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MacauDaily 澳門每日時報 ®
Times

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N.º 5073
THURSDAY
12 Nov 2026

T. 20°/ 27°
Air Quality Moderate

" THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

MOP 8.00
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MACAU IDENTIFIES 31,000 ELDERLY RESIDENTS LIVING ALONE OR IN TWO-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS AS LAWMAKERS DEMAND STRONGER SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARDS

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EIGHT FATAL ROAD ACCIDENTS SURPASS LAST YEAR'S TOTAL, PROMPTING PREVENTION CALLS

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CHINA'S SINGLES' DAY SHOPPING FESTIVAL STRUGGLES TO REVIVE CONSUMER SPENDING DESPITE EXTENDED DISCOUNTS, AI PROMOTIONS AND EXPORT GROWTH

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AP PHOTO



China-ASEAN China and ASEAN yesterday have provisionally agreed on 80% of a proposed South China Sea code of conduct but will miss this year's deadline. Negotiations will continue next year, with disputes remaining over geographic coverage, terminology and whether the agreement should be legally binding.

AP PHOTO



Indonesia A total of 120 lawmakers launched proceedings yesterday that could lead to Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka's impeachment over disputed educational credentials. Raka submitted his resignation Tuesday, but lawmakers continued their challenge amid uncertainty over whether President Prabowo Subianto accepted it.

AP PHOTO



UAE Russia and Ukraine agreed yesterday to a major prisoner exchange during U.S.-mediated negotiations in Abu Dhabi. Officials said numbers would be finalized Thursday. The talks produced no breakthrough toward ending the war, although both sides discussed humanitarian issues and security guarantees.

AP PHOTO



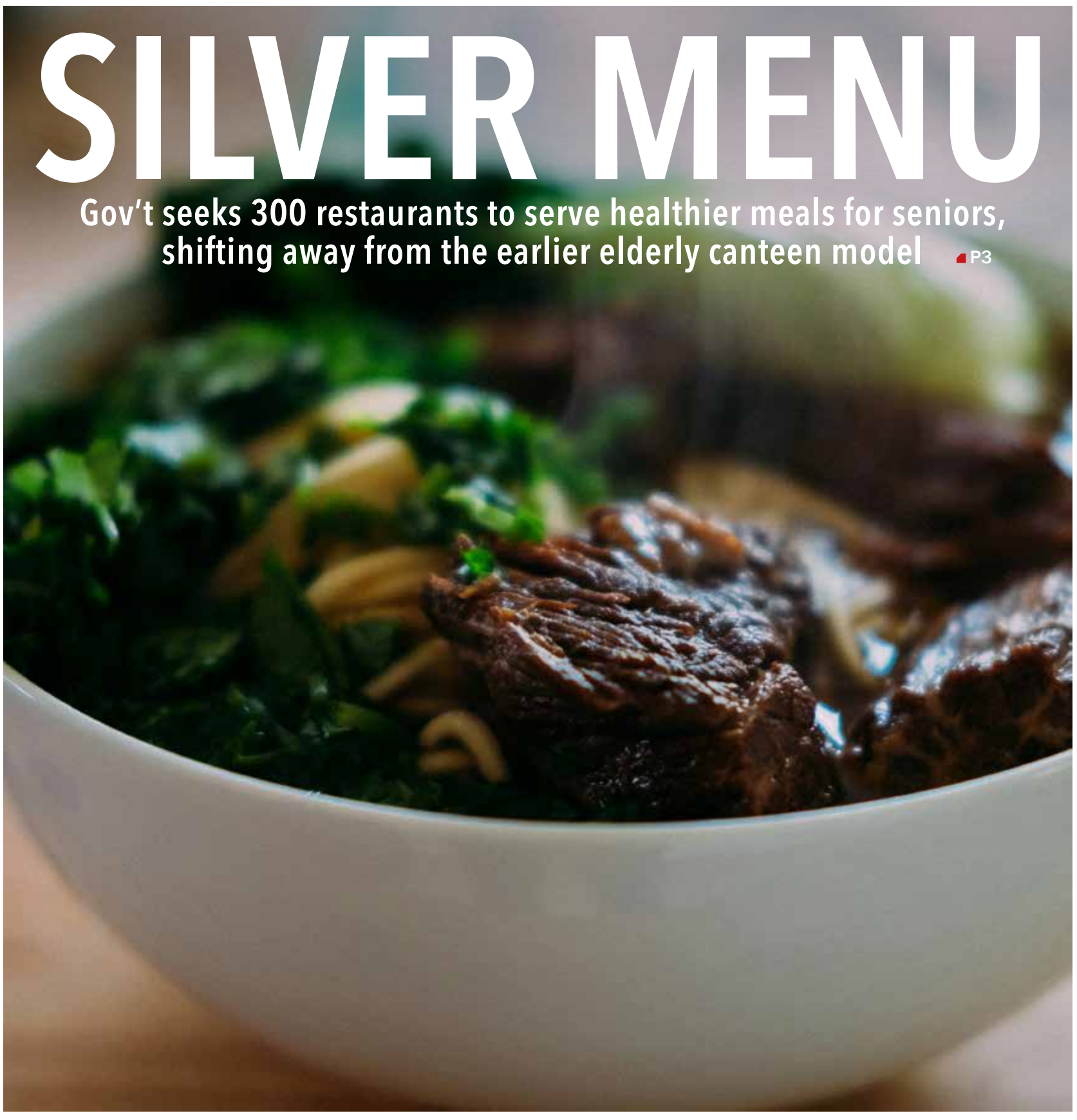
Spain Millions of workers staged Spain's first general strike in 14 years yesterday, protesting soaring housing costs ahead of national elections. Transportation and industrial operations faced major disruptions, while demonstrations spread across dozens of cities. Unions and business groups disputed participation levels.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

IAM puts 22 Iao Hon market stalls up for tender

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) is inviting bids for 22 stalls at Iao Hon Hawkers' Building and Bairro Iao Hon Market, with applications open until 1 p.m. on Dec. 10. 14 stalls are in the building's apparel area and eight in the market's hawker area. They are intended for businesses selling food products, cultural and creative goods or household items. Bids will be assessed on business plans, operating experience, merchandise diversity, opening hours and payment convenience. IAM will hold three briefing sessions from Nov. 17 to 19. Details are available on the bureau's website.

Gov't expands automated immigration clearance to Swiss, Belgian nationals

Swiss and Belgian nationals will be eligible to use Macau's traditional automated immigration channels from Nov. 11, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) said. The expansion allows citizens of both countries aged 18 or older to register in person with a valid passport. Minors aged 7 to 17 must register with a parent or guardian and present their birth certificate and relevant identification documents. The move brings the number of eligible nationalities to 11.

Beijing's top prosecutor meets Macau counterpart to discuss legal cooperation

China's Prosecutor General Ying Yong met Macau Prosecutor General Tang Xiaofeng on Nov. 10 during a visit to the SAR, discussing closer cooperation between mainland and local prosecution authorities and the development of prosecutorial work. He urged the office to strengthen judicial cooperation with other regions and make greater use of Macau's role as a platform for exchanges between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. Tang outlined efforts to improve internal operations, streamline case procedures and strengthen professional capabilities.

MPU, Coimbra University discuss joint campus cooperation

Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) and Portugal's University of Coimbra have discussed expanding cooperation in mechanical engineering, joint laboratory development and student exchanges during a visit by a Coimbra University delegation to Macau. The visit followed an agreement signed in the presence of Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai and Portugal's Minister of Education, Science and Innovation Fernando Alexandre to establish a joint global campus in Hengqin. MPU president Im Sio Kei said the delegation's return visit marked a move toward more concrete cooperation, following an MPU delegation's visit to Coimbra in September. The Coimbra university expressed interest in expanding collaboration in engineering, research commercialization and international talent development.

AL PLENARY

Private tutoring center bill passed with patriotism requirement for operators

YUKI LEI



Operators, shareholders and instructors of private continuing education centers will be required to meet eligibility criteria, including a commitment to "patriotism and love for Macau," under a bill passed in final reading by the Legislative Assembly (AL) on Tuesday.

The law, which takes effect on June 1 next year, also bars anyone with convictions for drug trafficking or sexual offenses from working in the sector. Courses attended by minors must end by 10:30 p.m., and Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) inspectors will increase inspections.

Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture O Lam told the assembly that more than 8,000 people working at approximately 5,000 continuing education centers and more than 2,000 tutoring centers must submit four documents: a personal declaration, a declaration of funding sources, a criminal record certificate and a health certificate. The first three can be submitted electronically, with the bureau coordinating with the Health Bureau on dedicated medical examination arrangements.

The bill replaces legislation governing private continuing education centers that has been in force for more than 30 years. It aims to improve licensing and supervision, protect students' well-being and introduce a one-stop licensing process.

On staffing efficiency, O said a mechanism will reduce approval procedures, with submitted information valid for two years, during which staff can move freely between continuing education centers and tutoring centers. New hires will receive a 30-day temporary permit after submitting a personal declaration, criminal record certificate and medical certificate, provided the remaining documents are submitted within 30 days.

If a center director leaves, the license holder may serve in the position for up to 60 days while recruiting a replacement. Asked whether a license would be revoked if no replacement is found, DSEDJ director Kong Chi Meng said it would not, but fines ranging from MOP10,000 to MOP50,000 would apply.

Kong said Macau has about 1,000 continuing education centers, of which more than 400 also hold tutoring center licenses. The new law prioritizes prevention, with inspections, education and advice, backed by a five-tier penalty system.

Once the electronic system is operational, all procedures under the law can be handled through it, including through the Macao One Account platform.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Smaller associations question ability to meet new legal requirements

LYNZY VALLES



While more than 85% of public consultation respondents support reforming the city's association laws, smaller groups worry the proposed changes will impose legal and staffing requirements they cannot meet.

The government's public consultation report on the Legal Regime for Associations found that compliance was already a challenge for many existing groups.

About 40% of associations registered for more than five years had not updated their records, held general meetings or submitted accounts. Of more than 12,000 registered associations, only about 8,500 had filed information on their governing body members with the Identification Services Bureau (DSI).

Smaller organizations warned that reporting deadlines and administrative requirements could leave them vulnerable to penalties. Some also questioned the government's authority to inspect groups funded entirely by private sources, arguing that intervention should be restricted to cases where legal violations had been established.

The government said the proposed reporting requirements were not intended to apply uniformly or create unnecessary burdens, but to address associations operating irregularly. The DSI would tailor inspections to individual circumstances and provide sample statutes and guidance to help organizations meet the requirements.

The proposed law would centralize the establishment, registration and supervision of associations under the DSI, ending the role of notary offices in the process. Association statutes would be published on the bureau's website instead of the Official Gazette. New groups would require at least seven founding members, and no more than three associations could register at the same address.

The DSI would also be authorized to examine funding from outside Macau. Applications could be rejected or associations dissolved on national security grounds, based on a binding opinion from the SAR's Committee for Safeguarding National Security.

While dissolution decisions could generally be challenged through administrative or judicial channels, the report excludes cases based on such a binding opinion. It did not provide a direct response to concerns over inspections of privately funded associations.

The government said it had reviewed the submissions and incorporated suggestions considered feasible into the draft bill.

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general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd
SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

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HEALTHY MACAU

300 restaurants sought for elderly healthy-meal program

NADIA SHAW



MACAU hopes to recruit 300 restaurants to a new healthy-meal program for older residents, the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) director Wilson Hon has said, as authorities turn to existing eateries to widen dining choices following concerns over an earlier elderly canteen pilot.

Applications opened Nov. 11 for the Elderly Healthy Meal Program, jointly organized by the IAS, the Health Bureau (SSM) and the Macau University of Tourism (UTM).

Participating businesses must first join SSM's "Restaurant - Healthy Eating" program and offer three dishes that meet the bureau's technical recommendations for meals for older adults.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE SILVER ECONOMY

During the launch ceremony, SSM director Alvis Lo presented the initiative as part of a wider effort linking knowledge, practical skills and a supportive dining environment.

Lo said, "We are going a step further. We are working with IAS and UTM to address the specific needs of older adults - for example, ease of chewing, food safety and bone health."

"Only by incorporating these age-specific needs into healthy eating can we achieve the goals of this program," he added.

Lo also cautioned that older people's understanding of healthy eating could be incomplete. Simply making food very plain, he suggested, did not necessarily ensure adequate nutrition.

"Older adults may sometimes hold views that are not entirely accurate - for example, that they should eat lightly. But if their diet is too plain, they may not get enough protein. So, we should use different approaches to help residents acquire knowledge about healthy eating," Lo advised.

Hon also described elderly dining as an opportunity for the "silver economy," with products and services designed around older consumers rather than treating their requirements as an afterthought.

"This is a win-win situation," Hon said.

A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Speaking to reporters after viewing dishes at UTM's Educational Restaurant, IAS director Hon said the ambition extended beyond providing meals for people with particular welfare needs. The program would seek to give older residents healthier choices in the restaurants they already visit.

"Our first priority is that more than 100,000 older people should have choices," he said.

"Our signature dishes can allow older adults to enjoy the flavors they loved when they were younger, while still fitting within the dietary program for older adults," he said, adding that the initiative would give them a better dining experience in the community.

The launch follows concerns about the earlier Elderly Canteen Service Pilot Scheme, including its impact on nearby eateries and pricing limits.

Rather than relying on a dedicated canteen model, the new initiative invites catering businesses to adapt their existing menus.

Hon distinguished the broader program from meal services for older people with particular needs or difficulties. Those services would continue through existing community arrangements, he said.

For other older residents, the problem was often a lack of clearly identified options when eating out, particularly for people managing chronic conditions.

Officials said 383 businesses were participating in SSM's existing healthy-eating program. Asked how many might join the elderly initiative, Hon replied, "We hope to have 300 join."

He said applications would remain open without a deadline. Restaurants would submit dishes for assessment, with an identifying logo helping diners recognize establishments whose offerings meet the program's standards.

KEEPING FAVORITE DISHES ON THE MENU

Hon advised restaurants to reconsider their signature dishes, preserving familiar flavors while adjusting ingredients, oil, salt and portion sizes to meet older customers' needs.

"We are not specifically asking restaurants to create new dishes," Hon said. "They can look at the amount of oil and salt in their existing menus and dishes."

Some businesses might already have suitable options on their menus, he added. The task would be to identify them against the new standards rather than assume every restaurant needed to start again.

He also encouraged chefs to balance smaller portions with other ingredients, suggesting that changes could help businesses manage costs while maintaining flavor.

SMALLER PORTIONS, NOT SMALLER AMBITIONS

Hon acknowledged that customers could interpret smaller servings as an attempt to save money.

He maintained that restaurants would need to explain why portions had changed and how those changes supported the program's objectives.

"It is not about cutting corners," he said, explaining that portion size, flavor and ingredients needed to be considered together.

He contrasted the familiar habit of asking for extra rice with requests for less, arguing that the dining environment could help people moderate how much they ate.

His emphasis was on a suitable serving rather than the largest possible one: food that remained appealing without leaving diners facing an unnecessarily substantial plate.

"Color, aroma and taste all matter."

Hon noted, "Many fine-dining restaurants serve smaller portions without customers feeling shortchanged. When people eat French or Japanese cuisine, they do not usually think the portions are too small. It is partly a matter of mindset and dining culture."

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Early intervention service suspensions raise concerns over treatment delays



PARENTS have raised concerns over disruptions to early intervention services for children with special educational needs, with questions over whether a new public procurement process could delay access to treatment.

In a written inquiry, Wong Kit Cheng said parents had reported widespread suspensions of early intervention services commissioned by the government from private organizations. The services reportedly need to undergo a new tendering process under the revised Public Procurement Law, raising concerns that children could face prolonged interruptions to their treatment.

Wong called on the the government to clarify the timetable for the tendering and contract-awarding procedures and speed up the full resumption of services. She also asked whether transitional arrangements were in place to prioritize referrals for children with urgent needs and prevent delays from affecting treatment outcomes.

Wong also pointed to Hong Kong's plan to introduce a school-based support model for preschool rehabilitation services in phases. In her interpellation, she asked whether Macau would consider adopting a similar approach by integrating therapy services into schools and expanding training for school-based special education teams, in line with its community-based resource support model. **LV**

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TRAFFIC

Lawmakers call for prevention-first approach as fatal accidents surpass 2025 total

YUKI LEI

RENATO MARQUES



EIGHT fatal traffic accidents had been recorded by early October this year, already exceeding the total for 2025, prompting lawmakers to call for a shift from after-the-fact enforcement to preventive road safety measures.

More than 14,000 traffic accidents were recorded in 2025, with nearly 7,000 in the first half of this year - down about 5% year-over-year - but accidents causing injuries or deaths rose rather than fell. Many of the fatal cases involved motorcycles, with the Amizade Bridge recording the highest concentration of serious and fatal motorcycle accidents.

Speaking ahead of Tuesday's agenda at the Legislative Assembly (AL), Vong Hou Piu said the Amizade Bridge has no dedicated motorcycle lane, forcing large and small vehicles to share the road despite significant differences in speed and extensive blind spots for larger vehicles. He proposed reviewing the safety design of dedicated lanes and connecting points on all cross-harbor bridges, adding physical separation and improving merge distances and road markings.

Vong also urged a data-driven approach to prevention. Describing the government's accident hotspot map as a positive step, he called for accident data to be directly linked to cross-departmental engineering improvements, with a "list management" system requiring on-site inspections and engineering solutions within set deadlines once a certain number or severity of accidents is recorded at a location. He also proposed piloting roadside smart warning systems on cross-harbor bridges and busy junctions, alerting motorcyclists to narrow lanes, crosswinds and accident-prone stretches during strong winds and rainy or wet conditions.

Loi I Weng called for the Road Traffic Law revision to be treated as a priority, with a clear timetable, including higher fines for dangerous driving behavior and a points system leading to license suspension for repeat offenders or those committing multiple types of dangerous acts. She also proposed an education mechanism involving on-the-spot warnings for jaywalkers and compulsory counseling for offending drivers.

Loi suggested using data from the city's fleet of public buses as a mobile monitoring platform, collecting real-time data on speeds, sudden braking and blind-spot incidents to identify potential accident black spots. She also proposed linking the system to electronic road signs and the "Macau Travel" app to warn drivers in advance.

She further proposed establishing "school safety zones" or "quiet streets" in older districts with concentrations of elderly residents and around schools, with speed bumps, smart illuminated crossings, cleared sightlines at junctions, wider pedestrian refuge islands and improved accessibility ramps.

Lee Koi Ian raised safety questions arising from the rapid growth of electric vehicles, which numbered about 16,000 by the end of 2025, up more than 30% year-over-year, and accounted for nearly 40% of newly registered light vehicles. He called for a full traceability system for retired power batteries covering collection, temporary storage, transfer and disposal, as well as professional training for workers and standard firefighting and insulation equipment.

He also urged fire, transport and environmental authorities to coordinate in setting clear fire safety standards and supervision rules for electric vehicle repair shops, battery warehouses and second-life battery sites. Official emergency rescue manuals for new electric vehicle models should be compiled and added to fire service databases, he said, with sufficient space reserved for fire engines at charging and repair facilities.

The Transport Bureau (DSAT) said separately that it had completed the replacement of its traffic control platform with a locally developed system drawing on mainland technology, with all traffic light systems now connected to the Public Security Police Force (PSP) for remote monitoring and control.

In a written reply to Leong Hong Sai, the bureau said new junctions are equipped with sensors that adjust signal phases according to traffic flow, as part of its gradual rollout of smart traffic management. The bureau and police have networked their systems, allowing officers to monitor main roads in real time, and are building a data interconnection mechanism. During peak periods, police and bureau staff coordinate at the traffic control and information center with bus company personnel to ease congestion.

CRIME

Man arrested over attempted hotel room sexual assault

NADIA SHAW

RENATO MARQUES



A mainland Chinese man has been arrested on suspicion of attempting to sexually assault a non-resident woman he invited to Macau, while police are separately investigating a suspicious fire outside a shop in Areia Preta as a suspected arson case.

The Judiciary Police (PJ) said at a press conference Wednesday that the 31-year-old suspect had known the woman for three years and claimed to be skilled at gambling when he invited her to Macau. After arriving, she stayed in a hotel room registered under the man's name.

According to the investigation, the suspect told the woman he was going gambling, leaving her alone in the room. He later returned, pushed her onto the bed and forcibly restrained her by pressing down on her body, arms and legs in an attempt to sexually assault her. The woman resisted and screamed for help, alerting other hotel guests, who called the police.

Public Security Police officers arrived and rescued the woman before referring the case to the PJ.

The woman sustained scratches and abrasions on her forearm and other parts of her body. The suspect also had multiple scratches on his face, neck and chest, which police believe were caused by the woman as she resisted.

In a separate case, the PJ said it received a notification from the Fire Services Bureau (CB) at 7:05 a.m. Wednesday about a suspicious fire outside a shop in Areia Preta. Firefighters were called to the scene at 6:12 a.m. after a resident reported the blaze.

The fire was extinguished, and no one was injured or required hospital treatment.

Following an initial investigation, the CB considered the cause of the fire suspicious and asked the PJ to investigate.

The case has been provisionally classified as suspected arson and referred to the force's investigation department for follow-up.

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SOCIETY

Over 18,700 childcare subsidy cases approved, MOP546 million paid out

YUKI LEI

MORE than 18,700 cases have been approved under the government's temporary childcare subsidy scheme since it was launched in July last year, with MOP546 million disbursed in total, the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) said.

According to the authorities, each eligible child receives MOP18,000 a year for up to three years, covering the year of birth and the following two years.

The scheme applies to children born between 2025 and 2027 who hold valid permanent resident identity cards, with special conditions for those born between 2022 and 2024. Approved payments are transferred in a lump sum within 60 days.

Speaking on public broadcaster TDM's radio program Wednesday, which discussed the implementation of social welfare measures, bureau president Wilson Hon said emotional education materials for young children are largely complete



and will be rolled out progressively to all subsidized nurseries next year.

On social security, Social Security Fund Administrative Committee president Chan Pou Wan said four allowances - marriage, unemployment, sickness and funeral - were increased early this year.

She said 350 employers have set up joint provident fund schemes under the non-mandatory central provident fund system, with about 119,000 people participating in contribution schemes when individual account holders are included.

CALLS FOR PERMANENT, TIERED SUPPORT

The announcement came as four lawmakers used pre-agenda speeches in the Legislative Assembly (AL) to press for a more systematic approach to fertility support, warning that the city's birth rate remains low.

Official data show that 2,037 babies were born in the first three quarters of this year, down about 4.4% year-over-year.

Lawmaker Ella Lei, citing a previously published survey by the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) and the Macau Dual Career Women Association, said more than 80% of respondents saw stable income and job security as the foundation of confidence in having children. She called for a wider age range for childcare allowances, tiered payments for families with multiple children or twins, and tax concessions or priority allocation of public housing for families with children.

Wong Kit Cheng proposed a tiered economic support system, upgrading the temporary childcare allowance into a permanent, institutionalized scheme with progressive payments by birth order and gradually extending coverage to children ages 3 to 6. She also urged a fertility-friendly housing policy, giving families with newborns or multiple children priority in economic housing allocation and the flat-exchange program, as well as a dedicated fund to encourage employers to adopt family-friendly measures.

Ngai Iek Hang called for making the childcare allowance permanent, expanding the eligible age range and introducing tiered payments by birth order, alongside incentives such as enterprise certification and tax concessions to encourage employers to offer family care leave, caregiving leave and flexible hourly leave. He also urged better emergency and temporary childcare services and a continuous service chain from pregnancy through early childhood.

Song Pek Kei proposed extending the allowance to age 6, with tiered support for second and third children, incorporating childcare services into the free public service system, and offering flexible work arrangements for civil servants with children under 3, along with measures to encourage private employers to adopt similar policies.

SOCIETY

Database of 31,000 elderly residents living alone or in two-person households established

YUKI LEI

THE government has built a database of more than 31,000 elderly residents living alone or in two-person households since a census began in September last year, saying it provides the basis for targeted assistance to those most at risk, as lawmakers called for faster and more concrete action.

Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) president Wilson Hon said 22 elderly service centers and seven outreach home support teams are providing meal services to 1,500 elderly residents. Speaking on TDM's radio program Wednesday, he said the bureau had recently begun remote medical cooperation with the Health Bureau to enable key follow-up consultations for residents of residential care homes to



be conducted remotely.

He said more than 1,300 households comprising 1,800 elderly residents are now living in government elderly apartments, adding that the government has long paid close attention to elderly residents facing special difficulties.

Social Security Fund Administrative Committee president Chan Pou Wan said the fund is closely monitoring inflation data to determine when to activate the regular adjustment mechanism for social security benefits. "As of September 2026, the cumulative change in the composite consumer price index was 1.71%, not yet at 2%," she said. "We monitor this data every month, and when it reaches 2% we will launch administrative procedures to adjust the pension accordingly."

Chan Po Yee, head of the fund's social security system department, said 120 people have applied for the "Guangdong-Macau Elderly Care Connect Plus" service launched in June. The service allows Macau residents living in Guangdong to submit applications through the Macao One Account platform, a dedicated joint service counter or local associations' offices in Guangdong without having to return to Macau.

CALLS FOR STRONGER MEASURES

In pre-agenda speeches at the Legislative Assembly (AL) on Tuesday, four lawmakers welcomed the census but argued that data alone is not enough.

Lam Lon Wai proposed using the census data to strengthen tiered follow-up services for high-risk seniors, improve coordination between the Health Bureau (SSM), IAS and community organizations, and mobilize associations, social workers and volunteers to reach isolated seniors not yet covered by existing services. He also urged better hospital-to-community referrals, citing Hong Kong's continuing support services for stroke patients and recently discharged patients. He called for elderly service applications, bookings and referral progress to be integrated into the Macao One Account platform while retaining phone, counter and community assistance channels.

Nick Lei said about 34,000 of roughly 100,000 elderly residents live alone or in two-person households, and that home accidents affect about 14.1 per 1,000 elderly residents each year. He called for a 24-hour emergency support mechanism for high-risk seniors, a clear list of subsidized home safety equipment with simplified applications, and systematic planning of the 15-minute community elderly service network using the census database.

Chan Lai Kei raised concerns about the digital divide, noting that about 130,000 residents aged 65 or older use the Macao One Account platform - equivalent to 80% of that age group - meaning about two in 10 have not registered. He proposed linking IAS' database with the platform's forthcoming "family binding" function, including designated caregiver access and outreach assistance for seniors without family support.

He also called for stronger Cantonese and local accent recognition in the voice function and a long-term digital inclusion blueprint that preserves access to offline services.

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Local firms secure more than 600 business meetings at Canton Fair

LYNZY VALLES

A delegation of 19 Macau enterprises held more than 600 business-matching sessions at the third phase of the 140th China Import and Export Fair in Guangzhou, as local businesses sought to expand their overseas networks and explore new commercial opportunities.

The delegation, organized by the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), showcased more than 280 products under the "Made in Macao" and "Macao Brand" labels at the fair from Oct. 31 to Nov. 4. Products from Portuguese-speaking countries were also featured at the Macao Pavilion in the fair's import exhibition hall.



The business meetings covered areas including food distribution, wine trading and health-related products. IPIM said the pavilion attracted interest from visitors, with some exhibitors receiving enquiries from international buyers and securing preliminary cooperation intentions.

The institute also used the event to promote Macau's business environment and investment opportunities, as well as the development prospects of the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin. It introduced Macau's role as a platform connecting China with Portuguese-speaking countries and highlighted the city's advantages as a meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions destination.

Among the participating companies, a local health products business attending the fair for the first time held nearly 100 substantive business discussions and received cooperation enquiries from international partners. The company said it hoped to use the event to build a business network linking the mainland, Macau and overseas markets. Feedback gathered at the fair would also inform its research and product development.

As cited in a statement issued by the IPIM, a local food producer said it established contacts with traders from Canada, Singapore and Japan, as well as buyers from the mainland. A Macau coffee exhibitor also reported enquiries from business visitors and expressed hope that the contacts could lead to commercial deals.

The bureau said the participation was intended to help local small and medium-sized enterprises reach overseas markets and develop partnerships through international trade exhibitions.

F&B

Future Bright swings to quarterly loss as Macau sales weaken

THE local tourism growth has yet to translate into stronger business for Future Bright Holdings, as the food-and-beverage operator reported a quarterly loss following declines in restaurant and food-court sales.

The Hong Kong-listed company recorded a net loss attributable to shareholders of HKD2.6 million (MOP2.69 million) for the three months ended Sept. 30, reversing a profit of HKD8 million in the same period last year. Revenue fell 9% year on year to HKD117.9 million,



while gross operating profit dropped 33% to HKD20.4 million.

The decline came as Macau welcomed 11.24 million visitors in the third quarter, up 7.5% year on year, while per-capita non-gaming spending increased 5.4% to MOP2,057.

Future Bright's food and catering operations, however, saw revenue fall 14% to HKD78.7 million. Sales at its Japanese restaurants plunged 41.3%, while food-court revenue declined 20.7%. The company attributed the weaker performance to softer demand in Macau.

Its food souvenir business, which operates mainly under the Yeng Kee bakery brand, provided some support, with revenue rising 3.6% to HKD34.1 million.

For the first nine months, the company posted a net loss of HKD4.3 million, compared with a profit of HKD16.6 million a year earlier. **LV**

FINANCE

BNU reports 13.6% profit growth to MOP358 million

BANCO Nacional Ultramarino (BNU) recorded an unaudited consolidated net profit of MOP358.3 million in the first nine months of 2026, up 13.6% from the same period last year, supported by lending growth and stable interest income.

The bank's net interest income rose 5.3% year on year to MOP666.3 million, as higher lending volumes helped offset the impact of lower interest rates on asset returns.

Total loans and advances reached MOP27.9 billion as of September, representing a 6.3% increase from a year earlier. BNU attributed the growth to lending demand as Macau's economy continued to benefit from tourism recovery.

The bank said operating costs remained under control, while provisions for credit losses fell to MOP6 million, which it attributed to the resilience and quality of its asset portfolio.

Its capital adequacy ratio also remained comfortably above the regulatory requirements set by the Monetary Authority of Macao, BNU said.

The lender added that it was strengthening customer relationships by expanding financial products available through its online platform and developing cross-border business through its Hengqin branch.

CORPORATE BITS

Melco donates MOP700,000 to Tung Sin Tong



Melco Resorts & Entertainment has donated MOP700,000 to the Macau Tung Sin Tong Charitable Society to support its social welfare programs and poverty alleviation initiatives.

The donation was presented at City of Dreams, with Melco chairman and CEO Lawrence Ho and chief advisor Kent Wong meeting representatives of the charitable society, according to a statement released by the gaming operator.

The delegation included Board of Directors chairman José Chui Sai Pang, vice chairman Jeffrey Vong, and directors Lee Koi Ian and Manuel Io, who accepted the donation on behalf of the organization.

The contribution will fund the society's community welfare activities and assistance for people in need.

Artyzen Grand Lapa offers Grand Prix dining and accommodation packages



Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau is offering dining and accommodation packages during the 73rd Macau Grand Prix, scheduled for Nov. 19 to 22.

The hotel's Trackview Room Stay package includes a one-night stay in a room overlooking the racetrack, breakfast at Café Bela Vista, a complimentary bottle of Moët & Chandon Brut Impérial Champagne and a hotel-branded Grand Prix souvenir, according to the hotel.

Guests booking directly with the hotel are also entitled to guaranteed late checkout at 6 p.m. The booking period runs until Nov. 13, with stays available from Nov. 19 to 22.

An all-day barbecue buffet will also be available at Friendship Terrace on Nov. 21 and 22, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Separately, the hotel's Lifestyle Mega Sale offers one-night accommodation from MOP700. Bookings are open from Nov. 11 to 25 for stays between Nov. 23, 2026, and June 30, 2027.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

BUSINESS

Singles' Day shopping festival struggles to shake off weak consumer spending

CHAN HO-HIM, HONG KONG

AP PHOTO



Workers of a delivery company sort out customers' parcels piled up at a pickup point ahead of the Singles' Day sale in Beijing

EARLY signs suggest China 's biggest online shopping event is struggling to persuade anxious consumers to spend more, despite discounts.

The Singles' Day festival, a major discount campaign comparable to Black Friday and Cyber Monday in the U.S., centers on Nov. 11. But it begins weeks earlier and is seen as a barometer of the broader economy.

Retail data platform Syntun said cumulative sales as of Oct. 31 totaled just over 1 trillion yuan ($154 billion), broadly in line with the same period last year.

Retailers have increased sales mainly by extending the festival. Total Singles' Day sales in 2025 reached a record of almost 1.7 trillion yuan ($254 billion).

Consumer demand in China remains subdued, however, as a prolonged property downturn and other pressures weigh on confidence.

"Optimism over a recovery in domestic demand has faded," said Max Zenglein, Asia Pacific senior economist at The Conference Board. "Improvements in sentiment have repeatedly proved short-lived."

E-commerce giants such as Alibaba have turned to artificial intelligence to encourage frugal shoppers to spend more. Alibaba integrated its Qwen AI into its Taobao and Tmall platforms to help shoppers place orders and find products.

Plans offering AI tokens are also being prominently promoted during Singles' Day for the first time. This month, a livestream by Li Jiaqi, dubbed the "Lipstick King" for his huge lipstick sales, sold plans covering roughly 2 trillion tokens within half an hour, according to Chinese media.

Singles' Day originated as "Bachelors' Day," a celebration of being single. The nationwide shopping festival began in 2009 and now targets everyone.

CONSUMERS FEEL PINCHED

While China's broader economy continues to grow at a relatively robust pace, expanding 4.6% from a year earlier in January-September, much of that momentum came from a boom in exports. Retail sales of consumer goods rose just 1.1% over the same period.

China's vast domestic market has struggled as a yearslong real estate downturn has left households feeling less wealthy. Home prices have fallen roughly 20% or more from their 2021 peak, with smaller cities and the resale market seeing steeper declines.

Although home prices appear to be stabilizing in larger cities, many homeowners remain concerned they could fall further, said Andy Rothman, founder and CEO of the advisory firm Sinology.

In the southern furniture manufacturing hub of Foshan, 24-year-old Gabby Liang said she was feeling cautious.

"I've been buying much less online, especially when it comes to non-essential items," she said. "During the Singles' Day festival last year, I bought quite a bit of skincare products. But this year I expect to buy fewer."

Other shoppers are also reining in spending.

"I'm perhaps not as keen on pursuing famous or high-end brands as I used to be," said Beijing resident Kong Min, referring to this year's Singles' Day.

Middle-class Chinese consumers have lost confidence, and many festival discounts are less generous than they once were, said Shaun Rein, managing director of China Market Research Group in Shanghai.

More shoppers are experiencing "discount fatigue," said Yaling Jiang, founder of market research company ApertureChina. With discounts available year-round, Singles' Day may be losing its power to boost spending, she said.

"Looking at what Singles' Day originally was: a shopping festival where people used to expect the largest discounts of the year," she said. "That is not true any more after it was extended to multiple platforms, then to a monthlong thing."

Liang, who works in furniture sales, said extras such as cameras and game consoles were off her shopping list this year.

"We're undergoing a consumption downgrade," she said. "Even the amount that we earn has somehow been downgraded."

DOMESTIC DEMAND REMAINS WEAK AS EXPORTS SOAR

Business has stalled as Chinese shoppers tighten their belts, Liang said, despite rising exports to markets such as the Middle East and Africa.

An oversupply of goods, from cars and TVs to shoes and other electronics, has intensified competition in China's crowded domestic market, pushing manufacturers to expand overseas.

Exports overall surged 35% from a year earlier in October, driven by high-tech products such as semiconductors and electric vehicles. China is on track to surpass last year's record trade surplus of $1.2 trillion.

Domestic demand for big-ticket items, including cars and some luxury goods, has been particularly weak.

Passenger car sales in China have fallen for most of this year, dropping almost 25% in January-September, according to industry data. The decline partly reflects cuts to government subsidies.

That contrasts sharply with a 71% jump in passenger car exports over the same period.

Luxury spending has also weakened. LVMH, whose brands include Louis Vuitton, Dior and Fendi, and Kering, which owns Gucci, Balenciaga and Saint Laurent, both reported softer demand in China in recent months.

Chinese leaders have pledged for years to accelerate growth in domestic demand. But strong exports have reduced the urgency of introducing policies to stimulate spending at home, analysts said.

"As long as China continues to make progress on its industrial and technological ambitions, policymakers have little incentive to fundamentally rebalance the economy toward household demand," Zenglein said.

BRIGHT SPOTS REMAIN AS STATUS SYMBOLS SHIFT

Not all retail categories are struggling. Health, lifestyle and experiences are increasingly becoming status symbols for Chinese consumers.

"It's not a simple case of big-ticket items falling," said Jacob Cooke, CEO of Beijing-based consultancy WPIC Marketing + Technologies. Health-related products are selling relatively well, he said.

According to WPIC data, online sales of imported fish oil rose nearly 43% from a year earlier in the 12 months through September. Sales of other supplements aimed at improving sleep or supporting joint and bone health grew between 28% and 37%.

Cooke expects some growth in this year's Singles' Day sales.

ApertureChina's Jiang described this year's defining consumer trend as "just living life," with people moving away from grand gestures and focusing on "the bare necessities and internal fulfillment."

Many families are holding back as youth unemployment hovers around 18% and income growth lags. Yet China's household savings remain vast. With a population of 1.4 billion, the country has enormous spending potential, even as consumer preferences and spending patterns shift.

Zenglein, the Conference Board economist, sees growing divergence in Chinese consumption, with pockets of stronger demand amid subdued overall sentiment.

"It's still enough to make a living, but there's just not much extra to splurge," said Liang, the furniture sales worker in Foshan.

MDT/AP

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AP PHOTO



Pope Leo XIV hugs an inmate during his visit to the federal prison complex in Buenos Aires, on the sixth day of his twelve-day apostolic journey to South America

ARGENTINA

Pope Leo XIV wrapping up visit before an emotional trip back to Peru, his adopted homeland

NICOLE WINFIELD, BUENOS AIRES

POPE Leo XIV told inmates at an Argentine prison with a dark history tied to the military dictatorship that there is always hope for redemption and reconciliation, as he spent his final morning in Argentina on Wednesday offering an uplifting message to a polarized country.

Leo visited Devoto Prison before celebrating his final Mass at Argentina's national shrine, the Basilica de Nuestra Señora de Luján, where 1 million people were expected — the latest of the record-setting crowds that have welcomed Leo on the first papal visit to Argentina in nearly four decades.

Both sites have important sentimental connections to Leo's predecessor, Pope Francis, who never returned home during his 12-year pontificate. But Leo's final stops in Argentina pale in comparison to the emotional highlight of his South American trip, when he returns to his adopted homeland of Peru later Wednesday.

A massive national party is planned to greet the Chicago-born Leo, who spent more than two decades as a missionary priest and bishop in Peru and holds dual citizenship in the United States and Peru. He's known to Peruvians as Padre Robert and beloved for ministering to poor communities, especially in times of crisis.

In Buenos Aires, Leo visited Devoto Prison, where Francis often ministered as the city's archbishop, celebrating Mass, going into cellblocks housing inmates with AIDS and washing prisoners' feet during the annual Holy Week ritual.

The prison, inaugurated in 1927, is being shut down permanently, with its more than 1,000 inmates moving to a new penitentiary complex. Only about 75 prisoners were on hand for Leo's visit, chosen primarily because they were active in the prison's religious programming, said the prison chaplain, the Rev. Matías De Martini.

Wearing identical white uniforms, they sat in rows in the prison gymnasium, facing a stage bearing the flags of Argentina and the Holy See, and a statue of the Virgin of Luján, which Francis had gifted to the prison during his years as archbishop.

The prison is grim and shows its age. Its corridors were dank, and harsh fluorescent light glinted off the worn bars dividing each wing. Red fire extinguishers lined the main hallway, and guards stood at attention, some holding plastic riot shields.

Leo heard stories from inmates of lives marked by drug addiction, crime and homelessness. He told them that their "troubling realities" are all too familiar.

"The sense of omnipotence produced by drugs, the false power that comes from easy money, the cowardly sense of security that comes from inflicting violence upon the weakest, and the impunity that results from corruption," he said.

He urged them to use their time in prison, and the limitations they face, as a chance for redemption.

"The evil that assails the human heart wreaks havoc on society and on the lives of many people, sometimes reaching extremes of inhumanity," he said. But he said that a light continues to shine.

"This means that even amid the evil, pain and deepest failures you may have experienced or caused, your present circumstances can become an opportunity to begin your lives anew," he said.

Leo didn't refer explicitly to the prison's dark history, but his reference to impunity and corruption could be seen as directed not just at the current inmates and prison administrators but at past eras as well.

During Argentina's last military dictatorship (1976–1983), Devoto functioned as a clandestine detention and torture center. It was designated a Memory Site in 2012 to ensure the military repression isn't forgotten.

Human rights lawyers have petitioned the courts to block any sale or disposal of the prison's land and facilities once all inmates are transferred, saying "the space must be preserved until the investigations regarding the crimes against humanity that occurred" there are finalized.

In 1978, during Argentina's military dictatorship, 65 inmates held on ordinary criminal charges were killed at Devoto in what became known as the Seventh Pavilion Massacre. The military government described the killings as a riot and covered them up.

Nearly a half-century later, in December 2025, a federal court found that 153 inmates had been tortured, including the 65 who died in a fire that broke out as guards violently cracked down on the prisoners, and called the events grave human rights violations. It sentenced two former prison chiefs, Juan Carlos Ruiz and Horacio Martín Galíndez, to 25 years in prison. Both men were over 90.

Leo has carried on Francis' practice of meeting inmates on his foreign trips, reminding them that they aren't alone and remain beloved children of God. Leo's last such visit, to a prison in Equatorial Guinea, produced some of the most chilling moments of his pontificate, when inmates were forced to sing and dance for him in pouring rain.

For Francis, that ministry began at Devoto, De Martini said.

"As pope, you'll remember he sometimes said, 'Whenever I walk into a prison, I always think, why them and not me?'" he said. "Well, that's what he always said here. Everything he talked about as pope, he lived in this prison."

After the prison visit, Leo was to make a pilgrimage to the Basilica de Nuestra Señora de Luján, dedicated to Argentina's patron saint. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1982 Solidarity leader Walesa released



The Polish Government has freed the leader of the outlawed Solidarity movement, Lech Walesa, after 11 months of internment.

His release comes only two days after riot police used tear gas, water cannon and phosphorous rockets to disperse big pro-Solidarity demonstrations in Warsaw and other cities.

The freeing of the shipyard electrician will be seen by the Polish people as a sign the Communist government may be preparing to lift martial law.

It was imposed almost a year ago to curb the growing influence of the Solidarity trade union and put off the threat of armed intervention from the Soviet Union.

Government spokesman Jerzy Urban said Mr Walesa was being released because he was no longer considered a threat to law and order.

He revealed Mr Walesa had also written a letter to the Polish leader General Wojciech Jaruzelski seeking a "national agreement".

Since his arrest Mr Walesa has been held in isolation at a remote government hunting lodge in Arlamowo, south-east Poland, close to the Soviet border.

It is thought General Jaruzelski may have struck a deal with the Roman Catholic Church which included freeing Mr Walesa in a bid to win the support of the Polish people for a limited programme of economic and political reforms.

He has already set a date in June for the Polish-born Pope John Paul II's visit to Poland. The Pope has always insisted the visit could only be made if there was an end to martial law.

Government sources say there is a possibility Mr Walesa will be able to see a senior official, perhaps the Trade Union Minister Stanislaw Ciosek, at the weekend before travelling to his home in Gdansk.

But they have made clear Mr Walesa will be interned again if he seeks to oppose the Government.

Mr Walesa rose to prominence as one of the leaders of the shipyard workers in Gdansk.

In 1980 he was one of the key men behind the Gdansk shipyard strike which gave rise to a wave of disputes over much of the country. The primary demands were for workers' rights.

The authorities were forced to give in and negotiate with Mr Walesa. Under the terms of the Gdansk Agreement of 31 August 1980, workers were given the right to strike and to organise their own independent union, Solidarity.

The Catholic Church supported Mr Walesa's aims and he was received by the Pope in the Vatican in 1981.

But the country's brief period of relative freedom ended with the declaration of martial law in December 1981 and the suspension of Solidarity.

Courtesy BBC News

In context

In his first public address after his release, Lech Walesa told a crowd of Solidarity supporters - gathered illegally outside his flat - he would not betray the principles of his old union.

Martial law was eventually lifted in July 1983. In October 1983, Lech Walesa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize which raised the spirits of the underground movement in Poland.

General Jaruzelski's regime became more unpopular as economic conditions worsened and eventually it was forced to negotiate with Solidarity.

The result was parliamentary elections and the establishment of a non-communist government.

As head of Solidarity, Mr Walesa became the elected President of Poland in 1990 - a post he held until defeat in 1995.

In 2000 he announced he was retiring from Polish politics after the poor showing of his party in the elections.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19

This is a lovely day to schmooze with others and enjoy their company. It's also a great day to travel or make travel plans. You want to do something to expand your world in a pleasant way.

Taurus
Apr. 20-May. 20

With Mercury retrograde opposite your sign, ex-spouses, ex-partners and people from your past are back in your world. Discussions about how to share something like an inheritance or jointly held property will go well.

Gemini
May. 21-Jun. 21

Cooperate with others today, even if this means being patient with silly, goofy mistakes at work. Fortunately, by Nov. 13, Mercury retrograde will be over. (Whew!) Enjoy socializing with friends and children.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Some of you have experienced old flames being back in your world. Others have been in contact with kids they haven't seen in a while. Meanwhile, relations with co-workers are especially enjoyable today.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Romance, the arts, fun social outings and vacations are on the menu today. Make an effort to do something that pleases you. Enjoy socializing. Reach out to others.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sep. 22

The pace of your days has accelerated recently with a busy schedule of appointments, errands, increased reading and writing and talking to everyone. Today is the perfect day to take it easy and relax at home.

Libra
Sep.23-Oct. 22

Your communication skills are excellent today because the Moon is dancing with your ruler Venus. In fact, many of you will make money from your ability to communicate through writing and editing.

Scorpio
Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Trust your moneymaking ideas today. Likewise, if shopping, you will be pleased if you have a chance to buy something pretty for yourself or a loved one. A small gift is a gesture that will please someone.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Today the Moon is in your sign dancing nicely with Venus, which increases your appreciation of beauty in the world around you. It's a great day for romance or any kind of socializing with others.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Your life has been more popular lately, in part because some of you have been interacting with younger people. Relations with authority figures are excellent, even romantic.

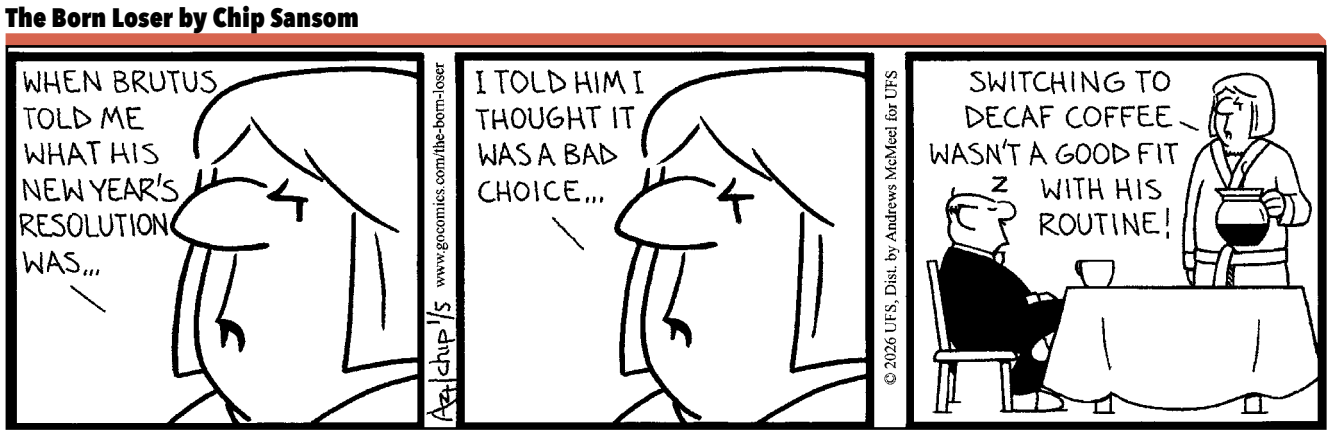
Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Friendships (especially with female acquaintances) will be warm and reassuring today. For some of you, a platonic relationship might become romantic. Meet someone and do something to enjoy the arts or make travel plans. Get out and socialize!

Pisces
Feb.19-Mar. 20

People notice you today, but this is good, because you appear attractive, charming and approachable. Because you're high-viz, someone might be attracted to you romantically. This is an excellent day for romance or any special gathering.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

WEATHER

CHINA	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
Beijing	1	16	fine
Changchun	2	11	fine
Chengdu	11	18	cloudy
Chongqing	13	16	overcast
Fuzhou	16	25	overcast
Guangzhou	14	26	cloudy
Guiyang	7	13	rain
Haikou	21	27	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	9	19	rain
Harbin	-4	9	cloudy
Hefei	6	16	overcast
Nanjing	8	17	rain
Shanghai	13	19	overcast
Taipei	17	25	cloudy
Wuhan	8	13	rain
Hong Hong	22	26	sunny

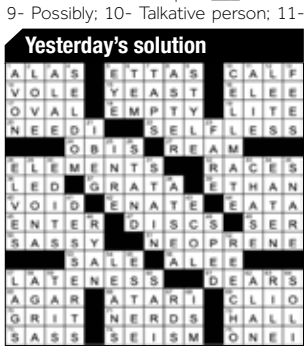
WORLD			
Moscow	0	2	sunny
Frankfurt	1	9	cloudy
Paris	1	10	cloudy
London	-1	8	rain
New York	6	15	rain

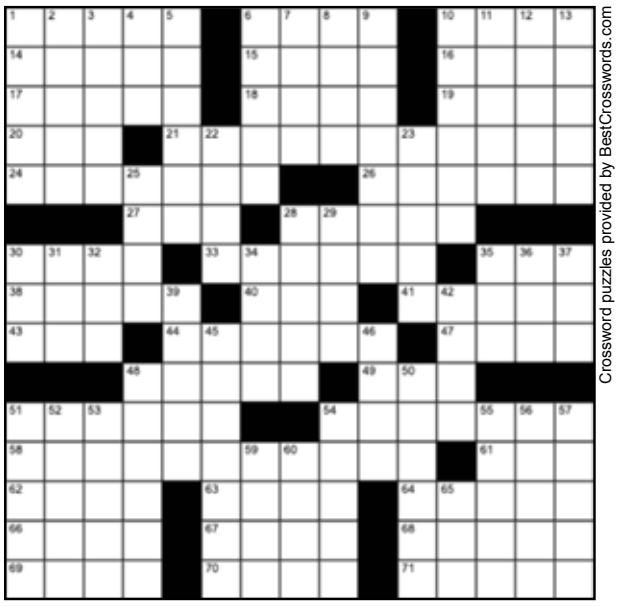
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Colorado resort; 6- PDQ; 10- Movie-rating org.; 14- Insect stage; 15- Ad word; 16- Bohemian; 17- French farewell; 18- Winter Palace resident; 19- Clotted blood; 20- Caesar of comedy; 21- Leaping insect; 24- Baby's ring; 26- Gets up; 27- ___ standstill; 28- Native American tent; 30- Swindle; 33- To a greater extent; 35- Levi's rival; 38- Measured with a watch; 40- Chum; 41- Article of bedding; 43- Dreyer's partner in ice cream; 44- Go by; 47- Evens the score; 48- Country dances; 49- Hill insect; 51- Maintain; 54- Get ready; 58- Lucy at "Swan Lake"?; 61- Mack of old TV; 62- Draft classification; 63- Yale students; 64- Rid of insect pests; 66- Spellbound; 67- Hire; 68- Clear the board; 69- London gallery; 70- Wise one; 71- Palm fruits;

DOWN 1- As ___ resort; 2- Hawkins of Dogpatch; 3- Self-respect; 4- Woman created from the rib of Adam; 5- Nothing; 6- When You Wish Upon ___; 7- Talk back to; 8- Exclamation to express sorrow; 9- Possibly; 10- Talkative person; 11- Stage items; 12- ___ Grows in Brooklyn; 13- Australia's ___ Rock; 22- Quantity of paper; 23- Cream-filled cookies; 25- Domesticate; 28- Snares; 29- Congers, e.g.; 30- Canonized Mlle.; 31- Spain's El ___; 32- Singer Grant; 34- Iridescent gemstone; 35- Maui memento; 36- Wide shoe width; 37- UFO pilots; 39- Caterpillar rival; 42- URL starter; 45- Correspondences; 46- Make; 48- Tell, as a tale; 50- Required; 51- Scrub (a mission); 52- Capital of Yemen; 53- Slumbered; 54- Stickum; 55- Ready to hit; 56- Put back into service; 57- Perimeters; 59- Olive genus; 60- Chinese dynasty; 65- Slice of history;

Yesterday's solution





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

AD



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

FOOTBALL | NATIONS LEAGUE

No Cristiano Ronaldo, Harry Kane set for another record and what to know about the league

JAMES ROBSON, MANCHESTER

AP PHOTO



THE post-Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi era in international soccer has officially begun.

Ronaldo's retirement from the Portuguese national team last week followed Messi's decision to step down from Argentina after the World Cup earlier this year.

The stage now belongs to the likes of Kylian Mbappé, Lamine Yamal and newly-crowned Ballon d'Or winner Harry Kane, who are all in Nations League action over the next week.

Winning the Nations League with Portugal last year was Ronaldo's final great act with his country. And despite his public fall out with coach Jorge Jesus during the last round of fixtures, prompting the forward's retirement, the team has already secured its place in the quarterfinals with a 100% record.

So too has World Cup winner Spain. For England, France and Germany, however, there is still work to be done before they can book their places.

Here's what to know about the next round of Nations League games:

Ronaldo bowed out of international soccer as the all-time men's leading goal scorer (146) and appearance maker (234).

While he ultimately fell short of leading his country to a World Cup crown, he won three major honors, including the European Championship and two Nations League titles.

Yet his final years with Portugal were often overshadowed by questions about whether he had gone on too long or was holding back a golden generation of talent.

Perhaps the answer to that will become clearer as coach Jesus leads a Portugal team without its greatest player for the first time in more than two decades.

A flawless start to the Nations League, with Ronaldo playing a limited part, suggests the future is bright with top players like Bruno Fernandes, Joao Neves and Vitinha leading the way.

Goncalo Ramos may also finally get the chance to establish himself in attack four years after his World Cup hat trick in Qatar appeared to usher the end of Ronaldo's reign.

Portugal plays Denmark Saturday and Wales Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Erling Haaland's Norway sits bottom of Group A4 with just three points. Norway, one of the surprise successes of the World Cup, plays Wales Saturday and Denmark Tuesday.

Can Spain add the Nations League to its list of titles in recent years, which includes the European Championship in 2024 and the World Cup?

It has already qualified for the quarterfinals with a 100% record and can confirm its place as Group A3 winner ahead of England.

Spain plays Czech Republic on Thursday when it will be confirmed group winner by bettering England's result against Croatia on the same night.

Spain plays England in the final group match on Sunday.

England will book its place in the quarters if it avoids defeat against Croatia.

Fresh from being crowned the best player on the planet, Kane will become England's all-time record appearance maker on 126 caps if he plays against Croatia.

The England captain is already his country's top scorer with 91 goals, ahead of second-place Wayne Rooney on 53.

Kane also holds records for the most goals by an England player at the World Cup (14) and the European Championship (seven, equal with Alan Shearer).

Kane is equal third, with Messi, for the most goals scored at major tournaments, with 21 in total. Ronaldo tops the list with 25 and Mbappé is second with 23.

Jürgen Klopp was hired to bring the good times back to German soccer, but he has failed to make an immediate impact.

Germany won only one of four games as Klopp took charge for the first time in September and October, suggesting there is no quick fix for one of the traditional powerhouses.

Germany is third in Group A2 and battling to advance to the quarterfinals, three points behind co-leaders Netherlands and Greece with two games to go.

Germany plays Serbia on Friday and Netherlands on Monday.

MDT/AP

AD

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FOOTBALL

Man United does 'due diligence' on Pochettino becoming its next coach: source

JAMES ROBSON, MANCHESTER

AP PHOTO



MANCHESTER United is working on a potential deal to have U.S. men's team coach Mauricio Pochettino to replace Michael Carrick, who is under pressure after a dismal start to the season, a source with knowledge of the situation said Wednesday.

United is in 18th place in the Premier League standings after 10 rounds, the club's worst start in the modern era.

Pochettino is a candidate to succeed Carrick, even though the 54-year-old Argentine is under contract with the U.S. team through the 2030 World Cup.

A person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press that preparations to appoint Pochettino had been carried out as a matter of "due diligence." The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because no final decision has been made on Carrick's future.

Julian Nagelsmann, Eddie Howe and Antonio Conte have also been reported to be options in recent weeks.

A decision was widely expected after a reported meeting scheduled in Monaco on Wednesday, where minority owner Jim Ratcliffe is based.

It is not uncommon for clubs to weigh up potential candidates and reach out to intermediaries before deciding to fire a coach.

Pochettino, who has previously coached Southampton, Tottenham and Chelsea in the Premier League, took over the U.S. team in October 2024 and led it to the round of 16 at this year's World Cup.

He was a leading candidate for United in 2022 when Erik ten Hag was ultimately hired.

Pochettino won the French title with Paris Saint-Germain in 2022, but arguably his greatest achievement was turning Tottenham into a serial title contender in the Premier League and also leading the London club to the Champions League final in 2019.

He has never won a major trophy in England, most recently losing the final of the English League Cup with Chelsea in 2024.

Pochettino has often spoken of his love for the Premier League and retains a home in London.

Carrick, who said Sunday that he would not walk away from the job, was due to lead training Wednesday despite increased speculation over his position.

United opted against firing him last month, deciding to give him time to turn around a wretched start to the season, but Sunday's 4-4 draw with Aston Villa left the 20-time English champion in the relegation zone with just one win from 10 games. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION



The Conversation

SoRelle W. Gaynor, Uni. of Virginia

Democrats' agenda hinges on unity and compromise

The Democratic majority in the U.S. House and Senate that was ushered in by a historic blue midterm vote is an ideologically diverse one.

Candidates spent much of the past year differentiating their positions from the mainstream Democratic coalition. The result is a freshman class filled with as many progressive liberals as moderate problem solvers.

Centrist Democrats pointed to pragmatic moderates flipping Trump-won seats. Liberal voices highlighted the enthusiasm and turnout driven by a new, progressive vision.

I'm a political scientist who has worked in and now studies Congress. Figuring out the dynamics and direction of the 120th Congress requires looking at more than the ideological positions of the candidates who won.

While history demonstrates that an ideologically diverse party can be hard to wrangle, the size of the new Democratic majority provides some breathing room for policy negotiation and procedural debates.

Unlike the current Republican Caucus that is reliant on keeping historically narrow majorities together to pass party goals, future Democratic leadership can stand to lose a few votes.

This breathing room provides the potential for negotiation, while also limiting any mandate an ideological group may claim.

If a group, say, the entirety of the Progressive Caucus' 100-plus membership, decides to stick together, leadership will be forced to listen. Thus, the potential power of ideological factions depends not only on their ideas but their own organizational skills.

When groups in Congress develop practices such as confidential meetings or binding rules that require members vote together on certain votes, the legitimacy of group demands can be strengthened.

The overarching policy goals for newly elected Democrats are consistent across the ideological spectrum: lowering the cost of living and rooting out corruption.

My research has shown that a cohesive message is a key part of winning and maintaining majority control.

However, the "blue tsunami" was powered by voters with very specific policy demands. And as is always the case with policymaking, the details matter. Does healthcare reform mean reinstating the Obamacare subsidies set to expire on Jan. 1, 2027? Or does it mean something bolder, such as Medicare for All?

While there is power in numbers, the organizational strength and ultimate success of ideological groups in Congress depend on how unified they can be around specific policy goals and proposals.

This means that who is doing the unifying also matters.

The success of any potential legislative package heavily relies on congressional leaders' knowledge of congressional rules and their willingness to incorporate member viewpoints.

But the power and success of congressional leadership lie in its procedural acumen, not its ideological vision. Furthermore, groups can extract concessions during leadership selection in exchange for their support, such as seats on powerful committees or an agreement on policy agenda items.

Who is chosen as leader is not necessarily a signal of what the party's policy goals will be.

After all, the new Democratic margins in Congress are a result of a collection of majority makers. The margins of victory tell a story about more than presidential backlash. Across the country, progressive enthusiasm and moderate appeal turned voters toward the Democratic Party.

The 120th Congress will include progressives and moderates and the establishment candidates in the middle that are all required parts of the same whole. Achieving a consequential majority in America requires coalition building and maintenance. [Abridged]

World leaders urge stronger and faster action at UN climate talks over inadequate response

THE BUZZ

It's time to act decisively and urgently to curb global warming, which is wreaking havoc with deadly floods,heat waves and other disasters, the United Nations chief told world leaders Wednesday as formal talks began at the U.N. climate conference in Turkey.

"We know the truth. Now we must act on it because climate action is more than a fight over a number or a thermometer," U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said in an opening speech. "We are in the fight for our lives and our children's future."

But top leaders of the world's three biggest polluting nations — China, the United States and India, together responsible for more than half of the world's carbon dioxide emissions — skipped the summit, known as COP31.

Their absence left a handful of national leaders and U.N. officials to press for action as a new report warned of a widening gap between countries' climate pledges and actual emissions cuts.

Scientists say global warming is likely to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial levels. Limiting warming to that threshold was a goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement and remains a focus of international negotiations.

AP PHOTO



Alice attends a dinner hosted by Jensen, Nvidia's CEO, at a restaurant in Taipei, in May 2025

NVIDIA AFFAIR

Alice Huang, who reportedly had an affair with Jensen Huang, is a Chinese banker turned tech exec

SHE was building a career in Chinese finance before turning to tech with a leadership role at a data center company in Singapore. He is the high-profile CEO of Nvidia, the California-based company that makes computer chips relied upon by advanced artificial intelligence systems.

An affair between Nvidia's Jensen Huang and Alice Huang, who reportedly was suspected of working as a spy for Beijing, has rocked the tech and political worlds.

The Chinese businesswoman also known as Huang Le had a close relationship with Jensen Huang, according to reports over the past month by the New York Times. China has since refuted the allegations.

In one widely shared photograph of the pair, Jensen Huang and people surrounding him are holding drinks in Taipei, while Alice Huang sits behind him, apparently watching him in conversation. The picture was posted in 2024 by software company NetThunder to its LinkedIn page.

It remains unclear how long the affair lasted, and when exactly the relationship might have ended. The Associated Press was unable to reach Alice Huang for comment.

Publicly available information about Alice Huang is scant.

She was a Chinese finance executive before becoming involved in artificial intelligence, data centers and computer chips.

In 2023, she became a director at Singapore-based Megaspeed, which describes itself as an "NVIDIA cloud partner." Last year, Megaspeed faced scrutiny from the U.S. over its alleged skirting of U.S. export restrictions and routing of a large amount of advanced Nvidia chips for Chinese users.

Megaspeed was incorporated in 2015 in Singapore with the name 7Road International, after being spun off as the overseas arm of a Chinese video game developer, according to corporate registration records.

Filings show that in March 2023, it renamed itself Megaspeed International, with all of the shares transferred to Huang Le Limited, a company registered in the British Virgin Islands.

That same month, Alice Huang became Megaspeed's controlling shareholder, according to research by the C4ADS, a Washington-based nonprofit focused on global security.

But by November 2023, she was no longer listed as a director at Megaspeed, and all her shares were transferred to a Singaporean businessman, Tan Yong Pong, who also is known as James Tan.

Before Megaspeed, Alice Huang previously held senior positions at the Chinese firm Shanghai Hexi Investment Co. from around 2015 to 2017, according to social media posts and records from Simuwang, a Chinese private equity database.

Her roles at Hexi included deputy general manager, executive director and member of the investment committee, according to Hexi's social media posts, among possible other roles.

Hexi's founder Kang Wei, who appeared on some records alongside Alice Huang, was fined in 2018 by China's securities regulator 400,000 yuan ($60,000) over financial misconduct behaviors while Hexi was fined 17.7 million yuan ($2.7 million).

Before that, Alice Huang worked at HSBC's Hong Kong private banking arm and at CITIC Securities, a Chinese investment bank. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Portugal closed approximately 8,000 schools nationwide yesterday and suspended nonessential public services as Storm Charles approached. Authorities urged residents to remain indoors amid forecasts of heavy rain, coastal flooding and winds reaching 140 kph. Lisbon's major technology conference canceled its events.

AP PHOTO



Italy Authorities evacuated approximately 300 schools across Italy yesterday following anonymous emailed bomb threats. Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said there was no evidence of immediate danger and announced an investigation. The threats followed similar disruptions targeting European institutions in recent weeks.

AP PHOTO



USA The White House warned congressional Democrats that planned investigations into President Donald Trump's administration could constitute criminal conduct. Democrats, preparing to control Congress in January, rejected the warning and pledged scrutiny of administration finances, immigration enforcement and the Jeffrey Epstein investigation.

El Salvador President Nayib Bukele faces growing international scrutiny over his deployment of 2,500 troops to Haiti to combat gangs. The offensive, launched after four Salvadoran technicians disappeared, has raised concerns about civilian safety and political motivations ahead of February's presidential election.

AP PHOTO



Nigeria A Nigerian court ordered investigative journalist Daniel Ojukwu to remain imprisoned pending a December 1 bail hearing over alleged cybercrime violations. His prosecution stems from reporting on suspected government financial misconduct, renewing concerns about authorities using cybercrime legislation against independent journalists.