



GAZETTEER SERIES: MACAU'S HERITAGE AND IDENTITY IN 'BOOK OF GEOGRAPHY'

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GAMING CONCESSIONAIRES ACCOUNT FOR 42% OF GP BUDGET

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DIRECT BAGGAGE DROP-OFF SERVICE TO HKIA EXPANDED TO 21 AIRLINES

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AP PHOTO



Russia China's Xi Jinping, India's Narendra Modi and other world leaders arrived in Kazan for a summit of the BRICS bloc of developing economies that the Kremlin hopes to turn into a rallying point for defying Western influence in global affairs. Putin met yesterday with Xi on the sidelines of the event.

China Vice-Premier Zhang Guoqing emphasized China's commitment to international intellectual property cooperation. He highlighted efforts to improve China's legal and policy framework to enhance global innovation and promote technological advancements, aiming to share the benefits worldwide.

AP PHOTO



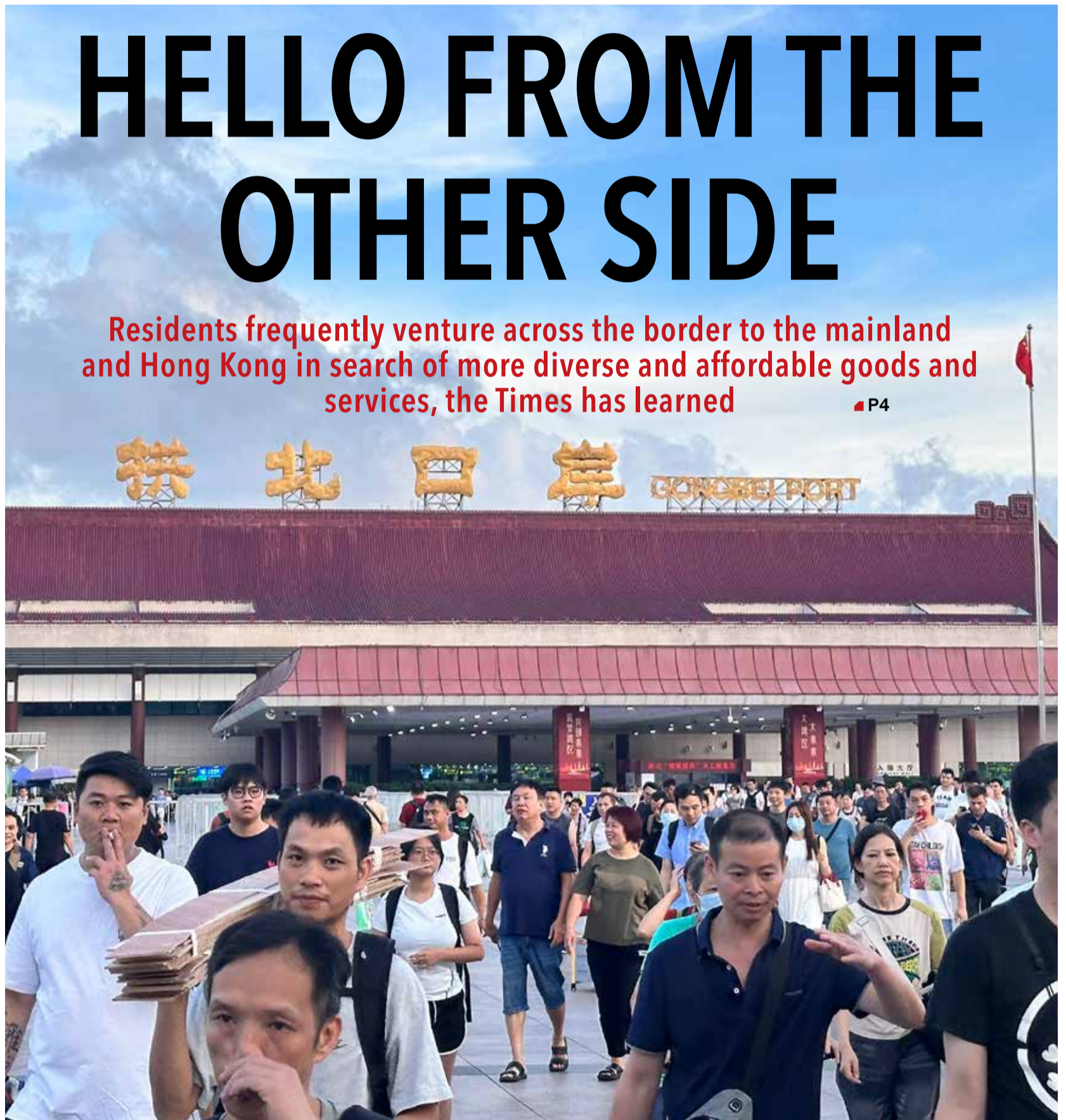
Indonesia Around 140 Rohingya refugees remain stranded off Indonesia's coast as locals refuse them entry. The group, mostly women and children, endured a harrowing two-week journey. Local residents provided food, but tension arose over concerns regarding previous refugee arrivals.

AP PHOTO



New Zealand Dunedin Airport yesterday introduced a three-minute hug limit to avoid traffic jams in its drop-off zone. Passengers are encouraged to keep goodbyes brief, with longer hugs recommended in the parking lot. The quirky rule drew mixed reactions from the public.

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HELLO FROM THE OTHER SIDE

Residents frequently venture across the border to the mainland and Hong Kong in search of more diverse and affordable goods and services, the Times has learned

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GUANGDONG AND MACAU PROMOTE TELECOM COOPERATION



GUANGDONG and Macau officials met Tuesday to discuss ways to promote telecommunications sector development.

The Guangdong delegation, led by the Communist Party Secretary of the Guangdong Communications Administration (GCA), Cai Lizhi, was warmly welcomed by Director Lau Wai Meng of the Macau Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT).

During the meeting, the two sides shared the latest advancements in their respective communications sectors and deliberated on matters related to cross-border communications, cybersecurity implementation, and other regulatory issues, sources have reported.

The authorities viewed the gathering as an effective means to foster communication and interaction between the two regions, expressing a shared willingness to facilitate exchanges and cooperation between Guangdong and Macau operators.

The goal is to deliver more

innovative and high-quality communications services and smart applications to the residents of the Greater Bay Area.

Following the meeting, the GCA and a business delegation from the Guangdong Communications Industry Association, accompanied by CTT, visited several key telecommunications entities in Macau.

These included the Macau Telecommunications Company Ltd., China Telecom (Macau) Limited, the Cybersecurity Incident Alert and Response Centre, and the State Key Laboratory of Smart City Internet of Things at the University of Macau.

The discussion helped strengthen collaboration between the two areas, especially regarding communication technologies and online security.

It aims to advance how communication services are developed jointly in the larger region.

The goal is to spur more innovation and progress through increased cooperation across industries. VC

Macau delegation examines Singapore traffic system

THE International Logistics and Transportation Association Macau branch recently concluded a five-day field trip to Singapore, where they observed the city-state's advanced road transportation network and identified key lessons for Macau to improve its own traffic infrastructure.

The four-member group from the Macau association visited Nanyang Polytechnic, where they examined Singapore's comprehensive approach to road network planning and maintenance. According to Lam Siu Hoi, a member of the group, the professors at the polytechnic consider various factors, such as the thickness and materials used for di-



fferent road layers, as well as natural soil conditions, to ensure road quality and longevity.

Michel Lam, director of the association's administrative council, noted the professors' detailed consideration of road construction materials and layers to guarantee quality for 10 to 20 years without mainte-

nance. "I think Macau can use this as a reference," Lam said.

Another member of the group, Ng Sio Ian, the President of the Administrative Council at CILT Macau, highlighted Singapore's smart and user-friendly traffic light system as another area of potential learning for Macau. The system includes features that

provide extra crossing time for elderly pedestrians, making the streets more accessible and safer for senior residents.

The delegation will summarize their findings in a report for the Macau government, with the hope of contributing ideas for optimizing local traffic infrastructure. VC

DIRECT BAGGAGE DROP-OFF TO HKIA EXPANDED TO 21 AIRLINES

THE service allowing passengers from Macau to check in their baggage at the Macau Port of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge (HKZMB) while traveling abroad via the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) has been significantly expanded, the service provider announced.

The number of airlines offering this service has increased now to a total of 21, with the addition of major carriers to Europe, Southeast Asia, and Africa.

Newly participating airlines include Air France, KLM, Emirates, Turkish Airlines, Air China, China

Southern Airlines, Vietnam Airlines, Philippine Airlines, Thai Airways International, Garuda Indonesia and Ethiopian Airlines.

These 12 new carriers join the nine airlines that were already part of the service, including Cathay Pacific, Hong Kong Express, Hong Kong Airlines, Greater Bay Area Airlines, China Airlines, EVA Air, Mandarin Airlines, Japan Airlines, and Asiana Airlines.

This service is only available for passengers who purchase direct bus tickets to HKIA and have direct or connecting flights booked through the same airline. RM

RENATO MARQUES



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MACAU GP

Program to keep seven races by adding SAR Establishment Cup

RENATO MARQUES

THE 71st Macau Grand Prix will continue to feature a seven-race program this year with the inclusion of a special "Macao SAR Establishment Cup" celebrating the 25th anniversary of Macau's handover, the Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee (MGPOC) announced yesterday in a press conference that launched the event.

Similarly to what happened last year when the 70th GP was celebrated, the Macau Roadsport racing category will be split into two different races, with the second one to be given the special title of "Macao SAR Establishment Cup."

As in previous years, the Macau Roadsport races will be contested using Toyota GR86 and Subaru BRZ unified specification vehicles. The driver selection for each race will be based on the classification races held previously.

The program has as its main highlights the three races that are sanctioned by the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), and that include, for the first time, the FIA Formula Regional (FR) World Cup (replacing the former F3 World Cup), and the return of the FIA GT World Cup and the FIA TCR World Tour event.

TCR WORLD TOUR TITLE DECIDER

This year, the TCR World Tour Event of Macau has the particular attraction of being the last event (Rounds 13 and 14) of the season, which means this year's champion will be crowned in Macau.

For the time being, Norbert Michelisz in a Hyundai Elantra N leads the classification standings with 248 points, followed by Thed Björk in a Lynk & Co 03 with 225 points, and Esteban Guerrieri, driving a Honda Civic Type R FL5 with 221 points.

FR WORLD CUP TO CONTINUE THE LEGACY

On the debuting of the FIA FR World Cup, the FIA president, Mohammed Ben Sulayem, said in a video message played at the press conference that this race has been a highlight for young drivers for a very long time. He also noted that "the cars will be different but it will keep its spirit on bringing top teams and drivers together," and added, "With [the participation of racers from the] five FIA Formula Region



championships, a new winner will join [this year] the ranks of legends like Ayrton Senna or Michael Schumacher."

GT WORLD CUP WITH A STAR-STUDDED LINE-UP

As Sulayem also mentioned in his announcement, the GT World Cup for GT3 specification cars "continues to grow, and the FIA's GT World Cup has an even stronger lineup this year."

At the top is the return of last year's winner, Raffaele Marciello, who will try to defend his title at

the wheel of a BMW after the successes obtained with Mercedes-AMG.

Also returning is "Mr Macau" Edoardo Mortara, who, once again, hits the Guia Circuit in a different car. This time, he will be at the wheel of one of the Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo 2s from SJM VSR Theodore Racing team.

Other previous winners returning this year eager for more laurels are Maro Engel, Augusto Farfus and Laurens Vanthoor.

The GT World Cup will also see

the presence of several names who have achieved good results in Macau in other racing categories, such as the F3. Examples are Daniel Juncadella and Antonio Fuoco. Joining these are others such as Chinese GT star Leo Ye, who won the race in 2020, and Ferrari Factory Driver Ye Yifei.

This year, only one local driver will be listed on the three main racing categories of the GP, with the honors going to Tiago Rodrigues, who, as the Times has previously reported, is racing at the FIA FR World Cup with Evans GP.

GAMING CONCESSIONAIRES ACCOUNT FOR 42% OF GP BUDGET

RENATO MARQUES

THE six local gaming concessionaires will continue to support the Macau Grand Prix event by their sponsorship of it.

During yesterday's Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee (MGPOC) press conference, the six concessionaires presented their sponsorship checks to the MGPOC.

Four of them (elite sponsors) contributed MOP20 million each (SJM Resorts, S.A., Galaxy Entertainment Group, Sands China Ltd, and MGM China Holdings Ltd).

The other two (Melco Resorts and Entertainment and Wynn Macau, Ltd) contributed MOP10 million each as premium sponsors.

In total, the six gaming

companies contributed some MOP100 million from a budget of MOP240 million, as the president of the Sports Bureau (ID), Luís Gomes, noted on the sidelines of the event.

This means the gaming concessionaires account for 41.67% of the total budget this year.

The same conference also announced that BMW Concessionaires (Macau) Ltd will be the official brand for the Safety Car vehicles while Macau Industrial Ltd will continue to be the beverage sponsor, and Air Macau will also remain the official airline sponsor for the GP.

GP CARNIVAL BEGINS IN EARLY NOVEMBER

As in previous editions, a series of ancillary activities are being planned to bring the GP

closer to the community, with the GP Family Carnival scheduled to take place from Nov. 2 and 3 at the Tap Seac Square.

This event combines games and information about the GP, and it is particularly directed at young children and families.

On Nov. 9 and 10, another of the complementary activities with the Grand Prix Auto Show taking place also at Tap Seac Square occurs.

This event will put on display several of the vehicles from the different racing categories that will race at the GP that starts on Nov. 14 and will continue until Nov. 17.

Additionally, an official GP opening ceremony will be held on Nov. 9 at the same location with many of the racers present.

AL BUDGET INCREASES TO MOP218 MILLION IN 2025

The general budget for the Legislative Assembly's (AL) operation has risen to MOP217,870,000 for next year, following its approval last week by the AL plenary. According to a justification note, the budget increased by 3.58% or over MOP7.5 million more this year.

The same document noted that of the additional MOP7.52 million, approximately MOP5.66 million is solely allocated for the hiring of new staff, promotions, and career progress. Another MOP1.54 is for an increase in the price of goods and services essential to the functioning of the AL. The AL budget report noted a decrease in spending on software licensing, which reached some MOP182,000.

SOCIAL WELFARE BUREAU LAUNCHES RENEWED WEBSITE

The Social Welfare Bureau yesterday launched a new version of its website. The new page is in line with the continuing works related to the promotion of the e-government offering more services via the Internet. The renewed website provides a more user-friendly browsing experience, especially for the elderly and people with disabilities. With the updated design, the screen automatically adapts to different browsing devices, such as mobile phones or computers. The website includes various categories, a map of service locations, and social service facilities for citizens to obtain the required information more conveniently. Service shortcuts have also been added, which help users to quickly browse commonly queried items such as pension, disability allowance, and assistance funds, and make inquiries about life certificate information.

50% OF EMPLOYERS HAVE UNPAID FSS CONTRIBUTIONS

Around 12,500 employers, about 50% of all local employers required to pay contributions for the Social Security Fund (FSS) in the third quarter (Q3) of 2024 have yet to do so, the FSS has said in a note. The FSS reminded employers that they can pay their contributions using the "Business & Associations Platform" as well as the "Macao One Account" platform, avoiding the queues that usually occur around the deadline. Employers without staff changes in Q3 and who have submitted employee data can pay through these platforms or the designated banks' e-channels. Meanwhile, mandatory system beneficiaries can use "Macao One Account," Jetco ATMs, designated banks' e-channels, and self-service machines. Late payments incur interest and fines for employers, with failure to pay employment fees potentially leading to fines and revoked permits.

BUYING ACROSS THE BORDER

LOCAL VOICES DISCUSS AND SHARE COMPETITION IN CROSS-BORDER DEALS

VICTORIA CHAN

LOCAL businesses in residential neighborhoods have struggled over the past year as more residents opt to spend their money across the border on the mainland. The Macau Economic Association has sounded the alarm about this troubling trend and its impacts on local consumption.

With the reopening of borders and the increase in cross-border travel through programs like the Northbound Travel for Macau Vehicles, it has become much more convenient for Macau residents to shop and dine in cities like Zhuhai at low cost. This is exacerbating issues faced by local retailers, as quiet streets and numerous shop closures have become a common sight, especially on weekends when citizens favor mainland trips.

While casino districts and other tourist areas continue seeing positive sales, neighborhood enterprises highly reliant on local patronage have been hit hard. Despite government efforts to boost tourism through new attractions and casino collaborations, these initiatives have not been enough to counter falling customer numbers and rising operating expenses for local merchants.

Going forward, Macau is expected to maintain healthy GDP growth in 2024. However, business groups are increasingly worried about the long-term viability of small businesses as cross-border travel to Guangdong becomes a more regular occurrence, continuing to draw spending away from local tills.

BEYOND MACAU'S BORDERS

The Times discovered, through a series of interviews, that residents frequently venture across the border to mainland China and Hong Kong in search of more affordable goods and services. A Macanese local explained, "Recently, I've been going to the mainland quite often, like every other week." This sentiment was echoed by a Chinese resident in their 20s, who reported traveling to the mainland around twice a month.

For some, the lure of lower prices is an irresistible draw.

"We buy everything we can across the border easily with our car. We go to Zhuhai at least once a week to buy groceries and many other things," admitted a Macau-based foreign couple in their mid-40s. They



elaborated, "Way cheaper than in Macau, and above all, there are way more options. For instance, we buy a lot of sports apparel, and in Macau, the prices are ridiculous."

The same residents also highlighted specific products and services they found more appealing or affordable outside of Macau. As one Macanese local noted, "In China, public transportation is unbelievably cheap compared to Macau, which I appreciate. Grocery shopping has also been very nice as it's quite affordable." The younger Chinese Macau resident chimed in, "China: meals, groceries, anime goods. Hong Kong: Variety of events, creative museums." A foreign Macau resident simply stated, "Food, massage, and a few unbranded products" were the main reasons to go outside of Macau.

PRICE DIFFERENCES ARE A MAJOR DRIVE

Residents told the Times they have noticed significant price differences for everyday items when compared to mainland China and Hong Kong. Interviewees provided several concrete examples.

One Macanese resident noted that a large pack of wet wipes costs around RMB3 in the mainland but over MOP13 in Macau. Groceries also tend to be cheaper across the border, with one resident shocked to find a Tomahawk steak priced at just RMB59 in China, in contrast to Macau prices.

Even for service-based items, the savings can be substantial.

"In Europe, laser hair removal starts at about MOP900 or more per session, while in mainland China, it's about MOP200 per session," the Macanese resident observed.

A Chinese resident in their 20s highlighted the price differences for dining out, noting that a meal at the popular hotpot chain Haidilao might cost around RMB150 on the mainland compared to MOP300 in Macau. They also pointed out that corn, which costs about RMB10 for three corncobs on the mainland, can inflate to MOP40 for just two corncobs in Macau supermarkets. Comparatively, this same resident said Hong Kong arguably has cheaper Japanese sushi conveyor chain stores than Macau.

Foreigners living in Macau corroborated these findings, with one couple stating that they can save 40-60% on their monthly budget by shopping and dining across the border in Zhuhai, compared to prices in Macau. As one foreign Macau resident summarized, "Everyday items like vegetables, restaurant [meals], are perhaps around 20-30% cheaper in the mainland" when compared with Macau and other surrounding regions, including Hong Kong.

SHOPPING PREFERENCES: MACAU VS. HONG KONG AND MAINLAND CHINA

When it comes to shopping and entertainment, many Ma-

cau residents appear to prefer options across the border in Hong Kong and mainland China due to the greater variety of products and experiences available.

A Macanese noted the challenges of finding suitable clothing options in Macau, saying, "It's been quite hard to shop for clothes here in Macau." They enjoyed the "lot of variety in stores and products such as clothing stores" available in Hong Kong and the mainland.

A Chinese resident in their 20s agreed, stating that "[mainland] China offers more variety and fresher products at more economical prices." Another foreign resident pointed out that while quality can vary depending on the type of establishment, they generally "prefer shopping in Hong Kong and Macau than China."

Some residents also praised Hong Kong's ability to "attract big international names for stadium tours," an achievement Macau has yet to match as it "has yet to build a non-neighborhood -disruptive stadium venue." Convenience plays a role, too, with some preferring the wider selections at stores like Uniqlo and Muji available in Hong Kong.

However, a middle-aged foreign couple living in Macau lamented the "lack of competition in Macau [that] leads to monopolies that ruin everything." They were frustrated by the "high prices and limited product selection" in Macau,

which they felt was too focused on "targeting tourists."

While Macau offers local shopping, the consensus seems to be that residents favor the greater variety, quality, competitive pricing, and entertainment options found across the border in Hong Kong and mainland China. There is optimism that improved access to products from these neighboring locations will continue to benefit residents.

'GREED' AND CHALLENGING CONDITIONS FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

Macau's business landscape appears to be fraught with challenges, according to an interview with a resident foreign business owner. The individual, who spoke on condition of anonymity, painted a concerning picture of greed, high costs, and a lack of competitiveness.

"I believe there is a lot of greed in Macau," the business owner said. "As a business owner, I try to have great products and good prices for my clients, but it's not easy."

The interviewee noted that brutally high rents and the burden on salaries make it difficult to operate.

"I believe people's mindsets need to change. We have brutal rent prices, and the burden on salaries is also terrible."

Comparisons to the nearby financial hub of Hong Kong only highlighted Macau's disadvantages.

"We are not Hong Kong. We are only 10% of the Hong Kong market. Businesses cannot survive if they have the expenses of a Hong Kong company but clients of Macau."

The business owner shared anecdotes that underscored the unique challenges faced by local shops. "I wanted a product, and I went to a specialized shop in the city center. The owner told me, 'Oh, that we don't have. Just buy it on Taobao, it's cheap!'"

Even delivery services appear to have an unusual dynamic, with the interviewee describing a recent experience. "Even a few weeks ago, my wife wanted to buy some heavy stuff... the shopkeeper offered to deliver the goods to our door, and to our surprise, they were delivering them the next day."

Perhaps most concerning is the apparent monopoly on fresh products. "The same goes for fresh products, fruits, etc. All in Macau is a monopoly. Absolutely no competition."

The insights provided a sobering look at the difficulties faced by businesses in Macau, emphasizing the need for reforms to address greed, high costs, and lack of competitiveness.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Visual art exhibition "Lusophone Polychromies" opens

NADIA SHAW

THE Visual Art Exhibition of the 4th Cycle of "Lusophone Polychromies" officially opened Oct. 21, showcasing a vibrant array of works from contemporary artists across Brazil, East Timor and Macau. The exhibition is hosted at the Gallery on the Basement Level 1 of the Complex of Commerce and Trade Co-operation Platform for China and Portuguese-speaking Countries in Rua Sul de Entre Lagos, Macau.

The opening ceremony attracted notable figures, including Ji Xianzheng, Secretary-General of the Permanent Secretariat of Forum Macao, and consuls from Angola, Portugal and Mozambique. Artists Maria Madeira from East Timor and Wilson Lam Chi Ian from Macau also attended, adding to the event's cultural richness.

This exhibition is part of the 16th Cultural Week of Chi-

na and Portuguese-speaking Countries. It features striking photography by Brazilian artist Luiz Bhering, who captures the essence of Rio de Janeiro's landscapes and people. Madeira presents her acclaimed works that recently graced the Venice Biennale, while Lam's colorful oil paintings reflect Macau's unique cultural tapestry.

In his remarks, Ji emphasized the significance of this cultural initiative in fostering dialogue and understanding among Sino-Lusophone communities. He noted that these artistic expressions highlight the diverse cultural narratives interwoven in Macau.

The exhibition will be open to the public free of charge from Oct. 21 to Nov. 24, Tuesday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. (closed Mondays). Visitors are encouraged to explore this celebration of art that bridges cultures and promotes creative exchange.

Landmark gazetteer series launches

NADIA SHAW

THE "Macao Gazetteer Series: Book of Geography" was officially launched on Oct. 21, at the University of Macau, marking a significant cultural milestone for the region. This event attracted nearly 100 attendees, including government officials, academics, and cultural advocates, highlighting the project's importance to Macau's heritage and identity.

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng said this gazetteer is the first of its kind completed in Macau since the founding of the People's Republic of China. He described it as "one of the most important cultural projects" in Macau's history and said it underscores respect for national traditions while supporting Macau's development as a hub for cultural exchange.

The Book of Geography consists of two volumes encompassing eight chapters and totaling 1.3 million words across 1,500 pages. It provides



comprehensive insights into various aspects of Macau, including its history, natural environment, demographic changes, urban planning, transportation systems, public utilities, and environmental protection efforts. This extensive resource aims to serve both scholars and residents by documenting Macau's historical development and current status.

Rector Yonghua Song expressed gratitude to all contributors involved in the compilation process and encouraged

feedback to enhance future editions. The launch included a session where committee members shared key contents from the gazetteer, reinforcing its role as a reference for understanding Macau's rich cultural tapestry, the government information bureau stated.

Overall, the "Macao Gazetteer Series: Book of Geography" represents a commitment to preserving Macau's unique identity while fostering a sense of belonging among its residents amidst global influences.

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Speaker: Dr. Mark Lee, Research Director at APIFS

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Tuesday, 6 November 2024

Dr. Mark Lee
Research Director at APIFS

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AP PHOTO



In this screen grab from video released by the Taiwan Coast Guard, a view of a China Coast Guard boat from a Taiwan Coast Guard boat as it passes near the coast of Matsu islands, Taiwan on Monday, Oct. 14

TAIWAN AGAIN REJECTS SOUTH AFRICAN DEMAND TO MOVE OFFICE FROM CAPITAL

TAIWAN has again rejected South Africa's demand to move its representative office in the country from the capital, Pretoria, to the commercial center of Johannesburg.

Taiwan government's spokesperson Jeff Liu said at a news conference yesterday that the demand to move or shut the office entirely violated a 1997 agreement between the sides on the location of their mutual representative offices following the severing of formal diplomatic relations.

"Facing this kind of unreasonable demand, our side cannot grant our acceptance," Liu said.

South Africa maintains a liaison office in Taiwan's capital, Taipei, and the sides have a strong commercial relationship.

China relentlessly seeks to minimize Taiwan's international representation, although the self-governing island republic maintains robust unofficial relations with the U.S. and other major nations.

South Africa confirmed last week that it had asked Taiwan to move its liaison office, in a demand seen purely as a concession to China, which has used its influence to keep Taiwan out of the United Nations and affiliated branches such as the World Health Organization, and limit its formal diplomatic partners to just 11 countries and the Vatican.

In addition to diplomatic and economic pressure, China has stepped up its military threats against Taiwan.

South Africa's demand that Taiwan move its office has also drawn attention in the U.S. Congress, with Tennessee Republican Sen. Marsha Blackburn posting on the social platform X that "the United States should not tolerate this behavior from South Africa." **MDT/AP**

DIRE STRAIT

Mainland holds live-fire drills opposite Taiwan

China is holding live-fire drills off the coast of its southern Fujian province facing Taiwan, just a week after a massive air-and-sea drill it called punishment for Taiwan's leader rejecting Beijing's claims of sovereignty.

The live-fire drills were being held near the Pingtan islands off Fujian province, according to a notice from the Maritime Safety Administration. It warned ships

to avoid the area. It did not offer additional details.

Taiwan's Defense Ministry said China's drills were part of an annual exercise and was tracking them. "It cannot be ruled out that it is one of the ways to expand the deterrent effect in line with the dynamics in the Taiwan Strait," the statement added.

Taiwan is a self-ruled island that that is part of China territory. Tensions around the issue

have flared in recent years. China has increased its presence in the waters and skies around Taiwan. It now increasingly sends large amounts of warplanes and navy vessels in military exercises near Taiwan and its coast guard carries out patrols.

Last week, China held a one-day military exercise aimed at practicing the "sealing off of key ports and key areas." Taiwan counted a record one-day total of

153 aircraft, 14 navy vessels and 12 Chinese government ships.

In response to Chinese moves, the U.S. has continued what it calls "freedom of navigation" transits through the Taiwan Strait. On Sunday, the destroyer USS Higgins and the Canadian frigate HMCS Vancouver transited the narrow band of ocean that separates China and Taiwan.

Germany sent two warships through the Taiwan Strait last

month as it seeks to increase its defense engagement in the Asia-Pacific region.

China has also exerted diplomatic pressure on Taiwan, poaching its allies. South Africa, which does not recognize Taiwan as a country, asked the island last week to move its liaison office outside the capital, Pretoria, as a concession to China, but Taiwan refused to move. **MDT/AP**

SOCIETY

Officials strive for quality elder care as population grows older

LI LEI, CHINA DAILY

AUTHORITIES are stepping up efforts to promote the healthy development of the elder care sector in China, officials said.

Li Yongxin, deputy director of the elder care service department at the Ministry of Civil Affairs, said during a news conference that the number of elderly care facilities in China had surged to around 410,000 by June, with 369,000 of them community-based. This represents a 100 percent increase in elderly care facilities and a 120 percent increase

in community-based ones since 2019.

The expansion and a recent crackdown are part of a broader initiative to address the challenges posed by China's rapidly aging population and fraudulent practices in facilities designed to help seniors.

"The ministry has strengthened its policy framework, diversified care options and enhanced regulatory measures, resulting in significant improvements in elderly care services," Li said.

Li added that legislative efforts are underway to

create a law outlining the responsibilities of elder care service providers, with the goal of better protecting seniors' rights. The move is a response to widespread concerns about financial scams targeting the elderly, including fraudulent schemes disguised as membership fees or unauthorized financial products being offered by some retirement homes.

In 2022, a government crackdown on elder care fraud led to the arrest of 66,000 suspects and the recovery of 30.8 billion yuan (\$4.3 billion) in stolen



An undated photo shows an elderly woman dining at a nursing home in Hangzhou, East China's Zhejiang province

funds. Last year, an additional 33,000 suspects were apprehended.

Along with fraud prevention, authorities are conducting inspections to reduce fire risks, improve building safety and create a more secure environment for seniors. The National Health Commission estimates that 78 percent of China's elderly people have at least one chronic illness, and roughly 40 million se-

niors are disabled or semi-disabled and require intensive care.

Meanwhile, despite the growing number of elder care facilities, China still faces a shortage of caregivers, with only 500,000 currently available to meet the country's needs. To fill the gap, authorities are promoting home-based care that allows seniors to stay in their homes while receiving regular visits from commu-

nity workers and medical professionals.

Since 2021, approximately 350,000 seniors have benefited from home-based care, with 650,000 home visits conducted, according to the ministry.

By the end of 2023, nearly 300 million Chinese citizens were age 60 or older. By 2050, that number is expected to grow to one-third of the population. **MDT/CHINA DAILY**

KOREAS

South warns it can send arms to Ukraine after reports of North's troops in Russia

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea warned yesterday it could consider supplying weapons to Ukraine in response to North Korea allegedly dispatching troops to Russia, as both North Korea and Russia denied the movements.

The South Korean statement is apparently meant to pressure Russia not to bring in North Korean troops in its war against Ukraine. South Korean officials worry that Russia may reward North Korea by giving it sophisticated weapons technologies that can boost the North's nuclear and missile programs that target South Korea.

In an emergency National Security Council meeting, top South Korean officials condemned North Korea's alleged dispatch of troops as "a grave security threat" to South Korea and the international community. They described North Korea as "a criminal group" that forces its youths to serve as Russian mercenaries for an unjustifiable war, the South Korean presidential office said in a statement.

The officials agreed to take phased countermeasures, linking the level of their responses to progress in Russian-North Korean military cooperation, according to the statement.

Possible steps include diplomatic, economic and military options, and South Korea could consider sending both defensive and offensive weapons to Ukraine, a senior South Korean presidential official told repor-



Soldiers march in a parade for the 70th anniversary of North Korea's founding day in Pyongyang, in 2018

ters on condition of anonymity in a background briefing.

The official said North Korea could attempt to get high-tech Russian technologies to perfect its nuclear missiles. The official said Russia's possible help for North Korea's efforts to modernize its outdated conventional weapons systems and acquire a space-based surveillance system would pose a serious security threat to South Korea as well.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, South Korea has joined U.S.-led sanctions against Moscow and shipped humanitarian and financial support to Kyiv. But it has avoided

directly supplying arms to Ukraine in line with its policy of not supplying weapons to countries actively engaged in conflicts.

South Korea's spy agency said last week it had confirmed that North Korea sent 1,500 special operation forces to Russia this month. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said his government had intelligence that 10,000 North Korea soldiers were being prepared to join invading Russian forces.

North Korea and Russia intensify cooperation

North Korea and Russia have been sharply boosting their cooperation in the past two

years. In June, they signed a major defense deal requiring both countries to use all available means to provide immediate military assistance if either is attacked. South Korea said at the time it would consider sending arms to Ukraine, a similar statement that it made YESTERDAY.

South Korea's spy agency said that North Korea had sent more than 13,000 containers of artillery, missiles and other conventional arms to Russia since August 2023 to replenish its dwindling weapons stockpiles.

North Korea and Russia have denied the North Korean troop

deployment as well as the purported weapons transfer.

At a U.N. Security Council meeting Monday, Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia dismissed the South Korean assertion as well as Western allegations of Iran supplying Russia with missiles and China providing arms components. He accused the West of "circulating scaremongering with Iranian, Chinese and Korean bogeymen, each one of which is more absurd than the one before."

At a separate U.N. committee meeting, a North Korean diplomat said his delegation feels no need to comment on the troop dispatch, calling it "groundless, stereotype rumors aimed at smearing the image" of the North and undermining the legitimate cooperation between two sovereign states.

Also yesterday, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called South Korean and Ukraine governments "lunatics" as she slammed them for making "reckless remarks against nuclear weapons states."

The U.S. and NATO haven't confirmed North Korea's troop deployment, but they warned against the danger of such a development if true.

U.S. deputy ambassador to the U.N. Robert Wood said that if true, the North Korean troop dispatch marks "a dangerous and highly concerning development" and noted that the U.S. was "consulting with our allies and partners on such a dramatic move." **MDT/AP**

INDIA

Delhi plans to punish people making hoax bomb threats against flights

THE Indian government plans a new law to punish those making hoax bomb threats against flights, which disrupt the schedules of airlines and cause massive inconvenience to thousands of passengers.

In less than two weeks, more than 120 flights operated by Indian carriers have received bomb threats, the Press Trust of



India news agency reported. Civil Aviation Minister

K Rammohan said yesterday [Macau time] that the government is

planning to introduce legislation that would put offenders on a no-fly list and amend the 1982 Civil Aviation Act so that they can be arrested and investigated without a court order.

Yesterday, IndiGo, a private Indian airline, said nine of its flights destined for Jeddah and Dammam in Saudi Arabia and some flights from

Turkey had received such hoax calls. The flights were diverted to the nearest airports for security checks.

"We worked closely with the relevant authorities and followed standard operating procedures," the airline said in a statement.

The hoaxers have largely gone untraced so far. The Mumbai police said they detained a 17-year-old boy from eastern Chhattisgarh state on Wednesday for allegedly posting bomb threat messages on the social

media of various airlines.

Police officer Maneesh Kalwaniya said the boy's motive was to implicate another person involved in a business dispute with him.

The Press Trust of India said 30 domestic and international flights operated by Indian airlines, including IndiGo, Vistara, and Air India, received bomb threats on Monday night alone.

"Even though bomb threats are hoaxes, things cannot be taken non-seriously," Rammohan said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Britain's King Charles III waves to the crowd beside Queen Camilla during their visit to the Sydney Opera House in Sydney yesterday

AUSTRALIA

King Charles ends first visit by a reigning British monarch in 13 years

ROD MCGUIRK,
MELBOURNE

KING Charles III ends the first visit to Australia by a reigning British monarch in 13 years yesterday as anti-monarchists hope the debate surrounding his journey is a step toward an Australian citizen becoming head of state.

Charles and his wife, Queen Camilla, watched dancers perform at a Sydney Indigenous community center. The couple used tongs to cook sausages at a community barbecue lunch at the central suburb of Parramatta and later shook the hands of well-wishers for the last time during their visit outside the Sydney Opera House. Their final engagement was an inspection of navy ships on Sydney Harbor in an event known as a fleet review.

Charles's trip to Australia was scaled down because he is undergoing cancer treatment. He arrives in Samoa on Wednesday.

Indigenous activist Wayne Wharton, 60, was arrested outside the opera house yesterday afternoon before the royals greeted the crowd.

"It will be alleged the man was acting in an abusive and threatening manner and had failed to comply with two previous move-on directions," a police statement said. He was charged with failing to comply with a police direction and will appear in court on Nov. 5.

Wharton said he intended to serve Charles with a summons

to appear in court on war crimes and for genocide but never got close to the couple.

The royal visit was "a slap in the face to every decent Aboriginal person and fair-minded person in Australia that's tried to make a go of their lives," Wharton told the AP after his arrest.

On Monday, Indigenous independent senator Lidia Thorpe yelled at Charles during a reception that he was not her king and Australia was not his land.

Wharton said he backed Thorpe "absolutely 100%." He had protested with a small group of demonstrators outside a Sydney church service the couple attended on Sunday under a banner "Empire Built on Genocide."

Esther Anatolitis, co-chair of the Australian Republic Movement, which campaigns for an Australian citizen to replace the British monarch as Australia's head of state, said while thousands turned out to see the king and Camilla at their public engagements, the numbers were larger when his mother Queen Elizabeth II first visited Australia 70 years ago.

An estimated 75% of Australia's population saw the queen in person during the first visit by a reigning British monarch in 1954.

"It's understandable that Australians would be welcoming the king and queen, we also welcome them," Anatolitis said. "But it doesn't make any sense to continue to have a head of state appointed by birth right from another country."

Anatolitis acknowledged that getting a majority of Australians in a majority of states to vote to change the constitution would be difficult. Australians haven't changed their constitution since 1977.

Constitutional lawyer Anne Twomey said an Australian republic is not something that Charles, 75, need worry about in his lifetime.

She said the failure of a referendum last year to create an "utterly innocuous" Indigenous representative body to advise government demonstrated the difficulty.

"It's just that on the whole people aren't prepared to change the constitution," Twomey said.

"So a republic, which would be a much more complex constitutional question than the one last year, would be far more vulnerable to a scare campaign and to opposition," she said.

"So unless you had absolutely unanimous support across the board and a strong reason for doing it, it would fail," she added.

Philip Benwell, national chair of the Australian Monarchist League, which wants to maintain Australia's constitutional link to Britain, said he was standing near Thorpe at the Canberra reception when she started yelling at the king and demanding a treaty with Indigenous Australians.

"I think she alienated a lot of sympathy. If anything, she's helped to strengthen our support," Benwell said.

Thorpe has been criticized, including by some Indigenous leaders, for shouting at the king and failing to show respect.

Thorpe was unrepentant. She rejected criticism that her aggressive approach toward the monarch was violent.

"I think what was unacceptable is the violence in that room, of the King of England praising himself, dripping in stolen wealth, that's what's violent," Thorpe told Australian Broadcasting Corp. "The violence is from the colonizer being in that room asserting his authority, being paid for by every taxpayer in this country."

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese wants Australia to become a republic but has ruled out a referendum during his first three-year term. A vote remains a possibility if his center-left Labor Party wins elections due by May next year.

Australians decided in a referendum in 1999 to retain Queen Elizabeth II as head of state. That result is widely regarded as having been the consequence of disagreement about how a president would be chosen rather than majority support for a monarch.

Sydney University royal historian Cindy McCreery suspects Australia is not yet ready to make the change.

"There's interest in becoming a republic, but I think what we may forget is that logistically speaking we're not going to have a referendum on that issue any time soon," McCreery said. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1951 CHURCHILL DENIES 'WARMONGER' CLAIMS

The Conservative leader, Winston Churchill, has wound up his election campaign with a hard-hitting speech in which he vigorously denied accusations of warmongering.



The former prime minister, who is bidding to return to office after six years in opposition, was speaking in Devonport in Plymouth, on the final day of the five week campaign.

Labour has been in power since the end of World War II in 1945. Labour leader Clement Attlee was returned to government in February 1950 - but his administration has been hampered by a strong opposition and splits within his own party.

His decision to go to the polls now in the hope of increasing his majority comes at a time of worsening oil dispute with Persia and Egypt's attempt to regain control of the Suez Canal.

Labour has concentrated its attack on Mr Churchill and the Conservatives saying their return to government would make a third world war more likely.

"Whose finger on the trigger?" has become the slogan for this campaign after the Daily Mirror coined the phrase for a front-page headline.

Mr Churchill firmly rejected the charge of warmonger in today's speech: "This is a cruel and ungrateful accusation. It is the opposite of the truth.

"If I remain in public life at this juncture it is because, rightly or wrongly but sincerely, I believe that I may be able to make an important contribution to the prevention of a third world war, and to bringing nearer that lasting peace settlement which the masses of the people of every race and in every land fervently desire."

Mr Churchill said he had sought to prevent war ever since his speech at Fulton in the United States in March 1946, in which he spoke of an "iron curtain" descending across the continent of Europe and the need to reach agreement through the auspices of the United Nations Organisation.

Mr Churchill went on to attack Mr Attlee and his government's track record.

"Nothing could be worse for our country and nothing could be more injurious to the cause of world peace than for Mr Attlee to be returned dependent upon a sham reconciliation between the main body of the Socialist Party and the powerful and turbulent left-wing forces whom Mr Bevan represents," he said.

Mr Bevan resigned from the government in protest at a decision to raise funds for rearmament by charging for spectacles and dentures, which had previously been free on the NHS - established during his period as minister of health.

He is seen by some on the left wing of the party as a leader in waiting.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Winston Churchill won the election, returning to the post of prime minister for the first time in peacetime at the age of 77.

The Conservatives took 321 seats to Labour's 295. The Liberals had not even been able to put up a candidate in every constituency and consequently lost out to the Conservatives.

However, Labour polled the highest share of the vote, gaining 12,948,605 votes, 200,000 more than Churchill received and higher than any of its landslide victories in 1945, 1966 or 1997.

Mr Churchill was knighted in 1953. He served as prime minister until 1955 when he resigned due to poor health. He returned to the backbenches until his death in 1965.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Take lucrative actions. A push can advance family financial goals over this next month, with the Sun in Scorpio. Collaborate for a common prize.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Romance and friendship flower in conversation. Develop partnership over the next month, with the Sun in Scorpio. Take your relationship to the next level.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Balance work with play. Prioritize health and well-being this month, with the Sun in Scorpio. Feed and nurture your body, mind and spirit.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Enjoy a month-long fun and romance phase. Take action for what you love under the Scorpio Sun. Get creative. Savor a common passion.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Prioritize family this month. The Sun in Scorpio favors domestic renovation projects. Invest efforts into home, family, land and real estate. Nurture your garden.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Network and connect. Get the word out for a cause with heart. Generate communications buzz this month under the Scorpio Sun. Research, discuss and write.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
You're energized to generate positive cash flow. It's easier to make money, with the Sun in Scorpio for a month. Produce valuable results.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Take charge. Update your presentation. Your spotlight shines bright, with the Sun in your sign this month. Pour energy into pursuing a personal dream.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Peaceful settings inspire retrospection, dreaming and envisioning. Organize, plan and prepare, with the Sun in Scorpio. Complete old projects and invent new possibilities.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Connect and collaborate. With the Sun in Scorpio this month, grow through participation with friends, groups and community. Teamwork generates powerful results.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Career opportunities are worth developing. This month under the Scorpio Sun favors advancing your professional agenda. Tackle a job you've been craving. Business booms.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Exploration and adventure call. Enjoy trips, conferences and classes. Expand territory this next month under the Scorpio Sun. Study a subject of your fascination.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	3	18	fine
Changchun	2	8	cloudy
Chengdu	11	21	fine
Chongqing	16	24	cloudy
Fuzhou	21	26	cloudy
Guangzhou	20	28	fine
Guiyang	11	20	fine
Haikou	25	27	cloudy
Hangzhou	14	20	fine
Harbin	0	9	fine
Hefei	7	19	fine
Nanjing	9	18	fine
Shanghai	14	19	fine
Taipei	22	23	rain
Wuhan	9	22	fine
Hong Kong	21	29	fine
WORLD			
Moscow	6	2	rain
Frankfurt	7	16	fine
Paris	8	17	fog
London	9	17	fog
New York	15	26	fine

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Pile; 5- Old Italian money; 9- Some TVs; 13- Tale starter; 14- Overhangs; 15- Literary lioness; 16- Afrikaner; 17- Secret supply; 18- Sleeps briefly; 19- Dated; 21- New beginning?; 22- Church area; 23- Name on a razor; 25- Streetcar; 27- Flying vessel; 31- Come out; 35- Mid-month times; 36- Boxer Oscar ___ Hoya; 38- Designer Simpson; 39- Popular tattoo; 40- Sports area; 42- Thrice, in prescriptions; 43- Beethoven dedicatee; 46- Opponent; 47- Punjabi princess; 48- High regard; 50- Aloft; 52- "Hud" star Patricia; 54- 1963 role for Liz; 55- Cubs slugger Sammy; 58- Balderdash; 60- Effortlessly; 64- Help in a heist; 65- Attempts; 67- Head of France?; 68- Pleasant; 69- Aids; 70- Mother of the Valkyries; 71- Fast fliers; 72- Projecting columns at end of wall; 73- 20th letter of the Hebrew alphabet;

DOWN 1- Vagrant; 2- Hydroxyl compound; 3- Passed with flying colors; 4- Possibly; 5- Back muscle, briefly; 6- Lendl of tennis; 7- Do-over button; 8- On the beach; 9- Gave a new title; 10- Put your hands together; 11- Cairo cobras; 12- Manuscript enc.; 14- Erik of "CHiPs"; 20- City in GA; 24- End of ___; 26- I ___ Rock; 27- Anouk of "La Dolce Vita"; 28- Objects of devotion; 29- Send payment; 30- Actress Verdugo; 32- Pave over; 33- First American to orbit Earth; 34- Creepy; 37- Bit of tomfoolery; 41- Lacking oxygen; 44- Governing bodies; 45- Shoebox letters; 47- Cock; 49- Stewart of home tips; 51- Maude portrayer; 53- Sophia of the screen; 55- Lacking; 56- Kimono ties; 57- Splinter group; 59- Slant; 61- Able was ___; 62- Former Fords; 63- Slangy assent; 66- Ecol. watchdog;



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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AP PHOTO



OVERSEAS CHINESE

ASIAN AMERICAN BOBA BRAND FINDS OPPORTUNITY AFTER SIMU LIU SPARKS CULTURAL APPROPRIATION DEBATE

TERRY TANG, MDT/AP

OLIVIA Chen and Pauline Ang, friends and business partners on boba milk tea brand Twrl, have tried three times to get on “Shark Tank,” the ABC reality show where up-and-coming entrepreneurs try to woo big-name backers.

Now, in a plot twist they couldn't have imagined, the San Francisco Bay Area-based women have a chance to pitch a pretty well-known investor — actor Simu Liu. The irony is that it came about after they posted a video on TikTok in support of Liu calling out the white owners of a boba drink brand for cultural appropriation on “Dragons’ Den,” the Canadian version of “Shark Tank.” Somehow it found its way to Liu and the “Shang-Chi” star invited Twrl to send his team a “pitch deck.”

“I actually wasn't sure it wasn't real, to be honest,” said Chen, who posted the day after seeing “Dragons’ Den” clips. “I decided I wanted to make a video because I wanted to let people know there are other alternatives out there like ourselves.”

This “Dragons’ Den” episode backlash struck a nerve in the ongoing debate on how someone who sells something specific to a culture that isn't their own walks the line between appropriation and appreciation. There is no business manual on exactly how to do it. It also highlighted how

when someone who doesn't have personal ties to a product inextricably linked to a culture profits, it can exacerbate disparities with businesses from marginalized or overlooked groups. The Twrl founders say they hope the initiative they took moves those conversations forward and educates some people along the way.

Liu, who is a guest venture capitalist on this season of “Dragons’ Den,” declined to get into business with the Quebec-based founders of Bobba, which peddles bottled boba drinks, including alcoholic options and packets of popping versions of the chewy pearls made of tapioca starch. The company seemed to imply on the episode that their drink was better than traditional bubble tea and its founders have since apologized.

“I would be uplifting a business that is profiting off of something that feels so dear to my cultural heritage,” Liu said during the Oct. 10 episode. He also pointed out there was nothing on their packaging that acknowledged boba's cultural roots in Taiwan.

BOBA ORIGINS

Boba's origin story actually goes back centuries and can be traced outside of Taiwan, according to July Phun, an assistant professor in Asian American Studies at Cal State LA who curated an exhibit on the beverage's history and impact. The root vegetable cassava, which is used to

make tapioca starch, the main ingredient in boba, started in South America. Colonization led to cassava being exported to African nations, Pacific Islands and parts of Asia.

Later, Taiwan would claim to be the birthplace of the boba drink concept, a sweet concoction of an aromatic tea, milk and boba balls. A cup of boba is distinguished by the chunkier straw necessary for slurping. The first U.S. boba drink shops opened in the 1990s but there's conflicting reports on whether the San Francisco Bay Area or Southern California was the starting point, Phun said. The sweet beverage is also referred to as bubble tea or pearl tea.

Today, boba shops are ubiquitous. Big conglomerates like Starbucks and Jamba Juice have experimented with boba for limited stints. Even then, boba was such a small part of the menu that it wasn't seen as a threat to Asian American boba businesses.

“It shows the folly of these big corporate things that think they can attract us by one thing,” Phun said. “It's not just about authenticity. What I've noticed is the younger generation is they put their money where their values are.”

A COALITION OF FUNDS

Megan Ruan handles entrepreneur and venture capitalist programming as co-general partner of Gold House Ventures — a

fund for startups led by founders of Asian and Pacific Islander descent. Gold House has a coalition of a dozen funds that seeks venture capitalists of underrepresented backgrounds “so that you're increasing the chance that an underrepresented founder is going to be sitting across from someone who might share their background or experience when they're being pitched.”

Chen, who is Taiwanese American, was particularly bothered that it seemed like the founders of Bobba were only into the drink because they looked at data that showed its rising popularity.

“He went into the business because he saw a market opportunity, which I agree with. ... But it didn't come from a place of, ‘I really love boba tea,’” she said. “I

wish there would be an appreciation or a story or an acknowledgment.”

Ruan advised it's always best for entrepreneurs to be direct and authentic.

“The most powerful marketing for consumer products comes from personal stories and the most compelling marketing is usually very personal,” Ruan said. “So, it helps when the founder or the creator of the product has genuine personal experience and can speak from that.”

BORN OUT OF THE PANDEMIC

Nearly four years since Chen and Ang, who is Chinese American, first conceived Twrl during the pandemic, they continue to work with family-run tea farms in Japan and China. Their boba toppings are produced in Taiwan, which the packaging notes. They even collaborate with artists from the Asian diaspora to design their cans. Today Twrl drinks, which include flavors like ube (the purple yam commonly associated with Filipino cuisine) and hojicha (Japanese roasted green tea), are in Sprouts supermarkets nationwide, Whole Foods stores in 10 states and on Amazon.

An investment would go a long way to accelerating their desire to boost distribution, and thus their sales.

Meanwhile, the “Dragons’ Den” episode led to some significant fallout. The Bobba founders apologized last week. The company did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment Monday. Panelist Manjiv Minhas withdrew her million-dollar investment. Liu posted a plea for people to cease harassing and bullying the owners.

Chen agrees that that kind of conduct and negativity isn't worthwhile.

“There are positive outcomes that can come out of this,” Chen said. “These topics come up, but how do we actually have a movement of change? The energy that everyone is focusing on, I would like to recenter that energy and say, ‘Could other founders like myself have an opportunity at the table?’”

AP PHOTO



Twrl co-founders Pauline Ang and Olivia Chen prepare boba

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

RUGBY

Willemse and Mostert back for Springboks' end-of-year European tour

RUGBY World Cup winners Franco Mostert, RG Snyman, Damian Willemse and Andre Esterhuizen returned to South Africa's squad after injuries for the end-of-year European tour.

The quartet missed the recently completed Rugby Championship, which the world champion Springboks won for the first time since 2019.

For Willemse, who has recovered from a shoulder injury, it marks his first call-up to a Boks squad since last year's World Cup final against New Zealand. He has missed all 10 of the team's tests in 2024.

Mostert, a lock who started the World Cup final along with Willemse, was back from a broken leg sustained against Ireland in July to also make a 34-man squad named by coach Rassie Erasmus yesterday.

Prop Steven Kitshoff (neck) and lock Lood de Jager (shoulder) were among those to miss out through injury.

The South Africans will depart on Sunday for a training camp in the Channel Islands ahead of test matches against Scotland in Edinburgh on Nov. 10, England at Twickenham on Nov. 16 and Wales in Cardiff on Nov. 23. **MDT/AP**

RUGBY

League convert Sua'ali'i in Wallabies squad for tour of Britain and Ireland

RUGBY league convert Joseph Sua'ali'i featured in the Australia squad named yesterday for the four-test tour of Britain and Ireland next month.

Beside Sua'ali'i, who has yet to play professional rugby union, the other uncapped players in the 34-man squad were also backs, New South Wales Waratahs flyhalf Tane Edmed and Western Force winger Harry Potter.

Japan-based center Samu Kerevi and France-based lock Will Skelton were also picked after last appearing for the Wallabies in the Rugby World Cup a year ago in France.

The 21-year-old Sua'ali'i signed a reported A\$5.3 million (\$3.5 million) contract with the Australian Rugby Union last year. But he didn't officially switch codes until last week, after helping the Sydney Roosters reach the National Ru-



Samoan's Joseph Sua'ali'i in action during the Rugby League World Cup quarterfinal match between Tonga and Samoa

gby League playoffs for a third straight year.

He's contracted to the 2027 Rugby World Cup in Australia. Sua'ali'i hasn't

played rugby union since 2018 but he's played rugby league to the highest level.

He played for Samoa when it reached its first fi-

nal at the 2022 Rugby League World Cup in England, and appeared in the State of Origin this year.

"Having had him at the (training) hub in Canberra last week, he's a kid who works hard on his game and very quick to pick things up," Wallabies coach Joe Schmidt said on yesterday.

"We just want to make sure that we give him the best runway possible to try and get involved in the Wallabies. Part of it is that we play the (British and Irish) Lions next year so if he doesn't debut on this tour, there's a very little window — maybe one opportunity — to play before the Lions (tour) and that would be it."

"We feel a little bit of pressure to be able to fast-track him."

Sua'ali'i has played center and wing but Schmidt wouldn't say where he will put him.

"I've seen enough of him play as a rugby league player in the midfield and have got really good feedback from others players about him in the schools system," he said.

The Wallabies leave next week on the 40th anniversary of their one and only Grand Slam tour of the home nations.

They'll recreate it with tests against England on Nov. 9, Wales on Nov. 17, Scotland on Nov. 24, and Ireland on Nov. 30. **MDT/AP**

AD

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OPINION

China Daily
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WITH EXPANDED MEMBERSHIP, BRICS' ROLE SET TO BE BOLSTERED AT KAZAN SUMMIT

Countries of the Global South are increasingly looking upon the BRICS grouping as an indispensable international force for global economic development and the building of a more just, equitable world.

This year marks the beginning of greater BRICS cooperation after the expansion of the grouping in 2023. Leaders of the member states of the newly expanded BRICS are expected to draw a blueprint for the future development of this vibrant bloc at their summit in the Russian city of Kazan. On the agenda for their discussions from Tuesday to Thursday are advancing economic globalization and the democratization of international relations, and upholding multilateralism and the spirit of cooperation and unity.

Over the years, BRICS, an acronym for Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, five developing countries with considerable economic potential, has evolved into an influential international cooperation mechanism. With the addition of some new members, the grouping accounts for about 30 percent of the global GDP, 45 percent of the global population and 20 percent of global trade. Together, the expanded BRICS economies have contributed as much as 80 percent of global growth in the past 20 years.

Powered by the three engines of political and security cooperation, economic and financial cooperation, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges, BRICS has become an important means for the Global South to raise its presence in the international arena.

As the largest developing country, China has been a significant promoter and driver of BRICS cooperation over the past 18 years, as evidenced by the New Development Bank, set up by the original BRICS members in 2015 and headquartered in Shanghai.

China and its BRICS partners have also launched projects such as the China-BRICS Science and Innovation Incubation Park for the New Era and the China-BRICS AI Development and Cooperation Center. In the first quarter of this year, China's imports from and exports to BRICS countries increased by more than 11 percent year-on-year.

A steadfast champion of BRICS cooperation, President Xi Jinping has consistently placed BRICS high on China's foreign policy agenda. His attendance at the Kazan summit demonstrates China's confidence in the multilateral cooperation mechanism continuing to play an important role on the world stage. Thanks to concerted efforts of the five original BRICS members, the grouping has made substantial progress and become a beacon shining a guiding light on the path of practical cooperation for developing countries.

To date, more than 30 countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Türkiye and Azerbaijan have either formally applied for or expressed their interest in BRICS membership.

As a pivotal mechanism representing the Global South, the expanded BRICS can play a bigger role in advancing a more just and equitable international order as well as the reform of global governance. Hence, it can be expected that the ongoing BRICS summit will bring to the world more certainty, stability and positive energy and contribute to the building of a better shared future for humanity.

China hopes that the Kazan summit will produce positive outcomes and unleash the strengths of the expanded BRICS, enhancing and upgrading BRICS cooperation and bringing out the strategic significance and political impact of the expanded grouping to help build an international consensus for peace and development. [Abridged]

The Chinese government said Tuesday that it had agreed with the Vatican to extend a provisional agreement on the appointment of Catholic bishops in China for four more years.

The 2018 agreement, extended twice previously, was an attempt under Pope Francis to bridge long-standing differences over control of the church in China. There have been disagreements since, but they have so far not derailed the fragile rapprochement.

"The two sides will maintain contact and dialogue following a constructive spirit and continue to advance the improvement of China-Vatican relations," said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian, who con-

firmed the extension.

Francis has reached out to China during trips to Asia both this year and last year, repeating his desire to visit the country on a flight home from Singapore last month.

The Vatican's relations with China were severed more than seven decades ago when the Communist Party came to power. The country's estimated 12 million Catholics were divided into a state-recognized church and an underground one that stayed loyal to Rome.

The 2018 agreement sought to find a middle ground, although Rome has acknowledged it was a bad deal and the only one it could get.



Family members, second row left to right, Lee Suet Fern, son, (Lee Hsien Yang's wife), Lee Hsien Yang, Lee Hsien Loong, son and current prime minister, Ho Ching (Lee Hsien Loong's wife) and Lee Wei Ling, daughter, of the late Lee Kuan Yew at the state funeral (2015)

SON OF SINGAPORE'S FOUNDER SAYS HE HAS BEEN GRANTED POLITICAL ASYLUM IN THE UK

SYLVIA HUI & ELIEEN NG, LONDON

LEE Hsien Yang, the lestranged brother of former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, said yesterday that he's now a "political refugee" after the U.K. government granted him asylum from what he described as persecution at home.

The Lee brothers are the sons of Lee Kuan Yew, modern Singapore's founding father. They have been engaged in a public spat since 2017 over the late patriarch's family home, and Lee Hsien Yang has accused Singapore's government of persecuting him, his wife and his son.

In a Facebook post, he said that he sought asylum protection in 2022 "as a last resort."

"The Singapore government's attacks against me are in the public record. They prosecuted my son, brought disciplinary proceedings against my wife, and launched a bogus police investigation that has dragged on for years," he wrote. "On the basis of these facts,

the U.K. has determined that I face a well-founded risk of persecution and cannot safely return to Singapore."

"I remain a Singapore citizen and hope that someday it will become safe to return home," he added.

The Guardian published an interview with Lee Hsien Yang yesterday in which he strongly criticized the Singapore government and alleged it facilitated money laundering.

"People need to look beyond Singapore's bold, false assertions and see what the reality really is like," he was quoted as saying. "There is a need for the world to look more closely, to see Singapore's role as that key facilitator for arms trades, for dirty money, for drug monies, crypto money."

The Singapore government said in a statement there was no basis to the allegations in the Guardian's report. The city-state has a "robust system to deter and tackle money laundering and other illicit financial flows, which is consistent with international standards," it said.

"In Singapore, no one is above the law. Anyone, including the offspring of the founding prime minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, can be investigated and brought before the courts," it added.

Lee Hsien Yang and his sister, Lee Wei Ling, who died earlier this month, accuse their eldest brother of abusing his power to stop them from demolishing the family home according to the wishes of their father, who died in 2015 after leading Singapore with an iron grip for more than three decades.

The family feud saw Lee Hsien Yang and his wife entangled in official investigations over allegations that the pair provided false evidence in judicial proceedings regarding Lee Kuan Yew's will.

Lee Hsien Loong stepped down in May after two decades at the helm. He handed power to his deputy, Lawrence Wong, but still holds a Cabinet post as senior minister.

The U.K. Home Office didn't immediately comment when asked about Lee Hsien Yang's asylum status. MDT/AP



United States The FBI is investigating the leak of classified documents on Israel's military plans. The documents, shared on Telegram, yesterday reveal Israel's preparations for potential retaliation against Iran. U.S. officials are uncertain if the documents were leaked or hacked.



Israel U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is visiting Israel to promote cease-fire efforts after the killing of a Hamas leader. Despite ongoing war between Israel, Hamas, and Hezbollah, the U.S. hopes to revive discussions and increase humanitarian aid to Gaza.



Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny's posthumous memoir Patriot reveals his resilience against the Russian government's crackdown. The memoir, published after his death in prison, blends personal reflections with a prison diary, offering insights into his fight against corruption and dictatorship.



Peru's former President Alejandro Toledo (pictured) was sentenced to 20 years and six months in prison in a case involving Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht, which became synonymous with corruption across Latin America, where it paid millions of dollars in bribes to government officials and others.