



LAWMAKER IP SIO KAI WANTS THE LOCAL BOND MARKET TO BE LESS INSTITUTIONAL AND MORE OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND SPECIFIC INVESTORS

P3

FIRE SERVICES RECORD FEWER CASES IN 2023, PLANS FOR OPERATION POST IN ZONE A

P2

TAIWAN ELECTIONS: DPP CANDIDATE SAYS HE IS WILLING TO REOPEN TALKS WITH CHINA

P6



AP PHOTO



Philippines A massive crowd of mostly barefoot Catholic worshippers marched yesterday in an annual procession in the Philippines' capital that paraded a centuries-old black statue of Jesus. Many said they were praying for peace in the Middle East, where tens of thousands of Filipinos work, as fears rise of a spread of the Israel-Hamas war, now in its fourth month.

AP PHOTO



Indonesia has temporarily grounded three Boeing 737-9 Max jetliners, following an incident last week in which an Alaska Airlines plane suffered a blowout that left a gaping hole in the side of the fuselage. The three aircraft, grounded since Saturday, belong to the Indonesian budget carrier Lion Air. The decision was made by the country's Transportation Ministry in coordination with the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration to ensure the safety and security of flight operations.

More on p5

AP PHOTO



Japan's transportation ministry said yesterday it has introduced improved emergency measures for the country's airports, a week after a fatal collision between a Japan Airlines jetliner and a coast guard plane at Tokyo's busy Haneda airport that is seen as a result of human error. The measures — including more visible stop line markings on taxiways leading to runways and use of clearer language in traffic control communication — are to be implemented right away at Haneda while they are slated to go into effect at other airports across the country in the coming weeks.

More on backpage

JOBS MISMATCH

Lawmakers doubt gov't job matching sessions will resolve unemployment woes P3



XINHUA

GAMING CASINO REVENUES PROJECTED TO SLOW DOWN: ANALYSTS

P4

YOHO RESORTS OPENING OF SHOPPING CENTER TO BOOST 'SLUGGISH RETAIL MARKET'

P4

WEATHER TO SLIGHTLY DROP THURSDAY

The Guangdong Meteorological Bureau predicts rapid weather changes across the regions in the coming week, including across the SARs. Forecasting a new wave of weak cold air entering Guangdong tonight, temperatures are expected to drop slightly from mid-week. The seven-day weather forecast indicates that temperatures will drop to 15 degrees Celsius on Thursday.

SSM: CITY ENTERS PEAK INFLUENZA SEASON

Data from the Health Bureau (SSM) indicates that Macau has entered its peak influenza season. The average daily number of emergency visits at the public hospital in the past week was 1,029, an increase of about 14% from two weeks prior. As of Sunday, 158,000 people have been vaccinated, an increase of nearly 30% compared with the same period last year. The SSM recorded one death from influenza earlier this month, where a 45-year-old male patient died of severe pneumonia due to influenza B infection.

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY PRICES SLIGHTLY DOWN

The overall residential property price index for September to November 2023 was 235.5, down by 1.8% over the previous period (spanning August to October 2023). The indices for the Macao Peninsula (233.5) and Taipa & Coloane (243.3) dropped by 1.4% and 3.3% respectively, data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) shows. The index for existing residential units (251.9) went down by 1.8% from the previous period, while the indices for those in the Macao Peninsula (241.7) and Taipa & Coloane (292.3) dipped by 1.5% and 2.9% respectively.

YOUTH DANCE FESTIVAL FROM JUL. 19

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the 25th anniversary of Macau's return to mainland China, the Education and Youth Development Bureau will host a Youth Dance Festival from July 19 to 25. The event aims to enable Macau's young dance enthusiasts and international visitors to engage in cultural exchange and showcase diverse dances.

FIRE SERVICES RECORD FEWER CASES IN 2023, PLANS FOR OPERATION POST IN ZONE A

STAFF REPORTER

THE Fire Services Bureau (CB) will build an operation post in the New Urban Zone A to bolster rapid rescue services within the area.

Speaking at a media briefing yesterday, Commander Leong Lok Sam said that the bureau has already secured a land plot in Zone A to ensure that first responders arrive at the scene within a maximum of six minutes, as stipulated in the Macau Fire Services Bureau's Quality Charter.

Recapping activities undertaken in 2023, the CB conducted 1,822 rescue operations, a decrease of 114 cases or 5.89% compared to 2022. Most rescue efforts focused on assisting with opening doors (412 instances) and providing assistance to injured individuals (282 instances).

The total number of special service attendances in 2023 was 6,968, marking an increase of 1,077 cases compared to 2022.

Leong also noted that the total number of fire alarms activated

RENATO MARQUES



in 2023 was 836, an increase of 20 cases (2.45%) from 2022.

Data revealed that the main causes of fire alarms being set off were unattended stoves, neglected kindling, burning incense and candles, and machinery/equipment failures, accounting

for 58.25% (487 instances) of the total fire alarm attendance.

The fire department also said that due to the post-pandemic resumption of normalcy, ambulance calls last year dropped by 5,722 cases year-on-year to 43,059 instances, a

decrease of 11.73%.

The bureau pledged to continue strengthening public education efforts to further improve fire safety awareness within society and reduce accident probabilities.

Meanwhile, Leong said that Macau is in discussions with mainland authorities regarding the potential operation of rescue services in Hengqin's Macau New Neighbourhood.

On cross-border rescue matters, Leong reiterated that the mainland and Macau have appropriate mechanisms in place, with reserved places for passing vehicles at each port.

Discussions are currently underway with the relevant departments in the mainland on whether Macau rescue vehicles can directly go to Zone A to retrieve injured patients.

Macau residents living in Zhuhai seeking emergency treatment may use the special area at the Border Gate Checkpoint in order to be transferred from a mainland ambulance to a Macau ambulance.

AL PLenary

Lo Choi In: Macau's maternity leave provisions 'outdated'

STAFF REPORTER

LAWMAKER Lo Choi In raised concerns at the Legislative Assembly plenary session yesterday about the adequacy of Macau's current labor laws.

According to Lo, labor laws have remained largely unchanged, following the introduction of the law in 2008 and a few amendments made in 2020.

She specifically highlighted the need for updates in the city's maternity and paternity leave



provisions, adding that Macau has not kept pace with the modern times.

She argued that the existing laws do not provide local families with

a reasonable amount of maternity leave that meets international standards.

Currently, Hong Kong and mainland China provide a minimum of 98 days of maternity leave, whereas Macau only offers 70 days.

In 2020, Macau increased its maternity leave from 56 to 70 days in response to the social impact of the pandemic.

However, Lo believes that the government should further extend it to 90 days, aligning with international conven-

tions. She argues that such revisions could help tackle Macau's aging population problem and promote a higher birth rate, which would have a substantial impact on the economy and the future development of Macau.

The local government has previously stated that the lack of detailed study on this matter is a concern. They argue that implementing changes to labor laws cannot happen overnight and should be approached through incremental adjustments.

Additionally, there are concerns about the ability of companies, namely the ones of small and medium size, to support employees taking the full 90 days of maternity leave if such revisions are implemented.

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 Torrão, 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

AL PLENARY

Lawmakers doubt job matching sessions will resolve unemployment woes

RENATO MARQUES

SEVERAL lawmakers at the Legislative Assembly (AL) plenary expressed skepticism that the “job-matching sessions” model promoted by the government with the gaming concessionaires will be effective. Specifically, they assert that the existing model is saturated and unlikely to alleviate unemployment of residents any further.

This sentiment was expressed by several members at the plenary session yesterday afternoon in a debate that stemmed from an inquiry from lawmaker Song Pek Kei regarding the need to define human resources policies and balance business development needs.

While acknowledging that the job matching session promoted by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL), particularly during the pandemic and immediately after, did successfully result in improvements to the employment rate of those who lost their jobs over the pandemic, lawmakers noted that some of those employed through the job matching model only remained in their roles for brief periods. The reasons for the rapid turnover are unknown and merit further analysis, lawmakers Ron Lam and Ella Lei noted. They also highlighted concerns about residents aged 25 to 34 with high academic qualifications.

Ella Lei noted that many of



those laid off during the pandemic were people who had spent many years in their jobs, noting that such workers faced challenges adjusting to the new 1+4 development strategy.

She noted, “DSAL could give them a job post, but it is possible that it will not be suitable for the job seeker’s development and integration of the future development.”

Lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho added that a high number of fresh graduates from universities are forced to take low-paying jobs that pay a mere MOP9,000 per month merely to get their foot in the door. He noted that this hindered both their professional growth as well as Macau’s potential to benefit from their higher

qualifications and expertise.

Song referenced a study by the Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) that revealed disparities between managerial positions within the gaming concessionaires and government figures. The results reveal a discrepancy, with the MPU research finding less than 80% in contrast to the government’s stated rate of over 85%.

The same lawmaker noted insufficiencies in the workforce available for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), as the median salary among residents is about MOP20,000.

“The SMEs cannot afford these wages,” she said, calling on the government to expedite overseas labor approvals to allow smaller enterprises to continue to operate.

Lawmaker Che Sai Wang observed that the local preference for jobs in gaming concessionaires stemmed from the perceived stability and benefits of the sector, stating that within the population, there is “little trust in [the stability] the other industries and the benefits are far lower.”

He highlighted a need to stabilize salaries and standardize benefits. In order to achieve this, the government must stabilize prices as well as manage inflation.

In response to these discussion points, the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong highlighted the work done by DSAL to assist local workers with obtaining job interviews and reemployment. He noted that there is very little the govern-

ment could do to make jobs within SMEs more attractive to potential jobseekers than larger corporations.

In response to Song’s request for additional quotas and reduced requirements for overseas recruitment, the Secretary said, “There is a need to strike a balance.” He hinted that the government would take a cautious stance regarding hiring non-resident workers (TNR) for jobs other than cleaning, restaurant workers and maintenance workers, where Macau currently faces local labor shortages.

He also said that Macau is facing competition in the labor market to hire workers for these three areas, with eligible TNR workers electing not to come to Macau due to the few benefits afforded by companies.

Regarding issues with job matching services, the DSAL director, Wong Chi Hong, said that the idea was to increase hiring of local unemployed residents. For that, he said, “We were asking companies to hire workers first and train them second.”

Wong also highlighted ongoing efforts by DSAL to increase local employment, particularly among younger workers. In particular, two new internship programs will be launched shortly.

The programs include a three-month internship for a project in the technology and finance sector, and another in the pharmaceutical industry.

FINANCE

Lawmaker wants local bond market to be less institutional

RENATO MARQUES

LAWMAKER Ip Sio Kai wants the local bond market to be less institutional and more open to the general public and specific investors, he said yesterday in an inquiry to the government delivered to the Legislative Assembly (AL).

Ip, who has ties to the banking and finance sector, called on the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, to make an extra effort to develop the local financial sector through a more robust bond market.

The lawmaker sugges-

ted the government attract local companies to issue bonds and other financial products in Macau. He also called on the government to issue debt securities as a way to finance major construction projects and other development plans.

In response, Lei said, “At the moment we do not do this, but we have not excluded the possibility in the future to issue government bonds to boost financial development,” he said. However, he noted a need to draft laws and regulations should this eventuate.

The Secretary said that

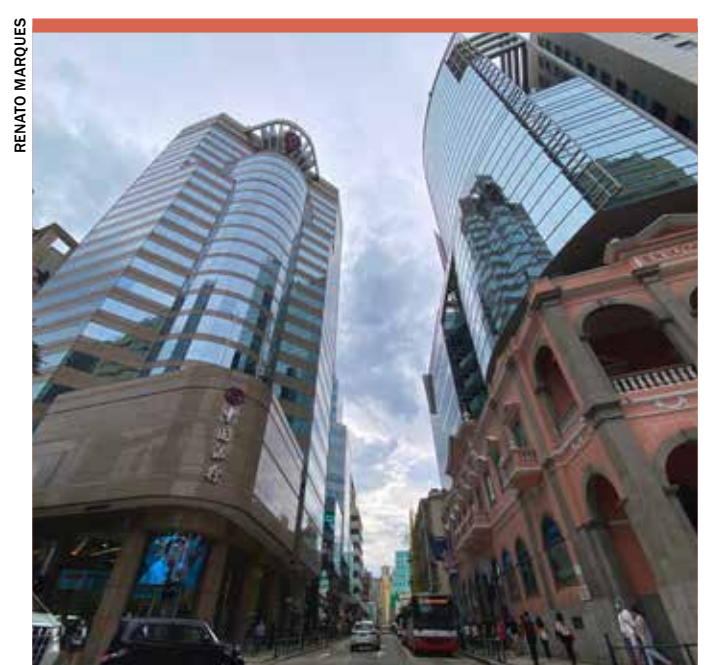
at this stage, the approach is to incentivize companies that typically issue such financial instruments outside of Macau to issue these products within Macau, particularly if they already have operations within the region.

Ip noted that the gaming concessionaires often use debt securities for financing, but these are usually issued in other markets such as Hong Kong and abroad and not in Macau. He stated, “We should be able to attract them to issue them in Macau.”

While agreeing with the concept, Lei also said that

the local government does not currently have a need for such financial products, due to sufficient reserves. He also noted the absence of legal frameworks for other public entities to participate in such a market, as it involves public funds.

Lei said that for the time being, the role of Macau would be to promote the issuance of such products at national and provincial levels. However, he stated that the government would make further efforts to advance in this field in the coming year to establish closer ties with the international markets.



GAMING

CASINO REVENUES PROJECTED TO SLOW DOWN

LYNZY VALLES

INDUSTRY insiders foresee that gross gaming revenue (GGR) will face a slight deceleration, estimating a range between MOP540 million and MOP590 million per day. The full-month GGR is anticipated to reach between MOP17.4 billion and MOP18.5 billion.

This is equivalent to 71% of the January 2019 median, consistent with trends observed in the second half of the year of 2023.

Macau's average daily GGR for the first seven days of the year reached MOP630 million, up from MOP599 million per day in December last year, according to Jefferies Financial Group as cited in AASocks Financial News.

The increase is attributed to strong traffic during New Year's Eve, with the SAR reporting a post-Covid record of 175,000 tourist arrivals on Dec. 31.

In total, the three-day New Year's holiday recorded 399,100 visitors.

Despite this promising start, the broker observed that casinos and shopping centres were relatively quiet. Restaurants and similar establishments, however, were busier.

On-site inspections by the broker highlighted quieter casinos with fewer gamblers and shorter queues at high-end luxury brand outlets like Chanel, Hermes and Louis Vuitton.

Notably, ferry trips between Hong Kong and Ma-



cau were not fully booked, and were more popular with elderly passengers, the report added.

Despite this, the main casinos at Galaxy Macau and The Venetian remained busy, while the Grand Lisboa Palace witnessed an increase in visitors, Jefferies observed.

Expectations remain high for the sector over the upcoming Chinese New Year, which is traditionally one of the busiest holidays in the mainland and Macau. The holiday is anticipated to boost arrivals and revenues.

Despite signs of gradual recovery within the sector, concerns persist regarding mainland China's slowing economic rebound and unfavourable macroeconomic factors that are expected to have a lingering effect on earnings.

Consequently, Jefferies projects that Macau casino stocks will continue to underperform the market

until mainland economic growth concerns subside.

'NEW NORMAL' IN 2024

Macau is slated to set a "new normal" this year, where GGR is forecast to grow by 30% year-on-year, according to a research report released by CLSA.

The projected figure will be a growth to USD29.2 billion, reaching 82% of the 2019 level.

The report also noted that Macau's gaming industry recorded a better recovery in 2023, with changes in the operating environment for gaming enterprises.

WYNN RESORTS TO LEAD GAMING STOCKS

Las Vegas' Wynn Resorts could be a star among gaming stocks this year as Macau's rebound continues taking shape.

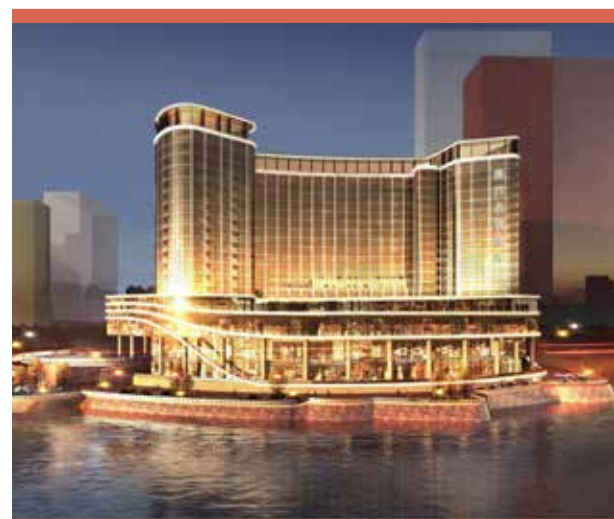
The analyst, as cited in a report by Casino.org, highlighted long-term potential with Wynn shares due to

factors including lingering pent-up demand by Chinese nationals to travel to Macau and Wynn's ability to shift its focus to premium mass clients, which is pertinent because a material recovery among VIPs could be further out.

"While we remain ahead of consensus, we believe the current consensus forecast remains overly conservative and embeds some macro softness entering the market," added Wiczynski.

As cited in the report, Wynn's ability to shift away from the embattled VIP segment to a stronger emphasis on Macau premium mass clients could pay dividends on another front.

Wynn shares are now trading at a 25%+ discount to their normal historical valuations, which the analyst suggested meant the "discount is pricing in a significant amount of recovery time or macro pressures, which we believe are overdone."



YOHO RESORTS

JLL: Opening of new shopping center to boost 'sluggish retail market'

OVER 80% of the retail floor space at the YOHO Resorts World Shopping Centre has been claimed by numerous international brands, according to data provided by realtor JLL.

The five-story, 400,000 square feet YOHO Resorts World Shopping Centre is scheduled for its grand opening on Jan. 26, offering amenities including restaurants, bars, a cinema, supermarkets, and entertainment center.

JLL—the leasing agent—sees this opening as a positive sign for the presently sluggish retail market in Macau. The center's opening, combined with the resurgence of Macau's tourism and gaming industry, is expected to further attract

regional tourists to the city.

Oliver Tong, general manager of JLL in Macau and Zhuhai, stated, "The full reopening of the mainland and Macau borders, alongside the significant rebound in mainland visitors to Macau, is expected to drive foot traffic and sales at YOHO Resorts World Shopping Centre."

"Currently, near 90% of its floor space has been leased to tenants, including several world-renowned retail brands and many lease applications from well-known international fashion, jewelry and watch brands – indicating confidence in the shopping center and its development prospects," Tong added. LV

AD



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>

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

Email: sales@ktranz.com.mo
Tel: +853 2871 6081/2 Fax: +853 2871 6084
Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR

AVIATION

Airlines say they found loose parts in door panels of Boeing Max 9 jets

FEDERAL investigators say a door panel slid up before flying off an Alaska Airlines jetliner last week, and they are looking at whether four bolts that were supposed to help hold the panel in place might have been missing when the plane took off.

The comments yesterday [Macau time] from the National Transportation Safety Board came shortly after Alaska and United Airlines reported separately that they found loose parts in the panels — or door plugs — of some other Boeing 737 Max 9 jets.

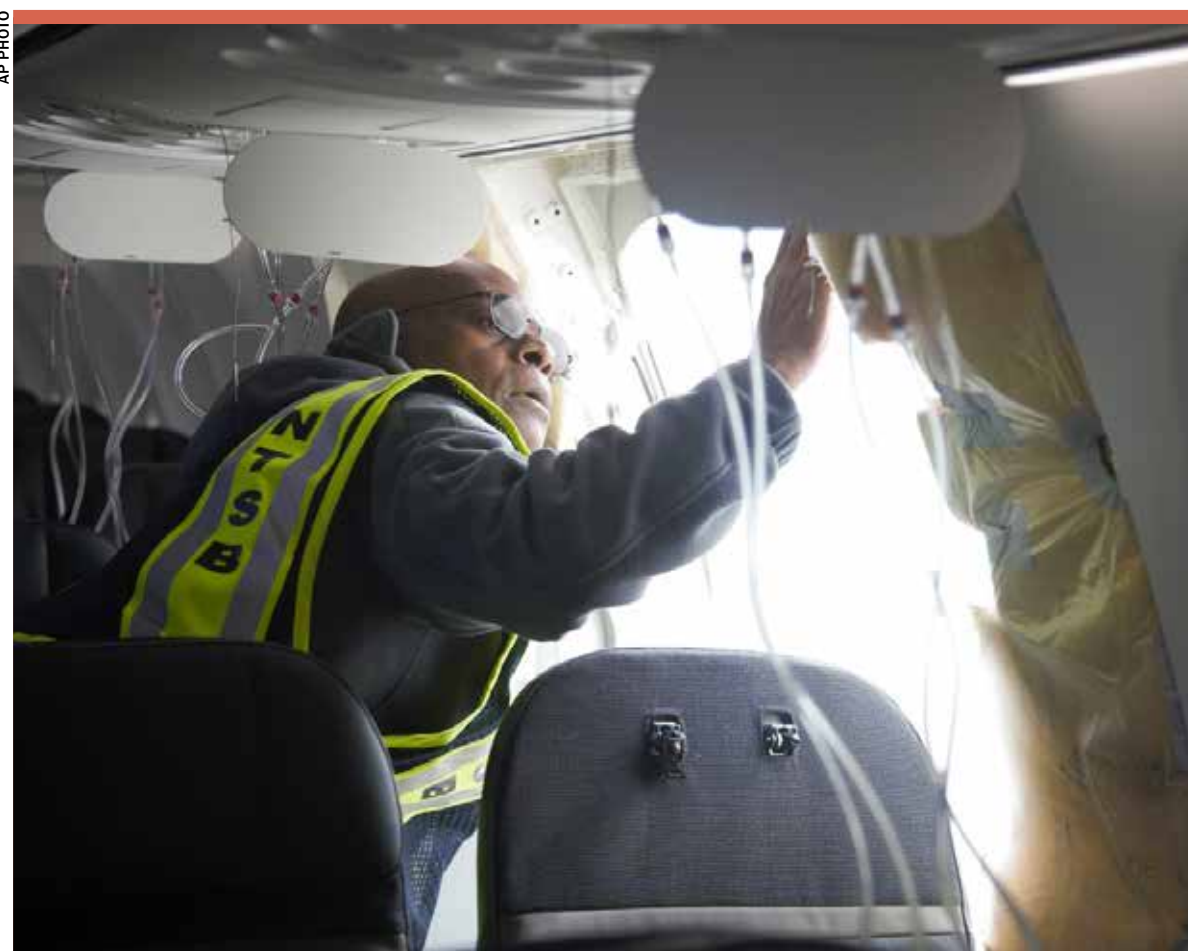
“Since we began preliminary inspections on Saturday, we have found instances that appear to relate to installation issues in the door plug — for example, bolts that needed additional tightening,” Chicago-based United said.

Alaska said that as it began examining its Max 9s, “Initial reports from our technicians indicate some loose hardware was visible on some aircraft.”

The findings of investigators and the airlines are ratcheting up pressure on Boeing to address concerns that have grown since the terrifying fuselage blowout Friday night. A plug covering a spot left for an emergency door tore off the plane as it flew 16,000 feet (4,800 meters) above Oregon.

Boeing has called an online meeting for all employees today to discuss safety.

The company, which has had problems with various planes over the years, pledged to “help



In this photo released by the National Transportation Safety Board, NTSB Investigator-in-Charge John Lovell examines the fuselage plug area of Alaska Airlines Flight 1282

address any and all findings” that airlines make during their inspections of Max 9 jets. Boeing has delivered more than 200 to customers around the world, but 171 of them were grounded by the Federal Aviation Administration on Saturday until the door plugs can be inspected and, if necessary, fixed.

The door plugs are inserted where emergency exit doors would be located on Max 9s with more

than about 200 seats. Alaska and United have fewer seats in their Max 9s, so they replace heavy doors with the plugs.

The panels can be opened for maintenance work. The bolts prevent the mechanism from moving upward on rollers when the plane is in flight.

During Alaska Airlines flight 1282 on Friday night, roller guides at the top of one of the plugs

broke — for reasons the investigators don’t fully understand yet — allowing the entire panel to swing upward and lose contact with 12 “stop pads” that keep the panel attached to the door frame on the plane, NTSB officials said at a news briefing in Portland.

NTSB Chair Jennifer Homendy said the safety board was investigating whether four bolts that help prevent the panel from sli-

ding up on rollers were missing when the plane took off from Portland or whether they blew off “during the violent, explosive decompression event.”

The interior of the plane suffered extensive damage, but pilots were able to return to Portland and land safely. Officials say there were no serious injuries among the 171 passengers and six crew members.

The lost door panel was found Sunday near Portland in the backyard of a school teacher’s home. NTSB officials said it will be sent to the agency’s lab in Washington, D.C., for detailed study that might help pinpoint why the plug broke loose.

Alaska and United have canceled hundreds of flights since the weekend because of their grounded planes. Alaska has 65 Max 9s, and United has 79. The airlines waited until Monday before Boeing and the FAA completed instructions for how to inspect their planes.

The jet involved in Friday’s blowout is brand-new, having been put in service in November. After a cabin-pressurization system warning light came on during three flights, the airline stopped flying it over the Pacific to Hawaii. Some aviation experts questioned why Alaska continued using the plane on overland routes until it figured out what was causing the pressurization warnings.

Homendy said, however, that NTSB has seen no evidence to link the warnings with the blowout of the door plug.

The Max is the newest version of Boeing’s 737, a twin-engine, single-aisle plane that debuted in the late 1960s and has been updated many times. The 737 has long been a workhorse for airlines on U.S. domestic routes.

Shares of Boeing fell 8% and Spirit AeroSystems, which installs the door plugs on Max jets, dropped 11% on Monday. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Bruno Mars performs at MGM Cotai



MGM recently hosted Bruno Mars and his “The One & Only Night” concert at MGM Cotai.

Bruno Mars, the 15-time Grammy Awards-winner and musician and songwriter, lit up the skyline of Macau with his signature high-energy performance.

Famous for his versatile musical style blending funk, hip-hop, and R&B, Bruno Mars rocked the house with his famous tunes including Just the Way You Are, Locked Out of Heaven, That’s What I Like, Uptown Funk, and more.

Bruno Mars’ popularity has made his concert tickets highly sought-after worldwide; tickets were being sold out quickly after box opened in early-December.

JW Marriott Hotel announces CNY and Valentine’s Day offers



JW Marriott Hotel Macau has announced its Chinese New Year and Valentine’s Day experiences for the public. The Chinese New Year

Dinner Buffet features an array of traditional classics, plus a variety of must-have Chinese New Year staples including Steamed Boston

Lobster with Garlic, Tossed Raw Fish Salad and the Braised Dried Abalone with Oyster Sauce.

On February 14, the hotel will feature a Valentine’s Day Dinner Buffet, where guests can expect a “diverse range of global culinary hits and Valentine’s Day-special dishes and desserts that promise to bring on the romance.”

For lovebirds looking for an intimate rendezvous on Valentine’s Day, ‘Savour the Romance’ offers a selection of food and drinks including a cheese & charcuterie platter, the Love Story cocktail and Pink Sparkle mocktail, exclusively available on February 14.

TAIWAN

Candidate Lai says he is willing to reopen talks with China

CHRISTOPHER BODEEN,
TAIPEI

TAIWAN'S leading candidate William Lai said yesterday he hopes for a reopening of dialogue with China following almost eight years of Beijing's near-complete refusal to communicate with leaders of the self-governing island it considers its own territory.

But Lai told reporters he would continue the current administration's policy of maintaining democratic Taiwan's "de-facto independence in the face of Chinese Communist Party threats" to annex it by political, military or economic means. China demands that Taiwan's leadership concede its claim of ownership over the island before reopening contacts.

"While aspiring for peace, we harbor no illusions," Lai said at a news conference ahead of Saturday's major polls. "We will build up Taiwan's defense deterrence, strengthen Taiwan's capabilities in economic security, enhance partnerships with democracies around the world and maintain stable and principled leadership on cross (Taiwan) Strait relations."

"Our door will always be open to engagement with Beijing under the principles of equality and dignity. We are ready and willing to engage to show more for the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Peace is priceless and war has no winners," Lai said.

Lai, currently Taiwan's No. 2, is



Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party candidate William Lai (left) and his running mate Hsiao Bi-khim

broadly seen as the front-runner in the election to succeed leader Tsai Ing-wen, who is barred by law from running for a third term. Most polls show him well ahead of the main opposition Nationalist Party, or KMT, candidate Hou You-yi, who favors eventual unification with China under its own terms, and the alternative Taiwan People's Party's Ko Wen-je, who has also pressed for renewed dialogue with China and the avoidance of confrontation with Beijing.

Voters will also choose a new legislature, where the DPP will seek to hold on to its majority, largely based on its handling of the economy, public welfare and em-

ployment opportunities for young people. Skyrocketing housing prices, a declining birth rate and a yawning gap between the super wealthy and working class are also playing into voter sentiments.

Looming over the election has been China's steadily increasing pressure on Taiwan through barring it from major international gatherings, wooing away its diplomatic allies to just a handful, and offering financial inducements to politicians — from the grassroots to top opposition figures who could influence the vote or promote policies increasing Chinese access to the island's economy.

The People's Liberation Army sends ships and warplanes on

daily missions around Taiwan and the island's Defense Ministry has reported a growing number of balloons crossing over from China. The balloon incidents re-

call the incursion last year of a Chinese balloon that flew over Canada and the U.S. and was eventually shot down by the U.S. Air Force. China claimed the aircraft was a weather balloon that had been blown off-course, but the U.S. said it was carrying sophisticated intelligence-gathering technology.

Over the past 24 hours, the ministry reported four Chinese balloons had passed over the island, while 10 warplanes and four warships had entered airspace and waters near the island, part of a campaign to wear down morale and military resilience. The Defense Ministry said it had monitored China's movements, scrambling jets, dispatching ships and activating coastal missile systems.

Taiwan has been boosting its defenses with new weapons purchases from the U.S. and has expanded national service for men to one year from four months. Those have become contentious issues in the coming election, with Lai and the DPP accusing the KMT of blocking new defense spending, possibly as part of an arrangement with Beijing to gradually hand over control of the island, which split from the mainland amid civil war in 1949 and has never been controlled by the People's Republic of China. **MDT/AP**

AIR RAID ALERT ISSUED SAYING CHINA HAS LAUNCHED A SATELLITE

THE Taiwan government issued an alert yesterday saying China has launched a satellite and urging caution days before the island's elections. Taiwan holds major elections Saturday that China has described as a choice between war and peace. In English, the alert sent to resi-

dents' mobile phones cautioned there was a missile flyover. The alerts went off in the middle of an international news conference by Taiwanese Joseph Wu. He clarified it was a satellite launch, told journalists not to worry, and proceeded with the news conference.

ANALYSIS

DPP 'militarizes' Taiwan society

ZHANG YI, CHINA DAILY

TAIWAN'S ruling Democratic Progressive Party has been pursuing a policy of relying on the United States to seek "independence" and resisting reunification to a much greater extent than previous authorities on the island, which experts said has significantly escalated tensions in cross-Strait relations.

Meanwhile, Beijing has taken steps to further limit the US' space to leverage the "Taiwan card", demonstrating its strategic determination and confidence in countering "Taiwan independence", they said at a re-

cent program on Southeast Television that focused on cross-Strait relations.

China announced sanctions on Sunday against five defense industry companies in the US for being involved in weapons sales to Taiwan, as it urged Washington to stop arming the island.

Lei Chien, chairwoman of the National Women's League on Taiwan, said: "Despite their claims of not supporting 'Taiwan independence', if we look at the actions of the US, they are indeed enhancing Taiwan's military capabilities, even through the US Congress."

Despite Beijing's call

for the US to stop arming Taiwan, Washington continued to provide significant military support to the island last year. For the first time it delivered military equipment to Taiwan under the Presidential Draw-down Authority, allowing the US to pull the weapons directly from US Defense Department inventories.

Meanwhile, Taiwan's proposed "defense" budget for 2024 is NT\$606.8 billion (\$19.6 billion), roughly 2.5 percent of Taiwan's gross domestic product, which the DPP authorities said displayed its determination to guard the island.

Taiwan's annual "de-

fense" spending has been on the rise since Tsai Ing-wen of the DPP took office in 2016. "Defense" spending has increased from NT\$355.7 billion, or 2 percent of GDP, in 2017 to NT\$580.3 billion in 2023, which is roughly 2.4 percent of GDP, Taiwan media reported.

Starting from Jan 1, the conscription period for compulsory military service in Taiwan was extended from the previous four months back to one year, which the DPP authorities claimed is aimed at improving its "defense" capability.

Zhu Weidong, director of the Institute of Taiwan

Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that the US has attempted to pre-position a battlefield in Taiwan, sending signals that could increase fantasies among pro-independence forces to make further provocations.

Tsai Cheng-yuan, former deputy secretary-general of the Kuomintang, said that the DPP authorities, in collaboration with the US, aimed to militarize Taiwan's society and create confrontation with the mainland.

Experts said Beijing made clearer demands to Washington regarding the Taiwan question, during a meeting between the leaders of China and the US in San Francisco in November, reflecting its strategic determination in resolving

the Taiwan question.

Beijing called on the US to translate its non-support for "Taiwan independence" into concrete actions that support China's peaceful reunification at the meeting. The US reiterated its stance of non-support for "Taiwan independence".

Wu Yongping, director of the Taiwan Research Institute at Tsinghua University, said that with China demanding that the US support its peaceful reunification, Beijing's position on the Taiwan question in its relations with the US has become more focused, clear and distinct.

The bottom line of the US in the Taiwan Strait is that it does not want a war, and the most likely cause of war now is "independence", he said. **CHINA DAILY**

SOUTH KOREA

Parliament passes landmark ban on production and sales of dog meat

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea's parliament yesterday passed a landmark ban on production and sales of dog meat, as public calls for a prohibition have grown sharply over concerns about animal rights and the country's international image.

Some angry dog farmers said they plan to challenge the bill's constitutionality and hold protest rallies, a sign of continued heated debate over the ban.

After a three-year grace period, the bill would make slaughtering, breeding and sales of dog meat for human consumption illegal from 2027 and punishable by 2-3 years in prison. It doesn't provide any penalties for eating dog meat.

Dog meat consumption, a centuries-old practice on the Korean Peninsula, is neither explicitly banned nor legalized in South Korea. It has long been viewed as a source of stamina on hot summer days. Recent surveys show more than half of South Koreans want dog meat banned and a majority no longer eat it. But one in every three South Koreans still opposes a ban even though they don't consume it.

The National Assembly passed the bill by a 208-0 vote. It will become law after being endorsed by the Cabinet Council and signed by President Yoon Suk Yeol, considered formalities since his government supports the ban.

"This law is aimed at contributing to realizing the values of animal rights, which pursue respect for life and a harmonious co-existence between humans and animals," the legislation says.

The bill offers assistance to dog farmers and others in the industry in shutting down their businesses and shifting to alternatives. Details are to be worked out among government officials, farmers, experts and animal rights activists.

Dozens of animal rights



Animal rights activists attend a protest rally supporting the government-led dog meat banning bill at the National Assembly in Seoul, yesterday

activists gathered at the National Assembly to celebrate the bill's passage. They carried large photos of dogs, chanted slogans and held placards reading "Dog meat-free Korea is coming."

Humane Society International called the legislation's passage "history in the making."

"I never thought I would see in my lifetime a ban on the cruel dog meat industry in South Korea, but this historic win for animals is testament to the passion and determination of our animal protection movement," said JungAh Chae, executive director of HSI's Korea office.

Dogs are also eaten in China, Vietnam, Indonesia, North Korea and in some African countries. But South Korea's dog meat industry has drawn more attention because of the country's reputation as a cultural and economic powerhouse. It's also the only nation with industrial-scale dog farms. Most farms in South Korea raise about 500 dogs, but one visited by The Associated Press in July had about 7,000.

Farmers were extremely upset by the bill's passage.

"This is a clear case of state violence as they are infringing on our freedom

to choose our occupation. We can't just sit by idly," said Son Won Hak, a farmer and former leader of a farmers' association.

Son said dog farmers will file a petition with the Constitutional Court of Korea and hold demonstrations. He said farmers will meet on Wednesday to discuss other steps.

There is no reliable official data on the exact size of South Korea's dog meat industry. Activists and farmers say hundreds of thousands of dogs are slaughtered for meat each year.

The anti-dog meat campaign received a huge boost from the country's first lady, Kim Keon Hee, who has repeatedly expressed her support for a prohibition. She has become the subject of withering criticism and crude insults during demonstrations by farmers.

The legislation doesn't clearly specify how dog farmers and others in the industry will be supported. Agriculture Minister Song Mi-ryung said yesterday the government will try to formulate reasonable assistance programs for them.

Ju Yeongbong, an official of the farmers' association, said most farmers are in their 60-80s and hope to

continue their businesses until older people, their main customers, die. But

Ju said the legislation would "strip them of their right to live" because it would

likely end up only offering assistance for dismantling their facilities and for transitions, without compensation for giving up their dogs.

Son said many elderly dog farmers are willing to close their farms if proper financial compensation is provided because of the extremely negative public view of their jobs.

Cheon JinKyung, head of Korea Animal Rights Advocates in Seoul, accused farmers of demanding unrealistically high compensation. She said compensation based on the number of dogs owned by farmers won't be accepted, but acknowledged that payments would likely be a major issue.

Ordinary citizens were split over the ban.

"Dogs are different from cows, chickens and pigs," said Kim Myung-ae, a 58-year-old Seoul resident. "Why would you still eat dogs when they are now seen more as family-like pets than food?"

Another Seoul resident, Jeong Yoon Hee, disagreed, saying whether to eat dog meat is a matter of a personal choice and dietary culture. "Dogs are dogs, not humans," she said. **MDT/AP**

AD

britcham 澳門 macao 英國商會

BUSINESS LUNCH

A look at the key trends shaping Asia Pacific real estate in 2024

Date: 18th January 2024
Venue: Artyzen Grand Lapa Chinnery Room
Time: 12:00 - 14:00
Fee: MOP 430 members/ MOP 530 non members

Advance booking is required.
Booking: ivone@britchammacao.org or call 6331 1124 for details

Will 2024 be a better year for global property investors? Join us to explore the market trends with Simon Smith, Head of Research & Consultancy at Savills HK. Simon has over 25 years of experience in Hong Kong. Discover how economic conditions, market dynamics, and global events, shape real estate trends. Simon is your guy for navigating the ever-evolving market.

Savills Macao, established in 2005, offers a full range of real estate-related services.

Sovereign Members: Loop Studio, LANSKY, 聯匯, 聯匯, 聯匯
Noble Members: Sniper Capital
Principal Media Partner: Times
Sponsorship Members: BNUI, CESL Asia, CTM, MdME, 中環, 中環
Friends of Britcham: BCM, ZEKO, Top Capital Group

ISRAEL

Blinken looks to planning for post-war Gaza as fighting continues to rage

MATTHEW LEE, TELAVIV

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken faced tough talks with Israeli leaders on Gaza's post-war future yesterday, while Israel's military pushed ahead with its offensive in the beleaguered territory. Heavy bombardment and fighting shook refugee camps, sending Palestinians scrambling to find safety and hampering aid groups' efforts to get relief to the population.

Blinken said he was coming to Israel with promises from four Arab nations and Turkey to help in rebuilding Gaza after the war. But those nations also want to see an end to the fighting in Gaza and concrete steps toward the eventual creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, something Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed not to allow.

The U.S. and Israel also remain deeply divided over how Gaza will be run when — and if — its current Hamas rulers are defeated. American officials have called for the Palestinian Authority, which currently governs parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, to take the reins in Gaza. Israeli leaders have rejected that idea but haven't put forward a concrete plan beyond an open-ended military control over the territory.

At the same time, Blinken is trying to prevent an all-out war between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah. After a presumed Israeli strike last week hit Beirut, killing Hamas's deputy leader, the two sides have stepped up their exchanges. Yesterday, Hezbollah said its exploding drones targeted the Israeli army northern command in the town of Safed — deeper into Israel than previous fire by the group. The Israeli military said a drone fell at a base in the north without causing damage, suggesting it had been intercepted. It did not identify the base.

"There is lots to talk about, in particular about the way forward," Blinken said after meeting Israeli President Isaac Herzog.

The United States has pressed Israel to scale down its of-



fensive in Gaza to more precise operations targeting Hamas. But the pace of death and destruction has remained largely the same, with several hundred Palestinians killed a day, according to health officials in Gaza. Israel has vowed to keep going until it has destroyed Hamas throughout the territory, in response to the Oct. 7 attack during which militants killed some 1,200 people, mainly civilians, in southern Israel and kidnapped around 250 others.

Still, after three months of fighting, Hamas continues to put up a fierce fight.

The Israeli military says it has dismantled Hamas infrastructure in northern Gaza, where large swaths of the cityscape have been demolished. But fighting continues there against what Israel says are pockets of militants. The offensive's focus has shifted to the southern city of Khan Younis, where ground troops have been fighting militants for weeks, and a number of urban refugee camps in central Gaza.

"The fighting will continue throughout 2024," military spokesman Daniel Hagari said.

Since the war began, Israel's assault in Gaza has killed more than 23,200 Palestinians, about two-thirds of them women and children, and more than 58,000 have been wounded, according to the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza. The death toll does not distinguish between combatants and civilians. Nearly 85% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million have

been driven from their homes by the fighting, and a quarter of its residents face starvation, with only a trickle of food, water, medicine and other supplies entering through an Israeli siege.

Throughout the night and into yesterday morning, warplanes struck multiple areas in and around Khan Younis. Israeli artillery shelling and gunfire echoed through the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, where troops have been pushing in from the north, said one resident, Saeed Moustafa. They were facing heavy resistance from gunmen in the camp, he said.

Like other refugee camps in Gaza, Nuseirat was built to house Palestinians driven out of homes during the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, and over the decades it has been built up into a densely populated town housing refugees and their descendants.

Families in Nuseirat's northern neighborhoods were fleeing to other parts of the camp, Moustafa said by phone, with the sound of sporadic gunfire in the background. Some tried to head south on the Gaza's main north-south road but found it blocked by Israeli tanks and turned around, he said. In leaflets, the military had told people evacuating to use another road, along the coast.

The U.N. humanitarian office, known as OCHA, warned that the fighting was severely hampering aid deliveries. Several warehouses, distribution

centers, health facilities and shelters have been affected by the military's evacuation orders, it said. Some bakeries in the central city of Deir al-Balah have been forced to shut down. A U.N. warehouse was hit last week, killing a staffer, and five other staffers were detained by the military, with two still held.

The situation is even more dire in northern Gaza, which Israeli forces cut off from the rest of the territory in late October. Tens of thousands of people who remain there face shortages of food and water.

The World Health Organization has been unable to deliver supplies to the north for two weeks. OCHA said the military rejected five attempted aid convoys to the north over that period, including planned deliveries of medical supplies and fuel for water and sanitation facilities.

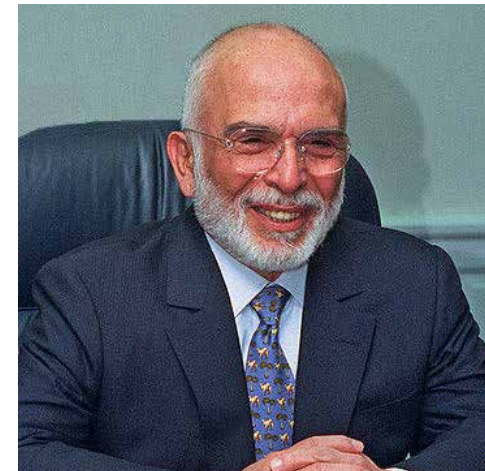
As Blinken arrived in Israel, exchanges between Israel and Hezbollah continued their spiral since last week's killing of Hamas deputy leader Saleh Arouri in Beirut.

Hezbollah said its drone strike on the base in northern Israel yesterday was further retaliation for the killing of Arouri and of a senior Hezbollah commander in an Israeli bombing Monday.

Yesterday, an Israeli drone hit a car in southern Lebanon, killing three people inside, security officials in the area and the state news agency said. There was no immediate word on the identities of the three. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1996 KING OF JORDAN IN HISTORIC TEL AVIV VISIT



King Hussein of Jordan has made his first public visit to Israel's largest city, Tel Aviv, in the latest indication of the new warmth between the two countries.

The King, an experienced pilot, flew a Jordanian army helicopter to the Sde Dov air base near Tel Aviv, where he was met by Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

At a ceremony to honour the chief negotiators who brokered the 1994 Israeli-Jordanian peace talks, Mr Peres said: "We still face all kinds of challenges: the greatest of them is not to let the galloping prospect of peace pass us by."

"I would like to say how happy we are to have the opportunity to be with our friends, our partners in building and laying the foundations for a comprehensive peace in this region," replied the King.

Israel and Jordan ended 46 years of war with a peace treaty in 1994 backed by US President Bill Clinton. The deal drew condemnation from Jordanian Palestinians, who make up 60% of the population.

PLO officials were critical of today's visit by the King, saying he should first have visited lands under Palestinian rule.

There was extremely tight security as King Hussein's motorcade made its way through Tel Aviv.

A quarter of Israeli police - 6,000 officers - were deployed to protect him, and central Tel Aviv was paralysed as police closed off roads and diverted traffic.

Thousands of Israelis turned out to watch him go by, giving him an enthusiastic welcome with Jordanian flags and banners greeting the King in Arabic.

King Hussein did hold talks with Mr Peres, but diplomats stressed the main purpose of the visit was symbolic rather than political.

Later, he flew to Beit Gavriel on the shore of the Sea of Galilee for talks with Mr Peres and US Secretary of State Warren Christopher, whose shuttle diplomacy in the region continues tomorrow with a visit to the Syrian capital, Damascus.

Jordan has been largely diplomatically isolated since taking a neutral stand in the Gulf War of 1991.

However, the peace agreement with Israel and King Hussein's increasing opposition to the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, have brought the country back into the international fold.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Shimon Peres lost the 1996 Israeli elections to Binyamin Netanyahu, who campaigned against the Rabin-Peres peace programme.

The Israel-Jordan peace treaty of 1994 continues to hold fast, however, despite its continuing unpopularity with many in the region.

In September 2002, Jordan and Israel agreed on a plan to pipe water from the Red Sea to the shrinking Dead Sea that straddles the two countries. The project, costing \$800m, was the two nations' biggest joint venture to date.

And 18 months later, in March 2004, the two nations agreed a joint project to build a desert science centre on their shared border. King Hussein of Jordan died of cancer in 1999.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19

To avoid any minor health problems, don't get too stressed. Financial investments that deal with joint money can be extremely prosperous.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20

You can help other people with their financial problems by setting up a budget for them. Take time to look at any outdated papers or possible investments.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21

Sudden changes will occur through communications with friends or in-laws. You may find out that someone has not been completely honest with you.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You will have a tendency to put on pounds. Make amends if you can. You are ready to blow up and your stress level has gone into over drive.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You need to put some trust in others. Don't hesitate to voice your ideas and opinions. Deception in your home is evident. Don't beat around the bush.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Look into physical activities that will help get rid of some of that tension you may be feeling. You may be experiencing emotional turmoil in regard to your mate.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Make any decisions you have to in order to avoid feeling unsettled. You may want to pull out some of those unfinished project you've got tucked away.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You may have been trying to do too much, leaving yourself exhausted and open to colds and infections. You may be thinking of starting your own business.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You will be in the doghouse if you are being. Be prepared to overcome frustrations and obstacles at work. Your depressed mood has been hard to shake.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Don't make promises. You may find that your generosity has been taken for granted. Avoid being overly opinionated or you will alienate friends.

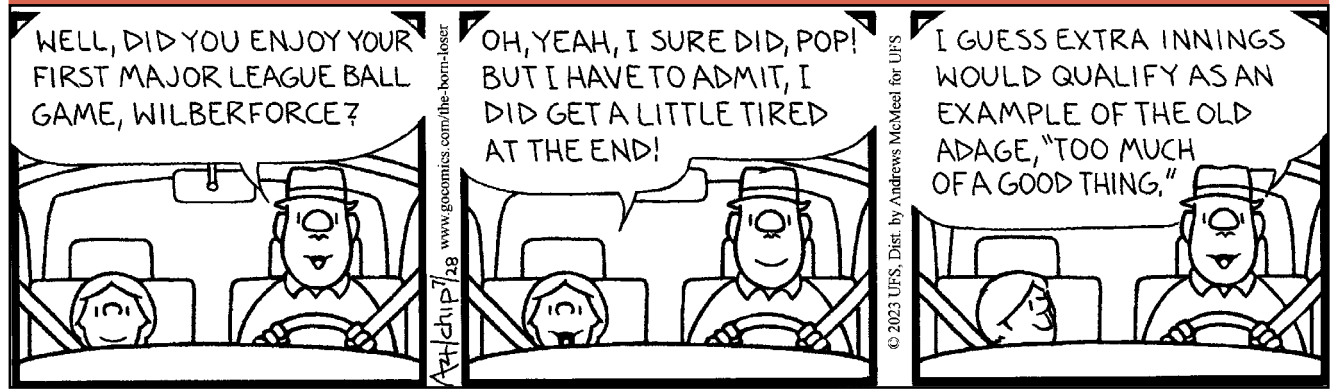
AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You are best to move quickly and to get in good with the boss. You may have been too nice to a friend who just wanted to take advantage of you.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Educational pursuits can bring interesting, helpful people. There'll be difficulties if you spend too much. You can invest in profitable ventures.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

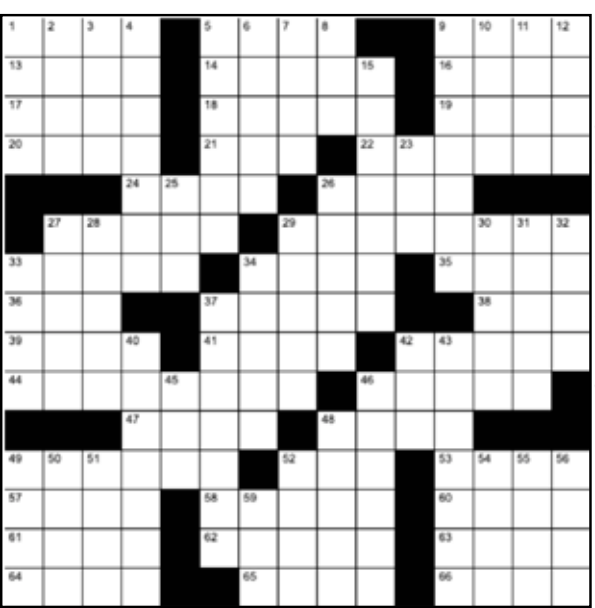
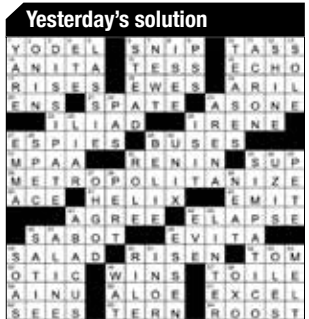
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-8	5	fine
Changchun	-17	-4	fine
Chengdu	5	15	overcast
Chongqing	10	13	overcast
Fuzhou	11	18	cloudy
Guangzhou	14	22	cloudy
Guiyang	5	11	overcast
Haikou	20	23	rain
Hangzhou	4	10	cloudy
Harbin	-22	-8	fine
Hefei	-2	7	fine
Nanjing	0	6	cloudy
Shanghai	4	7	cloudy
Taipei	15	17	rain
Wuhan	0	12	cloudy
Hong Kong	19	23	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	-14	-6	cloudy
Frankfurt	-5	3	overcast
Paris	-3	1	overcast
London	1	5	overcast
New York	3	9	windy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Rabble; 5- 3:00; 9- Hearing organs; 13- Beige cousin; 14- Dostoyevsky novel, with "The"; 16- Sea east of the Caspian; 17- "Believe" singer; 18- Pierces; 19- Bausch & Lomb brand; 20- High schooler; 21- Charlemagne's realm; Abbr.; 22- Like life, supposedly; 24- Env. notation; 26- Natural blue dye; 27- Lure; 29- With undiminished force; 33- Female fox; 34- Meager; 35- ___ Alto; 36- Doc bloc; 37- Capital of Vietnam; 38- Cpl.'s superior; 39- Faction of a group, often religious; 41- Richard of 'A Summer Place'; 42- Little bits; 44- Keep at a distance; 46- Higher; 47- Catch a view of; 48- Queue before Q; 49- Elude; 52- Paving material; 53- Actual; 57- Binge; 58- Fancy pancake; 60- Fashion mag; 61- Record; 62- Eucalyptus eater; 63- Golf's Ballesteros; 64- On ___ with; 65- Raised; 66- Coal-rich region;

DOWN 1- Four-sided fig.; 2- Hurt; 3- Spring from the slammer; 4- Kiln; 5- Fourscore; 6- Festoon; 7- Male parent; 8- Piggy; 9- Side covering on a hat; 10- Calculus calculation; 11- Wife of a rajah; 12- Insult; 15- Large sea wave; 23- Penpoint; 25- Cargo measure; 26- Negatively charged particle; 27- Small change; 28- Strictly accurate; 29- Radii neighbors; 30- Sensation provided by buds on the tongue; 31- "Pomp and Circumstance" composer; 32- Specks; 33- Still life subject; 34- Tending to droop; 37- Domineer a husband; 40- Tab grabber; 42- Wall St. debut; 43- Persecute; 45- Snake; 46- Like much spam; 48- Sap tree; 49- Bluesy James; 50- Work up lather; 51- Nightclub of song; 52- Eye drop; 54- Zeno of ___; 55- Thomas Edison's middle name; 56- Sly look; 59- Hold up;



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!**

jml property

CONTACT US & SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY!

hello@jmlproperty.com
www.jmlproperty.com

f jmlmacau @jmlproperty

Va Fat
HKD 3,980,000 2 bed 1 bath

Tou Un
HKD 2,980,000 1 bed 1 bath

Supreme Flower City
HKD 22,000/mth 3 bed 1 CP



DEMOGRAPHICS

SOUTH KOREA'S GENDER IMBALANCE IS BAD NEWS FOR MEN – OUTNUMBERING WOMEN, MANY FACE BLEAK MARRIAGE PROSPECTS

DUDLEY L. POSTON JR.,
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

SOUTH Korea's bachelor time bomb is about to really go off. Following a historic 30-year-long imbalance in the male-to-female sex ratio at birth, young men far outnumber young women in the country. As a result, some 700,000 to 800,000 "extra" South Korean boys born since the mid-1980s may not be able to find South Korean girls to marry.

As a demographer who over the past four decades has conducted extensive research on East Asian populations, I know that this increased number of South Korean boys will have huge impacts throughout South Korean society. Coincidentally, similar trends are playing out in China, Taiwan and India.

THE REASONS

In most countries, more boys are born than girls – around 105 to 107 boys per 100 girls. That

sex ratio at birth (SRB) is a near constant. The gender imbalance is likely an evolutionary adaptation to the biological fact that females live longer than males. At every year of life, men have higher death rates than women. Hence an SRB of between 105 and 107 boys allows for there to be roughly equal numbers of men and women when the groups reach childbearing ages.

The SRB in the United States in 1950 was 105 and was still 105 in 2021; in fact, it has been stable in the U.S. for as long as SRB data has been gathered. In contrast, in South Korea the SRB was at the normal range from 1950 to around 1980, but increased to 110 in 1985 and to 115 in 1990.

After fluctuating a bit at elevated levels through the 1990s and early 2000s, it returned to the biologically normal range by 2010. In 2022, South Korea's SRB was 105 – well within the normal level. But by then, the seeds for today's imbalance of marriage-age South Koreans was set.

A PREFERENCE FOR SONS

There are several reasons why South Korea's SRB was out of balance for 30 years.

South Korea experienced a rapid fertility decline in a 20- to 30-year period beginning in the 1960s. From six children per woman in 1960, fertility fell to four children in 1972, then to two children in 1984. By 2022, South Korea's fertility rate had dropped to 0.82 – the lowest fertility rate in the world and far below the rate of 2.1 needed to replace the population.

Yet, South Korea's long-held cultural preference for sons did not shift as quickly as childbearing declined. Having at least one son was a strong desire influencing fertility preferences in South Korea, especially up through the early years of the 21st century.

And the declining fertility rate posed a problem. When women have many children, the probability that at least one will be a boy is high. With only two children, the probability that neither will be a

son is around 25%, and when women have only one child, it is less than 50%.

In order to ensure that families would continue to have boys, many South Koreans turned to readily available techniques to identify the gender of the fetus, such as screening in the early stages of pregnancy. Abortion, which is legal and socially acceptable in South Korea, was then often used to allow families to select the sex of their child.

SEX BY THE NUMBERS

In South Korea, beginning in around 1980 and lasting up to around 2010 or so, many more extra boys were born than girls. When these extra boys reach adulthood and start looking for South Korean girls to marry, many will be unsuccessful.

The extra boys born in the 1980s and 1990s are now of marriage age, and many will be looking to marry and start a family. Many more will be reaching marriage age in the next two decades.

I have calculated that owing to the unbalanced SRBs in South Korea between 1980 and 2010, approximately 700,000 to 800,000 extra boys were born.

Already this is having an effect in a society where over the centuries virtually everyone was expected to marry, and where marriage was nearly universal. Recent research by Statistics Korea showed that in 2023, over 36% of South Koreans between the ages of 19 and 34 intended to get married; this is a decline from over 56% in 2012.

FOREIGN BRIDES AND 'BACHELOR GHETTOS'

The immigration of foreign-born women might help address the imbalance. Research by demographers Guy Abel and Nayoung Heo has shown that financial assistance from the South Korean government is already supporting the immigration to South Korea of Korean women from northeastern China and of foreign women from some less wealthy countries, such as Vietnam, the Philippines and some Eastern European countries.

If the extra bachelors do not marry immigrant brides, they will have no alternative but to develop their own lives and livelihoods. Some might settle in "bachelor ghettos" in Seoul and in South Korea's other big cities of Busan and Daegu, where commercial sex outlets are more prevalent. Such "ghettos" have already been observed in other Asian cities where men outnumber women, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou in China.

The consequences for South Korean society of the higher than biologically normal SRBs is a problem of the country's own making. South Korea's high fertility of the mid-20th century was holding the country back economically. Its program to bring down a fertility rate of nearly six children per woman was hugely successful. But its very success has been problematic.

The speed of South Korea's fertility transition meant that the evolution to a more modern familial normative structure – that is, with about two children per family and with less preference given to boys – lagged behind. Today, the SRB imbalances appear to be a thing of the past. Women in South Korea have greater access to education and employment, and there is less pressure for men to be sole wage earners. Together with the South Korean government's efforts to reduce sex selection beginning in the late 1980s, the premium for boys over girls has dropped.

Yet despite the relaxed desire for sons, long-term social issues related to gender imbalance, especially regarding the marriage market, will remain in South Korea for decades to come. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

FOOTBALL

Madrid and Atletico kickoff Spanish Super Cup in Saudi Arabia

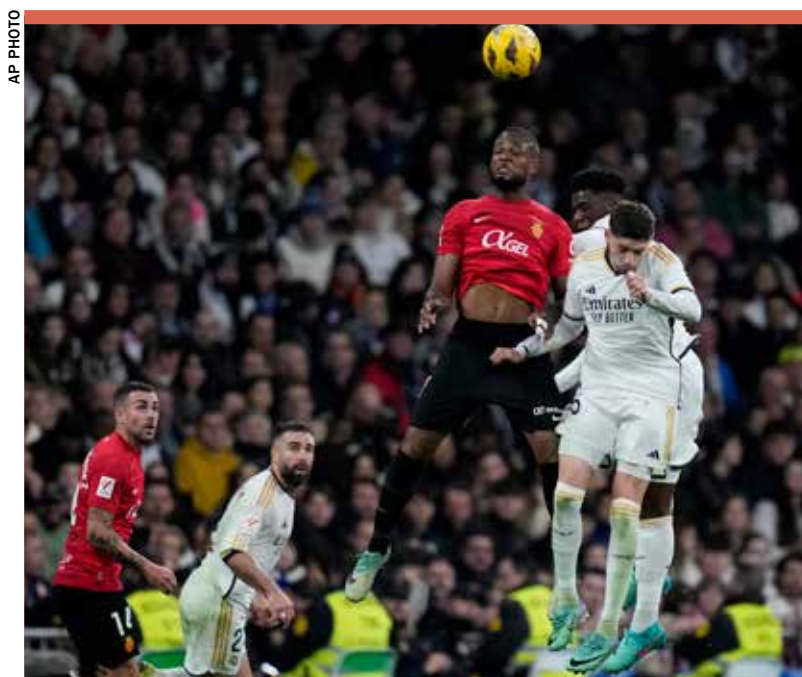
TALES AZZONI, MADRID

WITH Real Madrid enjoying good momentum and Atletico Madrid on a bit of a slump, the city rivals meet in the semifinal of the Spanish Super Cup in Saudi Arabia today in the first of three matches between the clubs in less than a month.

After the Super Cup, Madrid and Atletico will clash again on Jan. 18 in the round of 16 of the Copa del Rey, and then on Feb. 4 at the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium in their second Spanish league match of the season.

Madrid has won its last five games in all competitions and is enjoying an unbeaten run of 19 consecutive matches. The team's only loss this season came against Atletico in the Spanish league, 3-1 at the Metropolitano stadium, which is where the Copa's single-elimination game will take place next week.

It's also where Atletico won 20



Mallorca's Jose Manuel Copete jumps for the ball with Real Madrid's Federico Valverde

in a row across all competitions to tie a club record in a streak that ended with a 3-3 draw against Getafe in the Spanish league in December.

Diego Simeone's team went on a strong run after that home win against Madrid, advancing to the knockout rounds of the Champions League and getting near

the top of the Spanish league. But it has hit some speedbumps recently, winning only two of its last five matches in all competitions.

One of its two recent losses came at Girona, the second-place team at the league's halfway point. The 4-3 defeat dropped Atletico to fifth place, outside the Champions League places. It sits 10 points behind leader Madrid.

Atletico and Madrid also met in the 2020 final, with Madrid winning on penalties in what marked the first time the Super Cup was taken to Saudi Arabia in a lucrative multi-year deal for the clubs and the Spanish soccer federation.

The Super Cup's new "final four" format pits together the top two teams in the Spanish league last season and the last two Copa del Rey finalists.

The other semifinal will be played on Thursday between Barcelona and Osasuna, last season's runner-up to Madrid in the Copa del Rey.

Atletico forward Antoine Griezmann enters the game tied with Luis Aragonés as the club's all-time top scorer with 173 goals.

Madrid remains without some of its main players because of long-term injuries, including goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and central defenders Éder Militão and David Alaba. Young Turkey international Arda Güler made his debut in a Copa del Rey match this past weekend and could have more minutes in Saudi Arabia. Vinícius Júnior, Rodrygo and Jude Bellingham are set to lead Madrid's attack.

Barcelona beat Madrid in last year's Super Cup final to win its first title since the arrival of coach Xavi Hernández and the departure of Lionel Messi.

Xavi's team arrives at this year's tournament under pressure after a series of lackluster performances that recently drew jeers from its home fans.

The Catalan club edged fourth-division club Barbastro 3-2 in the third round of the Copa del Rey on Sunday. It was coming off hard-fought wins against last-place Almeria and midtable Las Palmas in the Spanish league, and before that it hadn't won in three straight games in all competitions.

Barcelona is third in the Spanish league, seven points behind Madrid and Girona. **MDT/AP**

AD

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 Io

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

MACAUCLOSER

LIVING & ARTS MAGAZINE

NOW ON SALE

SPACIAL 沉思
CONTEMPLATIONS 空間

澳門第五屆國際攝影博覽會
THE 5TH MACAU PHOTOGRAPHY ARTS FESTIVAL

享譽盛名的德國攝影大師CANDIDA HOFFER
在澳門藝術博物館展示她過去二十年攝影生涯的佳作
RENOWNED GERMAN PHOTOGRAPHER CANDIDA HOFFER
PRESENTS 20 YEARS OF WORK AT MACAO MUSEUM OF ART

MACAUCLOSER

OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

ORDER ON CHINA-MYANMAR BORDER SHARED CONCERN

Strengthening border security and maintaining the stability of the border have always been a top priority in the cooperation between China and Myanmar, as it has a huge bearing on the well-being of the people of both countries.

Thus, it came as no surprise that during the meetings between Vice-Foreign Minister Sun Weidong and Myanmar leader Min Aung Hlaing and other senior officials, during Sun's three-day visit to the country that ended on Saturday, the two sides pledged that they will jointly maintain peace and stability across the border, continue to build the China-Myanmar economic corridor to promote mutual economic and social development, and cooperate to combat cross-border crimes such as telecom fraud, and jointly promote regional peace, tranquility, development and prosperity.

A similar message was conveyed when State Councillor and Minister of Public Security Wang Xiaohong made a video call with Myanmar Union Minister for Home Affairs Yar Pyae on the weekend, during which they vowed to deepen law enforcement to safeguard security and stability in the border areas, particularly by cracking down on telecom and online fraud cases. The stepped-up contacts follow a series of disruptive events including armed conflict near the China-Myanmar border that have posed a threat to people's safety.

In the latest development, five people were injured last week by artillery shells fired during fighting between government and rebel forces that fell on a small town on the Chinese side of the border, prompting the Foreign Ministry to lodge a protest with "the relevant parties", while urging them to "stop fighting and take measures to prevent the recurrence of such vicious incidents".

Such remarks should not fall on deaf ears, because the determination of the Chinese government to safeguard the lives and property of the Chinese people should not be underestimated.

This has been evidenced in the joint operations China and Myanmar have conducted in recent months to crack down on the illegal activities along the border where tens of thousands Chinese people have been trapped and forced by criminal gangs to carry out scams targeting Chinese people via the internet.

More than 31,000 suspected fraudsters had been extradited to China by the end of November, including three group leaders who were on the most-wanted-list of the Chinese public security organs, with the Chinese police issuing a new batch of arrest warrants last month for 10 alleged "ringleaders" of online scam syndicates.

It will likely not be long before order is restored in the border areas as China and Myanmar join hands to combat cross-border crimes and internet scams in their pursuit of a China-Myanmar community with a shared future.

SPAIN PROBES CONTAMINATION OF ATLANTIC SHORE BY COUNTLESS PLASTIC PELLETS SPILLED FROM SHIP

THE BUZZ

Spanish state prosecutors have opened an investigation of countless tiny plastic pellets washing up on the country's northwest coastline after they were spilled from a transport ship, posing a possible major ecological problem in the area.

The state prosecutor's office made the announcement yesterday [Macau time] after having studied the arrival of pellets on the shore during the previous weeks.

The prosecutors fear that the pellets could have toxic properties and added that there are indications that they have also been found on Portuguese and even French shores.

The spill was first reported to authorities on Dec. 13 when hundreds of thousands of tiny white balls began washing up on Spain's Atlantic shoreline.

Spain's government representative for the northwest Galicia region said that the container ship Toconao, sailing under a Liberian flag, lost six shipping containers off the coast of Portugal, some 80 kilometers to the west of Viana do Castelo.

One of the six containers contained 1,000 sacks of pellets, with each sack holding 25 kilograms of the tiny plastic balls used in the fabrication of plastic products, the government representative said.



From left: Yorgos Lanthimos, Emma Stone, Willem Dafoe, Mark Ruffalo, and Ramy Youssef pose with the award for best motion picture, musical or comedy for "Poor Things"

GOLDEN GLOBES RATINGS REBOUND TO 9.4 MILLION VIEWERS, UP FROM 2023 TELECAST

JAKE COYLE, NEW YORK

REVIEWS have been poor for Sunday's 81st Golden Globes, but the telecast pulled in an average of 9.4 million viewers, up about 50% from last year, according to CBS.

The ceremony had the benefit of an NFL lead-in, as well as an especially starry gathering that drew Taylor Swift, Oprah Winfrey, Timothée Chalamet, Kylie Jenner, Leonardo DiCaprio and many more. The night's biggest winner, "Oppenheimer," was also a huge ticket-seller, with nearly \$1 billion in box office.

But the broadcast hosted by comedian Jo Koy, was slammed by critics for a fumbled opening monologue and a rushed pace throughout that struggled to rekindle the "Hollywood's party of the year"-vibe that the Globes have long fostered.

But more viewers tuned in than they have since before the pandemic. Back in 2020, 18.4 million watched the Globes.

The ratings were a marked improvement over last year's Globes. That telecast, hosted by Jerrod Carmichael and aired on a Tuesday, attracted 6.3 million viewers, a new low for the ceremony on NBC. At their peak, the Globes often drew closer to 20 million viewers.

Amid the decline of linear television, all award shows have struggled to reach the numbers they once did. But the Globes have been tested especially due to their own actions. After The Los Angeles Times reported that the HFPA had no Black members, Hollywood boycotted the organization and the 2022 Globes were booted off the air.

They returned in 2023 on a one-year trial with NBC, but the Globes' network home for decades ultimately dropped the show. After shopping the broadcast around, including to streaming platforms, CBS last month signed on to air Sunday's show.

Sunday's broadcast was a crucial test for the revamped Globes. Following

the scandals, the awards were acquired by Eldridge Industries and Dick Clark Productions, which Penske Media owns, and turned into a for-profit venture. The Hollywood Foreign Press Association was dissolved and a group of some 300 entertainment journalists from around the world was formed to vote on the awards.

CBS also streamed it to Showtime subscribers on Paramount TV+. CBS didn't provide streaming viewership figures but said it was the second-largest live-streamed CBS special event on Paramount+.

Koy, speaking on ABC's "GMA3," acknowledged that he would "be lying" if he said the criticism "doesn't hurt."

"It's a tough room. And it was a hard job, I'm not going to lie," said Koy, who landed the hosting job two weeks before the ceremony. "Getting that gig, and then having the amount of time that we had to prepare — that was a crash course." MDT/AP



Russia's national elections commission yesterday registered the Communist Party's candidate to compete with President Vladimir Putin in the March election that Putin is all but certain to win. Nikolai Kharitonov (pictured) joins two other candidates who were approved for the ballot last week. Kharitonov, a member of the lower house of parliament, has opposed some of Putin's domestic policies but not Russia's military operation in Ukraine.

Denmark An appeals court yesterday upheld guilty verdicts for three members of an Iranian separatist group convicted of promoting terror in Iran and gathering information for an unnamed Saudi intelligence service. The three were arrested in February 2020 in the town of Ringsted, 60 kilometers southwest of the capital of Copenhagen, and convicted of promoting terror over a deadly attack on a military parade in the southwestern Iranian city of Ahwaz in September 2018.



France Gabriel Attal (pictured) was named yesterday as the youngest-ever prime minister, as President Emmanuel Macron seeks a fresh start for the rest of his term amid growing political pressure from the far right. Macron's office announced the appointment in a statement. Attal, 34, rose to prominence as the government spokesman and education minister. He is France's first openly gay prime minister.

Spain Face masks will be mandatory in hospitals and healthcare centers starting today due to a surge in respiratory illnesses, the Health Ministry said. The new leftist minority coalition government is imposing the measure despite opposition from most of Spain's 17 autonomous regions.