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AP PHOTO



South Korea's government said Saturday it will not attend a memorial service near Japan's Sado Island Gold Mines due to disagreements with Tokyo over the event, which stirred longstanding tensions over the abuse of Korean forced laborers at the site before the end of World War II.

AP PHOTO



Indian billionaire Gautam Adani (pictured), one of Asia's richest men, may be facing his biggest challenge yet with an indictment by U.S. prosecutors for alleged fraud and bribery. But it's unclear just how the case will affect his businesses and own future — as well as the Indian economy and government.

AP PHOTO



Australia The only emperor penguin known to have swum from Antarctica to Australia was released at sea 20 days after he waddled ashore on a popular tourist beach, officials said Friday. The adult male was found on Nov. 1 on Ocean Beach sand dunes in the town of Denmark in temperate southwest Australia.

AP PHOTO



Colombia Thousands of Colombians took to the streets on Saturday to oppose the policies of President Gustavo Petro, who accused demonstrators of trying to destabilize the government. Protesters in cities including Bogotá, Medellín and Cali decried a series of proposed health, labor and pensions reforms and accused Petro's administration of corruption.

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AO IEONG PLEDGES TO UPHOLD INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

NADIA SHAW

SECRETARY for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong, committed to advancing the government's initiatives aimed at improving higher education in Macau.

Ao Ieong officiated at the University of Macau's (UM) Ceremony for the Conferment of Higher Degrees Saturday.

"We will continue to harness Macau's distinctive strengths under the 'One country, two systems' policy," she said.

"We will continue to promote industry-academia integration and innovation through the platforms of the state key laboratories to solidify higher education's role in providing talent and technology for high-quality social development," she said.

Furthering this effort, Ieong noted the establishment of research initiatives in the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone and collaborations with Portugal's science and technology department.

Meanwhile, UM rector Yonghua Song also emphasized significant milestones achieved by UM. He noted that over the past decade, UM has made substantial



strides in enhancing educational quality and fostering international collaboration.

"This year, UM made a major breakthrough in cross-border teaching and experimentation in the Cooperation Zone," he said, adding that more than 15,000 students are currently enrolled at the university.

Song expressed pride in UM alumni who have gained international recognition for their achievements in technology and innovation, successfully commercializing research outcomes within the Co-

operation Zone. To the graduates, he offered three key pieces of advice: "First, keep learning and develop interdisciplinary skills. Second, foster resilience in times of adversity and thrive amidst challenges. Third, pursue innovation and shoulder responsibilities."

This year, 1,910 postgraduate students graduated from various faculties at UM.

Of these graduates, 309 earned doctoral degrees, 1,551 received master's degrees, and 50 were awarded postgraduate certificates or diplomas.

EDUCATION

DSEDJ to crack down on fake academic credentials

STAFF REPORTER

In the aftermath of a series of fake academic credentials cases, the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) has announced its plan to coordinate with local higher education institutions and international exam bodies to prevent similar cases in the future.

The director of DSEDJ, Kong Chi Meng, shared the bureau's measures on preventing students from applying to local tertiary education institutions with fraudulent documents, as aired on the Chinese radio show from Teledifusão de Macau (TDM) last week.

This concern is mainly due to the recent discovery



of 24 students submitting fraudulent Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) results in their application for admission at the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST).

Kong said that after a similar series of cases in Hong Kong were disco-

vered in May, the DSEDJ met local higher education institutions at once to discuss the improvement of verification rules as well as the thorough inspection of academic qualifications.

The director said unlicensed education agencies have been employing new methods to carry out frau-

dulent operations.

"They counterfeit certificates, exam results, academic qualifications, and others. The Macau University of Science and Technology found these cases by conducting spot checks following our guidelines. They proactively verified with the relevant Hong Kong exam body. The organization responded that these academic qualifications were fraudulent," he said.

The DSEDJ said it will coordinate with mainland and international exam bodies to create an official verification channel to prevent similar situations.

Representatives from the University of Macau (UM), the Macau University of Tourism (UTM), and the Macau Polytechnic University (MPU) were also present on the radio show, emphasizing that they would revoke the degrees of those who enroll with fake academic credentials.



PUBLIC HOUSING

MONG SON RESIDENTS SET TO MOVE IN THIS WEEK

STAFF REPORTER

STARTING this Wednesday, the Housing Bureau (IH) will facilitate the signing of rental contracts and distribution of keys to eligible households at the newly completed Mong Há Social Housing - Mong Son Building.

The building, situated on Avenida de Venceslau de Moraes, features three blocks ranging from 24 to 35 stories high, encompassing a total of 1,590 social housing units—885 T1 units and 705 T2 units.

The building includes essential social amenities and commercial spaces on its podium levels, which will be operational in phases.

The second and third floors of the building feature recreational and sports facilities.

Additionally, a bus terminal is located on the ground floor while three basement levels provide ample public parking for cars and motorcycles.

The IH said it is confident in the stability of public housing in the region.

During a visit to the housing units on Friday, the expresses strong confidence in the stability of public housing within the region.

"We anticipate that the T1 units will be occupied quickly, with only a few T2 units available, as we have limited households with more than two or three members."

The completion of the Mong Son Building is part of a broader initiative that includes two other social housing projects—Mong Há Social Housing - Mong Tak Building and Toi San Social Housing - Toi Fai Building—bringing the total number of social housing units to 2,868. Furthermore, four additional developments currently under construction in Zone A are expected to provide 4,088 more units.

Since launching permanent applications for social housing, IH has assessed 5,723 households as of November 20, 2024.

Of these, 3,209 have been allocated housing while 1,764 remain on the waiting list. A total of 379 families were disqualified for not meeting requirements, and 371 withdrew their applications voluntarily.

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TRANSPORT

Airport expansion kicks off, targeting long-haul flight routes

RENATO MARQUES

THE renovation and expansion of the Macau International Airport (MIA) officially began with a groundbreaking ceremony last Friday morning.

The large-scale project is expected to take at least six years to conclude. Over part of this period (around two years), the MIA will close the runway at night to accommodate construction work around the facility.

The project will be carried out in three phases and will include the addition of a landfill with an area of more than 129 hectares, increasing the area currently occupied by the airport by about 40%.

According to the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the MIA Company, Chan Weng Hong, the closing of the airport runway will not occur continuously throughout the two-year period (2026 and 2027). Instead, closures will happen over several months, with the exact timing determined by the progress of the construction worked. Chan said closures would be scheduled during off-peak hours to minimize disruption to airport operations.

Chan said the airport expansion is looking to increase the number of flight routes, particularly the introduction of long-haul flights. The goal is to boost passenger traffic at the MIA, making it viable for airlines to launch new routes. The lack of such routes is currently a commercial decision based on the potential low number of passengers on such routes.

"When the companies see that there is a demand for these



routes, they will certainly open them," Chan said, adding that for the time being, the goal is to improve connections to southeast and northeast Asian destinations and increase them from the 42 routes currently on offer.

At the ceremony, the chairman of the Board of Directors of the MIA Company, Ma Iao Hang, described the start of the expansion project as a "new era in the development of civil aviation in the territory," adding that this investment "will increase the SAR's competitiveness beyond borders."

After the project's completion, the MIA should be able to cater for 13 million passengers annually. The current MIA record was reached in 2019 when 9.6 million passengers arrived and departed from the airport. At the time, the figure accounted for a year-on-year increase of 16%.

Staging a post-pandemic recovery, the MIA has handled 6.34 million passengers over the first

ten months of this year.

Concurrently with the groundbreaking ceremony for the expansion project, the Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng, has also inaugurated the new Government VIP Lounge at the Macau International Airport.

TRIPARTY MOU TO ENHANCE COOPERATION ON SAFETY

The Civil Aviation Authority of Macau (AACM) has signed a "Memorandum of Understanding on Close Cooperation in Airworthiness Certification" and the "Joint Operation Management Cooperation Arrangement (JOM)" with the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) and the Civil Aviation Department of Hong Kong SAR (HKCAD).

The MOU was signed Friday in Macau, with the AACM noting, "This marks a new chapter in the tripartite cooperation in the civil aviation field and lays a solid foundation for improving regio-

nal aviation safety and efficiency, demonstrating a vision for closer collaboration in the future."

The MOU on "Close Cooperation in Airworthiness Certification" expands the scope of the original Joint Certification Management Cooperation Agreement (JCM) signed in 2018, aiming to further strengthen communication and collaboration in the field of airworthiness certification between mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau, with a joint commitment to enhancing aviation safety and environmental protection.

As agreed, the three parties will establish and maintain the same or similar airworthiness standards and certification systems for civil aviation products, based on compliance with the airworthiness requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organization and their respective laws and regulations, reducing the economic burden on the

aviation industry.

According to the MOU, the cooperation covers the design approval of aviation products and components, optimization of airworthiness certification-related regulations and standards, and technical exchanges in the management of aircraft fuel.

The signing of the JOM is based on the shared interests of the three parties regarding safe operation management and a common aim to establish a joint safety supervision mechanism without interfering with the obligations each party undertakes under their respective laws and regulations.

The parties will enhance the efficiency of aviation operations in the three areas and achieve resource sharing through information sharing, technical support, and mutual consultation when formulating regulations, policies and guidelines related to this cooperation arrangement.

Lai Chi Vun shipyard reopens in December after renovations

NADIA SHAW

THE Lai Chi Vun shipyard in Coloane is set to reopen in December following extensive renovations, according to Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) director Deland Leong.

The site has been closed since July 1 for a major revitalization project aimed at enhancing the site's facilities and amenities.

Originally reopened in mid-2023, the shipyard's closure was necessary to carry out upgrades, including the addition of new family-friendly facilities and leisure options.

The IC director said the authorities are currently selecting an appropriate reopening date to coincide with a series of year-end activities.

Visitors can expect refreshed presentations highlighting the shipyard's



rich shipbuilding heritage alongside improved amenities.

The revitalization project, a collaboration between the government

and Galaxy Entertainment Group, is set to extend beyond December. Future enhancements planned for 2026 include skate and scooter parks, cafés, bookstores, and an urban garden, with completion expected by the third quarter of that year.

Besides the shipyard renovations, Leong provided updates on the revitalization of Inner Harbour's Piers No. 23 and 25.

Supported by Melco Resorts & Entertainment, Leong said project is progressing well and is expected to be ready for cultural initiatives by early 2025.

The Lai Chi Vun Shipyards area was designated a cultural heritage site in 2018, and these renovations are part of efforts to preserve and enhance its historical significance while improving amenities for visitors.

60% OF 2023 ECONOMIC OUTPUT FROM NON-GAMING INDUSTRIES

In 2023, non-gaming industries in Macau accounted for 61.7% of the total Gross Value Added (GVA). According to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), the GVA of non-gaming sectors rose 20.7% year-on-year to reach MOP220.7 billion, marking an increase of 12.9 percentage points compared to 2019 levels. This growth was primarily driven by a 395% surge in visitor arrivals, which revitalized various service sectors, especially in tourism-related industries. The tertiary sector's overall GVA, which encompasses both gaming and non-gaming activities, experienced a substantial increase of 76.4% year-on-year, elevating its share of the industrial structure to 94.4%.

79 SUSPECTED ILLEGAL WORKERS IN OCTOBER

The Public Security Police Force and the Labour Affairs Bureau conducted operations against illegal workers in October, inspecting 177 locations. The inspections included construction sites, private buildings and commercial establishments. These efforts resulted in the detection of 79 suspected illegal workers and reflect collaboration between law enforcement and labor authorities to address illegal employment effectively.

FUNDING COSTS FALL IN Q3

Funding costs in the banking sector decreased during the third quarter, according to statistics from the Monetary Authority of Macao. At the end of September, the composite interest rates for Macau Pataca (MOP) and Hong Kong Dollar (HKD) fell 11 basis points and 17 basis points respectively, dropping to 2.03% and 3.44% from 2.14% and 3.60% at the end of June. These rates reflect the average costs of funds across all interest-bearing liabilities in Macau's banks.

BEIJING AIMS TO ENHANCE COOPERATION WITH PORTUGAL THROUGH MACAU: TOP LEGISLATURE

CHINA is willing to further consolidate cooperation with Portugal on the platform of Macau and score more cooperation results, said China's top legislator Zhao Leji.

Last week, Zhao made an official visit to Portugal, where he expressed a willingness to strengthen bilateral cooperation. He also emphasized the hope that Portugal would collaborate with China through Macau to contribute positively to the development of China-EU relations.

Zhao, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, met with Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa and Portuguese Prime Minister Luis Montenegro, and held talks with Portuguese Parliament Speaker Jose Pedro Aguiar-Branco during the three-day visit.

The official said that in recent years, under the strategic guidance of the two heads of state, the China-Portugal comprehensive strategic partnership has been deepening



Zhao Leji, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee and Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa in Lisbon, Portugal, Nov. 21

and making solid progress, featuring steady progress in Belt and Road cooperation,

as well as rich cultural and people-to-people exchanges. China appreciates Portugal's

long adherence to the one-China principle and is willing to engage with Portugal based on mutual respect and equality, strengthening their bonds as good friends who respect and trust each other, reliable partners for common development, and close companions in mutual learning between civilizations, Zhao said.

It is hoped that Portugal will continue to play an active role within the European Union (EU) and inject more positive energy into the development of China-EU relations, said Zhao.

Highlighting that this year marks the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and the 25th anniversary of Macau's return to the motherland of China, the Portuguese president, Rebelo de Sousa, said Portugal is willing to enhance high-level exchanges with China, deepen friendly exchanges and strengthen cooperation in such areas as trade, new energy, marine economy and digital economy. LV/XINHUA

COURTS

Premeditated murder: 22-year sentence upheld

NADIA SHAW

A man has been sentenced to 22 years and six months in prison for the premeditated murder of a sex worker in a case that has drawn significant attention from legal experts and the local public.

The ruling was announced by the Office of the President of the Court of Final Appeal (TUI) Nov. 21, following a thorough examination of the evidence presented in court.

The convicted individual, referred to as A, meticulously planned the murder of B, a sex worker, beginning preparations as early as Jan. 29, 2023. Evidence revealed A researched vital points of the human body online and developed a detailed strategy to execute his crime.

On March 10, 2023, he arrived at B's hotel room



armed with an iron hammer. After engaging in sexual activity, A attacked B from behind while she was in the bathroom, striking her multiple times and causing fatal injuries.

"He caught her off guard and struck her head several times from behind with the hammer, thus breaking the victim's left parietal bone," according to the TUI statement.

Following the brutal act, A tried to conceal his crime by disposing of evidence, including B's

personal belongings. The court found A's actions were not impulsive but rather calculated and malicious, warranting severe punishment under Article 129 of the Criminal Code.

Despite his conviction, A appealed the sentence, arguing it was excessive and claiming legal guidelines had been disregarded. However, the court upheld the original ruling, emphasizing that A's premeditation and intent demonstrated a profound disregard for human life.

IAS

NEW GUIDELINES TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

NADIA SHAW

THE Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) is set to implement new guidelines next year aimed at safeguarding children affected by domestic violence.

IAS deputy director Tang Yuk Wa announced the initiative during an interview with TDM Chinese radio, highlighting the importance of expert collaboration in drafting these guidelines.

The proposed framework seeks to enhance the response to domestic violence cases involving minors, ensuring they receive the necessary support and protection.

Tang noted the guidelines will help caregivers manage children's emotional well-being following traumatic experiences.

Additionally, the document will outline procedures for medical personnel when children require hospital visits due to domestic violence.

Recent statistics reveal a concerning trend in domestic violence cases in Macau.

The bureau recorded 42 suspected cases in the first nine months of this year, a figure that has remained relatively stable over recent years, fluctuating between 38 and 46 cases annually since 2019. Notably, there was a significant spike in 2021, with 81 reported cases. However, the overall monthly average of suspected incidents has decreased from 10.3 at the onset of the domestic violence law in 2016 to just 3.3 last year.

Despite these encouraging trends, challenges remain.

IAS collaborates with various community organizations to deliver family services across different districts. This localized approach aims to ensure families receive timely and appropriate assistance based on their unique circumstances.

SPORTS

MotoSurf champions eager to make waves in inaugural competition

VICTORIA CHAN

As the action unfolded on the waves of Hac Sa beach, competitors at first MotoSurf World Championship not only showcased their exceptional skills but also immersed themselves in the sights of the city.

Among the participants were Matyas Novotny, the reigning MotoSurf World Champion, and Lukas Zahorsky, a six-time world champion, who shared their impressions of Macau, a city that has left a lasting impact on these water sport enthusiasts.

Co-hosted by Melco Resorts & Entertainment and the Macau MotoSurf Association, the event highlighted Macau's presence in international water sports and culture. This event, which took place from Nov. 22 to 24, attracted over 120 elite racers from 22 countries and regions, including the Czech Republic, China, Korea and local talent from Macau.

Seasoned champions like Lukas Zahorsky, a six-time world champion in motorized surfing, have brought a nostalgic touch to the championship.

Zahorsky, who recently returned to racing after a brief retirement, expressed his delight at returning. He told the Times, "I just came out of retirement from racing, back to the elite class, and I'm here to have fun and see my fellow riders race again. I have no expectations; I just want to try to enjoy it as much as I can." His emphasis on camaraderie and joy underscores the spirit that drives these athletes.

Matyas Novotny, this year's

VICTORIA CHAN

Lukas Zahorsky and Matyas Novotny



world champion who is experiencing Macau for the first time, praised the city's beauty, drawing comparisons to iconic landmarks like the Eiffel Tower and Big Ben. Reflecting on the beach conditions, Novotny appreciated the presence of waves on the track, which he found advantageous during competition. His optimistic outlook for the championship was clear. "The final is all that's

ahead, and I just want to enjoy the experience," he said.

Echoing Novotny's sentiments, Zahorsky described Macau as a "beautiful" and "astonishing" city.

In addition to the thrilling competition, the MotoSurf World Championship offers participants a chance to immerse themselves in the unique cultural blend of Macau.

Zahorsky expressed his excitement

for the gala dinner planned for the evening, describing it as an "Asian Vegas style" experience that he is eagerly anticipating. "It's going to be great," he said.

The event not only serves as a thrilling spectacle but also holds significance as a qualifier for the 2025 Chengdu World Games, with the women's category champion securing the prestigious first spot.

WOMAN ARRESTED FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING IN MACAU

Macau authorities have arrested a 37-year-old Hong Kong woman on suspicion of drug trafficking, seizing cocaine and methamphetamine worth over MOP91,000. The arrest followed intelligence about someone smuggling drugs from Hong Kong to Macau for nightclub patrons. Further investigation led to the discovery of more drugs in the suspect's rented hotel room with 24.26 grams of cocaine and 1.43 grams of methamphetamine seized. The police are now tracing the source and investigating the extent of the suspect's involvement in the illicit trade.

CYCLING RACE WRAPS UP, CUSTOMS DELAYS CLEAR AT MACAU PORT

The 2024 Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Road Cycling Race concluded successfully yesterday, with customs clearance at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge resuming around 12:30 p.m. after a six-hour suspension. Over 1,000 travelers faced delays as they queued for entry, unaware of the temporary closure that began at 6:30 a.m. Participants and spectators were advised to consider alternative transport options due to expected congestion. Despite the disruptions, many expressed satisfaction with the event's organization and order. The race, which covered 230 kilometers across Zhuhai, Hong Kong and Macau, proceeded smoothly.

CORPORATE BITS

Over 40 team members complete Sands China's responsible gaming training



Over 40 team members of Sands China recently completed the annual advanced responsible gaming training program from October 21 to October 22 at The Londoner Macao. This initiative supports the Macau government's

"Seeking Help for Winning the Future" responsible gaming efforts.

Participants were trained to become Responsible Gaming Ambassadors, enhancing their understanding of problem gambling and respon-

sible gaming practices. Since 2013, Sands China has offered this specialized training in addition to its comprehensive responsible gaming program for its 26,000 team members.

Led by expert Professor Bo J. Bernhard from UNLV, the training covered the history of problem gambling, recognition of gambling disorders, and intervention techniques. Professor Davis Fong from the University of Macau provided insights into local policies, while senior counselors from Sheng Kung Hui shared practical support strategies.

The 46 participants received certificates and Responsible Gaming Ambassador pins, equipping them to promote responsible gaming across their departments.

Wynn hosts fitness and wellness event



Wynn Macau hosted the "Beyond the Gym: Global Perspectives on Fitness & Wellness" event last week, gathering over 100 guests, including representatives from the Health Bureau, universities from Macau and Hong Kong, fitness clubs, and

local sports businesses. The gathering aimed to explore emerging trends in the health industry and position Macao as a rising health and wellness destination.

Craig Fullalove, CFO and CAO of Wynn Macau, emphasized the importance of

holistic wellness, which encompasses mental resilience and sustainable practices. "This seminar brings together the foremost minds in fitness, health, and sustainable well-being to promote the development of the health industry. Wellness extends beyond physical health to encompass mental resilience, personal growth, and sustainable practices that contribute to a thriving community," he said.

The event featured two engaging panel discussions moderated by Ed Haynes, founder and CEO of Coastal Fitness HK, and Cintia Martins, Macau Global Wellness Day Ambassador.

ECONOMY

Tariff hikes will backfire, and gov't can manage such 'external shocks'

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

HIGHER tariffs on Chinese exports will backfire, just increasing prices paid by consumers, while China can manage to weather the impact of such "external shocks," a senior Commerce Ministry official said Friday in Beijing.

Responding to a reporter's question about U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's plan to impose 60% tariffs on imports from China, Vice Commerce Minister Wang Shouwen said that would "not solve the country's own trade deficit problem."

"On the contrary, it pushes up the prices of the country's imports from China and other countries," Wang said during a news conference, noting that increased prices add to inflation.

China is willing to talk with the U.S. on a basis of mutual respect, for the benefit of both countries, Wang said.

"We believe that if China and



the U.S. can maintain a stable, healthy, and sustainable development trend in economic and trade relations, it will be beneficial (to everyone)," he said.

Wang noted that China's total foreign trade including imports and exports reached 36 trillion

yuan (nearly \$5 trillion) in January-October, up about 5% from the same period of 2023.

Despite the upbeat message, the threat of higher tariffs, following on increases during Trump's first administration and additional hikes in import

duties by the administration of President Joe Biden, threatens to add to Beijing's woes as China's ruling Communist Party struggles to revive growth and reverse a downturn in the property market and deal with mounting local government

debts and high employment among Chinese youths.

A 60% duty on Chinese imports could shave off 2.5 percentage points, or about half, of China's projected economic growth, according to an analysis published earlier this year by UBS.

During Friday's news conference Wang and other officials outlined ways that China is promoting expanding trade and support for coping with climate change.

Such measures include streamlining customs and visa requirements. China allows visa-free travel for citizens of 29 countries, including France and Germany, and the number of foreign visitors, which plunged during the pandemic, has jumped this year.

Of the nearly 8.2 million foreign visitors in July-September, more than half entered using visa-free channels, said Tong Xuejun, an official with the Foreign Ministry's consular department. **MDT/AP**

IMMIGRATION

Beijing is expanding visa-free entry to more countries in bid to boost economy

CHINA announced Friday that it would expand visa-free entry to nine more countries as it seeks to boost tourism and business travel to help revive a sluggish economy.

Starting Nov. 30, travelers from Bulgaria, Romania, Malta, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Estonia, Latvia and Japan will be able to enter China for up to 30 days without a visa, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said.

That will bring to 38 the number of countries that have been granted visa-free access since last year. Only three countries had visa-free access previously, and theirs had been eliminated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The addition of Japan appears to reflect a recent willingness on China's part to improve ties, which have soured in part over more strident talk from Tokyo on the Taiwan issue. The two



countries reached a deal in September in their dispute over the release into the sea of treated but still radioactive water from the destroyed Fukushima nuclear power plant.

Japan was one of the three countries with visa-free entry before the pandemic, and the government had repeatedly requested an early resumption, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi told reporters in Tokyo.

"We hope the visa exemp-

tion measure announced by the Chinese side will contribute to further smooth our exchanges between Japan and China," he said.

The permitted length of stay for visa-free entry is being increased from the previous 15 days, Lin said, and people participating in exchanges will be eligible for the first time. China has been pushing people-to-people exchange between students, academics and others to try to improve its sometimes strained rela-

tions with other countries.

China strictly restricted entry during the pandemic and ended its restrictions much later than most other countries. It restored the previous visa-free access for citizens of Brunei and Singapore in July 2023, and then expanded visa-free entry to six more countries — France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Malaysia — on Dec. 1 of last year.

The program has since been expanded in tranches. Some countries have announced visa-free entry for Chinese citizens, notably Thailand, which wants to bring back Chinese tourists.

For the three months from July through September this year, China recorded 8.2 million entries by foreigners, of which 4.9 million were visa-free, the official Xinhua News Agency said, quoting a Foreign Ministry consular official. **MDT/AP**

TAIWAN'S LAI WILL VISIT ALLIES IN SOUTH PACIFIC AS CHINA SEEKS INROADS

TAIWANESE leader Lai Ching-te will visit the self-governing island's allies in the South Pacific, where rival China has been seeking diplomatic inroads.

The Foreign Ministry announced Friday that Lai would travel from Nov. 30 to Dec. 6 to the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Palau.

The trip comes against the background of Chinese loans, grants and security cooperation treaties with Pacific island nations that have aroused major concern in the U.S., New Zealand, Australia and others over Beijing's moves to assert military, political and economic control over the region.

Taiwan has yet to confirm whether Lai will make a stop in Hawaii, although such visits are routine and unconfirmed Taiwanese media reports say he will stay

for more than one day.

Under pressure from China, which claims Taiwan as its own territory and threatens to annex it by force if needed, Taiwan has just 12 formal diplomatic allies. However, it retains strong contacts with dozens of other nations, including the U.S., its main source of diplomatic and military support.

China has sought to whittle away traditional alliances in the South Pacific, signing a security agreement with the Solomon Islands shortly after it broke ties with Taiwan and winning over Nauru just weeks after Lai's election in January. Since then, China has been pouring money into infrastructure projects in its South Pacific allies, as it has around the world, in exchange for political support. **MDT/AP**

LAOS

Deadly alcohol poisoning casts shadow over the Laotian backpacker town

INTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI,
VANG VIENG

A little town known as a backpacker paradise in northern Laos has come under spotlight for a mass poisoning case that has killed at least six tourists and potentially injured scores of others.

News broke earlier this week that two Australian teens became critically ill after a night out drinking in the town of Vang Vieng. They died in Thai hospitals, with one confirmed case of methanol poisoning. A British woman was also confirmed dead. An American and two Danes also died, though their exact causes of death have not been released. A New Zealander has been sickened.

Since then, many tourists have become worried as it's unclear how many have been affected, said Neil Farmiloe, a New Zealander who owns a restaurant in the town.

The incident has stirred up dark memories of the town once known for reckless partying involving young backpackers. But despite the tragedy, the town, especially at night, was packed by visitors in its main neighborhood bustling with bars, restaurants and food stalls. During the daytime, many kayaks floated along the river, with tourists shouting and splashing water at each other.

Frida Svedberg left Sweden five weeks ago for her big Southeast Asia trip with no firm return plan. She said she had heard about the news just before she arrived in Laos and has been bombarded



with messages from concerned family members and friends. She still went ahead with her original plan to spend three nights in the town. She found it as beautiful as expected.

"Obviously it's like a famous backpacker place. You go from Thailand Luang Prabang and then to Vang Vieng and then you keep going. I've just heard good things about it and it's where most people go," the 24-year-old said.

Vang Vieng used to be more dangerous

Landlocked Laos, a one-party communist state, is one of Southeast Asia's poorest nations and a popular tourist destination, particularly Vang Vieng.

Soutjai Xayphankhaun, who has run his Sout Jai Guesthouse in Vang Vieng for 17 years, said the town back in 2005-2006 started

to become popular among European backpackers, who were attracted by serene nature and activities like river tubing, where tourists sit on a tube and float along the Nam Song River, stopping to party at many different bars on the banks.

It could get rowdy with cheap booze, illegal drugs and river sports sometimes turning deadly. People drowned or took a fatal blow after jumping into the river on a rope swing. In 2011, the town recorded 27 deaths related to river activities, forcing the government to step in with regulations.

After that, Farmiloe said Vang Vieng has been receiving much more eclectic groups of tourists who enjoy a wider range of activities aside from nightlife. There are still a lot of young Western backpackers, but the town is also vi-

sited by many Chinese and South Koreans.

Tour agencies scattered along the main streets advertised a range of packages offering the clear turquoise water of the Blue Lagoon, serene mountaintop views and many different caves. Those more adventurous try kayaking, zip line, paragliding or hot air balloons. Tubing is still there, but with far fewer riverbank bars to visit than in the past.

Locals worry the incident could hit tourism

Vang Vieng received more than 600,000 tourists in 2023, and expected to see even more this year, the state-owned Laos News Agency quoted the district governor as saying earlier this year.

But with the latest tourist deaths, guesthouse owner Soutjai is a little worried.

"It's about tourists and the confidence of tourists. The news was all around the world. There will definitely be an impact," he said.

Swedish tourist Anton Honkanen said what happened did affect his experience.

"I think it destroys the value of backpacking a little bit. Because everyone just enjoys this time. Maybe meeting some new people at the hostels, taking some drinks with all kinds of people from all around the world. And now I won't do it today because of the poisoning," he said.

Svedberg, however, said what happened was unfortunate and shouldn't stop people from coming. "Things can happen anywhere, everywhere. So I think it doesn't have to affect tourism. Just be cautious."

The Nana Backpacker Hostel, where the two Australian teens stayed, shut its gate on Saturday. It had not been allowed to take new guests since early this week and was accommodating the remaining visitors until Friday. Its manager and owner, who are Vietnamese, have been detained for questioning by the Lao police.

Methanol is sometimes added to mixed drinks at disreputable bars as a cheaper alternative to ethanol, but can cause severe poisoning or death. It is also a byproduct of poorly distilled homebrew liquor, and could have found its way into bar drinks inadvertently.

The Laotian government on Saturday officially acknowledged the case and promised to bring the perpetrators to justice. **MDT/AP**

PHILIPPINES

Vice president publicly threatens to have the president assassinated

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

PHILIPPINE Vice President Sara Duterte said Saturday she has contracted an assassin to kill the president, his wife and the House of Representatives speaker if she herself is killed, in a brazen public threat that she warned was not a joke.

Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin referred



Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte

the "active threat" against President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to an elite presidential guards force "for immediate proper action." It was not imme-

diately clear what actions would be taken against the vice president.

The Presidential Security Command boosted Marcos' security and said it considered the vice president's threat, which was "made so brazenly in public," a national security issue.

The presidential security force said it was "coordinating with law enforcement agencies to

detect, deter, and defend against any and all threats to the president and the first family."

Duterte, a lawyer, later tried to walk back her remarks and said they were not an actual threat but only an expression of concern over an unspecified threat to her own life.

"If I expressed the concern, they will say that's a threat to the life of the president?" she said.

"Why would I kill him if not for revenge from the grave? There is no reason for me to kill him. What's the benefit for me?" Duterte told journalists.

Under the Philippine

penal code, such public remarks may constitute a crime of threatening to inflict a wrong on a person or his family and is punishable by a jail term and fine.

The Philippine Constitution says that if a president dies, sustains a permanent disability, is removed from office or resigns, the vice president takes over and serves the rest of the term.

Marcos ran with Duterte as his vice-presidential running mate in the May 2022 elections and both won with landslide victories on a campaign call of national unity. **MDT/AP**

S. Korea says Russia supplied air defense missiles to N. Korea in return for its troops

HYUNG-JIN KIM & KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

RUSSIA has supplied air defense missile systems to North Korea in exchange for sending its troops to support Russia's war efforts against Ukraine, a top South Korean official said Friday.

The U.S., South Korea and Ukraine say North Korea sent more than 10,000 troops to Russia in October, some of whom have recently begun engaging in combat on the front lines. North Korea's troop deployment threatens to escalate the war, and what Russia could give to the North in return has been a source of rampant international speculation.

The most alarming development for South Korea and the U.S. would be Russia transferring sophisticated weapons technology that can enhance North Korea's nuclear-capable missiles targeting its rivals. Many experts say, though, that it is unlikely Russia would do this in the initial stage of the North's troop deployment.

Shin Wonsik, national security adviser for South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, told an SBS TV program Friday that South Korea has found Russia provided missiles and other equipment to help it reinforce its air defense network for Pyongyang, the capital. Shin didn't say what specific missiles Russia gave to North Korea.

Lee Illwoo, an expert with



Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un

the Korea Defense Network in South Korea, said that Russia has likely sent S-400 long-range surface-to-air missiles, launchers and ground-based radar systems. He said that North Korea is capable of building shorter-range surface-to-air missiles on its own.

The S-400 missile, with a range of 400 kilometers, is considered one of Russia's most advanced anti-aircraft weapons. But Lee questioned how significantly it can boost Pyongyang's air defense, saying Russian air defense systems have failed to effectively deal with Ukrainian drone assaults.

Many observers say North Korea has likely felt the urgent need to boost its air defense capabilities after it last month accused South Korea of flying drones to scatter propaganda leaflets over Pyongyang. North

Korea threatened to take military action if leaflets were again dropped. South Korea's military has refused to confirm whether or not it was behind the alleged drone flights.

Kim Dae Young, a military expert at the Korea Research Institute for National Strategy, said it's possible that the air defense systems North Korea acquired from Russia could include counter-drone equipment.

Kim said that Pyongyang's outdated air defense system would need years of improvement and potentially huge external help to cope with the superior air forces of South Korea and the United States.

Shin said Russia has also appeared to have given economic assistance to North Korea and various military technologies, including those needed for the North's efforts

to build a reliable space-based surveillance system. Shin didn't say whether Russia has already transferred sensitive nuclear and missile technology to North Korea.

During a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un last year, Russian President Vladimir Putin already said that Moscow was willing to help the North build satellites. North Korea put its first spy satellite into orbit in November last year, but foreign experts question whether that satellite can produce militarily meaningful imagery. The North's attempt to launch a second spy satellite failed in May.

North Korea and Russia have been sharply boosting their military and other cooperation in the face of separate confrontations with the U.S. and its allies. Last month, South Korea's spy agency said that North Korea had sent more than 13,000 containers of artillery, missiles and other conventional arms to Russia since August 2023 to replenish its dwindling weapons stockpiles. The National Intelligence Service said last week that North Korea had recently sent additional artillery systems to Russia.

Earlier this week, North Korea and Russia reached a new agreement for expanding economic cooperation following high-level talks in Pyongyang this week, according to the countries' state-run media. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1963 JOHN F KENNEDY IS LAID TO REST

The funeral of the assassinated President, John F. Kennedy, has taken place in Washington.

An estimated 800,000 Americans lined the streets to watch the coffin's procession from the Capitol, where the president's body had lain in state since yesterday.

The crowd stood in silence, punctuated only by the sound of weeping, as the funeral procession made its way towards St. Matthew's Cathedral in central Washington.

The coffin, draped with the Stars and Stripes, lay on a gun carriage drawn by six grey horses. A black riderless horse pranced along behind.

Mr. Kennedy's widow, Jacqueline Kennedy, and her two children, three-year-old John Kennedy junior, and five-year-old Caroline, rode behind in a black car, accompanied by his brothers, Robert and Edward.

Then came the long procession of guests, representing every continent in the world in one of the most distinguished gatherings of foreign dignitaries ever assembled in the history of the United States.

They included, for Britain, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, and the Leader of the Opposition, Harold Wilson.

President de Gaulle of France was among them, as was President de Valera of Ireland, Chancellor Erhard of West Germany, and the Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie.

Also among the mourners, in a poignant recognition of the dead president's efforts to foster peace around the world, was the Soviet first deputy Prime Minister, Anastas Mikoyan, representing Nikolai Khrushchev.

The requiem mass at St. Matthew's was led by Cardinal Cushing of Boston.

It included a reading of the entire inaugural address, delivered by John F. Kennedy in January 1961, with perhaps his most famous words: "Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country."

As the coffin left the church after the ceremony, three-year-old John Kennedy Junior was seen to step forward for a moment and put his hand to his forehead in what appeared to be a childish salute.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

John F. Kennedy was assassinated on 22 November in Dallas, Texas.

The man accused of his murder, Lee Harvey Oswald, was himself shot dead by nightclub owner Jack Ruby, on the day before the president's funeral.

The circumstances around the president's death remain controversial to this day.

Jacqueline Kennedy was re-married in 1968, to the Greek shipping magnate, Aristotle Onassis. She died of cancer in 1994.

The Kennedys were to suffer so many tragedies in the years which followed that the family was said to be cursed.

John F. Kennedy's brother, Robert Kennedy, was shot dead in June 1968, while campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination.

His other brother, Ted Kennedy, ruined his chances of running for president after he was involved in a car accident in which he apparently left his passenger to die.

John Kennedy Junior, the boy who saluted his dead father, was also to die young, when the light aircraft he was piloting plunged into the Atlantic in 1999. His wife and sister-in-law also died.

US-CANADA

Two convicted in human smuggling case after Indian family froze to death

A jury convicted two men on Friday of charges related to human smuggling for their roles in an international operation that led to the deaths of a family of Indian migrants who froze while trying to cross the Canada-U.S. border during a 2022 blizzard.

Harshkumar Ramanlal Patel, 29, an Indian national who prose-

cutors say went by the alias "Dirty Harry," and Steve Shand, 50, an American from Florida, were part of a sophisticated illegal operation that has brought increasing numbers of Indians into the U.S., prosecutors said.

They were each convicted on four counts related to human smuggling, including cons-

piracy to bring migrants into the country illegally.

"This trial exposed the unthinkable cruelty of human smuggling and of those criminal organizations that value profit and greed over humanity," Minnesota U.S. Attorney Andy Luger said.

"To earn a few thousand dollars, these traffickers put men, women

and children in extraordinary peril leading to the horrific and tragic deaths of an entire family. Because of this unimaginable greed, a father, a mother and two children froze to death in sub-zero temperatures on the Minnesota-Canadian border," Luger added.

The most serious counts carry maximum

sentences of up to 20 years in prison, the U.S. Attorney's Office told The Associated Press before the trial. But federal sentencing guidelines rely on complicated formulas. Luger said Friday that various factors will be considered in determining what sentences prosecutors will recommend. **MDT/AP**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Stay focused to avoid hidden obstacles. Discipline and experience pay off. Stick to tested tricks. Don't push yourself too hard or risk an accident.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Prioritize family, love and fun. Keep your sense of humor and a flexible outlook. Things may not go as planned. Wear sensible shoes.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Domestic matters have your attention. Lay low and take it easy at home. Make repairs while still small. Research for best materials, quality and value.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Edit your words carefully. Verify facts before sharing them. Sift through details carefully. Avoid an embarrassing mistake. Extra eyes are helpful. Editing pays off.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Obstacles, irritations or hurdles could impact your finances. Stick to solid income sources. Avoid distractions and silly arguments. Hold out for the best deal.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Stick to reliable routines and tune out the noise. Expect the unexpected. Look for silver linings. Listen to someone who sees your blind spots.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Wait for better conditions. Postpone what you can. It's not a good time to travel. Keep a low profile to rest and recharge.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Misunderstandings or chaos could stir up a group project. Adapt around changes. Clarify what's needed. Keep your side of the bargain. Share support and solutions.

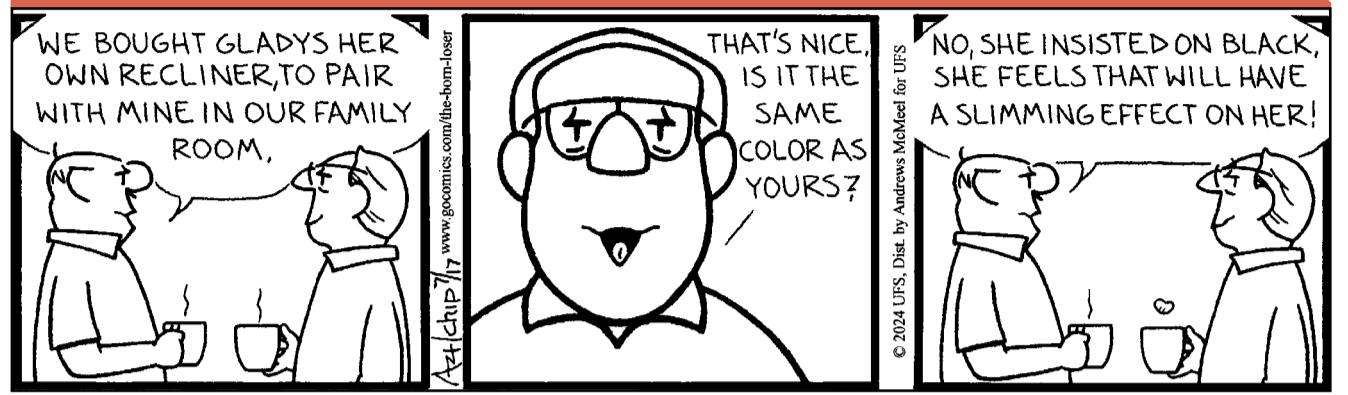
SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Keep your professional objective in mind. Go for substance over symbolism. A disagreement about priorities could slow the action. Listen and consider. Compromise.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Wishful thinking may not pan out. Words can be deceptive. Make arrangements and run a reality check. Take decisive action to reach your destination.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Stay frugal and postpone gratification for now. Hold onto what you have. Work together with your partner to find cost-effective solutions. Avoid risky business.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Collaborate with your partner for a wider perspective. Reality could clash with your fantasy. What you get isn't what you expected. Brainstorm for solutions.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	3	7	rain
Changchun	-1	3	rain
Chengdu	8	13	cloudy
Chongqing	11	12	fine
Fuzhou	16	22	rain
Guangzhou	17	23	rain
Guiyang	8	9	rain
Haikou	20	24	rain
Hangzhou	10	18	rain
Harbin	-8	5	rain
Hefei	8	10	rain
Nanjing	9	14	rain
Shanghai	12	19	rain
Taipei	19	25	cloudy
Wuhan	10	11	rain
Hong Kong	20	24	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	-9	-4	cloudy
Frankfurt	9	13	rain
Paris	7	17	rain
London	6	12	sunny
New York	8	12	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Evil spirit; 6- Arm or leg; 10- Drive-___ window; 14- Once ___ time...; 15- Bailiwick; 16- Back; 17- Goddess of tillage; 18- Fruit-filled pie; 19- Acquire through merit; 20- Vietnamese New Year; 21- Glisten; 23- Gutter site; 24- One more time; 26- Lauder of cosmetics; 27- Edible nut; 29- Fall guy; 31- Hipbones; 32- Heavy metric weight; 33- The Lion; 36- In spite of; 40- Porker's place; 41- Bluffer's ploy; 42- Get an ___ effort; 43- Succinct; 44- "Unto the Sons" author; 46- Pickle juice; 48- Seine spot; 49- Roofing stone; 50- Slatted wooden box; 52- Up to, informally; 55- Viscount's superior; 56- Abominable Snowman; 57- Romantic rendezvous; 59- Captain Hook's sidekick; 60- Paradise lost; 61- Greased; 62- Sun. speeches; 63- Tree house; 64- Curved moldings;

DOWN 1- Conduit; 2- Blunted blade; 3- Death rate; 4- Single unit; 5- Capital of the Bahamas; 6- Caesar's tongue; 7- OPEC member; 8- A ___ formality; 9- Baseball club; 10- Agreement; 11- Hoist; 12- Street show; 13- Coffee dispensers; 22- Strike; 23- Ruhr city; 25- Chew on; 26- Sicilian smoker; 27- Triumphs; 28- Thanks ___!; 29- Sheriff's band; 30- Poker pot starter; 32- Not that; 33- Habits; 34- Slaughter of baseball; 35- Monster; 37- Cara or Castle; 38- Shipping deduction; 39- Surrealist Salvador; 43- Names; 44- Rat-a- --; 45- "Am not!" rejoinder; 46- Hold responsible; 47- Less common or less cooked; 48- Enamel; 49- Cong. meeting; 50- Relinquish; 51- AAA suggestions; 53- Aha!; 54- Former Fords; 56- Strong desire; 58- Tractor-trailer;

Friday's solution

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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

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VA FAT (Taipa Village)
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77.10 m² / 830 ft² | HKD3,980,000



Nam Long (Taipa Village)
2 bed 1 bath
59.92 m² / 645 ft² | HKD3,650,000



Jade Garden (Taipa)
4 bed 3 bath
379.04 m² / 4,080 ft² | HKD 11,880,000



Ocean Garden Cattleya Court (Taipa)
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FORMULA 1

Verstappen captures 4th F1 championship after Mercedes sweep of Las Vegas Grand Prix

JENNA FRYER, LAS VEGAS

MAX Verstappen cruised to a fourth consecutive Formula 1 championship on Saturday night by finishing fifth in the Las Vegas Grand Prix.

Verstappen needed only to finish ahead of Lando Norris of McLaren to give Red Bull a fourth straight driver championship. The Dutchman started fifth but was already up to second by the 10th lap around the street circuit that includes the famed Las Vegas Strip.

Norris, who had to score at least three points more than Verstappen to extend the championship fight, finished sixth. Verstappen needed only to finish higher than Norris to win the title, which he did with two races remaining on the season.

He ended the race up 63 points over Norris with two events remaining this season.



AP PHOTO

“Max Verstappen you are a four-time world champion,” team principal Christian Horner said on the radio. “That is a phenomenal, phenomenal achievement. You can be incredibly proud of yourself as we are.”

Verstappen, only the sixth driver in F1 history to win at least four titles, sounded unusually emotional on the radio.

“Oh My God, what a season. Four times. Thank you, thank

you guys,” he said. “We gave it all.”

The race was won, meanwhile, by George Russell who was followed by Lewis Hamilton in the first 1-2 sweep for the Mercedes drivers since 2022. Hamilton came from 10th on the grid — two weeks after a demoralizing race in Brazil — to capture his podium finish.

The duo crossed the finish line under a checkered

flag waved by actor Sylvester Stallone.

Carlos Sainz Jr. finished third for Ferrari as the constructor championship remains a tight battle between leader McLaren and Ferrari. Charles Leclerc, his teammate, was fourth. Red Bull had won the title that pays roughly \$150 million in prize money the last two seasons but has slipped to third in the standings.

But that championship battle appears headed to next month's season finale in Abu Dhabi. McLaren has a 24-point lead over Ferrari headed into this weekend's race in Qatar after Norris and Oscar Piastri finished sixth and seventh in Las Vegas.

“Max deserved to win it. He drove a better season than I did, he deserved it more than anyone else,” Norris said. “Max just doesn't have a weakness. When he's got the best car, he dominates and when he's not got the best car, he's

still just there always.”

Verstappen, meanwhile, made easy work of Norris after a season where the McLaren driver pushed him harder than he'd been challenged since Verstappen's first title in 2021.

“To stand here as a four-time world champion is something I never thought would be possible,” Verstappen told actor Terry Crews, who moderated the podium news conference held in front of the Bellagio's famed fountains.

“It was a very challenging season and I had to be calm. I think this season taught me a lot of lessons and we handled it well as a team, so that of course makes it a very special and beautiful season.”

Verstappen, who is 27, won 19 races last year. He opened this season on a tear but a long winless streak from June until Brazil two weeks ago has him with only eight wins, his fewest since 2020. **MDT/AP**

AD

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Urology : Dr. Lo Kwong Yin Richard, Dr. Zhao Yun Qiao

Paediatric Surgery : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

Paediatrics : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

Obstetrics & Gynaecology : Dr. Fong Kuan Io

Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery : Dr. Lam U Lin

Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

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OPINION

The Conversation

Paula M. Carbone, USC



FAST FASHION MAY SEEM CHEAP, BUT IT'S TAKING A COSTLY TOLL ON THE PLANET – AND ON MILLIONS OF YOUNG CUSTOMERS

Fast fashion is everywhere – in just about every mall, in the feeds of influencers on social media promoting over-consumption, and in ads constantly popping up online.

Its focus on the continual production of new clothing is marked by speedy fashion cycles that give it its name. Fast fashion is intended to quickly copy high-end designs, but with low-quality materials, resulting in poorly made clothing intended to be worn once or twice before being thrown away.

One of fast fashion's leading companies, Zara, has a mission to put clothes in stores 15 days after the initial design. Another, Shein, adds up to 2,000 new items to its website daily.

While others in the fashion industry are working toward more sustainable clothing, fast fashion is focused on profit. The market's value was estimated at about US\$100 billion in 2022 and growing quickly. It's a large part of the reason global clothing production doubled from 2000 to 2014.

The big winners in this game are the corporations. The industry has a reputation for exploiting workers and for excessive pollution and extraordinary waste. Consumers are pulled into an unhealthy, spiraling pressure to buy more as cheap clothes fall apart fast.

Fast fashion also has a growing impact on the global climate. It is responsible for an estimated 8% to 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and its emissions are projected to grow quickly as the industry expands.

I teach courses that explore fast fashion and sustainability. The industry's growth seems unstoppable – but a combination of legislation and willpower might just rein it in.

Understanding the harm

About 60% of fast-fashion items are made from synthetic textiles derived from plastics and chemicals that start their life as fossil fuels. When this synthetic clothing is laundered or thrown in landfills to decompose, it can release microplastics into the environment. Microplastics contain chemicals including phthalates and bisphenol A that can affect the health of humans and animals.

Natural fibers have their own impacts on the environment. Growing cotton requires large quantities of water, and pesticides can run off from farmlands into streams, rivers and bays. Water is also used in chemically treating and dyeing textiles. A 2005 United Nations-led report on cotton's water use estimated that, on average, a single cotton T-shirt requires about 700 gallons of water from crop to clothing rack, with about 300 gallons of that water used for irrigation.

The chemicals used to process textiles for clothing for the fashion industry also contaminate wastewater with heavy metals, such as cadmium and lead, and toxic dyes. And that wastewater ends up in waterways in many countries, affecting the environment and wildlife.

Fast fashion's high output also creates literally mountains of waste. More than 90 million tons of textile waste ends up in landfills globally each year, by one estimate, adding to greenhouse gases as it slowly decomposes. Only a small percentage of discarded clothing is recycled.

From fashionista to environmental guardian

In many cultures, people's self-perception is intimately connected to fashion choices, reflecting culture and alliances.

The allure of buying new items comes from many sources. Influencers on social media play into FOMO – the fear of missing out. Cheap items can also lead to impulse buys.

Research shows that shopping can also create a euphoric sense of happiness. However, fast fashion's speed and marketing can also train consumers into "psychological obsolescence," causing them to dislike purchases they previously enjoyed, so they quickly replace them with new purchases. [Abridged]

A MAN CALLED 911 FOR HELP DURING A HOME INVASION. LAS VEGAS POLICE FATALLY SHOT HIM

THE BUZZ

A Las Vegas man called for police help during a home invasion before an officer fatally shot him, according to authorities and 911 calls.

Brandon Durham called 911 early Nov. 12, saying he was hiding with his 15-year-old daughter after someone broke into his home, Assistant Sheriff Dori Koren said.

Durham is heard pleading with the dispatcher to "send someone ASAP" in audio recordings obtained this week by KVVU-TV in Las Vegas.

Koren identified the officer who shot Durham as Alexander

Bookman, 26.

Bookman was one of the first officers to arrive and kicked in the front door. Koren said the officer found Durham in a hallway struggling over a knife with the intruder.

In a short clip of body camera video released by police, the officer yells for them to drop the knife, then fires one round. Durham and the intruder both fall to the floor, then the officer moves closer and fires five more rounds while standing over them, the video shows.

Durham, 43, died in his home.

AP PHOTO



Ketut Nita Wahyuni

INDONESIA

YOUNG GIRLS DANCE IN A TRADITIONAL HINDU FESTIVAL THREATENED BY CHANGING TIMES

FIRDIA LISNAWATI, BALI, INDONESIA

KETUT Nita Wahyuni lifts her folded hands prayerfully to her forehead as a priest leads the temple gathering. The 11-year-old is preparing to perform the Rejang Dewa, a sacred Balinese dance.

The rituals are part of the two-week-long Ngusaba Goreng, a thanksgiving festival for a rich harvest. "Ngusaba" means gathering of the gods and goddesses.

There are various forms of rejang performed during different occasions and rituals in Bali. Wahyuni and her friends have an important role during the festival. Rejang Dewa and Rejang Pucuk, performed on two separate days, are reserved only for girls who have not yet attained puberty.

"Being a rejang started when she lost her tooth until pre-puberty. We believe they are still pure to present dance to God during this time," her father Nyoman Su-

brata says.

As traditional chief of Geriana Kauh village, Subrata says he is proud to see his daughter participating in this ritual. Subrata is committed to the responsibilities of maintaining religious traditions that have passed down through generations.

Balinese Hinduism brings together Hindu philosophy and local animist traditions with some Buddhist influence. It is a way of life, building a connection between the people, their heritage, and the divine.

A day later, Wahyuni's mother Kadek Krisni has picked fresh flowers from their garden and prepared an elaborate head-dress while her daughter was in school. Today is Rejang Pucuk day, one of the most sacred forms of Rejang. It was routine as usual in the morning. The latter half of the day will be spent in the temple. This is life in Bali.

Krisni says she participated in the same rituals as a child and is "happy

there there is someone in the family continuing the ritual."

There is apparent pride even in someone as young as Wahyuni in offering her service to the temple. Her friends are also part of the group and there is excitement as they share their experiences.

"I also learn how to apply makeup," she says with a smile.

But despite the strong roots, there is also a fear for these traditions' place in the future. Subrata expresses concern that the younger generation is opting to leave the village for the city or overseas in search of work. He stresses the importance of being pragmatic and finding ways to maintain the Balinese traditional heritage without it being an impediment to the economic growth of the people.

"It is natural when they grow up and make their own choices, but I hope they don't forget the place where they were born and their cultural traditions," he says. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Turkish doctor at the center of an alleged fraud scheme that led to the deaths of 10 babies told an Istanbul court Saturday that he was a "trusted" physician. Dr. Firat Sari is one of 47 people on trial accused of transferring newborn babies to neonatal units of private hospitals, where they were allegedly kept for prolonged and sometimes unnecessary treatments in order to receive social security payments.

AP PHOTO



Pakistan yesterday suspended mobile and internet services "in areas with security concerns" as supporters of imprisoned former premier Imran Khan geared up for a protest in the capital. The government and Interior Ministry posted the announcement on social media platform X, which is banned in Pakistan.

Israel said yesterday that the body of an Israeli-Moldovan rabbi who went missing in the United Arab Emirates has been found after he was killed in what it described as a "heinous antisemitic terror incident." The government said it "will act with all means to seek justice with the criminals responsible for his death."

AP PHOTO



US President-elect Donald Trump and the head of NATO have met for talks on global security, the military alliance said Saturday. In a brief statement, NATO said Trump and its secretary general, Mark Rutte, met on Friday in Palm Beach, Florida. "They discussed the range of global security issues facing the Alliance," the statement said without giving details.

AP PHOTO



Mexico has been taking a bashing lately for allegedly serving as a conduit for Chinese parts and products into North America, and officials here are afraid a re-elected Donald Trump or politically struggling Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau could try to leave their country out of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement.