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 18 Apr 2023

“ THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ ”

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**DRIVERS MAY ONLY BE ALLOWED TO PAY ROAD-SIDE PARKING FEES BY ELECTRONIC MEANS FROM MAY 1**

**PJ INVESTIGATES OVER 150 SCHOOL CASES LAST YEAR, 15 RELATED TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

**US SAILS WARSHIP THROUGH TAIWAN STRAIT AFTER CHINA'S DRILLS**



**Hong Kong** activist Joshua Wong (pictured) was sentenced yesterday to three months in prison for breaching court bans on disclosing personal information about a police officer who injured a protester during 2019 anti-government protests. Wong was in custody after he indicated his intention to plead guilty in the city's biggest national security case, in which he faces a potential penalty of up to life in prison. Last year, he finished serving his sentences of about two years.

**Japanese** police have confiscated metal tubes, tools and possible gunpowder from the home of a man suspected of throwing what was believed to be a homemade pipe bomb at Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at a campaign event, rekindling worries about the growing threat of easy-to-make weapons in Japan. Witnesses say they saw an object that looked like a thin metal thermos flying overhead and landing near the prime minister. Kishida was safely evacuated.



**German** Chancellor Olaf Scholz (left) said that he will press for a trade agreement between the European Union and Indonesia as part of his country's efforts to reduce its reliance on China for crucial raw materials. Speaking at the opening of the annual Hannover trade fair, Scholz told Indonesian President Joko Widodo that a trade deal between Southeast Asia's most populous nation and the 27-nation bloc would create an economic area with 700 million people.

More on backpage

# HO STARTS EUROPE TOUR

**CE leaves today to Portugal, in a visit that includes Luxembourg and Belgium, accompanied by a large business entourage P3**



**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
**EDGAR MARTINS TRIBUTE TO JOURNALIST KILLED IN LIBYA WINS MAJOR INT'L AWARD P4-5**



## PHILANTHROPY

# 'EFFECTIVE ALTRUISM' HAS CAUGHT ON WITH BILLIONAIRE DONORS – BUT IS THE WORLD'S MOST HEADLINE-MAKING ONE ON BOARD?

NICHOLAS G. EVANS  
UMASS LOWELL

ONE of the ways tech billionaire Elon Musk attracts supporters is the vision he seems to have for the future: people driving fully autonomous electric vehicles, colonizing other planets and even merging their brains with artificial intelligence.

Part of such notions' appeal may be the argument that they're not just exciting, or profitable, but would benefit humanity as a whole. At times, Musk's high-tech mission seems to overlap with "long-termism" and "effective altruism," ideas promoted by Oxford philosopher William MacAskill and several billionaire donors, such as Facebook co-founder Dustin Moskovitz and his wife, former reporter Cari Tuna. The effective altruism movement guides people toward doing the most good they can with their resources, and Musk has claimed that MacAskill's philosophy echoes his own.

But what do these phrases really mean – and how does Musk's record stack up?

## THE GREATEST GOOD

Effective altruism is strongly related to the ethical theory of utilitarianism, particularly the work of the Australian philosopher Peter Singer.

In simple terms, utilitarianism holds that the right action is whichever maximizes net happiness. Like any moral philosophy, there is a dizzying array of varieties, but utilitarians generally share a couple of important principles.

First is a theory about which values to promote. "Hedonistic utilitarians" seek to promote pleasure and reduce pain. "Preference utilitarians" seek to satisfy as many individual preferences, such as to be healthy or lead meaningful lives, as possible.

Second is impartiality: One person's pleasure, pain or preferences are as important as anyone else's. This is often summed up by the expression "each to count for one, and none for more than one."

Finally, utilitarianism ranks potential choices based on their out-



SpaceX founder Elon Musk speaks during a T-Mobile and SpaceX joint event

comes, usually prioritizing whichever choice would lead to the greatest value – in other words, the greatest pleasure, the least amount of pain or the most preferences fulfilled.

In concrete terms, this means that utilitarians are likely to support policies like global vaccine distribution, rather than hoarding doses for particular populations, in order to save more lives.

## UTILITARIANISM 2.0?

Utilitarianism shares a number of features with effective altruism. When it comes to making ethical decisions, both movements posit that no one person's pleasure or pain counts more than anyone else's.

In addition, both utilitarianism and effective altruism are agnostic about how to achieve their goals: what matters is achieving the greatest value, not necessarily how we get there.

Third, utilitarians and effective altruists often have a very wide "moral circle": in other words, the kinds of living beings that they think ethical people should be concerned about. Effective altruists are frequently vegetarians; many are also champions of animal rights.

## LONG-TERM VIEW

But what if people have ethical obligations not just toward sentient beings alive today – humans,

animals, even aliens – but toward beings who will be born in a hundred, a thousand or even a billion years?

Longtermists, including many people involved in effective altruism, believe that those obligations matter just as much as our obligations to people living today. In this view, issues that pose an existential risk to humanity, such as a giant asteroid striking earth, are particularly important to solve, because they threaten everyone who could ever live. Longtermists aim to guide humanity past these threats to ensure that future people can exist and live good lives, even in a billion years' time.

Why do they care? Like utilitarians, effective altruists want to maximize happiness in the universe. If humanity goes extinct, then all those potentially good lives can't happen. They can't suffer – but they can't have good lives, either.

## MEASURING MUSK

Musk has claimed that MacAskill's effective altruism "is a close match for my philosophy." But how close is it really? It's hard to grade someone on their particular moral commitments, but the record seems choppy.

To start, the original motivation for the effective altruism movement was to help the global poor as much as possible.

In 2021, the director of the United Nations World Food Pro-

gram mentioned Musk's wealth in an interview, calling on him and fellow billionaire Jeff Bezos to donate US\$6 billion. Musk's net worth is currently estimated to be \$180 billion.

The CEO of Tesla, SpaceX and Twitter tweeted that he would donate the money if the U.N. could provide proof that that sum would end world hunger. The head of the World Food Program clarified that \$6 billion would not solve the problem entirely, but save an estimated 42 million people from starvation, and provided the organization's plan.

Musk did not, the public record suggests, donate to the World Food Program, but he did soon give a similar amount to his own foundation – a move some critics dismissed as a tax dodge, since a core principle of effective altruism is giving only to organizations whose cost-effective impact has been rigorously studied.

Making money is hardly a problem in effective altruists' eyes. They famously have argued that instead of working for nonprofits on important social issues, it may be more impactful to become investment bankers and use that wealth to advance social issues – an idea called "earning to give." Nonetheless, Musk's lack of transparency in that donation and his decision to then buy Twitter for seven times that amount have generated controversy.

## FUTURISTIC SOLUTIONS

Musk has claimed that some of the innovations he has invested in are moral imperatives, such as autonomous driving technology, which could save lives on the road. In fact, he has suggested that negative media coverage of autonomous driving is tantamount to killing people by dissuading them from using self-driving cars.

In this view, Tesla seems to be an innovative means to a utilitarian end. But there are dozens of other ways to save lives on the road that don't require expensive robot cars that just happen to enrich Musk himself: improved public transit, auto safety laws and more walkable cities, to name a few. His Boring Company's attempts to build tunnels under Los Angeles, meanwhile, have been criticized as expensive and inefficient.

The most obvious argument for Musk's supposed longtermism is his rocket and spacecraft company SpaceX, which he has tied to securing the human race's future against extinction.

Yet some longtermists are concerned about the consequences of a corporate space race, too. Political scientist Daniel Deudney, for example, has argued that the roughshod race to colonize space could have dire political consequences, including a form of interplanetary totalitarianism as militaries and corporations carve up the cosmos. Some effective altruists are worried about these types of issues as humans move toward the stars.

Is anyone, not just Musk, living up to effective altruism's ideals today?

Answering this question requires thinking about three core questions: Are their initiatives trying to do the most good for everyone? Are they adopting the most effective means to help or simply the most exciting? And just as importantly: What kind of future do they envision? Anyone who cares about doing the most good they can should have an interest in creating the right kinds of future, rather than just getting us to any old future.

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RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng is on an official five-day visit to Portugal from today until April 22, the Government Information Bureau (GCS) has announced.

Ho is leading a government delegation as well as a Macau entrepreneur delegation on the visit that will extend, on the return trip, to Luxembourg and Brussels (Belgium), before returning to Macau on April 27.

In the same statement, GCS noted the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) government "looks forward to strengthening ties with those countries in terms of economic and trade issues, cooperation in tourism, education and cultural affairs; as well as bolstering promotion of Macau in Europe."

While in the Portuguese capital city – Lisbon – the CE will meet the president of the Portuguese Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa; the Prime Minister, António Costa; and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, João Cravinho.

After the Lisbon leg of the trip, the Macau entrepreneur delegation will travel to Porto, led by the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, where they will visit several local enterprises

# CE to visit Portugal, Luxembourg and Belgium



to bolster bilateral ties in economic and trade matters.

On the trip to Luxembourg, the MSAR government delegation will meet the country's Prime Minister and Minister of State, Xavier Bettel, who is also Minister for Communications and Media, Minister for Religious Affairs, Mi-

nister for Digitalization and Minister for Administrative Reform.

On the final stop of the 10-day European tour, Ho will visit the European Union (EU) headquarters in Brussels where he will meet some undisclosed EU officials.

While in Brussels, the Macau delegation will also meet Bel-

gium's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Economy and Employment, Pierre-Yves Dergagne, as well as the Minister-President of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region, Rudi Vervoort.

During the CE's absence, the Secretary for Administration and

Justice, André Cheong, will be Acting Chief Executive.

As the Times has previously reported, the Macau government delegation will only include two of the government secretaries, namely Lei and the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário. The Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong, has a separate visit planned next month that will include Portugal and Geneva (Switzerland).

## LOCAL BUSINESSPEOPLE RECEIVED BY SEVERAL MINISTERS IN LISBON

Members of the delegation of businesspeople currently in the Portuguese capital city – Lisbon – to promote Macau and find business opportunities and cooperation with local companies, have been received by several Portuguese Ministers, TDM Radio has reported.

Among those, Ambrose So, director-general of the Clean Energy Forum reportedly met yesterday with the Portuguese Minister for Environment and Climate Action, Duarte Cordeiro.

The same source also reported the executive director of SJM Holdings, Daisy Ho, will meet the Portuguese Minister of Culture, Pedro Adão e Silva, at the end of this week.

## FUTURE COTAI HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT FEE UNCONFIRMED DESPITE PARTNERSHIP SET

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE charges to be made by Peking Union Medical College Hospital for their management and branding at the future Cotai hospital have not yet been identified, a parliamentary committee has revealed.

Following a discussion with the government on a bill concerning the management of the future hospital, the Third Standing Committee of the parliament, led by president Vong Hin Fai, said further negotiations between the Beijing hospital and the local government will determine the price tags.

The local government will bear the costs.

The contract, however, was signed early this year. The Beijing hospital's right of management will last 10 years, with a clause allowing automatic extension for another 10 years.

Reiterating its previous pledge, the government said staff for the future hospital will be recruited



locally. Preparations have been made and over 100 nurses will conclude their training in time for the opening of the new hospital

Citing the government, Vong said the future public hospital will provide both public and private medical services. With the aim of public services predominating, private services will be offered on the former's surplus.

Both types of services will be administered by the

same medical team, Vong added.

The future hospital will have three levels of pricing. Eligible local residents referred by Health Centers will enjoy service either free-of-charge or at a "reasonable" price. Others will be charged on par with private medical services.

The government also told the committee the current public medical service law may be updated after 40 years of effect.

## PJ INVESTIGATES OVER 150 SCHOOL CASES LAST YEAR, 15 RELATED TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE mechanism of communication between schools and the Judiciary Police (PJ) - Communication Network for School Safety – has led the force to be called to investigate some 152 cases in 2022, statistics from the PJ and the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) show.

Among those cases, 15 were related to alleged child sexual abuse.

Another statistical release related to the first quarter (Q1) of this year also shows an exponential increase in this kind of case, with the PJ recording 23 cases (+53%) between January and March this year.

The fact led lawmaker Ngan Iek Hang to question the government on the matter, particularly on strategies for prevention of this kind of case, mostly involving contact between minors and adults via the internet, but also



sometimes minors with other young people.

In response to Ngan's written inquiry, the DSEDJ said it has been reinforcing its work on safety education so that young people can use the internet without danger and become aware of how to protect themselves from potential "sex predators".

While the DSEDJ noted the 15 cases of alleged sexual abuse of minors

related to schools, there was no data on the result from such investigations, or any information as to whether any cases resulted in formal accusations of the crime of sexual abuse of children.

The DSEDJ also did not specify the age of the alleged victims, which, according to information collected by the Times from the PJ, usually indicates the victims are younger than 14 years old.



EDGAR MARTINS

# Emotional tribute to journalist killed in

LYNZY VALLES

**E**DGAR Martins, a photographer who grew up and lived in Macau for several years, was awarded Photographer of the Year 2023 for the portfolio series "Our War," a project that features a collection of portraits of his late photojournalist friend, Anton Hammerl.

The project that was created to honor and commemorate a friend who was killed in the 2011 Libyan Civil War has won a top award at the Sony World Photography Awards, with a portrait that also won the Portrait Category of the 2023 awards.

Frustrated by the lack of progress in the investigation to find Hammerl's body, Martins traveled to Libya in 2022 with the help of a smuggler.

However, the deteriorating situation in the country has made his search unfeasible.

While in North Africa, Martins photographed all types of people that he met – whether they were involved in the war, ex-militia, their descendants, local residents – anyone that could be a structure of a self-portrait of Hammerl.

Speaking to the Times, the photographer said the "unexpected win" not only took him aback but was also "quite an emotional experience because I get to share my friend's story on [the] world stage.

"For the last three to four years, this has really been just inside my mind. I've been working on the ground and all of that but it was very much a personal project. Now, of course, I'm sharing it with the world," said the photographer, based in the UK.

In a statement to the World Photo Organization, Martins explained the series of shots were selected because "they resembled him, espoused similar ideas and beliefs, or reminded me of him at different stages of our friendship."

"This project portrays a complex story, warped by absence, that talks of the difficulty of documenting, testifying, witnessing, remembering, honoring and imagining," he said.

Although Martins has been overwhelmed with the win, he considers winning the competition as subjective amid the over 410,000 entries in the prestigious contest.

The story of his late friend, who travelled to Libya to cover the conflict between pro-regime and anti-Gaddafi forces, and then was forcefully abducted



and killed by government militia, was just a jumping off point for this specific journey.

Although there had been other elements directly related to his practice as a photographer, Martins said he had always been very conscious of how photography has played in war zones and how it sometimes fails in storytelling.

Therefore, "Our War," which is still a work-in-progress pro-

ject scheduled to be launched, worldwide in 2024, is also a space to reflect on the decisive but paradoxical role that photography has played in conflict zones.

"I've always been somewhat critical of the way in which documentaries [or] photographs sometimes fall into [the] same old tropes," he told the Times.

A story backed by grief and loss, the series is part of a wider, much more complex project

that includes sound, installations and short films – a myriad of different types of approaches to tell the story.

"This isn't an orthodox documentary project. It's a project where the reality and my imagined reality of the places and circumstances [meet]. [...] Conflict has always been polarized in terms of the aggressors and victims. The reality of course is always much [more] nuanced

that this," Martins added.

Last week, the World Photography Organization revealed its 10 category winners and the prestigious Photographer of the Year, honoring professional photographers who have provided a snapshot from parts of the world rarely seen.

The Photographer of the Year award had a field of 180,000 entries, and includes the prize of a lead place in the World Pho-



# Libya wins Sony Photography Awards



**A story backed by grief and loss, the series is part of a wider, much more complex project that includes sound, installations and short films – a myriad of different types of approaches to tell the story**

tography exhibition, imaging equipment and a USD40,000 cash prize.

Martins' work triumphed in the Portraiture category of the Professional competition.

In a statement, prize chair Mike Trow described the project as a "powerful, personal set of portraits," adding: "(Martins') work highlights the lengths photographers will go to to tell a story and create meaning;

each image giving a sense of the journey Anton took without ever being explicit about how his life ended."

Born in Évora, Martins completed an MA in Photography and Fine Arts at the Royal College of Art. Throughout his career, he has received the Jerwood Photography Award (2003), the inaugural New York Photography Award (Fine Art category, May 2008), the BES Photo Prize

(Portugal, 2009), the Sony World Photography Award (2009 and 2018), the International Photography Awards 2010 (Abstract category) and the Hangar Centre Photography Prize (2021), among others.

Between 2002 and 2022 Martins published 15 separate monographs, which were received with critical acclaim. He was selected to represent Macau (China) at the 54th Venice Biennale.



# PARKING METERS MAY REFUSE COINS FROM MAY 1

ANTHONY LAM

**I**f a relevant bill passes the parliament tomorrow, drivers will only be allowed to pay road-side parking fees by electronic means from May 1.

The First Standing Committee of the parliament has concluded its discussion on the Bill concerning public parking services and compiled its opinions.

It is proposed to take effect on Aug. 1, with an exception for road-side parking fee payment, which is proposed to take effect in May.

After the concluding session, president Ella Lei of the committee told a press conference that all parking services operated or commissioned by the government will take both cash and electronic payment methods, except for two scenarios, as the bill proposes.

The two scenarios are when public parking lots clearly state the acceptance of only a single payment method, and in cases of road-side parking spaces.

There were some debates at the committee on the proposal restricting parking meters to accept electronic payments only. In explanation, the government said that the current facilities used are aged, but newer facilities that the government prefers either only take electronic payment methods or are more expensive



when they take both methods.

The government also blamed the current facilities for slow speeds in interface reaction and data transmission.

Future parking fees will be determined by the Chief Executive with Executive Dispatch.

Several drivers questioned the grounds for electronic-payment-only parking meters when they discussed the matter with local media Ma-

cao Daily News. One driver thought that public policies should be at the public's convenience.

Another driver moaned that the public opinions are not important to the government. "The government is so bossy that it didn't even consider asking the people," the driver said.

A Mr Lei cited foreign parking meters, which charge drivers after their parking times, to criticize the government for not changing its mentality.

## SPORTS

# WTT CHAMPIONS MACAO KICK OFF WITH THE ROUND OF 32

RENATO MARQUES

**T**he World Table Tennis (WTT) Champions Macao 2023 tournament kicked off yesterday with the first matches of the Round of 32.

In a day with some interesting and highly disputed matches in both the women's and men's groups, Japan's Mima Ito and Kasumi Ishikawa played respectively against Elizabeta Samara from Romania and Nina Mittelham from Germany.

In the men's group, Hiroto Shinozuka took on Hong Kong's Wong Chun Ting, and Alexis Lebrun from France battled Sweden's Truls Møregårdh.

In the last encounter of the day, Hugo Calderano from Brazil battled against Omar Assar of Egypt for a place in the Round of 16.

Strong performance was shown from the start by Koreans Jang Woojin and Lee Sang Su which led to them winning their respective matches against Swedish Kristian Karlsson and the Japanese Yukiya Uda.

At the same time, Liu Yangzi (Australia) and Han Ying (Germany) also started on the upper-hand beating, respectively, Dina Meshref (Egypt) and Yu Fu (Portugal).

The tournament continues today for the second day of the Round of 32.

## RESULTS OF MEN'S SINGLES - ROUND OF 32

Kristian Karlsson (SWE)	2	<b>3</b>	<b>Jang Woojin (KOR)</b>
Yukiya Uda (JPN)	0	<b>3</b>	<b>Lee Sang Su (KOR)</b>
Kirill Gerassimenko (KAZ)	0	<b>3</b>	<b>Darko Jorgić (SLO)</b>
<b>Liam Pitchford (ENG)</b>	<b>3</b>	1	Simon Gauzy (FRA)
Hiroto Shinozuka (JPN)	1	<b>3</b>	<b>Wong Chun Ting (HKG)</b>
<b>Alexis Lebrun (FRA)</b>	<b>3</b>	2	Truls Møregårdh (SWE)
Omar Assar (EGY)	2	<b>3</b>	<b>Hugo Calderano (BRA)</b>

## RESULTS OF WOMEN'S SINGLES - ROUND OF 32

<b>Yangzi Liu (AUS)</b>	<b>3</b>	2	Dina meshref (EGY)
<b>Ying Han (GER)</b>	<b>3</b>	0	Fu Yu (POR)
Lily Zhang (USA)	0	<b>3</b>	<b>Hina Hayata (JPN)</b>
Manika Batra (IND)	0	<b>3</b>	<b>Cheng I-Ching (TPE)</b>
Nina Mittelham (GER)	2	<b>3</b>	<b>Kasumi Ishikawa (JPN)</b>
<b>Mima Ito (JPN)</b>	<b>3</b>	1	Elizabeta Samara (ROU)
Chen Szu-Yu (TPE)	2	<b>3</b>	<b>Adriana Diaz (PRI)</b>

## GBA

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMPETITION CALLS FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RMB300 MILLION PRIZES

STAFF REPORTER

**T**he 3rd Hengqin International Scientific and Technological Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition has kicked off in the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin. With a total prize pool of RMB300 million, the competition welcomes outstanding innovation enterprises across the globe.

The competition has also created a new award, the "New Green Lotus Award", to attract entrants from Macao and Portuguese-speaking countries. Its prize amounts to RMB8 million, which will be shared by 10 winning teams, with at least two teams from lusophone countries.

The competition marks the first sci-tech competition held by Hengqin and Macau jointly after the



operation of the Cooperation Zone. Hosted by the Executive Committee of the Cooperation Zone, it is organized by the Economic Development Bureau of the Cooperation Zone, with support from the SAR's Economic and Technological Development Bureau and the Science and Technology Development Fund.

This year's competition further focuses on the major industries of the Cooperation Zone, including integrated circuits and electronic components, biomedicine and medical devices, big data and artificial intelligence, new materials and new energy.

In addition, it will prioritize those technology innovation projects that have

made innovative achievements, and achieved key technological breakthroughs with high potential for industrialization.

According to Fu Yongge, deputy director of the Executive Committee of the Cooperation Zone, the competition is an important platform for investment attraction and talent introduction in the Cooperation Zone, and it is also an important initiative for the Cooperation Zone to assist Macau's adequate economic diversification.

The competition has 31 awards, with 11 for the start-up group, 10 for the growth group and 10 for the "New Green Lotus Award". And the top winner in the growth group will be awarded up to 100 million RMB as non-repayable funding to subsidize its R&D expenses and investment facilities.





# New record-high of tourist arrivals, MGTO in talks with gaming ops to boost tourism

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE SAR has reached a peak in daily visitor arrivals since the onset of the pandemic, recording over 98,000 tourists visiting the city on April 15.

With this figure, Macau has recovered to 58% of the pre-pandemic levels.

Speaking at the Legislative Assembly, Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong said the city is gaining momentum from its tourism promotions and offers which have attracted travelers from the mainland and Hong Kong. Lei said tourists visiting Macau are young people, ranging from 18 to 35 years old.

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) is communicating with the gaming concessionaires about resource allocation to promote non-gaming elements in communities, take advantage of community tourism components, and speed up the recovery of economic tourism, Lei said.

Some mainland visitors said festivals and events are among the main reasons they come to Macau, and of those, half stayed for more than three days, according to Lei.

The office has concluded that festivals and events can



help encourage visitors to stay, so it will support community tourism and festival tourism.

The office has also launched a specific financial support program for "Community Economic Tourism Development" to encourage local organizations to attract visitors to their communities through special tourism activities that incorporate local traditional folk cultures, history and travel resources.

With the theme "Monthly highlight of Macau", the government will make the most of elements like festivals, foods, sports, the creative

industries, MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions), science and technology, as well as resources from the tourism industry and organizations, to launch more promotional activities.

Promotional activities for tourism with Zhuhai and Zhongshan in Hunan and Fujian are scheduled for a second season this year. The government will also hold a meeting on annual cooperation with the Guangdong and Hong Kong tourism bureaus about a brand-new multi-destination travel scheme.

Gaming operators should submit their investment

and execution plans to the government annually, which can be adjusted by the government in response to needs of economic development, according to the gaming concession contracts.

## NO PLANS FOR ANOTHER ROUND OF CONSUMPTION CARD

Lei has said that there is no need to issue consumer cards now, but he will closely follow the economic development situation and make dynamic plans to deal with any changes.

This comes after lawmaker Pereira Coutinho called for another round of MOP8,000 consumption card.

At the plenary many lawmakers were concerned about the remaining MOP4 billion of the second MOP10 billion anti-pandemic fund measures.

Lei said the nature of the relevant funds is a contingency need. If the situation improves, the balance will be taken back to the treasury.

He said the current recovery is better than expected, and compared with other regions, it has also made progress.

Lei also said the new unemployment rate (January to March) will drop further to 3.9%, and the underemployment rate will drop to 2.7%.

## EDUCATION

# OVER 80 SCHOOLS GATHER AT CONFERENCE TO PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES

STAFF REPORTER

**M**ORE than 80 schools and enterprises from China, Hong-Kong, Macau and neighboring Asian countries gathered from April 15 to 16 for the 2023 ACAMIS Spring Leadership Conference.

Co-organized by The International School of Macao (TIS), the Canadian International School of Guangzhou (CIS) and the Association of China and Mongolia International Schools (ACAMIS), this edition was under the theme of "Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow".

"This conference is an excellent opportunity to share the latest developments in current international education and discuss future international education with colleagues in the sector," school supervisor of TIS and member of the board of directors at the ACAMIS Howard Stribbell said during his welcome speech.

Many other educators and experts were invited to the conference, such as TIS Secondary School Principal Amanda Kiat, who spoke on mental health and life balance in school, but also TIS Technology Department Head Todd Voykin who talked about the development and impact of artificial intelligence.

"The International School of Macao believes that [such] participation and exchanges help understand the future trend and development of education, providing knowledge, insight and skills that will lay a foundation for students' further development," the school said in a statement.

## CORPORATE BITS

### Wynn invites Hong Kong artists for concerts in May Golden Week



Wynn has invited five Hong Kong artists to perform two live "Special For You" concerts in Macau during the

May Golden Week holiday. Gigi Yim, Mike Tsang, Jerry Lamb, Ron Ng and Kandy Wong will be headlining the

concerts for two consecutive nights at Wynn Macau on May 1 and at Wynn Palace on May 2.

The five artists will take turns to perform a variety of classics and hot new singles during the "Special For You" concerts in Macau. Fans who have followed the performers on the hugely popular "Endless Melody" and "Call Me by Fire S2" variety TV shows, will now have the chance to watch them live and up-close at Wynn. Their electrifying performances on the theater-like stages of Wynn Macau and Wynn Palace are set to create an audio-visual feast for the senses in celebration of Golden Week in May.

### Melco attends National Security Education Exhibition



Melco management team members recently attended the opening day of the National Security Education Exhibition on the National Security Education Day, the gaming operator said in a statement.

Approximately 180 Melco colleagues are expected to attend the month-long exhibition on the importance of national security jointly hosted by SAR government and Liaison Office of the Central

People's Government in the Macau SAR.

Last week, Melco colleagues also visited an exhibition to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the promulgation of the Basic Law.

Nearly 150 Melco colleagues are expected to visit this month-long exhibition "to deepen their understanding of the Basic Law." Furthermore, since January this year, 200 Melco colleagues have visited the Commemorative Gallery of the Macao Basic Law organized by the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM)'s Division of Civic Education. A further 200 colleagues are expected to visit the exhibition by the end of this year.



DIPLOMACY

# AUSTRALIA SEEKS TO 'STABILIZE THE RELATIONSHIP' WITH CHINA: FM

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

**A**USTRALIA is working to stabilize relations with China but could not return to the thriving economic relationship with its biggest trading partner that existed 15 years ago, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said yesterday.

Icy bilateral relations that deteriorated during the previous conservative Australian government's nine years in power have shown signs of improvement since Wong's center-left Labor Party was elected almost a year ago. Minister-to-minister meetings have resumed, China has recently lifted restrictions on Australian coal imports and Australia hopes a 3-year-old tariff barrier on Australian barley will be lifted within months.

But Wong said that trade relations could not return to the level when conservative Prime Minister John was in power from 1996 until 2007. Trade was then separated from political and strategic priorities.

"I have been very clear that we



Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong addresses the National Press Club in Canberra, yesterday

seek to stabilize the relationship," Wong told the National Press Club. "I think both countries know we are not going to go back to where we were 15 years ago."

During Howard's era, "you could have your strategic relationship with the United States and the economic relationship with China

and the worlds stayed separate -- we don't live in that sort of world anymore," Wong said.

China has imposed a series of official and unofficial trade barriers to Australian exports in recent years, particularly since the previous government angered Beijing by calling for an indepen-

dent investigation into the causes of and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While Australian businesses and state leaders were impatient for Chinese barriers to be lifted for exports including wine, wood and seafood, Wong described diversifying to other markets as "a smart

thing to do."

"Even with increased diversification, China will remain Australia's largest trading partner for the foreseeable future, and a valued source of foreign investment, where it meets our national interests," she said.

Australia has blocked the sale of assets including critical infrastructure to Chinese companies on national security grounds in recent years.

Wong said Australia was working toward maintaining a predictable, rules-based Asia-Pacific region "where no country dominates and no country is dominated."

She agreed with U.S. President Joe Biden on the need for "guardrails" -- communication channels between the United States and China to minimize the risk of military misunderstanding and miscalculation -- as developed during the Cold War by the United States and the former Soviet Union.

"President Biden has made overtures to China toward agreeing guardrails. It is in all the world's interests that his overtures are met," Wong said.

"I have said this to my Chinese counterpart and to his predecessor. And I will keep saying it," she added, referring to Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang and the man he replaced in December, Wang Yi. **MDT/AP**

COURTS

# Australian charged over reports to suspected Chinese spies

**T**WO suspected Chinese spies gave a Sydney businessman envelopes of cash for information about subjects including a government deal with the United States and Britain to build a fleet of Australian nuclear-powered submarines, prosecutors told a court yesterday.

The businessman, Alexander Csergo, was refused bail when he appeared by video link from prison in Sydney's Downing Center Local Court charged with one count of reckless foreign interference.

The charge, included in laws against covert foreign interference and espionage that angered China when they were legislated in 2018, carries a maximum 15-year prison sentence.

He is accused of accepting money from two suspected Chinese spies he knew by the names Ken and Evelyn in exchange for handwritten reports on Australian defense, economic and national security arrangements since 2021 while he



Bernard Collaery, lawyer for Alexander Csergo, speaks to media outside the Downing Centre Local Court in Sydney, yesterday

worked in Shanghai, where he owns a communications and technology infrastructure consultancy business.

The subjects included the AUKUS partnership among Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States to create an Australian submarine fleet powered by U.S. nuclear technology that was announced in September 2021, prosecutor Connor McCraith said.

U.S. President Joe Biden and the leaders of Australia and Britain announced details of the deal in March, including that Australia would buy secondhand Virginia-class submarines from the United States and build a new AUKUS class of submarines with Britain.

The suspected spies also requested details about Australia's partnership with the United States, Japan

and India known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or the Quad, as well as information about lithium and iron ore mining in Australia, the prosecutors alleged.

Csergo has been in custody since Friday, when he was arrested at his home in the Sydney beachside suburb of Bondi. He had been questioned for weeks by police and agents of the Australian Security Intelligence Organization, the nation's main domestic spy agency.

McCraith said Csergo admitted early in the questioning that he suspected Ken and Evelyn were spies soon after meeting them but remained in contact with them for two years.

"He clearly has links to the Chinese state and two people he clearly thinks work for the MSS (Ministry of State Security)," McCraith told the court. "He also traveled back to Australia with a shopping list" of requested information, he said.

McCraith said a reason-

able person would have alerted Australian authorities immediately after being approached.

Instead, Csergo continued to communicate with the male suspected spy, including inviting him to visit Australia, McCraith said.

Csergo's lawyer, Bernard Collaery, said there was nothing sinister about his client's behavior and that he was an experienced, successful businessman who was lauded for developing working relationships in China.

"Businesspeople such as our client know all roads lead to the state, whether it be the state economic intelligence agency" or the Ministry of State Security, Collaery said.

"Cash payments for consulting reports might have a color to it in Australia but might be the way it's done in China -- it's not necessarily sinister," Collaery added.

Collaery said the reports were from publicly sourced documents, plus Csergo's own creative efforts, and

were nothing close to espionage.

Magistrate Michael Barko said Csergo was a "very well-educated, sophisticated, worldly businessperson" who was entitled to the presumption of innocence.

But Csergo faced a strong case from prosecutors, including several substantial admissions, Barko said.

Csergo told ASIO investigators he met Ken and Evelyn in empty cafes in Shanghai and believed the cafes had been specially cleared for him, according to court documents.

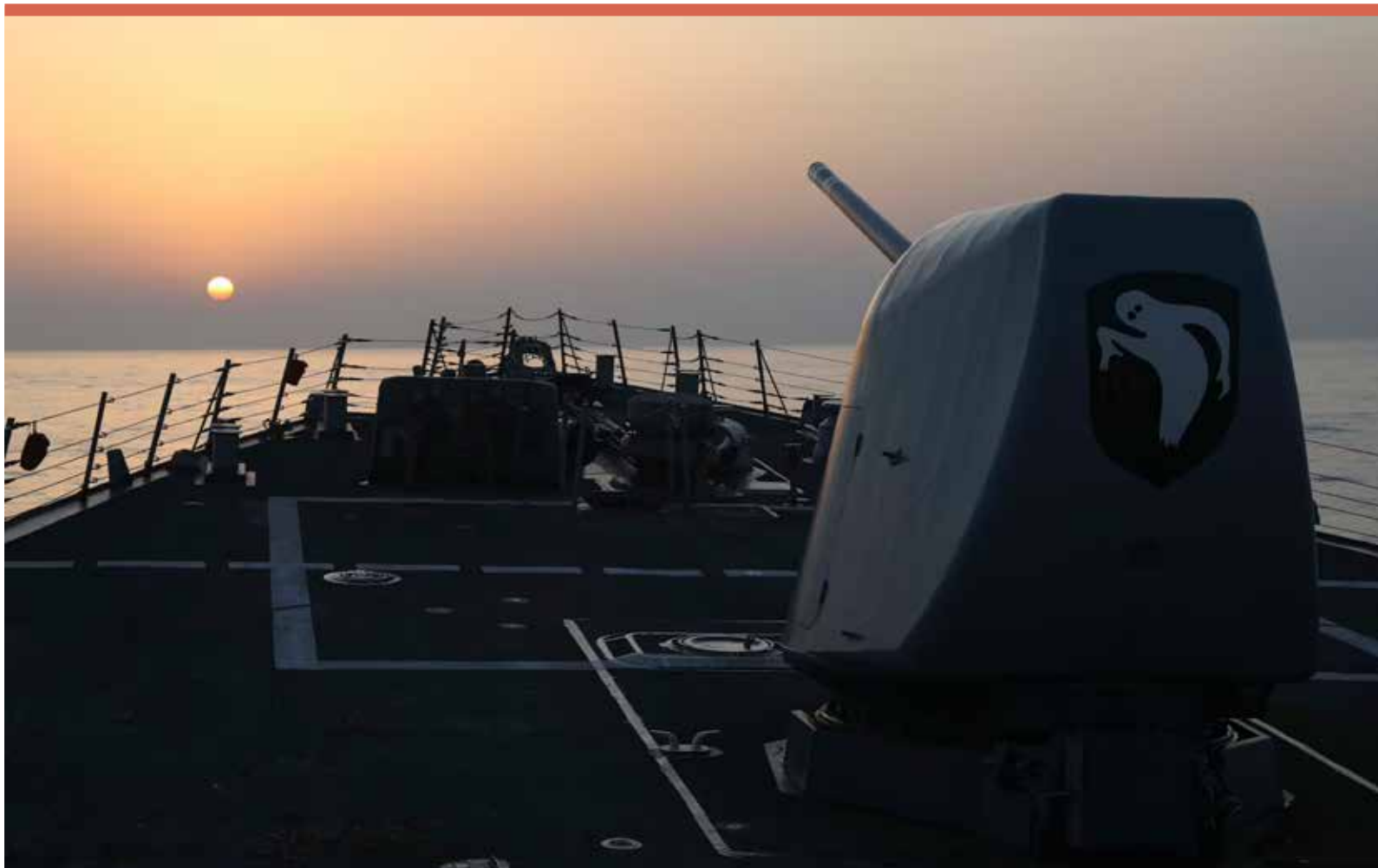
Csergo also believed Ken and Evelyn had been assigned by China's spy agency as his "handlers," the documents say.

"I don't know what they do in China, but in this country, if I were to read those facts to any layperson, they would be highly suspicious of the conduct of the defendant, at the very least," Barko said.

Csergo is due back in court in June. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO



In this photo provided by the U.S. Navy, the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Milius (DDG 69) conducts a routine Taiwan Strait transit on Sunday

DIRE STRAIT

# US sails warship through Taiwan Strait after China's drills

**T**HE United States Navy has sailed a warship through the Taiwan Strait in its first known transit since China carried out an encirclement exercise around self-ruled Taiwan.

The U.S. 7th Fleet said the transit through the strait by the

USS Milius on Sunday was routine. The cruisers "transited through a corridor in the Strait that is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal State," the statement said.

Last week China concluded large-scale air and sea drills in the strait in retaliation for Taiwan's Tsai Ing-wen meeting with U.S.

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy on April 5 in California. China said Wednesday that the exercises simulating an encirclement of Taiwan were intended as a "serious warning" to pro-independence politicians on the self-governing island and their foreign supporters.

China protested the transit yesterday, saying the U.S. transit was a "public hype" and that the Eastern Theater Command was ready at any time to "resolutely safeguard the country's sovereignty, safety, and regional peace and stability," according to a statement from the Eastern Theater

Command's spokesperson Shi Yilu.

China has stepped up its military pressure over Taiwan in recent years, sending fighter jets and navy vessels towards the island on a near-daily basis. After former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan last August, China sent more and more military vessels over the midline of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial boundary that had been accepted for decades. That increasing pressure from China has given greater attention to Taiwan globally.

Visiting French lawmaker Eric Bothorel, who arrived in Taipei yesterday, said that the world is watching.

"What we want to say to Taiwan is if something happens to Taiwan, it will change the world," Bothorel told reporters. "That is the reason why we have, for instance, a military ship from France, in the China Sea last week. We consider that we have to preserve the freedom of traveling, of moving in this space."

Taiwan's military confirmed a French navy vessel had transited the middle of the Taiwan Strait last week. However, it did not elicit a public protest by the Chinese military.

China earlier had sanctioned the organizations involved with Tsai's visit in the U.S., including the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, where her meeting with McCarthy and other members of Congress were held. It also sanctioned U.S. Rep. Michael McCaul, the Texas Republican who chairs the chamber's Foreign Affairs Committee, for visiting Taiwan.

On Sunday, China launched a rocket carrying a satellite that dropped debris into waters north of the capital Taipei. While the satellite launch had no obvious military purpose, it disrupted travel, delaying flights. **MDT/AP**

DEFENSE

# Putin meets with Chinese defense minister in Moscow

**R**USSIAN President Vladimir Putin met with China's defense minister yesterday [Macau time], underscoring Beijing's strengthening engagement with Moscow, with which it has largely aligned its foreign policy in an attempt to diminish the influence of the United States and other Western democracies.

Putin and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu met with Gen. Li Shangfu less than a month after Chinese leader Xi Jinping held a three-day state visit to Moscow.

China has refused to criticize Russia's military

actions in Ukraine and blames the United States and NATO for provoking Moscow. But China's foreign minister said last week that China wouldn't be helping Russia with weapons, as the U.S. and other Western allies have feared.

Officially, China remains neutral in the Ukraine conflict. However, Xi's trip emphasized how China is increasingly becoming the senior partner in the relationship as it provides Russia with political cover and an economic lifeline during the Ukraine conflict.

In comments opening the meeting, Putin praised the general development of

Russia-China relations.

"We are also working actively through the military departments, regularly exchanging information that is useful to us, cooperating in the field of military-technical cooperation, conducting joint exercises, moreover, in different theaters: in the Far East region, and in Europe, and at sea, and on land and in the air," he said, according to the Kremlin.

Li said that the countries' relations "outperform the military-political unions of the Cold War era. They rest on the principles of nonalignment, and are very stable." **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO





## KOREA PENINSULA

# US, allies conduct more drills in face of North threat

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

**T**HE United States, South Korea and Japan conducted a joint missile defense exercise yesterday in waters near the Korean Peninsula as they expand military training to counter the growing threats of North Korea's nuclear-capable missiles.

Last week, North Korea conducted one of its most provocative weapons demonstrations in years by flight-testing for the first time an intercontinental ballistic missile powered by solid propellants, as it pursues a weapon that's more responsive, harder to detect and could directly target the continental United States.

North Korea's unprecedented run of weapons tests has so far involved more than 100 missiles of various ranges fired into the sea since the start of 2022 as the country attempts to build a viable nuclear arsenal that could threaten its rival neighbors and the United States.

The South Korea-U.S.-Japan training could trigger a belligerent response from North Korea, which condemns the United States' military drills with its Asian allies as invasion rehearsals. The North has used those drills as a pretext to accelerate its own weapons development, creating a cycle of tit-for-tat that has raised tensions in recent months.

South Korea's navy said yesterday's three-way naval drills took place in international waters off the country's eastern coast and focused on mastering the procedures for detecting, tracking and sharing information on inco-

AP PHOTO



In this photo provided by South Korea Defense Ministry, South Korean Navy's destroyer Yulgok Yi I (bottom), U.S. Navy's the guided missile destroyer USS Benfold and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force's destroyer Atago (top) sail during a joint missile defense drill

ming North Korean ballistic missiles. The one-day naval exercise involved an Aegis destroyer from each country.

"The drills' goal is to improve our response capabilities against ballistic missiles and strengthen our ability to conduct joint operations as North Korea's nuclear and missile threats continue to escalate," Jang Do-young, a spokesperson of South Korea's navy, said in a news briefing.

The United States and South Korea also launched drills involving some 110 warplanes, including advanced F-35 fighter jets, that will continue through April 28.

The U.S.-South Korean aerial drills are designed to enhance combined airpower execution and train aircrews to successfully respond in combat scenarios involving robust surface-to-air and air-to-air threats, according to the militaries. The training

events "reaffirm the U.S.'s iron-clad commitment to the ROK," the U.S. Seventh Air Force said in a statement, using the initials of South Korea's formal name, the Republic of Korea.

Also yesterday, South Korea and Japan resumed a security meeting of senior diplomats and defense officials following a five-year hiatus. The meeting is one of many recent events that show ties between Seoul and Tokyo are improving in the face of North Korea's evolving nuclear threats after years of disputes over history and trade.

During the meeting, South Korea's Defense Ministry said Seoul and Tokyo discussed North Korea's nuclear program and a trilateral cooperation with the United States.

The United States and South Korea conducted their biggest filed exercises in years in March and have also held separate na-

val and aerial drills involving a U.S. aircraft carrier battle group and nuclear-capable B-52 bombers. The North responded by dialing up its own testing activity.

Yesterday marks 11 straight days that North Korea has not responded to South Korean checkup calls on a set of cross-border inter-Korean hotlines, South Korean officials say, raising concerns about potential kinetic provocations. Communications on those channels are meant to prevent accidental clashes along the rivals' sea borders.

On Saturday, a South Korean naval vessel fired warning shots to repel a North Korean patrol vessel that temporarily crossed the countries' disputed western sea boundary while chasing a Chinese fishing boat. There were no exchanges of fire between the North and South Korean vessels.

While the South's military

strengthened monitoring and readiness after the intrusion, it didn't immediately detect any unusual activity from the North Korean military, Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesperson Lee Sung Jun said.

North Korea's aggressive nuclear push under ruler Kim Jong Un is aimed at forcing the United States to accept the idea of the North as a legitimate nuclear power and negotiating economic concessions from a position of strength, many experts say. Nuclear talks between Washington and Pyongyang have remained derailed since 2019.

However, there are also signs that the costs of Kim's campaign is piling up as North Korea apparently grapples with food insecurity and other domestic problems worsened by pandemic-related border restrictions that disrupted trade with China, its main ally and economic lifeline. Chasing tangible economic achievements, Kim's government has prioritized construction and agricultural projects.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said yesterday that Kim attended an event over the weekend celebrating the building of 10,000 new homes at a district in Pyongyang. The project is part of broader plans to supply 50,000 new homes in the capital under a five-year national development plan that runs through 2025.

During Sunday's event, Kim called the housing project a "long-cherished plan" aimed at providing his people with "more stable and civilized living conditions," KCNA said.

Experts say North Korea has severe shortages in quality housing that deepened over decades of economic decay. But living conditions are much better in Pyongyang, where Kim in past years has pushed huge development projects that upgraded housing for elites and changed the city's skyline. **MDT/AP**

**A** freak storm in southern Thailand capsized a dozen fishing boats and killed at least three people, but more than 100 others who were also at sea have been accounted for, officials said yesterday.

Seven people were injured after the sudden storm off the coast of Nakhon Si Thammarat province on Sunday morning caused the fishing boats to capsize and damaged dozens of others in the Gulf of Thailand.

There were no missing reported among the 149 people on 61 boats, the provincial Public Relations Department reported.

One of the survivors,

## THAILAND

# Freak storm capsizes fishing boats, killing 3

Somkid Maneewong, said his boat encountered a wave about four meters high about an hour after leaving shore. He told TV Channel 3 that he and his 31-year-old son tried to swim to safety but strong currents eventually tired his son out and he died.

He said he was surprised by the winds and currents so strong he "could not control the boat."

The provincial disaster prevention agency published an announcement warning small fishing boats

against going to sea until yesterday, but it was issued Sunday afternoon, after Somkid's and other boats had already encountered the storm.

The disaster agency said 10 provinces had been affected by the storm, including Nakhon Si Thammarat and Surat Thani in the south, where officials reported a large private ferry was damaged while docked Sunday after a strong wave sent it crashing into the pier. There were no casualties. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



In this photo released by the People Unity Foundation, rescuers from the charitable organization help a survivor from a boat that capsized off the coast of Nakhon Sri Thammarat province





Workers walk near solar panels that provide partial electrical power to Istiqlal Mosque, in Jakarta

ENVIRONMENT

# Muslims around the world consider climate during Ramadan

EDNA TARIGAN  
& MARIAM FAM, JAKARTA

**I**N the heart of Jakarta, the grand Istiqlal Mosque was built with a vision for it to stand for a thousand years.

The mosque was conceived by Soekarno, Indonesia's founding father, and was designed as an impressive symbol for the country's independence. Its seven gates — representing the seven heavens in Islam — welcome visitors from across the archipelago and the world into the mosque's lofty interior.

But they don't just see the light here. It fuels them.

A major renovation in 2019 installed upwards of 500 solar panels on the mosque's expansive roof, now a major and clean source of Istiqlal's electricity. And this Ramadan, the mosque has encouraged an energy waqf — a type of donation in Islam that continues to bear fruit over time — to grow its capacity to make renewable power.

Her Pramtama, deputy head of the Ri'ayah — or building management — division of Istiqlal Mosque, hopes that Islam's holiest month, when the faithful flock to mosques in greater numbers, can provide momentum to Istiqlal's solar project through donations.

The mosque's climate push is just one example of different "Green Ramadan" initiatives in Indonesia and around the world that promote an array of changes during the Muslim holy month, which has fasting and, in many cases, feasting elements as people gather to break their fasts.

In a month where restraint and charity are emphasized, recommendations can include using less water while performing the ritual washing before prayers, replacing plastic bottles and cutlery during community iftars with reusable ones and reducing food waste. Other suggestions include carpooling to mosques, using local produce, emphasizing recycling and using donations to fund clean energy projects.

For the world to limit the effects of climate change — which is already causing worsening droughts, floods and heat waves — the use of dirty fuels for electricity and transport, petrochemicals to make products like plastics and the emissions from food waste in landfills all need to be drastically slashed, scientists say. Though individual initiatives are just a small part of that transition, experts say growing momentum behind climate goals can have an effect.

Groups taking an Islamic-based approach often highlight environmental understandings of certain Quranic verses and sayings and practices of Prophet Muhammad about the earth, water and against wastefulness.

Last year, at a meeting of the Muslim Congress for Sustainable Indonesia, the country's vice president Ma'ruf Amin called on clerics and community leaders "to play an active role in conveying issues related to environmental damage" and asked for concrete action on climate change including through donations to solar projects like those at Istiqlal Mos-

que.

Muhammad Ali Yusuf, a board member at the faith-based Nahdlatul Ulama's Institution for Disaster Management and Climate Change in Indonesia, said spreading awareness about clean energy is a "shared responsibility" for Muslims, where mosques' own solar panel installations can be catalysts toward a greater transition.

In the United States and Canada, environmental groups that began springing up in Muslim communities in the mid-2000s independently from one another formed "green Muslim understandings" from within their religious traditions, according to Imam Saffet Catovic, a U.S. Muslim community environmental activist.

## Mosques are urged to raise awareness on plastic pollution and reduce reliance on single-use plastic

"In some cases, the mosques were receptive to it," he said. In others, mosque leaders, "didn't fully understand" the drive, he added.

Ramadan offers a "possibility for ecological training that's unique to the Muslim community," Catovic said. "Thirty days allow someone to change their habits."

The Islamic Society of North America website calls on Muslims to be "an eco-friendly communi-

ty", saying looking after the environment is "based upon the premise that Islam has ordained us to be the stewards and protectors of this planet."

Some mosques and Muslims around the world are heeding such calls, one small step at a time.

Ahead of Ramadan this year, the mosque at Al Ma'hadul Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia received solar panels through Islamic donations, supplying enough energy for the mosque's entire needs. The electricity from the solar panels also lights up schools and roads in the vicinity.

The Nizamiye Mosque in Johannesburg, South Africa, with its towering minarets and spacious interior, has a roof dotted with domes and solar panels that help keep the power on at the mosque and its surrounding schools, clinic and bazaar.

The 143 panels cover over a third of the complex's energy use in a country that has struggled in recent years to provide enough electricity through its strained grid.

In Edison, New Jersey, Masjid Al-Wali, a mosque and community center, has been adopting changes such as selling reusable water bottles to members at cost and installing more water coolers to discourage the use of disposable plastic bottles, said board member Akil Mansuri.

"Preserving the environment is the Islamically right thing to do," Mansuri said. "People accepted the message, but adoption

is always slower."

Several years ago, Masjid Al-Wali, whose activities include an Islamic school and monthly community dinners, installed solar panels.

Meals this Ramadan for the mosque's community iftars come in plastic pre-packaged boxes for now, Mansuri said. But mosque leaders encourage members to take leftovers and reuse the boxes, instead of throwing them away, he said, adding he hopes alternatives can be found next Ramadan.

In the United Kingdom, Projects Against Plastic, a Bristol-based charity, is leading a plastic-free Ramadan campaign.

"I feel like, as a Muslim, that mosques are the hub of the communities and they should take a little bit more leading role for sustainability and toward recycling," PAP founder Naseem Talukdar said. "During the month of Ramadan is where I've really seen a ridiculous amount of plastic being used and thrown away."

Mosques are urged to raise awareness on plastic pollution and reduce reliance on single-use plastic. Seven Bristol mosques participated in a pilot project last year, with varying results, and a national campaign, with more than 20 participating mosques, was rolled out this year.

Besides education, another challenge is when mosques don't have enough funds to buy reusable cutlery, dishwashers and water fountains.

"We knew we were going to hit some hard walls and some pushbacks, but, to be honest, the engagement that we've seen so far, it was a little overwhelming," Talukdar said. "Even though the progress is slow, but there's a real appetite for this kind of initiative within the mosque."

Ummah for Earth, an alliance-led initiative that aims to empower Muslim communities facing climate change, is urging people to pledge to adopt one eco-friendly practice during Ramadan. Options include asking an imam to address environmental issues, donating to environmental charities and shopping sustainably.

"Many Muslims are not aware that there are environmental teachings in the Quran and the sayings of the prophet and that they have a role that they can play to protect the planet," said Nouhad Awwad, Beirut-based campaigner and global outreach coordinator for the Ummah for Earth project at Greenpeace MENA.

As they work to raise awareness, campaigners often encounter the argument that climate change is "destined" and that "you cannot change God's destiny," Awwad said.

"We're trying to change the narrative," she said. "We have things that we can do on an individual level, on a community level and on a political level." **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken (left) talks with Japan's Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi at the G7 meeting in Karuizawa, yesterday

JAPAN

# G-7 DIPLOMATS REJECT N. KOREAN, RUSSIAN AGGRESSION; CHINESE STANCE

MATTHEW LEE & FOSTER KLUG, KARUIZAWA

**T**OP diplomats from the Group of Seven wealthy democracies are vowing a tough stance on China's increasing threats to Taiwan and on North Korea's unchecked tests of long-range missiles, while building momentum on ways to boost support for Ukraine and punish Russia for its invasion.

Russia's war in Ukraine will consume much of the agenda yesterday as the envoys gather in this Japanese hot spring resort town for Day Two of talks meant to pave the way for action by G-7 leaders when they meet next month in Hiroshima.

The world is at "turning point" on the fighting in Ukraine and must "firmly reject unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force, and Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its threats of the use of nuclear weapons," Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi told his colleagues, according to a Japanese summary.

For the American delegation, the meeting comes at a crucial moment in the world's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and efforts to deal with China, two issues that G-7 ministers from Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, Italy and the European Union regard as potent challenges to the post-World War II rules-ba-

sed international order.

A senior U.S. official traveling with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters that the Biden administration's goal for the talks is to shore up support for Ukraine, including a major initiative on Ukraine's energy infrastructure launched at last year's G-7 gatherings in Germany, as well as to ensure the continued provision of military assistance to Kyiv. Ramping up punishment against Russia for the conflict, particularly through economic and financial sanctions that were first threatened by the G-7 in December 2021, before the invasion, will also be a priority, the official said.

Ukraine faces an important moment in coming weeks with Russia's current offensive largely stalled and Ukraine preparing a counter-offensive. The U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss Blinken's priorities at the closed-door meetings, said there would be discussion about ways to deepen support for Ukraine's long-term defense and deterrence capabilities. That might also improve Kyiv's position for potential negotiations that could end the conflict on its terms.

The role of Japan — the only Asian member of the G-7 — as chairman of this year's talks provides an opportunity to discuss coordinated action on China. Leaders and foreign ministers of G-7

countries, most recently France and Germany, have recently concluded visits to China, and the diplomats in Karuizawa are expected to discuss their impressions of where the Chinese stand on numerous issues, including the war in Ukraine, North Korea, and Taiwan, which is a particular sore point in U.S.-China relations.

At a private working dinner on Sunday night that was the diplomats' first formal meeting, Hayashi urged continued dialogue with China on the many global challenges where participation from Beijing is seen as crucial. Among the Chinese interests that are intertwined with those of wealthy democracies are global trade, finance and climate efforts.

But the diplomats are also looking to address China's more aggressive recent stance in Northeast Asia, where it has threatened Taiwan, the self-governing island that Beijing claims as its own.

Hayashi told ministers that outside nations must continue "building a constructive and stable relationship, while also directly expressing our concerns and calling for China to act as a responsible member of the international community," according to a summary of the closed-door dinner.

China recently sent planes and ships to simulate an encirclement of Taiwan. Beijing has also been rapidly adding nuclear warheads, taking

a tougher line on its claim to the South China Sea and painting a scenario of impending confrontation.

The worry in Japan can be seen in its efforts in recent years to make a major break from its self-defense-only post-WWII principles, working to acquire preemptive strike capabilities and cruise missiles to counter growing threats.

Blinken, the top U.S. diplomat, had been due to visit Beijing in February, but the trip was postponed because of a Chinese spy balloon incident over U.S. airspace and has yet to be rescheduled.

Blinken met briefly with China's top diplomat, Wang Yi, on the sidelines of the Munich Security Forum, but high-level contacts between Washington and Beijing have become rare. Thus, Blinken will be seeking insight from his French and German counterparts on their interactions with the Chinese, the senior U.S. official said.

Despite indications, notably comments from French President Emmanuel Macron, that the G-7 is split over China, the official said there is shared worry among G-7 nations over China's actions. The official added that the foreign ministers would be discussing how to continue a coordinated approach to China.

North Korea is also a key area of worry for Japan and other neighbors in the region. MDT/AP

## this day in history



### 1955 ALBERT EINSTEIN DIES

Albert Einstein has died in hospital in Princeton, New Jersey, aged 76.

The eminent scientist and originator of the theory of relativity was admitted to hospital three days ago with an internal complaint.

In recent years Dr Einstein had lived a secluded life although he was still a member of staff at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University.

In a statement issued following the scientist's death, US President Dwight Eisenhower said: "No other man contributed so much to the vast expansion of the 20th century knowledge.

"Yet no other man was more modest in the possession of the power that is knowledge, more sure that power without wisdom is deadly.

"To all who live in the nuclear age, Albert Einstein exemplified the mighty creative ability of the individual in a free society."

Albert Einstein was born on 14 March 1879 to Jewish parents at Ulm, Wurttemberg in Germany.

Soon afterwards the family moved to Munich where the young Einstein began his education at the Luitpold Gymnasium.

His early academic career was notable only for the fact he was asked to leave his school for "disruptive" behaviour.

But he had always excelled at mathematics - a subject which would later make him the most renowned scientist in the world.

In 1896 Einstein entered the Swiss Federal Polytechnic School in Zurich to train as a physics and maths teacher.

But he struggled to get a job, largely due to the fact he was German, so, in 1902, he accepted a job as a technical assistant in the Swiss Patent Office.

It was during his seven years at the Patent Office that, in his spare time, he worked on his mathematical theories which would eventually take the world by storm.

The Special Theory of Relativity, which describes the motion of particles moving close to the speed of light, was published in 1905.

In the years that followed, Einstein took up senior academic posts in Berne and Zurich. In 1911 he became Professor of Theoretical Physics in Prague but returned to Zurich a year later.

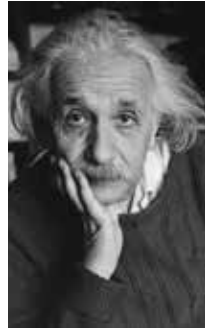
However, well-known German physicists, Walter Nernst and Professor Planck, were eager for Einstein to return to Berlin.

In 1913 they persuaded him to take up the position of director of the projected research institute for physics in the University of Berlin and become a member of the Royal Prussian Academy of Science.

Einstein's General Theory of Relativity was published in 1916. In 1921 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for physics.

He kept the positions in Berlin until 1933, when he accepted a part-time post at Princeton University in America.

His plan was to divide his time between Germany and America but in the same year the Nazis came to power and Einstein, being a Jew, never returned to his birthland.



Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Albert Einstein's work laid the groundwork for many modern technologies including nuclear weapons and cosmic science.

After his death, Einstein's brain was removed and preserved for scientific research by Canadian scientists. It was found that the part of Einstein's brain responsible for mathematical thought and the ability to think in terms of space and movement was 15% wider than average.

It also lacked a groove which normally runs through this region suggesting that the neurons were able to communicate.

In 1999 Albert Einstein was named "person of the century" by Time magazine.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
 Your mate will enjoy helping out. You can make sound financial investments if you act fast. Anger could lead to problems. Think twice before you speak.

**TAURUS**  
 Apr. 20-May. 20  
 You will need to take a look at the renovations that are necessary and try to find the cheapest way to get things done. Things are looking up.

**GEMINI**  
 May. 21-Jun. 21  
 Pleasure trips will be emotionally favorable. Travel will be in your best interest. You must be sure not to be frivolous, because as the saying goes, easy come, easy go.

**CANCER**  
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
 Refrain from arguing with your mate. Residential moves will be favorable. You may have the energy to clear up that mound of paperwork facing you.

**LEO**  
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
 Older relatives may make unreasonable demands. Don't hesitate to talk to your partner about rekindling your relationship. Plan events like camping or white water rafting.

**VIRGO**  
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
 It might be time to make a fresh start. You need to get out and have some fun to reduce tension. Listen, but don't make any rash decisions. Uncertainty about your relationship is prevalent.

**LIBRA**  
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
 Difficulties with your mate may lead to isolation. You will learn valuable information if you travel today. One of your female friends may try to disrupt your day.

**SCORPIO**  
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
 They will not have the patience to wait for you to complete things that they've asked you to do. You may not get your facts correct today; double-check before making any statements.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
 Children may be less than honest with you. Secret affairs may only cause complications in your life. Check into art objects or precious stones. You can do well in group endeavors.

**CAPRICORN**  
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
 You need to spend less time daydreaming and more time accomplishing. You may find that someone you really cared for in the past has come back into your life.

**AQUARIUS**  
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
 You may be frustrated by the way situations are being handled in your personal life. Travel will be on your mind; however, be careful and proceed with caution as minor accidents will cause delays.

**PISCES**  
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
 Try to do your job and then leave. You may find yourself interested in more than one person. You need to spend some time reflecting on past experiences and involvements.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

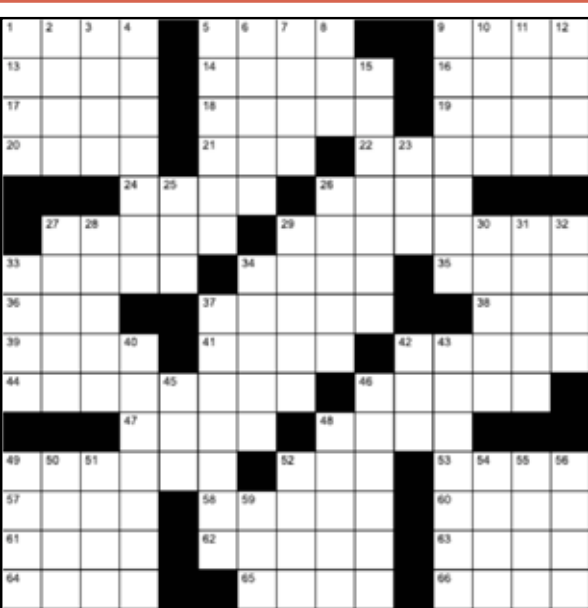
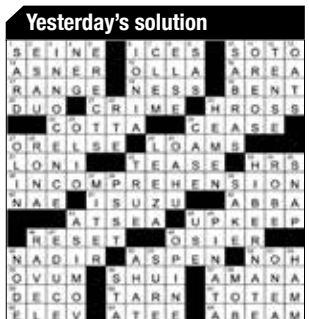
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	10	27	fine
Changchun	7	17	cloudy
Chengdu	21	32	cloudy
Chongqing	22	32	rain
Fuzhou	20	28	rain
Guangzhou	22	30	thunderstorms
Guiyang	18	26	cloudy
Haikou	25	34	cloudy
Hangzhou	18	27	rain
Harbin	6	15	showers
Hefei	19	26	rain
Nanjing	20	30	thunderstorms
Shanghai	18	30	overcast
Taipei	18	27	cloudy
Wuhan	20	22	rain
Hong Kong	22	24	overcast
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	6	14	overcast
Frankfurt	8	16	overcast
Paris	9	17	overcast
London	8	13	overcast
New York	7	14	overcast

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Church section; 5- Unit of potential difference; 9- Film \_\_\_; 13- Fourth Gospel; 14- More remote; 16- Director Preminger; 17- Grad; 18- Capital of Yemen; 19- \_\_\_ contendere; 20- Author Jaffe; 21- Class; 22- In and of \_\_\_; 24- Greek portico; 26- Dismounted; 27- Pine sap; 29- Johnny-come-lately; 33- Insurgent; 34- Stiff bristle; 35- Size of type; 36- British verb ending; 37- Corneous; 38- Half of MCI; 39- Division of a school year; 41- Thomas Edison's middle name; 42- Syrian president; 44- A lawyer; 46- Hilton competitor; 47- Clothes; 48- List from which to choose; 49- Majestic; 52- Lump; 53- Like some orders; 57- Western Native Americans; 58- Knight wear; 60- Writer Wiesel; 61- What's left; 62- Farm birds; 63- Architect Saarinen; 64- Pale; 65- All over again; 66- Faculty head;

DOWN 1- Partly open; 2- Game played on horseback; 3- Keep away from; 4- All together; 5- Sight; 6- Florida citrus center; 7- Chain piece; 8- Beverage commonly drunk in England; 9- Without interruption; 10- Oklahoma Native; 11- \_\_\_ never work; 12- Mouth part; 15- Railroad; 23- Involuntary muscular contraction; 25- "...the cows come home"; 26- MetLife competitor; 27- Bowling alley button; 28- Movie critic Roger; 29- Audacious; 30- Interior; 31- Dazzling display; 32- Sudden assault; 33- Comic Rudner; 34- Mends a shoe; 37- Pocketbook; 40- Lack of vanity; 42- Writer Rand; 43- Pan-fried; 45- Capek play; 46- Semitic language; 48- Bullwinkle, e.g.; 49- Marsh bird; 50- Western Native Americans; 51- Luxurious; 52- Feds; 54- "Hard \_\_\_" (sailor's yell); 55- Old Italian money; 56- Boxer Spinks; 59- Stephen of "The Crying Game";



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

- Emergency calls 999
- Fire department 28 572 222
- PJ (Open line) 993
- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- Customs 28 559 944
- S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IAM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
- Airport 59 888 88
- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
- Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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AD



TRADITION

YOUNG PEOPLE DRIVE BULLFIGHTING'S RESURRECTION IN SPAIN

JENNIFER O'MAHONY, MADRID

ÁLVARO Alarcón plays out the moment when he will enter Madrid's Las Ventas bullring for his final challenge as a "novillero," or apprentice bullfighter.

The 24-year-old has been training in the dusty countryside outside the Spanish capital, and his skintight suit, delicately woven with beads and gold embroidery, is back from the tailor. If he can triumph this last time, he will be considered for the highest rank of "matador" — bullfighters who take on beasts weighing more than half a ton.

"From the moment you get up until you go to bed, and even when you are asleep, you are dreaming about what you want to do in the bullring," he said. "Being a bullfighter is a way of life."

The death of Spanish bullfighting has been declared many times, but the number of bullfights in the country is at its highest level in seven years, and the young are the most consistent presence as



older groups of spectators drop away.

On a Sunday afternoon, Alarcón must kill two young bulls by driving a sword through their shoulder blades, puncturing the animals' aortas. He is cheered on by hundreds of children and teenagers among the 8,700 people

who turn out to watch from the stands. In an age of almost unlimited entertainment choices, it's a serious statement.

It is now firmly a minority interest. Just under 2% of Spaniards attended a bullfight in the 2021-22 season, according to Culture Ministry statistics, but among them

teenagers aged 15-19 were the largest group. Those aged over 75 were the least likely to attend.

The U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child urged Spain in 2018 to ban children from bullfights to shield them from "exposure to violence." So far, the call has had little effect.

While bullfighting is nowhere close to drawing the crowds of half a century ago, it remains an important, if divisive, symbol of Spanish identity in the country's south and central regions. Audiences are smaller, fans argue, but more committed.

Miriam Cabas is a 21-year-old bullfighter from the southern Andalusia region, and one of just 250 women who are registered as professionals in Spain. She has watched the profile of the crowds shift since she was a child in the stands. "It is true that bullfighting has decreased," she admitted. "But right now, I perceive that the youth is booming and people are eager to know and go to the bullrings."

For some right-wing youth, proudly associating oneself with

symbols of traditional Spain, like sporting the colors of the flag on bracelets and polo shirts, or attending bullfights, has become fashionable.

But Alarcón grew up in a family that had no interest in bullfighting, with parents who were horrified when he wanted to join a school to learn the practice as a teenager.

Beyond the bullfighters themselves, the industry employs thousands of ranchers, plus event organizers and promoters, and even bullfighting critics who still write up reports from the events in prestigious national newspapers. "Álvaro Alarcón took two young bulls with fuel and momentum," read a recent report in the El País daily, which noted that Alarcón was awarded with an ear severed from a felled bull.

África Calderón García, 20, is a seamstress for a Madrid tailor who crafts the intricate "traje de luces," or suit of lights, that bullfighters wear into the ring. She grew up attending bullfights with her grandmother and will continue the tradition, though she considers herself someone who cares deeply for animals.

"It is an art form; it is Spanish culture," she said on a break from weaving white beads onto a bright blue shoulder section. MDT/AP

AD

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C&C RECEIVED THE 1ST SILVER "DEIGNAN AWARD" FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN MACAU (2023)





**MOTORSPORT**

# Kyle Kirkwood wins Long Beach for first career IndyCar victory

**A**S Kyle Kirkwood crossed the finish line for his first career IndyCar win, his new race strategist urged him to soak up the sights and sounds of victory.

It nearly brought the 24-year-old to tears.

"A first win, it's a big deal for any driver. I guarantee even Mario Andretti, all the wins he's had, he still remembers the first one," said Bryan Herta, who was moved to Kirkwood's strategist one race ago.

"This is just as important milestone because it's one thing to be a guy who people think can win in IndyCar. It's something else to be somebody who has won in IndyCar."

Kirkwood held off teammate Romain Grosjean on the downtown streets of Long Beach to give Andretti Autosport a 1-2 finish yesterday [Macau time] at the most prestigious street course race in the United States. Coincidentally, team owner Michael Andretti scored his first career win



Kyle Kirkwood leads the IndyCar Grand Prix of Long Beach auto race

at Long Beach in 1986 and Mario Andretti won three IndyCar races at Long Beach and in 1977 became the only American driver to win a Formula One race on American soil when the grand prix was an F1 event.

"This is such a special race, I grew up watching it, and to win

here is such a dream come true. The next best race to win, outside of this one, is Indianapolis," Kirkwood said. "And the feeling I got, it was like trying to hold tears back in the car, which is something I never really felt before."

The Jupiter, Florida, native on Saturday won the first pole of his

career and then parlayed it into his first career victory in a breakthrough for Andretti Autosport. The team showed at last month's season-opener that it had clearly made massive offseason strides, but all four Andretti drivers were crashed out of the race.

Then at Texas two weeks ago,

three of the four Andretti drivers crashed with Kirkwood's car damaged in a pit lane incident with Alexander Rossi.

It was maddening for Michael Andretti, who had such hope for a turnaround after the organization managed only two wins.

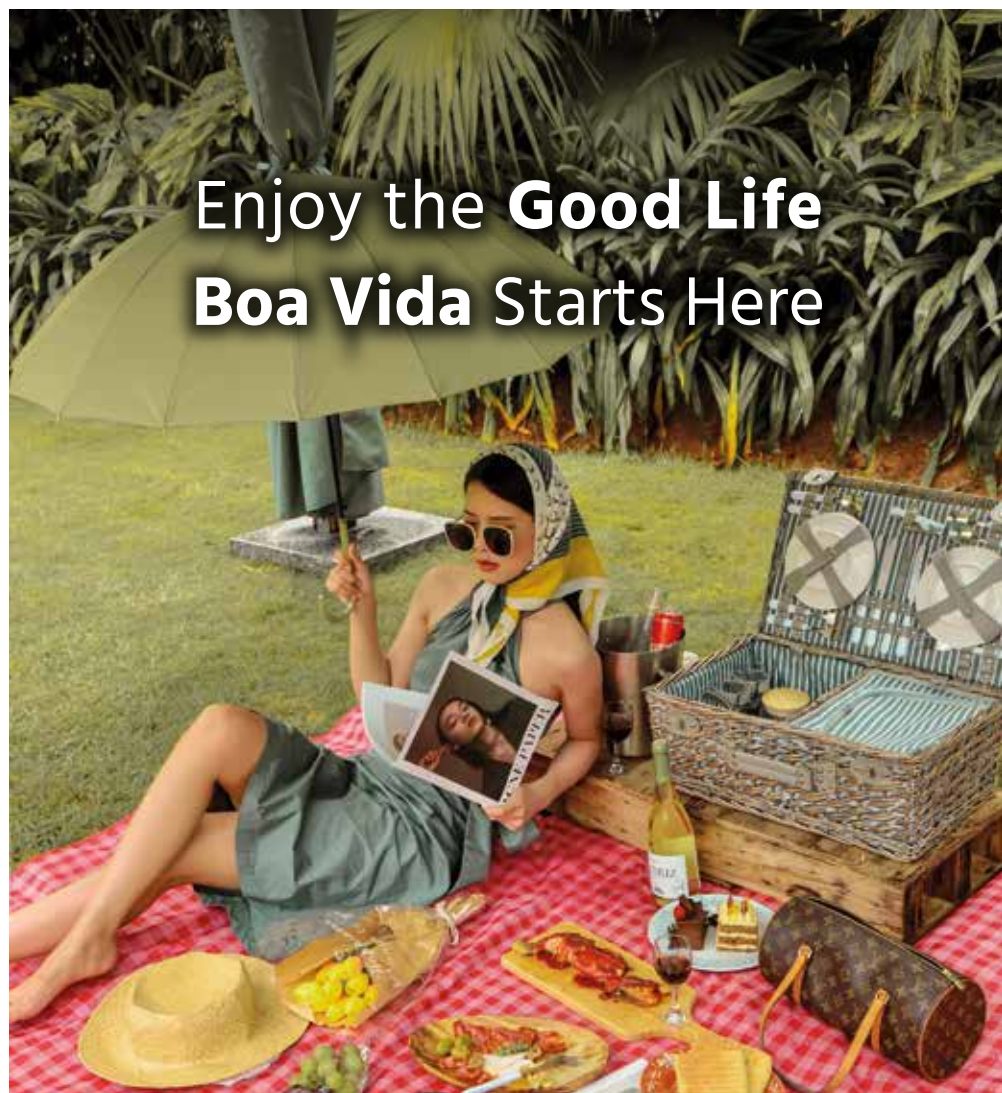
"That's what we needed, that's the medicine we needed," Andretti said. "It was very frustrating but we knew we had fast cars and we just kept our heads down and knew if we just kept going, we'd get the results."

Kirkwood was challenged mid-race by defending Long Beach winner Josef Newgarden, but reclaimed the lead when the Team Penske driver pitted for new tires. Kirkwood stayed out for a handful more laps and was able to make his stop for tires and get back on track before Newgarden could reclaim the lead.

Newgarden, the winner two weeks ago at Texas Motor Speedway, dropped to sixth and Kirkwood's primary challengers over the closing laps were Grosjean and Indianapolis 500 winner Marcus Ericsson of Chip Ganassi Racing.

But neither got close enough to make an attempt at the pass for the win, and Kirkwood celebrated his first win with Andretti. Grosjean at the end of the race actually seemed to be protecting Kirkwood's lead from Ericsson. **MDT/AP**

AD



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**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**G7 CONTINUES  
 PROVOCATIVE  
 BEHAVIOR BY TRYING  
 TO MUDDY WATERS  
 ON TAIWAN**

Pretending to be blind to the ugly roles their countries are playing in aggravating tensions on the Taiwan question and the Korean Peninsula issue as well as prolonging the Ukraine conflict, the top diplomats of the G7 countries at their meeting in Karuizawa, Japan, pointed their fingers at those being contained, threatened and bullied by the United States, accusing them of trying to change the status quo by force.

It is ridiculous that the top diplomats of the US and Japan in the meeting cited the People's Liberation Army's recent military drills around the island as a sign that Beijing is becoming increasingly aggressive and thus making it a potential security threat to the world.

The Taiwan question is completely China's internal affair. That there is only one China in the world with Taiwan being an inalienable part of Chinese territory is recognized by not only the governments of all the G7 countries, as the political foundation for their diplomatic relations with China, but also the United Nations.

As Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said in a regular news conference on Monday, although the national reunification of China has not yet been realized, China's sovereignty and territorial integrity have never been separated, and that is the real status quo of the Taiwan Strait.

Whatever form it takes, as long as the Taiwan question appears in the joint statement the three-day meeting is scheduled to release on Tuesday upon its conclusion, it will constitute a grave violation of China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and harm the issuers' credibility.

Beijing is the last party in the world that would like to see the Taiwan question resolved by force. Instead, it is the US and Japan, which are always ready to scratch each other's back in the process, that have been acting recklessly over the Taiwan question, taking advantage of it to advance their own agendas.

By siding with the US, the attendees at the meeting will ignore Washington's consistent provocations on the Taiwan question, with its top lawmaker's meeting with the island's diehard secessionist leader Tsai Ing-wen early this month being the latest. And that Tokyo is hyping up the Taiwan question to justify its attempt to rid Japan of its institutional restrictions on militarism.

If the US and Japan are really "defenders of peace" as they claim, they should first stop distorting the Taiwan question and acknowledge that they themselves are part of the root cause of the tensions.

Paying only lip service to adhering to the one-China policy and turning a blind eye to "Taiwan independence" secessionists' activities, the top diplomats of the "wealthiest democracies" are showing the world how they act as Washington's puppets, and how hypocrisy defines their membership of the US club.

Hong Kong's Roman Catholic bishop arrived in Beijing yesterday, marking the first visit to the Chinese capital by the city's bishop in nearly three decades, despite signs of Sino-Vatican strains.

The five-day trip by Bishop Stephen Chow began about two weeks after Vatican News, the news portal of the Holy See, reported that China had unilaterally appointed a new bishop to Shanghai.

Chow, who was named by Pope Francis as the city's bishop in 2021, earlier said that the visit underscores the mission of the Hong Kong Diocese to be a bridge church and promote exchanges between the two sides. He was invited to visit the Chinese capital

by his counterpart there.

China's ruling Communist Party closely watches organized religion.

People are allowed to worship in institutions that abide by party rules. Some Christians have set up underground churches, which are considered illegal.

In 2018, the Vatican and China signed a "provisional agreement" over the appointment of bishops, a breakthrough on an issue that stymied diplomatic relations for decades and aggravated a split among Chinese Catholics.

AP PHOTO



Russian opposition activist Vladimir Kara-Murza is escorted to a hearing in a court in Moscow, last February

**RUSSIAN OPPOSITION  
 ACTIVIST GIVEN 25-YEAR  
 PRISON SENTENCE**

A top Kremlin foe was convicted yesterday on charges of treason and denigrating the Russian military and sentenced him to 25 years in prison after a trial that marked the latest move in a relentless crackdown on the opposition amid the fighting in Ukraine.

Vladimir Kara-Murza, Jr., a prominent opposition activist who twice survived poisonings he blamed on the Kremlin, has been behind bars since his arrest a year ago. He has rejected the charges against him as political and likened the judicial proceedings against him to the show trials during the rule of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.

In his final statement last week, Kara-Murza, 41, said that he remains proud of standing up to Russian President Vladimir Putin's "dictatorship" and his decision to send troops into Ukraine.

"I know that the day will come when the darkness engulfing our country will clear," Kara-Murza, a father of three, said at his closed trial last week in remarks that were posted

on social networks and Russian opposition media. "And then our society will open its eyes and shudder when it realizes what terrible crimes were committed in its name."

Amnesty International denounced the sentence as "yet another chilling example of the systematic repression of civil society, which has broadened and accelerated" after the Kremlin sent troops into Ukraine.

"This verdict wrongly conflates human rights activism with 'high treason' and is reminiscent of Stalin-era repression," Amnesty's Russia Director, Natalia Zviagina, said in a statement.

The group declared Kara-Murza a prisoner of conscience convicted solely for his political beliefs and demanded his immediate and unconditional release.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov refused to comment on the sentence.

The charges against Kara-Murza stem from his March 2022 speech to the Arizona House of Representatives in which he de-

nounced Russia's military action in Ukraine. While he was in custody, investigators added the treason charges linked to his public speeches abroad.

Russia adopted a law criminalizing spreading "false information" about its military days after it sent troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. Authorities have used the law to stifle criticism of what the Kremlin calls "a special military operation."

Kara-Murza, a journalist, was an associate of Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, who was killed near the Kremlin in 2015. Kara-Murza survived poisonings in 2015 and 2017 that he blamed on the Kremlin. Russian officials have denied responsibility.

Kara-Murza's health has deteriorated in custody, leading to the development of polyneuropathy in both his feet, according to his lawyers.

Another prominent opposition figure, Ilya Yashin, was sentenced to 8½ years in prison late last year on charges of discrediting the military.

AP PHOTO



Norwegian startup Freyr will first build batteries to power electric vehicles and store clean energy in a remote town near the Arctic Circle. Up next? An Atlanta suburb. That's because a new U.S. clean energy law offers generous tax credits — up to 40% of costs — in what is a "massive, massive incentive" for producing in America, CEO Tom Einar Jensen said.

AP PHOTO



Northern Ireland Former U.S. President Bill Clinton and past leaders of the U.K. and Ireland gathered in Belfast yesterday, 25 years after their charm, clout and determination helped Northern Ireland strike a historic peace accord. They met to remember a moment, said former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, "when history opened itself to hope," in a Northern Ireland that has changed dramatically since 1998 — and where some wonder if the accord that created peace is still capable of sustaining it.

Sudan As explosions and gunfire thundered outside, Sudanese huddled in their homes for a third day yesterday in the capital Khartoum and other cities, while the army and a powerful rival force battled in the streets for control of the country. At least 97 civilians have been killed in the crossfire of gun-battles in the streets, airstrikes and bombardment.

AP PHOTO



Broadway The final curtain came down Sunday on New York's production of "The Phantom of the Opera," ending Broadway's longest-running show (35 years) with thunderous standing ovations, champagne toasts and gold and silver confetti bursting from its famous chandelier. It was show No. 13,981 at the Majestic Theatre and it ended with a reprise of "The Music of the Night" performed by the current cast, including actors in the show — including original star Sarah Brightman — and crew members in street clothes.