



THE CURRENT PUBLIC SWIMMING POOLS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM NEEDS TO CONTINUE TO BE ENFORCED AMID CRITICISMS, ID TOLD THE TIMES

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HIGH ROLLERS HAVE PLACED MORE BETS IN MACAU IN 2024 THAN THROUGHOUT ALL OF LAST YEAR

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PROMOTING MACANESE CUISINE OVERSEAS KEY TO ITS SURVIVAL

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AP PHOTO



Asian stock markets rose sharply after China's central bank announced measures to boost the economy. Rate cuts and eased down-payment requirements for second homes are intended to support growth, especially in the property sector, leading to a surge in Chinese shares.

AP PHOTO



China successfully launched a Smart Dragon 3 carrier rocket, deploying eight satellites into orbit. The launch took place from a service ship near Haiyang, Shandong province. This marks the rocket model's fourth sea-based launch, continuing China's advancements in space technology.

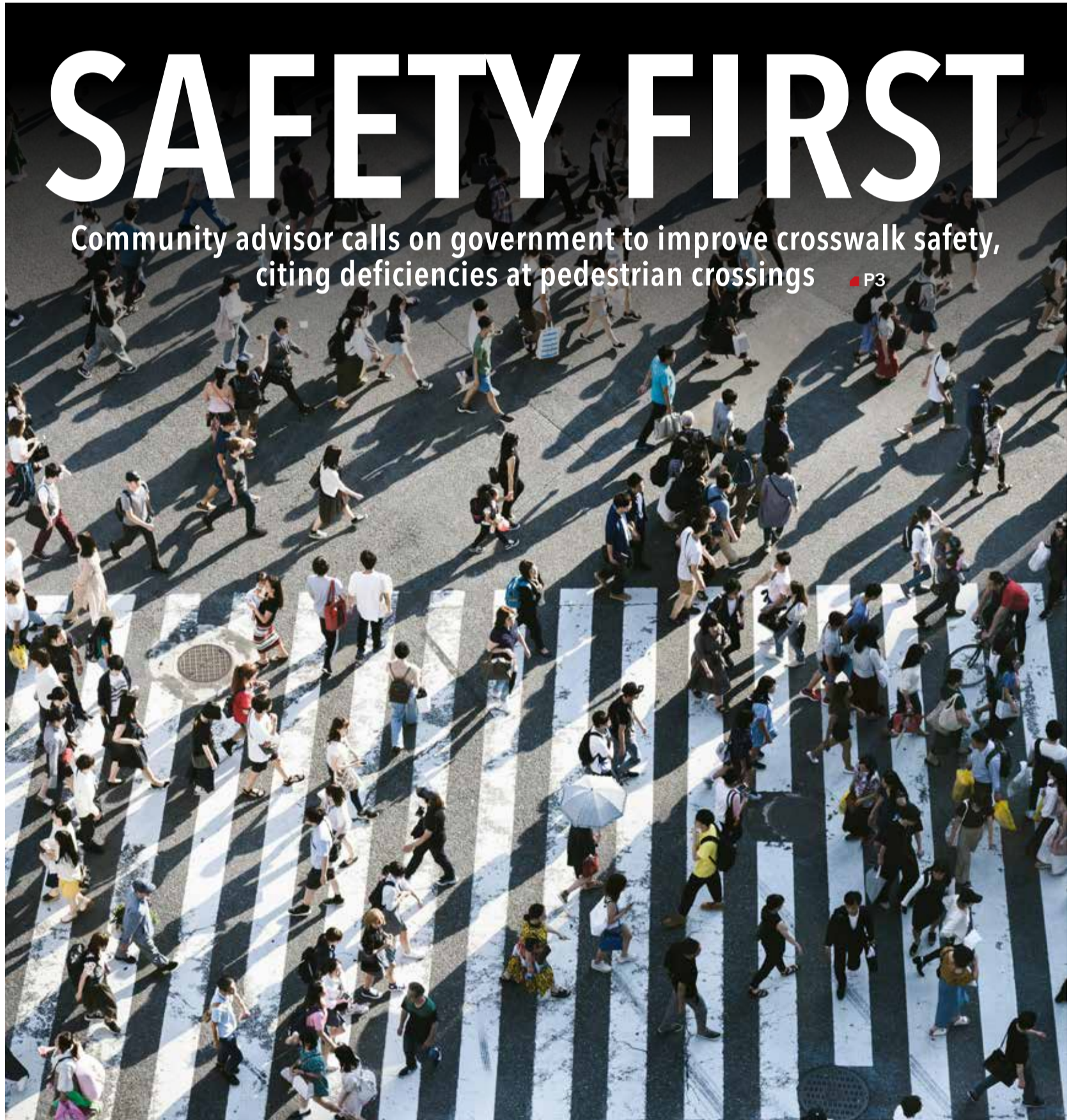
China Police in Wuxi, Jiangsu province, have detained 15 suspects at a hospital involved in a healthcare fraud scheme, including the hospital president and its legal representative, the municipal healthcare security administration said yesterday morning. The privately-owned Wuxi Hongqiao Hospital has been shut down, said the administration.

AP PHOTO



Lebanon Israeli airstrikes in southern and eastern Lebanon killed 492 people, including children and women. The strikes targeted Hezbollah-linked sites, causing thousands to flee. The violence escalated after Hezbollah fired rockets into Israel following the death of a military commander in a prior attack.

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SAFETY FIRST

Community advisor calls on government to improve crosswalk safety, citing deficiencies at pedestrian crossings P3

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CHINA CUTS RATES, ROLLS OUT OTHER MOVES TO HELP THE SLOWING ECONOMY

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TCM FORUM: CATALYST FOR REGIONAL HEALTH COOPERATION

The Health Bureau (SSM) held the "Macao Traditional Chinese Medicine Health Forum" earlier this week, aimed at enhancing regional cooperation through traditional medicine. The event featured officials, including Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong who emphasized the significance of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) – its cultural heritage and role in health innovation. The forum included keynote speeches and discussions on the modernization and internationalization of traditional medicine. Agreements were signed to deepen cooperation in professional health training with Zhejiang and Sichuan provinces, further integrating Macau into the traditional medicine landscape globally.

OPERATION TARGETS ILLEGAL WORKERS IN AUGUST

In August, joint operations by the Public Security Police Force (PSP) and the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) led to significant actions against illegal work. Authorities inspected 305 locations, including construction sites and commercial premises, resulting in the interception of 62 suspected illegal workers. This initiative highlights ongoing efforts to combat illegal employment practices, reduce criminal activity, and protect vulnerable workers from exploitation. The crackdown is part of a broader strategy to ensure compliance with labor laws and uphold the integrity of the workforce. Further operations are expected as authorities continue to address this issue.

SJM POSTPONES FOOD STALL NOTIFICATIONS

SJM Resorts, S.A. (SJM) recently announced that the notification period for successful applicants of 10 food stalls at Kam Pek Market will be postponed to early October. The decision comes after it received over 60 applications, necessitating a thorough review process. This follows SJM's May acquisition of the Kam Pek Community Centre for HKD166 million, aimed at transforming it into a vibrant food and beverage destination. The initiative is part of SJM's broader strategy to revitalize historic districts, enhancing its non-gaming attractions and contributing to local community development. The application period for bids opened Aug. 16 and closed 6 p.m. Sept. 9.

DSAMA: MARINE DEBRIS ISSUES UNDER CONTROL

VICTORIA CHAN

MARINE and beach litter issues stemming from recent weather events in Macau are under control, according to the Maritime Affairs and Water Bureau (DSAMA).

In response to a written question from lawmaker Leong Sun Lok, DSAMA director Susana Wong Soi Man explained that heavier than usual rainfall in recent months caused debris such as withered plant branches and household waste to wash ashore from the upper Pearl River areas.

Leong had noted abnormal conditions at Cheoc Van and Hac Sa beaches after heavy rain or bad



RENATO MARQUES

weather, with surges in dead tree branches and household garbage. Beach refuse was significantly higher in June than normal periods, and beach water samples failed water quality tests multiple times since late May. He urged regional

cooperation to enhance marine health.

To expedite cleanup efforts, DSAMA deployed additional manpower and the street cleaning contractor increased beach cleaning. Heavy April-June rainfall in

upper Pearl River regions carried garbage downstream, with tides and waves pushing some back onto Macau shores and rapidly increasing amounts in local waters and beaches.

Macau works closely with Zhuhai and Guangdong through cooperation groups to notify each other of sudden environmental incidents and cross-border pollution data. With stabilized weather and inter-departmental communication, the situations have been brought under control, said the Bureau.

The Environmental Protection Bureau continuously monitors local waters, assesses quality changes, and requires pollution prevention from sea project contractors. It also studies coastal discharge points and implements targeted remedial measures with partners to boost the local coastal water environment quality over time, citing completed improvement works.

ANONYMOUS 64

China blames Taiwan for cyberattacks, Taipei denies the allegations

NADIA SHAW

CHINA'S Ministry of State Security (MSS) has taken a bold step in the ongoing cyber warfare narrative by unveiling a Taiwanese hacker group.

MSS claims the hacker collective is backed by Taiwan's independence forces.

The group, named "Anonymous 64," is accused of launching cyberattacks against targets in mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau, with the alleged intent to spread disinformation and disrupt public communications.

In a statement Monday published by the MSS official public WeChat account, the MSS described "Anonymous 64" as an "internet army" raised by the "Taiwan independence" forces that has infiltrated various platforms.

The ministry claims this group has been responsible for over 70 social



media posts showcasing attacks on various targets, including universities and media outlets, despite some targeted websites being counterfeit or inactive.

The MSS has identified three active members of the group, who are reportedly affiliated with Taiwan's "Information, Communications and Electronic Force Command," a military unit established to conduct cyber operations against mainland China.

This command was restructured in 2022 and is said to be responsible for a range of cyber warfare activities, including

electronic warfare and public opinion manipulation.

Taiwan has denied these allegations.

Defense Minister Wellington Koo said Taiwan's military focuses on protecting its information security.

Premier Cho Jung-tai echoed these sentiments, calling for a vigorous counter-response to what he termed false accusations aimed at discrediting Taiwan.

The MSS's claims come amid heightened tensions between Beijing and Taipei, particularly following Taiwan's recent political shifts towards independence.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE MEETS PBOC GOVERNOR OVER FINANCIAL TIES

NADIA SHAW

CHIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng welcomed Pan Gongsheng, the Governor of the People's Bank of China (PBOC), earlier this week to discuss financial cooperation between Macau and the mainland.

The meeting coincided with the opening of the 2nd Conference of Central Bank Governors and Financial Officials between China and Portuguese-speaking countries at the Galaxy International Convention Center.

During their discussions, Ho expressed gratitude for the PBOC's ongoing support for the development of the Guangdong-Macau in-depth cooperation zone in Hengqin, including the release of "30 articles relating to financial support."

Ho said Macau has gradually built a series of financial system software and hardware facilities such as a central securities depository system and a financial asset exchange to support Macau's eco-

nomics diversification.

He hoped the PBOC will continue to support Macau's financial integration with the Greater Bay Area and strengthen Macau's role as a platform for financial services between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

Pan assured Ho the PBOC would continue to support Macau in strengthening financial cooperation with the mainland, assisting Macau in building a financial service platform serving China and the Portuguese-speaking countries.

The meeting included key officials such as Lei Wai Nong, Secretary for Economy and Finance, and Lau Hang Kun, member of the Board of Directors of the Monetary Authority of Macao.

In a separate development, Ho announced Macau is preparing to launch a digital pataca with the aid of the PBOC to further enhance the city's financial infrastructure and support economic diversification.

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general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

Community advisor wants gov't to improve crosswalk safety

RENATO MARQUES

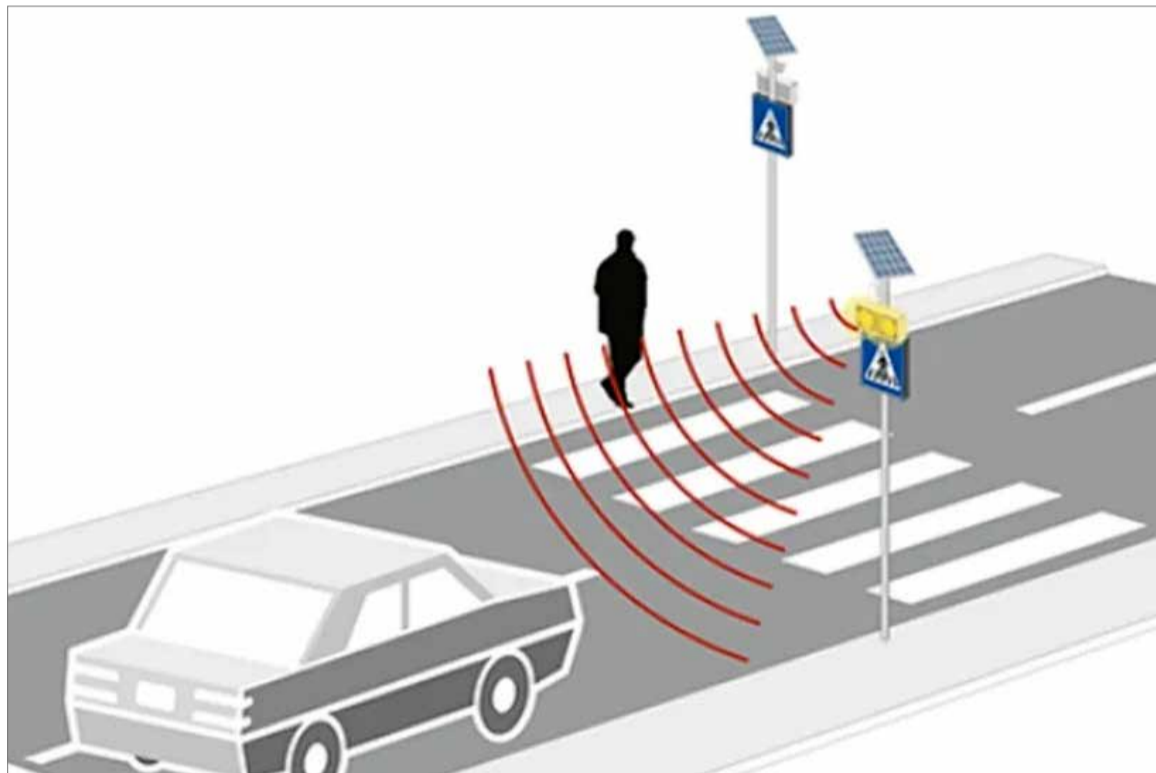
THE Central District Community Advisory Board member, António Monteiro, has called on the government to reinforce safety over crosswalks.

In a speech delivered at the latest Central District Community Advisory Board meeting, Monteiro noted that "considering the recent road accidents at pedestrian crossings, there are still some deficiencies or insufficient warnings at pedestrian crossings, including the lack of attention of some drivers on the roads."

Monteiro suggested the government, taking into account the new existing technologies to prevent road accidents at these specific locations, adopt some of these technologies, particularly in some "blackspots" for traffic accidents.

Among the solutions proposed by the advisor is the installation of a sensor system next to pedestrian crossings, which detects the approach of pedestrians, automatically activating a set of LED signals.

As he remarked, "This system often replaces the installation of traffic lights at pedestrian crossings, reducing waiting time" and, consequently, improving traffic flow.



Another solution could be via the installation of intermittent lighting at some crosswalks.

This system would operate autonomously around the clock, activating flashing lights to warn drivers by a presence sensor, only when there are

people in the area of the crossing.

Monteiro noted this system is already in use in many countries and regions and is solar-powered, with autonomy of up to seven days without light, and has proven to be efficient in alerting drivers of the presence of pedestrians at pedestrian crossings, particularly in conditions of bad

visibility.

The community advisor concluded that taking into account the government bid to promote Macau as a "smart city," "it is urgent to consider road risks and implement intelligent systems on the roads, rapidly reducing the road accidents rate, reducing casualties and increasing pedestrian safety."

HENGQIN TO HOST AISL HARROW ROWING REGATTA LATE THIS YEAR

The AISL Harrow Rowing Regatta and Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area Series Hengqin Tinmuk Rowing Regatta will take place from Nov. 30 to Dec. 1. This year, the club will also arrange pre-race exchanges between the rowing teams from Cambridge, Yale and Macau universities. The event will include a long-distance pursuit race, with the route designed to take participants past several iconic landmarks in Hengqin. Director of the Livelihood Affairs Bureau of the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone, Huang Yujie, expressed optimism in the rising recognition of Hengqin and its potential to represent the sports culture of the Greater Bay Area.

ZHENG GUANYING EXHIBITION UNVEILS 100 PIECES OF MEMORABILIA

The "Exhibition of the Legacy of Zheng Guanying" at the Zheng Guanying Memorial Museum will be held Sept. 27 at 4:30 p.m. to promote the deeds and contributions of the modern Chinese thinker. The exhibition will reveal the influence of Zheng's innovative ideas in the late Qing dynasty, showcasing over 100 items such as writings, documents, letters, photographs, plaques and poems. The exhibition showcases Zheng's life experiences and the development of entrepreneurial undertakings in modern China through projections, an interactive sandbox, a telegraph simulator and Augmented Reality (AR) technology.

TOURISM

Golden Week hotel bookings firm against economic headwinds

VICTORIA CHAN

HOTEL bookings appear satisfactory for Golden Week starting Oct. 1, though broader economic challenges could dampen demand, according to analysts.

17 of 31 hotels tracked by UBS Group AG have sold out or are unavailable for the weeklong national holiday in China, a higher number than the Labour Day period in May and last October's Golden Week, said the UBS analysts.

However, hotel prices average 7% lower than January's Golden Week but unchanged from a year ago in October, the analysts wrote.

They forecast gaming revenue of MOP900-950



million per day, in line with prior holiday periods.

Rutger Verschuren, the area vice president of Artyzen Hospitality Group, expressed cautious optimism.

"There [are] definitely two nights, I think, []

booked out. But in the casinos, they usually block rooms for the gamblers in advance."

He said the first and second of October are particularly packed for Artyzen's properties.

"We are not complaining at all. We're very happy with the vi-

sitation," Verschuren told the Times, though he acknowledged that bookings may fluctuate until days before the holiday as rooms are released back to the market.

Yet the broader economic picture could dampen spending, according to a Macquarie Equity Research note.

The note cited third-party data indicating that "Golden Week room bookings are decent, but the quality of players appears to be weak so far."

These figures underscore the challenges in discretionary spending, and operators "are not too optimistic" about player demand during the Oct. 1-7 period, the note said.

GAMING

CITI: 'WHALES' BETTING MORE IN 2024 THAN LAST YEAR

HIGH rollers known as "whales" have wagered more money in Macau in 2024 than all last year, according to a new report from Citigroup.

Citi analyst George Choi said in a recent note that whales, defined as players with bets of HKD100,000 or more, have wagered HKD43.3 million from January through September, exceeding the HKD39.7 million wagered in all of 2023.

The average bet of HKD655,000 is also 43% higher than last year.

"These stats continue to show that these affluent players are still able and willing to spend in Macau, despite the current state of the economy in China," Choi wrote.

Citi's September survey saw 613 premium mass players, up 42% from a year ago, with an average bet of HKD19,389, down slightly from 2023.

Choi said this "shows that the quality of premium mass players remains robust."

A total of 21 whales were spotted in September, with the top bet being HKD640,000 at Galaxy Macau's Horizon Room. Sands China led with 26% of total wager share.

Melco Resorts recently rebranded its premium mass offerings and saw a 17% wager share in September versus the 13.5% average previously.

"We believe the rebranding program is already yielding some early success," Choi said.

The report indicates high rollers continue fueling gaming in Macau despite China's economic slowdown, which has pressured other casino markets.

Whales and premium players will be crucial to operators, according to the analysts. VC

F&B

'MACANESE NIGHTS 2024' CELEBRATES MACAU'S CULINARY HERITAGE

VICTORIA CHAN

THE vibrant cultural experience of "Macanese Nights 2024" is returning to Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau by popular demand, celebrating Macau's rich gastronomic traditions and history as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy.

This event holds special significance as Macau recently earned the title of "Culture City of East Asia 2025."

"Macanese Nights 2024" pays tribute to over 450 years of Macau's culinary history, reaffirming the city's status as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy.

Running from Oct. 8 to Oct. 24, exclusive tasting menus will be crafted by renowned Macanese chef Antonieta Manhão and Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau's executive chef Pedro Santos Do Carmo.

"As a long-standing advocate for Macanese cuisine, I am overjoyed to participate again," said Manhão. "I am excited to introduce a few new dishes in this edition that capture the essence of Macau's cultural fusion."

Rutger Verschuren, area vice president for Artyzen Hospitality Group and General Manager of Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau, expressed enthusiasm for the return of "Macanese Nights."

He said, "This event reinforces Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau's role as the cultural bridge between China and Portugal, with Macanese cuisine as a testament to this fusion."

During a press conference, Manhão and Do Carmo jointly demonstrated the classic "Porco Bafassá," a beloved braised pork collar seasoned with tur-

VICTORIA CHAN



meric that represents the Asian influence on Macanese dishes.

Executive Chef Pedro Miguel Santos Do Carmo added, "This marks my third collaboration with Chef Neta, and her culinary expertise and knowledge continue to inspire me. I am so excited to see her new dishes added

to "Macanese Nights 2024" signature dishes, which will elevate the flavors and diversity of traditional Macanese cuisine."

CAFÉ BELA VISTA UNVEILS NEW MENU ADDITIONS

As Café Bela Vista kicks off its culinary event promo-

tion, the chef has unveiled an upgraded menu brimming with both new highlights and enhanced versions of beloved classics.

A native Portuguese chef with two decades of culinary expertise, five years of which have been spent at the helm

of Café Bela Vista, Chef Pedro continues to innovate and elevate the restaurant's offerings.

"Not only [do] the people have the chance to try them during this period, but also after that," he said.

Seafood lovers will delight in the new "Chilled Seafood Platter", a sharing plate showcasing the freshest lobster, abalone, oysters, shrimp and mussels.

Chef Pedro has also refined classic dishes like the Braised Atlantic Octopus Salad, now garnished with vibrant edible flowers for a touch of elegance.

Other menu highlights include the quintessential Portuguese stew Cataplana de Bacalhau, featuring tender seared codfish braised to perfection in a sealed copper vessel.

The restaurant's take on the iconic Arroz de Marisco, or Wet Seafood Rice, celebrates the flavors of the sea with scallops, mussels, clams, squid, prawns and crab meat.

"Our aim is to actually be authentic, bring the real Portuguese items and also Macanese," Chef Pedro said, promising a truly immersive culinary journey for diners.

VERSCHUREN: PROMOTING MACANESE CUISINE OVERSEAS VITAL

PPROMOTING Macanese cuisine internationally is crucial to ensuring its survival for future generations, according to Rutger Verschuren, area vice president of Macau Operations for Artyzen Hospitality Group.

Verschuren spoke to the media about the importance of hosting an event at the Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau focused on highlighting Ma-

canese dishes.

"Macanese cuisine is very complicated, as it has evolved over hundreds of years as a fusion of East and West," Verschuren said.

While acknowledging the value of examining historical recipes from a century ago, he stressed that "the whole point of Macanese cuisine is that it evolves."

Verschuren said modern

Macanese dishes may incorporate ingredients like imported Portuguese pork that were not available in past eras.

However, the executive warned that "if it is only the local people in Macau [who] appreciate Macanese food, it's not going to last for another 100 to 200 years."

He said promoting the cuisine internationally is crucial, so people visiting Macau "try

and appreciate" its uniqueness.

"Macanese cuisine reflects" the city's history as "a melting pot" of Chinese, Portuguese and other cultures, he added.

"We need to bring it out to the world, let them know that, hey, our cuisine is like the people," Verschuren said.

"We are a melting pot. It's a fusion of east and west and very unique."

The executive said events at the Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau aim to "spread the word about Macanese cuisine across the globe" to visiting tourists. VC

HOSPITALITY

First luxury collection hotel unveiled

NADIA SHAW

SSANDS China Ltd. and Marriott International are set to introduce the first Luxury Collection Hotel into Macau.

Located within The Londoner Macao, the Londoner Grand, a Luxury Collection Hotel, aims to combine British living with Macau's cultural heritage.

Designed by Peter Silling & Associates, the

hotel features Georgian-inspired architecture.

Its rooms and suites are designed to reflect a townhouse atmosphere influenced by London's Mayfair district.

The interiors focus on comfort and functionality, with open-plan living and dining areas. Some suites will include private terraces, children's rooms, media rooms and plunge pools.

The Londoner Grand

will enhance The Londoner Macao's dining options with five new concepts.

Hampton Court will offer an international and Chinese buffet, while Chelsea Garden will provide all-day dining with a variety of local Chinese dishes.

The Conservatory will feature a dim sum restaurant, tearoom, confectionery store and British pub.

Two signature Chinese

restaurants will serve Cantonese and Sichuan cuisine.

"This hotel represents a significant step in enhancing Macau's luxury hospitality landscape," said Grant Chum, CEO of Sands China Ltd in yesterday's press release. "It will also serve as a gateway to Macau's cultural heritage."

With 2,405 rooms and suites, the hotel aims to cater to both business and leisure travelers.



ID reaffirms need to keep current pool management system

RENATO MARQUES

THE current public swimming pools management system needs to continue to be enforced, the Sports Bureau (ID) has told the Times.

Following several concerns from users regarding the management system of the pools operating under the ID, the bureau has told the Times that to ensure the quality of the services provided, and particularly the water quality, it is necessary to continue to operate three different time slots with a one-hour break between each slot.

These break periods are also used for the rest and meal breaks of the lifeguards on duty.

"To ensure that the water quality meets opening requirements, the Bureau will monitor and test the water quality several times every day," ID said.

"Routine cleansing is carried out at the pool area and changing rooms every day."

"During the one-hour closure between each session, staff will first



clean and vacuum the pool area where suitable cleansing detergent is applied, and after all the swimmers have left, staff will then clean the changing room area to keep the facility clean and hygienic."

"During the pool cleaning period, lifeguards will take rest and meal breaks, while staff in other position[s] will take turns to rest at other times."

The ID said the three sessions per day (effective from July 2020) "allow [] residents to go swimming before going to school and work, during [their] lunch break, or after school and work, meeting

the general daily routine of most residents."

"The ID has always put the safety of swimmers as a priority," ID said.

"A sufficient number of lifeguards are arranged to be on duty when the swimming pool is open to the public."

"The lifeguards on duty are required to stay at their posts, closely monitor the safety of all swimmers, and maintain order of use."

"In addition, all staff are always required to mind their manners and conduct while on duty to ensure good quality of service."

This comes after feedback from

users who accused some pool staff of unprofessional behavior while on duty, as well as inappropriate comments about pool users.

Although noting their satisfaction with the current system, the ID also noted the importance of continuing to oversee the implementation of various measures and services at the swimming pools and keeping a close watch on the actual use of the swimming pools.

"Timely improvements will be made to provide a safe and good environment for residents to swim and exercise."

REAL-NAME TICKETING SYSTEM IS NEEDED

On another topic of community concerns, the ID said that "Real-name purchase and check-in procedures are required at the swimming pool[s] managed by Sports Bureau."

"In addition, to protect the safety of younger swimmers, children aged 12 and below must be accompanied by an adult when purchasing ticket[s] and using the pool."

"Each adult can only bring in a

maximum of two children, that is to say, each adult swimmer can purchase a maximum of three tickets, including one adult ticket and two children's tickets."

PRIVATE COACHING ACTIVITIES ARE PROHIBITED DURING INDIVIDUAL USE

In response to concerns aired by users of private teachers using public pools, namely Cheoc Van and Hac Sa Park, for swimming lessons, the bureau reaffirmed that "private coaching activities are prohibited during opening hours for individual use."

"However, in response to the public request for various forms of swimming exercises, the Sports Bureau has designated sessions at D. Bosco College Sports Centre - Swimming Pool to allow swimming coaching activities upon individual application to avoid affecting other swimmers."

The topic of the ID's management system has been recently on the line with several community members, including a District Community Advisory Board member who last month noted the need for the bureau to differentiate between pools that are used for summer leisure and those that are used for swimming practice, easing on the rules of the first ones to meet the needs and expectations of families.

Hearing tests launched for newborns

HEARING screening tests for newborns have been launched, according to the The Macau Deaf Association.

So far, 10 newborns are expected to be referred to the association for follow-up care, Lau Suet Man, association director, told the press in a recent event.

Currently, there are about 800 deaf individuals in Ma-

cau, ranging from young children to seniors.

For Lau, the demand for sign language interpreters is significant, yet the workforce is insufficient to meet this need.

For example, deaf students often require interpreters in schools, but the lack of available personnel hinders this support.

Lau emphasized the pressing need for information accessibility among the deaf community, noting that not all societal information is available in sign language.

She said visual accessibility is crucial, especially in safety contexts, acknowledging some government departments are addressing these concerns by installing

fire alarms in restrooms.

The association has long called for the society to attend to the needs of deaf and hearing-impaired persons and improve some measures such as in the official broadcast of information, to which sign language and subtitles could be added, to enable them to understand. LV



CORPORATE BITS

SJM to host 'Michelin star table' at Grand Lisboa Palace



SJM Resorts has announced the return of the Michelin star table series, marking their fourth consecutive collaboration with Michelin Guide.

The series will pay homa-

ge to Italian mastery at Don Alfonso 1890, located within Grand Lisboa Palace, on Oct. 18 and Oct. 19.

Promising impeccable Italian dining and atmosphere, the series features

a five-course lunch and a six-course dinner.

The series will also showcase a team of three Italian culinary masters: Chef Andrea Migliaccio from two Michelin starred L'Olivo, as well as Head Chef Federico Pucci and Chef Ernesto Iaccarino from Don Alfonso 1890.

Chef Migliaccio said, "It is an honor to be part of this ensemble and this unique event, which also represents an exceptional two-fold opportunity," referring to sharing Italian culinary traditions with friends in Macau and creating connections between a variety of interpretations in the Italian gastronomic heritage.

MGM leads delegation to Foshan for lion dance cultural exchange



MGM organized the "Lingnan Lion Dance Exchange Tour" in Foshan, attracting 120 young lion dance

masters and their parents from Macau. This initiative aimed to deepen appreciation for lion dance and

traditional Chinese culture. Over two days, participants engaged with local lion dance teams, learning about the intricate craftsmanship of lion heads and drums.

The tour included visits to historical sites like Liang's Garden and the Ancestral Temple, enhancing understanding of lion dance origins.

Deng Weijie, president of the Foshan Lion and Dragon Sports Association, said: "As the younger generation will be responsible for cultural inheritance in the future, early promotion in schools will surely help in the popularity of lion dance as well as the passing on from generation to generation."

ACADEMIC EXCHANGES

US-China research has given Beijing's military technology a boost, House GOP says

DIDI TANG, WASHINGTON

PARTNERSHIPS between the U.S. and China at universities over the past decade have allowed hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding to aid Beijing in developing critical technology that could be used for military purposes, congressional Republicans asserted in a new report.

The report said U.S. tax dollars have contributed to China's technological advancement and military modernization when American researchers worked with their Chinese peers in areas such as hypersonic weapons, artificial intelligence, nuclear technology and semiconductor technology.

The report, released yesterday [Macau time] by Republicans on the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party and the House Education and Workforce Committee, raised concerns over the national security risks of scientific collaborations that were once celebrated. It urged stronger safeguards and more robust enforcement.

The committees conducted a yearlong investigation into higher education's role in the economic rivalry with China, especially when it comes to technology. While American universities don't engage in secret research projects, their work — often among the best in the world — has the potential to be turned into military capabilities.

The U.S. House of Representatives this month approved about



President Xi Jinping, speaks at the opening ceremony of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, earlier this month

two dozen China-related bills, with a clear goal to compete with Beijing in the tech field. The bills, which still need to be approved by the Senate, seek to ban Chinese-made drones, restrict China-linked biotech companies in the U.S. market, and cut off remote Chinese access to advanced U.S. computer chips.

Other measures include those to curb Beijing's influence on U.S. college campuses and to revive a Trump-era program meant "to root out China's spying and theft of intellectual property" at American universities and research institutes. That's despite such efforts raising concerns about racial profiling and the ability to keep up exchange programs that boost tolerance between the two countries.

Collaboration among U.S.-based scholars and China also declined as a result of the Trump

administration's anti-spying program, which ended in 2022, researchers say.

Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell said at a forum by the Council on Foreign Relations earlier this year that he would welcome more Chinese students studying humanities and social sciences but "not particle physics" in American schools.

The report identified about 8,800 publications that involved U.S. researchers who received funding from the Department of Defense or the U.S. intelligence community working with Chinese researchers — many of whom were affiliated with China's defense research and industrial base. Such research is "providing back-door access to the very foreign adversary nation whose aggression these capabilities are necessary to protect against," the report said.

The House investigation also flagged what it described as problematic joint institutes between U.S. and Chinese universities, which the report said "conceal a sophisticated system for transferring critical U.S. technologies and expertise" to China.

Through those institutes, American researchers and scientists, including those who conduct federally funded research, have traveled to China to work with and advise Chinese scholars and train Chinese students, the report said.

"This creates a direct pipeline for the transfer of the benefit of their research expertise" to China, the report said.

The Georgia Institute of Technology, which is named in the report for its joint Georgia Tech Shenzhen Institute, defended its work in China, saying it was focused on educating students, not research, and that the report's

claims are "unsubstantiated."

"There was no research conducted at GTSI, no facilitation of technology transfer, and no federal funding provided to China," the university said in a statement.

However, Georgia Tech announced Sept. 6 that it would discontinue its participation in the joint institute with Tianjin University and the government of Shenzhen, a city in southern China. Georgia Tech said the partnership was "no longer tenable" after the U.S. Commerce Department accused Tianjin University in 2020 of theft of trade secrets.

The congressional report also identified Tsinghua-Berkeley Shenzhen Institute, which the University of California, Berkeley, and China's Tsinghua University opened in 2015 in the city of Shenzhen to focus on "strategic emerging industries," according to the institute's website.

Berkeley's researchers "engage only in research whose results are always openly disseminated around the world" and the school was "not aware of any research by Berkeley faculty at TBSI conducted for any other purpose," Katherine Yelick, the university's vice chancellor for research, said in a statement.

Berkeley also is unwinding its partnership, saying it has no oversight of research activities conducted only by non-Berkeley employees at the joint institute.

The U.S. university has decided "to start the process of relinquishing all ownership" in the Shenzhen school "after careful consideration, which began several months ago," Yelick said.

She said Berkeley "takes concerns about research security very seriously — including those concerns voiced by Congress."

The University of Pittsburgh, which is named in the report for its cooperation with Sichuan University, said it could not comment because the Pennsylvania university "was not consulted and did not work with the House Select Committee throughout the investigation." **MDT/AP**

ECONOMY

China cuts rates, rolls out other moves to help the slowing economy

CHINA rolled out a raft of measures yesterday aimed at countering a prolonged downturn in its property market that is weighing on the world's second largest economy.

The chief of China's central bank said it would cut the amount of reserves banks are required to keep. It also slashed interest rates on its loans to commercial

banks, reduced required down payments for some property purchases and promised other moves to revive the slowing economy.

Disruptions and job losses during the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with falling prices for homes, have left many Chinese unwilling or unable to spend, despite govern-

ment efforts to encourage purchases of homes, electric vehicles and other big-ticket items.

People's Bank of China Gov. Pan Gongsheng told reporters in Beijing that the reserve requirement for banks would be cut by 0.5 percentage points "in the near term," and that the central bank would follow up with further cuts.

That would free up more money for lending.

The news lifted share prices, especially for real estate developers. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index jumped 3.6%, while the Shanghai Composite index was up 3.4%.

The central bank also plans new policies to support stable development of the stock market, Pan

and other officials said.

Analysts said the latest, coordinated approach to supporting the property sector might be more effective than earlier, piecemeal efforts that so far had brought only scant relief. The Federal Reserve's half-a-percentage point rate cut last week also alleviated pressure on the Chinese yuan, giving the PBOC more leeway to act.

It's "a step in the right direction," Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics said in a commentary. "But it will probably be insufficient to drive a turnaround in growth unless

followed up with greater fiscal support," he said.

Unlike the U.S., where inflation due to a hot economy has been the main preoccupation of policymakers in recent years, China has been contending with slowing growth and downward pressure on prices due to slack demand.

The housing market has floundered after authorities cracked down several years ago on excessive borrowing by developers, leading many to default on their debts and to fail to deliver apartments buyers had already paid for. **MDT/AP**

JAPAN

Tokyo asks China to ensure the safety of Japanese citizens

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

JAPAN'S top diplomat asked China to ensure the safety of Japanese citizens there after the fatal stabbing of a Japanese schoolboy, and demanded a crackdown on what she called "groundless, malicious and anti-Japanese" social media posts that threaten children's safety.

Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa requested her Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, conduct a full investigation into the stabbing and provide a clear explanation to Japan about what happened, and to punish the suspect and implement preventive measures for the future.

Kamikawa said Beijing should take concrete steps to ensure safety of Japanese residents, especially children, in China, according to Japan's Foreign Ministry. The two ministers met in New York yesterday [Macau time] on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly meeting.

The 10-year-old boy was stabbed on Sept. 18 near the gate of the Shenzhen Japanese School. The attacker, identified as a



Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa (left)

44-year-old man, was arrested on the spot and is being investigated, according to Chinese officials. No motive for the attack was immediately clear.

Kamikawa has said the attack occurred despite Tokyo's request to Beijing for increased security for Japanese citizens and around Japanese schools ahead of the Sept. 18 anniversary of the Mukden Incident in 1931, which China marks as the beginning of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, now northeast China.

Kamikawa also told Wang that "groundless, malicious and anti-Japanese social media postings and others, including those

targeting Japanese schools, directly affect the safety of children and are absolutely unacceptable," demanding China a thorough crackdown as soon as possible, according to a ministry statement.

Wang said the stabbing was an "accidental, individual case" and that China would handle the case under the law, the ministry said. It said Kamikawa and Wang agreed to further cooperate to achieve progress on the issues as soon as possible.

Safety concerns are rising among the Japanese business community in China.

Vice Foreign Minister Yoshi-

fumi Tsuge was in Beijing on Monday for talks with his counterpart, Sun Weidong, and conveyed a similar message of concern. Tsuge then met with representatives of the Japanese business community to hear their thoughts on safely operating in China.

Tsuge said Japan is spending 43 million yen (\$300,000) to urgently beef up security around Japanese schools and their bus stops during commuting hours, and plans to seek additional budget to staff security guards on Japanese school buses.

Tetsuro Honma, head of Panasonic Holdings Corp.'s Chinese subsidiary and head of the Japanese Chamber Commerce and Industry in China, told Tsuge that the latest stabbing, in addition to an earlier case in June, were extremely regrettable, according to the ministry.

Honma said ensuring the safety of employees and their families is crucial for Japanese companies operating in China.

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.

Earlier in June, a Chinese man stabbed four U.S. university instructors at a public park in Jilin in the northeast and a Chinese person who tried to intervene. The four instructors from Cornell College were teaching at Beihua University. Their injuries were not critical.

About 100,000 Japanese students, employees and others live in China. MDT/AP

AUSTRALIAN WOMAN DETAINED IN TURKEY OVER ALLEGED LINKS TO KURDISH INSURGENTS

AN Australian woman was arrested in Turkey over her alleged links to a Kurdish militant group in a joint operation by anti-terrorist police and intelligence officers, Turkish media said.

Cigdem Aslan, 51, was detained at Istanbul airport after an investigation found she was "actively involved in the Australian structure of the terrorist organization," according to a report by the state-run Anadolu news agency.

Anadolu, citing unnamed security sources, did not specify the nature of her alleged involvement with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK. She was brought before a court and sent to prison awaiting trial.

The PKK has fought an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984. The conflict has led to tens of thousands of deaths and the group is listed as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States, the European Union and Australia.

The Anadolu report said she was arrested as she waited to board a plane for Australia and had been followed by Turkey's National Intelligence Organization, or MIT. It did not specify when she was initially detained. MDT/AP

New Rugby Season

Saturdays, 9-11am, Taipa Stadium

BOYS AND GIRLS, AGES 6 – 18

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- Co-operation
- Fitness and FUN

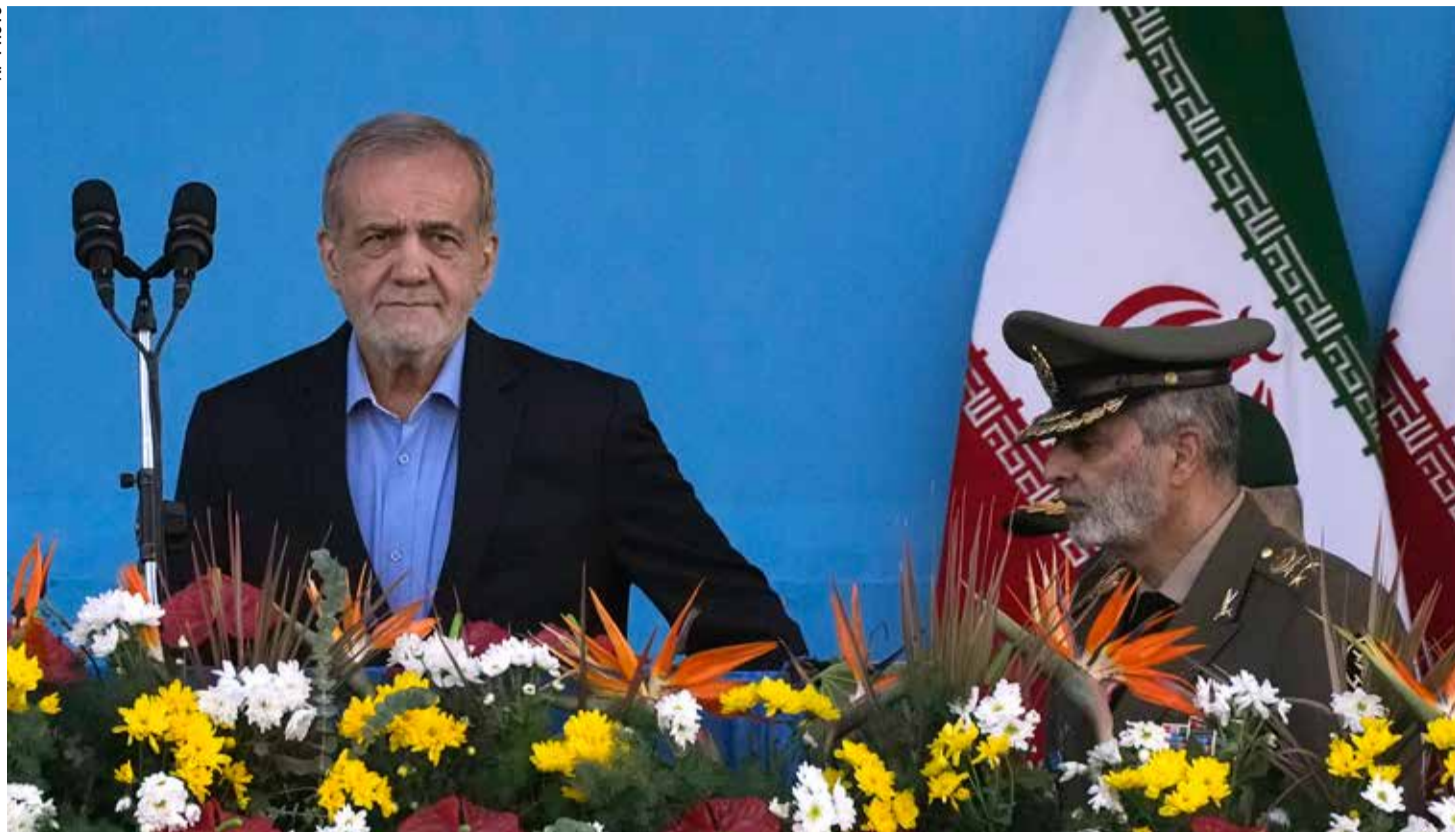


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BATS
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AP PHOTO



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian

MIDDLE EAST

Iranian president accuses Israel of seeking wider regional war

EDITH M. LEDERER,
UNITED NATIONS

IRAN'S new president accused Israel yesterday [Macau time] of seeking a wider war in the Middle East and laying "traps" to lead his country into a broader conflict.

Masoud Pezeshkian told about two dozen media representatives that Iran doesn't want to see the current war in Gaza and airstrikes across the Israeli-Lebanon border expanded.

"We don't want to fight," he said. "It's Israel that wants to drag everyone into war and destabilize the region. ... They are dragging us to a point where we do not wish to go."

Pezeshkian, a heart surgeon and reformer, defeated a hardliner in Iran's July presidential runoff, after the death of the former president in a helicopter crash. He is making his debut on the international stage at this week's annual gathering of world leaders at the U.N. General Assembly, just as Israel steps up attacks on Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon.

The Iranian leader, who will turn 70 on Sunday, said that while Israel insists it doesn't want a wider war, its actions show otherwise. Pezeshkian pointed to the deadly explosions of pagers, walkie-talkies and other electronic devices in Lebanon last week, which

he blamed on Israel, and the assassination of Hamas' political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31, hours after Pezeshkian's inauguration.

Pezeshkian said the Iranian drone and missile attacks on Israel in April, in response to an attack on an Iranian consular building in Syria's capital that Tehran blamed on Israel, proved its defensive capabilities.

He said Iran is not seeking to destabilize the Middle East. "We are willing to put all our weapons aside so long as Israel is willing to do the same," he said.

ON RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

Two weeks ago, the United States and Britain formally accused Iran of supplying short-range ballistic missiles to Russia to use against Ukraine and announced new sanctions on Moscow and Tehran before a joint visit to Kyiv by their top diplomats.

Pezeshkian insisted that Iran has not and will not supply Russia with ballistic missiles to attack Ukraine. "We have never approved of Russia's aggression against Ukrainian territory," he said, adding that the two countries should establish a dialogue.

ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

The president was asked about Iran's nuclear program following the Trump administration's withdrawal from

its 2015 nuclear deal with the U.S., Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany. It has seen Tehran expand its uranium enrichment from 3.67% purity under the deal to 60% purity, making many countries in the West nervous that it is seeking to make a nuclear weapon.

Would Iran go back to low-enriched uranium and give up its stockpile of high enriched uranium if the nuclear deal is restored?

Pezeshkian said weapons of mass destruction have no place in Iran and its military structures.

"We are still ready to live up to the same framework" that was agreed on in 2015, he said, but the Europeans tried to get Iran to sign a different accord.

He said Iran is willing to sit down with Europeans and Americans to negotiate.

ON ISRAEL AND GAZA

Pezeshkian was asked if Iran had advance knowledge of the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks on Israel that killed about 1,200 people, most of them civilians.

"The Americans know, and Israel is very well aware that Iran was not aware," he replied.

Israel says it only targets militants and accuses Hamas and other armed groups of endangering civilians by operating in residential areas.

Pezeshkian also accused Israel of committing "genocide"

in Gaza by attacking schools, hospitals and homes. He defended Iran's support for the Palestinians and Lebanon's Hezbollah militants, saying his country "will not stand by to oppression and injustice."

Israel's nearly year-long retaliation has killed more than 41,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry which doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants.

ON THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Pezeshkian responded to America's top intelligence official Avril Haines, who said in July that the Iranian government is covertly encouraging American protests over the war in Gaza in a bid to stoke outrage ahead of the November presidential election.

"Please don't believe these things - they're childish," he said.

ON THE CAPTIVITY OF A NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER

When a reporter asked if Iran would free Narges Mohammadi, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2023 for her activism including for women's rights, Pezeshkian said there are four women ministers in his administration. And if the Western media is so concerned about human rights, he asked, "Why are you not screaming about what is going on in Gaza?" MDT/AP

this day in history

1996 TALEBAN GAINS THREATEN KABUL



Opposition fighters in Afghanistan have reached the eastern suburbs of Kabul and are poised to take control of the country's capital.

Taliban fighters have captured the strategically important Sarobi, 45 miles east of Kabul, which allowed them to march easily to within three miles of the city centre.

Their advance is the biggest threat to the coalition of five factions that make up the Afghan government since the civil war began in 1992.

Mullah Mohammed Omar, the leader of the Islamic fundamentalist movement, said President Burhanuddin Rabbani was preparing to flee and offered the government forces amnesty if they surrender.

The Taliban victory follows the capture of the previously secure Silk Gorge six days ago - which even the Soviet army failed to take during the 10 years they tried to occupy the country.

A senior member of the Afghan administration blamed recent defeats on government force commanders defecting to the Taliban.

President Rabbani's coalition has also accused Pakistan of backing Mullah Omar, but a Foreign Office spokesman in Islamabad has denied the allegation.

The secretive one-eyed leader and his student fighters have taken control of two thirds of Afghanistan and are close to imposing their strict interpretation of Islamic law on the entire country.

The only serious opposition they face is from General Abdul Rashid Dostam - the northern warlord who controls the country's lucrative natural gas and oil supplies.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Two days later the Taliban fighters swept into the city and declared an Islamist state. They imposed Sharia law, which enforced punishments such as amputation and stoning to death.

Mullah Omar's grip on the country ended after the 11 September attacks in the United States which were blamed on one of his guests - Osama Bin Laden.

The opposition Northern Alliance - who seized the opportunity of US backing - marched into the capital in November 2001.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Home and family benefit from your attention. Clean messes. Misunderstandings can easily spark. Patiently clarify. Cook up something delicious. Share love and support.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Use your intellect and wit to articulate discourses, statements and ideas. Learn from history. Stick to what worked before. Edit carefully and share.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Maintain positive cash flow. Illusions fade to reveal hidden costs. Keep terms and conditions confidential for now. Find ways to increase efficiency and teamwork.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Take charge to ensure that deadlines are met and rules carefully followed. Avoid conflicts, controversy or antagonizing anyone. Treat yourself with kindness. Patience pays.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Slow down and reflect. Avoid risk and error. Anticipate what could go wrong and prepare with backup plans. Aim for simplicity and ease.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Avoid gossip or hearsay. Direct complaints to someone who can do something about it. Others appreciate your common sense. Coach your team to victory.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Career action is behind the scenes. Forgive miscommunications and maintain momentum. Another obstacle could arise: roll with it. Experience pays off.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Travel and study has your attention. Completion of a difficult project opens time for more fun. Reinforce structures and rules. Learn from another's mistake.

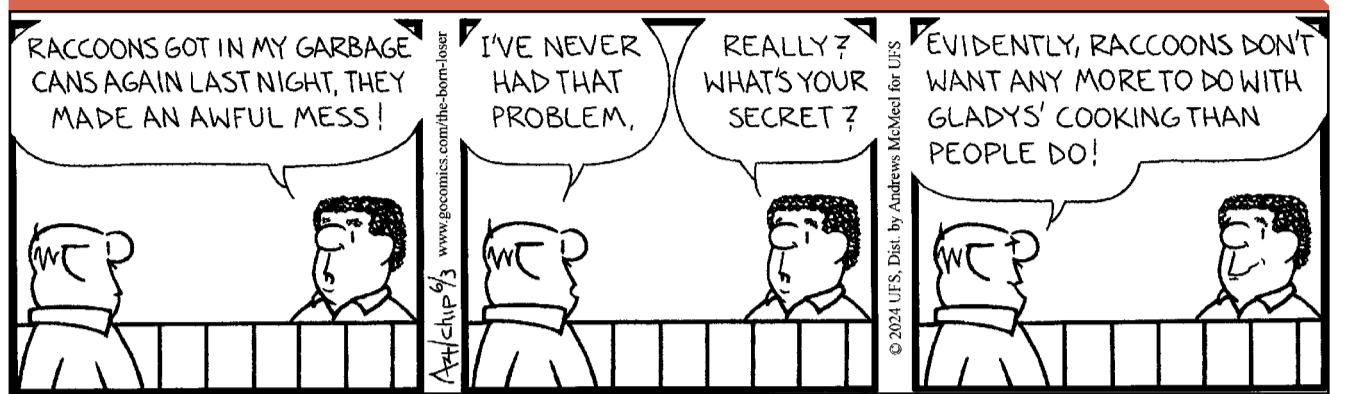
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Revise financial documents carefully before submitting. Mistakes may be difficult or costly to correct. Follow instructions and guidelines. Discuss priorities, concerns and goals.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Get farther by working with a partner. Others demand quick action: help them see the big picture. Share practical tasks and chores. Track accomplishments.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Don't believe everything you hear: talk is cheap, especially today. Watch for action. Follow routines and maintain your practices. Nurture your health and vitality.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Chaos abounds. Get disciplined to advance your art, talent, skill or favorite practice. Illusions fade to reveal harsh realities. Follow rules carefully. Strengthen your game.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	14	25	cloudy
Changchun	13	18	rain
Chengdu	19	30	cloudy
Chongqing	26	32	cloudy
Fuzhou	23	29	rain
Guangzhou	21	29	rain
Guiyang	15	26	overcast
Haikou	23	30	cloudy
Hangzhou	21	29	overcast
Harbin	14	18	rain
Hefei	14	27	fine
Nanjing	18	28	cloudy
Shanghai	20	28	cloudy
Taipei	25	27	rain
Wuhan	17	31	cloudy
Hong Kong	28	32	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	12	25	fine
Frankfurt	13	18	rain
Paris	15	17	rain
London	12	16	rain
New York	18	21	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Parentheses, essentially; 5- Balanced; 9- NYC airport; 12- Usher's offering; 13- Goes it alone; 15- Grumble; 16- Relaxation; 17- Perspire; 18- Castaway's home; 19- Wrinkle; 21- Woodcutter power tool; 23- "Give that cigar!"; 25- Dirty Harry's org.; 26- Spots on TV; 29- Skin eruption; 31- Remains of any organism preserved in rock; 35- Fond du ___; 36- Borscht veggies; 38- Fashion lines; 39- Bedouin; 41- Frame; 43- ___ yellow ribbon...; 44- Donnybrook; 46- Pilsner; 48- Gangster's rod; 49- Child who has lost both parents; 51- Franklin D.'s mother; 52- Ques. response; 53- Cupid, to the Greeks; 55- Disencumbers; 57- Legendary island; 61- Donny or Marie; 65- In the sack; 66- Mountain nymph; 68- Peek follower; 69- Torn clothing; 70- ___ say more?; 71- Trent of the Senate; 72- Debate side; 73- Blueprint detail, for short; 74- Wine sediment;

DOWN 1- Wait ___; 2- Backside; 3- What you do to a joint, prior to a heist; 4- Water vapor; 5- Concentrated extracts; 6- Pledge; 7- Util. bill; 8- ___ Ark; 9- Election defeat; 10- Big party; 11- Freshly; 14- Personnel; 15- Inclination; 20- Swedish import; 22- NASDAQ debuts; 24- Slippery as ___; 26- Texas shrine; 27- Challenger; 28- Skin of the upper part of the head; 30- Kett and James; 32- Goatlike antelope; 33- That is to say...; 34- Atty.-to-be exams; 37- Sucrose; 40- Decapitates; 42- Recurring at intervals; 45- Bring home the bacon; 47- X-ray units; 50- ___ your life!; 54- Begets; 56- Little; 57- Seniors' org.; 58- Ski lift; 59- Building block brand; 60- Leak slowly; 62- Woodwind; 63- Memo; 64- Specks; 67- Fruit drink;

Yesterday's solution

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

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	

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What nation's new Marxist-leaning leader means for economy, IMF loans

VIDHURA S. TENNEKOON
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

SRI Lankans voted for a new direction in leadership on Sept. 22, 2024, electing a leftist anti-poverty campaigner as president of the South Asian nation.

The ascent of Anura Kumara Dissanayake marks a break with the past and from the establishment parties and politicians blamed for taking the country to the brink of economic collapse in 2022.

Dissanayake characterized the victory as a "fresh start" for Sri Lanka – but he will nonetheless need to address the economic baggage left by his predecessors and the impact of an International Monetary Fund loan that came with painful austerity demands. The

Conversation turned to Vidhura S. Tennekoon, an expert on Sri Lanka's economy at Indiana University, to explain the task facing the new president – and how Dissanayake intends to tackle it.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE NEW PRESIDENT?

Anura Kumara Dissanayake leads both the National People's Power alliance, or NPP, and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, or JVP. Rooted in Marxist ideology, the JVP was founded in the 1960s with the aim of seizing power through a socialist revolution. But after two failed armed uprisings in 1971 and 1987-89 – which resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of lives – the party shifted toward democratic politics and has remained so for over three decades.

Until this election, the JVP remained a minor third party in Sri Lanka's political landscape, while power alternated between the alliances led by the two traditional political parties – the United National Party and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party – or their descendant parties.

In 2019, under Dissanayake's leadership, the NPP was formed as a socialist alliance with several other organizations. While the JVP continues to adhere to Marxist principles, the NPP adopted a center-left, social democratic platform – aiming to attract broader public support.

Despite these efforts, Dissanayake garnered only 3% of the vote in the 2019 presidential election.

But the political landscape shifted dramatically during the economic crisis of 2022. Many Sri Lankans, frustrated with the two traditional parties that had governed the country for over seven decades, turned to the NPP, seeing it as a credible alternative.

The party's anti-corruption stance, in particular, resonated strongly because many people blamed political corruption for the economic collapse.

It helped deliver 42% of the vote to Dissanayake.

While a significant achievement, it also marks a historic first for Sri Lanka — Dissanayake is the first president to be elected without majority support; the remaining 58% of votes were split between candidates from the two traditional parties.

His immediate challenge will be to secure a parliamentary majority in the upcoming elections, a crucial step for his administration to govern effectively.

WHAT KIND OF ECONOMY IS DISSANAYAKE INHERITING?

Two and a half years ago, Sri Lanka experienced the worst economic crisis in its history. With foreign reserves nearly depleted, the country struggled to pay its bills, leading to severe shortages of essential goods. People waited in long lines for cooking gas and fuel, while regular blackouts became part of daily life. The Sri Lankan rupee plummeted to a record low, driving inflation to 70%. The economy was contracting, and the country defaulted on its international sovereign bonds for the first time.

This sparked a massive protest movement that ultimately forced President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to resign. In July 2022, Parliament appointed Ranil Wickremesinghe to complete the remainder of Rajapaksa's term.

In the two years that followed, Sri Lanka's economy made an unexpectedly rapid recovery under Wickremesinghe's leadership.

After securing an agreement with the International Monetary Fund, the currency stabilized, the central bank rebuilt foreign reserves, and inflation fell to single digits. By the first half of 2024, the economy had grown by 5%.

The government successfully restructured its domestic debt, followed by a restructuring of its bilateral debt – that is, government-to-government loans, mostly from China but also from India and Western countries, including the United States. Just days before the election, an agreement was reached with international bondholders to restructure the remaining sovereign debt.

Despite these achievements, Wickremesinghe was overtaken in the presidential race by both Dissanayake and opposition leader Sajith Premadasa. Wickremesinghe's unpopularity stemmed largely from the harsh austerity measures implemented under the IMF-backed stabilization program.

Dissanayake now inherits an economy that, while more stable, remains vulnerable. He will have limited room to maneuver away from the carefully planned economic path laid out by his predecessor, even as voters expect him to fulfill popular demands.

HOW DOES HE PLAN TO IMPROVE THE ECONOMY?

As a leader from a Marxist party, Dissanayake will likely pursue policies to reflect collective decisions made by the politburos and central committees of the NPP and JVP, rather than his individual views. He advocates for an economic system where activities are coordinated through a central government plan, emphasizing the importance of "economic democracy."

His party believes prosperity should be measured not just by economic growth but by the overall quality of life. They argue that people need more than just basic necessities — they require secure housing, food, health care, education, access to technology and leisure.

Dissanayake's long-term vision is to transform Sri Lanka into a production-based economy, focusing on sectors like manufactu-

ring, agriculture and information technology rather than service industries. One of the key policies is to promote local production of all viable food products to reduce reliance on imports. To support these activities, the NPP plans to establish a development bank. Additionally, they NPP proposes increasing government spending on education and health care, in line with Sri Lanka's tradition of providing free, universal access to both.

WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE THE IMF LOANS?

Historically, Dissanayake's party has been critical of the IMF and its policy recommendations. Given the severity of Sri Lanka's economic crisis, Dissanayake has acknowledged the need to stay within the IMF program for now. But he has vowed to renegotiate with the IMF to make the program more "people-friendly." Dissanayake's proposals include raising the personal income tax exemption threshold to double its current level and removing taxes on essential goods. Dissanayake's party also plans adding jobs to the public sector, despite the ongoing effort to reduce the government workforce to manage the deficit.

Dissanayake's populist policies, aimed at attracting mass support during the campaign, will inevitably strain government revenues while increasing expenses. However, the IMF program requires Sri Lanka to maintain a primary budget surplus of at least 2.3% of gross domestic product to ensure debt sustainability. Dissanayake has promised not to jeopardize the country's economic stability by deviating from this target. His strategy is to improve the efficiency of tax collection, which he believes will generate enough revenue to fund his policies.

Additionally, his party has criticized the deal struck by Wickremesinghe's government with international lenders, calling it unfavorable to the country. Dissanayake has promised to seek better terms. However, since these agreements are already in place, it remains uncertain whether the new government will attempt to renegotiate them.

MDT/THE CONVERSATION



GOLF

Presidents Cup is a one-sided affair the International team hopes to change

DOUG FERGUSON, MONTREAL

GOLF has never seen a rivalry as lopsided as the Presidents Cup, so heavily weighted toward the Americans it can barely be considered a rivalry.

Adam Scott needs no reminder. He was a 23-year-old making his Presidents Cup debut in 2003, right in the middle of the action in South Africa, urging for a Tiger Woods-Ernie Els playoff to continue in the dark if it meant the International team not getting a share of the trophy. It ended in a tie. They shared the gold trophy.

But for Scott and the Internationals, it's been all downhill — more like plunging off a cliff — ever since then.

The Americans have won nine in a row since that tie, and the only International victory was in 1998 at Royal Melbourne in Australia.

What makes Scott think this will be any different?

"I think our team is deeper than we've seen for a while, as far as the



world ranking goes — not that it's the be all and end all, but it's something," Scott said. "I feel like we're putting together a formidable side, and 18-hole match play and some momentum, we can get right in it."

He has said that before. He just hasn't done that before.

The Presidents Cup starts Thursday at Royal Montreal, the oldest golf club in North America and site of another U.S. romp in the Presidents Cup in 2007. The only con-

solation for Canada that year was Mike Weir taking down Woods, even though the outcome had been decided.

Weir is now the International captain and hopeful Canada has more to cheer.

That starts with being in front of a home crowd.

"We know what they can do," Xander Schauffele said Monday as both teams played nine holes at Royal Montreal in cool weather

and occasional rain. "And they're on home soil."

That certainly doesn't hurt the cause, as the last two times illustrated. The International team, led by Els at Royal Melbourne in 2019, had the Americans on the ropes and was leading 10-8 going into the last day, only for the Americans to rally in singles and win.

Before that was South Korea in 2015. The Internationals thought they had it won until Chris Kirk

made a 15-foot putt and Anirban Lahiri missed from 4 feet. With a chance for at least a tie, Sangmoon Bae in the final match duffed a chip on the final hole.

Close, but no trophy. That's been the case since 1998.

In America, it's been no contest. The U.S. built an 8-2 lead after two sessions the last time, at Quail Hollow in North Carolina in 2022, against an International team that lost two key players, Cameron Smith and Joaquin Niemann, who joined the Saudi-funded LIV Golf League.

But they arrived on the weekend, a few days earlier than normal, to get acquainted with Royal Montreal. The International team spend two days in Montreal after the Tour Championship.

"I know they're putting a lot into it to kind of make it feel like as much of a home game as possible for us, and we're counting on the Canadian fans for that," Scott said. "But we're all going to have to do our job and win some points to get them on our side." **MDT/AP**



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OPINION

Business Views

Shuli Ren, Bloomberg



CHINESE TAKEOUT IN SAUDI ARABIA? YOU BET

“Going out” is a major consideration among big Chinese corporations. Pressed by shrinking profit margins at home, China Inc. is keen to expand businesses abroad. The question is whether their chosen destinations make economic sense, and if they can adapt to a culture that might be very different from the “996” work schedule at home.

The latest adventure comes from food delivery giant Meituan. It has started operations in Al-Kharj, a city in central Saudi Arabia, ahead of a widely-expected launch in the capital Riyadh. This is its first international foray outside greater China.

The company is joining a growing fleet of businesses that see a bright future in the Gulf kingdom. In recent months, Chinese firms won multibillion-dollar contracts to build solar plants and mixed-use development projects. In exchange for a \$2 billion investment, PC maker Lenovo Group Ltd. is establishing regional headquarters there in a deal that is expected to create 15,000 jobs locally. And last but not least, Hong Kong’s flagship airline Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. will start a new direct route to Riyadh in late October, pleasing Saudi officials who have been pitching the nascent tourism industry.

Nonetheless, Saudi Arabia is a curious first choice for an ambitious consumer tech brand with a formidable competitive track record that has recently won market share in a fierce three-way battle in Hong Kong. Why does Meituan want to go into a small market with only 35 million people?

Perhaps it is seduced by the investment thesis that Saudi Arabia is “like China two decades ago,” and that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s “Saudi Vision 2030” will bring about the same kind of economic opening that Beijing began in 1978.

For instance, Saudi Arabia’s demographics can be perfect for food delivery apps. Now that more women are working — labor participation rose to about one-third from 20% in 2017 — families may have more disposable income but less time to cook meals.

Meituan, whose shares have soared over 60% this year on solid sales growth and record high gross margins.

Perhaps because of its resounding success, some investors are worried the firm is “over-earning,” according to Bernstein Research’s analyst Robin Zhu.

In China, labor welfare — and whether consumer tech companies are a force of good — remains a touchy political issue. Meituan certainly seems eager to prove its social value. A new report from the company shows that its riders working in major cities are making more than the local population, portraying gig employment as an alternative for people in between full-time jobs. Last month, youth unemployment hit a new high.

No doubt, the Saudi market will present new challenges to Meituan. Deadly summer heat and regulations to motivate Saudis to work at the expense of non-locals are just a few examples. However, a few billion yuan of spending over the next few years will not dent Meituan’s balance sheet. It also gives the company a good global expansion story to tell.

Ironically, China Inc.’s foray into Saudi Arabia is simultaneously optimistic and nostalgic. Many of us growing up in China in the 1990s remember the thrill upon the arrival of KFC and big Hollywood blockbusters in movie theaters. As such, Chinese business executives can easily be persuaded by Saudi’s new investment thesis. They are simply reimagining China in Riyadh. [Abridged]

Courtesy Shuli Ren/Bloomberg

Small tsunami waves splashed ashore on remote Japanese islands yesterday morning after an earthquake that may have been triggered by volcanic activity.

The offshore quake was not felt, and the tsunami advisory was lifted about three hours later. No damage or injuries were reported.

The Japan Meteorological Agency had advised that waves up to 1 meter above tide levels could occur on the coasts of the Izu and Ogasawara island chains after the magnitude 5.8 quake occurred off the Izu Islands. The U.S. Geological Survey measured the quake’s strength at 5.6 magnitude.

About 21,500 people live on the islands in the Izu group and about

2,500 on the Ogasawara Islands.

JMA said a tsunami of about 50 centimeters was detected in the Yaene district on Hachijo Island about 30 minutes after the quake. Smaller waves were detected on three other islands — Kozushima, Miyakejima and Izu Oshima.

The offshore quake occurred about 180 kilometers (south of Hachijo island, which is about 300 kilometers south of Tokyo).

Television footage showed waves splashing against a wharf on Hachijo island but no major swelling was seen.

Residents on Hachijo said they did not feel the quake and only heard the tsunami advisory, Japan’s NHK public television said.

AP PHOTO



Singapore’s Second Minister for Home Affairs & Trade and Industry S. Iswaran speaks during a news conference in Singapore, this week

SINGAPORE OPENS ITS FIRST MINISTERIAL GRAFT TRIAL IN NEARLY HALF A CENTURY

SINGAPORE’S first ministerial corruption trial in nearly half a century began yesterday, with former Transport Minister S. Iswaran facing charges in a rare scandal in the Asian financial hub known for its squeaky clean government.

A former senior politician in the long-ruling People’s Action Party, Iswaran initially pleaded not guilty in January to 27 charges of graft, obstructing justice and accepting gifts such as concert tickets and golf clubs valued at 403,000 Singapore dollars (\$312,000). On March 25, prosecutors added more charges, bringing the total to 35, to which he maintained his not-guilty plea.

But in a twist at the start of the trial, local media said prosecutors will now proceed with only five charges. These include four related to public servants obtaining valuable things, and one charge of obstruction of justice, Channel News Asia reported.

It said prosecutors will apply for the remaining 30 charges to be taken into consideration for sentencing. No reasons were gi-

ven for the move.

Singapore ministers are among the most well-paid in the world. Although the amount involved in Iswaran’s case appeared to be relatively minor, his indictment is an embarrassment to the PAP, which prides itself on a clean image. The last Cabinet minister charged with graft was Wee Toon Boon, who was found guilty in 1975 and jailed for accepting gifts in exchange for helping a businessperson. Another Cabinet minister was investigated for graft in 1986, but died before charges were filed.

Iswaran had resigned just before he was charged, vowing to clear his name. His trial comes just over four months after Singapore installed new Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, succeeding Lee Hsien Loong, who stepped down after 20 years at the helm.

Lee has said before he stepped down that Iswaran’s case was dealt with vigorously according to the law and vowed to uphold his government’s reputation for honesty and incorruptibility. The case could cast a shadow on the PAP ahead of general elections

due by late 2025.

Iswaran, 62, was alleged to have received goods from Malaysian property tycoon Ong Beng Seng, some in return for helping the Singapore-based man advance his business interests. The gifts included free tickets for Singapore’s Formula 1 Grand Prix, as well as football matches and musicals in the United Kingdom. Ong owns the right to the local F1 race, and Iswaran was chair of and later adviser to the Grand Prix’s steering committee.

He also allegedly obtained 10 bottles of whisky, 12 bottles of wine and other items from businessperson Lum Kok Seng, whose company has work contracts with the government. Although the contracts were awarded before Iswaran became transport minister in 2021, the charge sheets said he was aware of Lum’s business dealings with his ministry.

The Attorney-General’s Chambers said it will decide whether to charge Ong and Lum after the case against Iswaran has been completed, based on the evidence presented in court. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Mexico Hurricane John hit Mexico’s southern Pacific coast, bringing life-threatening floods and storm surges. The Category 3 storm struck near Punta Maldonado and was expected to cause significant damage. Thousands were evacuated as authorities scrambled to respond to the rapidly intensifying hurricane.

AP PHOTO



Cyprus Nine EU nations met in Cyprus this week to develop cross-border renewable energy projects focusing on offshore wind and solar power. The group aims to turn the Mediterranean into a green energy hub, combat climate change, and attract investments by streamlining regulations and project implementation.

AP PHOTO



United Kingdom Flash floods caused widespread disruption in southern England, with roads submerged and train services suspended. London firefighters responded to hundreds of emergency calls. Heavy rainfall also caused a soccer pitch in London to collapse, forcing the cancellation of a match.

AP PHOTO



Portugal Around 180,000 motorcyclists gathered at the Our Lady of Fatima shrine for the annual Blessing of Helmets pilgrimage. The event included a parade and a mass where helmets were blessed. Participants prayed for protection during travels and remembered those lost in motorcycle accidents.