



2023 IS A VERY POSITIVE YEAR FOR SPORTS IN MACAU, SURPASSING THE GOVERNMENT'S EXPECTATIONS, SPORTS CHIEF PUN WENG KUN SAID P3

SURVEY FINDS ALMOST HALF OF LOCAL YOUTHS UNSATISFIED WITH LEISURE AREA SIZE P2

PRESIDENT XI VISITS VIETNAM WEEKS AFTER IT STRENGTHENED TIES WITH US, JAPAN P10



AP PHOTO



Myanmar's military junta confirmed this week that it has been holding talks, brokered by China, with representatives of an alliance of ethnic minority armed groups against which it is engaged in fierce combat in the country's northeast. Fighting has been raging in northern part of Shan state since the Arakan Army, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, calling themselves the Three Brotherhood Alliance, launched a coordinated offensive on Oct. 27.

Australia Residents have begun evacuating and batten down homes and businesses as the first tropical cyclone of Australia's season is forecast to cross the northeast coast today, bringing destructive winds and flooding rain. Tropical Cyclone Jasper — category 2 — was tracking west yesterday across the Pacific Ocean and was expected to cross the Queensland state coast near the tourist destination of Port Douglas, authorities said. Winds of up to 140 kph were expected as the cyclone approached. Queensland Deputy Premier Steven Miles told reporters in Brisbane.

AP PHOTO



United Arab Emirates A missile fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels slammed into a Norwegian-flagged tanker in the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen near a key maritime chokepoint, the rebels and authorities said yesterday. The assault on the oil and chemical tanker Strinda expands a campaign by the Iranian-backed rebels targeting ships close to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait into apparently now striking those that have no clear ties to Israel. That imperils shipments coming through the Suez Canal.

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HASTA LA VISTA!

Festive season outbound travel 90% of pre-pandemic levels

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APPROVAL OF MORTGAGE LOANS FELL 25%

New approvals of Macau's residential mortgage loans (RMLs) fell, while those of commercial real estate loans (CRELs) rose month-on-month in October, the city's monetary watchdog said yesterday. According to Monetary Authority of Macao statistics, the new RMLs approved by Macau banks in October fell 24.8% month-on-month to 883 million patacas. The new RMLs to residents, representing 98.3% of the total, decreased 24.3% to 868.08 million patacas. The non-resident component dropped to 14.92 million patacas.

MGTO HOLDS ANOTHER ISLAMIC CULTURE WORKSHOP

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) yesterday organized another Islamic Culture in Tourism Workshop to support tourism employees' professional growth. Participants included employees of hotels, catering establishments and travel agencies as well as tour guides in the workforce, retail personnel and chefs. The workshop presented an overview of the Islamic faith, as well as the religious rituals, festivals, customs and cultural characteristics of Islam. Industry participants were introduced to the norms and concerns in serving Islamic visitors, as well as itinerary planning for them.

MAN SMUGGLES OVER 100 CPUS

A Macau resident was found smuggling over 100 central processing units (CPUs) into the mainland in his shoes. Intercepted by Gongbei Customs, authorities said they observed that the man had an odd gait at the Gongbei Port. After he was intercepted, they found 118 plastic bags wrapped in the soles of his shoes.

MAN LOSES HKD1.61 MILLION IN FRAUD

A local man has reported that an investment scam had cost him more than HKD1.61 million, police authorities have reported. The case shows that in August, the victim was invited to an investment group chat and became friends with a group member. The other party claimed to have investment experience and persuaded the victim to download an app for investment purposes. After depositing HKD1.74 million, the victim withdrew HKD127,000 from his account. When he subsequently withdrew money, the suspect asked him to pay a deposit of more than HKD350,000.

NATIONAL SECURITY EDUCATION TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN 2024 ACADEMIC YEAR

LYNZY VALLES

A complete set of national security education supplementary teaching materials will be published in the new 2024-25 academic year, which will gradually be rolled out to all educational levels.

The compilation of the supplementary teaching materials will start this year, and samples have been produced for consultation with schools and teachers, according to the Education Council and Youth Affairs Committee yesterday.

According to the authorities, the supplementary teaching materials will help students understand the concept of national security.

In addition, to comply with Beijing's patriotism education law, the SAR government will optimize the curriculum, tea-



ching materials, and student activities based on Macau's actual situation.

During his November Policy Address, the Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng, said national security "is a very important assignment"

for the Macau government, and that patriotic education "has a strong foundation in Macau."

"Education on these topics has existed in Macau for so long," he said. "I believe the same happens in Portugal, that

students will be taught to be patriotic. This is the obligation of the citizens of any country. This is mandatory."

Further details about the implementation of relevant curricula will be the task of the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ).

DSEDJ director Kong Chi Meng said the new framework would not increase students' study hours or add subjects to their workload. Rather, the new points would be incorporated into existing subjects.

The move comes after China's legislature, the National People's Congress (NPC), debated a patriotic education bill this summer that would provide "targeted regulations" on how people in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan should promote national identity through education.

Survey finds almost half of local youths unsatisfied with leisure area size

SURVEY results released yesterday show about 50% of young people believe Macau does not have enough leisure areas.

Conducted by the Macao New Chinese Youth Association, the survey discovered that despite most local residents

being satisfied with local parks and leisure areas, they reported that shelters should be improved.

Moreover, only 14% of respondents believed the city had enough leisure venues.

The survey disclosed that 82% respondents reported using local parks

or leisure areas. Among them, 43% visited these venues at least once a week. Most used these venues on weekends in the afternoon or public holidays.

Based on the findings, the association suggested that the government add more leisure areas

to the city and expedite the construction of the promised coastal promenades. More shelters should be built in local parks and leisure areas, the association said.

In addition, accessible facilities should be improved in local parks and leisure areas. User

feedback should be taken into consideration while designing parks and leisure areas, to ensure that the venues were built in a manner that reflected population needs. Lawns at local parks should also be more open to public use. **AL**

TOURISM

FESTIVE SEASON OUTBOUND TRAVEL 90% OF PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

OUTBOUND travel is upbeat amid the upcoming festive season, with over 100,000 daily arrivals during the period are expected.

Andy Wu, chairman of the Travel Industry Council, said the indus-

try has received many bookings for air tickets and hotels in tourist destinations from residents preparing to travel for Christmas, as cited in a TDM report.

He believes travel for residents has returned

to 80-90% of pre-pandemic levels.

The boost in travel is occurring despite the fact that international flights are still recovering. Air ticket prices to Japan, South Korea, Thailand and other po-

pular destinations have nearly doubled compared with the discounts seen during the off-season, said Wu.

Wu also mentioned that although Christmas is not a mainland holiday, Macau's strong fes-

tive atmosphere is still expected to attract residents from Guangdong Province to Macau.

This season, the government, along with the six gaming operators, have launched their own festive events. A series of cultural and art performances, gastronomic events, and 3D mapping displays will be showcased across the city. **LV**

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PUN WENG KUN

ID head positively evaluates 2023 for sport

RENATO MARQUES

2023 was a very positive year for sports in Macau, surpassing the government's expectations, the president of Sports Bureau (ID), Pun Weng Kun, told the media on the sidelines of the press conference launching next year's 2024 MGM Macao International Regatta.

Reflecting on the sports year, Pun said, "We are currently in December and we still have some events to take place before the end of the year, but we can see that our colleagues at the Sports Bureau have been very busy with all the events. The results and data we have had access to also show how these events are supporting several aspects of Macau's development, which is evident in the increase in tourist numbers and spending."

"In general terms, we can say that 2023 was a success and even surpassed some of our expectations. We hope that in 2024 we can continue to host even more sports events," the official added.

The annual regatta will take place in January next year from the 11 to 14, and is the first large-scale sports event of 2024, Pun announced.

The ID president noted the event has been growing every year and attracting more inter-



RENATO MARQUES

national recognition, a fact that contributes to added visibility and interest in participation from international teams.

Pun noted the event has also contributed to local sailing enthusiasts learning more and improving their technique.

Asked by the media about the participation of local residents, the ID president said that not only is there more lo-

cal participation within the regatta itself but the organizing team has increasingly been using more locals in organizational tasks such as managing and adjudicating the competition, he said.

At the same press conference, the president and executive director of MGM China Holdings Ltd, Kenneth Feng, acknowledged the continuous support

of the company in the "transformation of Macau into a city of sports," adding that water and marine activities have been a big part of MGM's support portfolio this year, which is set to continue in future years.

SIMILAR FORMAT TO PREVIOUS EDITIONS

In the upcoming edition, the event will be once again

split into three competitive categories with participation from 37 teams and about 300 team members in total.

The three regattas include the already-traditional Macao Cup International Regatta (using Beneteau First 40.7); the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Cup Regatta (for International Rating Certificate - IRC - group); and the International Catamaran Invitational (using Hobie 16).

According to information from the organizers, the 300 participants represent 28 countries and regions.

The regattas will take place at the waters south of Hac Sa Beach (for the first two classes) and at the waters south of Inner Harbour channel just off the Macau Science Center for the Hobie 16, similar to previous years.

As in previous editions, a boat parade is also part of the event, allowing those interested to see the competition vessels more closely.

The parade starts from the docks of the Fisherman's Wharf and will head up to Sai Van Bridge, close to the Peninsula side, returning to the original docking location and passing closer to shore on the Taipa side.

More details on schedules and special events will be revealed at a later stage.

First Asia & GBA Racing Festival this weekend

RENATO MARQUES

THE Asia & Greater Bay Area (GBA) Racing Festival will take place for the first time this weekend at the Coloane Karting Circuit, the Sports Bureau (ID) said yesterday afternoon.

The event, sponsored by the Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG), will include seven racing events from different categories, including two and four-wheel races.

According to the ID president, Pun Weng Kun, the idea is to both revitalize the Karting Circuit and, at the same time, allow more local youth to engage in motorsports, an activity deeply rooted in the local community.

At the ID's press conference, Pun said the Co-



RENATO MARQUES

loane Karting Circuit is an important training ground where all local racers start. It also serves as the

training for local Grand Prix staff members.

Among the seven races to take place between Fri-

day, Dec. 15 and Sunday Dec. 17 are three karting races in the categories of ROK GP Junior, KZ, and

X30 Senior 125 Class.

These join four motorcycle racing categories from Mini Bike, 150-190cc, 250cc and the GBA Motorcycle Cup 150cc, which runs as a single-make category using CFMOTO NK150 motorcycles.

The almost 100 participants includes racers from Macau, Hong Kong, China and Taiwan, as well as Singapore and the Philippines.

There are 41 racers listed for the three karting races.

The highlight is the ROK GP Junior category (for racers aged between 12 and 13 years old), which will include nine students from Pui Ching Middle School who have taken a training course to obtain a karting racing sports license.

The KZ category, the

one most used for professional racers' training, will see 15 drivers competing, 10 from Macau and 5 from Hong Kong.

The most international of all the races will be the X30 Senior 125, with 17 racers aged 14 and up participating, and with the higher group (6) coming from the Philippines. Macau and Hong Kong will have four representatives each while the last three karts will be in the hands of two mainland racers and one from Singapore.

The racing action starts Friday (Dec. 15 at 9:45 a.m. running until 5:25 p.m.) for the practice sessions with the races getting underway Saturday (Dec. 16 at 9:20 a.m. around 5:30 p.m.) and Sunday (Dec. 17 from 9:50 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.).

The public can attend all the racing action over the weekend with free entry into the Coloane Karting Circuit stands.

EXCO

GOV'T PROPOSES POINT SCHEME FOR TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

ANTHONY LAM

The government has proposed a point scheme in the amendment bill for the Road Transport Law, the Secretary for Administration and Justice, and spokesperson of the ExCo, André Cheong, told a recent Executive Council (ExCo) press conference.

The director of Transport, Kelvin Lam, said the government is proposing to link 12 points to each driving license holder, deducting points for traffic infringements.

When drivers have only seven points left, they will only be able to regain three points by undertaking driver training at their own expense.

With only six points left, licenses will be suspended for three months. With no points left, they will be suspended for six months.

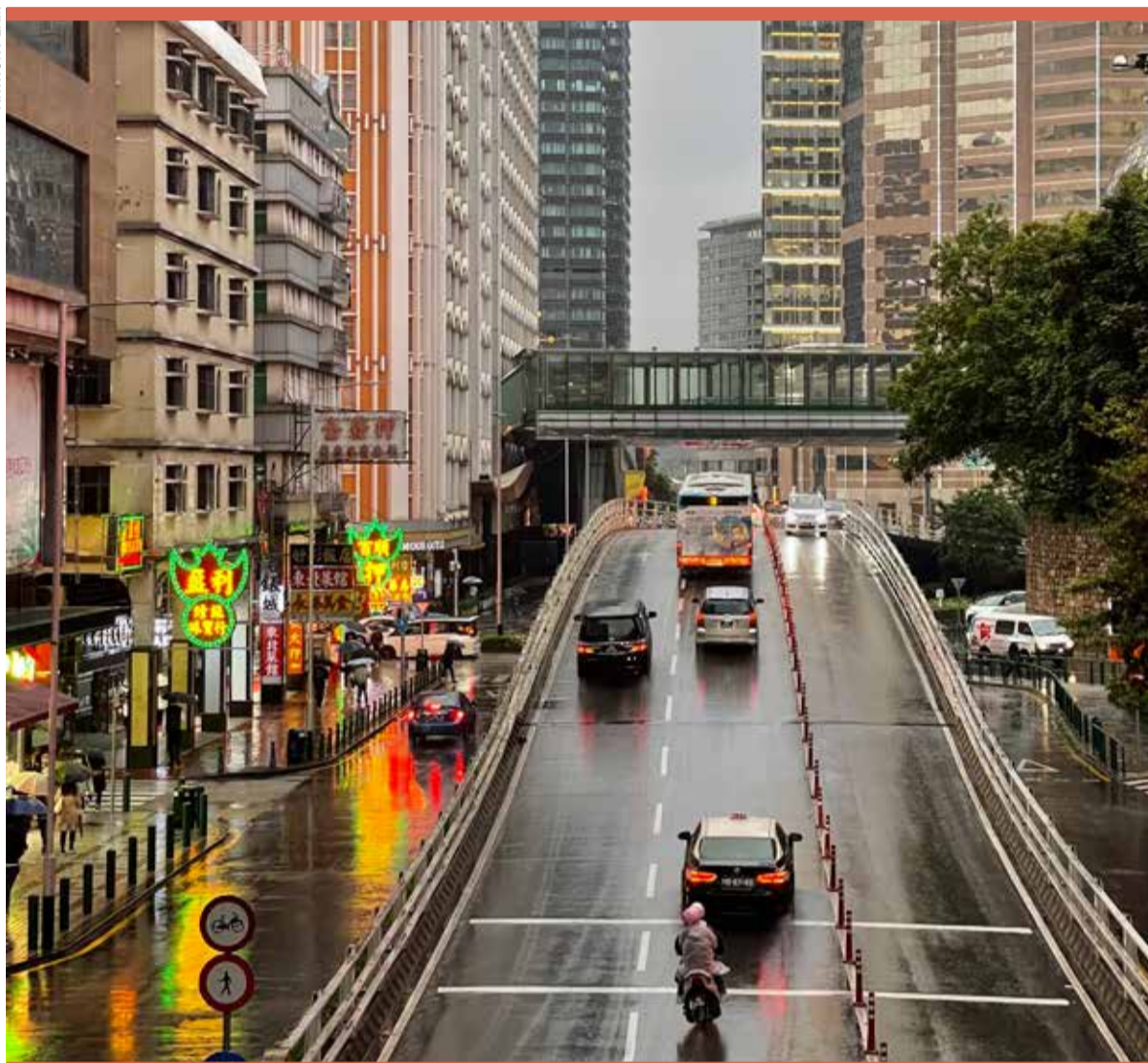
It is proposed that point deductions will only occur for two infringements – disobeying orders from an authorized person, or disobeying instructions on traffic signs.

The proposed scheme will not apply to speeding, driving in the reverse direction or failing to give way at a pedestrian crossing. Lam said the current system of fines and judicial procedures is sufficient.

Unlike in mainland China's scheme, the proposed point scheme does not have a renewal mechanism, according to the land transport official.

The government has also proposed banning the use of cellphones and similar telecommunica-

ANTHONY LAM



tion devices as well as audio-visual devices.

Lam said phone calls with hands-free devices is proposed to be permitted.

If passed, the law will ban holding a phone while driving or while sitting in a stationary vehicle. Lam

said playing music on vehicles will be allowed.

The road transport official said GPS navigation would be permissible, acknowledging its necessity.

Improved governance on pedestrian practices is also proposed. For example, additional regu-

lations are proposed for scenarios in which no legal crossings are available within 50 meters of a pedestrian.

It was also proposed that the use of skatebikes, skateboards and similar vehicles – regardless of their power source – be banned

on public roads. The use of wheelchairs and similar accessible equipment on public roads will also be regulated as proposed.

Punishments for driving under the influence of alcohol and narcotics, as well as speeding will also be increased under the proposal.

It is also proposed to expand the use of seatbelts for all types of vehicles to cover the front seats of heavy vehicles. But seatbelt use will not be mandated on back seats.

In another bill, the government has proposed changes to the ownership transfer of government housing, i.e. Economic and Sandwich-class Housing schemes.

To expedite the construction of government housing projects, the bill proposes to end the need to designate development rights to the Housing Bureau (IH).

Instead, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works will be able to designate a land plot for government housing and commence the tender process.

However, details will be announced in due course about the sales process, Cheong said. He also said no change to the current sale and purchase practices will be introduced even with this bill enacted as law.

Hui Ho Chi, a member of the Transport Advisory Committee, said he supports the government's proposed points deduction system, but has called on authorities for further information and discussion on the system and the modification of provisions governing pedestrians crossing the road.

He also believed the relevant modifications would encourage drivers to drive more carefully and hoped authorities would clarify details on the penalty points system as soon as possible.

Public procurement legislation to reach parliament

ANTHONY LAM

The parliament will discuss the Public Procurement Bill after the Executive Council (ExCo) recently announced its conclusion of discussions.

The ExCo said existing regulations about the matter have been enacted over many years.

The government has proposed the bill after its review of a topical decree-law in 2021, to improve supervision of public procurement and improve the efficiency of public administration.

The government needs to clarify aspects of the bill, including its coverage and key principles such as transparency, openness and fair competition. The qualifications of nominees

ANTHONY LAM



or bidders in a tender process must also be clarified.

The government intends to clarify and standardize types of public procurement procedures, con-

cerning activities such as public tenders, limited tender by prior qualification, competitive negotiations, consultation and direct designation.

To increase administrative efficiency and reduce costs, the government wants to create a centralized contracting system to set award criteria for objective

and fair contracting.

Stipulations were proposed concerning sanctioning regulations for the modification, termination and violation of contracts. At the same time, administrative infractions for violation of the public procurement system are also proposed.

If the bill becomes law, a website will be established to centralize data related to public procurement.

The director of Financial Services Bureau (DFS), Iong Kong Leong, had hoped the law would be enacted on New Year's Day in 2025, but legislative procedures will prevent this.

DFS will establish and administer the website.

Should the bill be made law, a major change to the procurement procedure is

that the purchase of consumables will be conducted through centralized tenders operated by the DFS. These consumables include drinking water, stationery and refreshments.

Currently, each bureau or government entity can open its own tender for the procurement of these resources.

The advantage of this proposed system, according to Iong, is that the government will have greater bargaining power on prices and quality. He did not say, however, whether the centralized system will lead to greater difficulty in sourcing enough resources.

All government entities will be subject to the governance of this future law, Iong added.

CSR

WITH OVER 300,000 VOLUNTEERING HOURS, SANDS CHINA GIVES BACK TO THE MACAO COMMUNITY

SANDS CHINA has been rooted in the city for two decades and is committed to giving back to the local community that it calls home. The company has been fulfilling its corporate social responsibility with concrete action to support local disadvantaged groups and implement sustainable measures to bring a positive impact to the city – together making Macao an ideal place to live, work and visit.

SANDS CARES AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Since 2005, Sands China team members have been volunteering their time in the community in their off-duty hours to bring warmth and care to vulnerable groups. Sands China formalized those efforts by launching the Sands Cares Ambassador Program in August 2009 as a platform to serve the community. The Sands Cares Ambassadors, now numbering over 3,330, have organized or participated in over 620 community events comprising more than 300,000 hours of volunteer service.

Aligning with the principles of the “Sands Cares” global corporate citizenship programme of parent company Las Vegas Sands Corp. (LVS), Sands China has been working closely with 520 local community groups and organizations to provide financial giving, community problem solving and collaboration, in-kind donations, and other charity work.

SANDS CARES FOOD KIT BUILD

In June, the Sands Cares Food Kit Build assembled and distributed food kits to the elderly at Caritas Macau's Brilho da Vida Elderly Centre, in a mass effort to get food resources to people in need.

The Sands Cares Ambassadors Program will have delivered a total of 3,000 food kits, 21 tons in total, by March 2024, to elderly residents, disabled people, households facing financial difficulties, community organisation users, food bank users and others who need help in Macao. Furthermore, Sands China has donated 960 kg of excess pastries and bakery items to the Macao ECONscious Association since 2022 in support of the Community Fridge Donation initiative.

SANDS GOLF DAY

In support of the development of local sports talent and to nurture the growth of young athletes, Sands China hosted Sands Golf Day, featuring renowned professional golfers Minjee Lee, Lydia Ko, Minwoo Lee, and Collin Morikawa engaging with the Macau Junior Golf Association. As a platform for mentorship, the event aimed to motivate young athletes to pursue their goals and realise their full potential. Moreover, Sands China donated a total of MOP 100,000 to the Macau Deaf Association and



Orbis Macau as part of a friendly competition during the event.

In bringing sporting events and professional athletes to Macao, Sands China is committed to creating opportunities for young people to interact and learn from people like British football icon David Beckham and Minjee Lee.

MACAO INTERNATIONAL 10K

In March, the Sands China Macao International 10K welcomed nearly 10,000 runners from 37 countries and regions. As title sponsor, Sands China invested MOP 8 million in the event in support of the development of the local sports industry. Over 250 team members participated in the competition, wearing a special t-shirt designed for them by local SMEs.

Sands China also invited families from Macau Special Olympics and Richmond Fellowship of Macau to join the 10K event, with accompaniment by Sands Cares Ambassadors to complete the race together. Furthermore, the Ambassadors offered a series of fun “Family Sports Day” activities at The Venetian Macao to members of the Women's Association

of Macau, and a 10K themed interactive zone at The Venetian Macao allowed residents and visitors to experience the vibrant and joyful atmosphere of the event.

THE 70TH MACAU GRAND PRIX

Sands China supported the world-famous Macau Grand Prix with a special community outing; a series of Grand Prix themed activities, installations and workshops at The Venetian Macao and at the historic Iec Long Firecracker Factory, which Sands China is revitalising; and concerts on each of the two Grand Prix weekends to promote the integrated development of sports, culture and tourism.

Sands China sponsored the Sheng Kung Hui (SKH) Grand Prix: Parent-child Pair-up, where SKH members visited the Macau Grand Prix museum and spent quality time together enhancing parent-child relationships through interactive games. As the second part of the activity, Sands Cares Ambassadors also invited them to watch the races together, promoting the building of a harmonious and inclusive community.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Environmental sustainability is core to Sands China's business practices. The Sands ECO360 global sustainability strategy guides its resorts, and drives sustainable operations, conservation practices and eco-friendly initiatives that minimise environment impact, preserve natural resources and achieve the company's commitment to protecting the planet.

Sands China executes MICE events with its Green Meetings principles, which utilise proactive measures to minimise the carbon footprint of events. The company's long-term dedication to sustainable operations led to Macao's first carbon neutral exhibition, the 2022 and 2023 MIECF, being held at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo.

RESPONSIBLE GAMING

Responsible gaming is essential for the sustainability of Macao's gaming industry, and Sands China proactively develops a culture of responsible gaming by promoting activities to increase the public's understanding of responsible gaming. The company

launched a self-exclusion programme in 2004 and established its comprehensive responsible gaming programme in 2007, which includes providing responsible gaming training to all new employees.

Furthermore, Sands China strives to enhance responsible gaming knowledge of its Responsible Gaming Ambassadors and all its team members, supporting the healthy development for the industry and bolstering the health and well-being of gaming practitioners. In support of the Macao government's “Seeking Help for Winning the Future” responsible gaming campaign, the company held the first ever responsible gaming themed carnival in Macao, in order to develop the concept of smart financial management and increase responsible gaming awareness among families. Sands China also partnered with the University of Macau's Institute for the Study of Commercial Gaming to launch Macao's first localized responsible gaming ambassador course in 2023, offering a tailored, content-based approach to allow team members to master the necessary skills to assist guests in need.

MILLENNIAL MONEY

Would your documents survive a disaster? What to protect and how to do it

KATE ASHFORD,
MDT/NERDWALLET

FLOODS, fires, historic storms — severe weather events are on the rise. If your home was hit by high water or a wildfire, would your important papers be safe?

“Unfortunately, I’ve had clients who’ve been victims of fires, flooding, hurricanes,” says Sev Tamayo, an agent with Goosehead Insurance in Palm Coast, Florida. “Some of them were prepared and some of them weren’t.”

Don’t be unprepared. Here’s what you need to do to protect your important documents.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KEEP SAFE

The most important items to keep in a safe place are things that are difficult to replicate, which includes documents that prove identity, legal process or ownership. If you’d have to call a government agency to process a replacement, you probably want to store it somewhere where it can stay damage-free. You should also consider what you’d need to access if a disaster strikes.

Here are some items to consider, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency:

- Birth, adoption, death, marriage and divorce certificates.
- Passports, green cards and Social Security cards.
- Property documents pertaining to your home or rental properties, mortgage or lease,



and vehicles.

- Pet ownership paperwork.
 - Paper stock and bond certificates.
 - Military discharge papers.
 - Health records, health insurance information and disabilities documentation.
 - Estate planning documents (powers of attorney, wills, advance directives and trust agreements).
 - Property insurance documents, including policy numbers and declarations pages.
 - Tax records.
 - Financial statements (loans, credit cards, banks, retirement accounts and investment accounts), as well as income records (pay stubs and government benefits).
 - Copies of driver’s licenses and other IDs, health insurance cards and credit cards.
 - Family photos or heirlooms.
- (For a complete checklist, visit ready.gov.)

STORE COPIES IN THE CLOUD

“It’s also a good idea to keep scans of your critical documents, as well as backups of all your computer files on a storage device at a separate location, or in the cloud,” said Pete Duncanson, senior director of training and development at ServiceMaster Restore, a restoration service company, in an email.

In some cases, a copy of a document will suffice in an emergency. This doesn’t mean you shouldn’t keep the original — but if you lose the original, you may be able to get by with your digital copy.

You can take a photo, scan a document or create a PDF of an online statement, and use a cloud service like Google Drive or Dropbox for storage. If you use an external drive, keep that somewhere safe as well.

THE VIDEO YOU SHOULD MAKE

If you need to file an insurance claim, your insurer will need

proof of what you owned. Keeping a record of your things is tedious — but you probably have a smartphone with a camera.

“Start from the front door, turn on the video camera, take a quick two-minute walk around your house,” Tamayo says. “Save it on the cloud.”

Do this once a year. Let your insurance renewal be your cue, or set a calendar reminder — and refresh it when you’ve made a major purchase or renovation. “You want to get credit for the newest things that you have,” Tamayo says.

WHERE TO KEEP YOUR DOCUMENTS

Store important documents in a container that makes the most sense for your particular risks with an eye toward preparing for the unexpected. Here are some options:

- Fireproof safe: You can get a

fireproof safe box for under \$50, but keep in mind that they come in a variety of sizes and temperature ratings. Some are waterproof. Some are more portable than others. Putting items into a zip-close bag or waterproof container inside a fireproof safe can provide double protection.

— Safe deposit box: A safe deposit box at a bank can weather a lot of events. But don’t put anything there that you might need in a hurry — such as a passport for a last-minute trip — or anything someone would need in the event of your death, such as your estate documents. “If a family member isn’t on the box, that box has to go through full-blown probate just to get stuff out of the box,” says Patrick Simasko, an estate planning attorney at Simasko Law in Mount Clemens, Michigan.

— Plastic bin: At the very least, you can put important documents in a watertight plastic bin on a high shelf. “It’s not going to protect you from fire, but it can protect the paperwork from smoke damage and from a burst pipe or flooding incident,” says Adam Lyszczarz, program manager of the documents division of restoration company Prism Specialties in Southeast Michigan.

— Fridge or freezer: Putting your documents in a plastic zip-close bag in your refrigerator or freezer can also protect them, although it’s not a long-term solution. “They are watertight and the cool temperatures will ensure that things don’t burn, but after a while they could begin to mold,” Lyszczarz says.

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China to hold performances during festive season



Sands China Ltd. is teaming up with the Macau Band Directors Association to bring the Sands China Performing Arts Program Outreach Series — Winter Showcase to the community. The Winter Showcase will deliver three outdoor

performances — held on Dec. 16 (Saturday, 3 p.m.), Dec. 28 (Thursday, 3 p.m.) and Dec. 30 (Saturday, 3 p.m.) — as part of the company’s revitalization efforts.

More than 230 musicians from Macau and Japan are

participating, performing at two outdoor locations: The Venetian Macao and the Macao Cultural Centre Square.

“We are thrilled to inaugurate the Sands China Performing Arts Program Outreach Series by featuring the Macau Youth Symphony and Japan’s Hachioji High School Wind Orchestra,” said Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd.

“These gifted young musicians have dedicated themselves to their craft, enriching the industry with their exceptional talent. We hope this cultural exchange will inspire and nurture the musicians, encourage their shared aspirations, and cultivate a vibrant music community in Macau,” he added.

Law firm MdME launches new brand image



Law firm MdME has launched a new brand image centered on the essence of “Balance in Motion.”

In a statement, the firm said the new brand image “reflects the transformative

journey of the firm and represents MdME’s renewed strategy and vision for the future.”

MdME’s managing partner, Rui Proença, said, “The essence of our new brand re-

fects our forward-thinking spirit and our commitment to creating lasting value for our clients in a world under constant change.”

The statement noted the “new brand image captures this transformation and reflects the firm’s dynamic and future-ready trajectory,” adding that “introducing ‘Balance in Motion’ as the essence of our new brand, MdME embraces the connection of interdependent forces within the firm that defines its way of being.”

MdME has more than 80 team members working in offices in Macau, Hong Kong, and Lisbon.



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Galaxy Entertainment Group Unveils Phase 3 Grand Opening Today!

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PLACEMENT IN RANDOM ORDER

DIPLOMACY

Xi visits Vietnam weeks after it strengthened ties with the US and Japan

HUIZHONG WU, BANGKOK

CHINESE leader Xi Jinping arrived in Vietnam yesterday seeking to further deepen ties with the Southeast Asian nation, weeks after it elevated its diplomatic relations with Western-aligned countries.

In his first visit since 2017, Xi will meet with Communist Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, President Vo Van Thuong and Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, Vietnam's Foreign Ministry said.

"This reflects Beijing's concerns about Hanoi's advances with the West," said Nguyen Khac Giang, a visiting fellow with the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore. "Concerns that Vietnam may join an anti-China alliance and gang up against China."

The Chinese leader received a red carpet welcome as Chinh greeted him on the tarmac. Dozens of Chinese and Vietnamese nationals gathered at the airport, waving Chinese and Vietnamese flags to welcome Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, who accompanied him on the visit.

Xi's visit marks 15 years of China being a "comprehensive strategic partner" of Vietnam, the highest official designation for a



Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan wave as they arrive at Noi Bai International airport in Hanoi

diplomatic relationship.

Vietnam plays an increasingly important strategic role in security and the economy in Southeast Asia.

Ideologically, Vietnam is closer to Beijing. It is run by a Communist Party with strong ties to China. But in recent months, Vietnam has signaled closer ties with Western countries.

In September, U.S. President Joe Biden visited Vietnam to mark the U.S. being elevated to the same diplomatic status as China. Biden asserted that the stronger ties were

not about countering China, though U.S. diplomacy across Asia and the Pacific has been focused on improving defense ties with countries to do just that.

In November, Japan and Vietnam boosted their economic and security ties, citing a "free and open Indo-Pacific," with Japan being given the same diplomatic status as China and the U.S.. Japan has been rapidly developing closer ties with Vietnam and is its third-largest foreign investor.

Experts say Vietnam is hedging against its large neighbor and its

geographical claims.

"You can see that they're flexible and balancing big powers," said Nguyen Thanh Trung, a professor of Vietnamese studies at Fulbright University Vietnam.

Vietnam is one of several countries to clash with China in the disputed South China Sea, particularly on two archipelagos, the Spratlys and the Paracel Islands. It has faced off with China's coast guard in the past in the disputed waters. Vietnam usually does not publicize the confrontations.

In October, Xi told the Vietna-

mese president that amid "changing international landscapes" the two nations should continue to develop their "traditional friendship."

The two spoke after attending China's Belt and Road Forum. Vietnam is likely to sign some infrastructure agreements with Beijing, as it has paid close attention to the development of the Chinese-built high-speed rail in Laos, completed in 2021.

"The Vietnamese prime minister wants to focus on more infrastructure," said Nguyen, the professor. "He thinks it's key to economic growth."

China has been Vietnam's largest trading partner for several years, with a bilateral trade turnover of \$175.6 billion in 2022. Imports from China, including crucial inputs for Vietnam's manufacturing sector, make up 67%, according to Vietnam customs data cited by Vietnamese state media.

However, the trade is at a deficit in China's favor.

China has over \$26 billion invested in Vietnam, with more than 4,000 active projects.

Xi's 2017 visit to Vietnam was for an Asia-Pacific economic summit in the coastal city of Danang. **MDT/AP**

TRADE

Australia credits improving relations after Beijing lifts some meat export bans



CHINA has lifted import bans on three Australian meat suppliers in another sign of improving trade relations between the two countries, Australian officials said yesterday.

China's customs agency announced overnight it was removing bans on imports of beef and mutton from Australian plants of JBS, a global foods company, and from the Australian Lamb Company, both in Victoria state. Also from Teys Australia in South Australia state, a government statement said.

China had banned imports of red meats from 11 Australian abattoirs since 2020, citing cases of CO-

VID-19 among staff and incorrectly labeled products. The bans were seen as part of various official and unofficial trade barriers China imposed to punish Australia over policies that included calling for an independent inquiry into the origins of and responses to the pandemic.

China still bans meat from the other eight Australian slaughter houses. Australian officials were working toward resolving "technical impediments to trade," the government statement said.

Acting Prime Minister Richard Marles said that resuming meat exports to China was another step toward stabilizing bilateral

relations since the government headed by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was elected last year.

"I'm not going to venture predictions going forward, but we will keep on the path that we are currently on, which does seek to stabilize the relationship with China," Marles, who is standing in for Albanese while he is on vacation, told reporters.

China has lifted most of its punitive trade barriers, which cost Australian exporters 20 billion Australian dollars (\$14 billion) a year at their peak, since Australia's government changed.

Last month, Albanese made the first visit by an

Australian leader to China in seven years in a sign of both how low relations had fallen and how they have begun to stabilize.

But last month, the two governments also clashed over an Australian allegation that a Chinese warship's unsafe use of sonar off Japan had caused ear injuries to at least one Australian navy diver. Albanese said the incident had damaged relations.

China denied the warship caused any injury and accused Australia of making "reckless and irresponsible accusations." Marles described the relationship with China as complex.

"With the one hand we've got our largest trading partner and on the other we've got our most significant security anxiety," Marles said.

"But for all those reasons, it's important that we do diplomacy excellently," he said. **MDT/AP**

GOLDEN TRIANGLE

War-wracked Myanmar is now the world's top opium producer, surpassing Afghanistan

GRANT PECK, BANGKOK

MYANMAR, already wracked by a brutal civil war, has regained the unenviable title of the world's biggest opium producer, according to a U.N. agency report released yesterday.

The Southeast Asian country's opium output has topped that of Afghanistan, where the ruling Taliban imposed a ban on its production, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime said in its "Southeast Asia Opium Survey 2023."

The Taliban's ban has led to a 95% drop in the cultivation of opium poppies, UNODC said last month. Opium, the base from which morphine and heroin are produced, is harvested from poppy flowers.

From 2022 to 2023, Myanmar saw the estimated amount of land used to grow the illicit crop increase 18% to 47,100 hectares, the new UNODC report said.

"Although the area under cultivation has not returned to historic peaks of nearly 58,000 ha cultivated in 2013, after three consecutive years of increases, poppy cultivation in Myanmar is expanding and becoming more productive," it said.



It also noted that the estimated opium yield expanded by 16% to 22.9 kilograms per hectare—topping the previous record set in 2022. It attributes that increase to "increasingly sophisticated means of cultivation, including increased plot density, improved organization of plants, and enhanced practices, such as the use of irrigation systems and potentially fertilizers."

The violent political turmoil in Myanmar has contributed to the opium production increase.

"The economic, security and

governance disruptions that followed the military takeover of February 2021 continue to drive farmers in remote areas towards opium to make a living," UNODC Regional Representative Jeremy Douglas said.

The report notes that "opium poppy cultivation in Southeast Asia is closely linked to poverty, lack of government services, challenging macroeconomic environments, instability, and insecurity."

For farmers, the bottom line is simple economics.

UNODC said the average price paid to opium growers increased by 27% to about \$355 per kilogram, demonstrating the attractiveness of opium as a crop and commodity and strong demand.

The figures mean farmers earned around 75% more than in the previous year, said the U.N. agency.

Douglas said that armed conflict in Shan state in Myanmar's northeast, a traditional growing region, and in other border areas "is expected to accelerate this trend." An offensive launched

in late October by an alliance of three ethnic armed groups against Myanmar's military government has further destabilized the remote region.

Northeastern Myanmar is part of the infamous "Golden Triangle," where the borders of Myanmar, Laos and Thailand meet. The production of opium and heroin historically flourished there, largely because of the lawlessness in border areas where Myanmar's central government has been able to exercise only minimum control over various ethnic minority militias, some of them partners in the drug trade.

In recent decades, as the region's opium production dropped, methamphetamine in the form of tablets and crystal meth has supplanted it. It's easier to make on an industrial scale than the labor-intensive cultivation of opium, and gets distributed by land, sea and air around Asia and the Pacific.

UNODC said in a statement accompanying its report that the region's burgeoning drug production "feeds into a growing illicit economy... which brings together continued high levels of synthetic drug production and a convergence of drug trafficking, money laundering and online criminal activities including casinos and scam operations."

Cyberscam operations, particularly in Myanmar's border areas, have come under the spotlight for employing tens of thousands of people, many lured by false offers of legitimate employment and then forced to work in conditions of near slavery.

The recent fighting in Shan state is linked to efforts to eradicate the criminal networks running the scam operations and other illegal enterprises. **MDT/AP**

HUNGER

Asia lags behind pre-pandemic levels of food security: UN agency

HUNGER remains a chronic problem in Asia, with 55 million more people undernourished in 2022 than before the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization says in its latest assessment of food security in the region.

Most of those living without enough to eat are in South Asia, and women tend to be less food secure than men, the report says.

The FAO's study focuses on food supply, consumption and dietary energy needs and is designed to capture a state of chronic energy deprivation that

stunts growth and saps productivity and quality of life.

The share of people in the region suffering from such undernourishment fell to 8.4% in 2022 from 8.8% the year before. But that's higher than the 7.3% of people who were undernourished before the pandemic began, sending some economies into a tailspin and depriving millions of people of their livelihoods.

Natural disasters and disruptions to food supplies, often linked to climate change, have added to those pressures.

The FAO data show the share of people in the re-

gion facing moderate food insecurity, uncertain of their ability to obtain food and having to sometimes eat less or poorer food due to a lack of money, or those experiencing hunger that puts their well-being at serious risk, still hovers near 30% for the world and above 25% for Asia and the Pacific.

The problem is worst for women: more than one in five women in Asia, excluding East Asia, face moderate or severe food insecurity. The rates are slightly lower for men in most regions, but in Southern Asia the gap grows to more than

42% for women and more than 37% for men.

Higher food, fuel, fertilizer and livestock feed prices mean that progress has stagnated after the pandemic reversed a longstanding trend beginning in the early 2000s toward alleviation of hunger.

It's a global problem, made worse by disruptions to supplies of grain, edible oil and fertilizer partly due to the war in Ukraine.

Worldwide, the number of people having precarious access to food rose to nearly 2.4 billion in 2022 from just over 1.6 billion in 2015, the report said.



A farmer fertilizes rice seedlings in fields located along a highway in Pyongyang

In Africa, the United Nations says at least three of every four Africans can't afford a healthy diet because of an "unprecedented food crisis."

More than half of the 735 million people who are nourished worldwide live in the Asia-Pacific, most of them in South Asia. But North Korea has the largest regional share of people who are undernourished,

the report says, at about 45%, followed by Afghanistan at 30%.

The world average for undernourishment is 9.2%, while in the Pacific islands of Oceania, excluding Australia and New Zealand, it was nearly 21%, or more than one in five people. In Southern Asia, about 16% of people are undernourished, the report says. **MDT/AP**

USA

Zelenskyy goes to Capitol Hill to grim mood as aid for Ukraine risks collapse

LISA MASCARO &
STEPHEN GROVES,
WASHINGTON

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will arrive on Capitol Hill to a darker mood than when he swooped in last winter for a hero's welcome, as the Russian invasion is grinding into a third year and U.S. funding hangs in balance.

Zelenskyy's visit yesterday [Macau time] comes as President Joe Biden's request for an additional \$110 billion U.S. aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other national security needs is at serious risk of collapse in Congress. Republicans are insisting on strict U.S.-Mexico border security changes that Democrats decry as draconian in exchange for the overseas aid.

"It is maddening," said Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., a close ally of Biden, of the stalemate. "A very bad message to the world, to the Ukrainian people."

The White House said the time was right for Zelenskyy's trip to Washington as Biden pushes lawmakers to approve the aid package before the year-end holidays. But the mood turned grim at the Capitol on the eve of his arrival.

Zelenskyy will meet privately with senators and new House Speaker Mike Johnson, then talk with Biden at the White House as the once robust bipartisan support for Ukraine was slipping further out of reach.

Ahead of Zelenskyy's high-stakes meetings, the White House yesterday [Macau time] pointed to newly declassified intelligence that shows Ukraine has inflicted heavy losses on Russia in recent fighting along the Avdiivka-Novopavlivka axis — including 13,000 casualties and over 220 combat vehicle losses. The Ukrainian holdout in the country's partly-occupied east has been the center of some of the fiercest fighting in recent weeks.

U.S. intelligence officials have determined that the Russians think if they can achieve a military deadlock through the winter it will drain Wes-



AP PHOTO

tern support for Ukraine and ultimately give Russia the advantage, despite the fact that Russians have sustained heavy losses and have been slowed by persistent shortages of trained personnel, munitions, and equipment.

"Russia is determined to press forward with its offensive despite its losses. It is more critical now than ever that we maintain our support for Ukraine so they can continue to hold the line and regain their territory," said White House National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson. She added that Russian President Vladimir Putin "is clearly watching what happens in Congress — and we need Congress to act this month to support Ukraine in its time of need."

Republicans in Congress, fueled by Johnson's far-right flank in the House, have taken on an increasingly isolationist stance in U.S. foreign policy, demanding changes to American border and immigration policies in exchange for any funds to battle Putin's war in Ukraine.

Biden has expressed a willingness to engage with the Republicans as migrant crossings have hit record highs along the U.S.-Mexico border, but Democrats in his own party oppose the proposals for expedited deportations and strict asylum standards as a return to Trump-era hostility towards migrants.

With talks at a standstill,

one chief Republican negotiator, Sen. James Lankford of Oklahoma, said there was nothing Zelenskyy could say during his visit with the senators to sway the outcome.

"Hey, pay attention to us, but not your own country? No," Lankford told reporters. "We've got to be able to deal with all these things together."

Zelenskyy, who visited Washington just months ago in September when the aid package was first being considered, is making his third trip to the Capitol since the war broke out in February 2022.

His surprise arrival days before Christmas last December was Zelenskyy's first wartime trip out of Ukraine and he received thunderous applause in Congress. Lawmakers sported the blue-and-yellow colors of Ukraine, and Zelenskyy, delivering a speech that drew on the parallels to World War II as he thanked Americans for their support, presented the country's flag signed by frontline troops to then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

But 2023 brought a new power center of hard-right Republicans, many aligned with Donald Trump, the former president who is now the GOP front-runner in the 2024 race for the White House.

New Speaker Johnson, on the job since October when Republicans ousted their previous leader Kevin McCarthy, has spoken publicly in favor of aiding Ukraine, as has Senate Republican Leader Mitch

McConnell. But it's not certain they can steer an aid package through the House's right flank.

Republican Rep. Michael McCaul of Texas, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said Zelenskyy has an opportunity to impress on Johnson in their private talk "the moral clarity and why is Ukraine important."

He said Zelenskyy could shake up the stalemate in Congress by reminding Johnson and the senators, "If we abandon our NATO allies and Ukraine, like we did in Afghanistan, we're just going to invite more aggression and embolden and empower our adversaries."

Zelenskyy kicked off the quick visit to Washington, warning in a speech at a defense university that Russia may be fighting in Ukraine but its "real target is freedom" in America and around the world.

"If there's anyone inspired by unresolved issues on Capitol Hill, it's just Putin and his sick clique," Zelenskyy told an audience of military leaders and students at the National Defense University yesterday.

He noted that on this day 82 years ago the U.S. went to combat in Europe, as then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the declaration of war against Germany. Now, he said, though the U.S. has no troops on the ground in Ukraine, it is supplying critically needed weapons and equipment. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1981 MILITARY CRACKDOWN ON POLISH PEOPLE



Poland's military rulers have declared a state of emergency after imposing martial law and placing leaders of the Solidarity trade union under arrest.

The country is effectively sealed off from the outside world with the military insisting the action is necessary to prevent the country from descending into civil war.

Borders with East Germany, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia have been closed and air space over Poland has been shut.

It is aimed at curbing the growing influence of the independent trade union Solidarity who reacted to the measures by calling a national strike.

Prime Minister General Wojciech Jaruzelski announced the crackdown on Solidarity on national television.

He warned Poles the country could no longer function under current tensions but pledged no blood would be spilt.

"We have been patient but now our patience has run out," he said.

The army was immediately dispatched to the streets in a massive show of military strength imposing strict censorship and a curfew.

The newly formed Military Council for National Salvation is instructed to shoot anyone breaking the new laws.

Soldiers are patrolling Warsaw in armed personnel carriers with automatic weapons.

Those on foot are patrolling the streets with riot shields and truncheons.

In the sparse reports leaking out of Poland it is understood some angry crowds have formed in Warsaw jeering and shouting "Gestapo" at soldiers.

Solidarity party offices have been raided and its leaders arrested except for Lech Walesa.

He has avoided detention by agreeing to negotiations with the government.

Demonstrations in Austria, staged mainly by Polish refugees seeking asylum there, have erupted against the action in Poland.

The Pope has called for an end to the strife and said no more blood should be shed in his homeland.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Martial law was not lifted until 1983 and in that year Lech Walesa won the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1989, with the economy close to collapse, General Jaruzelski convened talks and allowed free elections open to Solidarity candidates. Communists were swept from power and Lech Walesa became president of Poland. He turned Poland into a market economy virtually overnight and his reforms, while controversial, were generally successful, sparking rapid growth and major foreign investment. In 1995 Mr Walesa lost his re-election bid. But the legacy of his vision meant by 2000 Poland enjoyed full membership in Nato and joined the European Union in 2004.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Your unique approach to life will interest others. Be considerate and avoid being overly opinionated, or arguments will ensue. If you haven't planned a vacation, then at least try to get away for the weekend.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
You might find added popularity with those around you today. Romance is likely if you participate in unusual forms of entertainment. Don't exhaust yourself or minor health problems will set in.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Your reputation will be affected. Don't gossip. Try not to jump to conclusions. Think twice before you speak. Work on getting ahead by picking up added skills.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Romance could be exciting if you are spontaneous. You can make headway in the workforce if you put your mind to it. You have your own family to consider as well.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
You could be emotional if you didn't take care of problems with loved ones. Keep your eyes and ears alert for any evasive or deceptive statements.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Don't be afraid to speak in defense of others. You will be a bit of a spendthrift today. Don't donate more than you can afford in order to impress others.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
You may not be happy if members of your family are not pulling their weight. Your personal life will still be experiencing difficulties and you are best to avoid the issues for the time being.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
You will enjoy interaction with others today. You are best to stick to basics. Work on getting ahead by picking up added skills. You will be emotional with regard to your personal life.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Don't be too quick to let friends and relatives know what you're up to. Try to be reasonable. Your high energy will help you through this rather hectic day.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
They will not have the patience to wait for you to complete things that they've asked you to do. Your positive attitude and intellectual outlook will draw others to you.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Someone you live with may cause drastic alterations in your usual routine. Try to be reasonable. Minor accidents could occur if you don't take precautions.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Realize that you don't have to do everything yourself. Don't second guess yourself, just go to it. Finish overdue paperwork and catch up on letter writing and reading.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-6	-2	snow
Changchun	-20	-11	fine
Chengdu	7	15	cloudy
Chongqing	12	17	cloudy
Fuzhou	13	20	overcast
Guangzhou	18	26	cloudy
Guiyang	7	18	overcast
Haikou	22	28	rain
Hangzhou	4	17	overcast
Harbin	-26	-15	fine
Hefei	0	12	rain
Nanjing	1	12	rain
Shanghai	5	17	overcast
Taipei	17	22	cloudy
Wuhan	1	10	rain
Hong Kong	23	24	windy
WORLD			
Moscow	-8	-6	cloudy
Frankfurt	4	9	rain
Paris	7	10	rain
London	2	8	cloudy
New York	-1	7	fine

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Fail to hit; 5- Scottish musician; 10- Molecular component; 14- Apple variety; 15- Spud state; 16- Director Ephron; 17- Injectable diazepam, in military lingo; 18- cholesterol; 19- Very, in Versailles; 20- 1981 Neil Diamond hit; 22- Diary; 24- Wreath of flowers; 25- Maiden name preceder; 26- Restaurant in Greece; 30- Polygon having eight sides; 34- Send forth; 35- Eat away; 37- Acting part; 38- Bodybuilder's pride; 39- Conclusion; 40- Summer drink; 41- Stiff bristle; 43- Chirp; 45- Rushed, drove too fast; 46- Wipeout?; 48- Rascality; 50- RR stop; 51- Metro area; 52- Implore urgently; 56- Place in order; 60- Chemical used on trees; 61- Artist Rousseau; 63- Young male horse; 64- Hit the ground; 65- Great Lakes tribesmen; 66- Arrow poison; 67- Scottish boys; 68- At right angles to a ships length; 69- Barely passing grades;

DOWN 1- Flaky mineral; 2- Muslim leader; 3- Fit to be tried; 4- Bright red color; 5- Resembling fish; 6- Thought; 7- Acceptable score for a professional golfer; 8- Israel's Barak; 9- Love affair; 10- Aardvark; 11- Mower brand; 12- Black-and-white cookie; 13- Face covering; 21- Occupational suffix; 23- Nevertheless; 26- Fluff, as bangs; 27- Yellowish brown; 28- Panorama; 29- having fun yet?; 30- More bizarre; 31- Flip out; 32- More mature; 33- Wanting; 36- Washington bill; 42- Maintains; 43- Windpipe; 44- Hawaii's largest industry; 45- Slightly sour; 47- Salt Lake City athlete; 49- Boxer's warning; 52- False god; 53- Raines of film; 54- Stated; 55- Aromatic plant; 56- Calculus calculation; 57- Zilch; 58- High level of satisfaction; 59- French summers; 62- Never, in Nuremberg;



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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GOLDEN GLOBES

'BARBIE' LEADS NOMINATIONS WITH NINE, FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY 'OPPENHEIMER'

LINDSEY BAHR,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

B'BARBIE' leads Golden Globe nominations with 9, followed closely by 'Oppenheimer'

Greta Gerwig's "Barbie" dominated the Golden Globe Awards nominations with nine nods for the blockbuster film, including best picture musical or comedy as well as acting nominations for Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling and three of its original songs.

It was closely followed by its release date and meme companion Christopher Nolan's "Oppenheimer," which scored eight nominations, including best picture drama and for actors Cillian Murphy, Robert Downey Jr. and Emily Blunt.

In a statement, Gerwig said she, "can't wait to bring the Barbie party to the Globes."

The revamped group, now a for-profit endeavor with a larger and more diverse voting body, announced nominations yesterday [Macau time] for its January awards show, after scandal and several troubled years, including one without a broadcast. Cedric the Entertainer and Wilmer Valderrama presided over the announcements from the Beverly Hilton Hotel, where the show will also take place on Jan. 7.

Films nominated for best motion picture drama included "Oppenheimer," Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon," Bradley Cooper's "Maestro," Celine Song's "Past Lives," Justine Triet's "Anatomy of a Fall" and Jonathan Glazer's "The Zone of Interest."

In the best motion picture musical or comedy category, "Barbie" was joined by "Air," "American Fiction" "The Holdovers," "May December" and "Poor Things."

Yorgos Lanthimos' "Poor Things" and Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon" both received seven nominations each. "Poor Things" saw nominations for Lanthimos, its actors Emma Stone, Mark Ruffalo, Willem Dafoe, and Tony McNamara for screenplay. "Killers of the Flower Moon" got nods for Scorsese, for direction and co-writing the screenplay with Eric Roth, and stars Leonardo DiCaprio, Lily Gladstone and Robert De Niro.

Stone, who was also nominated for the Showtime series "The Curse," said in a statement that she was "Feeling extremely bewildered and thankful for it all." She also said her "Poor Things" character Bella Baxter is her favorite.

DiCaprio praised Gladstone in his statement: "She is the soul of our film and helped to bring this

AP PHOTO



sinister and painful part of our nation's history to life," he wrote. The film is about the murders of wealthy Osage individuals in Oklahoma in the early 20th century.

"Barbie" tied for second-most nominations in Globes history with "Cabaret," from 1972. Robert Altman's "Nashville" remains the record-holder with 11 nominations. It went into the morning as a favorite and got a big boost from its three original song nominations, including "I'm Just Ken," and one of the year's new categories, recognizing cinematic and box office achievement. One person who was not nominated was America Ferrera, who delivered the movie's most memorable monologue.

"Succession" was the top-nominated television program, with nine nods including for series stars Brian Cox, Jeremy Strong, Sarah Snook and Kieran Culkin, followed by Hulu's "The Bear."

As always there were some big surprises, like Jennifer Lawrence getting nominated for her bawdy R-rated comedy "No Hard Feelings" for best performance by a female actor in a musical or comedy. She was nominated alongside Robbie, Stone and Fantasia Barrino ("The Color Purple"), Natalie Portman ("May December") and Alma Pöysti ("Fallen Leaves").

Barrino heard the news from her husband who she immedi-

tely called back to make sure she wasn't dreaming.

"My voice is shot because I've been screaming, crying and just telling God, 'Thank you.' I almost allowed fear to hinder me from this role, to keep me from this role," she told the AP through tears. She's been on the road for work and said she's excited to go home and experience it with her children.

"The Color Purple" was expected to do better. The adaptation of the stage musical got only two nominations total, both for actors, for Barrino and Danielle Brooks for her supporting performance. Left out was Colman Domingo, who was nominated for best drama actor for "Rustin."

Cord Jefferson's comedy "American Fiction" also came up with only two nods, best musical or comedy and for lead actor Jeffrey Wright, who plays a frustrated writer.

"I don't think it's totally healthy to think about these things too much, but they're there, so one does," Wright told the AP. "I'm really pleased that the film is being recognized more so than my own personal recognition."

Sofia Coppola's widely acclaimed "Priscilla" got only one nomination, for actor Cailee Spaeny's portrayal of Priscilla Presley. Her category mates in best female performance in a drama include Gladstone, Annette

Bening for "Nyad," Sandra Hüller for "Anatomy of a Fall," Greta Lee for "Past Lives" and Carey Mulligan for "Maestro."

The Globes won't have to worry about anyone criticizing its "all male" directors this year, however. Gerwig was nominated as was Celine Song, for her romantic debut "Past Lives," alongside Nolan, Scorsese, Cooper and Lanthimos.

Netflix got the most nominations overall, with 13 total for a slate which included "Maestro," "May December" and "Rustin," followed by Warner Bros., which made "Barbie" and "The Color Purple" with 12.

Ridley Scott's "Napoleon" was not nominated at all. Instead, its star Joaquin Phoenix was recognized for "Beau is Afraid" in the lead actor comedy/musical category, with Wright, Matt Damon ("Air"), Nicolas Cage "Dream Scenario," Timothée Chalamet ("Wonka") and Paul Giamatti ("The Holdovers"). Michael Mann's "Ferrari," with Adam Driver, and Wes Anderson's starry "Asteroid City" also got zero nominations.

The voting body has now grown to 300 members, following backlash to a 2021 report in the Los Angeles Times that found that there were zero Black members in the group that was then composed of only 87 foreign journalists.

Perhaps as a result, there were more international films and ac-

tors nominated in prominent categories including the Finnish comedy "Fallen Leaves," the courtroom thriller "Anatomy of a Fall" and the harrowing Auschwitz drama "The Zone of Interest."

The 81st Golden Globes will be the first major broadcast of awards season, with a new home on CBS, but no word yet on a host. It's been tumultuous few years behind the scenes in the aftermath of the L.A. Times report, which also exposed ethical lapses like its members accepting lavish gifts and travel from awards publicists and studios.

The Globes had long been one of the highest-profile awards season broadcasts, second only to the Oscars. Before the pandemic, it was still pulling in around 19 million viewers. The show was touted as a boozy, A-list party, whose hosts often took a more irreverent tone than their academy counterparts.

Some years, the HFPA were pilloried for nominating poorly reviewed films with big name talent with hopes of getting them to the show, the most infamous being "The Tourist," with Angelina Jolie and Johnny Depp. In the past decade, they've more often overlapped with the Oscars.

York. This year, NBC's Tuesday night (today, Macau time) broadcast got its smallest audience ever for the ceremony, with 6.3 million viewers.

FOOTBALL VIOLENCE

Turkey suspends all league games after club president punches referee

THE Turkish Football Federation has suspended all league games in the country after a club president punched the referee in the face at the end of a top-flight match.

MKE Ankaragucu president Faruk Koca attacked referee Halil Umut Meler on the pitch yesterday [macau time] after the final whistle, following a 1-1 draw in a Super Lig game against Caykur Rizespor.

The referee, who fell to the ground, was also kicked in a melee that occurred after fans also invaded the pitch after Rizespor scored a last-minute equalizer.

The federation announced it suspended all league games indefinitely after an emergency meeting held to discuss the violence.

Meler was hospitalized with a slight fracture near his eye but was not in a serious condition. He was expected to be discharged on Wednesday.



Referee Halil Umut Meler holds his face as he lies on the ground after being punched by MKE Ankaragucu president Faruk Koca

Koca, who was considered to be at risk of a heart attack, was also hospitalized overnight. He

was ordered arrested pending trial on charges of injuring a public official after questioning

by prosecutors, Justice Minister Yilmaz Tunc announced on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter.

Two suspects accused of kicking Meler were also arrested while three others were freed from custody on condition that they report regularly to police.

During his questioning, Koca denied causing any injury, insisting that he merely slapped the referee, according to Haber-Turk television. The club president also blamed the incident on Meler, whom he accused of "wrongful decisions" and provocative acts, the station reported, citing unnamed judicial officials.

"This attack is unfortunate and shameful in the name of football," federation chief Mehmet Buyukeksi said after the emergency meeting.

"We say enough is enough," he added, insisting that all involved in the violence would be punished.

Buyukeksi also blamed the

attack on a culture of contempt toward referees in Turkey.

"Everyone who has targeted referees and encouraged them to commit crimes is complicit in this despicable attack," he said. "The irresponsible statements of club presidents, managers, coaches and television commentators targeting referees have opened the way for this attack."

Speaking to reporters after visiting Meler in hospital, Buyukeksi said he hoped the incident would become a "milestone" for change for soccer in Turkey, which has been selected to co-host the 2032 European Championship with Italy.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also condemned the attack.

"Sports means peace and brotherhood. The sport is incompatible with violence. We will never allow violence to take place in Turkish sports," he wrote on X.

Violence in soccer is commonplace in Turkey and some other European countries despite efforts to crack down on it.

Greece announced that all top-flight soccer matches would be played without fans in the stadiums for the next two months following a sport-related riot last week that left a police officer with life-threatening injuries. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

Multipolar World

Jorge Costa Oliveira



PHASE OUT OF FOSSIL FUELS - DO AS THE EU AND THE US SAY...

Several countries in the Beyond Oil & Gas Alliance and the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, as well as NGOs, have been campaigning to include language about the “phasing out” of fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas) in an agreement at COP28. Other countries are pushing for less imperative language, to “phase down” fossil fuels.

The burning of fossil fuels is responsible for more than 70% of greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change.

The EU and the USA (and small countries vulnerable to climate change) say they support the phasing out of unabated fossil fuels. However, the actions of European and North American governments do not match their verbal statements; although the words support phasing out, the respective governments continue: (i) not to approve any timetable for such (the USA); (ii) to approve new forms of fossil fuel exploration (the USA and Canada with oil and gas extracted from rock compression, and several European countries increasing the exploration of oil, gas, and coal), as well as new exploration around the world by European and American oil companies; and (iii) to consider natural gas a green energy source for energy transition purposes (the EU). There are reasons for this.

The war in Ukraine has emphasized concerns about energy supply security. On the other hand, there are still various uncertainties (on the economic impact, on energy infrastructures, on the costs of transition, on available alternatives, on the disruption of markets) underlying the period of energy transition. In addition, there is the powerful lobby of American and European companies operating in the fossil fuel sector; in the USA its power is such that it is hardly credible that Congress will honor the pledges that the American government representatives are making at COP28.

A report from the United Nations Environment Programme concluded that meeting climate targets would require an almost total phase-out of coal production by 2040 and a 75% reduction in oil and gas production by 2050. However, according to 2 of the scenarios outlined by the International Energy Agency (IEA), namely in the STEPS scenario, we are increasingly far from being able to meet the primary target of 1.5°C of the Paris Agreement. Various estimates point to a warming >2.5°C by 2100.

If not even regarding the progressive elimination of coal energy it is possible to reach an agreement at COP28 and a realistic and fair timetable (a concern of many developing countries), perhaps it is time to rethink the goals and timetables for the energy transition. If there were any doubts before, it seems clear now that many countries do not want or do not believe that Net-zero in 2050 is possible. With each passing year, the difference between the optimistic goals established in the Net-zero 2050 scenario and the real situation arising from the inertia of public policies and the response of oil producing companies to global demand, it will become clearer. And it is not serious to sell to voters and consumers scenarios of rapid reversal and catalyzation of the pace of energy transition.

POLAND'S NEWLY ELECTED PM TUSK PRESENTS HIS GOVERNMENT AND IS TO FACE A CONFIDENCE VOTE

THE BUZZ

New Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk says his government will mobilize to keep the world committed to helping Ukraine.

Tusk said it hurts him to hear Ukraine's president to have to keep trying to persuade world leaders about the need to continue supporting Kyiv's struggle against Russian aggression.



He said it will be a priority for his coalition government to persuade leaders that they need to continue to help Ukraine defend itself, and that is also in the interests of the free world.

Tusk was making his policy speech in parliament today [Macau time], a day after lawmakers chose him as the new prime minister.

AP PHOTO



The Chinese-made C919 arrives at the Hong Kong International Airport in Hong Kong, yesterday

CHINA'S HOMETGROWN AIRCRAFT ARRIVES IN HONG KONG IN MAIDEN FLIGHT

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

A Chinese C919 jet arrived in Hong Kong yesterday in the Chinese-made plane's first foray outside of mainland China as its manufacturer prepares to take on Airbus and Boeing in the market for single-aisle commercial aircraft.

The C919 is due to perform a fly-past over the city's scenic Victoria Harbor on Saturday, giving people on the waterfront a glimpse of the new aircraft, weather permitting.

As a precaution, flying of drones and remote control planes, kits and releases of balloons will be restricted, the government said in a statement.

C919 and ARJ21 received a “ceremonial water salute” as they arrived, the statement said. An official welcoming ceremony is planned for Wednesday at the airport.

The C919 and another Chinese-made aircraft,

an ARJ21, will be on display at Hong Kong's international airport until Sunday and can be visited by officials and lawmakers, representatives from the aviation industry and youth groups, among others, it said.

The maker of the C919, the Commercial Aircraft Company of China, or COMAC, designed many of the C919's parts, but some of its key components are still sourced from the West, including its engine.

The aerospace industry is viewed as an important step on the path laid out by Chinese leaders to transform the country from the world's low-cost factory into a creator of profitable technology.

More recently, the focus has turned to other strategically important industries such as computer chips, renewable energy and artificial intelligence. But China is expected to become one of the world's biggest

aircraft markets over the next two decades.

The narrow-bodied C919 airliner was in development for 16 years and received certification in 2022. It has a maximum range of about 3,500 miles and is designed to carry 158-168 passengers.

COMAC delivered its first ARJ21s in 2014. A smaller aircraft, it can seat 78 to 90 passengers depending on its configuration, with a range of up to 2,300 miles. It was designed as a rival to aircraft made by Bombardier Inc. of Canada and Brazil's Embraer SA.

China's aviation market has been growing rapidly as a rising middle class travels more for leisure and business. COMAC plans to build 150 C919 planes each year for the next five years, according to earlier Chinese state media reports. It has said it has hundreds of orders, mainly from Chinese airlines. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



New York

Choice Hotels is launching a hostile takeover offer for Wyndham Hotels & Resorts after repeated attempts to reach a deal with the rival hotel chain were rebuffed. Choice Hotels said Tuesday that its exchange offer to shareholders of Wyndham remains the same as its last bid, which was \$49.50 in cash and 0.324 shares of Choice common stock per Wyndham share. The exchange offer gives Wyndham shareholders the chance to choose to receive all cash, all shares or a combination of the two. The offer puts the value of the deal at about \$8 billion.

AP PHOTO



EU

Thousands of protesters gathered yesterday in the capital of the European Union, calling for better public services, salaries and living conditions. The protest in downtown Brussels took place during EU negotiations over the new Stability and Growth Pact, which aims to limit debt and deficits for member countries. Nations seeking to spend their way out of a crisis would instead implement a set of economic policies such as budget cuts and tax increases.

AP PHOTO



UK

A judge ordered Prince Harry on Monday to pay nearly 50,000 pounds in legal fees to the publisher of the Daily Mail tabloid for his failed court challenge in a libel lawsuit. The Duke of Sussex is suing Associated Newspapers Ltd. over an article that said Harry tried to hide his efforts to retain publicly funded protection in the U.K. after leaving his role as a working member of the royal family.