



MUSIC LOVER SENDS HIS 'HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MACAO ORCHESTRA FOR AN ASTONISHING OPENING CONCERT OF THE SEASON'

P2 Letter to the Editor

LABOR: YOUTH CAREER EXPO TO OFFER 1,700 JOB VACANCIES

P4

CHINESE OFFICIALS VOICE FAITH IN ECONOMY, KEEP INTEREST RATES STEADY

P6-7



China Two tornadoes within hours killed 10 people and seriously injured four others in eastern China, state media said. The first tornado hit parts of Suqian city in Jiangsu province on Tuesday afternoon, state broadcaster CCTV said. It destroyed 137 homes and damaged crop land and pig farms. Five people died and four were injured. A second tornado in the evening killed five people in Yancheng city, which is in the same province about 190 kilometers southeast of Suqian.

AP PHOTO



Japanese Crown Prince Akishino, the younger brother of Emperor Naruhito, arrived in Vietnam yesterday for a five-day visit marking the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, as Tokyo pushes to deepen ties with Southeast Asia and other developing and emerging nations to tackle regional and global challenges. Akishino, at a news conference last week, stressed the importance of deepening relations between Japan and Vietnam, noting their long history of cultural and economic exchanges dating back to the 16th century.

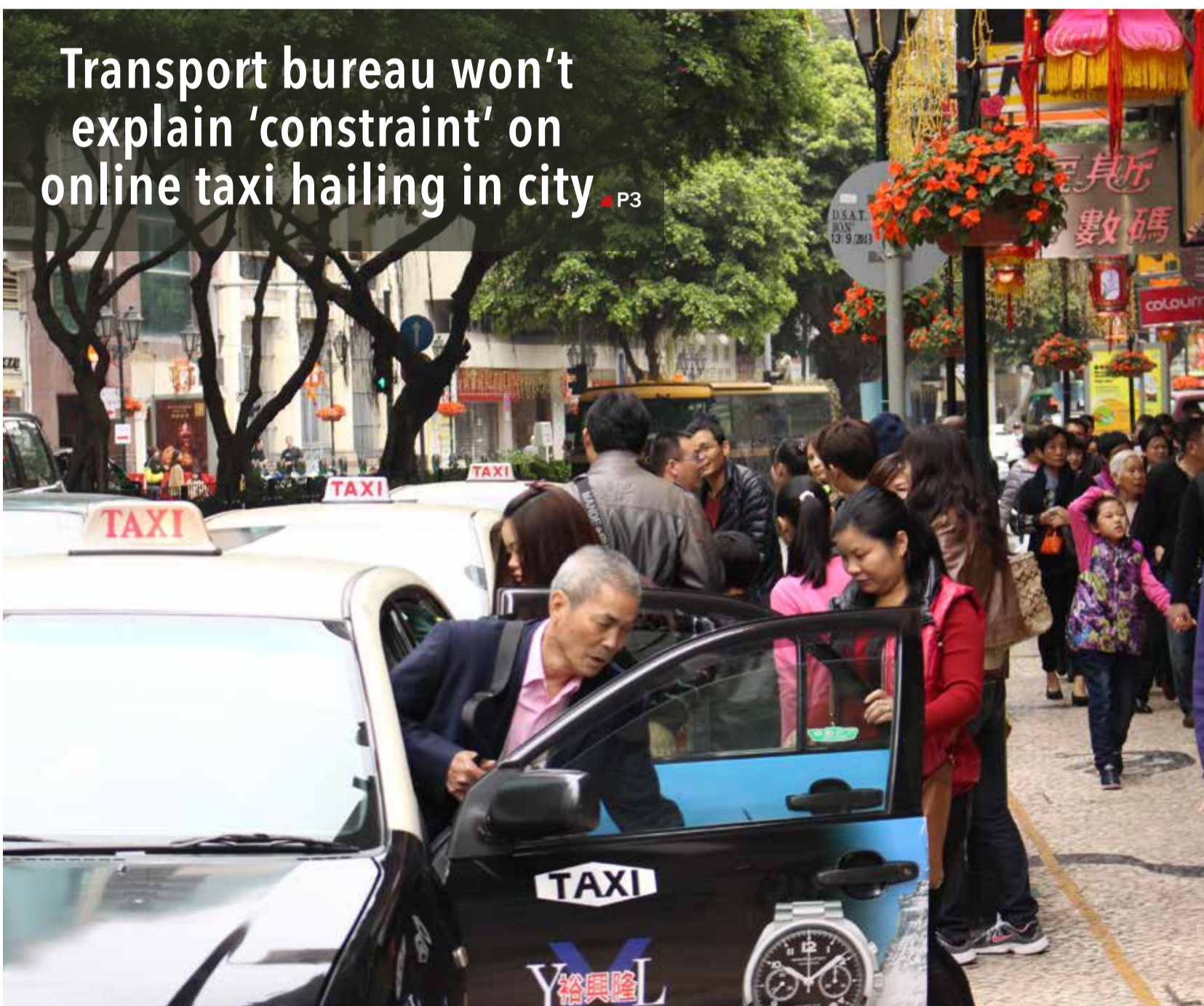
Vietnam has detained the director of a think tank that works on energy issues in the country — the sixth expert working on environmental and climate issues that authorities have taken into custody in the past two years, a rights group said yesterday. Ngo Thi To Nhien, the executive director for Vietnam Initiative for Energy Transition was arrested on Sept. 15, according to The 88 Project, a group that advocates for freedom of expression in Vietnam. Police also raided and searched the offices of the think tank and interrogated staff members, it said.

More on backpage

OPEN QUESTION

Transport bureau won't explain 'constraint' on online taxi hailing in city

P3



TOURISM FORUM UNWTO REP. SUGGESTS INVESTMENTS IN PEOPLE, PLANET, PROSPERITY

P2



SPORTS MACAU TO HOST OCTOBER FINALS OF GBA 3X3 BASKETBALL TOUR

P3

GTEF2023

UNWTO REP. SUGGESTS INVESTMENTS IN PEOPLE, PLANET, PROSPERITY

ANTHONY LAM

AMID the gradual resumption of tourism activities, investments should be prioritized according to people, planet and prosperity, Natalia Bayona, executive director of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), said yesterday.

Bayona is a keynote speaker at the 2nd Global Tourism Economy Forum Investment and Financing Conference (GTEF-IFC), which commenced yesterday afternoon at the Galaxy International Convention Centre.

People is one of the three keys to resuming tourism activities around the world, the speaker said, citing UN data stating that "16% of the global population are young people, but more than one in five of them were not in education, employment or training in 2020."

Although she did not explain the reason, it is understood that the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 put cities and countries under lockdown. Back then, technological support for working from a distance was not as popular as it is today.

Moreover, she also pointed out that "up to 25% of tourism workers in the European Union possess low-level qualifications." At the same time, 882,000 global tourism jobs per year will require vocational training until 2030.

With that said, the global re-



Opening ceremony of 2nd Global Tourism Economy Forum Investment and Financing Conference

sumption of tourism to pre-pandemic levels will rely on significant investments in education and training.

In regard to investments for the planet, the speaker suggested that the private sector should strive towards the 21 UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), in the hopes of achieving greener and more sustainable tourism activities.

In the last area – prosperity – the speaker explained that technological advancements should

receive further investment to boost growth and revitalization. In fact, she said, between 2018 and 2022, 40% of venture capital in the tourism technology industry has gone to travel startups, with 25% to hospitality and 10% to air transportation.

Within the same time frame, she added, the top 6 unicorns in the sector included four US and two Indian companies.

At the same event, Miao Muyang, director general of the Industrial Development Depart-

ment, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, who was another keynote speaker, shared his views on tourism investments and financing after reopening.

Miao suggested investors should invest to boost consumption, employment and the economy, and on the other, they should empower the revitalization of rural areas and the renewal of urban ones. Room for development in culture and tourism should be sought to help establish "spiritual

homes for the people," where locals and visitors do not feel threatened or unwelcome.

His second suggestion is that mixed development comprising culture and tourism should be deepened, which will not only elevate tourism projects culturally, but may also breed new industries and industry chains, as well as new values.

Third, he suggested that the trend of digitization should be followed. Digitization, he said, had transformed the mode of travel and introduced smarter and more individualized tourism experiences. Smart technologies should be applied to tourism in a wider manner.

Green tourism was his fourth and final suggestion. Miao suggested people safeguard the ecological baseline and operate sustainable tourism. Low-carbon green development should be promoted and seen as a valuable investment and the core requirement for the establishment of tourism projects.

Citing the Shanghai Disneyland's and the Beijing Universal Studio's prompt return on investments, as well as the series of theme parks being built around the country as examples, Miao praised China's achievements in attracting foreign tourism investments.

In addition, the Chinese official pledged that Beijing would continue its cooperation with governments and entities in various localities to boost connections and investments. The country will further open to foreign investments and make improvements in marketization, the rule of law and internationalization, the official added.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

'A PERFORMANCE MANY OF US WILL REMEMBER WITH REAL JOY FOR YEARS TO COME'

Sir,

In recent years there have been rumblings and grumbings of various kinds about the Macao Orchestra, the validity of which is not for me to comment. It is certainly true that during Covid, when Macao was largely closed to the outside world, the Orchestra was playing with less than its full complement of musicians and, whether for this or other reasons, some of its concerts were on the flabby side and performances were often tired or at least unins-

pired and uninspiring.

I am now writing to send my hearty congratulations to the Macao Orchestra and its conductor, Lio Kuokman, for an astonishing opening concert of the 2023 - 24 season, past Saturday evening, 2nd September.

At one stage, it looked almost certain that Super Typhoon Saolo was going to scupper this event but, thank goodness, it went ahead after all and what a thrilling evening it was. Guest pianist Yekwon Sunwoo was simply outstanding. His perfor-

mance of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op.18, beautifully accompanied by the Macao Orchestra, was truly electric and its effect was palpable throughout the concert hall. The rapport between pianist and conductor was also magical and this was a performance many of us will remember with real joy for years to come. The Orchestra's playing of the other pieces - Shostakovich, Richard Strauss and more Rachmaninoff - was also excellent: tight, controlled and exciting. Maestro Lio

has now set a very high standard for the rest of the season; I wish him and the Orchestra the greatest success. I truly hope this is a new beginning for the Macao Orchestra and with music like this to look forward to, the naysayers will have to look elsewhere for their gloomy satisfaction. The planned season promises a cornucopia of musical delights.

My congratulations to all.

Yours faithfully,
Glenn Timmermans
(Professor)



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NO FURTHER EXPLANATION

Transport bureau won't explain 'constraints' on online taxi hailing

ANTHONY LAM

THE Transport Bureau (DSAT) has declined to elaborate on the "geographical constraints" that its director cited as the reason that Macau cannot replicate the mainland's mode of online taxi hailing.

In a reply to lawmaker Ngan Iek Hang's written inquiry, director of Transport Kelvin Lam claimed that Macau is under "restraints of geographical factors," so the mode of online taxi hailing in mainland China cannot be "completely referenced."

The mainland mode of an online ride-hailing service is comparable to the adjusted international mode. DiDi is the largest ride hailing service platform in mainland China, which relies on online platforms to hail taxis. The adjusted international mode is currently applied in Hong Kong, for example, where platforms such as Uber offer the option to call taxis online.

Considering the reply, the Times asked Lam's bureau for clarification on what "geographical factors or restraints" the director was referring to. In addition, the Times cited Chongqing, a mountainous city with varied terrain, and Beijing, a historic city with small and winding alleys, as examples to support the contention that online



taxi or ride hailing is viable under these "geographical constraints."

Yesterday, the bureau's Public Relations Division replied by email, saying that "regarding online ride-hailing services, the SAR government has elaborated its stand through a variety of channels. '[The DSAT] has no additional information.'"

Reviewing the "elaborations through various channels" that the DSAT highlighted, the request for online ride-hailing services existed as early as 2016, when

Uber was briefly in Macau.

At a question session featuring then Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário, then lawmaker Au Kam San said that although Uber had expressed its willingness to be legally monitored, the government refused to contemplate or discuss this further, according to a report by local media Cheng Pou dated Oct. 25, 2016.

Meanwhile, even pro-establishment lawmaker Ho Ion Sang underlined the social need for

online ride-hailing services and called on the government to allow the introduction and supervision of such services.

In response, Rosário only said that vehicles operating under online hailing services must be legally apt for business, although the lawmakers were calling for measures to license online hailing services.

In August this year, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng was asked about online ride-hailing services. In response, he first commended

the "concept" of online ride hailing, although the "concept" has become a reality in many places around the globe.

Ho also disclosed that the government had checked the law and found no space for such services, "unless amending a lot of laws."

In addition to this comment, as reported by local media Macau Today on Aug. 13 this year, Ho said many online ride hailing companies outside of Macau have been financially challenged, questioning who would pay the price if this happened in Macau, although both DiDi and Uber are private companies.

The inaccuracy of the location services used by the local Radio Taxi Company has long been criticized, a problem which Ngan mentioned in his inquiry. The director of transport noted that the radio taxi operator uses Gaode Map from the mainland and has reported inaccuracies to the map operator.

When asked by the Times why the DSAT – as the supervising authority of taxi services – did not suggest the taxi company switch to Google Maps, the bureau declined to comment, adding that "the choice of map service is the company's commercial decision."

According to the same Macau Today report, Kuok Leong Son, head of the Macao Taxi Driver Mutual Association, said his association is ready to put the online hailing concept into practice, by rolling out an app to hail the local, individually operated taxis, more commonly referred to as Black Taxis.

However, he raised the possibility of charging passengers for hailing fees.

SPORTS

Macau to host October finals of GBA 3x3 Basketball Tour

RENATO MARQUES

MACAU will stage the Greater Bay Area (GBA) 3x3 Basketball Tour finals next month, the Sports Bureau (ID) and StarMac Entertainment and Production Limited announced yesterday in a joint press conference at the ID headquarters.

The event, which follows previous editions of the GBA 3x3 Basketball tournament, will be staged at the Ruins of Saint Paul's between Oct. 25 and 29, when the qualified teams from the GBA Circuit will meet to reach the final stage that will unveil this year's champion.

As in previous editions the event, co-organized by StarMac, the Macau-Chi-

na Basketball Association and the ID, will have as title-sponsor the gaming concessionaire Wynn Resorts (Macau), S.A. that, according to the president of ID, Pun Weng Kun, in his opening speech, "will be partially bearing the costs of the event."

The tournament circuit, which includes events in four cities in the GBA, is scheduled for the first week of October with local qualification events in Guangzhou and Shenzhen.

In the second week (Oct. 14-15), the third event will be in Hengqin, with Macau's qualifiers scheduled for Oct. 23 and 24.

The finals, which will take place from Oct. 25 to

29, will award a prize pool of around 400,000 patacas.

The ID president said that the idea to host this event, which is the second 3x3 basketball event of the year, comes after the success of previous editions and "taking into account the daily more frequent sports interchange events between the GBA cities," as well as, "the good reception that these events have had in the previous two editions."

The CEO of StarMac, Lou Kit Long, noted that the high momentum of the 3x3 Basketball, which appeared in the Olympic Games for the first time in 2021, has brought the sport additional public "attention."

Lou said the competi-



tion will feature both male and female sections in the finals. He added that the

integration between the sports and Macau's cultural and heritage elements

has been benefiting Macau on its path to becoming a 3x3 Basketball mecca.

LABOR

YOUTH CAREER EXPO TO OFFER 1,700 JOB VACANCIES

RENATO MARQUES

THE 2023 Youth Career Expo will be held on Sept. 27 and 28 with around 60 companies and institutions covering 14 different economic sectors offering some 1,700 job posts, the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) unveiled yesterday.

This time the job fair will take place on the second floor of the Galaxy International Convention Center, inviting companies and institutions related to the "1+4" development scheme.

Among the jobs on offer will be posts involving information security analysts, software development engineers, network engineers, speech recognition algorithm engineers, financial technology managers, risk analysts, private wealth managers, investment fund consultants, speech therapists, quality senior researchers in Traditional Chinese Medicine, civil engineers, mechanical engineers, administrative staff and customer service managers in the banking and hotel sector, airline service staff and sales of branded products.

As the DSAL also noted, the fair is also inviting enterprises from the Cooperation Zone between Guangdong and Macau in Heng-



qin and from the mainland, providing 300 job vacancies related to information technology, finance, Big Health, renewable energy, culture, tourism and commerce, among others.

Besides the opportunities directly related to the jobs on offer, the event will also include 18 thematic lectures with topics related to the industrial framework of the Deep Cooperation Zone and the respective development opportunities for young people. There will also be lectures related to the four main industries, which cover different professional areas, in artificial

intelligence, renewable energy, cutting-edge technology, Chinese medicine, company digitalization, modern finance, airline activities, infrastructure and retail sales, to name a few.

Employment support related to acquiring job search skills will also be provided through interview simulation workshops, curriculum vitae preparation workshops, consultation on professional career planning and social security, and exposure to professional techniques, aiming to give youngsters added capabilities to be prepared for integration into the job market.

STATS

Cinema goes top city's 'cultural activity' data, library goes decrease 17%

STAFF REPORTER

THE most popular activity among the local population is going to cinemas, with 144,600 participants, an increase of 16.4% compared to the same quarter two years ago.

The activity participation rate climbed by 4.2 percentage points to 31%, and the average number of cinema visits per participant was 2.7. Among these participants, 25.7% had seen locally produced films and videos.

The number of locals going to libraries, meanwhile, totaled 125,000, a decrease of 17.1% from the corresponding period in 2021; the activity participation rate dropped by 5.7 percentage points to 26.8%.

Results come after the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) released the results of the Survey on Participation of Residents in



Cultural Activities for the second quarter of 2023. Results were compared to 2021 figures, as activities in the second quarter of 2022 were suspended.

Locals visiting museums or world heritage sites fell sharply by 36.2% to 78,600 as against the same quarter two years ago, and the activity participation rate dipped by 9.8 percentage points to 16.8%.

With the gradual resumption of social activities, the number of locals who had attended performances rose by 30.2% to 50,200 compared to the same quarter of 2021.

The number of individuals participating in cultural activities in the second quarter totaled 276,800, and the participation rate decreased by 1.9 percentage points to 52.1%.

SURVEY SHOWS 30% LOCAL RESIDENTS GAMBLE IN CASINOS

LAATEST research from the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) shows that 30.1% of the local population is participating in casino gambling.

However, only less than 1% are considered to have addiction problems.

Division head of the Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment, Wu I Mui, said in a Macau Forum of TDM that in the first half of the year, 19 residents sought assistance from IAS due to gambling problems.

According to Wu, the bureau received 140 requests for help per year before the pandemic, a number that has fallen by around 40% in the last three years.

Some listeners during the phone-in show observed that

quitting gambling is more difficult than quitting drugs and believed that the number of requests for help received by the authorities was just the tip of the iceberg.

The official said authorities will use the tool (DSM-5) to assess whether the seekers have a gambling disorder.

DSM-5 is a standard classification of mental disorders used by mental health professionals in the United States.

Recently, the IAS noted that the city's central registration system for gambling disorders has received 69 requests for assistance, an increase of nearly 60% when compared to the same period last year.

However, the figure was in line with pre-pandemic levels.

FMCC CHARITY GALA RAISES OVER MOP62,000

STAFF REPORTER

THE France Macau Chamber of Commerce has raised MOP62,250 in support of the Society of Food & Environmental Health (Macao) during its 2023 Charity Gala Dinner.

Themed "Paris Extravaganza," the gala was held successfully at MGM Macau and was attended by approximately 300 members and guests.

The funds were given to the society's flagship project, "Leave No Food Behind."

This initiative centers on upcycling food trimmings and off-shelf vegetables into healthy pet food by applying various food technologies and food safety techniques.

Rutger Verschuren, FMCC chairman, reflected in his opening speech on the global

changes and ongoing evolution of Macau, highlighting that in 2024, FMCC will celebrate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and France, coinciding with the China-France Year of Culture and Tourism.

Also, this year FMCC launched "The Macau ESG Awards."

These awards recognize the exceptional contributions in the areas of environmental, social and corporate governance in Macau. They underline FMCC's commitment to nurturing sustainability.

The elected winners from three categories (Best Project, Best SME, Best NGO) were awarded to Sands China, Zenice Object Technology Ltd. and Macao IC2 Association respectively.



TRADE

Japan records a trade deficit in August as exports to China, rest of Asia weaken

JAPAN'S exports fell 0.8% last month from a year earlier, with steep declines in shipments to China and the rest of Asia, its largest regional market.

Imports sank nearly 18%, the Japanese Finance Ministry said in preliminary data released yesterday. That left a trade deficit of 930.5 billion yen (\$6.3 billion) in August, for the second straight month of red ink, it said.

Exports to Asian markets fell 8.8%, while imports dropped about 13%. A large share of that was an 11% drop in the value of shipments to China, whose economy has slowed in recent months as a hoped-for rebound from disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic fizzled.

"We think the weak recovery in China will continue



to have a negative impact on exports for a while, but semiconductors seem like they are bottoming out from the down cycle," Robert Carnell, regional head of research Asia-Pacific at ING, said in a report.

He said the strong contribution to economic growth in the April-July quarter was expected to weaken in this

quarter.

Japan's exports to the U.S. climbed 5.1%, helped by robust demand for vehicles. Exports to the European Union jumped 12.7% from a year earlier.

By product category, total auto exports jumped 40.9% year-on-year and semiconductor exports gained 8.1%. Exports in chemicals decli-

ned 11.7% and machinery exports slipped 9.6%.

China announced on Aug. 24 that it was suspending all seafood imports from Japan after treated radioactive water began to be released into the Pacific Ocean from the wrecked Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant in northern Japan.

That may have some impact on imports from Japan in September and beyond, but Japan's overall exports of food to China accounted for only a 1% share of the total, even if they did fall 41% from a year earlier.

China's weaker than expected recovery has been weighing on Japanese exports, although hopes are growing the downturn may be bottoming out, at least for some industries. **MDT/AP**

LODGING

AIRBNB REMOVED 59,000 FAKE BOOKINGS

FAKE listings have emerged as a major problem for Airbnb, threatening to scare off consumers and prompting the short-term rental service to use AI in an effort to crack down on fraudsters.

Airbnb says it has removed 59,000 fake listings and prevented another 157,000 from joining the platform this year.

Fake listings and high cleaning fees are among several issues that Airbnb said Wednesday that its users highlighted in a company survey. Others included high cleaning fees and a desire for lower prices.

The San Francisco company said more than 260,000 listings have lowered or removed cleaning fees this year, since it gave consumers the means to


sort listings in order of all-in pricing.

Airbnb says the change in how prices are displayed discourages hosts from touting low prices but piling on extra fees. However, only about one-third of Airbnb renters are using it.

"We got a lot of feedback that Airbnb is not as affordable as it used to be," CEO Brian Chesky said in an interview. The pricing changes are starting work, he said, and more measures are in the works.

One of those is "seasonal dynamic pricing" — technology that would help hosts adjust prices more often, like airlines and hotels do. Chesky said that will prod hosts into cutting prices during the off-season, but it could also help them raise peak prices. **MDT/AP**

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CAM reserves the right to reject any Proposal in whole or in part without stating any reason.

ECONOMY

Chinese officials voice faith in recovery, keep

ELAINE KURTENBACH

LEADING Chinese planners voiced confidence yesterday in the outlook for the world's second-largest economy, holding key interest rates steady amid signs of improvement in some areas such as services.

The upbeat tone of officials speaking at a news conference in Beijing was in contrast to forecasts by the Asian Development Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which say weakness in the Chinese economy are expected to further dent global and regional growth.

Cong Liang, vice chairman of China's chief planning agency, the National Development and Reform Commission, told reporters that the country's resilience during past crises was grounds for confidence and that improved factory output and tourism figures show the economy is on the mend.

He and the other senior economic officials did not present significant new data. They acknowledged

daunting challenges in reviving growth, but were united in predicting that the ruling Communist Party will ensure that the slowdown is temporary.

"Facts have fully proved that the decision-making arrangements of the party Central Committee and the State Council (China's cabinet) are correct and the macro-control policies are effective," Cong said in the briefing, which was carried online.

After three years of disruptions from the coronavirus pandemic, China's economy is still affected by both domestic and global factors, and "economic recovery will inevitably be a process of wave-like development and tortuous progress," he acknowledged.

In a speech published last month in Qiushi, a magazine of the ruling Communist Party, leader Xi Jinping said: "We must maintain historic patience and insist on making steady, step-by-step progress," in guiding the economy.

In a comment reminiscent of past decades, he said the West's pursuit of material wealth led to "spiritual poverty."

Still, China's leaders have moved to shore up growth and encourage spending and investment. That includes cutting reserve requirements for some banks and lifting restrictions on real estate transactions in smaller cities.

Yesterday, the People's Bank of China kept key interest rates unchanged, as expected. The 1-year loan prime rate is at 3.45% and the five-year LPR is at 4.2%. Officials have said they will assess the impact of measures taken recently to shore up business activity.

There was no sign markets reacted favorably to the reassurances: the Shanghai Composite index lost 0.5% yesterday and Hong Kong's Hang Seng was down 0.6%.

The economy has been slammed both by the pandemic and by a severe downturn in the property sector that has left real estate developers struggling with huge debts. As is true in many countries, trends in housing and other real estate spill over into many other parts of the economy, including the willingness of consumers

to spend more.

Job losses during and after the pandemic have also stunted the recovery, leaving about one in five young Chinese unemployed and further biting into consumer demand.

The Asian Development Bank's revised regional outlook report cut its forecast for China's growth in 2023 to 4.9% after a 5.5% annual pace of expansion in the first half of the year. The change reflected "softening momentum in domestic demand, headwinds from weaker global demand, and the property sector correction," it said.

On Tuesday, the OECD lowered its global growth outlook by 0.2 percentage point to 2.7% in 2024, citing China's slowdown and real estate troubles.

Surveys of foreign businesses released Tuesday by the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai and the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China indicated confidence among global investors and companies operating in China has weakened despite an end to disruptive "zero-COVID" policies

late last year.

"In the spring, we were all in a little bit of a sugar rush. China was opening up, we were expecting that everything would be great and that 2023 would be a year where we would all see very solid growth across all industries," the EU Chamber's president, Jens Eskelund, told reporters in Beijing.

"For many of us, it has been a complicated year and certainly oversold," he said. "The outlook across a range of industries is rather uncertain."

Both groups appealed to the Chinese government to provide more clarity about rules, saying uncertainty is a growing problem.

Chinese officials and state-run publications appear to have stepped up a campaign to counter concerns voiced by what the official Xinhua News Agency called "Western naysayers." They note that China's planners have been guiding the economy toward a more sustainable model of growth that depends less on heavy construction investment and more on high-value technology



This combo images shows New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham (left) and Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs

TAIWAN

US governors seek stronger economic ties with island

GOVERNORS from the Southwestern United States are pursuing stronger business ties with Taiwan in hopes of attracting new foreign investments and jobs to their landlocked states.

Trade missions this week have taken New Me-

xico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and Arizona counterpart Katie Hobbs, both Democrats, to the self-governing island of Taiwan.

Hobbs said her goal was to encourage ongoing investments to make Arizona a hub for semicon-

ductor manufacturing. She met earlier this week with Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. executives and suppliers, visiting their plant as well as water treatment facilities.

Arizona leaders have been touting that the state will be the home of a

Taiwanese microchip manufacturer's first U.S. plant, generating 12,000 construction jobs.

Construction started in 2021 on that sprawling facility that will utilize precision trademark technology for semiconductor fabrication with the capacity to produce 20,000 wafers per month. Once completed and operational next year, the plant is estimated to create 4,500 high-tech jobs.

At a business conference in Taipei on Tuesday, Lujan Grisham urged entrepreneurs and leaders to consider investment opportunities in her home state, touting a workforce with access to subsidized child care and tuition-free college.

Lujan Grisham says she hopes to expand the presence in New Mexico of Taiwanese companies that already including the label printing business Cymmetrik and wire manufacturer Admiral Cable — both with facilities at Santa Teresa, New Mexico, near a port of entry for freight between the U.S. and Mexico.

"Strengthening our relationships here is good

for New Mexico, good for America, and good for Taiwan as we develop a global economy with a more stable and resilient supply chain," Lujan Grisham said in a statement.

Several other governors — Democratic and Republican — have recently traveled on trade missions to Taiwan. Democrat Gretchen Whitmer became the first serving governor of Michigan to visit Taiwan, during an investments-related tour this month that included stops in Japan. Republican Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb traveled to Taiwan in August on a separate trade mission.

In August, Singapore-based Maxeon Solar Technologies announced plans to build a major solar panel manufacturing plant in Albuquerque, New Mexico, pending approval of a loan application with the U.S. Department of Energy.

The factory would employ about 1,800 people to provide photovoltaic solar panels for use in residential, commercial and utility-scale solar arrays.

Hobbs' trade mission includes a visit to South Korea. **MDT/AP**

DIPLOMACY

Kremlin: to counter

A senior Kremlin official yesterday called for closer policy coordination between Moscow and Beijing to counter what he described as Western efforts to contain them as he hosted China's top diplomat for security talks.

Nikolai Patrushev, the secretary of Russia's Security Council chaired by President Vladimir Putin, told Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi that Moscow "seeks progressive development and strengthening of the Russian-Chinese relations of comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation."

"Amid the campaign unleashed by the collective West that is aimed at the double containment of Russia and China, it's particularly important to further deepen Russian-Chinese coordination and interaction on the international arena," Patrushev said.

He noted that Putin is set to hold "substantive" talks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping during next month's trip to Beijing to attend a summit of the

interest rates steady as forecasts darken

and consumer spending.

"I believe that as long as the whole country is united and as long as we insist on doing our own thing well, there will be no obstacles that China cannot overcome in its development," Cong said.

In a commentary, Xinhua pointed to an improvement in retail sales in August, reported last week. Factory output also showed signs of improvement.

"Buoyed by emerging competitive industries and sectors, China's economy is transforming from high-speed growth to high-quality growth. This is making the economy more durable," it said.

One factor economists say is hindering growth is a trend toward favoring state-owned enterprises over the private sector companies that employ most people and account for most business activity.

Earlier this month, the planning agency NDRC, announced it had set up a "private economy development bureau" to support private industries. MDT/AP



Russia and China must edge closer Western efforts to contain them



In this photo released by Russian Foreign Ministry Press Service, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (left) listens to Foreign Minister Wang Yi during their talks in Moscow

sizeable ethnic and religious groups, including Tibetans and the Uyghur community in Xinjiang, north of Tibet, the harsh policies that have drawn strong criticism from the West.

The Kremlin has continuously expressed support for Beijing as Russia and China have grown increasingly close while their relations with the West deteriorate.

Wang arrived in Russia Monday on a four-day visit following his weekend talks with U.S. President Joe Biden's national security adviser in Malta. He began his trip by conferring with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

"The more violent the unilateral actions of hegemony and bloc confrontation become, the more important for us to keep up with the times, show a sense of duty as great powers, and further fulfill our international obligations," Wang said at the start of the talks with Lavrov. MDT/AP

Chinese Belt and Road infrastructure initiative.


Patrushev, a longtime Putin associate, reaffirmed Russia's "invariable" support for Beijing's policy on issues related to Taiwan, the western Xinjiang region and Hong Kong, which he said "are being used by the West

to discredit China."

China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has conducted increasingly large military drills in the air and waters around the island. Chinese authorities also have sought to eradicate any possibility of unrest in regions that are home to

AD

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Star-studded Galaxy Entertainment Yao Foundation Charity Game

THE Galaxy Entertainment Group 2023 the 11th Yao Foundation Charity Game and its series of 6 extended activities took place in Macau between September 16 and 17. It is hosted by Yao Foundation and China Youth Development Foundation; co-sponsored by Chinese Basketball Association; supported by the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR, the Sports Bureau, the Macao Government Tourism Office, the Education and Youth Development Bureau and the Health Bureau of the Macao SAR Government, Beijing Olympic City Development Center and the Federation of Macau-China Sports General Association; co-hosted and operated by Colorfull Cultural Technology Co., Ltd.; co-organized by Galaxy Entertainment Group, Sports and Children's Programming Center of China Media Group, Macau-China Basketball Association, Starz Sports Youth Culture Co., Ltd, Megahub Planning Co., Ltd. and title-sponsored by Galaxy Entertainment Group.

Held on September 17 at Macau's most iconic and advanced Galaxy Arena of Galaxy Macau, this was the first debut of the Yao Foundation Charity Game in the city. Uniting a constellation of renowned basketball stars from around the world, the event delivered an exceptional basketball showcase to the audience and enhanced the public's awareness to sports and charitable endeavors.

At the Charity Game, Yao Ming, Founder of Yao Foundation and Chairman of the Chinese Basketball Association delivered an opening remark, expressing gratitude to the Macao SAR Government and the community for their tremendous support. Francis Lui, Vice Chairman of Galaxy Entertainment Group, inaugurated the Charity Game, following the screening of the documentary "Team Together Wuhan" produced by the Yao Foundation, the opening film of one of the extended activities – the Hive 5 Sports Short Film Festival.

Participating players at the Charity Game included an array of basketball stars, namely, Fang Shuo, Zhai Xiaochuan, Kyranbek Makel, Jeremy Shu-How Lin, Isaiah Thomas, along with popular figures like Li Wenhan, Huang Zhiwei, and Liu Haoyuan. The players electrified the atmosphere with their swift movement, seamless teamwork, and dazzling display of technique and strategy, attracting more than 100 media from Macau, Hong Kong and Mainland China to engage in the basketball fever. At last, the International Basketball All-star Team won 147-144.

In the game of "Fantastic 3rd Quarter", the tradition of Yao Foundation Charity Game, four young players from Macau-China Basketball Association teamed up with twenty young players from Yao



Yao Ming (left) and Francis Lui (right), Vice Chairman of Galaxy Entertainment Group, exchanged souvenirs.



The Chinese Basketball All-Star Team played against the International Basketball All-Star Team.



Kyranbek Makel lifted a young player up to play dunk.



The Galaxy Entertainment Group Hive 5 Sports Short Film Festival was kicked off at the Galaxy Cinemas of Galaxy Macau.



Attending guests and all team players, coaches and referees took a group photo at the Charity Game.

Foundation Hope Primary School Basketball Season, to compete with the Chinese Basketball All-Star Team and the International Basketball All-Star Team players on the court.

The event also saw a list of other sports athletes in attendance, including Su Bingtian, Asian 100-meter sprinter; Fan Zhiyi, the first Chinese award winner of "Asian Footballer of the Year"; Olympic champion Wang Junxia and Basketball figures Yi Jianlian, Zhu Fangyu, Zhang Yunsong, Sun

Yue and Xu Liming whom Yao Ming presented trophies as tribute to all sports enthusiasts that embody Chinese sportsmanship and propel its development.

INTERNATIONAL BASKETBALL STAR FIRSTLY EXPERIENCE MACAU

At the pre-game press conference at the Galaxy International Convention Center, Isaiah Thomas expressed his thrill to visit Macau for the first time, bringing about a spectacular basketball

performance whilst enjoying Macau's unique charm as a "World Center of Tourism and Leisure".

Buddy Lam, Executive Vice President of Corporate Office of Galaxy Entertainment Group, said in his speech, "Upholding our corporate philosophy of 'What is taken from the community is to be used for the good of the community', over the years, GEG has proactively supported a wide array of large-scale sports events and activities in Macau through multi-pronged approaches, the-

reby enhancing the integration of 'tourism + sports' by contributing to the Macao SAR Government's '1+4' adequate diversification development strategy. Through supporting this event, we hope to elevate the public's awareness to sports and charitable causes."

1,000-MINUTE SHORT FILM FESTIVAL AT GALAXY CINEMAS

Also co-organized and title-sponsored by Galaxy Entertainment Group was the Galaxy Entertainment Group Hive 5 Sports

Galaxy Entertainment Group 2023 The 11th Basketball Carnival Successfully Concludes in Macau



Yao Ming presented trophies as tribute to sports enthusiasts that embody Chinese sportsmanship.



The pre-game press conference was held at the Galaxy International Convention Center.



In Philanthropy Forum various guests discussed over "sports to propel youth and community development".



The public participated in the fun-filled Basketball Carnival game booth.



Yao Ming shook hands and interacted with students from Macau Kao Yip Middle School.



Jeremy Shu-How Lin played basketball whilst Wavey the Peacock of Galaxy Kidz cheering for him.

Short Film Festival held at the Galaxy Cinemas of Galaxy Macau. The Short Film Festival included a forum on "How to Spread the Spirit and Culture of Sports" as well as the Macau premiere of the festival's opening film "Team Together Wuhan". Renowned guests were invited to share insights and offer trend forecasts on the various forms through which sportsmanship and Chinese characteristics have manifested over the years.

A non-stop charity screening

of 29 sports short films, totaling 1,000 minutes, was unfolded at the Galaxy Cinemas during the Festival. Through these captivating films from a diverse range of sports and different countries, viewers were able to tangibly experience the vigor and emotion that sports inspire.

FOSTERING COMMUNITY EXCHANGE THROUGH SPORTS

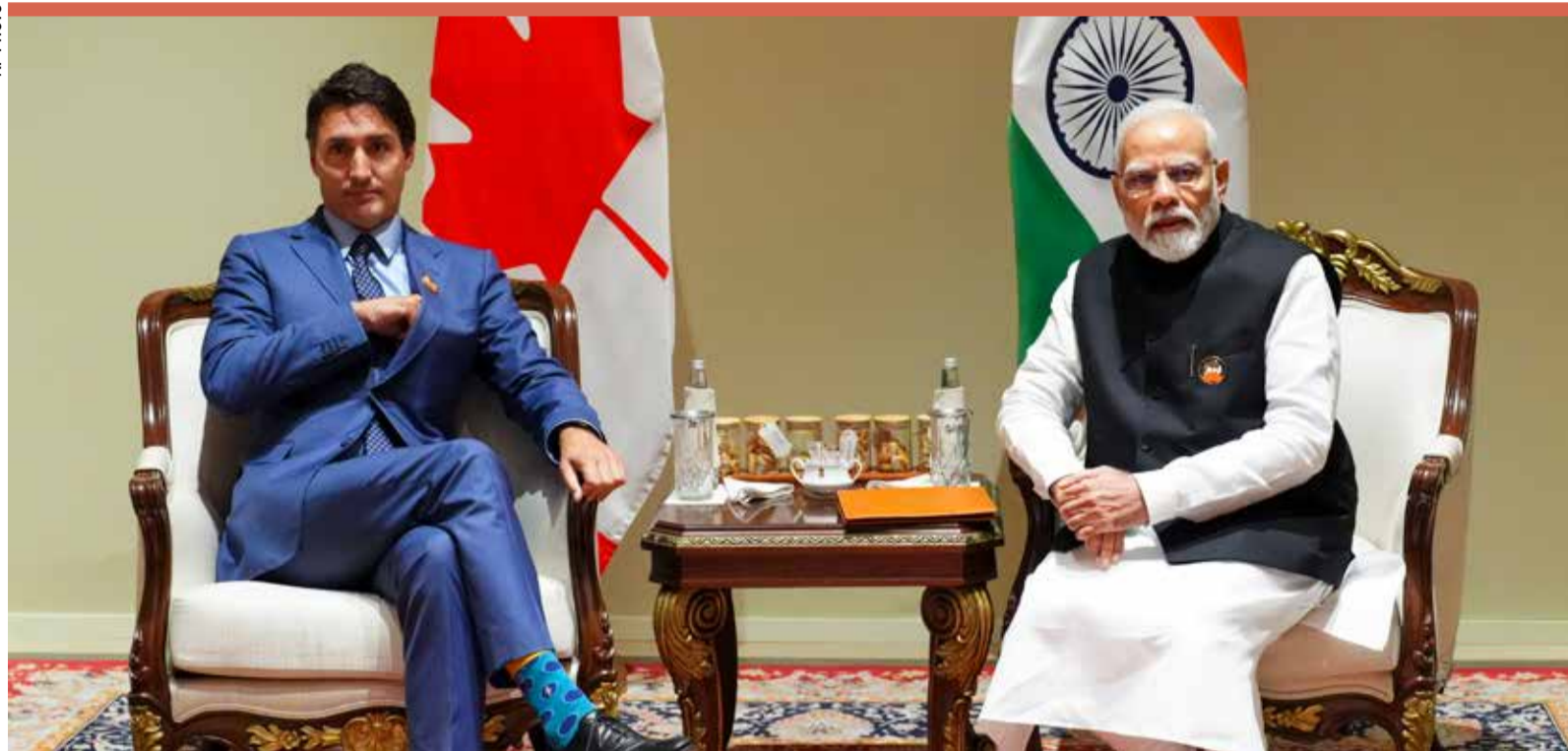
Furthermore, various extended activities were held to facilitate sports-related community

exchanges, including the Campus Visit, Basketball Carnival and the Philanthropy Forum. During the Campus Visit, Yao Ming and other basketball stars visited the Macau Kao Yip Middle School to engage in a riveting exhibition game alongside student athletes, forging unforgettable memories.

At the Basketball Carnival held at the gymnasium of the Macau University of Science and Technology, basketball stars Jeremy Shu-How Lin,

Isaiah Thomas delighted the public with their exceptional skills, sweeping the community with basketball culture and fever. To further promote community cohesion through sports, GEG also invited 50 members of various social organizations to participate in the Carnival, appreciate the spectacular basketball performances and interact with the basketball stars with aims of broadening their horizons and creating a joyful basketball experience.

Delving into topics such as "sports events to promote city image" and "sports to propel youth and community development", the Philanthropy Forum endeavored to construct a platform for the dissemination of sports philanthropic culture, and offer fresh perspectives for sports development of youths, enabling more ideas to be put into practice and encouraging more people to contribute to the cause of sports philanthropy.



Trudeau and Modi: tensions escalate

INDIA-CANADA

New Delhi expels Canadian diplomat, escalating tensions

KRUTIKA PATHI &
 ROB GILLIES, NEW DELHI

INDIA expelled one of Canada's top diplomats today [Macau time], ramping up a confrontation between the two countries over Canadian accusations that India may have been involved in the killing of a Sikh separatist leader in suburban Vancouver.

India, which has dismissed the accusations as absurd, said the expulsion came amid "growing concern at the interference of Canadian diplomats in our internal matters and their involvement in anti-India activities," according to a statement from its Ministry of External Affairs.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appeared to try to calm the diplomatic clash, telling reporters that Canada is "not looking to provoke or escalate."

"We are simply laying out the facts as we understand them and we want to work with the government of India to lay everything clear and to ensure there are proper processes," he said. "India and the government of India needs to take this matter with the utmost seriousness."

On Monday, Trudeau said there were "credible allegations" of Indian involvement in the slaying of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a 45-year-old Sikh leader who was killed by masked gunmen in June in Surrey, outside Vancouver. For years, India has said Nijjar, a Canadian citizen born in India, has links to terrorism, an allegation Nijjar denied.

A U.S. official said Trudeau was in contact with President Joe Biden's administration about Canada's findings before raising them publicly. The official, who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, said Trudeau's willingness to speak out about the matter was taken by the White House as an indication of the Canadian leader's certainty about what had been found.

Canada has yet to provide any evidence of Indian involvement, but if true it would mark a major shift for India, whose security and intelligence branches have long been significant players in South Asia, and are suspected in a number of killings in Pakistan. But arranging the killing of a Canadian citizen in Canada, home to nearly 2 million people of Indian descent, would be unprecedented.

India, though, has accused Canada for years of giving free rein to Sikh separatists, including Nijjar.

The dueling expulsions have escalated tensions between Canada and India. Trudeau had frosty encounters with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during this month's Group of 20 meeting in New Delhi, and a few days later Canada canceled a trade mission to India planned for the fall.

Nijjar, a plumber, was also a leader in what remains of a once-strong movement to create an independent Sikh homeland, known as Khalistan. A bloody decade-long Sikh insurgency shook north India in the 1970s and 1980s, until it was crushed in a government crackdown in which

thousands of people were killed, including prominent Sikh leaders.

Violence spilled across years and continents. In 1984, former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was killed by two of her Sikh bodyguards after she ordered an army operation to flush out heavily armed Sikh separatists barricaded inside Sikhism's holiest shrine. Her killing led to riots that left more than 2,000 Sikhs dead.

The next year, an Air India jetliner flying from Toronto to New Delhi was destroyed by a bomb over the Irish coast, killing 329 people. Officials blamed Sikh separatists.

The Khalistan movement has lost much of its political power but still has supporters in the Indian state of Punjab, as well as in the sizable overseas Sikh diaspora. While the active insurgency ended years ago, the Indian government has warned repeatedly that Sikh separatists were trying to make a comeback.

Nijjar was wanted by Indian authorities, who had offered a reward for information leading to his arrest. At the time of his killing he was working with the group Sikhs For Justice, organizing an unofficial Sikh diaspora referendum on independence from India.

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a lawyer and spokesperson for Sikhs For Justice, has said Nijjar was warned by Canadian intelligence officials about being targeted for assassination by "mercenaries."

Nijjar had recently been meeting "once or twice a week" with Canadian Security Intelligence

Service officers, including a day or two before the shooting, said his son Balraj Singh Nijjar.

He said his father had received hundreds of threatening messages telling him to stop his advocacy for Sikh independence. The threats were always passed to authorities.

"We weren't worried about safety because we weren't doing anything wrong," he said. "We were just using freedom of speech."

He said the family was relieved by Canada's actions.

"From day 1 we kind of had this idea and knowledge that if anything would happen to him, the Indian government would be involved," he said. "It was just a matter of time for when the truth would come out. It's finally coming to the public eyes that the Indian government is involved in this."

On Monday, Trudeau told Parliament that Canadian security agencies were investigating "credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the government of India" and Nijjar's killing.

"Any involvement of a foreign government in the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil is an unacceptable violation of our sovereignty," he said.

India's foreign ministry dismissed the allegation as "absurd" and accused Canada of harboring "terrorists and extremists."

"Such unsubstantiated allegations seek to shift the focus from Khalistani terrorists and extremists, who have been provided shelter in Canada and continue to

threaten India's sovereignty and territorial integrity," it said in a statement.

India has long demanded that Canada take action against the Sikh independence movement, which is banned in India. Canada has a Sikh population of more than 770,000, about 2% of its population.

In March, Modi's government summoned the Canadian high commissioner in New Delhi, the top diplomat in the country, to complain about Sikh independence protests in Canada. In 2020, India's foreign ministry also summoned the top diplomat over Trudeau's comments about an agricultural protest movement associated with the state of Punjab, where many Sikhs live.

Critics accuse Modi's Hindu nationalist government of seeking to suppress dissent using sedition laws and other legal weapons. Some critics of his administration have been arrested, creating what Modi's opponents say is a culture of intimidation.

Trudeau said Monday he brought up Nijjar's slaying with Modi last week at the G20 meeting in New Delhi, and told him any Indian government involvement would be unacceptable and he asked for cooperation in the investigation.

Modi, for his part, expressed "strong concerns" over Canada's handling of the Sikh independence movement at that meeting, India's statement said.

While in New Delhi, Trudeau skipped a dinner hosted by the Indian president, and local media reports said he was snubbed by Modi when he got a quick "pull aside" instead of a bilateral meeting.

The statement called on Canada to work with India on what New Delhi said is a threat to the Indian diaspora, and accused the Sikh movement of "promoting secessionism and inciting violence" against Indian diplomats.

Earlier this year, Sikh protesters pulled down the Indian flag at India's high commission in London and smashed the building's window after India arrested a popular Sikh preacher. Protesters also smashed windows at the Indian Consulate in San Francisco and skirmished with consulate workers.

The British government, meanwhile, said yesterday there were no plans to reinvestigate the death of a U.K.-based Sikh activist in the wake of Canada's claim India might have been behind the slaying of Nijjar.

Avtar Singh Khanda, who played a prominent role in protests for an independent Sikh homeland, died in June in the English city of Birmingham after falling ill. Supporters alleged he might have been poisoned, but Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman, Max Blain, said police found nothing suspicious. **MDT/AP**

USA

A Batman researcher said 'gay' in a talk to schoolkids, resigned when asked to censor himself

JEFF AMY, ATLANTA

MARC Tyler Nobleman was supposed to talk to kids about the secret co-creator of Batman, with the aim of inspiring young students in suburban Atlanta's Forsyth County to research and write.

Then the school district told him he had to cut a key point from his presentation — that the artist he helped rescue from obscurity had a gay son. Rather than acquiesce, he canceled the last of his talks.

"We're long past the point where we should be policing people talking about who they love," Nobleman said in a telephone interview. "And that's what I'm hoping will happen in this community."

State laws restricting talk of sexual orientation and gender identity in schools have proliferated in recent years, but the clash with Nobleman shows schools may be limiting such discussions even in states like Georgia that haven't officially banned them. Some proponents of broader laws giving parents more control over schools argue they extend to discussion of sex and gender even if the statutes don't explicitly cover them.

Eleven states ban discussion of LGBTQ+ people in at least some public schools in what are often called "Don't say gay" laws, according to the Movement Advancement Project, an LGBTQ+ rights think tank. Five additional states require parental consent for discussion, according to the project.

Legislation restricting LGBTQ+ rights gained steam this year, but suppression is not new. A school district in New Jersey, which requires curriculums to be LGBTQ-inclusive, tried to bar a valedictorian from discussing his queer identity during a graduation speech in 2021. That year, a federal judge ordered an Indiana district to give the same privileges to a gay-straight alliance as to other extracurricular groups. Two years later, Indiana passed a law banning discussion of LGBTQ+ people in grades K-3.

Schools nationwide have been challenged on books with LGBTQ+ themes or characters, and many have removed them, including Forsyth County, which has been a battleground in the

AP PHOTO



In this undated photo provided by Rebecca Hale, Marc Tyler Nobleman poses for a portrait

politics of schooling.

LGBTQ+ advocates say Nobleman bumped up against a moral panic fomented by conservatives seeking to roll back acceptance.

"The idea that these folks are saying that they just don't want to talk about it at all is very disingenuous," said Cathryn Oakley, a lawyer for the Human Rights Campaign, a leading advocacy group. "What they mean is they don't want views other than theirs to be expressed. And they believe that that means everyone should have to hear what they believe."

Discussion of straight people with traditional gender identities is everywhere, she said, and if all discussion of sexuality is going to be banned, Oakley said, "then you certainly better not be teaching 'Romeo and Juliet.'"

Nobleman, a self-described "superhero geek" who lives in the suburbs of Washington, D.C., is best known as the author of "Bill the Boy Wonder: The Secret Co-creator of Batman." It lays out the story of Bill Finger, the long-uncredited author who helped create Batman and other comic book characters.

Finger died in obscurity in

1974, with artist Bob Kane credited as Batman's only creator. Finger's only child was a son, Fred Finger, who was gay and died in 1992 at age 43 of AIDS complications. Bill Finger was presumed to have no living heirs, meaning there was no one to press DC Comics to acknowledge Finger's work.

But Nobleman discovered Fred Finger had a daughter, Athena Finger. That, he said, is a showcase moment of the presentation he estimates he has given 1,000 times at schools.

"It's the biggest twist of the story, and it's usually when I get the most gasps," Nobleman said. "It's just a totally record-scratch moment."

Nobleman's research helped push DC Comics into reaching a deal with Athena Finger in 2015 to acknowledge her grandfather and Kane as co-creators. That led to the documentary "Batman & Bill," featuring Nobleman.

In Forsyth County, the author gave his first presentations at Sharon Elementary on Aug. 21. After Nobleman mentioned in his first talk that Fred Finger was gay, the principal handed him a note during his second talk that said, "Please only share the

appropriate parts of the story for our elementary students."

Forsyth County schools spokesperson Jennifer Caracciolo said that just mentioning Fred Finger was gay isn't the problem. But she said it led to questions from students, meaning Nobleman and students might discuss sexuality without parents being warned.

In the past three years, conservatives in the 54,000-student district have tried to tamp down diversity policies and sexually explicit books they view as immoral.

The district was sued by a conservative group called the Mama Bears after banning a member of that group from reading explicit book excerpts at meetings. A federal judge ruled the policy unconstitutional.

The district was also warned by the U.S. Department of Education after pulling some books from libraries, with federal officials saying the discourse may have created a hostile environment that violated federal laws against race and sex discrimination.

Nobleman's discussion of sexual orientation has nothing to do with the state English language

arts learning standards his presentation was supposed to bolster, Caracciolo said.

"We have a responsibility to parents and to guardians that they will know what students are learning in school," Caracciolo said.

Nobleman said he was blindsided and agreed to drop the reference to Fred Finger's sexual orientation in remaining presentations that day, as well as in three at another school the next day. But by the morning of the third day, Nobleman started fielding questions from reporters after the principal at Sharon Elementary sent an electronic message to parents apologizing for the mention of Fred Finger's homosexuality.

"This is not subject matter that we were aware that he was including nor content that we have approved for our students," Principal Brian Nelson wrote. "I apologize that this took place. Action was taken to ensure that this was not included in Mr. Nobleman's subsequent speeches and further measures will be taken to prevent situations like this in the future."

And so, on the third day he was presenting, after a discussion with district officials, Nobleman refused to give the last two of his scheduled presentations if required to omit Finger's sexual orientation.

Many parents have applauded Forsyth County's actions, Caracciolo said. Cindy Martin, chair of the Mama Bears, said Nobleman should be "ashamed of himself."

She argues that a 2022 Georgia law bans discussion of sexuality without parental consent for any minor because it gives parents "the right to direct the upbringing and the moral or religious training" of their children.

"No one has the right to talk to a child about sexuality unless it's the parent, or the parent has given permission," Martin said. "Mr. Nobleman did not have permission. So he went against Georgia law."

Matt Maguire, a Sharon Elementary parent who had a daughter who attended one of Nobleman's presentations, said he was disappointed by the message and felt the school district was being bullied by Martin and others into "reactionary" censorship.

The mere mention of the word "gay" didn't merit claims made online by critics that Nobleman was "grooming or sexualizing children," he said, and it ignored that some Sharon Elementary students have gay parents.

"It didn't sit right with me. It made me feel like certain parts of our community were being kept as a dirty secret," Maguire said. "I couldn't imagine coming from a family with gay members and reading that apology just for saying the word 'gay.'" **MDT/AP**

UNITED NATIONS

RUSSIA HAS TURNED FOOD, ENERGY AND EVEN CHILDREN INTO WEAPONS AGAINST UKRAINE: ZELENSKYY

JENNIFER PELTZ
& DEREK GATOPOULOS,
UNITED NATIONS

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said yesterday [Macau time] that Russia is “weaponizing” everything from food and energy to abducted children in its war against Ukraine — and he warned world leaders that the same could happen to them.

“When hatred is weaponized against one nation, it never stops there,” he said at the U.N. General Assembly’s annual top-level meeting. “The goal of the present war against Ukraine is to turn our land, our people, our lives, our resources into weapons against you — against the international rules-based order.”

The war in Ukraine has deepened major global supply disruptions caused by the pandemic, driving a huge spike in food and energy prices, jolting the global economy and increasing hardship in many developing countries.

Decades-old energy supply channels to Europe from Russia, a major oil and gas producer, were halted or severely disrupted by the war due to sanctions, trade disputes, pipeline shutoffs and a major push by Western countries to find alternative sources. Both Russia and Ukraine also are major grain exporters, and Russia withdrew this past summer from a deal that allowed shipments of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea.

Zelenskyy pointed to the food and fuel crunches, and he highlighted what Ukraine says were kidnappings of at least tens of thousands of children taken from Ukraine after Moscow’s invasion: “What will happen to them?”

“Those children in Russia are taught to hate Ukraine, and all ties with their families are broken. And this is clearly a genocide,” Zelenskyy said in remarks that ran 15 minutes — the meeting’s often-disregarded time limit.

The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant in March for Russian President Vladimir Putin and another official, accusing them of abducting children



from Ukraine. Russian officials have denied any forced transfers of children, saying some Ukrainian youngsters are in foster care.

Russia gets its chance to address the General Assembly on Saturday. Deputy U.N. Ambassador Dmitry Polyansky sat in Russia’s seat during Zelenskyy’s address.

“Did he speak?” Polyansky said with a wry smile when an Associated Press reporter asked about his reaction to the address. “I didn’t notice he was speaking. I was on my phone.”

Zelenskyy took to the world stage at a sensitive point in his country’s campaign to maintain international support for its fight. Nearly 19 months after Moscow launched a full-scale invasion, Ukrainian forces are three months into a counteroffensive that has not gone as fast or as well as initially hoped.

Ukraine and its allies cast the country’s cause as a battle for the rule of international law, for the sovereignty of every country with a powerful and potentially expansionist neighbor, and for the stability of global food and energy supplies.

“We must stand up to this naked aggression today and deter other would-be aggressors tomorrow,” U.S. President Joe Biden told the assembly in his own speech. As he pledged support to Ukraine, there was a round of applause, including from Zelenskyy.

Russia insists its war is jus-

tified, claiming that it is defending Russian speakers in Ukraine from a hostile government and protecting Russian interests against NATO encroachment, and more.

The war has raged longer and losses have been greater than Russia hoped, and the fighting has spurred widespread international condemnation against Moscow.

But the Kremlin also has influential friends that haven’t joined the chorus of censure: China and India, for instance, have staked out neutral positions. So have many Middle Eastern and African nations. Many Latin American and Caribbean countries prefer to focus world attention on other global issues, including climate change and conflict in Africa.

Moscow is keen to display its global influence and its relationship with China and insists that it cannot be internationally isolated by the U.S. and its European allies.

Meanwhile, Ukraine is concerned that backing from its allies may be ebbing. They have supplied billions of dollars’ worth of arms but fear that their stockpiles are shrinking and that defense contractors are struggling to boost production lines.

Hours before Zelenskyy spoke at the U.N., allied defense leaders convened at a U.S. military base in Germany to discuss next steps. Some nations pledged further money and weapons. But a key sticking point is whether to supply longer-range missiles

that Kyiv insists it needs.

The U.S. Congress is weighing Biden’s request to provide as much as \$24 billion more in military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, amid a growing partisan divide over spending on the conflict. Zelenskyy is scheduled to spend time Thursday on Capitol Hill and to meet with Biden at the White House.

After landing Monday in New York, Zelenskyy suggested that the U.N. needs to answer for allowing his country’s invader a seat at the tables of power.

If there is still “a place for Russian terrorists” in the United Nations, “it’s a question to all the members of the United Nations,” Zelenskyy said after visiting wounded Ukrainian service members at Staten Island University Hospital.

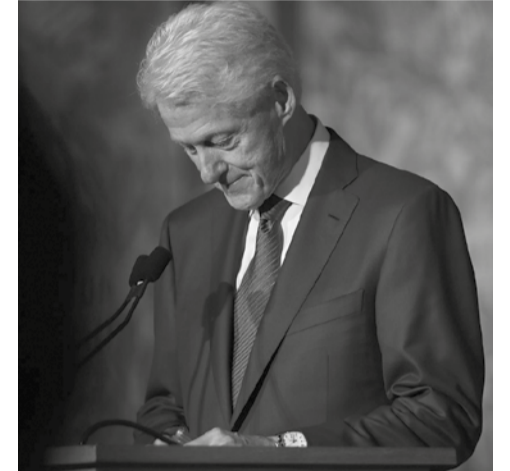
Russia is a permanent, veto-wielding member of the U.N. Security Council, which is entrusted with maintaining international peace and security.

Zelenskyy took the United Nations to task even before the war. In one memorable example, he lamented at the General Assembly in 2021 that the U.N. was “a retired superhero who’s long forgotten how great they once were.”

A former comedian and actor who took office in 2019, Zelenskyy later became a wartime leader, wearing military fatigues, rallying citizens at home and appearing virtually and in person before numerous international bodies. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1998 CLINTON’S GRAND JURY TESTIMONY RELEASED



Bill Clinton’s testimony about his relationship with a young female assistant has been released to the United States public.

The video of the American president’s 17 August interview in front of the Grand Jury was taken to a television station at 0910 local time (1410 BST) and broadcast immediately by many US networks.

During the examination President Clinton was questioned by prosecutors about the exact nature of his affair with Monica Lewinsky - and whether he had previously lied under oath.

The president’s defence against the accusations relied on elaborate definitions of certain words.

The interview was originally taped on the insistence of the investigating team for the benefit of a jury member who could not attend the hearing.

But members of the House of Representatives justified the release of the tape by saying the public had the right to see all the evidence of the Starr Report.

“It’s not a pretty sight... But the key thing we’ve all got to focus on is what is the truth”, said Charles Canady - a republican on the House Judicial Committee.

A visibly uncomfortable President Clinton was forced to defend previous statements about his affair with Miss Lewinsky by quibbling over the precise definition of his words.

In particular he said “sexual relations” did not to him mean “sexual intercourse” - which he denied having with the former White House intern.

Challenged later in the hearing, he argued the meaning of the smallest of words contained in one of his lawyers’ statements.

“It depends upon what the meaning of the word ‘is’ is. If ‘is’ means ‘is and never has been’ that’s one thing - if it means ‘there is none’, that was a completely true statement,” he said.

After facing the Grand Jury, the president now awaits the verdict of the American people.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

On 9 December 1998 the House Judiciary Committee proposed four articles of impeachment against the president.

Ten days later - after a bitter debate between republicans and democrats - the House of Representatives voted to confirm the recommendation.

Bill Clinton became only the second president in American history to face such an indictment, but he refused to resign.

His trial began on 7 January 1999 and ended on 12 February when senators voted to acquit him of the impeachment charges of perjury and obstruction of justice.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
A residential move may be in order. Don't overspend on luxury items. Make changes in your domestic scene. Make amends if you can.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Relax and enjoy what you've accomplished when you're finished. You can prosper if you invest in property or mutual funds. You will be prone to carelessness that could result in accidents.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Residential moves are evident. Opportunities to get ahead are evident. You can become obsessed with detail and must be sure to divide your time appropriately.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You can expect to have problems with your mate if you've been spending too much time away from home. Mingle with those who can help you get ahead.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Do you really want to start something with someone you can't reason with? Property deals look good. Don't let anyone take credit for a job you did.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Make sure that you get legal matters checked out thoroughly. Take the time to do your job correctly or you may find yourself looking for a new one.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Be honest in your communication and don't lose your cool if someone backs you into a corner. Come to your own conclusions rather than taking the word of someone else.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Don't let your jealousy be the reason for a decaying relationship. Elders may need your help. Secret affairs will only lead to heartache.

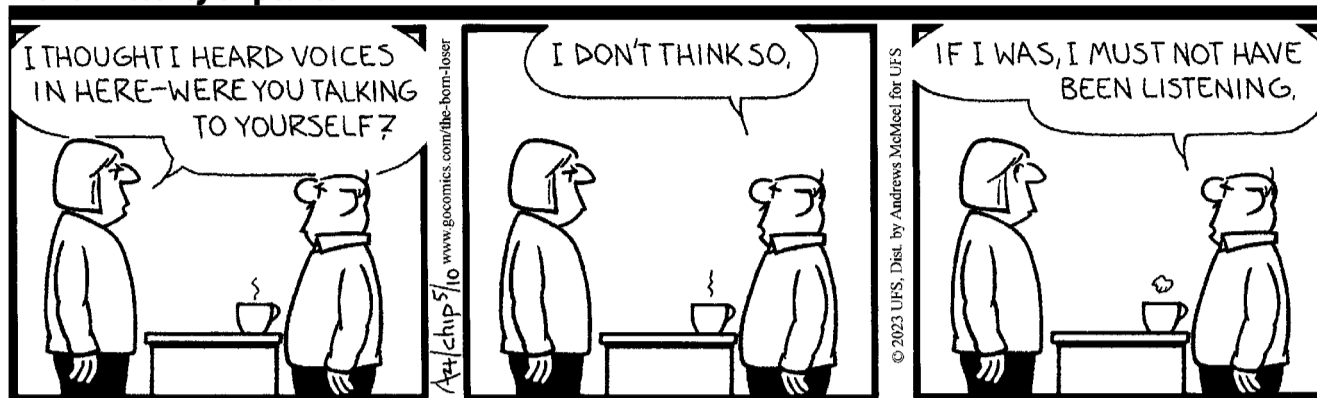
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
You need some excitement in your life, and meeting new people in exotic destinations will certainly satisfy your desires. You can make money through your own creative efforts.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Don't get involved in expensive entertainment that involves gambling. Any difficulties with peers could be unnerving. Erratic behavior at home may be hard to handle.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Take time to make physical improvements that will enhance your appearance. Use your obvious talent to work with detail and you can come up with something great.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Resist any idle chatter. Don't let children hold you back from doing things you enjoy. Deception is likely. You may have the day off but your thoughts will be on your work and your cash situation.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	15	27	fine
Changchun	7	22	fine
Chengdu	18	25	overcast
Chongqing	21	24	rain
Fuzhou	26	34	cloudy
Guangzhou	24	34	thunderstorms
Guiyang	20	26	showers
Haikou	25	33	cloudy
Hangzhou	22	23	rain
Harbin	7	21	cloudy
Hefei	19	21	rain
Nanjing	20	23	overcast
Shanghai	22	27	rain
Taipei	25	31	cloudy
Wuhan	20	21	rain
Hong Kong	26	31	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	13	21	rain
Frankfurt	13	25	overcast
Paris	12	19	rain
London	9	18	rain
New York	15	24	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- How sweet ___; 5- Winter drink; 10- Madam, I'm ___; 14- Clublike weapon; 15- Role for Valerie; 16- Timbuktu's land; 17- Kind of code; 18- Cinder; 19- Shade trees; 20- Eye membrane; 22- Traveler; 24- PC component; 25- "___ She Lovely?"; 26- Textile fabric; 30- On edge; 35- Enzyme ending; 36- Sweet suffix; 37- Les ___-Unis; 38- Modern humans; 41- Performer of gymnastic feats; 43- Egg exterior; 44- ___-pitch softball; 45- Good ___ boy; 46- Give up; 47- Litigable; 50- Israel's Abba; 53- East Lansing sch.; 54- Nightclub; 58- Bars legally; 62- Border on; 63- Bounded; 66- Captain ___; 67- Faction of a group, often religious; 68- Japanese immigrant; 69- One's partner; 70- School founded by Henry VI; 71- Body of values; 72- Leaf tool;

DOWN 1- Apple variety; 2- Edible corn; 3- Bakery worker; 4- Medium setting?; 5- Haydn oratorio, with "The"; 6- Unit of electrical resistance; 7- Corn holder; 8- "Waiting for Lefty" dramatist; 9- Biblical brother; 10- From the U.S.; 11- Painter of limp watches; 12- Charity; 13- Atomizer output; 21- Be mistaken; 23- Absolute; 25- ___ de France; 26- Large and dense; 27- Japanese beer brand; 28- Home on the range; 29- Chucklehead; 31- DDE's command; 32- Influential person; 33- Stable compartment; 34- Lauder of cosmetics; 39- Not in the pink; 40- Born before, senior churchman; 41- Capp and Capone; 42- Skin preparation; 44- Transgression; 48- Battleship letters; 49- Writer; 51- Give a false impression of; 52- This is only ___; 54- Portfolio; 55- Encourage in wrongdoing; 56- Osso ___; 57- Env. notation; 59- The last Mrs. Chaplin; 60- Tyler's successor; 61- Terrier type; 64- Bat wood; 65- Architect I.M.;

Yesterday's solution

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- 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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RELIGION

AI WON'T BE REPLACING YOUR PRIEST, MINISTER, RABBI OR IMAM ANY TIME SOON

PAULINE HOPE CHEONG,
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

EARLY in the summer of 2023, robots projected on a screen delivered sermons to about 300 congregants at St. Paul's Church in Bavaria, Germany. Created by ChatGPT and Jonas Simmerlein, a theologian and philosopher from the University of Vienna, the experimental church service drew immense interest.

The deadpan sermon delivery prompted many to doubt whether AI can really displace priests and pastoral instruction. At the end of the service, an attendee remarked, "There was no heart and no soul."

But the growing use of AI may prompt more churches to debut AI-generated worship services. A church in Austin, Texas, for example, has put a banner out advertising a service with an AI-generated sermon. The church worship will also include an AI-generated call to worship and pastoral prayer. Yet this use of AI has prompted concerns, as these technologies are believed to disrupt authentic human presence and leadership in religious life.

My research, alongside others in the interdisciplinary fields of digital religion and human-machine communication, illuminates what is missing in discussions of AI, which tend to be machine-centric and focused on extreme bright or dark outcomes.

It points to how religious leaders are still the ones influencing the latest technologies within their organizations. AI cannot simply displace humans, since storytelling and programming continue to be critical for its development and deployment.

Here are three ways in which machines will need a priest.

1. CLERGY APPROVE AND AFFIRM AI USE

Given rapid changes in emerging technologies, priests have historically served as gatekeepers to endorse and invest in new digital applications. In 2015, in China, the adoption of Xian'er, the robot monk, was promoted as a pathway to spiritual engagement by the master priest of the Buddhist Longquan Temple in Beijing.

The priest rejected claims that religious AI was sacrilegious and described innovation in AI as spiritually compatible with religious values. He encouraged the incorporation of AI into religious practices to help believers gain spiritual insight and to elevate the temple's outreach efforts in spreading Buddhist teachings.

Similarly, in 2019, the head



priest of the Kodai-ji Buddhist temple in Kyoto, Japan, named an adult-size android "Kannon Mindar," after the revered Goddess of Mercy.

This robotic deity, who can preach the Heart Sutra, a classic and popular Buddhist scripture, was intentionally built in partnership with Osaka University, with a cost of about US\$1 million. The idea behind it was to stimulate public interest and connect religious seekers and practitioners with Buddhist teachings.

By naming and affirming AI use in religious life, religious leaders are acting as key influencers in the development and application of robots in spiritual practice.

2. PRIESTS DIRECT HUMAN-MACHINE COMMUNICATION

Today, much of AI data operations remain invisible or opaque. Many adults do not recognize how much AI is already a part of our daily lives, for example in customer service chatbots and custom product recommendations.

But human decision making and judgment about technical processes, including providing feedback for reinforcement learning and interface design, is vital for the day-to-day operations of AI.

Consider the recent robotic initiatives at the Grand Mosque in Saudi Arabia. At this mosque, multilingual robots are being deployed for multiple purposes, including providing answers to questions related to ritual performances in 11 languages.

Notably, while these robots stationed at the Grand Mosque can recite the Holy Quran, they also provide visitors with connections to local imams. Their touch-screen interfaces are equipped with bar codes, allowing users to learn more about the weekly schedules of mosque staff, including clerics who lead Friday sermons. In addition, these robots can connect visitors with Islamic scholars via video interactions to answer their queries around the clock.

What this shows is that whi-

le robots can serve as valuable sources of religious knowledge, the strategic channeling of inquiries back to established religious leaders is reinforcing the credibility of priestly authority.

3. RELIGIOUS LEADERS CAN CREATE AND SHARE ETHICAL GUIDELINES

Clergy are trying to raise awareness of AI's potential for human flourishing and well-being. For example, in recent years, Pope Francis has been vocal in addressing the potential benefits and disruptive dangers of the new AI technologies.

The Vatican has hosted technology industry leaders and called for ethical guidelines to "safeguard the good of the human family" and maintain "vigilance against technology misuse." The ethical use of AI for religion includes a concern for human bias in programming, which can result in inaccuracies and unsafe outcomes.

In June 2023, the Vatican's culture and education body, in

partnership with Santa Clara University, released a 140-page AI ethics handbook for technology organizations. The handbook stressed the importance of embedding moral ideals in the development of AI, including respect for human dignity and rights in data privacy, machine learning and facial recognition technologies.

By creating and sharing ethical guidelines on AI, religious leaders can speak to future AI development from its inception, to guide design and consumer implementation toward cherished values.

In sum, while religious leaders appear to be undervalued in AI development and discourse, I argue that it is important to recognize the ways in which clergy are contributing to skillful communication involving AI technologies. In the process, they are co-constructing the conversations that chatbots such as the one at the church in Bavaria are having with congregants. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

RUGBY WORLD CUP

Springboks load bench with seven forwards to take on top-ranked Ireland

SOUTH Africa unsurprisingly reverted to its strongest starting lineup to face top-ranked Ireland in a crunch pool game at the Rugby World Cup while also naming seven forwards and just one back on the bench on Tuesday in a clear indication of how the Springboks aim to play.

The defending champion Springboks have gone with a 7-1 bench split just once before, against New Zealand last month in a Rugby World Cup warmup game.

The move was criticized then by some in the game as taking rugby down a dark road of just brute force forward play.

It effectively gives South Africa a new forward pack to bring on in the second half against Ireland at the Stade de France in Paris on Saturday (Sunday, 3:00). The winner of the game will likely finish top in Pool B and likely avoid a meeting with host France in the quarterfinals, although that will probably only mean a quarter against three-ti-



South Africa's Steven Kitshoff (right) is tackled by Romania's Adrian Motoc

me champion New Zealand.

Springboks coach Jacques Nienaber reverted to the starting 15 that beat Scotland in their opening game, only without

hooker Malcolm Marx, who was ruled out of the tournament with a knee injury. Bongi Mbonambi comes into the starting team for Marx.

Lock Eben Etzebeth was selected to start after sustaining a shoulder injury and going off in the first half against Scotland. Captain Siya Kolisi, Pieter-Steph du Toit and Jasper Wiese are the loose forward combination.

Faf de Klerk is back at scrumhalf to link up with flyhalf Manie Libbok, and wings Cheslin Kolbe and Kurt-Lee Arendse are recalled.

On the bench, scrumhalf Cobus Reinach, who can also play wing, is the only backline player among the reserves, with the Springboks naming three reserve front-row forwards, two reserve locks and two reserve loose forwards. Among them is Deon Fourie, the 36-year-old flanker who has been switched to reserve hooker after Marx's tournament-ending injury.

While the 7-1 split worked against New Zealand, setting the Boks up for a record 35-7 win over their archrival, it also poses a major risk if one or more backline players get injured.

Ireland is rugby's form team

and on a run of 15 straight wins since July last year.

"We know it's going to be a grind of a match and we know we need to pitch up physically and mentally. We also need to start with intensity and stay focused until the final whistle," Nienaber said. "This is a massive game for both sides with an eye to progressing out of our pool, so we need to be extremely accurate in all areas of our game."

MDT/AP

LINEUP

SOUTH AFRICA: Damian Willemse, Kurt-Lee Arendse, Jesse Kriel, Damian de Allende, Cheslin Kolbe, Manie Libbok, Faf de Klerk; Jasper Wiese, Pieter-Steph du Toit, Siya Kolisi (captain), Franco Mostert, Eben Etzebeth, Frans Malherbe, Bongi Mbonambi, Steven Kitshoff. Reserves: Deon Fourie, Ox Nche, Trevor Nyakane, Jean Kleyn, RG Snyman, Marco van Staden, Kwagga Smith, Cobus Reinach.

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

UPBEAT HIGH-LEVEL TALKS GIVE FURTHER BOOST TO RELATIONS THAT SHOULD NOT BE SQUANDERED

Sending a fresh signal that efforts continue to be made to stabilize the world's most important nation-to-nation ties, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi had talks with United States National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan in Malta over the weekend.

Both sides have subsequently struck an upbeat tone, with their discussions described as candid, substantive and constructive.

Strategic communication has emerged as a key word to define the latest high-level contact between the two sides. Apart from agreeing to maintain high-level exchanges, the two countries also pledged to hold consultations on Asia-Pacific affairs, maritime affairs as well as their respective foreign policies.

The discussions have helped to cultivate the right atmosphere for contact at the highest level in the near future, with a face-to-face meeting between the leaders of the two countries having been mooted for the APEC gathering in San Francisco in November.

The talks between Wang and Sullivan are the latest in a series of high-profile exchanges of views between the two sides, indicating that Beijing and Washington are seeking to restore the channels of communication to better manage their differences and make sure the relationship does not spiral out of control into conflict.

The US bid to suppress China on the economic and technological fronts and its frequent provocations over the Taiwan question and the South China Sea issue have fueled concerns and speculation that the two countries were inexorably heading toward a conflict.

Political wisdom is needed to put a check on the ever-worsening bilateral ties and steer them on a safer course. This is particularly true of the US, as it is always the one creating trouble.

In his talks with Sullivan, Wang emphasized the Taiwan question is "the first redline", meaning the US side should fully understand the sensitivity and gravity of the Taiwan question and realize that touching this redline will have consequences.

Wang also told Sullivan that China's development has strong endogenous driving force and follows inevitable historical logic and it cannot be stopped. "The Chinese people cannot be deprived of their legitimate right to development," he said. In fact, Washington's containment policies only serve to consolidate China's resolve to achieve self-reliance.

With the cooperation and participation of the two countries necessary to address the many global challenges plaguing the world, the time is ripe for a detente between Washington and Beijing. But whether the good momentum that has been fostered toward realizing that can be maintained ultimately depends on whether the US can match its words with deeds.

Russia's President Vladimir Putin said last night he accepted an invitation from his Chinese counterpart to visit China in October during the Belt and Road Summit.

Speaking after a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Moscow, Putin said Russia and China are "integrating our ideas of creating a large Eurasian space," noting that China's Belt and Road Initiative is a part of that.

The Initiative is a huge program in which Beijing has been expanding its influence in developing regions through infrastructure projects. Since Russia invaded Ukraine, Putin has pivoted the country toward

China, selling it more energy, and increasingly carrying out joint military exercises.

China has adopted a neutral stance on the war in Ukraine and even denounced Western sanctions against Moscow. It also accused NATO and the United States of provoking Putin's military action and declared last year that it had a "no-limits" friendship with Russia.

On Tuesday, senior Russian security official, Nikolai Patrushev, called for closer policy coordination between Moscow and Beijing to counter what he described as Western efforts to contain them as he hosted Wang Yi for security talks.

AP PHOTO



FRANCE ROLLS OUT THE RED CARPET FOR KING CHARLES III'S STATE VISIT

SYLVIE CORBET, PARIS

KING Charles III of the United Kingdom starts a three-day state visit to France yesterday meant to highlight the friendship between the two nations with great pomp, after the trip was postponed in March amid widespread demonstrations against President Emmanuel Macron's pension changes.

Charles and Queen Camilla were greeted by Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne at Paris-Orly airport. They were to attend a ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe in the presence of Macron and his wife, Brigitte.

The visit shows "the deep historical ties that unite our two countries. It is also an opportunity to showcase France's cultural, artistic and gastronomic excellence," the French presidency said.

At the Arc de Triomphe, both national anthems will be played before a review of French troops and a wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to "mark the shared sacrifices of the past and an enduring legacy of cooperation," according to Buckingham Palace.

The jet fighters of the Patrouille de France and Britain's Red Arrows, the acrobatic teams of the two air forces, will fly above the

monument.

The presidential and royal couples will then head by car to the presidential palace, parading on the Champs-Élysées avenue.

Macron and Charles will hold a bilateral meeting, because the visit also "symbolizes the relationship of friendship and trust" since they "have in the past worked closely together to protect biodiversity and combat global warming," the French presidency stressed.

They will also have talks on Russia's war in Ukraine and the migration issue as Italy's southern island of Lampedusa was in recent days overwhelmed by people setting off from Tunisia.

While the U.K. royal family long ago ceded political power to elected leaders, members of the royal family remain Britain's preeminent ambassadors as presidents and prime ministers jockey to bask in the glamor and pageantry that follows them wherever they go.

The visit comes amid a recent warming in the Franco-British relationship after years marked by Brexit talks and related disputes.

At a bilateral summit in March, Macron and U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak agreed to strengthen military ties and step up efforts to prevent migrants from

crossing the English Channel.

"We know that the British and French relationship has been difficult at times since 2016," Ed Owens, a historian of the British monarchy, told The Associated Press.

"This move on the part of the British state to send the king to France is about reassuring the people of France, but also the people of the U.K. that this is a relationship of significant importance and that it is based on history, heritage and that there are many other things in our shared futures that connect us."

A state dinner today [Macau time] in the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles in the presence of more than 150 guests will be one of the highlights of the visit.

Tomorrow, Charles will address French lawmakers at the Senate, providing a new venue for the king to show off his language skills after he wowed his audience by switching seamlessly between German and English during a speech to Germany's parliament in March.

He will later rejoin Macron in front of Notre-Dame Cathedral to see the ongoing renovation work aimed at reopening the monument by the end of next year. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



USA Actor and philanthropist Michael J. Fox won this year's Elevate Prize Catalyst Award, which the "Back to the Future" star plans to use to further his foundation's work to find treatments for Parkinson's disease. Fox, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease at the age of 29 in 1991, received the award at the Clinton Global Initiative, or CGI, conference in New York. The annual prize, which went to Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai last year, includes \$250,000 from the Elevate Prize Foundation and support to amplify the winner's messaging.

AP PHOTO



Danish pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk signed a deal with South Africa's Aspen Pharmacare to produce human insulin for diabetes patients in Africa, where there is a dire need for the life-saving treatment. The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention welcomed the move yesterday, saying it would "greatly impact the fight against diabetes" in Africa. Novo Nordisk has contracted Aspen to convert insulin into finished doses at its plant in Gqeberha, South Africa.

AP PHOTO



Britain's state-owned health service is operating on holiday-level staffing in England yesterday as doctors in the early stages of their careers joined their more senior colleagues in their first-ever joint strike action. Tens of thousands of so-called junior doctors walked off the job for the sixth time since last December in an escalation of their increasingly bitter pay dispute with the British government. The walkout comes a day after their more senior colleagues, commonly known as consultants in Britain, began their third walkout.