

LE MANS: TOYOTA WINS AGAIN



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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

CHIEF EXECUTIVE HO IAT SENG HAS EXPRESSED HIS CONFIDENCE IN MACAU'S ECONOMY PICKING UP BY THE SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR

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NEARLY 30,000 PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN MACAO ARTS FESTIVAL PROGRAMS

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A FIRE BROKE OUT IN THE CARPARK ENGINE ROOM OF THE MACAU OLYMPIC AQUATIC CENTER, CAUSING THE ID TO CLOSE THE SITE

P3



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un doubled down on his arms buildup in the face of what he described as an aggravating security environment while outside governments monitor signs of a possibly imminent North Korean nuclear test explosion. Kim defended his accelerating weapons development as a rightful exercise of sovereign rights to self-defense and set forth further "militant tasks" to be pursued by his armed forces and military scientists, according to state-run Korean Central News Agency.



Cambodia's prime minister urged military-ruled Myanmar to reconsider the death sentences against four political opponents, suggesting that executing them will draw strong international condemnation and complicate efforts to restore peace to the strife-torn nation. Hun Sen's letter on Saturday to Myanmar ruler Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing adds to worldwide concern and protest over the intended executions of four men involved in the struggle against military rule.



Sweden Having to defend Gotland against a foreign invasion seemed such a far-fetched notion to Swedish decision-makers at the start of the century that they demilitarized the Baltic Sea island. Now, the Swedish Armed Forces are back, and they are practicing with U.S. troops not just how to defend the island with a population of 58,000, but how to take it back from a foreign aggressor.

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VIA TAIWAN

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COVID-19

GOV'T TO ADOPT '10+7' MEASURE FROM JUNE 15

THE quarantine period for inbound travellers from overseas will be shortened from 14 days to 10 days, the government announced over the weekend.

From June 15, individuals who meet certain conditions and enter the SAR from Hong Kong, Taiwan or foreign places will be subject to a "10+7" anti-epidemic measure (i.e. 10 days of centralized medical observation in isolation and seven days of self-health monitoring).

The passenger must have completed triple Covid-19 vaccination prior to entry and have tested negative on nucleic acid tests on arrival and during the period of centralized medical observation in isolation.

According to a statement, during the period of self-health

monitoring, the Macao Health Code will be displayed in green, subject to the receipt of nucleic acid tests on Day 11, 12, 14, 16 and 17 since arrival.

Those who fail to take the test as scheduled will be assigned a Macao Health Code in yellow; if no test is taken after 24 hours of the specified dates, their Macao Health Code will turn red.

Also, arrivals from the Hong Kong SAR, the region of Taiwan, or foreign places are not allowed to travel to mainland China via the Macau SAR until the nucleic acid test conducted on the 14th day of entry returns a negative result.

Andy Wu Keng Kuong, chairman of the Travel Industry Council of Macau, considers this new directive as the "first step" towards

fully easing restrictions, although the newly imposed measure is mainly to attract tourists from Hong Kong and Taiwan to Macau.

If the pandemic continues to stabilize, the Council is optimistic about the number of tourist arrivals in the upcoming summer.

He also hopes that authorities will increase the number of quarantine hotels.

The Times is aware that, at least in the case of the Art Regency Hotel, there are vacancies from July 11 to August 11, while Treasure Hotel is fully booked until July 24.

Last week was the first time the CE had announced that local authorities are in discussion with Beijing about the "10+7" measure," adding that he hoped such measures could be achieved by summer. LV



TAIWAN TO RESUME INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSIT SERVICE

ANTHONY LAM

DUE to developments in Taiwan's Covid-19 conditions, the island's health agency has recently announced that international air transit services will resume from June 15.

By that time, Taiwan will have barred international air transit passengers for more than a year. The current restrictions were put in place on May 19, 2021.

This news will likely excite many Macau residents currently away from home as they will have a more direct route to return to Macau if departing from the Americas.

Currently, Macau residents flying in and out of the city can only fly via Singapore, which is the country that offers both flights and transit permission to and from Macau.

Taking this route means that returnees from the Americas need to fly excessively south before turning northward to head home.

With Taiwan resuming air transit services, travelers



will be able to make a brief stop in Taiwan's Taoyuan International Airport before boarding a flight home.

Entry into Taiwan is still restricted to its own residents and a small group of travelers meeting specific conditions.

As Taiwan eases transit restrictions, it will also shorten quarantine-upon-arrival periods from a seven-day quarantine plus seven-day health self-supervision (7+7 mode) to a three-day quarantine plus four-day

limited movement, if tests-on-arrival return negative results. Otherwise, travelers will be required to complete seven days of quarantine.

During the four days of limited movement, travelers may only go to work or buy necessities. Nonessential travel will not be permitted.

Meanwhile, Macau's Health Bureau has also announced over the weekend that from June 15, entrants will see their quarantine-upon-arrival period reduced from "14+7" to "10+7."

MACAO ART FESTIVAL CONCLUDES WITH 90% TICKETING RATE

LYNZY VALLES

NEARLY 30,000 people participated in the programs and outreach activities of this year's Macao Art Festival, which was themed "Invigorate."

"The overall ticketing rate reached nearly 90% and nearly 6.6 million people were exposed to online advertising," the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) said in a statement.

The organiser said it had actively strengthened the public's interaction through new media platforms by launching themed games to link the contents of the programs with the participants' anecdotes, reaching an online game engagement rate of 9,000.

"The programs were highly sought after and tickets were almost sold out," the IC said in a statement.

The 32nd MAF featured a wide range of activities including dance,



theatre, and children's programs, aiming to promote arts to different types of audiences.

A number of outreach activities were launched, including workshops, talks, backstage tours, community tours, art performances and food home deliveries, and accessibility services.

This year, the MAF had a total budget of 24 million patacas, 14% more than in 2021, when the total budget was 21 million patacas.

Organizers said that there is a much larger program than in 2021 and that this is why the budget is higher this year. The MAF has moved from 18 to 27 activities or events on the program and from 44 to over 100 for the extended and outreach program.

Meanwhile, in terms of visual arts, the exhibition "Wild Imagination: Contemporary Ink Art in Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao from 2000 to 2022" will end June 19.

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Times

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Residents slam gov't for slow action on Guia Hill landslide warnings

ANTHONY LAM

RESIDENTS of the neighborhood where last Thursday's Guia Hill landslide happened have criticized the Government for not heeding their warnings that such an incident could occur.

The landslide took place behind the public hospital's future infectious disease building, where construction was underway.

Residents of carparks and apartments on lower floors of nearby residential buildings, such as Ka On Court, complained about the Government's lack of action on earlier reports filed by these residents.

Residents have complained about the possibility of a landslide or other accidents amid the constructions of the future medical building. The larger site of this landslide is a triangle consisting of the future medical facility, a private residential development, and several existing residential buildings.

Within this larger site is an approximately four-century-old city wall, which is a legally accredited and cataloged relic.

Complaints had been filed with the government by nearby



COURTESY TDM

residents about the potential hazards of a landslide, but residents were assured that no problem would arise.

Complainants have also reported muddy water and water leakage from the construction sites to nearby buildings, but said that the government had done nothing to address these issues.

They suggested that the lands-

lide could have been avoided.

Pictures released show that a first-floor apartment wall that faces the hillside was destroyed, and the impacted room was filled with mud.

Amid residents' complaints about slow prevention and reaction to the incident, lawmaker Ron Lam criticised the Land and Urban Construction Bureau

(DSSCU) for evading its responsibilities. He added that the government should have issued an emergency response.

Lam Iek Chit, urban planner and member of the Cultural Heritage Committee, called for the government to rigorously investigate the cause of the landslide, according to a report by local media outlet All About Macau.

IC pledges to 'realistically restore' damaged four-century-old city wall

ANTHONY LAM

THE Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has pledged that it will restore the severely damaged four-century-old city wall "following its original form, skills and materials."

The promise was made in a statement issued Friday afternoon, after the landslide on Thursday evening.

To achieve this end, the IC disclosed that it has already restored the wall some years ago. During this restoration, samples of the wall were collected and analyzed. In the statement, the IC said it "is aware of its materials and production methodologies."

The bureau added that, in future and after the hillside is reinforced,



COURTESY TDM

the IC will realistically restore the fallen city wall.

However, with the majority of the city wall being damaged, it is unclear how much the wall can be

restored.

The IC emphasized that during discussions about nearby projects, it has issued several opinions and requirements.

The bureau also clarified that a structure found in January this year, which was suspected to be part of the city wall, has been confirmed as not

part of the wall.

Several hours after IC's statement, the Land and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU) and the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) jointly issued a statement to clarify the work that they were doing in response to the landslide.

The preliminary judgment of the DSSCU was that the structure of Ka On Court, a building with a whole wall of a room completely destroyed on impact, was still intact. Additionally, inspections have been carried out on several nearby buildings.

Both bureaus noted that emergency restoration on the landscape had already commenced, but they added that work would be slow due to expected rainfall.

As the site of the landslide is adjacent to a private construction project, that construction has been suspended due to the landslide, although the DSSCU stressed that the original construction had long been approved.

OLYMPIC SPORTS CENTER'S POOL CLOSED FOLLOWING FIRE

STAFF REPORTER

A fire broke out in the carpark engine room of the Macau Olympic Aquatic Center around 8 p.m. on Saturday, causing the Sports Bureau (ID) to close the center.

It is suspected that the fire was caused by the capacitor overheating.

The pool's staff said that all swimmers and staff had been evacuated, and that no one was injured.

The Fire Services Bureau (CB) said that around 30 people evacuated by their own initiative.

The Chief of the ID Sports Facility Management Department, Joe Ho, said, "the engine room is maintained every month, and there was no problem in the last inspection. It is believed that human factors may not be involved in the fire, but the cause of the fire needs to be investigated."

Ho added that "presently, they need time to evaluate the electrical system. So, the swimming pool and leisure sports area are closed from today; the swimming team will need to coordinate with other swimming pools to continue training. The three-on-three basketball court and parking lot have also adjusted their opening hours."

Meanwhile, the Cheoc Van Swimming Pool also closed due to blockage by heavy rains over the weekend. The pool was so affected by the rains due to its proximity to the sea and the mountains.

The authorities said it will work to open the Cheoc Van Swimming Pool as soon as possible after the drainage cleansing.

Separately, the vaccine sites in Mong-Ha Sport Centre will close from today as the ID will have to complete works on the Sport Centre.



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Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng (left) and Secretary of the CPC Guangdong Provincial Committee Li Xi

CE confident on H2 economic recovery

LYNZY VALLES

THE Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng has expressed his confidence in Macau's economy picking up by the second half of the year.

On Friday in Guangzhou, Ho met with the Secretary of the Guangdong Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), Li Xi, and the Governor of Guangdong Province, Wang Weizhong.

According to the CE, "Macau [is] maintaining its overall stability,

and [has] considerable achievements regarding effective pandemic prevention and control."

However, he admitted that Macau had faced economic pressure due to a significant drop in the number of visitors and tourists.

For the first four months of 2022, Macau received a total of 2.48 million tourist arrivals, with the majority still hailing from mainland China, which has had borders closed since March 2020.

A plunge in incoming tourists occurred in March 2022, the lowest month for tourism this year, with

about 526,912 arrivals, owing to the resurgence of the pandemic in the neighbouring regions.

The total expenditure by visitors (excluding gaming expenses) rose by 6.7% year-on-year to MOP6.59 billion in the first quarter of 2022, despite the consecutive downturn in visitor arrivals from January to March.

According to the CE, as the pandemic was subsiding on the mainland, he was confident that Macau's economy would gradually recover by the second half of this year, adding that the region is

making "steady progress in terms of adequate economic diversification."

According to a report issued by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Macau SAR's economic recovery is expected to continue, but it will take time before the economy fully regains its losses from the pandemic,

The city's recovery is forecast to continue this year, with IMF projecting a 15.5% GDP growth in 2022, driven by the gradual return of foreign tourists and the return in domestic demand.

Meanwhile, on Friday, the CE attended a panel meeting with Governor Wang, to exchange views on the next phase of cooperation, especially in terms of expediting the construction of the Cooperation Zone, and the measures regarding the movement of goods under either the "first-tier" of relaxed administration, or the "second-tier" of stricter customs control.

During the panel meeting, Ho stressed that Guangdong and Macau should maintain their significant levels of effectiveness in pandemic prevention and control, whilst facilitating movement by travellers and boosting economic activity.

Ho also admitted that the SAR government was "actively considering a reduction in the centralised medical observation period to "10+7" or even "7+7," in order to promote economic recovery for the two places.

On Saturday, the local government announced that all foreign arrivals' quarantine would be cut to 10 days from 14 days, with seven days of self-health monitoring from home.

EMPLOYMENT

Macau Legend discloses plans to 'adjust' 16% worker placements



ANTHONY LAM

THE parent company of the Macau Fisherman's Wharf will see "adjustments" in 16% of its workforce due to the over 20% drop in revenue, a company executive disclosed yesterday.

Speaking on the sidelines of an event, Melinda Chan, executive director and CEO of Macau Legend Development Limited, owner and operator of the Macau Fisherman's Wharf, told the press that the company has suffered at least a one-fifth drop in its revenue.

She hinted that this meant a "career adjustment" across its workforce

would be needed, according to public broadcaster TDM.

Local people will account for about 55% in the general adjustment.

Chan insisted that the adjustment is "normal" or justifiable because the company "has the current workforce placement on the grounds of Macau having 30 million tourists each year."

She added that the company would "simplify its structure and restructure its business." Business strategies will also be reformulated to cope with the future, she said.

"But I don't think the departure of our workers will be permanent," she said.

"Not even our workers will think so."

The local government, usually represented by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL), has reiterated its aim to retain local workers. If, in the worst case, layoffs are needed, employers should try their best to retain their local workforces.

Chan also spoke about Macau Legend's partnership with SJM Resorts, S.A. The latter is a casino licensee and operates the casinos in the Fisherman's Wharf.

All casino licenses have been extended to the end of this year. A re-license process is underway with the review of the Gambling Law being the current topic.

Chan explained that the future of the partnership will only be determined after the re-license process concludes. Whether or not SJM is relicensed will affect the existence of the partnership, Chan hinted.

VEHICLE SMUGGLES 31 BOTTLES OF MOUTAI

Law enforcement officers at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) discovered a cross-boundary vehicle traveling from Macau to Guangdong smuggling 31 bottles of Moutai from Zhuhai highway port of HZMB to mainland China last Thursday. During the inspection, the liquor was found hidden in the trunk, doors, seat storage compartments, and under floor mats. The authorities in Guangdong will further inspect the vehicle as required. The authorities issued a reminder that evading customs supervision by hiding, disguising, or concealing illegal products may be criminal and will be investigated.

DSAL CO-HOLDS WORKSHOP FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

The Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) and Macao Construction Industry General Union jointly held the first session on "understanding prefabricated building construction" at the Seac Pai Wan Vocational Training Center on June 11. According to the scheme, more than 2,000 vocational training places can be provided for the construction industry each year. The workshop teaches participants about prefabricated building construction technology.

IC HOLDS HERITAGE CARNIVAL

On "China Cultural and Natural Heritage Day" to promote the concept of "Protecting and Appreciating Our Cultural Heritage Together," the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) held the "China Cultural and Natural Heritage Day Carnival 2022" at the Mount Fortress Garden and the Macao Museum over the weekend. The IC also held an awards ceremony for the "2021 Guided Tour for Children in Practice Project" of the Macao Museum. A total of 22 people who completed the training course have become tour guides. They explain the history and culture of Macau to the public and visitors.

DIPLOMACY

Beijing accuses US of trying to 'hijack' support

SYAWALLUDIN ZAIN
& DAVID RISING, SINGAPORE

CHINA'S defense minister accused the United States yesterday of trying to "hijack" the support of countries in the Asia-Pacific region to turn them against Beijing, saying Washington is seeking to advance its own interests "under the guise of multilateralism."

Defense Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe lashed out at U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, rejecting his "smearing accusation" the day before at the Shangri-La Dialogue that China was causing instability with its claim to the self-governing island of Taiwan and its increased military activity in the area.

Austin had stressed the need for multilateral partnerships with nations in the Indo-Pacific, which Wei suggested was an attempt to back China into a corner.

"No country should impose its will on others or bully others under the guise of multilateralism," he said. "The strategy is an attempt to build an exclusive small group in the name of a free and open Indo-Pacific to hijack countries in our region and target one specific country — it is a strategy to create conflict and confrontation to contain and encircle others."

China has been rapidly modernizing its military and seeking to expand its influence and ambitions in the region, recently signing a security agreement with the Solomon Islands that many fear could lead to a Chinese naval base in the Pacific, and breaking ground this past week on a naval port expansion project in Cambodia that could give Beijing a foothold in the Gulf of Thailand.

Last year U.S. officials accused China of testing a hypersonic missile, a weapon harder for missile defense systems to counter, but China insisted it had been a "routine test of a spacecraft."

Answering a question about the test yesterday, Wei came the closest so far to acknowledging it was, indeed, a hypersonic missile, saying, "As for hypersonic weapons, many countries are developing weapons and I think there's no surprise that China is doing so."

"China will develop its military," he added. "I think it's natural."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken last month said China represented the "most serious long-term challenge to the international order" for the United States, with its claims to Taiwan and efforts to dominate the strategic South China Sea.

AP PHOTO



Defense Minister General Wei Fenghe speaks at a plenary session during the 19th International Institute for Strategic Studies

The U.S. and its allies have responded with so-called freedom of navigation patrols in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait, sometimes encountering a pushback from China's military.

Wei accused the U.S. of "med-

dling in the affairs of our region" with the patrols, and "flexing the muscles by sending warships and warplanes on a rampage in the South China Sea."

China has squared off with the Philippines and Vietnam, among

others, over maritime claims and Wei said it was up to the countries in the region to find their own solutions.

"China calls for turning the South China Sea into a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation,"

TANGSHAN

Nine arrested after vicious assault on women in Hebei

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

CHINESE authorities arrested nine people on suspicion of violently assaulting several women at a restaurant after surveillance footage of the attack sparked widespread outrage.

Footage from a barbecue restaurant in Tangshan in northern Hebei province, time stamped 2:40 a.m. Friday, showed one of the men approaching a table where a party of four women were seated and placing his hand on a woman's back.

She rebuffed him several times before he flew into a rage and slapped her, prompting her to fight back. A brawl ensued, with a group of men entering the restaurant and brutally attacking the woman and her dining partners, including

shoving them to the ground, kicking them and even throwing a chair at them.

Footage taken from outside the restaurant also showed the attackers dragging the woman who had initially rebuffed the man's advances out of the establishment before being viciously beaten, with most passersby and patrons of the restaurant looking on.

Photographs of her lying on a stretcher, with a swollen and bloodied face, as well as footage of the attack, went viral online.

The assault and the public outcry renewed a conversation about misogyny and mistreatment of women in China. Earlier this year, a viral video of a woman being chained to a wall in a hut drew public backlash after authorities initially denied that she was

a victim of human trafficking. She was later found to have been sold as a bride.

All nine suspects were arrested Saturday, according to a statement by authorities issued on microblogging platform Weibo.

Two women had also sustained non-life-threatening injuries and were receiving treatment in a hospital. Their condition was reported to be stable. Two others were slightly injured.

The footage of what happened both inside and outside the restaurant was just under five minutes. The Weibo user who was among the first to post the videos said in a post that it was "heartbreaking" to watch.

"Does that mean that dining out is so unsafe now, do we have to bring men with us everywhere we go?" the post read. "(These men



are no different from thugs."

When reached, the user declined to reveal the source of the videos, stating that it was "inconvenient" to do so. By yesterday, the video of footage filmed inside the restaurant had garnered over 68 million views, while the footage showing the graphic assault outside the restau-

rant had been taken down.

Social media users have condemned the attack and criticized Tangshan police for being slow in arresting the suspects.

"I'm a woman, and I have a daughter," said one Weibo user with the handle BaobaomaoDaren. "I wonder — as I'm creating value for society and spreading

positive energy, will this society protect me and my child?"

State broadcaster CCTV said in an online commentary that the suspects must be arrested as quickly as possible and "punished severely in accordance with the law" in order to account to the victims and the public. **MDT/AP**

t in Asia



Shangri-la Dialogue, in Singapore

Taiwan and China split during a civil war in 1949, but China claims the island as its own territory, and has not ruled out the use of military force to take it, while maintaining it is a domestic political issue.

Washington follows a "one-China" policy, which recognizes Beijing but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei. It provides arms to Taiwan and follows a "strategic ambiguity" approach about how far it would be willing to go to defend Taiwan in the face of a Chinese invasion. At the same time, it does not support Taiwanese independence.

President Joe Biden raised eyebrows and China's pique last month saying that the U.S. would intervene militarily if Taiwan were attacked, though the White House later said the comments did not reflect a policy shift.

Austin on Saturday accused China of threatening to change the status quo on Taiwan with a "steady increase in provocative and destabilizing military activity" near the island.

Wei fired back that the U.S. was not adhering to its "one-China" policy, saying "it keeps playing the Taiwan card against China."

He said China's "greatest wish" was "peaceful reunification" with Taiwan, but also made clear Beijing was willing to do whatever it took to realize its goals.

"China will definitely realize its reunification," he said. "China's reunification is a great cause of the Chinese nation, and it is a historical trend that no one and no force can stop."

He added that China would "resolutely crush any attempt to pursue Taiwan independence."

"We will not hesitate to fight, we will fight at all costs and we will fight to the very end," he said. "This is the only choice for China."

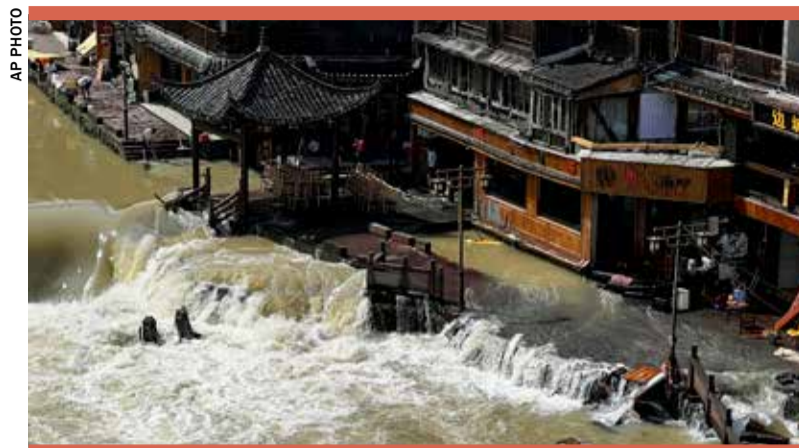
Wei and Austin met one-on-one on Saturday, and Taiwan featured prominently in their discussions, according to the U.S.

Yesterday, Wei met with Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles, which the Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported was the first high-level meeting between the two countries in more than two years.

Marles said it had been three years since Chinese and Australian defense ministers had met, and called the meeting a "critical first step."

"As Sec. Austin observed after his own meeting with Defense Minister Wei, it is really important in these times to have open lines of dialogue," he told reporters.

"Australia and China's relationship is complex and it's precisely because of this complexity that it is really important that we are engaging in dialogue right now." MDT/AP



AP PHOTO

CHINA EARMARKS 360 MILLION YUAN TO SUPPORT DISASTER RELIEF

CHINA last week allocated 360 million yuan (USD53.74 million) in advance from its central natural disaster relief funds to help local governments with flood control and disaster relief, the Ministry of Emergency Management said Saturday.

Some 340 million yuan was earmarked for 12 southern provincial-level regions, including Hunan, Guangxi and Guizhou, to help them with the search, rescue and relocation of affected people, emergency treatment, secondary disaster detection and the repair of damaged houses, the ministry said.

The remaining 20 million yuan

was allocated to northeast China's Liaoning Province to solve the water shortage there.

Several rounds of rainstorms have battered the country's southern areas this year, triggering floods, landslides and mud-rock flows.

In May, floods damaged over 1,000 houses and affected 2.52 million people in 15 provincial-level regions, leaving 10 people dead or missing, according to the ministry.

Floods caused a direct economic loss of 5.09 billion yuan last month, up 35 percent from the average during the same period over the past five years. XINHUA

he said. "This is the shared wish and responsibility of countries in the region."

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Second General Scientific Research Funding Application of 2022

I. Objectives
The Science and Technology Development Fund (FDCT) aims to concur with the objectives of the science and technology development policy of the Macao Special Administrative Region, and provide funding for projects that would enhance Macao SAR's science research capability, innovativeness and competitiveness.

II. Targets

1. Local universities, colleges and their R&D centers;
2. Laboratories or entities engaged in R&D activities in Macao;
3. Local private non-profit organizations;
4. Commercial enterprises and entrepreneurs registered in Macao and engaged in R&D activities;
5. People engaged in R&D activities in Macao.

III. Eligible Projects

1. Projects facilitating the popularization and deepening of scientific and technological knowledge;
2. Projects facilitating enterprises' improvement in productivity and competitiveness;
3. Projects facilitating the research and development, promotion and innovation of industrial development;
4. Projects facilitating the transformation of R&D achievements
5. Projects facilitating foreign scientific and technological cooperation;
6. Technology transfer projects promoting the city's economic development as a priority;
7. Patent application.

IV. Project Types
Applicants shall select one of the following project types for their projects, defined based on the classification of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

1. Fundamental research: projects undertaken to obtain new knowledge of the basic theories of phenomena and observable facts;
2. Applied research: innovative projects with specific aims, undertaken to promote the application of the results of fundamental research.
3. Experiment and development: projects with practical applications, undertaken for the introduction of useful products, materials, devices, technics, systems, services, etc. They include cooperation projects between industry, academic and research sectors as well as enterprises' R&D and clinical research projects.

V. Approved Amounts:

1. Applications for less than or equal to MOP1,000,000.00 (One million Patacas) (reviewed by Administrative Committee)
2. Applications for more than MOP 1,000,000.00 (One million Patacas) (reviewed by Trustee Committee)

VI. Application period:
13th June, 2022 to 13th July, 2022

VII. Application Method
Please apply through FDCT's online funding application system with the required documents listed in Article 6 of the Financial Aid Grant Regulation, approved as per the Chief Executive's Dispatch No. 64/2021 published in the Official Gazette, No.18 dated May 4th 2021. (website: www.fdct.gov.mo)
Office Address: Room K, 11/F, Macau Square, No.43-53A Avenida do Infante D. Henrique, Macao. Tel.: 28788777

VIII. Review Criteria
The review is conducted according to the Financial Aid Grant Regulation approved as per the Chief Executive's Dispatch No. 64/2021.

President of FDCT Administrative Committee,
Chan Wan Hei
2022 / 06 / 10

PUTIN'S WAR

Ukraine's leader says his troops keep defying predictions

DAVID KEYTON AND
JOHN LEICESTER, KYIV

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said no one knows how long the war in his country will last but that Ukrainian forces are defying expectations by preventing Russian troops from over-running eastern Ukraine, where the fighting has been fiercest for weeks.

In his nightly video address, Zelenskyy said he was proud of the Ukrainian defenders managing to hold back the Russian advance in the Donbas region, which borders Russia and where Moscow-backed separatists have controlled much of the territory for eight years.

"Remember how in Russia, in the beginning of May, they hoped to seize all of the Donbas?" the president said late Saturday. "It's already the 108th day of the war, already June. Donbas is holding on."

After failing to capture Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, early in the war, Moscow focused on seizing the parts of the largely Russian-speaking Donbas still in Ukrainian hands, as well as the country's southern coast. But instead of securing a swift, decisive takeover, Russian forces were drawn into a long, laborious battle, thanks in part to the Ukrainian military's use of Western-supplied weapons.

Both Ukrainian and Russian authorities said Sievierodonetsk, an eastern city with a prewar population of 100,000, remained contested. The city and neighboring Lysychansk are the last major areas of the Donbas' Luhansk province not under the control of the pro-Russian rebels.

Leonid Pasechnik, the head of the separatist-declared Luhansk People's Republic, said Ukrainian fighters remained in an industrial area of the city, including a chemical plant where civilians had taken shelter from days of Russian shelling.

"Sievierodonetsk is not completely 100% liberated," Pasechnik said Saturday, alleging that the Ukrainians were shelling the city from



Ukraine supporters cheer on the stands during the UEFA Nations League soccer match between Ukraine and Armenia, in Lodz, Poland

the Azot plant. "So it's impossible to call the situation calm in Sievierodonetsk, that it is completely ours."

Luhansk Gov. Serhii Haidai reported Saturday that a big fire broke out at the plant during hours of Russian shelling.

Elsewhere in Ukraine, a counteroffensive pushed Russians out of parts of the southern Kherson region they took early in the war, according to Zelenskyy. Moscow has installed local authorities in Kherson and other occupied coastal areas, offering residents Russian passports, airing Russian news broadcasts and taking steps to introduce a Russian school curriculum.

Zelenskyy said that while an end to the war was not in sight, Ukraine should do everything it can so the Russians "regret everything that they have done and that they answer for every killing and every strike on our beautiful state."

The Ukrainian leader asserted that Russia has suffered about three times as many military casualties as the number estimated for the Ukrainian side, adding: "For what? What did it get you, Russia?" There are no reliable independent estimates of the war's death toll so far.

Speaking at a defense conference in Singapore yesterday, Chinese Defense Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe

said Beijing continues to support peace talks between Russia and Ukraine, and hopes the U.S. and its NATO allies have discussions with Russia "to create the conditions for an early ceasefire." "China will continue to play a constructive role and contribute our share to easing tensions and realizing a political resolution of the crisis," Wei said.

He suggested that nations supplying weapons to Ukraine were hindering peace by "adding fuel to the fire" and stressed that China had not provided any material support to Russia during the war.

"The growth of China-Russia relations is a partnership, not an alliance," Wei said.

The Institute for the Study of War, a think tank based in Washington, said in its latest assessment that Ukrainian intelligence suggested the Russian military was planning "to fight a longer war."

The institute cited the deputy head of Ukraine's national security agency as saying that Moscow had extended its war timeline until October, with adjustments to be made depending on any successes in the Donbas.

The intelligence "likely indicates the Kremlin has, at a minimum, acknowledged it cannot achieve its objectives in Ukraine quickly and is further adjusting its military

objectives in an attempt to correct the initial deficiencies in the invasion of Ukraine," the think tank said.

The Luhansk People's Republic's ambassador to Russia, Rodion Miroshnik, said Saturday that 300 to 400 Ukrainian troops remained blockaded inside the Sievierodonetsk chemical plant along with several hundred civilians.

The Russians established contact with the Ukrainian troops to arrange the evacuation of the civilians, but the troops will be allowed to leave only if they lay down their arms and surrender, Miroshnik said.

Similar conditions existed for weeks at a steel mill in the southern Ukrainian city of Mariupol before a civilian evacuation was arranged and the defending troops were ordered by Ukrainian military commanders to stand down. The fighters who came out of the Mariupol plant were taken prisoner by the Russians.

Pasechnik, the separatist leader of the unrecognized Luhansk republic, said the Ukrainians making a stand in Sievierodonetsk should save themselves the trouble.

"If I were them, I would already make a decision (to surrender)," he said. "We will achieve our goal in any case. We will liberate the industrial area in any case. We will liberate Sievierodonetsk in any case. Lysychansk will be ours in any case." **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1991 YELTSIN WINS FIRST RUSSIAN ELECTIONS



Boris Yeltsin is celebrating victory as Russia's first popularly-elected president.

The 60-year-old reformer and leader of the group Democratic Russia has inflicted a heavy defeat on the Communist Party which has ruled the country since the 1917 Revolution.

Although the result will not be officially confirmed until next week, it is clear Mr Yeltsin has achieved more than the 50% of votes required to avoid a second ballot.

His supporters claim he has secured 60 to 70% of the vote in many of the large Russian cities and up to 90% in his native city, Sverdlovsk.

His allies, Gavriil Popov and Anatoly Sobchak, who stood in the mayoral races in Moscow and Leningrad respectively, have also defeated their Communist rivals.

But the biggest surprise of all is that the people of Leningrad have voted to change the city's name back to the Tsarist St Petersburg - despite a vigorous opposition campaign.

Mr Popov said the elections had been "a great event in Russian history and brought Russia into the family of civilised nations which choose their leaders by direct popular elections".

United States presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said the election was a "historic step for the Russian people and the Soviet Union".

Mr Yeltsin resigned from the Soviet Communist Party last year. He had been a trenchant critic of Mr Gorbachev for not pressing ahead fast enough with political reform and his departure left the Communist Party in disarray.

One of Mr Yeltsin's first tasks as Russian President will be to maintain the delicate political balance between himself and Mr Gorbachev.

Speaking on the eve of the ballot, Mr Yeltsin said his relations with Mr Gorbachev were "businesslike and low-key".

For his part, Mr Gorbachev told reporters that he was prepared to co-operate with anyone the Russians elected.

Mr Yeltsin has chosen as his deputy a former Afghan war hero, Colonel Alexander Rutskoi.

He will also have to improve his shaky international image - beginning with a visit to Washington and President George Bush on 20 June.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

In August 1991 Soviet hardliners staged a coup against President Gorbachev and President Yeltsin emerged as a national hero as he rallied the people from the top of a tank to keep the peace. In early December, the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus precipitated the end of the Soviet Union with the formation of the CIS or Commonwealth of Independent States. Mr Gorbachev stepped down as Soviet leader on 25 December 1991 and Mr Yeltsin became president of independent Russia. The unpredictable nature of his character surfaced again and he sacked his entire government twice, until parliament eventually forced him to accept limitations on his powers. He stepped down on 1 January 2000.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

 ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Relationships will become stronger. You may experience setbacks due to additional responsibilities with loved ones. Do something that will be stimulating and creative.	 TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Try to be honest when dealing with your mate. This may not be the time to lend or borrow. Restrictions may be difficult for you to live with, but try to do things by the book.
 GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Consider making pleasure trips or participating in entertainment that will require energy. You may find that your generosity has been taken for granted. Don't count your chickens before they hatch.	 CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You will have no problem getting along with clients. You may blow situations out of proportion when dealing with the one you love. You may need to make a choice.
 LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You may be frustrated by the way situations are being handled in your personal life. Renovations to your domestic scene will pay high rewards.	 VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 A new you could help your attitude. Don't let your mate bully you into thinking that you owe them your time and your life. You need more time to think this whole situation through.
 LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 You will be a bit of a spendthrift today. You can learn valuable information if you listen and observe what others are doing and saying. You need to look into new philosophies.	 SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 You will meet a person who may turn out to be more than just a friend. You will communicate easily and should be able to accomplish all that you set out to do. Be prepared to neutralize any threats.
 SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Your sensitivity toward those you love will capture their hearts. If you can, try to work out of your home today. Your boss won't be too thrilled if you leave things unfinished.	 CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You may be confused regarding your love life. Unexpected changes in friendships could occur. One sided attractions are likely.
 AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Older family members may try to make demands that are impossible for you to handle. Accept the inevitable. Changes in your home environment may cause friction.	 PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Your tendency to vacillate will drive everyone crazy. Don't bang your head against a wall. Don't be too quick to judge your position or surroundings at work.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	18	28	rain
Changchun	17	24	thunderstorms
Chengdu	19	30	cloudy
Chongqing	21	29	cloudy
Fuzhou	21	28	rain
Guangzhou	26	31	rain
Guiyang	17	22	showers
Haikou	26	35	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	20	27	rain
Harbin	17	24	thunderstorms
Hefei	18	30	cloudy
Nanjing	19	28	overcast
Shanghai	20	23	rain
Taipei	22	29	cloudy
Wuhan	21	31	fine
Hong Kong	26	28	showers
WORLD			
Moscow	15	23	showers
Frankfurt	9	23	overcast
Paris	12	24	clear
London	11	22	overcast
New York	19	31	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- In vogue; 5- Container cover; 8- Lhasa ___; 12- Actress Downey; 13- Faucet stuff; 15- Basin; 16- "A Jug of Wine..." poet; 17- ___ Gay; 18- Jutting rock; 19- Automate by computers; 22- TV listings abbr.; 23- Building wing; 24- Treater's words; 26- Doze; 29- Fervent; 31- San Francisco's ___ Hill; 32- Biscotto flavoring; 34- Squelched; 36- Simians; 38- Band's sample tapes; 40- Ill-mannered one; 41- Henri's hat; 43- Melodies; 45- That's awful!; 46- Boring; 48- Spatter; 50- He sang about Alice; 51- Unit of weight; 52- Boiling; 54- Gadget; 61- Pop singer Brickell; 63- Now you ___; 64- Composer Schifrin; 65- Cheer; 66- Fluff, as bangs; 67- JFK postings; 68- Sea-going eagle; 69- Numbered rd.; 70- Actress Russo;

DOWN 1- Plastic clog; 2- ___ sapiens; 3- Mosque leader; 4- Floor covering; 5- Alley; 6- Like ___ not; 7- Sandwich shop; 8- 1970 Jackson 5 hit; 9- Momentous; 10- Do the deck; 11- Gymnast Korbut; 13- Marsh; 14- Stubble remover; 20- It parallels a radius; 21- Winds up; 25- Repeat; 26- Managed; 27- Mental lapse; 28- Devoutness; 29- Ages; 30- Not easily broken; 31- Arrest; 33- Dallas sch.; 35- ___ degree; 37- Psychic; 39- Divided, anatomically; 42- Bath powder; 44- Swill; 47- Fowl pole; 49- Deer horn; 52- "You are ___"; 53- Redolence; 55- ___-do-well; 56- Milk source; 57- Increase in height or number; 58- Must've been something ___; 59- Pearl Buck heroine; 60- It smells; 62- Hot time in Paris;

Friday's solution

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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TAIPA 1 BED	HKD 7,900
MACAU 2 BEDS	HKD 9,300
TAIPA MARINA BAY 1 BED	HKD 7,500
HELLENE GARDENS 3 BEDS	HKD 13,500
TAIPA STUDIO	HKD 6,800
COLOANE 1 BED	HKD 9,300

FOR SALE UNDER HKD 5 MILLION

OLD TAIPA VILLAGE 2-BEDS	HKD 4,800,000
TAIPA RENOVATED 2 BEDS	HKD 4,680,000
CENTRAL TAIPA 2-BEDS	HKD 4,380,000
TAIPA CUTE & COZY STUDIO	HKD 3,980,000
TAIPA STUDIO WITH BALCONY	HKD 3,780,000
TAIPA GREAT POTENTIAL 1-BED	HKD 3,480,000
CENTRAL MACAU 1 BED	HKD 2,850,000
MACAU PARKING VA LONG	HKD 1,600,000

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Virtual Le Mans Series: A chance for Macau's

SÉRGIO DE ALMEIDA CORREIA
MDT, LE MANS

24H Le Mans organizers have announced in the French town a virtual championship to be called "Virtual Le Mans Series." At this championship, the best manufacturers, teams, drivers and virtual drivers will compete, with professionals competing alongside simulator amateurs.

Perhaps this is a chance for Macau's virtual pilots, who cannot find the means or support to compete with the best despite the wealth of the Macao SAR, to end up as part of a real-world team.

The Virtual Series will start on 17 September in Bahrain, continuing on 8 October with the 4 Hours of Monza, on 5 November with the 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps, and on 3 December with the 500 miles of Sebring, before ending with the first virtual 24H of Le Mans on 14 and 15 January 2023.

The announcement was made last Friday during the long-awaited press conference of the FIA and the Automobile Club de L'Ouest (ACO). The press conference took place in-room at the MMArena, on the outskirts of the circuit.

The main representatives of the FIA, the ACO, and programs under development were present: Pierre Fillon, Richard Mille, Christophe Ricard, and Frederic Lequien, Director General of the FIA WEC, and Stéphane Darracq, Director Gene-

ral of the ACO.

In the front row was FIA President, Sheikh Mohammed ben Sulayem, and legends such as Jacky Ickx, Hughes de Chaunac, as well as the Le Mans record holder and the ambassador chosen for the Centenary of the 24H, Tom Kristensen. Kristensen has had nine Le Mans victories.

Various topics were addressed at this press conference: changes to the regulations, Le Mans 2022, the Centenary of the 24H of Le Mans, the FIA WEC news, the green development program, and the next Le Mans Series Virtual Championship.

Despite COVID-19, which had slowed down the development of sports programs, this year there is a record number of participants. At the start of this year's edition, there were 62 cars for 186 drivers, with more than 1000 people involved.

In 2025 there will be a new regulation that will run until 2030, which aims to reduce CO2 emissions and the cost of competition and vehicles: balancing the chassis and changing all fuel to hydrogen.

Richard Mille, Chairman of the FIA Endurance Committee, announced that work is being done on the creation of a new class of vehicles that will be based on the current structure of the GTs. The new class will likely be an extension of the current GT-AM, but that is yet to be confirmed. This new category will start in 2024 and the denomination, although not finalized, will be of the LMGT type. The new regulations will

aim to lessen the problems of manufacturers who had to adapt their factories each time regulations were changed. It will correspond to a simple vision inspired by the current GT3, which will be associated with a small Le Mans kit, putting an end to the limited series and allowing more private teams to compete.

Also available from 2024 will be the LMGT3 Premium. The philosophy remains the same: apply to GT what was done with Hypercars, while controlling costs.

Kristensen spoke of the honor of being chosen as the ambassador of the Centenary, for which preparation has already begun. Kristensen highlighted the fact that this edition marks the 25th anniversary of the first time he lined up at Le Mans. He said, "Le Mans is more than a passion, it's a lifestyle" and the Centenary's aim will be to take the "Spirit of Le Mans" even further. This is what inspires people, brings hundreds of thousands every year, and has millions glued to television screens. "They respect Le Mans. You live that dream, or you will not stand on the podium."

Frederic Lequien has announced the extension of the contract for the WEC competition in Bahrain until 2027, where he will also finish this year's season after passing through Monza and Fuji.

The main focus of the press conference was the Mission H24 program. On May 14, at Imola, after much work to achieve homologation, the first car powered entirely by hydrogen finished a race with an acceptable level of performance before then breaking the speed record at La Sarthe on the 8 June. The development of the hydrogen program responds to the concerns of many people and of motorsport in general. This is anticipated by the FIA, the ACO and Richard Mille himself, President of Green GT.

As early as next week, private trials will begin to improve the performance of the Mission H24 vehicle, with the idea being to see the hydrogen prototypes competing in 2025. In a projection of the circular economy, this year Le Mans had a "hydrogen village" with information about how this fuel works, from the production of bioethanol, a catalytic process, as the basis of fuel. The adoption of these measures will reduce the WEC's CO2 emissions by 30%. This year, Total produced a 100% renewable fuel named Excellium Racing 100%, which will reduce emissions by 65% by 2022. Competitive motorsport is today's laboratory for tomorrow's solutions.

A further novelty of the 2022 edition allowed anyone to, on the eve of the race, walk, skate, or cycle the entire perimeter of the track, curve by curve, from Tertre Rouge to the Porsche curve. Motorsports is at the service of environmental awareness and health.

SUSTAINABLE RACES

SÉRGIO DE ALMEIDA CORREIA
MDT, LE MANS

AFTER strong initial advances, 2022 will be marked at Le Mans as the year of alternative energies. This is not only because of the brutal damage caused to the environment over the last century, but also because sustainability has become a watchword in all spheres, including in services, industry, transport, or business. Motorsports are no exception to this trend, and it may even be said that the sport has prioritized the improvement of environmental conditions inherited from the 20th century by drastically reducing the use of fossil fuels.

The MissionH24 prototype with hydrogen recently ran in La Sarthe. Piloted by Stéphane Richelmi, it set a new speed record at the Haunaudières, reaching 290.8 km/hour. Never has a non-fossil fuel vehicle driven so fast.

It is expected that, in 2025, according to the wishes of the FIA president expressed in 2018 and reiterated in the FIA/ACO/WEC press conference held here in Le

Mans, competing cars will be entirely powered by electricity or hydrogen. These will be the cars of the future.

From car manufacturers to tires and fuel, it seems that everyone is finally moving in the same direction. Michelin, the largest French tire manufacturer, and long linked to motorsport with multiple successes, is currently producing a very high-tech tire with a 53% sustainable composition.

Total, the French fuel giant, is also taking the same path by being associated with the Mission H24 project. With a large profile and lots of information, it is using all available resources to attract visitors and convey its message. This includes interactive simulators and games for visitors, a Formula E, and a hobby about wind energy.

Peugeot joined this year's edition with a temporary exhibition, "Allure Le Mans", inaugurated by Pierre Fillon, president of the Automobile Club de L'Ouest, Jean-Marc Finot, president of Stellantis Motorsport, and Yannick Dalmas, a former 24H winner.

SÉRGIO DE ALMEIDA CORREIA



AP PHOTOS

pilots?



Sebastien Buemi of Switzerland, left, Brendon Hartley of New Zealand, right, and Ryo Hirakawa of Japan, celebrate their victory atop their The Toyota Gazoo Racing GRO10 Hybrid

Toyota dominates again to win fifth straight 24 Hours Le Mans

TOYOTA won the 24 Hours Le Mans in the classic endurance race for the fifth straight time, with the No. 8 car finishing ahead of the No. 7 in another dominant performance yesterday.

New Zealander Brendan Hartley had clinched pole position and was at the wheel as Toyota Gazoo's No. 8 completed the race in sunny and warm conditions, with teammates Sebastien Buemi and Ryo Hirakawa watching from the team garage.

Swiss driver Buemi has won the race four times while Hartley clinched his third win, and second for Toyota after his first victory with Porsche in 2017. Both had modest Formula One careers.

Dane Tom Kristensen holds the records with nine wins.

Hirakawa secured his first victory to join Japanese countrymen Kazuki Nakajima (3 wins) and Kamui Kobayashi (1) as winners in the famed race, which was first held in 1923.

Jose Maria Lopez of Argentina followed a couple of minutes behind for Toyota's No. 7 at the Circuit de la Sarthe in northwestern France.

Lopez was joined by Kobayashi and British driver Mike Conway, his teammates when No. 7 won last year to underline how Toyota has broken the stranglehold of Audi and Porsche.

After a calm night, Toyota experienced a rare blip when the No. 8 punctured with Buemi at the wheel at around 7:30 a.m. and 15 minutes later Lopez stalled and needed an electrical reset, costing one lap.

Ryan Briscoe closed out the race as the Glickenhaus 007 car finished in third place, five laps behind the winners.

American Josh Pierson became the youngest driver to participate at 16 years old, 188 days — making him slightly younger than fellow 16-year-old Matt McMurry was in 2014.

Pierson drove 97 laps as he shared duties on the United Autosports USA team driving an Oreca 07 with Oliver Jarvis and Alex Lynn, finishing sixth in the LM P2 category. **MDT/AP**

OPINION

Multipolar World

Jorge Costa Oliveira



**THE LEADERSHIP
 'IMPRISONED' BY THE
 ZERO-COVID POLICY**

The Chinese government is committed to eradicating Covid internally by maintaining endless waves of mass testing, tracking the contacts of those infected (through the use of metadata), locking down numerous urban areas when necessary, and, above all, closing the country to the outside world hoping that, in the meantime, Covid-19 is eradicated in the rest of the world. But many countries (especially in Africa) have not yet managed to vaccinate their citizens. In some countries, the population does not seem to trust the vaccines (e.g. Russia), and in many others the approach is to accept that it is impossible to contain the virus and opted instead on rapid vaccination and live with successive waves of infection, particularly with highly contagious but less deadly variants such as Omicron, with an eventual goal of herd immunity.

Not only does the Chinese government not intend to reverse its policy, it has been reinforcing it since the beginning of 2022. Some analysts believe that this is primarily due to both low vaccination rates in the older population (<20% of the elderly aged 80+ have received their third dose), and to regional disparities in social services and health care. While Hong Kong studies comparing the Coronavirus to BioNTech's vaccine are inconclusive, the government does not seem to have much confidence in the efficacy of Chinese vaccines, including booster shots - overwhelmingly made with traditional Sinovac and Sinopharm vaccines, even though BioNTech also produces mRNA vaccines in China.

Meanwhile, the prudent WHO has come out and said that the zero-Covid policy is "unsustainable" given a highly contagious variant is raging around the world and is unlikely to disappear any time soon.

The Chinese leadership is facing a dilemma: if, for health reasons arising from the zero-Covid policy, it continues to maintain lockdowns of large urban areas with severe limitations on road traffic and ports, the estimated GDP for 2022 will continue to decline gradually but inexorably; the latest estimates from Bloomberg Economics forecasts a mere growth of 2%.

On May 19th, the Chinese PM, Li Keqiang, admitted in a videoconference to 100,000 officials that it is possible this second quarter will see no growth of the Chinese economy. If Chinese leadership changes the zero-Covid policy or eliminates sanitary confinements from large urban areas, it risks having tens, if not hundreds, of millions of people infected with the Omicron variant and more than a million people dead in the short term. The Chinese leadership will not take that risk: until the 20th CCP congress in October of this year, the guidelines are clear on "the primacy of stability."

The Chinese leadership is a prisoner of its own zero-Covid policy, and of the stance it took months ago in proclaiming success in combating the pandemic when it was still just beginning.

A significant slowdown of the Chinese economy in 2022 is almost certain. GDP growth may either stay at 4% or not go beyond 1-2%. Given China's importance to the world economy, tough times are ahead.

[linkedin.com/in/jorgecostaoliveira](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jorgecostaoliveira)

**'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH': THOUSANDS
 DEMAND NEW GUN SAFETY LAWS**

Thousands of people rallied on the National Mall and across the United States on Saturday in a renewed push for gun control measures after recent deadly mass shootings from Uvalde, Texas, to Buffalo, New York, that activists say should compel Congress to act.

"Enough is enough," District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser (pictured) told the second March for Our Lives rally in her city.

"I speak as a mayor, a mom, and I speak for millions of Americans."

Speaker after speaker in Washington called on senators, who are seen as a major impediment to legislation, to act or face being voted out of office, especially given the shock to the nation's conscience after 19 children and two teachers were killed May 24 at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde.



People lineup to visit a newly opened fast food restaurant in a former McDonald's outlet in Bolshaya Bronnaya Street in Moscow

**RUSSIAN-OWNED
 SUCCESSOR OF MCDONALD'S
 OPENS IN MOSCOW**

JIM HEINTZ, MOSCOW

THREE months after McDonald's suspended operations in Russia, hundreds of people streamed into its famous former outlet on Moscow's Pushkin Square as the restaurant reopened yesterday under a Russian owner and a new name.

In March, McDonald's halted operations of its company-run restaurants in Russia. Although some run by franchisees stayed open, the action by the multinational fast-food chain was among the most visible responses by foreign companies to Russia sending troops into Ukraine.

Two months later, McDonald's decided to leave Russia altogether and sold its 850 restaurants to Alexander Govor, who held licenses for 25 franchises in Siberia.

Govor is moving fast to reopen the shuttered outlets. It wasn't until a couple of hours before the Pushkin Square restaurant opened that the Russian chain's new name was announced: Vkusno-i Tochka

(Tasty-period).

The logo is different, but still evokes the golden arches: a circle and two yellow oblongs — representing a beef patty and french fries — configured into a stylized M.

Fifteen of the former McDonald's were set to reopen in Moscow yesterday. Oleg Paroev, the chain's general director, said he aims to have 200 open by the end of the month.

McDonald's decided to leave Russia and sold its 850 restaurants to Alexander Govor, who held licenses for 25 franchises in Siberia

As part of the sales deal, whose monetary terms were not announced, the new operation agreed to retain all 62,000 people employed by McDonald's prior to its exit.

The crowd at the Pushkin Square outlet, however sizable and lively, was no match for the turnout for the McDonald's opening in 1990, when people waited in line for

hours. At that time, McDonald's had psychological and political resonance beyond hamburgers.

The opening was the first taste most Muscovites had of Western consumerism and service efficiency, as well as a sign the Soviet Union was slowly dropping its guard and allowing foreign culture into the country.

Yesterday, that earlier symbolism echoed through the reopening with a note of nostalgia.

"This is a historic place — the flagship of McDonald's," Govor told reporters. "I'm sure it will be the flagship for us."

Inside, the restaurant resembled a fraternal twin of its former self. There were touchscreens for placing orders and counter workers wearing familiar polo-shirt uniforms.

"We're sure that our customers won't notice a difference between us," Paroev said. However, he said, the company will seek a new soft drinks supplier as it has limited stocks of Coca-Cola. MDT/AP



Turkey Heavy rainfall in the capital this weekend led to flooding that killed one person, authorities said. Search and rescue teams located the body of the 27-year-old man, who worked as a bus driver, the state-run Anadolu Agency reported. Turkey's interior ministry spokesman said earlier that authorities received a tip that one person was missing in the storm. Forty-four search and rescue personnel along with Ankara's fire department were dispatched to the area.



Italian rescuers located the bodies of seven people, including four Turkish and two Lebanese businessmen, who died when their helicopter crashed in a heavily forested, mountainous area in north-central Italy during a storm, authorities said. Col. Alfonso Cipriano, who heads an air force rescue coordination unit that led the search since Thursday, said rescuers were tipped off to the crash site after a mountain runner reported seeing what he thought was a part of the mangled chopper during an excursion on Mount Cusna on Saturday morning.



Libyan officials returned to the Egyptian capital yesterday for a third round of talks on constitutional amendments for elections. The North African nation once again finds itself at a political impasse with two rival administrations claiming legitimacy. The talks in Cairo come on the heels of clashes between rival militias that caused residents of the Libyan capital of Tripoli to panic and revived nightmares of previous bouts of fighting in the chaos-stricken nation.