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AP PHOTO



China Schools and highways were closed and some train services suspended yesterday as a snowstorm hit parts of northern and central China for the second time this week. A steady, blowing snow began falling in the late morning in the Chinese capital, Beijing, where authorities closed schools and some scenic spots in outlying mountainous areas. Several trains departing Beijing and in China's northwest Xinjiang region were canceled because of either snow or high winds.

AP PHOTO



North Korean economic officials met with the governor of a Russian region along the Pacific coast for discussions on boosting economic cooperation between the countries, North Korean state media said yesterday. The meeting in Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, came as concerns have grown in South Korea that the North may be attempting to expand its labor exports to Russia in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions to generate revenue for its struggling economy.

AP PHOTO



Thailand A court convicted and sentenced yesterday a recently elected lawmaker to six years in prison for defaming the monarchy under a controversial law that guards the royal institution. Rukchanok Srinork arrived at the court building in the capital, Bangkok, while her fellow lawmakers were convening in Parliament. "I submitted a request to postpone (the hearing) because today the new parliament convenes for its first session, but the court refused. So I came to hear the verdict."

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GROWING COTAI

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FROM THE
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SCULPTOR CRISTINA LEIRIA TO HOLD TALK ON KUN IAM STATUE

Portuguese sculptor Cristina Leiria will hold a talk on the casting process of the Kun lam statue, as well as the creative concept behind the design of the Kun lam Ecumenical Centre. The lecture, entitled "Well-Being and Silence: The Aim of Our Ecumenical Centre" will be held this Saturday at the Museum Auditorium of the Macao Museum of Art. Composed of a large bronze statue of the goddess Kun lam and a base in the shape of a lotus flower, the centre features a total height of 32 meters. After its inauguration, the centre received support from UNESCO and was declared a symbol that promotes the "mutual respect and understanding between different people and civilisations."

EXHIBITION SHOWCASING TIBETAN BUDDHISM TREASURES TO OPEN

The exhibition "Golden Eminence: Treasures from the Palace Museum and the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery" opens on Dec. 15 at the Macao Museum of Art. The exhibition presents 137 treasures from the collections of the Palace Museum and the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, bringing to the public the first overseas exhibition dedicated to successive Panchen Lamas and the Buddhist art of their imperial courts. The exhibition is divided into three sections: "From Tashi Lhunpo Monastery to the Palace Museum," "Art from the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery," and "Treasures of the Sixth Panchen Lama."

50,000 RESIDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR NEW ID CARD DESIGN

About 50,000 residents are now eligible to renew their ID cards with a new design in the next six months. At present, 90% of eligible citizens can use self-service machines to renew their ID cards. People who must go to the counter to apply for the card include those who are applying for the first time, as well as those whose current ID cards specify that they were under five years of age as of the date of issuance. The government has updated ID cards with additional security features, including a color-printed window, tactile features and color ultraviolet printing.

MACAU HOLDS COMMEMORATION FOR NANJING MASSACRE VICTIMS

Macau yesterday held a ceremony to mourn the 300,000 victims of the Nanjing Massacre. Vice-chairman of the National Committee of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Ho Hau Wah; Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng; and Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macau SAR, Zheng Xincong, all attended the ceremony together with over 300 other government officials and representatives from Macau's many sectors. The participants sang China's national anthem, observed silence and laid wreaths to mourn the victims. In 2014, China's top legislature designated Dec. 13 as the national memorial day for the victims of the Nanjing Massacre.

GALAXY TO ADD ANOTHER HOTEL IN NEWLY INAUGURATED PHASE 3

ANTHONY LAM

A new hotel that caters to a boutique clientele will open at the Galaxy Resort in Cotai, Francis Lui, vice chairman of its operator Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG), announced yesterday.

The casino operator officially launched the resort's third phase at a ceremony yesterday afternoon. The project includes a convention center, multi-purpose arena and two hotels: Andaz Macau and Raffles at Galaxy Macau.

However, Lui confirmed that this is not yet the conclusion of this phase's development. A building being constructed near Broadway Macau – another GEG hotel – will house the group's tenth hotel brand, he said.

"It will be a boutique hotel, expected to have less than 100 rooms, catering to the high-end market," Lui said. "It will be a new brand in Macau." The executive, however, refrained from making further comments on which brand it would be, or whether it would be a third-party brand.

Given no details on its facilities were released, Lui added that information would be announced in due course. He also hoped that the new hotel would "see most of its works concluded within next year."

Lui also discussed the plan for a theme park at his resort. The project was included in the proposal submitted to the government during last year's relicensing process, he explained.

"Non-disclosure agreements have been signed with our collaborator [for the theme park project]," Lui said. "Discussions will also be held with the government on the details of the project."

Regarding the additional investment required by the license terms and conditions, effective when gross gaming revenue (GGR) reaches MOP180 billion, Lui said that the group will invest in sporting efforts, such



as the World Table Tennis tournament and the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball tournament, as well as renovations to GEG's properties.

Meanwhile, in a statement issued by GEG, the fourth phase of the resort is planned to be a resort-in-resort, featuring multiple high-end hotel brands, extensive food and beverage as well as retail outlets, non-gaming amenities, landscaping and a water resort deck, alongside a 4,000-seat international music and performing arts theater to invigorate the local arts and culture scene.

GALAXY OFFICIALLY LAUNCHES ITS PHASE 3

Yesterday, GEG officially launched Phase 3 of the Galaxy Macau resort, which consists of the Galaxy International Convention Centre, the Galaxy Arena, the Andaz Macau and the Raffles at Galaxy Macau.

GEG described the launch as not only beginning a new chapter for the group's expansion into various business sectors, but also demonstrating GEG's unrelenting efforts to facilitate the integration of culture; entertainment; sports; meetings, incentives, conferences and

exhibitions; and tourism. The launch also showcases the group's steadfast dedication to Macau's socio-economic stability and its commitment to sharing prosperity with the local community.

GEG chairman Dr Lui Che Woo said during his opening remarks that Phase 3 aligns with the Macau SAR Government's calls to foster quality development of exhibitions and conventions combined with commerce. Phase 3 also establishes Macau as a "City of Performing Arts" and a "City of Sports," said Lui. Phase 3 of the resort entered operation early this year.

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AL PLENARY

2024 Budget approved, despite criticism from Ron Lam

RENATO MARQUES

THE government budget for 2024 was passed in the final reading at the Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday.

The budget was almost unanimously voted in by lawmakers. The exception was Ron Lam, who criticized the fact that the budget shows a reduction in investment from the government in core areas such as health and education.

Lam indicated from the start of the discussion that he would be voting against some articles, explaining that the budget bill had not been fully clarified in the AL Standing Committee. He also noted that, besides maintaining the wealth partaking scheme and resuming the injection of the 7,000 patacas into the individual accounts of residents' Providence Fund, the budget does not include any other measures aiming to solve societal problems.

"We still have a lot of problems with unemployment



Lawmaker Ron Lam

among the younger generation who hold high academic qualifications, but the budget does not have anything on this matter," Lam also said.

In response, the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, predictably refused to provide any further explanation, stating, "I cannot ex-

plain any further the reasons for this budget. All these matters have already been discussed in the committee, as the opinion notes. There isn't a need to increase investment from the government in all the sectors every year," he added. "The investment of the government needs to be addressed

highlighting the decision as being "good support" for the sector.

Lam also criticized the way the government reached a "non-deficit" budget, saying that the balance was "not really a positive one" that was "achieved through a financial engineering exercise."

Lam also voted against the budget article related to the Hac-Sá Adventure Park, claiming the government is spending "too much" without proper justification. He argued the money could instead be used to "improve the quality of teaching in the schools," or fund a "larger investment into free schooling programs."

in the medium and long term."

According to Lei, the investment or disinvestment can only be addressed in periods of five or more years and not annually.

Addressing particularly investment in education, Lei said that the government was investing between MOP7.6 billion and MOP7.7 billion,

MINIMUM WAGE APPROVED, SHORT TIMING FOR DISCUSSION CRITICIZED

THE AL passed on the final reading yesterday a bill that updates the minimum wage for both cleaning staff and security staff working in condominiums from MOP32 to MOP34 per hour.

The amendment represents an increase to the monthly salary from a previous MOP6,656 (in 2019) to MOP7,072 from January 1, 2024. At the plenary, several lawmakers have shown concerns over the timing for implementing the new law, claiming that the government took too long to present the bill for lawmakers to debate.

Ron Lam was one of the most vocal critics, stating that it is necessary to disclose the new rules to the condominiums and, in some cases, adjust the condominium fees accordingly.

Other lawmakers, namely those representing the labor sector, called on the government to establish a mechanism to periodically review the minimum wage; however, Lei Wai Nong said that such is a task of the Standing Committee for the Coordination of Social Affairs, which government does not wish to interfere with.

LAWMAKERS AGENDA

LEONG HONG SAI CLAIMS RECENT GRADUATES IN MEDICINE CAN ONLY WORK IN 'FOOD DELIVERY'

RENATO MARQUES

LAWMAKER Leong Hong Sai, linked with the Macau General Union of Neighborhood Associations (commonly referred to as Kai Fong), claimed yesterday at the Legislative Assembly (AL) that new medicine graduates can find no work in the local industry and being forced to change their career paths to work in the "take-away" [and food delivery] industry.

Such a statement was aired at the AL yesterday during the period before the agenda, in which Leong, well-known for his bold statements and partisan positions in the plenary, wanted to address the problem of the hiring of staff for the new Islands Hospital Complex, due to open soon.

"This time, the Islands Hospital will recruit only five general doctors and 50 nurses, which, according to some experts in the health sector, is very little. Therefore, they hope that in the next phase of recruitment there will be more vacancies for qualified residents to have opportunities to develop and contribute to the community," Leong said.

"However, due to Macau's unbalanced social development, many graduates from medicine streams are unable to find jobs matching their area of expertise," the lawmaker added. "Some have managed, thanks to their families, to set up their own clinics after obtaining their licenses, and others have chosen to leave Macau and establish themselves in other locations. As a colleague already

mentioned, to ensure their subsistence, many medical graduates can only change careers or work as take-away employees, and it is, in fact, regrettable to waste these talents formed after years of study and hard work."

Leong also said that according to his knowledge, the professions of physician, therapist and pharmacist have been popular in recent years, with around 500 new graduates per year, and an average of around 100 general Western medicine graduates returning to Macau every year. For Leong, there is no shortage of "new blood" in the sector nor is there a need to recruit these professionals abroad, so long as the government is willing to employ the existing local manpower in this sector.

LAWMAKERS AGENDA

PEREIRA COUTINHO WANTS ACCESS TO HENGQIN WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION

RENATO MARQUES

LAWMAKER José Pereira Coutinho wants authorities to allow all permanent residents of Macau to have the same access to the Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, irrespective of their nationality. Pereira Coutinho made the announcement during a spoken inquiry delivered yesterday in the period before the agenda at the Legislative Assembly.

The issue relates to the fact that only residents of Chinese nationality with an Exit-Entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macau, commonly known as a Two-way Permit, can easily cross the border between Macau and the Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

Pereira Coutinho notes that this blatantly discriminates against those permanent residents who do not have a Two-way Permit. Permanent residents without the permit cannot, among other things, access the new apartments of the new Macau neighborhood in Hengqin.

Without possessing a Two-way Permit, residents of Macau are forced to cross the border using their passports – for which they also need to have a visa. These prerequisites make the process of crossing the border for work, study and other activities very complex, time-consuming, and costly, particularly if there is a need to cross daily.

Pereira Coutinho noted that although

banking institutions, such as the Bank of China and Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU), are conceding loans for the acquisition of housing units in Hengqin for those not in possession of a Two-way Permit, the Macau Urban Renewal Company, tasked with overseeing the development, has said that it cannot promise that border procedures will be eased for those buyers who do not have a permit.

The lawmaker complained of discrimination, adding that although the government had announced families can also recruit or transfer their quotas of domestic workers to Hengqin, there is no regulation or information on how to do this.

ECONOMY

MACAU TO RETAIN STRONG GROWTH: FITCH

LYNZY VALLES

FITCH Ratings predicts Macau's year on year growth to remain strong, at 15% in 2024 from 76% in 2023, off the back of sharp rebounds in gaming revenue.

In its recent Greater China Outlook 2024 report, the institution forecast that, despite ongoing growth headwinds for greater China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan all retain robust fiscal and external credit buffers to manage their challenges.

"Macau was affirmed at 'AA'/Stable in March 2023. The ratings are sensitive to recovery in gaming, maintenance of fiscal buffers, and – like Hong Kong – the evolution of mainland China's rating," the institution said in the report.

Macau's gaming tourism underpins growth prospects as the city's gross gaming revenue (GGR) reached MOP164.5 billion from January to November, exceeding the government's expectations of MOP130 billion for the whole of



2023. The figure also represents about 61% of pre-pandemic levels.

Fitch's baseline assumes GGR will recover further to 79.3% of 2019 levels in 2024, driven primarily by solid growth in the mass-market segment.

"Strong performance in gaming tourism will also be bolste-

red by the government's stepped up efforts to boost long-haul travellers and greater utilisation of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge in the coming year," the report stated.

"We expect fiscal buffers to remain substantial, equivalent to more than five times our projected 2023 budget expenditure – a

key credit strength," the report added.

As part of its multi-year plan through to 2028, the government has been ramping up its efforts to facilitate economic diversification towards targeted strategic, non-gaming industries.

Macau's Big Six have already pledged nearly USD12 billion

in non-gaming investments following the granting of licenses earlier this year.

All six gaming operators have contributed hefty amounts as part of their individual commitments, funding city-wide investments in tourism, sports, and fine dining.

However, amid Macau's economic diversification, Fitch believes that "human capital constraints and skill mismatches will remain key challenges for the territory to substantially reduce its overwhelming dependence on the gaming sector."

Fitch has forecast the city's gaming industry to reach some MOP231 billion in revenue, according to the agency's recently released Global Gaming Outlook 2024 report.

Meanwhile, concerning mainland China, Fitch sees its growth to ease to 4.6% from 5.3% in 2023. Hong Kong's growth is also set to edge back from 3.2% to 3.0% in 2023, as it sustains its modest rebound from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Beijing 'agrees in principle' with Hengqin development plan

ANTHONY LAM

The Chinese State Council, as revealed on the website of the Central Government, has "agreed in principle" to the development plan for Hengqin that was co-submitted by Guangdong and Macau.

According to the statement, the National Development and Reform Commission "agrees in principle with the 'Overall Development Plan for the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin' [the development plan]." It cautions both Guangdong and Macau to "organize and implement [the development plan] carefully."

The Commission underlined that the plan's implementation must comply with Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era; the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Party; an aestheticism which advocates progress whilst also maintains stability; and other similar guidelines. It also highlighted that the project must be implemented fully to promote developmental progress in both Hengqin and Macau, as well as to ensure Macau's economic diversification and the improvements in Macau residents' livelihoods.



The Commission has also directed the People's Government of Guangdong Province to strengthen its communication and coordination with Macau and increase its support to better implement the project. The Zone's Management Committee "should strengthen overall coordination, improve the efficiency of discussion and decision-making, and effectively fulfill the main responsibility for the planning and construction of the cooperation zone," the Commission added.

The Zone's Executive Committee "must be courageous and good at taking action,

pragmatically assume the main executive responsibility for the planning and construction of the cooperation zone, deeply promote reform and innovation, open cooperation, and promote the development and construction of the cooperation zone with high standards, high quality and high efficiency," it added.

National entities will also escalate their work in ensuring the smooth implementation of the plan, using the Hengqin Guangdong-Macao Deep Cooperation Zone as "a test project and pilot area for deepening reform and expansions to this field."

ZONE A

THREE ECONOMIC HOUSING PROJECTS MAY BE AVAILABLE IN EARLY 2025

DESCRIBING New Urban Zone A as a mega construction site, Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário disclosed that three Zone A economic housing projects might be fit for transfer in early 2025.

The transfer of rights of use for these apartments aims to provide for the applicants in the applications that opened in 2019.

According to public broadcaster TDM-Radio Macau (Chinese), Rosário said that he was confident that the construction of each of the three projects would conclude at the end of next year. Relevant work, such as pricing, would then commence accordingly.

Rosário pointed out that several construction works remain underway in the Zone, hinting that an early entry into these apartments

may not be a good idea. He suggested successful buyers should wait temporarily, so as to experience an increased quality of living.

On the connections between the Zone and the main peninsula, Rosário said that a new connection would be available by the Lunar New Year. Enhancements to public facilities near the main roundabout of the Zone would also be conducted, he stated.

The convenience of travel between the Zone – or lack thereof – has long been criticized. When asked, Rosário said that construction contractors have been reminded to improve logistical considerations. However, the official added that additional bus routes are not "meaningful" at the stage because residents are not yet living in the Zone. **AL**



ART & CULTURE

SANDS CHINA NURTURES VIBRANT ARTS AND CULTURE SCENE IN MACAO

OVER the past two decades, Sands China has supported the growth of local arts and culture, aligning with the government's 'tourism+' policy, enriching the non-gaming experiences of residents and visitors, and strengthening the city's cultural and artistic growth.

SANDS GALLERY

Sands China opened its Sands Gallery in 2022, and has since hosted exhibitions by local and international artists, enriching the cultural experience of Macao residents and visitors. The company believes the high-level art exhibitions of this permanent exhibition space will play an active role in propelling artistic diversity and promoting exchange and cooperation among artistic groups from Macao, mainland China and other countries.

Sands China has showcased experimental masterpieces from Fang Lijun, one of the "Four Giants" of Chinese contemporary art, and has organized exhibitions for Greater Bay Area and Macao artists, including Zhaoying Zhang, Sisi Wong, Lei Ieng Wai, Leong Chi Mou, and Lai Sio Kit. Sands China hopes exhibitions like these will cultivate art appreciation among visitors, inspire Macao's artists, and stimulate the local cultural and creative industries. The company is committed to bolstering artistic exchange to support the Macao government's promotion of non-



-gaming offerings and to contribute to Macao's integration into the overall development of the nation.

SUPPORTING ART MACAO

Sands China recently presented the Art Macao 2023 exhibition "Meet the Magic: In celebration of Disney 100 by Philip Colbert and Jason Naylor," attracting over 6 million visits.

The exhibition featured iconic large-scale outdoor art installations – Mickey Lobster and Technicolor Mickey – created by famous pop artists Philip Colbert and Jason Naylor, bringing a magical journey of vibrant colors to the Cotai Strip. Some of their other incredible artworks were also exhibited at The Venetian Macao's lobby and quickly became popular photo hotspots.

Sands China simultaneously presented "Behind the Forms: Aesthetics of Contemporary Art

– Trio Exhibition by Lei Ieng Wai, Leong Chi Mou and Lai Sio Kit," a collateral exhibition of Art Macao, supplying a platform for promoting extensive exchange and cooperation among local and international art talent, while promoting the appreciation of the aesthetics of contemporary art to the public.

Sands China's additional Art Macao event at the Macao Museum of Art, titled "Behind the Forms: The Essence of Contemporary Art," featured professor Ung Vai Meng, a prominent scholar and local artist. A panel discussion featuring Professor Ung delved into the profound significance of contemporary art and encouraged the audience of local artists, art students, and the public to collectively explore the fundamental questions that arise in its appreciation. Sands China also commissioned Ung to create a work of his own, titled "The Genesis of Ratio-

nality," for Art Macao's Invitational Exhibition by Local Artists at the Macao Cultural Centre.

SANDS PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAM

Earlier this year, Sands China introduced the Sands Performing Arts Program to broaden the scope of performing arts in Macao, by introducing and promoting premier national local and overseas performing art projects. The program fully utilizes Macao's role as a platform of international exchange, in alignment with the Macao SAR government's vision for the integrated tourism and leisure industry.

It attracted over 11,000 audience members to watch 10 top-notch national and international performances, including the play "The Peony Pavilion" from the China Theatre Plum Blossom Award competition; the wildly acclaimed Cantonese opera performance Floral Princess; Vienna-based quartet Janoska Ensemble's unique interpretations of classical pieces; and the dramatic "Poetic Dance: The Journey of a Legendary Landscape Painting."

The company also organized two masterclasses, offering a chance for local art lovers a close-up exchange with canto-opera and music artists, promoting art and culture exchanges and fostering the professional development of performing arts.

PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT OF MACAO'S FILM INDUSTRY

Five locally produced micro movies premiered at The Londoner Macao as part of the 2022 New Art Studies in Filming – Micro Movie Support Program, organized by the Creative Industries Promotion Association of St. Lazarus Church District (CIPA) and sponsored by Sands China. The annual program helps new-generation local filmmakers produce micro movies, thereby bolstering the development of filmmaking talent in Macao, and offers courses covering directing, screenwriting, acting, make-up artistry, editing, and special effects. Sands China's program sponsorship demonstrates the company's commitment to nurturing local filmmakers for the sustainable development of Macao's film industry.

Sands China is also sponsoring the 2024 International Film Camp (IFC) launched by the Asian Film Awards Academy, which promises to be a transformative experience for aspiring filmmakers by offering a comprehensive curriculum to enhance their skills and knowledge. Throughout the duration of the camp, participants will benefit from the guidance and mentorship of renowned industry professionals, who will share their expertise and provide valuable insights into filmmaking.



Lok Hei

"As always, the Macau Artist Society has brought together local artists, especially young ones, with the aim of fostering their development. Whether it's the older generation's sketches or young artists' ways of presenting ideas in various forms, the aim is to share their spiritual pursuit with the audience. We are very glad to be showcasing the three artists' masterpieces through Art Macao here at Sands Gallery. This exhibition drew attention to the importance of the ideas behind artworks, while promoting the growth of local emerging artists and the curatorial team of the Macau Youth Art Association."

President, Macau Artist Society,
co-organiser of the
'Behind the Forms' exhibition



Philip Colbert

"Lobsters have a long history in arts and that is why I like the surrealism, fun and humour of lobsters. Macao is the ultimate city of pop art and it gives me a lot of inspiration – this is why I have always wanted to exhibit in Macao. I have showcased a huge art installation in Venice, so my Lobster character has a close connection with Venice. Bringing this character to The Venetian Macao is like a new and fun adventure."

Artist, 'Meet the Magic' exhibition for
Art Macao, presented by Sands China



Jason Naylor

"The collaboration with Sands China in Art Macao's special exhibition is a magical experience. I want to spread love, positive vibes, optimism, and kindness, and I do it using bright colours. The OPN Heart is one of the artworks in this exhibition. It is designed to open its hands and hearts, inviting the audience to share love, joy, and positive energy to others. I am very glad to be able to spread 'respect and acceptance' in such a vibrant city. The culture in this dynamic city with history is incredibly unique and rich with great inspiration."

Artist,
'Meet the Magic' exhibition



Janoska Ensemble

"This was our debut in Macao and it felt very special. It is our mission to support young musicians, thus, we are happy to give suggestions and show them how to insert their

own style and personality into music [at Sands China's masterclass for young Macao and Hong Kong music enthusiasts], making music sound freer and livelier."

CHINA-VIETNAM

Xi meets with Pham on second day of visit to shore up ties

CHINESE leader Xi Jinping met with Vietnam's prime minister and the head of the country's National Assembly yesterday, on the second day of his visit to shore up Beijing's relationship with Hanoi after the Southeast Asian nation recently elevated its ties with Japan and the United States.

Xi met with Communist Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong on Tuesday, and they announced that China and Vietnam would work toward a "community with a shared future," in what was seen as a diplomatic concession by Vietnam to Beijing.

Vietnam has resisted using that phrase in the past but wanted to assuage Beijing's concerns after Vietnam designated both the U.S. and Japan as "comprehensive strategic partners" in recent months, a

designation it uses for China. The status is Vietnam's highest official designation for a diplomatic relationship.

Xi referenced the phrase again yesterday in a meeting with National Assembly Chairman Vuong Dinh Hue.

"In the next stage, both sides need to strengthen cooperation in various fields, including legislation, to contribute to the building of the community with a shared future," Xi said.

Nguyen Khac Giang, a visiting fellow at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore, cited by the Associated Press, said the rhetorical concession from Hanoi "doesn't mean Vietnam supports China-led political initiatives, but rather (is) a delicate act of hedging, particularly after its upgrade with the U.S. and Japan recently."



President Xi Jinping meets with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh at the Hanoi Government Residence, yesterday

"I think the move is expected given the fact that Xi came to Hanoi in person," Nguyen said.

Xi also met with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh and President Vo Van Thuong yesterday and will end his trip after meeting with young Vietnamese and Chinese scholars.

Vietnam and China already have robust ties, but they also have points of difference, primarily over territorial claims over islands in the South China Sea.

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.

VIETNAM SUPPORTS BUILDING GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Echoing previous comments from President Xi, Hanoi supports Beijing on the initiative to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

A joint statement issued by China and Vietnam yesterday announced a mutual agreement supporting the development of the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative.

According to Xinhua News Agency, these proposals and initiatives are aimed at safeguarding

the common interests of humanity and committed to promoting peace, justice and the cause of progress for people of the world, reflecting the aspiration of people from all countries to build a better world.

China and Vietnam agree that the development of relations among countries should conform to the UN Charter, international law, and basic norms governing international relations, it said.

Countries should uphold mutual respect, equality, mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and resolve differences through peaceful means, the statement added, as cited by Xinhua. **MDT/AGENCIES**

XINHUA INSIGHT

China, Vietnam elevate ties to new stage

XINHUA EDITORS

JAN. 18, 1950 marked a significant milestone in the annals of China-Vietnam relations. Shortly after its own founding, the People's Republic of China became the first country to establish diplomatic ties with Vietnam.

Another landmark event in their relationship came in May 2008 when China became the first country to forge a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership with Vietnam, the latter's highest level of diplomatic ties.

On Tuesday, the China-Vietnam relationship hit a new high when both sides agreed to build a China-Vietnam community with a shared future that carries strategic significance on the basis of deepening the comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership.

Over the past 15 years since the inception of their comprehensive strategic

cooperative partnership, Vietnam and China have made substantial progress in cooperation in various fields, laying a solid foundation for both sides to push bilateral relations into a new stage, said Dao Ngoc Bau, deputy director in charge of the Institute of International Relations under the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics.

The announcement was made during the ongoing state visit to Vietnam by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Chinese president.

It has been Xi's third visit to Vietnam since he became general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and Chinese president.

Referring to Xi's visit as one bearing landmark significance, Nguyen Hoang Anh, a member of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) Central Committee, said, "High-level contact is

a good tradition between Vietnam and China, and is promoting the continuous development of bilateral ties."

Quoting late Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh's well-known remarks, which defined China-Vietnam relations as a bond of "camaraderie plus brotherhood," Xi said on Tuesday when meeting General Secretary of the CPV Central Committee Nguyen Phu Trong that China has, as always, viewed its relations with Vietnam from a strategic and long-term perspective.

Xi urged the CPC and the CPV, as the two largest governing communist parties in the world, to grasp the special strategic significance of China-Vietnam relations and solidly advance the building of a China-Vietnam community with a shared future from the height of building the strengths of socialism in the world and ensuring the sound and sustained deve-

lopment of their respective socialist causes.

Xi expressed the conviction that with the joint efforts of the two sides, the China-Vietnam relationship will enter a new stage featuring greater political mutual trust, more substantive security cooperation, deeper mutually beneficial cooperation, more solid popular foundation, closer multilateral coordination and collaboration, and more proper management of differences.

In August, Trong visited a cross-border port, known as the Friendship Pass, and planted a "friendship tree."

Noting that the pass is the only cross-border port in the world named after the word "friendship," Trong said then that it embodies the special traditional friendship of comrades plus brothers between the Vietnamese and Chinese people.

During talks with Xi on Tuesday, Trong thanked

China for placing priority on Vietnam in its neighborhood diplomacy, and stressed that Vietnam follows an independent foreign policy and takes growing the relationship with China as a top priority and a strategic choice.

Vietnam stands ready to work with China to build a community with a shared future that carries strategic significance, he said, adding that Vietnam will bolster cooperation with China across the political, economy and trade, security and people-to-people fields, and develop a paradigm of mutually beneficial cooperation.

Vietnam and China are both socialist countries led by communist parties, and the important consensus reached by the high-level leaders of the two parties and countries will promote the steady growth of bilateral relations, said Nguyen Tang Nghi, an international relations scholar from Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City.

Xi's visit to Vietnam shows the great importance China attaches to Vietnam-China relations and will inject strong impetus into the further development of bilateral relations, said the scholar.



Peng Liyuan, spouse of President Xi, accompanied by Phan Thi Thanh Tam, spouse of Vietnamese President Vo Van Thuong, visits Vietnam National University, Hanoi

MYANMAR

Economy is deteriorating as civil conflict intensifies: World Bank

MYANMAR'S economy is forecast to grow only 1% in the fiscal year that ends in March, the World Bank says, as conditions deteriorate with an escalation in fighting between the military and its opponents that has newly displaced more than 500,000 people.

Intensified fighting near Myanmar's border with China has blocked trade routes, causing shortages of food and other necessities and worsening inflation that was already near 30%, the World Bank said in a report this week.

Myanmar is embroiled in widespread conflicts that deepened and expanded after the military's seizure of power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in early 2021 prompted a wave of popular resistance.

The total number of people displaced by fighting has risen to some 2.5 million, the report said.

Political instability



coupled with the pandemic and mismanagement by the military leadership have undone years of economic progress, the report said. It said the military administration's efforts to attract foreign exchange and stabilize Myanmar's currency, the kyat, have "generally been ineffective," causing uncertainty and distorting markets.

The forecast for 1% growth suggests the economy will be about 10% smaller in 2024 than it

was five years earlier.

"At the same time, a lack of clarity around the implementation and enforcement of frequently changing and often non-transparent instructions has raised uncertainty and increased compliance costs," it said.

The report said power outages were affecting both homes and businesses, with costs for running generators during blackouts causing garment manufacturers losses amounting to nearly a

third of their sales in 2022. That is undermining one of the country's most important drivers for growth and exports.

"With the operating environment deteriorating and uncertainty about the future increasing, Myanmar's garment firms have been forced to focus on survival rather than investment and growth," Kim Alan Edwards, the World Bank's program leader and senior economist for Myanmar, said in a statement.

Among other developments mentioned in the report:

— A survey in September found that companies said they were operating at less than 60% of capacity, down from 75% in April.

— Average household incomes fell by 10% in the April-June quarter compared with a year earlier.

— Tourism has failed to recover despite government efforts to lure back visitors, with several international hotel chains remaining closed. **MDT/AP**

SRI LANKA

Island will get second tranche of much-needed bailout from the IMF

THE International Monetary Fund executive board approved the release of the second tranche of a \$2.9 billion dollar bailout package to help Sri Lanka recover from the worst economic crisis in its history.

In a statement, the fund said the decision yesterday [Macau time] to release \$337 million came after Sri Lanka had made "commendable progress" toward debt sustainability, raising revenue, rebuilding its reserves, reducing inflation and safeguarding financial stability.

It said a strong commitment to improving go-

vernance and protecting the poor and vulnerable remains critical.

In September, the IMF delayed the release of the second tranche of the four-year package, saying Sri Lanka's economy was recovering but the country needed to improve its tax administration, eliminate exemptions and crack down on tax evasion.

Sri Lanka plunged into its worst economic crisis last year, suffering severe shortages and drawing strident protests that led to the ouster of then-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. It declared bankruptcy in April 2022 with more than

\$83 billion in debt — more than half of it to foreign creditors.

The approval follows Sri Lanka's agreement with an Official Creditor Committee on debt restructuring, covering about \$5.9 billion of outstanding public debt. Japan and India are members of the 17-strong creditor committee. Sri Lanka had previously reached a debt restructuring agreement with China's EXIM Bank covering \$4.2 billion in outstanding debt.

Sri Lanka is hoping to restructure \$17 billion of its tens of billions of outstanding debt.

Over the past year, Sri

Lanka's severe shortages of essentials like food, fuel and medicine have largely abated, and authorities have restored power supplies.

But public dissatisfaction has grown over the government's efforts to increase revenues by raising electricity bills and imposing heavy new income taxes on professionals and businesses.

This week the government increased the rate of the Valued Added Tax and extended it to cover many essential items such as cooking gas, fuel, medicines etc. under the tax. **MDT/AP**

ADVERTORIAL

GREAT TIMES

Celebrate the Festive Season in Style at MGM

The holiday season is upon us — a time to embrace the festivities with exquisite feasts, in which cherished moments are shared with loved ones. From lavish buffets to limited-edition festive dining experiences, MGM offers an unparalleled gastronomic journey that will make your winter celebrations memorable.

At **Rossio** and **Coast**, the Christmas buffet awaits. Immerse yourself in a tantalizing journey through the diverse flavors of international delicacies. From traditional classics to contemporary creations, the buffet lines offer a diverse selection of savory and sweet delights, including Roasted Turkey, Seafood Platters, and more. The epicurean feast promises an unforgettable journey of flavors for all.



For a splendid dining experience like no other, make your way to **Grill 58**. In addition to festive brunch and dinner sets featuring premium ingredients, an interactive omakase experience will be available at the Teppanyaki corner. The menu showcases the finest seasonal seafood, including Monkfish and Buri Fish, and Beef Duo with the finest cuts from Japan and Australia's Wagyu beef with wine pairing options.



To satisfy your festive cravings, delight in an exquisite assortment of limited-edition Fantasy Winter Delights pastries and afternoon tea set at **Anytime** and **Pastry Bar**. At Anytime, guests can also enjoy the winter edition of the signature Sea Odyssey show while relishing the winter delicacies at the Spectacle.



SUSHIDAN at **Rossio** offers a variety of sushi sets and omakase experience. Indulge yourself in the atmosphere of traditional sushi house, appreciating craftsmanship of Edomae nigiri sushi, which would also be a perfect choice for festive celebration.

More captivating festive dining options are available at MGM MACAU and MGM COTAI. Visit www.mgm.mo/en/macau/offers/dining/Festive-in-style for more information and make your reservation now at (853) 8802 3888.

COP28

Delegates at UN climate talks in Dubai agree to 'transition away' from fossil fuels

SETH BORENSTEIN, DUBAI

UNITED Nations climate negotiators directed the world yesterday to transition away from planet-warming fossil fuels in a move the talks chief called historic, despite critics' worries about loopholes.

"Humanity has finally done what is long, long, long overdue," Wopke Hoekstra, European Union commissioner for climate action, said. After nearly 30 years of talking about carbon pollution, climate negotiators in a key document explicitly took aim at what's trapping the heat: the burning of coal, oil and natural gas.

Within minutes of opening the session, COP28 President Sultan al-Jaber gavelled approval of the central document — the global stocktake that says how off-track the world is on climate and how to get back on — without asking for comments. Delegates stood and hugged each other.

"It is a plan that is led by the science," al-Jaber said. "It is an enhanced, balanced, but make no mistake, a historic package to accelerate climate action. It is the UAE consensus."

"We have language on fossil fuel in our final agreement for the first time ever," said al-Jaber, who's also CEO of the UAE's oil company.

United Nations Climate Secretary Simon Stiell told delegates their efforts were "needed to signal a hard stop to humanity's core climate problem: fossil fuels and that planet-burning pollution. Whilst we didn't turn the page on the fossil fuel era in Dubai, this outcome is the beginning of the end."

Stiell cautioned people that what they adopted was a "climate action lifeline, not a finish line."

The new deal had been floated early yesterday and was stronger than a draft proposed days earlier, but had loopholes that upset critics. Analysts and delegates wondered if there was going to be a floor fight over



COP28 President Sultan al-Jaber, center, claps after passing the global stocktake at the U.N. Climate Summit yesterday, in Dubai

details, but al-Jaber acted quickly, not giving critics a chance to even clear their throats.

Several minutes later, Samoa's lead delegate Anne Rasmussen, on behalf of small island nations, complained that they weren't even in the room when al-Jaber said the deal was done. She said that "the course correction that is needed has not been secured," with the deal representing business-as-usual instead of exponential emissions-cutting efforts. She said the deal could "potentially take us backward rather than forward."

When Rasmussen finished, delegates whooped, applauded and stood, as al-Jaber frowned and then eventually joined the standing ovation that stretched longer than his plaudits. Marshall Islands delegates hugged and cried.

Bolivia blasted the agreement as a new form of colonialism. But there was more self-congratulations than flagellations.

"I am in awe of the spirit of cooperation that has brought everybody together," United States Special Envoy John Kerry said. He said it shows that multilateralism can still work despite what the globe sees with wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. "This document sends very strong messages to the world."

The deal also includes a call for tripling the use of renewable energy and doubling energy efficiency. Earlier in the talks, the conference adopted a special fund for poor nations hurt by

climate change and nations put nearly \$800 million in the fund.

"Many, many people here would have liked clearer language" on getting rid of fossil fuels, Kerry said. But he said it's a compromise.

Oil-rich Saudi Arabia, whose OPEC threatened to torpedo an agreement, hailed the deal as a success.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who has targeted oil companies and their massive profits, also celebrated, saying in a statement that "for the first time, the outcome recognizes the need to transition away from fossil fuels."

The deal doesn't go so far as to seek a "phase-out" of fossil fuels, which more than 100 nations, like small island states and European nations, had pleaded for. Instead, it calls for "transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade."

The deal says that the transition would be done in a way that gets the world to net zero greenhouse gas emissions in 2050 and follows the dictates of climate science. It projects a world peaking its ever-growing carbon pollution by the year 2025 to reach its agreed-upon threshold, but gives wiggle room to individual nations like China to peak later.

Intensive sessions with all sorts of delegates went well into the small hours of yesterday after the conference presidency's initial document angered many

countries by avoiding decisive calls for action on curbing warming. Then, al-Jaber presented delegates from nearly 200 nations a new document just after sunrise.

It was the third version presented in about two weeks and the word "oil" does not appear anywhere in the 21-page document, but "fossil fuels" appears twice.

"This is the first time in 28 years that countries are forced to deal with fossil fuels," Center for Biological Diversity energy justice director Jean Su told The Associated Press. "So that is a general win. But the actual details in this are severely flawed."

"The problem with the text is that it still includes cavernous loopholes that allow the United States and other fossil fuel producing countries to keep going on their expansion of fossil fuels," Su said. "There's a pretty deadly, fatal flaw in the text, which allows for transitional fuels to continue" which is a code word for natural gas that also emits carbon pollution.

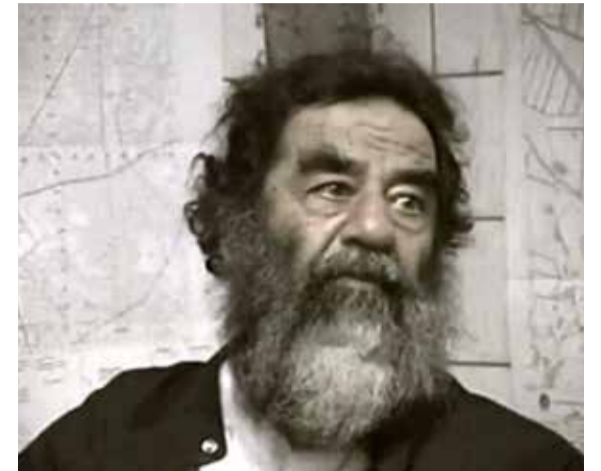
Several activists highlighted what they considered loopholes.

Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, a Nobel Peace Prize winning climate activist, said while it is an important milestone "to finally recognize that the climate crisis is at its heart a fossil fuel crisis," he called the deal "the bare minimum" with "half measures and loopholes."

"Whether this is a turning point that truly marks the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era depends on the actions that come next," Gore said. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2003 SADDAM HUSSEIN CAPTURED



The ousted President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, is under arrest after he was captured by US soldiers.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we got him," US administrator Paul Bremer told journalists in Baghdad. "The tyrant is a prisoner."

Saddam Hussein was found hidden in a tiny bunker at a farmhouse about 10 miles (15 km) south of his home town, Tikrit.

A US military spokesman, Major-General Raymond Odierno, said the operation was launched soon after a tip-off from a member of Saddam Hussein's own extended family. [...]

There was a \$25m reward offered by the US authorities for information leading to his capture.

A similar reward was claimed for revealing the whereabouts of Saddam Hussein's sons, Uday and Qusay, who were killed in a raid by US forces in the northern city of Mosul in July.

Saddam Hussein was found in a "spider hole" or cellar just big enough for a person to lie down in, and six to eight feet (1.8m to 2.5m) deep.

The entrance was topped with a polystyrene lid and covered with a rug, bricks and dirt. Saddam had been breathing through an air vent and extractor fan.

The former Iraqi dictator was armed with a pistol, but Major-General Odierno said he gave himself up without resistance.

He seemed "disoriented" and "bewildered", the Major-General said, and was arrested at 2030 local time (1730 GMT).

Two unidentified people said to be "close allies" of Saddam Hussein were also arrested. Weapons and more than \$750,000 in cash was confiscated.

Video footage was released by the US military showing a dishevelled Saddam with a long black and grey beard undergoing a medical examination.

The former president had not been seen since US forces entered Baghdad in April.

Despite one of the most intensive manhunts in history, he has evaded capture for eight months.

As the news spread throughout Iraq, people began celebrating in the streets of Baghdad and the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk by sounding their horns and firing into the air.

Saddam's stronghold towns of Tikrit and Fallujah, however, were sombre and quiet.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Saddam Hussein was transferred to the Iraqi authorities on 30 June 2004 following the handover of sovereignty to Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's interim government. His trial opened in Baghdad the next day.

Saddam Hussein was defiant. He challenged the legality of the proceedings, which he said were brought about by the "invasion forces".

In July 2005, the tribunal laid the first charges against Saddam Hussein and seven others.

His co-defendants included Barzan al-Tikriti, Saddam Hussein's half-brother and former head of Iraq's intelligence service and Awad Hamed al-Bandar, former Revolutionary Court chief judge.

All three were sentenced to death by an Iraqi court on 5 November 2006 after a year-long trial.

The former president was executed on 30 December 2006 after Iraq's highest court rejected an appeal.

The Iraqi government filmed the event to prove that Saddam Hussein was dead.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Your love will not be willing to listen to your criticism. Think before you act if you wish to avoid friction. Avoid letting family get involved in your personal life.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Think of changes to your home that will please and add to everyone's comfort. Keep the promises you've made or you can expect to be in the doghouse.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Don't be too quick to judge. You can find solutions if you are willing to communicate. You'll be angry if those you live with aren't pulling their weight.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You may find yourself in an uncomfortable situation if you have overloaded your plate unintentionally. Think twice before you say something you might regret later.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Your sensitivity toward those you love will capture their hearts. Spend a quiet day with the one you love. Finish those changes you've been talking about making to your residence.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Make sure that you have all the pertinent facts before taking action. Minor accidents are likely if you take risks. Listen to the advice given by others.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Your determination may make you a little overbearing when dealing with others. Opportunities to make advancements through good business sense are apparent.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
You're in the mood to get out and visit friends. Do not borrow or lend money or belongings to friends or relatives if you wish to avoid any hassles. Stay mellow.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Opportunities to make money may interfere with your personal plans. Situations you can't change should be forgotten for the present. Deep discussions may only lead to friction.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Stay out of other people's affairs. Visit friends or relatives you rarely see. Curb or cut out that bad habit you've been meaning to do something about.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
You are best to ask questions if you aren't certain about issues that are confronting you. You can make new connections through friends or relatives.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Take a close look at contracts and agreements that have been offered to you. You're in the mood to do things such as competitive sports, or perhaps a night on the town.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-5	-2	snow
Changchun	-18	-13	cloudy
Chengdu	10	16	cloudy
Chongqing	12	19	fine
Fuzhou	14	26	cloudy
Guangzhou	18	26	cloudy
Guiyang	14	22	cloudy
Haikou	22	29	cloudy
Hangzhou	6	25	fine
Harbin	-24	-15	fine
Hefei	4	15	overcast
Nanjing	5	20	cloudy
Shanghai	8	21	fine
Taipei	18	25	fine
Wuhan	6	10	rain
Hong Kong	24	25	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	-7	-7	cloudy
Frankfurt	3	7	cloudy
Paris	7	8	cloudy
London	2	8	cloudy
New York	1	4	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Smooth transition; 6- What ___ mind reader?; 10- Devoted follower; 13- Tine; 14- Offer; 15- Mystique; 16- Muse of love poetry; 17- Farm structure; 18- Foul mood; 19- Nightclub of song; 20- Floating craft; 22- Negligent; 24- Playground retort; 28- Spots; 31- Father of Methuselah; 32- Move sideways; 34- Him, to Henri; 36- Arise (from); 37- Far out; 38- Destruction of the natural environment; 41- Western Hemisphere org.; 42- Yeah, right!; 44- Numerical prefix; 45- Taken in; 47- Natural talent; 49- Congenitally attached; 51- Guys; 53- In and of ___; 56- Double-cross; 59- Mai ___; 61- Della's creator; 64- Gentle creature; 65- Whence Pinochet; 66- Really moved; 67- Word that can precede hygiene, tradition and agreement.; 68- Actress Taylor; 69- Mantric syllables; 70- Identical; 71- Head lock;

DOWN 1- Blueprint detail, for short; 2- Slip; 3- Flip out; 4- Savage; 5- Feeling of self-importance; 6- Francis's home; 7- Golda of Israel; 8- Evils; 9- Wahine's welcome; 10- Enjoyable; 11- Greek nickname; 12- Rebellious Turner; 15- Quaking trees; 20- Feature; 21- Strong feeling of anger; 23- Wight or Man; 25- From head ___; 26- Current location; 27- Units of resistance; 29- 1961 Heston role; 30- ___ juris; 32- Fine fur; 33- Model; 35- Think; 37- Jazz phrase; 39- ... ___ mouse?; 40- Chow; 43- Askew; 46- Baby's ring; 48- Uncooked; 50- Agile; 52- Flies alone; 54- Singer Frankie; 55- Rasping instruments; 57- Skater Lipinski; 58- Mosque leader; 60- Goes out with; 61- That, in Tijuana; 62- Tachometer abbr.; 63- Bandleader Brown; 65- TV part;

Yesterday's solution

M	I	S	S	P	I	P	E	R	A	T	O	M
I	M	A	C	I	D	A	H	O	N	O	R	A
C	A	N	A	S	E	R	U	M	T	R	E	S
A	M	E	R	I	C	A	D	A	Y	B	O	O
L	E	T		N	E	E						
T	A	V	E	R	N	A	O	C	T	A	G	O
F	M	I	T	T	R	O	D	E	R	O	L	E
F	E	N	D	E								
S	E	T	A	T	W	E	E	T	S	P	E	D
T	R	A	S	U	R	E	R	O	G	U	E	R
R	E	S	E	F	C	H	A	R	R	A	N	G
A	L	A	R	H	E	N	R	I	C	O	L	T
A	L	I	T	K	R	I	E	S	I	N	E	E
L	A	D	S	A	B	R	E	A	M	D	E	S

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



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HISTORY

COLONIZED COUNTRIES RARELY ASK FOR REDRESS OVER PAST WRONGS

- THE REASONS CAN BE COMPLEX

MANJARI CHATTERJEE,
MILLER BOSTON UNIVERSITY

The king of the Netherlands, Willem-Alexander, apologized in July 2023 for his ancestors' role in the colonial slave trade.

He is not alone in expressing remorse for past wrongs. In 2021, France returned 26 works of art seized by French colonial soldiers in Africa – the largest restitution France has ever made to a former colony. In the same year, Germany officially apologized for its 1904-08 genocide of the Herero and Nama people of Namibia and agreed to fund reconstruction and development projects in Namibia..

This is, some political scientists have observed, the “age of apology” for past wrongs. Reams of articles, particularly in Western media, are devoted to former colonizer countries and whether they have enacted redress – returned museum artifacts, paid reparations or apologized for past wrongs.

Yet this is rarely the result of official requests. In fact, very few former colonies have officially – that is, government to government – pressed perpetrators to redress past injustices.

My analysis found that governments in 78% of such cases have not asked to be compensated for historical acts of injustice against them. As a scholar of international relations who has studied the effect of colonialism on the present-day foreign policy of countries affected, I found this puzzling. Why don't more victim states press for intercountry redress?

The answer lies in the fact that colonial pasts and atoning for injustices are controversial – not just in what were perpetrator countries, but also in their victims. What to ask redress for, from whom and for whom are complicated questions with no easy answers. And there are often divergent narratives within victim countries about how to view past colonial history, further hampering redress.

FOCUS ON PERPETRATOR COUNTRY

There is a disproportionate amount of attention paid to whether perpetrator countries – that is, former colonizers who established extractive and exploitative governments in colony states – offer redress. They are lauded when they enact redress and shamed when they do not.

The processes pertaining to redress within victim countries – the former colonies – gets less attention. This, I believe, has the effect of making these countries peripheral to a conversation in which they should be central.

This matters – success or failure of redress can depend on whether victim countries officially push for it.

Take the experiences of two formerly colonized countries that I studied in depth in relation to the question of redress: India and Namibia.

THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE: DIFFERENT NARRATIVES

It's difficult for a country, particularly a poor developing nation, to take a former colonizer, usually a much richer country, to the International Court of Justice to ask for redress for the entire experience of colonialism.

But most former colonies have never officially asked for some form of redress – be it apology, reparations or restitution, even for specific acts of injustice.

India is an example of the difficulty in building consensus for official redress. Take the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919, in which British troops killed hundreds of peaceful protesters, including women and children.

The Indian government has never officially asked for an apology from the United Kingdom over the incident.

Part of the problem is different groups within India have different narratives about the 200 years of British colonial rule. No one disputes that the Raj was exploitative and violent. But which acts of violence to emphasize? How much

responsibility should be assigned to the British? And should any positive attributes of the Raj be highlighted? These are all debated.

Such points of divergence are reflected in India's federal and state-issued history textbooks, according to my analysis.

The bloody Partition of India in 1947 and the subsequent creation of Pakistan, for example, are blamed on the British in federal and many state textbooks. But it merits just a small paragraph in Gujarati textbooks, where it is blamed entirely on the Muslim League, the founding party of Pakistan. In the state of Tamil Nadu, Partition is mentioned without any description of either the horrors that followed or where responsibility lay.

Different narratives also appear in the Indian Parliament. When the issue of redress came up in 1997 – the 50th year of Indian independence and just before Queen Elizabeth II visited India – politicians agreed that India's emergence from what politician Somnath Chatterjee described as “a strangulating and dehumanizing slavery under a colonial imperialist power” was worth celebrating. But on the issue of whether Elizabeth should apologize for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, there was little agreement. Calls from some politicians for an apology were drowned out by others who jabbed at the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, pointing out its allies had never apologized for assassinating Mahatma Gandhi.

As of this writing, the U.K. has expressed regret for the massacre but never apologized, infuriating many Indians.

THE LONG JOURNEY FOR NAMIBIAN REDRESS

Namibia is an uncommon case of redress where the government has officially pushed for an apology and reparations from its former colonizer, Germany. But even then it was a painful, complex and time-consuming process dogged by many of the themes that have

prevented India and others from seeking formal redress.

Between 1884 and 1919, Namibia was a German colony, with some communities systematically dispossessed of their traditional lands. In 1904, one of these communities, the Herero, rebelled, followed in 1905 by the Nama. In response, German troops slaughtered thousands in a bloodbath that is today widely acknowledged to be a genocide. Survivors, including women and children, were herded into horrific concentration camps and subjected to forced labor and medical experiments.

The struggle to hold Germany accountable began decades ago, with individuals from the Herero and Nama communities calling for accountability and reparations. Germany rebuffed them repeatedly, precisely because the Namibian government did not take up their call. Only in 2015, after the Namibian government officially requested redress, did Germany acquiesce.

In May 2021, Germany finally agreed to recognize the genocide, apologize and establish a fund of US\$1.35 billion toward reconstruction and development projects in Herero- and Nama-dominated areas.

Why did it take so long? For the Herero and Nama, the genocide and loss of traditional lands were always forefront. But for others in Namibia – notably, the dominant political party, the South West Africa People's Organization, or SWAPO, which consists largely of members of the Ovambo ethnic community – uniting Namibians to come together in a national, anti-colonial struggle for independence was deemed more important than focusing on the wrongs suffered by any one community.

After independence, the ruling SWAPO prioritized nation-building and unity and cultivated ties with the German government, hoping for foreign aid and economic development. Complicating matters, the Ovambo had not lost

their own traditional lands to colonialism in the same way as the Herero and Nama.

For years, government-approved school history textbooks used in Namibian schools reflected the SWAPO narrative. One Ovambo former school history teacher told me that Namibian children learned about the “war of national resistance” and how exploitative colonialism had necessitated that war. But the word “genocide” was never used, and there were no mentions of the suffering of affected communities.

Around 2010, Namibian activists, NGO workers and government officials from all communities began to search for common ground to reconcile the different narratives. Some attempts failed. A 2014 museum exhibition on the genocide collapsed after its financier, the Finnish embassy, withdrew funding – allegedly under pressure, one Namibian expert told me, from the German government. But others succeeded. The National Archives of Namibia launched a project to collect academic papers on divergent narratives of the liberation struggle and colonial history.

As reconciling narratives progressed, history textbooks were revised to honor not just SWAPO's version of history, but also highlight the brutalities suffered by the Herero and Nama. They included frank discussions of genocide and colonial atrocities. Against this backdrop, the Namibian government officially initiated a request for redress from Germany. Both governments appointed teams to find a resolution, resulting in the 2021 reparation fund.

Redress between countries is rare. Successful redress even more so. But the example of Namibia shows that it can be done when the governments of victim countries initiate redress. By focusing only on perpetrator states, we miss an opportunity to examine their victims as agents of change, and thereby perpetuate redress as an unusual phenomenon.

MDT/THE CONVERSATION

FOOTBALL

Cabral's backheel goal in stoppage time secures a spot for Benfica in Europa League

RB SALZBURG 1, BENFICA 3

ARTHUR Cabral's backheel goal in stoppage time gave Benfica a 3-1 win over Salzburg in the Champions League yesterday [Macau time], with the late strike securing the Portuguese club a spot in the Europa League playoffs.

Benfica needed to win by a margin of two goals or more to finish ahead of the Austrian side. Both teams finished with four points in Group D, with Benfica third and Salzburg fourth.

Salzburg beat Benfica 2-0 in the group-stage opener in September in Lisbon.

Both teams went into the game yesterday already unable to reach the knockout rounds of the Champions League.

Real Sociedad won the group after a 0-0 draw at second-place Inter Milan.

"We deserved the win," said veteran Benfica forward Ángel Di María, who was named the player of the match. "We're working very

well and we deserved this win for ourselves, our family and the fans. We're still on the right track in Europe."

Benfica had lost its first four group-stage games before earning a 3-3 home draw against Inter Milan in the previous round, when it led 3-0 at halftime.

"We fought for the fans and we always believed," Benfica goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin said. "Unfortunately we didn't stay in the Champions League but we fought for the Europa League and we did it."

Cabral completed a cross by Fredrik Aursnes two minutes into stoppage time to score Benfica's decisive goal, back-flicking the ball into the net from close range. It was his 26th goal in UEFA competitions, and first in the Champions League.

"We deserved this goal and to be in the Europa League," Benfica coach Roger Schmidt said.

The 35-year-old Di María had put Benfica ahead in the 32nd to become the second oldest Argentinian scorer in the Champions

AP PHOTO



Benfica's Joao Neves (second from right) Tomas Araujo and Di Maria celebrate after Cabral scored

League, surpassing Lionel Messi, who found the net for Paris Saint-Germain in 2022. Javier Zanetti was 37 when he scored in Inter Milan's 4-3 win over Tottenham in 2010.

Di María made the assist as Rafa Silva added to the lead with

a one-timer by the far post in first-half stoppage time, but Luka Sucic scored for Salzburg with a low shot from just outside the area in the 57th to keep the hosts with the Europa League spot until the late goal by Cabral.

Salzburg substitute Sékou Koita

had a 75th-minute goal disallowed for offside.

"It's really hard of course," Salzburg defender Strahinja Pavlovi said. "You lose the game, you lose everything in the last minute. It's really hard, but it is what it is. That's football." MDT/AP

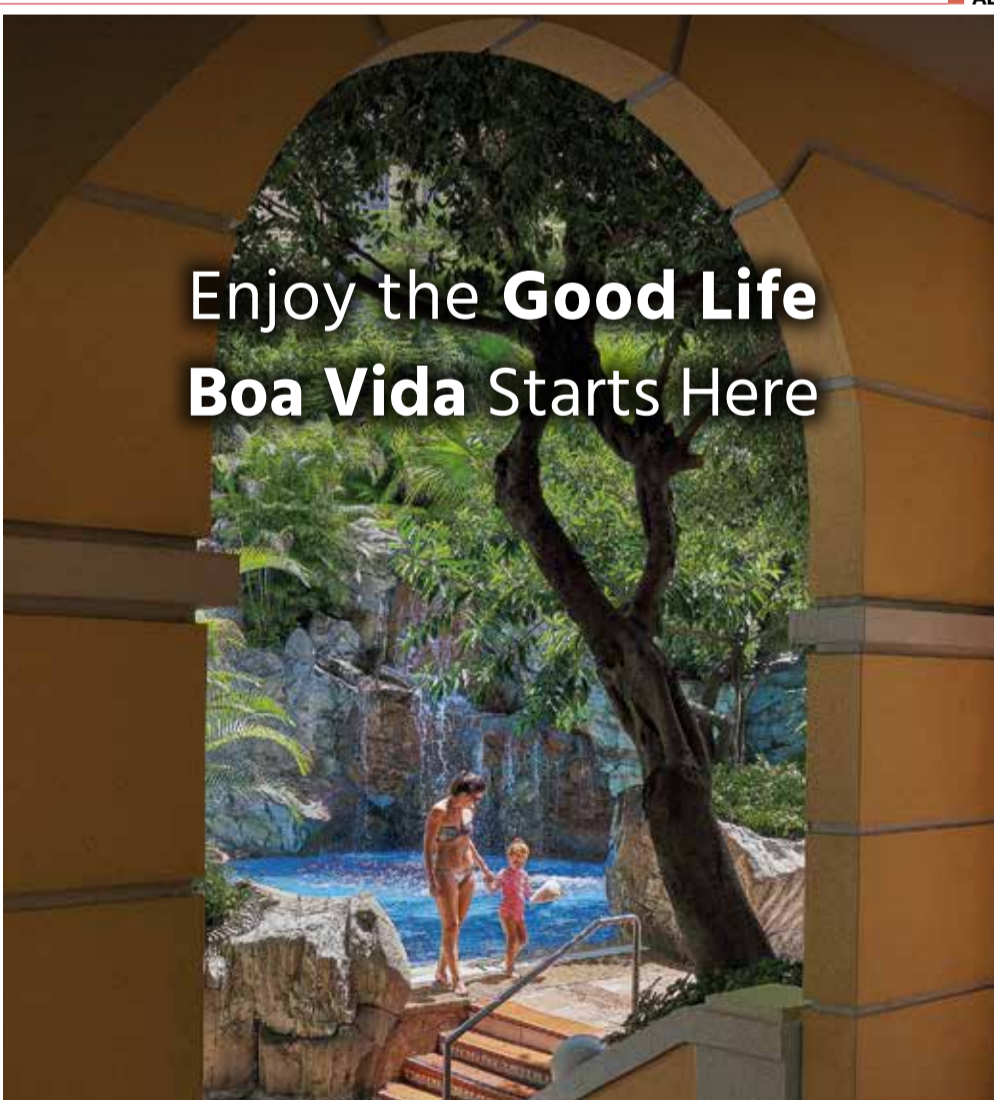


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OPINION

Business Views

Elaine Kurtenbach,
 MDT/AP Business Writer



**CHINESE LEADERS
 CONSIDER NEXT STEPS
 FOR ECONOMY UNDER
 CLOUDY OUTLOOK**

Chinese leaders have wrapped up a two-day annual meeting to set economic priorities for the coming year, the official Xinhua News Agency said in a report Tuesday that cited a litany of problems but also said the world's second-largest economy had "achieved a recovery."

The report gave no details of specific policy changes, but laid out broad goals that are in line with what the ruling Communist Party has been doing as it endeavors to steer the world's second-largest economy toward more sustainable, stable growth as China recovers from the setbacks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The property industry is in crisis. Prices have been falling for months, suggesting weak overall demand both inside China and in global markets. Youth unemployment is precariously high and local government debts are adding to pressures on the financial system.

The Xinhua report said that China was contending with slack demand, excess industrial capacity, weak consumer confidence and "certain risks and hidden problems" — and a world that has grown increasingly "complex, severe and uncertain."

But it also called for greater confidence, saying that "favorable conditions outweigh unfavorable factors."

The annual economic work conference is usually held in mid-December. It followed a meeting of top party leaders last week where Xinhua reported that Xi had described 2024 as a "crucial year" for attaining goals laid out in the party's five-year plan through 2025.

Reports on both meetings suggest officials are seeking greater consistency in carrying out policies. That hints at concerns over moves in recent years that have at times caused major disruptions, such as strict and disruptive anti-COVID 19 policies that Beijing abruptly abandoned late last year.

Tuesday's report said the meeting had called for maintaining stability and for establishing "the new before abolishing the old," a phrase analysts said suggested greater caution and a more gradual approach.

Policy swings such as the decision late last year to abruptly drop the anti-virus controls, and uncertainty over regulatory changes have also unnerved foreign companies operating in China and appear to be deterring foreign investment, which has fallen sharply in recent months.

The economy has been slowing from its past double-digit growth for years and is forecast to have expanded at about a 5% annual pace this year, in line with the government's target. Most estimates suggest it will slow further next year.

Last week, Moody's Investor Service downgraded China's sovereign debt rating as the country's real estate crisis seeps into local governments and private financing. It also downgraded ratings for some major Chinese banks and insurance companies.

China has tipped into deflation in recent months, another sign of weakness.

The property sector, a major source of demand for any major economy, has stalled with dozens of developers defaulting on their debts and struggling to finish apartments they promised to deliver.

In response, the government has eased borrowing rules and cut mortgage rates for first-time homebuyers while providing some tax relief measures for small businesses.

The weak housing market is among trends that have sapped enthusiasm for spending, hindering progress toward increasing domestic demand to help drive growth. Another is the high rate of unemployment among young Chinese, which was at about 20% as of June.

China's leaders had resolved to do everything possible to "secure people's livelihoods and improve their well-being" and to emphasize stable employment.

The son of jailed Hong Kong media mogul and pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai met with Britain's foreign secretary to lobby for the U.K.'s help in securing his release from prison.

Lai, the founder of the now-defunct Apple Daily, an outspoken pro-democracy newspaper, faces a long-delayed trial next week over charges he violated the national security laws enforced in Hong Kong after anti-government protests.

The 76-year-old British citizen has been in detention since 2020 over other offenses. He faces life in prison if convicted of the national security charges.

His son Sebastien Lai, who leads an international campaign to call for his father's release, said he hoped the meeting with British Foreign Secretary David Cameron would raise the case's profile and add to international pressure on Hong Kong's government.

"The U.K. opposes the National Security Law and will continue to stand by Jimmy Lai and the people of Hong Kong," the Foreign Office said after the meeting.

Jimmy Lai is accused of conspiring with others to call for international sanctions or engage in hostile activities against Hong Kong or China.

AP PHOTO



The Chinese-made ARJ21 touch down at the Hong Kong International Airport

**CHINA-MADE C919, ARJ21
 PASSENGER JETS ON
 DISPLAY IN HONG KONG**

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

CHINESE aerospace company COMAC has showcased its domestically-developed C919 passenger jet in Hong Kong, giving officials and media a close-up look at the narrow-bodied aircraft.

A welcome ceremony for the C919 and an ARJ21, another Chinese-made jet made by the state-owned Commercial Aircraft Corp of China, was held at the Hong Kong international airport yesterday, a day after both flew into Hong Kong for the first time.

At the event, Hong Kong's leader John Lee said China's successful development of the large passenger jet indicates its "leading position in the transportation manufacturing industry." He added that the two airplanes' visit to Hong Kong demonstrates the importance that China places on Hong Kong's aviation industry.

More than 1,000 orders have been placed for the

C919, Lee said, and Hong Kong's Civil Aviation Department has participated in certifying the aircraft and training pilots to fly it.

COMAC is preparing to take on Airbus and Boeing in the market for single-aisle commercial aircraft. But while it designed many of the C919's parts, some key components are still sourced from the West, including its engine.

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

Both planes 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 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 5,630 kilometers and is designed to carry 158-168 passengers. The plane made its maiden commercial flight in May from Shanghai to Beijing.

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 3,700 kilometers. It was designed as a rival to aircraft made by Bombardier Inc. of Canada and Brazil's Embraer SA. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Ukraine A nighttime Russian ballistic missile attack targeted Kyiv yesterday, injuring at least 53 people including eight children, officials said, as the Ukrainian president went to Scandinavia in pursuit of further international military support for his country after a trip to Washington secured no new pledges. A series of loud explosions could be heard in Kyiv at 3 a.m. as the city's air defenses were activated for the second time this week.

AP PHOTO



Germany's governing coalition reached a deal yesterday to resolve a budget crisis triggered by a court ruling last month, agreeing to cut some subsidies and spending while stressing that Berlin will stick to plans to step up support for Ukraine. Chancellor Olaf Scholz's three-party coalition has spent weeks wrangling over how to deal with the annulment by Germany's highest court of its decision to repurpose 60 billion euros originally meant to cushion the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic for measures to help combat climate change and modernize the country.

AP PHOTO



Vatican Pope Francis says he wants to be buried in the Rome basilica of St. Mary Major, not in the grottoes of the Vatican like other popes, so he can be near his favorite icon of the Madonna. Francis, who turns 87 on Sunday, also said he never thought about resigning this year despite a series of health scares. He said he has a trip confirmed to Belgium next year and visits under consideration to Polynesia and his native Argentina.