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THE TRANSPORT BUREAU IS ADJUSTING ON-STREET METERED PARKING SPACES FOR CARS TO OPTIMIZE THE TRAVEL AND PARKING ENVIRONMENT

P3

MACAU LAWMAKERS PLEDGE TO PROMOTE NATIONAL POLICIES

P3

RODRIGO DUTERTE ARRESTED IN MANILA OVER DRUG-RELATED KILLINGS

P7



AP PHOTO



Myanmar Activist groups are urging the UN to investigate its Myanmar envoy, Julie Bishop, over alleged conflicts of interest. Reports claim her consulting firm has ties to Chinese and Australian companies with business in Myanmar, including firms linked to mining and construction projects that benefit the military regime.

AP PHOTO



Japan Cleanup efforts at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant remain hazardous 14 years after the 2011 disaster. Workers removing melted fuel debris face radiation risks and intense stress. Officials aim to begin large-scale fuel removal in the 2030s, though decommissioning may take over a century.

AP PHOTO



Japan Nissan CEO Makoto Uchida announced his resignation yesterday after the automaker reported significant financial losses. Ivan Espinosa, a longtime Nissan executive, will take over starting April 1. Uchida's departure follows failed talks with Honda on a joint venture and ongoing struggles in key markets.

AP PHOTO



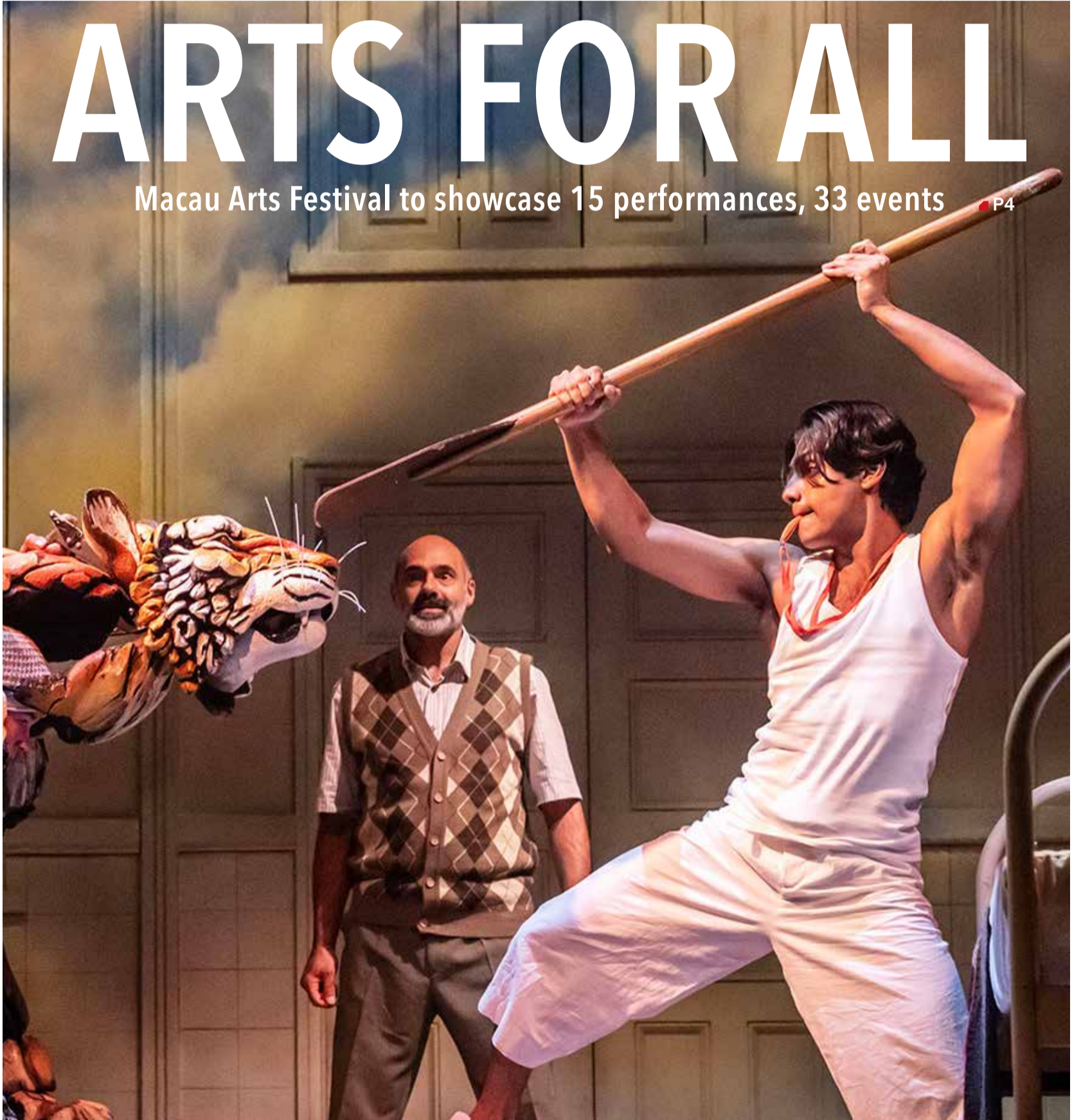
US-Ukraine talks on ending the war with Russia began in Jeddah yesterday, as Kyiv proposed a ceasefire in the Black Sea. Hours earlier, Russia claimed to have shot down 337 Ukrainian drones across 10 regions. No major damage was reported, but two people were killed.

More on backpage

ARTS FOR ALL

Macau Arts Festival to showcase 15 performances, 33 events

P4



JOHAN PERSSON

PROPERTY

PUBLIC HOUSING SYSTEM SET FOR MAJOR REFORMS TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

P3

GAMING

MELCO AFFIRMS COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS IN DISMISSAL CASE

P2

EMPLOYMENT

LAWMAKER URGES STRONGER LABOR PROTECTIONS AMID ANTICIPATED ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN

STAFF REPORTER

LAWMAKER Ella Lei has again urged the government to enhance labor protections as Macau adapts to economic restructuring.

In an interpellation to the government, she emphasized the need for improved job stability, wage growth, and workplace safety, particularly as Macau advances its "1+4" economic diversification strategy.

According to Lei, despite a relatively low unemployment rate and signs of economic recovery, underlying labor challenges persist.

Government data from the fourth quarter of 2024 revealed that over 1,600 people had been unemployed for more than six months, while the number of underemployed individuals had doubled since 2019, reaching 5,700.

Wage declines were also recorded in key sectors such as construction, real estate, and manufacturing.

Additionally, with inflation eroding purchasing power, many workers have not seen



real wage improvements.

Lei stressed that as the region's economic structure evolves, workers must be equipped with the skills necessary to adapt

She called for enhanced training and career development programs to help local residents remain competitive in the labor market.

Moreover, she pushed

for stronger protections for workers in emerging industries, ensuring their safety and rights are safeguarded.

While Lei acknowledged recent labor policy improvements, such as the implementation of a minimum wage and higher compensation limits for unfair dismissal, she underscored the need for further refinements.

She urged the government to strengthen regulations on occupational safety, workplace health, paid leave, and rest periods.

"Many labor laws in Macau remain outdated compared to neighboring regions. Key issues such as workplace safety, occupational diseases, unpaid leave, rest periods, and wage protection require

urgent attention," Lei stated in her interpellation.

"Does the government have a clear plan to enhance the employment support system and strengthen protections for workers?" she asked.

She also pointed out the need for stronger legal provisions to support vulnerable groups, including first-time job seekers, middle-aged workers, and individuals with disabilities.

Lei called on the government to prioritize local workers for job opportunities while also improving job quality and income security.

She emphasized that employment policies should not only focus on job availability but also on raising wages, ensuring stability, and promoting social well-being.

Given the anticipated global economic slowdown in 2025, Lei questioned what measures the government is implementing to support sectoral development, workforce retraining, and high-quality job creation.

She also noted that many workers in new industries, including tourism, cultural entertainment, e-commerce, and platform-based services, lack proper legal protections, particularly regarding unpaid wages and workplace accidents.

"Will the Macau government consider similar protections for workers in these new industries?" she asked.

LABOR

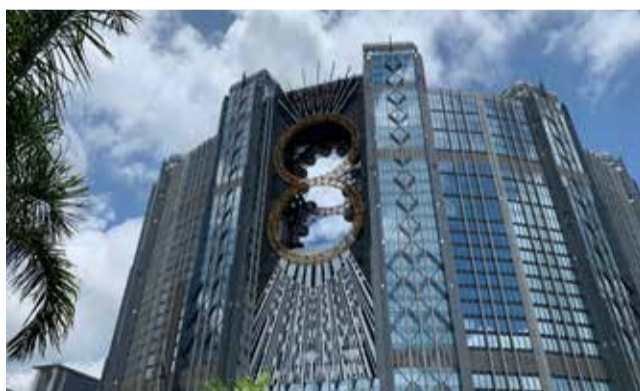
DSAL investigates dismissed workers' complaints as Melco affirms compliance with laws

LYNZY VALLES

THE Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) has launched an investigation following complaints from dismissed workers who allege unfair terminations at a major gaming operator.

The case was recently raised by lawmaker Ron Lam, followed by the submission of a letter by the allegedly dismissed workers to the government earlier this week.

In a reply to the Times,



DSAL confirmed that it has opened a case and is actively following up.

"As a functional department for labor ins-

pection, the bureau will follow up and investigate any complaints lodged by employees in accordance with its terms of reference

to protect the legitimate rights and interests of employees," the bureau stated.

Meanwhile, Melco Resorts & Entertainment emphasized its compliance with Macau SAR laws. "We are aware of the recent reports and have been actively cooperating with the authorities in the ongoing inquiries," a company spokesperson told the Times.

Melco affirmed that the terminations were carried out lawfully and based on objective, legitimate rea-

sons.

"The company strictly adheres to Macau SAR laws and regulations and upholds the principles of fairness and impartiality in all personnel matters," the statement continued.

"The company is committed to maintaining a fair workplace and protecting the lawful rights of all colleagues," it added.

Last week, the lawmaker revealed that several employees from various departments of a gaming operator were abruptly

dismissed on February 28 without prior notice, explanation, or job transfer options.

He described the layoffs as "unjustified" and criticized the company for failing to uphold its corporate social responsibility and commitment to local employment.

Lam also noted industry speculation that the government had tacitly approved layoffs by gaming operators, with only one major company yet to implement such measures.

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Public housing system set for major reforms to improve accessibility

LYNZY VALLES

MACAU'S public housing system may soon undergo significant changes aimed at improving accessibility and fairness.

Several key areas are being re-

viewed, including the criteria for grading and ranking applicants, adjustments to the pricing of public housing flats, and the introduction of a new flat replacement system.

The government is expected to announce details of the flat replacement system soon, which

could allow residents to exchange smaller flats for larger ones.

Leung Sin Man, a member of the Public Housing Committee, discussed the potential benefits of the system, suggesting it could help young people plan for their future housing needs. She noted that if implemented, it could free

up approximately 20% of one-bedroom flats.

Leung also recommended optimizing the scoring system to provide more targeted assistance to individual applicants, emphasizing that the system should consider the secondary circulation of T1 units and how to best assist applicants genuinely in need of one-bedroom flats.

However, she acknowledged that implementing the system might be complex.

"In terms of the system, we have also considered the secondary transfer of T1 flats. In fact, how to target the points system to help applicants genuinely applying for one-room flats is key. If the application of old net housing is applicable to the small-for-large self-exchange conditions, the overall implementation and operability may be more complex," said Leung, as cited in a TDM report.

Meanwhile, lawmaker Ella Lei suggested a long-term review of the net flat system, advocating for the relaxation of restrictions on the types of flats that can be applied for. She believed this could reduce the future demand for the self-exchange system.

The lawmaker also recommended creating data-driven planning for the distribution of flats, considering factors such as family size and unit demand.

ELDERLY WOMAN LOSES HKD420,000 IN PHONE SCAM

An elderly woman lost HKD420,000 to a "Guess Who" phone scam. She received a call last Thursday from someone posing as her son, claiming he was at a police station and needed money for legal trouble. She handed HKD220,000 to a man posing as a lawyer and later paid another HKD200,000 in supposed medical fees in Hong Kong. She only realized the scam after meeting her son and reported it to the police.

2025MIECF EXPANDS GLOBAL REACH WITH INCREASED PARTICIPATION

The 2025 Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum & Exhibition (2025MIECF) will take place from March 27 to 29, drawing exhibitors and traders from nearly 40 countries – 15% more than last year. The event features five exhibition zones and over 100 international enterprises showcasing green initiatives. It will also host global exchange activities, including a roundtable on low-carbon urban transformation and themed business matching sessions, fostering international cooperation and market opportunities in the environmental sector.

TWO SESSIONS

Lawmakers commit to promoting national policies

STAFF REPORTER

MEMBERS of Macau and Hong Kong's top legislative and political advisory bodies pledged yesterday to actively promote the latest national development directions and policies outlined in this year's two sessions to local communities in both Special Administrative Regions (SARs). Their goal is to strengthen the role of both regions in the nation's strategic development plan.

The two sessions concluded with the National People's Congress (NPC) holding its closing meeting after the conclusion of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

The NPC, which includes nearly 3,000 deputies from across the country, approved key documents during this session, such



as the Government Work Report, the central and local budgets for 2024, and the draft 2025 budget.

They also reviewed reports from the NPC Standing Committee, the Supreme People's Court, and the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

After the closing meeting, Chui Sai Peng, a Macau NPC deputy, noted that the central authorities had addressed Macau deputies' suggestions.

He promised to share

the nation's economic and social accomplishments with Macau society to reinforce confidence in high-quality development.

Chui has also called for enhanced integration between Macau and the Hengqin cooperation zone to support the region's economic diversification efforts.

"The Hengqin policy framework has clear development goals, but further implementation is needed," he said, as cited in a

China Daily report.

The development roadmap for Hengqin through 2035 consists of three phases, with the first phase (2021-2024) focusing on establishing a framework for integrated development between Macau and Hengqin.

In 2024, Hengqin's gross domestic product exceeded 53.8 billion yuan, reflecting a 5.3% year-on-year increase. The zone currently hosts approximately 6,600 Macau enterprises.

Further, lawmaker Wong Kit Cheng, a member of the CPPCC National Committee from the SAR, echoed the Government Work Report's focus on people-centered macro policies.

She emphasized the importance of implementing measures that create jobs, ease financial burdens, and stimulate consumer spending through increased resource allocation.

Wong also expressed optimism that the city's upcoming policy address, currently being prepared by the new administration under Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai, will align with the key priorities outlined in the national two sessions.

TRANSPORT

DSAT EXPANDS PARKING SPACES TO ACCOMMODATE LARGER VEHICLES

THE Transport Bureau (DSAT) is adjusting on-street metered parking spaces for cars in a bid to optimize the travel and parking environment.

In a statement yesterday, the bureau said the adjustments include increasing the average length of light vehicle parking spaces to 5.5 meters in phases to enhance parking efficiency and convenience. Some parallel spaces on Rua de Santa Clara have already been modified and are now in use.

Currently, most on-street parking spaces in Macau measure 5 meters in length and 2 to 2.5 meters in width. However, as larger vehicles become more common, the bureau aims to "gra-

dually extend parking space lengths while considering road conditions, pedestrian and vehicle safety, and overall parking availability."

The first phase of adjustments will include over 130 metered parking spaces at locations such as Estrada de São Francisco, Avenida Praia Grande, and Rua da Escola Comercial, among others.

The changes come amid calls from the community and the Transport Advisory Committee, who have been urging local authorities to replace straight motorcycle parking spaces with diagonal options, a move aimed at improving safety and efficiency in the densely populated city. LV

EVENTS

MACAO ARTS FESTIVAL TO SHOWCASE 15 PROGRAMS, 33 ACTIVITIES

VICTORIA CHAN

THE 35th Macao Arts Festival will take place from April 25 to May 31.

Featuring 15 programs and 33 outreach activities, this year's theme, "Growth," emphasizes fostering connections between audiences and artists through diverse artistic expressions.

Leong Wai Man, director of the Cultural Affairs Bureau, highlighted the festival's role in enhancing Macau's reputation as the "City of Performing Arts."

With a budget of approximately MOP23.4 million, nearly half of the programs will spotlight local art groups, including Macanese dramas.

At a press conference at MGM Cotai, Leong announced that this year's festival aligns with the East Asian Cultural Capital initiative.

The lineup will showcase selections from Japanese and Korean musicals, traditional drum performances, and Cantonese opera, promoting cultural exchanges among China, Japan, and South Korea.



In addition to performances, the festival will offer 33 outreach activities, including meet-the-artist sessions, backstage tours, pre-show talks, and workshops. Notable events include a pre-show talk for *Life of Pi*, hosted by resident director Gabriella Bird, who will discuss the adaptation of the novel into a theatrical experience.

Geoff Sobelle, creator of the show *Food*, will lead a session titled "Meet-the Artist," exploring the themes behind his absurdist works.

Acclaimed Chinese playwright He Jiping will also share insights into her drama *Deling* and *Cixi*.

The festival promises a rich

blend of creativity, featuring popular productions from London's West End and Broadway, as well as innovative performances like immersive food interactive theater and light art installations.

The "Selected Screenings of International Stage Performances" will present acclaimed productions on the silver

screen in Macau, including two plays by the UK's National Theatre Live: *The Motive and the Cue*, directed by Sam Mendes, and *All About Eve*, starring Gillian Anderson. Additional highlights include the Tokyo Ballet's *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* and the musical *Along with the Gods: The Afterworld* by the Seoul Performing Arts Troupe.

Furthermore, the Macau Chinese Orchestra will collaborate with Cantonese opera artists from the Greater Bay Area to perform classic works, showcasing the evolution of Chinese culture. Leong also addressed concerns regarding performance content ratings, ensuring that all public performances will be evaluated for age-appropriate categorization.

Workshops such as the "Theatre Movement Workshop" will demonstrate how to create dramatic body movements, while the "Behind the Scenes of Food" session will provide insights into the production process. Other workshops will include the "Drum on the Beat Workshop," led by TAGO members, and the "Cave of Sounds Workshop," which will engage participants in music dialogues.

This year's Outreach Programme will feature pre-show talks, workshops, and meet-the-artist sessions, all open to the public with free admission.

Sands China launches integrated resort leader development program

VICTORIA CHAN

SANDS China hosted a presentation event yesterday, showcasing the company's achievements in talent development through the Sands China Academy.

The event also marked the launch of the Sands China Integrated Resort Leader Development Program, designed to cultivate future leaders in the integrated tourism and leisure industry.

Wilfred Wong, executive vice chairman of Sands China, spoke at the event, highlighting the company's ongoing commitment to nurturing talent.

"For over two decades, Sands has been committed to developing local talent and fully supports the Macau government's policy of 'Building Macau

through Talent Training," he said.

Founded in 2015, the Sands China Academy provides a platform for talent development across various sectors, including food and beverage, hotel operations, and business analysis.

According to the gaming operator, more than 3,600 participants have joined the academy's programs, with over 3,300 successfully graduating.

The academy collaborates with the government, local and international higher education institutions, and other educational organizations to enhance tourism services and establish industry standards.

Wong noted the academy's expansion in 2023, adding eight sub-academies: MICE, hos-



pitality, integrated resort management, entertainment, facilities, responsible gaming, procurement, and retail.

"The 'four dimensions' of talent development include knowledge accumulation, professional qualifications, industry exchanges, and practical application," he said.

"The 'eight directions' represent the eight sub-academies, each cultivating outstanding talent for society and various industries."

Grant Chum, CEO and executive director of Sands China, discussed the new Integrated Resort Leader Development Program.

"The tourism industry's growth requires diverse professionals and visionary leaders to shape its future," he said. "We are proud to launch this program, designed to enhance strategic decision-making skills among management."

The program will collaborate with Cornell

University and talent assessment service provider SHL to develop a professional curriculum. The goal is to help participants explore the management practices of leading global enterprises while strengthening their leadership abilities.

INSIGHTS ON WORKPLACE LEARNING

Trainees from the Sands China Academy recently discussed the value of workplace training during an event showcasing the company's talent development initiatives.

Tiffany Ngai, a trainee at the Sands MICE Academy specializing in Convention and Exhibition Management, highlighted the practical skills gained through workplace experience.

"There are many things you learn in the workplace that are completely different from what you learn in school," she said. Ngai, who studies cultural entrepreneurship, became interested in the exhibition industry due

to city's growing tourism and exhibitions sector.

"Part of cultural entrepreneurship is related to tourism or exhibitions, and I saw that the Labour Affairs Bureau launched a plan, so I wanted to try applying," she explained.

Alice Wu, a trainee at the Sands Integrated Resort Management Academy, shared her journey as a recent graduate.

"I was a fresh graduate when I first started working," she said, stressing the importance of workplace training in bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practical experience.

Wu, who specializes in data science, highlighted the relevance of the resort analyst program for fresh graduates. "The resort analyst program is particularly suitable for fresh graduates studying Data Science," she said. "The current wave of AI is very attractive, and this project allows fresh graduates to get in touch with the work content of different departments."

ECONOMY

Japan's economy grew at a 2.2% annual rate in Oct-Dec

JAPAN'S has cut its estimate for its economic growth in the last quarter of the year to a 2.2% annual pace from 2.8% as consumer spending hit demand.

The Cabinet Office said yesterday that Japan's real gross domestic product, which measures the sum value of a nation's goods and services, also was lower due to higher private inventories than earlier reported.

It was the third straight quarter of expansion, and the government maintains that the economy is moderately recovering. On a quarter-to-quarter basis, seasonally adjusted real GDP grew 0.6%, revised from 0.7%. Private demand shrank 0.3%, worse than the 0.1% given earlier. Exports grew 1.0%, instead of the earlier 1.1%.

Unlike the U.S. and some other nations, Japan has been dogged by deflation, and these lower prices stifle growth. But recent wage growth has kept deflationary trends in check.

The slower growth than expected complicates policymaking for the Bank of Japan, which has been expected to raise interest rates. Annual negotiations between labor and management are resulting in bigger wage increases and the central bank has said it will raise its benchmark rate if the economy holds up and prices continue to rise at the projected steady rate of 2%.

The government kept unchanged its finding that the Japanese economy grew at a meager 0.1% annual rate, the fourth straight year of expansion.

The outlook for Japan is clouded by uncertainties about the future course for the U.S. economy and policies of U.S. President Donald Trump, especially tariffs. Japanese companies rely heavily on foreign trade, and tariffs on Japanese exports as well as those of China and other neighboring Asian nations, as well as Mexico and Canada, would reverberate across the globe. **MDT/AP**

MARKETS

Tesla tumbles again as investors bail on Musk's suddenly struggling EV company

SHARES of Tesla slid again Monday as confidence in Elon Musk's electric car company continues to disintegrate following a post-election "Trump bump."

Tesla shares tumbled 15.4%, to \$222.15. That's the lowest Tesla shares have traded since late October, reflecting investors' newfound pessimism as the automaker's sales crater around the globe. The decline, Tesla's steepest since September 2020, came with Wall Street in the midst of a sell-off caused by uncertainty over the Trump administration's trade policies.

Many analysts have attributed Tesla's sagging stock — and auto sales — to Musk's support of President Donald Trump and other far right candidates around the world.

Musk pumped \$270 million into Trump's campaign heading into the 2024 election, appeared on stage with him and cheered Trump's victory over Democratic candidate Kamala Harris in November. Tesla stock soared to \$479 per share by mid-December, but have since tumbled back to earth, losing 40% of their value.

Musk has become the face of the Trump admi-



A banner is left outside a Tesla showroom during a demonstration, in Lisbon

nistration's slash-and-burn efforts, known as the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE. The department has promised massive federal worker layoffs and aims to drastically reduce government spending.

Analysts have said Musk's shift to right-wing politics doesn't appear to sit well with potential Tesla buyers, generally perceived to be wealthy, environmentally-conscious liberals who have turned to electric vehicles in an attempt to reduce fossil fuel emissions.

Tesla sales are falling in California, the company's biggest U.S. market, and the

company recorded its first annual global sales decline last year. Similarly, Tesla sales plunged 45% in Europe in January, according to research firm Jato Dynamics, even as overall electric vehicle sales rose. The sales numbers were particularly bad in Germany and France.

The latest auto sales figure from China show that Tesla sales there have been nearly halved from February a year ago, although the decline is due increased local competition and not tied to Musk's politics.

Now, Wall Street analysts are concerned about a drop in Tesla deliveries in the U.S. Analysts at UBS Global Research expect deliveries

to fall 5% in the first quarter and full year compared to the same periods for 2024.

"Our UBS Evidence Lab data shows low delivery times for the Model 3 and Model Y (generally within two weeks) in key markets which we believe is indicative of softer demand," they wrote.

Tesla showrooms in the U.S. have been besieged by protesters, its vehicles vandalized and bumper stickers appearing on its cars with sayings such as, "I bought it before Elon went nuts."

In addition to backing Trump, Musk has also shown support for the far-right, pro-Russian, anti-Muslim party in Germany, called the British prime minister an "evil tyrant" and called Canada — a major Tesla market — "not a real country."

Tesla is not the only Musk-led company to run into trouble recently. His X social media platform crashed several times on Monday, which Musk blamed on a "massive" cyberattack.

Last week, a rocket launched by Musk's SpaceX exploded and broke apart over Florida, about two months after another of the company's rockets failed. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Wynn restaurants honored in 100 Top Tables 2025



The South China Morning Post's 100 Top Tables 2025 has recognized four Wynn restaurants—Chef Tam's Seasons and Mizumi at Wynn Palace Cotai, along with Drunken Fish

and Wing Lei at Wynn Macau—as among the best in Hong Kong and Macau. Additionally, Executive Chef Tam Kwok Fung of Chef Tam's Seasons received the prestigious

"Best Chef" title, highlighting Wynn's commitment to culinary excellence and Macau's role as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy.

Chef Tam's Seasons is known for its seasonal tasting menus, inspired by the 24 solar terms and blending East and West. Mizumi offers contemporary Japanese cuisine, presented theatrically by Executive Chef Hironori Maeda.

Drunken Fish specializes in premium seafood and innovative Moutai-infused dishes, while Michelin two-starred Wing Lei elevates classic Cantonese flavors.

Galaxy Macau and StarWorld Hotel restaurants featured in 100 Top Tables 2025



Six restaurants from StarWorld Hotel and Galaxy Macau Integrated Resort have been recognized in the South China Morning Post's prestigious 100 Top Tables guide for 2025.

This includes two new entries: Sushi Kissho by Miyakawa and Teppanyaki Shou, which both earned inaugural accolades.

Sushi Kissho by Miyakawa, the first overseas venture

of Michelin three-star sushi master Masaaki Miyakawa, brings a refined Edomae sushi experience to Raffles at Galaxy Macau. Teppanyaki Shou, which opened in 2024, offers a unique teppanyaki experience, blending precision and passion.

Meanwhile, longstanding favorites like StarWorld Hotel's Feng Wei Ju, 8½ Otto e Mezzo BOMBANA from Galaxy Macau, Yamazato from Hotel Okura Macau, and Lai Heen from The Ritz-Carlton Macau continued to maintain their high rankings.

Each restaurant was evaluated for its exceptional cuisine, service, and ambiance.

ANALYSIS

China is ending its annual Congress with questions open over how to revive its slowing economy

KEN MORITSUGU, BEIJING

CHINA wrapped up its biggest political event of the year yesterday leaving one question unanswered: How far will it go to try to revive economic growth in 2025?

A recurring theme throughout the weeklong meeting of the nearly 3,000-member National People's Congress was the need to boost investment and consumer spending.

How much will be done to translate words into action will only become clear in the months ahead as the ruling Communist Party juggles priorities. What is clear is that a burgeoning trade war with the United States has left the outlook for the coming months uncertain.

The meeting ended in the absence of top political leader Zhao Leji, the chairman of the Standing Committee of the Congress. Zhao, who was supposed to host the closing session, had a respiratory tract infection, said Vice Chairman Li Hongzhong, who chaired the meeting in his place.

The parliament voted overwhelmingly to approve an annual government work report, with 2,882 votes for, one vote against and one abstention. Similar near-unanimous votes were recorded to pass the budget and an amendment to a law on deputies to the Congress, among other items.

At stake is the health of the world's second largest economy, a major exporter of products to countries around the world and an important market for foreign companies from



Apple to Volkswagen. A prolonged property crisis has sapped consumer and business confidence, depriving the economy of its past vitality. Now, a tariff war unleashed by U.S. President Donald Trump is compounding those problems.

CHINA HOLDS BACK ON MAJOR STIMULUS

The Congress opened with the announcement of an economic growth target of "about 5%" for this year, a level that analysts said would be difficult to achieve with the measures detailed during this year's Congress.

They include borrowing more money for a slew of initiatives, such as giving 300 billion yuan (\$41.3 billion) in rebates to consumers who trade-in old cars and appliances for new ones. But much of the borrowing will go to supporting the housing market and local governments weighed down by debt.

"It is unclear how much of a jolt this budget will provide to underlying domestic demand and deflation efforts, despite the sizeable rise in the deficit," Jeremy Zook, the lead China analyst for Fitch Ratings, said in a report.

The ambitious 5% growth target signaled to analysts that more stimulus may be coming. Last year, the government surprised stock markets with various moves beginning in September to push growth up to 5%, also the target in 2024.

Finance Minister Lan Fo'an told journalists covering the Congress that the government had sufficient tools in reserve to deal with external or domestic uncertainties.

XI SEEKS PRIVATE SECTOR HELP, WITHIN LIMITS

Chinese President Xi Jinping seems bent on reinvigorating private businesses, which provide

a large share of growth and jobs in the country's state-dominated economy. Years of regulatory crackdowns have shaken the confidence of entrepreneurs and other investors.

The Congress reviewed comments on a proposed law meant to improve the environment for private enterprises by regulating aspects of market access, financing, competition and property rights protection, among others. The legislation was not put to a vote.

Xi aims to send a "message to entrepreneurs, but also to local governments and regulators, that the private sector's important and it's necessary," Neil Thomas, a fellow on Chinese politics at the Asia Society Policy Institute, said ahead of the congress.

Private companies will also gain access to a higher share of loans than before, and financing for private businesses raised through bond issuance will be expanded, Chinese Premier Li Qiang said in the work report.

WANG SAYS THE US SHOULDN'T BULLY

Much rides on how far Trump pursues his trade wars with China and other countries.

China has diversified its export markets in recent years, but the U.S. remains a vital trading partner. The greater fear is not the tariffs themselves but the health of the U.S. economy and demand for Chinese products, said Alicia Garcia Herrero, the chief Asia-Pacific economist for

Natixis investment bank.

Trump has raised tariffs on imports from China twice since taking office in January. China has shown no sign of backing down.

"If the American side goes further down this wrong path, we will fight to the end," Commerce Minister Wang Wentao told journalists during the Congress.

Asked about Trump's "America First" policy, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the law of the jungle would reign if all countries adopted a "my country first" approach.

"A big country should honor its international obligations and fulfill its due responsibilities," he said to journalists at the Congress. "It should not put selfish interests before principles, still less wield its power to bully the weak."

A CHINESE BUZZWORD MAKES A COMEBACK

The government said in its annual report that it would address what it considers unproductive "rat-race" competition, invoking a term that was a buzzword in China five years ago among stressed-out younger workers.

The government is applying the term "neijuan" — more commonly translated as "involution" — to companies and local governments rather than workers. A proliferation of green energy firms, for example, has led to gluts in solar panels and other equipment and fierce price wars that ultimately harm the industry.

"Their strategies are similar, which leads to extremely cruel competition," Chinese tech leader Lei Jun, the CEO of Xiaomi and a delegate to the Congress, told state media.

The solutions are unclear, experts say, noting that government subsidies for green energy helped create the problem by encouraging so many start-ups.

MDT/AP

TRADE WAR

Beijing strikes back at Trump tariffs with 15% levies targeting US farmers

CHINA retaliated against President Donald Trump's tariffs with an additional 15% tax on key American farm products, including chicken, pork, soybeans and beef.

The escalating trade tensions punished U.S. markets Monday as investors fearful of the damage from from Trump's trade wars put

their money elsewhere.

The Chinese tariffs, announced last week, were a response to Trump's decision to double the levy on Chinese imports to 20% on March 4. China's Commerce Ministry had earlier said that goods already in transit would be exempt from the retaliatory tariffs until April 12.

Imposing tariffs on

imports is a key part of Trump's agenda. He believes the import taxes can raise money for the Treasury, protect American industries and pressure foreign countries to do what he wants in a range of issues, including immigration and drug trafficking.

On Wednesday, Trump is set to remove exceptions on 25% steel tariffs

he imposed in 2018 — effectively raising the taxes — and raise his levy on aluminum from 10% to 25%.

In a bewildering series of announcements last week, Trump slapped tariffs on Canadian and Mexican imports, then delayed many of them for 30 days. Next month, he could plaster "reciprocal tariffs" — meant

to raise U.S. tariffs to match higher tariffs imposed by foreign countries — on a wide range of imports from around the world.

Economists warn that tariffs raise prices for consumers and make the U.S. economy less efficient as protected American companies have less incentive to innovate.

There's also the threat of retaliation, and farmers, who are among Trump's most loyal supporters and also have vigilant defenders in Congress, make a temporary target.

China also hit American farm products during

the president's first-term trade wars. U.S. farm sales to China plummeted, then recovered after the two countries reached a truce in January 2020 and Beijing promised to buy more from U.S. farmers. American farm exports to China peaked at \$38 billion in 2022, then fell to \$29 billion in 2023 and \$25 billion last year. In January, they were down 56% from a year earlier, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

During his first term, Trump spent tens of billions of dollars in taxpayer money to compensate farmers for lost exports. MDT/AP



Former President of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte arrives inside the Southorn Stadium during a thanksgiving gathering organized by Hong Kong-based Filipino workers, March 9

PHILIPPINES

Former President Rodrigo Duterte arrested in Manila on an ICC warrant over drug killings

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

FORMER Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte was arrested Tuesday on a warrant from the International Criminal Court accusing him of crimes against humanity over deadly anti-drugs crackdowns he oversaw while in office, the Philippine government said.

Duterte was taken into custody at the Manila international airport after arriving from Hong Kong with his family, becoming the first former Asian leader to be arrested by the global court. He was later driven to the nearby Villamor Air Base. It was unclear where he would be taken next by authorities.

Clad in a dark jacket, an irate Duterte protested his arrest after arrival and asked authorities the legal basis of his being taken into custody. His lawyers immediately asked the Supreme Court in Manila to block any attempt to transport him out of the Philippines to be handed over to the ICC in Europe.

"Show to me now the legal basis for my being here," Du-

terte asked authorities in remarks captured on video by his daughter, Veronica Duterte, who posted it on social media. "You have to answer now for the deprivation of liberty.

The surprise arrest sparked a commotion at the airport, where lawyers and aides of Duterte loudly protested that they, along with a doctor and lawyers, were prevented from coming close to him after he was taken into police custody. "This is a violation of his constitutional right," Sen. Bong Go, a close Duterte ally, told reporters.

ICC PROBING MASS KILLINGS UNDER DUTERTE

The ICC has been investigating mass killings in crackdowns overseen by Duterte when he served as mayor of the southern Philippine city of Davao and later as president. Estimates of the death toll of the crackdown under Duterte as president vary, from the more than 6,000 that the national police have reported up to 30,000 claimed by human rights groups.

"Upon his arrival, the prosecutor general served the ICC

notification for an arrest warrant to the former president for crime against humanity," the government said. "He's now in the custody of authorities."

The warrant of arrest sent by the ICC to Philippine officials, a copy of which was seen by The Associated Press, said "there are reasonable grounds to believe that" the attack on victims "was both widespread and systematic: the attack took place over a period of several years and thousands people appear to have been killed."

Duterte's arrest was necessary "to ensure his appearance before the court," according to the March 7 warrant, adding that the former president was expected to ignore court summons.

Although Duterte is no longer president, he "appears to continue to wield considerable power," it said.

"Mindful of the resultant risk of interference with the investigations and the security of witnesses and victims, the chamber is satisfied that the arrest of Mr. Duterte is necessary."

There was no immediate

comment on Duterte's arrest from the court or the ICC prosecutor's office in The Hague, Netherlands.

FAMILIES OF THE SLAIN CELEBRATE THE ARREST

Duterte's arrest and downfall stunned families of slain victims of his crackdown and drove some to tears. Some immediately gathered in a street rally to express their relief.

"This is a big, long-awaited day for justice," Randy delos Santos, the uncle of a teenager gunned down by police in a dark riverside alley during an anti-drug operation in suburban Caloocan city in August 2017 in the capital region, told the AP.

"Now we feel that justice is rolling. We hope that top police officials and the hundreds of police officers who were involved in the illegal killings should also be placed in custody and punished," delos Santos said.

Three of the police officers who killed his nephew, Kian delos Santos, were convicted in 2018 for the high-profile murder, which prompted Duterte at the time to temporarily

suspend his anti-drugs crackdown.

The conviction was one of only around three so far against law enforcers involved in the anti-drugs campaign, reflecting the concerns of families of victims of suspected extrajudicial killings that they would not get justice in the Philippines, hence their decision to seek the help of the ICC.

Former Sen. Antonio Trillanes, one of the harshest critics of Duterte who led the filing of a complaint against him before the ICC said the arrest was historic and a major blow to state impunity and tyranny anywhere in the world.

"This is like the downfall of an emperor," Trillanes told the AP. "The next step now is to make sure that all his followers who have committed criminal transgressions like him should also be held to account."

The government said the 79-year-old former leader was in good health and was examined by government doctors following his arrest.

DUTERTE TRIED TO HEAD OFF ICC PROBE

The ICC began investigating drug killings under Duterte from Nov. 1, 2011, when he was still mayor of the southern city of Davao, to March 16, 2019, as possible crimes against humanity. Duterte withdrew the Philippines in 2019 from the Rome Statute in a move human rights activists say was aimed at escaping accountability.

The Duterte administration moved to suspend the global court's investigation in late 2021 by arguing that Philippine authorities were already looking into the same allegations, arguing the ICC — a court of last resort — therefore didn't have jurisdiction.

Appeals judges at the ICC ruled in 2023 the investigation could resume and rejected the Duterte administration's objections. Based in The Hague, the Netherlands, the ICC can step in when countries are unwilling or unable to prosecute suspects in the most heinous international crimes, including genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who succeeded Duterte in 2022 and became entangled in a bitter political dispute with the former president, has decided not to rejoin the global court. But the Marcos administration had said it would cooperate if the ICC asked international police to take Duterte into custody through a so-called Red Notice, a request for law enforcement agencies worldwide to locate and temporarily arrest a crime suspect. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



A woman reads her ballot during an early voting for Greenlandic parliamentary elections at the city hall in Nuuk

GREENLAND

Arctic island votes in key election as Trump wants to take control of the strategic region

DANICA KIRKA, NUUK

THE single polling station in Greenland's capital city is ready. This big Arctic island with a tiny population is holding early parliamentary elections that are being closely watched. U.S. President Donald Trump has made clear he wants to take control of the region that occupies a strategic North Atlantic location and contains rare earth minerals key to driving the global economy.

Trump's overtures aren't on the ballot, but they are on everyone's minds.

This self-governing region of Denmark is home to 56,000 people, most from Indigenous Inuit backgrounds. It has been on a path toward independence since at least 2009. Now, Greenlanders are debating the best way to ensure they control their future.

"I think most of us have been scared since the new year because of (Trump's) interest," Pipaluk Lyngé, a member of parliament from the ruling Inuit Ataqatigiit, or United Inuit party, told The Associated Press. "So we're really, really looking to Europe right now to see if we could establish a stronger bond with them to se-

cure our sovereign nation."

Opinion polls show most Greenlanders favor independence.

Most say they don't dislike Americans, pointing to the good relations they have with the local Pituffik Space Base, formerly Thule Air Force Base, where U.S. military personnel have been stationed since 1951.

But Greenlanders show no sign of wanting to become Americans. Even some of Trump's biggest fans cling to the principle that they should control their destiny. That includes Gerth Josefsen, a 53-year-old fisherman from Nuuk who sports a MAGA hat and is proud to have visited Mar-a-Lago, Trump's Florida home.

Their mantra is that Greenland is open for business, but not for sale.

"The situation has changed because of Trump and because of the world," said Doris Jensen, representative of the social democratic Siumut party who said she has always favored independence. "So we have decided in our party that we have to do (it) more quickly."

Trump's attention has transformed the deeply local process of democracy. Suddenly, the presence of journalists

from as far away as Japan and Croatia are reminders that these are far from normal times.

After candidates' final televised debate at a school auditorium in Nuuk, Prime Minister Mute Bourup Egede was greeted by about 75 supporters who were almost outnumbered by photographers and cameramen.

"All these reporters are frightening to us," said Aviaja Sinkbaek, who works at the school. "It means that something must be happening soon."

She added: "I wonder what Trump has up his sleeve."

Politics in Greenland have a different rhythm. Debates during campaigning rarely got heated. People who became too animated were asked to step outside. Issues included building a skilled workforce and how to decorate the new airport, which opened a runway long enough to handle jumbo jets in November.

Today, the capital's lone polling station at the Nuuk sports hall will have political parties pitching tents outside, with campaigners offering hot drinks and Greenlandic cake -- a raisin-laced bread served with butter -- in hopes of swaying voters.

A bus will circle the city of

about 20,000 people, offering rides.

Unofficial election results should be available soon after polls close, but they won't be certified for weeks as ballot papers make their way to the capital from remote settlements by boat, plane and helicopter.

That's because there are no roads connecting communities across the island's 2.16 million square kilometers, which make Greenland the world's 12th biggest country.

Now the vast size has drawn outside attention.

Greenlanders know what they have. They hope the rare earth minerals will help diversify an economy where government jobs account for 40% of employment.

But the government has imposed strict rules to protect the environment on the island, most of which is covered by ice year-round. The harsh atmospheric conditions raise questions about whether extracting them is commercially feasible.

Hurricane-strength gusts over the weekend triggered warnings for boats and building materials to be securely tied down. As the wind howled like a revving jet engine, local people retreated to their homes to play board games.

MDT/AP

this day in history

1964 HOFFA FACES EIGHT YEARS BEHIND BARS



The president of the powerful American Teamsters union has been sentenced to eight years in jail on bribery charges.

James Hoffa has also been fined \$10,000 (£3,570) for trying to bribe a Federal Court jury which was hearing a conspiracy charge against him in 1962.

He was accused of attempting to secure an acquittal on a charge of "shaking down" a local haulage company owner for a million-dollar contribution to the union funds in return for 18 months of workforce co-operation.

This was Hoffa's first conviction - although he has now stood trial on four previous occasions. Past charges include trying to bribe a lawyer to spy on a Senate Committee and tapping the telephones of his subordinates in the Detroit office of his union.

Hoffa will remain free on bail pending an appeal.

If the sentence is upheld, it could mean the loss of his job as head of the 1.7 million-strong American Teamsters union - the nation's largest.

US District Judge Frank Wilson told Hoffa: "You stand here convicted of corrupting the administration of justice, of having struck at the foundation of this nation. Without fair, lawful administration of justice, there would be no civilisation in this country."

Hoffa replied: "I am not guilty. I believe this will be substantiated when the evidence is ultimately considered coolly and calmly."

Hoffa and three others were found guilty on 4 March of trying to fix a jury which could not agree on a verdict in his 1962 trial on a conspiracy charge.

The other three have been sentenced to three years each. [...]

Grounds for appeal include allegations that US marshals plied the jury with alcohol. Staff of the hotel where several jurors were confined during the trial have supported these claims.

As head of the Teamsters union, Hoffa commands a salary of \$75,000, has an unlimited expense account and presides over an empire with pension and welfare funds worth \$1bn.

Hoffa and Attorney General Robert Kennedy have had a running feud for years.

Mr Kennedy later issued a statement congratulating the prosecutors who won the conviction.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

In July 1964, Hoffa was found guilty of misusing the union's pension funds. He appealed against this conviction as well.

Hoffa was re-elected president of the lorry drivers' union in July 1966 - despite two prison sentences totalling 13 years hanging over him. He was also voted a big salary increase taking him to \$100,000 and making him the highest-paid trade unionist in the country. He commanded immense loyalty from Teamsters members for whom he had won significant overtime and fringe benefits.

The convictions against Hoffa were upheld and he served four years in prison, during which time he lost his job as Teamsters president. On his release, he began working to regain the leadership but vanished in mysterious circumstances in 1975. He has not been seen since. Investigators believe he may have been the victim of a feud within the world of organised crime.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

<p>ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19</p> <p>Imagine perfection, especially with romance. Share creative ideas and possibilities. Have fun with family and your sweetheart. Allow for pleasant surprises. Weave dreams together.</p>	<p>TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20</p> <p>You may need to get your hands dirty to make the domestic transformation you envision. It's amazing what paint can do. Energize creative ideas.</p>
<p>GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21</p> <p>Prepare public statements and monitor breaking news. Imagination and creativity illuminate a profitable idea. Prepare, edit and issue comments and declarations. Make connections.</p>	<p>CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22</p> <p>You're getting into a profitable groove. Stay in action. Make a persuasive case and boost sales. Provide excellent value. Your work is in demand.</p>
<p>LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22</p> <p>Get creative and innovative. You can realize a personal dream. Go for what's most authentic and honest. Increase integrity for greater workability. Take charge.</p>	<p>VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22</p> <p>Minimize noise and fuss. You can be especially effective behind the scenes. Let someone else take the limelight. Your greatest strength is love.</p>
<p>LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22</p> <p>You're motivated by a team cause. Share brilliant ideas, talents and resources. Leave nothing to chance. Express your compassion and contribution. Ride a wave together.</p>	<p>SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21</p> <p>Revolutionize your attitude around a work assignment. Analyze the basic structure and make adjustments. Shift the context and consider possibilities from another vantage.</p>
<p>SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21</p> <p>Keep building long-distance bridges to realize a dream. Learn from other cultures and perspectives. Design an educational adventure. Study options and possibilities.</p>	<p>CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19</p> <p>Cover all financial bases. Follow rules carefully and check procedures. File and process papers, forms and applications. Disciplined efforts pay off. Coordinate actions.</p>
<p>AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18</p> <p>Partnership yields benefits. One of you gets in where the other can't. Collaborate and network. Share resources, data and talents. Work for common dreams.</p>	<p>PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20</p> <p>Begin a new phase in your work, health and fitness. Words and action align for an energizing lift. Get farther than expected. Discover options.</p>

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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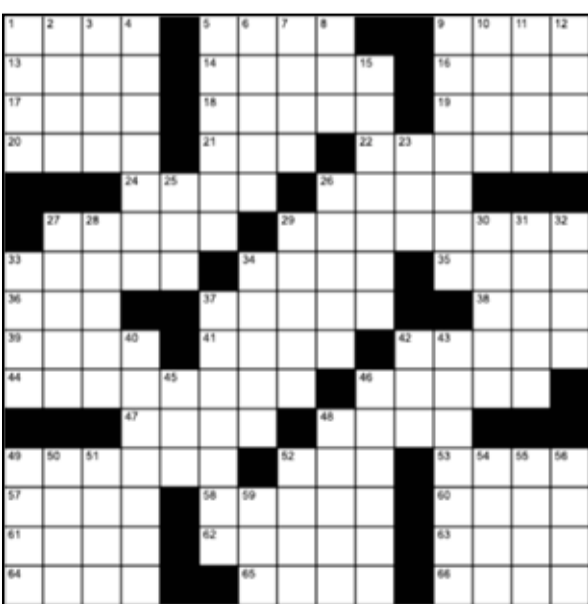
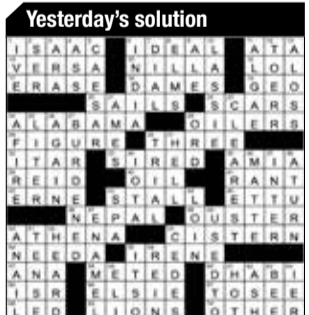
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	6	16	fine
Changchun	2	4	overcast
Chengdu	10	18	rain
Chongqing	14	19	cloudy
Fuzhou	15	27	overcast
Guangzhou	20	28	cloudy
Guiyang	10	16	overcast
Haikou	20	28	cloudy
Hangzhou	11	18	rain
Harbin	3	7	rain
Hefei	9	20	rain
Nanjing	11	18	rain
Shanghai	11	16	rain
Taipei	17	25	cloudy
Wuhan	11	17	rain
Hong Hong	22	24	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	6	11	cloudy
Frankfurt	2	9	rain
Paris	2	8	rain
London	2	8	rain
New York	4	12	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- The Beatles' "Back in the ___"; 5- Golden rule preposition; 9- Big party; 13- Merriment; 14- Polite denial; 16- Oil cartel; 17- 50%; 18- Deadly virus; 19- Seine tributary; 20- Hollywood headliner; 21- Capp and Capone; 22- Truly; 24- Ultimatum ender; 26- Smooth-tongued; 27- Sample; 29- Recently married; 33- Second-year students, for short; 34- ___ yellow ribbon...; 35- Not difficult; 36- Hamilton's bill; 37- Slightly intoxicated; 38- Numbered rd.; 39- Extent of space; 41- Caesar's wings; 42- U-Haul competitor; 44- Wrist band; 46- Actress Witherspoon; 47- Computer operator; 48- Prima donna; 49- Heed; 52- Pale; 53- Actress Hayworth; 57- Salt tree; 58- Autocratic Russian rulers; 60- Vegas gas; 61- Distribute cards; 62- Subway turner; 63- Prefix for while; 64- TV award; 65- Somewhat; 66- Lucy's husband;

DOWN 1- Sounds of disgust; 2- Strip of wood; 3- Actress Ward; 4- Reinvigorate; 5- Discomfort; 6- Aristocratic; 7- General ___ chicken; 8- Peanut product; 9- Farewell; 10- ...baked in ___; 11- ___ majesty; 12- Scored 100 on; 15- Railroad; 23- It's nothing; 25- Mil. officers; 26- Gaggle members; 27- ___ is human...; 28- Sleep issue; 29- Try to bite; 30- Hospital rooms; 31- First name in cosmetics; 32- Textile worker; 33- Attempt; 34- Floor worker; 37- Abilities; 40- Sharply; 42- Gun the engine; 43- Longed for; 45- Legal conclusion?; 46- Washed lightly; 48- "Our Gang" girl; 49- Stow, as cargo; 50- Tabloid couple; 51- Close with force; 52- Hold on!; 54- Able was ___; 55- Chuck; 56- Opposed to; 59- RR stop;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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 | |



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Mercedes driver George Russell of Britain (left) Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff (right) and Mercedes driver Andrea Kimi Antonelli of Italy attend the F1 75 Live launch event in London

AUTO RACING

MEET FORMULA 1'S BIGGEST ROOKIE INTAKE IN YEARS

JAMES ELLINGWORTH

ANDREA Kimi Antonelli once hid in a stack of tires to get through security and into the Formula 1 paddock. Now the 18-year-old Italian is Lewis Hamilton's successor at Mercedes.

Antonelli is among F1's biggest intake of new drivers in years as top teams put some trust in youth. Six of the 20 drivers on the 2025 grid are starting their first full seasons

in F1. Some could potentially compete for wins. Others already risk losing a hard-won F1 seat.

An unexpectedly talented Formula 2 field last season came at a time when some F1 teams were keen to move on from older drivers like Sergio Perez and Valtteri Bottas. Switching in 2025 gives teams a chance to let youngsters gain experience before the F1 car design rules change radically for 2026.

Here's a look at the rookie class:

ANDREA KIMI ANTONELLI

Stepping into a seven-time champion's shoes at Mercedes puts the spotlight on Antonelli, who is set to become the third-youngest F1 driver ever. The Italian wants to be known as just "the next Mercedes driver" because of Hamilton's legacy. The first time Antonelli visited an F1 paddock was age eight in 2014 when his father Marco

— who ran a team in a support series — hid him in a stack of tires under an umbrella to get past security and into the German Grand Prix. "That was a really cool experience," he said last month. Antonelli had a stellar record in junior series and was sixth in F2 last year but a heavy crash in practice for Mercedes at Monza in August was a tough introduction to F1.

LIAM LAWSON

The Red Bull driver is the odd man out in this list because he's taken part in 11 F1 races since 2023, though never a full season. He says he'll feel "more like a rookie" at the start of the season on tracks he hasn't raced before. Partnering four-time champion Max Verstappen as the replacement for Perez is a daunting task for Lawson, who knocked Verstappen out of qualifying in only his third F1 race in Singapore in 2023. The New Zealander needs to justify Red Bull's decision to elevate him over his 2024 teammate — and former roommate — Yuki Tsunoda, who outperformed Lawson over their six races together last year.

OLIVER BEARMAN

It's less than a year since Bearman burst onto the scene in F1 with a combative seventh-place finish for Ferrari in Saudi Arabia while Carlos Sainz Jr. was sidelined because of surgery. He'd never previously raced in Jeddah and was racing with two days' notice.

Bearman beat experienced teammate Nico Hülkenberg in two races for Haas later that year and is now a full-time Haas driver for 2025. Bearman remains part of Ferrari's junior program but displacing regular Ferrari drivers Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc is unlikely any time soon.

JACK DOOHAN

The son of legendary motorcycle world champion Mick Doohan enters 2025 with his F1 career under threat as soon as it has begun. Alpine's decision to sign ex-Williams driver Franco Colapinto as reserve means a would-be replacement is available if Doohan doesn't impress team management. "You're always going to have pressure on your shoulders because you're in such a cut-throat sport," Doohan said. The Australian driver placed third in F2 in 2023 but didn't race at all last year until a surprise entry for the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. Finishing 15th, he was far off the pace of teammate Pierre Gasly in seventh.

ISACK HADJAR

Lawson's promotion to Red Bull left an opening at its second team, now rebranded Racing Bulls, for F2 runner-up Hadjar. The French driver arrives at a team with a history of changing drivers mid-season if they don't perform. Even eight-time Grand Prix winner Daniel Ricciardo didn't last a full year there in 2024. **MDT/AP**

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FOOTBALL

Manchester United reveals plans for the 'world's greatest' stadium to replace Old Trafford

JAMES ROBSON, LONDON

MANCHESTER United unveiled plans yesterday to build the "world's greatest" soccer stadium.

A proposed 100,000-seater arena would surpass Wembley as the biggest in the United Kingdom.

Under the plans, the 20-time English champion said it would build next to its iconic Old Trafford ground, likely meaning it would not need to relocate during the construction process.

"Our current stadium has served us brilliantly for the past 115 years, but it has fallen behind the best arenas in world sport," part owner Jim Ratcliffe said. "By building next to the existing site, we will be able to preserve the essence of Old Trafford, while creating a truly state-of-the-art

stadium that transforms the fan experience only footsteps from our historic home."

United did not say how much the stadium would cost or reveal a timeline for its completion, but architect Norman Foster said building work would take five years.

British billionaire Ratcliffe paid \$1.3 billion for an initial 25% stake in United last year and made a new stadium one of his priorities.

The possibility of redeveloping Old Trafford, one of the most iconic stadiums in soccer, was considered but an entirely new construction was the preferred option.

"Today marks the start of an incredibly exciting journey to the delivery of what will be the world's greatest football stadium," Ratcliffe said.

United wants the venue to be part of a wider project to rege-



Jim Ratcliffe (center) in the stands at the Old Trafford Stadium

nerate the surrounding Old Trafford area, which it said would be worth 7.3 billion pounds (\$9.4 billion) to the U.K. economy. The U.K. government has already voiced its support for the project, although the specifics of how it would be funded are not known. Wembley is currently the big-

gest stadium in the U.K., with a capacity of 90,000, and is home to England's national soccer team.

Twickenham, which is home to the national rugby team, holds 82,500.

Old Trafford is the country's biggest dedicated soccer sta-

dium with a capacity of just over 74,000, but is dated in comparison to the likes of the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London, which regularly hosts NFL games.

"Our long-term objective as a club is to have the world's best football team playing in the world's best stadium," United chief executive Omar Berrada said.

Managerial great Alex Ferguson said the club "must be brave and seize this opportunity to build a new home, fit for the future, where new history can be made."

The announcement came days after thousands of United fans marched in protest against the club's ownership in the face of cost cuts, ticket price rises and ongoing failure on the field.

United is majority owned by the American Glazer family, which also owns the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Upon investing, Ratcliffe vowed to return the once-dominant club back to the summit of European soccer after more than a decade since it last won the Premier League.

But his first year in charge of soccer operations has been turbulent. United endured its worst-ever Premier League season last year and is on course to set a new low this term, with the team currently languishing in the bottom half of the standings. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

RATIONAL VIEW OF CHINA WOULD BENEFIT CANADA

The governing Liberal Party elected former central banker Mark Carney its leader on Sunday. Carney will thus succeed Justin Trudeau as prime minister after he is sworn in in the coming days, at a critical juncture as Canada addresses the challenge of US President Donald Trump's trade war.

Despite having little political experience — he has never been elected as a member of parliament — Carney's long track record as governor of the Bank of Canada during the global financial crisis and governor of the Bank of England during the Brexit negotiations is believed to be the main reason for his election victory.

Unlike his predecessor, who has appeared "weak" in front of the US' assertiveness, Carney, as predicted, talked tough on the US when addressing a crowd of Liberal supporters after the result of the leadership contest was announced on Sunday evening. "We didn't ask for this fight, but Canadians are always ready when someone else drops the gloves," he said.

But although he promised to face down Trump's threats to impose tariffs and annex Canada, saying, "America is not Canada, and Canada never, ever will be part of America in any way", how Carney will translate his strong language on the stage in Ottawa into practical solutions to those twin challenges is far less clear.

That Trudeau's 50-minute telephone call with Trump on Wednesday was reported as being "profanity-laden" clearly indicates that the US leader is determined to press ahead with the pressure he is putting on Canada. Further evidence of that is the new tariffs Trump threatened to impose on Friday on Canadian lumber and dairy products, one day after offering Canada a one-month reprieve on punishing, virtually across-the-board 25 percent tariffs.

As well as Trump's trade pressure, Carney has a host of domestic political, economic and social problems to tackle. The fast rising living costs and ballooning national debt over the past nine years under the Liberal Party have undermined public confidence in his party's leadership and he will have to deal with the challenge from the opposition parties led by the Conservative Party under the stewardship of the populist leader Pierre Poilievre in parliament.

The opposition parties will be alert to how Carney will deal with the US trade blows, further squeezing the space for his maneuvers as the US leader heightens his threats.

As such, the future Canadian leader has no reason not to overhaul the Trudeau government's China policy to mend the ties with the world's second-largest economy and Canada's major trading partner. The retaliatory tariffs Beijing vowed on the weekend to impose on some Canadian imports later this month to counter the punitive duties Trudeau slapped on some Chinese imports in October under pressure from the US should be taken as a reminder to Carney of a move he can take that has the potential to save the whole situation on his gameboard.

China remains open to working with Canada to enhance understanding and handle their differences properly and to promote a partnership based on mutual benefit and win-win cooperation. The two economies are highly complementary in resources and economic structures, and they enjoy broad cooperation prospects, and will continue to do so, if Canada does not allow itself to be manipulated by the US. [Abridged]

US BIOCHEMIST RESEARCHING TREATMENT OF HIV AND CORONAVIRUSES WINS ISRAEL'S WOLF PRIZE

THE BUZZ

An American biochemist whose research has helped scientists make inroads into treating coronavirus and HIV has won this year's Wolf Prize, a prestigious Israeli award in the arts and sciences.

Pamela Björkman of the California Institute of Technology won the prize for "offering new hope in the fight against infectious diseases," the Wolf Fund, which awards the prize, said yesterday [Macau time].

Björkman's research "unlocked the secrets of how the immune system identifies and battles pathogens, developing game changing approaches to combat some of humanity's most formidable viral enemies," the fund said.

Eight others also received the state-funded prize, which has been awarded annually for 47 years. Many of the award winners have gone on to receive Nobel prizes.

Björkman grew up in Oregon and studied at the University of Oregon, Harvard and Stanford before moving to Caltech to begin teaching in 1989. Her research focuses on how the immune system identifies invading pathogens.

She has broken ground, the fund said, in how scientists understand T-cell recognition and immunization strategies for HIV. T cells are white blood cells that help fight off diseases.



Hong Kong social worker Jackie Chen stands in front of the District Court building in Wan Chai

HONG KONG

A SOCIAL WORKER WHO TRIED TO MEDIATE DURING THE 2019 PROTESTS CONVICTED OF RIOTING

KANIS LEUNG, HONG KONG

A social worker who tried to mediate during the height of the 2019 anti-government protests in Hong Kong was convicted of rioting yesterday in the latest case that signaled the tough stance the authorities have taken toward political cases.

Jackie Chen was part of a group of social workers who often carried a loudspeaker seeking to mediate between police and protesters during the social unrest. She was freed at her first trial in September 2020, but the secretary of justice appealed and a court ordered a retrial by another judge.

In the retrial, the prosecution accused Chen, who used a loudspeaker to ask police officers to calm down and not to use their guns to fire non-lethal bullets, of participating in a riot during a protest in August 2019. Chen pleaded not guilty.

Judge May Chung wrote in her verdict that Chen had continuously shouted unfounded accusations against the police and suggested the officers' actions involved the use of excessive

force or were too rapid. Chen had used her social worker role, claiming to be "safeguarding justice," to back the protesters, the judge said.

Chung ruled that the only reasonable inference was that Chen intended to participate in the riot.

"Through the aforementioned means to gather together with other rioters, (she) thereby encouraged other rioters to commit acts that disturb social peace," she wrote.

Ahead of the verdict hearing, Chen took group photos with her supporters and hugged some of them outside of the district court building. Chen told reporters that she felt peaceful because she had five years to prepare for this. Regardless of the outcome, she has no regrets, she said.

"I hope all the people I know — they will live healthy, they will live happy because we still have our road to walk along," she said.

After the judge announced the decision, she shouted that she would be OK to her supporters sitting in the public gallery.

Chen is expected to be sentenced in April. The maximum senten-

ce for rioting in Hong Kong is 10 years, but the sentences at the district court are capped at seven years.

Chen could also lose her license. Last year, the government introduced amendments to the law that would allow the removal of a social worker's name from the register if he or she has been convicted of an offense that is punishable with imprisonment and may bring the profession into disrepute.

Chen's case drew attention because of her mild role in the 2019 movement.

The 2019 protests were sparked by a proposed extradition law that would have allowed criminal suspects in Hong Kong to be sent to the mainland for trial. The government withdrew the bill, but the protesters widened their demands to include direct elections for the city's leaders and police accountability.

In response, a national security law was imposed to quell the unrest. Under the law, many of the city's leading activists were prosecuted or convicted. Hong Kong government insists the law has restored the city's stability. **MDT/AP**



Israeli fire killed four Palestinians in Gaza and three in the West Bank over 24 hours, Palestinian officials said Tuesday. Despite a fragile ceasefire, clashes continue over truce terms. Israel has restricted supplies to Gaza, while Hamas demands negotiations on a broader peace deal.



Canada Ontario imposed a 25% tariff on electricity exports to the U.S. yesterday [Macau time] in response to Trump's new trade war measures. Premier Doug Ford warned of further hikes or a full cutoff if tensions escalate. The move affects power supplies to Minnesota, Michigan, and New York.



United Kingdom Environmental concerns rose yesterday after a Portugal-registered cargo ship carrying toxic chemicals collided with a U.S. military fuel tanker in the North Sea. Jet fuel spilled into the water, sparking a 24-hour fire. One crew member is missing. Authorities are assessing ecological damage near fishing zones.



South Africa A bus overturned near Johannesburg yesterday, killing at least 12 and injuring 45. Passengers were thrown onto the highway near O.R. Tambo International Airport. Emergency crews searched for trapped victims. The cause is unknown, and the driver was hospitalized with other survivors.