

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

CTM 5.5G
is the first to launch 5.5G in Macau
Speed Power Up
Experience hassle-free travel
FREE upgrade automatically to all 5G customers
www.ctm.net.mo
MULTI-MEDIA: 1000
CTM

LAWMAKER WONG EMPHASIZES THE URGENT NEED TO INCREASE MATERNITY LEAVE TO 90 DAYS, ALIGNING WITH THOSE OF CIVIL SERVANTS

P4

MACAU POSTAL SERVICES TO THE UNITED STATES RESUME

P2

OPENAI REJECTS MUSK'S OFFER TO BUY CHATGPT'S OWNER FOR \$100 BILLION

P6



AP PHOTO



South Korea A teacher in Daejeon fatally stabbed a first-grade student on Monday during after-school care. The suspect, a woman in her 40s, had a history of depression treatment. The attack prompted South Korea's acting president to demand yesterday a school safety review.

AP PHOTO



Chinese refiners received discounted Russian ESPO crude offers yesterday as concerns over U.S. sanctions persisted, Bloomberg reported. Traders reported March-loading cargoes at \$2 to \$3 per barrel above Brent, down from January's \$5 premium, as logistical and administrative hurdles impacted the trade.

AP PHOTO



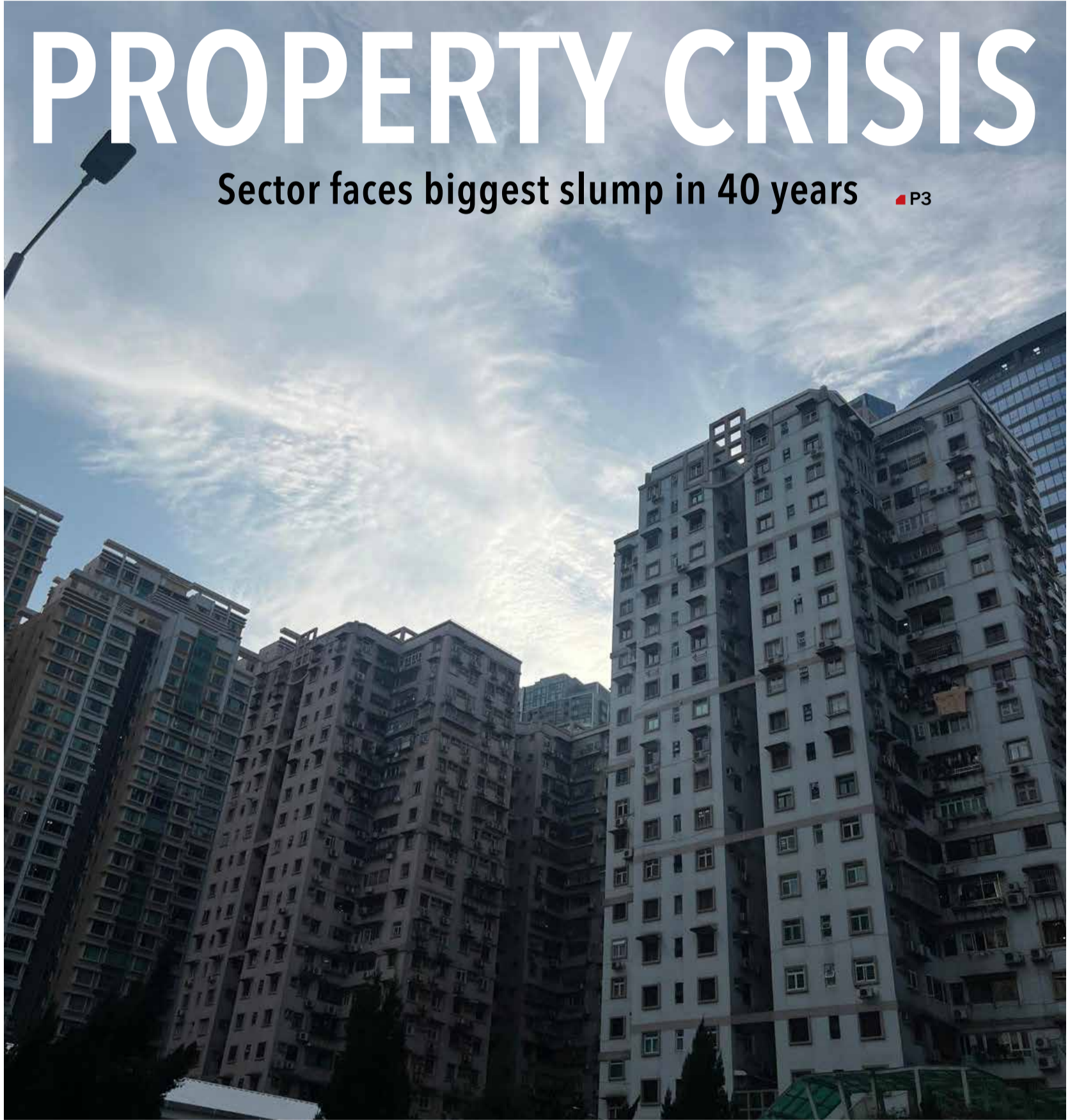
Asian stocks declined yesterday after U.S. President Donald Trump imposed 25% tariffs on steel and aluminum imports. The Hang Seng index dropped 1.06%, while Shanghai's market dipped 0.12%. South Korea's KOSPI, however, gained 0.71% despite broader concerns about trade tensions.

AP PHOTO



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen warned yesterday that new U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum "will not go unanswered." She vowed retaliatory measures, while German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said the European Union would respond decisively if the tariffs remained in place.

More on backpage



PROPERTY CRISIS

Sector faces biggest slump in 40 years P3

LYNZY VALLES

PROPERTY
'CONCERT ECONOMY' BOOSTS TRANSACTIONS IN OLD TAIPA

P3

HEALTH
ASSOCIATIONS URGE FREE FLU VACCINES FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

P3

ELDERLY WOMAN LOSES MOP1 MILLION IN SCAM

An elderly woman is suspected of falling victim to a fraud, resulting in a loss of MOP1.09 million. The Judiciary Police were alerted after bank staff noticed suspicious online transfers from the woman's account since December 2024. The woman reported receiving a call from someone claiming to be a "mainland police officer," who convinced her to cooperate in a supposed investigation. Believing the scam, she provided personal details and transferred the money in several batches to the fraudster's account.

O LAM CALLS FOR FOSTERING INTERNATIONAL TALENT

The Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, O Lam, convened with senior officials from local higher education institutions to address the development of higher education and the promotion of Macau as a hub for international talent. The meeting emphasized the need to integrate education, science, and technology. The officials put forward suggestions on cultivating and retaining scientific and technological talents, internationalizing higher education, and promoting industry-university-research collaboration and regional cooperation.

MAINLAND TOURIST DROWNS IN MACAU HOTEL POOL

A 40-year-old woman from mainland China drowned in a hotel pool in Macau on Monday, despite emergency medical treatment. The Fire Services Bureau reported that she showed no signs of life when found by her family, who discovered her floating unconscious at approximately 4:40 p.m. The hotel, located on Avenida Doutor Sun Yat-Sen, has not provided further details. Authorities confirmed her death yesterday, raising concerns about safety protocols in local hotels, as similar incidents have occurred in the past.

9TH ASIAN WINTER GAMES

MACAU ICE HOCKEY TEAM ENDS PARTICIPATION WITH WIN OVER BAHRAIN

RENATO MARQUES

THE local ice hockey team has ended its participation in the 9th Asian Winter Games, which are taking place in Harbin, China. Finishing 13th out of 14 teams, the local squad concluded the games with a 4-3 win over Bahrain, after some disappointing results, notably in the first two matches when the local team was defeated by Hong Kong (26-1) and Turkmenistan (26-0).

Clearly unfit to participate in such a high-level competition, the Macau team conceded 15 goals in the third period of the match against Turkmenistan. In the third match, against India, the local team, despite losing 4-2, managed to balance the game more against an opponent at their level.

The local team was led by Edison Sou, who scored three of Macau's seven goals in the tournament, with the other four coming from Argus Hong, Yeung Ho Yin, Katsuyoshi Shinoda, and Herminio Cheng.

Although the results were not impressive, Macau's participation in the competition should be viewed in light of the fact that the city has only about 100 players and a single, inadequate ice rink that does not meet minimum training standards.

Before the games, the team captain, Leong Chon Kong, had



already admitted in an interview with the media that the squad would be going up against some of the best teams in Asia, making the task even harder.

Still, Leong expressed his hope that Macau could win against nations with similar resources, such as India and Bahrain.

According to Leong, the goal was to win at least one game, which was finally achieved. "Against other teams, [such as Hong Kong and Turkmenistan], we're not focused on the result, but on achieving our best per-

formance, learning more, and hopefully scoring some goals." In addition to the poor conditions for practicing the sport in Macau, the local team also faced the hurdle of having to train in Zhuhai during the preparation stage for the Winter Games, since the only rink, located at Future Bright Amusement Park next to Camões Garden, is under renovation.

In the same interview, Hong noted issues with training in Zhuhai. First, they could only do one training session per week,

and second, the commuting time was too long.

"Training in Zhuhai takes over an hour [of commuting] just to get there from Taipa," he said. The 9th Asian Winter Games were officially inaugurated last Friday (Feb. 7) and will run for a week until Feb. 14. The Chief Executive, Sam Hou Fai, attended the opening ceremony. The 28 athletes of the ice hockey team were the only representatives from Macau at the games, which included 64 events in 11 different sports.

Postal services to the US resumed

VICTORIA CHAN

MACAU'S postal service, Correios e Telecomunicações (CTT), announced the full resumption of all mail services to the United States starting yesterday. This decision follows a brief suspension of services due to restrictions imposed by the United States Postal Service (USPS) policy changes tied to new tariffs on Chinese goods.



Earlier this week, the USPS had temporarily halted the acceptance of international parcels from China and Hong Kong, which also affected

shipments from Macau.

The suspension, which initially impacted small packages and surface mail parcels, was implemented after the USPS halted international parcel acceptance from China, Hong Kong, and Macau, specifically impacting express-cargo deliveries to Illinois. However, the US reversed the ban just one day later, citing collaboration with Customs and

Border Protection to manage new tariff collections and responding to potential disruptions for online shopping platforms popular among US consumers. Despite the USPS's reversal, CTT had maintained its stance on the suspension of parcel deliveries to the US., advising customers to monitor their website for updates. CTT cautioned customers about potential delivery delays due to the backlog caused by the suspension and advised checking its website for updates.

www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

REACHING OUT!

+25,000

Like us on facebook.com/mdtimes



MacauDaily 澳門每日時報
Times

DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR_Lynzy Valles
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS_Alex Torrão, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Segú, Victoria Chan DESIGNER_Melissandre Denize | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacaoNews, Xinhua SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

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

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

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

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

Advertisement advertising@macaudailytimes.com

For subscription and general issues:

general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

Property sector faces worst crisis in 40 years

VICTORIA CHAN

THE city's property sector is grappling with its worst downturn in four decades, as house prices plummet to levels not seen since 2012, according to the Association of Property Agents and Realty Developers of Macau.

In January, the average price per square meter dropped below 70,000 patacas, a significant decline from just over 86,000 patacas throughout 2023. "Real estate is in the worst environment in 40 years," said Ung Choi Kun, head of the association, on the sidelines of an event earlier this week.

"Today, a decade later, prices are the same as they were back then. That's more than 80,000 patacas per square foot. But in reality, if you put a house on the market now, its value has actually dropped by more than 50%, and no one is buying it."

Although the number of transactions increased slightly last year to 3,057 autonomous units, it remains a stark contrast to the 2,913 deals recorded in 2023, the



lowest figure since 2018.

The lackluster post-pandemic recovery has prompted the government to abolish tax incentives aimed at boosting home pur-

chases, but these measures have yet to yield significant results.

Recent data from the Monetary Authority of Macau showed a nearly 18% decline in new mor-

tgage applications in December.

Despite a 36.5% rise in new loan requests from October to December, banks are hesitant to lend, particularly for older

properties, due to the declining market value of such homes.

"The old city has not undergone any major transformation," Ung stated.

"We must explore ways to revitalize it. Supportive housing is crucial for those willing to invest, and the government should assist them in purchasing these properties." He emphasized the importance of a comprehensive support network to facilitate urban renewal, which he views as essential for revitalizing the sector. Ung pointed out that urban renewal could benefit both the real estate and financial industries, noting a significant increase in non-performing loans, which rose from 0.3% in 2020 to 5.5% in November 2024.

Government statistics indicate that as of June 2024, over 32,000 homes in Macau were more than 40 years old, representing nearly 14% of the total housing stock.

Ung warned that without decisive action, the sector's decline could have lasting repercussions on the city's economy.

'Concert economy' boosts real estate transactions in Old Taipa

MACAU'S concert scene has had a significant impact on the local real estate market, according to Centaline Property.

The number of concerts held in Macau has increased significantly in recent years, with an average of three to five concerts per week.

This has resulted in a surge of inbound tourists, with over 1.3 million visitors recorded during the recent eight-day Spring Festival holiday, including a record-breaking 219,000 tourists on the third day of the Lunar New Year.

"The 'concert economy' has driven business for companies around the venues, especially in the Rua do Cunha business district," the realtor said in a press release.



VICTORIA CHAN

According to data from Centaline, the number of purchase and sale transactions in Taipa last year increased by nearly 60% year-on-year, totaling around MOP642 million.

Investors have been particularly active in the Rua do Cunha business district, drawn by rental returns of around 3% to 4%, and individual shops reaching up to 5%.

By the end of last year, several "six-digit" rental tran-

sactions, ranging from MOP100,000 to MOP300,000, were recorded in the area.

"Amid a series of favorable travel news, the number of tourists visiting Macau is expected to show an upward trend," the realtor said.

Moreover, long-term prospects for the Rua do Cunha business district are optimistic, with the entry point for investments ranging from MOP30 million to MOP150 million. VC

HEALTH

ASSOCIATIONS URGE FREE FLU VACCINES FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

VICTORIA CHAN

FOLLOWING two flu-related deaths in Macau, local associations are calling for domestic workers to be included in the free flu vaccination program, citing their critical role in caregiving and the heightened risk during peak flu season.

Ao Ieong Kuong Kao, president of the Macau Oversea Worker Employment Agency Association, highlighted the importance of protecting non-resident workers especially domestic workers, who play a crucial role in caring for families and often face financial barriers to vaccination.

Ao Ieong noted the rising proportion of elderly over 65 in Macau, whose weaker immune systems face higher risks from influenza.

Domestic workers care for the elderly and children, so their health directly impacts family infection rates.

Yet, foreign workers are currently excluded from free flu shots, and some domestic workers may forgo vaccination due to costs, creating a preventive gap.

Ao Ieong advocates free vaccination and multilingual public awareness campaigns to inform domestic workers about flu risks and prevention, adding that efforts can ensure all domestic workers are aware of available measures.

Yesterday, the Health Bureau (SSM) said it has procured 11,000 extra flu vaccines to address the recent surge in demand.

LYNZZY VALLES



This new supply will enable expanded vaccination quotas, allowing specific age groups to receive walk-in services without needing an appointment.

Health officials confirmed that the influenza virus is currently active in Macau, with the epidemic having reached its peak.

The SSM urged residents, particularly high-risk groups such as pregnant women, children, the elderly, and individuals with chronic illnesses, to get vaccinated promptly.

To facilitate this, flu vaccination services will be available at multiple health centers across Macau from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

WONG KIT CHENG URGES NEED TO RAISE MATERNITY LEAVE TO 90 DAYS

LYNZY VALLES

LAWMAKER Wong Kit Cheng has emphasized the urgent need to raise maternity leave benefits to 90 days, aligning with the same duration offered to civil servants, as outlined in the Macau Women's Development Goal Plan.

As an advocate for women's rights, Wong pointed out that one of the key issues raised by civil society organizations, including the Women's General Association of Macau (which she chairs), is the inadequacy of maternity leave and the lack of support for families.

However, Wong acknowledged that amending the labor relations law to accommodate these changes has not yet been discussed, and no mechanism has been activated to do so.

"At this stage, while we await legislative changes, we suggest the government introduce temporary measures," Wong explained to the press on the sidelines of the Legislative Assembly Spring Lunch on Monday.

"One possible solution could be to transform the current subsidy program into an administrative regulation. This would allow the government to provide subsidies to businesses, encouraging them to adopt family-friendly policies, such as extended maternity leave."

Under the labor law, female employees are entitled to 70 days of maternity leave, an increase from 54 days in 2020.

Last year, the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) has confirmed that the Macau Women's De-



velopment Goal Plan is on track to be fully implemented by this year.

Among the five measures that will be further promoted this year are initiatives aimed at enhancing family-friendly policies within the public sector and fostering a supportive environment for women in private enterprises.

Meanwhile, Wong noted that the government could use incentives, rather than direct legislation, to motivate businesses to offer paid maternity leave.

"Given the current government expenditure and the foundation laid by the existing 14-day subsidy program, extending the subsidy by an additional 20 days seems entirely feasible," she said.

"This would help stimula-

te the birth rate and address some of the financial pressures families face during the postnatal period."

The lawmaker also called on the government to address other key factors influencing the birth rate, such as child care allowances, birth allowances, and related subsidies. She stressed that these measures could significantly alleviate financial pressures on families and improve their overall well-being, making it easier for them to raise children.

While Wong recognizes the importance of policy changes, she believes that a multifaceted approach is necessary.

"Family services, child care services, and healthcare are all essential components of a supportive environment for fa-

milies," she said.

"The government must actively engage with relevant organizations and service providers to enhance these services and improve the overall family-friendly environment in Macau."

As the Times reported earlier this week, Macau's declining birth rate has become a significant demographic concern, reflecting broader trends across China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

Data from the United Nations suggests that in 2024, Macau, China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan are part of a growing group of regions where fertility rates have dipped to alarmingly low levels.

Macau's fertility rate stands at 0.68, one of the lowest globally, and Hong Kong is not

far behind with 0.73 births per woman.

RISING DEMAND FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

Wong said that the number of individuals seeking help from mental health services has increased, and that the association's psychological counseling center has seen a surge in cases. She called for the government to enhance resources for mental health prevention, including promoting counseling services in schools and increasing the number of community centers offering mental health support.

Wong further emphasized that economic development is closely tied to the well-being of its citizens, noting that "the economy cannot grow without addressing people's livelihoods."

Therefore, it is essential that the government continues to focus on the moderate and diversified development of the economy," she explained.

"By strengthening welfare policies, the government can ensure that residents share in the benefits of economic growth."

Wong also stressed the need for better housing policies, particularly for new families. She argued that rising housing costs are a significant barrier for many families considering having children.

"The government should introduce more subsidies or protections for families, particularly those with single-income households, to alleviate housing-related financial pressures," she said.

The lawmaker expressed hopes that the government will take a more proactive role in supporting family development, calling for concrete measures to support families in all aspects—housing, employment, healthcare, and childcare.

GOVERNANCE

Lawmakers find new gov't less 'approachable'

RENATO MARQUES

LAWMAKERS have found Sam Hou Fai's new government much more distant and less willing to listen to society's opinions.

José Pereira Coutinho told the media earlier this week, on the sidelines of the Legislative Assembly (AL) Spring Lunch, that since the new Chief Executive (CE) was elected, he has become distant from people and reluctant to meet them or hear their opinions.

More concerning, the lawmaker said that this "new

approach" to governance seems to extend to the five secretaries, who have also been following this trend.

For Pereira Coutinho, it is evident that this government has distanced itself from the public and the media, communicating with the population almost exclusively via press statements.

"We are noticing a clear difference between the [campaign period], when it was easier to have access to the CE [candidate], and now, as the CE is becoming harder to reach. There is a



distancing," he said.

He also mentioned that even though he does not favor this style of governance, the most crucial part of the



government's work is the creation of policies and how they are implemented.

He hopes these policies align with the genuine

needs of the population in addressing issues such as declining purchasing power, unemployment, and underemployment, especially among youth, recent university graduates, and those who lost their jobs during the pandemic and have struggled to recover since.

In an interview with the public broadcaster TDM, Ron Lam corroborated Pereira Coutinho's opinion, disagreeing with Sam's government's "new methods" and communication style.

"I disagree with this practice of news disclosure. The

government needs to communicate directly with the associations and the population. This is what shows an integrated society."

Additionally, lawmaker Ella Lei expressed hope that the government would be more transparent with the public regarding official data and policies.

She noted that in addition to taking the initiative to release information, the government should allow the media and the public to learn more about different topics, particularly concerning policies.

"Promoting policies and gathering feedback on them are two distinct ways for the government to obtain public opinions," she concluded.

TRADE WAR | ANALYSIS

Iran loosens import restrictions on foreign cars and iPhones, trying to mask its economic woes

AMIR VAHDAT, TEHRAN

ALL architecture student Amirhossein Azizi wanted for his 19th birthday was the latest iPhone — and for Iran's cash-strapped theocracy, it was just the gift they needed as well.

Just buying a top-of-the-line iPhone 16 Pro Max in Iran's capital cost him on the day 1.6 billion rials (\$1,880). An additional 450 million rials (\$530) is required for import fees and registration on government-managed mobile phone networks.

"I'm very happy to own one of the most expensive phones in the country," Azizi said. His father, Mohammad, laughed nearby and added: "Maybe if they had to earn the money themselves, they wouldn't be so quick to spend it."

The purchase is only possible after Iran lifted import bans on expensive goods like foreign cars and new iPhones, yielding to public demand for the products while also trying to mask the dire straits of its economy.

While being described as a way to boost Iran's much-vaunted "resistance economy," the decisions trapped Iranians into buying more affordable locally produced vehicles long derided as "death wagons" and boosted the prices of aging, second-hand iPhones.

They also provide Iran with much-needed tax revenues as its government struggles under



international sanctions over its nuclear program. Uncertainty over how U.S. President Donald Trump will deal with Iran also has put pressure on its rial currency, which sits at record lows against the dollar.

Powerful forces within Iran long have been believed to be taking advantage of the sanctions, while those benefiting may just be among the country's most well-off citizens.

"It's more about perception than reality," Iranian economist Saeed Leilaz said.

'RESISTANCE' ECONOMICS AT PLAY

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, now 85, first proposed the idea nearly 15 years ago as Tehran faced its first round of intense sanctions over its nuclear program, which the

West fears puts the Islamic Republic at the precipice of obtaining an atomic bomb. Iran maintains its program is peaceful — even as it enriches uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels.

"Sanctions are not new for us," Khamenei said in a 2010 speech. "All achievements have been made and all the great movements of the people of Iran have been launched while we were under sanctions."

In some ways, it's worked for Iran's ruling clerics since Trump unilaterally reimposed sanctions on Tehran after withdrawing America from the 2015 nuclear deal. Iran struck deals with China to continuing buying its crude oil, likely at a discount.

Those in Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, which has grown into a major power center

under Khamenei, handle the sales — both funding their operations against Israel during the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip and creating a new wealthy elite loyal to Khamenei.

But for the average person, there's clearly a before and an after for the life under the nuclear deal, which saw Iran agree to drastically limit its enrichment and overall stockpile of uranium.

At the time of the deal, the Iranian rial traded at 32,000 to \$1. A decade later, \$1 is worth 928,500 rials. The public's savings have evaporated, pushing average Iranians into holding onto gold, real estate and other tangible wealth. Others pursue cryptocurrencies or fall to get-rich schemes.

IRAN LIFTS IMPORT RESTRICTIONS, SEEKING CASH

Iran banned the import of foreign cars in 2017, while not allowing iPhones newer than the 13 to be registered on the country's mobile phone networks. The phone decision set off a scramble for older iPhones, boosting their price, while used car prices for foreign models remain high as well.

In the last Persian year ending in March 2024, Iran imported \$3.2 billion worth of mobile phones, customs data shows. The cut for high-end iPhones makes them a lucrative option to plug some of the gaping holes in Iran's government spending

— though Iran's foreign currency reserves remain low due to sanctions.

"Lifting restrictions on a few platforms or allowing iPhone imports are the kinds of steps the government can take quickly and with minimal cost to create a sense of progress," said Leilaz, the economist.

Such decisions also provide a quick win for Iran's reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian with Iran's elite — though it doesn't address any of the longer-term economic problems.

For cars, former President Hassan Rouhani banned imports of fully built foreign vehicles in 2018, after Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the nuclear deal. While in theory protecting Iranian foreign reserves, it also backed up local automobile manufacturers, whose products have long been criticized for not meeting international safety and quality standards — hence their "death wagon" monikers.

Experts believe if Iran's government allowed more lower-priced, higher-quality imports, the country's automobile manufacturers would lose their edge. Restrictions still limit the number of foreign cars that can come into the country and tariffs that Pezeshkian wants lowered may have been again placed at 100%.

"Since the number of newly imported cars is still limited, only a few people can afford them," said Saber, a car dealer in Tehran who spoke on condition only his first name be used to be able to discuss the issue frankly. "As a result, imported cars have skyrocketed in price on the open market."

As Iran's economy worsens, its theocracy worries conditions could again push the public back onto the streets in nationwide protests. That's why officials up to Khamenei have backed the idea of talking again to the West. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Rainie Yang to perform at The Venetian Arena



Renowned Chinese pop singer Rainie Yang will perform on March 15 at The Venetian Arena, the gaming operator announced in a statement.

The concert, titled "Rainie Yang Another Star Concert," will feature Yang's vocal talent, combining emotional depth with energetic perfor-

mances.

The setlist will include some of her popular songs, such as "Ambiguous Love," "Traces of Time in Love," and "Rainie & Love."

Yang initially gained recognition as a member of the Taiwanese girl group '4 in Love', later expanding her career to include acting, singing, and hosting on television and variety shows.

Since 2020, Yang has held the "Rainie Yang Like A Star World Tour" in multiple cities, receiving positive responses from audiences.

To date, she has released 12 albums.

Michelin Guide Ceremony to be held in March



The Michelin Guide Ceremony will take place on March 15 at Grand Lisboa Palace Re-

sort Macau, unveiling the 17th edition of the Michelin Guide Hong Kong & Macau restau-

rant selection, according to a recent press release.

The ceremony is expected to be a key event for food enthusiasts and industry professionals, gathering culinary talent to celebrate the dining scene in Hong Kong and Macau.

One week before the ceremony, the Bib Gourmand selection, highlighting restaurants offering "good quality, good value cooking," will be announced.

The Michelin Guide evaluates restaurants based on five key criteria: the quality of ingredients, mastery of cooking techniques, harmony of flavors, the chef's personality reflected in the cuisine, and consistency.

TECH | ANALYSIS

DeepSeek's meteoric rise sparks billion-dollar debate

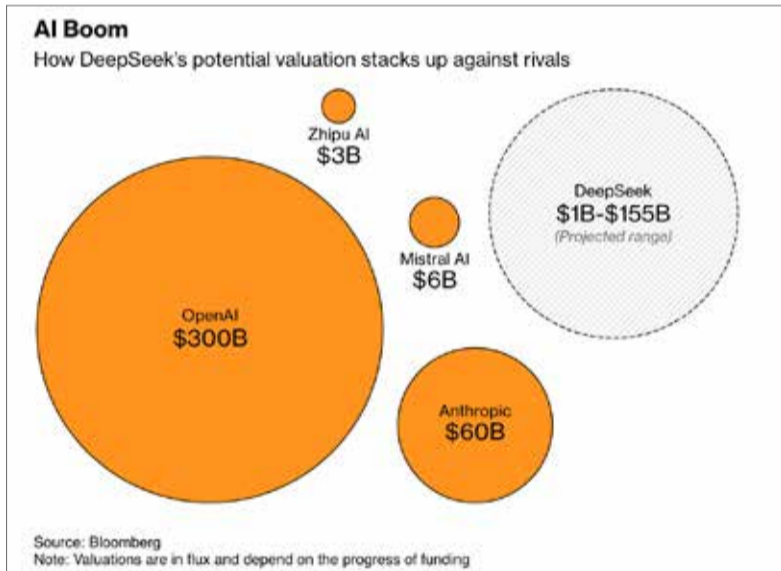
IN less than two years, DeepSeek—a Chinese startup that began as a side project—has become the subject of heated valuation debates across the global tech community. Estimates for the company's worth range from a modest \$1 billion to an astronomical \$150 billion, leaving investors, startup founders, and AI experts divided on its true value.

As Bloomberg noted, "Even staying on the conservative side, the company could easily obtain a valuation in the billions with only a few million in existing revenue—not to mention taking future growth into account," quoting Rudina Seseri, founder and managing partner of Boston-based Glasswing Ventures.

A survey of AI specialists and startup founders compiled by Bloomberg revealed that while some experts peg DeepSeek's value at the lower end of the spectrum, others—like Chanakya Ramdev, founder of Waterloo-based Sweat Free Telecom—are far more bullish. Ramdev asserted that DeepSeek could be valued at nearly half of OpenAI's estimated \$300 billion worth, which would translate to a staggering personal holding of about \$126 billion for founder Liang Wenfeng, given his 84% stake. That estimate—albeit a significant outlier—would give Liang a holding worth \$126 billion, a fortune higher than Nvidia Corp.'s Jensen Huang, the world's richest chip billionaire, according to according the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

Many of these valuation estimates stem from comparisons with other high-profile AI startups. Bloomberg's analysis points to Amazon-backed Anthropic, valued at \$60 billion, and French contender Mistral AI, with a valuation near \$6 billion, as benchmarks. "Some of the estimates draw on comparisons with the world's best-known AI startups," Bloomberg reported, adding that Chinese counterparts like Zhipu AI have been valued at around \$3 billion following recent funding rounds.

Despite these comparisons, the lack of transparent financials keeps the debate lively. "It's basically impossible to give a convincing answer here because it's a secretive, priva-



tely owned firm that is internally funded by the founder's trading profits," explained Jeffrey Emanuel, founder and CEO of New York-based blockchain startup Pastel Network. This opacity has allowed for wildly divergent opinions on what DeepSeek is truly worth, Bloomberg contends.

DEEPSEEK'S DISRUPTIVE IMPACT

DeepSeek's influence extends far beyond valuation debates.

The company has already secured "hundreds" of corporate licenses for its AI technology, and its innovative chatbot application has been compared favorably to those developed by Silicon Valley giants—all at a fraction of the cost. Bloomberg reported that DeepSeek upended many of the assumptions inside Silicon Valley about the economics of building AI, an achievement that contributed to what

was described as "the biggest stock wipeout in Nvidia's history" last month.

In parallel, a recent report from China Daily paints a picture of DeepSeek as a "flagship enterprise" in China's burgeoning tech ecosystem. The state-owned publication highlighted the company's disruptive, lower-cost AI model and its potential to challenge established international players. "DeepSeek's technology has not only attracted attention domestically but has also sent ripples across international tech circles," China Daily observed, noting that local tech firms are expected to make significant strategic investments in the startup.

These investments, according to Bloomberg, could mirror the early strategic moves by Microsoft in OpenAI. "I could easily see those companies making very large strategic investments in DeepSeek at what might look

like uneconomic valuations," Emanuel said, underscoring the strategic importance that many see in aligning with the company's innovative approach.

FROM MODEST BEGINNINGS TO AI 'LUMINARY'

The dramatic rise of DeepSeek is inextricably linked to the story of its founder, Liang Wenfeng. Liang's trajectory from a "nerd"—as a former intern once described him—to one of Asia's most closely watched tech figures is a narrative steeped in determination and innovation. Born in 1985 in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province, he studied electronic engineering at Zhejiang University, a prestigious college in the city of Hangzhou, and also earned a master's degree in information and communication engineering there.

Before establishing DeepSeek, Liang had already made his mark in the world of finance, having built a quant hedge fund that at one point managed a staggering \$12 billion. In 2023, as an offshoot of the AI division of Zhejiang High-Flyer Asset Management—a firm he co-founded with two colleagues from Zhejiang University—DeepSeek emerged. This venture was initially conceived as a means to apply advanced AI to financial trading, but it soon evolved into a broader technological enterprise with implications far beyond its humble origins.

China Daily's coverage further emphasizes Liang's status as a visionary. The report remarked, Liang's transformation from a diligent student to a tech entrepreneur of international repute "is a testament to the innovative spirit driving China's tech revolution." His leadership and technical prowess have positioned DeepSeek at the forefront of the AI race, challenging the dominance of long-established Silicon Valley players, China Daily added.

OPENAI REJECTS MUSK OFFER

Adding to the complex valuation landscape, a group of investors led by Elon Musk is offering about \$97.4 billion to buy the nonprofit behind OpenAI, escalating a dispute with the artificial intelligence company that Musk helped

found a decade ago.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman quickly rejected the unsolicited bid on Musk's social platform X, saying, "no thank you but we will buy Twitter for \$9.74 billion if you want." Musk bought Twitter, now called X, for \$44 billion in 2022.

Musk and his own AI startup, xAI, and a consortium of investment firms want to take control of the ChatGPT maker and revert it to its original charitable mission as a nonprofit research lab, according to Musk's attorney Marc Toberoff.

Musk and Altman, who together helped start OpenAI in 2015 and later competed over who should lead it, have been in a long-running feud over the startup's direction since Musk resigned from its board in 2018.

Musk, an early OpenAI investor and board member, sued the company last year, first in a California state court and later in federal court, alleging it had betrayed its founding aims as a nonprofit research lab that would benefit the public good by safely building better-than-human AI. Musk had invested about \$45 million in the startup from its founding until 2018, Toberoff has said.

Within China, the government's support for homegrown technology further bolsters the company's prospects. China Daily has reported that DeepSeek's disruptive approach aligns with national ambitions to become self-reliant in key technological sectors, including AI. The publication quoted industry insiders who suggested, "DeepSeek's model of combining low-cost AI with high performance is exactly what the future of the tech sector looks like." This domestic backing may well propel DeepSeek into becoming a central player in China's tech renaissance, even as it navigates global markets.

DeepSeek's rapid ascent and the ensuing valuation debates have sent shockwaves through the broader technology and investment communities. Bloomberg's detailed analysis highlights that the company's success is not merely measured in revenue but in the potential to redefine economic models in AI. Even with only a few million in existing revenue the company's growth trajectory suggests "a multi-billion dollar valuation in the near future." Such projections have led to a flurry of interest from investors looking to secure early positions in what many see as the next big revolution in artificial intelligence. **PC/AGENCIES**

AUSTRALIA

Trump considering tariff exemptions on Australian steel and aluminum

ROD MCGUIRK, MELBOURNE

U.S. President Donald Trump said he agreed to consider a tariff exemption on Australian steel and aluminum imports after a telephone call yesterday with Australia's prime minister.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese argued for an exemption during the call, which was scheduled before Trump announced tariffs on steel and aluminum imports on Monday.

Trump said the United States trade surplus with Australia was one of the reasons he was considering an exemption from the tariffs.

"We actually have a surplus," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office about trade with Australia. "It's one of the only countries which we do. And I told (Albanese) that that's something that we'll give great consideration to."

Trump spoke after he removed exceptions and exemptions from his 2018 tariffs on steel, meaning that all steel imports



Albanese first got the news over a call with Trump

will be taxed at a minimum of 25%. Trump also hiked his 2018 aluminum tariffs to 25% from 10%.

Albanese had told reporters earlier in Canberra he made Australia's case for an exemption, and that both leaders agreed on wording to say publicly, "which is that the 'U.S. president agreed that an exemption was under consideration in the interests of both of our countries.'"

"They are the words that are agreed. They're the words that I'll stick to. And I can say, thou-

gh, that it was a very positive and constructive discussion," Albanese added.

Australia had an exemption from such tariffs during Trump's first administration.

Australia's arguments include that the country has run a trade deficit with the U.S. since the mid-20th century and Australian steelmaker BlueScope employs thousands of workers in the U.S. Australia has only a minor share of the U.S. markets.

Albanese on Tuesday also raised the AUKUS agreement with

the U.S. and Britain, struck with former President Joe Biden's administration, in which Australia will acquire a fleet of submarines powered by U.S. nuclear technology.

"Our steel and aluminum are both key inputs for the U.S.-Australia defense industries in both of our countries," Albanese said.

Australia announced over the weekend it had made the first of six \$500 million payments to the U.S. under AUKUS to boost U.S. submarine building capacity.

Trump intends to reset U.S. taxes on all imports to match the same levels charged by other countries, all of which comes on top of the 10% tariffs he has already put on China, China's retaliatory tariffs that started Monday and the U.S. tariffs planned for Canada and Mexico that have been suspended until March 1.

Tuesday's conversation was Albanese's second with Trump since the president was elected. Albanese said after the phone call the "relationship is in good shape." **MDT/AP**

PHILIPPINES

MARCOS JR. THANKS CAMBODIA FOR PARDONING 13 FILIPINO WOMEN CONVICTED OF ILLEGAL SURROGACY

PHILIPPINE President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. thanked Cambodia's king yesterday for granting a royal pardon last year to 13 Filipino women who were convicted of illegally serving as surrogate mothers in the Southeast Asian kingdom.

Marcos expressed his gratitude in a meeting with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet, who was visiting Manila for talks on expanding trade, agricultural, tourism, cultural and security relations.

The Philippines and Cambodia both belong to the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a regional bloc that promotes economic integration but is divided on other issues, including countries whose security alignments is with the United States or China.

Marcos has strengthened his country's treaty alliance with the United States to boost the Philippines' external defense as it confronts China's increasingly aggressive actions in the disputed South China Sea. Cambodia has long been known as a key backer of China in the region.

The 13 Filipino women were convicted in December in Cambodia on human trafficking-related charges for acting as surrogates for a criminal syndicate selling babies to foreigners for cash.

The women, who were in various stages of pregnancy, were each sentenced to four years in prison by a Cambodian court, but they avoided imprisonment and were instead flown back to the Philippines under a royal pardon granted by Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni.

"We will never forget this act of magnanimity from His Majesty, a testament to the strong relations between our two countries," Marcos said before a closed-door meeting with the Cambodian premier and his delegation in Manila.

"We will continue to stand with you in the fight against transnational crimes and their adverse effects on our peoples and on our communities," Marcos said.

The Filipino women were charged for violating a Cambodian law against human trafficking and sexual exploitation which was updated in 2016 to ban commercial surrogacy. Cambodia has become a popular destination for foreigners seeking women to give birth to their children. **MDT/AP**

SOUTH KOREA

Top think tank lowers economic growth projection, citing Trump's tariffs

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea's top economic think tank slashed its growth forecast for the country's economy for the second time in four months yesterday, expressing concern about the impact of U.S. President Donald Trump's expanding tariffs.

The Korea Development Institute now projects South Korea's economy to grow by 1.6% in 2025, which is 0.4 percentage points lower than its previous estimate announced in November.

Kim Jiyeon, a KDI economist, said the "deterioration of the trade environment" following



Trump's inauguration was a major factor. South Korea is also grappling with political instability caused by the impeachment and criminal indictment of President Yoon Suk Yeol after he briefly imposed martial law in December.

Domestic demand remains weak due to slowing consumer spending and a declining job

market, and the pace of exports is slowing with most key industries aside from semiconductors struggling to find momentum, said Jung Kyuchul, who heads KDI's macroeconomic analysis department. KDI could be further lower its growth projections if Trump's trade actions intensify or South Korea's political turmoil drags on, Jung

said.

"In November, we assumed that Trump's steps to increase tariffs would proceed gradually over time and wouldn't be carried out so quickly this year, but there have already been tariff increases targeting countries like China," Jung said in a briefing. "We expected that uncertainties would be gradually resolved after the Trump administration took office, but we are now in a situation where uncertainties have actually grown."

Trump this week announced plans to impose 25% tariffs on all foreign steel and aluminum, following his

decision last month to impose 10% duties on all Chinese imports, as he accelerates an aggressive push to reset global trade.

Jung said Trump's steel and aluminum tariffs won't likely have a major impact on South Korea's economy, as those products account for less than 1% of its exports to the United States. However, Trump says he is also contemplating tariffs on cars, semiconductors and pharmaceuticals.

"Since our semiconductor exports are substantial, the economic impact would be considerable if that sector takes a hit," Jung said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



USA

Trump signs order for plastic straws as he declares paper ones 'don't work'

MATTHEW DALY,
WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Donald Trump said yesterday [Macau time] he is banning federal use of paper straws, saying they "don't work" and don't last very long. Instead he wants the government to exclusively move to plastic.

"It's a ridiculous situation. We're going back to plastic straws," Trump said as he signed an executive order to reverse federal purchasing policies that encourage paper straws and restrict plastic ones. The order directs federal agencies to stop buying paper straws "and otherwise ensure that paper straws are no longer provided within agency buildings."

The move by Trump — who has long railed against paper straws, and whose 2019 reelection campaign sold Trump-branded reusable plastic straws for \$15 per pack of 10 — targets a Biden administration policy to phase out federal purchases of single-use plastics, including straws, from food service operations, events and packaging by 2027, and from all federal operations by 2035.

Trump declared President Joe Biden's policy "DEAD!" in a social media post over the weekend.

While plastic straws have been blamed for polluting oceans and harming marine

life, Trump said that he thinks "it's OK" to continue using them. "I don't think that plastic is going to affect the shark very much as they're eating, as they're munching their way through the ocean," he said at a White House announcement.

Several U.S. states and cities have banned plastic straws, and some restaurants no longer automatically give them to customers. But plastic straws are only a small part of the problem. The environment is littered with single-use plastic food and beverage containers — water bottles, takeout containers, coffee lids, shopping bags and more.

Around the world, the equivalent of one garbage truck of plastic enters the ocean every minute from a range of sources, including plastic bags, toothbrushes, bottles, food packaging and more, experts say. As those materials break down in the environment, microplastics are turning up in the stomachs of fish, birds and other animals, as well as in human blood and tissue.

And plastic manufacturing releases planet-warming greenhouse gases and other dangerous pollutants. More than 90% of plastic products are derived from fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas, and millions of tons of plastic waste enter the world's oceans every year. Many multinational companies have moved

away from plastic straws and have made reducing plastic use across their operations central to their sustainability goals, making Trump's decision an outlier in the business world.

Trump's order is "more about messaging than finding solutions," said Christy Leavitt, plastics campaign director for the environmental group Oceana, noting that most U.S. voters support requiring companies to reduce single-use plastic packaging and foodware.

"President Trump is moving in the wrong direction on single-use plastics," Leavitt said. "The world is facing a plastic pollution crisis, and we can no longer ignore one of the biggest environmental threats facing our oceans and our planet today."

The plastic manufacturing industry applauded Trump's move.

"Straws are just the beginning," Matt Seaholm, president and CEO of the Plastics Industry Association, said in a statement. "Back to Plastic' is a movement we should all get behind."

More than 390 million straws are used every day in the United States, mostly for 30 minutes or less, according to advocacy group Straws Turtle Island Restoration Network. Straws take at least 200 years to decompose and pose a threat to turtles and other wildlife as they degrade into

microplastics, the group says.

"To prevent another sea turtle from becoming a victim to plastic, we must make personal lifestyle alterations to fight for these species," the group said in a statement.

Every year, the world produces more than 400 million tons of new plastic. About 40% of all plastics are used in packaging, according to the United Nations.

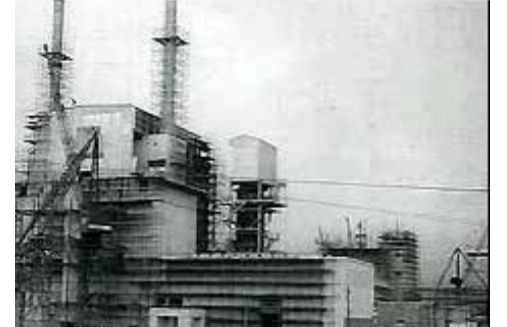
Globally, nations are creating a treaty to address plastic pollution. Leaders met for a week in South Korea late last year but didn't reach an agreement. Talks resume this year as more than 100 countries pursue a pact that limits plastic production as well as tackles cleanup and recycling.

The U.S., China and Germany are the biggest players in the global plastics trade. U.S. manufacturers have asked Trump to remain at the negotiating table, and to revert to Biden's previous position that focused on redesigning plastic products, recycling and reuse.

White House staff secretary Will Scharf, who presented the executive order to Trump, told him the push for paper straws has cost the government and private industry "an absolute ton of money and left consumers all over the country wildly dissatisfied with their straws. It really is something that affects ordinary Americans in their everyday lives." **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1954 NEW AUTHORITY FOR ATOMIC ENERGY



A new body has been established to control the production and development of atomic energy in the UK.

The Atomic Energy Authority Bill was introduced in the House of Commons by Minister of Work Sir David Eccles yesterday and has been published today to update legislation passed in 1946, when the first facilities were established.

Former Chief Planning Officer to the Treasury Sir Edwin Plowden, 47, will chair the new authority.

He will be joined on the Authority by between six and 10 members, who have so far been identified as:

Sir John Cockcroft, 47, Director of the Atomic Energy Research Establishment since 1946; Sir Christopher Hinton, 53, Deputy Controller of Atomic Energy since 1946; and Sir William Penney, 44, who designed Britain's first atomic bomb.

The Atomic Energy Authority (AEA) will be responsible for producing and disposing of atomic energy and radioactive waste and with government approval it may allocate grants and loans for developing research and production.

The government will retain close links and strict control over atomic weapons.

The re-organisation is in line with the findings of the committee set up by the government last April under the chairmanship of Lord Waverley.

The Waverley Report - which is not publicly available for security reasons - formed the basis of a White Paper presented to parliament last November.

It described the growing importance of atomic energy and the variety of commercial applications for it which suggested it would be better run as a large industrial facility than by a government department.

Changes began at the beginning of the year when responsibility for atomic energy was moved from the Minister of Supply to the Lord President of the Council, Lord Salisbury, a non-departmental post.

His role is to decide government policy for the industry and to distribute large sums of money voted for it by parliament.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) has continued to pioneer the development of nuclear energy. It is responsible for six sites at Dounreay in Caithness, Risley in Cheshire, Sellafield in Cumbria, Winfrith in Dorset and Culham and Harwell in Oxfordshire. Much of its current work is concerned with safely decommissioning old nuclear sites for conventional or other use. It remains a non-departmental public body, under the direction of the Department of Trade and Industry. The UKAEA provides the UK's input into the European fusion research project and expert advice on nuclear installations round the world.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Now is a good time to spread information to help boost your reputation as a creative or intellectual. Unfortunately, jealous peers may try to knock you off your pedestal. Stay rooted in your own beliefs.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Nurture the garden you've planted, and bountiful harvests will follow. Give extra energy to the goals, people, and support systems that fulfill your heart, acknowledging what really matters in this life.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
You may feel as though your mind is shooting in too many directions at once. Keep a pen and paper handy to keep track of any creative ideas, synchronicities, or signs that emerge.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Now is a good time to deeply meditate on any personal goals you've set. Unexpected drama could find you. Find peace in the fact that you alone are enough.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Tensions could brew within matters of the heart, especially if you feel as though your partner has been reckless or lacking discipline. Just remember to focus on your aspirations as well.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Build your empire quietly and patiently; you'll have a chance to reap the rewards of your hard work. Call in reinforcements if you fall in over your head, but avoid taking shortcuts that could have negative implications.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Acknowledge how blessed you truly are. Now is also a good time to consider how you can give back, scoring additional karma points with your good heart and kind nature.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
You'll feel prosperous within your partnerships. Keep in mind that success is to be shared, celebrating not only your accomplishments but those of those around you as well.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Lean on the power of persuasion to push major dreams through, and your moment to shine could manifest sooner than you thought it would. You'll need to be on guard for mistakes and miscommunications.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Partner up with people you can build with. Though you're capable of achieving much on your own, the power of teamwork will be undeniable under these cosmic conditions.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Let your heart expand in multiple directions this morning. This energy promotes connection and inclusion, so be sure to reach out to those who may feel left behind or stuck on the sidelines.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Consider what you can add to your life to make it more fulfilling. This energy is all about finding that which cultivates a sense of wellness, so be sure to prioritize your emotional, physical, and mental health.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-3	6	fine
Changchun	-14	-5	fine
Chengdu	7	11	rain
Chongqing	7	12	rain
Fuzhou	12	24	rain
Guangzhou	12	20	rain
Guiyang	4	8	overcast
Haikou	18	21	cloudy
Hangzhou	6	11	rain
Harbin	-17	-10	cloudy
Hefei	3	8	overcast
Nanjing	5	9	rain
Shanghai	7	11	rain
Taipei	15	20	rain
Wuhan	5	8	rain
Hong Kong	17	20	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	-8	-3	cloudy
Frankfurt	1	7	rain
Paris	2	7	cloudy
London	2	6	cloudy
New York	2	3	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Spicy sauce; 6- Spellbound; 10- Facility; 14- Hipbone; 15- Toast topper; 16- Laurel or Kenton; 17- Old finnish money; 18- Carry; 19- End in ___ (draw); 20- Sows; 21- Encompass; 23- I see it now!; 25- Bruins legend; 26- Overdue; 29- Kind of history; 32- Rasp; 37- Lyric tribute; 38- Notable periods; 39- Elevated; 40- In spite of; 43- List of corrections; 44- Makes a blunder; 45- HST's successor; 46- Arrive at; 47- Eye problem; 48- Pigsty; 49- Swelled head; 51- Actress Charlotte; 53- Infinite time; 58- Model; 62- Level; 63- Suffix with buck; 64- Dull finish; 65- 100 centavos; 66- Smell to high heaven; 67- Varnish resin; 68- Humanities; 69- ___-majesté; 70- Curved letters;

DOWN 1- Drinks slowly; 2- Sheltered; 3- Queue; 4- Ice cream topped with syrup; 5- Mennonite sect; 6- Goes bad; 7- Moises of baseball; 8- Gasoline; 9- It's human; 10- Isaac's eldest; 11- Envelope abbr.; 12- Aforementioned; 13- U-turn from WSW; 22- Church instruments; 24- It comes from the heart; 26- Hermit; 27- Think the world of; 28- Aquarium fish; 30- Cheering word; 31- Good point; 33- Free (of); 34- Out of the way; 35- Looks after; 36- Perimeters; 38- One or the other; 39- Harder to find; 41- WWII female enlistee; 42- Give it a shot; 47- Evening affair; 48- Military decorations; 50- Knot; 52- Actress Anouk; 53- Perpetually; 54- New driver's hurdle; 55- Slaughter of baseball; 56- Some digits; 57- Symbol of slavery; 59- Hot times abroad; 60- Look ___, I'm Sandra Dee; 61- Fragrant neckwear; 62- Clean air org.;

Yesterday's solution

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

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



It's prime time to BUY & RENT!

CONTACT US & SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY!

hello@jmlproperty.com
www.jmlproperty.com

f jmlmacau @jmlproperty

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

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

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

BASKETBALL

Doncic makes his Lakers debut, quickly connects

GREG BEACHAM, LOS ANGELES

LUKA Doncic was the last starter introduced by the Los Angeles Lakers, an honor normally reserved for LeBron James. When Doncic jogged into the spotlight on a darkened court through a cordon of his new teammates, his new fans stood and roared while wearing thousands of gold T-shirts with his name and number.

Even a young superstar could feel the magnificence of the moment.

"I was a little nervous before," Doncic said. "I (don't remember) the last time I was nervous before the game. But once I stepped on the court again, it was fun. Just being out there, it felt amazing."

Doncic's debut with the Lakers was brief and successful Monday night (yesterday, Macau time), but it piqued the anticipation of everybody involved for his days and years ahead in Los Angeles.

Doncic scored 14 points while playing just 23 minutes, immediately getting into the flow with James and his teammates during Los Angeles' 132-113 victory over the Utah Jazz. Doncic added five rebounds



Los Angeles Lakers guard Luka Doncic (77) shoots the ball

and four assists — none prettier than a three-quarter-court strike to James for a layup late in the first half.

Doncic was grateful to be playing basketball after nearly seven weeks of injury absence, and he was happy to begin to move past the upheaval in his life ever since the Dallas Mavericks shocked the sports world 10 days ago by trading their 25-year-old centerpiece and NBA scoring champion.

Doncic got multiple standing

ovations from a Los Angeles crowd wearing thousands of No. 77 shirts, but his pregame introduction was something he'll remember for a long time.

"Just the amount of cheering there was in the arena was absolutely unbelievable," Doncic said. "That was my favorite part — and to play again."

Doncic said James texted him in the morning and offered to do anything to help — and Doncic took him up on it by taking the final in-

tro spot. They'll swap for the Lakers' next home game next week, Doncic said with a grin.

"Shows what kind of person he is," Doncic said. "He let me have my moment."

The Slovenian scorer's first bucket was a 3-pointer in the opening minutes on his second shot. Doncic scored 11 points while Los Angeles streaked out to a 25-point halftime lead, and he sat down for good with 3:07 left in the third quarter with the Lakers far ahead in their sixth consecutive victory.

The game was Doncic's first since he strained his left calf on Christmas. After a full week to settle in Los Angeles and to return to full strength, Doncic joined James, Austin Reaves, Rui Hachimura and Jaxson Hayes as starters for the streaking Lakers, who had won 11 of 13 even before adding a five-time All-NBA selection to their lineup.

The Lakers have Doncic on a minutes restriction after his injury absence. His legs aren't quite there yet — he went 1 for 7 on 3-point attempts in his debut — but his playmaking immediately meshed with his new teammates.

Doncic's first touch was an alley-oop assist to Hayes, and he hit his

3-pointer moments later. He was serenaded with "Luka! Luka!" chants at the first dead ball, and several times thereafter.

"I just think it could be a thing of beauty, the way we can manipulate the game on the offensive end and get what we want every single possession," said Reaves, who scored 22 points. "Luka is one of the best passers in the world ... but yeah, I think it's just the high-level IQ going along with pieces that really fit. (Doncic and James) can shoot the ball, pass the ball, and really play the right way."

That crowd included Dirk Nowitzki, who overlapped with Doncic for one season in Dallas and served as his mentor. Doncic appeared to be the natural heir to the German Hall of Famer's incredible run in Dallas — until current Mavericks general manager Nico Harrison decided otherwise.

Coach JJ Redick, who played alongside Doncic for 13 games in 2021 with the Mavericks, was pleased by Doncic's poise and patience in a landmark game.

"Knowing Luka, whether he will admit this or not, there was probably a little bit of nerves playing for the Lakers for the first time, and the

DOUBLE YOUR REWARDS X2

BOA VIDA Lifestyle Membership



MOP 2,388

MEMBERSHIP PRIVILEGES

Room, dining and spa discounts up to **50%** | Complimentary vouchers value up to MOP **5,000**

Enjoy more Good Things in Life! Exclusive discounts now eligible at additional designated dining venues



ARTYZEN GRAND VIDA MACAU 澳門博奕酒店

T +853 2856 7888



DISCOVER MORE



MACAU 澳門

BENFICAMACAU ACADEMY
澳門賓菲加體育學校



FOOTBALL | BASKETBALL | DAILY TRAININGS

with LeBron in a 132-113 win over Utah

anticipation that this building had," Redick said. "I thought he handled it really well, and he played really well tonight. ... He didn't make it about Luka. He made it about playing good basketball and playing Laker basketball."

James returned from a one-game injury absence Monday when the Lakers began a home-and-home set with the Jazz heading into the All-Star break.

"I don't see any world where those two playing together isn't a good thing," Utah coach Will Hardy said. "Their processing speed mentally is incredible, and so I'm sure they'll figure it out."

Doncic had watched three straight Lakers victories from their bench since arriving in Los Angeles a week ago. Reaves scored a career-high 45 points to lead the Lakers past Indiana 124-117 on Saturday without Doncic or James, who sat out to rest his sore ankle.

Doncic began Monday by donating \$500,000 to fire recovery efforts in his new community, making an immediate impression with his pledge to help with the damage caused by the rampant wildfires that devastated parts of Southern California last month — including Pacific Palisades, where Redick's home was lost.

"It's been so sad to see and learn more about the damage from the wildfires as I landed in LA," Doncic wrote on his Luka Doncic Foundation's social media channels. "I can't believe it, and I feel for all the kids who lost their homes, schools and the places where they used to play with their friends."

Doncic signed his note: "Your new neighbor." **MDT/AP**

Doncic signed his note: "Your new neighbor." **MDT/AP**

Doncic signed his note: "Your new neighbor." **MDT/AP**

BUSY WEEK AHEAD WITH TOP MATCHUPS IN WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

IT'S a busy week ahead in women's basketball with a few top matchups on the schedule that may go a long way in determining conference regular season winners and top seeds in the NCAA Tournament.

The NCAA selection committee will make its first top 16 reveal on Sunday before No. 4 South Carolina hosts seventh-ranked UConn. That game will most likely be the Huskies' last chance to beat a top team and leave a strong impression on the committee. So far they've lost to No. 2 Notre Dame, No. 6 USC and No. 15 Tennessee.

The Gamecocks enter Sunday's game after seeing its 57-game regular season SEC winning streak end at Texas two days ago.



UCLA forward Angela Dugalic (32) shoots against Oregon forward Ehis Etute (35) in the second half of an NCAA college basketball game

While the South Carolina-UConn game won't effect conference standings, No. 1 UCLA visits USC on Thursday in the first of two matchups between the schools.

The two teams are currently 1-2 in the Big Ten in their first year in the conference. While

the Bruins are unbeaten, the Trojans have one conference loss after losing at Iowa on Caitlin Clark's jersey retirement day.

This game will feature two of the top players in the country with UCLA center Lauren Betts and USC guard JuJu Watkins.

Two other top 10 teams will square off on Sunday with No. 5 LSU visiting third-ranked Texas. The two teams are tied with South Carolina atop the SEC with all three of them having 10-1 records.

The Longhorns visit No. 8 Kentucky on Thursday. The Wildcats earned their

highest ranking in the poll on Monday since they were seventh on Dec. 8, 2015. Kentucky went out and lost at Ole Miss later Monday night. The Wildcats have a difficult schedule the rest of the way in the regular season with games against No. 3 Texas, No. 5 LSU and No. 15 Tennessee at home, capped by the season finale at No. 4 South Carolina.

Columbia has won its first eight Ivy League games for the first time in school history and sits alone atop the conference standings. The Lions, whose previous best start was 7-0, have a one-game lead on Princeton and two on Harvard. Columbia hosts Harvard on Sunday. The Lions and Tigers play on Feb. 22. **MDT/AP**

The Longhorns visit No. 8 Kentucky on Thursday. The Wildcats earned their

The Longhorns visit No. 8 Kentucky on Thursday. The Wildcats earned their

仁德 CENTRO MEDICO PEDDER
• 仁德醫療中心 •

We bring high quality of medical service to Macau

General Surgery : Dr. Fok Manson, Dr. Lai Cheuck Seen Edward, Dr. Lau Wing Kee Peter, Dr. Kwong Man, Dr. Nie Fu Zhong, Dr. U Chong San, Dr. Lei Chin Chong

Breast Surgery : Dr. Leong Iat Lun

Urology : Dr. Lo Kwong Yin Richard, Dr. Zhao Yun Qiao

Paediatric Surgery : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

Paediatrics : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

Obstetrics & Gynaecology : Dr. Fong Kuan Io

Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery : Dr. Lam U Lin

Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

ENT : Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang

Cardiology : Dr. Jin Chun, Dr. Leong Man Kin

General Medicine : Dr. Ng Kam Hong, Dr. Lam Weng Chio

Dietitian : Chan Lai U Joey

Avenida da Praia Grande No 599, Edifício Comercial Rodrigues 14 e 15 Andar, em Macau
T. 2832 2298 / 2832 2229 Website: www.peddermacau.com
Opening Hours: Mon - Fri 10:00 - 19:00 Sat 10:00 - 14:00 Sun & PH closed

MACAUCLOSER
生活藝術雜誌 LIVING & ARTS MAGAZINE

燃動街頭 STREETS COME ALIVE

現已發售 NOW ON SALE

知得更多，活得更好 KNOW MORE, LIVE BETTER

OPINION

World Views

Josh Funk, MDT/AP Business Writer



RECENT AVIATION DISASTERS CAUSE FEARS ABOUT THE SAFETY OF FLYING

The spate of recent aviation disasters and close calls have people worried about the safety of flying.

The midair collision that killed 67 near Washington, the fiery plane crash in Philadelphia and a plane crash in Alaska that killed 10 are only the most high-profile disasters. There was also a Japan Airlines plane that clipped a parked Delta plane while it was taxiing at the Seattle airport earlier this week and a United Airlines plane caught fire during takeoff at the Houston airport Sunday after an engine problem sparked a fire on the wing.

That's not even to mention the security concerns that arose after stowaways were found dead inside the wheel wells of two planes and aboard two other flights. And don't forget about the time that a passenger opened an emergency exit door on a plane while it was taxiing for takeoff in Boston.

So of course people are wondering whether their flight is safe?

The Jan. 29 collision between an American Airlines passenger jet and an Army helicopter killed everyone aboard both aircraft. It was the deadliest plane crash in the U.S. since Nov. 12, 2001, when a jet slammed into a New York City neighborhood just after takeoff, killing all 260 people on board and five on the ground. There hadn't even been a deadly crash of any kind involving a U.S. airliner since February 2009.

Crashes are more common involving smaller planes like the single-engine Cessna that crashed in Alaska. Ten people including the pilot were killed.

A medical transportation plane crashed in Philadelphia on Jan. 31, killing the six people onboard and another person on the ground. That Learjet generated a massive fireball when it smashed into the ground in a neighborhood not long after taking off from a small airport nearby.

How worried should I be?

Fatal crashes attract extraordinary attention partly because they are rare. The track record of U.S. airlines is remarkably safe, as demonstrated by the long stretch between fatal crashes.

But deadly crashes have happened more recently elsewhere around the world, including one in South Korea that killed all 179 people aboard in December. There were also two fatal crashes involving Boeing's troubled 737 Max jetliner in 2018 and 2019. And last January, a door plug blew off a 737 Max while it was in flight, raising more questions about the plane.

President Donald Trump added to those concerns last week when he blamed the midair collision on the "obsolete" air traffic control system that airports rely on and promised to replace it.

But even with all that, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy went on Fox News earlier this week and tried to assure viewers that air travel is "way safer than traveling in a car and train. This is the safest mode of transportation."

And the statistics back that up.

The National Safety Council estimates that Americans have a 1-in-93 chance of dying in a motor vehicle crash, while deaths on airplanes are too rare to calculate the odds. Figures from the U.S. Department of Transportation tell a similar story.

But Duffy said the public is right to say that crashes like the recent ones are unacceptable. That is why he plans to make sure "safety is paramount" as he leads the agency that regulates all modes of transportation. [Abridged]

MOST NATIONS MISS DEADLINE FOR PLANS TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE. UN SAYS TAKE YOUR TIME TO DO IT RIGHT

THE BUZZ

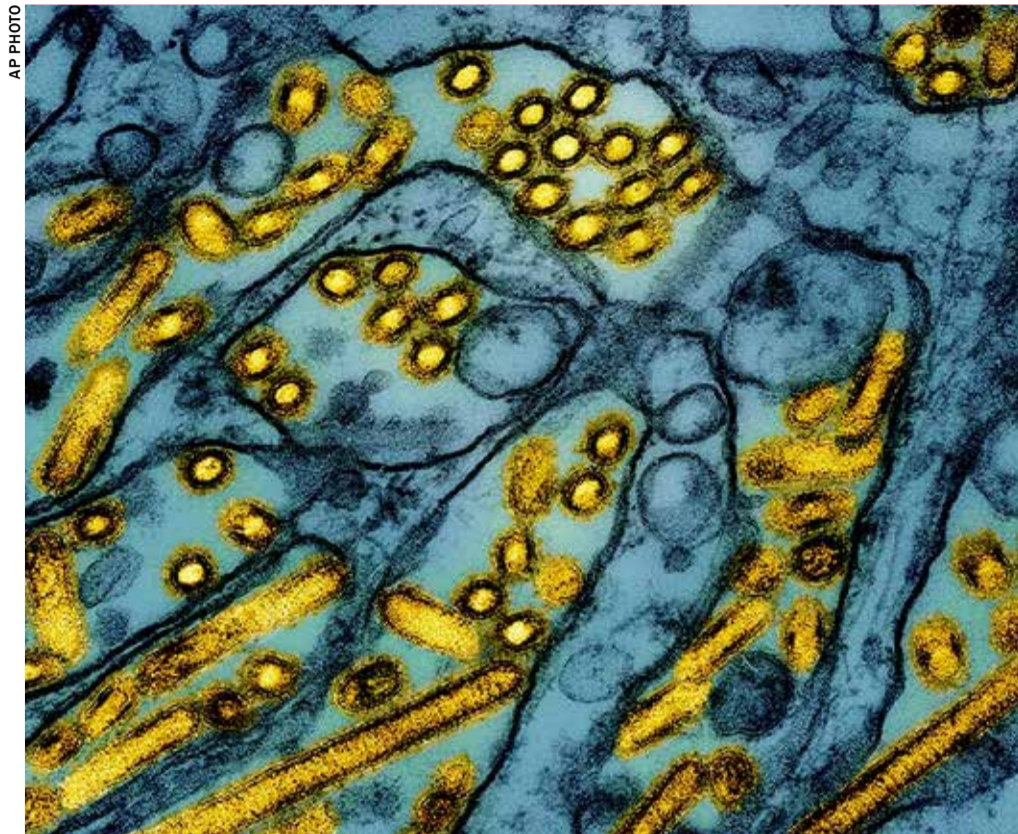
Nearly 200 nations faced a Monday (yesterday, Macau time) deadline to file what the United Nations' climate chief calls "among the most important policy documents governments will produce this century" — their plans on how they will cut emissions of heat-trapping gases.

Most won't make the deadline. The U.N. says that's OK as long as they are working on them.

So far only a dozen of the 195 nations that signed the 2015 Paris climate agreement have filed their national plans for cutting emissions by 2035. Those nations account for only 16.2% of the world's carbon

dioxide emissions — the chief human-caused heat-trapping gas — and almost all of that is from the United States, where President Donald Trump has already discarded the plan submitted by President Joe Biden's administration.

Aside from the U.S., the only major emitters to submit 2035 targets are Brazil, the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates. The Marshall Islands, Singapore, Ecuador, Saint Lucia, Andorra, New Zealand, Switzerland and Uruguay have filed their plans, but they all produce less than 0.2% of the world's carbon dioxide.



AP PHOTO

NEW STRAIN OF BIRD FLU IS DETECTED IN A NEVADA DAIRY WORKER, HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY

MIKE STOBBE, NEW YORK

A dairy worker in Nevada was infected with a new type of bird flu that's different from the version that has been spreading in U.S. herds since last year, federal health officials said yesterday [Macau time].

The illness was considered mild. The person's main symptom was eye redness and irritation, similar to most bird flu cases associated with dairy cows. The person wasn't hospitalized and has recovered, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The newer strain had been seen before in more than a dozen people exposed to poultry, but this is the first time an infection was traced to a cow. The Nevada dairy worker was exposed at a farm in Churchill County, in the west central part of the state, state health officials said.

CDC officials said there is no evidence the virus has spread from this person to any other people. The agency continues to say the virus poses a low

risk to the general public.

The bird flu currently spreading through animals, and some people, is known to scientists as Type A H5N1 influenza. But there are different strains.

A version known as B3.13 was confirmed in March after spreading to cattle in late 2023, scientists said. It has infected 962 cattle herds in 16 states, the vast majority of them in California.

The newer version, known as D1.1, was confirmed in Nevada cattle on Jan. 31. It was found in milk collected as part of a monitoring program started in December.

That discovery meant distinct forms of the virus spread from wild birds into cattle at least twice. Experts said it raises questions about wider spread and the difficulty of controlling infections in animals and the people who work with them.

At least 68 people in the U.S. have been reported infected with bird flu in the last year, according to CDC data. All but a small handful worked closely with cows or poultry.

Most caught the B3.13 version. The CDC previously said the D1.1 version had been seen only in cases in Louisiana and Washington state. But on Monday, the agency revealed that available data indicates D1.1 last year likely infected a total of 15 people in five states — Iowa, Louisiana, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin — all related to poultry.

The D1.1 version of the virus was linked to the first U.S. death tied to bird flu and to a severe illness in Canada. A person in Louisiana died in January after developing severe respiratory symptoms following contact with wild and backyard birds. In British Columbia, a teen girl was hospitalized for months with a virus traced to poultry.

While the risk to the general public is low, the CDC says bird flu poses a greater threat to people with close or prolonged contact with infected cows, birds or other animals. Those people are encouraged to wear protective equipment and take other precautions. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

United States President Donald Trump hosted Jordan's King Abdullah II yesterday, pressing for Jordan to accept Palestinian refugees from Gaza. Trump hinted at withholding U.S. aid to Jordan and Egypt if they refuse, despite both countries firmly rejecting forced resettlements.

Middle East President Donald Trump said yesterday [Macau time] the ceasefire in Gaza should be canceled if Hamas fails to release all hostages by Saturday. He also announced new 25% tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, sparking trade tensions with Canada, Mexico, and the European Union.



AP PHOTO

South Africa The Democratic Alliance filed a legal challenge against a land expropriation law allowing confiscation without compensation. President Donald Trump issued an executive order cutting U.S. aid to South Africa, citing concerns about property rights, foreign policy, and alleged anti-American positions.



AP PHOTO

Haiti Hundreds of Haitian migrants deported from the Dominican Republic arrived in Belladère yesterday [Macau time], reporting abuse by authorities. Human rights groups criticized the deportations, while Dominican officials defended the crackdown, citing strain on public services and illegal reentries by deported individuals.



AP PHOTO

Germany A corruption index released yesterday ranked South Sudan as the world's most corrupt country, displacing Somalia. Transparency International reported that 47 nations, including the U.S. and France, scored their lowest rankings in over a decade, citing weak anti-corruption efforts worldwide.