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**ELECTRIC CARS AND DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY DOMINATE AT BEIJING AUTO SHOW**

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AP PHOTO



**China** President Xi Jinping will visit Hungary from May 8 to 10 as part of a trip to Europe, Cabinet Minister Gergely Gulyas said at a briefing yesterday, Bloomberg reported. Prime Minister Viktor Orban is seeking to expand economic ties with China, including by broadening Hungary's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative to include further rail modernization projects as well as the financing of a new crude pipeline connecting it with Serbia. Xi is expected to arrive in Hungary after visiting France and Serbia.

**USA** A former Berklee College of Music student from China was sentenced to nine months in prison for stalking and threatening a person who posted a flyer in support of democracy in the Asian country, authorities said. The leaflet that was posted on the campus in Boston on Oct. 22 read, "Stand with Chinese People," along with other statements such as "We Want Freedom" and "We Want Democracy," the U.S. Attorney's Office in Boston said.

AP PHOTO



**Philippines** France and the Philippines will begin talks next month on a defense pact that would allow troops from each country to hold exercises in the other's territory, the French ambassador said yesterday. French and Philippine officials will meet in Paris next month for talks on a visiting forces agreement, French Ambassador to the Philippines Marie Fontanel said. She said the defense chiefs of both countries agreed in Manila last December to pursue such an accord.

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# PROPERTY MARKET BOOMS

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LYNZY VALLES

**HOSPITALITY**  
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## HEALTH SSM DISMISSES RUMORS LINKING MEASLES VACCINE TO AUTISM

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Health Bureau (SSM) has issued a statement addressing online rumors suggesting a connection between the measles vaccine and autism in children.

In its statement, the SSM urges citizens to disregard unverified information online regarding the alleged association between the measles vaccine and autism cases.

According to the bureau, such misinformation has led to doubts and fears among parents, potentially contributing to hesitancy in adhering to routine vaccination programs.

The SSM clarified that "according to many studies carried out by the World Health Organization and various regions, it has been proven that there is no link between measles vaccination and autism," adding that "it is important for parents to vaccinate their children against the threat of diseases that put their lives and health at risk."

The same bureau added that, in reality, "refusing vaccination not only has serious consequences for those unvaccinated but it can also cause the spread of preventable communicable diseases in society."

The SSM assured that all the vaccines procured by the local health authorities adhere to global standards, with mechanisms in place to monitor and follow up on potential adverse reactions post-vaccination.

Common side effects of any vaccine are typically mild, and include low-grade fever, fatigue, swelling, and pain in the vaccination area. The probability of serious allergic reactions is extremely low, and the risk of not being vaccinated outweighs potential post-vaccination risks.

The health authority emphasized that vaccination can effectively reduce the risk of serious and fatal cases, particularly among the elderly, children, pregnant women, and patients with chronic diseases. Parents are urged to vaccinate their children promptly in accordance with the Macau Vaccination Program.

# GALAXY TO ADD ULTRA-LUXURY CAPELLA HOTEL TO PORTFOLIO IN 2025

STAFF REPORTER

**G**ALAXY Entertainment Group (GEG) has announced a landmark collaboration with Capella Hotels and Resorts, named the "Best Hotel Brand in the World" by Travel + Leisure Magazine in 2023. This partnership will bring the first Capella property to the Greater Bay Area, according to a statement issued by the gaming operator.

The new Capella property at Galaxy Macau, set to open in mid-2025, will join the world's largest collection of nine high-end hotels under one roof, redefining Macau's offering of ultra-luxury experiences.

"We are thrilled to create this magnificent embodiment of ultra-luxury 21st-century hospitality in partnership with Capella Hotels and Resorts," said Francis Lui, GEG vice chairman.

"Capella at Galaxy Macau represents our continued com-



mitment to delivering unparalleled experiential luxury to our international guests in Macau," he added.

Capella at Galaxy Macau will feature 36 Sky Villas and 57 Suites, designed by the renowned Paris-based firm Moinard Btaille.

Each Sky Villa will offer a light-filled balcony with a transparent

infinity-edge pool, outdoor lounge, sunroom, and hidden winter garden, as well as amenities including a private plunge pool, cocktail bar, and karaoke room with a cigar butler.

"Galaxy Entertainment Group granted us the exceptional freedom to conceptualize Capella at Galaxy Macau," said designers Bruno Moinard and

Claire Betaille. "Macau's adventurous spirit and rich history inspired our tropical jungle theme."

Acclaimed chef Vicky Cheng will debut his first international fine dining concept at the property. Recent awards for Cheng include ranking fifth in Asia's 50 Best Restaurants 2024 and securing the Highest Climber award.

"I'm thrilled to showcase the distinctive ingredients and rich heritage of the Pearl River Delta in my fresh and independent concept," Cheng said.

Capella at Galaxy Macau will also house a members-only lounge "Pony & Plume" designed by Albert Kwan, along with an all-day dining restaurant and curated art collection.

"Capella at Galaxy Macau signifies a pivotal moment for Capella Hotels and Resorts as we expand into The Greater Bay Area," said Evan Kwee, vice chairman of Capella Hotel Group.

The partnership, according to GEG, underscores its commitment to cultural heritage and partnerships with leading global brands.

According to Lui, Capella at Galaxy Macau "is the latest innovative beacon for the ultra-luxury Galaxy lifestyle."

# AMCM and Central Bank of Timor-Leste renew bilateral cooperation agreement

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) and the Central Bank of Timor-Leste (BCTL) signed a renewed cooperation agreement to deepen and strengthen collaboration in various areas, the AMCM said in a press statement.

The renewed agreement was signed earlier this week during the 6th Ministerial Conference of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries in Macau.

According to AMCM, the renewed agreement has set out the general



framework for cooperation between the AMCM and the BCTL, covering different aspects of the functions of financial regulators. It will also deepen cooperation between

the two central banking institutions in various areas, with particular emphasis on financial supervision and technical assistance in central banking operations. The

updated cooperation agreement replaces a previous version signed back in 2019.

Concurrently, a bilateral meeting between the parties was held to share experiences and information on financial supervision, financial market development, and reserves management.

In this meeting, AMCM provided insights into its operations to improve financial supervision, sharing experiences in revising the Financial System Act, the various guidelines formulated to support the development of modern financial services and anti-money laundering, the evolution of mobile

payments, and the study of a risk-based capital framework for the insurance industry, as well as the management of the Fiscal Reserve and foreign exchange reserves.

Concurrently, the AMCM and the Macao Central Securities Depository and Clearing Limited (MCSL) introduced Macau's bond-market development to BCTL, and the custody of Chinese sovereign bonds denominated in Renminbi under MCSL, as well as their services.

The AMCM also welcomed Timor-Leste to invest and raise funds through Macau's bond platform.

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# Property market booms after cooling measure lifted

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE removal of three major cooling measures last weekend has sparked a rapidly growing property boom in Macau's market, especially among first-time home buyers.

Developers have seized the opportunity to offload inventory by slashing prices and boosting discounts significantly, according to realtor Centaline.

In just a few days after the measures were lifted, about 50 transactions were recorded in the high-end residential market.

Nova Grand in was particularly popular, with over 20 units sold after offering a 27% discount and MOP100 off each parking space valued over MOP1.5 million. The developer of "Tiffany House" next to Golden Lotus Square sold around 16 units by lowering prices



by 68% to about MOP5,000 per square foot, with units with parking going for around MOP6,000.

In Coloane, Grand Oasis introduced balcony flats and has already sold over 10 units by allowing buyers to swap a MOP1.5 million parking space for MOP300,000. The relaxation of cooling measures also drove

interest in Beco de São Roque, where two-bedroom flats start from MOP3 million.

Enquiries have risen across districts since sentiment improved, Centaline noted.

The realtor added that transactions are expected to pick up significantly, although prices may not experience a dramatic surge immediately, as

developers focus on offloading inventory through heavy discounts in the short-term. The current robust activity in Macau's property market signals a rebound after years of sluggish demand dominated by owner-occupiers.

Last week, the SAR government scrapped the housing market cooling measures amid calls from the property sector as demand continues to weaken.

This comes after several calls from associations to adjust the measures regulating real estate demand in Macau, as well as the tax measures in these regulations, which are a decade old.

The government has abolished the special stamp duty, additional stamp duty, and stamp duty on acquisition, as well as easing mortgage lending restrictions, increasing the maximum loan-to-value ratio to 70% for Macau residents and 90% for affordable housing purchases.

## ID CLOSES TAMAGNINI BARBOSA SWIMMING POOL DUE TO POOR WATER QUALITY

The Sports Bureau (ID) has announced the impromptu closure of the Tamagnini Barbosa Sports Centre swimming pool to the public. The temporary closure is effective immediately until further notice, and is justified by the facility's failure to meet the required water quality standards. Without specifying the exact cause of the water quality issue, the bureau stated that cleaning and disinfection works will be undertaken to ensure public safety. Individuals who purchased tickets for this swimming pool facility through the online booking system will be refunded via the same electronic payment method used for the transaction.

## MACAU TO FEATURE PAVILION DEDICATED TO THE 'CITY OF SHOWS' AT MITE

The local government is championing Macau's bid to become a "City of Shows" by introducing a dedicated pavilion on this theme at the 12th Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo (MITE), commencing today. The pavilion will be part of the largest-ever expo in Macau, and aims to spotlight Macau's potential as a powerhouse of tourism, focusing on the theme, "Meet at MITE: Discovery, Networking, Interaction!" The expo takes place over three days (April 26 to 28) at the Cotai Expo and will also feature a Gastronomy Pavilion and The Cellar under one roof, alongside other highlights.

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### POLICE ARRESTS STUDENT SUSPECTED OF ENGAGING IN FRAUDULENT ACTIVITIES

A college student from the mainland was apprehended by police, who believed him to be working for a mainland criminal organization and coming to Macau to engage in money laundering through currency exchange. According to the Judiciary Police (PJ), the victim, also from the mainland, was defrauded HKD100,000. The victim received a notification from the bank the following day, informing him that the money he had received was linked to fraudulent activities on the mainland.

### UNSTABLE WEATHER TO CONTINUE

Macau will see more unstable weather this weekend. This is due to the influence of an unstable airstream brought on by a trough of low pressure. A statement from the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) advised there will be more showers with thunderstorms, heavy at times with strong gusts until Saturday, and warned that flooding may occur. However, the weather is set to improve next week, with brief periods of sunshine.

### CRIME

# WORKER STABBED MULTIPLE TIMES IN TAIPA OVER LOAN

#### STAFF REPORTER

**A** male non-resident worker was viciously stabbed in Taipa on Wednesday evening in a dispute over borrowed money, authorities reported yesterday.

The victim, a Nepalese worker identified as a former colleague of the suspect in 2023, sustained multiple stab wounds, including on his left jaw, right chest, left elbow, and right index finger. The suspect, who was swiftly apprehended at 6:27 p.m., alleged that the victim, whom he claimed to be his cousin, owed him HKD50,000, sparking a dispute that escalated into a violent altercation.

According to eyewitnesses, the confrontation took a turn when the suspect brandished a fruit knife, measuring 22 centimeters in total length with a blade spanning 9.5 centimeters. The victim, in his statement to the authorities, vehemently denied any familial relationship with the



assailant, refuting the suspect's allegation that they were cousins.

The motive for the attack, the victim explained, stemmed from a financial dispute dating back to

2023 when the suspect borrowed MOP4,000 from him, which was never repaid.

The incident unfolded when the suspect approached the vic-

tim, seeking an additional loan of MOP2,000. However, the victim declined the request, leading to a heated argument. The situation quickly escalated, culminating in violence as the suspect unleashed a flurry of stabs upon the victim, leaving him with severe injuries.

The victim, in an effort to substantiate his version of events, presented the police with phone chat records that documented the previous loan and subsequent conversations between the two parties. The evidence indicated that the suspect had indeed borrowed MOP4,000 from the victim in the past, lending credibility to the victim's story.

Authorities have charged the suspect with multiple offenses, including serious bodily injury under Article 138 of the legal code, as well as possession of a prohibited weapon under Article 262. If convicted, the suspect could face severe legal consequences for his actions.

As of today, the victim remains in a stable condition and is expected to be discharged this afternoon. However, before his release, the police plan to conduct a thorough interrogation to gather additional information and build a stronger case against the suspect.

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MACAU AI CONFERENCE 2024

# Leaders highlight AI role in driving sustainable development

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in industry and manufacturing was the focus of a recent event co-organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations University (UNU).

The event, held under the auspices of the UNIDO Initiative and Global AI Network, brought together experts from academia, industry, and government to discuss how AI can be harnessed to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In his opening remarks, UNU director Tshilidzi Marwala highlighted the critical role AI can play in driving sustainable development. "AI is transforming manufacturing and industries, making production much more efficient," he said. "However, we must also consider the social and economic implications of this transformation, particularly the impact on employment."

Marwala emphasized the need for education and investment in sustainable AI solutions. "We need to educate ourselves about this techno-



logy and its impact on society, industry, and economics," he said. "We also need to invest in more sustainable ways of accelerating automation enabled by artificial intelligence."

Huawei Hong Kong Research Centre director, Yanhui Geng, shared insights into Huawei's efforts to integrate AI for enhanced productivity and sustainability. "We have been actively promoting the integration of AI in all sectors of industry to increase efficiency, improve sustainability, and reduce emissions," Geng said.

Geng provided examples of how AI is being used to optimize network planning and ope-

ration, resulting in significant efficiency gains. "By utilizing AI techniques, we can improve the efficiency by around 30%

to 50%," he said. "We can also improve the performance, especially for users with poor network experience."

Jingbo Huang, director of UNU Macau, discussed the alignment between the UNU Global AI Network and AIM Global's goals. "We're both UN organizations, but with different strengths," Huang said. "UNIDO specializes in manufacturing and industry, while we are more focused on academics, training, and education. This complementarity allows us to work together effectively."

Huang suggested potential collaboration opportunities, including leveraging UNU's academic network to connect with industry partners and providing independent research at different project stages. "We can start small with one pilot project and build on it to tackle other challenges," she said.

The event concluded with a call for continued collaboration between stakeholders to harness the power of AI for sustainable development. As Marwala stated, "If we think together, act together, and plan together, there is no mountain high enough that we will not be able to climb."

## AO IEONG WELCOMES SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EXPERTS TO FACILITATE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

**SECRETARY** for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao leong U, highlighted that high-tech industries such as artificial intelligence are one of the four key industries in Macau and a focal point for development in the coming five years. Speaking at the Macau AI Conference, which attracted over 500 participants, the government official said that at present, various policies are being implemented in a stepwise fashion. "We have launched a scheme to attract talent in the high

technology industry, promoted the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area into a hub for high-level talent, and actively participated in the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Innovative Technology Corridor by leveraging the strengths and resources in talent and technologies of the GBA and Hengjin," said Ao leong. "We welcome scientific and technological talent from around the world to come to Macau to set up businesses and facilitate development," she added.

EDUCATION

# MUST holds lecture on humanistic approach to language teaching

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE International College of the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) commemorated its 24th anniversary with a special appointment ceremony and lecture centered on the theme of "Humanizing teaching: A humanistic approach to teaching languages."

The recent event featured the appointment of Distinguished Professor Tang Lixing and drew over a hundred graduate students from the School of International Studies.

A scholar in the field of language education, Pro-



Professor Tang Lixing

fessor Tang has held various prestigious positions, including director and co-director of the Chinese

Teacher Development Center at New York University. He is currently serving as a chair professor and

doctoral supervisor at New York University, and brings extensive teaching experience and leadership in

language education.

The appointment ceremony commenced with a welcome speech by Dean Zhang Hongming of the International College, who expressed his delight in inviting Professor Tang to join MUST for academic exchange activities.

He highlighted the significance of this collaboration, particularly on the occasion of the university's anniversary and the fifth "International Chinese Day."

The partnership aims to promote the development goals of the International College, focusing on "Language, Education, Culture + Internationalization."

Following the appointment ceremony, Professor Tang delivered a lecture that delved into the essence of language teaching, guiding the audience to recognize that it encompasses more than imparting lan-

guage skills.

According to the scholar, language teaching should also foster a human connection with students, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal relationships. He shared personal anecdotes and engaged the audience in reflecting on the role of teachers, encouraging them to establish meaningful connections and facilitate students' success.

Furthermore, the expert emphasized the cultivation of students' adversity quotient (AQ) and elaborated on how language teachers can establish emotional connections between learners and the target language. He stressed the creation of a supportive and comfortable learning environment, enabling students not only to absorb the teaching content but also to apply their knowledge in real-life situations.



ADVERTORIAL

## SANDS CHINA NEWS

### Sands China Launches 'Summer Fiesta' Community Revitalisation Attractions at Iec Long and Taipa Houses

Sands China has launched **Summer Fiesta**, the latest round of its **Community Revitalisation Series** at the former **Iec Long Firecracker Factory** and the **Taipa Houses**, with installations on display now until May 31.

With Summer Fiesta, two areas come together to create an urban oasis in Macao, highlighting the distinct garden ambiance and natural ecology of both locations. Sands China is undertaking the transformation of the historic firecracker factory into the delightful **Iec Long Zoo** now until May 12, showcasing colourful and whimsical animal sculptures and the beauty of nature to create a joyful atmosphere, while the Taipa Houses continue to offer a romantic and leisurely sanctuary with **Love at Taipa Houses**, featuring the **Encounter Love** installation until May 31. In addition, Sands China has organised complimentary family activities for both local residents and visitors, including the recent **Todos Fest!**, an inclusive arts festival that ran April 12-21 at the former Iec Long Firecracker Factory, demonstrating the company's commitment to promoting Macao as a renowned and desirable destination for both living and tourism.

"A unique architectural style can still be seen at the former Iec Long Firecracker Factory, and its beautiful natural scenery makes it a significant area to be preserved and promoted," said Dr. Wilfred Wong, executive vice chairman of Sands China Ltd. "We are therefore transforming this remarkable area into a zoo-themed spot, while also enriching the romantic ambience at the Taipa Houses, in contribution to the city's economic diversification. We hope locals and tourists alike enjoy the beauty of the attractive new installations at these historic Macao locations early this summer. Moreover, in the hope of benefitting a wide range of stakeholders through our community revitalisation events, Sands China is pleased to present **Todos Fest!**, an inclusive arts festival aimed at spreading positivity in the community and promoting the idea of social inclusion – making the city a more inclusive and understanding place for all. Last but not least, we would like to express our gratitude to the Cultural Affairs Bureau for their unwavering support throughout the event."



#### GAMING

## MALAYSIA IN TALKS WITH TYCOONS OVER CASINO PROJECT TO REVITALIZE FOREST CITY

LYNZY VALLES

**MALAYSIA** has engaged **Lin** in preliminary talks with billionaires to open a casino in the USD100 billion Forest City development near Singapore, according to sources who asked to remain anonymous due to the matter's sensitivity.

According to Bloomberg's sources, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim met last week with Vincent Tan, a founder of Berjaya Corporation, and Lim Thay, a member of Genting Group.

However, the same sources noted the talks are at an early stage, and it remains unclear how committed Anwar is to the proposal. Such a move could potentially lead to backlash in a predominantly Muslim country, where gambling is prohibited.

Prime Minister Anwar, along with senior government officials and business leaders, convened for discussions and a lunch meeting to explore the potential issuance of Malaysia's second-ever casino license.

King Ibrahim, a billionaire businessman and shareholder in the Forest City project, controls more than 20% of the joint venture with Country Garden, the master developer of Forest City.

However, Prime Minister Anwar yesterday clarified to the press that there is no plan to license a casino in the development, dismissing the reports that he was considering the

idea as "a lie".

Also, a spokesman for Berjaya said the company was not aware of the conversation, while the National Palace, as cited in media reports.

Forest City has struggled to attract residents from China and elsewhere, thwarted by a litany of hurdles including political resistance in Malaysia, a Chinese government crackdown on citizens buying real estate overseas, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The establishment of a new gambling hub in Malaysia could potentially generate significant revenue for the government.

A brokerage in Singapore noted that the current casino in Malaysia generated up to 5 billion rupiah (USD1 billion) a year prior to the pandemic.

The gaming industry is highly regulated, and casino licenses need to be renewed every three months, with the finance minister, currently Prime Minister Anwar, having the final say on whether or not to renew them.

Both Lim and Tan are two of the most influential business figures in Malaysia.

Genting, of which Lim is a member, also manages casinos in various countries such as Singapore, the US, and the UK. Meanwhile, Tan is engaged in a wide range of businesses including real estate development and the operation of well-known brands like 7-Eleven and Starbucks in Malaysia.



DIPLOMACY

# Blinken raises Chinese trade practices in meetings with officials in Shanghai

MATTHEW LEE, SHANGHAI

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken raised what the U.S. describes as unfair Chinese trade practices during his first full day of meetings in China yesterday with local government officials in the financial hub of Shanghai.

Blinken met with the city's top official, Communist Party Secretary Chen Jining, and "raised concerns about (Chinese) trade policies and non-market economic practices," the State Department said in a statement.

It said he stressed that the United States seeks healthy economic competition with China and "a level playing field for U.S. workers and firms operating in China."

"The two sides reaffirmed the importance of ties between the people of the United States and (China), including the expansion of exchanges between students, scholars, and business," it said.

China's multibillion-dollar trade surplus with the U.S. along with accusations of intellectual property theft and other practices seen as discriminating against U.S. businesses in China have long been a source of friction in relations.

China, for its part, has objected strongly to U.S. accusations of human rights abuses and Washington's support for Taiwan.

Asked about Blinken's comments, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said China has "always conducted economic and trade cooperation in accordance with market principles, firmly supported the multilateral trading system, and fully complied with the rules of the World Trade Organization."

"We hope the U.S. will also earnestly respect the principle of fair competition, abide by the WTO rules, and work with China to create favorable conditions for the sound and stable development of China-U.S. economic and trade relations," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing.

Blinken also spoke with students and business leaders before flying to Beijing for what are expected to be contentious talks with national officials, including Foreign Minister Wang Yi and possibly President Xi Jinping.

Blinken arrived in Shanghai on Wednesday shortly before U.S. President Joe Biden signed a \$95 billion foreign aid package that has several elements that angered Beijing, including \$8 billion to counter China's growing aggressiveness toward Taiwan and in the South China Sea. It also seeks to force TikTok's China-based parent company to sell the social media platform.

China has railed against U.S. assistance to Taiwan and im-

AP PHOTO



Shanghai Party Secretary Chen Jining meets with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken (left) at the Grand Halls, in Shanghai, yesterday

mediately condemned the aid as a dangerous provocation. It also strongly opposes efforts to force TikTok's sale.

Still, the fact that Blinken made the trip — shortly after a conversation between Biden and Xi, a visit to China by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and a call between the U.S. and Chinese defense chiefs — is a sign the two sides are at least willing to discuss their differences.

"I think it's important to underscore the value — in fact, the necessity — of direct engagement, of speaking to each other, laying out our differences, which are real, seeking to work through them," Blinken told Chen, according to the State Department statement.

"We have an obligation for our people, indeed an obligation to the world, to manage the rela-

tionship between our two countries responsibly," he said. "That is the obligation we have, and one that we take very seriously."

Chen agreed with that sentiment and said the recent Biden-Xi call had helped the "stable and healthy development of our two countries' relationship."

"Whether we choose cooperation or confrontation affects the well-being of both peoples, both countries, and the future of humanity," he said.

Chen added that he hoped Blinken was able to get a "deep impression and understanding" of Shanghai, a city of skyscrapers, ports and more than 25 million people that is a magnet for commercially ambitious young people from China and abroad.

Most recently, the U.S. has

raised concerns that potential overcapacity in Chinese industries — such as electric vehicles, steel and solar panels — might crowd out U.S. and other foreign manufacturers.

Shortly after arriving, Blinken attended a Chinese basketball playoff game between the local Shanghai Sharks and the Zhejiang Golden Bulls, with the home team losing in the last seconds in a 121-120 nailbiter.

With the U.S. presidential race heating up, it's unclear what ramifications a victory for either Biden or Trump might have for relations. But Trump could deepen a trade war he started during his first term. His tough rhetoric on China and isolationist approach to foreign policy could ramp up uncertainties.

MDT/AP

ECONOMY

# Electric cars and digital connectivity dominate at Beijing auto show

GLOBAL automakers and EV startups unveiled new models and concept cars at China's largest auto show yesterday, with a focus

on the nation's transformation into a major market and production base for digitally connected, new-energy vehicles.

Toyota and Nissan both announced tie-ups with major Chinese technology companies as they strive to meet customer demand for AI-enabled online connectivity in cars, from social media apps to autonomous driving features.

Electric vehicles accounted for about a quarter of all auto sales in China last year. Hybrids, which have trailed EVs, are expected to be a growing segment going forward.

China's largest EV maker, BYD, showed off two "dual-mode" plug-in cars that can run either solely on electricity or as hybrids. The other is

a hybrid off-road SUV from its luxury Yangwang brand in the 1 million yuan-plus (\$140,000) range.

"China's EVs, represented by (BYD's) Qin and Han series, have successfully realized the large-scale replacement of traditional fuel cars, and this trend is irreversible," said Lu Tian, the head of sales for BYD's Dynasty models. The cars are named after former imperial dynasties.

An executive from Chery, a more traditional Chinese maker, offered a more moderate perspective. Li Xueyong, a deputy general manager, said they envision a future of 40% fuel vehicles, 30%

hybrids and 30% electric. The company plans to develop both fuel-powered and new-energy cars.

BYD has been expanding rapidly into overseas markets, launching its low-priced Dolphin Mini, sold as the Seagull in China, in Latin American markets this year.

It's building a factory in Brazil on the site of a former Ford plant that closed when the U.S. maker left the country. Two other Chinese automakers including Chery already have factories in Brazil.

BYD accounted for 41% of EV sales in Brazil in the first three months of this year, though the overall number is still relatively low.

In Mexico, Chinese vehicles went from about 2.6% of the market in 2021 to 19.2% in the first quarter of this year. Most of those were gasoline-powered vehicles, as there are few charging stations and

the cost of electricity makes it expensive to do so at home.

Chinese makers are making inroads in Europe too, raising concern in some countries that they pose a potential threat to European automakers and jobs. The EU is weighing whether to impose tariffs on China-made EVs because of government subsidies that drove the industry's growth.

A proliferation of EV makers, encouraged by tax breaks as well as green-energy subsidies, has prompted a fierce price war that is expected to lead to a shakeout and consolidation of the industry in the coming years.

For foreign players aside from American EV maker Tesla, it has challenged them to accelerate the development of new electric car models to stay competitive in the world's largest auto market.

MDT/AP

AP PHOTO





BRIEFS

### CHINA AND LUSOPHONE COUNTRIES FORMULATE NEW COOPERATION PLAN

China and Portuguese-speaking countries (PSC) have adopted a three-year action plan to enhance cooperation in emerging sectors such as the digital economy and the blue economy, while also focusing on climate change initiatives. The agreement was signed at the 6th ministerial conference of the Forum Macao for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and the Portuguese-Speaking Countries. The new blueprint emphasizes exploring potential collaborations in sustainable development, scientific and technological cooperation, and more. Ji Xianzheng, the Forum's secretary-general, emphasized the plan to strengthen electronic commerce, logistics, and blue partnerships, alongside continuing traditional trade exchanges. Additionally, Ji highlighted the role of Macau as a pivotal platform in these collaborative efforts, particularly in the context of regional integration projects like the Greater Bay Area.

### RECORD-BREAKING RAINFALL HITS SOUTH CHINA

South China has experienced unprecedented levels of precipitation, with amounts more than doubling the average for this period, marking it the second-highest since 1961. Meteorologists attribute this surge in rainfall to global warming coupled with a strong El Nino effect. Zheng Zhihai, chief forecast at the National Climate Center, noted that the increased atmospheric moisture and heightened temperatures have spurred frequent and intense rainstorms across provinces such as Guangdong and Zhejiang. The early onset of the flood season this April led to the earliest numbered floods since 1998 in the Pearl River Basin. The forecast anticipates continued heavy rains, raising concerns about potential geological disasters in affected areas.

### CHINA SOUTHERN AIRLINES OPENS NEW ROUTE BETWEEN CHINA AND FRANKFURT

China Southern Airlines has launched a new direct flight connecting Shenyang, Liaoning, with Frankfurt, Germany. This marks the first direct route from China's northeastern region to Germany and aims to bolster economic and trade relations between the two locations. The weekly flights depart early Thursday from Shenyang and return mid-afternoon from Frankfurt. The inaugural flight boasted a 90% seat occupancy, serving a diverse group of passengers including businessmen, students, and tourists. The new 11-hour flight route not only shortens travel time by over five hours compared to previous routes through major cities but also underscores Germany's significant role as a key investment and trading partner for Liaoning.

## A CAPITAL IDEA

ANALYSIS BY LEANDA LEE\*

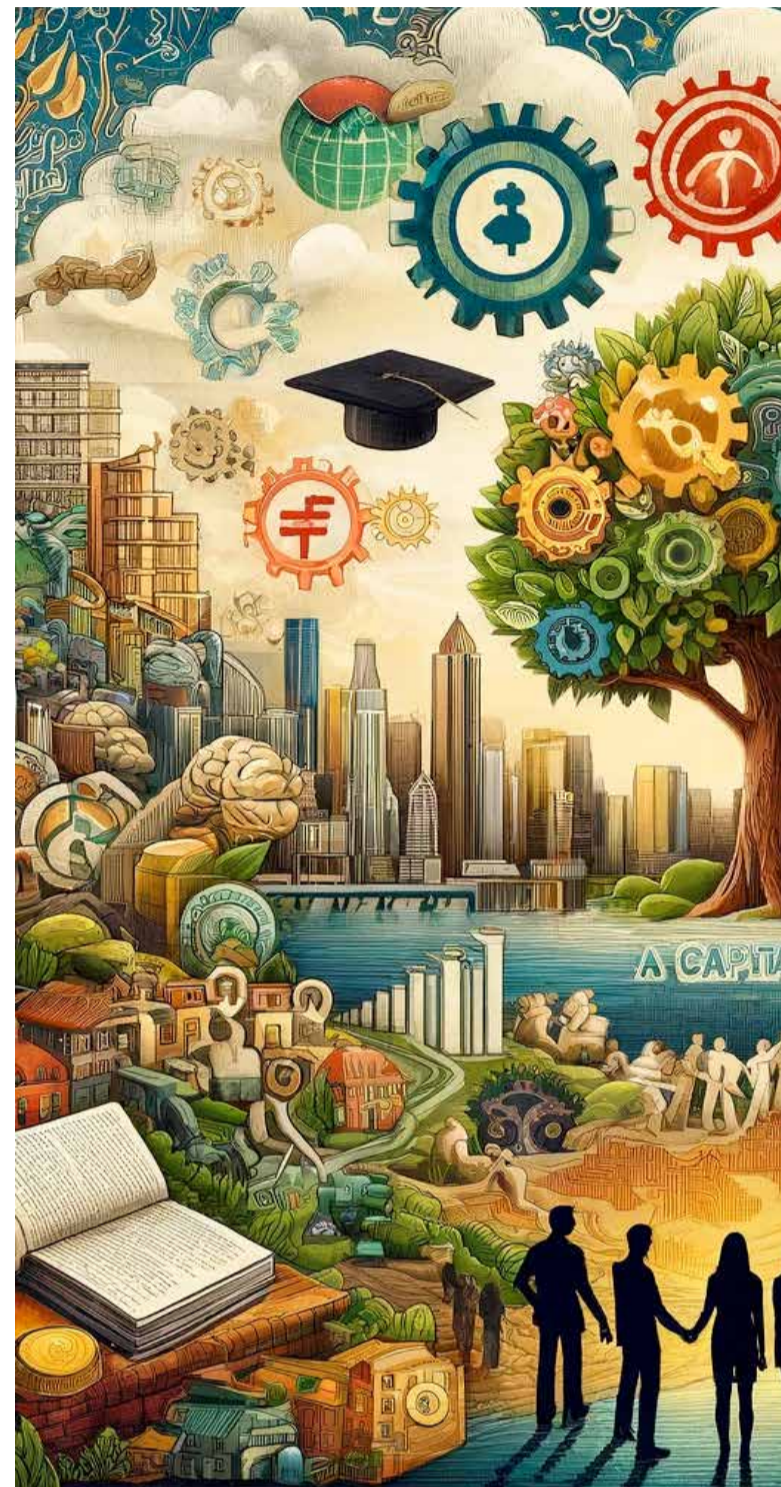
ONE of the foundational purposes of the Greater Bay Area is the comprehensive opening of the region: an exciting proposition for asset-rich individuals to invest and contribute to the GBA vision through their activity and engagement. This purpose, however, is presented in the Development Framework in the context of economic development, productivity and industrial innovation.

Terms such as assets, investment and capital commonly conjure ideas of economic and financial activity, but building forms of capital other than the throughput of monetary value is just as critical to the creation of thriving communities: physical capital, social capital, creative capital, environmental capital, educational capital, human capital. Many kinds of value flow from wealth embedded in these forms of capital. In the Development Framework, however, nine of the ten key cooperation areas are market-based or market-enhancing activities and only one refers to other spheres of a prosperous life: to build a quality living circle.

Other forms of capital do not have ready and recognizable metrics associated with them, as is found in the measure of GDP which lends relative superior importance to economic outcomes. Communities recognize that what is measured and what governments, media and

common discourse continue to highlight becomes valued over other aspects of human activity. Monetary metrics, however, measure only part of value created when humans prosper and life flourishes on earth.

Bolstering activity in creative domains and educational engagement is still viewed as tangential and peripheral support to the more commonplace business and economic activity. We see the latter being facilitated by trade fairs, missions and Foreign Direct Investment. Areas of development more sensitively determined to be under the purview of sovereign control and not necessarily reliant on external engagement - such as environment, social structure and human development - are cautiously opened to external collaboration and influence by only trusted entities. In one example, it is telling that the ambassador of Monaco to China, Marie-Pascale Boisson is hopeful of "advancing ties and creating exchanges in the fields of environment and culture." In The Times on Friday, the relationship between China and Monaco was characterized by its comparative strength, familiarity reflected in the similarities between Monaco and Macau, and President Xi Jinping and Prince Albert II's personal rapport. These elements and more suggest that the strength and close nature of the relationship will open doors and corridors to further engagement, so to build wealth and resources for a thriving



AI-generated artistic rendition that captures the diverse

GBA in more than just the economic domain.

Recent discussions at the Canton Fair with Premier Li Qiang also suggest that foreign partnerships in social

development goals and the move to a green economy are being given airtime alongside matters of trade and economic development.

The recent focus in eco-

## Visitors' uptick for May Day holidays

ON THE AGENDA

As the May Day holiday approaches, China is anticipating a surge in international visitors. According to data from Ctrip, one of the nation's leading online travel agencies, inbound tourist bookings have soared by an impressive 130% compared to the same period last year.

This uptick coincides with broader trends in travel to the Chinese mainland, highlighted by recent figures from the National

Immigration Administration. In the first quarter of 2024, a total of 59.115 million residents from Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, along with 13.074 million foreign nationals, entered mainland China. Of these, 466,000 were foreign nationals who received visas—a significant 118.8% increase from the previous year.

Additionally, the number of visa-free entries has skyrocketed, with over 1.988 million foreign nationals entering without a visa,

marking a 266.1% increase. This spike is largely due to China's strategic policies aimed at enhancing tourism and business exchanges. Among these is the reinstatement of a 15-day visa-free entry for Singapore and Brunei citizens holding ordinary passports for activities including business, tourism, family visits, and transit, effective from July 26, 2023.

Subsequent expansions included unilateral visa-free entries for citizens from France, Germany, Italy,

the Netherlands, Spain, Malaysia, Switzerland, Ireland, Hungary, Austria, Belgium, and Luxembourg, implemented between December 1, 2023, and March 14, 2024. The visa exemption agreement with Thailand that came into effect on March 1, 2024, further bolstered visitor numbers, with 989,000 travelers from the 15 eligible countries entering China visa-free, representing over 60% of total arrivals from these nations.

Last February, China expanded its visa-free access





Diverse forms of capital within the Greater Bay Area

economic and policy discourse globally on a broader conceptualisation of human activity to include multiple assets, resources and forms of capital has come from

the understanding of what it takes for people to thrive in balance. This about meeting the human rights of everyone within the means of our limited and living planet.

to Hainan, allowing travelers from certain countries to enter the region for up to 30 days for various purposes, including tourism, business, and medical treatment. Within two months of this policy, 49,000 foreign nationals visited Hainan visa-free.

Despite the increase in travel, China maintains stringent measures against illegal immigration, with 23,000 cases of illegal entry, residence, and employment detected early this year, resulting in 4,551 deportations. These figures underline China's cautious approach to opening its borders while safeguarding its immigration laws.



The “use and throw-away”, polluting form of degenerative economic growth that creates externalities and burdens for governments, communities and the environment to carry, and which has come to characterise economic success is now recognised as undermining our ability to meet the future needs and wants of humanity. We are interconnected, social, interdependent and dependent on the living world: this is why other forms of capital and wealth require development and prioritisation.

As stated in my earlier writings, social capital is critical to the success of GBA integration, partly to assist in knowledge transfer and a unification of peoples. Social capital is the wealth of trust and reciprocity. It underpins community cohesion, the ability for people to depend upon one another and to develop through human interaction. This is based on shared values and resources to achieve common goals. Such community cohesion allows for human needs - for participation, leisure, protection and belonging - to be met even outside the sphere of economic activity. Of course, the development of social capital is culturally bounded and thus opening communities to interaction with others will likely create ruptures if not managed thoughtfully with the input from sociology and community-development experts, and from the communities themselves.

Environmental capital - the maintenance of biodiversity, clean air and water and bio-active soils - as another example, is neces-

sary for human health, both directly and indirectly. We are already seeing a stagnation in improving risk factors for non-communicable diseases in the GBA caused mainly by an aging population and risk-behaviours around alcohol and tobacco use. Fortunately, the GBA is a pioneer in recognising that environment-friendly development will mitigate other forms of stress on health and chronic disease. To gain control over average particulate matter, which in 2022 was six times the WHO standard value, will be almost impossible even with end-of-pipe technologies by 2050. But as they are the cause of premature death and morbidity, and consequently detrimental economic effects, as elucidated in a 2023 academic study on the GBA, other forms of capital will need to be employed together with human capital (skills, knowledge, systems' innovation) and physical capital (technologies that do not undermine the ability of earth's system to support human development).

The GBA vision is a complex interaction of systems, each impacting upon the rest and supported by assets, resources and many forms of capital; economic capital being necessary but entirely insufficient. Regardless of whether the ultimate aim of integration is political, economic or social, the various forms of capital cannot be exploited in isolation without accessing the value inherent in them all. Undermining the wealth encapsulated in any particular form will undo the whole.

\*Contributing Editor, Scholar

## WORK IN PROGRESS NOTES ON ACADEMIC STUDIES

### A Satellite View of the Wetland Transformation Path and Associated Drivers in the Greater Bay Area of China during the Past Four Decades

Kun Sun, Weiwei Yu  
Remote Sens (2024)

As a highly productive and biologically diverse ecosystem, wetlands provide unique habitat for a wide array of plant and animal species. Owing to the strong disturbance by human activities and climate change, wetland degradation and fragmentation have become a common phenomenon across the globe. The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) is a typical case. The GBA has experienced explosive growth in the population and economy since the early 1980s, which has resulted in complicated transitions between wetlands and non-wetlands. However, our knowledge about the transformation paths, associated drivers, and ecological influence of the GBA's wetlands is still very limited. Taking advantage of the land use maps generated from Landsat observations over the period of 1980-2020, here, we quantified the spatiotemporal transformation paths of the GBA's wetlands and analyzed the associated drivers and ecological influence. We found that the dominant transformation path between wetland and non-wetland was from wetland to built-up land, which accounted for 98.4% of total wetland loss. The primary transformation path among different wetland types was from coastal shallow water and paddy land to reservoir/pond, with the strongest transformation intensity in the 1980s. The driving forces behind the wetland change were found to vary by region. Anthropogenic factors (i.e., population growth and urbanization) dominated in highly developed cities, while climate factors and aquaculture had a greater influence in underdeveloped cities. The findings presented in this study will provide a reference for wetland management and planning in the GBA. **FROM THE ABSTRACT**

### Multimodal transportation and city carbon emissions over space and time: Evidence from Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, China

Luqi Wang, Zhenqiang Wu, Xiaoxia Wang  
Journal of Cleaner Production (November 2023)

The effectiveness of climate policies will determine CO2 emissions and goal achievement. However, the coupled integration among driving factors on emissions is not given enough attention and analysis in most quantitative modeling. To clarify the effectiveness of de-carbonization pathways, here we identify coupled factors documented across a range of studies and connect them in a coupled system framework. The empirical analysis reveals the de-carbonization significance and potential of coupled variables in the GBA. These potentials can be decisive for determining policies and emission outcomes. After in-depth spatial and time-fixed analysis, spatial spillover effects of driving factors are identified. And the driving effect of the independent variable is further decomposed into direct effect and indirect effect to show a complex coupled correlation. The novelty of this study is that it explores the coupled correlation among driving factors and quantitatively verified these relationships. Research findings have important reference value for policymakers in assisting de-carbonization strategies design. **FROM THE ABSTRACT**



## JAPAN

# MORE THAN JUST A BOWL OF NOODLES, RAMEN IS AN EXPERIENCE AND A TOURIST ATTRACTION

YURI KAGEYAMA, TOKYO

**S**PICY, steaming, slurpy ramen might be everyone's favorite Japanese food.

In Tokyo, long lines circle around blocks, and waiting an hour for your ramen is normal. What awaits might be just a dive, but a hot bowl of ramen rarely fails to hit the spot.

Often cooked right before your eyes behind dingy counters, the noodle dish starts here at around 1,000 yen (\$6.50), and comes in various flavors and local versions. There's salty, soy-based "shoyu" or "miso" paste. Perhaps it's red-hot spicy with a dash of chili. Sometimes there's no soup at all but a sauce to dip the noodles in.

The curly noodles are lighter than the darker buckwheat "soba," or "udon," which are also usually flatter or thicker.

## GLOBAL SUCCESS

Ramen has also surged in popularity in the U.S., South Korea and other countries. Retail sales in the United States have risen 72% since 2000, according to NielsenIQ, a sales tracker. In the 52 weeks ending April 13, Americans bought more than \$1.6 billion worth of ramen.

In restaurants, versions beyond the traditional soup are appearing, said Technomic, a research and consulting company for the restaurant industry. Del Taco, a Mexican chain, recently introduced Shredded Beef Birria Ramen, for example.

Packaged ramen that's easily cooked in hot water at home is called instant noodles; it's precooked and then dried. The story of how Momofuku Ando invented instant ramen in a backyard shed in 1958, when food was still scarce, is the stuff of legend in Japan. He went on to found the food giant Nissin Foods.

Although convenient, ins-

AP PHOTO



tant noodles aren't the same as the ramen served at restaurants.

## THE EXPERIENCE

Some Japanese frequent ramen shops twice or three times a week. They emerge, dripping with sweat, smacking their lips.

"I'm probably a talking bowl of ramen," says Frank Striegl as he leads a dozen American tourists through the back alleys of Tokyo's funky Shibuya district on what he calls "the ultimate ramen experience."

The crowd is led behind a shabby doorway, sometimes down narrow stairs, to a dim-lit table where ramen gets served in tiny bowls, practically the size of a latte cup, or about a quarter of a regular ramen bowl. That's so guests have enough room in their tummies to try out six different kinds of ramen, two at each spot during the tour.

One restaurant, Shinbushikiya, offers "Hokkaido classics" from the northernmost main island, while another, Nagi, offers "Fukuoka fusion," from the southern main island of Kyushu. It includes a green ramen, similar to pasta al

pesto. Syuuichi, which means "once a week," features curry-flavored ramen.

"It's not just, of course, about eating delicious ramen, but also learning about it," said Striegl, a Filipino American who grew up in Tokyo. He calls ramen "people's food."

"A lot of countries around the world have their version of ramen in a way," he said. "So I think because of that, it's a dish that's easy to understand. It's a dish that's easy to get behind."

While the tour participants were relishing their noodles, Striegl outlined a brief history of ramen: Its roots date back to the samurai era, when a shogun took a fancy to Chinese noodles, setting off the localizing journey for ramen that continues today.

Katie Sell, a graduate student on Striegl's tour, called ramen "a kind of comfort food, especially in the winter. Get a group of friends, go have some ramen and just enjoy it."

Kavi Patel, an engineer from New Jersey, said he was glad he included the humble ramen on his tour of Japan, along with more established attractions like the ancient capital of Kyoto

and the deer park in Nara. "I'm having good fun," he said.

## ADJUSTING TO CHANGE

While ramen has never been more popular in Japan, ramen places have struggled because of the pandemic, the weakening Japanese yen, and the higher cost of wheat imports and energy, according to a study by Tokyo Shoko Research.

One beneficiary of the pandemic is a home delivery service for frozen, professionally cooked ramen. Called takumen.com, it boasts some 500,000 subscribers in Japan.

Another Tokyo operation, Gourmet Innovation, has signed on 250 of the country's top ramen joints to sell packaged versions of their soup, noodles and toppings, to be heated up in boiling water and served at home.

Co-founder and executive Kenichi Nomaguchi, who hopes to expand his business overseas, says ramen and animation are Japan's most successful exports.

Why ramen? Unlike pasta or curry, ramen is difficult to replicate at home, he said. Making it from scratch involves hours of cooking stock, with pork, beef or chicken, various fish or bonito flakes, and "kombu" kelp. Some stock uses oysters.

## LOTS OF VARIETY

Besides the different soup stocks and flavors, onions, grated garlic, ginger or sesame oil can be added for extra punch. Toppings can include bean sprouts, barbecued pork, boiled or raw eggs, seaweed, fermented bamboo shoots called "menma," chopped green onions, cooked cabbage, snow peas or corn.

Some insist a bowl of ramen is not complete without a slice of narutomaki, a whitefish cake with a pink spiral pattern.

Unusual varieties include coffee ramen and ramen topped with ice cream or pineapple.

Jiro-style ramen, named for a legendary restaurant in Tokyo, features mounds of vegetable toppings, huge steak-like barbecued pork and pungent, grated garlic seeped in a fatty pork-based stock.

"Impact is important. So the pork has to be big so it's truly memorable," said Kota Kobayashi, who serves Jiro-style ramen at his chain, "Ore No Ikiru Michi," which translates to, "The way I live my life."

Kobayashi is a former professional baseball player at the Yokohama Bay Stars, and played with the minor league Cleveland Guardians before switching to his ramen business.

"When I quit baseball, I chose ramen as my way of life," he said with a smile.

He can wax philosophical about ramen. One cultural difference he has observed is that Americans tend to leave the noodles and drink all the soup, while the Japanese mostly do the opposite.

And taste is only part of what makes good ramen. One must also offer entertainment, Kobayashi said.

At his restaurants, the chopsticks are tucked in a box on a shelf, so first-time visitors ask where they are. Repeat customers go straight to that box. Kobayashi calls out, "Welcome back," making the customers feel a connection, even if he doesn't remember a thing about them. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO





MYANMAR

# Karen guerrillas leave a town that army lost two weeks ago as rival group holds sway

GRANT PECK, BANGKOK

**G**UERRILLA fighters from the main ethnic Karen fighting force battling Myanmar's military government have withdrawn from the eastern border town of Myawaddy two weeks after forcing the army to give up its defense, residents and members of the group said this week.

Their withdrawal came after a contending armed Karen group, which has occupied the town and claimed responsibility for its security, provided assistance to army soldiers who had fled to a riverside spot there for safety.

The soldiers came from the army's Infantry Battalion 275, whose base, about 4 kilometers to the west of Myawaddy, was captured on April 11 by the armed wing of the Karen National Union — or KNU — and allied pro-democracy forces.

The fleeing soldiers reestablished themselves in an area next to one of Myawaddy's two bridges connecting it to Thailand's Mae Sot district.

The complicated maneuvering is the latest development in the nationwide conflict in



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

Despite its advantage in arms and manpower, Myanmar's army had been on the defensive since last October, when an alliance of three ethnic rebel groups launched an offensive in the country's northeast. Resistance forces since then have captured major swaths of territory

in northern Shan state on the border with China, made significant gains in Rakhine state in the west, and continue to pressure the army elsewhere.

The soldiers now encamped next to the 2nd Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge were given at least tacit protection there by Kayin state's Border Guard Force, another armed Karen group that had been 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 border guard units had been accused of providing protection to casino resorts in the Myawaddy area that have been decried as centers for organized crime, including online scam operations and human trafficking.

KNU spokesperson Padoh Saw Taw Nee told journalists that its forces had withdrawn temporarily from Myawaddy as Border Guard Force units brought the soldiers hiding near the bridge to the abandoned Infantry Battalion

275 base, where they raised Myanmar's national flag in place of the standard hoisted by the guerrillas when it occupied it.

Photos and video clips of a handful of soldiers raising Myanmar's flag on Tuesday were circulated by supporters of the military government on the Telegram social network. It wasn't clear if any of the soldiers remained at the base after the photo opportunity, or if they returned to their campsite by the bridge.

The KNU is preparing to defend against an expected counterattack by the military government, and it keeping its units mobile rather than trying to hold territory.

A member of the Karen National Union/ Karen National Liberation Army-Peace Council, another Karen organization based in Myawaddy, told The Associated Press that the border guards had helped arrange the safe flight of the soldiers to their bridge encampment two weeks ago and provided them with food and weapons. He spoke on the condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to release information.

Myawaddy's residents say the Border Guard Force has played a major role in taking charge of security measures in the town.

Last Friday, the Karen guerrillas launched a small attack aided by drones against the soldiers hiding near the bridge, and Myanmar's military responded with airstrikes, dropping several bombs nearby for two days, and forcing about 3,000 residents to seek shelter in Thailand. **MDT/AP**

ANZAC DAY

# Australia and New Zealand honor their war dead with dawn services on Anzac Day

**H**UNDREDS of thousands of people gathered across Australia and New Zealand for dawn services and street marches yesterday

to commemorate their war dead on Anzac Day.

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon attended a dawn service

in his country's largest city, Auckland, while Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese saw the sun rise at a World War II memorial in the wilds of Australia's nearest neighbor, Papua New Guinea.

April 25 is the date in 1915 when the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps landed on the beaches of Gallipoli, in northwest Turkey, in an ill-fated campaign that was the soldiers' first combat of World War I.

Albanese trekked to the memorial in the town of Isurava over two days with Papua New Guinea Prime

Minister James Marape. Isurava was the site of a major battle where United States and Australian troops fought the Japanese in August 1942.

"Those who enlisted for the Second World War grew up in an Australia scarred by the memory of the first," Nine Network reported Albanese telling the gathering.

"Anzac Day has never asked us to exalt in the glories of war. Anzac Day asks us to stand against the erosion of time and to hold on to their names," Albanese added.

Marape called for "peace to prevail in all cir-

cumstances."

Albanese has used his trip to underscore enduring security ties between the two countries that deepened in December, when he and Marape signed a wide-ranging security agreement.

The signing was delayed by six months after a security pact between Papua New Guinea and the United States sparked riots in the South Pacific nation over concerns that the country's sovereignty was being undermined.

Marape said in December that his government's security agreements with the U.S. and Australia did

not mean he was siding with those allies in their strategic competition with China.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Papua New Guinea over the weekend to discuss with Marape building closer relations.

In New Zealand, Luxon told the crowd that the country had its military personnel to thank for their freedom and democracy.

"It's a sacred day for all New Zealanders. It's a chance for us all to stop, to reflect, to remember, to commemorate great Kiwi service men and women in the past and present who have gone to stand up for our values," the Stuff news website reported Luxon saying.

A late morning commemorative service planned for the New Zealand capital of Wellington was canceled due to strong winds. **MDT/AP**



Veterans march during a Anzac Day parade at Hobsonville near Auckland yesterday



EXPLAINER

# What to know about the latest bird flu outbreak in the US

**A** poultry facility in Michigan and egg producer in Texas both reported outbreaks of avian flu this week. The latest developments on the virus also include infected dairy cows and the first known instance of a human catching bird flu from a mammal.

Although health officials say the risk to the public remains low, there is rising concern, emerging in part from news that the largest producer of fresh eggs in the U.S. reported an outbreak.

Here are some key things to know about the disease.

## WHAT ARE EXPERTS SAYING?

Dr. Mandy Cohen, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told The Associated Press on Wednesday that the agency is taking bird flu seriously, but stressed that the virus has already been well studied.

"The fact that it is in cattle now definitely raises our concern level," Cohen said, noting that it means farmworkers who work with cattle — and not just those working with birds — may need to take precautions.

The good news is that "it's not a new strain of the virus," Cohen added. "This is known to us and we've been studying it, and frankly, we've been preparing for avian flu for 20 years."

## WHAT IS BIRD FLU?

Some flu viruses mainly affect people, but others chiefly occur in animals. Avian viruses spread naturally in wild aquatic birds like ducks and geese, and then to chickens and other domesticated poultry.

The bird flu virus drawing attention today — Type A H5N1 — was first identified in 1959. Like other viruses, it has evolved over time, spawning newer versions of itself.

Since 2020, the virus has been spreading among more animal species — including dogs, cats, skunks, bears and even seals and porpoises — in scores of



countries.

In the U.S., this version of the bird flu has been detected in wild birds in every state, as well as commercial poultry operations and backyard flocks. Nationwide, tens of millions of chickens have died from the virus or been killed to stop outbreaks from spreading.

Last week, U.S. officials said it had been found in livestock. As of Tuesday, it had been discovered in dairy herds in five states — Idaho, Kansas, Michigan, New Mexico and Texas — according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## HOW OFTEN DO PEOPLE GET BIRD FLU?

This bird flu was first identified as a threat to people during a 1997 outbreak in Hong Kong. In the past two decades, nearly 900 people have been diagnosed globally with bird flu and more than 460 people have died, according to the World Health Organization.

There have been only two cases in the U.S., and neither were fatal.

In 2022, a prison inmate in a work program caught it while killing infected birds at a poultry farm in Montrose County, Colorado. His only symptom was fatigue, and he recovered.

This week, Texas health officials announced that a person who had been

in contact with cows had been diagnosed with bird flu. Their only reported symptom was eye redness.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF BIRD FLU?

Symptoms are similar to that of other flus, including cough, body aches and fever. Some people don't have noticeable symptoms, but others develop severe, life-threatening pneumonia.

The vast majority of infected people have gotten it directly from birds, but scientists are on guard for any sign of spread among people.

There have been a few instances when that apparently happened — most recently in 2007 in Asia. In each cluster, it spread within families from a sick person in the home.

U.S. health officials have stressed that the current public health risk is low and that there is no sign that bird flu is spreading person to person.

## WHAT IS THE ECONOMIC IMPACT?

While it's too early to quantify the potential economic impact of a bird flu outbreak, many of these latest developments are concerning, particularly the transmission of the virus from one species to another,

said Darin Detwiler, a food safety and policy expert at Northeastern University.

"We don't have a magic forcefield, an invisible shield that protects land and water runoff from impacting other species," Detwiler said. "There is a concern in terms of how this might impact other markets, the egg market, the beef market."

If the outbreak is not quickly contained, consumers could ultimately see higher prices, and if it continues to spread, some industries could experience "reputational strain," possibly affecting the export industry, Detwiler added.

The egg industry already is experiencing some tightening of supply following detections of bird flu late in 2023 and in early January, coupled with the busy Easter season, where Americans typically consume an average of 3 billion eggs, said Marc Dresner, a spokesperson for the American Egg Board.

Still, even with the outbreak in Texas and the nearly 2 million birds that were killed there, Dresner said there are an estimated 310 million egg laying hens in the U.S. and wholesale egg prices are down about 25% from a February peak. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1984 REAGAN ARRIVES IN CHINA

The US President, Ronald Reagan, has landed in China at the start of a six-day visit — the first by an American president since Nixon in 1972.



He arrived with his wife, Nancy Reagan, just after 1400 local time (0600 GMT), and was driven to Tiananmen Square, in the centre of the Chinese capital, Beijing, for a welcoming ceremony outside the Great Hall of the People.

He was greeted by the Chinese President, Li Xian-nian, to the deafening sound of a 21-gun salute.

Mr Li told Mr Reagan he shared his view of the importance of the Pacific region, referring to a comment made by Mr Reagan in a statement before his arrival.

President Reagan then attended a banquet given in his honour by President Li.

Mr Reagan used the occasion to speak, in Chinese, about the need for "mutual respect and benefit" between China and the United States.

The president is accompanied in China by a party of more than 600 journalists, aides, secret service men and officials who guard the codes for launching nuclear missiles.

The talks start tomorrow, and are expected to address a variety of subjects.

The White House spokesman, Larry Speakes, said the United States and China are expected to reach an agreement to assist US companies in helping develop commercial nuclear power in China.

But there is no sign of any compromise over the key issue of Taiwan.

The government-controlled People's Daily newspaper has today re-stated the view of the Chinese government that relations with America are being held back by Washington's support for the Kuomintang nationalist regime in Taiwan.

Until Nixon's visit in 1972 Washington only recognised the ousted nationalist government in Taiwan, where it had been forced into exile after being overthrown by communist forces in 1949.

Nixon, however, signed the Shanghai Communiqué, which for the first time recognised the communist government in Beijing. It resulted in diplomatic relations between the two countries for the first time, as well as the transfer of diplomatic recognition to Beijing as the Chinese capital.

Washington still continues to support Taiwan, however, and maintains unofficial links, including the sale of arms, to the frustration and anger of the communist leadership in Beijing.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

There was, as expected, no agreement on the key issue of Taiwan. Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping told President Reagan the US "should not interfere" in the process of reunifying China.

The Sino-American relationship is widely seen as one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world, and has gone through many ups and downs. Perhaps the lowest point was the Chinese army's brutal suppression of student democracy protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989. US-China relations were frozen for almost 10 years.

There have also been several difficult incidents, such as the Nato bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999, and the collision of a US spy plane with a Chinese jet in 2001.

Washington continues to supply Taiwan with arms, and there is still little progress towards addressing persistent criticisms of China's human rights record. But China's campaign for wider global acceptance resulted in its membership of the World Trade Organisation in 2001.

Diplomacy between the two countries still remains fraught with difficulties, and looks set to remain a delicate balancing act for the foreseeable future.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Listen powerfully. It's easier to resolve misunderstandings, with Mercury stationing direct in your sign. Serve as a translator for others who don't get each other.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
Consider dreams. Articulate your feelings privately. Words and traffic flow better, with Mercury direct. Review where you've been. Keep a journal. Plan and strategize.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
Communication barriers evaporate. Team coordination comes together naturally now that Mercury is direct. Background noise quiets and you can hear each other again.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Negotiate, collaborate and network. It's easier to advance professionally. Brainstorming gets more productive and creative again. Discuss possibilities. Develop opportunities.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
Make long-distance connections. It's easier to travel and launch. Traffic flows better. Confirm reservations. Get your message out.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Buy and sell. Discuss financial priorities with your partner. Money, invoices and payments flow with greater ease, with Mercury direct. Sign contracts. Negotiate deals.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Misunderstandings diminish. Communication clarifies naturally. It's easier to persuade, compromise and reach consensus. Send love messages and invitations.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
A physical barrier dissolves. It's easier to concentrate and communicate, with Mercury direct for three months. Traffic flows with greater ease. Discover health solutions.

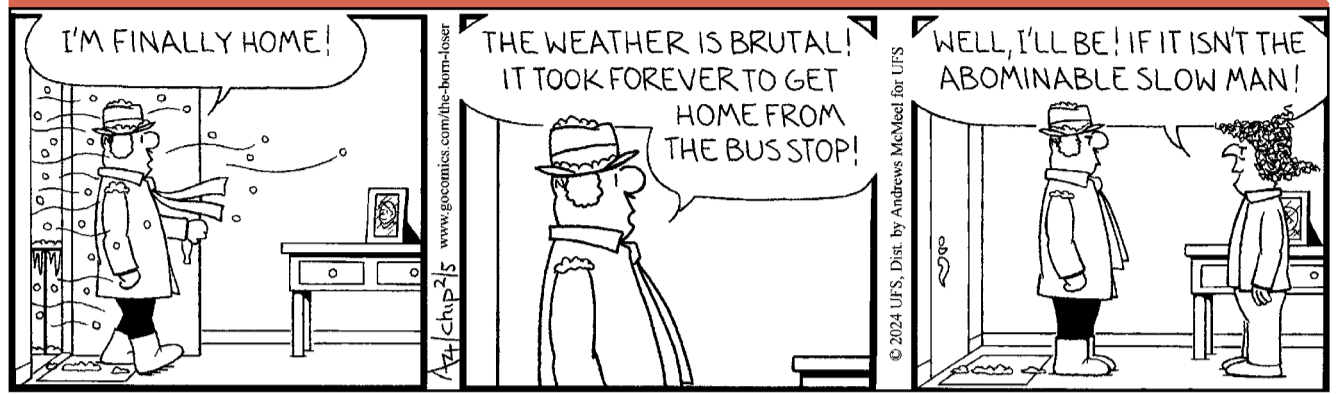
**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Listen to your muses. It's easier to express yourself, with Mercury direct. Practice your persuasive arts. Share your passion, possibilities and affection. Get creative.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Family communications clarify, now that Mercury stations direct. Collaborate and strategize. Share your visions. Determine domestic improvements. Clean up messes and resolve irritations.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Creative efforts leap forward. It's easier to learn and express, with Mercury direct. Sign papers, post and publish your views. Communicate and connect.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Financial transactions flow better, with Mercury direct in Aries. It's easier to discuss money. Confusion diminishes noticeably. Barriers dissolve. Make deals and bargains.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

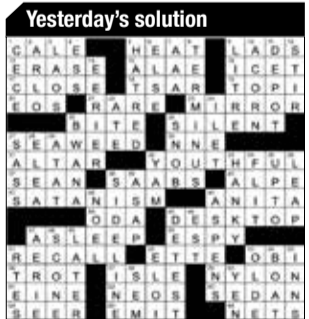
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	15	28	cloudy
Changchun	9	18	cloudy
Chengdu	16	25	cloudy
Chongqing	17	29	fine
Fuzhou	18	27	rain
Guangzhou	22	26	rain
Guiyang	14	25	showers
Haikou	27	36	cloudy
Hangzhou	16	22	cloudy
Harbin	7	18	fine
Hefei	15	26	cloudy
Nanjing	16	25	cloudy
Shanghai	14	19	overcast
Taipei	21	26	rain
Wuhan	18	29	cloudy
Hong Kong	26	28	thunderstorms
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	12	21	showers
Frankfurt	6	14	cloudy
Paris	9	16	cloudy
London	6	13	cloudy
New York	6	15	sunny

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS** 1- Comic Foxx; 5- Univ. recruiting group; 9- \_\_\_ avis; 13- Dies \_\_\_; 14- Gumbo pods; 16- Greek vowels; 17- Highland hats; 18- Pan-fry; 19- Bottle part; 20- Egyptian cobras; 21- Admiral's affirmative; 22- English river; 24- Messes up; 26- Molecule part; 27- Atomize; 29- Had faith; 33- Like a chimney sweep; 34- Achy; 35- Comic Carvey; 36- Timecard abbr.; 37- Studio sign; 38- Actor Chaney; 39- Bit of gossip; 41- \_\_\_ majesty; 42- Designer Simpson; 44- Small parrot; 46- Madonna role; 47- Equipment; 48- Pink-slips; 49- Give, as homework; 52- Make lace; 53- Cushions; 57- Sir Guinness; 58- Boite \_\_\_; 60- In \_\_\_ of; 61- Israeli round dance; 62- Cookwear; 63- Zip-\_\_\_-Doo-Dah; 64- Marine mammal, secure something; 65- Circus structure; 66- American football measure;

**DOWN** 1- Meter maid of song; 2- Notable periods; 3- Moist; 4- Final course; 5- Series of prayers; 6- Green-lights; 7- Faithful; 8- House pet; 9- Gave a new title; 10- Up and \_\_\_; 11- Speed contest; 12- Seeks permission; 15- Pioneer; 23- \_\_\_ polloi; 25- Narrow beam of light; 26- Eagle's nest; 27- In a way, informally; 28- Riddle; 29- Brag; 30- Hired parker; 31- \_\_\_ Gay; 32- "Great" dog; 33- Vessel; 34- Look of disdain; 37- 1992 David Mamet play; 40- Like Harry Potter's abilities; 42- Hail, to Caesar; 43- Show; 45- Beer barrel; 46- Scope; 48- Brother of Moses; 49- Sounds of pleasure; 50- \_\_\_ gin fizz; 51- Antitoxins; 52- Grow weary; 54- Verdi heroine; 55- Antelope's playmate; 56- Took to court; 59- Choose;



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Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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	



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

DRIVE IN

# JOANNA ARNOW'S FILM ANNOUNCES AN EXCITING NEW VOICE

JAKE COYLE, MDT/AP  
FILM WRITER

**I**n writer-director-star Joanna Arnow's "The Feeling That the Time for Doing Something Has Passed," Ann (Arnow), a 30-something New Yorker, lies naked in bed with an older man, Allen (Scott Cohen), with whom she has a yearslong BDSM relationship. She tells him she's grateful he only cares about his own pleasure.

"It's like I don't even exist," she says.

Much is just out of reach in Arnow's shrewdly perceptive and very funny new film. Love, certainly, is nowhere near Ann's life despite a series of romantic encounters. Music is talked about — from Andrew Lloyd Webber showtunes to the team cheer from "A League of Their Own" — but seldom heard. In one scene during a tryst with a composer, Ann says her favorite soundtrack is "In the Act of Wishing for Love," but she means "In the Mood for Love."

Even Ann's existential crisis doesn't quite materialize in this

AP PHOTO



Babak Tafti (left) and Joanna Arnow in a scene from "The Feeling That the Time for Doing Something Has Passed" (Magnolia Pictures via AP)

unwaveringly sardonic portrait of millennial malaise. Her life plays out in a series of brief, crispy edited vignettes that jump between her drab work life and her extreme but equally drab sex life.

Obedience is pushed on her in both places, as are labels, most of which Ann quietly but not necessarily apathetically accepts. One partner (Parish Bradley) who

instructs her to communicate in "a series of oinks" writes the lewd name he's given her across her belly in marker. At work, an unseen HR gives her a new job title: "Clinical Media E-learning Specialist." Which is worse is hard to say. After three years on the job, she's given a one-year anniversary trophy.

How Ann feels about all of this

isn't always obvious, possibly even to her. Arnow portrays her much as she directs and edits the film, with a detached deadpan. Sometimes Ann pushes back. She tells her older lover that she's not an Internet window he can open and close. But there's also something in Ann that recoils against more sentimental encounters. Later in the film, she begins da-

ting someone sweetly if naively romantic (Babak Tafti) who's unfamiliar with the kind of bondage role-playing Ann is accustomed to. But his sweetness is more of a strike against him. Ann may be a victim of her modern, alienating environment, but she's also a product of it. (Ann's parents in the film are played by Arnow's real-life mother and father, Barbara Weiserbs and David Arnow.)

But Arnow's sensibility is much dryer and more satirical. Whether Ann can free herself of her circumstance is one thing, but Arnow, as a keenly insightful filmmaker, proves again and again that she has. How else can you explain the trenchant absurdity of the poem-worthy dialogue that runs through the film? A sexual partner whose first line is: "Thank you for forgiving me for mansplaining about L.A." A boss who announces: "If you're not on Spotify, you're behind the times." And Ann, who after debasing herself with her older lover, says, "The candles were nice," only for him to reply: "There was just one candle."

**"The Feeling That the Time for Doing Something Has Passed," a Magnolia Pictures release, is unrated by the Motion Picture Association but contains adult nudity and language. Running time: 87 minutes**  
★★★★★

AD

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tTUNES

# Pet Shop Boys have done it yet again with catchy and bittersweet 'Nonetheless'

ONCE upon a time, on Pet Shop Boys' first single, "West End Girls," vocalist Neil Tennant sang the lines, "We've got no future / We've got no past / Here today, built to last."

Fifteen studio records later, there possibly isn't a better verse that captures the timelessness of the stone-faced British pop duo that appears to, indeed, be built to last.

Known for their synthesizer-backed dance tracks with emotionally resonant lyrics, Tennant and keyboardist Chris Lowe created their own style of electric pop — influenced by glam rock and disco — that has stood the test of time with consistent releases over the years. Their latest album, "Nonetheless," falls right in line with the pattern.

Tennant's simple-sounding vocals tell stories of loneliness, longing and love, elevated by bumping electronic beats and orchestral harmonies in this bittersweet masterpiece. Lowe's synthesizer skills bring each track to life, as always, and the dichotomy between heart-wrenching lyrics and dance-inducing instrumentals is a poignant reflection of human emotion.

Catchy track "Why am I dancing?" is a perfect example. Head-bopping beats and triumphant trumpets and strings accompany the lyrics, "Why am I dancing when I'm so alone? / Maybe I can celebrate on my own."

Nostalgia for another time and place seeps throughout "Nonetheless." Tennant reflects on starting out on his own in "New London boy," and he yearns for a feeling just out of reach in "A new bohemia."

"The secret of happiness" feels like falling in love in an old Hollywood movie with a sweeping orchestral arrangement, while final track "Love is the law" takes a more ominous turn with lyrics describing the feeling such as: "It waits and watches / Weaves and dodges / Catch it like a cold / No one is immune."

Packed with gems, "Nonetheless" is sure to delight both old and new fans and shows that the duo isn't slowing down any time soon.

KIANA DOYLE, MDT/AP



petshopboys nonetheless

"Nonetheless" by Pet Shop Boys (Parlophone/Warner)



TASTE OF EDESIA

## Classic American Steakhouse

IRENE SAM, MDT

**H**ENRY, the classic American steakhouse concept nestled inside Rosewood Hong Kong, celebrates a full transformation this April onwards under the culinary direction of newly appointed Chef Jorge Vera Gutierrez. Embracing a fresh chapter, HENRY introduces an exclusive Opus One winery ambassadorship and debuts a nostalgic cocktail program that pays homage to America's rich cocktail heritage.

Exciting updates at HENRY include the addition of signature dishes to a revamped menu that embodies the essence of a quintessential American steakhouse experience. The menu now features six distinct sections, showcasing a variety of offerings, including cold seafood, cold and hot starters, charcoal grill steak

selections, non-steak alternatives, sumptuous side dishes, and delectable accompaniments. Furthermore, the introduction of new tableside service options enhances the dining experience at HENRY, offering an interactive and theatrical touch.

Indulge in an array of signature dishes, including the opulent Seafood Tower and savoury Steak Tartare, made from finely hand-chopped raw USDA prime black angus beef, seasoned with a blend of herbs, spices, and condiments, and crafted tableside. At the heart of the culinary journey is the iconic tableside Caesar Salad, a timeless classic dating back to the 1920's, featuring crisp romaine lettuce, mustard & anchovy Caesar dressing, freshly grated Parmesan cheese, and crunchy homemade croutons.

Signature appetisers include the succulent Maryland Crab Cake with

tartare sauce, and HENRY's Buttermilk Fried Chicken, boasting a secret marinade and batter infused with homemade buttermilk for tenderness. Onion Soup is a rich blend of three onion varieties, three cheeses, and homemade beef broth — the pinnacle of elevated comfort food.

The premium steak selections are sourced from certified farms around the world, ensuring sustainability and quality with no added hormones. These exceptional cuts come from 44 Farms (USA), Brandt (USA), Aura (New Zealand), Marango (Italy), and Westholme (Australia), all expertly prepared to perfection. Highlights include the Porterhouse with a whisky flambé finish, the robust Cowboy Ribeye dry-aged in-house for 30 days, and the impressive Tomahawk carved tableside, adding theatrical flair to the dining experience.

## VIBRANT COCKTAILS

**T**HE Diageo World Class Competition, the most prestigious event in the bartending industry, is set to make its highly anticipated comeback in Hong Kong and Macau. This year's competition will kick off with an exhilarating World Class Cocktail Festival, featuring 20 participating mixologists from both cities. Cocktail enthusiasts are even invited to partake the festival to celebrate the vibrant mixology culture and the exceptional artistry within this captivating world.

Armed with their mixology prowess, the 20 talented bartenders have been tasked with crafting sensational cocktails using Johnnie Walker

Black Label and Don Julio to tackle the thrilling themes — "Beyond A Nightcap", exploring the limitless possibilities of Johnnie Walker Black Label; "2030 Margarita", a visionary take on the classic Margarita cocktail that reflects Don Julio's commitment to staying ahead of the curve. The spirited artisans delve into the realm of cutting-edge drink trends, infusing their creations with expertise, inventive ideas, and a magnetic personality to showcase their passion.

Diageo presents its iconic brands in the most prestigious bars worldwide, with a goal of crafting drinking experiences that inspire individuals to embrace a higher standard of drinking.



From now to 10 May, drinks lovers will have the incredible opportunity to embark on an adventure by visiting the participating bars to not

only show their support for the creative bartenders and immerse themselves in the global cultural movement that is shaping the world's drinking scene. IS



**OPINION**

**Multipolar World**

Jorge Costa Oliveira



**THE END OF SECULARISM IN INDIA?**

Since the era of Ashoka (250 BC), with pauses during the Mughal era, there has been religious freedom and a separation between the state and religious organizations in India's vast multiethnic and multicultural tapestry. The Constitution of India enshrines secularism (explicitly since 1976). One might debate whether the implementation of secularism in India is identical to that in the West, but it clearly entails treating religion as an entirely private matter, separate from the state and its political organization.

However, the rise of Hindu nationalist movements, especially the ascension of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to power in the Republic of India and in many states of the federation, has increasingly driven a wedge between Indian communities based on religion. Hindu "religious nationalism" originates from the concept of "Hindutva" by VD Savarkar – leading to the creation (in 1925) of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) – which envisioned India/Bharat as a homeland ("matri bhoomi") and a "holy land" ("punyabhoomi") exclusively for Hindus, where Christians, Muslims, and followers of other religions (altogether 20% of India's population) would not belong.

In the 1930s, one of the early leaders of the RSS, MS Golwalkar, modeled the movement on Mussolini's paramilitary organization and embraced the views of European fascists about minorities, stating that the "final solution" in Nazi Germany was a model for how India should treat its minority groups.

The BJP, a product of the RSS, first came to federal power (in coalition) in 1998. But it was only when it secured an absolute majority (in 2014) under the leadership of Modi – a lifelong RSS member who became a "pracharak" (organizer) of the group and was elected chief minister of Gujarat state in 2001 – that it began to enact RSS ideology, adopting religious-based apartheid with legislation that relegates Muslims (200 million in India) to second-class status and enacting laws that could strip many Muslims of their citizenship.

States controlled by the BJP have been passing laws that make it difficult for Hindus and Muslims to marry, convert to Islam, or purchase property in Hindu-dominated areas, aiming to make full citizenship dependent on being Hindu. Many of these laws also affect Christians. Similarly, as during Modi's tenure as state governor when the Gujarat police turned a blind eye to pogroms where hundreds of Muslims were killed, the federal authorities have also allowed waves of persecution based on a mix of ultra-nationalism and religious sectarianism, particularly anti-Islamic, as well as the spread of extremist Hindu militias, accused of acting similarly to the Nazi SA.

If, in the ongoing national elections, the BJP (and its allies) strengthen their majority in the lower house ("Lok Sabha") and achieve it in the upper house ("Rajya Sabha") of the Indian Parliament, it is quite possible that they might amend the Constitution and secularism may no longer have force of law in India, paving the way for the marginalization of hundreds of millions of Indian citizens.

[linkedin.com/in/jorgecostaoliveira](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jorgecostaoliveira)

**TIKTOK HAS PROMISED TO SUE OVER THE POTENTIAL US BAN – THE LEGAL OUTLOOK**

**THE BUZZ**

Legislation forcing TikTok's parent company to sell the video-sharing platform or face a ban in the U.S. received President Joe Biden's official signoff. But the newly minted law could be in for an uphill battle in court.

Critics of the sell-or-be-banned ultimatum argue it violates TikTok users' First Amendment rights.

The app's China-based owner, ByteDance, yesterday [Macau time] promised to sue, calling the measure unconstitutional.

But a court challenge's success is not guaranteed. The law's opponents, which include advocacy organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union, maintain that the government hasn't come close

to justifying banning TikTok, while others say national-security claims could still prevail.

For years, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have expressed concerns that Chinese authorities could force ByteDance to hand over U.S. user data, or influence Americans by suppressing or promoting certain content on TikTok. The U.S. has yet to provide public evidence to support those claims, but some legal experts note that political pressures have piled up regardless.

If upheld, legal experts also stress that the law could set a precedent carrying wider ramifications for digital media in the U.S.



**THE ROLLING STONES SET TO PLAY NEW ORLEANS JAZZ FEST 2024**

**CHEVEL JOHNSON RODRIGUE, NEW ORLEANS**

It looks like the third time is the charm as the 2024 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage festival prepares, again, for The Rolling Stones to perform.

The festival, which spans two weekends, is set to open today [Macau time] with dozens of acts playing daily on 14 stages spread throughout the historic Fair Grounds race course. The Stones play next Thursday, May 2, tickets for which have long been sold out.

In 2019, festival organizers thought they had landed the legendary rock band, but the appearance was canceled because lead singer Mick Jagger had heart surgery. They tried again in 2021, but a surge in COVID-19 cases ultimately forced the fest to cancel.

Now, says festival producer Quint Davis, "It's gonna be special."

This will be the first time the Stones play Jazz Fest.

Opening day acts include rock bands Widespread Panic and The Beach Boys, reggae artist Stephen Marley and jazz vocalist John Boutte.

"The talent is great, the

weather is projected to be good and people's expectations are going to be met," Davis said.

Blue skies, sunshine and temperatures in the 80s were forecast for opening day. Similar weather was expected for the rest of the first weekend, which runs through Sunday and showcases performances by Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter Jon Batiste, country megastar Chris Stapleton, R&B singer Fantasia, rock band Heart, Cajun fiddler Amanda Shaw and The Cute Guys, jazz pianist Patrice Rushen, and blues and folk artist Ruthie Foster.

Anticipation for the Stones' performance is palpable, Davis said.

"All I'm hearing is 'How can I get a ticket?'" he said of fans trying to see the marquee performance. "Unfortunately for some, that day sold out in like a day-and-a-half after tickets went on sale. I think people have just waited so long for this."

The Rolling Stones in October released "Hackney Diamonds," their first album of original material since 2005 and their first without drummer Charlie Watts, who died in 2021. Though he hasn't seen a set list, Davis said fans can ex-

pect to hear a mix of greatest hits and new releases. No special guests are expected to perform with the Rolling Stones, but Davis said "never say never."

"Just expect euphoria," he said laughing. "I think maybe we're going to need some ambulances on site because people are going to spontaneously combust from the excitement. And, they're playing in a daylight event. They're gonna be able to make eye contact with the audience. That's going to create a really special bond."

Acts on the festival's 14 stages usually play simultaneously beginning when gates open at 11 a.m. and continuing until the music ends at 7 p.m. But the other stages will shut down next week when the Stones take the stage.

"We didn't want to have 13 empty stages and no people in front of them when the Stones start singing favorites like '(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction' and 'Jumpin' Jack Flash,'" Davis said. "Everyone who bought a ticket for that day primarily bought one to see The Stones."

Davis said tickets for the festival's other days remain available and can be purchased online through their website. MDT/AP



**United Nations** Russia yesterday vetoed a U.N. resolution sponsored by the United States and Japan calling on all nations to prevent a dangerous nuclear arms race in outer space, calling it "a dirty spectacle" that cherry picks weapons of mass destruction from all other weapons that should also be banned. U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield (pictured) said Vladimir Putin has said Moscow has no intention of deploying nuclear weapons in space.



**Africa** There has been no final decision on whether or not all U.S. troops will leave Niger and Chad, two African countries that are integral to the military's efforts to counter violent extremist organizations across the Sahel region, a top U.S. military official told The Associated Press. Niger's ruling junta ended an agreement last month that allows U.S. troops to operate in the West African country. The State Department said Wednesday night that U.S. and Nigerien officials would meet Thursday in the capital, Niamey, "to initiate discussions on an orderly and responsible withdrawal of U.S. forces."



**Portugal** Military vehicles and red carnations return to the streets and squares of downtown Lisbon yesterday as Portugal reenacts dramatic moments from the army coup that brought democracy 50 years ago. Thousands of people attend celebrations of the so-called Carnation Revolution, which ended a stifling four-decade dictatorship established by Antonio Salazar. It also paved the way for Portugal's 1986 entry into the European Union, then called the European Economic Community. As a national holiday began in Lisbon, a column of troops and armored vehicles arrived in a downtown square as part of a reenactment of one of the early stages of the uprising.