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Times

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THE CONVERSATION P18



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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

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RUA DA FELICIDADE HAS PARTIALLY REOPENED TO VEHICULAR TRAFFIC FOLLOWING FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS, THE IC HAS ANNOUNCED P4

SANTOS INVESTIGATED IN PORTUGAL FOR ALLEGEDLY RUNNING A FAKE VISA SCHEME P2

NORTH KOREA IS PREPARING TO DESTROY PARTS OF INTER-KOREAN ROADS, SEOUL SAYS P14



China's export growth dropped to 2.4% in September, down from 8.7% in August, as global demand weakened. Imports rose just 0.3%, reflecting low domestic demand. Policymakers have launched measures to boost growth, though larger stimulus may be necessary to achieve economic targets.

China is focusing on green development within the Belt and Road Initiative signing climate change agreements with 42 developing nations, China Daily revealed yesterday. The country aims to assist with low-carbon transformations and ecological resilience through infrastructure projects such as the China-Laos Railway and other key initiatives.



Sri Lanka Heavy rains caused severe flooding in Sri Lanka, leading to school closures in Colombo and surrounding areas. Floods affected 134,000 people and displaced 7,000, damaging homes and infrastructure. Rescue teams are providing food and essential supplies as floodwaters continue to rise.



Markets Asian shares rose yesterday, driven by hopes of increased Chinese stimulus following comments from China's finance minister. South Korea's Kospi index gained 1%, and China's mainland stocks surged. European markets were mixed, while oil prices fell due to concerns over weakening Chinese demand.

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CRIME MAINLAND MEN ARRESTED FOR ROBBERY AND RAPE P2



VICTORIA CHAN

MAINLAND MEN ARRESTED FOR ROBBERY AND RAPE

VICTORIA CHAN

TWO mainland men have been arrested for luring a mainland woman into a hotel room in Macau, where they robbed, imprisoned, and raped her, according to the Judiciary Police (PJ). The case has been

transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office for further investigation and accusation.

The two suspects, aged 38 and 26, were arrested for the incident that allegedly occurred earlier this month. The older suspect is a project manager, while the younger is said to be unemployed.

The victim, a middle-aged mainland woman, met the two men in September when they engaged in a currency exchange transaction.

On the afternoon of Oct. 12, the younger suspect contacted the victim, claiming he had won money while gambling in Ma-

cau and had a gift for her. The victim went to an undisclosed hotel unit in Cotai to meet him, where she was ambushed by the two men.

As soon as the victim entered the hotel room, the older suspect emerged from the bathroom and restrained her, tying

her hands and body with a bathrobe belt. The two men then demanded the victim hand over HKD11,000 in cash and chips, as well as the password to her mobile banking account, from which they transferred RMB24,000.

While the younger suspect guarded the victim, the older suspect raped her. According to the police, the victim was held captive for approximately 17 hours before she was able to escape the next morning while the suspects were sleeping. She then sought help from the casino security, who notified the police.

The two suspects were later intercepted in another room of the same hotel, where they refused to cooperate with the investigation. The police is now tracing the stolen money and investigating whether any additional people were involved in the crime.

In a separate case reported by the same police force, PJ arrested two mainland Chinese men for allegedly detaining a gambler for 15 hours over unpaid debts. The victim, a middle-aged non-local man, had borrowed money earlier this month from one of the men to gamble but lost the funds and additional interest amounts totaling HKD50,000. He was then held at the hotel until he was able to alert his family, prompting police intervention. An investigation into the money trail and possible accomplices is ongoing.

Rita Santos investigated in Portugal for an alleged fake visa scheme

VICTORIA CHAN

COUNCILOR Rita Santos, who temporarily held the position of Councilor for Portuguese Communities, has stepped down from her role amid two ongoing investigations in Portugal. One involves allegations of electoral fraud, while another centers on a criminal probe into expedited "fake visas" in Macau, the weekly newspaper Plataforma reported.

The visas case, which originated in Guangzhou

has now been taken over by the Department of Investigation and Criminal Prosecution (DIAP). Authorities have gathered enough evidence to proceed with the investigation. The case has been assigned a number, and the relevant political bodies have been notified. Investigators had intended to notify Santos during her expected trip to Lisbon, last week, for the plenary session of the Council of Portuguese Communities, but she unexpectedly decided to temporarily suspend her



RENATO MARQUES

mandate before that as the Times previously reported.

Reports indicate that authorities had faced difficulties notifying

Santos, following a complaint of electoral fraud lodged by the National Electoral Commission. The investigation will examine Santos' potential involvement in expediting certain false visa cases.

Meanwhile, Rui Marcelo, an advisor to the Portuguese communities elected by the Asian constituency and who took the leadership role after the suspension of duties from Santos, has joined the team of Flávio Martins, who was reappointed as president of the Permanent Council of the Council of Portuguese Communities (CCP). Marcelo will serve as secretary, while Paulo Marques and Vas-

co Abreu will serve as vice-president and secretary, respectively. Marcelo was also chosen as president of the regional council for the Asia and Oceania area.

The temporary suspension of Santos' mandate has a maximum period of 60 days, which means the deadline for her to resume her duties ends in December this year. Elections for the Legislative Assembly of Macau will only take place the following year. During her absence, councilors Rui Marcelo and Marília Coutinho will remain in office, while Luís Nunes, the first alternate, will assume the position of third effective councilor.

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Congratulations to
Mr. Sam Hou Fai
on his election as the
Sixth Chief Executive-elect
of The Macau S.A.R.

永利

TOURISM

VISITOR ARRIVALS DROP BY OVER ONE-THIRD AFTER GOLDEN WEEK

RENATO MARQUES

THE number of visitor arrivals to Macau has fallen after the "Golden Week of the National Day Holidays," with figures dipping below the 100,000 daily mark, according to border crossing statistics from the Public Security Police Force (PSP).

From Oct. 11 to Oct. 13, the average of visitors was 93,907, a 33.81% decrease from the 141,874 daily average recorded during the Golden Week.

Consistent with ordinary weekends, Sunday remained the busiest day for border crossings, with 98,293 visitors entering Macau. On the other days, the daily count hovered around 90,000 per day.

During the Golden Week, Macau recorded an average of 141,874 daily arrivals, representing a 22.9% and 1.9% rise compared with the National Day holiday in 2023 and 2019 respectively.

The daily average exceeded that of the National Day holiday in 2019 and reached an all-time high since the recording of official statistics for National Day holidays began.

The single-day visitor arrivals peaked at 174,000 on Oct. 3, accounting for both the volumes of average daily and single-day visitor arrivals, also reaching the



highest records for National Day holidays. In the same period, the average hotel occupancy rate reached 94.5%.

MORE INTERNATIONAL VISITORS NOW

Interestingly, the number of international visitors is far

higher now than it was during the Golden Week.

From Sept. 29 to Oct. 6, the number of international visitors averaged 6,514. However, from Oct. 11 to 13, it averaged 10,218, peaking on Friday, Oct. 11, when 11,287 international visitors entered Macau.

This means the number of international visitors increased by 56.9% when compared with the Golden Week average.

The data also revealed that international visitors, as well as those from Hong Kong and Taiwan, tended to arrive in

Macau on Fridays, whereas mainland visitors tended to arrive on Sundays.

International visitors now account for about 6% of total arrivals, while the mainland continues to lead with an overwhelming majority share of 76%.



Tourism service prices up 4.3% in Q3

RENATO MARQUES

THE Tourist Price Index (TPI) for the third quarter (Q3) of 2024 rose 4.29% year-on-year to 147.22 points, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

Among the various sections of goods and services, the price index of Miscellaneous Goods rose by 13.68% year-on-year due to dearer prices of jewelry. The indices of Clothing & Footwear (+6.14%), Accommodation (+3.52%) and Restaurant Services (+3.52%) also increased. Meanwhile, the index of Entertainment & Cultural Activities dropped by 13.33%.

In comparison with the previous quarter, TPI for Q3 2024 went up by 4.43%. Higher



hotel room rates during the summer holiday pushed up the price index of Accommodation by 24.38% quarter-on-quarter. By contrast, the price index of Clothing & Footwear decreased by 6.56% due to seasonal changes in sales of summer clothing.

The average TPI for the last four quarters rose by 8.86% from the

previous period. Price indices of Accommodation, Clothing & Footwear, and Miscellaneous Goods increased by 25.86%, 8.3%, and 8%, respectively. On the other hand, the index of Entertainment & Cultural Activities recorded a drop of 7.42%. For the first three quarters of 2024 (January to September), TPI went

up by 3.9% year-on-year due to growth in the price indices of Miscellaneous Goods and Clothing & Footwear, which grew by 9.13% and 7.56% respectively. Once again, Entertainment & Cultural Activities (-14.51%) was the only category to register a decrease.

The TPI reflects the price change of goods and services purchased by visitors. Categories included in the index are selected based on visitor consumption patterns, such as Food, Alcoholic Beverages & Tobacco; Clothing & Footwear; Accommodation; Restaurant Services; Transport & Communications; Medicine & Personal Goods; Entertainment & Cultural Activities; and Miscellaneous Goods.

RUA DA FELICIDADE PARTIALLY REOPENS AMID BUSINESS CONCERNS

NADIA SHAW

RUA da Felicidade has partially reopened to vehicular traffic following feedback from local business owners. The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has announced vehicles can now access the street before 11 a.m. and after 10:30 p.m., with additional areas around Travessa do Aterro Novo and Travessa do Mastro fully open to traffic.

Originally pedestrianized in September 2023 to attract tourists, the initiative faced backlash from retailers who claimed the restrictions were detrimental to their businesses. Shop owners argued that while tourists flocked to the area for photos, they were less inclined to make purchases, negatively impacting sales.

In response to these concerns, the IC established a

new loading zone on Rua dos Mercadores for deliveries and pickups. The bureau emphasized its commitment to ongoing communication with residents and business operators to refine the pedestrian precinct.

The adjustments took effect Oct. 11 and are part of a trial plan to balance tourism and local commerce. The IC said future changes might occur during holidays or special events to better accommodate both visitors and residents.

As part of the revitalization efforts, restoration work on the façades of several buildings along Rua da Felicidade will begin soon, enhancing the street's appeal while preserving its historical significance. The IC continues to monitor the situation closely, aiming for an optimal blend of pedestrian access and vehicular convenience.

CONGRATULATIONS TO
MR. SAM HOU FAI
ELECTED AS SIXTH TERM
CHIEF EXECUTIVE DESIGNATE
OF MACAO SPECIAL
ADMINISTRATIVE REGION



29TH MIF AND 2024MFE PROMISE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY

NADIA SHAW

THE 29th Macao International Trade & Investment Fair (MIF) and the Macao Franchise Expo 2024 (MFE) will take place from Oct. 16 to 19 at the Cotai Expo in the Venetian Macao.

This year's theme, "Economic Diversification and Develop-

ment Opportunities" for MIF and "Brands Gathering with Business Opportunities" for MFE, aims to attract over 1,300 exhibitors, including tech companies from mainland China and popular brands from Portuguese-speaking countries. The four-day event will feature ten exhibition zones across four halls, showcasing a diverse array

of products and services while facilitating over 80 trade promotion sessions focused on emerging industries.

"This year's events are designed to create a more effective platform for collaboration," said Vincent U, President of the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute. "By extending the duration and

enhancing the structure, we aim to foster deeper discussions among participants."

The introduction of a new three-day format represents a significant change, allowing business tourists to engage with the exhibition "more deeply without the weekend rush" said U. This adjustment is expected to enhance business-to-

-business interactions, making it easier for attendees to network and explore investment opportunities.

The exhibition area will cover 38,000 square meters, featuring first-time exhibitors alongside established businesses. Notably, this year marks a record of participation from the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA), with Shenzhen serving as the partner city for MIF. The Shenzhen Pavilion will showcase over 40 enterprises in sectors such as technology and cultural tourism.

In addition to traditional exhibitions, attendees can expect innovative offerings such as a Portuguese-speaking countries Market Zone and a Macao International Coffee Festival Pavilion. These initiatives are designed to strengthen Macau's role as a bridge between China and Portuguese-speaking nations.

Gifts worth over MOP500,000 will be distributed during the fair. Attendees can enjoy complimentary coffee and tea drinks while participating in various promotional activities aimed at boosting local consumption.

During yesterday's press conference, emphasis was placed on the event's contribution to the "1+4" strategy—focusing on modern finance, big health, tourism, and conventions. The events will include specialized sessions on these sectors to promote collaboration and investment.

The fairs will open exclusively for trade visitors Oct. 16 before welcoming the public from Oct. 17 to 19. Free shuttle services will be available to facilitate access to the venue.



USJ bids to help Portuguese companies enter Chinese market

THE University of Saint Joseph (USJ) in Macau is working to assist companies in Marinha Grande, Portugal, to enter the Chinese market, according to a university representative who spoke to Lusa news agency.

According to Francisco Peixoto, the head of the USJ delegation in Portugal, the objective is "to support companies in the municipality of Marinha Grande in their internationalization efforts through the USJ incubation system, which currently connects Portugal, Macau, and Hengqin."

In March, USJ launched an incubator to attract Portuguese-speaking startups and help Macau companies invest in Portuguese-speaking countries'



markets. Last February, it signed an agreement to open an incubator in Hengqin with Chinese construction firm Sany Group.

USJ has also signed an agreement with the Marinha Grande City Council, under which it agrees to hold entrepreneurship workshops and organize trade missions to China for local companies. One

of the workshops will focus on the ability to do business in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area.

Peixoto stated that through these trade missions, USJ aims to create opportunities, allowing "micro, small, and medium-sized companies in Marinha Grande to strengthen their international-

ization efforts."

The protocol, signed Oct. 3, also involves the Marinha Grande School Group and targets final-year secondary school students from the municipality of Leiria district. USJ will provide scholarships for these students as part of the "considerable number" of scholarships opened annually for students from Portuguese-speaking countries.

Peixoto added, "We hope that by September next year, we will be able to count on students from Marinha Grande." The university representative said the protocol with Marinha Grande is "a pilot project" and that similar agreements could be signed with other Portuguese municipalities.

CHINA AND PLP CULTURAL WEEK CONTINUE TO PROMOTE EXCHANGES

THE 16th Cultural Week of China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries (PLP) begins Thursday (Oct. 17) and continues over four days.

This year, the cultural and gastronomic event is themed "Sino-lusophone cultural confluences building bridges of understanding," Secretary-General of the Permanent Secretariat of Forum Macao, Ji Xianzheng, announced yesterday during a press conference.

Ji said the event "aims to elevate Macau's role as a bridge and link between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, deepen cultural and humanistic exchange and strengthen friendly relations between them, to promote economic and commercial coo-

peration and exchange between the China and PLP."

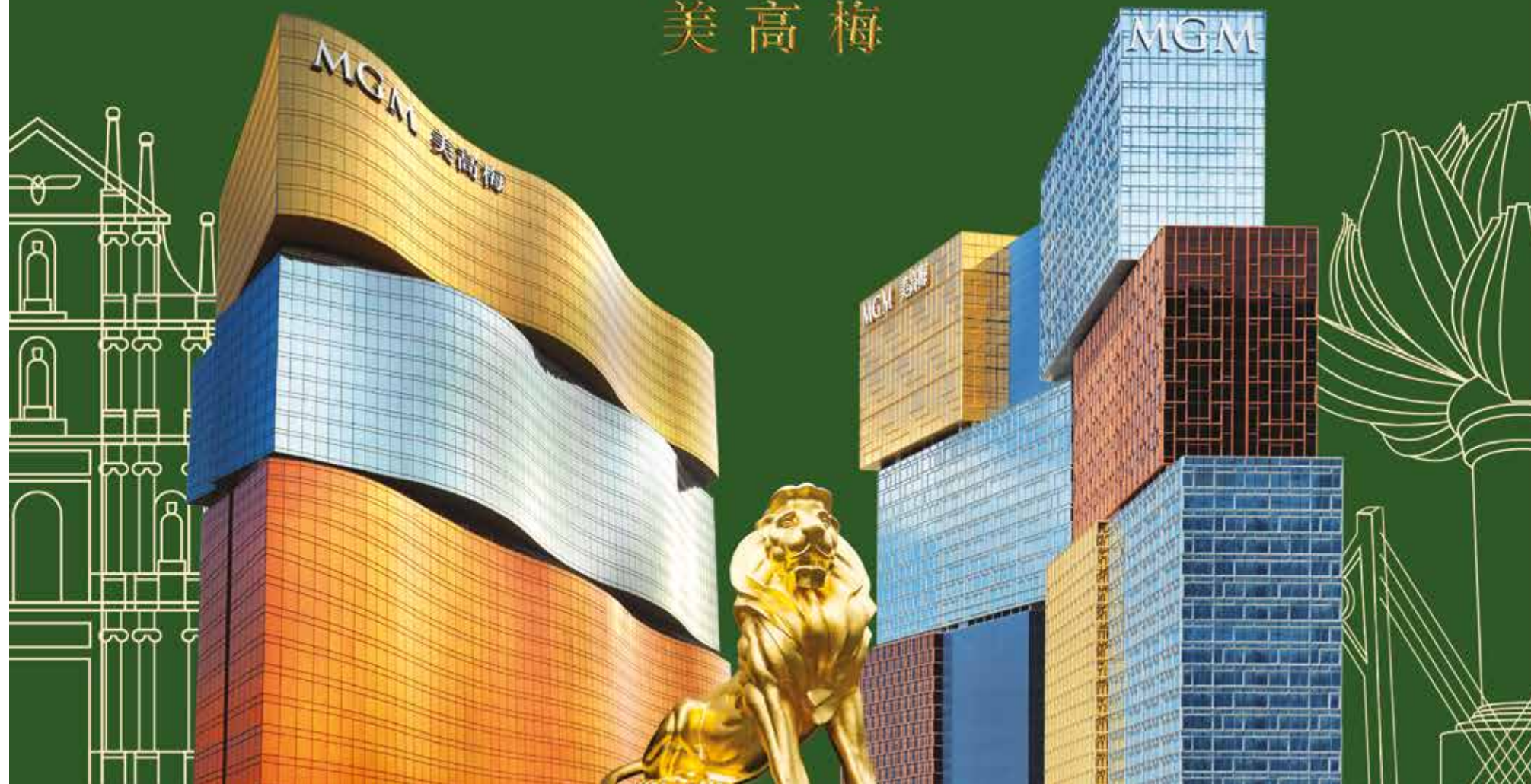
The event will feature artists, cultural groups, and chefs (among other attendees) from China and PLP to participate in various cultural exchange activities.

The event will open Oct. 17 at the Legend Boulevard of the Fisherman's Wharf in Macau.

The venue will also host music and dance performances presented by artistic groups from China and PLP, a crafts fair, a cooking workshop, and booths that exhibit goods and products from PLP and Macau.

Concurrently, chefs from PLP will offer special menus featuring delicacies from their respective countries at Vic's Restaurant. **RM**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
MR. SAM HOU FAI ON HIS ELECTION AS
THE SIXTH-TERM CHIEF EXECUTIVE-ELECT
OF THE MACAO S.A.R.**



GAMING TAX REVENUE REACHES MOP7.16B IN AUGUST

NADIA SHAW

THE Financial Services Bureau has reported a significant increase in gaming tax revenue for August, totaling MOP7.16 billion (approximately USD893 million), a rise of 4.8% from July. This uptick underscores the city's ongoing recovery from the pandemic, as gaming remains a vital component of its economy.

The effective tax rate on casino gross gaming revenue (GGR) stands at 40%, a rate implemented under the new 10-year gaming concession system that began on January 1, 2023. While the tax revenue figures provide insight into financial performance, they do not directly correlate with GGR due to timing differences in reporting and payment processes.

For the first eight months of this year, Macau has collected nearly MOP58.78 billion (USD7.37 billion) from gaming taxes, marking a remarkable



increase of 50.3% compared to the same period last year. This revenue stream accounted for 84.7% of the government's total fiscal income, which reached approximately MOP69.42 billion (USD8.7 billion).

September's figures continued this positive trend, with tax revenue climbing to MOP7.62 billion (USD952 million), reflecting a month-on-month increase of 6.4%. This growth is attributed to a strong GGR of MOP19.8 billion (USD2.47

billion) in August, indicating stronger visitor engagement and spending at the concessionaire properties.

Projections suggest gaming tax revenues could reach MOP83.61 billion (USD10.49 billion) in 2024, already achieving over 70% of this target within just nine months. The region's financial outlook remains optimistic as it diversifies its economy while maintaining its status as a premier gaming destination.



Suspicious transaction reports rise 30%

ACCORDING to data from the Financial Intelligence Office (GIF), suspicious transaction reports (STRs) filed by Macau gaming operators rose nearly 30% in the first nine months of 2024 compared to the same period last year.

A total of 3,041 STRs were reported by Sept. 30 this year, an increase of 30.2% on the 2,335 in the same time span in 2023. Gaming businesses accounted for 73.8% of Macau's total 4,118 flagged transactions in the first nine months of the year, similar to the proportion from last year's 3,178 suspect transactions from all sectors.

The rise in STRs was "mainly due to the increase in the number

of STRs reported by the financial sector and the gaming sector," reported the GIF.

Existing guidelines define suspicious transactions as those related to gambling operations that exhibit unusual traits or complexity, suggesting potential money laundering or terrorism financing.

While the overall number of STRs increased, their proliferation slowed quarter-on-quarter, with 860 STRs in the third quarter, down from 1,125 in the first quarter and 1,056 in the second quarter. The total number of STRs, including those from financial institutions, insurance companies, and other institutions, was up 29.6% year-on-year. VC

Congratulations

to Mr. Sam Hou Fai

for being successfully elected as

Chief Executive of Macau SAR

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NOBEL OF ECONOMICS

PRIZE IS AWARDED FOR RESEARCH INTO HOW POOR INSTITUTIONS AFFECT COUNTRIES' SUCCESS

DANIEL NIEMANN,
STOCKHOLM

THE Nobel memorial prize in economics was awarded yesterday to Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson for research that explains why societies with poor rule of law and exploitative institutions do not generate sustainable growth.

The three economists "have demonstrated the importance of societal institutions for a country's prosperity," the Nobel committee of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said at the announcement in Stockholm.

Acemoglu and Johnson work at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Robinson conducts his research at the University of Chicago.

"Reducing the vast differences in income between countries is one of our time's greatest challenges. The laureates have demonstrated the importance of societal institutions for achieving this," Jakob Svensson, Chair of the Committee for the Prize in Economic Sciences, said.

He said their research has provided "a much deeper understanding of the root causes of why countries fail or succeed."

Reached by the academy in Athens, Greece, where he is due to speak at a conference, the Turkish-born Acemoglu, 57, said he was surprised and shocked by the award.

"You never expect something like this," he said.

Acemoglu said the research honored by the prize underscores



res the value of democratic institutions.

"I think broadly speaking the work that we have done favors democracy," he said in a telephone call with the Nobel committee and reporters in Stockholm.

But he added that "democracy is not a panacea. Introducing democracy is very hard. When you introduce elections, that sometimes creates conflict."

Asked about how economic growth in countries like China fits into the theories, Acemoglu said that "my perspective is generally that these authoritarian regimes, for a variety of reasons, are going to have a harder time ... in achieving ... long-term sustainable innovation outcomes."

Acemoglu and Robinson wrote

the 2012 bestseller "Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty," which argued that manmade problems were responsible for keeping countries poor.

In their work, the winners looked, for instance, at the city of Nogales, which straddles the U.S.-Mexico border.

Despite sharing the same geography, climate, many of the same ancestors and a common culture, life is very different on either side of the border. In Nogales, Arizona, to the north, residents are relatively well-off and live long lives; most children graduate from high school. To the south, in Mexico's Nogales, Sonora, "residents here are in general considerably poorer. ...

Organized crime makes starting and running companies risky. Corrupt politicians are difficult to remove," the Nobel committee wrote.

The difference, the economists found, is a U.S. system that protects property rights and gives citizens a say in their government.

Acemoglu expressed worry yesterday that democratic institutions in the United States and Europe were losing support from the population. "Democracies particularly underperform when the population thinks they underdeliver," he said. "This is a time when democracies are going through a rough patch. ... It is, in some sense, quite crucial that they reclaim the high ground

of better governance."

The economists also studied the institutional changes that European powers such as Britain and Spain put in place when they colonized much of the world starting in the 1600s. They brought different policies to different places, giving later researchers a "natural experiment" to analyze.

Colonies that were sparsely populated offered less resistance to foreign rule and therefore attracted more settlers. In those places, colonial governments tended to establish more inclusive economic institutions that "incentivized settlers to work hard and invest in their new homeland. In turn, this led to demands for political rights that gave them a share of profits," according to the Nobel committee.

In more densely populated places that attracted fewer settlers, the colonial regimes limited political rights and set up institutions that focused on "benefiting a local elite at the expense of the wider population ... Paradoxically, this means that the parts of the colonized world that were relatively the most prosperous around 500 years ago are now those that are relatively poor." India's industrial production, for example, exceeded the American colonies' in the 18th century.

The economics prize is formally known as the Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel. The central bank established it in 1968 as a memorial to Nobel, the 19th-century Swedish businessman and chemist who invented dynamite and established the five Nobel Prizes.

Though Nobel purists stress that the economics prize is technically not a Nobel Prize, it is always presented together with the others on Dec. 10, the anniversary of Nobel's death in 1896.

Nobel honors were announced last week in medicine, physics, chemistry, literature and peace. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Wynn supports Macau Welfare Shop Project for 12th consecutive year



Established in 2013, the Welfare Shop Project of Macau Holy House of Mercy (SCMM) provides short-term food assistance to families facing financial difficulties due to inflation.

Since its founding, Wynn

has supported the Welfare Shop Project by donating funds or supplies to assist community members in need, a statement yesterday from the gaming operators said.

Last week, Linda Chen,

President and Vice Chairman of Wynn Macau, presented a cheque of MOP300,000 and sponsored the distribution of food baskets to 373 families from the General Union of Neighbourhood Associations of Macau, Macau Federation of Trade Unions, Association of Parents of the People with Intellectual Disabilities of Macau, and others.

In addition, 35 Wynn volunteers distributed food baskets containing food and daily necessities to these families at SCMM, "helping reduce their daily burdens," the statement reads.

A multi-purpose shopping trolley and a supermarket cash voucher valued at MOP100 were also provided to each family.

City of Dreams to present Kelly Chen's 'October's Dancing Blossoms'



City of Dreams will present a musical event featuring pop icon Kelly Chen, who has won multiple music awards in Asia and performed on world tours.

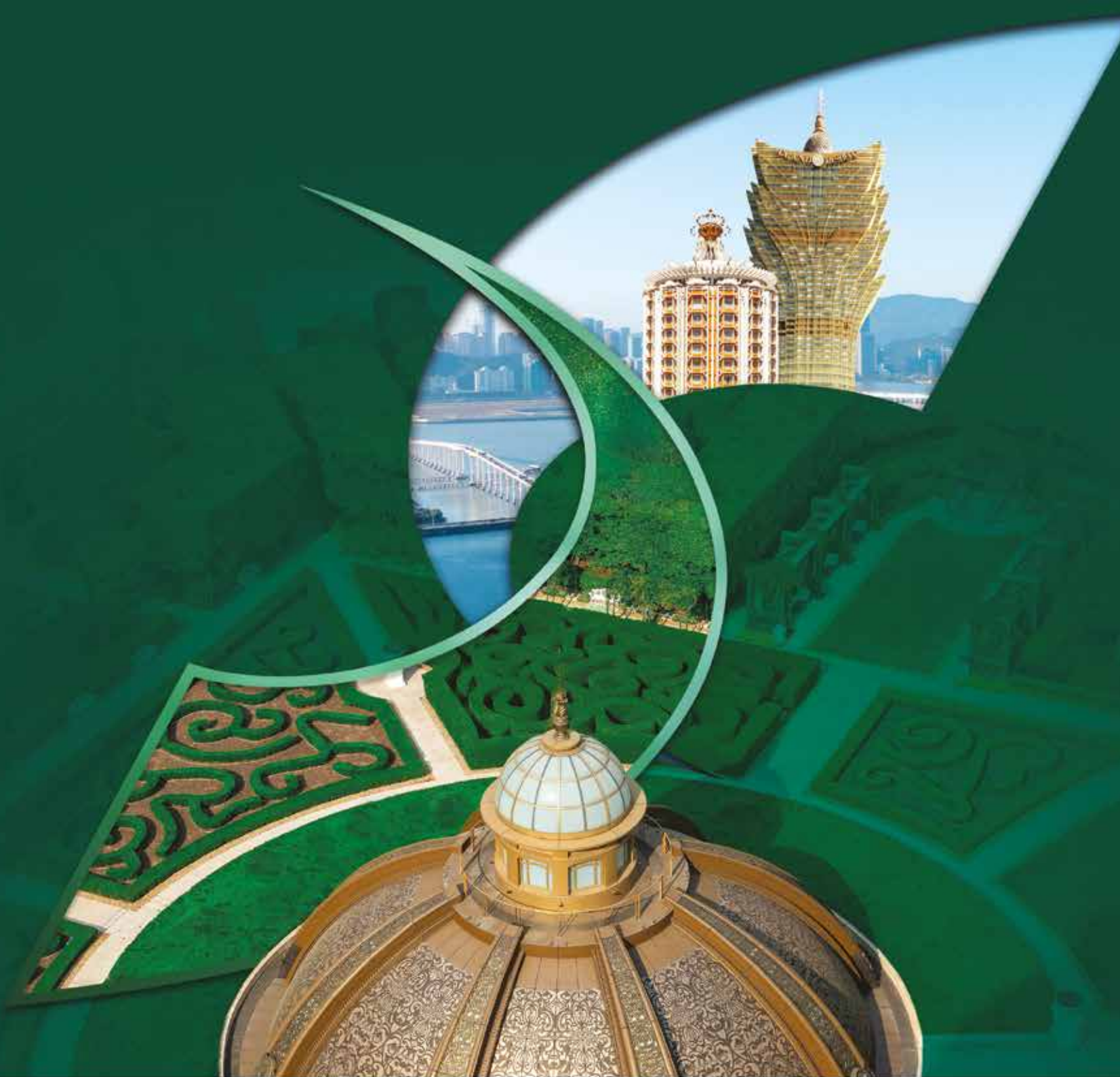
On October 26, a limited performance of Kelly Chen's show "October's Dancing Blossoms" will debut at the entertainment-integrated resort, showcasing the singer's

performance inspired by nature.

Kelly, often referred to as a Pop Diva, is known for her hit ballads such as "I don't want to let you go," "Wind, Flower, Snow," and "Care about you too much." She has also created various looks to complement her up-tempo dance tracks, including "Paisley Galaxy," "Amnesiac Weekend," and "The Big Day," highlighting her vocal and dance talents.

The theme concept of "October's Dancing Blossoms" was designed specifically for City of Dreams, with a curated setlist and stage effects to enhance the musical experience, the company said in a press release yesterday.

Congratulations to
Mr. Sam Hou Fai
on his election as the sixth-term
Chief Executive-elect of the Macao SAR



DIRE STRAIT

Beijing deploys record 125 warplanes in large scale military drill in warning to Taiwan

JOHNSON LAI &
HUIZHONG WU, TAIPEI

CHINA employed a record 125 aircraft, as well as its Liaoning aircraft carrier and ships, in large-scale military exercises surrounding Taiwan and its outlying islands yesterday, simulating the sealing off of key ports in a move that underscores the tense situation in the Taiwan Strait, officials said.

China made clear it was to punish Taiwan's leader for rejecting Beijing's claim of sovereignty over the self-governed island.

The drills came four days after Taiwan celebrated the founding of its government on its National Day, when Taiwanese leader Lai Ching-te said in a speech that China has no right to represent Taiwan and declared his commitment to "resist annexation or encroachment."

"This is a resolute punishment for Lai Ching-te's continuous fabrication of 'Taiwan independence' nonsense," China's Taiwan Affairs Office said in a statement.

Taiwan's Ministry of Defense said 90 of the aircraft, including warplanes, helicopters and drones, were spotted within Taiwan's air defense identification zone. The single-day record counted aircraft from 5:02 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Shipping traffic was operating as normal, the ministry said.

Taiwan remained defiant. "Our



AP PHOTO

In this screen grab from video released by the Taiwan Coast Guard, a guard monitors a mainland Coast Guard boat as it passes near the coast of Matsu islands, yesterday

military will definitely deal with the threat from China appropriately," Joseph Wu, secretary-general of Taiwan's security council, said at a forum in Taipei. "Threatening other countries with force violates the basic spirit of the United Nations Charter to resolve disputes through peaceful means."

Lai's office also called on China to "cease military provocations that undermine regional peace and stability and stop threatening Taiwan's democracy and freedom."

A map aired on China's state broadcaster CCTV showed six large blocks encircling Taiwan indicating where the military drills were being held, along with circles

drawn around Taiwan's outlying islands.

Taiwan's defense ministry said the six areas focused on key strategic locations around and on the island.

China deployed its Liaoning aircraft carrier for the drills, and CCTV showed a J-15 fighter jet taking off from the deck of the carrier.

China's People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theater Command spokesperson Senior Captain Li Xi said yesterday evening that the drill was successfully completed.

Li said the navy, army air force and missile corps were all mobilized for the drills, which were an integrated operation. "This is a

major warning to those who back Taiwan independence and a signifier of our determination to safeguard our national sovereignty," Li said in a statement on the service's public media channel.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said at a daily briefing that Beijing did not consider relations with Taiwan a diplomatic issue, in keeping with its refusal to recognize Taiwan as a sovereign state.

"I can tell you that Taiwan independence is as incompatible with peace in the Taiwan Strait as fire with water. Provocation by the Taiwan independence forces will surely be met with countermeasures," Mao said.

res," Mao said.

Taiwan's Defense Ministry said it deployed warships to designated spots in the ocean to carry out surveillance and stand at ready. It also deployed mobile missile and radar groups on land to track the vessels at sea. It said as of yesterday morning, they had tracked 25 Chinese warplanes and seven warships and four Chinese government ships, though it did not specify what types of ships they were.

On the streets of Taipei, residents were undeterred. "I don't worry, I don't panic either, it doesn't have any impact to me," Chang Chia-ru said.

Another Taipei resident, Jeff Huang, said: "Taiwan is very stable now, and I am used to China's military exercises. I have been threatened by this kind of threats since I was a child, and I am used to it."

China held similar large-scale exercises after Lai was inaugurated in May. Lai continues the eight-year rule of the Democratic Progressive Party that rejects China's demand that it recognize Taiwan as a part of China.

China also held massive military exercises around Taiwan and simulated a blockade in 2022 after a visit to the island by Nancy Pelosi, who was then speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. China routinely states that Taiwan independence is a "dead end" and that annexation by Beijing is a historical inevitability.

Also yesterday, China's Taiwan Affairs Office announced it was sanctioning two Taiwanese individuals, Puma Shen and Robert Tsao, for promoting Taiwanese independence. Shen is the co-founder of the Kuma Academy, a nonprofit group that trains civilians on wartime readiness. Tsao donated \$32.8 million to fund the academy's training courses. Shen and Tsao are forbidden to travel to China, including Hong Kong. MDT/AP

DIPLOMACY

Premier Li attends a regional security meeting in Pakistan

PREMIER Li Qiang is the most prominent leader attending this week's meeting in Pakistan of a regional security grouping that was founded by Russia and China to counter Western alliances, despite a surge in militant violence in the country.

Li arrived in Islamabad for the two-day meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization starting today to discuss how to boost security and economic ties between the member states.

Li is the first Chinese premier to visit Pakistan

in more than a decade. He arrived a week after two Chinese workers were killed and another was wounded when a suicide bomber dispatched by separatists in southwestern Balochistan province rammed his explosive-laden vehicle into a convoy outside the country's largest airport in Karachi.

Eight Pakistani security officials were also wounded in the Oct. 6 attack. It targeted some of the thousands of Chinese working in Pakistan on projects related to the China-Pakistan Economic



Corridor, while separatists accuse them of plundering mineral resources.

Gunmen last week also killed 21 coal miners in the the same province, but the separatist Balochistan

Liberation Army denied its involvement. Authorities said they were still trying to determine who was behind the assault.

Yesterday, at least one police officer and three insurgents were killed in an attack on a police station in the district of Bannu in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said. No one has claimed responsibility but the suspicion is likely to fall on the Pakistani Taliban, who often target security forces across the country.

During his three-day

visit, Li will also meet with Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari and senior political and military leadership.

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said the SCO meeting will also be attended by representatives of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It said Iran's vice president and the Indian foreign minister would also attend.

Pakistan has increased security in the capital by deploying troops and banning rallies. MDT/AP

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KOREAS

NORTH IS PREPARING TO DESTROY NORTHERN PARTS OF INTER-KOREAN ROADS, SEOUL SAYS

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea said yesterday it has detected signs that North Korea is preparing to destroy the northern parts of inter-Korean roads no longer in use, as the rivals are embroiled in soaring tensions over North Korea's claim that South Korea flew drones over its territory.

Destroying the roads would be in line with leader Kim Jong Un's push to cut off ties with South Korea, formally cement it as his country's principal enemy and abandon the North's decades-long objective to seek a peaceful Korean unification.

In a highly derisive rhetoric, Kim's sister and senior official, Kim Yo Jong, called the South Korean military "dregs" and "mongrels tamed by Yankees." She said that "the master of those dogs," an apparent reference to the U.S., must be held accountable for the alleged drone flights as well. South Korea and the U.S. had no immediate responses.

Earlier yesterday, South Korea's military said that it was observing various activities in North Korea that appeared to be preparations for demolishing the roads, such as installing screens.

"They have installed screens on the roads and are working behind those screens, preparing to blow up the roads," Lee Sung Joon, spokesperson of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a briefing. He said the demolitions could be carried out right away.

Lee said that the South Korean military believes that North Korea may carry out other provocations like a space rocket



launch, which the U.N. views as a disguised test of long-range missile technology.

It's not clear how much parts of the roads North Korea would destroy.

During the previous era of inter-Korean detente in the 2000s, the two Koreas reconnected two road routes and two rail tracks across their heavily fortified border. But their operations later were suspended one by one as the Koreans wrangled over North Korea's nuclear program and other issues.

Last week, North Korea said it would permanently block its border with South Korea and build front-line defense structures to cope with "confrontational hysteria" by South Korean and U.S. forces. South Korean officials said North Korea had

already been adding anti-tank barriers and laying mines along the border since earlier this year. They said North Korea has also planted mines and removed lamps along its sections of the inter-Korean roads and taken out ties on the northern side of the railways.

North Korea has accused South Korea of launching drones to drop propaganda leaflets over Pyongyang three times this month and threatened to respond with force if it happened again. South Korea has refused to confirm whether it sent drones but warned it would sternly punish North Korea if the safety of its citizens is threatened.

In a statement Sunday, the North's Defense Ministry said that the military had ordered artillery and other army units near

the border with South Korea to "get fully ready to open fire." The ministry said that the entire South Korean territory "might turn into piles of ashes" following the North's powerful attack.

North Korea often releases warlike rhetoric when animosities with its rivals increase. Experts say it's highly unlikely for North Korea to launch full-scale, preemptive attacks as its military is outmatched by the combined U.S. and South Korean forces.

Koo Byoungsam, a spokesperson of South Korea's Unification Ministry, said yesterday that North Korea's accusation over drone flights was likely aimed at creating tensions to reinforce its internal unity while stoking instability in South Korea. Koo said North Korea cannot win what it wants from South Korea with

threats and provocations.

Some observers say anti-Pyongyang activists in South Korea might have sent drones this month, but North Korea argues the South Korean government cannot escape responsibility.

In 2022, South Korea sent surveillance drones across the border into North Korea after it accused North Korea of flying drones into South Korea for the first time in five years.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest point in years, with North Korea continuing a run of provocative missile tests and South Korea and the U.S. expanding their military drills. Observers say North Korea could perform major weapons tests ahead of next month's U.S. presidential election to increase its leverage in future diplomacy with the Americans.

In January, Kim Jong Un ordered the revision of North Korea's constitution to eliminate the goal of a peaceful Korean unification, formally designate South Korea as the country's "invariable principal enemy" and define the North's sovereign, territorial sphere.

Kim's order stunned many North Korea watchers because it was seen as breaking away with his predecessors' long-cherished dreams of peacefully achieving a unified Korea on the North's terms. Experts say Kim likely aims to diminish South Korea's voice in the regional nuclear standoff and seek direct dealings with the U.S. They say Kim also likely hopes to diminish South Korean cultural influence and bolster his rule at home. **MDT/AP**

NEPAL

A record-setting teen climber returns home to a hero's welcome

ASherpa teenager who became the youngest person to scale all the world's 14 highest peaks returned home to Nepal yesterday to a hero's welcome.

Nima Rinji Sherpa, 18, reached the 8,027-meter (26,335-foot) summit of Mount Shishapangma in China last week, completing his mission to climb the world's peaks that are more than 8,000 meters (26,247 feet) high. He broke a previous re-

cord by another Sherpa, who was 30 years old at the time.

Nepal's Tourism Minister Badri Prasad Pandey, along with members of the climbing community, fellow Sherpas and supporters, lined up outside Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu to offer flowers and scarves to Nima Rinji.

"I am very happy and I want to say thank you so much everyone. It was a difficult mission but finally I

was able to be successful," Nima Rinji told reporters.

He comes from a well-known family in the Sherpa mountaineering community. His father and two uncles run the Seven Summits Treks in Nepal, which has become a leading company serving clients in Nepal, China and Pakistan.

Several mountaineering records have been achieved by Sherpa climbers.

After his latest and final

climb on Wednesday, Nima Rinji wrote on his Instagram account that it was "a tribute to every Sherpa who has ever dared to dream beyond the traditional boundaries set for them."

"We are not just guides; we are trailblazers. Let this be a call to every Sherpa to see the dignity in our work, the power in our heritage, and the limitless possibilities in our future," he said. **MDT/AP**



Mingma Sherpa, uncle of 18-year-old Nima Rinji Sherpa, celebrates with his family upon Nima's arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, yesterday

INDIA

An elephant procession for Dussehra draws a crowd in the former Mysore kingdom

AIJAZ RAHI, MYSURU

THE spectators were getting restless after hours of waiting when a drizzle began. But an announcer over scratchy loudspeakers urged them in Kannada, the language of India's Karnataka state, to be patient for a little longer.

Finally, around midafternoon, a loud cheer rose through the crowd when elephants came into view at the head of a procession.

As if on cue, the rain became heavier, but the thousands of people watching seemed unperturbed. This was the spectacle they had been waiting for — the grand event Saturday in the historic city of Mysuru marking the 10th and final day of the annual Dussehra festivities.

One after another, as the 11 elephants draped in bright silken sheets passed by the spectators, each animal raised its elegantly painted trunk in greeting.

They were followed by floats with tableaux flaunting anything from technological milestones to



Ragavendra MS, descendant of a former minister of Mysore's royal kingdom, poses with decorated elephants on the eve of the final day of the Dussehra festivities, in Mysuru

folk culture and architecture. In between the floats were dancers and performers, some in elaborate costumes performing classical dances, others beating drums and enacting scenes from Hindu mythology.

The procession culminated when a tall, majestic-looking male elephant arrived, flanked by two

shorter females.

The 58-year-old elephant, Abhimanyu, was decked up regally and carried in a golden seat on its back an idol of Chamundeshwari, the Hindu goddess also known as Durga. Legend has it that the seat, a howdah, weighs 750 kilograms (1,650 pounds) with 80 kilograms

(176 pounds) of gold leaves covering its wooden structure.

Despite the weight, Abhimanyu shuffled forward effortlessly, his feet making almost no sound on the street. All the elephants used in the procession were trained to be able to walk among vehicles along noisy streets.

Animal activists have long objected to ceremonial uses of elephants, citing distress in the animals caused by crowds and noise.

Chamundeshwari is the principal deity of the Wadiyar royal family, the former rulers of the Mysore kingdom, now known as Mysuru. The elephants were sent from the royal courtyard of the Amba Vilas Palace by the now-symbolic rulers with prayers and showering of flowers as their ancestors have done for more than 400 years.

The Mysuru Dussehra celebrates the slaying of the demon Mahishasura by the goddess, symbolizing the victory of good over evil. In other parts of India, people celebrate the victory of Hindu god Rama over the demon king Ravana on this day.

The festivities continued until the evening and when the elephants returned to the palace, it had been lit with almost 100,000 electric bulbs, illuminating the contours of its impressive architecture. **MDT/AP**

AD

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BELARUS

Ailing and silenced in prison, activist symbolizes the nation's repression

YURAS KARMANAU, TALLINN

THE last time any of Maria Kolesnikova's family had contact with the imprisoned Belarusian opposition activist was more than 18 months ago. Fellow inmates at the penal colony reported hearing her plead for medical help from inside her tiny and smelly cell.

Her father, Alexander Kolesnikov, told The Associated Press by phone from Minsk that he knows she's seriously ill and tried to visit her several months ago at the facility near Gomel, where she is serving an 11-year sentence, but has failed whenever he goes there.

On his last attempt, he said the warden told him, "If she doesn't call or doesn't write, that means she doesn't want to."

The 42-year-old musician-turned-activist is known to have been hospitalized in Gomel in May or June, but the outcome was unclear, said a former prisoner who identified herself only as Natalya because she feared retaliation from authorities.

"I can only pray to God that she is still alive," Kolesnikov said in an interview. "The authorities are ignoring my requests for a meeting and for letters — it is a terrible feeling of impotence for a father."

Kolesnikova gained prominence when mass protests erupted in Belarus after the widely disputed August 2020 election gave authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko a sixth term in office. With her close-cropped hair, broad smile and a gesture of forming her outstretched hands into the shape of a heart, she often was seen at the front of the demonstrations.

She became an even greater symbol of defiance in September of that year when Belarusian authorities tried to deport her. Driven to the Ukrainian border, she briefly broke away from security forces in the neutral zone at the frontier and tore up her passport, then walked back into Belarus. She was convicted a year later of charges including conspiracy to seize power.

Natalya, whose cell was next to Kolesnikova's before being released in August, said she had not heard her talking to guards for six months. Other inmates



Belarus opposition activist Maria Kolesnikova stands behind bars in a defendants' cage in a court in Minsk

heard Kolesnikova's pleas for medical assistance, she said, but reported that doctors did not come for "a very long time."

In November 2022, Kolesnikova was moved to an intensive care ward to undergo surgery for a perforated ulcer. Other prisoners become aware of her movements because "it feels like martial law has been declared" in the cellblock, Natalya said. "Other prisoners are strictly forbidden not only to talk, but even to exchange glances with Maria."

Her sister, Tatiana Khomich, said she was told by former inmates that the 5-foot-9-inch Kolesnikova weighed only about 45 kilograms (100 pounds).

"They are slowly killing Maria, and I consider that this is a critical period because no one can survive in such conditions," said Khomich, who lives outside Belarus.

The last time Kolesnikova wrote from prison was in February 2023. Letters to her "are ripped up before her eyes by prison personnel," her sister said, relaying accounts from other former inmates.

Kolesnikova, who before the 2020 protests was a classical flautist who was especially knowledgeable about baroque music, is one of several major Lukashenko opponents to disappear behind bars.

The prisons department of the Belarusian Interior Ministry refused to comment on Kolesnikova's case.

The U.N. Human Rights Committee has repeatedly demanded Belarusian authorities take "urgent protective measures" in relation to Kolesnikova and other political prisoners held incommunicado. In September, the European Parliament demanded that Belarus release all political prisoners.

Former inmates say Kolesnikova wore a yellow tag that indicates a political prisoner. That marks them for additional abuse by guards and officials, rights advocates say.

The human rights group Viasna counts about 1,300 political prisoners in Belarus, including the group's Nobel Peace Prize-winning founder, Ales Bialiatsky. At least six have died behind bars.

"It was too late to save Alexei Navalny (from prison in Russia), and it was too late for six people in Belarus. We and the Western world don't have much time to save Maria's life," Khomich said.

Amnesty International has begun a campaign to raise awareness about Kolesnikova's fate, urging people to take up her plight with Western officials and politicians.

Other prominent opposition figures who are imprisoned and

have not been heard from in a year or more include Siarhei Tsikhanouski, who planned to challenge Lukashenko in the 2020 election but was imprisoned; his wife, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, took his place on the ballot and was forced to leave the country the day after the vote.

Aspiring opposition candidate Viktor Babaryka also was imprisoned before the election as his popularity among prospective voters soared. Kolesnikova was his campaign manager but then joined forces with Tsikhanouskaya. Prominent opposition figure Mikola Statkevich and Kolesnikova's lawyer, Maxim Znak, are imprisoned and have not contacted the outside world since the winter of 2023.

Lukashenko denies Belarus has any political prisoners. At the same time, in recent months he has unexpectedly released 115 prisoners whose cases had political elements; those released had health problems, wrote petitions for pardons and repented.

Belarus is deeply integrated with Russia and some observers believe Lukashenko is concerned about the extent of his dependence on Moscow, hoping to restore some ties with the EU by releasing political prisoners ahead of a presidential election next year. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1964 KHRUSHCHEV 'RETIRES' AS HEAD OF USSR



Nikita Khrushchev has unexpectedly stepped down as leader of the Soviet Union.

The official Soviet news agency, Tass, announced that a plenary meeting of the Communist Party Central Committee had accepted Mr Khrushchev's request to depart "in view of his advanced age and the deterioration of his health".

Mr Khrushchev, who is 70, took over as First Secretary of the Central Committee soon after Stalin's death.

He has held the role of both party leader and prime minister since 1958. These posts will now be divided with 57-year-old Leonid Brezhnev heading the Soviet Communist Party, while 60-year-old Alexei Kosygin, will take the post of prime minister.

The news has come as a shock to Soviet diplomats in London who were unaware that their leader might be unwell.

A flamboyant character, Mr Khrushchev is described in the Times newspaper today as "the most colourful leader world communism has produced".

He took over from Joseph Stalin when he died in 1953.

In 1955 he began the first of several visits abroad to improve Soviet relations with the rest of Europe, America and Asia.

His first stop was Yugoslavia where he apologised in person to Marshal Josef Tito for Stalin's attack on Yugoslav Communism in 1948.

His denunciation of Stalin in 1956 in what's known as the "secret speech" to the 20th Party Congress gave Soviet satellite states such as Poland and Hungary new hope of more political freedom - which were soon crushed by Warsaw Pact troops.

During this speech, he also laid down the foundations of his foreign policy, moving away from the belligerent approach to capitalism and towards co-existence and competition.

For Western leaders, his brash and extrovert sense of humour was a refreshing change from the stern image of previous Soviet public figures.

He courted socialist parties abroad and encouraged cultural exchanges. [...]

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The following day the Soviet government reassured the West it would continue the policy of peaceful co-existence.

There had been a growing opposition to his failed agricultural and industrial policies, quarrels with China, and his humiliating climb-down over the Cuban missile crisis.



There was also a feeling he was trying to create a cult of personality - much like his predecessor Stalin - in taking on the two roles of prime minister and head of the Communist Party.

Mr Khrushchev lived the rest of his life away from the public eye in Moscow and at his country dacha as a special pensioner of the Soviet Government.

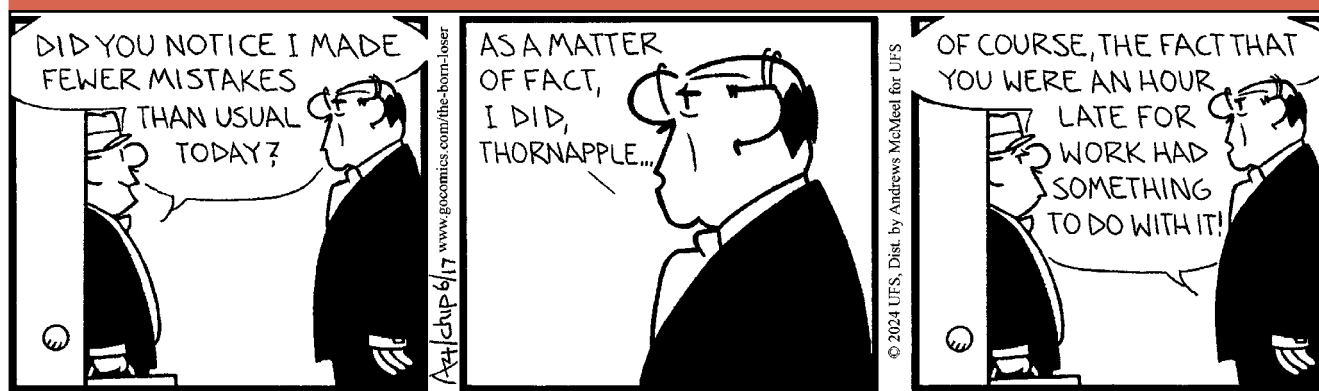
In 1970 his memoirs were published in the United States and Europe, but not in the Soviet Union. He died on 11 September 1971 but was denied a state funeral and interment in the Kremlin wall, and is buried at Novodevichy Convent Cemetery in Moscow.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

 ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Finish work privately. Save money, time and energy. Fix something old before buying new. Recharge with rest, exercise and meditation. Enjoy spiritual reflection.	 TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Teamwork achieves solid results once you get past nebulous distractions. Motivate focused attention by training eyes on the prize. Share resources and connections.
 GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 A professional opportunity tempts. Dress for success. Resolve a scheduling conflict. Get team support when needed. Anticipate changes. Forge ahead in exciting directions.	 CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Make valuable connections. Monitor traffic and weather conditions. Mix business with pleasure as you can. Postpone buying extra stuff. Pack lightly and move with ease.
 LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Nurture shared accounts for growth. Negotiate a shrewd deal and prepare a thorough budget. Resolve practical details with your partner. Work out the numbers.	 VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 Partnership provides satisfying results. Collaborate with practical chores and responsibilities. Patience is required. Walk and talk. Work out what each one can contribute.
 LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Keep practicing your moves. You're growing stronger. Nurture your health with good food, exercise and rest. Balance a busy work schedule with personal time.	 SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Connect with family and friends. Romance develops naturally. Creative expression feeds your spirit. Play music, sports and games. Learn from elders and children.
 SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Domestic responsibilities call. Clean and clear clutter. Home renovations or gatherings come together with help from family. Bring something delicious to the party.	 CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Prioritize practical writing and communications projects. Keep deadlines. Manage chores and responsibilities. Creative discipline reaps extra rewards. Edit and clarify your catchy message.
 AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Take care of business. Push for an income boost. Research purchases for best value. Move quickly to advance profitable opportunities. Generate your daily bread.	 PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Energy surges are predicted. Figure out what you want and go for it. Follow a practical path. Avoid illusions and fantasies. Prioritize concrete results.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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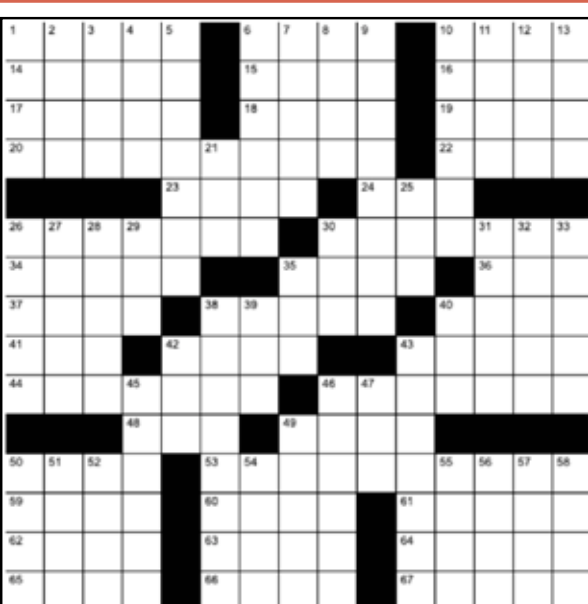
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	12	19	cloudy
Changchun	5	10	fine
Chengdu	17	26	rain
Chongqing	19	26	overcast
Fuzhou	23	30	cloudy
Guangzhou	24	32	cloudy
Guiyang	13	21	overcast
Haikou	24	29	rain
Hangzhou	20	24	rain
Harbin	3	8	fine
Hefei	16	25	cloudy
Nanjing	18	24	overcast
Shanghai	22	24	rain
Taipei	23	28	fine
Wuhan	17	28	cloudy
Hong Kong	28	31	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	4	8	showers
Frankfurt	10	16	cloudy
Paris	17	21	cloudy
London	13	16	cloudy
New York	6	16	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Puccini classic; 6- Corp. bigwigs; 10- Bar ___; 14- Constellation containing Rigel; 15- Abhor; 16- Hgt.; 17- Breakfast fruit; 18- The doctor ___; 19- Your excellency; 20- Immeasurably deep; 22- Implement; 23- Dixie pronoun; 24- Frozen water; 26- Room for infants; 30- First Biblical patriarch; 34- Lend ___ (listen); 35- Silage storage tower; 36- Summer drink; 37- Pace; 38- ___ Dame; 40- Workplace stds. enforcer; 41- Feel poorly; 42- Actor Calhoun; 43- Young; 44- Teachings; 46- Absence of sound; 48- Stomach muscles, for short; 49- Kitchen addition; 50- Glass ornament; 53- Absorbing; 59- Opposed to; 60- Me neither; 61- Word with panel or energy; 62- Baseballer Slaughter; 63- Leak slowly; 64- Abnormal plant swelling; 65- Spellbound; 66- Ferrara family; 67- Ventured;

DOWN 1- Grave; 2- White-centered cookie; 3- River sediment; 4- Codger; 5- Pest; 6- Feeling cold; 7- Artist's support; 8- Elevator man; 9- Aware; 10- Lipton rival; 11- Hodgepodge; 12- Emperor of Rome 54-68; 13- Robbie's daredevil dad; 21- Deface; 25- ___-Magnon; 26- Twangy, as a voice; 27- Loosen; 28- Country dances; 29- Tree syrup; 30- Ventilate; 31- Is wearing; 32- Kind of committee; 33- Gettysburg general; 35- Pippen; 38- Malarkey; 39- Surgery sites, briefly; 40- Lode load; 42- Steal from; 43- Sanctified; 45- One who enjoys inflicting pain; 46- Band of color; 47- Judge in 1995 news; 49- Plumed heron; 50- Boxer Max; 51- Sicilian resort; 52- On; 54- Denials; 55- Fizzy drink; 56- Robert of "The Sopranos"; 57- Identify; 58- Alum;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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 <p>Hoi Wan Retail (Taipa) HKD 12,980,000</p>	 <p>Tou Un (Taipa) HKD 2,750,000 1 bed 1 bath</p>	 <p>Jade Garden (Taipa) HKD 11,880,000 4 bed 3 bath</p>
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AD

As OpenAI attracts billions in new investment, its goal of balancing profit with purpose is getting more challenging to pull off: an interview with Alnoor Ebrahim

PROFIT WITH PURPOSE

AP PHOTO



What's in store for OpenAI is the subject of many anonymously sourced reports

OPENAI, the artificial intelligence company that developed the popular ChatGPT chatbot and the text-to-art program Dall-E, is at a crossroads. On Oct. 2, 2024, it announced that it had obtained US\$6.6 billion in new funding from investors and that the business was worth an estimated \$157 billion – making it only the second startup ever to be valued at over \$100 billion.

Unlike other big tech companies, OpenAI is a nonprofit with a for-profit subsidiary that is overseen by a nonprofit board of directors. Since its founding in 2015, OpenAI's official mission has been “to build artificial general intelligence (AGI) that is safe and benefits all of humanity.”

By late September 2024, The Associated Press, Reuters, The Wall Street Journal and many other media outlets were reporting that OpenAI plans to discard its nonprofit status and become a for-profit tech company managed by investors. These stories have all cited anonymous sources. The New York Times, referencing documents from the recent funding round, reported that unless this change happens within two years, the \$6.6 billion in equity would become debt owed to the investors who provided that funding.

The Conversation U.S. asked Alnoor Ebrahim, a Tufts University management scholar, to explain why OpenAI's leaders' reported plans to change its structure would be significant and potentially problematic.

– How have its top executives and board members responded?

Ebrahim – There has been a lot of leadership turmoil at OpenAI. The disagreements boiled over in November 2023, when its board briefly ousted Sam Altman, its CEO. He got his job back in less than a week, and then three board members resigned. The departing directors were advocates for building stronger guardrails and encouraging

regulation to protect humanity from potential harms posed by AI.

Over a dozen senior staff members have quit since then, including several other co-founders and executives responsible for overseeing OpenAI's safety policies and practices. At least two of them have joined Anthropic, a rival founded by a former OpenAI executive responsible for AI safety. Some of the departing executives say that Altman has pushed the company to launch products prematurely.

Safety “has taken a backseat to shiny products,” said OpenAI's former safety team leader Jan Leike, who quit in May 2024.

– Why would OpenAI's structure change?

Ebrahim – OpenAI's deep-pocketed investors cannot own shares in the organization under its existing nonprofit governance structure, nor can they get a seat on its board of directors. That's because OpenAI is incorporated as a nonprofit whose purpose is to benefit society rather than private interests. Until now, all rounds of investments, including a reported total of \$13 billion from Microsoft, have been channeled through a for-profit subsidiary that belongs to the nonprofit.

The current structure allows OpenAI to accept money from private investors in exchange for a future portion of its profits. But those investors do not get a voting seat on the board, and their profits are “capped.” According to information pre-

viously made public, OpenAI's original investors can't earn more than 100 times the money they provided. The goal of this hybrid governance model is to balance profits with OpenAI's safety-focused mission.

Becoming a for-profit enterprise would make it possible for its investors to acquire ownership stakes in OpenAI and no longer have to face a cap on their potential profits. Down the road, OpenAI could also go public and raise capital on the stock market.

Altman reportedly seeks to personally acquire a 7% equity stake in OpenAI, according to a Bloomberg article that cited unnamed sources.

That arrangement is not allowed for nonprofit executives, according to BoardSource, an association of nonprofit board members and executives. Instead, the association explains, nonprofits “must reinvest surpluses back into the organization and its tax-exempt purpose.”

– What kind of company might OpenAI become?

Ebrahim – The Washington Post and other media outlets have reported, also citing unnamed sources, that OpenAI might become a “public benefit corporation” – a business that aims to benefit society and earn profits.

Examples of businesses with this status, known as B Corps., include outdoor clothing and gear company Patagonia and eyewear maker Warby Parker.

It's more typical that a for-profit business – not a

nonprofit – becomes a benefit corporation, according to the B Lab, a network that sets standards and offers certification for B Corps. It is unusual for a nonprofit to do this because nonprofit governance already requires those groups to benefit society.

Boards of companies with this legal status are free to consider the interests of society, the environment and people who aren't its shareholders, but that is not required. The board may still choose to make profits a top priority and can drop its benefit status to satisfy its investors. That is what online craft marketplace Etsy did in 2017, two years after becoming a publicly traded company.

In my view, any attempt to convert a nonprofit into a public benefit corporation is a clear move away from focusing on the nonprofit's mission. And there will be a risk that becoming a benefit corporation would just be a ploy to mask a shift toward focusing on revenue growth and investors' profits.

Many legal scholars and other experts are predicting that OpenAI will not do away with its hybrid ownership model entirely because of legal restrictions on the placement of nonprofit assets in private hands.

But I think OpenAI has a possible workaround: It could try to dilute the nonprofit's control by making it a minority shareholder in a new for-profit structure. This would effectively eliminate the nonprofit board's power to

hold the company accountable. Such a move could lead to an investigation by the office of the relevant state attorney general and potentially by the Internal Revenue Service.

– What could happen if OpenAI turns into a for-profit company?

Ebrahim – The stakes for society are high.

AI's potential harms are wide-ranging, and some are already apparent, such as deceptive political campaigns and bias in health care.

If OpenAI, an industry leader, begins to focus more on earning profits than ensuring AI's safety, I believe that these dangers could get worse. Geoffrey Hinton, who won the 2024 Nobel Prize in physics for his artificial intelligence research, has cautioned that AI may exacerbate inequality by replacing “lots of mundane jobs.” He believes that there's a 50% probability “that we'll have to confront the problem of AI trying to take over” from humanity.

And even if OpenAI did retain board members for whom safety is a top concern, the only common denominator for the members of its new corporate board would be their obligation to protect the interests of the company's shareholders, who would expect to earn a profit. While such expectations are common on a for-profit board, they constitute a conflict of interest on a nonprofit board where mission must come first and board members cannot benefit financially from the organization's work.

The arrangement would, no doubt, please OpenAI's investors. But would it be good for society? The purpose of nonprofit control over a for-profit subsidiary is to ensure that profit does not interfere with the nonprofit's mission. Without guardrails to ensure that the board seeks to limit harm to humanity from AI, there would be little reason for it to prevent the company from maximizing profit, even if its chatbots and other AI products endanger society.

Regardless of what OpenAI does, most artificial intelligence companies are already for-profit businesses. So, in my view, the only way to manage the potential harms is through better industry standards and regulations that are starting to take shape.

California's governor vetoed such a bill in September 2024 on the grounds it would slow innovation – but I believe slowing it down is exactly what is needed, given the dangers AI already poses to society.

MDT/THE CONVERSATION

FOOTBALL

Player unions and leagues in Europe go to Brussels with latest legal challenge against FIFA

IN a busy soccer season when players have talked of going on strike, their union teamed up with domestic leagues to go to the European Union yesterday with a long-promised challenge to FIFA about how it adds new and bigger men's competitions.

The European division of player union FIFPRO and the 33-nation European Leagues group filed a formal complaint on competition grounds alleging FIFA fails to consult properly on commercially-motivated decisions.

It is the latest dispute playing out in the legal arena, where FIFA has been pressured in the past year by rulings related to the European Super League, player agent regulations and — just this month



— the global transfer market. On the field, FIFA will launch a 32-team Club World Cup — including 12 from Europe — in the United States next June and July, and the

2026 World Cup, also in North America, will have 48 teams instead of 32 and last for one extra week.

"The international match calendar is now beyond saturation and has become unsustainable for national leagues and a risk for the health of players," the union and leagues have said.

The complaint yesterday to the European Commission targets FIFA, which manages the calendar of protected dates for national-team games. Clubs must release players who are selected.

It does not cite European soccer body UEFA, which this season has committed hundreds of players to extra competitive games by expanding three of its men's international competitions: the Cham-

pions League and Europa League for clubs, and the Nations League, which has a new playoffs system.

Europe's domestic leagues have had their fixture scheduling options squeezed by four extra midweeks from September through January now occupied by UEFA club competitions.

The leagues' grievance with FIFA is in not being fully consulted during talks to agree the latest calendar renewal through 2030 for national-team games, which mostly force them to shut down lucrative weekend fixture slots.

FIFA has said its offers this year of talks were not taken up.

The complaint in Brussels, to the executive arm of the 27-nation EU bloc, has been joined by Spain's La Liga and claims FIFA abuses its dominant position in soccer.

FIFA's role, the complaint states, as governing body and regulator conflicts with its commercial objectives as a competition organizer.

FIFA previously suggested there was hypocrisy in European soccer, which sees clubs play lucrative offseason games worldwide, while it had a global duty to protect and develop the game. **MDT/AP**

AD

Congratulations to
Mr. Sam Hou Fai
elected as sixth term Chief Executive-Elect of
Macau Special Administrative Region

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macau-slot.com

OPINION

The Correspondents

Kanis Leung, MDT/AP



FORMER TOP JUDGE IS CHOSEN AS THE CHINESE CASINO HUB'S FIRST LEADER BORN IN MAINLAND

Macau's former top judge, Sam Hou Fai, has been chosen as the city's next chief executive, becoming the first leader born in mainland China to hold the role. In a largely ceremonial election on Sunday, Sam secured 394 out of 398 votes from an election committee dominated by Beijing loyalists, with only four blank votes. Sam's appointment marks a shift from the tradition of electing leaders born in the former Portuguese colony, often from influential business families.

Sam, 62, is widely seen as having Beijing's approval. During his nomination, 386 committee members had already endorsed him, and after his election, he pledged to uphold national sovereignty, diversify Macau's economy, and integrate it further into China's national development plans. Sam will take office in December, coinciding with the 25th anniversary of Macau's handover to China.

While most of Macau's 687,000 residents lack voting rights, reactions to the election have been mixed. Some hope Sam will prioritize public opinion over business interests, while others feel detached from a process they cannot participate in. Despite his mainland origin, many residents appear comfortable with his selection in a city known for its migrant population.

Macau is the only place in China where casino gambling is legal, but Beijing has urged the city to reduce its reliance on gambling. Sam has promised to continue efforts to diversify the economy by expanding tourism and other sectors like traditional Chinese medicine and finance. However, analysts believe Macau will still depend heavily on its gambling industry to support government revenue and social welfare programs.

Beijing envisions Macau as a world-class tourism hub and a bridge for trade between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. However, local businesses have suffered due to competition from the neighboring mainland city of Zhuhai, which offers better value for money. Additionally, Chinese tourists are spending less in Macau than before.

Observers question whether Sam, who lacks government leadership experience, can assemble a strong team to address these challenges. Sam emphasized the importance of Macau's integration into the Greater Bay Area, a Chinese plan to connect Macau and Hong Kong with cities in Guangdong province. He also called for the government to take a more active role in decision-making, saying that despite Macau's capitalistic economy, the government should not be passive.

Sam was born in Guangdong in 1962 and studied law at Peking University and the University of Coimbra in Portugal. He practiced law in mainland China before being appointed as Macau's top judge in 1999, shortly after the territory returned to Chinese rule. He held this position for nearly 25 years before resigning in August to run for chief executive. As a judge, Sam handled politically sensitive cases, including upholding bans on pro-democracy protests and barring certain candidates from legislative elections.

Looking ahead, some residents are hopeful Sam's legal background will help him tackle Macau's social and economic problems. For example, seafood restaurant operator Ip Weng U, 49, expressed hope that Sam could perform better than his predecessors, given his experience as a judge. [Abridged]

French authorities are joining forces with players to oppose plans by World Rugby to change its regulations with the introduction of a 20-minute red card, saying it poses a health risk.

The sport's governing body said last week that the possibility of replacing a red-carded player with a team-mate after 20 minutes was moving closer to global adoption following "successful trials."

The sent-off player would not, though, be able to return for the rest of the match.

The proposed new law is part of a package of changes "designed to enhance the viewing and playing experience," World

Rugby said.

In a joint statement, the French rugby federation, the league and the players' union Provale disagreed. Ahead of a World Rugby council meeting next month, they said they were firmly opposed to the adoption of the rule and called on the sport's governing body "to base itself on evidence before modifying such a crucial sanction, particularly with regard to the impact on player safety."

"For the FFR, LNR and Provale, the red card is a crucial tool that deters unsporting behaviour and protects the physical integrity of players," they said.

AP PHOTO



Skeletons and skulls sit in graves at an excavation site of a 10th century Viking burial ground in Aasum, Denmark, last week

A RARE DISCOVERY

IN DENMARK, FIFTY WELL-PRESERVED VIKING AGE SKELETONS HAVE BEEN UNEARTHED

JAMES BROOKS, AASUM

In a village in central Denmark, archeologists made a landmark discovery that could hold important clues to the Viking era: a burial ground, containing some 50 "exceptionally well-preserved" skeletons.

"This is such an exciting find because we found these skeletons that are so very, very well preserved," said archeologist Michael Borre Lundø, who led the six-month dig. "Normally, we would be lucky to find a few teeth in the graves, but here we have entire skeletons."

The skeletons were preserved thanks to favorable soil chemistry, particularly chalk and high water levels, experts from Museum Odense said. The site was discovered last year during a routine survey, ahead of power line renovation work on the outskirts of the village of Aasum, 5 kilometers, northeast of Odense, Denmark's third-largest city.

Experts hope to conduct DNA analyses and possibly reconstruct detailed life histories, as well as looking into social patterns in Viking Age, such as kinship, migration patterns and more.

"This opens a whole new toolbox for scienti-

fic discovery," said Borre Lundø as he stood on the muddy, wind-swept excavation site. "Hopefully we can make a DNA analysis on all the skeletons and see if they are related to each other and even where they come from."

During the Viking Age, considered to run from 793 to 1066 A.D., Norsemen known as Vikings undertook large-scale raids, colonizing, conquering and trading throughout Europe, even reaching North America.

The Vikings unearthed at Aasum likely weren't warriors. Borre Lundø believes the site was probably a "standard settlement," perhaps a farming community, located 5 kilometers from a ring fortress in what's now central Odense.

The 2,000-square meter burial ground holds the remains of men, women and children. Besides the skeletons, there are a few cremated bodies.

In one grave, a woman is buried in a wagon -- the higher part of a Viking cart was used as a coffin -- suggesting she was from the "upper part of society," Borre Lundø told The Associated Press.

Archeologists also unearthed brooches, necklace beads, knives, and

even a small shard of glass that may have served as an amulet.

Borre Lundø said the brooch designs suggest the dead were buried between 850 and 900 A.D.

"There's different levels of burials," he explained. "Some have nothing with them, others have brooches and pearl necklaces."

Archeologists say many of the artefacts came from far beyond Denmark's borders, shedding light on extensive Viking trade routes during the 10th century.

"There's a lot of trade and commerce going on," said Borre Lundø. "We also found a brooch that comes from the island of Gotland, on the eastern side of Sweden, but also whetstones for honing your knife ... all sorts of things point to Norway and Sweden."

The burial site was discovered last year, and the dig, which started in April, ended Friday. Boxes of artefacts have shipped to Museum Odense's preservation labs for cleaning and analysis.

Conservator Jannie Amsgaard Ebsen hopes the soil may also hold other preserved organic material on the backs of brooches or knife handles. "We're really hoping to gain the larger picture." MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



United States Vice President Kamala Harris yesterday [Macau time] unveiled an initiative to empower Black men economically through forgivable business loans, apprenticeships, and healthcare research. The plan aims to energize Black male voters ahead of the election, addressing concerns about voter turnout and participation in key battleground states.

AP PHOTO



United States The murder trial for Nima Momeni, accused of killing Cash App founder Bob Lee, began yesterday in San Francisco. Prosecutors allege Momeni stabbed Lee following a dispute over Momeni's sister. Momeni claims self-defense, and the trial is expected to last until mid-December.

AP PHOTO



United Kingdom Sir Keir Starmer's government yesterday announced major investment in artificial intelligence, life sciences, and infrastructure at a business summit. While companies pledged billions, Elon Musk's absence stirred headlines. The government faces balancing acts between business interests and concerns from labor unions regarding workers' rights.

AP PHOTO



Uganda A 10-nation Nile Basin partnership declared a new water-sharing accord had come into effect without Egypt's backing. The agreement, aimed at equitable use of the Nile's water resources, has increased regional tensions, particularly with Egypt opposing upstream water management by Ethiopia.