



THE 'BIG SIX' HAVE SEEN A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR GAMING REVENUE OVER THE FIRST COUPLE WEEKS OF AUGUST, REACHING MOP7.1 BILLION

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GOV'T TO TRAIN GENERAL PRACTITIONERS ON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

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INDIANS SEEKING REFUNDS FOR UNDELIVERED TESLAS REFLECT HOW THE EV MARKET HAS CHANGED

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AP PHOTO



Philippines lodged a diplomatic protest against China yesterday after Chinese jets fired flares at a Philippine patrol plane over Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea. This encounter, which occurred last week and was described by the Philippine military as "potentially disastrous." Beijing said its action was prompted by a Philippine jet that "illegally" entered Chinese airspace.

AP PHOTO



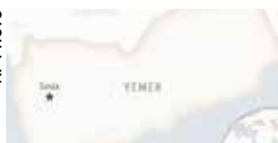
Japan-Myanmar A Japanese business executive was released from Myanmar yesterday after being detained for overpricing rice. Hiroshi Kasamatsu, director at Aeon Orange supermarket, faced charges under Myanmar's pricing regulations, reflecting the country's intense regulatory environment amid ongoing economic and civil turmoil.

AP PHOTO



Bangladesh The head of the interim government, Muhammad Yunus, confirmed the legality of the resignations of several high-profile officials close to former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. This shift comes amid significant political upheaval prompted by widespread student protests demanding governmental reform.

AP PHOTO



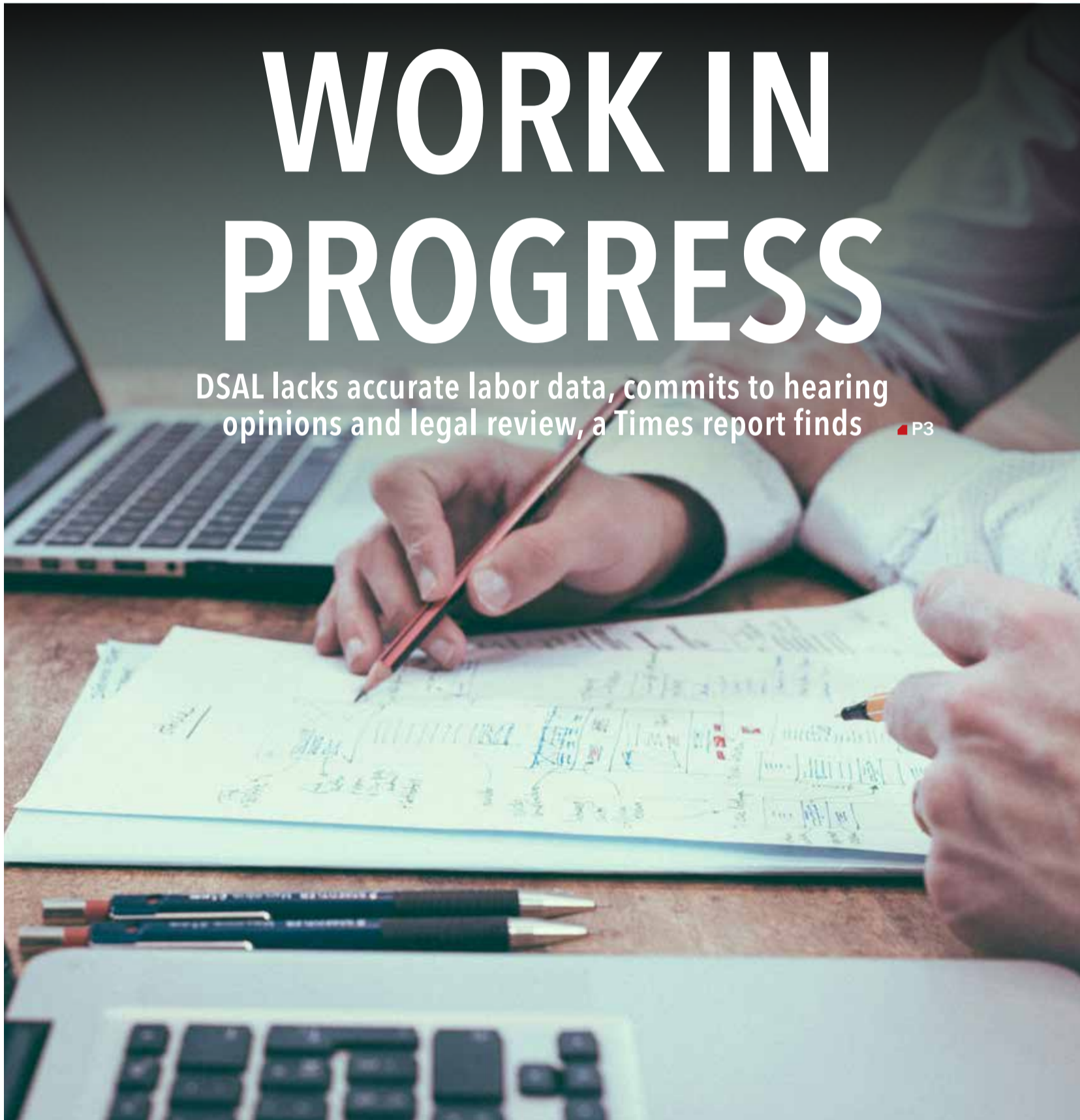
Yemen A ship in the Red Sea was targeted yesterday in three separate attacks by suspected Houthi rebels, marking a significant escalation in maritime tensions. The assaults involved drones and possibly bomb-carrying boats, highlighting the ongoing conflict's reach beyond Yemen's borders and its impact on international maritime security.

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DSAL lacks accurate labor data, commits to hearing opinions and legal review, a Times report finds

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MACAU TRAVELERS ALERTED TO RISK OF 'MEGA-QUAKE' IN JAPAN

LYNZY VALLES

IN response to Japanese authorities warning of a potential mega-earthquake, the Macao Government Tourist Office (MGTO) has issued a caution for Macao residents currently in Japan or planning to travel there. MGTO advises residents to remain vigilant and stay informed with updates from the Japanese government.

The bureau emphasizes the importance of monitoring earthquake developments, weather alerts, and natural disaster prevention information. Residents are urged to follow all safety and evacuation instructions provided by Japanese authorities.

President of the Macau Travel Industry Council, Andy Wu, told TDM that there are currently four tour groups from Japan in Macau, and an ad-



ditional five to six groups are scheduled to depart for Osaka and Tokyo in the next week.

Wu noted that Japan remains a popular destination for Macau residents during the summer vacation period. He

expressed his belief that many residents are either traveling independently to Japan or participating in tour groups originating from Hong Kong and Guangzhou. As of yesterday, he has not received any requests

for assistance.

Wu also acknowledged Japan's susceptibility to earthquakes, noting that the current warning is anticipated to last for approximately one week.

The Japan Meteorological

Agency issued its first ever "mega-quake advisory" last week, warning of a possible future major earthquake triggered by the underwater Nankai Trough, after a magnitude 7.1 earthquake hit just off the eastern coast of Kyushu last week.

The trough, which runs along Japan's Pacific coast, has been the source of devastating earthquakes in the past.

Seismologists at the agency held an emergency meeting after last Thursday's quake to assess whether it had affected the nearby trough and reassess the risk of a major quake. They urged people to observe high levels of caution for about a week.

For assistance, Macau residents can contact the 24-hour Tourism Hotline at (853) 2833 3000. Additionally, they can reach the Global Emergency Hotline of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs at +86-10-12308 or +86-10-65612308.

The Chinese Embassy in Japan also offers consular protection and assistance at +81-3-6450-2195.



TOURISM

International visitors rebound to 1.34 million

THE Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has reported a significant recovery in international tourist arrivals to the city in 2024, signaling

a return to pre-pandemic levels.

According to MGTO, from January to July this year the number of international tourists visiting Macau

reached 1.341 million, a 1.22-fold increase compared to the same period in 2023. This figure represents 68% of the level recorded in the same period in

2019, before the pandemic.

The data also showed a surge in group tours, with international group tours 8.4 times higher than last year, reaching 102,000 in the first half of 2024. Additionally, inbound tourists on package tours were 1.7 times higher, totaling 968,000 during the same period.

From Aug. 1 to Aug. 12, Macau recorded over 1.48 million passenger arrivals, with a peak of 154,000 arrivals on Aug. 10 and an average of around 124,000 per day.

To sustain this momentum, the Macau government has been focusing on expanding its tourist markets, particularly in Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia, while also developing long-distance markets in Europe and the United States. Promotional activities have been ramped up since the first quarter of 2024. LV

GOV'T TO TRAIN UP GENERAL PRACTITIONERS ON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

LYNZY VALLES

IN the past two weeks, Macau has witnessed a number of deaths by suicide, affecting individuals from teenagers to older adults.

This trend has sparked action from the government to more effectively address mental health issues, according to a briefing after a committee meeting earlier this week, where reports of growing cases of suicide were addressed.

Authorities have announced plans to train general practitioners and family doctors to better detect and address mental health concerns.

This initiative aims to expand the number of healthcare professionals equipped to provide mental health services.

The waiting time for mental health assistance is now two weeks at the public hospital.

Zheng Anting, chairman of the Monitoring Committee for Public Administration Affairs,

said "the first step is to train other practitioners and family doctors to recognize mental illness."

By building the skills of GPs, the government hopes to create a frontline defense against mental health crises.

For Zheng, the Health Bureau is committed to implementing general training programs for these doctors and its goal is to ensure that more healthcare professionals can offer immediate support to citizens in need.

"When other doctors are in need, they can also provide support to citizens requiring mental assistance," Zheng added.

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

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LABOR MATTERS

DSAL lacks accurate labor data, commits to legal review

RENATO MARQUES

THE Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) lacks accurate data on several labor-related matters, as evidenced by its inability to respond to an inquiry from the Times.

The Times requested data on the average number of days of leave (including annual leave, weekly rest days, and public holidays) a worker in Macau enjoys and how this figure differs between the private and public sectors, as well as how it compares with other neighboring regions.

DSAL could not provide a figure, stating only that, "according to the provisions of the Labor Relations Law, employees with a labor relationship of one year are entitled to no less than six working days of paid annual leave in the following year."

A little more clarity was provided as to whether there are any differences between resident and non-resident workers (TNRs) in relation to matters such as wages, holidays, and other work-related benefits.

The bureau confirmed to the Times that local labor laws provide no differences between benefits of workers regardless of their residency status, remarking that it is only possible to hire TNRs for job posts or vacancies that cannot be supplied from the local job market.

"The Law on the Employment of Non-resident Workers" stipulates that the labor relationship established with non-resident workers shall be supplemented by the general labor relations system. Therefore, non-resident workers enjoy the same rights as local employees and are protected by the 'Labor Relations Law,'" DSAL said in its response to the Times. The bureau added, "The main premise of the SAR government's labor import policy is to ensure priority and continued employment of local residents. TNRs will only be considered as temporary supplements when local human resources are lacking or insufficient and so [are] allowed to be imported."

DSAL also advised that, "in any case, if there are local residents who are interested in positions that are classified as qualified work posts, enterprises must give priority to the hiring of local workers."

"DSAL will strictly follow the principles and standards stipulated in the 'Law on the Employment of Non-resident Workers'



and take into account the policies of the SAR government, overall socioeconomic development, supply and demand of the labor market, industry characteristics, operating conditions, and existing conditions of the applicant enterprise," the bureau added.

The bureau also noted that decisions are made after comprehensive consideration of factors such as employees' conditions and the situation of recruiting local employees, and every application for TNRs is reviewed and approved based on facts."

LAWMAKERS: REALITY CONTRASTS WITH THE LAW

This response contrasts with the many calls that have been recently made by several lawmakers at the Legislative Assembly, who claim that the number of TNRs has been growing in Macau, particularly this year, due to a legal loophole and lack of supervision from DSAL. This has allowed companies to bypass the conditions by hiring local workers, temporarily or part-time to obtain quotas for hiring TNRs, and then dismissing the local employees. Lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho made this claim recently in a Legislative Assembly debate with the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, as well as DSAL officials.

Several other lawmakers, namely those linked with the Macau Federation of Trade Unions, as well as Ron Lam, have also raised this topic and claimed to have proof that several irregularities, specifically involving the gaming concessionaires, are not

being properly addressed by labor authorities.

On this charge, DSAL responded to the Times, advising, "The government attaches great importance to, as well as actively creates conditions for, local residents to have upward mobility opportunities in jobs. To this end, it continues to promote and monitor the six integrated tourism and leisure enterprises to provide training and promotion for local workers, and maintain the proportion of local employees serving as middle and senior managers in the six integrated tourism and leisure enterprises at a rate above 85%."

During the debate on this topic at the Legislative Assembly, lawmaker Leong Sun Lok suggested the government amend this rate "maybe to 90%," claiming that there are now more local workers capable of taking on higher posts.

DSAL said that, "when reviewing and evaluating the applications made by companies of TNRs for middle and senior management positions that can be filled by local workers, [these] applications will be gradually [not] approved, and the TNRs holding relevant positions will be ordered to retire in an orderly manner through administrative means to protect the labor rights of local employees."

LEGAL REFORM IS LAST RESORT

The Times also asked DSAL if there is a current or foreseeable need to amend the current Labor Law to suppress some legal loopholes, such as tho-

se acknowledged during the pandemic which relate to the regulation of situations in which the companies can resort to extreme measures, such as wage reduction, unpaid leave, and part-time work.

In response, the bureau said it was "continuing to listen to relevant opinions and suggestions from people from all walks of life and conduct careful research based on the actual economic and social development of Macau," before proceeding with the revision of laws and regulations.

The bureau added that, during the pandemic, DSAL "encouraged employers and employees to understand each other and negotiate amicably on work arrangements during this period, while cooperating with epidemic prevention measures," reaffirming that "unpaid leave must be negotiated and agreed upon by both employers and employees. The employer cannot make unilateral arrangements on its own, and both parties should act in good faith and clarify the relevant absence period and other arrangements based on the actual situation."

As for salary reductions, DSAL responded that "the current Labor Relations Law has clearly stipulated that reducing the basic remuneration of employees must also be agreed in writing between the employer and the employee, and must be notified to this bureau within 10 days before the salary reduction agreement can take effect."

FASHION COMPETITION CULTIVATES YOUTH ARTISTIC TALENT

A student fashion and creative competition based on the theme "Performing City" was held yesterday, attracting 36 participants from 21 colleges. The Macao Student Fashion Creativity Competitions event included fashion design, product display, and beauty technology competitions. Contestants believe the competition provides a good platform for artistic development in Macau, seeing the event as a starting point to understand related industries. The competition aims to discover and cultivate the talent needed to transform Macau into a "performing city" by promoting industry-university cooperation and economic diversification.

TICKETS ON SALE FOR ORCHESTRA'S 2024-25 CONCERT SEASON

The Macao Chinese Orchestra's 2024-25 concert season kicks off Sep. 1, with 14 distinctive concerts throughout the season. Tickets went on sale yesterday (Aug. 13) through the Macau Ticketing Network, with discounts available for qualifying individuals. The season opens with "Splendor of the Strings" and closes with "Auspicious Arrival," highlighting a fusion between Chinese and Western cultures. Additionally, the season features the Cantonese opera concert "Unveiling the Harmonious Voices," presented by Zeng Xiaomin, President of the Guangdong Cantonese Opera Theatre, along with National Class One Actor Wen Ruqing and other notable talents from the Guangdong Cantonese Opera Theatre.

OXFAM TOWERRUN SCHEDULED OCT. 20

The Oxfam TowerRun Macau 2024 has been scheduled for October 20. The annual race, which takes place at the Macau Tower, will once again have a charitable component. The ambassador for the 11th edition will be Wai Ching Soh, a Malaysian athlete who is a specialist in this type of competition. Soh has been ranked as the world's number one in this sport since April 2022 and has won the Empire State Building run-up three times. The current Oxfam TowerRun Macau champion is Fabio Ruga of Italy, who won the event last year and set a new course record of six minutes and 40 seconds.

WORKER LOSES RMB15,000 IN PHISHING SCAM

A non-resident worker claims to have lost RMB15,000 in a phishing scam, the Judiciary Police reported yesterday. The victim received a purported loan SMS and visited the linked website, entering personal and bank details with the intention of borrowing RMB30,000. The system claimed the bank card was incorrect and the account frozen, demanding RMB15,000 to unfreeze it. Suspicious, the victim contacted the police. In another case, a local woman lost HKD13,000 after receiving a message from an alleged relative in Hong Kong asking for money. Both cases are under police investigation.

GAMING REVENUE TICKS UP IN AUGUST

NADIA SHAW

MACAU'S six licensed gaming operators have seen a significant improvement in their gross gaming revenue (GGR) over the first couple weeks of August, according to a recent note from JP Morgan Securities (Asia Pacific) Ltd. Estimated GGR for this period reached around MOP7.1 billion, translating to a daily run-rate of approximately MOP657 million, "meaningfully above the MOP590 million to MOP600 million daily run-rates in June/July," wrote JP Morgan analysts DS Kim, Mufan Shi, and Selina Li.

This figure represents a notable increase from the MOP645 million daily run-rate at the start of the month and a significant improvement from the MOP590 million and MOP600 million daily run-rates in June and July respectively.

The JP Morgan analysts have kept their August GGR forecast for Macau unchanged, estimating it



to be around MOP19 billion to MOP19.5 billion, which they believe could be slightly conservative if the current weekly run-rates are sustained towards the end of the month.

According to the analysts, mass GGR is estimated to be sitting at 110% of pre-pandemic levels, while VIP remains subdued in the low-to-mid 20% range.

Macau's Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau had previously reported a Macau-wide GGR of MOP18.59 billion in July, which was a 5.1%

increase from the previous month and 11.6% higher when compared to the year prior. However, some investment analysts had described the July GGR result as "weak" relative to market expectations, citing a likely slowdown in the daily run-rate towards the end of the month.

The mass market segment's strong performance suggests that the recovery is gaining momentum, and the industry is well-positioned to capitalize on the upcoming summer holidays.

Taiwan mulls closing Macau Office amid visa dispute

STAFF REPORTER

THE ongoing dispute between Taiwan and Macau over the 'One China' principle has escalated, with Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) considering to close the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Macau, according to The Taipei Times.

This comes after a newly-appointed TECO official was denied a visa for refusing to sign an affidavit affirming the 'One China' stance.

The TECO post in Macau has been vacant since July 23, when a senior official departed after more than a decade of service.

The planned successor was denied a visa due to their unwillingness to endorse the 'One China' policy, which the Macau government considers a legitimate and reasonable requirement.

In an earlier response, the Macau government condemned what it perceives as Taiwan's "distortion of facts and defamation" regarding the TECO personnel

rotation arrangements. Macau authorities have stressed that adherence to the 'One China' principle and the signing of a Letter of Commitment are necessary protocols.

The TECO in Macau was originally envisioned to be staffed by eight officials from various Taiwanese government agencies. However, only two MAC employees are currently stationed there, alongside 14 local Macau staff. In contrast, the TECO counterpart in Hong Kong is fully staffed by local personnel.

According to an unnamed official familiar with cross-strait affairs, the MAC is considering the possibility of closing the Macau representative office altogether in a 'worst-case scenario.' This is because the TECO would not be sustainable if new appointees are compelled to sign the 'One China' pledge, as cited in the report.

The potential removal of the TECO from Macau would effectively sever official ties between Taiwan and the special administrative region. The unnamed official warned that such a move would not be in Macau's best interest.



CRIME

Wheelchair ruse fails at Gongbei border crossing

NADIA SHAW

A local man was intercepted last week while attempting to smuggle 97 mobile phones into mainland China using a modified electric wheelchair. The incident occurred at Gongbei Port at around 1 p.m., when customs officers became suspicious of the man's slow-moving wheelchair, which showed signs of being altered.

Upon inspection, officers discovered irregularities in the battery compartment of the wheelchair. Using an X-ray



machine, they identified concerns that prompted a more thorough examination.

Further disassembly of the wheelchair revealed a hidden stash of old mobile phones, carefully

wrapped in plastic film, concealed within the battery box.

Authorities have ramped up inspections in recent months, particularly targeting unconventional methods of smuggling.

Gongbei customs officials emphasized the seriousness of smuggling offenses, stating that evading customs regulations through concealment or false declarations can lead to criminal charges. They reiterated that transporting prohibited items or goods that are subject to taxation without proper declaration constitutes smuggling, which can result in severe legal consequences.

As travel increases, officials urge travelers to adhere strictly to customs laws to avoid penalties and contribute to national security efforts. They aim to deter such attempts and maintain security at the border.

The man now faces legal consequences for his actions, which could include fines and possible imprisonment.

CRIME

POLICE SEIZE HKD1.8 MILLION IN CRACKDOWN ON MONEY EXCHANGE GANG

STAFF REPORTER

IN a joint operation, the Judiciary Police (PJ) and China's Ministry of Public Security have cracked down on money exchange gangs operating in Macau.

Authorities seized 36 mainland Chinese suspects – 26 men and 10 women – and confiscated HKD1.8 million in cash, as well as HKD600,000 in casino chips.

The operation, launched in May, involved 180 detectives who raided several hotels and residential units in the Cotai area. Among those arrested was a foreign male employee confirmed to have illegally exchanged money in the guise of

employment.

In a statement, the Ministry of Public Security emphasized that the large-scale crackdown was not in response to any recent high-profile cases.

Rather, the authorities have maintained ongoing communication and cooperation to combat cross-border crimes.

Last month, Beijing launched a major crackdown on "money exchange gangs" operating in Macau, targeting illegal foreign exchange activities linked to a surge in fraud, robbery and kidnapping. The government said the move is to curb the "arrogance of criminals" and disrupt the entire illicit network.

GRAND PRIX

FIA confirms 11 team entries to Macau FR World Cup

RENATO MARQUES

THE governing body of international motorsport, Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) has announced the 11 teams that will participate in the rebranded FIA FR World Cup (formerly the FIA F3 World Cup) that will take place in November this year.

According to FIA, the 11 teams providing entries for the event are: TOM's Formula,

TGM Grand Prix, PHM Racing, MP Motorsport, Saintéloc Racing, SJM Theodore Prema Racing, Pinnacle Motorsport, Kiwi Motorsport, Evans GP, R-ace GP, and Art Grand Prix.

FIA said in a statement that the blue ribbon event on the junior single-seater calendar is continuing its long history as the ultimate test for young drivers breaking onto the international single-seater scene.

This year's iteration of the Macau Grand Prix will, for the



first time, utilize Formula Regional (FR) machinery, as previously reported by the Times. FIA noted that this has garnered

attention from top teams in almost every FR Championship around the world, including the FR Japanese Championship, FR

European Championship, FR Americas, FR Oceania, and FR Middle East.

The organizers noted that,

with such a broad range of teams registered who are competing in many different series around the globe, the door is now open for talented young drivers to join them and begin to take on the challenge of the Macau Grand Prix.

Most of these teams are involved in championships of different categories, including FR, F4, and others, which can also contribute to a larger pool of potential candidates for a seat in the local GP grid.

Previously, FIA had advised that the grid would be able to accommodate a maximum of 27 Tatuus Formula Regional chassis equipped with Autotecnica-built Alfa Romeo engines.

As the Times previously reported, the FR specifications are for a type of F3 car that diverges from the F3 International Series cars in size and engine power.

While they weigh almost the same as the F3 International cars (680-690kg), they have about 30% less power, putting them closer in general performance to the F3 cars used until 2018.

The most significant difference, playing a very important role in FIA's bid to make the motorsport junior series more accessible to a wider range of racers, is in the price tag. The FR cars cost around MOP920,000 per unit, whereas F3 International series cars are priced at about MOP2.2 million each.

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ECONOMY

Economists advocate direct support to consumers

ZHOU LANXU & OUYANG SHIJIA, CHINA DAILY

CHINA'S central government should consider additional direct support to consumers worth at least 1 trillion yuan (\$139 billion) — either cash or vouchers — in the rest of the year to effectively address the pressing challenge of lackluster domestic demand, economists from government-backed think tanks said.

The likelihood of the Chinese government directly subsidizing consumers — a policy widely seen in developed economies — has significantly increased, they said, citing that a top-level meeting has decided to shift policy focus more toward boosting consumption.

Such a step, which would necessitate expanding this year's deficit ratio or approving additional special treasury bonds, can play a significant role in reviving the country's consumer sentiment and accelerating the transition of economic drivers in the face of trade tensions, they said.

"Compared with the past, it is true that the probability of the central government providing direct support to low and middle-income groups has increased notably," said Zhang Ming, deputy director of the Institute of Finance & Banking at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

"China is facing a rapid aging of the population and a change in the



PEOPLE'S DAILY ONLINE

development trend of the real estate market. Using some new tools at this special stage would be a necessary and natural option," said Zhang, who is also deputy director of the National Institution for Finance & Development.

Zhang suggested that the central government issue consumption vouchers by increasing fiscal deficits or issuing special treasury bonds, with a size of no less than 1 trillion yuan — if the measures are to generate a notable effect.

Previous economic stimulus policies focused on supporting business operations so that improved business conditions can translate into growing household income.

Yet, the policy transmission now seems to have met some difficulties, Zhang said.

"At this time, directly backing households can revitalize people's expectations and confidence and bolster household consumption," he said, adding that experiences from developed economies have proven that issuing consumption vouchers to households can bear good results.

The remarks came at a time when policymakers are placing more emphasis on boosting consumption. At a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee on July 30, it was stressed that the focus

of economic policies should shift toward bringing real benefits to the people and promoting consumption while vowing to launch a batch of incremental policy measures in a timely manner.

China recently announced that it would allocate about 150 billion yuan in ultra-long-term special treasury bonds to support trade-in deals for consumer goods, such as appliances and autos, deemed by some analysts as a sign that the central government has turned more willing to directly subsidize consumers.

Consumption — which contributed to about 60 percent of China's economic growth in the first half of

the year — is assuming even more importance for the world's second-largest economy as its exports could face downward risks amid a rise in protectionist trade policies, economists said.

Among exports, investment and consumption, the traditional "troika" powering China's economic development, spurring consumption will be the key driving force boosting China's economic growth, said Chen Wenling, chief economist at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics on Friday pointed to a strengthening of consumer confidence and demand, as the country's consumer price index, a main gauge of inflation, grew 0.5 percent year-on-year in July, accelerating by 0.3 percentage point from June.

Analysts, however, debated whether the recovery in demand can be sustained as the core CPI growth — it excludes volatile food and energy prices and is seen as a better gauge of the demand-supply relationship — came in at 0.4 percent year-on-year last month, down from 0.6 percent in June.

Li Daokui, director of Tsinghua University's Academic Center for Chinese Economic Practice and Thinking, said it is advisable for the government to issue consumption coupons worth 1 trillion yuan during the weeklong National Day holiday in October this year, which will significantly boost consumer sentiment.

Zhang Yansheng, former secretary-general of the Academic Committee of the National Development and Reform Commission, said cash handouts are an immediate and effective way to boost spending. "That will significantly boost consumption and prop up economic growth." **CHINA DAILY**

China's foreign investment mechanism faces increased scrutiny

CHINESE investors looking to diversify offshore are encountering new hurdles as authorities intensify scrutiny of the Qualified Domestic Limited Partnership (QDLP) program, a key channel for such investments, Nikkei Asia reported.

This decade-old scheme allows wealthy Chinese individuals and institutions to invest in overseas private and public markets. Available only in select provinces and cities, the QDLP has become crucial for foreign managers and banks



AP PHOTO

seeking to tap into Chinese capital.

However, recent regulations have tightened

oversight on QDLP investments, focusing on two main areas: the investment in offshore lo-

cal government financing vehicles (LGFVs) and the origins of the invested funds.

As reported by Nikkei Asia, these new measures are designed to mitigate risks associated with local governments' offshore debts and to ensure proper taxation of corporate earnings. The enhanced checks have been introduced as local governments, facing financial pressures and a downturn in the real estate sector, seek to manage their debt levels more strictly.

Regulators from the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) in Shanghai, Hainan, and Chongqing are now rigorously reviewing QDLP investments in LGFVs. Managers of QDLP products are required to provide detailed information about their investments, specifically those in LGFVs, and this scrutiny is a

new development, according to a source cited by Nikkei Asia. Additionally, institutions using corporate earnings for such investments are experiencing significantly extended review times, with approvals now taking up to two months compared to the previous two-week timeframe.

Despite these challenges, some asset managers remain optimistic. Alexandre Werno, CEO of a BNP Paribas and Agricultural Bank of China joint venture, noted that demand for offshore investments persists. His firm recently received a \$50 million quota for a new offshore investment plan and is exploring opportunities to use QDLP for private credit investments in the future. **MDT/AGENCIES**



Hemant Suthar stands beside his car in Mumbai

INDIA

Buyers wanting their money back for undelivered Teslas shows how drastically the EV market changed

ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL, HANOI

IN April 2016, Elon Musk invited Indians to preorder the upcoming Tesla Model 3. Vishal Gondal was one of the first to sign up, paying a \$1,000 deposit for a car that never arrived.

The founder and CEO of a health-tech startup called GOQii in India's financial capital Mumbai, Gondal wasn't sure when the automaker would launch in India or how much the car would eventually cost. But the Elon Musk fan was excited about the Model 3 and willing to wait.

In the eight years since Tesla's initial promise to sell cars in India, other automakers have launched their own EVs. But the American automaker has failed to follow through, apparently because of concerns that taxes would make the cars too expensive in India, combined with the difficulties of building an Indian factory if it decided to shift production away from China.

After six years without a Tesla or a clear explanation about the company's plans for India, Gondal bought an electric SUV made by German automaker Audi. He got his \$1,000 back in January 2023 with the help of a friend

who helped him track down a Tesla sales manager in India.

India is the world's third-largest auto market after China and the United States. But it's unique. The average price of cars sold in India in 2023 was \$14,000, compared with \$47,000 in the United States. An American can buy a new Tesla 3 for about \$40,000. That's the price of a luxury car in India, and buyers would demand excellent after-sales service.

"I think Tesla may be a great tech company. But they just don't know how to sell luxury cars," Gondal said.

Since then, other automakers who have been selling luxury cars in India have also started selling EVs. Hemant Suthar, a Mumbai-based director of a design studio who had also pre-booked a Tesla in 2016 before finally getting his money back in 2023, said that he didn't think the minimalistic Tesla could compete with some of the more luxurious EVs now on Indian roads.

To woo automakers like Tesla while also protecting domestic carmakers like Mahindra and Maruti Suzuki, India reduced its import duties to 15% from 70%-100% in March 2024 for EVs cheaper than \$35,000 — as long

the automaker commits to building a factory in the country within three years.

Despite his earlier enthusiasm, in 2019 Musk expressed concern that import duties could double prices of Teslas made in India, making them "unaffordable." Many in India expected Musk to announce plans for a factory there in April, but he canceled an expected trip at the last minute, citing "very heavy Tesla obligations."

Tesla didn't respond to an emailed request for comment.

The EV market has changed drastically in India and elsewhere in the past five years and Tesla's own position has evolved since it built giant factories in China, Germany and the U.S. Sales are slowing and its only new product, the Cybertruck EV, lacks much of a market outside the U.S., so global sales have fallen year over year for two straight quarters.

According to a filing to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, it can build 2.3 million cars annually. Production in 2023 grew by 35% to 1.85 million cars. In the first half of 2024, Tesla sold 831,000 vehicles worldwide, far short of the more than 1.8 million for the full year

that Musk had forecast.

The novelty of EVs has been wearing off, said Tu Le, founder of the consultancy Sino Auto Insights.

"What was a huge opportunity five years ago is now almost a weight around their neck," he said.

To keep a leading position among global automakers, Tesla needs new, more affordable cars for emerging markets like India, Tu said. Even a car priced at \$25,000 is not competitive in China given the dominance of Chinese EV makers like BYD. They're expanding overseas with both cheap and premium cars, wiping out Tesla's first-mover advantage in a place like India.

"Every market they (Tesla) enter from now on, BYD is going to be looking at their watch and saying: What took you so long?" Tu said.

India's growing auto market is dominated by its largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki, followed by South Korea's Hyundai Motors and India's Tata Motors. Electric vehicle sales doubled in 2023 but still made up just 2% of total car sales, according to market research firm Counterpoint Research. Of this, Tata Motors held more than two-thirds

of the market, with Indian automaker Mahindra & Mahindra and China's BYD shares growing.

BYD started making batteries in India in 2008. It was one of the top five EV brands in India in 2023 despite selling only two models — the six-seater e6 MPV and the Atto 3 SUV, Counterpoint said. It launched the BYD Seal in India in March 2024.

Many in India, a relatively small and crowded EV market, are skeptical about EVs. Ishan Raghav, the managing editor of the Indian car magazine autoX, said that to win over customers with an affordable EV for mass sales, Tesla would need to price its cars at a "sweet spot" of roughly \$30,000.

"The only way to do that is if they build that car in India," he said.

India says it does not restrict imports of Chinese EVs. But ties between China and India deteriorated after a military clash in July 2020, Raghav noted, and protections for domestic automakers will create other obstacles.

Even if Tesla were to sell cars in India after agreeing to build a factory within three years, most imported Teslas would sell for what luxury cars made by established players like Mercedes Benz and Audi cost. Those automakers have been in India for decades and already have extensive dealership and service networks.

Tesla has sold cars directly to American customers, but dealerships play a vital role in enticing customers with a luxury experience, said Matthew Degen of Cox Automotive, an American car research company.

"You go into an actual location, you meet with people, there are nice lounges. Now Tesla has showrooms, but that is different from dealerships," he said.

Tesla also would also have to build a charging network in India, given the relatively small number of EVs already in the market.

Musk said in a July earnings conference call that Tesla is boosting capacity at its factories and that its affordable car — a small model expected to cost around \$25,000 using new generation vehicle underpinnings and some features of current Tesla models — was "on track" for delivery in the first half of 2025.

The company's plans for India remain unclear.

Rajesh Kumar Singh, a federal bureaucrat who heads the Indian agency for promoting industrial growth, said in a TV interview that the Tesla executive who Indian officials had been talking with "got fired" and that India didn't know what the company intended to do.

"We really don't know," he said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



People evacuated from fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces queue to receive humanitarian aid at a distribution center in Kursk, Russia

PUTIN'S WAR

Ukrainian forces control 1,000 sq km of Russia's Kursk region

SAMYA KULLAB, KYIV

UKRAINE'S top military commander says his forces now control 1,000 square kilometers of Russia's neighboring Kursk region, the first time a Ukrainian military official has publicly commented on the gains of the lightning incursion that has embarrassed the Kremlin.

Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi made the statement in a video posted yesterday [Macau time] to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Telegram channel. In the video, he briefed the president on the front-line situation.

"The troops are fulfilling their tasks. Fighting continues actually along the entire front line. The situation is under our control," Syrskyi said.

Russian forces are still scrambling to respond to the surprise Ukrainian attack after almost a week of fierce fighting.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said the incursion, which has caused more than 100,000 civilians to flee, is an attempt by Kyiv to stop Moscow's offensive in eastern Ukraine's Donbas region and gain leverage in possible future peace talks.

Zelenskyy confirmed for the first time that the Ukrainian military is inside the Kursk region. On Telegram, he praised his country's soldiers and commanders "for their steadfastness and decisive actions." He did not elaborate.

The Ukrainian operation is under tight secrecy, and

its goals remain unclear. The stunning maneuver that caught the Kremlin's forces off guard counters Russia's unrelenting effort in recent months to punch through Ukrainian defenses at selected points along the front line in eastern Ukraine.

Speaking yesterday [Macau time] at a meeting with top security and defense officials, Putin said the attack that began Aug. 6 appeared to reflect Kyiv's attempt to achieve a better negotiating position in possible future talks to end the war. He insisted Moscow's army would prevail.

Putin said Ukraine may have hoped the attack would cause public unrest in Russia, but that it has failed to do so, and he claimed the number of volunteers to join the Russian military has increased because of the assault. He said Russian forces will carry on with their offensive in eastern Ukraine regardless.

"It's obvious that the enemy will keep trying to destabilize the situation in the border zone to try to destabilize the domestic political situation in our country," Putin said. Russia's main task is to "drive the enemy out of our territories and, together with the border service, to ensure reliable cover of the state border."

Acting Kursk Gov. Alexei Smirnov reported to Putin that Ukrainian forces had pushed 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) into the Kursk region across a 40-kilometer (25-mile) front and currently con-

trol 28 Russian settlements.

Smirnov said 12 civilians have been killed and 121 others, including 10 children, have been wounded. About 121,000 people have been evacuated or left the areas affected by fighting on their own, he said.

Tracking down all the Ukrainian units that are roaming the region and creating diversions is difficult, Smirnov said, noting that some are using fake Russian IDs.

The governor of the Belgorod region adjacent to Kursk also announced the evacuation of people from a district near the Ukrainian border.

Zelenskyy said the territory now controlled by Ukrainian forces was used to strike Ukraine's Sumy region many times, adding that it is "absolutely fair to destroy Russian terrorists where they are."

"Russia brought war to others. Now it is coming home," he said in a video posted on Telegram.

Russia has seen previous incursions into its territory during the nearly 2 1/2-year war, but the foray into the Kursk region marked the largest attack on its soil since World War II, constituting a milestone in the hostilities. It was also the first time the Ukrainian army has spearheaded an incursion rather than pro-Ukraine Russian fighters.

The advance delivered a blow to Putin's efforts to pretend that life in Russia has been largely unaffected by the war. State propaganda tried to play down the attack, emphasizing the authorities' efforts to help

residents of the region and seeking to distract attention from the military's failure to prepare for the attack and quickly repel it.

Kursk residents recorded videos lamenting that they had to flee the border area, leaving behind their belongings, and pleading with Putin for help. But Russia's state-controlled media kept a tight lid on any expression of discontent.

Retired Gen. Andrei Gurulev, a member of the lower house of the Russian parliament, criticized the military for failing to protect the border.

"Regrettably, the group of forces protecting the border didn't have its own intelligence assets," he said on his messaging app channel. "No one likes to see the truth in reports, everybody just wants to hear that all is good."

The combat inside Russia rekindled questions about whether Ukraine was using weaponry supplied by NATO members. Some Western countries have balked at allowing Ukraine to use their military aid to hit Russian soil, fearing it would fuel an escalation that might drag Russia and NATO into war.

Though it's not clear what weapons Ukraine is using across the border, Russian media widely reported that American Bradley and German Marder armored infantry vehicles were there. The claim could not be independently verified.

Ukraine has already used U.S. weapons to strike inside Russia. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1980 SHIPYARD POLES STRIKE FOR THEIR RIGHTS



Shipyards workers in Gdansk, Poland, have staged a successful strike in protest over the dismissal of militant crane driver Anna Walentinowicz.

The strike at the Lenin shipyard is seen as part of a growing campaign to gain political freedoms and to improve economic conditions for Poland's labour force.

Numbering some 16,000, the workers secured Miss Walentinowicz's swift reinstatement and then elected her to the workers' committee, which negotiates with the Polish authorities and shipyard management.

Today the committee won a number of political and economic concessions, including the promise of more accurate media coverage of the industrial unrest that has beset the country over the summer.

Workers are also demanding the right to form their own genuine representative bodies instead of subscribing to official trade unions.

Police Brutality

The Gdansk region has a history of strike action to secure greater freedoms. In 1970, rioting shipyard workers forced the incumbent Communist Party leader, Wladyslaw Gomulka, out of office.

Today the shipyard workers have persuaded the authorities to erect a monument in memory of those who died during the 1970 police brutality.

The workers' key economic demands include a pay rise of 40% and family allowances equal to those enjoyed by members of Poland's security forces.

There have been reports that the current party leader, Edward Gierek, was recently blamed for the unrest by a Warsaw party committee. Mr Gierek has yet to return from a holiday in the Soviet Union.

Tonight Polish television appealed for calm and "level-headedness" in its first mention of "work stoppages" since the strikes began in June.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Edward Gierek, like his predecessor, had his political reputation ruined by the Gdansk-led labour unrest, and subsequently resigned.

Poland's bid for political and social freedom grew out of strong co-operation between workers, intellectuals and its Roman Catholic Church, who worked together to spread information and resist the communist regime.

The reinstatement of Anna Walentinowicz brought only a temporary halt to the unrest. Stoppages continued until the government finally caved in and agreed to recognise the right of independent trade unions with a deal signed on 31 August.

In September 1980 Solidarity (Solidarnosc) was formed, the workers' first independent trade union, led by shipyard electrician Lech Walesa.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Do the homework. Don't accept more than you can handle by the deadline. Consider logistics and practicalities. Keep detailed records. Charm others into participating.

TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Review budgets carefully before agreeing to a purchase or new expense. Postpone an important decision until you're sure. Talk it over with your partner.

GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Wait to act until you're both on the same page. Temporary overwhelm could incite sparks. Avoid upsets and monitor a delicate situation. Patiently clarify.

CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Stick to practical objectives with your health, fitness and work. Make plans and connections. Avoid fantasies and distractions. Move one step at a time.

LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Listen and learn with loved ones. Moderate a disagreement. Reassure someone who feels left out. Share your thoughts and dreams. Collaborate for practical goals.

VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 Domestic matters have your attention. Consider hidden costs before purchasing. You may pay another way for something "free." Provide comfort and good sense.

LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Polish a diamond in the rough. Outline ideas before presenting. Edit, revise and clarify. Simplify to basics. Propose collaborative possibilities. Follow through on promises.

SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Expenses may be higher than planned. Postpone and research. Get creative. Work with your team for practical solutions. Collaborate your way around an obstacle.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Personal discipline overcomes a challenge. Practice patiently. Give up something for something you want more. Take charge. Make plans to achieve an ambition.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Private contemplation soothes. New information challenges old beliefs. Reflect before doing anything. Consider others affected. Avoid sensitivities.

AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Inspire your team by example. Listen carefully to avoid conflict. Check the data. Avoid stepping on anyone. Share ideas and resources with friends.

PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Avoid professional controversy by keeping a low profile and focusing on the job at hand. Look for silver linings. Listen carefully to instructions.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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4 | | | | 5 | | | | |
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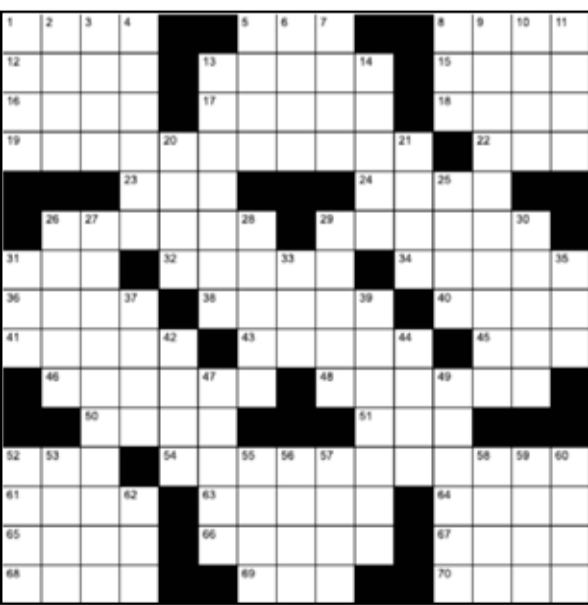
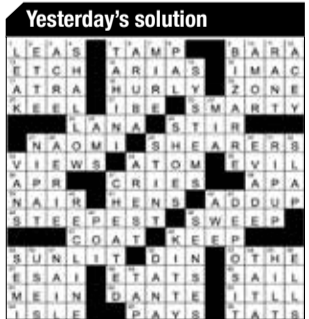
WEATHER

Table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION. Rows include CHINA (Beijing, Changchun, Chengdu, Chongqing, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Guiyang, Haikou, Hangzhou, Harbin, Hefei, Nanjing, Shanghai, Taipei, Wuhan, Hong Hong) and WORLD (Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, London, New York).

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Foreshadowing; 5- Xenon, e.g.; 8- Mil. truant; 12- Indian princess; 13- Rum cakes; 15- A ___ formality; 16- Gator's kin; 17- What you put on snooze; 18- Chaplin prop; 19- An organization; 22- Vietnamese holiday; 23- Chat room chuckle; 24- 20th letter of the Hebrew alphabet; 26- Hemoglobin deficiency; 29- Interlocks; 31- Era; 32- In flames; 34- Garr and Hatcher; 36- Hot rock; 38- Newly made; 40- Tsp. and tbsp.; 41- Glasses, briefly; 43- Ford flop; 45- DDE opponent; 46- Run chore; 48- Pines for; 50- Pianist Peter; 51- Dr. of rap; 52- Half a fly; 54- Patriarch; 61- Gutter location; 63- Old French expression meaning "goodbye"; 64- ___ Misbehavin'; 65- Family diagram; 66- Sticker; 67- Romeo's last words; 68- ___ Grey, tea type; 69- D.C. bigwig; 70- Sparks and Beatty;

DOWN 1- "Jaws" boat; 2- Milky Way maker; 3- Slaughter of baseball; 4- Actress Kidman; 5- Big bash; 6- Blind as ___; 7- Indian garment; 8- Onetime Jeep mfr.; 9- Meteorologist; 10- Writer Sarah ___ Jewett; 11- Internet writing system that popularized "pwn3d" and "n00b"; 13- Court attendant; 14- Campfire treat; 20- Deep sleep; 21- Hotbed; 25- Queens stadium; 26- Open-mouthed; 27- Imaginary; 28- Ventilated; 29- Unordered; 30- Locations; 31- Gore and more; 33- Checkers side; 35- Conscripting org.; 37- Farm unit; 39- Attentive; 42- Puppeteer Tony; 44- Dr. Zhivago's love; 47- "WarGames" org.; 49- Keep; 52- Head of France; 53- Franklin D.'s mother; 55- Citrus quenchers; 56- Good one!; 57- Faculty head; 58- Conceal; 59- Oklahoma city; 60- AAA suggestions; 62- Electric fish;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



Real estate advertisement for JML Property. Includes text: 'It's prime time to BUY & RENT!', 'CONTACT US & SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY!', 'hello@jmlproperty.com', 'www.jmlproperty.com'. Features three property photos: Hoi Wan Retail (Taipa) HKD 12,980,000; Tou Un (Taipa) HKD 2,750,000 1 bed 1 bath; Jade Garden (Taipa) HKD 11,880,000 4 bed 3 bath.

AP PHOTO



Coach Isabelle Sambou, 43 years old, rear, two-time Olympian and nine-time African wrestling champion

HUMAN RIGHTS

IN ONE REGION OF SENEGAL, GIRLS CAN BECOME WRESTLERS — AND WIN. BUT ONLY UNTIL MARRIAGE

MONIKA PRONCZUK,
MLOMP

IT'S almost dusk, and the West African heat is finally faltering. In Mlomp, a village in southern Senegal, dozens of teenagers in colorful jerseys are throwing each other to the ground to the rhythm of Afro-beats against a backdrop of palm trees.

It's a common sight across Senegal, where wrestling is a national sport and wrestlers are celebrated like rock stars. The local variation of wrestling, called laamb in Wolof, one of the national languages, has been part of village life for centuries. Senegalese wrestle for entertainment and to celebrate special occasions. The professional version of the sport draws thousands to stadiums and can be a catapult to international stardom.

But in most of the country, wrestling remains off-limits for women.

There is one exception. In the Casamance region, home to the Jola ethnic group, women traditionally wrestle alongside men. At a recent training session in Mlomp, most teenagers on the sandy ground were girls.

"It's in our blood," said coach Isabelle Sambou, 43, a two-time Olympian and nine-time

African wrestling champion. "In our village, girls wrestle. My mum was a wrestler, my aunts were wrestlers."

But once Jola women marry, they are expected to stop practicing and devote themselves to family life, considered the main duty of Senegalese women regardless of ethnicity or religion.

Sambou's aunt, Awa Sy, now in her 80s, was the village champion in her youth, and said she would even take down some men.

"I liked wrestling because it made me feel strong," she said, standing outside her house nestled between rice fields and mangroves. "I stopped when I got married." She didn't question it at the time.

That hasn't been the case for her niece, who, despite her humble demeanor and small size, exudes strength and determination. She defied many barriers to become a professional athlete.

As a teenager, Sambou was noticed by a professional wrestling coach at a competition during the annual Festival of the King of Oussouye, one of the few events accessible to women. The coach suggested that she try Olympic wrestling, which has a female national team. But she only agreed after her older brother

convinced her to do it.

Wrestling brought Sambou, who did not finish primary school, to the Olympic Games in London and Rio de Janeiro, where she placed outside the medal contenders. But being a successful professional female athlete in a conservative society comes with a price.

"If you are a female wrestler, people are going to make fun of you," Sambou said, recalling her experiences in parts of Senegal beyond her home region. "When I walked around in shorts, people were saying: 'Look, is it a woman or is it a boy?'"

Others claimed that her body would change and she would no longer look like a woman.

Such things can "get to your head," Sambou said. "But I tell myself: They don't know what they are talking about. It's in my blood, and it brought me where I am today."

In 2016, facing her mid-30s, she decided to retire from professional sport and move back to her village.

"I thought it was the time to stop and think of something else, maybe find a job, start a family," she said. "But that hasn't happened so far."

Instead, she focused on finding "future Isabelles." After not fulfilling her dream of winning an Olympic medal,

she hopes a girl she coaches can achieve that.

That mission has been complicated by the lack of resources. Female sport is often underfunded, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

Around Sambou's village, there are no gyms where girls can do strength training. They don't have the special shoes used in Olympic wrestling, and instead train barefoot. They don't have mats, so they make do with sandy grounds.

And yet, at Africa's youth championship in wrestling held in June in Senegal's capital, Dakar, Sambou's students won 10 medals, including six golds.

"Despite everything, they did magnificent work," she said.

She has received little in return. Senegal has no pension system for retired professional athletes. Her lack of formal education complicates her career as a coach. She helps to coach the national wrestling team, both men and women, but on a voluntary basis. To get by, she works in a small shop and cleans people's houses.

"I gave everything to wrestling, to my country," she said. "Now I don't have anything. I don't even have my own house. It hurts a bit."

She listed the countries she

has visited, including the United States and Switzerland, while sitting outside the home she shares with relatives. Her bedroom is decorated with a picture of Virgin Mary and posters celebrating her participation in championships — the only sign of her glorious past.

"It's difficult to be a professional athlete. You have to leave everything behind," she said. "And then you stop, and you come back here and you sit, without anything to do."

But times are changing, and so is the perception of women in Senegalese society. These days, parents seek out Sambou and ask her to coach their children, regardless of their gender, even if it's still for free.

Sambou's 17-year-old niece, Mame Marie Sambou, recently won a gold medal at the youth championship in Dakar. Her dream is to become a professional wrestler and compete internationally. The big test will come in two years when Senegal hosts the Youth Olympic Games, the first Olympic event ever organized on African soil.

"It's my aunt who encouraged me to start wrestling," she said. "When I started, many people were saying they have never seen a girl wrestle. But I never listened to them. I want to be like her." **MDT/AP**

SPORTS BETTING ROUNDUP

US men's, women's basketball dominated betting at BetMGM sportsbook

THE Summer Olympics wrapped up over the weekend in Paris.

Two of the bigger events were the gold medal games for both men's and women's basketball — both featuring Team USA vs. France.

Saturday was the men's final, where Team USA beat France 98-87. Steph Curry led the way with 24 points, all coming on 3-pointers.

And in the women's final on Sunday, Team USA beat France 67-66. It was their eighth consecutive gold medal — dating back to the 1996 Games. A'ja Wilson paced Team USA with 21 points and 13 rebounds.

TRENDS OF THE WEEK

At the BetMGM online sportsbook, the men closed as 16.5-point favorites, so they did not cover the spread. Forty percent of the bets and 42% of the money was on Team USA to cover the spread, while 73% of the bets



and 33% of the money was on France moneyline (+900).

The women also closed as 16.5-point favorites. Fifty-five percent of the bets and 58% of the money came in on Team USA to cover the spread. They were -1600 on the moneyline, and took in 75% of bets and 91% of the money.

When it comes to MLB betting, the overs for Pirates rookie pitcher Paul Skenes continue to dominate. On Saturday against the Dodgers he struck out eight batters, hitting the over 6.5 strikeouts. Overs are now 11-4 on his strikeout props this season.

Week 1 of the NFL preseason is in the books and underdogs went

10-6 against the spread, while underdogs went 12-4.

UPSETS OF THE WEEK

Aaron Rai picked up his first career PGA Tour win at the Wyndham Championship over the weekend. Rai shot a final-round 64 to win by two strokes. Players needed to play 36 holes on Sun-

day after no golf was played on Thursday due to Tropical Storm Debby. Going into the tournament, Rai was +3300 to win and took in 5% of the bets and 6.6% of the money.

In Saturday's NFL preseason action, the Browns (-5.5), Bills (-3) and Raiders (-3) were the three most-bet teams to cover the spread at BetMGM sportsbooks, and all three did not.

COMING UP

The Phillies are currently +450 to win the World Series after opening the year +1100. They are taking in the most bets (11.5%) and most money (15.7%).

Philadelphia is 69-49 and currently hold a 7.5-game lead in the NL East. They are tied with the Dodgers for the best record in the National League.

The Dodgers have the best odds to win the World Series at +325 and are taking in the third-most bets (9.7%) and the second-most money (12.6%). **MDT/AP**

AD

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FOOTBALL | BASKETBALL | DAILY TRAININGS

OPINION

The Conversation

Eric B. Larson, University of Washington



DEMENTIA RISK FACTORS IDENTIFIED IN NEW GLOBAL REPORT ARE ALL PREVENTABLE

Nearly half of all dementia cases could be delayed or prevented altogether by addressing 14 possible risk factors, including vision loss and high cholesterol.

That is the key finding of a new study that we and our colleagues published in the journal *The Lancet*.

Dementia, a rapidly increasing global challenge, affects an estimated 57 million worldwide, and this number is expected to increase to 153 million by 2050 worldwide. Although the prevalence of dementia is on the decline in high-income countries, it continues to increase in low- and middle-income countries.

This third updated report of the Lancet Commission on Dementia offers good news and a strong message: Policymakers, clinicians, individuals and families can be ambitious about prevention and reduce dementia risk; and for those living with dementia and their caregivers, support their quality of life using evidence-based approaches.

The new report confirms 12 previously identified potentially modifiable risk factors from two previous reports, published in 2017 and 2020. It also offers new evidence supporting two additional modifiable risk factors: vision loss and high levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, often called "bad" cholesterol.

Our study of published evidence found that collectively, addressing 14 modifiable risk factors could potentially reduce the prevalence of dementia by 45% worldwide. Even greater risk reductions could be possible in low- and middle-income countries and for people with low income in higher-income countries given the higher prevalence of dementia, health disparities and risk factors in these populations.

The report further indicates that reducing these 14 risks can increase the number of healthy years of life and reduce the length of time with poor health in people with dementia.

Additionally, the report cites clinical trials showing that nonpharmacological approaches, such as using activities tailored to interests and abilities, can reduce dementia-related symptoms and improve quality of life.

We are a general internist and an applied sociologist and intervention scientist, and our work focuses on memory and wellness in older adults. Together with 25 other internationally recognized dementia experts under the leadership of psychiatry professor Dr. Gill Livingston, we carefully reviewed the evidence to derive recommendations for prevention, intervention and care.

The rapid growth of aging populations worldwide is a triumph of better public and personal health throughout the entire life span. Yet, given the lack of a dementia cure, this report highlights the importance of prevention as well as supporting quality of life for those with a dementia diagnosis.

In the new report, our team proposed an ambitious program for preventing dementia that could be implemented at the individual, community and policy levels and across the life span from early life through mid and late life. The key points include:

- In early life, improving general education.
- In midlife, addressing hearing loss, high LDL cholesterol, depression, traumatic brain injury, physical inactivity, diabetes, smoking, hypertension, obesity and excessive alcohol.
- In later life, reducing social isolation, air pollution and vision loss.

Together, these add up to the Lancet Commission on Dementia's estimate that 45% of dementia risk can be reduced. And an abundance of new research shows that when risk factors are addressed, such as exposure to air pollution, they are linked with improved cognition and likely reduction of dementia risk. [Abridged]

Bulgarian authorities have seized some 436 kilograms of heroin at the Black Sea port of Burgas, the district prosecutor's office said. The heroin was stashed in 434 packages hidden inside officially declared cargo in a trailer. The drug haul's value is estimated at 35 million euros (nearly \$38 million).

The trailer had arrived at the end of July on a land route from Kyrgyzstan to the Georgian Black Sea port of Batumi, from where it crossed to Burgas.

From Bulgaria, it was supposed to continue to Alexandroupolis in Greece.

The trailer, supposedly transporting cable-laying machines, raised

suspicion due to its unusually long stay at the port, anti-drug unit chief Ivan Sokolov told reporters, adding that an X-ray inspection led to the discovery of the concealed heroin.

"So far, there have been no arrests, and no persons found involved in this cross-border crime," district prosecutor Georgi Chinev said.

A conviction on drug trafficking carries up to 20 years in prison in Bulgaria.

Bulgaria, which lies on a drug route from the Middle East to Western Europe, has taken massive steps in recent years to prevent drug trafficking.

AP FILE PHOTO



MARCIA DUNN, CAPE CANAVERAL

MARS may be drenched beneath its surface, with enough water hiding in the cracks of underground rocks to form a global ocean, new research suggests.

The findings released Monday are based on seismic measurements from NASA's Mars InSight lander, which detected more than 1,300 marsquakes before shutting down two years ago.

This water — believed to be 11.5 kilometers to 20 kilometers down in the Martian crust — most likely would have seeped from the surface billions of years ago when Mars harbored rivers, lakes and possibly oceans, according to the lead scientist, Vashan Wright

of the University of California San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

Just because water still may be sloshing around inside Mars does not mean it holds life, Wright said.

"Instead, our findings mean that there are environments that could possibly be habitable," he said in an email.

His team combined computer models with InSight readings including the quakes' velocity in determining underground water was the most likely explanation. The results appeared yesterday [Macau time] in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

If InSight's location at Elysium Planitia near Mars' equator is representative of the rest of the red planet,

the underground water would be enough to fill a global ocean a mile or so deep, Wright said.

It would take drills and other equipment to confirm the presence of water and seek out any potential signs of microbial life.

Although the InSight lander is no longer working, scientists continue to analyze the data collected from 2018 through 2022, in search of more information about Mars' interior.

Wet almost all over more than 3 billion years ago, Mars is thought to have lost its surface water as its atmosphere thinned, turning the planet into the dry, dusty world known today. Scientists theorize much of this ancient water escaped out into space or remained buried below. MDT/AP

BERLIN ZOO IS HOPING FOR MORE GERMAN-BORN GIANT PANDAS AS SCANS CONFIRM A PREGNANCY

THE Berlin Zoo has much anticipated news: Meng Meng the panda is pregnant again, months after the first giant pandas born in Germany were sent to China.

The zoo said yesterday that ultrasound scans over the weekend

showed Meng Meng is expecting two cubs. They still have plenty of growing to do but the zoo expects the birth at the end of August, if all goes well, it said.

Meng Meng and male panda Jiao Qing arrived in Berlin in 2017. In August 2019, Meng

Meng gave birth to Pit and Paule, also known by the Chinese names Meng Xiang und Meng Yuan, the first giant pandas born in Germany.

The twins were a star attraction in Berlin, but they were flown to China in December — a trip that was con-

tractually agreed from the start but delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. China gifted friendly nations with its unofficial mascot for decades as part of a "panda diplomacy" policy. The country now loans pandas to zoos on commercial terms. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Gaza Strip Iran has rejected European calls to avoid retaliation, following a recent escalation in the Israel-Hamas conflict. This stance comes amid increased military actions and civilian casualties in Gaza, with Iran emphasizing its right to respond to Israeli actions perceived as aggressive or provocative.

AP PHOTO



USA News outlets have received but not published leaked documents from Donald Trump's campaign, reflecting a cautious approach in handling potentially sensitive information. This contrasts sharply with the 2016 election coverage, suggesting a shift in media responsibility and strategy regarding political leaks.

AP PHOTO



Brazil The pilot of the plane that crashed down in Brazil last week was buried yesterday [Macau time] in Sao Paulo, becoming the first person laid to rest among the 62 victims, as authorities continue working to determine what exactly caused the accident. Family members and friends walked behind the vehicle and dozens of shop owners who knew him as a regular customer gathered on the sidewalks to applaud as it passed. Romano was 35.

AP PHOTO



Sierra Leone's president, during the country's presidency of the UN Security Council, has called for increased representation for Africa within the council. Highlighting the historical underrepresentation of Africa, he advocates for more permanent seats to better reflect the continent's growing significance on the global stage.