



PJ ARRESTED TWO WOMEN AND A MAN IN CONNECTION WITH A DRUG TRAFFICKING OPERATION, RESULTING IN THE SEIZURE OF OVER 16 GRAMS OF METH

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WASTE INCINERATION CAPACITY EXPANDED TO 3,000 TONS DAILY

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ELON MUSK HELPED TRUMP WIN. NOW HE'S LOOKING AT EUROPE, AND MANY POLITICIANS ARE ALARMED

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AP PHOTO



China Even as the mercury dropped well below freezing, enthusiasm soared among about a dozen hardy swimmers during a daily ritual in northeast China's "ice city" of Harbin. The swimmers trained daily throughout the year for this. Some said their limbs were already numb in the -13C weather.

AP PHOTO



South Korean court yesterday cleared the government and an adoption agency of all liability in a lawsuit filed by a 49-year-old Korean man whose traumatic adoption journey led to an abusive childhood in the United States and ultimately his deportation to South Korea in 2016 after legal troubles.

Thailand Police yesterday said an arrest warrant has been issued for a man suspected of gunning down a former opposition politician from Cambodia in a popular Bangkok tourist area. Lim Kimya, an ex-lawmaker from the dissolved Cambodia National Rescue Party, was shot dead near a temple close to Khaosan Road on Tuesday evening.

AP PHOTO



Indian army divers retrieved the body of one of at least nine miners trapped inside a flooded coal mine in the northeastern Assam state, officials said. The miners became trapped on Monday when water gushed in from a nearby unused mine in the Umrangso area in Dima Hasao district, about 125 miles south of the state capital, Guwahati.

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UTM TO HOLD 2025 OPEN DAY JAN. 11

The Macao University of Tourism (UTM) will host its 2025 Open Day on Jan. 11 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Mong-Há Campus. This event invites the public, particularly secondary school students and their parents, to explore admission information and program details. According to a press statement, attendees can participate in program-sharing sessions, workshops, and interactive activities, including culinary demonstrations and cultural talks. At the event, student ambassadors will lead campus tours for the public, showcasing various teaching and training facilities, such as the Pousada de Mong-Há, the Educational Restaurant, and the kitchens.

MACAU MAINTAINS 17 SPOTS IN 2025 BLACK PEARL RESTAURANT GUIDE

17 restaurants in Macau, primarily within integrated resorts, have been recognized in the 2025 Black Pearl Restaurant Guide, China's equivalent to the Michelin Guide. This number remains unchanged from last year. The guide, published by Meituan, awarded three diamonds to Robuchon au Dôme at Grand Lisboa and Jade Dragon at City of Dreams. The Eight retained its two-diamond status, while 14 restaurants received one diamond, with Palace Garden replacing The Kitchen and Chef Tam's Seasons taking over from the now-closed Golden Flower. Searches for Black Pearl restaurants surged by 30.1% in 2024.

AUTHORITIES CONDUCT ON-SITE INSPECTION IN AREIA PRETA

The Environmental Protection Bureau and the Social Welfare Bureau conducted an on-site inspection to evaluate progress in resolving the odor issue at the elderly apartments in Areia Preta. The temporary housing project in Lot P, identified as the primary source of the odor, is nearing completion. The channel cleaning work has been finished, and relevant outlets have been sealed. According to a joint statement, the interdepartmental team will continue monitoring the situation and dispatching personnel to ensure the odor problem is effectively managed.

GOV'T BANS CHICKEN PRODUCTS FROM LISBON

Macau has implemented a ban on the importation of chicken meat and products from Lisbon, Portugal, following recent avian influenza outbreaks. The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) announced the decision Tuesday, mirroring Hong Kong's earlier ban aimed at safeguarding public health. The IAM stated that applications for imports from affected areas would not be approved, citing concerns over bird flu incidents in Portugal, Hungary, and South Korea. Portugal reported a highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreak in Sintra, prompting immediate control and eradication actions.

MDT REPORT

Locals and tourists criticize retailers'

RENATO MARQUES

RESIDENTS and tourists alike agree that many local retailers urgently need to improve their customer service, interactions, and overall business attitude.

With a greater influx of visitors forecasted for 2025, opportunities abound for local retailers and businesses to boost sales and revenue. However, some individuals interviewed by the Times believe that a structural problem may hinder this potential: the way local retailers treat consumers.

A Filipino national residing in Vietnam, who requested anonymity, shared her preference for shopping for luxury items in Hong Kong over Macau.

"Well, it's not about the price. It's more about the attitude of the store attendants in Macau," she explained, adding, "I feel that Macau has a lot to improve in customer interaction. When I enter a store—especially one from a well-known luxury brand—I am scanned from head to toe several times by the staff, who almost immediately ignore me. This has happened more than once, including during my recent trip to Macau and Hong Kong over Christmas."

She further elaborated, "In other places like Hong Kong or Singapore, there is less bias from store attendants. In Macau, it seems that being Southeast Asian automatically means I'm not there to buy anything. That ruins the experience."

Having lived most of her life in China, she clarified that language is not a barrier, as she speaks fluent Mandarin, nearly like a native. "It's not a language issue; it's a matter of mentality—let's call it that," she remarked.

Fortunately, she noted that this unwelcoming attitude does not extend to Macau's hotels. "In the hotels, no. I have no complaints. Particularly in five-star establishments, I have always been treated very well, even better than in similar hotels in Hong Kong," she said.



A professional in hospitality services in Vietnam, she expressed that Macau's customer service still falls short of global city standards. "In some aspects, Macau is at the level of second-tier mainland cities, which I know very well. Macau needs to improve its game," she commented.

Corroborating some of these concerns, Hong Kong resident Wingki Chan criticized the lack of professionalism displayed by some Macau businesses. She specifically cited the mishandling of a concert by Hong Kong artist MC Cheung Tin Fu, scheduled for January 5 but postponed at the last minute.

"The organizers have shown terrible attitude and lack of respect toward consumers," Chan said. "It's really low standards. I'm not saying they're to blame for the postponement, but the fact is, we [concertgoers] still don't know why it was postponed, and the promoter doesn't seem to care about the consequences."

Chan elaborated that attending a concert in Macau requires significant planning and investment. "We're not just sitting on our sofas, deciding last minute to go to Macau. First, we had to secure tickets, which wasn't easy. Then, I had

to take a day off work because the concert was on a Sunday evening."

She continued, "As we know, returning to Hong Kong from Macau late at night is inconvenient because the last ferry leaves before midnight. For that reason, my friends and I booked a hotel, which added significantly to our budget."

Macau is still very far from the 'world city standards that people here claim to want to achieve'

When the concert was postponed at the last minute, Chan said all their plans fell apart. Since none of their bookings were refundable, they ended up traveling to Macau without attending the concert.

"It felt like a scam. We spent so much and made so many arrangements for the concert, only for it to be canceled. It's incredibly disappointing," she said.

According to Chan, the organizer only sent a message asking attendees to hold onto their tickets for a new date to be announced, a response she

found "nonsense".

"They will probably refund the ticket price because, after that poor announcement, many people took to social media to protest the organizer's attitude. However, that refund covers only about 30% of what we spent to attend the concert," she explained. She added that she will seriously reconsider attending future events in Macau due to this disappointing experience.

Meanwhile, the Times has learned that the organizer has since issued a statement indicating that they will proceed with the immediate refund of all tickets for the concert.

LOCALS ALSO WEIGH IN WITH SIMILAR COMPLAINTS

Some local residents have expressed similar complaints, urging Macau businesses to change their mentality and business practices, warning that failure to adapt could threaten their survival.

A government employee working in communication, who preferred to remain anonymous, told the Times about his recent struggles acquiring professional equipment for his workplace.

"It is quite difficult to deal

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customer interaction and business attitude



RENATO MARQUES

with some retailers. They have a poor attitude, and it seems like they do not need to make the sale," he said. He explained that government procurement requires specific standards for

quotations and support documentation—a "hassle" many local retailers appear unwilling to handle.

"I went to two retailers, the only ones I know that deal with

this type of equipment, with a detailed list of what I needed. They showed little interest in helping. Emails went unanswered, and even when I visited the stores in person, they didn't bo-

ther giving me proper responses."

He continued, "I'm looking to purchase equipment worth around HKD30,000, but for them, it seems like small change and not worth their effort. One salesperson even suggested I buy the items on Taobao instead."

The resident expressed frustration at what he perceives as a growing subsidy dependency among local retailers, particularly after the Covid-19 pandemic. "I see daily news about businesses saying they're struggling and need government subsidies, but in reality, they're making no effort to improve their service."

Another resident, surnamed Ma, shared a similar experience. While trying to acquire equipment to upgrade his services, he encountered unexpected obstacles.

"I visited a store I often used in the past and asked about a specific piece of equipment. The shopkeeper told me they had no stock. I was surprised since this

retailer has at least three stores across Macau. When I asked if I could place an order, the response was shocking," Ma recounted.

"They told me, 'If you want to order, you need to pay a deposit of at least 50%—over MOP50,000—and wait about six months.' Then, they casually suggested I buy it in Hong Kong instead."

Frustrated, Ma did exactly that. He placed an order online with a Hong Kong retailer and picked up the item the next day.

"In Hong Kong, they were very helpful. They arranged to transport the item to their store in Tung Chung so I could easily pick it up after taking the golden bus," he explained.

Ma expressed disappointment with the current state of local businesses, noting that these situations are becoming more frequent in Macau.

"It seems like Macau is quickly becoming just a backdrop for photos. People come here, take pictures, and leave. We're just extras in this movie," he concluded.

AD

Academic Year 2025/2026 Central Registration for Children Entering Kindergarten for the First Time



Aims

Optimise schools' enrolment mechanism; simplify the steps for parents to enrol their children in kindergarten for the first time; enable parents to confirm the preferred schools as early as possible.

Targets

Macau residents aged 3 by 31 December 2025, and will enrol in infant education in Macau for the first time.

Timeline (Year 2025)

Admission information	Starting from 1 January onwards, parents can consult the enrolment information on the DSEDJ website or school website.
Central Registration	Parents register through "Macao One Account" on the DSEDJ website / at the DSEDJ counters Between 6 and 16 January
Schools announce the interview date and time	Between 19 and 21 February
School admission interviews	Between 1 and 25 March
Schools release the admission list and parents confirm online which school to enrol their children in	Release the admission list on the DSEDJ website and at schools 7 April Parents can check the admission list and confirm one school to enrol their child in through "Macao One Account" on the DSEDJ website Between 7 and 9 April
Schools announce the students admitted from the waiting list	From 10 April onwards
Parents go to school to process enrolment/ school transfer procedures	From 11 April onwards (According to the period informed by schools) Students on the admission list must process enrolment on or before 14 April
Enrolment at other schools	If a child has not yet been admitted to any school by 15 April, or parents want to enrol their child in another school, parents can visit the DSEDJ website to check the status of K1 places available at different schools, and go to the schools that still accept enrolment for enquiries and registration.

Gentle Reminder:

- To enrol in schools in Macau, non-Macao residents must possess a stay permit or residence permit for over 90 days issued by the competent entity of the Macao SAR. Parents must process the registration at any of the DSEDJ counters.
- Schools set no limit to the number of registrants and interviews. There is also no priority for early registration in the Central Registration system. Therefore, there is no need to be hurry to process registration.
- Macau residents can apply for "school for children of Macao residents" in Hengqin through Central Registration; it is not counted as the registration limit of 6 schools.
- At the time of interview, parents should show the screenshot of "Interview QR Code" on their phone to the school staff. The QR Code can be reused.
- Parents only need to bring the screenshot of the child's "First-time Enrolment QR Code" to the school to process enrolment or school transfer procedure according to the requirement of the school.
- The DSEDJ will provide "Service of consultation and arrangement of school places" to parents who are in need.

For enquiries
8397 2309

For details, please browse
DSEDJ website:

www.dsedj.gov.mo



DSEDJ app



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ENVIRONMENT

WASTE INCINERATION CAPACITY EXPANDED TO 3,000 TONS DAILY

VICTORIA CHAN

THE city's waste management infrastructure has been significantly enhanced with the expansion of its third waste incineration center.

The facility's daily processing capacity has increased from 1,700 tons to 3,000 tons, securing the region's waste management needs for the next three decades.

Earlier this week, the Islands Social Advisory Committee held its first meeting of the year at the Seac Pai Van Activity Center in Coloane. During the session, representatives from the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) shared updates on resource recycling initiatives and the construction of environmental facilities in Macau.

According to Chan Kwok Ho, head of the Environmental Infrastructure Management Center at DSPA, the first phase of the incineration center's expansion has been



completed, significantly boosting the city's waste processing capacity. Alongside this milestone, the government is prioritizing other waste management projects, including the construction of an organic resource recycling center

slated for completion in 2027.

After the meeting, committee members highlighted the government's dedication to "waste reduction at source and resource recycling." Macau currently offers over 4,000 recycling points across

various districts, making it easier for residents to adopt sustainable waste practices.

However, a recent survey by the General Union of Neighbourhood Associations revealed challenges in local recycling habits. Nearly

40% of Macau residents rarely or never recycle. The survey, conducted between August and September with 612 participants, found that only 30.56% of respondents recycle consistently, while a staggering 67.81% dispose of food waste directly into bins.

To address these issues, environmental advisor Chan Meng Kei recommends increasing the capacity of recycling bins in housing estates. Meanwhile, legislator Ngan Iek Hang suggests drawing lessons from successful recycling programs in mainland China.

In addition to improving recycling, the government is tightening regulations on plastic use. New laws will promote reusable shopping bags, and the import of non-degradable plastic items has been banned. A differentiated disposal charging system for construction waste aims to further curb waste generation.

Authorities are also focused on food waste, which accounts for 30% to 40% of municipal solid waste. Once operational, the organic resource recycling center will process 150 tons of organic waste daily, with potential expansion to 220 tons in the future.

CRIME

PJ arrests three in drug trafficking bust

VICTORIA CHAN

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) arrested two women and a man in connection with a drug trafficking operation. The bust resulted in the seizure of over 16 grams of methamphetamine, valued at approximately MOP43,000.

According to authorities, the investigation was launched following intelligence and surveillance efforts. Police identified a female suspect involved in drug activities in Macau's central district.

On Jan. 7, officers intercepted the suspect near her residence and found 0.21 grams of suspected methamphetamine in her possession. A search of her apartment led to the discovery of two additional suspects and five small packages of methamphetamine weighing 2.05 grams in the first suspect's room.

Further searches uncovered 16.97 grams of methamphetamine, drug paraphernalia, two electronic scales, and MOP20,000 in suspected drug-related funds.

In the second suspect's room, police found 53 small packages of methamphetamine weighing 14.71 grams, additional drug paraphernalia, and MOP9,000.

The first and second suspects, both female, were charged with illegal drug trafficking, while all three, including a male suspect previously implicated in a September 2024 drug case, face charges for the illegal use of narcotics and possession of drug equipment. Police confirmed that the suspects intended to sell

the drugs to Macau residents and other Indonesian nationals.

Meanwhile, the PJ also revealed details of a fraud scheme that cost a local resident over MOP100,000.

The victim, a middle-aged Macau woman, came across an online post on December 31, 2024, advertising a part-time job opportunity involving commenting and writing positive reviews on a designated website. Enticed by the offer, she registered an account and completed tasks, earning an initial reward of RMB686.

Encouraged by the payout, the victim continued working

on the platform. However, she later discovered that MOP100,000 had been stolen from her bank account through 101 separate transactions. Realizing she had been scammed, she reported the case to the police.

Investigations led to the arrest of a 19-year-old male Macau resident, who allegedly received the stolen funds in his bank account. He used RMB5,000 to purchase game recharge cards and personal items.

Although the suspect denied involvement and claimed to be exploited by others, police confirmed he had full control over the funds. Authorities have frozen MOP94,000 and are pursuing further leads to identify other individuals involved in the scheme.

AD



PUI CHING MIDDLE SCHOOL (COLOANE CAMPUS)

RECRUITING TEACHERS AND STAFF

Recruiting teachers and staff for the 2025/2026 school year. Please scan QR code or view the link below for more information.

<https://coloane1.puiching.edu.mo/pcmscoloane/recruitment>



VICTORIA CHAN



"Wynn Presents - 2024 Macau Snooker Masters" was a Resounding Success

WHAT started out as a sport enjoyed by a handful of British army officers in the late 1800s during some recreational downtime has now become a worldwide phenomenon that is widely celebrated as a game of skill and strategic thinking defined by precision and elegance. Snooker is a sport enjoyed across the globe and thousands tune in every year to watch televised matches of world class tournaments and even travel the world to see their favorite players perform live. In recent years, Wynn Resorts (Macau) S.A. has played a pivotal role in promoting the popularity of snooker in Asia, and also enhancing Macao's appeal to international visitors.

Organized by Wynn and supported by the Macao Government Tourism Office and the Sports Bureau of the Macao SAR Government, and co-organized by Sailing Up Sports, "Wynn Presents - 2024 Macau Snooker Masters" returned to Wynn Palace from December 25 to 28 where eight of the world's top international professional snooker players were invited to pit their wits, skill, and tactics against one another in this prestigious Masters Invitational.

The competition this year saw some of the most elite players from around the world, including Ding Jun Hui, Marco Fu, Judd Trump, Jack Lisowski, Stuart Bingham, Kyren Wilson, and Si Jia Hui, challenge "Wynn Brand Ambassador" and seven-time World Snooker Champion Mr. Ronnie O'Sullivan in best-of-nine matches. Seven matches were played throughout the four-day tournament, two of which were won by Judd Trump and Marco Fu. Fu even dazzled the audience with a "perfect frame," achieving the legendary score of one-four-seven by potting all the balls in one single visit to

the table. The audience looked on with rapt attention as Marco choreographed the snooker balls in their elegant dance across the emerald-green baize, each reaching one of the six pockets with expert precision. The other five matches were won by none other than "Wynn Brand Ambassador" Ronnie O'Sullivan, who also holds the world record for the highest number of perfect frames scored during professional competitions.

While visiting Macao, the snooker stars decided to go out and enjoy the charm of the city and its residents by visiting one of Macao's most emblematic heritage sites—Rua da Felicidade—where they tasted some authentic delicacies and chatted to snooker enthusiasts while enjoying a traditional game of recreational checkers.

Speaking at a press conference before the tournament, Ms. Linda Chen, President and Vice Chairman of the Board of Wynn Macau, Limited, said: "Wynn is committed to hosting premier international sporting events, establishing a diverse global perspective for Macao. 'Wynn Presents - 2024 Macau Snooker Masters' not only advances Macao's 'Tourism + Sports' strategy but also offers a diversified travel experience for locals and visitors, contributing to the development of Macao as a 'City of Sports'."

Not only is sport a great form of exercise and entertainment, but it also forms a bridge that crosses cultural boundaries and unites people from across the world in celebration of unique strengths, skills, and talents and appreciation of the dedication, perseverance, and indefatigable spirit that all sport professionals embody. The power and influence of sports tourism has now become so important in Macao and is fundamental to the Macao SAR Government's "1+4" moderate diversification develop-



Wynn Presents - 2024 Macau Snooker Masters



Kyren Wilson



Ding Jun Hui



"Wynn Brand Ambassador" Ronnie O'Sullivan won five out of seven matches

ment strategy for which Wynn continues to bring high-quality events to Macao in an effort to expand international markets.

In 2024 alone, Wynn has hosted the "International Series Macau," an elite-level Asian Tour golf tournament at the Macau

Golf and Country Club in March, the "3x3 Greater Bay Area Tour 2024" elite basketball competition in October, and even showcased a Wynn Special Chocolate F1 display at the Macao Grand Prix Museum in November in celebration of one of Macao's largest and most celebrated annual competitions.

In 2025, Wynn hopes to attract even more high-profile, global sports events to Macao, encouraging even more international sports enthusiasts to visit the city and also enjoy many of the other experiences Macao has to offer, and thereby boost Macao's global image as a World Center of Tourism and Leisure.



O'Sullivan and Lisowski enjoyed recreational checkers with snooker enthusiast



Judd Trump and Si Jia Hui visited Rua da Felicidade

TRANSPORT

TAXI FLEET EXPANDS BUT INFRACTIONS PERSIST

VICTORIA CHAN

THE number of taxis in Macau is expected to increase to approximately 1,800 by the end of January as new vehicles join the fleet, according to the Transport Bureau (DSAT). This follows a year-end count of 1,700 taxis, reflecting a growth of 200 vehicles since September.

The DSAT reported that, as of December 31, eight of the 10 companies awarded general licenses for taxi operations had begun service, significantly strengthening the fleet. The rise in taxi numbers aims to meet increasing public demand, particularly after the number of black taxis fell to 1,127 in the second quarter of last year.

In its efforts to expand taxi services, the DSAT launched a public tender in October 2023 to award new licenses under updated passenger transport regulations. This tender seeks to introduce 500 eco-friendly taxis with seating for six or more passengers. The companies awarded licenses must begin operations by the end of January.



The DSAT has also stipulated that successful bidders must be locally registered companies specializing in taxi transport.

The DSAT has mandated that taxis offer multiple payment options, including cash, credit cards, and digital platforms like WeChat Pay and Alipay, to enhance passenger convenience.

Despite the fleet expansion, concerns about taxi driver behavior remain prevalent.

The DSAT recorded 832 infractions by taxi operators in 2024, a notable increase compared to the previous year. These violations included 22 cases of overcharging and 209

instances of refusing to transport passengers.

While this represents the highest number of infractions since the enactment of new regulations in June 2019, it is still a dramatic improvement compared to the over 6,000 infractions recorded in 2018.

The DSAT emphasized that infractions in 2024 had decreased by approximately 90% compared to the 6,279 cases reported between January and May 2019, prior to the implementation of the new taxi law.

However, the latest figures highlight persistent challenges and remain a cause for concern among authorities.

EDUCATION

DSEDJ implements admission guidelines for universities

THE Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) has rolled out new guidelines to improve admissions processes for colleges and universities, focusing on rigorous academic qualification verification to ensure all students meet required enrollment standards.

To support these efforts, the bureau has organized exchanges on academic verification through meetings with higher education task forces and institutional leaders. These initiatives aim to enhance coordination and establish more robust systems for credential verification.

Responding to inquiries from lawmaker Ron Lam, the bureau underscored the significance of a 2019 memorandum between Macau and Mainland China, which enables mutual recognition of higher education qualifications.

Additionally, three public universities in Macau have adopted external verification systems, allowing third parties to confirm academic qualifications. Other institutions have implemented similar channels for verifying credentials.

The authorities also issued a

warning to prospective students about the admissions process. They clarified that local higher education institutions do not use intermediary agencies or individuals for recruitment. Applicants who provide false information or engage in fraudulent practices will face severe consequences, including dismissal and potential legal action.

In November, DSEDJ director Kong Chi Meng shared the bureau's measures to prevent students from applying to local tertiary education institutions with fraudulent documents. The concern was mainly due to the recent discovery of 24 students submitting fraudulent Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) results in their applications for admission to the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST).

Kong said that after a similar series of cases in Hong Kong was discovered in May, the DSEDJ met with local higher education institutions at once to discuss the improvement of verification rules as well as the thorough inspection of academic qualifications. LV

TIBET EARTHQUAKE

SAM HOU FAI EXPRESSES CONDOLENCES TO AUTHORITIES FOLLOWING XIGAZE EARTHQUAKE

CHIEF Executive Sam Hou Fai expressed his condolences in a letter to the Tibet authorities for those impacted by the earthquake that struck Xigaze, Dingri County, in the Tibet Autonomous Region on Tuesday morning, according to a press statement from the Government Information Bureau.

In the letter, addressed to the Secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Regional Committee of the Communist Party of China, Wang Junzheng, and the Acting Chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region, Karma Tsedan, Sam noted that the 6.8-magnitude earthquake had caused serious casualties among local people and property damage. He expressed, on behalf of

the Macau Special Administrative Region government and all Macau residents, mourning for those fatally injured and offered his deepest condolences to their families, along with his thoughts for those injured in the disaster.

The CE added, "Under the leadership of the Central government, with the unity and cooperation of local officials and the public, the affected areas will overcome this adversity."

He also offered support to the authorities in Tibet to back all rescue operations, expressing wishes for the smooth progress of the rescue efforts and hoping that the lives of the people in the earthquake-hit area would soon return to normal. RM

ECONOMY

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDEX RISES SLIGHTLY, BUT ECONOMIC CONCERNS LINGER

STAFF REPORTER

THE city's overall consumer confidence index saw a modest increase during the fourth quarter of 2024, rising by 2.54% to 102.95 points from the previous quarter's score of 100.39, according to research published by the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST).

The index, measured on a scale of 0 to 200, reflects consumer sentiment, with 0 indicating no confidence and 200 signaling full confidence. It is calculated using six sub-indices, four of which showed improvement while two registered declines in the latest survey.

Confidence in commodity prices posted the most significant growth, increasing by 6.83% to reach 100.35 points. Other areas of improvement included confidence in housing acquisition (+6.55% to 97.86 points), living standards



(+1.08% to 108.53 points), and employment (+0.68% to 104.18 points).

However, consumer confidence weakened in two key areas: stock investment declined by 2.20% to 96.31 points, and confidence in the local economy fell by 3.13% to 103.87 points.

MUST researchers highlighted that the dip in confidence regarding the local economy warrants close monitoring.

"The decline in confidence

toward the local economy requires special attention," the report noted. "It suggests we should pay more attention to potential risks and challenges."

Globally, the study observed a slowdown in economic momentum during the fourth quarter of 2024, with major economies becoming increasingly divided. While China's economy remained stable, the researchers pointed out lingering challenges, particularly insufficient domestic demand.

Beijing outlines New Year resolutions to boost its economy

ELAINE KURTENBACH,
BANGKOK

AP PHOTO

CHINA'S leaders are bracing for shocks to the economy from higher tariffs threatened by U.S. President-elect Donald Trump once he takes office.

To help rev up an economy bogged down by a property crisis and disruptions during the pandemic, the ruling Communist Party is rolling out a slew of measures to get Chinese consumers and businesses to spend more money and counter a slump in the Chinese currency and stock prices.

Here are some of the top items on China's list of priorities for 2025:

SUBSIDIES FOR SPENDING

China plans to expand its cash for clunkers and appliance recycling programs to encourage more purchases of new, energy-efficient models. The recycling that began last year has led to the replacement of 6.5 million fuel-powered vehicles with electrics and hybrids since June, officials of China's main planning agency said Wednesday. They also cited a double-digit growth in the past several months in sales of new appliances.

Subsidies of up to 20% of sales prices will now apply to a dozen types of appliances and also include digital products such as mobile phones, they said. The government is also subsidizing the upgrading of outdated factory equipment.

CRACKDOWN ON SHAKEDOWNS

Local officials have been warned not to conduct unjustified "arbitrary inspections" that interfere with normal business, Hu Weilie,



a vice minister of Justice, told reporters Tuesday according to state media reports.

The official Xinhua News Agency said new rules are meant to prevent abuse of power, arbitrary seizures of assets and unjustified orders to halt production. The effort is part of a campaign aimed at improving China's business environment, according to Premier Li Qiang. The moves follow complaints that dozens of executives have been detained or assets seized by cash-strapped local governments trying to shake down companies.

MORE MONEY IS ON THE WAY

So far, China has not unleashed a big bazooka of stimulus spending, choosing a more targeted and incremental approach. However, Zhao Chenxin, head of the National Development and Reform Commission, China's main planning agency, said the government plans to announce "significantly larger" scale long-term treasury bonds to finance such spending. But specific figures won't come until the

annual meeting of the national rubber-stamp legislature, due to be held in early March.

PROTECTING THE 'PEOPLE'S MONEY'

China's central bank said it resolved at a meeting over the weekend to keep the value of the yuan steady and stabilize financial markets.

The Chinese currency, also called the renminbi, or "people's money," has weakened against the U.S. dollar and other currencies, putting pressure on its financial markets. Its stock market has languished again after a brief revival in late September, when the Shanghai Composite index jumped to nearly 3,700, falling back to just over 3,200. The yuan was trading at 7.3278 to the dollar on Wednesday. It was trading near 7 yuan to the dollar in early October.

A weaker yuan can make Chinese exports more competitive but also risks angering Chinese trade partners.

TALKING UP THE ECONOMY

China's ruling party allows very little leeway

for public dissent, and even the scope for talking about the economy has narrowed.

Authorities have shut down the social media sites of economists challenging policies as they try to rally support for President Xi Jinping's leadership. A recent report by Xinhua called for ensuring "correct public opinions" that are aligned with creating "a mainstream public opinion of unity and progress."

But talking up the economy can obscure hard realities, said a recent report by the think tank Rhodium Group, which estimated China's actual economic growth last year at 2.4% to 2.8%, well below the official estimate of about 5%.

One big factor behind the lower-than-hoped-for growth is pocketbook issues that crimp demand, such as falling housing prices and smaller paychecks. The report also said: "No substantial policy measures have been announced that will substantially change the employment or wage outlook." **MDT/AP**

ADVERTORIAL

GREAT TIMES

A Feast to Remember:
Celebrate Reunion
Season at MGM



As the Chinese New Year approaches, it's time to gather your loved ones and celebrate the spirit of togetherness with a feast as grand as the occasion itself. This year, MGM invites you to indulge in an exquisite Chinese New Year Big Bowl Feast, a gastronomic experience designed to bring bundles of joy, happiness, and treasured moments to your reunion table. Available from January 20 to February 4, this is the perfect way to kick off the Year of the Snake with a culinary bang!

MGM MACAU – Imperial Court

Step into the elegant surroundings of Imperial Court and savor a feast steeped in tradition and luxury. The Big Bowl Feast offers two indulgent options to suit your celebratory mood:

Bundles of Joy and Happiness Feast Bowl
\$1,980* for 6 persons and \$3,960* for 12 persons

Reunion Treasure Feast Bowl
\$7,680* for 6 persons and \$15,360* for 12 persons

Whether you're seeking a joyful gathering or an opulent celebration, these meticulously crafted bowls are packed with premium ingredients and flavors that will leave your taste buds dancing with delight.

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For those looking to celebrate in the vibrant and modern atmosphere of MGM COTAI, Chún presents the same sumptuous offerings that guarantee a feast to remember:

Bundles of Joy and Happiness Feast Bowl
\$1,980* for 6 persons and \$3,960* for 12 persons

Reunion Treasure Feast Bowl
\$7,680* for 6 persons and \$15,360* for 12 persons

At Chún, the culinary team blends traditional Chinese flavors with contemporary flair, creating bowls that are both a feast for the palate and a sight to behold.

Don't wait to secure your spot at the table! With the limited promotion period from January 20 to February 4, these feasts are sure to be in high demand. Whether you're dining at Imperial Court in MGM MACAU or Chún in MGM COTAI, your reunion dinner promises to be a celebration of flavors, memories, and togetherness.

For enquiries and reservations, please call (853) 8802 3888.

*All prices are in MOP and subject to a 10% service charge.

Elon Musk helped Trump win. Now he's looking at Europe, and many politicians are alarmed

JILL LAWLESS, LONDON

FRESH from pouring his money and energies into helping Donald Trump win reelection, Elon Musk has trained his sights on Europe, setting off alarm bells among politicians across the continent.

The Tesla and SpaceX chief executive has endorsed the far-right Alternative for Germany, demanded the release of jailed U.K. anti-Islam extremist Tommy Robinson and called British Prime Minister Keir Starmer an evil tyrant who should be in prison.

Many European politicians have been left concerned by the attention. Musk's feed on his social network X is dotted with abusive language — labeling politicians “stupid cretin” and “sniveling cowards” — as well as retweets of far-right and anti-immigrant accounts.

Andrew Chadwick, professor of political communication at Loughborough University, said Musk is using X “a bit like an old-style newspaper mogul,” to promulgate his political views.

“We've seen Musk start to align himself much more obviously with an international movement of the far right,” Chadwick said. “If you look at the kinds of people who Musk himself is boosting on his platform... he's increasingly started to assemble a group of different right-wing influencers, many of them with large followings, and presenting their evidence as a basis for his interventions into European politics.”

Musk has inserted himself into politics in Germany, which is headed for a Feb. 23 election after center-left Chancellor Olaf Scholz's fractious three-party coalition government collapsed.

On Dec. 20, Musk wrote on X: “Only the AfD can save Germany,” a reference to the Alternative for Germany party, which is under observation by the domestic intelligence agency for suspected extremism.

He doubled down on support for the AfD in an article for the Welt am Sonntag newspaper, claiming Germany is “teetering on the edge of economic and cultural collapse.” Later this week Musk is due to hold a live chat on X with AfD co-leader Alice Weidel.



Elon Musk

Scholz's response embodies the dilemma faced by European politicians — should they ignore and let Musk's comments go unchallenged, or engage and risk amplifying them?

Scholz has said it's important to “stay cool” over personal attacks, but called Musk's involvement in German politics worrying. In a new year message, Scholz pointedly noted that Germany's way forward “will not be decided by the owners of social media channels” but by German voters.

French President Emmanuel Macron warned Monday about the risks posed by unchecked power in the hands of tech billionaires and the destabilizing impact they could have on democratic institutions.

“Who could have imagined, 10 years ago, that the owner of one of the world's largest social networks would intervene directly in elections, including in Germany?” Macron said.

Greek Health Minister Adonis Georgiadis said Musk's behavior was “troubling and far from amusing.”

“Someone cannot simply use their platform, wealth and connections to try to dictate how governments are formed in each nation,” he told Parapolitika Radio. “This is becoming increasingly dangerous.”

Musk has increasingly focused on British politics since the

center-left Labour Party was elected in July, calling Starmer an “evil” leader presiding over a “tyrannical police state.”

Musk's recent focus is on child sexual abuse, particularly a series of cases that rocked northern England towns several years ago, in which groups of men, largely from Pakistani backgrounds, were tried for grooming and abusing dozens of mostly white girls. The cases have been used by far-right activists to link child abuse to immigration and Islam.

Musk has accused Starmer of failing to bring perpetrators to justice when he was England's director of public prosecutions between 2008 and 2013 — a charge Starmer strongly denies.

“Starmer must go and he must face charges for his complicity in the worst mass crime in the history of Britain,” Musk tweeted.

Chadwick said “there's been a hesitancy on the part of the political elite in the U.K. to engage” with Musk's “incredibly inflammatory remarks.” But Starmer changed tack Monday, condemning “lies and misinformation” and accusing U.K. Conservative politicians who have echoed some of Musk's points of “amplifying what the far right are saying.”

“I enjoy the cut and thrust of politics, the robust debate that

we must have, but that's got to be based on facts and truth, not on lies,” the prime minister said.

Starmer is facing calls to tighten Britain's laws on foreign interference, and governments around the world are under pressure to leave X. Both the U.K. and German governments say they have no plans to quit the platform.

Musk's X is under investigation by European authorities attempting to curb hatred, disinformation and other toxic content on social media. The European Union has launched infringement proceedings against X under the bloc's Digital Services Act, and EU spokesman Thomas Regnier said it will look at whether Musk's livestream interview Thursday with the AfD's Weidel gives inappropriate “preferential treatment” to the party during a preelection period.

Musk, a self-styled free-speech advocate, is critical of efforts to regulate social media. He has compared British attempts to weed out online misinformation through the Online Safety Act to censorship in the Soviet Union.

Musk clearly enjoys baiting mainstream politicians on social media, but Chadwick said it “remains to be seen” whether his posting changes public attitudes or helps the causes he champions. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1972 MINERS STRIKE AGAINST GOVERNMENT



Coal miners walked out at midnight in their first national strike for almost 50 years.

Three months of negotiations with the National Coal Board ended in deadlock four days ago with an offer of 7.9% on the table and the promise of a backdated deal for an increase in productivity.

The 280,000 mineworkers signalled their determination to break the Government's unofficial eight per cent pay ceiling by refusing to put the offer to the vote.

They are looking for an increase of up to £9 a week - on an average take home wage of £25.

Miners have been observing an overtime ban since 1 November in support of their pay claim, which the NCB estimates has already cost the industry £20m.

Yesterday, the NCB announced it was withdrawing its pay offer as it became clear the miners were intent on striking.

NCB Chairman, Derek Ezra, said: “If we had granted the £120m they had asked for and thus presumably satisfied the mineworkers, we would have landed ourselves in a very serious financial situation.

“The only way of recouping that money would then have been to put prices up and we would have had to put the price of coal up by at least another 15%.”

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The miners' strike lasted seven weeks. Within 48 hours of the strike beginning, 17 schools in Shropshire - dependent on coal-fired heating - were forced to close. The TUC advised transport unions not to cross picket lines and once these were set up at ports, power stations and coal yards, the coal could not be moved.

The NUM's aim was to freeze domestic and industrial coal supplies to force the coal board back to the negotiating table.

By 5 February, factories were beginning to lay off workers because of power shortages. Four days later, BBC local radio stations were warning of domestic power cuts.

A state of emergency was declared on 9 February.

Employment Secretary, Robert Carr, set up a committee of inquiry on 11 February under Lord Wilberforce - after the latest round of talks between the NCB and the union broke down.

A headline in the Times on 16 February said 1.2m workers had been laid off as a result of the strike.

At 0100 on 19 February, miners' leaders agreed a £95m pay package. During the talks at Number 10, the union claims to have wrung about 15 extra pay concessions from the Coal Board - over and above the Wilberforce inquiry recommendations. Miners voted to return to work on 25 February.

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Career opportunities multiply in communication, with Mercury in Capricorn. Discuss dreams, ideas and ambitions. Invent interesting possibilities together over the next three weeks.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Broaden your horizons. Begin a three-week expansion phase, with Mercury in Capricorn. Investigate fascinating curiosities. Travel, research and education especially flourish. Reinforce long-distance connections.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Collaborate on practical work. Get into a three-week financial management phase, with Mercury in Capricorn. You're learning economics, hands-on. Budget and save for growth.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Listen and learn. A three-week partnership phase flowers, with Mercury in Capricorn. Discuss possibilities and align on solutions. Collaborate for what you both love.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Develop your brilliant ideas. Your communication skills benefit your career, with Mercury in Capricorn. Professional efficiency rises. Work smarter and faster by networking.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Express your heart. With Mercury in Capricorn for three weeks, it's easier to find the words. Creativity percolates. Apply it to share your passion.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Get creative with home renovation. Enjoy domestic arts and crafts over three weeks, with Mercury in Capricorn. Share memories and traditions. Invent new ones.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Engage in fascinating explorations. Enjoy a three-week study and investigation phase, with Mercury in Capricorn. Learn voraciously. Communication, educational and travel channels are wide open.

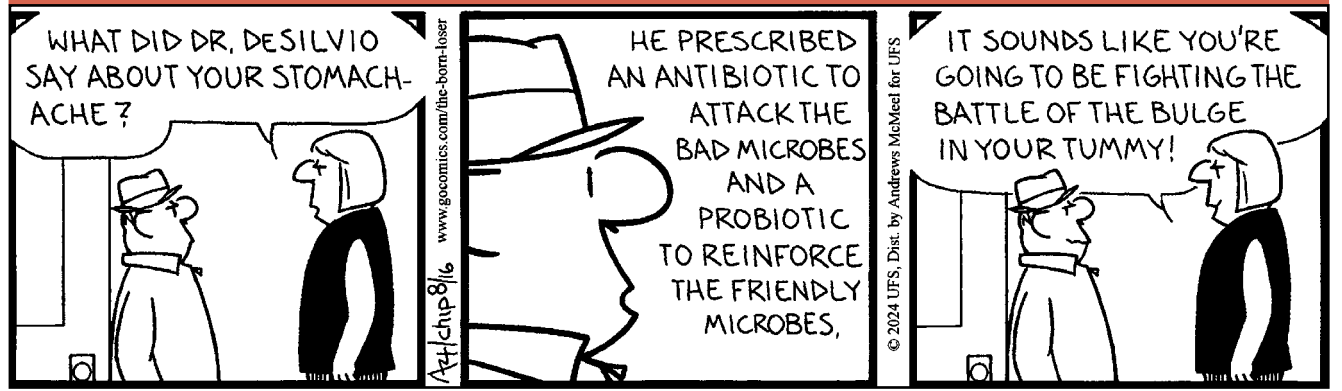
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Wheel, deal and make lucrative bargains. A profitable three-week phase develops with Mercury in Capricorn. Use your wit and charm. Network, market and promote.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Discover creative solutions over the next three weeks. You're especially brilliant, with Mercury in your sign. Discuss ways to support growth. Express your views.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Nature and music inspire imaginative dreaming. Creative thinking flourishes, with Mercury in Capricorn. Enjoy private productivity. Savor introspection and meditation. Practice gratitude.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Work together to get farther, faster. Teamwork comes naturally, with Mercury in Capricorn for three weeks. Everything you need can be found in your networks.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

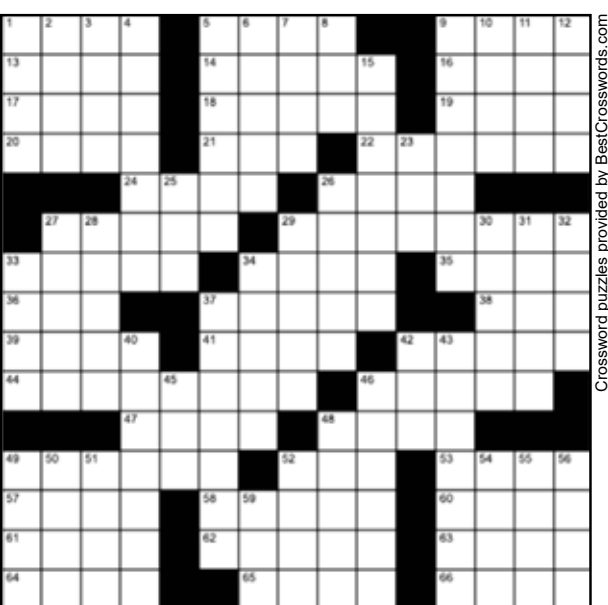
	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-6	2	fine
Changchun	-23	-13	snow
Chengdu	2	13	rain
Chongqing	6	10	rain
Fuzhou	9	15	cloudy
Guangzhou	10	18	cloudy
Guiyang	0	2	overcast
Haikou	17	22	cloudy
Hangzhou	1	3	cloudy
Harbin	-27	-13	cloudy
Hefei	-4	3	overcast
Nanjing	-2	4	cloudy
Shanghai	0	5	cloudy
Taipei	11	15	rain
Wuhan	0	7	overcast
Hong Kong	14	21	sunny
WORLD			
Moscow	-1	1	cloudy
Frankfurt	1	11	snow
Paris	2	10	rain
London	-2	2	sunny
New York	-3	1	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Swarm; 5- Like the Gobi; 9- Wagon; 13- ___ Lama Ding Dong; 14- Mexican moola; 16- Baseball stats; 17- Singer Redding; 18- "All My Children" vixen; 19- Opera set in Egypt; 20- Bust maker; 21- Adult male; 22- Lengthier; 24- Strong ___ ox; 26- Needle case; 27- Ohio city; 29- Death notice; 33- Pertaining to punishment; 34- Small songbird; 35- Movie-rating org.; 36- "___ Beso" (1962 hit); 37- Chicago airport; 38- Up to, informally; 39- Steals; 41- Thaw; 42- Wrong; 44- On an upper floor; 46- Color anew; 47- Ceremony; 48- Of ___ I Sing; 49- Leave; 52- B'way hit sign; 53- Old Fords; 57- Diamond family name; 58- Devoured; 60- Support; 61- Dick Tracy's love; 62- Fear greatly; 63- Circle overhead?; 64- Chows down; 65- "The Thin Man" dog; 66- Rapper born Tracy Marrow;

DOWN 1- 1982 Disney film; 2- I could ___ horse!; 3- Chieftain, usually in Africa; 4- Eyelash cosmetic; 5- Tarzan, e.g.; 6- Aired again; 7- The doctor ___; 8- Dwarf with glasses; 9- Skull; 10- You're making ___ mistake!; 11- Travel on; 12- Winter Palace ruler; 15- Chowder cracker; 23- Not at home; 25- Costa del ___; 26- Movie critic Roger; 27- Greek fabulist; 28- Door handles; 29- Some exams; 30- In a fitting way; 31- Elevate; 32- Ivy League school; 33- South American country, famous for Macchu Picchu; 34- In what place; 37- Left out; 40- Austrian composer; 42- Lawyer's charge; 43- Long Island university; 45- Broadcast; 46- Girl in a Beach Boys song; 48- Unexpected pleasure; 49- Go out with; 50- Zeno's home; 51- Pillar; 52- Canonized Fr. women; 54- ___ II (razor brand); 55- Pineapple vendor; 56- Dick and Jane's dog; 59- The Altar;

Yesterday's solution



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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	
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IAM 28 387 333	
Tourism 28 333 000	
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AP PHOTO

Keachia Bowers holds a photograph of her with her late father in their home in Accra, Ghana



COME HOME, GHANA TOLD THE AFRICAN DIASPORA. NOW SOME BLACK AMERICANS TAKE ITS CITIZENSHIP

ANNIE RISEMBERG, ACCRA

FLIPPING through a family album, Keachia Bowers paused on a photo of her as a baby on her father's lap as he held the 1978 album "Africa Stand Alone" by the Jamaican reggae band Culture.

"When I was 10 years old, I was supposed to come to Ghana with him," she said. A day earlier, she had marked 10 years since her father's death. Though he was a Pan-Africanist who dreamed of visiting Ghana, he never made it here.

Bowers and her husband, Damon Smith, however, are among the 524 diaspora members, mostly Black Americans, who were granted Ghanaian citizenship in a ceremony in November.

Bowers and Smith moved to Ghana from Florida in 2023 after visiting the region several times between them since the '90s. They now run a tour business that caters to Black people who want to visit Ghana or elsewhere in West Africa, or like them have come to consider a permanent move.

The November group was the largest one granted citizenship since Ghana launched the "Year of the Return" program, aimed at attracting the Black diaspora, in 2019. It marked 400 years since the first African slaves arrived in Virginia in 1619.

Ghana's Tourism Authority and the Office of Diaspora Affairs have extended the program into "Beyond the Return," which fosters the relationship with diasporans. Hundreds have been

granted citizenship, including people from Canada, the U.K. and Jamaica.

Bowers said moving to Ghana gave her family a certain feeling of ease they didn't have in the U.S.

"When we see Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, all these stories of people being murdered just in their home, living in their home and being murdered at the hands of police brutality, hearing about it creates trauma," she said.

She also worried about her son Tsadik, 14.

Tsadik towers over loved ones in the way that lanky teenage boys often do. He is shy but opens up around his younger sister Tselah, 11, and the family's dog, Apollo.

"In America, being a Black male with locs who's very tall for his age, he is treated like a threat," Bowers said.

Americans face few obstacles to living in Ghana, with most people paying an annual residency fee. But Bowers said getting citizenship signified more than simply living in Ghana.

"I didn't need (citizenship) to tell me that I'm African. Anywhere that I go in the world and someone looks at me, I'm melanated," she said.

"But my ancestors who wanted to return and come back home, those ancestors who never made it back," she said, "that passport, for me, is for them."

Between 10 to 15 million people were forcibly taken from Africa to the Americas during the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the majority from West and Central Africa,

Ghana, then a British colony known as the Gold Coast, was a main point of departure.

As memorials to the slave trade become tourist destinations across West Africa, painful reminders of its brutality are easily accessible. From Ghana to Senegal to Benin, one can visit variations of the "Door of No Return," haunting doorways that open to the Atlantic Ocean where slaves left Africa, and their families, for the last time.

The joy that people feel in finding connections that were broken long ago is palpable. Videos of the recent citizenship ceremony show men and women of all ages waving Ghanaian flags and cheering.

Deijha Gordon, 33, was one of them.

"I first visited Ghana in 2015. From then on, I knew this is a

place that I wanted to be and a place where I wanted to show other diasporans, African-Americans, that we have a place where we belong," she said.

She moved from Brooklyn to Ghana in 2019 and opened a food truck, Deijha Vu's Jerk Hut, selling Jamaican food.

Between bagging to-go orders and speaking to a Black American tourist couple, she explained how she built the business from scratch.

Gordon was giddy while recalling the moment she got citizenship.

"It just feels good to have a connection to an African country as an African-American, as a Black American. Because back in America we don't have anything to trace our roots to but Africa. To have that connection here, I feel like I've done something right,"

she said.

Like Bowers, Gordon has had a stream of people reaching out and asking about the citizenship process.

The path is not clearly defined. Citizenship must come from a concession from Ghana's presidency, a process made legal under the 2000 Citizenship Act. It's granted to those residing in Ghana who have told the Office of Diaspora Affairs that they are interested in citizenship.

Ghana's government in part describes the program as a benefit to the economy and focuses on investment opportunities for those wishing to relocate.

Festus Owooson with the local nonprofit Migration Advocacy Center said that though the government emphasizes the economic angle, the real benefits of citizenship are intangible.

"I don't think (recipients) were crying because they have landed a gold mine, or they've found oil or some kind of business opportunity. But it's something so relieving, which you cannot put value or a price on," he said.

President Nana Akufo-Addo's administration, which launched the "Year of the Return," is on its way out. Ghana's main opposition party won the presidential election on Dec. 7.

But Owooson said Black Americans and other diaspora citizens are likely to continue receiving citizenship by presidential concession.

Citizenship also can pass to the next generation. The children of Bowers and Smith received it automatically after their parents' ceremony.

Bowers' father, like her husband and children, was a follower of the Rastafari faith. "Part of the Rastafarian tradition is to repatriate. We see repatriation as the ultimate experience that you can have on this earth," she said.

She believes that her father is proud of her. "I really feel like he's smiling, where he is. He wanted to experience this for himself, so he's experiencing it through me."

MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Keachia Bowers and her daughter Tselah Smith look through their family album

BASKETBALL

Trae Young's game-winning heave at the buzzer caps a series of huge plays in Hawks' win

JOHN COON, SALT LAKE CITY

AFTER imposing his will on offense for four quarters, Atlanta's Trae Young still had one play left in him with the final seconds ticking off the clock.

Young heaved a buzzer-beating 49-foot 3-pointer from just behind the halfcourt line to give the Hawks a 124-121 victory over the Utah Jazz yesterday (Macau time). The dramatic shot capped a game in which Young had 24 points and 20 assists while committing only two turnovers.

His game-winner followed of a tying 3-pointer by Utah's Collin Sexton with four seconds left.

"When there's time left, I always feel like we can score," Young said.

Young, the Hawks' franchise leader in assists and made 3-pointers, put on a clinic on how to control a game. He dished out



Atlanta Hawks guard Trae Young

seven assists before scoring his first basket in the second quarter. Behind his sure hand, Atlanta built a 16-point first-half lead before Utah rallied and forced a tight finish.

"This is part of what I do," You-

ng said. "I always get guys involved, always been able to find people. I feel like I'm the kind of guy who can pass you open. You don't just have to be open for me to get you the ball. I can see things and get you into a good spot."

Young's winner was the highlight of a series of big plays he made down the stretch.

After the Jazz took a 114-113 lead on the second of back-to-back dunks by Walker Kessler, Young scored a step-back 3-poin-

ter to reclaim the lead and then fed De'Andre Hunter for another go-ahead 3 a minute later. Then, Young hit a pair of free throws with 8.8 seconds left.

"He has taken a lot of pride in being efficient and knowing when it is time to give the ball up and when it's time to impress himself on the game from a scoring standpoint," Hawks coach Quin Snyder said.

Young needed only a couple of dribbles and a halfcourt heave to make that impression a lasting one. He felt confident the shot would be right on target from the moment he took the inbounds pass and up to when he released the ball.

"I knew we had three seconds," Young said. "I could take a couple of dribbles and be closer to halfcourt and then I made sure I used my legs and put some air into the ball and that was important."

MDT/AP

FOOTBALL

France coach Didier Deschamps says he'll leave after 2026 World Cup

SAMUEL PETREQUIN

DIDIER Deschamps announced yesterday that he won't continue as France coach after the next World Cup.

The 56-year-old Deschamps said in an interview with broadcaster TF1 that he will leave when his contract expires in the summer of 2026.

"I've been here since 2012, I'm scheduled to be here until 2026, the next World Cup, but that's where it's going to end because it has to end at some point," Deschamps said in excerpts of the interview to be aired later Wednesday.

"I did my time, with the same desire and the same passion to keep the French team at the highest level, but 2026 is all very well."



Didier Deschamps

Deschamps started in his role as a successor to Laurent Blanc and led France to victory at the 2018 World Cup, also reaching the final in 2022 and at the 2016 European Championship.

At the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, France reached the final and lost an epic title match to Argentina.

"I'm not here for the records," Deschamps added. "The most important thing is that

the France team remains at the top as it has been for many years."

Europe will send 16 teams to the first 48-team World Cup, being co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico in the summer of 2026.

Deschamps did not elaborate on his future beyond the World Cup.

"There is a life afterwards," he said. "I don't know what it will be."



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FOOTBALL | BASKETBALL | DAILY TRAININGS

OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

GROWING BRICS REFLECTS GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION

When four new members were welcomed into the BRICS family last year and several countries were invited to be partner countries, Chinese President Xi Jinping pointed out that the group's enlargement was a major milestone in its history, and a landmark event in the evolution of the international situation.

That was reinforced on Monday, when Indonesia, the most populous country and biggest economy in Southeast Asia, became the 10th full member of the cooperation platform that originally comprised just four countries, Brazil, Russia, India and China.

Those founding members of the fledgling group came together to promote dialogue and cooperation among themselves and to serve the common interests of emerging market economies and developing countries. South Africa joined them in 2009 to form BRICS. And five became nine last year when Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates became official members of the platform.

Before Indonesia's formal admission, the Southeast Asian nation had already joined Malaysia, Thailand, Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Uganda as a BRICS partner after the group's summit in Kazan, Russia, last year. The steady enlargement of the group and its obvious appeal to countries of the Global South is testimony to it having become the primary channel for strengthening solidarity and cooperation among the Global South nations and the vanguard for advancing global governance reform.

In the face of the rapidly changing world dynamics and increasing global uncertainties and challenges as a result of the developed countries' efforts to cling to their privileges, developing countries have been drawn together in the shared pursuit of fairer global governance and distribution of development dividends.

The ever-expanding BRICS has thus become a forerunner for reform of the global governance system. BRICS countries, with their large populations, abundant resources, huge development potential, and increasing appeal and international influence, have, by strengthening their solidarity and coordination, made the platform a model of multilateralism and a champion for just global development and security.

In a world that increasingly demands cooperation to address grave and complex common challenges, the expanded BRICS manifests the recognition that common development and sustainable progress require collaboration among nations large and small. The BRICS mechanism thus helps drive home the message that the world cannot carry on as it has.

However, despite the group being motivated to join hands in pursuit of the overarching trend of peace and development, it has to contend with opposition to its aims by the G7 countries, which fear it is moving their cheese.

The developed countries should realize that this is symptomatic of the rising tide of change, as more and more countries, especially those of the Global South, are seeking a fairer, more inclusive global order that is not subject to the United States' will, as channeled through the dollar-dominated system.

It is only natural that the BRICS grouping should be riding that tide to help shape a more fair, just, and multipolar world order for the benefit of people that have been under the Western thumb for too long. In a world convulsed by turbulence and undergoing profound transformation, the members and partners of the group must embrace the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security; adhere to green and sustainable development paths; and champion true multilateralism characterized by extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits.

Above all, they should seek to make BRICS an exemplar of the spirit of inclusiveness and harmonious coexistence among civilizations and lead the way toward the building of a community with a shared future.

Chinese actor who disappeared after traveling to Thailand and was found near the border of Myanmar in an area where online scam networks operate was a victim of human trafficking, Thai police said yesterday.

Chinese state-owned newspaper The Global Times reported Monday that the family of Wang Xing requested help from the Chinese Embassy in Thailand after the actor went missing at the Thailand-Myanmar border.

Authorities found Wang on Tuesday in Myanmar and brought him to Thailand for questioning, Thai police said. Photos and videos showed Wang sitting with the police in the Thai border town of Mae

Sot with his head shaved.

Wang told the police that he was lured by a promise of a job casting by a major Thai entertainment company, but instead was taken across the border into Myanmar, where police believe he was put to work in a call scam operation targeting Chinese people, said Senior Inspector General Thatchai Pitaneelaboot.

The area is known as a haven for criminal syndicates who have forced hundreds of thousands of people in Southeast Asia into participating in online scams including false romantic ploys, bogus investment pitches and illegal gambling schemes.



Rescuers transfer the injured at Zhacun Village of Dingri County in Xigaze, southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, Tuesday

TENTS ARRIVE FOR SURVIVORS OF A QUAKE THAT KILLED 126 IN FREEZING, HIGH-ALTITUDE TIBET

KEN MORITSUGU & CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, BEIJING

RESCUE workers in the freezing, high-altitude Tibet region in western China searched yesterday for more survivors and victims of a strong earthquake that struck a day earlier near a holy city for Tibetan Buddhists, killing at least 126 people and leveling thousands of houses.

Tents, quilts and other relief items were being delivered to people whose homes were uninhabitable or unsafe. Temperatures fell well below freezing overnight in an area with an average altitude of about 4,200 meters.

The confirmed death toll stood at 126 with another 188 injured as of Tuesday evening. The earthquake struck the city of Xigaze, the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama, the second-highest figure in Tibetan Buddhism. It was not immediately known whether he was in his Tashi Lhunpo Monastery at the time of the quake or how much damage the city sustained. The quake's distance from Xigaze, which sprawls across a high altitude plain, was about 25 kilometers.

More than 500 aftershocks were recorded after the earthquake, which the U.S. Geological Survey said measured magnitude 7.1. China's earthquake center recorded a magnitude of 6.8. The quake was also about 75 kilometers from Mount Everest and the border with Nepal, where the shaking sent people running out of their homes in the capital.

A candlelight vigil was planned in Dharamsala, India, home to the Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhism's highest figure, and a large Tibetan population, last night. An announcement on the Dalai Lama's website said he would lead a prayer ceremony in memory of the victims on Thursday.

The Dalai Lama is viewed by the Chinese government as bent on making Tibet independent of China.

Asked about the prayer ceremony, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said, "We are very clear about the separatist nature and political schemes of the Dalai Lama and remain highly vigilant."

Guo expressed confidence that the people in the earthquake zone will be able to rebuild under

"the strong leadership" of the Communist Party.

The Chinese government and followers of the Dalai Lama have feuded over who should hold the position of Panchen Lama since a boy appointed by the Dalai Lama disappeared in the mid-1990s and a Chinese-backed candidate was approved for the position. The Dalai Lama denounced the move and has refused to recognize the current Panchen Lama.

China's government says Tibet has been part of its territory for centuries, but many Tibetans say they were functionally independent for most of that time. China's People's Liberation Army invaded the territory in 1950 and the Dalai Lama fled to India nine years later during an uprising against Chinese rule, seen as eroding Tibet's unique Buddhist culture.

The dead toll from the quake included at least 22 of the 222 residents of Gurum, the official Xinhua News Agency cited the village's Communist Party chief, Tsering Phuntsog, as saying. The victims included his 74-year-old mother, and several other of his relatives remained buried in the debris. MDT/AP



Australia A seaplane crashed during takeoff from a tourist island, killing three people including Swiss and Danish tourists and injuring three others. Only one of the seven people aboard the Cessna 208 Caravan was rescued without injury after the crash Tuesday afternoon on Rottnest Island, police said.



Australia A hiker survived on two muesli bars, foraged berries and creek water for two weeks while lost on a remote mountain range. Hadi Nazari, a 23-year-old medical student from Melbourne, went missing on Dec. 26 when he separated from two hiking companions to take photos in the Kosciuszko National Park in the Snowy Mountains in New South Wales state.



USA President Jimmy Carter will continue to lie in state Wednesday after his remains arrived in Washington a day earlier as part of state funeral rites. The Georgia Democrat and 39th president died Dec. 29 at the age of 100. Carter served as president from 1977-81, winning office as an outsider in the wake of the Vietnam War and Watergate.



Syria The first international commercial flight since the fall of former President Bashar Assad landed Tuesday at the Damascus airport. The Qatar Airways flight landed at Damascus International Airport, greeted by the passengers' relatives and friends inside a terminal building. Qatar had provided assistance in rehabilitating the airport, which had suffered from years of neglect.

Ukraine-USA An upcoming trip to Kyiv by U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's special envoy for Ukraine and Russia has been canceled but will be rescheduled, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiha said. The planned meetings between Keith Kellogg, a highly decorated retired three-star general who has long been Trump's top adviser on defense issues, and Ukrainian officials are "extremely important," Sybiha told reporters.