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MGTO TO COOPERATE WITH AIRASIA AND JIN AIR TO FURTHER ATTRACT OVERSEAS TOURISTS AS ARRIVALS HAVE REACHED 60% OF PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS P3

CTRIP FORECASTS BOOST IN TOUR PACKAGES FOR VISITORS AMID OPTIMIZED ENTRY, EXIT POLICES P4

THAILAND COUNTS VOTES IN KEY ELECTION WITH OPPOSITION FAVORED TO WIN P7



AP PHOTO



Myanmar Thousands of people hunkered down yesterday in monasteries, pagodas and schools, seeking shelter from a powerful storm that slammed into the coast of Myanmar, tearing the roofs off buildings and killing at least three people. The center of Cyclone Mocha made landfall Sunday afternoon in Myanmar's Rakhine state near Sittwe township wind speeds up to 209 kilometers per hour, Myanmar's Meteorological Department said. Earlier, the storm passed over Bangladesh's Saint Martin's Island, causing damage and injuring people, but turned away from the country's shores before landfall.

AP PHOTO



Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan left a high court in Islamabad last week after being granted broad protection from arrest in multiple legal cases against him. The ruling struck a blow to the government in a stand-off that has sparked days of rioting by Khan's followers and raised the specter of widespread unrest in the country. After the court granted him bail, Khan spent hours more in the building, as he and his legal team were locked in apparent negotiations over his exit from the site.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said yesterday that his country is preparing a counteroffensive designed to liberate areas occupied by Russia, not to attack Russian territory. Zelenskyy said Ukraine's goal is to free the territories within its internationally recognized borders. The Washington Post cited previously undisclosed documents from a trove of U.S. intelligence leaks suggesting that Zelenskyy has considered trying to capture areas in Russia proper for possible use as bargaining chips in peace negotiations to end the war launched by Moscow in February 2022.

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DSAL TO HOLD JOB-MATCHING SESSIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Labour Affairs Bureau will hold a job-matching session for residents with disabilities on June 20, offering a total of 165 vacancies. In a statement, the bureau stated that 17 companies from the hotel, catering, retail sales, cleaning and security sectors, among others, will offer positions for waiters, seamstresses, kitchen assistants, and floral arrangement technicians, among others. Registration opens from today until May 29.

IEEE CONDUCTS LECTURE ON CLIMATE SUSTAINABILITY

Saifur Rahman, president and CEO of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), recently visited the University of Macau (UM) and exchanged ideas with researchers at the university on disciplinary development. Rahman also gave a talk titled "Technologists' Role in Addressing Climate Sustainability" as part of the University's Lecture Series to explore the importance of carbon emission reduction to the sustainable development of the environment and how to build a relevant scientific and technological system.

SHENZHEN LAUNCHES ONLINE AUCTION PLATFORM FOR NEW INT'L TUNA TRADING CENTER

Shenzhen launched an online auction platform on Friday for its new international tuna trading center amid a push to develop the country's aquatic products sector. Based on Internet Plus, cloud computing, the Internet of Things and big data technologies, the platform focuses on the innovation and development of online auctions, aiming to attract global high-end and high-quality aquatic products to the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area and form a regional price index. The first auction on the platform was completed after an Atlantic bluefin tuna weighing 204 kilograms was bought at a price of 57,324 yuan.

ELECTIONS

LOBBYING FOR BLANK VOTES MAY BE CRIMINALIZED IN FUTURE ELECTIONS

ANTHONY LAM

Lobbying for or encouraging voters to cast blank or invalid ballots should be criminalized in the future, the Electoral Affairs Commission (CAEAL) recently suggested in the wake of the last parliamentary election.

The commission has just released its concluding report on last election, held in September 2021, and made some suggestions.

Last election saw the city's lowest voting turnout since 1999 and the most blank ballots in history. The 2021 election had a 42.38% turnout rate, as well as 3,141 blank ballots and 2,067 invalid ballots, accounting for 2.29% and 1.51% of all ballots cast.

In contrast, the 2017 election garnered a 57.22% turnout rate, with both blank and invalid ballots accounting for less than 1% of all ballots.

The CAEAL identified the weather as the culprit of this state of affairs.

It also saw the first electoral disqualifications in history. A total of 20 candidates were expelled from



the election due to the Electoral Affairs Committee deeming them "unpatriotic."

Despite this, the concluding report of the CAEAL did not review the reason why voters lost interest in voting; rather, it recommended punishing those who suggested that people cast blank or invalid ballots in the future.

The CAEAL sees the act of lobbying for or encouraging the casting of blank or invalid ballots as "obviously initiated to disturb electoral procedures and damage the fairness of the election."

On the other hand, in order to guarantee all candidates are "patriotic" in the future, it is suggested in the report that a vetting

committee be established in the future to "verify whether candidates uphold the Basic Law and pledge allegiance to the Macau Special Administrative Region."

More power is also recommended for the Judiciary Police (PJ) to identify illicit promotions.

The CAEAL suggested that the PJ cannot currently help much in cracking down on illicit promotions during election periods due to its lack of authorization. It added that illicit promotion on online platforms had become more frequent in the past few elections.

As such, the commission recommends vesting the PJ with the legal power to identify and investigate online illicit promotions.

On the participation of civil servants, the CAEAL suggests a clarification in the Election Law that those civil servants required by law to be politically impartial should not participate in any form in an election. Violators should also be subject to punishments.

Discrepancies in the Election Law between the Chinese and the Portuguese versions are also addressed in the report.

Middle court deems certain non-consensual recordings presentable as exhibits

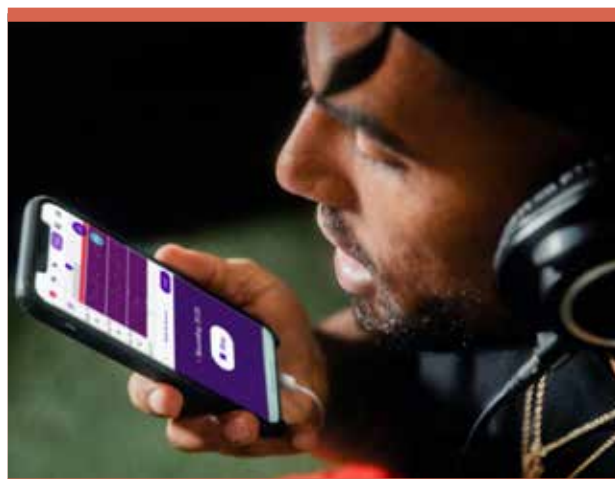
ANTHONY LAM

Voice recordings obtained on the grounds of obstructing the commission of illicit acts can be presented as exhibits, the Court of Second Instance (TSI) has recently ruled.

The TSI pointed out that recordings obtained for the purposes of proving criminality, preventing crimes and self-defence can be accepted as exhibits.

The clarification was made during the appeal of intimidation and blackmail cases.

According to the court, two individuals B and C were accused of the afore-



mentioned violations. The original exhibits comprised two voice recording clips – one provided by A, the civil complainant in the procedure, and the other obtained from D's

cellphone. D was convicted in another legal procedure. The recording captured a conversation between A, C, D and A's father, referred to as E.

During the hearing at the base court, the recordings were ruled as illegally recorded and thus invalid. Meanwhile, the recordings may subject the makers to a charge of making an illegal recording or photograph.

In January 2021, the court invalidated the recordings as exhibits and in May 2021, the judgment was made against A. The-reafter, A filed an appeal, arguing that the recordings should have been considered valid.

Underlining the nature of the initial procedure as proving or disproving the existence of intimidation and blackmail, the middle

court highlighted the recordings managed to evidence signs of blackmail.

It noted that the recordings concerned a single conversation, in which the court could hear C and D making threatening utterances to A, who took the recordings so as to prevent malicious and illicit acts. As such, the recordings should be considered a means of self-protection, the court ruled.

Moreover, the court cited the top court in ruling that the balance between the rights to speech and to evidence should be struck so that "the protection of the former cannot become the violation of the latter."

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DSSCU dismantles 12 dangerous constructions since 2017

ANTHONY LAM

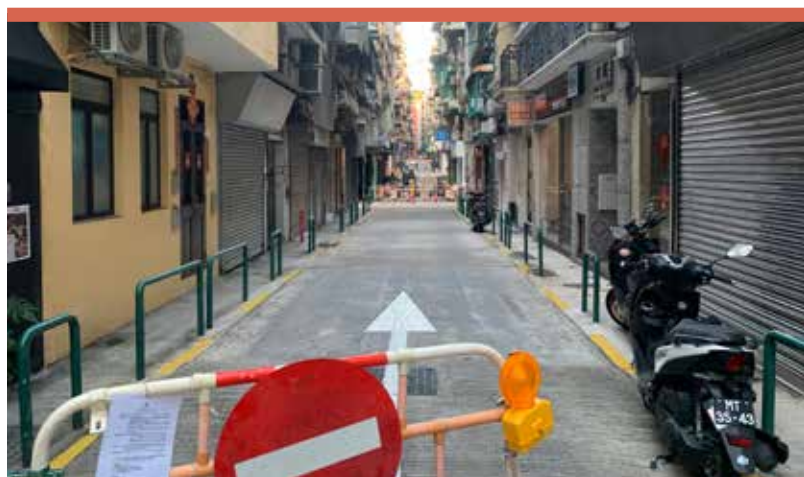
SINCE 2017, 12 out of 22 dangerous buildings in the city have been demolished, the Land and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU) director Lai Weng Leong recently revealed in response to an inquiry from lawmaker Ron Lam.

Lai disclosed that 19 buildings had been identified as under risk and that three others were classified as under immediate risk. Of the total, nine risky and three urgently risky buildings have been dismantled, with other buildings are being "constantly monitored."

Another 87 buildings had been identified as being poorly maintained, Lai said.

He also disclosed that about 600 notifications have been issued to building owners or owners' associations to remind them to repair buildings that had been identified as slightly poorly maintained in a timely fashion.

Moreover, Lai explained that, pursuant to the Urban Construction Legal System, building or unit owners are obliged to regularly inspect and maintain their buildings.



Owners will be legally responsible in cases where damage or injuries are caused by poor maintenance.

Urgent cases must be reported to the government immediately, Lai said.

In addition, citing the Housing Bureau (IH), Lai introduced that the government owns a building repair fund that has an umbrella of subsidy schemes. The objective of the fund is to provide support to building or unit owners to regularly maintain public facilities within the buildings, including power networks.

Citing the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA), Lai added

that public facilities, such as public power networks, are privately owned in a legal sense. Individual owners are obligated to ensure their safety.

The DSPA will continue supervising power supplier CEM to ensure the safety and stability of the public section of its power network.

The DSSCU added that data related to its handling of poorly maintained buildings and building repairment is available on its website. Meanwhile, the bureau has only logged complaints or referrals about aged buildings that it received.

GCASH, TOUCH 'N GO & TRUEMONEY

Macau Pass collaborates with Southeast Asia e-wallets to expand service

STAFF REPORTER

MACAU Pass has been officially approved to provide acquiring services to Alipay+ market-leading partner e-wallets from the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand.

This means that in addition to Alipay, AlipayHK, WeChat Pay and Simple Pay, Macau Pass payment devices will from now be able to accept GCash, Touch 'n Go eWallet and TrueMoney, following South Korea's Kakao Pay.

With Southeast Asian governments' active efforts to promote the di-



gital economy and the region's e-commerce boom, it is estimated that by 2025, at least six Southeast Asian countries, such as Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Phi-

ippines, will have more than 440 million e-wallet users.

In Macau, mobile payments had already increased by 40% last year, leading the Monetary Authority of Macau (AMCM) to extend the use of Simple Pay to buses last April.

"Comprehensive and innovative digital solutions is the key to accelerate the digital transformation of Macau's service industry," the chairman and CEO of Macau Pass Sun Ho said in a statement.

"Through the cooperation with Alipay+, the innovative one-stop payment solution will accelerate the digital transformation of local merchants in Macau, create a connected international digital payments ecosystem in the city, solve the problem of cross-border payment for international tourists, and will help companies find new marketing growth opportunities," the CEO added.

TOURISM

MGTO TO COOPERATE WITH AIRASIA AND JIN AIR TO ATTRACT OVERSEAS TOURISTS

STAFF REPORTER

THE number of tourists visiting Macau has reached 60% of pre-pandemic levels, with a stable majority of tourists coming from the mainland and Hong Kong and a number of overseas and Taiwan tourists which is still small, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes said.

"Considering that the routes between Japan, South Korea and Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand are recovering quickly, we are currently focusing on these markets for publicity," the official explained, saying that the current average daily number of overseas and Taiwan tourists was about 2,600 to 2,900.

"While Macao Week is planned to be held in the cities of Qingdao, Tianjin and Xiamen this year, we will also hold overseas roadshows and promotions in the second half of the year," the MGTO director added, as cited in a TDM report.

In addition, MGTO will cooperate with Malaysian low-cost carrier AirAsia and South-Korean low-cost carrier Jin Air, which recently announced it will resume flights to Macau by next July, to launch thousands of tickets discounts during May and June with the aim of attracting more foreign tourists.

Fernandes also said that MGTO will cooperate with every other airline intending to resume flights to and from Macau.

GAMING

MELCO TO OPEN CITY OF DREAMS MEDITERRANEAN IN JULY

STAFF REPORTER

THE City of Dreams Mediterranean located in the city of Limassol, Cyprus, is set to open its doors by July 10, becoming the first integrated resort in Europe, Melco Resorts & Entertainment announced.

After Macau and Manila, this new City of Dreams is the third to be developed by Melco and will comprise Europe's largest casino, Cyprus' biggest expo center, and also 500 guest rooms and suites.

"We are thrilled to finally open the doors of City of Dreams Mediterranean to our valued guests," general manager of City of Dreams

Mediterranean Grant Johnson said in a statement.

"As it's a landmark project and our first venture in Europe, it will bring Melco's award-winning standards of entertainment and leisure and welcome innovation to Cyprus' luxury hotel scene," Grant Johnson added.

The property has an 8,000 square meters of indoor and outdoor space featuring a grand ballroom, a multi-functional forum and a roman-style amphitheater,

An initial soft opening period for hotel and invited guests will commence on June 12, before the full opening to the public takes place on July 10.



TRAVEL

Ctrip forecasts boost in tour packages for visitors amid optimized entry, exit polices

STAFF REPORTER

AS China today restores fast-lane entry and exit services at all ports, Ctrip expects that more tailored package products will emerge.

From today, Chinese nationals will be allowed to use fast lanes for expedited border inspection on the following travel documents: Chinese ordinary passports, exit-entry permits for travel to and from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, mainland travel permits for Hong Kong and Macau residents, five-year mainland travel permits for Taiwan residents, and multiple entry permits valid for one year, the National Immigration Administration said in a notice.



Lin Zhizhuo, a manager of Ctrip, a Chinese travel service provider, said that the adjusted policies will benefit people who are not employed where they have registered residence, and it will greatly ease the visa application process for tourists to Hong Kong and Macau, according to a report issued by China Daily

The policy of applying for travel permits at any immigration center provides great convenience for tourists, who are not restricted to their place of departure, Lin said.

According to Ctrip, orders for group tours to Hong Kong and Macau rose about 70% in May from April.



ARTS

VETERAN PHOTOGRAPHER LOU KAM IENG OPENS FIRST PAINTING EXHIBITION

EXPERIENCED local photographer Lou Kam Ieng has expanded his scope of creations and recently unveiled his first painting exhibition at the Macau Tower.

The exhibition was curated by local art company Macau Creations.

Before this exhibition, Lou held a multitude of photo exhibitions in and out of Macau. His works have also been transformed repeatedly by the Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT) into philately products

(items relating to postage stamps).

Several photo books have also been published.

In recent years, without forgoing his initial interests, the artist has started exploring the painting world, creating works liberally and in a boundless manner, which is also the name of this exhibition.

Citing his own words during his speech at the opening ceremony, "painting is a liberal process and the creations may in the end resemble impressions of scenes I have perceived."

Lou's paintings may or may not be identified as abstract paintings. The key, as he suggests to his viewers, is to immerse oneself into the paintings and make their own meaning. Paintings exhibited sometimes resemble snow-capped mountains or scattered relics.

Discussing Lou's talent, curator Wilson Lam said in his speech that an unconfined imagination could be seen.

The exhibition is on now at the lower ground floor of the Macau Tower. AL

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CORRUPTION WATCHDOG FINDS NO IRREGULARITIES OVER 'LEATHER FACTORY' LAND PLOT

STAFF REPORTER

THE Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) has found no illegalities in connection with the land plot at Rua dos Pescadores where buildings no. 15 and 17 (commonly known as the Leather Factory) were located.

Regarding the acceptance by the administration of the maintained status of the already-constructed building on the grounds that it should not be subject to the declaration of invalidation arising from former Secretary for Transport and Public Works Ao Man Long's corruption case, and the fact that the land use period was approved to be

extended in and after 2018, the CCAC believes that they, to a certain extent, "met the principle of useful and effective use of land and there were no apparent administrative illegalities or irregularities."

The street alignment plan, on which the construction of the relevant building was based, was issued four years before the entry into force of the Law of Urban Planning, and there was therefore no situations of false starts or circumvention of the law as such.

According to the CCAC, "public works departments are suggested to seriously review the relevant practice and step-up efforts to consolidate the premium

regime in force so that the actual market value of the land of Macau may be reflected [in] the premiums and the precious land resources of the Macau SAR may be fully protected."

According to the letters sent to the CCAC by different associations in 2018, the matters queried included the non-declaration of expiry of the concession despite the expiry of the land use period of the land plot at the Leather Factory, the premium calculation for the land plot for repurposing and the circumvention of the Law of Urban Planning. In response, the CCAC specifically formed an "inquiry group" to follow up the case.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Exec fired from ByteDance says Beijing had access to TikTok data in termination suit

HALELUYA HADERO

A former executive fired from TikTok's parent company ByteDance made a raft of accusations against the tech giant Friday, including that it stole content from competitors like Instagram and Snapchat, and served as a "propaganda tool" for the Chinese government by "suppressing or promoting content favorable to the country's interests."

The allegations were made in a complaint last week by Yintao Yu, the head of engineering for ByteDance's U.S. operations from August 2017 to November 2018, as part of a wrongful termination lawsuit filed earlier this month in San Francisco Superior Court. Yu claims he was fired for disclosing "wrongful conduct" he saw at the company.

In the complaint, Yu alleges the Chinese government monitored ByteDance's work from within its Beijing headquarters and "provided guidance on advancing core communist values."

Yu said government officials had the ability to turn off the Chinese version of ByteDance's apps, and maintained access to all



company data, "including information stored in the United States."

ByteDance did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The allegations come as TikTok - one of the most popular social media apps in the U.S. - faces heightened scrutiny in Washington and some states about whether it can keep American data safe from the Chinese government. The Biden administration has threatened to ban the app if its Chinese owners don't sell their stakes.

TikTok maintains it never gave U.S. user data to Chi-

na's government and wouldn't do so if it was asked. In an effort to avoid a ban, it also wants to store U.S. user data on servers operated by the software giant Oracle.

In another attention-grabbing part of the lawsuit, Yu alleges he observed ByteDance promoting content that expressed "hatred for Japan on Douyin," the Chinese version of TikTok. At another time, he said the company "demoted content that showed support for the protests in Hong Kong while promoting content that expressed criticism of the protests."

He alleges the company

would then repost the content on its own websites - including TikTok - to attract more engagement from users.

Yu said a fellow TikTok executive in charge of the video-sharing app's algorithm waved off his concerns.

The former executive also alleges the company "created fake users to boost its engagement metrics," including by programming them to "like" and "follow" real accounts.

Yu is seeking punitive damage, lost earnings and 220,000 ByteDance shares that had not vested by the time he was fired. **MDT/AP**

REAL ESTATE

CHINESE DEVELOPMENT FIRM FINED \$4 MILLION IN LA BRIBERY CASE

A company owned by a billionaire Chinese real estate developer was fined \$4 million for bribing a Los Angeles city councilmember for help in getting a downtown skyscraper approved.

Shenzhen New World I LLC was given the maximum penalty and was also placed on five years of probation, according to a statement from the U.S. Department of Justice.

During the sentencing hearing, U.S. District Judge John F. Walter said the case exposed the "crushing costs of public corruption," according to the statement.

A federal jury found the company guilty last year of bribery, honest services wire fraud and interstate and foreign travel in aid of bribery.

Shenzhen's owner, Wei Huang, 57, also was charged in the federal case but he is a fugitive and "is believed to be in China," prosecutors said.

From 2013 to 2018, Shenzhen provided more than \$1 million worth of bribes to José Huizar to help obtain city approval to build a 77-story tower that would have been the tallest skyscraper west of the Mississippi River, prosecutors said.

It was never built.

At the time, the councilmember chaired the city's powerful Planning and Land Use Management Committee.

Huizar allegedly received cash, casino gambling chips, luxury stays in Las Vegas, expensive meals, prostitution services, political contributions and funds to settle a sexual harassment lawsuit.

However, the project wasn't approved.

Prosecutors say the bribes were part of Huizar's pay-to-play scheme tied to approval of downtown developments.

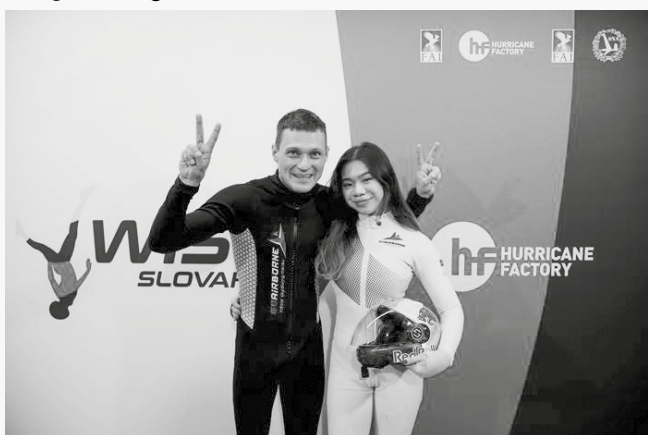
Huizar pleaded guilty in January to racketeering conspiracy and tax evasion. He's scheduled to be sentenced on Sept. 25. Under a plea agreement, Huizar agreed to seek a sentence of at least nine years in prison, prosecutors said.

Last week's sentencing was the latest step in a sweeping and ongoing City Hall corruption probe.

In addition to Huizar, a half-dozen other people have been convicted or pleaded guilty to federal charges, including Huizar's brother, Salvador Huizar; a former Huizar special assistant, a Huizar fundraiser, a lobbyist and another real estate developer. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

FAI Announces 5th World Cup of Indoor Skydiving 2024 in GoAirborne Macau



The 5th FAI World Cup of Indoor Skydiving 2024 will be held in GoAirborne Macau, a first for Asia, FAI announced. The ambassador of GoAir-

borne Macau Kyra Poh and Toms Ivans won the gold and bronze medals, respectively, in the Solo Freestyle event at the 4th

FAI World Indoor Skydiving Championships 2023 (WISC) held from April 19 to 22 in Slovakia.

"I look forward to seeing every flyer in the world in Macau next year," the ambassador and chief instructor of GoAirborne Macau Toms Ivans said in a statement.

Skydiving has been growing in popularity in recent years, from a leisure activity to a globally recognized sport, gathering more than 250 athletes from all around the world for its fourth competition.

Following this success, the organization committee for the 2024 Paris Olympics proposed Indoor Skydiving as an event.

Sands China launches 'Sands Resorts Incubation Centre' program



Sands China launched its new "Sands Resorts Incubation Centre" program during a press conference held in The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo during Beyond Expo. This program, which will

include a series of targeted seminars and competitions, is aimed at encouraging technological innovation, to discover local innovative enterprises with development potential, and to in-

troduce innovative solutions for smart integrated resorts.

"Smart tourism is a pivotal direction and trend in today's tourism industry," president of Sands China, Wilfred Wong, said in a statement.

In addition to the launch of the 'Sands Resorts Incubation Centre program', Sands China signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Parafuturo de Macau Investment and Development Limited (PFM) directed at working together with PFM's Macau Young Entrepreneur Incubation Centre to identify potential enterprises through periodic workshops, classroom trainings, and competition events.



Yoshimasa Hayashi (center) is received by Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom (left) and EU High Representative Josep Borrell for the EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum

DEFENSE

China and Russia increasing military collaboration: Japan FM

JAPANESE Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi expressed concern yesterday [Macau time] about Russian and Chinese military cooperation in Asia and said the security situation in Europe could not be separated from that in the Indo-Pacific region since Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Speaking at a meeting of European and Indo-Pacific foreign ministers in Sweden, Hayashi said Russia's war in Ukraine had "shaken the very foundation of the international order" and must face a united response by the international community.

"Otherwise, similar challenges will arise in other regions and the existing order which has underpinned our peace and prosperity could be fundamentally overturned," Hayashi said.

Japan firmly backs Ukraine in the war but China says it remains neutral while declaring a "no limits" relationship with Moscow and blaming the U.S. and NATO for provoking the conflict.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, in March at the same time as Chinese President Xi Jinping met Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Moscow.

Hayashi accused Beijing of "continuing and intensifying its unilateral attempts" to change the status quo in the East and South China seas by force and increasing its military activities

around Taiwan.

"In addition, China and Russia are strengthening their military collaboration, including joint flights of their bombers and joint naval exercises in the vicinity of Japan," Hayashi said.

China, which claims most of the South China Sea as well as Japanese-held islands in the East China Sea, says it has the right to defend its sovereignty and development interests.

Hayashi also warned that North Korea was "escalating provocations" in the region by conducting ballistic missile launches "with a frequency and in a manner that are unprecedented."

"We can perfectly discuss the Indo-Pacific without China. It doesn't mean we neglect China. It doesn't mean we want to substitute China."

JOSEP BORRELL
EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE

He joined dozens of ministers from the European Union and the Indo-Pacific region for the meeting just north of the Swedish capital. China was not invited to the talks.

"Since the aggression of Russia to Ukraine, the security situation here in Europe and the security situation in the Pacific are not separable," Hayashi said as he arrived.

Some of the Indo-Pacific countries, including India and Pakistan, have called for an end to the Ukraine war but stopped short of condemning Russia for it.

"We all try and address it in our own different ways," Pakistani Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar said. "I think a lesson a country like Pakistan has learned is that percolation of conflict is never the answer; that we want an end to hostilities, an end to conflict, so people can go back to building lives rather than destroying more lives."

Most EU countries have provided military support to Ukraine and the bloc has imposed sanctions on Russia. Asked whether the EU was hoping to convince Indo-Pacific countries to align with the bloc's stance on the conflict, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said, "We don't want to convince anyone. We just want to share our analysis of the causes and consequences of the war."

He dismissed a question about whether it was possible to have a meaningful dialogue with the Indo-Pacific countries without China, saying the EU had plenty of other opportunities to talk to Beijing.

"We can perfectly discuss the Indo-Pacific without China," Borrell said. "It doesn't mean we neglect China. It doesn't mean we want to substitute China. I don't see where the problem is." **MDT/AP**

CRIME

Man suspected of killing multiple people apprehended

A person suspected of killing seven people and injuring 11 was grabbed by police in Lyuliang city, Shanxi province, the local government released yesterday.

According to the release, cited by China Daily a man surnamed Guo, 27, injured a 21-year-old woman as a result of an emotional dispute in Xingxian county, Lyuliang, on Saturday afternoon and

thereafter killed her mother-in-law, her husband and her son. After that, the suspect drove to escape, during which he hit a police officer and 13 passerbys. Altogether, seven died and 11 were injured.

The case is still under further investigation and a joint task force has been set up to carry out relative work, the release said. **CHINA DAILY**

EV

REGULATORS ORDER RECALL OF 1.1M TESLAS TO FIX PROBLEM THAT RAISES CRASH RISK

CHINESE safety regulators have ordered Tesla to recall 1.1 million vehicles because drivers might step on the accelerator pedal for too long, increasing the risk of a crash.

The State Administration for Market Regulation said in a notice last week that the recall involves imported Model S, X and 3 models as well as the Chinese-made Models Y and 3. The models were produced between January 12, 2019 and April 24, 2023, but it wasn't clear from the notice whether those dates applied only to the Chinese-made vehicles.

The recall, which starts May 29, was triggered because drivers aren't able to select the regenerative braking system and because of the lack of a warning when they press hard on the accelerator pedal, the watchdog said on its website.

The combination of these issues "may increase the probability of mistakenly stepping on the accelerator pedal for a long time, which may increase the risk of collision and pose a safety hazard," it said.

Regenerative braking takes energy that would be lost from stopping a vehicle and uses it to help recharge the battery in electric and gas-electric hybrid vehicles. When it's operating, vehicles don't coast as well as they do without it.

Tesla will use an online software update to fix the problem, the regulator said.

It wasn't clear whether the recall would be extended to other markets. The U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says it's aware of the China recall and is getting more information from Tesla. A message was left Friday seeking comment from Tesla. **MDT/AP**



THAILAND

Vote counting underway in key election with opposition favored to win

GRANT PECK, BANGKOK

VOTE counting was underway yesterday in Thailand's general election, touted as a pivotal chance for change nine years after incumbent Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha first came to power in a 2014 coup. He is now running against the daughter of the politician who is the military's top nemesis.

The polls closed at 5 p.m. and some results were expected in early evening, with a fuller picture coming later last night, after print. Thai elections use paper ballots that are counted publicly at polling stations.

The opposition Pheu Thai Party, headed by Paetongtarn Shinawatra, is widely predicted to win at least a healthy plurality of the seats in the 500-member lower House. After casting her ballot, Paetongtarn said every vote is important for effecting change in Thailand and that she has high hopes for the final result.

But who heads the next government won't be decided by yesterday's vote alone. The prime minister will be selected in July in a joint session of the House and the 250-seat Senate. The winner must secure at least 376 votes and no party is likely to do that on its own.

Pheu Thai won the most seats in the last election in 2019, but its



Paetongtarn Shinawatra, one of the prime minister candidates from Pheu Thai Party, speaks to media casting her vote in Bangkok

archival, the military-backed Palang Pracharath Party, succeeded in cobbling together a coalition with Prayuth as prime minister. It relied on unanimous support from the Senate, whose members share the military's conservative outlook and were appointed by the military government after Prayuth's coup.

Prayuth is running for reelection, although the military this year has split its support between two parties. Prayuth is backed by the United Thai Nation Party; his deputy prime minister, Prawit

Wongsuwan, another former general, is the standard bearer for Palang Pracharath.

Prayuth has been blamed for a stuttering economy, shortcomings in addressing the pandemic and thwarting democratic reforms, a particular sore point with younger voters. At his polling station, he also encouraged people to come out to vote.

"The increased youth vote and general awareness of the damage caused by military rule are key factors likely to determine the results of this election," said Tyrell

Haberkorn, a Thai studies specialist at the University of Wisconsin. "After nine years of military rule, people are ready for a change, even those who were not interested in rocking the boat before."

Pheu Thai is the latest in a string of parties linked to populist billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra, who was ousted as prime minister by an army coup in 2006. Paetongtarn Shinawatra is his daughter. Her aunt, Yingluck Shinawatra, who became prime minister in 2011, was toppled in the coup led by Prayuth.

Pheu Thai and Paetongtarn, the most popular of the party's three registered candidates for prime minister, are strides ahead of the competition in the opinion polls. But there is no sign that the country's military-backed conservative establishment has warmed to them.

"I think the conservative-royalist side, underpinning the military, the monarchy, their backs are against the wall. Change is coming and they have to find a way to deal with it," said Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a political scientist at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University.

That means Pheu Thai will have to tread carefully after the election in choosing possible coalition partners.

The Move Forward Party is polling second and is its ideological bedfellow in seeking to clip the military's wings. But its outspoken support for minor reforms of the monarchy, while winning younger voters, is unacceptable to most conservatives to whom the institution is sacrosanct, and scares off other possible coalition partners.

Many believe that Pheu Thai might look in the other direction for a partner, by cutting a deal with the Palang Pracharath Party and its leader, Prawit, who is less associated with the 2014 coup and the hard line Prayuth has pursued. MDT/AP

PHILIPPINES

Court acquits former justice secretary of drug charges

A former Philippine opposition senator and justice secretary was acquitted of drug charges after key witnesses recanted and said they had lied about her involvement in narcotics trafficking.

Leila de Lima, 63, remained jailed, however, as she has one outstanding charge against her.

De Lima has been detained since 2017 on drug charges she says were fabricated by former President Rodrigo Duterte and his officials in an attempt to muzzle her criticism of his deadly crackdown on illegal drugs. His campaign left thousands of mostly petty suspects dead and sparked

an International Criminal Court investigation as a possible crime against humanity.

Duterte, who has insisted on de Lima's guilt, left office last June at the end of his turbulent six-year term.

Last Friday, trial court judge Abraham Alcantara said in his ruling that a former senior police official's recantation led to his decision to acquit de Lima.

"Without his testimony, the crucial link to establish conspiracy is shrouded with reasonable doubt," he wrote, "which warrants the acquittal."

As supporters surrounded her police escort and chanted "free Leila de Lima"

outside the court, she said she felt vindicated.

"Answered prayers, this is a glorious day, this is the beginning of my vindication. May I say this to my oppressors: You can never crucify the truth," she said as she was surrounded by police.

Prosecution witness Rafael Ragos, a former head of the Bureau of Corrections, retracted a claim to have delivered money from drug lords to de Lima and said he had been forced by government officials to make it.

De Lima said through her attorney that she was looking forward to her full acquittal on all charges. She has been held in pretrial detention since her arrest wi-

thout any convictions.

"I have no doubt from the very beginning that I will be acquitted from all the cases the Duterte regime has fabricated against me based on the merits and strength of my innocence. That's already two cases down and one more to go," she said in a statement read out by lawyer, Boni F. Tacardon.

"I am of course happy that with this second acquittal in the three cases filed against me, my release from more than six years of persecution draws nearer. I am extremely grateful to those who stood by and prayed for me all these years," she added. MDT/AP



Detained former opposition Senator Leila de Lima reacts as she goes out of the Muntinlupa trial court

G7 Finance chiefs show renewed support for Ukraine, but avoid to mention China

ELAINE KURTENBACH
NIIGATA

THE Group of Seven's top financial leaders united yesterday [Macau time] in their support for Ukraine and their determination to enforce sanctions against Russia for its aggression but stopped short of any overt mention of China.

The finance ministers and central bank chiefs ended three days of talks in Niigata, Japan, with a joint statement pledging to bring inflation under control, help countries struggling with onerous debts and strengthen financial systems.

They also committed to collaborating to build more stable, diversified supply chains for developing clean energy sources and to "enhance economic resilience globally against various shocks."

The statement did not include any specific mention of China or of "economic coercion" in pursuit of political objectives, such as penalizing the companies of countries whose governments take actions that anger another country.

Talk this week of such moves by China had drawn outraged rebukes from Beijing. Officials attending the talks in this port city apparently balked at overtly condemning China, given the huge stake most countries have in good relations with the rising power and No. 2 economy.

The finance leaders' talks laid the groundwork for a summit of G-7 leaders in Hiroshima next week that President Joe Biden is expected to attend despite a crisis over the U.S. debt ceiling that could result in a national default if it is not resolved in the coming weeks.

Japanese Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki said that Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen mentioned the issue in a working dinner, but he refrained from saying anything more.

While in Niigata, Yellen warned that a failure to raise the debt ceiling to enable the government to continue paying its bills would bring an economic catastrophe, destroying hundreds of thousands of jobs and potentially disrupting glo-



bal financial systems. No mention of the issue was made in the finance leaders' statement.

The G-7's devotion to protecting what it calls a "rules-based international order" got only a passing mention.

The leaders pledge to work together both within the G-7 and with other countries to "enhance economic resilience globally against various shocks, stand firm to protect our shared values, and preserve economic efficiency by upholding the free, fair and rules-based multilateral system," it said.

G-7 economies comprise only a tenth of the world's population but about 30% of economic activity, down from roughly half 40 years ago. Developing economies like China, India and Brazil have made huge gains, raising questions about the G-7's relevance and role in leading a world economy increasingly reliant on growth in less wealthy nations.

China had blasted as hypocrisy assertions by the U.S. and other G-7 countries that they are safeguarding a "rules-based international order" against "economic coercion" from Beijing and other threats.

China itself is a victim of economic coercion, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said late last week.

"If any country should be criticized for economic coercion, it should be the United States. The U.S. has been overstretching the concept of national security, abusing export controls and taking discriminatory and unfair measures

against foreign companies," Wang said in a routine news briefing.

China accuses Washington of hindering its rise as an increasingly affluent, modern nation through trade and investment restrictions. Yellen said they are "narrowly targeted" to protect American economic security.

Despite recent turmoil in the banking industry, the G-7 statement said the financial system was "resilient" thanks to reforms implemented during the 2008 global financial crisis.

"Nevertheless, we need to remain vigilant and stay agile and flexible in our macroeconomic policy amid heightened uncertainty about the global economic outlook," it said.

Meanwhile, inflation remains "elevated" and central banks are determined to bring it under control, it said.

Since prices remain "sticky," some countries may see continued rate hikes, said Kazuo Ueda, Japan's central bank governor. "The impact of the rate hikes has not been fully realized," he told reporters.

Japan won support for its call for a "partnership" to strengthen supply chains to reduce the risk of disruptions similar to those seen during the pandemic, when supplies of items of all kinds, from medicines to toilet paper to high-tech computer chips, ran short in many countries.

Suzuki said details of that plan would be worked out later.

"Through the pandemic, we learned that supply chains

tended to depend on a limited number of countries or one country," he said, adding that economic security hinges on helping more countries develop their capacity to supply critical minerals and other products needed as the world switches to carbon-emissions-free energy.

Tensions with China, and with Russia over its war on Ukraine, inevitably loomed large during the talks in Japan, the G-7's only Asian member.

"We call for an immediate end of Russia's illegal war against Ukraine, which would clear one of the biggest uncertainties over the global economic outlook," the joint statement said.

The financial leaders took time to listen to ideas on how to focus more on welfare in policymaking, rather than just GDP and other numerical indicators that often drive decisions with profound impacts on people's wellbeing.

"These efforts will help preserve confidence in democracy and a market-based economy, which are the core values of the G-7," the finance leaders' statement concluded.

Suzuki said he and other leaders learned much from a seminar by Columbia University economist Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel prize winner who worked in the Clinton administration and who has championed what he calls "progressive capitalism."

It's a "very interesting view," Suzuki said, adding that "so far, we've been mostly focused on GDP and other numerical indicators." MDT/AP

this day in history

1957 BRITAIN DROPS ITS FIRST H-BOMB



Britain has exploded its first hydrogen bomb as part of a series of tests in the Pacific, the Ministry of Supply has announced.

Details of the bomb, described only as a "nuclear device", are sketchy. The term "device" indicates that it was an experimental explosive rather than a fully developed weapon.

It was almost certainly part of the thermonuclear weapons programme which was started in December 1954 to develop the megaton hydrogen bomb, which is as powerful as one million tons of TNT.

The test was carried out at high altitude over the largely uninhabited Christmas Island to minimise nuclear fall-out.

This is the most important range of tests carried out by Britain, developed with limited resources and in a remarkably short space of time.

Scientists have taken two years to develop the tests compared with their American counterparts who took seven years before exploding their first device.

The bomb was dropped by a four-engined jet, Valiant of No 49 Squadron RAF Bomber Command, normally based at RAF Wittering, Northants.

The Minister of Supply, Aubrey Jones, was informed of the Pacific nuclear trials by Air Vice-Marshal WE Oulton, commander of the task force and WRJ Cook, scientific director of the program.

Scientists are evaluating the results of the testing and will make a further statement in the next few days.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The tests raised a major debate about the dangers of nuclear weapons and led to the founding in 1958 of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament which pressed for British, and ultimately international, abandonment of nuclear weapons.

The Cold War and the arms race between the superpowers reached a peak by the 1960s. Then relations thawed and in 1963 the Soviet Union, the UK, the USA and many other countries agreed a Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Don't let someone take the credit for a job you did. Arguments could prevail. You will have a great deal of insight when dealing with others.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
 You could be cornered, so be prepared to tell the truth. Family outings that aren't expensive will be enjoyable and help strengthen ties.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
 Try to visit a country that excites you. Take time to do some writing, whether it's correspondence, poetry, or keeping a journal.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Friends may not be completely honest with you. Exercise your talents and present your ideas to groups you think you can contribute to.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 You will be able to make financial gains. Be cautious of making any residential changes today. You will have splendid suggestions for fund raising events.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Uncertainties about your personal life are probable. Be prepared to deal with groups and organizations of greater magnitude.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Property investments, insurance, tax rebates, or inheritance should bring you financial gains. Lending and borrowing may be a problem.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Any intimate relationships with colleagues will lead to gossip that could easily affect your position. Call a good friend. Jealousy may get in the way of a good relationship.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Romantic opportunities will be plentiful if you get out and mingle. Travel if it's needed to start the ball rolling. You need adventure and excitement in your life.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Don't push your luck with authority. Your passionate mood will be well received by your mate. You may be tempted to get involved in secret affairs or love triangles.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Try to be precise in your communications. Find ways to make extra cash. Start making things or reusing rather than buying ready made. Don't let your personal partner hold you back.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Try to be understanding. You can make money if you put your mind to it. Do not let the reactions of others get you going. Problems with ear, nose, or the throat are likely.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	16	35	fine
Changchun	14	25	cloudy
Chengdu	17	29	overcast
Chongqing	20	29	cloudy
Fuzhou	19	29	overcast
Guangzhou	20	29	cloudy
Guiyang	14	24	cloudy
Haikou	22	29	cloudy
Hangzhou	18	32	overcast
Harbin	13	20	thunderstorms
Hefei	16	34	cloudy
Nanjing	20	33	fine
Shanghai	21	33	fine
Taipei	20	25	overcast
Wuhan	20	31	fine
Hong Kong	22	24	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	8	21	overcast
Frankfurt	10	20	rain
Paris	7	15	rain
London	7	17	cloudy
New York	12	26	fine

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Lawsuits; 6- Arrived; 10- Recipe amt; 14- Bikini blast; 15- Sea east of the Caspian; 16- Comic Rudner; 17- Pave over; 18- ___ dancing is popular with cowboys; 19- Citrus coolers; 20- Muesli morsel; 21- Promotion in rank; 24- Chocolate chewy cake; 26- Walk stealthily; 27- Show stoppers?; 28- Food and water; 30- Dress often worn by Hindu women; 33- Composer Debussy; 35- Advanced degree?; 38- Summits of buildings; 40- Leb. neighbor; 41- Like non-oyster months; 43- Cheer for Manolete; 44- Native drum; 47- Encourage in wrongdoing; 48- Marshal; 49- Boat propeller; 51- Separated; 54- Taller and thinner; 58- Arrogant; 61- Compass dir.; 62- Ornamental fabric; 63- Hwys.; 64- Goes the distance; 66- Sets of equipment; 67- Bibliography abbr.; 68- Tennis champ Chris; 69- Very much; 70- Challenge to complete a task; 71- Gives a 9.8. say;

DOWN 1- Chocolate substitute; 2- Shed ___; 3- Brief brawl; 4- Conductor ___-Pekka Salonen; 5- Leave high and dry; 6- Have a cow?; 7- Type of song, to be sung solo; 8- Jazz flutist Herbie; 9- Voted into a seat; 10- Vagrants; 11- Bathroom fixture; 12- Pad user; 13- Cut's partner; 22- Round object, often used to store computer data; 23- Duck with soft down; 25- Street urchin; 28- Beastly; 29- Monetary unit of Spain; 30- B'way hit sign; 31- "You've got mail" co.; 32- School of the future?; 34- Capital of Peru; 35- Kan. neighbor; 36- "Cats" monogram; 37- DDE's predecessor; 39- Sprinkle; 42- Songbird; 45- Commanded; 46- Lament; 48- Still; 50- Fisherman; 51- Lively Bohemian dance; 52- Be of use to; 53- Verso's opposite; 54- Cotton thread used for hosiery; 55- Atlas feature; 56- ___ nous; 57- Reposes; 59- Bluesy James; 60- At hand; 65- Actress Gardner;

Friday's solution

A	L	G	I	D	A	L	A	S	N	E	S	T
S	O	U	S	E	L	O	V	E	E	L	I	A
S	C	A	R	F	I	B	R	E	T	V	E	R
T	O	R	E	A	S	E	S	L	I	N	E	S
A	P	A	R	T	A	H	E	A	D			
O	F	N	O	T	E	I	N	L	A	W		
R	O	T	E	K	N	E	E	S	A	R	I	
X	E	M	P	L	I	F	I	C	A	T	I	O
L	I	V	E	H	O	T	E	L	A	L	A	R
L	A	T	E	R	H	A	R	A	R	E		
B	R	A	S	S	R	I	S	O	N			
A	R	E	T	E	K	R	U	P	P	T	R	A
L	A	T	H	L	I	E	S	E	T	H	A	N
T	I	R	E	C	L	I	E	C	O	U	N	T
O	N	O	R	I	N	N	S	T	A	S	T	E

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
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 Telephone - Report 1000
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POP MUSIC

Swedish singer Loreen wins Eurovision Song Contest

JILL LAWLESS, LIVERPOOL

SWEDISH singer Loreen won the Eurovision Song Contest on Saturday night [early yesterday, Macau time] with her power ballad “Tattoo,” at a colorful, eclectic music competition clouded for a second year running by the war in Ukraine.

The diva from Stockholm beat acts from 25 other countries to take the continent’s pop crown at the final of the competition in Liverpool. Finnish singer Käärijä was second in a close-fought battle of the Nordic neighbors.

Loreen, 39, previously won Eurovision in 2012 and is only the second performer to take the prize twice, after Ireland’s Johnny Logan in the 1980s. It’s Sweden’s seventh Eurovision victory, matching Ireland’s record.

“I am seriously overwhelmed,” Loreen said. “This is so beautiful.”

She said returning to the contest that helped make her a star was “like coming back to a family. We’ve had an 11-year-long relationship. We know each other by now.”

Britain hosted Eurovision on behalf of Ukraine, which won last year but couldn’t take up its right to hold the contest because of the war. Air raid sirens sounded across Ukraine as the contest was underway, and Ukrainian media reported a strike in Ternopil, home town of Ukraine’s Eurovision entry, Tvorchi.

Under the slogan “united by music,” Eurovision final fused the soul of the English port city that birthed The Beatles with the spirit of war-battered Ukraine.

The sights and sounds of Ukraine ran through the show, starting with an opening film that showed 2022 Eurovision winners Kalush Orchestra singing and dancing in the Kyiv subway, with the tune picked up by musicians in the U.K. — including Kate, Princess of Wales, shown playing the piano.

The folk-rap band itself then emerged onstage in the Liverpool Arena on a giant pair of outstretched hands, accompanied by massed drummers.

Contestants from the 26 finalist nations entered the arena in an Olympics-style flag parade, accompanied by live performances from Ukrainian acts including Go A, Jamala, Tina Karol and Verka Serduchka — all past Eurovision competitors.

Now in its 67th year, Eurovision bills itself as the world’s biggest music contest — an Olympiad of



AP PHOTO

Loreen of Sweden performs during the Grand Final of the Eurovision Song Contest in Liverpool

party-friendly pop. Competitors each have three minutes to meld catchy tunes and eye-popping spectacle into performances capable of winning the hearts of millions of viewers.

Loreen’s anthem of intense love had been the bookies’ favorite and won by far the most votes from professional juries in Eurovision’s complex voting system. She faced a strong challenge from Käärijä, a wildly energetic performer whose rap-pop party anthem “Cha Cha Cha” won the public vote.

Israel’s Noa Kirel came in third with power-pop anthem “Unicorn,” while Italy’s Marco Mengoni was fourth with his ballad “Due Vite” (Two Lives).

The varied tastes of the con-

tinents were on display in a contest that took in the cabaret-style singing of Portugal’s Mimita, the Britney-esque power pop of Poland’s Blanka, echoes of Edith Piaf from La Zarra for France and smoldering balladry from Cyprus’ entry, Andrew Lambrou.

From Australia — a Eurovision contender despite its far-away location — guitar band Voyager evoked head-banging ‘80s stadium rock. Croatia’s Let 3 offered a surreal antiwar rock opera, and Austrian duo Teya & Salena sent up the music industry in Poe-referencing song “Who the Hell is Edgar?”

Electronica duo Tvorchi paid tribute to Ukraine’s resilience on “Heart of Steel,” coming sixth.

Britain’s Mae Muller drew the unenviable final performance slot of the night with her jaunty breakup anthem “I Wrote a Song.” She came in second to last place — but at least avoided the humiliation of getting “nul points,” or zero points.

While votes were cast and counted, Sam Ryder, last year’s runner-up for Britain, performed his new single “Mountain,” accompanied by Queen drummer Roger Taylor. A “Liverpool Songbook” segment featured past Eurovision stars performing songs from the city, including John Lennon’s “Imagine,” “You Spin Me Round (Like a Record)” by Dead or Alive and the unofficial civic anthem “You’ll Never Walk Alone”

— with the audience joining in, as a tribute to both Liverpool and Ukraine.

About 6,000 fans watched the show inside the arena, and tens of thousands more at a Liverpool fan zone and at big-screen events across the U.K. The global television audience has been estimated at 160 million.

Under spring sunshine, fans flocked in their thousands to a Eurovision party zone in the city’s dockside area ahead of the contest. Many were draped in flags of their favored nations or dressed as their favorite acts.

“Just to come down and see people from all different nationalities, all different cultures — it’s good fun,” said Australian Martin Troedel, sporting a kangaroo on his hat. “Frankly there’s some quite odd acts, which is what I love about it. You never know what to expect.”

Liverpool embraced Eurovision, and Ukraine, with businesses across the city flying Ukrainian flags and a program of cultural events introducing locals to the art, music and food of the eastern European country.

But organizers said they turned down a request by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to make a video address. The European Broadcasting Union said that would breach “the nonpolitical nature of the event.”

Founded in 1956, Eurovision is a European cultural institution that has produced breakout stars — ABBA and Celine Dion are both past winners — alongside performers whose careers sank without a trace.

In recent years, it has once again become a platform that can launch stars. Italian rock band Måneskin, who won in 2021, have played major U.S. festivals and opened for the Rolling Stones on tour. Ryder has had a No. 1 album and performed at the Glas- tonbury festival.

“Now, the music industry, the world, knows that if you appear at Eurovision, you could be in for a great thing,” said Steve Holden, host of the official Eurovision Song Contest podcast. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

Jere Poyhonen AKA Kaarija of Finland



Jere Poyhonen AKA Kaarija of Finland

OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

CHINA AND EUROPE
CAN BE BALLAST
FOR PEACE

There are many common interests between China and the European countries despite their ideological differences. Among these is a shared desire for peace in Ukraine.

An end to the conflict would benefit not just Ukraine and Russia, but also China, the whole of Europe and the rest of the world. The conflict has been one of the factors driving up global inflation. It has caused grain, gas and other material shortages, as supply chains have been broken. Quarrels and antagonism among various parties have also been exacerbated by the hostilities.

Since it has taken a principled position on the crisis rather than simply choosing sides, this dissension has been focused on China. As a result, the conflict has prompted intensifying calls within the US-led camp for decoupling from China.

But with the spillover effects from the crisis worsening, an increasing number of countries are now acknowledging that "an overly simplified or emotionally driven approach" is not the right way forward. Which was something that Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang stressed during his visit to Germany on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Reiterating that China is neither the one that created the conflict nor a party to it, Qin reminded his hosts that China has been a consistent advocate for peace and the building of a balanced, effective and durable European security architecture.

Qin was visiting Germany within a month of his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock visiting China. It is to be hoped that Germany is gaining more awareness of China's sincerity in working for peace and urging the two countries to join hands to share the dividends of development.

Although German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told European Union lawmakers on Tuesday that he agrees with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen that "we should not aim for a de-coupling" from China, he also added his voice to hers in calling for "smart de-risking".

In fact, what many in Germany and European countries seem to hope will happen is that they can continue to follow the United States' lead while China will leverage its friendly relations with Russia to accept a peace deal dictated by Washington.

But, as Qin told his hosts on Wednesday, what China brings to the world are opportunities, cooperation, stability and reassurance, not crises, confrontation, turmoil or risks. Its 12-point peace proposal is a workable basis on which concerted efforts can be made to secure a cease-fire in Ukraine and get the conflicting parties to negotiate a deal in good faith that will produce durable peace.

FIFA FUND FOR UNPAID WAGES HELPS 225 PLAYERS AT CLUBS AROUND THE WORLD

THE BUZZ

A FIFA fund to compensate for unpaid wages helped 225 players in the latest round of payments, including 61 in Portugal and 50 in Greece, the governing body of soccer said.

The \$16 million FIFA Fund for Football Players was created in 2020 with the FIFPRO player union. Some clubs were suspected of closing down to avoid paying salaries and then re-started anew as a "phoenix" operation.

FIFA allocated \$4 million to applications for financial help from the 2021 calendar year.

The payments included 22 for players from Greek club Doxa Dra-

ma, plus 19 from CD Aves and 18 from Uniao da Madeira in Portugal.

Cases in China came from Shanghai Shenxin, Beijing Renhe, Tai-zhou Yuanda and Guangdong South China Tiger.

"Given that it's deeply frustrating for players not to receive their salaries, we're pleased that the FIFA (fund) is again providing them with a safety net to ensure that they receive part of what they are owed," FIFPRO legal director Roy Vermeer said in a statement.

FIFA said 1,370 players have been helped by the fund, and \$4 million has been set aside for a final cycle of applications through 2022.

AP PHOTO



Preacher Paul Mackenzie (right), who was arrested two weeks ago for asking his followers to starve to death in order to meet Jesus, appears at a court in Malindi, Kenya, early May

KENYA CULT DEATH TOLL
HITS 200, WITH MORE THAN
600 REPORTED MISSING

EVELYNE MUSAMBI,
NAIROBI

THE death toll linked to a doomsday cult in Kenya hit 201 Saturday after police exhumed 22 more bodies, most of them bearing signs of starvation, according to the coast regional commissioner.

The bodies are believed to be those of followers of a pastor based in coastal Kenya, Paul Mackenzie. He's alleged to have ordered congregants to starve to death in order to meet Jesus.

More than 600 people are still missing.

Mackenzie, who was arrested last month, remains in custody. Police plan to charge him with terrorism-related offenses.

Hundreds of bodies have been dug up from dozens of mass graves spread across his 800-acre property, located in the coastal county of Kilifi.

Mackenzie insists that he closed his church in

2019 and moved to his property in a forested area to farm.

Autopsies conducted on more than 100 bodies last week showed the victims died of starvation, strangulation, suffocation and injuries sustained from blunt objects.

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Local media outlets have been reporting cases of missing internal body organs, quoting investigators in the case.

Mackenzie, his wife and 16 other suspects will appear in court at the end of the month.

Coast regional commissioner Rhoda Onyancha on Saturday said the total number of those arrested stood at 26, with 610 people reported as missing by

their families.

It is unclear how many survivors have been rescued so far from the search and rescue operations on Mackenzie's vast property. Some of them were too weak to walk when they were found.

Cults are common in Kenya, which has a religious society.

Police across the country have been questioning other religious leaders whose teachings are believed to be misleading and contrary to basic human rights.

President William Ruto last week formed a

commission of inquiry to investigate how hundreds of people were lured to their deaths at the coast and recommend action on institutions that failed to act.

Mackenzie had in the past been charged with the deaths of children in his church in a case that is ongoing in court. Residents nearby had raised the alarm after his followers moved to the forested area. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Germany will provide Ukraine with additional military aid worth more than 2.7 billion euros, including tanks, anti-aircraft systems and ammunition, the government said. The announcement came on the eve of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's first visit to Germany since Russia invaded his country last year. Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said that Berlin wanted to show with the latest package of arms "that Germany is serious in its support" for Ukraine.

AP PHOTO



Germany Voters are going to the polls in the country's northern state of Bremen to decide whether the center-left Social Democrats should continue to run a city they've governed since World War II. The party of Chancellor Olaf Scholz came second behind its conservative rivals for the first time in 70 years at the last election, but retained power with the help of the Greens and Left party. While recent polls show greater support for the Social Democrats than their challengers from the Christian Democratic Union, both of Mayor Andreas Bovenschulte's junior coalition partners have lost ground.

AP PHOTO



Serbian authorities yesterday displayed many of around 13,500 weapons they say people have been handed over since this month's mass shootings, including hand grenades, automatic weapons, and anti-tank rocket launchers. The authorities have declared a one-month amnesty period for citizens to hand over unregistered weapons or face prison sentences as part of a crackdown on guns following the two mass shootings that left 17 people dead, many of them children.