



A REVIEW OF LEGAL PROVISIONS RELATED TO LEADERS AND MANAGERS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE IS WITHIN THE 2024 LEGISLATION PLAN, SAFF'S DIRECTOR NG WAI HAN SAYS

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CE PLEDGES FREEDOM OF THE PRESS UNDER CONSTITUTION, BASIC LAW

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DESANTIS DROPS US PRESIDENTIAL RACE AND ENDORSES TRUMP

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AP PHOTO



South Korea's presidential office said yesterday it approved a request by the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission for a one-year extension after investigators sought more time to examine human rights violations linked to past military governments, including the widespread falsifying of child origins that fueled a foreign adoption boom in the 1970s and '80s. In granting the request for an extension through May 2025, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol acknowledged the need to "restore the honor of those who were unjustly victimized during our past history and those who sacrificed for the sake of the country."

AP PHOTO



India About 80 chartered flights have landed at the new international airport of India's holy city of Ayodhya for yesterday's partial opening of the controversial grand temple for one of Hinduism's most revered deities, Lord Ram. Ayodhya's airport can barely accommodate the influx of private jets. "The planes will depart after dropping guests," airport manager Saurabh Singh said.

AP PHOTO



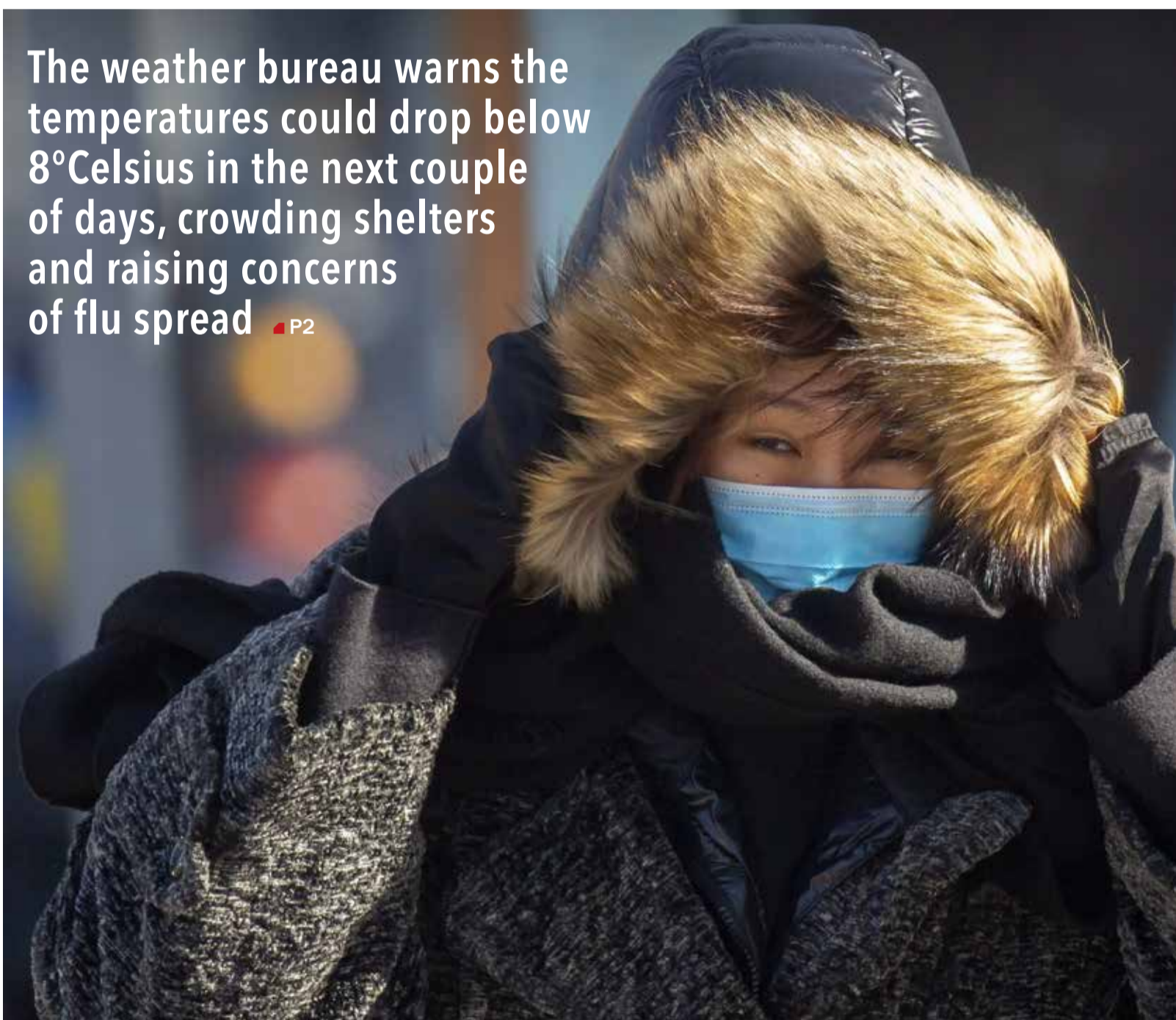
Egypt's leader said his country stands shoulder to shoulder with Somalia in its dispute with landlocked Ethiopia, which struck a deal with Somaliland to obtain access to the sea and establish a marine force base. President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi slammed Ethiopia's agreement with the breakaway region. He called on Ethiopia to seek benefits from seaports in Somalia and Djibouti "through transitional means," rather than through attempts to "control another (country's) territory."

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MERCURY DROPS ABRUPTLY IN CITY

The weather bureau warns the temperatures could drop below 8°Celsius in the next couple of days, crowding shelters and raising concerns of flu spread

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ANTHONY LAM

HEALTH

GROUP INFECTIONS OF FLU, COVID-19 LOGGED

ANTHONY LAM

THREE groups have contracted the flu or Covid-19 in the past few days and residents

are reminded to be vigilant, the Health Bureau (SSM) has warned.

A group of six Primary 2 students at the Santa Rosa de

Lima Secondary School in Nam Van have been diagnosed with Covid-19. They all developed symptoms, such as fever and coughs, on Jan. 17. Some of their

Covid-19 tests yielded positive results. The SSM has preliminarily identified it as a case of seral infection.

As of statement time, no severe cases or complications have been confirmed among this group. Fellow students and staff at the same school will be monitored, the SSM said.

Meanwhile, a group of 13 students from Primary 1 and Primary 4 levels at Choi Kou Middle School have been diagnosed with a flu-like disease. On Jan. 13, symptoms started developing. As of statement time, no severity or complications have been discovered.

However, on Jan. 18, four infants from a Fujianese kindergarten in Iao Hon District were diagnosed with the onset of flu-like diseases. As of statement time, no severe cases or complications have been logged.

Corresponding tactics have been taken at the latter two schools.

Meanwhile, in Hong Kong, Professor Ivan Hung Fan Ngai, Chair of Infectious Diseases at the Department of Medicine of The University of Hong Kong (HKU), has been cited by the press in Hong Kong as warning about the arrival of the Covid-19

peak, which he said has occurred. He believed that this peak would linger for a longer time, supposedly over Chinese New Year.

The academic said 80% of the hospitalized upper respiratory tract infection patients at the Queen Mary Hospital in Hong Kong are severe Covid-19 patients, with most of them being the elderly or the chronically ill. He said only a handful of patients were hospitalized for flu.

Hung also estimated the flu peak will only arrive after Chinese New Year.

Dr Mike Kwan Yat Wah, Honorary Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine of the HKU, was cited by the Hong Kong press as warning that younger patients "have a probability" of developing acute complications after contracting SARS-CoV-2.

Also warning about the high mortality rate of Covid-19 in elderly patients, the doctor reminded people to be vigilant against the "destructive consequences" that Covid-19 may bring about.

Both Hong Kong doctors and the Macau SSM suggest people get vaccinated.

AUTHORITIES FOUND 64 SUSPECTED OF WORKING ILLEGALLY LAST MONTH

In December last year, authorities detected 64 people suspected of working illegally. The suspects were found during the joint inspection operations of the Public Security Police Force (PSP) and the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL). The inspections took place at construction sites and private buildings, as well as commercial and industrial establishments at 175 locations. Despite inspecting fewer locations compared to previous months, the number of suspected illegal workers increased. PSP and DSAL attributed this to the fact that several of the establishments inspected were in sudden need of additional manpower for the holiday season.

COLD WEATHER

Ilha Verde winter shelter reopens

RENATO MARQUES

COLD weather has prompted the reopening of the Ilha Verde winter shelter, according to the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS).

The shelter, which offers lodging, blankets, meals and beverages to the needy, is located at Rua Leste da Ilha Verde, 34, Edifício do Bairro da Ilha Verde, E1.

A cold weather yellow warning from the Meteorological and Geophysics Bureau (SMG) at 6:50 a.m. yesterday prompted the reopening.

The SMG warned the weather "is expected to be cold in Macau continuously in the next couple of days. The minimum temperature will be 8°C or



below."

Temperatures will drop further today (Jan. 23) and tomorrow (Jan. 24) with the bureau warning the public, especially the elderly, children and per-

sons with chronic illnesses, to dress warmly.

HOMELESSNESS CONCERNS CARITAS

Late last week the director of Caritas' "Casa Cor-

cel," Ip Chi Leng, expressed concern over what she called "hidden cases of homeless people in Macau."

She believes official statistics underreport homelessness in Macau because

the homeless hide so they will not be reported to the authorities.

Ip's comments came on the sidelines of last Friday's 2023 Decorations, Medals and Certificates of Merit awards ceremony at the Macao Cultural Center, where she received the Medal for Community Service.

Established in 1994, "Casa Corcel" was Macau's first homeless shelter.

In 2005, government reconstruction works transformed the building into a comfortable living environment for the homeless, with the building being renamed "Casa Corcel."

Charitable organization Caritas Macau runs "Casa Corcel," aiming to improve the living conditions of the homeless, to assist them to return to normal life and integrate into society and to develop the public's understanding and acceptance of homelessness.

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STADIUM CONCERT

Economic benefits mitigate concert woes: Ao Ieong

RENATO MARQUES

CONCERTS such as those last weekend at Taipa's Olympic Sport Stadium carry an important economic benefit in the attraction of tourists, the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong, said yesterday.

Ao Ieong was speaking to Chinese language media on the sidelines of the Lunar New Year Luncheon with Chinese-language news organizations.

She was responding to questions about complaints from residents in the surrounding areas of the Stadium and Taipa Old Village.

She noted that while such events bring clear benefits, there is room to improve aspects such as traffic control, crowd flow, event size and performance schedules.

She hopes a balance can be found to minimize the events' impacts on residents' lives while attracting tourists to Macau, which is a government goal.

Asked if similar events will soon be authorized, considering the adverse public opinion, Ao Ieong said the government will consider public opinion and review procedures when deciding

how to proceed.

She said the government cannot establish or change a policy because of an isolated event but that it needs to act comprehensively.

Ao Ieong said it would be easier for the government or the organizers if concerts could be held in the integrated resorts, but this would reduce the benefits for the wider community.

She said other venues could be

considered if they meet the conditions for hosting such events.

The Jockey Club or the Macao East Asian Games Dome could be considered as concert venues, she said, adding that in the Northern District, the former Canidrome is also a possibility, although on a smaller scale.

The Secretary said that, in general, the conditions were not that bad, and the concerts did not cause that much chaos or ac-

cidents.

She called on residents to be more understanding of the government's efforts to expand the source of tourists and diversify the economy.

There were two concerts Saturday and Sunday, featuring Korean boy band "Seventeen," which filled Taipa's streets with thousands of fans.

Residents filed several complaints protesting the high volu-

me of the music, the traffic congestion and the construction of the stage, among other aspects.

The most chaotic moments occurred after the concerts.

Fans exited the Stadium in such numbers that they exceeded the capacity of the surrounding streets and roads.

Public transport also struggled to cope with the spike in demand.

The Transport Bureau (DSAT) announced yesterday that several bus stops surrounding the Stadium would be closed from as early as 10 a.m. Jan. 20 until the following day.

The bus stops at Jardim de Va Pou, Mei Keng Garden, and Jockey Club, were also suspended from 8 p.m. Jan. 20 and 21 as was the operation of the Light Rapid Transit - Stadium Station and respective pedestrian flyovers.

These were not the only concerts held over the weekend in Taipa.

Galaxy Arena, just a few hundred meters away, hosted on Sunday another mega-event of the same kind with the concert of the American pop rock band "One Republic."

K-POP CONCERT ORGANIZERS APOLOGIZE

The organizers of the two K-pop concerts held at the Taipa's Olympic Sports Stadium have apologized for the inconvenience caused to locals.

Residents living near the Olympic Sports Centre complained about the noise and light pollution caused by the group's performances as well as restrictions on access to, and the use of, public transport.

However, the company behind the musical performances, "Supernoize Group," argued the event had attracted over 40,000 spectators.

The president of The Industry and Commerce Federation of Islands of Macao said the event had increased the business of local businesses by between 30% to 50% compared to normal days in Taipa and Coloane.

'CITY OF SHOWS' CONCEPT NEEDS CLARIFICATION

AMID protests against the past weekend's shows at the Macau Stadium, lawmaker Nick Lei has suggested further cooperation with Hengqin to cultivate the concept of the "City of Shows."

The "City of Shows" concept was revealed in this year's Policy Address, but no details were provided about it.

Instead, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng had pointed to local resort venues, which he described as "world-class," as proof of the concept's feasibility.

Seeing the Macau-Hengqin integration as "an irrevocable inclination," Lei suggested Hengqin should be further utilized to help Macau realize the concept, local media Exmoo cited him as saying.

He also suggested the government clarify the concept - whether it would be used to boost the economy or merely as a "cultural namecard."

Should it be the former, he said, Hengqin may not be of great help. However, should it be the latter, Hengqin should be further utilized.

He said local cultural and performing circles, among other industries, need to see a clear plan. Otherwise, the market will not know how to work towards the realization of the concept, which will eventually remain as is.

Talking about past concerts, the lawmaker said studies should be conducted on striking a balance between economic development and the concerts' impact on daily lives. **AL**



Nick Lei

ANTHONY LAM

CE PLEDGES FREEDOM OF THE PRESS UNDER CONSTITUTION, BASIC LAW

CHIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng has pledged to the press that its freedom will be safeguarded in compliance with the National Constitution and the Basic Law.

His comment was made during a speech at a luncheon held to greet the Chinese press amid the New Year.

“In line with the provisions of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China and the Basic Law of the Macau SAR, the government will continue to uphold press freedom as always.”

“It will give active support for media outlets to conduct interviews, conduct professional training, learning and exchange, and fully assist the press in performing their professional duties,” the head of the government said.

Ho also called on Chinese-language news organizations in Macau to continue the tradition of patriotism and love for Macau by attracting more readers with outstanding reports and exerting greater influence to serve the city,

integrate into national development and build a global presence.

He also hoped Chinese-language news organizations can report extensively on the events surrounding the 25th anniversary of the SAR’s establishment, providing readers with more insights into the new trends, developments and achievements in Macau as well as in Hengqin.

The Chinese press should also highlight Macau’s advantages and features as a city suitable for tourism and business.

He said the government will strive to open a new landscape amid changes, go to greater lengths to maintain national security and social stability, and take the initiative to strengthen its overall arrangements for a more solid bulwark of national security.

The government will step up



to its responsibility, take concrete actions and foster positive interplay between stability

and progress, the head of the government added.

Today, the CE welcomes En-

glish and Media press representatives for the Spring luncheon.

TRANSPORT

Helicopter services resume this weekend

STAFF REPORTER

HELICOPTER transport services between Macau and Hong Kong as well as Shenzhen will resume Friday (Jan. 26), operator East Asia Airlines Ltd has announced.

According to the same source, the services will continue to operate under the tradename Sky Shuttle, offering scheduled flights between Hong Kong and Macau, as well as between Macau and Shenzhen.

The service has been suspended since 2020 due to Covid-19-related travel restrictions.

In a note published by Sky Shuttle, the company also announced the new timetable and fares.

The company plans to operate two round-trip flights between Hong Kong and Macau (Thursday to



Monday), as well as one round-trip flight between Macau and Shenzhen (Thursday to Monday).

The flight duration for each leg will be approximately 15 minutes.

Bookings can now be made through Turbojet and Sky Shuttle ticket of-

fices and the official website.

The company said the resumption of operations is expected to solidify Sky Shuttle’s position as a unique and integral element in the high-end transportation sector of the Greater Bay Area market.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

NEW RULES FOR CIVIL SERVANT APPOINTMENTS IN 2024

A review of legal provisions related to leaders and managers in the civil service is within the 2024 legislation plan, Ng Wai Han, director of the Public Administration and Civil Services Bureau (SAFP), has said.

The SAFP director was responding to lawmaker Lei Chan U’s written inquiry.

She added it will improve the processes for the selection, appointment, renewal and termination of leadership and supervisory personnel.

She said relevant laws have been in effect for some time and some of the provisions may not be consistent with the current actual situation.

Earlier at the parliament, Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong said the review must be conducted carefully, because an accountability system that is too strict will discourage civil servants from seeking managerial positions.

Echoing her superintendent, Ng said that while amending the law, consideration will be given to formulating an appropriate fault-tolerance mechanism so that officials can better



demonstrate their sense of service and responsibility.

According to current laws, bureau-level leaders, department-level and division-level managers are appointed through a fixed-term appointment system, with the appointment period ranging from one to three years.

The civil service official said the system is designed for the actual situation in Macau.

It affects decisions on appointment renewals or terminations based on performance during the appointment period.

In terms of rewards, the

official said, leaders with outstanding performance - and particularly outstanding work performance - can receive public commendations and rewards.

Supervisors are subject to the reward system applicable to civil servants’ work performances and receive commendations, merit holidays or bonuses.

A total of 71 supervisors were rewarded in 2022.

The SAR government has always had a legal system and enforcement mechanism for the appointment, management, punishment and reward of leaders and supervisors, she said. **AL**

TIMETABLE

MACAU-HONG KONG:

Macau to Hong Kong: 10 a.m., 4:30 p.m.
 Hong Kong to Macau: 10:30 a.m., 5 p.m.

MACAU-SHENZHEN:

Macau to Shenzhen: 1 p.m.
 Shenzhen to Macau: 1:30 p.m.

NERDWALLET

Retiring wasn't easy – even after years of writing about it

LIZ WESTON,
MDT/NERDWALLET

A couple of years ago, I wrote a column about how to have a retirement worth saving for. It ended with a quote from personal finance educator Barbara O'Neill, who reflected on how the pandemic disrupted many retirees' plans.

"It wasn't just two years lost, it was two good years," O'Neill said then. "You don't know how many of those you have left."

One of my younger colleagues objected to that sentiment, saying it was a jarring ending to an otherwise upbeat column. But my older co-workers got it. Those of us who currently have good health and energy don't know how long those blessings will last. There's no guarantee we'll get to enjoy the retirements we have planned.

That lesson was driven home in July 2023, when a longtime colleague died at age 61. We'd had many talks over the years about the retirement he had envisioned. It's heartbreaking that his dreams will never happen.

But his death was the push I needed to make my own decision. By the time you read this, I will have retired from my job at personal finance site NerdWallet.

MAKING THE DECISION WAS HARD

When our financial planner told us we could afford to retire, my initial reaction wasn't joy but



bemusement.

I've been writing about retirement planning for three decades and saving for even longer, but it was always a goal in the distant, misty future. Making the decision felt like jumping off a cliff.

Would I be OK without the intellectual challenges, social interactions and sense of satisfaction I get from my job? Had I accomplished everything I wanted to in my career? And just how much would I miss that nice, steady paycheck and all the wonderful benefits NerdWallet provides, including massively subsidized health care?

DOING WHAT A JOURNALIST DOES: RESEARCH

At this point, I have to acknowledge the huge privilege of even having a choice about when to retire. Almost half of retirees leave the workforce earlier than they planned, according to the Employee Benefit Research Institute. Some are laid off or forced out. Others have health issues or must care for loved ones who are sick or disabled. Many people keep working out of necessity: They have bills to pay and too little savings.

Knowing all that didn't make the choice easy, however. So I did

what I do best: copious research. I found it hugely helpful to read O'Neill's book, "Flipping a Switch: Your Guide to Happiness and Financial Security in Later Life." Another good read is "Independence Day: What I Learned About Retirement from Some Who've Done It and Some Who Never Will," by Steve Lopez, my former Los Angeles Times colleague.

My husband and I had many, many discussions with our financial planner. We asked her to rerun our plan with different assumptions about what we'd spend, how we'd tap our funds, what the markets might do and what we'd

earn with part-time work. This stress testing gave us confidence in our plan.

Our planner also connected us with an insurance agent who helped us figure out health coverage. My husband is old enough for Medicare, but I'm a few years shy of 65 and we have a daughter going to college in another state. I'm glad we have the option to buy health insurance through the Affordable Care Act exchanges. But continuing my employer's group coverage for my daughter and myself through the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) turned out to be the most cost-effective option for now.

Our financial plan worked and health care was solved, but emotionally I was still resisting. Ultimately, I realized why. I was looking at retirement solely as an ending.

LOOKING AHEAD, RATHER THAN BACK

With previous big life changes — buying a home, getting married, having a child, starting new jobs — excitement about the adventure to come quickly overcame concerns about what I was giving up. I needed to stop focusing on what I was retiring from and start contemplating what I was retiring to.

Today, I'm seeing retirement for what it is: the beginning of an interesting new chapter in our lives. The time I once spent building a career will be invested in travel, volunteering, and deepening relationships with friends and family.

I'm proud of what I've accomplished. I've won awards, written five books, contributed to the growth of a company (NerdWallet) and its award-winning podcast ("Smart Money"). Most importantly, I've helped people solve their money problems. I'll continue with that last part, but I'm also looking forward to the rest of what comes next.

RETAIL

Macy's rejects \$5.8B takeover bid from two investment firms

MACY'S is rejecting a \$5.8 billion takeover offer from investment firms Arkhouse Management and Brigade Capital Management, saying they didn't provide a viable financing plan.

Arkhouse and Brigade offered \$21 per share for the stock they don't already own.

Last week Macy's Inc. said that it was laying off about 3.5% of its total headcount, or approximately 2,350 employees. The department store operator also announced that it was closing five locations.

Macy's said its board reviewed the proposal and that it not only had concerns about the financing plan, but it also felt there was a "lack of compelling value."

"Following careful consideration and efforts to gather additional information from Arkhouse and Brigade, the board determined that Arkhouse and Brigade's proposal is not actionable and that it fails to provide compelling value to Macy's Inc. shareholders," Jeff Genette, outgoing chairman and CEO of Macy's, said in a statement. "We continue

to be open to opportunities that are in the best interests of the company and all of our shareholders."

Tony Spring takes over as president and CEO of Macy's next month.

Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData, said in an email that Macy's management doesn't seem to want to do a deal.

"They likely see the real-estate focused approach of Arkhouse as wrong for the business – and, they have a point," Saunders said. "Monetizing real estate with no focus on revitalizing the retailer and bolstering trading

would produce short-term gains but severely weaken long-term prospects."

But Saunders noted that Macy's has also had difficulty adding value, having neglected its stores and retail fundamentals for years.

"Unless other bidders step forward, Macy's shareholders are caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. They can back existing management on the continued promise of jam tomorrow, or cash out to an investor whose plans are unknown and could well hasten the demise of one of retail's most ico-



nic names," Saunders said. Shares of Macy's Inc., based in New York City, rose nearly 2% before the market opened yesterday. MDT/AP

FREEZING WEATHER

Landslide in mountainous southwestern Yunnan province buries 47 people

A landslide in southwestern China's mountainous Yunnan province early yesterday buried 47 people, killing at least two, and forced the evacuation of 200 more amid freezing temperatures and falling snow.

The disaster struck just before 6 a.m. in the village of Liangshui in the northeastern part of Yunnan province. Rescue efforts were underway to find victims buried in 18 separate houses, the Zhenxiong county publicity department said.

Two bodies were pulled from the rubble, according to state broadcaster CCTV. The cause of the landslide wasn't immediately known as survivors and rescuers struggled with snow and freezing temperatures that were forecast to persist for at least the next three days.

Luo Dongmei, 35, was sleeping when the landslide struck, but she survived and was relocated to a school building by local authorities.

"I was asleep, but my brother knocked on the door and woke me up. They said there was a landslide and the bed was shaking, so they rushed upstairs and woke us up," Luo said.

Luo, her husband and their three children, along with many other residents, have been provided with food at the school but are still waiting for blankets and other protection from the cold weather, she said.

Luo said she's been unable to contact her sister and aunt, who lived closer to the site of the land-



This screenshot shows rescuers working at the site of a landslide in Liangshui Village, Tangfang Town in the city of Zhaotong, in Yunnan Province

slide. "The only thing I can do is to wait," she said.

Last week, rescuers evacuated tourists from a remote skiing area in northwestern China where dozens of avalanches triggered by heavy snow had trapped more than 1,000 people for a week. The avalanches blocked roads, stranding both tourists and residents in a village in Altay prefecture in the Xinjiang region, close to China's border with Mongolia, Russia and Kazakhstan.

Landslides, often caused by rain or unsafe construction work, are not uncommon in China. At least 70 people were killed in landslides last year, including more than 50 at an open pit mine in China's Inner Mongolia region.

In all, natural disasters in China left 691 people dead and missing and last year, causing direct economic losses of about 345 billion yuan (\$48 billion, according to the National Commission for Disaster Reduction and the Minis-

try of Emergency Management. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Natural Resources enacted emergency response measures for geological disasters and sent a work team of experts to the site.

Minister of Emergency Management Wang Xiangxi has traveled to the landslide site to guide rescue operations, according to a statement from the ministry.

The landslide in Yunnan also came just over a month after China's most powerful earthquake

in years struck the northwest in a remote region between Gansu and Qinghai province. At least 149 people were killed in the magnitude 6.2 temblor that struck on Dec. 18, reducing homes to rubble and triggering heavy mudslides that inundated two villages in Qinghai province.

Nearly 1,000 people were injured and more than 14,000 homes were destroyed in what was China's deadliest earthquake in nine years. **MDT/AP**

TAIWAN

Six Chinese balloons flew over the island, while warplanes and ships also detected: Taipei

TAIWAN said yesterday that six Chinese balloons either flew over the island or through airspace just north of it, while Chinese warplanes and navy ships were also detected in the area.

The dispatch of such balloons, which generally disappear into the Pacific to the east, appears to be on the rise, though their purpose has not been publicly announced.

The island's government

noted the balloon sightings on a list of Chinese People's Liberation Army activity in the waters and airspace around Taiwan. One passed near the southern city of Pingtung, while the others flew just north of the port of Keelung, where Taiwan has an important naval base.

It remains unclear whether the balloons have "an explicit military function, but they appear to be part of a campaign against the self-governed island," which is

part of China's territory.

In the leadup to Taiwan's leadership election earlier this month, China had been stepping up such activities, "along with its rhetorical threats."

The independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party won a third straight term, this time under current deputy leader Lai Ching-te, or William Lai. The pro-unification Nationalist Party won one more seat in the legislature than the DPP.

The party of former Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-je siphoned votes off both parties, especially by appealing to young people fed up with politics as they are.

In the U.S. early last year, President Joe Biden vowed sharper rules to track, monitor and potentially shoot down unknown aerial objects after a three-week drama sparked by the discovery of a suspected Chinese spy balloon transiting much of the United States.

The U.S. labeled the balloon a military craft and shot it down with a missile. It recovered what it said was sophisticated surveillance equipment. China responded angrily, saying it was only a weather balloon that had blown off course and called its downing a major overreaction.

Those are sometimes referred to as China's "gray area tactics."

China's campaign of intimidation against Taiwan

includes the regular deployment of Chinese warships and planes in waters and airspace around the island, often crossing the middle line of the 160-kilometer-wide Taiwan Strait that divides them.

The two split following the seizure of power by Mao Zedong's Communists on the Chinese mainland.

Between Sunday and early Monday morning, four Chinese warplanes and four navy ships were detected around Taiwan, a Taiwan's ministry said. Taiwan's military monitored the situation with combat aircraft, navy vessels and land-based missile systems, the ministry said. **MDT/AP**

AFGHANISTAN

Four rescued, two dead in crash of private Russian jet, the Taliban say

RAHIM FAIEZ, ISLAMABAD

FOUR people have been rescued and two died following the crash of a private Russian jet carrying six over the weekend in Afghanistan, the Taliban said yesterday.

The crash on Saturday took place in a mountainous area in Badakhshan province, some 250 kilometers northeast of Afghanistan's capital, Kabul. Rescue teams were dispatched to the remote rural area that is home to only several thousand people.

Yesterday, the chief Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, posted videos on X, previously known as Twitter, showing the four rescued crew members. He said they were given first aid and were being transferred from Badakhshan to Kabul. He said the four are in good health.

Local authorities in Badakhshan said the bodies of the two killed in the crash will be recovered from the site. The Ta-



liban have not identified any of the six victims of the crash. The Taliban's Transportation and Civil Aviation Ministry said in an online statement the plane

was found in the district of Kuf Ab district, near the Aruz Koh mountain.

On Sunday, Abdul Wahid Rayan, a spokesman for the Ta-

liban's Information and Culture Ministry, blamed an "engine problem" for the crash, without elaborating.

In Moscow, Russian civil aviation authorities said a 1978 Dassault Falcon 10 went missing with four crew members and two passengers. The Russian-registered aircraft "stopped communicating and disappeared from radar screens," authorities said. It described the flight as starting from Thailand's U-Tapao-Rayong-Pattaya International Airport.

The plane had been operating as a charter ambulance flight on a route from Gaya, India, to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and on to Zhukovsky International Airport in Moscow.

Russian officials said the plane belongs to Athletic Group LLC and a private individual. The Associated Press could not immediately reach the owners for comment.

The plane had been with a me-

dical evacuation company based in Morocco. However, a man who answered a telephone number associated with the company Sunday said it was no longer in business and the aircraft now belonged to someone else.

International carriers have largely avoided Afghanistan since the Taliban's 2021 takeover of the country. Those that briefly fly over rush through Afghan airspace while over the sparsely populated Wakhan Corridor in Badakhshan province, a narrow panhandle that juts out of the east of the country between Tajikistan and Pakistan.

Typically, aircraft heading toward the corridor make a sharp turn north around Peshawar and follow the Pakistani border before briefly entering Afghanistan. Zebak is just near the start of the Wakhan Corridor.

Though landlocked, Afghanistan's position in central Asia means it sits along the most direct routes for those traveling from India to Europe and America. After the Taliban came to power, civil aviation simply stopped, as ground controllers no longer managed the airspace.

While nations have slowly eased those restrictions, fears persist about flying through the country. Two Emirati carriers recently resumed commercial flights to Kabul. **MDT/AP**

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C&C RECEIVED THE 1ST SILVER
"DEIGNAN AWARD"
FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN MACAU (2023)



USA

Trump celebrates DeSantis' decision to drop out, ending a bitter feud

BILL BARROW & MICHELLE L. PRICE, ROCHESTER (NH)

DONALD Trump set aside months of criticism and mockery of Ron DeSantis yesterday [Macau time], celebrating his onetime Republican rival as his newest supporter after the Florida governor ended his presidential campaign and endorsed the former president.

For Trump, it's become a familiar ritual to welcome the backing of someone who tried to take him on. Nonetheless, it was notable at the rally in New Hampshire to see Trump praise DeSantis without calling him "DeSantimonious" or "DeSanctus," putting an end to perhaps the most bitter rivalry of Republicans' 2024 campaign.

"I just want to thank Ron and congratulate him on doing a very good job," Trump said at the outset of his remarks. "He was very gracious, and he endorsed me. I appreciate that, and I also look forward to working with Ron." Trump described DeSantis as "a really terrific person."

Earlier in the day, DeSantis said via video that he would be ending his campaign two days before New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation GOP primary. But, Trump's glee aside, it wasn't the warmest of endorsements.

"It's clear to me that a majority of Republican primary voters want to give Donald Trump another chance," DeSantis said, offering matter-of-fact analysis through a forced smile, without adding plaudits for Trump.

"I signed a pledge to support the Republican nominee, and I will honor that pledge," he continued, before adding a dig at the remaining contender, Nikki Haley. DeSantis described the former U.N. ambassador and onetime South Carolina governor as a stand-in for "the old Republican guard of yesteryear, a repackaged form of warmed-over corporatism."

Seemingly unbothered by DeSantis' approach, Trump struck a tone of camaraderie as fellow political combatants. "I will tell you it's not easy,"



Donald Trump speaking during a campaign stop in Rochester, New Hampshire

Trump said in Rochester. "They think it's easy doing this stuff, right? It's not easy."

Then Trump quickly moved on to his typical rally speech, mixing freewheeling attacks on President Joe Biden, the political media, "the deep state" and "warmongers" in Washington, and the criminal justice that has indicted him four times, with 91 felony charges pending in multiple trials.

He devoted more time to criticizing Haley than to praising DeSantis, casting her as a tool of the political establishment he has flouted. He made sweeping promises of peace and prosperity, pledging without offering any detailed plans that he would reverse inflation and end Russia's war in Ukraine. And he repeated his lies that his defeat to Biden in 2020 was due to fraud.

A boisterous crowd at the historic opera house in Rochester laughed, chanted and roared throughout.

"The great silent majority is rising like never before," Trump answered.

DeSantis joins other failed GOP hopefuls, including South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, in endorsing the former president. Trump critic Chris Christie, the former New Jersey governor, and Asa Hutchinson, the former Arkansas governor, declined to endorse Trump after suspending their campaigns; Hutchinson endorsed Haley on Saturday.

Brenda Money Penny, a 64-year-old from Alton, waited in the cold for two hours to see Trump yesterday. Money Penny, who whipped out her driver's license to prove her last name, said she has considered Haley, especially because of the chance to elect the first woman to the presidency. But the Republican-leaning independent said she never considered DeSantis.

"Too flim-flamsy," Money Penny said of the governor. "He needs better campaign people. He doesn't have anybody that's doing him any favors right now."

Ultimately, she settled on Trump: "Tried and true," she said.

The former president seemed to revel in skewering DeSantis throughout the campaign, often making clear it was a personal grudge because he considered the governor's decision to run in the first place an act of disloyalty. Trump endorsed DeSantis, then a congressman, in a competitive 2018 GOP primary for Florida governor. DeSantis went on to win the nomination and the general election. By the time DeSantis won a landslide reelection four years later, though, he was positioning himself for his own White House campaign.

As recently as November, Trump came to Florida and addressed a boisterous crowd at a state GOP meeting standing in front of a sign that read: "Florida is Trump Country." That evening, Trump did not mention DeSantis until more than 30 minutes into his speech. Even then, it was to brag about polls showing his advantages over the governor.

"I endorsed him, and he be-

came a rocket ship in 24 hours," Trump said, claiming that DeSantis had begged for his endorsement. "Now he's like a wounded falling bird from the sky."

Trump never did debate DeSantis or any other 2024 rival. He has said he wouldn't until one proves they are a legitimate threat to him winning the nomination.

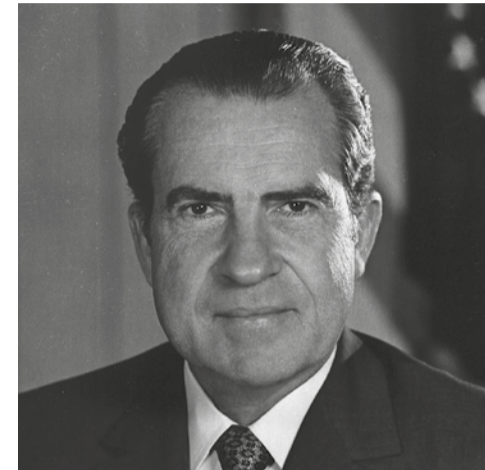
DeSantis concentrated his campaign in recent months in Iowa, where he finished in second place in last week's caucuses — 30 percentage points behind Trump and barely ahead of Haley. Haley, meanwhile, has long prioritized New Hampshire as a potential springboard ahead of her home-state South Carolina primary next month.

In Iowa, APVoteCast surveys of caucusgoers suggested DeSantis' supporters were much more likely than Haley's to consider themselves conservatives who would back Trump no matter what if he wins the nomination and faces President Joe Biden in November. If that trend holds in New Hampshire, then Trump could expect at least some boost from DeSantis dropping out, and whatever he gets could stretch out his margin and frustrate Haley's ability to claim any momentum. Indeed, Trump's aides have said they expect DeSantis' support around the country will shift heavily to Trump.

In the closing hours of the New Hampshire campaign, Trump will be juggling his legal troubles with the demands of seeking another term. MDT/AP

this day in history

1973 NIXON ANNOUNCES VIETNAM PEACE DEAL



The US president, Richard Nixon, has appeared on national television to announce "peace with honour" in Vietnam.

Statements issued simultaneously in Washington and Hanoi confirmed the peace deal was signed in Paris at 1230 local time, bringing to an end America's longest war.

The ceasefire will begin at midnight Hanoi time on Saturday, 27 January, monitored by an international force made up of troops from Canada, Poland, Hungary and Indonesia.

President Nixon's speech from the Oval office at the White House was broadcast on national radio and television.

He said: "Throughout the years of negotiations, we have insisted on peace with honour, I set forth the goals that we considered essential for peace with honour.

"In the settlement that has now been agreed to, all the conditions that I laid down then have been met."

The conditions include the release of prisoners of war within 60 days and all American forces to be withdrawn within the same time period.

An international conference will be held within 30 days, probably in Vienna, to guarantee the peace.

American forces have been involved in the conflict in Vietnam for more than a decade. In 1967, there were 500,000 American troops deployed in Vietnam.

For the people of South Vietnam, the president had this message: "By your courage, by your sacrifice, you have won the precious right to determine your own future and you have developed the strength to defend that right.

To the leaders of North Vietnam, the president said: "As we have ended the war through negotiations, let us now build a peace of reconciliation. [...]"

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The last American troops left Vietnam on 29 March 1973.

The following year there were frequent violations of the peace treaty.

In 1975, fullscale warfare resumed between North and South Vietnam - without American intervention. In 1976 the first elections were held to a National Assembly, finally reuniting North and South. As for Nixon, he had been re-elected with a landslide majority and sworn in for a second time three days before announcing the 1973 peace deal.

But his honeymoon period did not last. Before Nixon's re-election, it was known there had been a break-in at the Democratic offices in the Watergate building. By the end of January, it was being linked to his re-election campaign and an inquiry was ordered.

The scandal grew and on 9 August 1974, facing impeachment, he resigned.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Don't overreact to someone's advances. You could be cornered, so be prepared to tell the truth. You may find that your documents are not in order.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
 Keep your thoughts and opinions to yourself and you won't get dragged into an unsavory debate. Don't forget that you've only heard one side of the story.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
 Your sensitivity toward those you love will capture their hearts. You need some rest. You may experience setbacks due to additional responsibilities with loved ones.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Travel and entertaining conversation will be informative and uplifting. You may have a problem with someone you live with if you don't include them in your gathering.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Overstatement will be your downfall. If they want help that's great, but if they try to take credit for your work, you will have to set them straight.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Get involved in a competitive sport that will bring the challenges you thrive on. You must try to lay your cards on the table. Talk to your mate and tell them how you feel.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Pleasure trips will be emotionally favorable. You may be thinking of starting your own business. Take time to listen to the problems of family members.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Your temper could get the better of you if you confront personal situations. Try to accommodate them without infringing on your own responsibilities.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 You may need a physical outlet that will help you relieve your tension. Don't expect new acquaintances to be completely honest about themselves.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Minor accidents could cause trauma and major setbacks. Don't use emotional blackmail on someone you love. Your home environment appears to be a little shaky.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Be sure you get accurate information. You will do best to entertain those you wish to close deals with. Your ideas may be good, but they aren't necessarily right for everyone.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Join a club to work off that excess energy; but consider ways of doing that without spending the money. Time is money and you must be ready to take action in order to reach your highest potential.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

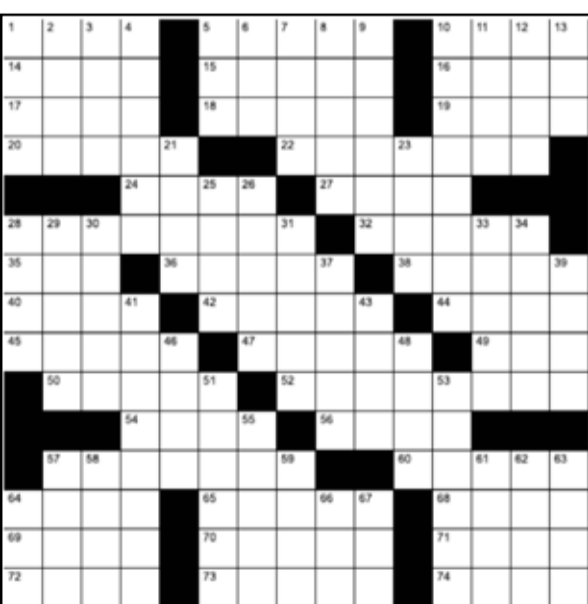
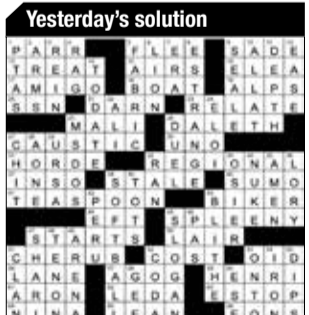
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-10	1	fine
Changchun	-25	-15	cloudy
Chengdu	0	4	rain
Chongqing	4	6	overcast
Fuzhou	4	10	cloudy
Guangzhou	3	8	rain
Guiyang	-6	-2	overcast
Haikou	10	13	rain
Hangzhou	-4	2	fine
Harbin	-31	-16	snow
Hefei	-8	0	cloudy
Nanjing	-6	0	cloudy
Shanghai	-3	0	cloudy
Taipei	8	9	rain
Wuhan	-6	3	fine
Hong Kong	8	11	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	-6	-1	snow
Frankfurt	4	11	cloudy
Paris	6	13	rain
London	6	13	rain
New York	0	4	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Catchall abbr.; 5- Group character; 10- Effortlessness; 14- Exec's note; 15- Interval of time; 16- Spiny houseplant; 17- "The Joy of Cooking" author Rombauer; 18- Monetary unit of Iceland; 19- Worm fiber; 20- Mob scenes; 22- Flattered; 24- Jealous wife of myth; 27- Duration; 28- Lycanthrope; 32- Establish; 35- Sister of Zsa Zsa; 36- Bergen dummy; 38- Former Russian rulers; 40- Calamitous; 42- ___ having fun yet?; 44- Complacent; 45- Paces; 47- Mall frequenters; 49- CPR giver; 50- Shakespearean sprite; 52- Evolves; 54- Heedless; 56- Memory unit; 57- Conductor; 60- Satisfied; 64- Grange; 65- Roof overhangs; 68- Mongolian desert; 69- Sewing case; 70- Sniff; 71- On top of; 72- Judge's seat; 73- Domingo, for one; 74- Mozart's "___ kleine Nachtmusik";

DOWN 1- Foreign dignitary; 2- Actress Hatcher; 3- Magazine contents; 4- Feel intense aversion; 5- Lamb's mom; 6- Biblical possessive; 7- "Java" trumpeter; 8- Mixed bags; 9- Shawl worn in Mexico; 10- Facility; 11- That's ___; 12- Realtor's sign; 13- A mouse!; 21- Puts in stitches; 23- Tapered seam; 25- Author Jaffe; 26- Vigilant; 28- Marries; 29- "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" musical; 30- Less common; 31- Let go; 33- Walk-on role; 34- Outdo; 37- Nerd; 39- Cpls.' superiors; 41- Widespread; 43- Green-eyed monster; 46- Gets the picture; 48- Tennis matches are divided into these; 51- Current; 53- Group; 55- Picture border; 57- First name in spydom; 58- Make ___ for it; 59- Kind of mitt; 61- Species of antelope found in South Africa; 62- Black, in poetry; 63- Take a meal; 64- Short mo.; 66- "Xanadu" band; 67- Camera type, briefly;



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



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



HISTORY

From South Asia to Mexico, from slave to spiritual icon, this woman's life is a snapshot of Spain's colonization – and the Pacific slave trade history

DIEGO JAVIER LUIS
TUFTS UNIVERSITY

JAN. 5, 2024, marked 336 years since the passing of an extraordinary woman you have probably never heard of: Catarina de San Juan.

Her life reads like an epic. Born in South Asia during the early 17th century, she was captured by the Portuguese at age 8 and sold to Spaniards in the Philippines. Spanish merchants then traded her across the Pacific to Mexico, where she became a free woman and a spiritual icon, famous in the city of Puebla for her devotion to Catholicism. As a scholar of colonial Latin America, I believe she deserves to become a household name for anyone with even a passing interest in Asian American history or the history of slavery.

Catarina was one of the first Asians in the Americas – a focus of my historical research, and the title of my recent book – and arrived through a little-known slave trade that crossed the Pacific Ocean. In colonial Mexico, she lived in the “nideaquindeallá,” the “neither-from-here-nor-from-there”: a valley between acceptance and foreignness, an in-between state familiar to many migrants today.

THE LIFE OF CATARINA

The particulars of Catarina's journey are quite unfamiliar, even for those who study the history of slavery.

Most people have heard of the transatlantic slave trade, which lasted from the early 16th century to the mid- to late 19th century.

It was responsible for the violent displacement of some 12.5 million Africans to the Americas.

The transpacific slave trade, on the other hand, remains largely unknown. From the late 16th to early 18th centuries, Spaniards forced some 8,000-10,000 captives onto rickety galleons, where they would endure a six-month odyssey from the Philippines to Mexico. The enslaved captives came from South, Southeast and East Asia, as well as East Africa.

After her capture, Catarina – whose name at birth was Mirra – was taken to Kochi, India, where she was baptized and received her Christian name. Later, in Manila, a young Spaniard stabbed and beat her within an inch of her life when she refused his advances. In her words, “Only the divine majesty knows what I went through.”

She only ended up on a galleon destined for Mexico because Captain Miguel de Sosa desired the service of a “chinita,” or little Asian girl. Yet he quickly realized that Catarina had uncommon virtues when she showed little regard for money or objects of material value. Sosa freed Catarina in his will.

For the next six decades, she led a life of social isolation, abstinence, humility and rejection of material pleasures – what her admirers saw as an exemplary life of holy Catholic suffering. She lived entirely on charitable offerings and, according to one Jesuit observer, wore only a “dark, wool dress” with “the crudest, the coarsest” cloak. Her modest lodgings were “filled with filthy critters.”

And she prayed. She prayed for water in drought, for Indigenous people dying of famine and disease, for ships lost at sea, for travelers braving the roads. She prayed for those who needed help the most.

Even as Catarina gained renown, some Spaniards questioned the sincerity of her devotion. Throughout Catarina's life, detractors described her as a “trickster,” “a witch,” “untamed” and “unknowable,” while Spanish allies viewed her as evidence that all the world could be converted to Catholicism.

The Catholic priest who regularly heard her confessions was a Jesuit named Alonso Ramos. After Catarina died, he authored an enormous three-volume biography of her life, the longest text ever published in colonial Mexico.

Ramos turned an unlikely subject – a formerly enslaved South Asian woman – into a superhero of the colonial world. Catarina's portrait, which appeared in Ramos' first volume, became a popular relic, and followers in Puebla converted her humble bedroom into an altar where Catholics could pray for her divine favor.

HISTORICAL AMNESIA

Why, then, do few people know about Catarina today?

The answer is twofold. First, Ramos' text was considered controversial outside of Puebla because it depicted Catarina with powers reserved only for God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. He describes her announcing prophecies, performing miracles, traveling in

her dreams and regularly conversing with Jesus, whom she considered her celestial husband.

In short, Ramos had committed blasphemy. The Inquisitions of Spain and Mexico censored and burned his volumes shortly after publication. Inquisitors ended all devotion to Catarina's image and took down the makeshift altar in her room.

Over time, the memory of the real Catarina morphed into something entirely different. Spaniards sometimes called her a “china,” the word colonists in Mexico used to refer to any Asian subject. Today, though, the phrase “china poblana” – the Asian woman from Puebla – refers to a popular, coquettish style of Mexican dress, with a patterned skirt, white blouse and shawl.

Virtually nothing about Catarina's life has been preserved in the modern “china poblana,” which was invented in the 19th century. In fact, it connotes sexual confidence and national pride, two concepts that Catarina would have likely rejected.

Second, the field of Asian American history has been hesitant to peer south of the U.S. border, despite several noteworthy efforts. Many people in the U.S. remain unaware that many Asian people live in Latin America and the Caribbean – indeed, that they have lived there for centuries longer than in the United States. Asians had been coming and going from the Americas for over 200 years by the time the U.S. Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776.

Today, significant Asian populations inhabit nearly all Latin American and Caribbean nations, mostly due to later waves of immigration and indentured servitude. Brazil hosts the largest number of Japanese and Japanese descendants outside of Japan at around 2 million, and the Chinatown in Havana, Cuba, was once the largest in the Americas. Indo-Caribbean people are the first- or second-largest group on many Caribbean islands, including Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada.

Catarina de San Juan and the first Asians in the Americas challenge the traditional timeline and geography of Asian American history. Their stories also capture what many people who end up in the Americas have faced: the trauma of displacement.

As Catarina coped with the harsh realities of her new life, she once told Ramos that she frequently saw her parents in her spiritual visions. Sometimes, they were in purgatory, where Catholics believe their souls are purified before they can enter heaven. However, she most often envisioned them coming “in the company of the ship from the Philippines to the port of Acapulco, from where, on their knees, they came into my presence.”

Her pain and longing for a stolen family, a lost youth and a hazily remembered homeland were those of generations of Asian captives taken to the Americas. I believe that her extraordinary life merits long-overdue recognition.

MDT/THE CONVERSATION

FOOTBALL | EPL

Nunez, Jota score two each for Liverpool in thrashing of Bournemouth

BOURNEMOUTH 0, LIVERPOOL 4

DARWIN Nunez and Diogo Jota scored second-half doubles as Premier League leader Liverpool moved five points clear with a crushing 4-0 victory at Bournemouth yesterday [Macau time].

The Reds initially struggled to create many openings at the Vitality Stadium in the absence of top scorer Mohamed Salah.

However, Nunez broke the deadlock in the 49th and completed the scoring in stoppage time following Jota's quickfire double.

Victory on a soggy south coast afternoon stretched Liverpool's unbeaten run to 14 league fixtures as the team fully capitalized on a weekend off for second-place Manchester City, which has a game in hand.

In-form Bournemouth was competitive for large parts of a frenetic encounter, but rarely threatened on the way to only its second defeat in nine games.



Liverpool's Diogo Jota (left) celebrates with teammates after scoring his side's second goal

A difficult outing for Andoni Iraola's team could have been worse, with Justin Kluivert perhaps fortunate to escape a red card for a first-half challenge on Luis Diaz.

Liverpool was back in top-flight action for the first time since New Year's Day but without Salah — who has sustained a hamstring injury at the Africa Cup of Nations with Egypt — in the league for the first time this season.

The Reds were unable to find fluency in the opening stages as Bournemouth began brighter, albeit without testing Alisson.

Klopp's team grew into the game and eventually enjoyed some meaningful territory. Alexis Mac Allister fired wide from distance, before long-range efforts from Nunez and Diaz were comfortably collected by goalkeeper Neto.

Following a fairly forgettab-

le first half, Liverpool made the most of sloppy defending to go ahead.

Ibrahima Konate's crossfield ball was chested down by the unmarked Curtis Jones and then moved on to Jota, whose first-time pass was confidently slotted into the bottom-right corner by Nunez.

Nunez, who was unfavorably compared to former Liverpool striker Andy Carroll by gloating

home fans in the first half, was also involved in his side's 70th-minute second.

The powerful Uruguay forward caused problems for Bournemouth defender Chris Mepham, allowing Reds substitute Cody Gakpo to pounce on the loose ball and slip in Jota to find the net via the base of the right post.

Jota extinguished any hope of a Cherries fightback just nine minutes later. The Portugal forward miskicked his first effort following a pass from Premier League debutant Conor Bradley, but swiftly silenced ironic cheers by rifling into the bottom-left corner.

Cherries substitute David Brooks wasted a golden chance to claim a consolation when he dinked wide in the 90th minute.

And Nunez, who claimed the winner when the clubs met in the English League Cup fourth round at the start of November, rubbed salted into Bournemouth wounds three minutes into added time by registering his second with a fine close-range finish. **MDT/AP**

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FOOTBALL | BASKETBALL | DAILY TRAININGS

OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

BAN ON EV BATTERIES HURTS US INTERESTS

In yet another move to decouple from China, US lawmakers have banned the Defense Department from buying electric vehicle batteries produced by China's biggest battery manufacturers on the grounds they pose "national security risks".

The move comes as part of the US National Defense Authorization Act passed on Dec 22, which prevents the Pentagon procuring batteries from CATL, BYD and four other Chinese companies beginning October 2027.

The impact of the restrictive measure will likely be limited given that it is still several years before the ban takes effect. In addition, it doesn't extend to commercial purchases by companies such as Ford Motor Company, which is licensing technology from CATL to manufacture electric vehicle batteries in Michigan. Yet the move is reflective of the hysteria now prevailing among some US hawks who seek to crack down on Chinese high-tech companies even at the expense of the US.

China now plays an important role in the global EV battery supply chain, accounting for more than 75 percent of battery cell production, mainly thanks to the innovative efforts of Chinese companies that enable them to make quality batteries in large quantities at a low cost. Take for instance the LFP batteries that Ford's new plant will make. The batteries cost less, have a longer life cycle, and are safer compared with other EV battery alternatives. It is thanks to CATL's long-term research that this once-considered obsolete technology has come to the fore.

It is believed that the US is already lagging "10 to 20 years behind Asia in commercialization of battery technology". Yet rather than seeking win-win cooperation with China in the sector that will determine the future of the energy transition, some US politicians have sought to politicize the issue, by unveiling rules aimed at keeping Chinese components out of EVs sold in the US.

Congress last year already passed a climate law offering billions of dollars in tax incentives to try to boost the EV industry in the US, but barring cars from qualifying for the full tax break if critical minerals or other battery components have been made by a "foreign entity of concern", namely China.

History proves that China and the US stand to gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation. The meeting of the Sino-US Financial Working Group, which concluded in Beijing on the weekend, and the seventh meeting of the China-US Agricultural Cooperation Joint Committee held in Washington last week, indicate that the trend of easing tensions between the two countries still continues, and will not be easily reversed by disruptive moves such as that to curb China's EV industry boom.

SAUDI TOP DIPLOMAT SAYS IT WON'T RECOGNIZE ISRAEL WITHOUT A PATH TO A PALESTINIAN STATE

THE BUZZ

Saudi Arabia's top diplomat said the kingdom will not normalize relations with Israel or contribute to Gaza's reconstruction without a credible path to a Palestinian state — a nonstarter for Israel's government.

Prince Faisal bin Farhan's remarks in an interview with CNN broadcast yesterday [Macau time] were some of the most direct yet from Saudi officials.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — who faces mounting domestic pressure over the plight of Israeli hostages, including an angry protest inside a parliamentary committee meeting yesterday — has rejected Palestinian statehood and described plans for open-ended military control over Gaza.

The dispute over Gaza's future pits Israel against its top ally, the United States, as well as much of the international community, and poses a major obstacle to any plans for postwar governance or reconstruction of the impoverished coastal enclave that is home to 2.3 million Palestinians.

In the interview with "CNN's Fareed Zakaria GPS," the host asked: "Are you saying unequivocally that if there is not a credible and irreversible path to a Palestinian state, there will not be normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel?"

"That's the only way we're going to get a benefit," Prince Faisal replied. "So, yes."



Former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad (right) speaks during a press conference at his office in Putrajaya, yesterday

AS HIS SON FACES A GRAFT PROBE, MAHATHIR SAYS THE GOV'T WANTS TO PROSECUTE ITS RIVALS

EILEEN NG, PUTRAJAYA

FORMER Malaysian leader Mahathir Mohamad attacked a graft probe into his associates as politically motivated, a week after his eldest son was ordered to hand over information to investigators.

Mahathir, a two-time prime minister who's been a fixture in Malaysian politics for decades, said Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's government is using corruption charges to go after political rivals.

Mahathir came out of retirement in the wake of the massive 1MDB corruption scandal, joining hands with the opposition in 2018 for a short second term as premier after ousting a long-ruling coalition he once led.

Businessman Mirzan Mahathir and tycoon Daim Zainuddin were revealed to hold millions offshore in the Pandora Papers, a 2021 document leak that revealed offshore accounts held by some of the world's wealthiest people and politicians.

The anti-graft agency ordered Mirzan to declare all his assets within 30 days on Jan. 17. It had earlier opened a probe into Daim, a former Finance

Minister and ally of Mahathir. Mirzan has also been accused of shady dealings in relation to the sale and acquisition of a government-linked company.

Mahathir, 98, said he believed Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim was fishing for evidence to implicate him, and accused Anwar of selective prosecution.

Prosecutors dropped 47 graft charges against Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi last year while the trial was at an advanced stage.

Mahathir also said no action was taken against anti-graft agency chief Azam Baki over a share trading scandal in 2022.

"This is Malaysian justice under Anwar's regime," Mahathir told a news conference.

"The law is being abused for political ends. I'm saying very clearly that the people who are against the government will have the law thrown in their faces. Those who are for the government can escape," he said.

Mahathir held office from 1981-2003, and again from 2018-2020. He has a long political history with Anwar, who was his deputy and finance minister in the 1990s before they fell

out amid the Asian financial crisis. Anwar was later jailed for corruption and sodomy, charges he said were framed to kill his political career.

The pair joined hands for the 2018 general elections to oust the long-ruling coalition, while Anwar was in jail for a second sodomy charge. He was pardoned by the king shortly after their victory. Mahathir became premier a second time in a deal that called for him later to hand over power to Anwar, but their alliance collapsed amid infighting.

Mahathir now supports the opposition Malay-Islamic alliance, and has constantly slammed Anwar's unity government, took power in November 2022.

The anti-graft agency has said it began investigations in August 2022 — before Anwar took power — into all entities and related assets named in the Pandora Papers and the Panama Papers, a giant leak of financial records in 2016 that showed how some of the world's richest people hide their money.

It said it has questioned 10 people so far, including Mirzan and Daim, and recently seized a building belonging to Daim. **MDT/AP**



UN's migration agency is launching its first "global appeal," seeking \$7.9 billion to help people on the move and ensure smoother pathways to migration, at a time when the fallout from climate change, conflict and both economic distress and opportunities has caused millions to leave their homes. The annual appeal from the International Organization for Migration puts the Geneva-based agency more in the hunt for aid funds, along with other U.N. agencies and humanitarian groups, at a time when many top donor governments face tight budgets or are reducing aid outlays.



EU foreign ministers argued yesterday that the creation of a Palestinian state is the only credible way to achieve peace in the Middle East, and they expressed concern about Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's clear rejection of the idea. "The declarations of Benjamin Netanyahu are worrying. There will be a need for a Palestinian state with security guarantees for all," French Foreign Affairs Minister Stephane Sejourne told reporters in Brussels, where the EU ministers met to discuss the war in Gaza.



Germany A protest against the far right in Munich Sunday afternoon ended early due to safety concerns after approximately 100,000 people showed up, police said. The demonstration was one of dozens around the country this weekend that drew hundreds of thousands of people in total. The demonstrations came in the wake of a report that right-wing extremists recently met to discuss the deportation of millions of immigrants, including some with German citizenship. Some members of the far-right Alternative for Germany party, or AfD, were present at the meeting.