



**CHINA AND PSCs FILM FESTIVAL WILL RUN FROM NOV. 10 TO NOV. 24, SCREENING OVER 20 CHINESE AND PORTUGUESE FILMS AT PASSION**

**UPDATES ON PROPERTY ANTI-SPECULATION MEASURES SOON: GOV'T**

**XI URGES COUNTRIES UNITE IN TACKLING AI CHALLENGES**



AP PHOTO



**Philippines** Dozens of Filipinos fled from the war-ravaged Gaza Strip into Egypt through the Rafah crossing after Filipino diplomats negotiated for their safe passage and Qatar mediated for the border to be opened, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said yesterday. The 40 Filipinos were traveling to the Egyptian capital of Cairo, where they planned to take flights back to the Philippines, Marcos said in a video message in Manila. Two Filipino doctors managed to leave the Gaza Strip into Egypt last week.

AP PHOTO



**Japan** The Unification Church's Japanese branch announced plans to set aside a fund up to 10 billion yen (\$67 million) to cover possible compensation for those seeking damages they say were caused by the group's manipulative fundraising tactics. The move is seen as an attempt to allay any suspicion that the group would try to avoid later payouts by hiding assets overseas while a government-requested dissolution order is pending.

AP PHOTO



**G7** Top diplomats from the Group of Seven leading industrial democracies announced a unified stance on the Israel-Hamas war yesterday after intensive meetings in Tokyo, condemning Hamas, supporting Israel's right to self-defense and calling for "humanitarian pauses" to speed aid to desperate civilians in the Gaza Strip. In a statement following two days of talks, the nations sought to balance unequivocal criticism of Hamas' attacks against Israel and "the need for urgent action" to help civilians in the besieged Palestinian enclave.

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## AL PLENARY

# MACAU ADOPTS NEW MINIMUM WAGE



**GAMING**  
**MELCO TO RELAUNCH HOUSE OF DANCING WATER**



**GBA**  
**HK WORKING TOWARDS CROSS-BOUNDARY DATA FLOW**

### CE WELCOMES 'QUALITY COMPANIES' IN MACAU

The Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng has said "excellent and quality companies" are welcome to set up their businesses in Macau and participate in the Hengqin development. Ho spoke yesterday in virtual format at the thematic conference of the Global Investment Promotion Conference for the Guangdong-Hong Kong Greater Bay Area, Macau 2023. Ho added that as one of the four main cities in the Greater Bay Area, Macau will continue to improve its commercial environment and industrial structure, to demonstrate initiative and responsibility.

### PUBLIC TENDER FOR 15 MARKET STALLS CLOSING NOV. 16

The closing date for submission of tenders for the Horta da Mitra Market and Patane Food Court is Nov. 16, the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has said. The IAM has put five stalls in Horta da Mitra Market and 10 stalls in Patane Food Court out to public tender. The 15 market stalls are available for operation of 13 categories of merchandise or cuisines, such as light meals, cooked food and aquatic products. Each tender participant can only submit a tender for a stall of one business category in a market.

### TAP SEAC CRAFT MARKET TO HOST 220 CREATIVE STALLS

The Autumn Tap Seac Craft Market will be held for two consecutive weekends from Nov. 16 to Nov. 19 and Nov. 23 to Nov. 26 at the Tap Seac Square, marking the 15th Anniversary of the craft market. This event features over 220 handicraft and creative gastronomy stalls by cultural and creative practitioners from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Malaysia and Korea each week, showcasing and selling a wide range of distinctive original products. Meanwhile, 47 music performances by singers from Macau, mainland China and Hong Kong as well as creative gastronomy stalls will be held.

### AL PLENARY

# UPDATES ON PROPERTY ANTI-SPECULATION MEASURES SOON

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE government will soon announce updates on the speculation-d discouraging measures concerning real properties, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong has told a parliamentary plenary.

The senior official made the disclosure while responding to lawmaker Becky Song.

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng had earlier pledged that when new measures in the area become available, they will be submitted for parliamentary scrutiny. The head of the government also said research on such measures had been ongoing since last year.

Citing next year's Public Budget Bill, Song said the government had no plan for land auctions next year. She also did not expect the real proper-

ty market to be very lively next year, due to high interest rates that have been discouraging purchases.

She said similar measures in nearby regions had been adjusted to revive the investment market. She added that the real property market is synergized with the architecture and financial markets, among other industries. With some residents needing to buy new properties but being discouraged by the measures, she asked the official for comment.

Lei replied that the government had implemented sufficient measures to monitor real property speculation, such as the five-tier housing policy. He said the government has been monitoring market development and communicating with industry leaders. Comparisons with nearby localities were



also conducted, before issuing opinions on the measures. He believes that announcements should be expected soon.

In response to other lawmakers' questions, Lei said there would be over 10,000

vocational training opportunities available next year. On tourism, the official said general tourist expenditure in Q2 surpassed the same quarter in 2019 by 114%, with gambling spending not within the map.

# HK working towards cross-boundary data flow within GBA

**H**ONG Kong is actively working towards cross-boundary data flow within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) with the support of the central authorities, Paul Chan, financial secretary of the HKSAR government, said yesterday.

Such convergence of data is not only benefiting the artificial intelligence (AI) industry but also conducive to the development of other sectors like pharmaceuticals and biomedicine, Chan said at the Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit in Hong Kong.

The data-intensive AI sector is fast developing and driving revolutionary changes to financial and other businesses, he said, noting that many Chinese mainland AI firms as well as international AI companies are keen to come to Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is deter-

mined to develop innovation and technology (I&T) as a core engine of growth, with the HK-SAR government having invested over 200 billion Hong Kong to build, consolidate and enrich the I&T ecosystem in recent years, he said.

Hong Kong is home to numerous award-

-winning scholars and researchers, and tech companies at different stages of development are also looking to Hong Kong's vibrant capital markets to realize their growth ambitions, Chan said.

"You can reasonably expect that Hong Kong will give birth to more unicorns in the next five to 10 years," he said. "Investments in companies with such potential are certainly good deals that investors should not miss." **MDT/XINHUA**

### EVENTS

## MGS TO ATTRACT 5,000 PARTICIPANTS

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE MGS Entertainment Show & Summit is slated to return with aims to attract 5,000 professional attendees and visitors at the Galaxy International Convention Center Nov. 14 and 15.

Under the theme "The Asian Pioneer Returns," the exhibition will feature 35 exhibitors in its first physical format after the pandemic.

The last MGS hosted in person was in 2019, followed by an online format in 2021 and 2022

due to the city's Covid-19 travel restrictions.

Jay Chun, chairman of the organizer, Macau Gaming Equipment Manufacturers Association (MGEMA), said he hopes to tell the "Macau story" from the perspective of leisure techno-

logy through the event and hopes to build a platform for local participants to discuss and exchange with global industry players, and explore innovations for Macau's entertainment, technology and tourism industries.

Through the summit, he hopes to better assist Macau's economic recovery.

Meanwhile, Kevin Kelley, COO - Macau for Galaxy Entertainment Group - will deliver the keynote address at the summit on Nov. 14, followed by panel sessions that will feature representatives from the city's gaming operators.

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AL PLENARY

# Minimum wage bill passes first reading amid heated debate

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE bill to raise the minimum wage to MOP34 per hour passed its first reading yesterday, with discussions mainly about the wage's review period.

The bill proposes to increase the minimum wage depending on how salaries are calculated or paid.

For monthly wages, it is proposed to be MOP7,072; for weekly, MOP1,632; for daily, MOP272; for hourly, MOP34. For salary per part hourly, it should not be lower than MOP34 when the monthly salary is divided by the actual work hours during the month.

According to Article 9 of Law No 5/2020 – Minimum Wage for Employees, the level should be reviewed two years after the law's promulgation and every two years thereafter.

Several lawmakers, including independent Ron Lam, civil servant unionists Che Sai Wang and José Pereira Coutinho, as well as trade unionists Leong Sun Iok and Ella Lei, expressed concern over this stipulation.

In reality, this review commenced exactly two years after the initial enactment of the law. However, this bill was only delivered to the parliament 1.5 years behind the two-year period, with all the work having been done before this bill was delivered to the parliament.

As such, the actual adjustment of the wage level is at least 3.5 years af-



ter the initial enactment of the law.

These lawmakers criticized the delay which meant the lower-income group was kept from catching up with the general inflation.

In response to this, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong, who sat in yesterday's plenary to introduce the bill and take questions from lawmakers, cited the law to support the government's delay.

He said the government is working in accordance with legal stipulations, "which is a crucial embodiment of our governance according to the law."

Despite his answer, Lei promised to study how the process could be expedited. The main challenge, he added, is the collection of timely data.

years," according to the body's website.

Leong suggested the government consider establishing a similar commission in Macau to focus on work related to the minimum wage.

"I understand that the Director [of Labour Affairs Wong Chi Hong] is often busy handling his many responsibilities," the lawmaker said.

Leong asked whether the income supplement for disabled employees will also increase should the wage adjustment be made into law. Lei said that as of the second quarter of this year, 222 applications had been received for the supplement, of which 212 were approved, equating to MOP1.5 million.

He also asked for a mechanism to handle the topic more scientifically. Secretary Lei said that there is a mechanism. Factors that are considered include economic and investment vitality, overall income level and opinions from the Social Coordination Permanent Commission.

Indirectly elected lawmakers Ip Sio Kai, deputy chief of Bank of China, Macau Branch and Wang Sai Man, businessman, spoke for and commended the government's work. Calling for a focus on economic diversification rather than minimum wage, Wang even wished that one day, there would be no discussion on minimum wage because everybody would be earning much more than the wage.

## DSEDJ DEPT. HEAD APPOINTED AS SPORTS DEPUTY HEAD

Luís Gomes, department head for non-tertiary education at the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ), has been appointed as a vice director of sports, the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture announced in yesterday's Official Gazette. The appointment will begin today for a year. Gomes holds a master's degree in Sports Education from the University of Macau. He has been a member of the Macau Karate Representative Team and won silver medals in the 2005 East Asian Games and the 2006 Lusophonia Games. The Chief Executive has also extended the appointment of the vice commissioner of corruption.

## UNOFFICIAL DRONE FLIGHTS BANNED DURING GP

Except for official drone flights approved by the Civil Aviation Authority, all other drone flights will be banned from Nov. 11 to 12 and from Nov. 16 to 19, the race periods of this year's Macau Grand Prix, to guarantee the safety of the races, the government announced yesterday. Violators will be fined between MOP2,000 and 20,000. In recent years, the Sports Bureau used drones at sporting events for live broadcasts or recording purposes. Drone flights under specific circumstances require government approval.

## ANOTHER LOCAL ATHLETE WINS MEDAL AT YOUTH GAMES

Athlete Wong Weng Ian has won a silver medal in the University Category Women's Self-chosen Sword at the Student (Youth) Games. She lost to an athlete from Gansu Province with a minute score difference of 0.01. The sword event is part of the Wushu or Martial Arts event in the Games. Wong, 19, has already scored a gold and a silver in these Games. She said she was satisfied with her performance and hopes to continue to improve, according to public broadcaster TDM-Radio Macau (Chinese). Having finished her participation in the Games, she will soon depart for the US for the World Championship.

CINEMA

# China, Lusophone festival to screen 20 films

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE "China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries Film Festival" will run from Nov. 10 to 24, screening over 20 Chinese and Portuguese films at Cinematheque-Passion.

Themed "Dresses Galore in Films," the opening film, "Good Autumn, Mommy," led by Golden Horse Best Actress winner Shu Qi will kick off the film festival.

This film, focusing on the female protagonist's life, explores the value of family and individuals. It won the Golden Goblet



Outstanding Artistic Achievement at the 25th Shanghai International Film Festival.

The closing film "Miú-

cha: The Voice of Bossa Nova" examines the life of the Brazilian diva to the accompaniment of melodious and light-hearted

bossa nova music. The film festival has four sections, according to a statement from the Cultural Affairs Bureau.

In the "Dresses Galore in Films" section, six classic Chinese and Portuguese films in terms of costume design will be screened, including "The Phantom Lover" and "4 Faces of Eve" involving renowned art directors Chang Suk Ping and Man Lim-chung.

The "Premiere of Chinese and Lusophone Films" section will introduce the audience to films from rising directors from China and Portuguese-speaking

countries, while the "Screening of Films about Macao" section will screen local films to showcase their strengths.

Moreover, this year, the "Outdoor Screening" section will be held in the Former Iec Long Firecracker Factory, where six animations will be screened.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong art director and costume designer Man Lim-chung will share with the audience his creative experiences and insights at the Hong Kong Film Arts and Costume Design Sharing Session as part of the festival's outreach activities.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# MELCO TO RELAUNCH HOUSE OF DANCING WATER Q4 2024

LYNZY VALLES

**G**AMING operator Melco Resorts is looking to open the House of Dancing Water for a relaunch late in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Speaking in an earnings call with analysts, David Sisk, Melco's Chief Operating Officer - Macau Resorts, said they are currently doing shows in the theater and will start the remount for the House of Dancing Water in mid-November.

"We're just now going through the process of the remount. We've been doing a lot of work on the House of Dancing Water theater to get it up and ready. We just started doing our first shows there," he said.

"And towards the middle of November, we'll get back out of that and get started back on the remount for the House of Dancing Water," he added.



Back in 2020, amid the pandemic, the gaming operator announced the House of Dancing Water show at the City of Dreams Cotai property

would be suspended, to be redesigned by creator Franco Dragone.

However, towards the end of the year, the City of Dreams said the pandemic had had a major impact on the entertainment industry. Thus, given the travel restrictions, the House of Dancing Water show hiatus would be longer than previously anticipated.

In the same earnings call, Sisk said the group has started to advertise a little more in markets including Hong Kong or in China to "let people know we have these assets out there."

## SOLID OCTOBER PERFORMANCE

Macau's recovery continued to grow from strength to strength into the third quarter of 2023, especially during the summer months with our property visitation and casino player hours benefiting from this growth.

Lawrence Ho, chairman and CEO of Melco Resorts & Entertainment Limited, said the company "had solid performance over the October Golden Week and saw a robust recovery during the remainder of October, with gross gaming revenue (GGR), ex-

cluding junkets, reaching close to 2019 levels."

"October was the best month in Macau and the best month for us since the reopening. So we're feeling very good. [...] It has not been soft and November has started off strong as well," Ho added.

In October, the city recorded another post-pandemic record high GGR, buoyed by the National Day Golden Week, where nearly a million tourists flocked to Macau during the eight-day holiday.

Data released by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau yesterday revealed that GGR exceeded analysts' esti-

mates of 392% growth, with revenues growing 400% to MOP19.5 billion. This marks a return to 74% of pre-Covid revenue levels.

Meanwhile, in response to a question about the below-average industry GGR levels, Sisk said the lack of junkets and the presence of larger VIP players had created more volatility in their business.

The executive expected continued volatility in the VIP market, but long-term, they expect to surpass the 2019 levels in the premium direct VIP business.

## STUDIO CITY RELAUNCH

Studio City has been the center of entertainment for the group in Macau.

According to Ho, the opening of Phase 2, the addition of the Epic Tower and W Macau hotels, the Residency Concerts and an ongoing schedule of events drove gaming volume and contributed to a 65% increase in adjusted property EBITDA quarter-to-quarter.

"I think we're very excited about Studio City Phase 2. But at the same time, the reason we've opened this kind of piece meal is we're gradually rolling more and more product into the market," explained Ho.

Amid a continuing major retail renovation, "over the next two or three months, most of those retail tenants will be open."

"Probably sometime in the first quarter of next year or early second quarter, we will try to do a major property relaunch Phase 2 opening," Melco's top official revealed.

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## MELCO'S LOSSES NARROW TO USD16.3. MILLION IN Q3

**MELCO** Resorts' total operating revenues for the third quarter were US\$1.02 billion, representing an increase of approximately 321% from US\$241.8 million for the comparable period in 2022, the group announced in its financial results. The increase in total operating revenues was primarily attributable to the improved performance in all gaming segments and non-gaming operations following the re-

laxation of Covid-19 related restrictions in Macau in January 2023 and the opening of Studio City Phase 2. Operating income for the third quarter of 2023 was US\$94.7 million, compared with operating loss of US\$198.5 million in the third quarter of 2022. Meanwhile, its losses narrowed to US\$16.3 million, compared with US\$243.8 million, in the third quarter of 2022.

ENERGY

# Governments plan more fossil fuel production despite climate pledges: report

JENNIFER MCDERMOTT

**D**ESPITE frequent and devastating heat waves, droughts, floods and fire, major fossil fuel-producing countries still plan to extract more than double the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 than is consistent with the Paris climate accord's goal for limiting global temperature rise, according to a United Nations-backed study released yesterday.

Coal production needs to ramp sharply down to address climate change, but government plans and projections would lead to increases in global production until 2030, and in global oil and gas production until at least 2050, the Production Gap Report states. This conflicts with government commitments under the climate accord, which seeks to keep global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).

The report examines the dis-



parity between climate goals and fossil fuel extraction plans, a gap that has remained largely unchanged since it was first quantified in 2019.

"Governments' plans to expand fossil fuel production are undermining the energy transition needed to achieve net-zero emissions, creating economic risks and throwing humanity's future into question," Inger Andersen, executive director of the United Nations Environment Pro-

gramme, said in a statement.

As world leaders convene for another round of United Nations climate talks at the end of the month in Dubai, seeking to curb greenhouse gases, Andersen said nations must "unite behind a managed and equitable phase-out of coal, oil and gas — to ease the turbulence ahead and benefit every person on this planet."

The report is produced by the Stockholm Environment Institute, Climate Analytics, E3G, Inter-

national Institute for Sustainable Development, and UNEP. They say countries should aim for a near-total phase-out of coal production and use by 2040 and a combined reduction in oil and gas production and use by three-quarters by 2050 from 2020 levels, at a minimum.

But instead, the analysis found that in aggregate, governments plan to produce about 110% more fossil fuels in 2030 than what's needed to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit), and 69% more than would be consistent with the less protective goal of 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit). These global discrepancies increase even more toward 2050.

Soon after the release of the 2021 Production Gap Report, U.N. climate talks were held in Glasgow, Scotland, and governments agreed to accelerate the transition away from "unabated" coal power, meaning coal-fed power plants where carbon dioxide comes out

of the smokestack. A transition away from that kind of electricity is underway in many places, including Germany, Canada, South Africa and the United States. But major oil and gas producers continue to expand, the report states.

More than 80 researchers from over 30 countries contributed, examining 20 major fossil fuel-producing countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They found that while most have launched initiatives to cut emissions, none have committed to reducing coal, oil and gas production enough to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Combined, these countries account for 82% of production, and 73% of consumption, of the world's fossil fuels, the report states. MDT/AP

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CESL Asia and Friends Sport Fun Day 2023 was once more a great and impactful event! We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all our Partners, Sponsors and Volunteers who have joined us to help promote values of equality and inclusion in our community and to raise MOP125,000 in donations to support the athletes of Macau Special Olympics ("MSO") and its talent.

**關懷社區·齊創共融** Community care and harmonious development of our society

**C**HINESE President Xi Jinping said yesterday that potential risks associated with artificial intelligence are challenges that countries should deal with together, remarks that come against the backdrop of China's rigid control of free speech on the internet.

At the same time, China has also maximized the internet's economic benefits and social media's propaganda contributions to the ruling Communist Party's authoritarian agenda.

Xi's prerecorded speech was broadcast at the opening of the World Internet Conference Summit in the eastern city of Wuzhen.

He called for common security in cyberspace instead of confrontation. He said China would work with other countries to address risks brought by the development of AI and expressed his objections to "cyberspace hegemony."

China is ready to "promote the safe development of AI," he said, with the implementation of the Global AI Governance Initiative, a proposal launched by the Chinese government last month calling for an open and fair environment for AI development.

Li Shulei, director of the Communist Party's publicity depart-

TECH

# Xi urges countries unite in tackling AI challenges



ment, echoed Xi's remarks at the conference, saying China would work with other countries to "im-

prove the safety, reliability, controllability and fairness of artificial intelligence technology."

The conference was first launched as an annual event in 2014 by the Chinese government to

discuss internet development. China blocks most overseas news and social media sites, but lifts them in the Wuzhen area for the duration of the conference.

As recently as June, Chinese state-backed hackers foiled Microsoft's cloud-based security in breaching the email accounts of officials at multiple U.S. agencies that deal with China ahead of Secretary of State Antony Blinken's trip to Beijing.

The surgical, targeted espionage accessed the email of a small number of individuals at an unspecified number of U.S. agencies and was discovered in mid-June by the State Department, U.S. officials said. They said none of the breached systems were classified, nor was any of the stolen data.

The hacked officials included Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, whose agency imposed export controls that have stung multiple Chinese companies.

In September 2020, the Justice Department has charged five Chinese citizens with hacks targeting more than 100 companies and institutions in the United States and abroad, including social media and video game companies as well as universities and telecommunications providers. **MDT/AP**

## XINHUA ROUNDUP

# Star-studded financial summit lineup casts vote of confidence in Hong Kong, mainland

**G**LOBAL financial heavyweight regulators joined regulators this week at the main session of the Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit in Hong Kong, casting a vote of confidence in the economic prospects of the financial center and the Chinese mainland.

The event brought together around 300 international and regional leaders from 160 global financial institutions, with more than 90 institutions represented by their group chairmen or CEOs.

Under the theme of "Living with Complexity," the main summit discussed the trends and changes that are reshaping the global financial industry. Mainland policymakers shared insights into the conditions and future direction of the Chinese economy.

John Lee, chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), said in his speech at the event that Hong Kong is at the center of the world stage, creating opportunities for a world



Wang Jianjun, vice chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission, speaks at the main session of the Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit in Hong Kong

of business, finance and investment, and the global financial community believes in Hong Kong and the long-term promise of Hong Kong.

"That is what this summit is all about, and that is why you can see the flourishing future of Hong Kong, one that is made possible, thanks to the city's own strengths, and to the fact that it connects the world with the Chinese

mainland," he said. "Because, simply put, Hong Kong means prosperity."

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), the organizer of the event, told Xinhua that last year's summit signaled Hong Kong's return to normalcy and the international stage. They further mentioned that this year's summit has seen an increased number of international financial leaders, indicating positive indus-

try feedback on last year's event.

Wang Hanfeng, managing director of CICC, said the central financial work conference has further strengthened people's expectations of Hong Kong's status as an international financial center.

The fact that the summit has attracted the participation of a large number of international financial leaders demonstrates that the international financial industry is closely watching and showing confidence in Hong Kong's and the mainland's economic development and business expansion, Wang said.

In the "China: The Way Forward" session, officials of mainland financial regulators provided their perspectives on China's economic prospects and the opening-up in financial sector.

Zhang Qingsong, deputy governor of the People's Bank of China, said that China's economy keeps pursuing progress while ensuring stability, while long-term high-quality de-

velopment is built on a solid foundation.

Looking back upon China's economic and social development over the past 40 years, the fact is that all the important goals China set for itself have been achieved, despite complex internal and external environment, he said.

Wang Jianjun, vice chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission, said that the mainland capital market will inevitably become more open in the future.

He said China's domestic market is full of opportunities, and it is never too late to seize the opportunities in China. The top securities watchdog will spare no effort in getting things done to benefit the Hong Kong capital market and strengthen Hong Kong's status as an international financial center.

Commenting on the event's turnout, Liang Haiming, president of China Silk Road iValley Research Institute, said the summit not only provides a plat-

form for the international financial community to invest in the Chinese mainland but also brings more diversified international capital to Hong Kong, consolidating and enhancing Hong Kong's position as an international financial center.

Luo Zhiheng, chief economist of Yuekai Securities, said Hong Kong can further promote the opening up and liberalization of the financial market in the future and attract more international financial institutions and multinational corporations to set up their headquarters or branches in Hong Kong.

During a panel discussion on opportunities in the Guangdong Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), HSBC Group Chief Executive Officer Noel Quinn said that GBA has three principal pillars: the financial community in Hong Kong, the manufacturing community in Guangdong, and R&D and University community in both areas, and particularly here in Hong Kong, which make a powerful combination.

The three-day summit will conclude Wednesday with the "Conversations with Global Investors" investment forum. **XINHUA**

SRI LANKA

# US plans to build a \$553M terminal in Colombo port in rivalry with China

**T**HE U.S. announced a \$553 million project yesterday to build a deep-water shipping container terminal in Sri Lanka's Port of Colombo as it competes with China in international development financing.

The project is billed as providing critical infrastructure for the South Asian nation with the potential to "transform Colombo into a world-class logistics hub at the intersection of major shipping routes and emerging markets," according to the U.S. International Development Finance Corp.

The DFC's commitment of \$553 million in private loans for the West Container Terminal will "expand its shipping capacity, creating greater prosperity for Sri Lanka — without adding to sovereign debt — while at the same strengthening the position of our allies across the region," said DFC Chief Executive Officer Scott Nathan.

The U.S.-backed financing comes at a time when Sri Lanka is struggling to recover from a dire financial and economic crisis.

The Port of Colombo has been operating near its capacity since 2021, and the new terminal will cater to growing economies in the Bay of Bengal, the DFC said. Local partners will include Sri Lanka's John Keells Holdings and India's Adani Ports & Special Economic Zones Limited, which owns a 51% share in the West Container Terminal.

Nathan said DFC provides a direct loan to the consortium involved in developing the terminal and with that investment, Sri Lanka will be the "2nd biggest exposure" for his institution in the whole India Pacific region. India is the biggest.

"It's high priority for the United States to be active in the Indo-Pacific region" said Nathan, adding this region is the engine economic growth of the world and has a huge potential to make impact for development.

"We are very active in other countries through out the Indo Pacific region. Sri Lanka will be very important partner of our portfolios in the region," Nathan told reporters in Colombo, after visiting the site of the new terminal.

The DFC was established five years ago in response to Beijing's massive global infrastructure building campaign, known as the Belt and Road Initiative. Through it, Beijing has invested

AP PHOTO



A view of the proposed site for a \$553-million project to build a new, deep-water shipping container terminal in the Port of Colombo, yesterday

tens of billions of dollars each year to build roads, railways, ports and airports, typically in developing nations, to foster trade and goodwill toward China.

Some of those projects have raised controversy, among them Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port, on its southeastern coast. Sri Lanka borrowed heavily from China to build the port and other infrastructure including an airport and a city being built on reclaimed land. The projects have failed to earn enough revenue to pay for the loans, and in 2017, Sri Lanka leased the seaport in Hambantota to China.

Sri Lanka's multibillion-dollar debts to Beijing have hindered efforts to resolve its financial woes and have often been cited as evidence by critics of the BRI who claim China engages in debt-trap diplomacy.

The Chinese government rejects such accusations. The debt trap argument was "fabricated to disrupt and undermine China's cooperation with developing countries," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said during a routine briefing Tuesday.

Both neighboring India and China are jostling for influence

in Sri Lanka and both have already invested in expanding facilities at the Colombo port. India worries over a growing Chinese presence in the island, which is on one of the world's busiest shipping routes and in a region that India considers part of its strategic backyard.

Colombo port also has a terminal run by China Merchants Port Holdings. Another Chinese project — a luxury oceanside development spanning over 269 hectares of reclaimed land called Port City, is being built by CHEC Port City Colombo Co., a unit of China Communications Construction Company. It has invested \$1.4 billion to build an integrated resort and casino and conference center zone, a marina, apartments, a business district and green space.

That project has raised concerns in Sri Lanka and India that the development could become a virtual Chinese outpost or colony.

In development financing, the U.S. faces tough competition from Beijing, which has recalibrated its BRI initiative to be greener, safer and more sustainable, according to AidData, a research lab at William & Mary, a

public university in Virginia.

However, Nathan said the DFC was "only interested in making financially sustainable financial transactions."

"We are not interested in giving money to projects that are not going to work. Of course, sometimes, mistakes happen. But rarely."

"Sustainability and local appropriateness are very important elements for what we do," Nathan said, expressing optimism on their latest investment in Sri Lanka.

"It's really an investment in dynamics of the global economy, shipping and transshipment," he said, adding that studies on the project "have demonstrated that dynamics with high confidence."

In a recent report, AidData said the U.S. is catching up with China in terms of development finance after being overtaken by Beijing in terms of total official financial flows to the developing world in 2007.

China's lead has grown since then but the gap has narrowed recently as China scaled back its lending while the U.S. sharply raised loans through the newly launched DFC.

The U.S. now provides about

\$60 billion of development finance each year to low- and middle-income countries. Yet, at \$80 billion a year in aid and credit commitment, China remains the single largest official source of international development finance, AidData says.

For the past two decades, China has dominated global infrastructure finance with faster and bigger projects. Now it has rebooted with more stringent environmental, social and governance safeguards, said Bradley Parks, executive director of AidData.

He said, "this finding is a big deal because China's competitors in the global infrastructure market offer safety but not speed."

"Beijing, on the other hand, is squaring the circle between safety and speed. It is several steps ahead of its competitors in the global infrastructure market. It is laser-focused on giving leaders in the developing world exactly what they want: rapid delivery of big-ticket infrastructure projects without unreasonably high levels of risk," he said. "Whether the U.S. will be able to do the same is a big question mark."

MDT/AP

USA

# Third GOP debate will focus on Israel, foreign policy and Trump

MICHELLE L. PRICE  
& JILL COLVIN, MIAMI

**F**OREIGN policy and the Israel-Hamas war are expected to be prominent in today's [Macau time] third Republican primary debate, as a narrowing field of candidates seeks to cut into Donald Trump's lead without being able to challenge the former president in person.

Trump will again skip the debate in Miami, instead holding a rally in a nearby suburb. He says he won't participate due to his large lead in national and early state polls.

With voting set to start in leadoff Iowa in January, no one has thus far been able to shake Trump's dominance of the Republican primary. Many of the candidates have gone after each other hoping to break out as a viable alternative to the former president, emphasizing their differences on foreign policy but also ripping Trump for his criticisms of the Israeli prime minister and claims that a group attacking Israel was "very smart."

Republican strategist David Kochel, who has advised several past presidential campaigns, said despite Trump's absence from the stage, the debate offers a chance for someone like Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis or former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley to try to emerge.

"Even if he's not on the stage and basically all these candidates are all kind of fighting for second, I think it's worth it," Kochel said. "Because if this race does get much more quickly down to a two-person race, who knows what the dynamic will be?"

Kochel said though Trump has a lot of strength, "You still have a lot of voters in Iowa and New Hampshire open to somebody else."

So far, however, Trump has retained huge leads despite facing four criminal indictments and a civil fraud case against his businesses for which he testified in New York this week.

His campaign has worked to overpower DeSantis in their shared home state and publicly said it wants to score blowout wins in early primary states to seal the nomination.

The rivalry between DeSantis and Haley has ramped up in recent weeks, with Haley rising in a prominent Iowa



poll and gaining new interest from donors and voters. Both campaigns and allied super PACs have hit each other over the war in Israel and the U.S. relationship with China as Republicans take an increasingly antagonistic view of Beijing.

Both candidates have also diverged on abortion rights, a political challenge for Republicans since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade. Supporters of abortion rights claimed new momentum Tuesday after elections in several states went in their favor.

In a memo the DeSantis campaign distributed this week to donors, the Florida governor's top advisers argued that their candidate is best situated to deny Trump a runaway win in leadoff Iowa and that the other Republican rivals, including Haley, are at best, spoilers in that effort who could hand Trump the nomination.

Haley's campaign, however, contended in a memo that DeSantis and Haley are in "a dead heat" in Iowa, without acknowledging Trump's lead.

In addition to DeSantis and Haley, also appearing on stage Wednesday will be South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy.

The Republican candidates have been staunchly supportive of Israel in its offensive af-

ter Hamas' Oct. 7 attack killing more than 1,400 people.

DeSantis has used his official role as governor to show support for Israel, winning praise from some of the state's Democrats. He authorized the state to fly hundreds of Americans evacuated from Israel to the U.S., ordered state universities to disband chapters of a pro-Palestinian group, and arranged to help send weapons, ammunition and other supplies to Israel.

Haley, also the former governor of South Carolina, has leaned into her experience as Trump's U.N. ambassador arguing in support of the Israeli government. She has forcefully scolded Ramaswamy, a first-time candidate who has challenged some traditional GOP foreign policy positions, as lacking experience and expertise.

Haley and DeSantis have also become more frequent and vocal critics of Trump in recent weeks.

Haley, in a speech last month to the Republican Jewish Coalition, slammed Trump's compliments of foreign strongmen and described his style of "chaos, vendettas and drama" as dangerous.

DeSantis, who has more directly embraced many of Trump's policies and sought to win over some of his key supporters, has in recent days been questioning if Trump

"can summon the balls to show up to the debate." His campaign quickly starting selling sets of two golf balls for \$18 in a box that declares, "Ron DeSantis has a pair" and "He shows up."

The three remaining candidates — Christie, Scott, and Ramaswamy — are all taking different paths.

Ramaswamy has run as a potential inheritor to Trump's "America First" mantle. He said he wants the U.S. to avoid so-called "forever wars" and focus on China, while also telling the Republican Jewish Coalition that he would "love nothing more" than for Israel "to put the heads of the top 100 Hamas leaders on stakes and line them up on the Israel-Gaza border."

Christie, the former New Jersey governor, has focused almost exclusively on New Hampshire's primary and become the race's most vocal critic of Trump.

And Scott is hoping for a strong finish in Iowa, where he's courting the state's white evangelical voters and spending millions on ads leading up to the Jan. 15 caucuses.

The two-hour debate will be moderated by NBC News anchors Lester Holt and Kristen Welker and conservative commentator Hugh Hewitt, who hosts a morning talk show for the Salem Radio Network. MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 1985 AMERICA WELCOMES CHARLES AND DIANA



Prince Charles and Princess Diana have ended the first day of their much-vaunted trip to the USA at a gala dinner in the Washington, hosted by President Reagan and his wife Nancy.

They mixed with movie stars, such as Clint Eastwood, John Travolta, Tom Selleck and the singer Neil Diamond as well as politicians and businessmen.

A small group of anti-British IRA supporters protested outside and there were a few slip-ups during the glamorous event.

For a moment President Reagan forgot the Princess of Wales' name during an after-dinner speech to guests.

"Permit me to add our congratulations to Prince Charles on his birthday just five days away," he said, "and express also our great happiness that ... er ... Princess David - Princess Diane (sic) here on her first trip to the United States."

And the princess herself, still suffering from jetlag, momentarily forgot to return the toast.

But all that was forgotten when she took to the dance floor with John Travolta in her midnight blue velvet dress and sapphire and diamond choker.

This is the royal couple's first visit together to the States and is to last four days.

Their Royal Highnesses had arrived at Andrews Air Force base in Washington this morning from Hawaii and emerged into the bright autumn sunshine to be greeted by hundreds of enthusiastic well-wishers.

After a welcome at the White House by the President and the First Lady, they were taken to the official home of the British Ambassador, Sir Oliver Wright, where they are staying. [...]

Thousands of enthusiastic Americans are expected to turn out to catch a glimpse of the royals.

The following day, Monday, there is a less highbrow event on the agenda - a visit to Springfield shopping mall in Virginia to see the "Best of Britain" promotion at the JC Penney department store.

Monday is also Veterans' Day in the USA, and Prince Charles will visit Arlington National Cemetery to lay wreaths to war heroes.

The trip to Washington ends on Tuesday when the royal couple will go to Palm Beach Florida. There, Prince Charles will play in a friendly polo match and the princess will present a trophy to the winners. They return home to London on Wednesday.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Charles and Diana's trip sparked off a serious case of "royal fever" in the USA.

But what seemed like a fairytale marriage was actually in serious trouble.

The couple separated in 1993.

Diana spoke publicly about her own infidelity and her husband's affair with long-term friend Camilla Parker-Bowles in a BBC Panorama documentary in November 1995.

They officially divorced in 1996. Diana was stripped of the title of Her Royal Highness but was never far from the front pages of the tabloid newspapers. She became actively involved with charities for children, the homeless, the disabled and those with HIV and AIDS and campaigned for a ban on the use and manufacture of landmines.

Her death in a car crash in Paris on 31 August 1997 shocked the world.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Investments concerning your residence will be profitable. Get out and get active. A second chance will result in good work.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
You can find out important information if you listen to friends and relatives. Recognition will be yours if you meet your deadline.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
Instant romance could be yours if you go out with friends. Be honest in your communication and don't lose your cool. Pamper yourself for a change.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Discuss your objectives with partners or peers. In return, the satisfaction you get is enough for you. You are best to sit back and think it through.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
You can get ahead if you work diligently behind the scenes. Look closely at motives and honesty in your personal encounters. Take positive action.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
You will enjoy socializing and unusual forms of entertainment. Don't be too eager to cut those who have disappointed you from your life. Loved ones may be annoyed if they feel restricted.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Turn things around, make sure that they do their share. Avoid any erratic behavior or it could cause isolation at home. You may have the opportunity to get involved in some interesting conversations.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
Recognition will be yours if you meet your deadline. You must be careful not to ignore the needs of the youngsters in your family. Get the red tape and the unwanted paperwork out of the way.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Problems with in-laws or relatives may be more damaging than you realize. Partnerships will be successful. Be aware that a female you work with may be trying to hold you back.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
You must be extremely careful not to let relatives or friends interfere in your personal life. Friends and relatives can give you good advice. Do not sign your life away.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Don't divulge secret information. You will meet some interesting people if you attend promotional functions. Your diplomacy will be of utmost importance today.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Take advantage of your attributes and lure the mate of your choice. Don't force your opinions on friends or relatives unless you are prepared to lose their favor.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

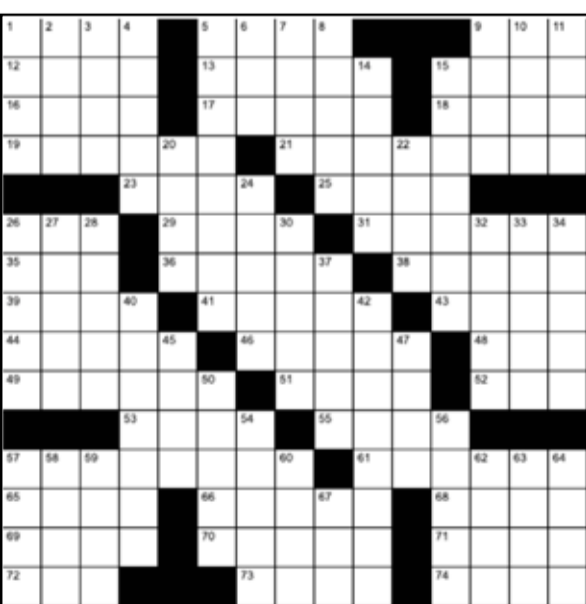
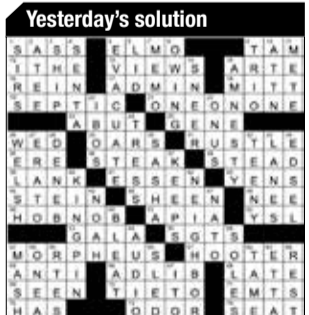
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	2	8	fine
Changchun	-13	-7	fine
Chengdu	14	22	rain
Chongqing	16	22	cloudy
Fuzhou	20	30	cloudy
Guangzhou	21	27	cloudy
Guiyang	14	21	overcast
Haikou	23	30	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	14	18	rain
Harbin	-12	-6	fine
Hefei	11	17	rain
Nanjing	12	18	rain
Shanghai	16	20	rain
Taipei	21	28	fine
Wuhan	12	17	rain
Hong Kong	26	28	overcast
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	2	6	fog
Frankfurt	7	11	rain
Paris	7	12	showers
London	17	23	overcast
New York	6	11	overcast

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Faint, with "over"; 5- Spanakopita ingredient; 9- 100 yrs.; 12- What's \_\_\_ you?; 13- Eat away at; 15- Commotion; 16- Defense grp. since 1949; 17- Big house; 18- Lacoste of tennis; 19- Reunion attendees; 21- Novel; 23- Lacking; 25- Require; 26- Great Lakes canals; 29- Pocket bread; 31- Blessed event?; 35- Hill insect; 36- Licorice flavor; 38- Lend \_\_\_; 39- Search; 41- Muse with a lyre; 43- Small combo; 44- Seraglio; 46- Divert; 48- Apr. addressee; 49- Many; 51- Notion; 52- Shoebox letters; 53- Mrs. Dithers, in "Blondie"; 55- Catch a view of; 57- Casual coatlike garment; 61- Wagner heroine; 65- Island of Hawaii; 66- Next after the second; 68- Notable exploit, legal document; 69- Karate blow; 70- Dike, Eunomia and Irene; 71- Salingir girl; 72- Tempe sch.; 73- Tear apart; 74- Boxer Spinks;

DOWN 1- Basic currency of Papua New Guinea; 2- Catchall abbr.; 3- Famous last words; 4- Weaving machines; 5- Female; 6- Time; 7- Up \_\_\_ good; 8- Enhance; 9- "Fargo" director; 10- Poet \_\_\_ St. Vincent Millay; 11- Christmas; 14- Great Lakes tribesmen; 15- Poseidon's spear; 20- The \_\_\_ Valley is a Californian wineland; 22- Actress Rowlands; 24- Agitates; 26- "Peter and the Wolf" bird; 27- Actor Ryan; 28- Alamogordo's county; 30- Japanese beer brand; 32- Creepy; 33- Congo, once; 34- Uneven; 37- Piece of music written for a solo instrument; 40- Condiment; 42- Unequal; 45- Heath; 47- Knocks lightly; 50- Foam; 54- Loathe; 56- Warble; 57- \_\_\_ Raton; 58- Contented sighs; 59- Biblical pronoun; 60- Cork's place; 62- \_\_\_-majesté; 63- Floor model; 64- Garden of \_\_\_; 67- Sprinted;



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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HKD 9,950/mth 1 bed 1 bath



## PHOTOGRAPHY &amp; LITERATURE

# LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN LOS ANGELES' VENICE BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD INSPIRES ACTIVISM AND ART

CHRISTOPHER WEBER,  
LOS ANGELES

AS more and more of her friends and neighbors found themselves priced out of rental units in Venice Beach, Judy Branfman began photographing the dozens of houses, bungalows and apartments being sold, renovated and then relisted at double or triple the cost.

Branfman started with only the vague idea that she should be documenting the growing problem of evictions and housing unaffordability in her beloved west Los Angeles neighborhood. The writer and activist lamented that Venice, where tourists flock to the famous boardwalk and Muscle Beach, has been slowly shedding its historically bohemian vibe and becoming another enclave for the wealthy.

Word spread about her photo project and earlier this year Branfman started hosting community meetings where residents could share their experiences with evictions that forced them to move out of the area and, in some cases, into homelessness. Some people recited poems. Others expressed themselves through paintings. And the more academically-minded among them began compi-

ling housing and eviction statistics.

Branfman's initial notion to just shoot a few photos has culminated in an unlikely but ambitious art-meets-data exhibit titled "Where Has All The (affordable) Housing Gone?" It's on display through Saturday at Venice's venerable Beyond Baroque gallery, a hub for cultural events and activism dating back to the late 1960s.

"The idea was to illustrate the problem, to show what we've lost. You know, make it visual so people would walk in and be a little shocked, and want to do something about it," Branfman said at the gallery this week.

## PANDEMIC TOLL

Venice became a center of the Los Angeles homelessness crisis during the coronavirus pandemic, when camps sprouted up in residential neighborhoods and along the sands. The nation's second-largest city also has 46,000 residents who are homeless among the overall population of 4 million people, according to the most recent survey.

The area was a flashpoint because of its visibility as a city landmark — the boardwalk attracts an estimated 10 million visitors per

year. A certain edginess always coexisted with a live-and-let-live ethos in the artsy beach community, but the widening of the wealth gap has become increasingly apparent as tech firms moved in and sleek modern homes went up.

As building owners seek to bring in more deep-pocketed renters, longtime residents find themselves dealing with rent increases that overwhelm their finances. Some 80% of low-income Los Angeles renters pay over half their income toward housing costs, according to data released this week by the nonprofit Angeleno Project.

While Los Angeles is on track to meet certain goals for new housing set out by recent ballot measures, "supply is severely behind demand," the report found.

"Some 3,500 housing units are at high or very high risk of losing their affordability terms, threatening to push more families into homelessness," said the report. "A significant dip in affordable housing that started in 2022 post-COVID-19 continues to trend downward."

Upon entering Branfman's exhibit, visitors are confronted by her photos on an enormous and detailed map depicting, blo-

ck by block, many of the nearly 1,500 rent-controlled units she says have disappeared from the housing market in Venice over two decades. In many instances, the buildings were sold to large corporations that are increasingly buying up properties and jacking up rents.

## ACT OF EVICTION

The map, and much of the exhibit, pins some of the blame for the problem on the Ellis Act, a 1985 California law that gave landlords broad authority to evict tenants in rent-controlled buildings for redevelopment, and then later list the same units at market rates. Branfman said she was "Ellis Acted" when she was evicted from a Venice apartment in 2003.

"Too many tenants are afraid to fight back. And most don't know what their rights are under the law," she said. And even when tenants do file complaints against landlords, she said, the city very rarely prosecutes the claims.

On the wall opposite the map is a free-verse poem made up of quotes about why many renters are were afraid to take on landlords, such as: "I don't want any trouble" and "My neighbors aren't documented and they're afraid if they say anything they'll

be targeted."

Upstairs there are paintings and mixed-media figurines that the artist Sumaya Evans calls "dignity dolls." Evans, who was homeless in Venice for years before recently finding housing, said creating art gave her a sense of self-worth when she was living on the streets.

"You get used to being ignored as a homeless woman. People are blind to you when you're outside," she said. "And so being a part of a project like this, being a part of a community, is just so healing."

Branfman and other housing activists are hopeful that change could come with measure that's qualified for the 2024 ballot. The initiative that will go before voters would expand local control by overturning a 28-year-old law that prohibits rent control on single-family homes, condos and rental units that were built after 1995.

After the exhibit closes Saturday, Branfman hopes to find a home for some of the installations at a library or university. Most of it will live virtually on its own Instagram page.

"The rest of it will be on display in my apartment," she laughs. **MDT/AP**

**FOOTBALL**

# At 40, Pepe becomes oldest scorer in Champions League

PORTO 2, ANTWERP 0

**P**ORTO captain Pepe became the oldest scorer in Champions League history as Porto beat 10-man Antwerp 2-0 yesterday [Macau time] to end the Belgian club's hopes of reaching the knockout stages.

Pepe, who is 40 years, 254 days old, scored in stoppage time after Brazilian striker Evanilson put the hosts in front with a first-half goal.

The previous record was held by Roma's Francesco Totti, who scored in Europe's top club competition at age 38 years, 59 days in 2014.

With four losses in as many matches in Group H, last-place Antwerp can no longer finish as one of the top two teams. Porto has nine points and moved level with leader Barcelona, which lost 1-0 to Shakhtar Donetsk in the group's other match.

With Barcelona's loss earlier in the day, Antwerp knew it could



ld revive its hopes of advancing. Fielding a team with many young players — including 18-year-old playmaker Arthur Vermeeren who got the captain's armband in

the absence of Toby Alderweireld — the Belgian champions started aggressively.

Antwerp initially managed to counter the hosts' early pressure

and had an excellent chance to take the lead after only eight minutes when Porto gave the ball away in its half. Forward Michel-Ange Balikwisha was quickly set

up in the box, only to miss the target.

Evanilson, who had scored a hat trick in a 4-1 win in Antwerp last month, then came close but dragged his shot wide in the 15th minute.

The Brazilian forward had another occasion in the 32nd minute from the penalty spot. He sent goalkeeper Senne Lammens the wrong way to put Porto in front with his seventh goal this season.

Deputizing for Jean Butez, who stayed at home with his pregnant wife, Lammens had produced a good save to deny Pepe just seconds before the referee awarded the penalty because of a foul from Gyranon Kerk on Stephen Eustaquio in the box.

Porto played more freely after opening the scoring and could have doubled its lead two minutes before the interval when Mehdi Taremi was set up with a through ball and fired a powerful strike that hit the side netting.

Antwerp took a further blow in the 52nd minute when midfielder Jurgen Ekkelenkamp was shown a red card after VAR check for a reckless tackle on Zaidu Sanusi. Porto, however, had to wait until the added time to take advantage of the situation to add another goal when Pepe headed the ball home just after Antwerp winger Arbnor Muja missed a golden chance to level. **MDT/AP**

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**FOOTBALL**

**BASKETBALL**

**DAILY TRAININGS**

**OPINION**

**World Views**

Aamer Madhani, MDT/AP



**BIDEN-XI MEETING STILL ON TRACK, NO MAJOR BREAKTHROUGHS EXPECTED**

The anticipated meeting between President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping is on track for next week on the sidelines of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco, but the White House is not expecting the face-to-face to result in major changes to the relationship between the two nations, according to a person familiar with the planning.

The White House announced late last month that U.S. and China had come to an agreement in principle for Biden and Xi to speak to each other in person on the sidelines of the summit — the first engagement between the leaders in what's been a tension-filled year between the world's two biggest economic powers. But with Biden set to arrive in San Francisco in a week for the summit, exact timing and other logistical details have not yet been formally announced.

The U.S. believes that the two sides will be able to make some modest announcements following their meeting, but the fundamental differences in the relationship will remain unchanged, according to the person, who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Jude Blanchette, chair of China Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said Biden and Xi were looking "to intentionally keep that bar low."

"What's going on here is an attempt to have a deep conversation where the two sides directly share their concerns, but more importantly that the meeting unlocks, especially in the Chinese system, space for further engagement in constructive work," Blanchette said.

There's been plenty of effort by both sides to lay the groundwork for the expected San Francisco meeting.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is set to meet this couple of days with Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng in San Francisco before finance ministers of the APEC member nations officially kick off the summit Saturday.

The meeting between the two senior government officials comes after Biden spoke with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the White House for about an hour late last month, when Beijing's top diplomat came to Washington for talks with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan. Xi similarly met with Blinken in June when the secretary of state traveled to Beijing for talks with Wang.

Yellen last met with her counterpart He during a July visit to Beijing, when she urged Chinese government officials to cooperate on climate change and other global challenges and not to let sharp disagreements about trade and other irritants derail relations.

Biden and Xi last met nearly a year ago on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit in Bali, Indonesia, a nearly three-hour meeting in which Biden objected directly to China's "coercive and increasingly aggressive actions" toward Taiwan and discussed Russia's invasion of Ukraine and other issues.

The already fraught relationship has become only more complicated since that Bali meeting. Differences have sharpened as a result of U.S. export controls on advanced technology; Biden ordering the shooting down of a Chinese spy balloon after it traversed the continental United States; and a stopover in the U.S. by Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen earlier this year, among other issues.

Beijing sees official American contact with Taiwan as encouragement to make the island's decades-old de facto independence permanent, a step U.S. leaders say they don't support. Under the "One China" policy, the U.S. recognizes Beijing as the government of China and doesn't have diplomatic relations with Taiwan, but it has maintained that Taipei is an important partner in the Indo-Pacific.

**BRAZIL POLICE SEARCH PORTUGAL'S CONSULATE IN RIO AS PART OF A GRAFT INVESTIGATION**

**THE BUZZ**

Brazilian federal police conducted searches at five locations, including the Portuguese Consulate in Rio de Janeiro, as part of a corruption investigation.

Portuguese public prosecutors and Portuguese security agents accompanied the Brazilian officers, according to a statement from the Federal Police force. Pictures shared by the agency's press office showed officers in front of the consulate, which is located in the Sao Clemente Palace.

Portuguese authorities are investigating alleged corruption and the falsification of documents in collusion with applicants seeking visas and Portuguese nationality, according to the statement.

A spokesperson from the federal police's press office said the searches were unrelated to the corruption-related raids and arrests in Portugal that prompted Prime Minister António Costa's resignation Tuesday.

The police statement did not disclose the four other locations searched, but at least one was in Saquarema, a seaside town north of Rio.

Many Brazilians have struck out for Portugal during the past decade of economic downturn and political polarization; about 252,000 live there, according to Brazil's government. They are by far the largest foreign community in the European nation and have increasingly faced xenophobia.



AP PHOTO

**MYANMAR HOSTS JOINT NAVAL EXERCISE WITH RUSSIA, ITS CLOSE ALLY AND TOP ARMS SUPPLIER**

GRANT PECK, BANGKOK

**T**HE military-run Southeast Asian nation of Myanmar is holding its first joint naval exercise with Russia, state media reported, with the countries carrying out maneuvers in the Andaman Sea.

Reports in the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper said that the maritime security exercise with Russia was being held until today, 157 kilometers west of Myeik in Myanmar's far south. Some Russian navy vessels sailed from Yangon to take part, state television MRTV reported.

The three-day joint drill involves aircraft and naval vessels and focuses on defending against threats from air, sea and land as well as other maritime security measures, the reports said.

Russia is a major supporter and arms supplier of Myanmar's military government, which was installed after the army seized power and ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021. Russia defends Myanmar's military government in international forums, and the ruling generals return the favor by generally supporting Moscow's foreign policy agenda.

Myanmar has been treated as a pariah state by many Western nations since the military takeover and the violent suppression of protests against it, which has led to the deaths of thousands of civilians and given rise to an armed resistance movement in many parts of the country.

The Global New Light of Myanmar said the head of the military government, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, met on Monday with Adm. Nikolai Yevmenov, the commander-in-chief of Russia's navy, at Thilawa port in the southern part of Yangon. The Russian officer welcomed an inspection by the Myanmar leader, who reviewed a guard of honor and toured one of the Russian vessels.

Min Aung Hlaing was briefed on the capacity of Russian weapons, the installation of modern systems and an anti-submarine helicopter, the reports said.

Tom Andrews, the U.N. independent investigator on human rights in Myanmar, in a report in May to the Geneva-based Human Rights Council identified \$406 million in weapons and materiel that went to the Myanmar military from Russia, \$267 million from China, \$254

million from Singapore, \$51 million from India and \$28 million from Thailand.

Since the 2021 takeover, the report said, 28 Russian private and state-owned companies have transferred fighter jets and their spare parts, advanced missile systems, reconnaissance and attack drones, attack helicopters and other systems to Myanmar's military.

As an example of what he called the military's brutality, Andrews pointed to its April 11 air strike using a Russian Yak-130 fighter jet on a ceremony in northern Myanmar attended by some 300 opponents of army rule. It was quickly followed by an attack by Russian Mi-35 helicopters on those who came to help. He said at least 160 people were killed, including many children.

The joint exercises come at a time when Myanmar's military is facing the coordinated offensives of the pro-democracy resistance fighters and ethnic minority armed organizations that have seized strategic towns in the northern region of Sagaing and Shan state in the east.

Russian-made fighter jets are used in attacks on both the resistance fighters and ethnic armed groups. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

**North Korea** criticized rival South Korea yesterday for removing a law that banned private activists from sending anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets to the North, insisting that such activities amount to psychological warfare and threatening to respond with a "shower of shells." The statement published by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency was the first time state media commented on the September decision by South Korea's Constitutional Court to invalidate a 2020 law that criminalized leafleting. The decision was based on concerns that it excessively restricted free speech.



AP PHOTO

**Indian** authorities have barred any solidarity protest in Muslim-majority Kashmir and asked Muslim preachers not to mention the conflict in their sermons, residents and religious leaders told The Associated Press. The restrictions are part of India's efforts to curb any form of protest that could turn into demands for ending New Delhi's rule in the disputed region. They also reflect a shift in India's foreign policy under populist Prime Minister Narendra Modi away from its long-held support for the Palestinians, analysts say.



AP PHOTO

**Afghanistan** The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for a minibus explosion in the Afghan capital late on Tuesday that killed at least seven people. The Sunni militant group said its members detonated an explosive device on the bus carrying Shiite Muslims. Twenty others were wounded in the attack in Kabul's western Shiite neighborhood of Dashti Barchi, according to police spokesman Khalid Zadrar.