



**AN UNEMPLOYED MAN WAS ARRESTED FOR SUSPECTED INVOLVEMENT IN AT LEAST THREE CASES OF BUS THEFTS TOTALING MOP11,800 IN LOSSES**

P2

**SJM TO TRANSFORM KAM PEK COMMUNITY CENTER INTO A CULINARY HUB BY YEAR-END**

P5

**SPORTS: OLYMPIC STARS TO HEADLINE WTT CHAMPIONS TOURNAMENT IN MACAU**

P3



AP PHOTO



**Japanese** Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, in a surprise move yesterday, announced he will not run in the upcoming party leadership vote in September, paving the way for Japan to have a new prime minister. Kishida was elected president of his governing Liberal Democratic Party and became prime minister in 2021. His three-year term expires in September and whoever wins the party vote will succeed him as prime minister because the LDP controls both houses of parliament.

AP PHOTO



**Filipino** gymnast Carlos Yulo, who won two gold medals in the Paris Olympics, flew home to a hero's welcome Tuesday with a nationally televised tribute by the president and donors pledging more than \$1 million worth of cash and gifts, including a resort house and free lunch buffets for life. The 24-year-old's wins in the men's floor exercise and vault were the largest victory ever by a Filipino athlete since the Philippines joined the Games a century ago.

AP PHOTO



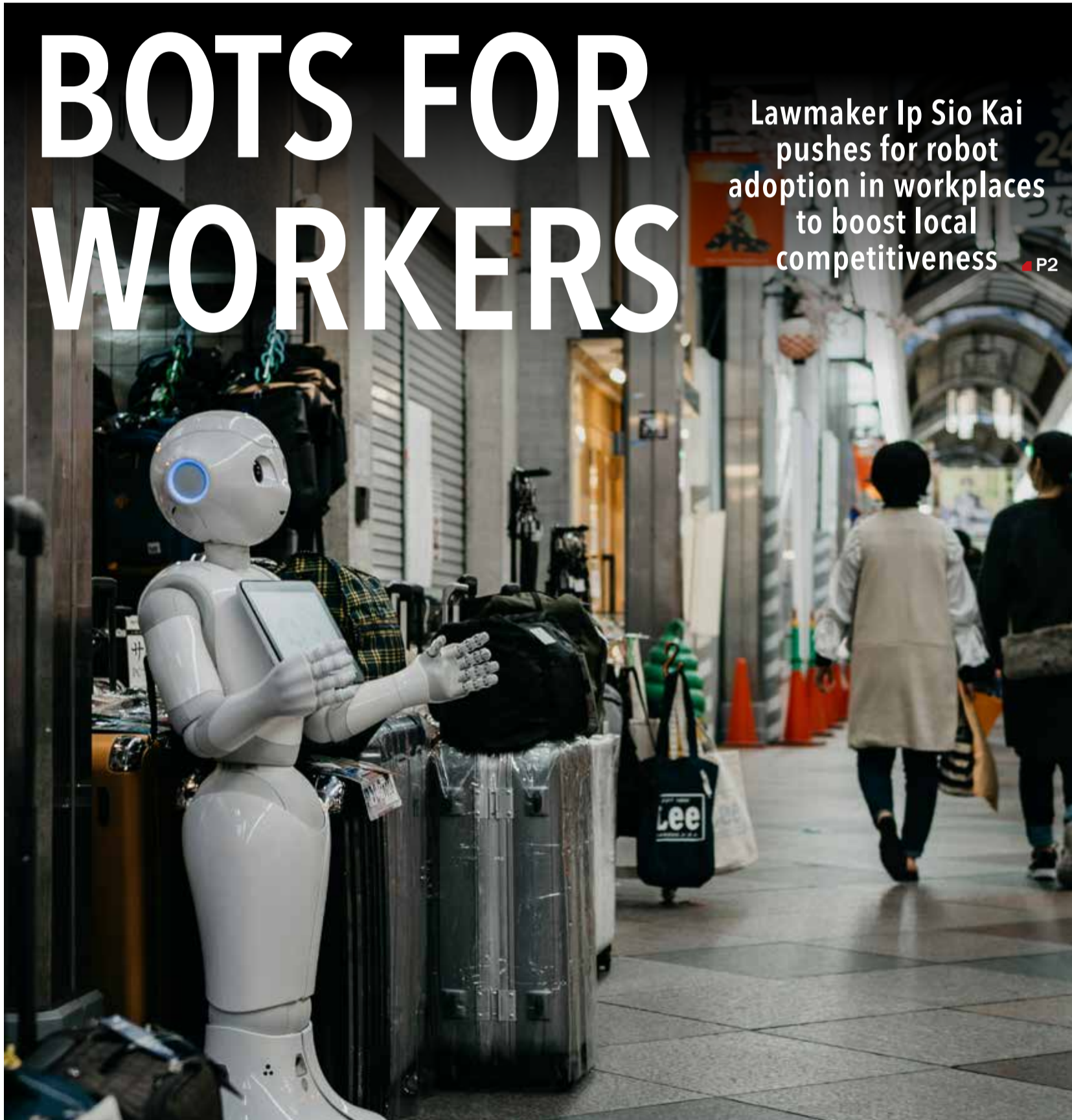
**India** The heavy rains that resulted in landslides killing hundreds in southern India last month were made worse by human-caused climate change, a rapid analysis by climate scientists found. The study by the World Weather Attribution, a group of scientists who use established climate models to quickly determine whether human-caused climate change played a part in extreme weather events around the world, found that the 15 centimeters of rain that fell in a 24-hour period July 29-30 was 10% more intense because of global warming.

More on backpage

# BOTS FOR WORKERS

Lawmaker Ip Sio Kai pushes for robot adoption in workplaces to boost local competitiveness

P2



**AL PLENARY**  
**OLYMPIC HYPE CAN PROMOTE SPORTS AND HEALTH, LAWMAKERS SAY**

P3

**GAMING**  
**LAWRENCE HO DOWNPLAYS MONEY EXCHANGE CRACKDOWN ON SOFT REVENUES**

P4

### COURT VERIFIES RESULTS OF CE ELECTION COMMITTEE

The Court of Final Appeal (TUI) has officially verified and published the results of the general vote for the election of members to the Chief Executive Election Committee, as submitted by the General Counting Assembly. The TUI confirmed no appeals were filed after the legal deadline, allowing the results to be made public. According to the announcement, 6,265 eligible voters participated in the election Sunday. Of those, 5,521 exercised their right to vote, representing an 88.12% turnout. The results show 156 spoiled votes and 18 blank votes, with 5,347 valid ballots cast.

### GUANGDONG TO ISSUE RMB2.5B BONDS, BENEFITING HENGQIN

The Guangdong government will issue RMB2.5 billion (MOP2.8 billion) worth of offshore local government bonds in Macau later this month. The bonds, which will be offered to professional investors only, include green bonds and government bonds, and will be used to support major infrastructure construction projects in the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin. This bond issuance marks the fourth consecutive year since 2021 that Guangdong province has issued municipal government bonds in Macau. Notably, this will be the first-ever Hengqin-themed bond to be issued in Macau.

### MAINLAND DRIVER ARRESTED FOR RMB32,000 CURRENCY EXCHANGE FRAUD

A 38-year-old mainland male driver was arrested on suspicion of committing fraud by assisting in a currency exchange scam, involving a total of RMB32,000. The victim had added the suspect through social media, hoping to exchange currency at a favorable rate. After transferring money through the QR code provided, the victim immediately notified security and the police. Investigation revealed strong indications that the suspect was working with an accomplice who remains at large.

### AL PLENARY

# LAWMAKER: ROBOTS SHOULD REPLACE WORKERS FOR COMPETITIVENESS

RENATO MARQUES

**L**AWMAKER Ip Sio Kai has advocated the replacement of certain worker tasks with robots to increase Macau's competitiveness.

Speaking at the Legislative Assembly yesterday before the official agenda, Ip said Artificial Intelligence (AI) is advancing rapidly globally, with many countries and regions investing in its development and application.

He said Macau should also integrate AI into its plans to diversify the local economy, particularly as one of its main directions includes the development of "Tourism + Technology" and support for tourism operators in providing personalized services and experiences through artificial intelligence.

"Macau is small, but in its integration in the development of the Greater Bay Area, it must leverage its political advantages, such as being a free port and low-tax region, to attract international capital," Ip said.

"Labor costs are high, but if we can replace part of this with artificial intelligence, it will be possible to reduce operational costs."

He said Macau, as a tourist destination, should use AI to improve and develop its service sector, for example by using robots to serve customers, and



Ip Sio Kai

offering higher quality tourist services.

Ip provided several examples of AI applications.

"Robots can provide uninterrupted service 24 hours a day, responding quickly to customers' needs, and can also provide translation services in multiple languages, helping workers communicate better with tourists from around the world and thus increase productivity."

"Other sectors, including catering, can use smart equip-

ment, such as roll-shaped frying pans, or use robots to create designs in coffees," he said.

He said AI robots can be used in property management, maintenance and cleaning services, "drastically reducing the need for human resources."

"For example, there are already robots specializing in cleaning bathrooms, and these can completely replace cleaning workers."

"Furthermore, traditional property security technologies

are generally limited in time and space, which makes it difficult to achieve full coverage."

"When it comes to smart security and surveillance, there is scope to deploy facial recognition and behavior identification technology to allow real-time control of people entering and leaving buildings."

"There is even an alert function for the police, which not only reduces the work intensity of security personnel but also makes it possible to significantly increase levels of safety and management and operational effectiveness."

Ip noted that in Hong Kong, AI robots are being used to pick up and re-stock goods in convenience stores. While these robots may work more slowly than humans, they offer the advantage of operating continuously.

Ip said the government could provide "strong support for research and development of AI" to encourage companies, higher education institutions, and research organizations to dedicate themselves to advancing AI and autonomous systems, while promoting the use of these technologies by local SMEs and micro-enterprises to accelerate their development.

He recommended the government develop legislation to regulate AI, following the example set by the mainland, to complement and regulate the use of AI.

### CRIME

# Suspect arrested for multiple thefts on buses

NADIA SHAW

**A**FTER recent thefts reported on public transport, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) has arrested a 33-year-old unemployed man from mainland China for suspected involvement in at least three cases of theft on buses, resulting in a total loss of MOP11,800 for the victims.

The suspect, taking

advantage of the crowded buses, used backpacks as cover to steal cash and valuables from victims' handbags, backpacks, and belt bags between June and August.

The thefts were reported in and around the Central and North Districts.

Police apprehended the suspect as he was preparing to leave the country through the border gate on Aug. 13.

The suspect claimed to have spent all the stolen money and has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office for further legal proceedings.

Police are investigating whether the suspect is linked to additional similar cases and are urging citizens who have been victims of theft on public transport to report the crimes.



RENATO MARQUES

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AL PLENARY

# Olympic hype can promote sports and health, lawmakers say

RENATO MARQUES

SEVERAL members of the Legislative Assembly (AL) have urged the government to harness the enthusiasm generated by the Olympic Games to promote sports and healthy lifestyles.

This suggestion was highlighted by several spoken inquiries delivered yesterday at the AL before the agenda.

Lawmaker Kou Kam Fai, speaking on his own behalf as well as on behalf of lawmaker Iau Teng Pio, called on the government to integrate the excellent results obtained by the Chinese athletes in the Paris Olympic Games with the "Healthy Macau 2030 Plan," recently presented by the Health Bureau.

Kou noted that, as is customary, some of the Chinese medalists are expected to visit Macau and engage with the community.

"Their visit will not only bring positive energy to the Macau community but also the motivating and inspiring effect of the Olympic spirit," Kou said.

"This initiative will promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle and will encourage the Macau population to actively engage in sports to improve physical and mental health."

"We propose that the government take advantage of the opportunity of this delegation's visit to promote the spirit of Chinese sports and the Olympic spirit, with the organization of a sports carnival for all, as well as the development of patriotic education and activities for young people to experience various Olympic sports."

"This will ensure the population develops a taste for sport



and the public experiences the fun and challenges of sport, thus creating an environment conducive to the next National Games."

"At the same time, preparations are underway for a physical condition assessment of the population planned for 2025," he said.

Kou said a survey of local secondary students revealed 90% of students were doing insufficient physical exercise.

According to the same lawmaker, "the 2020 Physical Condition Assessment Report for the whole population reveals that less than 40% of students in primary, secondary and higher education reported that they 'often' participate in physical activity."

The lawmaker said both the "Healthy Macau Plan" as well as the Sports Law of the People's Republic of China, which came into force on Jan. 1, 2023, stipulates that "priority is given to the development of sports among young people in schools."

"It is necessary to persist in

the integration of sport in education, the coordination between cultural studies and sporting practice, and in attributing equal importance to physical conditioning and character formation, to promote the development of young people. This demonstrates the importance of

school sports."

Lawmakers Kou and Iau want the government to use new technologies to track physical activities and sports performance to better evaluate the local population's physical condition and sports potential.

In a subsequent inquiry,

## SONG PEK KEI WANTS MACAU IN THE OLYMPICS

LAWMAKER Song Pek Kei wants the government to persist in efforts to ensure Macau can one day participate in the Olympic Games and that excellent local athletes can fulfill their dreams on the Olympic stage.

She voiced this sentiment during a spoken inquiry at the Legislative Assembly during the period before the agenda.

Song acknowledged recurring suspensions and delays in Macau's bids to join the Games, but stressed the im-

portance of the government setting an example for local athletes by continuing to seek recognition from the local Olympic Committee to participate in the Games.

She noted the need to enhance the quality of local athletes by improving professionalization of sports in Macau, to put them up to par with their international counterparts.

Song said increased flexibility in the "Financial Support Project for the Training of Elite Athletes" and other

mechanisms be adopted, to ensure promising local athletes do not give up sports.

"I suggest the government improve mechanisms for participating in competitions and training as soon as possible, to provide local athletes with plans and development opportunities amid a thriving sporting environment," she said.

She noted that this year Macau has one athlete participating in the Paralympic Games. **RM**

SPORTS

# Olympic stars to headline WTT champions tournament

NADIA SHAW

SOME of the world's top stable tennis players, including Olympic gold medalists, will compete at the WTT Champions Macao tournament from Sept. 9-15. The event will take place at the Macao East Asian Games Dome in Cotai.

The women's singles draw features a star-studded lineup led by world number

one Sun Yingsha.

The 2022 and 2023 WTT Champions Macao winner will face stiff competition from Chen Meng, the Paris 2024 Olympic gold medalist, as well as Wang Manyu, the 2023 WTT Women's Singles champion. Other top contenders include Wang Yidi and Hina Hayata.

The men's singles event is headlined by world No. 1 Wang Chuqin, who won the

Macau title in 2022 and 2023. He will be challenged by Paris 2024 Olympic gold medalist Fan Zhendong, along with Hugo Calderano, Liang Jingkun and Felix Lebrun.

A total prize pool of USD800,000 (MOP6.4 million) is up for grabs, with the champions earning USD35,000 (MOP 279,045) and 1,000 ranking points.

Established in 2019 by the International Table Tennis

Federation, the WTT Series aims to commercialize and elevate the sport.

"The WTT Champions Macao always delivers high-octane table tennis action, and this year's event looks set to be one of the most competitive yet," said ITTF President Thomas Weikert.

"With Olympic champions and world No. 1s all vying for the title, fans are in for a real treat."



Table tennis singles gold medalist Chen Meng

GAMING

# LAWRENCE HO DOWNPLAYS MONEY EXCHANGE CRACKDOWN ON SOFT REVENUES

LYNZY VALLES

MELCO Resorts Chairman and CEO Lawrence Ho has attributed the recent softness in Macau's gaming market to factors like the Euro 24 football championships and the delayed start of the Chinese school holidays, rather than the impact of a crackdown on illegal money exchange activities.

In an earnings call with analysts, Ho said some growth in July had been noted notwithstanding softness in June, and observed that August was off to a very good start.

He believed June's results are likely related to the Euro cup, which lasted from mid-June to mid-July.

These comments come amid concerns that the crackdown on underground money changers, who facilitate the flow of funds from mainland China to Macau's casinos, could negatively impact Macau's gaming revenue.

Regarding the money changers, Ho said, "We have seen this in Macau over the years. I think this has been a story 10 years in the making."

The executive expressed optimism about Macau's gaming prospects, stating the market has shown a more typical summer performance so far in August. He expects continued growth, buoyed by the completion of upgrade works at Melco's City of Dreams Macau and Studio City properties.

"If anything, we are very posi-



ve and optimistic about the future," Ho said. "I believe that we will continue to see growth heading into the second half of the year."

In the earnings call with analysts, Ho noted gaming volumes have steadily improved since mid-July, and he expects the impending completion of upgrade works at both City of Dreams Macau and Studio City to further support growth for the remainder of 2024.

Ho maintained a positive outlook, suggesting the industry's resilience and the appeal of Macau's integrated resort offerings would help offset any short-term disruptions.

"Post Covid, we have seen that there was work needed from a maintenance standpoint, and to

concurrently reestablish our former premium mass leadership position. That is why we are reinvesting into the gaming floor," said Ho.

Subject to approvals and the applicable regulations, Melco hopes that by Golden Week, the gaming operator would have "the nicest VIP slot area to open at that time."

## WEAK RETAIL SALES

At City of Dreams, where the high-end and luxury retailers are located, sales have also been soft in line with the rest of China and Hong Kong.

Ho hopes the Chinese economy will recover, because ultimately the long-term success of

any businesses in the Greater China area depends on the health of the Chinese economy.

"Fortunately for Macau, Macau has its unique advantages compared to Hong Kong or, say, Hainan Island. So again, everybody is hoping for the Chinese economy to recover quickly," he said.

## WHITE GALLERY EXHIBITION

City of Dreams is set to have a new exhibition in the fourth quarter, president and managing director Evan Winkler announced in the call.

The exhibition will be held in the White Gallery, which is the part of retail precinct by Nua. The gaming operator expects this to be an incremental driver of traffic.

"If you've been there on the weekend, you've already seen that we've got sports cars in the lobby and that we've got concerts on the weekend that have attracted some pretty good crowds," said Winkler.

## MELCO'S REVENUES UP 22% Y-O-Y

Melco's second quarter total operating revenues were USD1.16 billion, representing an increase of approximately 22% from USD947.9 million for the comparable period in 2023. The increase in total operating revenues was primarily attributable to the improved performance in the mass market segment and non-gaming operations, led by the continued recovery in inbound tourism during the second quarter of the year.

Melco generated Adjusted Property EBITDA of USD302.8 million in the second quarter of 2024, compared with Adjusted Property EBITDA of USD267.3 million in the second quarter of 2023.

Lawrence Ho, chairman and CEO, commented, "Our strategic initiatives to expand revenue and profitability, and drive growth continued to evolve in the second quarter of 2024. We've seen growth in GGR quarter-to-quarter and year-over-year, and our teams are focused on driving the continued expansion of our market position."

# Macau rakes in MOP6.4 billion in gaming taxes

IN the first seven months of the year, gaming tax revenue reached nearly MOP51.62 billion, marking a 15.2% increase from the same period last year, according to data released by the Financial Services Bureau (DSF).

In July alone, the government collected approximately MOP6.83 billion in gaming taxes, a decrease of 12.2% from June.

Under Macau's 10-year gaming concession system,

initiated Jan. 1, 2023, the effective tax rate on casino gross gaming revenue (GGR) is 40%.

However, the tax revenue figures and casino GGR are not directly comparable due to timing differences in revenue recognition.

For instance, June GGR was reported at MOP17.7 billion, a 12.4% decline from May's MOP20.2 billion, which had been the highest monthly total since January 2020.

Gaming taxes accounted for 83.9% of the government's total revenue of nearly MOP61.51 billion through July 31.

The government anticipates gaming tax revenue will reach MOP83.61 billion by the end of the year, with the current figures representing 61.7% of that projection.

In 2023, Macau collected MOP65.26 billion in gaming tax revenue, exceeding budget expectations by 28.3%. NS

GAMING

# PARADISE ENTERTAINMENT EXPECTS PROFIT REBOUND IN 2024

NADIA SHAW

PARADISE Entertainment Limited has announced it expects to return to profitability, driven by higher casino management and Live Multi-Game (LMG) revenues.

According to the company's preliminary review, Paradise Entertainment is poised to record a profit of HKD119.4 million for the six-month period ending June 30, 2024, a significant turnaround from the HKD3 million loss reported in the same period last year. The profit alert comes after Paradise Entertainment reported a profit of HKD60.9 million in 2023, coming back from a HKD166.3 million loss in 2022.



Paradise Entertainment attributed the turnaround to two key factors: a 48.5% increase in revenue from casino management services in Macau, owing to a rise in gross gaming revenue at Casino Kam Pek Paradise, which Paradise Entertainment manages; and a stagge-

ring 1,743.2% surge in revenue from the sale and leasing of electronic gaming equipment and systems – particularly their Live Multi-Game (LMG) system – and related products, in response to growing demand from Macau's casino operators.

SJM

# Kam Pek Market to launch first phase with 10 food stalls by year-end

NADIA SHAW

**I**N a move to revitalize the historic Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro (San Ma Lou), SJM Resorts, S.A. (SJM) unveiled its plans for the Kam Pek Market project during a tenant briefing yesterday.

This initiative, guided by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), will transform the Kam Pek Community Centre into a culinary and cultural hub, offering an array of international casual dining, trendy shopping, entertainment and artistic elements.

"SJM embraces the spirit of 'big enterprises leading small ones'," said Daisy Ho, managing director of SJM.

"We hope to leverage our competitive advantage to inject new vitality into the Macau community through this revitalization project, utilizing our resources to pave new paths and build a favorable business environment for future



tenants and neighboring businesses," Ho added.

In the first phase of the project, 10 food stalls on the ground and first floors will be available for bidding by local entrepreneurs, with an estimated opening date between mid-December and the Chinese New Year.

Five additional food stalls will be reserved for collaboration with invited brands.

The bidding criteria include operational strategies, relevant experience, and various eligibility requirements.

The application period for bids opens Aug. 16, and closes 6 p.m. Sept. 6, this year.

The revitalization project will incorporate Art Deco style and structural elements, creating a relaxed atmosphere that appeals to young customers while respecting the building's former role as the community's entertainment and leisure hub.

The company said it will also operate its beverage brand in the market, working hand in hand with SMEs to create a top-of-mind dining destination.

The "Revitalization Plan for San Ma Lou," launched in 2023, is jointly advanced by the government and SJM to drive the development of neighborhoods around the historic areas.

The Kam Pek Market is a part of this blueprint.

This announcement follows SJM's May 21 declaration of its intention to acquire Kam Pek Community Centre and redevelop it into a food and beverage landmark, as part of its commitment to revitalize his-

toric districts under its 10-year concession contract.

The open tender for local businesses to establish stalls will be launched mid-August.

SJM has previously announced the acquisition of Kam Pek Community Centre for HKD166 million is part of its commitment to non-gaming investment and will be an important part of the integrated revitalization of Avenida Almeida Ribeiro.

The briefing yesterday was attended by representatives from various government bureaus, including the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED), the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), and the Macao Chamber of Commerce, as well as industry associations such as the Macau Federation of Trade Unions and the United Association of Food and Beverage Merchants of Macao.

AD




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GEOPOLITICS

# An election in Kiribati triggers Western alarm about Beijing's sway in Pacific atoll nation

CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-MCLAY,  
WELLINGTON

PEOPLE in Kiribati went to the polls yesterday for the first round of voting in a national election expected to serve as a referendum on rising living costs and the government's stronger ties with China.

A second round of voting is scheduled on Aug. 19 for all parliamentary seats that are not won by a majority vote. Results from the first round are expected today.

The nation of low-lying atolls with 120,000 people is one of the most threatened in the world by rising sea levels and does not command the resource wealth or tourism branding of other Pacific islands. But its proximity to Hawaii and its huge ocean expanse have bolstered its strategic importance and provoked an influence skirmish between Western powers and Beijing.

The Kiribati government switched its allegiance from pro-Taiwan to pro-Beijing in 2019, citing its national interest and joining several other Pacific nations that have severed diplomatic ties with Taipei since 2016.

Kiribati is one of the most aid-dependent nations in the world and is rated at high risk of external

debt distress by the International Monetary Fund. Its existence is threatened by coastal erosion and rising seas that have contaminated drinking water and driven much of the population onto the most populous island, South Tarawa.

Analysts say few details about the campaigning or this week's vote have appeared online and there are few English-language news sources in the country. The blocked or delayed entry of Australian officials to Kiribati and a stalled flow of information between the governments in recent years have prompted anxiety in Canberra about the scale of Beijing's influence.

"A lot of countries in the region are really trying to find their place with a lot of geostrategic competition," said Blake Johnson, a senior analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. Kiribati has "taken the approach of keeping its cards pretty close" and is not divulging details "that might impact the way those relationships are trending," he said.

The election will decide 44 of the 45 seats in Parliament but not the Kiribati presidency, which is due to be resolved in October. A public vote will be held to choose the leader from three or four can-

AP PHOTO



didates selected from among those elected this month.

The incumbent, Taneti Maamau, who has been in office since 2016, is expected to seek another term as leader if returned to his seat.

The increased cost of living, scarce medicine supplies and fuel shortages are expected to be central issues for voters. Analysts say voters are likely to reward the incumbent government for the introduction of universal unemployment benefits and increased subsidies for copra, or dried coconut flesh.

"People are taking time to link that the challenges they're facing

are a result of the policies that are in place," Rimon Rimon, an independent journalist in Kiribati, said by phone. He said the prospect of incumbents being reelected was "quite strong at the moment."

The question of how much influence Beijing has is not a simple one. Dismay from Australia, New Zealand and the United States about China's sway is not always specific or well-articulated and has often caused frustration in the Pacific, Johnson said.

He said Australia's worries include reports that Beijing has trained and equipped Kiribati police officers, and the suspension of foreign judges serving in

the island nation.

"Interestingly, these Western countries maintain their own connections with China, but when small island states do the same, it suddenly raises concerns," said Takuia Uakeia, director of the Kiribati campus of the University of the South Pacific. "This is well understood by the people."

Rimon, the journalist, said policy shifts since Kiribati switched to a pro-Beijing stance include a requirement that researchers and reporters apply for permits for filming and a more "hard-line" approach to information access. The government remains very secretive about the content of 10 agreements signed between Kiribati and China in 2022, he added.

Voters who spoke by phone yesterday said a list of polling places had only been published by the government on Tuesday and there had been uncertainty before voting opened about whether identification cards were required to vote.

Political parties are loose groups in Kiribati, and lawmakers do not confirm their allegiance until elected to office. Kiribati was traditionally a society governed by consensus, with strong democratic principles and respect for its constitution, but the contest for foreign influence had sowed divisions, Rimon said.

"How we're seeing things in terms of donors and cooperation with partners is that we're not sure how this is helping us that they're competing in this sense," he said.

There are 115 candidates contesting the election, including 18 women. Candidates were unopposed for four seats — three of them incumbent lawmakers from the governing Tobwaan Kiribati Party, according to Radio New Zealand. **MDT/AP**

ENVIRONMENT

# Yangtze River's warming headwaters to present challenges, researchers say

THE headwaters of the Yangtze, China's longest river, are expected to become warmer and more humid, which will pose multiple challenges, Chinese researchers have warned.

They recently conducted a scientific expedition in the headwater regions of the Yangtze and Lancang rivers in Northwest China's Qinghai province.

Under moderate emission scenarios, average temperatures in the Yangtze's source area could rise by 2 C to 4 C by the end of this century, with precipitation potentially increasing by 10 percent to



Researchers conduct a survey on vegetation ecology and soil erosion in the headwaters area of the Yangtze River in Qinghai province

30 percent, said Qin Pengcheng, a senior engineer from the Yangtze River Basin's meteorological center.

The headwaters of the Yangtze are located on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, with an average elevation

of over 4,500 meters. The plateau, known as "the roof of the world", is also the birthplace of the Yellow

River, the second-longest river in China, and the Lancang, which is known as the Mekong after it flows out of China.

The warming and increased humidity at the source area of the Yangtze have raised risks, including glacier shrinkage and increased water and sediment flow.

"Accelerated glacier retreat in the region is evident, with iconic glaciers showing gradual shrinkage," said Fan Yue, a member of the scientific expedition.

Additionally, extreme precipitation events in the upper reaches of the Yangtze have been increasing in frequency and intensity. In August last year, the Zhimenda hydrological station recorded the biggest flood since its establishment in 1956. It caused severe damage to local roads.

From July 1 to 22 this year, precipitation in the Yangtze source area was 53.5 percent above average for the same period in previous years.

While China's conservation efforts have improved biodiversity in the region, experts called for a global response and joint measures to tackle global warming, along with increased attention and research on the Yangtze's headwaters.

Vital components of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau ecosystem, the headwater regions of the Yangtze and Lancang rivers play a crucial role in safeguarding water resources, protecting biodiversity and ensuring ecological stability.

Annual scientific expeditions to the source of the Yangtze River have been conducted since 2012. **XINHUA**

THAILAND

# Prime Minister Srettha removed from office by a court order over an ethics violation

JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI,  
BANGKOK

A court in Thailand yesterday removed Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin from office over an ethical violation, further shaking up Thai politics after the court-ordered dissolution of the main opposition party a week ago.

The Constitutional Court ruled on a case involving Srettha's appointment of a Cabinet member who had been imprisoned in connection with an alleged attempt to bribe a court official.

The court voted 5:4 against Srettha and the ruling removed him from office immediately.

The Cabinet will remain in place on a caretaker basis until Parliament approves a new prime minister. There is no time limit for Parliament to fill the position. The caretaker Cabinet could also dissolve Parliament and call a new election.

The acting PM is expected to be Phumtham Wechayachai of the Pheu Thai party. Phumtham was first deputy prime minister and commerce minister under Srettha.

If Parliament is given the task of choosing a new prime minister, it can select from a roster of candidates nominated for the post last year by the major political parties. The Pheu Thai Party, to which



Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin

Srettha belongs, has two eligible candidates, including Paetongtarn Shinawatra, the daughter of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Another frontrunner would be Anutin Charnvirakul, head of the Bhumjaithai Party, which ran third in last year's election. He is currently a deputy prime minister and interior minister. Anutin, a powerbroker in the vote-rich northeast whose family owns a major construction group, has served in both a military-backed government and the civilian one that it replaced.

Also in the running would be two former senior military officers: Prayuth Chan-ocha, who served as prime minister for nine years after staging a coup in 2014,

and Prawit Wongsuwan, who was one of Prayuth's deputy prime ministers.

Srettha, speaking at Government House shortly after the verdict, thanked the judges for giving him the opportunity to defend himself. He said he respected the ruling and that he always sought to act ethically during his time in office.

"I'm sorry that I'd be considered as a prime minister who's unethical, but that's not who I am," he said.

Srettha had appointed Pichit Chuenban as a minister of the Prime Minister's Office in a Cabinet reshuffle in April. Pichit was jailed for six months in 2008 on contempt of court charges after he allegedly tried to bribe a judge

with 2 million baht (\$55,000) in cash in a grocery bag over a case involving Thaksin, the former prime minister.

Pichit resigned from the post weeks after being appointed when controversy over the incident was revived.

The court said that although Pichit has already served his jail term, his behavior — as ruled by the Supreme Court — was dishonest.

Srettha as prime minister has sole responsibility for vetting the qualifications of his Cabinet nominations, the court ruled. It said he knew about Pichit's past but still nominated him, and therefore it ruled that he violated the ethics codes.

The petition against Srettha was initiated by former members of the military-installed Senate who had refused to approve Move Forward's prime ministerial candidate when the party was attempting to form a government after its election victory.

The petition against Srettha was seen as a move favoring a pro-military political party in his coalition government.

Thailand's courts, especially the Constitutional Court, are considered a bulwark of the country's royalist establishment, which has used them and nominally independent state agencies such as

the Election Commission to issue rulings to cripple or sink political opponents.

Srettha became prime minister in August last year, despite his Pheu Thai party finishing second in the general election. After Move Forward was denied power by the Senate whose term ended in May, Pheu Thai — then the biggest partner of Move Forward — excluded it from the coalition and joined hands with parties affiliated with the previous military-controlled government to gather enough support from other parties and the Senate to approve a new prime minister.

Srettha, 62, was a real estate executive before entering politics. He prioritized opening up Thailand after almost a decade of military-backed rule, frequently traveling abroad for trade negotiations. His party pushed a populist plan for a 10,000-baht (\$286) handout policy to stimulate the economy, a key promise in its campaign last year, though it has been delayed by technicalities largely involving funding.

His government also promoted Thai cultural products through a "soft power" agency and the critical tourism sector by loosening entry requirements and other measures.

Srettha, who tried to project an image of a strong CEO, was seen by critics as an agent for Thaksin, who returned last August to submit to a plea deal his detractors say was essential to Srettha gaining the premiership.

The Constitutional Court last week ordered the dissolution of the progressive Move Forward Party over an accusation that the party violated the constitution by proposing an amendment to a law against defaming the country's royal family. The party has already regrouped as the People's Party.

MDT/AP

NEW ZEALAND

# Food bank distributes candy made from a lethal amount of methamphetamine

CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-MCLAY, WELLINGTON

A charity working with homeless people in Auckland, New Zealand unknowingly distributed candies filled with a potentially lethal dose of methamphetamine in its food parcels after the sweets were donated by a member of the public.

Auckland City Mission yesterday said that staff had started to contact up to 400 people to track down parcels that could contain the sweets —

which were solid blocks of methamphetamine enclosed in candy wrappers. Three people were treated in hospital after consuming them, New Zealand authorities said, but were later discharged.

The amount of methamphetamine in each candy was up to 300 times the level someone would usually take and could be lethal, according to the New Zealand Drug Foundation — a drug checking and policy organization, which first



tested the candies.

Ben Birks Ang, a Foundation spokesperson, said disguising drugs as innocuous goods was a common cross-border smuggling technique and more of the candies

might have been distributed throughout New Zealand.

The sweets had a high street value of NZ\$ 1,000 (\$608) per candy, which suggested the donation by an unknown member

of the public was accidental rather than a deliberate attack, Birks Ang said.

The authorities' "initial perceptions" were that the episode was likely an importation scheme gone awry, said Detective Inspector Glenn Baldwin, but the nature and scale of the operation was unknown. Officers have recovered 16 of the candies, but do not know how many are circulating, he said.

The City Missioner, Helen Robinson, said eight families, including at least one child, had reported consuming the contaminated candies since Tuesday. The "revolting" taste meant most had immediately spat them out.

The charity's food bank only accepts donations of commercially produced food in sealed packaging, Robinson said. The pineapple candies, stamped with the label of Malaysian brand Rinda, "appeared as such when they were donated," arriving in a retail-sized bag, she added.

Auckland City Mission was alerted Tuesday by a food bank client who reported "funny-tasting" candy. Staff tasted some of the remaining candies and immediately contacted the authorities. One staff member was taken to hospital after sampling the sweet, Baldwin said, adding that a child and a "young person" were also treated in hospital before being discharged. MDT/AP

ANALYSIS

# How X owner Elon Musk uses his social platform to amplify his right-wing views

BARBARA ORTUTAY

**A**S X's owner and most followed user, Elon Musk has increasingly used the social media platform as a megaphone to amplify his political views and, lately, those of right-wing figures he's aligned with. There are few modern parallels to his antics, but then again there are few modern parallels to Elon Musk himself.

Of course, none of this should come as a surprise.

Back in 2022 when he was trying to buy Twitter, Musk said he was doing so because it wasn't living up to its potential as a "platform for free speech." Protecting free speech — not money — was his motivation because, as he put it, "having a public platform that is maximally trusted and broadly inclusive is extremely important to the future of civilization."

Musk often ruminates on the future of civilization. For one, he appears fixated on a coming "population collapse," threatening to wipe out humanity. And he joined prominent scientists and tech leaders last year in warning the world about artificial intelligence doing the same. Musk has framed threats to free speech as yet another existential crisis looming over the world. And he is going to try his best to save it.

"Free speech is the bedrock of a functioning democracy, and Twitter is the digital town square where matters vital to the future of humanity are debated," Musk said in an April 2022 post, adding hearts, stars and rocket emojis to highlight the statement.

Two years on, the platform — now called X — has indeed become a haven for the type of free speech Musk has come to champion. In the U.S., he's spread memes — and sometimes misinformation — about illegal immigration, alleged election fraud and transgender policies, and he formally endorsed former President Donald Trump's presidential bid this summer.

In May 2023, he co-hosted Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis' of-

AP PHOTO



ficial presidential bid announcement. That turned out to be a disastrous rollout marred by technical glitches but it underscored Musk's desire to turn X into a "digital town square." After the event was marred by technical difficulties, Musk extended an open invitation to any other presidential candidate who wants to do one. Trump took him up on it, agreeing to an interview with the billionaire Tesla CEO on Monday evening. The conversation started with technical glitches with people unable to join in and began some 42 minutes late.

"I've not been very political before," Musk said during his conversation with Trump.

Overseas — where most X users live — he's feuded with top officials in Australia, Brazil, the European Union and the U.K. over the balance between free speech and the spread of harmful misinformation. And he accused a political party in his native South Africa of "openly pushing for genocide of white people."

"Elon Musk is a master of the media and controls one of the world's largest microphones. Musk understands the power of social media in shaping a political narrative," said Emarketer analyst Jasmine Enberg. "The concern is that as he pushes his

own political agenda, X could suppress viewpoints that oppose Musk's own, either intentionally or by nature of the platform becoming more partisan. That could turn off users who feel marginalized on the platform, and disillusion some who may have earlier bought into his free speech mantra."

Musk's political shift playing out on X comes as other social media platforms, notably Meta's Facebook and Instagram, are shying away from politics. Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg has never endorsed a presidential candidate — and in February, the world's largest social media company announced it would avoid recommending political content to people who don't already follow such accounts.

Lately, Zuckerberg appears to contrast Musk in other ways too. While as recently as January, the Facebook founder was testifying before Congress about the harm his platforms have caused children, he seemed to have embraced a more stylish look that includes gold chains, longer curls and a beaming confidence coupled with slightly self-deprecating humor that seems to embrace his eccentricities. On July 4th, for instance, he posted a video of

himself riding an electric surfboard, wearing a tuxedo and holding a can of beer in one hand and an American flag in the other. The online response was far more positive than to a 2021 surfing photo, where he's seen slathered in so much sunscreen it looks like he is wearing a white mask.

Musk, meanwhile, is veering from cool nerd territory into what Kara Swisher, the elder stateswoman of tech journalism, recently called "the Howard Hughes portion" of an inevitable decline. He's sparring with those who disagree with him — be they foreign governments or people infected by what he calls the "woke mind virus." Last week, the British government called on Elon Musk to act more responsibly after the tech billionaire used X to unleash a barrage of posts that risk inflaming violent unrest gripping the country.

Justice Minister Heidi Alexander made the comments after Musk posted a comment saying that "Civil war is inevitable" in the U.K. Musk later doubled down, highlighting complaints that the British criminal justice system treats Muslims more leniently than far-right activists and comparing Britain's crackdown on social media users to the Soviet Union. **MDT.AP**

## this day in history

### 1965 LOS ANGELES RIOT TOLL KEEPS RISING



At least 28 people have died and hundreds have been injured after a weekend of rioting in Los Angeles.

Armed National Guards have been deployed on the streets of the Californian city, where many of the shops and businesses now lie in smouldering ruins.

About 500 businesses, most of them white-owned, are reported to have been destroyed or damaged in what is a predominantly black neighbourhood.

The trouble began in the Watts area of the city four nights ago when a black man was stopped on suspicion of drunken driving.

A crowd gathered around the car as the driver and his brother began arguing with the police officers. Their mother then joined the argument. When all three were arrested the trouble began.

The crowd began throwing bricks and bottles. Shop windows were broken and stock looted. Black youths ran through the streets setting fire to churches, offices and other buildings.

The Governor of California, Edmund Brown, who has just flown back from Europe, said: "We are involved in a state of insurrection there."

William Parker, the police chief of Los Angeles, said: "We haven't the slightest idea when this can be brought under control."

Over the weekend, sniping and looting have continued. The cost of repairs is now put at \$100m.

Television pictures show black shopkeepers have posted notices on their businesses reading "Blood brother" or "Negro-owned" in an attempt to prevent attacks on the premises.

One National Guard officer was injured when he was hit by a car reportedly driven by a black man. After that incident, officers were authorised to load their rifles and attach bayonets.

Some 18,000 National Guards have been deployed. About 2,000 were flown in from San Francisco.

President Lyndon Johnson, who spent the weekend at his Texas ranch, has called for an end to the violence. [...]

Civil rights leader Martin Luther King is on his way to Los Angeles. He claims the poor social conditions are the underlying cause for the discontent

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

In 1964 the United States passed the Civil Rights Act, which was intended to herald a new era in race relations. But many states acted quickly to circumvent the law. California blocked the fair housing legislation thus ensuring segregation continued.

It led to a great feeling of injustice and resentment in the inner cities. The riots in Los Angeles lasted six days, left 34 dead and about 1,000 people injured. Nearly 4,000 people were arrested and hundreds of buildings were destroyed.

A commission headed by former CIA Director, John McCone, concluded the riots were the result of many socio-economic problems like unemployment, poor housing and lack of education, but little was done to address the problems. Los Angeles was the scene of another riot in 1992, triggered by the acquittal of four white police officers accused of beating a black motorist, Rodney King.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Express your heart. The next three weeks, with Mercury in Leo, favor creativity, romance and fun.

TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Enjoy creative domestic projects. The next three weeks, with Mercury in Leo, are especially good for family communication.

GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Talk about possibilities and solutions. It's easier to learn, express and get your message out, with Mercury in Leo.

CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Communication gets especially profitable, with Mercury in Leo for three weeks. Negotiations come naturally.

LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Develop creative projects over the next three weeks. You're especially clever and articulate, with Mercury in your sign.

VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 Complete or abandon old projects over three weeks, with Mercury in Leo. Clean messes. Write down dreams.

LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Communication generates teamwork, with Mercury in Leo. Social participation opens new possibilities with friends and allies.

SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Brainstorm lucrative ventures. Communication leads to rising professional status, with Mercury in Leo for three weeks.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Educational opportunities arise, with Mercury in Leo. Expand your investigation over the next three weeks.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Tally shared resources. Profitable projects arise in conversation over three weeks, with Mercury in Leo.

AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Partnership flowers in conversation. It's easier to communicate, articulate and delegate over three weeks, with Mercury in Leo.

PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Research and learn new tricks. With Mercury in Leo, you're especially clever and creative with your work, health and fitness.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles: EASY and EASY+ grids with numbers.

Sudoku puzzles: MEDIUM and HARD grids with numbers.

WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION. Rows include CHINA (Beijing, Changchun, Chengdu, etc.) and WORLD (Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, etc.).

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Upper crust; 6- Mayberry \_\_\_; 9- Teheran native; 14- Deep sleeps; 15- "Hollywood Squares" win; 16- Morocco's capital; 17- Bicycle steering mechanism; 19- Smell, usually a pleasant one; 20- Yoko; 21- Capital city of Peru; 22- When pigs fly!

DOWN 1- Canyon comeback; 2- Bank transaction; 3- \_\_\_ expert, but...; 4- Wee bit; 5- Night school subj.; 6- Redbreast; 7- Froth; 8- David Copperfield's first wife; 9- Shah, e.g.;

Yesterday's solution crossword grid with filled-in words.

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers.

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



Advertisement for 'BUY & RENT!' with contact information for jml property.

Advertisement for 'jml property' with contact details.

Advertisement for 'Hoi Wan Retail (Taipa)' with price HKD 12,980,000.

Advertisement for 'Tou Un (Taipa)' with price HKD 2,750,000.

Advertisement for 'Jade Garden (Taipa)' with price HKD 11,880,000.

AP FILE PHOTO

Lobster fishermen work at sunrise off Kennebunkport, Maine

GAME OF INCHES

# LOBSTER FISHERMEN SAY TINY CHANGE IN LEGAL SIZES COULD DISRUPT IMPERILED INDUSTRY

PATRICK WHITTLE,  
PORTLAND

**G**ERRY Cushman has seen Maine's iconic lobster industry survive numerous threats in his three decades on the water, but the latest challenge — which might sound tiny — could be the biggest one yet.

Lobster fishing is a game of inches, and the number of inches is about to change. Fishing regulators are instituting a new rule that lobster fishermen must abide by stricter minimum sizes for crustaceans they harvest.

The impending change might be only 1/16th of an inch or 1.6 millimeters, but it will make a huge difference for fishermen when the fishery is already facing major threats from climate change and new rules designed to protect whales, numerous lobster fishers told The Associated Press.

Interstate fishery regulators, however, say the change is necessary to preserve the future of the lobster population off New England as the species shifts farther north with warming waters.

In addition to causing a dispute between fishermen and regulators, the change has led to confusion about the ramifications for international trade in one of the world's most popular seafoods.

"We don't need any more, really, on our plate. It's just a lot going on, one fight after another," Cushman, 55, a boat captain who fishes out of Port Clyde, said. "We don't need anything in the marketplace to lower the price of lobsters."

## FISHERMEN PUSHING BACK

Fishermen are pushing back at the new rules slated to go into effect next summer, because they fear even such a small

change could dramatically alter their ability to fish. They also say it would put them at a competitive disadvantage with Canada, which harvests the same lobster species and has more relaxed rules. Some worry the size change could glut the market with lobsters in future years.

But recent surveys have shown a decline in baby lobsters off Maine, and regulators with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission say that could foreshadow a decline in catch.

"We're seeing a decline in recruits that will probably result in a decline in adults later on," said Caitlin Starks, a senior fishery management plan coordinator with the commission.

America's lobster catch is already dipping — the haul in Maine, which harvests most U.S. lobster, fell from a high of 132.6 million pounds in 2016 to 93.7 million last year.

The minimum size change applies to the Gulf of Maine, a piece of ocean off New England that's one of the most important lobster fishing grounds in the world. Under commission rules, the legal harvesting size for lobsters would change there if the

young lobster stock in the gulf dropped by 35%.

Officials said last year the stock declined by 39% when comparing 2020-22 to 2016-18. That surprised both regulators and fishermen, and led many fishermen to question the accuracy of the commission's data.

Nonetheless, regulators say the minimum size on the gauges fishermen use to measure lobsters will increase to 3 5/16 inches (8.4 centimeters) on July 1 and grow another 1/16th of an inch two years later.

## CONSERVATIONISTS SUPPORT

Some conservationists support the changes, which they feel will protect lobsters from depletion from overfishing. That's especially important "in the face of unprecedented climate change in the Gulf of Maine," said Erica Fuller, an attorney in the ocean program at Conservation Law Foundation.

Scientists say the gulf is warming faster than most of the world's oceans.

"Analysis shows that the proposed increase in gauge size will contribute to the long-term

health and resiliency of the lobster stock by increasing its spawning stock biomass," Fuller said.

The changes do not apply in Canada, which has an even larger lobster fishing industry than the U.S. Some fishing grounds there already allow smaller lobsters to be caught than U.S. rules allow.

Canadian authorities and trade groups are closely watching regulatory actions in the U.S.

This month, the Atlantic States commission approved new rules to prevent the U.S. from importing sub-legal lobsters from Canada. The Canadian government is "committed to working with the Canadian fishing industry to help ensure continued market access," said Barre Campbell, a spokesperson for Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Inability to sell lobsters to the U.S. could result in Canadians relying more on other foreign markets, said Geoff Irvine, executive director of the Lobster Council of Canada. China is a major buyer from both countries.

"If we can't sell those percentages of that size lobsters to the U.S. anymore, we have to find

places to sell it," Irvine said. "What does that mean for prices, what does that mean for harvesters?"

## MAJOR IMPACT ON LOBSTER TRADE

The changes will likely have a major impact on the lobster industry but might not trickle down to U.S. consumers, said John Sackton, a longtime seafood industry analyst. Prices this summer have been down compared to recent years, according to trade data. Whether that continues depends in part on how large the catch is for the rest of the year, Sackton said.

Some scientists who study the fishery have supported the minimum size change. Richard Wahle, a retired University of Maine marine sciences professor who has studied lobsters for decades, called it a "prudent" measure to protect the fishery's future.

But the lobster industry sees a different story, said Patrice McCarron, executive director of the Maine Lobstermen's Association, the oldest and largest fishing industry association on the East Coast.

The association believes the action isn't needed at this time.

While recent lobster hauls are down from the 2010s, the group argued in commission testimony that they remain much higher than previous decades and that lobstermen also face "extreme regulatory uncertainty due to future whale rules."

Rep. Jared Golden, a Democratic congressman who represents the Maine coast, proposed an amendment in July to block the size changes.

"It's clear that regulators need to work much closer with fishermen to keep the industry sustainable and competitive," Golden said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



ANALYSIS

# Olympics with a short field delivers stars on the podium and compelling golf

DOUG FERGUSON,  
SAINT-QUENTIN-EN-YVELINES

AP PHOTO

**T**AKE a small field and eliminate about half of them for not having a realistic chance of winning and it sounds like it could be a LIV Golf event.

But this is the Olympics, with 60 players from more than 30 countries, some of whom rarely experience a big stage, none getting paid. Singapore had its first player (Shannon Tan) in the women's competition. Switzerland had its first (Joel Girrbach) in the men's event.

That might explain why golf in the Olympics continues to deliver the biggest stars on the podium, along with compelling stories.

Paris was no exception.

Scottie Scheffler set the tone for the fortnight at Le Golf National with a Sunday charge that was as amazing as the collapse of Jon Rahm.

Scheffler was four shots behind going into the last round, and the world's No. 1 player still trailed by six shots as he played the 12th hole. He shot 29 on the back nine, closed with a 9-under 62 and added Olympic gold to an already astonishing year.

Xander Schauffele, the gold me-



Lydia Ko, of New Zealand, poses for the cameras with her gold medal following final round of the women's golf event at the Olympics

dalist from the Tokyo Games, also is having a monster year with major titles at the PGA Championship and British Open. He shared the 54-hole lead with Rahm and said afterward that "cherry on top would not do it justice" if he had won another gold.

"Scottie is going to have about 14 cherries on top of his cake," Schauffele said.

It's been that kind of year.

The best year in women's golf belongs to Nelly Korda, with five straight wins (including a major) and six titles in seven starts. The Olympics, however, were all about Lydia Ko of New Zealand.

Ko had said at the start of the week she hasn't seen her silver medal from Rio de Janeiro or her bronze from Tokyo since winning them. Her father had the silver. Her sister

had taken the bronze back to their parents' native South Korea to share with family. Ko said if she won the gold, she would have to take back the other medals.

Ko's road back to her Florida home probably will include a detour to South Korea. "I think I need to find a good place to put them all together," she said yesterday [Macau time].

Her game was as good as it has been all year, and the timing could not have been better. Ko, who got married at the end of 2023, has been contemplating retirement and concluded this would be her last Olympics. She needed one more victory to get into the LPGA Hall of Fame.

Just like the men's competition, there was a combination of clutch play (Ko) and collapses (Korda,

Morgane Metraux, Miyu Yamashita, Rose Zhang). Ko made a 45-foot birdie putt on the seventh hole, built a five-shot lead and then had to hang on to win by two.

She headed to Scotland and didn't get her first good sleep until Sunday night.

"I woke up like, 'Was that a dream? Did that just really happen?' Super exciting," she said at the Women's Scottish Open. "Just very grateful for literally this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

Indeed, it was a quite a show.

But that's how it was the previous two Olympics for golf.

Korda won the gold in Tokyo as the newly minted No. 1 player in women's golf who was coming off her first major. Schauffele won gold with a 5-foot par putt on the last hole, a tribute to both parents. His mother was raised in Japan — his grandparents are still there — and his father had Olympic aspirations of his own until getting struck by a drunk driver on his way to a German training site. He lost an eye among numerous injuries. Storybook stuff.

In Rio de Janeiro, former U.S. Open champion Justin Rose won a duel with British Open champion Henrik Stenson.

The more compelling outcome was Inbee Park. She has been

injured in 2016 and barely played while she tried to recover, and there was a push behind the scenes by the South Korean squad to replace her with someone who would have had a better shot at gold. Park ignored the noise, and then took down Ko — the No. 1 player at the time — to win.

Golf already has produced gold medalists destined for the Hall of Fame if they aren't there already, such as Park and Ko. Scheffler is virtually assured of being No. 1 for the longest stretch since Tiger Woods. Rose is a former No. 1. Schauffele is a double major winner who finally is getting is due as one of the elite.

By now there should be little debate whether golf belongs in the Olympics, even though it doesn't look like other sports in the program. There is no getting around the fact most Olympic athletes wait four years for their prize and golf has four of them (five on the LPGA Tour) a year in the form of majors.

Scheffler's year would not have been incomplete without a gold medal. He has a green jacket. Ko's career was made complete with gold.

Next up are the Los Angeles Games in 2028. Given how the last three Olympiads have gone, what will Riviera deliver? **MDT/AP**

AD

## New Rugby Season - Starts 24<sup>th</sup> August

Saturdays, 9-11am, Taipa Stadium

BOYS AND GIRLS, AGES 6 – 18

- Team working
- Co-operation
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**MACAU  
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**OPINION**

**The Conversation**

Barnet Sherman, Boston University



**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS  
 WILL OFFER A BIG BOOST  
 TO THE US ECONOMY**

Of the millions of young adults heading off to college this fall, many will be international students. If trends continue, about 1 million students from around the world will come to the U.S. to pursue higher education this year.

These young scholars make a big economic impact. Altogether, they pump more than US\$40 billion into the U.S. economy and support over 368,000 jobs. That's not just paying professors and buying textbooks—it includes everything from renting apartments to late-night DoorDash and Grubhub deliveries. And it's near a record high.

In fact, higher education is the 10th-leading export of the United States, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis—except the export is really an import, of students from around the world.

Think of it this way: If you went to Paris to see the Olympics this year, the Olympics was the export that brought you—the tourist, or, in economic terms, the import—to France. In the complex world of economic balance of trade accounting, international students are the tourists visiting U.S. campuses.

Only economists could think that studying and taking exams is somehow a vacation.

While China, India and South Korea send the most students to the U.S., young people come from around the globe to pursue degrees here. Last year, they represented some 221 nations and territories, including three students from the independent island nation of Tuvalu.

In any of the 50 largest American cities, you'll find at least one college or university with international students on campus. For these communities, global learners offer a most welcome financial aid package.

Consider Boston. With its pantheon of venerable institutions—including Boston University, where I teach multinational finance and trade—the region boasts over 50 colleges and universities. Boston's economic gains from the more than 60,000 international students at these schools are huge: some \$2.7 billion.

Or look at Greater Philadelphia. The region's higher education institutions rank fifth nationwide in attracting students from around the world. From the perennially top-drawing University of Pennsylvania—itsself ranked in the top 25 for international students—or the more specialized Curtis Institute of Music, together they can expect to host nearly 17,000 international students in fall 2024.

In the top three of those public institutions alone—Arizona State University, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the University of California, Berkeley—international students contributed nearly \$1.6 billion, supporting close to 16,900 jobs. Expand that to the top 10—the University of California system takes four of those spots—and the numbers pop up to \$4.5 billion and 47,900 jobs.

But it's not just the geographically sprawling University of California and other large state systems. Mankato, Minnesota, hosts a Minnesota State University campus; in the 2022 academic year, some 1,700 international students called this small city, 80 miles from Minneapolis, their home away from home.

In addition to private and public universities, community colleges also attract thousands of international students. Although their international enrollment has fallen off in recent years, community colleges still attracted just shy of 53,600 international students in 2023, with China, Vietnam and Japan leading the list.

Generating some \$1.5 billion and supporting 6,620 jobs, they have a major economic impact—particularly in Texas, California and Florida, where the majority of these students come to learn.

One thing's for sure: Whether they're attending small-town community colleges or Ivies in big cities, international students have a "high degree" of economic impact.

The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared this week that the increasing spread of mpox across the continent is a health emergency, warning the virus might ultimately spill across international borders.

Yesterday, the World Health Organization is convening its own expert meeting to consider making a similar emergency declaration over mpox.

So far, more than 96% of all cases and deaths are in a single country—Congo. Scientists are concerned by the spread of a new version of the disease there that might be more easily transmitted among people.

Here's a look at what we know about mpox, and what might be done

to contain it:

Mpox, also known as monkeypox, was first identified by scientists in 1958 when there were outbreaks of a "pox-like" disease in monkeys. Until recently, most human cases were seen in people in central and west Africa who had close contact with infected animals.

In 2022, the virus was confirmed to spread via sex for the first time and triggered outbreaks in more than 70 countries that had not previously reported mpox.

Mpox belongs to the same family of viruses as smallpox but causes milder symptoms like fever, chills and body aches.

AP PHOTO



**FORD, MAZDA WARN OWNERS TO STOP DRIVING OLDER VEHICLES WITH DANGEROUS TAKATA AIR BAG INFLATORS**

**F**ord and Mazda are warning the owners of more than 475,000 older vehicles in the U.S. not to drive them because they have dangerous Takata air bag inflators that have not been replaced.

The warning issued yesterday [Macau time] covers more than 374,000 Ford, Lincoln and Mercury vehicles from the 2004 through 2014 model years and nearly 83,000 Mazdas from the 2003 through 2015 model years.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says the inflators can explode with too much force in a crash, blowing apart a metal canister and shooting fragments that can severely injure or kill people. All were recalled previously but repairs have not been completed.

Ford models covered by the warning include 2004 to 2011 Ranger pickups, 2005 through 2014 Mustangs, 2005 and 2006 Ford GTs, 2006 through 2012 Fusions and 2007 through 2010 Edge SUVs.

Affected Mercury and Lincoln models include the Milan, MKZ and Zephyr from 2006 through 2012, and the MKX from 2007 through 2010.

Mazdas covered by the warning are the 2004 to 2009 B-Series pickup,

2003 through 2013 Mazda 6, the 2006 and 2007 Speed6 and the 2004 through 2011 RX-8. Also included are the 2004 through 2006 MPV, the 2007 through 2012 CX-7 and the 2007 through 2015 CX-9.

The government says 27 people have been killed in the U.S. by faulty Takata inflators, which used volatile ammonium nitrate to create a small explosion to inflate air bags in a crash. The chemical can deteriorate over time when exposed to high temperatures and humidity. More than 400 people in the U.S. have been hurt.

Worldwide at least 35 people have been killed by Takata inflators in Malaysia, Australia and the U.S.

Potential for a dangerous malfunction led to the largest series of auto recalls in U.S. history, with at least 67 million Takata inflators involved. The U.S. government says many have not been repaired. About 100 million inflators have been recalled worldwide. The exploding air bags sent Takata into bankruptcy.

Owners can check to see if their vehicles are covered by going to the NHTSA website and keying in their vehicle identification or license

plate numbers. Ford and Mazda also have recall websites.

If a vehicle has an un-repaired Takata inflator, owners should stop driving them and call a dealer to set up a repair appointment. Ford and Mazda are offering free towing or mobile repairs and loaner vehicles if necessary, NHTSA says.

"Even minor crashes can result in exploding Takata air bags that can kill or produce life-altering, gruesome injuries," the agency said in a statement. "Older model year vehicles put their occupants at higher risk."

Ford says more than 765,000 inflators in Ford and Lincoln vehicles worldwide should not be driven until the air bag inflators have been replaced. In the U.S., the company has made more than 121 million attempts to contact owners including emails, phone calls, text messages and visits to customer homes. The company says over 95% of its U.S. customers have had their inflators replaced.

Nissan, Honda, Stellantis, Ford, BMW and Toyota and Mazda have previously issued similar "do not drive" warnings for some of their vehicles equipped with Takata inflators. **MDT/AP**

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**French** prosecutors opened an investigation into an online harassment complaint made by Olympic boxing champion Imane Khelif (pictured) after a torrent of criticism and false claims about her sex during the Summer Games, the Paris prosecutor's office said yesterday. The athlete's lawyer Nabil Boudi filed a legal complaint with a special unit in the Paris prosecutor's office that combats online hate speech on Friday. Boudi said the boxer was targeted by a "misogynist, racist and sexist campaign" as she won gold in the women's welterweight division

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**Palestine** A top Hamas official said the Palestinian militant group is losing faith in the United States' ability to mediate a cease-fire in Gaza ahead of a new round of talks scheduled for this week amid mounting pressure to bring an end to the 10-month-old war with Israel. Osama Hamdan (pictured) told The Associated Press in an interview recently that Hamas will only participate if the talks focus on implementing a proposal detailed by U.S. President Joe Biden in May and endorsed internationally.

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**Ukrainian** forces pushed on with their major cross-border advance into Russia's Kursk region for a second week yesterday, claiming that they took more ground, captured more Russian prisoners and destroyed a bomber in attacks on military airfields. Assault troops advanced 1 to 2 kilometers farther into areas of Kursk yesterday, the commander of the Ukrainian military, Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi, said in a video posted on President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Telegram channel.