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THE GLOBAL EXHIBITIONS DAY IN MACAU FOCUSED ON PROMOTING MICE PROGRESS, ECONOMIC GROWTH, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EXCHANGES

CORRUPTION WATCHDOG INVESTIGATED 250 CASES IN 2023

KIM HAILS RUSSIA TIES AS PUTIN REPORTEDLY PLANS A VISIT



Mongolia More than 7.1 million animals have died due to an extreme weather phenomenon known as the dzud, combining severe winter snows and droughts. This disaster, exacerbated by climate change, threatens the livelihoods of herders and the economy. The dzud has led to widespread livestock deaths, escalating poverty, and migration to urban areas.



South Korea A magnitude 4.8 earthquake yesterday struck Buan in southwestern South Korea, causing cracked walls and minor damage but no injuries. The quake, the strongest in the country this year, had a depth of 8 kilometers. Prime Minister Han Duck-Soo urged vigilance for aftershocks and infrastructure protection. Nuclear power plants reported no safety issues.



Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki (pictured), renowned for blending Eastern and Western design elements, has died at 95. Maki, who won the Pritzker Prize, designed the National Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto and New York's 4 World Trade Center. He was celebrated for his innovative use of light and space in architecture.



Italy President Joe Biden is attending the G7 summit in Italy to discuss Ukraine support, migration, and artificial intelligence. This gathering could be the last for some leaders due to upcoming elections. Biden aims to secure funds for Ukraine by converting frozen Russian assets and address challenges posed by China's economic influence.

TRIBUTE TO FILIPINO RESILIENCE

Celebrating Philippines Independence Day in Macau as a tribute to community resilience



**IT'S OFFICIAL
MACAU IS WORLD'S FAVORITE CASINO DESTINATION**

**SAY AGAIN?
GOV'T LIMITS CASINO'S FREE SNACKS, REPORTS SAY**

NORTHERN MACAU SPENDING DRIVE GENERATES OVER MOP9M

A government-led campaign aimed at spurring spending in northern Macau has generated more than MOP9.55 million in secondary consumption since launching three months ago, according to authorities. The consumption drive, a collaboration between the Industry and Commerce Association of Macau Northern District and the Macao Chamber of Commerce, attracted over 1,200 participating businesses, up from an initial 400. As of June 9, approximately MOP14.54 million in e-vouchers had been used through the campaign.

AL TO REVIEW PROCEDURAL RULES AND LAWMAKERS' STATUS

The Legislative Assembly (AL) is reviewing its rules of procedure and the regulations that establish legislators' status, the lawmaker and president of the AL Rules and Mandates Committee, Ho Ion Sang, said after a recent committee meeting. Ho said the review comes after committee members decided to ensure the documents dovetail with new regulations, including amendments made to the AL electoral law, the election of the Chief Executive, the National Security Law, and the Oath Taking rules. The AL last revised its rules of procedure in 2017, while lawmakers' status has remained unchanged since 2009.

PORTUGAL: NO NEW TEACHERS TO REPLACE FUTURE LAYOFFS

Portugal's Minister of Education, Science, and Innovation has notified the management of the Portuguese School of Macau (EPM) he will not provide additional teachers to replace those who may be laid off in the future. Responding to Hoje Macau, the minister, Fernando Alexandre, also said there was a new request for information about the wave of layoffs. Recently, the director of the Portuguese School of Macau was asked for clarifications amid the controversial layoffs that made waves in the SAR. "Furthermore, due to the shortage of teachers in Portugal, the Ministry has already stated that teachers will not be made available to replace any teachers that the school management may dismiss," it was added, according to the same report.

LIGHT RAIL SEES PASSENGER, REVENUE SURGE IN 2023

Macau's LRT has reported a significant increase in both passenger numbers and ticket revenue during the year 2023. According to the company's latest business report, the LRT carried 2.47 million passengers in 2023, marking a fourfold increase from the previous year. The light rail network provided about 60,000 train services over the year, a 49% jump compared to the prior period. Correspondingly, the light rail's ticketing revenue reached MOP13.55 million in 2023.

CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE DAY: A TRIBUTE TO FILIPINO RESILIENCE

LYNZY VALLES

THE Filipino community pulsated with pride and unity during the commemoration of the 126th Independence Day of the Philippines yesterday, which gathered compatriots from different sectors.

June 12, 1898 was the pivotal moment when the island nation made its bold move for autonomy.

Hosted by the Philippine Consulate General in Macau, led by Porfirio M. Mayo Jr, yesterday was celebration of the shared spirit of the Filipino community and their adopted home, Macau.

The Consul General's words echoed with hope and reassurance: "We want the world to see the Philippines standing proudly as a free nation. And this is the occasion where Filipinos can display and show their cultural identity."

Speaking at the reception that featured cultural performances, Mayo recalled that over the years, amidst the challenges of building a new life in a foreign land, the Filipino community had found solace and strength in their shared cultural traditions.

Tens of thousands of Filipinos have made Macau their second home, contributing significantly to the city's economy across various sectors.

For the official, the city has been a home to Filipino entrepreneurs who had built successful businesses, artists who had found new platforms to showcase their talents, and families who chose to create a chapter in their lives in the SAR.

Filipino community groups and artists are also frequently invited and called on to perform in various cultural celebrations of Macau, further adding to the vibrancy and luster of the city they have chosen as their second home.

"Our growing number is indeed a testament to Macau's openness and amity towards Filipinos and other migrant workers. Many of our Filipino entrepreneurs, business owners, and professionals, some of whom are present here to-



day, have already established roots in Macau," said Mayo.

"Each one of them has their own story [...] Each one is a testament to the strength and spirit of the Filipino people," he added.

Filipinos comprise the largest migrant community in Macau. Data from the government shows that by year end 2023, Macau was home to 28,800 Filipinos, a number that has far increased during these six months.

The Philippines is also a significant source of tourist arrivals for Macau, with 314,161 visitors from the Philippines recorded in 2023.

"Allow me to express my profound gratitude to the government of Macau for being

benevolent and gracious hosts to Filipinos living and working in this beautiful city. The consulate is able to fulfill its mandate and serve our nationals freely through the local government's steadfast support," said Mayo in his remarks.

Currently, Macau is also home to a number of different Filipino organizations in Macau amid the growing community, which the Consul General described as "strong and reliable allies of the consulate general in community building and cultural promotion."

Meanwhile, at the reception, Wong Sio Chak, Secretary for Security, and representative of the Chief Executive, remarked that since the resumption of social and

economic activities last year, and with the joint efforts of all walks of life, the local economy has recovered significantly and achieved good results and progress in different areas.

"This includes the valuable contributions of the local Filipino community [...] in different fields. We express our sincere appreciation for it," said Wong.

The official said the SAR "hopes to continue the exchanges with the Philippines through the Consulate General of the Philippines in Macau and thus facilitating the sustainable development of China-Philippines relations with more and more constructive cooperation outcomes."

APPREHENSIONS, JOB SCAMS ARE 'ISOLATED MATTERS'

The Consul General acknowledged the isolated incidents of Filipinos being apprehended but emphasized that such occurrences were exceptions. This statement comes after the recent arrest of two Filipino nationals announced by the Judiciary Police over drug-related issues.

"In general, the Filipino community is peaceful and well-integrated," he asserted.

Meanwhile, rumors of unscrupulous employment agencies and job scams targeting vulnerable jobseekers had cast a shadow over the community's well-being.

But, for Mayo, such abuses cannot be controlled by the Consulate noting that "any complaints about fake employment are isolated matters, not systemic issues."

"This is not something that is peculiar only to Filipinos. So we've seen it happening to all

the migrant visitors here in Macau," he adds.

The Consul General urged victims of such abuses to file complaints, acknowledging that this was primarily a matter for law enforcement.

The community's growth in recent years brought both opportunities and responsibilities.

"We're regaining the numbers we lost during the pandemic," the Consul General said with pride. "We're almost back to the 33,000 Filipinos we had pre-pandemic."

To cope with the demand, the Consulate has improved facilities at its office and particularly the migrant workers office from the Department of Migrant Workers. Mayo said they will be increasing their personnel to cope with the demand for consular and labor services. LV

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Macau: World's favorite casino destination in 2024

NADIA SHAW

OFTEN referred to as the "Las Vegas of Asia," Macau tops the charts in Online Betting Guide's 2024 Global Casino Index (OLBG).

The city received a Casino Index Score of 9.32 and has been ranked as the best gambling destination by OLBG. The British publication found "Macau performed very well, [...] combining a large number of casinos, casino restaurants, and table games and more than 360,000 annual searches for casinos."

In overall ranking, Macau appears in first place (9.32) - two places above Las Vegas (7.2) and three places ahead of Singapore, Asia's second-largest gambling destination, at (6.84).

According to World Casino Directory data, OLBG ranked Las Vegas as having the most casinos per head (26.28 casinos per 100,000 people). This gives casino-goers in Vegas a huge range of venues to choose from, with an impressive 175 casinos in the city.



Macau was ranked fourth (4.05 casinos per 100,000 people) with 28 casinos in the region. Though significantly smaller than Las Vegas, Macau has an area of about 30.5 square kilometers. In contrast, Las Vegas has an area of about 351.9 square kilometers. Las Vegas is roughly 11.5 times larger than Macau.

In terms of revenue, Macau regained its lead from Las Vegas as the world's top gaming hub, generating MOP183 billion GGR in 2023.

By comparison, the United States generated a record US\$66.5

billion in commercial gaming revenue last year. The total GGR of Nevada casinos reached over \$15 billion. Figures indicate that while there may be fluctuations in gaming revenue, the overall industry remains strong and continues to generate significant revenue.

OLBG found that Google search data for local casinos has increased by almost 50% worldwide over the past year for "casinos near me." This suggests more people are looking for casinos in their local areas, indicating a growing interest in gambling and entertainment. Annual casino searches for

Macau totaled 363,700, while Las Vegas recorded 2,747,000 respectively.

Steve Madgwick, OLBG's Editor in Chief commenting on Macau, said "It is important to note that Las Vegas doesn't rule as the definitive casino destination though; in this case, Macau can take the plaudits, and features amongst the top 10 casino capitals for several of our ranking factors including; the most affordable casino capitals for hotel prices, casinos per 100,000 people, restaurants per casino, table games per casino, and annual casino searches.

Govt limits casino's free snacks, reports say

STAFF REPORTER

THE Macau government has reportedly directed casino operators either to restrict or stop providing complimentary snacks to their patrons, according to multiple sources.

The move comes amid concerns that the practice of offering free food and drinks is negatively impacting local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), Inside Asian Gaming has learned.

Rumors of the government's intervention have been circulating on social media platforms, and sources have confirmed the accuracy of these reports.

In the post-Covid era, some casino

operators have been offering free snacks and drinks to attract customers, often combined with free transport options from mainland China. This strategy has been employed to compete for mass and premium mass players.

Currently, different gaming operators offer a variety of snacks, ranging from milk tea to egg tarts and different kinds of pastries to ice creams.

However, the rise of "zero-dollar tours" targeting younger mainland visitors has also been observed, with guests opting for the complimentary food provided within the casinos instead of exploring local dining options or spending money

in the community.

Alleged comments from Macau SMEs claim they have experienced significant cancellations of large orders in recent days, as the government has requested an end to the practice due to its adverse impact on local businesses.

While no official statement has been issued, a source has revealed to the media outlet that the government wants the practice "reduced and controlled."

Billy Song, president of the Macau Association for Responsible Gaming, has confirmed the news and said casinos would gradually change their approach to serving free snacks soon, according to the report.

He said there is a need to balance the increase in visitor flow to the casinos with the potential impact on the survival of local SMEs.

At the TDM Radio Forum yesterday, Cheng Wai Tong, deputy director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), cited data from 2023 and the first quarter of 2024, indicating that tourists' non-gaming consumption has increased compared to 2019.

He noted that despite the availability of free snacks, tourists are spending more, with the per capita consumption of Korean tourists increasing by 71% compared with 2019, and that of Japanese tourists increasing 21%.

CORRUPTION WATCHDOG INVESTIGATED 249 CASES IN 2023

STAFF REPORTER

THE Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) has handled 249 cases, including corruption, ombudsman investigations and mutual assistance inquiries.

The agency has recorded a decline in reports of fraudulently obtaining government subsidies, which it attributes to its robust crackdowns, system building, and promotion and education strategies.

In the report, the corruption watchdog stated it pursued various cases, including those involving security service companies, uncovering crimes such as falsifying records, document forgery, and corruption within private sector management. Investigations also revealed instances of public servants engaging

in dishonest clocking-in and clocking-out practices.

In the realm of ombudsman actions, the CCAC collaborated with the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau to ensure proper interpretation of legal regimes governing public services.

Through the long-term promotion plan titled "All for Integrity," the agency targeted young people with integrity education activities.

Additionally, the CCAC organized over 600 seminars, talks, and activities for public servants, private sector employees, residents, and students at various educational levels. The agency employed diverse methods and channels to disseminate messages about integrity, ensuring a broad reach within the community.

HARVEY ROUSE TO HEAD EU OFFICE TO HK AND MACAU

The European Union's High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Harvey Rouse, will replace Thomas Gnecchi as Head of the Office of the European Union to Hong Kong and Macao. Before his current position, Rouse was Head of the Trade & Economic Section at the EU Delegation to Indonesia/Brunei Darussalam, as well as the EU Delegation to ASEAN. Thomas Gnecchi, who has served as Head of the EU Office to Hong Kong and Macau since September 2020, has been appointed Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to Japan. Gnecchi will now be heading to Tokyo to take up his new diplomatic post.

GOV'T EXTENDS LANDLINE LICENSES FOR CTM AND MTEL

The Macau government has announced the extension of landline service licenses for local telecom providers CTM and MTEL, according to the government gazette. The licenses will be renewed for an additional year, from Oct. 1, 2024, to Sept. 30, 2025. This decision follows the government's previous announcement in Dec. 2023, which granted a nine-month extension to the two-year licenses that were originally set to expire at the end of 2023. Derby Lau Wai Meng, the director of the Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT), had stated earlier this year that the authorities would strive for industry reforms within the nine-month extension period to ensure a fair market environment.

WTT CHAMPIONS MACAO 2024 TO BE HELD IN SEPTEMBER

Macau will this September welcome the world's top table tennis players, as the WTT Champions Macao 2024 tournament is set to take place from Sept. 9 to 15 at the Macao East Asian Games Dome. The event will feature 32 elite male and 32 elite female players, who will compete for prestigious titles and prize money. It marks the fifth time since 2020 that Macau has hosted a major World Table Tennis (WTT) Series event, demonstrating the city's capabilities in organizing world-class sporting competitions.

IPIM REORGANIZATION TO STRENGTHEN TRADE

RENATO MARQUES

THE Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) will be renamed from July 1 to the Investment Promotion Bureau, the Secretary for Economy and Finance, André Cheong, announced late last week during a press conference from the Executive Council (ExCo).

The name change is the last of several restructuring measures for the IPIM that has seen significant changes to its competencies, notably the ending its role of evaluating residency applications for qualified professionals and investment programs.

Among the changes of the new bureau is the merging of IPIM with the Support Office of the Permanent Secretariat of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macao).

Cheong noted the changes aim to optimize the structure and stability of the Support Office of the Forum Macau and interlink activities and resources of the two separate services that often need to work together.

The administrative committee will head the Investment Promotion Bureau which will be composed of three departments and eight divisions.

Among these are the Investment Promotion and Economic and Trade Development Department, the Exhibition Development and Event Promotion Department, the China-Portugal Forum Permanent Secretariat Support Department, and the Portuguese-speaking Market Promotion Department.

The main duties continue to be to seek foreign investment opportunities in Macau, assist local companies to enter outside markets as well as those from outside to engage in the local market, promote and support the development of the MICE industry, and promote economic and trade exchanges and cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

CE HO IAT SENG MEETS PORTUGAL MINISTER OF JUSTICE

CHIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng has met Rita Alarcão Júdice, the Minister of Justice of Portugal, to discuss promoting cooperation between the SAR and the nation in judicial, economic, and trade matters.

During the meeting at the Macau Government Headquarters, Ho noted the deep ties and friendship between Macau and Portugal, with the Portuguese language and culture being an important part of Macau's unique advantages. He expressed gratitude for Portugal's support in Macau's recruitment of Portuguese judges and prosecutors.

Minister Júdice, who was honored to visit Macau on the Day of Portugal and the 500th anniversary of the birth of Luís de Camões, said the visit would further strengthen the exchange and connection between Portugal, Macau, and other Asian regions in the field of judicial affairs.

She acknowledged the wide-ranging cooperation between Portugal and Macau, including in tertiary education and the "Big Health" industry, and looked forward to deepening the friendly relations between Portugal and China through the Macau platform. **HT**

MICE INDUSTRY MAKING MAJOR STRIDES THIS YEAR: GOV'T

NADIA SHAW

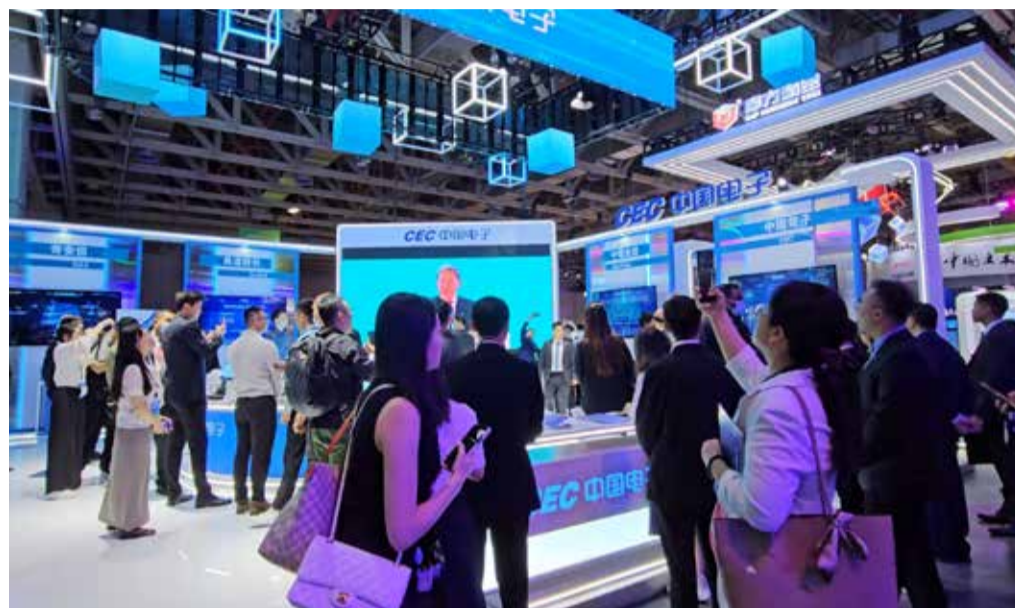
THE recent "Global Exhibitions Day" event held in Macau focused on promoting industry progress, economic growth, sustainable development and exchanges.

The event reviewed the achievements of Macau's MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) industry in recent years.

Synthia Chan, from the Macau Fair & Trade Association was elected as the vice chairman of the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI) in 2023. Further solidifying Macau's position as a key player in the region's MICE landscape.

The start of 2023 marked the beginning of the new 10-year gaming concession contracts for the six casino operators in Macau. As part of the deal, the operators agreed to significantly expand their non-gaming offerings and help Macau diversify its economy away from gaming.

Throughout 2023, Macau hosted a wide range of even-



ts and attractions to fulfill this mandate. The city saw a surge in live entertainment, with 180 pop concerts over the course of the year. Macau also emerged as a premier destination for MICE events, hosting over 1,000 gatherings in 2023.

In the first quarter of 2024, Macau hosted 307 conventions and exhibitions, representing a year-on-year increase of 31.2%.

The amount of overseas exhibitors and professional visitors increased signifi-

cantly by 32.2% and 39.5% respectively, compared to the same period in 2023. These events led to about MOP900 million in non-gaming revenue, an increase of over 50% from the same period in 2023.

The per capita consumption of MICE business visitors in the first quarter was MOP5,148, a year-on-year increase of 18.2%, more than twice the per capita consumption of general visitors (MOP 2,293). This demonstrated the MICE industry

can drive the regular development in other related industries and is an important driving force in promoting the diversified development of Macau's economy.

The city's MICE industry has made major strides, investing in non-gaming amenities and events. The casino operators are helping to broaden Macau's appeal and reduce its reliance on gaming revenue.

The government plans to hold 1,500 MICE events this year.

AL PLENARY

Lei Wai Nong: Gov't assisting new metaverse companies, research, jobs

RENATO MARQUES

GOVERNMENT support for companies in the metaverse industry was not a direct investment but support paid through the Science and Technology Development Fund (FDCT), the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, said in response to lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho.

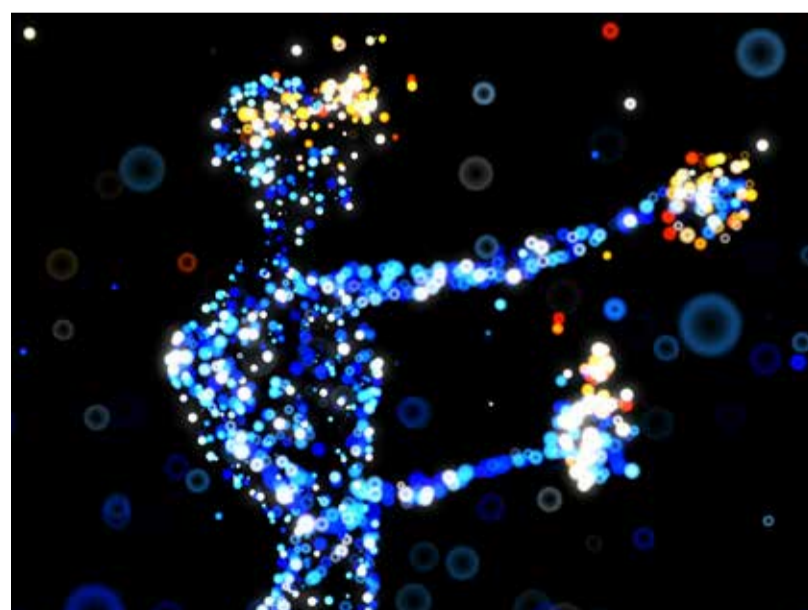
It also supported the establishment of new companies and assisted the research of companies with headquarters in the cooperation zone in Hengqin.

Lei was participating in a Q&A session with lawmakers at the Legislative Assembly

(AL), discussing economy-related matters.

He further explained, "[the development of] metaverse is our direction, but we need to pass through different chapters. We have been making efforts to create companies and participating in the creation of joint labs. We have been supporting companies mostly on investigation and research and now we are opening another lane for the research of new technologies."

"The government did not invest millions or billions in the metaverse but, instead, and through the FDCT, we paid support to companies to base themselves in Macau and



to create jobs. This is the support the FDCT is providing, it is not a direct investment [in the companies]," he said.

Lei also said that, for the time being,

"At least four Macau companies have already managed to get funding and they count on the FDCT's support for their continued market."

Pereira Coutinho

had earlier accused the government of spending millions of patacas in the metaverse industry without any guarantees of a return or any benefits.

AL PLENARY

Angela Leong wants Macau to become an ecotourism destination

RENATO MARQUES

MACAU should become an ecotourism destination, lawmaker Angela Leong said in an inquiry presented at the Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday.

Leong said several countries and regions are adopting ecotourism to attract different types of visitors. She noted that although the government has previously said it has a plan to promote ecotourism this seems to not have been moving forward.

"Thailand, Finland and Taiwan, among other countries and regions, are making great efforts to develop ecological tourism, which has brought them economic benefits and sustainable development," she said.

"Macau has a rich historical and cultural heritage and also several places suitable for exploring ecotourism."



Angela Leong

"The Macao Tourism Industry Development Master Plan also points to the support, planning and development of ecological tourism, and the authorities have even launched activities that were very well received by the public, such as 'Designing an Ecological Tour' and maritime ecological tours to observe black-faced spoonbills and mangroves, among other ecological landscapes."

The lawmaker said that as Macau positions itself as a world cen-

ter for tourism and leisure, and for the opening and increased diversification of tourist experiences, these types of activities can contribute and "inject another dynamic into the tourist environment," to offer different experiences to residents and tourists.

The government responded that the Municipal Affairs Bureau has been working on the beautification of the areas, creating trails and paths, and facilitating people's access to the wetlands and other

areas of ecological interest.

According to the government, there were 400 activities directed to students, and it is working with schools to increase knowledge on the matter.

Leong noted the work, but said that, according to the response, most of the work has been oriented to local students and learning and not to tourism nor to the commercially oriented activities she noted.

The deputy director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), Cheng Wai Tong, said the office has been supporting the industry to develop maritime tourism, having launched a Financial Support Program this year.

Cheng also said there is a "tourism + ecology" itinerary, which includes visits to the "Ecological Trail Garden of the Medicinal and Aromatic Plant" that was launched in 2021 and 2022 and was included in the program that promoted tours, gastronomy, and stays but that was, once again, directed to local

residents.

He said that MGTO is encouraging the tourism industry to develop ecotourism itineraries in Henqin as there are more spaces and resources there.

A program to invite Hong Kong students to visit Macau to participate in ecotours is also planned for this year. Cheng hoped it will increase the willingness of young tourists to visit Macau as well as of educational institutions to organize more study visits to Macau.

The Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, said the MGTO oversees evaluating and studying the markets and understanding if there are conditions and potential markets for this type of tourism.

"If there is the possibility of turning these places like the trails and others into a tourism product with commercial purposes, we will take the opinions into account and will study them," Lei said.

Ecotourism typically involves travel to destinations where flora, fauna and cultural heritage are the primary attractions.

It is intended to offer tourists an insight into the impact of human beings on the environment and to foster a greater appreciation of natural habitats. Examples of ecotourism include activities such as camping, hiking, and wildlife viewing.

AD



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NATIONAL SECURITY

HK invokes law to cancel passports of six overseas-based activists

KANIS LEUNG, HONG KONG

THE Hong Kong government yesterday canceled the passports of six overseas-based activists under the new national security law, stepping up its crackdown on dissidents who moved abroad.

Among them were former pro-democracy lawmaker Nathan Law, unionist Mung Siu-tat and activists Simon Cheng, Finn Lau, Johnny Fok and Tony Choi — all accused of endangering national security by authorities in the southern Chinese city. The government said they have “absconded” to the U.K.

Last year, police offered rewards of 1 million Hong Kong dollars (\$128,000) each for information leading to their arrests and drew sharp criticism from Western governments.

According to the official statement, authorities also banned anyone from providing funds or economic resources to them or forming any joint venture with them, among other restrictions. Doing so without authorization would carry a penalty of up to seven years in prison.

The government said it acted because the six were continuing to engage in activities that endanger national security,



AP PHOTO

In this image taken from video, former employee at the British consulate in Hong Kong Simon Cheng speaks during an interview in London, on July 3, 2020

ty, smearing the city and colluding with external forces.

Secretary for Security Chris Tang said in a news briefing that some officials, politicians and media outlets in the U.K. have attempted to damage the rule of law in the financial hub and tried to influence judicial decisions in some national security cases.

The six activists have been sheltered in the U.K, Tang said.

“We have to combat, deter and to prevent those people who have committed the offenses relating to endangering national security through absconds,” he said.

Tang, when asked whether subscribing to the activists’ accounts on Patreon and YouTube is illegal, said anyone who provides funds to them would be seen as violating the rules, regardless of the platform.

The measures were taken under the new powers granted by Hong Kong’s homegrown national security law enacted in March.

Beijing imposed a similar national security law on the territory in 2020 that has

Over 144,400 people from Hong Kong have moved to the U.K. using a special visa that allows them to live and work in

the country and apply for British citizenship after six years. The U.K. introduced the pathway in 2021, in response to the 2020 security law.

Additionally, the British government granted asylum to activists Law and Cheng.

Law said on Facebook he had submitted his passport to U.K. authorities when he applied for asylum in 2020, and has not collected it back, calling the government’s statement “a redundant move.” He urged people who remain in Hong Kong to prioritize their safety if the other restrictions under the new law worry them.

Lau said on X that he never owned a Hong Kong passport, so “it is ridiculous to cancel something that never exists.”

Mung wrote on X said the government can cancel his passport but it “can never cancel” his identity “as a Hong Konger.” He vowed to continue to fight for his hometown.

In Beijing, China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said the measures taken by Hong Kong authorities were legitimate and necessary to safeguard the city’s rule of law and national security. He stressed that the city’s affairs are China’s internal affairs and “brook no external interference.”

Hong Kong’s political changes have long been a source of tension between the U.K. and the city government, as well as with Beijing due to the territory’s unique history.

Last week, two British judges confirmed they resigned from the city’s top court, with one citing as the reason “the political situation in Hong Kong.” That article drew swift criticism from the Hong Kong government.

In May, U.K. authorities charged three men with agreeing to engage in information gathering, surveillance and acts of deception that were likely to materially assist the Hong Kong intelligence service. One of the trio was later found dead in a park.

Chinese authorities in the U.K. and Hong Kong have decried the charges, saying they were the latest in a series of “groundless and slanderous” accusations that the U.K. government has leveled against China. **MDT/AP**

DIRE STRAIT

Man who sailed into a river mouth in Taiwan was acting on his own, Beijing says

THE Chinese government said yesterday that a Chinese man who sailed a small boat into a strategic river mouth in Taiwan was acting on his own and would be punished after his return to China.

Taiwanese authorities have detained the man, who has been identified as a 60-year-old former Chinese naval officer surnamed Ruan, according to Taiwan’s official Central News Agency. His reported military background raised suspicion that the voyage might have been an attempt by China to test Taiwan’s detection and de-

fense capabilities.

“This is purely his personal behavior,” said Chen Binhua, the spokesperson for China’s Taiwan Affairs Office.

The authorities from Taiwan’s ruling Democratic Progressive Party “do not need to be paranoid, make a fuss and engage in political manipulation,” Chen said in response to a question at a news conference.

The small boat was detected off Taiwan’s coast on Sunday but apparently was not interdicted until it began interfering with ferry traffic across the Tamsui River, which leads to the ca-

pital, Taipei, and flows into the 160-kilometer-wide strait that separates Taiwan and the Mainland.

The Taiwan Strait is a key transit point for global commerce but is also known for its winds and tides, raising speculation over whether the small boat made it on its own from the Chinese coast or was launched from a larger vessel.

Transport links have been restored between the sides over the past two decades, but China’s ruling Communist Party keeps tight restrictions on where serving and retired officials can travel. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

Taiwan’s coast guard officials are seen on board a speedboat that an alleged former Chinese naval officer used to enter a harbor in New Taipei city, Taiwan on Monday

NORTH KOREA

Kim hails Russia ties as Putin reportedly plans a visit

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

NORTH KOREAN leader Kim Jong Un hailed the country's expanding relationship with Russia yesterday, as reports suggest that Russian President Vladimir Putin will soon visit the country for his third meeting with Kim.

Military, economic and other cooperation between North Korea and Russia have sharply increased since Kim visited Russia last September for a meeting with Putin. The U.S., South Korea and their partners believe North Korea has supplied artillery, missiles and other conventional weapons to Russia to support its war in Ukraine in return for advanced military technologies and economic aid.

Kim has been pushing to boost partnerships with Russia and China in a bid to strengthen his regional footing and launch a united front against the United States.

During their September meeting at Russia's main space launch site, Kim invited the Russian president to visit North Korea at "a convenient time," and Putin accepted.

Kim sent Putin a message



Putin and Kim shake hands during their meeting at the Vostochny cosmodrome in the far eastern Amur region, Russia in Sept. 2023

congratulating Russia on its National Day, according to the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

"Thanks to the significant meeting between us at the Vostochny Spaceport in September last year, (North Korea)-Russia friendly and cooperative relations developed into an unbreakable relationship of comrades-in-arms," Kim said in

the message.

Kim's comments came as media reports said Putin is expected to visit North Korea as early as next week. If realized, it would be their third summit meeting. Their first summit happened in Vladivostok in April 2019.

Japanese public broadcaster NHK, citing unidentified diplomatic sources including high-ranking Russian officials,

reported yesterday that Putin is preparing to visit North Korea and Vietnam next week.

NHK said Putin is expected to seek stronger military ties with North Korea as Russia faces a shortage of weapons in its war with Ukraine, while North Korea is believed to want help with space technology in the wake of its recent failure to put a second spy satellite in orbit in late May.

Russian business daily Vedomosti, citing an unidentified diplomatic source, said Monday that Putin will visit North Korea and Vietnam "in the coming weeks." The report quoted Russia's ambassador in North Korea, Alexander Matsegora, as saying that preparations for Putin's visit to North Korea were underway.

Neither Russia nor North Korea have confirmed reports of a planned trip. Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told a briefing in late May that "the visit is in the pipeline, and we will make an announcement in due time," according to Russian news agency Tass.

Russia and North Korea are locked in separate confrontations with the United States — Russia over its invasion of Ukraine and North Korea over its advancing nuclear program. Both North Korea and Russia have denied allegations of arms transfers, which would be a violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions.

In March, South Korean Defense Minister Shin Wonsik said North Korea had already shipped about 7,000 containers filled with munitions and other military equipment to Russia. In return, Shin said that North Korea had received more than 9,000 Russian containers likely filled with aid.

Recently, tensions on the Korean Peninsula have risen again as North Korea launched trash-carrying balloons toward South Korea, prompting the South to resume propaganda broadcasts at border areas. **MDT/AP**

AUSTRALIA

Farrell anticipates China will lift final obstacle for exports

AUSTRALIAN Trade Minister Don Farrell yesterday predicted the final obstacle for exports to China, Beijing's ban on live lobster imports, will be lifted soon after Chinese Premier Li Qiang visits the country.

The return of lobsters to the Chinese market would be a milestone in the Australian government's ambition to stabilize bilateral relations since coming to power in 2022.

China banned minister-to-minister communications with Australia and imposed a series of official and unofficial trade barriers in 2020 on Australian products including beef, barley, coal, wood and wine costing exporters 20 billion Australian dollars (\$13 billion) a year.

Bilateral relations plummeted new lows after a previous Australian govern-

ment demanded an independent investigation into the causes of and China's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Farrell said Li becoming the first Chinese premier to visit Australia in seven years on Saturday would remove the final trade barrier on lobsters.

"I think there's both the willingness on our part and the part of the Chinese government to remove all of the impediments in our relationship," Farrell told reporters.

Lobster is the one remaining banned product, said Farrell, China lifted tariffs on Australian wine in March and restrictions on Australian beef in December 2023.

"I'd be very confident that the visit this week will result in a very successful



Australia's Trade Minister Don Farrell

outcome for lobster producers," Farrell added.

Li will be accompanied by Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao when he visits the Australian cities of Adelaide, Canberra and Perth from Saturday until

Tuesday next week.

Farrell said every meeting he had held with Wang since the center-left Labor Party replaced the conservative government in 2022 had progressed the trade relationship.

"I'm very confident that not only will we remove all of the remaining trade impediments, but that we can actually continue to build on our trading relationship with China," Farrell said.

Prime Minister Anthony

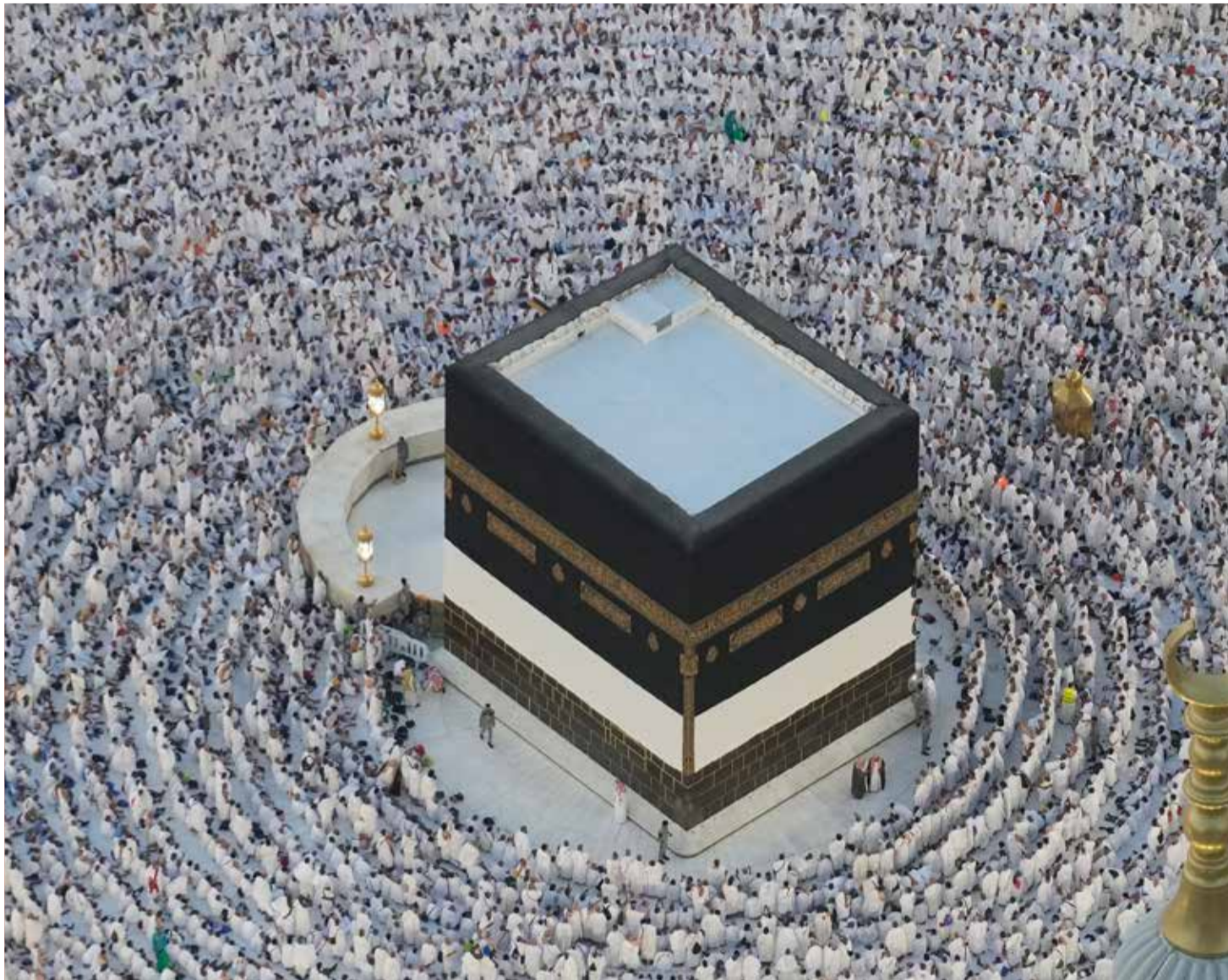
Albanese, who in November became the first Australian government leader to visit Beijing in seven years, said Li's visit was symbolic of the normalization of relations since the current government was elected.

"That has been important for Australia to renew that trade, because one in four of Australian jobs relies upon trade, and one in four of Australian export dollars is from trade to China," Albanese said.

Farrell was speaking at Wirra Wirra Vineyard in South Australia state which celebrated its 130th anniversary as a winery yesterday.

Since China removed the tariffs in April, AU\$86 million (\$57 million) of wine had been exported to what was once the largest export market for Australian vineyards, Farrell said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Muslim pilgrims circumambulate the Kaaba, the cubic building at the Grand Mosque, during the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca

this day in history

1967 MOSCOW CALLS FOR UN ACTION AGAINST ISRAEL

The United Nations Security Council has rejected Soviet demands for an immediate vote on a resolution condemning Israel's aggression in the six-day war.



Moscow - which has close ties with Egypt - is also demanding the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Arab territories. It follows six days of fighting in which Israel has made advances on three fronts doubling the area of land it controls.

Israel says the attacks were launched to counter huge Arab troop movements along its borders

It has seized Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt in the south and the Golan Heights from Syria in the north.

It has also pushed Jordanian forces out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The advances ended with ceasefires signed as Israeli troops were poised within striking distance of each of the respective capitals, Cairo in Egypt, Damascus in Syria and Amman in Jordan.

It is not clear what action Moscow will take in the face of the UN's hesitation. The council has postponed making a decision on how to respond to the war until tomorrow at the earliest.

Israel has already declared its intention to remain in control of its newly occupied territories until permanent peace with its Arab neighbours can be established.

Israel's casualties after six days of fighting are calculated at 759 dead and about 3,000 wounded. Arab casualties are far higher, about 15,000. [...]

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency is appealing for help to buy tents, blankets and vehicles and has also asked for medical supplies.

It says many of the refugees in Jordan are homeless for a second time - having been forced to flee the camps outside Jericho which had been their homes since the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

The British Government is contributing towards the cost of the emergency relief, as are many Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia which is donating half a month's salary per soldier in its armed forces.

Courtesy BBC News

SAUDI ARABIA

More than 1.5 million foreign Muslims arrive in Mecca for pilgrimage

SAMY MAGDY, MECCA

MUSLIM pilgrims have been streaming into Saudi Arabia's holy city of Mecca ahead of the start of the Hajj later this week, as the annual pilgrimage returns to its monumental scale.

Saudi officials say more than 1.5 million foreign pilgrims have arrived in the country yesterday [Macau time] y, the vast majority by air, from across the world. More are expected, and hundreds of thousands of Saudis and others living in Saudi Arabia will also join them when the pilgrimage officially begins on Friday.

Saudi officials have said they expect the number of pilgrims this year to exceed 2023, when more than 1.8 million people performed Hajj, approaching pre-pandemic levels. In 2019, more than 2.4 million Muslims made the pilgrimage. Saudi authorities control the flow of pilgrims through quotas, allowing

each country one pilgrim for every thousand Muslim citizens.

The pilgrims included 4,200 Palestinians from the occupied West Bank who arrived in Mecca earlier this month, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip were not able to travel to Saudi Arabia for Hajj this year, because of the 8-month war between Israel and Hamas.

"We are praying for Palestine to be free and (for Palestinians) to liberate their land and to be like other nations, to live in peace and not always to have war," said Ibrahim al-Hadhari, an Algerian pilgrim, as he was standing in the Grand Mosque court waiting for evening prayers.

Yesterday, pilgrims thronged the Grand Mosque in Mecca, performing a ritual circuit walking seven times around the Kaaba, the cube-shaped structure inside the mosque that is considered Islam's holiest site.

They wore ihrams, two unstitched sheets of white cloth that resemble a shroud.

Many were seen carrying umbrellas against the sun, in temperatures reaching 42 degrees Celsius (107 Fahrenheit) during the day on Tuesday.

"I was relieved when I arrived at the Al-Masjid Al-Haram and saw the Kaaba," said Rabeia al-Raghi, a Moroccan woman who came to Mecca for Hajj along with her husband and their daughter. "I am very happy."

Mohammad Abdel-Baset, an Iraqi pilgrim, said he was overjoyed to perform Hajj.

"We congratulate the great crowd and thank God for gathering us from all regions, globally and not from the Arab world only, from all the global Muslim regions (who) came to the Grand Mosque," said Abdel-Baset, a lawyer from Baghdad.

At night, the vast marble court around the Kaaba was packed with the faithful, walking nearly shoulder to shoulder

and often jostling with barricades set up by security forces to direct the giant flows of people in and around the Grand Mosque.

Pilgrims do the circumambulation, known as "Tawaf" in Arabic, upon arriving in Mecca. The large crowds circling the Kaaba will last into the Hajj's first day.

On Friday, pilgrims will move to the Mountain of Arafat for a daylong vigil, then to Muzdalifah, a rocky plain area a few miles away. In Muzdalifa, pilgrims collect pebbles to be used in the symbolic stoning of pillars representing the devil back in Mina.

One of the world's largest religious gatherings, the Hajj is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. All Muslims are required to undertake it at least once in their lives if they are physically and financially able to do so.

Those in the Hajj view the pilgrimage as an opportunity to strengthen their faith, wipe out old sins and start new. **MDT/AP**

IN CONTEXT

The General Assembly met again on 19 June but lengthy discussions on what action to take continued for a month until the session adjourned on 21 July and referred the matter back to the Security Council. The Council, after long discussions, on 22 November unanimously adopted Resolution 242, which became the basis for future United Nations policymaking on the Middle East conflict.

It stated "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" and called for "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict".

It also called for the acknowledgement of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every national state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure borders.

In the meantime, the Arab nations resolved to ignore Israel's call for peace. With Soviet help, they began rebuilding their armies and adopted a policy of three nays, no to peace, no to recognition of Israel and no to negotiations.

The occupied territories became the basis of the land-for-peace diplomatic concept at the heart of the 1978 Camp David accords and 1993 Oslo accords.

Israeli forces evicted Jewish settlers from the Gaza strip in August 2005 and began to demolish some settlements on the West Bank as well.

Egypt and Jordan are the only Arab nations to have made peace with Israel since 1967.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Take care of practical obligations. Fun could get preempted by responsibilities or unscheduled deviations. Clarify misunderstandings patiently. Rest and relax.

TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20
Domestic matters have your attention. Reinforce infrastructures and support systems. Clean messes and organize spaces. You get more with honey than with vinegar.

GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21
Slow down and articulate clearly. Keep a low profile. Secrets and scandals get revealed. Miscommunication and mistakes can delay the action. Patiently repeat.

CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Costs could be higher than anticipated. Cut expenses and avoid upsets. Focus on practical priorities. Adapt and adjust. You may not have the full picture.

LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Personal doubts could hold you back. Don't take risks or raise unrealistic expectations. Let criticism roll off your back. As you gain strength you gain options.

VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Lay low and get organized behind the scenes. Avoid chaos, crowds or noise. Figure out what's next and adjust plans for new circumstances. Recharge batteries.

LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Avoid a team controversy or conflict of interests. Provide steady support despite misunderstandings, delays or mistakes. Practice optimism to discover that it's contagious.

SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Don't push with a professional project, despite delay or mishap. Wait patiently for things to come together. Observe to determine what's missing. Gently coordinate.

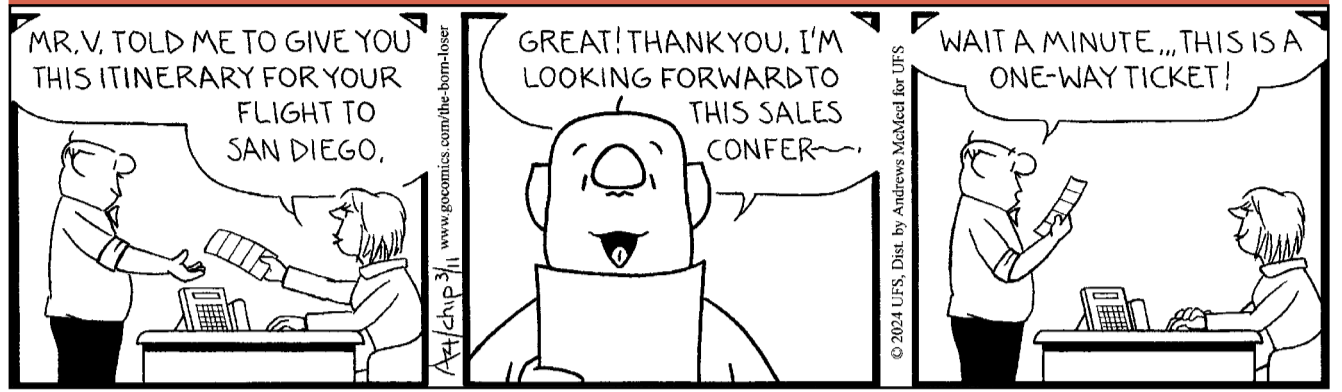
SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Anticipate changes with your educational plans or exploration. Adapt to prioritize practicalities. Heed the voice of experience. Make sure you know what's required.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Collaborate to manage shared accounts, especially with delays or breakdowns. Patiently coordinate. Leave a cushion for unexpected expenses. Avoid controversy and play it cool.

AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Unexpected changes or delays could frustrate. You can either guard your patience or fall into arguments. Avoid risk, hassle or expense. Compromise for common commitments.

PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Slow to finish faster. Avoid stress. Don't push into a wall. Take care around sharp objects. Reduce risk or fuss. Prioritize health and safety.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

8		3				5	2	
						1		
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			1					
							8	
	2	4	3					
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		6						

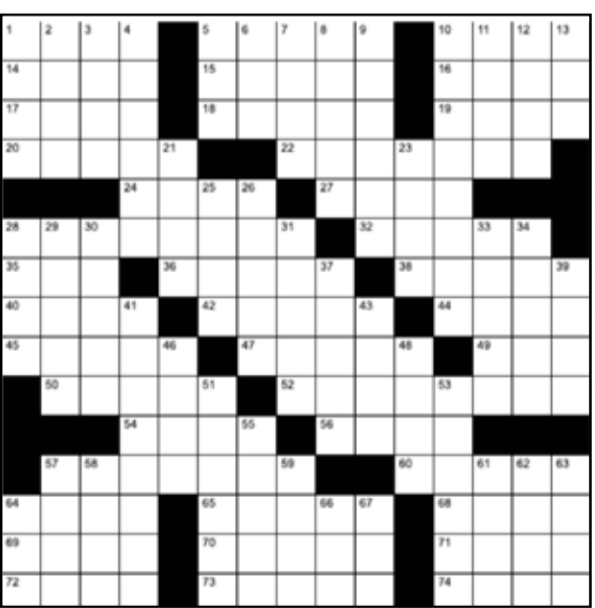
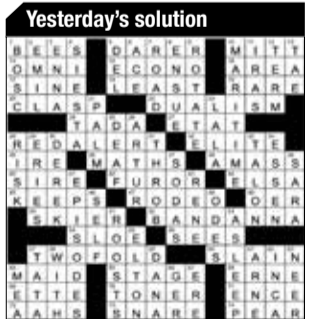
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	23	37	cloudy
Changchun	17	28	rain
Chengdu	23	33	rain
Chongqing	22	30	rain
Fuzhou	25	30	rain
Guangzhou	26	33	rain
Guiyang	18	24	showers
Haikou	26	36	cloudy
Hangzhou	22	32	cloudy
Harbin	16	25	thunderstorms
Hefei	23	34	overcast
Nanjing	23	32	cloudy
Shanghai	23	31	cloudy
Taipei	26	30	overcast
Wuhan	25	34	fine
Hong Hong	27	30	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	14	21	showers
Frankfurt	12	22	cloudy
Paris	13	22	cloudy
London	13	17	cloudy
New York	21	29	sunny

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Work up lather; 5- Perch; 10- Sensible; 14- Exon predecessor; 15- Writer Loos; 16- ___-friendly; 17- Catalog; 18- Affirmatives; 19- Perlman of "Cheers"; 20- Take ___ at (try); 22- Went in; 24- Orchestral heavyweight; 27- Vintner's prefix; 28- Learned persons; 32- Distrust; 35- "Hollywood Squares" win; 36- Lasting a short time; 38- Hagar the Horrible's dog; 40- Comedian Carvey; 42- Lover of Juliet; 44- Woodland animal; 45- View; 47- Name; 49- ___ kwon do; 50- Marriott competitor; 52- Implies; 54- Bugs, clunkers, and rides, e.g.; 56- River to the Moselle; 57- Quarantine; 60- Satan; 64- ___ for All Seasons; 65- Like some vbs.; 68- Give up; 69- Aforementioned; 70- Stressed; 71- ___ yellow ribbon...; 72- Bruins' sch.; 73- Be in a bee; 74- Break sharply;

DOWN 1- Actress Ward; 2- Medical suffix; 3- Mgr.'s helper; 4- Edible tuber; 5- Narrow beam of light; 6- Any person; 7- Seine tributary; 8- Shorthand taker; 9- Sampled; 10- Encompass; 11- 1975 Wimbledon champ; 12- Call for; 13- Period; 21- Future tulip; 23- Baseballer Slaughter; 25- Roseanne, once; 26- Running wild; 28- Lays the lawn down; 29- Carriage; 30- Bee stuff; 31- Big rigs; 33- Borscht veggies; 34- Rare delight; 37- Unborn child; 39- Very, in Versailles; 41- South American boa; 43- Gymnast Korbut; 46- List finish; 48- Holy smokes!; 51- Characteristics; 53- Puts up; 55- Throat bug; 57- Colorful computer; 58- Travel on water; 59- Fish-eating eagle; 61- Blood vessel; 62- Think tank output; 63- Spring; 64- Tempe sch.; 66- Subj. for immigrants; 67- Toothpaste type;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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

AD

EURO 2024 | ANALYSIS

CRISTIANO RONALDO AND MODRIC GO TO THE TOURNAMENT SHOWING AGE IS NO BOUNDARY FOR SOCCER'S MODERN STARS

JAMES ROBSON,
SOCCER WRITER

AGED 39 and about to play in a record-extending sixth European Championship, Cristiano Ronaldo's longevity at soccer's highest levels almost defies belief.

Luka Modric is 38, still performing for Real Madrid and will be expected to provide the X Factor for Croatia at the Euros in Germany, which start June 14,

The best players are extending their careers for longer, despite the increased pace and intensity of the modern game.

Higher levels of fitness and stamina are being demanded of athletes, but that is being matched by ever-improving expertise in how to maximize performance.

"Sports science has had an impact on how we prepare the modern-day player in terms of diet, nutrition, lifestyle, training programs. We've moved out of the 80s and 90s with the increased level of professionalism," Tony Strudwick, a sports scientist with more than three decades of experience in soccer, told The Associated Press.

Strudwick has held prominent roles at Manchester United, Arsenal and England and is currently director of medical at West Bromwich Albion.

He worked with Ronaldo at United when the Portugal forward first established himself as one of the best players in the world.

"He just set himself up for success," Strudwick said. "I said four or five years ago, knowing how



Football royalty: Cristiano Ronaldo and Luka Modric

professional Ronaldo was, he could play up to the age of 40. That was no problem."

With his 40th birthday in sight, Ronaldo shows no sign of being ready to quit. And with the advancement of sports science, the longevity that the likes of Ronaldo and Modric are achieving could become the norm.

ATTITUDE

It's not so much that athletes have changed physically over the years — rather it has been a shift in mentality.

"We have seen a kind of evolution in professionalism as opposed to an evolution in genetics," Strudwick said. "It wasn't that players were unprofessional (in the past), they just didn't know what they didn't know."

"There's a lot more scrutiny on players in terms of accountability."

Improvements in player lifestyle is lengthening careers, with

many using the services of fitness and conditioning experts to ensure they remain in prime condition even during the offseason.

Ryan Giggs took on yoga in his later years to help extend his career and allow him to play for United until he was 40.

DIET

Many top players also rely on the services of private chefs who deliver daily meals that are nutritionally balanced, while also being of restaurant quality.

That's in addition to what's provided by elite clubs, which have nutrition departments to help players keep food diaries and provide them with diet coaching.

In the past, some players would have pre-match meals of steak. Much has changed, with some managers banning sauces at the table.

Rod Thornley, a masseur who worked with Manchester United and England, can remember

when Italian coach Fabio Capello took charge of the Three Lions.

"The first ever pre-match meal was just a massive bowl of pasta. No sauce, just pasta," Thornley told the AP. "The lads were looking round going 'What is this? We can't eat this.' And that's all he offered. That was it."

INJURY PREVENTION

Massage plays a role in avoiding soft tissue injury. Contemporary players will have several massages throughout the week at the training ground or at home.

"With the more exercise you do, the more tight your muscles become," Thornley said. "You are affecting muscles, you're affecting muscle mass, you're affecting your buildup of tightness, your lack of elasticity in the muscle."

"It's a huge part of keeping a player fit, keeping a player healthy, keeping them on the pitch."

Ice baths are also used to help recovery.

MONEY

For all the ambition of players to continue as long as they can, there is also a clear financial incentive at a time when the rewards have never been higher.

It only makes sense for a player to want to extend their earning potential. Ronaldo, for instance, is reportedly paid \$200 million a year playing for Al Nassr in the Saudi League. He is the CEO of the money-making machine that is his playing career. It is something Strudwick calls the "rise of the entrepreneur" soccer player.

And it can apply to players much lower down the food chain than Ronaldo.

"There is a big incentive to keep your career going," Strudwick said. "An extra five years at the back end of your career sets up the modern footballer for a very, very comfortable future."

DRIVE

In the case of Ronaldo, a remarkable career that has seen him win five Ballon d'Or awards for the best player in the world is no accident, according to Thornley.

They worked together at United, where Ronaldo won the first of his five Champions League titles.

"Ronaldo just had that mentality where he was just wanting to be the best at everything," Thornley said. "He wanted to be the best player in the world from the second he turned up there. He was just one of those lads that you knew he would do whatever it took to be that person, and he did and he proved it."

MDT/AP

Group A		Group B		Group C		Group D		Group E		Group F	
1	Munich Sat, 15/06/2024 03:00 Germany vs Scotland	3	Berlin Sun, 16/06/2024 00:00 Spain vs Croatia	6	Stuttgart Mon, 17/06/2024 00:00 Slovenia vs Denmark	7	Hamburg Sun, 16/06/2024 21:00 Poland vs Netherlands	10	Munich Mon, 17/06/2024 21:00 Romania vs Ukraine	11	Dortmund Wed, 19/06/2024 00:00 Türkiye vs Georgia
2	Cologne Sat, 15/06/2024 21:00 Hungary vs Switzerland	4	Dortmund Sun, 16/06/2024 03:00 Italy vs Albania	5	Gelsenkirchen Mon, 17/06/2024 03:00 Serbia vs England	8	Dusseldorf Tue, 18/06/2024 03:00 Austria vs France	9	Frankfurt Tue, 18/06/2024 00:00 Belgium vs Slovakia	12	Leipzig Wed, 19/06/2024 03:00 Portugal vs Czechia
14	Stuttgart Thu, 20/06/2024 00:00 Germany vs Hungary	15	Hamburg Wed, 19/06/2024 21:00 Croatia vs Albania	18	Munich Thu, 20/06/2024 21:00 Slovenia vs Serbia	19	Berlin Sat, 22/06/2024 00:00 Poland vs Austria	21	Dusseldorf Fri, 21/06/2024 21:00 Slovakia vs Ukraine	24	Hamburg Sat, 22/06/2024 21:00 Georgia vs Czechia
13	Cologne Thu, 20/06/2024 03:00 Scotland vs Switzerland	16	Gelsenkirchen Fri, 21/06/2024 03:00 Spain vs Italy	17	Frankfurt Fri, 21/06/2024 00:00 Denmark vs England	20	Leipzig Sat, 22/06/2024 03:00 Netherlands vs France	22	Cologne Sun, 23/06/2024 03:00 Belgium vs Romania	23	Dortmund Sun, 23/06/2024 00:00 Türkiye vs Portugal
25	Frankfurt Mon, 24/06/2024 03:00 Switzerland vs Germany	27	Dusseldorf Tue, 25/06/2024 03:00 Albania vs Spain	29	Cologne Wed, 26/06/2024 03:00 England vs Slovenia	31	Berlin Wed, 26/06/2024 00:00 Netherlands vs Austria	33	Frankfurt Thu, 27/06/2024 00:00 Slovakia vs Romania	35	Gelsenkirchen Thu, 27/06/2024 03:00 Georgia vs Portugal
26	Stuttgart Mon, 24/06/2024 03:00 Scotland vs Hungary	28	Leipzig Tue, 25/06/2024 03:00 Croatia vs Italy	30	Munich Wed, 26/06/2024 03:00 Denmark vs Serbia	32	Dortmund Wed, 26/06/2024 00:00 France vs Poland	34	Stuttgart Thu, 27/06/2024 00:00 Ukraine vs Belgium	36	Hamburg Thu, 27/06/2024 03:00 Czechia vs Türkiye

ALL MATCHES IN GROUPS' PHASE, MACAU TIME

FOOTBALL | WORLD CUP

China keeps its hopes alive despite a 1-0 loss to South Korea; Thailand, India miss out

CHINA kept its 2026 World Cup hopes alive by the narrowest of margins despite a 1-0 loss to South Korea this week in Asian qualifying.

China advanced to the third qualification round because Thailand, needing to beat Singapore by three goals, only won 3-1.

South Korea finished the second round of continental qualifying atop Group C and remains on course for an 11th straight World Cup appearance.

Six of the 18 Asian teams in the next stage will secure automatic spots at the World Cup. Two more teams will earn direct entry to the World Cup from a fourth stage in Asian qualifying and another will go into intercontinental playoffs for a spot at the global tournament.

ment.

In front of 65,000 fans at Seoul World Cup Stadium, Lee Kang-in scored in the 61st minute. A cross from Tottenham star Son Heung-min found its way to the Paris Saint-Germain midfielder, who scored on a low shot from near the penalty spot.

"We were able to keep China from creating any dangerous chances," Son said. "There's no such thing as a perfect match, but we stayed patient and capitalized on our chance to win. Obviously, we could have won by a bigger margin, but overall, everyone did a great job."

China needed a draw or better to ensure second place in the group but was forced to wait and hope that Singapore could avoid a three-goal loss in Bangkok.

China's only appearance at



a men's World Cup so far was in 2002, when the tournament was co-hosted by South Korea and Japan.

At the Rajamangala Stadium, Suphanat Mueanta put Thailand ahead in the first half, and Ikhsan Fandi equalized just before the hour.

Thailand made it 3-1 on

goals from Poramet Arjvirai and Jaroensak Wonggorn but couldn't find the key fourth goal.

"I feel disappointed that we didn't make it to the next round," Suphanat said. "I have to apologize to the football fans and all Thai people ... there were so many opportunities."

There was also heartbreak for the India squad. India needed to beat Group A leader Qatar to be sure of progressing but lost 2-1 in Doha after scoring the first goal. Kuwait scored in the 81st minute to Afghanistan 1-0 and take second spot with seven points from six games.

Earlier, in a contest between teams already confirmed as first and second in Group I, Australia beat the Palestinian team 5-0 in Perth to make it six wins out of six and a 22-0 goal difference.

Socceroos forward Kusini Yengi scored twice, including the contentious penalty in the opening minutes that upset the Palestinian team, and 18-year-old Nestory Irankunda capped it with a late penalty.

A crowd of 18,261 fans attended the match in the Western Australia capital, with Palestinian supporters more vocal than the Socceroos fans.

Indonesia progressed with a 2-0 win over the Philippines in Group F.

North Korea took advantage of Syria's 5-0 loss to Japan, which did not concede a goal in the six games, to take second place in Group B with a 4-1 win over Myanmar.

MDT/AP

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創刊17周年
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OPINION

Business Views

Shuli Ren, Bloomberg



STOP COMPARING HONG KONG TO SINGAPORE

Business travelers have been visiting Hong Kong in recent weeks, attending big finance conferences and mulling whether to wade back into China. Chinese and Hong Kong stocks are up by some \$2 trillion in market value since the January lows.

Exchanging investment ideas aside, visitors are keen to offer their views on the future of Hong Kong, whose reputation has been dented since the government's crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in 2019. Views are diverse. Last week, Stephen Roach, Morgan Stanley's former Asia chair, defended an article he had written that claimed "Hong Kong is over." Perhaps not coincidentally, emerging markets investing guru Mark Mobius posted a blog on the same day saying the opposite, and that it was never a good idea to write off the potential of any city.

It's a lively debate. But almost invariably, Singapore is mentioned alongside Hong Kong in these discussions, as if the rise of one spells the demise of the other.

In my view, this comparison isn't fair. Hong Kong and Singapore sit in very different corners of the financial system. One is an established trading hub that helps companies raise capital, while the other is more suited for private wealth management.

China looms large over both financial centers, whose fortunes move like ocean waves as the mainland goes through business cycles. After the global financial crisis, Hong Kong was the big winner. Blue-chip Chinese companies raced to go public on its bourse and issued billion-dollar corporate bonds. For years, earning investment banking fees was effortless.

As the Chinese economy slowed, Singapore started to shine. Rich mainlanders have been immigrating there since 2019. Singapore has a natural edge in private wealth management, in that it's not part of China. It's no coincidence that millionaires from developing nations like to park their money in places like Zurich, far away from banks at home and their governments' scrutiny.

Think of it this way: Hong Kong is where the Chinese can grow their wealth, while Singapore is where they can preserve it. As China's economy hits a wall, Singapore is naturally the bigger beneficiary, as Hong Kong once was.

But does that mean Hong Kong is over? The logic is as absurd as questioning if developed economies still need capital markets.

Meanwhile, private wealth from China also comes with its own challenges. A money-laundering scandal involving more than \$3 billion (\$2.23 billion) has tarnished Singapore's image and exposed weaknesses in how its banks screen their clients.

"Singapore washing," or Chinese companies setting up headquarters in the city-state to sidestep US-China geopolitical tensions, is another problem. How much of that capital influx will stay in the country, and whether the local economy will benefit, remains an open question.

So far, much of that new money seems to treat Singapore as a mere stopover. Investment firms salivating at the chance to manage billions of dollars have been disappointed. Shein, founded in China where most of its suppliers are, is planning to go public in London, and is hoping to take advantage of the publicity there for a valuation of more than \$60 billion. The online fashion group is not listing in Singapore, where it has its corporate headquarters.

Often, hot money is myopic and judgmental. But those who are savvy and committed to Asia know each city has its own bragging rights and structural challenges. So please, stop comparing apples to oranges. [Abridged]

Courtesy Shuli Ren/Bloomberg

UN SAYS VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN CONFLICT REACHED EXTREME LEVELS IN 2023, INCLUDING IN GAZA

THE BUZZ

Violence against children caught in multiplying and escalating conflicts reached "extreme levels" in 2023, with an unprecedented number of killings and injuries in crises, from Israel and the Palestinian territories to Sudan, Myanmar and Ukraine, according to a new U.N. report.

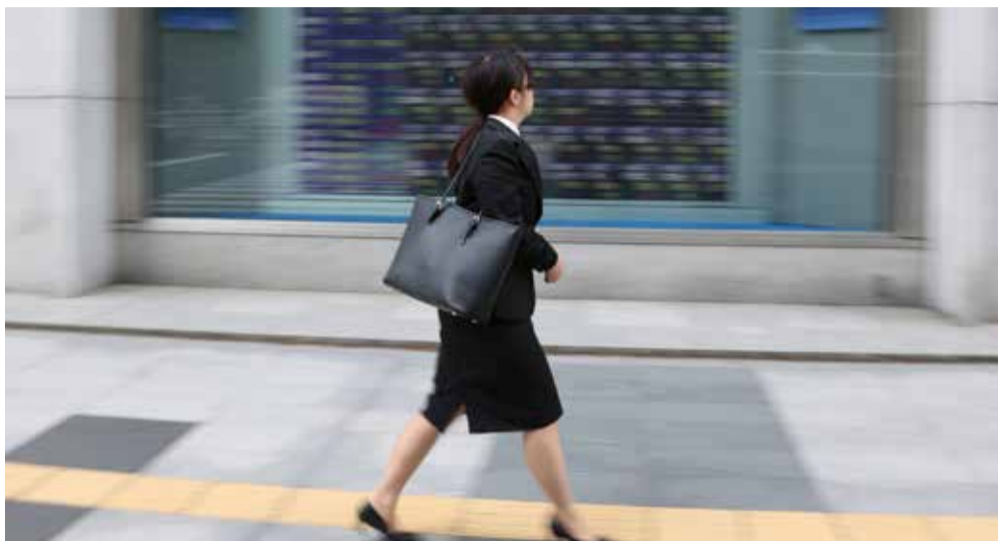
The annual report on Children in Armed Conflict, obtained yesterday [Macau time] by The Associated Press, reported "a shocking 21% increase in grave violations" against children under the age of 18 in an array of conflicts, also citing Congo, Burkina Faso, Somalia and Syria.

For the first time, the U.N. report put Israeli forces on its blacklist

of countries that violate children's rights for the killing and maiming of children and attacking schools and hospitals. It listed Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad militants for the first time as well for killing, injuring and abducting children.

Hamas' Oct. 7 surprise attack in southern Israel and Israel's massive military retaliation in Gaza have led to a 155% increase in grave violations against children, especially from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas in Gaza, said the report by U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres.

AP PHOTO



WILL JAPANESE WOMEN BE ABLE TO KEEP THEIR MAIDEN NAMES AFTER MARRIAGE?

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

A powerful Japanese business lobby is calling on the government to allow married couples to keep dual surnames, saying the lack of freedom to do so hinders women's advancement and has even become a business risk.

In Japan, each wedded pair has to legally adopt one family name. While either surname can be used, 95% of women still traditionally adopt their husbands', according to a 2022 government survey. Experts say such law only exists in Japan and have even accused it of putting women off marriage in a country already suffering dwindling nuptials.

Keidanren, or The Japan Business Federation, said Monday the law has to be revised to fit a more diverse, equal and inclusive Japanese society.

This came months after about a dozen plaintiffs filed a lawsuit asking for the system to be changed.

"As women play more active roles and the number of female executives is on the rise, the surname issue has become a business risk that companies can no longer dismiss as a problem of certain individuals," said Masakazu Tokura, head of Keidanren.

Tokura said many Japanese career women are already using their maiden names at work and on their business cards, including 90% of Keidanren female members. However, they still have to use their unified surnames on all legal documents, causing them issues when — for example — opening bank accounts, issuing credit cards, and traveling overseas as the names don't match, he said.

Keidanren internally surveyed its members and 88% of female executives expressed dissatisfaction with the status quo.

The proposal by the organization — which boasts over 1,500 Japanese companies and has regularly made economic policy recommendations — is seen as unusual for it has customarily supported Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's conservative governing Liberal Democratic Party that has shelved the dual surname idea for over three decades.

Tokura says the proposal will be submitted to the government next week following approval by the lobby's board meeting. They also called on the parliament to swiftly support a change in the 1898 civil code which governs the adoption of surnames.

However, several surveys show the vast majori-

ty support a dual-surname household, and the ruling LDP, which also opposes same-sex marriage, is already facing growing calls to allow more diversity in family values and marriage. Many in the party support traditional gender roles and a paternalistic family system, arguing that allowing the dual-surname option would destroy family unity.

In 2015 and 2021, the Supreme Court found said the one-surname-only policy wasn't unconstitutional but urged parliament to discuss the issue. But deliberations have stalled due to opposition by the governing party conservatives.

Akari Takahashi, a 22-year-old wedding planner, said she never questioned adopting her father's surname until she traveled to Australia and her host mother expressed discontent with the idea of a unified family name.

"That's when I realized something was wrong with it," Takahashi said, adding she couldn't imagine having to make such a choice.

The rights gap between men and women in Japan is among the world's largest with Japan ranking 125th in a 146-nation survey by the World Economic Forum for 2023. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Lebanon Amid rising anti-refugee sentiment in Lebanon, hundreds of Syrian refugees are returning to opposition-held areas in Syria via smugglers. Lebanon hosts the highest per capita refugee population, straining resources and escalating tensions. Returning refugees face dangerous journeys and uncertain futures in war-torn Syria, often due to fear of forced deportation.

AP PHOTO



Cuba Russian warships have arrived in Cuban waters for planned military exercises in the Caribbean, amid growing tensions over Western support for Ukraine. The fleet includes a nuclear-powered submarine. The U.S. sees no direct threat but remains vigilant. The mission underscores Russia's strategic alliances with Cuba and Venezuela in the region.

AP PHOTO



France President Emmanuel Macron yesterday called for moderate politicians to unite against the far-right in upcoming legislative elections. This follows the National Rally party's success in the EU Parliament elections. Macron, addressing internal issues like immigration and crime, aims to consolidate a centrist bloc to counter the rising influence of extremist parties.

AP PHOTO



Kenya Respiratory diseases are rising in Kenya as more people use firewood for cooking to save money. This contributes to chronic respiratory issues, particularly in low-income areas. Despite cleaner cooking options, high costs remain a barrier. Health experts urge affordable solutions to reduce the health impacts of indoor air pollution from biomass burning.