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**GOV'T RULES OUT NEED FOR MASS TESTING AND DISTRICT LOCKDOWNS AS RECENT COVID-19 CASES DO NOT POSE A GREAT RISK**

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**APPROXIMATELY 6,200 OLDER ADULTS HAVE BEEN LIVING ALONE OR AS COUPLES SINCE 2018: SOCIAL WELFARE BUREAU**

▲ P5

AP PHOTO



**North Korean** leader Kim Jong Un boasted that a recently tested intercontinental ballistic missile is another "reliable and maximum-capacity" weapon to contain U.S. military threats, state media reported. The United States responded to the North's weapons launch by flying supersonic bombers in a show of force. The North's Korean Central News Agency said Kim oversaw the launch of the Hwasong-17 missile, a day after its neighbors said they had detected the launch of an ICBM that showed a potential to reach anywhere in the United States.

AP PHOTO



**Japan's** Prime Minister Fumio Kishida sacked his internal affairs minister yesterday over funding irregularities, NHK television said, in a blow to his scandal-prone Cabinet that already lost two ministers in one month. Internal Affairs Minister Minoru Terada has been under fire over several accounting and funding irregularities. In one, he acknowledged that one of his support groups submitted accounting records carrying a dead person's signature.

AP PHOTO



**India** An avalanche in Kashmir has killed three Indian soldiers along the heavily militarized Himalayan frontier between India and Pakistan, the Indian military said. A slide of snow hit the northwestern Machil sector in Indian-controlled Kashmir on Friday and trapped three soldiers on a patrol, said Col. Emron Musavi, an Indian army spokesperson.

More on backpage



GP69

# ANDY CHANG TAKES VICTORY

A dramatic edition with history-making racers, unexpected blunders and numerous yellow flags

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**T**HE Macau government will elect 12 deputies to the 14th National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, on Dec. 12, according to a decision by the presidium meeting of the Conference for Electing Deputies of the SAR to the 14th NPC on Saturday.

The electoral conference held its first plenary session earlier in the day, which was attended by 469 members. An 11-member presidium including Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng and former top official Ho Hau Wah was elected to preside over the conference according to a method for the Macau SAR to elect deputies to the 14th NPC.

Yang Zhenwu, secretary-general of the NPC Standing Committee who came to Macau to preside over the election work, said that electing NPC deputies in the Macau SAR is a practice of "One country, two systems," reflecting that "Macau com-

**NPC**

# MACAU TO ELECT DEPUTIES TO NATIONAL LEGISLATURE IN DECEMBER

patriots are the masters of their own affairs," as cited in a Xinhua report.

Yang stressed the need to perform the duties as enshrined in the Constitution and the Macau SAR Basic Law and to be aware of the bottom line of safeguarding national security.

Efforts should be made to ensure that patriotic deputies, who represent the wide public of Macau and have strong abilities to participate in and deliberate on state affairs, can be elected, Yang added.

At the presidium meeting, Ho Iat Seng was elected standing chairman of the presidium. The presidium decided the nomina-

tion of candidates for NPC deputies will run from Nov. 22 to 28. The voting will take place on Dec. 12 at the second plenary session of the electoral conference.

According to the election method, a total of 12 deputies are to be elected in Macau.

Each member of the electoral conference is allowed to nominate no more than 12 candidates. Macau residents with Chinese citizenship aged 18 or above are eligible to contest for the candidacy, and they need to obtain at least 15 nominations from electoral conference members for their registration to be effective. LV/XINHUA



**COVID-19**

## Gov't refutes possible mass testing over new cases, Harbourview cordoned off

**T**HE recent Covid-19 cases do not pose a great risk to the community, thereby reducing the need for mass testing and district lockdowns, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong has said.

Ao Ieong was speaking on the sidelines of a media event of the Grand Prix.

The official told the media that tests conducted in the target areas had all been negative so far, and that these cases do not pose a great risk to the community.

In view of the recent cases detected in Macau, between tomorrow and Friday, all persons wishing to enter the premises of the courts should perform a rapid antigen test on the same day.

Ao Ieong justified the



measure mandating four tests in five days in the target areas, stressing that such testing is to "ensure the safety of residents."

Harbourview Hotel was cordoned off on Saturday after the discovery that one of its guests from mainland China had tested positive for Covid.

In turn, the city has required those who live and work in the places the 60-year-old woman visited to get tested four times in five days.

The move is in line with the rigid zero-Covid policy that seeks to eliminate infections through lockdowns, quarantines, case

tracing and mass testing, despite the impact on normal life and the economy.

The patient flew to Zhuhai from Suzhou in Jiangsu province, along with two members of her family before entering the city on November 4.

According to local authorities, the woman had been sightseeing across the city for at least four days before she tested positive for Covid, and authorities confirmed an "epidemiological investigation is in progress."

"Since the case began to develop symptoms on the second day after arriving in Macau, it was preliminarily judged as a confirmed case of imported novel coronavirus," the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center said.

Although she visited integrated resorts such as Sands, The Venetian, The Londoner and The Parisian, she claimed she did not enter shops or casinos.

A nucleic acid test (NAT) drive started Saturday and will continue until November 23. LV

## LOCAL FILMMAKERS LOSE TO BIG NAMES AT GOLDEN HORSE AWARDS

**K**ISSING the Ground You Walked On, a locally-made film that competed in the Taipei Golden Horse Awards, lost its three nominations to big names in the industry.

Winners were revealed Saturday evening with a ceremony in Taipei. The Macau nominees and a portion of the crew had flown to the island for the occasion and its extended activities.

Director Hong Heng Fai lost to Malaysian competitor Lau Kok-rui, who won the Hong Kong film award with The Sunny Side of the Street. The film's protagonist, Hong Kong's Anthony Wong, was crowned Best Leading Actor.

Meanwhile, Ellison Lau Chi Keong, audio chief of

the Macau film, lost to Netflix blockbuster Incantation's sound crew that comprises R.T Kao, Rockid Lee, Richard Hocks and Nusorn Thongkhum, in the Best Sound Effects category. Charlie Sou Wai Kin lost to Hong Kong blockbuster Limbo's Cheng Siu Keung in the Best Cinematography category.

The Times has contacted the local crew for comments but had not received a reply as of press time.

At the red carpet ceremony held before the award ceremony, Hong said the experience gained from making theatrical dramas had helped him to better mingle with the film crews with whom he worked. AL



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ECONOMY

# SAR's bleak scenario continues as GDP contracts 33% in Q3

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE SAR's gross domestic product (GDP) plunged 33.4% year-on-year in the third quarter of this year as the city battled its largest outbreak since 2020.

Due to the outbreak in June to July, the economy continued to deteriorate as Macau underwent 14 rounds of mass testing and a two-week lockdown – including closures of non-essential business activities.

The dramatic plunge was a continuation from the Q2 plunge where the city's GDP fell 39.3% compared to the same period last year.

Data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) shows that, with a 50.8% decline in visitor arrivals during the pandemic, exports of services fell 46.7% year-on-year, of which exports of gaming services and other tourism services tumbled 72.5% and 45.9% respectively.

The demand slid a further 14.4% year-on-year, dragged down by a drop in gross fixed capital formation and private consumption expenditure.

Amid the partial lockdown in July, household final consumption expenditure in the domestic market and abroad dropped 13.3% and 12.2% year-on-year respectively.

Previously, economists were



quoted saying that though the data was alarming, it was natural that the GDP would fall substantially since the economy is at a standstill.

The city continues to adhere to Beijing's zero-Covid policy, and as previously announced by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng in the 2023 Policy Address, dropping restrictions remains unlikely – implying the policy is here to stay.

Speaking to the Times, economist José Luís de Sales Marques said that the contraction was expected due to the SAR's current circumstances.

"After so many false starts to Macau's economic recovery just a painful reminder that some

kind of balance must be found between Covid prevention and market opening very soon so that the economy can rebound and with this some normalcy will return to Macau residents' life and earnings," he said.

Professor Kwan Fung, assistant professor at the University of Macau and advisor to the Economic Development Committee of Macau, has previously told the Times the Q3 GDP growth will be affected tremendously due to the June 18 outbreak.

He added that uncertainty over the anti-pandemic measures makes it very difficult for any economic analyst to predict the

timing of economic recovery, given that Macau relies a lot on services driven by the flow of customers.

Back in June, Fitch Ratings expressed reduced confidence in Macau's economic recovery as the city's zero-Covid strategy "continues to constrain the cash-flow generation ability of Macau's operators."

Economists have forecasted the GDP drop would continue not only for the rest of this year but also extend throughout 2023 (depending on government policies). In line with this, the local economy during the three quarters of this year has contracted 27.8% in real terms.

## VISITOR EXPENDITURE DROPS 40% IN Q3

Total visitor spending (excluding gaming expenses) dropped 39.7% year-on-year to MOP2.90 billion in the third quarter, dragged down by a 50% decline in visitor arrivals amid the pandemic. Total spending from overnight visitors (MOP2.63 billion) and same-day visitors (MOP264 million) fell 37.6% and 54.6% year-on-year respectively. Data from the Statistics and Census Service showed that in first three quarters of this year, total visitor spending was MOP13.34 billion, down 26.5% year-on-year. Visitors spent primarily on shopping, accommodation and food and beverage in the third quarter.

## MACAU BANKS' INT'L BUSINESS SHARE FALLS IN Q3

The proportion of international business in Macau's local banking sector fell in the third quarter, the SAR's monetary watchdog said on Friday. According to statistics from the Monetary Authority of Macao, the share of international assets in total banking assets decreased to 84.7% at the end of September from 85.5% at the end of June, while the share of international liabilities in total banking liabilities fell to 82.4% from 83.3%. At the end of September, total international assets decreased 5.8% from last quarter to 2,077.8 billion patacas.

## CHINESE AND PORTUGUESE ARTISTIC WORKS EXHIBITED

An exhibition displaying works by artists from China and Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs) opened Friday. The exhibits range from paintings and sculptures to photographic works by nine artists from several countries. The exhibition is part of the cultural week for China and PSCs held in Macau, aiming to showcase the countries' unique charms and help consolidate Macau's role as a center for cultural exchange between China and PSCs, according to the Permanent Secretariat of Forum Macao, a forum for economic and trade cooperation between China and PSCs. The exhibition will last until Dec. 11.

# IAS: Database of 6,200 older adults living alone compiled since 2018

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) has compiled a database of approximately 6,200 older adults living alone or as couples since 2018.

The bureau released the data in response to lawmaker Ron Lam's written inquiry about the lives and safety of older adults who live alone, after the consecutive passing of two elderly siblings in their Penha Hill residence two months ago.

Lam asked the government how it would prevent such tragedies recurring. He also asked for data on community support mea-



asures. In the response signed by IAS director Hon Wai, it was revealed the IAS would use the information to "improve support and services for older adults living alone." The data was

obtained from older adults living alone using specific services, Hon added.

Hon also revealed the IAS would "introduce other data collection means and methodologies [to analyze the needs of]

older adults living alone" in due course.

Hon said the bureau has services for the safety of older adults living alone, such as regular telephone calls, visits and community activities. As of August

31 this year, the services have seen 5,300, 4,100 and 950 users respectively, Hon revealed.

Since Lam also asked about the safety call-and-response service, Hon said that "constant supervision and evaluation" on the effectiveness of the service is being conducted.

Branded as Peng On Tung, the safety call-and-response service gives older adults single-button access to a call center for help or support.

Hon sounded hesitant replying to Lam's question about introducing new operators. He cited the local older adult population and service and operation costs, among other factors, to justify the bureau's slow service expansion.

The IAS has also pledged more events and activities would be held for single-living older adults.

# KIANG WU NURSING COLLEGE TO HOST CENTENARY OPEN DAY AT NEW COTAI CAMPUS

ANTHONY LAM

**A**N open day is among the events the Kiang Wu Nursing College of Macau (KWNC) will host at its new Cotai campus for its centenary celebration.

The institution will mark its 100th anniversary next year.

At a weekend press conference to announce the details of the event, KWNC president Van Iat Kio said the inauguration of the college's new Cotai campus, which is part of the project of the Islands Hospital Complex, will be held next year, followed by an open day for the public.

Van also revealed that apart from the open day, an academic event, the 17th World Congress on Long Term Care in Chinese Communities, will also be held next year as part of the centenary celebrations.

The Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau will also launch the "KWNC 100th Anni-

versary commemorative stamp album" next November.

While discussing the college's student intake, Van said applicant numbers for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program had increased from 120 to 180 this year, eventually resulting in about 170 new students.

"KWNC is now recruiting students for 2023 and the college has already received an overwhelming number of recommended students from local secondary schools and is in the process of initial recruitment," Van added.

The new campus will feature new facilities and equipment to improve the quality of education. The chair of the College Council, Lau Veng Seng, said a world-standard Objective Structured Clinical Examination Center (OSCE) will be unveiled to standardize assessment processes and criteria.

Equipment at the nursing laboratory will be enhanced with the establishment of the city's

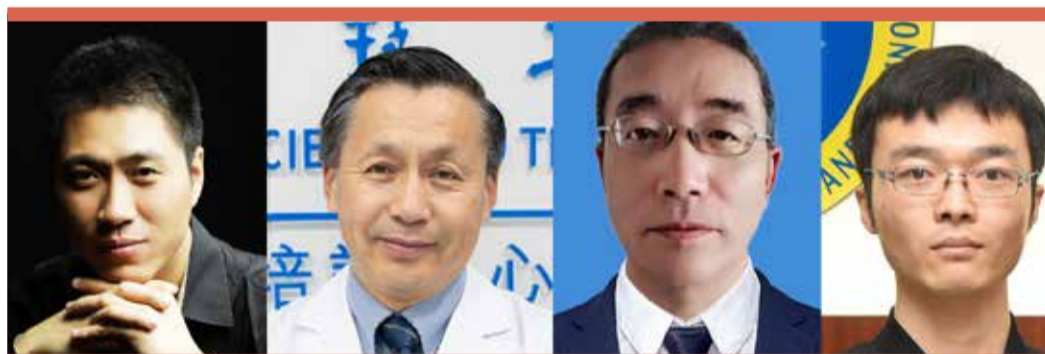


first nursing and comprehensive health experience center under the sponsorship of the Wynn Care

Foundation.

When completed, the center will offer an experiential learning

space for children, teenagers, adults and older adults for life education, Lau added.



## EDUCATION

# MUST academics picked by data company among world's top highly-cited

ANTHONY LAM

**F**OUR academics from the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) have recently been listed as highly cited global researchers by a data science company, the university has announced.

Clarivate is the company that creates the list.

The MUST has said this is the first year it has had a doctoral graduate make the list. The academic is Dr. Li Zhongjun, a 2019 graduate of the Faculty of Innovative Engineering, School of Computer Science and Engineering. Li was included on the list of cross-disciplinary academics.

The other three academics

are distinguished Professor Wang Jun of the Macau Institute for the State Key Laboratory of Quality Research in Chinese Medicine, selected for biology and biochemistry; Chair Professor Zhang Kang, vice dean of the School of Medicine; and Professor Wang Jianzhou of the Faculty of Innovative Engineering, who were both on the list of cross-disciplinary academics.

The MUST noted Li's inclusion is "particularly impressive," as the list mainly comprises veteran or distinguished professors or scholars with established reputations.

The university also noted Wang had been included on the list for five consecutive

years, with Zhang for four and Wang for three.

In a statement discussing the results, the MUST said, "MUST has always been committed to the development of high-quality education and excellent research, adhering to the policy of giving equal importance to teaching and research, and has been encouraging [academics] to contribute to global scientific research."

This year, the list covered 22 disciplines in the natural and social sciences, and was generated by analyzing all the papers included in the Science Citation Index (SCI) and Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) over the past ten years.

# COURT RULES WIDER PERSPECTIVES NEEDED TO EVALUATE COHABITATION STATUS

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE Court of Second Instance (TSI) has suggested broader considerations as it overruled the Secretary for Security's decision nullifying a married immigrant's visa due to the absence of cohabitation.

In announcing the verdict, the court emphasized the secretary's judgement was insufficiently wide and he was, therefore, unable to rule that the married couple was no longer cohabiting.

A local resident, whom the court referred to as A, had been living and working in Macau, "revolving their life around Macau," as the court put it.

A Canadian citizen, whom the court referred to as B, married A in 2016. The two decided to relocate to Macau. The next year, B obtained a retention permit to stay in Macau.

In February 2020, the couple traveled to Canada to visit B's father, who suffered from dia-



betes. They decided that B would return to Macau in July for work, with A remaining in Canada to care for B's father. In March 2021, A returned to Macau.

In November 2020 the secretary refused B's application for an extension of the spousal visa, on the grounds that the couple no longer lived together. In response, B explained that A had remained in Canada because of the pandemic and need to care for the father-in-law. The secretary did not consider this

explanation sufficient. The official did not anticipate A's foreseeable return when the application was reviewed.

As the visa was terminated, B filed an appeal to the court, citing Civil Code Article 1534 to prove that couples living in different countries are, in fact, legally permitted, if they have no subjective intention to separate.

The court stressed the secretary did not prove the couple were in a state of legal separation when the official refused the visa application.

RENATO MARQUES

# Chang makes history winning his first F4 race in Macau

**L**OCAL racer Andy Chang won his first Macau Grand Prix yesterday, continuing the path laid by Charles Leong (in third position) who won the first two Formula 4 (F4) races in Macau.

Chang started the weekend well, as the fastest driver during the qualifying sessions, starting in pole position for race 1 held Saturday afternoon.

Saturday saw the confirmation of the rising of a new star with Hong Kong's youngster, Gerrard Xie, defeating Chang who finished second 2.084 seconds behind Xie. Leong, winner of the two previous editions, only placed third, promising that Sunday's race 2 would be very competitive.

The rivalry among the trio did not last long. Xie started better in a race that saw the Safety Car enter almost immediately due to an early crash on the first turn.

As soon as the Safety Car returned to the pits, Xie continued to widen the gap between himself and Leong (who was second). Eventually, Leong could not keep up the pace and was passed by Chang who started a pursuit of Xie who, at the time, had a comfortable lead.

This was until another crash, this time at Lisboa Bend and involving two cars, caused the pack to regroup. At the restart, after being a few laps behind the Safety Car, Chang grew stronger and overtook Xie, driving as fast as possible away from him to



RENATO MARQUES

Andy Chang

avoid any potential immediate retaliation from the 16-year-old Hong Kong racer.

Eventually, the gaps between first and second and second and third became too big to allow any overtaking. Without making any mistakes, Chang took the checkered flag by almost 6 seconds over Xie and 14 seconds over Leong who, without a way

to fight for the second position, held comfortably in third place until the end and scored another podium finish this weekend in Macau.

After finishing second for two consecutive years, it was time for Chang to break the spell and climb to the top of the podium.

Despite finishing second in race 2, Xie showed great skill

and competitiveness the whole weekend, not only winning race 1 but also battling two very experienced Macau specialists notwithstanding his young age and the fact that he is a rookie in Macau. This alone promises that Xie will soon be a recognized name in the regional racing world as a rising new talent.

Finishing fourth in both ra-

ces was Li Si Seng, completing the competitive group of racers in this series.

Lacking young blood to battle rising stars like Xie, the Chinese F4 needs to act fast in pursuing more talent and opportunities for youngsters. If the Chinese F4 does not continue to evolve, it runs the risk losing events like the Macau GP.

## Engel wins bittersweet Macau GT Cup

RENATO MARQUES

**G**ERMAN driver Maro Engel extended his list of triumphs in Macau this weekend winning both races of the Macau GT Cup.

Despite the impressive outcome, the wins have left a bittersweet flavor. Accidents marred both races, disrupting their normal course. Race two saw its total number of laps severely reduced, with most of the laps occurring in slow-driving mode behind the safety car.

At the wheel of a Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo from Craft-Bamboo Racing, Engel also benefited from a strange incident that occurred during race one on Saturday. Polesitter Edoardo Mortara in an Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II su-

ddenly jumped from the grid and inadvertently followed the safety car when the red lights were still showing to the drivers.

The incident delayed the start for five minutes. Mortara received a penalty that forced him to remain in the grid while the field moved forward to the formation lap.

Starting from last position, Mortara benefited a little from an incident involving four cars on turn one that forced the race to stop and ruled out four competitors including Darryl O'Young, Adderly Fong, Cheng Cong Fu, and Min Heng. The incident enabled Mortara to start a recovery that took him to fourth position.

After a lengthy delay, the race restarted behind the safety car, and Engel

and fellow Mercedes driver Raffaele Marciello sprinted away.

Mortara still attacked Ling Kang in third position in the Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo, but Ling defended his position well.

In yesterday's race two, Marciello was the quickest at the greenlight and jumped ahead of Engel, but eventually ended his race prematurely, going off track at the hairpin bend. This paved the way for Engel to win the second race without a challenge. When the safety car prompted drivers to return to the pits, there was very little of the race left to complete. Mortara finished second in race two, while the third spot on the podium went to Alexandre Imperatori in a Porsche 911 GT3 R.



Maro Engel (front)

## SOUZA SCORES DOUBLE-WIN IN GUIA RACE

RENATO MARQUES

**L**OCAL racer Filipe de Souza has won both legs of this year's edition of the Macau Guia Race for touring cars.

At the wheel of an Audi RS3 LMS TCR, Souza sprinted to a win in race two from pole position earned on Saturday with a win in race one.

When the race began on lap two, Souza had a poor start from third following a lap behind the safety car. He soon benefited from that, however, as front-row starters Andy Yan and Lo Sze Ho were involved in an incident at Lisboa Bend that created a partial blockade that Souza managed to evade, creating a comfortable leading gap.

Ahead of the field, Souza maintained the gap between his car and Hu Heng who finished second. Souza's position was never at risk. Another Macau racer - Cheong Chi On - completed the historical podium. No Macau racer has ever won the Guia Race.

In race two, Souza had a great start from the lead, pulling ahead of Leong Keng Hei and Cheong Chi On who pursued at an incredible pace. At the first pass by the finish line, Souza already had an advantage of about five seconds from Leong.

Failing to brake at Lisboa Bend while moving up the field, Chan

RENATO MARQUES



Filipe Souza

Weng Tong eventually stalled the driver immediately behind him.

This allowed Lo Sze Ho to move into second place just before the safety car was deployed to Yiu Lung's car that had stopped on the track near Fishermen's Bend after crashing into the barriers.

At the end of lap four, Lo tried to hold the other competitors

behind him and give himself a gap to catch Souza as soon the safety car pulled to the pits. However, Lo was eventually overtaken by Cheong who could not brake behind him.

Cheong attempted to give back the place but Lo refused to overtake him as the race was under yellow flags, a situation that gave Souza an unexpected lead.

After the restart, another incident, this time with Jason Mok, prompted another safety car deployment that lasted until the last lap of the race. At the release, Yan clipped Lo at Mandarin Bend causing the most severe accident of the whole weekend, with Lo's car destroyed.

Lo and at least one other driver (Ryan Wong), who crashed

into Lo's spinning car, were taken to the hospital but, according to information from the drivers, they are well and had gone to the hospital as a precaution.

Since the race was red-flagged at that time, the final classification was attributed according to the previous lap, with the win attributed to Souza, and Lo coming second and Yan third.

RENATO MARQUES



Liang Jia Tong

## Liang scores double-win in GBA GT Cup

**L**IANG Jia Tong dominated the weekend in a Lamborghini Huracan STO in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) GT Cup for GT4 and GTC cars, taking both lights-to-flag wins in the Saturday and Sunday races.

Liang surpassed Luo

Kai Luo (Mercedes-AMG GT4) who came second in both races, despite being the stronger in the first practice sessions.

If Chris Chia had not managed to reach the podium in race two, we would have had a repeat podium ranking

from Saturday to Sunday in one of the less interesting races of the weekend but one that ran for almost the full race distance.

In both races, third position was over 20 and over 40 seconds behind, respectively. **RM**

## MITSUBISHIS DOMINATE ROADSPORT CHALLENGE

**L**OCAL racers Chan Chi Ha and Chu Hiu Fong won race 2 and race 1, respectively of the Macau Roadsport challenge event this year.

Both racers, driving Mitsubishi Evolution 9 cars, scored victories in the race that is probably the most unpredictable

and the most local race of the whole program.

Another local racer, Leon Wong, scored two second positions in both races at the wheel of another Mitsubishi but this time an Evolution 10.

Wong Ka Hong in another Evo 10 came third

in race 1, the position occupied by Sabino Lei in yet another Evo 9 in race 2.

In the category of smaller touring cars with 1.6 Turbo engines, victories smiled to Lui Man Kit in a Mini Cooper S and Ip Tak Meng in a Peugeot RCZ. **RM**

RENATO MARQUES



Chan Chi Ha





Erno Kostamo

# Kostamo wins in troubled return of Motorcycle GP

RENATO MARQUES

ONE of the main race favorites, Finn Erno Kostamo, has justified his status and won this year's edition of the Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix.

But the return of the local GP program, with this being the 54th

edition of the two-wheel race, was not without difficulties. Contrary to initial plans, the Motorcycle GP held only one out of two planned races. Furthermore, this race only occurred yesterday morning when it had been planned for Saturday afternoon.

The trouble started Saturday morning when, after the pit exit lap

for the grid formation, some riders, led by Sheridan Morais, protested about the conditions of the track.

According to the riders, there were a lot of oil spills on track from incidents during previous car races. The spills posed serious risks for motorcyclists because some spills were on fast corners of the track where a small loss of grip

could be a serious problem.

After two riders' meetings held on track with the race organization, it was decided they would ride two tentative warm-up laps on yellow flags and that front-runners would decide (by raising their arm) if track conditions were acceptable for racing.

By the time riders reached Lisboa Bend on the first lap, the red flags were already waving and stopping the race.

As for Saturday afternoon's race 2, a serious accident prevented the motorcycles from leaving the pits. The accident had occurred during the Macau GT Cup race and had caused more oil spills and damage to the barrier on Reservoir Bend,

which needed overnight repairs.

After negotiation with the riders, the organizers decided to hold a substitute for race 2 early yesterday morning.

In the race, Morais, starting from third place, began well and immediately jumped to the lead ahead of Kostamo and German racer David Datzler. But under pressure from the two, Morais was finally passed by the duo on lap 3. Kostamo and Datzler continued at a good pace until the checkered flag, although no overtaking occurred. All riders seemed happy with the positions they were holding. Morais finished third. Another rookie in Macau, Lukas Maurer, finished fourth.

MACAU TOURING CAR CUP

# Huff scores one more win, Zhang takes the final race

BRITISH racer Rob Huff, returning to Macau this year, added one more win to his portfolio. The manner in which he drove his MG5 XPower TCR allowed him to reach the top spot of the podium in the Macau Touring Car Cup, which this year was almost completely at the expense of cars from the Chinese touring car championships.

On Saturday, Huff used all his experience to best David Zhu in one of the many Lynk & Co 03 TCRs. The third spot belonged to Hong Kong driver Sunny Wong in another Lynk & Co 03 TCR.

Starting from the back, Huff made an impressive recovery. Unfortunately, race interruptions stalled his progress. Nonetheless, the British racer finished race two yesterday



Rob Huff



Zhang Zhi Qiang

day just behind Zhang Zhi Qiang in a Lynk & Co 03 TCR that had been the

fastest in free practices and second in qualifying one.

Also returning to Macau was local racer Rodolfo Ávila, who took

another MG5 XPower TCR to the fourth position in race two behind

Gao Hua Yang, in the SAIC Lamando L that was third in both races. **RM**

AP PHOTO



FILE - China's Defense Minister, Gen. Wei Fenghe, center right, talks with U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, left, during the 19th International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Shangri-la Dialogue, Asia's premier defense forum, in Singapore

## CHINA, US OFFICIALS TO ATTEND SOUTHEAST ASIA DEFENSE MEETING

THE defense chiefs of rival powers China and the U.S. will both attend the expanded meeting of Southeast Asian security ministers in Cambodia, opening up the possibility the two will hold face-to-face discussions.

China's Defense Ministry said Gen. Wei Fenghe will attend the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus from Sunday to Thursday.

The Department of Defense said Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III will also attend following stops in Canada and Indonesia.

Both officials plan to meet with participants on the margins of the main gathering of ministers from the 10-nation organization known as ASEAN.

While no formal bilateral meeting has been announced, Chinese Defense Ministry spokesperson Col. Tan Kefei appeared to hold that possibility open in a statement issued yesterday.

"China holds a positive and open attitude toward exchanges with the U.S. during the period of the ASEAN-Plus meeting and relevant departments of both countries are maintaining com-

munication and coordination in this regard," Tan said.

Their two countries are chief rivals for influence in the region, where China is seeking to smooth over disputes surrounding its determination to assert its claim to the South China Sea, including through the construction of artificial islands equipped with airstrips and other infrastructure.

The two countries are also at odds over Russia, which China has refused to condemn or sanction over its invasion of Ukraine, and the status of Taiwan.

China's Defense Ministry said

Wei would address the assembly and meet with heads of other delegations to discuss "bilateral cooperation and issues of regional and international concern."

It said he would also hold talks with civilian and military leaders of close Chinese ally Cambodia, with whom it is working on expanding a port facility that could give it a presence on the Gulf of Thailand.

China and four ASEAN members share overlapping claims to territory in the South China Sea, home to vital shipping lanes, along with plentiful fish stocks

and undersea mineral resources. China and ASEAN have made little headway on finalizing a code of conduct to avoid conflicts in the area.

While China's capacities are growing rapidly, the U.S. remains the region's dominant military power and, while it doesn't officially take a stand on sovereignty issues, it has refused to acknowledge China's blanket claims. The U.S. Navy regularly sails past Chinese-held islands in what it calls freedom of navigation operations, prompting a furious response from Beijing.

The U.S. also has a security alliance with the Philippines and strong relations with other ASEAN members, with the exception of Myanmar, where the military has launched a brutal crackdown since taking power last year.

The U.S. Defense Department said that Austin would hold an "informal multilateral engagement" with his ASEAN counterparts and meet with officials from Cambodia and partner nations "to bring greater stability, transparency, and openness to the Indo-Pacific region."

At a previous defense forum attended by both U.S. and Chinese ministers in June in Singapore, Austin delivered a speech saying China's "steady increase in provocative and destabilizing military activity near Taiwan" threatens to undermine the region's security and prosperity.

Wei said at the same conference that the U.S. is trying to turn Southeast Asian countries against Beijing and is seeking to advance its own interests "under the guise of multilateralism. MDT/AP

### ZERO-COVID

## China announces first Covid-19 death in almost six months

CHINA yesterday announced its first new death from COVID-19 in nearly half a year as strict new measures are imposed in Beijing and across the country to ward against new outbreaks.

The death of the 87-year-old Beijing man was the first reported by the National Health Commission since May 26, bringing the total death toll to 5,227. The previous death was reported in Shanghai, which underwent a major springtime surge in cases.

China yesterday announced 24,215 new cases detected over the previous 24 hours, the vast majority of them asymptomatic.

While China has an overall vaccination rate of more than 92% having received at least one dose, that num-



ber is considerably lower among the elderly — particularly those over age 80 — where it falls to just

65%. The commission did not give details on the vaccination status of the latest deceased.

That vulnerability is considered one reason why China has mostly kept its borders closed and is

sticking with its rigid "zero-COVID" policy that seeks to wipe out infections through lockdowns, quarantines, case tracing and mass testing, despite the impact on normal life and the economy and rising public anger at the authorities.

China says its tough approach has paid off in much lower numbers of cases and deaths than in other countries, such as the U.S.

With a population of 1.4 billion, China has officially reported just 286,197 cases since the virus was first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019. That compares to 98.3 million cases and 1 million deaths for the U.S., with its population of 331.9 million, since the virus first appeared there in 2020.

Unlike in other countries, the deaths of patients who presented COVID-19 symptoms were often attributed to underlying conditions such as diabetes or heart disease, obscuring the real number of deaths from the virus and almost certainly leading to an undercount.

Critics pointed especially to this year's outbreak in Shanghai. The city of more than 25 million only reported about two dozen coronavirus deaths despite an outbreak that spanned more than two months and infected hundreds of thousands of people in the world's third-largest city.

China has also defied advice from the World Health Organization to adopt a more targeted prevention strategy. MDT/AP

STRAIT TENSIONS

# VP Harris to visit front-line Philippine island in sea feud

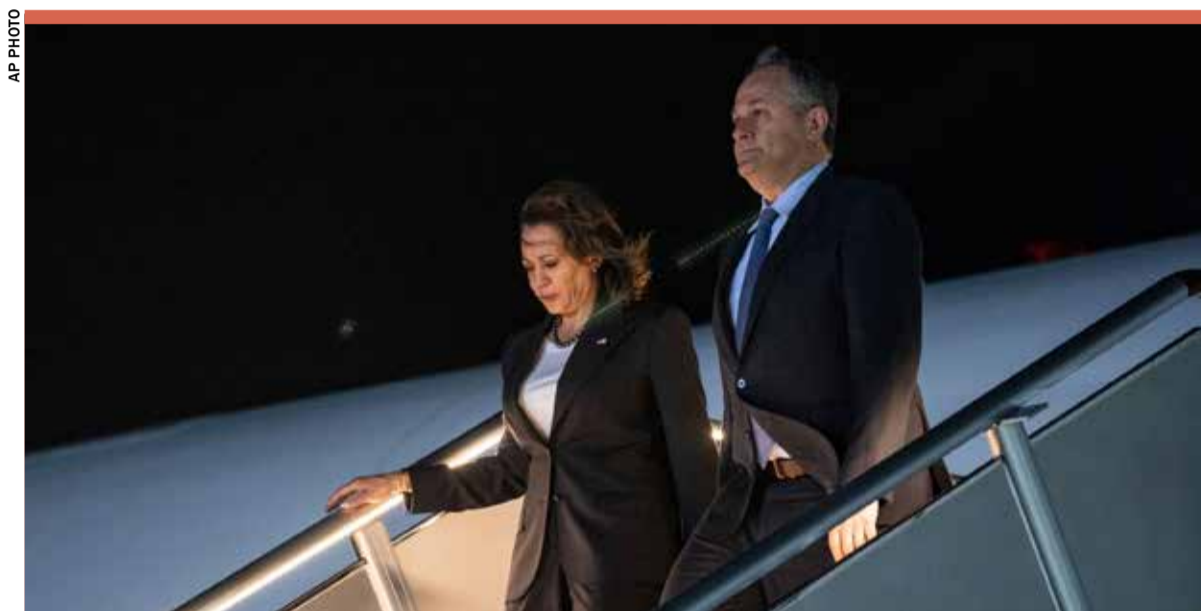
JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

**V**ICE President Kamala Harris will underscore America's commitment to defending treaty ally the Philippines with a visit that started yesterday and involves flying to an island province facing the disputed South China Sea, where Washington has accused China of bullying smaller claimant nations.

After attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Thailand, Harris flew last night to Manila and today will meet President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. for talks aimed at reinforcing Washington's oldest treaty alliance in Asia and strengthening economic ties, said a senior U.S. administration official, who was not identified according to practice, in an online briefing ahead of the visit.

Harris said her trip to Thailand was "quite successful" as she reiterated the U.S. commitment to the region Sunday afternoon at a roundtable discussion on climate change.

The panel of climate activists,



Vice President Kamala Harris and her husband Doug Emhoff arrive at Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila, Philippines, last night

civil society members and business leaders focused on clean energy and the threat climate change is posing to the Mekong River, which more than 60 million people in Southeast Asia use for food, water and transport. Harris announced the U.S. plans to provide up to \$20 million in funding for clean energy in the region via the Japan-U.S. Mekong Power

Partnership.

Before her flight out, she stopped by a local market and perused a maze of shops, struck up conversations with shopkeepers and purchased Thai green curry paste.

On Tuesday she'll fly to Palawan province, which lies along the South China Sea, to meet fishermen, villagers, officials and

the coast guard. Once there, she'll be the highest-ranking U.S. leader to visit the frontier island at the forefront of the long-seething territorial disputes involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

The Philippine coast guard is scheduled to welcome Harris on board one of its biggest patrol ships, the BRP Teresa Magbanua,

in Palawan, where she is scheduled to deliver a speech, according to coast guard spokesperson Commodore Armand Balilo.

Harris will underscore the importance of international law, unimpeded commerce and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, the U.S. official said.

China can view the visit the way it wants, the official added in response to a question, but Washington's message is that the U.S., as a member of the Indo-Pacific, is engaged and committed to the security of its allies in the region.

Philippine Ambassador to Washington Jose Manuel Romualdez said Harris's trip to Palawan shows the level of America's support to an ally and concern over China's actions in the disputed sea.

"That's as obvious as you can get, that the message they're trying to impart to the Chinese is that 'we support our allies like the Philippines on these disputed islands,'" Romualdez told The Associated Press. "This visit is a significant step in showing how serious the United States views this situation now."

Washington and Beijing have long been on a collision course in the contested waters. While the U.S. lays no claims to the strategic waterway, where an estimated \$5 trillion in global trade transits each year, it has said that freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea is in America's national interest. **MDT/AP**

POLITICS

# Two rival blocs race to form Malaysia's next government

EILEEN NG,  
KUALA LUMPUR

**T**HE two biggest winners of Malaysia's general elections were competing yesterday to hammer out alliances to form a government after tightly-fought general elections failed to produce a clear winner, with the nation's king to be the final arbiter.

The unprecedented hung Parliament after Saturday's divisive polls saw the rise of Malay nationalists and plunged the country into a new crisis, stunning many Malaysians who hope for stability and unity after political turmoil that has seen three prime ministers since 2018 polls.

The Malay-centric Perikatan Nasional, or National Alliance, led by former Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, was an underdog that enjoyed an unexpected surge of support with 73 out of 222 Parliamentary seats.



Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim (left) and Perikatan Nasional (National Alliance) President Muhyiddin Yassin

Its hard-line ally the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party was the biggest winner with a haul of 49 Parliamentary seats — more than double what it won in 2018. Known as PAS, it touts Sharia, rules three states and is now the single largest party. Its rise has stoked fears of greater Islamization in the country.

Opposition leader Anwar

Ibrahim's reformist alliance topped the race with 82 federal seats, but fell far short of the 112 needed for a majority.

The alliance led by the United Malays National Organization, which ruled Malaysia since independence from Britain until 2018, was the biggest loser. It won only 30 seats in its

worst-ever performance as many Malays opted for Muhyiddin's bloc, which has touted itself as a "caring, clean and stable" alternative.

"This election had reinforced identity politics. Given that no party has outright majority, the newly formed coalition government will need to unite the

nation," said Amir Fareed Rahim, director of strategy at public affairs at political risk consultancy KRA Group.

Many rural Malays, who form two-thirds of Malaysia's 33 million people — which includes large minorities of ethnic Chinese and Indians — fear they may lose their rights with greater pluralism under Anwar's alliance. This, together with corruption in UMNO, has benefited Muhyiddin's bloc.

Among other key election losers was two-time former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who at 97 is leading a separate Malay movement. He suffered a shocking defeat to the National Alliance.

Anwar and Muhyiddin, both 75, claimed they have enough support to secure a majority, but have not provided details.

Muhyiddin appeared to be leading as he met with one of the Borneo bloc lea-

ders Sunday. He said negotiations are also underway with other groups.

"God willing, the federal government will be able to be formed in the near future," he tweeted.

Anwar told a news conference that he had obtained support in writing from lawmakers for a simple majority. He said this will be submitted to King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, who will have the final say. The king's role is largely ceremonial in Malaysia, but he appoints the person he believes has majority support in Parliament as prime minister.

"We have obtained the majority ... majority means more than 111," Anwar said.

The palace said in a statement that Sultan Abdullah has asked political chiefs to submit their choice for prime minister and for the alliance that will be formed for a majority by today. **MDT/AP**

PUTIN'S WAR

# UK PM Sunak makes surprise trip to Kyiv, boosts defense aid

JOHN LEICESTER  
& JILL LAWLESS, KYIV

**B** RITISH Prime Minister Rishi Sunak promised 125 anti-aircraft guns and other air-defense technology as he made an unannounced visit Saturday — his first — to Ukraine's snow-blanketed capital for talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The air-defense package, which Britain valued at 50 million pounds (\$60 million), comes as Russia has been pounding Ukraine's power grid and other key infrastructure from the air, causing widespread blackouts for millions of Ukrainians amid frigid weather.

The package includes radar and other technology to counter the Iran-supplied exploding drones that Russia has used against Ukrainian targets. It comes on top of a delivery of more than 1,000 anti-air missiles that Britain announced earlier this month.

The U.K. has been one of the staunchest Western backers of Ukraine's resistance to Russia's invasion. Speaking alongside Zelenskyy, Sunak noted that the U.K. has given 2.3 billion pounds (\$2.7 billion) in military aid and pledged: "We will do the same again next year."

"Your homes, your hospitals, your power stations are being destroyed," Sunak said in announcing the new air-defense package. "You and your people are paying a heavy price in blood."

Speaking through a translator, Zelenskyy said Russian strikes have damaged around half of Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

As snowflakes fell, Zelenskyy greeted Sunak at a presidential palace for their talks. He called the two countries "the strongest of allies." Walking in the snow, they also inspected captured Russian tanks and other destroyed and rusting military hardware used by the invasion forces that are displayed in a Kyiv square.

"With friends like you by our side, we are confident in our victory. Both of our nations know what it means to stand up for freedom," the Ukrainian leader said on Twitter.

Former U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who stepped down in July, won wide praise in Ukraine for his backing. Sunak is keen to reassure Ukrai-



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, left, and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak observe destroyed Russian military vehicles installed in downtown Kyiv, Ukraine, Saturday

ne's leaders that there will be no change of stance under his leadership, although when he was U.K. Treasury chief under Johnson he was considered resistant to demands for higher defense spending.

"The courage of the Ukrainian people is an inspiration to the world," Sunak said. "In years to come, we will tell our grandchildren of your story."

He pledged that Britain "will stand with you until Ukraine has won the peace and security it needs and deserves and then we will stand with you as you rebuild your great country."

Sunak also laid flowers at a memorial for the war dead, lit a candle at a memorial for victims of a deadly Soviet-era famine in Ukraine in the 1930s, and met first responders at a fire station, his office said.

Sunak's visit came in the wake of a major recent battlefield success for Ukraine: the recapture of the southern city of Kherson.

The restoration of rail connections brought further joy Saturday to Kherson's residents, who excitedly waited for the first train from Kyiv.

"This is the beginning of a new life," said 74-year-old Ludmila Olhouskaya, who didn't have anyone to meet off the train but went to the station to show support. "Or rather, the revival of a former one."

On the battlefield, Russian forces launched 10 airstrikes, 10 missile strikes and 42 rocket attacks on Ukraine in the last day, the General Staff of Ukraine's armed forces said Saturday.

In Kherson, the major southern city that Ukrainian for-

ces recaptured more than a week ago, two Russian missiles struck an oil depot — the first time a depot was hit in the city since the Russians withdrew, according to firefighters at the scene. AP reporters said a huge fire and billowing black smoke.

"There was a strong explosion," said Valentyna Svyderska, who lives nearby. "We were scared, everyone was scared ... Because this is an army that is at war with the civilian population."

Local authorities were struggling to respond to the blaze, the firefighters said, because Russian forces took the city's fire trucks and ambulances when they retreated.

Russia is pressing an offensive in the eastern Donetsk region, and Ukraine reported heavy fighting around the city of Bakhmut, the town of Avdiivka and the village of Novopavlivka.

Russian forces claimed to have repelled a Ukrainian counteroffensive to take back the settlements of Pershotravneve, Kyslivka and Krokmalne in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv province.

Ukrainian forces said they killed or wounded scores of Russian soldiers during an attack on the village of Mykhailivka in the southern Kherson region, and the wounded were taken to hospitals in Crimea. The claim could not be independently verified.

Ukrainian forces also reported they conducted deadly strikes on the Kinburn Spit in Ukraine's southern Mykolaiv province, a key site for Russian electronic warfare.

Russia kept up its strikes on critical infrastructure, with

a rocket attack overnight causing a fire at a key industrial facility in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region, according to the region's chief. Some parts of the regional capital of Zaporizhzhia were left without heat.

The head of Ukraine's biggest private energy firm told the BBC that Ukrainians who can afford it should consider leaving the country to relieve pressure on its war-damaged power system.

"If they can find an alternative place to stay for another three or four months, it will be very helpful to the system," said Maxim Timchenko, chief executive of DTEK. "If you consume less, then hospitals with injured soldiers will have a guaranteed power supply."

In Poland, a funeral was held Saturday for one of the two men who died when a missile landed there this week, according to the state news agency PAP. A military honor guard and Polish and Ukrainian representatives joined the man's family and members of the community.

NATO member Poland and the head of the military alliance have both said the missile strike in an eastern farming region appeared to be unintentional and was probably launched by air defenses in neighboring Ukraine. Russia had been bombarding Ukraine at the time.

The U.K. Ministry of Defence noted Saturday that Russia conducted its largest ever-debt issuance in a single day, raising \$13.6 billion on Wednesday. It said debt issuance is a key mechanism to sustain defense spending. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1985 SUPERPOWERS AIM FOR 'SAFER WORLD'



The Geneva summit has ended in optimism but with no agreement on the "Star Wars" space defence system.

Both United States President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev spoke of the world being a "safer place" at the end of their two-day meeting in Switzerland.

The two men broke with convention and met together without advisers in discussions President Reagan dubbed the "fireside summit".

The negotiations have resulted in the Geneva Accord, which commits the two countries to:

- speeding up arms talks
- working towards the abolition of chemical weapons
- a new commitment to human rights

It is the first time the world's superpowers have met for six years and both countries have pledged to convene again in Washington and Moscow.

A news blackout placed on the proceedings was finally lifted when the leaders spoke at the closing ceremony and at separate news conferences afterwards.

Mr Reagan has remained firm in his refusal to stop research in the "necessary defence" of the Star Wars programme, despite the Soviet president saying the door should be "firmly shut" on weapons in space.

But both leaders were optimistic a new rapport between the old enemies had been reached.

"I came to Geneva to seek a fresh start in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union - and we have done this," President Reagan said.

And Mr Gorbachev told reporters at a news conference they should move away from confrontation.

"I would be so bold as to state that despite the fact there is as much weaponry as before, the world is nevertheless a safer place," he said.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

In December 1987 the US and USSR signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty - the first ever agreement to reduce the total number of nuclear arms since their invention. It was followed by further accords in 1991, 1993 and 2002, which all reduced the numbers of nuclear warheads.

The Strategic Defence Initiative - Star Wars - was abandoned by President Bill Clinton in 1993 amid allegations test results had been falsified. The programme was resurrected by President George W Bush in 2002 as the Ground-based Midcourse Defence (GMD) Test Bed.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

 <b>ARIES</b> Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You are best to concentrate on your professional endeavors. Don't hesitate to present your unique ideas. You may be experiencing emotional turmoil in regard to your mate.	 <b>TAURUS</b> Apr. 20-May. 20 Friends may not be completely honest with you. You should be promoting your ideas. Your family may not be pleased with your decisions.
 <b>GEMINI</b> May. 21-Jun. 21 Spend some time with the one you love. Pleasure trips will be satisfying. Try not to donate to organizations if you can hardly afford to take care of yourself. Invite friends or relatives into your home.	 <b>CANCER</b> Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You'll find it easy to charm members of the opposite sex today. Deception regarding joint finances or investments will cause upsets between family members.
 <b>LEO</b> Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Problems with colleagues are likely. Travel for pleasure will be enticing. Pamper yourself; the self-esteem it brings you will be most gratifying.	 <b>VIRGO</b> Aug. 23-Sep. 22 It's doubtful anyone will try to stand in your way or cut you off at the pass today. Short trips will be educational. Relationships will become stronger.
 <b>LIBRA</b> Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Limitation could set in if you've been spending too much. Try to do your job and then leave. You need to sit back and enjoy. Overexertion and negligence will be your worst enemies.	 <b>SCORPIO</b> Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Chances are you split up the last time because you didn't really want to make a commitment. Make sure any presentation you have is ready. You may find yourself caught in a triangle.
 <b>SAGITTARIUS</b> Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You need to take a good look at all sides of an issue before making a decision. You can make new friends who could turn into intimate connections if you join clubs or take creative courses.	 <b>CAPRICORN</b> Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Things at work have been moving quickly and you may be feeling a little uncertain about the changes taking place. Try not to judge too quickly.
 <b>AQUARIUS</b> Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You can make alterations to your appearance that everyone will admire. Someone may be trying to damage your reputation. Children may be less than honest with you.	 <b>PISCES</b> Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Acknowledge your lover's needs. Don't gamble unless you can afford to lose. You will benefit by taking care of other people's concerns.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	4	13	fine
Changchun	-6	3	fine
Chengdu	13	19	overcast
Chongqing	13	18	overcast
Fuzhou	19	24	cloudy
Guangzhou	20	29	rain
Guiyang	11	20	overcast
Haikou	24	26	rain
Hangzhou	11	19	cloudy
Harbin	-10	0	fine
Hefei	8	15	rain
Nanjing	11	18	rain
Shanghai	14	20	fine
Taipei	21	23	overcast
Wuhan	9	17	rain
Hong Kong	21	23	cloudy
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	-4	-6	cloudy
Frankfurt	4	9	rain
Paris	5	8	showers
London	5	9	rain
New York	1	6	clear

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Awestruck; 5- Beetle Bailey's boss; 10- Do a slow burn; 14- Repeated, an island of French Polynesia; 15- Rest atop; 16- Deck; 17- Woodstock singer Joan; 18- Summed; 19- Pentathlon need; 20- More; 21- Insipid; 23- Mouthpiece of a bride; 25- Monetary unit of Vietnam; 26- Tree specialist; 31- Rate; 35- Meadow; 36- Biscotto flavoring; 38- Molten rock; 40- Competent; 42- Rice unit; 44- Deli side; 45- Bowling alley button; 47- Slip; 49- Single unit; 50- 3 grains troy weight; 52- Shaped like a bagel topping; 54- Not sweet; 56- Common article; 57- Folding recliner; 62- Furniture wood; 66- Raced; 67- Red River city; 68- Pro follower; 69- Yonder; 70- Total; 71- Desktop image; 72- Assuming that's true; 73- Kett and James; 74- Pet plant;

DOWN 1- French clergyman; 2- Score; 3- Minerals; 4- Summerhouse; 5- Boards that support a mattress; 6- Opera set in Egypt; 7- Beatty Oscar film; 8- Pride \_\_\_ before...; 9- Make beloved; 10- \_\_\_-Ball; 11- Knocks lightly; 12- Stares at; 13- Misfortune; 22- Rich soil; 24- 401(k) alternative; 26- Banned apple spray; 27- Renaissance fiddle; 28- Light wood; 29- Beget; 30- Former Russian rulers; 32- Univ. aides; 33- Inuit dwelling; 34- Muscat native; 37- Cork's place; 39- Overwhelmed; 41- Always, poetically; 43- Nares; 46- Piece of work; 48- Cheering word; 51- Computer expert; 53- Like grams and liters; 55- Repeat rhythmically; 57- Tip, as a hat; 58- Historical chapters; 59- Atlantic mackerel; 60- Med school subj.; 61- Kansas city; 63- "From \_\_\_ according to his abilities..."; 64- Yours, in Tours; 65- Japanese syllabic script; 66- \_\_\_ chi ch'uan;



**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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AD

MATCH OF THE DAY

# US RETURNS TO FINALS AGAINST WALES AFTER 8-YEAR WAIT

RONALD BLUM, DOHA

**G**IO Reyna, Joe Scally and Yusuf Musah were 11 years old the last time the United States took the field in a World Cup match. On the 3,066th day after that loss in Brazil, the Americans return to soccer's showcase with a new-look team dreaming lofty goals and hoping for actual ones.

Filled with novelty, nerves and naivety, these young American team take the field against Wales tonight [Tuesday, 03:00] in a match a growing fanbase back home has been pining for since 2014.

"Three years, four years of just working up to this moment, I think all the guys are ready to go," midfielder Weston McKennie said.

A Friday match against England follows and group play ends Nov. 29 against Iran, which famously eliminated the U.S. from the 1998 World Cup in France.



United States forward Christian Pulisic (left) and other players participate in an official training session at Al-Gharafa SC Stadium, in Doha

Only DeAndre Yedlin, a 29-year-old defender, remains from the American team eliminated by Belgium in the second round eight years ago. Yedlin, Christian Pulisic, Kellyn

Acosta and Tim Ream are among just four holdovers from the group that flopped to the field in anguish after the crushing loss at Trinidad in CONCACAF qualifying in October 2017

that ended the streak of U.S. World Cup appearances at seven.

McKennie debuted a month later in a 1-1 friendly draw at Portugal along with Tyler Adams and Cameron Carter-Vickers. A total of 118 players were tried over 68 matches in a World Cup cycle interrupted by a pandemic, including 91 after Gregg Berhalter was hired as coach in December 2018. He gave debuts to 56 players and took the second-youngest roster to the tournament at an average age of just over 25 years, older than only Ghana.

Some are already looking ahead to 2026, when the U.S. co-hosts the tournament and the core group figures to be in its prime.

"We want to build a ton of momentum going into 2026, but it all starts now," Berhalter said.

Berhalter becomes the first American to play and coach at a World Cup — his 50th minute shot from Claudio Reyna's corner kick struck German defender Torsten Frings' arm on the goal line but was not called a hand ball in 2002's 1-0 quarterfinal loss.

"I was in my mom's belly," quipped Gio Reyna, Claudio's son, who was born that November.

Berhalter has installed a high-pressing style and led the Americans to a 36-10-10 record that included titles in the 2021 CONCACAF Gold Cup and Nations League.

"The final determination of this group," he said, "will be at the World Cup. That's how generations are measured. We can all be talking — that's great, we beat Mexico three times. Or we won the Gold Cup or the Nations League. But the real measuring stick for this group is certainly going to be how you perform in Qatar."

Wales is back in the World Cup for the first time since 1958, led by 33-year-old Gareth Bale and 31-year-old Aaron Ramsey. The Dragons advanced to the 2016 European Championship semifinals before losing to eventual champion Portugal and made it to the second round of last year's Euros before a 4-0 wipeout against Denmark. The lack of World Cup experience has the Welsh as guarded as the Americans heading into the match at

Ahmad bin Ali Stadium, a renovated 44,000-seat venue west of the capital.

"They're intense, they're athletic, they move the ball quick and they're really attacking," Wales defender Ben Cabango said of the U.S. "So we've got to make sure we're in a good shape and just get in a good defensive position. And then, obviously, on a counter we can hit any team with the quality we have."

With Miles Robinson and Chris Richards injured, the American central defense will start a pair from among Walker Zimmerman, Aaron Long, Carter-Vickers or 35-year-old Tim Ream, back on the national team for the first time in 14 months.

"Tim's the grandpa of the group," Adams said.

Forward, a position that produced just three goals in qualifying, also is uncertain for the U.S. Josh Sargent, Jesús Ferreira and Haji Wright are the choices.

Following Berhalter's surprising decision to drop Zack Steffen, Matt Turner likely will start in goal over Ethan Horvath and Sean Johnson. Turner has been limited to four Europa League matches in his first season with Arsenal, the last Oct. 20.

"I showed the coaching staff here how much I've grown as a person and a player," Turner said.

Pulisic also has struggled for playing time, getting just five starts for Chelsea this season. Right back Sergiño Dest made only two starts for AC Milan.

As the opener approached, Pulisic recalled gathering for World Cup games in the basement of his home in Hershey, Pennsylvania, and watching Landon Donovan score the injury-time goal that beat Algeria in 2010 to earn advancement.

"The family coming together, wearing all our red, white and blue, just getting excited," Pulisic said. "It was always a dream of mine. I wanted to be there so bad. But now to be here as a part of this team actually at the World Cup, it's special. And, yeah, I don't want to take a moment of this for granted." MDT/AP

AD

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## TODAY'S MATCHES

	Date	Time	Home	Away	ODDS
<b>Mon</b>	Nov 21	21:00	England	Iran	H 1.4, D 4.75, A 12
<b>Tue</b>	Nov 22	00:00	Senegal	Netherlands	H 7.2, D 4, A 1.58
<b>Tue</b>	Nov 22	3:00	USA	Wales	H 2.55, D 3.1, A 3.35

SANS BALLON D'OR

# France star Karim Benzema out for World Cup with leg injury

JEROME PUGMIRE, DOHA

ONE month after raising the Ballon d'Or in triumph to crown his remarkable rise, Karim Benzema's dream of winning the World Cup is over before he has even played a game in Qatar.

Defending champion France's World Cup hopes took a huge blow with the news that its star striker Benzema is out of the tournament after tearing a muscle in his left thigh during training on Saturday.

"Karim Benzema is out of the World Cup," the French soccer federation (FFF) said. "After hurting the quadriceps on his left thigh the Real Madrid striker is forced to give up on taking part in the World Cup."

Benzema was participating in his first full training session with Les Bleus when he had to come off after feeling some pain in his left thigh, the FFF said.

"He went for an MRI scan in a hospital (clinic) in Doha, which unfortunately confirmed a tear," the FFF said, adding that he will need three weeks to recover.

Benzema addressed his fans after the news emerged.

"I've never given up in my life but tonight I have to think of the team, as I have always done," Benzema posted on his Instagram account. "So reason tells me to give my place to someone who can help our squad have a great World Cup. Thanks for all your messages of support."

France coach Didier Deschamps said: "I'm very sad for Karim who had made this World Cup a major objective,"

Benzema had hardly played at all in recent weeks — since winning the Ballon d'Or, he has played fewer than 30 minutes for Madrid — and this was his first full training session with France.

France faces Australia on Tuesday in Group D, then Denmark four days later and Tunisia on Nov. 30.

It is a crushing blow for Benzema, only the fifth Frenchman to win the



Ballon d'Or award and the first since Zinedine Zidane, his idol, in 1998.

The hugely talented Benzema, who is of Algerian descent, came through Lyon's renowned youth academy and scored the first of his Champions League goals as an audaciously gifted 17-year-old. He's now fourth all-time with 86 goals.

Benzema was France's top scorer at the 2014 World Cup but did not play in France's victorious 2018 World Cup campaign because he was still exiled from the team for his alleged role in a sex-tape scandal with then-France teammate Mathieu Valbuena.

The fallout from that scandal led to a dramatic fall from grace for Benzema. He faced a nationwide deluge of vitriol and scathing criticism, including on the political level. It led to a long exclusion from the national team from Oct. 2015 until his recall by Deschamps in May last year.

With his relationship with Deschamps repaired, Benzema scored freely for France with 10 goals in 16 games since coming back to reach 37 overall, and he formed a great partnership with Kylian Mbappe.

He won the hearts of French fans and cemented his place in the affections of Madrid's equally demanding supporters. Benzema

won five Champions League titles and has moved up to second place in Madrid's all-time scoring list with 329 goals.

At last year's European Championship, Benzema looked sharp and was France's top scorer with four goals.

Earlier this week Benzema gave reassuring news in an extract of an interview with L'Equipe's television channel, which was set to air yesterday.

"I'm fine. I had a bit of pain but no tear and no serious injury. I could have played (for Madrid) but I wasn't at 100%," he told L'Equipe's TV channel this week.

Now Benzema joins the list of big names injured shortly before the World Cup — like Senegal's Sadio Mane and Germany's Timo Werner. Not to mention Benzema's own teammates, Paul Pogba, N'Gole Kante and Christopher Nkunku.

Deschamps has seen his squad riddled with injuries.

Nkunku was injured just minutes before the end of the team's training session on Tuesday evening and replaced in the squad by Randal Kolo Muani on Wednesday.

Deschamps is already missing midfielders Pogba and Kante, who helped France win the World Cup four years ago.

Deschamps has an an-

xious wait to see if his best central defender, Raphael Varane, is fit to face Australia — exactly a month since he limped off for Manchester United with a hams-

tring injury.

Fellow World Cup winner and central defender Presnel Kimpembe pulled out Monday after failing to sufficiently recover from a

six-week layoff following a hamstring injury.

Even without Benzema, France still has a strong attack to face Australia. France is likely to start with Olivier Giroud as the central striker, flanked by 2018 World Cup star Mbappe and either Barcelona's Ousmane Dembele or veteran Antoine Griezmann.

Giroud has scored 49 goals for France, Griezmann has 42 and the 23-year-old Mbappe already has 28. Dembele has been in fine form for Spanish league leader Barcelona this season.

Deschamps has until Monday — the eve of the Australia game — to call up a replacement for Benzema to his 26-player squad. Monaco striker Wissam Ben Yedder, who has three international goals, could be an option.

But Deschamps already has ample forward backup with Bayern Munich winger Kingsley Coman, Marcus Thuram and Kolo Muani.

Benzema would have turned 35 the day after the World Cup final. If France reaches it, he won't be there to play in Qatar, just like four years ago in Russia. **MDT/AP**

AD



## Barrier Gates Removal Schedule for the 69<sup>th</sup> Macau Grand Prix

As the 69<sup>th</sup> Macau Grand Prix draws to a successful conclusion, the Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee would like to express our gratitude to all citizens for your support and cooperation! Barrier removal works have been started after the event and the barrier gates are expected to be completely removed on 1<sup>st</sup> of December. The schedule is as follows:

Date	Time	Location
21 <sup>st</sup> to 24 <sup>th</sup> of November	08:00 to 20:00	(1) Remove all movable gates (2) Remove all barrier gates on both sides of the movable gates
21 <sup>st</sup> to 26 <sup>th</sup> of November	08:00 to 20:00	Remove all barrier gates from Avenida da Amizade to Reservoir Bend
24 <sup>th</sup> of November to 1 <sup>st</sup> of December	08:00 to 20:00	Remove all barrier gates from Rua dos Pescadores to Reservoir Bend
26 <sup>th</sup> of November to 1 <sup>st</sup> of December	08:00 to 20:00	Remove all barrier gates at the upper part of the Guia Hill

**OPINION**

**World Views**

Dasha Litvinova, MDT/AP

**WHERE'S PUTIN? LEADER LEAVES BAD NEWS ON UKRAINE TO OTHERS**

When Russia's top military brass announced in a televised appearance that they were pulling troops out of the key city of Kherson in southern Ukraine, one man missing from the room was President Vladimir Putin.

As Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and Gen. Sergei Surovkin, Russia's chief commander in Ukraine, stiffly recited the reasons for the retreat in front of the cameras on Nov. 9, Putin was touring a neurological hospital in Moscow, watching a doctor perform brain surgery.

Later that day, Putin spoke at another event but made no mention of the pullout from Kherson — arguably Russia's most humiliating withdrawal in Ukraine. In the days that followed, he hasn't publicly commented on the topic.

Putin's silence comes as Russia faces mounting setbacks in nearly nine months of fighting. The Russian leader appears to have delegated the delivery of bad news to others — a tactic he used during the coronavirus pandemic.

Kherson was the only regional capital Moscow's forces had seized in Ukraine, falling into Russian hands in the first days of the invasion. Russia occupied the city and most of the outlying region, a key gateway to the Crimean Peninsula, for months.

Moscow illegally annexed the Kherson region, along with three other Ukrainian provinces, earlier this year. Putin personally hosted a pomp-filled Kremlin ceremony formalizing the moves in September, proclaiming that "people who live in Luhansk and Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia become our citizens forever."

Just over a month later, however, Russia's tricolor flags came down over government buildings in Kherson, replaced with the yellow-and-blue banners of Ukraine.

The Russian military reported completing the withdrawal from Kherson and surrounding areas to the eastern bank of the Dnieper River on Nov. 11. Since then, Putin has not mentioned the retreat in any of his public appearances.

Putin "continues to live in the old logic: This is not a war, it is a special operation, main decisions are being made by a small circle of 'professionals,' while the president is keeping his distance," political analyst Tatyana Stanovaya wrote in a recent commentary.

Putin, who was once rumored to personally supervise the military campaign in Ukraine and give battlefield orders to generals, appeared this week to be focused on everything but the war.

He discussed bankruptcy procedures and car industry problems with government officials, talked to a Siberian governor about boosting investments in his region, had phone calls with various world leaders and met with the new president of Russia's Academy of Science.

On Tuesday, Putin chaired a video meeting on World War II memorials. That was the day when he was expected to speak at the Group of 20 summit in Indonesia — but he not only decided not to attend, he didn't even join it by video conference or send a pre-recorded speech.

The World War II memorial meeting was the only one in recent days in which some Ukrainian cities — but not Kherson — were mentioned. After the meeting, Putin signed decrees awarding the occupied cities of Melitopol and Mariupol the title of City of Military Glory, while Luhansk was honored as City of Labor Merit.

Independent political analyst Dmitry Oreshkin attributed Putin's silence to the fact he has built a political system akin to that of the Soviet Union, in which a leader — or "vozhd" in Russian, a term used to describe Josef Stalin — by definition is incapable of making mistakes.

"Putin and Putin's system ... is built in a way that all defeats are blamed on someone else: enemies, traitors, a stab in the back, global Russophobia — anything, really," Oreshkin said. "So if he lost somewhere, first, it's untrue, and second — it wasn't him."

Some of Putin's supporters questioned such obvious distancing from what even pro-Kremlin circles viewed as a critical developments in the war.

[Abridged]

Towering clouds of ash and glowing lava are spewing from two volcanoes on Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula and scientists say major eruptions could be on the way.

The peninsula, which extends into the Pacific Ocean about 6,600 kilometers east of Moscow, is one of the world's most concentrated areas of geothermal activity, with about 30 active volcanoes.

The sudden new activity followed a strong earthquake on Saturday, news reports said.

The Russian Academy of Sciences' vulcanology institute said

that at Klyuchevskaya Sopka, which at 4,754 meters is Eurasia's tallest active volcano, as many as 10 explosions an hour were being recorded.

Lava flows and ash emissions also are coming from the Shiveluch volcano, the institute said.

Kamchatka is sparsely populated. The town of Klyuchi, with about 5,000 people, lies between the two volcanoes, 30-50 kilometers from each.

The volcanoes are about 450 kilometers from the peninsula's only major city, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky.

AP PHOTO



WORLD CUP 2022

**WHERE TO GET A BEER? BARS PACKED AMID QATAR'S ALCOHOL LIMITS**

ISABEL DEBRE, DOHA

CHRIS, a British fan in Qatar for the World Cup, tried to order a beer with his dinner at a kebab joint on Sunday. He was quickly rebuffed.

He sighed and settled for a lemonade instead. "If I were a few years younger, I wouldn't have even come to this World Cup," said Chris, a 34-year-old sales manager from London who declined to give his last name for privacy reasons.

The question of where to get a drink, a fixture at sporting events around the world, in the conservative Islamic country has been top of mind for many fans since Qatar banned the sale of beer in stadiums on Friday in a stunning about-face. As a result, many of Doha's bars and nightclubs — one of the rare places fans can get alcohol — were packed with crowds and had their tables fully booked on Sunday as the tournament kicked off with the match between the host country and Ecuador.

"We are super full," said the hostess at Aqua Lounge bar in the Marriott Hotel. "It is painful to turn guests down." The Irish

Pub said the weekend has been "crazy." DT Nightlife Club on the Corniche, a palm-tree lined boulevard along the Doha waterfront, advised fans to "come as early as possible, or else it probably won't be possible."

"Nope, not a chance you can get in," said the hostess at the Belgian Cafe, another trendy spot in the city.

The rush on Doha's bars reflects the tensions tearing at the Muslim country and challenges facing the tiniest host of the world's biggest sporting event. Crowds already have overwhelmed the FIFA Fan Festival, now one of the only spot fans can get beer outside of luxury hotel bars. Qatari officials say the festival area has capacity for 40,000 people — a fraction of the visitors expected at peak times during the tournament. On Saturday just after 8 p.m., police turned away thousands of fans.

The unusually exorbitant price of alcohol has also dismayed many accustomed to a beer-fueled tournament.

"Man, we're missing the beer," said 48-year-old Fabian Cruz from Ecuador as he wandered around

Doha's city center. He said wouldn't try to squeeze into the fan zone again after the chaos the night before and couldn't stomach the thought of downing multiple \$14 beers at his hotel.

As a result, he faced the very real prospect of having to attend the opening match — which pits his country against Qatar — completely sober. "We don't even need a lot of alcohol. But we need some."

The question of where and how to get alcohol has dominated World Cup fan WhatsApp and Facebook groups. Many swap tips about how to sneak liquor into the country. Some share success stories of pouring arak, a strong anise-flavored liquor, into empty bottles of hand sanitizer buried in their checked luggage. Others report their bottles were confiscated at the airport.

"Of course we're disappointed," Ritu Mohan from England said of the stadium beer ban, adding he'd be scouring the street for bars with an empty table on Sunday night. "But we should have known what we were getting into when we heard Qatar was hosting." MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Turkey launched airstrikes over northern regions of Syria and Iraq, the Turkish Defense Ministry said yesterday, targeting Kurdish groups that Ankara holds responsible for last week's bomb attack in Istanbul. Warplanes attacked bases of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, and the Syrian People's Protection Units, or YPG, the ministry said in a statement, which was accompanied by images of F-16 jets taking off and footage of a strike from an aerial drone.

AP PHOTO



Tunisia Leaders of French-speaking countries gathered Saturday on a Tunisian island to discuss debt relief, migration, food and energy shortages amid a soaring cost-of-living crisis across Africa, Europe and the Middle East due to Russia's war on Ukraine. French President Emmanuel Macron, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the presidents of eight African nations were attending the 18th biannual meeting of the 88-member International Organization of Francophonie.

AP PHOTO



Polish officials last week inspected the initial installation phase of high-tech monitoring equipment along a metal wall on the border with Belarus geared toward preventing thousands of migrants from crossing into the European Union member country. Poland's Interior Minister Mariusz Kaminski said that the 5.5-meter high wall has slashed crossing attempts tenfold. Poland's Border Guard said the daily number of migrant crossings has dropped to a few dozen compared to thousands in 2021 and earlier this year.