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THE HEALTH BUREAU RECORDED 17 HIV INFECTIONS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF THE YEAR

CENTRALIZED KITCHEN LINKED TO FOOD POISONING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

CHINESE COURT TO CONSIDER COMPENSATION FOR PEOPLE ON MISSING MH370 FLIGHT, RELATIVE SAYS



AP PHOTO



China A man wanted for allegedly embezzling millions of yuan from his company and then fleeing to Morocco was extradited back to China this weekend, the Ministry of Public Security said. The man, a financial executive at the company, used passwords for its bank accounts to transfer money to his personal account, the ministry said in a statement. It didn't name the company but said that Shanghai police filed a case against the man in February 2020.

AP PHOTO



India Officials trying to reach 41 workers who have been trapped in a collapsed tunnel in northern India for eight days were contemplating alternative rescue plans yesterday after snags with a drilling machine caused them to halt digging. A new drilling machine arrived at the accident site in Uttarakhand state on Saturday to replace one that was damaged while breaking through the rocks and debris. They had been using the drill to create a space to insert wide pipes through which the trapped workers could crawl to their freedom.

AP PHOTO



Israel Thousands of family members and supporters of some 240 hostages held in Gaza streamed into Jerusalem on Saturday, castigating Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government over his management of the war with Hamas and pleading with the government to do whatever it takes to bring their loved ones home. As public pressure mounted, Netanyahu said Saturday that Israel's War Cabinet would meet with representatives of the families this week. "I am marching with you. The Israeli people are marching with you," he said.

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A NEW STAR IS BORN

GRAND PRIX MACAU

SUPPLEMENT

IFTM TO EXPAND POSTGRADUATE PROGRAM

The Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM) will expand its portfolio of programs with the introduction of two postgraduate programs in events management. The two programs are planned for the 2024/2025 academic year and will be in effect after being published in MSAR Gazette. A statement from the IFTM stated the move was to respond to the "strong demand locally for highly-qualified professionals" in the field of events. IFTM's School of Hospitality Management is launching a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in International Hospitality and Tourism Management (specialization in Events Management) and a Master of Science (MSc) in International Events Management.

SSM OPENS NEW ROUND OF FLU VACCINE

The Health Bureau (SSM) has stated the 2023-2024 seasonal influenza vaccine free vaccination program will be open to all Macau residents starting today. Vaccine recipients must be 6 months old or above. According to the SSM, nearly 112,000 high-risk individuals have been vaccinated since the free vaccination program began on Sept. 25.

AIR MACAU ROUTE TO JAKARTA RESUMES NOV. 28

Air Macau will resume its route from Macau to Jakarta from Nov. 28 with three flights per week. Flight numbers NX910 and NX909 are slated to operate every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. Air Macau said the Jakarta route's launch is a major measure to actively respond to the call of the SAR government to coordinate the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and attract more international tourists to Macau. The local carrier said it is actively exploring the Indonesian market and gradually increasing the proportion of international passenger source markets.

GBA GLOBAL CLIMATE FINANCING CONFERENCE OPENS IN SOUTH CHINA

The 2023 Pearl Bay International Climate Investment and Financing Conference opened Friday in Guangzhou under the theme of "Climate Finance for a Better World." The two-day event aims to attract more financial resources into the climate change sector, supporting high-quality development and the green, low-carbon transformation of the economy and society. The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area serves as a new engine for China's high-quality economic development and aims to demonstrate and play a leading role in driving green, low-carbon development, said Leung Chun-ying, vice chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.



MACAO INT'L SHORTS

INAUGURAL FILM FESTIVAL SEEKS LOCAL ENTRIES

ANTHONY LAM

An inaugural international short film festival in Macau is calling for local entries until Dec. 15, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has announced.

Officially known as 1st Macao International Shorts Film Festival and co-organized by

the IC and Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG), the call for entries welcomes all local residents. The winner will receive a trophy and a prize of MOP40,000.

Set for next year, the festival will have an opening ceremony and opening screenings, screening activities, workshops, se-

minars, as well as a closing and award ceremony. The screenings will be divided into three sections, namely "Macao Short Film," "Emerging Short Film" and "Filmmaker in Focus."

The sessions will also feature the participation of senior filmmakers who will form a jury, and will host workshops

and seminars to create an international platform for the exchange and screening of short films, with the aim of actively promoting local film and television productions.

At the same time, the Cultural Development Fund is also calling for applications for a grant targeting original music album productions.

The application period starts today and will be open until Jan. 12, 2024.

Productions must not have been previously published and must not be commissioned works. The grants will target both Extended Play (EP) and album productions. The former should have at least three songs, and the latter six. The subsidized repertoires must be published on at least four commercial digital music platforms, with at least one of them being from mainland China.

There will be six EP and four album quotas. Each of the former will get a maximum of MOP135,000 and each of the latter MOP270,000. The funds can be used for production, transport, marketing, as well as studio or equipment hire. The grants will be valid for 18 months.

The fund will arrange for industry experts to provide input and expertise on the productions.

HEALTH

17 HIV cases recorded in first nine months

ANTHONY LAM

There have been 17 newly recorded HIV infections from local residents in the first nine months of the year – 15 men and two women – the Commission for AIDS prevention and treatment has disclosed.

Currently, eight of the cases were aged between 20 and 29 years; one case was between 40 and 49 years; and seven were above 50 years.

Among the 17 cases, 12 contracted HIV through same-sex or bisexual relations and four through heterosexual sexual intercourse. Another case has allegedly contracted the virus through a blood transfusion outside of Macau.

Existing measures, such as the promotion of safe sex, training of medical staff and public education, will remain the main tactics to curb the spread of the virus.

The Commission said a HIV self-testing scheme began in 2021. As of September this year, 708 self-testing kits were sold, with nearly half of the buyers not having conducted any HIV testing before. The scheme detected three HIV infections.

Meanwhile, the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) has employed various measures to prevent the spread of HIV through narcotics consumption.

In the first nine months of the year, 99 people have used methadone therapy, with an average of 93% attendance.



Those with better results will be able to withdraw from the therapy and resume their normal life.

The IAS and Health Bureau (SSM) have also cooperated in pinpointing Hepatitis C pa-

tients since August 2020, and 39 patients have been logged so far.

The sex education curriculum has also been implemented at schools to help prevent HIV infections.

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Economy at 77% of pre-pandemic levels

LYNZY VALLES

THE city's economy expanded by 116.1% year-on-year in the third quarter of 2023, attributable to thriving services exports. Notably, growth in gaming services exports and other tourism services grew by 781.4% and 255.4% respectively.

The city's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been recovering (albeit from a low base) since borders reopened in January after nearly three years of shut-down.

Meanwhile, domestic demand increased 15.7% due to a continued rebound in gross fixed capital formation and private consumption expenditure. These factors have contributed to the strong and sustained economic recovery of the SAR.

Data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) indicated imports of goods and services rose 25.7% and 58.2% respectively, whereas exports of goods reduced by 9%.

For the first three quarters of



2023, GDP surged 77.7% year-on-year in real terms, and Macau's overall economic output returned to 77.4% of its 2019 level during the same period.

Meanwhile, the improving economic environment and employment situation continued

to boost private consumption. Overall private consumption increased 29.6% year-on-year, an accelerated growth from the second quarter. Household final consumption expenditure in the domestic market and abroad rose 22.4% and 138.7% respectively

year-on-year.

Fitch Ratings had anticipated growth of up to 65% in Macau's economy this year, driven by sustained recovery in the gaming and tourism sector.

The ratings institution had anticipated it could take until at

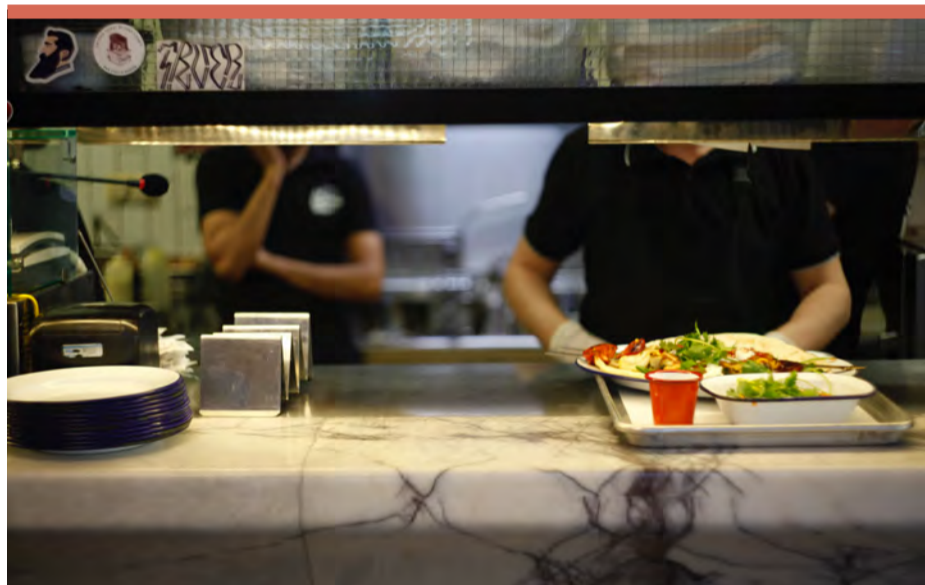
least end-2025 for GDP to return to 2019 levels, "along with moderate non-gaming diversification."

The local government previously echoed the statement noting that gaming concessionaires are positioned to promote the development of non-gaming elements.

Meanwhile, government final consumption expenditure fell 23.6% year-on-year, owing to the conclusion of the SAR government's livelihood subsidy scheme. Net purchases of goods and services decreased 41.7% while compensation of employees rose 3.1%.

Despite the budget remaining in the red for next year, Ho Iat Seng said in August that the government would maintain population livelihood allowances for 2024.

However, Ho said in his recent Policy Address that there will be no additional support measures for the populace or companies next year, other than those already previously announced due to budget constraints.



Centralized kitchen linked to food poisoning among university students

ANTHONY LAM

A food poisoning case concerning 30 University of Macau students has been attributed to a centralized kitchen with poor hygiene practices, the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has disclosed.

Students who consumed food from the centralized kitchen owned and operated by Heyday Catering Group Com-

pany Limited on Nov. 15 began experiencing symptoms of food poisoning that same afternoon, including diarrhea, abdominal pain and vomiting.

The authorities suspect the cause to be pathogenic bacteria, and the possibility of more individuals being affected cannot be ruled out, the IAM added.

On-site investigations

discovered that workers at the kitchen had low awareness of food safety practices and that the kitchen had substandard cleanliness. Additionally, cooked ingredients were found to be improperly stored, leading to the immediate suspension of the relevant operations.

Should breaches of food safety standards be confirmed, those responsible will be prosecuted,

the IAM said.

Heyday Catering Group Company Limited owns and operates a variety of brands and businesses, from coffee shops and sushi joints, to bubble tea and dessert venues.

The group's alleged involvement in a food poisoning case has sparked discussion and criticism on social media platforms. A screen cap reportedly depicted text message conversations within one of the group's subsidiaries, claiming that the unsold and uncooked ingredients could be repurposed for the use at the Chinese kitchen. Several social media posts made similar claims.

Meanwhile, on the sidelines of an event, director of Education and Youth Development Kong Chi Meng gave an assurance that lunch supplies to local schools will be handled appropriately.

The official said the centralized kitchen is also a supplier of lunches to some local schools. The suspension of operations has impacted meal services to these schools.

In addition, Kong said the education bureau has guidelines for schools and tuition centers on food safety and food supplier reliability.

BUSINESS BLOOMS DURING EVENTFUL WEEKEND

AMID the Macau Grand Prix and the Macau Food Festival this weekend, shopkeepers have reported vigorous business and revenue.

Shopkeepers near the Ruins of St Paul's said this weekend saw revenues returning to about half of the same period in 2019, according to public broadcaster TDM-Radio Macau (Chinese).

It was also hoped more events will be held to extend the good vibes to Christmas and New Year.

In another tourist area, Rua dos Ervanarios, a shopkeeper said revenues rose 50% compared with a regular weekend. It was also reported that many tourists visited shops featured by influencers.

The pedestrianized 'Happiness Street' has also garnered good feedback from tourists, the public broadcaster reported.

Lawmaker Angela Leong confirmed to local media outlet Macao Daily News that there was an influx of tourists this weekend amid the car races. She encouraged on the government to leverage its experience to further elevate the quality of the event.

Another lawmaker, Wu Cho Kit, complimented the decision to extend the car races to two weekends, as this was an effective means of extending tourists' stay lengths. However, further improvements are required to minimize the impact of the event on daily life, he said. **AL**



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



Cao Hongwei

MTCC - CTCC

HART AND CAO WIN IN MACAU GP

RENATO MARQUES

IRISH racer Max Hart (Hyundai Elantra N TCR) won Race 2 of the Macau Touring Car Cup (MTCC) – China Touring Car Championship (CTCC) as Cao

Hongwei (Hyundai Elantra N TCR), the winner of Race 1, clinched the TCR China title Sunday in Macau.

In Sunday's Race 2, Hart, who finished fourth in Race 1, started in ninth position, due to the par-

tially inverted grid format, but managed to overtake several competitors ahead of him due to their slower race pace and quickly rose to fifth position.

The winner of Race 1, Cao, was involved in a

three-car clash with Yang Xiaowei (Hyundai Elantra N TCR) and local racer André Couto (Honda Civic FL5 TCR) as he tried to pass both on lap three.

However, as Cao attempted to take the inside line at Lisboa Bend, his car was launched over the front-right corner of Yang's Hyundai and into Couto's path, with whom Cao then collided.

Unable to continue, Couto retired from the race. Cao continued with a damaged car that was also retired moments later.

In the process, Young, who was challenging Cao for the title, lost time and hit the barriers, dropping to 12th position.

After a comeback, Young retired from the race after hitting David Zhu (Lynk & Co 03 TCR) on the final lap, leaving the door open for Cao's title win even with a DNF (Did Not Finish) added.

With Couto out of the race, the only local competitor on track was Filipe de Souza (Audi RS3 LMS TCR) who failed to achieve better than 14th position in Race 2 after having finished 12th in Race 1 Saturday.



Lei Kit Meng (left) and Adrian Chung

GP 70TH ANNIVERSARY CHALLENGE ADRIAN CHUNG AND LEI KIT MENG WIN

MACAU driver Lei Kit Meng (Toyota GR86) and Hong Kong driver Adrian Chung (Toyota GR86) have won Races 1 and 2 of the Macau 70th Anniversary Challenge respectively, a special race from this year's program to commemorate the milestone of the local GP.

Lei won Race 1 Saturday, beating local racer Summer Chan (Toyota GR86) and Hong Kong's Loo Long Yin (Toyota GR86).

In Race 2 yesterday

morning, Lei could not keep pace with Chung who led the race and gave the competition no chances with an impressive race pace.

In Race 2, the results for second and third positions was inverted, with Loo taking second and Chan third.

This special event derives from the Macau RoadSport Challenge that raced on the first week of the GP and which only uses Toyota GR86 or Subaru BRZ car models. **RM**

AD

澳門特別行政區政府
Governo da Região Administrativa Especial de Macau
體育局
Instituto do Desporto

Metal barrier removal schedule for the 70th Macau Grand Prix

Upon conclusion of the 70th Macau Grand Prix, the Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee would like to thank all Macau citizens for their support and cooperation of the event and inform that the metal barrier removal works have begun immediately upon the conclusion of the event. It is estimated that these works will be concluded on 30th November, as per the schedule below:

| Date | Time | Location |
|--|----------------|--|
| 20 th to 23 rd of November | 08:00 to 20:00 | (1) Remove all movable gates (2) Remove all barriers on both sides of the movable gates |
| 20 th to 25 th of November | 08:00 to 20:00 | Remove all barriers from <i>Avenida da Amizade</i> to Reservoir Bend |
| 23 rd to 30 th of November | 08:00 to 20:00 | Remove all barriers from <i>Rua dos Pescadores</i> to Reservoir Bend |
| 25 th to 30 th of November | 08:00 to 20:00 | Remove all barriers at the upper part of the Guia Hill (<i>Estrada de S. Francisco, Estrada dos Parses</i> and <i>Estrada de Cacilhas</i>) |

HORSE RACING

MACAU JOCKEY CLUB SLASHES 30% IN BETTING PRIZE MONEY

THE Macau Jockey Club (MJC) has initiated a 30% reduction in horse betting prize money due to low turnover in recent years.

“Due to the club's disappointing betting turnover over the years, the club has reluctantly implemented a policy adjustment,” the MJC has said in a statement.

“Effective from the Nov. 18 race meeting, there will be a 30% reduction in prize money.”

“We aim to sustain the club's stable operations, despite the challenges in the current economic environment.”

The MJC is facing a downturn in revenue following economic headwinds caused by the pandemic.

For the first nine months of the year, the company generated MOP32 million in revenue –43% of pre-pandemic levels.

However, this figure al-



ready represents a 14% increase compared to the same period last year.

In August, following reports of a potential shutdown, the group announced that it had received approval for a new season. However, the future trajectory remains uncertain, according to an insider

speaking the Times on conditions of anonymity, as they were not officially permitted to discuss the matter with the press.

The insider estimated that this season may only have four races a month and could potentially conclude by December due to various factors. **LV**

TECH

ChatGPT-maker OpenAI fires CEO Sam Altman, the face of the AI boom, for lack of candor with company

MATT O'BRIEN

CHATGPT-maker OpenAI said Friday it has pushed out its co-founder and CEO Sam Altman after a review found he was "not consistently candid in his communications" with the board of directors.

"The board no longer has confidence in his ability to continue leading OpenAI," the artificial intelligence company said in a statement.

In the year since Altman catapulted ChatGPT to global fame, he has become Silicon Valley's sought-after voice on the promise and potential dangers of artificial intelligence and his sudden and mostly unexplained exit brought uncertainty to the industry's future.

Mira Murati, OpenAI's chief technology officer, will take over as interim CEO effective immediately, the company said, while it searches for a permanent replacement.

The announcement also said another OpenAI co-founder and top executive, Greg Brockman, the board's chairman, would step down from that role but remain at the company, where he serves as president. But later on X, formerly Twitter, Brockman posted a message he sent to OpenAI employees in which he wrote, "based on today's news, i quit."



Co-founder and CEO of ChatGPT, Sam Altman

In another X post on Friday night, Brockman said Altman was asked to join a video meeting at noon Friday with the company's board members, minus Brockman, during which OpenAI co-founder and Chief Scientist Ilya Sutskever informed Altman he was being fired.

"Sam and I are shocked and saddened by what the board did today," Brockman wrote, adding that he was informed of his removal from the board in a separate call with Sutskever a short time later.

OpenAI declined to answer questions on what Altman's alle-

ged lack of candor was about. The statement said his behavior was hindering the board's ability to exercise its responsibilities.

Altman posted Friday on X: "i loved my time at openai. it was transformative for me personally, and hopefully the world a little bit. most of all i loved working with such talented people. will have more to say about what's next later."

In another post on X early Saturday morning, he called what happened a "weird experience" and thanked his followers for the "outpouring of love."

"it has been sorta like reading

your own eulogy while you're still alive," Altman wrote.

The Associated Press and OpenAI have a licensing and technology agreement allowing OpenAI access to part of the AP's text archives.

Altman helped start OpenAI as a nonprofit research laboratory in 2015. But it was ChatGPT's explosion into public consciousness that thrust Altman into the spotlight as a face of generative AI — technology that can produce novel imagery, passages of text and other media. On a world tour this year, he was mobbed by a crowd of adoring fans at an event in London.

He's sat with multiple heads of state to discuss AI's potential and perils. Just Thursday, he took part in a CEO summit at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation conference in San Francisco, where OpenAI is based.

He predicted AI will prove to be "the greatest leap forward of any of the big technological revolutions we've had so far." He also acknowledged the need for guardrails, calling attention to the existential dangers future AI could pose.

Some computer scientists have criticized that focus on far-off risks as distracting from the real-world limitations and harms of current AI products. The U.S. Federal Trade Commission has launched an investigation into

whether OpenAI violated consumer protection laws by scraping public data and publishing false information through its chatbot.

The company said its board consists of OpenAI's chief scientist, Ilya Sutskever, and three non-employees: Quora CEO Adam D'Angelo, tech entrepreneur Tasha McCauley and Helen Toner of the Georgetown Center for Security and Emerging Technology.

OpenAI's key business partner, Microsoft, which has invested billions of dollars into the startup and helped provide the computing power to run its AI systems, said that the transition won't affect its relationship.

"We have a long-term partnership with OpenAI and Microsoft remains committed to Mira and their team as we bring this next era of AI to our customers," said an emailed Microsoft statement.

While not trained as an AI engineer, Altman, now 38, has been seen as a Silicon Valley wunderkind since his early 20s. He was recruited in 2014 to take lead of the startup incubator YCombinator.

OpenAI started out as a nonprofit when it launched with financial backing from Tesla CEO Elon Musk and others. Its stated aims were to "advance digital intelligence in the way that is most likely to benefit humanity as a whole, unconstrained by a need to generate financial return."

That changed in 2018 when it incorporated a for-profit business Open AI LP, and shifted nearly all its staff into the business, not long after releasing its first generation of the GPT large language model for mimicking human writing. Around the same time, Musk, who had co-chaired its board with Altman, resigned from the board in a move that OpenAI said would eliminate a "potential future conflict for Elon" due to Tesla's work on building self-driving systems. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

MGM donates MOP700,000 to Tung Sin Tong



MGM presented another year of support to Macau's Tung Sin Tong Charitable Society's annual fundraising campaign, with a donation of

MOP700,000.

Over 16 consecutive years, MGM has donated MOP 7.9 million to the local charity, living out its service

ethos of "a common wish to benefit society, and virtuous atmosphere to welcome all."

Kenneth Feng, president and executive director of MGM China Holdings Limited, said, "As one of the most longstanding charity organizations in Macau, Tung Sin Tong has been serving the community for over a century, with welfare services that are being constantly extended and enhanced over the years."

"MGM is honored to be their long-term partner and hopes to continue serving the community with them and many other community organizations," he added.

Rolls-Royce Spectre makes debut at Wynn Palace



Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Hong Kong & Macau has hosted a gala dinner at Wynn

Palace Cotai in Macau to celebrate the arrival of Spectre — the first fully electric Rolls-

-Royce.

Wynn Resorts collaborated with Rolls-Royce Motor Cars as venue partner for the event to launch the revolutionary new ultra-luxury Spectre from Rolls-Royce.

Following its inauguration, Spectre will be showcased for a limited-time exhibition at the North Atrium Lobby of Wynn Palace until Dec. 1, 2023.

"This event is just one recent example of how Wynn is collaborating with globally renowned luxury car manufacturer Rolls-Royce Motor Cars to stage more international events in Macau," the gaming operator said in a statement.

Japan and China agree to work on stable relationship, though only vague promises in seafood dispute

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

JAPANESE Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed to build a stable and constructive relationship, but achieved only a vague agreement on easing a dispute over a Chinese ban on Japanese seafood, officials said.

Kishida told reporters after a 65-minute meeting with Xi on the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco that they agreed to “find ways to resolve the dispute through meetings and dialogue in a constructive manner.”

He said they would convene a meeting of scientific experts but gave no details, and told reporters later Tuesday that timing of a possible lifting of the ban was “unforeseeable.”

Kishida had demanded that China immediately lift its ban on Japanese seafood, in place since the crippled Fukushima nuclear power plant began discharging treated radioactive wastewater into the sea on Aug. 24. The ban has badly hurt Japanese exporters of scallops and other seafood.

Japan says the wastewater is much safer than international standards and that the International Atomic Energy Agency has concluded the environmental and health impact of its release is negligible. China calls the discharge “nuclear-contaminated water.”



Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, left, stands next to Chinese President Xi Jinping during the family photo at the APEC Summit in San Francisco, last week

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV also said China and Japan agreed to find a way to resolve the Fukushima water issue through consultations and negotiations. Xi, calling the discharge a global health and marine environment issue, told Kishida that Japan should take domestic and international concerns seriously and handle them in a responsible and constructive manner, CCTV said in an online report.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning, speaking Friday in Beijing, said all countries have the right to ensure food safety and protect public health.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno praised the talks

as “extremely meaningful” because Kishida and Xi “confirmed their mutual goal of building constructive and stable Japan-China relations from a wide perspective.”

But a series of disputes dominated the talks. Kishida asked Xi to remove all marking buoys that Beijing has placed inside Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone in the East China Sea, and to quickly release a Japanese businessman who was formally arrested in October on spying allegations.

Kishida said he raised “grave concern” about China's increased military activity around Japan, including joint exercises with Russia. He stressed the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan

Strait, where China regularly dispatches military ships and planes to threaten Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own territory.

Kishida also held talks on the sidelines of APEC with South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol. They also attended a roundtable with technology startups and joined an event at Stanford University to discuss possible cooperation in investment and development in semiconductor, quantum, AI and other technologies — another move underscoring deepening ties between the two countries.

Kishida said he has high expectations for a three-way cooperation with the United States and South Korea in the area. He said

that a nation cannot achieve resilience of innovation and supply chain on its own and that he could imagine “a future of our cooperation” among the three countries.

Yoon said at the Stanford event that innovation is borderless and that South Korea supports promising startups “regardless of their nationalities or where their startups are based.”

“As the competitiveness of startups in both South Korea and Japan is excellent, we can create great synergies by expanding cooperation between the countries,” Yoon said, pledging that the two countries will together support the innovations by younger generations.

Kishida also briefly met with Biden and discussed the Middle East, Ukraine, the Indo-Pacific, China and North Korea, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said. The three leaders also held a separate meeting together.

Yoon's office said the three leaders talked for about 10 minutes about security and economic cooperation. Biden expressed gratitude to Yoon and Kishida for “easing his burden as he performs his duties as the president of the United States,” Yoon's deputy national security director, Kim Tae-hyo, told South Korean reporters.

Japan and South Korea, which share security concerns in the Indo-Pacific, have rapidly repaired and strengthened their ties that had long been strained over historical issues involving Japan's colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula, thereby bolstering three-way security ties with the United States.

In their meeting, Kishida and Yoon expressed satisfaction over the “positive trends in bilateral relations” and the expansion of government consultations on diplomacy, security and economy, Yoon's office said. **MDT/AP**

MH370

Chinese court to consider compensation for people on missing Malaysia Airlines flight, relative says

A Chinese court will hold hearings on claims for compensation for the Chinese relatives of people who died on a Malaysia Airlines plane that disappeared in 2014 on a flight to Beijing, a representative of the families said Friday.

Jiang Hui, whose mother was on flight MH370, wrote on his Weibo social media account that he had received a notice that court hearings would begin Nov. 27. The hearings are expected to continue until mid-December, Jiang said.

“I hope China's laws can

bring justice to the families who have not received a penny of compensation or an apology in the past 10 years,” Jiang wrote. “The disappearance of 239 lives, including 154 Chinese people, is a shame.”

After almost a decade, the fate of the plane and its passengers remains a mystery. Various theories have emerged, but scant evidence has been found to show why the plane diverged from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. The plane is believed to have plunged into the

Southern Ocean south of India.

Given the continuing mystery surrounding the case, it remains unclear what financial obligations the airline may have and no charges have been brought against the flight crew. However, relatives say they wish for some compensation for a disaster that deprived them of their loved ones and placed them in financial difficulty.

China's largely opaque legal system offers wide latitude for judges to issue

legal or financial penalties when criminal penalties cannot be brought.

The case is expected to be heard in Beijing's main Chaoyang District Intermediary Court, according to online postings, but no information was immediately available on the court's website.

Similar cases brought in the U.S. against the airline, its holding company and insurer have been dismissed on the basis that such matters should be handled by the Malaysian legal system. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO



Demonstrators gather outside the Hawaii Convention Center in Honolulu, Saturday

Marcos' visit to Hawaii boosts US-Philippines bond and recalls family history

JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER & AUDREY MCAVOY, HONOLULU

PHILIPPINES President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is meeting with senior U.S. military leaders and members of Hawaii's large Filipino community this weekend in a visit steeped in geopolitical and personal significance for the leader, but also drawing protests from a younger generation of Filipinos who point to the actions of his dictator father who died in exile in Hawaii.

Marcos, who stopped in Hawaii on his way home from the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco, connected Saturday evening with members of Hawaii's large Filipino-American community before a planned Sunday meeting with Adm. John Aquilino, the top U.S. military commander in the Indo-Pacific region. Marcos is then due to deliver a talk about his nation's security challenges and the role of the Philippines-U.S. alliance.

Protesters gathered outside the community meeting and at the airport where he landed.

Marcos' trip comes at a time when the U.S. and the Philippines have been deepening their long-standing alliance in a shift after Marcos' predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, nurtured cozy ties with China and Russia.

The Philippines this year agreed to give the U.S. access to four more bases as America looks to deter China's increasingly aggressive actions toward Taiwan and in the South China Sea. In April, the two countries held their largest military exercises in decades.

But the trip also likely has perso-

nal resonance for the leader of the Philippines. His father, the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, died in exile in Honolulu after he was ousted in a 1986 army-backed "people power" uprising.

Many Filipino immigrants in Hawaii also hail from same part of the Philippines as Marcos and revere him and his family. Filipinos are the largest single ethnic group in Hawaii, accounting for 26% of the state's population as of the 2020 census.

Winfred Damo, who immigrated to Honolulu from Marcos' province of Ilocos Norte in 1999, said being Ilocano means "we always support the Marcoses."

The 58-year-old helped campaign for Marcos Jr. in Hawaii and said the president is a different person than his father and from a different era. Philippine nationals living abroad can vote in elections back home.

"We have a better government now in the Philippines," he said. "Marcoses are good people. They did a lot in our country and they are the best."

Not all are Marcos fans. Arcy Imasa organized a protest outside the convention center where Marcos met with community members on Saturday. Her aim was to help younger Filipinos learn his family's history.

Marcos' father placed the Philippines under martial rule in 1972, a year before his term was to expire. He also padlocked Congress, ordered the arrest of political rivals and left-wing activists and ruled by decree.

A Hawaii court found the senior Marcos liable for human rights violations and awarded \$2 billion from his estate to compensate more than

9,000 Filipinos who filed a lawsuit against him for torture, incarceration, extrajudicial killings and disappearances.

Imasa, 40, who is part of Hawaii Filipinos for Truth, Justice and Democracy and grew up in the Ilocos province of Pangasinan, said the mindset of many Filipinos in Hawaii is fixed, especially those of older generations.

"They're not on the right side of history. They're not fully aware of the crimes that transpired," she said.

Satu Limaye, the vice president of the East-West Center, noted the U.S. and the Philippines have a long, complicated relationship. He pointed to years when the U.S. ruled the archipelago as a colony, when the two nations signed a mutual defense treaty in 1951 and when the U.S. military withdrew from major bases in the country in the 1990s.

Duterte was often critical of the U.S., at times questioning the value of the alliance and demanding more military aid to preserve the pact. Under Marcos there has been a "180-degree turn" and a massive change in cooperation and coordination with the U.S., Limaye said.

China has laid sweeping territorial claims over virtually the entire South China Sea, areas also claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

China has clashed with its smaller neighbors and subsequently drawn in the U.S., which is Manila's treaty ally and China's main rival in the Asia-Pacific region. Washington and its allies have deployed navy ships and fighter aircraft to promote freedom of navigation and overflight, build up deterrence and reassure allies. MDT/AP

ADVERTORIAL

GREAT TIMES

Witness the Ultimate Tennis Showdown at MGM Macau Tennis Masters



Macau has been a hub of world-class sporting events this year, and the upcoming MGM Macau Tennis Masters (MMTM) in December promises to be yet another spectacular experience. Set to take place on December 2 and 3 at the Macau East Asia Games Dome, the tennis extravaganza features an exciting lineup of international stars.



The MMTM will bring together six top players from around the world, creating a one-of-a-kind tennis spectacle for the city. Among the ATP headliners are **Taylor Fritz**, the American tennis ace ranked world No. 10, and the rising star **Tallon Griekspoor**, Dutch No.1 and world No. 21 men's singles player. Joining them will be **Borna Coric**, young Croatian sensation with a career-high ranking of world No. 12, and **Zhang Zhizhen**, top seed of China who recently clinched the men's singles gold at the Asian Games Hangzhou. On the women's side, **Daria Kasatkina**, a six-time singles title winner with a career-high singles ranking of No. 8, and China's rising star **Wang Xinyu** who won the doubles title at the 2023 French Open and peaked at world No. 18 in the doubles ranking will be joining. The fascinating mix of these high-profile players guarantees captivating performances that will wow audiences. Tennis fans can also capture special moments at the photo spots and take home limited-edition souvenirs.

The MMTM will be an event that tennis enthusiasts won't want to miss. Get ready to witness the ultimate tennis showdown and secure your tickets now!



ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

UN team says 32 babies are among scores of critically ill patients stranded in Gaza's main hospital

NAJIB JOBAIN & SAMY MAGDY, GAZA STRIP

A United Nations team said yesterday that 291 patients were left at Gaza's largest hospital after Israeli troops had others evacuate. Those left included 32 babies in extremely critical condition, trauma patients with severely infected wounds, and others with spinal injuries who are unable to move.

The team was able to tour Shifa Hospital for an hour after about 2,500 displaced people, mobile patients and medical staff left the sprawling compound Saturday morning, said the World Health Organization, which led the mission. It said 25 medical staff remained, along with the patients.

"Patients and health staff with whom they spoke were terrified for their safety and health, and pleaded for evacuation," the agency said, describing Shifa as a death zone.

Another WHO team was heading to Shifa on Sunday to evacuate the babies, according to Mohammed Zaqout, the director of hospitals in Gaza. An Associated Press reporter saw a convoy of ambulances, escorted by U.N. vehicles, heading north toward Gaza City. The WHO has said it hopes to evacuate patients to southern Gaza, where hospitals are also overwhelmed.

Israel has long alleged that Hamas maintains a sprawling command post inside and under Shifa. It has portrayed the hospital as a key target in its war to end the militants' rule in Gaza following their wide-ranging attack into southern Israel six weeks ago, which triggered the war.

Hamas and hospital staff deny the allegations. Israeli troops who have been based at the hospital and searching its grounds for days say they have found guns and other weapons, and showed reporters the entrance to a tunnel shaft. The AP couldn't independently verify Israel's findings.

Saturday's mass departure was portrayed by Israel as vo-



luntary, but the WHO said the military had issued evacuation orders, and some of those who left described it as a forced exodus.

STRIKES IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH

Elsewhere in northern Gaza, dozens of people were killed in the urban Jabaliya refugee camp when what witnesses described as an Israeli airstrike hit a crowded U.N. shelter Saturday.

"The scenes were horrifying. Corpses of women and children were on the ground. Others were screaming for help," Ahmed Radwan, who was among the wounded, said by phone. AP photos from a local hospital showed more than 20 bodies wrapped in blood-stained sheets.

The Israeli military, which has repeatedly called on Palestinians to leave northern Gaza, said only that its troops were active in the area "with the aim of hitting terrorists." It rarely comments on individual strikes.

Heavy clashes were reported in the Jabaliya camp overnight into Sunday. "There was the constant sound of fire, gunfire and tank shelling," Yassin Sharif, who is sheltering in a U.N.-run hospital in the camp, said by phone. "It was another night of horror."

In southern Gaza, an Israeli airstrike hit a residential building near the town of Khan

Younis on Saturday, killing at least 26 Palestinians, according to a doctor at the hospital where the bodies were taken.

Doctors Without Borders, an international aid group, said a convoy of staff members and their families tried to evacuate northern Gaza in a clearly marked convoy on Saturday but turned back after shots rang out at a crowded Israeli checkpoint. On their way back to Gaza City, the convoy was attacked and a staffer's family member was killed, it said. It was not immediately clear who attacked the convoy.

More than 11,500 Palestinians have been killed, according to Palestinian health authorities. Another 2,700 have been reported missing, believed buried under rubble. The count does not differentiate between civilians and combatants; Israel says it has killed thousands of militants.

HOSTAGES AND AID

Around 1,200 people have been killed on the Israeli side, mainly civilians killed during Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, in which the group also dragged some 240 captives back into Gaza. The military says 52 Israeli soldiers have been killed.

Hamas has released four hostages, Israel has rescued one, and the bodies of two hostages were found near Shifa in an area where there had been heavy fighting.

Israel, the United States

and the Persian Gulf nation of Qatar, which mediates with Hamas, have been negotiating over a hostage release for weeks. On Saturday, a senior White House official suggested it would need to be completed before the entry of large amounts of desperately needed aid.

"A release of large number of hostages would result in a significant pause in fighting ... and a massive surge of humanitarian relief," Brett McGurk, the White House's National Security Council coordinator for the Middle East, said at a conference in Bahrain.

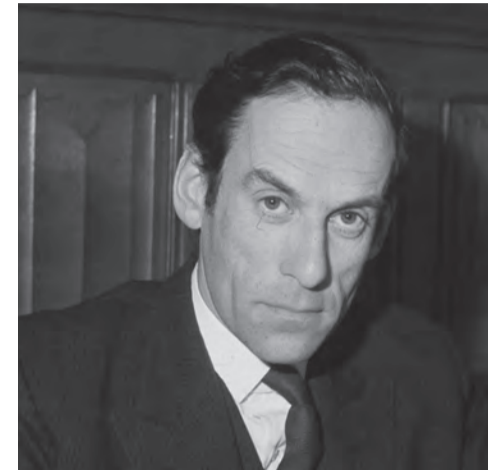
More than two-thirds of Gaza's population of 2.3 million have fled their homes. The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA, is providing basic services to hundreds of thousands of people sheltering in schools and other facilities.

Over the weekend, Israel allowed UNRWA to import enough fuel to continue humanitarian operations for another couple of days, and to keep internet and telephone systems running. UNRWA had been forced to put aid operations on hold Friday during a communications blackout.

Israel cut off all fuel imports at the start of the war, causing Gaza's sole power plant and most water treatment systems to shut down, leaving most residents without electricity or running water. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1978 LIBERAL MP ACCUSED OF MURDER PLOT



MP Jeremy Thorpe has been accused in court of plotting to kill his former homosexual lover and dispose of the body.

The former Liberal Party leader is charged with David Holmes, George Deakin and John le Mesurier of conspiracy to murder Norman Scott.

Mr Thorpe, 49, is also accused alone of inciting Mr Holmes to murder Mr Scott - with whom the MP is alleged to have had an affair in the early 1960s.

The evidence was heard at a committal hearing in Minehead, Somerset, and can be made public after a request from one of the defendant's solicitors to lift the usual reporting restrictions.

Prosecution counsel Peter Taylor QC said Mr Thorpe had become very anxious Mr Scott would reveal details of their relationship after it ended in 1963, and irrevocably damage his reputation.

'We have to get rid of him'

The courtroom heard how the party leader had discussed the problem of Mr Scott with fellow Liberal MP Peter Bessell.

The QC said Mr Thorpe told his friend at a meeting in the House of Commons: "We have to get rid of him."

The prosecution also said it had evidence the Liberal leader had:

incited deputy treasurer of the Liberal Party David Holmes to kill Mr Scott

later plotted with John le Mesurier and George Deakin to murder him

hired airline pilot Andrew Newton to carry out the assassination

diverted Liberal Party funds to pay £5,000 to Mr Newton

The pilot had been jailed for two years in 1976 after shooting Mr Scott's dog on a lonely stretch of Exmoor, but no connection with the politician came out at the time.

Mr Thorpe has denied both charges and insisted the alleged affair never took place.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The magistrates committed the case to trial on 13 December.

Proceedings began at the Old Bailey in May 1979 - just after the general election in which Mr Thorpe lost his seat.

All four defendants were cleared of the charges a month later, but the case destroyed the MP's career and he did not return to politics.

A drama-documentary giving Norman Scott's side of the story was broadcast in July 2002 by ITV and was condemned by many as a retrial by television.

Mr Thorpe had declined to be interviewed for the programme.

The John le Mesurier accused with Jeremy Thorpe was not the actor of the same name who starred in the BBC series Dad's Army.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Seminars will provide you with knowledge and amusement. If you're looking to do something worthwhile, consider volunteer work. Some of your new friends may not be that trustworthy.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Too many opportunities and too many changes going on. You could meet an interesting individual you'll want to get to know better. Colleagues may try to undermine you when talking to superiors.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Your intellectual charm will entice new love interests. Think about your priorities. Romance can develop; however, it will most probably be short-lived.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 You can enjoy your involvement in organizations that make charitable contributions. It might be time for you to take a quantum leap from one career to another.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 You can find out important information if you listen to friends and relatives. Get involved in fitness programs that will bring you in contact with new friends.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Beware of individuals who are not that reliable or well known to you. If you've been really busy, try to schedule some time to spend with loved ones. This could be a serious relationship.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 You can make money through real estate or by using your head when it comes to personal investments. Take a look at yourself and prepare to make those changes you've been contemplating.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 You will find that social activities will be enjoyable and will promote new connections. You will be in the mood for competition, and your ability to lead a group will bring you popularity.

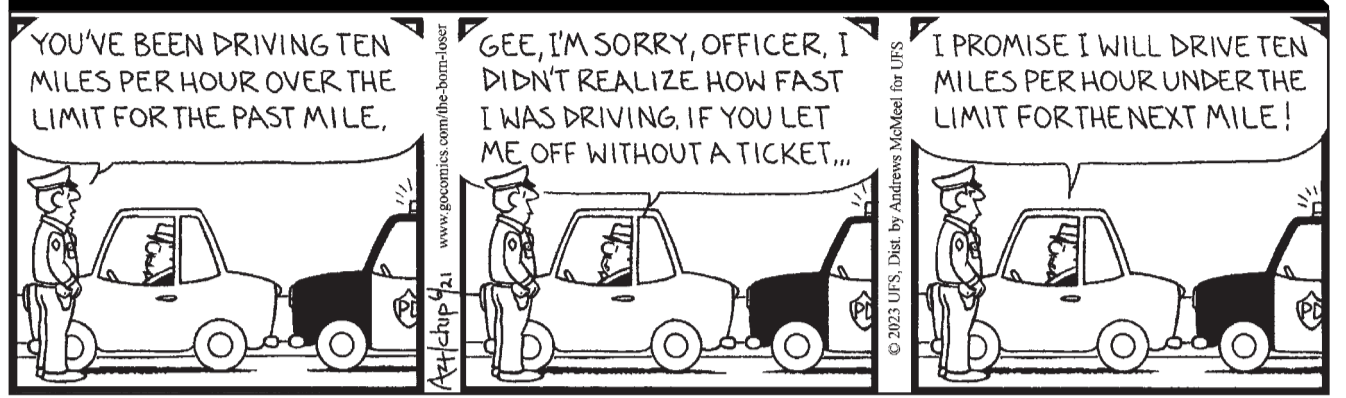
SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 If you put your mind to it, you could entertain or host a multitude of social events. Major job changes or opportunities to get ahead professionally are apparent.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 You have so much to offer; open up and let your thoughts be known. Your outgoing nature will surprise others today. Do your job and then spend some time with family; you'll be glad you did.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Go with the flow and don't let the unsettled atmosphere get on your nerves. You may be ill-treated if you have to deal with institutional environments.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 You may have a problem at work with a female coworker. Overindulgence will mean poor health. Problems with your partner are apparent.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

EASY

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WEATHER

| | MIN | MAX | CONDITION |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----------|
| CHINA | | | |
| Beijing | 0 | 13 | fine |
| Changchun | -7 | 5 | fine |
| Chengdu | 8 | 17 | overcast |
| Chongqing | 10 | 19 | fine |
| Fuzhou | 11 | 22 | fine |
| Guangzhou | 11 | 24 | fine |
| Guiyang | 8 | 21 | fine |
| Haikou | 17 | 25 | cloudy |
| Hangzhou | 6 | 20 | fine |
| Harbin | -10 | 1 | fine |
| Hefei | 4 | 21 | fine |
| Nanjing | 5 | 20 | fine |
| Shanghai | 8 | 19 | fine |
| Taipei | 16 | 22 | cloudy |
| Wuhan | 6 | 23 | fine |
| Hong Kong | 19 | 23 | fine |
| WORLD | | | |
| Moscow | -8 | -5 | snow |
| Frankfurt | 6 | 11 | rain |
| Paris | 8 | 12 | rain |
| London | 9 | 12 | showers |
| New York | 3 | 9 | overcast |

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Travel on foot; 5- Examine closely; 10- Toddler's glassful; 14- Writer Wiesel; 15- Claw; 16- The wife of Geraint in Arthurian lore; 17- Mend with rows of stitches; 18- Chou ___; 19- Covers; 20- Stately aquatic bird; 21- Capital of Tennessee; 23- That, in Tijuana; 25- Capitol Hill abbr.; 26- Hermits; 31- Flat shelf; 35- Eight-time Norris Trophy winner; 36- Western Australia's capital; 38- Seductively beautiful woman; 40- Mars, to the Greeks; 42- Ventured; 44- ___ contender; 45- Settle a loan; 47- Garr and Hatcher; 49- Loser to DDE; 50- Discourage; 52- Guns, knives, etc.; 54- Fleur-de-___; 56- Atlas page; 57- In good order; 62- Morales of "NYPD Blue"; 66- Bluey-green color; 67- Purity unit; 68- Takes home; 69- Bristle; 70- Clear the boards; 71- "The Time Machine" race; 72- One hunted; 73- Prohibit; 74- Drops from the sky;

DOWN 1- Ties the knot; 2- There oughta be ___; 3- Old Italian money; 4- Shelter for a dog; 5- Abnormally narrowed; 6- Injectable diazepam, in military lingo; 7- ___ well...; 8- ___ Ark; 9- Whine; 10- Commendably; 11- Indigo; 12- Broad; 13- Super Bowl highlights?; 22- Supermodel Sastra; 24- Eat dinner; 26- Laugh heartily; 27- Made a mistake; 28- Fancy pancake; 29- Quod ___ demonstrandum; 30- Sprinkle; 32- Loud noise; 33- Sigh; 34- Conger catcher; 37- "You are ___"; 39- Prying; 41- Watched the kids; 43- Distance across a circle; 46- Quick sharp bark; 48- Mineral spring; 51- Dared; 53- Kitchen utensil; 55- Apportion; 57- Clairvoyant; 58- Detest; 59- Now ___ me down...; 60- Graceful horse; 61- Que ___?; 63- Actress Ward; 64- Yours, in Tours; 65- The doctor ___; 66- Medicinal amt.;

Friday's solution

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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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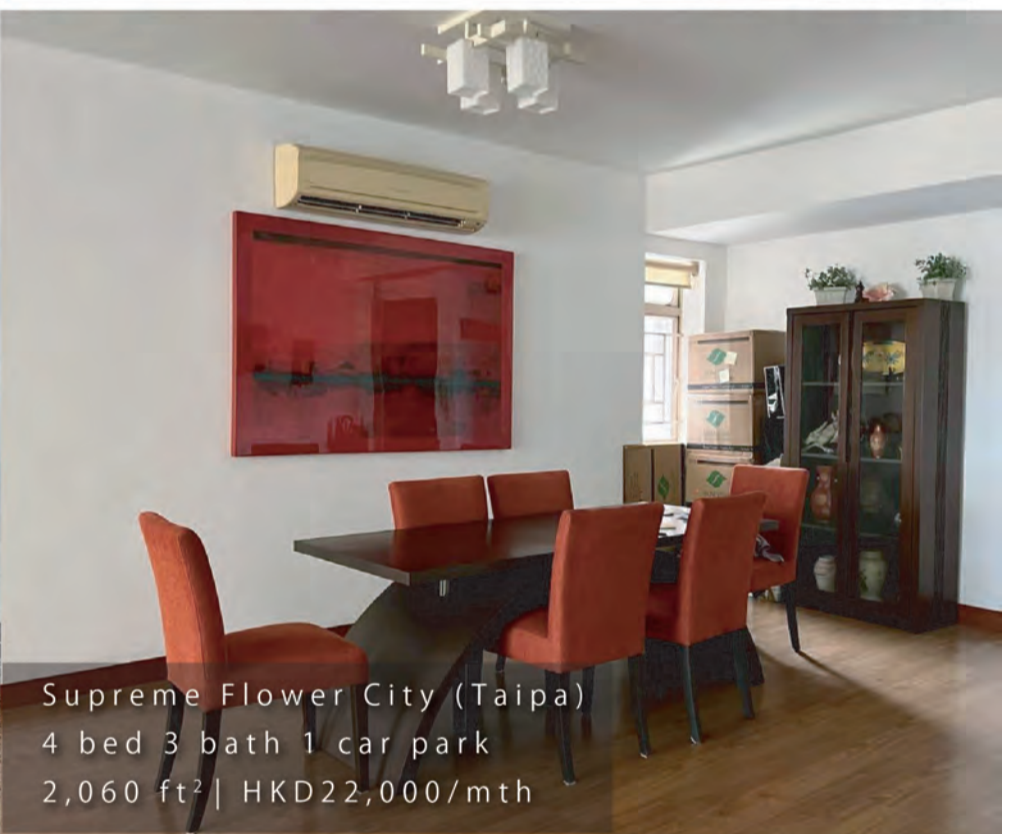
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VA FAT (Taipa Village)
2 bed 1 bath
830 ft² | HKD3,980,000



Coloane Hellene Garden
3 bed 2 bath
1,663 ft² | HKD11,800/mth



Supreme Flower City (Taipa)
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2,060 ft² | HKD22,000/mth



Nam Long (Old Taipa)
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GRAND PRIX

F1 exceeds Las Vegas expectations as Verstappen wins one of the most competitive races of the season

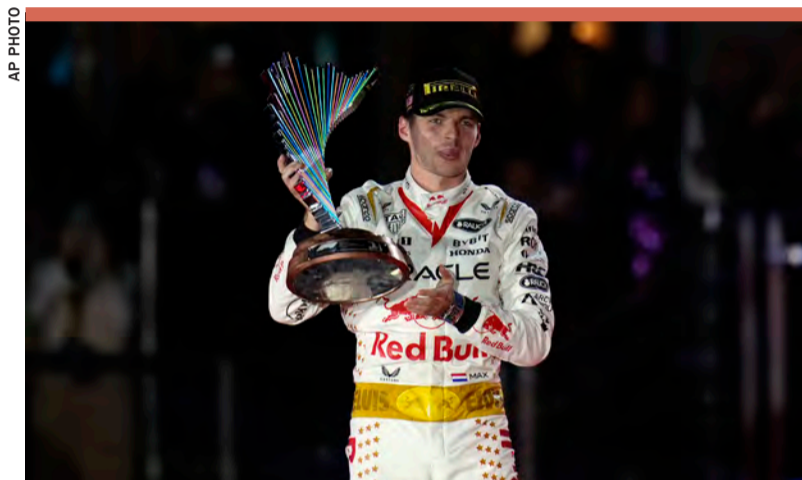
JENNA FRYER, LAS VEGAS

MAX Verstappen hated everything about the Las Vegas Grand Prix from the moment he arrived in Sin City. Formula One's three-time reigning world champion found the excess and opulence over-the-top and prioritized over the actual racing.

He changed his tune — literally — following his 18th win of the season.

"Viva Las Vegas! Viva Las Vegas!" sang Verstappen as he crossed under the checkered flag waved by Justin Bieber. Verstappen had slammed Saturday night's spectacle at every chance, yet raced in an Elvis-inspired firesuit and took the victory on the famed Las Vegas Strip.

"I hope everyone enjoyed it, we definitely did. Excited to come back here next year and try to do



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen, of the Netherlands, holds a trophy after winning the Formula One Las Vegas Grand Prix auto race, yesterday

something similar," said Verstappen, who had markedly reversed his weeklong position on the Las Vegas spectacle.

"It was a fun race. I enjoyed it," he conceded.

Verstappen passed Charles Leclerc at the start then overcame a

penalty to pass Leclerc once more with 13 laps remaining to continue his season-long dominance. Verstappen, Leclerc and Sergio Perez were driven in a limousine to a stage located near the Bellagio — "we go straight to the nightclub," Verstappen told his fellow podium

finishers — but they were instead treated to the casino's famed fountain show.

The Bellagio fountains had been turned off all week and restarted as part of the victory celebration. None of the participants seemed remotely interested as they stood chatting. After receiving their trophies, they were treated to a New Year's Eve-style fireworks show over the Strip.

Martin Garrix then launched into a throbbing DJ set to entertain those who opened their wallets for the most expensive spectator race of the season. Celebrities danced along on the grid and everyone seemed thrilled with the show. The stars in attendance included Brad Pitt, Rihanna, Usain Bolt and Shaquille O'Neal as F1 said it drew more than 315,000 spectators over the weekend and estimated an economic impact of \$1.2 billion to Las Vegas.

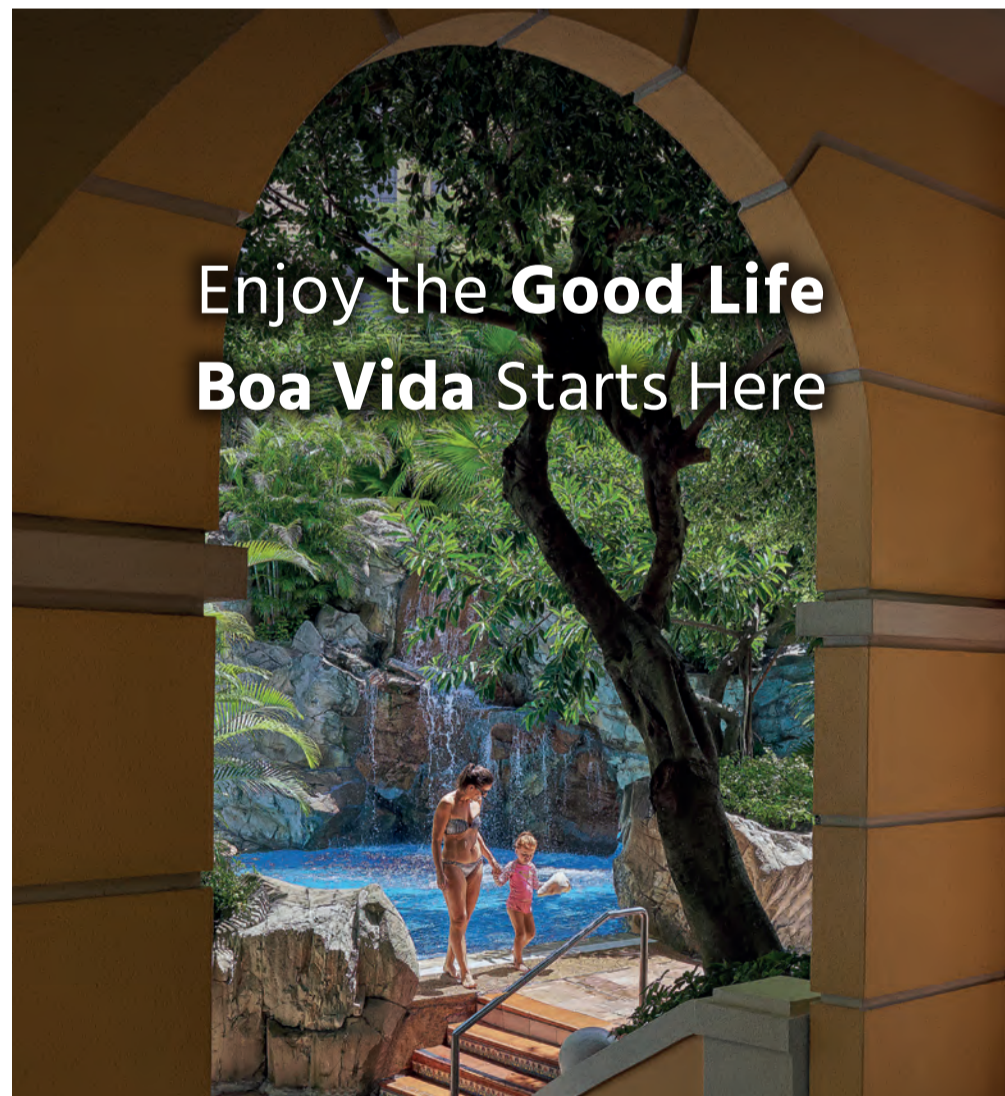
"I really enjoyed it and I am especially happy that we finished the weekend on a high note because it was hurting me to see the sport that I love so much starting so wrong on Thursday," said Leclerc. "The fact that we had an amazing race makes it all better."

The race was the third stop this season in the United States, more than any other country, and was promoted by F1 and owner Liberty Media. But the event has been lambasted — especially by Verstappen — for its emphasis on becoming a neon extravaganza.

Tickets were expensive, hotels along the famed Strip hiked their prices, and the sporting element of the 21st race of the season was overshadowed by everything from celebrities, musical acts and a myriad of Elvis impersonators roaming the paddock that included a wedding chapel where former F1 champion Jacques Villeneuve was married earlier in the week.

Liberty expected to spend \$500 million on the first grand prix it self-promoted, but paddock speculation before Saturday night's race was that Liberty had gone well over budget. The entire event nearly imploded nine minutes into the first practice session when Carlos Sainz Jr. ran over a water drain valve cover on the track that badly damaged his Ferrari and F1 had to close the 3.85-mile circuit for inspection. **MDT/AP**

AD



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OPINION

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RAY OF HOPE THAT CHINA-JAPAN RELATIONS CAN TAKE MEANINGFUL TURN FOR THE BETTER

Good China-Japan ties are not just in the interest of the two countries, but also in the interest of regional peace and development.

But Tokyo's actions in relation to historical issues and its wrong perception of China, which has been encouraged by Washington, has made improving ties difficult. Will China-Japan relations realize a turn for the better? This will undoubtedly be the hope of many in both countries and Asia as well after the meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting in San Francisco last week.

The fact that the leaders of the two countries discussed thorny issues such as the Taiwan question, the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water from the damaged nuclear power plant in Fukushima, as well as economic ties between the two countries suggests that both sides are serious about trying to improve bilateral relations.

Notably, a "strategic relationship of mutual benefit" was mentioned in their discussions. In a joint statement in 2008, the two countries agreed to pursue a "mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests" designed to ensure frequent leadership exchanges on issues such as security and economic cooperation.

But the phrasing has been used less frequently in recent years as differences between the two countries on issues such as territorial claims, trade tensions, Japan's rhetoric on the Taiwan question and what Japan has said or done in favor of Washington's strategy to contain the rise of China have damaged the ties between the two neighbors.

Talk of a "strategic relationship of mutual benefit" in this meeting is obviously a positive development, and it would be a boon for the two countries, and beyond, if that was to materialize. That both sides agreed to try to resolve the issue related to the Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water through consultations certainly sends a message that both sides attach importance to improving bilateral ties.

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between China and Japan. Xi said the treaty, in a legal form, stresses opposition to hegemony and sets the overall direction for peaceful bilateral cooperation. It is a momentous milestone in the history of the two countries' relations. Xi also said that the two sides should view each other's development in an objective and rational manner. His remarks hit the nail on the head.

Japan needs to recognize that China's development will only provide more opportunities for Japan's economic growth and vice versa. Japan also needs to be aware that however developed China becomes, China will not seek hegemony, which has been verified by what it has done in its cooperation with countries under the Belt and Road Initiative framework.

It is imperative for Japan to realize that it will not benefit by joining the United States in its geopolitical game, which will only cause damage to the foundation of China-Japan relations and lead to regional tensions. There is more than enough reason for China and Japan to meet each other halfway in promoting their bilateral ties for the lasting peace and development of Asia and the world at large.

Amazon is cutting hundreds of jobs in the unit that handles its popular voice assistant Alexa as it plows more resources into artificial intelligence.

In a note to employees on Friday, Daniel Rausch, Amazon's vice president of Alexa and Fire TV, wrote that the company is eliminating certain roles because it is ditching some initiatives.

"As we continue to invent, we're shifting some of our efforts to better align with our business priorities, and what we know matters most to customers — which includes maximizing our resources

and efforts focused on generative AI," Rausch wrote.

He said "several hundred" positions would be cut but did not give a more precise figure.

Seattle-based Amazon is in fierce competition with other tech companies rushing to capitalize on the generative AI craze. The company has been implementing a host of AI initiatives in the past few months, from infusing the technology into customer reviews to providing services that allow developers to build their own AI tools on its AWS cloud infrastructure.



Hong Kong Catholic Diocese, Beijing Bishop Joseph Li Shan, at left, and Hong Kong Bishop and Cardinal Stephen Chow during a ceremony at Hong Kong's Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

HONG KONG

ROMAN CATHOLIC CARDINAL SAYS HE DREAMS OF BISHOPS FROM GREATER CHINA PRAYING TOGETHER

KANIS LEUNG,
 HONG KONG

HONG Kong's newly appointed Roman Catholic cardinal said he dreamed of bishops and faithfuls from different parts of greater China praying together one day during a historic visit by the head of the Chinese Catholic church, a publication affiliated with the city's diocese reported last week.

Joseph Li, who was installed by China's state-controlled Catholic church as an archbishop, arrived in Hong Kong on Monday at the invitation of cardinal Stephen Chow, marking the first-ever official visit by a Beijing bishop to the city.

His five-day tour was a reciprocal visit following Chow's landmark trip to Beijing in April — the first visit to the Chinese capital by the city's bishop in nearly three decades. Experts said Chow's invitation was a symbolic gesture that could strengthen the fragile relationship between China and the Vatican.

Beijing and the Vatican severed diplomatic ties in 1951 following the Communist Party's rise to power and the expulsion of foreign priests. Since the break in ties, Catholics in China have been divided between those who belong to an official,

state-sanctioned church and those in an underground church loyal to the pope. The Vatican recognizes members of both as Catholics but claims the exclusive right to choose bishops.

Li and Chow took part in a Mass with Hong Kong's cardinal John Tong and other church officials from mainland China on Wednesday, the Kung Kao Po newspaper said.

"One of my dreams ... is to have bishops, fathers and faithfuls from four cross-strait societies to pray together," Chow said, referring to Hong Kong, Macau, mainland China and Taiwan.

In a seminar on Wednesday, Chow affirmed the Hong Kong church's role as a "bridge church," the report added.

Most recently, Pope Francis was forced to accept the unilateral appointment of a new bishop of Shanghai. The agreement has been harshly criticized by Hong Kong cardinal Joseph Zen.

Francis in September insisted that the Vatican's relations with China were going well but said work must still be done to show Beijing that the Catholic church isn't beholden to a foreign power.

The installation of Li in 2007, however, was well-regarded by the Vatican and

church officials at the time said it was done with its approval.

During his trip to Hong Kong, Li joined an evening prayer service with Chow, exchanged gifts with the cardinal and visited various religious sites, including the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit Seminary, Kung Kao Po said.

Li told the publication that he learned about the development of the Hong Kong diocese and pledged to make the China church better. "This opportunity allows us to learn a lot of things," he said.

Lo Lung-kwong, an honorary senior research fellow at the Divinity School of Chung Chi College at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, said the two trips involving Li and Chow this year helped strengthen the relationship between China and the Vatican.

Lo said there are restrictions for the highest-level officials to have "concrete exchanges," pointing out that Pope Francis and Chinese President Xi Jinping will not visit each other's home turf.

"Concrete things must be built upon the grassroots level. There's no other choice and there's just one place — Hong Kong," he said. MDT/AP



Ukrainian troops worked to push back Russian forces positioned on the east bank of the Dnieper River, the military said Saturday, a day after Ukraine claimed to have secured multiple bridgeheads on that side of the river that divides the country's partially occupied Kherson region. Ukraine's establishment of footholds on the Russian-held bank of the Dnieper represents a small but potentially significant strategic advance in the midst of a war largely at a standstill.



Iceland People remained on edge Saturday, waiting to see whether a volcano rumbling under the Reykjanes Peninsula will erupt. Civil protection authorities said that even if it doesn't, it's likely to be months before it is safe for residents evacuated from the danger zone to go home. The fishing town of Grindavik was evacuated a week ago as magma rumbled and snaked under the earth amid thousands of tremors. It has left a jagged crack running through the community, thrusting the ground upward by 1 meter or more in places.



Argentina Voters head to the polls yesterday in a presidential runoff election that will determine whether South America's second-largest economy will take a rightward shift. Populist Javier Milei, an upstart candidate who got his start as a television talking head, has frequently been compared to former U.S. President Donald Trump. He faces Economy Minister Sergio Massa of the Peronist party, which has been a leading force in Argentine politics for decades.