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SECOND COURT RULES TNR BECOMING RESIDENTS ENTITLED TO COMPENSATION ONLY FROM RESIDENCY START, AMENDING A PREVIOUS DECISION OVER A CLAIM

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HO HOPES ENGLISH, PORTUGUESE MEDIA CONTINUE TO BRIDGE CULTURES; REAFFIRMS RESPECT FOR FREEDOM OF PRESS

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7.1 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE RATTLES PART OF XINJIANG

P6



AP PHOTO



Japanese automaker that cheated on safety tests for decades said it doesn't expect to resume shipping cars any time soon. The Japanese government ordered a subsidiary of Toyota to halt production of its entire lineup after reports of faked safety test results emerged last year. The Daihatsu Motor Co. skipped mandatory safety tests by copying data from testing on one side of cars to the other, and used timers to ensure airbags went off in tests.

AP PHOTO



Palestinian militants carried out the deadliest single attack on Israel's forces since the Hamas raid that triggered the war, killing 21 soldiers, the military said yesterday. Hours later, the military announced that ground forces had encircled the southern city of Khan Younis, Gaza's second largest. That marked a major advance, but it was unclear how much closer it would bring Israel to defeating Hamas or freeing Israeli hostages, as cease-fire talks appear to be gathering pace.

AP PHOTO



US Vice President Kamala Harris blasted Republicans as extremists for trying to ban abortions as she rallied women in the key battleground state of Wisconsin on Monday. She singled out Donald Trump, who is tightening his grip on the Republican presidential nomination, for saying he was "proud" of helping to limit abortions. Trump nominated three conservative justices to the U.S. Supreme Court during his term in office.

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MGRA SURVEY

CASINO RECOVERY MEANS BETTER SERVICES

MDT PHOTO



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CIRCUS ARTISTS POINT TO SPACE AS CHALLENGE FOR DEV'T

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FRINGE

CIRCUS ARTISTS POINT TO SPACE AS MAIN CHALLENGE FOR DEVELOPMENT

ANTHONY LAM

THE relatively massive scale of space required by circus performances is still a major challenge and can only be overcome by somewhat bypassing it, several local circus artists said yesterday.

A meet-the-press event was held yesterday for the Crème de la Fringe: Contemporary Circus Festival, an extended event in this year's Macao City Fringe Festival. At the press event, artists who either curated or will perform at the circus performances for the extended event were asked by the Times how the challenges of developing circus arts in Macau can be overcome.

During their introductions, the artists revealed that a Cyr wheel artist from Taiwan will perform for the circus festival. Cyr wheel art, which somewhat resembles the Vitruvian Man by Leonardo da Vinci, has a performer holding the inside of a metal wheel with diameter measuring up to 1.8 meters.

In Macau, street performances, such as busking, are strictly monitored and require prior application to the Cultural Affairs Bureau



(IC) or the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), unlike in many other places, where anybody can bring their instruments to stage their performances.

As such, circus arts, which on many occasions involve large-scale instruments, can be difficult in Macau, a packed city in terms of both space and population.

Cita Kuong, performer at The Crow Clowns, one of the four events at the circus festival, suggested that the government could

streamline its application process for venue use. Furthermore, she said that her troupe recently was seeking a venue for a performance, but the schedule was so packed. However, she believed that there are rooms available that the government will announce as part of the application process for venue use.

In addition, training space is also a challenge, as not many indoor premises in Macau have high ceilings and sufficient space for

circus arts. Fortunately, a friend happened to have a studio that met the requirements of circus arts and offered it up for the performers to use for practice, Benson Kuong, artistic director of the circus festival, disclosed.

To overcome or work around the challenges with space, Benson Kuong said that the local artistic circus circle needed to instill more artistic and performing elements into their daily training and curations.

For example, he said, the circle in Hong Kong developed advanced skills in making performance tools, such as balls for juggling, in part because there was not enough space in the territory for large-scale circus performances.

On whether assistance from casino operators is among their plans – considering the talent cultivation and economic diversification aspect of Corporate Social Responsibilities – both Bobo Leong, curator of the circus festival, and Benson revealed that they had approached some operators, but Benson said that the operators needed them to produce a convincing portfolio before the discussing next steps.

They hope that this circus festival will help them achieve this. In fact, they have invited representatives from Sands China Ltd. to watch this circus festival.

On the culturally negative impression of clowns, Cita admitted that when she was young, she hated clowns. Nonetheless, she realized later that the quality she hated was the “horridly colorful presentation.” Now, working as a clown herself, she assured that contemporary clowns are more “aesthetically pleasing,” and parents should embrace the arts, should their children want to become one.

Contemporary Circus Festival will be on show at the Former Iec long Firecracker Factory over this weekend.

MEDIA

Ho hopes English and Portuguese media continue to bridge cultures, reaffirms respect for freedom of press

CHIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng yesterday praised the “significant job” the local news outlets reporting in Portuguese and English are doing “in bridging the gap between cultures and languages,” to provide the public with essential information.

During a lunch reception for Portuguese- and English-language news organizations, Ho conveyed his appreciation for their extensive coverage of Macau's new trends and developments. He highlighted the role played by these

outlets in offering the outside world a better understanding of the region development and elevating its global profile.

Ho mentioned that representatives from these news outlets had visited other cities within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, as well as Tibet in the past year. Their reports “provided readers with first-hand accounts of China's high-quality development,” while presenting its longstanding cultural and social traditions. He

acknowledged the unique advantage held by local news outlets in Macau as they have proximity to mainland China while also having access to the international community.

Recognizing the expertise and sense of responsibility of journalists working in Portuguese- and English-language news outlets, Ho praised their bridging function in reflecting public voices and facilitating policy implementation. He acknowledged that these outlets offer suggestions and coo-

peration, providing impetus for the Government's endeavors.

Ho reassured that, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law of Macau, the Government “remains committed to upholding press freedom and supporting media outlets.” He affirmed the Government's active assistance in conducting interviews and providing information “to ensure effective reporting” by facilitating the media's activities. PC



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DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR_Lynzy Valles
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

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

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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
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GAMING

More patrons trigger better casino service post-pandemic, survey finds

ANTHONY LAM

IN 2023, more gamblers fostered better services at casinos, a survey hosted by the Macau Gaming Research Association (MGRA) aimed at generating Gaming Service Index (GSI) has revealed.

An online symposium was held yesterday morning to announce the results of the survey. The survey was conducted by SGS Hong Kong, commissioned by MGRA.

The survey employed mystery customers, who during the third and fourth quarter of last year evaluated the services provided by seven frontline departments – Table Game-Dealer, Slot Machine, Cashier, Security, Membership, Shuttle Bus and Cloakroom – at 12 local casinos with higher representation, according to the survey host. The 12 casinos were Grand Lisboa, StarWorld, MGM Macau, Sands, Wynn Macau, Grand Lisboa Palace, Galaxy, MGM Cotai, Venetian, Wynn Palace, City of Dreams and Studio City.

A total of 864 datapoints were collected.

Following the return of normal travel in 2023, there have been reports on both online and offline platforms about the drop in service quality in non-gambling trades, such as dining and retail.

Asked by the Times for an interpretation of the aforementioned finding in contrast to the ser-



vice quality drop in other industries, Hannah Koo from MGRA suspected that it was caused by the past several years of business standstill in the casinos.

"Probably after three years of emptiness, casino workers were elated to see customers returning," Koo said. She also said that previous editions of the same survey had shown that the most suitable number of gamblers at a single table – which would trigger the best service quality – was between seven to nine. Any number higher or lower than this would negatively impact service quality.

Her interpretation is that before the pandemic, some croupiers would rather sit at an empty table and do nothing rather than serve just a handful of gamblers.

When the number increased to between seven and nine, the croupier's motivation to provide service would improve.

Elaborating on Koo's comment, Cheryl Tso from SGS underlined that service quality in the gambling industry may not be directly comparable to other industries. Customers in other industries may look for different qualities than those in casinos.

She added that although improvements in service quality have been recorded, extended studies are required to determine if this is a foundational or sporadic change.

Despite the participation of representatives from several local casino operators, no additional opinions or interpretations have

been provided, even though Koo invited contributions.

When asked by the press about whether evaluations were affected when croupiers were disturbed by hustlers, Tso admitted that some gamblers disliked disturbances and this could contribute to their choice of casino.

As for the GSI, the survey hosts discovered the index had risen to a historic high in 2023, reaching 145 points. The base point was 100 in 2013.

The index is further separated into two indices: Macau Peninsula and Cotai GSIs. Last year, the Macau Peninsula GSI went to 144, which was a historic high. Meanwhile, after years of fluctuation, the Cotai GSI rested at 154, equivalent to the level in 2019.

POLICE LAUNCHES WINTER-SPECIFIC POLICING OPERATIONS

The Unitary Police Service (SPU) commenced this year's winter-specific policing operation on Jan. 22, of which the CPU is an initiator and coordinator. The operation involves the Public Security Police Force (PSP), the Judiciary Police (PJ) and the Macao Customs (SA). The public entities will enter the community to determine security needs and promote crime prevention measures. Additional forces will be deployed to major districts to safeguard against potential crimes. The SPU reminds residents to be on the lookout for loopholes that may lead to crimes.

FORUM MACAU HEAD SEEKS COOPERATION WITH MPU

Secretary-General Ji Xianzheng of the Permanent Secretariat of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macao) led a delegation to visit the Macau Polytechnic University on Jan. 18 to seek cooperation, and was received warmly by Rector Professor Marcus Im Sio Kei. Im introduced to the secretary-general the achievements the university's Chinese-Portuguese school had made over the years, especially in the cultivation of bilingual students, which was highly commended by Ji. In response, Ji hopes that the university will provide ample assistance to the ministerial meeting held by the Forum, so as to promote China-Lusophone cooperation.

PJ, MASTERCARD HOST ANTI-FRAUD WORKSHOP

The Judiciary Police and MasterCard co-hosted a workshop on Jan. 19 on safety and evidence collection of cryptocurrencies. Experts from the payment card service briefed participating PJ investigators with the relevant knowledge. The workshop was deemed crucial, as according to the PJ, the use of cryptocurrency in crimes including fraud is increasing. The often difficult to trace channels of payment have created difficulties for law-enforcement authorities in their investigations. Topics such as cryptocurrency's risks for the banking ecosystem, as well as impacts on investigations, tracing and intelligence, and evidence collection were also covered.

Upward trend to continue in Macau casinos

STAFF REPORTER

MACAU'S gross gaming revenue (GGR) for the first 21 days of January 2024 totaled MOP13 billion (\$1.6 billion). This resulted in an average daily revenue of MOP629 million, marking a 5% increase from the previous week, according to a HSBC Global Research report issued yesterday.

The rise in revenue is attributed to an increase in traffic and a higher VIP win rate, which improved from approximately 2.7-2.8% to between 2.8-3.0% in the last week, the report says.

Also, the VIP gaming volume showed a 1% month-to-month increase, while mass market GGR went up by 4-5% compared to a 3% increase in the prior week.

The research group said Sands China and MGM are reportedly gaining market share in the mass gaming segment compared to December.

If the GGR maintains an average daily run-rate of MOP550-600 million for the rest of January, it is projected that the total GGR for the month could reach between MOP18.5 billion (\$2.3 billion) to MOP19

billion (\$2.36 billion). This forecast suggests a recovery to 74-76% of January 2019 levels, a slight improvement from the 75% recovery observed in the fourth quarter of 2023.

Previously, Citigroup has predicted that Macau's GGR for January 2024 might reach MOP 17.5 billion (US\$2.2 billion), signifying a recovery to 70% of 2019 levels. This expectation follows a performance in December 2023 that exceeded initial forecasts, with an average daily revenue of around MOP 600 million, surpassing expectations by



approximately 6%.

These reports indicate a positive trend in Macau's

gaming revenue, suggesting a recovery trajectory for the industry.

TSI CLARIFIES

TNR WHO BECOME RESIDENTS ONLY ENTITLED TO COMPENSATION FROM THE PERIOD THEY BECOME RESIDENTS

RENATO MARQUES

THE Court of Second Instance (TSI) has partially amended a claim from an employer in a court case involving the payment of compensation for job dismissal.

The TSI judges partially amended a previous ruling from the Court of First Instance (TJB), clarifying that a non-resident worker (TNR) who becomes a resident worker while working from the same company is only entitled to count the time for dismissal compensation from the time he acquired the status of resident, with the previous working time for this purpose being ruled out, a statement from the Office of the president of the Court of Final Appeal noted.

Initially, the TJB had calculated the full duration of work contracts between the worker and the employer without taking into account that for the first few years, the worker was under a TNR working contract.

TSI noted that all TNR work

RENATO MARQUES



contracts are, by nature, fixed-term employment contracts that expire at the end of this period and, although the law provides compensation in the case of non

fulfilment of these contracts, these are limited to each contract period.

In the particular case addressed, a worker signed a contract

with the employer in September 2007 as a TNR, a contract that was later (in August 2010) amended as the worker acquired resident status.

The contract was eventually terminated without just cause by the employer in July 2020, giving rise to a dispute that reached the courts.

The worker was claiming compensation of MOP643,864.28, claiming the dismissal compensation as well as compensation for work conducted overtime, work performed during mandatory rest days, and public holidays, which both courts were satisfied he could prove.

The TSI noted that while TNRs are also protected by labor laws and are also entitled to compensation for termination without just cause, in this case, the worker was not dismissed, as he continued to work for the same employer but under different terms after becoming a resident. Since he did not lose his job, the TSI clarified that he is not entitled to request any compensation in relation to the previous period.

Still, the TJB ruled the employer must pay compensation of MOP96,562.67, a ruling that the TSI partially amended because of the portion of time that he was on a TNR contract.

Finally, the TSI made an order for compensation amounting to MOP83,067.00 due to the worker, an amount that had been calculated and already paid as compensation to the worker by the employer, dismissing the other claims.

December 2023 brought more visitors but shorter stays

RENATO MARQUES

OFFICIAL statistics released by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) show that last month accounted for a significant number of visitors (almost 3 million) but also that the duration of the stays of these visitors in Macau has been shrinking by almost half.

According to the release, visitor arrivals totaled 2,943,930 in December 2023, a figure that is naturally much higher than the one recorded in 2022 (656%) but more significantly is just 4.52% below the figure reached in 2019 (pre-pandemic) when the total number of visitors in December reached 3,083,406.

December 2023 also represented a month-on-month increase of 13.9% when compared with November, which is traditionally a stronger month of visitation.

Although more visitors were arriving in Macau last month, the statistics release also shows that the duration

RENATO MARQUES



of the stays of these visitors has been shortening, with the average length of stay of visitors dropping by 0.9-day year-on-year to a total of 1.2 days.

This figure roughly means that the length of stays dropped year-on-year some 42.86%.

According to DSEC, this drop is almost totally attributed to the overnight visitors, whose duration of stay decreased by 1.4 days for a

total of 2.2 days. Meanwhile, that for same-day visitors (0.2 days) remained steady.

When compared year-on-year with December 2019, the duration of trips of overnight stayers shows a slight drop (from 2.3 to 2.2 days), while the same-day visitors continued steadily at 0.2 days.

In terms of proportion, December 2023 saw the number of same-day visitors top those staying overnight by just by

a slim margin, at 50.47% and 49.53% respectively.

As regards the source of visitors, the number of visitors from the mainland totaled 1,962,223 (66.65%) in December, with those traveling under the Individual Visit Scheme totaling 1,060,216.

Visitors from the nine cities within the Greater Bay Area were more than one-third of all visitors to Macau, with 27% of those arriving from Zhuhai (273,974) and another 21.9% from Guangzhou (222,218).

The number of visitors from the neighboring regions of Hong Kong totaled 686,441 (23.32% of the total) and international visitors (238,611) accounted for 8.11% of all visitors during this month.

The same figure for international visitors also shows that year-on-year, when compared to 2019, such visitors have recovered by 94% (from 253,753 in December 2019).

Over the entirety of 2023, the busiest border post continued to be Border Gate, which was the port of entry for 47% (10,516,603) of all those arriving to Macau. The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge accounted for 33.6% (7,519,072) of all arrivals, while 14% (3,127,469) entered the region via the Hengqin port.

CRIME

PJ REPORTS 25 CASES OF SCAMS INVOLVING K-POP CONCERTS, OVER MOP100,000 LOST

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) has received a total of 25 complaints from people deceived while attempting to purchase tickets for the concerts by the K-pop group "Seventeen," held in Macau last weekend.

The PJ is said to have received complaints from 25 different people claiming to have been scammed while trying to acquire tickets online, reporting a total loss of about MOP105,354.

The complaints were filed with the PJ between January 18 (Thursday) and January 22 (Monday).

The PJ did not clarify how the victims were lured into acquiring the tickets, saying only that the cases involve "online purchases."

The force also noted that most of the victims were young and, so far, only four out of the 25 are residents of Macau with 21 other cases reported relating to tourists.

There are reports of people losing significantly high sums as they were willing to pay over MOP12,000 for a concert single ticket. **RM**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

WYNN recently celebrated a significant milestone in its commitment to diversification with the grand unveiling of the "Illuminarium," an immersive attraction that marked a significant expansion of its non-gaming offerings.

The launch, which took place on January 19, was a nod to the innovative spirit of the Macao Special Administrative Region Government's economic diversification strategy. It also paid tribute to the extraordinary progress of China's aerospace industry over the past thirty years and commemorated the 25th Anniversary of the Macau SAR's establishment.

Illuminarium, situated within the luxurious Wynn Palace, in Cotai, is a testament to Wynn's dedication to enriching Macau's tourism landscape. It merges the wonders of space travel with a unique educational experience, inviting both residents and visitors to embark on an interactive journey through the vastness of the universe.

Here, guests can discover the awe-inspiring achievements of China's aerospace efforts, presented through a seamless integration of advanced technology and breathtaking visual displays.

The opening ceremony was graced by an array of esteemed guests, such as Ms. Yang Hao, Deputy Director-General of the Economic Affairs Department of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR; Ms. Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, Director of the Macao Government Tourism Office; Ms. Leong Wai Man, President of the Cultural Affairs Bureau; Mr. Chan Chou Weng, Acting Head of the Technology Department of the Economic and Technological Development Bureau; Dr. Allan

Wynn Unveiled Illuminarium, an Innovative Immersive Attraction



Guests attend the Illuminarium immersive gala dinner at Wynn

Zeman, Chairman and Independent non-executive Director of Wynn Macau, Limited; Ms. Linda Chen, President, Vice Chairman and Executive Director of Wynn Macau, Limited; and Mr. Alan Greenberg, Chief Executive Officer of Illuminarium Experiences.

These dignitaries and others in attendance had the privilege of being the first to experience Illuminarium's engaging exhibits and state-of-the-art interactive displays.

Ms. Chen, in her inaugural speech, encapsulated the vision of Illuminarium as a journey through the historic and contemporary feats of Chinese exploration, embodying a spirit that has spanned millennia. She spoke of the installation as a fusion of education

and entertainment, designed to broaden the horizons of its visitors while contributing to Macau's cultural and economic vitality.

Beyond the opening ceremony, Wynn Macau hosted a "Beauty and Knowledge of Space" seminar, engaging visitors with the expertise of notable figures such as Mr. Zhao Chuandong, a Taikonaut and Popular Science Expert; Mr. Cao Jun, a renowned national artist; and Assistant Professor Tang Chi Pui from the Space Science Institute at Macau University of Science and Technology.

The exchange of knowledge and ideas continued into the evening with an immersive gala dinner, offering a taste of space exploration through a multi-sensory dining experience.

Now open to the public, Illuminarium operates from Tuesday to Sunday, inviting exploration and learning through its interactive installations. The standard entry fee is MOP198, but Wynn has ensured accessibility for all by offering discounted rates to students, seniors, children, and Wynn Insider members. Macau residents benefit from an even more advantageous admission fee, reinforcing the resort's commitment to its local community.

Wynn Palace stands as a paragon of luxury in Macau's Cotai district. The establishment's palatial accommodations, meeting facilities, retail options, and dining venues set a new standard in opulence. The Performance Lake, SkyCab, and an impressive array of art installations make Wynn Palace a destination that offers far more than just gaming excitement.

The addition of Illuminarium is a strategic move by Wynn, emphasizing the resort's investment in cultural and recreational experiences that complement its gaming



Wynn hosts a "Beauty and Knowledge of Space" sharing session



Visitors can explore the universe from 360-degree angles in the Illuminarium



Ms. Linda Chen, President, Vice Chairman and Executive Director of Wynn Macau, Limited delivers a speech



Distinguished guests attend the launch of the new Illuminarium at Wynn

operations. This diversification is part of a broader vision to transform Wynn into a comprehensive resort that caters to a wide array of interests and preferences, aiming to attract not only gamers but also families, educational groups, and cultural enthusiasts.

The Illuminarium is just one example of how Wynn is integrating new forms of entertainment that align with Macau's evolving tourism industry.

By offering innovative attractions like Illuminarium, Wynn is not only enhancing the guest experience but also contributing to the broader goal of establishing Macau as a multifaceted, international destination.

Looking ahead, Wynn's strategy includes further development

of non-gaming elements such as cultural exhibitions, interactive shows, and themed attractions that enrich the visitor experience. The company's vision extends to hosting events that showcase local arts and culture, engaging with the community through educational initiatives, and developing partnerships that promote sustainability and innovation.

Wynn's approach exemplifies a trend in the hospitality industry towards creating immersive experiences that engage visitors in new and unexpected ways.

With the launch of the Illuminarium, Wynn is at the forefront of this trend, inviting guests to not only witness but to actively participate in the wonders of exploration and discovery.

7.1 magnitude earthquake rattles part of Xinjiang, injuring six people and collapsing 47 homes

KEN MORITSUGU, AKSU

A magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck a sparsely populated part of China's western Xinjiang region early yesterday, causing extensive damage but injuring just six people in freezing cold weather, authorities said. The quake was the latest in a series of seismic events and natural disasters to hit the vast country's western regions.

The quake rocked Uchturpan county in Aksu prefecture shortly after 2 a.m., the China Earthquake Networks Center said. Rescue crews were rushed to the area, with about 1,000 on hand by mid-day. No deaths have been reported. The county is called Wushi in the Mandarin language spoken by most Chinese.

Rescue crews combed through the rubble, overturning bricks and stone blocks in search of victims. Emergency survival gear including coats, tents and folding beds to help the thousands of people who fled their homes had arrived or were on their way, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Of the six people hurt, only two had serious injuries. Among the more than 120 buildings damaged, 47 houses collapsed, 78 houses were damaged and some greenhouses were reduced to plastic sheets and rubble, the government



Rescuers search through a quake-affected area in Yamansu Township, Wushi County of Aksu prefecture

of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region posted on its official Weibo social media account.

Liu Jinhua, who runs an advertising company in Aksu, rushed out of his apartment in the middle of the night with his wife and kids in their pajamas as the quake shook the building.

"I was really sleepy at the time, and was awoken by my wife and didn't know what was wrong. I just wanted my family to evacuate safely," he said.

The quake downed power lines but electricity was quickly restored, Aksu authorities reported. Mountainous Uchturpan county had around 233,000 people in 2022, according to Xinjiang authorities.

Urumqi Railroad Bureau resu-

med services after 7 a.m. following safety checks that confirmed no problems on the train lines. The suspension had affected 23 trains, the bureau serving the Xinjiang capital said on its official Weibo account.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake measured 7.0 magnitude and occurred in the seismically active Tian Shan mountain range. It said the area's largest quake in the past century was 7.1 magnitude and occurred in 1978 about 200 kilometers to the north of one early yesterday.

Multiple aftershocks were recorded, the strongest of them measured at 5.3 magnitude.

The rural area is populated mostly by Uyghurs, a Turkic ethnicity that is predominantly Muslim

and has been the target of a state campaign of forced assimilation and mass detention. The region is heavily militarized and state broadcaster CCTV showed paramilitary troops moving in before dawn to clear rubble and set up tents for those displaced.

Uchturpan county is recording temperatures well below freezing, with lows down to negative 18 degrees C (just below zero F) forecast by the China Meteorological Administration this week.

The tremors from yesterday's earthquake were felt hundreds of kilometers away. Ma Shengyi, a 30-year-old pet shop owner living in Tacheng, 600 kilometers from the epicenter, said her dogs started barking before she felt her apartment building shudder. The quake

was so strong her neighbors ran downstairs. Ma rushed to her bathroom and started to cry.

"There's no point in running away if it's a big earthquake," Ma said. "I was scared to death."

Chandeliers swung, buildings were evacuated and a media office building near the epicenter shook for a full minute, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. A video posted by a Chinese internet user on Weibo showed residents standing outside on the streets bundled in winter jackets, and a photo posted by CCTV showed a cracked wall with chunks fallen off.

Tremors were felt across the Xinjiang region and in the neighboring countries Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. In the Kazakh capital of Almaty, people left their homes, the Russian news agency Tass reported. In both Xinjiang and Kazakhstan, classes were suspended to allow children to recover from the shock.

Videos posted on the Telegram messaging platform showed people in Almaty running down the stairs of apartment blocks and standing outside in the street after they felt strong tremors. Some people appeared to have left their homes quickly and were pictured standing outside in freezing temperatures in shorts.

Earthquakes are common in western China, including in Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, as well as the Xinjiang region and Tibet.

A 6.2 magnitude earthquake that struck Gansu in December killed 151 people and was China's deadliest quake in nine years. An earthquake that hit Sichuan in 2008 killed nearly 90,000 people. The collapse of schools and other buildings led to a yearslong effort to rebuild using more quake-resistant materials. **MDT/AP**

YUNNAN

Death toll in landslide rises to 31 while more remain missing

THIRTY-one people were confirmed dead while several remained missing yesterday after a landslide in a remote, mountainous part of China's southwestern province of Yunnan, Chinese state media reported.

The disaster struck just before 6 a.m. on Monday in the village of Liangshui in the northeastern part of Yunnan.

Authorities said earlier that a total of 44 people were either missing or had been found dead.

Authorities resumed search and rescue operations yesterday after suspending the work temporarily due to

another landslide alert.

More than 1,000 rescuers were working amid freezing temperatures and falling snow, according to the Ministry of Emergency Management. Two survivors were rescued Monday and were recovering at a local hospital.

State news agency Xinhua, citing a preliminary investigation by local experts, said the landslide was triggered by the collapse of a steep cliff top area, with the collapsed mass measuring around 100 meters-wide, 60 meters in height, and about an average of 6 meters in thickness. It did not elaborate on what caused the initial

collapse.

Aerial photos posted by Xinhua showed the side of a heavily terraced mountain had spilled over several village homes.

Zhenxiang county lies about 2,250 kilometers southwest of Beijing, with altitudes ranging as high as 2,400 meters.

Rescuers struggled with snow, icy roads and freezing temperatures that were forecast to persist for at least the next three days.

Heavy snow has been falling in many parts of China, causing transportation chaos and endangering lives.

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



Rescue workers search the site of a landslide in Liangshui village, Tangfang Town in the city of Zhaotong

in China's Inner Mongolia region.

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

for Disaster Reduction and the Ministry 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. **MDT/AP**

MYANMAR

Churches, temples and monasteries regularly hit by airstrikes, activists say

GRANT PECK, BANGKOK

A study issued yesterday by researchers collecting evidence of war crimes in Myanmar supported reports that air strikes by the military government damaged churches in the Buddhist-dominated country's sole Christian-majority state.

The 10 reported attacks on churches in the western state of Chin examined by the researchers are part of a broader assault on religious communities across the war-torn nation, other religious and human rights workers said.

Myanmar sank into civil war after the army seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021. Since then, resistance fighters from the Buddhist Burman ethnic majority have joined forces with long-oppressed ethnic minorities, some with substantial Christian populations.

Human rights agencies and United Nations investigators have found evidence that security forces indiscriminately and disproportionately targeted civilians with bombs, mass executions of people detained during operations and large-scale burning of civilian houses.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which tallies political arrests and attacks, at least 4,416 people have been killed by security forces since the 2021 takeover.

Yesterday's report, compiled by the Myanmar Witness project of the United Kingdom-based Centre for Information Resilience, analyzed in depth five claims of airstrikes causing major physical damage to churches in Chin state over several months in 2023 and concluded that all five could be verified.

Religious buildings are accorded special protected status under international law.

At least 107 religious buildings — including 67 churches and five Buddhist monasteries — have been destroyed by the military



Debris is seen in the St. Peter Baptist Church-Kanan, which was struck by the suspected military's aerial attacks in Kanan village earlier this month

since the 2021 takeover in Chin state alone, the Chin Human Rights Organization said. A 2023 report by the International Commission of Jurists, covering the period through April, counted 94 major Buddhist religious sites and 87 Christian ones destroyed or damaged nationwide.

Myanmar Witness cross-checks evidence such as photos, videos and witness accounts found on social media with satellite photo analysis and other methods to try to verify human rights abuses. The ultimate aim, said project director Matt Lawrence, is "providing material to international mechanisms that can hold perpetrators of atrocities to account."

The report did not address whether the strikes were deliberate, but wrote that the Myanmar Air Force's "overwhelming air superiority" makes it likely that they were conducted by the government.

Many human rights activists believe that the military aims for religious buildings.

"Bombing churches is much more than just collateral damage," wrote Benedict Rogers, former East Asia team leader for the human rights organization Christian Solidarity Worldwide and author of three books on Myanmar, wrote in an email interview. "Tar-

getting them is part of a deliberate strategy," he said.

The military regime is intolerant of non-Burman ethnic and non-Buddhist religious minorities, he said. In 2017, the military carried out a brutal counterinsurgency campaign in the western state of Rakhine that drove about 740,000 members of the Muslim Rohingya minority to flee to neighboring Bangladesh.

"By targeting churches and other places of worship, they are striking directly at the identity of these communities," he said.

Crucially, churches and other places of worship are also suspected of sympathy with ethnic opposition groups, he added, even though they are much more commonly used as places of refuge for civilians seeking to shelter from fighting.

The military was not available for immediate comment on the report, but in the past has repeatedly said it attacks only legitimate targets of war, accusing the resistance forces of being terrorists.

Salai Mang Hre Lian of the Chin Human Rights Organization said that previous governments also discriminated against religious minorities, but "the attacks and direct violations and discrimination against Christian minorities are more significant and increasing" since the

army's 2021 takeover.

"Buddhist monasteries suspected of providing shelter or assistance to resistance groups have also

been attacked," he noted.

Attacks on religious buildings "send a powerful signal to all civilians that even in places protected by international humanitarian laws, if they support non-junta groups, they will be targets," Lian said.

"Not only Christians, but all the religious minorities are being persecuted," said Ngun Thawng Lian, a well-known Christian pastor who now lives in Australia.

His hometown of Thantlang was virtually leveled in September 2021, in some of the war's most brutal early fighting. With four Myanmar nationals, he filed a criminal complaint in the Philippines against the junta generals, under a 2009 Philippine law claiming universal jurisdiction.

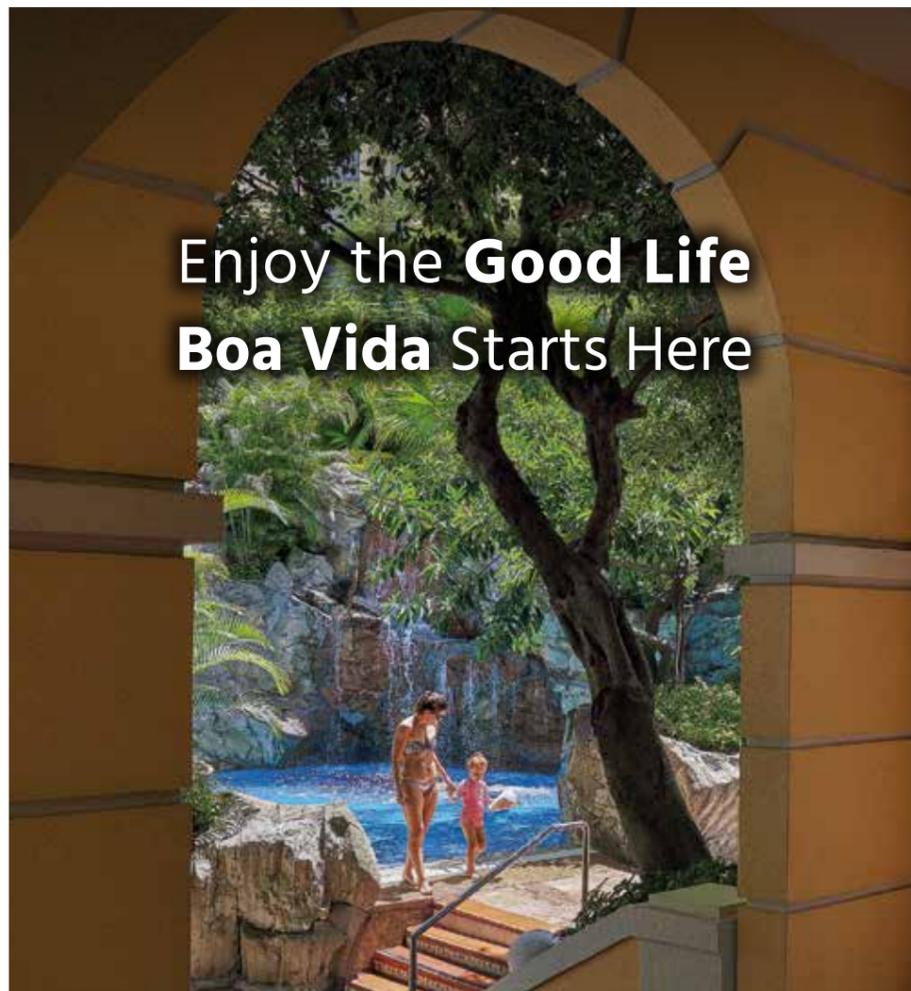
More reports of attacks on churches were made by Christian humanitarian assistance group Free Burma Rangers, which runs mis-

sions bringing medical aid and evangelical activities to villagers in Kayah, also known as Karenni state, and elsewhere in eastern Myanmar.

"Since the coup, many churches have been bombed and destroyed in Chin state — not just Chin, but in Karen and Karenni," said Dave Eubank, a former member of the U.S. Special Forces who is the group's founder and director.

He said that around Demoso, a contested township in Karenni, most of the churches have been bombed and completely destroyed or damaged.

"I can think of 10 that I've already seen in ruins or big holes in them, direct airstrikes," Eubank said. One of the biggest churches in Demoso was hit in 2022, with helicopter gunships directly firing rockets and heavy machine guns into the church steeple." MDT/AP



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MIDDLE EAST

US, British launch new round of joint strikes against multiple Houthi sites in Yemen

THE U.S. and British militaries bombed multiple targets in eight locations used by the Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen on Monday night (yesterday, Macau time), the second time the two allies have conducted coordinated retaliatory strikes on an array of the rebels' missile-launching capabilities.

According to officials, the U.S. and U.K. used warship- and submarine-launched Tomahawk missiles and fighter jets to take out Houthi missile storage sites, drones and launchers. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a military operation, said Australia, Bahrain, Canada and the Netherlands contributed to the mission, including with intelligence and surveillance.

In a joint statement, the six allied nations said the strikes specifically targeted a Houthi underground storage site and locations associated with the Houthis' missile and air surveillance capabilities. They added, "Our aim remains to de-escalate tensions and restore stability in the Red Sea, but let us reiterate our warning to Houthi leadership: we will not hesitate to defend lives and the free flow of commerce in one of the world's most critical waterways in the face of continued threats."

Britain's Ministry of Defense confirmed that four Royal Air Force Typhoon jets struck "multiple targets at two military sites in the vicinity of Sanaa airfield" with precision-guided bombs. The strikes, said Defense Secretary Grant Shapps, were "aimed at degrading Houthi capabilities" and would "deal another blow to their limited stockpiles and ability to threaten global trade."

One senior U.S. military official told reporters the strikes dropped between 25 and 30 munitions and hit multiple targets in each location, adding that the U.S. "observed good impacts and effects" at all sites, including the destruction of more advanced weapons in the underground storage facility. The official said this is



This image provided by the U.S. Navy shows an aircraft launching from USS Dwight D. Eisenhower during flight operations in the Red Sea Monday night

the first time such advanced weapons were targeted.

The official also said fighter jets from the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower aircraft carrier conducted strikes, and other ships involved included the USS Gravelly and USS Mason, both naval destroyers, and the USS Philippine Sea, a cruiser.

The joint operation comes about 10 days after U.S. and British warships and fighter jets struck more than 60 targets in 28 locations. That was the first U.S. military response to what has been a persistent campaign of Houthi drone and missile attacks on commercial ships since the start of the Israel-Hamas war in October.

The Houthis' media office said in an online statement yesterday that raids targeted Sanaa, Yemen's capital. And Jamal Hassan, a resident from south Sanaa, told The Associated Press that two strikes landed near his home, setting off car alarms in the street. An Associated Press journalist in Sanaa also heard aircraft flying above the skies of Sanaa overnight.

Al-Masirah, a Houthi-run satellite news channel, said there were raids on three areas of Sanaa: al-Dailami Air Base just north of the capital, Sarif, northeast of the city

center, and al-Hafa, which is south of Sanaa.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak spoke with President Joe Biden earlier. Sunak's office said the two leaders agreed to take "as needed, targeted military action to degrade Houthi capabilities."

The latest barrage of allied attacks marks the eighth time the U.S. has conducted strikes on Houthi sites since Jan. 12. And it follows an almost-daily assault on Houthi missile launchers by U.S. fighter jets and ship-based Tomahawks over the past week. The rapid response missions, which officials said go after launchers that are armed and ready to fire, demonstrate the military's increasing ability to watch, detect and strike militant activities in Yemen.

The chaotic wave of attacks and reprisals involving the United States, its allies and foes suggests that the retaliatory strikes haven't deterred the Houthis from their campaign against Red Sea shipping, and that the broader regional war that the U.S. has spent months trying to avoid is becoming closer to reality.

For months, the Houthis have attacked ships in the region's waterways that they say are either linked to Israel

or heading to Israeli ports. They say their attacks aim to end the Israeli air-and-ground offensive in the Gaza Strip that was triggered by the Palestinian militant group Hamas' Oct. 7 attack in southern Israel. But any such links to the ships targeted in the rebel assaults have grown more tenuous as the attacks continue.

The U.S. and allies warned of retaliation for weeks, and the White House and a host of partner nations issued a final warning on Jan. 3 to the Houthis to cease the attacks or face potential military action.

That threat, however, had little noticeable effect. The Houthis continued to attack ships in the region, including at times appearing to target U.S. Navy and U.S.-owned ships, in addition to the wide range of commercial vessels.

Of the eight strike missions on Yemen this month, all but the two with Britain were conducted by the U.S. military alone. Five of the latest strikes were labeled self-defense to take out missiles ready to fire. The most recent, on Saturday, struck and destroyed a Houthi anti-ship missile that was aimed into the Gulf of Aden and was prepared to launch, according to Central Command. MDT/AP

this day in history

1961 END OF THE ROAD FOR MONROE AND MILLER



The Hollywood screen star Marilyn Monroe has divorced her husband, playwright Arthur Miller, after less than five years of marriage.

The divorce was granted in Mexico, where a judge signed the decree. The grounds of divorce were listed as "incompatibility".

It has been rumoured that the pair have had frequent quarrels over their differing lifestyles.

Mr Miller has recently been working with his wife on her most recent film, *The Misfits*, based on a short story he wrote, although the pair were reported to be barely speaking on set.

The film is due to be released this month.

The divorce was officially announced last November, and a spokesman at the time said they had already separated.

Sources close to the couple said Arthur Miller had in fact left Miss Monroe for German-born photographer Inge Morath, whom he met on the set of *The Misfits*.

The couple married in 1956, five years after they first met. Marilyn Monroe converted to Judaism for her new husband, who rose to prominence with his play "Death of a Salesman" in 1949, which won the Pulitzer Prize.

Soon after they were married, Arthur Miller told journalists: "Marilyn will only make one film in every 18 months or so, which will take her about eight weeks."

When asked what she would do for the rest of the time, he replied, "She will be my wife. That's a full-time job."

Marilyn Monroe disagreed, and continued to pursue her film work to the full, travelling to England to shoot "The Prince and the Showgirl" with Laurence Olivier shortly after the wedding. [...]

Marilyn Monroe had been married twice before. Her first husband was Jimmy Dougherty, whom she married aged 16. The marriage did not survive her "discovery" and subsequent rise to fame.

In 1954, she met and married baseball star Joe DiMaggio, but it was a tempestuous partnership and ended just nine months later.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Marilyn Monroe's divorce was part of a decline which was marked by her erratic behaviour on set and persistent abuse of alcohol and drugs.

The Misfits was to be her last completed film. Soon after, in 1962, she also made her last major public appearance, singing "Happy Birthday" to President John F Kennedy at a televised party for him.

On 5 August 1962 she was found dead in her Los Angeles home, aged 36. Her death was officially attributed to suicide by drug overdose, but has been the subject of numerous conspiracy theories.

She had been due to re-marry her second husband, baseball star Joe DiMaggio, three days later. Arthur Miller married photographer Inge Morath a month after his divorce from Marilyn Monroe.

He later wrote compassionately of Monroe in his autobiography, referring to his marriage to her as "the best of times, the worst of times".

He stayed with Inge Morath until her death in 2002. Arthur Miller died in 2005.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You may be more emotional than usual. Acknowledge your lover's needs. Ask others to help, or you may feel that a burden is weighing you down.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Don't overdo it. Your need to get away could lead you into greater debt. Your boss won't be too thrilled if you leave things unfinished.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Think about your priorities. Don't exhaust yourself or minor health problems will set in. Better still, take your mate and let them foot the bill.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Don't let others put unreasonable demands on you. Help elders in your family. You may be able to get some good advice about your personal problems.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Travel opportunities must be taken advantage of. Your high enthusiasm will be sure to inspire anybody around you. Move into a leadership position if you are determined to do so.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Look for something entertaining to do. You've got that competitive edge. Your partner may be erratic today if you haven't paid enough attention to him or her.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
You might get behind if you spend too much time debating senseless issues. Consider making pleasure trips or participating in entertainment that will require energy.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Take the time to do something nice for your friends and relatives. Social events held in your home will be successful and entertaining for those who attend.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Try to bend to their wishes if you want to avoid conflict. You can stabilize your situation if you compromise. Don't get involved in other people's private doings.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
You will find yourself tied to the phone. Your emotional life may be up in the air if your mate has been going through a change of heart.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Make changes regarding your friendships. You can stabilize your personal relationship if you're willing to communicate honestly. Partnerships could be tense.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
A second chance will result in good work. You need time to rejuvenate. You should be able to get involved in an interesting proposition today.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-7	3	fine
Changchun	-21	-11	fine
Chengdu	0	4	rain
Chongqing	4	6	overcast
Fuzhou	0	11	fine
Guangzhou	3	10	cloudy
Guiyang	-6	-2	overcast
Haikou	9	14	overcast
Hangzhou	-4	5	fine
Harbin	-26	-15	cloudy
Hefei	-6	5	fine
Nanjing	-5	4	fine
Shanghai	-4	4	fine
Taipei	7	11	overcast
Wuhan	-6	4	cloudy
Hong Kong	8	15	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	-1	2	windy
Frankfurt	4	12	rain
Paris	11	13	rain
London	7	11	cloudy
New York	2	6	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Capital of the Ukraine; 5- Pub perch; 10- Kind of prof.; 14- Automaker Ferrari; 15- Daffy's pal; 16- City in Western Nevada; 17- Female child; 18- Charlotte ____; 19- Lacking slack; 20- Rapid-fire; 22- Sudden forward thrust; 23- Humanities; 24- Back; 26- Sports area; 29- Addictive substance; 33- Fabric of jeans; 34- Soaked; 35- Narcissist's problem; 36- Not fem.; 37- Income source; 38- One's partner; 39- Hosp. area; 40- Arm bones; 41- Salivate; 42- Actor; 44- Harass; 45- Pocket bread; 46- Classic soda; 48- Hickory-nut; 51- Actual elapsed period; 55- Stepped; 56- Singes; 58- Mandikova of tennis; 59- Top-notch; 60- Not dead yet; 61- ____ Rhythm; 62- Flat sound; 63- Broad valleys; 64- Nightclub of song;

DOWN 1- Frat party purchases; 2- Monogram ltr.; 3- Book before Nehemiah; 4- Like some ash; 5- Herring type; 6- Track tipsters; 7- Estimator's phrase; 8- Authorizes; 9- Bleaching agent; 10- Conductor Toscanini; 11- Actor Connery; 12- Cozy; 13- Carry; 21- Pull an all-nighter; 22- Fine and delicate; 24- Fads; 25- Energy units; 26- Allow to enter; 27- Get to; 28- Result; 29- Atari founder Bushnell; 30- Mortise insert; 31- Dome home; 32- In a shy way; 34- Capital city of Yemen; 37- Split; 38- Pertaining to birds; 40- ____ arms (angry); 41- "James and the Giant Peach" author; 43- Dark suit; 46- Pluck; 47- Lets up; 48- School orgs.; 49- Psyche's love; 50- Hustles; 51- Complain; 52- Emilia's husband; 53- Queue before Q; 54- I could ____ horse; 56- Downcast; 57- Guido's high note;

Yesterday's solution

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- 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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AD

FASHION

DIOR AND SCHIAPARELLI BRING HISTORICAL REVERENCE TO HAUTE COUTURE WEEK IN PARIS

THOMAS ADAMSON, PARIS

DIOR'S couture show at Paris' Musee Rodin wove an intricate Ottoman tapestry for spring and attracted a tapestry of stars to rival it yesterday [Macau time]. Rihanna, Natalie Portman, Elizabeth Debicki, Ali Wong, Felicity Jones, Glenn Close, Kristin Scott Thomas, Juliette Binoche, and Carla Bruni were among the VIP guests on hand to admire Maria Grazia Chiuri's latest fusion of art and fashion.

An installation by artist Isabella Ducrot adorned the runway walls. The set called "Big Aura" featured myriad oversized dresses, each towering up to 5 meters (16.4 feet) high, that were reminiscent of Ottoman sultans' attire and hinted at the masterful show theme — the deft uniqueness of couture.

Here are some highlights of spring 2024 couture displays in Paris:

DIOR'S UNIQUE APPROACH TO COUTURE

It began with an understated yet powerful beige trench, worn with the large collar draping over a bare torso and complemented by a raw pearl double choker reminiscent of teeth that added a subtle bite.

Chiuri's interplays of architectural silhouettes and innovative materials were out in force for a diverse collection that had a lot to say, seamlessly intertwining the historical richness of Ottoman styles with the contemporary.

Yet, the show's scope extended beyond historic influences: It was very much a Dior show. A draped skirt embroidered with metallic Ottoman-style threads exemplified Dior's own haute couture legacy.

Above all, it served as a homage to the unsung heroes of haute couture: Dior's legendary seamstresses. Their artistry was vividly showcased in pieces like a crocheted field flower twine top, a teeming tapestry of intricate blooms that had guests reaching for their cameras. It was the piece de resistance.

Further delving into Dior's rich history, the La Cigale dress, an iconic piece from Christian Dior's autumn-winter 1952 collection, was revisited. It was reimagined for the modern era, standing out with its sculptural construction and luxurious moiré fabric.

The ambition of the collection was its only weakness, sometimes leading it to skirt the edges of thematic coherence. One example was an elegant, long black crepe wrap dress, which, while stylish, seemed incongruous in the dis-



A model wears a creation for Schiaparelli's Haute Couture Spring-Summer 2024 collection



A model wears a creation for Christian Dior

play as a whole.

Perhaps this was the point. Ducrot's installation underscored the theme of unique haute couture auras, garments that transcend fashion to reflect the wearer's individuality.

SURREAL FUSION OF HISTORY AND KINK

Schiaparelli, piloted by the inventive Daniel Roseberry, inaugurated Haute Couture Week with a celebration of glamour, surrealism, and historical reverence. The collection was a vivid tableau

of the house's 1930s glory days under the late, great Elsa Schiaparelli, fused with a provocative twist that electrified the VIP audience.

Opening with a dominatrix-inspired black PVC-style gown, complete with an Elizabethan choker, the show was a study in historic contrasts. This modern reinterpretation of the choker, blending the grandeur of yesterday with a nod to BDSM aesthetics, showcased Roseberry's ingenious ability to weave art and high fashion with tongue-in-

-cheek.

A standout piece, a 17th-century black cape with rope adornments, mirrored the kinky spikes of a BDSM submissive while being set against a bejeweled neck clasp. Beyond its tantalizing exterior, the ensemble underscored Schiaparelli's commitment to craftsmanship.

Roseberry's tribute to the house's founder was masterfully displayed in a pearl suit jacket ensemble with tubular, sculptural arms that redefined the human form. This piece, and others,

exemplified his surreal take on classics, a hallmark of Elsa Schiaparelli's original vision.

The show's zenith was a dramatic black sheer lace screen top, sprawling out with intricate vein-like details, reminiscent of an insect's wings — an embodiment of the house's surrealist roots.

It was a stunning blend of Schiaparelli's glamorous frivolity and exaggerated silhouettes, reimagined for a contemporary age.

JENNIFER LOPEZ SHINES

Jennifer Lopez embraced a daring new look at Schiaparelli. The megastar captivated onlookers at the Petit Palais venue with a striking white coat, a masterpiece adorned with real white rose petals that cascaded over a textured white turtleneck sweater. This floral fantasy was a Roseberry creation, the house said.

The star's new chin-length bob, slicked back in a slightly wet style, added an edge.

VALLI'S FLOURISHES AND FLAIR

The air was perfumed, the carpet a lush pink, and the music orchestral and suspenseful as VIPs gathered at Giambattista Valli's show in Place Vendôme. True to Valli's signature flair for drama, the collection dazzled in shades of peony and powder pink, punctuated by bold reds, tangerine, and obsidian.

The show contrasted tiny, glittering bodysuits with immense tulle trains and asymmetrical bows of gargantuan proportions. Opening with a silk velvet bodysuit adorned with silk organza roses, the collection transitioned into draped tulle skirts and trains, a testament to Valli's mastery of extravagant volume.

Crystals and bows were abundant throughout. Balloon sleeves and velvet trains were reminiscent of Elizabethan opulence, while dropped shoulders unfurled like blossoms, blending historical elements with contemporary couture. Each piece segmenting the female form into architectural tiers, another Valli signature, showcased his expertise in creating striking silhouettes.

The show culminated in a moment of pure theatrics: the bridal gown's extravagant train, so voluminous, caught against the feet of front-row VIPs, in a symbolic moment of collection's unbridled excess.

Valli has consistently celebrated opulence and romanticism and his couture shows are known for their escapist qualities, offering a world of pure aesthetic joy and visual relaxation. **MDT/AP**

FOOTBALL | ASIA CUP

Al-Haydos' spectacular volley sees Qatar finish group stage in style; China must wait

QATAR 1, CHINA 0

ASIAN Cup host Qatar finished its group stage in style yesterday [Macau time] with a spectacular volley from Hassan Al-Haydos for a 1-0 win over China, which is on the brink of elimination from the tournament.

The deadlock at the Khalifa International Stadium was broken midway through the second half with an unforgettable strike. Akram Afif's corner was immediately met outside the area by Al-Haydos, who confidently volleyed into the top corner. Both players had just been introduced as substitutes.

Qatar, which had already secured its spot in the knockout stage, topped Group A with nine points and advanced with Tajikistan, which beat last-place Lebanon 2-1 to take second with four points.

China finished with just two points and failed to score in any of its three games. It has never won the Asian Cup and must now



China's goalkeeper Yan Junling fails to block a shot by Qatar's Hasan Al Haydos to score the solitary goal

wait for other results and hope to squeeze into the next round as one of the four best performing of the third-place teams in the six groups.

"In the three games we played, we missed a lot of chances every game," China coach Aleksandar Jankovic said. "If you don't score, you cannot expect a big result. We are disappointed of course because our destiny doesn't depend on us any more."

The Serbian said he understands that his position as head

coach, which he started in February 2023, may be under threat.

"There are two types of coaches in general -- those who have been fired and those who will be fired," he said. "When you accept to do this job, you accept both."

Qatar may have lost all three games on home soil at the 2022 World Cup but has been perfect in the Asian Cup, advancing to the round of 16 by winning all three games without conceding a goal.

Already certain of top spot head-

ding into the match, defending champion Qatar made nine changes from its previous game, handing the initiative to China which created better chances in the first half.

Wei Shihao had three opportunities to score his team's first goal. After just seven minutes, he side-footed wide from just inside the area and then later his low shot from close range was saved by Saad Al Sheeb.

Wei went close again just before

the break with a header that just cleared the bar.

After Al-Haydos' superb goal in the 66th, China had the ball in the net with three minutes remaining but Jiang Shenglong's shot was ruled out as the ball had gone out of play in the buildup.

In the group's other fixture, Tajikistan rallied to beat Lebanon and advance to the knockout stage for the first time.

"We made history today and this is the biggest thing for the Tajikistan people," Tajikistan coach Petar Segrt said. "It was difficult but we kept fighting and we did it."

Lebanon took the lead early in the second half with a curling shot from Bassel Jradi but was reduced to 10 men after 54 minutes because of a foul by Kassem El-Zein.

Tajikistan had two goals ruled out for offside but finally scored with 10 minutes remaining. Parvizdzhon Umarbaev scored and then Nuriddin Khamrokulov headed home a winning goal in the second minute of second-half stoppage time. **MDT/AP**

AD

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RENOWNED GERMAN PHOTOGRAPHER CANDIDA HOFFER
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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
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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**RALLYING CALL FOR
 CONCERTED FIGHT
 AGAINST TERRORISM**

The white paper the State Council Information Office published on Tuesday offers a systemic review of the institutional progress the country has made in the fight against terrorism, and demonstrates the country's commitment to upholding the rule of law in its efforts to counter terrorism.

The document, China's Legal Framework and Measures for Counterterrorism, introduces in detail the legal framework for the fight against terrorism, the provisions for the determination and punishment of terrorist activities, as well as the measures that are taken to protect human rights in the process of effectively protecting people's lives and property and safeguarding national security.

By shining a light on its counterterrorism work, China has highlighted the straightforwardness of its undertakings, which is in contrast to some countries which seek to manipulate counterterrorism for geopolitical purposes. The white paper offers other countries the means to gain a better understanding of China's policies, laws and practices pertaining to counterterrorism. It is to be hoped that it can help promote closer international cooperation and exchanges in this crucial endeavor by building trust.

As a nation that has paid a heavy price for terrorist attacks, China's resolve to fight against terrorism and eradicate all terrorist roots in Chinese soil and its capacity to accomplish that objective should never be underestimated.

The document can also be regarded as a powerful rebuttal of the double standard adopted by some countries in criticizing China's counterterrorism efforts under the pretext of defending the "rule of law" and "human rights".

Those Western politicians attacking China's counterterrorism cause, citing "human rights violations", are doing nothing but smearing the country for their own narrow political ends. They are selectively blind to the heavy loss of life in China as a result of terrorist attacks. As long as the terrorists can cause social unrest and chaos, or in other ways hinder or disturb China's development, they are regarded as friendly forces in the same trench with the China hawks in the West, and even be praised as "brave freedom fighters". This double standard has weakened the foundations for counterterrorism cooperation, severely hampering the global fight against terrorism.

China has established cooperation mechanisms with dozens of countries and law-enforcement departments to combat terrorism in border areas, and it has engaged in pragmatic exchanges and cooperation in intelligence, border control, and the investigation and handling of cases, and cut off funds for terrorism.

With the release of the white paper, China hopes that more countries will recognize its efforts and actively cooperate with it so that the scourge of terrorism can be eradicated.

**WEST PRESSES CHINA AS UN REVIEWS ITS RIGHTS
 RECORD, BEIJING SAYS IT PROTECTS HUMAN RIGHTS**

**THE
 BUZZ**

Western countries used a U.N.-backed review of China's human rights record yesterday to press Beijing to do more to allow freedom of expression, protect the rights of ethnic minorities and "repeal" a security law in Hong Kong that is derided by activists, among other things.

China's ambassador in Geneva, Chen Xu, led a delegation from some 20 ministries in China for the review under the U.N. Human Rights Council. He stressed China's progress in poverty eradication, said citizens engage in "democratic elections," and said freedom of religious belief is safeguarded.

"China upholds respect for and protection of human rights as a task of importance in state governance," Chen said through an interpreter.

"We have embarked on a path of human rights development that is in keeping with the trend of the times and appropriate to China's national conditions and so-called historic achievements in this process."

"We uphold the people-centered philosophy and strive to deliver a better life for all the people," he said.

The process, which encourages constructive recommendations over sharp criticism, nevertheless gave way to firm, if not scathing, advice to China from some leading Western countries.

AP PHOTO



**FILIPINO FISHERMAN
 VERBALLY CONFRONTS
 CHINESE COAST GUARD
 IN DISPUTED SHOAL**

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

A Filipino fishing boat captain protested yesterday the Chinese coast guard's aggression in the disputed South China Sea where he said Chinese officers drove him and his men away from a disputed shoal and ordered them to dump their catch back to sea.

The face-to-face confrontation on Jan. 12, which Filipino fisherman Joely Saligan and his men reported belatedly to Manila's coast guard after returning from the sea voyage, is testing efforts by China and Philippines to deescalate tensions in a potential Asian flashpoint.

At a Jan. 17 meeting in Shanghai, Beijing and Manila agreed to take steps to ease tensions after a year of high-seas territorial faceoffs between their ships in the sea passage, one of the world's busiest. The hostilities have sparked fears of a major armed conflict that could involve Washington, Manila's longtime treaty ally.

The fishermen, led by Saligan, reported to the Philippine coast guard that Chinese coast guard personnel drove them away from the disputed Scarborough Shoal off the nor-

thwestern Philippines on Jan. 12 and ordered them to dump their catch of fish and seashells back to the sea.

The confrontation happened on a coral outcrop, which juts out of the high seas like an islet at low tide. Saligan and his men took a dinghy from their mother boat and went to collect seashells and fish for food during their sea voyage. However, five Chinese coast guard personnel, three of them armed with steel batons, followed by boat, alighted on the islet and ordered the fishermen to leave.

One Chinese officer tried to confiscate the cellphone of a Filipino fisherman, who resisted by pushing away the officer's hand. Both sides were documenting the confrontation either with video cameras or cellphones, Saligan said.

"This is Philippine territory. Go away," Saligan said he told the Chinese coast guard personnel, who he said insisted that they leave the shoal immediately. The Chinese did not speak and used hand gestures, he said.

Saligan said he decided to dump some of their seashells and fish back in the sea and returned by boat to his mother boat,

the F/V Vhrayle, to prevent the dispute from escalating.

Chinese officials did not immediately comment on Saligan's statements. In past disputes over the Scarborough Shoal, however, Beijing has asserted China's sovereignty and the right to defend the rich fishing atoll from encroachments.

Philippine coast guard spokesman Commodore Jay Tarriela said the written statements and video submitted by Saligan and his men have been validated as accurate by the coast guard. A report would be submitted to a multi-agency government group dealing with the long-simmering territorial disputes for possible actions, including the filing of a new diplomatic protest against China.

"Those actions were really illegal and the harassment that they did to our Filipino fishermen were unacceptable," Tarriela said in a news briefing.

The Philippine coast guard remained confident, however, that the agreement by China and the Philippines to lower tensions would "have a positive impact" and foster a peaceful resolution of the long-seething disputes, Tarriela said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



NATO signed yesterday a \$1.2-billion contract to make tens of thousands of artillery rounds to replenish the dwindling stocks of its member countries as they supply ammunition to Ukraine to help it defeat Russia's invasion. The contract will allow for the purchase of 220,000 rounds of 155-millimeter ammunition, the most widely sought after artillery shell, according to NATO's support and procurement agency. It will allow allies to backfill their arsenals and to provide Ukraine with more ammunition.

Germany's highest court ruled yesterday that a small far-right party will not get any state funding for the next six years because its values and goals are unconstitutional and aimed at destroying the country's democracy. The Federal Constitutional Court said the Die Heimat party, which used to be known as the National Democratic Party of Germany, or NPD, "continues to disregard the free democratic basic order."

AP PHOTO



France Spreading demonstrations by farmers against low wages and other grievances were hit by tragedy yesterday when a woman was killed and her husband and daughter seriously injured in a traffic collision at a protest barricade. A car plowed into straw bales that demonstrators had placed across a road, hitting the three people before it came to a stop against a tractor's semi-trailer, prosecutor Olivier Mouysset said in a statement.

Vatican-affiliated Catholic charity made an urgent appeal yesterday to the U.S. state of Alabama to halt a planned execution this week using nitrogen gas, saying the method is "barbarous" and "uncivilized" and would bring "indelible shame" to the state. The Rome-based Sant'Egidio Community has lobbied for decades to abolish the death penalty around the world. It has turned its attention to Thursday's scheduled execution of Kenneth Eugene Smith in what would be the first U.S. execution using nitrogen hypoxia.