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FINANCE IN GREATER BAY AREA AIMS FOR HIGHER QUALITY DEVELOPMENT, EXPERTS AT FORUM IN HENGQIN, GATHERING AROUND 300 GUESTS, CONCLUDE

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LAWMAKER WONG KIT CHENG INSISTS ON SEX WORK CRIMINALIZATION

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INDIA WILL BE MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY BY MONTH'S END, UN SAYS

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China A veteran Chinese journalist who worked at ruling Communist Party-affiliated newspaper and was a Harvard University fellow faces espionage charges after being detained while meeting with a Japanese diplomat in a restaurant, his family said. Dong Yuyu, deputy head of the editorial department at Guangming Daily, regularly met with foreign journalists and diplomats to help understand global trends. But Chinese authorities regarded his contacts with foreign diplomats as evidence of spying, according to the family.



Japan A company is about to attempt what no other private business has done: land on the moon. Tokyo's space company put its own spacecraft into orbit around the moon a month ago. Yesterday, flight controllers will direct the craft, named Hakuto, Japanese for white rabbit, to descend from 60 miles high and land. The 7-foot lander is carrying a mini lunar rover for the UAE and a toylike robot from Japan designed to roll around in the moon dust.



Israel It's become a hallmark of the anti-government protests: the country's blue and white national flag adorned with the Star of David. For most Jewish Israelis, the flag has been a potent symbol of their foundational narrative — of a nation that rose from the ashes of the Holocaust to build a modern-day miracle, with a strong military and at the forefront of technology. As Israel today marks 75 years since its creation, the protesters say they are reclaiming the flag that was co-opted by the nationalists.

MACAU, LUXEMBOURG BONDS

Ho Iat Seng visits Luxembourg Stock Exchange, meets Prime Minister before heading to Brussels, final stopover of his European tour P3



CRIME

POLICE ARREST SUSPECTS IN PHONE FRAUD SYNDICATE CASE

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STATS

SUSPICIOUS TRANSACTION REPORTS FROM CASINOS GROW IN FIRST QUARTER

P3

ZHUHAI TO DROP CROSS-BORDER QUOTA RESTRICTIONS MAY 1

The Zhuhai Municipal Bureau of Commerce will discontinue restrictions on the number of passes at the Zhuhai-Macau border crossing, according to the Macao Customs Service. The Zhuhai Municipal Bureau of Commerce said that restrictions will be lifted starting May 1, and implementation details have been sent to Macao Customs. However, both sides are still discussing the details, and final arrangements are yet to be announced.

CITY CARNIVAL FOR INT'L MUSEUM DAY

To celebrate International Museum Day on May 18, the city's 20 museums will organize a range of activities, including carnivals and workshops. The events will be held May 14, when the museums will host game booths such as "Multiple Perspectives on Museums," an experience activity titled "Understanding the Exhibits of the Macao Museum," workshops such as "Colors in Concert: Printmaking Registration Workshop," and ceramic printing and woodblock printing workshops. In May, museums will also hold exhibitions, workshops, guided tours and other celebratory activities, and will be open to the public for free at designated times.

DURIAN DELIVERY MARKS MILESTONE FOR CHINA-LAOS-THAILAND RAILWAY

A cross-border cold-chain freight train arrived in Guangzhou, Guangdong province early this week, completing its first heavy-laden return trip via the China-Laos-Thailand railway. The train's arrival in Guangzhou highlights the deepening cooperation between China's Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the China Media Group reported. Transporting 414 tons of Thai durians, the freight train departed from Thailand and carried out a series of tasks including customs declarations, transfer from meter-gauge to standard-gauge rail and international settlement in Vientiane, Laos before the fragrant cargo made its way to Guangzhou.



LAWMAKER INSISTS ON SEX WORK CRIMINALIZATION

RENATO MARQUES

LAWMAKER Wong Kit Cheng is again insisting on changing the law to criminalize all sex work in Macau.

Wong has previously made similar calls, and recently submitted a new written inquiry to the government through the Legislative Assembly (AL) calling directly on the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, to move forward with a new law on the matter even if there is not social consensus on the topic.

On more than one previous

occasion, the same lawmaker, who is linked with the Women's General Association of Macau, had called on the government to amend the relevant laws to criminalize sex work in Macau.

This demand was not heeded by government officials, who noted studies indicating a large percentage of the population was not in favor of criminalization and held views that sex work was part of Macau's status as a gambling hub as well as its cultural background.

Claiming that there was no social consensus to move forward

with such a change to the law, authorities dropped this idea after being in light of a study from the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM) in 2020.

Wong now calls on the government to ignore the social consensus and move forward with the amendment unilaterally due to fears that the sex work industry might expand and bring a "bad environment" to the city, especially to the old neighborhoods.

Sex work is not illegal in Macau, so long as those working are locals. In reality, this is very rare, as most sex workers in the city

and especially in casino areas are people who have officially entered Macau as tourists.

In these, sex workers are usually charged under laws related to illegal work and subject to a fine of up to 5,000 patacas and consequent expulsion from Macau with an additional ban from reentering for a usual period of two years.

Wong thinks that these penalties are not enough to stop illegal activity and that authorities have not been keen to tackle the problem either.

Currently, it is only criminal to exploit, manage or help in any way the activity of the sex workers.

In the IFTM study, researchers said their findings indicated that Macau locals appeared to be more concerned about social problems related to sex work than any related moral issues.

"In this sense, prostitution-related social problems are preoccupations for the government, but the relevant social problems are difficult to eliminate or alleviate without dealing with the source: that is, the illegal sex trade," said the scholars, calling on the government to proceed with legalization of the sex trade under specific rules, instead of a general criminalization. This approach has been taken in many countries to avoid or reduce the criminal activities that currently surround the industry.

CRIME

Police arrest suspects in phone fraud syndicate case

STAFF REPORTER

THE police have apprehended a telephone fraud syndicate pretending to be a government department.

The syndicate used about 3,500 local and overseas phone cards through gateway communication equipment installed in Macau, and made at least 1.74 million calls attempting to defraud people in Macau, the Judiciary Police (PJ) reported.

According to the PJ, 45 people were scammed to the tune of MOP23

million. 26 of the victims were college students.

Two local men were suspected of assisting in the setup and maintenance of criminal tools. The PJ is still tracking down the other suspects.

The group set up fraudulent call centers overseas and four gateway communication devices in Macau to make batch calls. The money obtained by fraud was transferred to overseas bank accounts. During the investigation, the PJ found that the calls were transmitted from a residential unit

in Taipa, and two Macau men in their thirties were arrested yesterday morning. The local suspects received MOP2,000 and MOP10,000, respectively, in remuneration. The case has been referred to the prosecutions office.

Earlier this week, the PJ asked the public to stay vigilant and safeguard their personal information. In a statement, the PJ said that it has again received reports from the public concerning fraudulent SMS messages from fake courier companies. Since the pandemic has caused



interruptions in delivery services, fraudsters have seized this opportunity to scam the public by sending fake SMS messages claiming that parcels

cannot be delivered, and providing a link to a fake website, where victims are asked for personal information and to pay a "surcharge."

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HO IAT SENG IN LUXEMBOURG

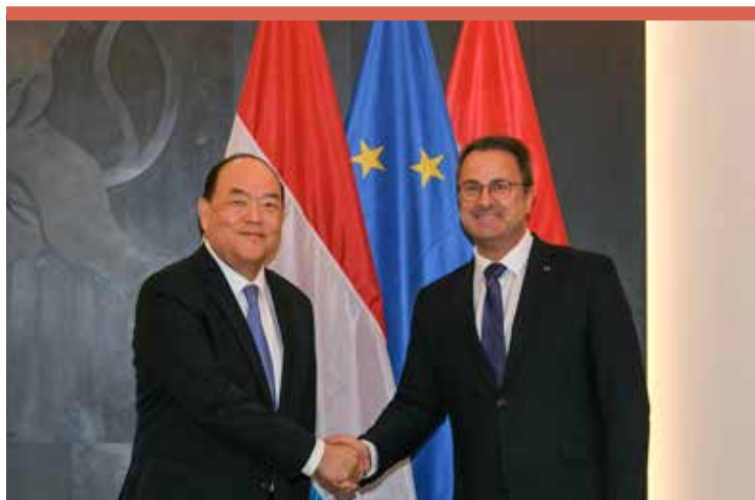
CE tours Luxembourg Stock Exchange and meets Prime Minister

RENATO MARQUES

CONTINUING his tour of Luxembourg, the Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng yesterday visited the Luxembourg Stock Exchange as well as meeting with the country's Prime Minister, Xavier Bettel.

The CE's visit to Luxembourg is related to the experience and success of the small European country in developing its financial sector. The CE said that the government wants to learn from Luxembourg to develop a "secondary market" for bonds in Macau, in a bid to develop what the government calls a "modern financial industry."

During the visit and a briefing about the stock exchange's operations, the CE also witnessed the signing of a cooperation protocol between the chairman of the board of directors of Chongwa Financial Assets Transaction (Macau), S.A., Zhang Weichun, and the CEO of the Luxembourg Stock Exchange, Julie Becker. The two parties will continue to jointly explore



Ho Iat Seng meets with Luxembourg's Prime Minister Xavier Bettel

new opportunities to innovate and cooperate in the financial market business and promote bond market connections with other parts of the world.

The Luxembourg Stock Exchange, Europe's largest bond exchange, was founded in 1928 and is one of China's main overseas bond issuance markets.

In 2016, the Luxembourg Stock Exchange established the world's first green exchange.

Earlier in the same day, Ho met with Luxembourg Prime

Minister and Minister of State Xavier Bettel, who also holds the titles of Minister for Communications and Media, Minister for Religious Affairs, Minister for Digitalization and Minister for Administrative Reform.

During the meeting, both parties discussed strengthening cooperation between Macau and Luxembourg in several areas, namely economics, commerce and modern finance. The CE again expressed interest in taking advantage of this visit to

learn from Luxembourg's successful experience in the development of its financial sector, an exemplar for Macau's bid to properly diversify its economy.

Ho also presented briefly on the ongoing projects and initiatives in which Macau is playing a leading role or taking part, with a special focus on the Cooperation Zone, which Ho sees as a good opportunity to facilitate the entry of products into the Macau and China markets.

In turn, Bettel noted the many similarities between Luxembourg and Macau, namely in their demographics and also their gross domestic product, despite a small geographic area.

Bettel also noted Luxembourg's interest in sharing its expertise with Macau not only in the finance sector but also in other areas such as trade, which he noted is essential to promote stability between sectors.

After the stock exchange visit, the CE and Macau delegation departed for Brussels, Belgium, the last stop of their tour before returning to Macau.

MACAU NEW NEIGHBORHOOD CONSTRUCTION EXPECTED TO CONCLUDE BY 2H

The Macau New Neighborhood project in Hengqin, which commenced in 2021, is currently in the fit-out and external wall works phase and expected to be finished by the second half of the year. The project includes 27 towers and will provide over 4,000 residential units, complemented by schools, a health station, a seniors' service center and a family service center. A prefabricated construction approach has been used for three types of components, namely façade panels, staircases and autoclaved lightweight concrete (ALC) panels. Macau Urban Renewal Limited (MUR) said in a statement.

LIBRARY WEEK PROMOTES SERIES OF READING ACTIVITIES

Macau Library Week 2023 is promoting a series of reading activities until May 14. During the promotional week, the Cultural Affairs Bureau and Associação de Publicações de Macau are jointly organizing the "Cultural Salon," in which four Macau writers — Tan Jian Qiao, Li I, Lawrence Lei and Lin Ge — are invited to share their experiences reading, creating and publishing in the reading area of the salon, in order to deepen the public's understanding of Macau's literature

GP FAMILY CARNIVAL TO BE HELD THIS WEEKEND

The 70th Macau Grand Prix Family Carnival will take place at the Coloane Karting Track for the first time on April 29 and 30. For the convenience of the general public, the organizers will arrange two shuttle bus routes to take residents and tourists to and from the Coloane Karting Track, the Macao Forum and Taipa Central Park (near Towers 9-11 of Nova City). The first shuttle bus is scheduled to depart at 9:30 a.m. The Macau Grand Prix will be held November 11-12 and 16-19 this year.

UM DELEGATION VISITS UNIVERSITIES IN EUROPE

A delegation from the University of Macau (UM) led by Rector Yonghua Song recently visited the Technical University of Munich, Constructor University and Leibniz University of Hannover in Germany, as well as KU Leuven in Belgium. The visit was aimed at fostering research and academic collaborations between UM and universities in Europe. In a statement, the university said that it will continue to "promote academic exchange and cooperation with renowned universities around the world, with the goal of improving its academic quality and global impact as well as creating more exchange opportunities for its faculty and students."

STATS

Suspicious Transaction Reports from casinos grow in Q1 2023

RENATO MARQUES

THE number of Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs) registered with the Financial Intelligence Office (GIF) in the first quarter (Q1) of 2023 has reached 817, an increase of 13.47%

compared with the same period in 2022, in which there were 720 reports.

The increase is explained only by an increasing number of reports by the gaming sector, totaling 595 or 72.82% of all reports, a

year-on-year increase of 44.07%.

The general rate of growth of STRs was partially offset by a decrease in the number of reports made by both financial institutions and insurance companies, as well as other institutions

not included in the finance or gaming sector.

Further falls were seen in the number of reports made by the financial sector, which accounted for 218 reports (30.3%) in Q1 2022, but only 157 in the same quarter of this year.

The GIF received 2,199 total STRs in 2022, a decrease of 9.7% when compared with 2021. At the time the decrease was also attributed to lower activity related to the gaming industry which has been maintaining a report rate of between 50% to 55% of all reports annually.

Of the 2,199 reports made in 2022, only 62 (2.82%) were referred to the Public Prosecutions Office due to indications of potential criminal activity.

EVENTS

GUANGDONG AND MACAU PRODUCTS FAIR CALLS FOR LOCAL PARTICIPANTS

STAFF REPORTER

THE 2023 edition of the "Guangdong and Macao Branded Products Fair," which aims to help Guangdong and Macau enterprises promote their products and services, will be held from July

27 to 30 at the Exhibition Hall, Galaxy International Convention Center.

The four-day event will involve a series of activities, including exhibitions and sales campaigns, business-matching sessions, live broadcasts, forums and roadshows,

which will help enterprises to promote sales and explore business opportunities.

Numerous sectors will be represented during the exhibition, including food and beverage, big health, scientific innovation, home applian-

ces, daily commodities, clothing, cultural and creative products and products from Portuguese-speaking countries.

This year, the organizers have indicated that priority will be given to enterprises which highlight "Made in Macau,"

such as local SMEs, which are invited to participate at a special discount.

Macau SMEs which have been registered with the Financial Services Bureau for at least one year and have at least 50% of the shares or the controlling interest of the company owned by Macau residents can participate in the fair this year at the special price of MOP 1,400.

GBA

FINANCE IN GREATER BAY AREA AIMS FOR HIGHER QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

STAFF REPORTER

The Fifth Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Financial Development Forum recently opened in the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, gathering around 300 guests to discuss pressing issues concerning the high-quality financial development of the Greater Bay Area in the new era.

The forum was held by the Financial Research Institute, which is part of the Development Research Center of the State Council and the Guangdong Financial Supervisory Authority. It invited guests to deliver keynote speeches and put forward suggestions on the Greater Bay Area's financial development.

Huang Hong, the former vice chairman of China Banking and the Insurance Regulatory Commission, noted that a financing service system that covers the whole innovation process should be established. Huang further stated that diversified financial tools should be offered to support basic scientific research in the Greater



Bay Area.

He added that long-term bank loans with low interest rates should be provided for talents involved in basic scientific research when purchasing housing, as cited in a statement from Zhuhai authorities. High-quality insurance pro-

ducts for these talents, especially those from overseas, should also be established to meet up with the demands in health management, medical services and elderly care.

Huang also suggested that the listing procedures of institutes that manage basic scientific research

needs to be simplified, and that core technical talents in these institutes should get more control rights.

Hong Kong's Financial Secretary, Paul Chan Mo-po, said that Hong Kong has now been active in adding renminbi service coun-

ters at Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing to boost the issuance and trading of offshore RMB stocks.

He expressed the hope that insurance after-sale service centers will be approved in Guangzhou's Nansha district and Shenzhen's Qianhai district to provide services such as consultations, claim settlements, and insurance renewals for residents living in the Greater Bay Area with Hong Kong insurance.

Great efforts will be devoted to developing finance leases and releasing preferential financial policies, added Paul.

Tong Shiqing, deputy director of Guangdong Provincial Local Financial Supervision and Administration Bureau, noted that Guangdong will vigorously develop financial leasing and promote the introduction of conducive policy measures to boost the standardized development of these characteristic financial formats, aiming to consolidate the province's position as the third pole of financial leasing in the country and create a new growth point for finance in the Greater Bay Area.

Vong Lap Fong, member of the advisory board member of Macao's Monetary Authority, said that the bond market in Macao has taken shape after nearly three years of construction, and it will help Macao play a major part in the construction of a Sino-Portuguese financial service platform.

TOURISM

More than 70k daily visitors expected for Labor Day Golden Week

STAFF REPORTER

As the Labor Day Golden Week starts May 1, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has forecast average daily visitor arrivals of at least 70,000 and up to 90% hotel occupancy rates.

Following the Chinese New Year, the Labor Day Golden Week is the mainland's second-highest peak travel period, with hundreds of millions of tourists from across the country visiting each year prior to the pandemic.

MGTO director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes believes the upcoming Golden Week will see figures which will be as good as, or even higher, than those recorded during the Easter break, which totaled around 481,000 visitors during the six-day period.

"According to our cur-



MGTO director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes

rent estimation, we hope to reach an average of 70,000 daily visitor arrivals or more," the MGTO director said, adding that the hotel booking rate had already "surpassed 60% last week."

"We believe that this number will [improve] during the May 1st Golden Week and that the hotel occupancy rate can maintain between 80% to 90%," Senna Fernandes said.

WYNN EYES DIVERSIFICATION OF VISITOR SOURCES, STABLE OCCUPANCY RATE

STAFF REPORTER

WYNN Macau hopes efforts to diversify its sources of visitors will start producing results during the May First Golden Week.

"I hope that everyone's hotel occupancy rate will not only be high, but especially that visitor sources will be more diverse," Linda Chen, president and vice chairman of the Board of Wynn Macau, Limited, expressing her desire to attract tourists "not just from the mainland, but especially from the international market."

"As you know, we just came back from Portugal. We hope to promote the importance of having more international visitors to Macau," Chen told the press on the sidelines of an SME event at Wynn.

However, she added, it will take time and multiple campaigns to expand the international customer base.

She noted that labor is



Linda Chen, Wynn Macau president

"a challenge that everyone is facing," and claimed Wynn is relatively stable in this regard because it maintained the company's employment rate and kept employees on during the three years of the pandemic. This has allowed Wynn's hotel rooms to be fully operational.

In the process of promoting non-gaming projects, gaming employees are also encouraged to

seek more non-gaming jobs.

Chen expressed that the first priority is to develop non-gaming industries, non-gaming activities and projects in the future. If these can be developed well, it will be of "great benefit to the recovery of the entire market." There are currently more than 200 employees receiving training in non-gaming sector activities, she said.

TOURISM

Coronation gives businesses boost, but UK economy still reeling

KELVIN CHAN, LONDON

KELLY Curto is taking her first trip outside the U.S., and the die-hard fan of the British royal family is making it the one at the top of her bucket list — heading to London for King Charles III's coronation.

After arriving on May 5, the 44-year-old school bus driver from Long Island and a friend will head to the Mall, the ceremonial avenue to Buckingham Palace where the monarch's pomp-filled procession will pass by the following day.

That's where they plan to spend the night if they can find a good spot to glimpse the gilded horse-drawn state coach, royals and thousands of soldiers filing past — despite splurging on a four-star hotel for their nine-day trip.

"This is like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. You get to be part of history," Curto said. "Everybody around the world knows this family. Everybody around the world is going to be watching this coronation — and we get to be a part of that."

The coronation is luring royal enthusiasts fascinated by the ceremonial spectacle — and drama — of the monarchy and far-flung visitors eager to experience a piece of British history. Tour companies, shops and restaurants are rolling out the red carpet, whether it's a decked-out bus tour of London's top sights with high tea or merchandise running from regal to kitschy.

The weekend of events starting



May 6 will bring a cash infusion to central London businesses, especially hotels, pubs and restaurants, but it won't do much for U.K. residents struggling with an economy on the precipice of recession and a cost-of-living crisis that has stirred months of disruptive strikes by workers seeking pay hikes.

For visitors looking to splash out, hotels across London are touting coronation-themed packages, menus and decor.

Those willing to spend an eye-popping 12,995 pounds (over \$16,000) can get an overnight stay in the Royal Suite at the five-star Hotel Cafe Royal and a limo ride to the Tower of London for a private tour and viewing of the Crown Jewels.

The Dorchester Hotel, long a favorite with royals and celebrities, concocted a lavish, five-tier

coronation cake and put up theater-style draping across its facade to re-create the decorations that it used to mark Queen Elizabeth II's coronation in 1953.

Many international visitors are drawn by the idea of a "beautiful fairytale" about "the royals and everything that is around them," general manager Luca Virgilio said.

"So there's a lot of love and a lot of interest. And we are sold out already, which is very encouraging," he said.

The Royal Lancaster Hotel near Hyde Park is serving afternoon tea inspired by Charles' favorites: roast beef sandwiches, darjeeling tea and damson plum mousse.

The spread features a darjeeling tea cake shaped like crown atop a crimson cushion, while the hotel bar serves a coronation cocktail: a martini with a splash of

darjeeling tea, trimmed with gold leaf.

For a different twist, Annie Verhaert, 64, and daughter Claudia Lombaert, 30, from Belgium, boarded a vintage red double-decker bus strung with Union Jack flags for a coronation-themed tour that hits landmarks like Big Ben and Trafalgar Square.

On the way, they sipped tea — using cupholders to prevent spills — and snacked on finger sandwiches and pastries like the "royal scone" from a menu a former royal butler curated for tour operator Brigit's Bakery.

"We knew the queen all our life," Verhaert said. "And it's now the first time we see a change on the throne. So it's special."

And souvenirs are in no short supply, including tea towels, socks, dessert plates and other paraphernalia with coronation insignia from the Royal Collection Trust, purveyor of official memorabilia.

Unofficial merchandise also abounds at shops in tourist areas, with Charles' likeness crudely emblazoned on tote bags, coasters and teabag holders or coronation-branded pens, tins of fudge and playing cards offering more upscale options. Even more items show his mother, who died in September after 70 years on the throne, on everything from mugs to bobblehead figures.

Officials have high hopes that the coronation will provide a vital boost to the country's tourism industry, which is still reeling from two years of COVID-19 shutdowns. The U.K. received some

29.7 million visits last year, still nearly a third below 2019.

"Events like this really kick-start the recovery, don't they? And they put Britain on the world stage again," said Patricia Yates, chief executive of the VisitBritain tourism board.

Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee celebrations last year brought in an extra 2.6 million visitors to London, she said, and Charles' coronation is expected to have a similar effect.

History, heritage and the royals are the biggest draw for international tourists, Yates said, and royal pageantry is a particular magnet for Americans, who are driving the U.K.'s tourism recovery.

"We can see a 10% increase in flight bookings through May from the America market," she said. "The big question mark is, of course, China, which was our second-most-valuable market and still not coming back quite in the numbers we would like to see."

The coronation's wider impact on Britain's economy is less clear.

Tax revenue will get a boost from extra retail spending for parties nationwide, including booze sales that have hefty alcohol duties. Pubs will be allowed to stay open two hours longer May 5-6.

However, organizing the coronation has a huge cost that some reports estimate could run as high as 100 million pounds, and an extra public holiday on May 8 means a lost day of productivity.

So while the hospitality industry benefits, "the flipside of that is that by giving everybody an extra day off, you're taking quite a bit of output out of the economy in quite a lot of other sectors," said Andrew Goodwin of Oxford Economics.

The British economy has been essentially stagnant since the start of last year as decades-high inflation squeezes households and small businesses. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China team members tour National Security Education Exhibition



A delegation of Sands China's senior executives and department heads went on a guided tour of the 2023 National Security Education Exhibition at the Complex

of Commerce and Trade Co-operation Platform for China and Portuguese-speaking Countries.

Led by Sands China president Wilfred Wong, the

tour aimed to "deepen team members' understanding of the development of the Chinese mainland and Macau."

Wong said: "National security is a prerequisite for social and economic development. Sands China is therefore very pleased to organise this tour for our team members again this year, as it is part of our ongoing effort to promote professionalism education."

A total of 50 team members were given a guided tour of the exhibition.

The exhibition showcases a series of new achievements in various fields of security and development, as well as the SAR government's improvement in maintaining the national security system.

Wynn holds SME procurement partnership meeting



Wynn Resorts held the "2023 Wynn local SME Procurement Partnership Meeting and 'M-Mark' Promotion" yesterday, attracting almost 400 representatives from local SMEs in its business networking series.

The networking series provided

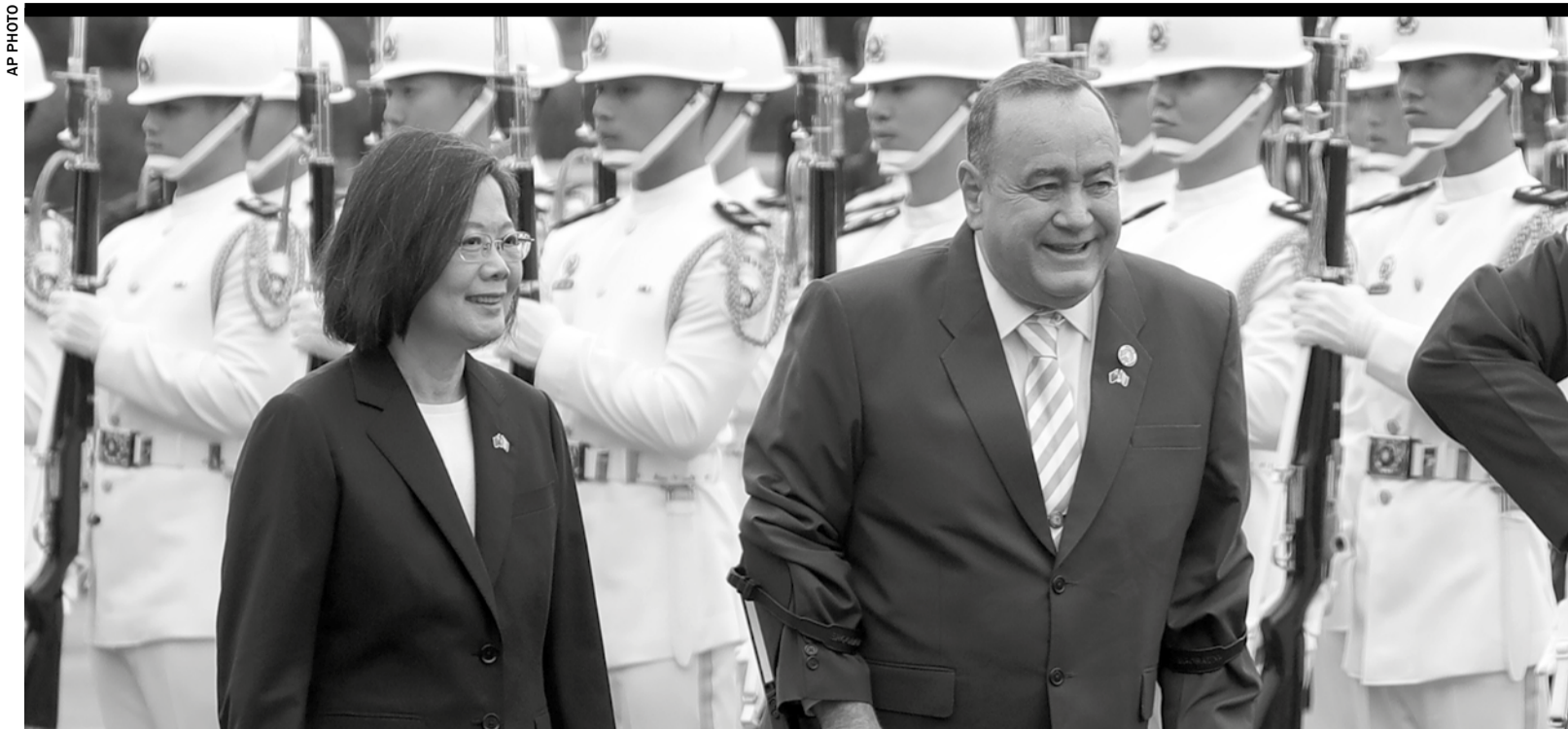
on-site meeting opportunities for Macau's local suppliers and Wynn's procurement specialists.

An exclusive technology and innovation zone was also set up to offer local tech innovators a platform to explore potential

collaboration and partnerships.

In addition, Wynn arranged seminars and training sessions on the "M-Mark" certification, helping the local SMEs to improve manufacturing and management performances, increase overall competitiveness, and support the appropriate diversified development of Macau's economy.

"As a global integrated leisure and entertainment resort, Wynn is committed to seeking more collaboration opportunities and creating synergies with local SMEs, jointly enhancing the economic diversification of Macau," Linda Chen, president and vice chairman of the Board of Wynn Macau, Limited, said in her speech.



US GOVERNOR MEETS TSAI IN TRADE MISSION

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin met with the leader of Taiwan earlier this week to discuss mutual trade and investment initiatives and other business matters, his office said, and he signed an executive order establishing an economic development office in Taipei.

The visit by Youngkin, who has been considered a possible 2024 presidential contender and has not publicly ruled out a run, came on Day 1 of his first international trade mission — and amid heightened tensions between the United States and China, which claims Taiwan as its own territory and treats dealings between U.S. and Taiwanese officials as a challenge.

Following his meeting with Tsai Ing-wen, the Republican governor, along with the rest of the Virginia delegation, is also expected to visit Tokyo and Seoul, South Korea, as the trade mission continues this week.

“I was thrilled to meet with [leader] Tsai to strengthen Virginia’s decades-old partnership with Taiwan,” Youngkin, a former private equity executive, said in a statement. “As a former business leader, I appreciate the commitment to excellence that Taiwan demonstrates across sectors. They are an important training partner and model of prosperity for nations across the globe.”

According to Youngkin’s office, Virginia exported \$730 million in products to Taiwan in 2022 and imported \$1 billion in goods.

Youngkin’s executive order says the Taipei trade office will represent Virginia in Taiwan and “offer services related to economic development and trade.” The state has similar international offices in Germany, Japan and South Korea. **MDT/AP**

DIRE STRAIT

Guatemala leader in Taiwan expresses ‘rock-solid friendship’

JOHNSON LAI, TAIPEI

THE president of Guatemala appealed to other governments to respect Taiwan’s sovereignty during an official visit yesterday at a time when China’s ruling Communist Party is stepping up efforts to isolate the self-ruled island Beijing claims as its own territory.

President Alejandro Giammattei’s government is one of a dwindling number that have official relations with Taipei instead of Beijing.

Legislators from the United States and Europe have visited to

show support in the face of Beijing’s attempts to intimidate the island, but their governments have official relations with China, not Taiwan.

“I would like to appeal to the international community and the free world that we should strive to respect Taiwan’s sovereignty and territorial integrity,” Mattei said in a speech to Taiwan’s legislature. He expressed “rock-solid friendship” with Taiwan.

Mattei said his visit was a “demonstration of our firm support for your country and our commitment to defending our sovereignty and territorial integrity, and our

firm opposition to aggression.”

President Xi Jinping’s government has flown fighter jets and bombers near Taiwan in increasing numbers and fired missiles into the sea in an attempt to intimidate the island.

The number of governments that deal with Taiwan as a national government is shrinking as Beijing and Taipei compete for recognition from small, mostly poor countries in Africa, Latin America and the South Pacific with infusions of aid and investment.

The United States and all European governments except tiny Vatican City have no official relations

with Taiwan, a center for high-tech industry and one of the biggest global traders, but maintain extensive commercial and informal ties.

Taiwanese leader Tsai Ing-wen visited Guatemala and Belize this month on a tour aimed at shoring up relations with the handful of governments that recognize Taiwan. In Guatemala, Tsai visited a rural hospital built with a donation from Taiwan.

Earlier, Honduras announced it was switching recognition to Beijing following the announcement that a Chinese company would build a \$300 million hydroelectric dam project in central Honduras.

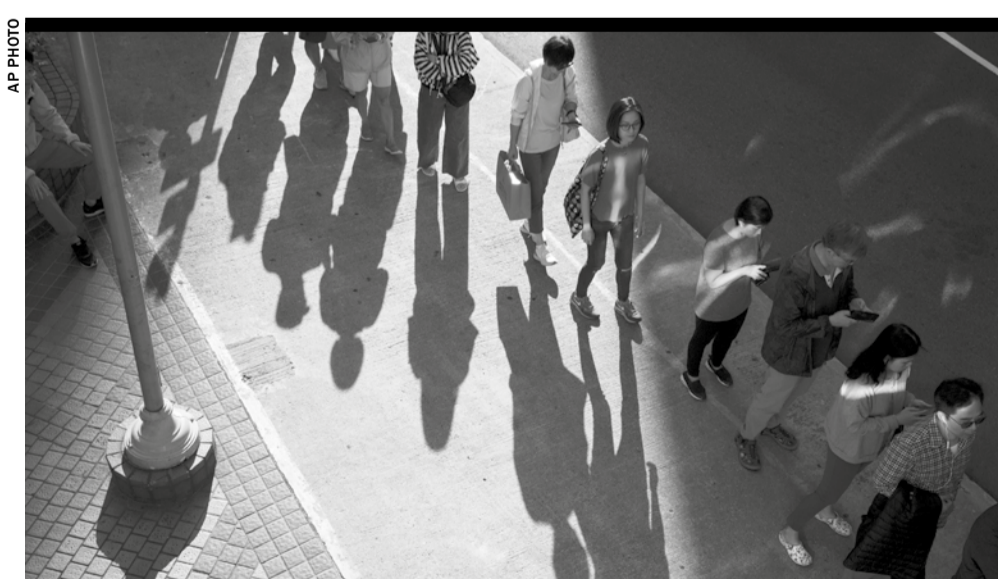
HONG KONG

Lee plans electoral overhaul for district councils

HONG Kong is planning to overhaul its last major political representative body that is mostly comprised of popularly elected seats, its leader said yesterday. The move ensures the municipal-level organization will be run by Beijing loyalists, quashing any future challenges.

Chief Executive John Lee said at a press briefing that the government will not allow the district councils to become a platform for advocating Hong Kong independence or intervening in its administration.

The race for the seats of the city’s district representatives usually gets little international attention as



People line up to vote outside of a polling place in Hong Kong, Nov. 24, 2019

the councilors mainly handle municipal matters. But their election took on sym-

bolic importance after the city’s pro-democracy camp won a landslide victory in

the last poll at the height of the anti-government protests in 2019.

channels.” He did not further elaborate.

Many pro-democracy district councilors who were elected four years ago resigned in 2021 after the authorities introduced an oath-taking requirement to ask them to pledge allegiance to the city.

Their mass resignations followed media reports that councilors may have to repay their wages if they are later disqualified from office, which the government had not confirmed or denied at the time.

The requirement was widely seen as part of a broader crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in the former British colony, which has seen an erosion of the freedoms it was promised it could maintain after being handed to Chinese control in 1997. **MDT/AP**

In 2021, Hong Kong amended its electoral laws for its legislature, drastically reducing the public’s ability to vote and increasing the number of pro-Beijing lawmakers making decisions for the city.

Under the current electoral rules, most of the council’s seats are directly elected by voters. Lee said an ongoing review will help depoliticize the bodies.

“There will be multiple ways of entry and certain elements of election will be reserved,” Lee said. “This will allow patriots who have the ambition to serve in their districts to take part through multiple

WWII

Australians and New Zealanders recall war dead on Anzac Day

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

HUNDREDS of thousands of Australians gathered at dawn services and veterans' street marches across the nation yesterday to commemorate their war dead on Anzac Day as recent events focused minds on the cost of war and the new threat of China's rapid military buildup.

Australia and New Zealand commemorate Anzac Day every April 25 — the date in 1915 when the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps landed on the beaches of Gallipoli, in northwest Turkey, in an ill-fated campaign that was the soldiers' first combat of World War I.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese spoke to more than 30,000 people who gathered at the Australian War Memorial in the national capital Canberra for the first Anzac Day since his government was elected almost a year ago.

"Gallipoli is just one battle in our history, but in all its stories of valor and resilience, in its simple truth of Australians looking out for each other no matter how bad things got, it has come to stand for something so much bigger in our collective heart," Albanese said.



AP PHOTO

His government chose the eve of Anzac Day to release a review of the nation's defense force that warned with China's growing military strength and assertiveness, Australia's geographic isolation did not provide the protection from global conflict that it once did.

The report recommended more Australian defense spending and a rapid embrace of missile technology to strike targets at longer ranges. It described China's

military buildup as the largest and most ambitious of any country since the end of World War II.

Over the weekend, Australians were given a tragic reminder of when Japan's land forces reached what is now Australia's nearest neighbor, Papua New Guinea, during World War II. With Japanese supply lines stretched, Japan decided to isolate rather than invade Australia.

Deep-sea explorers announced Saturday they had found the wreck

of the Japanese ship *Montevideo Maru* that was transporting Allied prisoners of war from Rabaul in the then-Australian territory of New Guinea to China when it was torpedoed off the coast of the Philippines in 1942.

The 1,080 killed from 14 nations included 979 Australians, which was Australia's largest wartime loss of life at sea.

While veterans of the two world wars dominated Anzac Day services and marches for decades, their

descendants and unrelated younger generations have taken their place, defying an expectation that the tradition might die with the veterans.

Veterans Affairs Minister Keogh, who is representing his government at Gallipoli, said the dawn service there was expected to attract the biggest crowd since the centenary commemorations in 2015.

"What we've really seen Anzac Day become is not just about one conflict, it's now a day where we commemorate not just those that died but all those people that have served in our uniform on our behalf in conflict," Keogh told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

In downtown Sydney, Glenda Rixon wore the medals of her late father Henry "Harry" Rixon, a Korean War infantryman, and was touched that the 70th anniversary of the Korean armistice was noted in Martin Place where dawn services have been held since 1927.

"Usually they don't say anything -- it's like it's the forgotten war," Rixon said.

"I'm really proud of my father. He passed away eight years ago. It's a special day. We used to always watch him march," she added.

As well as 70 years since Australia's involvement in the Korean War ended, this year's ceremonies also commemorated 50 years since the last Australian forces withdrew from the Vietnam War.

Dawn services and marches were also held across New Zealand, where Anzac Day is considered the most important day of national commemoration as it is in Australia. **MDT/AP**

MYANMAR

Ban Ki-moon urges army to end violence

FORMER U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon yesterday urged Myanmar's ruling military to take the initiative in finding a way out of the country's violent political crisis, including releasing political detainees, after a surprise meeting with the army leader who seized power two years ago.

Ban met Monday in the Myanmar capital Naypyitaw with the leader of the military government, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, and other top officials. His mission was made on behalf of a group of elder statesmen that engages in peacemaking and human rights initiatives around the world.

Ban is the deputy chair of the group, which calls itself The Elders.

A statement released yesterday by the group quo-



AP PHOTO

In this photo provided by the Myanmar Military True News Information Team, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing (right) head of the military council, talks with Ban Ki Moon in Naypyitaw, Monday

ted Ban saying "I came to Myanmar to urge the military to adopt an immediate cessation of violence, and start constructive dialogue among all parties concerned." He described his talks as "exploratory."

"With patient deter-

mination, I believe a way forward can be found out of the current crisis. The military must take the first steps," he said.

The statement said Ban, who flew to Bangkok from Naypyitaw Monday night, in his talks stressed the

need to implement a peace plan by the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations — ASEAN — and a United Nations resolution to stop the violence between the military and the pro-democracy resistance forces following the

army's 2021 ouster of the civilian government led by Aung San Suu Kyi.

"ASEAN member states and the wider international community need to show unity and resolve in their commitment to peace and democracy in Myanmar, which is a source of serious international concern," Ban was quoted as saying.

The statement also said Ban "supported the international community's calls for the immediate release of all arbitrarily detained prisoners, for constructive dialogue, and for utmost restraint from all parties."

The 77-year-old Suu Kyi was imprisoned for 33 years after the takeover on charges widely seen as being trumped up by the military to keep her from playing an active role in politics. Her

trials were held behind closed doors, and the military has turned down requests from U.N. officials, foreign diplomats and other interested parties to see her.

Myanmar has been wracked by violence since the army's takeover, which prevented Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party from beginning a second term in office. The takeover was met with massive public opposition, which security forces quashed with deadly force, in turn triggering widespread armed resistance.

Myanmar's military government has spurned previous outside initiatives calling for negotiations as an infringement on Myanmar's sovereignty, and generally describes the pro-democracy opposition as terrorists.

The Elders' statement said Ban warned that elections promised by the military must be held only under free and fair conditions. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Families watch from a bridge as thousands of people enter the holy River Saryu in Ayodhya, last month

DEMOGRAPHICS

India will be most populous country by month's end, UN says

KRUTIKA PATHI & JOE MCDONALD, NEW DELHI

INDIA will be the world's most populous country by the end of this month, eclipsing an aging China, the United Nations said yesterday [Macau time]. The milestone raises questions about whether India can repeat the economic success that has made China central to the world's economy and a leading global power.

The news comes at a moment when India is promoting itself as a rising international player as the host of this year's Group of 20 summit. It's also becoming a more attractive destination for multinational companies seeking to reduce their reliance on China.

By the end of April, India's population is expected to reach 1.425 billion, which means it will match and then surpass mainland China's, the U.N.'s Department of Economic and Social Affairs said in a statement. The forecast is based on their latest estimates of global population.

It's not clear exactly when India's population will pass China's. It may have already have done so. Demographers say the limits of population data make it impossible to calculate a date.

Another U.N. report last

week projected that India would have 2.9 million people more than China by midyear, but that was based on snapshots of the populations at the beginning of the year and the middle of the year. The announcement is based on an analysis that tried to estimate when the population crossover will take place.

The Indian government, which hasn't done a census since 2011, has not officially commented on the estimates. The timing of when India surpasses China in population will likely be revised once India conducts its next census, John Wilmoth, director of the United Nations' population division, said at a news conference at U.N. headquarters in New York.

"The precise timing of this crossover isn't known, and it will never be known," Wilmoth said. "There is uncertainty in the data."

India and China are neighbors and have a complicated relationship, including robust trade ties and a long-running border dispute. The United States and its allies increasingly see India, the world's largest democracy, as a counterweight to China.

But their interests don't always align. India, unlike much of the West, has refrained from condemning its Cold War ally Russia

over its war in Ukraine, instead adopting a neutral stance even as India's purchases of Russian crude have soared.

Observers say India's sheer size, and its young population, give it the potential to replicate China's economic trajectory.

Young workers who flooded into China's cities to take factory jobs starting in the 1990s were an essential ingredient in the boom that saw China become the world's second-largest economy.

But China's population peaked in 2022 and has since started to fall. By the close of the century, its population could drop below 1 billion, the U.N. said. The country's elderly population is swelling while its birth rate is still plunging, from 1.7 babies per woman in 2017 to 1.2 in 2022, according to U.N. data.

By contrast, India has the world's largest young population, a higher fertility rate, and has seen a consistent decrease in infant mortality. Experts caution against alarm about overpopulation, however, as the country's fertility rate has been steadily falling, from over five births per woman in the 1960s, to two in 2022. India's population is expected to stop growing and stabilize around 2064.

"The main driver is the

levels of fertility in these two countries," Wilmoth said.

Historic reforms in the 1990s spurred spectacular growth and India's \$3 trillion economy is the fifth-largest in the world today as its high-skilled sectors have soared.

But India's economy is still far behind China's. In 1970, the two countries had nearly equal per capita incomes, but today China's gross domestic product is \$12,556 per person, compared to India's \$2,256, according to 2021 World Bank data.

Economists warn that even as India's GDP has surged, so has joblessness. About 80% of Indian workers still toil in informal jobs, which are often precarious, low paid, and offer little to no benefits. Still, India stands to benefit from what is referred to as a "demographic dividend," when the swelling of the working-age population spurs rapid economic growth, provided there's strong participation in the labor force, Wilmoth said.

India's vast population also means that many challenges play out on a huge scale, whether it's grappling with the growing threat of climate change, disparities between its urban and rural populations, a shrinking number of women in the workforce or a widening religious divide.

"For this century to belong to India, it must make the most of its demographic advantage," said Brahma Chellaney, a professor of strategic affairs at the Centre for Policy Research. "China's demographic crisis is timely for India's growth — but only if it can find enough good quality employment for its teeming youth." **MDT/AP**

this day in history



1984 REAGAN ARRIVES IN CHINA

The US President, Ronald Reagan, has landed in China at the start of a six-day visit - the first by an American president since Nixon in 1972.

He arrived with his wife, Nancy Reagan, just after 1400 local time (0600 GMT), and was driven to Tiananmen Square, in the centre of the Chinese capital, Beijing, for a welcoming ceremony outside the Great Hall of the People.

He was greeted by the Chinese President, Li Xiannian, to the deafening sound of a 21-gun salute.

Mr Li told Mr Reagan he shared his view of the importance of the Pacific region, referring to a comment made by Mr Reagan in a statement before his arrival.

President Reagan then attended a banquet given in his honour by President Li.

Mr Reagan used the occasion to speak, in Chinese, about the need for "mutual respect and benefit" between China and the United States.

The president is accompanied in China by a party of more than 600 journalists, aides, secret service men and officials who guard the codes for launching nuclear missiles.

The talks start tomorrow, and are expected to address a variety of subjects.

The White House spokesman, Larry Speakes, said the United States and China are expected to reach an agreement to assist US companies in helping develop commercial nuclear power in China.

But there is no sign of any compromise over the key issue of Taiwan.

The government-controlled People's Daily newspaper has today re-stated the view of the Chinese government that relations with America are being held back by Washington's support for the Kuomintang nationalist regime in Taiwan.

Until Nixon's visit in 1972 Washington only recognised the ousted nationalist government in Taiwan, where it had been forced into exile after being overthrown by communist forces in 1949.

Nixon, however, signed the Shanghai Communique, which for the first time recognised the communist government in Beijing. It resulted in diplomatic relations between the two countries for the first time, as well as the transfer of diplomatic recognition to Beijing as the Chinese capital.

Washington still continues to support Taiwan, however, and maintains unofficial links, including the sale of arms, to the frustration and anger of the communist leadership in Beijing.

Courtesy BBC News



IN CONTEXT

There was, as expected, no agreement on the key issue of Taiwan. Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping told President Reagan the US "should not interfere" in the process of reunifying China.

The Sino-American relationship is widely seen as one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world, and has gone through many ups and downs.

Perhaps the lowest point was the Chinese army's brutal suppression of student democracy protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989. US-China relations were frozen for almost 10 years.

There have also been several difficult incidents, such as the Nato bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999, and the collision of a US spy plane with a Chinese jet in 2001.

Washington continues to supply Taiwan with arms, and there is still little progress towards addressing persistent criticisms of China's human rights record.

But China's campaign for wider global acceptance resulted in its membership of the World Trade Organisation in 2001. Diplomacy between the two countries still remains fraught with difficulties, and looks set to remain a delicate balancing act for the foreseeable future.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You may find that family members may not be too easy to get along with. You need to reevaluate your situation. Acknowledge your lover's needs.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Join a choir or a drama club. You may be considering moving to larger quarters. Catch up on any correspondence you've neglected.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Uncertainty about your relationship is prevalent. You are best to sit back and think it through, rather than add to the ranting and raving.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Opportunities for romance may develop through dealing with groups that have a purpose. Don't push your luck with authority figures.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You may find out that someone has not been completely honest with you. Be sure to take care of the needs of your immediate loved ones first.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

You can make money if you are careful not to let it trickle through your fingers. Financial affairs do not look too favorable today.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Self improvement projects should be your key concern. Face any emotional problems head-on to avoid situations getting out of hand.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You have a real need to be vocal. Do a little investigating if there is someone at work you don't trust. Try to be understanding. Unexpected bills may set you back.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You will meet new friends and enjoy a multitude of new activities. You will find that you are able to clear up a number of small but important details.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You are best to ask questions if you aren't certain about issues that are confronting you. You may jump from the frying pan into the fire if you make a move today.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Concentrate on getting ahead financially and let your personal life settle down for a while. Make sure that all your legal papers are in proper order.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Your need to be in a leadership position will help you surpass any rivals you might encounter. Set aside any decisions regarding your personal life today.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

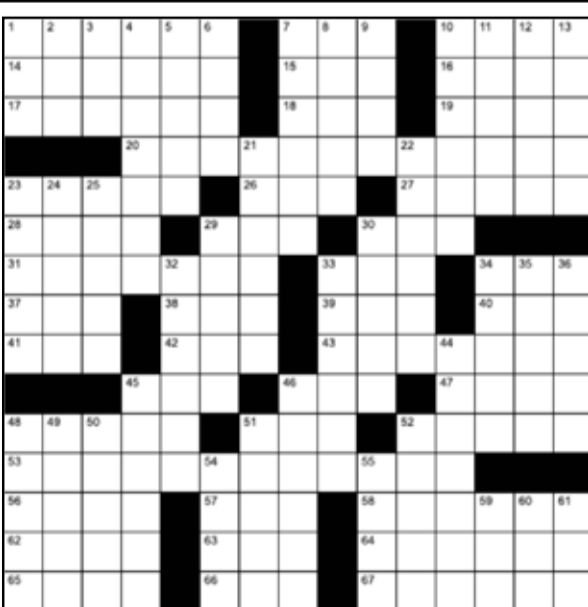
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	5	21	cloudy
Changchun	-1	14	cloudy
Chengdu	13	25	cloudy
Chongqing	13	27	cloudy
Fuzhou	16	20	rain
Guangzhou	17	24	cloudy
Guiyang	7	22	cloudy
Haikou	23	26	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	11	21	cloudy
Harbin	-4	14	fine
Hefei	8	23	fine
Nanjing	9	22	cloudy
Shanghai	12	22	cloudy
Taipei	17	20	rain
Wuhan	8	23	fine
Hong Kong	20	22	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	9	18	rain
Frankfurt	2	13	overcast
Paris	8	17	overcast
London	7	12	rain
New York	8	15	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Novice; 7- East Lansing sch.; 10- Cookbook amts.; 14- Painter, e.g.; 15- Aliens, briefly; 16- Get as a result; 17- Cavern; 18- Driving peg; 19- Editor Wintour; 20- Denied; 23- Hardly wimpy; 26- Disencumber; 27- Bobby of the Black Panthers; 28- Qualified; 29- Tic ___ Dough; 30- Mule's sire; 31- Altered; 33- Bearded beast; 34- Green shade; 37- Jockey Turcotte; 38- Before; 39- Era; 40- Australian bird; 41- Assn.; 42- Ed.'s pile; 43- Conifer native to California; 45- Never, in Nuremberg; 46- Orch. section; 47- Not pro; 48- Follow, as advice; 51- Water tester; 52- So far; 53- Juice aroma enhancer; 56- Med school subj.; 57- Foster Brooks persona; 58- Strikes; 62- Singer Vikki; 63- Took in; 64- Faculties; 65- Lohengrin's bride; 66- Strong desire; 67- Governor;

DOWN 1- Joplin song; 2- Bobby on the ice; 3- Oklahoma First Nation; 4- Culinary department; 5- Playground retort; 6- School founded in 1440; 7- Like grams and liters; 8- Place; 9- Pre-owned; 10- Vestiges; 11- Actress Berger; 12- Discussion group; 13- Club alternative; 21- Baseball deals; 22- Flowed out; 23- PC shortcut; 24- Loathe; 25- Loud sound; 29- Brief; 30- Ire; 32- Third sign of the zodiac; 33- Device for holding up a stocking; 34- Indiana state flower; 35- Chew the scenery; 36- Examine account books; 44- Devastating; 45- Cosa ___; 46- Alleviate; 48- Expeditiously; 49- Artificial waterway; 50- Former Russian rulers; 51- Govt. security; 52- Actress Anouk; 54- Anthem opener; 55- The Beatles' "Back in the ___"; 59- Lao-___; 60- Still, in poetry; 61- Atl. crosser;



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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HKD 13,988,000 4 beds 3 bath

Houston Court
HKD 9,950/mth 2 bed 1 bath

AD

URBAN DESIGN

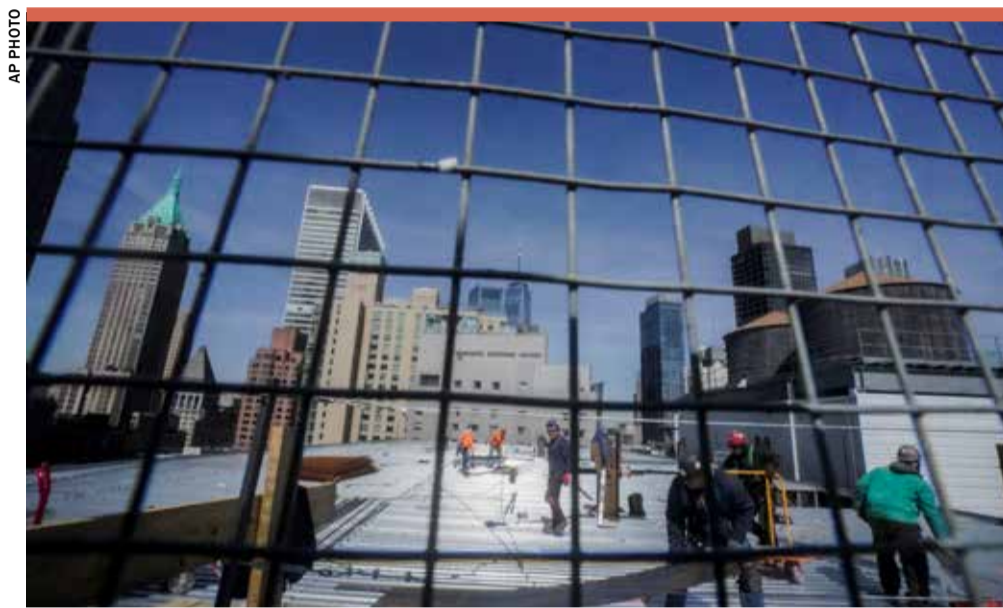
CITIES REVIVING DOWNTOWNS BY CONVERTING OFFICES TO HOUSING

MAE ANDERSON, ASHRAF KHALIL & MICHAEL CASEY, NEW YORK

ON the 31st floor of what was once a towering office building in downtown Manhattan, construction workers lay down steel bracing for what will soon anchor a host of residential amenities: a catering station, lounge, fire pit and gas grills.

The building, empty since 2021, is being converted to 588 market-rate rental apartments that will house about 1,000 people. "We're taking a vacant building and pouring life not only into this building, but this entire neighborhood," said Joey Chilelli, managing director of real estate firm Vanbarnton Group, which is doing the conversion.

Across the country, office-to-housing conversions are being pursued as a potential lifeline for struggling



Construction workers update the roofing on a high rise at 160 Water Street in Manhattan's financial district, for the building's conversion to residential apartments

districts that emptied out during the pandemic and may never fully recover. The conversion push is marked by an emphasis on affordability. Multiple cities are offering serious tax breaks for developers to incentivize

office-to-housing conversions — provided that a certain percentage of apartments are offered at affordable below-market prices.

In January, Pittsburgh announced it was accepting proposals to produce more affordable housing

through the "conversion of fallow and underutilized office space." Boston released a plan in October aimed at revitalizing downtown that included a push for more housing, some of which would come from office conversions. And Seattle launched a competition in April for downtown building owners and design firms to come up with conversion ideas.

In the nation's capital, Mayor Muriel Bowser has made office-to-housing conversions a cornerstone of her plan to repopulate and revitalize downtown. Her "comeback plan" for the capital city, announced earlier this year, seeks to add 15,000 new downtown residents, in addition to the 25,000 who already live here.

"Our job is to make sure that we are getting more people downtown," she said at the time.

But the conversion push has some skeptics. Housing advocates worry that the affordable housing requirements could get watered down. And even advocates of the model say giving tax breaks to wealthy developers isn't the best tool to achieve the goal.

"Developers who feel it's going to benefit their bottom line will do it without an incentive," said Erica Williams, director of the D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute. "This is a very costly proposal for an unproven program."

And, as increasing numbers of employers turn to hybrid work models, there's the question of persuading people to live downtown if they're not required to be

there every day.

"You have to make downtown a neighborhood — somewhere that's living and playful and active," Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey told a panel at the United States Conference of Mayors meeting last January.

Jordan Woods, a 33-year-old federal government contractor, moved to a downtown Washington apartment in 2019, attracted in part by the appeal of walking to work. But then came the pandemic. Downtown, he said, was "like a moonscape" for more than a year.

"And even before the pandemic it was still missing basic stuff like playgrounds and dog parks and a normal non-Whole Foods grocery store that I could walk to," Woods said. "I wouldn't say I regret it, but if I was considering the same move right now, I'm not sure I would do it."

Chuck D'Aprix, principal at Downtown Economics, a development consulting firm, said businesses and services like mid-size affordable grocery stores and day-care centers, pet supply shops, hardware stores and auto repair garages are needed to attract people to make the move. And they need to stay open past regular office hours.

"A lot of those services simply aren't available right now in small city downtowns or mid-sized city downtowns, you know, they close up at night," D'Aprix said.

But with vacancy rates at downtown office buildings continuing to rise, from 12.2% in the fourth quarter of 2019 to 17.8% in the first quarter of 2023, according to the real estate firm CBRE, there's an urgency to do something.

In New York City, where the vacancy rate is 15.5%, Mayor Eric Adams announced in January a plan to bring 500,000 new homes to the city including what he calls rent-restricted units.

A key piece of that plan is to rezone parts of Midtown Manhattan which currently only allow office and manufacturing spaces. The mayor's office also is pressing for approval of tax breaks that would entice developers to invest in

conversions that include affordable units and other changes. Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer said the conversions could help "make a dent in this dire housing crisis that we've been in."

Conversions are credited with turning lower Manhattan from a neighborhood that shut down at dusk into a sought-after destination for both families and foodies.

"All of a sudden, you just saw strollers and dogs, so obviously that means that people are not just coming to work. They're actually coming to stay," said Ross Moskowitz, a partner at the Stroock & Stroock & Lavan law firm who specializes in real estate, land use and public-private partnerships.

But there are challenges.

"Converting buildings is not easy," said Luke Bronin, the mayor of Hartford, Connecticut. "There are a lot of buildings that just aren't conducive."

Issues include access to natural light and air, the absence of balconies and the need to install hundreds of bathrooms and kitchens, along with the accompanying plumbing, in buildings often constructed with just two large bathrooms per floor.

There also can be environmental issues, like asbestos, said Anoop Davé, the CEO of Victrix, a real estate investment management development company specializing in converting mostly vacant office buildings into residential buildings and hotels.

Christopher Nicholson, 38, a technical operations analyst, knows first-hand the pluses and minuses of living in a converted downtown office building.

In 2018 he moved into a 31-story former office high-rise in downtown Denver that was built in 1967 and converted into apartments in 2006. "There was definitely a lack of green space, the nearest park is more than a half a mile away," he said. "The grocery store was about a mile plus."

He moved to his current building in 2020, a 130-year-old, nine-story former office building converted in 2000. It's right by the light rail and bus stops and near hotels that have nice restaurants and cocktail bars.

"I can't imagine living anywhere else," Nicholson said. "I think for what I get, I'm more than happy with the tradeoffs that I've made." **MDT/AP**

AD



AustCham, BritCham and CanCham have the pleasure of inviting members and friends to celebrate together the
Coronation of His Majesty, King Charles III

Date: Friday, 5th May 2023

Venue: NAAM Garden, Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau

Time: 6:30 pm - 9:30pm

Members: MOP 480 per person

Non-members: MOP 580 per person

(includes free-flow wines, beers, juices and commonwealth canapes)

Dress code: Smart and Relaxed Casual

Kindly RSVP: Friday, 28th April 2023 via email to:

secretary@austcham.mo

ivone@britchamacao.org

joyce.francis@cancham.org.mo

(Limited Tickets)

FOOTBALL

UEFA, top coaches team up to urge easing of handball law

GRAHAM DUNBAR, GENEVA

EXPECT to see fewer penalties awarded for handball in the Champions League next season.

After gathering elite coaches including Zinedine Zidane and Jürgen Klinsmann to discuss the laws of the game, UEFA said yesterday its new Football Board agreed on new guidance for referees in its competitions.

"The Board recommends that UEFA should clarify that no handball offense should be called on a player if the ball is previously deflected from his own body and, in particular, when the ball does not go towards the goal," the European soccer body said in a statement.

The coaches also agreed that "not every handball should automatically lead to a caution after every shot at goal," UEFA said, and that referees should show yellow cards to players



who fake being injured or pretend to have been fouled.

UEFA can give specific guidelines to referees in its own competitions but cannot change the fundamental Laws of the Game.

That process is managed by FIFA through the Zurich-based rules panel known as IFAB, which meets annually. It comprises officials from FIFA and the four British soccer federations, typically leaving UEFA's influence unclear or limited.

The inaugural Football Board met on Monday in Nyon, three weeks after UEFA president

Aleksander Ceferin promised it would be created and review handball offenses he said were increasingly confusing to players and fans.

The coaches urged UEFA to lobby IFAB to amend Law 12 on fouls and misconduct so that fewer red cards will be shown for handball.

The current law requires a player to be sent off for a handball that prevents a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity.

"The Board feels players should be sent off only if they

deliberately and intentionally touch the ball with their hand/arm," UEFA said.

The new Football Board revives what was an annual coaches' forum held each September when UEFA was led by Michel Platini.

The new grouping is led by Zvonimir Boban, the former Croatia and AC Milan great who previously worked at FIFA and is now a key adviser to Ceferin.

"The handball rule, for example, will always be disputed but we can make it more consistent and aligned with the game's true nature," Boban said.

Monday's meeting also included national-team coaches Gareth Southgate, Ronald Koeman and Roberto Martinez, plus Philipp Lahm, the former Germany captain. Lahm is overseeing the German organizing committee for the 2024 European Championship where the updated guidance to referees should apply. **MDT/AP**

FOOTBALL

ATALANTA EYES RETURN TO EUROPE AFTER BEATING ROMA

ATALANTA boosted its chances of returning to Europe after beating visiting Roma 3-1 in Serie A yesterday [Macau time].

Mario Pasalic put Atalanta ahead before the break after being set up by Duvan Zapata. Then Rafael Tolo doubled the advantage midway through the second half with a bouncing shot that Roma defender Diego Llorente headed into his own goal in a failed clearing attempt.

After Lorenzo Pellegrini pulled one back for Roma, Teun Koopmeiners immediately restored the two-goal advantage following a goalkeeping blunder by Rui Patricio.

Seventh-placed Atalanta moved within two points of sixth-placed Inter Milan and the Italian league's Conference League spot.

Roma remained fifth, level on points with fourth-placed AC Milan, and four points ahead of Atalanta.

After five straight seasons of playing in Europe, Atalanta didn't qualify for any continental competitions for this season.

Roma faces Bayer Leverkusen in the Europa League semifinals. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

The Conversation

Nareg Seferian, Virginia Tech



GENOCIDE RESISTERS, LONG OVERLOOKED BY HISTORY, STEP INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

The anniversary of the Armenian Genocide is marked every year on April 24. That was the date in 1915 when hundreds of Armenian community leaders were arrested by the government of the Ottoman Empire in the capital Constantinople, now known as Istanbul.

At the time, Armenians lived throughout what is modern-day Turkey. Modern scholars estimate up to 1.5 million Armenians were killed by the Turkish government, and around 800,000 to 1.2 million were deported during World War I. Most ended up in the Middle East, the Caucasus, Russia, Europe and the Americas. During that period, Greek, Assyrian and Yezidi communities were also massacred and forced to flee into exile.

April is also Genocide Awareness Month. Holocaust Remembrance Day takes place this month every year, as do commemorations for genocides in Cambodia, Iraqi Kurdistan, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

For much of the 20th century, commemorations of mass killings and genocide have focused on remembering the dead as victims and condemning the perpetrators.

But recent research has taken a broader view, recognizing that mass violence takes place because of many complex factors. Besides political, economic and cultural currents, the resistance and resilience of the people who were targeted are coming to the fore of scholarly work and public understanding.

The 1915 Armenian Genocide was not the first attack on Armenians in what is now Turkey. In the 1890s, hundreds of thousands of Armenians were targeted by the government of the Ottoman Empire in what came to be called the Hamidian Massacres, as they took place during the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II.

And in 1909 – again, in April – there was a separate such episode. Those massacres took place in the region historically known as Cilicia, on the Mediterranean coast of southeastern Turkey today. In two waves of violence at the end of April 1909, more than 20,000 Armenians and other Christians were killed by Turks connected with the government. The violence happened in and around the city of Adana and extended into neighboring areas. Muslim populations suffered as well, with an estimated 2,000 killed in retaliation for the massacres.

Some present the Hamidian and Adana massacres as dress rehearsals for the Ottoman Turkish government's plan, decades in the making, to implement the all-out elimination of the Armenians in 1915, dispossessing them of their millennia-old historical homeland. Among Armenians, this is the prevalent nationalist reading of Armenian history.

Recent scholarship has taken a closer look at the details of these massacres. In particular, scholars are beginning to highlight the fact that, despite facing mass violence, Armenians and others organized resistance activities and put together relief work in the aftermath of killings. Sometimes resistance was armed, and sometimes it consisted of putting together protest campaigns or publishing newspaper articles and books in the Ottoman Empire and beyond.

"The Horrors of Adana" by Bedross Der Matossian is the first in-depth work on the Adana Massacres. Der Matossian writes about the actions of a prominent literary figure, Zabel Yessayan, who was among the leaders of relief efforts following the 1909 massacres, bringing in food, clothing and other necessities for the survivors. Yessayan also wrote "In The Ruins," published in 1911, specifically to document the aftermath of the killings and to support humanitarian aid, media outreach and legal efforts.

"The Resistance Network" by Khatchig Mouradian documents the work of Armenian community leaders such as Rev. Aharon Shirajian to support the survivors of death marches and deportations. Shirajian himself cared for a number of orphaned genocide survivors in Syria.

These stories are not only powerful on their own but can also have lasting effects in the global effort to end genocide.

[Abridged]

A recent, rapid heating of the world's oceans has alarmed scientists concerned that it will add to global warming, BBC News reported yesterday.

This month, the global sea surface hit a new record high temperature. It has never warmed this much, this quickly.

Scientists don't fully understand why this has happened.

But they worry that, combined with other weather events, the world's temperature could reach a concerning new level by the end of next year.

Experts believe that a strong El Niño weather event - a weather

system that heats the ocean - will also set in over the next months.

Warmer oceans can kill off marine life, lead to more extreme weather and raise sea levels. They are also less efficient at absorbing planet-warming greenhouse gases.

According to BBC, an important new study, published last week with little fanfare by Earth System Science Data, highlights a worrying development.

Over the past 15 years, the Earth's accumulated heat has increased by 50%, with most of the extra going into the oceans.

AP PHOTO



Kaysville, Utah

GLIMPSES OF A CHANGING EARTH, AS SEEN FROM ABOVE

CHARRED, drained or swamped, built up, dug out or taken apart, blue or green or turned to dust: this is the Earth as seen from above.

As the world commemorates Earth Day on Saturday, the footprints of human activity are visible across the planet's surface. The relationship between people and the natural world will have consequences for years to come.

In Iraq, lakes shrivel and dry up as rain fails to fall, weather patterns altered by human-made climate change. In Florida, the opposite problem: too much water clogs roads and neighborhoods, trapping cars and stranding people, with the burning of fossil fuels again partially to blame for erratic conditions.

In megacities, like the rapidly growing Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, skyscrapers shoot upwards while in Guyana excavators dig deep into the earth for deposits of gold.

In California, surfers straddle waves in the ocean. In New Jersey, solar panels float in ponds, and in India, fishing nets sink into the lakes. Residents of neighborhoods in Utah meanwhile, find water where it shouldn't be - coursing through their streets and homes.

On land, farmers are at the whims of the weather, with patterns being alte-

AP PHOTO



Cabo da Roca near Lisbon, Portugal



Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

red by climate change. In Argentina, parched lands turn crops to gray. Just outside Barcelona, new cracked, thirsty water beds appear after months of little to no rain.

Earth Day first began in 1970, heralded as the birth of an environmental movement that encouraged people worldwide to protect the natural world. Today, it also urges action to combat climate change, which has accelerated in recent decades.

Each year, scientists have warned that the burning of fossil fuels is heating the planet and bringing us closer to breaching internationally agreed upon limits of warming, which would have major effects, such as more extreme weather events.

Around the world, activists of all ages are keeping the pressure on governments and companies to do more to protect the environment and combat climate change. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



USA Joe Biden yesterday formally announced that he is running for reelection in 2024, asking voters to give him more time to "finish the job" he began when he was sworn in to office and to set aside their concerns about extending the run of America's oldest president for another four years. Biden, who would be 86 at the end of a second term, is betting his first-term legislative achievements and more than 50 years of experience in Washington will count for more than concerns over his age.

Spain Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was due to arrive in Spain late yesterday on the second stop of a European tour aimed at resetting relations and making progress on a long-delayed trade deal between the EU and the Mercosur bloc of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Following five days spent in Portugal, Lula will arrive in Madrid to attend a business forum this afternoon ahead of meetings with Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and King Felipe VI today.

AP PHOTO



Sudan's warring generals pledged Tuesday to observe a new three-day truce that was brokered by the United States and Saudi Arabia in an attempt to pull Africa's third-largest nation back from the abyss. The claims were immediately undercut by the sound of heavy gunfire and explosions in the capital of Khartoum. Residents said warplanes were flying overhead. Several previous cease-fires declared since the April 15 outbreak of fighting were not observed.