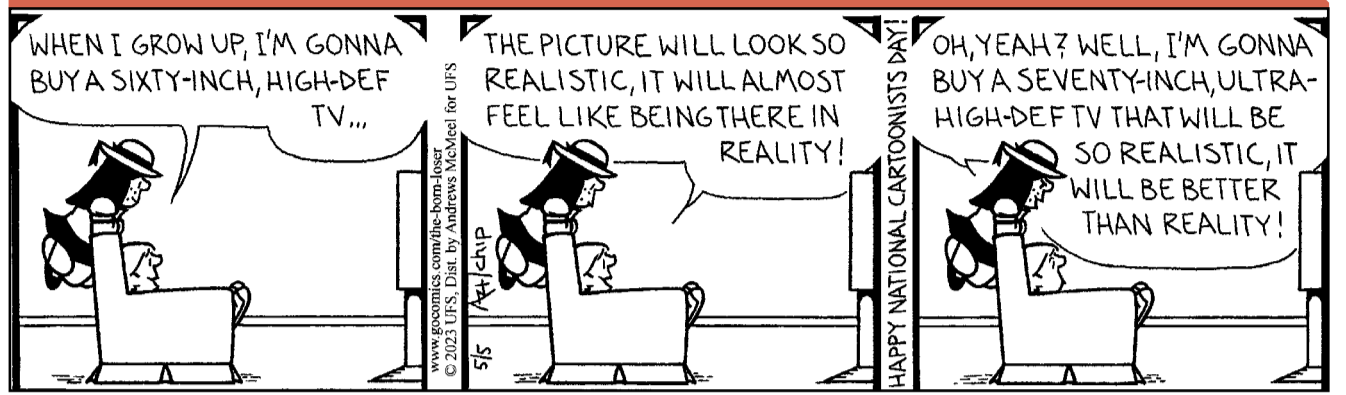
**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Don't prejudge. You may get drawn into a personal situation that will not be to your liking. You'll find you're detail oriented today. Think about your priorities.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
You will have no problem getting your point across to those in a position to help you. Emotional relationships will be plentiful if you attend group activities.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Your magnetic, outgoing personality will capture hearts. Get out and experience the spice of life. Be sure to take time for old friends or relatives you don't get to see that often.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
It's time to reevaluate your motives. Problems with in-laws or relatives may be more damaging than you realize. Difficulties with your mate may lead to estrangement.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

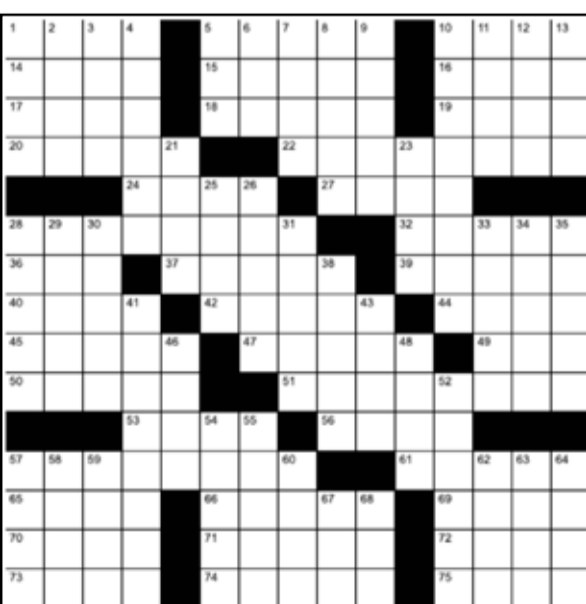
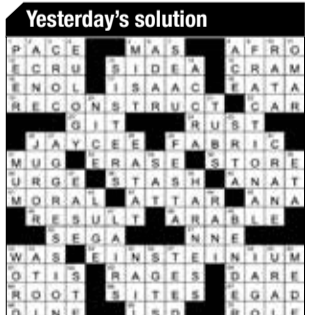
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	16	28	fine
Changchun	15	28	fine
Chengdu	20	29	cloudy
Chongqing	22	33	fine
Fuzhou	25	33	rain
Guangzhou	24	28	rain
Guiyang	16	27	cloudy
Haikou	25	30	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	21	25	rain
Harbin	14	25	fine
Hefei	19	26	overcast
Nanjing	22	26	overcast
Shanghai	23	28	rain
Taipei	24	30	cloudy
Wuhan	20	30	fine
Hong Kong	27	29	thunderstorms
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	11	20	cloudy
Frankfurt	13	26	fine
Paris	15	27	fine
London	15	26	overcast
New York	13	23	overcast

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Schoolmarmish; 5- President Garfield's middle name; 10- Very, in Versailles; 14- Actress Downey; 15- Fluff, as bangs; 16- Methods; 17- Not much; 18- Tall and thin; 19- Sceptic's scoff; 20- Tourist draw; 22- Well statistic; 24- Hullabaloo; 27- Small songbird; 28- Defensive mounds; 32- Femme fatale; 36- 7th letter of the Greek alphabet; 37- Lasso; 39- Govt. security; 40- Bust maker; 42- Feed on grass; 44- Adhesive; 45- Aquarium buildup; 47- Rudner and Moreno; 49- Hall or Byrnes; 50- Suspicious; 51- Hermits; 53- Slippery; 56- Karate blow; 57- Zealous environmentalist; 61- Main impact; 65- Laugh loudly; 66- Fear greatly; 69- Draft classification; 70- Commedia dell'arte; 71- Garden figure; 72- Vegas line; 73- Eye sore; 74- Short literary composition; 75- Throw;

DOWN 1- London stroller; 2- Routine; 3- Apple variety; 4- Reckless; 5- City in GA; 6- Actress Arthur; 7- Monetary unit of South Africa; 8- Crooked; 9- Gangster Lansky; 10- Union; 11- Broccoli (leafy vegetable); 12- Organs used for sight; 13- Fast fliers; 21- Hebrew month; 23- Nudnik; 25- Not a dup.; 26- Fab Four name; 28- Of the kidneys; 29- \_\_\_ of Two Cities; 30- A Simpson; 31- Flight segment; 33- Actor's parts; 34- Piece of music written for a solo instrument; 35- Food and water; 38- Nahuatl speaker; 41- Without anxiety; 43- A head; 46- Observer; 48- Pig; 52- How to harvest a carrot; 54- Flat shelf; 55- Threads; 57- Important times; 58- Bud of "Harold and Maude"; 59- Like Cheerios; 60- Greek island in the Aegean; 62- Bring to ruin; 63- Beatty and Rorem; 64- Soviet news service; 67- Doctors' org.; 68- Susan of "L.A. Law";



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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DRIVE IN

# 'CASSANDRO,' WITH GABRIEL GARCIA BERNAL AS A LIBERATED LUCHADOR, IS A WINNER

JAKE COYLE,  
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

ANYONE who has eagerly followed Gabriel Garcia Bernal since his breakthrough roles in "Amores Perros" and "Y tu mamá también" likely never foresaw him one day in the world of lucha libre wrestling.

Bernal, far from the most brawny actor, has been a slyer shape-shifter, whether in heels as a femme fatale in Pedro Almodovar's "Bad Education" or on a motorcycle as Che Guevara in Walter Salles' "Motorcycle Diaries."

But while almost anything with Bernal in it has been worth seeing, it's been a little while — maybe his pair of movies with Pablo Larrain, 2012's "No" and 2016's "Neruda" — since Bernal had a sufficiently good part to, well, really go to the mat for.

He's found it, though, in "Cassandro," Roger Ross Williams' based-on-a-true-story drama about the Mexican wrestler Saúl Armendáriz. He was an exótico in 1990s lucha libre wrestling who rose to

AP PHOTO



Gael Garcia Bernal in a scene from "Cassandro"

become one of the sport's most popular champions.

Exóticos, who first emerged in the 1940s, evolved to be male fighters dressed in drag who served as a contrast to the macho main events. But Armendáriz, a gay man, wanted his character, Cassandro, to be more than that. He wanted to spar with luchado-

res on equal ground.

"Cassandro," which opens in limited theaters Friday and debuts Sept. 22 on Amazon Prime Video, follows Armendáriz' rise from scrawny outsider to center stage. The odds are always against him, but Bernal plays Armendáriz with an infectious innocence, even when he's doing lines in the

bathroom. Most of all, his transformation of the exótico into something more than is prescribed by luchador tradition makes for a stirring metaphor of gay empowerment.

Armendáriz, after struggling to catch on as the wrestler El Topo, is convinced by his trainer (Roberta Colindrez) to jump into the ring as an exótico. Armendáriz, though, has no interest in playing Cassandro as he's supposed to. For starters, he wants to win, and exóticos were intended to be fey, flamboyant victims for the hulking luchadores to easily dispatch.

They were also masked, but Armendáriz chooses to go without — an especially bold move considering the withering waves of homophobia directed at him by many in the crowd. But Armendáriz wins them over, and in doing so, achieves something spectacular, turning a gay stereotype into a hero. "I felt like Wonder Woman," the real Armendáriz once said.

"Cassandro," which co-stars Bad Bunny, doesn't always make

time for some of the inner pain that Armendáriz was experiencing. (He dealt with depression and drug addiction.) And the filmmaking by Williams, in the narrative debut for the longtime documentarian, can be muddled. The story is so sensational that you almost wish "Cassandro" was instead a feature-length documentary. (Williams first made a fine short about Armendáriz for the New Yorker in "The Man Without a Mask.")

Yet "Cassandro" will surely bring many more to Armendáriz's remarkable tale. Bernal, again channeling the feminine side he showed in Almodovar's "Bad Education," makes up for what he lacks in physical strength with charm. It's a terrific performance, even if it doesn't measure up to Cassandro's.

**"Cassandro," an Amazon Studios release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for language, drug use and sexual content.**  
Running time: 107 minutes.  
★★★★★

AD




  
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TASTE OF EDESIA

# Showcasing Chinese Culinary Excellence

IRENE SAM, MDT

**D**EDICATED to the inheritance and promotion of Chinese culture, MGM invited Li Xiaolin, the third-generation heir of the century-old Family Li Imperial Cuisine, a renowned traditional Manchu cuisine from the Qing Dynasty, to join hands with the Chef de Cuisine Homan Tsui from the Black Pearl Awarded Restaurant **Imperial Court** at MGM MACAU, to present an extraordinary culinary feast that combines the best of North and South.

The two master chefs showcased the essence of Chinese traditional cuisine with exquisite delicacies. Family Li Imperial Cuisine, beloved by celebrities and dignitaries from around the world, traces its history back to the reigns of the Tongzhi and Guangxu Emperors during the Qing Dynasty. The culinary heritage of the cuisine can be traced back to Li Xiaolin's great-grandfather, who served as the Comman-



der-in-Chief of the Palace Guard. It combines the essence of old Beijing cuisine and imperial delicacies. The Li family's restaurant, founded by Li Xiaolin's father in Beijing, inherits

the imperial recipes and culinary skills of his great-grandfather and adheres to the cooking principles of "meticulousness, premium ingredients, and exquisite craftsmanship," creating a

legendary culinary experience from Beijing.

The rich and layered flavours of Family Li Imperial Cuisine come from the delicate pursuit of ingredient quality and cooking techni-

ques, while the Lingnan Cuisine at Imperial Court emphasizes seasonal ingredients and focuses on preserving the original flavors.

The starter, Fresh scallops mashed with green pea puree, comes with simple presentation, but truly displays the chef's expertise. The peeled green peas and fresh scallops were stir-frying into smooth puree, resulting in a refreshing and aromatic texture. With its simple and green presentation, it comes with a beautiful name "Jade Scallops" in Chinese.

Steamed Macau Sole with Xuanwei Ham and Fig Leaf features locally sourced Delta Bay Devon sole, accompanied by fresh fig leaves that are in season during the summer.

Steamed together with ham, it exudes a delightful and fragrant aroma. This four-hands collaboration combines and draws on the essence and techniques of both cuisines, paying tribute to the inheritance of traditional regional Chinese cuisines and culinary culture.



Chef Homan Tsui

Chef Li Xiaolin

**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT ANSWER TO TAIWAN QUESTION**

Integrating the development of Taiwan with that of the Chinese mainland will not only help promote the island's economic development, it will also help people on the island to know that the mainland authorities are sincere in their endeavors to realize the peaceful reunification of the island with the motherland.

A circular jointly released by the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council on Tuesday explicitly stated that East China's Fujian province will be developed into a demonstration zone for integrated development across the Taiwan Strait. This sends a strong message that the mainland will never give up its efforts to realize the peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question.

What makes the latest circular particularly noteworthy is that it outlines an all-inclusive range of policies for Fujian province, and the island, which is just across the Strait from the province, to realize integrated development.

Policies and measures will enable Taiwan residents to do business or stay in Fujian enjoying the same treatment as their local counterparts.

Taiwan compatriots who have never been to the mainland are welcome to visit Fujian, students are welcome to study in the province and those wanting work are encouraged to find jobs in Fujian. Enterprises, especially Taiwan enterprises based in Fujian, are urged to hire more Taiwan employees, and Taiwan-based physicians are allowed to practice in Fujian.

Taiwan compatriots are also encouraged to take part in social welfare programs. They will no longer need to register for temporary residence in Fujian, and they can settle in Fujian if they are willing to. Institutions of higher learning and those engaged in scientific research are encouraged to enroll students and researchers from Taiwan. If implemented well such moves will greatly promote exchanges and understanding between people across the Strait.

The circular reinforces the importance of exchanges by requiring Fujian to strengthen institutional support for Taiwan compatriots in Fujian in terms of employment, health services, housing, elderly care services and social assistance. It also states that there will be support for efforts to explore a model for the joint development of Xiamen-Kinmen infrastructure so as to facilitate supplies of electricity and gas and improve connectivity with the construction of bridges from Xiamen to Kinmen, and supporting Kinmen using Xiamen's new airport.

As such integrated development is consolidated, it will extend beyond Fujian to other parts of the country, and there will be more opportunities for people on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait to know more about each other. The Taiwan question will not be left hanging indefinitely. The circular shows that Beijing has the answer, which is the island's peaceful reunification with the motherland.

**EUROPE'S CENTRAL BANK FACES CLOSE CALL ON INTEREST RATES AS THREAT OF RECESSION GROWS**

**THE BUZZ**

Caught between stubborn inflation and weakening growth, the European Central Bank faces a close call yesterday on whether to halt its record run of interest rate hikes amid alarming signs that the economy could slide into recession.

The decision comes as the ECB, U.S. Federal Reserve and other major central banks are nearing the end of their swift series of rate hikes aimed at squelching inflation — and hoping the damage to economic growth from higher borrowing costs is not too extensive.

ECB President Christine Lagarde has said the latest rate decision will be made based on available data, a switch from the last nine

meetings when rate hikes were signaled ahead of time.

Annual inflation of 5.3% in the 20 countries that use the euro currency is still well above the bank's target of 2%, robbing consumers of purchasing power and contributing to economic stagnation that has kept growth just above zero this year — supporting arguments for a 10th straight rate increase.

Pushing the other way is the growing awareness that higher borrowing costs are weighing on decisions by consumers and businesses to invest and spend and are becoming a burden on the economy.

AP PHOTO



**THAILAND'S GOVERNMENT, SEEKING RETURN OF TOURISTS FROM CHINA, APPROVES VISA-FREE ENTRY FOR FIVE MONTHS**

**JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI, BANGKOK**

THAILAND'S new government approved this week a measure granting temporary visa-free entry to Chinese tourists, signaling that the recovery of the country's tourism industry is a top economic priority.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin said the visa exemption, which will also apply to visitors from the Central Asian nation of Kazakhstan, will be effective from Sept. 25 until Feb. 29 next year. He said the relevant authorities had been consulted to ensure they are ready to handle the expected surge in travelers.

China more than a decade ago became a major source of tourists to Thailand, with almost 11 million visitors in 2019, accounting for 27.6% of all arrivals the

year before the coronavirus pandemic devastated the tourist market.

The government proposed the measure due to concerns that the number of Chinese tourists this year might not reach the initial target of 5 million due to strict visa requirements. The Tourism Authority of Thailand reported that around 1.4 million Chinese tourists came in the first six months of this year.

Thailand's economy slumped during the pandemic as its huge tourism industry virtually collapsed. The country received about 40 million international visitors in 2019 who the government estimated generated 1.9 trillion baht (\$53.2 billion) in revenue, an amount that plummeted by more than 99% by 2021, according to data from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

Chai Wacharonke, a spokesperson for the Office of the Prime Minister, said Thailand received 15 million international visitors in the first seven months of this year. He said the government aims to draw 28 million international visitors and generate 1.4 trillion baht (\$39.2 billion) in tourism revenue in 2023.

Chai praised the visa exemption scheme, saying the tourism industry is "the only economic machine remaining that can be driven with hope to generate new income quickly for Thailand."

Besides the visa exemption, other measures the Cabinet approved included a reduction in electricity fees and diesel prices, as well as a three-year debt relief program for farmers, to address the higher cost of living and other economic woes. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



**West Bank** Israeli government has quietly taken unprecedented steps toward cementing Israel's control over the occupied West Bank — perhaps permanently. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, a leader of the settlement movement, assumed new powers over the occupied territory in his coalition agreement with Netanyahu. Smotrich moved swiftly to approve thousands of new settlement homes, legalize previously unauthorized wildcat outposts and make it more difficult for Palestinians to build homes and move about.

AP PHOTO



**Argentina** A jaguar lies beside George Washington. The United States' first president holds a rifle with one hand as he rests the other on the dead Argentine predator. The backdrop is a U.S. dollar and an Argentine 500-peso note joined like a book, a clear allusion to the rapid depreciation of the local currency, the peso. That has made it difficult for Argentines to make ends meet. The peso has depreciated around 60% compared to the U.S. dollar over the past year.

AP PHOTO



**USA** Delta Air Lines passengers who have long enjoyed access to free meals, alcohol and a quiet place to relax before their flight are in for some major cutbacks in coming years. The Atlanta-based airline said it plans to cap the number of entries to its Sky Clubs for holders of the American Express Platinum Card as well as the Delta Reserve American Express Card. Those holding the Platinum Card will be allowed six visits per year, while the Delta Reserve Card holders will get 10 annual visits. Those who book a basic economy ticket will no longer be allowed in lounges from Jan. 1, 2024. The news originally was leaked on a Portuguese-language website.