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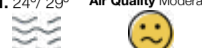


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“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

THE SANDS SHOPPING CARNIVAL IS COMING TO THE VENETIAN MACAO'S COTAI EXPO FOR A FOURTH YEAR BETWEEN JULY 20 AND 23, WITH OVER 580 BOOTHS

P4

CASINO STOCKS ON A DECLINE, FULL RECOVERY ONLY BY 2025: MOODY'S

P4

THE CORONATION ROAD

P11



India The governor of a remote Indian state issued orders allowing district magistrates to shoot protesters, as soldiers patrolled the streets and enforced a curfew after thousands of people clashed, causing deaths and damage to homes and vehicles, officials said yesterday. Internet services were also suspended for five days in northeastern Manipur state bordering Myanmar to stop rumors from spreading on social media, according to N. Biren Singh, the state's top elected official.



West Bank Israeli troops yesterday killed three Palestinian militants wanted in connection with a shooting attack that killed a British-Israeli woman and two of her daughters, the Israeli military said, the latest bloodshed in a relentless wave of violence. In a rare daytime incursion launched as residents were starting their day, the military said forces entered the heart of the flashpoint city of Nablus and raided an apartment where the men were located. Troops and the suspects exchanged fire and the three men were killed.



USA-Ukraine As Ukrainian artists Jenya Polosina and Anna Ivanenko watched missiles descend on their country, the two decided to use their creativity to push back against Russia's invasion. Working in the early days of the war from bunkers or sometimes without electricity and water in Kyiv, they and other artists started drawing. Some of their war posters are now on display in New Hampshire in an exhibit entitled "Our Fire is Stronger Than Your Bombs."

More on backpage

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Air Macau to lose monopoly this year, liberalization moving forward

P3



PUBLIC WORKS

CONSTRUCTION OF HOSPITAL SPECIALIST BUILDING TO CONCLUDE THIS MONTH

P3



BROADCASTING

JERRY SPRINGER AND THE HISTORY OF THAT [BLEEPING] BLEEP SOUND

 MATTHEW JORDAN
 PENN STATE

SINCE Jerry Springer's death on April 27, 2023, writers have been working through the cultural significance of his eponymous daytime talk show.

For 27 years, Springer's circus of sensationalism was a remarkably durable and bankable commodity. Helping to normalize outrageousness in culture, it taught content creators that shamelessness is a lucrative industry.

It's been framed as a harbinger of "anything goes" reality television or "trash TV" and decried for setting a "new standard for tawdriness" and for providing audiences with the "guilty pleasure" of "chair-throwing."

But as a media historian interested in the ways that sound structures our experience of TV shows and films, when I think of "The Jerry Springer Show," I think of the sounds – the studio audience chanting "Jerry! Jerry!," the boxing bell ringing when fists start flying, and the sonic dissonance between the heavy metal-tinged theme song and the soothing, paternal tone of its host.

But one of its most iconic sounds was added in post-production: the 1000 hertz censor bleep, which became more prevalent as the behavior on the show grew more profane.

THE ORIGINS OF BLEEPING

The history of broadcasters' bleeping out profanity reveals a lot about our culture's ongoing negotiation of a murky concept.

While the First Amendment protects political speech, it does not protect profanity, and in 1964 the Supreme Court gave the Federal Communications Commission the authority to police language in broadcasting.

Yet using sounds to mask offensive language predates the FCC and dates back to a 1921 radio speech on Newark, New Jersey's WJZ by vaudeville actress Olga Petrova. Petrova was famous for her outspoken advocacy for feminism and birth control, and station managers worried that she might violate the 1873 Comstock Act, which prohibited the distribution of obscene materials, including information about con-



Security guards separate guests on an episode of 'The Jerry Springer Show' titled 'I am pregnant by my half-brother'

traception. So the radio engineers created a mechanism for masking her words with music from a phonograph when she dared speak her mind – and they ended up needing to use it several times.

By the time the FCC was established in 1934, studio engineers were regularly masking profanity, as the industry was always trying to stay one step ahead of the censors and stay in the good graces of advertisers. Further innovations, like the seven-second delay, aided the policing of live talk shows, allowing engineers to cover dirty words before they reached the audience's ears.

Just exactly who deployed the bleep tone first is unclear, but engineers had long used the 1000 hertz sine wave tone to test equipment connections, so it was at their fingertips. By the mid-1960s, the bleep tone was heard everywhere, so much so that bleeping was used in FCC deliberations as a verb to define the practice of masking profanity.

BLEEPING'S FEEDBACK LOOP

Yet by 1970, bleeping out words on TV news was viewed as a potential problem, with some regulators wondering if it unnecessarily tempered the way people actually behaved.

FCC chairman Dean Burch, for example, thought the commission should reconsider its use: "If a man stands up and calls

me a dirty son of a bitch, I wonder whether we are giving the viewer the full flavor of the news if we quote him as saying, 'You're a dirty bleep, bleep, bleep.'"

Nonetheless, most broadcasters tended to err on the side of caution. Bleeping out profanity became so common in U.S. broadcasting that it inspired George Carlin to satirize the practice in his Seven Dirty Words You Can't Say on TV monologue.

After the FCC came down on Pacifica Radio for broadcasting the bit, Pacifica sued the FCC and the case made it to the Supreme Court, which, in its decision, granted the FCC limited power to protect the public from profanity, especially during the daytime when kids might be listening.

Afterward, bleeping became more commonplace on radio and television.

Yet for audiences yearning for counterculture programming that seemed more real, focusing attention on profanity by bleeping it created a feedback loop that made cursing – and the rebels who did it – more appealing to audiences, piquing their interest about what the bleep concealed.

At the same time, networks pushing for deregulation wanted to show that they could self-censor and that FCC oversight wasn't necessary. By the early 1980s, a new radio format based on sho-

cking public sensibilities, the "shock jock," had emerged. Radio performers like Don Imus and Howard Stern found that audiences would tune in to hear profane behavior and would return daily to see just how far the performers would go.

Industry programming followed the ratings.

SPRINGER'S BRAND OF PROFANE REALISM

By the time Springer's show began in 1991, a paradoxical mix of deregulation and self-censoring had settled over the industry, producing edgy shows with lots of bleeps.

Audiences experienced bleeped performances as more authentic. Provocateurs like Madonna knew cursing drew attention, and she has repeatedly used the self-promotional technique ever since her infamous spot on "The Arsenio Hall Show" in 1990, when she talked about giving good [bleep]. It was the highest-rated Arsenio show ever.

Springer quickly learned that booking guests who required bleeps boosted ratings.

As the show found its niche, it shifted so that it was no longer Springer confronting racists, deviants or polygamists. Instead, guests involved in relationship betrayals or with simmering resentments would confront one another. As the frequency of the

bleeps and fights increased, the ratings began to soar. By 1997, it often matched "The Oprah Winfrey Show" at the top of the ratings leaderboard.

In one "Final Thoughts" segment in 1995, Springer defended his fight-inducing exploitation of raw emotion, calling it "the price of reality, this loss of civility, as we take entertainment to the edge of real life and real people." The bleeping became central to the aesthetic, a Pavlovian signal to audiences at home that the explosive behavior was "real."

In fact, media researchers have shown that bleeping words actually draws attention to them and that audiences perceive the frequency of profanity to be higher when words are bleeped.

THAT [BLEEPING] REALITY TV SOUND

By the turn of the century, the show's sound mix was set, with audiences chanting "Jerry! Jerry!" whenever the bleeps started flying. By the show's third decade, in episodes like "You slept with my stripper sister," everyone seemed to be in on the pro wrestling nature of the spectacle.

In case they weren't, the bleep sound was often accompanied by a boxing bell, cuing everyone that [bleep] was getting real.

Toward the end of the show's run, the meaning of the bleep sound became more comedic. Where audience reaction shots once revealed them gasping, now they were laughing.

The bleep sound, a standard effect heard across the burgeoning reality TV format, had great comedic impact in shows like "The Osbournes," where Ozzy would stumble around muttering profanity that had to be bleeped. It's telling that the bleep became a sound effect used in scripted comedy as well, exploited in shows like "Arrested Development" and "South Park" for maximum effect.

Today, when broadcasters want to censor profanity on live shows, like they did during the Oscars after Will Smith slapped Chris Rock, they tend to mute the sound rather than bleep over it.

Nonetheless, even if what counts as profanity keeps shifting, the meaning of the bleep sound is universally understood: It means profanity is happening. And like the definition of obscenity given by Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart way back in 1964, people know it when they hear it.

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Air Macau to lose monopoly this year, liberalization moving forward

RENATO MARQUES

THE only Macau flag carrier, Air Macau, is about to lose its monopoly on air travel, as the Macau government is finally moving forward with the new air transport law that will liberalize the business and allow other players to operate air routes from Macau.

Although such a move had already been slated for November this year, confirmation that the government had finalized the bill was reported yesterday by TDM Radio. Without citing sources, the media outlet stated that discussions on the bill have already concluded, with the bill to be referred to the Legislative Assembly in the upcoming weeks.

The original agreement granted sole control to Air Macau over the transport of passengers, luggage, cargo, mail, and postal parcels to and from Macau via air. The contract was initially signed in 1995, with an expiration date set to 25 years and due to take place in 2020.

Amidst the pandemic crisis, in September 2020, the government granted Air Macau a three-year extension of the contract, which now has a deadline of November 9 this year.

The government mentioned the possibility of the contract being terminated earlier than the scheduled date in the contract extension, if the new legislation was completed and approved earlier.

The end of this exclusive arrangement is viewed as beneficial for the market's development and the competitiveness of Macau Inter-



national Airport.

Gaming industry expert, Ben Lee, said to the Times that such a move is "essential to diversifying our economic base," adding that, "Monopolies are driven to maximize their profits and this usually conflicts with the interests of the wider community they exist in."

Lee, who is a managing partner of IGamiX Management & Consulting, also noted the example of the liberalization of the gaming industry in Macau to highlight the positive impacts perceived by the liberalization of air transport.

"We saw what happened when Macau's gaming monopoly by STDM [Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de Macau] was broken up. Imagine the same for our international air access if we had many competing airlines fighting each other to maximize their passenger loads."

Former Air Macau captain, Vicente Serafim, said to TDM Radio that with the liberalization, it is certain that the prices of airfares will drop as a consequence of more

offers and direct competition.

"From the moment there are two or three airliners based in Macau, the offerings go up significantly in both destinations and routes as well as in the number of seats available," he remarked.

For Serafim, the loss of the monopoly in operations from Air Macau will force the company to adopt a "change in strategy," which can also result in benefits for travelers.

Back in 2019, when the contract of Air Macau was originally due to expire, Asia's largest low-cost air carrier – AirAsia – was said to be considering establishing an operations base in Macau to expand its services into mainland China, company's founder and CEO Tony Fernandes said on the sidelines of Credit Suisse's Asia Investment Conference in Hong Kong.

According to Fernandes, the possibility was being seriously evaluated at that time, taking into account the end of Air Macau's contract.

"Entering China could be done

via Macau," Fernandes said, adding, "We do not have to be in mainland China, but being in Macau is like being in China."

Fernandes added that if such an opportunity arose, AirAsia would be ready to take it, orienting its Macau base to serve mainly Chinese costumers.

Fernandes said that Macau has always been a goal as a "home base" for the company noting, "Macau is very close to my heart. They believed in us when we were nothing."

At the same opportunity back in March 2019, Asian Business Aviation Association chairperson Jenny Lau said that AirAsia should not be alone in this idea to compete for the Macau market.

"Several players like AirAsia or Cebu Pacific may consider expanding their services from Macau, or new players like HK Express," Lau said, adding that included among the new players could also be names such as Shun Tak Holdings as well as companies traditionally related to business aviation.

ALIPAYHK MERCHANT SALES UPTICK OVER GOLDEN WEEK

Sales of AlipayHK partner merchants almost doubled over the first three days of the May Golden Week period compared to the corresponding period in 2022. Electronic products, jewelry, apparel and catering sectors recorded the most significant uptick when compared to the year prior. At the beginning of May, nearly 250,000 AlipayHK users spent their first instalment of electronic consumption vouchers. Mainland China and Macau remained the top choices as travel destinations among Hong Kong users of AlipayHK.

POLICE ARREST ILLEGAL MONEY CHANGERS OVER COUNTERFEIT BILLS

Two illegal money changers from mainland China were arrested and confessed to having been hired by a network to circulate counterfeit banknotes in Macau. One of the detainees, a 22-year-old, handed three piles of fake notes to a "customer" at a casino in Cotai last week, after having received RMB455,000 transferred by the victim. The other suspect, aged 21, resorted to the same strategy and was also urged to return the money to a "customer," however, he fled. Police found 579 fake notes in their possession.

MAN FOUND DEAD IN COTAI HOTEL

The Judiciary Police (PJ) reported last night that a male victim was found in a guest room at a hotel in Cotai with signs of lividity. Upon preliminary examination, the victim was found to have a head injury and bruises on the neck and hands. According to the PJ, investigation into a possible murder case is currently underway.

466 JOB OFFERS NEXT WEEK

On May 11 and 12, the Labour Affairs Bureau and the Macau Federation of Trade Unions will co-organize three job-matching sessions for the hospitality and retail sectors of general and luxury consumer goods, providing 466 job vacancies. Online registration opened yesterday.

Public Works Bureau: Construction of CHCSJ Specialist Building to conclude this month

THE Public Works Bureau (DSOP) has updated the expected conclusion date for the construction of the Public Health Specialist Building of the public hospital to sometime within May.

The work was commissioned in January 2021, according to the website. The original end-date was scheduled for last month, but has been pushed out by a 43-day delay caused by Covid-19 restrictions across several outbreaks over the past few years, according to the DSOP.

Located on the sou-



thwestern end of the Conde de São Januário Hospital, the eight-story building takes up an area of 5,700 sqm and reaches 35.6 m at its tallest point. The build-

ing houses 80 standard isolation wards, operation theaters, laboratories, observation wards, X-ray labs, CT scan labs and other supportive facilities. Ventilation systems with filtration have also been installed for safety.

The foundation and construction of the building and other auxiliary costs come to over MOP1 billion. The foundation work costed about MOP110 million.

As seen from the outside, the bamboo scaffolding has been fully removed. As per local media outlet Ma-

cau Daily News, internal decoration work started in September last year.

When the government proposed to build a specialized infectious disease facility in 2016, the proposal was opposed by nearby residents, who believed that the building was too close to residential buildings and schools, and worried that it would have a negative impact.

During the past three years, however, more discussions have been held on Macau's capacity to handle infectious disease outbreaks. **AL**

MALTREATMENT REPORTED IN A NURSERY

Parents have reported on the Internet that they suspected that their children had been abused and hurt in their childcare facility. The nursery involved had actively notified the authorities about the report after the incident, and made an appointment with the affected parents the same day, according to Choi Sio Un, head of the Department of Social Solidarity of the Social Welfare Bureau. The police have intervened in the case. Choi said that CCTVs were equipped in the public space of the nursery. The activity room, which is for diaper changing and cleaning, was not an appropriate location to install a video surveillance system due to the risk to the children's privacy. All nurseries will also be inspected shortly.

US CONSULATE TO OFFER CONSULAR SERVICES IN MACAU MAY 10

On May 10, the US Consulate General for Hong Kong and Macau will be offering consular services for US citizens in Macau, with consular officers traveling to Macau to receive minor passport applications, first-time adult passport applications, and applications for Consular Reports of Birth Abroad. To request an appointment, an email outlining the type of service required, the full name and date of birth of the applicant, and full names of all other individuals who will attend the appointment will be required. Only US dollars will be accepted for those paying application fees.

GAMING

CASINO STOCKS ON A DECLINE, FULL RECOVERY ONLY BY 2025: MOODY'S

STAFF REPORTER

MACAU casino stocks again declined yesterday, following losses of up to 8.7% the day prior.

Yesterday, Melco International led the decline with a 4.4% drop, followed by Wynn Macau, MGM China and SJM Holdings, with losses of 3.5%, 3.3% and 2.6%, respectively.

Galaxy recorded a loss of 1.7%.

According to JPMorgan, the bank fielded more than 30 queries on Wednesday from investors asking about the declines, in what was "one of the busier days in many years."

"We have checked extensively with operators and our contacts across the industry, and the feedback has been consistent that demand is tracking very well, much better than expectations," said DS Kim, JPMorgan's head of Asia gambling. "We thus attribute this correction to market flows and technical selling pressure," he said.

On Wednesday, MGM China fell sharply at the open, with other casino stocks following suit.

"It didn't help that there were a couple of block trades on MGM China, causing the market to speculate over idiosyncratic reasons



for its underperformance such as potential forced selling by a fund or potential equity placement, among others," he added.

The city recorded nearly half a million travelers during the May Golden Week, the majority of whom hailed from mainland China.

CASINO TO RECOVER BY 2025: MOODY'S

The Macau casino market will only manage to reach 50% of 2019 gross gaming revenue (GGR) levels at most in 2023, but this rate of recovery is expected to improve and completely recover to pre-

-pandemic levels by 2025.

According to recent study by Moody's Investors Service, "China's reopening will boost Asian gaming revenue, but not to a full recovery from the pandemic impact."

The authors further noted that they did not expect Asian gaming operators' earnings to fully recover to pre-pandemic levels in 2023, as cited in a report issued by GGR Asia.

The authors explained that the VIP segment was expected to decline between 10% to 15%, whereas the "mass-market segment, which has significantly higher

margins than VIP, will drive the overall increase in Macau's GGR."

This means that the pace of recovery in earnings will be faster than that of revenue for Macau, while Moody's estimates that Macau's mass GGR would improve to about 75% of 2019 level in 2023, and to 100% in 2024.

In fact, it is estimated that the debt levels of the Macau-focused operators may "decline gradually during 2023-24 as they start generating positive free cash flow," and that it will take until 2025 before their leverage returns to levels that are more in-line with their current rating categories.

Sands Shopping Carnival to host 580 booths for SMEs

STAFF REPORTER

THE Sands Shopping Carnival, organized by Sands China Ltd., is coming to The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo for a fourth year between July 20 and 23, with over 580 booths across 11 exhibition zones, including booths run by MinM Plaza and Happy Reading. The free-admission event will be open from noon to 10 p.m. daily, with a special invitation-only preview session on the first day.

The carnival has attracted more than 310,000 visits over the past three years since its debut, helping to spur economic revival by taking advantage of the synergy between local SMEs and international retail brands.



This year, in addition to a kids-targeted cuisine workshop, the carnival will involve activities such as competitions in K-Pop dance and Karaoke.

Co-organized by the

Macao Chamber of Commerce, with the support of the Economic and Technological Development Bureau, the Macao Government Tourism Office, and the Macao Trade

and Investment Promotion Institute, the carnival supports the Macau SAR government's economic revival policies.

Sands hopes to show "unwavering support to local SMEs and offer a joyful travel experience to visitors," said Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd. He also hopes that visitors will enjoy the food booths after the lifting of mask regulations.

The announcement for the 2023 Sands Shopping Carnival was made at a press conference yesterday at The Londoner Macao. The online exhibitor registration portal has opened for interested exhibitors to register for a free booth until 6 p.m. on May 17.

Regarding the conference, Wong also mentioned that all properties under Sands China Ltd. achieve high and even full occupancy rates during the May Golden Week. He expects the gaming revenue to continue to surge, but still with a gap compared to pre-pandemic levels.

MGTO: 300 MAINLAND GROUPS TOUR MACAU DURING MAY GOLDEN WEEK

STAFF REPORTER

300 groups of mainland visitors have toured Macau during the May Day holiday, said Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, director of the Macao Government Tourism Office.

Senna Fernandes expressed her satisfaction with tourism numbers during the holiday and said that the occupancy rate of hotels was high. According to Senna Fernandes, there was an occupancy rate of 70% in the hotels, even on the last day of the holiday.

She also mentioned that hotels are enhancing their operating capacity. Among the more than 46,000 rooms in Macau, 2000 were not available to visitors, which she described as a huge improvement

compared to the past.

New hotels will be open in the second half of this year to further increase capacity.

According to the official, the MGTO will meet with more business operators such as travel agencies and restaurants to reduce the influence of visitors on residents' daily lives, for example, to handle the volume of visitors at specific tourist attractions.

The MGTO took on learnings from the Ching Meng and Easter holidays to improve travel experiences, such as crossing the borders during the May Day holiday, and will continue to document findings from this Golden Week to aid preparation for the next peak during the summer vacation.

Financial institutions may be required to withhold fake money received

ANTHONY LAM

UNDER a bill currently receiving parliamentary consideration, financial institutions may be required to retain counterfeited money that they received for investigative purposes.

The bill for the Legal System for Currency Issuance is being discussed at the Second Standing Committee of the parliament. Following a recent meeting, Committee President Chan Chak Mo disclosed that consideration of the bill is nearly complete.

In addition, Chan also disclosed that the latest version of the bill proposes that financial institutions have the obligation to retain alleged counterfeit money, record the personal particulars of the holders, and notify the police as soon as possible.

This proposal is in contrast to an earlier version, which proposed to apply this obligation to a broader range of parties. In response to this initial proposal,

RENATO MARQUES



the government explained that financial institutions are more equipped to identify and detect counterfeit money. However, small businesses will have the right to decline taking suspected counterfeit money.

The government has also proposed that damaged or defaced bank notes can be exchanged as

long as they bear clearly visible serial numbers and the defacement or damage covers over 75% of the note. The industry, however, recommends clearer provisions in this respect.

It was also proposed that approval by the Monetary Authority of Macao should be obtained prior to replacing legal

tender, and guidelines must be followed. The Committee suggested the government clarify the legitimate reasons for replacement to avoid falling afoul of any legal grey areas.

Moreover, the government explained that removing the proposal to prohibit anybody from accepting suspected coun-

terfeit money is intended to avoid mass refusals or excessive anxiety over potential liability in this regard. However, the Committee worries that the absence of this proposal will imply an absence of the right to decline counterfeit money. The government pledged to further examine this.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

MGTO: BOTH ONLINE AND OFFLINE TRAINING PROVIDED TO TOURISM WORKERS

ANTHONY LAM

TRAINING via online and offline channels has been provided to workers in the tourism industry to better prepare them for reopening after Covid-19 restrictions, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has recently said.

In reply to lawmaker Leong Sun Iok's written inquiry dated Mar. 17, Ricky Hoi, deputy director of the MGTO, made the comment.

Hoi said that in the area of assisting industry to improve business skills and transformation, the MGTO had long gathered information on the relevant needs from industry leaders and associations.

Training courses were prepared as per the information and opinions collected from participants of previous courses.

Online and offline courses were opened to suit the needs of industry workers, who want to gain knowledge and improve their 'soft skills.' Hoi underlined that industry workers had long been encouraged to



move upwards on the career ladder.

The MGTO's plan for this

year in the area of industry training is to organize 29 offline and six online courses,

covering knowledge and skills in language, customer service, communication and mana-

gement, food safety, culture, comprehensive tourism, barrier-free communication, and so on.

The bureau, meanwhile, will also assist trainees to obtain relevant internationally recognized qualifications.

Early this year, the government started a scheme to subsidize tour groups from mainland China. As of Apr. 3, 88 local travel agencies have so far qualified for the scheme, with a total of 1,796 groups applying for the subsidy, amounting to 51,978 tourists.

In mid-April, the government extended the scheme to tour groups from Taiwan and other overseas markets.

Meanwhile, Hoi also disclosed that luxury tours and the Middle East are the MGTO's focus and target source market.

On regional cooperation, Hoi recapped that tourism authorities across the Greater Bay Area joined together and formed a market supervisory entity in September 2020 for more efficient communication and better management of market order.

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Tally of people arrested concerning casino brawl raises to 13

RENATO MARQUES

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) has announced the arrest of five further people in relation to a brawl that took place in a local casino over the May 1 holidays. The new arrests raise the tally of those arrested on suspicion of their involvement in the fight to 13.

According to the PJ, 11 men and two women aged between 22 and 48 years old were involved.

Of those arrested, 10 men have been charged with assault causing bodily harm and will be banned from entering Macau for a period ranging between four to five years, while the two women and another man have been charged with inciting violence, and have been banned from reentering Macau for one year.

The Public Security Po-



lice Force and the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, previously stated that the actions of those involved were considered to pose a danger to public safety and order, and the consequent widespread footage of the fight across multiple online platforms also harmed the image of Macau.

The police authorities stated that the variance in ban periods results from the fact that those

banned for more time (5 years) were also found to be overstaying in Macau at the time of the incident.

The PJ is also investigating the origin of footage of the brawl, which quickly spread across social media platforms, adding that they are also seeking to hold those who filmed and published the footage accountable under laws that forbid the collection of still or moving images inside casino venues in Macau.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

AP PHOTO



Genesis G80 Electrified



BMW i4

EDMUNDS

Genesis G80 Electrified vs. BMW i4 M50

ALEX NISHIMOTO,
MDT/EDMUNDS

IT seems like there's a new electric luxury SUV introduced every couple of months. But if you're seeking old-school opulence, a luxury sedan might be more your speed. Luckily, automakers haven't completely forsaken that category. Two recently introduced electric luxury sedans worth looking into are the Genesis G80 Electrified and the BMW i4. Both are based on existing conventionally powered models — the G80 and 4 Series Gran Coupe, respectively — and have much to offer the luxury-sedan shopper in their all-electric guise. Which extra-posh EV should you splurge on? The car specialists at Edmunds compare the two electrified four-doors to find out.

PERFORMANCE AND RANGE

There are three versions of the BMW i4: the eDrive35, eDrive40 and M50. In this article, we're using the top-line M50 for our comparison. It comes standard with dual electric motors and all-wheel drive. Combined, its two motors produce 469 horsepower and 538 lb-ft of torque, and that can temporarily be increased to 536 horsepower and 586 lb-ft for about 10 seconds using Sport Boost mode. At the Edmunds test track, the i4 M50 accelerated from 0 to 60 mph in just 3.6 seconds, which is impressively quick. Around turns, the i4 feels composed and grippy but lacks the playful feel that BMW sedans typically offer.

The Genesis G80 Electrified only comes with dual motors and all-wheel drive. This se-

tup is good for 365 horsepower and 516 lb-ft. It's not as quick as the i4 M50, posting a 0-60 mph time of 4.5 seconds, but acceleration should be more than adequate for most. From a handling standpoint, it's not as enjoyable to drive as the BMW. The G80 Electrified is better suited as a luxurious cruiser.

The BMW i4 M50's range estimate varies depending on what size wheels you choose. With 19-inch wheels, the i4 M50 gets an EPA-estimated range of 271 miles on a single charge. But opt for the 20-inchers and that estimate drops to a disappointing 227 miles. Thankfully, your real-world experience could be better; Edmunds ran an i4 M50 with the 20-inch wheels on its real-world range test and it went 268 miles. Picking the smaller wheels or the less powerful i4 versions should

net even more range. But in this straight-up comparison, the Genesis edged out the i4 with its higher EPA estimate of 282 miles. It also outperformed that number in Edmunds' testing, covering 309 miles on a single charge. **Winner: tie**

INTERIOR AND TECH

The BMW i4 M50's cabin is highlighted by a fully digital instrument panel that flows seamlessly into an extra-wide 14.9-inch central touchscreen. That screen runs the latest version of BMW's iDrive operating system, which comes with wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay smartphone integration. The G80 Electrified's interior, for better or worse, looks almost exactly the same as the gas-powered version. It's handsomely styled and features high-quality materials, and in general, will feel familiar to most luxury-car shoppers. The touchscreen is nearly as large as the BMW's, but it's not as intuitive and doesn't offer wireless connectivity for Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

The i4 is technically a size down from the G80, but it doesn't give up that much in-

terior space to the larger Genesis. Front seat space is comparable and less than 2 inches separates them when it comes to rear legroom. Despite the i4's more dramatically sloped rear roofline, both cars boast identical rear headroom. One clear advantage the i4 has over the G80 is its rear hatch. It's fairly shallow and won't fit much more than your groceries beneath the luggage cover, but the rear seats fold down, unlike in the G80 Electrified, so you'll have an easier time fitting bulkier items. **Winner: i4 M50**

PRICING AND VALUE

Priced just under \$69,000, the BMW i4 M50's starting price is about \$10,000 less than the G80 Electrified's. However, the Genesis comes fully loaded with no packages or options to add. To get a comparably equipped i4 with all the same advanced driver aids, convenience features and in-car tech, you'll have to spend closer to \$75,000. That's still cheaper than the G80 Electrified, but the Genesis also comes with a generous 10-year/100,000-mile powertrain warranty (compared to four years/50,000 miles for the BMW). BMW covers the i4's battery separately for eight years/100,000 miles. In addition to the better warranty, Genesis also offers three years of free 30-minute charging sessions at Electrify America stations, or one year more than what BMW provides. **Winner: G80 Electrified**

Edmunds says: The BMW i4 M50 delivers on nearly all of the expected qualities of a BMW sedan. It just so happens to be electric. But in this comparison, it's edged out by the Genesis G80 Electrified, which provides a slightly more compelling mix of performance, comfort, range and luxury features for the price. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Sands Resorts Macao presents special Mother's Day menus in six restaurants



As Mother's Day approaches, signature restaurants at The Venetian Macao,

The Parisian Macao, The Londoner Macao and Sands Macao are laun-

ching numerous special menus.

A total of six restaurants will be offering specially designed menus for Mother's Day, including the Cantonese Pin Yue Xuan and the Japanese Hiro by Hiroshi Kagata in the Venetian, the French bistro Brasserie in the Parisian, The Huaiyang Garden and the Churchill's Table at The Londoner, and the Copa Steakhouse in Sands.

The menus will be available on May 13 to 14 at the Brasserie and The Huaiyang Garden, and on May 14 for the others.

Wynn collaborates with Piaget to present timepieces exhibition



Wynn partners with Swiss high jewellery and high watchmaking brand PIAGET to

present the first luxury timepieces exhibition in Macau in 2023.

Following the debut of the new timepieces at Watches and Wonders 2023 in Geneva, the exquisite timepieces has arrived in Macau, offering guests the opportunity for an exclusive preview. The exhibition will be held from April 29 to May 7 at the Parlor Suite of Wynn Palace, showcasing Piaget's exclusive debut collections and providing an unparalleled experience of dazzling jewellery watches. Meanwhile, Piaget will also set up a pop-up store at Wynn Palace from now until the end of May, offering guests with a prestigious shopping experience.

DIRE STRAIT

TAIWAN TRADE CHIEF WARNS AGAINST 'UNNECESSARY FEAR' OF CHINA

ELLEN KNICKMEYER,
WASHINGTON

TAIWAN'S chief trade representative says his country's semiconductor makers will expand production in the U.S. as much as they can afford to do so, but he insists Taiwan remains an ideal place for that production and other U.S. trade, business and investment, despite tensions with China.

John Chen-Chung Deng spoke to The Associated Press on a visit this week to Washington, where he is leading a Taiwanese trade delegation and meeting with U.S. trade officials.

Deng's visit comes at a time of intensifying efforts to harden the U.S. and Taiwanese militaries and economies against any threat from rival China. As part of this, President Joe Biden and Congress are moving to boost semiconductor production on U.S. soil in the event of any conflict disrupt-

AP PHOTO



Taiwan's John Chen-Chung Deng speaks during an interview with the Associated Press at Willard Hotel's Café du Parc, in Washington, this week

ting exports from Asia, especially from Taiwan. Semiconductors make

electronics ranging from phones to electric cars to advanced weapons run, and

Taiwan produces more than 90% of the world's more advanced semiconductors.

At the same time, Pentagon leaders have been touring the Indo-Pacific to rally regional allies in bolstering military defenses and deterrence. A House committee last month war-gamed a hypothetical attack by China on Taiwan and U.S. positions as part of a bipartisan congressional effort to find specific ways to boost deterrence.

Deng said Americans should see these efforts as "ensuring that Chinese President Xi Jinping will never feel confident enough to invade Taiwan."

"We should avoid any exaggeration or rhetoric which doesn't reflect the true situation, that creates fear ... unnecessary fear," said Deng.

He said the U.S. business community in Taiwan assures him it is still expanding and hiring. He cited the experienced workforce and support industries that Taiwan offers for semiconductor producers and for Google, Amazon and other U.S. businesses on its soil.

Relations between the U.S. and China have hit dramatic peaks in tensions over the past two years as Xi's government asserts China's growing strength economically, diplomatically and militarily. That in-

cludes China underscoring its broad territorial claims in the region.

China, for its part, accuses the U.S. of meddling in its internal affairs and pursuing a containment strategy against China to prevent its rise.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war and have no official relations. They are linked by billions of dollars in trade and investment.

The Biden administration and Republicans and Democrats in Congress broadly support strengthening the U.S. and Taiwanese positions in the region to discourage any Chinese invasion of the island.

For Taiwan, that swell in U.S. support overall has also brought renewed focus from Washington on the island's decades-old appeals to the U.S. to overhaul its tax and trade policies toward the island. Taiwanese leaders say the current U.S. policies make it hard for Taiwanese companies and workers operating in the United States, and could do more to help Taiwan strengthen trade relations with allies.

The U.S. switched its diplomatic relations from Taipei to Beijing in 1979. Without formal relations and the kind of a tax treaty that the U.S. has signed with friendly nations that

it recognizes, Taiwanese workers in the U.S. have to pay taxes in both the U.S. and Taiwan. That makes the already more-expensive U.S. prohibitively expensive for many Taiwanese.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in March called it an issue the U.S. needed to address. Senior members of Congress also have urged the U.S. to reach a tax agreement with Taiwan.

Meanwhile, the Biden administration is promising tens of billions of dollars to support construction of U.S. chip foundries and reduce reliance on suppliers in Taiwan and elsewhere in Asia, which Washington sees as a security weakness.

Answering that U.S. call, Taiwanese chip giant Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp. is building a chip plant in Arizona and plans a second, for a total investment of \$40 billion.

Deng said he hopes for resolution of the tax issue before that first Taiwanese plant starts operation in Arizona, given the double-tax burden the operation will face.

"Once they start to produce, this is a real problem," the trade official said.

Taiwanese officials also hope in coming weeks to close an initial trade agreement with Washington, in a nod toward the free-trade pacts the U.S. has negotiated with South Korea and other allies.

U.S. worries about angering China have helped keep Washington from signing a free-trade pact with Taiwan in the past. Deng argued the hoped-for U.S. trade agreement would boost the confidence of Taiwan and encourage other allies to increase trade with Taiwan as well.

That would help Taiwan lessen its economic dependence on trade with China, now the customer for 35% to 40% of Taiwan's products, Deng said.

He said Taiwan also sees the strategic point in Biden administration measures aimed at discouraging other countries from exporting semiconductors to China, to starve China's security forces of the advanced chips they need.

Integrated circuits alone account for about 25% of Taiwan's GDP. When it comes to China's share of that, however, Taiwan "realizes there's no sense in sending chips to them, to build up missiles aiming at us," Deng said. **MDT/AP**

AD

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Policemen stand guard at the main venue of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization council (SCO) of foreign ministers' meeting, Goa

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

India meets with China, Russia before Central Asia forum

KRUTIKA PATHI, PANAJI,

INDIA'S foreign minister held talks yesterday with counterparts from China and Russia ahead of a meeting of a Central Asian security forum.

Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said he had detailed discussions with Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang on bilateral ties. "Focus remains on resolving outstanding

issues and ensuring peace and tranquility in the border areas," he tweeted after the meeting.

India and China are embroiled in an intense three-year standoff involving thousands of soldiers stationed along their disputed border in the eastern Ladakh region.

A meeting last week between their defense ministers gave a glimpse of just how differently the

two countries view the situation along the border. While India accused its neighbor of eroding ties by violating bilateral agreements, China said the border conditions were "stable overall."

A clash three years ago in Ladakh killed 20 Indian soldiers and four Chinese.

Jaishankar also said he had a "comprehensive review of bilateral, global and multilateral coo-

peration" with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Analysts say India is likely to be concerned over Russia's growing reliance on China as its invasion of Ukraine drags on.

New Delhi's relationship with Moscow, its Cold War ally, has remained strong. But Beijing gaining more sway over Moscow could prove frustrating for India.

Foreign ministers from the

members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a security pact dominated by Moscow and Beijing, arrived in the Indian tourist hotspot of Goa, where they are expected to discuss deepening economic and security cooperation in the region on Friday. A summit of SCO leaders is to be held in July.

Pakistan, India's archrival, is also a member of SCO. Its foreign minister, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, is making the first visit by a high-ranking Pakistani official to India in nearly a decade. Zardari's attendance has triggered speculation of a thaw in strained relations between the two South Asian countries, though both ministers have dismissed speculation of a bilateral chat.

"During my visit, which is focused exclusively on the SCO, I look forward to constructive discussions with my counterparts from friendly countries," Zardari tweeted before setting off for India.

The two countries have a history of bitter relations, mainly over Kashmir, a disputed Himalayan region that was split between them but is claimed by both in its entirety. India and Pakistan have fought two wars over Kashmir since gaining independence from British colonial rule in 1947.

Jaishankar held talks with the SCO's secretary general, Zhang Ming, earlier yesterday and was also expected to speak with Uzbekistan's foreign minister.

Russia and China founded the SCO in 2001 as a counterweight to U.S. alliances across East Asia to the Indian Ocean. The group includes the four Central Asian nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which Russia considers its backyard. In 2017, India and Pakistan became members and Iran is set to join later this year. **MDT/AP**

ECONOMY

Volkswagen sees sales slump in China, vows rebound this year

VOLKSWAGEN profits fell 30% in the first three months of the year despite booming business in Europe and North America because sales dropped in China, where the German automaker is facing increasing competition from homegrown models.

After-tax profit fell to 4.7 billion euros (\$5.2 billion) from 6.7 billion euros in the first quarter of last year, the Wolfsburg-based company said yesterday.

The number of vehicles sold rose 7.5%, to 2.04 million. Revenue jumped by 21.5%, to 76.2 billion

euros, as VW saw strong demand and increased pricing power — meaning the willingness of customers to shell out more for its cars.

However, the company sold 14.5% fewer vehicles in China, the world's largest car market, where competitors such as BYD are rapidly developing new electric and hybrid vehicles at competitive price points and competing with foreign brands.

BYD Auto, owned by battery maker BYD Co., edged ahead of Tesla in total 2022 sales at 1.9 million vehicles. Half were gasoline-electric

hybrids, while Tesla's fleet is pure electric.

Volkswagen said it was "confident" that an expanded model range and more China-specific technological features would mean deliveries to the country would "recover during the remainder of the year."

The company said it plans to invest 1 billion euros in a new center for electric car innovation headquartered in the Chinese city of Hefei.

VW said it was systematically pushing ahead with its move into electric vehicles, selling 141,000 battery-only

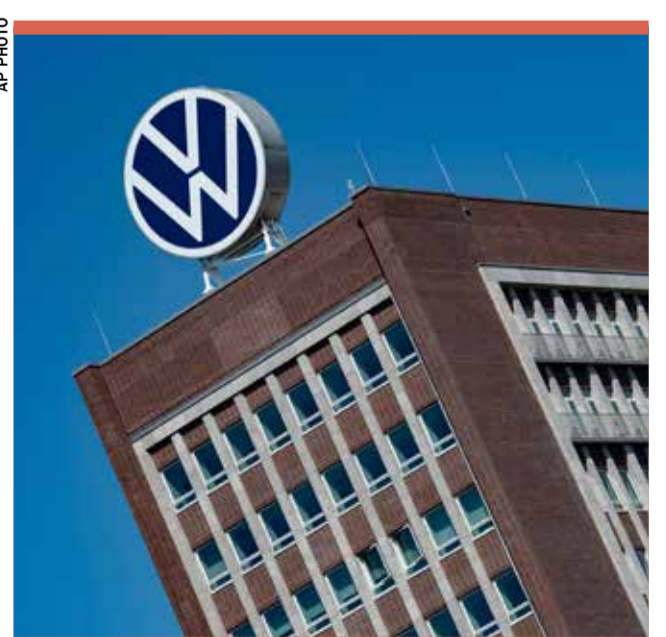
cars during the quarter, or about 7% of total deliveries.

It confirmed its profit outlook for the year and said strong demand for its products was reflected in an order book of 1.8 million vehicles in Europe, including 260,000 battery-electric vehicles.

The January-to-March quarter was burdened by a non-cash charge of 1.3 billion euros from Volkswagen hedging its purchases of raw materials, while hedges offered a boost to the tune of 3.2 billion euros in the same period a year ago.

MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



THAILAND

Daughter of ousted Thai prime minister could win his old job

JERRY HARMER, BANGKOK

SHE has confidence, she has charisma, but most of all she has the family name and a face that reminds many of her famous father. In the race to become Thailand's next prime minister, opinion polls show Paetongtarn Shinawatra to be the heavy favorite to take the post after the May 14 general election.

But some fear that victory for the youngest daughter of ousted former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra — the country's most divisive figure — could plunge Thailand back into a familiar cycle of protest and military intervention.

Having the 36-year-old Paetongtarn on the ballot is expected to pay off handsomely for the popular Pheu Thai opposition party. It's polling so well that it's hoping for a landslide victory, with enough seats to overcome the ruling party's built-in edge and name the prime minister.

While Paetongtarn is the clear vote-getter of her party's three candidates, any of the three could emerge from post-election wheeling and dealing as Thailand's new leader.

At a registration event for candidates in March, Paetongtarn outlined policies including improving labor conditions, guaranteeing a higher minimum wage, reducing pollution, and turning Thailand into a financial technology hub.

Paetongtarn's 73-year-old father was the first Thai politician ever to win an overall majority of seats. Although the billionaire businessman's populist policies built him a powerful political base, they also earned him the enmity of the country's elite. Thaksin was

AP PHOTO



Paetongtarn Shinawatra (right) a leader of Thailand's opposition Pheu Thai Party

ousted by a military coup in 2006 and has been in self-imposed exile for over a decade to avoid serving a prison term for abuse of power, a conviction he has denied as politically motivated.

Still, he remains close to the hearts of million of voters, especially the country's poor and residents of the relatively disadvantaged north.

Paetongtarn insists she is not merely a proxy for her father.

"It's not the shadow of my dad. I am my dad's daughter, always and forever, but I have my own decisions," she told a reporter at a recent rally.

Thaksin-backed parties thrived at the polls since Thaksin won his first election in 2001, but were unable to stay in office for long due to legal challenges in the courts — firmly aligned with the conservative establishment

— and destabilizing street protests engineered by his die-hard foes.

In 2011, Thaksin's sister Yingluck Shinawatra — Paetongtarn's aunt — was swept into office with an easy election victory, becoming Thailand's first female prime minister. But her government was ousted by another coup in 2014 carried out by then-army commander Prayuth Chan-ocha, who led a military government for five years and was then named prime minister after the 2019 general election. Like her brother, she went into exile to avoid legal consequences.

Prayuth, 69, is now running for reelection, but he's struggled to compete with Paetongtarn's political savvy. He is generally ranked a distant third in opinion polls for the preferred prime minister candidate, while his United Thai

Nation Party has a similar but slightly weaker position with about 10% support.

Paetongtarn has shown her determination by carrying out a busy campaign schedule right until she gave birth to a second child this week. From the hospital where she delivered her newborn son Prutthasin, she told the media she was ready to get right back to the hustings.

"She connects with the electorate, the base. She also has, I think, some talent that may have been inherited from her father in terms of going out on stump speeches, connecting with voters, speaking in front of large crowds, and running a campaign, while being pregnant," said Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a professor of political science at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University. "She is definitely prime minister material."

Under Thailand's electoral system, even if Pheu Thai wins a majority of seats, it does not automatically name the prime minister. That's up to a joint vote of both houses of parliament, giving the unelected 250 members of the Senate a major voice. The Senators, appointed under the 2014-2019 military government, are a linchpin of the conservative ruling class, and cast their votes as a bloc in 2019 for Prayuth, the military's favored candidate.

A strong Pheu Thai Party performance would threaten the military's almost nine-year hold on power and could reignite animosity towards the family that erupted into months of street protests in 2013 and 2014 against the Yingluck government.

For some people, a Shinawatra as prime minister is a step too far, even if fairly elected.

"A lot of people love them but you have a large number of conservative people who are against Thaksin and his family," said Prajak Kongkirati, a political scientist from Bangkok's Thammasat University. "So the fact that he put his daughter for the candidate, you know, might turn off a lot of conservative people and can stir up emotion from conservative side again."

Paetongtarn recently downplayed the chances of anther coup.

"I'm not the one who invented the coup d'etat or anything but, actually, I have a very high hope that it's not going to happen again and I believe it's going to be a lot harder that the coup will happen again," she said.

There has been widespread speculation that Paetongtarn may be counting on a deal with Prawit Wongsuwan, a 77-year-old former general who is Prayuth's deputy prime minister, but is competing against him in this year's election with the military-aligned Palang Pracharath Party.

Pheu Thai leaders have denied a deal, but there's persistent speculation that the Thaksin-supported Pheu Thai Party might bring him into a post-election coalition to calm the establishment. **MDT/AP**

LAOS

Rights groups call for probe into shooting of activist

HUMAN rights groups called for an investigation into the shooting of a political and social activist in Laos whose posts on Facebook criticized the Southeast Asian nation's communist government.

Initial reports, repeated by human rights groups, had said Anousa Luangsaphom, 25, was killed in the attack Saturday night

at a coffee shop in Vientiane, the capital. But Human Rights Watch issued an update yesterday saying Anousa's family and other sources provided evidence that he survived the shooting and was in a hospital receiving medical treatment.

Video from security cameras uploaded onto a state media website and

then circulated on social media shows a gunman in a cap and mask make a tentative entrance into the cafe, step out, walk back in again, and brush past a woman to fire two shots from a handgun into the sitting victim. Another video released online shows paramedics attending to him.

Reports in Lao media

and from fellow activists said Anousa later died. But a Lao activist in exile in Paris who knew Anousa, Joseph Akaravong, said on Facebook that he was still alive. A photo said to be of Anousa in the hospital, showing wounds in the spots cited in media reports, accompanied the post.

The Associated Press was unable to confirm

Anousa's condition and was not immediately able to contact Akaravong.

No evidence has emerged of the gunman's identity or motive. Lao authorities could not immediately be contacted for comment.

Amnesty International described Anousa, also known as Jack, as a "vocal critic of the Lao government and society."

The group said Anousa ran a Facebook page called "Driven by the Keyboard" which featured posts "on a wide range of social, environmental, economic and political issues in Laos, such as haze pollution, the human rights of school children and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) rights." **MDT/AP**

UK

Showtime! The kingdom readies pomp for Charles III's coronation

DANICA KIRKA, LONDON

THE crown has been re-sized. The troops are prepared for the biggest military procession in 70 years. The Gold State Coach is ready to roll.

Now it's time for the show.

King Charles III will be crowned tomorrow [ceremony starts at 18:00, Macau time] at Westminster Abbey in an event full of all the pageantry Britain can muster.

Enrobed clergymen will hand over the medieval symbols of power — the rod, the scepter and the orb. Brass bands and soldiers in bearskin hats will troop through the streets. And the new king and queen will presumably end the day on the balcony of Buckingham Palace to wave to the cheering crowds.

But don't be too dazzled. There's purpose behind the pomp: to buttress the crown's foundations and show that the people of the United Kingdom still support their monarch.

Royal historian Robert Lacey compares the event to a U.S. presidential election and an inauguration rolled into one — a celebration as well as a test of how the public sees the new sovereign.

"The king obviously is not subject to the vote and so these big public rituals are the closest royal people get to that sort of test," said Lacey, author of "Battle of Brothers: William & Harry — the Inside Story of a Family in Tumult." "Its basic purpose is to attract the loyalty and interest of British people to demonstrate that crowd outside Buckingham Palace waving at the balcony."

But, while TV screens around the world will be filled with flag-waving fans, Charles' coronation comes at a difficult time for the royals.

MONARCHY LESS POPULAR

Opinion polls show that support for the monarchy has weakened over time. Britain is gripped by double-digit inflation that is eroding living standards and making some people question the expense of the coronation. And the royal family is riven with controversy as Charles' younger son, Prince Harry, lobs criticism from his base in Southern California.

More fundamentally, some in Britain's increasingly diverse society want a re-examination of the monarchy's links to the trade in enslaved Africans and its role in the former British Empire, which

AP PHOTO



Long Live The King!

ruled over large parts of Asia, Africa and the Caribbean.

Kehinde Andrews, a professor of Black Studies at Birmingham City University, questions whether the people of Britain and the Empire's successor, the Commonwealth, really want a 74-year-old white man as their representative.

"If that isn't the biggest celebration of white supremacy, I can't think of what is, especially when you think about the lengths, the pageantry, the jewels and all this stuff, right?" Andrews said of the coronation. "So if you really were serious about saying, look, we want an anti-racist future, there is absolutely no place for this terrible institution."

The king has tried to address some of those concerns by promising to open the royal archives to researchers studying the family's links with slavery.

But the coronation will be a broader, more symbolic effort to show the monarchy still has a role to play.

The crowning of Charles and Camilla, the queen consort, will feature many of the elements of coronations past — the hymns, the prayers, the anointing with oils — all of which are designed to remind the world of the history, tradition and mystery embodied by the monarchy.

But the festivities have been tailored to better reflect modern Britain, where about 18% of the population describe themselves as belonging to an ethnic minority. That compares with less than 1% when Charles' mother, the late Queen Elizabeth II, was crowned in 1953.

For the first time, religious leaders representing Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh traditions will play an active role in the ceremony. The music will feature pieces written and performed by artists from each of the U.K.'s four nations and throughout the Commonwealth.

PLEDGE TO SERVE, NO TO BE SERVED

Symbolically, Charles will open the service by facing a young choirboy and pledging to serve — not to be served — and he has scrapped the centuries-old tradition of having the most senior members of the aristocracy pledge their loyalty to him. Instead, the congregation and those watching at home will be invited to pledge allegiance to the king.

The ceremony will also be shorter — about two hours, instead of three.

"The coronation is about different people celebrating together," said interfaith leader Aliya Azam, who will represent Muslims when

faith leaders greet the king after he is crowned. "I think what's very important is that cohesiveness triumphs over divisiveness, like light triumphing over darkness."

Syluis Toussaint and his wife, Bridgette, will be watching. The couple celebrated Elizabeth's coronation as children on the island of Dominica and moved to England in 1960 to find work. A corner of their home in Preston, northwest England, is festooned with royal photos and souvenirs, including a tin of coronation shortbread.

Toussaint likes Charles' efforts to protect the environment and he's willing to look past the breakdown of his first marriage to the late Princess Diana. He blames the government, not the monarchy, for the immigration crackdown that unfairly targeted him and thousands of other Caribbean migrants in recent years.

"Maybe like the rest of us, he has his faults ... but he's forgiven," Toussaint said. "I think he will do a good job and we rather like him."

The question is whether that allegiance is passed on to younger generations.

While support for the monarchy has softened over the past 30 years, it is much weaker among young people, according to surveys conducted by the polling firm Ipsos.

One of the monarchy's strengths is that many see the benefit in having a neutral head of state at times of instability, said Kelly Beaver, the firm's U.K. chief executive. With Britain facing multiple pressures from inflation to climate change and the war in Ukraine, the king has "a real opportunity to step forward and to demonstrate leadership," she said.

"And so I think, really, for Charles, it's all to play for."

SPOTLIGHT ON FAMILY DRAMAS

Unfortunately for the king, the coronation will also spotlight the family dramas that have rattled the House of Windsor. Chief among those is Charles' tense relationship with Harry and his wife, Meghan, a biracial American who pundits once thought would help the royal family connect with multicultural Britain.

But those hopes crumbled when the couple gave up front-line royal duties and decamped to California three years ago. Since then, they have aired a series of grievances, including allegations that palace officials were insensitive to Meghan's mental health struggles when she was adjusting to life as a royal, that the Windsors are guilty of unconscious bias in their attitudes on race, and that Camilla leaked unflattering stories about the couple to garner more favorable coverage for herself.

After months of speculation about whether they would be invited to the coronation, the palace announced that Harry would attend but Meghan would remain in California with their two children.

If recent royal gatherings are any indication, attention will now shift to the seat assignments inside the Abbey and whether Harry speaks to his father and Prince William, the heir to the throne.

"Where Harry sits in relation to the rest of his family clearly will be of great importance to the international media," said Joe Little, managing editor of Majesty Magazine. "But, you know, Buckingham Palace and the organizers will be aware of that, and they will, I'm sure, come up with the best possible solution under the circumstances."

All of this — the history of the monarchy, the changes in British society, and even the family drama — will be on people's minds as they watch the coronation unfold.

For Lacey, that's how it should be. At some level, people will process all of these things when they decide whether to cheer or stay away altogether, just like voters on election day.

"One of the interesting things about the coronation and its symbolism is it's not just simple celebration," he said. "It does give Britons a chance to look and think about what matters to us." MDT/AP

NETHERLANDS

UKRAINE'S ZELENSKY VISITS INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

MIKE CORDER, THE HAGUE

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskyy yesterday made an unannounced visit to the International Criminal Court, which has issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin for alleged war crimes in Ukraine.

Zelenskyy was on a visit to The Hague, which hosts the ICC as well as the United Nations' top judicial organ, the International Court of Justice. The Dutch city calls itself the international city of peace and justice.

Zelenskyy was welcomed outside the ICC building by the court's president, Poland's Piotr Hofmaski. Court staff crowded at windows to get a glimpse of Zelenskyy's arrival and raised a Ukrainian flag next to its own flag outside the building.

Judges at the ICC last month announced they found "reasonable grounds to believe" that Putin and his commissioner for children's rights were responsible for the unlawful deportation and unlawful transfer of children from occupied areas of Ukraine to Russia.

But the chances of Putin standing trial in The Hague are remote. The court does not have a police force to execute its warrants, and the Russian leader is unlikely to travel to any of the ICC's 123 member states that are under an obligation to arrest him if they can.

The visit came a day after he denied that Ukrainian forces were responsible for what the Kremlin called an attempt to assassinate Putin in a drone attack.

On a visit to Helsinki on Wednesday, Zelenskyy told reporters: "We didn't attack Putin. We leave it to (the) tribunal."

Ukraine's Air Force Command said early yesterday that Russian forces attacked multiple Ukrainian regions overnight with Iranian-made drones. Air raid sirens sounded across Ukraine overnight and explosions were reported in the southern city of Odesa and the capital, Kyiv.

Ukraine's military said that in Odesa, three drones — inscribed "for Moscow" and "for the Kremlin," referencing an alleged Ukrainian attack on Wednesday — hit a



AP PHOTO

dorm of an educational facility, but the fire was quickly put out and there were no casualties. Kyiv was targeted with drones and missiles, its military administration said, in what is a third airborne attack on the capital in four days. All of them were shot down.

The ICC said in a March 18 statement that Putin "is allegedly responsible for the war crime of unlawful deportation of (children) and that of unlawful transfer of (children) from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation."

ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan has made repeated visits to Ukraine and is setting up an office in Kyiv to facilitate his ongoing investigations in the country.

However, the ICC does not have jurisdiction to prosecute Putin for the crime of aggression — the unlawful invasion of another sovereign country. The Dutch government has offered to host a court that could be established to prosecute the crime of aggression and an office is being established to gather evidence.

The new International Center for Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression should be operational by summer,

the European Union's judicial cooperation agency, Eurojust, said in February.

Zelenskyy's visit to The Hague came as questions continued to swirl around Russia's claim that it foiled an attack by Ukrainian drones on the Kremlin early Wednesday. Moscow branded it an unsuccessful assassination attempt against Putin and promised retaliation for what it termed a "terrorist" act.

Air raid sirens went off in Kyiv overnight, but there were no immediate reports of any airstrikes on the Ukrainian capital.

Putin wasn't in the Kremlin at the time and was at his Novo-Ogaryovo residence outside Moscow, his spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Russia's state news agency RIA Novosti.

There was no independent verification of the purported attack, which Russia authorities said occurred overnight but presented no evidence to support it. Questions also arose as to why it took the Kremlin hours to report the incident and why videos of it also surfaced later in the day.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said the U.S. was "unable to con-

firm the authenticity" of Russia's claims of a Ukrainian attack on Moscow.

Asked whether the U.S. was concerned that the accusation might have been a false flag operation by Russia to serve as a pretext for more aggressive military action on Ukraine, Jean-Pierre said she didn't want to speculate, but added, "Obviously Russia has a history of doing things like this."

The Netherlands has been a strong supporter of the Ukrainian war effort since Russia's invasion last year. Among military equipment Prime Minister Mark Rutte's government has promised are 14 modern Leopard 2 tanks it is buying together with Denmark. They are expected to be delivered next year. The Netherlands also joined forces with Germany and Denmark to buy at least 100 older Leopard 1 tanks for Ukraine.

Among other military hardware, it also sent two Patriot air defense missile systems and promised two naval minehunter ships as well as sending military forensic experts to assist war crime investigations. Zelenskyy's visit came on the day the Dutch remember their war dead. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1980 SAS RESCUE ENDS IRAN EMBASSY SIEGE



The siege of the Iranian embassy in London has ended after a dramatic raid by SAS commandos.

Five Iranian gunmen were killed and one was arrested. Nineteen hostages were set free but one died and two were injured in the cross-fire.

Millions of people watched the rescue live on television as bank holiday entertainment on all three channels was interrupted to show the real-life drama unfold.

More than 30 masked troops stormed the embassy building from the balcony and front and back doors throwing grenades through the windows.

Screams were heard from inside the building and some 15 minutes later the hostages emerged and were escorted by Scotland Yard police to waiting ambulances.

The siege began five days ago when six gunmen took over the Iranian embassy in Kensington.

Most of their hostages were fellow Iranians but also included embassy police guard PC Trevor Lock, BBC sound man Sim Harris, BBC news organiser Chris Cramer and tourists who had stopped by to collect visas.

Four of the captives — including Mr Cramer — were released over the last week for medical reasons.

The gunmen belonged to a dissident Iranian group opposed to Ayatollah Khomeini, the religious leader who came to power last year.

They wanted the release of 91 political prisoners held in Iran as well as an aircraft to take them and the hostages out of the UK.

The Home Secretary William Whitelaw ordered the attack on the sixth day of the siege after the gunmen shot dead Iranian press attaché Abbas Lavasani and dumped his body outside the building.

Speaking through PC Lock who relayed the demands from an embassy window to police officers on the ground, they then threatened to kill the rest of the hostages and blow up the embassy if their demands were not met.

The Iranian government approved the use of force and President Bani-Sadr announced the SAS raid as a victory. In a broadcast he said "We did not surrender, we became victorious."

The Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has visited the SAS barracks in Kensington to congratulate the troops on a successful mission, codenamed Operation Nimrod.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

It later emerged that during the SAS raid PC Trevor Lock had tackled the leader of the gunmen known as Salim and saved the life of an SAS soldier. He was awarded the George Medal for his actions.

The excellent publicity provided by unprecedented live TV coverage of the event ensured the future of the SAS regiment was guaranteed. It had previously been under threat of disbandment.

The one surviving gunman, Fowzi Nejad, was sentenced to life imprisonment nine months later.

His fellow hostage-takers had opposed Ayatollah Khomeini and demanded freedom for the southern Iranian province of Khuzestan. But their cause was soon forgotten when war broke out between Iran and Iraq in late 1980 — a conflict that was to last eight years.

Although Iran had supported the SAS raid, it took about 13 years for a mutual compensation package to be agreed whereby the British government paid for the damage done to the Iranian embassy and Iran repaired the British embassy in Tehran damaged during the 1979 revolution.

Chris Cramer went on to become managing editor of CNN International.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You will have to help family members sort out unfortunate difficulties. You always seem to spend more than you make. There'll be difficulties if you spend too much.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
You will enjoy events that lean toward theater, art, or music today. An older member of the family may need assistance. Don't be too quick to react.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
You will be moody and react poorly to issues concerning your mate. You can make money through real estate or by using your head when it comes to personal investments.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Be firm when dealing with matters pertaining to your environment. Try to control your irritability if you're experiencing emotional problems with your partner.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Go to the top if you're being harassed or held back. Your childlike quality may get you into big trouble today if you neglect your responsibilities. Let your boss know your goals.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
You may find your self a bit frazzled if you allow someone to goad you into an unsavory debate. Use your head and do things to your liking. Look after financial transactions today.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
You can complete any projects efficiently, especially if you put the effort in yourself. You need an outlet that will not only stimulate you but also challenge your intelligence as well.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Take care of any pressing medical problems that you or one of your parents may be suffering from. Passion is about the best way for you to relieve tension.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
After all, they may have valuable information to pass on. Problems with your boss could lead to unemployment. Try to get others to stand behind your good judgment.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
There is not much you can do to alleviate the problem, but consider putting some extra work into your house. Make career changes that may increase your income.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Try to mix business with pleasure while traveling. You can make favorable changes in your home environment. Question your mate if you must.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Sudden good fortune will help you cover your debts. If you work in conjunction with someone else you may find they're trying to steal your thunder.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

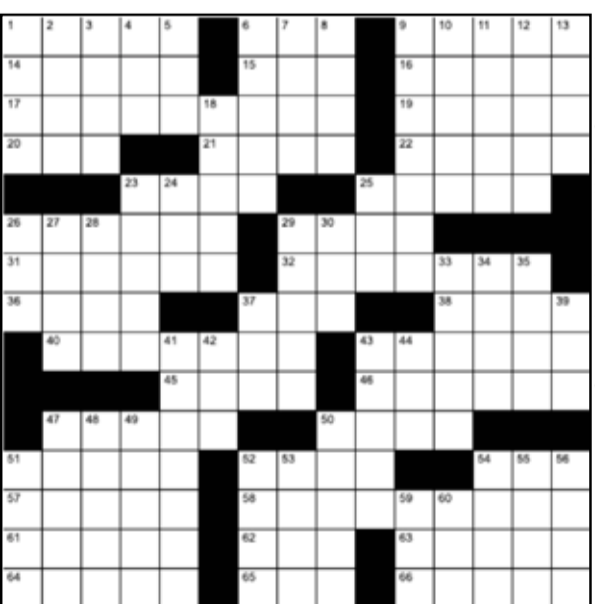
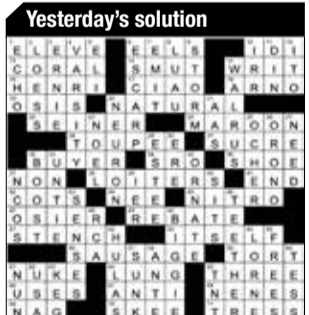
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	15	24	cloudy
Changchun	11	17	cloudy
Chengdu	19	27	overcast
Chongqing	23	30	cloudy
Fuzhou	23	32	overcast
Guangzhou	25	32	cloudy
Guiyang	19	26	overcast
Haikou	26	38	cloudy
Hangzhou	20	30	rain
Harbin	7	16	cloudy
Hefei	18	21	overcast
Nanjing	21	25	overcast
Shanghai	21	26	rain
Taipei	22	28	overcast
Wuhan	19	26	cloudy
Hong Kong	23	26	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-6	-1	snow
Frankfurt	0	3	snow
Paris	2	5	rain
London	0	7	cloudy
New York	2	6	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Rascal; 6- This ___ stickup!; 9- Queeg's command; 14- Threepio's buddy; 15- Ancient; 16- Director Welles; 17- Dedicated; 19- Mild cigar; 20- Nor-neighbor; 21- X-ray units; 22- "Hyperion" poet; 23- Simians; 25- Long hard seat; 26- Compact hound; 29- Slippery; 31- Continuously; 32- Like some mail; 36- Classic soda; 37- Afflict; 38- On ___ with; 40- Link; 43- Ancient Palestinian; 45- Son of Zeus in Greek mythology; 46- Prize; 47- Winged; 50- Socialite Maxwell; 51- Nobelist Root; 52- Barely beat; 54- Hosp. area; 57- Giver; 58- Remorseful; 61- The end of ___; 62- ___-pitch softball; 63- Bobby of the Black Panthers; 64- Decoration; 65- Still, in poetry; 66- Starbucks order;

DOWN 1- Pouches; 2- Black bird; 3- Look ___. I'm Sandra Dee; 4- May honoree; 5- Luau chow; 6- Little bits; 7- Hill toy; 8- Increases; 9- Squinting eye; 10- Senator Specter; 11- Stern with a bow; 12- Compass point; 13- Slaughter of baseball; 18- Woody inhabitants of forests!; 23- One more time; 24- Layer; 25- Sandwich initials; 26- Proscribe; 27- Util. bill; 28- Horton Hears ___; 29- Gives off; 30- Grown elver; 33- Dreadlocks wearer; 34- Pentathlon need; 35- Hamlet, e.g.; 37- Hotshot; 39- "Everybody Hurts" band; 41- Chemical-free; 42- Before, poetically; 43- Conger catcher; 44- Conscriptio org.; 47- Singly; 48- Wrinkled; 49- Now, in Nogales; 50- Goad; 51- Dutch cheese, wrapped in red wax; 52- Scottish Gaelic; 53- Remove from text; 54- ___ first you don't...; 55- Sect; 56- Peter Fonda title role; 59- Alien's subj.; 60- Leaves in a bag;



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

DRIVE IN

'BEAU IS AFRAID' IS STUCK IN A ONE-NOTE NIGHTMARE

JAKE COYLE,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

BEAU may be afraid but Ari Aster certainly isn't.

Of the many words used to describe the writer-director's previous two films — "Hereditary" and "Midsommar" — timidity was never of them. This is a filmmaker who has sent Toni Collette skittering across the ceiling and intricately arranged mutilated bodies the way some people make bouquets.

But if any doubts remained about just how far Aster is willing to go, "Beau Is Afraid" should pacify them. Not because of the degree of terror within it; by Aster's high standards, "Beau Is Afraid" is notably less ghastly than his first two outings. But it's even more audaciously grotesque, more self-evidently pulled from its director's psyche, more a work of a filmmaker's unfiltered, runaway imagination.

Rather than slotting in as a "horror" film, it can be categorized a little less neatly as a surreal three-hour Homeric odyssey about Jewish guilt, Oedipal angst

and somebody named "Birthday Boy Stab Man." And this, remember, constitutes a sunnier register for Aster.

What has made Aster such a potent filmmaker, I think, is the lack of relief he offers audiences. His movies are nightmares without any possibility of waking. And just as much as one might spend "Midsommar" looking for an escapeway, the urge to open a window for just one breath of fresh air in "Beau Is Afraid" is considerable.

That's both a compliment and a complaint for Aster's film, a rigorously wearisome experience propelled by a monstrous current of anxiety and dread. Aster's cinema is that of a bad trip: a surreal and comic journey through dark corners of consciousness, vividly rendered in caricature and detail. ("Midsommar," if you remember, began with mind-altering mushrooms.) It's not an easy ride to recommend taking. But, just the same, there's never any doubt that you are, most definitely, traveling somewhere else.

"Beau Is Afraid," which A24 releases in theaters nationwide

Friday, opens not with psychedelics but the pangs of child birth. After some muffled screams and flashes of light, we, as Beau, emerge directly out of the womb. His mother Mona (played at different times by Zoe Lister-Jones and Patti LuPone) screams because her baby is oddly silent. Flashing forward several decades, the grown but still whimpering Beau Wassermann (Joaquin Phoenix) is sitting with his therapist (Stephen McKinley Henderson, a boon to any movie). It doesn't take long for his mother to come up in their session. "Do you ever wish she was dead?" the therapist asks. Beau, protesting a little too much, quickly shouts "No!"

Back near his New York apartment, the city streets are an over-the-top hellscape, draped in garbage and graffiti, with mean-looking faces everywhere, including that loose maniac, Birthday Boy Stab Man, along with roaming hordes of vandals. We're less in the real world than some bonkers, not-funhouse-mirrors manifestation of Beau's fears. His anxiety might called cripplingly



Joaquin Phoenix in a scene from "Beau is Afraid"

extreme if it didn't appear to be well-founded by the state of things around him.

Beau is to travel the next day to visit his mother. But after a neighbor harasses him through the night and his apartment keys and bag are stolen...

Aster, whose first film also dug into the frightful side of what we inherit, is clearly and intensely channeling something deep within. And as captivating as it can be to see a filmmaker out on the ledge like this this, the sense that characters are being moved around like pawns in an elabora-

te design — an aspect of Aster's previous films, too — never quite dissipates. The one exception: Parker Posey. She walks into the movie late, as a long-ago encounter of Beau's, and instantly changes the movie's chemistry. She's the one breath of fresh air in "Beau Is Afraid," but, boy, does Aster snuff it out quick.

"Beau Is Afraid," an A24 release is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for strong violent content, sexual content, graphic nudity, drug use and language. Running time: 179 minutes.★★★★

AD

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



TASTE OF EDESIA

Serene celebration

IRENE SAM, MDT

MOTHER'S day is right around the corner. For those who are thinking of where to take mom to enjoy the special day, a short stay in Hong Kong would be a wonderful choice. Out of all the hotels in the buzzing city, **The Silveri Hong Kong-MGallery** is one of the best for a beautiful and serene getaway.

MGallery Hotel Collection brand thoughtfully selects and curates unique properties around the world, forming a storied collection of boutique hotels with true soul where captivating stories are lived and shared. With more than 100 properties, each hotel under the brand tells a special story inspired by its own remarkable past or the destination it calls home. From bespoke design and sensorial mixology to well-being dedicated to everyday self-care, **MGallery** hotels are places where guests can enjoy an exquisite travel experience.

Opened in 2022, **The Silveri Hong Kong-MGallery** is the flagship for **The MGallery Hotel Collection** in Hong

Kong. With a stylish 25-meter swimming pool and well-equipped fitness area, a dozen extraordinary signature suites surround the garden, offering a true resort-style experience, rare in the urban environment of Hong Kong. The hotel also offers a number of unique guest experiences during their stay, curating and arranging Memorable moments such as private helicopter tours over Lantau, hiking adventures 'back in time' to the traditional fishing village of Tai O, or excursions to nearby tourist attractions such as the world-famous Tian Tan Buddha, Po Lin Monastery, and Hong Kong Disneyland.

Named after Lantau Island's historic local silver mines, **The Silveri Hong Kong-MGallery** resembles a cozy manor home within stone-walled grounds, featuring al fresco dining and mesmerising sunset views in a lush outdoor garden with expansive lawns – a rare sustainability-focused resort-style experience in Hong Kong indeed. For foodies, the hotel's signature restaurant **The Enclave** offers an authentic experience in a modern Bistro ambience.



!TUNES

K-pop's Le Sserafim offer a diabolically good time

A year to the day of their debut, K-pop girl group **Le Sserafim** release their first studio album "Unforgiven," a mish-mash of ear worms, head bangers and body shakers mixing English, Korean and Japanese. That is to say, an absolute firecracker of a record that kicks the door off the hinges and into some sort of psychedelic dance trip.

It doesn't hurt that the

legendary Rock & Roll Hall of Fame producer, songwriter and guitarist **Nile Rodgers** lends a funky guitar riff to the spine-tingly sound of title track "Unforgiven," which samples the iconic soundtrack of the 1966 Western classic, "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly."

The result is a bold anthem of female empowerment; "Unforgiven, I'm the villain," they intone, kinda

like the rest of the album. They poke, they challenge, they dare girls to move in their own direction, make their own choices, break those taboos.

Out of the 13 tracks on the album, only seven are brand new – last year's singles bass house "Antifragile" and smooth R&B "Impurities" have proven their mettle with a fresh sound.

They bring in some industrial techno with "The

World is My Oyster," "The Hydra" and a more classic energetic electro beat to "Eve, Psyche & The Bluebeard's Wife."

"Fearless" and "Blue Flame" (both the 2023 version) strong-arm you into having a good time, while "Burn the Bridge" enraptures with its anthem, soundtrack vibe. If they're the villain, they're forgiven for the fun ride. **CRISTINA JALERU, MDT/AP**



Le Sserafim, "Unforgiven" (SOURCE Music)

OPINION

China Daily

Zhang Zhouxiang, China Daily

MEDIA LITERACY IN CHATGPT ERA NEEDS PROMOTION

On April 28th, Hainan Tropical Ocean University and the Hainan Provincial Committee of China Democratic League hosted a special lecture titled "Media Literacy in the ChatGPT Era," featuring Professor Bi Yantao from the School of Public Administration of Hainan University and the Deputy Director of the Culture Committee of the Hainan Provincial Committee of China Democratic League.

Professor Bi called on experts in related fields to study and update media literacy education as soon as possible to help netizens understand the underlying logic and potential hazards of generative AI. He emphasized that journalism students have a dual mission as news gatekeepers and information providers, and they must update their media literacy in a timely manner to lead society in adapting to the communication ecology of the AI era.

Professor Bi analyzed the risks of generative AI from three levels: domestic, international and human survival. He introduced the concept of cognitive security and epistemic injustice to help listeners understand the risks of generative AI. In 2020, Professor Bi defined cognitive security as "the operational state of human intelligence and artificial intelligence that is not subject to deliberate interference and manipulation."

Epistemic injustice refers to unfair treatment of cognitive subjects, which experts divide into three categories: discriminatory, distributive and formative. By mastering these theoretical analytical tools, people can easily understand the enormous risk that generative AI poses to cognitive security. To help understand these concepts, Professor Bi reinterpreted the fables of "The Blind Men and the Elephant" and "The Allegory of the Cave" to vividly illustrate the specific manifestations and main causes of epistemic injustice.

After detailing the basic characteristics of the current communication ecology, Professor Bi proposed that, to adapt to the information society of the AI era, people urgently need to upgrade their beliefs about knowledge and knowing, further understand epistemic principles, the nature of knowledge and its construction, and timely detect, effectively monitor and adjust their cognitive activities. Only in this way can people understand the necessity, urgency and basic path toward optimizing the configuration of information sources, and effectively enhance their information and communication literacy.

This lecture was part of the Hainan Provincial Committee of China Democratic League's Cultural Lecture Hall tour in 2023. Dr Li Su, the head of the journalism curriculum group of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hainan Tropical Ocean University, presided over the lecture and urged students to closely monitor the potential impact of AI development on the news industry. The College of Humanities and Social Sciences will continue to organize lectures and activities related to media literacy and AI education to promote the development of a society that is better equipped to understand and adapt to the ChatGPT era.

GERMANY, ITALY CLAMP DOWN ON ITALIAN MOB WITH RAIDS, ARRESTS

THE BUZZ

Police across Europe arrested dozens of people, raided homes and seized millions of euros in assets yesterday [Macau time], in a coordinated crackdown on Italy's 'ndrangheta organized crime syndicate, one of the world's most powerful, extensive and wealthy drug-trafficking groups.

The operation, coordinated by EU judicial cooperation agency Eurojust, aimed to dismantle a network that includes the 'ndrangheta, Colombian drug producers and paramilitary groups, and moves tons of cocaine to Europe and Australia each year.

The investigation uncovered how these networks used ports in Ecuador, Panama and Brazil to ship the Colombian drugs to northern European ports while also dealing in weapons. The drug proceeds were then laundered through restaurants, ice cream shops and car washes, and money sent back to Colombian drug producers via a Chinese wire transfer service, according to Italian officials and a Carabinieri press release.

"With today's coordinated measures across Europe, law enforcement authorities have dealt a serious blow to the 'ndrangheta," German Interior Minister said. "Today's raids are one of the largest operations to date in the fight against Italian organized crime."

In Italy, Carabinieri police backed by helicopters said arrest warrants were served on 108 people.

MEXICO DEVELOPS OWN COVID-19 VACCINE, TWO YEARS LATE

FABIOLA SÁNCHEZ, MEXICO CITY

MEXICAN officials celebrated yesterday [Macau time] the announcement that the country finally developed its own COVID-19 vaccine, more than two years after inoculations from the U.S., Europe and China were rolled out.

It was unclear what use would be made of the vaccine, named "Patria" or "Motherland," developed in a joint effort between the government and a Mexican company, Avimex, which previously did work on animal vaccines.

Vaccine uptake in Mexico dropped precipitously in late 2022 and 2023, and Mexico still has millions of doses of the Abdala vaccine it bought from Cuba.

María Elena Álvarez-Buylla, the head of Mexico's government commission for science and technology, said the new vaccine would be approved for use as a booster shot. She did not say whether the government medical approval agency had formally authorized the Patria vaccine.

Dr. Fidel Alejandro Sánchez, who sits on the council of researchers in charge of following virus variants in Mexico, said he had doubts about using a vaccine designed two years ago as a booster to protect against currently circulating strains.



AP PHOTO

"It is like reading yesterday's newspaper," Sánchez said. "It makes no sense to use it as a booster when it wasn't designed for that."

Mexico started developing the Patria vaccine in March 2020. But testing was slow, and the country wound up importing 225 million doses, mainly Astra-Zeneca and Pfizer, and some Chinese vaccines.

Mexico bought 9 million doses of the Cuban-made Abdala vaccine in September 2022, even though it was designed for coronavirus variants circulating in 2020 or

2021, not current variants. Few Mexicans have shown up to get the Cuban booster shots.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has made a point of trying to make Mexico self-sufficient in many industries, while at the same time supporting Cuba however he can.

"This opens the door to recovering vaccine sovereignty," Álvarez-Buylla said.

Mexico's official death toll of test-confirmed COVID-19 deaths stands at almost 334,000, but testing was scarce in the early days of the pandemic and the government's own review of death certificates shows more than 505,000 deaths where COVID-19 was listed as a cause of contributing cause of death. MDT/AP



AP PHOTO

USA Donald Trump called a writer's claims that he raped her at a Manhattan department store "the most ridiculous, disgusting story," testifying in a deposition shown in court that the allegations were "made up" and that the assault never happened. "If it did happen, it would have been reported within minutes," Trump said

Brazil's Federal Police searched former President Jair Bolsonaro's home and seized his phone yesterday [Macau time] in what they said was an investigation into alleged falsification of COVID-19 vaccine cards. Several other locations also were searched and a half dozen people faced arrest, police said. The former president confirmed the search of his residence while speaking with reporters, as did his wife, Michelle, on her Instagram account.



AP PHOTO

Hungary's populist prime minister likened liberalism to a "virus" in an opening speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference in Budapest yesterday, painting a picture of a global right-wing movement mobilizing to defeat "progressive elites." Viktor Orbán's (pictured) speech at CPAC Hungary centered around battling what he frequently described as "woke culture," and delved primarily into hot-button cultural topics such as transgender and LGBTQ+ rights, migration and the content of education for children.



Sudan The death of a well-known actress, killed in crossfire in the north of Khartoum, has shocked residents of Sudan's capital as they hear of more and more friends and relatives caught up in the fighting. Asia Abdelmajid (pictured), who turned 80 last year, was famous for her theatre performances - first coming to prominence in the 1965 production of the play Pamseeka.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Photo by Evan Agostini/Invision/AP



Cinderella? Rihanna and A\$AP Rocky attend The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute benefit gala celebrating the opening of the "Karl Lagerfeld: A Line of Beauty" exhibition on Monday, in New York.