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AP PHOTO



France The Aga Khan, spiritual leader of Ismaili Muslims and philanthropist, died Tuesday [yesterday, Macau time] at 88. A Harvard-educated billionaire, he led global development efforts in health and education. His successor will be announced after his will is read in Lisbon. Tributes poured in worldwide.

AP PHOTO



United States The Trump administration announced yesterday [Macau time] it will withdraw most USAID workers, effectively ending decades of U.S. humanitarian aid. The decision impacts security assistance, health programs, and development projects. Critics argue it weakens U.S. influence abroad, while Musk-backed reforms call the agency wasteful.

AP PHOTO



United States A U.S. military flight deporting migrants landed in Guantanamo Bay yesterday [Macau time], marking the first use of the naval base for large-scale immigration detention. Trump's administration plans to house up to 30,000 migrants there. Human rights groups condemned the move as cruel and isolating.

AP PHOTO



India A U.S. military flight deported 104 Indian migrants to Amritsar yesterday, marking the first such mass deportation under Trump's immigration crackdown. India accepted the deportees after verification. The move precedes Prime Minister Modi's Washington visit, where migration policies will be a key discussion.

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CONSTRUCTION WORKER WAGES DROP IN 2024, MATERIAL PRICES SEE DECLINE

The average daily wage of construction workers fell by 2.7% year-on-year to MOP763 in 2024. After adjusting for inflation, the real wage index decreased by 3%, according to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). However, in the fourth quarter, daily wages increased by 1.3% to MOP777. Notably, wages for plant operators, pipe installers, and iron erectors rose, while concrete formwork carpenters and fire service mechanics saw wage declines. Meanwhile, construction material prices also dropped in the same period.

BROAD MONEY SUPPLY REBOUNDS IN DECEMBER

Broad money supply (M2) rebounded in December 2024, rising 0.6% from the previous month. This was driven by a 4.7% increase in M1, which includes currency in circulation and demand deposits. Resident deposits also grew 0.7% month-on-month, while loans to residents declined. According to statistics released by the Monetary Authority of Macau, shares of MOP, HKD, RMB, and USD in M2 were 32.8%, 45.7%, 6.1%, and 14.1%, respectively. Total deposits in the banking sector increased 0.3% from the prior month to MOP1,272.9 billion, with the currency composition largely unchanged.

NEW NEIGHBORHOOD TO HOST FESTIVE CELEBRATION

The Macau New Neighborhood (MNN) is set to launch its first large-scale event of the year on Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Lotus Square. Following a successful series of festivals last year, this event will feature interactive programs, including handicraft workshops, game stalls, and live performances, inviting citizens to immerse themselves in the festive atmosphere. Participants can enjoy free workshops on creating Chinese New Year lanterns and sugar painting, while supplies last. A God of Wealth parade and lion dance will add to the festivities, encouraging community spirit.

SPRING FESTIVAL GOLDEN WEEK

CNY VISITORS FROM TAIWAN SEE LARGEST INCREASE, WHILE HONG KONG SEES NOTABLE DECLINE

RENATO MARQUES

MACAU welcomed 1.309 million visitors from the mainland during the eight-day Spring Festival Golden Week holiday in 2025, according to government data.

This marks a 3.5% decrease compared to the previous year. On average, the region saw approximately 163,000 tourists each day throughout the holiday period.

The most significant notes go for the substantial increase in the number of visitors from Taiwan (+20.7%) and the notable decrease in those from Hong Kong (-8.9%) compared year-on-year with 2024.

A decline was also observed in the visitors from the mainland (-3.2%), which, given its large base, accounted for the loss of most of the visitors compared to last year.

On the other hand, the losses were offset slightly by the international visitors, who grew 11.5% this year to 67,651.

Totals show that visitors generally contracted by 3.5% this year, reaching over 1.3 million.

From these, over 1 million (76.4%) were visitors from the mainland, followed by those from the neighboring region of Hong Kong (17.6%). International visitors accounted for 5.2% of the market share, with the remaining being visitors from Taiwan.

Without surprise, the most used border crossing checkpoint continued to be the Border Gate, which was responsible for the arrival of some 503,589 visitors. The second busiest border post was the checkpoint of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, where another 314,488 entered Macau.

Hengqin port came third with 213,382 entries recorded over eight days, followed by the Taipa Ferry Terminal (77,920) and the Airport (76,166).

HOTELS SOLD OUT AS EXPECTED

During a press conference on Tuesday, Cheung Kin Chung, president of the Macau Hoteliers & Innkeepers Association, said local hotels were primarily booked to



capacity during the Lunar New Year (CNY) holidays.

The acknowledgment confirmed the expectations shared by the same official the week before the holidays when Cheung said that most of the city's hotels should be fully occupied during CNY.

Cheung noted that the hotel occupancy exceeded 90% in all the units, with some reaching full capacity.

He pointed out that, according to the association's information, there was a significant increase in small-group tours, family trips, and visitors from Southeast Asia,

which benefited the different types of lodging in Macau.

Cheung noted that even though room rates increased as they typically do, they stayed at the same level as in previous years and remained reasonable, as requested by the tourism authorities. He said this demonstrates the

industry's commitment to providing quality service to all visitors.

FIVE INFRACTIONS BY TAXI DRIVERS DETECTED

The Public Security Police Force (PSP) reported five infractions by taxi drivers between January 28 (CNY Eve) and January 31 (the third day of the New Year).

The violations included overcharging, refusal to provide transportation, and one case of a driver ignoring the order at a taxi stand.

Additionally, two drivers were reported for overspeeding while transporting passengers, and one case involved a driver taking a longer route to increase the fare. The police also referred a complaint of mistreatment by a taxi driver to the Transport Bureau for follow-up.

Moreover, five prosecutions were made against drivers offering illegal transportation in private vehicles.

CNY VISITOR ARRIVALS

Region	Number of Visitors	Change (%)
Mainland China	1,000,208	-3.2%
Hong Kong	231,058	-8.9%
Taiwan	21,006	20.7%
Others	67,651	11.5%

SECURITY

PSP INSPECTED NEARLY 700 PEOPLE, NO SUSPICIONS OF WRONGDOING

THE Public Security Police Force (PSP) reported conducting an extensive series of operations as part of its winter crime prevention plan. During the Lunar New Year (CNY) holidays, the force intensified some operations to reinforce community safety.

The force said it inspected 694 random individuals from January 28 to February 2, with no cases of suspected wrongdoing reported.

Regarding vehicle checks, 125 vehicles were stopped and searched,



resulting in two penalties for the same driver. The first penalty involved failing to display an identification sign (commonly known as a "P plate"), which indicates that the rider has held a

motorcycle license for less than one year and cannot transport passengers. The second penalty was for transporting a passenger while having a license for less than one year.

The PSP added that 123 officers were involved in these operations at various locations on the Peninsula and Islands.

Additionally, during the CNY, the force reinforced inspections related to excessive noise and the illegal use of firecrackers and fireworks. According to the report, 106 complaints about noise pollution were received. Of those, 32 resulted in warnings, and 12 were fined. In the remaining cases, no action was taken as the noise source could not be identified. RM

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LYNZY VALLES

MACAU'S postal service, Correios e Telecomunicações (CTT), announced the suspension of several postal services to the United States, including small packages and surface mail parcels.

The move came in response to the United States Postal Service's (USPS) temporary halt on accepting international parcels from China and Hong Kong, a restriction that also applied to shipments from Macau.

The suspended services specifically impacted express-cargo deliveries to the US state of Illinois.

However, the Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau clarified in a statement last night that services for letters, documents, and airmail—including small packages, parcels, and express mail—would continue operating normally for all other US

CTT suspends some postal services to the US amid policy reversal

destinations.

Yesterday, however, in a swift reversal, the US rescinded the ban just one day after implementing it. The USPS had initially announced Tuesday that it would no longer accept parcels from China and Hong Kong following the US government's decision to impose an additional 10% tariff on Chinese goods.

The move also ended a customs exemption that previously allowed low-value parcels to enter the US without paying tax.

According to a report from the Associated Press, the USPS did not provide a reason for the reversal but stated that it would collaborate with Customs and

Border Protection to implement a collection process for the new China tariffs, ensuring that delivery disruptions are minimized.

The initial ban had the potential to cause massive disruptions for online shopping platforms like Shein and Temu, which have gained popularity among younger US consumers for offering inexpensive clothing and other products shipped directly from China.

Cheap, direct postal service has helped these companies keep costs low, along with the "de minimis" exemption that previously allowed shipments valued under USD800 to enter the US tax-free. (See more on p6)



CRIME

Hong Kong driver caught with ketamine leads to Macau dealer bust

VICTORIA CHAN

A 40-year-old Hong Kong man was arrested in the early hours of January 26 after police discovered ketamine in his vehicle during a routine check near Rua de Fai Chi Kei.

The driver, who admitted to a history of drug use, tested positive for the controlled substance, leading to a broader investigation that resulted in the detention of a Macau resident suspected of supplying the drugs.

According to the Judiciary Police (PJ), the incident began in the early hours of January 26 when officers stopped the driver during a vehicle inspection and noted his disoriented state. Upon questioning, he confessed to habitual drug use.

A search of his vehicle revealed the three transparent bags containing suspected ketamine and a piece of whi-



te paper, totaling approximately 4.28 grams.

The driver was taken to a hospital for drug testing, which confirmed the presence of ketamine in his system.

Further investigation revealed that the driver had allegedly purchased the drugs through a cell phone application. He claimed to have met a supplier and agreed to buy four packets of ketamine for HKD2,500 on January 25 near the tourist bus parking area of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB)

to complete the transaction.

After the transaction, he pulled over to consume some of the substance near Rua de Fai Chi Kei and stored the remaining narcotics under the driver's seat. He denied selling any narcotics or psychotropic substances.

Through the city surveillance system, police identified and intercepted the suspected supplier, a 40-year-old Macau resident, at the Qingmao Port on January 28 as he was entering Macau. The suspect denied involvement in drug

trafficking or distribution.

The Hong Kong driver faces charges under Article 8 of Law No. 17/2009, as amended by Law No. 10/2016, for unlawful sale and consumption of narcotic drugs, as well as violations of Article 90 of the Road Traffic Law for driving under the influence.

The Macau supplier is suspected of violating the same laws related to illegal drug trafficking. Both cases have been referred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) for further investigation.

RENATO MARQUES



EVS

ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANDS AS ADOPTION GROWS

STAFF REPORTER

THE city's push toward electric vehicles (EVs) has gained significant momentum, with over 2,200 charging spaces for light vehicles and more than 600 spaces for electric motorcycles now available across public parking lots.

The Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) recently revealed that, in partnership with local utility CEM, it has introduced 204 national standard charging sockets at 49 public parking lots, aiming to enhance the convenience of EV owners.

As of late 2024, Macau has 12,302 electric vehicles in total, including 6,480 light cars, 1,239 heavy cars, 3,003 heavy motorcycles, and 1,580 light motorcycles.

Notably, the proportion of electric light cars among newly registered vehicles has increased from 4% in 2019 to approximately 27% in 2024.

Meanwhile, the adoption of electric motorcycles has surged from about 2% before the launch of the subsidy scheme for replacing old motorcycles with new electric ones to around 35%

today.

The number of electric motorcycles in the city has grown by a 11.8 times since the program's launch in 2022.

Speaking at the TDM Forum, lawmaker Lo Choi In praised the government's efforts but emphasized that further improvements are necessary. She highlighted the success of the pilot scheme for electric motorcycle battery swap stations, which has benefited commercial vehicles, particularly delivery services.

Lo suggested expanding zero-emission public buses and incentivizing the conversion of commercial vehicles, such as food delivery motorcycles, to further boost the market for new energy vehicles.

Transport Advisory Committee member Ip Wai Keong echoed the need for increased adoption of new energy vehicles, urging government departments and public transportation services to lead by example. He also called for enhanced policies to meet the goal of 100% zero-emission vehicles for newly registered cars by 2035.

MACAU AND TAIPA FIRECRACKER ZONES CLOSE WITH INCREASED IMPORTS

The two designated firecracker zones in Macau and Taipa have officially closed, concluding a festive season that saw increased firecracker imports but fewer safety incidents compared to last year. This year, imports reached 2,000 boxes, a 25% increase from last year. Of those, 171 boxes, or 8.5%, required disposal, reflecting a decrease from last year's figures. Despite attracting over 31,000 visitors—down from 35,000 in 2024—the number of first aid cases declined, with 24 reported in Macau and 39 in Taipa, primarily involving minor incidents.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE MEETS AL PRESIDENT TO DISCUSS COOPERATION

Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai met with Legislative Assembly (AL) president Kou Hoi In and other members of the Executive Board earlier this week. According to the Government Information Bureau, the meeting focused on strengthening coordination between the administrative and legislative branches, particularly in relation to administrative and legislative matters. Both sides agreed on the need for more effective communication mechanisms.

BANKS SEE 21% PROFIT DROP IN 2024

Macau's banks recorded a profit of over 4 billion patacas in 2024, a 21.3% decline compared to the previous year, when profits totaled 6.14 billion patacas. According to official data from the Monetary Authority of Macau (AMCM), the decline was largely due to an 18.3% decrease in the interest margin. This drop followed three cuts in the main reference interest rate in the last quarter of 2024, mirroring actions by the US Federal Reserve. While loans, the primary source of banking revenue, fell by 7.2% to just over one billion patacas, deposits grew by 4% to 1.27 trillion patacas.

SUBSIDIES

RON LAM URGES GOV'T TO REVISE WEALTH PARTAKING MEASURE

LYNZY VALLES

LAWMAKER Ron Lam has called for a clearer definition of the government's Wealth Partaking Scheme, urging officials to clarify whether it is intended as a "dividend" or a "relief" measure. The government has been distributing cash to residents annually since 2008, and the 2025 fiscal budget continues this practice.

However, Lam argues that a more structured approach is needed.

Lam emphasized that public policies should have clear objectives and principles to ensure effective implementation.

He criticized the current ambiguity surrounding the scheme, questioning whether the focus should be on providing benefits to all residents or targeting those in need. He also pointed out that any decision to change the plan should follow a scientific approach and be based on clear criteria.



Lam also proposed a residence requirement for eligibility, similar to the Central Provident Fund's rule, which requires residents to stay in Macau for at least 183 days a year. This could ensure that the cash-sharing plan more effectively benefits those who truly contribute to the local community.

Furthermore, Lam highlighted

the need for a pension adjustment mechanism that better reflects the financial pressures faced by elderly residents, especially given the stagnant pension rates over the past five years.

He called for the creation of a Consumer Price Index (CPI) specifically for the elderly to more accurately gauge their inflationary challenges.

In a separate query, the Social Security Fund (FSS) said that the government is advancing its study on the creation of a Consumer Price Index (CPI) specifically for the elderly, which could play a crucial role in adjusting pension values.

In response to an interpellation from lawmaker Lei Chan U, the FSS announced that the study is expected to be completed by the end of the first semester of this year.

The proposed index aims to monitor price variations in products most commonly consumed by the elderly population.

Currently, pension adjustments are determined by the general CPI, which must reach a threshold of 3% for pension values to increase. However, this target has not been met in recent years; as of September 2024, the general CPI stood at just 2.47%. This stagnation has resulted in no updates to pensions for the elderly over the past five years.

AL INTERPELLATION

Lawmaker calls for enhanced support for employment of people with disabilities

LYNZY VALLES

LAWMAKER Ho Ion Sang has raised concerns about the ongoing challenges faced by persons with disabilities (PWDs) in securing employment, despite various initiatives launched by the government in recent years.

While the government has proactively introduced several measures, such as subsidizing vocational training programs, organizing job-matching sessions, and offering tax incentives for employers, Ho emphasizes that the barriers to successful job market integration persist due to physical constraints and persistent misconceptions.

In a written interpellation to the government, Ho highlighted that despite efforts like the annual "Outstanding Disabled Employees and Recognized Employers Award Ceremony," employers still harbor concerns about the capabilities and adaptability of PWDs.

As a result, the willingness to hire them remains low, limiting employment and training opportunities.

To address this, Ho is calling for more targeted vocational training courses that align with the developmental stages and needs of PWDs, along with enhanced career planning support to better integrate



individuals with disabilities into the workforce.

Furthermore, Ho has urged the government to provide more resources to employers, encouraging them to offer internships and training programs for PWDs.

According to the lawmaker, this would not only help employers better understand the abilities of disabled workers but also foster a culture of inclusion by facilitating more direct interaction between employees and PWDs.

Ho also pointed to inefficiencies in the current application process for the tax rebate for hiring residents with disabilities, noting that many individuals face difficulties with the paperwork, including the need to submit additional medical certificates.

He called for improvements in the application process, including better inter-departmental cooperation, to streamline the system and increase access to support for PWDs.

Last year, Ho said that although the Health Bureau (SSM) had previously proposed a comprehensive 10-year plan to improve rehabilitation services, Macau has no immediate plans to review the disability legislation. The SSM's plan aims to establish public-private partnerships and promote accessibility and equal opportunities in sectors like education, employment, and transportation. While the plan seeks to promote independent living for people with disabilities, the lack of a review since 1999 has raised concerns about the effectiveness of services, said Ho.

STATS

MACAU SEES INCREASE OF NEARLY 6,000 NON-RESIDENT WORKERS IN 2024

MACAU'S workforce expanded by nearly 6,000 non-resident workers in 2024, according to data from the Labour Affairs Bureau.

By December, the city employed more than 182,000 migrant workers, marking an increase of around 5,900 compared to the same period in 2023.

This rise also reflects a recovery of nearly 30,700 workers since the end of pandemic-related restrictions.

However, the current figure still falls short of the pre-pandemic peak of 196,538 non-resident workers recorded in late 2019.

By January 2023, the territory had lost almost 45,000 workers compared to that peak.

The hotel and restaurant sector saw the largest increase in non-resident workers in 2024, adding 4,561 employees. The domestic workers sector also recorded a notable rise, with 1,678 more workers joining. Additionally, cultural and recreational activities, including the casino industry, employed 1,418 more non-resident workers last year.

ARCHITECTURE

Local company wins Silver Award at design competition in France

RENATO MARQUES

A local team of architects, headed by Nuno Soares, has received a Silver Award at the 2024 French Design Awards.

Architectural firm Urban Practice's proposal received an accolade in the Interior Design – Exhibits, Pavilions & Exhibitions category for its design of the Macau World Heritage Pavilion. The pavilion is planned to be constructed behind the Ruins of St. Paul's and adjacent to the Macao Museum.

The proposal, which aimed to preserve, reveal, display, and promote local heritage, was presented as part of the Cultural Affairs Bureau's public tender in 2022.

The concept focuses on



showcasing Macau as a UNESCO World Heritage City and the fusion of Chinese and Western



cultures.

Situated on Rua de D. Belchior Carneiro, the building

seeks to connect with nearby areas, including historical monuments such as the Ruins of

St. Paul's and Mount Fortress.

The pavilion, featuring a dynamic façade that allows seamless interaction between the interior and exterior, is designed to incorporate advanced technology and interactive features.

The entrance lobby has been designed to provide views of the Ruins of St. Paul's and to restore its original layout using augmented reality technology.

In addition to preserving the ancient trees and vegetation, the building would also feature a barrier-free design.

Nuno Soares, principal architect at Urban Practice, stated in a press release, "This approach aims primarily to preserve and highlight Macau's World Heritage for a broader audience. The selection of materials and technologies for this project is based on sustainable principles and best preservation practices."

"A key feature is the vertical patio, featuring a ground-to-top wall constructed from local rammed earth—a material historically used in the city's ancient wall that once crossed the site," he added.

RESIDENTIAL

Housing prices hit a decade low

VICTORIA CHAN

MACAU'S housing prices have plummeted to their lowest level since 2012, with the average price per square meter dropping to MOP69,882 last year, a 17% year-on-year decline, as the government moves to revive the struggling real estate market by lifting decade-old property cooling measures.



The Financial Services Bureau (DSF) reports

that housing prices are down 30% from 2019 levels. In early January,

there were 125 property transactions, a decrease from 203 during the same time in 2019, although this is an increase from 105 transactions in January 2023. The current property price index is at 206.5, a notable decline from 267.4 in 2019.

Last year, the SAR government scrapped the housing market cooling measures amid calls

from the property sector as demand continues to weaken.

This comes after several calls from associations to adjust the measures regulating real estate demand in Macau, as well as the tax measures in these regulations, which are a decade old.

The government has abolished the special stamp duty, additional stamp duty, and stamp duty on acquisition, as well as easing mortgage lending restrictions, increasing the maximum loan-to-value ratio to

70% for Macau residents and 90% for affordable housing purchases.

The government previously stated the changes reflect sufficient housing supply and aim to stabilize the market. However, it will retain the ability to reintroduce measures if necessary.

Industry experts like Stanley Poon of Centaline believed that the removal of cooling measures is unlikely to cause a sharp spike in property prices. Rather, it should attract more buyers into the market.

CORPORATE BITS

Wynn celebrates CNY with festive events



Wynn Macau and Wynn Palace hosted vibrant Chinese New Year celebrations this week, featuring dragon and lion dances, firecracker displays, and traditional ceremonies to welcome the Year of the Snake and share prosperity wishes

with residents and visitors. The celebrations began on February 3 at Wynn Macau and continued on February 4 at Wynn Palace, with Linda Chen, president and vice chairman of Wynn Macau, leading the eye-drawing ce-

remonies to symbolize good fortune for the year ahead. At both resorts, lion dance teams performed to rhythmic drumbeats, igniting firecrackers to officially welcome the New Year.

Visitors were drawn to attractions like the "Tree of Prosperity" and "Goldfish Aquarium," while lively performances added to the festive atmosphere. As part of the celebrations, Wynn also participated in the "Parade for Celebration of the Year of the Snake" on January 31, showcasing a carnival-themed float adorned with traditional symbols of wealth and prosperity. Wynn plans to continue its celebrations with another parade on February 8.

JW Marriott Hotel offers romantic Valentine's dining experiences



JW Marriott Hotel Macau is celebrating Valentine's Day with two exclusive

dining experiences, offering couples a choice between a buffet at Urban Kitchen

and an intimate menu at The Lounge, designed to create romantic moments. Urban Kitchen's Valentine's Dinner Buffet, available on February 14 and 15, features premium offerings like Oyster Ideale N°4, a live Caviar Bar, and Slow-roasted Orange-fed Australian Wagyu.

At The Lounge, couples can enjoy a refined Valentine's Day Menu from February 14 to 16. Brimming with whole Boston Lobster, succulent shrimps, half-shell mussels, conchs, and snow crab legs, the offering is further elevated with a bottle of Perrier-Jouët Rosé Champagne, setting the stage for a day of love and indulgence.

TRADE WAR

Fast fashion, laptops and toys likely to cost more due to US tariffs on Chinese imports

A sweeping new U.S. tariff on products made in China is expected to increase the prices American consumers pay for a wide array of products, from the ultra-cheap apparel sold on online shopping platforms to toys and electronic devices such as computers and cellphones.

An additional 10% tariff on all Chinese goods took effect Tuesday, while the U.S. Postal Service announced it will stop accepting parcels inbound from China and Hong Kong until further notice.

The previous day, President Donald Trump agreed to pause his threatened tariffs against Mexico and Canada for 30 days following negotiations on Trump's demands for the North American nations to take steps to reduce illegal immigration and the flow of drugs such as fentanyl into the U.S.

After failing to get a similar White House reprieve, China struck back with retaliatory tariffs on some U.S. goods that are set to begin next week.

The sheer volume and variety of the China-made merchandise sold in the U.S. means residents would probably see the prices of many typically inexpensive items tick higher if the tit-for-tat tariffs persist.

These are some of the products most likely to be impacted:

ELECTRONICS, HOME SUPPLIES AND CAR PARTS

The U.S. imported about \$427 billion worth of goods from China in 2023, the most recent year with complete data, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Consumer electronics, including cellphones, computers and other tech accessories, make up the biggest import categories.

China is a dominant production engine for tech gear, including for American companies like Apple that have their products assembled in the country. In 2023, China accounted for 78% of U.S. smartphone imports and 79% of laptop and tablet imports, the Consumer Technology Association trade group reported.

The tariffs also may affect how much consumers pay for typically inexpensive clothing, shoes and kitchen items like pots and pans, as well as the big-ticket items, such as appliances, furniture and auto parts.

AP PHOTO



Jay Salaytah, 43, who runs his own auto repair shop in Detroit, said he bought some pieces of equipment sooner than he might have, anticipating they would cost more if Trump implemented his campaign promise to use import tariffs as a tool to promote U.S. manufacturing.

"I knew the costs were going to go up, and these are manufactured in China," Salaytah said of a probe test light he purchased before Tuesday's tariff went into effect.

LOW-COST APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

In addition to imposing a new tariff on Chinese imports, Trump's executive order also suspended a little-known trade exemption that allowed goods worth less than \$800 to come into the U.S. duty-free. The order left open the possibility for the loophole to still be used with shipments from other countries.

The trade rule, known as "de minimis," has existed for nearly a century. It came under greater scrutiny in recent years due to the rapidly growing number of low-cost items coming into the U.S. from China, mainly from prominent China-founded online retailers such as Shein, Temu and Alibaba's AliExpress.

Former President Joe Biden's administration proposed a crackdown on the loophole in September, but the rules did

not take effect before Biden left office.

Shein and Temu have gained global popularity by offering a quickly updated assortment of ultra-inexpensive clothes, accessories, gifts and gadgets shipped mostly from China, allowing the two e-commerce companies to compete on the home turf of American companies.

Seattle-based Amazon is trying to compete with them through an online storefront that mimics their business model by offering cheap products shipped directly from China.

Chinese exports of low-value packages soared to \$66 billion in 2023, up from \$5.3 billion in 2018, according to report released last week by the Congressional Research Service. In the U.S., Temu and Shein comprise about 17% of the discount market for fast fashion, toys and other consumer goods, the report said.

HOW MUCH WILL PRICES GO UP?

It's unclear. Under de minimis, Shein, Temu and AliExpress could bypass taxes collected by customs authorities. But under the changes effective Tuesday, company shipments from China will now be subject to existing duties plus the new 10% tariff imposed by Trump, analysts said.

"The vast majority of these orders are valued less than

\$800, which means all or virtually all of them are going to get caught in that," Youssef Squali, an analyst at Truist Financial, said.

Juoas Kaziukenas, founder of e-commerce intelligence firm Marketplace Pulse, said he thinks the price increases on platforms like Shein and Temu will be "pretty small" and the products they sell will remain cheap. However, the rule change is likely to result in delivery delays since the packages now have to go through customs, Kaziukenas said.

The new tariffs will also hit third-party sellers on Amazon that import products from China, according to Squali. He expects sellers to eat some of the costs and pass the rest onto customers, which he thinks could result in percentage price increases in the mid-single digits. Other e-commerce sites that host businesses, such as Etsy, are also going to be impacted, Squali said.

Temu, which is owned by China's PDD Holdings, has previously said its growth did not depend on the de minimis policy. Though most of its products are shipped from China, Temu has been recruiting Chinese merchants to store inventory in the U.S., a move that experts said would allow it to not be as exposed to changes around the trade rule.

In January, China also introduced measures to help cross-

border e-commerce build overseas warehousing by offering them tax rebates or tax exemptions

WHAT ARE US RETAILERS SAYING?

The day after November's U.S. presidential election, Brieane Olson, CEO of teen clothing chain PacSun, went to Hong Kong to meet with factory executives to figure out ways to prepare for Trump's tariff plan.

Roughly 35% to 40% of PacSun's garments are made in China, even as the chain has accelerated moves to diversify with suppliers in countries like Cambodia and Vietnam.

But Olson said Trump's 10% tariff on Chinese goods was less extreme than the company anticipated. For now, PacSun doesn't plan to increase prices on its products or move its manufacturing of knitwear and denim out of China.

Toys are another category of consumer products that relies heavily on imports from China. Greg Ahearn, the president and CEO of The Toy Association trade group, said he thinks toy companies that source in China are going to absorb the cost of the new tariff in the short term.

Eventually, those price hikes will be moved onto the consumer, Ahearn said. **MDT/AP**

THE ROLE OF USPS

The U.S. Postal Service said in a notice that it would temporarily stop accepting inbound parcels from the China and Hong Kong Posts until further notice.

Letters and flats — mail that measures up to 15 inches (38 centimeters) long or 3/4 inches (1.9 centimeters) thick — are not affected.

The USPS did not state a reason in a brief announcement, but the suspension came after Trump closed the "de minimis" customs exemption this week that allowed shoppers and importers to avoid duties on packages worth below \$800.

The exemption was removed as part of an executive order to levy a 10% tariff on Chinese goods. U.S. Customs and Border Protection previously stated that it processes an average of over four million "de minimis" imports each week.

At closing time, AP reported that USPS reverted its policy (See p3).

PHILIPPINES

Vice president impeached by House, faces Senate trial

PHILIPPINE Vice President Sara Duterte was impeached by the House of Representatives yesterday after more than the required number of legislators, many of them allies of the president with whom she has had a bitter political feud, signed a petition to remove her from office.

House of Representatives Secretary General Reginald Velasco told a plenary meeting of the lower chamber of Congress that at least 215 lawmakers have signed a petition to impeach Duterte, more than enough for the powerful House to impeach her.

With enough endorsements by House legislators, the impeachment complaint was ordered transmitted to the Senate, which will serve as an impeachment tribunal that would try the vice president, the daughter of former President Rodrigo Duterte.

The vice president, who didn't immediately react to the House move to impeach her, and her father have been politically at odds with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and his camp, including a majority of House legislators.

The vice president, regarded as a possible presidential



AP PHOTO
Sara Duterte

candidate after Marcos's term ends in 2028, has faced at least four impeachment complaints by several legislators and left-wing activist groups over a range of issues.

Those included a death threat she made against the president, his wife and House Speaker Martin Romualdez last year, irregularities in the use of her office's intelligence funds and her failure to stand up to

Chinese aggression in the disputed South China Sea.

Only the latest impeachment complaint, accusing the vice president of violating the constitution, betraying the public trust, corruption and other high crimes, and signed by the 215 legislators would be sent to the Senate for her trial, according to legislators.

Efforts to impeach the vice president may be hampered by

a lack of time. The House impeachment came on the last day of congressional session before campaigning begins for midterm elections in May that would select new legislators for the House and Senate. A special session could be called to allow the Senate to bring Duterte to a rapid trial.

The vice president's legal troubles have unfolded with the backdrop of her increas-

ingly bitter political feud with the president and his allies. She said in online news conference on Nov. 23 that she has contracted an assassin to kill Marcos, his wife and Speaker Martin Romualdez if she were killed, a threat she warned wasn't a joke.

She later said that she wasn't threatening him, but was expressing concern for her own safety.

The House has been investigating the alleged misuse of 612.5 million pesos (\$10.3 million) of confidential and intelligence funds received by Duterte's offices as vice president and education secretary. She has since left the education post after her political differences with Marcos deepened.

She has refused to respond to questions in detail in tense televised hearings last year. Duterte also vehemently protested when her chief of staff, Zuleika Lopez, was ordered temporarily detained for allegedly hampering the inquiry. Lopez has since been released from hospital detention.

Duterte has accused Marcos, his wife and Romualdez of corruption, weak leadership and attempting to muzzle her because of speculation she may seek the presidency in 2028.

The National Bureau of Investigation subpoenaed Duterte last year to face investigators about her threats against them.

The police, military and the national security adviser immediately boosted the security of the Marcos family after the threats. **MDT/AP**

THAILAND

Bangkok cuts power supplies to Myanmar border towns in effort to curb scam rings

THAILAND yesterday cut off power supplies to areas in Myanmar where scam networks operate, following a public outcry demanding government action to tackle the problem.

Parts of Myanmar bordering Thailand, including Myawaddy and Tachilek, are known as havens for criminal syndicates who have forced hundreds of thousands of people in Southeast Asia and elsewhere into helping run online scams including false romantic ploys, bogus investment pitches and illegal gambling schemes.

Such scams have stolen tens of billions of dollars



AP PHOTO
In this photo released by Thailand's Provincial Electricity Authority, Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul shuts down electricity supplies to five locations in Thailand-Myanmar border

from victims around the world, while the people recruited to carry them out are often tricked into taking the jobs under false pretense and trapped in virtual slavery.

Thailand's National Security Council and other government agencies met on Tuesday and agreed to cut off electricity, internet and gas supplies to five towns in Myanmar along

the border with northern Thailand, citing national security and severe damage that the country has suffered from scam operations.

Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, who oversaw the process at the Bangkok headquarters of the Provincial Electricity Authority, said the annual revenue from the electricity sold in these areas was about 600 million baht (\$17.8 million). Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai said Tuesday that scams have caused an estimated damage of 80 million baht (\$2.3 million) to Thailand a day.

Anutin, who also serves as a deputy prime minister,

said a clause in the supply contract allows Thailand to cut off the supply on the grounds of national security. "Today, the government said we must stop, because you supply our electricity to those who cause damage to our country," he said.

Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos have become known as the major centers of online scam operations, while Thailand has recently received attention as an area of transit for victims of false recruitment for scams.

Public scrutiny heightened recently when a senior Chinese official visited Thailand last week to discuss cooperation in cracking down on scam

operations, many of which are believed to be run by Chinese nationals. The Royal Thai Police said the meeting with Liu Zhongyi, China's Vice Minister of Public Security and Commissioner of the Criminal Investigation Bureau, addressed rescue missions, law enforcement and cutting off utilities to the areas where scam networks operated.

Liu's visit came shortly after the disappearance of a Chinese actor in Thailand, who was later found near the border of Myanmar, made global headlines. Thai police said he was trafficked to work in a scam operation.

Beijing has also put pressure on Myanmar's military government to curb the scam centers, but they are often in areas under the control of ethnic rebel groups where laws are not enforced. **MDT/AP**

MIDDLE EAST

Trump's suggestion the US 'take over' the Gaza Strip rejected by friends and foes

DAVID RISING &
JON GAMBRELL, DUBAI

PRESIDENT Donald Trump's proposal that the United States "take over" the Gaza Strip and permanently resettle its Palestinian residents was swiftly rejected and denounced yesterday by American allies and adversaries alike.

Trump's suggestion came at a White House news conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who smiled several times as the president detailed a plan to build new settlements for Palestinians outside the Gaza Strip, and for the U.S. to take "ownership" in redeveloping the war-torn territory into "the Riviera of the Middle East."

"The U.S. will take over the Gaza Strip, and we will do a job with it too," Trump said. "We'll own it and be responsible for dismantling all of the dangerous unexploded bombs and other weapons on the site, level the site, and get rid of the destroyed buildings, level it out, create an economic development that will supply unlimited numbers of jobs."

The comments came amid a fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, during which the militant group has been turning over hostages in exchange for the release of prisoners held by Israel.

Egypt, Jordan and other American allies in the Middle East have already rejected the idea of relocating more than 2 million Palestinians from Gaza elsewhere in the region. Following Trump's remarks, Egypt's Foreign Ministry issued a statement stressing the need for rebuilding "without moving the Palestinians out of the Gaza Strip."

Saudi Arabia, an important American ally, weighed in quickly on Trump's expanded idea to take over the Gaza Strip in a sharply worded statement, noting that its long call for an independent Palestinian state was a "firm, steadfast and unwavering position."



Palestinians carry defaced pictures of U.S. President Donald Trump while protesting against his latest statements regarding the transfer of Palestinians from Gaza

"The kingdom of Saudi Arabia also stresses what it had previously announced regarding its absolute rejection of infringement on the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, whether through Israeli settlement policies, annexation of Palestinian lands or efforts to displace the Palestinian people from their land," the statement said.

Similarly, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese told reporters in Canberra, Australia, that his country has long supported a two-state solution in the Middle East and that nothing had changed.

"Australia's position is the same as it was this morning, as it was last year, as it was 10 years ago," he said.

Trump has already made waves — and upset longtime allies — suggesting the purchase of Greenland, the annexation of Canada and the possible takeover of the Panama Canal. It was not immediately clear whether the idea of taking over the Gaza Strip was a well thought out plan, or an opening gambit in negotiations.

Albanese, whose country is one of the strongest American allies in the Asia-Pacific region, seemed frustrated to even be asked about the

Gaza plan, underscoring that his policies "will be consistent."

"I'm not going to, as Australia's prime minister, give a daily commentary on statements by the U.S. president," he said. "My job is to support Australia's position."

New Zealand's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that its "long-standing support for a two-state solution is on the record" and added that it, too, "won't be commenting on every proposal that is put forward."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian also underscored Beijing's long-standing support for a two-state solution.

"We oppose the forced relocation of people in Gaza and hope that the relevant parties will take the ceasefire and post-war governance in Gaza as an opportunity to push the Palestinian issue back on the right track," he said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told state-run Anadolu Agency that Trump's proposal on "deportations from Gaza is not something that either the region or we would accept."

"Even thinking about it, in my opinion, is wrong and absurd," Fidan said.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called for

the United Nations to "protect the Palestinian people and their inalienable rights," saying that what Trump wanted to do would be "a serious violation of international law."

Hamas, which sparked the war with its Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, said Trump's proposal was a "recipe for creating chaos and tension in the region."

"Instead of holding the Zionist occupation accountable for the crime of genocide and displacement, it is being rewarded, not punished," the militant group said in a statement.

In its attack on Israel, Hamas killed some 1,200 people, primarily civilians, and took about 250 hostages.

Israel's ensuing air and ground war has killed over 47,000 Palestinians, more than half of them women and children, according to local health authorities who do not say how many of the dead were fighters. The war has left large parts of several cities in ruins and displaced around 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million people.

In the U.S., opposition politicians quickly rejected Trump's idea, with Democratic Sen. Chris Coons calling his comments "offensive and insane and dangerous and foolish." MDT/AP

this day in history

2001 SHARON SWEEPS TO POWER

The leader of the right-wing Likud party, Ariel Sharon, has won a landslide victory to become the new prime minister of Israel.

He called for a government of national unity to bring peace to the Middle East.



The outgoing prime minister, Ehud Barak, said he was resigning as Labour leader and leaving parliament.

Addressing jubilant supporters in Tel Aviv, Mr Sharon ruled out territorial concessions to the Palestinians over Jerusalem and urged them to "cast off the path of violence and return to the path of dialogue".

He said: "Today the state of Israel has taken a new road, the road of peace, security and unity."

Mr Barak ruled out his party's participation in a national unity government without agreement on a joint plan of action. [...]

Mr Sharon has a fearsome reputation as a ruthless and fearless soldier and politician. As defence minister he was the main architect of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

He was removed from office in 1983 by an Israeli tribunal that found him indirectly responsible for the massacre of hundreds of Palestinians by Lebanese Christian militiamen in two Beirut refugee camps under Israeli control.

But he made his political comeback just one year later as trade and industry minister in a Likud-Labour national unity government.

Minutes after voting ended on Tuesday evening, exit polls gave Mr Sharon a lead of 19%. Partial results broadcast later on Israeli television suggested an even greater lead for the Likud leader.

Turnout, according to electoral officials, was about 60% - the lowest in Israeli history.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was conciliatory in his response to Mr Sharon's victory. [...]

Demonstrators chanting "Sharon is a butcher" clashed with Israeli soldiers in the West Bank towns of Ramallah and Hebron.

Mr Sharon will inherit the same fractured and fractious parliament which gave Mr Barak so much trouble.

Some Israeli commentators say there may have to be new parliamentary elections within six months.

In that event, his rival Binyamin Netanyahu could challenge him for leadership of the Likud Party and supplant him as prime minister.

The new Israeli prime minister may also find himself constrained by the realities on the ground.

If he tries, as his record suggests he may, to use the iron fist to curb Palestinian anger, analysts say he will find there are no purely military solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian problem.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

In June 2002 following a series of suicide bombings, work began on building a security wall, 640 km (440 miles) long, between Israel and the West Bank. An effort to revive the peace process resulted in the publication of a new roadmap for peace in April 2003. Ariel Sharon's mission was to fight for Israel's security, in the belief that the end justifies the means. But his plans for Israeli settlers to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank - completed in August 2005 - provoked ire from his staunchest supporters and were repeatedly voted down by his right-wing Likud Party. He finally left Likud in November 2005 to found a new centrist party, Kadima (Forward). On 4 January 2006, Mr Sharon suffered a major stroke and went into a coma. Three months later, on 11 April, the Israeli cabinet declared him "permanently incapacitated".

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Be a source of comfort and stability for yourself and those you hold dear. Focus on strengthening your financial independence, breaking free from situations that feel restrictive so you can spread your wings.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

This cosmic climate inspires you to take action, backing up your most brilliant ideas with a keen eye and the motivation to see them through. Savvy to sales and marketing. Have faith in your own imagination.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Greet the morning at your own pace and try to notice beautiful details. The more gratitude you cultivate, the more safe and stable you will feel.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Step into your role as a pillar within the community, doing what you can to inspire, motivate, and help those you encounter. Trust where your intuition leads you.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

People might not understand the path you've chosen. Though bigger pictures may only be visible to yourself, steer the course in spite of what others say, but be open to valuable advice from those with more experience.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Choose the company that brings out the best in you, you'll notice how certain social spheres have led to a lack of inspiration or motivation.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Don't hesitate to get tough and assert your authority, finding the fire within to barrel through obstacles and address problems. A close companion could surprise you though your commitments could shift as a result.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Turn away from dynamics that dim your light. Appreciate the artistic visions of loved ones while Neptune and the nodes of fate stir, but don't forget to chase your own.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Patch up any holes in your situation, lend a helping hand where it is needed and your day could take an exciting twist.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Reclaim passion within creative outlets and matters of the heart, though your methods may seem unconventional to others, follow your gut when it comes to self-expression.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Bring tenderness to your routines in order to rebuild strength, showing compassion for yourself and others. Stay on track without compromising your health and wellness.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Dare to walk your path, even if it means deviating from others. Follow through on your ideas to make the most of these vibes, but don't hesitate to change courses.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

1	7	3						
2	6			5				
4		5						
3	6		1					
8		1	7	5		4		
	7		2	8				
		6		5				
3				4	6			
	3		8	7				

HARD

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

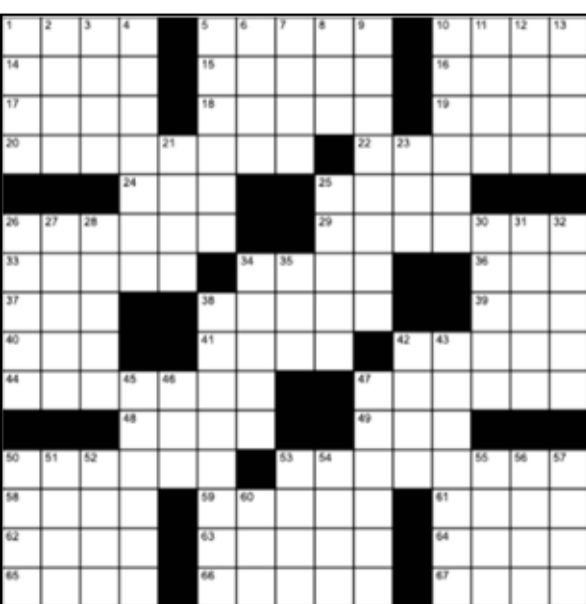
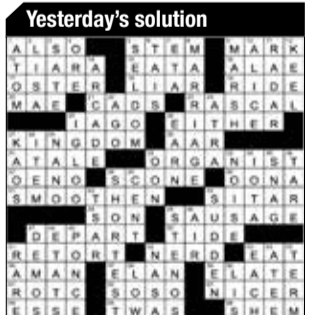
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-7	0	cloudy
Changchun	-24	-13	fine
Chengdu	5	11	rain
Chongqing	8	10	rain
Fuzhou	7	17	overcast
Guangzhou	11	18	overcast
Guiyang	3	4	rain
Haikou	15	23	cloudy
Hangzhou	1	7	cloudy
Harbin	-29	-15	cloudy
Hefei	-2	9	cloudy
Nanjing	-2	9	cloudy
Shanghai	0	7	cloudy
Taipei	12	19	overcast
Wuhan	3	8	fine
Hong Kong	17	19	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-3	-1	cloudy
Frankfurt	2	4	cloudy
Paris	3	6	rain
London	4	8	cloudy
New York	3	5	snow

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Jessica of "Dark Angel"; 5- Champagne buckets; 10- Challenge to complete a task; 14- Artist Mondrian; 15- Atari founder Bushnell; 16- Opposite of odd, especially when applied to numbers; 17- Dedicated to the ___ Love; 18- Later, dude!; 19- Captain of the Nautilus; 20- Convince; 22- Gasoline; 24- Common ID; 25- Nick and Nora's pet; 26- Allege; 29- Refuge; 33- Less common; 34- This, in Tijuana; 36- Suffix with pay; 37- U-turn from WSW; 38- Rare delight; 39- ___ King Cole; 40- Doze; 41- Crowd noise; 42- 1985 Kate Nelligan film; 44- Warned; 47- Coiffure; 48- Caesar's wings; 49- Skill; 50- Morals; 53- Worker; 58- Contends; 59- Deplete; 61- Sweeney ___; 62- Della's creator; 63- Lunar valley; 64- Watched warily; 65- Funny Fox; 66- German industrial city; 67- Walkman maker;

DOWN 1- Each; 2- ___ dancing is popular with cowboys!; 3- Ale, e.g.; 4- Under discussion; 5- Certifiable; 6- Like some dorms; 7- Gen. Robt. ___; 8- Narrow beam of light; 9- Photograph; 10- Pertaining to the teeth; 11- State firmly; 12- San ___ Italy; 13- Hydroxyl compound; 21- The Beatles' "Back in the ___"; 23- Somme summer; 25- ___ Is Born; 26- Gladiator's venue; 27- Artificial waterway; 28- Classy pancake; 30- Printer refill; 31- African antelope; 32- 2:1, e.g.; 34- Eat into; 35- Caribbean, for one; 38- Cherish; 42- British nobleman; 43- Understatement; 45- Elevated; 46- Pampering, briefly; 47- Occur; 50- Eternally; 51- Air-filled rubber hoop, become fatigued; 52- Grippled; 53- Slippery swimmers; 54- Sterile hybrid; 55- Spool-like toy; 56- Garden spot; 57- Water swirl; 60- Lisa, to Bart, briefly;



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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AD

AP PHOTO



MOTORSPORT

Zhou Guanyu joins Ferrari as a reserve driver for 2025 F1 season

THE first Chinese driver in Formula 1, Zhou Guanyu, is heading back to Ferrari as one of its reserve drivers for the 2025 season.

Zhou doesn't have a race seat for 2025 after leaving Sauber at the end of last year but could step in if Charles Leclerc or Lewis Hamilton can't race.

The 25-year-old Zhou first raced in F1 in 2022 for what was then the Alfa Romeo team, before it reverted back to the Sauber name. He has a best finish of eighth and has strong commercial and sponsorship backing in China. He was a Ferrari academy driver earlier in his career.

Zhou is one of two reserves for Ferrari alongside another ex-Sauber driver, Antonio Giovinazzi, who last raced in F1 in 2021 and is a long-time reserve who has yet to drive for the team.

When Ferrari's Carlos Sainz Jr. was unable to race because of appendicitis at the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix last year, the team opted instead to promote then-Formula 2 driver Oliver Bearman.

A strong seventh-place finish at an unfamiliar circuit helped Bearman build momentum and secure a full-time F1 drive for 2025 with Haas. **MDT/AP**

FOOTBALL

CRISTIANO RONALDO TURNS 40: A LOOK AT THE SOCCER GREAT THROUGH THE YEARS

HE started out as a skinny winger with floppy hair, quick feet and outrageous skills, wowing the world at the age of 17 after moving to Manchester United.

He developed at Real Madrid into perhaps the most famous athlete on the planet and one of soccer's greatest ever goal-scorers — and is still going strong heading into his fifth decade.

Cristiano Ronaldo turned 40 yesterday and the goals are still flowing for the Portugal superstar in the twilight of his **AD**

career, whether it's for his national team or his Saudi club Al-Nassr. Who knows, we could yet be seeing Ronaldo's famous "Siuuu" celebration at the 2026 World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico — when he'll be 41½.

Ronaldo started out at Sporting Lisbon in 2002, and impressed so much in a preseason friendly against United the following year that the English club bought him immediately. He became a world-class winger at United, winning three Premier Leagues, the Champions League

and — in 2008 — the first of five Ballon d'Or trophies.

The other four were won at Madrid, where he moved in 2009 and became a lethal center forward, helping the Spanish giants to four more Champions Leagues and many more titles.

Ronaldo is the all-time top scorer in the Champions League and in men's international soccer, and is approaching 1,000 goals for club and country as he continues his career in Saudi Arabia. **MDT/AP**

New Rugby Season

Saturdays, 9-11am, Taipa Stadium

BOYS AND GIRLS, AGES 6 – 18

- Team working
- Co-operation
- Fitness and FUN



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**MACAU
BATS
RUGBY**

SPORTS & GENDER

Trump will sign an executive order barring transgender female athletes from competing

PRESIDENT Donald Trump will sign an executive order today [Macau time] designed to prevent people who were biologically assigned male at birth from participating in women's or girls' sporting events.

The order, which Trump is expected to sign at an afternoon ceremony, marks another aggressive shift by the Republican president's second administration in the way the federal government deals with transgender people and their rights.

The president put out a sweeping order on his first day in office last month that called for the federal government to define sex as only male or female and for that to be reflected on official documents such as passports and in policies such as federal prison assignments.

Trump found during the cam-



AP PHOTO

paign that his pledge to "keep men out of women's sports" resonated beyond the usual party lines. More than half the voters surveyed by AP VoteCast said support for transgender rights in government and society has gone too far.

He leaned into the rhetoric be-

fore the election, pledging to get rid of the "transgender insanity," though his campaign offered little in the way of details.

The order — which coincides with National Girls and Women in Sports Day — will involve how his administration will interpret Title IX, the law best known for

its role in pursuing gender equity in athletics and preventing sexual harassment on campuses.

"This executive order restores fairness, upholds Title IX's original intent, and defends the rights of female athletes who have worked their whole lives to compete at the highest levels," said U.S. Rep. Nancy Mace, a Republican from South Carolina.

Every administration has the authority to issue its own interpretations of the landmark legislation. The last two presidential administrations — including Trump's first — offer a glimpse at the push-pull involved.

Betsy DeVos, the education secretary during Trump's first term, issued a Title IX policy in 2020 that narrowed the definition of sexual harassment and required colleges to investigate claims only if they're reported to certain officials.

The Biden administration rol-

led back that policy last April with one of its own that stipulated the rights of LGBTQ+ students would be protected by federal law and provided new safeguards for victims of campus sexual assault. The policy stopped short of explicitly addressing transgender athletes. Still, more than a half-dozen Republican-led states immediately challenged the new rule in court.

"All Trump has to say is, 'We are going to read the regulation traditionally,'" said Doriane Lambelet Coleman, a professor at Duke Law School.

How this order could affect the transgender athlete population — a number that is incredibly difficult to pin down — is uncertain.

The Associated Press reported in 2021 that in many cases, the states introducing a ban on transgender athletes could not cite instances where their participation was an issue. When Utah state legislators overrode a veto by Gov. Spencer Cox in 2022, the state had only one transgender girl playing in K-12 sports who would be affected by the ban. It did not regulate participation for transgender boys.

"This is a solution looking for a problem," Cheryl Cooky, a professor at Purdue University who studies the intersection of gender, sports, media and culture, told the AP after Trump was elected. **MDT/AP**

AD

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OPINION

Business Views

Shuli Ren, Bloomberg



CHINA'S MR. BIG WON'T CAVE IN TO TRUMP FOR NOTHING

President Xi Jinping has a nickname in China. Instead of calling him directly by name, people commonly use Da Da, or Mr. Big. After all, he is the nation's most powerful politician in decades, serving a precedent-defying third term. He also dares to challenge the world's biggest economy, and China's only real rival, promoting a multipolar global order instead of unchallenged US dominance.

It should come as no surprise, then, that China is acting differently from Canada or Mexico as President Donald Trump imposes trade tariffs. Not willing to capitulate to what it sees as bullying, Beijing is taking the 10% extra levy in stride.

Compared to 2018, China may feel it can handle the heat better. Exports to the US account for only about 15% of the total, versus 19% at the onset of Trump's first trade war. In addition, Chinese firms have been diversifying their supply chains, opening factories in nations such as Mexico and Vietnam that until recently looked less vulnerable to US tariffs and wouldn't be drawing attention with "Made in China" goods.

Initially, Xi seems to be playing a gentle match, hoping to prevent tensions from escalating. Beijing's retaliation, such as targeted tariffs on oil and liquefied natural gas, are narrower in scope than the 10% blank levy from the White House. An anti-trust probe into Google has no real bite, since the tech giant largely pulled out of China after 2010.

Even before Trump's tariffs hit, exporters — the only bright spot in a deflationary economy — were feeling gloomy, judging by the latest Caixin PMI data.

A meltdown in real estate investment, as well as potential loss of export orders, are leaving a huge hole in aggregate demand. According to a back-of-the-envelope calculation from Alpine Macro, a financial research outlet, China needs to deploy a spending package of at least 4% of gross domestic product per year to get out of its deflationary trap, and more if harsh tariffs are imposed.

Second, a currency war may just be necessary. So far, the People's Bank of China has been reluctant to weaken its daily fix, keeping it stronger than 7.2 per dollar over fears of excessive capital outflows. But if a big stimulus package doesn't come about, interest rate cuts and a weaker yuan may be the only way to counter Trump's tariffs.

Third, it's time to give away some of China's crown jewels. Trump has expressed interest in ByteDance Ltd.'s TikTok, saying that the US sovereign wealth fund he's creating could end up buying the social media platform, which is not available in China.

While Beijing is reportedly planning to treat TikTok as a "commercial matter," meaning the government intends to stay out of the way and let ByteDance's investors negotiate a sale, some of the bids out there can be humiliating. One group of buyers, for instance, offered only \$20 billion, even though analysts say TikTok could be worth well north of \$100 billion. Beijing needs to swallow its pride and stay out of the way, however this deal plays out.

Dealing with an unpredictable, domineering Trump requires a strong leader that can make sacrifices and act in his citizens' best interests. China's Mr. Big, are you who they say you are? [Abridged]

Courtesy Bloomberg/Shuli Ren

PAKISTAN'S PRESIDENT SAYS EXTREMIST ATTACKS WON'T END FRIENDSHIP WITH CHINA

Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari said yesterday that his country's friendship with China has "gone through ups and downs" but it won't be broken down by extremist attacks that have killed Chinese nationals that have killed Chinese nationals.

"Pakistan and China will always be friends, all-weather friends," he said at the opening of talks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. "No matter how many terrors, how many issues crop up in the world, I will stand, Pakistan people will stand with the people of China."

Thousands of Chinese workers work in Pakistan on road and other

infrastructure projects under China's multibillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to improve trade routes and deepen China's ties with the rest of the world.

Chinese workers have been among those targeted in attacks in recent years, including seven who died last year in two separate attacks that raised renewed alarm in China.

Zardari arrived in China Tuesday on a four-day visit that will also take him to the wintry northeastern city of Harbin for the opening ceremony of the 9th Asian Winter Games.



AP PHOTO

AT LEAST 10 KILLED IN SWEDEN'S WORST MASS SHOOTING, GUNMAN ALSO DEAD

SERGEI GRITS & STEFANIE DAZIO, OREBRO

SWEDEN'S worst mass shooting left at least 11 people dead, including the gunman, and at least five seriously wounded at an adult education center west of Stockholm.

The gunman's motive hadn't been determined by yesterday as the Scandinavian nation — where gun violence at schools is very rare — reeled from an attack.

Officials said yesterday that three women and two men, all with gunshot wounds, underwent surgery at Orebro University Hospital. All were in serious but stable condition after being admitted to the hospital with life-threatening injuries. Another woman was treated for minor injuries and was stable.

Jonas Claesson, regional director of health and medical services, said that two of the gunshot victims were in intensive care yesterday. All of the victims are over age 18, officials said. No other patients related to the shooting were admitted to Orebro University Hospital overnight.

The school, called Campus Risbergsska, offers primary and secondary educational classes for adults age 20 and older, Swedish-language classes for immigrants, vocational training and programs for people with

intellectual disabilities. The school is on the outskirts of Orebro, which is about 200 kilometers west of Stockholm.

Justice Minister Gunnar Strömmer called the shooting "an event that shakes our entire society to its core." King Carl XVI Gustaf and Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson ordered flags to be flown at half-staff at the Royal Palace and government buildings.

The king and Queen Silvia were in Orebro and would visit the school district and attend a memorial service in the city, the palace said. Kristersson and Strömmer would also be there. Soccer teams Degerfors IF and Orebro Syrianska will wear black armbands at a preseason match today [Macau time] and hold a minute's silence before kickoff, Degerfors said.

The shooting started Tuesday afternoon [local time] after many students had gone home following a national exam. Students sheltered in nearby buildings, and other parts of the school were evacuated following the shooting.

Authorities were working to identify the deceased. Police said that officers discovered the gunman dead at the school when they arrived. It was unclear how the gunman died.

Roberto Eid Forest, head of the local police, said that the school's large premises

meant it took a long time for officers to search the campus to ensure there were not any more victims. Police heard gunshots when they arrived and initially thought they were being fired upon, he said.

Eid Forest said that six officers were treated for smoke inhalation. There wasn't a fire, he said, but authorities didn't immediately know what caused the smoke.

Investigators will spend Wednesday seeking information from witnesses and checking any video footage of the attack. Police wouldn't say whether the shooter had multiple guns.

There were no warnings beforehand, and police believe the perpetrator acted alone. Police haven't said if the man was a student at the school. They haven't released a possible motive, but authorities said there were no suspected connections to terrorism at this point.

Police raided the suspect's home after the shooting, but it wasn't immediately clear what they found. Police cautioned the public against spreading incorrect narratives on social media.

"Today, we have witnessed brutal, deadly violence against completely innocent people," the prime minister told reporters in Stockholm yesterday [Macau time]. "This is the worst mass shooting in Swedish history." MDT/AP



AP PHOTO

India Hundreds of Naga Sadhus, naked and ash-smeared, joined the Maha Kumbh festival in Prayagraj, India. These warrior monks, revered for their renunciation, bathed in the holy Ganges. New initiates underwent rituals, severing ties with worldly life. Millions attended the Hindu festival, seeking blessings



AP PHOTO

Myanmar Yesterday, a third auction attempt for Aung San Suu Kyi's historic Yangon home failed. The \$141 million asking price drew no bidders amid Myanmar's civil war. The property, linked to her pro-democracy struggle, remains unsold as she serves a 27-year prison sentence.



AP PHOTO

Japan Northern Japan saw record snowfall, with Hokkaido's Obihiro receiving 129 cm (4 feet). Flights and trains were disrupted, roads shut, and schools closed. Authorities warned of continued snowfall. Sapporo's snow festival remains unaffected despite the severe winter conditions affecting travel and services.



AP PHOTO

Greenland's parliament passed a law yesterday [Macau time] banning foreign political donations, citing geopolitical tensions. The move follows Trump's renewed interest in acquiring the Arctic territory. U.S. and Russian figures have expressed interest in Greenland, which remains a strategic location under Danish sovereignty.