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PREPPING FOR THE UPCOMING OPENING OF NEW BRIDGE, DSAT HAS ANNOUNCED A SERIES OF TRAFFIC ADJUSTMENTS AND NEW ROUTES TO IMPROVE

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RECYCLING EFFORTS SURGE AS OVER 458 TONS PROCESSED

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TAIWANESE BUSINESSMAN'S GAMING DEBT TO ALVIN CHAU SCALES TO MOP1.5 BILLION

P4



AP PHOTO



Taiwan The mainland's ban on Taiwanese fruit, vegetables, and seafood violates WTO rules, says Taiwan. The ban escalates tensions as Beijing increases pressure on the island. Taipei urges Beijing to resolve the issue through WTO discussions, warning that the ban harms farmers on both sides.

AP PHOTO



Vietnamese real estate tycoon Truong My Lan faces a second trial after being sentenced to death for orchestrating the country's largest financial fraud case. Lan is accused of fraudulently raising billions through illegal bond issuance, leading to significant losses for investors and banks.

Hong Kong A report revealed that a faulty fuel hose component caused an engine fire on a Cathay Pacific Airbus A350. The fire forced a Zurich-bound flight to return to Hong Kong. Had it not been detected, the fire could have caused extensive damage.

AP PHOTO

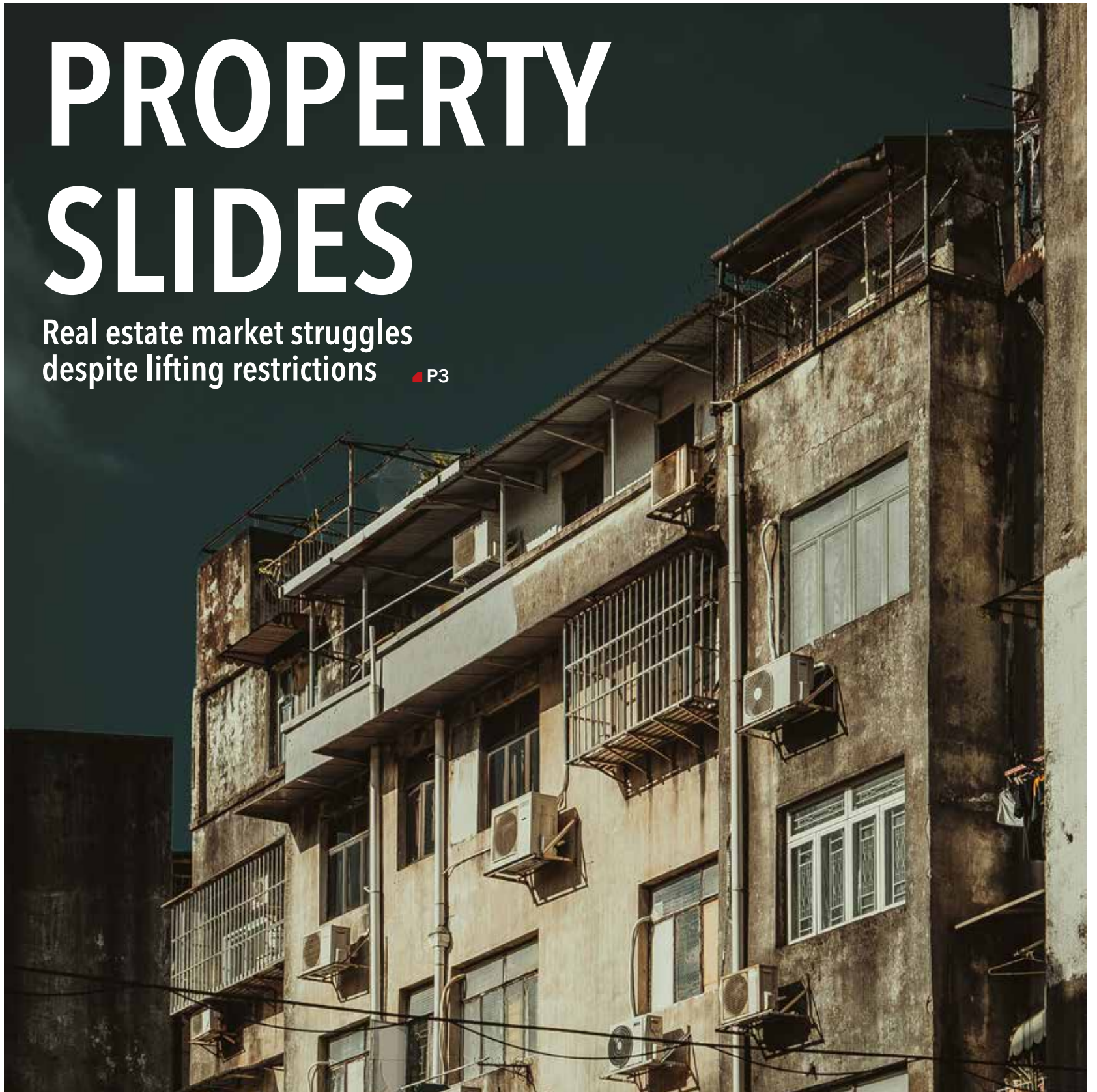


Malaysian police detained 19 leaders of an Islamic group, including CEO Nasiruddin Mohamad Ali, amid an investigation into widespread child sexual abuse at the group's welfare homes. Over 400 children were rescued, and authorities froze the group's assets in response to the scandal.

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PROPERTY SLIDES

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TASTE OF EDESIA

MID-AUTUMN
OVER 490,000 TOURIST ARRIVALS DURING THE HOTTEST FESTIVAL ON RECORD



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TENDERS OPEN FOR AIRPORT RECLAMATION WORK

The Civil Aviation Authority (AACM) has announced tenders are now invited for reclamation and construction works at the local airport, with projects expected to commence in the second half of 2024. This initiative aims to enhance the airport's capacity amidst the city's recovering economy and tourism sector. In response to concerns from lawmaker Lei Chan U, AACM emphasized that a pre-construction risk assessment will be conducted to ensure flight safety during the expansion. Safeguard measures include increased inspections of runways and taxiways, as well as scheduling construction during non-peak flight hours to minimize disruptions.

POLICE ARREST THREE OVER DEFRAUDING TOURIST MOP60

Police authorities arrested three individuals from mainland China for allegedly accosting pedestrians and defrauding a tourist of MOP60. On Sept. 16, officers patrolling Av. 24 de Juno encountered the suspects, who claimed they had lost all their money gambling. When they requested financial aid, a victim handed over MOP60. The police intervened, seizing HKD9,500 and MOP60 in suspected stolen money from one of the suspects.

F&B OUTLETS REPORT RISE IN JULY REVENUE

Receipts for restaurants and similar establishments rose 7.4% month-on-month in July, according to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). Local Style Cafes, Congee & Noodle Shops; and Chinese Restaurants saw increases of, respectively, 7.8% and 7.3%. Retail sales also improved, climbing 5.4% month-on-month, particularly in motor vehicle, clothing, and cosmetics sectors. However, when compared to July 2023, restaurant receipts dropped 13.3%, with notable declines in Chinese, Japanese, and Western restaurants. Retail sales fell 26.4% year-on-year, especially in watches and leather goods. Looking ahead to August, optimism is evident as 31% of restaurant operators expect increased receipts, while 35% of retailers anticipate sales growth, reflecting a positive business outlook for both sectors.

TOURISM

OVER 490,000 TOURIST ARRIVALS DURING HOTTEST MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL ON RECORD

LYNZY VALLES

DURING the recent Mid-Autumn Festival, Macau saw a surge in travel across its borders, highlighting the holiday's festive spirit.

From Sept. 14 to 18, the festival, celebrated widely in East Asia, saw about 1 million tourists, including 492,000 inbound travelers.

A staggering 3.019 million passengers entered and exited through various checkpoints, with the influx of tourists marking a notable recovery in travel trends, according to data from the Public Security Police.

Key entry points such as the Border Gate welcomed more than 195,700 incoming passengers, while the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Port received over 102,000 tourist arrivals.



Also, Macau recorded its hottest Mid-Autumn Festival since 1952, when records began, with temperatures soaring to 34.6 degrees Celsius on Sept. 17, according to the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG).

This unprecedented heat shattered the previous record of 33.7 degrees Celsius set on Sept. 14, 2008.

Last year, the city experienced its third hottest Mid-Autumn Festival, with temperatures reaching

33.4 degrees Celsius on Sept. 29, highlighting a concerning trend in rising temperatures during this culturally significant holiday.

SMG has attributed the surge in extreme weather events, including this record heat, to climate change and global warming.

The Mid-Autumn Festival is traditionally a time of family reunions and cultural celebrations.

In China, some 629.56 million passenger trips were handled by its transportation sectors during

the three-day holiday for the festival, up 31.1% year on year, data from the Ministry of Transport showed Wednesday.

Of the total, China recorded 42.57 million passenger trips by railway, 1.98 million by water, and 5.07 million by air.

Road traffic took the lion's share, with 579.94 million passenger trips.

The latest data from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism reveals that domestic tourist destinations welcomed approximately 107 million visitors during the holiday, marking a 6.3% increase compared to 2019, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Travelers spent over 51 billion yuan, an 8% rise from 2019, when the holiday was celebrated in mid-September. In contrast, last year, the holiday coincided with the National Holiday.

FINANCE

Macau slashes interest rates to 5.25%, follows Fed's lead

MACAU and Hong Kong have both followed the U.S. Federal Reserve by reducing their interest rates to 5.25%, a decrease of 50 basis points.

This move, announced recently, aligns with the Fed's first rate cut in four years, aimed at easing financial pressures on borrowers and stimulating economic growth.

The decision to lower interest rates in Macau is particularly expected, as the city's currency, the pataca, is pegged to the Hong Kong dollar, which in turn is linked to the U.S. dollar.

The Federal Reserve's action comes amid signs of a slowing labor market and persistent inflation



concerns.

Economists suggest lower rates could encourage long-term investments and job creation.

This trend of rate cuts is not limited to Hong Kong and Macau; other countries including China, Canada and New Zealand have recently implemented similar measures to bolster their economies amid global economic uncertainties.

Yesterday, most stock markets in the Gulf closed higher, following interest rate cuts by central banks in the region after an unusually large policy easing by the Fed. The Fed reduced its benchmark rate by 50 basis points (bps) on Wednesday, with policymakers anticipating another half percentage point decrease by the end of the year.

LV

TWO WOMEN DEAD IN SEPARATE INCIDENTS

LYNZY VALLES

AUTHORITIES are investigating two incidents involving the deaths of women in separate locations Sept. 18, during the Mid-Autumn Festival.

At 2 p.m., the Fire Services Bureau alerted the police to a woman found lifeless on the ground-floor of the shop on Rua Sul.

Upon arrival, the scene showed no signs of struggle or theft, and an initial examination revealed no suspicious injuries.

The case is currently classified as a body discovery, pending forensic examination to determine the cause of death.

Later that evening, at 9:38 p.m., another report came in regarding an elderly woman who had fallen from a building in Ocean Gardens.

Emergency responders rushed her to the public hospital but resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful, and she was pronounced dead.

Investigators found her injuries were consistent with a fall from height, with no signs of foul play inside her residence.

Both cases have been referred to the Criminal Investigation Department of the Judiciary Police (PJ) for further inquiry as authorities work to uncover the circumstances surrounding the events.

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MacauDaily 澳門每日時報 * DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR_Lynzy Valles
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS_Alex Torrão, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Seguí DESIGNER_Rebeca Almeida | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacaoNews, Xinhua SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

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ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER_Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS_Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

Advertisement_advertising@macaudailytimes.com

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



Property market struggles despite lifting restrictions

NADIA SHAW

THE residential property market continues to face challenges despite the lifting of market restrictions in April,

with transaction numbers and prices hitting multi-year lows in August.

The real estate sector does not appear to be benefitting from the removal of market curbs, according to stamp

duty data from the Financial Services Bureau, published earlier this week.

Between July and August, residential property sales dropped 43%, from 356 transactions to just 200.

The Macau Peninsula, Taipa and Coloane saw their transaction numbers decrease in August, with the peninsula's sales totaling 150, a drop of almost 39% month-on-month.

The residential property price per square meter was similarly dismal, decreasing almost 15%, from MOP93,374 in July to MOP79,568 in August.

This figure marks the lowest level since June 2016, which saw a price of MOP78,416.

By area, the peninsula's average property price in August fell 14.5% month-on-month, to MOP77,565.

To the Times, Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) Macau, attributed the current downturn more to broader economic conditions than seasonal trends.

JLL noted that interest rate hikes, a slow recovery post-COVID-19, and shifts in economic structure are significant factors contributing to the weak property market.

Looking ahead, JLL acknowledged that while recent cuts in US interest rates may signal potential relief for buyers, they might not significantly impact Macau's market due to its disconnection from US rate movements.

The firm told the Times "Jobs and payroll data will be crucial in determining the

size and pace of cuts in the future."

The downturn has particularly affected local residents seeking their first homes.

Many who purchased properties in the last five years now face negative equity as current prices approach construction costs.

"The demand is still weak due to the low investment sentiment, as well as low marriage and newborn rates in the recent years," said JLL.

Despite government efforts to stimulate demand through measures like removing stamp duties and easing mortgage ratios for luxury properties, JLL believes these actions have not effectively addressed the challenges.

The property firm suggested restoring loan-to-value ratios for first-time buyers could better support residents.

Investor sentiment remains cautious; however, some view the current situation as an opportunity for long-term investment as they anticipate a market bottoming out.

JLL has forecast that while rental values may stabilize or grow slightly this year, overall property prices will continue to face downward pressure in the near term.

AD

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ELECTORAL COMMITTEE CONFIRMS SOLE CANDIDATE SAM HOU FAI

Sam Hou Fai will be the sole candidate in the upcoming Chief Executive Election, having secured 386 endorsements from the 400-member Chief Executive Election Committee. In a statement, the Electoral Affairs Commission confirmed his candidacy for the election scheduled Oct. 13. According to the relevant provisions of the Chief Executive Election Law, nominated candidates and members of the Chief Executive Election Committee may lodge appeals within one day of the Electoral Affairs Commission announcing its decision on the eligibility of nominated individuals. If no objections are received within the relevant period, the Electoral Affairs Commission will issue, today, a notice announcing the final list of the accepted candidates for the election.

LABOR BUREAU HOSTS JOB MATCHING SESSIONS FOR RESIDENTS

The Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL), working with the Macao Federation of Trade Unions, will hold three job matching sessions at the end of September, offering 149 job vacancies across various industries. The first session on Sept. 26 will focus on the cleaning industry, featuring 59 positions for roles such as security officers and cleaners. The travel and public transport sector will follow with 46 vacancies, while the catering industry will offer 44 positions on Sept. 27. Registration opens Sept. 20 and runs until noon Sept. 25.

FIRE INVESTIGATION UNDERWAY NEAR TAIPA SPORTS CENTER

The Fire Services Bureau responded to a fire reported by the Fire Department at 9:24 a.m. yesterday. The greenery in the center of the roundabout at the Macao Stadium caught fire, near the Taipa Northeast Sports Center. The fire's recurrence, which follows a previous incident on Sept. 18, has raised concerns. Investigators found remnants of past burns and identified a layer of "sludge soil" containing flammable materials as a potential cause. No injuries were reported, and the municipal department does not plan to pursue criminal charges. The case has been referred to the Judiciary Police (PJ) for further investigation.

PUBLIC WORKS

NEW TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS NEAR MACAU BRIDGE TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

VICTORIA CHAN

IN preparation for the upcoming opening of the Macau Bridge, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) has announced a series of traffic adjustments and new routes to improve vehicle flow and efficiency.

According to Un Chao Wa, head of DSAT's Transport Planning and Infrastructure Department, said, "The connection bridge links Zone A to the artificial island and it will open on September 21."

The changes, which take effect tomorrow, include the opening of the new bridge connection and the installation of traffic lights on Estrada Circular Fronteira de Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau.

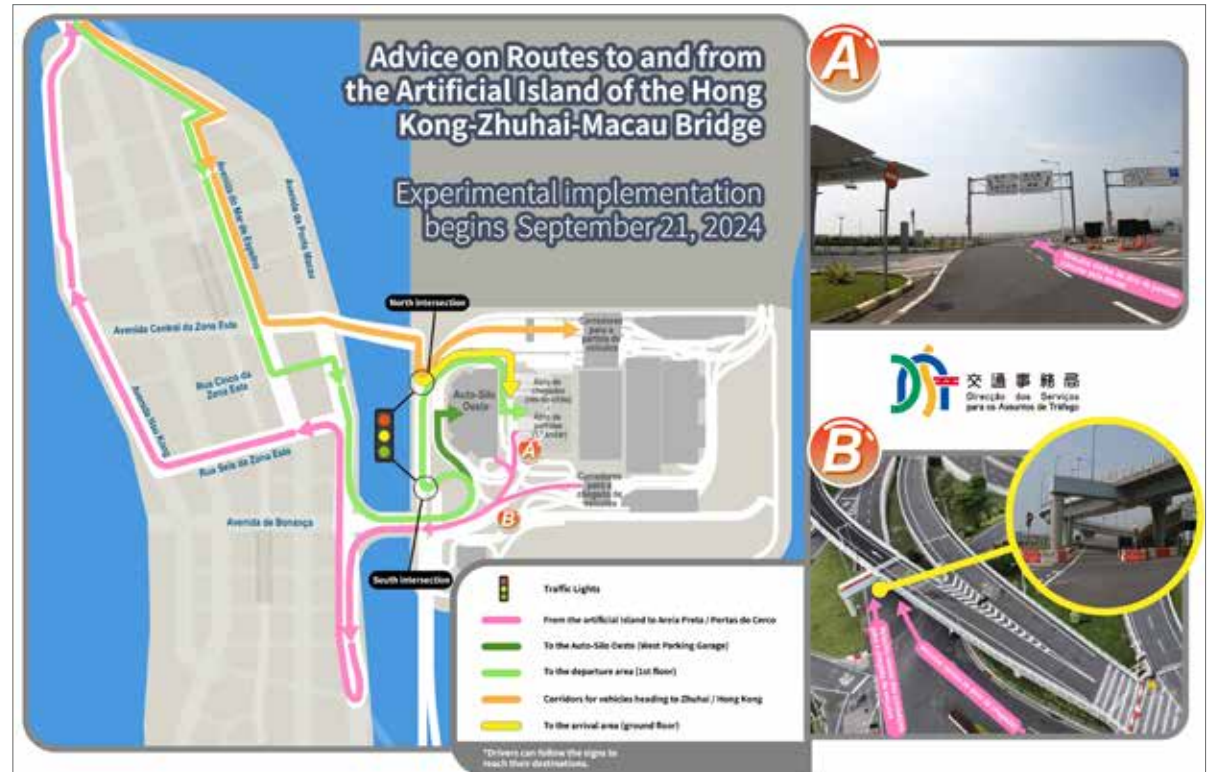
The bridge on Avenida de Bonança, which connects Zone A of the new landfills to the border of the artificial island of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, will be opened for the first time.

This new connection is expected to contribute to better vehicle sorting and increased traffic efficiency.

As part of the changes, DSAT has provided recommended routes for vehicles traveling between Zone A and the artificial island.

For vehicles departing from the Macau Peninsula towards the Hong Kong or Zhuhai side, the suggested route is to enter the artificial island via the existing route, that is, the viaduct on Avenida Central in the East Zone.

For vehicles traveling from



the Macau Peninsula to the West Parking Lot and Departure Lobby (first floor), the recommended route is to enter the artificial island via the Cinco da Zona Este and the connecting bridge on Avenida de Bonança.

Vehicles traveling from the Macau Port of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge to the Macau Peninsula are advised to enter Zone A via the connecting bridge on Avenida de Bonança and reach the Macau Peninsula via Rua Seis da Zona Este and Avenida Hou Kong.

Wong Kuok Heng, chief of the Division of Construction and Infrastructure of the Public Works

Bureau (DSOP), said, "Vehicles will enter and leave the bridge through the temporary road. In addition, this modification will also increase the route of the Guangzhou-Macau Highway."

Additionally, the construction of an underground technical gallery on Avenida Central da Zona Este will require temporary traffic diversions.

Vehicles to and from the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge will be redirected along Avenida do Mar de Espelho, Rua Cinco da Zona Este, Rua Seis da Zona Este, Avenida de Bonança, Avenida da Ponte Macau and Hou Kong Avenue.



DSAT has emphasized the importance of drivers paying attention to the temporary and visible indicative signs, as well as the changed traffic routes and designations during this transitional period.

"Roads in Zone A are still under construction, but it will be opened due to the need for road construction, and most of the roads that will be opened on Sept. 21 will be parallel. When the project is completed, the direction of traffic will be adjusted according to the road plan. In addition, we will start installing street signs on the newly opened roads in Zone A," said Wong.

Taiwanese businessman's gaming debt to Alvin Chau scales to MOP1.5 billion

LYNZY VALLES

A significant figure in Taiwan's ongoing corruption scandal has been revealed to owe former junket operator Alvin Chau a staggering NT\$6 billion (approximately MOP1.52 billion) in gaming debts, according to Taiwanese media reports.

Sheen Ching-Jing, chairman of the Core Pacific Group, was detained at the end of August for his involvement in a redevelopment scandal linked to a luxury project in downtown Taipei.

This case has also implicated former leader candi-



Sheen Ching-Jing

date Ko Wen-je, who was arrested earlier this month as part of the investigation into alleged irregularities

during his tenure as mayor from 2014 to 2022.

Ko, who previously enjoyed considerable support

from younger voters, is suspected of facilitating an increase in the project's floor area ratio (FAR), which prosecutors claim benefitted Sheen's business interests.

A report by Mirror Media indicated that Sheen had signed 17 promissory notes to Chau's Hong Kong company, reflecting his substantial financial obligations.

His inability to meet these commitments led to a court attempt in 2017 to seize assets linked to him, including the Tao Zhu Yin Yuan residential tower, known for its eco-friendly design and luxury apartments.

In addition to his financial troubles, Sheen is accused of offering Taipei City councilor Angela Ying a "donation" of NT\$47 million as part of the bribery allegations tied to the redevelopment project.

The Taipei District Court has ruled these funds a bribe rather than a charitable contribution, further complicating Sheen's legal situation.

The investigation continues to unfold as multiple individuals connected to the case remain detained, including Ko and former deputy mayor Pong Cheng-sheng.



Distinguished guests presented the awards to champions of the men's and women's singles, Mr. Lin Shidong and Ms. Sun Yingsha.

'WTT Champions Macao 2024 Presented by Galaxy Entertainment Group' Successfully Concluded

As the first high-tier international table tennis tournament following the 2024 Paris Olympics, the WTT Champions Macao 2024 presented by Galaxy Entertainment Group and organized by the Sports Bureau of the Macau SAR Government, World Table Tennis (WTT), and Galaxy

Entertainment Group (GEG), was successfully concluded recently. The exciting seven-day tournament was held from world's finest table tennis players, captivating both local residents and tourists with their exceptional performances. This marked the fifth consecutive time that GEG has been involved in the

WTT event since its debut in Macau. This time, GEG continued to provide multifaceted support to the event, working closely with other organizers to hold an array of extended activities to promote Macau's unique cross-sectoral "tourism + sports" charm while deepening sports exchanges in the community.



The seven-day tournament held at Macao East Asian Games Dome comprised a total of 62 matches, gathering elite table tennis players for a showcase of their exceptional performances to table tennis fans.



GEG arranged the "Love Between Fairy and Devil" immersive VR booth outside the competition venue, with actor dressed in Hanfu introducing audiences to the unique immersive experience, further showcasing Macau's unique cross-sectoral "tourism +sports" appeal.



With GEG's support and arranged by WTT, two youth champion players Mr. Xiang Peng and Ms. Kuai Man were invited to join the "Double Celebrations - GEG Macau Special Olympics Inclusive Table Tennis Fun Day 2024" event held at Broadway Macau and engaged with Macau Special Olympic athletes, sharing competition insights and the spirit of sports.



The fierce competition among top global players completely captivated the audience, fueling a dynamic and exhilarating atmosphere on site.



Accompanied by members of the GEG Volunteer Team, members of various community groups were invited to watch the matches on-site to experience the exhilarating atmosphere and table tennis craze.



WTT players Ms. Chen Xingtong and Mr. Truls Moregard held an autograph session at the East Square of Galaxy Macau, interacting with fans and creating a memorable experience.

ENVIRONMENT

RECYCLING EFFORTS SURGE AS OVER 458 TONNES PROCESSED

NADIA SHAW

MACAU'S Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) has made significant strides in recycling, with over 458 tonnes of circuit boards and batteries processed for resource recovery as part of its ongoing environmental initiatives.

By the end of August, the DSPA reported the collection of more than 9,100 tonnes of waste electronic and electrical equipment and over 340 tonnes of waste batteries through both its "Electronic and Electrical Equipment Recycling Scheme" and "Waste Battery Collection Scheme."

Since launching the "Computer and Communication Equipment Recycling Plan" in October 2017, DSPA expanded its efforts in 2020



to include major appliances like refrigerators and air conditioners. Nearly 830,000 pieces of elec-

tronic equipment have been recycled, with over 2,300 items donated for reuse.

More than 90% of non-donatable equipment is dismantled for resource processing.

DSPA's contracting company is facilitating the cross-border transfer of over 266 metric tonnes of pretreated circuit boards and more than 192 metric tonnes of batteries to Japan and South Korea for further recycling.

This operation adheres to the Basel Convention guidelines for hazardous waste management.

As the public grows its awareness of environmental issues, a substantial increase in recycling rates has been seen.

In 2023, the volume of recycled electronic equipment rose by over 30%, while battery recycling more than doubled.

The bureau aims to enhance collection points and educational outreach to further boost these numbers.

While these initiatives mark a positive trend, DSPA has emphasized reducing waste at the source remains paramount.

Residents are encouraged to prioritize reusing or donating old electronics and opting for rechargeable batteries to foster a more sustainable future.

RENATO MARQUES



Gov't to focus on carbon emission reductions in electricity contract negotiations

MACAU is set to prioritize carbon emission reductions and the adoption of environmentally friendly energy sources in the upcoming electricity concession contract negotiations with CEM.

This announcement was made by the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA), confirming that discussions have commenced for the renewal of the current electricity concession, which will expire on December 31, 2025.

According to the DSPA, the goal is to ensure that the new contract aligns with Macau's long-term development needs.

Late last year, the bureau announced that the local government aims to reach peak carbon emissions by 2030, with a long-term goal of achieving deep decarbonization by 2050 and near-

-zero emissions overall.

The concept of "deep decarbonization," as defined by international environmental organizations, involves the systematic phase-out of carbon-emitting fuels in favor of more sustainable energy sources.

Therefore, in the recent statement, bureau has proposed enhanced obligations for CEM, particularly regarding compliance with China's dual carbon targets.

These targets aim for peak carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2060.

Additionally, the DSPA is advocating for the integration of alternative, eco-friendly energy sources to replace natural gas generating units as part of the new contract stipulations. LV

HEALTH

ISLANDS HOSPITAL OFFERS 30% DISCOUNT FOR PAID SERVICES TO RESIDENTS

VICTORIA CHAN

MACAU residents will benefit from a 30% discount on paid medical services at the new Macau Union Hospital, but rates for services are expected to be adjusted, the hospital's deputy director has said.

The Macau Union Hospital officially opened this week and will offer level two medical services to residents referred by the city's Health Bureau who do not qualify for free care.

However, Lei Wai Seng said fees need updating as the fee structure has not changed in over 30 years while medical costs have risen.

"Medical fees have not been adjusted for more than 30 years and medical costs and reasonableness have changed," Lei told Radio Macau. But he said any rate changes would keep costs "reasonable based on the affordability" of citizens.

Level two services include consultations, ultrasounds, radiology exams, and some lab tests.

Rates for these paid services have been set, with Macau residents receiving a 30% discount, according to Lei.

The hospital also offers level one free care for qualifying residents and level three private services.

Lei said level three inter-



national rates would take into account market conditions "to set an attractive price" for local residents and visitors.

The Emergency Department of Hospital Conde S. Januário was transferred to the new Macau Union Hospital late last year.

Since then, the Emergency Department at Macau Union Hospital has treated over 40,000 patients.

Lei said emergency medical services will eventually be fully operated in Macau Union Hospital as it continues to expand its integrated healthcare services.

Staffed by 80 local doctors and senior specialists from China, Macau Union Hospital now provides 25 outpatient specialties and has seen over 300 referred patients.

Lei aims to increase staff to 400 employees by year's end.

The Macau Union Hospital currently provides 25 specialist outpatient clinics and plans to gradually expand its services. It has also set up an academic week with forums on topics like oncology, cutting-edge technology, and international medical care to promote exchanges.

GAMING

Melco announces new sales office in Cyprus to boost Macau tourism

VICTORIA CHAN

MELCO Resorts & Entertainment has announced plans to establish a sales office in Cyprus as part of its efforts to promote Macau as a premier tourism destination.

The integrated resort operator, which operates casinos in Macau and the Philippines, said it is currently setting up the sales office in Cyprus to expand its existing offices in Singapore, Hong Kong and the Philippines to target European and Middle Eastern tourism.

"As a prominent integrated resort operator deeply rooted in Macau, we are thrilled to host our second 'Glow Your Way to Macau' event at City of Dreams Mediterranean," said Lawrence Ho Yau Lung, Melco's chairman and chief executive.



cutive.

"It demonstrates our support for the SAR government's drive to attract more

international travelers to the city and expand Macau's visitor sources in line with the '1+4' diversified development

strategy."

Ho said Melco is confident Macau will grow to become an even more cherished and popular destination for travelers from Cyprus, broader Europe and GCC markets.

The announcement came after Melco hosted a roadshow at its City of Dreams Mediterranean resort in Limassol, Cyprus, earlier this week.

About 150 guests attended the roadshow, including officials from the Republic of Cyprus government, representatives from the Macau SAR government, travel agencies, business associations, and media from Europe and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Andreas Gregoriou, head of Presidency for Cyprus, noted the country's strategic location provides unmatched access to markets in Europe,

Asia, Africa and the wider Mediterranean, Middle East regions.

For the executive, as an EU member, Cyprus acts as an entry point to one of the largest economic areas worldwide.

"Cyprus, with its strategic location at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa, offers unparalleled access to markets in the wider Mediterranean, the Middle East and beyond.

As a member of the European Union, Cyprus serves as a gateway to one of the largest and most diverse economic zones in the world," he said.

Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), also attended, stating "Macau and Cyprus have much in common and great room for cooperation in tourism and beyond."

Gov't showcases investment opportunities at CIFIT 2024

STAFF REPORTER

THE Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) recently facilitated the participation of Macau enterprises in the 24th China International Fair for Investment & Trade (CIFIT) held in Xiamen earlier this month.

This initiative aimed to promote investment

opportunities both within the exhibition and beyond, focusing on four major industry sectors, according to a statement the bureau released.

During the event, IPIM established a 180-square-metre "Macao Pavilion," designed to highlight Macau's business environment and its role as a commercial bridge between China and

Portuguese-speaking countries.

Foreign investors visiting the pavilion expressed their appreciation for gaining insights into the SAR's investment landscape and indicated potential interest in conducting business research in the region.

In addition to the exhibition, IPIM's investment promotion team visited promi-

nent technology companies in Xiamen and Fuzhou, promoting Macau as an attractive destination for business expansion.

Meanwhile, a Fuzhou-based technology company, which had previously invested in Macao before the pandemic, revealed plans to revitalize their investment strategies based on new information provided by IPIM.



CORPORATE BITS

SJM donates books and hosts educational activities for local children



SJM recently donated pre-loved children's books to the Cradle of Hope Association and Lar De Nossa Senhora Da Penha of Caritas Macau as part of its ongoing community initiatives.

This marks the second consecutive year that SJM has contributed second-hand books to the Cradle of Hope Association.

Earlier this month, SJM collaborated with the Ma-

cao Science Center to host a science outreach activity at the Cradle of Hope. The event featured a science-themed drama titled "The Tree of Life: Darwin," attended by 24 children, aimed at making science engaging and accessible.

This performance is part of the "Science and Reading Literacy Enhancement Programme," which has included over 30 performances since its inception in February.

Also, SJM team members visited Lar De Nossa Senhora Da Penha, where they engaged with 10 children through interactive games and storytelling sessions.

In addition to donating books, SJM provided newly purchased stationery, toys, and its mascot toy, "Sam the Rooster."

Melco hosts local youth sharing session with badminton legend Lin Dan



Melco Resorts & Entertainment hosted a local youth sharing session featuring badminton legend Lin Dan recently, aimed at inspiring young athletes in Macau.

This event was part of the

inaugural "2024 Macau Lin Dan Cup Badminton Open," which Melco co-hosted.

During the session at Studio City's Seer Arena, Lin Dan shared insights from his career as an Olympic gold

medalist and two-time Grand Slam champion. He discussed the challenges he faced and encouraged local players to pursue their dreams.

The event also included interactive badminton sessions with Lin Dan and fellow athlete He Bingjiao, who recently won an Olympic silver medal. The initiative involved participants from the Macau Special Olympic Badminton Team, Macau Polytechnic University, and Melco teams.

Hetzer Siu, National Director of Macau Special Olympics, highlighted the significance of such interactions for athletes with intellectual disabilities, emphasizing how sports can promote inclusivity and understanding within the community.

CRIME A 10-YEAR-OLD JAPANESE BOY STABBED NEAR HIS SCHOOL IN SHENZHEN HAS DIED

MARI YAMAGUCHI & EMILY WANG FUJIYAMA, BEIJING

A 10-year-old Japanese student who was stabbed near his school in southern China has died, officials in Tokyo said yesterday, asking Beijing to provide details of the stabbing and take preventive measures. A suspect is in custody.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa expressed condolences and noted that the attack occurred despite Tokyo's requests for caution and enhanced safety as China marks a key anniversary of its war with Japan.

The student was stabbed on Wednesday about 200 meters from the gate of the Shenzhen Japanese School, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Lin Jian said in a daily briefing. Lin said the attacker was arrested on the spot and the case was still under investigation.

In a statement released Wednesday, Shenzhen police said a



Chinese authorities inspect the scene of a stabbing at the Shenzhen Japanese School, yesterday

44-year-old man with the surname Zhong had been taken into custody in connection with a knifing on a minor.

No motive for the attack was immediately clear.

Kamikawa noted that Japan had asked China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for increased security around Japanese schools ahead of the Sept. 18 anniversary of the Mukden Incident in

1931, which China marks as the beginning of Japanese invasion of Manchuria, now northeast China.

"I find it extremely regrettable that the attack occurred despite that," Kamikawa said, adding that such an attack "should never occur in any country." Japan takes the attack "extremely seriously" and will renew its request to Beijing to do more

to ensure safety of the Japanese citizens, she added.

Kamikawa said she had also advised Japanese schools in China to review their safety measures, and requested Beijing to provide details of the killing and do its utmost to prevent similar attacks on Japanese citizens.

Lin yesterday expressed condolences and sadness over the boy's death. "Our hearts go out to his family," he said, adding that China will provide necessary assistance. He identified the boy as a Japanese citizen with parents from Japan and China.

Following an earlier knife attack at a bus stop for a Japanese school, the ministry has urged Japanese school operators in China to review their safety measures, said Masashi Mizobuchi, the ministry's assistant press secretary, and officials will discuss how they can better secure the safety of Japanese students.

On June 24th, a knife attack at a school bus stop for a Japanese

school in the southeastern city of Suzhou killed a Chinese national who was trying to stop the attacker and injured a Japanese mother and her child.

Lin denied any link between the two incidents, saying "similar cases may happen in any country" and denied the attacks will harm China's relations with Japan.

"China and Japan are in communication on the case. We always welcome people from all countries, including Japan, to come to China for traveling, studying, business or living," Lin said, pledging to take effective measures to protect their safety while in China.

"We believe individual cases will not affect the exchanges and cooperation between China and Japan," he said.

While the news of the Japanese boy's death was not on reported in Chinese media yesterday, people posted condolences on the social media platform Weibo and condemned the attack. **MDT/AP**

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Families of Americans detained in China share their pain and urge US to get them home

DIDI TANG, WASHINGTON

THE families of four Americans detained in China said yesterday that their loved ones are suffering both physically and mentally, urging the U.S. government to take action to bring them home.

Appearing before the Congressional-Executive Commission of China, the families of Kai Li, Mark Swidan, Dawn Michelle Hunt and Nelson Wells Jr. — all of whom have been detained in China for at least eight years — cast a spotlight on the longstanding issue that has gained new attention with the release this week of American pastor David Lin, who was behind bars for almost 20 years.

"This is American human rights being violated with impunity," said Rep. Chris Smith, a New Jersey Republican who chairs the commission.

At the hearing, Harrison Li said his father had suffered a stroke and lost a tooth and that he was allegedly largely locked in a cell for three years when China imposed draconian restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Kai Li is serving 10 years in a Shanghai jail on what rights groups say are trumped-up

AP PHOTO



Harrison Li holds a photo of his father, Kai Li, as he poses for a photo, last January, in Palo Alto, California

charges of spying and stealing state secrets.

"Everyday I wake up I shudder at the thought of him crammed in that tiny cell with anywhere from seven to 11 other people, no climate control, unable to sleep in the summer due to the heat, experiencing the mental and physical anguish," Li said.

He told the panel that it is time for his father to come home: "So I ask President Biden, how much

longer does he need to suffer?"

Nelson Wells Sr. said his son, jailed in China since 2014 over what the family believes to have been unwitting drug possession, is suffering from "debilitating chronic pain, seizures, malnutrition, internal issues, dental pain, severe depression and thoughts of self-harm."

He expressed frustration at the lack of progress to bring his son home. "Please help our family by

creating a pathway for outright release or prisoner transfer to a home prison," Wells Sr. said.

Tim Hunt, brother of Dawn Hunt, choked up when he asked the commission to help her. She's serving life in prison in Guangdong province after being arrested in 2014 and charged with drug smuggling, which she denies, the family said.

Tim Hunt said his sister was tricked into believing she had won a

contest that brought her to Hong Kong. He says she was taken to mainland China, where she was given designer purses before a flight to Australia without knowing illicit drugs were sewn into the linings.

Dawn Hunt has developed ailments but has refused surgeries out of distrust, her brother said, adding that "our citizens are being mistreated, abused — and it's coordinated."

While Americans should be held liable for breaking the law in a foreign country, Beijing's legal practice and human rights records make judicial justice a far reach, said Sen. Jeff Merkley, an Oregon Democrat and the commission's co-chair.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington said China is ruled by law.

"The judicial authorities will handle the criminal suspects strictly in accordance with the law, treat them equally regardless of their nationality, and protect their legitimate rights and interests," the embassy said in a statement.

The U.S. State Department advises Americans to reconsider travel to China, citing "the risk of wrongful detentions" as a reason for its second-highest travel alert.

The hearing also showed a video by Katherine Swidan, mother of Mark Swidan, who said her son was suffering. He has been jailed in China for 12 years on a drug charge and, along with Li, is considered wrongfully detained by the State Department.

In a statement, Katherine Swidan urged the U.S. government to act: "I am pleading for my son's life, his freedom and the chance to bring him home." **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

First people are sentenced under new security law

AHong Kong court sentenced the first two people under a new Hong Kong national security law yesterday, including a man who was given 14 months in prison for wearing a T-shirt with a protest slogan. A second man received 10 months for writing pro-independence messages on the back of bus seats.

Chu Kai-pong, 27, wore a shirt on June 12 reading "Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times," a slogan chanted during anti-government protests in 2019. That day was the fifth anniversary of a demonstration in which thousands of people surrounded the city's legislative council complex to protest a now-withdrawn extradition bill. Months of often-violent

protests followed as demonstrators expanded their demands to call for greater police accountability and democracy.

Authorities have said the protest slogan could imply the separation of Hong Kong from China — a red line for Beijing.

Chu pleaded guilty in court on Monday to the charge of carrying out an act or acts with a seditious intent.

The city's new security law, which critics say further stifles freedom of expression, took effect in March and imposes stiffer punishments for seditious offenses. Offenders face up to seven years in prison, up from the previous maximum sentence of two years for a first offense and three years for a subsequent offense.

Colluding with an external force to carry out such activities is now punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

In handing down Chu's sentence yesterday, Chief Magistrate Victor So said June 12 is viewed as a symbolic date among protesters and Chu's case was not minor because he used the date in an effort to encourage others to remember the unrest and revive ideas about it. That caused a great risk to social order, he said.

He noted that Chu had already been jailed for sedition earlier this year and his subsequent act showed the deterrent effect of his previous sentence was insufficient.

He said Chu "planned to commit a crime

shortly after he was released from prison and was evidently unwilling to reform," but reduced the prison term by one-third because of Chu's guilty plea.

In January, So sentenced Chu to three months in jail under a colonial-era law before the security law took effect. In that case, Chu was arrested for wearing a similar T-shirt at the airport and possessing publications deemed seditious by authorities.

The court heard on Monday that Chu had told police that he wore the T-shirt in June to remind people of the 2019 protest movement. Chu also wore a mask printed with "FDNOL," an abbreviation of another protest slogan, "Five de-

mands, not one less."

The prosecution accused Chu of attempting to cause hatred, contempt or disaffection toward the country's fundamental system and the city's constitutional order. It said his acts could incite others to use illegal means to change what the authorities have decided on.

In a separate case yesterday, another man, Chung Man-kit, pleaded guilty to three counts of sedition. So sentenced him to 10 months in prison, saying Chung knowingly broke the law by writing statements on the back of bus seats promoting Hong Kong independence.

The 2019 protest movement was the most concerted challenge to

the Hong Kong government since the handover in 1997.

Amnesty International's China director, Sarah Brooks, said Chu's conviction and sentencing over his clothing choice highlighted "the sheer malice" of the new security law. She urged local authorities to repeal the law.

"Chu Kai-pong is the first person convicted under this legislation, but its vague wording, vast scope and repressive nature leaves Hong Kongers fearing that he will not be the last," she said.

The Beijing and Hong Kong governments insist the two security laws are necessary for maintaining the city's stability. **MDT/AP**

THAILAND

PYGMY HIPPO MOO DENG IS SO ADORED SHE MAY GET HER OWN PATENT

JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI,
CHONBURI

ONLY a month after Thailand's adorable baby hippo Moo Deng was unveiled on Facebook, her fame became unstoppable both domestically and internationally.

Zookeeper Atthapon Nundee has been posting cute moments of the animals in his care for about five years. He never imagined Khao Kheow Open Zoo's newborn pygmy hippo would become an internet megastar within weeks.

Cars started lining up outside the zoo well before it opened Thursday. Visitors traveled from near and far for a chance to see the pudgy, expressive 2-month-old in person at the zoo about 100 kilometers southeast of Bangkok. The pit where Moo Deng lives with her mom, Jona, was packed almost immediately, with people cooing and cheering every time the pink-cheeked baby animal made skittish movements.

"It was beyond expectation,"



Two-month-old baby hippo Moo Deng walks at the Khao Kheow Open Zoo in Chonburi province

Atthapon told The Associated Press. "I wanted people to know her. I wanted a lot of people to visit her, or watch her online, or leave fun comments. I never would've thought (of this)."

Moo Deng, which literally

means "bouncy pork" in Thai, is a type of meatball. The name was chosen by fans via a poll on social media, and it matches her other siblings: Moo Toon (stewed pork) and Moo Waan (sweet pork). There is also a common hippo at the

zoo named Kha Moo (stewed pork leg).

"She's such a little lump. I want to ball her up and swallow her whole!" said Moo Deng fan Areeya Sripanya while visiting the zoo Thursday.

Already, Moo Deng has been made into memes. Artists are drawing cartoons based on her. Social media platform X even featured her in its official account's post.

With all that fame, zoo director Narongwit Chodchoi said they have begun patenting and trademarking "Moo Deng the hippo" to prevent the animal from being commercialized by anyone else. "After we do this, we will have more income to support activities that will make the animals' lives better," he said.

"The benefits we get will return to the zoo to improve the life of all animals here."

The zoo sits on 800 hectares of land and is home to more than 2,000 animals. It runs breeder programs for many endangered species like Moo

Deng's. The pygmy hippopotamus that's native to West Africa is threatened by poaching and loss of habitat. There are only 2,000-3,000 of them left in the wild.

To help fund the initiative, the zoo is making Moo Deng shirts and pants that will be ready for sale at the end of the month, with more merchandise to come.

Narongwit believes a factor of Moo Deng's fame is her name, which compliments her energetic and chaotic personality captured in Atthapon's creative captions and video clips.

Appropriately, Moo Deng likes to "deng," or bounce, and Atthapon got a lot of cute and funny moments or her giddy bouncing on social media. Even when she's not bouncing, the hippo is endlessly cute — squirming as Atthapon tries to wash her, biting him while he was trying to play with her, calmly closing her eyes as he rubs her pinkish cheeks or her chubby belly. **MDT/AP**

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QUALIFIED IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS:
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SOUTH KOREA

Adoption fraud separated generations of South Korean children from their families

KIM TONG-HYUNG & CLAIRES GALOFARO, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea's government, Western countries and adoption agencies worked in tandem to supply some 200,000 Korean children to parents overseas, despite years of evidence they were being procured through questionable or downright unscrupulous means, an investigation led by The Associated Press has found.

Those children grew up and searched for their roots — and some realized they are not who they were told. Their stories have sparked a reckoning that is rocking the international adoption industry.

The investigation, in collaboration with Frontline (PBS), was based on interviews with more than 80 adoptees in the U.S., Australia and six European countries, along with parents, agency employees, humanitarian workers and government officials. It also drew on more than 100 information requests and thousands of pages of documents — including many never publicly seen before and some the AP got declassified.

In dozens of cases AP examined, it found: Children were kidnapped off the streets. Parents claim they were told their newborns were dead or very sick, only to have them shipped away. Documents were fabricated, leading adoptees to anguished later reunions with supposed parents — only to discover they were not related at all.

Government officials declined to answer questions about its past, saying it will let a fact-finding commission finish its work. But in a written statement, the Health Ministry acknowledged that skyrocketing adoptions in the 1970s-80s were possibly driven by an intent to reduce welfare spending.

The adoption agencies declined to comment on specific cases, but have long defended their practices as a way to search for foreign families for vulnerable children.

Here are further findings:



In this photo provided by Robert Calabretta, right, he and his biological father, Lee Sung-soo, stand together for a photo while on a visit in Daegu, South Korea, in August of 2020

Desperate to reduce spending, South Korea targeted its weakest citizens

Korea's adoption program grew out of the wreckage of the 1950-53 Korean War, when Americans took in the unwanted biracial children of Korean women and Western soldiers. It expanded to include the children of unwed mothers and poor families. Korea relied on private adoption agencies as its social safety net, bringing millions of dollars into the economy.

Korean officials fit their laws to match American ones to make children adoptable in the West, where access to birth control and abortion had caused the domestic supply of adoptable babies to plummet. The government endorsed "proxy adoptions" for families to adopt children quickly without ever visiting Korea. Korea also rewrote its laws to remove minimal safeguards or judicial oversight.

Concerns were raised early. In a 1966 internal memo obtained by AP, International Social Service, a Geneva-based organization, wrote that it suspected the Korean government assessed agencies not by child welfare standards, but by the money they brought in. Korean officials were aware that lost children were documented as abandoned; the origins of alleged orphans weren't verified; and some were "disguised" by agencies as being born from unwed mothers to make them adoptable, according to records seen by AP. In the early 1980s, the government itself likened the agencies' child-hunting practices to "trafficking."

ADOPTION AGENCIES WERE AGGRESSIVELY HUNTING FOR CHILDREN

Former adoption workers told AP that agencies paid to have every corner of the country scoured for children. One worker, employed at an agency from 1979 to 1984, said the agencies had no process to verify the backgrounds of children and invested "zero effort" in confirming the child was orphaned.

Private counseling records in a 1988 document prepared by the country's largest adoption agency, Holt Children's Services, show that some parents who relinquished their children soon pleaded for them back, with no success. The document, obtained by AP, describes how agency workers told parents that their children would thrive in good Western families and may return home someday rich or "with Ph.Ds."

Humanitarian workers openly worried about what they were seeing. Francis Carlin, who then ran Korea's Catholic Relief Services, said there weren't enough legitimate orphans to feed Western demand, which led to "a lot of the compromises, a lot of the hanky panky" involving larger agencies.

"These, I would call them brokers, were going out and trying to get more and more children," Carlin said. "They would put the legitimate parent on a guilt trip and say, what are you doing? You can't afford to take care of this child.... You're so selfish."

Children were stolen from parents, bought from hospitals and falsely descri-

bed as abandoned

By the 1980s, agencies were procuring most of their children directly from hospitals and maternity homes, which often received illegal payments for babies, according to records seen by AP. Though the stated intention of adoption was to spare children from orphanages, they gathered more than 4,600 children from hospitals in 1988, 60% of their supply.

A government audit in 1989 shows that Holt Children's Services, the biggest agency, made nearly 100 illegal payments to hospitals during six months in 1988, worth about \$16,000 now. Eastern Social Welfare Society gave even more, worth about \$65,340, to hospitals over that period.

Despite the agencies' common practice of labeling children as "abandoned," records from 1980 to 1987 show that more than 90% of the Korean children

sent to the West almost certainly had known relatives, said Philsik Shin, a scholar at Korea's Anyang University. It was "almost customary" to document children as abandoned, said Helen Noh, who matched hundreds of children with U.S. parents at Holt from 1981 to 1982.

AS COMPLAINTS MOUNT, SOUTH KOREA IS UNDER PRESSURE

Robyn Joy Park, who was adopted by parents in Minnesota in 1982, traveled to South Korea in 2007 to meet a woman her agency, Eastern, said was her biological mother. She developed a deep bond with the woman over several years, but was devastated after a DNA test in 2012 showed they weren't related.

The AP spoke to 10 others who found their identity was switched with someone else. When children processed for adoption died,

became too sick to travel or were found by their biological families, agencies often replaced them with other children, according to former adoption workers. At a meeting with an adoptee in 2021 where AP was present, a longtime worker said Western partner agencies were willing to take "any child of the same sex and similar age, because it would take too much time to start over again."

Park is among more than 360 adoptees who have asked South Korea's Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the circumstances surrounding their adoptions.

Nobody knows how many Korean adoptions were questionable or even fraudulent, in part because of the privacy and sensitivities involved along with the vagueness and unreliability of the documents. Advocates say many adoptions have happy endings. MDT/AP

AD

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AP PHOTO



The Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Laboon sails in the Red Sea, last June

USA | ANALYSIS

Lessons from Red Sea and Black Sea fight help prep Navy for possible conflict in East Asia

LOLITA C. BALDOR,
WASHINGTON

THE Navy is taking lessons from its combat in the Red Sea over the past year and what Ukraine has done to hold off the Russians in the Black Sea to help U.S. military leaders prepare the service for a potential future conflict with China.

From drones and unmanned surface vessels to the more advanced operation of ship-board guns, the Navy is expanding its combat skills and broadening training. It is also working to overcome recruiting struggles so it can have the sailors it needs to fight the next war.

Adm. Lisa Franchetti, chief of naval operations, is laying out a series of goals, including several that will be highly challenging to meet, in a new navigation plan she described in an interview with The Associated Press. The objective is to be ready to face what the Pentagon calls its key national security challenge — China.

"I'm very focused on 2027. It's the year that that President Xi (Jinping) told his forces to be ready to invade Taiwan," Franchetti said. "We need to be more ready."

The new plan, set to be released Wednesday, includes what she considers seven priority goals, ranging from removing delays in ship depot maintenance to improving Navy infrastructure, recruiting and the

use of drones and autonomous systems.

One significant challenge is to have 80% of the force be ready enough at any given time to deploy for combat if needed — something she acknowledged is a "stretch goal." The key, she said, is to get to a level of combat readiness where "if the nation calls us, we can push the 'go' button and we can surge our forces to be able to meet the call."

The announcement of the goals comes as U.S. leaders are treading a fine line, pledging a commitment to the defense of Taiwan while also working to keep communication open with Beijing to deter greater conflict.

Taiwan has rejected Beijing's demands that it accept unification. China says it will do so by force if necessary. The United States is obligated under domestic law to help defend Taiwan and give it weapons and technology to deter invasion.

An important element in any Asia-Pacific conflict will be the need to control the seas. Franchetti said the U.S. can learn from how the Ukrainians have used drones, airstrikes and long-range unmanned vessels to limit Russian ship activity in the western Black Sea and keep access open to critical ports.

"If you look at the Ukrainian success in really keeping the Russian Black Sea fleet pushed all the way over into the east, that's all about sea denial and that's very important," Franchetti

said. She added that Ukraine has been innovating on the battlefield by using existing systems, such as drones, in different ways.

The Navy's monthslong battle with the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen has provided other lessons.

"I think probably no one is learning more than the Navy, because really, this is the first time we've been in a weapons engagement zone for this sustained period," she said.

She said sailors are watching their attacks and analyzing the data as ships respond.

Earlier this year, the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower aircraft carrier was stationed in the Red Sea to respond to help Israel and to defend commercial and military ships from Houthi attacks. The carrier returned home after an eight-month-plus deployment that the Navy said was the most intense running sea battle since World War II.

F/A-18 fighter jets routinely launched off the carrier's deck to take out Houthi weapons, and Navy destroyers persistently fired rounds of missiles and used on-board guns to shoot down incoming strikes and drones.

On board the USS Mason destroyer, which was stationed with the Eisenhower, Franchetti in August met and promoted one of the destroyer's fire control sailors who worked on its large, fully automatic artillery gun. Unlike missiles, many of the drones launched by the

Houthis were more complicated and challenging to target and shoot down, and he was able to adjust the gun to better defeat them.

"He could see how it was performing against the Houthi threat," Franchetti said, "and he came up with a different way to use the gun to make it more effective in these engagements."

She did not identify the sailor and declined to provide details on the exact changes he recommended. But it resulted in new formal military tactics and procedures that were distributed to all other ships.

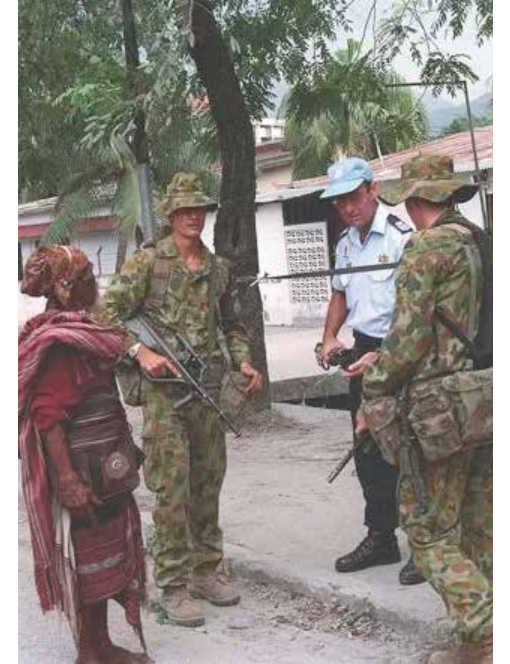
Another key effort will be to improve Navy development of unmanned and autonomous systems and weapons and integrate them into training and combat. As the military brings on new technologies, including unmanned surface vessels, the Navy needs to ensure it has trained sailors who can use and repair them.

The new navigation plan notes that the Navy is now working on concepts and requirements for larger robotic systems and the artificial intelligence applications they could use to understand and control the battlespace.

Navy leaders also understand the financial restraints they will likely face from Congress — limits that rivals such as China do not have. China outpaces the U.S. in the number of ships and is expected to do so into the future. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1999 UN FORCE ARRIVES IN EAST TIMOR



A multinational peacekeeping force has landed in East Timor in an attempt to restore law and order to the territory.

The UN force has been sent to the island to end the violence that has beset the region since its people voted overwhelmingly for independence from Indonesia.

Pro-Jakarta militias are thought to have killed thousands of people since the election on 4 September.

They have been apparently backed by the Indonesian military (TNI), but members of the UN International Force for East Timor (Interfet) said the army was now cooperating fully with the peacekeepers.

The operation began at 0640 local time (0140 BST) when a transport plane carrying British Royal Marines and Australian troops touched down at Komoro airport in the capital, Dili.

Throughout the day a total of 1,190 soldiers - mostly from Australia and New Zealand - landed on the war-torn island.

Fires from recent attacks were still burning, but the troops met little resistance from Indonesian forces or the armed bands that have been terrorising the population.

"The TNI have been quite helpful - we have not seen any militia," said British Brigadier Mark Evans.

Another 1,110 peacekeepers will arrive in East Timor tomorrow and within the next seven days the international force will eventually grow to 8,000 soldiers - drawn from more than 20 countries.

UK Armed Forces Minister John Spellar told the BBC the primary objective of Interfet was to take the militias off the streets.

The next stage would be to re-establish supply lines of food, water and electricity in a capital mostly abandoned by its inhabitants.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 when Portugal withdrew after occupying the island for 450 years.

78.5% of the country voted for independence in the September 1999 elections.

In August 2001 an 88-member Constituent Assembly was elected.

The former rebel leader Xanana Gusmao was voted East Timor's first president on 14 April 2002, and on 20 May 2002 the country became fully independent.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

<p>ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19</p> <p>You've got this. You can maintain your advantage despite challenges. Patiently prepare. Hold your temper with frustrations or interruptions. Win now and clean up later.</p>	<p>TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20</p> <p>Save money and keep a low profile. Private meditation soothes your spirit. Contemplate your next move. Clean messes and prepare for what's ahead.</p>
<p>GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21</p> <p>Work with your team. Offer support when you can. Find a willing hand when needed. Money may be tight. Share resources. Pull together.</p>	<p>CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22</p> <p>Forge ahead with a professional project, despite challenges. Avoid risky business. Prioritize basics. It could get messy. Polish a diamond in the rough.</p>
<p>LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22</p> <p>Research and study. Not everything you discover is pretty. Some things remind you what you love about familiar sights. Choose a positive view.</p>	<p>VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22</p> <p>Review financial options with your partner. Plug a leak. Update budgets and plans. Hunt for resources. Make a lucrative mess and clean later.</p>
<p>LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22</p> <p>Things could get romantic, despite chaos or messy situations. Abandon fairytale fantasies about your partner. Remember what's most important and let the little stuff go.</p>	<p>SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21</p> <p>Focus on physical labors and services. Meticulous efforts yield satisfying results. You may need to make a mess to create a work of beauty.</p>
<p>SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21</p> <p>Prioritize fun. Practice your arts and skills. It could get messy. Polish to reveal hidden beauty. Avoid controversy. Relax and chill with someone nice.</p>	<p>CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19</p> <p>Clean, sort and organize. Home repairs and domestic chores require attention. A mess could seem overwhelming. Good music helps. Advance one step at a time.</p>
<p>AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18</p> <p>A creative project may not go as imagined. Keep polishing, crafting and editing. Envision the future sparkle of this rough diamond. Patiently chip away.</p>	<p>PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20</p> <p>Keep cash flowing positively. Avoid nebulous fantasies. Follow a practical path to reduce risk, waste and expense. Simplify for ease. Get creative to save.</p>

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	17	19	rain
Changchun	9	15	cloudy
Chengdu	24	34	cloudy
Chongqing	31	38	fine
Fuzhou	26	34	rain
Guangzhou	26	33	rain
Guiyang	18	29	cloudy
Haikou	25	30	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	25	34	thunderstorms
Harbin	7	16	fine
Hefei	24	29	rain
Nanjing	27	30	rain
Shanghai	26	32	rain
Taipei	26	31	cloudy
Wuhan	25	34	cloudy
Hong Kong	27	31	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	11	22	overcast
Frankfurt	11	24	fine
Paris	14	24	overcast
London	14	22	overcast
New York	28	26	overcast

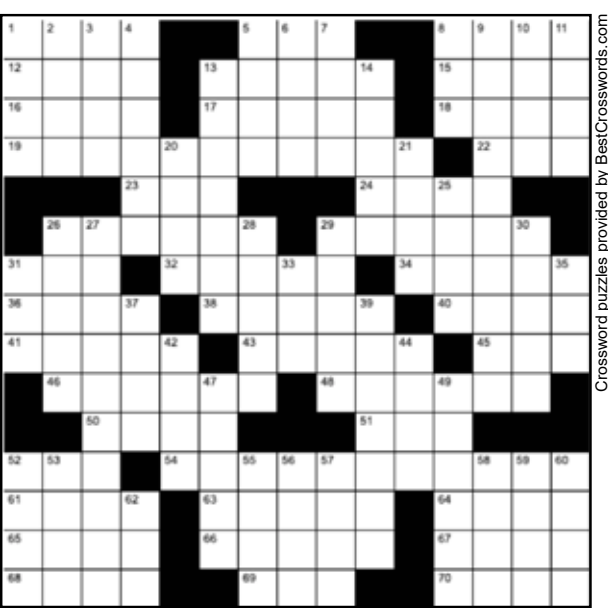
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Emperor after Claudius; 5- Golfer Trevino; 8- Way out there; 12- Quarter, e.g.; 13- Center; 15- Quattro maker; 16- Indigo source; 17- Continental identity of a Chinese person; 18- Editor's note; 19- An organization; 22- Put into service; 23- Entirely; 24- Travel from place to place; 26- River in a Strauss waltz; 29- Pager; 31- Cut off; 32- Keep an ___ the ground; 34- Grain stores; 36- Snakes; 38- Zsa Zsa or Eva; 40- Scottish loch, home to a monster!; 41- Risk; 43- Glossy fabric; 45- Lisa, to Bart; 46- Give; 48- Throaty; 50- Dynamic introduction?; 51- No-win situation?; 52- Anatomical pouch; 54- Powerful defoliant; 61- Sound effect; 63- Old French expression meaning "goodbye"; 64- Booty; 65- French summers; 66- Tennis's Monica; 67- Trading center; 68- Fail to hit; 69- Stimp's pat; 70- Queens stadium;

DOWN 1- March Madness org.; 2- Ages; 3- Journalist Jacob; 4- Borrowed; 5- One of the Simpsons; 6- Prepare for publication; 7- Lou's "La Bamba" costar; 8- Small batteries; 9- Without prospect; 10- Cool drinks; 11- Solemn ceremony; 13- Postal carrier's tote; 14- Govt. security; 20- What you're reading right now; 21- Turndowns; 25- ___ arms (angry); 26- Gave medicine to; 27- Draws near; 28- Rub out or remove from memory; 29- Voting compartment; 30- Comic O'Donnell; 31- Once around the track; 33- TV listings abbr.; 35- Leaky tire sound; 37- Trig ratio; 39- Very funny; 42- Zhivago's love; 44- Neat rival; 47- Roman garments; 49- Kingdoms; 52- Appear; 53- Play beginning; 55- Fulda tributary; 56- Cairo's river; 57- New driver, often; 58- Flood survivor; 59- Clotted blood; 60- Bluesy James; 62- CIA forerunner;

Wednesday's solution

A	T	O	M	O	N	E	A	O	A	L	I
F	I	N	E	L	I	T	R	E	G	A	D
A	N	I	L	I	G	E	T	A	P	U	R
R	A	N	I	V	H	S	R	H	O	N	D
S	L	I	T	I	R	A	S				
A	T	S	E	A	G	R	I	M	I	N	A
S	W	E	A	T	A	R	O	N	T	E	N
P	I	E	R	O	S	I	N	G	R	A	D
A	R	R	O	S	S	S	N	E	V	I	S
K	I	N	D	E	E	P	Y	O	D	I	
F	E	E	L	S	M	I	N	I			
A	B	S	E	N	S	E	H	O	E	Y	A
L	A	B	E	S	M	A	L	L	I	P	O
M	I	S	S	A	L	A	D	O	S	H	A
A	D	O	S	S	E	R	S				



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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



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DRIVE IN

CLOONEY AND PITT CARRY THE FIXER CAPER 'WOLFS'

JAKE COYLE,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

THE overriding tension in "Wolfs," starring George Clooney and Brad Pitt as rival fixers brought in to clean up the same crime, isn't so much the threat of police arrest or Albanian mob assassination — both of which are concerns. It's that Clooney and Pitt aren't pals.

The two start out as strangers to one another. It's a testament to Clooney and Pitt's jovial on-and-off screen chemistry, and their bond in shared movie-star charisma, that it's genuinely discomfiting to hear Pitt tersely call Clooney "sir" as he does in the opening scenes of Jon Watts' winning, clever caper.

Pitt and Clooney first acted together in 2001's "Ocean's Eleven." And like that remake riff on the Rat Pack original, "Wolfs" is as much, if not more, about its movie stars as it is anything else. The movie's appeal is mostly in their



Brad Pitt, left, and George Clooney in a scene from "Wolfs" (Apple TV)

easy charm and chemistry — the little eye rolls and games of one-upmanship that accrue until, finally,

they're buddies, like we want them to be.

Clooney is 63 and Pitt is 60, and there are few

bits about back pain and Advil in Watts' film. But "Wolfs," which opens in limited theaters Friday and streams next week on Apple TV+, is designed to show you that they can still, without ever really breaking a sweat, get the job done.

When their characters meet, they are both standing in the penthouse of a luxury New York hotel where a tough-on-crime district attorney (Amy Ryan) is in desperate need of a cover up. A young, nearly naked man is seemingly dead on the floor. She's frantically searched her phone for a number once given for such emergencies. That brings the first never-named fixer (Clooney) to the door. Not long after, the second, also unnamed fixer (Pitt) knocks. After a moment of confusion, he points to a small camera at the ceiling. He's been dispatched by the hotel owner (an unseen Frances McDormand) who doesn't want any bad press.

The two fixers are spiritual descendants, you might say, from Harvey Keitel's Winston Wolfe, the fast-driving cleaner of "Pulp Fiction." Each is a specialist, supposedly the only man who can do what they do. "Wolfs" — with an awkwardly spe-

lled title that represents the pained collaboration of these two solo freelancers — is a little bit like the pointing Spider-Man meme brought to life. Fitting, then, that it comes from Watts, director of the three Tom Holland Spider-Man films. He also wrote the script.

There are more movies that "Wolfs" has some kinship with, too, like Tony Gilroy's "Michael Clayton," a high point for Clooney in which he played the clean-up man of a malicious law firm. "Wolfs" doesn't measure up to anything like "Michael Clayton" — what does? — and isn't trying to, anyway. This is more of an old-school movie-star-driven entertainment featuring two actors with skills as rarified as their characters', the kind of movie that was once regularly at home in theaters but now has instead been built for the streaming era.

Informed that they have to finish the job together, the two fixers begin to go about the business of getting rid of the body. They eye each warily, disinterested in giving away any tricks of the trade. This mostly falls to Clooney's character, whose creative way of lifting the body onto a luggage rack begins to

earn the respect of Pitt's character.

They turn out to have much, maybe everything, in common. Slowly, reluctantly, they inch toward a partnership. It's a credit to Watts' keen sense of rhythm and his stars' subtlety that it more or less takes the whole movie to get there. Once outside the hotel, "Wolfs" unspools over the course of one night, shot sleekly in the shadows of downtown Manhattan by cinematographer Larkin Seiple.

Things get a jolt when the body in question turns out to be alive, and kind of a hoot, too. The kid, credited only as "Kid," is roused from a drug-induced stupor, and quickly, in tighty whities, goes escaping down the street, forcing the two fixers on an extensive chase leading up to the Brooklyn Bridge. The kid is played with a lot of goofy moxie by Austin Abrams ("Euphoria," "The Walking Dead"), and his account of how he got into this mess, delivered in a cheap motel, may be the film's best sequence. Along with Sean Baker's upcoming "Anora," it's turned into a surprisingly good season for New York nocturnal odysseys propelled by mop-haired kids who end up in Brighton Beach.

But the kid's perspective on his two captors also pushes "Wolfs" along. He's naive enough to think they're his friends, even though they would seem duty-bound to dispatch him. Regarding Clooney and Pitt, both in leather jackets, from the back seat of the car, he otherwise correctly assesses them, calling them "like the two coolest people I've ever met."

Thankfully, someone has come to the not-hard-to-deduce realization that Clooney and Pitt are good together. A sequel has already been announced. "Wolfs" turns out to be both the beginning and the coda of a beautiful friendship.

"Wolfs," an Apple Studios release is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for language throughout and some violent content. Running time: 108 minutes. ★★★★★

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Chef Motokazu Nakamura



TASTE OF EDESIA

Mindfulness in taste

IRENE SAM, MDT

MGM recently had a pop up at Aji and invited the world's only Michelin three-star chef with a doctorate to present the jewel of Japanese cuisine, Kaiseki. A traditional Japanese cuisine, Kaiseki Ryori places great emphasis on achieving balance. In Japanese Zen culture, stone is seen as a concept for harmony and simplicity. It is a symbol of purity and concentration, two elements that are essential in meditation. In ancient times, Zen monks would put warm stones underneath their robes when they feel hungry after just having a simple meal served in the style of the Japanese tea ceremony.

Kaiseki 懷柯 literally means "a stone in the bosom." Although this idea might indicate a sense of austerity, the modern day "bosom-stone" cuisine is nothing frugal. Known as an art form, it is an elegant, multi-course meal. Chef Motokazu Nakamura proudly upholds a culinary tradition that spans 180 years at Isshi Souden Nakamura. This prestigious kaiseki restaurant in Kyoto was founded by his ancestors, who once served the city's nobility and feudal lords. Chef Nakamura's work continues to be deeply influenced by the history and traditions of his family, as he meticulously preserves the culinary techniques and philosophies that have been passed down through generations. This

commitment not only honours his heritage but also ensures the longevity and relevance of Kyoto cuisine in the modern culinary landscape. Following his university education, Chef Nakamura spent 18 months at Kyoto's Tenryuji Temple and immersed in Zen practices and cultivation of food. His philosophy highlights the importance of mindfulness and the connection to food.

Chef Nakamura's dishes surprised the palate with nuances and elegance. Elements such as yuzu, shiso, chrysanthemum heightened the main ingredients in an extremely subtle manner. Balance of flavours and attention to details impressed discerning diners who appreciated the creations mindfully.

Chinese art of wellness

LIFE can be hectic. To unwind and relax, Foot Hub at Galaxy Macau is perfect for those interested in traditional Chinese art of wellness. Foot Recovery Massage combines reflexology and acupressure to revitalise the feet and balance the body. Perhaps one of the most unique massages in Macau, Foot Hub developed their own Zen massage. Therapist leads one on a journey of total relaxation with a flow of Tai Chi components, aiming to promote inner energy. Finally, Cheng Du Ear cleaning improves health by stimulating acupressure points in the ears, leaving them relaxed and refreshed. Adding a seasonal touch, pear osmanthus tea and autumn flower arrangement delight the eyes while the comfortable ambiance and impeccable service exceed expectations. **IS**



OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

WALKING THE TALK WAY TO STABILIZE RELATIONS

A US delegation made up of officials from the Treasury and Federal Reserve Board, led by Treasury Undersecretary for International Affairs Jay Shambaugh, is to meet with Chinese counterparts in Beijing on Thursday and Friday.

Reportedly, during the talks of the Economic Working Group, the US side is expected to lay out its concerns about China's economic trajectory and industrial "overcapacity".

"During our trip we will further our discussions on China's macroeconomic imbalances and industrial policies that risk causing significant harm to workers and firms in the US and around the world," Shambaugh said.

Beijing insists that the Chinese economy remains fit and resilient, and rejects the overcapacity allegation.

That being said, the discussions carried out under the Economic Working Group mechanism might become another chicken-and-duck talk.

The United States' long blacklist of Chinese entities, the exorbitant tariffs it has imposed on Chinese exports, as high as 100 percent on electric vehicles, and the great lengths Washington has been going to in a bid to coerce its allies, including Japan, the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea, to form a "chip iron curtain" against China all speak volumes of how narrow the US' definition of China's manufacturing and "overcapacity" is.

The "overcapacity" discourse of the US is nothing but an excuse for Washington to justify its politically motivated nonmarket means to stifle China's high-tech and competitive industries. The prescription Washington proposes is that China serve as an eternal lower-end manufacturing base of consumer products for the US market and open its financial sector to the US, which, if carried out prematurely, will only enable the US to control China's financial sector.

With the Joe Biden administration's decision on the Section 301 tariffs on Chinese imports still pending, the US delegation should not regard that as a bargaining chip in its discussions with the Chinese side, as the Chinese economy has adapted to those tariffs over the past about five years. They should also be reminded that US companies and consumers have also borne the brunt of the punitive tariffs from day one.

The challenges confronting the Chinese economy now are mainly caused by some domestic structural issues. For too long, the Chinese economy has relied on the boom of the real estate sector, a low-hanging fruit for all emerging economies in the early stage of their economic development.

If the US really looks forward to helping China address its economic issues, it should put an end to its attempts to sabotage China's endeavors to strive for a higher position in the global value chain. It should discard its zero-sum Cold War mindset and view China's development objectively.

Shambaugh rightly said that it is important to have a "resilient channel" for talks, "especially in areas where we disagree", but until the US side ceases to politicize economic relations with China, the Economic Working Group mechanism will only serve as a venue for the two sides to pay lip service to improving bilateral relations.

That being said, the high hopes that are being pinned on the discussions to stabilize relations between the world's two largest economies are likely to be nothing more than wishful thinking as the US side has shown no inclination to do more than talk for talk's sake.

MOSCOW WILL SUPPORT ISLAMABAD'S BID TO JOIN BRICS, SAYS RUSSIAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

THE BUZZ

Moscow will support Islamabad's bid to join the BRICS bloc of developing economies, the Russian deputy prime minister said yesterday while visiting the Pakistani capital.

Pakistan applied last year for membership in the alliance that has a stated aim to amplify the voice of major emerging economies to counterbalance the Western-led global order. Founded in 2006, it included Brazil, Russia, India and China, with South Africa joining in 2010. Recently, it expanded to include Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates.

"Of course, we would be supportive" of Pakistan's request to join the BRICS alliance, Alexei Overchuk said in a televised news conference, standing next to his counterpart Ishaq Dar, who is also the country's Fo-

reign Minister.

Dar and Overchuk said they also discussed ways to improve economic ties and bilateral trade that touched the \$1 billion mark last year.

Also yesterday, Overchuk met with Pakistan's powerful army chief Gen. Asim Munir.

In recent years, Pakistan has taken steps to boost commercial relations with Russia.

Pakistan's imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan visited Moscow in February 2022 to meet with President Vladimir Putin when the Russian invasion of Ukraine seemed imminent. Since then, Pakistan has avoided condemnation of the Russian invasion.

AP PHOTO



A fire rages on the hills around Sever do Vouga, a town in the northern district of Aveiro

PORTUGAL DECLARES A STATE OF CALAMITY AS WILDFIRES RAGE OUT OF CONTROL

MORE than 100 wildfires stretched thousands of firefighters to the limit in northern Portugal yesterday, with seven deaths since the worst spate of fires in recent years spread out of control over the weekend.

Portuguese Prime Minister Luis Montenegro declared a state of calamity for the hardest-hit areas yesterday [Macau time], invoking powers to mobilize more firefighters and civil servants. He also called on police investigators to redouble their efforts to find those who started the fires and pledged help for those who have lost their homes or have been evacuated.

"We are well aware that these difficult hours are not over yet," Montenegro told the nation in a televised address. "We have to continue to give everything we have and ask for help from our partners and friends so that we can reinforce the protection of our people and property."

The European Copernicus satellite service said that over 15,000 hectares (37,000 acres) were scorched and a combined 13 kilometers (8 miles) of fire fronts were detected as of Tuesday night. It added that an area home

to 210,000 people was exposed to the fire risk.

The hot, dry conditions behind the outbreaks in Portugal coincided with flooding in central Europe. The European Union said yesterday that the juxtaposed extreme weather phenomena are proof of a "climate breakdown."

Spain's military sent 240 soldiers and vehicles from its emergency response battalions specialized in combating fires to its neighbor.

Four water-dumping planes from France, two from Spain and two from Italy were deployed after answering an appeal to help their fellow EU member. Morocco likewise responded to a request by Portugal with two water-dumping planes that arrived yesterday.

"The thick smoke produced by most of these fires is making it very difficult for air units to operate," said Civil Protection official Andre Fernandes. "We are still at high risk for forest fires over the next 48 hours."

Thick grey smoke and the smell of burnt wood reached some 85 kilometers (50 miles) across the border into northwest Spain.

Montenegro made a special call for security forces to

pursue both arsonists and any individuals who started a fire out of negligence. Portuguese national police said they arrested seven men suspected of starting wildfires in recent days.

Authorities have prohibited the use of heavy farming equipment to reduce the risk of inadvertently starting a blaze.

Among the hardest-hit areas is the district of Aveiro, south of the northern city of Porto, but several major blazes were also raging out of control in other wooded areas.

Authorities have yet to release figures for property damage or the number of evacuees, but Portuguese state broadcaster RTP has shown charred houses in rural villages and local residents trying to battle flames with buckets of water, hoses, and even large tree branches. Other televised images showed visibility reduced to a few meters (yards) as orange smoke enveloped the terrain.

Three firefighters died Tuesday in their vehicle, while another succumbed to what authorities called a "sudden illness" while on duty over the weekend. Three civilians have also perished. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



North Korea's Kim Jong Un yesterday supervised missile tests designed to carry conventional and nuclear warheads. The tests are part of efforts to enhance military capabilities amid rising tensions with the U.S. and South Korea. The missiles are designed for both conventional and nuclear use.

AP PHOTO



India Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday visited Kashmir for a campaign rally ahead of local elections, the first since the region's semi-autonomous status was revoked in 2019. The visit was marked by heavy security, as Kashmir remains a disputed territory between India and Pakistan.

BBC



United Kingdom Five women accused late Harrods owner Mohamed Al Fayed of raping them while they worked at the department store. A BBC investigation yesterday revealed more than 20 ex-employees claimed sexual assaults, including rapes, during his ownership. Harrods' current owners apologized, calling the allegations appalling.

AP PHOTO



Central Europe Rising rivers in Poland threatened homes as flooding receded elsewhere in Central Europe. Poland, Romania, Austria, and the Czech Republic experienced deadly floods after record rains. Polish soldiers and volunteers worked to protect homes near swollen rivers, with the Oder River expected to crest.