

The Alcohol Control Law
shall enter into force on
5th November 2023

Enjoy a healthier life:
Quit smoking and limit alcohol
consumption!

Scan QR code for related infographics

ARTYZEN
GRAND LAPA MACAU
澳門雅辰酒店

DISCOVER
Good Life Starts Here

LEGISLATOR LAM LON WAI CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN CRIME PREVENTION EDUCATION FOR LOCAL MINORS P4

ELECTION LAW REVIEW FINALLY APPROVED AND READY FOR NEXT YEAR'S ELECTION P2

65 ROUNDS IN: IS MACAU'S LONG-RUNNING MASK DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM STILL NECESSARY? P5



AP PHOTO



Hong Kong Reporters Without Borders said today [Macau time] that one of its representatives was denied entry into Hong Kong, calling it a “new decline” in the city’s press freedoms. According to the group, its Taipei-based staffer Aleksandra Bielakowska was stopped at the airport by immigration officers. She was detained, questioned and had her belongings searched three times before she was denied entry, said the group, also known by its French acronym RSF.

AP PHOTO



South Korea's prime minister Han Duck-soo (pictured) and senior presidential officials offered to resign en masse yesterday after their ruling party suffered a crushing defeat in parliamentary elections in a huge blow to conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol. The results of Wednesday's elections mean the liberal opposition forces will prolong their control of parliament until after Yoon completes his single five-year term in 2027.

AP PHOTO



Ukraine's parliament passed a controversial law yesterday that will govern how the country recruits new soldiers to replenish depleted forces who are increasingly struggling to fend off Russian troops. Two years after Russia's full-scale invasion captured nearly a quarter of the country, the stakes could not be higher for Kyiv. After a string of victories in the first year of the war, fortunes have turned for the Ukrainian military, which is dug in, outgunned and outnumbered.

More on backpage

THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

Despite the flashy numbers – of visitors and gaming revenues – lawmaker Pereira Coutinho paints a dark picture of the local economy and calls for consumption cards P3



XINHUA

LIGHT RAIL
PRICE FOR LAND RENTED FROM ZHUHAI STILL 'A MYSTERY' P2

TASTE OF EDESIA

P15

MACAU TO HOLD NATIONAL SECURITY EDUCATION EXHIBITION

The SAR and Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in Macau will hold the 2024 National Security Education Exhibition for All from April 15 to May 15. The exhibition aims to provide residents with knowledge about national development and security over the past decade. With the theme "Overall National Security Concept, 10th Anniversary of Innovation Leading," it will feature sections on "security achievements, high-quality development, and Macau's prosperity with central government support."

APPROVED MORTGAGE LOANS PLUNGE 40% IN FEBRUARY

New residential mortgage loans (RMLs) approved by local banks fell by 42.5% month-on-month to MOP686.29 million in February, according to data from the Monetary Authority of Macao. Of these, new RMLs to residents, representing 97.0% of the total, decreased by 43.0% to MOP665.97 million; the non-resident component dropped by 23.6% to MOP20.33 million. New and commercial real estate loans (CRELs) decreased by 33.4% month-on-month to MOP946.14 million. Within this total, new CRELs to residents, which occupied 99.3% of the total, fell by 31.4% to MOP939.96 million.

PRICE FOR LAND RENTED FROM ZHUHAI FOR LRT STILL 'A MYSTERY'

RENATO MARQUES

THE Secretary for Administration and Justice, André Cheong has failed, yet again, to provide the rent figure that will be paid to the authorities of Zhuhai for the 3,700 square meter land parcel close to the Border Gate that will be used in the construction of the East Line of the Light Rapid Transit (LRT).

At the Legislative Assembly (AL) where discussion, the first reading, and final vote on a bill for basic regulations under Macau laws governing the land and sea areas granted by the central government for such a purpose were held, Cheong was questioned by the lawmakers on the topic of the area, rental period and rental fee to be paid by Macau to the neighboring city of Zhuhai for the use of the plot. In response, the Secretary said that the rental period will run until 2049 but the price is not yet known.

"As for the rent price, in the future, we will have an agreement between the two sides [Zhuhai and Macau]. For the time being, we don't know for sure the price," he said, saying also that the detailed area of the plot, to be defined by the State Council, is currently



undergoing a final marking but should be approximately 3,700m².

Cheong also noted that the agreement states clearly that during the whole rental period, ending December 19 2049, the plot cannot be used for any other purpose besides the construction of the East Line of the LRT to reach the Border Gate area.

He also said that the land must be used to benefit the local LRT, as well as for the interconnection with the transport network of the mainland side.

The decision to grant Macau the plot came from a decision of the Permanent Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), adopted on December 29 last year.

In the decision it is also noted that "at the end of the lease period, the lease may be renewed by decision of the Standing Committee of the NPC."

When completed, the East Line of the LRT will connect the Pac On area in Taipa via an underwater tunnel to Zone A of the new landfills and continue as an undergrou-

nd tunnel until the Border Gate.

Previously, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, suggested the line extending beyond the current plan might include one more station to serve the Qingmao border post but, in an interview with the Times last month, Rosário said that this potential extension is not a matter for the current agenda. He hinted that such a project would be not part of the major construction of the line but instead a separate project for a later time.

LAWMAKERS who comprise Macau's Legislative Assembly (AL) unanimously approved the new amendments to the AL election law yesterday.

The amendments make several changes to election procedures as well as introduce a new mechanism by which to evaluate the candidates in light of the motto "Macau government by patriots."

In a final voting that took place after only a few questions or calls for clarification, the topics that raised most discussion were related to the new rules completely excluding from all lists those found to be subscribing to more than one candidate's list. The first version of the bill proposed that a person subscribed to multiple lists would be allowed to remain

Election law review finally approved and ready for next year's election

on the first subscribed list but, after discussion in the Second Standing Committee of the AL, it was decided it was fairer to exclude the person from all lists completely as the law states that each person can only subscribe to one.

Another topic of discussion was the start of the campaign ban period, which was initially at the point of submission of a candidacy list but, for the sake of fairness, was moved to the day after the deadline for submitting candidacy lists to avoid candidates submitting their lists at the very end of the submission

period and to ensure all candidates are provided the same length of time to campaign.

As it is already known, the new mechanism used to measure candidates' "patriotism" and "faithfulness to Macau and China" is binding and is not subject to any form of appeal.

The new law comes into force the day after its publication in the government's official gazette and will apply to next year's election for the AL.

In the initial presentation to the plenary, the president of the Committee, lawmaker Chan Chak Mo,



noted that the amendment to the election law passed easily with only four com-

mittee meetings needed for both sides to agree to the final version. **RM**

www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

REACHING OUT!

+25,000

Like us on facebook.com/mdtimes



MacauDaily 澳門每日時報 * **Times** DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com ASSISTANT EDITOR Lynzy Valles CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS Alex Torrão, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, 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 DESIGNER Rebeca Almeida | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES Associated Press, MacauHub, MacaoNews, Xinhua SECRETARY Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

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

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

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

RENATO MARQUES

Pereira Coutinho paints a dark picture of the local economy, calls for consumption cards

LAWMAKER José Pereira Coutinho has painted a dark picture of the local economy, calling on the government to enforce new financial support measures such as the reissuing of electronic consumption cards.

The lawmaker noted that, recently, the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, predicted that Macau's economic growth for 2024 could reach 10% but, in reality, the economy seems to be receding.

"Recent statistical data on the transactions involving commercial stores and office spaces show that business has been decreasing at a very sharp rate," Pereira Coutinho said, adding, "back in 2010 there were 2,451 [of this type of] transaction but in 2023 there were only 299 transactions. We see that there was a decrease of around 820%, i.e., an abrupt drop in this type of transaction."

Making use of the same data from the Statistics and Census Service, the lawmakers added that, even in the residential market, the drop in transactions is also very significant

with 21,628 units transacted in 2007 but only 2,879 units in 2023 (-751%).

"These data show that, in general, Macau's economy is going from bad to worse with serious social implications while small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) struggle to survive due to a lack of customers," he said. He adding that the "recent radical changes" that have occurred in the gaming industry will further impact the survival of SMEs, namely in the food and beverage sector.

According to the same lawmaker, this situation is due to the "slow death" situation of the junkets and what is left of the VIP gaming sector, which he fears will soon increase the number of unemployed locals.

"I call once again for elec-

RENATO MARQUES



tronic consumption cards to be distributed to help families in difficulty and thus increase

domestic consumption," he said, adding, "the government must also increase the pension

to match the real living costs due to the increase of the price of essential goods."

AD

CHURCHILL'S
Table

British Classics with a Twist

Savour the taste of two British classics in one with Jammie Custard Cream. Freshly baked in limited quantities daily!

MOP 88 PER BOX

ADDRESS Churchill's Table Boutique, Level 1, The Londoner Macao

ENQUIRY 853 8118 8822
churchilltable.londoner@the-londoner.com.mo



Scan for Details



MACAU TO HOST SERIES OF SPORTS EVENTS IN 2025 NATIONAL GAMES INCLUDING VOLLEYBALL

STAFF REPORTER

MACAU is set to take on table tennis, women's volleyball, three-on-three basketball, men's under-18 basketball, and karate in the 2025 National Games.

The announcement comes as Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng led organizers of Macau's delegation to yesterday inaugural meeting on the 15th National Games in Guangzhou.

The meeting marked the formal establishment of the organizing committee overseeing preparations for the multi-sport event, which will be held across Hong Kong, Macau and Guangdong Province in November 2025.

Zhang Xin, director of the State Sports General Administration's Competition and Sports Department, said the 15th National Games will run from Nov. 9 to Nov. 21, 2025.

Guangzhou will host the opening ceremony while Shenzhen will host the closing ceremony.

There will be 34 major competitions and 401 minor events. Mass events have been divided



into competitions and exhibitions.

According to Ho, the SAR plans to host two or three test matches this year in a bid to prepare for the National Games.

He added that Macau will fully participate in, and cooperate with, the work of the organizing committee and work with Guangdong and Hong Kong

He mentioned that various departments of the Macau Divi-

sion Organizing Committee are preparing for various software and hardware facilities, competitions, receptions, publicity, and transportation.

"Regarding the competition, we are maintaining close cooperation and communication with relevant national project associations and relevant departments of Guangdong Province, conducting personnel training, and making full preparations," said Ho.

In addition, he noted that the recruitment of volunteers for the 15th National Games had been officially launched in February 2023. As of this February, more than 9,000 people had registered to participate

Meanwhile, neighboring region Hong Kong Hong Kong will be hosting eight sports events including fencing and track cycling.

Also, Zhang said officials are

considering connecting marathon and road cycling routes between the three regions to promote integrated development.

Formation of the organizing committee marks important progress as plans ramp up for the quadrennial event, which rotates among China's provinces and territories.

PUN: INTENSE PREPARATION UNDERWAY

Sports Bureau (ID) director Pun Weng Kun has admitted that the Grand Prix and the 15th National Games, to take place at the same time, will be challenging given the intense preparation required.

However, Pun told the press that he is confident that authorities have already allocated sufficient manpower, and all government departments will actively provide assistance.

According to current assessments, Macau will use six to seven venues for the National Games, and is currently doing preliminary optimization, including lighting, network and optical fiber laying, among others.

"The current work is going smoothly and we are confident that it will be basically completed early next year," Pun told the press on the sidelines of the meeting yesterday in Guangzhou, as cited in a TDM report.

Pun also said that it has collaborated with the hotel sector for athlete accommodation.

Lam Lon Wai calls gov't to strengthen prevention mechanisms to protect minors

STAFF REPORTER

LAWMAKER Lam Lon Wai called on the government's security and education departments to be actively engaged in crime prevention education for local minors.

This comes as crime statistics in 2023 show that there were 36 cases of child sexual abuse, which is an increase when compared to both 2022 and 2019.

In 2019, only 11 child sexual abuse cases were reported.

In an interpellation to the Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday, Lam highlighted that there is a need for the city to comprehensively safeguard schools and minors and



provide an environment conducive to their healthy development.

Believing the number of cases in 2023 alarming, Lam hopes that the government will continue to boost the plan to establish new communication mechanisms and intelligence

platforms in collaboration with the local police to combat the spread of underage pornography.

Despite ongoing emphasis by authorities, "there is still a need to reinforce minors' self-protection abilities and awareness," said

the lawmaker.

"There should be collective efforts from all sectors of society to strengthen awareness and education, establish effective home-school cooperation mechanisms, and enhance protection capabilities," he remarked.

ZONE A

LAWMAKERS SUBMIT PROPOSAL FOR ROAD TO BE NAMED AFTER ZHENG GUANYING

STAFF REPORTER

LAWMAKERS Ma Chi Seng and Pang Chuan propose the establishment of "Zheng Guanying Road" near public cultural facilities in the Zone A, in bid to honor the Chinese reformist from Guangdong.

This proposal aims to honor, restore and establish Zheng Guanying Road near the large-scale public cultural facilities in Zone A, to highlight Macau's position and role in the historical process of national development and use this as a way to strengthen the "patriotism and love for Macau" according to the joint proposal.

Zheng Guanying, a prominent figure in modern China, was born in Yongmo Village, Xiangshan County

in 1842 and spent a significant amount of time in Macau. He embarked on a path of westernization at the age of 18 and held various positions in Shanghai, including the Shanghai Telegraph Bureau and the Kaiping Mining Co., Ltd.

He later settled in Macau and wrote influential works such as Words of Warning to a Prosperous Age which advocates self-strengthening and social and economic reforms in Qing China. Zheng Guanying was a reformist thinker and industrialist, and his ideas had a profound impact on the modernization process in China.

In the 1990s, a road in Macau was named after him, but it was later removed in 2007 due to urban development needs.

65 rounds in: Is Macau's long-running mask distribution program still necessary?

STAFF REPORTER

MACAU'S long-standing mask supply program, now in its 65th round, is being questioned by residents particularly about the continued allocation of public funds.

While the program aims to distribute masks at an affordable price to eligible residents, changing habits and declining mask usage has led some individuals to question the program's relevance and suggest alternative uses for the funds.

The long-running program will distribute 30 masks for 24 Macau patacas to eligible residents over 30 days. But interviews found that many no longer wear masks regularly.

"I don't wear masks unless I have a cough or I'm sick; it's much easier to bear them considering we had to wear them constantly for a few years," said local resident Jessica Silva.

Silva also suggested that the government could allocate the funds for better purposes as

RENATO MARQUES



masks are otherwise readily available for purchase.

Tomas Lopes said "no" when asked if he still wears a mask. Acknowledging masks may come in handy, he doesn't think continuing distribution is harmful.

Oriana Cheang, another resident, mentioned that she only wears masks in public health areas and observed that the government possesses substantial funds.

The Health Bureau (SSM) was approached by the Times for

comments regarding the funding rationale and the possibility of the program's termination. However, the bureau has yet to respond, leaving questions unanswered about the decision to continue allocating funds to masks despite a significant decli-

ne in usage over the past year.

While masks will remain commercially available, the voluntary wearing of masks has decreased, and mask stock is increasing. This has prompted some to question whether public funds could be utilized more effectively in other areas as concerns over Covid-19 subside. The SSM did not clarify whether usage trends influenced its decision to renew the program.

This comes as Deputy Ron Lam previously called last year for people to gradually stop wearing masks after the peak of the pandemic last year, stating prolonged use can affect immunity, language development in children, and interpersonal communication.

While some individuals express a decreased reliance on masks and suggest alternative uses for public funds, others acknowledge potential benefits of continued distribution. Ultimately, the decision regarding the allocation of public funds and the future of the mask supply program rests with the SSM.

AD

仁德 CENTRO MEDICO PEDDER
• 仁德醫療中心 •

We bring high quality of medical service to Macau

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

Breast Surgery : Dr. Leong Iat Lun

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

Paediatric Surgery : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

Paediatrics : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

Obstetrics & Gynaecology : Dr. Fong Kuan Io

Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery : Dr. Lam U Lin

Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

ENT : Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang

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

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

Dietitian : Chan Lai U Joey

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

澳門特別行政區
REGIÃO ADMINISTRATIVA ESPECIAL DE MACAU
科學技術發展基金
FUNDO PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO DAS CIÊNCIAS E DA TECNOLOGIA

Notice
Funding Scheme for Innovation and Technology Promotion 2024

I.Objectives
To align with the policy address of the Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region, the Scheme aims to attract and support junior researchers and those who are interested in improving their scientific research capabilities to lead scientific and technological R&D, enhance the cultivation of scientific and technological innovation talents, enrich the technological talent pool, and facilitate the I&T in Macao, with a view to promoting the effect and contribution of I&T to social development.

II.Applying Entities
1. Local higher education institutions under the supervision of the Macao SAR Government;
2. Private non-profit organizations registered in the Macao SAR.

III.Principal Investigator
The principal investigator (PI) shall meet any of the following conditions:
1. As of the date on which the application of the Scheme opens, the applicant has served as an assistant professor or equivalent in an entity referred to in paragraph 1 of the preceding article for not more than 5 years;
2. Serve in an entity referred to in paragraph 2 of the preceding article;
3. If the applying entity is an entity referred to in paragraph 2 of the preceding article, and the funds applied for will be used in higher education institutions, its PI shall also meet the conditions referred to in paragraph 1 of this article.

IV.Requirements for Project Findings
The expected project findings, not limited to academic or applied research findings, may include papers, monographs, research (consultation) reports, patents, talent cultivation, software, hardware (prototype, mock-up), technical standards, formulas, new materials, new technologies, etc.

V.Application and Funding Amount
Applications for less than or equal to MOP500,000. (five hundred thousand patacas)

VI.Project Duration
The duration of each project is from one year to two years.

VII.Application Period
12th April, 2024 to 30th April, 2024

VIII.Applying Method
Please apply through FDCT's online funding application system. (website: www.fdct.gov.mo)
Office Address: Room K, 11/F, Macau Square, No.43-53A Avenida do Infante D. Henrique, Macao.
Tel.: 28788777

IX.Assessment Criteria
The assessment is performed by FDCT according to the Funding Regulations of the Science and Technology Development Fund as approved by the Chief Executive's Dispatch No. 93/2023.
Key considerations will be given to the followings:
(1) The capability of implementing the project of the applying entity;
(2) Project feasibility and work plan;
(3) Budget justification;
(4) Expected R&D results;
(5) The effect of the project in promoting the R&D ability of participating researchers

President of FDCT Administrative Committee,
Che Weng Keong
2024/04/11

MPU JOINS GUANGDONG-HK-MACAU CREATIVE ARTS ALLIANCE

The Macao Polytechnic University (MPU), along with universities in the Greater Bay Area jointly signed the "Agreement on the Formation of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao University Creative Arts Alliance" under the framework of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao University Alliance. The move aims to develop the creative arts system of universities in the three regions. According to the statement, the universities are "committed to promoting academic exchanges and collaboration among universities for creative arts practice, research and education."

MACAU LAUNCHES REMOTE VEHICLE INSPECTION APPOINTMENTS

The Transport Bureau (DSAT) has launched online vehicle inspection appointments to improve public services. Beginning April 13, vehicle owners with overdue periodic inspections can book times through the "My Vehicle" portal or reservation system without visiting authorities in-person. On inspection dates, car owners must go to vehicle inspection centers to apply and pay additional overdue fees.

ZONE A

NEW HOUSING PROJECTS TO BE COMPLETED IN 2024, FIVE DEVELOPMENTS SUSPENDED

STAFF REPORTER

CONSTRUCTION of housing projects applied for in 2019 will be completed this year and are expected to be move-in ready by early to mid-2025, according to Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário.

Speaking to the press yesterday, Rosário said the projects in Zone A should not have to wait until the end of next year to be completed.

Also, the government will suspend five housing developments originally planned for this year, Rosário explained, citing a lack of market demand.

However, the bureau will continue monitoring the situation and reviewing supplementary documents for 2023 housing applications.

There will be 5,415 units available through the 2023 public

housing scheme, which received 6,562 applications during the period. More than 5,300 applicants have now completed their documentation, with the deadline for submissions being April 26. Rosário did not say if unsold homes would be converted to public or mixed-use sites but noted the situation is still being watched closely.

Rosário added around 30 construction sites are currently active in Zone A, mostly located in northern Lots A and B. The 4,000 privately owned units mentioned in plans are distributed in southern Lots C and D, where road building has yet to begin, so there are no land sales scheduled currently for Zone A.

As for sandwich class public housing, Rosário reiterated the focus remains on demand. The program will only launch when needed.



AD



KTRANZ
TRANSLATIONS LIMITED

ACCURATE, TIMELY & COMPETITIVE TRANSLATIONS

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

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

We translate +10,000 words a day

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

GAMING

MGM gains an edge with early smart table adoption: Citibank

STAFF REPORTER

MGM China has gained a technological advantage over its Macau competitors by being an early adopter of smart gaming tables, according to analysts at Citibank.

Citibank analysts George Choi and Ryan Cheung said, "by being an early adopter of smart gaming tables and becoming more aggressive in marketing, MGM China has been successful in gaining market share in 2023 and 2024 to date."

The analysts added, "we believe the merits of smart gaming tables and RFID chips are real and, based on the estimated smart gaming table rollout timeline of its competitors, it looks like MGM China will enjoy this technological advantage over its competitors for most of 2024, if not extended into 2025."

AP PHOTO



Based on MGM China's sustained technological advantage, Citibank has named the company as its top pick in Macau and raised its target price on MGM China shares.

"We believe its technological advantage over its peers is sustainable throughout most of this year, thanks to its early adoption of smart gaming tables," the analysts added.

Industry-wide, Citibank forecasted first quarter gross gaming revenue growth of 6% compared to a 2% increase in ear-

nings, citing unfavorable hold percentages, especially in February. However, SJM is positioned to exceed growth targets as its Grand Lisboa Palace property becomes consistently profitable after ramping up operations late last year.

MGM China set an all-time quarterly earnings record in the fourth quarter of 2023, and Citibank expects the company, along with SJM, to continue outperforming peers through improved market position and adoption of gaming innovations.

ANALYSIS

When are those rate cuts coming, already? The European Central Bank may be providing some hints

DAVID MCHUGH, FRANKFURT

THE European Central Bank will likely use its meeting today [Macau time] as a prelude to a first interest rate cut in June as the rich world's central banks, including the ECB and the U.S. Federal Reserve, assess how soon receding inflation will let them loosen credit for businesses and consumers.

It's a step closely watched for by stock investors, after markets soared in recent months on expectations of lower rates by this summer.

Broad stock market indexes fell immediately in the U.S. on Wednesday and bond prices rose after a hotter than expected inflation report raised fears that the Fed may wait longer than previously thought to lower its benchmark interest rate.

Analysts say it's unlikely the ECB, the monetary authority for the 20 countries that use the euro currency, will change its interest benchmarks today. Instead, the post-decision statement and President Christine Lagarde's news conference will be scrutinized for hints about the potential downward path of rates in the future.

Lagarde has dropped what analysts interpret as broad hints that the bank will wait at least until its June 6 meeting to take any



action as it waits to see sustained evidence that inflation is under control. With eurozone inflation falling to 2.4% in March, down from a peak of 10.6% in October 2023, Lagarde's remarks have made many believe that a cut in June is likely from the current record high benchmark rate of 4%.

The focus will be on how much more guidance Lagarde will be willing to give during her news conference.

"We will be mainly looking for two things: changes to the communication and some hints at the size of the first and following rate cuts," said Carsten Brzeski, chief of global macro at ING bank.

The ECB and the developed world's other central banks are tilting toward undoing some of the sharp hikes to interest rates that were imposed with the goal of getting inflation under control. The Swiss National Bank was the first major central bank to cut rates in the current cycle on March 21. The big exception is Japan, which raised rates for the first time in 17 years on March 19.

Higher rates help squelch inflation by raising the cost of borrowing to buy things, which can cool demand for goods — but they can also slow growth if overdone or maintained for too long.

And growth in Europe has been anemic to say the least. The eurozone economy didn't grow at all in the last three months of last year and the outlook for the figures from the quarter just ended isn't much better.

The ECB is teeing up a cut even as uncertainty grows over the prospect of a first rate cut from the U.S. Federal Reserve. U.S. annual inflation of 3.5% in March and robust U.S. jobs figures suggesting strong growth have led to questions about whether the Fed will carry through with the three rate cuts that it had signaled for this year. Analysts now think the U.S. cuts could be fewer or could

come later than originally expected.

Rate cuts can boost stocks because they suggest the central bank sees a strong economy ahead that will boost corporate profits, and because lower interest rates make stocks relatively more attractive compared with interest-bearing holdings such as bonds or CDs.

The price spike in Europe was spurred by an outside shock: Russia cutting off most supplies of cheap natural gas after its invasion of Ukraine. The energy crisis came on top of logjams in supplies of raw materials and parts as the economy bounced back from the pandemic slowdown. Those issues have largely eased as energy prices have fallen to pre-war levels and as supply chain frictions have eased. But services inflation remains sticky, and the ECB wants to see more data on wage increases.

While the European energy shock is over, U.S. demand for goods remains buoyant. That means the inflation decline is "more predictable" in Europe, according to Erik F. Nielsen, UniCredit group chief economics adviser. "The US inflation hump was comparatively driven more by excess demand than European inflation, created by the vastly expansionary US fiscal policy," he wrote in an email. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

MGM restaurants receive Tatler's best restaurant awards



Two signature Chinese restaurants at MGM properties in Macau have been honored with Best Restaurants Awards 2024 by Tatler Hong Kong. Imperial Court at MGM Macau and Five Foot Road

at MGM Cotai received the accolades from the luxury media brand.

Five Foot Road offers a unique Sichuan dining experience curated by Executive Sous Chef Yang Dengquan.

Guests can sample the 24 flavor profiles of the Sichuan cuisine, including delicacies like stewed bird's nest with chicken.

Nestled in MGM Macau's lobby, Imperial Court showcases Lingnan cuisine with modern twists from Executive Sous Chef Homan Tsui. Dishes pay tribute to the region's culinary traditions using seasonal ingredients.

Founded 40 years ago, Tatler's Dining Guide is a leading authority on luxury dining worldwide. The awards recognize both restaurants' exquisite interpretations of Chinese regional cuisine through meticulous techniques and ingredients.

Three Wynn restaurants rank among Tatler's top 20 in Macau



Three restaurants from Wynn Macau and Wynn Palace were among the top 20 best restaurants in Macau, according to the Tatler Dining Awards 2024. Chef Tam's

Seasons and SW Steakhouse at Wynn Palace along with Golden Flower at Wynn Macau earned spots on the prestigious list. The awards recognized

the pinnacle of dining in Hong Kong and Macau.

Chef Tam's Seasons, created by Cantonese master chef Tam Kwok Fung, has received awards within its first year including one MICHELIN star.

Through seasonal degustation menus emphasizing regional ingredients, Chef Tam blends culinary techniques with Chinese cultural traditions.

Golden Flower's Executive Chef Henry Zhang meticulously recreates imperial cuisine with modern flair, earning Forbes five stars.

As Macau's premier steakhouse, SW Steakhouse offers premium cuts alongside theatrical presentations meant to delight the senses.

GREEN INDUSTRIES

Beijing condemns EU's investigation of subsidies as protectionist

KEN MORITSUGU, BEIJING

CHINA has accused the European Union of protectionism and "reckless distortion" of the definition of subsidies in response to a new EU investigation into Chinese wind turbine makers.

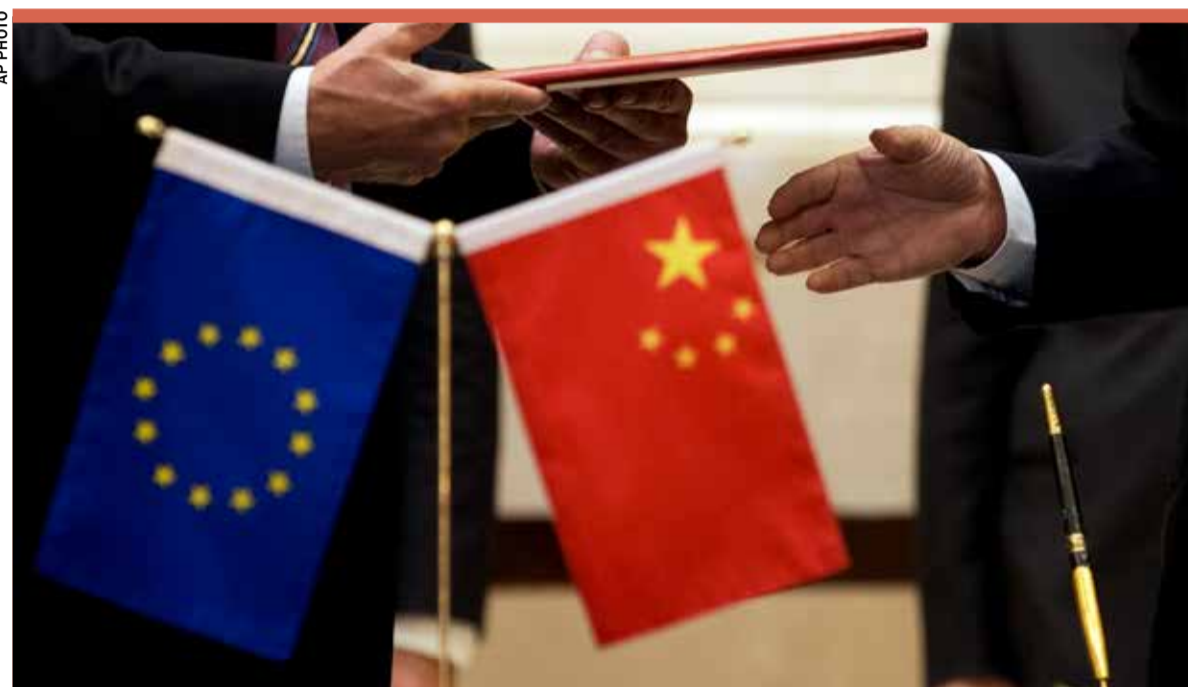
A Chinese trade remedies official made "solemn representations" on the issue in a meeting in Brussels yesterday [Macau time] with Martin Lukas, the EU director general for trade defense, the Commerce Ministry said.

"The European side's reckless distortion of the definition of subsidies, and the lack of openness and transparency in procedural standards during the investigation, is a protectionist act that harms the fair competition environment in the name of fair competition," the statement said.

The investigation opened by the European Union earlier this week is the latest against Chinese companies announced in the past two months under a new EU regulation.

The investigation will look into whether Chinese subsidies are giving wind turbine companies an unfair advantage in the competition for projects in five member countries: Spain, Greece, France, Romania and Bulgaria.

"We're making full use of the tools that we have," the EU commissioner for competition, Margrethe Vestager, said in announcing the move.



AP PHOTO

A Chinese business group in Europe described the investigations as "an act of economic coercion" that undermines the EU's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

"This action sends a detrimental signal to the world, suggesting discrimination against Chinese enterprises and endorsing protectionism," the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU said in a statement.

The EU also announced investigations last week into two Chinese solar panel makers bidding for a 455-megawatt solar park in Romania. An earlier EU probe into

the procurement of 20 electric trains in Bulgaria was dropped last month after the Chinese bidder withdrew from the competition.

Vestager, delivering a speech in the United States on technology and politics, called the approach "whack-a-mole" and said the EU needs to address the issue in a more systemic way.

"And we need it before it is too late," she said, according to a text of her prepared remarks. "We can't afford to see what happened on solar panels, happening again on electric vehicles, wind or essential chips."

China thinks the investigations are "targeting an obvious direc-

tion," undermining the confidence of Chinese companies to invest and trade in Europe and affecting global efforts to combat climate change, the Commerce Ministry statement said.

The EU also launched an investigation last October into Chinese subsidies for electric vehicles as exports from China to Europe rise.

China's vehicle exports, including trucks and buses, rose 33.2% in the first three months of this year to 1.3 million units, the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers said. Exports of electric vehicles were up 7.3% to 248,000 units. Passenger cars accounted for 1.1 million of the total.

The U.S. treasury secretary, Janet Yellen, raised similar concerns on a recent visit to China. She called for changes in a Chinese industrial strategy that she said has "the potential to flood our markets with exports that make it difficult for American firms to compete."

A German industry representative said that inexpensive Chinese goods contribute to Europe's environmental goals in the short-term but "will destroy our industry" in the medium term.

"We have a dilemma here," said Maximilian Butek, the head of the German Chamber of Commerce in East China. "Because now at the moment it's solar, the next could be maybe wind power, etc. So this is a balance the politicians need to find."

The chamber wants German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, on his visit to China next week, to raise German company concerns about access to the Chinese market.

Complaints about unfair trade practices are not new, but they have taken on increased importance with the emergence of Chinese companies as competitors both in China and abroad.

"Especially against the background of increased entry of Chinese providers into the European market, a level playing field must be implemented," the German Chamber said in a survey of member companies released this week. **MDT/AP**

DIRE STRAIT

China sanctions two US defense companies for supporting arms sales to Taiwan

CHINA yesterday announced rare sanctions against two U.S. defense companies over what it said is their support for arms sales to Taiwan.

The announcement freezes the assets of General Atomics Aeronautical Systems and General Dynamics Land Systems held within China. It also bars the companies' management from entering the country.

Filings show General Dynamics operates a half-dozen Gulfstream and jet aviation services operations in China, which remains heavily reliant on foreign

aerospace technology even as it attempts to build its own presence in the field.

The company helps make the Abrams tank being purchased by Taiwan to replace outdated armor intended to deter or resist an invasion from China.

General Atomics produces the Predator and Reaper drones used by the U.S. military. Chinese authorities did not go into details on the company's alleged involvement with supplying arms to Taiwan.

Beijing has long threatened such sanctions, but has rarely issued them as



AP PHOTO

its economy reels from the COVID-19 pandemic, high unemployment and a sharp decline in foreign investment.

"The continued U.S.

arms sales to China's Taiwan region seriously violate the one-China principle and the provisions of the three China-U.S. joint communiqués, interfere in

China's internal affairs, and undermine China's sovereignty and territorial integrity," China's Foreign Ministry said in a statement. It insists that the mainland and the island to which Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist forces fled amid civil war in 1949 remain part of a single Chinese nation.

Sanctions were leveled under Beijing's recently enacted Law of the People's Republic of China on Countering Foreign Sanctions.

General Dynamics fully owned entities are registered in Hong Kong, the southern Chinese semi-au-

tonomous city over which Beijing has steadily been increasing its political and economic control.

Despite their lack of formal diplomatic ties — a concession Washington made to Beijing when they established relations in 1979 — the U.S. remains Taiwan's most important source of diplomatic support and supplier of military hardware from fighter jets to air defense systems.

Taiwan has also been investing heavily in its own defense industry, producing sophisticated missiles and submarines.

China had 14 warplanes and six navy ships operating around Taiwan on Wednesday and Thursday, with six of the aircraft crossing into Taiwan's air defense identification zone. **MDT/AP**

MYANMAR

Ethnic Karen guerrillas claim to have seized key border town

GRANT PECK, BANGKOK

GUERRILLAS from the Karen ethnic minority yesterday claimed to have captured the last of the army's outposts in Myawaddy district in eastern Myanmar, virtually clearing the way for them to take over Myawaddy town, the major crossing point for trade with Thailand.

The Karen National Union, the ethnic group's leading political body, said in a statement posted on Facebook that its armed wing, acting together with the affiliated Karen National Defense Organization and allied pro-democracy forces, had captured the garrison of the army's Infantry Battalion 275, about 4 kilometers to the west of Myawaddy, before dawn yesterday, after besieging it since the start of the week.

The fall of Myawaddy would be another major setback in the army's war against resistance forces since last October, when an alliance of three other ethnic rebel groups launched an offensive in the country's northeast.

Over the past five months, the army has been routed in northern Shan state, where it ceded control of several border crossings with China, and in Rakhine state in the west, and is facing active challenges elsewhere.

The nationwide conflict in Myanmar began after the army



Army soldiers are seen on the Myanmar side of a bridge across the Moei River linking to the district of Mae Sot in Thailand's Tak province, yesterday

ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021 and suppressed widespread nonviolent protests that sought a return to democratic rule.

Myawaddy, in Kayin state, is opposite the Thai district of Mae Sot in Tak province and is connected by two bridges across the Moei River. It is Myanmar's most active trading post with Thailand, and the principal town of Myawaddy district.

The fighting in Myawaddy has alarmed officials in Bangkok, who fear the prospect of large numbers of people fleeing across the border. Thai Foreign Minister Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara said Tuesday that Thailand can accommodate

about 100,000 people in safe areas on a temporary basis. Mae Sot district has in the past sheltered thousands of Myanmar villagers seeking safety.

With Infantry Battalion 275 garrison's capture, all army outposts in the township have been seized and the resistance groups will pursue those soldiers who remain at large, said the statement from the KNU.

"We want to inform the public not to fear and to cooperate with us," the statement said.

In a separate statement, the KNU said retreating soldiers seeking to cross into Thailand for refuge were hiding on the Myanmar side of the No.2 Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge.

Photos carried by Thai media showed men they identified as Myanmar soldiers resting by the bridge.

A Karen guerrilla involved in the resistance offensive told the Associated Press that their combined forces had seized the Infantry Battalion 275 garrison late Wednesday night.

The guerrilla, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to release information, said the resistance forces collected weapons from the garrison. The KNU statement included photos of what it said were captured weapons.

A journalist covering the fighting in the area also confirmed the

seizure of the garrison and weapons, saying the soldiers withdrew from the garrison overnight. He along with other individuals in Myawaddy willing to speak about the situation, spoke on condition of anonymity because of fear for their safety.

A resident of Myawaddy living near the garrison told the AP by phone that the retreat of the soldiers came after the Border Guard Force units negotiated between the army and the combined resistance force. He said a jet fighter dropped two bombs near the garrison at 10:30 a.m. yesterday but no casualties were reported.

The Border Guard Force units in Kayin state are nominally affiliated with the military but announced last month they were cutting their ties and establishing themselves independently under the name of the Karen National Army.

The Karen National Union recently opened an office in Myawaddy jointly with another group, the Karen National Liberation Army-Peace Council. A representative from that office confirmed to the AP that the new Karen National Army was playing a major role in negotiations between the resistance and the Myanmar military.

The representative said the KNA had taken control of security in Myawaddy town since fighting in the area began early last month.

He said the Karen National Army units had pledged to Myawaddy's residents that they would try to not let a single bullet hit the town, and were patrolling and taking other security measures.

Another Myawaddy resident also told the AP that while he was driving in the town he saw hundreds of people evidently seeking to cross into Mae Sot in Thailand at the bridge checkpoints. **MDT/AP**

PHILIPPINES

Two navy pilots killed after training helicopter crashes near homes

A Philippine navy training helicopter crashed near a seaside city, killing the two pilots on board and narrowly mis-

sing a fruit market and neighborhood, where some horrified residents ran for their lives, officials and witnesses said yesterday.

Nobody on the ground was injured when the Robinson R22 helicopter crashed near early-morning marketgoers and resi-

dents in Cavite City, 21 kilometers south of Manila.

Military spokesperson Col. Francel Padilla said the cause of the crash was not immediately known, but the two pilots had "executed emergency procedures."

Joann Nicolas Laristan said she was hanging her laundry when she saw the helicopter flying unusually low near a church before it collided with two trees beside an empty workers' shed about 50 meters from her home.

"I got really scared because the crash happened just nearby," Laristan told

The Associated Press. "I ran back to my home and grabbed my children."

Other residents said they were roused from sleep by the loud noise of the crash.

Several residents expressed relief that the helicopter did not hit their homes or the nearby public market, which was starting to draw a crowd after daybreak.

Police investigator Ar-mangel Genuino told AP the helicopter took off from Sangley Airport for a routine training flight around Cavite province and crashed less than 10 minutes later.

The instructor pilot and his navy colleague were extracted from the wreckage by paramedics and rescuers but were later declared dead in two hospitals, Genuino said.

The navy mourned the

death of the pilots and said an investigation was underway.

"No stone will be left unturned as we endeavor to prevent this kind of accident from happening again," a navy statement said.

The Philippine military is among the weakest in the region and has struggled for decades to modernize and strengthen its navy, army and air force while dealing with long-running Muslim and communist insurgencies.

In recent years, it has started to shift its focus to external defense, including in the disputed South China Sea, where the Philippine navy and coast guard have faced an increasingly aggressive Chinese coast guard and suspected militia fleets in high-seas territorial confrontations. **MDT/AP**



In this photo provided by the Cavite Police Regional PIO, rescuers check the remains of a trainer helicopter after it crashed in Cavite province yesterday

VIETNAM

COURT SENTENCES REAL ESTATE TYCOON TO DEATH IN LARGEST EVER FRAUD CASE

ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL, HANOI

REAL estate tycoon Truong My Lan was sentenced yesterday to death by a court in Ho Chi Minh city in southern Vietnam in the country's largest financial fraud case ever, state media Thanh Nien said.

The 67-year-old chair of the real estate company Van Thinh Phat was formally charged with fraud amounting to \$12.5 billion — nearly 3% of the country's 2022 GDP.

Lan illegally controlled Saigon Joint Stock Commercial Bank between 2012 and 2022 to allow 2,500 loans that resulted in losses of \$27 billion to the bank, reported state media VnExpress. The court asked her to compensate the bank \$26.9 million.

Despite mitigating circumstances — this was a first-time offense and Lan participated in charity activities — the court attributed its harsh sentence to the seriousness of the case, saying Lan was at the helm of an orchestrated and sophisticated cri-



Business woman Truong My Lan, front center, attends a trial in Ho Chi Minh City yesterday

minal enterprise that had serious consequences with no possibility of the money being recovered, VnExpress said. Her actions "not only violate the property management rights of individuals and organizations but also push SCB (Saigon Joint Stock Commercial Bank) into a state of special control; eroding people's trust in the leadership of the Party and State," VnExpress quoted the judge-

ment as saying.

The 2011 merger of a beleaguered SCB bank involved two other lenders. The banks have since become one of Vietnam's largest commercial banks by assets.

Former central bank official Do Thi Nhan was also sentenced Thursday to life in prison for accepting \$5.2 million in bribes.

Lan's arrest in October 2022 was among the most high-profi-

le in an ongoing anti-corruption drive in Vietnam that has intensified since 2022. The so-called Blazing Furnace campaign has touched the highest echelons of Vietnamese politics. Former President Vo Van Thuong resigned in March after being implicated in the campaign.

But it's the scale of Lan's trial has shocked the nation. VTP was among Vietnam's richest real es-

tate firms, with projects including luxury residential buildings, offices, hotels and shopping centers. Analysts said the scale of the scam raised questions about whether other banks or businesses had similarly erred, dampening Vietnam's economic outlook and making foreign investors jittery at a time when Vietnam has been trying to position itself as the ideal home for businesses trying to pivot their supply chains away from China.

The real estate sector in Vietnam has been hit particularly hard: An estimated 1,300 property firms withdrew from the market in 2023, developers have been offering discounts and gold as gifts to attract buyers, and despite rent for shophouses falling by a third in Ho Chi Minh City, many in the city center are still empty, according to state media.

In November, Communist Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, Vietnam's top politician, said that the anti-corruption fight would "continue for the long term." **MDT/AP**

AD

律師事務所



C&C
LAWYERS
& NOTARIES
SINCE 1996



合夥人 PARTNERS:

官樂怡 Rui José da Cunha ° 山度士 Álvaro Rodrigues ° 馬天龍 Nuno Sardinha da Mata ° 趙魯 Zhao Lu * 馬傑安 João Nogueira Marques

大律師 ASSOCIATES:

高文軒 Adelino Correia °
羅善齡 Zelina Rodrigues
馬潔冰 Maria João Marques
陶義德 António Isóo de Azeredo
白穎怡 Icília Berenguel
冼玲鳳 Mariana Afonso Esteves
馬秀文 Sofia Mendes Martins
飛嘉華 Carlos dos Santos Ferreira °
莫永誠 Rui Velez de Moura
安東尼 António Manuel dos Santos
巴慧雅 Vera Bastos
歐文傑 Miguel Evaristo
陳芷喬 Joana Chan

大律師 ASSOCIATES:

顏曉蓉 Teresa Xiaorong Yan
諾瑪莉 Maria Noras
康靜雅 Viviana Hong
梁淑嵐 Ana Leon
黃瀚賢 Frederico Vong
斐彥德 Gonçalo Figueiredo
吳靈鋒 Ng Teng Fong

實習律師 TRAINEE LAWYERS:

陳健雄 Eurico Chan
戴博晴 Tai Pok Cheng
吳佩愉 Ng Pui U
陳子健 Kimi Chan

法律專家 及 外地註冊律師

JURISTS AND LAWYERS
QUALIFIED IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS:
林思潔 Jessie Lin
羅成軒 José J. Rodrigues
楊詩婷 Si Teng leong

法律專家 JURISTS:

張偉鴻 Cheong Wai Hong
伍福賢 Domingos Ng
許栢桓 Rui Fernandes Brás

WWW.CCADVOG.COM
TEL: (853) 2837 2642/ 2837 2623

° 私人公證員 Notary Public * 中國委託公證人 China Appointed Attesting Officer



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



GUATEMALA

Desperate young Guatemalans try to reach the US even after horrific deaths of migrating relatives

GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO,
COMITANCILLO

EVERY night for nearly two years, Glendy Aracely Ramírez has prayed by the altar in her parents' mud-brick bedroom where, under a large crucifix, is a picture of her sister Blanca. The 23-year-old died alongside 50 other migrants in a smuggler's tractor-trailer in Texas.

"I ask God for my family's health and that I might get to the United States one day. My mom asks God that she won't have to see another accident," said Glendy, 17, who has already packed a small backpack for her own journey from the family's home 8,900 feet up in Guatemala's highlands.

Her "coyote" postponed it for a few days because of a flare-up in violence among Mexican drug cartels that control migrants' routes to the United States, but she is undeterred.

Tens of thousands of youths from this region would rather take deadly risks — even repeatedly — than stay behind where they see no future. Blanca's fatal journey was her third attempt to reach the U.S.

"I want to go there, because here there are no opportunities, even though Mom says that I'll suffer what Blanca did," Glendy said as she sat with her mother, Filomena Crisóstomo, in their tidy dirt-floor courtyard. "I'd like to have a house, help my family and get ahead."

The record-high numbers of migrants illegally crossing the U.S.-Mexico border have made migration a top concern in this U.S. presidential election year. Among those migrants, the largest group of unaccompanied minors has been from Guatemala — nearly 50,000 of the 137,000 encounters recorded by border authorities in the last fiscal year.

Most come from tiny hamlets in the predominantly Indigenous Western Highlands. Daily wages top out around the equivalent of \$9, far below the supposed legal minimum. In tiny plots of brittle clay soil — often the only collateral for loans to pay smugglers' fees that can reach \$20,000 — many families grow corn and beans to eat.

Little else sprouts from the steep mountainsides except



AP PHOTO

Olivia Orozco Lopez cries as she holds a portrait of her late daughter Celestina Carolina during an interview in the Culvilla hamlet of Tejutla

for the exuberantly decorated, multi-story concrete homes built with remittances from loved ones in the United States — constant reminders of what's possible if only one makes it "to the north."

MASS TRAGEDIES

In the small town of Comitancillo, two murals serve as a different reminder — they're memorials to the nearly two dozen local migrants who died in recent mass tragedies. They either asphyxiated in the trailer in San Antonio, Texas, in June 2022, or were shot and set afire by rogue police officers in Camargo, Mexico, in January 2021.

It took less than a week after the remains from the Camargo massacre were returned to Comitancillo for burial before the first surviving family member left for the U.S.

And with a 17-year-old boy who made it to Florida this winter, now at least one relative has migrated from nearly all of the families since the massacre, said the Rev. José Luis González, a priest with the Jesuit Migration Network. The lone exception was an older man whose family was already north of the border; he died trying to make it back after being deported, González said.

"It's an evident sign that the fear to stay is bigger than the fear to go," said González, who started ministering to the affec-

ted families when they traveled some six hours to Guatemala's capital for DNA tests to identify the remains.

Many families credit the Jesuit group for being the only institution that has stayed by their side, regularly traveling to Comitancillo to provide legal updates — nearly a dozen police officers were sentenced last fall in the Camargo case — as well as psychological, humanitarian and pastoral assistance.

On a recent morning, about 50 relatives of those lost either in Camargo or San Antonio gathered for a meeting with the Jesuit group that included workshops to process depression and grief. Most were women and children speaking Mam, one of Guatemala's two dozen Mayan languages.

One of the handful of fathers at the meeting was Virgilio Ambrocio. The eldest of his eight children, Celestina Carolina, was making less than \$90 a month as a housekeeper in Guatemala City and sending half of that back home to help feed her siblings. So she decided to try her luck in the United States, and died at 23 in the trailer.

"The hardest part is, who's going to help us now," Ambrocio said as dust swirled around his home. His wife, Olivia Orozco, wept silently, while holding a framed photo of a smiling Celestina.

VIOLENCE AND DEBTS

The primary driver of migration over the past 10 years is the inability to get jobs to pay for the most basic necessities, said Ursula Roldán, a researcher at Rafael Landívar University in Guatemala City. That's exacerbated by the debts families incur to pay the smugglers, which would take 10 years' worth of in-country wages to repay — making it crucial to get to the U.S. and send back remittances from far higher wages.

Rising violence in the Mexican regions bordering Guatemala is also pushing more migrants to head to the U.S. instead of working seasonal agricultural jobs there. Climate change is affecting even subsistence farming.

In their one-room home near Comitancillo, Reina Coronado tried to convince the eight children she had since she married at 16 that they didn't have to risk their lives.

Some went north anyway, including Aracely Florentina Marroquín, 21, who had completed high school like Blanca and, like her, felt she had wasted her family's money in studying since she still couldn't get a professional job.

The last thing she told Coronado was that she'd go only for four years and send money to build a kitchen, so she wouldn't have to cook tortillas over

an open fire. Next came the call from Texas that made Coronado cry for months. Today, she finds some comfort caring for two young daughters still living with her and the animals she raises.

"Even though it's a struggle, one has to fight, to try to keep going," Coronado said. "I go to work and that way the day, and the hard moments, pass. Sometimes I do it crying, but I trust in our Father, the Lord."

Marcelina Tomás has also been praying for strength since her oldest son, Anderson Pablo, was murdered in Camargo — and especially in recent months since his younger brother Emerson, 17, also went to the U.S.

Anderson was in 9th grade when the pandemic hit and he started working in the fields alongside his father. Their wages of around \$6 a day were enough to afford tortillas each day for the family of 11, but not something to go with them, Tomás said. So she and her husband agreed to help Anderson get loans for the \$16,000 smuggling fee.

Twelve days after Anderson, 16, left their home near Comitancillo, news of the Camargo massacre arrived via social media. Pregnant with her tenth child, Tomás, 37, had to leave her children with family members and spend a night away from home for the first time to undergo DNA tests in the capital that allowed Anderson's partial remains to be identified and buried.

"Only God knows what happened. And all for wanting to get ahead," Tomás said. "I relied on him, and he treated his little siblings so well."

Anderson had dissuaded Emerson from going along, saying he should stay in school a bit longer. According to Tomás, Emerson was heartbroken after his brother's death; he enrolled in high school, but soon quit to work in a potato field.

Around the third anniversary of Anderson's death, Emerson said he wanted to migrate, because many other youths had gone too. Tomás reminded him of Anderson's fate, the tragedy in San Antonio, the neighbors' children who died in the border deserts or in work accidents in the U.S.

"No," he told me, "I'm going." And he went," Tomás said by the altar where three pictures of Anderson stand by a crucifix, with a lit candle and a vase of calla lilies.

Anderson's dream was to earn enough to move the family from their one-room, mud-brick house to a concrete one with separate spaces for his parents, his brothers and his sisters. They live in such a house now, built with donations received after his death.

But nobody sleeps in the room with the altar. They're keeping it as Anderson's room. **MDT/AP**

USA

Biden will meet with Philippine, Japanese leaders to discuss Indo-Pacific action

AAMER MADHANI,
WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Joe Biden is bringing together Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the White House today [Macau time] as the three nations use their first-ever trilateral summit to try to show they are in lockstep about countering China's military assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific.

The leaders are expected to announce that their coast guards will hold a joint patrol in the Indo-Pacific this year, a follow-up on law enforcement drills carried out last year by the allies in waters near the disputed South China Sea. The U.S. Coast Guard will also welcome Filipino and Japanese coast guard members onto a U.S. Coast Guard vessel during the patrol for training, according to senior Biden administration officials who insisted on anonymity to preview the talks.

The summit comes a day after Biden held one-on-one talks with Kishida and feted the Japanese premier with a glitzy state dinner at the White House, a diplomatic honor meant to recognize Tokyo's growing clout on the global stage. It was also designed to send a clear signal that the Democratic administration remains determined to build what it calls a "latticework" of alliances in the Indo-Pacific even as it grapples with the Israel-Hamas war and Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine.

Biden on Wednesday reflected on the fact that Japan, once a fierce U.S. enemy, has become one of the closest American partners and an indispensable ally in a shared push for peace, security and prosperity in the Pacific and beyond.

"Just a few generations ago, our two nations were locked in a devastating conflict," Biden said with Kishida by his side for a pomp-

AP PHOTO



Biden, Kishida and Marcos Jr.

-filled arrival ceremony at the White House. "It would have been easy to say we remain adversaries. Instead, we made a far better choice: We became the closest of friends."

Today's three-way summit will also have a large economic component with several major U.S.-based companies — including Meta, UPS, and Greenbrier Energy — announcing investments in the Philippines, administration officials said. The new deals come after Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo visited Manila last month to announce more than \$1 billion in new investment by American companies in the Philippines.

Administration officials have acknowledged growing concern among all three countries about strong Chinese action in the Pacific, which will be a large focus of the leaders' talks. The White House sees the summit as countering China's attempts at "intimidation" and sending a message that China is "the outlier in the neighborhood," according to an administration official.

Relations between China and the Philippines have been repeatedly tested by skirmishes involving the two nations' coast guard vessels in the disputed South China Sea. Chinese coast guard ships also regularly approach disputed Japanese-controlled East China

Sea islands near Taiwan.

The so-called "gray-zone" actions by China has included shining military-grade lasers at the Philippine Coast Guard, firing water cannons at vessels and ramming into Philippine ships near the Second Thomas Shoal, which both Manila and Beijing claim. In 1999, Manila intentionally ran the World War II-era ship aground on the shoal, establishing a permanent military presence there.

Biden, in a wide-ranging phone call with Chinese President Xi Jinping last week, raised concerns about China's operations in the South China Sea, including efforts to impede the Philippines, which the U.S. is treaty-obligated to defend, from resupplying its forces on the Second Thomas Shoal.

"The main intent of this trilateral agreement is for us to be able to continue to flourish, to be able to help one another, and ... to keep the peace in the South China Sea and the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea," Marcos told reporters before departing for Washington on Wednesday.

Chinese officials have bristled at criticism over their action in the South China Sea and blamed the U.S. for exacerbating tensions.

"Countries outside the region, led by the U.S., have been cobbling together small groupings in the South China Sea," Chinese

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said Wednesday. "They have been stoking confrontation in the name of cooperation, flexing muscles in the name of peace, and sowing chaos in the name of order. This is no doubt an act of hegemonism."

Biden has made improving relations with the Philippines a priority since Marcos became the country's president in June 2022. The relationship has had ups and downs over the years and was in a difficult place when Marcos took office. Human rights groups said Marcos' predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte's "war on drugs" resulted in thousands of extrajudicial killings.

Marcos, the son and namesake of the country's former dictator, as a candidate said he would look to pursue closer ties with China. But he's increasingly drifted toward Washington amid concerns about China's coercive action.

Biden hosted him for talks at the White House last year, the first Washington visit by a Philippine president in more than a decade. Biden also met him on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly soon after Marcos took office, and dispatched Vice President Kamala Harris to Manila in 2022 to meet him.

Last year, the Philippines agreed to give the U.S. access to four more bases on the islands. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1975 US PULLS OUT OF CAMBODIA



The US has admitted defeat in Cambodia and removed its remaining embassy personnel from the capital, Phnom Penh.

Early this morning 276 people were airlifted from a football field near the embassy by a fleet of 30 helicopters.

Those on the airlift included 159 Cambodians who had worked with the Americans.

Foreign journalists who had been covering the civil war between the communist Khmer Rouge and the Cambodian government were also airlifted out of the country.

It was feared "Operation Eagle Pull", as the evacuation was dubbed, would come under Khmer Rouge fire and more than 300 armed Marines guarded the field.

However, the operation passed off uneventfully.

Some of Cambodia's most senior government ministers, including the Acting President, Saukham Khoy, were among the evacuees.

The country's Prime Minister, Long Boret, has remained in Phnom Penh.

Long Boret's decision not to leave came as a surprise as he has been condemned to death by the advancing Khmer Rouge.

The evacuees were flown to American war ships, the Okinawa and the Hancock, in the Gulf of Thailand.

In Washington, President Ford explained the reasons why the US had pulled out of Cambodia.

Mr Ford said he had taken the decision with "a heavy heart" but had done so to ensure the safety of Americans who had "served valiantly".

The American withdrawal is an inglorious end to five years of involvement in Cambodia's civil war.

Its presence in the country was closely linked to the war it is conducting in neighbouring Vietnam.

Between 1970 and 1973 the US bombed Cambodia in order to stop its North Vietnamese enemies using the country as a base.

If Phnom Penh does fall, Cambodia will become the first country since Cuba 16 years ago to pass into Communist hands.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

After the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh on 17 April its leader, Pol Pot, immediately set about realising his vision of an agrarian utopia.

He forced hundreds of thousands of people to leave urban areas and become farmers.

Pol Pot's reforms led to the deaths of an estimated 1.7 million people - some were executed but many died of disease and starvation.

In 1979 Cambodia's old enemy, Vietnam, invaded and the Khmer Rouge fled.

In 1991 a United Nations-brokered peace agreement was signed which ended the country's civil war.

In 1997 Pol Pot was convicted of treason by a "people's tribunal" and was sentenced to life under house arrest.

He died in April 1998.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Follow your inspiration. You're making interesting connections. You can see what's missing. Not everything is as it seems. Maintain open communications. Share your discoveries.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20

Bring home the bacon and fry it up in a pan. Don't get pushy. Reinforce the basics. Grab lucrative opportunities. Develop prospects naturally.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21

Talk about what you love to discover new connections. What you need can be found in your networks. Imagine the possibilities. Develop and grow.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Get quiet enough to listen to your muses. Make plans to realize a dream close to your heart. Outline the steps. Reinforce support structures.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Share support with friends, teammates and colleagues. Collaboration flowers with communication. Discuss potential adaptations around a challenge.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Put your heart into your work to grow. It could get chaotic. Distractions and illusions abound. Focus on the details that you love.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Follow your heart down interesting avenues. Spontaneous detours can reveal hidden treasure. Let go of expectations. Reality may not match fantasy. Explore possibilities.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Coordinate for lucrative benefits. Collaborate to bring home a healthy harvest. Keep family expenses paid and everyone fed. Contribute for growth. Conserve resources together.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You and your partner are in sync. Talk about shared passions and strategies for advancement. Strengthen foundational structures. Reinforce the basics. Love is fundamental.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Watch where you're going. Slow for tricky sections. Pitfalls line the path. Physical action gets satisfying results. Score extra points for reconnecting with nature.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Follow your heart, despite complications. Love, fun and romance take priority. Distractions abound. Simplify expectations. Fantasies don't match reality. Keep an open mind.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Relax and have fun with family. Cook up something delicious. Things may not go as planned. Stay flexible and amplify the love part.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

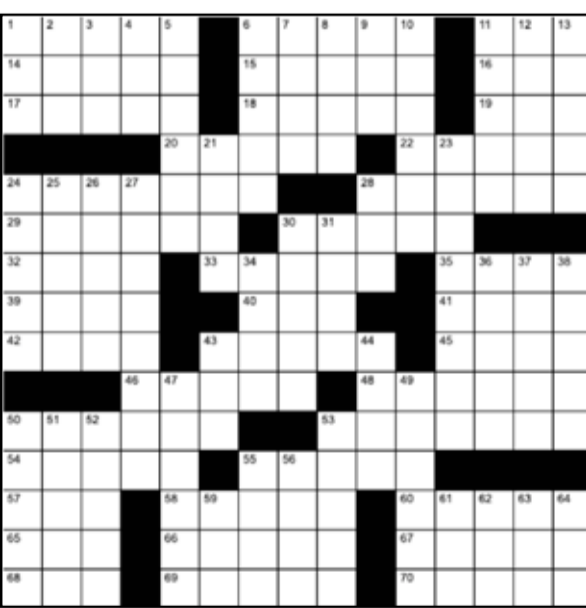
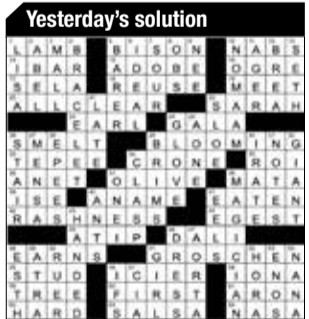
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	11	27	fine
Changchun	11	23	cloudy
Chengdu	13	26	cloudy
Chongqing	17	28	cloudy
Fuzhou	18	27	rain
Guangzhou	21	29	cloudy
Guiyang	13	25	showers
Haikou	24	31	cloudy
Hangzhou	16	24	rain
Harbin	8	22	rain
Hefei	13	24	fine
Nanjing	15	25	cloudy
Shanghai	22	30	cloudy
Taipei	13	22	cloudy
Wuhan	10	15	cloudy
Hong Kong	23	28	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	7	16	cloudy
Frankfurt	9	21	cloudy
Paris	12	23	cloudy
London	11	21	cloudy
New York	9	17	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Main blood vessel; 6- Hawke of "Reality Bites"; 11- Ballet step; 14- Killed; 15- Concert venue; 16- Gone by; 17- Singer LaBelle; 18- Less doubtful; 19- Fam. reunion attendee; 20- Taxi's ticker; 22- Thick-skinned charger; 24- Becomes visible; 28- Perches; 29- Parish officer; 30- Melts; 32- Sauce brand; 33- Singer McLachlan; 35- Hey you!; 39- Knighted Guinness; 40- Sun. talk; 41- Cake finisher; 42- Arizona city; 43- Peruses; 45- Big book; 46- Threesome; 48- Honeybunch; 50- High regard; 53- Like harp seals; 54- ___ Island Red; 55- Reptile; 57- Decay, waste away; 58- Clogs, e.g.; 60- More adorable; 65- Miner concern; 66- Words on a Wonderland cake; 67- Govt. security; 68- Sleep stage; 69- Rose; 70- Philosopher Kierkegaard;

DOWN 1- Viper; 2- Suffix with pay; 3- Fink; 4- ___ for tat; 5- Beast; 6- Bridge positions; 7- Not false; 8- German Mister; 9- "Wheel of Fortune" buy; 10- Of little width; 11- Seine spot; 12- Representative; 13- Flies alone; 21- "___ Tu"; 1974 hit; 23- Sanatorium; 24- President Garfield's middle name; 25- Norman Vincent ___; 26- Senate attendants; 27- Learned; 28- It's a bit of cheer; 30- Tire feature; 31- Difficult; 34- Sailing; 36- Cross the goal line; 37- Big rigs; 38- Forest makeup; 43- Edge; 44- Minn. neighbor; 47- ___ Pieces; 49- Builds; 50- Wrong move; 51- Beach locale; 52- Clan symbol; 53- Alleviated; 55- And ___ bed; 56- Captain of the Nautilus; 59- Boater or bowler; 61- Numero ___; 62- Craggy hill; 63- Riviera season; 64- Stimp'y pal;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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

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

jml property

CONTACT US & SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY!

hello@jmlproperty.com
www.jmlproperty.com

f jmlmacau @jmlproperty

Va Fat
HKD 3,780,000 2 bed 1 bath

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

Jade Garden
HKD 11,880,000 4 bed 3 bath

DRIVE IN

IN 'GIRLS STATE,' MISSOURI TEENS START A MOCK GOVERNMENT

LINDSEY BAHR,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

WHAT would an all-female government look like in the U.S.? Or even a majority female government? It's something that remains a fantasy. But for the ambitious high school students in the Girls State program, given the spotlight in a new documentary arriving on Apple TV+ Friday, it's something they can play at for at least a week.

Six years ago, documentary filmmakers Amanda McBaine and Jesse Moss brought their cameras to the Boys State camp in Texas in the aftermath of a historic and, according to that 2018 class, embarrassing stunt in which their predecessors voted to secede from the U.S. By the time the filmmakers were finishing that effort, they were already thinking about a follow up focused on the girls' program.

In "Girls State" they move away from Texas and to Missouri, and give voice to sev-



A scene from 'Girls Stat' (Apple TV)

eral midwestern teens during a heightened week in which a draft of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, which legalized abortion nationwide, had leaked to the press. This is hardly a consensus issue among the young women at the camp: Even at a single lunch table, many sides of the debate are represented. One girl is firmly pro-choice, but even those opposed also have differing viewpoints of

what the government's purview should be.

During another moment, two girls talk about the right to bear arms. One preaches the importance of protecting a constitutional right, the possibility of arming teachers and the comfort she would get from having access to a bedside automatic rifle should an armed intruder enter her house at night. The other wonders if that's more of a danger to the

household than anything else. And they eventually agree to disagree. Minds are not necessarily being changed through these talks, but all seem excited for the opportunity to be heard (and, sometimes, to hear what others have to say).

McBaine and Moss take pains to find a group of main characters with different backgrounds and viewpoints. There's the city girl from St. Louis who thinks she's probably the

most liberal of the bunch. There's the reformed conservative who once followed her family but in recent years has started disagreeing. There's a moderate conservative who truly believes in bipartisanship. And there is one Black girl who wonders if she's the first Black person that some of the others have seen. The microaggressions, she says, have been few at least. She ends up being elected attorney general, while the others run for the highest office: governor.

Like "Boys State," this film presents a fascinating microcosm of American teenagers. Granted, it's a rather narrow, self-selecting group of kids who choose to spend a week of their summer vacation creating a mock government. You wonder whether four or eight years from now, when they are voting and entering the workforce, they'll have a similar interest in politics and policy and the ambition to do something about it. For the sake of democracy, let's hope so — these kids are really something.

"Girls State," an Apple TV+ release streaming Friday, has not been rated by the Motion Picture Association but should be appropriate for most audiences. Running time: 98 minutes.
★★★★

AD

廖國敏
LIO KUOKMAN

指揮廖國敏懷揣著遠大的志向，為他故鄉的樂團描繪出一幅宏偉的藍圖

TALENTED MAESTRO LIO KUOKMAN HAS AMBITIOUS PLANS FOR HIS HOMETOWN ORCHESTRA

現在發售
now on sale

MACAUCLOSER

知得更多，活得更好
KNOW MORE, LIVE BETTER

MACAUCLOSER
生活藝術雜誌 LIVING & ARTS MAGAZINE

MACAU
澳門

BENFICAMACAU
ACADEMY
澳門賓菲加體育學校

FOOTBALL | **BASKETBALL** | **DAILY TRAININGS**

tTUNES

Vampire Weekend's frenetic, challenging album is an ode to New York

AMERICAN rock band Vampire Weekend returns with their most challenging record to date, the frenetic "Only God Was Above Us."

It's like a musical shot of adrenaline. But its rewards are worth working to discover.

It just takes repeated and close listens to get there.

The 10 tracks on "Only God Was Above Us" won't easily grab the listener the first time through, like the instantly infectious cuts "Harmony Hall" or "This Life" did on their last full-length release, 2019's "Father of the Bride."

While "Father of the Bride" has a California sunshine and Grateful Dead-infused sheen, "Only God Was Above Us" is a sometimes dissonant, cacophonous ode to New York City in the 1980s.

That sometimes-confounding tone is set right out of the gate with the first track, "Ice Cream Piano," which begins with lead singer Ezra Koenig singing an expletive and features a furious guitar riff throughout, ending with a crash of instruments.

"Gen-X Cops" is perhaps the most accessible track on "Only God Was Above Us," with driving guitar and a catchy refrain of "each generation makes its own apology." But even its layers have layers, much like New York, making it somewhat of an effort to uncover what the song has to offer.

In the "neither here nor there" category, welcome "Mary Boone" to the list of Vampire Weekend songs named after women. She joins "Hannah Hunt" and "Diane Young."

The mesmerizing album closer and best track, "Hope," comes in at nearly 8 minutes and is both unsettling and soothing at the same time, with a whirling dervish of sound punctuated by Koenig's refrain of "I hope you let it go / I hope you let it go."

The chaotic energy of "Only God Was Above Us" may be too challenging for more casual Vampire Weekend fans looking for them to duplicate their earlier work. But it's a fascinating evolution for a band that refuses to stay in one place for too long. **SCOTT BAUER/MDT/AP**



"Only God Was Above Us" by Vampire Weekend (Columbia Records)



TASTE OF EDESIA

Comfort with a twist

IRENE SAM, MDT

THIS month, BaseHall 02 in Hong Kong is thrilled to announce the newest addition to its vibrant culinary line-up, **CCT by Shop B**. Coming from Sai Ying Pun to the heart of Central, CCT by Shop B is set to captivate diners with a unique cha chan teng experience that marries the essence of Hong Kong's culinary heritage with a contemporary twist.

Premier food and beverage destination, BaseHall 02 is the vibrant new addition to Hong Kong's diverse culinary landscape. BaseHall 02 presents a curated collection of Hong Kong's best food and beverage experiences under one roof. From counters serving up the city's celebrated classics and experiences, to late-night DJ events fuelled by bespoke cocktails, BaseHall 02's fluid space leads the way in mo-

dern, multi-concept experiential dining.

Owned and operated by the visionary duo Chef George Kwok and Natalie Ngan, CCT by Shop B, also known as "Cha Chan Teng", is where the past, present, and future of Hong Kong cuisine converge. Drawing inspiration from the rich tapestry of Cantonese classics and the conviviality of Dai Pai Dong, CCT by Shop B presents a menu that pays homage to local comfort food while embracing a modern culinary approach.

At CCT by Shop B at BaseHall 02, diners can expect a culinary journey that celebrates Hong Kong's food culture, offering a diverse selection of dishes that cater to every palate. From traditional all-day breakfasts to fusion creations such as baked rice and pasta dishes, Hong Kong-style egg on rice, and beloved street snacks like siu mai and fish balls with Shop B's signature curry sau-

ce, every bite evokes a sense of nostalgia.

Choose from their lunch menu featuring highlights of Baked Chicken Rice with Portuguese Curry Sauce, Baked Spaghetti Bolognese, Shop B Fried Rice, and Egg Omelette Rice with Shrimp. For afternoon snacking options, savour Satay Beef Indomie, Fried Chicken Thigh with Fries, Pineapple Bun with Butter Slice, and Curry Fish Balls, each dish reminiscent of Hong Kong's street food favourites.

For dinner, indulge in Claypot Satay Beef with Vermicelli, Claypot Tofu with Fried Dough, and Typhoon 10 Calamari, among other comforting delights.

CCT by Shop B enriches BaseHall02's diverse culinary offerings, while paying tribute to Hong Kong's vibrant food scene, where the old and the new converge in a symphony of flavours.

OPINION

World Views

Gearoid Reidy, Bloomberg



THE '3-BODY PROBLEM' OF ADAPTING CONTENT ACROSS BORDERS

Like many readers of Liu Cixin's Three-Body series of novels, I was a bit taken aback by some of the decisions made in Netflix Inc.'s adaptation of the 3-Body Problem. Where was Wang Miao, the character through whose eyes most of the mystery in the first book unfolds — and who was this researcher in his place? Why are the aliens no longer called Trisolarians? What's Samwell Tarly from Game of Thrones doing there?!

Some Chinese netizens were also displeased with the changes, though often for other reasons — upset that the primary location was changed from China to the UK, and most local characters diversified into other nationalities. They might have a point, though: The parts of the show truest to the book, such as the depictions of the Cultural Revolution and any scenes involving the species-traitor Ye Wenjie, are by far its strongest points, with the travails of the characters in modern-day Britain much less interesting.

The issue of how much change is acceptable or appropriate when adapting and translating material across languages or media is one attracting increasingly vocal opinion. It came to the fore at the start of the year as another round in the online culture wars, when some fans complained of supposedly "woke" localizations of Japanese videogames and anime — and rejoiced that AI translation would soon allow them to enjoy more "authentic" experiences.

Some were upset with the insertion of modern-day politics into text where it previously didn't seem to exist, such as slipping the line "all property is theft" into one game's originally entirely non-political dialogue. Assuming the original author wasn't consulted, that's questionable at best. But others seem upset with the very idea of localization at all, complaining for example that text in the fantasy game Unicorn Overlord was noticeably more flowery in English than the original's rather prosaic Japanese.

The Three-Body Problem was famously translated by Ken Liu, a Chinese-American, himself a multi-award-winning author of science fiction and fantasy. "My metaphor for translation has always been that translation is really a performance art," he told Wired in 2016. "You take the original and try to perform it, really, in a different medium."

Ken Liu took Liu Cixin's original text and turned it something different for another language. That's been changed again for a new medium. It's tempting to wonder what he might think of changes to his version of the text, such as the decision to call the aliens threatening Earth the San-Ti (from the Chinese San-Ti Ren, Three-Body People), instead of the "goofy"-sounding Trisolarians as they were known in the book. Of course, television is itself a different medium, and the art must be performed differently; Trisolarians is quite a mouthful if it's being used every other sentence.

Localization is always a problem of judging what the target audience will accept and understand. That makes the "performance art" harder and harder to pull off successfully. But changes are inevitable.

I wrote recently that among the bravest decisions made by Walt Disney Co.'s Shogun series was the extensive use of subtitled Japanese scenes. Netflix could have taken a similar route for 3-Body Problem, setting the show primarily in China (for the first season at least), perhaps with a token western character to guide the audience. However, this is where the creators run into another problem facing localizers: many Americans have a dim view of China right now, so a series set mostly on the mainland with a nuanced cast of Chinese characters might struggle.

Purists must accept that changes are necessary to reach a bigger audience. These issues will only become more acute as more material is adapted across borders. Like a three-body problem, there are no simple solutions. [Abridged]

Courtesy Bloomberg/Gearoid Reidy

FAKE UK STAMPS BLAMED ON CHINESE-MADE COUNTERFEITS: BBC

Fake stamps circulating in the UK are originating from China, a senior MP has told the BBC.

Reports suggest a rise in complaints that stamps bought from legitimate stores are being deemed counterfeit. Anyone who receives a letter with a fake stamp is charged £5 by Royal Mail.

Conservative MP Iain Duncan Smith told BBC Breakfast: "China is behind it."

A Royal Mail spokesman said: "We are working hard to remove counterfeit stamps from circulation."

Consumers are being warned to look out for strange perforations around the edge of a stamp, a shine to the surface or the colour looking off.

An investigation by the Daily Telegraph found that four Chinese companies had offered to print up to one million counterfeit stamps a week, with each stamp being sold for as little as 4p each before being sent to the UK.

The fakes have been found for sale on various websites, the paper said, and they were also bought by small retailers who did not realise they were counterfeit.

THE BUZZ



INSTAGRAM BEGINS BLURRING NUDITY IN MESSAGES TO PROTECT TEENS

KELVIN CHAN, LONDON

INSTAGRAM said it's deploying new tools to protect young people and combat sexual extortion, including a feature that will automatically blur nudity in direct messages.

The social media platform said in a blog post yesterday that it's testing out the new features as part of its campaign to fight sexual scams and other forms of "image abuse," and to make it tougher for criminals to contact teens.

Sexual extortion, or sextortion, involves persuading a person to send explicit photos online and then threatening to make the images public unless the victim pays money or engages in sexual favors. Recent high-profile cases include two Nigerian brothers who pleaded guilty to sexually extorting teen boys and young men in Michigan, including one who took his own life, and a Virginia sheriff's deputy who sexually extorted and kidnapped a 15-year-old girl.

Instagram and other social media companies have faced growing criticism for not doing enough to protect young people. Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Facebook parent company Meta, apologized to the parents of victims of such abuse during a Senate hearing earlier this year.

The company said scammers often use direct messages to ask for "intimate images." To counter this, it will soon start testing out a nudity protection feature for direct messages that blurs any images with nudity "and encourages people to think twice before sending nude images."

"The feature is designed not only to protect people from seeing unwanted nudity in their DMs, but also to protect them from scammers who may send nude images to trick people into sending their own images in return," Instagram said.

The feature will be turned on by default globally for teens under 18. Adult users will get a notification encouraging

them to activate it.

Images with nudity will be blurred with a warning, giving users the option to view it. They'll also get an option to block the sender and report the chat.

For people sending direct messages with nudity, they will get a message reminding them to be cautious when sending "sensitive photos." They'll also be informed that they can unsend the photos if they change their mind, but that there's a chance others may have already seen them.

Instagram said it's working on technology to help identify accounts that could be potentially be engaging in sexual extortion scams, "based on a range of signals that could indicate sextortion behavior."

To stop criminals from connecting with young people, it's also taking measures including not showing the "message" button on a teen's profile to potential sextortion accounts, even if they already follow each other, and testing new ways to hide teens from these accounts. MDT/AP



US-Ukraine The top general for U.S. forces in Europe told Congress that Ukraine will be outgunned 10 to one by Russia within a matter of weeks if Congress does not find a way to approve sending more ammunition and weapons to Kyiv soon. The testimony from Army Gen. Christopher Cavoli, head of U.S. European Command (pictured), and Celeste Wallander, assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, comes as Congress enters pivotal weeks for voting for aid for Ukraine.



Israeli aircraft killed three sons of Hamas' top political leader in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, striking high-stakes targets at a time when Israel is holding delicate cease-fire negotiations with the militant group. Hamas said four of the leader's grandchildren were also killed. Ismail Haniyeh's sons are among the highest-profile figures to be killed in the war so far. Israel said they were Hamas operatives, and Haniyeh accused Israel of acting in "the spirit of revenge and murder."



Argentina's President Javier Milei kicked off a visit to the United States, where he'll meet with tech billionaire Elon Musk, as his government seeks an infusion of cash to overhaul Argentina's embattled economy. The populist president started his four-day trip in Miami, which hosts one of the largest Argentine populations in the US, and home to soccer superstar Lionel Messi. Milei will meet with Musk today in Texas.