

MacauDaily 澳門每日時報

**Times**

**16** YEARS

A-CHANGIN'

Advertise with us

+853 287 160 81

# MacauDaily 澳門每日時報

# Times

FOUNDER & PUBLISHER Kowie Geldenhuys EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

iPhone 15 Pro. Capture more than ever before.

iPhone 15 Pro



CTM5G: Fast · Entertaining · Unlimited

\$468 / 3-Destination Unlimited Data Usage

Handset Bundle Price \$2,070 up

Note: Customers of the above promotion are bound by the respective service agreement.

CTM

N. 4400 **MONDAY** T. 16°/21° Air Quality Moderate

08 Jan 2024

"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

MOP 8.00 HKD 10.00 2305 4271

**THE BANK OF CHINA HAS RECEIVED OVER 600 MORTGAGE APPLICATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL UNITS IN THE MACAU NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD IN HENGQIN**

P3

**BACK TO BUSINESS: HORTA DA MITRA MARKET REOPENS TOMORROW**

P2

**UN FORECAST CITES CONFLICT, SLUGGISH TRADE, HIGH INTEREST AND CLIMATE DISASTERS IN 2024**

P8



AP PHOTO



**Japanese** prosecutors made their first arrest yesterday in connection with a major political slush fund scandal that has rocked Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's already unpopular government. Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office said in a statement it apprehended former vice-education minister Yoshitaka Ikeda on suspicion of failing to report fundraising proceeds he received from his faction within the governing Liberal Democratic Party.

AP PHOTO



**Japan** Rescue teams worked through snow to deliver supplies to isolated hamlets, six days after a powerful earthquake hit western Japan, killing at least 128 people. Heavy snowfall expected in Ishikawa Prefecture added to the urgency. After last week's 7.6 magnitude tremor, 195 people were still unaccounted for, a slight decrease from the more than 200 reported earlier, and 560 people were injured. Hundreds of aftershocks have followed, rattling Noto Peninsula, where the quakes are centered.

AP PHOTO



**US** Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Jordan's king and foreign minister and visited a World Food Program warehouse in Amman as he pressed ahead with an urgent Middle East diplomatic mission to prevent Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza from spreading. On his fourth visit to the region in three months, Blinken stressed the need for Israel to adjust its military operations to reduce civilian casualties and significantly boost the amount of humanitarian aid reaching Gaza.

More on backpage

RENATO MARQUES



**Raimundo do Rosário denies LRT data records were hidden following accusations he described as 'fake news'**

P3

**MDT EXCLUSIVE**

**LOCAL RACER TIAGO RODRIGUES WILL RACE AT THE F4 UAE CHAMPIONSHIP**

P5



**11 INJURED IN THREE-VEHICLE COLLISION**

P4



BACK TO BUSINESS

# HORTA DA MITRA MARKET REOPENS TOMORROW

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Horta da Mitra Market will reopen Tuesday after being closed almost a year for a major revamp, the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has said.

The market, in Rua do Campo, closed last March for renovation and reorganization works that were completed at the end of 2023.

Late last year, the IAM held a meeting to help tenants return and resume business in an orderly manner.

The IAM's meeting explained the arrangements for business resumption and gave details about the stalls' facilities, safe power use as well as other information about the revamp.

The market will resume operations on Jan. 9. with the 13 original stall tenants who are ready to resume business.

Among the changes is a new



stall layout that separates dry and wet zones to improve the market's hygiene and image.

The IAM said the Horta da Mitra Market, built in 1939, had needed a comprehensive revamp of its sewerage network, heat dis-

sipation and ventilation, lighting, and other facilities.

The revamp involved preservation of the market's architectural appearance, the installation of air-conditioning and ventilation systems, improvement of the li-

ghting system, changes to the location of public toilets and the ratio of male and female toilet cubicles, an upgrade of the sewerage equipment and the addition of barrier-free facilities.

The new layout comprises 18

stalls, 13 of which have been allocated to the original market stall tenants.

Seven are free meat stalls, four fish stalls, one chilled and frozen meat stall, and one vegetable stall. The five remaining stalls were put out for public tender in October 2023.

## HAWKERS ARE ALREADY BACK TO BUSINESS

The revamp also included the hawker area at the sides of the main building which was also closed in August last year.

Currently, 14 hawker stalls have resumed operation after the replacement of the insulation panels, the retractable awnings, the backboards and the separation wire mesh between stalls.

This area also saw an improvement of the drainage facilities and the renovation of the structural supports, among other works.

# Gaming ops announce bonuses, pay rise

**G**AMING operators have announced a one-month discretionary bonus for all eligible non-management team members before the Chinese New Year.

Over the weekend, Melco Resorts & Entertainment said the "bonus payout and base salary increase recognize the dedication, loyalty and hard work of our eligible non-management colleagues."

In addition to the bonus, the company has also announced a 2.5% base salary increase for all eligible non-management employees, effective April 1.

Melco is the second gaming operator to announce a salary increase, following Sands China's announcement last week of a 2.5% to 5.4% pay rise effective March 1.

In a Legislative Assembly plenary session in August, the Chief Executive announced the proposal to increase civil servants' wages and called on the gaming concessionaires to follow suit.

"I can only negotiate with the

MDT ARCHIVE



gaming concessionaires and hope that post-pandemic they can assume their social responsibilities," the CE previously remarked.

Meanwhile, Wynn Macau also announced a one-month bonus, which will be paid by month-end, benefiting 96.7% of its workforce.

This bonus is being awarded to show the "company's appreciation to all employees for their

collective efforts and contribution," as cited in a statement.

Galaxy Entertainment Group will also pay a '2023 discretionary bonus' for its employees by month-end, benefiting 98% of its team members.

The pay rise is also attributed to its team members' support and encouragement, which plays a key role to the gaming operator's development. LV

# FRANCE AWARDS FMCC'S VERSCHUREN ORDER OF MERIT FOR BOOSTING FRANCE-MACAU LINKS

**C**HAMBER executive and hotelier Rutger Verschuren has been awarded the title and rank of "Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite" for establishing friendly links between France and Macau.

The award, translated as "Knight of the National Order of Merit," was given to the chairman of France Macau Chamber of Commerce (FMCC) by the French government for his "pivotal role in fostering France-Macau economic exchanges," said a statement issued by the chamber.

Spearheading the FMCC since 2014, Verschuren's role as the chairman of FMCC has been marked by developments aimed at strengthening ties between

France and Macau.

Verschuren also led the transformation of the Macau France Business Association to the France Macau Chamber of Commerce in 2017.

Christile Drulhe, Consul General of France in Hong Kong and Macau, said, "I am particularly happy that he witnesses a surge of interest from French companies keen to partake in Macau's revitalized business landscape."

"Receiving this honor is a milestone in my journey, encouraging us to continue our efforts in bringing France and Macau closer. It is a testament to the power of collaboration and shared cultural appreciation," said Verschuren on receiving the title. LV



www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

**REACHING OUT!**

+25,000

Like us on facebook.com/mdtimes



MacauDaily 澳門每日時報  
**Times**

DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF\_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com  
ASSISTANT EDITOR\_Lynzy Valles  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS\_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS\_Alex Torráo, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Seguí DESIGNERS\_Miguel Bandeira, Rebeca Almeida | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS\_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES\_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacaoNews, Xinhua SECRETARY\_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com  
OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com  
ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84  
Advertisement advertising@macaudailytimes.com  
For subscription and general issues: general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd



TRANSPORT

# Raimundo do Rosário denies LRT data records were hidden

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, has responded to an opinion article that accused the defunct Transportation Infrastructure Office (GIT) of trying to hide data records on works related to the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) system.

In a press statement, the Office of the Secretary denied the accusation and slammed the opinion piece as containing “fake news.”

The most recent Commission of Audit (CA) report said LRT electric power cables had failed to meet both national standards and international regulations and had noted other problems at the managerial and decision-making level.

In the statement from Rosário's Office, the Secretary said that, in an recent opinion piece, an unnamed person used the CA report incorrectly, taking “quotes out of context” to “create an erroneous idea” that, for instance, the GIT had deleted files from an alleged hard drive to hide problems with the construction of the LRT system.

The Secretary said that when the GIT was closed in October 2019, all documents related to the works under the GIT's responsibility were recorded on a hard drive to be transferred to the new bureau in charge, the Public Works



Bureau (DSOP).

He added that such files are encrypted and require the installation of a particular document management software to become accessible, which was done in this case.

Rosário denied that the files had been deleted and then “been able to be recovered later” by the DSOP.

The Secretary also responded on the case of the substandard electric cable, noted by the CA, saying that the materials submitted by the supplier were done according to the tender documents.

“The public tender for the construction of the LRT system was launched in 2009, meaning that the content of the proposal was drawn up by the technical standards and requirements at

that time,” he noted.

He said, contrary to the implications of the opinion piece, there was no “secrecy” or “unlawful exchange” of the product for another that did not meet the standard.

He also noted that the cables were exchanged by agreement with the supplier without having any additional cost to the public purse.

The CA report said the supplier's final test did not match the specifications of the cables acquired and installed.

The report also noted that the project consultant and the construction contractor were both aware of the issue but accepted the cables and installed them anyway, which the CA described as an obvious flaw in manage-

ment and control.

The replacement of the faulty cables that have caused several system breakdowns led to the total suspension of the LRT service for about six months.

The CA said there was a need to enforce an effective mechanism to ensure appropriate decision-making from the different management levels to safeguard safety, practicality and economic interests.

The statement from the Rosário's Office ended by stating that the government has been committed to solving the issues and accepting all constructive criticism and opinions, however, “it will never accept statements made out of context that aim to provoke society's disagreement with the work that the government develops.”

## CHINA ADJUSTS TARIFF POLICIES FOR GUANGDONG-MACAO COOPERATION ZONE

China has adjusted its tariff policies for the Guangdong-Macao in-depth cooperation zone in Hengqin to promote efficient goods flows and the diversified development of Macau's economy. More entities and products will enjoy tax exemption or bonded policies in the cooperation zone, and the processing and manufacturing industry will be encouraged with new duty-free rules for products made from materials from Macau, according to the Ministry of Finance, the General Administration of Customs, and the State Taxation Administration.

## QINGMAO PORT RANKS FOURTH IN CHINA ON PASSENGER TRAFFIC

More than 28.33 million people used the Qingmao border to enter or leave Macau, a year-on-year increase of 130%, according to data from the Qingmao Immigration Inspection Station. The number of passengers has reached record highs since the establishment of the station, even hitting fourth rank in China. In 2023, the daily passenger flow of Qingmao Port has repeatedly set the highest single-day record in the New Year holidays. Among them, the daily passenger flow on Dec. 31 exceeded 135,000, the peak of the whole year.

## MPU EYES 15% INCREASE IN STUDENTS

The Macau Polytechnic University (MPU) is aiming to increase its enrolment by an additional 15% in the coming 2024/2025 academic year. The university's acting rector, Irene Lei, told the press that the university will focus on developing artificial intelligence, particularly Chinese-Portuguese machine translation. During the weekend, the MPU held its Open Day, attracting over 3,000 participants, according to its statement.

## IAM PLEDGES MONITORING OF ANCIENT TREES

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) is following up on the condition of an endangered camphor tree in Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida. Although healing measures such as using medication, pruning to control the tree's height and other treatments were taken in recent months, the growth condition of the tree has not improved. Currently, the leaves in the tree's crown have all withered and there are signs of disease and pest infestation. IAM will continue to monitor the growth of Macau's ancient and valuable trees.

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE Bank of China has received over 600 mortgage applications for residential units in the Macau New Neighbourhood (MNN) in Hengqin.

Bank data has revealed most buyers are aged between 30 and 50 years old, and there are also local retirees.

Speaking to TDM, Bank of China Macau director and vice president Chan Weng Tat said that, so far, more than half the applications have been approved, with loans being for 90% of the property value.

Sales for the MNN began in November, attracting interest from individuals who did not own property.

Each apartment is pri-

COOPERATION ZONE

# BOC receives over 600 MNN mortgage applications



ced between RMB2.41 million and RMB3.71 million, depending on its size and location. More than 1000 residential units in the MNN

have been reserved by prospective buyers so far, according to Chan.



### CONSTRUCTION WORKS UNDERWAY FOR IFTM'S NEW FACILITIES

The Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM) said it has continued its efforts to improve the academic facilities of the two campuses to provide adequate practice space for its teachers and students. Fanny Vong, IFTM president said construction works are underway for the Silver Jubilee Building and the new Accommodation Building at the Taipa Campus, which will be served as academic building and hospitality training building, respectively. The project is expected to be completed by 2025 and by that time the educational environment and training units at the Taipa Campus will be expanded.

### IC TO PRESENT PUPPET THEATRE IN FEBRUARY

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) will present "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," a puppet theatre based on a popular children's book. The funny, little larva and his colourful friends will stroll around the Cultural Center's stage in five shows scheduled for Feb. 3 and Feb. 4. Inspired on the well-known stories created by Eric Carle, "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" plunges kids and families in a parade of 70 plus puppets, all of them characters imagined by the American illustrator throughout a career that lasted more than half a century.

# 11 INJURED IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT INVOLVING A PUBLIC BUS

RENATO MARQUES

A total of 11 people reportedly suffered injuries in a traffic accident involving one truck and two buses, one a public bus, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) has reported.

The accident occurred early afternoon at the Avenida da Ponte da Amizade in the direction of Macau - Taipa some 100 meters before the traffic light at the bridge's entrance.

The PSP's preliminary investigation has revealed the truck driver could have caused the accident by failing to keep a safe distance from the public bus, hitting the rear of it. In consequence, the public bus also hit the rear of a tour bus in front of it.

The accident injured 11 people including, the drivers of the truck and the public bus, and the nine public bus passengers.

All were sent to the hospital for treatment.

All the drivers passed blood alcohol tests.



According to the Fire Services, which deployed several ambulances and fire vehicles, none of the injured seemed to be in a serious condition.

The truck driver, a 44-year-old man, needed the most

medical attention as he suffered a laceration to his head and several wounds caused by abrasions in his upper torso and arms.

None of the tour bus passengers reported injuries. Most

of the public bus passengers suffered only bruises caused by them falling inside the bus cabin.

The accident caused serious traffic disruption that took several hours to resolve.

AD

## ACCURATE, TIMELY & COMPETITIVE TRANSLATIONS

**Languages:**  
ENGLISH, CHINESE,  
PORTUGUESE, JAPANESE,  
KOREAN, SPANISH,  
FRENCH, ARABIC,  
RUSSIAN

**Services**  
TRANSLATIONS,  
PROOFREADING, COPYWRITING,  
DATA INPUT, NEWS MONITORING

**We translate +10,000 words a day**

**K** **KTRANZ**  
TRANSLATIONS LIMITED

Email: sales@ktranz.com.mo  
Tel: +853 2871 6081/2 Fax: +853 2871 6084

Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edf. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR





**SPORTS**

# Tiago Rodrigues shifts from China to UAE F4 Championship for 2024

RENATO MARQUES

**I**N 2024, local racer Tiago Rodrigues will race at the Formula 4 (F4) UAE Championship, a five-round championship on two circuits: the Yas Marina Circuit; and the Dubai Autodrome.

The local teenager won the title in his rookie year at the 2023 F4 Chinese Championship.

He is ready to raise the bar by entering the full season of this competitive championship, he told the Times exclusively.

Rodrigues is as yet unsure how far he can go or what can he do in this championship, because the final entry list of drivers and teams has not yet been officially published.

Major motorsport teams will participate including Hitech Pulse-Eight, Prema, Agi Sport, PHM Racing, Pinnacle Motorsport and XCEL Motorsport.

The local racer told the Times he will be racing in XCEL Motorsport machinery this year, a UAE-based team managed by Paul Hardy.

The team has enormous experience in Karting and has been betting on transitioning young racers from the Karts to the Formulas.

The 2024 F4 UAE Championship will be the eighth season of this series and the last under this moniker before it rebrands as

the F4 Middle East Championship from 2025.

This decision became public after the meeting of the FIA World Motor Sport Council in mid-October last year.

The decision from the FIA Single-Seater Commission aims to improve interest in championship events and provide a better learning platform for young drivers by ensuring a greater variety of circuits.

The 2025 championship will also race in Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain.

Current FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem founded the series in 2016, to enable local and foreign drivers to compete over the (European) winter in a condensed and cost-effective format.

The regular season commences Jan. 12 at the Yas Marina Circuit and will conclude Feb. 18 at the Dubai Autodrome.

The format of five-rounds includes 15 races (three per weekend) raced on consecutive weekends.

The exception is the third round (first in the Dubai Autodrome) which will have a one week break after the first two at Yas Marina Circuit (Abu Dhabi).

The series uses the same cars as last November's Macau F4 Grand Prix and races alongside other series such as the Formula Regional Middle East Championship (F3 specifications) and the Asian Le Mans Series.

Create A Better  
**TOMORROW TODAY**  
今天開創明天



## MGM Joined Hands with Fortune to Debut Brainstorm Design in Macau



Fortune Brainstorm Design 2023 recently debuted at MGM COTAI. Themed "Empathy in the Age of AI", the leading international forum at the intersection of design and business made its first appearance in China, gathering over 100 executives from Fortune 500 companies and world's preeminent designers in Macau to manipulate crucial questions of design and explore collaboration opportunities for the future.

In this groundbreaking collaboration with Fortune, MGM pioneered the introduction of Fortune Brainstorm Design to Macau. This initiative echoed with MGM's pledge to curate world-renowned and high-quality Meeting, Incentives and Conferences to establish a platform for great minds worldwide. The Fortune Brainstorm Design this year brought together global top designers and management executives to discuss how AI technology can propel commercial design, architecture and art, and help with Macau's urban development and future design.

Pansy Ho, Chairperson & Executive Director of MGM China Holdings Limited, was invited for an enlightening conversation on "Macau's Design Future" with Alan Murray, Fortune CEO. Ms. Ho said, "Macau has developed a unique cultural heritage with its over 400 years of history blending East and West. As a pioneer in cultural tourism, MGM is dedicated to originality and innovation, actively introducing world's top-notch performances, creativity, culture and arts to Macau. As next year marks the 25th anniversary of Macau's return to China, we welcome talents from all around the world to come to Macau and help contribute brilliant ideas to the city's diversified development."

Upon Macau's inclusive backdrop integrating historical tapestry and cosmopolitan ambiance, Fortune Brainstorm Design invited executives from top global companies, including Tom Dixon, General Mills, Rockwell Group Architecture Studio, Christie's, PepsiCo, etc., as speakers of the event to explore the ways design can help to tackle the challenges related to climate change and sustainability; diversity and inclusion; as well as other related topics.



A city of rich cultural heritage, Macau is also a model for urban design revitalization. During the conference, MGM hosted a special workshop with Fortune at Macau's Navy Yard No.2 to further the idea exchange on urban construction development. Speakers included Charles Hayes, Executive Managing Director, Asia and Partner at IDEO; Sarah Stein Greenberg, Executive Director of the Stanford d.school; Liselott Stenfeldt, Director of R&D of Gehl; Scott Doorley, Creative Director of Stanford d.school; Clay Chandler, Fortune Executive Editor for Asia; and Catarina Lio, Senior Vice President Brand Marketing of MGM. The group of participants later visited A-Ma Temple, Macau's world heritage site, to immerse in the wonder of traditional Chinese culture.



MGM  
Avenida Dr. Sun Yat Sen, NAPE, Macau  
E info@mgmchina.com.mo  
W http://www.mgm.mo/





US-CHINA TIES

# Beijing calls for peaceful coexistence and promises pandas on the 45th anniversary

BY KEN MORITSUGU, BEIJING

**C**HINESE Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Friday that the United States and China must insist on peaceful coexistence and transcend their differences like they did when they established diplomatic relations 45 years ago this week.

Wang also promised that giant pandas would return to the U.S. — and specifically California — by the end of the year.

“China-U.S. cooperation is no longer a dispensable option for the two countries or even for the world, but a must-answer question that must be seriously addressed,” he said.

Wang struck a relatively positive note at a lavish banquet marking the anniversary with 300 guests at a hall in the sprawling Diaoyutai state guest house complex in the Chinese capital.

The two countries are trying to navigate — and avoid a war — in what may be their most difficult waters since the U.S. ended official ties with Taiwan and recognized the communist government in Beijing as the government of China on Jan. 1, 1979.

China’s rise as an economic and military power is challenging long-standing American leadership in the Asia region and globally.

AP PHOTO



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi gives a toast to invited guests after delivering a speech at a reception for Commemoration of the 45th Anniversary of China-U.S. Diplomatic Relations at the Diaoyutai Guest House in Beijing, Jan. 5

“The world is currently undergoing profound changes unseen in a century,” Wang said. “We must think about how to calibrate the direction of the large ship of China-U.S. relations (and) avoid hidden reefs and dangerous shoals.”

Both Wang and David Meale, the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy, cited congratulatory letters exchanged by Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S.

President Joe Biden on Monday’s anniversary.

Meale, who spoke after Wang, said Biden expressed his commitment to managing the relationship responsibly and said he looked forward to building on the progress made by past leaders of the two countries.

Wang did criticize the use of “the big stick of sanctions” and engaging in power games, char-

ges that China often levels at the United States. He denied that China seeks to supplant any other country and called on the U.S. to respect China’s development path and core interests.

The giant pandas in Memphis, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C., returned to China last year, and some feared that China would stop lending pandas to American zoos because of the tensions be-

tween the two countries.

But Xi raised hope for California in November when he told an audience in San Francisco that China was ready to continue cooperating with the U.S. on pandas and “do our best to meet the wishes of the Californians.”

Wang told Friday’s banquet audience that “preparations are ready for a giant panda return to California within the year.” MDT/AP

## Gov’t sanctions five companies in response to US sanctions and arms sales to Taiwan

KEN MORITSUGU, BEIJING

**C**HINA announced sanctions yesterday on five American defense-related companies in response to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and U.S. sanctions on Chinese companies and individuals.

The sanctions will freeze any property the companies have in China and prohibit organizations and individuals in China from doing business with them, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement posted online.

It was unclear what impact, if any, the sanctions would have on the companies, BAE Systems Land and Armaments, Alliant Techsystems Operations,



AeroVironment, Viasat and Data Link Solutions. Such sanctions are often mostly symbolic as American defense contractors generally don’t sell to China.

The Foreign Ministry said the U.S. moves harmed China’s sovereignty and security

interests, undermined peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and violated the rights and interests of Chinese companies and individuals.

“The Chinese government remains unwavering in our resolve to safeguard

national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity and protect the lawful rights and interests of Chinese companies and citizens,” the ministry statement said.

The announcement was made less than a week ahead of a leadership elec-

tion in Taiwan that is being contested in large part over how the government should manage its relationship with China.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry did not specify which arms deal or which U.S. sanctions China was responding to, though spokesman Wang Wenbin had warned three weeks ago that China would take countermeasures following the U.S. government’s approval of a \$300 million military package for Taiwan in December.

The deal includes equipment, training and equipment repair to maintain Taiwan’s command, control and military communications capabilities.

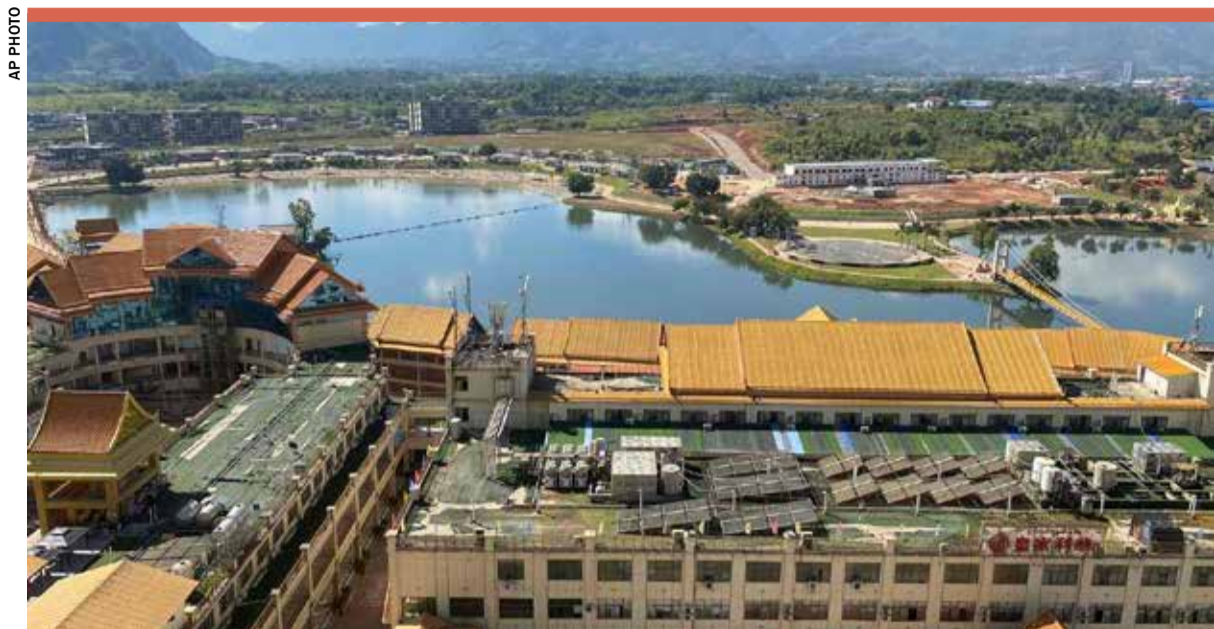
The U.S. said the sale would support the moder-

nization of Taiwan’s armed forces and the maintenance of a credible defense. “The proposed sale will improve the recipient’s capability to meet current and future threats by enhancing operational readiness,” a news release from the Pentagon’s Defense Security Cooperation Agency said.

Taiwan is a major flashpoint in U.S.-China relations that analysts worry could explode into military conflict between the two powers. China says that U.S. arms sales to Taiwan are interference in its domestic affairs.

The Chinese military regularly sends fighter planes and ships into and over the waters around Taiwan, in part to deter the island’s government from declaring formal independence. An invasion doesn’t appear imminent, but the constant military activity serves as a reminder that the threat is ever-present. MDT/AP





This photo provided by Kyaw Ko Lin shows a view of Laukkaing city in Shan state, Myanmar

MILITARY

# Myanmar confirms a key northeastern city on border with China has been seized by an ethnic alliance

GRANT PECK, BANGKOK

**M**YANMAR'S military government has acknowledged that it withdrew its forces from a key city on the northeastern border with China after it was taken over by an alliance of ethnic armed groups it has been battling for months.

The fall of Laukkaing late Thursday is the biggest in a series of defeats suffered by Myanmar's military government since the ethnic alliance launched an offensive Oct. 27. It underlines the pressure the government is under as it battles pro-democracy guerrillas in the wake of a 2021 military takeover as well as ethnic minority armed groups across the country.

Ethnic armed organizations have battled for greater autonomy for decades, but Myanmar has been wracked by what amounts to civil war since the army seized power in February 2021 from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, sparking nationwide armed resistance by pro-democracy forces.

The Three Brotherhood Alliance that took Laukkaing is composed of the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army and the Arakan Army. The MNDA is a military force of the Kokang minority, who are ethnic Chinese.

Photos and videos on social media showed a vast amount of

weapons that the alliance claimed to have captured.

Laukkaing is the capital of the Kokang Self-Administered Zone, which is geographically part of northern Shan state in Myanmar.

Myanmar government spokesperson Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun told the Popular News Journal, a pro-army website, on Saturday that the military and its local commanders relinquished control of Laukkaing after considering many aspects, including the safety of the family members of the soldiers stationed there.

He said the military also took into consideration Myanmar's relationship with China, which is just across the border from Laukkaing. China, which has good relations with both the military and the ethnic alliance, has been seeking an end to the fighting.

Beijing protested after artillery shells landed in its territory on Wednesday, wounding five people. Zaw Min Tun said the alliance had fired the shells and that it tried to blame the military in order to damage its relationship with China.

A statement posted by the alliance on social media late Friday declared that the entire Kokang region had become a "Military Council-free area," referring to Myanmar's ruling junta,

It said 2,389 military personnel — including six brigadier generals — and their family members had surrendered by Friday and that all were evacuated to safety.

Video clips circulating on social media purportedly showed the soldiers and their family members being transported in various vehicles. The Shwe Phee Myay News Agency, an online news site reporting from Shan state, reported that many of them were taken to Lashio, the capital of Shan's northern region, under an agreement with the MNDA for their repatriation.

It's unclear whether the Three Brotherhood Alliance will try to extend its offensive outside of Shan state, but it has vowed to keep fighting against military rule.

MDT/AP

TENSIONS

## NORTH KOREA DENIES ARTILLERY FIRING AND MOCKS SOUTH KOREA'S DETECTION CAPABILITIES

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

**T**HE influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un mocked South Korea's ability to detect weapons launches by the North yesterday, as she denied Seoul's claim that North Korea fired artillery shells into the sea the previous day.

South Korea's military quickly dismissed her statement as "a low-level psychological warfare" and warned that it will make a stern response to any provocations by North Korea.

South Korea's military earlier said North Korea fired shells near the rivals' disputed western sea boundary for a second consecutive day on Saturday. The military said North Korea fired more than 60 rounds on Saturday, a day after launching more than 200 shells.

North Korea acknowledged it performed artillery firings on Friday but said it didn't fire a single round on Saturday.

Kim's sister, Kim Yo Jong, said yesterday that North Korea only detonated blasting powder simulating the sound of its

coastal artillery at the seashore to test the South Korean military's detection capabilities.

"The result was clear as we expected. They misjudged the blasting sound as the sound of gunfire and conjectured it as a provocation. And they even made a false and impudent statement that the shells dropped north" of the sea boundary, Kim Yo Jong said in a statement carried by state media.

"I cannot but say that (South Korean) people are very pitiful as they entrust security to such blind persons and offer huge taxes to them," she said. "It is better 10 times to entrust security to a dog with a developed sense of hearing and smell."

Calling South Korea's military "gangsters" and "clowns in military uniforms," Kim Yo Jong suggested its possible future miscalculation of North Korean moves could cause an accidental clash between the rivals, jeopardizing the safety of Seoul, a city of 10 million people which is only an hour's drive from the land border. MDT/AP



A TV screen shows a file image of North Korea's military exercise during a news program at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, Jan. 6



### PUI CHING MIDDLE SCHOOL (COLOANE CAMPUS) IS HIRING

We are currently recruiting teachers and staff for the 2024/2025 academic year. For recruitment information, please scan the QR code or visit the following website.

Suitable candidates will be contacted for an interview.

<https://coloane.puiching.edu.mo/recruitment>



AD



ECONOMY

# UN forecast cites conflicts, sluggish trade, high interest and climate disasters

EDITH M. LEDERER,  
UNITED NATIONS

**T**HE United Nations issued a somber global economic forecast for 2024 last week, pointing to challenges from escalating conflicts, sluggish global trade, persistently high interest rates and increasing climate disasters.

In its flagship economic report, the U.N. projected that global economic growth would slow to 2.4% this year from an estimated 2.7% in 2023, which exceeds expectations. But both are still below the 3% growth rate before the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, it said.

The U.N. forecast is lower than those of the International Monetary Fund in October and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in late November.

The IMF said it expects global growth to slow from an expected 3% in 2023 to 2.9% in 2024. The Paris-based OECD, comprising 38 mainly developed countries, estimated that international growth would also slow from an expected 2.9% in 2023 to 2.7% in 2024.

The U.N.'s report -- World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024 -- warned that the prospects of prolonged tighter credit conditions and higher borrowing costs present "strong headwinds" for a world economy saddled with debt, especially in poorer developing countries, and needing investment to resuscitate growth.

Shantanu Mukherjee, director of the U.N.'s Economic Analysis and Policy Division, said fears of a recession in 2023 were averted mainly due to the United States, the world's largest economy, curbing high inflation without putting the brakes on the economy.

But he told a news conference launching the report: "We're still not out of the danger zone."

Mukherjee said that's because the unsettled situation in the world could fuel inflation. For example, another supply chain shock or problem in fuel availability or distribution could prompt another interest rate hike to bring the situation

AP PHOTO



under control, he said.

"We're not expecting a recession, per se, but because there is volatility in the environment around us, this is the major source of risk," he said.

Very high interest rates for a long time and the threat of possible shocks to prices contribute to "quite a difficult balancing act," Mukherjee said. "So that's really why we said that we are not yet out of the woods."

According to the report, global inflation, which was at 8.1% in 2022, is estimated to have declined to 5.7% in 2023, and is projected to decline further to 3.9% in 2023.

But in about a quarter of all developing countries, annual inflation is projected to exceed 10% this year, it said.

While the U.S. economy performed "remarkably well" in 2023, the report said growth is expected to decline from an estimated 2.5% in 2023 to 1.4% this year.

"Amid falling household savings, high interest rates, and a gradually softening labor market, consumer spending is expected to weaken in 2024 and investment is projected to remain sluggish," the U.N. said. "While the likelihood of a hard landing has declined considerably, the United States

economy will face significant downside risks from deteriorating labor, housing and financial markets."

With elevated inflation and high interest rates, the report said Europe faces "a challenging economic outlook."

GDP in the European Union is forecast to expand from 0.5% in 2023 to 1.2% in 2024, it said, with the increase driven by "a pick-up in consumer spending as price pressures ease, real wages rise, and labor markets remain robust."

Japan, the world's fourth largest economy, is projected to see economic growth slow from 1.7% in 2023 to 1.2% this year despite the country's monetary and fiscal policies, the report said, "Rising inflation may signal an end from the deflationary trend that persisted for more than two decades" in the country, it said.

In China, the world's second-largest economy, the U.N. said recovery from COVID lockdowns has been more gradual than expected "amid domestic and international headwinds."

With economic growth of just 3.0% in 2022, the report said China turned a corner during the second half of 2023 with the growth rate reaching

5.3%. But it said the combination of a weak property sector and faltering external demand for its products "will nudge growth down moderately to 4.7% in 2024."

In developing regions, the U.N. said economic growth in Africa is projected to remain weak with a slight increase from an average of 3.3% in 2023 to 3.5% in 2024.

"The unfolding climate crisis and extreme weather events will undermine agricultural output and tourism, while geopolitical instability will continue to adversely impact several subregions ... especially the Sahel and North Africa," the report said.

The U.N. forecasts a moderate slowdown in East Asia economies from 4.9% in 2023 to 4.6% in 2024. In Western Asia, GDP is forecast to grow by 2.9% in 2024, up from 1.7% in 2023.

In South Asia, GDP rose by an estimated 5.3% last year and is projected to increase by 5.2% in 2024, "driven by a robust expansion in India, which remains the fastest growing large economy in the world." Its growth is forecast to reach 6.2% this year, similar to its projected 6.3% increase in 2023. MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 1989 DOZENS DIE AS PLANE CRASHES ON MOTORWAY



A Boeing 737 airplane has crashed onto the M1 motorway near East Midlands airport, killing 46 people.

Eighty have survived, of whom ten are seriously injured.

The British Midland flight 092 was forced to crash land after both engines of the brand new aircraft failed.

It slammed into the motorway embankment at 2026 GMT, breaking into three pieces.

Motorists on the M1 had a lucky escape as there were no vehicles in the immediate vicinity at the moment of impact.

The flight to Belfast was forced to divert to East Midlands airport 10 minutes after leaving Heathrow, when one of the plane's two engines caught fire.

As the aircraft began its descent the remaining engine failed too.

Experts said later the chance of suffering such a double engine failure was a hundred million to one.

The plane passed very low over the village of Kegworth, Leicestershire, crashing just a few hundred metres from the safety of the runway, where emergency services were waiting.

The most severely injured were given medical attention immediately, while others were lifted from the twisted fuselage and taken to local hospitals.

Survivor Gareth Jones described the moment when the plane hit the ground.

He said: "There was a shudder, crash, like a massive motor car accident, crunch, blackness, and I was by the emergency hatch."

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

A report by the UK Air Accidents Investigation Branch later found the flight crew had shut down the wrong engine.

The crew had responded "incorrectly" to a fractured fan blade in the No.1 engine, by shutting down the No.2 engine "which was running satisfactorily".

The report made several recommendations, calling for increased engine inspections and improvements to engine vibration indicators on Boeing 737s.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

<p><b>ARIES</b>                  Mar. 21-Apr. 19                  Don't forget family obligations. You've been a little down and you need a lift. You can continue to make gains if you call a few people who can help you close an important deal.</p>	<p><b>TAURUS</b>                  Apr. 20-May. 20                  Don't overspend on children or on large purchases. You must refrain from overspending on entertainment. Travel for business purposes may bring the highest returns.</p>
<p><b>GEMINI</b>                  May. 21-Jun. 21                  Take time to visit someone who has been confined due to illness. Your lack of attention may have been a factor. You can make rewarding connections through the organized groups you associate with.</p>	<p><b>CANCER</b>                  Jun. 22-Jul. 22                  Be prepared to neutralize any threats. Your health may have suffered due to neglect or abuse. Implement your ideas into your projects at work.</p>
<p><b>LEO</b>                  Jul. 23-Aug. 22                  Don't let friends convince you that you should contribute to something you don't believe in. Curb your mood swings; they could result in loneliness.</p>	<p><b>VIRGO</b>                  Aug. 23-Sep. 22                  Expect temper tantrums on the home front if you haven't been letting someone have their way. Friends and relatives may not understand your needs.</p>
<p><b>LIBRA</b>                  Sep. 23-Oct. 22                  Sudden changes at home will affect family members more than you anticipated. You may have to take a short trip to visit someone who hasn't been well.</p>	<p><b>SCORPIO</b>                  Oct. 23-Nov. 21                  Confusion regarding other people's money and joint ventures will come to a head. Resistance leading to conflict will only make it twice as hard to turn the situation around.</p>
<p><b>SAGITTARIUS</b>                  Nov. 22-Dec. 21                  Do not reveal personal information to those you feel may be untrustworthy. Don't be shy; show your abilities! Hard work will not go unnoticed.</p>	<p><b>CAPRICORN</b>                  Dec. 22-Jan. 19                  You will have extra energy; put it to good use. Assist a relative or good friend by setting of a budget for them. You will have to control the way you feel.</p>
<p><b>AQUARIUS</b>                  Jan. 20-Feb. 18                  Secret affairs will only lead to deception. Kick your shoes off and relax. Sign up for courses or join fitness clubs. You can make major accomplishments while on short trips.</p>	<p><b>PISCES</b>                  Feb. 19-Mar. 20                  Problems with females you live or work with will try your patience and cause temper flare ups. Someone you work with could try to undermine you.</p>

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

<p><b>EASY</b></p>	<p><b>EASY+</b></p>
<p><b>MEDIUM</b></p>	<p><b>HARD</b></p>

**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-9	1	cloudy
Changchun	-17	-5	cloudy
Chengdu	7	13	cloudy
Chongqing	11	15	cloudy
Fuzhou	10	15	rain
Guangzhou	14	21	cloudy
Guiyang	7	12	overcast
Haikou	18	24	cloudy
Hangzhou	1	11	overcast
Harbin	-23	-11	fine
Hefei	1	8	cloudy
Nanjing	1	6	overcast
Shanghai	2	10	overcast
Taipei	15	19	cloudy
Wuhan	5	12	cloudy
Hong Hong	20	21	overcast
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	-18	-18	clear
Frankfurt	-5	-1	cloudy
Paris	-3	-1	cloudy
London	1	4	cloudy
New York	-1	4	overcast

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS** 1- Comic Rudner; 5- Mission control gp.; 9- NFL 6-pointers; 12- Quod \_\_\_ demonstrandum; 13- Uruguayan friend; 15- Ersatz; 16- Colorado resort; 17- Fable finale; 18- Trim; 19- Opening word; 21- Remove from action; 23- Realtor's sign; 25- Kind; 26- Back muscle, briefly; 29- Light gas; 31- Establishes; 35- Clean air org.; 36- So far; 38- Dark; 39- Contented sighs; 41- Streamlined; 43- Arizona city on the Colorado River; 44- Arrogant; 46- Parades; 48- Native ruler of Tunisia; 49- Shorthand pros; 51- Lose one's cool; 52- Radical '60s grp.; 53- Wife of Jacob; 55- Duration; 57- Regent; 61- Poorly ventilated; 65- Very, in Versailles; 66- Basic monetary unit of Sweden; 68- It may be landed; 69- Kimono ties; 70- Cold mold; 71- In a jiffy; 72- Nine-digit ID; 73- Furniture wood; 74- French summers;

**DOWN** 1- Guns; 2- Dies \_\_\_; 3- Mai \_\_\_; 4- Country album?; 5- Anonymous; 6- Latin I verb; 7- Letter opener; 8- From the top; 9- Pad \_\_\_; 10- Phooey!; 11- "Peter Pan" pirate; 14- Blast from the past; 15- Rancorous; 20- \_\_\_ Lisa; 22- Creamy-beige color; 24- Holmes's creator; 26- Springs; 27- Separated; 28- Lake in the Sierra Nevada; 30- Food and water; 32- Bludgeons; 33- Measured with a watch; 34- Remains; 37- Mall frequenters; 40- Dismal; 42- Backpack; 45- Go-getter; 47- Petty quarrel, ejected saliva; 50- Decaf brand; 54- Actor Buchholz; 56- Suckle; 57- Old Pontiacs; 58- Globes; 59- Blood vessel; 60- Thick cord; 62- Kicker; 63- Floating ice; 64- Cravings; 67- Actress Peeples;

**Friday's solution**

Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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



**It's prime time to BUY & RENT!**

**CONTACT US & SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY!**

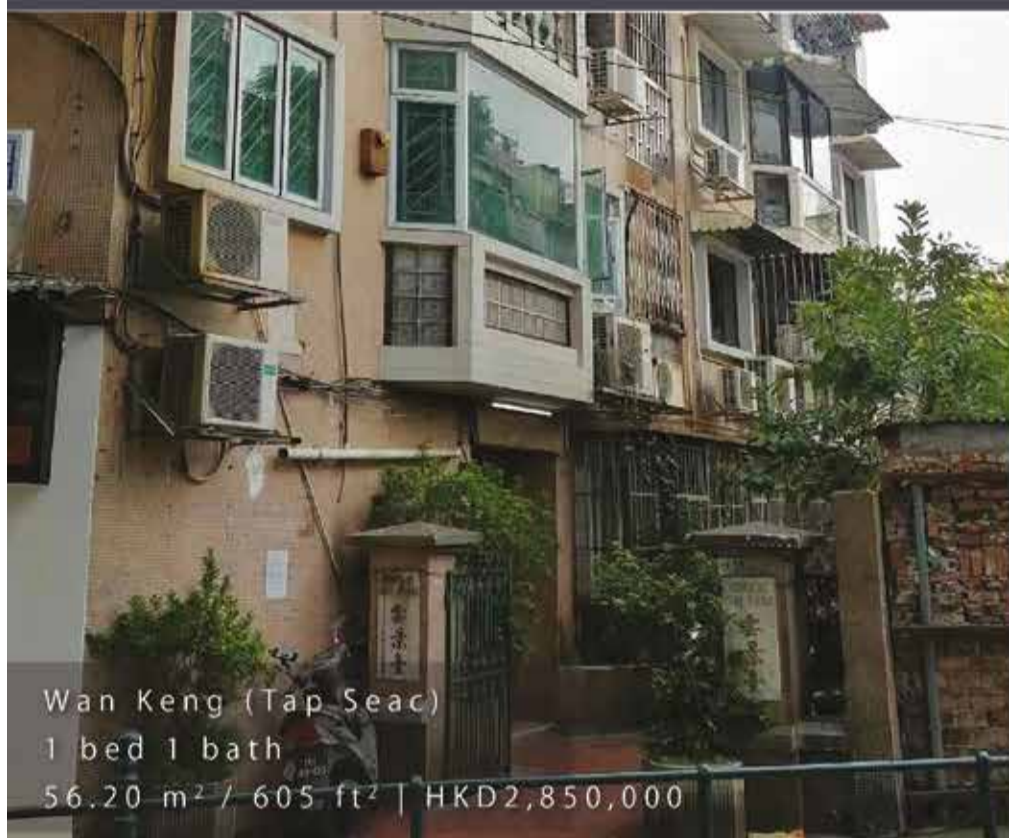
hello@jmlproperty.com  
 www.jmlproperty.com

有關樓宇廣告法例查詢詳情請向職員查詢  
 For more information on advertising laws, please speak to one of our representatives.



info@jmlproperty.com

jmlmacau jmlproperty



Wan Keng (Tap Seac)  
1 bed 1 bath  
56.20 m<sup>2</sup> / 605 ft<sup>2</sup> | HKD2,850,000



VA FAT (Taipa Village)  
2 bed 1 bath  
77.10 m<sup>2</sup> / 830 ft<sup>2</sup> | HKD3,980,000



Tou Un (Taipa)  
1 bed 1 bath  
44.12 m<sup>2</sup> / 475 ft<sup>2</sup> | HKD2,980,000



Supreme Flower City (Taipa)  
4 bed 3 bath 1 car park  
191.38 m<sup>2</sup> / 2,060 ft<sup>2</sup> | HKD22,000/mth



Manhattan (Taipa)  
3 bed 2 bath  
162.58 m<sup>2</sup> / 1,750 ft<sup>2</sup> | HKD13,000,000



It's prime time to  
**BUY & RENT!**  
[www.jmlproperty.com](http://www.jmlproperty.com)

有關樓宇廣告法定資訊資料請向職員查閱  
For more information on advertising laws, please speak to one of our representatives.

Call us!

(853) 2835 2699

有關樓宇廣告法定資訊資料請向職員查閱

For more information on advertising laws, please speak to one of our representatives.



Juliet Risdon

(853) 6680 9804  
juliet@jmlproperty.com  
AI-1003469-6



Windy Lam

(853) 6881 1007  
windy@jmlproperty.com  
AI-10010081-9



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# Hope abounds for the NFL's final four as Browns, Lions, Texans and Jaguars eye elusive Super Bowl

MARK LONG, JACKSONVILLE, FLA.

**T**HEY are bonded by football futility for now, but surely not forever. Right?

Cleveland, Detroit, Houston and Jacksonville — the NFL's final four, if you will — are the last remaining teams to never make a Super Bowl. They're far from favorites yet still in contention to end their droughts as the playoffs near.

The Browns (11-5) and Lions (11-5) have clinched postseason berths. The Texans (9-7) and Jaguars (9-7) can join them with victories this weekend.

"It's great for all four of those franchises," said retired NFL cornerback Johnathan Joseph, who spent nine of his 15 professional seasons with Houston. "They're on the verge and they're not going away. They're all young teams with young talent. It's only

a matter of time."

The Browns, Lions and Jaguars have been close before, all of them reaching conference championship games in different decades and losing in stomach-churning fashion.

Here's a look at a few defining failures for the NFL's final four:

## CLEVELAND BROWNS

Of the four, the Browns have come the closest to ending their misery. That's hardly any consolation for Bernie Kosar.

"It's only taken me 30 years to get over it," Cleveland's former quarterback said.

Led by Kosar and an underrated defense, the Browns got to three AFC Championships in four seasons (1986-89) but lost to the Denver Broncos each time. The first two losses came in soul-crushing fashion and are immortalized with nicknames: "The Drive" and "The Fumble."

The third was another loss,

only not as painful.

On Jan. 11, 1987, the Browns, who last won an NFL title in 1964, were minutes away from their first Super Bowl trip when Broncos quarterback John Elway got the ball at Denver's 2-yard line.

## DETROIT LIONS

Former Lions kicker Eddie Murray played a key role in one of Detroit's many postseason shortcomings.

In the 1983 NFC divisional round, Murray made three field goals before missing one late as San Francisco held on to win 24-23 after taking advantage of Gary Danielson's five interceptions.

"Not being able to make that kick at the end of the game was gut-wrenching not only for myself, but the team," Murray said. "We were the best team on the field that day and we were really good on both sides of the ball that year, but mistakes killed us

against the 49ers."

Murray, with star teammate Barry Sanders carrying the load, got closer in 1991. They beat Dallas in the divisional round only to get trounced by juggernaut Washington in the NFC title game.

## HOUSTON TEXANS

Joseph won six AFC South titles during his time in Houston, so getting to the playoffs was never a problem. Advancing to the conference championship was another story.

Joseph immediately pointed to 2011 — Houston's first foray into the postseason — as his most painful reminder of what could have been. The Texans were 7-3 after 10 games and looked like the AFC's best team.

But Matt Schaub suffered a Lisfranc injury to his right foot executing a quarterback sneak at Tampa Bay and missed the rest of the season.



Detroit Lions quarterback Jared Goff reacts after throwing a touchdown pass against the Dallas Cowboys

## JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

Hall of Fame left tackle Tony Boselli has witnessed all three of Jacksonville's chances to make the big game. He was on the field for one, on the sideline for another and in the radio booth for the most recent.

Each one ended in heartache for Boselli.

More than two decades before Tom Brady connected on a third-and-18 play and Myles Jack was ruled down — plays that have haunted the Jaguars for six years already — Boselli endured the most agonizing of the franchise's playoff losses. **MDT/AP**

AD



Enjoy the **Good Life**  
**Boa Vida** Starts Here

Discover Now



T +853 2856 7888  
Terms & conditions apply



仁德 CENTRO MEDICO PEDDER  
• 仁德醫療中心 •



We bring high quality of medical service to Macau

**General Surgery** : Dr. Fok Manson, Dr. Lai Cheuck Seen Edward, Dr. Lau Wing Kee Peter, Dr. Kwong Man, Dr. Nie Fu Zhong, Dr. U Chong San, Dr. Lei Chin Chong

**Breast Surgery** : Dr. Leong Iat Lun

**Urology** : Dr. Lo Kwong Yin Richard, Dr. Zhao Yun Qiao

**Paediatric Surgery** : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

**Paediatrics** : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

**Obstetrics & Gynaecology** : Dr. Fong Kuan lo

**Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery** : Dr. Lam U Lin

**Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine** : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

**ENT** : Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang

**Cardiology** : Dr. Jin Chun, Dr. Leong Man Kin

**General Medicine** : Dr. Ng Kam Hong, Dr. Lam Weng Chio

**Dietitian** : Chan Lai U Joey

Avenida da Praia Grande No 599, Edifício Comercial Rodrigues 14 e 15 Andar, em Macau  
T. 2832 2298 / 2832 2229 Website: www.peddermacau.com  
Opening Hours: Mon - Fri 10:00 - 19:00 Sat 10:00 - 14:00 Sun & PH closed



OPINION

China Daily  
 Editorial, China Daily

**LID MUST BE KEPT ON KOREAN PENINSULA TENSIONS**

Both Pyongyang and Seoul have good reasons to be pessimistic about the prospect of inter-Korea relations in 2024. The present state of affairs on the peninsula does not allow for the kind of optimistic anticipations that generally accompany the start of a new year.

The exchange of artillery fire near the disputed maritime border of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea on Friday and Saturday marked the return of heightened mutual animosity and may portend a further escalation of frictions. It is tempting to disregard the exchange of fire as being like similar previous incidents, with the expectation that the situation will soon cool down. But considering the latest changes in Pyongyang and Seoul's respective approach to bilateral ties, that may well be wishful thinking.

In a break from the Workers' Party of Korea's long-standing policy position, DPRK leader Kim Jong-un declared at the party's high-profile plenary session at the end of 2023 that the ROK would no longer be considered a counterpart of reconciliation and unification. The ROK was to be henceforth regarded as an enemy state. The ROK has already revived that perception of the DPRK having dropped it for a while under the previous administration. And ROK President Yoon Suk-yeol announced in his New Year's message Seoul's plan to finish the establishment of "extended deterrence" against the threat from the DPRK under the framework of the United States-Japan-ROK alliance. Prior to that, he had ordered frontline ROK troops to return fire before reporting in the event of any DPRK provocation.

The latest exchange of artillery fire was the first since Pyongyang unilaterally nullified the military agreement the two sides inked on Sept 19, 2018, on preventing armed conflict at sea. With Pyongyang openly renouncing the long-standing goal of reunification and reiterating the reality that the two Koreas are in a state of war, the situation on the peninsula is becoming increasingly fragile and perilous. Since both parties have sworn to take a tougher approach toward the other, the escalation of frictions is worrisome.

Given the historical complexity of inter-Korea relations, it won't be easy to do away with the spiral of escalation without all stakeholding parties working in concert, which seems unlikely at this point. But Beijing's call for all parties to exercise restraint will always apply. "Meaningful dialogue" between Pyongyang and Seoul may not occur any time soon with the current level of hostility. But other stakeholders in peninsula peace should urge them to refrain from further escalating tensions.

The present pattern of peninsula relations, characterized by mutual animosity and growing hostility, is a formula for disaster if the current trend continues.

A competitor in Chinese chess says he has sued the national association in China for mental distress after he was stripped of a title for drinking alcohol and defecating in the bathtub of his hotel room at a recent competition.

Yan Chenglong doesn't deny what happened but wrote in a civil complaint last week that he drank a moderate amount of beer to celebrate his win with other players and that some food had caused stomach problems and he couldn't make it to the

toilet in time.

The complaint came one week after a social media post by the Chinese Xiangqi Association that described the drinking and defecation. It said an investigation had found that Yan damaged hotel property, violated public order and good behavior, and had a negative impact on the tournament.

Chinese chess, called xiangqi in Chinese, is a traditional board game that remains popular, particularly among older people.



Palestinians salvage what they can from their belongings following Israeli airstrikes on Khan Younis, Gaza Strip



Israeli military signaled that it has wrapped up major combat in northern Gaza, saying it has completed dismantling Hamas' military infrastructure there, as the war against the militant group entered its fourth month. The military did not address troop deployments in northern Gaza going forward. Its spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said late Saturday that forces would "continue to deepen the achievement" there, strengthen defenses along the Israel-Gaza border fence and focus on the central and southern parts of the territory.

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

**UN HUMANITARIAN CHIEF CALLS GAZA 'UNINHABITABLE' 3 MONTHS INTO WAR**

EDITH M. LEDERER,  
 UNITED NATIONS

THE U.N. humanitarian chief described Gaza on Friday as "uninhabitable" three months into Israel's war with Hamas, warning that famine was looming and a public health disaster unfolding.

In a grim assessment of the devastating impact of Israel's military response to the horrific Hamas attacks on Oct. 7, Martin Griffiths said that Gaza's 2.3 million people face "daily threats to their very existence" while the world just watches.

He said tens of thousands of people, mostly women and children, have been killed or injured, families are sleeping in the open as temperatures plummet, and areas where Palestinians were told to relocate have been bombed.

"People are facing the highest levels of food insecurity ever recorded (and) famine is around the corner," Griffiths said. The few partially functioning hospitals are overwhelmed and critically short of supplies, medical facilities are under relentless attack, infectious diseases are spreading, and amidst the chaos some 180 Palestinian women are giving birth every day.

"Gaza has simply become uninhabitable," the

U.N. undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs said.

He said the humanitarian community is facing an "impossible mission" – trying to help more than two million people while U.N. staff and aid workers from partner organizations are killed, communications blackouts continue, roads are damaged, truck convoys are shot at, and vital commercial supplies "are almost non-existent."

Griffiths reiterated U.N. demands for an immediate end to the war and the release of all hostages, declaring that "It is time for the international community to use all its influence to make this happen."

The Oct. 7 attack into southern Israel by Hamas, which controls Gaza, killed around 1,200 people, and its fighters and other militants took some 250 people hostage. More than 120 remain in captivity.

Israel's air, ground and sea assault in Gaza, aimed at obliterating Hamas, has killed more than 22,400 people, two-thirds of them women and children, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory. The count does not differentiate between civilians and combatants.

The three-month conflict has displaced some 85% of

Gaza's residents, and the United Nations has identified more than 37,000 structures destroyed or damaged in the war so far.

The U.N. children's agency UNICEF said Friday that most young children and pregnant women aren't getting enough nutrition, with fewer than 200 aid trucks entering Gaza every day – less than half the prewar level – and distribution hampered by the fighting.

A survey by UNICEF found that 90% of children under the age of two are eating two or fewer of the five essential food groups each day, mainly bread or milk. A quarter of pregnant women said they only eat one food group per day.

UNICEF says cases of diarrhea among children under the age of five have risen from 48,000 to 71,000 – an indication of poor nutrition. Normally, only 2,000 cases of diarrhea are reported each month in the Gaza Strip.

Israel cut off food, clean water, medicine, electricity and fuel deliveries to Gaza immediately after the Hamas attack. In response to U.S. pressure it allowed a trickle of aid in through Egypt in late October, and the number of trucks has increased from about 100 to up to 200 every day. MDT/AP



Polish farmers who had blockaded a border crossing to Ukraine ended their protest after reaching an agreement with the government that met their demands, Poland's state news agency PAP reported Saturday. The frustration of the farmers was one of the challenges facing the new Polish government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk, which seeks to support Ukraine while also addressing the demands of Polish farmers and truckers whose livelihoods have been hurt by the war.



UK police have opened a fraud investigation into Britain's Post Office over a miscarriage of justice that saw hundreds of postmasters wrongfully accused of stealing money when a faulty computer system was to blame. The Metropolitan Police force said late Friday that it is investigating "potential fraud offences arising out of these prosecutions," relating to money the Post Office received "as a result of prosecutions or civil actions" against accused postal workers.