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AP PHOTO



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AP PHOTO



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XI OPENS HANGZHOU ASIAN GAMES, MACAU SECURES FIRST MEDAL

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XINHUA





MACAU ATHLETE SECURES MEDAL AT ASIAN GAMES

Song Chi Kuan of Macau won bronze at the men's changquan of wushu at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province. Silver medalist Edgar Xavier Marvelo of Indonesia won silver, while Sun Peiyuan of China won gold. Macau Region sent a 273-member delegation, including 183 athletes, to the Games. These athletes are competing in 21 sports, including aquatics, track and field, basketball, badminton, and martial arts.

LIN QINGHUA APPOINTED POLITICAL COMMISSAR OF PLA GARRISON

Lin Qinghua has been appointed major general political commissar of the Macau Garrison of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), Wang Hui, spokesperson of the garrison said Saturday. General Wang Jianwu, political commissar of the PLA's Southern Theater Command, recently visited the Macau Garrison and broke the news. Lin vowed to earnestly implement the 'One country, two systems' principle and firmly safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests as well as the prosperity and stability of Macau.

INFLATION RISES 1%

The composite consumer price index (CPI) for August (104.80) grew by 0.99% year-on-year. The rise was attributed to higher prices for eating out and package tours, rising tuition fees, as well as increases in hotel room rates and clothing prices. Yet, the increase was partially offset by falling rentals for dwellings and lower airfares. For the 12 months ended August, the average Composite CPI grew by 0.86% from the previous period, and the price indices of Education (+10.02%) and Household Furnishings & Services (+6.63%) showed notable growth, according to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

TOURISM FORUM

ECONOMY CHIEF PINPOINTS SUSTAINABILITY AT GTEF CLOSING ADDRESS

ANTHONY LAM

Sustainable development to revive the tourism industry should be promoted, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong said as part of his closing address of the Global Tourism Economy Forum (GTEF), which concluded Saturday.

Lei, who is also the executive chairman of the GTEF, stated in his closing remarks that the Forum featured dedicated sessions in collaboration with different organizations zeroing in on the sustainable and high-quality development of the tourism industry, as well as tourism growth and innovation through the application of technology.

He added that in response to the goals set by the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Forum values "thinking beyond tourism" with the aim of fostering innovative tourism collaboration.

Graced by the presence of personages and entities from different sectors, he added, GTEF 2023 culminated in success as an internationally renowned convention in Macau and a seminal annual event for the global tourism industry, garnering great recognition from across



the global tourism industry and manifesting Macau's capabilities and advantages in Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE).

GTEF Vice Chairman and Secretary-General Pansy Ho expressed in her concluding remarks, "China advocates building a community with a shared future for mankind and sharing China's opportunities with the rest of the world. In the past decade, we have attracted tourism industry practitioners across the globe to this international forum

originating in China."

"We will take it to the international stage in the next decade, bringing GTEF to other parts of the world, raising both the voice and influence of China's tourism industry internationally. We will continue to provide an equal and inclusive platform for stakeholders worldwide and inspire the global tourism industry with innovative ideas," Ho added.

The final day of the Forum saw a series of discussions held prior to the closing ceremony. There were sessions about reshaping

tourism in Europe and redefining city tourism in the next decade, among other topics.

Harry Hwang, director of the Regional Department for Asia and the Pacific of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), proposed that UNWTO members in the region should reinforce investment in tourism infrastructure, strengthen institutional and legal frameworks, and create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship, jobs, communities, and education.

He noted that product development and diversification, reduction of seasonality, niche products and new destinations are among other top priorities for the region's tourism development.

CE DISCUSSES PROMOTING MACAU WITH UNWTO

The Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng has discussed enhancing Macau's tourism industry and expanding its sources of international tourists with the Secretary-General of the UNWTO Zurab Pololikashvili.

Ho said that the GTEF2023 had attracted culture and tourism ministers and industry leaders from a number of countries to Macau to participate in the event.

Pololikashvili also said that UNWTO had plans to strengthen cooperation with higher education institutions in Macau, to offer courses in tourism, communications, marketing, and other major subjects, in a bid to help build Macau into an educational hub for tourism talent training.

PUBLIC HOUSING

Applications for elderly residence apartments to start in November

RENATO MARQUES

The application process for the government elderly residential apartments will kick off as soon as the applicable new administrative regulation comes into force on November 6, the president of the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) Hon Wai said on Friday, when he also

presented the regulations.

Hon explained that although the residences will only be completed in 2024, the application process starts immediately so that the government can do a thorough evaluation of the applicants and the priority criteria.

According to the same official, after approval and confirmation, the new re-

sidents can start moving into the new rooms by the fourth quarter of the year.

The administrative regulation establishes a series of criteria for both eligibility and priority access to the new residences.

By default, eligible candidates are over 65 years of age, permanent residents, and self-sufficient. The rooms are each de-

signed to accommodate up to two people; a co-occupant must be at least 60 years old and a spouse, family member, or friend of the applicant.

Priority will be given to the elderly who live in buildings that do not have elevators. Other criteria include the candidate's length of residence in Macau.

The selection process will be done by IAS, who will select for all 1,815 apartment units. Other eligible candidates will be placed on a waiting list.

At the press conference, and when questioned by the media on the topic, Hon noted that co-occupants will be not evicted in the instance something happens to the main applicant, and will still have the right to remain living in the apartment.

Rents will be calculated based on the market value as well as floor level and other characteristics of the apartment.

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Gov't to launch tender for up to 500 taxi licenses

RENATO MARQUES

THE government will soon launch a public tender for common taxi licenses of eight years' duration. The tender was initially thought to reissue some 300 licenses that are currently due to expire, but Transport Bureau (DSAT) director Kelvin Lam said that the number might actually be up to 500 according to the needs of locals and tourists, which the government is currently evaluating.

The news came at a press conference with the Executive Council (ExCo) that took place last Friday at the government's headquarters. At this press conference, the government presented the administrative regulation governing the rules for the tender.



“Previously we wanted to launch more than 300 licenses, and we are currently still assessing the demand among citizens and tourists. In future, it might not be 300 but 500, but we can only know this after the study is concluded,” Lam said. The tender can only open the

day after the administrative regulation is published in the government's official gazette, which should happen soon.

According to DSAT, there are currently approximately 1,900 taxi licenses attributed and valid, of which about 300 will expire at the end of this year.

According to officials from the taxi sector, there are far fewer licenses currently in use than what the government estimates. This is due to several factors including drivers that have left the profession and found another occupation during the pandemic. During the pandemic, the industry was struggling to keep taxis operating with no tourists in Macau and little demand from local residents.

At the press conference, Lam also raised the possibility of opening a new tender to attribute more licenses for the so-called “radio taxis.” These are taxis that operate via a phone call or mobile application order, although he did not give a clear timeframe on when the government expects this new tender to be launched.

NEARLY 40 CREATIVE BRANDS SHOWCASE PRODUCTS IN FOSHAN

The “Macao Craft Market @ Foshan Lingnan Tiandi” has featured 50 cultural and creative brands from Macau and mainland China. Held from Sept. 22 to Sept. 24 in Foshan, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has organised the participation of nearly 40 cultural and creative brands from Macau, displaying and selling a wide range of cultural and creative products, including clothing and accessories, knitted fabrics, handmade pottery and original illustrations. In addition, eight Macau singing groups and bands were invited to perform as part of the event.

TRAVEL AGENCY SECTOR REVENUES AMOUNT TO MOP1.6B IN 2022

Receipts and expenditure of the travel agency sector amounted to MOP1.60 billion and MOP1.69 billion respectively in 2022, down by 19.8% and 20.3% year-on-year, data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) showed. The number of persons engaged dropped by 588 year-on-year to 2,204. The industry registered a deficit of MOP90.77 million in 2022, an improvement compared to 2021 (-MOP127 million). 176 travel agencies operating in 2022, a decrease of eight year-on-year. Analysed by size, there were 124 travel agencies with fewer than 10 persons engaged, 41 with 10 to 29 persons, and five with 30 to 49 persons.

Gov't must inject funds into Islands Hospital if not self-sufficient

RENATO MARQUES

THE government will be responsible for injecting the necessary funds to balance the accounts of the Islands Medical Complex if it does not find a way to be self-sufficient. The news came on Friday during the press conference from the Executive Council (ExCo) by the

coordinator of the preparatory office for the Macau Medical Center of Peking Union Medical College Hospital, Lei Wai Seng.

Lei was speaking at the press conference about the completed analysis by the ExCo of the administrative regulation that established the bylaws of the Islands



Medical Complex.

Without entering into much detail, Lei explained that besides the investment already made by the government, which amounts to some 13 billion patacas, the executive will have the duty to continue funding the operations become self-su-

fficient, which is, according to the same official, one of the main goals.

Lei also noted that, officially, recruitment for the medical facility can only start after the Medical Complex Legal Regime comes into force next week (October 1).

For the first phase of

operations, which will start before the year ends as the government announced on several occasions, the Islands Hospital Complex expects to hire some 500 staff members, who have been already pre-selected.

The administrative regulation established that the administrative bodies of the Medical Center include a Strategic Development Committee, a Management Board, a Supervisory Board, and a Financial Committee.

While the first is the supreme decision-making body of the Medical Center, which is responsible for deciding on the administrative, financial, and personnel management of the Medical Center, as well as its op-

erations, the Management Board and the Financial Committee are bodies subordinated to the Strategic Development Committee.

The Supervisory Board is responsible for all the internal supervision of the Medical Center, namely for financial verification, as well as for communicating and presenting opinions and suggestions to the regulatory entity, whenever problems are detected in the functioning and finances of the medical facility.

The regulation also allows the Medical Center to create functional units, including medical education and medical research units that are considered necessary for long-term development needs. Affiliations with other hospitals or institutions as well as representation of the hospital outside Macau are also permitted.

ANOTHER LAWMAKER CALLS FOR RESOLUTION TO LIN FONG SWIMMING POOL CONSTRAINTS

ANTHONY LAM

LAWMAKER Che Sai Wang has called for more swimming pools for teaching classes to cope with the recent Lin Fong Swimming Pool constraints.

A week or so prior to this written inquiry by the lawmaker, Che's parliamentary colleague Ron Lam

held a press conference with swimming coaches and pool users so they could express their demands.

Weeks ago, the government suddenly announced that all swimming classes offered at Lin Fong Swimming Pool – including healthcare classes for seniors – would be terminated to make way for the opening

up of the facility.

The decision has prompted objections from users, especially senior residents, who attended classes for health reasons.

Lin Fong is the only local swimming pool accredited for swimming classes with accessible equipment that caters to the needs of seniors and the aurally or

mentally disabled. Government-operated swimming pools are closed to private swimming classes.

While pointing out that more people have become aware of physical and mental benefits of physical exercise, Che noted that the small sporting grounds in Macau has inevitably forced players of different sports to

practice on the same grounds. This may cause tension between different players who are in need of suitable space for their practice, according to the lawmaker.

In his inquiry, Che pointed out that the local per-person sporting ground area in 2022 was less than 60% of the national figure for the same apparatus. The local figure was 1.53 sqm/person, a rise of 0.18 sqm/person from 2017.

As such, he asked if the government would consi-

der building more multi-sports buildings to cater to the needs of players of different sports. Meanwhile, he also asked if the government would consider restructuring or building swimming pools that can facilitate swimming classes.

When it was also disclosed that some coaches had become unemployed due to the Lin Fong constraints, Che asked if the government could relocate these professionals to retain talent.

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ARTS

Alan Chan: Eastern elements will shine further in design



ANTHONY LAM

EASTERN elements will further gain significance in the design world because there is so much "to be inspired [by]," Hong Kong famed designer Alan Chan has said.

Designer of a multitude of establishments in Macau, such as the China Rouge clubhouse at Galaxy Macau and two Michelin three-star restaurants – Robuchon au Dôme and The Eight at Grand Lisboa Hotel – Chan has spent 55 years in the design industry.

He was in Macau on Friday to open his lantern installations at a local shopping mall.

In almost all of his designs, there is a hybrid of both Chinese and western cultures. An expert in this respect, the master designer was asked whether he believes the prac-

ice will become even more popular in the future.

Replying with a resounding yes, Chan elaborated that with the engine of development now leaning against the East, particularly China and the UAE, elements from these cultures will exist more often in future designs.

Furthermore, "China has a history spanning 5,000 years," Chan said, suggesting that there is "so much to learn and be inspired from." He even emphasized that many of his recent designs had evolved from elements that were previously unused.

He also took to the cyclical trend in fashion to explain his understanding. "I hold on to the philosophy of 'if there's no past, there's no future,'" Chan said. "Everything has to rely on our history and our past."

Elaborating on what he referred to as "Asian sensitivi-

ty" in design, Chan said he is inspired by decades of creations in Greater China, insisting this is not due to his Chinese or Hong Kong ancestry.

When asked how the local design circle can further thrive, the master designer said that local designs had been enriched significantly in the past years, before saying that the vibe of local designs will only continue to improve.

Discussing his latest exhibition at One Central Macau shopping mall and MGM Macau, the master designer disclosed that his mother was from Macau but relocated to Hong Kong when she married his father. When he was small, he would spend a month or two in Macau every summer with his relatives in the city. This explains his fondness for the city.

Asked about his memories of Mid-autumn Festival, Chan recalled that shops on Hennessy Road in Hong Kong, where he spent his childhood, would set up mechanical installations that highlighted Chinese literature, such as Journey to the West, so he has incorporated imagined motion in his latest installations in Macau.

MID-AUTUMN EVENTS

TOURISM DIRECTOR COMMENDS RABBIT LANTERN INSTALLATIONS FOR COMPLEMENTING FIREWORKS

RABBIT lantern installations displayed inside and outside a local shopping mall will complement the local fireworks display contest, director of Tourism Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes said over the weekend.

Featuring eight massive rabbit lanterns designed by famed Hong Kong designer Alan Chan, the 6th Macau Lantern Festival, co-organized by One Central Macau shopping mall and MGM, opened last Friday and will run until the end of November.

During her speech at the opening ceremony, the tourism official recommended several locations where fireworks viewers will have better views. One of these locations is the promenade of the shopping mall. She said that the addition of the rabbit lantern display will help elevate the festive mood.

Chan's rabbit lantern installations will be shown both on the coastal prome-



nade of the shopping mall and inside the shopping mall itself. Introducing his work, Chan said that the rabbits were depicted in varying postures to highlight the mammal's vital, playful and sometimes cheeky characteristics. The postures also symbolize humankind's efforts to thrive despite the restrictions of the past three years. He deliberately picked white because he wanted to convey the notion of "back to basics" and purity. White also blends well with its visual surroundings.

The rabbits have lotus flowers to symbolize Ma-

cau and, more importantly, to accentuate the Kun Iam statue, not far from the exhibition. "I have taken the entire neighborhood into consideration," Chan said.

During the festivities, named Mandarin Oriental, there is a delightful "Rabbit Surprise" cake at The Mandarin Cake Shop. Make sure not to miss the National Day Promotion at One Central Macau from 29th September to 8th October. Spend MOP30,000 or more at One Central Macau during this period and receive gift vouchers with up to 3.8% in rebates. **AL**

CRIME

PJ DETAINS SEVEN PEOPLE SUSPECTED OF INSURANCE FRAUD WORTH OVER 25 MILLION

RENATO MARQUES

SEVEN people, including five insurance agents, have been arrested by the Judiciary Police (PJ) on suspicion of major fraud that allegedly caused the loss of some HKD25 million from at least 28 victims, the PJ announced.

According to the PJ, the crime ring used images of several celebrities to publish fake advertisements on social media to attract clients to join the alleged scheme.

Victims were invited to invest in an insurance-based investment scheme.

The case was first unveiled after five of the victims realized they had been blocked from accessing their investment assets through a mobile application. They filed complaints with the PJ. Upon investigation, the PJ detected another 23 potential victims of the same scheme.

All victims were lured by the insurance agents and directed to purchase insu-



rance. In the process and in making use of the documents, the group opened several bank accounts in Macau into which the alleged investment money was being transferred.

The members were then added to an online group that continuously shared investment tips about the best plans or stocks to invest in.

As often happens in this kind of case, after some success investing a small amount, the victims were invited to increase their investments.

The group then transferred the money paid by

the victims into 13 bank accounts in Macau and later transferred the earnings to 10 bank accounts on the mainland.

The suspects under PJ custody told the police that they were hired by the crime ring and were earning sums between HKD2,000 and 70,000.

Among the seven arrested, six are Macau residents (including the five insurance agents) and one is a resident from the mainland.

The PJ also disclosed that of the 28 victims located so far, 27 are local residents and one is a mainland resident.

Lots of dignitaries and impressive digital effects as the Asian Games open

STEPHEN WADE, HANGZHOU

THE opening ceremony of the Asian Games on Saturday in China offered all the staples of a major international sports event.

Dignitaries greeted General Secretary Xi Jinping, fans packed the 80,000-seat Olympic Sports Center Stadium in Hangzhou to capacity, and many of the 12,417 participants from 45 nations and territories paraded to officially open the two-week show.

By comparison, next year's Paris Olympics will field about 10,500 competitors.

One big thing, however, was missing: real fireworks, the exploding kind that smell of power and burnt fuses. Instead, the high-tech games — billed of course as “green games” — offered electronic flash, 3D animations and a virtual torchbearer.

Xi was greeted by wild cheers when he appeared, and fans were handed LED star lights, adding sparkle to the stands when the lights dimmed and eight well-polished soldiers arrived carrying the national flag above their heads.

The loudest cheers were for the Chinese delegation, but Taiwan, North Korea and Hong Kong were also welcomed warmly. There were no audible jeers for any delegation.

Delayed for a year by the pandemic, the Asian Games are China's largest sports event since the country scrapped its zero-COVID-19 policy early in the year.

Among the dignitaries on hand were Syrian President Bashar al-



-Assad, who left behind his war-torn country, International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach, and King Norodom Sihamoni of Cambodia.

Bach is in a political tussle over the governance of the Olympic Council of Asia and is also believed to be lobbying Xi against supporting any breakaway multi-sport games sought by Russian President Vladimir Putin with Russia likely being banned next year in Paris.

The 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics were held in a COVID-19 bubble. The 2008 Summer Olympics marked China's rise as a wor-

ld power. These games serve as a promotional event for Hangzhou, the eastern metropolis of 8 million that seeks a larger stage, partly lost in the shadow of nearby Shanghai.

“Through the window of Hangzhou Asian Games, people around the world will see a trustable, loveable, and respectable China in its new era,” Xinhua, the official news agency, said in an editorial, echoing Xi's call to tell China's story.

The sluggish economy and high youth unemployment have some residents grumbling that the money could be better spent, prompting city officials to reassure

the public that it would be a “frugal” event.

Revenues from donations and the private sector were estimated to reach hundreds of millions of dollars by March, while the expenditures were estimated to have exceeded \$30 billion as the city built 56 sports facilities, 30 training sites, five villages for athletes as well as major infrastructure investments.

However, the city's residents also are aware that the infrastructure upgrades were only possible because of the games and, along with the city government, have welcomed the games to justify the

spending.

The giant numbers are due to the staggering array of events with many regional specialties, sports, and games you won't see at the Olympics. And there's also cricket, which appears headed to the Olympics as soon as 2028 in Los Angeles, and certainly for 2032 in Brisbane, Australia.

The regional fare includes dragon boat racing, sepaktakraw — sometimes called “kick volleyball” — wushu, a Chinese martial art, and kabaddi, a popular contact sport on the Indian subcontinent.

Add to this a long list of what organizers call “mind sports” from bridge to chess to xiangqi (Chinese chess) to esports. Esports figure to be a giant hit after being a demonstration sport in 2018.

Of course, there are the old standbys seen in every Olympics like track and field, swimming, or volleyball. Nine sports will offer qualification spots for the Olympics — archery, artistic swimming, boxing, breaking, hockey, modern pentathlon, sailing, tennis, and water polo.

Many of the 481 events offer a chance for smaller delegations to win medals, which is often impossible at the Olympics. China won almost 300 medals in the Asian Games five years ago and is sure to dominate again followed by Japan and South Korea.

North Korea is on hand, so are female athletes representing Afghanistan, and Taiwan — the democratic island claimed by China as a breakaway province — always fields a strong team.

The Afghan team arrived, including women, and marching under the non-Taliban flag. **MDT/AP**

TALIBAN SEND ALL-MALE TEAM TO ASIAN GAMES BUT AFGHAN WOMEN COME FROM OUTSIDE

IN the first Asian Games since the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan, two teams of athletes arrived in the Chinese city of Hangzhou, looking very different.

One, sent from Afghanistan where women are now banned by the Taliban from participating in sports, consists of about 130 all-male athletes, who will participate in 17 different sports, including volleyball, judo and wrestling. Atel Mashwani, a Taliban-appointed spokesman for the Afghanistan's Olympic Committee, told The Associated Press.

Another, competing under the black, red and green flag of the elected government the Taliban toppled in 2021, is drawn from the diaspora of Afghan athletes around the world, and includes 17 women, according to Hafizullah Wali Rahimi, the president of Afghanistan's National Olympic Committee from before the Taliban took over.

Rahimi, who now works from outside Afghanistan but is still recognized by many countries as its official representative on

Olympic matters, told reporters at the team's official arrival ceremony late Thursday that the athletes are there for the love of sports.

“We want to be keeping the sports completely out of the politics so the athletes can freely, inside and outside their country, do their sports activity and development,” he said.

Rahimi's contingent at the welcome ceremony was entirely male, but he said the women were on their way, consisting of a volleyball team that have been training in Iran, cyclists from Italy, and a representative for athletics from Australia.

He did not respond to an emailed request on Friday seeking more details.

The games official opening ceremony was on Saturday.

Although the Taliban promised a more moderate rule than during their previous period in power in the 1990s, they have imposed harsh measures since seizing Afghanistan in August 2021 as U.S. and NATO forces were

pulling out after two decades of war.

They have barred women from most areas of public life such as parks, gyms and work and cracked down on media freedoms. They have banned girls from going to school beyond the sixth grade, and prohibited Afghan women from working at local and non-governmental organizations. The ban was extended to employees of the United Nations in April.

The measures have triggered a fierce international uproar, increasing the country's isolation at a time when its economy has collapsed and worsening a humanitarian crisis.

Rahimi said that the previous government had been working hard to increase women's participation in sport since the previous Taliban regime, and that it had increased to 20%.

“We hope it comes back, of course,” he said. “Not only the sport, we hope that they'll be back allowed to schools and education, because that's the basic rights of a human.”

MDT/AP

AUSTRALIA

Vatican shares investigation into child abuse allegations against a bishop with police

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

THE Vatican had shared with police findings of an internal investigation of a former Australian bishop over child sex abuse allegations and the church would fully cooperate with criminal investigators, a cleric said on Friday.

The Catholic Church announced the handover of its investigation report into former Bishop Christopher Saunders three days after the Western Australia Police Force publicly revealed it had requested a copy.

"The church will continue to offer full transparency and cooperation with W.A. Police," Bishop Michael Morrissey, who replaced Saunders in the Broome Diocese in 2021, said in a statement.

"The church encourages anyone who has experienced abuse, or suspects abuse within the community, to come forward and report it to police," Morrissey added.

Saunders, now 73, denied any



Bishop Christopher Saunders of Broome tries to play a didgeridoo during a World Youth Day 2008 media event in Sydney, Australia, on April 17, 2008

wrongdoing and refused to participate in the Vatican investigation, which began last year, the church said.

He resigned in 2021 as bishop of Broome, an Outback diocese of northwest Australia larger than

France but with a population of only 50,000, after police announced they had dropped a sex crime investigation. He had stood down a year earlier after media reported the allegations.

The Vatican this week confir-

med it had completed its Saunders investigation that it said could not have begun before the police investigation had ended.

The confirmation followed media reports on Monday that the 200-page Vatican report found Saunders likely sexually assaulted four Indigenous youths and potentially groomed another 67 Indigenous youths and men.

The church refuses to publicly detail the allegations that were investigated.

Police had conducted two investigations into allegations against Saunders between 2018 and 2020. Prosecutors had concluded there was insufficient evidence to lay charges.

In requesting the Vatican report, a police statement said on Tuesday: "If further information comes to light, police will investigate."

Morrissey said the Vatican report had been handed to Western Australia Deputy Police Commissioner Allan Adams. Morrissey did not say when.

The church and police "remain in ongoing and collaborative contact on the matter," Morrissey said.

Police on Friday declined to comment on what they intended to do with the report.

Saunders, who continues to hold the church title of bishop, is now Australia's most senior cleric known to be accused of child abuse in a scandal that has enveloped the church around the world.

Cardinal George Pell was the third highest-ranking cleric in the Vatican when he was convicted in an Australian court in 2018 of sexually abusing two 13-year-old choirboys in a Melbourne cathedral in 1996, when Pell was an archbishop.

Pell spent 13 months in prison before the convictions were overturned on appeal. He maintained his innocence until his death in Rome in January.

Saunders began working in Broome as a deacon in 1975 and became bishop in 1996. **MDT/AP**



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2. Scope of Services:	Provision of Management and Maintenance Services of the Installation, Systems and Equipment owned by Macau International Airport Co. Ltd Pavements and Associated Systems (RFP/E&M/02/23)
3. Request for Tender Document:	The interested Bidders shall call the Senior Secretary of the Engineering and Maintenance Branch (E&M) of the Airport Operations Department of CAM at (853) 88982386 and collect the tender document at the following location until 27 September 2023 before 13:00 (Macau Local Time). <u>Location for collecting the tender document</u> CAM – Macau International Airport Co. Ltd. Macau International Airport Engineering and Maintenance Branch E&M Building 1st Floor, Office 41019 Taipa, Macau For any enquiry regarding the Tender Procedure, please reach our Engineering and Maintenance Branch at (853) 88982386.
4. Location for Submission of Proposals:	CAM – Macau International Airport Co. Ltd. Av. De Wai Long CAM Office Building, 4 th Floor Reception Taipa, Macau Attention: Mr. Chu Tan Neng – Executive Director
5. Tender closing time and date:	At 12:00 (noon) on 25 October 2023 (Macau Local Time)
CAM reserves the right to reject any Proposal in whole or in part without stating any reason.	

Russian foreign minister lambastes the West but barely mentions Ukraine in UN speech

EDITH M. LEDERER
& JENNIFER PELTZ,
UNITED NATIONS

RUSSIA'S top diplomat denounced the United States and the West on Saturday as self-interested defenders of a fading international power structure, but he didn't discuss his country's war in Ukraine in his speech to the U.N. General Assembly.

"The U.S. and its subordinate Western collective are continuing to fuel conflicts which artificially divide humanity into hostile blocks and hamper the achievement of overall aims. They're doing everything they can to prevent the formation of a genuine multipolar world order," Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said.

"They are trying to force the world to play according to their own self-centered rules," he said.

As for the 19-month war in Ukraine, he recapped some historical complaints going back to the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union, and alluded to the billions of dollars that the U.S. and Western allies have spent in supporting Ukraine. But he didn't delve into the current fighting.

For a second year in a row, the General Assembly is taking place with no end to the war in sight. A three-month-long Ukrainian counteroffensive has gone slower than Kyiv hoped, making modest advances but no major breakthroughs.

Ukraine's seats in the assembly hall were empty for at least part of Lavrov's speech. An American diplomat wrote on a notepad in her country's section of the audience during Lavrov's speech.

The speech accused the U.S. of, among other things, "whipping up hysteria on the Korean Peninsula." North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made a rare foray out of his country last week by train to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin, an unsettling development for South Korea and allies including the United States.

Later, in a press conference,



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov addresses the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Saturday

rence, Lavrov said the U.S. was "effectively engaged in hostilities with us, using the Ukrainians as fodder."

"You can call this whatever you want to call this, but they are directly at war with us," he said. "We call this a hybrid war. But that doesn't change the reality."

Under assembly procedures that give the microphone to presidents ahead of cabinet-level officials, Lavrov spoke four days after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and U.S. President Joe Biden.

Zelenskyy accused Russia of "weaponizing" food, energy and even children against Ukraine and "the international rules-based order" at large.

Biden sounded a similar note in pressing world leaders to keep up support for Ukraine: "If we allow Ukraine to be carved up, is the independence of any nation secure?" On North Korea, he reiterated criticism of the North's violations of Security Council resolutions regarding its nuclear and ballistic missile programs but said Washington is "committed to diplomacy that would bring about the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

Since invading Ukraine in February 2022, Russia has

offered a number of explanations for what it calls the "special military operation" in Ukraine.

Among them: claims that Kyiv was oppressing Russian speakers in Ukraine's east and so Moscow had to help them, that Ukraine's growing ties with the West in recent years pose a risk to Russia, and that it's also threatened by NATO's eastward expansion over the decades.

Lavrov hammered on those themes in his General Assembly speech last year, and he alluded again Saturday to what Russia perceives as NATO's improper encroachment.

But his address looked at it through a wide-angle lens, surveying a landscape, as Russia sees it, of Western countries' efforts to cling to outsized influence in global affairs. He portrayed the effort as doomed.

The rest of the planet is sick of it, Lavrov argued: "They don't want to live under anybody's yoke anymore." That shows, he said, in the growth of such groups as BRICS — the developing-economies coalition that currently includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa and recently invited Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to join

next year.

"Our future is being shaped by a struggle, a struggle between the global majority in favor of a fairer distribution of global benefits and civilized diversity and between the few who wield neocolonial methods of subjugation in order to maintain their domination which is slipping through their hands," Lavrov said, adding that the United Nations needs to change to have "a fair balance of interests."

Both Lavrov and Zelenskyy also addressed the U.N. Security Council on Wednesday but didn't actually face off. Zelenskyy left the room before Lavrov came in.

Lavrov also sat out Zelenskyy's speech at the General Assembly, but rejected the Ukrainian president's 10-point peace plan as "not feasible" and "not realistic" during the press conference following his speech.

"I had my own affairs to attend to. We know what he's going to say. Why waste time?" the Russian said to explain his absence.

Nonetheless, he said he'd watched video of the Ukrainian president's remarks there and in the Security Council and thought "he seemed rather grim." MDT/AP

this day in history

1950 SEOUL IN UN HANDS



United Nations forces have taken control of the South Korean capital Seoul, three months after it fell to North Korea, the US Army has announced.

The US 7th Infantry Division and South Korean 17th Regiment have crossed the Han river and captured the North Korean stronghold on South Mountain, the spokesman said.

US Marines have also reached Duk Soo palace in the centre of the city and are within 600m (1,969ft) of the main railway station.

North Koreans strongly resisted the UN advance near the station and American and South Korean units suffered many casualties, but opposition in other areas is reported to have been light.

US Air Force planes from the American aircraft carrier Sicily supported the ground attacks all day, targeting North Korean defences with jellied petrol bombs and rockets.

Major General Edward Almond, commander of the X Army Corps, told reporters the combined assault had been key to the UN's success.

The general said: "Co-ordination of air, tank and artillery, and infantry fire-power made possible the seizure of the enemy's defences with minimum losses."

He added that the UN advance from the west after the landings at Inchon on 15 September had cut off important North Korean supply routes and forced them to retreat.

North Korea's defences were crucially breached when tanks from the American 1st Cavalry Division, which had entered Seoul from the west, linked up with US infantry who had fought their way from the east.

The troops joined forces at the 274m (900ft) South Mountain after it was captured in a surprise attack.

The North Korean Peoples' Army have been in control of Seoul since 26 June, just 24 hours after they invaded South Korea.

The UN condemned the offensive and US troops arrived to bolster South Korean resistance just days later.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Korea was divided after the Japanese withdrawal at the end of World War II - which left the USSR occupying the north of the country and the US the south. The border was the 38th parallel.

The invasion of South Korea took the international community largely by surprise - despite years of increasingly bloody frontier incidents.

The re-capture of Seoul from the North Koreans did not signal the end of the conflict and in November 1950 troops from Communist China entered a war which would eventually cost two million lives.

Fighting in Korea did not stop until the signing of an armistice on 27 July 1953.

But a peace deal has never been reached and American troops remain stationed in the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES  **Mar. 21-Apr. 19**
 You should be able to get a lot done. Exercise is always a good way to relieve stress. Update and review your personal investments. Be careful while traveling.

TAURUS  **Apr. 20-May. 20**
 You can expect to experience delays or additional red tape if you deal with institutions. Try to enlist the support of your coworkers first. You need a change of pace.

GEMINI  **May. 21-Jun. 21**
 Don't ignore any emotional issues that could be causing problems. Property deals will pay big dividends. Your generous nature could be taken advantage of.


CANCER  **Jun. 22-Jul. 22**
 Someone you care about may let you down or criticize your methods. A trip to visit relatives should be rewarding. Try to slow down, and take another look.


LEO  **Jul. 23-Aug. 22**
 Find out what they're up to, and see if you can pick up where you left off. You will be able to pick up on future trends if you keep your eyes peeled for unique ideas.


VIRGO  **Aug. 23-Sep. 22**
 Make the necessary changes that will enable you to advance financially. You will learn a great deal about yourself if you go somewhere secluded.


LIBRA  **Sep. 23-Oct. 22**
 You can expect to have a problem with your lover. Don't put off the things that they have asked you to do. Don't let someone try to bully you into doing things their way.

SCORPIO  **Oct. 23-Nov. 21**
 Opportunities to upgrade your living standards will come through your lover or through joint financial investments. Be careful while traveling.

SAGITTARIUS  **Nov. 22-Dec. 21**
 Try to spend time with those having similar interests. Delays are evident. Investments that deal with property will pay off but could cause conflict with some family members.

CAPRICORN  **Dec. 22-Jan. 19**
 Lending and borrowing may be a problem. You may as well work on projects that will allow you to make progress. You can help them more than they can help you.

AQUARIUS  **Jan. 20-Feb. 18**
 You may want to clear the air where older relatives are concerned. You may have problems with those you live with. Try to keep an open mind.

PISCES  **Feb. 19-Mar. 20**
 It's time to make professional changes. Make changes regarding your status in society. You may want to take a look at your direction in life.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	19	30	fine
Changchun	18	26	thunderstorms
Chengdu	21	27	showers
Chongqing	26	33	rain
Fuzhou	26	34	cloudy
Guangzhou	24	33	thunderstorms
Guiyang	20	29	cloudy
Haikou	25	30	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	23	34	fine
Harbin	17	24	rain
Hefei	22	33	cloudy
Nanjing	23	32	cloudy
Shanghai	24	32	cloudy
Taipei	25	29	fine
Wuhan	24	34	cloudy
Hong Kong	24	28	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	9	18	overcast
Frankfurt	16	23	rain
Paris	13	23	rain
London	13	19	rain
New York	16	23	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Agitate; 5- PDQ; 9- Low in pitch; 13- Wave-related; 15- Terrier type; 16- Gothic-type arch; 17- HI hi; 18- Jury member; 19- Hankering; 20- Fam. member; 21- Corner; 23- Large soup dish; 25- Light gas; 26- Very thin sheet iron; 27- Certifies; 30- Wildcatter's find; 31- Charged; 32- Handrail; 37- ___ above; 38- Merchandise; 40- ___ Alto; 41- Maternal; 43- Gal's guy; 44- Wee bit; 45- Raincoat; 47- Noises; 50- Rail supports; 51- Capital of the Bahamas; 52- Klutz's cry; 53- Chit; 56- Off-Broadway theater award; 57- About; 59- Looks after; 61- Psychic; 62- Hammer or sickle; 63- Eagle's home; 64- Goes wrong; 65- Baby blues; 66- Goes out with;

DOWN 1- The closest one to us is the sun; 2- One with a glazed look, perhaps; 3- Graven image; 4- Fan sound; 5- Quaking trees; 6- ___-Ball; 7- Affirmative vote; 8- Belongs; 9- French market town; 10- Give consent; 11- Rocker Bob; 12- Observed; 14- Current; 22- Nonsense; 24- Wrinkly fruit; 25- Not o'er; 26- Tailless amphibian; 27- Composer Khachaturian; 28- ___ Bell; 29- Hardware fastener; 32- Son; 33- Glasses, briefly; 34- Confer; 35- Paris pronoun; 36- Laugh loudly; 38- Receive an academic degree; 39- Auto pioneer; 42- Europe's highest volcano; 43- Guadalajara gala; 45- Chairs; 46- Guff; 47- Cavalry weapon; 48- Willow; 49- Software buyers; 51- It smells; 52- Oklahoma Native; 53- Memo opener; 54- Comics canine; 55- Employs; 58- Tofu base; 60- Some MIT grads;

Friday's solution

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AP PHOTO



Georgia's Merab Sharikadze (centre) looks on as Portugal's Tomas Appleton passes the ball

RUGBY WORLD CUP

ENGLAND ROMP AND PORTUGAL DRAW

PORTUGAL 18, GEORGIA 18

PORTUGAL couldn't have come closer to its first Rugby World Cup win in Toulouse.

Os Lobos [The Wolves] rallied from 13-0 down and looked to have settled the result thanks to two blistering tries from winger Raffaele Storti. But a thrilling climax left both teams unsatisfied.

Trailing 18-13 and having been surprisingly dominated by the Por-

tuguese in the second half, Georgia's grizzled set of forwards summoned up one last push with two minutes remaining and replacement hooker Tengizi Zamtaradze grounded at the back of a rolling maul to tie the score.

There were barely 40 seconds left as Luka Matkava booted the touchline conversion right of the posts.

Portugal's players breathed a sigh of relief, and then were handed another chance of victory when

Georgia gave away a penalty for obstruction straight from the restart.

With first-choice kicker Samuel Marques having already been replaced, fullback Nuno Guedes stepped up for the last kick of the game and pulled it wide. He looked devastated when the final whistle was blown immediately.

Still, Portugal earned its first World Cup points in its sixth match in the tournament, having lost all

four pool games in 2007 and opened this World Cup with a 28-8 defeat to a second-string Wales.

Georgia's record of winning at least one match at every Rugby World Cup since 2007 is under threat now, with games against Fiji and Wales to come.

ENGLAND 71, CHILE 0

Winger Henry Arundell scored a record-tying five tries for En-

gland in Lille his Rugby World Cup debut.

England's highest score in 20 years featured 11 tries, eight of them converted by captain Owen Farrell, who closed to within one point of Jonny Wilkinson's England all-time points record of 1,179.

Criticized for the poor quality of its game at the Rugby World Cup, England excited with flair, pace, and clinical finishing for a third straight win in Pool D and all but secured a spot in the quarter-finals. England will need to beat Samoa in two weeks in their last pool game.

England's approach to an historic first meeting with the lowest-ranked team in the tournament was to put away the boot and run at the Chileans. The passes flowed freely on a sunny afternoon, with England players resorting to kicking only to create attacks and tries.

Arundell became the fourth player in England's history to score five tries in a game, and the first since Josh Lewsey at the 2003 Rugby World Cup against Uruguay.

Chile was organized and willing and never gave up in its first match against a Six Nations side. Los Condores prevented England from scoring for the first 20 minutes but they were outclassed. They finish next weekend against Argentina in the first all-South American Rugby World Cup match. **MDT/AP**

AD

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BREWS & BUZZ

britcham Hengqin:
What's New & What's True - What's Hot & What's Not

Date: 28th September 2023
Venue: L'Altro Italian Restaurant (Diagonally opposite Premier Bar) Kin Wai Garden, 26, Rua Direita Carlos Eugenio, Old Taipa.
Price: \$450 Members/\$580 Non-Members
Parking nearby: Largo dos Bombeiros car park within 1 min. walk

A concise yet wide-ranging update from our man on the ground in Hengqin. The discussion will cover Hengqin's newest projects and the latest developments. From new record-breaking theme parks to those empty skyscrapers, this photo-rich presentation will deliver the latest info and analysis on Hengqin—an island that our speaker calls "Macau's Wild West". So saddle up, Britcham folks, and come along for the ride.

Matthew Ossolinski is the founder of GW Investment Consulting and advises integrated resort operators and institutional investors on Hengqin Island.

Advance booking is required.
Booking: ivone@britchammao.org or call 6331 1124 for details

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RUGBY WORLD CUP

Ireland beats South Africa 13-8 in titanic clash

IRELAND'S 5-3 trum- ped South Africa's 7-1.

The Springboks believed their fresh set of seven forwards would come off the bench and finish grinding down the Irish in the second half of their monster pool match at the Rugby World Cup early yesterday [Macau time].

It worked, initially. An overpowering scrum in the new half set up South Africa's only try by Cheslin Kolbe to regain the lead at 8-7.

But Ireland's scrum adapted, just as its lineout did in the first half when it lost its first four throw-ins. The Irish toilers hung on to win just enough moments to edge an epic contest 13-8.

Asked about his 7-1 choice of forwards-backs on the bench, deployed by South Africa for only the



Ireland's James Ryan (left) and South Africa's Eben Etzebeth vie for the ball in a lineout

second time ever, coach Jacques Nienaber said, "We thought that gave us the best opportunity to be competitive tonight. We didn't get the result but we were competitive."

Springboks tighthead

Frans Malherbe dominated Ireland loosehead Andrew Porter in the leadup to Kolbe's go-ahead try. But seven minutes later, Porter bested Malherbe right in front of referee Ben O'Keefe for a penalty in

front of the South Africa posts that Jonathan Sexton nailed for 10-8 with a quarter to go.

That was Malherbe's last action, and when hooker Bongi Mbonambi was replaced by part-ti-

mer Deon Fourie in the 64th minute to clear the 'bomb squad' off the Boks bench, only flanker Pieter-Steph du Toit was left of South Africa's starting pack.

"(The scrum) was a proper battle," Ireland replacement prop Finlay Bealham said. "Some of the boys' necks and backs will be sore tomorrow but that is what South Africa are class at. They are world class in the scrum. But I thought we firmed up really well."

The last of Ireland's five reserve forwards didn't get on until the 75th — for Porter — but they all had an impact.

The pressure was such that Fourie threw in crooked to a South Africa five-meter lineout.

Back down South Africa's end, the Boks had a scrum put-in outside their

22 but they pushed too early and were penalized, and replacement flyhalf Jack Crowley extended Ireland's lead to 13-8 with three minutes left.

"We focused a lot on our set-piece and dominating there so we have to improve," Boks replacement prop Ox Nche said. "We did our job in the second half but we just didn't execute as well as we wanted to."

South Africa earned one last shot, a 10-meter attacking lineout with the clock in red. Du Toit's take was mauled and they made a handful of meters before collapsing in a messy pile that ended the match.

Simon Easterby was a proud Ireland defense coach.

"That last lineout," he said, "the lads defended incredibly well." **MDT/AP**

SCOREBOARD

Italy	38	17	Uruguay
France	96	0	Namibia
Argentina	19	10	Samoa
Georgia	18	18	Portugal
England	71	0	Chille
South Africa	8	13	Ireland



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OPINION

World Views

Associated Press Analysis

A MONTH AFTER PRIGOZHIN'S SUSPICIOUS DEATH, THE KREMLIN IS SILENT

Why Yevgeny Prigozhin's private jet plummeted into a field northwest of Moscow is still a mystery. The Russian military leaders he tried to oust with his armed rebellion remain in power. His mercenary army is under new management.

And President Vladimir Putin, whose authority was badly dented by the short-lived mutiny, seems as strong as ever, with Prigozhin's fiery death sending a chilling message to anyone challenging him.

A month after Prigozhin was killed in a suspicious plane crash, the Kremlin seems to be succeeding in keeping the demise of the profane and outspoken Wagner chief as low-key as possible — a strategy underlined by Putin's absence at his funeral and troops keeping the media from entering Porokhovskoye Cemetery in St. Petersburg for his Aug. 29 burial.

Prigozhin's funeral was "the culmination of a covert operation aimed at his elimination," said Tatiana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center. It was conducted under the strict oversight of security agencies, "shrouded in secrecy and involved deceptive tactics," she noted.

Makeshift street memorials sprouted in several cities honoring the 62-year-old Prigozhin, but they have been quietly removed by authorities. Recruitment billboards for the Wagner Group had vanished shortly after the rebellion fizzled.

In a further indignity, someone stole a violin that was left on his grave, a nod to the mercenary group's namesake, German composer Richard Wagner. Another man tried but failed to steal a sledgehammer placed there — another Wagner symbol after the group boasted of using such a tool to beat traitors to death.

Now, a surveillance camera is mounted on a nearby tree and a 24-hour guard monitors Prigozhin's well-tended grave, which on Friday was covered in flowers and written tributes. Cemetery workers say there is a steady trickle of visitors.

Prigozhin's greatest wartime accomplishment — the Wagner-spearheaded capture of the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut in May after months of bloody combat — is under threat. Kyiv's troops are seeking to reclaim it in their counteroffensive in order to deal a psychological blow to Russia.

Still, the private army that once counted tens of thousands of troops is a precious asset the Kremlin wants to exploit, and Russian officials are pondering the possibility of sending some Wagner fighters back to Ukraine.

Prigozhin launched the June 23-24 rebellion, bent on ousting the Russian Defense Ministry's leadership that he blamed for mistakes in pressing the war in Ukraine. His mercenaries took over Russia's southern military headquarters in Rostov-on-Don and then rolled toward Moscow before abruptly halting the mutiny.

Putin denounced them as "traitors," but the Kremlin quickly negotiated a deal ending the uprising in exchange for amnesty from prosecution. The mercenaries were offered a choice to retire from the service, move to Belarus or sign new contracts with the Defense Ministry.

Exactly two months after the rebellion's start, a plane carrying Prigozhin and his top lieutenants crashed on Aug. 23 while flying from Moscow to St. Petersburg, killing all 10 people aboard.

An investigation was launched but no findings have been released. Moscow rejected an offer from Brazil, where the Embraer business jet was built, to join the inquiry.

A preliminary U.S. intelligence assessment concluded an intentional explosion caused the crash, and Western officials have pointed to a long list of Putin foes who have been assassinated. The Kremlin called allegations he was behind the crash as an "absolute lie."

Despite any damage done to Putin by the rebellion, Prigozhin's death was a powerful signal to Russian elites about challenging his authority.

[Abridged]

INDONESIA IMPRISONS A WOMAN FOR SAYING A MUSLIM PRAYER BEFORE EATING PORK IN A TIKTOK VIDEO

THE BUZZ

A court in Indonesia has convicted a woman of inciting religious hatred and sentenced her to two years in prison for saying a Muslim prayer and then eating pork — considered forbidden in Islam — on a TikTok video.

Judges at Palembang court in South Sumatra province in Sumatra island also ordered Lina Lutfiawati to pay a fine of 250 million rupiah (\$16,262) in their blasphemy trial verdict on Tuesday.

Lutfiawati, who is also known as Lina Mukherjee and who

identifies as Muslim, said a brief prayer phrase that translates to "in the name of God" before eating a crispy pork skin in a video that was published in March and was widely viewed.

Once she went on trial on blasphemy charges, she expressed regret and apologized in a post on her social media last month. She apologized again after Tuesday's verdict.

"I am surprised. I have apologized many times. Actually, I know that I was wrong, but I did not expect the sentence to be two years," Lutfiawati said after the trial.



Team Macau prepares for their match with team Kyrgyzstan during the Arena of Valor Asian Games Version Group A match of Esports at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou

LEAGUE OF LEGENDS, OTHER ESPORTS JOIN ASIAN GAMES IN COMPETITION FOR THE FIRST TIME

DAVID RISING, HANGZHOU

THE world of online gaming takes its place this year at the Asian Games as an official event for the first time, with gold medals in play across seven top titles.

The Asian Games has long featured other so-called "mind games," like bridge and chess, so it's not surprising that extremely popular — and lucrative — esports are being added to the lineup.

Teams from more than 30 countries are taking part, with South Korea and host China expected to dominate what is anticipated to be one of the most watched events of the two-week Asian Games.

The competition features five PC games and two mobile games, covering both multiplayer online battle arena, or MOBA, and single-player genres.

The lineup consists of: League of Legends, Arena of Valor Asian Games Version (also known as Honor of Kings); Peace Elite Asian Games Version (also known as PUBG Mobile); Dota 2; Dream Three Kingdoms 2; Street Fighter V: Champion Edition; and EA Sports FC (also known

as FIFA Online 4).

Competition forms vary with the genre but gold medals will be awarded for each game.

There's even more at stake for the South Korean players, like Lee "Faker" Sanghyeok, known by many as the League of Legends G.O.A.T. — Greatest Of All Time — where winning a gold medal at the Asian Games also wins one an exemption from otherwise compulsory military service for men.

Esports was first featured at the last Asian Games in Jakarta, Indonesia, as a demonstration sport and proved incredibly popular.

Newzoo, a research company that specializes in tracking the global games market, projected in its annual analysis released last month that the number of players worldwide will reach 3.38 billion in 2023, up 6.3% year-on-year, with mobile gaming contributing to most of the growth. It expects 3.79 billion players by the end of 2026.

Annual revenues are expected to grow 2.6% to \$187.7 billion, with 46% from the Asia-Pacific region, followed by 27% from North America and 18% from Europe. The

strongest growth, however, was seen in the Middle East and Africa.

There's more to gaming crossover than esports showing up in the Asian Games competition. Newzoo notes the success of movies and shows derived from video games, like the Super Mario Bros. Movie and HBO's The Last of Us series.

"Gaming is now fully embedded in the mainstream," the company said in its report.

"With each younger generation, gaming engagement increases; as current players age and new players enter the fold, player numbers will continue to rise."

Despite being a competition event at the Asian Games now, however, the possibility of esports making it to the Olympics is still an open question.

The International Olympic Committee has looked longingly at the potential of video gaming and virtual sports to help attract and stay relevant with young audiences. That goal saw skateboarding and surfing debut at the Tokyo Olympics held in 2021 and breakdancing joins them at the 2024 Paris Olympics. **MDT/AP**

Sweden A landslide caused a huge sinkhole on a major highway to Norway early Saturday, and three people were injured when their cars and a bus skidded off the road, police said. Photos and video footage showed a sinkhole 500 meters wide that had opened up on the E6 highway, which runs from southern Sweden to Norway, not far from Sweden's second largest city of Goteborg. Police said at least four cars and a bus skidded off the road and crashed, and three people were hospitalized.



UK Britain pitched itself to the world Friday as a ready leader in shaping an international response to the rise of artificial intelligence, with Deputy Prime Minister Oliver Dowden (pictured) telling the U.N. General Assembly his country was "determined to be in the vanguard." Touting the United Kingdom's tech companies, its universities and even Industrial Revolution-era innovations, he said the nation has "the grounding to make AI a success and make it safe."

France Families, community groups and far-left activists marched in cities Saturday to decry racism and police brutality, putting authorities on edge at a time when French police are deployed en masse for a string of high-security events. Lingering anger over the killing by police of 17-year-old Nahel Merzouk in June was an impetus for Saturday's protests, but they included groups with disparate demands for immigrants' rights, affordable housing and economic justice.



Vatican Pope Francis on Saturday labeled the weapons industry as being a key driver of the "martyrdom" of Ukraine's people in Russia's war, saying even the withholding of weapons now is going to continue their misery. Francis appeared to refer to Poland's recent announcement that it is no longer sending arms to Ukraine when he was asked about the war during brief remarks to reporters while returning home from Marseille, France.