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**COMMUNITY ADVISORY MEMBERS EXPRESS CONCERNS OVER THE WATERFRONT PROMENADE PROJECT, PARTICULARLY REGARDING THE LACK OF PARKING**

**SPORTS BUREAU ENCOURAGES YOUTH SPORTS PARTICIPATION AS YAO MING VISITS**

**WHO IS THE SOUTH KOREAN LEADER WHO TRIED TO IMPOSE MARTIAL LAW?**



**USA** Police are searching for a masked gunman who fatally shot UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, 50, yesterday [Macau time] in Manhattan. Captured on security cameras, the suspect fled into Central Park. A \$10,000 reward is offered as police investigate potential motives and prior threats.

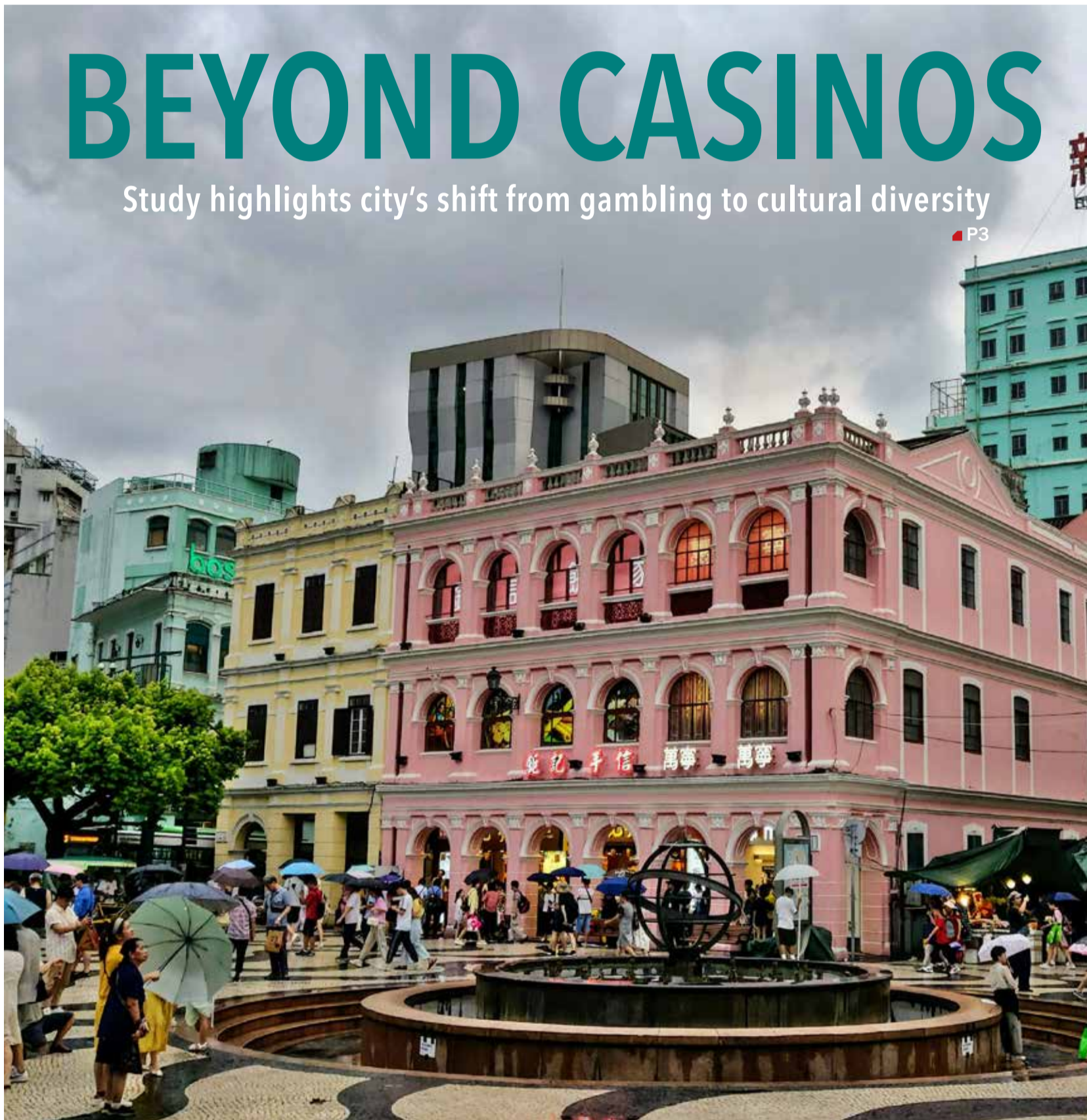
**Philippine** police suspect kidnapped American Elliot Eastman, 26, was fatally shot by abductors in October. Reports indicate his body was discarded at sea. Investigations continue, with some suspects arrested or killed. Authorities informed Eastman's wife and the U.S. Embassy but maintain hope of finding him.



**Vietnam** yesterday suspended Chinese online retailer Temu for failing to register by a Nov. 30 deadline. Authorities cited concerns about the authenticity of Temu's cheap products. Temu has removed its Vietnamese-language options and is working with officials to resume operations.



**Japan** Sake brewing, an integral part of Japanese culture, was added to UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list. Officials hope the designation will renew domestic interest and boost exports as the tradition faces challenges from shifting drinking habits and a declining workforce.



# BEYOND CASINOS

Study highlights city's shift from gambling to cultural diversity

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## TASTE OF EDESIA



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WATERFRONT PROMENADE

# COMMUNITY ADVISORY MEMBERS EXPRESS CONCERNS OVER PROJECT AND LACK OF PARKING

RENATO MARQUES

SEVERAL members of the Central District Community Advisory Board have raised concerns about the South Shore Waterfront Green Promenade, a new leisure and sports area that the government will soon begin constructing.

The project, presented in mid-January this year, will feature a variety of leisure areas and sports facilities.

During the council's monthly meeting earlier this week, which focused on a presentation of the project by the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), several members voiced concerns over the plan's parking provisions, which include only 80 street parking spots.

According to a briefing after the meeting, some members felt that this number was insufficient, particularly during festivals and holidays when more people visit the area for leisure. They suggested increasing the number of parking spaces and even proposed building an underground parking garage to accommodate the new area.

As previously announced, the second phase of the project aims



to develop the coastal area from the southern tip of the Peninsula to the west of the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge, extending to the "Gate of Understanding" (Porta do Entendimento).

According to IAM's update to the council members, after

some preparatory work that is currently underway, the bureau plans to begin construction by the end of this month, with completion expected by the third quarter of next year. The project has been awarded through a public tender that concluded in early August for a price

exceeding MOP33 million, with a construction period of 216 working days.

The IAM official present at the meeting also mentioned that the land is currently undergoing filling and preparation for construction, a process expected to be completed by the se-

cond quarter of next year.

As previously stated by IAM, construction will proceed in two separate phases: eastern and western. The eastern area will replace the existing sports facilities near the Macau Tower with new ones closer to the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge, minimizing the downtime of these facilities.

In the area near the bridge, the project will include several sports grounds, seating areas, a waterfront promenade, a fishing platform, and other amenities.

Although IAM officials stated that construction should be completed by the end of the third quarter of next year, they clarified that it is unclear whether all facilities will be ready to open by that time, or if additional time will be needed for finishing touches and to assess the condition of the surrounding area.

Another concern raised by community council members was the quality of construction. They urged officials to ensure strict oversight and control to ensure that public funds are properly utilized and that the facilities effectively serve the well-being of residents.

## Waterfront Promenade's third phase coming soon

RENATO MARQUES

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) confirmed that the third phase of the Waterfront Promenade project will soon begin.

At a recent meeting of the Central District Community Advisory Board, IAM officials said that this phase aims to extend the coastal promenade from the "Gate of Understanding" to the Barra Escola de Pilotagem (Nautical School), with several preparatory works already underway. While it is unclear when construction will officially begin for this phase, IAM officials indicated that a public tender is expected to be launched sometime next year.

With no concrete sche-

dule or plan in place, the section in question appears to be the area between the Kun Iam Ecumenical Centre and the western side of the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge.

When first proposed, the idea of creating a coastal promenade along the southern Peninsula was to seamlessly connect the Macau Science Center area with the Barra District. The project was designed to include a range of leisure and sports facilities, such as a continuous cycle and walking/jogging path. However, the completion of this phase seems to be facing challenges, primarily due to the planning for the central section of Zone B of the new landfills.



The Zone B imbroglio According to information from the Public Works Bureau, Zone B covers an area of approximately 47 hectares and was originally planned for road infrastructure, tourism and leisure

facilities, parks, and green spaces, among other uses.

In the past, there were discussions about using the central section of Zone B for the construction of an underwater road tunnel that would connect to Zone D

of the new landfills on the Taipa side, although Zone D has not yet been built. This proposal has undergone several changes over time, with the government even announcing at one point that it was planning to com-

pletely cancel the construction of Zone D, a decision that was later reversed.

Almost a year ago, lawmaker Si Ka Lon raised a question with the government regarding the need to move forward with the development plan and infrastructure construction for Zone B. Si's inquiry came after noticing that the government's budget for the year once again made no reference to any development in this area.

Zone B, which was built nearly 20 years ago, has been largely idle for an extended period. It has mostly been used for parking buses and heavy-duty vehicles, failing to meet the original goal of developing the coastal area of the Peninsula.

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GAMING

# Study highlights city's shift from gambling to cultural diversity

VICTORIA CHAN

A recent study by researchers from Shenzhen Tourism College of Jinan University reveals a significant shift in Macau's tourism landscape.

The city, known primarily as a gambling hub, is now emerging as a diverse destination for art, fashion, cuisine, and more, as its hotel industry's reputation-building power diminishes.

The study titled "An Investigation into the Image of Macao as a Tourism Destination Based on Social Media Data," conducted by Zhang Gaojun, Shi Biyang, Li Mengying, and Zhang Zheng, analyzed social media discourse to track changes in Macau's destination image from 2015 to 2019, as well as from 2023 to the present.

The findings suggest that Macau's stereotypical reputation as a gambling hub is no



longer conducive to the diversified development of Macau's tourism industry.

Researchers utilized microblog data to gain insights into public perception, identifying several new images that are "basically in line with the planning

objectives" for the region.

These emerging images include Macau as a "city of art and fashion," an "international gourmet city," a "city of hospitality," and a "city of history and culture." While gaming remains a prominent aspect of Macau's

identity, the study reflects a shift towards a more diverse and culturally appealing perception.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Macau's hotels enjoyed a high profile and good reputation, partly due to their association with the city's casinos.

However, the sector became less discussed post-Covid-19, amid a shift in accommodation demand and travel patterns.

The study also noted that gaming, despite being Macau's economic mainstay, has long held a relatively low profile on the Chinese mainland due to legal restrictions that have reduced its public visibility.

The element of conventions and exhibitions was also found to be unimpressive, as the domestic market is still going through a cultivation stage, unlike more mature peers such as Hong Kong and Singapore.

The researchers concluded that the "image of a city of ho-

tel services' is relatively low, reflecting significant hidden risks that are present in Macau's hotel industry."

The diminishing emphasis on gaming reflects Macau's efforts to shift away from its stereotype as a gambling destination, indicating successful diversification.

This aligns with the Macau Special Administrative Region's (SAR) strategic plan to enhance its role as a global tourism hub and a bridge for connections between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

The researchers emphasized the importance of monitoring the "often fluctuating international economic situation" to maintain and positively evolve Macau's diverse tourism image. They also highlighted the need to focus on improving the image of Macau's hotel industry, which was found to be "very low" compared to the city's gaming reputation.

AD

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### ETA REQUIREMENT FOR MACAU PASSPORT HOLDERS TRAVELING TO THE UK

Starting Jan. 8, 2025, holders of Macau passports must obtain an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) to visit or transit through the UK. The ETA is valid for two years and allows stays of up to six months at a time. The Identification Services Bureau has urged SAR passport holders to apply in advance to prevent issues with boarding or entry. This requirement follows the UK's rollout of the ETA program, which began in October 2023, and will also apply to tourists from over 40 other visa-free countries, including the U.S. and Japan, expanding to EU travelers by March 5, 2025.

### MERCHANTS FALL VICTIM TO FRAUD SCHEME

Two merchants reported a total loss of MOP125,000 after falling prey to an electronic fraud scheme. The victims, an event planning company and a construction firm, received phone calls from individuals posing as "school teachers" on Dec. 2 and Dec. 3. The scammers claimed to be ordering bed frames for schools and nursing homes, sending fake transfer screenshots to convince the proprietors. Following the instructions, the event company transferred HKD45,000 while the construction firm sent HKD80,000. After payment, both businesses lost contact with the fraudsters and reported the incident to police.

### CONCERT VENUE WITH DISCOUNTS FOR RESIDENTS TO LAUNCH

The new outdoor performance area near the Grand Lisboa Palace in Cotai will host its inaugural concert on Dec. 28, marking the start of a trial operation. The event, budgeted at over MOP20 million, aims to celebrate the venue's completion and will feature artists from Hong Kong, Macau, and beyond. Local residents can enjoy discounted tickets, verified upon entry. Yesterday, Deland Leong, acting chairman of the Cultural Development Advisory Committee, emphasized safety and testing as priorities for the trial run. Additionally, catering service solicitations for the concert will close tomorrow, with future plans for long-term service contracts in development.

### CUSTOMS SEIZES 265 IMMIGRANTS

Macau Customs has intercepted 265 cases of illegal immigrants attempting to reach Macau by water, marking a 90% increase from 137 cases in the same period last year. In a meeting hosted by the North District Community Advisory Board, the bureau said it has also intercepted 4,312 logistics cases at various ports, reflecting a 9% decrease year-on-year. Additionally, 37 cross-border vehicles involved in parallel import activities were seized, with 256 locations suspected of such activities identified across the region, including shops and residences.

### TRANSPORT

## SURVEY: RESIDENTS AND TOURISTS FAVOR ONLINE TAXI-HAILING SERVICES

LYNZY VALLES

A survey showed that 90% of residents and tourists expressed a strong preference for online taxi-hailing services over traditional taxis.

The survey, conducted by the Macau Economic and Livelihood Alliance and including over 1,500 participants, revealed significant concerns about the current state of taxi availability in Macau. 60% of respondents reported facing challenges such as limited taxi availability and excessively long wait times, whether hailing a taxi in person or through an online platform.

Lawmaker Lo Choi In recognized the need to enhance taxi services; however, she highlighted that revising existing regulations poses significant challenges.

Currently, private cars in Macau are prohibited from operating for profit, which complicates the implementation of online ride-hailing services, according to Lo.

"I support the concept of further opening up online ta-

VICTORIA CHAN



xi-hailing platforms and upgrading services," Lo stated.

"However, we must navigate the existing legal framework, which restricts private car owners from picking up passengers for money.

"To legally introduce online ride-hailing services, Lo highlighted the need for revisions to specific laws. "Achieving this will require overcoming various difficulties and

meeting certain criteria," she explained.

The lawmaker urged the government to develop a comprehensive plan to assess the timing and feasibility of such changes, noting that the Legislative Assembly cannot unilaterally amend laws.

Previously, lawmaker Ron Lam highlighted taxi shortages, particularly during peak hours, as a key issue that cou-

ld be alleviated by introducing licensed ride-hailing services.

Just last month, the Transport Bureau announced a significant expansion of the city's taxi industry with the addition of seven new taxi companies in operation. This move comes as the bureau prepares to put 500 new taxi units into service by January. Macau currently has nearly 1,650 taxis in operation.

### TOURISM

## MGTO promoting 'night economy' through street festivals

RENATO MARQUES

THE Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has expressed hope that the three festivals scheduled for this month will help promote the so-called "night economy."

The celebrations, organized by various communities and held in different areas of the city, have received financial support through MGTO's program aimed at encouraging local associations to undertake diverse tourism activities or projects to boost the local economy.

The three events are the 1st Macao Vegetarian Carnival, the Thailand Cultural Festival, and the Luminescent Night at Travessa do Armazém Velho. The-

RENATO MARQUES



se festivals promise to showcase Macau's diverse offerings and vibrant nightlife.

Starting today and running until Dec. 10, the first edition of the Vegetarian Carnival will offer five days of vegetarian food along with cultural and artistic performances, cultural lectures, product sales, game stalls, pho-

to opportunities, and a lantern ceremony to commemorate Macau's handover. The carnival is being held at the Legend Boulevard of the Fisherman's Wharf.

With a long-standing tradition in Macau, the Thailand Cultural Festival will once again take over the streets of Rua de Abreu

Nunes this weekend (Dec. 7 and Dec. 8), featuring around 20 Thai food stalls. In addition to food, the event will include rice distribution and blessing activities, as well as massages, traditional dances, and Thai music and dance performances.

Starting Saturday (Dec. 7) and continuing until Feb. 28, 2025, the "Luminescent Night at Travessa do Armazém Velho 2024" will bring the historic streets of Macau to life, between the Ruins of St. Paul's and the Inner Harbour. The event will feature a variety of light displays and effects aimed at attracting visitors. It will also include online games and workshops, offering a range of ex-

periences to encourage increased foot traffic and stimulate night time consumption in the area.

MGTO highlighted that this year, 41 activities have been approved under its financial support program, 31 of which were completed in the first 11 months of the year. According to MGTO, these activities attracted over 660,000 participants and involved around 1,600 commercial establishments.

In August and September, MGTO opened applications for financial support for activities scheduled in 2025, with the results expected to be announced in January 2025. The approved projects will run from Feb. 1 to Dec. 31 next year.



# Talent Training: The Key to Macao's Future Development and Sustainability

**B**USINESS experts would undoubtedly agree that employee training is an indispensable tool for boosting both individual and organizational performance and lowering employee turnover, but also for maximizing job satisfaction and cultivating a company culture replete with enthusiasm and motivation.

Moreover, in addition to training existing employees, nurturing young adults who are entering the workforce for the first time can help equip them with the necessary skills and experience that an industry requires, and gives them a reliable framework upon which they can start to build their career. This provides society with the skilled labor it needs to sustain itself and gives the youth a sense of purpose that can ultimately serve as a catalyst for business innovation and sustainable growth.

The hospitality industry is one of the cornerstones of the government's "1+4" appropriate diversification development strategy as it was fundamental to Macao's designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, it is the driving force behind our aim to become a "City of Sports" and is the key player in the successful implementation of the nascent "Big Health Tourism" that is being given so much focus as of late. Furthermore, a 2019 report authored by consultancy firm Deloitte on behalf of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) forecast the annual number of visitors to the city in 2025 will reach up to 41 million—a figure that surpasses that seen before the pandemic. However, the report also highlighted an inadequate level of human resource talent development at that time in Macao, which is why employee and youth training schemes have become so vitally important in recent years.

Wynn Macau has seized this unique opportunity to focus on team building and youth training to prepare a loyal, engaged, and productive team of hospitality specialists that the entire Greater Bay Area can be proud of. By launching the "Wynn Management Skills Program" in collaboration with Macao Polytechnic University (MPU), management staff can now enroll on a two-year professional training program that specializes in a range of different fields to cultivate interdisciplinary strategic thinking that will solidify Macao's position as a global tourist destination. As a testimony to the success of these efforts, 45 trainees were recently awarded



"Wynn Management Skills Program" graduation ceremony



Prof. Im Sio Kei



Ms. Linda Chen

professionally accredited certificates at a graduation ceremony held at the MPU. In a speech given at the event, President and Vice Chairman of the Board of Wynn Macau Limited Ms. Linda Chen commented on the importance of these courses that "allow the trainees to gain a sharper business insight and broad visions of the market, which can deepen their understanding of innovative technology and the ever-changing business environment and are very important for their career development."

The two-year program covers important topics ranging from regional and national industrial development, trends of digital finance, and current application of high technology in tourism and entertainment scenarios to inte-

grated resort management models featuring interdisciplinary collaboration. Rector of Macao Polytechnic University, Prof. Im Sio Kei, praised the long-term cooperation the institute has with Wynn Macau and highlighted its wider import to "foster a sustainable pool of high-quality integrated tourism and leisure professionals for Macao."

For the hospitality industry to progress and comprehensively elevate its quality and services, training must be provided to every level of the workforce, ranging from top management to entry-level workers. Every employee has potential, and Wynn Macau is fully committed to investing in that potential and transforming it into a tangible reality. This is one of the many reasons they have

now partnered with a global leader in education and innovation for the hospitality sector—the EHL Hospitality Business School based in Switzerland—who offer a wide array of hospitality management degrees for people with varying backgrounds and career aspirations. Together, they have rolled out "Wynn x EHL Hospitality Management Certified Program" which is specifically designed to nurture the talent of local youth to maximize their engagement and contribution to the hospitality industry.

The program attracted 20 young professionals who embarked on a transformative educational experience throughout October and November. Upon completion, the students had all received valuable vocational training and

had expanded their understanding of the complexities of hotel operations and the practical skills required in the hospitality industry. The training was delivered in three separate modules: "Personal Effectiveness and How to be a Future Leader in Hospitality" which focused on increasing self-awareness and adaptability and developing the important skills of effective communication and influential leadership; "Hospitality Luxury Brand Management" which equipped the trainees with hands-on practical knowledge of the intricacies of luxury brands, and the strategic choices implicit in luxury branding and communication in various industries; and "Data Analytics for Hospitality" which taught the important skills of collecting, transforming, analyzing, and interpreting data related to both the rooms division and food and beverage division, and the techniques required to communicate their findings with stakeholders.

Vice President of Learning and Advancement at Wynn Macau and Wynn Palace, Dr. Barry Ip, highlighted how the valuable experience that EHL brings from its international hospitality operations is highly beneficial to the development of youth in Macao, and high-level training such as this would contribute significantly towards solidifying Macao's position as a World Center of Tourism and Leisure.

Talent development is the key to unlocking Macao's moderate economic and industrial diversification and Wynn has shown consistent dedication to providing diverse training programs for its team members in the hope of fostering more outstanding local talent and creating more upward mobility opportunities, not just for the individual in the workplace, but also for Macao on the world stage.



20 youths participated in the hospitality management certified program



Wynn x EHL Hospitality Management Certified Program



FORTUNE BRAINSTORM DESIGN

# DESIGNER CALLS FOR RESPONSIBLE TECH TO COMBAT MENTAL HEALTH RISKS

NADIA SHAW

**I**N an era in which technology is increasingly influencing societal health, the potential for backlash grows alongside innovation.

At the Fortune Brainstorm Design event at MGM Cotai yesterday, Gadi Amit, founder and principal designer of NewDealDesign LLC, shared his vision for creating technology that connects people while aligning with human values.

In a conversation with Nicholas Gordon from Fortune, Amit emphasized the critical need for design that enhances quality of life rather than undermines it.

Amit articulated a pressing concern about the negative impacts of technology on mental health, stating, "As technology's impact on society's health grows, so does the risk of a backlash."

He believes designers hold a unique responsibility to foster connections through their work. By prioritizing human values in design processes, he argues that it is possible to create products



that "reduce harm and promote well-being."

His work includes the design of the Fitbit, which revolutionized the wearable technology market, and contributions to various sectors such as health, computing, and electric vehicle infrastructure.

Throughout his career, Amit has been at the forefront of innovative design, leading projects for major brands like Google.

His firm has garnered more than 100 design awards, reflecting a commitment to excellence in both functionality and aesthetics. "We mold strategic thinking

with tactical brilliance to achieve bold and tangible market impact," he explained, underscoring the studio's dedication to impactful design.

Moreover, Amit's commitment to crafting user-centered designs was recognized when he received the National Design Award from

Michelle Obama in 2013.

At the heart of Amit's philosophy is the belief that technology should serve as a bridge between people rather than a barrier.

He advocates for designs that are not only functional but also emotionally engaging. "Innovation should enhance our quality of life," he asserted, highlighting the need for products that resonate with users on a deeper level.

Amit also pointed out alarming trends related to mental health among young people, exacerbated by excessive digital engagement. "We need to create designs that support emotional well-being," he urged, calling for a shift in how designers approach their work.

As industries evolve and societal expectations shift, Amit's vision offers a roadmap for future innovations.

By embracing a design philosophy rooted in empathy and connection, he believes it is possible to mitigate the risks associated with technology while maximizing its potential benefits for a better future.

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**BASKETBALL**

# Gov't encourages youth sports participation as Yao Ming visits

VICTORIA CHAN

**S**ANDS China co-hosted the Sands China Yao Foundation Campus Basketball Charity Event with the Yao Foundation at Hou Kong Middle School in Macau yesterday. The event featured professional basketball training and friendly matches for local youth.

Attended by Yao Foundation founder Yao Ming, the initiative aimed to inspire a passion for sports among Macau's youth, foster teamwork, and strengthen basketball exchanges between Macau and mainland China.

Yao Foundation Ambassadors, including former players and coaches, served as honorary coaches,



providing professional guidance to the young participants. Sports Bureau president Luis

Gomes said this allows Yao to feel "like coming to Macau is like going home," providing the

opportunity to share the joy of basketball with local students and help them grow through the sport.

Gomes noted Sands China's efforts in recent years to promote sports development in Macau, providing support for various sporting events. He highlighted the upcoming Sands China Legend event on Dec. 7, where Yao's good friend and former Rockets teammate Tracy McGrady will also make an appearance in Macau.

"I hope that future students will participate more and pay more attention to Macau sporting events," Gomes said. "In the process of building Macau's sports market, it is inseparable from the support of schools and the central government. Without the support of schools, Macau's sports market cannot be realized. Without the participation of children, our physical education classes and our sports activities cannot attract more children and parents to participate in society through sports."

He encouraged the students to "take the initiative and learn basketball from Yao" and hoped Sands China would bring more basketball activities to Macau in the future.

**MOTORSPORTS**

# Racers and machines gear up for karting weekend

RENATO MARQUES

**R**ACERS and their machines are gearing up for the second and final weekend of the 2024 Macau International Kart Grand Prix (IAME Asia Final) at the Coloane track.

A total of 188 competitors will be racing over the weekend in Coloane in seven different classes that include Cadet, Junior, Senior, Master, and KZ, as well as the Coca-Cola and Sands Cups.

The largest field is the Senior Class, with 50 racers listed at the start, followed by the Cadets, with 44.

Track activities commenced on Wednesday, and yesterday marked the beginning of the intense competition, featuring official free practice sessions for the four main racing classes (excluding the special cups and KZ) from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Today, additional official free practice ses-



sions and the first timed trial session, starting from 3:30 p.m., will be held.

Saturday (Dec. 7) will commence with warm-up sessions, followed by qualifying heats before

the lunch break. The afternoon will see more qualifying heats.

Sunday, the final day of the event, will feature the most important races of the weekend, including the superheats in the morning and the category in the afternoon.

These races will close a double weekend of karting races in Macau's karting track, which already saw a series of races from the ROK Cup Macau Invitational Race

categories last weekend.

Last Sunday, Australian Jay Rhett Kostecki won the Mini ROK Class, followed by Italian Achille Rea and Indonesian Fadhl Abbas Wibowo Muhammad. In the Junior ROK Class, Jiang Houzhai from China won, followed by Singaporean Danish Irwan Chen Ruiyi and Vernice Lao from Macau.

In the Senior and Expert Rok class, the winner was Tomoki Terashima from Japan.

## CORPORATE BITS

### National gold medalists to visit Macau for Vitality Walk 2024

The "National Gold Medalists Visit to Macau - Vitality Walk 2024," presented by Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG), is set for Dec. 7 to Dec. 8.

Organized by the Sports and Olympic Committee of Macau, this event will be joined by national gold medalists, including: renowned track and field athlete Su Bingtian; pool player Pan Xiaoting; diving athlete Wu Minxia; gymnastics athletes Li Xiaopeng, Liu Xuan, and Li Shanshan; badminton players Fu Haifeng and Zhang Ning; and volleyball

player Zhao Ruirui.

The Vitality Walk aims to promote patriotism and sportsmanship while enhancing national pride among Macau residents. Over the years, the event has supported the annual charity initiative, "Walk for a Million." During their visit, athletes will engage with students at local schools, share their inspiring stories, and participate in community activities.

On Dec. 8, they will join participants in the "Walk for a Million," according to a statement from GEG.

### Festive celebrations at Grand Coloane Resort



This December, Grand Coloane Resort is hosting a month of festive activities, inviting guests to enjoy seasonal celebrations. The resort features various

dining experiences, including Santa's Afternoon Tea at Panorama Lounge, where guests can savor festive sandwiches, pastries, and freshly baked

scones.

Cantonese cuisine enthusiasts can explore Chef Jack Cai's festive set menu at Kwun Hoi Heen, featuring dishes such as

steamed scallops and braised sweet corn soup.

Special events include a Christmas Eve Roasted Buffet Dinner at Café Panorama and a Christmas Day buffet lunch, both offering a range of festive dishes.

The New Year's Eve Countdown Party will take place at Café Panorama from 7 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., featuring a selection of dishes such as black nori crusted tuna and grilled lamb chops.

From 10 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., the "Countdown Bash: The Finale Party" at Panorama Lounge will offer gourmet sandwiches, a variety of beverages, free-flowing beers and wines, and live music.



# CHINA'S URBAN CENTERS: THE NEW FRONTIERS OF SCIENCE

## ANALYSIS

BY NADIA SHAW, MDT

**D**ATA from the Nature Index has revealed 32 cities in mainland China are now recognized as major contributors to global scientific output. This positions them prominently within the global ranking of scientific cities, with ten Chinese cities making it into the top 20. The findings highlight China's growing prominence in the international research landscape, showcasing an impressive increase in both the quantity and quality of research emerging from its urban centers.

According to the Nature Index 2024 Science Cities supplement, Beijing leads the global rankings. It is closely followed by Shanghai in second place, while Nanjing, Guangzhou, and Wuhan round out the top ten at fifth, eighth, and ninth places, respectively. Other notable mentions include Hangzhou (13th), Hefei (15th), Tianjin (18th), Hong Kong (19th), and Xi'an (20th). This remarkable achievement highlights China's strategic investment in research and development across various fields.

The data indicates that half of the top 20 science cities are now located in China. This includes not only major metropolises but also provincial capitals like Chengdu and Hefei, which have emerged as competitive players on the global stage. Simon Baker, editor of the Nature Index supplement, noted, "This



Acrylic sphere of JUNO detector (Image by IHEP)

trend is particularly interesting as these lesser-known cities are now competing with established scientific hubs in Europe and North America."

China's research output has surged dramatically over the past decade, with a five-fold increase in published research between 2009 and 2021, outpacing that of Western nations. Notably, a recent report indicated China has surpassed the United States in producing highly cited papers, a key metric of research impact.

The rise of these cities aligns with China's national strategies aimed at enhancing economic self-sufficiency and promoting

high-tech industries. Initiatives such as "Made in China 2025" aim to shift the country toward knowledge-driven sectors, including electric vehicles and

## The Jiangmen Underground Neutrino Observatory (JUNO), which is currently under construction, will become the world's largest neutrino observatory

solar energy. As Baker noted in his article, "many of these rapidly developing cities are playing a specialist role in key technology areas such as electric vehicles and solar energy," reflecting a broader trend of regional growth in scientific research.

Shanghai's ascent to second place is particularly noteworthy as it has overtaken New York City, which now holds third place. This shift is attributed to Shanghai's strengthening research capabilities in biopharmaceuticals, advanced materials, and artificial intelligence (AI). The competition among these cities is intensifying, with Beijing extending its lead over Shanghai to nearly double its share of scientific output to 18.4%.

Institutions contributing to this success include The Beijing Municipal Science & Technology Commission and the Administrative Commission of Zhongguancun Science Park, which have played vital roles in fostering an environment conducive to scientific advancement.

The implications of these findings extend beyond mere rankings; they reflect a broader narrative about China's ambitions on the world stage. As the nation continues to invest heavily in education and research infrastructure, its cities are poised to play a pivotal role in shaping future scientific advancements.

Interestingly, while Chinese cities have made significant strides in various scientific fields, there remains room for improvement in health sciences. Currently dominated by established

networks in cities like Boston and London, there is optimism that within a decade, leading Chinese cities could emerge as frontrunners in this domain as well.

In the pipeline, institutions that are expected to play a pivotal role in advancing research

in various scientific fields – particularly in astrophysics and particle physics – include the Jiangmen Underground Neutrino Observatory (JUNO), which is currently under construction and will become the world's largest and most sensitive neutrino observatory. Situated 700 meters underground, JUNO aims to address fundamental questions in particle physics. Another critical facility being built is the China Jinping Underground Laboratory, which, upon completion, will be the deepest underground laboratory globally, located 2,400 meters below the Jinping Mountains.

Baker said the emergence of provincial capitals signifies a shift in how scientific output is distributed across China.

"From Chengdu in the west to Hefei in the east, these cities are now rubbing shoulders with long-established scientific centers." This diversification not only enhances regional development but also contributes to a more balanced distribution of research capabilities across the country.

The Nature Index tracks contributions from a select group of high-quality research journals and measures cities based on their share of published articles. This year's rankings reveal Chinese cities are not only producing more research but are also enhancing their collaboration efforts both domestically and internationally.

It is clear China's commitment to advancing its scientific capabilities will have lasting impacts on global research dynamics. With half of the top 20 science cities now situated within its borders, China is well-positioned to lead in various scientific disciplines over the coming years.

## Students in HK expressed interest in a fintech career in the city with links to the GBA: survey

## ON THE AGENDA

**T**HE Greater Bay Area is a major policy plan envisioned by the Chinese government for an integrated 11-city cluster involving Hong Kong, Macau and the southern mainland region. Amongst the sectors that some believe will be a major beneficiary of development is financial technology.

And according to a Bloomberg survey of 200 university students, 79% expressed interest in pursuing

a fintech career in Hong Kong with connectivity across the GBA. 92% were very familiar or somewhat familiar with the GBA with 81% associating the megalopolis with topics related to innovation.

18% expressed a preference for focusing solely on Hong Kong.

In terms of further support for fintech careers, 76% of respondents cited access to training programs as a requirement to enter the industry.

Fintech skills that at-



tracted the greatest interest included data analysis and big data (57%), AI and machine learning (54%), financial product development (42%) and digital payments (42%).

Various efforts are underway to build the fintech talent pool. This includes the second year of the "Greater Bay Area Fintech Talent Initiative" which involves collaboration

between Bloomberg, the Hong Kong United Youth Association (HKUYA) and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) alongside 22 strategic and corporate partners.

A two-way internship scheme for post-secondary students was also launched by the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau of the Hong Kong government with participation from 70 students and 30 fintech companies.

"The HKMA recognizes the importance of colla-

borative efforts among the industry players to develop a sustainable local talent pipeline," said HKMA chief executive Eddie Yue.

"Given the tremendous potential of the GBA, Hong Kong should capitalize on the connection with the cities in the area to tap into new opportunities. The young generation should as well embrace an entrepreneurial mindset and stay open-minded to contribute to the fintech sector," he said. **MDT/FINNEWS.ASIA**



SHENZHEN

# Rescuers search for 13 workers missing after a railroad construction site collapses

RESCUERS in southern China were searching yesterday for 13 workers missing after a railroad construction site caved in in the business center of Shenzhen.

An emergency management bureau's statement said the collapse occurred at about 11 p.m. Wednesday at a construction site on a section of the Shenzhen-Jiangmen Railway in Bao'an district. The line will link Shenzhen, a tech hub, and Jiangmen, both cities in Guangdong province neighboring Hong Kong.

Residents living nearby have been evacuated. An investigation into the cause was underway.

State broadcaster CCTV reported some roads were closed during the operation.

China has seen collapses of a highway and a bridge that killed dozens of people earlier this year. The collapses have raised questions about the safety of China's road and bridge infrastructure, which was built rapidly in recent decades. MDT/AP

DIPLOMACY

# Relic of the Buddha loaned by China gets a warm welcome in Thailand

MORE than 2,000 people took part this week in a procession to escort a relic of the Buddha lent by China to a shrine in the Thai capital Bangkok to honor the birthday of King Maha Vajiralongkorn and to celebrate half a century of diplomatic relations between Thailand and China.

The tooth relic, considered sacred by Buddhists, was flown in earlier in the day from the Lingguang Temple in Beijing, which normally houses it. Loans of the tooth as a show of friendship have been an effective form of soft diplomacy by China, even though competing claims from various countries on possessing the Buddha's tooth raise questions about its provenance.

The tooth was put in an ornate, golden container and placed on a flower-bedecked float as it was paraded through one of the oldest neighborhoods of the city.

Attendants flanked the vehicle as it



travelled about 2 1/2 kilometers to the relic's temporary home, a soaring pavilion on Sanam Luang, a large field outside Bangkok's famous Grand Palace.

Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra and members of her cabinet received the relic amid the sounds of chanting monks. Representatives of China, including Beijing's ambassador to Thailand, were also present, according to local media.

The loan is the latest in a series of events to mark the 72nd birthday of the Thai king. It also commemorates the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Thailand and China, which occurs next year. It was previously displayed in Thailand in 2002 to mark the 75th birthday of Vajiralongkorn's father, King Bhumibol, who died in 2016.

The relic will be on public display at the pavilion until mid-February. MDT/AP

AD

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DIRE STRAIT

# TAIWAN'S LAI REPORTEDLY HAS PHONE TALKS FROM GUAM WITH US CONGRESS LEADERS

**T**AIWAN'S leader Lai Ching-te reportedly held phone calls with U.S. congressional leaders yesterday while visiting Guam, his second U.S. stop on a Pacific Island trip.

A presidential office spokesperson told journalists on the trip that Lai had spoken with Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson and House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, according to both Taiwan's official Central News Agency and NOWnews, a leading online news outlet in Taiwan. Lai also had a video call with U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker, the top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, the reports said.

China, which considers Taiwan a renegade province, opposes any official interaction between the island's government and the United States.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian noted the government's previous statements on U.S. official interactions with Taiwan and said that "the Taiwan issue is at the core of Chi-



na's core interests and the first red line that must not be crossed in China-U.S. relations."

"China will take strong measures to firmly defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said, when asked about the reported call with Johnson, the House Speaker. Voice of America earlier reported the call with Johnson, citing unnamed sources, but not the other two calls.

China's Foreign Ministry also announced sanctions yesterday on 13 American companies and

six executives in response to recently announced weapons sales to Taiwan. The executives include the president and vice president of Raytheon's Naval Power strategic business unit. The sanctions include a ban on entering China, including Hong Kong and Macau.

"U.S. attempts to assist Taiwan independence by arming Taiwan will not shake our firm determination to oppose Taiwan independence and achieve national reunification, and it will only push Taiwan into a dangerous

situation of military conflict," Lin said.

Lai arrived in Guam on Wednesday night after stops in Hawaii, the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu. From Guam, he was heading to Palau, the final stop on his trip. He met with the governor of Guam and the legislature, where he emphasized the shared values and strategic importance of Taiwan and Guam in the Indo-Pacific region.

"Let us together become the crucial force in defending free-

dom, democracy in the first island chain," he said, referring to a string of islands off the Asian continent that includes Japan, Taiwan and part of the Philippines.

The U.S. is the main overseas supplier of arms for Taiwan's defense, and has naval and air force bases on Guam.

A resolution from Guam's legislature welcomed Lai and expressed appreciation for Taiwan's "significant contributions to Guam's economy and community," Speaker Therese Terlaje said.

Lai called for deeper cooperation with Guam, highlighting aquaculture, hydroponic agriculture, construction projects and alternative energy as potential areas of partnership.

The three Pacific Island nations he visited — Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Palau — are among 12 governments that recognize Taiwan diplomatically. The rest of the world, including the United States, has official ties with the Chinese government in Beijing. **MDT/AP**

AD

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YOON SUK YEOL

# Who is the South Korean leader who tried to impose martial law?

FOSTER KLUG, HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

**D**ECADES of achievement led Yoon Suk Yeol to the pinnacle of political power in South Korea, but his legacy may now boil down to a single, baffling decision to send out troops under martial law over vague claims that one of Asia's leading democracies was under threat.

Was there any clue in Yoon's background that this was coming?

Yoon, a staunch conservative and longtime prosecutor, went from political novice to president of South Korea in 2022, ending five years of liberal rule that saw failed efforts to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis and a slackening economy.

But his time in office has been marked by near-constant friction with an opposition-controlled parliament, threats of annihilation from North Korea and a series of scandals involving him and his wife. Observers say he has long taken criticism personally and relies the advice of hardcore loyalists, and that he makes impulsive decisions.

As he faces impeachment by parliament, no one thing explains his attempt to shut down the mechanisms of a democratic nation over his still unexplained claim that "anti-state" actors were acting under the influence of North Korea.

But there are strands in Yoon's background, and especially in the intense acrimony with the liberal opposition and his hardline standoff with North Korea, that help illuminate what could turn out to be the defining moment of his presidency.

## A TURBULENT RISE TO TOP PROSECUTOR

Despite his three years as president, Yoon's career has been overwhelmingly about the law, not politics.

Yoon, 63, was born in Seoul to two professors, and went to prestigious Seoul National University, where he studied law.

A defining moment, according to Yoon, happened in 1980 when he played the role of a judge in a mock trial of then-dictator Chun Doo-hwan, who had staged a military coup the previous year, and sentenced him to life imprisonment. In the aftermath, Yoon had to flee to the countryside as Chun's military extended martial law and placed troops and armored vehicles at the university.

Yoon returned to the capital



and eventually began a career as a state prosecutor that would last nearly three decades, building an image as strong-minded and uncompromising.

Prone to confrontation

But he has also faced criticism that his personality was unsuited to high-level leadership.

"President Yoon isn't well-prepared, and he does things off the cuff," Choi Jin, director of the Seoul-based Institute of Presidential Leadership, said. "He also tends to express his emotions too directly. The things that he likes and dislikes are easy to see, and he tends to follow the advice of a small group of his own people, not the majority of people."

During a parliament audit in 2013, Yoon, then a senior prosecutor, said he was under pressure from his boss, who said he opposed Yoon's investigation into an allegation that the country's spy agency had conducted an illicit online campaign to help conservative President Park Geun-hye win the previous year's election.

At the time, he famously said, "I'm not loyal to (high-level) people."

He was demoted, but after Park's government was toppled over a separate corruption scandal in 2017, then President Moon Jae-in made Yoon head of a Seoul prosecution office, which investigated Park and other conservative leaders. Moon later named Yoon the nation's top prosecutor.

## A NEOPHYTE IN POLITICS

Yoon only joined party politics about a year before he won the presidency, abandoning the liberal Moon after an impasse over

a probe of Moon's allies. Moon's supporters said he was trying to thwart Moon's prosecution reforms and elevate his own political standing.

The 2022 presidential race was Yoon's first election campaign.

Yoon beat his rival, liberal firebrand Lee Jae-myung, by less than 1 percentage point in South Korea's most closely fought presidential election.

Their campaign was one of the nastiest in recent memory.

Yoon compared Lee's party to "Hitler" and "Mussolini." Lee's allies called Yoon "a beast" and "dictator" and derided his wife's alleged plastic surgery.

## DOMESTIC POLITICAL STRIFE

Yoon's time as president has been dominated by frustration

and acrimony, much stemming from his narrow victory and his party's failure to win control of parliament.

The liberal opposition's control of parliament will continue until he leaves office in 2027 after re-sounding parliamentary election wins earlier this year.

Gridlock in parliament has led to an increasingly tense political discourse.

When Yoon declared the state of emergency, he said a goal was to eliminate "shameless North Korea followers and anti-state forces" that he said were plotting rebellion, in an apparent reference to the opposition Democratic Party.

During Tuesday's martial law announcement, Yoon highlighted his rivals' repeated attempts to impeach his top officials and their

bid to curtail key parts of next year's budget bill as major reasons for his declaration.

Claims of corruption have also battered his approval ratings.

Last month, Yoon denied wrongdoing in an influence-peddling scandal involving him and his wife. Spy camera footage in a separate scandal also purportedly shows the first lady, Kim Keon Hee, accepting a luxury bag as a gift from a pastor.

Choi said he thinks Yoon likely planned the "clumsy martial law" edict to divert public attention away from the scandals.

"Whether he will be politically dead or not, he tried to massively shake up the political world," Choi said. "But he failed. He likely ... believed there was no other option."

## N.KOREA HAS LASHED OUT AT HIS HARD LINE

If political squabbles and scandal have set the tenor of Yoon's domestic presidency, its foreign policy has been characterized by a bitter standoff with North Korea.

Yoon early on in his presidency promised "an audacious plan" to improve the North's economy if it abandoned its nuclear weapons.

But things turned sour quickly, as North Korea ramped up its weapons tests and threats to attack the South. By last year North Korea was calling Yoon "a guy with a trash-like brain" and "a diplomatic idiot."

And for months now, North Korea has taken that trash theme literally, sending thousands of balloons filled with garbage over the border, including some that made it to the presidential compound in Seoul at least twice.

Yoon's mention of North Korea as a domestic destabilizing force reminded some of an earlier South Korea, which until the late 1980s was ruled by a series of strongmen who repeatedly invoked the threat from the North to justify effort to control domestic dissidents and political opponents. **MDT/AP**

## YOON REPLACES HIS DEFENSE MINISTER

**S**OUTH Korea's president replaced his defense minister yesterday as opposition parties moved to impeach both men over the stunning-but-brief imposition of martial law that brought armed troops into Seoul streets.

The Democratic Party and other small opposition parties submitted a joint motion to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol on Wednesday over his martial law declaration the previous night. Martial law lasted about six hours, as the



National Assembly quickly voted to overrule the president, forcing his Cabinet to lift it before daybreak Wednesday.

Jo Seung-lae, spokesperson of the Democratic Party, said it will push for a National Assembly vote on Yoon's impeachment motion

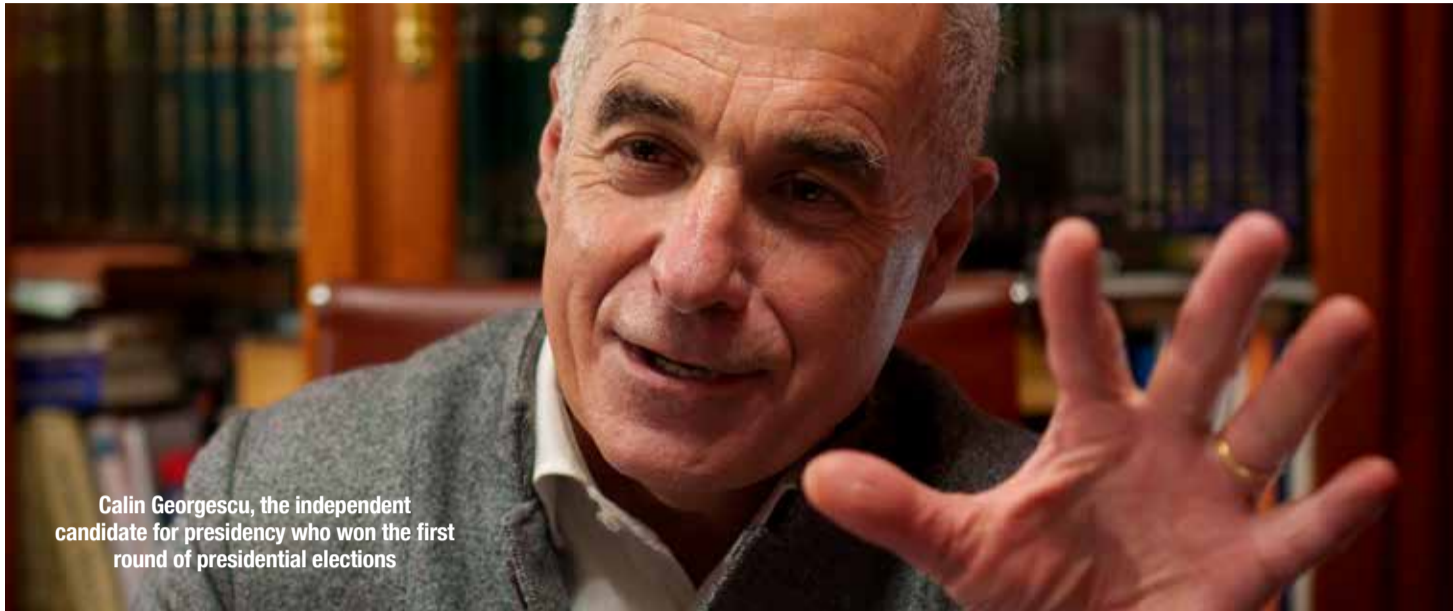
on Saturday, calling his martial law declaration an "unconstitutional, illegal rebellion or coup."

Yesterday, Yoon's office said he decided to replace Defense Minister Kim Yong Hyun with Choi Byung Hyuk, a retired general who is South Korea's ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

Yoon's office didn't provide any further comments by him. He hasn't appeared in public since his televised announcement that martial law was lifted.



AP PHOTO



Calin Georgescu, the independent candidate for presidency who won the first round of presidential elections

ROMANIA

# Surprise front-runner says he's not pro-Russia, but he allegedly had Moscow's help

STEPHEN MCGRATH,  
IZVORANI

**T**HE surprise front-runner in Romania's presidential election insisted to The Associated Press in an interview yesterday [Macaut time] that he is not pro-Russian — hours before Romania declassified intelligence alleging Moscow ran an online campaign to promote him to voters.

Far-right populist Calin Georgescu could not immediately be reached about the unprecedented intelligence release ordered by President Klaus Iohannis, which alleges a sprawling network of thousands of social media accounts across platforms like TikTok and Telegram that promoted Georgescu content. The intelligence indicated a modus operandi and resources "specific to a state actor."

"Romania is a target for aggressive Russian hybrid actions, including cyber attacks and information leaks ... and sabotage," a document from the Foreign Intelligence Service says. It was not immediately clear from the intelligence release whether Georgescu was aware of the alleged campaign or assisted in it.

Sitting at his desk in an isolated compound north of Bucharest earlier in the day, Georgescu told the AP that "I am interested in us being a sovereign and self-sufficient power. Freedom and independence come from the ability to finance yourself, not from being financed by others."

He said Romania's Western alliances remain secure providing they "serve the sovereignty of the country and nothing else."

But his success has left Western allies on edge. In the past, Georgescu — who declared zero campaign spending — praised Russian President Vladimir Putin as "a man who loves his country" and called Ukraine "an invented state." Still, he claims not to be pro-Russian.

Georgescu unexpectedly topped the polls in the first round of the Romanian presidential vote on Nov. 24 despite being a huge outsider, plunging the European Union and NATO country into unprecedented turmoil. On Sunday, he will face reformist Elena Lasconi of the Save Romania Union party in a final vote.

His vision lies in Romania-first policies in a push to become self-reliant in areas such as energy, food, and water. Other key issues he wants to address if he wins the presidency include tackling high poverty rates, organized crime and drug use in schools.

Georgescu is also a self-professed Donald Trump supporter and said the incoming U.S. president "knows what he wants, he loves his people, he put America first, just like I put Romania first ... we have the same ideology."

Georgescu has courted controversy for describing Romanian fascist and nationalist leaders from the 1930s and 1940s as national heroes. He denies having any connection to extremist organizations and says the

quotes were misrepresented.

"I am only for God and my country," he said. "Period."

Once a member of Romania's far-right Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, Georgescu left the party in 2022 after being accused by colleagues of being Russia-friendly and critical of NATO.

Romania has played a key role in the U.S.-led military alliance since Russia fully invaded neighboring Ukraine nearly three years ago. Observers wonder how a Georgescu presidency could affect NATO unity.

"NATO is a defensive organization, but as long as it remains defensive, everything is fine," the presidential hopeful said. "We will evaluate and see what is to Romania's advantage ... Everything, no matter what, must benefit the Romanian people," referring to two NATO bases in Romania.

On the war in Ukraine, "it's a very difficult and grave situation," he said. "And my main position is a strategy of peace. Peace with everyone, regardless of who they are."

But Lasconi, his opponent in Sunday's runoff, has cast Georgescu as a threat to democracy and national security who is not fit for high office.

"Let us be very clear, Calin Georgescu is an open admirer of Vladimir Putin. He is openly against NATO and the European Union," she said a day after the first vote. She added that "without NATO we are at the mercy of Russia."

Georgescu's past controversial remarks are wide-ranging and include questioning

vaccine safety, calling climate change a "business scam" and saying "feminism is an absolute mess."

Georgescu holds a doctorate in pedology, a branch of soil science, and held different positions in Romania's environment ministry in the 1990s — as well as black belts in judo and karate. Between 1999 and 2012, he was a representative for Romania on the national committee of the United Nations Environment Program.

But he remained a little-known entity until just weeks ago.

Many observers attributed his success to his TikTok account, which now has 5.8 million likes and 531,000 followers. But some experts suspect Georgescu's online following was artificially inflated while Romania's top security body alleged he was given preferential treatment by TikTok over other candidates.

In Romania's intelligence release hours after Georgescu's AP interview, the secret services alleged that one TikTok user paid more \$381,000 (361,000 euros) to other users to promote Georgescu content. Intelligence authorities said information it obtained "revealed an aggressive promotion campaign" to increase and accelerate his popularity.

Asked by the AP whether he believes the Chinese-owned TikTok can pose a threat to democracy, Georgescu said: "The most important existing function for promoting free speech and freedom of expression is social media." **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1978 SPAIN SET TO VOTE FOR DEMOCRACY



Spaniards have been turning out in force today to cast a vote for democracy and end almost 40 years of dictatorial rule.

The majority of the 25 million Spaniards eligible to vote are expected to endorse a new constitution in the historic referendum.

It would strip the monarchy of much of its current powers, many of which were handed down by the late dictator General Franco, who died in 1975.

King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia support the move and were among the first to cast their vote in a village school near Madrid.

Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez, leader of the Union of the Democratic Centre UCD, a moderate centre-right coalition, has drafted the new democratic constitution.

It could eventually put him out of a job if new elections are held as a result.

Last June saw Spain's first elections to the Cortes (parliament) since 1936 and in which Mr Suarez won 34% of the votes.

Tens of thousands of children, not able to vote, still had reason to celebrate as they have had the day off with schools converted into polling stations.

But there was still an air of tension in the country after a recent spell of murders and bombings, attributed to Basque separatists in the northern Basque region.

Riot police and soldiers are on high alert, guarding polling stations and communication centres.

The fear of violence is reported to have led an estimated 250,000 Spaniards to cast a postal vote.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The new constitution was overwhelmingly supported by voters with newspapers the following morning congratulating Spaniards with headlines such as "Good morning, democracy".

It established Spain as a parliamentary monarchy.

Spain continued to shake off the Franco years which had left the country alienated internationally.

It invested heavily to win European support and became a member of the EC, now the EU, in 1986.

This required it to open its economy, modernise its industrial base and improve infrastructure.

The country has been dogged by separatist violence in a long-running campaign by the Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA), founded in 1959 and dedicated to promoting Basque independence.

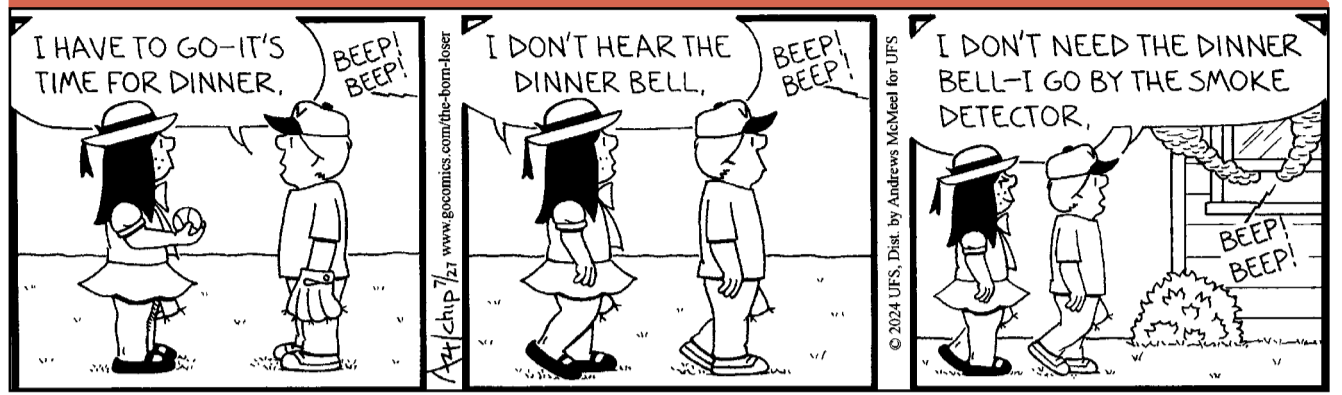


MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

 <b>ARIES</b> <b>Mar. 21-Apr. 19</b> Help others cool down. Begin a fight to lose it, with Mars retrograde. Gentleness wins over aggression. Score points for compassion and helpfulness. Get creative.	 <b>TAURUS</b> <b>Apr. 20-May. 20</b> Prepare household renovation projects in advance. Plan improvements in detail. Research materials. Budget for supplies and labor.
 <b>GEMINI</b> <b>May. 21-Jun. 21</b> With Mars retrograde over the next 10 weeks, reduce risk and effort. Keep communications simple and clear. Do the homework. Keep equipment repaired.	 <b>CANCER</b> <b>Jun. 22-Jul. 22</b> Support each other to keep accounts current. Review budgets and statements for errors, with Mars retrograde for over three months. Research big purchases.
 <b>LEO</b> <b>Jul. 23-Aug. 22</b> Work together. Over 10 weeks with Mars retrograde in your sign, revise personal goals. Complete current projects before beginning new ones. Make plans.	 <b>VIRGO</b> <b>Aug. 23-Sep. 22</b> Nurture yourself. Put down roots, with Mars retrograde. Lay the groundwork for the future. Implement actions in 10 weeks. Backup your work. Strategize.
 <b>LIBRA</b> <b>Sep. 23-Oct. 22</b> Practice creativity and patience. Expect revisions with group projects over 10 weeks, with Mars retrograde. Follow through on your part. Find ways to simplify.	 <b>SCORPIO</b> <b>Oct. 23-Nov. 21</b> Stick with what you know works. With Mars retrograde for 10 weeks, complete existing projects. Expect delivery delays. Restore supplies and recharge batteries.
 <b>SAGITTARIUS</b> <b>Nov. 22-Dec. 21</b> Maintain existing connections. Finish projects. Clear space for what's next. Plan adventures to initiate next season, with Mars stationing retrograde for 10 weeks.	 <b>CAPRICORN</b> <b>Dec. 22-Jan. 19</b> Collaborate to maintain positive cash flow. With Mars stationing retrograde for 10 weeks, reduce risk and effort. Manage finances carefully. Pull together and share.
 <b>AQUARIUS</b> <b>Jan. 20-Feb. 18</b> Take it easy. Tempers can spark, with Mars retrograde for 10 weeks. Don't get pushy. Coordinate actions carefully. Plan big moves for later.	 <b>PISCES</b> <b>Feb. 19-Mar. 20</b> Rest extra. Keep reliable routines, with Mars retrograde. Expect delivery delays and traffic. Maintain equipment. Backup files. Resupply and recharge.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sanson**



**SUDOKU**

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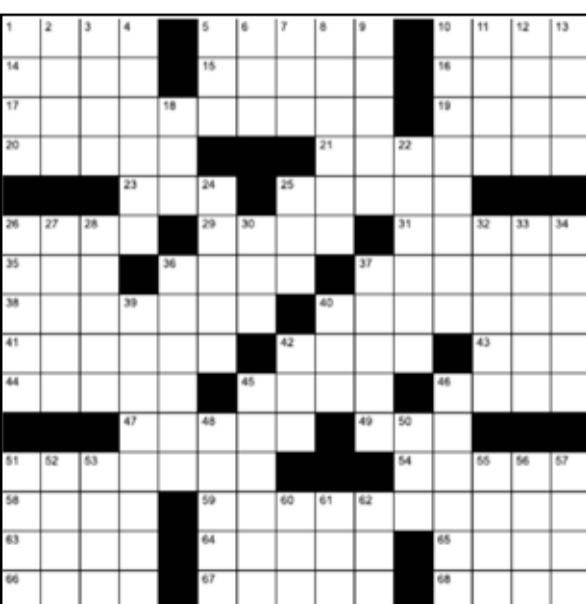
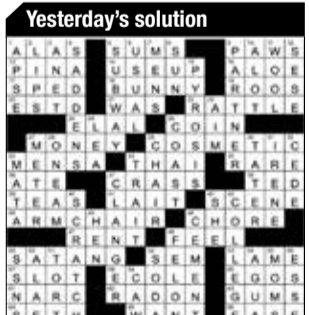
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-1	5	overcast
Changchun	-12	-8	fine
Chengdu	5	12	overcast
Chongqing	10	12	rain
Fuzhou	16	19	overcast
Guangzhou	14	23	cloudy
Guiyang	4	7	rain
Haikou	21	26	cloudy
Hangzhou	9	14	cloudy
Harbin	-17	-9	cloudy
Hefei	1	11	cloudy
Nanjing	4	13	cloudy
Shanghai	8	13	fine
Taipei	18	20	rain
Wuhan	4	14	overcast
Hong Kong	19	23	fine
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	-7	-4	snow
Frankfurt	3	8	cloudy
Paris	7	9	cloudy
London	8	8	rain
New York	-2	2	cloudy

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS** 1- Woeful word; 5- Govt. security; 10- Cambodian currency; 14- All there; 15- Harder to find; 16- Glimpse; 17- Chili ingredient; 19- Bucket; 20- Burning of another's property; 21- Absence of sound; 23- They appear before U; 25- Later!; 26- 2002 erupter; 29- Yalies; 31- Like non-oyster months; 35- Actress Zadora; 36- "Pirates of the Caribbean" star; 37- Yellowish brown pigment; 38- Makes sorrowful; 40- Distribute the wrong cards; 41- Projecting windows; 42- Kind of D.A.; 43- Mohawk-sporting actor; 44- Civil rights org.; 45- Ed and Mel of baseball; 46- Storm centers; 47- Chicago airport; 49- Over there, old-style; 51- Strong liquor from Mexico; 54- Dumas dueler; 58- The jig \_\_\_\_\_. 59- Aims; 63- List ender; 64- Encore!; 65- Regrets; 66- "Smooth Operator" singer; 67- Paris divider; 68- Goddess of discord;

**DOWN** 1- \_\_\_ silly question...; 2- Hideaway; 3- No ifs, \_\_\_\_\_. 4- Lady of Spain; 5- Attempt, a score in rugby; 6- Collar; 7- Mined mineral; 8- Tantalizes; 9- Bert's buddy; 10- Revoked; 11- This \_\_\_ outrage!; 12- Grand in scale; 13- Singer Lovett; 18- Nav. rank; 22- Ancient musician; 24- Ages between 13 and 19; 25- Little drink; 26- Big name in printers; 27- Jewelled crown worn by women; 28- Gymnast Comaneci; 30- CD forerunners; 32- Adversary; 33- Trap; 34- Smelling \_\_\_; 36- Oracle site; 37- Actress Spacek; 39- To disconnect; 40- Colo. clock setting; 42- Grazed; 45- Citrus fruit; 46- Whole; 48- Assumed name; 50- Bit of grain; 51- Fastens a knot; 52- This, in Tijuana; 53- Campus area; 55- Time; 56- That's \_\_\_ haven't heard; 57- Flat sound; 60- Mai \_\_\_\_; 61- Ich bin \_\_\_ Berliner; 62- U-turn from SSW;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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



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DRIVE IN

# 'GLADIATOR II,' WITH DENZEL WASHINGTON, GOES BACK INTO THE ARENA

JAKE COYLE,  
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

ROME teeters on the brink in Ridley Scott's "Gladiator II." Its fall is said to be imminent. The dream it once symbolized is dead. The once high-minded ideals of the Roman Empire have deteriorated across a venal land now ruled by a pale-faced emperor.

On the throne is Geta (Joseph Quinn), who sits alongside his sniveling brother, Caracalla (Fred Hechinger). The heart of this Rome, of course, is the Coliseum, where throngs cheer for the gladiators who fight and die. There, the ageless Scott remains remarkably at home. The arena, with its eruptions of spectacle and violence, is a stand in for the director's own vision of the big screen: Go big or go home.

This dichotomy — a fallen society and its insatiable need for entertainment — is the clever and not altogether flattering backdrop of the "Gladiator" films. Part two, set 20 years after the events of the first movie, brings a new comba-



Paul Mescal in a scene from "Gladiator II" (Paramount Pictures)

tant to the Coliseum — a mysterious outsider named Lucius Verus, played by Paul Mescal. And to answer the inevitable question, yes. Yes, I was quite entertained.

In a movie where everyone nurtures some secret, few stay hidden long. Foremost among them is Lucius Verus, a warrior in Numidia who's taken prisoner

and forced to fight as a gladiator. He's the son of Lucilla and Maximus (Crowe in "Gladiator"). Following the events of that film, Lucilla sent him, an heir to the empire, to Numidia to grow up outside of the empire's power struggles.

Mescal, the terrific Irish actor of "Aftersun" and "All of Us Stran-

gers," smoothly steps into a blockbuster arena for the first time. "This one is interesting," says Macrinus, eyeing him for the first time. Mescal's Lucius is vengeful — the Roman army kills his warrior wife in the Numidia battle. "Rage pours out of you like milk," Macrinus says, admiringly. The glint of mischief in Mescal's eyes gives Lucius a little more character than your average revenge-seeking gladiator.

We watch as Lucius cunningly survives arena after arena. Meanwhile, Macrinus manipulates him to steer the public's routing interest away from the emperor. It's a rich if slightly cartoonish tapestry of palace intrigue, with Macrinus deftly pulling all the strings.

But, really, none of the power machinations are as compelling as the increasingly carnivalesque scenes of the Coliseum. In the gladiators' first trip there, they're greeted by man-eating monkeys. Next, it's a rider atop a giant, charging rhinoceros. Then, the piece de resistance: a flooded Coliseum festering with sharks. There are even little mock islands

with palm trees spread about.

Now, "Gladiator II" may not stand up to much inquiry from historians.

Yes, heads do roll in Scott's "Gladiator" sequel. Macrinus succeeds in whipping Rome into a frenzy. In fact, he does it so easily and guilefully that, once things begin unraveling for him, the air leaves "Gladiator II." You don't quite believe his recklessness after he so patiently and artfully turned the screws.

Nevertheless, two possible successors emerge — Lucius, who has a birthright to the throne, and Macrinus, who comes to within its grasp purely by his own wit. Is it any wonder that I was rooting for Macrinus, all the way? How could you not, with Washington chewing scenery like this and making zestful (and rather apt) pronouncements like: "That, my friend, is politics!"

**"Gladiator II," a Paramount Pictures release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "strong bloody violence." Running time: 148 minutes. ★★★★★**

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



## TASTE OF EDESIA

# Parisian Flair

IRENE SAM, MDT

**H**ONG KONG'S dining scene is about to get more exciting as Rosewood announced the launch of **MARMO BISTRO**, a new French bistro concept and the hotel's first foray into French cuisine. The eatery channels the warm and inviting ambiance of Parisian bistros, offering guests an intimate dining experience of classical French cuisine and iconic fine wines.

Under the skilled leadership of Chef de Cuisine Giovanni Galeota, guests can expect the same elevated culinary standards in a completely reimagined dining experience. **MARMO** Bistro is set to captivate diners with reservations open now.

Inspired by the timeless elegance of marble, **MARMO** Bistro invites guests to savour the beau-

ty of classic French fare in a warm and welcoming setting. The seasonal menu showcases honest, carefully sourced ingredients, featuring the finest meats, the freshest seafood, and a thoughtfully curated selection of exceptional wines.

Embracing the spirit of a neighbourhood bistro, **MARMO** is the perfect destination for friends and family to gather around a cosy table. Classic French Cuisine at **MARMO** Bistro With a steadfast commitment to simplicity, freshness, and authenticity, **MARMO** Bistro sources the freshest and finest ingredients to create bold French flavours in every one of the 18 dishes and five sides on the new menu.

The journey begins with **POUR COMMENCER**, meaning 'To Start', offering three dishes, including the celebrated Foie Gras Torchon. This hallmark of French

gastronomy features homemade duck liver, wrapped in a cloth, poached, and rested for 24 hours to deepen the flavours, complemented by fig chutney, kampfot pepper, and toasted sourdough, creating a delightful interplay of sweet and savoury.

As guests transition to the **ENTRÉES**, they will find comfort in the **Gratinée à L'oignon**, a rich, beef broth onion soup with a storied history, reputedly first created by King Louis XV.

Chef Giovanni adds his own spin to this classic by incorporating golden broiled Gruyère and Comté cheese, resulting in a truly indulgent experience. Other signature dishes to look forward to include the **Cuisse de Grenouille**, paying homage to a delicacy enjoyed in France since the 12th century.

Often associated with French monks who found a clever loophole, allowing them to savour frog legs without classifying them as meat, this dish features organic frog legs served alongside parsley risotto and sweet garlic sauce, offering diners a taste of French history.

Another classic French dish is the **Nicoise Salad** from the south of France Here which at **Marmo** Bistro is reimagined as the **Thon A La Nicoise**, replacing tuna confit with fresh bluefin akami tuna, topped with tuna sauce, anchovies, quail egg and olives. The **MER**, or 'Sea' section shines with the iconic **Sole Meunière**, a French classic celebrated for its simplicity and elegance.

Pan-fried in butter with all its bones to preserve the fish's tenderness, the fish is later deboned for a refined presentation. Complementing this simple seafood offering is the more complex **Bouillabaisse**, a traditional fish stew from Marseille, initially crafted by fishermen. **Marmo** Bistro's rendition is elegantly served tableside with a flavourful vegetab-

le broth and an array of seafood, including red mullet, seabass, clams, mussels, and squid, accompanied by a sourdough bread topped with rouille sauce.

For those who favour meat over fish, **TERRE**, meaning 'Land' features a **Côte De Boeuf à La Bordelaise**, a dish that embodies the robust flavours of Bordeaux. This impressive Argentinian rib-eye, known for its tenderness and low fat, is roasted to perfection, and finished with a velvety red wine glaze and bone marrow. Accompaniments include the **Pomme Purée**, a rich, mashed potato renowned for its silky, buttery texture, made famous by the late French chef, Joël Robuchon.

Finally, the **DESSERT** section showcases a total of six new creations. Among the highlights, a **Tarte Tropeziennne**, originally created by a Polish baker in the 1950's in the iconic French coastal town, the tart gained worldwide popularity thanks to actress Brigitte Bardot.

**MARMO**'s version pays homage to this classic with a fragrant touch of orange blossom and pearl sugar, lending the dessert a refined Mediterranean flair.

**MARMO** Bistro's Beverage Programme **Marmo** Bistro is excited to introduce a beverage programme that beautifully complements its exquisite French dining experience. The wine list is designed to be highly accessible, showcasing the most iconic wine regions of France while also featuring hidden gems and popular fine wines, each chosen for their unique character and exceptional value.

This carefully curated selection enhances the flavours of the bistro's reimagined classic dishes, allowing guests to savour the essence of French gastronomy with every sip. Among the highlights is **Philipponnat**, **Champagne Royale Réserve Brut NV**, boasting vinosity, versatility, and complexity with a rich fla-

avour profile predominantly featuring Pinot Noir grapes.

For those seeking a standout rosé, **Domaine de Terrebrune's** 2022 **Bandol Rosé** delivers bold personality and complexity, thanks to its blend of Mourvèdre, Grenache, and Syrah grapes – a robust choice that evolves beautifully with age. Wine enthusiasts will appreciate the **Château Musar**, **Bekaa Valley, Lebanon 2016**, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cinsault that offers a mature profile with aromatic and spicy notes, reflecting the rich history and terroir of Lebanon.

In addition to the impressive wine offerings, the cocktail menu developed by **Rosewood Hong Kong's** Director of Bars, **Bob Louison**, embraces the vibrant bistro drinking culture, featuring aperitivo-style cocktails crafted to complement the cuisine of various French regions.

Crafted using French spirits, each cocktail is designed to refresh and reset the palate, taken by locals before, during and after a meal, they capture the essence of France's drinking traditions. Among the signature cocktails is the **Sidecar**, a classic drink made with French brandy, **Pierre Ferrand** Curacao, and citrus. With its mysterious origins believed to date back to the end of World War I, the **Sidecar** is renowned for its balanced flavours and timeless appeal, and is often associated with the **Ritz** in Paris.

Another standout cocktail is the **Boulevardier**, a sophisticated creation that combines **Rozelieures** **Origine** Collection, **Noilly Prat** French Vermouth, **Campari**. The **Liaison**, crafted with **Michel Couvreur** Blended Whiskey, **Noilly Prat**, **Lillet Rouge**, and **Cointreau**, captures the spirit of romance that defines France. Inspired by the intimate bistros where stories of passion are shared, the **Liaison** is more than just a drink – it's an experience.

## TUNES

# Blackpink K-pop star Rosé's debut solo album is heartfelt

**ROSÉ**, the nightingale of the massively popular Korean girl group **Blackpink**, has flown the nest and launched her first solo album "**Rosie**." She's the first of the awesome foursome to release a full-length solo record, and in English at that. Members **Jisoo** and **Jennie** have previously released singles, and **Lisa** is gearing up for her own studio album in 2025.

Across "**Rosie**," titled after Rosé's nickname to communicate a kind of personal intimacy, the singer goes to great lengths to detach herself sonically

from her band. Unlike **Blackpink's** high energy electro-pop output, Rosé's solo material is that of a coffee-house dweller with a sideline in romantic drama. But don't expect finger-plucked acoustic guitar balladry exclusively — "**Rosie**" is reserved in some moments, full of life in others.

The album starts off chipper, with the soaring piano ballad "**Number One Girl**," the cool synth-pop track "**Two Years**," the dynamic, catchy **Bruno Mars** collaboration "**Apt.**," and the contemporary, **Taylor Swift**-indebted pop of "**Toxic Till**

the End." But it invariably slows down, preferring fairly stripped back production throughout. She's got the voice and she's flaunting it; it's her prerogative to showcase her range at the expense of a more energetic beat.

Across 12-tracks, the album studies heartache over lost loves ("It's been two years and you're still not gone/It doesn't make sense that I can't move on," she sings on "**Two Years**"), missed chances ("Are we lovers or friends/'Cause it's as good as it gets" in "**Call it the End**") and ambivalence over situationships that

probably should've been nipped in the bud but staggered along, strung by the power of lust and not much else. (That one is everywhere — particularly in the dubious boyfriends of "**Toxic Till the End**" and "**Gameboy**.") Who can't relate?

The album is an emotional rollercoaster easy to empathize with, stuffed with songs that articulate the trials and tribulations of early adult years — the search for connection and getting dragged into romances that lead nowhere. But throughout, fans of both **Blackpink** and Rosé



"Rosie" by Rosé  
(Atlantic Records)

might miss the spirited songs of her group. After all — your 20s are for par-

tying, too — not just heartbreak. **CRISTINA JALERU**, MDT/AP



**OPINION**

**Business Views**

Shuli Ren, Bloomberg



**SOUTH KOREA'S YOON CAN KISS HIS STOCK REFORM GOODBYE**

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol has been touting a so-called corporate value-up plan to tackle the nation's notoriously depressed stock market this year. After briefly declaring martial law late Tuesday, he can kiss that initiative goodbye.

Yoon is borrowing the concept from Japan, where a decade-long corporate governance reform is luring global investors back. Companies are encouraged to come up with plans on how to improve financial metrics, such as price-to-book or returns on equity. One approach is to name and shame firms that don't attempt to make money for shareholders. The Korea Value-up Index, introduced in September, clearly takes a page out of Tokyo's successful "shame index."

If global investors were in a wait-and-see mode before, they can toss away Seoul's proposal now. The short-lived martial law that stunned the world is a great reminder of what they dislike about South Korea: It's a market full of billionaire family feuds and handshake deals. Foreigners are the last ones to find out what's going on.

There are plenty of examples. Korea Zinc Co., a key metals supplier to the semiconductor and auto industries, is the best-performing blue-chip this year, up 228%. Its shares are doing well only because the two families that founded the company are in a heated fight for control, with each side holding more than 30% stake. Looking at the fundamentals, though, value investors that Seoul is trying to attract dare not touch this stock: The shares are 60% overpriced, according to analysts polled by Bloomberg, and trading is volatile.

Or consider Samsung Electronics Co., the crown jewel of Korea Inc. Jay Y. Lee, a third-generation heir, has been dogged by lawsuits and attacks from New York-based activist hedge fund Elliott Investment Management for almost a decade. Depending on which political party is in power, he's been jailed and pardoned, and might be jailed again. But one thing is constant — he remains at the helm of Samsung.

With top management distracted, the once-dominant chipmaker has failed in strategic thinking. Samsung is falling behind in the AI boom because it underinvested in a niche product used with Nvidia Corp.'s processors. As a result, Korean equities are suffering from the most disappointing tech cycle since 1997, according to CLSA analyst Alexander Redman.

Of course, the K-drama award has to be given to Yoon, who has been struggling to implement his conservative political agenda against the opposition Democratic Party, which took control of the legislature in April. But was martial law a good idea? An impeachment is now on the cards, and political analysts at Teneo, a consultancy, worry that mass demonstrations could become a daily occurrence in Seoul, as we saw during former president Park Geun-hye's impeachment crisis in December 2016.

Trading at only 8.4 times forward earnings, the benchmark Kospi index has rarely been cheaper. But valuation alone is not enough to lure foreign asset managers back. The \$1.6 trillion market seems to be controlled by a handful of powerful men, who can move benchmark stocks out of whim and ego.

Instead of lifting up the stock market, Yoon is giving global investors one more reason to stay away.

Courtesy Bloomberg/Shuli Ren

French President Emmanuel Macron will address the nation today [Macau time], a day after the National Assembly ousted Prime Minister Michel Barnier in a historic no-confidence vote that has left France without a functioning government.

Macron is expected to focus on stabilizing the political crisis and possibly naming a new prime minister to navigate the fractured parliament.

Barnier formally submitted his resignation yesterday at the Elysée Palace, fulfilling a constitutional obligation. The no-confidence motion passed by 331 votes in the National Assembly, forcing Barnier to step

down after just three months in office—the shortest tenure of any prime minister in modern French history.

Macron faces the critical task of naming a replacement capable of leading a minority government in a parliament where no party holds a majority. Yaël Braun-Pivet, president of the National Assembly and a member of Macron's party, urged the president to move quickly.

The process may prove challenging. Macron's administration has yet to confirm any names, though French media have reported a shortlist of centrist candidates who might appeal to both sides of the political spectrum.



Indonesian immigration officers escort recently-arrested Chinese national Yan Zhenxing during a press conference in Jakarta

**INDONESIA ARRESTS A CHINESE MAN WANTED BY BEIJING OVER MONEY LAUNDERING CHARGES**

ANDI JATMIKO, JAKARTA

INDONESIAN authorities have arrested a Chinese man sought by Beijing for allegedly helping transfer and laundering almost \$18 million from a criminal online gambling group in China, officials said yesterday.

Yan Zhenxing was detained Monday by immigration officers at a cross-border ferry terminal on Batam island, next to Singapore.

Yuldi Yusman, the Director of Immigration Supervision and Enforcement, said Yan was arrested following an Interpol red notice for him. The notices request law enforcement agencies worldwide to detain or arrest a suspect wanted by a specific country.

Yusman said Yan, a permanent resident of Singapore, was arriving in Batam for holiday with his family when he was detained.

Indonesian authorities brought the suspect, wearing a detainee's orange shirt and

a facemask, to a news conference yesterday in the capital of Jakarta. The suspect did not make any statements and was not asked any questions.

Yusman said that Yan was named as a suspect by police in China's Inner Mongolia region who allege he was involved in transferring and laundering more than 130 million Chinese Yuan (\$17.8 million) from a criminal online gambling group.

He said Yan was handed to Indonesia's National Central Bureau Interpol in Jakarta on Thursday and a decision to deport or to extradite him to China will take some time.

The arrest came just two months after immigration officers on the tourist island of Bali arrested a Chinese suspect sought by Beijing who allegedly helped to run investment scams that brought in over \$14 billion from clients in China.

"We are committed to protecting Indonesia's territory from the arri-

val of foreign nationals who are not useful and threaten national stability," Yusman said.

Indonesia, an archipelago nation on the crossroads between Asia and the South Pacific, is attractive to local, regional and global organized crime because of its geographical location.

Last month, authorities in Bali arrested Hector Aldwin Pantollana, a Filipino fugitive accused of helping scam over \$67 million out of clients in the Philippines.

Another Filipino, Alice Guo, a fugitive former mayor accused of having links to Chinese criminal syndicates, was arrested near Jakarta in September. She has since been deported to the Philippines.

In June, Chaowalit Thongduang, one of Thailand's most wanted fugitives, was escorted back to Thailand on a Thai air force plane after being arrested in Bali following months on the run over allegations he was involved in several killings and drug trafficking. MDT/AP



**Serbia** Naive art from Kovacica, a Slovak village in Serbia, was added to UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list. Celebrated for its vivid depictions of rural life, the self-taught painting tradition began in 1939. The recognition highlights the ethnic Slovak community's cultural identity and historical preservation.



**Germany** Eight members of the OPEC+ alliance of oil exporting countries decided yesterday to put off increasing oil production as they face weaker than expected demand and competing production from non-allied countries — factors that could keep oil prices stagnant into next year. The OPEC+ members decided to postpone by three months production increases that had been scheduled to take effect Jan. 1.



**UK** Sumo wrestling returns to London's Royal Albert Hall in 2025 for a five-day tournament, its second appearance since 1991. The event aims to promote Japanese culture alongside the ancient sport, capitalizing on recent global interest sparked by media and cultural exhibitions.

**HOLIDAY TIMES**

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will be back on the stands on Tuesday December 10. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.