



THE FIRST BATCH OF MAINLAND TRAVEL PERMITS FOR NON-CHINESE RESIDENTS OF MACAU AND HONG KONG HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY ISSUED

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HAMAS LEADER HANIYEH WAS ASSASSINATED IN TEHRAN, IRAN SAYS

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AP PHOTO



China's Purchasing Managers' Index yesterday indicated a continued contraction in the manufacturing sector, dropping slightly to 49.4 in July. This marks the third consecutive month of decline, reflecting persistent economic challenges. The government has pledged to implement measures to boost market confidence and stimulate economic growth.

AP PHOTO



India After torrential rains Tuesday, rescuers in Kerala are battling tough conditions to search for survivors of devastating landslides that have claimed at least 151 lives. The landslides swept through tea estates and villages, causing massive destruction and isolating affected areas. Emergency teams face blocked roads and unstable terrain in their rescue efforts.

AP PHOTO



Israel-Palestine A UN report released yesterday accuses Israel of torturing Palestinians detained since the October attacks, including practices such as waterboarding and electric shocks. Holding over 9,400 security detainees, the report highlights severe violations of international laws and calls for urgent international attention to these human rights abuses.

AP PHOTO



USA-Vietnam William Calley, the U.S. Army lieutenant notorious for leading the My Lai Massacre in Vietnam, passed away on April 28, his death reported on Monday. Calley's command resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Vietnamese civilians, marking a grim chapter in American military history. He lived quietly in Florida following his trial and partial pardon.

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STATEMENT

Liu Xianfa*



CHINA'S REFORM IN THE NEW ERA: OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WORLD

The 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) has just successfully concluded its third plenary session in Beijing. The Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization is the most important outcome of the Session, which is a new blueprint for China's reform and opening up, sending a strong message to the world on China's steadfast commitment to reform and opening up as well as creating more opportunities for the world in the new era.

Reform and opening up have been crucial to the cause of the Party and the people, enabling us to catch up with the times in great strides.

The Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee ten years ago was of epoch-making significance. It marked the start of a new journey of comprehensively deepening reform in the new era with systematic and holistic plans, thus paving the way for a brand new stage in China's reform and opening up endeavors. At that Session, the Central Committee set up the Commission on Comprehensively Deepening Reform, with General Secretary Xi Jinping taking the lead and chairing 72 meetings of the commission since then. Over 2,000 programs have been introduced to strengthen, broaden and deepen reform. Reform measures in various sectors have brought China's openness to a significantly higher level. From establishing 22 Pilot Free Trade Zones and the Hainan Free Trade Port, the signing and entry into force of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, to the building of a globally-oriented network of high-standard free trade areas, from repeatedly shortening the negative list for foreign investment to reducing market access restrictions in telecommunications, healthcare and other services sectors, from promoting high-quality Belt and Road cooperation to establishing international cooperation platforms for trade and economic exchanges, such as the China International Import Expo, China International Fair for Trade in Services, and the China International Consumer Products Expo, these important measures to expand high-quality opening up benefit the international community through China's development, and give the world reason for optimism about China's growth outlook. China has remained the world's largest trader in goods for seven years running, and the world's largest exporter and second-largest importer for 15 consecutive years. It has been among the world's top three sources of outbound investment for 11 years in a row. 155 countries and regions around the world are beneficiaries of the funding that China provides.

As Chinese modernization has been advanced continuously through reform and opening up, it will surely embrace broader horizons through further reform and opening up.

The present and the near future constitute a critical period for our endeavor to build a great country and move toward

national rejuvenation on all fronts through Chinese modernization. To deal with complex environments both at home and abroad, adapt to the new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation, and live up to the new expectations of our people, it is vital that we continue to advance reform. It was pointed out at the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee that the overall objectives of further deepening reform comprehensively are to continue improving and developing the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and modernize China's system and capacity for governance. By 2035, China will have finished building a high-standard socialist market economy in all respects, further improved the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, generally modernized our system and capacity for governance, and basically realized socialist modernization. All of this will lay a solid foundation for building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects by the middle of this century. To steadily advance reform, we will focus on building a high-standard socialist market economy, advancing whole-process people's democracy, developing a strong socialist culture in China, raising the people's quality of life, building a Beautiful China, advancing the Peaceful China Initiative to a higher level, and improving the Party's capacity for leadership and long-term governance. In order to realize these reform goals, the Resolution elaborates on reform plans in specific fields such as the economy, politics, culture, society, environmental conservation, national security, and national defense and the military, involving over 300 concrete measures. It has been made clear that the reform tasks laid out in the Resolution shall be completed by the time the People's Republic of China celebrates its 80th anniversary in 2029.

Chinese modernization is the modernization of peaceful development.

The Resolution solemnly states that China remains firm in pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace and is dedicated to promoting a human community with a shared future. We will stay committed to the common values of all humanity, pursue the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative, and call for an equal and orderly multipolar world and universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization. We will deepen institutional reforms related to the work of foreign affairs and get involved in leading the reform and development of global governance system. We will resolutely safeguard China's sovereignty, security, and development interests and foster a favorable external environment for further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization. In addition, more development opportunities will emerge because of China's reform and Chinese modernization. The important reform measures enshrined in the Resolution include steadily expanding institutional opening up, deepening the foreign trade structural reform, further reforming the management systems for inward and

outward investment, optimizing the layout for regional opening up, and improving the mechanisms for high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, among others. I believe that the implementation of these measures will enhance various institutions and mechanisms, remove obstacles, provide a steady source of dynamism for Chinese modernization, and create more opportunities for China and the rest of the world to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation and thrive and prosper together. The first half of 2024 has seen China's economy doing better in speed and quality, with GDP growing by 5% and investment in high-tech sectors rising by 10.6%. The International Monetary Fund has revised up its forecast for China's economic growth rate in 2024. The global business community has also expressed stronger optimism about China's economic prospects, with new foreign enterprises in China increasing by 14.2%. China welcomes all countries to actively integrate into the Chinese market and share China's development opportunities, so as to achieve common development and deliver benefits to all the people in the world.

Macao plays an integral part in China's further comprehensively deepening reform.

The Resolution underlines supporting Hong Kong and Macao in building themselves into international hubs for high-caliber talent, improving relevant mechanisms to see the two SARs playing a greater role in China's opening up to the outside world, and encouraging cooperation between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in the Greater Bay Area by promoting closer alignment of rules and mechanisms. The Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will fully support all sectors of the society in Macao in implementing the spirit of the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee by further leveraging Macao's unique advantages endowed by the "One Country, two Systems" and its role as a platform for international cooperation. We will also give a boost to Macao's efforts to develop new quality productive forces, promote appropriate economic diversification in compliance with its 1+4 plan through technological innovation and industrial upgrading, and develop the In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin and the Greater Bay Area. Since its return to the motherland 25 years ago, Macao has enjoyed the biggest constitutional advantage - "One country, two systems", abundant horizons for development, a highly internationalized business environment, the strong economic foundation, the advantage of multiculturalism, and a traditional passion of patriotism and loyalty. I believe that with these advantages and through embracing the new opportunities created by further deepening reform and opening up, Macao's golden business card as an international metropolis can and will be polished even brighter!

*Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Macau Special Administrative Region

LYNZY VALLES

THE Court of Final Appeal (TUI) has upheld an appeal by the Public Prosecutor's Office, leading to a retrial of ex-assistant prosecutor general Kong Chi. It remains unclear whether the retrial will cover all original charges or focus solely on the secret society offence, for which he was previously acquitted, as cited in a TDM report.

COURTS

Kong Chi to face retrial after appeal upheld

Kong Chi received a 17-year prison sentence for various offences including corruption, abuse of office, and unjustified enrichment. He was acquitted of the secret society charge due to insufficient evidence.

The Public Prosecutor's Office appealed in April,

citing significant errors in the court's case assessment. They argued for the conviction of all defendants on the secret society charge, as cited in the same report.

The retrial will also involve three other defendants, including lawyer Kuan Hoi Lon, who was previously

acquitted of all charges. The prosecution has requested a minimum 10-year sentence for Hoi Lon.

For the secret society offence, the prosecution seeks an additional 12-year sentence for Kong Chi and six-year sentences for each of the other three defendants.

RENATO MARQUES



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RENATO MARQUES



AL PLENARY

Lawmakers veto ride hailing debate

RENATO MARQUES

PRO-GOVERNMENT lawmakers have voted en bloc against two debate proposals submitted to the plenary of the Legislative Assembly (AL) by lawmaker Ron Lam.

Lam was seeking a debate session to discuss the need for ride-sharing platforms in Macau, offering visitors and locals alternative solutions to the current, buckling taxi system.

He also sought to debate the construction of the local crematorium.

Both proposals were voted down by all lawmakers except two directly elected "New Hope" lawmakers, José Pereira Coutinho and Che Sai Wang, and Lam himself.

Lam noted the inadequacies of the taxi system, which has been unable to meet demand from local and visiting customers over the years, and argued that commuters, based on current worldwide trends, favored ride-sharing platforms to traditional taxi services.

He did not convince any pro-government lawmakers, who immediately voted down the debate proposals, claiming they were "unnecessary" and "time-consuming."

Among the few lawmakers who intervened to substantially contribute to Lam's proposals

was Iau Teng Piu, a lawmaker appointed directly by the Chief Executive (CE).

He was against debate due to the government's promotion of public transport, especially Light Rapid Transit (LRT), as well as improvements to pedestrian infrastructure, stimulating increased foot traffic.

Iau said transforming every car into a potential taxi contradicts the government's policy of restricting the number of vehicles on the roads.

"The government is optimizing the taxi system, and in the future we will have some 2,000 new taxis available," he said.

Another lawmaker appointed by the CE, Chan Hou Seng, picked up where Iau ended, adding, "To produce laws to regulate the ride-sharing system would take too long."

Chan said modernizing and, therefore, improving the current system was a better and faster solution, "saving time and resources."

He said he favored including better technologies to aid the calling of taxis, as well as electronic payment methods, as opposed to simply opting for ride-sharing.

A third lawmaker from the list of those appointed by the CE, Kou Kam Fai, also addressed the plenary.

He also said it was best to "improve the current system

rather than create a whole new one." Indeed, a new system, he added, "has the potential to create even more problems, instead of solving the current ones."

Ma Io Fong, in his name and representing Wong Kit Cheng, repeated the same speech claiming there was no need to debate the topic because it was easier to improve the cur-

rent system.

Making a new system would take too long a time, he said.

Chui Sai Peng, Ip Sio Kai, and Wang Sai Man, all of whom are lawmakers elected by indirect suffrage, representing the business sector, also said the government was already addressing the problems surrounding the taxi system.

They said a unified platform to manage all taxis, allowing for the better management of existing resources, was in development, remarking, "Since the government is already doing the work then there is no need for debate."

Of those in favor of the debate, Pereira Coutinho said he would always support the discussion of matters that were considered of public importance, even in circumstances during which he already held strong opinions.

"A debate is always an opportunity to learn more on a particular topic and to share valuable ideas," he said.

He noted that, while the government is making a huge effort to bolster Macau's image among tourists from abroad, a necessity existed to analyze just how the city's reputation was suffering from the current incongruence between Macau and, for example, the neighboring regions of Hong Kong, with which the local government is cooperating to reach some visitor sources.

"It makes no sense that China has this [ride-sharing] and Hong Kong has this, but we cannot have it," he said.

CREMATORIUM NOT FEASIBLE

BUILDING a crematorium facility is not feasible, a large majority of AL plenary lawmakers decided, without debate.

Lawmaker Ron Lam's second debate proposal, which dealt with the construction of a crematorium, was voted down by all except, again, Lam, Pereira Coutinho, and Che.

The majority of the lawmakers claimed the crematorium was not a topic that deserved to be debated.

They argued the government had already conducted studies and presented proposals on the matter, and these had been rejected by the city's population.

Several lawmakers said the number of cremations from Macau performed in the neighboring regions like Hong Kong or the city of Zhuhai is too small to justify investment in a local facility, which would require a significantly large, unused land plot.

These opinions were shared by lawmakers including, among others, Ma Shi Seng, Cheung Kin Chung and Ip Sio Kai.

Dissenting lawmakers argued debate on the matter would be insensitive, owing to the cultural beliefs and habits of Macau's diverse people. Such a debate, lawmakers feared, might inspire social discord.

"We need to be very careful when talking about this. We should not propose a debate on this matter," lawmaker Ma said.

Also unanimous among the lawmakers that voted against the debate proposal was the belief that Lam's intentions to discuss the matter stemmed from the high prices of cremations in neighboring regions.

Ma and Ip said, "The government can try to negotiate with the neighboring authorities to lower costs. There is no need for a debate."

Ip added the government, settled in its decisions, would resort to "regional cooperation" to address pricing concerns.

Earlier, Lam noted that in 80% of recent deaths, residents had opted for cremation. In his opinion, Macau was mature enough to discuss the matter.

The lawmaker noted that, for Macau locals, cremation procedures in neighboring regions invoke many bureaucratic hurdles, and can cost 10-fold those paid normally by the residents of those places.

This situation is unfair for Macau residents, who should not have to shoulder such high expenses simply because Macau does not have a crematory.

In his presentation, Lam said that, considering his previous proposal about ride-sharing legalization, this was the 26th time a debate proposal had been brought to the plenary by the initiative of lawmakers only to be immediately voted down by other lawmakers that have formed a large, pro-government bloc. **RM**

SLAUGHTERHOUSE CONCESSION RENEWED

The concession agreement governing the operation of Macau Slaughter House Ltd. has been extended for an additional five years. As per a notification from the Financial Services Bureau, the concession awarded by the SAR to the slaughterhouse is currently in effect and will remain so until June 4, 2029. This renewal follows two years after the initial contract was signed, which has now undergone revisions. The company is required to pay a land rent of 411,750 patacas. Furthermore, the government has indicated it "will not authorize any loans" that the slaughterhouse may seek; however, it may provide subsidies "as financial assistance."

OVER 30 SPECIALIST DOCTORS FOR CHRONIC DISEASES

The Health Bureau currently employs 34 specialist physicians to address the main chronic diseases in the community, such as hypertension, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. This assurance was provided by Wong In, the director of the Praia do Manduco Health Centre, during the Ou Mun Tin Toi forum program. The program's focus yesterday was on the pilot project for managing chronic diseases in the community. The project, which has no specified start date yet, aims to enhance collaboration between the public and private sectors. It also aims to improve the family medicine system by establishing a team of specialist doctors in this field, along with general practitioners from health centers and community family doctors.

EXPORTS TO THE BELT AND ROAD COUNTRIES DOUBLE IN H1

External merchandise trade totaled MOP70.70 billion in the first half of 2024, down by 9% compared to the same period last year (MOP77.69 billion), according to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). The total value of merchandise exports grew by 4% year-on-year to MOP6.62 billion, of which value of re-exports (MOP5.89 billion) increased by 4.5%, while value of domestic exports (MOP728 million) decreased by 0.2%. Analyzed by destination, merchandise exports to the Belt and Road Countries (MOP469 million), mainland China (MOP407 million) and the EU (MOP116 million) expanded respectively by 101.8%, 2.7%, and 67.1% year-on-year in the first half of 2024.

3,000 HOTEL ROOMS UNDERWAY

The ongoing construction of five new hotels in Macau is expected to add nearly 3,000 hotel rooms to the region, according to data from the Land and Urban Construction Bureau. Additionally, seven other hotel projects are currently being planned, with a combined capacity of approximately 900 rooms. In addition to hotel projects, the bureau also provided information on residential developments, stating that two private residential projects with a total of 11 flats had received final approvals during the second quarter. Furthermore, there are 56 private housing projects in various stages of construction, which could potentially offer an additional 2,375 flats.

GAMING

MACAU TO CAPITALIZE ON THAILAND'S USD15B CASINO MARKET

LYNZY VALLES

MACAU is strategically positioning itself to capitalize on the potential opportunities arising from Thailand's likely entry into the lucrative casino market, which is estimated to reach a substantial value of USD15.1 billion (MOP121.55 billion) in the near future.

Thailand, as projected by brokerage CLSA, is expected to inaugurate its first entertainment complex by 2029, potentially introducing a 17% gaming tax on gross gaming revenue (GGR).

CLSA analysts Jeffrey Kiang, Naphat Chantaraserekul, and Leo Pan have underscored the distinct disparities in tourism dynamics between Macau and Thailand, emphasizing the diverse visitor profiles, the varying lengths of stay, and tourists' nationalities in each region.

These variations highlight the unique strengths and potential growth opportunities each destination offers within the broader context of the gaming and hospitality sectors.

"Even though mainland tourists are likely to be a major source of Thailand's post-COVID tourism rebound, we see sharp differences between Macau and Thailand tourism, with these ensuring Macanese gaming resilience," said the analysts.



The analysts also drew attention to the contrasting profiles of visitors to Macau and Thailand, with Macau predominantly attracting visitors from Hong Kong and the mainland, while Thailand remains an untapped market for those from the mainland and India.

According to CSLA, the low travel penetration rates in Thailand present a significant growth potential, especially if the rates increase to levels comparable to those observed in Macau. This could result in a substantial surge in annual visits from the mainland and India.

In terms of market considerations, visitors to Thailand and Macau stay for different amounts of time and are of

varying demographics.

While both destinations welcomed around 40 million visitors in 2019, Thailand's visitor base is more international, with a significant proportion arriving from countries beyond China and Hong Kong.

Moreover, tourists tend to stay longer in Thailand, averaging over a week, in contrast to the shorter stays observed in Macau.

"Visitors also stay in Thailand for over a week on average, compared with less than two nights in Macau," the analysts wrote. From 2005 to 2019, the average length of stay in Thailand was 9.3 days, with Asian visitors staying between 5.5 and 9.9 days.

Recently, the brokerage reported that four of Macau's six gaming operators are interested in investing in Thailand

The report suggested the annual gross gaming revenue (GGR) value of the Thai casino industry could be as high as USD30.8 billion, with a base projection of USD15.1 billion.

Among the Macau gaming concessionaires, Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd, Las Vegas Sands Corp, MGM Resorts International, and Wynn Resorts Ltd are believed to be considering investments in the country.

The proposed gaming licenses would be valid for 20 years, with a 17% tax rate, targeting foreign visitors as the primary clientele.

FINANCE

Guangdong to issue RMB2.5b in offshore bonds in Macau

IN a move to further integrate the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area, Guangdong's Department of Finance plans to issue offshore yuan-denominated bonds worth up to 2.5 billion yuan in Macau and an additional 5 billion yuan in Hong Kong, according to a report by the South China Morning Post.

This will be Guangdong's fourth issuance of so-called "dim sum" bonds in Macau, but



the first time the provincial government has issued them in

Hong Kong.

The upcoming five-year bonds are aimed

at "further promoting the integrated development of the Greater

Bay Area," the authority said in a notice released earlier this week.

Guangdong is not the only Chinese region tapping the offshore yuan bond market.

Both the Shenzhen municipal government and the Hainan provincial government have also recently issued dim sum bonds in Hong Kong, while the central government issued five-billion-yuan worth of sovereign bonds in Macau last September.

The move to issue more offshore yuan bonds in Macau and Hong Kong is part of China's broader efforts to develop the Greater Bay Area. LV

EVENTS

36th Int'l Music Festival set to dazzle audiences with a lineup of 12 programs

NADIA SHAW

THE Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) yesterday announced the program for the 36th Macao International Music Festival (MIMF), a hallmark event in the city's cultural calendar.

Scheduled to run for one month, from Oct. 4 to Nov. 4, this year's festival promises a celebration of music under the theme "And the Stars Shine," featuring a lineup of world-renowned artists and diverse performances.

Deland Leong, director of the Cultural Affairs Bureau, unveiled the festival's details during a media conference held at The Londoner Macao yesterday.

"This year's festival continues our commitment to inviting exceptional musicians from around the globe, many of whom are making their debut in Macau or are at pivotal moments in their careers," Leong said.

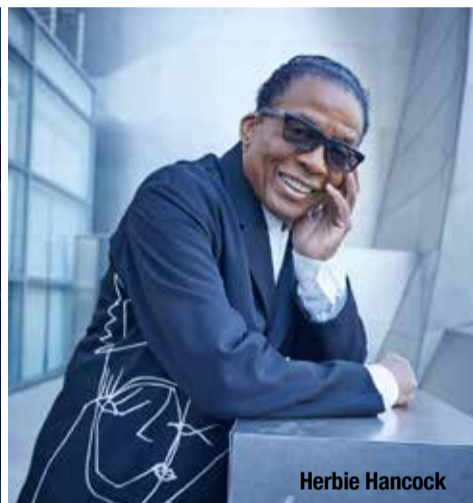
Notable performers include jazz legend Herbie Hancock, who has received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, and the esteemed Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra from St Petersburg, Russia.

The festival will begin with a grand performance of Puccini's opera "Tosca," presented by the Mariinsky Theatre and the Macao Orchestra.

This timeless masterpiece



The Nutcracker and I



Herbie Hancock

will be showcased over three consecutive nights, highlighting its enduring appeal and emotional depth. "Tosca" is celebrated for its powerful arias, including the famous "E lucevan le stelle," which resonates with audiences worldwide.

In addition to the opening opera, the festival will feature a closing performance by acclaimed Portuguese Fado singer Marisa, accompanied by the Macao Chinese Orchestra, held at The Londoner Theater.

This collaboration exemplifies Macau's unique position as a cultural bridge between East and West, blending traditional Chinese music with Western influences.

The festival will present 12 distinct programs, including 16 community outreach activities designed to engage both locals

and tourists.

These activities will encompass workshops, lectures and backstage explorations, allowing participants to gain deeper insights into the world of music.

The outreach initiative underscores the festival's commitment to fostering a vibrant musical community, with a "budget of MOP33 million, consistent with last year's funding."

Among the highlights of this year's festival are performances by renowned artists, such as Ivo Pogorelich, a pianist known for his innovative interpretations of Romantic music, and conductor Valery Gergiev, who will lead the Mariinsky Orchestra in two concerts featuring Russian symphonic works.

"These performances are not to be missed," Leong said, noting the rarity of such talents

gracing Macau's stages.

The festival also aims to celebrate cultural diversity through unique collaborations.

Performances like DoosTrio will showcase the rich musical heritage of ancient Persia, China and India, while multimedia ballet "The Nutcracker and I" promises to enchant audiences of all ages.

The annual concert "Bravo Macao!" will provide a platform for emerging local artists, spotlighting the next generation of musical talent.

Leong expressed gratitude to the festival's partners and the media for their ongoing support.

"The success of the Macao International Music Festival is a collective effort, and we invite everyone to immerse themselves in this celebration of music under the stars," he said.

MPU WINS INNOVATION COMPETITION

Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) won first place in the finals of the 19th Cross-Strait, Hong Kong and Macau College Student Computer Innovation Competition held from July 24 to 25. The event showcased the technological prowess of students from 16 institutions, including Guangdong University of Technology and Hong Kong Baptist University. Nearly 10,000 students participated, submitting 1,679 entries across various fields, such as artificial intelligence and cloud computing. The competition awarded 16 first prizes and recognized outstanding innovation and practical applications.

CULTURAL HERITAGE SUMMER CLASS FOSTERS UNITY AMONG YOUTH

A week-long cultural heritage summer class for middle school students from the mainland, Hong Kong, and Macau concluded successfully in Anhui Province recently. Sponsored by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, as well as local governments, the program aimed to deepen students' understanding of Chinese history and culture. During the event, 39 students explored Anhui's rich heritage, visiting sites like the Anhui Museum and Huizhou's ancient city. This initiative, now in its sixth year, promotes cultural awareness and unity among youth from the three regions.

OPERATION THUNDER CRACKDOWN CONTINUES

The Public Security Police Force (PSP) is continuing its "Thunder 2024" anti-crime patrol operation, which seeks to improve the public security environment and prevent illegal activities throughout the city. Earlier this week, PSP dispatched 25 criminal investigators to inspect hotels in the Central District. They intercepted and investigated 119 people (78 men and 41 women) but no suspicious persons were brought in for further questioning. PSP affirmed that it would adjust its strategies to suit the present security situation, increasing patrols in key areas at relevant times.

PJ BOOST CRIME PREVENTION EFFORTS

According to a press release published by the Judiciary Police (PJ), crime prevention initiatives are being carried out across the city, focusing on local businesses. In July, officers visited over 60 restaurants and shops, including those on San Ma Lou and Avenida de Horta e Costa, to educate owners on preventing telecommunication fraud and theft. The outreach included distributing anti-deception leaflets, as well as advising merchants to exercise vigilance, especially if they receive large orders from unfamiliar suppliers.

Health Bureau records 22 suicide deaths in Q2

LYNZY VALLES

THE Health Bureau (SSM) has reported 22 suicide deaths during the second quarter of this year.

The deceased comprised nine males and 13 females, aged between 12 and 76.

Among them, 19 were Macau residents, accounting for 86% of the cases, while three were non-residents. The number of cases remains unchanged from the previous quarter and is two persons lower than the

same period in 2023.

An analysis of the data has revealed the primary causes of these suicide deaths were mental illness, gambling issues and financial problems.

SSM said the causes of suicide are multifaceted, often involving a combination of mental illness, psychological factors, socio-economic pressures, family dynamics, interpersonal relationships, and biogenetic factors.

The bureau has advised residents to maintain close contact with friends and family who

can offer care and a listening ear.

To reduce the incidence of suicide, the SSM has encouraged individuals who are emotionally distressed to seek professional help.

The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) encourages residents to remain conscious of their psychological and emotional well-being, as well as the health of relatives and friends. If in need, residents can call Caritas' Life Hope hotline (28525222) or IAS' counseling hotline (28261126).



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

FIRST MAINLAND TRAVEL PERMITS ISSUED TO FOREIGN RESIDENTS

NADIA SHAW

The first batch of mainland travel permits for non-Chinese permanent residents of Macau and Hong Kong has been officially issued.

This marks a significant step towards enhancing cross-border mobility.

The newly-introduced permits allow holders to travel to and from the mainland multiple times within a five-year validity period, with each stay capped at 90 days, according to the report from CCTV News.

Since July 10, eligible residents have been applying for these permits, which promote greater exchanges in business, tourism, education and cultural activities between the



mainland and the two Special Administrative Regions.

The permits, designed as electronic card-type travel documents, eliminate the need for a visa for short-term visits.

China Travel Service (CTS) has announced the agency is prepared to manage around 30 applications daily, accommodating

both online and walk-in applicants.

The application process is streamlined, allowing for completion in as little as 10 to 20 minutes – so long as all required documents are correctly provided.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old and possess a valid Macau or Hong Kong permanent identity card, a pass-

port with at least six months of validity, and a recent photo.

In some instances, a photo can be taken at the travel service center.

The application fee is HKD260 for Macau and Hong Kong residents, while those from the mainland seeking to renew or replace permits will pay RMB230.

CRIME

Elderly woman loses HKD1.42 million in fraud

An elderly woman is suspected of having fallen victim to a fraud scheme orchestrated by someone posing as a police officer.

She lost contact with her relatives and friends for about 20 days, during which time she stayed in a hotel as instructed by the fraudster.

Additionally, she paid "bail money," resulting in a loss of HKD1.42 million.

According to police report yesterday, the woman received a call on June 18 from a person claiming to be a mainland bank employee. The caller alleged her identity had been used to defraud others of HKD5 million and requested her assistance in an investigation on the mainland.

When the woman explained she could not stay in the mainland, the call

was transferred to someone claiming to be a mainland law enforcement officer.

This individual knew her name, Home Visit Permit number and telephone number, which convinced her of his legitimacy.

Following his instructions, she refrained from contacting anyone and rented a guesthouse in the Taipa District.

On July 9, the supposed officer told her she needed to transfer all the money from her Macau account to a designated Hong Kong account to be released on bail, pending trial. She complied with this instruction.

It was not until July 30 that the woman received a call from her Hong Kong bank inquiring about the reason and source of the large fund transfer. LV



CRIME

MAN THREATENS COFFEE SHOP OWNER WITH KNIFE AFTER DISSATISFACTION WITH SERVICE

A local man in his 30s has allegedly slapped a coffee shop owner and threatened him with a knife after expressing dissatisfaction with the shop's

service. In a report by the Public Security Police and according to the shop owner, the confrontation began around 4:30 p.m. two days prior, when the

suspect exhibited sudden emotional distress.

During the altercation, the shop owner was struck in the face. Approximately five minutes after

leaving the establishment, the suspect returned, placed an 11-centimeter fruit knife on the counter, and issued a threat, stating, "I will get a gun next time,"

before departing.

The police apprehended the suspect on a nearby street roughly 10 minutes after the report was made.

Witnesses indicated that the dispute arose over the service attitude of the shop owner while purchasing coffee, after which the suspect allege-

dly retrieved a fruit knife from his residence with the intent to intimidate the owner. The suspect has denied any physical attack.

However, police confirmed through surveillance footage that the suspect had indeed inflicted harm by slapping the shop owner in the face. LV

CORPORATE BITS

Studio City's WAVEFest to bring 2NE1's Sandara Park



Studio City has announced an additional performance of WAVEFest on Aug. 17: WAVEFest Beats.

As Macau's first-ever wa-

ter music festival, the event will return this August with WAVEFest Beats on Aug. 17 and WAVEFest Epic on Aug. 18.

"The WAVEFest offers a special multi-faceted open stage, putting audiences up close with performers," the gaming operator said in a statement.

WAVEFest Beats will bring in Sandara Park from K-pop girl group 2NE1, K-pop idol Infinite member Lee Seong Jong and rapper and dancer Kino, along with a mega lineup of DJs, including DJ Sura, one of the top 100 female DJs in the world; and DJ Raiden, who has performed at the world-renowned Ultra Music Festival.

Nightclub sensation DJ Glory will get audiences pumped with their powerful EDM drops.

MGM celebrates new batch of graduates



MGM has partnered with various educational organizations in Macau to establish a platform promoting its team members' diversity. Since 2016, the Company launched the "MGM High School Diploma Program", which has attracted more than 300 team members at various

stages of their studies, with a total of 133 high school diplomas awarded to date. Recently, the "Celebration of MGM Continuing Education Journey" commends the achievements of a new batch of graduates, and celebrates the Escola Seong Fan da

Associação Comercial de Macau for contributing tailor-made courses to the program. In addition, MGM signed a memorandum of understanding – "Diversified Development Program of Talent Management and Cultivation" – with the Macau Institute of Management, unveiling an in-house, four-year bachelor's degree program.

This partnership encourages MGM team members to continue on to university study following the completion of MGM's high school program, and makes MGM the first integrated resort operator to run an in-house bachelor's degree program with local educational institutions, the gaming operator said in a statement.

AP PHOTO



Palestinian Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh (center) flashes a victory sign as he is surrounded by a group of Iranian lawmakers in Tehran, Tuesday

MIDDLE EAST

Hamas leader Haniyeh killed in Iran by an alleged Israeli strike

ABBY SEWELL, BEIRUT

HAMAS leader Ismail Haniyeh was killed by a predawn airstrike in the Iranian capital yesterday, Iran and the militant group said, blaming Israel for a shock assassination that risks escalating the conflict even as the U.S. and other nations were scrambling to prevent an all-out regional war. Iran's supreme leader vowed revenge against Israel.

There was no immediate comment from Israel, which has pledged to kill Haniyeh and other Hamas leaders over the group's Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel in which the Palestinian militant group killed 1,200 people and took some 250 others hostage. The strike came just after Haniyeh had attended the inauguration of Iran's new president in Tehran — and only hours after Israel targeted a top commander in Iran's ally Hezbollah in the Lebanese capital Beirut.

The dramatic assassination of Hamas's top political leader threatened to reverberate throughout the region's intertwined conflicts. Most explosively, the strike in Tehran could push Iran and Israel into direct conflict if Iran retaliates.

"We consider his revenge as our duty," Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a statement on his official website. He said Israel had "prepared a harsh punishment

for itself" by killing "a dear guest in our home."

Bitter regional rivals, Israel and Iran risked plunging into war earlier this year when Israel hit Iran's embassy in Damascus in April. Iran retaliated and Israel countered in an unprecedented exchange of strikes on each other's soil, but international efforts succeeded in containing that cycle before it spun out of control.

Haniyeh's killing could also prompt Hamas to pull out of negotiations for a cease-fire and hostage release deal in the 10-month-old war in Gaza, which U.S. mediators had said were making progress.

And it could enflame already heightening tensions between Israel and Hezbollah — which international diplomats were trying to contain after a weekend rocket attack that killed 12 young people in the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights.

Tuesday evening, Israel carried out a rare strike in the Lebanese capital that it said killed a top Hezbollah commander allegedly behind the rocket strike. Hezbollah, which denied any role in the Golan strike, said yesterday that it was still searching for the body of Fouad Shukur in the rubble of the building that was hit in a Beirut suburb, killing two women and two children, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry.

There was no immediate reaction from the White House to the killing of Haniyeh.

Asked by reporters in Manila about the Tehran strike, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said he had no "additional information to provide." But he expressed hope for a diplomatic solution on the Israeli-Lebanon border.

"I don't think that war is inevitable," he said. "I maintain that. I think there's always room and opportunity for diplomacy, and I'd like to see parties pursue those opportunities."

But international diplomats trying to defuse tensions were alarmed. One Western diplomat, whose country has worked to prevent an Israeli-Hezbollah escalation, said the double strikes in Beirut and Tehran have "almost killed" hopes for a Gaza cease-fire and could push the Middle East into a "devastating regional war." The diplomat spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive situation.

An Israeli military spokesman declined to comment. Israel often doesn't comment on assassinations carried out by its Mossad intelligence agency or strikes on other countries.

Iranian media showed videos of Haniyeh and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian hugging after Pezeshkian's inauguration ceremony Tuesday. Hours later, the strike hit a residence Haniyeh uses in Tehran, killing him, Hamas said in a statement.

It also quoted a past speech by Haniyeh in which he said

the Palestinian cause has "costs" and "we are ready for these costs: martyrdom for the sake of Palestine, and for the sake of God Almighty, and for the sake of the dignity of this nation."

Pezeshkian vowed his country would "defend its territory" and make the attackers "regret their cowardly action." An influential Iranian parliamentary committee on national security and foreign policy was to hold an emergency meeting on the strike later yesterday.

Hamas' military wing said in a statement that Haniyeh's assassination "takes the battle to new dimensions and will have major repercussions on the entire region." It said Israel "made a miscalculation by expanding the circle of aggression."

Speaking to the AP, a Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said the loss of Haniyeh won't impact the group, saying it had emerged stronger after past crises and assassinations of its leaders.

Haniyeh left the Gaza Strip in 2019 and had lived in exile in Qatar. The top Hamas leader in Gaza is Yehya Sinwar, who masterminded the Oct. 7 attack.

In the West Bank, the internationally backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas condemned Haniyeh's killing, calling it a "cowardly act and dangerous development." Political factions in the occupied territory called for strikes in protest at the killing.

In April, an Israeli airstrike in Gaza killed three of Haniyeh's sons and four of his grandchildren.

Meanwhile, Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces, a coalition of Iranian-backed militias, said that a strike Tuesday night on a base southwest of Baghdad killed four members of the Kataib Hezbollah militia.

The group accused the United States of being behind the strike. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1976 LAUDA FIGHTS FOR LIFE AFTER GRAND PRIX CRASH



Formula One racing driver Niki Lauda is in a critical condition in hospital after an horrific accident at the Nurburgring Grand Prix in Germany.

The Austrian-born driver became trapped inside his Ferrari after it swerved off the track before bouncing back into the path of the oncoming cars and catching fire.

Fellow driver Guy Edwards managed to avoid the blazing wreckage but Harald Ertl and Brett Lunger both hit it.

All three drivers raced to the burning Ferrari and, with the help of the Italian driver Arturo Merzario, who also stopped, eventually managed to pull 27-year-old Lauda from his vehicle.

Lauda, who has led this drivers' championship since the beginning of the season, began the race second on the grid behind James Hunt in pole position.

Guy Edwards said they had had problems getting the trapped driver out.

"Lauda was basically sitting in the middle of a fire and I would guess it would be about a minute before we managed to get the belts undone.

"In the meantime Ertl had got a fire extinguisher from somewhere and was aiming it towards the central cockpit area so he was able to keep the fire under some sort of control."

"Lauda was conscious most of the time and was saying 'get me out.'"

Mr Lauda was taken to nearby Adenau hospital with serious burns. From there he was flown to the University Hospital in Mannheim where his condition is described as critical.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Within six weeks of the Nurburgring accident Niki Lauda was back behind the wheel.

He fought for his life for several days following the accident and suffered horrendous burns to his head and face.

Part of one of his ears was burnt off and his tear duct mechanism was severely damaged which affected his vision in subsequent races.

Lauda won the World Championship a total of three times - in 1975, 1977 and 1984. He retired from F1 in 1985.

Before the 1976 accident he had been well on course to win it again - but eventually lost by just one point to James Hunt.

At the end of the 1970s he launched his own airline Lauda Air, which was later sold to Austrian Airlines.

He managed the Jaguar F1 racing team from 2001-2. In late 2003 he launched another airline, Niki.

Guy Edwards was awarded a Queen's Gallantry Medal for his bravery.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Focus on income generation to maintain positive cash flow. Adjust spending. Not everything goes as planned. Keep expectations realistic and scheduling flexible. Delegate when possible.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
You're generating buzz. Enjoy a self-confident phase. Take action for what you want. Fortune favors personal initiative. Use your power responsibly. Lead with heart.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Organize and prepare now for increased productivity later. Listen more than speaking. Sort, file and discover buried treasure. Make repairs and handle messes.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Confer with allies and listen with intent. Find common ground on tough issues. Cultivate leadership. Put in a good word for someone else.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Consider professional priorities. Take advantage of a lucky break to advance. Spontaneous opportunities can have lasting benefits. Keep an open mind. Review options and choose.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Get into an adventurous phase. Explore near or far. Study and investigate. Costs can vary widely. Don't waste funding on something you don't need.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Collaborate to reap opportunities you didn't see before. Seek and discover lucrative possibilities. Completion leads to profits. Beat a deadline and win a prize.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Collaborate with your partner. Stick to familiar routines. Listen to loved ones and especially children. Enjoy simple pleasures together. Listening nets more than speaking.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Practice your moves before a performance. The possibility of mechanical or technical error is high. Keep things simple and elegant. Slow and rest after.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Spread seeds of generosity. Love blossoms when least expected. Entertaining distractions abound; take care of business first. Express your artistry and creative ideas.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Discuss home renovations or changes with your family. Pay attention to everyone's needs. Go over options. Don't touch savings. Work up a practical budget.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
A creative undercurrent flows through your work. Present your argument tactfully. Think diplomatically, and choose words carefully. Anticipate resistance. Practice your persuasive arts.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

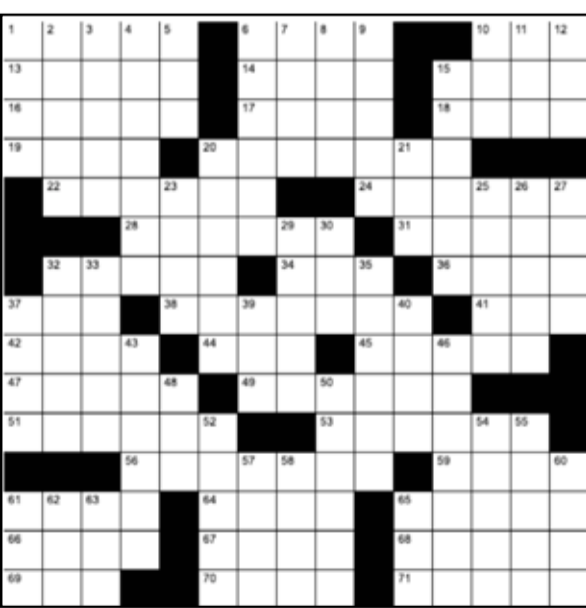
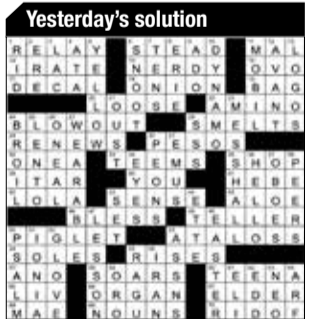
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	24	32	rain
Changchun	22	27	rain
Chengdu	23	33	fine
Chongqing	26	36	fine
Fuzhou	28	37	fine
Guangzhou	26	33	thunderstorms
Guiyang	20	25	showers
Haikou	26	34	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	30	39	fine
Harbin	21	30	thunderstorms
Hefei	27	34	rain
Nanjing	29	36	cloudy
Shanghai	29	39	cloudy
Taipei	26	31	fine
Wuhan	28	33	showers
Hong Kong	28	31	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	14	20	cloudy
Frankfurt	18	27	thunderstorms
Paris	19	31	cloudy
London	17	28	cloudy
New York	25	33	sunny

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Stub; 6- Actor Rob; 10- ___ Beta Kappa; 13- Ignited again; 14- Screws up; 15- Gator's kin; 16- State Farm rival; 17- Burrows and Vigoda; 18- Actor Auberginois; 19- Confident; 20- Catch; 22- Father or mother; 24- Pines for; 28- Thespian; 31- Eye sores; 32- Indian metropolis; 34- Magician's prop; 36- Genesis setting; 37- Upper limb; 38- Describing the path of a satellite; 41- Ames and Asner; 42- ___ Raton; 44- Long time; 45- Laughs loudly; 47- Consecrate; 49- Flowing gently; 51- Syrian city; 53- Out there; 56- Cold weather head protector; 59- Fragrant neckwear; 61- Bard's river; 64- Young cow; 65- Rips; 66- Pen points; 67- Nautical direction; 68- Donkeys; 69- Mai ___ (drink); 70- Prophet; 71- Consumers;

DOWN 1- Ladies of Sp.; 2- Get ready to drive; 3- Extreme; 4- Ore; 5- Sch. group; 6- Simple shed; 7- Spheres; 8- Small songbird; 9- Short literary composition; 10- Start to fix?; 11- Darlin'; 12- Chiller; 15- Bring into being; 20- Whole; 21- Hi-___ monitor; 23- Reverberate; 25- U-Haul competitor; 26- Food and water; 27- IRS IDs; 29- Thick-skinned charger; 30- Was in session; 32- Whimsically funny; 33- Toastmaster; 35- Import or export duty; 37- Swedish pop band whose hits include "Waterloo"; 39- Halloween greeting; 40- Burt's ex; 43- Quaking trees; 46- Eternal; 48- Pampering place; 50- Blue pigment; 52- Killer whales; 54- Buy alternative; 55- More urgent; 57- Boy or man; 58- Peter Fonda role; 60- Flat sound; 61- Aardvark's snack; 62- By means of; 63- ___-Wan Kenobi was a character in "Star Wars"; 65- Kind of cross;



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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AD



Xu Yan, an author of a textbook on nüshu, shows a book of nüshu calligraphy to the visiting university students at her studio in Beijing

CALLIGRAPHY

A CENTURIES-OLD SECRET SCRIPT CALLED NÜSHU IS EMPOWERING YOUNG CHINESE WOMEN

HUIZHONG WU, BEIJING

CHEN Yulu never thought her home province of Hunan had any culture that she would be proud of, much less become an ambassador of.

But these days, the 23-year-old is a self-proclaimed ambassador of nüshu, a script once known only to a small number of women in the south China.

It started as a writing practiced in secrecy by women who were barred from formal education in Chinese. Now, young people like Chen are spreading nüshu beyond the women's quarters of houses in Hunan's rural Jiangyong, the county whose distinct dialect serves as the script's verbal component.

Today, nüshu can be found in independent bookstores across the country, subway ads, craft fair booths, tattoos, art and even everyday items like hair clips.

Nüshu was created by women from a small village in Jiangyong, in the southern province where Mao Zedong was born, but there's little consensus on when it originated. Scholars estimate the script is at least several centuries old, from when reading and writing were deemed male-only activities. So the women developed their own script to communicate with



Lu Sirui, a 24-year-old working as a marketer, talks about nüshu, a centuries-old secret script, that she has learned from online feminist groups, in Beijing

each other.

The script is slight with gently curving characters, written with a diagonal slant that takes up much less space than boxy modern Chinese with its harsh angles.

"You won't allow me to go to school. Okay, I get it. So what's my way out? I'll find ways to educate myself," said Xu Yan, 55, the author of a textbook on nüshu.

Women lived under the control of either their parents or their husband, using nüshu, sometimes called "script of tears," in secret to record their sorrows: unhappy marriages, family conflicts, and longing for sisters and daughters who married and could not return in the restricti-

ve society.

Xu is also the founder of Third Day Letter, a nüshu studio in Beijing named after a centuries-old practice by the script's practitioners. The third-day letter is a hand-sewn book presented in farewell to a woman in Jiangyong on the third day after her marriage, when she's allowed to visit the childhood home she left.

The script became a unique vehicle for composing stories about women's lives, typically in the form of seven-character line poems that are sung. A secret world sprung from the script that gave Jiangyong women a voice through which they found friends and solace.

That secret world still resona-

tes today as a source of strength for young women dissatisfied with patriarchal constraints.

Chen, who studied photography at an art school in Shanghai, said her male professors often doubted that she could keep up with the male photographers because of her slight physique. That attitude, she said, is "in every aspect of life, there's nowhere it doesn't touch."

She was frustrated but didn't see much room to push back — until she learned about nüshu.

"I felt that I had received a very strong power, and I think a lot of women need this power," she said.

Chen wanted to make a documentary about feminism and came across nüshu in her online search. When she realized the script originated from Jiangyong, just a few hours from her hometown, she immediately knew that she had found her graduation project's topic.

The more she learned about this script, the more she learned about its duality: that it was as much a painful thing as it was a source of strength.

In her documentary, she follows He Yanxin, a formally designated inheritor for nüshu who is now in her 80s. She asks Chen, "Do you think nüshu has any use?" Chen says yes. In res-

ponse, He says, "Nüshu is useless."

He comes from Jiangyong and says she was forced to marry a man she didn't want to be with, who physically abused her and tore up photos from nüshu meetups and workshops she attended. She did not feel that the script had made her life materially better, according to Chen's first-person account, published on social media.

Yet, He is the one who urged her to learn the script.

Formal inheritors of the script have to be from Jiangyong, Chen said, and have to master the nüshu, but there was nothing stopping her from sharing her love of the script with others.

Beginning in 2022, Chen began spreading the practice. She started an online nüshu group, taught writing workshops and set up nüshu art exhibitions in cities across China. Most participants at her writing workshops are women, she said, and some people even bring their mothers. Chen also runs a social media account to promote nüshu and its culture beyond Hunan.

Lu Sirui, a 24-year-old working as a marketer, learned about nüshu from online feminist groups and joined Chen's nüshu-focused WeChat group.

"At first I just knew that it was a women's inheritance, belonged only among women," Lu said. "Then, as I got to know it better, I realized that it was a kind of resistance to traditional patriarchal power."

For Lu, nüshu means "a very powerful rebellion" and a bond of sisterhood. She said it was important for women to stick together.

Lu once encountered a rental agent in Beijing who, drunk in the middle of the night, knocked on her door and tried to enter her home. Lu said that she picked up a stick at the doorway and ran out to confront him. Afterwards, she confided in a small feminist community online, where she received comfort and advice on how to handle the situation. She says communities like that have supported her in the face of gender-based violence, inequality and mother-daughter relationship problems, among other challenges.

Seeing nüshu as another representation of sisterhood, Lu bought a textbook and practices the script in her spare time. Even though she is not a formal nüshu ambassador, she began hosting nüshu workshops at bookstores and bars in Beijing. When organizing these events, Lu discovered that very few people had heard of nüshu, but the feedback was always positive.

"It's a manifestation of female strength that transcends time and space," Lu said. **MDT/AP**

OLYMPICS 2024

Italy wins gold in women's team epee fencing to disappoint a passionate French crowd again

JAMES ELLINGWORTH, PARIS

THE fans at fencing are among the loudest and most passionate at the Paris Olympics, especially when France is challenging for a gold medal. They usually leave disappointed.

Italy overcame a passionate "Marseillaise"-singing crowd at the Grand Palais to hand France its fourth fencing silver medal of the Games in the women's team epee yesterday [Macau time].

Alberta Santuccio got the winning touch for Italy in overtime against France's Auriane Mallo-Breton to complete a hard-fought 30-29 win for gold. It was the second time that Mallo-Breton lost a Paris Olympic final by a single point after a 13-12 loss to Hong Kong's Vivian Kong Man Wai in the indi-



Italy's Alberta Santuccio (second right) celebrates with her teammates Rossella Fiamingo, Giulia Rizzi and Mara Navarria after winning the women's team Epee final match against France

vidual epee Saturday.

French fencers are 0-3 in finals against non-French opponents at the 2024 Olympics,

with those losses coming in epee events. The host nation's only gold came when Manon Apithy-Brunet beat her

teammate Sara Balzer in the women's saber final on Monday. "If you look at the (epee) finals, of course we seem to be

losing, but we're in the finals all the same," Mallo-Breton said through an interpreter. "I think that in the teams, there are possibilities to go and get some wonderful medals, and we hope that the other (French) teams will be able to go and do that, so we're going to be supporting them."

Team fencing involves squad members fencing one-on-one in a rotating sequence that means everyone gets to face each opponent once. Despite the overtime loss, Mallo-Breton was still France's standout in the final with a combined record of 14-10 against all opponents.

Italy has one gold, one silver and one bronze medal so far in fencing. Five more team events remain.

Polish fencer Aleksandra Jarecka was shaking on the floor with emotion after winning her team bronze. Jarecka tied the score with less than three seconds to go and then won the tiebreaker point for a 32-31 overtime win against China.

Just before that was an unexpected twist when an apparent glitch with the scoring system seemed to give Poland an extra point in the last minute, only to take it away. It prompted the referee to study video of recent points in a bid to clear up exactly what the state of play was for the final seconds. **MDT/AP**

AD



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OPINION

Multipolar World

Jorge Costa Oliveira



USA, CHINA, DECOUPLING, AND THE 'LITTLE GUY'

As the years go by, we realize that decoupling does not (and will not) occur in all areas simultaneously; it tends to occur in a fragmented and sector-specific manner. It began with the tariff war initiated by the USA in 2018. It progressed to restrictions in access to high technology, in capital flows, and also in critical metals.

However, China's rise is inevitable. Even with the current adjustment difficulties (particularly in the real estate sector), the Chinese economy is growing at 5% per year. Its industrial capacity has been diminished with the relocation of numerous companies abroad (due to rising domestic costs and as a preventive reaction to the approaching demographic winter), but it remains formidable, with an export sector that has become the locomotive of Chinese development. Despite the progressive interference of the CCP in the private business sector (80% of the total), companies continue to be competitive and innovative, within a regulatory framework that mixes a still quite liberal capitalism with submission to public policies defined by the State-Party. Nonetheless, from the record creation of intellectual property rights to the production of relevant capital goods (cars, airplanes, advanced industrial equipment), including the production of military equipment, China has never been stronger.

On the other hand, Chinese influence on a global scale continues to increase, especially in developing countries. And foreign trade between the USA and China keeps growing, despite repeated political acts by American authorities aiming to implement decoupling. Furthermore, on a global scale, world flows of goods and capital have stabilized since the global financial crisis, confirming that globalization and multilateralism have created enormous interdependence between the economies of the main blocs.

But what would be the economic effects of a significant decoupling between the USA and China? The IMF has already warned of the dangers of wealth destruction that such a move would generate, estimating that enormous restrictions on international trade could reduce about 7% of global GDP in the long term, a loss equivalent to \$7.4 trillion. And who will suffer the most if a significant decoupling occurs?

The IMF predicts that developing economies will be the most affected if Washington and Beijing cut economic ties. Not all (some are even benefiting from the effects of decoupling), but the majority of developing countries – the most fragile component of the international economic system – are destined to be the proverbial little guy who gets hurt when the big guys fight.

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

ABOUT 8 IN 10 DEMOCRATS ARE SATISFIED WITH HARRIS IN STARK POST BIDEN SHIFT: AP-NORC POLL

THE BUZZ

Vice President Kamala Harris appears to have energized Democrats in the early days of her candidacy, with the surge in warm feelings extending across multiple groups, including some key Democratic constituencies that had been especially tepid about President Joe Biden, a new poll shows.

About 8 in 10 Democrats say they would be somewhat or very satisfied if Harris became the Democratic nominee for president, according to the survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, which was conducted after Biden withdrew from the race.

In a separate AP-NORC poll, taken before Biden dropped out but after his debate against Republican former President Donald Trump, only about 4 in 10 Democrats said they were somewhat or very satisfied that he was the Democratic Party's likely nominee for president.

The rapidly changing views among Democrats in such a short time span underscore how swiftly the party — from rank-and-file voters to elected officials — has coalesced behind Harris as its standard-bearer, motivated by the fresh face at the top of the ticket and newfound confidence in the party's prospects against Trump in November.



Former BBC broadcaster Huw Edwards arrives at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London, yesterday

FORMER LEAD BBC NEWS PRESENTER PLEADS GUILTY TO THREE COUNTS OF MAKING INDECENT IMAGES OF CHILDREN

PAN PYLAS, LONDON

Huw Edwards, the BBC's former top news presenter, pleaded guilty yesterday to three counts of making indecent images of children.

The offenses he pleaded guilty to at Westminster Magistrates' Court in central London during a 26-minute hearing involved images shared on WhatsApp between December 2020 and August 2021 by a man who had initially contacted Edwards via social media.

Edwards, who was the lead anchor on the BBC's nighttime news for two decades and led the public broadcaster's coverage of the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022, has been remanded on bail until a pre-sentencing hearing on Sept. 16. He could face up to 10 years in prison, though the prosecution conceded that a suspended sentence may be appropriate.

The court heard that Edwards, 62, was involved in an online chat with an adult man on the messaging service who sent him 377 sexual images, of which 41 were indecent images of children. The images that were sent

included seven of what are known as "category A," which are the most indecent. Of those, the estimated age of most of the children was between 13 and 15, but one was aged between 7 and 9.

The court also heard that the unnamed male asked Edwards on Feb. 2, 2021 whether what he was sending was too young. Edwards told him not to send any underage images. Five more, though, were sent, and the exchange of pornographic images continued until April 2022.

"Accessing indecent images of underage people perpetuates the sexual exploitation of children, which has deep, long-lasting trauma on these victims," said Claire Brinton of the Crown Prosecution Service.

Speaking in Edwards' defense, his lawyer Philip Evans said there is "no suggestion" that his client had "in the traditional sense of the word, created any image of any sort."

Edwards, he added, "did not keep any images, did not send any to anyone else and did not and has not sought similar images from anywhere else." He added that Edwards had "both

mental and physical" health issues and that he is "not just of good character, but of exceptional character."

Prosecutor Ian Hope told the court that Edwards' "genuine remorse" was one reason why a suspended sentence might be considered. Setting out the potential penalties under the law, he said that where there is the prospect of rehabilitation, a community order and sexual offender treatment program could be considered as alternatives to prison.

A spokesperson for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children said there should be "no doubt" about the seriousness of Edwards' crimes.

"It can be extremely traumatic for young people to know sexual images of themselves have been shared online," the spokesperson said. "We also need to see online platforms do much more to identify and disrupt child abuse in private messaging services in order to safeguard young people."

Edwards, who was one of the BBC's top earners, was suspended in July 2023 for separate claims made last year. He later resigned for health reasons. **MDT/AP**



USA President Joe Biden, facing increasing criticism from former President Donald Trump, called on Congress yesterday to pass new legislation aimed at curbing the fentanyl crisis. This includes establishing stricter import rules and enhancing penalties for traffickers. Biden's initiative also aims to support Vice President Kamala Harris against ongoing political attacks over border security.



Venezuela The Carter Center declared yesterday [Macau time] that it could not verify the results of Venezuela's recent presidential election due to "a complete lack of transparency." Protests erupted following the controversial announcement of Nicolas Maduro's victory, with accusations of electoral manipulation sparking political tensions and calls for international scrutiny.



Hungary Ahead of the European Parliament elections, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's control over the media is under scrutiny. Critics argue that Orbán's government uses media dominance to suppress dissent and manipulate public opinion, which has been a critical factor in maintaining his political power since 2010.

Japan Amazon Prime Video's "Like a Dragon: Yakuza," which premieres in October, has all the glorious fare of a classic mobster story — bloody fistfights, beautiful women, expensive cars, muscle and flashy suits. Based on a popular Sega video game that debuted in 2005, the story centers around Kazuma Kiryu, a gangster with a heart of gold. But the latest version has evolved to appeal to global audiences today.