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AP PHOTO



**Japan's** wrecked Fukushima nuclear power plant said it began releasing a second batch of treated radioactive wastewater into the sea yesterday after the first round of discharges ended smoothly. Plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings said workers activated pumps to dilute the treated water with large amounts of seawater, slowly sending the mixture into the ocean through an undersea tunnel for an offshore release. **More on p11**

AP PHOTO



**Israel** has quietly helped fuel Azerbaijan's campaign to recapture Nagorno-Karabakh, supplying powerful weapons to Azerbaijan ahead of its lightning offensive last month that brought the ethnic Armenian enclave back under its control, officials and experts say. Just weeks before Azerbaijan launched its 24-hour assault on Sept. 19, Azerbaijani military cargo planes repeatedly flew between a southern Israeli airbase and an airfield near Nagorno-Karabakh, even as Western governments were urging peace talks.

AP PHOTO



**US** Secretary of State Antony Blinken and other top American officials are visiting Mexico next week to discuss shared security issues, foremost among them trafficking of the synthetic opioid fentanyl, but also arms trafficking and increasing migration. The latest round of the High-Level Security Dialogue brings Blinken, U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland and Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, among others, together with their Mexican counterparts for two days of talks.

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## RELIGION | THE NONES

# IN SECULAR JAPAN, WHAT DRAWS SO MANY TO TEMPLES AND SHRINES? STAMP COLLECTING AND TRADITION

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

**A**LMOST weekly Momo Nomura makes time to visit Shinto shrines. She performs the prescribed rituals — cleansing her hands, ringing a bell, bowing and clapping. But her main purpose is getting a Goshuin, a stamp with elegant calligraphy that shrines provide for a fee to certify the visit.

She loves the stamps, which she began collecting during the pandemic. One with blue hydrangeas got her started.

“Because of the Goshuin, shrines have become closer to me, but I don’t consider this a religious activity,” Nomura said after getting her stamp and taking selfies at Sakura Jingu, a western Tokyo shrine established in 1882 as a minority Shinto sect focused on traditional values.

Nomura, who posts about her hobby on social media as Goshuin Girl, says she enjoys the stamp designs, and shrine visits allow a moment of reflection and a change of pace from her busy life as a graphic designer and entrepreneur. Differences of religious sects are not an issue, she says.

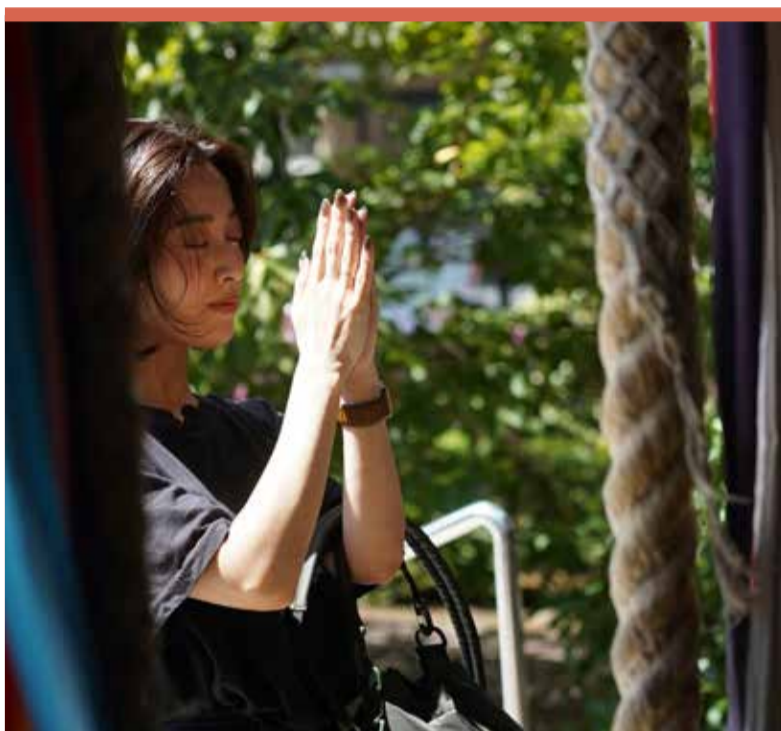
“It’s a mindfulness kind of thing for me,” Nomura said. “I don’t consider myself religious.”

About 70% of people in Japan have similar nonreligious feelings, according to surveys. Their responses reflect a long history of pragmatism about traditional religions, which often serve more as connections to family and community than as theological guides, as in the West.

Nomura, who graduated from a Christian university in Tokyo, says her parents also are not religious. Still, she vaguely remembers going to shrines with her family as a girl for Shichi-Go-San ceremonies, where parents pray for health and prosperity for their children. She also visited a shrine dedicated to the god of education before college exams.

On a recent weekend at Onoterusaki Jinja, a 9th century Tokyo shrine that is part of a broader Shinto history, people came and

AP PHOTO



Momo Nomura prays before collecting a stamp. “I don’t consider myself religious”

went, some praying or just sitting on benches. Masami Takeda brought her 6-year-old grandson, and they picked up a stamp with autumn leaves. “I never think I visit religious sites,” Takeda says. “But I now pray for my grandson’s health.”

Japan’s unique relationship to faith is on full display during the final week of the year: People celebrate Christmas with an exchange of presents, ring Buddhist temple bells on New Year’s Eve, and hours later go to Shinto shrines to celebrate the New Year. During other seasons, Japanese flock to Buddhist Bon dances and Shinto-related festivals involving “mikoshi,” or portable shrines.

“In Japan, faith is not considered an important element of religion, unlike Christianity or Islam, in which understanding of the Bible or the Quran is necessary and the theology serves as a guidepost for daily life,” says Ryosuke Okamoto, a religion professor at Hokkaido University.

**BUDDHISM VS CHRISTIANITY**

Historically, Buddhism arrived in Japan in the 6th century and took root. From around 1640, as part of a push to ban Christianity, temples kept family registries of people in the neighborhood,

creating a tradition of ancestor worship still observed today. A majority of Japanese return to their hometowns during August’s Bon holiday week to spend time with relatives and visit ancestors’ graves. Most funerals in Japan are held in a Buddhist style.

Japan’s Indigenous religion of Shinto is largely rooted in animism, which believes there are thousands of “kami,” or spirits, inhabiting nature. It’s closely linked to the country’s imperial family: Around 1870, Japan made Shinto the state religion and used imperial worship to fan ultra-nationalism and support for World War II, which was fought in the name of the emperor. Japan’s U.S.-drafted postwar constitution ensures freedom of religion and the separation of religion and state, though the conservative government today still places great importance on imperial worshipping.

“Younger people tend to have an even more pragmatic view and less interest in principles linked to religion,” Okamoto said.

According to Cultural Affairs Agency statistics for 2022, the number of Japanese with links to Shinto, Buddhism, Christianity or other religions totaled 180 million, which exceeds Japan’s

population of 126 million. This suggests that most people follow both Shinto and Buddhism. Christians account for about 1% of that total.

Many Japanese are especially cautious about new religions, an impact of the 1995 deadly sarin attack led by the Aum Shinrikyo cult that shocked the nation and ruined the image of new religious sects.

Allegations of fraudulent business practices by the Unification Church and its decades-long political ties with the Japanese governing party surfaced in the investigations of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s assassination last year, adding to the public’s weariness about non-traditional religion. The alleged assassin told police he killed Abe because of the politician’s links to the Unification Church — which the murder suspect hated because his mother’s large donations to the group bankrupted his family.

According to a survey of Japanese by the Niwano Peace Foundation in 2019, most respondents said they haven’t participated in any religious activities in recent years, and more than 70% said they don’t have any faith. However, positive feelings about shrines and temples increased over the past 20 years, presumably because of a growing interest in spiritual tours and stamp collections, the survey shows.

**STAMPS AND TRADITION**

The popularity of Goshuin stamps and visits to spiritual spots like shrines and temples is not a show of faith, experts say, but instead suggests people feel an affinity for the traditions without a need to be deeply involved. Some compare the stamp collecting to a blessed version of baseball cards.

Onoterusaki priest Karin Kodashima says the stamps are increasingly popular, allowing visitors to “tie a connection with gods.” The stamps can also be an introduction to Shinto, she says during her break from preparation for an upcoming autumn festival which features rituals, lectures and court music.

For many people, shrines offer a chance for reflection, even if it’s not a religious experience. Kodashima says, “I believe shrines will continue to be part of people’s daily lives and serve as a place of tranquility and peace.”

Some Buddhist temples, including Tsukiji Hongwanji and Komyoji in Tokyo, are seeking to reach younger people and have opened cafes, yoga and meditation classes, as well as talk sessions and concerts.

A Komyoji monk, Yuken Kihara, serves his homemade deserts, tea and coffee every Wednesday at Open Terrace café on a temple balcony, available to anyone with reservations.

“I hope to provide a space for people to drop by and relax,” Kihara said. “Japanese people are seen as secular, but I think it’s a value that you cannot answer just by yes or no.”

As Japan’s population increasingly ages, with family values becoming more diverse and younger generations moving to cities, small shrines and temples in rural Japan struggle to survive, with many on the verge of closing.

In an attempt to connect the struggling shrines and temples with potential visitors interested in history, architecture or the stamps, a young entrepreneur established an online information site. There are about 160,000 temples and shrines in Japan, according to government statistics.

“Hotokami,” a word combining Hotoke (Buddha) and Kami (God), was launched by Ryo Yoshida in 2016 after he organized tours to historic sites for three years.

The online service now has 1.2 million monthly users, and has collaborated with train operators, including those in Yokohama and Osaka, as well as shrines in the area, to organize trips to collect stamps.

Yoshida says he personally feels a connection to both Buddhism and Shintoism. Every morning for 10 minutes he listens to a YouTube program by a monk based at a temple in Kamakura. As far as his family’s religion, he notes a Buddhist temple next to his grandfather’s home in Shiga prefecture.

Yoshida says, “I like both Shinto’s appreciation of nature and ancestors, and Buddhist values of how to live a better life.” But he adds, “If you ask me whether I have faith, I’m not sure.”

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 MacauDaily 澳門每日時報

**DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF** Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com  
**ASSISTANT EDITOR** Lynzy Valles  
**CONTRIBUTING EDITORS** Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

**NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS** Alex Torrão, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Seguí **DESIGNERS** Miguel Bandeira, Rebeca Almeida | **ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS** JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | **NEWS AGENCIES** Associated Press, MacauHub, MacaoNews, Xinhua **SECRETARY** Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

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**ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

**OFFICE MANAGER** Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com**ADDRESS** Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR **Telephones:** +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84**Advertisement** advertising@macaudailytimes.com**For subscription and general issues:**

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**GOLDEN WEEK**

# Cotai hotels benefit from holidays amid gradual decline in arrivals

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE eight-day National Day holiday is breaking post-pandemic records as it marks the first Golden week in three years where Chinese travelers are free to travel without border restrictions.

Current entry and exit data are exceeding local government expectations of 100,000. However, the question remains as to whether the numbers will align with the expectations of local businesses, particularly in the hotel industry.

Despite slow growth, high youth unemployment, and a property market in crisis on the mainland, Macau has already welcomed more than 859,000 visitors in the first seven days of the holiday period. The majority of visitors have come from the mainland.

However, the numbers slowly started to decline from Friday's peak, the Mid-Autumn Festival holiday, through yesterday.

Hotels in Cotai appear to be the biggest beneficiaries, with occupancy rates of up to 95%, according to industry representatives.

"By Wednesday onwards, the rates have gone back to normal



weekday rates," said Rutger Verschuren, vice-chairman of the Macau Hotel Association.

Speaking on the sidelines of a press briefing at Artyzen Grand Lapa yesterday, Verschuren, who heads the resort, said current ar-

rival numbers show signs of recovery, following a tourism boost during the summer holidays.

"There was a lot of potential for Cotai hotels and casinos of course [with all] these new products in town. We're happy to see everyone

putting in so much effort to bring back business," he told the Times.

However, neighboring regions are also offering newer attractions, such as the Chimelong Spaceship Theme Park in Hengqin, which recently set seven Guinness World Records.

ness World Records.

The new entertainment facility in Hengqin was designed by US-based theme park group Legacy Entertainment, and has an enclosed area of 397,064 square meters, surpassing previous record holder Warner Brothers Abu Dhabi.

With comparatively higher local hotel rates in Macau, some tourists are opting to stay in Zhuhai or visit new attractions in Hengqin.

Verschuren noted, "The rates [for this holiday] are quite reasonable. It is just difficult to have a proper pricing strategy as we did not know what the demand would be. You don't know how many are actually going to stay over."

"Zhuhai prices are lower than Macau's, and Hengqin has enormous attraction. So, there are a lot of people who are only making day trips to Macau," Verschuren added.

More than 21 million Chinese people will fly during the 10-day break that began on Friday last week, according to China's civil aviation regulator.

This includes 14,000 domestic flights a day, as budget-conscious young Chinese tourists explore destinations closer to home.

Most people still have some reservations about travelling beyond China, as many also opt to travel within the mainland to visit families during the year's longest holiday.

According to analytics firms, ForwardKeys, as its data shows outbound travels down 40% when compared with 2019.

## Slight drop in visitor arrivals unlikely to harm final numbers

RENATO MARQUES

**F**OLLOWING its peak on the second day of the eight-day holiday period spanning September 29 to October 6, the number of visitors to Macau has been dropping by approximately 10,000 per day.

However, with the exception of the first day (September 29), during which the daily number of tourist arrivals was below 100,000, every other day of this holiday period was well above the 100,000 expected daily average forecasted by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO). The holiday period comprises the mid-autumn festival as well as the National Day holiday.

Yesterday October 5, the statistics revealed that a total of 859,289 people entered Macau in the first seven days, accounting for a daily average of 122,756 visitors.

Of those daily visitors, some 42,356 were foreign tourists, representing a daily average of around 6,051 people and accounting for 4.9% of the total.

When compared to the official figures from 2019 (with 974,337 visitor arrivals in the first seven days), the current numbers represent a 15% decrease from pre-pandemic figures.

### MORE PROMOTION THAN REAL BUSINESS

Nevertheless, despite the influx of people, tra-

ders claim that business volume is below expectations, noting that tourists now are spending significantly less than before, according to several media reports.

Some traders have noted that this new wave of tourists in Macau are keener to take photos with products or while inside traditional stores with no intention of making a purchase.

Additionally, some shop owners and shopkeepers who own or manage stores in areas of the city outside of regular visitor routes claim that there are no benefits to their businesses from the increased visitor numbers during the holiday season in comparison to previous months.

## MACAU LEGEND EXITS PROJECTS IN CAMBODIA AND CAPE VERDE

**M**ACAU Legend Development has announced its intended withdrawal from several overseas projects in Cambodia and Cape Verde in Africa by 2025.

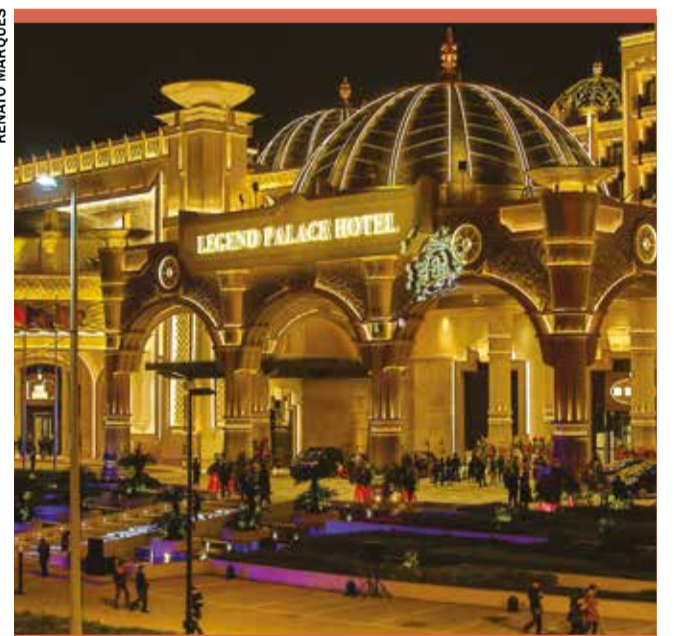
In an interview with Hong Kong TV station, TVB, chairman and executive director Li Chu Kwan explained that the group is actively seeking to develop its non-gaming businesses to reduce its dependence on the gaming sector.

The group is currently exploring opportunities to attract guests to Macau from the Greater Bay Area.

In June this year, the company announced it had signed a letter of intent to sell its Savan Legend casino resort in Savannakhet, Laos, for USD45 million.

In 2019, Macau Legend purchased 1,200 hectares of land in Cambodia's Siem Reap Province from

RENATO MARQUES



Howing Enterprises Co. Ltd to develop an integrated resort.

The land was acquired for slightly over USD90 million following a memorandum of understanding signed by both parties in June 2014.

Following this, Macau

Legend and the government of Cape Verde signed a contract in 2015 to build an integrated resort and casino. The USD273 million project includes a luxury hotel, international convention centre, marina, and bridge connecting the islet to the mainland. LV

### UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AT 3.1%

The general unemployment rate was 2.5% for the June to August 2023 period, with the unemployment rate of local residents at 3.1%. These figures represent a decrease of 0.1 and 0.2 percentage points respectively from the previous period (May to July 2023), according to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). Meanwhile, the underemployment rate increased by 0.1 percentage points to 1.8%. With fresh graduates entering the labor market, the proportion of new labor market entrants seeking their first job increased by 4.1 percentage points, accounting for 12.7% of the total unemployed.

RENATO MARQUES



turally occurring bacteria, it is advisable for members of the public to avoid entering the sea water if they have wounds and to be careful of animals in the wild."

The bureau also advised beachgoers and visitors to be vigilant of their hygiene and safety during beach visits.

DSAMA noted that while dead fish occasionally wash up on the beach, regular inspections by DSAMA staff found that "there is no abnormal increase in the number of dead fish."

An agreement between DSAMA and the beachside cleaning company states that, "The cleaning company will carry out comprehensive cleaning work at the beach twice a day, usually before the daily peak flow of people."

Lifeguards will also assist in cleaning those areas, should dead fish appear outside of these scheduled times.

DSAMA concluded by affirming that the bureau "will pay close attention to the health reports and disease prevention recommendations for beaches from relevant departments such as the Health Bureau and the Municipal Affairs Bureau, to review the application and use by organizers of beach activity accordingly."

### GOVERNMENT HEADQUARTERS OPEN TO PUBLIC FROM OCT. 21

The Protocol Palace and the garden of the Government Headquarters will be opened to the public for the first time in three years on October 21 and 22, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. During the Government Headquarters Open Day, visitors may enter the premises from the right side of the Protocol Palace on Travessa do Paiva. Special traffic arrangements will be in place on certain sections of Travessa do Paiva during the day.

### HAC SA INFECTION

## DSAMA IS MONITORING BEACH BACTERIA

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) stated that it is aware of recently reported cases of *Vibrio vulnificus* bacterial infections on Macau beaches

and has taken measures to enhance sanitation of the affected areas, the bureau said in a statement to the Times.

After a report from the Health Bureau (SSM) on two recent cases of bacterial infection caused

by dead fish on the beaches of Hac Sa and Cheoc Van, DSAMA said in response to inquiries that, "According to the SSM, *Vibrio vulnificus* is a commonly found bacteria. Since nature and wildlife may contain na-

**T**HE eligibility criteria for financial talent recruitment in the city's acquisition scheme was announced yesterday in the Official Gazette.

According to the announcement, professionals in the financial services industry seeking to obtain a work visa or residency in Macau through the Talent Acquisition Scheme of Macau must meet specific criteria.

According to the announcement, applicants must be at least 21 years old and hold a Bachelor's degree or higher

## Financial talent acquisition criteria announced

in a relevant discipline. They must also have four years of professional experience in an applicable industry.

The relevant disciplines include finance, economics, accounting, actuarial science, risk management, business analysis, data analysis, business administration, financial technology, mathematics, statistics, computational science and engineer-

ing, sustainable development, law, or related disciplines.

Applicants who do not hold a degree in any of the above disciplines will still be eligible if they have a degree in any other discipline and six years of professional experience in the core disciplines mentioned above. Another pathway is available for applicants with a degree in any discipline, provided

they have four years of professional experience in the core disciplines and hold a professional accreditation in the financial industry.

Furthermore, applicants must also demonstrate proficiency in either Chinese, Portuguese or English and achieve a minimum of 200 points in the scoring system (with a total possible score of 300 points). **AL**



AD



### Pui Ching Middle School Macau Opening New Campus in 2024/2025 Academic Year

Pui Ching Middle School Macau will open a new campus in 2024/2025 academic year, named "Pui Ching Middle School (Coloane Campus)". The new campus will be a through-train school providing internationalised education.

Levels opening for 2024/2025 academic year include:

Kindergarten (K1 to K3), Primary (P1 to P4), Junior Secondary (S1)

For more information about Pui Ching Middle School (Coloane Campus), please refer to :<https://admission.puiching.edu.mo/coloane>



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# Ron Lam unhappy with brief replies from gov't

ANTHONY LAM

**L**AWMAKER Ron Lam expressed his dissatisfaction with the government's often "brief replies" to his written inquiries during his review on the past legislative term yesterday.

In accordance with law, government authorities must respond to lawmakers' inquiries within 30 days of the Chief Executive receiving the inquiries. However, the law does not specify the minimum length of these responses.

Lam highlighted an instance on August 1, 2023, when he submitted a written inquiry regarding the progress of the development of the legal framework for telecommunications services. He asked the government to provide an update on its plan to develop the services and its handling of concessionaire properties, among other questions.

In response, he received a reply consisting of a mere 55 Chinese characters, which briefly stated that "internal discussions [are]

in progress and announcements [will] be made in due course."

On April 20 of the same year, he submitted another inquiry related to the release of data and compliance by owners or operators of private cemeteries. Again, he posed three questions on breaches, data mapping and data publication.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) issued a longer response than that provided to the telecommunications services inquiry, which was handled by a different bureau. However, the IAM merely reiterated that the applicable laws must be complied with for private cemeteries and burials, adding that it routinely conducted spot checks on private cemeteries and reported any irregularities to the relevant bureaus.

The lawmaker noted that during the second legislative term, he had received seven replies that were shorter than 300 Chinese characters.

Lam observed that these brief replies were in conflict with the government's regular pledges to

improve communication with parliament, criticizing some bureaus for obfuscation and sometimes providing responses that were "perfunctory."

During the same session, he also called for improved transparency in the Administrative Plan for the Development Investments and Expenditures (PIDDA).

He pointed out that additional government investment or spending in the absence of regular PIDDA announcements would lead to doubts within society about government accountability. The absence of PIDDA updates would also effectively deny community members the opportunity to participate in rational discussions and discourse.

Additionally, Lam noted that he had requested PIDDA announcements during two Chief Executive question sessions but was informed that the information had already been provided to lawmakers.

He also questioned why some bureaus had directed him to request meetings through the par-



liament, stating that it is not uncommon in Macau for lawmakers to request meetings with officials or bureau teams related to complaints they had received. Lam disclosed that some bureaus had not even responded to his requests for meetings.

He acknowledged the government had improved its engagement with lawmakers on matters concerning major construction

projects. Nonetheless, Lam expressed his hope that more time would be allocated for questions from lawmakers to provide them with the opportunity to convey more opinions.

For example, he said that lawmakers usually had limited time for follow-up questions at these introductory sessions, while government officials enjoyed the benefit of greater time resources.

AD

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### KARATE-DO ATHLETE BRINGS HOME SILVER MEDAL IN ASIAN GAMES

Macau's karate-do athlete, Jugo Kuok Kin Hang, won a silver medal in the kata final event yesterday. He achieved a score of 39.8 points, while Japan's Kazumasa Moto took gold with 43.0 points. Kuok previously won the first bronze medal for Macau at the People's Republic of China's 14th National Games, held in the city of Xian, Shaanxi province, in 2021. Macau has won five medals at the Asian games, including one gold, two silver and two bronze medals.

### SPORTS FUND APPLICATIONS: NEW REGULATIONS PUBLISHED

The government has published new regulations for subsidy applications under the Sports Fund (FD) program in the official gazette. The updated regulations take effect from December 1 and set out details of the subsidy granting system, including the objectives, scope of applications, and obligations of those who are granted subsidies, while also standardizing the subsidy types. The rules also establish that projects with a total budget under MOP1 million will be handled by the Sports Fund Administrative Committee. Projects with a budget above this amount will be handled by a supervisory body. The report must describe the activities, income generated, and expenditures incurred. Original receipts and expenditure records must be maintained for a period of five years.

### 35TH MIMF

# 'THE BARBER OF SEVILLE' COMEDY WILL CAPTIVATE LOCAL AUDIENCES

ANTHONY LAM

**B**OTH opera and "The Barber of Seville" are not as inaccessible as commonly believed, representatives of the opera's local shows said yesterday.

Members of the cast and crew met with the press yesterday at the Macao Cultural Centre in advance of the opening night. The opera will premiere there tonight, marking the opening of the 35th Macao International Music Festival (MIMF).

When asked by the Times on how local audiences can be encouraged to attend, Lio Kuokman, chief conductor at Macao Orchestra and program director of the festival, along with Martin Lyngbo, director of the opera, emphasized that opera is not a distant or inaccessible art form.

The Macao Orchestra will play the music for the performances.

Lio encouraged local audience members who have not yet purchased tickets to watch the show. He said that contrary to public perceptions of opera, the show is family-friendly and comedic in nature.

Echoing Lio's sentiments, Lyngbo added that the shows are accessible even for children. He highlighted the value of introducing children to opera, adding that it may provide inspiration for thoughts and ideas in children which differ from adults, and indeed, many children have liked the shows.

ANTHONY LAM



In support of this, he mentioned his own children, stating, "I have four children, aged between five to 17, and they all liked the show!"

He has also adapted this work into a more accessible production by cutting it short to 2.75 hours, in contrast to many other operatic works, some of which run for 3.5-hours. He has also sought to incorporate posture and gesture to convey emotions and overcome any language barriers. Surtitles were also lowered to stage level to allow audiences to see both actions on the stage and understand the lyrics. Lyngbo believes these measures will facilitate the experience throughout the entire theater to allow the audience to feel the same at more or less the same time.

This production is not a new piece of work, as Danish Lyngbo created this version of the opera more than five years ago.

The show has so far toured across Israel, Taiwan and Macau. Lio served as conductor for the shows in Taichung, Taiwan.

Five years ago, Lio had heard good feedback on the show, so he flew to Denmark and "had a good laugh from start to end. I have since then wanted to bring it to Macau," Lio said.

As The Barber of Seville had not been staged in Macau for some time, he believed it timely

to stage it this year. He also believed that the comedic vibe would be well-suited for the days after disease control restrictions.

Taiwanese Jo-Pei Weng, who plays female lead Rosina at the only afternoon show, also starred in the Taichung shows. Weng said that a partial refreshment of the cast in Macau gave her fresh inspiration for the role.

She believes that new elements will emerge in the Macau show, noting that minor adjustments are common whenever a show arrives at a new venue. Echoing her comments, Lio highlighted that each show contributes to the maturity and development of a piece of work.

### RUA DA FELICIDADE AND MOUNT FORTRESS

# New tourist attractions close earlier due to Typhoon Koinu

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE newly established tourist attraction at the Rua da Felicidade and Mount Fortress has been directed to suspend operations by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) due to concerns regarding the potential impact of Typhoon Koinu.

In a press statement, the IC said, "Taking into account that Typhoon Signal No. 1 has been hoisted in Macau and the need to ensure safety, the street fair and performances of the 'Rua da Felicidade Pedestrian Zone Plan' will be suspended while the

typhoon signal is hoisted, and the installations along the street will be dismantled." The IC noted that the street would continue to function as a pedestrian zone during ordinary hours.

The IC also noted that due to the risk of interference with the lighting installations and facilities for the "Mount Fortress in the Moonlight" light show, this event, which was initially scheduled to run until October 6, will conclude prematurely. No further activities or performance will take place on October 5 and 6.

With the closure of the

event, the Mount Fortress schedule will return to normal with a closing time of 7 p.m.

The IC also urged the owners of heritage buildings – particularly those situated in low-lying areas – to enact all necessary heritage protection measures in a timely manner as well as the appropriate wind and flood prevention measures.

According to the latest information from the local Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG), there is only a moderate likelihood of increasing Typhoon Signal No. 1 to Typhoon Signal

No. 3 between dawn and the morning of October 7.

The SMG did not forecast any significant storm surges associated with the passing of this typhoon.

In a separate statement, the SMG stated, "According to the present forecast track, 'Koinu' might move further westward, approaching the vicinity of the Pearl River Estuary during the weekend and early next week. It is expected that 'Koinu' will gradually weaken under the influence of the northeast monsoon."

Furthermore, the SMG also noted that "since 'Koinu' might weaken



slower than expected, and it might undertake a track closer to the Pearl River Estuary, the intensity and track remains uncertain. Under the combined in-

fluence of 'Koinu' and the northeast monsoon, showers will increase from the weekend to early next week, with force 5 to 6 gusty northerly winds."

GAMING

# Powerball jackpot up to \$1.4 billion after no one matches all the numbers and hits it rich

**T**HE Powerball jackpot climbed to an estimated \$1.4 billion after no players matched all six numbers and hit it rich yesterday [Macau time].

The winning numbers announced were: 9, 35, 54, 63, 64 and the Powerball 1.

Players will next have a shot at the Powerball jackpot Saturday night in hopes of ending an 11-week stretch without a big winner. No matter how large the prize grows the odds stay the same — and they're terrible.

It's those odds of 1 in 292.2 million that make the jackpot so hard to win and that result in such giant prizes for the lucky player or players who manage to pick the game's six winning numbers. The latest Powerball jackpot is the world's seventh-largest lottery prize. The last time someone won the top prize was July 19.

## GAME DETAILS

In most states, Powerball tickets cost \$2 and buyers can choose their own numbers and single Powerball or leave that task to a computer. Powerball drawings are held three times a week at 10:59 p.m. EDT on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturday, with the numbers selected at the Florida Lottery in Tallahassee.

Once the numbers are chosen, it usually takes a couple hours to determine if there is a

AP PHOTO



jackpot winner. If there isn't a winner, state lottery officials release a jackpot estimate for the next drawing. If there is a winner, the jackpot reverts to \$20 million and begins the long process of growing until there is another winner.

Gale Groseclose, who was buying Powerball tickets in Pineville, North Carolina, said a \$1 million prize would be plenty for her but that the Wednesday's \$1.2 billion jackpot certainly caught her attention.

"I don't usually do this on a regular basis, but like I said, when it gets to be, what is it? I don't

even know what, over 1 billion dollars," Groseclose said. "It's exciting."

## HOW IS THE JACKPOT DETERMINED?

The jackpot is based on revenue from ticket sales, so the more people who play the game, the faster the top prize grows. However, even though the current jackpot is advertised as \$1.4 billion, the lottery has less than half that amount available for the top prize. That's why the cash prize — which most winners take — would be \$643.7 million.

Players also can choose an

annuity, in which that \$643.7 million would be paid to a company that would guarantee a return over 30 years of \$1.4 billion. If a winner dies before collecting all their money, the remainder would go to the winner's estate.

## WHAT ABOUT TAXES?

State lotteries will immediately deduct 24% of jackpot winnings for federal taxes, and additional federal taxes may be required when filing federal tax returns. State taxes will vary as some states don't tax lottery winnings at all and others tax the money at different rates.

Players who buy winning grand prize tickets in a state different from where they live will pay taxes based on where they bought the ticket.

## DO ODDS CHANGE BASED ON NUMBER OF PLAYERS?

The game's odds remain 1 in 292.2 million regardless of how big the jackpot is and the number of people buying tickets. Those odds mean there are 292.2 million possible number combinations.

To put the immensity of that into context, note that for Monday's drawing players across the country chose just over 20% of those possible combinations. That means nearly 80% of the possible combinations were not selected, so the odds were pretty good that there wouldn't be a winner.

Typically, the larger the jackpot grows, the more people play and the more combinations are covered. People also usually buy more tickets on Saturdays, which increases the chance of a winner for those drawings.

Eric Warner, who also was buying tickets in Pineville, said he would immediately buy a Porsche if he won the big jackpot and then invest most of the money for himself and his community. Warner said he never really expects to win but enjoys buying a ticket now and then.

"It's something that I run into and maybe I'm feeling lucky," he said. "Then I'll go ahead and pick up a ticket and just kind of hope for the best."

## CAN WINNERS REMAIN ANONYMOUS?

Rules vary from state to state with some requiring that jackpot winners be named and others allowing anonymity. Some states have more detailed rules, such as in Florida, where winners can remain anonymous for 90 days before the state lottery releases their name. **MDT/AP**

## CORPORATE BITS

### 'Disney Princess - The Concert' coming to The Venetian Theatre in November



The Venetian Macao, in partnership with AEG Presents Asia and Chessman, will present "Disney Princess - The Concert" at The Venetian Theatre

from November 10 to 12. The concert features an award-winning cast of Broadway stars who have performed in numerous Disney productions. The

show will feature popular songs as "Let it Go," "A Whole New World," "How Far I'll Go," "Colors of the Wind," and "Almost There."

The acclaimed stars will also share with the audience exclusive, heartfelt, and amusing behind-the-scenes stories from their experiences on stage and screen, according to a statement by gaming operator Sands China.

"Disney Princess - The Concert" runs for approximately two hours with intermission. Each concert will feature four princesses and one prince.

Tickets will be available for sale via Cotai Ticketing from today.

### Wynn presents new exhibition of rare luxury cars



To celebrate the 74th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, Wynn is hosting the "Wynn Signature - 2023 Hypercar Exhibition" until November 30. The exhibition showcases a collection of 16 world-class and rare luxury cars at Wynn Macao and Wynn Pa-

lace, boasting a total value exceeding HKD500 million.

The exhibition opening ceremony held earlier this week featured notable guests including Ma Qinghua, the first Chinese driver to win the WTCC - FIA World Touring Car Cup and basketball legend Shaquille

O'Neal, alongside Wynn executives.

In her speech, President and Vice Chairman of the Board of Wynn Macao, Linda Chen, said that, "the Wynn Signature - 2023 Hypercar Exhibition is an event under the new resort experience brand 'Wynn Signature,' combining premium taste, unique experiences, and technology craftsmanship. The exhibition aims to promote the annual international sporting event, the Macau Grand Prix, to enrich the experience of Macau visitors and showcase the diverse tourism image of 'Tourism + Sports' to travelers from around the world."

HANGZHOU GAMES

# THE CENTURIES-OLD CARD GAME OF BRIDGE OFFERS A SHARP CONTRAST TO ESPORTS

STEPHEN WADE, HANGZHOU

**I**F you're looking for another kind of esport to follow from the Asian Games, try the centuries-old card game of bridge.

Here the "e" would stand for "elderly" to represent the game's aging demographic — not for "electronic" as in the youth-driven online gaming that's proving to be one of the most popular events of the Asian Games, generating billions in annual revenue worldwide, and producing a new breed of global icons like South Korean League of Legends star "Faker."

Esports, chess, and bridge are among the so-called mind sports with full medal status at the two-week long Asian Games.

Kelvin Ong heads the Singapore Bridge Association and laments it's difficult to attract the nation's youth to bridge. But as he talks he, himself, is playing a video game on a tablet.

"I'll shut it down," the 37-year-old says sheepishly, knowing he's inadvertently highlighted the problem. "I think bridge is losing its following with the young because now there are computer games, mobile games."

"Kids nowadays want action to come flashy and quick — 30 seconds," Ong adds, noting a bridge hand takes seven or eight minutes to play. "We'll get to that level



when someone finds a way to made a bridge hand last one minute. But it won't be good bridge."

Bridge at the Asian Games is the antithesis of flashy and quick. It's more staid and deliberate, and of course there's no premium on physical fitness. It's also one of many sports or games you won't find in the Olympics.

At least nine players in the field of about 200 are over 70. The oldest is 78-year-old Masood Mazhar of Pakistan, a full 65 years older than 13-year-old Chinese skateboarder Cui Chenxi who won gold last week.

There was an 89-year-old player five years ago at the games in Indonesia, but no octogenarians this time.

"You can play until you're 100," said 64-year-old Anal Shah, the

coach and non-playing captain of the Indian women's team.

"There's no retirement age," added Dr. Raheel Ahmed, a radiologist who manages the Pakistan team.

The average age of participants this time is about 50, and the youngest are 22-year-old Vidhya Patel of India and 23-year-old Chen Kuan-hsuan of Taiwan.

Chen said she started playing at eight, coerced by her mother, an elementary school teacher.

"She held summer vacation classes to teach students to play bridge," Chen said. "So I was forced by her to learn bridge. I was very unhappy because I wanted to play over summer vacation. I tried to refuse her, but she was very strong."

The bridge venue is set up on

the 12th and 13th floors of a Hangzhou office building. A nearly silent atmosphere pervades the space. Four players each fill dozens of small tables — card-table size, of course. Many hold a fan-like spread of cards in one hand, and a few fiddle with reading glasses in the other.

Each table has a screen running diagonally — top and bottom — to keep players from passing signals to teammates. The game presents no language barriers, using universal terms from English like "no trump, slam, pass" and so forth.

Observers can watch the hands that are dealt — and how they are played — on large television screens filled with red and black symbols for spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs.

Ong said teams playing contract bridge have been known to — not in competitions — "kick, cough and stomp" to pass signals to teammates. Hence, the screens.

In addition to the aging players, Bridge also has an image problem, at least in parts of Asia.

"The general concept is India is that cards is gambling," Shah said. "Bridge is cards, and cards is gambling. You have to convince parents that it's an intellectual game. It improves your logical powers. It sharpens so many skills for the brain."

Of course, bridge has nothing to do with poker or black jack and would be as out of place in a casino as Spain's national festival of bullfighting might be in Bhutan.

The misconception also exists in Pakistan, a predominantly Muslim country where Dr. Ahmed said he uses a different pitch.

"We don't have any muscles in the brain, but by playing bridge you can see you can build the mind muscle," he said.

"I think 99.9% of our people don't know what bridge is," he added. "In Islam we don't like betting so most of the people connect card games with betting. They laugh at me wearing a beard. They say he's participating in such an event; a religious person playing a card game. Yes, I have to explain." **MDT/AP**

HIGHER EDUCATION

# Suzhou strives to attract students from Wuhan

**W**HEN Wuhan University student Liu Wan started to head for the high-speed train station to travel to Suzhou, Jiangsu province, she was pleasantly surprised to find a dedicated car waiting on the campus for her and her schoolmates arranged by the Suzhou government.

The thoughtfulness didn't stop there, as students entering their final year at several universities in Wuhan, Hubei province, who were willing to find work in Suzhou were also treated to an immersive experience during their railway journey.

They were given the opportunity to savor the exquisite flavors of Suzhou's cuisine, witness the mesmerizing performances of Kunqu Opera and delve



into the captivating world of intangible cultural heritage activities on the train, which was named the "University Talent Introduction Special Train".

Suzhou went the extra mile to ensure that the gra-

duating students felt cared for and cherished. Transportation subsidies of up to 1,000 yuan (\$137) were offered to help them travel to and from interviews, and 116 hotels provided free accommodations for up to 14

days, ensuring a worry-free experience for job seekers.

Moreover, each student received a gift bag containing metro transportation cards and accommodation gift cards, as well as vouchers they could use to

visit scenic spots and dine at restaurants in the city.

The pinnacle of that experience came during the Suzhou Campus Day event, which was launched last month by the Suzhou Municipal Party Committee Talent Office, the Suzhou Human Resources and Social Security Bureau and the Suzhou Municipal Communist Youth League.

With six recruitment zones and an array of high-quality positions on offer at the event's job fair, the students were able to explore promising careers in diverse fields such as electronic information, biopharmaceuticals and financial education. The job fair featured 110 employers looking to hire Wuhan students for 3,590 positions.

Representatives from

various Suzhou companies have been visiting campuses nationwide since the beginning of the year in an effort to recruit talent. In the spring, 4,898 employers went to 116 universities to participate in 230 job fairs, where 98,000 job positions were offered.

This autumn, Suzhou's recruitment drive is spreading far and wide, as the Suzhou Campus Day event embarks on a journey spanning 22 provinces, 54 cities and 168 universities. The event will run through December.

With nearly 300 campus job fairs planned, the students will have ample opportunities to connect with employers and explore the potential of Suzhou.

Cao Lubao, Party Secretary of Suzhou, said during the campus day event that the city strives to become a place in which all of its residents can achieve their aspirations and find opportunities. **CHINA DAILY**



SOUTH CHINA SEA

# Philippine boats breach a Chinese coast guard blockade in faceoff near disputed shoal

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

**T**WO Philippine supply boats breached a Chinese coast guard blockade in the South China Sea this week in a recurring confrontation near a disputed shoal some fear could spark a larger security crisis that could draw in the United States.

Two Philippine coast guard ships escorted the smaller supply boats, but it wasn't immediately clear whether the ships were blocked by the Chinese coast guard from coming closer to the Second Thomas Shoal, where a small contingent of Filipino marines has stood guard for years aboard a long-marooned but still actively commissioned warship, the BRP Sierra Madre.

China also claims the shoal and has surrounded it with its coast guard ships and militia vessels to prevent the Philippines from delivering construction materials that Beijing fears could be used to reinforce the Sierra Madre and turn it into a permanent territorial outpost.

"Despite attempts by a significant number of China coast guard and Chinese maritime militia vessels to block, harass, and interfere with the routine rotation and



resupply mission," the two Philippine boats managed to deliver provisions to the Filipino forces at the shoal, a Philippine government body overseeing the disputed waters said in a statement late Wednesday.

"The Philippines' resupply

missions and maintenance of BRP Sierra Madre are part of regular operations in line with domestic and international law and ensures safety and well-being of our stationed personnel," the inter-agency body said.

It didn't provide other details of

the Chinese coast guard's actions, which it has condemned in the past as dangerous maneuvers that have nearly caused collisions, and violated international safety regulations at sea.

The Chinese coast guard said in a statement Wednesday night that the Philippine vessels entered the waters "without permission from the Chinese government" and that "China firmly opposes the Philippines illegally transporting building materials to the 'grounded' military boat." It said it gave a stern warning to the Philippines vessels and monitored them throughout the process.

The dangerous confrontation is the latest flare-up from the long-simmering territorial disputes in the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest trade routes. The conflicts, which involve China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei, are regarded as a potential Asian flashpoint and have also become a delicate fault line in the U.S.-China rivalry in the region.

In early August, a Chinese coast guard ship used a water cannon against one of two Philippine supply boats to prevent it from approaching the Second Thomas Shoal. The brazen move, which was caught on video, outraged

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and prompted the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila to summon the Chinese ambassador to hand a strongly worded protest.

Washington reacted by renewing a warning that it's obligated to defend the Philippines, its oldest treaty ally in Asia, if Filipino forces, aircraft and vessels come under an armed attack, including in the South China Sea.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry accused Washington then of "threatening China" by raising the possibility of the U.S.-Philippines mutual defense treaty being activated. Beijing has repeatedly warned the U.S. not to meddle in the territorial disputes.

Later in August, the Philippines again deployed two boats, which succeeded in maneuvering past the Chinese coast guard blockade and completing the delivery of supplies to the Filipino forces at the Second Thomas shoal. Two Philippine coast guard ships securing the supply boats, however, were blocked and prevented by Chinese coast guard ships from maneuvering closer to the shoal. A U.S. Navy surveillance aircraft flew in circles in support of the Philippine vessels as the standoff lasted for more than three hours.

Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro expressed concern over China's dangerous actions at sea and said the government was ready to respond to potential emergencies, including a possible collision of Chinese and Philippine ships in the disputed waters.

"Naturally the concern is always there, and we take that into account," Teodoro said in response to a reporter's question Tuesday night. "We have plans depending on what happens."

MDT/AP

TAIWAN

# One dead, more than 300 injured as Typhoon Koinu sweeps parts of island

**T**YPHOON Koinu swept southern Taiwan yesterday, killing one person and injuring more than 300 as it brought pounding rain and record-breaking winds to the island, leading to school and office closures.

One person was killed by flying glass in the central city of Taichung and at least 304 were injured around the island, Taiwan's fire department said. Gusts of wind downed trees and caused damage to some buildings.

Koinu, which means "puppy" in Japanese, made landfall early yesterday in

Cape Eluanbi, the southernmost tip of Taiwan, and is expected to weaken as it moves west toward the Guangdong and Fujian provinces of southern China.

The typhoon brought the fastest wind ever recorded in Taiwan as it approached on Wednesday night. A weather monitoring station on the outlying Orchid Island, southeast of the main island, measured a gust of 342.7 kph at 9:53 p.m., as well as sustained winds that reached 198.7 kph at 9:40 p.m. Both values set all-time highs since Taiwan began keeping records of

wind speeds in 1897, said Huang Chia-mei, head of the Central Weather Administration's Taitung Weather Station, according to the official Central News Agency.

The device measuring the wind speeds broke shortly afterward, Huang said.

Images shared on social media from Orchid Island showed buildings with broken windows and boats sunk in a harbor.

Yesterday evening, Koinu's maximum sustained winds measured 137 kph with gusts of 173 kph.

The heaviest rain fell in

the east-coast counties of Taitung and Hualien, and in the mountainous Pingtung county in the south.

Cities across the island canceled work and classes, including the major southern port city of Kaohsiung. The capital, Taipei, in the north, was operating as normal.

Most domestic flights and dozens of international flights were canceled, according to the transportation ministry, while ferries to outlying islands were also suspended.

Despite weakening, typhoon Koinu is expected



ted to douse coastal areas of southern China over the weekend. The city of Guangzhou canceled some flights and trains starting Friday, while its maritime authorities issued a Level 4 alert — the least severe in a four-tier system, calling for caution.

In Fujian province, bor-

dering the Taiwan Strait, authorities suspended 137 passenger ferry trips.

Taiwan sits in an active region for tropical cyclones, but Koinu is only the second typhoon to make landfall in four years. Typhoon Haikui hit the island in early September, injuring dozens. MDT/AP

AUSTRALIA

KING CHARLES III'S IMAGE TO APPEAR ON AUSSIE COINS THIS YEAR

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

AN image of King Charles III will soon appear on Australian coins, more than a year after the death of his mother Queen Elizabeth II, officials said yesterday.

The gold Australian dollar coin will be the first with an image of the new British monarch, who is also Australia's head of state, Royal Australian Mint chief executive Leigh Gordon said.

About 10 million of the dollar coins will be circulating by Christmas, he said.

Assistant Minister for Treasury Andrew Leigh said the government had not wanted to rush the coin transition following the queen's death in September last year.

"Certainly, we're keen to get as many of the new coins with the king's face on them out there as quickly as possible," Leigh said.

The remaining denominations -- 5, 10, 20 and 50 cent coins plus



a \$2 coin -- will be rolled out with the king's left profile and without a crown during 2024 based on demand from banks.

The latest queen's image wore a crown. In maintaining tradition, the right profile of the queen was shown.

The king's image is the official Commonwealth Effigy designed by The Royal Mint in London with the king's approval and is available for use by all British Commonwealth countries.

The 15.5 billion Australian coins carrying the queen's image minted since Australia introduced decimal currency in 1966 will remain

legal tender. She has appeared on Australian money since 1953.

The government was criticized over a decision this year to replace the queen's image on the \$5 note with an Indigenous design rather than an image of the king.

The \$5 bill had been Australia's only remaining bank note to still feature an image of the monarch.

Critics saw it as part of a plan by the center-left Labor Party government to replace the British monarch as Australia's head of state with an Australian president.

Leigh said there was no plan to remove the monarch from Australian coins. MDT/AP

JAPAN

Mayor of Tokyo's Shibuya district asks Halloween partygoers to stay away

THE mayor of Tokyo's busy Shibuya shopping and entertainment district is asking Halloween celebrants not to visit, fearing that a large number of partygoers following the COVID-19 pandemic could cause a disaster similar to last year's fatal crowd surge in South Korea's capital.

"This year, we are making it clear to the world that Shibuya is not a venue for Halloween events," Shibuya city Mayor Ken Hasebe said at a news conference yesterday. "Please, do not come to the Shibuya station area for Halloween."

Hasebe said he understands that Halloween is a fun celebration around the world, but noted that a crowd crush like the one that killed

about 160 people celebrating Halloween last year in Seoul's Itaewon district could happen in Shibuya.

"A fatal accident like Itaewon can happen here any time," he said.

Shibuya's famed intersection by its train station, nicknamed "scramble crossing" for the large number of pedestrians attempting to cross, has become a popular destination for residents and tourists on Halloween, drawing large crowds of young people in costumes every year.

The number decreased during the pandemic, but Shibuya's streets were packed again on Halloween last year, and city authorities fear this year's turnout could be worse, Hasebe said. MDT/AP

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JAPAN

# Fukushima nuclear plant starts second release of treated radioactive wastewater into the sea

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

JAPAN'S wrecked Fukushima nuclear power plant said it began releasing a second batch of treated radioactive wastewater into the sea yesterday after the first round of discharges ended smoothly.

Plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings said workers activated pumps to dilute the treated water with large amounts of seawater, slowly sending the mixture into the ocean through an undersea tunnel for an offshore release.

The wastewater discharges, which are expected to continue for decades, have been strongly opposed by fishing groups and neighboring countries including South Korea, where hundreds of people staged protest rallies. China banned all imports of Japanese seafood, badly hurting Japanese



Japanese Agriculture Minister Ichiro Miyashita (right) and Malaysian celebrity Amber Chia attend an event at Japanese store, Don Don Donki in Kuala Lumpur

seafood producers and exporters.

The plant's first wastewater release began Aug. 24 and ended Sept. 11. During that release, TEPCO said it discharged 7,800 tons of treated water from 10 tanks. In the second discharge, TEPCO plans to

release another 7,800 tons of treated water into the Pacific Ocean over 17 days.

"So far, we are strictly following the procedures and everything is moving smoothly as planned," said TEPCO spokesperson Kei-

suke Matsuo. He pledged to safely carry out the second round of release while closely monitoring data from seawater samples taken from multiple locations off the plant.

About 1.34 million tons of radioactive wastewater is stored in about 1,000 tanks at the plant. It has accumulated since the plant was crippled by a massive earthquake and tsunami in 2011.

TEPCO and the government say discharging the water into the sea is unavoidable because the tanks will reach capacity early next year and space at the plant will be needed for its decommissioning, which is expected to take decades.

They say the water is treated to reduce radioactive materials to safe levels, and then is diluted with seawater by hundreds of times to make it much safer than international standards.

Some scientists say, however, that the continuing release of low-level radioactive materials is unprecedented and needs to be monitored closely.

Japan's government has set up a relief fund to help find new markets and reduce the impact of China's seafood ban. Measures also include the temporary purchase, freezing and storage of seafood and promotion of seafood sales at home.

Cabinet ministers have traveled to Fukushima to sample local seafood and promote its safety.

TEPCO is tasked with providing compensation for reputational damage to the region's seafood caused by the wastewater release. It started accepting applications this week and immediately received hundreds of inquiries. Most of the damage claims are linked to China's seafood ban and excess supply at home causing price declines, TEPCO said.

Agriculture Minister Ichiro Miyashita promoted Japanese scallops at a food fair in Malaysia on Wednesday on the sidelines of a regional farm ministers' meeting.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has reviewed the safety of the wastewater release and concluded that if carried out as planned, it would have a negligible impact on the environment, marine life and human health. MDT/AP

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USA

# Trump's intensifying rhetoric offers insight into how he might govern again

MICHELLE L. PRICE &  
NICHOLAS RICCARDI

**O**VER the past two weeks, Donald Trump said shoplifters should be immediately shot, suggested the United States' top general be executed and mocked a political opponent's husband who was beaten with a hammer.

The former president and current front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination also in recent weeks encouraged the impeachment of Democratic President Joe Biden because the "lowlives Impeached me TWICE," urged his party to shut down the U.S. government with the hope it would stall some of the criminal cases he faces, and said that, if elected to the White House again, he would threaten NBC News and MSNBC's access to the airwaves over news coverage of him that he called "Country Threatening Treason."

From his earliest days in public life as a New York real estate tycoon, Trump has favored language that makes him appear tough and scrappy, particularly when it comes to crime and retribution for his perceived enemies. But the rhetorical escalation on display in recent weeks is notable for its parallels to the hardline approaches that are hallmarks of authoritarian regimes that he has occasionally praised, such as the rule of Russian President Vladimir Putin or North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un.

"Violence is his political project now," said Ruth Ben-Ghiat, a historian at New York University. "It is the thing, besides his own victimhood, that he brings up the most."

Author of a book called "Strongmen," Ben-Ghiat contends that Trump fits well in the category. His recent statements on shooting shoplifters, for example, call to mind strongman leaders he has previously praised such as former Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, whose war on drugs fea-



red "extrajudicial killings" of thousands of suspects without a trial, or other countries where military leaders disappear after falling out of favor with the regime.

Trump already has a nearly decade-long record of making inflammatory, violent statements, often without follow-through.

He has mulled shooting illegal border crossers in the legs and offered to pay the legal fees of people who roughed up protesters that disrupted his 2016 campaign rallies.

Trump's words also can rile up his supporters and have direct consequences, most glaringly in the case of Jan. 6, 2021, when his lies about his 2020 election loss revved up a mass of supporters who attacked the U.S. Capitol in a failed effort to prevent Congress from certifying Biden's presidential victory.

They can also rile up Trump's own party, which then incorporates the former president's vendettas and impulses into its own agenda.

Following Trump's complaints of political persecution by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Republicans have now called for dissolving the law enforcement agency and the GOP-controlled House has launched a committee investigating the "weaponization" of the federal government.

After Trump mulled bombing drug labs in Mexico, his rivals for the Republican

nomination have pushed increasingly aggressive proposals for using the military to attack cartels in the U.S.' southern neighbor, which would be the sort of unilateral use of force on foreign soil that Trump has railed against.

The violence and vengeance in Trump's remarks has ratcheted up in recent weeks as his lead in the Republican primary has seemed to solidify and his legal peril in four criminal cases, as well as a fraud case threatening his businesses, has intensified.

The remarks have also alarmed the legal system.

Early this week, a New York judge overseeing the former president's civil fraud trial issued a gag order barring Trump from talking about his staff, after the former president posted a picture of the judge's clerk on his social media network, Truth Social.

Last month, federal prosecutor Jack Smith asked for a gag order in his criminal case against Trump over his attempt to overturn the 2020 election results, citing Trump's stream of inflammatory remarks about prosecutors, the judge in that case, and even his recent suggestion that Mark Milley, the retiring chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had committed treason and should be executed.

The comment was a reference to phone calls Milley made to his counterpart in China toward the end of

Trump's term, including after the Jan. 6 Capitol attack, that were meant to give "reassurance" to the U.S.'s chief adversary.

Trump described the calls as a "treasonous act" for which "in times gone by, the punishment would have been DEATH!" In an interview with "60 Minutes," Milley said he had taken precautions to protect himself and his family after Trump's social media post.

Though most in his party have stayed quiet, Trump's comments about Milley horrified some Republicans. His former vice president, Mike Pence, on Tuesday called them "utterly unacceptable" at a national security and foreign policy event at Washington's Georgetown University co-hosted by The Associated Press.

Trump's former White House chief of staff, John Kelly, released a statement to CNN on Tuesday that also bemoaned his former boss' attack on Milley. It also included a long list of behaviors that Kelly, a retired Marine Corps general, said demonstrated that Trump "has nothing but contempt for our democratic institutions, our Constitution, and the rule of law."

Trump campaign spokesman Steven Cheung did not respond to a request for comment about the former president's language.

On the debate stage last week, Trump's rivals for the GOP nomination didn't address the former president's more incendiary rhetoric. They instead focused their relatively infrequent criticism of Trump on his decision to skip the debate, how he added to the national debt while running the country and his comments on abortion.

Democrats, including Biden, have warned that Trump and supporters in his Make America Great Again movement are a threat to American democracy. In a speech the day after the debate, Biden declared of Republicans that "the silence is deafening." MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 1973 ARAB STATES ATTACK ISRAELI FORCES



Heavy fighting has erupted between Arab and Israeli forces along two fronts.

To the south, Egyptian armoured forces have broken the Israeli line on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal.

In the north, Syrian troops and tanks are battling with Israeli defences along the Golan Heights seized by Israel from Syria in 1967.

Both sides have accused each other of firing the first shots, but UN observers have reported seeing Egyptian and Syrian troops crossing into Israeli-held territory.

Israeli defence minister, General Moshe Dayan has told the nation in a televised address: "We must realise this is war. We are engaged in heavy battles on both fronts against numerically superior forces."

The attacks have come on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, and the holiest day in the Jewish calendar.

The heaviest fighting has been reported along the Suez Canal and the adjoining Sinai peninsula, seized by the Israelis from Egypt in 1967.

Israel's Prime Minister, Mrs. Golda Meir, claimed in a radio address that heavy losses have been inflicted on both Egypt and Syria.

But an Egyptian military communiqué has stated the Canal is now almost entirely under their control.

Damascus radio said Syrian forces on the northern frontier have captured Israeli positions on the Golan Heights, notably Mount Hermon.

But the claims are being countered by the Israelis, who say the situation in the border region remains "adequate".

Israel is outnumbered three to two in immediately available man-power, three to two in tanks and two to one in combat aircraft against the combined forces of Egypt and Syria.

Algeria, Libya, Kuwait, Jordan and the Lebanon have all pledged their support for the Arab offensive.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Early in the conflict, Egyptian and Syrian forces retook key positions lost in the 1967 'Six Day' war. Many Arab states contributed troops and financial support, and the USSR also provided assistance. But ultimately the Arabs buckled under a sustained Israeli counter-attack strengthened by US airlifts. Saudi Arabia then orchestrated an Arab oil embargo which threatened to extend the conflict into a full-scale superpower confrontation. Most hostilities ended on 22 October. Both sides suffered heavy losses. An estimated 8,500 Syrian and Egyptian soldiers died, while Israel lost about 6,000. In 1974 agreements negotiated by then US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger gave Egypt control of the Suez Canal. Syria regained some of its pre-1967 territory.

**YOUR STARS**

<p><b>ARIES</b> Mar. 21-Apr. 19</p> <p>Family members may want you at home, when your heart is telling you to spend time with someone you recently met. Love relationships will flourish. You need to pamper yourself for a change.</p>	<p><b>TAURUS</b> Apr. 20-May. 20</p> <p>Try not to spend too much on children or entertainment. Don't hold back; go with the flow and take a bit of a chance. Get involved in creative projects that could turn into moneymaking ventures.</p>
<p><b>GEMINI</b> May. 21-Jun. 21</p> <p>Keep your thoughts to yourself for the time being. You will find that money could slip through your fingers. Your communication skills may win you points.</p>	<p><b>CANCER</b> Jun. 22-Jul. 22</p> <p>You will be drawn to individuals who can provide you with both intellectual conversation and physical passion. Romance is likely if you participate in unusual forms of entertainment.</p>
<p><b>LEO</b> Jul. 23-Aug. 22</p> <p>Any financial limitations will probably have to be dealt with on your own. Do a little investigating if there is someone at work you don't trust. You can make headway in the workforce if you put your mind to it.</p>	<p><b>VIRGO</b> Aug. 23-Sep. 22</p> <p>You will be emotional about your personal life. You will do your best work on your own. Entertainment should include your whole family.</p>
<p><b>LIBRA</b> Sep. 23-Oct. 22</p> <p>Don't take advantage of your expense account. Real estate investments will be profitable. The stamina you possess will be apparent in your approach to your hobbies and creative projects.</p>	<p><b>SCORPIO</b> Oct. 23-Nov. 21</p> <p>Family may not want to get involved but an entrepreneur will. Take a look at your legal position. Try to visit friends or relatives you don't get to see often.</p>
<p><b>SAGITTARIUS</b> Nov. 22-Dec. 21</p> <p>You should spend your day trying to get things completed at work. Try not to lose your cool, and make your point known. Tempers could boil if someone you work with has not been pulling their weight.</p>	<p><b>CAPRICORN</b> Dec. 22-Jan. 19</p> <p>You will be drawn to individuals who can provide you with both intellectual conversation and physical passion. Romance is likely if you participate in unusual forms of entertainment.</p>
<p><b>AQUARIUS</b> Jan. 20-Feb. 18</p> <p>You will meet exciting new people through interest groups or functions that you attend with your children. Opportunities to make advancements through good business sense are apparent.</p>	<p><b>PISCES</b> Feb. 19-Mar. 20</p> <p>You may have been trying to do too much, leaving yourself exhausted and open to colds and infections. It's a good time for long awaited relationships to begin.</p>

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	12	22	fine
Changchun	4	18	fine
Chengdu	15	18	rain
Chongqing	19	20	rain
Fuzhou	22	25	rain
Guangzhou	26	35	thunderstorms
Guiyang	17	19	rain
Haikou	25	31	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	17	23	rain
Harbin	2	14	fine
Hefei	15	20	overcast
Nanjing	16	21	overcast
Shanghai	19	23	rain
Taipei	25	28	overcast
Wuhan	17	21	fine
Hong Kong	23	30	overcast
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	2	12	rain
Frankfurt	8	21	overcast
Paris	10	23	overcast
London	14	22	overcast
New York	18	22	rain

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Radio switch; 5- Falsehoods; 9- Not to mention; 12- Bridges of Hollywood; 13- Adlai's running mate; 15- Baseball family name; 16- Remove water from a boat; 17- To the left, at sea; 18- Hero; 19- Corroborate; 21- Baby; 23- London district; 25- Trumpet accessory; 26- Skid row woe; 29- Four-sided fig.; 31- Caprice; 35- Suffix with ball; 36- Rare delight; 38- Wanting; 39- Apparatus for weaving; 41- Tall tales; 43- Antlered animal; 44- Loose outer garment; 46- Model Campbell; 48- Georgia, once; Abbr.; 49- \_\_\_ de corps; 51- The closest one to us is the sun; 52- Biblical verb ending; 53- Pig; 55- Salinger girl; 57- Legendary island; 61- Left-\_\_\_ compliment; insult; 65- Shootout; 66- Two-time loser to Dwight; 68- Director Ephron; 69- Geographical expanse; 70- Live's partner; 71- Ton, for one; 72- Hosp. staffers; 73- Bit of kindling; 74- Got it;


DOWN 1- "Dancing Queen" quartet; 2- Crux; 3- \_\_\_ accompli; 4- Some hybrids; 5- Like overly tanned skin; 6- AOL, e.g.; 7- School founded in 1440; 8- \_\_\_ cholesterol; 9- Et \_\_\_ (and other men); 10- High time?; 11- Manure; 14- Play chords; 15- Supposed; 20- Kind; 22- Anna of "Nana"; 24- Body of salt water; 26- Soft; 27- Implements; 28- Pry; 30- Gogol's "\_\_\_ Bulba"; 32- Actress Witherspoon; 33- That is, in Latin; 34- Incense gum; 37- Govt. security; 40- Cooking wine; 42- Wonderful; 45- Potter's oven; 47- "The Joy of Cooking" author Rombauer; 50- Bottom line; 54- Bathroom fixture; 56- Boredom; 57- Jewish month; 58- Go sour; 59- Dreg; 60- Deli side; 62- Puts on; 63- Cleveland's lake; 64- Go out here; 67- Uris hero;

**Yesterday's solution**

P	A	R	E	R	F	A	V	O	R	L	E	O
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**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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	



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

JAKE COYLE,  
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

DRIVE IN

# IN 'FAIR PLAY,' A BATTLE OF THE SEXES ON WALL STREET

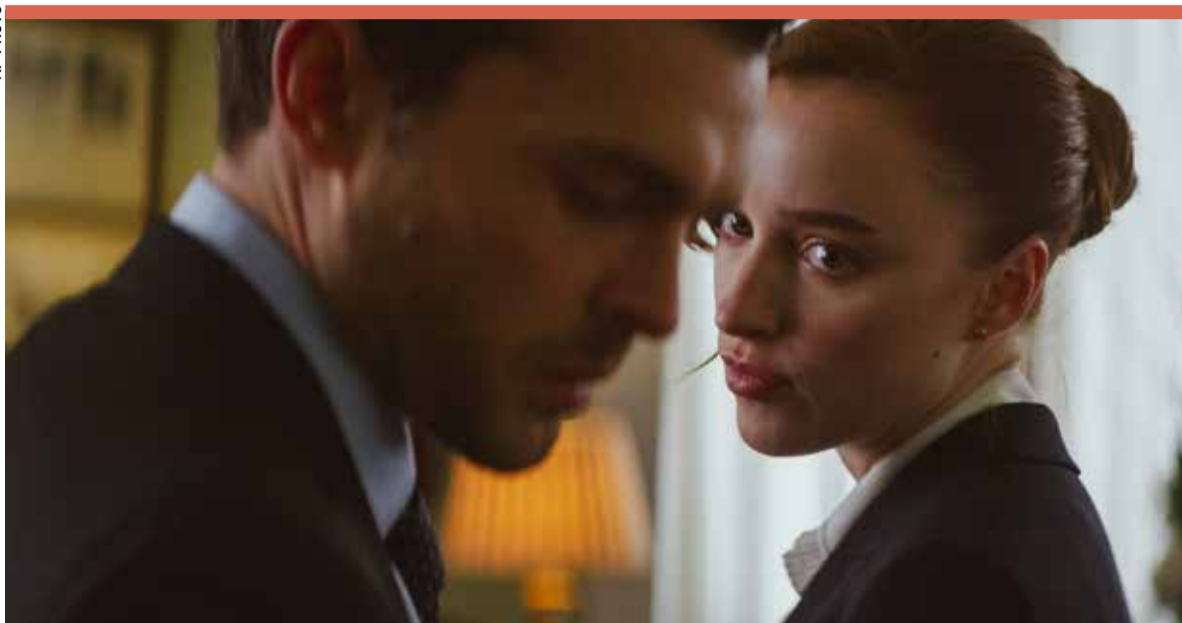
THE disquieting root of Chloe Domont's slick, feature debut "Fair Play" lies in the face of Luke (Alden Ehrenreich) as he learns that his fiancée Emily (Phoebe Dynevor) has been given the promotion at their Wall Street hedge fund he thought was his.

"Congratulations," he says with a grin that looks more like a grimace. "That's amazing."

Ehrenreich, a cunning actor here given a part to chew on, conveys the moment with the just right mix of support for Emily and shattering woundedness. Up to this point, we've seen Emily and Luke as only a swoon-worthy romantic pair deeply in love with one another. In the film's breezy opening moments, they slip away from a party to have sex in a bathroom. After, Luke kneels to propose.

But the engagement ring lies ominously on the counter when both dress in the morning for work in their Chinatown apartment at the same high-powered hedge fund in downtown New York. They've left some inner version of their selves at home; at the office, they must keep their relationship a secret for the sake of company policy and their own career ambitions.

AP PHOTO



Alden Ehrenreich (left) and Phoebe Dynevor in a scene from "Fair Play" (Netflix)

Work-life balance gets more than a little wobbly in "Fair Play," which debuts Friday on Netflix, and so do traditional gender roles. Luke initially puts up a good front, but his alpha male persona (and his libido) takes a beating when Emily's meetings with the sexist boss Campbell (Eddie Marsan) go past midnight and

banter around the office turns to his fiancée. In "Fair Play," the supportive male may just be a facade.

Since its hit arrival at the Sundance Film Festival, "Fair Play" has been hailed for reviving the long-dormant-but-often-missed erotic thriller. While there are bits of that in Domont's film, "Fair

Play" is neither especially erotic nor much of a thriller. What it is, though, is often gripping battle of the sexes set in a toxic, misogynist corporate world where power and sex are inextricably linked currencies.

The movie is brilliant and breezy at first but sputters just as its catching fire. It may, in fact,

be wrong to call this a battle of the sexes — Luke turns out to be not really up for a fight. He transforms into an emasculated and increasingly volatile wreck and "Fair Play" lurches toward a lurid and overcooked third act. For Emily — and surely countless women just like her — "Fair Play" is more of a horror movie, and an accurate one at that.

But for a while, Domont's film is electric thanks to its lead actors. Dynevor is especially terrific playing a woman whose first thought when she's promoted isn't pride for herself but concern for the hurt feelings of Luke.

At its best, "Fair Play" feels like a demented game where everything in high finance comes down to how you project yourself, man or woman. Emily knows when meeting the boss to switch her drink order from a Diet Coke to Macallen 25, neat. It's in sly moments like these that Domont is at her most playful. Double entendres fly. Coming home drunk one night, Emily tries to cajole a tired Luke into sleeping with her. "C'mon," she says, "I'll do all the work."

**"Fair Play," a Netflix release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for pervasive language, sexual content, some nudity, and sexual violence. Running time: 113 minutes.★★★★**

AD

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TASTE OF EDESIA

# Kitchen of Wonders

IRENE SAM, MDT

**A** dynamic dining destination in its own right, the newly opened **Andaz Macau** is home to a captivating culinary venue where guests can experience the authentic flavors of Macau alongside classic dishes from around the world.

The largest eatery in the Galaxy Hotel, Andaz Kitchen is a buzzing all-day-dining neighborhood destination where talented chefs perform eye-catching live-action cooking and serve up a dazzling array of Portuguese, Macanese and neighborhood dishes.

The overall design draws inspiration from old Macau shophouses, with further nods to the city's heritage in the form of Portuguese mosaic tiles on the floor and high wooden archways that reference the city's maritime history.

Andaz Kitchen is also home to a striking wall feature titled "Layers of Tradition", which showcases a curated collection of blue-and-white ceramic plates with hand-painted motifs inspired by Chinese and Portuguese accents commonly seen in Macau. In the kitchen Executive Chef of An-

daz Macau, Chef André Lai, works his magic.

Born and raised in Portugal, of Chinese-Portuguese heritage, André is a master chef with over two-decade experience in gastronomy. Infusing traditional family recipes with contemporary and innovative elements, his creations showcase authentic Portuguese and Macanese cuisines, as well as local and regional specialties, evoking an inspired journey through time.

Leading a team of talented chefs at Andaz Macau, Chef André aims to create a distinct dining experience, showcasing the real tastes of Macau to all the guests. Highlights on the menu include Macanese Pork Chop Bun, Tuna Ceviche, Mediterranean Style Grilled Octopus, and a must-try dessert, Deep-fried Portuguese Toast with Cinnamon Sugar.

Along with Chef André, Shobit Shetty, a super talented mixologist who has worked in one of the Asia's 50 Best Bars, is now the story teller behind the bar at Andaz Macau.

Inspired by what he has seen, heard and tasted in Macau, he presents a creative array of cocktails that reflect the multicultural aspect of the city.



tTUNES

# Allow Jorja Smith to reintroduce herself on her sophomore release, 'Falling or Flying'



"Falling or Flying" by Jorja Smith (FAMM)

**B**REAKS are privileges awarded veteran acts, most often an effect of long-lasting relevancy. The opposite is also true: New acts are rarely given permission to take a beat, or risk slipping into obscurity. The horrible irony is that deadlines have never been muses for great art. The alternative is, of course, to say screw it all and work on your own timeline, likely as an independent artist.

That's something Jorja Smith knows well.

Five years ago, the British musician released her debut LP, "Lost &

Found," defining an era of R&B-pop-trip-hop. Or simply British soul, depending on who you ask — or which country you ask it in. Now she's released "Falling or Flying," an eclectic sophomore release built from the pieces of her past and present.

For it, Smith relocated to her hometown of Walsall, in the West Midlands of the U.K., from London working largely with the local production duo DameDame(asterisk). The grounding effects are immediate. These 16 tracks meander, but they

never feel lost. Her revered ballads have a home here, like on "Broken is the man" and the slow burn "What if my heart beats faster?" (The latter will surely reprise early Amy Winehouse comparisons for Smith's rich, brassy tone. There are worse things to be compared to.)

In 2021, Smith dropped a short EP, "Be Right Back," to keep the loyalists satiated. At the time, she described it as a "waiting room" for this record that would inevitably follow. It certainly served that purpose.

On "Falling or Flying," surprises abound, from the Bombay Bicycle Club and the Kooks-inspired English-indie track "Go Go Go" to the glossy, soulful title track "Falling or Flying." Then there are the pop-punk riffs filtered through SZA, like on "Too many times," with echoes on "Backwards," before the string orchestral coda.

Collaborations are few and pointed: British rapper J Hus on "Feelings" and Jamaican reggae singer Lila Iké on "Greatest Gift," as well as a choir. Here, as before, as in every Jorja Smith record, even stripped-down production soars, like an R&B Radiohead, but it is her voice that enraptures.

The outcome is transcendent. **MARIA SHERMAN, MDT/AP MUSIC WRITER**

OPINION

Business Views

Minxin Pei, Bloomberg



CHINA CAN'T CLAME EVERYTHING ON WAYWARD BILLIONAIRES

The fall of Hui Ka Yan, the founder of real estate developer China Evergrande Group and once Asia's richest man with an estimated fortune of \$45.3 billion in 2017, has certainly been steep. But it should not come as a surprise.

Hui, who was placed under investigation last week for possible wrongdoing, is only the latest in a long list of disgraced Chinese billionaires, including Xiao Jianhua (sentenced to 13 years in August 2022), Ye Jianming (reportedly detained in 2018 but not yet formally charged), Wu Xiaohui (serving an 18-year sentence after conviction in 2018), and many others.

In coming months, we should expect the Chinese government to portray Hui as a dishonest, greedy, and unscrupulous character. Missing in that narrative will be any hint that Chinese officials and the system they serve could have acted as Hui's enablers and partners.

It's extremely unlikely that China's fallen tycoons could have taken out huge loans from state-owned banks, engaged in risky behavior, and signed questionable deals that eventually blew up their empires without support from local officials and lax oversight from regulators.

Exhibit A is Evergrande. For years, the real estate giant gambled on a dubious business model highly vulnerable to the slightest puncture in China's housing bubble. Essentially, the company relied on bank loans, bond issuance, and prepayment from customers to finance its operations.

Constantly rising housing prices provided the principal source of its profit. Over the years, the company's leverage reached unsustainable levels, requiring more borrowing to stay afloat. At the peak in December 2016, Evergrande's debt-to-equity ratio stood at 1,221%, meaning about 92 cents for every dollar on its books represented borrowed money.

Yet, government regulators seemed unconcerned that Evergrande's shaky finances might pose a systemic risk to the housing sector. Instead, Hui was feted as a national hero.

Weak oversight may also be what allowed Xiao Jianhua to defraud the financial system on a massive scale. Through his control of Baoshang Bank Co., a small regional lender in northern China, Xiao secretly funneled billions of dollars to companies affiliated with Tomorrow Group, a conglomerate he owned. After Baoshang went under in 2019, the bailout cost the government 23.5 billion yuan (\$3.27 billion).

Venial officials are often the willing accomplices of fraudulent tycoons. Ye Jianming, founder of CEFC China Energy Co., was able to borrow more than \$4.5 billion from China Development Bank, a large state lender, because Ye had paid its chief bribes worth "tens of millions of yuan," according to the Chinese government.

Armed with those loans, Ye went on a shopping spree. In the Czech Republic alone, he bought a football club, brewery, real estate, and stakes in an airline and an investment bank. The total losses from Ye's risky investments remain unknown.

Most corrupt tycoons may steal from the Chinese state with one hand, but eagerly advance its agenda with another. Wu Xiaohui, the owner of Anbang Insurance Group Co., who was convicted in 2018 of a \$10 billion financial fraud, actively cultivated business ties with Jared Kushner, former US President Donald Trump's son-in-law.

Ten days after Trump won his surprise bid for the White House in 2016, Wu reportedly had a private dinner with Kushner to explore a deal that might have led to a \$400 million investment in a property partly owned by the Kushner family. (Kushner Cos. ended talks with Anbang after some details were reported by Bloomberg News.)

More billionaires are sitting in jails in China than any other country, even Russia. This is not because Chinese entrepreneurs are more dishonest. The Chinese system, marred by weak regulatory enforcement and bribe-taking even after a decade of anti-corruption purges, effectively creates more opportunities for reckless risk-takers and rewards them generously before they are caught.

This partnership has made — and destroyed — many tycoons and their eye-watering fortunes. Evergrande's Hui will not be the last. [Abridged]

Courtesy Bloomberg

Deepfakes generated by artificial intelligence are having their moment this year, at least when it comes to making it look, or sound, like celebrities did something uncanny. Tom Hanks hawking a dental plan. Pope Francis wearing a stylish puffer jacket. U.S. Sen. Rand Paul sitting on the Capitol steps in a red bathrobe.

But what happens next year ahead of a U.S. presidential election? Google was the first big tech company to say it would impose new labels on deceptive AI-generated political advertisements that could fake a candidate's voice or actions.

Now some U.S. lawmakers are calling on social media platforms

X, Facebook and Instagram to explain why they aren't doing the same.

Two Democratic members of Congress sent a letter yesterday to Meta and X CEOs expressing "serious concerns" about the emergence of AI-generated political ads on their platforms and asking each to explain any rules they're crafting to curb the harms to free and fair elections.

"They are two of the largest platforms and voters deserve to know what guardrails are being put in place," said U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota in an interview with The Associated Press.

AP PHOTO



Norwegian author Jon Fosse in Stockholm in 2021

JON FOSSE, A NORWEGIAN MASTER OF SPARE NORDIC WRITING, WINS THE NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE

DAVID KEYTON, STOCKHOLM

NORWEGIAN writer Jon Fosse, whose work tackles birth, death, faith and the other "elemental stuff" of life in spare Nordic prose, won the Nobel Prize for Literature yesterday for writing that prize organizers said gives "voice to the unsayable."

The novelist and playwright said the prize was recognition of "literature that first and foremost aims to be literature, without other considerations" — an ethos expressed in dozens of enigmatic plays, stories and novels, including a seven-volume epic made up of a single sentence.

Fosse's work, rooted in his Norwegian background, "focuses on human insecurity and anxiety," Anders Olsson, chair of the Nobel literature committee, told The Associated Press. "The basic choices you make in life, very elemental stuff."

One of his country's most-performed dramatists, Fosse said he had "cautiously prepared" himself for a decade to receive the news that he had won.

"I was surprised when

they called, yet at the same time not," the 64-year-old told Norwegian public broadcaster NRK. "It was a great joy for me to get the phone call."

The author of 40 plays as well as novels, short stories, children's books, poetry and essays, Fosse was honored "for his innovative plays and prose, which give voice to the unsayable," according to the Swedish Academy, which awards the prize.

Fosse has cited the bleak, enigmatic work of Irish writer Samuel Beckett — the 1969 Nobel literature laureate — as an influence on his minimalist style.

Fosse has also taught writing — one of his students was best-selling Norwegian novelist Karl Ove Knausgaard — and consulted on a Norwegian translation of the Bible.

"He tends to write in a fairly sparse style," said Guy Puzey, senior lecturer in Scandinavian Studies at the University of Edinburgh. "There's a lot of repetition of quite simple expressions, which then take on a lot deeper meaning and make you ponder what lies in between the lines."

His first novel, "Red, Black," was published in 1983, and his debut play, "Someone is Going to Come," in 1992.

His work "A New Name: Septology VI-VII" — described by Olsson as Fosse's magnum opus — was a finalist for the International Booker Prize in 2022. An exploration of life, death and spirituality, the seven-volume novel contains no sentence breaks.

His other major prose works include "Melancholy;" "Morning and Evening," whose two parts depict a birth and a death; "Wakefulness;" and "Olav's Dreams."

His plays, which have been staged across Europe and in the United States, include "The Name," "Dream of Autumn" and "I am the Wind."

Mats Malm, permanent secretary of the academy, reached Fosse by telephone to inform him of the win. He said the writer, who lives in the western city of Bergen, was driving in the countryside and promised to drive home carefully.

"I stand here and feel a little numb, but of course very happy for the great honor," Fosse told TV2. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Russia targeted Ukraine with drones in another major attack yesterday as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy traveled to Spain to rally support from Western allies at a summit of around 50 European leaders. Ukraine's air force said that the country's air defenses intercepted 24 out of 29 Iranian-made drones that Russia launched at the southern Odesa, Mykolaiv and Kirovohrad regions.

AP PHOTO



Slovakia began conducting traffic checks on its border with neighboring Hungary yesterday amid what it says is a dramatic rise in migrants crossing onto its territory. The policy joins a flurry of similar border measures other Central European countries have imposed in recent days. The increased border protection came as a reaction to Slovakia's neighbors, including Austria, the Czech Republic and Poland, reintroducing controls at their own borders with Slovakia.

AP PHOTO



Germany A special unit of police and customs officials have raided several properties of a Russian national in the southern state of Bavaria, officials said yesterday. The unidentified Russian is subject to sanctions and asset freezes by the European Union, German customs officials said. The EU, the US and other western nations have imposed sanctions against Russia in response to Moscow's war against Ukraine. These include travel bans and asset freezes of a number of Russian government members and certain Russian businesspeople.