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PORTUGAL'S PM RESIGNS OVER CORRUPTION PROBE

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AP PHOTO



China Australian PM Anthony Albanese is calling for the "full resumption of free and unimpeded trade" with China in a meeting with his counterpart Li Qiang. Climate change, food security and transnational crime are areas in which the two nations can cooperate, Albanese said yesterday. The sides should discuss "ways to shape a regional and global order that is peaceful, stable and prosperous, where countries respect sovereignty and meet their obligations under international law and conventions." More on p6

AP PHOTO



Australia's central bank lifted its benchmark interest rate yesterday for the first time since June with a quarter percentage point hike that brought the cash rate to a 12-year high of 4.35%. The Reserve Bank of Australia's hike, its 13th since May 2022, was widely expected after the nation's inflation for the September quarter was higher than expected at 1.2%, or 5.4% for the year, driven mainly by the price of gasoline.

AP PHOTO



India Two Indian states began voting in local elections yesterday in a test of strength for India's opposition, which is pitted against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party ahead of a crucial national vote scheduled for next year. The elections in central Chhattisgarh and northeastern Mizoram states, along with polls in three others states over the next three weeks, may give an indication of voter mood for nationwide elections in 2024 in which Modi is eyeing a third term.

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OPTIMIST BUDGET

First non-deficit budget of this gov't term passed but with many remarks, namely on overly confident accounting P3



CLIMATE CHANGE
MACAU SETS NEW RECORD FOR HIGHEST OCTOBER TEMPERATURE

P3

**MOBILE
TRANSACTIONS
UP 4% IN Q3**

The number of transactions carried out by local mobile payment tools increased 4% quarter-to-quarter to 76.9 million in the third quarter (Q3). The transaction value totaled MOP7 billion, an increment of 3.1% from the preceding quarter. The average amount per transaction was MOP91.4. Meanwhile, the number of credit card transactions marked 10.2 million, up 11.6% on a quarterly basis. Credit card repayments, in which payments for interest and fees are included, rose quarter-to-quarter by 11.7% to MOP6.5 billion. Concurrently, the number of debit card transactions other than cash withdrawals and the debit card turnover totaled MOP565.7 million.

**UM, DATASTORY
INAUGURATE AI LAB**

The University of Macau (UM) and Datastory inaugurated their Joint Laboratory of Artificial General Intelligence yesterday. The joint laboratory will explore cutting-edge technologies and business applications of artificial intelligence, as well as developing controllable multimodal AI technologies with global influence. It will also serve as a platform to demonstrate industry-academia collaboration between Hengqin and Macau, with the aim of promoting deep integration between Hengqin and Macau, and between cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), as well as advancing technological innovation in the region.

**IFTM COLLABORATES
WITH FOSHAN
UNIVERSITY FOR
CULTURAL STUDY**

The Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM) recently collaborated with Foshan University (FOSU) to carry out a five-day field study with the theme of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Foshan. FOSU is an educational partner of IFTM in Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) with offering joint Bachelor's degree in Tourism Business Management. This time, 23 students conducted the field survey to understand the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) elements and their protection and management in Foshan.



AL PLENARY

LAWMAKERS UNHAPPY WITH PUBLIC PARKING FEE INCREASE

RENATO MARQUES

Several lawmakers have expressed dissatisfaction with the government's planned increase of the hourly parking fees of seven public car parks.

The measure, announced by the Transport Bureau (DSAT) on Oct. 20, is still making waves with at least three lawmakers using the period before the agenda of yesterday's Legislative Assembly (AL) plenary session to criticize it.

Leong Sun Iok, Ngan Iek Hong, and Che Sai Wang were three of those who dedicated all their time to the topic delivering spoken inquiries calling on the government to retract the measure.

Lawmaker Leong said, "The DSAT used the pretext of increasing the turnover of parking spaces to announce, recently, the plan to increase fees for seven public parking lots between 33% and 50% from November. In my opinion, this adjustment lacks justification and is not based on scientific evidence," he said, also accusing the government of failing to consider the global situation of social recovery and the needs of residents in the areas involved.

According to DSAT's announcement, the government will increase the parking fees of seven of the public parking lots with greater usage in November and December.

The car parks are the Qingmao Border Post Car Park, Nam Van (Pak Wu) Car Park, Pak Vai Car Park, Jardim de Vasco da Gama Car Park, Car Park of Edificio Cheng Chong, Pak Wai Car Park and Alameda Dr. Carlos d'Assumpção Car Park.

The increase will raise the hourly fee of Qingmao Border Post Car Park to 10 patacas per hour (for cars) during the day and 8 patacas per hour during the night, while motorcycles will pay 4 patacas per hour during daytime and 3 patacas per hour at night.

Starting in December, fees for the other six public parking lots will be adjusted to 8 patacas per hour for cars during the day and 4 patacas per hour at night.

Motorcycles will be charged 3 patacas per hour during the day and 1.50 patacas during the night. The adjustments will also be reflected on monthly passes.

Lawmaker Leong also added it will be difficult for users to change the location of their parking places as it is already quite a complex process to access a parking

slot during most of the hours of the day.

Leong noted that according to government reports, the car parks have always been a profitable business and that it is not the right time to increase the burden of local residents' expenses while they are still struggling from the pandemic's impact.

The lawmakers said the measure might result in residents making more use of street parking, which contradicts the idea and concept of the use of parking lots for long stays and street parking for short-term parking.

Ngan also noted that while the number of existing vehicles and parking spaces would be generally suitable, in reality, this is not the case as some parking lots have a higher demand while others are barely used because they are not suited to residents' needs due to their fares or location.

"The usage rate [of the parking lots] varies greatly from one park to another as in some, the rate reaches 98% while in others is only 6%. As for motorbikes, the usage rate is quite low, as it is only in a few cases that it may exceed 60%, said Ngan."

"Furthermore, the average

usage rate is also not an accurate reference [for the evaluation], as each car park has its usage peak, since, for those located in commercial areas, normally, the daytime is the peak period, while at night the situation is much calmer, the opposite being the case in residential areas," Ngan said, calling on the government to adjust their criteria and references while evaluating the need to suggest adjustments to parking lot usage.

The lawmaker suggested the government use "Big Data" to analyze the situation before taking individual measures that might be disconnected from reality.

He agreed with the previous two lawmakers and added that measures of this kind can significantly impact livelihoods and needs to be scrutinized by the community.

He also alerted the government to the fact that post-pandemic all living costs have been rising and while the government should be focusing on helping the population to bounce back from that problem, it seems to be doing the opposite by overloading and creating added and unnecessary burdens in times of distress.

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DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaodailytimes.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@macaodailytimes.com

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ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaodailytimes.com
OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaodailytimes.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
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AL PLENARY

First non-deficit budget of this gov't term passed but with many remarks

RENATO MARQUES

THE 2024 budget will be the last from the current government term and will be the first that will not be in deficit and resorting to the financial reserves to balance the accounts, the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, said yesterday evening at the Legislative Assembly (AL) where the Budget 2024 bill was being discussed on its first reading.

Although the bill was passed unanimously by all lawmakers in the plenary of AL, it was not without remarks with some lawmakers having many questions for Secretary Lei.

Lei dealt with most of the sensitive questions by stating, "I won't be able to reply to many of the questions addressed by the lawmakers at this moment. While some are more suitable to be discussed at a later stage in the Standing Committee [where the bill will be analyzed in detail], and some others are mostly related to the Policy Address [for 2024], which has not yet been presented by the Chief Executive, I cannot comment on those topics just yet."

Some lawmakers were concerned that although the budget had a positive balance, the difference between forecast revenue and the expenditure was close. Some feared this could be potentially dangerous if some "mishap" or event



slowed Macau's current economic recovery.

The government's budget revenue for next year is approximately 107.1 billion patacas, an increase of approximately 1.8% compared with this year's initial budget.

Concurrently, budget expenditure is expected to reach some 105.9 billion patacas, an increase of approximately 1.4% from this year, reflecting a positive expected balance of 1.17 billion patacas for 2024.

With the return to surplus, the government also proposes to resume measures to benefit the population. The measures had been stopped as they were predicated on a government accounts surplus. Such measures included the annual 7,000 patacas to be injected

into the individual accounts of the Central Provident Fund.

It was also confirmed that civil servants' wages will be updated from the current 91 patacas per index point to 94 patacas per point, an increase of 3.3%.

In his presentation, Lei noted the 2024 budget represents a return to economic progress and that it should be seen as a sign of hope and encouragement for the whole population after the last four difficult years.

Lawmaker Nick Lei questioned the criteria that resulted in the proposed increase of civil servants' wages. He called on the government to make the process "more transparent and more methodical so that it can be easily trusted and followed by the private sector."

The same lawmaker noted that the gaming industry accounts for some 51,000 workers of Macau's total workforce, which should prompt the government to take "special actions" to ensure these workers "receive benefits in the same way [as the government employees] so that workers from the gaming concessions can also improve their quality of life."

Also critical of the budget was lawmaker Ron Lam who said that he could not see "any measures to tackle society's problems."

Lam said that on the contrary, next year's budget "seems to be reducing elements relevant to the livelihood of the population, precisely where the government should be increasing them."

Lei replied that the amounts to

be spent on each part of the annual budget are strictly following the approved Administrative Plan for the Development Investments and Expenditures (PIDDA) and that "the distribution of the available wealth to each sector is being made to reach a balance."

Lam also noted that the government's financial reserves are still very healthy with the general reserve to reach 547 billion patacas and the extraordinary reserve to add another 393 billion patacas.

"These reserves and funds are for future generations and the way to invest in them is by investing in education," he said, claiming that considering the value per capita, "the government is, in reality, under-investing in education which is a capital sector."

Lam also noted that many social subsidies and benefits have remained unchanged for the proposed budget of 2024, a fact that is considered disappointing considering the significant loss of families' purchasing power over the last four years.

On the same topic, lawmakers José Pereira Coutinho and Che Sai Wang also insisted on the reinstatement of the "consumption cards" to restore lost purchasing power and to stimulate internal consumption. They stated residents have now become used to "purchase everything online from mainland sales platforms and they have stopped acquiring goods locally."

CLIMATE CHANGE

City sets new record for highest October temperature

LYNZY VALLES

MACAU sweltered through its hottest October on Oct. 4, reaching 35.2 degrees Celsius, which was attributed to Typhoon Koinu, with the city entering autumn in September.

According to the Meteorological and Geophysics Bureau (SMG), the Oct. 4 temperature broke the record for the highest October temperature since 1952.

October also saw three extremely hot days, the second October with the most number of sweltering days since records began.

Meanwhile, in July,

under the influence of Typhoon Talim's outer subsidence airflow, the daily maximum temperature was 36.6 degrees Celsius, the third highest in July since 1952.

Replying to the Times, SMG said Macau's annual average temperature over the past decade has been on the high side, with 2019 to 2021 being the warmest three years since 1952.

While 2019 was the warmest year (23.6 degrees Celsius), 2021 and 2020 were the second and third warmest years respectively.

In terms of extreme high temperatures, the daily maximum tempera-

ture of 38 degrees Celsius recorded in August 2017 was the hottest day since 1952, the local weather bureau said.

According to climate data for the past 32 years (1991-2020), although Macau entered autumn in September, the average number of days with hot weather was 6.3, and hot weather was recorded in October.

In addition, Macau's cumulative rainfall in October was 295.4 mm, about four times Macau's 30-year climate average. The daily cumulative rainfall on Oct. 9 reached 231.6 millimeters, which was the third highest

daily figure in October in 71 years, which was also influenced by Typhoon Koinu.

The typhoon, which brought Hong Kong and Macau to a standstill, injured more than 300 as it brought pounding rain and record-breaking winds to the island, leading to school and office closures.

As the Earth sweltered to its hottest Northern Hemisphere summer ever recorded, Macau, as well as Hong Kong, shared in the misery.

The Hong Kong Observatory said this year's summer was much hotter than normal in August.

Its average August temperature was 29.7 degrees Celsius, while the average maximum August temperature was 32.4 degrees Celsius, 1.1 degrees higher than normal and one of the second-hottest Augusts on record.

"Together with the unusually hot June and July, Hong Kong experienced the hottest summer on record," the observation noted.

Japan's summer this year was the country's hottest since records began in 1898.

A record warm August capped the season of brutal and deadly temperatures, according to the World

Meteorological Organization.

August 2023 was not only the hottest August scientists ever recorded by far with modern equipment, but it was also the second hottest month measured, behind only July 2023, the WMO and the European climate service, Copernicus, previously announced.

Further, the SMG has warned Macau would continue to have high temperatures for the rest of the week and temperatures would reach up to 30 degrees Celsius, yet a sharp drop in temperatures is expected after the weekend, falling as low as 17 degrees Celsius by Tuesday.

HK CONSIDERS MACAU-STYLE CROSS-BOUNDARY VEHICLE VISITS

Hong Kong's Secretary for Transport and Logistics Lam Sai-hung has said his government is considering allowing vehicles from Macau and Guangdong Province to take the bridge to Hong Kong and park at a designated parking lot, before the passengers take a flight or enter the city. Details are still under consideration, but implementation is expected next year. There may be quotas and prior registration, and applications may be required. The second phase of this plan might allow external vehicles to enter Hong Kong, but Lam said it was too early to discuss the second phase.

POST OFFICE ANNOUNCES CHRISTMAS CUT-OFF DATES

The Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT) has announced the cut-off dates for this year's Christmas mail. Mail to most destinations will end in November, with the exception being mail to mainland China ending Dec. 7, to Taiwan ending Dec. 1 for parcels and Dec. 4 for letters and small packages, and to the UK ending Dec. 1 for letters and small packages. The mailing of parcels as well as letters and small packages to Portugal will end Nov. 27 and 28 respectively. Mail to the US and Canada will end near the end of this month. The full list is accessible on the CTT website.

MORE SEATS AVAILABLE FOR FADO-CHINESE ORCHESTRA

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has announced that due to overwhelming demand, additional seats are available for the show featuring Portuguese Fado divo Camané and the Macao Chinese Orchestra. Tickets are now on sale at Macau Ticketing points. The IC said the singer is a pioneer in the new generation of Fado, and won a Fado award at age 13. With six albums, over a million of sales and a multitude of sold-out concerts around the world, Camané's Macau concert on Saturday is an unmissable occasion.

PHARMACEUTICAL BUREAU RECALLS TCM PATENT

The Pharmaceutical Administration Bureau has recalled a patented traditional Chinese medicine pill made with *Coptis chinensis* and manufactured by Three Mast Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. in Taiwan due to the detection of an excessive quantity of aerobic bacteria, molds and yeasts. The affected batch is WG07. The bureau has urged purchasers of the affected batch to contact the sellers for follow-up. Questions can also be directed to the bureau at 8598 3533 during office hours.

KONG CHI

PROSECUTOR ACCUSES KONG'S COLLEAGUES OF MALPRACTICE

ANTHONY LAM

THE prosecution in Kong Chi's alleged corruption trial has accused two of Kong's Public Prosecutions Office (MP) colleagues of separate instances of malpractice.

Prosecutor Leong Man Ieng, who had testified at a hearing, was seen by Assistant Prosecutor General Kuok Un Man as having engaged in conduct that affected the MP's image, local media All About Macau has reported.

Leong, replying to questions during her testimony, said she had forgotten details related to the topic. Though Kuok did not view her response as perjury, the practice might affect the MP's image and violate the requirement of loyalty expected of civil servants.

Kuok has requested the voice recording of Leong's testimony and plans to deliver it to the Prosecutors' Committee for further investigation.



Kuok reported Chan to the court for alleged perjury and personal favoritism.

Several other MP officers have testified at the latest hearing, with two being or having been assistants of Prosecutor Coordinator Lai U Hou and Assistant Prosecutor General Kong Chi.

Kong's assistant between 2017 and 2018, surnamed Chan, testified she had drafted indictments or notices of archive under Kong's instructions. Decisions whether to press charges or to archive cases were made either by her or Kong, but Kong had ultimate discretion. However, she

did not know if Kong had reversed any decisions because Kong would directly pass the updated documentation to the competent divisions.

When questioned by a judge if she considered herself as having crossed legal lines, Chan said she had no feelings about the matter because the same situation applied to other officers as well.

The witness also said some prosecutors would not attend interrogation sessions, which included Kong, who would only attend for "important" cases.

Another witness, Lai's assistant surnamed Cheong, told the judge he was only working as an assistant when his superintendent told him to draft legal documents. To rationalize his drafting of legal documents, he said senior officials' dispatches are not written by the officials.

Two judges, in response, said the drafting of legal documents is the responsibility of judicial clerks, which is a legal stipulation.

CRIME

Duo apprehended for alleged phone scams

ANTHONY LAM

POLICE have arrested two men and delivered them to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for alleged impostor phone scams, the MP said in a statement yesterday.

The two men are from Hong Kong, the MP added.

In impostor phone scams, scammers conceal their identities but

lure call recipients to connect them to somebody they know.

The MP said that in the first case a Hong Kong man allegedly started swindling four senior local residents in October. The man allegedly worked with a syndicate, the MP noted.

According to the MP, the suspects pretended to be a relative of the senior residents and requested

emergency money from the four residents. They asked the elderly victims to prepare cash, which was collected by the Hong Kong man who pretended to be a lawyer.

The case involved MOP360,000.

The second man allegedly defrauded two local residents of MOP370,000.

The two men are now in custody because of the severity of the case, the

risk of their fleeing and the disruption to judicial procedures, following recommendations from the prosecutor and an order from a court, the MP added.

Each man has been charged with the crime of serious deception. The second man has been hit with an additional charge of grievous deception.

The MP said serious deception incurs five

years imprisonment or a maximum of 600 days of fine. The crime of grievous deception incurs ten years of imprisonment.

The MP said residents must be vigilant against scams. Phone calls requesting payment or money should be handled with exceptional caution. Victims should report cases to the police or the MP.

YOUTH GAMES

LOCAL CHANGQUAN ATHLETE WINS BRONZE



LOCAL athlete Sou Lcho Man yesterday won the bronze medal in the Changquan event in the ongoing first Student (Youth) Games of China, scoring 9.666 points.

Sou, a student of Macao Polytechnic University, also achieved fifth place in the overall women's Changquan event

during the recent Hangzhou Asian Games.

Today, she is set to compete in the women's Daoshu event.

Macao athlete Wong Weng Ian won the gold medal in the women's Qiangshu event Monday, while swimmer Chen Pui Lam won her first gold medal in the women's 50-meter breaststroke

event Saturday, which was the first for the Macau delegation in the Games.

Organized by the Ministry of Education, the General Administration of Sports, and the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, the Games will run from Nov. 5 to Nov. 15, featuring 39 sports, 51 disciplines and 805 events in open and campus categories, where more than 18,000 athletes will participate.



GAMING

New Edition announces Wynn Las Vegas residency from late February

R&B group New Edition will bring their New Jack Swing tunes to Las Vegas early next year.

The Grammy-nominated sextet announced that New Edition: Las Vegas will kick off Feb. 28. The group confirmed six residency shows at the Wynn Las Vegas' Encore Theater, where acts like Diana Ross, Duran Duran, Lionel Richie and Brad Paisley have taken the stage.

"We just caught lightning in a bottle," said Ronnie DeVoe, a founding member of New Edition — which includes Michael Bivins, Bobby Brown, Johnny Gill, Ralph Tresvant and Ricky Bell. Monday's announcement came after days after the group performed a tightly choreographed tribute to the Spinners at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony in New York.

DeVoe said the band heard fans countless requests — particularly through social media — for them to perform in Sin City. "We're looking to touch that stage and continue on with the legacy," he said.

After two consecutive North American tours, New Edition has planned for a more intimate setting at Encore, which sea-

ts 1,480.

"This is going to more theatrical than our Legacy and Culture tours," Brown said. "This will be a lot more intimate. We wanted it to be up, close and personal for our fans."

New Edition was founded by childhood friends in a Boston housing project and became one of the originators of the modern-day boy band. The group released their debut album "Candy Girl" in 1983 and rejuvenated the teen music scene in the mold of The Jackson Five with hit singles like "Candy Girl," "Mr. Telephone Man" and "Cool It Now."

The group maintained success after puberty and laid the foundation for groups such as New Kids on the Block, the Backstreet Boys and Boyz II Men.

But then, New Edition faced plenty of conflict — which included Brown's erratic behavior during a concert tour, resulting in him being kicked out of the group. Tensions grew after Brown was replaced by Gill.

Brown found success as a solo artist with the 1988 hit "Don't Be Cruel." Gill and Tresvant had their own solo careers, while Bell, Bivins and DeVoe created their own group, Bell Biv DeVoe, and soared with

their 1990 debut album, "Poison," which went quadruple platinum.

But eventually, all six members reconciled, reuniting for their sixth studio album "Home Again" in 1996. The group has toured the past couple of years.

Bell said the tours helped build cohesiveness and created more of an opportunity to appreciate each other. He's grateful for the group's longevity: "We have each other, we have our health, we have our families. Everybody's still here."

Bivins said the same authentic brotherhood shown during New Edition's recent tours will be on display in Las Vegas.

"Our audience got a chance to see growth, bond, brotherhood," he said. "Sometimes that's bigger than any record because people come to look for separation. But I think we'll give them the glue."

New Edition hasn't released an album since 2004, but DeVoe said there's a good chance the group will release new music leading up to their residency stint.

"It makes sense," he said. "I think it'll be a great time to get in the studio and put our vocals on something new and fresh." MDT/AP

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ECONOMY

Chinese imports rise in October while exports fall for sixth straight month

CHINA'S imports rose in October while exports fell for a sixth straight month compared with a year earlier in the latest evidence the world's second largest economy remains in the doldrums.

Customs data released yesterday showed imports climbed 3% from a year earlier to \$218.3 billion, while exports fell 6.4% to \$274.8 billion. The trade surplus of \$56.5 billion was down more than 30% from \$77.7 billion in September and was a 17-month low.

Exports had fallen 6.2% year-on-year in September.

Exports may fall further still, said Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics.

"We expect exports to decline over the coming months before bottoming around the middle of next year. Measures of foreign orders hint at a more significant drop in foreign demand than what has so far been observed in the customs data," he said in a report.

Overall, China's foreign trade has remained sluggish this year as global demand has slackened and a recovery has stalled despite the country's reopening after its strict COVID-19 controls were lifted late last year.

Demand for Chinese exports has weakened since the Federal Reserve and central banks in Europe and Asia began raising interest rates last year to cool inflation that was at multi-decade highs.

Total trade in January-October,



including both imports and exports, rose a mere 0.03%, yesterday's data showed.

At the same time, imports have remained weak. October's 3% increase was the first monthly increase since September 2022, and a big improvement from a 6.2% decline in September.

Major contributors to that increase included soybeans and crude oil, as well as intermediate products such as electronic components used in manufacturing.

Trade with Japan, Southeast Asian countries, the European Union and the U.S. has declined

this year.

China's property sector remains a drag on the economy, with sales slumping and developers struggling to repay massive amounts of debt.

The central bank has eased borrowing rules and cut mortgage rates for first-time home buyers while providing some tax relief measures for small businesses. Late last month, it announced plans to issue 1 trillion yuan (\$330 billion) in bonds for infrastructure projects and disaster prevention, dipping deeper into deficit to try to nudge the

economy into higher gear.

The data were released as China was holding its annual International Import Expo in Shanghai. The event has drawn thousands of foreign businesses shopping for Chinese products and looking to expand their own trade and investment in the huge market of 1.4 billion people.

ALBANESE FOR FREE TRADE

In opening the event during the weekend, Chinese Premier Li Qiang sought to reassure foreign companies that the country remains eager to attract more fo-

reign investment. He promised to relax curbs on market access and protect the rights of foreign companies and to "continue to create a market-oriented, legal, and international business environment."

China and Australia were meanwhile holding talks yesterday on how to revive their trade ties. In the first visit by an Australian prime minister in seven years, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese called for the "full resumption of free and unimpeded trade" with China.

The two sides are working to restore trade links blocked for years due to economic and political tensions. More than 200 Australian companies were represented at the fair.

China's imports from Australia have risen 8.4% this year, while exports to Australia have fallen 4.2%.

Trade with Russia has surged, with imports of oil and other commodities jumping 12.4% as meanwhile exports to Russia surged more than 52%.

Money has been flowing out of China seeking higher returns in places where interest rates have risen. The government reported earlier that foreign direct investment fell nearly \$12 billion in July-September compared with a year earlier in the first such quarterly drop since the State Administration of Foreign Exchange began reporting the data in 1998. **MDT/AP**

EVENTS

Philadelphia Orchestra returns to China for tour marking 50 years since its historic 1973 visit



Philadelphia Orchestra's 73-year-old violinist Davyd Booth (left) is greeted at the Beijing Airport

THE Philadelphia Orchestra returned to Beijing yesterday for a tour that will mark 50 years since its historic performance in China, the latest sign of improving ties between the two countries ahead of a highly anticipated meeting between Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping.

The orchestra first visited China in September 1973, marking a thaw in U.S.-China relations just as the two nations began normalizing ties after Richard Nixon became the first U.S.

president to visit China's mainland.

Ahead of the tour, the orchestra said 14 of its members will be traveling to China, including 73-year-old Davyd Booth, a violinist who was on the orchestra's first tour to the country half a century ago.

"This constant 50-year connection with China has been really very deep and very wonderful," Booth on arriving at Beijing's Capital International Airport.

The ensemble will be performing with the Chi-

na National Symphony Orchestra at the National Centre for the Performing Arts, starting Friday. The musicians will also travel to the cities of Tianjin, Suzhou and Shanghai, and hold master classes and perform chamber music at schools and cultural venues.

The ensemble's visit coincides with the American Ballet Theatre's tour in China, which started in Shanghai last week. The cultural exchanges follow a series of high-level visits from the United States, in-

cluding Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo.

The U.S. and China have been slowly restoring contacts that were largely broken off over the past four years, both by the coronavirus pandemic that restricted travel and the growing animosity between the world's two largest economies.

In recent weeks, Washington and Beijing have made overtures to each other as they prepare for a meeting between Biden and Xi at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco next week.

Until now, the Philadelphia Orchestra had visited China 12 times, most recently in May 2019, before the pandemic. **MDT/AP**

MYANMAR

Resistance claims first capture of a district capital from regular forces

GRANT PECK, BANGKOK

ARMED resistance groups fighting Myanmar's military government seized a district capital in the north this week after taking state offices and a police station in a four-day offensive, according to residents, the country's major opposition coalition and media reports.

Kawlin in Sagaing region is the first administrative capital seized by the resistance forces in continuing strife since the army seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021.

Sagaing has been a stronghold of armed resistance to the army, which has responded with major offensives using ground troops supported by artillery and air strikes, burning down villages and driving hundreds of thousands of people from their homes.

Loosely organized resistance groups opposed to army rule, known as the People's Defense Force, or PDF, have sprung up around the country since the army's takeover. They have made alliances with well-established armed ethnic minority groups such as the Kachin and Karen, who have been fighting in border areas for greater autonomy from the central government for more than half a century.



Members of the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army hold the group's flag as they pose for a photograph on a captured army armored vehicle in Myanmar

Kawlin, which is about 200 kilometers (125 miles) north of Mandalay, the country's second biggest city, is the principal town of Kawlin district.

Clashes began there at dawn on Friday with coordinated attacks by a combined force of at least three local resistance groups including the Kawlin People's Defense Force, according to reports posted online by media groups sympathetic to the resistance struggle.

Outlets including Khit Thit Media also posted video online showing what they said were members of the resistance clearing

the bodies of soldiers and police killed in battle from damaged buildings.

It was impossible for The Associated Press to independently verify details of the fighting in the remote, war-torn area.

However, a resident interviewed by phone said that the resistance fighters seized Kawlin's police station on Sunday evening and the township administration office on Monday at 7:30 a.m., and by that morning they had taken control of the whole town, which was being patrolled by a joint resistance force. He spoke on the condition of anonymity because

he was afraid of being arrested by the military.

Members of the Kachin Independence Army, an armed wing of the main Kachin political organization, the Kachin Independence Organization, were among the resistance forces taking part, he said.

He said the military's intense aerial bombardments and shelling of recent days had stopped late Monday, and the resistance forces were preparing to defend against new attacks.

More than 20 members of the military and three members of the resistance groups died in

clashes, and the number of the civilians killed during the fighting was still being tallied, he said.

Another resident who also spoke on the condition of anonymity due to security concerns said about 30,000 civilians, including inmates of the local jail, were evacuated into the forest and nearby villages by the resistance groups to avoid casualties from air strikes.

Myanmar's National Unity Government -- the main organization opposed to military rule -- said in the statement posted on its Facebook page that resistance fighters had seized control of the police station, general administration office, high school, the land management and statistics office and Myanmar Commercial Bank

It said it was the first time that an administrative district capital had been attacked and captured.

Access to the internet and mobile phone services in the area was almost entirely cut off as the fighting raged.

More a dozen Kawlin residents who have been away from the town told the AP that since Saturday evening they have not been able to reach family members still in Kawlin by mobile phone.

The victory came a week after the Three Brotherhood Alliance launched an offensive against the military government and seized three towns in the country's northeast, including a major border crossing for trade with China.

The unexpected action by the alliance, composed of the Arakan Army, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, was seen as boosting the nationwide armed struggle to overthrow the military regime. **MDT/AP**

SINGAPORE

Prince William cheers on 15 finalists of Earthshot Prize ahead of awards ceremony

BITAIN'S Prince William cheered on 15 finalists of his third Earthshot Prize in Singapore yesterday ahead of the awards ceremony where five of them will win 1 million pounds (\$1.2 million) each to scale up groundbreaking innovations to fight climate change.

William spoke to the finalists -- all whom are attending the ceremony for the first time for networking opportunities -- at Gardens by the Bay, an artistic horticulture attraction. The winners are grouped into five categories: nature protection, clean air, ocean re-



Prince William meets the 2023 Earthshot Prize finalists at the base of the Supertrees at the Gardens by the Bay in Singapore

val, waste elimination and climate change.

The finalists included a

U.S. company that found a way to recycle polycotton fabrics, which makes

up half of all textile waste. Others were an Indian company producing solar-powered dryers to help small farmers preserve crops and combat food waste; a scheme to plant, grow and digitally track trees in Sierra Leone's capital Freetown where 70% of trees have been cut down amid urban sprawl; an anti-smog movement in Poland which has the dirtiest air in Europe and a U.K. company making low-emission tires for electric vehicles.

The winners are chosen by a 13-member council that includes Jordan's Queen Rania al Abdullah, Chinese business magna-

te Jack Ma, British fashion designer Stella McCartney, broadcaster David Attenborough, World Trade Organization chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweale and former NBA star Yao Ming.

Apart from the prize money, all 15 finalists will receive a year of technical support and resources to help them accelerate their ideas. The Earthshot Prize was launched in 2020 by William's Royal Foundation charity as a 10-year program to shore up innovative solutions and technologies against the planet's greatest environmental perils.

William, 41, arrived Sunday for a four-day trip, his

first in 11 years. The award ceremony is being held in Asia for the first time after the inaugural session in London and in Boston last year. He has said his wife, Kate, couldn't accompany him as she was helping their eldest son George with school exams.

William will join celebrities later to walk the 'green carpet' for the glitzy ceremony at the theater at MediaCorp., a state-owned media conglomerate. The ceremony will be co-hosted by actors Hannah Waddingham and Sterling K. Brown. Artists performing for the night are pop bands One Republic and Bastille, and U.S. singer Bebe Rexha.

Prizes will be presented by Oscar winner Cate Blanchett, actors Donnie Yen, Lana Condor and Nomzamo Mbatha and Australian wildlife conservationist Robert Irwin. **MDT/AP**

G7 Israel-Hamas war crowds crisis-heavy agenda as foreign ministers meet in Japan

MATTHEW LEE, TOKYO

FRESH from a whirlwind tour of the Middle East, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken shifted his intense diplomacy on the Israel-Hamas war to Asia yesterday, as he and his counterparts from the Group of Seven leading industrial democracies began two days of talks in Japan.

The devastating month-long conflict in Gaza and efforts to ease the dire humanitarian impacts of Israel's response to the deadly Oct. 7 Hamas attack were set to be a major focus of the meeting. Yet with the Russia-Ukraine war, fears North Korea may be readying a new nuclear test, and concerns about China's increasing global assertiveness, it is far from the only crisis on the agenda.

"Even as we are intensely focused on the crisis in Gaza, we're also very much engaged and focused on the important work that we're doing in the Indo-Pacific and in other parts of the world," Blinken told reporters in Ankara, Turkey, before leaving the Middle East for Asia.

In Tokyo, Blinken and foreign ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan and Italy will be looking for common ground on approaches to the Israel-Hamas war that threatens to destabilize already shaky se-



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, left, shakes hands with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida ahead of G7 meeting

curity in the broader Middle East and seeking to maintain existing consensus positions on the other issues.

Before wrapping up the Mideast portion of his trip — a four-day whirlwind that included stops in Israel, Jordan, the West Bank, Cyprus, Iraq and Turkey — Blinken said he would brief his G7 colleagues on the status of his efforts, seeking their advice and pressing ahead.

"I'll have an opportunity to debrief my colleagues on what we've learned and what we've done during this trip, and to continue that work and carry it forward," he said.

Those efforts include sig-

nificantly expanding the amount of humanitarian aid being sent to Gaza, pushing Israel to agree to "pauses" in its military operation to allow that assistance to get in and more civilians to get out, beginning planning for a post-conflict governance and security structure in the territory and preventing the war from spreading.

Blinken described all of these as "a work in progress" and acknowledged deep divisions over the pause concept. Israel remains unconvinced and Arab and Muslim nations are demanding an immediate full cease-fire, something the United Sta-

tes opposes. There has also been resistance to discussing Gaza's future, with the Arab states insisting that the immediate humanitarian crisis must be addressed first.

Securing agreement from G7 members, none of which border or are directly involved in the conflict, may be a slightly less daunting challenge for Blinken.

Since before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the G7 has held together in defense of the international order that emerged from the destruction of World War II. Despite some fraying around the edges, the group has preserved a unified front in condemning and opposing Russia's war.

The group similarly has been of one voice in demanding that North Korea halt its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, that China exercise its growing international clout responsibly, and also in calling for cooperative actions to combat pandemics, synthetic opioids, and threats from the misuse of artificial intelligence.

Yet the Gaza crisis has inflamed international public opinion and democracies are not immune from intense passions that have manifested themselves in massive pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel demonstrations in G7 capitals and elsewhere. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2000 BUSH AND GORE FIGHT TO THE FINISH

The result of the American presidential election is still hanging in the balance hours after the last polls officially closed.

Votes are still being counted in the key state of Florida where it seems there are only a few hundred votes separating the two would-be presidents.

Early exit polls claimed Republican George W Bush had taken the Sunshine State — but the claim was later retracted.

The Democrat White House hopeful, Al Gore, had apparently been on the verge of admitting defeat.

He had already phoned Mr Bush to offer his congratulations when he was told the Florida result was still too close to call.

Mr Gore telephoned Governor Bush a second time to withdraw his concession.

He said: "Circumstances have changed since I first called you."

"We have now learned we are down by only about 600 votes out of millions cast and that means an automatic recount."

The election campaign has been one of the closest for years.

National polls gave Governor Bush a slender lead as voters went to the polls but one survey gave Al Gore a two point advantage suggesting he could still win the race.

A high turnout of blacks and union members appears to have helped Mr Gore in the large industrial states.

Jeb Bush, Mr Bush's brother and governor of Florida, had promised to deliver the state for his brother.

The Texas governor appeared to hold a slender advantage in a string of swing states, including Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin, Arkansas and Nevada.

If he wins in Florida, he will probably have enough electoral college votes to become president.

It is possible Mr Bush could win the electoral college but lose the popular vote. This has not happened since 1888 when Benjamin Harrison became President even though Grover Cleveland had amassed more votes.

Mr Bush closed his White House campaign by vowing to be a "uniter not a divider" if elected president and Mr Gore promised to "fight for you". [...]

He ended his campaign with a whistle-stop tour of five states, ending in Florida. He was joined in Miami by celebrity supporters including actors Robert de Niro, Glenn Close, Ben Affleck and Stevie Wonder.

Courtesy BBC News



LEBANON

Woman and her three granddaughters killed in Israeli strike laid to rest

A Lebanese woman and her three granddaughters were laid to rest in their hometown in southern Lebanon yesterday, two days after they were killed in an Israeli drone strike that hit the car they were traveling in near the Lebanon-Israel border.

Hundreds of men and women marched before the four coffins, which were draped

in black and white banners as they were carried through the streets of the village of Ainata. The coffins were later taken for burial in a cemetery in the nearby village of Blida.

Israeli troops and militants from Lebanon's Hezbollah group and their allies have been clashing for a month along the border following

the start of the Israel-Hamas war. The clashes have intensified since Israel launched a ground incursion into Gaza against Hamas, an ally of Hezbollah.

Large posters of Samira Abdul-Hussein Ayoub and her three granddaughters — Rimas Shor, 14; Talin Shor, 12; and Layan Shor, 10 — were displayed in the ce-

metry in the southeastern town of Blida. The three girls' mother, Hoda Hijazi, was wounded in the attack and is still undergoing treatment in a hospital.

Following the drone strike that killed the four, Hezbollah said its fighters fired rockets toward the northern Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona, killing one person. **MDT/AP**

IN CONTEXT

Texas Governor George Bush was eventually declared President-elect on 13 December 2000 after a protracted legal battle.

The vote in Florida went to a hand-count. But it turned out thousands of votes had been discarded by automatic machines because voters were supposed to knock out a small rectangle of card next to their choice of candidate and many were not punched properly.

The bits of card, known as chads, gave rise to serious complaints. Many black Americans claimed they had been disenfranchised after it was revealed the oldest and least reliable voting machines were placed in black precincts.

An inquiry carried out after the result had been decided concluded that more than 180,000 votes were thrown out as a result of poorly trained poll workers and a lack of standard procedures.

On 13 December 2000 Al Gore conceded victory to George W Bush.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Don't let emotional upset force you into the poorhouse. Get involved in philosophic groups that will enlighten you. Don't forget to let your mate know how much you care.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Try not to take others for granted. Tempers could get out of hand today. You can have an enjoyable time if you socialize with friends. Education may be the answer.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Sudden changes regarding work and colleagues are apparent. Your talents are likely to be discovered. Your ideas can be put into action.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You may be uncertain about some of your coworkers and your boss. Don't give up what you have until you can be certain just what it is you're getting.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You can make a difference if you take a position of leadership. Make changes regarding your friendships. Promote your ideas now.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Opportunities for travel and socializing are evident. You may need to lend an ear to an old friend. Don't overspend or give too freely to others.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

You may be frazzled today. New romantic ties can be made; however, you must make sure that your motives are not selfish before you make your move.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Try to stay calm and do the best you can. You may find it impossible to get the rest you require. Opportunities for romance will develop through activities with large groups.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Social activities that involve the whole family will be enjoyable. You may find that someone you live with is not too happy, but you can't really do anything about that right now.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You will be in the doghouse if you are being. Keep calm. Someone around you is bouncing off the walls. Situations in your personal life are moving a little fast lately.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Try out for a local sports team such as volleyball, tennis, lawn bowling, or whatever interests you. Pamper yourself; you deserve it. Make sure that you have all the pertinent facts before taking action.

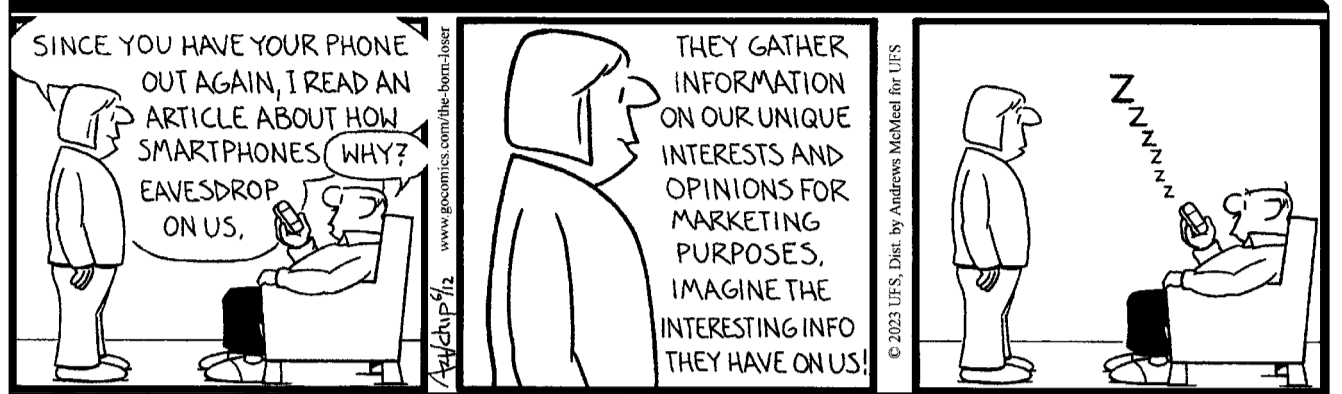


PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You may find that female colleagues will be more helpful than you anticipated. You should regain some of your self esteem if you get involved in organizational functions.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

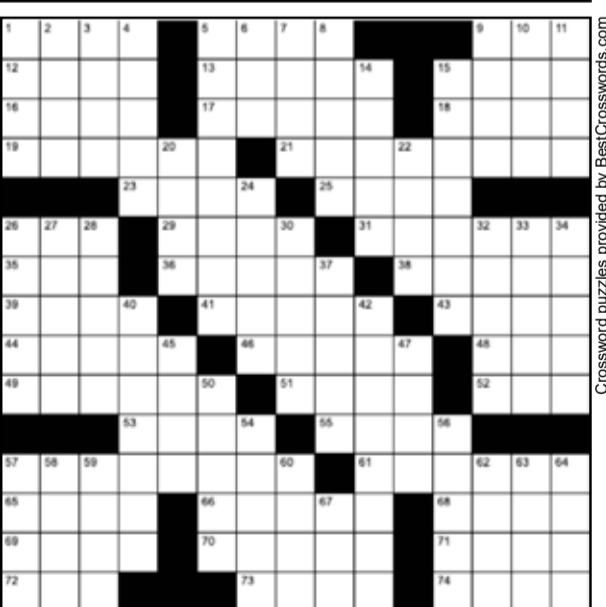
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	0	11	cloudy
Changchun	-14	1	snow
Chengdu	12	21	overcast
Chongqing	16	21	rain
Fuzhou	18	27	rain
Guangzhou	21	26	rain
Guiyang	11	22	cloudy
Haikou	24	29	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	12	22	overcast
Harbin	-17	-3	snow
Hefei	8	22	cloudy
Nanjing	11	23	cloudy
Shanghai	13	22	overcast
Taipei	21	27	fine
Wuhan	9	22	cloudy
Hong Kong	25	26	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	3	8	overcast
Frankfurt	7	10	overcast
Paris	9	13	showers
London	6	13	showers
New York	8	12	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Disrespectful back talk; 5- Ticklish doll; 9- Skye cap; 12- Spillane's "___ Jury"; 13- Scenes; 15- Commedia dell'___; 16- Bridle strap; 17- Mgmt.; 18- Fly catcher; 19- Infected; 21- Person-to-person; 23- Border on; 25- Basic unit of heredity; 26- Tie the knot; 29- Long objects used to row a boat; 31- Steal livestock; 35- Afore; 36- Meat; 38- Place; 39- Slender; 41- Ruhr city; 43- Longings; 44- Lager holder; 46- Luster; 48- Born, in France; 49- Informal chat; 51- Capital city of Western Samoa; 52- Fashion monogram; 53- Big bash; 55- Cpls.' superiors; 57- God of dreams; 61- Owl, e.g.; 65- Not pro; 66- Improvise; 68- Like the White Rabbit; 69- Observed; 70- Connect with; 71- CPR experts; 72- Is afflicted with; 73- Redolence; 74- Show to a table;

DOWN 1- Letter opener; 2- To ___ (perfectly); 3- Pack and send; 4- Actress Berger; 5- Leave empty; 6- Container cover; 7- Exec's note; 8- Due (to); 9- Dixie Chicks, e.g.; 10- Env. notation; 11- Allot; 14- Twisted expression?; 15- Pardon; 20- Native Nigerians; 22- Responsibility; 24- Head lock; 26- From Cardiff; 27- One of the Muses; 28- Brightest star in Cygnus; 30- "Peter and the Wolf" bird; 32- Itty-bitty; 33- Ways to the pins; 34- Ford flop; 37- Hangs on to; 40- Boss; 42- Person who lives near another; 45- Flood survivor; 47- Defense grp. since 1949; 50- Sheep cry; 54- Recording of acoustic signals; 56- Mends a shoe; 57- Potato preparation; 58- Draft classification; 59- Hwys.; 60- Go downhill fast?; 62- Domesticated; 63- Bluesy James; 64- Break; 67- How was ___ know?;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
- Fire department 28 572 222
- PJ (Open line) 993
- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- Customs 28 559 944
- S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IAM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
- Airport 59 888 88
- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
- Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

RUGBY ACADEMY

MACAU BATS RETURN TO HONG KONG FESTIVALS

DONALD SHAW, HONG KONG

LOCAL rugby team, the Macau Bats, entered their first rugby festival of the new season in Hong Kong last weekend. The club entered six teams across the under 7 to under 12 age groups. The Under-7s were first up to play at Kings Park and got the day off to a bright start with 3 wins and a draw in their games. Similarly, the U8s had a very successful campaign winning all 4 of their matches, an outcome that will see them promoted to the higher division at the next festival in two weeks.

The U9s also had a positive showing with wins against hosts USRC Tigers (5-2), Sai Kung Stingrays (9-2), followed by a 4-4 draw with Sandy Bay and a 2-5 loss to a strong Tsuen Wan Rhinos.

At U10s, the Bats fielded a joint team with Tung Chung Buffaloes.

The combined team showed a lot of heart and promise in their play despite losses to USRC Tigers (2-4), Hong Kong Football Club (2-4), Shatin Shapei (3-4) and Flying Kukris (3-5).

The U11s gave a good account of themselves with four wins - against USRC Tigers (2-1); Sandy Bay (5-0); Shatin Shapei (4-0); and an impressive 6-1 win over Flying Kukris.

As with the U10s, the Bats and Tung Chung Buffaloes joined forces in the U12 age group and recorded a draw against Sandy Bay (3-3); a win (2-1) against South China Athletic before a couple of close losses to HKFC (2-4) and USRC Tigers (1-3).

Across the age groups there can be optimism for the rest of the season with the next Hong Kong festival taking place on the 19th November.



AD

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

FOOTBALL | EPL

9-man Tottenham beaten by Chelsea in chaotic match



Hat trick: Chelsea's Nicolas Jackson celebrates after scoring his side's third goal

TOTTENHAM 1, CHELSEA 4

TOTTENHAM'S players lost their heads and the remaining unbeaten record in the English Premier League.

A late hat trick by Nicolas Jackson sealed a 4-1 victory for Chelsea in a chaotic London derby yesterday [Macau time] featuring two red cards — to Tottenham defenders Cristian Romero and Destiny Udogie — five disallowed goals and a maverick tactical approach by Spurs manager Ange Postecoglou in his unlikely bid to survive with nine men.

Jackson broke the resistance of Tottenham with his three goals from the 75th minute, settling a frantic game that defied logic at times as hosts survived for a while despite playing a high defensive line following the sending-offs of Romero in the 33rd and Udogie in the 55th.

"It is pretty hard to process," Postecoglou said. "It's almost impossible to analyze the game be-

cause it just seemed to get out of control."

Dejan Kulusevski gave Tottenham a flying start by scoring off a deflected shot in the sixth minute, only for the derby to turn fiery amid a blaze of wild challenges and crazy incidents.

Amidst all the madness, Cole Palmer equalized from the spot after Romero conceded a penalty — and earned a fourth red card in 2 1/2 years at Tottenham — for a dangerous lunge on Argentina teammate Enzo Fernandez.

And when Udogie collected a second yellow card, Tottenham faced an uphill battle to preserve its undefeated start to the season.

Chelsea initially failed to get past Tottenham's brave but possibly naïve high line but did so eventually to devastating effect. Jackson's final two goals came deep into stoppage time to clinch a memorable win for visiting manager Mauricio Pochettino on his return to the club he coached from 2014-19 and led to a Champions League final.

Postecoglou had no regrets re-

garding his tactics while his team was down to nine men, saying: "It is just who we are. It is who we are and who we will be for as long as I am here.

"If we go down to five men, we will have a crack."

It left Manchester City, the defending champion, a point clear of second-placed Tottenham after an 11th round of games that saw Liverpool and Arsenal, the other teams in the top four, also fail to win.

The first half, in particular, was mayhem.

Aside from the two goals and the red card to Romero, there were four disallowed goals, game-ending injuries to Tottenham players James Maddison and Micky van de Ven, yellow cards to Postecoglou for complaining and Udogie for a flying two-footed lunge, a free-for-all sparked by a scuffle between Chelsea's Levi Colwill and Tottenham's Pape Sarr, and 12 minutes of stoppage time.

Romero also avoided punishment for kicking out at Colwill off the ball, only for the World Cup winner to see red a few minutes later. Along with the four red cards, he has also had 26 yellow cards in his time at Spurs.

The game was reminiscent of the so-called "Battle of the Bridge" between the teams at the end of the 2015-16 season, when Tottenham's title hopes evaporated at Stamford Bridge. **MDT/AP**

AD



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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**ROBUST
 REINVIGORATION OF
 SINO-AUSTRALIAN TIES
 SHOULD BE BUILT UPON
 FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT**

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's visit to China, the first by an Australian prime minister in seven years, has effectively put behind the unpleasant experience of the past few years and created an atmosphere conducive to deepening cooperation in different fields, which will better serve the interests of both countries.

As President Xi Jinping said during his meeting with Albanese in Beijing on Monday, the two countries have no historical disputes, no fundamental conflicts of interest, and can deepen mutual trust and make mutual achievements.

The two countries should follow the trend of the times, proceed from their common interests, jointly strengthen China-Australia relations based on equality, seek common ground while shelving differences, and deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, Xi said.

President Xi stressed that small cliques cannot adapt to the great changes in today's world, and countries must be vigilant against and oppose attempts to destabilize the Asia-Pacific region.

That should be the consensus between the two countries on which they can further advance their comprehensive strategic partnership. This serves the common interests of both countries and their peoples, and meets the common expectations of the countries in the region.

The two sides should give full play to the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement, expand cooperation in emerging areas such as the green economy and the fight against climate change, safeguard the free trade system, and develop a good business environment for the enterprises of the two countries to invest and operate freely, as Xi urged.

Echoing Xi, Albanese said the differences between the two countries should not be allowed to define the bilateral relationship, as Australia and China have broad common interests, and dialogue and cooperation are the best way to move forward and ensure mutual benefit. That shows the Australian side's willingness to meet the Chinese side halfway to put bilateral ties back on the track of healthy development.

Before Albanese's visit, China and Australia had settled the dispute over wine and wind turbine trade, with Australia even shrugging off so-called security concerns over a Chinese company getting the lease for operating the Port of Darwin.

As an ally of the United States and given the increasingly aggressive competition between China and the US, Australia needs to formulate an independent China policy which is not affected by its alliance with the US. Blindly following the US in China-related issues will only hurt the interests of Australia and bring more twists and turns to China-Australia ties.

In the turbulent world of today, healthy, stable and robust Sino-Australian ties would not only cater to the interests of both countries but also contribute to peace, stability and development in the Asia-Pacific region and the world beyond.

**JEWISH MAN DIES AFTER CONFRONTATION DURING
 PRO-ISRAEL AND PRO-PALESTINIAN RALLIES**

**THE
 BUZZ**

A Jewish man in California has died after getting into a confrontation during dueling protests over the Israel-Hamas war, authorities said.

Paul Kessler, 69, died at a hospital yesterday [Macau time], a day after he was struck during pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian demonstrations at an intersection in Thousand Oaks, a suburb northwest of Los Angeles, authorities said.

Witnesses said Kessler was involved in a "physical altercation" with one or more counter-protesters, fell backward and struck his head on the ground, according to a statement from the Ventura County Sheriff's Department.

An autopsy said Kessler died from a blunt force head injury and it was homicide, according to the Sheriff's Department, which said in-

vestigators hadn't ruled out the possibility that the act was a hate crime.

No arrests had been made and details of the confrontation weren't immediately released, although the Sheriff's Department scheduled a news conference for Tuesday morning.

Rabbi Noah Farkas, president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, said the group had heard reports that Kessler was struck in the head by a megaphone held by a pro-Palestinian demonstrator. However, he said federation officials weren't at the scene or involved in the demonstrations.

Other unconfirmed reports suggested that Kessler may have been pushed and fallen.

AP PHOTO



Portugal's Prime Minister Antonio Costa

**PORTUGUESE PM RESIGNS
 AFTER BEING INVOLVED
 IN CORRUPTION PROBE**

**HELENA ALVES &
 JOSEPH WILSON, LISBON**

PORTUGUESE Prime Minister António Costa said yesterday he is resigning after being involved in a widespread corruption probe.

Costa said in a live nationally televised address that "in these circumstances, obviously, I have presented my resignation to the president of the republic."

Costa's shocking announcement came hours after Portuguese police arrested his chief of staff while raiding several public buildings and other properties as part of a widespread corruption probe.

The Supreme Court, the state prosecutor's office said, was also examining the suspects' "use of the prime minister's name and his involvement to unlock" the practices being probed.

The 62-year-old Costa, Portugal's Socialist leader since 2015, defended his

innocence and teared up while thanking his family for their support through the years.

"I totally trust the justice system," he said. "I want to say eye to eye to the Portuguese, that my conscience is clear of any illicit or censured act."

"If there are suspicions, than the judicial authorities are free to look into them ... I am not above the law."

Portuguese president Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa is expected to accept Costa's resignation.

An investigative judge issued arrest warrants for Vítor Escária, Costa's chief of staff, the mayor of the town of Sines, and three other people because they represented a flight risk and to protect evidence, the prosecutor's office said in a statement.

It said that the Minister of Infrastructure João Galamba and the head of the country's environmental agency were among those named as suspects.

The judge is investiga-

ting alleged malfeasance, corruption of elected officials, and influence peddling related to lithium mine concessions near Portugal's northern border with Spain, and plans for a green hydrogen plant and data center in Sines, on the south coast.

The raids included the premises of the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Infrastructure, the Sines town council, private homes and offices.

The prosecutor's office said that the probe has determined that the "suspects invoked the name of the prime minister" when carrying out their allegedly illicit activities.

Portugal's lithium mines and green hydrogen projects are part of the continent's green initiative being pushed by the European Union.

Costa said that he had no prior indication that he was being scrutinized by legal authorities.

"This is a phase of my life that comes to an end," he said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



South Africa's government has recalled its ambassador and diplomatic mission to Israel in condemnation of the bombardment of the Gaza Strip, calling it a "genocide." Pretoria also threatened action against the Israeli ambassador to South Africa over his recent remarks on the African country's stance on the Israel-Hamas war. No further details were given about the remarks.

AP PHOTO



UK Britain's Conservative government is setting out a pre-election policy slate including tougher sentences for criminals and measures to tame inflation and boost economic growth at the grand State Opening of Parliament today [Macau time]. King Charles III will read out a speech, written by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's government, outlining its legislative plans for the next year. It's almost certainly the last such speech before a national election.

USA Voters in Virginia's capital city are deciding today [Macau time] whether developers can move forward with a proposed \$562 million resort casino along Interstate 95. A ballot measure on whether to allow the gambling and entertainment complex is before Richmond voters for a second time, after the city narrowly rejected the proposal two years ago.

AP PHOTO



Broadway Boy George — the Culture Club icon of the 1980s — is returning to Broadway in "Moulin Rouge! The Musical." The singer-songwriter whose hits include "Karma Chameleon" and "Do You Really Want to Hurt Me" will play Moulin Rouge club owner Harold Zidler in the jukebox adaptation of Baz Luhrmann's hyperactive 2001 movie. He starts Feb. 6 and ends May 12 at Broadway's Al Hirschfeld Theatre, taking over the role from Tituss Burgess.