

POLICE DATA SHOWS THAT AROUND 300,000 RESIDENTS HAVE ALREADY REGISTERED THEIR IRIS SCANS AT THE BORDER CROSSINGS

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FOREIGN MINISTER CRITICIZES US TARIFFS AND ACCUSES THE COUNTRY OF 'MEETING GOOD WITH EVIL'

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AP PHOTO



Australia Flooding rains lashed the east coast even though it avoided the destructive winds of its first tropical cyclone in 51 years, officials said Saturday. One person was confirmed dead and several were injured. Tropical Cyclone Alfred had been expected to become the first cyclone to cross the Australian coast near the Queensland state capital of Brisbane.

AP PHOTO



Bangladesh Rohingya refugees in cramped camps say they are worried about a U.S. decision to cut food rations by half beginning next month, while a refugee official says the reduction will impact the nutrition of more than 1 million refugees and create “social and mental pressure.”

AP PHOTO



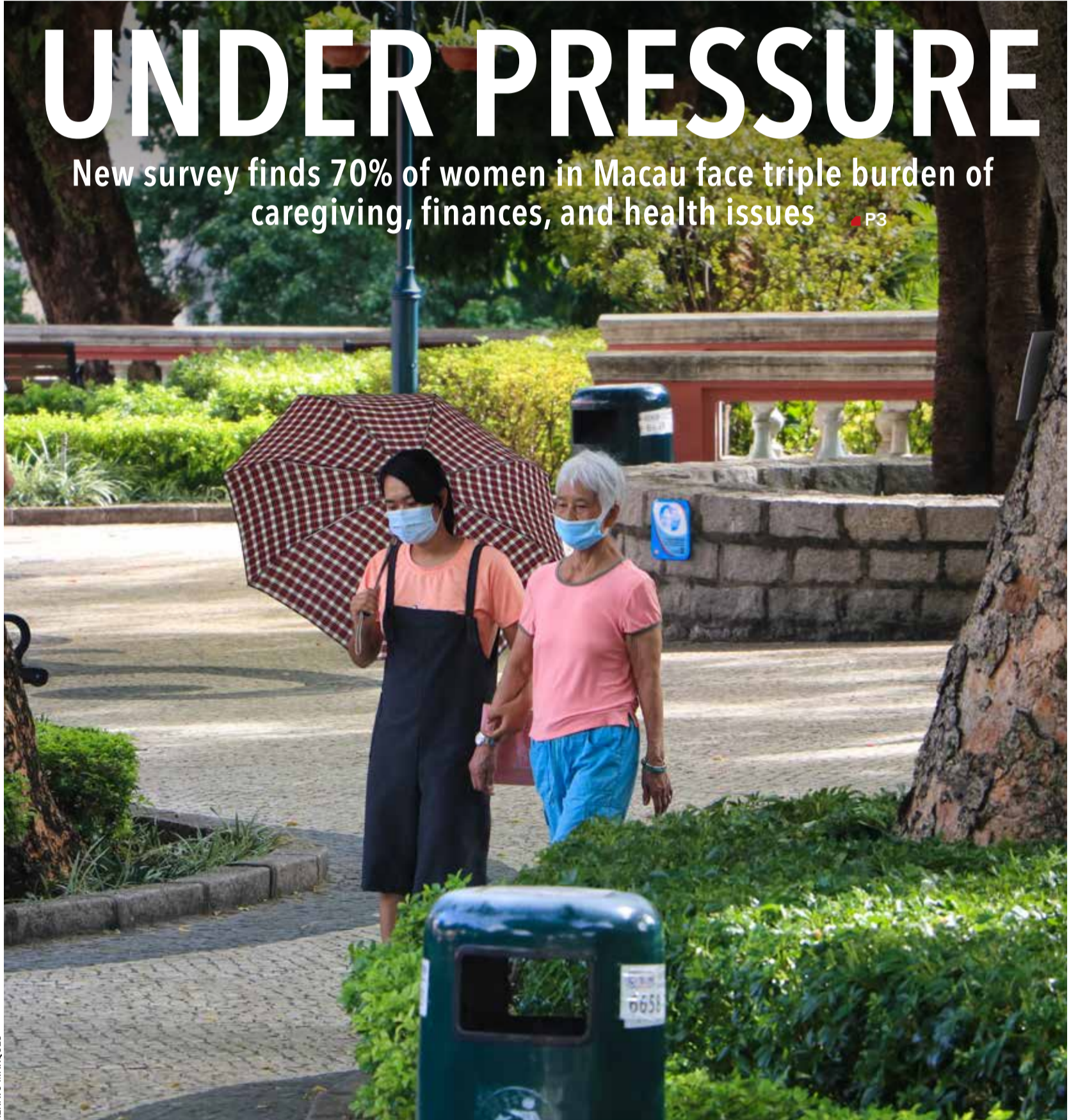
Canada-Philippines Both countries have concluded talks for a key defense pact that would allow their forces to hold joint combat drills and boost defense engagements. Canada and other Western nations have been reinforcing their military presence in the Indo-Pacific to help promote the rule of law and expand trade and investment in the region.

AP PHOTO



Honduras Voters selected candidates from the three main parties yesterday to compete in November's general election for the presidency in a country that remains deeply polarized, but skeptical of leaders from the left and right who have failed to deliver on improving security and the economy.

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RENATO MARQUES

UNDER PRESSURE

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TRANSPORT

DSAT ADJUSTS PARKING SPACES TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

LYNZY VALLES

THE Transport Bureau (DSAT) is implementing changes to parking arrangements in various districts to enhance vehicular access and optimize space usage, following calls from the community to improve parking.

In a statement, the bureau said it plans to gradually introduce ramped motorcycle parking spaces and extend light vehicle parking spaces to an average length of 5.5 metres.

Rua de Santa Clara has been selected as the first location for these modifications. Following adjustments, the motorcycle parking spaces will accommodate approximately 90 angled spaces.

The next phase includes adjustments to motorcycle spaces near San Francisco Garden and the extension of 23 metered parking spaces for light goods vehicles, with completion expected by late March.



Responding to community feedback advocating for angled parking spaces, the bureau said it will continue to install or modify

such racks at suitable locations. This process involves consultation with road users, community groups, and advisory orga-

nisations, alongside assessments of road conditions and safety factors. A review of over 2,000 straight

motorcycle parking spaces in the region is underway, with plans to complete their conversion to angled designs by year-end. Priority will be given to installing slant parking racks in narrower areas.

DSAT said it will monitor parking space usage closely and make further adjustments as needed.

Just last month, the Transport Advisory Committee urged local authorities to replace straight motorcycle parking spaces with diagonal options, a move aimed at improving safety and efficiency in the densely populated city.

Currently, motorcycle parking in Macau includes both straight and diagonal spaces, but the majority are straight, which pose challenges for riders.

The committee emphasizes that improving motorcycle parking design should start in areas that prioritize public needs.

This push for change echoes discussions from 2019, when former lawmaker Sulu Sou brought the issue to the Legislative Assembly.

He proposed changing the city's current "right-angled" parking spaces to diagonal designs, following global trends that favor angled bays for their safety and efficiency.



ASK THE VET
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CAN I GIVE MY CAT A BATH?

In this post, we'll answer some of the most common questions including:
• **Do I need to bath my cat?**
• **What supplies do I need to give my cat a bath?**

Reasons to bathe a cat

Before bathing your cat, it's important to think about whether a bath is necessary. There may be a better solution. Genuine reasons your cat might need a bath include:

- Your cat has a skin condition, and your veterinarian recommends bathing in a medical shampoo
- Your cat has a severe infestation of fleas, and its coat is full of flea dirt (Note: flea dirt is digested blood, so it turns the bathwater red. This can look scary, but it's the dirt, not your cat)
- A large area of your cat's coat is muck or toxins that could harm your cat if licked or won't come off with a brush

Will bathing my cat get rid of its fleas?

No, a cat with many fleas may need a bath to get rid of the flea dirt, but a bath is not the best way to get rid of the fleas themselves. Only 5% of the flea population is on



your pet at any one time. The other 95% is living in your home. Washing your cat only addresses 5% of the problem. A better way to kill fleas is to use flea and tick preventatives (given by mouth) or drops (a small amount of liquid applied to the skin on the back of your cat's neck). Ask your veterinarian for guidance on which product to choose.

What supplies do I need to bathe my cat?

If you've established that your cat does need a bath, you will need the

following equipment to bathe your cat. Be sure to have all your gear ready and laid out before you get your cat, so you can keep a smooth and relaxed manner once the bath is underway.

- A bath with a nonslip surface – You can use a human bath or a sink. To make your bath nonslip, use a stick-on rubber mat or an old towel.
- Warm water – do not use water that is too hot or too cold. Test the temperature of the water by sticking your elbow in it – this is the

same technique used to test babies' bathwater. Your elbow is more sensitive to temperature than your hands. A cat's skin will only cope with very slightly warmed water, just enough that it's not going to shock them from being cold

- A plastic jug, bowl, or shower head with a gentle setting – for rinsing
- Shampoo – keep reading to see suggestions on choosing a shampoo
- A large towel to dry your cat afterward. The towel needs to be large enough to wrap your cat – cats can find it reassuring to be wrapped, so this can be a helpful way of getting them dry
- A cat-appropriate comb or brush – A stiff but soft-ended bristle is best – metal with plastic bobbles on the tips can work well.

What shampoo do I use on my cat?

If you are bathing your cat for a particular skin condition, always use treatments recommended by your veterinarian. You can do more harm than good if you use an off-the-shelf shampoo that is inappropriate for the condition you are treating. If you're bathing your cat to get rid of muck, dirt, or toxins, a mild cat-specific shampoo or Dawn dish soap

is best. Please don't use human shampoo. Human shampoos can irritate cats' skin.

How often should you bathe a cat?

Most cats don't need bathing at all. If your cat needs medicated baths, follow the advice of your veterinarian. Cats receiving medicated baths may need frequent bathing in the early stages of treatment.

Only bathe your cat for non-medical reasons if absolutely necessary, and certainly not more than once a month. Bathing your cat too often can disrupt the normal oils on your cat's skin and can cause skin irritation.

Do cats feel better after a bath?

Most cats feel anxious and stressed by baths because they dislike water. If you do need to bathe your cat, it's essential to follow our advice regarding how to wash your cat safely and with minimal stress. By safely, we mean without hurting your cat and without getting scratched yourself!

Hope this info helps
Till next time
Dr Ruan

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SURVEY

70% of local women juggle caregiving, financial stress, and health concerns

VICTORIA CHAN

A study by the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) found that more than 70% of women in Macau are responsible for caring for two or more family members while grappling with financial pressures and health concerns, leading to widespread stress among respondents.

The survey, titled "Women's Living and Employment Conditions in 2025," focused on 1,000 women aged 18 to 65 and revealed that two-thirds of respondents are constantly caring for children and elderly dependents, with over 60% responsible for at least two family members. This caregiving burden, combined with financial strain, has resulted in more than two-thirds of women reporting symptoms of stress in their daily lives.

Financial concerns were a significant issue, with 80% of respondents stating that daily meal expenses have increased.

Half of the women cited pu-

blic services such as water, electricity, childcare, transportation, medical care, and bank loans as their largest expenditures. Additionally, 73% of those surveyed earn less than the median salary of 20,500 patacas per month, and nearly 70% described their work as stressful or very stressful.

Meanwhile, the survey highlights that nearly 90% of women believe government financial assistance is essential to address the economic challenges they face.

The findings indicate that approximately half of the participants hold tertiary education degrees. However, around 80% reported stagnant or declining income levels since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, 73% expressed concerns regarding their employment prospects.

During a press conference on Friday, lawmaker Ella Lei emphasized the need to improve leave entitlements and protections for female employees.

Furthermore, about 77% of respondents cited economic con-



ditions as a primary source of stress. Leong Meng Ian, another representative of the workers' group, called for government action on family and maternity issues, proposing extended maternity leave, increased childcare subsidies, and enhanced housing policies to support women and families.

Encouraging higher birth rates was another focus of the study,

with the majority of respondents agreeing that extending maternity leave from 70 to 90 days and increasing the value of birth benefits would be effective ways to incentivize women to have more children.

For FAOM, there is still room for improvement in the labor rights and interests of women in Macau, particularly concerning maternity leave. Currently, fema-

le employees in the private sector are entitled to just 70 days of maternity leave, which is significantly less than the 90 days offered to civil servants and the 14 weeks recommended by the Maternity Protection Convention.

The same call was previously made by lawmaker Wong Kit Cheng, who 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.

Although 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, she believes that 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," she said.

IMMIGRATION

Iris scan system sees high adoption at border crossings

VICTORIA CHAN

THE Public Security Police (PSP) reported over the weekend that around 300,000 residents have already registered their iris scans at the border crossings, with the automatic border crossing service using the iris scan being utilized 7.8 million times last year.

The PSP revealed that the Portas do Cerco border post, the first to adopt the iris recognition system, has seen over 40% of residents opting for the technology. Dedicated corridors for cross-border students and their parents have also been established at the Portas do Cerco, Qingmao, and Hengqin border posts, facilitating an



average of 3,500 student crossings daily.

In addition to iris recognition, QR code travel between Hong Kong and Macau has gained traction, with approximately 3,600 daily users. Since its introduction, 210,000 Macau residents and 43,000 Hong Kong residents have utilized the

QR code system.

Vehicle border crossings have also seen significant automation, with 77.7% of vehicles using automatic channels. At the Hengqin border post, 88.7% of traffic passed through express customs lanes.

The PSP reported progress in combating

illegal immigration, with 14,554 individuals sanctioned for overstaying their visas, marking a 1.5% decrease from the previous year. Additionally, 249 illegal immigrants were expelled, a 31% drop compared to last year.

Legal actions were initiated in 36 cases of false marriages involving 78 individuals and 51 cases of false employment involving 156 people.

Immigration authorization services also saw growth, with approximately 17,000 new and renewal applications for foreign domestic workers submitted through the "Single Entry Authorization" platform, representing over half of all applications and a 34% annual increase.

TAXI INJURES TWO PEDESTRIANS AFTER FAILING TO STOP

A traffic accident occurred on Rua do Pai Kok in Taipa on Saturday at around 5:30 p.m., when a cab driver allegedly failed to yield at a crosswalk, striking two pedestrians.

According to the Public Security Police, the victims, two mainland residents in their 20s, sustained bruises.

A video circulating on social media shows the two pedestrians about to cross the crosswalk when the driver continued driving. Authorities confirmed they were taken to Kiang Wu

Hospital in Taipa for treatment.

The cab driver, a man in his 40s, was charged with failing to stop for pedestrians at a zebra crossing. Authorities reported that he passed a medical test following the incident.

Investigations into the case are ongoing.

Earlier this year, a 19-year-old secondary school student was run over by a bus, suffering an injury to his right leg while crossing a pedestrian walkway in the northern district. LV



WOMAN FOUND DEAD IN SEAC PAI VAN APARTMENT

A woman was found dead in an apartment in Seac Pai Van yesterday, with an alleged bottle of drugs discovered at the scene. Her friend, unable to contact her, went to check on her and found her unresponsive. The friend called the police for help. Officers found a syringe and an empty drug bottle in the room, raising suspicions of a drug-related suicide, according to the Judiciary Police (PJ). No signs of foul play or theft were found, and the body showed no criminal injuries. The woman is a middle-aged local resident and the cause of death is under investigation.

MGTO RECONNECTS WITH EUROPE

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) participated in the ITB Berlin last week, marking its return to the premier travel trade show post-pandemic. MGTO Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes led promotional activities, aiming to strengthen ties with German-speaking markets. During a reception, MGTO showcased Macau's "Tourism+" offerings, including its UNESCO heritage sites and integrated resorts. With over 40 attendees, the event highlighted ongoing efforts to boost international visitor arrivals from Europe, reflecting a renewed focus on long-haul tourism.

MACAU TO BEGIN PROTECTIVE BACKFILLING OF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) will commence protective backfilling of archaeological remains at the excavation site on Rua de D. Belchior Carneiro today. This initiative follows conservation recommendations from the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. To ensure public safety during the work, the Preservation and Exhibition Area and the permanent exhibition on the Maritime Silk Road will be temporarily closed, with work expected to be completed by early May. The reopening date will be announced later.

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY PRICES DECLINE

The Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) reported a 1.3% decrease in the overall residential property price index for November 2024-January 2025, reaching 204.2. The index for Taipa and Coloane fell significantly by 7.2%, while the Macau Peninsula saw a slight increase of 0.4%. Existing residential units saw a marginal increase of 0.1%, but pre-sale units dropped sharply by 16.8%. Compared to the same period last year, the overall index declined by 11.8%.

ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS

NPC CHAIRMAN STRESSES CONSTITUTIONAL EDUCATION

STAFF REPORTER

BEIJING has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening the implementation of the 'One country, two systems' policy and enhancing constitutional education in Macau and Hong Kong, according to Zhao Leji, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee.

During the second plenary meeting of the NPC on Saturday, Zhao delivered the legislature's annual work report, highlighting efforts to uphold the authority of the Chinese Constitution in the two Special Administrative Regions (SARs).

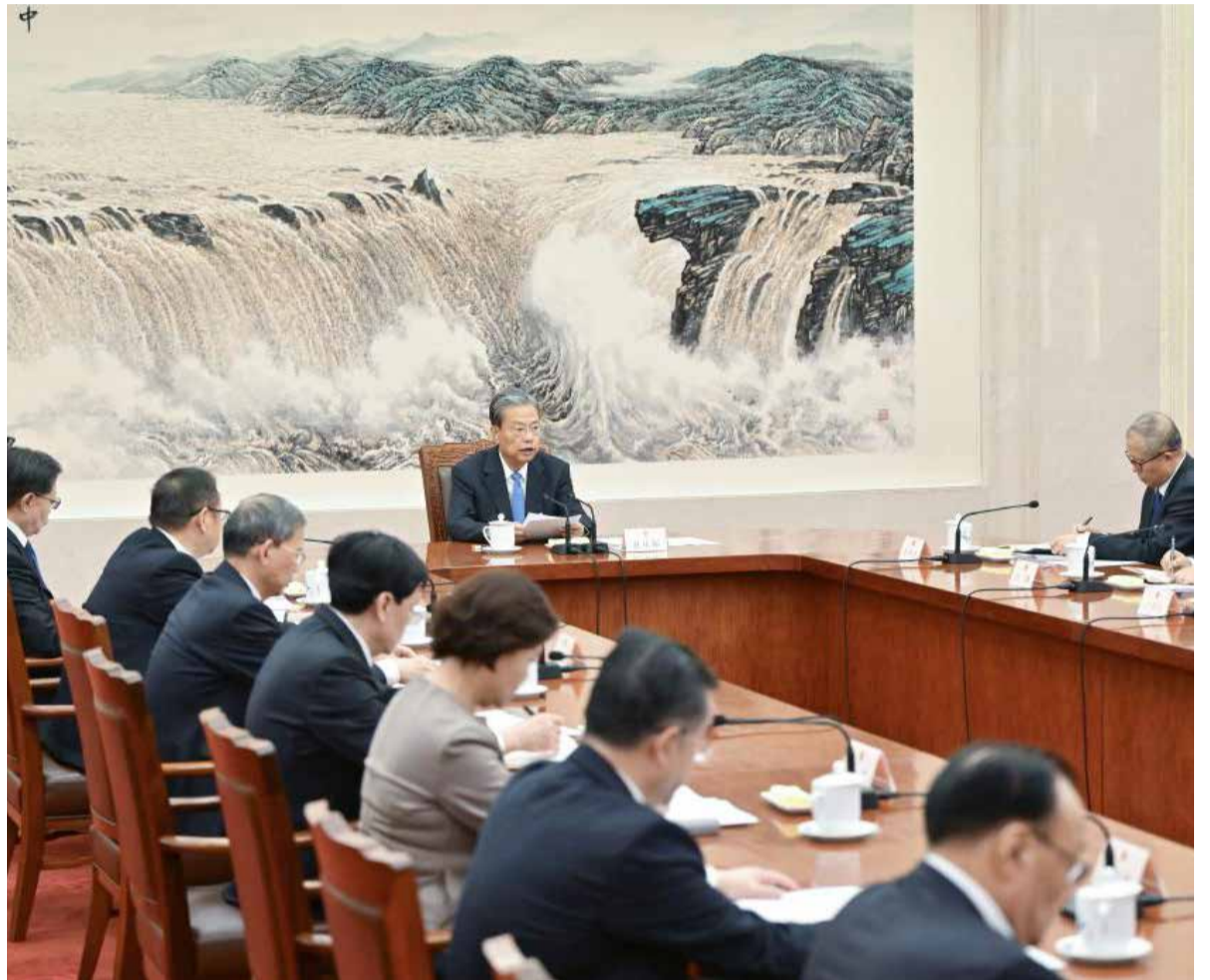
The session was attended by President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang, and other senior officials.

Reflecting on the legislature's work in 2024, Zhao emphasized measures taken to reinforce constitutional oversight and ensure compliance with national laws.

He noted that education and public awareness campaigns regarding the Constitution had been expanded in both SARs, including field visits and symposiums for local deputies.

"[We have] ramped up education and publicity efforts regarding the Constitution in Hong Kong and Macau," Zhao said, as cited in a report by The Standard.

The NPC Standing Committee has also increased efforts to promote international understanding of 'One country, two systems.' The report stated that Beijing had actively countered foreign criticisms and defended China's sovereignty, security, and develop-



Zhao Leji presides over the first meeting of executive chairpersons of the presidium at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, Saturday

ment interests in response to external political pressures.

Looking ahead, Zhao outlined the legislature's priorities for 2025, stressing the need to maintain the constitutional order in Macau and Hong Kong as defined by the Constitution and the Basic Law.

Meanwhile, Macau Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference delegate Lao Ng-wong said Macau is an example of the successful implementation of the 'One country, two systems' policy.

"Macau should use its advantages in reinforcing connections with both the main-

land and the world... and build the SAR into another international passage besides Hong Kong," he said.

Last week, Xia Baolong, director of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, has urged both the Special Administrative Regions' (SAR) delegates to fulfill their roles with a strong sense of duty while supporting their respective governments and advancing economic development.

In a statement, the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office said its director encouraged delegates to carry out their responsibilities with a "sense

of responsibility and mission" while ensuring public concerns are effectively represented.

Xia emphasized the need for full support of the SAR administrations, calling on Hong Kong delegates to accelerate the city's transition from stability to prosperity.

Meanwhile, he urged Macau representatives to focus on promoting moderate economic diversification to strengthen the region's long-term development.

His remarks were made during a closed-door session with delegates from the two regions at the NPC.

IAM: Rodent control in public areas remains at manageable level

STAFF REPORTER

THE Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) announced that, according to a recent survey conducted by third-party academic institutions in mainland China, rodent control in the city's public areas remains at a manageable level.

In 2024, the city recorded 711 complaints rela-

ted to rodent infestations, a 36% decrease from 1,113 cases in 2019.

In response to a written inquiry from lawmaker Ron Lam regarding measures to combat rodent-borne diseases, the IAM outlined its recent efforts.

Over the years, the department said it has intensified extermination efforts in public spaces,

significantly increasing the number of fixed rat bait boxes on public streets from about 200 in 2017 to approximately 1,400 today, covering nearly all districts.

Macau has also been divided into 25 districts for systematic rodent control, with extermination efforts increasing from twice a year per district to at least three times annually since

last year. Each campaign lasts for five weeks, with 27,000 bait placements recorded in 2024.

Additionally, the number of traditional street trash cans has been drastically reduced from over 1,600 to just 92, helping to minimize odor and pest problems.

Earlier this year, the bureau ordered three bran-

ches of the supermarket chain Royal to temporarily suspend operations after discovering a widespread rodent infestation on the premises. This action followed the circulation of viral social media footage depicting rodents feeding in a freezer.

According to the IAM, the affected branches were found to have substandard hygiene conditions, including visible signs of rodent activity in storage areas and inadequate pest control measures in food preparation zones.

ECONOMY

China's exports and imports weaken in Jan-Feb as demand slides amid global trade uncertainty

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

CHINA'S exports rose a less-than-expected 2.3% in January and February from a year earlier while imports fell more than 8% in a slow start to a year dogged by uncertainty over U.S. tariffs and other policies.

Economists had forecast that exports would rise 5% year-on-year and that imports would edge higher. China's overall trade surplus grew to \$170.52 billion in the first two months of the year.

China's customs agency typically publishes combined trade data for January and February to avoid any distortion from slowdowns during the week-long Lunar New Year holidays.



"Export growth cooled over the first two months of 2025, with tariff front-running providing less of a boost to demand than we had anticipated," said Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capi-

tal Economics.

"This slowdown comes before any substantial hit from tariffs, which will almost certainly lead to sharp falls in shipments to the U.S. before

long," he said.

Evans-Pritchard said that the slowdown in imports suggests that the pick up in demand driven by government stimulus spending late last year has "already partially reversed."

This week, U.S. President Donald Trump's second of two 10% hikes in tariffs on imports from China took effect and that is likely to hurt Chinese exports in coming months.

To a certain extent, buyers and Chinese suppliers had rushed to beat those increases in import duties.

Chinese officials have slammed the tariff increases but also expressed confidence that the economy is resilient and that trade with other coun-

tries can help compensate for any declines in exports to the U.S. after the tariffs took effect. They have also said they are open to talks on a mutually respectful basis.

Last year, exports helped China attain its target economic growth rate of 5%. The government again has set the target for around 5%, despite uncertainties over the outlook for trade this year.

Exports to the U.S. grew 2.3% in annual terms in January-February, while shipments to the European Union and Japan grew just 0.6% and 0.7% respectively. Exports to Russia fell 10.9%.

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) remained China's biggest trading partner, with shipments growing 5.7% year-on-year.

"While we don't read too much into a few months of data, the breakdown does pose questions about how export trends might look once tariffs start to drag on the U.S., too," Lynn Song of ING Economics said in a report.

"With tariffs coming into effect in February and March, it's likely that the impact will be seen gradually in the coming months," she said. **MDT/AP**

TRADE WAR

China imposes retaliatory tariffs on Canadian farm and food products

SIMINA MISTREANU,
BEIJING

CHINA on Saturday announced retaliatory tariffs on some Canadian farm and food imports, after Canada imposed duties in October on Chinese-made

electric vehicles and steel and aluminum products.

The new duties become effective March 20, according to a statement by the Customs Tariff Commission of the State Council. Additional 100% tariffs will be imposed on Canadian rapeseed oil,

oil cakes and peas, and additional 25% tariffs will apply to pork and aquatic products.

The tariffs add to global trade tensions already high, with rounds of tariff announcements by the United States, China, Canada and Mexico.

The duties come in retaliation for Ottawa imposing tariffs against Chinese imports in October, including a 100% surtax on all Chinese-made EVs and 25% on steel and aluminum imports.

"Despite China's repeated opposition and

dissuasion, Canada has taken unilateral restrictive measures on electric vehicles, steel, aluminum and other products imported from China without investigation, undermining China-Canada economic and trade relations," read the statement by the customs authorities.

The decision to impose retaliatory duties comes after an "anti-discrimination probe, which found out that Canada's restrictive measures against

some Chinese products have disrupted normal trade order and harmed the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises," it added.

Canada announced tariffs on Chinese goods last August following similar duties being imposed by the U.S. and the European Union against Chinese-made EVs and other products. The Western governments say China's subsidies give its industry an unfair advantage. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China celebrates International Women's Day with team members



Sands China Ltd. marked International Women's Day by celebrating the contributions of its female team members with gifts and a special event. As part of the company's annual tradition, female employees across all departmen-

ts received soap flowers as a token of appreciation for their hard work and dedication.

At The Venetian Macao's team member restaurant, an event focused on empowering women through casual discussions on relevant topi-

cs. This celebration was mirrored globally across Sands' properties to recognize female employees' efforts.

The event was organized by Sands EmpowHER, a women-led diversity initiative aimed at fostering networking and professional development. Dr. Miriam Adelson, Las Vegas Sands Co-founder, shared encouraging words through a video message, inspiring team members to pursue continuous growth.

Sands China CEO Grant Chum highlighted the company's commitment to diversity and inclusion, emphasizing that half of Sands China's 27,000 team members are women, many balancing both work and family responsibilities.

Wing Lei Bar at Wynn Palace unveils new concept



Wing Lei Bar at Wynn Palace is undergoing a significant transformation, focusing on an updated approach to mixology, atmosphere, and customer service.

The changes aim to create a more accessible and personalized experience while

maintaining the luxury of a hotel bar, according to a statement issued by the gaming operator.

Led by Head Mixologist Mark Lloyd, Wing Lei Bar will debut a two-pronged cocktail program on March 12, featuring a redesigned sig-

nature menu with 12 reimagined takes on classic cocktail styles.

Lloyd, with 15 years of experience working across Asia, is known for integrating unique global ingredients into his cocktail creations.

Lloyd's bespoke bar program uses a personalized approach, focusing on homemade infusions and tinctures over modern gadgets.

The menu incorporates repurposed ingredients from across the hotel.

Additionally, Wing Lei Bar will launch its culinary-inspired guest shift series starting March 13, with Shanghai's Union Trading Company showcasing their unique cocktail creations.

TRADE

Foreign minister criticizes US tariffs and accuses the country of 'meeting good with evil'

SIMINA MISTREANU, BEIJING

CHINESE Foreign Minister Wang Yi said China will continue to retaliate for the United States' "arbitrary tariffs" and accused Washington of "meeting good with evil" in a press conference Friday on the sidelines of the country's annual parliamentary session.

Wang said China's efforts to help the U.S. contain its fentanyl crisis have been met with punitive tariffs, which are straining their ties.

"No country should fantasize that it can suppress China and maintain a good relationship with China at the same time," Wang said. "Such two-faced acts are not good for the stability of bilateral relations or for building mutual trust."

The U.S. this week levied duties against China as well as Canada and Mexico over accusations of fentanyl smuggling, which the countries have called unjustified. China maintains it's done a lot to curb the exports of industrial chemicals used to make fentanyl over the past few years, and that illegal drug use in the U.S. is a domestic problem.

The duties were the latest in a series of retaliatory tariffs Washington and Beijing have imposed against one another

AP PHOTO



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi

since U.S. President Donald Trump's return to office in January. The U.S. raised flat tariffs on all Chinese imports to 20%, while Beijing countered with additional 15% duties on U.S. imports including chicken, pork, soy and beef, and expanded controls on doing business with key U.S. companies.

The foreign minister's annual press conference is the one occasion on which Wang speaks to Chinese and foreign media on a range of topics. Fri-

day's event was dominated by questions about China's ties with the US, along with other topics such as regional conflicts and collaborations within the Global South.

Regarding the Trump administration's policy of safeguarding U.S. interests above international cooperation, Wang said such an approach, if adopted by every country in the world, would result in the "law of the jungle."

"Small and weak countries

will get burnt first, and the international order and rules will be under severe shock," Wang said. "Major countries should undertake their international obligations ... and not seek to profit from and bully the weak."

On the Ukraine war, Wang reiterated China's stance of supporting conflict resolution through political negotiations. Wang said that in hindsight, the Ukraine conflict "could have been avoided."

"All parties should learn so-

mething from the crisis," he said. "Among many other things, security should be mutual and equal, and no country should build its security on the insecurity of another."

Wang stressed that China-Russia relations are as strong as ever despite recent consultations between the U.S. and Russia on ending the Ukraine war. He said Beijing and Moscow are planning joint celebrations this year marking the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.

On Taiwan, the island democracy China claims as its own, Wang said "Taiwan has never been a country and will never be a country in the future."

"Advocating for Taiwan independence is splitting the country, supporting Taiwan independence is interfering in China's internal affairs, and conniving for Taiwan independence is undermining the stability of the Taiwan Strait," he said.

Those who support Taiwan's independence are "only playing with fire and will burn themselves," Wang said.

Asked about Trump's plan to take control of Gaza and resettle Palestinians in neighboring countries, Wang said Gaza belongs to the Palestinians and any forced change of the territory's status would trigger new turbulence. He said China backs the peace plan put forth by Egypt and other Arab countries and reiterated Beijing's support for a two-state solution for Palestine and Israel.

"The Israeli-Palestinian conflict takes place again and again simply because the two-state solution is only half-achieved," Wang said. "The state of Israel has long been a reality, but the state of Palestine is still far beyond reach." **MDT/AP**

Consumer prices fell in February and remain flat in a sluggish economy

CONSUMER prices fell in China in February for the first time in 13 months, as persistent weak demand was compounded by the early timing of the Lunar New Year holiday.

The National Bureau of Statistics said yesterday that the consumer price index dropped 0.7% in February compared to a year ago. On a monthly basis, prices were down 0.2% from January.

While many other countries wrestle with inflation, China's policymakers face flat to

falling prices, and the possibility they could evolve into a deflationary spiral that would drag down the economy. The government stressed the need to increase domestic demand and consumer spending in an annual report last week to its ceremonial legislature, the National People's Congress, but held back on unveiling any dramatic new steps to boost the economy.

The Lunar New Year, a time when spending rises for travel, dining out and entertainment,



came in late January this year instead of February, as it's based on the cycles of the moon. Holiday spending hel-

ped drive the consumer price index up 0.5% in January, but it then fell last month compared to 2024's elevated level.

Factoring out the impact of the holiday, the index rose 0.1% last month, Dong Lijuan, a statistician at the government's statistics bureau, said in a written analysis.

That is still far lower than ideal. Last week's government annual report included an inflation target of 2% for this year, but it is likely to fall far short of that goal. The consumer price index was flat in 2024, rising 0.2%.

A burgeoning trade war with the United Sta-

tes could add to China's economic headwinds.

Besides the early Lunar New Year, two other factors contributed to falling prices in February, Dong said: Better weather boosted farm production, driving down the price of fresh vegetables and automakers also stepped up promotions to try to boost sales, reducing prices for new cars.

The producer price index, which measures the wholesale price of goods, fell 2.2% in February, the statistics bureau said. Producer prices have been falling more sharply than consumer prices, putting pressure on companies to cut labor and other costs. **MDT/AP**

North Korea unveils nuclear-powered submarine for the first time

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

NORTH Korea unveiled for the first time a nuclear-powered submarine under construction, a weapons system that can pose a major security threat to South Korea and the U.S.

The state media agency on Saturday released photos showing what it called "a nuclear-powered strategic guided missile submarine," as it reported leader Kim Jong Un's visits to major shipyards where warships are built.

The Korean Central News Agency, or KCNA, didn't provide details on the submarine, but said that Kim was briefed on its construction.

The naval vessel appears to be a 6,000-ton-class or 7,000-ton-class one which can carry about 10 missiles, said Moon Keun-sik, a South Korean submarine expert who teaches at Seoul's Hanyang University. He said that the use of the term "the strategic guided missiles" meant it would carry nuclear-capable weapons.

"It would be absolutely threatening to us and the U.S.," Moon said.

U.S. National Security Council spokesman Brian Hughes said that "we're aware of these claims and do not have additional information to provide at this time.



AP PHOTO

"The U.S. is committed to the complete denuclearization of North Korea," Hughes said.

A nuclear-powered submarine was among a long wish list of sophisticated weaponry that Kim vowed to introduce during a major political conference in 2021 to cope with what he called escalating U.S.-led military threats. Other weapons were solid-fueled intercontinental ballistic missiles, hypersonic weapons, spy satellites and multi-warhead missiles. North Korea has since performed

a run of testing activities to acquire them.

North Korea obtaining a greater ability to fire missiles from underwater is a worrying development, because it's difficult for its rivals to detect such launches in advance.

Questions about how North Korea, a heavily sanctioned and impoverished country, could get resources and technology to build nuclear-powered submarines have surfaced.

Moon, the submarine expert,

said that North Korea may have received Russian technological assistance to build a nuclear reactor to be used in the submarine in return for supplying conventional weapons and troops to support Russia's war efforts against Ukraine.

He also said that North Korea could launch the submarine in one or two years to test its capability before its actual deployment.

North Korea has an estimated 70-90 diesel-powered submarines in one of the world's largest fleets.

However, they are mostly aging ones capable of launching only torpedoes and mines, not missiles.

In 2023, North Korea said that it had launched what it called its first "tactical nuclear attack submarine," but foreign experts doubted the North's announcement and speculated that it was likely a diesel-powered submarine disclosed in 2019. Moon said that there has been no confirmation that it has been deployed.

North Korea has conducted a slew of underwater-launched ballistic missile tests since 2016, but all launches were made from the same 2,000-ton-class submarine which has a single launch tube. Many experts call it a test platform, rather than an operational submarine in active service.

In recent days, North Korea has been dialing up its fiery rhetoric against the U.S. and South Korea before their upcoming annual military drills set to start on Monday.

During his visits to the shipyards, Kim said that North Korea aims to modernize water-surface and underwater warships simultaneously. He stressed the need to make "the incomparably overwhelming warships fulfill their mission" to contain "the inveterate gunboat diplomacy of the hostile forces." KCNA reported Saturday. **MDT/AP**

SOUTH KOREA

Impeached President Yoon released from prison

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea's impeached conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol was released from prison on Saturday, a day after a Seoul court canceled his arrest to allow him to stand trial for rebellion without being detained.

After walking out of a detention center near Seoul, Yoon waved, clenched his fists and bowed deeply to his supporters who were shouting his name and waving South Korean and U.S. flags. Yoon climbed into a black van headed to his presidential residence in Seoul.

In a statement distributed by his lawyers, Yoon said that he "appreciates the courage and decision by the Seoul Central District Court to correct illegality," in an apparent reference to legal disputes over his arrest. He said he also thanks his supporters and asked those who are on hunger strike against his impeachment to end it.

Yoon was arrested and indicted by prosecutors in January over his Dec. 3 martial law decree that plunged the country into huge political turmoil. The liberal opposition-controlled National Assembly separately voted to impeach him, leading to his suspension from office.

The Constitutional Court has been deliberating whether to formally dismiss or reinstate Yoon. If the court upholds his impeachment, a national election will be held to find his successor within two months.

The Seoul Central Dis-



AP PHOTO

Impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol greets his supporters after he came out of a detention center in Uiwang, South Korea, Saturday

trict Court said Friday it accepted Yoon's request to be released from prison, citing the need to address questions over the legality of the investigations on the president. Yoon's lawyers have accused the investigative

agency that detained him before his formal arrest of lacking legal authority to probe rebellion charges.

The Seoul court also said the legal period of his formal arrest expired before he was indicted.

Yoon's release came after prosecutors decided not to appeal the decision by the Seoul court. South Korean law allows prosecutors to continue to hold a suspect while pursuing an appeal, even after his or her arrest is canceled by a court.

The main liberal opposition Democratic Party, which led Yoon's Dec. 14 impeachment, lashed out at the prosecutors' decision, calling them "henchmen" of Yoon, a former prosecutor general. Party spokesperson Cho Seung-rae urged the Constitutional Court to dismiss Yoon as soon as possible to avoid further public unrest and anxiety.

At the heart of public criticism of Yoon over his martial law decree was his dispatch of hundreds of troops and police officers to

the National Assembly after placing the country under military rule. Some senior military and police officials sent to the assembly have testified that Yoon ordered them to pull out lawmakers to thwart a parliamentary vote on the decree. Yoon has countered that he aimed to maintain order.

Enough lawmakers eventually managed to enter an assembly hall and voted unanimously to overturn Yoon's decree.

Investigators have alleged Yoon's martial-law decree amounted to rebellion. If he's convicted of that offense, he would face the death penalty or life imprisonment. Yoon has presidential immunity from most criminal prosecutions but that doesn't cover grave charges like rebellion and treason. **MDT/AP**

Panama releases dozens of detained deportees from US into limbo following human rights criticism

MEGAN JANETSKY, ALMA SOLÍS & MATÍAS DELACROIX, PANAMA CITY

AP PHOTO

AFTER weeks of lawsuits and human rights criticism, Panama on Saturday released dozens of migrants who were held for weeks in a remote camp after being deported from the United States, telling them they have 30 days to leave the Central American nation.

It thrust many like Hayatullah Omagh, a 29-year-old who fled Afghanistan in 2022 after the Taliban took control, into a legal limbo, scrambling to find a path forward.

"We are refugees. We do not have money. We cannot pay for a hotel in Panama City, we do not have relatives," Omagh told the Associated Press in an interview. "I can't go back to Afghanistan under any circumstances ... It is under the control of the Taliban, and they want to kill me. How can I go back?"

Authorities have said deportees will have the option of extending their stay by 60 days if they need it, but after that many like Omagh don't know what they will do.

Omagh climbed off a bus in Panama City alongside 65 migrants from China, Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Nepal and other nations after spending weeks detained in poor conditions by the Panamanian government, which has said it wants to work with the Trump administration "to send a signal of deterrence" to people hoping to migrate.

Human rights groups and lawyers advocating for the migrants were waiting at the bus terminal, and scrambled to find the released migrants shelter and other resources. Dozens of other people remained in the camp.

Among those getting off buses were migrants fleeing violence and repression in Pakistan and Iran, and 27-year-old Nikita Gaponov, who fled Russia due to repression for being part of



the LGBTQ+ community and who said he was detained at the U.S. border, but not allowed to make an asylum claim.

"Once I get off the bus, I'll be sleeping on the ground tonight," Gaponov said.

Others turned their eyes north once again, saying that even though they had already been deported, they had no other option than to continue after crossing the world to reach the U.S.

The deportees, largely from Asian countries, were part of a deal struck between the Trump administration and Panama and Costa Rica as the U.S. government attempts to speed up deportations. The administration sent hundreds of people, many families with children, to the two Central American countries as a stopover while authorities organize a way to send them back to their countries of origin.

Critics described it as a way for the U.S. to export its deportation process.

The agreement fueled human rights concerns when hundreds of deportees detained in a hotel in Panama City held up notes to their windows pleading for help and saying they were scared to return to their own countries.

Under international refu-

gee law, people have the right to apply for asylum when they are fleeing conflict or persecution.

Those that refused to return home were later sent to a remote camp near Panama's border with Colombia, where they spent weeks in poor conditions, were stripped of their phones, unable to access legal council and were not told where they were going next.

Lawyers and human rights defenders warned that Panama and Costa Rica were turning into "black holes" for deportees, and said their release was a way for Panamanian authorities to wash their hands of the deportees amid mounting human rights criticism.

Those who were released Saturday night, like Omagh, said they could not return home.

As an atheist and member of an ethnic minority group in Afghanistan known as the Hazara, he said returning home under the rule of the Taliban — which swept back into power after the Biden administration pulled out of the country — would mean he would be killed. He only went to the U.S. after trying for years to live in Pakistan, Iran and other countries but being denied visas.

Omagh was deported after presenting himself to American authorities and asking to seek asylum in the U.S., which he was denied.

"My hope was freedom. Just freedom," he said. "They didn't give me the chance. I asked many times to speak to an asylum officer and they told me 'No, no, no, no, no.'"

Still, he said that leaving the camp was a relief. Omagh and other migrants who spoke to the AP detailed scarce food, sweltering heat with little relief and aggressive Panamanian authorities.

In one case, Omagh and others said, a Chinese man went on a week-long hunger strike. In another, a small riot broke out because guards refused to give a migrant their phone. The riot, they said, was suppressed by armed guards.

Panamanian authorities denied accusations about camp conditions, but blocked journalists from accessing the camp and cancelled a planned press visit last week.

While international aid organizations said they would organize travel to a third country for people who didn't want to return home, Panamanian authorities said the people released had already refused help. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1969: MARTIN LUTHER KING'S KILLER GETS LIFE



James Earl Ray has been jailed for 99 years by a court in Memphis, Tennessee, after admitting he carried out the murder of the American civil rights leader.

His guilty plea was made on the understanding he was spared the electric chair. It also brought a swift end to the trial, which otherwise might have lasted weeks.

Ray will not be eligible for parole until he is 90.

The verdict is unlikely to silence the speculation that Dr King's murder was the result of a conspiracy.

Until now, it had been assumed Ray's defence would be that he was involved in a plot to assassinate the civil rights leader, but did not fire the fatal shot.

Dr King, who preached non-violence, was shot dead by a sniper in the southern city of Memphis in April 1968 as he stood on a hotel balcony. He was in the city to lead a civil rights march.

He had come to Memphis to support striking dustmen, the majority of whom are black. The unresolved dispute meant feelings between black and white were running high in the city.

Immediately after the shooting, the Federal Bureau of Investigation was ordered to begin an investigation.

Ray had escaped from Missouri State Penitentiary in April 1967 where he was serving a 20 year sentence for armed robbery.

He was eventually traced to London in June 1968, where he was travelling under a false identity. He was arrested at Heathrow airport and charged with possessing a loaded firearm and false passport.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The trial verdict was seen by some as a cover-up for a politically motivated conspiracy. However, federal authorities insisted there was no evidence of a cover-up.

Ray agreed to plead guilty so he could be spared the electric chair.

Ray was known to have a fanatical hatred of black people. Even while serving his sentence in Missouri, he rejected a move to an open farm prison where conditions were better on the grounds he could not live with black inmates.

Three days after his jailing, Ray recanted his guilty plea. He claimed he had been set up by a gun dealer in Montreal known only as Raoul.

He spent the next 29 years fighting for the trial his guilty plea had forestalled - and won the support of the King family.

New forensic tests in 1997 on the gun said to have been used in the assassination proved inconclusive.

Ray died on 23 April 1998.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Quick action gets through. Collaboration flowers. Pull together for common gain. Have fun with family, friends and someone you love. Share your heart.

TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20
 Work together for home and family. Work out who will do what, and get going. Handle household routines and make a long-desired improvement.

GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21
 Make a bargain, commitment or promise. Push for a long-term vision. Use your charm and creativity. Make a move leading to lasting benefits.

CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Replenish your reserves in small, steady increments. Compute expenses to find painless twigs to prune. Feed your roots. Align on solutions for long-term growth.

LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Focus energy on a personal project for long-lasting gain. Research and consider expert financial opinions. You're especially powerful and confident. Explore and innovate.

VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Rest and review options to find the pathway of least friction. Gentle, steady pressure works better than force. Determine the best direction and recharge.

LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 A community effort gains momentum. Long-term goals seem within reach. Recruit friends to help. Make agreements and sign contracts. Work together to exceed expectations.

SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 A professional goal tempts. Play the game you've been practicing to win. Forge ahead. Anticipate changes. Stay light on your feet and have fun.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Research and prepare. Align structures to support your next educational adventure. Weigh your options. Make long-term decisions and preparations. Consider budgets and practicalities.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Go for big financial goals and make them, with a partner's support. Teamwork goes the distance. Clarify the vision to inspire greater gain.

AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Collaborate and strategize. Discuss possibilities and align upon which to greenlight. Compromise and negotiate terms. Enjoy meaningful conversations. Share support with partners and allies.

PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Pick up the pace as demand for your work rises. The moves you make now can have lasting benefits. You have an extra advantage.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

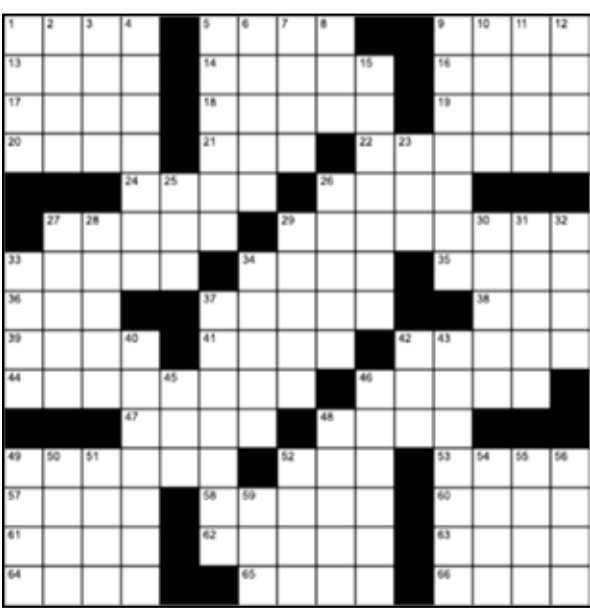
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	7	22	cloudy
Changchun	3	19	fine
Chengdu	6	23	cloudy
Chongqing	11	15	fine
Fuzhou	11	18	cloudy
Guangzhou	15	19	cloudy
Guiyang	4	12	cloudy
Haikou	17	16	cloudy
Hangzhou	7	23	cloudy
Harbin	-2	15	fine
Hefei	6	24	fine
Nanjing	8	24	cloudy
Shanghai	9	20	cloudy
Taipei	16	15	cloudy
Wuhan	6	13	overcast
Hong Kong	20	18	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	5	7	cloudy
Frankfurt	7	15	cloudy
Paris	7	12	rain
London	7	16	cloudy
New York	6	17	sunny

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Muslim pilgrimage; 5- Up to the job; 9- Biblical birthright seller; 13- Baseball's Moises; 14- Borscht veggies; 16- RR stops; 17- Paint crudely; 18- Sleep images; 19- Shipping deduction; 20- Calvary letters; 21- Young ___; 22- Complied; 24- Ornamental fabric; 26- Novel ending; 27- Spy; 29- Barbaric; 33- Runs in neutral; 34- Sat on the back of a horse; 35- Fall prey to a banana peel, say; 36- Falsehood; 37- Flying Pan; 38- Candle count; 39- Singer Horne; 41- Starring role; 42- Shaping tool; 44- Eyeglasses with tinted lenses; 46- Bowling lane button; 47- Ferrara family; 48- Interlock; 49- Simple shed; 52- After taxes; 53- Evens the score; 57- Ardent; 58- Like most sumo wrestlers; 60- Make over; 61- ___cava; 62- Grannies; 63- Tract; 64- Aardvark's meal; 65- Robin's digs; 66- Hankerings;

DOWN 1- ___ but known...; 2- Astronaut Shepard; 3- Sullen; 4- Occasion of rejecting; 5- Kidnap; 6- European capital; 7- Wine sediment; 8- Greek vowel; 9- Values highly; 10- Hang around; 11- Bern's river; 12- Hand-me-down; 15- Suffocate; 23- Heat meas.; 25- Ques. response; 26- Finished, terminated; 27- Old French expression meaning "goodbye"; 28- First American to orbit Earth; 29- Little bits; 30- Having wings; 31- The dark; 32- Blunted blade; 33- Woes; 34- Singer Della; 37- Military unit; 40- To-do lists; 42- Bandleader Brown; 43- Smokers receptacle; 45- WWII craft; 46- Student's second chance; 48- Flat-topped hills; 49- Hot rock; 50- Square; 51- ___ Misbehavin'; 52- Hawaii's state bird; 54- Able was ___; 55- Steinbeck; East of ___; 56- In order (to); 59- Outlaw;



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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Hellene Garden w/ 1 CP
 HKD 7,500,000 4 bed 3 bath

Manhattan F Unit
 HKD 10,800,000 3 bed 2 bath

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Nam Long (Old Taipa)
4 bed 2 bath
130.43 m² / 1,404 ft² | HKD 6,988,000



Manhattan F Unit (Taipa)
3 bed 2 bath
111.76 m² / 1,203 ft² | HKD10,800,000



Hellene Garden (Coloane)
4 bed 3 bath & 1 Car Park
192.58 m² / 2,073 ft² | HKD7,500,000



Chun Leong (Taipa)
2 bed 1 bath
68.28 m² / 735 ft² | HKD 4,480,000



Ocean Garden Cattleya Court (Taipa)
2 bed 2 bath
73.95 m² / 796 ft² | HKD 6,980,000

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FOOTBALL

Liverpool's lead in Premier League grows to 16 points as ailing Man City loses again

LIVERPOOL'S LEAD in the Premier League has grown to 16 points. Mohamed Salah's lead in the Golden Boot contest is up to seven goals.

AP PHOTO



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah

Both races are turning into a procession after Salah converted two second-half penalties for his 26th and 27th goals of the campaign to clinch a 3-1 win for Liverpool at home to last-placed Southampton on Saturday.

It seems a matter of when, not if, Liverpool secures its record-tying 20th English top-flight championship, even if Arsenal — way back in second place — has two games in hand. Liverpool's players have nine games left but surely won't need all of them to seal the title.

Maybe a more staggering statistic is that Manchester City, the winner of the last four titles, is now 23 points behind Liverpool after a 1-0 loss at third-placed Nottingham Fo-

rest, whose 83rd-minute winner came from Callum Hudson-Odoi.

City is in fourth place, at least for overnight, and has a fight on its hands just to finish in the top five, which should be enough to qualify for the Champions League this season. Only five points separate City from Fulham in 10th place.

Erling Haaland had a quiet match and — stuck on 20 goals

— is now struggling to be the league's top scorer for the third straight season.

Instead, it's Salah heading for the Golden Boot, which he won outright in 2017-18 and shared in the 2018-19 and 2021-22 seasons, and is now up to 184 goals in the Premier League — tied with Man City great Sergio Aguero at No. 5 on the all-time list. Aguero and Salah are the top-scoring fo-

reign players since the Premier League was founded in 1992.

LIVERPOOL NOT HOLDING BACK AHEAD OF PSG

For Liverpool, the meeting with Southampton came in the middle of two matches in a six-day span against Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League's last 16.

Liverpool holds a 1-0 lead after the first leg in Paris on Wednesday and manager Arne Slot opted against mass rotation ahead of the return match on Tuesday. Indeed, Salah played the whole match.

Darwin Nunez started after setting up Harvey Elliott's winner in the French capital and scored himself in the 51st minute, canceling out Will Smallbone's shock opener for Southampton in first-half stoppage time.

Nunez then was fouled for the first penalty slotted home by Salah in the 54th, before the Egypt star notched his second

in the 88th after a handball.

"The manager, his head was going for us but it's something you need sometimes," Salah said of Slot's halftime reaction. "Because the first half it was sloppy and we were slow."

Southampton stayed 13 points from safety and looks destined for an immediate return to the Championship.

FOREST ON COURSE FOR CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Forest's improbable bid for Champions League qualification was strengthened by beating City, whose goalkeeper Ederson Moraes was beaten at his near post by Hudson-Odoi's shot late in a tight game at the City Ground.

A few minutes earlier, Ederson had tipped a curling strike by Hudson-Odoi onto the post.

"I knew I'd get another chance and that one went in, so I'm buzzing," Hudson-Odoi said. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**NO WINNERS IN CONFLICT,
 NO LOSERS IN PEACE**

In a social media post on Friday, US President Donald Trump said he is “strongly considering” levying new sanctions and tariffs on Russia.

Considering that he issued the same warning shortly after he took office in January before making public the United States’ about-face in its stance on the Ukraine crisis, Trump’s repetition of the same old warning should serve to reflect new pressure has been quickly building on his shoulder after his dramatic showdown with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Washington on Feb 28.

After Trump’s post, Kevin Hassett, director of the US National Economic Council, told reporters that “President Trump is adamant that we need to get everybody to the table, and we could do that with carrots, and we could do that with sticks”.

But Trump’s post came after the European Union leaders, the day before, showed their firm commitment to working together to bolster the bloc’s defenses and to free up hundreds of billions of euros for security.

It is the US leader’s repeated warnings that he would cut them adrift to face the threat of Russia alone and the US’ decision to not provide new military and intelligence assistance to Ukraine that has prompted the EU leaders to speak in almost one voice, except the opposition of Hungary, in support of the bloc’s self-reliance on security.

That means the EU and Ukraine have dug their heels in instead of succumbing to the US administration’s pressure that they have no choice but to accept a deal it struck with Russia to end the conflict in Ukraine.

“It may be easier dealing with Russia, which is surprising, because they have all the cards,” Trump said. Thus the US president’s warning to Moscow can be seen as a stress reaction of the administration to some extent.

After more than three years of sanctions imposed on Russia by the previous US administration, the Trump administration has few cards to play on that front. Russia’s exports of goods to the US were a relatively negligible \$3 billion last year — with fertilizers accounting for nearly half the volume — in contrast with the US’ \$3.3 trillion goods imports that year, leaving little space for the US to wield its tariff baton.

To ease the mounting pressure, Trump is sending Secretary of State Marco Rubio, national security adviser Mike Waltz and special envoy Steve Witkoff to Saudi Arabia this week to meet with Ukrainian officials.

The whole crisis over the past more than three years and the detour of the peace process due to Washington being intent on looting a burning house only serve to highlight China’s constant stance on the issue. China has advocated dialogue and negotiation and sought a political solution since the first day of the crisis, and has been working for peace and promoting talks ever since.

China welcomes and supports all efforts committed to peace. At the same time, all parties must also see that the root causes of this crisis are complex and intricate, so the peace process can also be long and complicated. As Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a news conference on Friday, “There can be no winners in the conflict, and there will be no losers in the peace”.

Relevant parties should therefore put aside their own immediate interest, and advocate and practice a new security concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. [Abridged]

The death toll from two days of clashes between Syrian security forces and loyalists of ousted President Bashar Assad and revenge killings that followed has risen to more than 1,000, a war monitoring group said Saturday, making it one of the deadliest acts of violence since Syria’s conflict began 14 years ago.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said in addition to 745 civilians killed, mostly in shootings from close distance, 125 government security force members and 148 militants with armed groups affiliated with Assad were killed. It ad-

ded that electricity and drinking water were cut off in large areas around the city of Latakia.

The clashes, which erupted Thursday, marked a major escalation in the challenge to the new government in Damascus, three months after insurgents took authority after removing Assad from power.

The government has said that they were responding to attacks from remnants of Assad’s forces and blamed “individual actions” for the rampant violence.



AP PHOTO
 People take part in the 18th annual Million Women Rise march on International Women’s Day, in central London, Saturday

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY

PROTESTS DEMAND EQUAL RIGHTS AND AN END TO DISCRIMINATION, SEXUAL VIOLENCE

**MEHMET GUZEL &
 ANDREW WILKS,
 ISTANBUL**

WOMEN took to the streets of cities across Europe, Africa, South America and elsewhere to mark International Women’s Day with demands for ending inequality and gender-based violence.

On the Asian side of Istanbul, Turkey’s biggest city, a rally in Kadikoy saw members of dozens of women’s groups listen to speeches, dance and sing in the spring sunshine. The colorful protest was overseen by a large police presence, including officers in riot gear and a water cannon truck.

The government of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared 2025 the Year of the Family. Protesters pushed back against the idea of women’s role being confined to marriage and motherhood, carrying banners reading “Family will not bind us to life” and “We will not be sacrificed to the family.”

Critics have accused the government of overseeing restrictions on women’s rights and not doing enough to tackle violence against women.

Erdogan in 2021 withdrew Turkey from a European treaty, dubbed the Istanbul Convention, that protects women from domestic violence. Turkish rights group We Will Stop Femicides Platform says that 394 women were killed by men in 2024.

“There is bullying at work, pressure from husbands and

fathers at home and pressure from patriarchal society. We demand that this pressure be reduced even further,” Yaz Gulgun, 52, said.

WOMEN ACROSS EUROPE AND AFRICA MARCH AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

In many other European countries, women also protested against violence, for better access to gender-specific health care, equal pay and other issues in which they don’t get the same treatment as men.

In Poland, activists opened a center across from the parliament building in Warsaw where women can go to have abortions with pills, either alone or with other women.

Opening the center on International Women’s Day across from the legislature was a symbolic challenge to authorities in the traditionally Roman Catholic nation, which has one of Europe’s most restrictive abortion laws.

From Athens to Madrid, Paris, Munich, Zurich and Belgrade and in many more cities across the continent, women marched to demand an end to treatment as second-class citizens in society, politics, family and at work.

In Madrid, protesters held up big hand-drawn pictures depicting Gisele Pélicot, the woman who was drugged by her now ex-husband in France over the course of a decade so that she could be raped by dozens of men while unconscious. Pélicot has

become a symbol for women all over Europe in the fight against sexual violence.

Thousands of women marched in the capital Skopje and several other cities in North Macedonia to raise their voices for economic, political and social equality for women.

Organizers said only about 28% of women in the country own property and in rural areas only 5%, mostly widows, have property in their name. Only 18 out of 100 women surveyed in rural areas responded that their parents divided family property equally between the brother and sister. “The rest were gender discriminated against within their family,” they said.

In Nigeria’s capital, Lagos, thousands of women gathered at the Mobolaji Johnson Stadium, dancing and signing and celebrating their womanhood. Many were dressed in purple — the traditional color of the women’s liberation movement.

In Russia, the women’s day celebrations had a more official tone, with honor guard soldiers presenting yellow tulips to girls and women during a celebration in St. Petersburg.

German president warns of backlash against progress already made

In Berlin, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier called for stronger efforts to achieve equality and warned against tendencies to roll back progress already made. **MDT/AP**



Vatican City Pope Francis continued his recovery from double pneumonia yesterday after doctors reported some positive news: After more than three weeks in the hospital, the 88-year-old pope is responding well to treatment and has shown a “gradual, slight improvement” in recent days.



French President Emmanuel Macron is back at the center of global diplomacy, seeking to ease relations with President Donald Trump, championing a Ukraine peace plan alongside his British counterpart, and seeing his longstanding desire to boost European defense turning into reality.



UK A man was arrested yesterday after he climbed the Big Ben tower at the Palace of Westminster in central London while barefoot and holding a Palestinian flag. The man, who appeared to be staging a protest on a ledge several meters (yards) up Elizabeth Tower, stepped off the building after midnight.



Boxing Jade Jones (pictured), a two-time Olympic gold medalist in taekwondo, is launching a career in boxing. Jones took gold for Britain in 2012 and 2016 and competed in four Games, most recently in Paris last year. But, at the age of 31, she has announced her move to boxing.