



GOVERNMENT ASSESSES THE FEASIBILITY OF BUILDING AN ICE SPORTS FACILITY TO SUPPORT SPORTS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

P6

TODDLER DIES FROM INJURIES IN TAIWAN BLAST; AUTHORITIES INVESTIGATE MANSLAUGHTER

P6

DEPORTED FROM THE US UNDER TRUMP, MIGRANTS REMAIN STRANDED IN PANAMA

P11



AP PHOTO



China World Boxing announced yesterday [Macao time] the addition of China, Turkey, Sudan, Greece, Slovakia, and Montenegro to its membership. With 84 federations now on board, the organization strengthens its case for Olympic recognition. China's inclusion marks a significant milestone ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Games.

AP PHOTO



Iran An Emirati diplomat visited Tehran yesterday [Macao time], reportedly carrying a letter from President Trump regarding Iran's nuclear program. Iran's Supreme Leader dismissed negotiations, citing past U.S. policy reversals. The visit comes amid heightened regional tensions and economic pressures exacerbated by Western sanctions on Iran.

AP PHOTO



US officials announced a \$100 million study into bird flu vaccines amid soaring egg prices. Concerns about trade restrictions have delayed vaccine adoption. The poultry industry remains divided, with egg and turkey producers supporting vaccinations while meat chicken exporters worry about international market impacts.

AP PHOTO



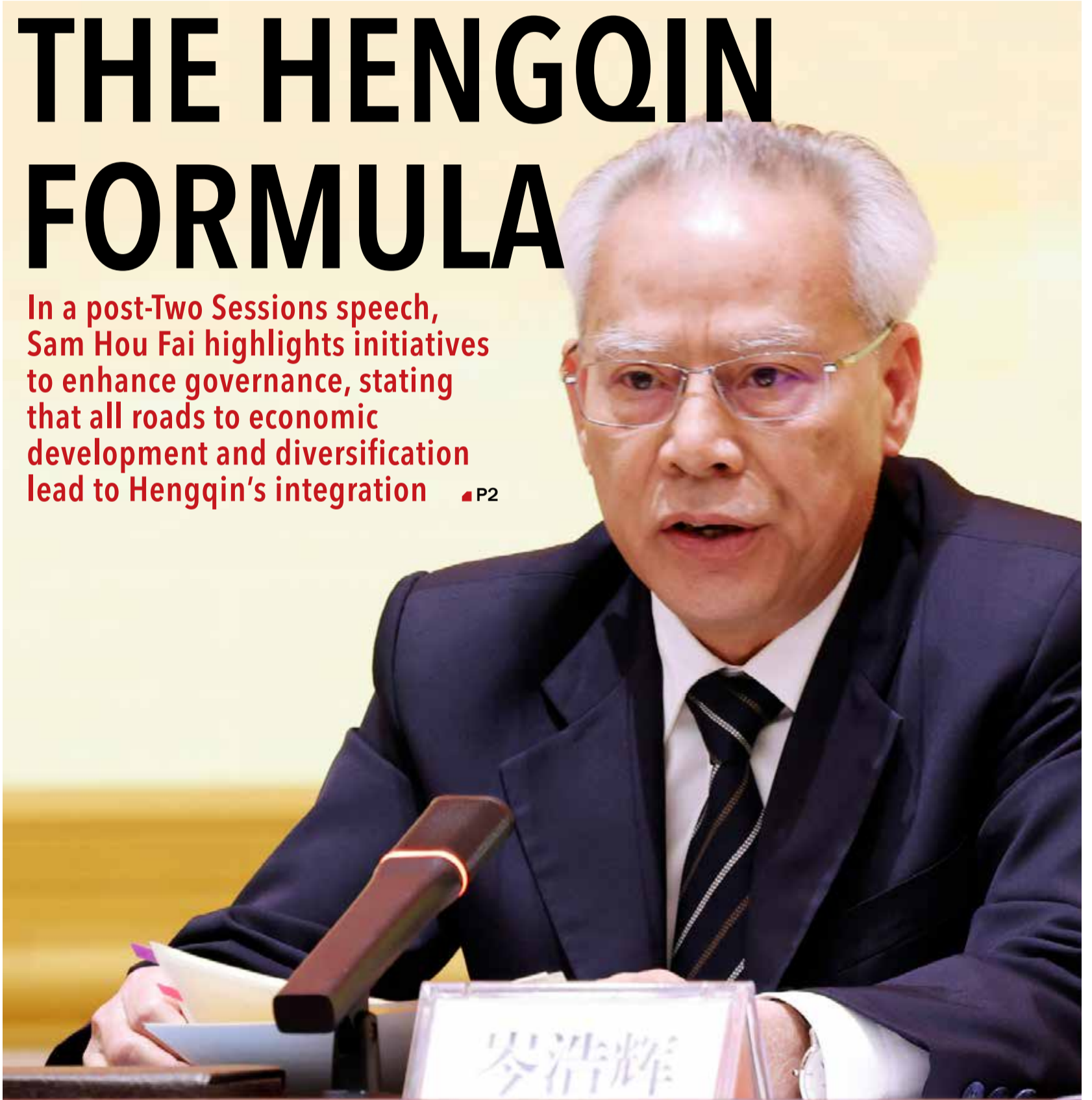
USA President Trump hosted Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin at the White House yesterday [Macao time] for an early St. Patrick's Day celebration. Trump criticized Ireland's tax policies, accusing it of benefiting from U.S. pharmaceutical companies. Martin defended Ireland's economic contributions, emphasizing mutual benefits in trade relations.

More on backpage

THE HENGQIN FORMULA

In a post-Two Sessions speech, Sam Hou Fai highlights initiatives to enhance governance, stating that all roads to economic development and diversification lead to Hengqin's integration

P2



TASTE OF EDESIA

TWO SESSIONS LIAISON OFFICE OUTLINES PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING CENTRAL POLICIES

P3



P15

TWO SESSIONS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE COMMITS TO ENHANCING GOVERNANCE, EFFICIENCY, AND PUBLIC SERVICE INTEGRITY

STAFF REPORTER

Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai reaffirmed the city's commitment to national development and economic diversification in his address at yesterday's briefing session, organized by the Liaison Office of the Central Government in Macau.

The session aimed to share new policies and aspirations set out in the 2025 Two Sessions, which he attended at the National People's Congress.

In his speech, published by the Government Information Bureau yesterday, Sam expressed confidence in the SAR's future, citing support from Beijing for the region's economic growth, international engagement, and deeper integration into national development.

Sam emphasized the importance of improving government efficiency, announcing measures to strengthen coordination across departments.

Six leadership and working groups have been established to focus on key areas, including administrative reform, infrastructure development, and legal coordination.

He also underscored plans to streamline administrative licensing, reduce bureaucratic delays, and improve government services. Public servants, particularly se-



nior officials, were urged to adopt a forward-thinking approach and uphold integrity in governance.

"I would like to put forward the following requirements to all public service workers, especially middle and senior managers," said Hou. "They should have a long-term vision, act pragmatically, and have a sense of responsibility, solidarity, and integrity; in particular, they should consider the relationship between the proper performance of their own duties and innovation and reform, liberalize their thinking, and innovate courageously," he added.

ADVANCING MACAU-HENGQIN INTEGRATION

For Sam, the development of the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin remains a top priority. The CE outlined plans to accelerate the zone's construction while ensuring legal and regulatory alignment with the city's system.

"The construction of the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin is a top priority responsibility and duty of this government," said Sam.

Efforts will focus on attracting global businesses, inte-

grating industries, and enhancing infrastructure links. The aim is to create an environment conducive to business growth and facilitate employment opportunities for Macau residents.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND LONG-TERM GROWTH

Sam also stressed the need to accelerate economic diversification. He called for increased investment in emerging industries, support for small and medium-sized enterprises, and optimization of the business environment.

He highlighted that the domes-

tic and external environment of the city's economic development is "complex and volatile," and that structural problems of Macau's domestic economy persist.

"The economic cycle is changing, consumption patterns and social classes are undergoing changes, the post-epidemic recovery momentum has slowed down, and financial revenues in the current year may not be as high as expected," he said.

"Therefore, it is necessary to carefully assess the future economic situation. While consolidating the momentum of economic recovery, we must make more efforts to promote adequate diversification of the economy, address the imbalance in domestic economic development, and prevent and mitigate potential risks," he added.

ENHANCING SOCIAL WELL-BEING

In his speech, Sam also reaffirmed the government's commitment to social welfare, prioritizing policies that support the elderly, disabled, and disadvantaged groups. Measures will also be taken to ensure stable employment and improve the overall quality of life for residents, he said.

Sam also pledged that employment rights and social justice remain key focus areas, with the government aiming to create sustainable opportunities and better living conditions for the population.

"We will continue to pay attention to and better promote employment, effectively safeguard the rights and interests of the residents in employment, ensure basic conditions for their well-being, and promote social justice, and make every effort to create a better life for the residents," he said.

STATS

Mortgage loan approvals surge 31% in January

MACAU'S banking sector experienced a significant rise in mortgage loan approvals at the start of the year, according to the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM).

In January, new residential mortgage loans (RMLs) grew by 31.4% from the previous month, reaching MOP1.33 billion.

Loans approved for local residents accounted for 97.3% of the total, increasing

by 32.3% to MOP1.29 billion.

Recently, the bureau 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%.

Meanwhile, approvals for non-residents grew by 5.2%, amounting to MOP36.2 million. The three-month



average from November 2024 to January 2025 showed a modest 0.8% rise com-

pared to the October-December 2024 period, reaching MOP1.19 billion.

Commercial real estate loans (CRE) saw even stronger growth, surging by 113.2% to MOP1.46 billion in January. Loans granted to local residents accounted for 80.4% of the total, rising by 78.7% to MOP1.18 billion, while non-resident approvals increased to MOP285.86 million.

The three-month average of new CRE loans reached MOP1.01 billion, marking a 37% increase compared to

the previous period.

Despite the rise in new loans, the total outstanding residential mortgage loan balance declined slightly due to repayments of large loans.

At the end of January, the total stood at MOP217.63 billion, reflecting a 0.2% drop from the previous month and a 4.8% decrease year-on-year.

Commercial real estate loans totaled MOP150.19 billion, showing a slight 0.2% increase from December but a 4.6% decline compared to January last year. Of these, 92% were granted to residents. LV

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TWO SESSIONS

Liaison Office outlines priorities to implement central policies

STAFF REPORTER

THE Liaison Office of the Central Government in Macau held a briefing yesterday to convey the spirit of the National "Two Sessions."

The event featured key speakers including Edmond Ho Hau Wah, Vice Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC); Macau Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai; and Liaison Office Director Zheng Xinchong.

Over 240 officials and representatives attended the briefing.

Director Zheng emphasized the nature of this year's Two Sessions describing them as a "grand gathering of unity and action." He articulated that the outcomes of these sessions are intended to propel China's modernization and national rejuvenation efforts.



Zheng highlighted President Xi Jinping's participation in three discussions that focused on pivotal topics such as economic development, education, and national security.

"China's path to moderniza-

tion is now an irreversible historical trend," Zheng stated.

During the session, Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang and Xia Baolong, Director of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, engaged with Macau delegates.

They acknowledged the progress achieved by the Special Administrative Region (SAR) and encouraged further contributions towards national security and economic diversification. Zheng reiterated,

"Macau plays a unique role and must make special contributions to the country's development."

The official outlined three main priorities for implementing the spirit of the Two Sessions: strengthening confidence in China's modernization, understanding global challenges, and ensuring effective execution of policies.

He urged attendees to recognize and seize historical opportunities, advocating for determination and unwavering confidence in moving forward.

Moreover, the director called upon participants to take the initiative in promoting the messages from the Two Sessions. This includes implementing central policies, supporting the SAR government, and fostering a social consensus.

"We are all players, insiders, and leaders in Macau's development," he concluded, emphasizing the collective responsibility of those in attendance.

The briefing served as a platform for reinforcing the importance of alignment with national goals and the active role that Macau is expected to play in the context of China's development strategy.

AD



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★ Awards Information

- For the Food & Beverage sector, awards will be conferred according to the evaluation results which include Quality Tourism Services Merchant Award, Quality Tourism Services Gold Award, Quality Tourism Services Excellence Award and Special Theme Awards (Sustainable Dining Award, Community Care Services Award, Local Feature Award, Operational Innovation Award and Integrity Business Award)
- For Travel Agency sector, awards will be conferred according to the evaluation results which include Quality Tourism Services Merchant Award, Quality Tourism Services Gold Award, Quality Tourism Services Excellence Award and Special Theme Awards (Quality Training Award, Courtesy Merchant Award and Integrity Business Award)

Four categories in Food and Beverage sector :

- Restaurant (hotel)
- Restaurant (non-hotel)
- Simple Dining Establishment (hotel)
- Food and Beverage Establishment



Travel Agency sector :



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



CRIME Police bust illegal hostel following social media tip

THE Public Security Police (PSP) raided a unit in a building on R. de Évora in Taipa earlier this week, suspected of operating as an illegal hostel. This action followed posts on a social media platform that raised concerns about tourists staying in illegal hostels.

A middle-aged mainland man, believed to be running the illegal establishment, was arrested and transferred to the PSP's Immigration Control Department for further processing.

During the raid, police discovered over a dozen beds in the unit and found seven mainland men and women staying there.

Upon questioning, a mainland man admitted to renting the unit for HKD9,000 per month and subletting beds for daily rates ranging from HKD80 to HKD100.

The man, in his 50s, was suspected of running an illegal hotel and was handed over to the department for processing due to activities inconsistent with his tourist visa status. Authorities also suspected illegal accommodation practices and immediately informed the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO).

After an investigation, the MGTO confirmed the unit was an illegal hotel and sealed it off. LV

CRIME

FOUR MAINLAND RESIDENTS ARRESTED IN AGGRAVATED THEFT CASE

VICTORIA CHAN

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) have detained four mainland Chinese men suspected of a series of aggravated thefts targeting local residents, resulting in losses exceeding MOP208,000. The suspects allegedly used fake keys to break into homes and were apprehended following a months-long investigation.

The victims include an elderly male and two middle-aged individuals, all residents of Macau. The detainees, identified as four mainland residents aged 33, 39, 40, and 48, were arrested.

The first victim suffered a loss of MOP50,000, while the second and third victims collectively lost MOP158,000. Notably, police found no signs of forced entry, indicating that the perpetrators accessed the units with fake keys.

Following an investigation, police identified and arrested two suspects on Tuesday.

These individuals had previously



sly scouted the building on November 29 and 30, 2024, testing doors to select their targets.

On December 2, they allegedly returned to execute the theft, with one suspect knocking on doors to ensure the units were empty before using a fake key to enter. After the theft, they fled to mainland China.

On the day of the arrests, the remaining two suspects were intercepted at the Border Gate while attempting to leave Macau.

One was found in possession of valuable items, including watches and MOP48,000 in various

currencies, along with a tool used for robbery.

Further investigation revealed that the four suspects targeted a tenement building in the Areia Preta District, where they robbed the second and third victims, contributing to the total MOP158,000 in stolen property. Yesterday, police tracked the remaining suspects to a high-rise building, where they were discovered in a stairwell. Although no additional thefts were confirmed, authorities believe the four men are part of the same criminal group.

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C&C RECEIVED THE 1ST SILVER
"DEIGNAN AWARD"
FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN MACAU (2023)



SMEs

Food industry faces challenges amid takeaway platform fees

STAFF REPORTER

THE rise in commission fees imposed by food delivery platforms is presenting financial challenges for restaurant sector in the SAR.

Industry representatives highlight that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are particularly affected, with commission rates reaching up to 50% per order.

This increase, combined with the necessity for businesses to participate in promotional campaigns, has put considerable strain on restaurant profitability, Aeson Lei, president of the Macao Catering Industry Association, told Macau Daily News.

Many local restaurants are struggling to balance rising operational costs while competing in an increasingly saturated market.

While consumer demand



RENATO MARQUES

for food delivery services has grown, the associated expenses often outweigh the benefits for smaller establishments.

Some industry observers argue that Macau's limited market size further complicates the situation, with many residents opting to dine across

the border for more affordable options.

Lei notes that reliance on delivery platforms has forced smaller restaurants into challenging business models.

He points out that many establishments feel pressured to engage in platform-led promo-

tions that significantly impact their profit margins. Restaurants operating in high-rent areas are especially vulnerable, as they face mounting financial burdens from rent, ingredient costs, and commission fees.

Another concern for the industry is the dual pricing structure imposed by delivery platforms. In addition to restaurants paying high commissions, consumers are also charged for delivery services, further complicating the pricing strategy for businesses.

In response, some restaurants have started offering discounts to customers who pick up their orders in person.

However, the convenience of delivery services continues to outweigh these incentives, keeping businesses dependent on platform-based orders.

Therefore, the association is advocating for regulatory intervention to address what

they see as an imbalance in market power. "If left unchecked, these rising fees could lead to the closure of many small businesses, leaving the industry increasingly dominated by larger corporations," Lei cautioned.

The food delivery sector's competitive landscape has already led to significant market shifts in neighboring regions.

The recent withdrawal of UK-based delivery service Deliveroo from Hong Kong highlights the financial pressures faced by companies in the sector. With fewer competitors remaining in that market, concerns are growing that similar trends could lead to even higher commission rates in Macau, Lei said.

Previously, the Macau Restaurant Owners Association has called for new regulations to address the exorbitant service fees charged by these delivery platforms.

According to Fong Kin Fu, representative of the association, the fees are excessive and lack transparent and reasonable calculations. "There are no clear provisions on the charging standards of the platforms, and restaurant owners have to rely on takeaway platforms for food delivery to grow their business," Fong explained.

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POLICE WARN AGAINST MACAU PASS PHISHING SCAM

The police have issued a warning about phishing websites impersonating Macau Pass to steal personal and credit card information. Scammers have been posting fake messages on Facebook, falsely claiming that for MOP17, users can get a Macau Pass card for unlimited public transport rides for three months. The fraudulent posts contain phishing links designed to steal financial details for unauthorized transactions. Macau Pass has confirmed the messages are fake, and the Monetary Authority of Macao urges the public to stay vigilant.

WATER SUPPLY GRADUALLY RESTORED IN TAIPA

The Macao Water Supply Company Limited announced that normal water supply is gradually being restored following the repair of a burst pipe at Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen in Taipa, completed around 5:30 p.m. yesterday. The incident, which occurred Wednesday, disrupted service for several residential and institutional buildings, including Chong Fok Garden, Caritas School and City University of Macau. Emergency water trucks were deployed to assist affected areas.



GOV'T EXPLORES FEASIBILITY OF ICE SPORTS FACILITY

LYNZY VALLES

THE government is assessing the feasibility of building a dedicated ice sports facility to support the growth and development of the sport.

According to the Sports Bureau (ID), efforts to promote these activities are ongoing, with close collaboration between the

ID and the Macau Ice Sports Federation.

In response to a query from lawmaker Leong Sun Lok, ID president Luís Gomes stated that the institute has been investing resources in ice sports. These efforts include hiring professional coaches and providing both financial and technical support for athletes to participate in competitions.

Additionally, the ID has facilitated training opportunities for Macau's figure skating and ice hockey teams.

Through the Sports Fund, athletes have been able to attend training camps in mainland Chinese cities, lasting between four to six days per week.

The government is also "continuously checking the feasibility

of opening more sports spaces in existing facilities, seeking to carry out studies and integrate spaces that have the conditions to be modified to house various sports."

The ID noted that feasibility studies are being conducted to identify suitable spaces for modifications.

The Land and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU) has incorporated this consideration into the Master Plan for the Macao Special Administrative Region (2020-2040), which aims to maintain and enhance large-scale recreational and sports infrastructure.

Plans are also in place to develop new sports facilities for the general public, increasing access to both indoor and outdoor recreational spaces.

A key aspect of this initiative is the integration of sports venues into large residential complexes to maximize space utilization.

One such development is Plot A9 in Zone A of the New Landfills, designated for recreational and sports use, where construction has already begun.

Additionally, Plots B3 and C1, covering approximately 34,000 square meters, have been earmarked for similar purposes, further expanding Macau's sports infrastructure.

Toddler passes away from blast injuries; authorities investigate possible manslaughter

VICTORIA CHAN

THE two-year-old girl from Macau, critically injured in last month's gas explosion at a Taichung department store, has passed away last week, becoming the fifth fatality in the incident, the Health Bureau (SSM) announced early yesterday.

The child suffered severe head trauma in the February 13 blast at Shin Kong Mitsukoshi in Taichung.

She was part of a family of seven visiting Taiwan, two of whom—her grandparents—died at the scene. The family was struck by flying debris while walking past the building during the explosion.

The blast occurred during renovation work on the 12th floor of the complex, triggered by a gas leak while replacing an LPG cylinder.

After receiving initial critical care in Taiwan, the toddler was airlifted to Macau on February 26 for further treatment.



In a statement, the SSM expressed grief over the child's death and extended condolences to the bereaved family. SSM has also provided psychological support and counseling to her family. Local media reported that the family of each victim will receive approximately MO-P2.67million in compensation, including condolence payments, insurance claims, and other forms of restitution.

The Taichung District Prosecutor's Office is investigating the incident for potential manslaughter, public endangerment, and negligent injury charges.

So far, 33 witnesses have been questioned, but no defendants have been named. Authorities noted the complexity of the explosion site, stating that a fire scene identification report must be completed to fully reconstruct the incident.

PUBLIC WORKS

TAIPA GRANDE TUNNEL'S NORTHERN LINE PROJECT TO COST HKD425 MILLION

STAFF REPORTER

THE Taipa Grande Tunnel project will cost HKD425.5 million, with construction expected to begin in the next quarter.

The project includes the design and construction of the North Line, which will take approximately 540 working days to complete.

According to the Public Works Bureau (DSOP), the project aims to facilitate travel between the Peninsula and Cotai (via the Macau Bridge) and is also expected to ease traffic congestion in the Pac On area (near the Taipa Ferry Terminal and Airport) and Cotai.

Currently, these areas experience frequent stops due to traffic lights, particularly at the Airport roundabout.

Meanwhile, the 890-meter-long structure will feature a four-lane, two-

way road designed to handle heavy traffic.

Its highest section will reach approximately 23 meters above ground, passing over several key traffic routes and the light rail system.

The tender for the project was opened to the public in December last year, attracting 11 bids ranging from HKD413 million to HKD438 million.

Meanwhile, the tendering process for the South Line and related tunnel works is still under review. Authorities launched a restricted tender in May last year, pre-qualifying five bidders.

The estimated cost of this section ranges from HKD799 million to HKD1.117 billion, with construction expected to take around four years. Pending bid evaluation, authorities plan to commence work in the third quarter of this year.





Alain Bouchard, chairman of Canada's Alimentation Couche-Tard

M&A

Canada's Couche-Tard's chief stresses 'friendly' interest in Japan's 7-Eleven chain

CANADA'S Alimentation Couche-Tard reaffirmed yesterday that it is determined to acquire Seven & i Holdings, although the operator of Japan's top convenience store chain has rejected its offer.

"We are continuing to pursue a friendly, mutually agreeable transaction," the chairman and founder of Alimentation Couche-Tard, Alain Bouchard, told reporters in Tokyo.

Bouchard stressed that his company was pursuing a "friendly" transaction, not a hostile takeover. He reiterated his promise to retain local management, saying the merger would be good for 7-Eleven's business.

The chain has more than 20,000 stores nationwide and more than 80,000 outlets around the world, serving an estimated 63 million customers a day, according to Tokyo-based Seven & i Holdings Co.

In rejecting the Canadian company's offer, Seven & i Holdings said it intends to boost its own corporate value. It also has raised antitrust concerns that it says will come up in the U.S.

Seven & i appointed a new chief executive this month and announced a share buyback and said it will sell its supermarket subsidiary to U.S. private equity firm Bain Capital, to help boost its value and fend off the acquisition. MDT/AP

MARKETS

World shares mixed after rebound on Wall St as investors await next steps in trade war

ELAINE KURTENBACH, BANGKOK

WORLD shares were mixed yesterday after a rebound on Wall Street fueled by an encouraging update on U.S. consumer prices.

That report showed overall prices rose less for U.S. consumers last month than economists expected. Today [Macau time] will bring an update on wholesale prices.

The future for the S&P 500 lost 0.2% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 0.1%.

Chinese markets led a broad decline in Asia as investors watched for the next steps in President Donald Trump's trade war. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index shed 0.6% to 23,462.65, while the Shanghai Composite index lost 0.4% to 3,358.73.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 gave up early gains to close 0.1% lower at 37,790.03.

South Korea's Kospi edged 0.1% lower, to 2,573.64. In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 lost 0.5% to 7,749.10.

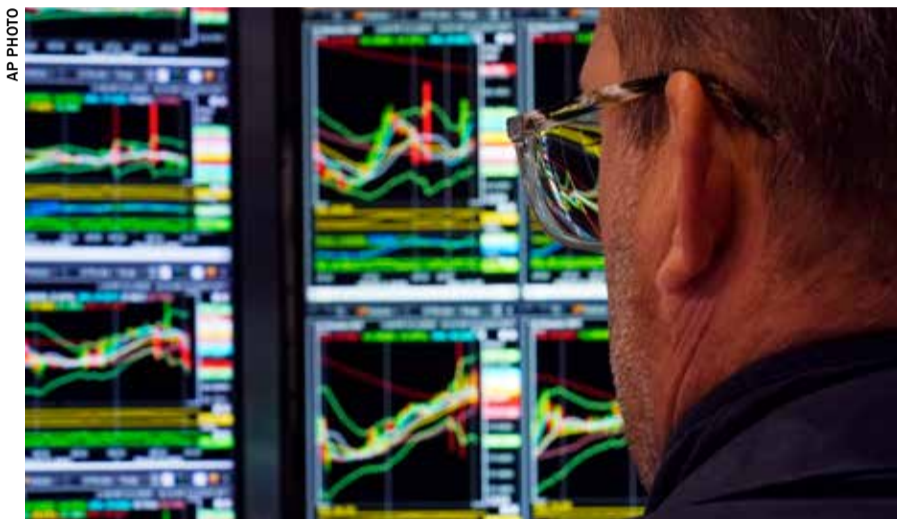
Taiwan's Taiex shed 1.4% and the Sensex in India edged 0.1% lower. Bangkok's SET rose 0.1%.

On Wednesday, the S&P 500 gained 0.5%, a day after the index briefly fell more than 10% below its all-time high set last month.

The Dow industrials fell 0.2% and the Nasdaq composite climbed 1.2%.

Companies in the artificial-intelligence industry led gains, bouncing back after AI stocks got crushed recently by worries their prices had gone too stratospheric.

Nvidia climbed 6.4% to trim its loss for the year so far to 13.8%. Server-maker Super Micro Computer



rose 4%, and GE Vernova, which is helping to power AI data centers, gained 5.1%.

Elon Musk's Tesla, whose price had more than halved since mid-December, rallied 7.6% for its first back-to-back gain in nearly a month.

But more stocks in the S&P 500 fell than rose. Among the hardest hit were businesses that could be set to feel pain because of Trump's trade war.

The question hanging over markets is how much pain Trump will let the economy endure through tariffs and other policies.

Even if Trump ultimately goes with milder tariffs, damage could still be done. The dizzying barrage of on-again, off-again announcements on tariffs has already begun sapping confidence among U.S. consumers and businesses by ramping up uncertainty. That could cause U.S. households and businesses to spend less, hurting the economy.

On Tuesday, for example, Trump said he would double 25% tariffs

announced on Canadian steel and aluminum, only to walk it back later in the day after a Canadian province pledged to drop a retaliatory measure that had incensed Trump.

Some U.S. businesses say they've already begun seeing a change in behavior among their customers.

Yesterday's inflation report came at a time when worries are mounting that Trump's tariffs will drive prices even higher as U.S. importers pass on their costs to their customers.

It's also helpful for the Federal Reserve, which had been cutting interest rates last year to boost the economy before pausing this year, partly because of concerns about stubbornly high inflation.

In other dealings early Thursday, U.S. benchmark crude oil lost 37 cents to \$67.31 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, gave up 29 cents to \$70.66 per barrel.

The U.S. dollar fell to 148.16 Japanese yen from 148.25 yen. The euro fell to \$1.0873 from \$1.0887. MDT/AP

CORPORATE BITS

Galaxy launches golf training program for local students



Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) has partnered with the Macau Professional Golfers Association (MPGA) to introduce the "Galaxy Entertainment Group Presents: PGA Tour Dreams, Ma-

cau" program. The program trains physical education teachers to introduce a seven-week golf curriculum for students aged 6 to 12. Using beginner-friendly equipment,

students learn golf fundamentals through structured lessons and hands-on practice.

The program, which recently commenced at Macau Anglican College and Escola Oficial de Seac Pai Van, offers 140 training sessions throughout the year.

PGA-certified coaches provide instruction to 200 students and teachers using beginner-friendly equipment.

The goal is to integrate golf into the school curriculum and foster long-term interest in the sport.

At the first training session at Escola Oficial de Seac Pai Van, students received fundamental golf training in an engaging environment.

Sands China highlights Rua das Estalagens' heritage with new publication



Sands China Ltd. has launched a bilingual publication, In Search of Its Roots – An Illustrated History of Rua das Estalagens, showcasing the historic Macay street's cultural and historical significance.

Compiled by local professionals, the book captures the

transformation of Rua das Estalagens through stories and illustrations, offering insights into its heritage.

Supported by the SAR Government and Cultural Affairs Bureau, the book has been archived in public libraries and distributed to schools to

educate future generations.

Sands China has also contributed to the street's revitalization through initiatives such as the Entrepreneurship Recruitment Programme and a shopfront beautification project with the Macau Artist Society.

Dr. Wilfred Wong, Sands China's executive vice chairman, emphasized the company's commitment to preserving Macao's heritage while supporting local businesses.

These initiatives aim to strengthen community connections, promote cultural appreciation, and revitalize Rua das Estalagens as a vibrant part of the city's history.

SCIENCE, INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION INTEGRATION THE NEW FOCUS

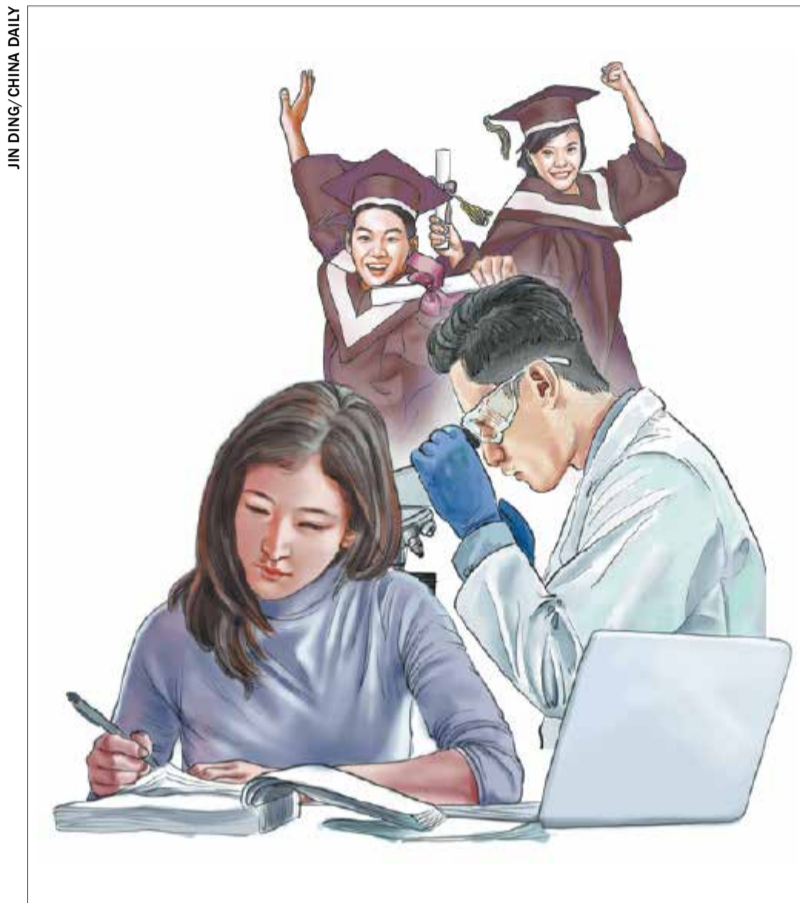
ANALYSIS
BY GAO SONG*

SCIENTIFIC revolutions spur industrial revolutions, which in turn drive economic progress. Enhancing innovation capabilities, fostering new quality productive forces, and promoting high-quality development have become the shared priorities for governments, universities, research institutions and businesses alike.

Universities, as engines of science and technological innovation and a major source of talents, play a crucial role in shaping industrial ecosystems and driving economic growth, and their deep interactions with local economies create a mutually beneficial cycle of progress. For example, Stanford University played a key role in the rise of Silicon Valley.

Similarly, the University of Science and Technology of China has been fueling Anhui province's technological progress, while Sun Yat-sen University, with its century-long legacy, has made significant contributions to Guangdong province's economic development.

Today, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) stands as one of China's most open and economically dynamic regions, with the Sun Yat-sen University both benefiting from and contributing to its growth. Hopefully, the uni-



JIN DING/CHINA DAILY

versity will continue playing its part in building the GBA into an international hub for technological innovation and talents, by not just conducting cutting-edge research but also ensuring its transformation into tangible productive forces.

The Sun Yat-sen University has been pursuing reforms in education, science and talent development, by systematically removing institutional hurdles to strengthen the innovation chain. A key strategy of the

university has been the development of key projects, teams and platforms in collaboration with State-owned enterprises, listed companies and industry leaders to accelerate the commercialization of scientific research.

For instance, in 2024, the National Supercomputing Center in Guangzhou, operated by the university, launched the next-generation domestic supercomputing system, Tianhe Xingyi, which has transformed

drug discovery in the biopharmaceutical sector, enabling AI-driven precision drug design and reducing drug development and animal testing cycles from two years to just 49 days. Multiple pharmaceutical companies have already incorporated this breakthrough into their R&D programs.

To further incentivize technology transfer, the Sun Yat-sen University has implemented an innovative profit-sharing policy, allocating commercialization revenue in a 7:1:1:1 ratio among inventors, the university, the operational platform, and relevant departments. This model not only safeguards the interests of researchers but also engages faculties and service institutions in the commercialization process. In 2024 alone, the university helped commercialize 888 technological achievements, a conversion rate of 29.7 percent.

The university has made impressive strides in research in fields such as pharmaceuticals, high-tech equipment, environmental solutions and energy materials. In the medical field, it has pioneered new treatment methods for cataract, glaucoma, gastrointestinal diseases, breast cancer, diabetes, and other conditions, leading to breakthrough anti-tumor and cough-suppressant drugs, with its cumulative technology transfer revenue exceeding 2 billion yuan (\$275 million). No-

tably, the university's research on an Epstein-Barr virus vaccine, aimed at addressing the high incidence of nasopharyngeal carcinoma in Guangdong, has attracted significant investment, with enterprises committing 100 million yuan to joint development.

The university has also spearheaded research in smart high-tech equipment, including Zhuhaiyun, the world's first smart unmanned research ship, and Zhuhaiqin, a foldable, self-elevating deep-sea aquaculture platform. It has achieved success in the environmental and energy sectors, too.

The university also prioritizes workforce development by forging partnerships with leading tech enterprises. The Sun Yat-sen University-Huawei "Smart Base" talent training program, launched in 2021 is one such standout project, which has integrated 34 courses and developed three new high-quality courses.

The university now plans to leverage its campuses across Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Hong Kong to establish specialized innovation hubs based on the unique strengths of these cities. By fostering deeper industry collaborations, clearing institutional bottlenecks and embracing a results-driven approach to research, the Sun Yat-sen University is setting a new benchmark for transforming knowledge into real-world products and services. **MDT/CHINA DAILY**

* The author is president of Sun Yat-sen University and a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress.

HK and GBA will outshine US Bay rivals: Paul Chan

IN THE NEWS

FINANCIAL Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po envisions Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area becoming a pioneering global hub for finance and innovation, surpassing the Bay Areas of San Francisco and New York.

Chan outlined the city's ambition as he delivered a speech at the 2025 Technology for Change Asia forum this week.

According to The Standard, the finance chief highlighted the government's substantial investments and the

formulation of a comprehensive strategy in innovation and technology, saying: "We are scaling the tech ecosystem in Hong Kong from upstream to downstream."

He also emphasized the complementary strengths of Hong Kong and its GBA sister cities, pointing to the World Intellectual Property Organization's ranking, which put the Shenzhen-Hong Kong-Guangzhou science and technology cluster at the world's number two in innovation. He added Hong Kong's Northern Metropolis project will support the

synergized development of the SAR and the GBA, which will be the home to many strategic tech companies.

"Hong Kong's value for tech is clear: together with the GBA, we will emerge as a leading international financial and innovation centre, more than combining the advantages of both the San Francisco Bay Area and the New York Bay Area," he said as reported by the HK daily.

The finance chief went on to underscore Hong Kong's strength in providing capital - from angel investments to venture capital, private equity and fundraising through initial public offerings. He expects Hong Kong's IPO market to raise more funds than



COURTESY THE STANDARD

last year, which stood at US\$11 billion (HK\$85.8 billion), ranking fourth globally.

"This year, we are benefiting from the optimism in the tech sector and the continued support from the central authorities in encouraging leading mainland companies to list on the

Hong Kong Stock Exchange," Chan said.

"We are expecting to raise some US\$17 billion to US\$20 billion this year." Regarding artificial intelligence, the finance chief sees the emerging technology as rapidly reshaping production, business and consumption models

while empowering the upgrading of traditional industries and creating new ones.

Chan highlighted China's strengths in AI, which are not limited to the rapid rise of DeepSeek. "Its strengths in AI are demonstrated not only by groundbreaking large language models like DeepSeek and others, but also by a multitude of AI inventions and applications, ranging from self-driving cars to embodied AI."

Chan stressed that Hong Kong has "robust" basic research capabilities, with five universities ranked among the global top 100, and three institutions among the world's top 25 in AI and data science, The Standard reports. **MDT**

TRADE WAR

China is taking issue with Trump's move to link tariffs to fentanyl

US President Donald Trump threw a curve ball at China by linking the fentanyl issue to his tariffs on imports. The Chinese government is swinging back.

First it issued a report detailing its efforts to control the illegal trade in fentanyl, specifically the ingredients for the opioid that are made in China. Then, the Chinese foreign minister blasted the U.S. for responding to Beijing's goodwill with tariffs. And this week, Chinese officials expressed their indignation at a rare background briefing with journalists.

"In the spirit of humanity, China assisted the U.S. in various ways," Foreign Minister Wang Yi told journalists last week in an annual appearance before the media. "The U.S. should not meet good with evil or even impose arbitrary tariffs. No responsible major country should do that."

Trump cited the fentanyl issue as the reason for imposing a 10% tariff on all Chinese imports in early February, on top of any existing duties. He doubled that to 20% earlier this month. He also has cited fentanyl, along with other reasons, for imposing tariffs on Canada and Mexico.

WHAT TRUMP IS SAYING

In his executive order on the first 10% tariff, Trump accused China of subsidizing chemical companies to export fentanyl



Zhang Jianmin, PRC's consul general in San Francisco, addresses Trump's tariffs on China during a meeting with the press at his home in San Francisco, yesterday [Macau time]

and related "precursor chemicals" and of providing a safe haven for Chinese criminal organizations that launder the revenues from the opioid trade.

It's not unusual for the Chinese government to subsidize industries, and the precursor chemicals are also used to make legal painkillers. But some of the production finds

its way to Mexican drug cartels who make fentanyl and send it to the United States.

"Despite multiple attempts to resolve this crisis at its root source through bilateral dialogue, PRC officials have failed to follow through with the decisive actions needed to stem the flow of precursor chemicals to known criminal cartels," the statement said.

CHINA'S RESPONSE

The Chinese government hit back both times Trump imposed tariffs with its own duties on selected U.S. products and other measures aimed at American companies. Analysts have described the response as a measured one designed to try to avoid an escalation of the trade war, which could deal a blow to an

already sluggish Chinese economy.

The government's report on its fentanyl-related actions said that China and the U.S. have held multiple high-level meetings since early last year to promote cooperation, and that its Narcotics Control Bureau holds regular exchanges with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.

China is committed to cooperation, the report said, "but firmly opposes the U.S. imposition of unlawful sanctions and unreasonable pressure on China on the pretext of responding to fentanyl-related issues."

FROM BIDEN TO TRUMP

Under former President Joe Biden, cooperation on fentanyl was relaunched in early 2024 after falling victim to geopolitics in 2022. In August of that year, a visit to Taiwan by a top U.S. legislator, then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, angered China, and the government responded by cutting off talks on a range of issues including drug control.

A rapprochement in late 2023, negotiated over several months, led to a meeting on fentanyl in January of last year. Drug enforcement, like climate, was held up as an area where the two countries could cooperate despite growing differences and their military, economic and technological competition.

Now Trump, back in the White House after a four-year hiatus, is trying to shift the playing field in the U.S.-China relationship. So far, China has indicated it won't blink.

"If the American side goes further down this wrong path, we will fight to the end," Commerce Minister Wang Wentao said last week. **MDT/AP**

TAIWAN

Lai says tougher measures needed to counter stepped-up mainland 'infiltration'

TAIWANESE leader William Lai Ching-te said yesterday tougher measures are needed to counter stepped-up mainland infiltration, spying and other efforts to weaken the island's defenses.

Lai cited a range of recent incidents involving China that fall into a "gray area" of psychological warfare short of open armed conflict.

Beijing's efforts to "subvert, obtain secrets,

lure members of the armed forces and influence public opinion to lose confidence in our national defense require that we step up our legal safeguards to prevent and detect such incidents," Lai said at a news conference.

Lai's Democratic Progressive Party favors the island's continued de-facto independence from Beijing. China has refused almost all official contact with the DPP



William Lai Ching-te

since Lai's predecessor, Tsai Ing-wen, was elected eight years ago.

China regularly sends

ships and planes into airspace and waters near the island in an effort to intimidate its 23 million

people and wear down its armed forces and morale.

Taiwan's government recently expelled the Chinese wife of a Taiwanese citizen after the woman repeatedly posted short clips on Chinese social media saying China would conquer Taiwan in half an hour and praising the PRC's leadership.

Such acts are illegal under Taiwan's laws on aiding and abetting the

enemy. The woman, who also held official Chinese titles as a consultant, can apply for residency again in five years.

Other recent incidents have included Taiwanese artists and influencers living in the mainland reposting statements from Chinese state media asserting Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan. The two sides split amid civil war in 1949.

Retired Taiwanese service members have also passed information about the island's weapons systems to Chinese agents and sought to recruit serving military members to serve as spies. **MDT/AP**

PAKISTAN

INSURGENTS WHO ATTACKED A PASSENGER TRAIN KILLED 21 HOSTAGES WHILE ALL OTHERS FREED: OFFICIALS

ABDUL SATTAR, QUETTA

INSURGENTS who attacked a passenger train carrying 440 passengers in restive southwestern Pakistan killed 21 hostages before security forces killed all 33 of the assailants, and all other passengers were rescued, officials said yesterday [Macau time].

Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said the separatist Baloch Liberation Army group was behind the attack, and the military operation “has successfully reached its logical conclusion.”

He said no passengers died because of the operation, and praised the military for “averting a potential catastrophe.” The province’s chief minister, Sarfraz Bugti, told a provincial assembly that troops killed all insurgents involved.

Three soldiers who had been guarding the railroad track were also killed in the attack that began Tuesday in restive Balochistan province, the military spokesman, Lt. Gen. Ahmad Sharif, told local media.

The Baloch Liberation Army claimed responsibility for attacking the train in a tunnel in a remote part of Balochistan. Spokesman Jeeyand Baloch had said the group was ready to free passengers if authorities agreed to release jailed militants.



AP PHOTO An injured passenger, rescued by security forces from a passenger train attacked by insurgents at a railway station in Much

The BLA regularly targets Pakistani security forces and has also attacked civilians, including Chinese nationals among the thousands working on multibillion-dollar infrastructure projects in Balochistan.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said her country “will continue to firmly support Pakistan in advancing its counterterrorism

efforts.”

Some relatives of hostages were angry at Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, who last year claimed that the BLA was not a threat and “an ordinary police inspector could fix this situation.”

What happened?

The train had been traveling from Quetta to the northern city of Peshawar. Officials say the Jafer Express train was par-

tially inside a tunnel when the militants blew up the tracks, forcing the engine and nine coaches to stop.

Oil- and mineral-rich Balochistan is Pakistan’s largest and least populated province. It’s a hub for the country’s ethnic Baloch minority, whose members say they face discrimination and exploitation by the central government.

Balochistan borders Iran

and Afghanistan and has long been the scene of insurgency. Separatists demand greater autonomy from the government in Islamabad and a larger share of the region’s natural resources.

Insurgencies on either side of the Iran-Pakistan border have frustrated both countries, whose governments suspect each other of supporting — or at least tolerating — some groups. Iran has sought help from Pakistan in countering the threat from the militant group Jaish al-Adl. Pakistan wants Tehran to deny sanctuaries to BLA fighters.

What did the hijackers want?

Members of the military frequently use trains to travel from Balochistan’s capital, Quetta, to other parts of the country. In November, the BLA carried out a suicide bombing at a train station in Quetta, killing 26 people.

The BLA had warned that hostages’ lives would be at risk if the government did not negotiate. Analysts said the attack and its focus on civilians could backfire.

“After failing to damage the Pakistan Army within Balochistan, BLA has shifted its targets from military to unarmed civilians. This may give them instant public and media attention, but it will weaken their support base within the civilian population, which is their ultimate objective,” said Syed Muhammad Ali, an Islamabad-based independent security analyst.

Rescued passengers, including women and children, were being sent to their hometowns. Some of the injured were taken to Quetta, about 100 kilometers (62 miles) away. **MDT/AP**

INDONESIA

Fishermen sue Bumble Bee and say the canned tuna giant knew of abuse

LAWYERS representing four Indonesian fishermen who say they were beaten and trapped on vessels that were part of the global supply chain that provided tuna to Bumble Bee Seafoods filed a lawsuit Wednesday against the canned seafood giant.

It is believed to be the first such case of forced labor at sea brought against a U.S. seafood company, the men’s lawyer, Agnieszka Fryszman, said.

U.S. companies that



benefit from forced labor and undercut other businesses need to be held accountable, Fryszman said.

“What you see is really devastating,” she said.

The lawsuit accuses the company headquartered in San Diego of

violating the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. The law allows foreigners who suffered from human trafficking to sue U.S. businesses that knew or should have known that they were profiting from forced labor.

Bumble Bee said in an email to The Associated Press that it does not comment on pending litigation.

The fishermen are all from villages in Indonesia and worked for longline vessels owned by

Chinese companies from which Bumble Bee sourced its albacore tuna, according to the lawsuit. They say they were beaten regularly by their captains.

One fisherman named Akhmad, who like many Indonesians uses only one name, said he was hit by a metal hook and forced to work even after being injured on the job by a load of fish that gashed open his leg to the bone. Another fisherman, Syafi’i, said he received no medical care for severe burns and was ordered to return to work to pay to eat. All the men said they asked to go home and even tried to go on strike on board, according to the lawsuit.

The boats stayed out at sea while supply ships provided provisions and collected the catch. The men were strapped with debt from food bills and other fees and the threat of fines if they quit, Fryszman said.

Bumble Bee had been warned of inhumane conditions in its supply chain over the years, Fryszman said. In 2020, accounts of abusive conditions and forced labor prompted the U.S. to halt imports from a Taiwan-based fishing vessel that reportedly supplied the global tuna trading company that acquired Bumble Bee Seafoods that same year. None of these fishermen worked on that vessel. **MDT/AP**

MIGRANTS

They crossed the world to reach the US. Deported under Trump, they're stuck in Panama

MATÍAS DELACROIX & MEGAN JANETSKY, PANAMA CITY

THEY crossed oceans to get to the U.S., fleeing conflict, religious persecution, poverty and government crackdowns in countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Cameroon, China, Pakistan and Iran.

After flying to Central and South America, they bused through countries where they didn't speak the language and walked through unfamiliar jungle to get to the U.S.-Mexico border.

Within days, they were detained and put on military aircraft that flew nearly 300 of them to Panama as U.S. President Donald Trump sought to accelerate deportations to more complicated destinations.

Panama was supposed to be a stopover. But for those unwilling to return home — mostly out of well-founded fear — Panama sent them to a guarded camp without access to lawyers in the same Darién jungle many had crossed months earlier on their way north.

Over the past week, under legal pressure, the Panamanian government dropped them off at a bus station in the capital with 30 days to figure out where they will go next.

"It feels like the whole world is crushing down on me. It's like everything is stopping," said Isha Len, a 29-year-old from Cameroon. "I risked everything, my life, everything, crossing the Darién Gap, just to be sent back."

Here are the stories that some of the deportees told The Associated Press:

ISHA LEN, 29, CAMEROON

After conflict broke out in her small town, Len crossed Cameroon by car and minibus, then a fisherman friend carried her four hours by boat to Nigeria.

Len, a schoolteacher, flew to Sao Paulo, Brazil, where she said authorities detained her for a month in the airport. From there, she wound north through South America by bus, following other migrants until they reached the Darién Gap.

She walked days through the dangerous jungle that divides Colombia and Panama before boarding buses that carried her through Central America. After being kidnapped for days by a gang in Guatemala, she crossed into southern Mexico, where she took a boat along the Pacific coast to evade authorities. After she landed, she rode



Isha Len



Wang Qiu



Ebrahim Ghezgelgechi (right)



Elham Ghaedi

eight hours to Mexico City, continuing on by bus and car to Tijuana.

She crossed the U.S. border and presented herself to American authorities.

ARTEMIS GHASEMZADEH, 27, IRAN

Artemis Ghasemzadeh left her country in January, fleeing after converting from Islam to Christianity — something that could cost Ghasemzadeh her life in Iran. She flew to Dubai, where she stayed two weeks and then took a flight to South Korea.

From there she flew to Mexico City, staying there for three weeks before going to Tijuana. She crossed the U.S. border on Feb. 9, and was detained for five days, including her birthday.

"For changing your religion, your punishment is death," she said. "We don't know what will happen."

WANG QIU, 53, CHINA

Wang Qiu said he left home after he was imprisoned for three years for speaking out about democracy

and human rights issues.

He flew from Beijing to Cuba, then to the small South American country of Suriname. From there, he traveled by land: through Guyana, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia, before trekking through the Darién Gap.

He moved up through Central America and Mexico before being detained after crossing into the U.S. in San Diego.

QAMAR ABDI, 19, SOMALIA

Qamar Abdi, left for the U.S. on Aug. 17, due to warfare between the government and militants of al-Shabab, which the U.S. recognizes as a terrorist group.

She hopped from buses to shared cars for nearly a month until she reached South Africa. From there, she flew to Sao Paulo, Brazil, and spent the next six months riding buses north.

When she arrived at the northern tip of Colombia, she traveled six days through the Darién Gap, landing in Panama on New Year's Day.

She took buses to the southern



Artemis Ghasemzadeh



Qamar Abdi (left)



Samin Haider (left)



Hayatullah Omagh

Mexican border city of Tapachula, where she was temporarily kidnapped and robbed by a gang. To avoid immigration authorities, she traveled hours packed on a boat with other migrants along Mexico's Pacific coast, then took a bus to Mexico City. She spent two weeks there before driving to Tijuana, where she crossed into the U.S.

EBRAHIM GHEZELGECHI, 36, IRAN

Ebrahim Ghezgelgechi fled Iran with his wife, Sahar; 10-year-old daughter, Aylin; and 11-year-old son, Sam, on Nov. 21.

The family flew to Brazil, then to Panama and finally Nicaragua. From there, they took buses north to Guatemala, then crossed into southern Mexico by boat. They rode on top of trains and in buses and vans to get to Tijuana.

After Mexico authorities sent them back to the southern part of the country, they took a plane to the resort area of Los Cabos. There, they were detained, had their passports taken and were sent back south again.

They tried getting north a number of times, punted back by Mexican authorities, before eventually paying a driver to take them to Tijuana.

After crossing into the U.S., they were detained in San Diego for a week.

SAMIN HAIDER, 21, PAKISTAN

Samin Haider left for Dubai in 2023 after violence surged in his region of Parachinar, which borders Afghanistan and has been plagued for decades by conflicts between Shi'ite and Sunni Muslim communities.

Haider was there for 1 1/2 years before the United Arab Emirates canceled visas for Pakistanis.

Haider then flew to Mexico and traveled to the U.S.-Mexico border with the hopes of seeking asylum.

Now deported to Panama, he still hopes to reach the U.S.

ELHAM GHAEDI, 29, IRAN

Elham Ghaedi left on Oct. 21, flying to Brazil and then to Venezuela's capital Caracas.

She traveled to Colombia, where she took a bus north and then walked five days through the Darién Gap.

She stayed 15 days in a migrant camp in southern Panama before taking a bus through Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and to Mexico's southern border. There, migration authorities detained her for six days.

She traveled north to Mexico City, where she spent a month, before boarding a flight to Tijuana. U.S. authorities detained her when she crossed to San Diego.

HAYATULLAH OMAGH, 29, AFGHANISTAN

Omagh fled Afghanistan in 2022 after the takeover of the Taliban because he identified as an atheist and was part of an ethnic minority, something that could put his life in danger.

He first went to Pakistan, where he got a visa for six months, and struggled to get a new one due to his Afghan passport.

He then went to Iran and worked there for 1 1/2 years. But the country wouldn't accept him as a refugee.

He managed to get a visa to Brazil, which offered a number of Afghan people refuge after the rise of the Taliban, and flew to Sao Paulo in 2024.

Hoping to reunite with friends and family in the U.S., Omagh paid smugglers to move him north through Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia. He trekked through the Darién Gap, then took buses north through Central America to southern Mexico.

Mexican authorities detained him and dropped him back in southern Mexico a few times before he managed to take a flight to Mexico City and later to the U.S., where he was detained.

"After so much time, I've lost hope," he said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio disembarks from a military airplane upon arrival at Quebec City

this day in history

1958 HISTORIC SHEERNESS DOCKS TO CLOSE



The government has announced the closure of one of the oldest naval dockyards in the UK.

All 2,500 jobs at Sheerness Docks on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent are in jeopardy.

The first ever secretary of the Admiralty, Samuel Pepys, established the dockyard in the 17th century as an extension to the Royal Navy headquarters in nearby Chatham.

The former mayor of Rochester - the nearest city - and President of the Medway Towns Trades Council reported one of his councillors saying, "Pepys would turn in his grave".

One dockworker said: "I'll have to leave, there's nothing else here."

Members of Sheerness Urban District Council say they are concerned about the future of the town and repaying debts for their massive re-building and slum-clearance programme.

The Council has already telegraphed Prime Minister Harold Macmillan about delaying the closure until its future use has been decided and alternative industries have been developed.

Sheerness Co-operative Society - one of the oldest in the country - is also under threat.

The co-op's managing secretary said: "My society does 50% of its trade with dockyard employees and officials and naturally a large part of our trade will be affected. At the moment we're doing a quarter of a million pound trade annually, so you can work that one out."

The port facilities at Chatham are also likely to be affected as the Admiralty withdraws its headquarters and shuts down the Royal Navy barracks there.

Chatham has an even longer history than Sheerness and Lord Nelson's famous ship, Victory, was built there.

The impact of losing the 5,000 sailors from the barracks will be felt in all the surrounding Medway towns.

Courtesy BBC News

G7

RUBIO COULD FACE AN UNFRIENDLY RECEPTION FROM CLOSE ALLIES OVER TRUMP'S POLICIES

MATTHEW LEE, LA MALBAIE

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio may be walking into unusually unfriendly territory this week when he meets his counterparts from the Group of 7 industrialized democracies — strong American allies stunned by President Donald Trump's actions against them.

Just hours after Trump's steel and aluminum tariffs kicked in — prompting responses from the European Union and Canada and threatening to ignite full-scale trade wars with close U.S. partners — Rubio arrived at the scenic Quebec town of La Malbaie on the St. Lawrence River for two days of talks starting today [Macau time] with the top diplomats of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. All of them have been angered by the new American president's policies.

Rubio will likely be hearing a litany of complaints about Trump's decisions from once-friendly, like-minded countries in the G7 — notably host Canada, to which Trump has arguably been most antagonistic with persistent talk of it becoming the 51st U.S. state, additional tariffs and repeated insults against its leadership.

Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly, the official host who will see each participant separately, said that "in every single meeting, I will raise the issue of tariffs to coordinate a response with the Europeans and to put pressure on the Americans."

"The only constant in this unjustifiable trade war seems

to be President Trump's talk of annexing our country through economic coercion," Joly said. "Yesterday, he called our border a fictional line and repeated his disrespectful 51st state rhetoric."

Rubio downplayed Trump's "51st state" comments, saying that the president was only expressing what he thought would be a good idea.

The G7 grouping "is not a meeting about how we're going to take over Canada," Rubio said, noting that they would focus on Ukraine issues and other common topics.

FACING ALLIES AS TARIFFS TAKE HOLD

On tariffs, Rubio said G7 partners should understand that these are a "policy decision" by Trump to protect American competitiveness.

"I think it is quite possible that we could do these things and at the same time deal in a constructive way with our allies and friends and partners on all the other issues that we work together on," Rubio told reporters on a refueling stop in Ireland as he headed to Canada from talks with Ukrainian officials in Saudi Arabia. "And that's what I expect out of the G7 and Canada."

Asked if he expected a difficult reception from his counterparts, Rubio brushed the question aside: "I don't know, should I be? I mean, they've invited us to come. We intend to go. The alternative is to not go. I think that would actually make things worse, not better."

Rubio notably skipped a meeting of G20 foreign minis-

ters — a bigger but less powerful group that includes developing nations — last month in South Africa because of his concerns that the agenda, which included climate change and diversity, did not align with Trump administration policies.

The agenda for the G7 meeting includes discussions on China and the Indo-Pacific; Ukraine and Europe; stability in the Americas; the Middle East; maritime security; Africa; and China, North Korea, Iran and Russia.

DISCUSSING PEACE IN UKRAINE

Rubio and Trump's national security adviser, Mike Waltz, had been in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, earlier in the week securing a potentially huge win for the administration — a possible ceasefire to end the Russia-Ukraine war, an issue that galvanized the G7 since even before the conflict began.

Armed with Ukraine's acceptance of the proposal for a 30-day ceasefire but still awaiting a Russian response, Rubio can expect cautiously optimistic responses from his fellow diplomats.

Yet, Trump's apparent desire to draw Russian President Vladimir Putin back into the fold — including saying he would like to see Russia rejoin the group to restore it to the G8 — continues to alarm G7 members. They united behind Ukraine, with large amounts of military assistance and punishing economic sanctions against Moscow, after the invasion began in February 2022.

Russia was thrown out of the G8 after it annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014.

Among international groupings, the G7 — whose members, with the exception of Japan, are all NATO allies — had been the toughest on Russia.

At the last G7 foreign ministers meeting before the 2022 invasion, members warned Russia in a joint statement in December 2021 of "massive consequences" should it attack Ukraine. Three months later, they coordinated to impose sweeping financial, travel and other sanctions on Moscow.

Since Trump's election, that appears to be changing, at least from the U.S. side.

Rubio said his goal was not to antagonize Russia as it considers the ceasefire proposal "by issuing statements that are abrasive in any way." He noted that all of the sanctions against Russia remain in place but that new threats of action could be counterproductive to getting Putin on board with the U.S. peace plan.

That throws into question hopes that the G7 can unify around a common statement condemning Russia.

Britain, along with France, has been spearheading efforts to set up a "coalition of the willing" to help safeguard a future ceasefire in Ukraine, including with troops on the ground. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer — who has said the plan will only work with U.S. security guarantees to back it up — plans to host a virtual meeting of about two dozen countries Saturday to discuss progress. **MDT/AP**

IN CONTEXT

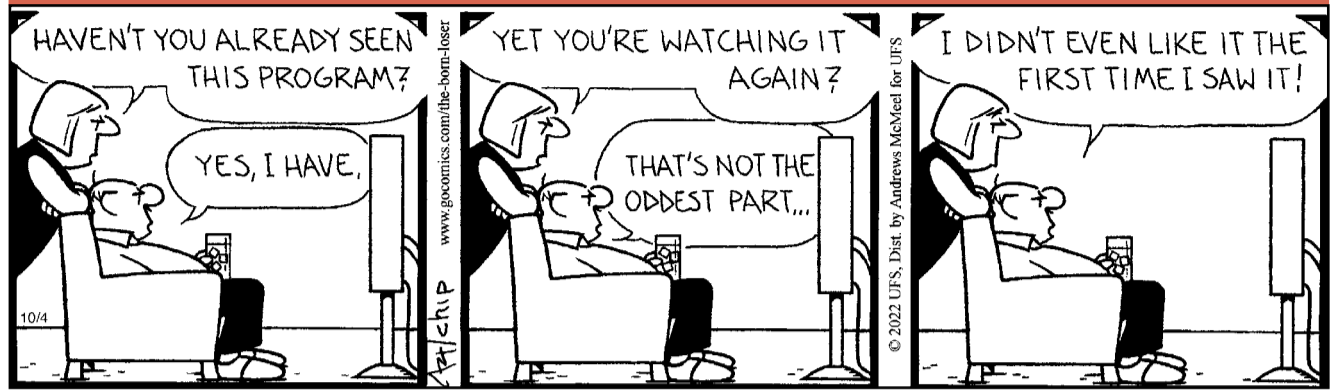
Redundancies at Sheerness were spread over several months until the naval dockyards closed permanently in March 1960. It was taken over by the Medway Port Authority and by 2002 was the largest port for motor imports in the UK. Chatham continued as a naval dockyard until it closed in 1984 when the site became a naval museum.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

<p>ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Begin a physical health, work and fitness phase. Adapt practices for changing conditions over the next half year, illuminated by tonight's Virgo Lunar Eclipse.</p>	<p>TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Express your heart, imagination and artistry. Tonight's Full Moon Eclipse shines on a transition. Adapt directions with a romance, passion or creative endeavor. Shift perspectives.</p>
<p>GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Make repairs. Renovate, remodel and tend your garden. Adapt with domestic changes. Nurture your home and family over this six-month Lunar Eclipse phase.</p>	<p>CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Start another chapter. A six-month Eclipse phase highlights communications, connection and intellectual discovery. Adapt around challenges. Keep channels open. Write, edit and share.</p>
<p>LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Make a shift around income and finances. Discover profitable opportunities in new directions under this Virgo Full Moon Eclipse. Redirect attention toward fresh potential.</p>	<p>VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 A challenge reorients you. This Lunar Eclipse in your sign illuminates new personal directions. Expand boundaries over half a year. Develop an inspiring possibility.</p>
<p>LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Review priorities privately. This Eclipse illuminates the dawn of a six-month introspective phase. Balance old responsibilities with new. Process transitions. Consider the past and future.</p>	<p>SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 One social door closes and another opens under this Eclipse. Adapt with community and team changes over six months. Share appreciation and salutations.</p>
<p>SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Consider an exciting career opportunity. Make professional changes under this Eclipse. Redirect efforts over the next half year toward your talents, passions and purpose.</p>	<p>CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Your exploration changes and adapts. The Full Moon Eclipse illuminates a shift in your educational direction. Experiment with new concepts over six months.</p>
<p>AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Collaborate for financial growth over the next six months following tonight's Lunar Eclipse. Shift directions for changing conditions. Deepen bonds by pulling together.</p>	<p>PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Make adjustments together. Collaborate for shared commitments around changes over six months after tonight's Full Moon Eclipse. Adapt for solutions. Love provides foundational strength.</p>

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

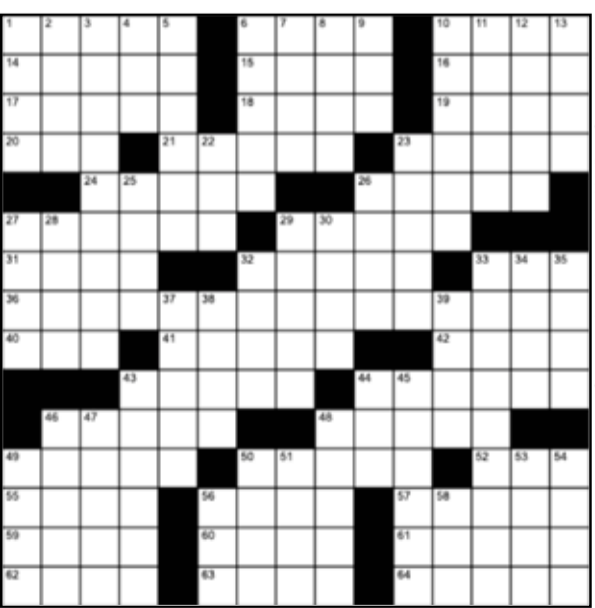
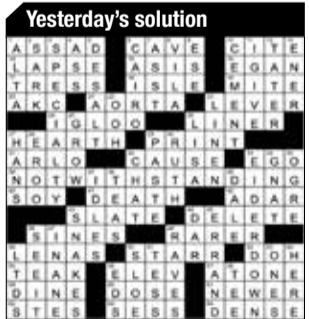
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	5	8	overcast
Changchun	-6	4	fine
Chengdu	11	16	rain
Chongqing	13	16	rain
Fuzhou	14	19	rain
Guangzhou	22	29	showers
Guiyang	8	12	rain
Haikou	22	31	cloudy
Hangzhou	9	12	rain
Harbin	-7	1	fine
Hefei	6	11	rain
Nanjing	9	12	rain
Shanghai	9	13	rain
Taipei	18	23	rain
Wuhan	11	12	rain
Hong Kong	22	23	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	0	13	rain
Frankfurt	1	9	snow
Paris	1	8	cloudy
London	1	8	cloudy
New York	7	14	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Pertaining to people; 6- Jai ___; 10- Ah, me!; 14- Once ___ time...; 15- Fragrant neckwear; 16- Boot bottom; 17- Turkish coins; 18- Teri of 'Tootsie'; 19- Falafel holder; 20- Hill dweller; 21- Lathers; 23- Showed again; 24- Open-mouthed; 26- More pleasant; 27- Edible nut; 29- Brewer's need; 31- What ___ mind reader?; 32- Make fun of; 33- Fannie ___; 36- In spite of; 40- Unbuttered, as toast; 41- High times?; 42- Annapolis inst.; 43- Olds model; 44- Hosted; 46- Burrowing animals; 48- More frigid; 49- Ancient linear unit; 50- Burning of another's property; 52- Hail, to Caesar; 55- Soothing succulent; 56- Airline since 1948; 57- Arm joint; 59- Hammer part; 60- ___ precedent; 61- Esther of 'Good Times'; 62- Flat sound; 63- Checkup; 64- Cancels a dele;

DOWN 1- Hawaiian native dance; 2- ___ arms (angry); 3- Death rate; 4- Santa ___; California; 5- Capital of the Bahamas; 6- Pond scum; 7- Jump; 8- Televises; 9- Syr neighbor; 10- Facet; 11- France's longest river; 12- Communion table; 13- Playwright O'Casey; 22- Decide; 23- Ascended; 25- Chew on; 26- Rocket launcher; 27- Magic stick; 28- Latin love; 29- Type of question; 30- Breaks bread; 32- God with a hammer; 33- Wretchedly unhappy; 34- Diarist Frank; 35- Holy smokes!; 37- Small bay; 38- Some digits; 39- Il ___ (Mussolini); 43- Foreigners; 44- Green prefix; 45- Pit-workers; 46- Some hybrids; 47- Woodwind section members; 48- Religion of the Muslims; 49- Hats; 50- Author Haley; 51- Pro ___; 53- Unit of potential difference; 54- Female sheep; 56- Legal conclusion?; 58- Used car locale;



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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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

DRIVE IN

'NOVOCAINE', WITH JACK QUAID, IS A SHOT OF BLOODY ACTION-COMEDY

LINDSEY BAHR,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

NATHAN Caine may not be able to feel pain, as the tagline for the new action-comedy "Novocaine" reads, but the same does not apply to audiences.

Although he doesn't scream when his leg is impaled with an arrow or when he sticks his hand in a vat of frying oil, you might. I certainly did. Out loud. In a theater. With other people. There may have been some phrases uttered entirely involuntarily too. Were other people reacting in the same way, I wonder? I couldn't hear them over my own groans. Hooray for the communal experience, I guess?

This is, in some ways, a film for people who thought John Wick wasn't stabby enough. It delights in the relentless mutilation of its hero, a regular guy (played by Jack Quaid) with a rare condition that has rendered him immune from feeling any sort of discomfort to bodily harm. Unlike such high concept premises as "Crank," congenital insensitivity to pain analgesia (or CIPA) is actually real. But

AP PHOTO



Jack Quaid in a scene from "Novocaine" (Marcos Cruz/Paramount Pictures)

it's not exactly a superpower, Nate explains. He can still die; it just might be because he hasn't emptied his bladder in many hours. Or because he's accidentally bitten his tongue off eating a sandwich. These are real concerns of his.

His entire existence is devoted to preventing these kinds of crises, mostly through tried-and-true baby proofing techniques like using tennis balls on sharp corners. Like Kelly Ripa before a show,

he only consumes "non-chewing food."

Work is stable and dull as an assistant manager at a bank. And dating is out of the question; He spends most of his free time playing online video games. Quaid, even with his two movie star parents, is somehow believable as this cautious introvert, though everything is played with a light touch and a wink. The movie, written by Lars Jacobson and

directed by Dan Berk and Robert Olsen, even begins with the mournful R.E.M. anthem "Everybody Hurts."

Then Nate's life is changed one day when a pretty teller at the bank, Sherry (Amber Midthunder), asks him out to lunch, then to drinks and even spends the night. The next morning, things get even crazier: Sherry is taken hostage after a violent robbery at the bank. These guys are capital B bad (led

by fellow nepo spawn Ray Nicholson) killing both the bank manager the cops outside. So what does Nate do? He steals a cop car and attempts to save her himself.

"Don't do it," pleads an injured cop as Nate hesitates before apprehending the car.

On the heels of some bad action comedies like "Love Hurts," "Novocaine" is pretty enjoyable. It might have been born in the same elevator pitch incubator (what if non-stop violence!), but it's executed with some style and understanding of comedic timing. In one clever sequence, Nate persuades his psychotic captor to torture him as slowly as possible, buying time until his friend gets there as he pretends to feel the pain. "Novocaine" also kind of overstays its welcome, stretching on too long with too many endings. Still, it's an easy, if not entirely painless, watch.

"Novocaine," a Paramount Pictures release in theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "strong, bloody violence, language throughout, grisly images). Running time: 110 minutes. ★★☆☆

AD

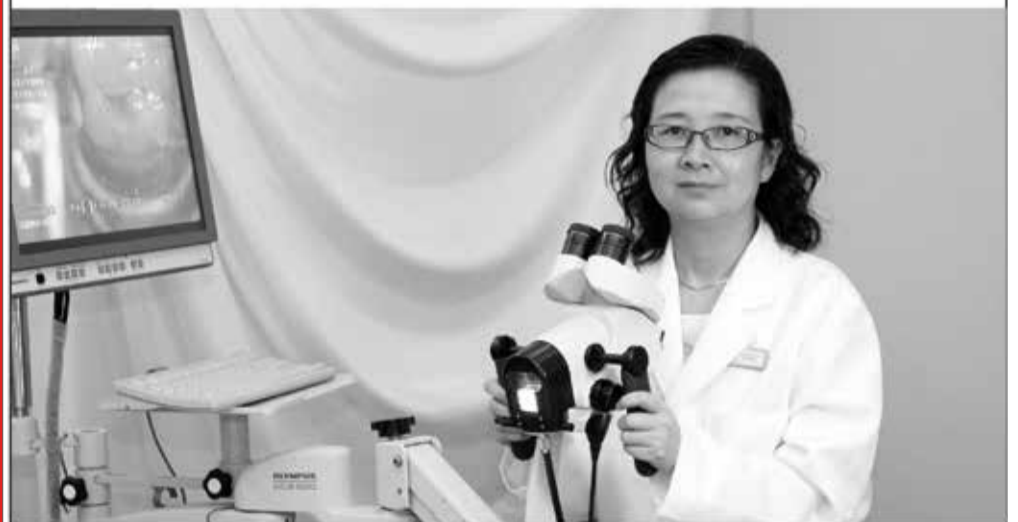


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tTUNES

The Lady Gaga you loved and missed returns with pop 'Mayhem'

SHE hath returned: A new Lady Gaga, like the old Lady Gaga, but a different Lady Gaga.

"Mayhem," released Friday, is a satisfying full-length project of big pop material, both a return to her roots and a hard press on the gas pedal.

Her 2008 debut "The Fame" introduced a new generation to the addictive properties of expertly crafted electropop. "The Fame Monster" a year later cemented her position as a modern great, a savior of theatrical pop that once recalled Madonna and now serves as a reminder that big belts are cinema. Then came the genre explorations of "Born This Way," "Artpop," "Joanne" (arriving years before pop would go country — she has long been prescient), and 2020's "Chromatica."

Half a decade later, is the world ready again for her club anthems? Or is "Mayhem" an attempt to revitalize a big pop sound left behind in the streaming era? Can an artist return home without playing some parody of themselves?

The answer, of course, is up to the listener. Some will hear "Abracadabra" as life-affirming dance music. Others will press play on "Killah" and balk at its Gesaffelstein-aided sound. They might read the earworm "Disease" as a song that too easily recalls the mid-2010s of her heyday, but to do so would strip it of stadium-sized pleasures. It is a great song, a familiar song, a return to a classic Gaga. (And for what it is worth, there's a lot more energy there than in the Grammy-winning power ballad "Die with a Smile," her collaboration with Bruno Mars.)

The truth is, Gaga has reclaimed her early dark-pop sensibilities and ushered them into her 2025 reality across "Mayhem." It manifests in a few ways, most prominently in her delivery. Lady Gaga sounds like she is having fun here, from the modular Moog of the ballad fake-out "Vanish Into You" and the "Bad Romance" easter egg of "Garden of Eden," to the springy synth of "Perfect Celebrity," which furthers Gaga's quest to use fame to question fame's legitimacy. Now that is timeless pop meta-commentary.

Autonomy was top of mind for Gaga on "Mayhem," and it's yielded great results. "Something that was really important to me on this was really taking from myself my own inventions," she told The Associated Press in a recent interview. "I was the creator. This was my work. It was just not a character I was playing. It was something that I made."

"Mayhem" will sound familiar to Gaga listeners, there's no doubt about that. But they will hear an evolved version — not an easy play at nostalgia, nor an artist appeasing contemporary trends. It is Gaga staying true to herself, as she has been known to do.

MARIA SHERMAN, MDT/AP MUSIC WRITER



"Mayhem" by Lady Gaga (Interscope Records)

TASTE OF EDESIA

Shanghai and more

IRENE SAM, MDT

SHANGHAI PLUS is set to elevate the culinary landscape of Hong Kong's Wan Chai North. Embracing a concept that celebrates the innovative combination of Shanghai and Cantonese cuisines, Shanghai Plus stands out from the traditional Cantonese-focused restaurants. Under the guidance of Executive Chef Edmond Ip, a native of Hong Kong, Shanghai Plus melds Shanghai culinary traditions with Cantonese influences — infusing the menu with a touch of Hong Kong flair.

The name Shanghai Plus (in

Cantonese 尚海薈) is derived from the meanings of its individual Chinese characters: 尚 represents elegance and modernity, 海 signifies inclusivity and vastness, and 薈 conveys gathering and abundance.

Award-Winning Executive Chef, Edmond Ip, with over 20 years of experience perfecting wok hei and slow-braising techniques, fuses traditional Shanghai cuisine with his unique, Hong Kong twist.

Having honed his craft in acclaimed kitchens and garnered prestigious awards, Chef Edmond presents a distinct, multi-regional Chinese dining experience that harmoniously blends Shanghai

and Canton, introducing a new and unique addition to Hong Kong's diverse culinary scene.

With a menu featuring a total of 77 dishes during the soft opening phase, Shanghai Plus presents Chef Edmond's innovative take on Shanghai cuisine infused with Cantonese flavours and influences.

Guests can savour from dim sum items, handmade noodles to signature dishes such as the classic Shanghai Fried Pork Ribs with a Cantonese twist, where carefully chosen pork ribs are marinated in a combination of Italian balsamic vinegar and Okinawan black sugar, and topped with aged tangerine peel.



Luxurious Hammam

MGM Macau's TRIA Spa has been luxuriously revamped and now has the biggest Hammam facility in Macau. The menu now includes an extraordinary body treatment tailored for the most discerning guests who demand ultimate luxury and indulgence.

Luxurious and holistic, TRIA Hammam Journey uses the precious Agarwood as its main ingredient. The treatment starts with scrub, bubble massage, aromatic steam and experience shower, follows with relaxation in the unique Himalayan Salt Room.

Inhaling and exhaling salt-infused air detoxes while scrubbing with precious Agarwood unclogs pores, giving the skin a healthy, youthful glow.

With floor to ceiling pink marble adorning the interior, TRIA Spa has one of the most spectacular and exotic Hammam facility in Macau. While the amazing products used during the treatment are not available for purchase, they are indeed outstanding in toning the skin, leaving it firm and incredibly moisturised without being heavy.

The heavenly Agarwood body milk applied at the end of the treatment is most enjoyable as it is soaked into the skin, resulting in smoothness and has gentle brightening effects. The scent of Agarwood calms the mind throughout the day after the treatment, while the skin rejuvenating effects last for many days. IS



OPINION

Business Views

Shuli Ren, Bloomberg



BEWARE OF LI KASHING'S SUPERSIZED VALUE TRAP

From Chinese tech stocks to European defense shares, President Donald Trump's second term seems to be lifting the world's biggest value traps. One of the most prominent and controversial is the holding company owned by Hong Kong's richest man, Li Ka-shing.

CK Hutchison Holdings Ltd. has agreed to sell most of its ports, including those near the Panama Canal and a larger unit that has operations across 23 countries, to a consortium led by New York-based BlackRock Inc. It was a major victory for the US president, who had complained loudly that China had taken over the critical waterway.

Market response was overwhelmingly positive. The \$19 billion cash proceeds were about the same size as CK's market cap before the deal was announced. That's remarkable considering the entire port business, including in China and Hong Kong that were not sold as part of the deal, accounted for about 28% of the conglomerate's operating free cash flow, according to the latest data available. CK's stock rose 22% on the date the news came out, the most in over two decades.

But as the initial excitement starts to fade, investors are growing nervous, wary of a billionaire family that has a poor track record on shareholders' returns.

The Li clan takes pride in the myriad of businesses and markets it operates in. But what kind of value-add can a diversified conglomerate offer when globalization is out of favor and geopolitical risks are on the rise? CK's de-rating has accelerated since Trump's first term, with the stock trading at just 35% of its book value even after the recent share bump.

The complex business dealings have made enterprise valuation an impossible task.

In a sign of deep capital market skepticism, CK seems to have trouble monetizing its assets. Its health and beauty subsidiary A.S. Watson is still privately-held, a decade after postponing an ambitious \$6 billion dual listing in Hong Kong and London. Softer consumer sentiment in China, once a growth market, has become a drag. Last summer, CK Infrastructure did a secondary listing in the UK, hoping to widen its investor base. Trading volume has hardly improved since.

CK has not indicated how it plans to deploy the \$19 billion from the port deal. In the past, the company did not announce special dividends or buybacks after major asset disposals, which would have pleased investors. Analysts say the proceeds could go into acquisition deals in infrastructure assets in the UK, considering CK Infrastructure's recent interest in UK water supplier Thames Water Utilities Inc. as well as waste firm Viridor Ltd.

Though nicknamed "Superman", Li's aura has long faded in some investing circles. In 2015, minority shareholders revolted and blocked a proposal by CK Infrastructure to buy out another subsidiary, Power Assets Holdings Ltd., in a rare setback to the tycoon who sought to consolidate his businesses before handing over control to his elder son Victor.

This is the perhaps the last chance the 96-year-old will have to make amends with disgruntled shareholders. Instead of more empire-building, the Li family can perhaps share its winnings with outsiders. After all, stock buybacks are often the best use of corporate capital, especially when shares are trading below their fair value. That would be real superpower. [Abridged]

Courtesy Bloomberg/Shuli Ren

BELGIAN PROSECUTORS MAKE ARRESTS IN A CORRUPTION PROBE LINKED TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

THE BUZZ

Belgian federal prosecutors said yesterday they have arrested several individuals as part of a corruption probe linked to the European Parliament amid reports in local media that Chinese company Huawei bribed EU lawmakers.

Some 100 federal police officers carried out 21 searches in Brussels as well as in Flanders, Wallonia and Portugal, the federal prosecutor's office said.

The suspects were arrested for questioning in "connection with their alleged involvement in active corruption within the European Parliament, as well as for forgery and use of forgeries," prosecutors said. "The offences were allegedly committed by a criminal organization."

According to an investigation by Le Soir newspaper and other media, lobbyists working for Chinese telecoms giant Huawei are suspected of bribing current or former MEPs to promote the company's commercial policy in Europe.

Huawei did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The federal prosecutor's office, which did not name Huawei, said that corruption is believed to have been practiced "regularly and very discreetly from 2021 to the present day, and taking various forms."

Police seized several documents and objects during the searches.

More on macaudailytimes.com.mo/buzz

AP PHOTO



This image provided by the Apsara National Authority, shows a headless statue excavated by archaeologists at the Angkor temple complex in Cambodia's Siem Reap province

THE TORSO OF A BUDDHA STATUE HAS BEEN FOUND AT ANGKOR TEMPLE COMPLEX

SOPHENG CHEANG, PHNOM PENH

ARCHAEOLOGISTS in Cambodia are celebrating an unexpected find at the country's centuries-old Angkor temple complex: the torso of a statue of Buddha that matches a head found nearly a century ago at the same site.

The torso, believed to be from the 12th or 13th century, was discovered during a dig by a team of Cambodian and Indian experts last month at Angkor's Ta Prohm temple. It was found along with 29 fragments that appeared to be part of the same statue, archaeologist Neth Simon said this week.

It stands at 1.16 meters (3 3/4 feet) tall and is in the Bayon art style, associated with Angkor's Bayon temple.

"It was a big surprise when we unearthed this sculpture because all we'd found so far were small pieces," Neth Simon told The Associated Press by phone from Siem Reap province.

She described the statue's design as displaying

carved jewelry and robe and sash, with a unique left-hand gesture across the chest — "an uncommon representation in Khmer (Cambodian) art."

The statue's presumed head was discovered at the same temple in 1927 during the French colonial era, and is currently kept at Cambodia's main National Museum in the capital Phnom Penh.

Neth Simon said the torso was found about

"A near-complete reconstruction of the statue is possible."

NETH SIMON
ARCHAEOLOGIST

50 meters away from the site where the head was discovered, and that an optical electronic scan confirmed they were a match.

"A near-complete reconstruction of the statue is possible," Neth Simon added, now that only the right hand of the statue remains missing. Her team will ask the Minister of Culture and Fine Art for approval to reattach the head and body of the sculpture to

make it whole for public display.

The Angkor site sprawls across some 400 square kilometers (155 square miles), containing the ruins of capitals of various Cambodian empires from the 9th to the 15th centuries. Scholars consider it to be one of the most important archaeological sites in Southeast Asia.

The site is Cambodia's most popular tourist attraction and in 2024 attracted about a million international tourists, according to Cambodia's Tourism Ministry.

The excavations aim to organize and preserve the numerous art objects scattered throughout the Ta Prohm complex, highlighting the ongoing efforts to protect and understand Cambodia's rich cultural heritage, the Apsara Authority says.

Neth Simon said she would be delighted if the statue's pieces could be reassembled after being far apart from each other for a century.

"As an archaeologist, I would be really happy," she said. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Russia's military claimed yesterday it recaptured Sudzha, a key town in the Kursk region, from Ukrainian forces. The U.S. is awaiting Moscow's response to a proposed 30-day ceasefire. President Putin, visiting troops Wednesday, suggested expanding territorial control, complicating ongoing diplomatic efforts.

AP PHOTO



Israel A United Nations commission accused Israel yesterday of systematic gender-based violence in Gaza. Israel rejected the allegations, calling them unverified. The report scrutinized civilian casualties and infrastructure destruction. Israel maintains its military actions target Hamas, not civilians, as a fragile ceasefire remains in place.

AP PHOTO



Vatican Pope Francis marked his 12th anniversary as pope yesterday while recovering from pneumonia. Vatican officials reported stable health improvements following four weeks of hospitalization. The 88-year-old pontiff continues to receive respiratory support and remotely follows papal duties, with no immediate public engagements scheduled.

AP PHOTO



Space SpaceX delayed its launch to the International Space Station due to a hydraulic system issue at the launch pad. The mission aims to replace NASA astronauts stranded since June. Officials now expect the next launch attempt no earlier than Friday, pending system evaluations.