

AS MACAU CELEBRATES 60 YEARS OF KARTING, A NEW BOOK CAPTURES THE SPORT'S RICH HISTORY IN THE TERRITORY

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MAKE ENDS MEET

Lawmaker Lei Chan U called on the gov't for measures to increase buying power as post-pandemic recovery has not improved purchasing ability P3



AP PHOTO



Japan's parliament yesterday re-elected Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba after significant electoral losses left his coalition without a Lower House majority. Ishiba's renewed Cabinet aims to stabilize governance by collaborating with smaller parties, as economic policies and public dissatisfaction pressure his administration.

AP PHOTO



Australia An emperor penguin, yesterday found malnourished on an Australian beach far from its Antarctic habitat, is receiving rehabilitation. Weighing just 23 kilograms instead of the usual 45 kilograms, the penguin's potential return to Antarctica is under review by wildlife authorities

Australia-Mali Mali's military junta detained three executives from Australia's Resolute Mining, including CEO Terence Holohan, following discussions about an unspecified dispute. The detentions underscore escalating scrutiny of Mali's foreign mining operations, which are critical to the country's economy.

AP PHOTO



Australia A children's book by British chef Jamie Oliver was withdrawn after Indigenous Australian groups criticized it for perpetuating stereotypes. Oliver apologized, saying the book's portrayal of Indigenous culture was unintentional, and the publisher pledged to improve cultural consultations.

SPORTS SECTOR FACING HEADWINDS AS REDUCED FUNDING AFFECTS ATHLETES

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OBITUARY
CASINO TYCOON LUI CHE WOO DIES AT 95

P12



FORMER MACAU CONSUL TO HEAD PORTUGAL'S INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

Prime Minister Luis Montenegro has announced the appointment of Vitor Sereno, a diplomat who previously served as Portugal's Consul in Macau, as the new head of the country's Intelligence Services (SIRP). Sereno, a 53-year-old veteran, will assume the role of Secretary-General of the Information System of the Portuguese Republic, succeeding Graça Mira Gomes, who has held the position since 2017. Sereno's career includes a stint as Portugal's top diplomat in Macau from 2013 to 2018. SIRP, the overarching organization, supervises two distinct intelligence agencies: the Security Intelligence Service (SIS), which focuses on domestic intelligence, and the Defense and Strategic Intelligence Service (SIED), which is responsible for foreign intelligence gathering.

TREE COLLAPSE AT GUIA HILL INJURES WOMAN

A woman suffered head lacerations and lost consciousness after a tree fell on her at Guia Hill's jogging trail. The incident occurred around 3 p.m. when a tree approximately nine meters tall collapsed. The cause of the incident is still under investigation. Staff from the Municipal Affairs Bureau went on-site clearing the fallen tree and to inspect nearby trees later.

MORTGAGE LOANS RISE IN SEPTEMBER

The Monetary Authority of Macao has reported that new approvals for residential mortgage loans (RMLs) and commercial real estate loans (CRELs) both rose in September. New RMLs surged 142.1% month-on-month to MOP3.05 billion, primarily driven by a significant increase in loans to residents. In contrast, the outstanding balance of RMLs fell 1.3%, while CRELs saw a slight increase of 0.1%.

SUPER JUNIOR'S KYUHYUN IN MACAU NEXT YEAR

If you missed Kyuhyun in Hong Kong last year, this is the chance to see the Super Junior member as he prepares to hold concerts in Hong Kong and Macau in 2025 as part of his 'Colours' Asia tour. The shows will also serve as the 10th-anniversary celebration of his album of the same name. The Korean singer-songwriter will also visit other cities in Asia such as Kaohsiung, Bangkok and Manila. Official dates for the Hong Kong and Macau shows are Jan. 25, and Mar. 22, respectively.

LAWMAKER CRITICIZES GOVERNMENT AS DECREASE IN SPORTS FUNDING AFFECTS ATHLETES

VICTORIA CHAN

The sports landscape is facing significant challenges, as government financial support for sports development has declined in recent years, according to lawmaker Ron Lam.

In his written inquiry to the government, Lam noted many sports organizations have expressed frustration over the lack of support for sports development, with some claiming that maintaining normal operations has become increasingly difficult.

Athletes have also raised concerns, pointing out that, aside from the government's "City of Sports" slogan, there is "little evidence of genuine commitment to enhancing the sports sector."

The most glaring issue appears to be a significant reduction in funding. Lam and the sports community have criticized the government for drastically cutting financial support for sports organizations, with a more than 40% reduction in estimated expenditure over the past three years.

Despite the government's claims of consistent sports funding, financial data



paints a different picture. The allocation for the Sports Development Fund dropped from MOP208 million in 2020 to just MOP106 million in 2021, a 49% decrease. Although funding has fluctuated in subsequent years, it has remained lower than pre-2020 levels, with a notable 34.8% decrease in 2023. In comparison, the government allocated around MOP196 million in financial assistance through the fund in 2014.

"This year's estimate has even been reduced by more than 40% compared to three

years ago. What are the reasons for the drastic reduction in sports funding and the budget in recent years?" Lam questioned in his inquiry.

Lam said the funding cuts have taken a toll on the operations of sports organizations.

"Due to limited government resources, Macau athletes have faced temporary disqualifications from representing the region in competitions. Many sports associations have reported that these constraints have led to Macau teams missing out on numerous in-

ternational events in recent years," Lam explained.

"As a result, athletes have not had the opportunity to gain competition experience or earn points, which has contributed to low morale within the sports community. This situation raises concerns about the long-term impact on athlete development and Macau's overall competitiveness in the sporting arena," he added.

As of the end of 2023, Macau has around 2,200 training team athletes, many of whom are unaware of their entitlements, including various allowances and subsidies, according to Lam. Some athletes who meet the criteria for the government's financial assistance programs for elite athletes have reported not receiving the subsidies they are entitled to.

The government's investment in professional athletes, reported at MOP16 million, averages nearly MOP670,000 per athlete. However, the revised criteria for the government's financial assistance programs, "implemented without broad consultation," have led to confusion, not meeting some athletes' expectations.

CE rallies support for National Games

VICTORIA CHAN

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng delivered a speech on the weekend on video at the launch ceremony for the 15th National Games, the 12th National Games for People with Disabilities, and the 9th Special Olympics.

In his remarks, Ho emphasized the government's commitment to ensuring the smooth and successful hosting of these anticipated na-

tional sports events. As the country heads into athletic competition season, the National Games serve as a platform to showcase China's comprehensive strength and promote sports exchanges across regions.

Under the guidance of the State Administration of Sport, Macau has collaborated closely with Guangdong Province and Hong Kong to advance various preparatory tasks through coordinated liaison me-

chanisms. Ho expressed gratitude for the support and assistance provided by the national sports authority, as well as the provincial and Hong Kong governments.

Macau will host four competition events for the 15th National Games, including table tennis, three-person basketball, five-person basketball (men under 18), and volleyball (women's adult group). The region will also host karate mass events, as

well as two badminton competitions for the Paralympic Special Olympics.

Macau's Organizing Committee for the Games is currently undertaking an extended arrangement of preparatory work, spanning infrastructure, competition logistics, reception arrangements, and transportation. Ho expressed confidence that these meticulous efforts will culminate in a successful and memorable

sports event.

In closing, the Chief Executive offered his sincere hope that the 15th National Games, the 12th National Games for People with Disabilities, and the 9th Special Olympics would each triumph.

A countdown timer labeled "Countdown to the 1st Anniversary of the 10th National Games and Paralympic Games" has been installed at Leal Senado yesterday.

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AL PLENARY

Lei Chan U: Measures to improve purchasing power needed

RENATO MARQUES

LAWMAKER Lei Chan U has called on the government to introduce measures aimed at improving the purchasing power of the population.

In a verbal inquiry delivered at the Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday afternoon, before the start of the agenda, Lei highlighted that although Macau's economy and tourism sector have been recovering satisfactorily almost two years after the post-pandemic period, this recovery has not translated into improved purchasing power for the people.

"In the first half of this year, GDP reached 204.27 billion patacas, recovering 86.2% of the 2019 level. Employment has continued to improve, and according to the third-quarter (Q3) survey, the general unemployment rate was 1.7%, while the unemployment



rate for residents was 2.3%—both lower than the pre-pandemic levels.

Additionally, the median monthly income for employed residents was 20,500 patacas, 2.5% higher than the 20,000 patacas recorded in the same period of

2019," Lei explained. "However, this does not mean that the employment situation has fully recovered. Between January and September this year, visitor numbers reached 25.92 million—85.8% of the level seen in 2019. Yet, visitor spending remained cautious,

while resident consumption increased, which led to an uneven recovery across various sectors in Macau."

Lei further pointed out that the median monthly income in several sectors had yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. He provided

several examples: "For instance, in Q3 this year, the median monthly income in the electricity, gas, and water sectors was 20,500 patacas, only 82% of the 25,000 patacas recorded in the same period of 2019. The median monthly income in the restaurant sector was 12,000 patacas, lower than the 13,000 patacas in 2019. Even in sectors where the median income has remained the same or even slightly higher than in 2019, many residents' real purchasing power has decreased, especially when accounting for inflation over the past five years."

The lawmaker also noted that the starting salaries of new workers in some sectors have fallen compared to pre-pandemic levels, further indicating that residents' incomes still need improvement.

Lei emphasized that labor income remains the primary or sole source of income for the majority of residents. "Therefore, fair distribution of income is essential for the effective protection of workers' rights and interests," he said.

He concluded by suggesting the government closely monitor residents' income levels and, if necessary, begin relevant studies to establish a fair and impartial income distribution system.

LABOR

Dismissal compensation salary cap set to increase to MOP21,500

RENATO MARQUES

A bill to raise the maximum compensation for dismissal without just cause was passed yesterday at the Legislative Assembly, with all lawmakers voting in favor.

The bill proposes increasing the compensation ceiling from 20,000 patacas to 20,500 patacas. While the proposal received unanimous support, some lawmakers felt it was too modest and long overdue.

Among the less satisfied was Ella Lei, a directly elected lawmaker who represents workers' interests. Lei acknowledged the increase of 500 patacas was a step forward but argued



the entire framework governing dismissal and compensation is outdated and no longer reflects the realities of modern society.

She also criticized what she referred to as a "false review mechanism," noting that while the law requires regular evaluations and updates of labor standards

every two years, the government often opts to simply maintain previous standards, making updates only every four, six or even more years.

Lei also expressed concerns the current bill only addresses the maximum compensation amount and does not consider other important

provisions, such as the number of months used to calculate compensation or other relevant factors.

In general, lawmakers noted the existing laws remain heavily tilted in favor of employers, a situation that undermines social harmony and hinders meaningful negotiations.



COMMERCIAL PROPERTY REBOUNDS AMID RATE CUTS

LYNZY VALLES

THE climate for commercial and industrial properties has significantly improved in recent months, according to realtor Centaline.

Last month, commercial and industrial shop transactions rose significantly, with many corporate users taking up low-priced properties, with shop spaces performing most prominently.

Centaline estimated that there was around 40 transactions in October, representing a significant increase of around 186% over the same period last year.

The rebound came after the U.S. Federal Reserve's recent interest rate cut and the Central Government's initiatives to revitalize the market.

The start of the interest rate reduction cycle has effectively lowered the threshold for entry into the market, coupled with the fact that the prices of industrial and commercial properties

have fallen back to attractive levels.

"The number of industrial and commercial shop visits has increased significantly in recent months, and some people who did not plan to enter the market in the past have also begun to pay attention to the market," Centaline reported.

The rental yield for commercial shops is currently between 3.3% and 3.8%, reflecting a robust leasing market.

In October alone, six transactions were recorded with monthly rents exceeding MOP100,000, primarily along Praia Grande and the street along Ruins of St. Paul.

This heightened demand has led to some properties being quickly leased by multiple tenants and brands, with final rental prices often surpassing landlords' expectations.

However, Centaline observed that, as transaction volumes increase, landlords are finding themselves with diminished negotiating power.



NEW BOOK EXPLORES EVOLUTION OF KARTING IN MACAU

VICTORIA CHAN

AS Macau celebrates 60 years of karting, a new book captures the sport's rich history in the territory.

"History of Karting in Macau," published by Praiagrande Edições and sponsored by Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG), was launched yesterday

at an event featuring the book's authors and renowned car racers.

The book, written by Carlos Barreto and Pedro Dá Mesquita, aims to promote Macau's racing culture and reinforce local sports development.

"We intend to tell the story of karting in Macau from its humble beginnings to nowadays,

and knowing that in the last three decades the development of karting has been tremendous in terms of infrastructure, technology, safety and communication," said Barreto.

This trilingual edition (Chinese, Portuguese, and English) is the result of research that began in 2008 of "old documents, stories and pictures" collected

among drivers and sports officials, "from (the sports) humble origins to the present day, through decades of tremendous changes in infrastructure, technology, security and communications."

Co-author Pedro da Mesquita expressed his enthusiasm for the project, saying, "When Carlos Barreto invited me to write

a book about Macau's karting history, I didn't have any idea about it. And I really was impressed."

"It was a surprise after surprise. And I wanted to share it with you because it's really interesting. What I hope, sincerely, is the joy that I have had in writing it, and the revelation of a lot of stories that nobody knows, will continue when you read it," he added.

The first kart race in Macau took place in 1965.

Over the years, the territory's karting circuit has hosted important names in the sport, such as current three-time Formula One World Champion Max Verstappen, while local drivers such as André Couto and Charles Leong Hong Chio, winners of the Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix in 2000 and the Formula 4 Macau Grand Prix in 2020 and 2021 respectively, have also started successful careers in motorsport here.

Meanwhile, the event also featured a sharing session with the authors and renowned car racers.

The "History of Karting in Macau" will be available for sale at the Portuguese Bookshop and other outlets, including the Grand Prix Museum store.

The book has 276 pages, 33 of which contain images illustrating the evolution of the sport in Macau over the last 60 years.

TOURISM

Visitor numbers exceed gov't expectations as arrivals reach 30 million

STAFF REPORTER

VISITOR arrivals have exceeded 30 million this year, surpassing last year's total of 28.25 million. The average daily visitor count has reached around 95,000, reflecting a significant year-on-year increase of 27% and recovering to approximately 87% of the pre-pandemic levels seen in 2019, according to the Public Security Police (PSP).

The data also shows that the figures are at 90% of this year's target.

Mainland visitors make up the majority, accounting for 70% of total arrivals and showing a robust year-on-year growth of 33%. In comparison, visitors from Hong Kong represent 21%, with a slight increase of 0.5%. Visitors from Taiwan have surged 73%, making



up 2% of arrivals, while other international visitors constitute 7%, reflecting an impressive year-on-year increase of 83%.

In terms of entry points, the Border Gate saw 39% of these arrivals, followed by the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge at 25%, Hengqin Port at 12%, and the airport at 9%.

PSP noted a steady rise in inbound travelers this

year, supported by efficient customs clearance processes across various control points.

With several major events planned for November, including the highly anticipated Grand Prix, authorities expect high clearance throughput throughout the month. The Grand Prix is projected to attract over 400,000 visitors, with hotel occupancy rates likely to

exceed 90%.

This forecast aligns closely with visitor numbers from the second weekend of last year's Prix.

Maria Helena de Sena Fernandes, director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), expressed confidence in a significant influx of visitors during the Grand Prix.

Various local associations are organizing themed activities to enhance the event's appeal, while the six gaming operators are collaborating with the Grand Prix Museum to promote racing culture in Macau.

Ticket sales for the Grand Prix have been strong, with most tickets nearly sold out; however, between 200 and 300 tickets will be reserved each day for same-day sales to accommodate last-minute attendees.

WEATHER

SMG TO ISSUE T1 FOR TYPHOON TORAJI

TROPICAL cyclone Toraji, currently near Luzon in the Philippines, is expected to approach within 800 kilometers of Macau early today.

The Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) plans to issue Typhoon Signal No. 1. According to the latest forecast, Toraji may pass approximately 200 kilometers from Macau later this week. However, uncertainties remain regarding its exact track and intensity.

As the northeast monsoon combines with the cyclone's effects, winds in Macau are projected to strengthen, bringing increased rainfall starting midweek. The Philippine government has taken significant precautions in response

to Toraji.

Authorities ordered the evacuation of residents from 2,500 villages as the typhoon made landfall yesterday, following three major storms that had already caused widespread devastation in the region.

Rescuers reported that around 7,000 people were moved from coastal areas, as well as from flood-prone and landslide-prone regions in Aurora and Isabela, the first two provinces to be struck before Toraji plowed inland to the mountainous interior of Luzon.

With maximum sustained winds of around 130 kilometers per hour, Toraji is expected to weaken as it moves northwest across Luzon and into the South China Sea. LV

RETAIL

The Singles' Day shopping festival loses its shine under China's lagging economy

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

MERCHANTS and consumers alike found the Singles' Day shopping festival yesterday less shiny than in years past as e-commerce firms look abroad for growth.

The annual event named by the numeric form of its Nov. 11 date was started by e-commerce platform Alibaba, which offered attractive discounts to entice shoppers to spend big. The extravaganza has since expanded to other platforms like JD.com and Pinduoduo in China as well as abroad.

While Singles' Day was previously a one-day event, shopping platforms in China now kickstart the festival weeks ahead to drum up sales volume. The festival has also traditionally been regarded as a barometer of consumer sentiment.

But amid China's lagging domestic economy, dragged down by a real estate crisis and deflationary pressures, consumers no longer go all out on purchases during the shopping extravaganza.

"I only spent a few hundred yuan on daily necessities," said Wang Haihua, who owns a fitness center in Beijing.

Wang said that the prices offered on e-commerce platforms during Singles' Day are not necessarily cheaper than usual.

"They're all tricks and we've seen through it over the years," she said.

Zhang Jiewei, a 34-year-old who runs a barber shop in Xi'an



city, echoed Wang's sentiments, saying that he no longer trust Singles' Day promotions as some merchant tend to raise the usual price of a product before offering a discount, giving consumers the illusion they are getting a deal.

"I used to buy a lot two or three years ago and I even purchased a mobile phone (during Singles' Day)," he said.

"I stopped doing that following the pandemic because of less income. I am not going to buy anything this year," Zhang added.

Some experts say that Beijing's recent stimulus measures have had little impact to boost consumer confidence.

"People are not interested in spending and are cutting back

on big-ticket items," said Shaun Rein, founder and managing director of China Market Research Group in Shanghai. "Since October 2022, the weak economy means that everything has been on discount year-round, 11.11 is not going to bring in more discounts that the month before."

Rein said he expects low growth for the Singles' Day shopping festival as consumers tighten their spending in anticipation of difficult economic times ahead.

Categories such as sportswear and fitness, however, have been doing well as customers "trade down a Gucci bag for Lululemon sportswear," he said.

Platforms like JD.com and Alibaba, which operates e-commerce platforms Taobao and Tmall, previously used to pu-

blish the value of transactions made during the festival, but have since stopped revealing the total figure. While yearly growth used to be in the double digits, estimates of recent figures have dwindled to low single-digit growth.

Syntun, a data provider, estimated that last year's gross merchandising volume sales across major e-commerce platforms grew just 2% to 1.14 trillion yuan (\$156.40 billion), a far cry from double-digit growth before COVID-19.

Merchants who typically take part in the Singles' Day shopping festivals say the costs of participation no longer pay off, amid high advertising fees and unsatisfactory sales.

Zhao Gao, who owns a gar-

ment factory in eastern Zhejiang province, said that after paying advertising costs to e-commerce platforms he would only break even after sales.

"The platforms have so many rules for promotions and customers have become more skeptical," he said. "As a merchant, I no longer participate in the Singles' Day promotions."

Another merchant, Du Baonian who runs a food company processing mutton in Inner Mongolia, said that overall sales in the past year have fallen 15% as consumers downgraded and reduced consumption.

Du said that while he still takes part in the Singles' Day promotions, the higher expenses do not typically generate returns because of sluggish sales.

"We are seeing shrinking revenue, but advertisement on the platform can help us to maintain our leading sales position," he said, adding that he was considering advertising on more e-commerce platforms to target more consumers.

Meanwhile, e-commerce platforms grappling with a slowing domestic market have also turned to overseas markets to seek new growth, offering promotions like global free shipping and allowing merchants to sell globally with ease.

Alibaba, for example, said in a blog post on its Alizila site that some 70,000 merchants saw sales double with global free shipping. In markets like Singapore and Hong Kong, new customers also doubled, Alibaba said.

MDT/AP

CORPORATE BITS

Discover Zi Yat Heen's hidden recipes at Four Seasons Hotel Macau



Four Seasons Hotel Macau is inviting its guests to embark on an extraordinary culinary adventure through its "Hidden Recipes" dining promotion.

The experience spans 13

acclaimed Chinese restaurants in the region and aims to reveal the secrets of Chinese cuisine.

Renowned for his mastery of Cantonese cooking, executive chef Anthony Ho

will present his beloved classic recipes at Zi Yat Heen, the award-winning Chinese restaurant at Four Seasons Hotel Macau, from Nov. 9 to Dec. 8, inviting guests to explore rich flavors and artistry inspired by his life.

As a classicist in Cantonese cuisine, Chef Ho elegantly blends traditional techniques with modern presentation in his secret recipes. His sautéed Kagoshima A5 wagyu beef cubes with boletus mushroom and black pepper sauce is an exemplary dish.

Drawing inspiration from Thai flavors and spices, he created a Thai-style braised Sri Lankan crab with white pepper, a classic that balances rich flavors with a variety of textures.

Lord Stow's Bakery raises funds for breast cancer



Lord Stow's Bakery has raised HKD45,728 during its annual Breast Cancer Awareness Month campaign last month.

The funds were generated through the sale of pink

ribbon cookies and rose coffee, with 50% of the proceeds donated to the Hong Kong Breast Cancer Foundation.

Audrey Stow, director and chief executive of

Lord Stow's Bakery, emphasized the importance of early detection in a statement.

"The event reminds everyone to conduct regular checkups at home and to schedule annual screenings," she said. With a survival rate of 97.5% for early-stage breast cancer, Stow highlighted the critical nature of awareness and early intervention.

The bakery and cafes have raised HKD164,803 for breast cancer initiatives.

Last year alone, the bakery's fundraising contributed HKD38,166 to the foundation.

DEFENSE

Research reveals China has built prototype nuclear reactor to power aircraft carrier

DAVID RISING & DIDI TANG,
BANGKOK

CHINA has built a land-based prototype nuclear reactor for a large surface warship, in the clearest sign yet Beijing is advancing toward producing the country's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, according to a new analysis of satellite imagery and Chinese government documents provided to The Associated Press.

There have long been rumors that China is planning to build a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, but the research by the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in California is the first to confirm it is working on a nuclear-powered propulsion system for a carrier-sized surface warship.

Why is China's pursuit of nuclear-powered carriers significant?

China's navy is already the world's largest numerically, and it has been rapidly modernizing. Adding nuclear-powered carriers to its fleet would be a major step in realizing its ambitions for a true "blue-water" force capable of operating around the globe in a growing challenge to the United States.

Nuclear carriers take longer to build than conventional carriers, but once in operation they



XINHUA

Conventionally powered Chinese aircraft carrier Liaoning carries out a dual aircraft carrier formation exercise with the Shandong aircraft carrier, unseen, for the first time in the South China Sea in late October

are able to stay at sea for much longer because they do not need to refuel, and there is more room on board for fuel and weapons for aircraft, thus extending their capabilities. They are also able to produce more power to run advanced systems.

Right now, only the United States and France have nuclear-powered carriers. The U.S. has 11 in total, which allows it to keep multiple strike groups deployed around the world at all times, including in the Indo-Pacific.

China currently has three carriers, including the new Type 003

Fujian, which was the first both designed and built by China. It has said work is already underway on a fourth, but it has not announced whether that will be nuclear or conventionally powered.

The modernization aligns with China's "growing emphasis on the maritime domain and increasing demands" for its navy "to operate at greater distances from mainland China," the U.S. Defense Department said in its most recent report to Congress on China's military.

How did researchers conclude

China has built a prototype reactor for a carrier?

Middlebury researchers were initially investigating a mountain site outside the city of Leshan in the southwest Chinese province of Sichuan over suspicions that China was building a reactor to produce plutonium or tritium for weapons. Instead they said they determined that China was building a prototype reactor for a large warship.

The conclusion was based upon a wide variety of sources, including satellite images, project tenders, personnel files, and

environmental impact studies.

The reactor is housed in a new facility built at the site known as Base 909, which is under the control of the Nuclear Power Institute of China.

Documents indicating that China's 701 Institute, which is responsible for aircraft carrier development, procured reactor equipment "intended for installation on a large surface warship," as well as the project's "national defense designation" helped lead to the conclusion the sizeable reactor is a prototype for a next-generation aircraft carrier.

What does China say?

Chinese President Xi Jinping has tasked defense officials with building a "first-class" navy and becoming a maritime power as part of his blueprint for the country's great rejuvenation.

The country's most recent white paper on national defense, dated 2019, said the Chinese navy was adjusting to strategic requirements by "speeding up the transition of its tasks from defense on the near seas to protection missions on the far seas."

Sea trials hadn't even started for the new Fujian aircraft carrier in March when Yuan Huazhi, political commissar for China's People's Liberation Army Navy, confirmed the construction of a fourth carrier. Asked if it would be nuclear-powered, he said at the time that would "soon be announced," but so far it has not been.

Neither China's Defense Ministry nor Foreign Affairs Ministry responded to requests for comment.

Even if the carrier that has been started will likely be another conventionally-powered Type 003 ship, experts say Chinese shipyards have the capability to work on more than one carrier at a time, and that they could produce a new nuclear-powered vessel concurrently. **MDT/AP**

DEMOGRAPHICS

Broad-based system needed to boost fertility

CHINA'S health minister has highlighted the establishment of a child-birth subsidy system, the expansion of childcare services and ensuring the implementation of maternity leave as key steps to building a birth-friendly society and tackling China's demographic challenges.

The nation's total fertility rate — the average number of babies born to each woman of reproductive age — fell to around 1 last year, and a low fertility trend has persisted for over three decades, said Lei Haichao, minister of

the National Health Commission, in an article released by the commission on Thursday.

The rate in China fell below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman in the early 1990s. It registered a small rebound to 1.75 in 2016 following a policy change that allowed all couples to have up to two children, but then fell again rapidly.

Declining fertility is regarded as a crucial factor that drove a historic fall in China's total population in 2022. The decrease continued to the next year



CHINA DAILY

Medical staff at the People's Hospital of Yuping county, Tongren city, Guizhou province, care for newborns on Jan 2, 2024

as the nation's total population fell by 2.08 million year-on-year in 2023.

Lei added that last year, the proportion of children age 14 and under accounted for only 16.4 percent

of the population, lower than the global average of 25 percent. The ratio of elderly — defined as those age 60 and above — rose to 21.1 percent, proof that China has become a mo-

derately aging society.

"There is an urgent need to improve fertility-supportive policy systems to adjust to new trends in demographic development," he said.

The minister said that the central and local governments had dedicated great efforts to tackling demographic challenges in the past decade, such as adjusting family planning policies, strengthening population surveys and launching a string of supportive measures ranging from tax exemptions and maternity subsidies to lea-

ve benefits.

He called for a strong sense of urgency to accelerate the formulation of a fertility-supportive policy system that can cover all aspects and be carried out fully.

As varying levels of cash incentives have already been introduced by local governments, Lei said efforts will be made to integrate them and formulate a wide-ranging, basic system aimed at subsidizing childcare.

Families with multiple children will also be given favorable policies in renting or purchasing homes, while medical insurance coverage and tax deductions will be guaranteed, he said. **MDT/CHINA DAILY**

PHILIPPINES

Storm-weary country forcibly evacuates thousands as another typhoon hits

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

A new typhoon barreled across an agricultural region in the northeastern Philippines yesterday after thousands were evacuated to safety while still struggling to recover from the devastation caused by three successive storms in the last three weeks.

Typhoon Toraji slammed into northeastern Aurora province and was forecast to blow over the mountainous Luzon region, where President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. — just the day before — inspected the damage from the last storm and led the distribution of food packs to residents in Cagayan and Ilocos provinces. Marcos skipped this week's Asia-Pacific Cooperation forum in Peru to oversee recovery efforts from back-to-back storms.

After making landfall in Aurora yesterday morning with sustained winds of up to 130 kilometers (81 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 180 kph (112 mph), the typhoon was expected to barrel northwestward across Luzon, weaken as it crosses a mountain range and then blow into the South China Sea.



A boy tries to sleep in his flooded house after Typhoon Yinxing blew past Cagayan province

Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla on Sunday ordered the forcible evacuation of people in 2,500 villages expected to be lashed by Toraji, locally named Nika, warning that the rain-soaked Luzon mountains, valleys and plains were more susceptible to flash floods and landslides. With the typhoon approaching fast, there was little time to move large numbers of people to safety, he said.

"We understand if some would want to stay, but we have to get them out," Remulla told reporters.

The military said its disaster-response forces have been deployed near high-risk areas and were standing by for new contingencies. It added that it suspended combat drills in the north due to the weather.

"Our commitment remains steadfast in safeguarding and as-

sisting our countrymen specially in times of disaster," Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson Col. Francel Margareth Padilla said.

Schools were shut down, inter-island ferry services and domestic flights were suspended in provinces in or near the path of the typhoon, the 14th weather disturbance to batter the Philippine archipelago this year. Forecasters

said they were monitoring another brewing storm in the Pacific that could affect the country if it strengthens.

The last two typhoons and a tropical storm caused more than 160 deaths, damaged thousands of houses and farmlands and affected more than 9 million people, including hundreds of thousands who fled to emergency shelters, after dumping from one to two months' worth of rain in just 24 hours in some cities and towns.

Overwhelmed, the Philippines received help from Southeast Asian countries led by Singapore, along with longtime treaty ally the United States, to transport food, water and other aid to hard-hit northern provinces.

The Philippine archipelago is often battered by typhoons and earthquakes and has more than a dozen active volcanoes, making it one of the most natural disaster-prone countries in the world.

In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, one of the strongest recorded tropical cyclones, left more than 7,300 people dead or missing, flattened entire villages and caused ships to run aground and smash into houses in the central Philippines. **MDT/AP**

PAKISTAN

Authorities suspend railway services in the country's southwest after deadly train station bombing

PAKISTAN'S railways suspended all train services yesterday to and from a restive southwestern province where a suicide bombing at a train station over the weekend killed 26 people, including soldiers and railway staff.

The train services would be suspended for four days for security reasons, according to a statement from Pakistan Railways.

The attack, claimed by the separatist Baloch Liberation Army struck the station in the city of Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province, on Saturday. At least 62 people were also wounded in the bombing, officials said.

The provincial government also declared a three-day mourning period in solidarity with the families



Security officials examine the site of a bomb explosion at railway station in Quetta

of the victims and said that security has been stepped up and vowed to hit back "with full force" against the separatists, according to Sarfraz Bugti, the province's chief minister.

Bugti spoke after meeting with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, who traveled to Quetta on Sunday to be briefed about the situa-

tion. Naqvi's office said in a statement that authorities would "take decisive steps to crush the terrorists" and support the local Balochistan government in dealing with the "scourge of terrorism."

Train services are a major part of Balochistan's economy — hundreds of people travel to and from

Quetta to other parts of the country every day. Trains also transport food and other items.

Saturday's attack took place when about 100 passengers were waiting for a train to leave the Quetta station for the garrison city of Rawalpindi, police had said. In its claim of responsibility, the separatist BLA

said it targeted Pakistani troops.

The attack was the deadliest since August, when separatists killed more than 50 people in multiple coordinated attacks on passengers buses, police and security forces across Balochistan.

The oil- and mineral-rich Balochistan is Pakistan's largest but also least populated province. It is a hub for the country's ethnic Baloch minority whose members say they face discrimination and exploitation by the central government.

Balochistan has for years been the scene of a long-running insurgency, with several separatist groups staging attacks, targeting mainly security forces in their quest for independence. The province also

has an array of militant groups that are active there.

The separatists also target Chinese nationals working in Pakistan as part of Beijing's multibillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative, an initiative that has built power plants, roads, railroads and ports around the world and is a major part of China's push to play a larger role in global affairs

Last month, a suicide bomber dispatched by BLA targeted a convoy with Chinese nationals outside the country's largest airport in the port city of Karachi, killing two Chinese workers and wounding eight people. Authorities claim they have arrested the mastermind of that attack in a raid in Balochistan. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Hurricane Dorian aftermath in Bahamas (2019)

ANALYSIS

UN climate talks to focus on money to help poor nations cut carbon pollution

SETH BORENSTEIN, BAKU

A complex international two-week-long game of climate change poker is convening. The stakes? Just the fate of an ever-warming world.

Curbing and coping with climate change's worsening heat, floods, droughts and storms will cost trillions of dollars and poor nations just don't have it, numerous reports and experts calculate. As United Nations climate negotiations started yesterday in Baku, Azerbaijan, the chief issue is who must ante up to help poor nations and especially how much.

The numbers are enormous. The floor in negotiations is the \$100 billion a year that poor nations — based on a categorization made in the 1990s — now get as part of a 2009 agreement that was barely met. Several experts and poorer nations say the need is \$1 trillion a year or more.

"It's a game with high stakes," said Climate Analytics CEO Bill Hare, a physicist. "Right now the fate of the planet depends very much on what we're able to pull off in the next five or 10 years."

But this year's talks, known as COP29, won't be as high-profile as last year's, with 48 fewer heads of state scheduled to speak. The leaders of the top two carbon polluting countries — China and the United States — will be absent. But if money negotiations fail in Baku, it will handicap 2025's make-or-break climate negotiations, experts say.

Not only is dealing with mo-

ney always a touchy subject, but two of the rich countries that are expected to donate money to poor nations — the United States and Germany — are in the midst of dramatic government changes. Even though the United States delegation will be from Biden Administration, the reelection of Donald Trump, who downplays climate change and dislikes foreign aid, makes U.S. pledges unlikely to be fulfilled.

The overarching issue is climate finance. Without it, experts say the world can't get a handle on fighting warming, nor can most of the nations achieve their current carbon pollution-cutting goals or the new ones they will submit next year.

"If we don't solve the finance problem, then definitely we will not solve the climate problem," said former Colombian deputy climate minister Pablo Vieira, who heads the support unit at NDC Partnership, which helps nations with emissions-cutting goals.

Nations can't cut carbon pollution if they can't afford to eliminate coal, oil and gas, Vieira and several other experts said. Poor nations are frustrated that they are being told to do more to fight climate change when they cannot afford it, he said. And the 47 poorest nations only created 4% of the heat-trapping gases in the air, according to the U.N.

About 77% of the heat-trapping gas in the atmosphere now comes from the G20 rich nations, many of whom are now cutting back on their pollution, something that is

not happening in most poor nations or China.

"The countries that are rich today have become rich by polluting the Earth," said Ani Dasgupta, president of World Resources Institute.

The money being discussed is for three things: Helping poor nations switch from dirty fossil fuels to clean energy; helping them adapt to the impacts of a warming world such as sea level rise and worsening storms; and compensating vulnerable poor nations for climate change damage.

"Should the global community fail to reach a (finance) goal, this is really just signing the death warrant of many developing countries," said Chukwumerije Okereke, director of the Center for Climate Change and Development in Nigeria.

Michael Wilkins, a business professor who heads Imperial College's Centre for Climate Finance and Investment in the U.K., said since 2022 total climate finance has been nearly \$1.5 trillion. But only 3% of that is actually geared toward the least developed countries, he said.

"The Global South has been repeatedly let down by unmet pledges and commitments," said Sunita Narain, director general of New Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment.

"Finance is really the key component that compels all types of climate action," said Bahamian climate scientist Adelle Thomas, adaptation director at the Natural Resources Defense Council. "Without

that finance, there's simply not much that developing countries in particular can do."

It's an issue of both self-interest and justice, Thomas and others said. It's not charity to help poor nations decarbonize because rich nations benefit when all countries cut emissions. After all, a warming world hurts everyone.

Compensating for climate damage and helping nations prepare for future harm is a matter of justice, Thomas said. Even though they didn't create the problem, poor nations — especially small island nations — are particularly vulnerable to climate change's rising seas and extreme weather. Thomas mentioned how 2019's Hurricane Dorian smacked her grandparents home and "the only thing left standing was one toilet."

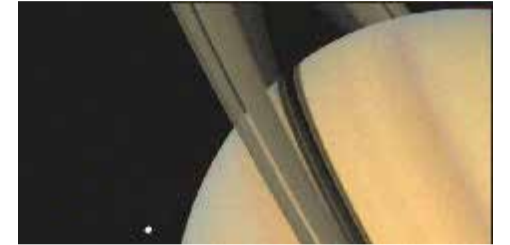
The trillion-dollar figure on the table is about half of what the world spends annually on the military. Others say global fossil fuel subsidies could be redirected to climate finance; estimates of those subsidies range from the International Energy Agency's \$616 billion a year to the International Monetary Fund's \$7 trillion a year.

"When we need more for other things, including conflict, we seem to find it," United Nations Environment Programme Executive Director Inger Andersen said. "Well, this is probably the largest conflict of all."

A U.N. climate finance committee report looked at the need from 98 countries and estimated it as ranging from \$455 billion to \$584 billion per year. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1980 SATURN'S RINGS CAUGHT ON FILM



The Voyager 1 space probe has reached the ringed planet, Saturn and sent back the first vivid photographs of the planet.

Scientists have been delighted and overwhelmed by the stream of data that has flooded back from the planet 950 million miles (1530 million km) away from Earth.

Voyager 1, launched in 1977, passed within 77,000 miles (124,000 km) of the clouds which surround Saturn. It was just 12 miles (19 km) off course after its epic journey.

The photographs show bands of yellow and orange clouds circling the planet at several hundred miles an hour.

The probe took a close look at the spectacular rings which surround Saturn, and discovered them to be more complex than Earth-based telescopes had suggested.

Scientists have counted more than 100 separate rings, instead of the six broad bands visible from Earth.

Dr Bradford Smith, leader of the Voyager photo-interpretation team, said: "The mystery of the rings, the structure and the mechanism that governs the structure, keeps getting deeper and deeper."

Voyager has already sent back data leading to some ground-breaking discoveries, including a 15th moon and a scan of Titan, the largest of Saturn's moons.

It is the only moon in the Solar System big enough to hold on to an atmosphere, mainly because of its size - it is bigger than the planet Mercury.

Scientists say Titan bears a close chemical resemblance to the Earth when life began on our planet about 4,000 million years ago.

Tomorrow Voyager will continue past Saturn, visiting several of the smaller moons on the way.

Voyager 1, along with its sister craft, Voyager 2, have already sent back revolutionary new images of Saturn's sister planet, Jupiter.

The missions were only possible because of an event which occurs about every 175 years - when the outer planets of the Solar System came into an alignment which allowed a spacecraft to travel to each in turn.

The two probes are each carrying a time capsule containing images, natural sounds and music from Earth in case they should encounter extra-terrestrials during their journey into outer space.

Voyager 2, is due to reach Saturn in August next year.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Voyager 2 flew by Saturn in August 1981. Nasa scientists extended the Voyager missions, sending Voyager 2 to the next planets in the Solar System - Uranus and Neptune. The probe passed Uranus in January 1986, and Neptune in August 1989. Voyager 1 continued towards deep space. In 1998 it became the most distant man-made object in the universe, and in 2003 reached the edge of the Solar System. The Cassini-Huygens spacecraft, a joint project between Nasa, the European Space Agency and the Italian Space Agency, arrived at Saturn in July 2004. The moon was revealed to be locked in a deep freeze, with temperatures as low as -179 degrees C, and criss-crossed by rivers of liquid methane.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 You're a bright star. Take charge professionally, with Venus in Capricorn for three weeks. Watch for lucrative career advances. Assume authority and shine.

TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20
 Class convenes. Venus entering Capricorn for the next three weeks favors investigation and exploration. Follow curious and fascinating subjects.

GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21
 Coordinate for productivity and efficiency. Shared finances can especially grow, with Venus in Capricorn. Discover profitable collaboration.

CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Partnership flowers. Collaborative efforts seem energized over three weeks, with Venus in Capricorn. Work together for common gain. Share love, fun and romance.

LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Physical action gets results. Workouts are especially energizing. Your work's in demand, with Venus in Capricorn for three weeks. Have fun and move.

VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Creative inspiration sings to you. Listen to your muses. Fun, passion and romance spark easily, with Venus in Capricorn. Relax and get playful together.

LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Settle into your love nest. Enjoy domesticity, with Venus in Capricorn. Beautify your surroundings. Home and family take priority.

SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Communication gets lucrative. Share a fascinating story, with Venus in Capricorn. Study, research and write. You're especially brilliant.

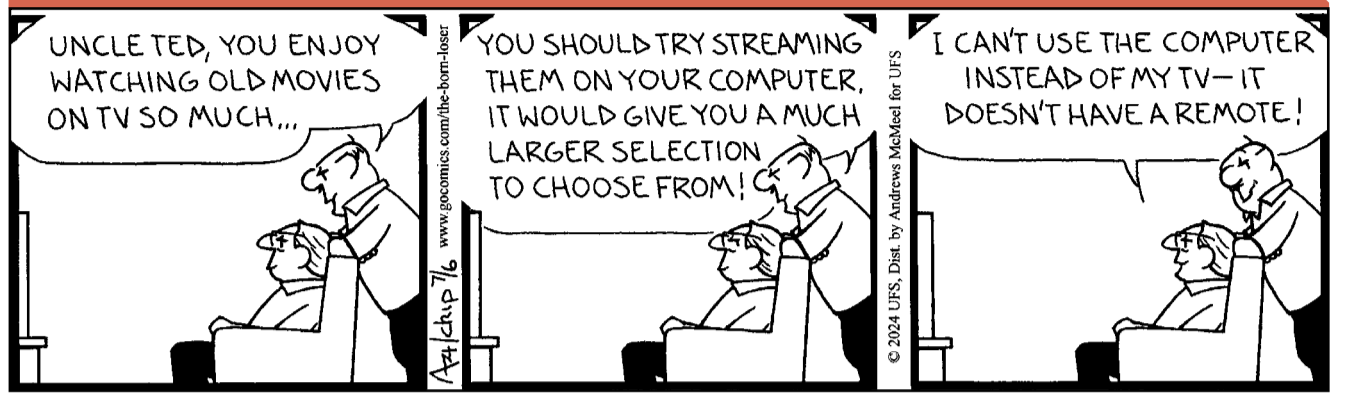
SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Focus on making money. The next three weeks with Venus in Capricorn can get especially profitable. Conserve resources. Stash savings. Keep in action.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Splurge on a new look or style. Over three weeks, with Venus in your sign, your luck improves. You're irresistible. Use your charms.

AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Nurture seeds with loving care. Finish old jobs and consider potential, with Venus in Capricorn. Allow more time for imagination, dreaming and fantasies.

PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Enjoy the public spotlight. You're especially popular, with Venus in Capricorn. Group activities go well over three weeks. Social activities benefit your career.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	7	16	cloudy
Changchun	-2	9	cloudy
Chengdu	14	18	rain
Chongqing	17	21	rain
Fuzhou	21	26	cloudy
Guangzhou	21	28	cloudy
Guiyang	12	24	cloudy
Haikou	23	26	overcast
Hangzhou	12	21	cloudy
Harbin	-7	5	rain
Hefei	11	22	fine
Nanjing	11	21	fine
Shanghai	14	21	overcast
Taipei	22	24	rain
Wuhan	12	25	fine
Hong Kong	22	27	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	1	2	cloudy
Frankfurt	4	9	cloudy
Paris	6	11	rain
London	7	12	overcast
New York	3	13	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Bluey-green color; 5- Opium flower; 10- Sunrise direction; 14- Capri, for one; 15- Cosmetician Lauder; 16- Linebacker Junior; 17- James of "The Godfather"; 18- Ornamental coronet; 19- Quarter, e.g.; 20- Eyeglasses with tinted lenses; 22- "Hotel ____"; 24- Up to, briefly; 25- Break sharply; 26- Island greetings; 29- Broadened; 33- Nymph chaser; 34- Ollie's partner; 36- "...and seven years ____"; 37- Baseball's Mel; 38- Imitating; 39- D.C. bigwig; 40- Originally named; 41- So-so grades; 42- Clear the board; 44- Unpredictable; 47- Slender; 48- X-ray units; 49- Slender metal fastener; 50- Thin layer of wood; 53- Capital of South Australia; 58- Sometimes you feel like ____; 59- Home run king Hank; 61- Letters, e.g.; 62- Go it alone; 63- Like some college walls; 64- European erupter; 65- Cockney greeting; 66- Closes in on; 67- Distribute cards;

DOWN 1- Personal quirks; 2- Biblical birthright seller; 3- Space pioneer Shepard; 4- Very long; 5- Flower parts; 6- Medical suffix; 7- School orgs; 8- Latin word which means "for every"; 9- Longing; 10- Get away; 11- Long time; 12- Aforementioned; 13- "Chicken of the sea"; 21- One telling tales; 23- Roll of bank notes; 25- Graceful birds; 26- In union; 27- "See ya!"; 28- Web-footed mammal; 30- Like Fran Drescher's voice; 31- Excrete from the body; 32- Gift recipient; 34- Eyeglasses, for short; 35- Overtime cause; 38- Polluted precipitation; 42- "The ____ Dead", classic horror movie; 43- Gave a new title; 45- "Am not!" rejoinder; 46- ____ kwon do; 47- Uses money; 50- Flower holder; 51- Hydroxyl compound; 52- Invalid; 53- Sills solo; 54- Activist; 55- Must've been something ____; 56- Actress Merrill; 57- Tel Aviv server; 60- Roman greeting;



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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 HKD 11,880,000 4 bed 3 bath

ANALYSIS

FIFA and IOC hold different track records with

GRAHAM DUNBAR, GENEVA

THE two biggest events in world sports are coming to America. And if President-elect Donald Trump is not thinking about them yet, organizers of the 2026 World Cup and 2028 Los Angeles Olympics certainly are.

The World Cup and the Summer Games are rare globally shared cultural moments with potential for unifying people. But there are questions around issues like granting visas and providing security that will cross Trump's desk.

And that requires diplomacy.

Soccer body FIFA seems in a better place to resume warm relations with Trump from his first administration compared to the International Olympic Committee based on public reactions this week and previous interactions.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino used his Instagram account to congratulate Trump even before the Electoral College win early Wednesday. There has been a public silence from the IOC, though it follows a more formal

protocol code.

IOC President Thomas Bach made one visit to the White House in June 2017 that is part of Olympic lore for how badly it went.

"Pray for our world," Bach was heard to say on a cellphone call later that day in Washington D.C.

This summer, at a campaign rally, Trump falsely labeled two female Olympic champion boxers as men and pledged to "keep men out of women's sports." It's the type of issue that could arise from the Trump administration despite top-tier Olympic sports track and field, swimming and cycling already excluding from women's competitions any athletes who went through male puberty.

FIFA, meanwhile, seems to have an open line of communication with Trump to talk through potential challenges such as Iran's probable qualification to the men's World Cup and the political implications it may bring.

Trump called Infantino "my great friend" at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2020.

Infantino also recently moved

AP PHOTO



to Miami, just 70 miles south of Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate.

The tradition for the head of state of a host nation is to present the trophy at the World Cup final and formally open the Summer Games.

Ceremonial duties for Trump at the World Cup — which the US is co-hosting with Mexico and Canada — and LA Olympics — held after Bach leaves office — in moments watched by hundreds of

millions of viewers worldwide, are in some ways the easy bit.

"My personal view would be that Trump has a very astute appreciation of being on the world stage," Michael Payne, an IOC insider since the 1984 LA Summer Games as a marketing executive and consultant, told The Associated Press.

"The challenge will be the year counting down to the events —

how that doesn't compromise the agenda of everybody turning up," Payne said in a telephone interview.

Asking for and getting permission from the IOC and FIFA to host their sprawling, multi-billion dollar events requires federal government guarantees on security and letting athletes, team officials and fans enter the country.

Trump's first administration

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"DEIGNAN AWARD"
FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN MACAU (2023)



Trump ahead of World Cup and Olympics in US

was involved in the bid campaigns — won in 2017 by LA and in 2018 by U.S. soccer officials bidding jointly with Canada and Mexico — and likely was made aware that FIFA, the IOC and fans see the events as belonging to everyone.

“The World Cup and the Olympics, I was responsible for getting both of them, actually,” Trump told Bill Belichick this month on the Let’s Go podcast.

During those campaigns, when both American bid teams faced questions about a backlash by global voters against Trump’s rhetoric, U.S. soccer and Olympic bid officials noted he wasn’t expected to be in office when the sports events opened.

Even Trump, in a meeting with Infantino at the White House in August 2018, didn’t factor in the possibility of losing the 2020 election, which opened the door for him to run again four years later and return to office in time for the 2026 World Cup.

“2026, I won’t be here,” said at the time.

Hosting games and races that make the world stop to watch, that

create a rare sense of shared global experience, is seen as a privilege. Even when the athletes and teams come from countries that were insulted by President Trump, whose politics include travel bans and deportations.

“That responsibility extends to making people feel welcome and that the visa regime is open,” said Piara Powar, executive director of anti-discrimination group Fare that works with FIFA to monitor offensive incidents at World Cup games.

Iran, a power in Asian soccer, is on track to qualify in March for its fourth straight World Cup. The Palestinian national team is still contesting one of the eight guaranteed places from Asia in the 48-nation tournament lineup. Trump has a history of support for Israel though has vowed to bring peace to the Middle East. Africa, demeaned by Trump in his first term, has nine guaranteed entries.

TRACK RECORDS

“Congratulations Mr President!” Infantino wrote about the man he visited twice at the White

House, and also joined in Davos for a dinner event at the high-end Swiss ski resort. The post predicted “a great FIFA World Cup. Football Unites the World!”

In contrast to Trump’s kind words for Infantino at Davos, there was no such public warmth exchanged with Olympic leader Bach.

Trump and Bach met once at the White House just over seven years ago. Then, the IOC was moving toward making winners of both 2024 Olympics bid rivals Los Angeles and Paris by bringing 2028 into play.

The meeting did not go well. That was suspected at the time but only confirmed years later in private conversations.

No photos, nor a readout, ever were published of Trump hosting the Olympic delegation that came from Switzerland, Los Angeles and Colorado Springs. The U.S. president was apparently dismissive of Paris and questioned why the IOC wanted the city, which hosted an acclaimed Olympics this year.

Asked why there was no formal acknowledgment of Trump’s win

this week, the IOC cited its tradition of neutrality and not taking political sides.

Still, in May 2017, within days of French President Emmanuel Macron first being elected, his telephone call with Bach was reported by the IOC to have included praise for a “brilliant” win.

Macron was on the field in Moscow in July 2018 for the World Cup-winning France team to receive the trophy in torrential rain. Only one umbrella was provided, held over the head of Russian President Vladimir Putin. The next day, Putin met with Trump in Helsinki in neighboring Finland.

Infantino was closely tied to Putin ahead of and during that World Cup and they were in an iconic photograph at the opening game, Russia’s 5-0 win over Saudi Arabia. The other man in the photo, Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman, also is now close with Infantino and Saudi Arabia’s hosting of the 2034 World Cup will be confirmed in Zurich on Dec. 11.

When a Middle East diplomatic deal, known as the Abraham Accords, was signed at the Trump

White House in September 2020, Infantino was there on the South Lawn during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“If FIFA and Gianni Infantino have a good relationship with Donald Trump then we hope that could be used for the good of the World Cup,” the London-based Powar said in a telephone interview, “and to ensure that it’s an open and inclusive World Cup. That is the risk at the moment.”

At the past two World Cups a match ticket counted as a visa and, Powar noted, in Qatar in 2022 “everybody did have the opportunity to travel there with a ticket, there were no restrictions.”

Russia and Qatar — and 2022 Winter Olympics host China — know well that sports fans, administrators and media often see domestic events and legislation through their own lens.

“It puts a magnifying glass on the issues,” said Payne, a close-up observer of Olympic Games for 40 years. “They take on a profile and political dimension with greater impact because everyone is watching.” **MDT/AP**

AD

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OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

APEC LEADERS SHOULD JOIN HANDS TO ENSURE ANOTHER 'GOLDEN 30 YEARS' FOR THE REGION

The 31st APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting to be held in Lima on Saturday is undoubtedly the most important event of the ongoing APEC Economic Leaders' Week, which is being held in the Peruvian capital this week under the theme of "Empower, Include, Grow".

The meeting sets the stage for bilateral and multilateral discussions among the participating leaders to further liberalize trade among the regional economies. Such face-to-face meetings between major leaders can effectively help deepen mutual understanding, prompt consensus and manage differences.

So the expectations are high that such meetings will also feature at Saturday's gathering in Lima to help build consensus on the implementation of relevant pro-trade documents and newly adopted trade initiatives, among other things.

In the face of the world's largest economy's politicization of economic issues and attempts to restructure the global industry and supply chains to its liking, it remains a question whether the APEC mechanism can usher in another "golden 30 years" for the region.

Thirty years ago, after the end of the Cold War, leaders in the Asia-Pacific region unanimously agreed to transcend the old thinking of group confrontation and to work together to deepen regional economic cooperation and integration, and commit to building a dynamic, harmonious and prosperous Asia-Pacific family.

That propelled the development of the Asia-Pacific and put economic globalization onto the fast track, helping the region become the world's economic growth center, the anchor for global stability, and the highland of cooperation. The Asia-Pacific now accounts for one-third of the world's population, more than 60 percent of the world's economy, and nearly half of the total global trade.

Whether or not the Asia-Pacific can enjoy another "golden 30 years" depends on whether the APEC members uphold the original aspirations of the mechanism, and push for a new start in Asia-Pacific cooperation. Those participating in Saturday's meeting should bear in mind that openness and inclusiveness should be the main principles underlying regional cooperation, and promoting common development should be the overall goal.

They should thus seek to advance the process for the establishment of an Asia-Pacific free trade area, promote economic linkages and integration among the regional economies without any exclusion, and strengthen the connection between relevant regional economic and trade agreements and development strategies.

In particular, with a new technological revolution taking place, they should work together to improve global science and technology governance, strengthen support for technological innovation to promote the green transformation and sustainable development, and create an open, fair, just and nondiscriminatory environment for the development of science and technology.

China remains a staunch advocate and practitioner of Asia-Pacific cooperation. It hopes the regional economies will demonstrate the wisdom to maintain free and open trade and investment, and support and strengthen the inclusive regional trading system, rather than denying the achievements of the past 30 years by adopting a beggar-thy-neighbor approach to economic and development issues.

China is willing to work with all parties to comprehensively implement the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 and push for positive outcomes from this meeting, which it hopes will inject new impetus into regional economic integration and promote shared, balanced and sustainable growth. Beijing calls for parties in the Asia-Pacific to join hands and work together to build an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future. [Abridged]

European markets powered higher yesterday catching up with last week's Wall Street rally. Bitcoin soared over \$82,000 for the first time but Asian stocks fell as China's stimulus package disappointed investor expectations.

Germany's DAX gained 1.2% to 19,438.89. In Paris, the CAC 40 added 1.1% to 7,421.24. Britain's FTSE 100 also rose 0.7%, to 8,128.58.

U.S. shares were poised to open higher, with futures for the S&P 500 up 0.3% and those for the Dow Jones Industrial Average up 0.3%.

Bitcoin hit a fresh record, rising to \$82,022.98 in early trading, according to Coindesk. The most popular digital token has been extending a rally that began after the reelection of former President Donald Trump, who has embraced cryptocurrencies and pledged to make the United States the world crypto capital.

In Asia, China approved a 6 trillion yuan (\$839 billion) plan during a meeting of its national legislature Friday. The long-anticipated stimulus is designed to help local governments refinance their mountains of debt in the latest push to rev up growth in the world's second-largest economy.



OBITUARY

CASINO TYCOON LUI CHE WOO DIES AT 95

Lui Che Woo, the influential Hong Kong tycoon whose wealth surged alongside the burgeoning casino industry in Macau, has passed away at the age of 95.

He passed away November 7, as announced by Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd., the company he founded and led as chairman.

The company's board praised Lui for his visionary leadership, noting that his guidance laid the groundwork for the group's ongoing success.

Lui was among Hong Kong's wealthiest individuals, with an estimated net worth of USD14.5 billion according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

He established his business empire from the ground up in what has become the world's largest gambling destination, navigating fierce competition from industry giants like Steve Wynn and Sheldon Adelson.

In 2002, he secured a gaming license after the government of Macau ended a 40-year monopoly held by Stanley Ho, known as the "King of Gambling," who passed away in 2020.

His first major venture into the casino sector was the StarWorld Macau resort, which opened in 2006.

This was followed by the launch of Galaxy Macau in 2011.

Reflecting on his journey, Lui once remarked to Hong Kong's Phoenix Television, "Don't just think, 'Oh, he's got so rich!' You don't know how many obstacles he's had to go through," as cited in a Bloomberg report.

Born on August 9, 1929, in Jiangmen, Guangdong province, China, Lui's early life was marked by upheaval.

His family fled to British-controlled Hong Kong in 1934 to escape turmoil in mainland China. However, their relative prosperity was shattered during the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong in 1941. Lui attended primary school but left after one year of secondary education due to his reluctance to study Japanese. By age 13, he had begun supporting his family, which eventually included five sisters, by selling Chinese baked goods.

The media outlet recalled that Lui entered the gaming industry in 2002 in partnership with Adelson's Las Vegas Sands Corp. However, the collaboration was short-lived, as differences in vision led to their split.

Adelson aimed to re-

plicate Las Vegas in China, while Lui focused on catering to Asian preferences, emphasizing Chinese dining options and clear signage throughout his establishments. His son, Francis, noted in a 2006 interview that his father found American casinos confusing and reminiscent of mazes.

According to the Bloomberg report, despite his immense success in the gambling sector, Lui was known for other passions, including golf and Chinese calligraphy, and he enjoyed playing mah-jong. In a notable philanthropic effort, he established a "prize for world civilization" in 2015 with a cash award of HK\$20 million, significantly higher than that of a Nobel Prize.

The same report noted that in a 2018 interview, he described this award as similar to the Nobel Peace Prize but broader in scope, recognizing contributions to sustainable development and human welfare. Past laureates include organizations like The Nature Conservancy and notable figures such as former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.

Lui was married to Lui Chiu Kam-ping in 1952, and together they had five children. LV



Bangladesh Supporters of Bangladesh's ousted leader Sheikh Hasina clashed with rivals during a rally attempt in Dhaka, as tensions remain high over her potential return. Rivals, including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, have opposed Hasina's party events, adding to political unrest in the country.



United States President-elect Donald Trump has pressured Senate GOP leader candidates to support recess appointments to bypass votes for Cabinet nominations. This move intensifies debate over executive authority as Trump urges Republicans to accelerate his Cabinet placements.



United Kingdom King Charles III led Remembrance Sunday commemorations honoring fallen soldiers, marking his return to official duties after recovering from cancer. The event saw thousands gather for the two-minute silence as the royal family and military leaders participated in remembrance rituals.



France U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer joined French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris to commemorate Armistice Day, celebrating Franco-British solidarity. This marks the first such event with a British leader in attendance since World War II.



Mexico Over 1,000 mariachis gathered in Mexico City's main plaza, singing classics like "Cielito Lindo," in what may have set a new record. The gathering marked the close of a mariachi congress celebrating this iconic Mexican musical tradition.