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UKRAINE WILL ASK ALLIES TO BOOST ITS AIR DEFENSES AT A MEETING IN GERMANY, ZELENSKYY SAYS

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China A fire at a food market Saturday in northern China killed at least eight people and injured 15 others, state media said. The fire at the Liguang market in the city of Zhangjiakou broke out midday Saturday and was mostly extinguished by 2 p.m., Xinhua News Agency reported, citing a government official in Qiaoxi District where the market is located.

AP PHOTO



Myanmar's military government has released more than 6,000 prisoners and has reduced other inmates' sentences as part of a mass amnesty marking the 77th anniversary of independence from Britain on Saturday. They included just a small proportion of hundreds of political detainees jailed for opposing army rule since the military seized power in February 2021.

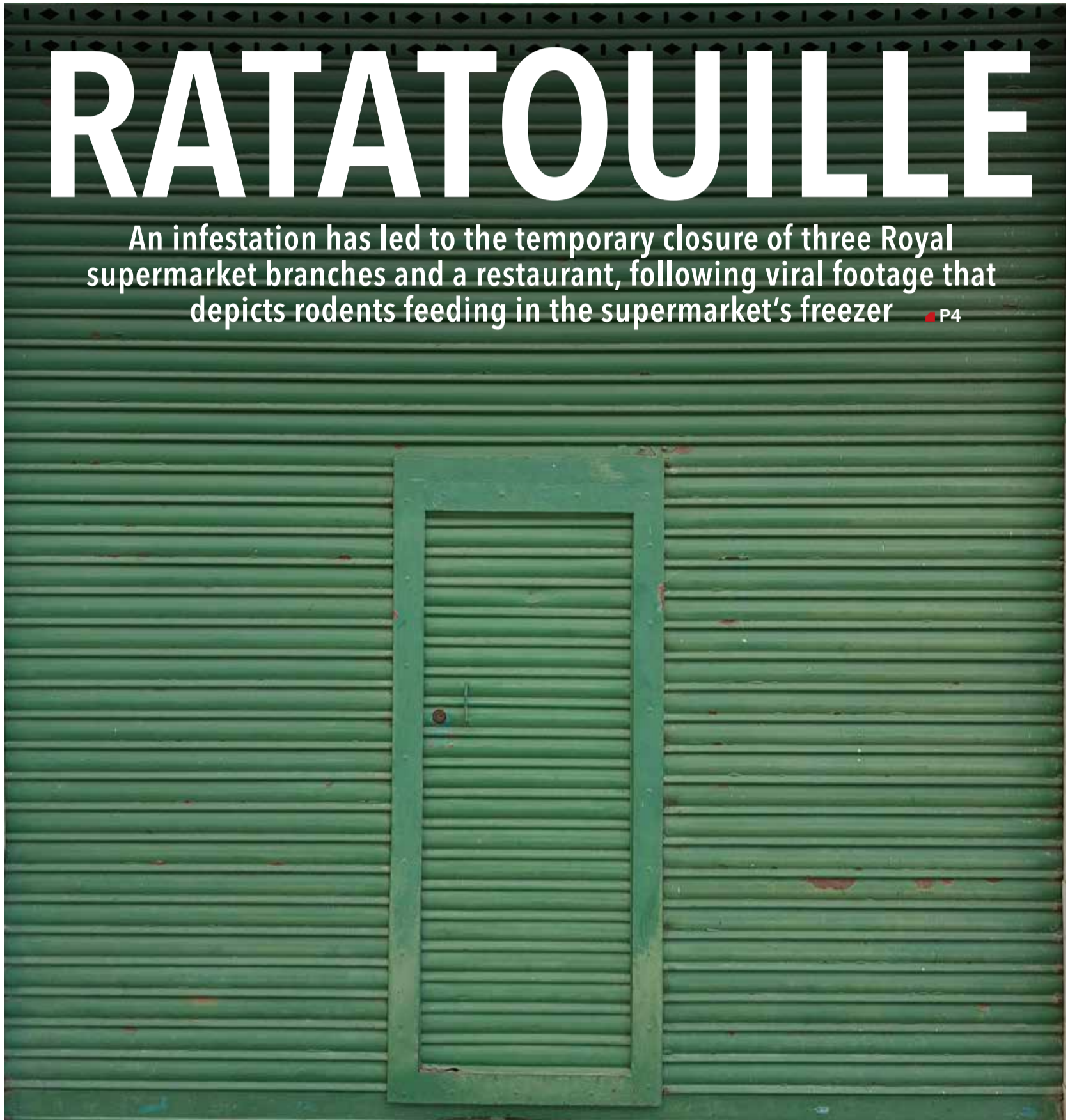
Malaysian authorities said that they have turned away two boats carrying nearly 300 people believed to be Muslim Rohingya refugees who were found to have entered the country illegally. The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency said that it had information that two more boats were attempting to enter the country.

AP PHOTO



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz says he's staying "cool" against critical personal comments made by Elon Musk but finds it worrying that the U.S. billionaire makes the effort to get involved in a general election by endorsing the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party.

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An infestation has led to the temporary closure of three Royal supermarket branches and a restaurant, following viral footage that depicts rodents feeding in the supermarket's freezer

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PROPERTY

CENTALINE: MARKET SET FOR STABILITY AND RECOVERY THIS YEAR

VICTORIA CHAN

REALTOR Centaline Property predicts that the Macau property market is poised for a more stable trajectory in 2025, driven by renewed buyer interest and supportive government measures.

In a press conference last week, Stanley Poon, managing director at Centaline, noted that the combination of supportive policies and improving market conditions suggests a stabilizing property market, with the potential for price recovery and increased transaction volumes.

He urged potential buyers to remain vigilant for opportunities, especially as some homeowners may face continued financial pressures early in the year.

Centaline highlighted a significant rebound in Macau's property market following the comprehensive withdrawal of measures initiated in April.

Jack Lei, principal regional sa-

RENATO MARQUES



les director, reported a notable increase in the volume of transactions for industrial and commercial buildings. He noted that office transactions surged by nearly 60% year-on-year, with approxi-

mately 92 transactions expected for 2024.

The average price per square foot for offices is projected to be MOP3,940 in the Nape area and MOP5,300 in Nam Van, reflecting

an overall decline of about 20% for the year.

In the industrial property sector, transaction volumes are anticipated to reach approximately 53, up 36% from the previous year.

However, the average price for industrial buildings has dropped to MOP2,396 per square foot, a decrease of 22% compared to 2023.

Looking forward, the market faces challenges due to limited potential for interest rate cuts. Lei emphasized that property owners may need to maintain returns around 4% to attract buyers. He noted that the Nape District appears to be stabilizing, while the Nam Van area shows signs of recovery, albeit with low transaction volumes.

In comparison, the residential market showed mixed performance in 2024, with a significant decline in sales transactions in the first quarter, down 27.6% year-on-year. However, subsequent months showed signs of recovery, with improved market confidence and a narrowing decline in sales by June.

Government policies have played a crucial role in stabilizing the market, with more than 760 new policies introduced, including relaxed purchase restrictions and reduced down payment ratios. The government also implemented measures to reduce transaction taxes, contributing to a more favorable environment for buyers.



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10 SIGNS YOUR DOG IS HAVING A VETERINARY EMERGENCY

In the panic of the moment, some mild conditions can appear very serious or even life-threatening to the untrained eye. Below are some helpful tips to determine whether your dog's condition can wait until the morning or whether they need immediate assessment by a veterinarian.

1. Blood loss

Severe blood loss is always an emergency – whether from a wound, from the mouth, or within vomit or diarrhoea. When faced with a bleeding dog, it is easy to panic, and it can look like there is more blood than there is.

Take a breath and try to quantify the amount of blood calmly – would it fill a coffee cup or a bucket? Being able to explain to your veterinarian a rough estimate of how much blood there is will help decide whether it is an emergency and assist the veterinarian in beginning preparation for treatment like a blood transfusion if required.

2. Collapse or weakness

There are many causes of collapse or weakness, but if your dog is suddenly unable to stand, this is a veterinary emergency. The only potential exception to this rule is if a dog has had mobility issues for a long time and has gra-



dually deteriorated. In this instance, if their pain is controlled, this can wait a few hours until your local clinic is open.

3. Vomiting or retching

If your dog is suddenly vomiting profusely, for example, more than four times in an hour, they are likely to become dehydrated and so should see a veterinarian immediately. Similarly, if they cannot keep water down or are constantly retching but bringing nothing but white foam up, they should be assessed by a veterinarian as an emergency. Additional symptoms like bloating or swelling of their belly also suggest emergency

intervention could be required.

4. Breathing distress

Any sustained difficulty in breathing – be that choking, coughing, wheezing, or panting – could be a veterinary emergency. If your pet's breathing pattern is not right, call your veterinarian right away.

5. Not passing urine

If your dog isn't peeing, this can be a serious emergency as it can indicate an obstruction in the urethra (the tube that takes urine from the bladder out of the body). If your dog is straining but passing no urine or cannot form a stream

of urine, this is an emergency as the bladder can become over-full and even burst (rupture) if the urine isn't passed.

6. Severe pain

If your pet is in severe pain, this could be considered an emergency – whether it's due to an acute injury or illness or an existing condition where prescribed pain relief is not working. No dog should ever be in severe, uncontrolled pain, but try to calmly consider the level of discomfort they are in and whether they genuinely need to be seen immediately.

7. Severe limping

If your dog is not putting any weight on one of their legs for an hour or more, or there is a visible fracture to the leg, seek veterinary advice immediately. Not only do they need pain relief, but assessing the injury as possible will mean a better chance of a full recovery.

8. Neurological signs

If your dog has had a trauma to the head and is showing unusual signs like incoordination, being less alert, or fitting, this is a veterinary emergency. If your dog has a series of seizures in a short time or does not come around fully from a fit, this would be an emer-

gency. Seizures lasting more than five minutes should also prompt a veterinary visit.

9. Problems in labor

If a female dog is giving birth and has been consistently pushing for half an hour or more, this could signify that a puppy is stuck in the birth canal, and veterinary help should be sought immediately. However, remember that there can be significant gaps between pups in normal labor, so this is not an emergency if there is no straining.

10. Heatstroke

If it is a warm day in Macau and your dog has been exercising or unable to get to shade, they may suffer from heatstroke. Brachycephalic dogs with short snouts and narrow airways (Like Pugs and Bull Dogs) are particularly prone to heatstroke and may suffer on days when the temperature isn't excessively high. Signs include panting excessively, laying down, and difficulty breathing, but seizures, coma, and death are all possible consequences if untreated. Heat exhaustion is an emergency, and you must contact your veterinarian right away if you suspect your dog is suffering from it.

Hope this info helps
Till next time
Dr Ruan Bester

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TRANSPORT

LRT sees a significant surge in passenger numbers after Hengqin line opening

RENATO MARQUES

THE Light Rapid Transit system (LRT) recorded a significant surge in the number of passengers transported last month.

According to the company data, the LRT transported a daily average of 23,100 passengers in December 2024, a 36.7% increase when compared to November 2024's average of 16,900 passengers.

Contributing to the surge in passengers is the opening of the Seac Pai Van Line (Nov. 1, 2024) and, most significantly, the Hengqin Line (Dec. 2, 2024).

As previously forecasted by several people and entities, the impact of the opening of the Seac Pai Van Line appears minor when compared to the Hengqin Line due to the lack of connection between the station and the residential area.

Back in July 2023, members of the "People's Alliance for the Construction of Macau" (Aliança de Povo de Instituição de Macau) stated their belief that the Seac Pai



Van Line would not be popular among those living in the area since the station is located a considerable distance from the residential area.

In an interview published by the Macao Daily News, a leader of the association said, "Only the Lok Kuan (public housing) and Praia Park buildings (private housing) are close enough to be served by the station entrance. For the other

residents, they will need to walk a considerable distance."

The same official also noted that the station service is not complemented by any public bus routes, a fact that led her to think most residents, especially the elderly, will continue to opt for buses.

Comparing the results from LRT between October 2024 and November 2024 (before and after the opening of the Seac Pai

Van Line), it is possible to observe that the number of passengers transported grew by only 11.2%, equivalent to an increase of about 1,700 passengers per day.

Still, in December 2024, with both new lines in operation, the increase amounted to 6,200 more passengers transported per day.

Another factor to consider is the so-called "novelty factor" that was observed previously when

the Barra Station opened, which prompted many local residents to try the new transport system, even if they did not intend to use it regularly for their daily commutes.

The real effects of the opening of the Hengqin Line will be seen this year as the system reaches normal operations.

The results of the LRT for December 2024 mark the second-best month since the system was inaugurated back in December 2019, when an average of 33,000 passengers per day was recorded. However, it should be noted that this result was achieved through free trial trips.

Before the opening of the Hengqin Line, the government announced the line would feature only four-car trains, which can transport around 476 people per train.

It was also stated that the frequency of the trains would be at intervals of 6 to 7 minutes, providing the line with the capacity to transport approximately 8,000 people per hour in both directions.

In response to an inquiry from the Times in mid-2023, the Macao Light Rapid Transit Corporation, Limited stated that it believed the number of passengers using this transport system would increase after the opening of the Seac Pai Van and Hengqin Lines but declined to provide a forecast on the expected number of passengers the LRT would carry daily after the opening of the two new lines.

For now, the LRT closed out the year 2024 with a yearly average of 14,675 passengers transported per day.

SOCIETY

Lawmakers urge government to update civil servants' salaries

RENATO MARQUES

LAWMAKERS José Pereira Coutinho and Ella Lei have urged the new government, led by Sam Hou Fai, to update the salaries of Civil Servants.

The two lawmakers, who represent the Macao Public Servants Association (ATFPM) and the Macao Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM), have expressed in comments made to the public broadcaster TDM that the new government should prioritize the salary update in its policies for 2025.

While Ella Lei did not specify a figure on how much the salaries should grow, Coutinho reaffirmed the figure of about 3%, which he had previously mentioned at the Legislative Assembly (AL) when

discussing the 2025 budget with former Secretary Lei Wai Nong.

At the time, the lawmaker, who represents the interests of civil servants, called for an update of the Civil Servants' Salary Index from the current 94 patacas per index point to 97 patacas.

In their statements, the two lawmakers noted that the government should follow the example set last week by the gaming concessionaire Sands China Ltd (SCL), which announced increases in the salaries of their workers to take effect in March this year.

They both stated that it is hoped that the other five concessionaires will follow the example of SCL and increase salaries for all their staff.



During the AL discussion over the 2025 budget, the outgoing Secretary for Economy and Finance responded to the call by saying, "This budget is not for the current government but for the next. It's a basic

budget to ensure the payment of contracted expenses and the normal functioning of services." Lei Wai Nong remarked that if the new government sees that there is a possibility to increase the benefits for civil

servants or the population in general, they can do so by presenting an amendment to the approved budget.

On the topic, Coutinho said that he now hopes that when, in March this year, the government presents the Policy Address for 2025, the salary updates for the government workers will already be part of these policies and calculated, budgeted, and ready for implementation. He noted this to be a matter of justice, as the price increases have been causing a successive loss of purchasing power for the population in Macau.

So far, only SCL has announced salary increases for 2025.

SCL pay adjustments vary by income level, with lower-salaried staff (below MOP16,000/month) receiving a higher percentage increase, while those earning wages above MOP16,000 will see their salaries increase at a fixed percentage of 2.5%. These adjustments apply to all the

workers under SCL-owned properties, which include not only the casinos but also the hotels, stores, and food and beverage outlets, among others.

For her part, Ella Lei said that the salary update is necessary, especially for those government workers who earn lower salaries.

The same FAOM lawmaker also noted that attention is needed for the private sector, in which many workers have even seen their salaries reduced. She cited examples of workers in restaurants and food and beverage establishments, construction, and real estate and property management.

Ella Lei noted that currently, many workers have not yet recovered to the salary levels they had before the pandemic. She remarked that the previous government had systematically analyzed the labor market situation just through the unemployment rate, which, she said, "is not the only factor to take into account."

THREE ROYAL SUPERMARKET BRANCHES AND RESTAURANT ORDERED TO SUSPEND OPERATIONS DUE TO RODENT INFESTATION

VICTORIA CHAN

THE Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has ordered three branches of the supermarket chain Royal to temporarily suspend operations after discovering a widespread rodent infestation on the premises.

This action follows the circulation of viral social media footage depicting rodents feeding in a freezer.

According to the IAM, the affected branches—located at Edificio Ip Heng in Seac Pai Van, Treasure Garden in Taipa, and Edificio New China Plaza in Horta e Costa—were found to have substandard hygiene conditions, including visible signs of rodent activity in storage areas and inadequate pest control measures in food preparation zones.

The move has alarmed local residents, some of whom reported to TDM witnessing rats scurrying around the supermarket aisles firsthand. “I’ve seen rats running underneath the vegetable and fruit racks in the Royal supermarket in the morning. It’s crazy,” said one concerned shopper, echoing



the sentiments of others who raised similar complaints with staff, to no avail.



In response to safety concerns, the IAM has ordered the temporary closure of the three

affected branches for thorough cleaning and disinfection. Additionally, all fresh produce items

will be destroyed, and the stores will only be allowed to reopen after passing a comprehensive re-inspection.

The Royal supermarket chain has issued a public apology, acknowledging, “We have always attached great importance to food safety and hygiene management. Cleaning and disinfection procedures will focus on solving the problem of rat infestation. At the same time, detailed inspections will be carried out on all goods and facilities. The relevant foods have been discarded immediately to ensure a hygienic and safe shopping environment for customers.”

As the IAM intensified inspections of catering establishments and supermarkets across various districts yesterday, a rodent infestation was also discovered at a Chinese restaurant “Chun Seong Heong” on R. de Entre-Campos.

The merchant was immediately ordered to close for rectification, and all fresh food on the premises was destroyed.

Online food delivery platforms were required to remove the restaurant from their services to prevent further risk.

GOVERNANCE

André Cheong urges IAM to evolve and update to serve the population better

RENATO MARQUES

THE Secretary for Administration and Justice, André Cheong, has called on the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) officials to lead the bureau to evolve and update its structure and departments so it can better serve the population.

Cheong’s words were said in a speech at the swearing-in ceremony of the new president (Chao Wai Ieng) and vice president (Mak Kim Meng) of the IAM that took place late last week.

When delivering a speech at the inauguration ceremony, Cheong highlighted that the work



of IAM was closely related to the public, adding that now that 25 years have passed since the return of Macau to the motherland, “the development of municipal work has also reached a moment of transition from the old to

the new.” Speaking more specifically to the new heads, Chao and Mak, Cheong urged them to lead all colleagues of IAM to meet challenges with new attitudes and new mindsets in their new positions,

in collaboration with the Members of the Administration Committee on Municipal Affairs.

Cheong further developed saying that IAM leadership “should take into serious account the transformation of the department structures, competence, and personnel regime, to offer better municipal services to the public and live up to Macau’s acclaim as ‘a pearl on the palm of the motherland’ given by President Xi Jinping.”

In their turn, Chao and Mak expressed their awareness of the responsibility of their duties and tasks and pleaded to perform them with due diligence.

The new president also assumed the responsibility for the reform of the management philosophy following the policy vision of the Chief Executive while optimizing and promoting various municipal works to provide the public with high-quality municipal services.

CRIME

TRIO ARRESTED FOR COUNTERFEIT CASINO CHIP FRAUD IN COTAI

VICTORIA CHAN

THREE unemployed Chinese men were arrested in Cotai for their alleged involvement in a casino chip fraud scheme that defrauded an entertainment venue, 11 gamblers, and money changers of over HKD600,000.

The incident occurred on Jan. 1, when a casino employee at the entertainment venue noticed an irregularity in the chips being redeemed by a customer. Further investigation revealed that other gamblers were also in possession of counterfeit chips of the same type, attempting to redeem them at the casino.

Police officers arrived at the scene and arrested the three suspects, all reported to be unemployed mainland Chinese nationals. The officers seized a total of 77 coun-

terfeit chips with a face value of HKD10,000, as well as HKD17,000 in suspected proceeds from the crime.

The investigation found that the three suspects, along with other unknown individuals, had entered Macau on the day of the incident and exchanged the fake chips with gamblers and money changers in and around the casino to commit fraud.

One of the suspects was caught mixing fake chips with real ones and attempting to exchange them at the casino’s cashier.

The casinos confirmed a total loss of HKD20,000, with four of the 11 victims suspected of engaging in illegal currency exchange work in Macau.

The case has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office for further processing.

TOURISM

Authorities expect new policy for Zhuhai tourists to add 20,000 daily visitors

VICTORIA CHAN

AUTHORITIES expect the new policy to bring an additional 20,000 people per day traveling to Macau from Zhuhai and Hengqin.

More than 3,200 residents of Zhuhai and Hengqin crossed into Macau on the first day of a new visa policy that allows them to enter the city for stays of up to seven days, marking a significant increase in border traffic.

Figures provided by the Public Security Police (PSP) showed that approximately 2,500 of the new visa holders were from Zhuhai, while roughly 700 were from the neighboring Hengqin area. The visa is valid for one year and



does not require the typical two-month wait before returning to Macau.

Residents reported in an interview with TDM that the new visa is "very convenient."

One resident noted, "We can come whenever we want without a thought, unlike before, when we could visit, but each time we had to wait two months in between."

Cheung Kin Chung, general manager of Macau CTS Hotel Management International Co. Ltd. and chairman of China Travel and Tourism Agency (Macau), mentioned in an interview with TDM that they have noticed many cross-border trips to Macau are for activities such as shopping and consumerism.

The Public Security Police and tourism industry representatives stated they are making preparations to accommodate the expected surge of new visa holders entering Macau. In addition to the usual tourist traffic, the city is now bracing for a significant rise in travel from those taking advantage of the simplified border crossing.

HONG KONG-ZHUHAI-MACAO BRIDGE REPORTS RECORD HIGH PASSENGER FLOWS IN 2024

More than 27 million inbound and outbound passenger trips were recorded through the Zhuhai port of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge in 2024, marking a 72% year-on-year increase and a record high, according to official data released on Friday. The bridge handled over 5.55 million vehicle trips last year, also up 71%, exceeding the 5-million mark for the first time. Daily passenger flows at the port surpassed 100,000 on 50 days in 2024, a tenfold increase from 2023.

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE CONFERENCE SHOWCASES TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF DATA ANALYTICS

The University of Macau's Faculty of Business Administration hosted the 2024 Macau International Conference on Business Intelligence and Analytics. The event brought together scholars to explore the latest developments, featuring keynote speeches and panel discussions on AI, big data, decision-making, and emerging technologies. UM Rector Yonghua Song emphasized the transformative role of business intelligence, highlighting the conference's importance for global academic exchange. The event included keynotes by Princeton's Fan Jianqing on uncovering financial fraud and Micro Connect's Gary Zhang on financing strategies.

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CHINA-US

Small businesses brace themselves for potentially disruptive TikTok ban

MAE ANDERSON

A looming TikTok ban could affect the millions of small businesses that use the short-video social media app to help them grow their business.

Desiree Hill, owner of Crown's Corner Mechanic in Conyers, Georgia, started her business solo as a mobile mechanic. Sharing videos of her work on TikTok helped spread the word and she became so popular she was able to open a 9,000 square foot brick and mortar shop with five employees 18 months ago.

"Every day I get at least two to three customers that have seen me on TikTok, watched my videos and wanted to become a customer," she said.

Though TikTok has been around only since 2016, small business owners use the platform in a variety of ways, from growing a customer base to advertising and marketing, as well as selling goods directly from the site.

According to TikTok's own estimates, small businesses on TikTok would lose more than



\$1 billion in revenue in a single month if the ban goes into effect.

The Justice Department ordered the app's China-based parent company, ByteDance, to sell TikTok or face a U.S. ban by Jan. 19, citing security concerns. The Supreme Court will take up the matter in January. President-elect Donald Trump, who takes office

Jan. 20, has asked the Supreme Court for a delay.

If a ban does occur, small businesses will have to migrate to other platforms to find their customers. Instagram Reels, Snapchat and YouTube Shorts are alternatives. The good news is brands likely already have a presence there. But it may be harder

to reach teens that have made TikTok their preferred social media app.

Another alternative is to build a strong database of customers that opt in to providing contact emails or phone numbers. That lets owners reach out directly to customers with promotions and other marketing messages.

But Crown Corner Mechanic's Hill said she is worried that other sites may not have the reach that TikTok does. She has a presence on YouTube, Instagram and Facebook, but it's not the same, she said.

"I am worried because there is no preparation for this," she said. "It holds such a significant place in regards to my customer base and how I reach customers that if I lose TikTok, I will lose a large part of my business or I will lose my ability to grow anymore."

Crystal Lister is the owner of Mommy and Me: The Listers, in Cypress, Texas, which offers interactive workshops about STEM education. She's working on pivoting to YouTube for videos and Instagram Reels for teasers to direct people to YouTube, but said TikTok is easier.

"It is going to be a challenge if TikTok is banned because we're losing kind of all the functionality you want — the ability for a video creation, the ability to spread the word via social media," she said. "So we'll have to use many other platforms to supplement what TikTok did in one." **MDT/AP**

US sanctions Beijing-based cyber group for its alleged role in hacking incidents

FATIMA HUSSEIN,
WASHINGTON

THE U.S. Treasury on Friday sanctioned a Beijing-based cybersecurity company for its alleged role in multiple hacking incidents targeting critical U.S. infrastructure.

The Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control hit Integrity Technology Group, Inc. with sanctions Friday morning, for conducting multiple hacks against U.S. victims, including incidents attributed to Flax Typhoon, a Chinese state-sponsored campaign that targets U.S. critical infrastructure.

The sanctions come a few days after Treasury reported that Chinese hackers remotely accessed several U.S. Treasury De-



partment workstations and unclassified documents in a major cybersecurity incident.

The Treasury Department said it learned of the problem on Dec. 8, when a third-party software service provider, BeyondTrust, flagged that hackers had stolen a key "used by the vendor to secure a cloud-based service used to remotely provide technical support" to workers.

Friday's sanctions do

not appear to be related to the Dec. 8 Treasury hack.

Treasury Acting Under Secretary Bradley Smith said the U.S. will disrupt cyber threats "as we continue working collaboratively to harden public and private sector cyber defenses."

The sanctions block access to U.S. property and bank accounts and prevent the targeted people and companies from doing business with Americans.

U.S. officials are continuing to grapple with the fallout of a massive Chinese cyberespionage campaign known as Salt Typhoon that gave officials in Beijing access to private texts and phone conversations of an unknown number of Americans.

In Beijing, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson gave China's standard response to hacking allegations.

"We have repeatedly stated our position on such groundless accusations that lack evidence," Mao Ning previously said at a daily briefing. "China consistently opposes all forms of hacking, and we are even more opposed to the dissemination of false information against China for political purposes." **MDT/AP**

STATS

SURGING NUMBER OF FOREIGN TOURISTS ENTER HAINAN VISA-FREE IN 2024

IN 2024, the number of foreign tourists that entered south China's island province of Hainan visa-free surged by 283 percent compared to the previous year, local authorities said Friday.

Hainan handled 2.14 million inbound and outbound trips crossing the border in 2024, with foreign travelers accounting for 47.5 percent of the total, according to the Haikou General Station of Immigration Inspection.

Hainan has long enjoyed favorable visa-free entry policies in China. The majority of foreigners who enter Hainan do so under the visa-free entry policy.

In recent years, China has introduced numerous measures to facilitate travel for foreign tourists. At

the end of last year, the country announced a significant relaxation of its visa-free transit policy, extending the permitted stay for eligible foreign travelers from the initial 72 hours and subsequent 144 hours to 240 hours, or 10 days.

According to Rao Jun, who works at the inspection station, the number of border inspection channels in Hainan has grown from 39 to 98, which helped ensure faster, smoother customs clearance.

Hainan's three main airports, Haikou Meilan International Airport, Sanya Phoenix International Airport and Qionghai Boao International Airport, currently operate 70 international routes, connecting nearly 40 cities worldwide. **MDT/XINHUA**

SOUTH KOREA

Protesters brave cold to demand Yoon's ouster as detention deadline looms

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

HUNDREDS of South Koreans, bundled up against freezing temperatures and snow, rallied overnight into yesterday near the residence of impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol, calling for his ouster and arrest, as authorities prepared to renew their efforts to detain him over his short-lived martial law decree.

Dozens of anti-corruption agency investigators and police attempted to execute a detention warrant against Yoon on Friday but retreated from his residence in Seoul after a tense standoff with the presidential security service that lasted more than five hours.

The one-week warrant for his detention is valid through today. There were no immediate indications that anti-corruption authorities were ready to send investigators back to the residence as of yesterday afternoon. Staff from the presidential security service were seen installing barbed wire near the gate and along the hills leading up to Yoon's residence over the weekend, possibly in preparation for another detention attempt.

Last Tuesday, a Seoul court issued a warrant to detain Yoon and a separate warrant to search his residence after the embattled president defied authorities by refusing to appear for questioning and obstructing searches of his office. But enforcing them is complicated as long as Yoon remains in his official residence.

Investigators from the country's anti-corruption agency are weighing charges of rebellion after the conservative president, apparently frustrated that his policies were blocked by a legislature dominated by the liberal opposition, declared martial law on Dec. 3 and dispatched troops to surround the National Assembly.

The Assembly overturned the declaration within hours in a unanimous vote and impeached Yoon on Dec. 14, accusing him of rebellion, while South Korean anti-corruption authorities and public prosecutors opened separate investigations into the events.

If the anti-corruption agency manages to detain Yoon, it will likely ask a court for permission to make a formal arrest. Otherwise, Yoon will be released after 48 hours.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials, which is leading a joint investigation with police and military

AP PHOTO



investigators, says detaining Yoon would be "virtually impossible" as long as he is protected by the presidential security service. The agency has urged the country's acting leader, Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, to instruct the service to comply with their execution of the detention warrant, but Choi has yet to publicly comment on the issue.

In a video statement, Park Jong-joon, chief of the presidential security service, hit back against criticism that his organization has become Yoon's private army, saying it has legal obligations to protect the incumbent president. Park said he instructed his members not to use violence during their standoff with investigators and called for the anti-corruption agency and police to change their approach.

Park and the deputy chief of the presidential security service defied summonses on Saturday from police, who planned to question them over the suspected obstruction of official duty following Friday's events.

Yoon's legal team said it will file complaints against the anti-corruption agency's chief prosecutor, Oh Dong-woon, and approximately 150 investigators and police officers involved in Friday's detention attempt, which they claim was unlawful. The team said it will also file complaints with public prosecutors against the country's acting defense mi-

nister and police chief for ignoring the presidential security service's request to provide additional forces to block the detention attempt.

Yoon's lawyers had submitted an objection to the warrants against the president on Thursday, but the Seoul Western District Court dismissed the challenge on Sunday.

Park Chan-dae, floor leader of the main opposition Democratic Party, called for the anti-corruption agency to move quickly to detain Yoon, saying it was deeply disappointing to see the agency "hesitating and letting time slip away."

Hundreds of anti-Yoon protesters rallied for hours near the gates of the presidential residence from Saturday evening to Sunday, voicing frustration over the failed detention attempt and demanding stronger efforts to bring Yoon into custody. Separated by police barricades and buses, pro-Yoon protesters were gathering in nearby streets, denouncing his impeachment and vowing to block any efforts to detain him.

"With barely a day left before the execution deadline for Yoon Seok Yeol's detention warrant, the presidential security service continues to hide a criminal and the Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials cannot be more relaxed," Kim Eun-jeong, an activist, said on a stage during the anti-Yoon rally.

"Angry citizens have already spent two freezing nights demanding his immediate detention. Are their voices not being heard?"

Yoon's lawyers have challenged the detention and search warrants against the president, saying they cannot be enforced at his residence due to a law that protects locations potentially linked to military secrets from search without the consent of the person in charge — which would be Yoon. They also argue the anti-corruption office lacks the legal authority to investigate rebellion charges and that police officers don't have the legal authority to assist in detaining Yoon.

While the presidential security act mandates protection for Yoon, it does not authorize the presidential security service to block court-ordered detentions. The service's attempts to block the execution of the warrant may amount to an obstruction of official duty, according to Park Sung-bae, an attorney specializing in criminal law. While the president mostly has immunity from prosecution while in office, the protection does not extend to allegations of rebellion or treason.

The agency said its outnumbered investigators had several scuffles with presidential security forces that threatened their safety and expressed "serious regret" that Yoon was not complying with the legal process.

After getting around a mili-

tary unit guarding the residence's grounds, the agency's investigators and police were able to approach within 200 meters of Yoon's residential building but were stopped by a barricade comprising around 10 vehicles and approximately 200 members of the presidential security forces and troops. The agency said it wasn't able to visually confirm whether Yoon was inside the residence.

The Defense Ministry says the troops at Yoon's official residence are under the control of the presidential security service. Kim Seon-ho, the acting defense minister, conveyed his concern to the presidential security service, saying that deploying military personnel to block the execution of the detention warrant would be "inappropriate" and requesting that the troops aren't placed in a position where they might confront police, according to the ministry.

Yoon's defense minister, police chief and several top military commanders have already been arrested over their roles in the period of martial law.

Yoon's presidential powers have been suspended since the National Assembly voted to impeach him on Dec. 14. Yoon's fate now lies with the Constitutional Court, which has begun deliberations on whether to uphold the impeachment and formally remove Yoon from office or reinstate him. **MDT/AP**

PUTIN'S WAR

Ukraine will ask allies to boost its air defenses at a meeting in Germany, Zelenskyy says

VOLODYMYR YURCHUK & ELISE MORTON, KYIV

UKRAINE'S President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he will again call on allies to boost its air defenses at last week's meeting in Germany, as U.S. President-elect Donald Trump takes over later this month with a vow to end the almost three-year war quickly.

Zelenskyy said that dozens of partner countries will participate in the meeting of the Ramstein group at Ramstein Air Base in Germany on Thursday, "including those who can help boost our capabilities not only to defend against missiles but also against guided bombs and Russian aviation."

"We will discuss this with them and continue to persuade them," Zelenskyy said in his nightly address on Saturday. "The task remains unchanged: strengthening our air defense."

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin will attend the meeting. Biden was originally scheduled to attend the October summit in Ramstein but it was postponed because of response to Hurricane Milton that battered the U.S.



Russian servicemen attend a combat training for assault units in an undisclosed location, Jan. 4

In its last few weeks in office, the Biden administration was pressing to send as much military aid as possible to Ukraine before Trump is sworn in Jan. 20. Trump claimed during his election campaign that he could end the war in one day and his comments have put a question mark over whether the United States will continue to be Ukraine's biggest — and most important — military backer.

Zelenskyy said last week that Trump is "strong and unpredictable," and those qualities can be a decisive factor in his policy approach to

Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Russia controls about one-fifth of Ukraine, and capitalized last year on weaknesses in Ukraine's defenses to slowly advance in eastern areas despite high losses of troops and equipment. The war's trajectory isn't in Ukraine's favor. The country is short-handed on the front line and needs continued support from its Western partners.

Zelenskyy said Saturday that Russian and North Korean troops had suffered heavy losses in the fighting in Russia's Kursk region.

"In battles yesterday and to-

day near just one village, Makhnovka, in the Kursk region, the Russian army lost up to a battalion of North Korean infantry soldiers and Russian paratroopers," Zelenskyy said. "This is significant."

Zelenskyy said last month that 3,000 North Korean troops had been killed and wounded in Kursk, where Ukrainian forces launched an incursion in August, dealing a blow to Russia's prestige and forcing it to deploy some of its troops from a slow-moving offensive in eastern Ukraine.

The incursion didn't significantly change the dynamic of the war, and military analysts say Ukraine has lost around 40% of the land it initially captured.

In other developments, nine people were wounded in a Russian guided bomb attack on the border town of Semenivka in Ukraine's northern Chernihiv region on Saturday evening, local officials said.

Moscow sent 103 drones into Ukraine overnight into Sunday, Ukrainian officials said. According to Ukraine's air force, 61 drones were destroyed and 42 were lost likely due to electronic jamming. MDT/AP

this day in history

2000 FLU OUTBREAK STRETCHES NHS RESOURCES



Hospitals around the UK are feeling the strain of the current flu outbreak even though it has not been classed as an epidemic.

In Scotland latest figures show that the number of people with a flu-like illness has doubled. A similar increase is predicted in England and Wales.

In Liverpool hospitals have cancelled all non-emergency surgery to try and cope with a shortage of beds.

Some patients have had to stay overnight on trolleys while they wait for treatment.

In London all the capital's 275 intensive-care beds are full.

Health experts also say that the outbreak has been made worse by the fact that vulnerable people such as the elderly have not been vaccinated.

The Public Health Laboratory Service said the uptake was not what it should be in the high-risk groups.

The crisis offers an easy target for opposition politicians seeking to explode Labour's jubilant post-election promises of radical NHS reform.

Nineteen US states and several European countries are currently stretching their medical capacities to the limit as flu epidemics take hold.

Royal College of Nursing general-secretary Christine Hancock told the BBC that the problem lay not in a shortage of actual beds, but in hospitals having too few nurses to accompany them.

But Sir Alan Langlands, chief executive of the NHS, said he was confident people were getting the right care.

He said: "Anyone who will benefit from intensive care is getting that care from the health service."

Courtesy BBC News

AUSTRIA

Chancellor Nehammer says he will resign after talks on forming a new government fail

STEPHANIE LIECHTENSTEIN, VIENNA

AUSTRIAN Chancellor Karl Nehammer said Saturday he will resign in the coming days after talks on forming a new government failed a second time.

The announcement came after the People's Party and the Social Democrats on Saturday continued coalition talks a day after the liberal Neos party's surprise withdrawal from discussions.

"Unfortunately I have to tell you today that the

negotiations have ended and will not be continued by the People's Party," said Nehammer, the conservative party's leader, in a statement on social media.

He said that "destructive forces" in the Social Democratic Party have "gained the upper hand" and that the People's Party will not sign on to a program that it considers to be against economic competitiveness.

Social democratic leader Andreas Babler said he regretted the People's Party decision to end the talks. "This is



Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer

not a good decision for our country," he said.

Babler said that one of the main stumbling blocks had to do with how to repair the "record deficit" left by the previous government.

"I have offered to

Karl Nehammer and the People's Party to continue negotiating and called on them not to give up," he told reporters Saturday evening.

The next government in Austria faces the challenge of having

to save between 18 to 24 billion euros, according to the EU Commission. In addition, Austria has been in a recession for the past two years, is experiencing rising unemployment, and its budget deficit is currently at 3.7% of Gross Domestic Product — above the EU's limit of 3%.

Babler blamed the collapse of the negotiations on "forces within the People's Party" that were against a coalition with the Social Democrats, while praising Nehammer for his readiness to compromise. MDT/AP

IN CONTEXT

A few days later, Professor Liam Donaldson, the government's chief medical officer, made controversial claims that the UK was experiencing its first flu epidemic for a decade, despite the fact that statistics suggested the outbreak was only halfway towards reaching epidemic status.

The huge influx of patients coupled with staff sickness left many hospitals struggling not only to tend the living, but even to store the dead. At some hospitals, refrigerated lorries were used as temporary mortuaries as existing facilities were overwhelmed.

The knock-on effects were immense. Most trusts started to cancel routine planned surgery and thousands of patients were affected. The government blamed the problem on what they said was the worst flu outbreak for a decade. But the opposition said it was exaggerating the effects of the current flu outbreak to cover up the failings of its health policies.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 You're growing stronger. Meditate on a personal dream. Friends help you make a connection. Old assumptions get challenged. Not everything thinks the same.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Envision and plan for an inspiring future. Write your imaginative ideas. Sort, organize and clean up the files. Hide out, if necessary. Recharge.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Friendship deepens and mellows with age. Relax and enjoy it. Invest in work you love with talented people. Listening is more powerful than speaking.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 A professional opportunity beckons. Practice your marketing charms and persuasions. Smile for the cameras; your performance is gaining attention. Develop a great assignment.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Explore your surroundings. Avoid controversy or drama. Study cultural flavors and sounds. Fall into a fascination. Enjoy conferences, classes and studies.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Update the budget to avoid overspending. Resources can be found. Follow rules and guidelines. Handle paperwork and reconcile accounts. Save for something special.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Form a mutual admiration society. Make long-term plans to fulfill practical goals. Share ideas and potential solutions. Have fun together. Deepen your partnership.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Maintain practices for lasting benefit. Public obligations interfere with private time. Not everything goes as planned. Balance a busy schedule with rest and exercise.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Use practical resources to have fun with family and friends. Don't strain the budget. Someone attractive comes into focus. Relax and enjoy the view.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Make domestic improvements for long-term family benefit. Tend your garden. Increase beauty and harmony at home, without overextending. Enjoy farmer's markets. Re-supply locally.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Dig deep into a favorite subject. Listen and learn. There's more to it than you thought. Soak in your discoveries like a sponge.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 A surge in cash flow is possible. Pick up the pace and earn more. Research a long-desired purchase. Don't rush into anything. Enjoy the hunt.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-2	6	fine
Changchun	-19	-10	fine
Chengdu	4	13	cloudy
Chongqing	7	13	cloudy
Fuzhou	10	20	fine
Guangzhou	8	22	fine
Guiyang	3	14	cloudy
Haikou	14	21	cloudy
Hangzhou	5	11	fine
Harbin	-26	-13	cloudy
Hefei	-1	11	fine
Nanjing	2	10	fine
Shanghai	5	11	fine
Taipei	14	18	fine
Wuhan	1	14	cloudy
Hong Kong	18	21	sunny
WORLD			
Moscow	-8	-5	cloudy
Frankfurt	5	12	cloudy
Paris	4	11	showers
London	1	11	cloudy
New York	-6	0	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- ___-car; 6- Flightless bird; 9- Wharves; 14- Constellation containing Rigel; 15- Assembled; 16- Cop ___; 17- Tropical fruit; 19- Mikhail's wife; 20- Bambi's aunt; 21- Ed and Mel of baseball; 22- Late bloomer?; 23- Promising; 25- It can be used for collateral; 26- Island greetings; 29- Dynamic beginning; 31- Previous to; 32- Railroad; 36- Novelist Bagnold; 37- That girl; 38- Dutch cheese; 40- Suffered humiliation; 43- Slowpokes; 45- Russo of "Ransom"; 46- Bizet's opera; 47- Rare delight; 50- Atlas pages; 51- Atari founder Bushnell; 52- Christmas song; 54- Small batteries; 57- Cheri of "Saturday Night Live"; 58- Institute; 61- Physician Nikola; 62- ___ kwon do; 63- Hawk's home; 64- Ford flop; 65- Isr. neighbor; 66- Twangy, as speech;

DOWN 1- Thick cord; 2- "___ Brockovich"; 3- 1492 vessel; 4- Water tester; 5- Santa ___ Calif; 6- Vacant; 7- Dissolve; 8- Salt Lake City students; 9- Umbrella; 10- "No bid." in bridge; 11- Cream of the crop; 12- Bowling lane button; 13- German river; 18- Sheriff's band; 23- ___ Island Red; 24- Paddle; 25- Jackie's second; 26- Jurist Fortas; 27- Musical Home; 28- Think nothing ___; 29- ___ there yet?; 30- Corn serving; 33- Has on; 34- Take ___ view of; 35- Bush alma mater; 37- Sweetie; 39- AOL alternative; 41- Pertaining to the skull; 42- On Soc. Sec.; 43- Milan's La ___; 44- Short snooze; 47- Lugged; 48- Like non-oyster months; 49- Steve of country music; 50- Taxi's ticker; 51- Short letter; 52- Trawler equipment; 53- Anthem opener; 54- Televises; 55- Bhutan's continent; 56- Cartoonist Silverstein; 59- Prohibition; 60- Meadow;

Friday's solution

T	R	E	S	A	R	E	A	C	A	R	D	S	
A	A	R	P	C	A	A	N	A	B	E	A	T	
U	C	L	A	R	I	T	A	S	A	N	T	A	
T	H	E	R	M	O	S	T	W	I	S	T	E	R
T	H	E	R	O	S	E	T	I	N	E	S	S	E
B	A	T	O	N	S	M	S	O	R				
A	R	E	W	E	A	D	N	E	F	A	R		
F	E	I	N	V	E	L	L	I	N	G	R	I	O
R	A	S		S	O	A	P	R	H	O	D	A	
N	E	E	A	S	T	E	R	C	A	E	S	A	R
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A	N	N	O	Y	E	R							
S	T	O	R	E									
A	R	L	E	S									
L	E	A	S	T									
L	E	A	S	T									

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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	
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Jade Garden (Taipa)
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Ocean Garden Cattleya Court (Taipa)
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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

AP PHOTO



Golden State Warriors forward Jonathan Kuminga, right, moves the ball while defended by Memphis Grizzlies guard Cam Spencer during the first half of an NBA basketball game, yesterday

BASKETBALL

Warriors forward Jonathan Kuminga sprains right ankle and Kerr expects him to miss time

JANIE MCCAULEY,
SAN FRANCISCO

WARRIORS forward Jonathan Kuminga sprained his right ankle yes-

terday (Macau time) and coach Steve Kerr expects the forward to miss some time.

Kuminga was hurt in the closing minutes of the first half of Golden State's 121-113 victory over the Memphis Grizzlies

when he tried to block a shot and landed awkwardly. He will undergo an MRI exam.

Kerr said Kyle Anderson will play more minutes in Kuminga's absence.

"It's not going to be a day-to-

-day thing, it was a significant sprain," Kerr said. "We'll just have a report tomorrow."

Golden State hosts Sacramento today (Macau time) in a back-to-back.

Kuminga came into the game

as the Warriors' second-leading scorer behind Stephen Curry, averaging 16.9 points, but was limited to 13 points over 15 minutes.

"It's going to be tough. JK's been playing the best basketball of his career these last couple weeks, so we're going to miss him," Kerr said. "But Kyle will fill in well."

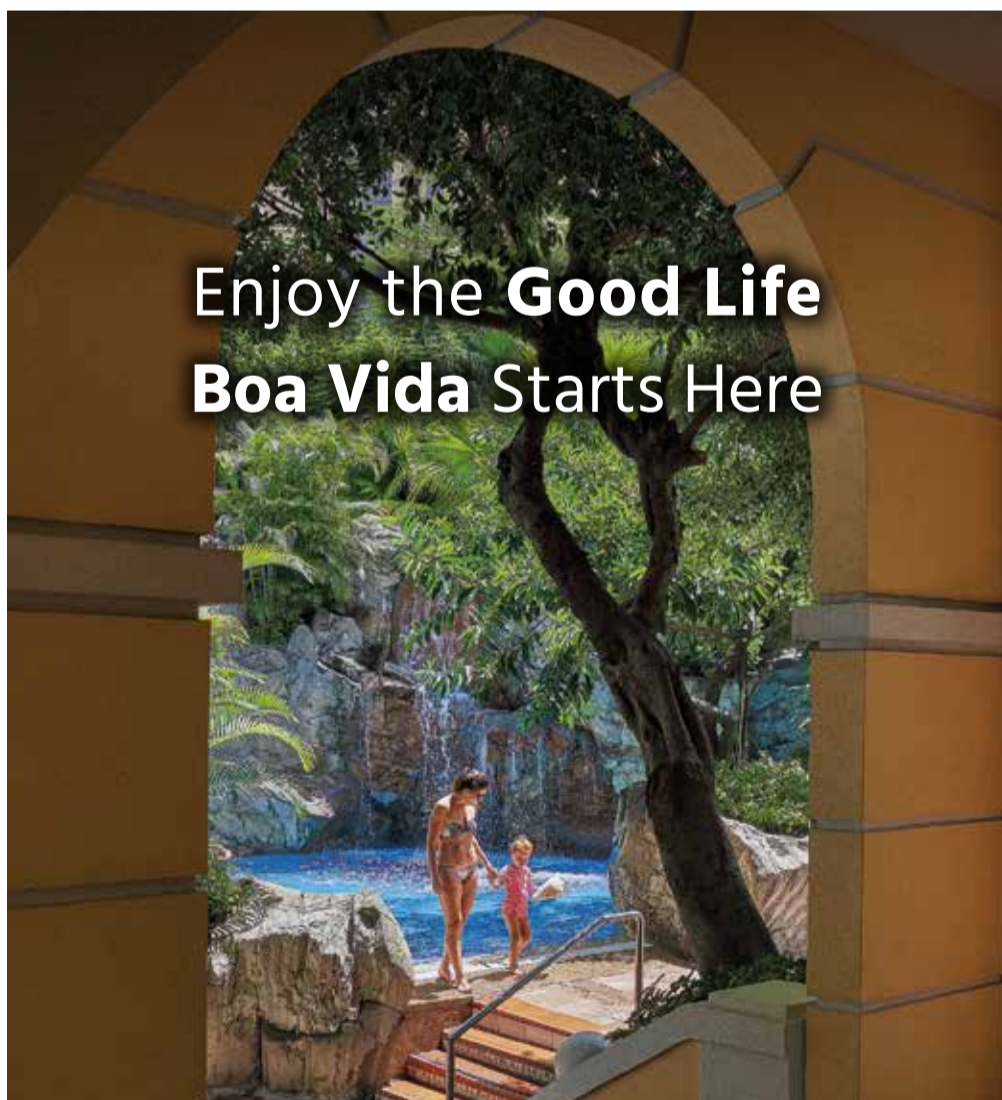
Anderson played 21-plus minutes and had seven points, three assists and three rebounds. His playing time has been inconsistent but Anderson is eager for his opportunity.

"I've done my work already while not playing as far as working out and staying ready, so it's just a matter of going out there and playing basketball," Anderson said, noting he has had similar circumstances before. "I've been in this situation two or three times in my career and I've always made the playoff rotation. That's just the goal is to keep getting better, support my teammates and when my number's called go out there and do what I can do."

The Warriors have counted on their deep roster through injuries all season.

"I'm just glad we have the depth that we do by way of Kyle," Kerr said. "... We added a lot of depth for this reason, to be able to withstand some injuries." **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

The Conversation

Harry Anthony Patrinos, MDT/AP



**AFGHANISTAN SHOWS
 WHAT INVESTING IN
 WOMEN'S EDUCATION - OR
 DIVESTING - CAN DO TO AN
 ECONOMY**

When the Taliban fell from power in Afghanistan in 2001, women were once again allowed to go to school after being banned since 1996. I, along with World Bank education expert Raja Bentaouet Kattan and American University economist Rafiuddin Najam, analyzed the economic benefit of this societal change, using data from the Labor Force and Household Surveys conducted in Afghanistan in 2007, 2014 and 2020. We found it was enormous.

In the wake of the Taliban's fall, educational opportunities expanded at all levels. The infant mortality rate declined by half, and the gross national income per capita nearly tripled (in real terms in purchasing power, from US\$810 in 2001 to \$2,590 in 2020).

A big part of the country's economic progress in this period can be attributed to women. While the overall average return on investment in education remains low in Afghanistan, it is high for women. For example, for every additional year of schooling a woman received, her earnings increased 13%. This is higher than the global average of 9% for return on investment in education.

Why it matters

Twenty years after the first ban on women's education ended, the Taliban resumed power in 2021 and has once again banned girls and women from attending school after the sixth grade.

The economic cost could potentially reach over a billion dollars – and this doesn't include the wider social costs associated with lower levels of education for women. For context, Afghanistan's entire gross domestic product was just \$17 billion in 2023.

Our study demonstrates how catastrophic the newest education ban could be, not just for women, but for the whole country.

How we did our work

Research on the economic return to schooling, especially for women, is limited in Afghanistan. But such evidence is critical for understanding the economic losses a country faces when women are denied access to education and work opportunities.

Our study attempted to fill this gap by quantifying how earnings changed in response to an additional year of schooling. We looked at what happened between 2004, when the government expanded compulsory education for both men and women from sixth grade to ninth grade, and 2020.

Our findings suggest that the cost of excluding women from education and work is significantly higher than previously estimated. According to our research, Afghanistan risks losing over \$1.4 billion annually. This equates to a 2% decrease in national income.

What's next

A widely held belief among researchers is that investing in women's education impacts more than each individual woman. It offers economic and social benefits that can last for generations. This includes higher rates of school attendance and improved health for her kids.

Further research could explore the social benefits of women's education in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2021, in addition to the economic benefits. Future studies could investigate the public returns to schooling by assessing whether investment in women's education breaks intergenerational cycles of poverty, improves public health and reduces inequality, creating a multiplier effect for entire communities.

Every additional day that the ban on women's education persists, generations fall further behind, losses compound and the dreams of millions of children and businesswomen become further out of reach.

Tomiko Itooka, a Japanese woman who was the world's oldest person according to Guinness World Records, has died, an Ashiya city official said Saturday. She was 116.

Yoshitsugu Nagata, an official in charge of elderly policies, said Itooka died on Dec. 29 at a care home in Ashiya, Hyogo Prefecture, central Japan.

Itooka, who loved bananas and a yogurt-flavored Japanese drink called Calpis, was born on May 23, 1908. She became the oldest person last year following the death of 117-year-old Maria Branyas, according to the Gerontology Research Group.

When she was told she was at the top of the World Supercentenarian Rankings List, she simply replied, "Thank you."

When Itooka celebrated her birthday last year, she received flowers, a cake and a card from the mayor.

Born in Osaka, Itooka was a volleyball player in high school, and long had a reputation for a sprightly spirit, Nagata said. She climbed the 3,067-meter Mount Ontake twice.

She married at 20, and had two daughters and two sons, according to Guinness.

AP PHOTO



A lady is seen pulling her child along on a sledge as they admire Anthony Gormley's sculpture, the Angel of the North, which is surrounded by heavy snow in Gateshead, North East England, yesterday

**HEAVY SNOW BRINGS
 WIDESPREAD DISRUPTION
 ACROSS THE UK AND
 GERMANY**

PAN PYLAS & MONIKA
 SCISLOWSKA, LONDON

HEAVY snow and freezing rain brought widespread disruption across Europe yesterday, particularly in the U.K. and Germany, with several major airports forced to suspend flights

With the weather set to stay inclement on Sunday in the U.K., there are concerns that many rural communities, particularly in the north of England, could be cut off, with up to 40 centimeters of snow on ground above 300 meters.

The National Grid, which oversees the country's electricity network, said it had been working to restore power after outages across the country. The company's live map shows power cuts in Birmingham in central England, Bristol in the west and Cardiff in Wales.

Many sporting events have already been postponed, though the heavyweight Premier League fixture between rivals Liverpool and Manchester United is on, following an inspection at Liverpool's

home ground of Anfield and of local conditions.

Liverpool's John Lennon Airport and Manchester Airport had to close runways, but both appeared poised to reopen them by late Sunday morning. Leeds Bradford Airport, however, said it had closed its runway on Sunday morning.

The road network was heavily impacted too, on what would have been a very busy day with many families returning home from the Christmas and New Year break and students heading back to universities.

Many roads had been preemptively closed by local authorities but stranded vehicles and collisions have caused disruption elsewhere.

On the railways, many services were canceled, with National Rail warning of disruption continuing into the working week.

Britain's main weather forecaster, the Met Office, says sleet and snow will continue to push north on Sunday and will be heaviest in northern En-

gland and into southern Scotland. After experiencing freezing rain, which occurs when supercold rain freezes on impact, the south will turn milder.

The Environment Agency has also issued eight flood warnings across southern England on the River Taw and River Avon.

Snow and ice were also causing havoc in Germany, where a bout of winter weather is spreading from the southwest. Authorities have issued black ice warnings for drivers and pedestrians, advising people to stay home where possible.

Frankfurt airport canceled 120 of its 1,090 planned takeoffs and landings on Sunday, according to the Fraport press office. At Munich airport, only one runway was open while the other one was being cleared.

In Baden-Wuerttemberg eight people were injured when a bus skidded off the road near the town of Hemmingen.

Long-distance train connections also experienced irregularities in the Frankfurt area. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Montenegro A top-level meeting on Friday promised tough measures to curb illegal weapons after a gunman fatally shot 12 people in a second such tragedy in less than three years in the small Balkan country. An emergency session of Montenegro's National Security Council announced a new, strict gun law and urgent actions to confiscate illegal weapons.

AP PHOTO



Iran warned Italy on Friday that it risked harming good bilateral relations if it bows to the "political and hostile goals" of the United States by detaining an Iranian engineer on a U.S. warrant in connection with a drone attack in Jordan last year that killed three American troops. Tehran issued the warning to the Italian ambassador to Iran, Paola Amadei, who was summoned to the foreign ministry.

AP PHOTO



Greece Costas Simitis, former prime minister of Greece and the architect of the country's joining the common European currency, the euro, has died at age 88, state TV ERT reported. Simitis was taken to a hospital in the city of Corinth early yesterday morning from his holiday home west of Athens, unconscious and without a pulse

AP PHOTO



Vatican City Pope Francis warned that bullying in schools prepares students for war rather than peace, in a speech to Catholic educators gathered at the Vatican on Saturday. Speaking to about 2,000 Italian teachers, educators and parents, Francis stressed his message against bullying, asking the audience to pledge to fight against it both at school and at home.