Seasonal influenza vaccination is free for all Macao residents
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MACAU DEFENDS AU'S CONVICTION AFTER THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CHALLENGES THE VERDICT AND CRITICIZES ITS NATIONAL SECURITY LAW

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GOV'T MAKES WRITTEN EXAM A CUTOFF FOR CANDIDATES SEEKING PUBLIC HEALTHCARE JOBS

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GOV'T PLANS SIX JOB FAIRS AND WILL IDENTIFY OVER 1,000 MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL OPENINGS PAYING ABOVE MEDIAN INCOME

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AP PHOTO



South Korea The Bank of Korea raised its benchmark interest rate by a quarter percentage point to 3.25% yesterday, its third increase since July. The central bank also raised its 2026 growth forecast to 3.9%, citing strong exports. Consumer prices rose 2.8% in October from a year earlier.

AP PHOTO



Thailand An explosion and fire at a major oil facility in Bangkok injured at least seven people yesterday and forced nearby residents to evacuate. Four of the injured were in critical condition, a medical center said. Thick black smoke rose from the refinery in the eastern part of the capital.

AP PHOTO



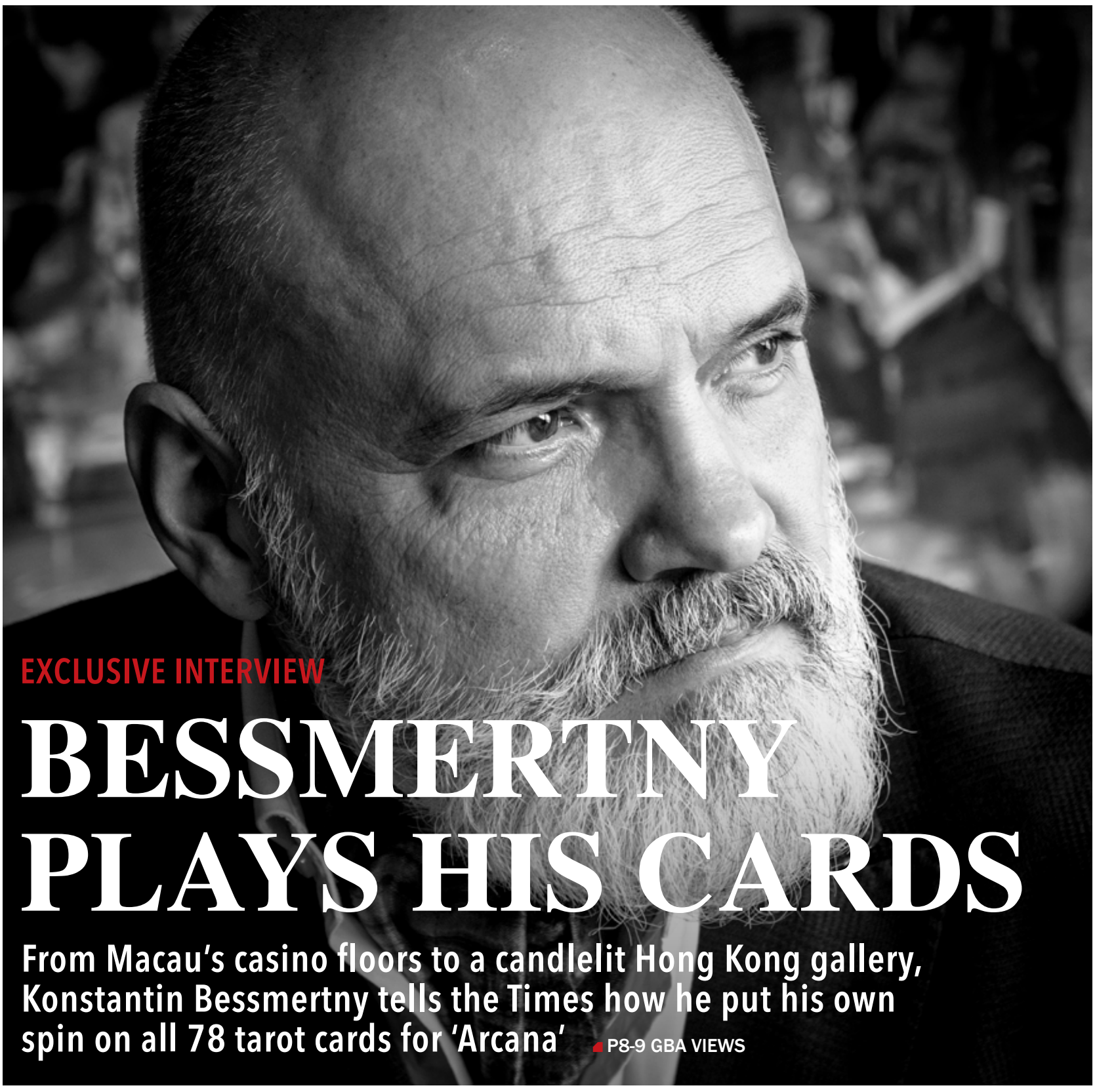
Pakistan A six-story building under construction collapsed in Karachi, killing at least four people and injuring 14. Families reported 17 people missing, a government official said. Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab said rescuers were prioritizing the search for people trapped under the debris.

AP PHOTO



Gaza Three Israeli strikes killed eight Palestinians overnight into yesterday in Gaza City and central Gaza, hospital officials said. A strike on an apartment in Deir al-Balah killed a man and his wife. Israel's military said one strike targeted three people it described as terrorists.

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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

BESSMERTNY PLAYS HIS CARDS

From Macau's casino floors to a candlelit Hong Kong gallery, Konstantin Bessmertny tells the Times how he put his own spin on all 78 tarot cards for 'Arcana'

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Times
MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

PUBLIC SECTOR

CIVIL SERVANTS STRONG ON PUBLIC-INTEREST COMMITMENT BUT WEAKER ON COLLABORATION: SURVEY

YUKI LEI



CIVIL servants in Macau score in the upper-middle range for service awareness, with a strong commitment to the public interest but weaker scores for collaboration and self-sacrifice, a survey has found.

The two organizations behind the survey are urging the government to establish an error-tolerance mechanism to give public servants greater confidence to try new approaches.

The survey, titled "Survey on Macau Civil Servants' Role Perception and Service Awareness," was conducted by the Macau Civil Servants Federation and the Macao Chinese Civil Servants' Association. It collected 1,208 valid questionnaires from civil servants across different departments and positions, aiming to understand and strengthen public servants' awareness of serving the people and promote government-citizen collaboration.

Public service motivation scored highest in commitment to the public interest, at 4.1 out of 5, followed by service calling at 3.9 and compassion at 3.8. These findings reflect a strong sense of mission in serving the public interest and society, as well as broad recognition of the importance of safeguarding social equality and protecting vulnerable groups.

Self-sacrifice scored 3.2, indicating that staff place more emphasis on balancing personal and social interests. The survey said management systems should be designed so that short-term contributions can translate into long-term personal development and social benefits, thereby sustaining service motivation.

Role perception was highest for the regulatory type – valuing rules and procedures – at 3.7, followed by the innovative type at 3.6 and the collaborative type at 3.4, which recorded the lowest score. The survey suggested this may be linked to overly specialized job divisions and limited opportunities for horizontal mobility. It also found that staff who value innovation and collaboration have noticeably higher service awareness, and that seniority, work autonomy and diversity also have a positive effect.

Respondents tended to see residents as partners, with a score of 3.8, and service recipients, at 3.7, while the tendency to view them as regulatory targets was relatively lower, at 3.4. This reflects a preference for cooperation and service-oriented approaches when dealing with residents.

Sixty percent of respondents believed residents' views are valuable to service design, and more than half supported residents' participation in service quality assessments. The survey said these findings support expanding public participation in public services at multiple levels.

GROUPS CALL FOR ERROR TOLERANCE AND REFORM

The two organizations called for an error-tolerance mechanism after releasing the findings and put forward a series of recommendations covering job rotation, experience transfer, innovation, frontline workloads, service assessments and public participation.

A representative of the Macao Chinese Civil Servants' Association said public servants are increasingly approaching their work with an innovative mindset, both in terms of skills and policy options, enabling them to serve as a bridge between the SAR government and the public. "How can we lift the morale of public servants, or improve our reforms, and provide quality services?" the representative said, noting that the service mindset has shifted from the traditional practice of following rules mechanically to a people-oriented approach.

To strengthen collaboration, the groups proposed regular transfers within and between departments, along with greater participation in cross-departmental tasks. They also proposed documenting veteran staff members' experience through case studies and mentoring, so that their service awareness can be passed on.

On innovation, the groups are asking the government to clarify the extent of flexibility available to frontline staff and tolerate well-intentioned attempts that fall short of expectations. They also want frontline workers involved in identifying and eliminating low-value work, freeing them to focus on residents' needs.

The recommendations also cover assessment and participation. Service awareness should be assessed across more dimensions, with the results used to inform job matching, training design and talent selection.

Public participation should also move beyond traditional opinion collection, with residents involved in co-designing and co-assessing services so they become co-creators rather than merely service recipients. Participation models should be tailored to the nature of each service and its target group.

TRANSPORT

New public parking lot opens in Taipa

RENATO MARQUES



A new public outdoor parking lot opened yesterday in Taipa, adding 150 parking spaces to the adistrict's central area.

The new facility is part of the government's efforts to put idle land plots to temporary public use.

Located at the intersection of Avenida Sun Yat Sen, Avenida de Guimarães and Rua de Siu Kuan, beside Taipa's fire station, the parking lot provides 80 spaces for light vehicles and 70 for motorcycles.

The parking lot will follow the same management arrangements as other facilities of its kind, including half-hourly parking charges and the first 15 minutes free of charge.

The facility also uses the latest electronic payment system, with cash payments accepted only if the system fails.

Parking fees follow the standardized rate structure, with cars charged MOP4 per half-hour during the day and motorcycles MOP1. Rates are halved at night.

Separately, the Land and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU) has added a new map layer to its "Cadastral Information Network," showing the locations and status of 39 land parcels selected by the government for temporary-use projects.

The DSSCU said the new feature aims to promote transparency in land-use information by giving the public clearer access to relevant details.

The measure is part of the government's policy agenda, and the bureau said it aligns with efforts to make services more convenient and improve service delivery for the public and business sector.

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E-PAYMENT

Macau's opportunity is to make payment differences invisible, says industry expert

RENATO MARQUES



As Macau welcomes more international visitors, an issue arises around the popularity of different payment methods across countries and regions.

For Konrad Chan, Global Payments' Asia-Pacific president, this landscape presents both a challenge and an opportunity for Macau.

In an exclusive interview with the Times, Chan noted that the key to successfully welcoming visitors from around the world and benefiting from their spending is to make payment differences invisible.

"The key is giving consumers choice. Digital wallets now account for 56% of global e-commerce and 33% of point-of-sale transaction value, representing a combined USD13.8 trillion (MOP111.52 trillion) in 2025, according to our Global Payments Report (GPR). But payment preferences still vary significantly by market," the executive told the Times.

"In Europe, for example, many digital wallets remain linked to traditional credit and debit cards, so international visitors naturally expect cards to be widely accepted," Chan said, adding, "For Macau, the opportunity is to make those differences invisible to the customer."

The expert noted that as the global payments landscape becomes more fragmented, greater interoperability between cards, local wallets and QR payments will be critical to delivering a seamless visitor experience.

"We are already seeing governments and central banks pursue greater cross-border connectivity through initiatives such as Nexus and the China-Indonesia QRIS linkage," he said.

From a policy perspective, Chan said the focus should be on encouraging broad payment acceptance and transparency, so visitors understand how they can pay before reaching the checkout.

At the same time, merchants need technology that allows them to accept international cards alongside local payment methods without adding unnecessary complexity.

"Ultimately, visitors should not have to change the way they prefer to pay simply because they have crossed a border," he noted.

THE GBA CHALLENGE

Asked by the Times about payment integration difficulties among residents of the three regions of the Greater Bay Area (GBA), Chan said, "The challenge is that payments remain highly localized. Macau, Hong Kong and mainland China each have different regulatory requirements, banking infrastructure, settlement arrangements and established payment ecosystems. Connecting them is therefore more complex than simply making one wallet work in another market."

Nonetheless, he noted progress across Asia, particularly through initiatives designed to make domestic payment systems more interoperable.

For Macau, he said continued collaboration among regulators, financial institutions, payment networks and technology providers will be critical.

"The direction of travel is clear: consumers increasingly expect payments to work seamlessly across borders, and the industry now needs to make the infrastructure behind that experience just as seamless."

SCAMS AND CONSUMER TRUST

The Times also inquired Chan about the potential impact of a reported increase in e-payment-related scams.

The president of Global Payments said, "Trust will certainly influence how quickly agentic commerce is adopted, but I don't believe concerns about scams will stop its development. What they will do is raise consumers' expectations around security, control and accountability."

Citing the company's 2026 Agentic Commerce Report, which the Times previously reported on, Chan said payment security remains the top concern, with 52% of consumers citing it.

"But beyond security, consumers are increasingly focused on how these systems operate: 46% are concerned about the use of their personal data, 42% worry an AI agent could make the wrong choice, and 40% are unsure who would be accountable if something went wrong," he said. "Consumers are also telling us what would build their confidence. 34% want a confirmation step before every purchase, while 30% want access to human support and 30% want proof that the AI cannot be hacked," he explained.

The same report also found that 83% believe it is important that no one, including the AI agent, ever sees their actual card or account number, reinforcing the importance of technologies such as tokenization.

"The lesson for the payments industry is that trust needs to be designed into the transaction from the beginning, rather than relying on fraud protection after something goes wrong. That means secure credentials, tokenization, clear spending limits, strong identity controls and giving consumers the ability to approve transactions before money moves," he said, noting that what consumers ultimately want is for AI to make commerce easier without requiring them to give up control.

In this scenario, the businesses and payment providers that can deliver both convenience and visible safeguards will be best placed to earn that trust.

MACAU'S INCREASINGLY DIGITAL PAYMENTS MARKET

Regarding Macau's payment landscape, Chan noted that Macau is becoming a more diverse, digitally driven payments market, shaped by its position within the GBA and the high number of visitors it welcomes each year.

"Digital wallets such as Alipay and WeChat Pay are already deeply embedded, particularly for mainland Chinese consumers, while international visitors continue to bring strong demand for traditional card payments.

The result is a market where merchants increasingly need to support multiple ways to pay rather than a single dominant payment method," he said, pointing once again to interoperability as the biggest opportunity and challenge.

"For Macau, the goal should be simple: wherever a visitor comes from, paying should feel as familiar and effortless as it does at home," he concluded.



Konrad Chan

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Gov't reviews food delivery rules with three platforms

The government met with the three major food delivery platforms to review industry regulations, consumer complaints and courier protection. Discussions covered the implementation of 2025 guidelines, delivery safety and safeguards for self-employed riders. The Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSEDT) said participants agreed on improving consumer services, strengthening cooperation between platforms and restaurants, and exploring better protections for couriers. The bureau will continue monitoring the sector and support restaurants in adopting digital tools.

Noise complaints decline as Gov't expands monitoring technology

The Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) said noise complaints have generally declined in recent years, with acoustic cameras helping enforcement officers identify noise sources more quickly. The bureau plans to gradually introduce more smart technologies to strengthen environmental monitoring. In a written reply to lawmaker Lei Leong Wong, the bureau said it and the Public Security Police Force (PSP) have been improving enforcement and complaint-handling mechanisms under the noise law. Police received 10 noise cases requiring mediation from July to October this year and will strengthen patrols and enforcement.

Macau beats Guangdong 3-1 in first leg of football cup

Macau defeated Guangdong 3-1 in the first leg of the 20th Guangdong-Macau Cup in Foshan. Macau led 1-0 at halftime before Guangdong equalized. However, the Macau team scored twice in just over two minutes to secure the victory. The second leg will take place Saturday, Nov. 28, at 7:30 p.m. at the Olympic Sports Centre Stadium in Taipa.

HEALTH

Gov't introduces eliminatory written exam for medical staff recruitment

RENATO MARQUES



THE Executive Council (ExCo) has approved a new administrative regulation to streamline the recruitment of qualified medical professionals.

According to information provided at a press conference at the government's headquarters on Thursday, one interview stage has been removed, while the initial written exam will become an eliminatory test rather than being graded as part of the overall assessment.

When questioned by the media about the potential effects of the measure, Health Bureau (SSM) director Alvis Lo said: "The aim is to streamline the process and improve efficiency. In the initial phase of the training program, there are two stages. Each stage includes a written exam and an interview. With two stages, the process requires four exams and takes up to 12 months. After an evaluation, we determined that conducting so many similar exams in such a short period was inefficient."

"Therefore, to improve the program's efficiency, we made a change last year, switching from a combination of a written exam and an interview to a written exam only. This time, the written exam will be used for elimination purposes," Lo added.

Asked whether the change could affect the recruitment of candidates with poor communication skills, Lo downplayed the concern, saying: "When doctors or staff take the exam or test at the institutions, they will also be subject to these assessment techniques."

In general, the new regulation aims to simplify the recruitment and training of medical professionals, including physicians, nurses and other technical staff, by reducing the time required to complete the procedures.

While noting that the process currently takes up to one year, Lo did not specify how much time the new measures are expected to save.

ExCo spokesperson Wong Sio Chak added that the new regulation aims to strengthen the training of qualified specialists in medicine and promote regular specialized training programs. He said the rules had been optimized following discussions with health care institutions, professional associations, representatives and higher education institutions.

"The government prioritizes improving training effectiveness and increasing the number of health care professionals eligible for training. The main points are as follows: optimizing and enhancing the effectiveness of the process; assessing integrated medical competencies; and replacing the two selection methods originally established for specialized medical training – namely, the written exam and the interview – with a written exam as the sole selection method and a screening tool. This allows for the more optimized advancement of training efforts for resident physicians," Wong said.

According to Wong, the new provision will take effect on Dec. 1 this year.

New rules for private health care licensing

Another administrative regulation, also taking effect Dec. 1, will amend the procedures for applying for, renewing and modifying licenses for private health care institutions.

Also announced yesterday by the ExCo, the new regulation complements recently introduced rules allowing the establishment of facilities such as day hospitals in Macau.

The regulation defines the documentary requirements, review procedures and decision-making processes for applications to renew or modify licenses for private health care institutions, as well as applications to amend registration certificates and complete other relevant formalities.

It also sets out application requirements and review and approval procedures for authorization to provide services such as telemedicine, community-based medical services and advanced therapies. In addition, it establishes a reporting mechanism requiring the submission of annual activity reports and case-by-case reports to help safeguard the quality of medical services.

The regulation also defines the composition and operation of the Commission of Experts and Advisors for the Evaluation of Advanced Therapies, which will consist of at least 11 professionals with relevant specialized expertise.

Another provision concerns professional liability insurance for health care providers, setting the minimum insurance coverage limit for outpatient clinics at MOP15 million.

HEALTH

Flu activity climbs to mid-high level as positive rate hits 24%

YUKI LEI

INFLUENZA activity has risen to a mid-to-high level in recent weeks, with the positive detection rate reaching 24.3% during the week of Nov. 15-21, well above the 15.2% warning threshold, the Health Bureau (SSM) said, urging unvaccinated high-risk residents to take additional precautions.

Laboratory surveillance shows that influenza B and influenza A subtypes H3 and H1 have circulated in turn this year, with activity remaining stable from April to early October before rising in recent weeks.

Children are being hit hardest. Emergency department visits for influenza-like illness among children rose 38% in four weeks, from 363 to 501 last week, while visits among adults remained stable.

The number of influenza clusters has also increased, mainly in kindergartens and schools and mostly caused by influenza A. The number rose from four clusters four weeks ago to 13 last week, with seven more recorded so far this week.

YUKI LEI



The bureau reported a cluster on Wednesday at Santa Rosa de Lima Secondary School, where four Form 5 girls developed fevers and coughs beginning Nov. 22. Three tested positive for influenza A. Their conditions were mild, and none developed severe complications. Staff have inspected the school and advised it to strengthen cleaning and improve ventilation.

Vaccination uptake is satisfactory, with coverage at care homes above 80% and among school populations at around 70%. Free vaccination was extended to all residents from Nov. 16, and nearly 141,000 doses have been administered this year, including 62,000 to people aged 50 or above and the elderly.

The bureau urged unvaccinated residents, especially the elderly, pregnant women, young children and people with chronic illnesses, to get vaccinated before travelling in December, noting that it takes two to three weeks for the body to develop sufficient antibodies.

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LYNZY VALLES



HOUSING

Social housing supply exceeds waiting list as 1,902 flats available for allocation

LYNZY VALLES

MACAU has 1,344 households waiting for public rental housing, fewer than the 1,902 flats currently available for allocation, according to the latest figures released by the Housing Bureau (IH), which also reported an increase in the number of tenants returning units after exceeding income limits.

More than half of the households on the waiting list are single-person applicants, numbering 695, while 466 applications involve two-person households. Another 157 households comprise three people, 23 have four members and three have five or more.

The bureau said it had received more than 10,000 applications since August 2020. Of these, 7,934 were accepted, 1,847 rejected for failing to meet eligibility requirements and 487 withdrawn. A further 537 applications with complete documentation are being assessed, while 80 are undergoing legal procedures.

The available housing stock comprises 624 one-bedroom units, 1,140 two-bedroom flats and 138 larger units with three or four bedrooms. Another 611 flats are undergoing repairs, including painting, door and window replacements and electrical and plumbing work.

A further 2,800 social housing units are under construction in plots A5 and A6 in Zone A of the New Urban Zone, which will provide 1,736 and 1,064 flats, respectively.

Meanwhile, Macau has 15,510 social housing tenants, including 634 whose household income exceeds the statutory threshold but remains below twice that limit. Since January, 93 tenants in this category have returned their flats, compared with 57 during the same period last year.

The bureau also recorded 84 investigation cases involving suspected breaches of residency requirements or unauthorized occupants. Separately, 11 cases involving suspected contractual violations by property management companies were identified, with two resulting in penalties and nine still under investigation.

ADVERTORIAL

SANDS CHINA NEWS

Voices Across Cities: Sands China A Cappella Fest 2026

This December, Macao is welcoming a new addition to its growing performing arts scene with the inaugural Sands China A Cappella Fest 2026. Bringing together five outstanding vocal groups from Macao, Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Xiamen, the festival promises an evening that celebrates creativity, cultural exchange and the extraordinary power of the human voice.

Representing Macao is CKppella from Sheng Kung Hui Choi Kou School, which has represented Macao at major cultural events and competitions. Joining them are Kentopella and Boonfaysau from Hong Kong, City Singers from Xiamen, and Guangzhou's WOW Vocal Band, each bringing its own distinctive musical style and artistic identity, collaborating on stage for the first time right here in Macao.

With accolades from prestigious regional and international competitions, the ensembles showcase the diversity of contemporary a cappella, from inventive pop arrangements and original works to performances inspired by traditional musical influences.

Beyond the performances, the festival highlights the role of music in connecting people across cities, cultures and generations. By bringing together student performers, university ensembles and established vocal artists, the event creates opportunities for artistic exchange and mutual inspiration while showcasing the vibrant creative energy emerging from the Greater Bay Area and beyond.

As one of the key initiatives under the Sands China Performing Arts Programme in 2026, the festival reflects a continued commitment to enriching Macao's cultural landscape and supporting the city's development as a destination for arts and cultural tourism.

Whether you are already a fan of a cappella or simply curious to discover something new, the Sands China A Cappella Fest 2026 offers a unique opportunity to experience five exceptional vocal groups in one unforgettable evening. Purchase tickets for the show, 8 p.m. Dec. 12 at The Parisian Theatre, through Cotai Ticketing, Damai, Macau Ticket, Maoyan or UUTIX.

And to bring a cappella closer to audiences, CKpella, Kentopella and WOW Vocal Band are coming to Macao Dec. 5 for a series of flashmob performances at Sands China's integrated resorts. Don't miss these chances to witness the creativity, energy and musical magic created using nothing but the human voice!

Get your tickets now



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MACAU'S 'INVISIBLE BUILDERS' BROUGHT INTO FOCUS BY COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE RESEARCH

NADIA SHAW

THE Chinese and Macanese workers who helped shape Macau's colonial buildings deserve greater recognition alongside the architects credited with their design, a researcher told an audience at the Portuguese School of Macau on Nov. 24.

Professor Ana Vaz Milheiro said studying construction through workers' experiences could reveal how local skills, materials and working relationships influenced buildings often understood principally as European architectural achievements.

The session, moderated by Xuan Luo of the University of Macau, examined research connecting architecture, colonialism and labor across former Portuguese territories.

Milheiro, a full researcher at DINÂMIA'CET-Iscte, University Institute of Lisbon, described moving beyond architects' intentions towards understanding the people who translated drawings into buildings.

"Looking through the workers' eyes made a little more human the history of architecture," she told attendees.

BUILDING ACROSS DISTANCE

The school hosting the discussion offered a practical example of the limits of architectural authorship. Discussing its design in the early 1960s, Milheiro posed a question to the audience: How could an architect based in Lisbon ensure construction quality thousands of kilometers away?

"He completely had to rely on the people who were here," she said.

That dependence extended beyond fellow architects and technicians to Chinese and Macanese workers. Their knowledge was therefore part of the construction process, rather than simply a means of carrying out instructions.

A BRIDGE AND ITS MISSING WORKERS

An accompanying journal extract, "Invisible Builders: Labour and Colonial Representation in the Construction

NADIA SHAW



of the Macau-Taipa Bridge", examines a similar gap between celebrated engineering and overlooked labour.

Built in the early 1970s, the bridge combined Portuguese engineer Edgar Cardoso's design with construction directed by Chinese contractor Ho Yin. Its workforce initially drew heavily on Hong Kong before increasingly employing Macau workers.

While recruitment and working conditions were left to the contractor, an arrangement authorities presented as respecting Chinese customs.

The paper argues that this division obscured responsibility for workers' welfare, while photographs emphasising the bridge's scale largely excluded its builders.

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Gov't, legislature oppose European Parliament resolution on Au Kam San case

THE government and Legislative Assembly (AL) have condemned a European Parliament resolution criticizing the handling of the city's first national security case, rejecting its calls for the release of former lawmaker Au Kam San and warning against possible sanctions.

In separate statements Thursday, the two institutions accused the European Parliament of interfering in Macau's internal affairs and questioning the independence of the city's judiciary.

The government said the court had conducted the trial impartially and in accordance with the law, with proper procedures and sufficient grounds for conviction. It said Au had accepted a court-appointed lawyer, exercised his right to defend himself and agreed with the arguments presented by his defense counsel.

According to the government, Au did not dispute most of the facts presented during the proceedings and acknowledged that his actions involving multiple external organizations constituted criminal offenses.

The government also rejected the European Parliament's call for the European Union to provide consular protection to Au, saying he is a Chinese citizen and that holding Portuguese travel documents does not entitle him to Portuguese or EU consular protection in Macau or other parts of China.

The government defended its National Security Law, describing the protection of national security as a constitutional responsibility under the Basic Law. It also said any discriminatory restrictive measures imposed by the EU would prompt Macau to take action to protect its lawful rights and interests.

The AL said the trial had safeguarded Au's procedural rights and described the case as an internal matter in which external parties had no right to interfere.

Au was sentenced to 12 years and six months in prison in Macau's first national security case.

RENATO MARQUES



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Wong Sio Chak

ADVERTISING LAW

Gov't sets liability ceilings and insurance premiums

RENATO MARQUES

THE government has set civil liability insurance requirements for the installation of advertising materials, with a minimum coverage limit of MOP700,000 for higher-risk projects.

The new administrative regulation, which complements the previously approved Advertising Law, also sets maximum insurance premiums under a two-tier system based on the scale and risk level of advertising installations. It was presented at a press conference by the Executive Council (ExCo) on Thursday.

As explained by ExCo spokesperson and Secretary for Administration and Justice Wong Sio Chak, the two tiers are determined by the risk level and scale of the advertising installation.

"Depending on the level of risk, minimum insurance coverage limits of MOP700,000 and MOP300,000, respectively, apply to the installation of advertising materials subject to obtaining a construction permit and, for those subject to the registration system, the annual premium may not exceed MOP2,000 and MOP1,000, respectively," Wong said.

In response to media questions, a representative from the Financial Services Bureau added: "Under the new administrative regulation, for projects subject to a construction permit, that is, larger-scale projects, the minimum insurance limit is MOP700,000 and the maximum premium is MOP2,000. In all other cases, the minimum limit is MOP300,000, and the maximum insurance premium is MOP1,000. Therefore, the administrative regulation will define the scope of different construction projects and their respective insurance amounts," the official said.

Wong also outlined the provisions of the new law, noting that the law and its accompanying administrative regulation will enter into force together on Dec. 1. These include procedural provisions on the authorization and registration of advertising material installations, as well as prior notification requirements for advertising certain products, such as medical devices, health-related products and dietary supplements, among others.

Wong also said efforts had been made to improve the efficiency of review procedures through an electronic system, in line with the government's principle of "more steps for the government, fewer steps for citizens."

EMPLOYMENT

Gov't to hold six job fairs, identify 1,000-plus positions in 2027

YUKI LEI



THE local government will hold at least six large-scale job fairs and launch no fewer than 35 "employment+training" programs next year, while identifying more than 1,000 management and technical positions at large enterprises that pay above the median income, the Labor Affairs Bureau (DSAL) said.

DSAL Director Chan Un Tong outlined the plans on TDM's regular radio program on industrial diversification and employment services. He said the bureau would identify more than 1,000 management and technical positions at large enterprises next year, with salaries above the current median income.

Chan said the bureau will continue monitoring residents' employment stability after they are hired, study a job support subsidy scheme for young people who graduated in recent years, and explore subsidies for technology companies hiring local talent to ensure both the "quantity" and "quality" of job matching. The training programs will strengthen the link between training and internships.

He said the positions identified at large enterprises require some experience and offer above-median pay, so time is needed to train local residents to fill them. He hopes the measures can be rolled out gradually next year, after which the bureau will review their effectiveness. He also urged the public to continue following the bureau's job-matching efforts.

From January to October this year, the bureau successfully matched 9,234 job seekers with positions, Chan said. In October, 2,459 people were registered as job seekers with the bureau, of whom 443 were aged 34 or younger – a figure that remained stable. They tended to prefer clerical, sales and professional-technical positions.

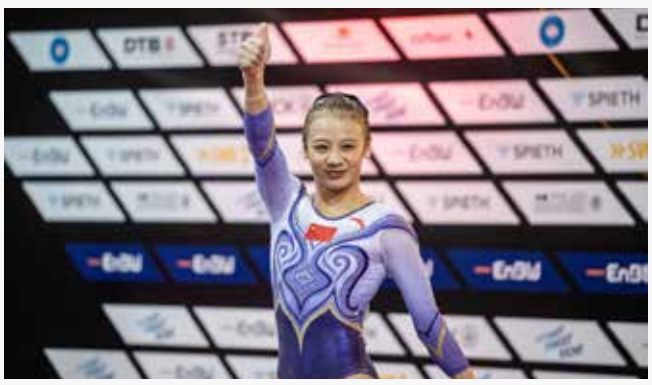
Chan stressed that nonprofessional clerical positions in financial institutions have largely completed the replacement of nonresident workers with local employees. Demand for clerical workers now mainly comes from small and medium-sized enterprises and large companies, including cleaning and security firms. These positions offer monthly salaries of MOP10,000 to MOP12,000, about MOP2,000 below the median wage of young people successfully matched with jobs through the bureau. The bureau hopes to narrow the gap through various measures.

Asked about calls for stronger action against cross-border and cross-occupation drivers, Chan said the bureau and the Public Security Police Force (PSP) inspected 833 vehicles between March and October this year, identifying 29 people suspected of working outside their authorized occupations.

The authorities announced earlier that the police and the bureau, as part of a crackdown on illegal employment, intercepted 98 suspected illegal workers last month and conducted 311 inspections at construction sites, private buildings, and commercial and industrial premises during the period.

CORPORATE BITS

Galaxy to host Chinese gymnastics champions in Macau in December



Olympic and world champion gymnasts from China will visit Macau from Dec. 11 to 13 for a series of sporting and community activities, including a gala performance at Macau Forum on Dec. 11.

The Galaxy Entertainment Group-sponsored event will feature athletes from China's men's and women's artistic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics and acrobatic gymnastics teams, including two-time Olympic champions Zou Jingyuan and Liu Yang.

The gala will also feature joint performances by the athletes and students from the Macau Gymnastics General Association, with interactive sessions allowing audiences to meet the champions.

Free tickets will be distributed Nov. 28 at Mong-Há Sports Centre from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., with a limit of two tickets per person, subject to availability. Valid identification must be presented to collect tickets.

The three-day program will also include school and community visits by athletes, as well as their participation in the Walk for a Million, supported by GEG's community sports initiative.

Poly MGM Museum to launch after-hours glassmaking experience



Poly MGM Museum will launch an immersive after-hours experience, Night at the Museum Archives: Decoding Luminous Glass, on December 5, inviting visitors to explore Chinese liuli craftsmanship through interactive theater and treasure hunts.

In partnership with local Dream Theater Association, the experience will feature costumed performers and smartphone-enabled activities, allowing participants to discover four traditional glassmaking techniques.

The museum will also introduce a Winter Edition of its Luminous Craft mobile game from December 1 to January 31, featuring exclusive digital collectibles, location-based challenges and prizes.

The activities complement the ongoing Luminous Brilliance: The Artistry of Zibo Liuli exhibition, featuring nearly 180 historical artifacts and contemporary works.

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BESSMERTNY OPENS EXHIBITION IN HONG KONG

FORTUNE GAMBLES: MACAU'S TAKE ON TA


Konstantin Bessmertny

Macau- and Hong Kong-based artist builds candlelit 'Arcana' show around a full tarot deck, with an Italian actor as fortune teller

INTERVIEW
BY NADIA SHAW

ARTIST Konstantin Bessmertny, born in Blagoveschensk in the former Soviet Union, has painted a full 78-card tarot deck, and he wants visitors to draw their own cards with a little help from artificial intelligence. In an exclusive interview with The Times before the opening of "Arcana," the Macau- and Hong Kong-based artist outlined a show that treats the gallery as a candlelit playground.

The exhibition opens in Hong Kong with a reception at 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 28, at Gallery EXIT and runs on the third floor through Dec. 24.

A DECK OF IMPOSSIBLE TASKS

"Arcana" is described as a solo exhibition that brings works from different periods of Bessmertny's career into a new constellation. Tarot serves as the framework for viewing, and, through the motifs of divination, fate and omens, the paintings are meant to speak to one another.

The project has a long history. Bessmertny, first tackled the major arcana, the cards such as Death, Lovers, Sun and Moon, in "Deity of Doubt" at Rossi & Rossi in Hong Kong in 2016. Two works from that show remain unsold and return here for "Arcana." One is "Lovers," in which an angel fires an arrow into the man's head rather than his heart.

To see how far the artist departs from convention, it helps to look at the traditional card.

In the traditional tarot card, a man and a woman stand blessed by an angel overhead, in what appears to be the Garden of Eden. Behind the woman, a fruit tree entwined with a snake recalls the biblical story of humanity's fall into temptation and into the realm of the flesh. The angel is Raphael, associated with the element of air, the same element as Gemini, the zodiac sign that governs the card.


Three of Wands (Battle of Cascina after Michelangelo), 2026, oil on canvas mounted on wood panel, 36.5 x 49.5 cm


Page of Wands (Go 2024, oil on canva

Bessmertny's version, however, turns that picture around. "At that time [in 2016], they were actually naked," he said. "But now I see too much censorship. So, I put the stickers like parental guidance [...] I adapted it from the music industry."

Describe his "Lovers" scene in detail, Bessmertny said, "So, two people with the angel shooting arrow into the head of the man. Not to the heart, but to the head [...] and she's putting her finger into the ring," he said. "But the painting is the same."

Since then, Bessmertny has completed the minor arcana, and maintains that the works are not tarot illustrations. "I hate to illustrate tarot," he said. "Most of the tarot you could see in the kiosks and the bookstores, it's just illustration of like conventional ideas. But tarot themselves are not actually facts. It's not absolute truth."

> "I like this kind of big, almost impossible tasks. Like making 78 paintings.

Instead, he tries to keep to each card's general idea "but to bring my own life experience, my philosophical ideas and so on."

"I always was dreaming [...] I was sketching and so on. So, a few years ago, I decided, no, I have to do it," he said. "I like this kind of big, almost impossible tasks. Like making 78 paintings."

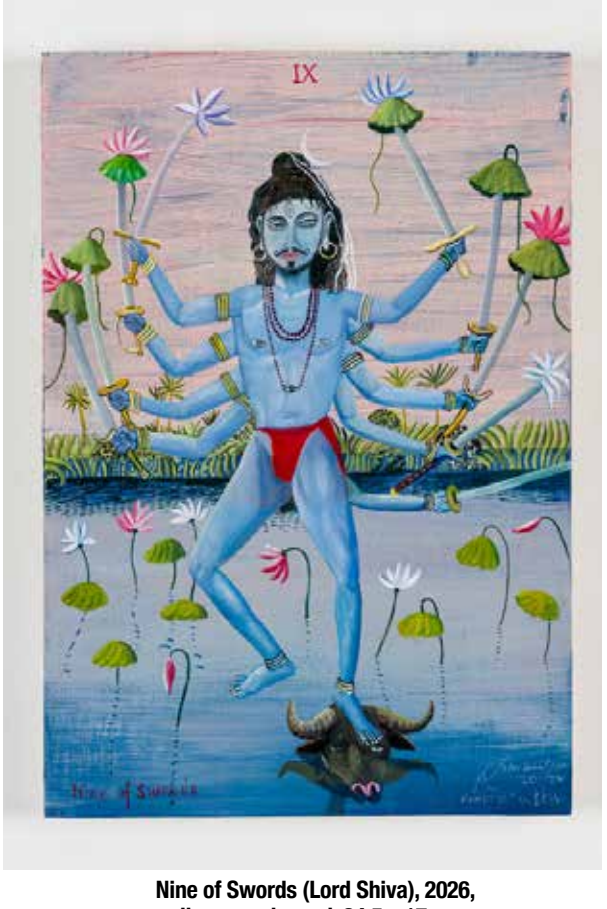
COLD WAR CHIPS AND WINE-TASTING CUPS

As a result, the works are playful and often political. The show includes new oil paintings from 2026, among them "Eight of Wands (The Persistence of Luck)," "Nine of


The Lovers (Gli Amanti) 2026, oil and mixed media on canvas, 32 × 26.5 cm, 42 × 37 cm framed



Eight of Wands (The Persistence of Luck), 2026, oil on found wood panel, 24.5 x 16.5 cm



Nine of Swords (Lord Shiva), 2026, oil on wood panel, 24.5 x 17 cm


Ten of Pentacles, 2025 on wood panel

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ROT



olf Course Emperor),
as, 45 x 59 x 3.5 cm

Swords (Lord Shiva)" and "The Hanged Man."

One casino-themed work, for example, shows Ronald Reagan beside an original dollar. "This is not gambling. This is Cold War," Bessmertny said. "Reagan is the winner of Cold War." Another borrows Salvador Dalí's melting clocks for a roulette-style scene in which every bet lands on eight. "The bet is on 8. So, you're a winner anyway. It's a kind of absurd," he said.

Meanwhile, the suit of cups becomes a tour of drinking cultures. The Irish card features Guinness, and the Seven of Cups is a wine tasting. "How pompous. It's educational," he said.

Elsewhere in the show, many works draw on his Japanese-influenced "Nanban-jin" series, shown in Tokyo last year. They use bamboo frames, washi paper and gold fabric. The title "Nanban-jin" 南蛮人 is the historical Japanese term for the first Europeans to arrive in Japan, "barbarians from the south."

The idea came from a conversation in Japan. Bessmertny told The Times that Japanese friends once explained the many names their language has for the Portuguese, and he found one especially funny. "My favorite was hairy Chinese," he said. "They were thinking like, these people coming from China."

He then took the idea as a subject. "I'm from Macau. I'm a barbarian in the south. I tried to kind of take this as a subject. And then develop it."

At the other end of the scale, the largest work in "Arcana," a tower measuring 280 by 2 meters, began as an Escher-style labyrinth made for the Doha art fair. A buyer reserved it but never committed, and it was shipped back. "I brought it to studio. First, I destroy it," Bessmertny said. "And then I started to paint. So now it's full of characters."

> **"People will find it out, oh my God, I want to be there. I want this feeling. Fear of missing something. FOMO.**

CANDLES, ACTORS AND ALGORITHMS

Beyond the paintings, the show is also theater. Bessmertny has persuaded the gallery to dim the lights and use candles, mostly artificial, with one real flame. He cited Stanley Kubrick's "Barry Lyndon" as inspiration. "Everything was filmed with the candlelight," he said. "So I wanted to bring this feel into the sort of playground."

To complete the effect, an Italian actor will play the tarot master at the opening. "He's an actor. But he's clever. He can improvise and so on," Bessmertny said. The actor read cards for him almost 15 years ago in Dresden, Germany.

After the opening, however, visitors will work alone. An old mahjong table with drawers will hold the cards. "What you need is three cards," Bessmertny said. "Draw three cards and mention upright or upside down." Technology can then take over. "Or even surely with AI, you can take a photo," he said. "Actually, you don't need tarot card master now with AI."

Ultimately, the aim is to pull people from their phones. "I want them to be dragged out of screen," he said. "And even people will find it out, oh my God, I want to be there. I want this feeling. Fear of missing something. FOMO."

A GREATER BAY AREA LENS

Read through a Greater Bay Area lens, Bessmertny's tarot framework turns the gallery into a space where fate is not fixed but negotiated. His work also speaks to Macau's particular position.



Hierophant (Art Pyramid) 2026, oil on mirror,
40 x 30 cm, 47.5 x 37.5 cm framed

As a Russian-born artist working between Macau and Hong Kong, he draws on European art history, Japanese Nanban-jin imagery, casino culture and Cold War politics—precisely the layered encounters that have made the Pearl River Delta a site of East–West exchange.

The region's cultural plans position Macau as a base for multicultural exchange, while Hong Kong serves as a platform for dialogue between Chinese and international cultures.

Most importantly, Bessmertny refuses a single, polished narrative. His paintings move from classical drawing to performance, video and installation, treating art as an open system rather than a fixed category.

Looking ahead, Bessmertny told The Times he does not expect to revisit the tarot project soon. "Unless it comes like a different stage," he said. "But, for now I feel like what I wanted is complete."



5, oil and mixed media
l, 24.5 x 17 cm



The Hanged Man, 2026,
oil and gold leaf on wood panel, 24.5 x 16.5 cm



The Tower, 2025 / 2026, acrylic and mixed media
on canvas, 280 x 200 cm, 2 panels



The Sun, 2017, oil and mixed media
on wood panel, 16 x 26.5 cm

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TAI PO INFERNO

Hong Kong marks deadly fire anniversary with flowers, prayers and tears following government warning

KANIS LEUNG, HONG KONG

AP PHOTO



People offer flowers and pray for the victims near the site of a deadly fire last year at Wang Fuk Court in Hong Kong, Thursday

HONG KONG residents on Thursday remembered the victims of the city's deadliest fire in decades by offering flowers and prayers days after the government warned them to be cautious about commemorative activities and to avoid being exploited by people it said had ulterior motives.

The blaze engulfed seven high-rise buildings in Wang Fuk Court on Nov. 26, 2025, killing 168 people and displacing thousands of others in a disaster unimaginable in the wealthy financial hub known for its safety and modernity.

A year on, many fire survivors were still grieving their losses despite life pushing them forward to adjust to their temporary housing, arrange funerals for their loved ones, clean up their belongings retrieved from charred homes and decide on resettlement plans.

At a park near the apartment complex in Tai Po in the north of Hong Kong, a steady stream of residents laid flowers, snacks and toys in tribute. Some returned to the familiar area and gazed at their old homes. Others wept.

Survivor YN Chi still remembered her escape from the complex a year ago, saying she wouldn't be alive if she had left five minutes later. She feels frightened when she thinks about it.

"My greatest wish is to deliver the truth for those 168 victims," she said. "They are truly innocent. It's tragic."

Performance artist Sanmu Chen laid some grass, saying humans are unlike grass and cannot be burned or cut casually.

BEIJING WARNS OF ATTEMPTS TO STIR UP CHAOS

The tragedy is a sensitive issue in the Chinese territory, and not everyone feels free to speak about it.

As the first anniversary approached, Hong Kong's No. 2 official, Eric Chan, said last Friday that the government would allow all lawful commemorations but reminded residents to choose carefully what to take part in and not to be exploited by others to engage in disruptive acts. Without identifying anyone, he said some people spoke plainly online that they hoped to use this opportunity to organize people to come out or carry out acts of disruption.

Echoing that, China's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office on Tuesday urged vigilance against attempts to "use the disaster to stir up chaos."

It said the government's response demonstrated its decisive action in advancing reforms with efficiency and pragmatism. Many residents have gradually emerged from the shadow of the tragedy and are grateful to the government and society, it added.

But Elaine Pearson, Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said the city government responded to the fire "by using Beijing's tactics of shutting out the voices of the victims and promising an elusive accountability."

Kai Chou, who studies in Tai Po, saw the flames from afar when the blaze broke out and, as a Hong Konger, he felt compelled to commemorate the victims of a tragedy that involved human-made mistakes. He said it was not necessary for the government to urge residents to guard against those with ulterior motives and questioned if it was treating residents as "terrorists."

Grace Chan, a non-Tai Po resident who offered a flower, told reporters with tears in her eyes that Hong Kong has changed and she could not digest it.

RELIGIOUS COMMEMORATIONS ARE HELD

Beyond Tai Po, religious commemorations were held across the city, including a Mass that drew hundreds, including bereaved families, on Wednesday.

At a cathedral in Hong Kong's downtown, the names of the 168 victims were read out one by one. Jenny Lam, a pastor who lost three family members in the fire, said that on many sleepless nights, she thought about how those who remain should live on. She later realized they needed to live well.

"It's not about forgetting our pain," she said. "But rather ... to continue experiencing the beauty of this world on their behalf."

Phyllis Lo, whose mother died in the blaze, said she pondered where the victims lived and how their families would feel when she heard their names.

Lo had anticipated the government would hold commemoration activities, saying its apology was already late and doing so would show it was truly walking alongside them.

"There was disappointment, but I won't place any expectations on it anymore," Lo said.

FINDINGS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

An investigation found the blaze was likely caused by a lit cigarette and spread rapidly through non-fire-retardant scaffolding material. The report blamed faults in the complex's renovation work and oversight deficiencies by several government departments.

Just a month ago, Hong Kong leader John Lee and officials bowed in apology, while his housing minister resigned.

Da Chung, a former Wang Fuk Court resident who attended the Mass, said that she was learning to make peace with the tragedy, but it was not easy for everyone. She could feel the sadness of those who lost their families during the event.

"Their grief hangs in the air," she said. **MDT/AP**

CRIME

Chinese consumer advocate is stranded in South Korea as crackdown targets campaigners

FU TING AND DIDI TANG, WASHINGTON

AP PHOTO



Wang Hai, founder of Beijing Dahai Business Consultancy

CHINESE consumer rights advocate Wang Hai has spent three decades exposing counterfeit goods and seeking compensation for buyers. In recent months, he left China fearing he was a target of the authorities, but now he is stranded in South Korea with his family, facing possible deportation home.

Wang, a well-known campaigner against counterfeit goods, said China invalidated his passport and South Korean authorities rejected his asylum. The United States also revoked his tourist visa, narrowing his options for leaving South Korea and deepening his fears of being sent back to China.

Chinese authorities launched a campaign against organized crime in July, saying they would target "malicious compensation claims." Since then, authorities have arrested at least 100 people for allegedly extorting businesses through anti-counterfeiting work or consumer compensation claims, according to official statements reviewed by The Associated Press.

Wang said the arrests made him fear he could be next, prompting him to leave a country where official Chinese media had once praised him for his role as an anti-counterfeiting activist.

Wang spoke to the AP from South Korea about his situation and has appealed the rejection of his asylum application in that country.

The activist said that he arrived in South Korea in late September with his wife, 8-year-old daughter and infant son.

"The very same job has suddenly morphed from being praised into something associated with organized crime," said Wang.

A notice reviewed by AP showed South Korean immigration authorities rejected Wang's and his family's applications for refugee status. AP also reviewed the U.S. Embassy email that revoked his visa, in which U.S. authorities told Wang that new information made him inadmissible to the U.S. or ineligible for a U.S. visa but did not provide specific details.

South Korea's Justice Ministry said it couldn't share any information, citing local laws on refugees and personal information protection.

The U.S. State Department didn't respond to the request for comment.

Wang became a household name in China in the 1990s for exposing counterfeit goods, an increasingly widespread problem as the country's market economy expanded rapidly and consumer protection oversight lagged.

Finally he fled China.

After his U.S. visa was revoked, Wang is seeking resettlement in Canada with the help of a human rights organization. **MDT/AP**

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NORTH KOREA

Kim vows to build more nuclear weapons after ignoring Trump's overture

HYUNG-JIN KIM AND KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un visited facilities that produce nuclear ingredients and called for building more nuclear weapons, days after ignoring U.S. President Donald Trump's offer to meet during his recent visit to Asia.

Experts say Kim likely wants to show off his evolving nuclear arsenal, the backbone of his authoritarian rule, and reaffirm his rejection of any future talks on dismantling his nuclear program.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said Thursday that Kim inspected two nuclear materials production factories, one newly inaugurated and the other being expanded. KCNA photos showed Kim and senior military officials walking between dense rows of what appeared to be centrifuges used to produce weapons-grade uranium and touring halls displaying what were believed to be warheads. Some of the images were blurred.

KCNA said Kim visited a nuclear-powered equipment production base and a nuclear research institute as well on Wednesday.

North Korea has disclosed a uranium enrichment site a few times since it showed one at its main Yongbyon nuclear complex to visiting American scholars in 2010. North Korea didn't say where the nuclear materials production factories that Kim visited this week are located. In June, when North Korea disclosed parts of a uranium enrichment site while reporting on Kim's visit there, outside experts assessed it was likely an additional uranium enrichment facility at Yongbyon.

AP PHOTO



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, leader Kim Jong Un, left, inspects what it says a facility for producing weapons-grade nuclear material at an undisclosed location in North Korea

KIM JUSTIFIES NUKES WITH THREATS FROM US, S.KOREA

Kim said his latest inspection visit was part of efforts to strengthen North Korea's defense capabilities in response to "variable nuclear threats approaching the Korean Peninsula moment by moment." He accused the U.S. of inciting its regional allies to possess nuclear-powered submarines and committing to sharing its nuclear weapons with them, KCNA said.

"The validity and substantiality of our possession of nuclear weapons and the trend of bolstering up its nuclear capability in quality and quantity are an irreversible reality," Kim said, according to KCNA.

Kim also said the deployment of low-yield battlefield nuclear weapons across multiple domains for various missions is crucial and urgent given North Korea's "inevitable reality facing the border with the most dangerous enemy state," a reference to South Korea. North Korea has in recent years focused on developing such tactical nuclear weapons amid heightened animosity with South Korea.

"Trump has talked about a willingness to meet Kim Jong Un, but the basic U.S. position that North Korea must denuclearize remains unchanged. So Kim Jong Un wants to say 'Look at how powerful we are. Don't talk about denuclearization if you want to meet us,'" said Moon Seong Mook, an analyst for the Seoul-based Korea Research Institute for National Strategy.

Moon said Kim's visit to the nuclear facilities was also likely meant to check on how state objectives on the nuclear program have progressed this year and what future goals must be set ahead of a year-end Workers' Party conference.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said it takes Kim's comments on battlefield nuclear weapons seriously and added that Seoul maintains a firm military readiness against Pyongyang's nuclear threats under an alliance with the U.S. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff declined to share an analysis of the North Korean nuclear facilities reported by KCNA, calling it confidential information for South Korea and the U.S.

TRUMP STILL HOPES TO MEET KIM

Trump reiterated his eagerness to restore diplomacy with Kim as he visited China last week for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit. But a Trump-Kim meeting didn't happen, with Pyongyang not publicly responding to Trump's overture.

In an interview with the New York Post this week, Trump dismissed the suggestion that Kim had rebuffed his outreach, saying, "No, he didn't ignore it. You know, we had many leaders there … There'll be a time when we meet … It was just not really the right time. It was a very busy two-day period."

Trump also claimed he could revive diplomacy with Kim at any time by restarting the exchange of letters they maintained during his first term, although he acknowledged that the two leaders had not corresponded "recently."

Kim has previously said he could return to talks if the U.S. drops its "hostile policy" against his country and respects what he calls the North's status as a nuclear state. Experts say Kim aims to win international recognition as a nuclear state so that he could demand the lifting of international sanctions.

Last week, International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Rafael Grossi assessed North Korea has been expanding its original uranium enrichment facility at Yongbyon, calling the move "a cause for serious concern."

Nuclear weapons can be built using either highly enriched uranium or weapons-grade plutonium, and North Korea has facilities to produce both at Yongbyon. Last year, South Korea's Unification Minister Chung Dong-young said that North Korea was operating four uranium enrichment facilities and that they were running every day. **MDT/AP**

INDONESIA

Rescuers battle wet, dark conditions in flooded mine where 16 died and 10 are missing

NINIEK KARMINI, JAKARTA

RESCUERS battled high water, darkness and slippery, narrow terrain Thursday searching for 10 miners believed trapped by flooding in an illegal gold mine where 16 bodies have been recovered.

The miners were digging for grains of gold late Monday when heavy rain caused the Ciseureuh River to overflow into a mine shaft in the Bogor regency of West Java province. Several people escaped from one section of the excavation before floodwaters filled the shaft, estimated to be about 100 meters (330 feet) deep, in a mountainous area south of the capital, Jakarta.

Authorities said they were not immediately notified because the miners were operating illegally, and local miners and residents initially tried to pump water from the site themselves before the situation became unmanageable.

Police first received reports of trapped miners about 16 hours after the flooding occurred, and nearby state-owned mining company PT Antam forwarded a formal report to the Jakarta Search and Rescue Agency shortly after midnight Wednesday, triggering a full-scale rescue operation.

AP PHOTO



The search and rescue team used submersible water pumps to suck water from the hole and tried to close off openings where groundwater seeped in.

West Java police spokesperson Hendra Rochmawan said authorities believe at least 10 miners remain trapped as rescuers retrieved 16 bodies by Thursday.

"On the fourth day, the chances of finding survivors have become increasingly slim," Rochmawan said. "But we will continue the search. At this point, it would be a miracle if anyone were still alive."

Thursday's search operation involving 325 personnel focused on two adjacent mine shafts, using rope-access techniques to reach victims, said Jakarta Search and Rescue Agency chief Desiana Kartika Bahari.

The flooded shaft was near facilities operated by PT Antam's Pongkor gold mining unit, but the company said the incident was unrelated to its operations.

Informal mining is common in Indonesia, where thousands work in dangerous conditions. Miners face risks including landslides, flooding and tunnel collapses, while gold processing often involves toxic mercury and cyanide with little protective equipment. **MDT/AP**

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NVIDIA AFFAIR

Huang's comeback fuels debate over misogyny and impunity for the powerful

ALEXANDRA OLSON, CLAIRE SAVAGE AND DEEPTI HAJELA, NEW YORK

AP PHOTO


Jensen Huang

JUST over a year ago, the chief executive officer of an Ohio tech company was forced to resign when he was caught on video embracing an employee at a Coldplay concert. The CEO of McDonald's was among several pushed out over a consensual relationship at the height of the #MeToo movement.

Now the stunning reinstatement of Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang despite similar allegations of sexual misconduct is fueling fears of a resurgence of impunity for the rich and powerful.

Huang resigned from Nvidia after he admitted to having an extramarital affair with a woman suspected of being a Chinese spy, and following reports that he was involved with a second woman who was his subordinate. Huang has acknowledged that he violated the company's code of conduct, which warns against personal relationships that may create conflicts of interest.

But in an extraordinary turnaround following a pressure campaign from Huang's tech allies and President Donald Trump, Nvidia's board voted unanimously Monday to reinstate him. The board said it had received assurances from the U.S. government that Huang was not a national security concern, but there was no mention of the sexual misconduct allegations at the center of the scandal.

The president, who has a history of marital infidelity and has faced allegations of sexual assault he says are false, predicted the scandal would only help Huang's reputation.

"Sex sells, fellas," Trump declared in an interview on CNBC.

He also posted a doctored image of Huang raising a red bra in triumph, a pose that parodied a famous photograph of Trump himself moments after he survived a 2024 assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request by The Associated Press for comment Wednesday.

Trump's response reinforces the impression "that there is a class of men who see violence against women, coercion of women as a currency of power," said Cheyenne Hunt, an attorney who founded the advocacy group Reckoning Action after her role in bringing to light the sexual assault allegations that brought down Democratic Sen. Eric Swalwell and Maine Senate candidate Graham Platner.

"This sends a horrible message to men everywhere that it's open season on their direct reports," Hunt said.

Randall Peterson, a professor of organizational behavior at the London Business School, said the #MeToo movement had reinforced the idea that company leaders who engage in relationships with subordinates "are in serious trouble because you cannot rule out coercion. You just cannot."

Peterson said the messaging now is that "you are at risk, as in the days before #MeToo."

"I'm sad about that," he said. "I thought we had moved on from that."

AN APOLOGETIC BUT JUBILANT COMEBACK

Huang, for his part, apologized to his employees a day after returning to Nvidia, saying he had made mistakes and was in daily therapy, according to a livestreamed meeting reviewed by The New York Times. He also warned that his reinstatement didn't mean other employees could violate the company's code of conduct, saying that "sometimes, it's appropriate to forgive" and "sometimes it's not."

The saga, however, has "made very clear that Huang is untouchable," said Ann Lipton, a University of Colorado Boulder law professor who specializes in corporate and securities law.

"It suggests that if you've had a certain amount of success, then you should be able to get away with pretty much whatever you want," Lipton said.

The Nvidia scandal has brought scrutiny to the independence of its 10-member board and a corporate culture centered around hero-worshiping its celebrity CEO.

Thousands of people, including former and current employees, had signed a petition calling for Huang's return. Nvidia's collapsing stock had fueled fears that the AI bubble would pop and, for Huang supporters, bolstered their argument that his vision, connections and deal-making skills were indispensable to the entire industry.

Nvidia's shares rocketed up 31.5% upon his reinstatement on Monday — although they have since fallen — and employees chanted Huang's name as he returned to headquarters. The company did not respond to requests for comment for this story.

SPEAKING UP IN THE FACE OF IMPUNITY

Women make up just 21% of Nvidia's global workforce and an even smaller share of its managers and leaders, according to the company's latest sustainability report, which touts its efforts to achieve gender pay parity as well as establish employee resource groups for women and other groups, and family-supporting policies such as generous paid parental leave.

Huang's triumphant return, however, is exactly the sort of outcome that silences victims of sexual misconduct, said Fatima Goss Graves, president and CEO of the National Women's Law Center, which runs the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund, a program to support workers facing sexual harassment.

Still, she said the legacy of the #MeToo movement continues to inspire women to speak out about sexual harassment and misconduct, adding that public scandals like the one at Nvidia sometimes provoke outrage that leads to an uptick in complaints to Time's Up and other organizations.

Meanwhile, Trump's role in getting Huang's job back drew immediate bipartisan fire and the CEO is expected to testify next week before the Senate Banking Committee.

"What comes next really matters," Goss Graves said. "If everybody shrugs their shoulders and says some people are too important to be held accountable, then we will have a problem." **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1975 TV PRESENTER ROSS MCWHIRTER SHOT DEAD



Guinness Book of Records co-founder and editor Ross McWhirter has been shot dead outside his North London home.

Mr McWhirter was hit at close range in the head and chest at 1845 GMT. He was taken to a local hospital, but died soon after being admitted.

The well-known author and BBC Record Breakers presenter recently offered a reward of £50,000 for information leading to the arrest of IRA bombers.

Scotland Yard said no group had yet claimed to be behind the attack.

The two gunmen are thought to have waited in the garden of the couple's Enfield house for an hour while Mr McWhirter was in the house preparing to go out to the theatre.

When Rosemary McWhirter arrived home, she got out of her blue Ford Granada and was approached by two men holding pistols.

She ran into the house as her husband came to the front door and seconds later heard two shots.

The killers then used her car to escape. Police later found the car abandoned a few miles away in Tottenham.

Mrs McWhirter and her two sons, Iain and James, were taken to a secret address soon after the murder, where they are being guarded around the clock.

Mr McWhirter edited the Guinness Book of Records with his twin brother, Norris, and also worked closely with Guinness Director David Hoy, who said the outspoken critic of the IRA was aware he could be in danger.

"He took normal precautions recommended by the police and always looked under his Mercedes - he also varied his routes home," he said.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The IRA gang who killed Ross McWhirter and carried out dozens of other attacks in London throughout 1975 was apprehended two weeks later.

Martin O'Connell, Edward Butler, Harry Duggan and Hugh Doherty exchanged shots with police in central London on 6 December and escaped to a flat in Balcombe Street, taking two hostages.

The four men were arrested after a six-day siege, charged with 10 murders and 20 bombings and jailed for life in 1977.

They were freed in April 1999 under the terms of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement - the multi-party peace deal for Northern Ireland.

Norris McWhirter continued to edit the Guinness Book of Records until 1985 and presented BBC's Record Breakers until 1994. He died in April 2004.

YOUR STARS

Aries
Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Today your focus is on home, family and your private life. Fortunately, you have lots of physical and intellectual energy. Nevertheless, steer clear of arguments with parents, older relatives and authority figures.

Taurus
Apr. 20-May. 20

This is a busy day! You have strong emotional and physical health today, plus lots of energy and emotional force. Discussions with children and romantic partners will be lively and energetic.

Gemini
May. 21-Jun. 21

Today your mind is focused on money matters as well as things that you own. You have the energy to make home improvements and deal with practical issues like cleaning or moving furniture around.

Cancer
Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Today the Moon is in your sign dancing beautifully with fiery Mars, injecting you with strong emotional and physical health. Relations with a parent or an authority figure might discourage you.

Leo
Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Don't hide your light under a bushel today, which you might be tempted to do because privacy is appealing. Basically, you're in a playful mood. Young children and romantic partners might lift your spirits.

Virgo
Aug. 23-Sep. 22

You're lucky because fiery Mars is in your sign giving you tons of energy today to accomplish whatever you want to do. Interactions with a friend (probably a female) will be positive and energetic.

Libra
Sep.23-Oct. 22

You're high-viz today, so you might take charge or run the show. Be diplomatic with partners, spouses and close friends, because judgmental attitudes will block the flow of conversation.

Scorpio
Oct. 23-Nov. 21

This might be a restless day for you, which is why you want to do something different! Travel will appeal. Hanging out with people from different cultures will also interest you.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22-Dec. 21

The Sun in your sign gives you energy today, while Mars at the top of your chart arouses your ambition. Discussions about shared responsibilities and shared expenses will go well.

Capricorn
Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Do your best when dealing with spouses, partners or close friends today, because there might be a lack of emotional flexibility. People are judgmental, which can make life hard.

Aquarius
Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You have lots of energy to work today; however, you might be too worried. Lighten up. "Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do but gets you nowhere." You know this. Do your best.

Pisces
Feb.19-Mar. 20

Social occasions, sports and time spent with children might have an element of "duties and obligations." Fortunately, you make a great impression on everyone who will look to you for their cue.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Easy

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

Easy+

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

Medium

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

Hard

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	2	10	fine
Changchun	0	4	overcast
Chengdu	7	21	fine
Chongqing	10	19	fine
Fuzhou	12	24	cloudy
Guangzhou	14	25	cloudy
Guiyang	5	17	cloudy
Haikou	18	24	cloudy
Hangzhou	8	21	fine
Harbin	-6	2	snow
Hefei	6	18	overcast
Nanjing	8	19	cloudy
Shanghai	10	20	fine
Taipei	17	22	rain
Wuhan	5	19	cloudy
Hong Hong	19	24	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-4	-2	cloudy
Frankfurt	-2	1	sunny
Paris	-1	3	sunny
London	1	4	cloudy
New York	7	12	cloudy

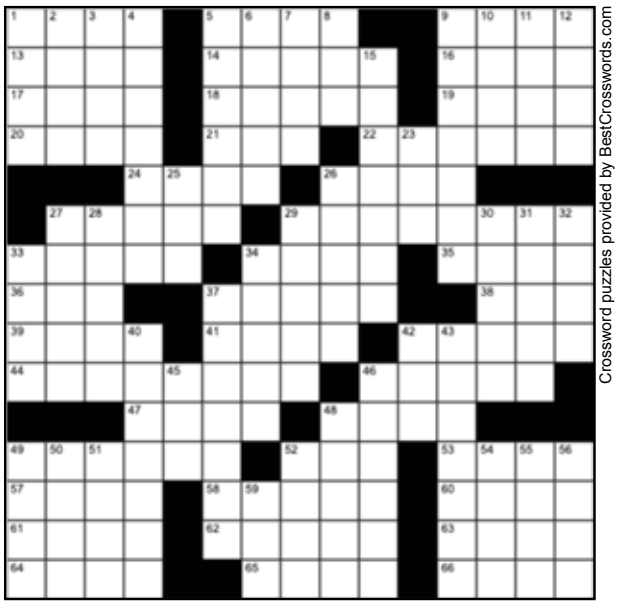
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Toot one's own horn; 5- Manipulator; 9- Not new; 13- Verdi heroine; 14- Swellings; 16- ___ Dogg; 17- New Orleans music; 18- "The ____ has landed."; 19- Dull; 20- Toward shelter; 21- Goon; 22- Ancient musician; 24- Hardy lass; 26- Adhesive; 27- Championship; 29- He might spring you from jail; 33- Marisa of "My Cousin Vinny"; 34- Shower; 35- Big rig; 36- ___ glance; 37- Existence; 38- 1970 Jackson 5 hit; 39- Prego rival; 41- Tolkien tree creatures; 42- Jeter of the Yankees; 44- First principles; 46- Like some bears and icecaps; 47- This can be guilty or not guilty; 48- Medicinal plant; 49- Russian sleigh; 52- Get older; 53- Guitarist Atkins; 57- Ale, e.g.; 58- ___ cotta; 60- Lug; 61- Diarist Frank; 62- Sharpened; 63- Black; 64- Outback hoppers; 65- Denials; 66- "___ you dare!";

DOWN 1- ___ California; 2- 100 dinars; 3- Cutting tool; 4- Newspaper; 5- Discomfort; 6- Lathers; 7- Outer limit; 8- Seminary subj.; 9- Disrobe; 10- Madras dress; 11- Greek letters; 12- It's owed; 15- Marketing; 23- Actor Brynner; 25- Biblical high priest; 26- Profits; 27- Bottom line; 28- Icon; 29- Teases; 30- Stiller's partner; 31- The color of honey; 32- Shaving mishap; 33- Shipping deduction; 34- ___-car; 37- Below; 40- Referees; 42- Scooby-___; 43- Voted into a seat; 45- Antlered animal; 46- Begs; 48- Come to terms; 49- Ski lift; 50- Nevada resort city; 51- Vintner's prefix; 52- River under the Ponte Vecchio; 54- Vagrant; 55- School on the Thames; 56- Portable shelter; 59- Awfully long time;

Yesterday's solution

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



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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DRIVE IN

Ariana Grande gives a moribund franchise a pair of shock paddles in 'Focker In-Law'

MARK KENNEDY, ENTERTAINMENT WRITER, MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Robert De Niro and Ariana Grande in a scene from "Focker In-Law" (Universal Pictures and Paramount Pictures)

THE next chapter in the "Meet the Parents" franchise is upon us, so you know what's ahead: Get ready for the lie detector test and cue the hostile animal.

"Focker In-Law" turns out to be a perfectly adequate sequel thanks to adding something absolutely "Wicked" – Ariana Grande, who breathes new life into the moribund Focker Cinematic Universe.

Grande plays Olivia, a corporate coach and former FBI hostage negotiator dating Greg Focker's son. She's flying to New York to meet the dysfunctional clan at a birthday celebration for Jack, played by Robert De Niro.

This time, De Niro's stern patriarch has softened into a vegan health nut who likes tofu and Pelotons. He cedes the antagonist role to Grande. Ben Stiller's Greg is a protective father who isn't quite sold on his son's angelic girlfriend.

Things get off to a rocky start when Greg tries to sneak into the first-class bathroom on a flight and ducks into Olivia's seat. The two are strangers. She accuses him of stealing from her purse, and the encounter ends with an embarrassing public pat-down.

Back on the ground, they laugh off the incident, but the damage has been done. Greg and Olivia circle each other warily for the whole movie.

Writer-director John Hamburg, who co-wrote the previous three films, brings back the spiky flight attendant, cremated ashes and the polygraph. Mr. Jinx is long dead, but Jack's German shepherd snarls at Greg and, naturally, loves Olivia. Jack bonds with her almost immediately, too.

Things turn hostile when Greg burns dinner while Olivia produces a Michelin-level vegan banquet and saves a choking guest. She calls him an overly involved parent. He suspects mind games. "I'm not one of your marionettes," he tells her.

Surreal touches include a random cameo from tennis star Novak Djokovic and a performance of John Legend's "All of Me" that may ruin the song for viewers.

You don't need a lie-detector test to know that Grande saves it. She plays perfect daughter-in-law material one moment and turns steely the next. It's exactly the jolt the Focker franchise needed. This Thanksgiving, dig in.

"Focker In-Law," a Universal Pictures release that's in theaters Wednesday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for "strong language and suggestive references." Running time is 105 minutes. ★★½☆

AD

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顏曉蓉 Teresa Xiaorong Yan
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THE 1ST SILVER "DEIGNAN AWARD FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP" IN MACAU (2023)

"THE MACAU ESG AWARD" BEST SME 2024



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

tTUNES

Peter Gabriel contends with AI's impact on being human in latest album

LIKE so many of us these days, Peter Gabriel is thinking a lot about artificial intelligence. As companies barrel toward creating machine intelligence they hope surpasses our own, the 76-year-old singer and multi-instrumentalist is reflecting on what it means to be human.

On his latest album, "o\i," the former Genesis singer's response appears to be to go outside, touch grass and remember that we are all "made of earth," as he sings on one of the more upbeat tracks, "Who Are We Talking To?"

Much of the record, though, has a hypnotic solemnity that augments his message. On "Been Undone," the Nazarene, a Turing machine, mitochondria and a funeral bell all turn up over staid synths reminiscent of a church organ.

Gabriel succeeds in creating a deeply spiritual album, a companion piece to his 2023 record, "i/o." He occasionally signals transcendence with Christian imagery, but mostly channels the divine through lyrics about nature and mortality, accompanied by his familiar world music sound. On the ominous, sonically austere "Sacrament," his delivery is almost spoken word.

Nature informed more than his lyrics. The seven-time Grammy winner released one song from the album on each full moon this year, a creative if somewhat hokey approach. Most of the 13 tracks run more than five minutes, with "One by One (Bright-Side Mix)" coming in at nearly 10. The length feels like another effort to subvert the attention economy. On "What Lies Ahead," Gabriel imagines a world connected like a brain, singing somberly over brooding strings.

There is, at times, a tension between the lighthearted tracks and his urgent message. On "Looking for the Happy," Gabriel searches for joy amid chaos over a cheerful brass arrangement. His refusal to despair is admirable, but the song isn't quite convincing that happiness can be found as we confront an intelligence that challenges the very thing that makes us who we are.

Still, this kind of head-on engagement with our current reality is something to be lauded. Amid fears AI will replace human-created art, Gabriel's gritty lyricism and soulful sound remind listeners how much art draws on our experience of life, aging and mortality. **KRYSTA FAURIA, MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



"o\i" by Peter Gabriel. (Real World)

TASTE OF EDESIA

Galaxy Stars of Gastronomy 2026: A five elements culinary journey

IRENE SAM, MDT









BUILDING on a successful three-year legacy of world-class culinary festivals, Galaxy Stars of Gastronomy 2026 debuts this November as Galaxy Macau's eponymous signature gastronomy event. Set to be one of Macau's most anticipated dining celebrations, the inaugural Galaxy edition brings together 12 world-renowned chefs and culinary masters, boasting a collective total of 24 Michelin stars, alongside some of Asia's most celebrated mixologists and pastry talents, for an unparalleled two-day gastronomic experience.

Held during the high-octane Macau Grand Prix weekend, the event draws inspiration from the philosophy of the Five Elements, inviting guests to embark on an immersive culinary journey while reinforcing Macau's position as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy. Through exclusive dishes, cocktails and interactive experiences, culinary and bar talents interpret the elements of Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth in captivating and unexpected ways.

Guided by the ancient Chinese philosophy of Wu Xing, 12 distinguished chefs—including Umberto Bombana, Chek Keong Chan, Vicky Cheng, Taejun Eom, Hiroyasu Kawate, Jimmy Lim, Vianney Massot, Masaaki Miyakawa, Julien Royer, Darren Teoh, Jingye Xu and pastry chef Lok Hin Yam—explore flavor, artistry and heritage, each offering a personal interpretation of their assigned element.

Metal represents rigor and purity of expression. Chef Jingye Xu of House of Origin delivers Crispy Camphor Smoked Wenchang Chicken, while Chef Vianney Massot of Blackswan presents Brittany Blue Lobster with Lobster-Filled Pasta Shells and Coconut Civet Sauce.

Wood symbolises freshness and vitality. Chef Julien Royer of Odette presents Wild Langoustine, Tarragon Sabayon & Kristal Caviar, while Chef Vicky Cheng offers Fish Maw Rice, Smoked Eggplant, Salted Fish & Fermented Chilli.

Water draws inspiration from the ocean's abundance. Chef Masaaki Miyakawa presents Snow Crab with Crab Miso, and Chef Chek Keong Chan explores Sichuan-style South African Abalone.

Fire pays tribute to open flame. Chef Taejun Eom serves Charcoal-Grilled New Zealand Lumina Lamb Chop, Chef Jimmy Lim presents PANGGANG: Flame-Grilled Japanese Kagoshima Beef Wagyu Tenderloin, and Chef Darren Teoh offers Grilled Skewers of Kagoshima Pork Belly.

Earth unfolds with respect for natural terroirs. Chef Umberto Bombana presents Homemade Cavatelli with mushroom ragout and shaved white truffle, while Chef Hiroyasu Kawate spotlights Bluefin Tuna Chutoro Tartare.

Beyond the plate, acclaimed mixologists Andrew Ho, Shelley Tai and Nokoy Mak interpret the elements through specially created cocktails and mocktails, while pastry Chef Lok Hin Yam presents a dessert blending oolong tea, Japanese persimmon and chestnut.

Set at Cabana beside Galaxy Macau's 75,000-square-metre Grand Resort Deck, this exclusive two-day event is the ultimate fusion of luxury, heritage and gastronomy.

Jack's Club debuts at The St. Regis Bar Macao with jazz elegance





THE St. Regis Bar Macao, ranked No. 45 on Asia's 50 Best Bars 2026, hosted the debut of Jack's Club, a signature St. Regis Cabaret transforming the venue into an intimate jazz lounge.

Headlined by international jazz singer Jasmine Chen, the evening revived the brand's Gilded Age heritage with velvet drapery and candlelit tones. Inspired by John Jacob Astor IV's storied New York soirées, Jack's Club set a new benchmark for Macau nightlife.

Head Mixologist Kevin Lai joined Paulo Naranjo and Fransiska to craft jazz-era cocktails like Jack's Old Fashioned and Cotton Club, pairing them with canapés and live music for an unforgettable, glamorous cultural experience. **IS**

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OPINION



The Conversation

Huizhong Wu, MDT/AP

What Taiwan's local elections can tell us

Taiwan will choose mayors, council members and other local leaders across its 22 cities and counties Saturday, in elections focused largely on local issues but also drawing attention from China.

The elections are held once every four years, and will be tightly contested between the ruling Democratic Progressive Party and the Nationalist Party, also known as the Kuomintang or KMT.

While some experts have in the past compared Taiwan's local elections with the U.S. midterms, as a referendum on the ruling party and its policies, this election cycle has largely focused on bread and butter local issues, without much talk about the island's relationship with China.

From Tainan to Taipei, voters will be choosing between candidates from the DPP and KMT. A third party, the Taiwan People's Party, is also running in some smaller races, and linking up with the KMT in the Taipei mayoral race to support the KMT candidate.

While in the past, the DPP has often used the narrative of defending Taiwan against "Beijing's threat" in local races, little of that was on display this time, experts said. They also noted less aggressive campaigning this time from candidates who were instead more focused on policy issues.

"Many of the candidates, they toned down their attacks, and in order to try and get the swing voters, they talked more about policy," said Wei-hao Huang, a political science professor at National Sun Yat-sen University.

"How much does the CPC have in actual importance in Taiwan's local elections? Not much," he said, referring to the Communist Party of China.

Although the elections are across the island, none of the contested positions are in the central government.

"In the election period, people won't talk directly about how the central government has performed. One of the reasons is because it seems like Lai Ching-te's approval ratings have been pretty good," said Jia-wei Liu, a professor in the department of public administration and policy at National Taipei University.

Traditionally, the KMT has performed better in local elections. In the last round of local elections in 2022, the DPP won in only 5 out of 22 localities. Experts say the ruling party has only room to grow.

Some of the most closely watched races are the mayoral races for Taipei, New Taipei City and Kaohsiung, some of the island's biggest cities. New Taipei City's incumbent mayor is from the KMT, while Kaohsiung's mayoral office is held by the DPP.

Jia-wei Liu of National Taipei University described all three races as closely contested.

Taipei's mayoral race is among the most closely watched. The incumbent mayor, the KMT's Chiang Wan-an, has struggled to garner the level of local support expected of him, Chung said.

The performance of the other Taipei mayoral candidate, Puma Shen, may also have significant implications for the ruling DPP.

Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council this week again warned the public to be conscious of any disinformation ahead of the elections.

Beijing retains a strong incentive to influence the outcome, said political scientist Sanho Chung. For voters, however, the choice is who will run their cities and counties and address local concerns. [Abridged]

Andy Taylor, Duran Duran's original guitarist, dies at 65



THE BUZZ

Andy Taylor, the original guitarist of Duran Duran, whose hits "Hungry Like the Wolf," "The Reflex" and "Rio" helped define the early years of MTV, has died. He was 65. His family and bandmates announced his death in a statement.

Taylor revealed in 2022 that he had been living with stage 4 metastatic prostate cancer for several years. He was unable to attend the band's induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame that November.

Taylor joined Duran Duran after answering a Melody Maker ad for a "Live-Wire Guitarist." His playing helped give the band's synthesizer-driven sound its rock edge. The videos made them international stars. "I don't think we could have done it without MTV," he said in 2012.

The band recorded the James Bond theme "A View to a Kill" and played Live Aid in Philadelphia in 1985. Taylor and bassist John Taylor also formed Power Station with Robert Palmer. Andy Taylor later rejoined Duran Duran for its 2004 album "Astronaut."

In 2023, Taylor released "Man's a Wolf to Man," his first solo album in more than 30 years. He is survived by his wife, Tracey, their four children and a grandson.

AP PHOTO



Members of the Women's Cultural and Folklore Association of Mykonos carry the icon of St. Catherine during a procession on the Aegean island of Mykonos

MYKONOS

On Greece's most glamorous island, tradition endure with a celebration of its women

LEFTERIS PITARAKIS & DEREK GATOPOULOS, MYKONOS

LONG before the cruise ships arrived, Mykonos was run by its poor and iron-willed women. On Wednesday (yesterday, Macau time), the Greek island honored them on the feast day of St. Catherine.

Mykonos, now a playground for wealthy travelers, hasn't forgotten its hardscrabble origins when men left to join fishing crews or work in commercial shipping while women managed its modest and traditionally Orthodox Christian society.

More than 17 centuries after her death, St. Catherine of Alexandria is celebrated here as a bond with that past.

"She represents us as women," said Anna Athymariti, head of the Mykonos Women's Cultural and Folklore Association. Founded in 1979, the group chose St. Catherine as its patron in recognition of her courage and wisdom.

"Mykonos has traditionally been considered a matriarchal society," Athymariti said.

A SAINT'S CELEBRATION IS A BOND WITH THE PAST

On Wednesday, she joined Father Petros Marangos, parish priest at the Metropolitan Church of Megali Panagia. They led a procession that carried the saint's flower-adorned icon along Mykonos' celebrated waterfront.

It passed bars and hotels, iconic Greek island whitewashed homes and Mykonos' famous windmills. Along the way, women handed out chocolates to residents and visitors.

Katerina Xydaki, who shares the saint's name, also gave out sweets. Relics of her maternal grandfather are kept in the island's Church of St. Catherine.

"St. Catherine is the patron saint of my family, of me personally and of our community," Xydaki said.

Mykonos was first put on the travel map nearly a century ago as a stopping point for Delos, the nearby and uninhabited island that is the mythological birthplace of Apollo and one of Greece's most important archaeological sites.

FROM HOME-WOVEN TEXTILES TO SUPERYACHTS

Mykonian women sold visitors home-woven textiles and offered up their homes as guest houses. A vacation business was born.

Decades later, the island has been reshaped by luxury tourism. Private yachts, cruises and charter flights deliver affluent visitors, focused on the main town's hedonistic nightlife and high-end consumption.

According to Christian tradition, Catherine was a young and learned noblewoman in Roman Egypt, tortured and killed for embracing Christianity.

The Orthodox Church venerates Catherine as "all-wise," the patron saint of scholars, philosophers, students and unmarried women.

"She read Homer and Virgil, studied medicine and explored every field of knowledge available in that era," said Father Petros, who has served at the church for 35 years.

Beyond its packed beaches and resorts, Marangos said, another Mykonos endures, emerging in the cooler months when the crowds have gone.

"Mykonos is an island rich in tradition," he said, "and its people continue to uphold that tradition with great love and respect."

For Athymariti, St. Catherine's example remains as relevant as ever.

"We take St. Catherine as our example," she said. "So that we, too, can stand strong in our families and in life." **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



European Union leaders met in Brussels yesterday to narrow differences over the bloc's next seven-year budget and a proposed €45 billion loan for Ukraine. The budget proposal also sets aside €100 billion for Ukraine over seven years. Diplomats said a deal was more likely next month.

AP PHOTO



USA Macy's postponed its Thanksgiving Day Parade for the first time, moving the 100th edition from yesterday to Saturday after forecasts of strong winds and rain in New York. The department store said the rescheduled parade would begin at 8:30 a.m. NBC planned to air a rerun of the 2025 parade.

AP PHOTO



Peru A private zoo in Lima introduced two baby meerkats yesterday (Macau time), bringing its colony to 15. Eight of the animals have been born in Lima since 2025. Zoo biologist Eduardo Espíritu said the animals, native to southern Africa, are wild and should never be kept as pets.

AP PHOTO



Nigeria's anti-drug agency announced yesterday (Macau time) that it had seized 1,512 kilograms of methamphetamine worth about $227 million and arrested five Mexican suspects. Agents raided a clandestine laboratory in southeastern Enugu state. The agency said the suspects had entered Nigeria with forged passports.