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**LAWMAKERS HAVE ONCE AGAIN RAISED CONCERNS ABOUT DECLINING BIRTH RATE, URGING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPREHENSIVE MEASURES**

**SURVEY SHOWS SENIOR RESIDENTS FAVOR ZHUHAI AS TOP RETIREMENT CHOICE**

**THE GOV'T SAID IT HAS ALWAYS 'SAFEGUARDED PRESS FREEDOM' AND THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION, DESPITE LOCAL JOURNALISTS' CONCERNS**



**India** Ethnic organizations in parts of India's violence-wracked northeastern state shut schools and businesses yesterday, protesting the killings of 10 people by paramilitary soldiers. They called for an 11-hour shutdown in the hill districts of Manipur from 5 a.m. yesterday. Heavy gunfire was reported overnight in the periphery of the hills and the Imphal Valley.



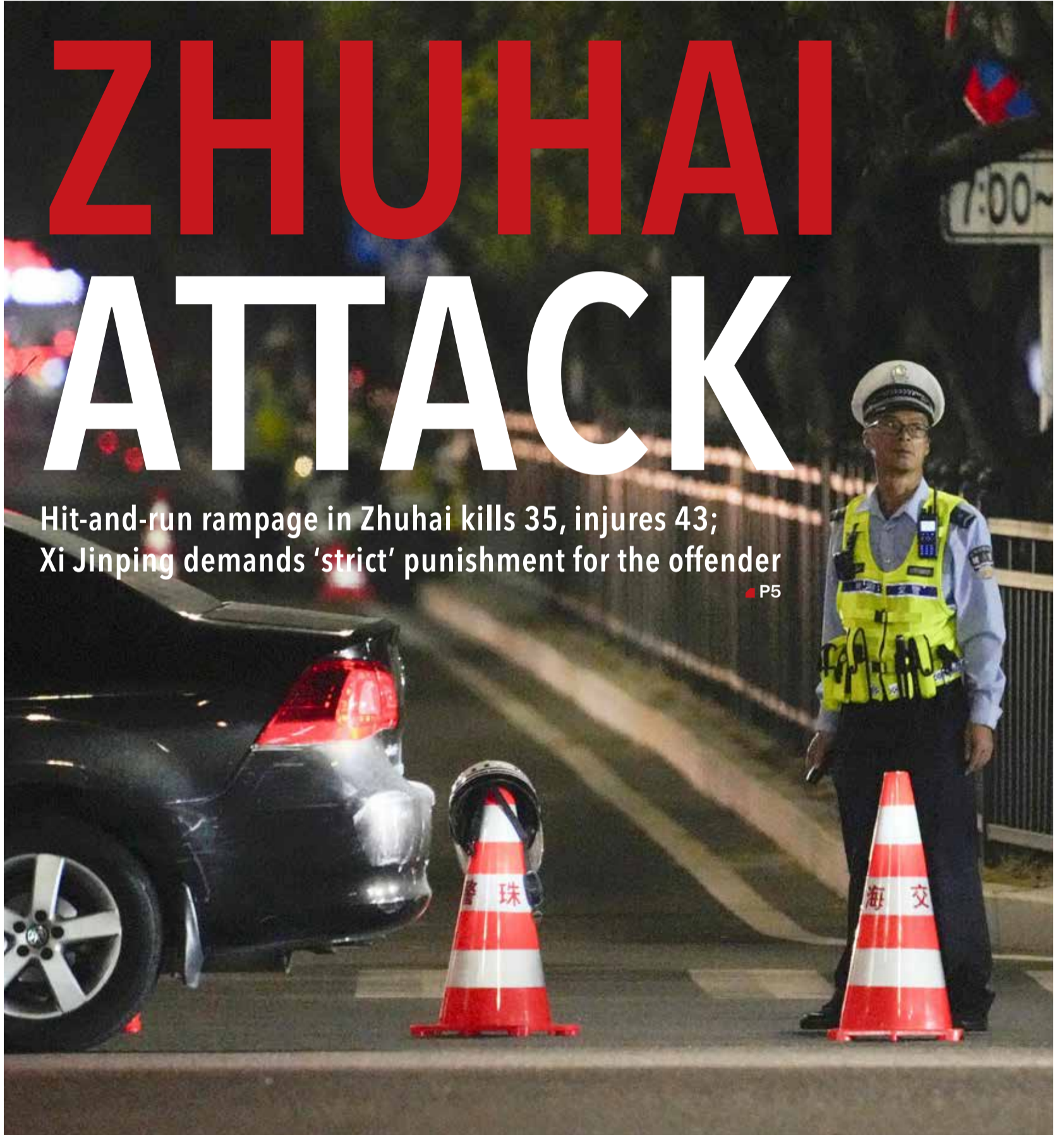
**Philippines** Typhoon Toraji unleashed floods, knocked down trees and caused power outages in the northern Philippines before weakening into a tropical storm and blowing out to the South China Sea, officials said yesterday as they braced for another approaching storm.



**Israel** has failed to meet U.S. demands to allow greater humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip, where conditions are worse than at any point in the 13-month-old war, international aid organizations said yesterday. The Biden administration last month called on Israel to "surge" more food and other emergency aid into Gaza, giving it a 30-day deadline that expired yesterday.



**Russian** glide bombs, drones and a ballistic missile smashed into cities in southern and eastern Ukraine on Monday, officials said, killing at least six civilians and injuring about 30 others. Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Russia has recently intensified strikes that have long tormented civilian areas.



**Hit-and-run rampage in Zhuhai kills 35, injures 43; Xi Jinping demands 'strict' punishment for the offender**

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**GOLDEN LOTUS**  
**ALVIS LO PLEDGES TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF MEDICAL SERVICES**

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STAFF REPORTER

# ALVIS LO PLEDGES TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF MEDICAL SERVICES

**T**HE Conde de S. Januário Hospital, operated by the Health Bureau (SSM), has been honored with the 2024 Golden Lotus Medal of Honor by the government.

This accolade is particularly significant as it coincides with the 150th anniversary of the hospital's establishment.

According to Alvis Lo, SSM director, this recognition "serves as a testament to their hard work and commitment to healthcare."

Speaking to the press yesterday, Lo said the hospital boasts 29 specialties and 24 subspecialties, providing over 1,100 beds—an increase of more than 1.5 times since the handover.

In 2023, it served approximately 805,000 patients. Currently, the average waiting time in emergency departments is around one hour, while initial consultations at specialist clinics have been reduced to three weeks.

Looking ahead, Lo said the hospital aims to enhance the quality of its medical services further, ensuring that it con-



tinues to meet the healthcare needs of the population effectively.

"This recognition not only celebrates past accomplishments

but also sets a promising direction for future improvements in health services," he said.

The government recently announced this year's official ho-

norees, including five recipients of the city's second-highest award, the Golden Lotus Medal.

No Grand Lotuses, the highest accolade in the SAR, will

be awarded this year.

The Golden Lotus medals will be presented at an awards ceremony on Nov. 29 to individuals and organizations including the Macao Holy House of Mercy, a charitable institution with a history spanning 455 years; Conde de S. Januário Hospital; lawyer and Executive Council member Leonel Alberto Alves; Peter Lam Kam Seng, Executive Council member and chairman of the University of Macau; and Chan Chak Mo, Executive Council member and president of the Sports and Olympic Committee of Macau.

Additionally, two entities will receive Silver Lotus medals: the Industrial Association of Macau and Luso International Banking Limited.

The Medal of Merit for Culture will be awarded to Henrique Miguel Rodrigues de Senna Fernandes, a Macanese lawyer, playwright and theatre director.

# Gov't defends press freedom amid journalists' concerns

VICTORIA CHAN

**T**HE government has asserted its commitment to having always "safeguarded press freedom" and the right to information, amid growing concerns from the local journalists' association over what it has described as a "serious deterioration" of press freedom in the territory.

In response to calls from the Macau Journalists Association's (AJM) to end "excessive restrictions" imposed on media workers, including access to press conferences, the Government Information Bureau (GCS) said it has "always safeguarded freedom of the press in accordance with the law,"



protecting the right to reporting, news coverage, and access to information.

According to Lusa, the GCS said the growing demand for news coverage by external media outlets in Macau has led to prioritizing "television and radio media outlets, publications with greater frequency and news agencies,"

which it described as a "common international practice." The bureau said most official press conferences are broadcast live, allowing media outlets to obtain information through these broadcasts.

However, the AJM argued that a "growing number of recent activities promoted by local government

departments have impeded the right to report of a range of media, through the use of an attendance registration system or by inviting only a select group of media to the events they have organized." The association stressed that these actions "clearly contravene journalists' 'freedom of access to sources of informa-

tion,' a right enshrined in Macau's press law."

The concerns raised by the journalists' association have also been echoed by lawmaker Ron Lam, who previously criticized the imposition of "unnecessary and unreasonable restrictions" on media participation in press conferences and government events.

# CE EXTENDS CONDOLENCES OVER PASSING OF LUI CHE WOO

STAFF REPORTER

**C**HIEF Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng has extended his condolences over the passing of Lui Che Woo, founder and chairman of Galaxy Entertainment Group.

In a statement from the Government Information Bureau, Ho expressed his deep mourning via a condolence letter sent to Lui's family members.

"The Chief Executive praised Dr Lui as a highly-respected entrepreneur and philanthropist, and acknowledged his significant contributions to the appropriate diversification of Macau's economy over the years," the statement read.

"The establishment of the 'Lui Che Woo Prize – Prize for World Civilization' underscored Dr Lui's steadfast belief in the spirit of universal love. The Chief Executive deeply mourns the passing of Dr Lui, and extends his condolences to the family," it added.

Established in 2015, the Prize aims to advance world civilization and inspire a more peaceful world, according to the official site dedicated to the award.

The Prize comes with a cash award of HKD20 million and has honored 12 awardees to date, including former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and The Nature Conservancy organization.

Passing away at the age of 95 last week, Lui was among Hong Kong's wealthiest individuals, with an estimated net worth of USD14.5 billion according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

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FAOM

# Survey shows seniors favor Zhuhai as top retirement choice

NADIA SHAW

A recent survey conducted by the Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) in collaboration with the University of St. Joseph has revealed a trend among the elderly in the region.

Nearly one-third of respondents expressed a desire to retire in cities within the Greater Bay Area (GBA), particularly favoring Zhuhai as their ideal location. These findings shed light on the evolving preferences of seniors seeking new living arrangements as they approach retirement.

The survey, which was conducted from May to October, collected 628 valid responses, predominantly from individuals aged 65 to 74.

Among those considering retirement in the GBA, an overwhelming 80% indicated a preference for Zhuhai. However, not all respondents were enthusiastic about relocating.

Many cited concerns such as differing living habits, insufficient social support, and inadequate medical facilities as barriers to their decision.

FAOM advocates for improved collaboration with service groups across the GBA to enhance the quality and accessibility of elderly care services. Ella Lei, vice-chair of FAOM, stressed the urgent need for the government to accelerate the implementa-



tion of various GBA projects aimed at enhancing elderly care.

"A new pilot program for elderly care should be established in Zhuhai," Lei stated in a press conference yesterday.

The survey results indicated that among those contemplating retirement care in the GBA, over 80% favored Zhuhai as their preferred location. Furthermore, nearly 60% of respondents expressed a preference for home-based retirement care, while about 33% opted for community retirement care. The ongoing "Elderly Health Care Voucher GBA Pilot Scheme" has been instrumental in demonstrating effective cross-border elderly care solutions. Lei recommended optimizing this existing pilot project and establishing new initiatives in Zhuhai to better meet residents' retirement needs.

Concerns regarding the cur-

rent social support system were also highlighted during yesterday's press conference, with nearly 50% of respondents indicating dissatisfaction with its effectiveness. Economic factors were also found to play a crucial role in retirement decisions.

The survey revealed that as personal income increases, so does interest in relocating to mainland cities within the GBA for retirement. However, overall data showed that 60% of respondents reported a monthly income of less than 5,000 yuan. Among this group, only 23% considered moving to mainland retirement care options. This disparity underscores the need for societal attention to the financial constraints faced by many seniors.

Additionally, more than 60% of respondents admitted they lack understanding of existing elderly care policies and legal

frameworks within the GBA. Experts recommend that government outreach efforts be broadened and direct cross-border medical services be established to facilitate smoother transitions for retirees.

With aging population becoming a prominent issue in Macau, data from Statista shows that as of 2024, the average life expectancy is approximately 84.81 years.

The financial burden on seniors is significant with average annual expenses reaching around MOP28,498 (approximately USD3,500), largely driven by healthcare and daily living costs.

As interest in retirement within the GBA grows, collaborative efforts between the government and organizations are underway to enhance support systems and address the economic barriers faced by this demographic.

## ALIBABA PARTNERS WITH LOCAL CINEMAS TO LAUNCH ICIRENA

Alibaba Pictures Group Limited recently announced that iCIRENA, the international version of Fenghuang Yunzhi, has partnered with cinemas in Macau and Hong Kong, including Emperor Cinemas in Hong Kong, and Galaxy Cinemas and Bona International Cinemas in Macau. This collaboration aims to introduce a new technological experience to the film market in Macau and Hong Kong through an integrated smart cinema solution. Fenghuang Yunzhi, developed by Alibaba Pictures, is a digital management platform for cinemas.

## GOV'T TO HOST CHINESE MEDICINE WORKSHOP WITH WHO

Macau, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), will host a "Local Training Workshop: Thematic Lecture on Traditional Chinese Medicine on Clinical Safety and Quality Assurance of Traditional Chinese Medicine" on Nov. 30. The workshop aims to introduce traditional Chinese medicine practitioners in Macau to the latest policies and development trends in the field of clinical safety and quality assurance of traditional Chinese medicine globally. The workshop is open to traditional Chinese medicine doctors, masters, pharmacists, and other related professionals registered in Macau. A total of 300 vacancies are available.

## LET CONTINUES TO FACE BOARDROOM SETBACKS

LET Group Holdings has encountered another challenge, as Bennie Kwok Kai Bun, the sole independent non-executive director, announced his resignation Monday. His departure leaves three board committees without any members. Before resigning, Kwok served on the audit, remuneration, nomination, and risk management committees. His resignation follows that of two other directors, Tou Kin Chuen and John Lo Wai Tung, who left last week, citing their inability to contribute meaningfully to the company's efforts to resume share trading.

## WOMAN LOSES RMB245,000 IN ALIPAY SCAM

A mainland woman reportedly fell victim to a fraudulent Alipay scheme in Macau, losing RMB245,000. The incident occurred Nov. 11 when the victim received a call from someone claiming to be an Alipay representative. The caller stated that her registered identity information needed updating and instructed her to follow a web link. Believing the claims, the victim transferred her entire bank balance of RMB245,000 to a designated account. After the transfer, she grew suspicious and reported the incident to the police.

THE Land and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU) has announced that the construction of five public housing projects in Zone A of the New Urban Zone is well underway. The structures have been capped, and interior work is currently in progress. The projects are expected to be completed between the fourth quarter of 2025 and the third quarter of 2026.

The public housing initiative involves five separate lots: A1, A2, A3, A4, and A12. Originally scheduled to begin in early 2022, the projects will ultimately provide 5,254 residential units, as well as public parking lots, commercial and social facilities, and other

# Zone A public housing capped, nearing completion next year

living amenities.

To enhance the quality of the public housing, the government continues to refine the design requirements.

Notable enhancements include the use of exterior paint finishes and a combination of paint and mosaic in indoor public corridors. Additionally, the apartments in Zone A will be equipped with built-in appliances and cabinets, simplifying the move-in process for residents and reducing the need for further interior enhancement. VC





Lawmaker Ron Lam

AL PLENARY

## RON LAM CONCERNED WITH ZONE A TRAFFIC DISORDER

RENATO MARQUES

**L**AWMAKER Ron Lam has raised concerns about the traffic disorganization in Zone A of the new landfills. He expressed these concerns during a spoken inquiry before the agenda in a recent plenary session at the Legislative Assembly.

Lam said that due to numerous construction projects in the area, traffic flow is constantly changing and frequently halted, creating chaos for those needing to use the roads. He said the issue has become particularly noticeable since the opening of the Macau Bridge last month, which has brought more traffic to Zone A. The si-

tuation has been further aggravated by transport authorities encouraging gaming operators to use the new bridge as the primary route connecting Cotai and the Border Gate area.

Describing Zone A as a "large construction site," Lam said the area is not only home to various building projects but also includes ongoing work on techni-

cal galleries, roads, and the East Line of the Light Rapid Transit. He said many streets in the area have been temporarily converted to one-way streets, while others are operating in both directions but without clear signage, causing further confusion and traffic bottlenecks.

Lam criticized the lack of planning, pointing out that

Zone A was developed from scratch, and therefore, the government had no excuse for the disorganization. He argued that the government should have anticipated these problems and coordinated the construction efforts more effectively.

"It's important to note that Zone A, where the new landfills are, was planned from scratch, and construction proceeded accordingly. With comprehensive planning and better coordination of the works, the government could have minimized the disruption to residents and traffic. Instead, the government has taken a reactive approach, implementing provisional measures as problems arise, rather than addressing the issues proactively," Lam said.

The lawmaker also highlighted the significant delays in the construction of the access bridges between Zone A and the Peninsula. He said these bridges should have been completed long before major developments, such as the Macau Bridge, were opened. He argued these delays reflect a broader issue of poor planning and a lack of foresight by the government in addressing the needs of the population.

Lam called on the authorities to reassess their priorities for the area and to reorganize the works to reduce the traffic disruptions.

STAFF REPORTER

**L**AWMAKERS have once again raised concerns about Macau's declining birth rate, urging the implementation of comprehensive measures to encourage higher birth rates, alongside improved maternity leave and childcare policies.

In the third quarter of the year, Macau recorded only 2,619 births, a decrease of 132 compared to the same period last year.

Even with retroactive measures, such as the temporary maternity leave compensation subsidy scheme, the situation remains challenging for both companies and workers.

The prevalence of dual-income households underscores the need for businesses to play an active role in supporting families.

However, due to current economic uncertainties, many SMEs face unsatisfactory operating conditions, said lawmaker Wong Kit Cheng.

Additionally, Wong said that working parents experience other challenges as

AL PLENARY

## Lawmakers urge action amid declining birth rate



daycare facilities' operating hours often do not align with parents' work schedules, complicating transportation arrangements for children. Financial constraints have also become a critical consideration for many young women contemplating motherhood.

While government initiatives, such as providing 15 years of free education and free healthcare for children under 10, offer some support to families, the persistent pressures of high inflation and rising

living costs, coupled with a lack of timely policy updates, have rendered the government's measures to promote childbirth less effective.

Wong proposed several measures to address these issues.

She noted that the temporary maternity leave compensation subsidy scheme, extended by two years and seven months, aims to simplify the application process and promote a family-friendly environment, and should be

further extended.

Wong also suggested enhancing incentives through administrative regulations and reassessing demographic policies to better support aspiring families.

Lawmaker Song Pek Kei suggested improvements in health, education, and social benefits policies to bolster Macau's birth rate, through offering free daycare services, revising birth allowances, and introducing child-rearing subsidies.

## HENGQIN HEALTH CENTER OPENS TO POSITIVE RECEPTION

**M**ACAU'S new health center in the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin opened officially Monday, making healthcare more accessible for Macau residents living in the area.

By 5:45 p.m. on its opening day, the facility had already served approximately 125 individuals, providing a range of services including medical treatment, nursing, and health consultations, according to a statement from the Health Bureau (SSM).

Spanning 1,000 square meters, the health center is equipped with clinics, pharmacies and multi-purpose rooms.

It offers comprehensive healthcare services tailored to men, women and children, focusing on both chronic conditions like hypertension

and acute illnesses such as colds. Patients requiring specialized care will be referred to local hospitals as necessary.

Trained professionals from Macau's health centers are staffing the center, demonstrating cross-border service and compliance with mainland medical regulations. The Guangdong Food and Drug Administration has approved over 290 medications for use at the center.

Operating hours for the health center are Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m., with slightly adjusted hours Friday.

The government said the health center aims to enhance public healthcare services in Hengqin, aligning with Macau's commitment to integrated regional development. NS

# Driver rams his car into crowd in Zhuhai, killing 35. Police say he was upset about his divorce

NG HAN GUAN & HUIZHONG WU, ZHUHAI

AP PHOTO



A sports center where a man rams a car into people exercising in Zhuhai, Monday

A man who authorities said was upset over his divorce settlement rams his car into a crowd of people exercising at a sports complex in Zhuhai, killing 35 and severely injuring dozens of others, police said yesterday.

Police detained the 62-year-old man, who is being treated for wounds thought to be self-inflicted, shortly after the attack Monday night in the city.

The city is hosting the People's Liberation Army's annual aviation exhibition, which opened yesterday, and searches for what happened were censored for users behind China's Great Firewall.

Outside of the controls, however, videos circulated on the social media platform X.

In several, dozens of people could be seen lying on the track at the sports complex, which is regularly used by hundreds of residents to run, play soccer or dance.

In one, shared by news blogger and dissident Li Ying, a woman says "my foot is broken." That same video showed a firefighter performing CPR on a person, as others were told to leave. Li, who is known on X as Teacher Li, posts daily news based on user submissions

In addition to the 35 people killed, police said 43 were injured.

China has seen a number of

attacks in which suspects appear to target members of the public at random.

In October, a man was detained after he allegedly attacked children with a knife at a school in Beijing. Five people were wounded. In September, three people were killed in a knife attack in a Shanghai supermarket, and another 15 were injured. Police said at the time that the suspect had personal financial disputes and came to Shanghai to "vent his anger."

In May, two people were killed and 21 injured in a knife attack in a hospital in Yunnan province.

Police identified the man detained in Monday's attack only by his family name of Fan, as is typi-

cal, and said he was unconscious and receiving medical care after being found in his car with a knife and wounded.

He was dissatisfied with the split of financial assets in his divorce, according to a preliminary investigation, police said.

For almost 24 hours after the attack, it was unclear what the death or injury toll was. Yesterday morning, a search on the Chinese social media platform Weibo for the sports center turned up just a few posts, with only a couple referring to the fact something had happened, without pictures or details.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping called for the "strict" punishment of the perpetrator according to

law in a statement yesterday evening.

He also called on all local governments "to strengthen prevention and control of risks at the source, strictly prevent extreme cases from occurring, and to resolve conflicts and disputes in a timely manner," according to the official Xinhua news agency.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang has called for appropriately handling the aftermath of the incident, swiftly investigating into the case and severely punishing the perpetrator in accordance with the law.

Following Xi's instruction, China's central authorities have dispatched a team to oversee the handling of the case. MDT/AP

## Tree collapse raises concerns at Guia Park

A tree collapse at Guia Municipal Park's running trail on Nov. 11 has left local residents shaken but undeterred in their exercise routines. The incident occurred around 3 p.m., when a nine-meter-tall tree fell, injuring a woman who suffered head lacerations and lost consciousness.

Despite the incident, many citizens continued to jog along the trail the following day. One local runner expressed her concerns, stating, "I'm a little worried, but there's no need to be scared," but urged authorities to enhance tree inspections. The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) responded quickly, clearing the fallen tree and inspecting nearby trees for safety.

Gou Lot Fu, president of the Society for Natural Ecology Research, noted that brown root disease is a prevalent issue affecting Macau's trees, particularly in the Guia Hill area. He emphasized the importance of regular inspections, as the disease can take six months to a year to visibly manifest.

The Municipal Advisory Committee echoed these sentiments, highlighting the challenges of managing tree health in heavily affected areas like Guia Hill. They urged better use of technology and improved training for personnel overseeing tree management.

As authorities continue their investigations, residents remain hopeful for enhanced safety measures on public trails. NS

## CORPORATE BITS

### Sands China leads delegation of enterprises in Lisbon visit



Sands China is leading a delegation of 17 DSEDTC-certified Macau enterprises on a five-day trip to Lisbon for the Macao Technological Innovation Exploration from Nov. 11 to Nov. 15. Grant

Chum, CEO of Sands China Ltd., said this visit aligns with the government's initiative to promote technology-driven smart tourism and enhance industrial development.

The participating enterprises will gain insights into global technology trends and network at the Web Summit, an annual conference in Lisbon expected to draw 70,000 participants, including 2,600 start-ups and 800 speakers.

Activities include a networking dinner with Lisbon's tourism and technology stakeholders, and visits to innovative companies, fostering meaningful exchanges.

The tour is co-organized by the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSEDTC) and supported by the Science and Technology Development Fund (FDCT), with coordination from the Sands Resorts Incubation Center.

### Melco sponsors cultural exchange with Beijing



Melco Resorts & Entertainment recently sponsored the "Beijing-Macao Universities Art Exchange and Aesthetic Education Immersion Activities," reinforcing its commitment to cultural exchange and artistic development.

This initiative recently welcomed a delegation of 51 students and faculty to Macau.

During their visit, the delegation engaged with local universities and schools through teaching practices, seminars and performances.

Melco arranged a visit to the Family and Integrated Community Service Centre of Seac Pai Van, where they performed nationalistic songs and shared musical skills with

local elders.

Chief of Staff & Executive Vice President at Melco, Akiko Takahashi, emphasized the importance of fostering cultural connections.

"Melco will continue to develop meaningful and impactful initiatives for the community, to promote local talent development and further strengthen our efforts in instilling national pride and patriotism through the education of Chinese culture," the executive pledged.

The event is organized in collaboration with the Education and Youth Development Bureau, the Macau Youth Development Service Centre, and Beijing's Central Conservatory of Music.

EXPLAINER

# A look at the research revealing China's work on 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 car-



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

riers, but once in operation they 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.

But the Pentagon is growingly increasingly concerned about China's rapid modernization of its fleet, including the design and construction of new carriers.

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 Defense Department said in its most recent report to Congress on China's military.

## HOW DID RESEARCHERS CONCLUDE CHINA HAS BUILT A PROTOTYPE REACTOR?

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 si-

zeable 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**

11.11

# Police crack down on sales of fake goods

POLICE across the country have cracked more than 1,900 cases involving online sales of counterfeit goods this year while carrying out related campaigns launched by the Ministry of Public Security, the ministry said.

In a statement issued shortly before the "Double 11" online shopping event, which falls on Nov 11 every year, the ministry said police have closely followed key facilitators such as livestreams and e-commerce platforms, to crack down on counterfeit

sales.

They have focused on goods that tend to generate more consumer complaints, including food, medicine, makeup, electric devices and products for children, the ministry said.

As online counterfeit sales are highly clandestine and involve a long industrial chain, police have thoroughly investigated the production and sale of fake products and have punished organizers, operators and those who have profited from it, the ministry said.



The ministry also revealed 10 cases in which online sellers of counterfeit goods were caught.

One case involved sa-

les of cellphones that had been reassembled from various parts and were then sold as famous brand name phones.

From June 2021 to earlier this year, the suspects, including one surnamed Zheng, bought large quantities of parts from secondhand cellphones and made new phones from them. They also purchased fake bar codes, labels and packages of well-known brands.

Then they sold as many as 17,000 fake-branded cellphones through online stores.

In June this year, police in Huainan, Anhui province, received reports about the phones and an investigation led to the

arrest of nine suspects.

Another case cracked by police in Heze, Shandong province, involved the production and sale of pirated toys.

An investigation revealed that from November 2019 to earlier this year, a person surnamed Yang and other suspects had registered several companies to produce a large number of toys infringing on copyrights and sold them online and at brick-and-mortar stores.

After receiving reports from companies that had learned of the crime in June this year, Heze police arrested 29 suspects and seized more than 100,000 pirated toys at production sites. **CHINADAILY**

PHILIPPINES

# Defense secretary doesn't expect Trump will demand payment for protection

ROD MCGUIRK, MELBOURNE

**P**HILIPPINE Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said yesterday that he didn't expect President-elect Donald Trump's next administration would demand that the Philippines pay more for military protection because both allies faced the shared threat of China.

Teodoro was speaking at a news conference with Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles following an inaugural bilateral annual meeting aimed at improving security ties.

Asked if Trump would expect the Philippines, like Taiwan, to pay for U.S. protection, Teodoro replied: "I really don't expect some sort of a statement from Mr. Trump, hopefully not."

"I really don't have any preconditions or any assumptions as to what will be the outcome of this administration, except on what we are working on — on institutional ties," he said.

"We have an interest, both the United States and the Philippines, in ensuring that our partnership continues because — not totally, but principally — ... of shared threats. And that is undoubtedly the overreach and the aggressive and illegal activities of China," he added.

Marles said that Australia had been confident that regard-



Australian Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles, left, and Philippine Secretary of National Defense Gilberto C. Teodoro Jr. during the inaugural Australia-Philippines Defence Ministers' Meeting at Parliament House in Canberra, yesterday

less of the U.S. presidential election outcome, Australia's alliance with Washington would remain in "good shape."

"What we see in the election of President Trump and in the formation of his administration, is an administration which will maintain America's role of leadership in the world, which is really important in terms of maintaining the global rules-based order, which is very much in Australia's national

interest," Marles said.

Last week, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signed two laws reaffirming the extent of his country's maritime territories and right to resources, including in the South China Sea, angering China, which claims the hotly disputed waterway almost in its entirety.

China's Foreign Ministry said it summoned the Philippine ambassador to China to

lodge a "stern protest." The ministry condemned the move as an attempt to "solidify the illegal ruling of the South China Sea arbitration case through domestic legislation."

Confrontations between Chinese and Philippine coast guard and naval forces in the disputed sea passage have spiked alarmingly since last year. That has sparked fears that the United States — Manila's longtime treaty ally — may

get drawn in a major conflict.

The laws, called the Philippine Maritime Zones Act and the Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act, were signed by Marcos in a nationally televised ceremony attended by top military and national security officials. They further cement Manila's rejection of China's claims to virtually the entire sea passage, and stipulate jail terms and stiff fines for violators. **MDT/AP**

NORTH KOREA

# Pyongyang ratifies major defense treaty with Russia

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

**N**ORTH Korea ratified a major defense treaty with Russia stipulating mutual military aid, the North's state media reported Tuesday, as the U.S., South Korea and Ukraine say North Korea has sent thousands of troops to Russia to support its war against Ukraine.

Russia had completed the ratification of the treaty last week after it was signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in June. It is considered both countries' biggest defense deal since the end of the Cold War.

The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership treaty will take effect when both sides exchange documents on the ratification, the state-run Korean Central News Agency said.

North Korea ratified the treaty through a decree signed Monday by the country's president of state affairs, KCNA said, using one of Kim's titles.

North Korea's rubber-stamp parliament, the Supreme People's Assembly, has the right to ratify treaties but Kim can unilaterally ratify major ones, according to South Korea's Unification Ministry.

The treaty requires both countries to use all availa-



Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, and North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un pose for a photo during a signing ceremony of the new partnership in Pyongyang, North Korea, on June 19

ble means to provide immediate military assistance if either is attacked. It also calls for the two countries to actively cooperate in efforts to establish a "just and multipolar new world

order" and strengthen cooperation on various sectors including peaceful atomic energy, space, food supply, trade and economy.

Some observers speculate the treaty's ratification

in both countries could signal North Korea could formally enter the Russia-Ukraine war soon.

According to U.S., South Korean and Ukrainian intelligence assessments, up to 12,000 North Korean troops have been sent to Russia likely as part of the June treaty. Last week, Ukrainian officials said Ukraine and North Korean troops engaged in small-scale fighting while Ukraine's army fired artillery at North Korean soldiers in Russia's Kursk border region.

North Korea's troop dispatch threatens to escalate the almost three-year war. South Korea, the U.S. and their partners also worry

about what Russia could give North Korea in return. Possible Russian transfer of sensitive technology to enhance North Korea's already-advancing nuclear and missile programs would be an alarming development for the U.S. and its allies.

North Korea and Russia have been significantly strengthening their military and other cooperation. South Korea's spy agency said last month 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. **MDT/AP**

COP29

# Biggest name world leaders missing at UN climate talks, but others try to fill the void

SETH BORENSTEIN,  
MELINA WALLING & SIBI  
ARASU, BAKU

**W**ORLD leaders are converging yesterday at the United Nations annual climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan although the big names and powerful countries are noticeably absent, unlike past climate talks which had the star power of a soccer World Cup.

But 2024's climate talks are more like the International Chess Federation world championship, lacking the recognizable names but big on nerd power and strategy. The top leaders of the 13 largest carbon dioxide-polluting countries will not appear with their countries responsible for more than 70% of 2023's heat-trapping gases.

Biggest polluters and strongest economies China and the United States aren't sending their No. 1s. The four most populous nations with more than 42% of all the world's population aren't having leaders speak.

"It's symptomatic of the



lack of political will to act. There's no sense of urgency," said climate scientist Bill Hare, CEO of Climate Analytics. He said this explains "the absolute mess we're finding ourselves in."

COP29 lead negotiator Yalchin Rafiyev stressed at a press conference yesterday that "success doesn't depend on one country alone."

"Unless all countries can slash emissions deeply, every country and household will be hammered harder than they currently are. We will be living in a nightmare," he said.

Azerbaijan's president Ilham Aliyev, United King-

dom's prime minister Keir Starmer and Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan are the headliners of among the nearly 50 leaders set to speak during the event.

There'll also be a strong showing is expected from the leaders of some of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries. Several small island nations presidents and over a dozen leaders from countries across Africa are set to speak over the two-day World Leaders' Summit at COP29.

As a sense of how the bar for celebrity has lowered, yesterday morning photographers and video cameras

ran along side one leader walking through the halls of the meeting. It was the emergency management minister for host country Azerbaijan.

United Nations officials downplayed the lack of head of state star power, saying that every country is represented and active in the climate talks.

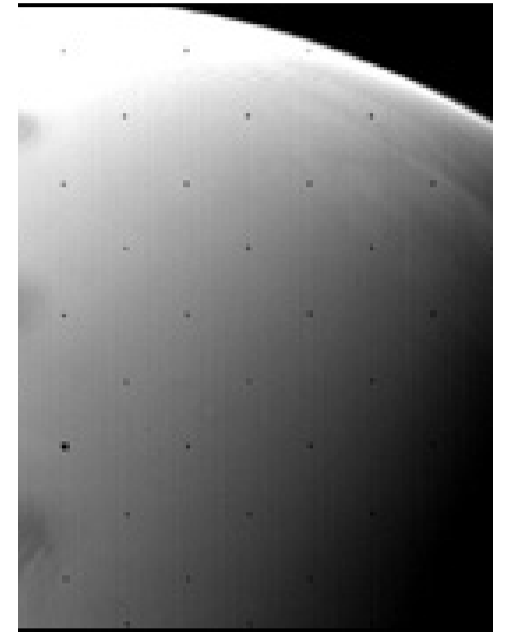
One logistical issue is that next week, the leaders of the most powerful countries have to be half a world away in Brazil for the G20 meetings. The United States recent election, Germany's government collapse, natural disasters and personal illnesses also have kept some leaders away.

The major focus of the negotiations is climate finance, which is rich nations trying to help poor countries pay for transitioning their economies away from fossil fuels, coping with climate change's upcoming harms and compensating for damages from weather extremes.

Nations are negotiating over huge amounts of money, anywhere from \$100 billion a year to \$1.3 trillion a year. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1971 AMERICAN PROBE ORBITS MARS



The American space probe, Mariner 9, has become the first spacecraft to orbit another planet, swinging into its planned trajectory around Mars without a hitch.

An engine burn at 2337 GMT put the craft into an elliptical orbit around the Red Planet set to take it within 800 miles of the surface.

Three previous missions, Mariners 4, 6 and 7, have flown past Mars, but none has gone nearer than 2000 miles.

Mariner 9 is due to circle the planet twice a day for three months, sending back more than 5000 pictures covering 70% of the surface.

Dust storm

It's hoped it will map the planet's white polar caps, believed to consist of carbon dioxide, as well as provide vital clues about the possible existence of life.

However, the first photographs, taken on the approach to the planet, have been disappointing.

A vast dust storm which began on 22 September has been sending huge red clouds at high speeds across much of the planet's surface.

The setback led to a groundbreaking exercise by Nasa scientists, who had to re-program the space probe over millions of miles of space to wait until the dust storm had abated before continuing with its mission.

Geologists hoping for a closer look at the features on Mars are dismayed, but atmospheric scientists are delighted.

Courtesy BBC News

## NETHERLANDS

# Dutch appeals court overturns landmark climate ruling against Shell

MIKE CORDER, THE HAGUE

**A**Dutch appeals court yesterday overturned a landmark ruling that ordered energy company Shell to cut its carbon emissions by net 45% by 2030 compared to 2019 levels, while saying that "protection against dangerous climate change is a human right."

The decision was a defeat for the Dutch arm of environmental group Friends of the Earth, which hailed the

original 2021 ruling as a victory for the climate. Yesterday's civil ruling can be appealed to the Dutch Supreme Court.

The ruling upholding Shell's appeal came as a 12-day U.N. climate conference was entering its second day in Azerbaijan.

In a written summary of the ruling, the court said that Shell has a duty of care to limit its emissions, but it annulled the lower court's decision because it was "unable to establish that the social standard



of care entails an obligation for Shell to reduce its CO2 emissions by 45%, or some other percentage.

"There is currently insufficient consensus in climate science on a specific reduction per-

centage to which an individual company like Shell should adhere."

Presiding Judge Carla Joustra said that Shell already has targets for climate-warming carbon emissions that are in line with demands

of Friends of the Earth — both for what it directly produces and for emissions produced by energy the company purchase from others.

The court then ruled that "for Shell to reduce CO2 emissions caused by buyers of Shell products ... by a particular percentage would be ineffective in this case. Shell could meet that obligation by ceasing to trade in the fuels it purchases from third parties. Other companies would then take over that trade." **MDT/AP**

## IN CONTEXT

It was another month before the storm died away and scientists saw the first truly clear pictures of the surface of Mars.

They showed a planet of huge seismic activity, with gigantic volcanoes over twice the height of the largest found on Earth, and a grand canyon stretching 3000 miles across its surface - the largest in the solar system. There were also channels which suggested that water once flowed on Mars.

Mariner 9 orbited the planet for far longer than expected. Its two television cameras returned 7329 photographs before contact ended on 27 October 1972.

The Soviet probe, Mars 2, arrived shortly before Mariner 9 and crashed due to the dust storm. Mars 3 touched down on the surface, but malfunctioned after 20 seconds.

The first successful landing on the Martian surface was carried out by Viking 1 five years later in 1976



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Dress to impress. Use your power and confidence to propel a personal project. Let go of nebulous illusions to advance clear, specific goals.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
Recharge in peaceful privacy. Reduce overstimulation, noise and bustle. Consider philosophical and spiritual questions. Adapt to a recent transition. Read, reflect and relax.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
Brilliant ideas flow through your circle of friends and allies. Share resources and encouragement. Get together to share appreciation and gratitude. Teamwork wins.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Schedule carefully. Crazy professional dreams seem possible. Take practical steps and ignore unrealistic plots. Innovation doesn't require revolution. Get creative and invite feedback.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
A prize beckons. Explore and investigate. Travel and study plans take flight. Share gifts and contributions. Make an educational exchange and a sweet connection.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Get clear on shared expenses. Murkiness with numbers could get expensive. Collaborate to stick to the budget. Pull together for a bonus prize.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Communicate with your partner for practical goals. Coordinated actions get farther than expected. You can realize plans you've long wanted. Collaborate for shared gain.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
Get coaching to improve your physical performance. Realize a dream with practical actions. Practice makes perfect. Nurture your health with good food and rest.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Give in to romance. Share gifts and surprises. Express your love and appreciation. Have fun with friends and family. Play games and relax together.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Domestic bliss could arise. Abandon unrealistic expectations. Appreciate what you have rather than some idealized fantasy. Discover hidden beauty. Contribute to a family project.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
You're especially charming and persuasive. Ask for what you want, for yourself and others. Imagine perfection and then invite participation. What would it take?

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Generate profitable possibilities. Stick to practical priorities for positive cash flow. Avoid frivolous spending. Stick to simple basics to save time and money.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

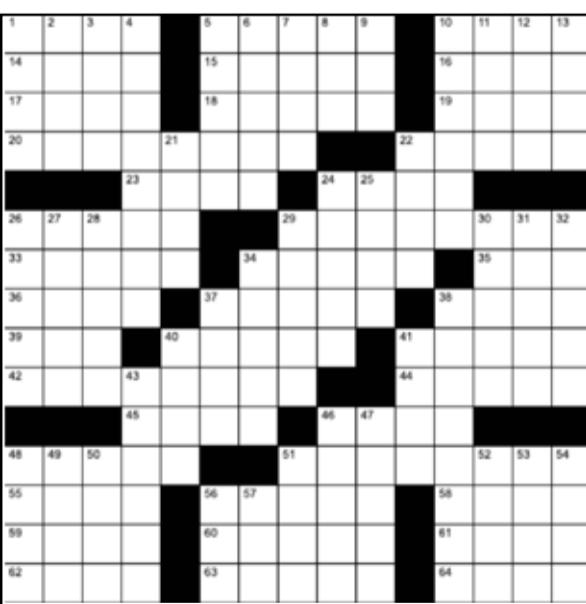
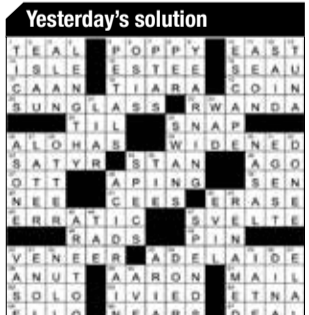
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	9	11	rain
Changchun	-2	13	fine
Chengdu	15	20	rain
Chongqing	17	20	rain
Fuzhou	20	24	overcast
Guangzhou	20	29	rain
Guiyang	16	26	fine
Haikou	22	29	cloudy
Hangzhou	13	22	cloudy
Harbin	-5	7	cloudy
Hefei	12	23	cloudy
Nanjing	14	23	cloudy
Shanghai	16	22	fine
Taipei	22	26	overcast
Wuhan	15	25	fine
Hong Kong	26	28	showers
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	-1	2	cloudy
Frankfurt	4	7	cloudy
Paris	5	9	cloudy
London	6	11	cloudy
New York	4	12	sunny

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS** 1- Actor Omar; 5- Take \_\_\_ at (try); 10- Historic Scott; 14- Like an abyss; 15- Jewelled crown worn by women; 16- Days of \_\_\_; 17- District; 18- Novelist Jong; 19- Memo; 20- Hunger pang; 22- Gives a 9.8, say; 23- Electrically charged particles; 24- Former name of Thailand; 26- Rest atop; 29- Latrine; 33- Dispute; 34- Software medium; 35- Scott's refusal; 36- Sailors; 37- Cowboy display; 38- Celestial body; 39- Summer along the Seine; 40- Abnormal body temperature; 41- Excuse; 42- Dental device; 44- Baseball's Pee Wee; 45- Party to; 46- Boot bottom; 48- Burn with water; 51- Board game; 55- Singer Amos; 56- Novelist Zola; 58- Blunted blade; 59- Z \_\_\_ zebra; 60- Columbus's birthplace; 61- Actress Sofer; 62- Adult male deer; 63- Something for the mill; 64- Battle memento;

**DOWN** 1- Dutch export; 2- South American country, famous for Macchu Picchu; 3- Hammer part; 4- Roomy; 5- Dined at home; 6- Begets; 7- Mai \_\_\_; 8- Joan of \_\_\_; French heroine; 9- Ewe said it; 10- Electric generator; 11- Cheer (for); 12- Romain de Tiroff, familiarly; 13- Poor grades; 21- Fine-tune; 22- Chicago mayor Emanuel; 24- Less doubtful; 25- Langston Hughes poem; 26- "See ya!"; 27- Hot under the collar; 28- Plumed heron; 29- More peculiar; 30- Loosen; 31- Swedish imports; 32- Spine-tingling; 34- Assembly of witches; 37- Nevada resort city; 38- Railway ties; 40- Discover; 41- Singer Guthrie; 43- Sick; 46- Goes it alone; 47- \_\_\_ a time (singly); 48- RR stops; 49- Price tag; 50- Oratorio highlight; 51- Short skirt; 52- Oil cartel; 53- Singer Horne; 54- 365 days; 56- Cackleberry; 57- "La \_\_\_" (Debussy work);



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



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AD

# As sports betting addiction takes hold in Brazil,

MAURICIO SAVARESE &  
LUCAS DUMPHREYS,  
SAO PAULO

**K**ING” doesn’t disclose his real name. Even clients of his Sao Paulo newsstand have to call him by his moniker. The Brazilian online sports gambling addict lowered his profile after a loan shark threatened to put bullets in his head if he didn’t pay up.

Broke and embarrassed, King sought treatment and support earlier this year.

“I was once addicted to slot machines, but then sports betting was so easy that I changed. I got carried away all the time,” he told The Associated Press.

King’s story is that of many vulnerable Brazilians in recent years. The country has become the third-biggest market in the world for sports betting, following the U.S. and the U.K., a report by data analysis company Comscore said last year. But unlike those countries, rampant advertising and sponsorship have been coupled with an unregulated market. The government is now — belatedly, some say — striving to get a handle on the epidemic.

On a recent evening, King’s Gamblers Anonymous meeting took place in an improvised classroom inside a church,

with coffee and cookies to keep everyone awake, and supportive messages scrawled onto the blackboard. One that’s become ubiquitous in Brazil and beyond: “Only for today I will avoid the first bet.”

King and other attendees, all Christian, started a prayer and the meeting began.

King said his financial problems arose from his addiction to online sports betting, chiefly on soccer.

“I miss the adrenaline rush when I don’t bet,” he said before the gathering. “I have managed to stop for a couple of months, but I know that if I do it once again, even a small bet, it will all come back.”

#### DRIVEN BY THE PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic was a key driver for Brazilians embracing sports betting. King said he transformed almost every sale during that time into a bet. His hook was the non-stop advertising on TV, radio, social media as well as sponsorship of local soccer teams’ jerseys. He asked for bank loans to pay his gambling debts and then, to cover those, went to the moneylender. His total debt now amounts to 85,000 reais (\$15,000) — impossible to pay off with his monthly income of 8,000 reais.

Digging oneself out of debt

AP PHOTO



Gamblers in recovery attend a Gamblers Anonymous meeting in Sao Paulo, last month

in Brazil is especially daunting with its sky-high interest rates. Loans from Brazilian banks could add interest of almost 8% per month to the borrowed sum, and from loan sharks could be even more.

Four Gamblers Anonymous meetings attended by the AP in October featured discussions

about difficulties paying down debts, forcing working-class members to postpone housing payments and cancel family vacations.

Some members of impoverished Brazilian families have used welfare money for betting instead of paying for groceries and housing, official data sug-

gests. In August, beneficiaries of Brazil’s flagship program Bolsa Familia spent 3 billion reais (\$530 million) on sports betting, according to a report from the central bank. That was more than 20% of the program’s total outlay in the month.

A host of gambling related

AD

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# the government moves to crack down

problems

Sports betting was made legal in 2018 in a bill signed by former President Michel Temer. The subsequent turmoil has recently been setting off alarm bells, with addicts venting on social media and media reports of people losing huge sums.

On Oct. 1, the economy ministry prevented more than 2,000 betting companies from operating in Brazil for having failed to provide all the required documents. Soccer-loving President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said in an interview on Oct. 17 that he will shut down the entire market in Brazil if his administration's new regulations — presented at the end of July — fail to work. And Brazil's Senate on Oct. 25 opened an investigation into betting companies, focusing on crime and addiction.

"There's tax evasion, money laundering of organized crime, the use of influencers to trick people into betting. These companies need to be audited," Sen. Soraya Thronicke, who proposed the inquiry, told journalists in Brasilia.

Sérgio Peixoto, a ride-sharing app driver in Rio, is one of many lower-middle-income Brazilians who have reduced their spending due to sports betting debt. Peixoto's debt currently amounts to 25,000 reais (\$4,400). His monthly income is four times less than that.

"It stopped being a game, it wasn't fun. I just wanted to get the money back, so I lost even more," said Peixoto, 26. "I could have invested that money. It would surely have given me more benefits.

### PRESSURE TO BET

Pressure on people to gamble is everywhere. Current and former soccer players, including Vinicius Júnior, Ronaldo Nazário and Roberto Rivellino, are among the poster boys for local and foreign brands. All but one of the top-tier soccer clubs have betting companies among their main sponsors, with their name and logo emblazoned on their kits. There have been cases of

kids and teenagers setting up accounts using their parents' personal information and money, multiple local media outlets have reported.

Brazil's economy ministry estimates that Brazil's sports betting market had \$21 billion in transactions last year, a 71% increase compared with the first year of the pandemic, 2020.

The ministry's newly presen-

come January, between 100 and 150 betting companies will continue to operate in the South American nation.

The changes in Brazil have prompted some companies to take preemptive action. A report by Yield Sec, a technical intelligence platform for online marketplaces, said several betting companies voluntarily restricted their operations in different places after the latest editions of the European Championships and Copa America in the hopes of presenting "the best possible license application face to the Brazilian authorities."

Magnho José Santos de Sousa, the president of the Legal Gambling Institute, a betting think tank, said Brazil has been flooded by some legal platforms that have licenses in Malta, Curaçao, Gibraltar and the United Kingdom, and also illegal sites based in China.

De Sousa expressed hope

that the new regulations for advertising, responsible gambling and qualification of sports betting companies will transform the country's deregulated arena into a more serious one that doesn't exploit the vulnerable.

"The whole operation could turn from water into wine," he said.

### GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS IN HIGH DEMAND

Meantime, the demand for Gamblers Anonymous meetings in Sao Paulo has grown so much in recent years that the weekly gathering, in place since the 1990s, was no longer enough. Many groups have added a second day in the week to help new people recover, mostly sports bettors.

Earlier in October, a group on Sao Paulo's northern edge admitted a man who was struggling with sports betting and card games. The 13 other people in the room stressed that he wasn't alone.

"Welcome," one long-time attendee said, in a greeting that has become a regular for the group. "Today, you are the most important person here." MDT/AP

## There have been cases of kids and teenagers setting up accounts using their parents' personal information and money

ted regulations include facial recognition systems for gamblers to bet, the identification of a single bank account for transactions involving sports betting, new protections against hackers and the government-authorized domain, bet.br, which will host all betting sites that are legal in Brazil. Once they are in place,



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OPINION

The Conversation

Enayat Nasir, The Conversation



HOW THE TALIBAN ARE SEEKING TO RESHAPE AFGHANISTAN'S SCHOOLS TO PUSH THEIR IDEOLOGY

The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021 was a blow for education across the country – but especially for girls and women. Since then, the Taliban's leaders have outlawed education for girls after sixth grade, expanded religious seminaries known as madrasas ninefold and reintroduced corporal punishment in schools.

Now, the Taliban are continuing their assault on education for both boys and girls by changing the curriculum in grades 1-12. They have already revised textbooks up to eighth grade, and they're on track to finish the rest within months. After completion, the revised curriculum will go up for approval by the Taliban's supreme leader and will likely be followed by swift implementation. The process is straightforward. The supreme leader of the Taliban controls education policy – including the curriculum. Once submitted to him, he has no reason to reject or delay the implementation.

As an educational policy scholar who pushed for educational progress in Afghanistan before the Taliban takeover, I believe these changes echo the tactics of the Soviet-backed regime in the 1980s to impose an ideology through textbooks. They also reflect the stifling climate of the 1990s, which promoted violence and suppressed critical thinking in education. By controlling education, the Taliban aims to instill their totalitarian and extremist religious-based ideology in young minds, ensuring their grip on power for generations to come.

Afghanistan's education system is centralized, meaning all schools follow a single curriculum. The current textbooks are the result of two decades of reforms that followed the country's recovery from the Soviet invasion and civil wars of the 1980s and 1990s.

Since 2001, when the Taliban's last regime fell, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with international developmental agencies, undertook a critical revision of the national curriculum. This initiative aimed to make curriculum and textbooks inclusive, nondiscriminatory and free from promotion of violence – a departure from previous textbooks that included illustrations of tanks, rocket launchers and automatic weapons.

In the last decade before the Taliban regained power, the Ministry of Education was still attempting to reform curriculum to focus on students' personal and economic growth. Unfortunately, the ministry never completed the reforms.

Within a few months after their takeover in August 2021, senior Taliban leaders criticized the previous education system and curriculum, saying it was brainwashing Afghan youth and weakening religious values. They called for a reeducation campaign.

Since then, the Taliban have been revising the curriculum and aggressively rewriting textbooks for grades 1-12. This is based on 26 recommendations from their education commission. Some of the changes approved by the commission include:

1. Removing subjects like formal art, civil education and culture. Instead, schools are increasing time spent on religious studies.
2. Removing content about human rights, women's rights, equal rights, freedoms, elections and democracy.
3. Removing all images of living beings from textbooks, including pictures of humans, animals, sports and anatomy. The Taliban believe that only God creates living beings, and producing or distributing images of God's creation is prohibited.
4. Adding religious material to the curriculum that enforces Taliban narratives. This includes teachings that justify violence against those who resist or oppose the Taliban's views.
5. Shaping student behaviors to fit the Taliban's vision of society, similar to what they defined in recent vice and virtue laws that ban women's voices and bare faces in public, among other rules.

[Abridged]

New Zealand's Prime Minister Christopher Luxon made a "formal and unreserved" apology in Parliament yesterday for the widespread abuse, torture and neglect of hundreds of thousands of children and vulnerable adults in care.

"It was horrific. It was heartbreaking. It was wrong. And it should never have happened," Luxon said, as he spoke to lawmakers and a public gallery packed with survivors of the abuse.

An estimated 200,000 people in state, foster and faith-based

care suffered "unimaginable" abuse over a period of seven decades, a blistering report released in July said at the end of the largest inquiry ever undertaken in New Zealand. They were disproportionately Mori, New Zealand's Indigenous people.

In foster and church care — as well as in state-run institutions, including hospitals and residential schools — vulnerable people "should have been safe and treated with respect, dignity and compassion," he added. "But instead, you were subjected to horrific abuse and neglect and in some cases torture."

AP PHOTO



Selina Cheng, a former reporter at the Wall Street Journal, and chairperson of the Hong Kong Journalists Association speaks to media in Hong Kong, yesterday

HONG KONG

REPORTER SAYS SHE'LL SUE WALL STREET JOURNAL FOR DISMISSAL BECAUSE OF HER UNION ROLE

KANIS LEUNG, HONG KONG

A former Hong Kong reporter of The Wall Street Journal yesterday said she'll sue the publication for sacking her because she joined a trade union.

Selina Cheng lost her job in July after a senior editor told her that her position was eliminated due to restructuring. However, Cheng believed the termination was linked to her refusal to comply with her supervisor's request to withdraw from the election for the chairperson of the Hong Kong Journalists Association, a trade union for journalists that advocates for press freedom.

Cheng, now the chair of the association, said in a press briefing that she had sought mediation with her former employer through private channels and legal representatives, but their communication was "not fruitful" and her former employer refused to reinstate her job.

After the failed attempts, Cheng said she would file a civil claim at the Labor Tribunal, saying she had already brought evidence to the

city's Labor Department. In a claim form shown to reporters, she stated she was fired unreasonably and illegally and it was due to her participation in a trade union.

"If the Wall Street Journal regrets this decision and agree that this wasn't right, there are ways to make repairs, perhaps still," she said.

Cheng said she would meet with the department's investigators today "to pursue this as a criminal matter." She requested them to investigate her ex-employer for what she called "likely" violation of the employment ordinance.

Dow Jones, which publishes the newspaper, did not immediately comment.

After the national security law was imposed in 2020, two local news outlets known for critical coverage of the government, Apple Daily and Stand News, were forced to shut down following the arrest of their senior management, including Apple Daily publisher Jimmy Lai. Lai is expected to testify in his defense next week in his landmark national security trial.

Two former editors at

Stand News were convicted in August, the first journalists found guilty of sedition since the former British colony returned to China in 1997. One of them received a jail term of 21 months.

The termination of Cheng's contract in July sent shockwaves among Hong Kong's media workers. Cheng yesterday said her former employer insisted her job loss was a result of redundancy.

"Us being reporters, we hate being lied to by whoever it is, and least of all by our own supervisors and companies," she said.

The Independent Association of Publishers' Employees, a union run by and for the employees of Dow Jones, previously said in a statement that if Cheng was fired as what she claimed, the behavior was "unconscionable." It called on the publication to restore her job and provide full explanation about their decision to dismiss her.

Hong Kong ranked 135th out of 180 countries and territories in Reporters Without Borders' latest World Press Freedom Index, down from 80 in 2021. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



US Congress returns to a changed Washington as President-elect Donald Trump's hard-right agenda is quickly taking shape, buoyed by eager Republican allies eyeing a full sweep of power on Capitol Hill while Democrats are sorting out what went wrong. Trump is already telling the Senate to forgo its advise-and-consent role and simply accept his Cabinet nominees.

AP PHOTO



US Elon Musk's super PAC spent around \$200 million to help elect Donald Trump, according to a person familiar with the group's spending, funding an effort that set a new standard for how billionaires can influence elections. The billionaire Tesla and SpaceX CEO provided the vast majority of the money to America PAC, which focused on low-propensity and first-time voters, according to AP sources.

AP PHOTO



Haiti's international airport shut down on Monday after gangs opened fire at a commercial flight landing in Port-Au-Prince, prompting some airlines to temporarily suspend operations as the country swore in a new interim prime minister who promised to restore peace.

AP PHOTO



Stock market Asian shares mostly fell yesterday, despite a rally on Wall Street in stocks seen as benefiting the most from Donald Trump's reelection as U.S. president. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 reversed early gains to decline 0.6% in afternoon trading to 39,289.14, weighed down by uncertainty about how Trump's policies, including tariffs, may affect local industries.