

THE INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMPETITION FOR TECH ENTERPRISES FROM BRAZIL AND PORTUGAL KICKS OFF TODAY AT THE SCIENCE CENTER

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XINHUA



China Premier Li Qiang urges rapid implementation of policies to meet China's growth targets, China Daily has reported. The measures include monetary easing and support for businesses, boosting investor confidence. New policies will stabilize the economy, with a focus on alleviating business burdens and addressing excessive regulations.

XINHUA



China's tourism hit new highs during the National Day holiday, with record visitor numbers. Attractions across the country, including folk arts festivals, witnessed increased footfall. The holiday's success highlights the country's growing domestic tourism market.

AP PHOTO



North Korea yesterday vowed to permanently block its border with South Korea and fortify frontline defense structures. This move comes amid rising tensions with South Korea and the U.S., further straining ties and escalating the military standoff on the Korean Peninsula.

AP PHOTO



Ukraine A Ukrainian drone strike hit a significant Russian arms depot in Bryansk, disrupting missile and artillery supplies, including those from North Korea. The attack, which damaged powerful glide bombs used by Russia, is part of Ukraine's strategy to undermine Russia's logistical capabilities.

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NADIA SHAW

SAM HOU FAI COMMITTED TO IMPROVING PUBLIC HOUSING

NADIA SHAW

SAM Hou Fai, the sole candidate for the sixth term of Chief Executive, visited Seac Pai Van yesterday morning to discuss public housing improvements and engage with community representatives.

Accompanied by his campaign team, Sam toured key facilities, including the Seac

Pai Van Health Centre and the Seac Pai Van Bus Station. His goal was to assess the current state of social services and gather insights from local leaders and organizations.

ADDRESSING PUBLIC HOUSING CHALLENGES

Speaking to media representatives at noon yesterday, the candidate acknowledged

the shortcomings of the Seac Pai Van public housing complex. He admitted that while planning was thorough, the expedited construction to meet social demand had left some supporting facilities lacking.

"The rush to launch this project led to insufficient supporting infrastructure," he stated. However, he assured residents that improvements have been

made over time, with transportation options and social services now largely adequate.

He stressed the importance of learning from past challenges in public housing development. He said many facilities in Zone A of the new landfills have been established based on lessons learned from Seac Pai Van.

"The current government has recognized previous shortcomings and has set up many facilities in advance for Area A." He also stressed the need to avoid repeating mistakes.

When asked how future public housing projects would ensure higher quality, Sam outlined a comprehensive strategy focusing on meticulous design, construction quality, monitoring, and ongoing maintenance.

"We must avoid quality issues as much as possible," he said.

A highlight of his visit was addressing the anticipated opening of the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) Hengqin line, which is currently undergoing testing.

"We expect it to open in December," he said, expressing optimism that this new transportation link will enhance mobility for residents in Coloane.

"This will meet the travel needs of our citizens and improve connectivity within the region."

Sam expressed confidence the government will continue refining its approach to public housing. He believes ongoing evaluations of past projects will lead to better planning and implementation in future developments.

"We will consolidate our experiences and use them to improve public housing construction."

LISTENING TO COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Earlier that morning, at the bus station, Sam expressed concern over transportation challenges faced by residents and foreign-employed bus drivers. He noted ongoing construction in the area has created temporary disruptions but said the upcoming LRT Seac Pai Van Line would alleviate some of these transportation issues.

Elderly residents also voiced concerns during the visit. One elderly woman highlighted the difficulties wheelchair users face at nearby crossings. She urged the CE candidate to consider accessibility in future infrastructure planning.

As his visit concluded, Sam reaffirmed his commitment to making public housing more accessible and user-friendly for all residents.

"Our goal is to create a better living environment grounded in community needs," he finalized.

MACAU GP

Tiago Rodrigues confirms participation at the FR World Cup

RENATO MARQUES

MACAU racer Tiago Rodrigues has confirmed his participation in this year's edition of the Macau Grand Prix. He will compete in the first-ever FIA Formula Regional (FR) World Cup.

The young local driver, who won the 2023 FIA Chinese Formula 4 (F4), took part in last year's Macau Grand Prix in the Macau F4 race for the first time. He is now gearing up for his de-



but at an FIA World Cup event, where he will be racing with Evans GP team.

Rodrigues will team up with Cooper Webster,

who will be also racing at this year's GP under the same banner.

Like his teammate, this will be Rodrigues' first time competing in

this class, facing strong competition from drivers who have been racing in FR throughout the season. It is also expected that some of this year's competitors to be racers with an accumulated experience of more than one season in this category.

Nonetheless, Rodrigues remains optimistic, relying on valuable lessons from last year's track experience.

Last year, Rodrigues secured a top-six finish in a final race won by Bri-

tish racer Arvid Lindblad.

The local racer last month raced with the team at the Sepang Round of the Australian F4 Championship, where he impressed with a pole position and a race victory.

"I'm really looking forward to racing with Evans GP again at the Macau GP FR World Cup," Rodrigues said.

"Having raced in Macau last year in the F4 races, I know how challenging the circuit is. Stepping up to Formula Regional will be tough, especially with the level of competition, but I'm ready to push myself and learn as much as I can. Racing in front of my home crowd makes this race even

more special, and I can't wait to represent Macau once again," he said.

Joshua Evans, team manager of Evans GP, added, "We're very pleased to welcome Tiago [Rodrigues] back to the team for the Macau GP Formula Regional World Cup. His performance in Sepang, where he secured pole position and a race win, shows the potential he brings. Moving up to Formula Regional will be a big step, especially with the experienced drivers he'll be competing against, but his previous experience in Macau will certainly help him. It's always special to race in front of your home fans, and we're confident he'll give his best effort."

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HEALTH

Faculty of Medicine should not be a priority, Furtado says

RENATO MARQUES

THE local government's push to establish a Faculty of Medicine has raised concerns among some health professionals. Dr. Rui Furtado, a surgeon and a physician with an extensive career and significant experience in both local public and private health sectors, has given an exclusive interview with the Times.

Furtado noted that the government has been investing great efforts to establish a local Faculty of Medicine that, in his opinion, should not be a priority.

"There is a lot of work to be done in the development of the local health sector. Some progress has been made, but I believe the government is focusing on the wrong priorities by trying to establish a Faculty of Medicine in Macau. We have significant resources just next door in Hong Kong. While it is a good thing to establish a Faculty of Medicine in Macau, it is not essential for our medical or training needs," he said. He acknowledged that the creation of the Macau Medical Academy, for instance, had already made positive strides in advancing the sector.

Commenting on the recent

RENATO MARQUES



Dr. Rui Furtado, veteran surgeon and physician

inauguration of the Macau Union Hospital, Furtado described it as a "big step" for the local healthcare system.

"It's a big step because they [the hospital management and staff] are good. In Beijing, as well as in Shanghai, there are some really good hospitals and professionals in the

health field," the same expert added.

Questioned by the Times on the use of the new medical unit for medical tourism, he said that there is a long way from just the opening of a facility to the use of its full potential.

"The opening of this hospi-

tal does not necessarily open the door to medical tourism. Medical tourism as an offering will require the hospital to deliberately direct part of their resources towards catering to medical tourism. It will need to be planned and organized by experts in the field and will take time."

BRAZIL VS. PORTUGAL

Innovation and entrepreneurship competition starts

NADIA SHAW

THE "2024 Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition for Technology Enterprises from Brazil and Portugal" kicks off today at 9 a.m. at the Macau Science Center's Convention Center. The event is organized by the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSEDT) and, this year, promises to showcase groundbreaking technology and innovative projects.

A total of 64 teams submitted entries, with 17 finalists selected to



present their ideas. With participants eager to demonstrate how their projects can impact global markets, the competition will include a live Q&A session featuring a panel of experts, including professional investors and universi-

ty leaders, focusing on advancements in fields such as biomedicine, artificial intelligence, and agricultural technology.

This year's theme includes pitches in the areas of integrated circuits, electronic components and devices,

biotechnology, medical devices, big data, artificial intelligence, new materials, and new energy.

Since its inception in 2021, this competition has aimed to solidify Macau's position as a bridge between

China and Portuguese-speaking countries. It serves as a platform for scientific exchange and collaboration, attracting top-tier projects to the Greater Bay Area.

The event also aligns with the objectives of the Centre for Science and Technology Cooperation and Exchange between these regions. The competition also offers prizes to the best projects in over USD 65,000 (over MOP520,000).

Support for this initiative comes from various government entities across mainland China, as well as institutions in Brazil and Portugal, including Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU), the Portugal-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Portuguese-Speaking Countries Business Confederation.

MACAU WOMEN SHINE ON FORTUNE'S MOST POWERFUL LIST

Macau's Pansy Ho and Linda Chen have been recognized in Fortune magazine's 2024 "Most Powerful Women in Asia" list. Ho, executive director of MGM China, ranked 13th regionally and 80th globally, while Chen, president of Wynn Macau, secured the 70th spot. This prestigious list highlights female leaders transforming industries and driving innovation across various sectors, including finance and hospitality. This year's top honors went to Grace Wang of Luxshare Precision Industry, followed by Helen Wong and Makiko Ono. Together, these leaders exemplify excellence across diverse sectors in the Asia-Pacific region.

DSAT IMPROVES BORDER POSTS BUS ROUTES AMID GROWING DEMAND

Facing growing passenger demands, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) is optimizing public transportation options near border checkpoints. The changes are said to meet rising cross-border mobility needs with the bureau coordinating with operators to add more buses, especially on holidays. Recently, stops were positioned by the Qingmao border and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge terminus to facilitate additional cross-border movements. Special shuttles are also available now to transport students from the University of Macau to Hengqin checkpoint. The bureau hopes these strategies will contribute to smoother and more satisfying travel experiences for all users in the Qingmao area.

GAMING REVENUE DECLINE EXPECTED AFTER HOLIDAY BOOST

Daily gross gaming revenue (GGR) is projected to fall by around 35% following the profitable Golden Week holiday period. Vitaly Umansky analyst from Seaport Research Partners said. The region saw an estimated MOP6.5 billion in gaming revenue during the first six days of October, thanks to strong visitation and good weather. The daily average GGR of MOP1,080 million was just 7% lower than the daily average during Golden Week 2019 when VIP gaming accounted for over 35% of GGR, and 30% higher than last year. However, the analyst projects that the rest of the month will average around MOP601 million, indicating a 4.5% increase compared to September but a 5.7% decline compared to the daily average in August. Despite the expected decline, the average GGR per visitor during the recent period is estimated to have surpassed this year's Lunar New Year period by more than 50%, implying that gamblers held higher value. Based on Seaport's estimate, October is anticipated to yield MOP21.5 billion in GGR, potentially exceeding the previous year's level by over 10%.

2024 'LUSOFONIA' TO HIGHLIGHT CULTURE OF GOA, DAMAN, AND DIU

VICTORIA CHAN

MACAU is set to host the 6th edition of the "Encounter in Macao – Arts and Cultural Festival between China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries," a dynamic celebration of the city's unique Sino-Portuguese heritage and its role as a cultural exchange center.

The festival will feature nearly 70 events across seven series, including the "Lusofonia Festival" held concurrently. Highlights include a Sino-Portuguese arts exhibition, a picture book fair, traditional music and dance performances, a film festival, a concert, and a wine-tasting workshop.

"The long-standing friendship between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries remains strong as always," the organizers said. "The 'Encounter in Macao' festival will allow participants to experience the cultural integration between these countries and jointly facilitate exchange and mutual learning among these civilizations."

Organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) and Galaxy Entertainment Group, with the Macao Government Tourism Office and the Municipal Affairs Bureau as co-organizers, the festival will leverage Macau's bridging role as a hub for China-Portuguese-speaking country cooperation.

This year's Lusofonia Festival, held in parallel, will place greater emphasis on the cultures of Goa, Damão, and Diu, with featured guests including a chef and a contemporary tattoo artist from these regions.



Over two weekends, the event will showcase the music, dance, art, crafts, traditional costumes, literature, and cuisine of 10 Portuguese-speaking countries and regions through performances and cultural booths. It is a testament to Macau's enduring role as a platform for cultural exchange between China and the Lusophone world.

Other highlights include:

The "Memories, Legacies, Mutations" exhibition at the Macau Museum of Art Taipa Houses (Exhibitions Gallery): This exhibition brings together artists from China and the Portuguese-speaking world to present thought-provoking contemporary works exploring the fusion of Eastern and Western cul-

tural influences.

Chinese and Portuguese Picture Book Fair: Themed "Forest Carnival," this celebration of illustrated children's literature invites readers to immerse themselves in the imaginative narratives and artistry from China and the Lusophone sphere.

GEG Traditional Music and Dance Performance in the Community: Artists from mainland China and eight Portuguese-speaking countries and regions will present captivating traditional performances, fostering artistic and cultural exchange.

China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries Film Festival: Themed "Creating an Interesting Contrast," the festival will showcase a diverse lineup of films, anima-

tions, and shorts from China and the Lusophone world.

Tito Paris Concert with the Macao Chinese Orchestra: Renowned Cape Verdean musician Tito Paris will perform his songs fused with the sounds of traditional Chinese instruments, creating a harmonious blend of musical cultures.

Wine Tasting Workshop: Participants will delve into the rich wine culture of Portugal, tasting a variety of vintages and learning about the country's renowned wine regions and grape varieties.

These events and activities underscore Macau's role as a 'Cultural Exchange Centre between China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries,' leveraging the city's uni-

que position as a hub for cultural fusion and cooperation.

In a speech today, Deland Leong, president of the IC, praised Macau's unique role in cultural exchange. She observed that "Macau has always played an important role in the history of cultural exchange between China and the West, being an important link and trading post on the Maritime Silk Road."

Macau has long been a place where cultures have converged and integrated. Several of China's leading historical figures were born in the territory. The city preserves its multicultural character through historic sites like the D. Pedro V. Theatre, the first Western-style theater built in China, which still hosts concerts today. Many other historic buildings have been converted into urban cultural spaces like libraries, exhibition halls, and restaurants.

This cultural diversity was acknowledged earlier this year when Macau was awarded the title of "East Asia City of Culture 2025." As Leong stated in her speech, this "adds a glorious 'golden business card' to the city as an international metropolis and thus affirms the merit of Macau's cultural work."

To showcase Macau's unique blend of Chinese and Portuguese cultures, this year's festival will present a diversified program with more than 700 artists. It aims to provide a panoply of exceptional cultural experiences and allow attendees to experience the charm of the city, where Chinese and Lusophone culture and art converge.

Leong said she hopes the event will help to jointly promote the development of Macau as "a base for exchange and cooperation to promote multicultural coexistence, with a predominance of Chinese culture."



Hotels occupancy at 95% during Golden Week

HOTELS in Macau saw record occupancy rates during this year's October Golden Week holiday in China, according to data from the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO). The ave-

rage occupancy rate of Macau's hotels reached 94.5% during the seven-day break, from Oct. 1-7, with an average room rate of MOP1,860.

Occupancy peaked at 98.5% on Oct. 3 and 4.

Hotel room rates were 4% higher on average than the same period in 2019. The busiest day was Oct. 3 when Macau welcomed 174,313 visitors, breaking the single-day record set in 2019.

The influx of visitors during the holiday period was significant, with Macau receiving 993,117 visitors or a daily average of 141,873. The majority of these visitors were from the Chinese mainland, with Hong Kong being the second-largest contributor. The average daily mainland visitor count was 118,025, up 34.7% year-on-year, while the average daily Hong Kong visitor count was 16,715, down 21.8% year-on-year.

The tourism office data did not provide occupancy or rates by hotel tier. Separate figures from the Macau Hotel Association show the average room rate at five-, four- and three-star hotels in the first eight months of the year was MOP1,409, with a 91% occupancy rate. VC

ELDERLY LOSES MOP250,000 IN PHONE SCAM

A 23-year-old Hong Kong Aman has been arrested for allegedly participating in a scam ring that swindled an elderly resident out of MOP250,000. This incident marks another of the "Guess Who I Am" phone scams, which prey mostly on vulnerable senior residents.

According to the Judiciary Police (PJ), the victim was contacted by the scammer Oct. 8. The impersonator requested MOP250,000 related to a serious accident that had occurred involving his son. After withdrawing the money, the victim handed it over to the man who falsely claimed to be a lawyer. The victim later verified the facts with his son and realized he had been tricked.

Officers intercepted the suspect at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-

-Macao Bridge checkpoint while he was attempting to flee Macau. The suspect was uncooperative during questioning, but police managed to seize over MOP10,500 in cash believed to be part of the proceeds of the crime. Investigators suspect that the remaining funds were transferred to other members of the group.

Authorities are increasingly concerned about the rising number of scams targeting seniors. Fraudsters often exploit familial bonds to manipulate their victims. Police urge the public to remain vigilant and report any suspicious calls immediately.

As investigations continue, law enforcement authorities remarked to be working to identify additional members of this network. NS

ADVERTORIAL

SANDS CHINA NEWS

Sands China's 'Colorful Spark Pop-up Cultural Creative Playground' Offers Family Fun

In celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China and the 25th Anniversary of Macao's Return to the Motherland, Sands China has launched the **Colorful Spark Pop-up Cultural Creative Playground** at the former Iec Long Firecracker Factory, running now until Jan. 2 as part of Sands China's ongoing revitalisation series.

Resembling a playground, **Colorful Spark** features dazzling spark-shaped art installations, educational and entertaining parent-child workshops, and mini games to offer fun and excitement for both residents and visitors – while celebrating Macao's designation this year as a Culture City of East Asia 2025.

With a century of history, Iec Long Firecracker Factory witnessed the rise and fall of Macao's firecracker industry, which played an important role in the economic development of Macao. Resembling a playground, **Colorful Spark** was inspired by the form of firecrackers and the vivid colours of fireworks, designed to be a space for both children and adults to enjoy and take photos. It aims to bring joy and beauty to the old town area of Taipa during festive celebrations, attracting families and young visitors to explore the former Iec Long Firecracker Factory and introducing the younger generation to the culture of firecrackers.

In addition, Sands China recently spread joy in the community by presenting a special dragon and lion dance parade Oct. 1-3 in Taipa Village, at a temporary pedestrian zone in place during the National Day holiday period.

The **Colorful Spark Pop-up Cultural Creative Playground** is the latest initiative of Sands China's revitalisation series, which includes the revitalisation and optimisation plan of the areas around the former Iec Long Firecracker Factory, the Taipa Houses, Rua das Estalagens, Pátio da Eterna Felicidade, and Macao Cultural Centre Square, in cooperation with the Macao SAR government.

Since September 2023, when the government entrusted integrated resort operators with promoting community revitalisation, Sands China has launched various projects, including an entrepreneurship recruitment programme, festive themed celebrations, art installations, large-scale outdoor orchestral concerts, and parent-child workshops. Visit www.sandschina.com/the-company/sci-community-revitalization-programme.html to learn more about Sands China's revitalisation initiatives.



MARKETS

Chinese stocks sink, with Shanghai down 6.6%, while other markets are mostly higher

ZIMO ZHONG, HONG KONG

CHINESE shares plunged yesterday, with Shanghai's benchmark down 6.6% and Hong Kong's sliding 1.5%, while other world markets mostly advanced.

Details of economic stimulus plans from officials in Beijing have failed to live up to lofty expectations that had built up after the central bank and other government agencies announced various policies to help revive the ailing property market and spur faster economic growth.

The Shanghai Composite lost 6.6% to 3,258.86 after it gained 4.6% Tuesday as it reopened from a weeklong national holiday. The CSI 300 Index, which tracks the top 300 stocks traded in the Shanghai and Shenzhen markets, gave up 7.1%.

The benchmark in the smaller market in Shenzhen dropped 8.7%.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng index shed 1.5% to 20,618.79. That followed a plunge of more than 9% on Tuesday.

The government has set a target for about 5% annual growth this year, but the economy expanded at only a 4.7% pace in the last quarter and economists have been revising their estimates for the full year downward.

The moves announced in late September fueled a rally that has since fizzled. But analysts have pointed out that a news con-

ference on Tuesday by China's main planning agency, the National Development and Reform Commission, was unlikely to convey much information about government spending, which is the purview of the Finance Ministry.

That ministry is due to hold a briefing on Saturday that could provide further details on planned government outlays that so far have fallen short of what investors have been hoping for.

"A lack of new stimulus has been the cause of disappointment, with many market participants hoping that its fiscal policies will follow in the footsteps of the financial 'bazooka' delivered in late-September, but there was clearly a step-down in yesterday's [Tuesday] announcement," Yeap Jun Rong of IG said in a commentary.

The Shanghai Composite is still up 5.2% from a year ago and more than 10% in the past three months. Hong Kong's index is up nearly 18% from a year earlier.

In Tokyo, the Nikkei 225 index advanced 0.9% to 39,277.96. Shares of the Japanese retailer Seven & i Holdings gained 4.7% after media reported that Canadian convenience store operator Alimentation Couche-Tard had increased its takeover bid by about 20%.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 gained 0.1% at 8,187.40. South Korea's markets were closed for a public holiday. MDT/AP

'MADE IN CHINA'

Trump has long blasted China's trade practices, but his bibles were printed here

RICHARD LARDNER
& DAKE KANG

THOUSANDS of copies of Donald Trump's "God Bless the USA" Bible were printed in a country that the former president has repeatedly accused of stealing American jobs and engaging in unfair trade practices — China.

Global trade records reviewed by The Associated Press show a printing company in China's eastern city of Hangzhou shipped close to 120,000 of the Bibles to the United States between early February and late March.

The estimated value of the three separate shipments was \$342,000, or less than \$3 per Bible, according to databases that use customs data to track exports and imports. The minimum price for the Trump-backed Bible is \$59.99, putting the potential sales revenue at about \$7 million.

The Trump Bible's connection to China, which has not been previously reported, reveals a deep divide between the former president's harsh anti-China rhetoric and his rush to cash in while campaigning.

The Trump campaign did not respond to emails and calls seeking comment.

TRUMP SAYS HIS BIBLES WOULD HELP AMERICA

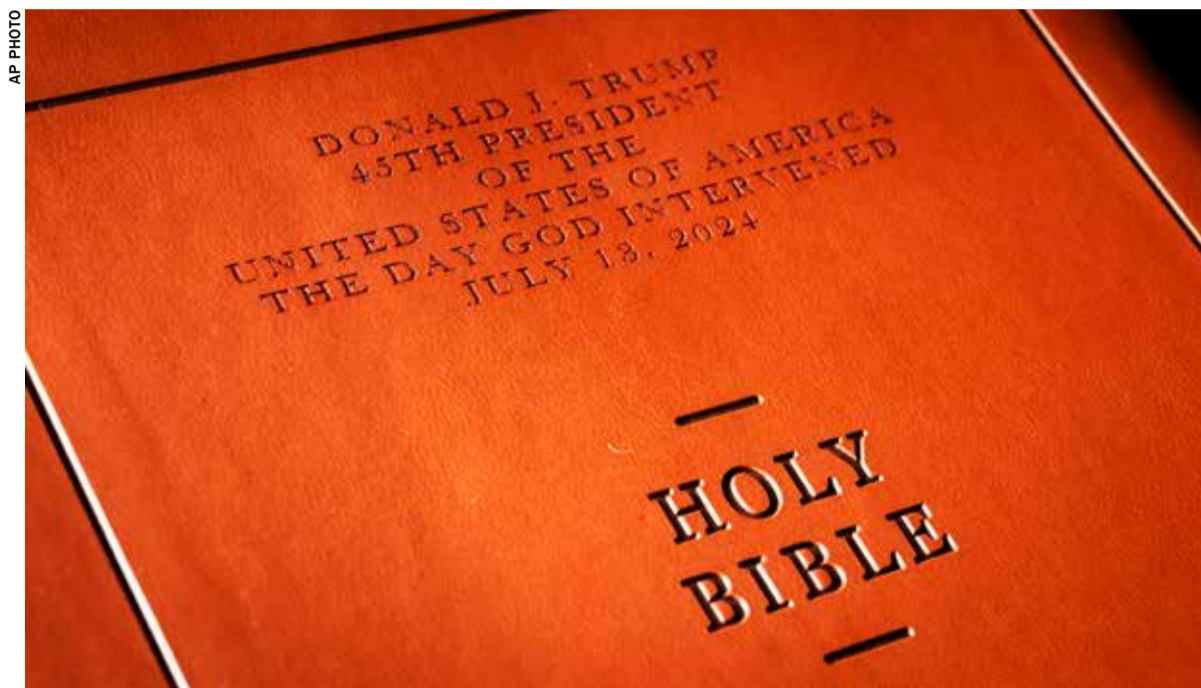
The largest and most recent load of 70,000 copies of Trump's Bible arrived by container vessel at the Port of Los Angeles on March 28, two days after Trump announced in a video posted on his Truth Social platform that he'd partnered with country singer Lee Greenwood to hawk the Bibles.

In the video, Trump blended religion with his campaign message as he urged viewers to buy the Bible, inspired by Greenwood's ballad, "God Bless the USA." The Bible includes copies of the U.S. Constitution, Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights and Pledge of Allegiance.

"This Bible is a reminder that the biggest thing we have to bring back in America, and to make America great again, is our religion, Trump said. Judeo-Christian values, he added, are "under attack, perhaps as never before."

Trump didn't say where the "God Bless the USA" Bibles are printed, or what they cost; a copy hand-signed by the former president sells for \$1,000. Trump also didn't disclose how much he earns per sale.

A version of the \$59.99 Bible memorializes the July 13 assassination attempt on the former president in Pennsylvania. Trump's name is on



the cover above the phrase, "The Day God Intervened." The wording appears to have been stamped on after the Bible was produced. Trump said Saturday his would-be assassin did not succeed "by the hand of providence and the grace of God."

The Bibles are sold exclusively through a website that states it is not affiliated with any political campaign nor is it owned or controlled by Trump.

A photo posted on the website shows Trump sitting at his desk in the Oval Office with Greenwood standing beside him. In another photo, the former president smiles broadly while holding a copy of the Bible.

TRUMP'S NAME AND IMAGE ARE LICENSED

The website states that Trump's name and image are used under a paid license from CIC Ventures, a company Trump reported owning in his most recent financial disclosure. CIC Ventures earned \$300,000 in Bible sales royalties, according to the disclosure. It's unclear what period that covers or how much Trump received in additional payments since the disclosure was released in August.

AP received no response to questions sent to an email on the Bible website and to a publicist for Greenwood.

For years, Trump has castigated Beijing as an obstacle to America's economic success, slapping hefty tariffs on Chinese imports while president and threatening even more stringent measures if he's elected again. He blamed China for the COVID-19 outbreak and recently suggested, without evidence, that thousands of Chinese immigrants are flooding the U.S. to build an "army" and attack America.

But Trump also has an eye on

his personal finances. Pitching Bibles is one of a dizzying number of for-profit ventures he's launched or promoted, including diamond-encrusted watches, sneakers, photo books, cryptocurrency and digital trading cards.

The web of enterprises has stoked conflict of interest concerns. Selling products at prices that exceed their value may be considered a campaign contribution, said Claire Finkelstein, founder of the nonpartisan Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law and a law professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

As president, Trump would be in a position to influence policies and markets to benefit businesses in which he and his family have financial stakes. While president, his administration exempted Bibles and other religious texts from tariffs imposed on billions of dollars of Chinese goods.

There's a potentially lucrative opportunity for Trump to sell 55,000 of the "God Bless the USA" Bibles to Oklahoma after the state's top education official ordered public schools to incorporate Scripture into lessons for grades 5 through 12. Oklahoma plans to spend \$3 million on Bibles that initially matched Trump's edition: a King James Version that contains the U.S. founding documents. The request was revised Monday to allow the U.S. historical documents to be bound with the Bible or provided separately.

Oklahoma's Department of Education did not answer AP's questions about whether the Bibles must be printed in the United States or if any department officials have discussed the proposal with Trump or his representatives.

"There are hundreds of Bible

publishers and we expect a robust competition for this proposal," said department spokesman Dan Isett.

CHINESE PRINTING COMPANY CONFIRMS SHIPMENTS

China is one of the world's leading producers of Bibles, so it's not unusual for the Trump-endorsed version to be printed there.

The first delivery of Trump Bibles was labeled "God Bless USA," according to the information from the Panjiva and Import Genius databases. The other two were described as "Bibles." All the books were shipped by New Ade Cultural Media, a printing company in Hangzhou that describes itself as a "custom Bible book manufacturer." They were sent to Freedom Park Design, a company in Alabama that databases identified as the importer of the Bibles.

Tammy Tang, a sales representative for New Ade, told AP all three shipments were "God Bless the USA" Bibles. She said New Ade received the orders via the WhatsApp messaging service and confirmed they were from Freedom Park Design. The books were printed on presses near the company's Hangzhou office, she said. Tang did not disclose the sales price or other details, citing customer confidentiality.

"They didn't come to meet us," Tang said by telephone. "We just do the production."

She declined further comment and referred interview requests to Freedom Park Design.

Freedom Park Design was incorporated in Florida on March 1, according to business registration records. An aspiring country singer named Jared Ashley is the company's president. He also co-founded 16 Creative, a digital marketing firm that uses the same Gulf Shores address and processes online or-

ders for branded merchandise sold by entertainers and authors.

Ashley hung up on a reporter who called to ask about the Bibles.

Greenwood is a client of 16 Creative, according to the firm's website. He launched the American-flag emblazoned Bible in 2021. His song, "God Bless the USA," was released 40 years ago and is a staple at Trump rallies. Greenwood has also appeared at the former president's campaign events.

CRITICS CALL TRUMP BIBLE A 'TOXIC MIX'

The King James Version used in the Trump Bible is in the public domain. Greenwood had initially planned to use the best-selling New International Version licensed in North America by HarperCollins Christian Publishing. But the publisher abandoned the arrangement amid pressure from religious scholars and authors who denounced the merger of Scripture and government documents as a "toxic mix" that would fuel Christian nationalism sentiments in evangelical churches.

Christian nationalism is a movement that fuses American and Christian values, symbols and identity and seeks to privilege Christianity in public life. Christian nationalists are likely to believe the U.S. Constitution was inspired by God and that the federal government should declare the U.S. a Christian nation.

Other critics called the Trump Bible blasphemous.

"Taking what has long been understood as a global message religiously and stamping it with the flag of one nation is the type of thing that for centuries theologians would call heresy," said Brian Kaylor, a Baptist minister and president of the Christian media company Word&Way.

'LOVE OF MONEY'

Tim Wildsmith, a Baptist minister who reviews Bibles on his YouTube channel, said he quickly noticed the signs of a cheaply made book when his "God Bless the USA" Bible arrived wrapped in plastic inside a padded mailer.

It had a faux leather cover, and words were jammed together on the pages, making it hard to read. He also found sticky pages that ripped when pulled apart, and there was no copyright page or information about who printed the Bible, or where.

"I was shocked by how poor the quality of it was," Wildsmith said. "It says to me that it's more about the love of money than it is the love of our country." MDT/AP

ASEAN SUMMIT

Southeast Asian leaders meet in Laos to discuss Myanmar war and disputed sea

JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI,
EILEEN NG, VIENTIANE

SOUTHEAST Asian leaders gathered yesterday for an annual forum that will focus on the civil war in Myanmar and territorial tensions in the South China Sea, two key challenges that have tested the bloc's credibility.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Laos will be followed by two days of meetings with global powers including China, the United States and Russia, which are contending for influence in the region.

The timing of the meetings in the capital, Vientiane, makes it likely the talks will also touch on the escalating conflict in the Middle East, although Southeast Asia has faced only indirect fallout.

ASEAN's influence has historically been limited even among its own members, but the forum has been a platform for engagement between superpowers and the region.

The 10 member states of ASEAN — Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Brunei and Laos — will also hold talks with other dialogue partners including Japan, South Korea, India and Australia on topics ranging from the economy, to climate change and energy.

Lao Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone welcomed new lea-



From left Laos' PM Sonexay Siphandone, Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim, Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, and Cambodian PM Hun Manet hold hands for a photo session during the opening ceremony of the ASEAN Summit in Vientiane

ders from Thailand and Singapore to the summit in his opening speech.

"We help one another, and work together the ASEAN way," he said. "We will discuss and strengthen cooperation between ASEAN members and other dialogue partners, along with upholding the unity and centrality of ASEAN."

Thailand's Paetongtarn Shinawatra, who took the premiership in August, is the bloc's youngest leader at 38. Singapore's Prime Minister Lawrence Wong took over in May from Lee Hsien Loong, who stepped down after 20 years. Vietnam also has a new leader after President To Lam took office in August, but the country

is being represented by Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh.

President Joko Widodo of Indonesia, ASEAN's biggest member, is skipping the forum as his successor Prabowo Subianto prepares to take office later this month, sending Vice President Ma'ruf Amin in his stead. It will also be the first overseas trip for Japan's new Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, who was confirmed just last week.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will fill in for President Joe Biden at the meetings, while China will be represented by Premier Li Qiang.

Frayed U.S.-China relations, especially "escalatory and irresponsible" moves by Beijing to

coerce smaller claimant countries in the disputed South China Sea, will be a major agenda item for Blinken, said Dan Kritenbrink, a top U.S. diplomat for Asia.

ASEAN members Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei have overlapping claims with China, which claims sovereignty over virtually all of the South China Sea. ASEAN members and China have been negotiating a code of conduct to govern behavior in the sea for years, but progress has been slow. Sticky issues include disagreement on whether the pact should be binding.

Chinese and Philippine vessels have clashed repeatedly this year, and Vietnam charged last week that Chinese forces assaulted its

fishermen in disputed areas in the South China Sea. China has also sent patrol vessels to areas that Indonesia and Malaysia claim as exclusive economic zones. The Philippines, a longtime U.S. ally, has been critical of other ASEAN countries for not doing more to get China to back away.

Muhammad Faizal Abdul Rahman, research fellow at Singapore's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, said there's little chance of clear outcomes as those not in direct conflict with China — the region's top trade and key investment partner — will likely prioritize ties with Beijing.

"It is the preference for conflict avoidance while getting geostrategic benefits where possible," he said. "In reality, national interests matter more than regional interests."

Indonesian Vice President Ma'ruf Amin called for the code of conduct to be completed by 2026 and urged high-level officials to bolster direct communications to prevent conflicts in the South China Sea. He also called Myanmar "ASEAN's biggest internal challenge" and warned it could threaten regional stability if it remains unresolved.

ASEAN's credibility has been severely tested by the war in Myanmar, where the army ousted an elected government in 2021, and fighting has continued. **MDT/AP**

JAPAN

Prosecutors will not appeal acquittal of world's longest death-row inmate in retrial

JAPANESE prosecutors this week said they will not appeal the acquittal of the world's longest-serving death-row inmate in a retrial last month, bringing closure to the 1966 murder case after more than a half-century of legal battles.

Prosecutor-general Naomi Unemoto said the prosecution decided not to appeal the Shizuoka District Court decision that found Iwao Hakamada not guilty in a retrial 58 years after his arrest, saying: "We feel sorry for putting him in a legally unstable situation for an

extremely long time."

Hakamada, an 88-year-old former boxer, was found not guilty on Oct. 26 by the Shizuoka court, which concluded that police and prosecutors collaborated in fabricating and planting evidence against him. The court said he was forced into confession by violent, hours-long interrogations.

The top prosecutors' decision to not appeal two days before the Oct. 10 deadline finalizes Hakamada's acquittal by the district court.

"I'm delighted that we



Iwao Hakamada, 88-year-old former boxer who has been on death row for nearly six decades

finally resolved this. Case closed," his 91-year-old sister Hideko Hakamada told reporters after getting a phone call from her

lawyer about the prosecutors' decision.

"I kind of knew this was going to happen," Hakamada said, with a

laugh.

Unemoto, in a statement on the Supreme Public Prosecutors Office website, also apologized for Hakamada's decades-long unstable legal situation amid a lengthy court process and pledged to investigate why the retrial took so long. She expressed dissatisfaction over the court decision that investigators had fabricated evidence.

Hakamada was convicted of murder in the 1966 killing of an executive and three of his family members and setting fire to their home in central Ja-

pan. He was sentenced to death in 1968 but was not executed, due to the lengthy appeal and retrial process in Japan's notoriously slow-paced justice system.

His acquittal became official yesterday when the Shizuoka prosecutors office submitted the paper waving the right to appeal.

The Shizuoka prefectural police chief, Takayoshi Tsuda, told reporters he hoped to directly apologize to Hakamada. He expressed regret for the victims' families that the case ended without finding the culprit.

Hakamada became the fifth death row inmate to be found not guilty in a retrial in postwar Japan, where prosecutors have a more than 99% conviction rate and retrials are extremely rare. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



An ad by Valor media shows a photo of Elon Musk at a shopping center in Brasilia

BRAZIL

X to be reinstated after complying with Supreme Court demands

GABRIELASÁ PESSOA & BARBARA ORTUTAY, SAO PAULO

THE Brazilian Supreme Court's Justice Alexandre de Moraes yesterday [Macau time] authorized the restoration of social media platform X's service in Brazil, over a month after its nationwide shutdown, according to a court document that was made public.

Elon Musk's X was blocked on Aug. 30 in the highly online country of 213 million people — and one of X's biggest markets, with estimates of its user base ranging from 20 to 40 million. De Moraes ordered the shutdown after a monthslong dispute with Musk over free speech, far-right accounts and misinformation. Musk had disparaged de Moraes, calling him an authoritarian and a censor, even though his rulings, including X's suspension, were repeatedly upheld by his peers.

Despite Musk's public bravado, X ultimately complied with all of de Moraes' demands. They included blocking certain accounts from the platform, paying outstanding fines and naming a legal representative in the country. Failure to do the latter had triggered the suspension.

"The resumption of (X)'s activities on national territory was conditioned, solely, on full compliance with Brazilian laws and absolute observance of the

Judiciary's decisions, out of respect for national sovereignty," de Moraes said in the court document.

"X is proud to return to Brazil," the company said in a statement posted on its Global Government Affairs account. "Giving tens of millions of Brazilians access to our indispensable platform was paramount throughout this entire process. We will continue to defend freedom of speech, within the boundaries of the law, everywhere we operate."

Just two days before the ban, on Aug. 28, X said it was removing all its remaining staff in Brazil "effective immediately," saying de Moraes had threatened with arrest its legal representative in the country, Rachel de Oliveira Villa Nova Conceição, if X did not comply with orders to block accounts.

Brazilian law requires foreign companies to have a local legal representative to receive notifications of court decisions and swiftly take any requisite action — particularly, in X's case, the takedown of accounts. Conceição was first named X's legal representative in April and resigned four months later. The company named her to the same job on Sept. 20, according to the public filing with the Sao Paulo commercial registry.

In an apparent effort to shield Conceição from potential violations by X — and risking arrest — a clause has been written

into Conceição's new representation agreement that she must follow Brazilian law and court decisions, and that any legal responsibility she assumes on X's behalf requires prior instruction from the company in writing, according to the company's filing.

Conceição works for BR4Business, a business services firm. Its two-page website provides no insight into its operations or staff. "Something great is on its way," the top of the site's main page reads in English. Its other page is an extensive privacy policy.

At three of its listed Sao Paulo offices, receptionists told the AP that the company's offices are empty and employees work remotely. Neither Conceição nor BR4Business returned multiple phone calls and emails from the AP.

There is nothing illegal or suspect about using a company like BR4Business for legal representation, but it shows that X is doing the bare minimum to operate in the country, said Fabio de Sa e Silva, a lawyer and associate professor of International and Brazilian Studies at the University of Oklahoma.

"It doesn't demonstrate an intention to truly engage with the country. Take Meta, for example, and Google. They have an office, a government relations department, precisely to interact with public authorities and discuss Brazil's regulatory

policies concerning their businesses," Silva added.

Indeed, it is rare for an established, influential company such as X to have only a legal representative, said Carlos Affonso Souza, a lawyer and director of the Institute for Technology and Society, a Rio-based think tank. And that could be problematic going forward.

"The concern now is what comes next and how X, once back in operation, will manage to meet the demands of the market and local authorities without creating new tensions," he said.

Some of Brazilian X's users have migrated to other platforms, such as Meta's Threads and, primarily, Bluesky. It's unclear how many of them will return to X. In a statement to the AP, Bluesky reported that it now has 10.6 million users and continues to see strong growth in Brazil. Bluesky has appointed a legal representative in the South American country.

Brazil was not the first country to ban X — far from it — but such a drastic step has generally been limited to authoritarian regimes. The platform and its former incarnation, Twitter, have been banned in Russia, China, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, Venezuela and Turkmenistan. Other countries, such as Pakistan, Turkey and Egypt, have also temporarily suspended X before, usually to quell dissent and unrest. MDT/AP

this day in history

1975 LIZ TAYLOR AND RICHARD BURTON REMARRY



Actors Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor have secretly remarried in Africa only 16 months after getting divorced.

The couple who split last year after nearly 10 years of marriage were reconciled in August and have been enjoying a second honeymoon in Chobe game park in Botswana.

The couple first met when they were starring in the film, Cleopatra, in Rome, when their onscreen romance quickly turned into an off-screen love affair.

They married in 1964. Richard Burton was her fifth husband, she was his second wife.

They arrived in Johannesburg in September ostensibly to attend a charity celebrity tennis tournament.

They then flew by private jet to the Rhodesian border near Victoria Falls where they were met and driven to the Chobe game lodge.

The private wedding ceremony was conducted by African district commissioner Abrose Masalila and witnessed by the manager of the game lodge where they were staying, Fred Knoessen, and Brian Graham, who runs tours from the lodge.

Mr Masalila said: "The bride wore green, with lace frills and guinea fowl feathers."

Burton was in a red shirt, white trousers and red socks.

The simple service, which took just 20 minutes to perform, was held at 1530 local time in Mr Masalila's office in the remote village of Kasane.

The couple exchanged rings and held hands and later they asked Mr Masalila to join them for a champagne toast on the banks of the Chobe river.

He said: "They looked very excited but composed. I don't think they had a party afterwards because I think they would have invited me if they had. They are very nice people."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

News of the couple's wedding emerged five days later.

Elizabeth Taylor said she had remarried Richard Burton after an x-ray revealed spots on her lungs which she feared were cancerous.

She said the 12 hours of anxiety waiting for the prognosis, which turned out to be clear, convinced her to remarry.

Another newspaper story which surfaced shortly after their second wedding said Liz Taylor had sold back a £500,000 honeymoon ring to pay for a hospital in Botswana.

However, their stormy relationship did not last. The couple began rowing and separated in February 1976, reportedly when Richard Burton began drinking again.

Their marriage was dissolved. Burton married twice more but died in 1984 of a cerebral haemorrhage.

Taylor also went on to marry twice more - her last marriage to Larry Fortensky was dissolved in 1995.

She was made a dame in 2000 and officially retired from acting in 2003. Despite a number of health problems, she has continued to campaign for Aids research.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Begin a four-month creative review process. Jupiter's retrograde favors coordination, communications and planning. Study the back story.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Invent income ideas. Over four months, with Jupiter retrograde, review finances. Dogma, overindulgence or hypocrisy get revealed. Find and plug leaks.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Reexamine personal priorities. Relinquish practices and habits that no longer serve. Practice for mastery over four months, with Jupiter retrograde in your sign.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Share support with your partner. Water your common roots with generous listening. Share a deeper connection over the next four months, with Jupiter retrograde.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Enjoy stories, photos and memories, with Jupiter's four-month retrograde phase. Share highlights, appreciations and acknowledgments.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Reorient your professional path. Do you love what you're doing? Revise career plans, with Jupiter in retrograde for four months. Organize for new possibilities.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Reconsider educational or travel plans. Refine the itinerary over the next four months, with Jupiter retrograde. Reserve tickets and launch adventures after February.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Get your numbers in order. For about four months, with Jupiter retrograde, review and revise financial matters. Find new ways to profit and save.

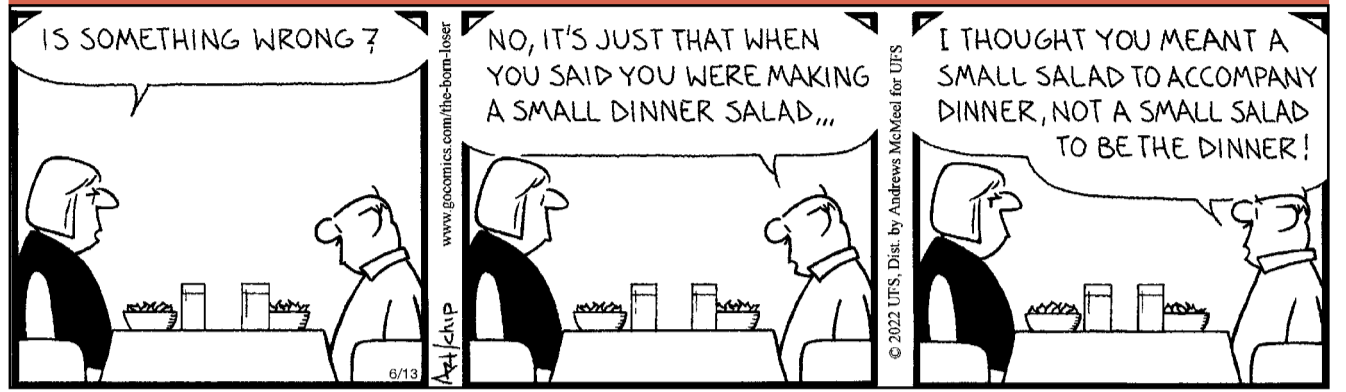
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Shift responsibilities. Invent new possibilities in a partnership, with Jupiter retrograde. Revise collaborative efforts over four months.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Rest and recharge to avoid burnout. Over four months, during Jupiter's retrograde, revise physical and health practices. Reduce stress with soothing music.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Abandon outdated ideas. Add passion, romance and fun to your schedule. Practice tricks over four months, with Jupiter retrograde. Prioritize what and who you love.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Plan for home improvements. Jupiter's retrograde encourages nesting for four months. Initiate action after February. Organize ideas and review priorities.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

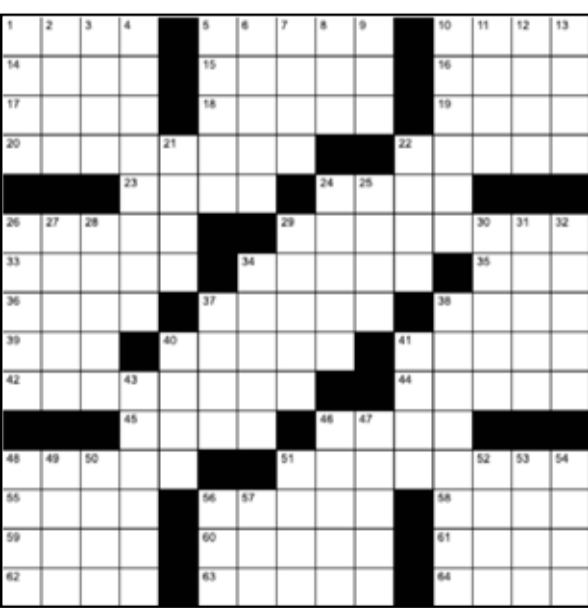
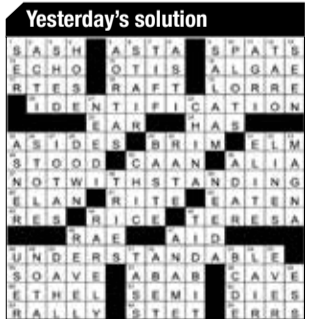
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	11	21	fine
Changchun	7	14	rain
Chengdu	16	23	rain
Chongqing	18	22	rain
Fuzhou	20	26	cloudy
Guangzhou	21	31	cloudy
Guiyang	11	19	overcast
Haikou	23	30	cloudy
Hangzhou	13	25	cloudy
Harbin	10	12	rain
Hefei	12	25	cloudy
Nanjing	13	25	cloudy
Shanghai	15	24	fine
Taipei	22	24	cloudy
Wuhan	16	29	cloudy
Hong Kong	25	29	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	6	11	cloudy
Frankfurt	8	16	rain
Paris	8	16	rain
London	2	11	rain
New York	8	17	fine

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Deficiency; 5- Made a choice; 10- Org.; 14- Irish island group; 15- Red cosmetic; 16- Linebacker Junior; 17- Bog down; 18- Seasonal song; 19- Put on the market; 20- Without a saddle; 22- Reef material; 23- Corned beef concoction; 24- Large pitcher; 26- Those against; 29- Custom; 33- Beetle Bailey's boss; 34- Creepy; 35- Guy's partner; 36- Winnie-the-___; 37- Orlando attraction; 38- Literary lioness; 39- Australian bird; 40- Standard of perfection; 41- Rest on the surface of a liquid; 42- Gaseous element; 44- Not tied down; 45- French summers; 46- Family; 48- Sleep disorder; 51- Pharmacist; 55- Go belly up; 56- Aired again; 58- "Puppy Love" singer; 59- Fairy tale opener; 60- "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" musical; 61- Nipple; 62- Hollow grass; 63- It beats rock; 64- It is in Spain;

DOWN 1- Gyro meat; 2- Diva's delivery; 3- Singer Vikki; 4- Since I was ___ to a grasshopper (young); 5- Killer whales; 6- Fish illegally; 7- Istanbul resident; 8- Self-image; 9- Tierra ___ Fuego; 10- Categorize; 11- Crystal gazer; 12- Room in a casa; 13- Void's partner; 21- Foundation; 22- Gospel singer Winans; 24- Swashbuckler Flynn; 25- Hold on!; 26- Colorado skiing mecca; 27- Wynonna's mom; 28- Freshwater fish; 29- Pie nut; 30- Ice house; 31- Durango dwellings; 32- Delight; 34- Sporting blades; 37- Competitive advantage; 38- Stretch; 40- Very small quantity; 41- National symbol; 43- Staggered; 46- Slatted wooden box; 47- Of the moon; 48- Get an ___ effort; 49- Window piece; 50- Pleasant; 51- Faucet fault; 52- Supermodel Sastre; 53- Three-player card game; 54- Toodle-oo!; 56- Agent, for short; 57- One of the Gaboris;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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AD

FOOTBALL

SAUDI ARABIA PAYS FOR NAMING RIGHTS TO ATLÉTICO'S STADIUM FOR NINE YEARS

SAUDI Arabia has consolidated its branding push with Atlético Madrid by paying for naming rights to the Spanish club's stadium for the next nine years.

Atlético, which has been sponsored by Saudi state-owned Riyadh Air since last season, said yesterday that its Metropolitano stadium will be known as the Riyadh Air Metropolitano henceforth until 2033.

Atlético did not say how much it was receiving for the new agreement "which makes the Saudi Arabian company the most important sponsor in the club's history."

The deal for shirt sponsorship from 2023-27 was already worth a reported 40 million euros a season to the club.

"The final installation of the new name of the stadium on the main, northeast and southeast facades will take



place in the next few weeks," Atlético said.

The establishment of Riyadh Air was announced by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in March 2023. It is yet to begin commercial operations.

Saudi Arabia is all-but confirmed to host the 2034 World Cup. It is the only candidate in a contest FIFA

member federations will decide in a Dec. 11 vote.

But the oil-rich kingdom has been accused of abusing migrant workers. A global group of trade unions filed a complaint in July urging the International Labor Organization to investigate the country for "severe human rights abuses and wage theft," which it said affected

at least 21,000 workers over the past decade.

Hosting the World Cup is part of the sweeping Vision 2030 project backed by the crown prince to modernize Saudi society and diversify the economy beyond dependence on oil. Sports and entertainment events are key to his project.

Deals with Atlético provide a link to the club's CEO, Miguel Ángel Gil Marin, who is board member of the influential European Club Association, which should be a key stakeholder in negotiations with FIFA over which months the 2034 World Cup will be played.

Dan Friedkin, the owner and president of Italian club Roma, is another ECA board member. Roma's team jerseys have been displaying the logo of Saudi state-owned entertainment series Riyadh Season since August last year. **MDT/AP**



FOOTBALL

Tchouaméni to lead France against Israel in Nations League

REAL Madrid midfielder Aurélien Tchouaméni will captain France in its Nations League game against Israel in the absence of Kylian Mbappé, the French soccer federation said yesterday.

Tchouaméni has played 36 matches with France and will bring his experience to a team lacking its biggest star.

Mbappé, France's usual captain, is nursing a minor thigh injury in Madrid. France is also without vice-captain Antoine Griezmann, who surprisingly announced the end of his international career last month. Together they led France to the 2018 World Cup title and were coach Didier Deschamps' most influential players in recent years.

Italy has a three-point lead over France and Belgium in their Nations League group after two rounds. France plays Israel on Thursday and travels to Belgium four days later. **MDT/AP**

AD

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TENNIS

Sinner avenges Shanghai defeat to Shelton; Tsitsipas rants at umpire

JANNIK Sinner avenged his defeat to Ben Shelton in the fourth round of last year's Shanghai Masters with a 6-4, 7-6 (1) to spoil the 22-year-old American's birthday yesterday.

Like last year, the duel again featured some incredible shot-making and serving dominance but this time the 23-year old Italian prevailed to improve his record against Shelton to 4-1.

"Happy how I handled this situation, it's obviously a position where I have been last year, and where I am right now, it's different, so I'm happy to be in the position where I am," Sinner said.

Sinner's break in the ninth game was all that separated the duo in the opening set. Both players then dominated on their own serve through the second before the Italian sped away in the tiebreak and won the last seven points of the match to advance to his seventh ATP Masters 1000 quarterfinal of the year.

He will play fifth-ranked Daniil Medvedev, who earlier beat long-time rival Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-6 (3), 6-3, in a match where the Greek player launched into a minutes-long rant against the chair

AP PHOTO



Jannik Sinner of Italy plays a backhand return against Ben Shelton of the United States during the men's singles fourth round match at the Qizhong Forest Sports City Tennis Center, in Shanghai

umpire Fergus Murphy over a time violation call and initially refused to continue playing.

"You have never played tennis in your life. You have no clue about tennis, it seems like," Tsitsipas said to Murphy. "Definitely you've had no career. You probably played serve-and-volley every single time."

"Anyways, tennis is a physical sport and we need some time over there. You have to show

some compassion because you aren't showing any.

"It's a physical sport. We are not throwing darts out here, okay?"

"If it's going to be unfair, I need to talk to the supervisor. You seem like you have no idea what you're doing," Tsitsipas continued as the crowd began to slow clap.

In a similar incident the day prior, Frances Tiafoe cursed re-

peatedly at a chair umpire after losing his third round match and later apologized.

Second-ranked Carlos Alcaraz, who won the China Open in a thriller against Sinner last week, made it 12 consecutive wins with a testing 6-4, 7-5 victory over French veteran Gael Monfils to advance to the quarterfinals.

Alcaraz needed all his shot-making abilities to outmaneuver the 38-year-old Monfils,

with the 21-year-old Spaniard making 22 winners and taking a break in each set to clinch the match in 87 minutes.

The French Open and Wimbledon champion will play Tomas Machac in the quarterfinals.

WUHAN OPEN

Second-ranked Aryna Sabalenka maintained her undefeated record at the Wuhan Open, opening her campaign with a 6-4, 6-4 win over 37th-ranked Katerina Siniakova in a second-round match yesterday.

Two-time defending champion Sabalenka, who received a bye in the first round with the other top eight seeds, broke her Czech opponent twice in each set — as well as surrendering one of her own service games — as she clinched her latest win in 1 hour and 34 minutes of play.

In the third round, the 26-year-old Belarussian will play Yulia Putintseva of Kazakhstan, who ended Paris Olympics silver medalist Donna Vekic's tournament with 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 victory.

The reigning U.S. Open champion is now up to 13-0 in Wuhan after winning the title on her first appearance in 2018 and defending her crown in 2019 before the tournament took its five-year hiatus from the calendar due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and a WTA boycott of China.

"I missed Wuhan a lot," Sabalenka said. "I just have really good memories of winning, two times, the title here. Just Wuhan brings me a lot of great memories, good vibes." MDT/AP

AD

New Rugby Season

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

STRENGTHENING FRIENDLY SINO-ASEAN TIES AND CLOSE PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS ALL IN REGION

China and the ASEAN member states have everything to gain from continuously injecting fresh momentum into their cooperation as their relationship holds boundless potential.

Thanks to the determined efforts of both sides, relations between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have witnessed tremendous progress in recent years. Two-way trade has surged, connectivity has been enhanced, and economic, people-to-people and other exchanges have flourished. The burgeoning cooperation has brought tangible benefits to the people on both sides and helped promote broader regional development and integration.

China has remained ASEAN's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years, while ASEAN has been China's top trading partner for four consecutive years. Statistics indicate that in the first seven months of this year two-way trade reached \$552 billion, up 7.7 percent year-on-year, accounting for about one-sixth of China's overall trade volume in the same period.

Such flourishing trade relations would not have been fostered if both sides had not shared a commitment to the vision of creating an integrated regional market, building connectivity, optimizing the allocation of resources and leveraging each other's strengths for mutual benefit.

The thriving China-ASEAN ties have also benefited hugely from their active participation and collaboration in the China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which have enhanced trade and investment liberalization and facilitation between the two sides.

The strong development of China-ASEAN ties is one of the reasons why the Asia-Pacific region has been able to maintain overall peace, stability and prosperity in recent years, despite the various turbulences unsettling the international landscape.

As a trustworthy friend and reliable partner, China has always supported the centrality of ASEAN in the region and the bloc's vision of building an ASEAN community.

Premier Li Qiang's visit to Southeast Asia this week underscores China's commitment to deepening ties with ASEAN, strengthening cooperation with regional countries and injecting fresh impetus into the development and prosperity of the region.

During his visit, Li will attend the 27th China-ASEAN Summit, the 27th ASEAN Plus Three Summit and the 19th East Asia Summit to be held in Vientiane, Laos, and pay an official visit to Laos and Vietnam. These provide fresh opportunities for China and its regional partners to forge consensus on other issues, deepen mutual trust and open new horizons for their reciprocal cooperation.

Amid the sluggish global economic recovery, China's economy has continued to display its resilience. Its share of the world economy has increased from 12.3 percent to more than 18 percent over the past decade. China's further high-quality development will therefore create new opportunities for ASEAN countries.

In an increasingly turbulent world, Southeast Asia, due to its special position in world economic and strategic terrain, has inevitably been influenced by some undesirable factors and from time to time even been pushed to the forefront of big power competition.

Hence, it is heartening to see many ASEAN member states demonstrating their strong resolve to stay true to an open and inclusive regional cooperation architecture, uphold the regional order, practice real multilateralism, and reject bloc confrontation.

It is to be hoped that the two sides take the opportunities of the meetings to further leverage their complementary advantages, accelerate coordinated development, and jointly foster exchanges in all areas to inject renewed impetus into their cooperative relations. In doing so, both sides will not only reap direct development benefits but also those brought about by the guarantee of regional peace and stability. [Abridged]

WOODWARD BOOK REVEALS TRUMP'S CALLS WITH PUTIN AND BIDEN'S PRIVATE REMARKS ON OBAMA, NETANYAHU



Donald Trump has had as many as seven private phone calls with Vladimir Putin since leaving office and secretly sent the Russian president COVID-19 test machines during the height of the pandemic, Bob Woodward reported in his new book, "War."

The revelations were made in the famed Watergate reporter's latest book, which also details President Joe Biden's frustrations with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's assortment of burner phones. The Associated Press obtained an early copy of the book, which is due out next week.

Trump denied the reporting in an interview with ABC News. "He's a

storyteller. A bad one. And he's lost his marbles," Trump said of Woodward.

Trump had previously spoken to Woodward for the journalist's 2021 book, "Rage." Trump later sued over it, claiming Woodward never had permission to publicly release recordings of their interviews for the book.

"They f----- up in 2014," Woodward wrote that Biden said to a close friend in December, blaming Obama's lack of action for Putin's actions in Crimea. "Barack never took Putin seriously."

The publisher and Woodward denied Trump's allegations.

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AP PHOTO

Jacob Hersant (left) a self-described Nazi, walks from the Melbourne Magistrates Court yesterday

AUSTRALIA

SELF-DESCRIBED NAZI WILL BE SENT TO PRISON FOR SALUTE AT SENTENCING NEXT MONTH

ROD MCGUIRK, MELBOURNE

A self-described Nazi will become the first person in Australia sentenced to prison for performing an outlawed Nazi salute when a magistrate sets his term next month.

Magistrate Brett Sonnet told Jacob Hersant yesterday he will be sentenced to a "relatively modest term of imprisonment" at his next court appearance. "It will not be a severe term of imprisonment, but I have not determined the length," Sonnet said.

Sonnet initially intended for Hersant to be taken into custody yesterday until his sentence was set on Oct. 23.

But after hearing arguments from defense lawyer Tim Smartt, Sonnet allowed the 25-year-old to remain free on bail until a sentencing hearing on Nov. 8.

The maximum potential sentence is 12 months in prison plus a 24,000 Australian dollar (\$16,177) fine.

Hersant gave the salute and praised Nazi leader Adolf Hitler in front of news

media cameras outside the Victoria County Court on Oct. 27, 2023. Hersant had just avoided a prison sentence on a conviction for causing violent disorder.

He gave the gesture six days after the Victoria state government made the Nazi salute illegal. The Federal Parliament passed legislation in December that outlawed nationwide performing the Nazi salute in public or to publicly display, or trade in, Nazi hate symbols.

Hersant became the first person convicted under the Victorian law when Sonnet found him guilty on Tues-

described the offending as serious and called for a prison sentence.

Gurvich noted that Hersant told media after he was convicted on Tuesday that, "I'll still continue to give the salute, but hopefully police officers don't see it."

Sonnet told Smartt he was only punishing Hersant for making a Nazi gesture that he knew was illegal.

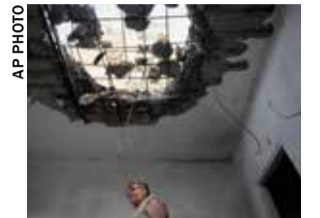
"I want to emphasize that I'm not punishing your client for holding his political views," Sonnet said.

"He's entitled to hold those political views however unpalatable, however offensive they may be to others," Sonnet added.

Usual mitigating factors including remorse, a guilty plea and a lack of any previous criminal history were absent in Hersant's case, Sonnet said.

Asked by a reporter during the court's lunch break if he had anything to say in what then could have been his last moments of freedom, Hersant replied, "I regret nothing."

"I'm prepared to go to jail for my beliefs," Hersant told reporters. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

Lebanon Hezbollah increased rocket attacks on Israel as Israeli forces expanded their ground operations in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah's acting leader stated their military capabilities remain intact, vowing continued pressure despite Israeli airstrikes targeting the group's top commanders and military infrastructure.



AP PHOTO

Sweden David Baker, Demis Hassabis, and John Jumper won the Nobel Prize in chemistry for breakthroughs in protein structure prediction and design. Their work enables the creation of custom proteins, with wide applications in pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, revolutionizing research in life sciences.



AP PHOTO

Germany Jürgen Klopp is set to become Red Bull's head of global soccer, overseeing the strategic vision of its international club network. This marks Klopp's return to football in a non-coaching role, following his celebrated tenure at Liverpool and Borussia Dortmund.



AP PHOTO

Space Prepare to spot a rare, bright comet. The space rock is slinging toward Earth from the outer reaches of the solar system and will make its closest pass on Saturday. It should be visible through the end of October. Comet Tsuchinshan-Atlas should be bright enough to see with the naked eye, but binoculars and telescopes will give a better view.