

17 YEARS
A-CHANGIN'
Advertise with us
+853 287 160 81

MacauDaily 澳門每日時報®
Times

FOUNDER & PUBLISHER Kowie Geldenhuys EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

CTM 5.5G
is the first to launch 5.5G in Macau
Speed Power Up
Experience hassle-free travel
FREE upgrade automatically to all 5G customers

www.ctm.net.mo
MULTI-PLANS: 1000

N.º 4643 THURSDAY 16 Jan 2025
T. 14 ° / 23° Air Quality Moderate

“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”

MOP 8.00
HKD 10.00 2305 4271

THE NEW GOV'T SECRETARIES ARE PREPARING FOR THE 2025 POLICY ADDRESS AND HAVE BEEN MEETING WITH VARIOUS ASSOCIATIONS TO GATHER OPINIONS

P4

CE CALLS ON THE MEDIA TO FURTHER PROMOTE MACAU'S SUCCESS

P3

US TIKTOK USERS FLOCK TO CHINESE APP XIAOHONGSHU IN PROTEST WITH TIKTOK BAN LOOMING

P6



China-Congo Three Chinese citizens were sentenced earlier this week to seven years in prison and ordered to pay \$600,000 in fines for illegally exploiting mineral resources in Congo, according to court filings. The ruling marks the first time foreign mineral brokers have been convicted for unauthorized mineral exploitation in the DRC without authorization from Congolese authorities.



Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese (pictured) said yesterday his government will take the "strongest action possible" if Russia has harmed an Australian who was taken prisoner while fighting for Ukraine. Video posted on social media in December showed Oscar Jenkins, 32, dressed in a military uniform with his hands bound being questioned and struck by a Russian interrogator.

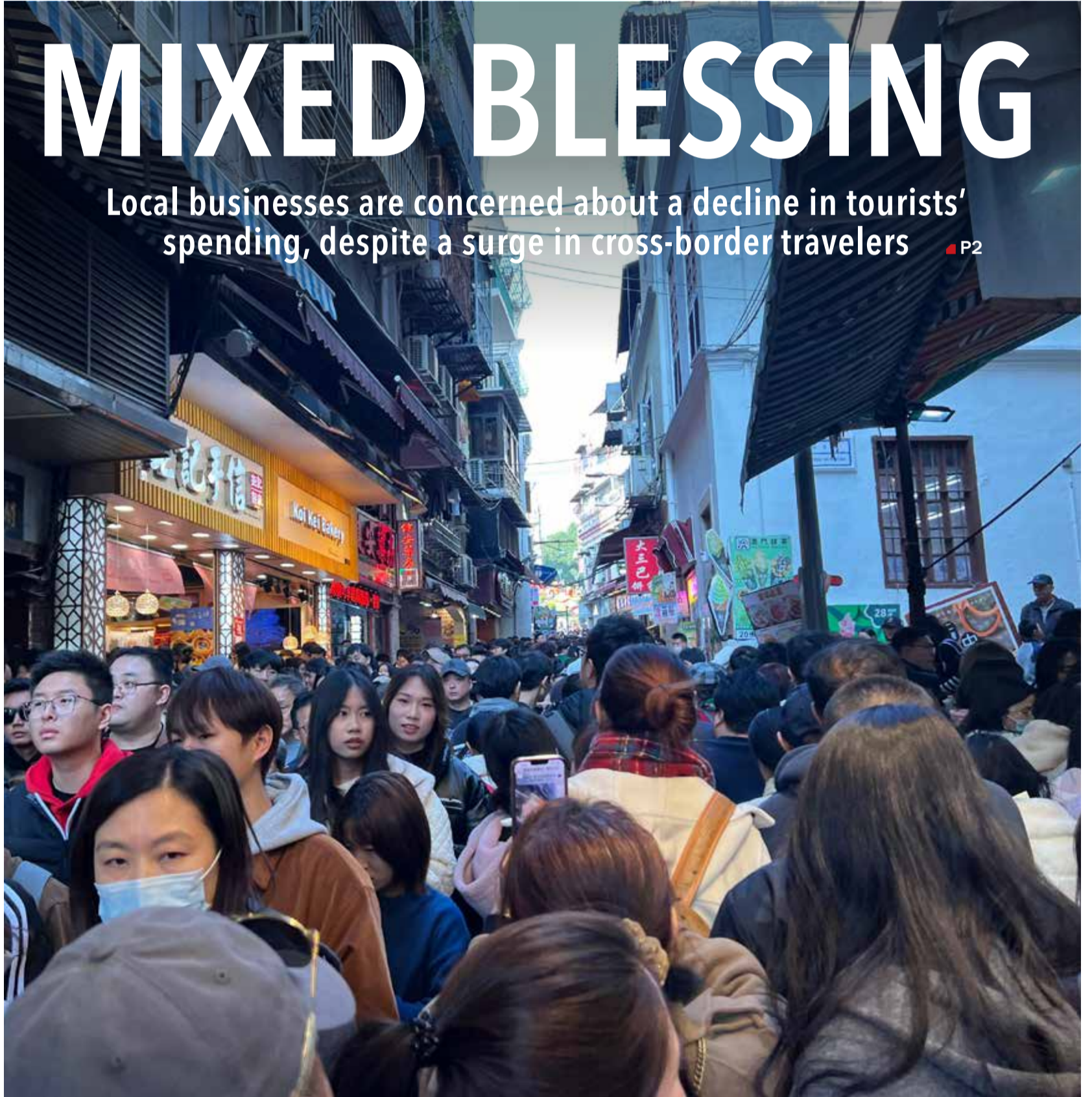


UK Inflation unexpectedly fell in December, a move that will likely fuel pressure on the Bank of England to cut interest rates again next month. The Office for National Statistics said that inflation, as measured by the consumer prices index, was 2.5% in the year to December, largely as a result of easing price pressures in the services sector, which accounts for around 80% of the British economy.



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (pictured, right) was visiting Poland yesterday after the two countries reached an agreement on a longstanding source of tensions between them: the exhumation of Polish victims of World War II-era massacres by Ukrainian nationalists. The visit comes just days after Tusk announced progress on starting exhumations.

More on backpage



MIXED BLESSING

Local businesses are concerned about a decline in tourists' spending, despite a surge in cross-border travelers

P2

PHILIP COLBERT
'LOBSTERS' BACK IN TOWN

P5



NEW VISA POLICY BOOSTS TOURISM BUT LEAVES RETAIL SPENDING UNCERTAIN

VICTORIA CHAN

THE new visa policy allowing mainland Chinese residents from Zhuhai and Hengqin easier access to Macau has led to a significant increase in border crossings, yet local businesses are reporting mixed reactions, with some experiencing a surge in visitors while others noting a decline in spending.

Since January 1, mainland Chinese residents with household registration and residence permits for the two regions have been eligible to apply for a multiple-entry visa to travel to Macau. The visa, valid for one year, allows unlimited trips; however, each stay is limited to seven days.

Authorities estimate that the new policy could increase daily travelers from Zhuhai and Hengqin by 20,000. Visitor numbers from Zhuhai to Macau have increased by 26.1% year-on-year, reaching over 257,000 so far in 2025.

Lu Ning, a spokesperson for the Chinese National Immigration Administration, revealed these figures during a press conference earlier this week.

According to Lu, the implementation of the new visa policies has led to a "significant increase" in the number of mainland Chinese visitors to both Macau and Hong Kong.

"Since January 1, 59,000 'one trip per week' visas have been issued to mainland Chinese residents for travel to Macau, along with more than 6,000 'multiple-entry' visas," Lu disclosed during the press conference.

"These measures are designed to further ease mainland residents' ability to visit for sightseeing, shopping, and consumption in Hong Kong and Macau," she added. "These initiatives are expected to drive economic and social growth in both regions while supporting their integration into the nation's broader development strategy."

Meanwhile, local business owners and retailers have reported a noticeable increase in visitor numbers, yet reactions to the new visa policy vary.

Katy Lei, owner of a souvenir shop in Macau, noted a surge in tourists since the policy change. "It has become easier for Chinese

VICTORIA CHAN



Lilly Lei



Katy Lei

se to pass the border now, and I've seen more tourists lately," she said. Despite the typical post-Chinese New Year lull, Lei observed a bustling environment, attributing this prosperity to the new visa regulations and the upcoming Lunar New Year festivities.

"We're seeing about 20% to 30% more tourists compared to previous years," Lei added, highlighting that many visitors are gearing up for the New Year, purchasing traditional items such as candies, cakes, and seafood. She emphasized that Saturdays have become the busiest day for tourism, a shift from previous patterns where Sundays attracted larger crowds.

Conversely, some retailers have reported a different experience. An anonymous assistant at a beauty and health retail shop expressed skepticism about the policy's impact. "Although it has become easier to cross the border, I don't feel there has been a significant change," she said. "Customers come in to browse but are not spending much."

Lilly Lei, owner of a food souvenir store, echoed similar sentiments. "Yes, there are more tourists, but people don't spend

much," she stated. She noted that while visitor numbers have increased, the spending habits of tourists have shifted, with many not carrying shopping bags as they did in the past. "It's all about the same; we have more people, but not much consumption," she said.

The average Tourist Price Index (TPI) for 2024 increased by 3.15% compared to the previous year, reaching 146.23, according to data released by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). This rise is primarily attributed to higher prices for jewelry, clo-

thing, and restaurant services.

However, the mixed responses from local businesses raise questions about the impact of the new visa policy on Macau's economy. While the influx of visitors is welcomed, the observed decline in spending compared to the past could pose challenges for retailers.

Macau's economy has been heavily reliant on gaming and tourism, particularly from mainland China.

The new visa policy aims to revitalize the sector, but as several shop owners noted, the type

of tourism emerging may not translate into increased sales.

In an interview with the Times, Raymond Wong, president of the Industry and Commerce Association of Macau Northern District, shed light on the North District's challenges and opportunities.

"Since January 1, after Zhuhai visas became more convenient, there have been many more tourists in Macau, but for the North District, there haven't been many tourists so far," Wong explained. He noted that the majority of visitors are flocking to the larger hotels and the Cotai area, leaving the North District's older neighborhoods largely untouched. "Our old districts currently have no characteristics, and there are no big hotels or major attractions," he said.

Despite these challenges, Wong remains optimistic about the district's future. "There are more tourists; there will be more in the next six or seven years. Macau had about 30 million tourists last year. We hope there will be more," he added.

The association is actively collaborating with the government to attract visitors to the district by improving transportation and beautifying the old neighborhoods.

While the Zhuhai visa changes are influencing Macau's tourism landscape, Wong acknowledged that the North District has yet to see the full effects.

"The North District has not seen any effect yet," he emphasized.

MACAU, HONG KONG RESIDENTS DRIVE CROSS-BORDER TRAVEL GROWTH

RESIDENTS from Macau, Hong Kong and Taiwan made a combined total of 254 million cross-border trips in 2024, reflecting a significant year-on-year increase of 38.8%, according to statistics released by the National Immigration Administration (NIA) earlier this week.

The overall number of cross-border trips inspected by Chinese immigra-

tion authorities surged to 610 million during the year, marking a 43.9% increase from the previous year, said NIA spokeswoman Lyu Ning at a press conference.

Mainland Chinese residents contributed 291 million trips, a 41.3% rise compared to 2023, while trips by foreign citizens reached 64.88 million, soaring 82.9% year-on-year.

Additionally, the NIA issued over 2.59 million visas to foreign nationals in 2024, representing a 52.3% increase. The number of foreign travelers visiting China visa-free more than doubled, exceeding 20 million.

Lyu attributed the growth to favorable policies introduced throughout the year, which have enhanced cross-border travel accessibility.

www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

REACHING OUT!

+25,000

Like us on facebook.com/mdtimes



MacauDaily 澳門每日時報
Times

DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR Lynzy Valles
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS Alex Torrão, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Seguí DESIGNER Rebeca Almeida | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES Associated Press, MacauHub, MacaoNews, Xinhua SECRETARY Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C,

MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

Advertisement advertising@macaudailytimes.com

For subscription and general issues:

general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

CE calls on the media to further promote Macau's success

RENATO MARQUES

THE Chief Executive (CE), Sam Hou Fai, called on local media to “utilize further their credibility and influence to promote to the global community the significant achievements of Macau’s successful practice of the ‘one country, two systems’ principle and its inherent values of peace, inclusiveness, openness, and sharing,” a press statement from the Government Information Bureau notes.

Sam was speaking at a dinner reception held yesterday evening with representatives of Chinese-language local news outlets.

At the same time, the CE added that he hoped the local media would share the compelling stories concerning China and Macau with the world and “show outsiders that the ‘one country, two systems’ principle is viable and achievable as a framework and can substantially benefit humanity.”

Addressing President Xi Jinping’s recent visit and speeches, Sam no-



ted, “Over the past 25 years, the motherland has remained the most solid support for Macau’s prosperity and stability, consistently providing Macau with the greatest develop-

ment opportunities.”

For the CE, the media’s work in Macau has been assisting the government in its communication efforts and “is a crucial observer,

participant, and communicator of the MSAR’s development,” adding, “They have been attentive to, and followed up on, the various activities and work of the

MSAR government.”

On the other hand, the CE also said that “as a bridge between the government and the public,” the media plays a crucial role in “overseeing the administration as well as reflecting public demands, distinguishing right from wrong, cultivating social consensus, and promoting social harmony and stability.”

“Through their accurate and timely reporting, the media reflect public sentiment, making governance more in line with the thoughts and aspirations of the Macau public. This, in turn, fosters better understanding and support among the public regarding the government’s work and promotes healthy interaction between the government and the public.”

The matter of press freedom in Macau was also addressed by Sam, who reaffirmed that it is “fully guaranteed under the MSAR Basic Law and the Press Law,” reaffirming the commitment of the government to adhere to law-based governance, supporting the media in enhancing their professional standards, and innovating in terms of their skills.

The CE also argued that the new government would enhance coordination and communication between departments and the media, providing information and offering more assistance for interviews and reporting.

AD

海濱奇想
The Lobster King's Vacation in Macao
龍蝦國王暢「游」澳門
COASTAL FANTASIA
2025 Philip Colbert in Macao
15/01 - 16/03

● Macao Science Center Waterfront
● Venetian Macao Outdoor Lagoon

World-Renowned Pop Artist
PHILIP COLBERT

First Debut in Macao, Come & Visit

Supporting Party: [Logos of Macau Government, Macao Science Center, Instituto Cultural, etc.]
Organizer: [Logo of the event organizer]

ROAD TO LAG25

SECRETARIES MEET ASSOCIATIONS TO COLLECT OPINIONS AHEAD OF POLICY PRESENTATION

RENATO MARQUES

THE new government secretaries are preparing the policy address for 2025 (LAG25) and have been meeting with various associations to obtain their opinions on the priority matters to be addressed.

According to their respective offices, the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Tai Kin Ip, the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, O Lam, and the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raymond Tam, have been meeting over the past few days with the most representative associations from different sectors to collect their feedback and ambitions for this year.

In a press statement, Tai's office noted that from this week onwards, the Secretary is leading a delegation composed of the service directors under his authority to visit social and commercial associations to listen to and gather in-depth opinions and suggestions from the various social sectors.

In the same statement,



it is said that the purpose of the meeting is to adjust the policies for the year so they can better meet residents' expectations and study society's needs in depth. The Macau Chamber of Commerce, the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM), the General Union of Macau Neighborhood Associations, the Women's General Association, the Macau Overseas Chinese Association, the Macau Youth Federation, the Macau Fukien

Fellowship General Association, and the Macau Kong Mun Fellowship Association are among the associations meeting with the delegation.

The same delegation plans to exchange ideas with the Macau Industrial and Commercial Association, regional industrial and commercial associations, and think tank associations, among others. Secretary Tam also is engaged in a similar task and has met with several groups, including

the FAOM.

In the meeting with the representatives of FAOM, Tam heard six leading suggestions for works to be developed in the transport and public construction field, including the extension of the Light Rapid Transit system to the Qing-mao border crossing and other more distant areas, the moving forward with the construction of Zone A of the new landfills, the integration of Macau into the national development framework, and continuing support for new energy vehicles; launching decarbonization and energy-saving measures to raise public awareness of environmental protection; promoting standardized management of road works; and making reasonable use of land reserve resources to meet society's aspirations.

In his remarks, Tam promised to increase information transparency by strengthening interdepartmental cooperation and efficiency, improving infrastructure to foster interconnection with the mainland,

and improving the housing environment to better respond to society's expectations. Secretary O Lam visited several associations on her tour, including the Chinese Educators Association of Macau.

Representatives from this association have suggested, among others, that besides recruiting qualified professionals in science and technology, the government should also consider training local professionals in science and technology innovation through courses offered by local schools.

Also addressed were the needs to develop young people's mental and physical health, encourage births, guarantee teachers' salaries and pension benefits, and construct Zone A for schools, sports facilities, and leisure areas.

The heads of the different public services under the Social Affairs and Culture Secretariat have said they have taken note of all the opinions and ideas exchanged and will incorporate them into the LAG25 for this sector.

GOVT EXPANDS EV CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE WITH NEW SOCKETS IN PUBLIC PARKING LOTS

To improve air quality and meet the "Dual Carbon Target," the Macau government is upgrading its electric vehicle infrastructure under the "Electric Vehicle Promotion Plan." National standard sockets are being installed in public parking lots to support electric motorcycles and mopeds. In light of recent safety concerns, officials stress that users must avoid using adapters or extension cords when charging. Currently, 630 charging stations are available across 49 locations, with additional battery cabinets in eight lots. Future improvements will cater to user needs, promoting safer and more convenient electric vehicle travel in the region.

MACAU DELEGATION ATTENDS CEFCO 2025

A delegation of 28 representatives from Macau's exhibition industry recently participated in the "20th China Expo Forum for International Cooperation" (CEFCO 2025). The forum, themed "Gathering New Quality Productive Forces for a Sustainable Future," brought together global exhibition professionals to explore high-quality development paths for the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector. During the event, IPIM director Elaine Wong engaged with global exhibition leaders to explore collaborative opportunities for exhibitions and training in Macau. Participants attended seminars focused on digital technology and industry innovation, enhancing their understanding of trends that can drive future international cooperation and development in the exhibition industry.

Community urges cooperation to tackle rodent infestation

VICTORIA CHAN

OFFICIALS and community members are still expressing concern about rodent control efforts. In a recent episode of the TDM Forum, they convened to address the growing issue of rodent infestations in the region.

The discussion highlighted ongoing efforts and the need for increased public awareness and cooperation in combating this persistent problem.

Kou Ngon Fong, deputy of the Northern District Community Service Consultative Council Committee, emphasized that rodent eradication is an ongoing challenge.

He noted that the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has implemented proactive measures, including



the installation of approximately 1,400 fixed rat-bait boxes strategically placed on public streets throughout Macau. Kou emphasized that while significant progress has been made, the collaboration of both restaurants and residents is essential in private areas.

Fong Kin Fu, the vice chairman of the United Association of Food and Beverage Mechanics of Macau, recognized the nota-

ble advancements in pest control within the restaurant sector over recent years. He noted that while food safety training and inspections are now standard practices, completely eliminating rodents is not feasible.

He emphasized the importance of prevention and encouraged restaurant owners to maintain a proactive approach.

During the program, audience members raised concerns

about the necessity of conducting scientific assessments of rodent populations.

One resident suggested that the IAM should utilize data-driven methods to evaluate the levels of rodent infestation and communicate these findings to the public. Responding to this call for transparency, Kou expressed his support for publishing detailed information on rodent control efforts.

He echoed the audience's concerns and emphasized the importance of the department enhancing its rodent control technology.

Furthermore, he urged making more comprehensive data and indicators related to rodent infestations publicly accessible while promoting greater awareness of hygiene

practices.

Choi Seng Hong, deputy director of the Islands Community Advisory Board, proposed hosting a community cleaning campaign to engage residents directly in rodent prevention efforts. He pointed out that timely disposal of large garbage items is essential to eliminate potential hiding spots for rats.

Additionally, concerns were raised about the sanitation conditions in certain residential buildings, which have contributed to rodent problems. Choi suggested that residents could adopt a "joint management" approach similar to practices in Hong Kong, hiring professional teams to implement scientific methods for blocking rat entry points.

Philip Colbert's iconic lobster artworks showcased throughout the city

VICTORIA CHAN

SANDS China has partnered with British pop artist Philip Colbert to bring his vibrant lobster art exhibition, titled "Coastal Fantasia: The Lobster King's Vacation in Macau," to the city.

The exhibition, which features giant, eye-popping installations of Colbert's iconic Lobster character, runs until mid-March.

Held in five locations throughout the city, each site features large-scale installations designed to celebrate the region's coastal beauty, with some pieces created exclusively for this event.

Colbert, known for his lobster character and energetic paintings, highlighted his excitement about returning to Macau. "This is the largest artist takeover in the city's history. I'm so grateful to the organizers for having the great ambition to help bring my artistic works to life on such a big scale," he stated.

The exhibition includes a striking 15-meter-high inflata-



ble installation, "Lobster Submarine," and a 7-meter-high "Lobster Flamingo" at The Venetian Macao.

The opening ceremony for the exhibition was held yesterday at the Macao

Science Center waterfront. Wilfred Wong, executive vice chairman of Sands China Ltd, expressed excitement about partnering with Colbert, stating, "Sands China is delighted to partner with globally acclaimed

British contemporary pop art master Philip Colbert to bring his iconic Lobster back to the city... By introducing internationally renowned masterpieces to Macau, we aim to boost Macau's coastal tourism and enhance its

cultural atmosphere," Wong said. In addition to the main exhibition, Colbert's solo show, "The Journey to the Lobster Planet Macau," features over 20 new artworks at the Macao Cultural Center until February 15.

TIS LEADS THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION: INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM SET TO LAUNCH



The International School
OF MACAO | 澳門國際學校

With the rapid growth of globalization, international education has become increasingly popular among students and parents. In this context, The International School of Macao (TIS) distinguishes itself through its innovative educational approach and personalized teaching model.

TIS offers a distinctive approach to education, prioritizing individualized and holistic learning experiences that set us apart from traditional teaching methods. The school maintains high standards by continually evolving, innovating, and actively seeking feedback from parents about their educational expectations. The latest survey indicates parents want their children to develop skills that nurture their unique strengths while exploring diverse cultures. In response, TIS is thrilled to announce the launch of an innovative "Individualized Education" program, that will serve students from kindergarten to high school.

Enhancing Individualized Education to Cultivate Global Competitiveness

Proficiency in both Chinese and English has become an important tool for international families. TIS will enhance individualized education in both



kindergarten and middle school by adding Chinese and English enhancement classes, aimed at strengthening students' linguistic proficiency, ensuring students develop the multilingual capabilities necessary for success in global environments.

Enhanced Chinese Kindergarten Program

In kindergarten, children are in a prime stage for developing their language skills. To leverage this, TIS introduces the "Enhanced Chinese" Kindergarten program, aimed at fostering students' comprehensive development in both English and Chinese. Students will immerse themselves in a bilingual and bicultural environment, enhancing their language skills while developing cross-cultural understanding and adaptability. The Enhanced Chinese class will adopt an innovative teaching model, alternating between Chinese and English instruction each week to achieve balanced bilingual learning. The core of the curriculum is to cultivate students' language and literacy, mathematics, and social/emotional learning. This includes subject integration

through inquiry units that explore and incorporate language development.

To meet the diverse needs of students, TIS combines student-centred learning with differentiated instruction. Throughout the week, teachers will assess knowledge, skills and understanding in both languages. Each Friday, students will receive support in the language requiring greater development. Parents will also play a crucial role as supporters of their children's learning. The school will organize meetings and workshops to share course content and at-home support strategies, along with providing regular updates to keep parents informed about their children's progress.

English Acceleration - Middle School Program

Middle school is crucial for students to explore their identities and potential. To this end, TIS is launching a new English Acceleration Program in Grade 7. It offers intensive English classes based on students' interests and career plans, reinforcing Chinese comprehension in subjects where English is emphasized. The Secondary Principal, Mr. Dominic Masters, stated "This program supports students who are new to English language learning in an inclusive environment, helping them develop language skills alongside academic content. This program fosters confidence and a sense of belonging, empowering students to reach their full potential in a diverse society."

High School Extension courses

In Grade 10, core courses in Science, Mathematics, English, and Social

Studies will present high achievers with an exceptional opportunity to extend their learning beyond the regular curriculum. Our newly launched extended classes are tailored for students who strive for excellence and seek a deeper understanding of these essential subjects.

These programs are designed to challenge students through innovative teaching methods and advanced materials, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. By engaging in these extended classes, students will not only enhance their academic performance but also develop the skills necessary to thrive in an ever-changing world.

High School Pathways

In high school, individualized pathways for graduation and tertiary education are promoted to each student. As students approach high school, academic counselling is provided to ensure that families make informed decisions about course selection that align with their goals. A wide range of disciplinary study areas are available to help students select a pathway that best suits their interests and academic strengths, ensuring the chosen path leads to success.

For those pursuing the Alberta High School Diploma, two different levels of academic rigour are offered for each of the core courses (English, Math, Science, Social Studies). For those pursuing the IB Diploma, all courses are studied at either Standard level or



Higher Level, to meet the interests and academic strengths of the students.

Tertiary Pathways

TIS students can take SAT examinations on site, as TIS is an authorized testing centre for this organisation. This opportunity, coupled with one-on-one support from TIS Academic Counselling team and Secondary leadership team, helps students receive offers from excellent tertiary institutions and successfully navigate international study abroad. Through TIS's individualized education approach, students from various language backgrounds can find suitable learning pathways. This new system not only meets parents' educational expectations but is also a bold attempt at educational innovation. Looking ahead, TIS's initiative will undoubtedly lead a new trend in international education in Macao, providing high-quality educational options for more families.

Discover the TIS Difference
Join Our Open Day!
February 8, 2025 | 10 AM - 12 PM

Visit www.tis.edu.mo or call 2853 3700.

XIAOHONGSHU

US TikTok users flock to Chinese app in protest with TikTok ban looming

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

AS the threat of a TikTok ban looms, U.S. TikTok users are flocking to the Chinese social media app Xiaohongshu – making it the top downloaded app in the U.S.

Some of the “TikTok refugees,” as they call themselves, say the TikTok alternative, a Chinese app, is being chosen in protest of the TikTok ban.

The U.S. Supreme Court is due to rule on a law that stipulates TikTok must be divested from its Chinese parent company ByteDance by Jan. 19 or face a ban in the U.S. over national security concerns.

After the justices seemed inclined to let the law stand, masses of TikTok users began creating accounts on Xiaohongshu, including hashtags such as #tiktokrefugee or #tiktok to their posts. Since Monday, Xiaohongshu has become the top downloaded free app on Apple's App Store in the U.S.

Xiaohongshu, which in English means “Little Red Book” is a Chinese social media app that combines e-commerce, short video and posting functions.

The app has gained traction in China and other regions and countries with a Chinese diaspora such as Malaysia and Taiwan in recent years, racking up 300 million monthly active users, a majority of whom are young women who use it as a de-facto search engine for product, travel and restaurant recommendations, as well as makeup and skincare tutorials.

The #tiktokrefugee topic has racked up over 160,000 posts on Xiaohongshu, many of which are videos of American users introducing themselves and asking for tips on how to navigate the app,



which they are calling “RedNote”.

Xiaohongshu did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

Alexis Garman is a 21-year-old TikTok user in Oklahoma with nearly 20,000 followers. She joined Xiaohongshu on Tuesday after seeing others do the same. Garman said she is not particularly concerned about data privacy.

“What I experienced on (Xiaohongshu) so far has been really great and inviting,” said Garman, who has left two posts on the platform.

“I like your makeup,” a Xiaohongshu user from Beijing comments one of her posts, and Garman thanks them in a reply. A user from the southwestern province of Sichuan commented “I am your Chinese spy ... please surrender your personal informa-

tion or the photographs of your cat (or dog).”

“TikTok possibly getting banned doesn't just take away an app, it takes away jobs, friends and community,” Garman said. “Personally, the friends and bond I have with my followers will now be gone.”

Other American users who have joined Xiaohongshu have been outspoken about joining the app in protest of the possible TikTok ban.

An American user with the handle Definitelynotchippy made a video addressed to the Chinese users of Xiaohongshu, explaining why Americans are downloading the app.

“The reason that our government is telling us that they are banning TikTok is because they're insisting that it's owned by you guys, the Chinese people, gover-

ment, whatever,” she said. “And they're trying to make us think that you guys are bad.”

“A lot of us are smarter than that though so we decided to piss off our government and download an actual Chinese app,” she said. “We call that trolling ... in short we're here to spite our government and to learn about China and hang out with you guys.”

Chinese users on Xiaohongshu have so far welcomed American users, with some offering to teach them Chinese. Others have offered tips on navigating the Chinese internet, warning the new users not to mention or discuss anything considered politically sensitive as they may get censored. In some cases, Chinese students have asked the Americans for help with their English homework.

Like most apps and internet services in China, Xiaohongshu is

subject to censorship. Platforms typically enforce censorship by deleting or shadowbanning content that Beijing deems politically sensitive. Large Western platforms, such as Google and Facebook, are blocked in China.

Though Xiaohongshu has seen an influx of users, it is not clear if the app could replace TikTok, which has created an ecosystem that allows for e-commerce and advertising. Before TikTok was under threat, the overwhelming majority of Xiaohongshu's users were Chinese, and the app, which lacks translation features, is not optimized for an international user base.

Even though U.S.-China tensions remain high over trade and national security, many Chinese and American Xiaohongshu users have pursued friendly cultural exchanges on the app. Those interactions range from live chat rooms to comments on posts.

A TikTok refugee who goes by the name Amanda posted a video on how happy she was in finding the Xiaohongshu app, saying that Chinese users have been welcoming. Under her post, a Chinese user comments: “We are not enemy, we are human beings (living) in one world!”

“We also never ... had a chance to communicate with you foreign guys directly sharing the same app or platform, so the (feeling is) mutual since you come on this app,” another says.

In a comment posted in Chinese, Amanda, the TikTok “refugee” said she would work on posting captions and subtitles in Chinese in the future.

“I am so happy to talk to Chinese people and learn about your culture and experiences,” she said. **MDT/AP**

India's navy launches submarine, warships to guard against China's presence in Indian Ocean

RAFIQ MAQBOOL & ASHOK SHARMA, MUMBAI

INDIA'S navy yesterday simultaneously launched a submarine, a destroyer and a frigate built at a state-run shipyard, underscoring the importance of protecting the Indian Ocean region through which 95% of the country's trade moves amid

a strong Chinese presence.

Defense Minister Rajnath Singh said that the Atlantic Ocean's importance has shifted to the Indian Ocean region, which is becoming a center of international power rivalry.

“India is giving the biggest importance to making its navy powerful to protect its interests,” he said.

“The commissioning of

three major naval combatants marks a significant leap forward in realizing India's vision of becoming a global leader in defense manufacturing and maritime security,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi said while commissioning the vessels at the state-run Mazagon dockyard in Mumbai.

The situation in the Indian Ocean region is

challenging with the Chinese navy, India's main rival, growing exponentially, said Rahul Bedi, a defense analyst.

Bedi said that the INS Vagsheer submarine, the sixth among a French license-built Kalvari (Scorpene)-class conventional diesel-electric submarines, is aimed at replacing aging Indian underwater platfor-

ms and plugging serious capability gaps in existing ones. India now has a total of 16 submarines.

The P75 Scorpene submarine project represents India's growing expertise in submarine construction in collaboration with the Naval Group of France, Bedi said.

India's defense ministry is expected to conclude a deal for three additional

Scorpene submarines to be built in India during Modi's likely visit to Paris next month to attend the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron.

However, the first of these boats, according to the Indian navy, is only likely to be commissioned by 2031. **MDT/AP**

SOUTH KOREA

Impeached President Yoon detained in massive law-enforcement effort

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea's impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol was detained in a massive law enforcement operation at the presidential compound yesterday, defiantly insisting the anti-corruption agency didn't have the authority to investigate his actions but saying he complied to prevent violence.

In a video message recorded before he was escorted to the headquarters of the anti-corruption agency, Yoon lamented the "rule of law has completely collapsed in this country."

Yoon, the country's first sitting president to be apprehended, had been holed up in the Hannam-dong residence in the capital, Seoul, for weeks while vowing to "fight to the end" the efforts to oust him. He has justified his declaration of martial law Dec. 3 as a legitimate act of governance against an "anti-state" opposition employing its legislative majority to thwart his agenda.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials said Yoon was brought into custody about five hours after investigators arrived at the presidential compound and about three hours after they successfully entered the residence, in their second attempt to detain him over his imposition of martial law.

A series of black SUVs, some equipped with sirens, were seen leaving the presidential compound with police escorts. Yoon was later seen stepping out of a vehicle after arriving at the agency's office in the nearby city of Gwacheon. Following the questioning, Yoon was expected to be sent to a detention center in Uiwang, near Seoul.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Yoon could be held in custody for weeks.

The anti-corruption agency, which is leading a joint investigation with the police and the military over whether Yoon's martial law declaration amounted to an attempted rebellion, has 48 hours to request a court order for a formal arrest on a charge of attempting a rebellion, and if it fails to do so, Yoon will be released. If Yoon is formally arrested, investigators can extend his detention to 20 days before transferring

AP PHOTO



Impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol arrives at the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials in Gwacheon, South Korea, yesterday

the case to public prosecutors for indictment.

The anti-corruption agency told reporters that Yoon, during his first two hours of questioning, exercised his right to remain silent.

The detention warrant for Yoon, issued by the Seoul Western District Court, said there were substantial reasons to suspect that he committed crimes as a "ringleader of a rebellion."

Yoon's presidential powers were suspended when parliament impeached him on Dec. 14. The impeachment case now rests with the Constitutional Court, which could formally remove Yoon from office or reject the case and reinstate him.

In a separate message posted on his Facebook account after his detainment, Yoon claimed that "martial law is not a crime," saying his declaration was necessary to raise awareness about an opposition that was exercising "legislative dictatorship by blocking laws and budgets" and "paralyzing" state affairs. He denied the rebellion accusations, describing his impeachment as "fraud."

THE SCENE AT THE COMPOUND

As they began the detention operation in the early morning, the anti-corruption investigators and police officers engaged in an hourslong standoff at the compound's gate with presidential security for-

ces but otherwise encountered no meaningful resistance.

Police officers were seen using wire cutters to remove the barbed wire placed by the presidential security service on the perimeter of the compound to block their entry. Some police officers used ladders to climb over rows of buses placed by the presidential security service near the compound's entrance, and then the investigators began moving up the hilly compound. The investigators and police later arrived in front of a metal gate with a gold presidential mark that's near Yoon's residential building. Some officers were seen entering a security door on the side of the metal gate, joined by one of Yoon's lawyers and his chief of staff. The presidential security service later removed a bus and other vehicles that had been parked tightly inside the gate as a barricade.

Despite a court warrant for Yoon's detention, the presidential security service had insisted it's obligated to protect the impeached president and fortified the compound with barbed wire and rows of buses blocking paths.

THE PREPARATIONS AND THE CONCERNS

South Korea's acting leader, Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, issued a statement early Wednesday urging law enforcement and the presidential security service to ensure there are no "physical

clashes."

Following Yoon's detainment, Choi met with diplomats from the Group of Seven nations, including the United States, Japan, Britain and Germany, as well as the representative of the European Union, to reassure them that the government was functioning stably.

Park Chan-dae, floor leader of the liberal opposition Democratic Party, which drove the legislative campaign that led to Yoon's impeachment on Dec. 14, said Yoon's detention is the "first step toward restoring constitutional order, democracy, and realizing the rule of law."

As investigators moved up the hillside compound, lawmakers from Yoon's People Power Party held a rally in nearby streets, decrying the efforts to detain him as unlawful.

The National Police Agency met with field commanders in Seoul and nearby Gyeonggi province in recent days to plan their detainment efforts, and the size of those forces fueled speculation that more than a thousand officers could be deployed. The agency and police had openly warned that presidential bodyguards obstructing the execution of the warrant could be arrested.

Yoon's lawyers have claimed that the detainment warrant issued by the Seoul Western District Court was invalid. They cited 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 claimed that the anti-corruption agency had no legal authority to investigate rebellion allegations.

"I am truly appalled to see illegalities upon illegalities being carried out and procedures being forcefully conducted under an invalid warrant," Yoon said in the video released before his detention. "I do not acknowledge the investigation by the Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials. As the president, who is responsible for upholding the constitution and legal system of the Republic of Korea, my decision to comply with such illegal and invalid procedures is not an acknowledgment of them, but rather a willingness to prevent unfortunate and bloody incidents."

Yoon's supporters and critics have held competing protests near the residence — one side vowing to protect him, the other calling for his imprisonment — while thousands of police officers in yellow jackets closely monitored the tense situation.

WHAT LED TO THIS

Yoon declared martial law and deployed troops around the National Assembly on Dec. 3. It lasted only hours before lawmakers managed to get through the blockade and vote to lift the measure. The opposition-led assembly voted to impeach him on rebellion charges Dec. 14.

The Constitutional Court held its first formal hearing in the impeachment case on Tuesday, but the session lasted less than five minutes because Yoon refused to attend. The next hearing is set for Thursday, and the court will then proceed with the trial whether or not Yoon is there.

The White House National Security Council issued a statement saying that the United States stands by its support for the Korean people and "our shared commitment to the rule of law." It said Washington remains committed to working with the government led by Seoul's acting leader, Choi, and reaffirms the strength of the countries' alliance. **MDT/AP**

MIDEAST

Hamas OKs draft agreement of a Gaza ceasefire and the release of some hostages, officials say

MAGDY & WAFAA SHURAF

HAMAS has accepted a draft agreement for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the release of dozens of hostages, two officials involved in the talks said earlier this week.

Mediators from the United States and Qatar said Israel and the Palestinian militant group were at the closest point yet to sealing a deal to bring them a step closer to ending 15 months of war.

The Associated Press obtained a copy of the proposed agreement, and an Egyptian official and a Hamas official confirmed its authenticity. An Israeli official said progress has been made, but the details are being finalized. All three officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the talks.

"I believe we will get a ceasefire," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said during a speech Tuesday, asserting it was up to Hamas. "It's right on the brink. It's closer than it's ever been before," and word could come within hours, or days.

The United States, Egypt and Qatar have spent the past year trying to mediate an end to the war and secure the release of dozens of hostages captured in Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack that triggered it. Nearly 100 people are still captive inside Gaza, and the military believes at least a third are dead.

Any deal is expected to pause the fighting and bring hopes for winding down the most deadly and destructive war Israel and Hamas have ever fought, a conflict that has destabilized the Middle East and sparked worldwide protests.

It would bring relief to the hard-hit Gaza Strip, where Israel's offensive has reduced large areas to rubble and displaced around 90% of the population of 2.3 million, many at risk of famine.

If a deal is reached, it would not go into effect immediately. The plan would need approval from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Security Cabinet and then his full Cabinet. Both



are dominated by Netanyahu allies and are likely to approve any proposal he presents.

Officials have expressed optimism before, only for negotiations to stall while the warring sides blamed each other. But they now suggest they can conclude an agreement ahead of the Jan. 20 inauguration of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, whose Mideast envoy has joined the negotiations.

Hamas said in a statement that negotiations had reached their "final stage."

In the Oct. 7 attack, Hamas-led militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted another 250. Around half those hostages were freed during a brief ceasefire in November 2023. Of those remaining, families say, two are children, 13 are women and 83 are men.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 46,000 Palestinians, more than half of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many of the dead were combatants.

Israeli airstrikes on two homes in central Gaza killed at least 17 Palestinians late Tuesday and wounded seven more, hospital officials said, adding that some of the corpses had been dismembered. Earlier strikes killed at least 18 people,

including two women and four children, according to local health officials, who said one woman was pregnant and the baby died as well.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military. Israel says it only targets militants and accuses them of hiding among civilians.

A three-phase agreement

The three-phase agreement — based on a framework laid out by U.S. President Joe Biden and endorsed by the U.N. Security Council — would begin with the release of 33 hostages over a six-week period, including women, children, older adults and wounded civilians in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian women and children imprisoned by Israel.

Among the 33 would be five female Israeli soldiers, each to be released in exchange for 50 Palestinian prisoners, including 30 militants who are serving life sentences.

The Israeli official said Israel assumes most of the 33 are alive.

During this 42-day phase, Israeli forces would withdraw from population centers, Palestinians could start returning to what remains of their homes in northern Gaza and there would be a surge of humanitarian aid, with some 600 trucks entering each day.

Details of the second phase still must be negotiated during the first. Those details remain difficult to resolve — and the deal does not include written guarantees that the ceasefire will continue until a deal is reached. That means Israel could resume its military campaign after the first phase ends.

The Israeli official said "detailed negotiations" on the second phase will begin during the first. He said Israel will retain some "assets" throughout negotiations, referring to a military presence, and would not leave the Gaza Strip until all hostages are home.

The three mediators have given Hamas verbal guarantees that negotiations will continue as planned and that they will press for a deal to implement the second and third phases before the end of the first, the Egyptian official said.

The deal would allow Israel throughout the first phase to remain in control of the Philadelphi corridor, the band of territory along Gaza's border with Egypt, which Hamas had initially demanded Israel withdraw from. Israel would withdraw from the Netzarim corridor, a belt across central Gaza where it had sought a mechanism for searching Palestinians for arms when they return to the territory's north. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2001: DR CONGO PRESIDENT KABILA SHOT



The President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Laurent Kabila, is reported to be fighting for his life after being shot and seriously wounded by one of his own bodyguards.

Eyewitnesses said they had heard gunfire for about an hour around the president's hilltop home in Kinshasa, known as the Marble Palace and usually heavily guarded by soldiers and a tank.

A source close to Mr Kabila said: "The president took two bullets, one in the back, another in the leg."

Later, a heavily guarded helicopter was seen landing at one of Kinshasa's main hospitals.

There are rumours that the president may already be dead, and further speculation that the shooting may be part of a coup attempt against the president.

Belgian Foreign Minister Louis Michel said Mr Kabila was apparently shot by a guard during a meeting with army generals whom he had dismissed.

"From three sources, I have [heard] that Kabila has most likely been shot to death," he said.

But Congo officials insisted the president was only wounded and survived the attack.

There has been growing discontent within the army for the last year. At least two factions — one led by Mr Kabila's son Joseph — are jostling for control, with no clear central authority in command.

DR Congo is also fighting a six-nation war in which the Kinshasa government, backed by Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia, is fighting a rebellion backed by Uganda and Rwanda.

The conflict has so far claimed more than a million lives.

The Chief of Staff, Eddy Kapend, has appeared on television to order troops to block the main airport serving Kinshasa and to close the river border with neighbouring Congo-Brazzaville.

He read out a message on state television urging citizens to be calm, but making no reference to the shooting.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

There was no government confirmation of Laurent Kabila's death until almost two days later. The president's son, Joseph Kabila, took over almost immediately. His appointment was initially unpopular, but within a year peace talks re-started and all sides agreed to a UN-monitored ceasefire. A transitional government took over in 2003, largely ending a civil war which had claimed 2.5 million lives. Eyewitness accounts of the shooting told how a bodyguard opened fire on the president during an argument. The bodyguard himself was reportedly shot dead. A government investigation concluded that the murder had been planned as part of an international plot to topple the president. A year after the shooting, 80 people were tried for plotting the murder. The trial was heavily criticised by human rights groups. It ended with the conviction of 26 of the defendants, including Army Chief of Staff Eddy Kapend. All were sentenced to death, with no right to appeal.

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Prioritize matters of the heart. Love feeds you. Share sweet nothing moments with someone dear. Savor delicious flavors, fragrances and beautiful views together.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20

Enjoy domestic pursuits. Clean your spaces. Cook something delicious and share it. Bees thrive around your hive. Fill your home with love and beauty.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21

Words come easier now. Consider emotions, feelings, visions and dreams. Capture them into your art. Write and sketch. Express your ideas and views.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Follow your intuition. New financial growth is available. Luck reveals a new revenue source. Take advantage of lucrative conditions. Grab an interesting opportunity.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22

A personal project can grow to new heights. Advance to discover open doors. Get spurred into action by great conditions. Shine your light.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Strategize and organize. Luck appreciates carefully laid plans. Anticipate tricky spots. Rest and let your subconscious remind you what's still needed. Relax with music.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Your friends are there for you. Make sure what you're building together is solid. Pull together for your community. Share gratitude and appreciation.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You're on a roll at work. Plans previously laid come into play; develop and expand. Take charge. Accept responsibility. Ask for help as needed.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Expand your frontiers through higher education or travel. Discover new views and ideas. Read, research and explore. Try new flavors, views and perspectives.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You could have more than you thought. Review resources. Discover unconsidered value. Study ways to increase shared account balances and implement growth strategies.

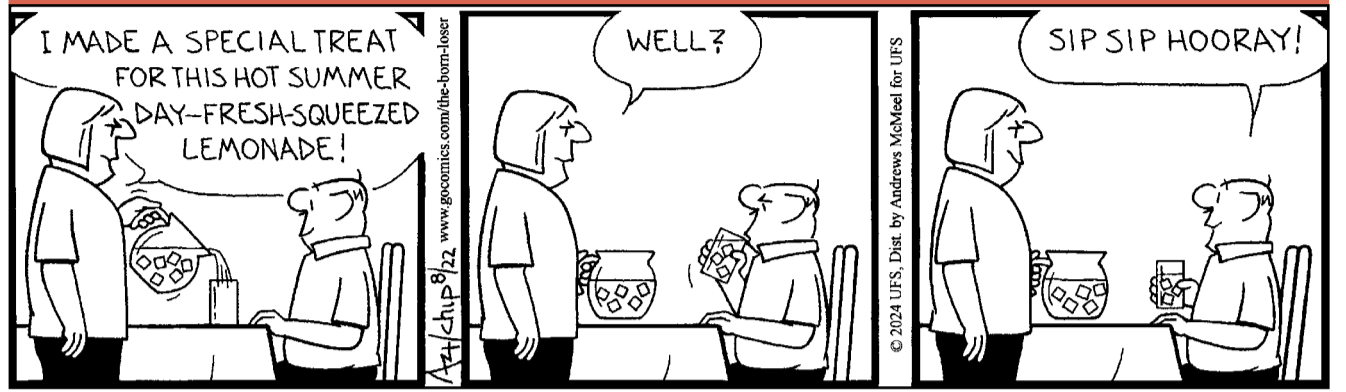
AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Discuss dreams, visions and crazy ideas with your partner. Encourage each other to develop promising options. Romance sparks in conversation. Create interesting possibilities.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20

The excellent work you've been doing reflects you well. Take a walk outside for fresh ideas. Visualize perfection. Practice technique. Get your heart pumping.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

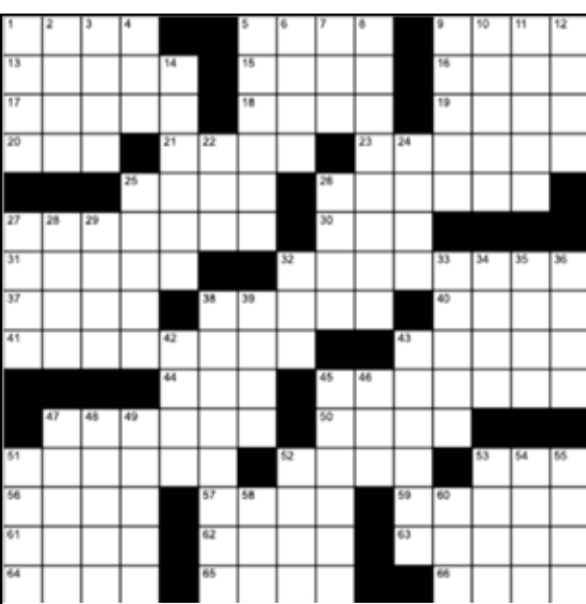
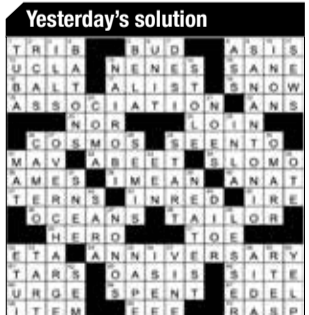
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-5	7	fine
Changchun	-19	-6	fine
Chengdu	5	12	overcast
Chongqing	7	13	cloudy
Fuzhou	5	15	fine
Guangzhou	8	19	fine
Guiyang	3	9	cloudy
Haikou	15	19	cloudy
Hangzhou	0	7	cloudy
Harbin	-18	-8	cloudy
Hefei	-5	10	fine
Nanjing	-4	9	fine
Shanghai	-1	6	fine
Taipei	11	14	overcast
Wuhan	-2	13	fine
Hong Kong	14	19	sunny
WORLD			
Moscow	-3	1	cloudy
Frankfurt	-2	4	cloudy
Paris	-1	6	cloudy
London	3	7	cloudy
New York	-3	1	snow

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Work without ___; 5- A Baldwin brother; 9- Sacramento's ___ Arena; 13- Brother of Moses; 15- Currency unit in Western Samoa; 16- Went through, as the paper; 17- Actress Taylor; 18- Treater's words; 19- Rim; 20- Legal add-on; 21- First class; 23- Killer; 25- Comedian Johnson; 26- Elevated; 27- Goals; 30- Noteworthy period; 31- Belle or Bart; 32- Abroad; 37- French friend; 38- Spicy sauce; 40- King of the Huns; 41- Apostate; 43- ___ a time (singly); 44- "Hold On Tight" band; 45- Books of maps; 47- Names; 50- Queens stadium; 51- Except if; 52- Between ports; 53- NL cap monogram; 56- Dirty; 57- Story; 59- Distinguishing characteristic; 61- List finish; 62- Lends a hand; 63- Broke off; 64- Some wines; 65- Dec. holiday; 66- Oceans;

DOWN 1- River in central Switzerland; 2- Scottish refusals; 3- Sea-going eagle; 4- Digit of the foot; 5- Does penance; 6- Highway division; 7- Shade tree; 8- Roman capital of Palestine; 9- Neighborhoods; 10- Color anew; 11- Behind bars; 12- River to the Baltic; 14- Closer; 22- Slugger Mel; 24- Make-up artist?; 25- Go along (with); 26- Guns; 27- Boris Godunov, for one; 28- Look ___, I'm Sandra Dee; 29- Parade spoiler; 32- Flamenco cheer; 33- Capital city of Yemen; 34- French summers; 35- Caesar's wings; 36- Poses; 38- Levy on deals?; 39- Hullabaloo; 42- Hair goops; 43- Soap ingredient; 45- Evaluate; 46- Common article; 47- Govt. security; 48- Troy story; 49- Informs; 51- Exploitative one; 52- Alan of "M*A*S*H"; 53- "Smooth Operator" singer; 54- ___ yellow ribbon...; 55- Old Fords; 58- Intention; 60- ICU workers;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



It's prime time to **BUY & RENT!**

CONTACT US & SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY!

hello@jmlproperty.com
www.jmlproperty.com

jmlmacau jmlproperty

Hoi Wan Retail (Taipa)
HKD 12,980,000

Tou Un (Taipa)
HKD 2,750,000 1 bed 1 bath

Jade Garden (Taipa)
HKD 11,880,000 4 bed 3 bath

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

NOVAK DJOKOVIC BREAKS A TIE WITH ROGER FEDERER FOR THE MOST GRAND SLAM MATCHES IN TENNIS HISTORY

HOWARD FENDRICH,
MELBOURNE

NOVAK Djokovic added yet another record to his lengthy list, breaking a tie with Roger Federer for the most Grand Slam matches played in tennis history by reaching 430 yesterday at the Australian Open in what was a tougher-than-expected second-round victory.

Djokovic improved to 379-51 for his career at major tournaments, a .881 winning percentage, by defeating 21-year-old Portuguese qualifier Jaime Faria 6-1, 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-2 in a match briefly interrupted by light rain before Rod Laver Arena's retractable roof was shut.

"Grand Slams, of course, they are the pillars of our sport. They mean everything for the history of the sport. ... Definitely the most important tournaments," Djokovic said. "I'm just blessed to be making another record, I guess, today."

Oh, yes, Djokovic already holds so many marks, many of which used to belong to Federer — who went 369-60 during his 429 Slam matches, a .860 winning percentage — and

AP PHOTO



Novak Djokovic of Serbia celebrates after defeating Jaime Faria of Portugal in their second round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, yesterday

there are more on the horizon. As it is, Djokovic has won the most Grand Slam singles titles of any man, 24, ahead of Rafael Nadal's 22 and Federer's 20 (those other two members of the Big Three are now retired). The 37-year-old Serb has spent more weeks at No. 1 in the

rankings than any other player. He's played in 37 Slam finals, six more than Federer's old record. And so on and so on.

Consider, too, what could possibly await for Djokovic.

A title at the end of the 15 days at Melbourne Park would be his 25th at a major, a num-

ber never reached by any man or woman. It would also be his 11th at the Australian Open, equaling Margaret Court for the most. It would make him the oldest man in the Open era — which began in 1968 — to collect a Grand Slam singles trophy (Ken Rosewall was

about six months younger when he won the 1972 Australian Open). And it would be Djokovic's 100th tour-level tournament title, a nice round number behind only Jimmy Connors' 109 and Federer's 103 in the Open era among men.

Not everything has gone perfectly this week in Australia for Djokovic in his first tournament working with former on-court rival Andy Murray as his coach.

Both of Djokovic's matches so far came against a young player making his Grand Slam debut. And both times, he was pushed to four sets.

In the first round, it was against Nishesh Basavareddy, a 19-year-old American who turned pro only last month and is ranked 107th. In the second, it was Faria, who is ranked 125th, giving him a bit of a hard time, especially during a four-game run in the second set.

"He was playing lights-out tennis. ... I had to weather the storm," Djokovic said. "I think I responded very well in the third and, particularly fourth, (sets)." **MDT/AP**

AD

New Rugby Season

Saturdays, 9-11am, Taipa Stadium

BOYS AND GIRLS, AGES 6 – 18

- Team working
- Co-operation
- Fitness and FUN

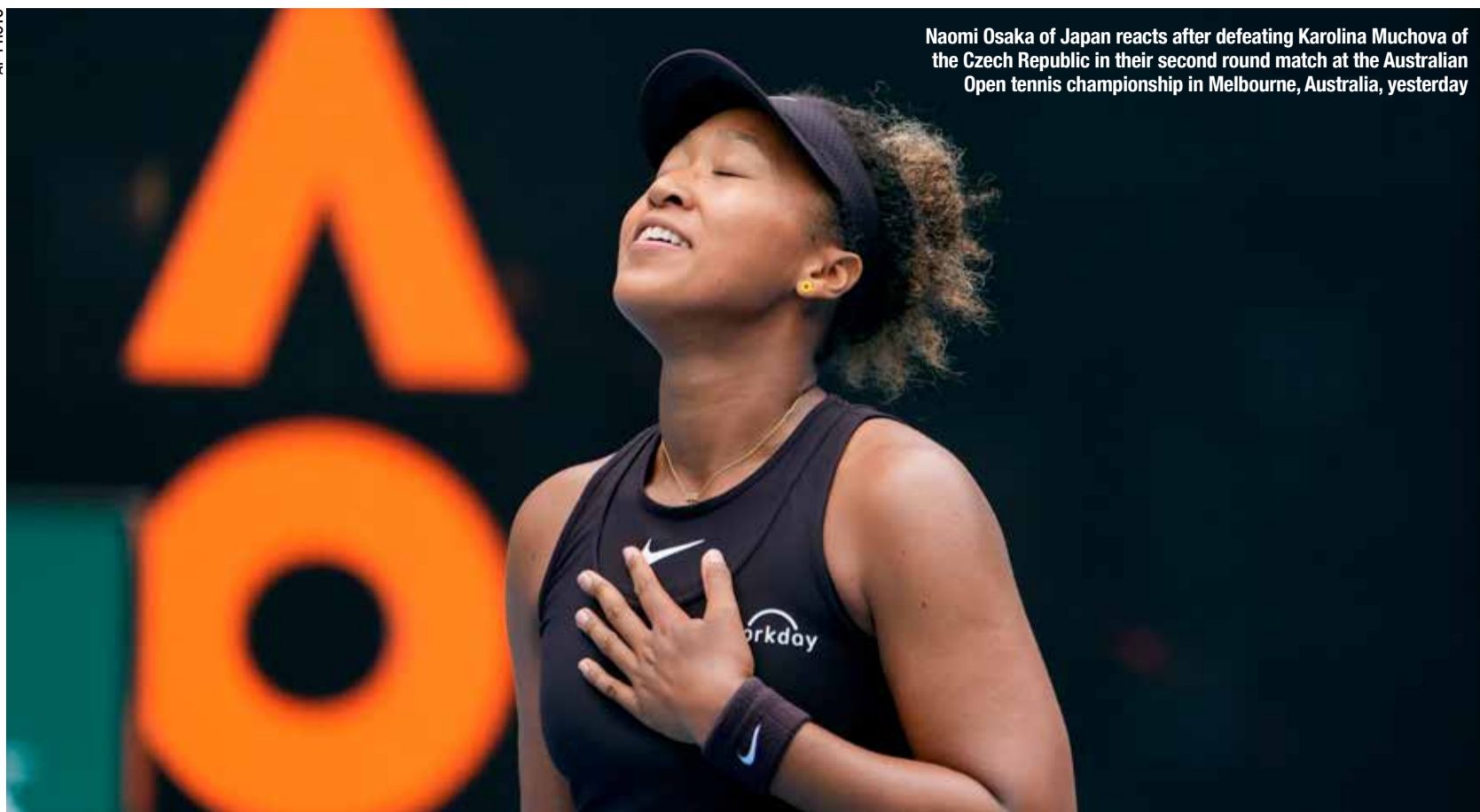


SIGN UP NOW!!



**MAGAU
BATS
RUGBY**

AP PHOTO



Naomi Osaka of Japan reacts after defeating Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic in their second round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, yesterday

3-6, 7-6 (8), and No. 30 Leylah Fernandez, the 2021 U.S. Open finalist.

Siegemund has never been past the third round in Australia, but is taking confidence from her big upset.

"I knew I just had to play more than my best tennis," Siegemund said. "I had nothing to lose. I just told myself to swing free." Novak Djokovic, seeking a record 25th Grand Slam title, added yet another record to his list with his 6-1, 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-2 win over Jaime Faria on Wednesday afternoon.

It was his 430th Grand Slam singles match, the most in tennis history, breaking a tie with Roger Federer.

"It's been over 20 years that I've been competing in the Grand Slam at the highest level," he told the crowd at Rod Laver Arena. "Whether I win or lose, one thing is for sure: I always leave my heart out on the court."

Third-seeded Carlos Alcaraz, aiming to add the Australian Open title to complete a set of all four major crowns, advanced 6-0, 6-1, 6-4 victory over Yoshihito Nishioka. **MDT/AP**

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Naomi Osaka advances, returning to the third round

NAOMI Osaka thought for a few moments after losing a lopsided first set yesterday, and it gave her the perspective she needed to turn things around and reach the third round of a Grand Slam tournament for the first time since 2022.

"I just told myself ... if she beats me 6-1, 6-1, then she's the greatest player ever," Osaka recalled after her 1-6, 6-1, 6-3 second-round win at the Australian Open over No. 20 Karolina Muchova. "Yeah, I just tried to tell myself to fight."

That she did, the four-time major winner matching the power that last year's U.S. Open semi-finalist brought to their contest on Kia Arena and finding ways to beat her.

"The score in the first set was very dramatic, but there was key points that I could have maybe won a game here or there. So I kept trying to tell myself that," Osaka said. "Yeah, just try not to live in the past."

Reflecting on the past doesn't always hurt, though. It was a second-round loss to Muchova at the U.S. Open last year

served as motivation. "She crushed me in the U.S. Open when I had my best outfit ever," Osaka joked in a post-match interview. "I was so disappointed. I was so mad. This was my little revenge."

Osaka lost in the first round at Melbourne Park last year to Caroline Garcia in Osaka's comeback from maternity leave, but she avenged that with a first-round victory over Garcia earlier this week.

The two-time Australian Open champion next faces Belinda Bencic, the Tokyo Olympic gold medalist who is playing in her first major since the birth of her daughter, Bella, last year.

Both of last year's women's finalists were playing at the same time Wednesday afternoon.

Sabalenka, the two-time defending champion, extended her run to 16 wins at Melbourne Park by winning the last five games to beat No. 54-ranked Jessica Bouzas Maneiro 6-3, 7-5 on Rod Laver Arena.

No. 5 Zheng Qinwen, distracted by a time penalty and unable to counteract No. 97-ranked Laura Siegemund's aggressive approach, lost 7-6 (3),

6-3 on John Cain Arena. Zheng lost the 2024 decider at Melbourne Park to Sabalenka and went on to win the Olympic gold medal in Paris and finish runner-up at the WTA Finals in a breakout season.

But her first tournament of the year ended much earlier against 36-year-old Siegemund, who attacked from the first point and put Zheng off her game.

Zheng needed a change of shoes early in the second set, got a time warning on her serve from the chair umpire — she said she couldn't clearly see the clock — and was worried about some minor issues which sidelined her before the Australian Open.

"I feel maybe today is not my day. There's a lot of details in the important points. I didn't do the right choice," Zheng said.

Of a weak serve that bounced before the net, Zheng said the time warning from the umpire "obviously that one really distracted me from the match."

"This is my fourth year in the tour, and never happen that to me."

Also advancing were

No. 7 Jessica Pegula, who had a 6-4, 6-2 win over Elise Mertens, 17-year-

-old Mirra Andrejeva, the No. 14 seed who beat Moyuka Uchijima 6-4,



BENFICAMACAU ACADEMY
澳門賓菲加體育學校



FOOTBALL | BASKETBALL | DAILY TRAININGS

OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

THREE PARTIES NEED TO SHOW SHARED WISDOM

Addressing the Boao Forum for Asia New Year Outlook event for 2025 on Jan 8, Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Sun Weidong reiterated Beijing's view that to maintain peace and stability in Asia and promote its economic development requires countries in the region to pool their wisdom, and make joint contributions and concerted efforts to make it a better common home.

The virtual meeting of United States President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr that was held on Monday morning Asian time showed the necessity for such remarks.

According to a readout issued by the White House after their talks, the three leaders discussed trilateral maritime security and economic cooperation, as well as China's "dangerous and unlawful behavior in the South China Sea" and they agreed on the importance of "continued coordination to advance a free and open 'Indo-Pacific'".

The outgoing US president made clear the intention behind the meeting when he said, "Simply put, our countries have an interest in continuing this partnership and institutionalizing our cooperation across our governments so that it is built to last. I'm optimistic that my successor will also see the value of continuing this partnership, and that it is framed the right way," President Biden said. So basically it was a call for his successor to continue to orchestrate "provocations" of China in the South China Sea.

Indeed, apart from agreeing to further deepen their trilateral economic, maritime and technology cooperation, the three leaders also discussed what they alleged to be China's "dangerous and unlawful behavior in the South China Sea", and to work together to uphold international law in the waters.

There is nothing more hypocritical and absurd than this: Out of their own strategic calculations, the three countries have been making malicious accusations concerning China's strengthened law enforcement in its territorial waters; actions that have been necessitated by the provocative moves of the Philippines, which has been emboldened by the support of the US and Japan to gravely infringe upon China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea.

If the US wants to talk about dangerous and unlawful behavior in the South China Sea, it should first start with the Philippines and then look in the mirror. When it comes to "aggressive and coercive activities", it is the US that has militarized the waters and is encouraging its two regional allies to beef up their military posture targeting China.

China's law enforcement activities in relevant waters are lawful, justified and beyond reproach, as China's sovereignty and rights in the South China Sea are solidly grounded in history and international law. The territory of the Philippines is defined by a series of international treaties, and so defined it does not include Huangyan Island and the Nansha Islands.

The US, Japan and the Philippines are peddling a false, misleading narrative that portrays China as a bully and the Philippines as a victim bravely standing up to it. This narrative has been fabricated by the US as a means to whitewash its formidable military deployment in the region and to encourage its allies, both regional and extra-regional, to employ their military assets alongside it to contain China.

Sensing an opportunity to cement its land grab, the Philippines has foolishly allowed itself to be used as a bridgehead for the US "Indo-Pacific" strategy. [Abridged]

BRITISH AUTHOR NEIL GAIMAN DENIES EVER ENGAGING IN NON-CONSENSUAL SEX AS MORE ACCUSERS COME FORWARD

THE BUZZ

Best-selling British author Neil Gaiman released a statement yesterday denying he had ever engaged in non-consensual sex after a magazine this week published allegations from several women, accusing him of sexual assault.

The 64-year-old author of "The Sandman" comic book series and novel "American Gods" was responding to a New York Magazine article that detailed allegations of assault, abuse and coercion leveled by eight women. The allegations of four of them had been broadcast in July in a Tortoise Media podcast.

Gaiman said he had watched stories about him circulate on the Internet for months with "horror and dismay."

"As I read through this latest collection of accounts, there are moments I half-recognize and moments I don't, descriptions of things that happened sitting beside things that emphatically did not happen. I'm far from a perfect person, but I have never engaged in non-consensual sexual activity with anyone. Ever." Gaiman posted on the social media platform Tumblr.

Gaiman said he had read back message exchanges he had had with his accusers.



AP PHOTO

HAITI HAS ONE MILLION DISPLACED PEOPLE, MOSTLY FROM GANG VIOLENCE

THE U.N. migration agency says internal displacement in Haiti, largely caused by gang violence, has tripled over the last year and now surpasses 1 million people — a record in the Caribbean nation.

The International Organization for Migration reported earlier this week that "relentless gang violence" in the capital, Port-au-Prince, has fueled a near-doubling of displacement there and a collapse of health care and other services, and worsening food insecurity. Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world.

"The latest data reveals that 1,041,000 people, many displaced multiple times, are struggling amidst an intensifying humanitarian crisis," the Geneva-based agency said in a statement. Children make up more than half of the displaced population.

The figure marks a three-fold increase in displacement from the 315,000 in December 2023, IOM said.

Agency spokesman Kennedy Okoth told a U.N. briefing in Geneva that the forced return of around 200,000 people — mostly from neighboring Dominican Republic — to Haiti over the last year had worsened the crisis.

The two countries share the Caribbean island of Hispaniola.

Okoth said that the number of displacement sites in Port-au-Prince has risen from 73 to 108 over the last year.

The outgoing administration of U.S. President Joe Biden has strongly supported and expanded a temporary status program, which allows some foreign nationals from countries like El Salvador, Haiti and Venezuela to remain in the U.S.

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump and his running mate, JD Vance, have suggested that they would scale back the use of the program and policies that grant temporary status, as they pursue mass deportations. U.S. federal regulations would allow the extensions to be terminated early, although that's never been done before.

Asked whether IOM had any concerns about possible changes to such U.S. protections, Okoth declined to comment about any specific country.

But he said that "deportation or any forced returns to countries that are already facing mounting security and humanitarian challenges is not something that is going to be beneficial to the group."

As Haiti continues to struggle with a surge in gang violence, the government on Tuesday swore in Mario Andrésol as the new state secretary of public security.

Andrésol, who served as director of Haiti's National Police nearly 20 years ago, pledged to crack down on gangs and crime including weapons and drug trafficking.

"We have to think and rethink strategies to fight crime," he said at a news conference where he held a moment of silence for victims of violence. "Everyone needs to collaborate."

Joining Andrésol was Haitian Prime Minister Alix Fils-Aimé, who said he was taking responsibility for placing "the right people in the right job" to protect Haitians and provide security.

"The Haitian people deserve to live in peace," he said, adding that the country faced multiple challenges. "If we work nonstop, that can be changed."

Last week, the U.N. Human Rights Office noted that more than 5,600 people were reported killed in Haiti last year, a more than 20% increase compared with the previous year. In addition, more than 2,200 people were reported injured and nearly 1,500 kidnapped. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

Mexico Schools and some businesses were closed and few people walked the streets of this town south of Mexico's capital yesterday, hours after five people were gunned down on the same street where another attack left eight dead just eight months earlier. Huitzilac is at the center of a restive area in Morelos state with competing criminal organizations and illegal logging.



AP PHOTO

UK The Princess of Wales said that her cancer is in remission after she spent the day supporting other cancer patients at the hospital where she received treatment. In a statement on social media, she offered her thanks to everyone who helped her and her husband, Prince William, as they navigated the ups and downs of treatment and recovery.



AP PHOTO

Argentinian President Javier Milei (pictured) has been awarded Israel's prestigious 2025 Genesis Prize in recognition of his support of Israel, organizers announced. During his year in office, Milei has announced he will move the embassy to Jerusalem, joining a small group of countries that recognize the contested city as Israel's capital.



AP PHOTO

South Africa Months after authorities initially cut off supplies to miners working illegally in an abandoned gold mine, rescuers brought dozens of bodies and emaciated survivors to the surface earlier this week with hundreds more still believed to be underground, many of them dead and others too weak to come out on their own.