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# Times

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**CARITAS MACAU HAS RECEIVED NEARLY MOP400,000 IN CASH DONATIONS FOR VICTIMS OF TURKEY-SYRIA EARTHQUAKE**

P3

**RESUMPTION OF TRAVEL TO SARS TO BOOST CHINA'S LUXURY GOODS MARKET**

P2

**EXPERTS SAY THE COOPERATION ZONE REGULATIONS WILL INJECT 'GREAT IMPETUS' INTO THE MACAU'S NON-GAMING INDUSTRIES**

P5



**New Zealand's** national carrier canceled dozens of flights yesterday as Aucklanders braced for a deluge from Cyclone Gabrielle, two weeks after a record-breaking storm swamped the nation's largest city and killed four people. Air New Zealand said it was canceling all domestic flights to and from Auckland through midday tomorrow as well as many international flights.



**USA** President Joe Biden, hosting both Republican and Democratic governors for a black-tie affair at the White House, raised his glass for a toast. Standing under a portrait of Abraham Lincoln, he told the people in the room to remember who they were. "We're the United States of America. We can get big things done if we do it together." "Cheers!" the crowd replied.



**Canadian** Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (pictured) said yesterday [Macau time] that on his order a U.S. fighter jet shot down an "unidentified object" that was flying high over the Yukon, acting a day after the U.S. took similar action over Alaska. North American Aerospace Defense Command detected the object flying at a high altitude Friday over Alaska, U.S. officials said. It crossed into Canadian airspace on Saturday.

ANTHONY LAM

# NEXT GETAWAY

**Bangkok a popular destination so far; flights to some Southeast Asian countries will resume next month**

P2



**ISLANDS HOSPITAL**  
**GOV'T INKS AGREEMENT WITH PEKING UNION MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL**

P3

**ENVIRONMENT**  
**DSPA WORK ON FOOD WASTE TOO SLOW: LAWMAKER**

P3



### HO IAT SENG TO MAKE FIRST OFFICIAL TRIP TO PORTUGAL

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng will make his first official trip to Portugal since becoming the city's top official. Although no official announcement has yet been made, the trip will likely be in April, according to Portuguese media outlet Plataforma. The same report confirmed the direct involvement of the President of Portugal, which means Ho Iat Seng will be received by Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa. This will be Ho Iat Seng's first trip outside Greater China since he took office in December 2019. Official foreign visits have been discouraged due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### MGTO HOSTS TRIP FOR HK DELEGATES TO BOOST TOURISM

The local government has hosted a two-day familiarization trip for over 100 members of Hong Kong's tourism office to boost visitors from the neighboring region after the complete end of Covid-19 related restrictions. The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has unfolded a promotional campaign with different special offers tailored for the Hong Kong market. Special offers on transportation tickets between Hong Kong and Macau are included, while brand-new promotional videos have been released on online and offline platforms. The government has reserved a budget of MOP 650 million to increase visitor numbers, of which MOP 180 million is for targeted group tours.

### TRAVEL

## BANGKOK A POPULAR DESTINATION AMONG RESIDENTS FOLLOWING FLIGHT RESUMPTION

**B**ANGKOK has become a popular destination for residents after the launch of Air Macau's international flights as the city drops its zero-Covid policy of nearly three years.

According to the local carrier, its flights to Tokyo, Hanoi, Seoul and Taipei have topped the list of popular destinations with about 31% to 83% of flight occupancy from Jan. 7 to Feb. 8.

Next month, Air Macau plans to increase flights to these five destinations, resume flights to destinations such as Osaka, Kaohsiung and Da Nang, and add Singapore as a destination at the same time.

It is also slated to add new international destinations this year.



Civil Aviation Authority data shows that during the Lunar New Year, the total passenger volume of Macau International Airport exceeded 76,000, returning to about 31%

of that before the pandemic.

Several international routes between Macau and Southeast Asian regions including the Philippines, Chiang Mai and Da Nang are expected to commence as early as next month as the government has earlier announced the approval of some airlines that will operate flights between the regions.

The city's tourism bureau is gearing up for physical promotional activities in international markets, including roadshows, presentation seminars, and familiarization trips in preparation for the return of international tourism.

The government will follow a strategy based on the Southeast Asian countries that have direct flights to Macau to promote an airfare-based subsidy to attract visitors from those countries. LV

## Credit approval to SMEs down on 2H of 2022

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE number of newly approved credits to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) dropped in the second half (2H) of 2022, a statistic released by the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) has shown.

The new lending approved in the 2H totaled MOP7.5 billion, down 0.5% from the first half (1H) of 2022. The collateralized ratio also dropped 13.6% from the last survey period to 55.1%. The collateralized ratio indicates the proportion between the credit limit and the tangible assets pledged.

The larger share of total loans granted was related to the construction and public works industry sector (40.3%), followed by the wholesale and retail trade (15.3%).

For credit utilization, at end of 2022, the outstanding balance of SME loans



totalled MOP85.2 billion, up 1.4% from the end of June.

Compared to the previous survey period, outstanding SME loans to restaurants, hotels and similar grew 11.3%, followed by an increase also in the wholesale and retail trade (5.9%). Moving in the opposite direction were the outstanding loans to transport, warehouse and communications, which decreased 4.0%.

The utilization rate, defined as the proportion of outstanding credit balan-

ce to the credit limit granted, rose 3.1% in 2H when compared to 1H, reaching 81% at the end of last year.

Also decreasing in the 2H was the outstanding balance of delinquent SME loans which registered a drop of 19.4% from June 2022 to MOP560.6 million. The delinquency ratio dropped 0.2% from the end of June 2022 to 0.7% at the end of last year.

The delinquency ratio refers to the fraction of delinquent loans to total SME loans outstanding.

## RESUMPTION OF TRAVEL TO SARs TO BOOST CHINA'S LUXURY GOODS MARKET

**C**HINA'S luxury goods market is expected to grow to 816 billion yuan by 2025, or approximately 25 percent of the global total, said a report from PwC China last week.

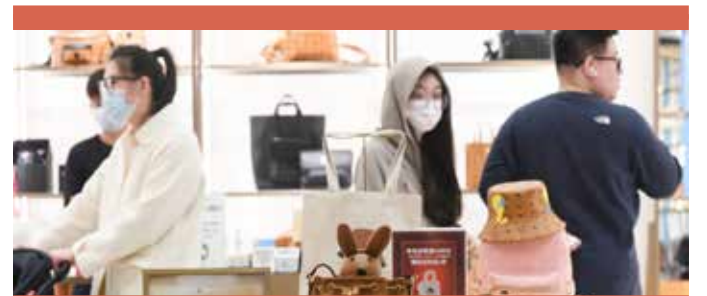
The Asia-Pacific region has become an important growth engine for the global luxury goods market, and China, as a major driver, will continue to unleash its potential, according to the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong luxury industry analysis report.

Offshore duty-free shopping in the southern Chinese island province of Hainan has boosted the country's burgeoning luxury goods

market, with offshore duty-free shopping in Hainan accounting for about 13 percent of Chinese consumer spending on luxuries in 2021, raking in 49.5 billion yuan, the report stated.

As the Chinese mainland has fully resumed normal travel to and from Hong Kong and Macau, luxury consumption in Hong Kong will gradually embrace a rebound, it said.

"China's luxury market is rapidly recovering from the pandemic with greater strength, resilience and flexibility," said Steven Zhong, ESG Strategy Lead Partner at PwC China. MDT/XINHUA



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# Gov't finally inks agreement with PUMCH for Islands Hospital

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE government has signed an agreement with the Peking Union Medical College Hospital (PUMCH) for the management and operation of the Islands Medical Center.

The signing ceremony occurred last Saturday in the presence of the Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng.

The document is considered very important by members of the third standing committee of the Legislative Assembly, which is conducting a detailed analysis of the bill that will establish the legal grounds for the operation of the medical facility.

Last week, the lawmakers complained of there being too many questions over the operation of the medical facility largely because there was not yet a contract signed between the



government and the management entity (PUMCH) and there was no available information about the document's contents. According to a statement

from the Office of the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, the agreement states the local government will initiate long-term cooperation with

the PUMCH, for health care services, medical education, scientific studies and transformation of the respective results and the health industry

(big-health industry).

The same office also said that after the Islands Medical Center becomes operational, the PUMCH will manage the facility. It added the reputation, techniques, and management team of PUMCH has assured the local government that such a medical facility will reach "a regional to national level."

Before the signing of the agreement, the Macau Hospital Strategic Development Committee held its first plenary meeting of 2023, chaired by Zhao Yupei, honorary president of Peking Union Medical College Hospital and member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The meeting addressed matters noted by the lawmakers of the Third Standing Committee of the AL, including clarification of the responsibilities and competencies of all parties involved.

It was also decided the committee should meet quarterly to discuss issues about the preparatory works for the start of operations of the medical facility, the managerial regime currently being examined and the legal grounds for the facility's operation.

## CARITAS MACAU

# Nearly MOP400,000 raised for Turkey-Syria earthquake

**C**ARITAS Macau has reportedly received nearly MOP400,000 in cash donations over the past several days since it commenced an appeal for victims of last week's Turkey-Syria earthquake.

The death toll from Monday's quakes that hit southeastern Turkey and northern Syria stood at 33,179 yesterday and was certain to rise as search teams locate more bodies in the rubble. Authorities said more than 92,600 other people were injured in the disaster.

Several charitable organizations in Macau are currently participating in the global action to raise funds and collect donations.

Without specifying the date, secretary general of Caritas Macau Paul Pun said the association is preparing to send the first batch of nearly MOP400,000, TDM has reported.



FILE - A destroyed building in Antakya, southern Turkey, Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2023.

Pun has called on residents to donate cash to avoid logistics issue.

The fundraising event will continue for about three months, and the donations will be directed to Caritas Turkey or relevant organizations to purchase materials and equipment for the victims.

Meanwhile, Pun also said that recently, many people from all walks of life have offered to help fundraising, including advertising companies publishing

free fundraising promotions, shops placing fundraising boxes and schools holding fundraising activities.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan acknowledged earlier last week the initial response was hampered by the extensive damage to roads and other infrastructure that made it difficult to reach some areas. He also said the worst-affected area was 500 kilometers in diameter and was home to 13.5 million people in

Turkey.

That has meant rescue crews have had to pick and choose how and where to help.

Meanwhile, the death toll in Syria's northwestern rebel-held region has reached 2,166, according to the rescue worker group the White Helmets. The overall death toll in Syria stood at 3,553 on Saturday, though the 1,387 deaths reported for government-held parts of the country hadn't been updated in days. LV

## DSPA WORK ON FOOD WASTE MOVING TOO SLOW: LAWMAKER

RENATO MARQUES

**L**AWMAKER Wong Kit Cheng has accused the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) of being too slow to address Macau's food waste issue.

Wong made a spoken inquiry to the government during last Friday's Legislative Assembly (AL) meeting.

While considering the government's previous promises, Wong said she feared this would be yet another issue in which the government makes "a lot of investment for little effect."

The lawmaker noted the government collects about 400 tons of food waste annually. At about one ton daily, the figure is considered almost residual considering food waste accounts for around 40% of all waste collected.

Wong's inquiry mostly concerned the government's food waste treatment center pilot project launched last year that has not been

receiving enough waste to justify its operation and purpose.

The director of DSPA said the food waste treatment center is still being built, noting the current scale of waste collection has not reached the scale it will reach in the future, when the center should receive around 150 tons of food waste daily.

According to the government, the center's purpose is to collect and process food waste to produce fertile soil through composting as well as energy production resulting from the burning of biogas released during the food waste fermentation process.

Wong asked when the government would expand the current pilot project that collects food waste from only 166 small and medium-sized restaurants, which she noted was less than 10% of all food waste production. These food and beverage and hotel industries total over 2,500 establishments in Macau.





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THE ZONE

# Hengqin regulations to boost the development of Macau's non-gaming industries: Experts

**T**HE regulations for promoting the development of the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin was released on February 8.

Experts from Macau and Hong Kong said that the regulations will inject great impetus into the non-gaming industries of Macau and the development of new infrastructure will benefit both Hengqin and Macau in an interview with GDToday.

Covering a total of eight chapters and 66 articles, the regulations focus on boosting the development of key industries, facilitating Macau residents' livelihood, promoting the integrated development of Hengqin and Macau and ensuring legal protections.

## MACAU'S NON-GAMING INDUSTRIES

The regulations detailed the supporting measures for key industries that will help Macau achieve an adequate level of economic diversification.

"Macau is at a crossroads to make an economic transforma-



tion. With the release of these regulations, Hengqin will further extend its industrial chain, which will in turn support Macau's economic transformation and development," said Liu Chengkun, director of the Institute for Sustainable Development in Macau University of Science and Technology.

The key industries mentioned in the regulations, such as, sci-tech R&D, cultural and tourism, conventions and exhibitions, are very much in line with a strategy put forward by Macau.

According to the SAR's policy address for the fiscal year of 2023, it will achieve economic diversifi-

cation by building Macau into a world tourism and leisure center and continuously advance the development of major industries of big health, modern finance, high technologies, conventions and exhibitions, as well as culture and sports.

The ultimate goal is to see that the non-gaming industries account for around 60 percent of Macau's GDP and build a sustainable industrial structure that fits Macau's reality.

Liu stressed that the industrial planning of the Cooperation Zone will expand development space and provide industrial matchmaking for Macau.

## HEALTHY COMPETITION

Like Liu, another Macau expert also thinks that the regulations will invigorate the Cooperation Zone and the SAR.

There are two innovative mechanisms highlighted in the regulations. One is to allow relevant institutions and individuals to bear no responsibilities if a reform failed, and the other is to establish long-term mechanism to delegate powers so that the Zone has the initiative to conduct reform and develop to the greatest extent.

"The regulations will have a 'catfish effect', which means an innovative and high-efficient Cooperation Zone will make Macau review its own development, thereby make corresponding improvements," said Tong Kai Chung, president of Macao Institute of Management and chairman of Macao Political Economy Research Association.

With greater autonomy, he believed that the Cooperation Zone will better shoulder the responsibility of taking the lead in reform, opening-up, and innovation of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Ma-

cao Greater Bay Area or even the whole country.

## NEW INFRASTRUCTURE

During the 14th Five-year Plan period (2021-2025), the new infrastructure related to the digital economy and energy industry will become the new underpinning and driver for the comprehensive strategic transformation of China's economy.

Information technology and big data hold the key to the building of a smart city and efficient urban administration service platform. This is not emphasized in the regulations but also echoed by an economist from Hong Kong.

"The goal of the Cooperation Zone should not just be a smart city, but a cognitive city by resorting to the new infrastructure," said Liang Haiming, chairman and chief economist of the China Silk Road iValley Research Institute.

Macau businesses, especially the small and medium-sized high-tech enterprises, can join in the development of new infrastructure so as to enjoy the benefits from it.

"The regulations will help Hengqin make full use of the development of new infrastructure and lay a solid foundation for Hengqin to become a cognitive city in the future," said Liang.

In the meantime, the new infrastructure will support the Cooperation Zone in upgrading its trade supply chain system and cross-border payments services, setting a good example for urban development in the world.

MDT/GDTODAY

# Seoul lifts visa limits on short-term travelers from China, testing for SARs remain

**S**OUTH Korea says it will remove the entry restrictions it placed on short-term travelers from China since the start of the year as officials see the Covid-19 situation in that country as stabilizing.

South Korea in early January stopped issuing most short-term visas at its consulates in China, citing concerns about a virus surge in the country and the potential for new mutations. China abruptly eased coronavirus restrictions in December, raising the prospect of millions of Chinese traveling abroad again for the first time in three years.

South Korea also re-



A traveler walks outside of a COVID-19 testing center at the Incheon International Airport in Incheon, South Korea, last week

quired all passengers from China, Hong Kong and Macau to submit proof of negative tests taken with 48 hours before their arrival and put

them through tests again once they arrive.

Following an anti-virus meeting on Friday, the government decided to normalize short-term visa applications at its consulates in China from Saturday. The testing requirements were maintained but officials say those steps could be relaxed later depending on virus developments.

While allowing the extension of existing visas, South Korea had stopped issuing most short-term visas at its consulates in China, except for essential government, diplomatic and business activities and humanitarian reasons.

The South Korean virus measures prompted China to retaliate by suspending South Korean short-term visa applications, raising business concerns in a country that heavily depends on exports to China. MDT/AP

# DSI RECEIVES OVER 10,000 APPLICATIONS ON THE FIRST WEEK OF EXTENDED SERVICE

**F**ROM last Tuesday (Feb. 7), when the Identification Services Bureau (DSI) extended its service hours to 9 p.m. and to weekends, it has received over 10,000 applications for documents and certificates, the DSI has said.

The figure includes applications lodged in-person at the service counters as well as via online channels.

At the moment, an appointment can still be made for lodging application at China Plaza Building, while the next available appointment dates for lodging applications at the Government Services Centres

in Areia Preta and in the Islands are Feb. 26 and Feb. 23, respectively.

The extended service hours, which resulted from a rapid increase in demand, will be in effect until the end of March this year.

Citizens are welcome to make appointments for counter services in the extended time in "Ticketing and Appointment for Counter Service" in "Macao One Account" or on the DSI website (www.dsi.gov.mo). On-site ticketing will not be provided, but citizens can collect documents without an appointment during that time. RM



AP PHOTO



China's defense ministry spokesman Tan Kefei (left) and U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin

ANALYSIS

# 'IT JUST RANG': IN CRISES, US-CHINA HOTLINE GOES UNANSWERED

ELLEN KNICKMEYER,  
WASHINGTON

WITHIN hours of an Air Force F-22 downing a giant Chinese balloon that had crossed the United States, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin reached out to his Chinese counterpart via a special crisis line, aiming for a quick general-to-general talk that could explain things and ease tensions.

But Austin's effort Saturday fell flat, when Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fenghe declined to get on the line, the Pentagon says.

China's Defense Ministry says it refused the call from Austin after the balloon was shot down because the U.S. had "not created the proper atmosphere" for dialogue and exchange. The U.S. action had "seriously violated international norms and set a pernicious precedent," a ministry spokesperson was quoted as saying in a statement issued late Thursday.

It's been an experience that's frustrated U.S. commanders for decades, when it comes to getting their Chinese counterparts on a phone or video line as some flaring crisis is sending tensions between the two nations climbing.

From Americans' perspective, the lack of the kind of reliable crisis communications that helped get the U.S. and Soviet Union

through the Cold War without an armed nuclear exchange is raising the dangers of the U.S.-China relationship now, at a time when China's military strength is growing and tensions with the U.S. are on the rise.

Without that ability for generals in opposing capitals to clear things up in a hurry, Americans worry that misunderstandings, false reports or accidental collisions could cause a minor confrontation to spiral into greater hostilities.

And it's not about any technical shortfall with the communication equipment, said Bonnie Glaser, managing director of Indo-Pacific studies at the German Marshall Fund think tank. The issue is a fundamental difference in the way China and the U.S. view the value and purpose of military-to-military hotlines.

U.S. military leaders' faith in Washington-to-Beijing hotlines as a way to defuse flare-ups with China's military has been butting up against a sharply different take — a Chinese political system that runs on slow deliberative consultation by political leaders and makes no room for individually directed, real-time talk between rival generals.

And Chinese leaders are suspicious of the whole U.S. notion of a hotline — seeing it as an Ameri-

can channel for trying to talk their way out of repercussions for a U.S. provocation.

"That's really dangerous," Assistant Secretary for Defense Ely Ratner said Thursday of the difficulty of military-to-military crisis communications with China, when Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley pressed him about China's latest rebuff on Beijing's and Washington's hotline setup.

U.S. generals are persisting in their efforts to open more lines of communication with Chinese counterparts, the defense official said, testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "And unfortunately, to date, the PLA is not answering that call," Ratner said, referring to China's People's Liberation Army.

Ratner accused China of using vital channels of communication simply as a blunter messaging tool, shutting them down or opening them up again to underscore China's displeasure or pleasure with the U.S.

China's resistance to military hotlines as tensions increase puts more urgency on efforts by President Joe Biden and his top civilian diplomats and security aides to build up their own communication channels with President Xi Jinping and other top Chinese political officials, for situations

where military hotlines may go unanswered, U.S. officials and China experts say.

Both U.S. and Chinese militaries are building up for a possible confrontation over U.S.-backed self-ruled Taiwan, which China claims as its territory. The next flare-up seems only a matter of time. It could happen with an expected event, such as House Speaker Kevin McCarthy's promised visit to Taiwan, or something unexpected, like the 2001 collision between a Chinese fighter and a U.S. Navy EP-3 reconnaissance plane over the South China Sea. Without commanders talking in real-time, Americans and Chinese would have one less way of averting greater conflict.

"My worry is that the EP-3 type incident will happen again," said Lyle Morris, a country director for China for the Office of the Secretary of Defense from 2019 to 2021, now a senior fellow at the Asia Society Policy Institute. "And we will be in much different political environments of hostility and mistrust, where that could go wrong in a hurry."

Biden has emphasized building lines of communications with China to "responsibly manage" their differences. A November meeting between Xi and Biden yielded an announcement

the two governments would resume a range of dialogues that China had shut down after an August Taiwan visit by then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Last weekend, the U.S. canceled what would have been a relationship-building visit by Secretary of State Antony Blinken after the transit of the Chinese balloon, which the U.S. says was for espionage. China claims it was a civilian balloon used for meteorological research.

The same week that China's balloon flew over the U.S., Austin was in the Philippines to announce an expanded U.S. military footprint there, neighboring China, noted Tiehlin Yen, director of the Taiwan Center for Security Studies, a think tank. "America is also very nationalistic these days," Yen said.

"From a regional security perspective, this dialogue is necessary," Yen said.

What passes for military and civilian hotlines between China and the U.S. aren't the classic red phones on a desk.

Under a 2008 agreement, the China-U.S. military hotline amounts to a multistep process by which one capital relays a request to the other for a joint call or videoconference between top officials on encrypted lines. The pact gives the other side 48 hours and up to respond, although nothing in the pact stops top officials from talking immediately.

Sometimes when the U.S. calls, current and former U.S. officials say, Chinese officials don't even pick up.

"No one answered. It just rang," recounted Kristen Guinness, a senior policy analyst at the Rand Corporation. Guinness was speaking about a March 2009 incident when she was working as an adviser to the Pentagon's chief of naval operations. Chinese navy vessels at the time surrounded a U.S. surveillance ship in the South China Sea and demanded the American leave. U.S. and Chinese military officials eventually talked - but some 24 hours later.

It took decades of Washington pushing to get Beijing to agree to the current system of military crisis communications, said David Sedney, a former deputy assistant secretary of defense who negotiated it.

"And then once we had it in place, it was clear that they were very reluctant to use it in any substantive purpose," Sedney said.

Americans' test calls on the hotline would get picked up, he said. And when Americans called to give congratulations on some Chinese holiday, Chinese officials would pick up and say thanks, he said.

Anything more sensitive, Sedney said, the staffers answering the phone "would say, 'We'll check. As soon as our leadership is ready to talk, we'll get back to you.' Nothing would happen." MDT/AP



DIPLOMACY

# Iranian President Raisi to visit China to shore up ties

IRANIAN President Ebrahim Raisi will meet with his counterpart Xi Jinping during his three-day trip in China starting tomorrow, as the two U.S. rivals seek further cooperation.

China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying made the announcement Sunday, saying Raisi's visit was at Xi's invitation.

Raisi will meet with Xi and their delegations will sign cooperation documents, according to Iran's state news agency IRNA. Meeting with Iranian and Chinese business leaders and Iranian expatriates in China is also part of his itinerary, the report added.

Raisi's visit is expected to deepen ties between the two political and economic partners that are opposed to the U.S.-led Western domination of international affairs.

The two leaders met last September in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, when Xi underscored China's support for Iran.

In December, Raisi pledged to remain committed to deepening

the strategic partnership during a meeting with Chinese Vice Premier Hu Chunhua in Tehran.

China is a major buyer of Iranian oil and an important source of investment in the Mideast country. In 2021, Iran and China signed a 25-year strategic cooperation agreement that covered major economic activities from oil and mining to industry, transportation and agriculture.

Both countries have had tense relations with the United States and have sought to project themselves as a counterweight to American power alongside Russia.

Washington has accused Iran of selling hundreds of attack drones to Russia for its war in Ukraine and has sanctioned executives of an Iranian drone manufacturer. At that same time, ties between Moscow and Beijing have grown stronger.

Iran on Saturday celebrated the 44th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution amid nationwide anti-government protests and heightened tensions with the West. **MDT/AP**

DIPLOMACY

# CAMBODIA'S HUN SEN RECEIVES SUPPORT PLEDGES ON BEIJING VISIT

CAMBODIAN Prime Minister Hun Sen received multiple assurances of Chinese economic and political support during a meeting Friday in Beijing with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"(China) firmly supports Cambodia in safeguarding national sovereignty and security, firmly supports Cambodia in steadily advancing major domestic political agendas and economic and social development, and resolutely opposes external forces interfering in Cambodia's internal affairs," Xi was quoted as telling Hun Sen by China's official Xinhua News Agency.

China will also encourage more Chinese enterprises to invest in Cambodia, help in the construction of the Sihanoukville economic zone in Cambodia's southwest on the Gulf of Thai-

land, and support building transportation infrastructure, Xi said.

Hun Sen was quoted as thanking China for providing COVID-19 vaccines and said Cambodia "firmly supports China in safeguarding national sovereignty, security, and development interests" and "firmly opposes any external forces interfering in China's internal affairs on issues related to Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet."

Cambodia is a key Chinese diplomatic partner, helping dampen criticism of Beijing within the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, several of whose members are engaged in territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea.

The meeting at the Diaoyutai State Guest House comes in the middle of Hun Sen's three-day visit. **MDT/AP**

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## MGM Clinched 30 APAC Human Resources Accolades in 2022



MGM won a total of 30 Asia-Pacific human resources awards in 2022, covering a broad spectrum of HR practices, including employee training and talent development, HR management, workplace culture, employer branding, etc. This array of accolades stands as a testament to the Company's highly praised HR management and strategy.

**Kenneth Feng, President, Chief Strategic & Financial Officer of MGM**, said, "These awards are a great encouragement to the Company. MGM has always embraced innovative HR strategies to equip team members with up-to-date industry knowledge and skills, career advancement and a great working environment. We will continue to align with the Macao SAR government's policies, stepping up efforts to offer diversified and professional training schemes and further uplift the capability of industry talents, in a bid to foster the high-quality development of Macao's integrated tourism and leisure industry."

### NURTURING LOCAL TALENTS WITH INNOVATIVE OFFERINGS

MGM has forged many award-winning flagship training programs. One among all is the Community Outreach eLearning Series Programs, jointly organized with MGTO and the Macau Deaf Association, was acclaimed as "Quality Training Course" in the "Construction of Quality Training Courses & Learning Projects of the Year" by Training Magazine of Xinhua Daily Media Group. Besides, MGM's online learning platform eAcademy won "Best Digital HR Team" by HRTech China. MGM also attained "Employee Experience Awards 2022 - Best Learning and Development Program" awarded by Asia's prestigious industry magazine Human Resources.

### CREATING EXCELLENCE IN CORPORATE CULTURE

MGM has been applauded for its efforts in facilitating team communication and work environment. In 2022, the Company won Gold in "Best HR Communication Strategy" at the Employee Experience Awards 2022, and was named "The Best Workplace to Work" by the Committee of the Pudong International Talent Hub Forum. Other awards recognizing MGM for shaping a distinguished corporate culture include "Best Employer in Hospitality Industry" by VeryEast, "Best HR COE of the Year" by HRoot, and "Best HR Team of the Year" by HR Flag, and so on.

### ATTAINED FOUR AWARDS AT THE NATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCES INNOVATION COMPETITION

In the second edition of the National Human Resources Innovation Competition, MGM won four accolades, including "HR as Strategic Business Partner of the Year", "Talent Development of the Year", "Corporate Culture of the Year" and "Chief HR Officer of the Year", making MGM the most-awarded Macao entrant of the year. The Company also reached the Top 3 position among all nationwide entrants.

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28,000 KILLED

# Turkey arrests building contractors six days after quakes

**A**S rescuers still pulled a lucky few from the rubble six days after a pair of earthquakes devastated southeast Turkey and northern Syria, Turkish officials detained or issued arrest warrants for some 130 people allegedly involved in the construction of buildings that toppled down and crushed their occupants.

The death toll from Monday's quakes stood at 28,191 — with another 80,000-plus injured — as of yesterday and was certain to rise as bodies kept emerging.

As despair also bred rage at the agonizingly slow rescue efforts, the focus turned to who was to blame for not better preparing people in the earthquake-prone region that includes an area of Syria that was already suffering from years of civil war.

Even though Turkey has, on paper, construction codes that meet current earthquake-engineering standards, they are too rarely enforced, explaining why thousands of buildings slumped onto their side or pancaked downward onto residents.

Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay said late on Saturday that warrants have been issued for the detention of 131 people suspected to be responsible for collapsed buildings.

Turkey's justice minister has vowed to punish anyone responsible, and prosecutors have begun gathering samples of buildings for evidence on materials used in constructions. The quakes were powerful, but victims, experts and people across Turkey are blaming bad construction for multiplying the devastation.

Authorities at Istanbul Airport yesterday detained two contractors held responsible for the destruction of several buildings in Adiyaman, the private DHA news agency and other media reported. The pair were reportedly on their way to Georgia.

Two more people were arrested in the province of Gaziantep suspected of having cut down columns to make extra room in a building that collapsed, the state-run Anadolu Agency said.

A day earlier, Turkey's Justice Ministry announced the



Emergency teams search for people in the rubble of a destroyed building in Adana, southern Turkey

planned establishment of "Earthquake Crimes Investigation" bureaus. The bureaus would aim to identify contractors and others responsible for building works, gather evidence, instruct experts including architects, geologists and engineers, and check building permits and occupation permits.

A building contractor was detained by authorities on Friday at Istanbul airport before he could board a flight out of the country. He was the contractor of a luxury 12-story building in the historic city of Antakya, in Hatay province, the collapse of which left an untold number of dead.

The detentions could help direct public anger toward builders and contractors, deflecting attention away from local and state officials who allowed the apparently sub-standard constructions to go ahead. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government, already burdened by an economic downturn and high inflation, faces parliamentary and presidential elections in May.

Survivors, many of whom lost loved ones, have turned their frustration and anger also at authorities. Rescue crews have been overwhelmed by the widespread damage which has impacted roads and airports, making

it even more difficult to race against the clock.

Erdogan acknowledged earlier in the week that the initial response has been hampered by the extensive damage. He said the worst-affected area was 500 kilometers (310 miles) in diameter and was home to 13.5 million people in Turkey. During a tour of quake-damaged cities Saturday, Erdogan said a disaster of this scope was rare, and again referred to it as the "disaster of the century."

Rescuers, including crews from other countries, continued to probe the rubble in hope of finding additional survivors who could yet beat the increasingly long odds. Thermal cameras were used to probe the piles of concrete and metal, while rescuers demanded silence so that they could hear the voices of the trapped.

Two sisters were removed from the wreckage yesterday in the city of Adiyaman, 153 hours after the quake, according to HaberTurk television, which also broadcast the live rescue of a 6-year-old boy removed from the debris of his home in Adiyaman. The child was wrapped in a space blanket and put into an ambulance. An exhausted rescuer removed his surgical mask and took deep breaths as a group of women could

be heard crying in joy.

Turkey's health minister, Fahrettin Koca, posted a video of a young girl in a navy blue jumper who was rescued. "Good news at the 150th hour. Rescued a little while ago by crews. There is always hope!" he tweeted.

The efforts of a team of Italian and Turkish rescuers also paid off when they removed a 35-year-old man from the wreckage in the hard-hit city of Antakya. The man, Mustafa Sarigul, appeared to be unscathed as he was being transported on a stretcher to an ambulance, private NTV television reported.

Overnight, a child was also freed in the town of Nizip, in Gaziantep, state-run Anadolu Agency reported, while a 32-year woman, was rescued from the ruins of a eight-story building in the city of Antakya. The woman, a teacher named Meltem, asked for tea as soon as she emerged, according to NTV.

In Kahramanmaraş, near the epicenter of the first 7.8 quake that struck early Monday morning, efforts were underway to reach a survivor detected by sniffer dogs beneath a now-pancaked seven-story building, NTV reported.

Those found alive, however, remained the rare exception. MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 1975 MINERS SET FOR 35 PER CENT PAY RISES



British mineworkers' leaders have agreed to accept the coal board's latest pay offer of up to 35%.

A settlement was reached when the coal board added an extra pound to wage rates after two-and-a-half days' intensive negotiations at the industry's London headquarters.

The deal, brokered by National Coal Board chair Sir Derek Ezra, is worth £140m and means increases of up to 35% for the UK's 246,000 miners.

NUM executives voted 16 to 10 to recommend the award which gives new basic weekly rates of £61 - up from £45 - at the coalface, £47 - up from £36 - elsewhere - and £41 - up from £30 - on the surface.

Other improvements include extending unsocial hours by an extra two hours, increasing the hourly rate from 1p to 20p and setting national - rather than individual - weekly production bonuses of £3 for output over 100,000 tonnes of target.

The union will send out ballot papers to members next week and hope to implement the changes on 1 March.

Overall the offer falls just short of figures demanded by the NUM's left-wing at last year's conference.

Leading left-winger and President of the Yorkshire branch of the NUM Arthur Scargill said: "The social contract has been breached and to that extent I welcome the advances which have been made."

"But I think much more could have been obtained with a more determined and militant approach," he continued.

NUM President Joseph Gormley said the latest pay deal remained in the spirit of the social contract.

Moderate trade unionists and the government were keen to preserve the social contract and avoid further industrial action.

The social contract was brokered by Harold Wilson's Labour Government to settle the miners' strike after the general election last February and had promised food subsidies and price restraints to the unions in return for pay restraint and co-operation.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The deal was accepted by miners - militant and moderate - across the country and strikes were avoided.

From 1 March the price of domestic coal rose by 22% and the price of coal for industrial use rose by over 7%, to generate an extra £370m in revenue to pay for the wage increases.

Coal output also increased to meet the higher production targets set by the NCB.

Targets rose to 150 million tonnes over the decade from the 115 million tonnes achieved in 1975.

Joseph Gormley presided over a period of relative harmony in the coal industry for the rest of the 1970s and achieved the relatively peaceful closure of 40 pits in that period.







AP PHOTO



A man rides an electric motorcycle from Ampersand on a test drive in Nairobi

Electric mobility has a promising future in the continent but “requires infrastructural, societal and political systemic changes that neither happen overnight nor will be immune to hesitance,” said Carol Mungo, a research fellow at the Stockholm Environment Institute.

The move to electric transport “will require African governments to rethink how they deliver current services such as reliable and affordable electricity” and at the same time put in place adequate measures to address electric waste and disposal, Mungo added.

Some financial incentives are on the way.

Earlier in February the African Development Bank announced that it will provide \$1 million in grants for technical assistance in Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and South Africa.

The African continent records a million premature deaths annually from air pollution, according to a soon-to-be-released study by the U.N. environment agency, Stockholm Environment Institute and the African Union obtained by The Associated Press.

Studies by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition say a reduction of short-lived climate pollutants can cut the amount of warming by as “much as 0.6 degrees Celsius (1.1 degrees Fahrenheit), while avoiding 2.4 million premature deaths globally from annual outdoor air pollution.”

But Mungo warned that cleaning up transport is just one step of many toward better air quality.

“There are so many emission factors in cities,” she said. “E-mobility, however, looks broadly beyond the transport sector to infrastructure development and urban planning, which in the end can solve complex pollution issues on in Africa.” **MDT/AP**

## EV IN KENYA, AN ELECTRIC TRANSPORT PLAN FOR CLEAN AIR, CLIMATE

WANJOHI KABUKURU,  
NAIROBI

ON the packed streets of Nairobi, Cyrus Kariuki is one of a growing number of bikers zooming through traffic on an electric motorbike, reaping the benefits of cheaper transport, cleaner air and limiting planet-warming emissions in the process.

“Each month one doesn’t have to be burdened by oil change, engine checks and other costly maintenance costs,” Kariuki said.

Electric motorcycles are gaining traction in Kenya as private sector-led firms rush to set up charging points and battery-swapping stations to speed up the growth of cleaner transport

and put the east African nation on a path toward fresher air and lower emissions.

But startups say more public support and better government schemes can help further propel the industry.

Ampersand, an African-based electric mobility company, began its Kenyan operations in May 2022. The business currently operates seven battery-swapping stations spread across the country’s capital and has so far attracted 60 customers. Ian Mbote, the startup’s automotive engineer and expansion lead, says uptake has been relatively slow.

“We need friendly policies, taxes, regulations and incentives that would boost the entry into

the market,” said Mbote, adding that favorable government tariffs in Rwanda accelerated its electric transport growth. Ampersand plan to sell 500 more electric motorbikes by the end of the year.

Companies say the savings of switching to electric and using a battery-swap system, rather than charging for several hours, are key selling point for customers.

“Our batteries cost \$1.48 to swap a full battery which gives one mobility of about 90 to 110 kilometers (56 to 68 miles) as compared to the \$1.44 of fuel that only guarantees a 30 to 40 kilometer ride (19 to 25 miles) on a motorcycle,” Mbote said.

Kim Chepkoi, the founder of electric motorbike-making com-

pany Ecobodaa Mobility, added that “electricity costs are going to be more predictable and cushioned from the fluctuation of the fuel prices.”

Ecobodaa’s flagship product is a motorcycle with two batteries, making it capable of covering 160 kilometers (100 miles) on one battery charge. The motorcycle costs 185,000 shillings (\$1,400) without the battery, about the same as a conventional motorbike.

Other cleaner transport initiatives in the country include the Sustainable Energy for Africa program which runs a hub for 30 solar-powered charging stations for electric vehicles and battery-swapping in Kenya’s western region.

## CORPORATE BITS

### La Chine, Zi Yat Heen receive diamond ratings in Black Pearl guide



Sands Resorts Macao has been recognised at the Meituan Black Pearl Restaurant Guide 2023 for the sixth year in a row, with two signature restaurants achieving diamond ratings – The Parisian

Macao’s La Chine (two diamonds) and Four Seasons Hotel Macao’s Zi Yat Heen (one diamond).

The Black Pearl Restaurant Guide 2023 acknowledged a total of 304 restaurants, co-

vering 28 cities worldwide. In Macao 12 restaurants were selected, with two at Sands Resorts Macao.

Tom Connolly, senior vice president of Food and Beverage Operations, Sands China Ltd., said: “We are truly honoured and delighted to have received diamond ratings again in the trusted Black Pearl Restaurant Guide. At Sands Resorts Macao, more than 150 restaurants offer a world of diverse cuisine for our guests and highlight the unique charm of Macao as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy. This honour is a testament to our restaurants’ outstanding food, ambience and service, and will inspire us to create even more unforgettable feasts.”

### Melco presents residency concert series



Melco Style presents ‘Melco Residency Concert Series’ – a three-year world-class residency entertainment spectacle featuring a line up of superstars with a collective of 90 shows at Studio City.

Pop Diva Joey Yung per-

forms live in Asia’s First Ever Residency Concert Series to kick off ‘Melco Residency Concert’ in style on April 1. Last week, Joey appeared at the virtual press conference to share the exciting highlights of her spectacular bespoke

show – ‘Eternity Joey Yung Live in Macau’.

Joey Yung who has toured with more than 150 concerts around the world will be the first performer at The Melco Residency Concert Series with a total of eight shows in ‘Eternity Joey Yung Live in Macau’ over four consecutive weekends.

David Sisk, COO Macau Resorts, Melco Resorts and Entertainment said, “Melco strives to support the Macau SAR government’s strategy on diversified tourism, and it further demonstrates Melco’s confident and strong contribution to the Greater Bay Area.”



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

FIGURE SKATING

# Miura and Kihara win Four Continents skating championship

DAVE SKRETTA

**I**T was a memorable night for Japan at the Four Continents Figure Skating Championships.

Riku Miura and Ryuichi Kihara became the first pairs skaters from their nation to win the prestigious event among non-European countries Saturday. Then, hours later, Kao Miura followed them to the ice inside Broadmoor World Arena and made it confidently through his free skate in the thin air of Colorado Springs, Colorado, to win the men's event.

"It was really tough skating at this altitude," Kihara admitted, "but the cheers of the audience kept our legs moving."

Indeed, many skaters struggled to get through their long programs.

Jin Boyang appeared to be so light-headed after his free skate

that he collapsed face-first to the ice. Even after taking time to catch his breath, the veteran Chinese skater still appeared unsteady as he headed to the center of the ice for bows.

Kao Miura finished with 281.53 points, the second-highest score in the world this year, and he needed just about all of it after Keegan Messing's performance. The longtime Canadian standardbearer took silver with 275.57 points, while Shun Sato climbed from sixth after his short program to round out the podium.

Unbeaten in pairs competition this year, Kihara spun out on the final double axel of their opening jump sequence, and along with Rika Miura was sloppy on their triple salchow and throw triple flip. But they were good enough for 137.05 points and a total of 208.24, easily outdistancing the American

team of Emily Chan and Spencer Akira Howe.

Chan and Howe, who were second to world champs Alexa Knierim and Brandon Frazier at the recent U.S. nationals, were third after their short program. But they put together a strong free skate — they were a little out of sync on their triple toe loops and shaky on the throws late in the program — to vault to the silver medal with 201.11 points.

Canadian champions Deanna Stellato-Dudek and Maxime Deschamps struggled to a third-place finish with 193.84 points.

"It was an amazing performance and it definitely felt like one of the best we have had this season," said Howe, who along with Chan finished second in both of their Grand Prix assignments at the NHK Trophy and Skate Canada.

"It's amazing to come to Colo-

AP PHOTO



Siyang Zhang and Yongchao Yang of China compete in the pairs free skating at the Four Continents Figure Skating Championships

rado Springs," Howe said. "A lot of the talk was about the altitude, so to come here and give this performance — our season best — was amazing. It feels amazing."

Stellato-Dudek and Deschamps went awry when she put her hand down on their throw triple flip,

then during a messy triple salchow when he fell and she spun out. They rallied to finish strong and secure the bronze medal.

"Just finishing that program with all of those lifts was hard," an out-of-breath Deschamps said. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily  
Editorial, China Daily

DPP STANDS IN WAY OF CROSS-STRAITS EXCHANGES

The meeting between Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, and visiting Hsia Li-yan, vice-chairman of the Chinese Kuomintang party, in Beijing on Friday has undoubtedly provided the two sides with a valuable opportunity to promote exchanges and cooperation.

That Hsia also met with Song Tao, head of both the Taiwan Work Office of the CPC Central Committee and the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, before that meeting shows that the mainland attaches great importance to the KMT delegation's visit, and the CPC's hope that exchanges between the two parties can be further enhanced at various levels to uphold the 1992 Consensus, which embodies the one-China principle, and oppose "Taiwan independence".

The hospitality and sincerity the KMT delegation has been greeted with during its visit should serve to awaken the Taiwan leader Tsai Ing-wen and the secessionist-minded Democratic Progressive Party of the island to the mainland's consistent stance that the one-China principle is the political foundation for any form of exchanges across the Straits.

It is the DPP's obstruction, if not its brazen hijacking of the island's interests for its secessionist scheme, that has hindered the normal cross-Straits exchanges. That a mainland delegation was unable to go to Taiwan to pay tribute to Master Hsing Yun, founder of the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist order in Taiwan who passed away on Feb 5, due to obstruction from the DPP authorities, is in stark contrast to the Tsai administration's eagerness to invite anti-China Western politicians to visit the island.

However, the DPP's failure in the island's local elections late last year, which led to Tsai stepping down as head of the DPP, shows that the Taiwan people are not that easily duped, and they are fully aware that the DPP feels no qualms about turning the island into a scorched battlefield in pursuit of its agenda.

The warm welcome Wang has extended to the Taiwan people in saying that "We welcome and support more Taiwan compatriots to participate in the cause of Chinese modernization and national rejuvenation" represents the openness of the mainland to share the fruits of its development, as well as the great significance the mainland attaches to the peaceful reunification of the country.

The harmonious atmosphere of the talks between Wang and Hsia, the broad subjects they have touched upon and the valuable consensus they have reached should consolidate Taiwan compatriots' confidence that peace and prosperity are always within the island's reach as long as it makes the right choice.

For the West, the island is just a piece to be played in its great game in Asia. But it is an irrefutable historical fact that both sides of the Straits belong to one China. That is unchangeable. So too is the historical trend of the reunification of the country, which is irresistible and inevitable.

HARLEY-DAVIDSON FROM 1908 BECOMES PRICIEST BIKE AT AUCTION

THE BUZZ

A rare Harley-Davidson motorcycle built in 1908 has become the most expensive motorcycle ever sold at auction, according to data compiled by a website that tracks vintage motorcycle sales.

The Strap Tank Harley-Davidson was recorded on vintagent.com as being sold for \$935,000 after auction fees last month at the Mecum Auction in Las Vegas, The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported last week.

The bike was named Strap Tank because its oil and fuel tanks are attached to the frame with nickel straps. The bike is believed to be one of only 12 such models in the world.

A 1907 Strap Tank sold for \$715,000 after fees but didn't go for as much as the record-setting 1908 Strap Tank because it was never restored.

The record-breaking bike had many of its original parts, making it even more rare, said Greg Arnold, Motorcycle Division Manager at Mecum Auctions.

"We marketed the bike well and Harley is by far the most famous American motorcycle brand so we had a feeling it would do well in auction, but obviously you are surprised anytime you sell the most expensive bike ever," he said.

AP PHOTO



FASHION

SERGIO HUDSON DELIVERS COLORFUL '90S CELEBRATION AT NYFW

BEATRICE DUPUY, NEW YORK

SERGIO Hudson created a nostalgic scene with shoulder pads, neon colors and graffiti prints taken right out of the early '90s with his latest collection Saturday.

Hudson, who has dressed the likes of Beyoncé and Michelle Obama, borrowed inspiration from artist Jason Naylor's colorful and borderline psychedelic murals for New York Fashion Week in an eclectic celebration of energy.

Models walked on a graffiti print by Naylor with voluminous Fran Drescher hairstyles in multi-colored mini dress suit sets to thumping beats.

Hudson told The Associated Press that Naylor added his vision to Hudson's brand name iconography and the two merged their styles into graffiti letters that were spray painted on white T-shirts, incorporated into the fabric of the collection and

sequined designs. Aside from Naylor's striking use of colors for his art, Hudson also said the artist's murals have a deeper meaning for him.

During a hard time for his business when he was living in Los Angeles, Hudson said, he came across a Naylor mural.

"He did this great inspirational painting on the other side of the street," Hudson said. "When I saw it, it just kind of touched me emotionally. I always said if I ever get the opportunity, I was going to do a collection inspired by him."

While meshing Naylor's fun colors and lettering with his show, Hudson paid homage to another artist. After the Met Gala unveiled its theme to honor late Chanel designer Karl Lagerfeld, Hudson said that he too wanted to add his own interpretation of Lagerfeld's infamous '90s rebrand of Chanel by adding playful tailoring to his looks.

Hudson even brought

his youthful flair with his red carpet looks as models adorned in slinky dresses with sparkly cut outs walked the runway. Keeping with the times, Hudson brought out a look that has caused some recent commotion in the fashion community — no pants. One model could be seen wearing a cropped suit jacket with what looked like black high waisted undies.

Celebrities in attendance included "The View" co-host Sunny Hostin, journalist Joy Reid, and model and brand founder of Baby Phat, Kimora Lee Simmons, who was supporting her daughter Aoki Lee Simmons walking the runway.

This season, Hudson said he wasn't designing for a specific person in mind but for everyone.

"I am proud of the American fashion industry for the strides they made to be more inclusive," he said. "They have made a quantum leap in the past year or two." MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



**West Bank** An Israeli settler shot and killed a Palestinian in the northern West Bank yesterday [Macau time]. Palestinian health officials said, while an 8-year-old child died of injuries suffered a day before in a car-ramming attack in Jerusalem. As night fell, warning sirens sounded in southern Israel when Palestinian militants fired a rocket from the Gaza Strip that was intercepted by Israeli aerial defenses.

AP PHOTO



**Ukraine** Russian forces over the weekend continued to shell Ukrainian cities amid a grinding push to seize more land in the east of the country, with Ukrainian officials saying that Moscow is having trouble launching its much-anticipated large-scale offensive there. One person was killed and one more was wounded on Sunday morning by the shelling of Nikopol.

AP PHOTO



**Austria** has come under heavy criticism for granting visas that will allow sanctioned Russian lawmakers to attend a Vienna meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The issue highlights the delicate balancing act the European country has engaged in while trying to maintain its longstanding position of military neutrality during the war in Ukraine.

AP PHOTO



**Germany** The city of Berlin yesterday was holding a court-ordered rerun of a chaotic 2021 state election that was marred by severe glitches at many polling stations that led to hours-long lines as some polling places ran out of ballot papers or received ones for the wrong district. Berliners have long been frustrated by the German capital's notoriously dysfunctional ways.