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



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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

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THE DIGITIZATION OF MEDICAL RECORDS DOES NOT REACH EVERYONE, NON-RESIDENTS FACE MANY OBSTACLES TO ACCESSING THEIR DATA, REPORTS THE TIMES

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HEALTH BUREAU URGES VIGILANCE AS CONTAGIOUS DISEASES SURGE

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SURGE IN GARBAGE COLLECTION AS RESIDENTS PREPARE FOR CNY

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AP PHOTO



United States A California woman was sentenced to 41 months in prison yesterday [Macau time] for aiding pregnant Chinese women to deliver babies in the U.S. through a "birth tourism" business. The scheme ensured American citizenship for their children, violating immigration laws.

AP PHOTO



Colombia U.S. visa appointments in Colombia were canceled yesterday [Macau time] following a deportation flights dispute. Colombia later accepted deportees to de-escalate tensions, avoiding U.S. tariffs on exports as threatened by President Trump during the diplomatic standoff.

AP PHOTO



Canada On Monday, Canadian PM hopeful Chrystia Freeland proposed a \$200 billion retaliation list targeting U.S. industries if President Trump imposes tariffs on Canadian goods. She vowed to protect Canadian sovereignty and stressed proportional responses to any U.S. economic coercion.

AP PHOTO



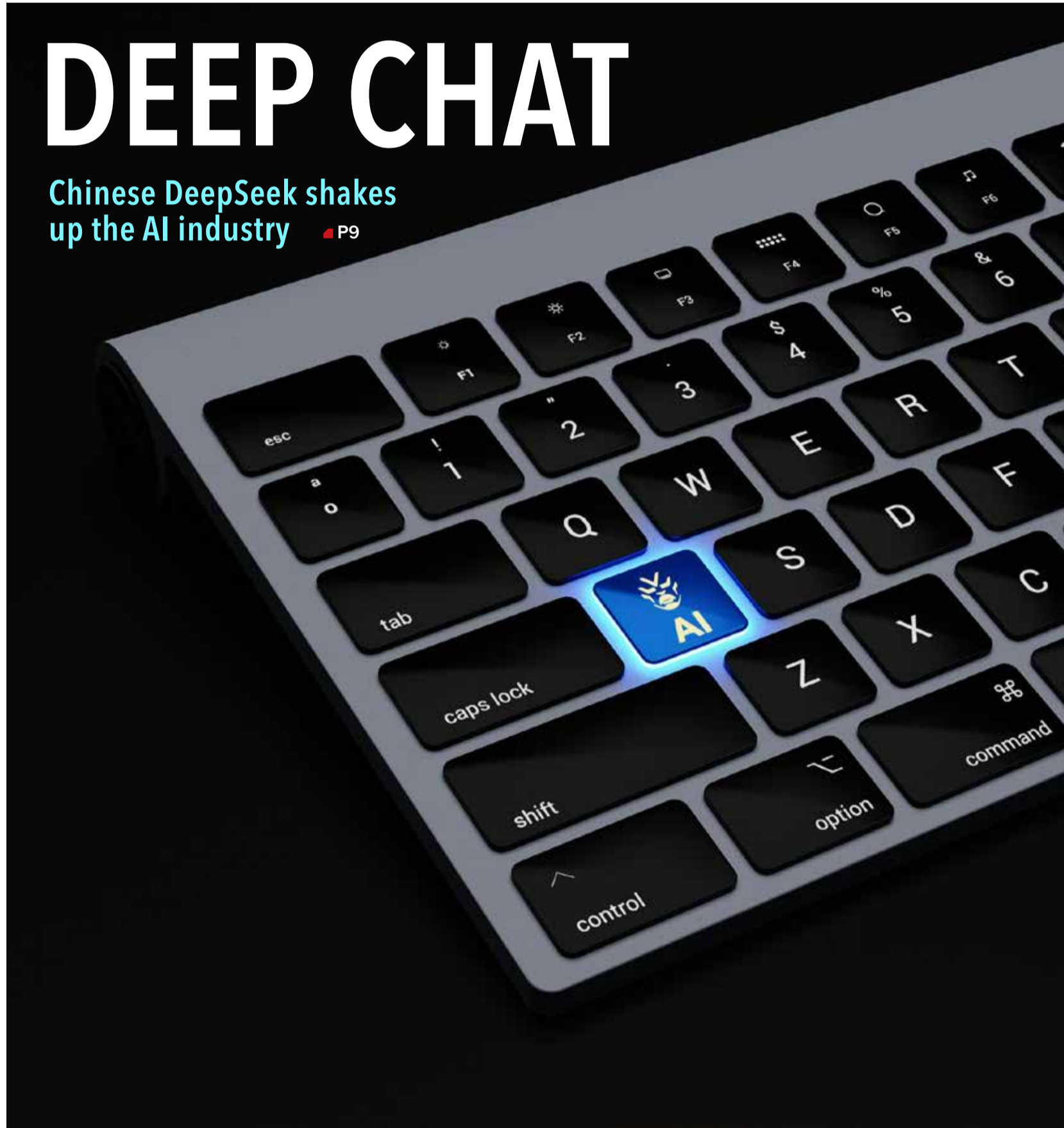
UAE Dubai residents raised concerns over housing prices and worsening traffic due to rapid urban growth. Amid population surges, officials unveiled infrastructure expansion plans, including Metro extensions, pedestrian paths, and flying taxis set for next year.

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UM'S 'ICY FIRE' WINS GOLD AT SHENZHEN LIGHT FESTIVAL

The digital ink generative video art installation "Icy Fire," created by Lampo Leong and doctoral student Yanxiu Zhao from the University of Macau, has won a gold award at Glow Shenzhen 2024, a prestigious light art festival held in Shenzhen. Measuring 7.5 by 4 by 4.8 meters, "Icy Fire" employs high-definition LED panels and mirrored surfaces to illustrate melting glaciers through ink splashes and geometric abstraction. The installation, on display at Shum Yip Upperhills until February 16, 2025, combines sound and light, captivating audiences with its innovative take on Chinese ink art.

EXCESSIVE CHLORATES FOUND IN COCA-COLA PRODUCTS

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) reported that several drinks produced by Coca-Cola Company of Belgium and Luxembourg contain excessive chlorates. Coca-Cola Macau clarified that it does not represent the affected batch and has issued an early warning to the food industry. A market inspection is underway to prevent these products from circulating. The 35 affected products belong to eight brands, including Minute Maid, Fanta, and Sprite. Chlorates, which come from chlorine disinfectants, can disrupt iodine absorption, posing health risks, particularly for children.

70-YEAR-OLD MAN SUSPECTED OF SCRUB TYPHUS INFECTION

A 70-year-old Macau man is suspected of being infected with scrub typhus, marking the first suspected case of 2025. The patient developed symptoms, including high fever, chills, and dizziness, on January 21. The following day, he sought treatment at the public hospital, where he was hospitalized. Physical examination revealed painless eschars on his left shoulder and neck. Based on these signs and clinical treatment, scrub typhus was suspected. The patient had recent exposure to rats, though his family members remain symptom-free.

HEALTH

SSM SAYS IT IS IMPROVING THE EHR SYSTEM, BUT HASSLES CONTINUE FOR NON-RESIDENTS

RENATO MARQUES

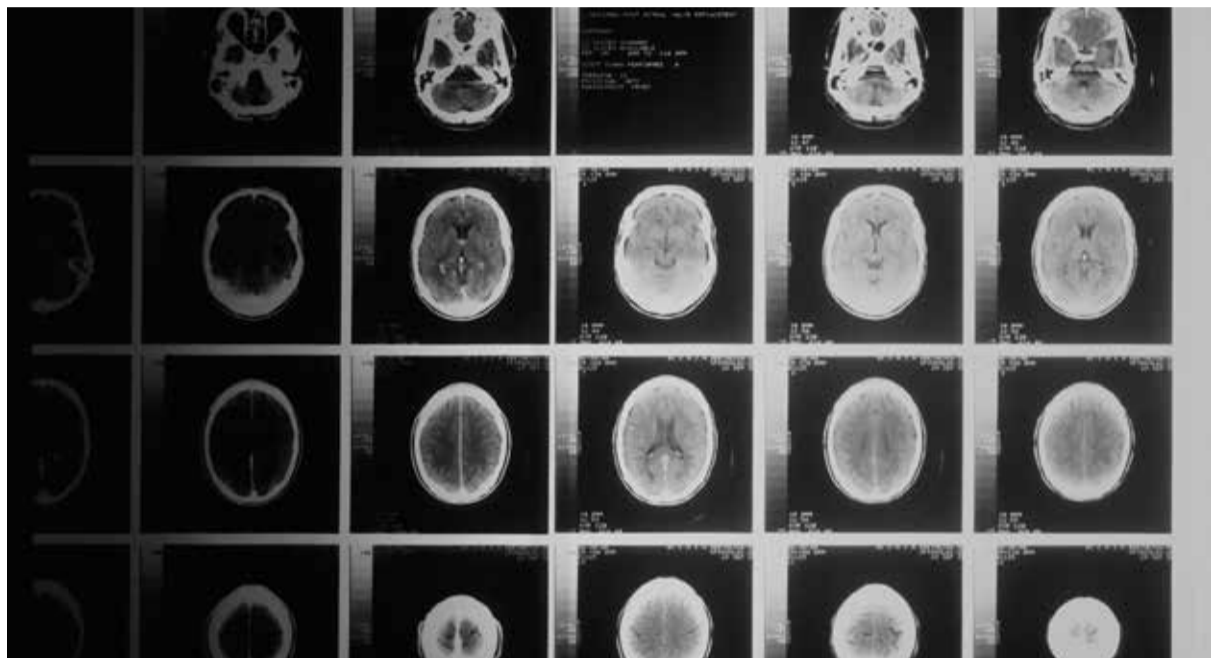
THE Health Bureau (SSM) claims to constantly improve its "Electronic Health Record Platform (eHR)." However, the Times learned that the digitization of medical records and diagnostic tests does not reach everyone, and non-residents face many obstacles in accessing their data.

According to information provided to the Times by the SSM, residents can access all their medical histories through the eHR platform via the "My Health" section of their Macao One Account.

The platform provides digital access to X-rays, blood tests, and other features, such as verifying the dates of previous doctor appointments, prescribed medications, and vaccination records. It facilitates access to and sharing of this information among different medical professionals and services. Still, this system does not include medical reports.

SSM explained to the Times that "[users] can request a medical report for personal reasons online or in person, and its issuance is subject to payment of the relevant administrative fees under the law."

The SSM also remarked, "As doctors need time to write medical reports, the average processing time is around 25 working days. In the case of an urgent request, [users] can indicate the reason on the application form so that the doctors can arrange processing accordingly without



having to pay any additional fee."

Although the long wait for this kind of information to be processed can be a significant hassle for those residing in Macau, it can also pose a serious obstacle for those who are forced to use local medical services due to health issues or accidents during a short stay.

The Times also learned that this system does not apply to people who are not residents of Macau, namely non-resident workers (TNR), who, like visitors, face numerous challenges and expenses in retrieving their information from the SSM.

Health service users who want to retrieve imaging tests such as X-rays and magnetic resonance imaging

are expected to encounter additional hassles.

In this case, users are requested to apply for copies from the respective service, which can only provide this data via CD-ROM or microfilm.

When questioned about the matter, the SSM responded, "In the case of requests for CD-ROMs or films, these must be produced by the Imaging Service, and the corresponding fee will be charged according to the law, with priority given to urgent cases. Since CD-ROMs are more compatible, can be used with most medical imaging software, and offer advantages such as data security, antivirus protection, ease of transportation, and lower costs, residents are encouraged to choose

this format."

According to a Times investigation, each CD-ROM costs MOP100, while each microfilm page costs MOP180.

The Times has also questioned the Office of the Secretary for Administration and Justice about progress in e-government and whether any measures are anticipated to be implemented in the health sector. "Big Health" and "Medical Tourism" are priorities on the government's agenda, especially following the establishment of Macao Union Hospital.

However, since the Office forwarded all the questions to the SSM for response, this and other inquiries remain unanswered.

HOUSING

2,166 residential units were built in 2024

THE Land and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU) disclosed in a statistics release that 55 residential developments were under construction and were completed at the end of 2024. According to the same release, four developments obtained usage licenses, providing 97 housing units. The other



51 were still under construction or had been completed but were undergoing final inspections before being issued the usage licenses.

In total, these 51 developments were said to be able to provide 2,069 new residential units. Additionally, the DSSCU received 79 other projects for new developments that could provide 5,192 additional residential units. According to DSSCU data, the 55 housing developments will also feature 1,066 new light

vehicle parking spaces and 330 motorcycle parking spots, while the upcoming development projects include 2,956 car parks and 850 motorcycle parking spots. The DSSCU also noted that of all the projects submitted in 2024, approximately 25% (107 units) have already commenced construction. **RM**

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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

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

歲朝圖

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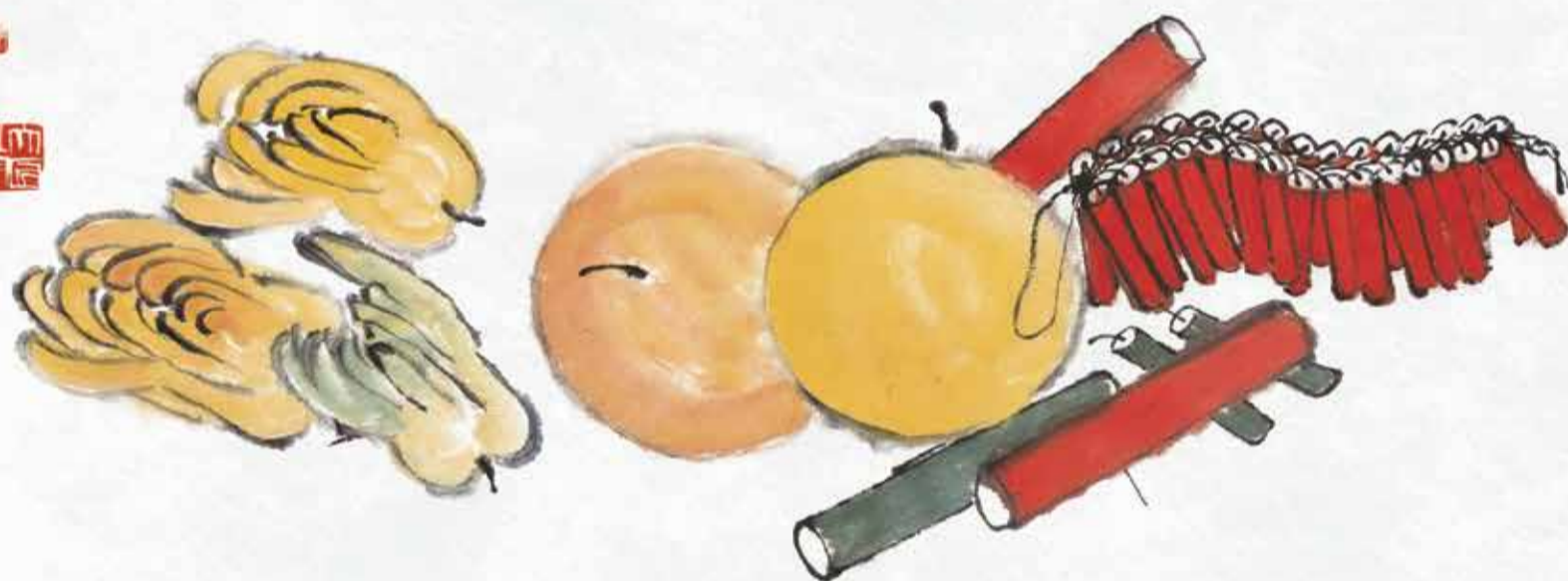
齊白石



永利 Wynn



*Wishing You a
Joyous and Prosperous
Chinese New Year*



蓮開並蒂
Lotus Blossoms in Pairs

梅結同心
Plum Blossoms in Clusters

齊白石的藝術世界
The Artistic World Of Qi Baishi
Exhibition at Wynn Palace. Free Admission

A Season of Beauty, a Warm Welcome to the New Year.

As spring arrives, we are inspired by the timeless works of renowned Chinese artist Qi Baishi, whose vibrant depictions of red lanterns, Buddha's hand citrons, tangerines, and firecrackers capture the festive spirit of the season. Symbolizing "blessings and longevity," the Buddha's hand citron heralds an auspicious start to the New Year. May this year bring you health, happiness, and endless good fortune!

Inspired by the works of Qi Baishi in the collection of the Beijing Fine Art Academy.



TOURISM

LAWMAKER RON LAM ADVOCATES FOR QUICKER TRAINING AND INCENTIVES FOR TOURIST GUIDES

RENATO MARQUES

LAWMAKER Ron Lam wants the authorities to expedite the training process for tourist guides and increase incentive packages to facilitate the development of the tourism industry.

His opinions were expressed in an inquiry recently submitted to the government through the Legislative Assembly.

According to Lam, "As of January 2025, there were 1,824 holders of Tourist Guide Licenses issued by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), with some of these guides registered as being able to speak more than one language," he wrote. He added that information provided by MGTO mid-year last year indicated that those registered for such a job could offer services



in Cantonese (785), Mandarin (1,189), English (156), Japanese (78), Korean (28), and Thai (22), with the number of guides able to provide tours in other languages being fewer

than 10.

The lawmaker noted that, according to visitor statistics for 2024, there is significant demand for tour guides, particularly due to increases in visitors from South Korea and India in tour groups. This, he said, supports his claim that there is a need for more and better-trained guides in Macau.

He remarked that, for now, only one of the Macao University of Tourism's (UTM) training courses for this job is available, and it takes over one year to complete.

Citing feedback from applicants, Lam said that the courses are "excessively long and not suitable for the job," suggesting that these courses have kept people "occupied" and off unemployment lists for some time before they quit

and pursue other jobs.

The lawmaker complained that the course modules are very spread out, with significant time gaps, making it difficult for enrollees to complete the program logically and efficiently.

He urged the government to make proper adjustments to the courses, which, he said, have a total duration of just 135 hours but take over one year to complete.

He also called for the reduction of bureaucratic hurdles to accelerate the process and allow residents to obtain their licenses faster so they can begin working.

The lawmaker further noted that the availability of language proficiency examinations is minimal and does not align with policies targeting international visitors.

Coutinho calls for action amid 'alarming' rise in pests

VICTORIA CHAN

FOLLOWING a video that surfaced earlier this month showing a rat wandering around refrigerated food in a local supermarket, lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho has formally urged government authorities to address the increasing pest populations, particularly rats and cockroaches.

The video, which quickly gained traction on social media, prompted an inspection by the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), resulting in the temporary closure of three supermarkets. Coutinho's recent written inquiry reflects growing public concern, as numerous residents report an "alarming increase" in infestations of cockroaches, flies, and rats.

Coutinho emphasized that these infestations pose not only discomfort but also serious public health risks. "These vectors can transmit diseases such as leptospirosis, dengue, and Zika, in addition to causing various types of allergies," he stated. He called for the implementation of "more effective and sustainable measures" to combat these pests and safeguard the community's health.

Highlighting a previous request made 18 months ago, Coutinho expressed frustration over the lack of significant progress. He noted that food safety and public health in Macau remain at risk, underscoring the ur-



gent need for continuous monitoring and robust preventive actions. These measures should include not just the placement of traps but also community awareness campaigns focused on proper waste management and hygiene practices in commercial establishments.

In his inquiry to the government, Coutinho requested a detailed report from the government on the actions taken to exterminate rats since October 2023, specifically regarding sanitation networks. He also inquired about the results of these control efforts and suggested community-based extermination campaigns to address the growing complaints about rodents in public spaces.

In response to the recent outcry, the IAM announced an increase in rat traps on the streets, boosting the total from 200 to 1,400 and indicating a commitment to utilizing technological solutions to tackle the pest problem.

SSM URGES VIGILANCE AS COMMUNICABLE DISEASES SURGE

VICTORIA CHAN

THE Health Bureau (SSM) has reported a notable surge in cases of communicable diseases, with a total of 1,198 notifiable disease cases recorded in December last year. The rise highlights the ongoing need for vigilant monitoring and public awareness.

The three disease groups with the highest case counts were influenza, norovirus infection, and chickenpox.

Influenza cases saw a 3.8-fold increase from the previous month, with 732 cases reported in December 2024. However, this represented a 59.2% decrease compared to the same period in 2023.

Influenza is especially contagious during winter and spring, primarily transmitted through respiratory droplets. Symptoms include fever, cough, and muscle aches, with



serious complications possible for vulnerable populations.

Norovirus infections saw a dramatic rise, with 176 cases reported in December compared to only 14 in the same month last year. This represents a staggering increase of approximately 3.5 times from November.

Norovirus, a leading cause of gastroenteritis, spreads through contaminated food, water, and surfaces, affecting all age groups, particularly in communal settings like schools and nursing homes.

Additionally, the SSM recorded 89 ca-

ses of chickenpox, an increase of 2.4 times from the previous year and a 34.8% rise from November.

This highly contagious disease primarily affects children aged 5 to 10 and is transmitted through direct contact and respiratory droplets. Vaccination is recommended to prevent outbreaks.

In light of these trends, the SSM continues to emphasize the importance of disease prevention and control, urging the public to adhere to health guidelines and consider vaccination.

"In order to con-

tinue monitoring the epidemiological trends of communicable diseases in Macau and formulate appropriate prevention and control measures, the SSM requires that medical institutions and healthcare providers report cases of communicable diseases within the legal time limit," the bureau stated in a press release.

The SSM periodically analyzes the reported data and releases monitoring information to the public, aiming to raise awareness of disease prevention and promote sound health management.

SANDS CHINA LTD. WISHES YOU

A HAPPY CHINESE NEW YEAR

FILLED WITH HOPE, JOY AND GOOD HEALTH



CE reaffirms support for Macanese community development

VICTORIA CHAN

CHIEF Executive Sam Hou Fai emphasized the government's commitment to supporting the Macanese community during a reception earlier this week. He highlighted their vital contributions across various sectors, including education, social services, and culture.

In his address, Sam underscored the importance of the Macanese community in enhancing Macau's position as a bridge between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. He stated that the community's participation is essential for the city's ongoing development, particularly as it navigates economic diversification and social inclusion.

"Today's Macau enjoys social stability and sound economic momentum," Sam said, attributing this progress to the efforts and contributions of the local community. He recognized the Macanese community's integral role in fostering a multicultural society where residents can thrive.

The Chief Executive also referen-

ced President Xi Jinping's recent visit to Macau, during which the president acknowledged the community's contributions to the region's prosperity. Sam reiterated Xi's call for continued collaborative efforts to elevate Macau's development.

Macau has seen a robust economic recovery, with celebratory events marking its achievements over recent years. Notably, over 1,000 members of the Macanese diaspora returned for the 8th Macanese Community Gathering in December, showcasing the community's unique attributes.

Looking ahead, Sam outlined the sixth-term government's administrative philosophy of "Striving Together, Upholding Integrity and Innovation." He emphasized the need for a collective approach to realize visions for a "Law-based Macau," a "Vibrant Macau," a "Cultural Macau," and a "Blissful Macau."

The Chief Executive expressed his willingness to collaborate with the Macanese community to safeguard and enhance Macau's legacy, ensuring a prosperous future for generations to come.

CSR SEES SURGE IN GARBAGE COLLECTION AS RESIDENTS PREPARE FOR LUNAR NEW YEAR

STAFF REPORTER

THE annual tradition of spring cleaning ahead of the Lunar New Year has led to a sharp rise in garbage collection.

According to CSR Macau, over the past three days, the volume of household and commercial waste in Macau surged by 30%, with large-scale waste, particularly furniture, doubling from 20 tons to nearly 40 tons per day.

On New Year's Eve last night, it was estimated that the total amount of garbage collected would reach 1,200 tons.

To maintain hygiene during the festivities, the Municipal Affairs Bureau has set up 136 bulky garbage collection stations across the city, operating from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. yesterday. These stations facilitate the disposal of cleaning waste and furniture by residents.



Hong Cheung Fai, general manager of CSR Macau, noted a consistent year-end increase in waste, with daily household and commercial garbage typically exceeding 800 tons, as cited in a Macao Daily News report.

The rise is attributed to residents preparing homes and businesses for the New Year, coupled with a noticeable uptick in visitors from the mainland as businesses there begin their holidays.

In response, cleaning companies have increased garbage collection frequencies, deploying up to 70 garbage trucks daily compared to the usual 40.

Meanwhile, incidents of garbage fires have significantly declined, dropping from three or four cases per day in previous years to only two over several days. Hong credited greater public awareness for the improvement and urged residents to ensure all ashes are fully extinguished before disposal.

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in the Year of the Snake

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SPRING FESTIVAL

Sam Hou Fai embraces the New Year with optimism and commitment

VICTORIA CHAN

SAM Hou Fai, Chief Executive of Macau, delivered a heartfelt New Year's message on the eve of the Year of the Snake, emphasizing unity and prosperity for the region. In a speech to residents and friends, Hou expressed his wishes for health, happiness, and good fortune in the coming year.

"As we welcome the Year of the Snake, we are ready to embrace our blessings," he said, underscoring the importance of collective efforts in shaping Macau's future. Reflecting on the past year, he acknowledged the gradual economic recovery and the cooperation among different sectors that contributed to stability and harmony in the community.

"One can tell the inner of an object by observing its outer; likewise, having observed the past, we can predict the future," Sam remarked, emphasizing



the achievements of 2024 while looking forward to the challenges and uncertainties ahead. He highlighted the need for innovative thinking and adaptability as Macau navigates a rapidly changing global landscape.

In his address, Sam outlined key goals for the new government term, including enhancing governance capabilities, promoting economic diversification, and building a harmonious society. He urged residents to join hands

in contributing their wisdom and strength to Macau's development.

"As the New Year bell rings, I wish our motherland auspiciousness and prosperity, and I wish Macau stability and harmony," Sam concluded, calling for solidarity among all sectors of society as they embark on a new chapter in the Year of the Snake.

Yesterday, Sam and his wife visited the Lunar New Year Fair at Tap Seac Square and the fire-

crackers and fireworks zones in Macau and Taipa to celebrate the coming Year of the Snake alongside the community in a festive atmosphere.

The Lunar New Year Fair was alive with celebration, featuring numerous stalls selling flowers, festive products, and traditional delicacies.

The Chief Executive and his wife then visited the two firecrackers and fireworks zones in Macau and Taipa, to gather informa-

tion about their business and to speak with the vendors, wishing them success in their business.

At the conclusion of their visit, they set off firecrackers and fireworks, using the sounds of the celebrations to "express their hopes for the prosperity and development of both the country and Macau, as well as for the happiness and health of the entire population," according to a statement from the Government Information Bureau.

AD

Two vertical banners for the Chinese New Year 2025. The left banner features the logo of the Macau Government (市政署) and the Instituto para os Assuntos Municipais (INSTITUTO PARA OS ASSUNTOS MUNICIPAIS). The right banner features the logo of BNU (Banco Nacional Ultramarino) and 大西洋銀行 (Banco Nacional Ultramarino). Both banners have a pink background with hanging lanterns at the top, two snakes in the middle, and a circular seal at the bottom containing the text "HAPPY CHINESE NEW YEAR YEAR OF THE SNAKE 2025".

MACAU RINGS IN YEAR OF THE SNAKE WITH FLOAT PARADE AND FESTIVITIES ACROSS OLD DISTRICTS

LYNZY VALLES

THE Parade for Celebration of the Year of the Snake is set to dazzle Macau between January 31 and February 16, featuring two grand float parades this Friday and next Saturday—on the third and 11th days of the Chinese New Year (CNY).

Macao Government Tourism Office director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes has earlier assured the public that preparations are complete, with most performance troupes already in Macau and ready for the festivities.

The MGTO said that the Parade for Celebration of the Year of the Snake represents Macau as “a pearl in the palm of the motherland,” moving forward into a “new era” of prosperity across industries, inspired by the intelligence and fortune of the golden snake.

The two float parades will kick off at 8 p.m. on Friday and next Saturday, departing from Sai Van Lake Square and Estrada Marginal da Ilha Verde, respectively.

They will showcase 17 floats and over 1,300 performers from Macau and around the world.

Fernandes highlighted the inclusion of first-time participants, including performance troupes from Colombia and India, alongside local performers.

One of the key highlights will be performances by representatives from four Culture Cities of East Asia 2025: Macau, Huzhou City in Zhejiang Province, Kamakura City in Japan, and Anseong City in South Korea.

These cities will collaborate in a special opening performance on Friday, promising a unique cultural showcase.

Spectator stands have been set up at Sai Van Lake Square, Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, the Kun Iam Ecumenical Centre, the Macau Science Center roundabout, and the Roman amphitheatre at Macau Fisherman's Wharf.

More than 4,300 seats are available to the public, with MGTO expecting large crowds of residents and tourists to enjoy the celebrations.

“This year's parade will bring a wonderful show for everyone,” Fernandes said.

Also, the SAR Government, in collaboration with six integrated resort enterprises, is promoting the revitalization of historic districts to celebrate the Lunar New Year of the Snake. Various events will be held across the city, blending cultural experiences with festive cheer for residents and



tourists alike.

GALAXY: SPRING MARKET AT LAI CHI VUN SHIPYARDS

From January 18 to 26 and January 31 to February 2, the Lai Chi Vun Shipyards Spring Market will feature over 15 cultural booths offering Chinese New Year-themed products. Highlights include live music, craft workshops, and a God of Wealth Parade with fortune gift bags. Free shuttle buses between Galaxy Macau and the shipyards will ease travel for visitors.

MELCO: BLESSED MOUNT FORTRESS

From January 29 to February

12, Mount Fortress Garden will host the “Blessed Mount Fortress” event, showcasing traditional Chinese culture with costume photography, Tang Dynasty workshops, and a lantern wall. Guests can enjoy a New Year food market, festive performances, and blessings from the God of Wealth.

MGM: BARRA LUCKY BLESSING MARKET

Running from January 24 to February 25, the Barra Zone will feature creative workshops, exhibits by Japanese illustrator Shinri Murakami, and musical performances from Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Mainland China.

Local specialties and trendy goods will be available at the Barra Kitchen and pop-up café by Bookand.

SANDS: PHILIP COLBERT'S MACAO ART TOUR

From January 15 to March 16, contemporary pop artist Philip Colbert presents themed sculptures, including the “Lobster Firecracker” and “Lobster Cockerel,” at the Former Iec Long Firecracker Factory and Taipa Houses. Visitors can explore the art-filled parks and enjoy festive decorations.

SJM: AVENIDA DE ALMEIDA RIBEIRO FESTIVITIES

From January 29 to Fe-

bruary 12, Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro will host street performances, workshops, and dining experiences at Kam Pek Market. Local restaurants offer diverse cuisines, complemented by music and festive lantern displays.

WYNN: CNY MARKET ON RUA DA FELICIDADE

From January 31 to February 4, the Pedestrian Zone of Rua da Felicidade will transform into a festive market with cultural stalls, balloon art, flash mob shows, and the God of Wealth distributing blessings. Visitors spending at local stalls can win exclusive gift bags.

GOV'T BOOSTS PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVITIES

To accommodate increased travel demands during the Lunar New Year, the Transport Bureau has introduced special measures to ensure smooth traffic flow and reduce congestion in busy areas.

Seasonal bus routes

and adjustments will be implemented across key locations, including the Border Gate, Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro, and Rua da Cunha.

From today to February 4, special bus services such as routes 3BX, 17T, 21AT, 26AT,

and 101XS will operate, helping expedite passenger movement.

Additionally, 10 regular bus routes and the Macau Light Rail Transit (LRT) will extend services on New Year's Eve and select festival dates, with LRT operating hours leng-

thened to accommodate festivities.

During the “Taipa Village Temporary Pedestrian Zone” event, bus diversions will be in place from 11 a.m. to the last scheduled service. The Transport Bureau (dsat), in collaboration with the Public

Security Police Force and other organizations, will monitor real-time traffic conditions and adjust schedules, stops, and implement restrictions as needed.

Macau will host large-scale activities, including a float parade, fireworks displays, and firecracker events. Residents and visitors are encouraged to use public transport to ease road congestion.

TECH

DeepSeek has rattled the AI industry - and there are more Chinese models

THE Chinese artificial intelligence firm DeepSeek has rattled markets with claims that its latest AI model, R1, performs on a par with those of OpenAI, despite using less advanced computer chips and consuming less energy.

Wall Street's tech superstars tumbled Monday (early yesterday, Macau time) as a competitor from China threatens to upend the artificial-intelligence frenzy they've been feasting on.

The S&P 500 dropped 1.5%, dragged down in large part by a 16.9% fall for Nvidia. Other Big Tech stocks also took heavy losses, and they pulled the Nasdaq composite down 3.1% for its worst loss in more than a month.

DeepSeek's emergence has raised concerns that China may have overtaken the U.S. in the artificial intelligence race despite restrictions on its access to the most advanced chips. It's just one of many Chinese companies working on AI, with a goal of making China the world leader in the field by 2030 and besting the U.S. in their battle for technological supremacy.

Like the U.S., China is investing billions into artificial intelligence. Last week, it created a 60 billion yuan (\$8.2 billion) AI investment fund, days after the U.S. imposed fresh chip export restrictions.

Beijing has also invested heavily in the semiconductor industry to build its capacity to make advanced computer chips, working to overcome limits on its access to those of industry leaders. Companies are offering talent programs and subsidies, and there are plans to open AI academies and introduce AI education into primary and secondary school curriculums.



China has established regulations governing AI, addressing safety, privacy and ethics. Its ruling Communist Party also controls the kinds of topics the AI models can tackle: DeepSeek shapes its responses to fit those limits.

Here's an overview of some other leading AI models in China.

ALIBABA CLOUD'S QWEN-2.5-1M

Alibaba Cloud's Qwen-2.5-1M is the e-commerce giant's open-source AI series. It contains large language models that can easily handle extremely long questions, and engage in longer and deeper conversations. Its ability to understand complex tasks such as reasoning, dialogues and comprehending code is improving.

Like its rivals, Alibaba Cloud has a chatbot released for public use called Qwen - also known as Tongyi Qianwen in China. Alibaba Cloud's suite of AI models, such as the Qwen2.5 series, has mostly been deployed for developers and business customers such as automakers, banks, video game makers and retailers as part of product development and shaping customer experiences.

BAIDU'S ERNIE BOT 4.0

Ernie Bot, developed by Baidu, China's dominant search engine, was the first AI chatbot made publicly available in China. Baidu said it released the model publicly to be able to collect massive real-world human feedback to build its capacity.

Ernie Bot 4.0 had more than 300 million users as of June 2024. Similar to OpenAI's ChatGPT, users of Ernie Bot are able to ask it questions and have it generate images based on text prompts.

BYTEDANCE'S DOUBAO 1.5 PRO

Doubao 1.5 Pro is an AI model released by TikTok's parent company ByteDance last week. Doubao is currently one of the most popular AI chatbots in China, with 60 million monthly active users.

ByteDance says the Doubao 1.5 Pro is better than ChatGPT-4o at retaining knowledge, coding, reasoning, and Chinese language processing. According to ByteDance, the model is also cost-efficient and requires lower hardware costs

compared to other large language models because Doubao uses a highly-optimized architecture that balances performance with reduced computational demands.

MOONSHOT AI'S KIMI K1.5

Moonshot AI is a Beijing-based startup valued at over \$3 billion after its latest fundraising round. It says its recently released Kimi k1.5 matches or outperforms the OpenAI o1 model, which is designed to spend more time thinking before it responds and can solve harder and more complex problems. Moonshot claims that Kimi outperforms OpenAI o1 in mathematics, coding, and ability to comprehend both text and visual inputs such as photos and video. **MDT/AP**

DeepSeek says it was hit with 'large-scale malicious attacks'

CHINESE tech startup DeepSeek said yesterday it was hit by a cyber attack that disrupted users' ability to register on the site.

The company, whose artificial intelligence chatbot has sent the tech world into a frenzy, said that it had suffered "large-scale malicious attacks" on its services. Registered users could log in normally, DeepSeek said.

DeepSeek began attracting more attention in the AI industry last month when it released a new AI model that it boasted was on par with similar models from U.S. companies such as ChatGPT maker OpenAI, and was more cost-effective in its use of expensive Nvidia chips to train the system on huge troves of data. The chatbot became more

widely accessible when it appeared on Apple and Google app stores early this year.

By yesterday, DeepSeek's AI assistant had become the No. 1 downloaded free app on Apple's iPhone store. The jump in popularity fueled debates over competition between the U.S. and China in developing AI technology. But some U.S.

tech industry observers said they were worried about the idea that the Chinese startup has caught up with the American companies at the forefront of generative AI as a fraction of the cost.

DeepSeek was founded in Hangzhou, China in 2023. The company released its first AI large language model later that year. **MDT/AP**



JAPAN

EXECUTIVES AT FUJI TV AND PARENT FIRM RESIGN OVER A SEX SCANDAL LINKED TO A FORMER STAR

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

THE president and chairperson of Japanese network Fuji Television have resigned over a widening sex assault scandal linked to one of Japan's top TV celebrities.

The scandal centers on Masahiro Nakai, a former leader of Japan's once-hugely popular boy band SMAP, and his costly settlement with a woman over the alleged sex assault at a 2023 dinner party that Fuji TV staff allegedly helped to organize.

The allegations surfaced in magazine articles in December and have since triggered claims of systematic cover-ups by Fuji TV executives. The public outrage over the lack of transparency and explanation at the network's earlier news conference this month have led to an avalanche of advertising losses at Fuji, one of the networks where Nakai worked.

Fuji Television Network Pre-



Koichi Minato, president and CEO of Fuji Television Network (left) and Shuji Kano, Fuji Media Holdings COB

sident Koichi Minato and other company officials said Monday the case was mishandled and possibly had violated the woman's human rights. But they didn't provide new details, citing her privacy as well as the third-party investigation, during the more than 10-hour news conference while they at times faced yelling by frustrated reporters demanding clarifications.

"We are very sorry that we mishandled the case because of our lack of awareness about human rights and corporate governance ... and as a result our responses to the involved woman were inadequate," Minato said. "We are very sorry to have destroyed our credibility."

He said it was handled as an "extraordinary" case requiring maximum confidentiality and

sensitivity for the woman's mental health and was shared by a small group of officials. The company had continued allowing Nakai to appear on Fuji shows for a year and six months, he said, but denied covering up the case because it involved a big star.

Minato said he did not think what happened was sexual assault and that the case was not reported to the company's compliance office until the magazine report came out. The third-party investigation report is due in March.

He denied a Fuji TV employee's involvement in that case but said allegations that the employee had previously organized barbecue and other parties for Nakai needed to be investigated. He said he believed the employee's innocence based on interviews only by him and Nakai and without asking the woman.

Fuji officials also acknowledged that female announcers and other female employees have in

the past participated at parties for male stars, talent agency executives and sponsors, though they denied any sexual services. Minato said he believed top officials were complacent about outdated gender roles and they now need to "update their mindset."

Shukan Bunshun weekly, one of the magazines that exposed the scandal, also alleged that Fuji TV has long exploited its female announcers to entertain stars like Nakai.

In addition to Minato's resignation, board chairperson Shuji Kano resigned from his position prior to the news conference, officials said.

Nakai last Thursday announced his retirement to take responsibility for the trouble and business losses. He had earlier denied any violence or involvement of a third party.

A series of sexual assault allegations have surfaced in recent years in Japan's entertainment industry, in what is seen as a delayed #MeToo movement that began in Western nations in the 2010s. The cases include the abuse of hundreds of boys and young men by late talent mogul Johnny Kitagawa, whose now-defunct agency Johnny & Associates managed many boy bands, including the one to which Nakai belonged, SMAP. **MDT/AP**

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大律師 ASSOCIATES:

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羅善齡 Zelina Rodrigues
馬潔冰 Maria João Marques
陶義德 António Isóo de Azeredo
白穎怡 Iclília Berenguel
冼玲鳳 Mariana Afonso Esteves
馬秀文 Sofia Mendes Martins
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IN MACAU (2023)



NEW ZEALAND

Wellington reviews its aid to Kiribati after the Pacific island nation snubs an official's visit

CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-MCLAY,
WELLINGTON

NEW Zealand is reconsidering all development funding to the aid-dependent island nation of Kiribati, following a diplomatic snub from the island nation's leader, government officials said.

The unusual move to review all finance to Kiribati was prompted by the abrupt cancellation of a planned meeting this month between President Taneti Maamau and New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters, Peters' office told The Associated Press on Monday.

It followed months of growing frustration from Australia and New Zealand — jointly responsible for more than a third of overseas development finance to Kiribati in 2022 — about a lack of engagement with the island nation. Tensions have risen since Kiribati aligned itself with China in 2019 and signed a series of bilateral deals with Beijing.

AN STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT ISLAND NATION

The bond between Kiribati — population 120,000 — and its near neighbor New Zealand, a country of 5 million people, might not appear the South Pacific's most significant. But the acrimony reflects concern from western powers that their interests in the



A boy scavenges for saleable items at Red Beach dump, on Tarawa atoll, Kiribati

region are being undermined as China woos Pacific leaders with offers of funding and loans.

That has provoked a contest for influence over Kiribati, an atoll nation that is among the world's most imperiled by rising sea levels. Its proximity to Hawaii and its vast exclusive economic zone — the world's 12th largest — have boosted its strategic importance.

POWERS VIE FOR SWAY WITH AID

Kiribati, one of the world's most aid-dependent nations, relies heavily on international support, with foreign assistance accounting for 18% of its national income in 2022, according to

data from the Lowy Institute, an Australian think tank. About 10% of development finance that year came from New Zealand — which contributed 102 million New Zealand dollars (\$58 million) between 2021 and 2024, official figures show.

However, officials in Wellington and Canberra have expressed frustration over a lack of engagement from Tarawa regarding development projects. Frictions escalated when Kiribati suspended all visits from foreign officials in August, citing a need to focus on the government formation process after elections that month.

Kiribati switched its allegiance from pro-Taiwan to pro-Beijing in

2019, joining a growing number of Pacific nations to do so.

AN OFFICIAL SNUB PROVOKES BACKLASH

Peters was scheduled to meet Maamau, who has led the country since 2016, in Kiribati on Jan. 21 and Jan. 22, Peters' office said, but was told a week before the trip that Maamau could not accommodate him. It would have been the first visit by a New Zealand minister in more than five years.

"The lack of political-level contact makes it very difficult for us to agree joint priorities for our development program, and to ensure that it is well targeted and delivers good value for money," a state-

ment supplied by Peters' office said. New Zealand will review all development cooperation with Kiribati as a result, the statement added.

The government of Kiribati did not respond to a request for comment, although Education Minister Alexander Teabo told Radio New Zealand yesterday that Maamau had a long-standing engagement on his home island — and denied a snub.

New Zealand cautioned that the diplomatic rift could have broader consequences, including impacting New Zealand resident visas for Kiribati citizens and participation in a popular seasonal work scheme that brings Pacific horticulture and viticulture workers to New Zealand. New Zealand — home to large populations of Pacific peoples — is a popular spot for those from island nations to live and work.

"In the meantime, New Zealand stands ready, as we always have, to engage with Kiribati at a high level," said the statement.

AUSTRALIA'S SOFTER APPROACH

The decision to review all development funding is a "different, and more forceful approach" than New Zealand has taken before, said Blake Johnson, a senior analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, and contrasted with a different tack taken recently by Australia — which is Kiribati's biggest funder.

Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles traveled to the island nation this month as planned to deliver a patrol boat promised to Kiribati in 2023 — even though he did not meet with Maamau. Australia's foreign ministry said in a statement yesterday that the country "remains committed to its longstanding partnership with Kiribati." **MDT/AP**

BANGLADESH

Trains canceled across country as rail union goes on strike

TRAINS were canceled across Bangladesh yesterday as railway staff went on strike for higher pensions and other benefits, affecting tens of thousands of passengers and freight transport.

Saidur Rahman, acting president of the Bangladesh Railway Running Staff and Workers Union, said the strike was called after a meeting with the interim government headed by Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus failed to reach a deal late Monday.

Rahman said the strike

would continue indefinitely if the government does not accept their demands.

The state-run railway system carries some 65 million passengers per year in the densely populated nation of 170 million people. It employs about 25,000 people and operates a network of over 36,000 kilometers (22,000 miles).

The main Kamlapur Railway Station in the capital, Dhaka, was mobbed by hundreds of disappointed passengers who were not aware of the strike.



Many waited for hours before going home.

As the country's railway adviser visited, passengers shouted complaints.

Fouzul Kabir Khan, the country's railway affairs adviser, told reporters that such a nationwide strike was "regrettable" and he

urged the protesters to end the strike.

He said that "doors for discussion" were open to resolve the standoff.

Shahadat Hossain, a station manager in Dhaka, said at least 10 trains were scheduled to leave the station yesterday morning. Authorities arranged buses as an alternative, but they were not enough to meet demand.

Mohammed Nadim was stranded at the Kamlapur Railway Station as he travelled hundreds of kilometers overnight to reach Dhaka for his vaca-

tion to the southern coastal district of Cox's Bazar.

"I came here in at 5:30 a.m. from outside Dhaka. But after one hour or so, I came to know that my train will not run. Now I have been stranded here for hours without any hope. The station officials told me my ticket money will be reimbursed, but I don't know when," he told The Associated Press at the scene.

He refused to travel to his destination by a bus as arranged by the authorities as an alternative. **MDT/AP**

USA

Trump fills his cabinet with billionaires after running on a working-class message

BILL BARROW, ATLANTA

PRESIDENT Donald Trump's brash populism has always involved incongruence: the billionaire businessman-politician stirring the passions of millions who, regardless of the U.S. economy's trajectory, could never afford to live in his Manhattan skyscraper or visit his club in south Florida.

His second White House is looking a lot like the inside of Mar-a-Lago, with extremely wealthy Americans taking key roles in his administration.

The world's richest man, Elon Musk, is overseeing a new Department of Government Efficiency. Billionaires or mega-millionaires are lined up to run the treasury, commerce, interior and education departments, NASA and the Small Business Administration, and fill key foreign posts.

"He's bringing in folks who have had great success in the private sector," said Debbie Dooley, an early 2015 Trump supporter and onetime national organizer in the anti-establishment Tea Party movement. "If you need to have brain surgery, you want the proven brain surgeons."

Others raise concerns about conflicts of interest at odds with Trump's pledge to fight for "forgotten men and women" in a country where the median household net worth is about \$193,000 and median annual household income is about \$81,000.

"It's hard to conceive how the wealthiest set of Cabinet nominees and White House appointments in history will understand what average working people are going through," said former Labor Secretary Robert Reich, who served under President Bill Clinton and has warned for decades about the nation's widening wealth and wage gaps. Countered Dooley: "Trump sets the agenda. If they won't enact his policies, then they will hear him say what we hear on 'The Apprentice' all the time: 'You're fired!'"

Here is a closer look at some of Trump's picks, their net worth according to Forbes, and what the choices could mean:



ELON MUSK

Musk (net worth estimated above \$400 billion) is chairing the new Department of Government Efficiency, which is a special commission charged with slashing federal spending. The extensive ties his businesses have to the government have raised questions about Musk's potential conflicts in the role.

LINDA MCMAHON

McMahon was picked to be Trump's secretary of education. She is the wife of Vince McMahon, who is worth at least \$3 billion.

The former WWE wrestling executive will lead an agency that many conservatives have called for abolishing altogether. While that's a heavy lift politically, McMahon and Trump have endorsed an expansion of "school choice," programs that steer taxpayer money to private school tuition. She also could be in charge of implementing Trump's proposals to withhold federal money from public schools — K-12 and higher education — that do not meet White House demands to modify or scrap diversity programs.

DOUG BURGUM

The North Dakota governor (estimated net worth \$1.1 billion) made his money as a software entrepreneur. Burgum impressed Trump during his own failed bid for the GOP's 2024 presidential nomination. As interior secretary, Burgum

would be charged with implementing Trump's "Drill, baby, drill" promise — making it even easier for energy companies to tap fossil fuel resources, including from public lands.

SCOTT BESSENT

Forbes has not yet identified Bessent as a billionaire, but the veteran hedge fund manager confirmed Monday as treasury secretary certainly is worth many hundreds of millions. At Treasury, he will play key roles in selling and implementing a number of Trump's signature policies: reinstating the 2017 tax cuts tilted to corporations and wealthy individuals, imposing tariffs on many imports and cutting taxes on overtime wages, Social Security benefits and tip income.

Reich, the former labor secretary, noted that Bessent and his fellow wealthy Cabinet designees stand to benefit personally from Trump's tax ideas. Trump tax policies, which helped widen the deficit in Trump's first term, are juxtaposed with Bessent's warnings about the dangers of rising U.S. debt and the cost of annual interest payments to the government's bond holders.

HOWARD LUTNICK

An apparent runner-up to head Treasury, Lutnick (estimated net worth \$1.5 billion) has been nominated to be secretary of commerce. Lutnick, who made his fortune as a financial services executive, is still slated for a high-profi-

le post that will put him at the center of Trump's promised trade wars with China and other nations, including Mexico and Canada. Commerce also oversees several agencies, including the Census Bureau, whose calculations are key to determining the funding distributions of programs across the federal government.

KELLY LOEFFLER

The Georgia businesswoman named to lead the Small Business Administration was the wealthiest member of the Senate during her brief stay on Capitol Hill. Loeffler is married to Jeffrey Sprecher, CEO of Intercontinental Exchange, the publicly traded firm that owns the New York Stock Exchange. That's not the center of commerce for the SBA's usual clientele. The agency was founded in 1953 and describes itself as "the only cabinet-level federal agency fully dedicated to small business" by providing "counseling, capital, and contracting expertise as the nation's only go-to resource and voice for small businesses."

As a senator, Loeffler faced ethics complaints over alleged insider trading tied to stock trades she and her husband made as members of Congress first started receiving briefings related to the coronavirus pandemic. The trades occurred weeks before the pandemic caused markets to plummet. Justice Department and Senate inquiries later found no wrongdoing on Loeffler's part. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1987 AQUINO SUPPRESSES REBEL UPRISING



President of the Philippines Corazon Aquino has forced a group of heavily armed rebels occupying a television station to surrender.

Her troops fired tear gas into the Channel 7 building in Manila to try to flush out the group who have occupied the centre for the last two days.

A few minutes later they all surrendered.

Around 1,000 heavily armed troops wearing gas masks, surrounded the building just before the attack.

The rebels were warned that they had 15 seconds to surrender over a loud speaker but the army were forced to move in.

Following the stand off President Aquino said: "Here was a determined attempt to disrupt the affairs of government and those of the people at large.

"Here was a determined attempt to overthrow the first principle of democracy, which is civilian supremacy by those specially charged with its preservation."

Earlier, the rebel leader Colonel Oscar Canlas had hinted that they would surrender and follow orders from the Armed Forces, Chief General Fidel Ramos, who had repeatedly ordered the group to give themselves up.

But Colonel Canlas insisted that unspecified arrangements had to be made first and the armed forces refused.

Although the rebels had control of the building, loyal officials cut off their electricity supply to prevent them from broadcasting.

The take-over was part of a series of carefully orchestrated attacks on key military bases and broadcasting stations.

The rebels also attacked the Villamor air force base near Manila airport in the south of the city but armed forces prevented their assault after 10 minutes of heavy fighting.

Two rebels were killed and another 50 captured in the conflict.

General Ramos later said that government troops are now in control of all the areas targeted by the armed group.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Following the uprising, Corazon Aquino ordered the arrest of a number of dissident high ranking army officers involved in the rebellion.

Despite re-election to power shortly after the coup, another attempt was made to topple her government in August 1987.

It was the fifth uprising following her controversial election victory in spring 1986.

Throughout her term in office the Philippines remained in deep political crisis primarily because she took over from a corrupt dictatorship and tried to install a democratic regime.

At the same time she inherited a Communist insurrection as well as a restless right-wing military regime who were used to serving under martial law.

She survived one more coup attempt before Fidel Ramos succeeded her as the next president in 1992.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

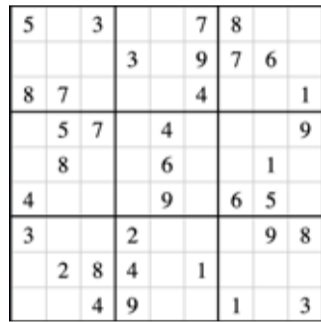
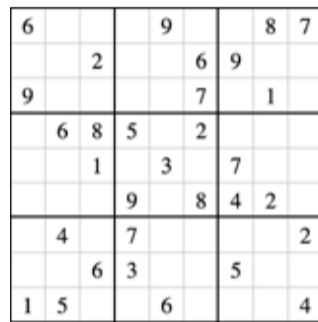
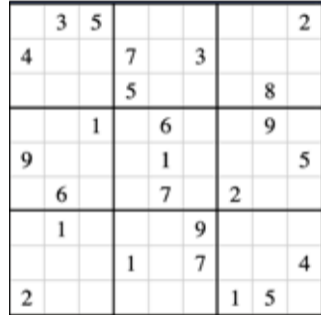
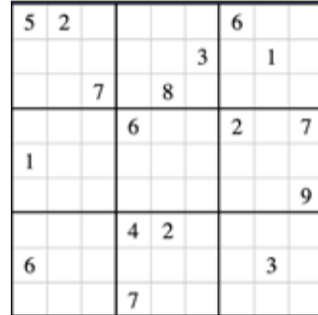
YOUR STARS

 ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Share news and collaborate on projects. Team communication buzzes, with Mercury in Aquarius for the next three weeks. Discuss plans with friends and allies.	 TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Take charge of your career, with Mercury in Aquarius. Patiently navigate tests and challenges for the prize. Discuss and develop possibilities. Coordinate actions.
 GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Make plans and go. With Mercury in Aquarius for three weeks, you're especially good at finding ways around obstacles. Study, research and discuss ideas.	 CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Financial planning provides power. Over three weeks, with Mercury in Aquarius, manage family finances for growth. Track the numbers. Work on accounting and taxes.
 LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Communication benefits your work, health and fitness. For three weeks, with Mercury in Aquarius, streamline physical routines. Coordinate actions. Work with coaches to grow.	 VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 Brainstorm in creative partnership. Coordinate and schedule, with Mercury in Aquarius over three weeks. Seek tutoring from a master. Rely on technical experts.
 LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Love, romance and fun take priority for the next three weeks. Share your heart, with Mercury in Aquarius. Practice hobbies, sports and passions.	 SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Upgrade household communication technology. Domestic harmony arises in conversation, with Mercury in Aquarius. Discuss home improvement possibilities with family. Share interesting ideas.
 SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You're especially clever, brilliant and analytical. Complexities fascinate, with Mercury in Aquarius. Communications and transport flow openly. Take advantage. Get your message out.	 CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Share profitable ideas and plans. Negotiate terms and put together valuable deals over the next three weeks, with Mercury in Aquarius. Profit through communications.
 AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Words come easily, with Mercury in your sign. You learn quickly over the next three weeks. Tell your story. Talk about creative projects.	 PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Read and study in peaceful privacy over the next three weeks, with Mercury in Aquarius. Your dreams are trying to tell you something. Take notes.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY 	EASY+ 
MEDIUM 	HARD 

WEATHER

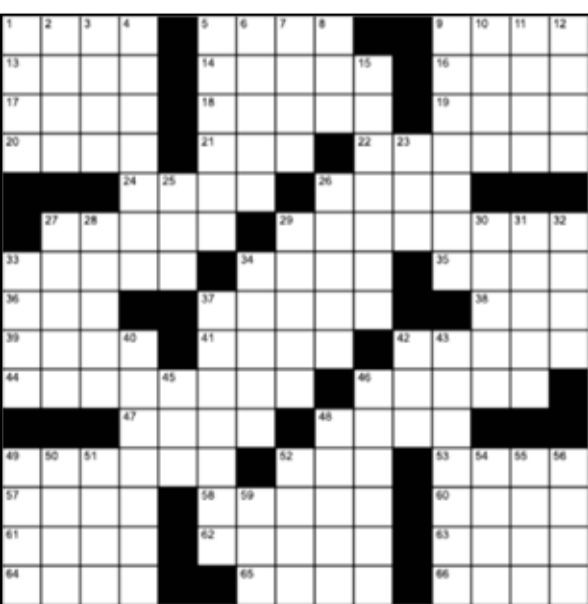
	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-11	1	cloudy
Changchun	-15	-11	snow
Chengdu	1	13	cloudy
Chongqing	7	15	cloudy
Fuzhou	5	16	fine
Guangzhou	7	20	fine
Guiyang	1	12	overcast
Haikou	12	20	cloudy
Hangzhou	0	11	cloudy
Harbin	-17	-12	snow
Hefei	-4	11	fine
Nanjing	-4	9	fine
Shanghai	0	7	fine
Taipei	9	16	cloudy
Wuhan	-3	15	cloudy
Hong Kong	17	18	sunny
WORLD			
Moscow	4	6	cloudy
Frankfurt	3	9	showers
Paris	6	8	rain
London	4	7	showers
New York	-4	8	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Pronto; 5- Latin love; 9- Moises of baseball; 13- ___-Rooter; 14- Capital city of Yemen; 16- Henpecks; 17- Singer Vikki; 18- Office subs; 19- The world's longest river; 20- Practice in the ring; 21- She raised Cain; 22- Like a parka; 24- Fictional Jane; 26- ___-bitty; 27- Folded food; 29- Evil omens; 33- ___ lunch; 34- ___ chance; 35- Profound; 36- ___-mo; 37- Cooperative race; 38- Numbered rd.; 39- Bits of thread; 41- Singles; 42- Rescued; 44- Performs surgery; 46- Satisfies; 47- JFK postings; 48- Actor Brad; 49- Broom room; 52- Rule, for short; 53- Historic times; 57- X-ray units; 58- Hawke of "Reality Bites"; 60- Charts; 61- Toward the sheltered side; 62- Caterpillar competitor; 63- School orgs.; 64- Rock clinging plant; 65- Boy or man; 66- Sailors;

DOWN 1- Pendulum paths; 2- Work up lather; 3- Razor brand; 4- Projecting; 5- Late bloomers; 6- "Circle of Friends" author Binchy; 7- Treater's words; 8- Music style performed by Dr Dre and Eminem; 9- Peeved; 10- Placed down; 11- Give the eye; 12- Pre-owned; 15- Smokers receptacle; 23- Slugger Mel; 25- ___-hool; 26- Bits; 27- Bell-shaped flower; 28- Make up for wrongdoing; 29- Warsaw residents; 30- Audacity; 31- French beans?; 32- Rushed, drove too fast; 33- Scandinavian capital city; 34- Hawaiian state birds; 37- Turned; 40- Locks; 42- Parked oneself; 43- Try; 45- Devoured; 46- One concerned with the bottom line?; 48- Bit of wisdom; 49- Burn the midnight oil, studying; 50- "Le Roi d'Ys" composer; 51- Lofty poems; 52- Perlman of "Cheers"; 54- Pro ___ (proportionally); 55- On ___ with (equal to); 56- Flat sound; 59- President pro ___;

Yesterday's solution

Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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HKD 2,750,000 1 bed 1 bath



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

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

BOOK IT

'THIS BEAUTIFUL, RIDICULOUS CITY' CAPTURES NEW YORK IN AN EMOTIONAL GRAPHIC MEMOIR

DONNA EDWARDS, MDT/AP

KAY Sohini's move from India to New York was an escape, rebirth and reunion all wrapped in one, leaving behind an abusive relationship and broken family to start anew in the melting-pot city that already felt like an old friend because it's where her heroes penned their most famous works.

Sohini's debut book, "This Beautiful, Ridiculous City," is an ode to the place that shaped and saved her. The graphic memoir shows New York as a muse, a mystical place where the lore of the city is perhaps as powerful as the place itself, if not more potent. The rotoscope-style illustrations have a broad, largely warm and slightly pastel palette. Sohini plays with form by overlaying rectangles or swirls to direct attention and add motion to the full-page illustrations.

Unlike your traditional comics,

very few pages are split into panels, and even then it's typically bisected or trisected, leaving plenty of room for rich details both in art and text.

The story starts with a brief overview of New York's magnetism, and through its attributes we learn about the narrator. Then it delves into the recent history of India to provide context for the cultural and socioeconomic circumstances during Sohini's childhood. Under sweeping reforms by Manmohan Singh, who would go on to become one of India's longest-serving prime ministers, Sohini's family sent her to a Catholic, English-speaking school to get ahead in a capitalist and Western-dominated world. She reads F. Scott Fitzgerald and Alison Bechdel while Bollywood shifts into an era of balancing East and West, old and new.

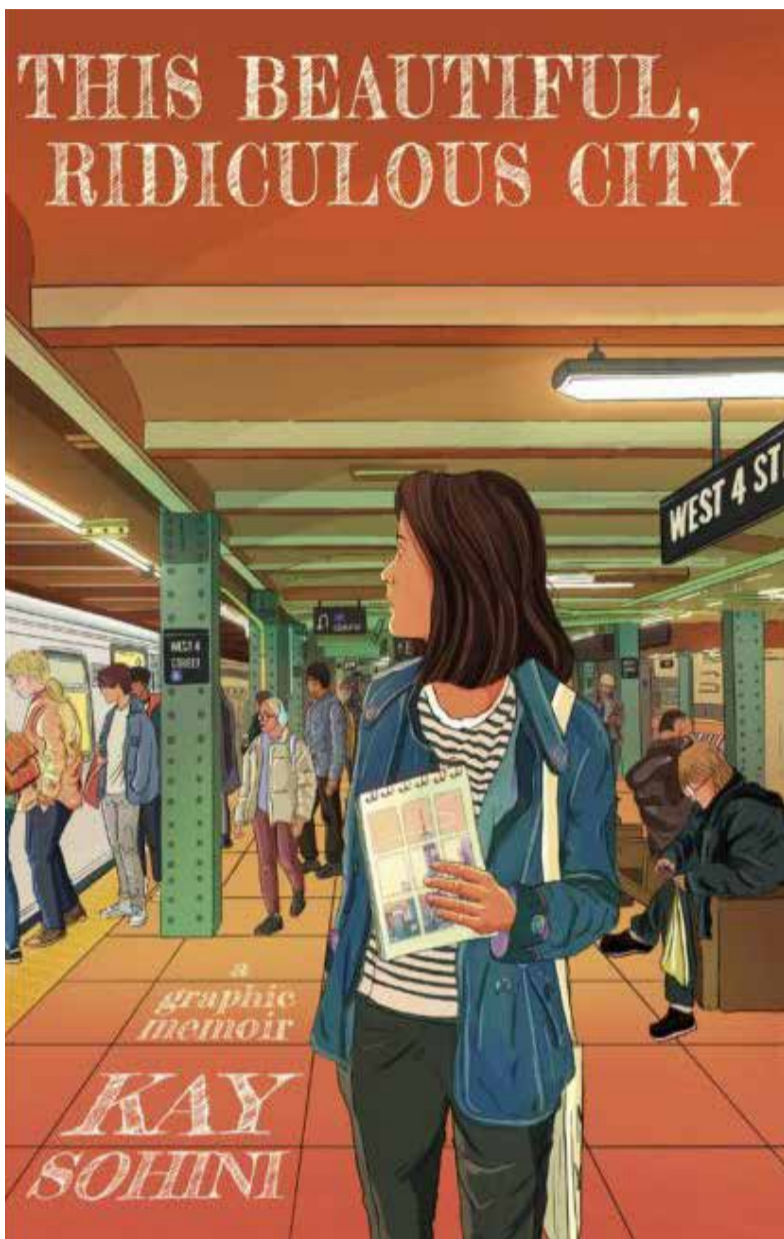
With the foundation solidly set, the memoir gets more personal, looking at a death that shook the

family and an abusive relationship that nearly killed Sohini.

Rarely have I seen someone capture a feeling so well — in text or visuals — as Sohini does with New York's beauty, and in building out the emotional landscape for each part of her life through her masterful command of form, flow and color.

"This Beautiful, Ridiculous City" is like an appetizer; it's bite-sized, delicious, intriguing, and leaves you wanting more — apt because of all the scrumptious foods from Sohini's childhood, and from explorations of New York's globally representative array of cuisines that had my stomach growling throughout. While the novel felt somewhat condensed, it delivered exactly what it promised — a look into one woman's life, centering around the city that saved her — with influential imagery serving as an emotional guide throughout.

AP PHOTO



"This Beautiful, Ridiculous City" by Kay Sohini (Ten Speed Graphic)

AD



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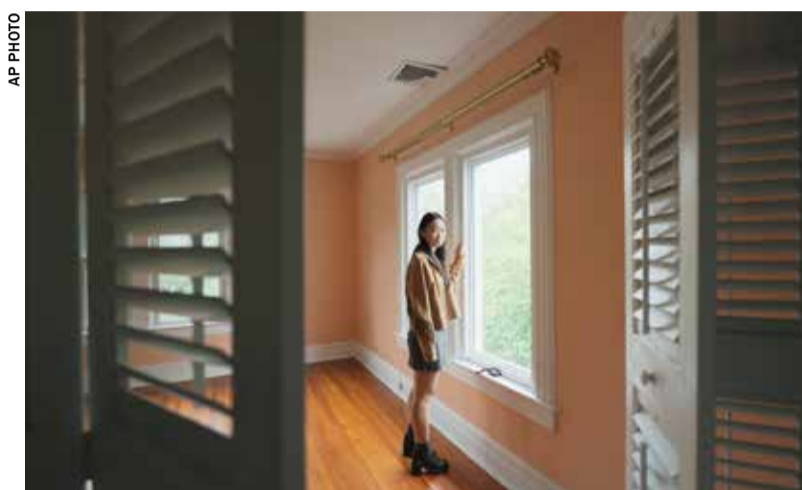
Steven Soderbergh's eerie haunted house drama 'Presence' packs a punch

LINDSEY BAHR,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

THE camera is the ghost in Steven Soderbergh's chillingly effective, experiential haunted house drama "Presence." The filmmaker traps the audience in a beautiful suburban home, letting us drift through rooms with this curious being, in and out of delicate conversations as we (and the ghost) try to piece together a puzzle blindly.

Often in haunted house movies where a new family moves in and starts sensing strange things, the ghost knows exactly what they want — usually their house back. In this one, the presence doesn't have such a clear objective. It's more confused, wandering around and investigating the surroundings, like a benevolent amnesiac. Occasionally, though, big emotions erupt, and things shake violently.

Mostly, they go unnoticed.



Callina Liang in a scene from "Presence" (Neon via AP)

They observe the chipper real estate agent (Julia Fox) preparing for a showing, the painting crew, one of whom believes there's something around, and finally the family and all the complexities of its dynamics. Lucy Liu (a delightful, wickedly funny scene-stealer) is the mom, Rebecca, a wealthy, successful, type-A woman hyper focused on the success of her eldest, a teenage boy

named Tyler (Eddy Maday). The father, Chris (Chris Sullivan), is more of the nurturer, concerned about their teen daughter Chloe (Callina Liang) in the aftermath of her friend's unexpected death.

There is a family drama transpiring inside the house, only some of which will make sense in the end. We overhear Rebecca drunkenly telling Tyler that everything she does is for him.

We listen in as Chris confides to someone on the phone about a hypothetical partner being involved in something illegal and whether they still would be if legally separated. We see Tyler often with his head buried in his phone. And then there's Chloe: Sad, rebellious Chloe, who is the only one to notice that they're not alone. She's had the recent trauma, after all, and soon she's starting a thing with Tyler's floppy haired, cool guy friend Ryan (West Mulholland). They hook up, they drink, they do drugs, and Chloe gets to escape from her own thoughts.

"Presence" was written by David Koepp ("Jurassic Park") off of a few pages Soderbergh put together, imagining what it would be like to be the ghost. He is that too, technically, as both director and cinematographer on the project. It's a slow-burn experience that sneaks up on you, especially once you've seen how it plays out. Personally, I didn't see any of

it coming and couldn't have anticipated the emotional wallop it would pack in the end. It's a heady experiment that transcends the somewhat gimmicky-on-paper premise — something Soderbergh manages to do alarmingly well and regularly.

January releases aren't often the most compelling. Aside from the annual rollout of awards contenders, it's more often than not a dumping ground. "Presence" is a movie that I first saw last January at the Sundance Film Festival, and yet, even after a year, the chill and the admiration has stubbornly lingered in my mind, like a ghost that just won't go away, while so many other films have simply faded from memory. It is a rare gem in the January mix.

"Presence," a Neon release in theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "teen drinking, drug material, sexuality, language, violence." Running time: 85 minutes. ★★★★★

AD

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新年快樂

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Year of Snake 2025



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OPINION

Money Matters

Amy Arnott, Morningstar



ASSET ALLOCATION WHEN YOU HAVE ENOUGH

I recently chatted with a retired couple who were looking for a second opinion about their portfolio's asset allocation. The key question: Is 65% in stocks too high for someone in their situation? Here, I'll walk through some ideas about how to think through these issues.

Jot down what your spending looks like in a typical month, including costs for housing, food, medical care, insurance, clothing, charitable donations, and taxes. Then you can add in discretionary spending, such as travel, entertainment, major purchases, and the like.

If you're working with a financial advisor, he or she should be able to use this data to estimate your lifetime spending needs. If you're managing your own assets, you can do a rough calculation by reverse engineering the 4% rule: Multiply your planned annual spending by the inverse of the withdrawal percentage; for example, someone who plans to spend \$50,000 per year would need a portfolio of at least \$1.4 million (\$50,000 times 28.6, which is the inverse of 3.5%).

Next, it's time to think about asset allocation for these core assets.

Scenario 1: Legacy focus. If you want to prioritize leaving assets (bequests) to charity or family members, you might be comfortable with a higher equity allocation, which should allow for continued growth while the assets are still in your portfolio.

Scenario 2: Capital preservation focus. Investors who aren't as focused on asset growth for eventual bequests to charity or family members might be more comfortable prioritizing safety instead, and can tilt their "extra" portfolio towards bonds.

Of course, these two scenarios are just a starting point. A couple in this situation might end up deciding on a portfolio allocation somewhere in between, or decide to carve out additional buckets, such as a separate bucket for charitable donations during their lifetime or another bucket for "fun money" to enjoy the fruits of a lifetime of work and saving.

Even for investors comfortable with a higher equity allocation, it's prudent to reduce exposure to individual stocks if they're significantly overvalued or consume a large percentage of the portfolio (5% or more is a rough guideline).

It's also worth considering whether each spouse has the same level of risk tolerance and comfort with investing. Think about how a surviving spouse might handle remaining assets and make sure the portfolio's asset mix is something both members of the couple are comfortable with for the long term.

At the end of the day, there's no "right" answer to creating an asset-allocation mix. It all comes down to an individual's level of risk tolerance, portfolio size, and anticipated spending needs. But investors who have enough assets to cover their planned spending during retirement—and then some—have more flexibility to create a customized asset mix that reflects their goals and priorities.

TRUMP SIGNS ORDER THAT LIKELY SETS IN MOTION A FUTURE BAN ON TRANSGENDER TROOPS

THE BUZZ

President Donald Trump signed an executive order yesterday [Macau time] directing Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to revise the Pentagon's policy on transgender troops, likely setting in motion a future ban on their military service.

He also ordered troops to be reinstated who had left voluntarily or been booted for refusing COVID-19 vaccines, outlined new rollbacks in diversity programs and provided for the deployment of a space-based missile defense shield for the U.S. — all on Hegseth's first day.

Trump and Hegseth had described parts of the anticipated orders throughout the day, but the exact language did not drop until late.

A transgender ban had been widely expected, and Trump's order largely sets the stage for a future ban — but directs Hegseth to come up with how that would be implemented in policy.

In his order, Trump claimed that service by troops who identify as a gender other than their biological one "conflicts with a soldier's commitment to an honorable, truthful, and disciplined lifestyle, even in one's personal life" and is harmful to military readiness, requiring a revised policy to address the matter.

Trump had tried to ban transgender troops during his first term, but it was tangled up in the courts.

AP PHOTO



LE LOUVRE NEEDS AN UPGRADE

MACRON IS TO ADDRESS THE ICONIC MUSEUM'S COSTLY RENOVATION

SYLVIE CORBET, PARIS

THE Louvre needs a full upgrade, and a costly one. French President Emmanuel Macron is expected to announce today [Macau time] possibly hundreds of millions of euros in renovation work for the most visited museum in the world, plagued with overcrowding and outdated facilities.

Macron's speech comes after the Louvre director Laurence des Cars expressed concerns over the "very poor condition" of some of the museum's spaces.

The Louvre's latest overhaul dates back to the 1980s, when the iconic glass pyramid was unveiled. Now, the museum is not up to international standards anymore.

A look at what's at stake. Des Cars sent a note expressing a series of concerns to Culture Minister Rachida Dati earlier this month saying the museum is threatened by "obsolescence."

According to the document first released by French newspaper Le Parisien, she warned about the gradual degradation of the building due to water leaks, temperature variations and other issues "endangering the preservation of artworks."

The pyramid that serves at the museum's entrance, unveiled in 1989 as part

of late President François Mitterrand's project, now appears outdated. The place is not properly insulated from the cold and the heat and tends to amplify noise, making the space uncomfortable for both the public and the staff, Des Cars stressed.

In addition, the museum suffers from a lack of food offerings and restroom facilities, she said.

"We're faced with a collective challenge," an official at the French presidency said. "That is, how can we adapt the Louvre to expectations, welcome visitors from across the world in comfortable conditions and also be leading a commitment for artistic and cultural education?" The official could not be named in line with the French presidency's customary practices.

The financing needed for such a major renovation has not been specified, but any renovation work at the former royal palace is expected to be costly and technically complicated.

The Pompidou Center, another major museum in Paris, is set to close to undergo a five-year renovation worth 262 million euro (\$273 million), starting from the end of the year.

Half the Louvre's budget is financed by the French state, including the wages of the 2,200 employees.

The other half is provided by private funds including ticket sales, earnings from restaurants, shops and bookings for special events, as well as patrons and other partners. That includes the United Arab Emirates' financing for the right to use the brand for the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum.

Questions arise about how the Mona Lisa should be displayed in the museum.

Des Cars asked for the issue to be "reassessed," suggesting a possible transfer of the museum's most popular attraction to another room that would be specifically dedicated to it.

The Mona Lisa is now being shown behind protective glass in the museum's largest room, overcrowded with long, noisy queues of visitors eager to take a selfie with Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece. That makes some other paintings in the room by the greatest Venetian painters like Titian and Veronese go unnoticed by many.

The museum's latest big renovation in the 1980s was designed to receive 4 million annual visitors.

Last year, the Louvre received 8.7 million visitors, over three-quarters being foreigners mostly from the United States, China and neighboring countries Italy, the UK, Germany and Spain. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Gaza Strip Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians returned yesterday [Macau time] to northern Gaza after 15 months of war under a fragile ceasefire. Many found their homes destroyed. The ceasefire included Hamas hostage releases, as Israel delayed reopening northern Gaza over disagreements on release orders.

AP PHOTO



Serbian Prime Minister Milos Vucevic resigned yesterday amid anti-corruption protests over the Novi Sad canopy collapse that killed 15 people. His resignation is expected to lead to snap elections as tensions rise, reflecting dissatisfaction with President Aleksandar Vucic's autocratic governance.

AP PHOTO



Albania Yesterday, an Italian navy ship brought 49 migrants to Albania for asylum processing, marking the third such attempt under a contentious bilateral agreement. Earlier efforts failed due to Italian court rulings deeming migrants' countries unsafe for repatriation under expedited procedures.

HOLIDAY TIMES
 Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will be back on the stands on Wednesday February 5. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.