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**THE COOPERATION ZONE IN HENGQIN SAW THE ISSUANCE OF THE FIRST CORPORATE BOND IN THE REGION BY ZHUHAI-BASED HUAFA INVESTMENT HOLDINGS**

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**MILITARY IMPORTED \$1B IN WEAPONS TO MYANMAR SINCE 2021 COUP: UN EXPERT**

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AP PHOTO



**Singapore** Wednesday hanged another citizen for trafficking cannabis, the second in three weeks, as it clung firmly to the death penalty despite growing calls for the city-state to halt drug-related executions. The 37-year-old man was executed after his last-ditch bid to reopen his case was dismissed by the court Tuesday without a hearing, said the Transformative Justice Collective, which advocates for abolishing the death penalty in Singapore.

AP PHOTO



**Thailand** The leader of the progressive opposition party that won a stunning victory in national election said yesterday that eight parties have agreed to form a coalition government with him as prime minister, despite fears among supporters that his military-aligned opponents may use the unelected Senate to block them. Move Forward Party leader Pita Limjaroenrat said that the proposed coalition would have a total of 313 seats in the House of Representatives, a solid majority of its 500 members.

AP PHOTO



**Japan** racked up a trade deficit in April, marking the 21st month in a row of deficits, although it declined dramatically compared to a year ago, as exports recovered, according to government data released yesterday. Japan's trade deficit totaled 432.4 billion yen (\$3.2 billion) in April, as exports gained 2.6% and imports fell 2.3%, the Finance Ministry said.

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# NATIONAL SECURITY BILL IN FORCE



Macau and central governments 'satisfied' the new National Security Law passed with unanimous vote at the AL plenary - without much discussion ▲ P3

**TOURISM**

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EMILY KATZ

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

## PHILOSOPHY

# THREE LESSONS FROM ARISTOTLE ON FRIENDSHIP

WHILE most love songs are inspired by the joys and heartaches of romantic relationships, love between friends can be just as intense and complicated. Many people struggle to make and maintain friendships, and a falling-out with a close friend can be as painful as a breakup with a partner.

Despite these potential pitfalls, human beings have always prized friendship. As the 4th century B.C.E. philosopher Aristotle wrote: “no one would choose to live without friends,” even if they could have all other good things instead.

Aristotle is mostly known for his influence on science, politics and aesthetics; he is less well known for his writing on friendship. I am a scholar of ancient Greek philosophy, and when I cover this material with my undergraduates, they are astonished that an ancient Greek thinker sheds so much light on their own relationships. But maybe this should not be surprising: There have been human friendships as long as there have been human beings.

Here, then, are three lessons about friendship that Aristotle can still teach us.

## 1. FRIENDSHIP IS RECIPROCAL AND RECOGNIZED

The first lesson comes from Aristotle's definition of friendship: reciprocal, recognized goodwill. In contrast to parenthood or siblinghood, friendship exists only if it is acknowledged by both parties. It is not enough to wish someone well; they have to wish you well in return, and you must both recognize this mutual goodwill. As Aristotle puts it: “To be friends ... [the parties] must feel goodwill for each other, that is, wish each other's good, and be aware of each other's goodwill.”

Aristotle illustrates this point with an early example of a parasocial relationship – a one-sided kind of relationship in which someone develops friendly feelings for, and even feels that they know, a public figure they have never met. Aristotle offers this example: A fan may wish an athlete well and feel emotionally invested in his success. But because the athlete does not reciprocate or recognize this goodwill, they are not friends.

PASCAL DELOICHE/STONE



Aristotle (center) seen in a discourse with Plato in a 16th century fresco, 'The School of Athens' by Raphael

This is as true today as it was in Aristotle's time. Consider that you cannot even be Facebook friends with someone unless they accept your friend request. By contrast, you can be someone's social media follower without their acknowledgment.

Still, it is perhaps more difficult today to distinguish friendships from parasocial relationships. When content creators share details about their personal lives, their followers may develop a one-sided sense of intimacy. They know things about the creator that, before the arrival of social media, would have been known by only a close friend.

The creator may feel goodwill toward her followers, but that is not friendship. Goodwill is not genuinely reciprocal if one party feels it toward an individual while the other feels it toward a group. In this way, Aristotle's definition of friendship lends clarity to a uniquely modern situation.

## 2. THREE KINDS OF FRIENDSHIP

Consider next Aristotle's distinction between three kinds of friendship: utility-based, pleasure-based

and character-based friendships. Each arises from what is valued in the friend: their usefulness, the pleasure of their company or their good character.

While character-based friendship is the highest form, you can have only a few such intimate friends. It takes a long time to get to know someone's character, and you have to spend a lot of time together to maintain such a friendship. Since time is a limited resource, most friendships will be based on pleasure or utility.

Sometimes my students protest that utility relationships are not really friendships. How can two people be friends if they are using one another? However, when both parties understand their utility friendship in the same way, they are not exploiting but rather mutually benefiting one another. As Aristotle explains: “Differences between friends most frequently arise when the nature of their friendship is not what they think it is.”

If your study partner believes you hang out because you enjoy her company, while you actually hang out because she is good at explaining calculus,

hurt feelings can follow. But if you both understand that you are hanging out so that you may improve your calculus grade and she her writing grade, you can develop mutual goodwill and respect for each other's strengths.

Indeed, the limited nature of a utility friendship can be just what makes it beneficial. Consider a contemporary form of utility friendship: the peer support group. Since you can have only a small number of character-based friends, many people dealing with trauma or struggling with chronic illness do not have close friends working through these experiences.

Support group members are uniquely positioned to help one another, even if they have very different personal values and beliefs. These differences may mean that the friendships never become character-based; yet the group members may feel deep goodwill toward one another.

In short, Aristotle's second lesson is that there is a place for each kind of friendship, and that a friendship works when there is a shared understanding of its basis.

## 3. FRIENDSHIP IS LIKE FITNESS

Finally, Aristotle has something valuable to say about what makes friendships last. He claims that a friendship, like fitness, is a state or disposition that must be maintained by activity: As fitness is maintained by regular exercise, so friendship is maintained by doing things together. What happens, then, when you and your friend cannot engage in friendship activities? Aristotle writes:

“Friends who are ... parted are not actively friendly, yet have the disposition to be so. For separation does not destroy friendship absolutely, though it prevents its active exercise. If however the absence be prolonged, it seems to cause the friendly feeling itself to be forgotten.”

Contemporary research backs this up: The state of friendship can persist even without friendship activities, but if this goes on long enough, the friendship will fade. It might seem that Aristotle's point has become less relevant, as communication technologies – from postal service to FaceTime – have made it possible to maintain friendships across great distances.

But while physical separation no longer spells the end of a friendship, Aristotle's lesson remains true. Research shows that, despite having access to communication technologies, people who decreased their friendship activities during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic experienced a corresponding decrease in the quality of their friendships.

Today, as in ancient Athens, friendships have to be maintained by engaging in friendship activities.

Aristotle could not have imagined today's communication technologies, the advent of online support groups or the kinds of parasocial relationships made possible by social media. Yet for all the ways in which the world has changed, Aristotle's writing on friendship continues to resonate. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

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AL PLENARY

# National Security Bill passed without much discussion

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE National Security Law Amendment Bill was passed yesterday unanimously in parliament with only two questions raised by lawmaker Ron Lam.

When the second reading reached Clauses 5 and 6 of Article 1 of the now Amendment Law, Lam asked questions about state secrets. He first pointed out that Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak had assured the parliament's First Standing Committee that the definition and relevant procedures about this issue will be stated in another Bill – Defending State Secret Bill – currently under scrutiny by the same committee.

Then he asked the Secretary, who sat in yesterday's plenary, for some points of clarification. For example, he questioned, if a person comes in contact with a document that is later identified by the government to be a state secret, will this person be prosecuted for viewing the document?

In response, Wong reiterated this law upholds the principle of deliberate violation, meaning that an act will only be considered in contravention of the Bill when the perpetrator understands the nature of the material and intentionally violates it.

As such, "the example [of the



## Lawmaker Ron Lam demanded the government strike a balance between safeguarding national security and honoring people's legal and human rights

person] given by Lawmaker Lam will not be subject to prosecution," Wong said.

When the session touched on Clause 5-A of Article 2 of the law, Lam raised concerns over the stipulations on contact with external organizations.

He worried that "people will rai-

se a ruckus over this stipulation" and suggested the secretary better explain this stipulation. He added that, in fact, the preceding stipulation defines the criteria as one in which contacts would be considered criminal.

Wong, in response, agreed with the lawmaker's view and pledged

to raise better awareness in future.

Following the issue of public concern about the Amendment Law, in his voting declaration, Lam adopted an opposite view in urging the Secretary to better educate the public so that innocent people do not fall victim to national security breaches or into traps.

He also demanded the government strike a balance between safeguarding national security and honoring people's legal and human rights. The law, he said, should not jeopardize a person's right to criticize the government.

Meanwhile, lawmaker Ma Io Fong calls for the use of technology to safeguard national security.

NATIONAL SECURITY

# Beijing, Macau gov'ts satisfied with passing of amendments

ANTHONY LAM

**U**PON passing of the National Security Law Amendment Bill in local parliament, government bodies in Beijing and Macau expressed their satisfaction in separate statements.

Besides showing its satisfaction, the local government did not forget to thank lawmakers for their support and contributions to this amendment process. Lawmakers were also praised for "carrying out their legal jobs in a diligent and responsible manner."

It added that safeguarding national security is



key to ensuring prolonged governance, peace and prosperity of both the country and Macau. The government has been taking its role in an orderly manner in terms of national security, it added.

The government also thanked local people for supporting and complying with the amendment process.

On the other hand, the

Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council described the passing of the Bill as "an important measure for the Macao Special Administrative Region to improve the legal system and enforcement mechanism for safeguarding national security."

"It is of great significance to fully and accurately implement the 'one country, two systems' policy, better safeguard interests in national sovereignty, security and development, maintain the long-term prosperity and stability of Macau, and protect the fundamental interests of

the majority of Macau residents," the office added.

The office also recapped Macau's effort in stepping up measures that help ensure national security.

Both the office and the local government reiterated that "at present, the overall security of the country is facing more serious challenges," which is why a timely amendment to the National Security Law is required to better safeguard security.

Furthermore, the Liaison Office of Beijing in Macau pointed out in a statement that "safeguarding interests in national sovereignty, security and development is the highest principle of the 'one country, two systems' policy. On safeguarding national security, this is purely the responsibility of 'One Country' and there is no distinction between the 'Two Systems'."

## GOV'T UNVEILS MOP7.8B OVERHEAD BRIDGE IN NORTHERN DISTRICT

An overhead network of walkways will be constructed in the northern district, the local government announced yesterday. According to the plan presented by the Public Works Bureau, the MOP7.82 million project will be divided into three sections, with construction of each section expected to take 120 days to finish. The walkway will be about 1,300 meters in length along Avenida Leste do Hipodromo, Rua 1 de Maio and Avenida do Nordeste.

## POLICE OFFICER SUSPECTED OF FILMING WOMAN

A public security police officer is suspected of secretly filming women with his mobile phone at the central district while off-duty, according to the Public Security Police Force (PSP). PSP has launched disciplinary investigation procedures against the police officer involved. The officer involved had admitted that he secretly photographed a woman. He was suspected of committing the crime of intrusion into private life.

## MAN IN CUSTODY FOLLOWING SUSPICION OF DRUG TRAFFICKING AND USE

The Judiciary Police (PJ) arrested a 40-year-old Filipino on suspicion of drug trafficking and drug use after finding a variety of drugs worth a total of MOP410,000 in his apartment. The PJ used state intelligence to locate the man, saying that he was selling drugs to Filipinos in the central district. The man was intercepted on Tuesday and was found with 87.61 grams of methamphetamine and 13.1 grams of cocaine, as well as 191 tablets of "magu", which is made from methamphetamine and caffeine and 12.15 grams of heroin. The man involved in the case tested positive for methamphetamine after a urine test. He has refused to cooperate.

### BANKS' INT'L BUSINESS SHARE RISES IN Q1

The proportion of international business in Macau's local banking sector rose in the first quarter of 2023, the monetary watchdog said. According to statistics released by the Monetary Authority of Macao, the share of international assets in total banking assets increased to 85.6% at the end of March from 85.4% at the end of December 2022, while the share of international liabilities in total banking liabilities rose to 83.4% from 81.9%. Non-local currencies continued to be the dominant denomination in international banking transactions.

### CPTTM CALLS FOR FASHION ILLUSTRATION ENTRIES

The "14th Macao Fashion Illustration Contest" of the Macao Productivity and Technology Transfer Center (CPTTM) is now open for entries and will remain open until June 28. An open category for Portuguese-speaking countries has been added for this year's contest. Themed "Times in Macao - The Macanese Charms," the organizer said that the number of entries are unrestricted. There will be winners in each of the three categories, as well as one internet popularity award for each category and six merit awards.

### GUANGZHOU TO HOST GBA SCIENCE FORUM

The 2023 Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Science Forum will be held from May 20 to 23 in Guangzhou, according to China Science Daily. This year's forum was initiated by the Alliance of International Science Organizations and will be hosted by the Guangdong provincial government. There will be a total of 15 sub-forums, according to the report, with a focus on marine science, nanoscience, high-energy physics, advanced manufacturing and artificial intelligence.

### TALENT ACQUISITION LAW

# BIG DATA TO BE USED TO VET, REVIEW TALENT ACQUISITION ELIGIBILITY

ANTHONY LAM

IT strategies and apparatuses will be used to investigate the eligibility and credibility of people obtained through the future Talent Acquisition Law, a government official assured parliament yesterday.

The parliament held a plenary meeting for the second reading on the Bill of Talent Acquisition Legal System. It was passed unanimously with discussions revolving around several topics.

Lawmakers were particularly concerned with criminality crackdown and investigation efforts, due to previous revelations by the corruption watchdog of illicit practices in the acquisition of professionals and immigration by investments.

Trade Unionists Ella Lei and Leong Sun Iok, as well as civil servant Pereira Coutinho and independent Ron Lam raised questions on the topic. They asked about the size of the future inspection teams as well as the Talent Development Committee's strategies and tactics.

Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong responded that IT and Big Data methodologies will help with implementing the work, while admitting that full-coverage inspection is impossible.

Revealing that more people will be hired for inspection purposes, she disclosed that an internal database would be established with the help of Big Data. Meanwhile, internal standards and criteria will also be founded so as to remind committee workers about persons of concern.



The computer application and software engineering graduate also emphasized that certain measures can help identify problems.

Leong cited a previous case wherein a housewife pretended to be an office manager and successfully acquired Macau residency. Ao Ieong believes that immigration and taxation records, as well as product samples or academic papers, will be able to help prove or disprove the correspondence between declared versus actual occupation.

It was also disclosed that the police will be called, should alleged violators decline to allow inspectors onto their premises.

On Ron Lam's criticism over double-standard treatments for local talents and invited talents, Ao Ieong said all pre-requisites would be publicized and all interested parties can test their eligibilities.

Lam recalled that some local-resident medical professionals who obtained medical registrations or li-

censes from outside of Macau were asked to prove their academic qualifications, while the same measure did not apply to non-local medical professionals.

Lawmaker Pang Chuan, academic at the Macau University of Science and Technology, was concerned with talent acquisition in the academic circle. He did not see a criterion for academics to fit in the legal system.

Replying to his question, the Secretary guaranteed him that academic talents would fit in.

"Existing criteria include high and new technology, Big Health, culture and sports, MICE, etc. The 'et cetera' in fact gives flexibility and I can't see which profession is not covered by this scope," Ao Ieong explained.

On the matter of nurturing local talents through acquiring external talents, besides revealing that many places have dropped this as black-and-white requirement, Ao Ieong

used her experiences as an example.

She disclosed that when she finished her Master's studies, she went to a research institute where she put her theoretical knowledges into practice without senior researchers actually instructing her how to improve herself.

"Local people need to be motivated to progress, otherwise, we can't help," said the Secretary. She added that with external talents working together with local people, the latter would be able to acquire some external knowledges and make progress in life.

Ao Ieong was confident that the first batch of applications can be accepted in early August, with the application platform undergoing final testing and two sets of relevant Executive Regulations being nearly ready.

In their joint voting declaration, Che and Coutinho expressed reservations about the actual efficacy of the law.

### AL PLENARY

# Lawmaker calls for improving education on environmental protection

MORE general education on environmental protection should be introduced to make progress in the area, lawmaker Wu Chou Kit said in his parliamentary pre-agenda speech yesterday.

During his speech, he called for the government to adopt the practice that is currently in place in the mainland. He believed that doing so would nurture an improved understanding and attitude in residents, workers and students.

Additionally, he also called for the government to adopt stricter policies on



pollution and create conditions for environmental protection, including by promoting green development across society. Moreover, citing a similar policy on the mainland, he re-

quested subsidies for social and commercial entities to purchase equipment that consumes less energy from cleaner sources.

As an architect, the lawmaker views the city's

ecological challenges from an architectural perspective, pointing out that Macau has long, hot, and humid summers that require prolonged use of air conditioning. Furthermore, the

mainland has a minimum permitted air conditioning temperature of 26 degrees Celsius. Most importantly, Macau has energy-demanding casinos that operate around the clock.

Against this background, the lawmaker revealed that building units in Macau have two to four times higher per-area energy consumption and thus carbon emission. He took the opportunity to again request tighter controls.

The lawmaker also called for a deadline for removing traditionally powered vehicles from roads. **AL**

TOURISM

# Visitor arrivals surge to 2.27 million in April amid travel rebound

**V**ISITOR arrivals totalled 2.27 million last month, representing an upsurge of 274.7% year-on-year and a rise of 16.2% month-on-month, data from Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) shows.

The surge comes amid the current increasing trend in visitors as overnight visitors (1.18 million) and same-day visitors (1.10 million) soared by 550.2% and 157.7% year-on-year respectively.

The number of visitors from mainland China jumped by 159.3% year-on-year to 1.39 million with those travelling under the Individual Visit Scheme (817,730) surging by 589.5%.

Visitors from Hong Kong (745,282) and Taiwan (33,295) rocketed by 1,039.3% and 419.0%



RENATO MARQUES

year-on-year respectively.

In the first four months of 2023, the number of visitor arrivals expanded by 190.8% year-on-year to 7.22 million.

The local government has been ramping up on promoting the city after a long tourism drought in the city amid the pandemic restrictions.

Just last month, the one-stop travel service provider Trip.com announced the launch of its pro-

motion campaign "See you in Macao" which highlights the city as a destination choice for leisure and business. The promotion is in addition to the campaign with Air Macau, where tourists can enjoy a limited-time 'Buy One Get One Free' offer when they purchase a round-trip ticket from Air Macau, departing from Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Thailand or Vietnam with Macau as the destination until June 30. **LV**

GBA

# First corporate bond issued in Hengqin

**T**HE Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin saw the issuance of the first corporate bond in the region by Zhuhai-based Huafa Investment Holdings Group at a cooperation zone bond support policy exchange meeting in Hengqin International Finance Center earlier this week.

The group has also become the first business in the Cooperation Zone to issue bonds in Macao in Chongwa (Macao) Financial Asset Exchange Co., Ltd. on April 28.

Simultaneously, its bonds were also listed overseas in Luxembourg Stock Exchange. It was the first "non-financial corporate bonds" denominated in the Chinese currency to be listed on the bond market of Macau.

The Hengqin authorities also said they were also the first bonds to be traded, book-kept, and priced in Chinese, English, and Portuguese. It is an effective effort for enterprises in the Cooperation Zone to issue bonds in

Macao and to connect with the capital markets of Portuguese-speaking countries via Macao's capital market.

Officials from the Hengqin authorities briefed the supportive policies for enterprises issuing bonds in Macao based on the draft of the special support measures.

According to the special support measures, the supportive standard for bond issuance by enterprises in the Cooperation Zone is that 2% of the raised funds will be given as a one-time subsidy, with a maximum of RMB5 million.

Compared with the original measures, the forthcoming revised one will further enhance the attractiveness of companies to issue bonds in Macao.

The revised one has been approved by the Executive Committee of Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin and will be officially implemented in the near future. **MDT/NEWSGD**

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ARTS

# EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS FIVE HK AND MACAU ARTISTS TO PROMOTE CULTURAL EXCHANGE

STAFF REPORTER

**G**ALAXY Macau launched its fourth art exhibition since 2021 "Artists-in-residence: Summer Love" which showcases 15 exclusive canvases from five different artists; two from Macau and three from Hong Kong.

Around 100 people attended the launch, including the five artists Samantha Cheung, Kristopher Ho and Bao Ho from Hong Kong, along with Macau graffiti artists MCZ and PIBG.

"We will hold similar events in Galaxy Macau in the future as we believe that it is really important to provide a platform which showcases the creativity and culture of Hong Kong and Macau," Galaxy's chief operations officer, Kevin Kelley, said.

In April, people have been able to watch the artists creating their artworks, sometimes over many weeks. This was the case with Cheung three acrylic paints, which is a story in calligraphy that took 14 days to complete.

"I really want my work to be

RAPHAEL ROUAULT



From left: Bao Ho, Kristopher Ho, MCZ, Samantha Cheung and PIBG



Bao Ho's acrylic paint 'Love across the sea'

considered as an open book and a love story during summer," Cheung explained. "It was the first time I painted in color and it was super fun. I'm really proud and happy with the result."

With a completely different style, the graffiti-artist MCZ, whose many creations can be found in Macau's streets, created three different canvases that dis-

play various colors of the warmth of summer.

"This is like a trip," the artist explained. "I really focused on the emotions that the theme 'Summer Love' was giving me, and I expressed it through the art."

His artwork "Treats" is inspired by the Hong Kong flag, using the color palette and the form of

its floral emblem bauhinia, but there are also many references to Macau in the artist's creations, such as blooming lotus flowers in the Bao Ho's acrylic paint "Love Across the Sea," where the Chinese goddess of the sea Mazu holds in her palm a junk boat, symbolizing the cultural exchange between Hong Kong and Macau.

In the spirit of collaboration, the five artists also created the collaborative artwork "Summer Love," with each one bringing his or her own style, before they all signed it to conclude the ceremony.

The exhibition will be held until the end of June, and the artists will be occasionally in attendance to explain their works.

AD

《澳門特寫》**16**  
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BEHIND-THE-WHEEL

# Why Hyundai and Kia have everyone else playing catch-up

NICK KURCZEWSKI, EDMUNDS

**I**N the past few years, Hyundai and Kia vehicles have skyrocketed to the top of Edmunds' rankings in some of the most popular vehicle segments. For example, you'll find a Hyundai or Kia in the top spots for three-row midsize SUVs, midsize sedans, and multiple categories of electric vehicles. This changing of the guard can come as a surprise for car shoppers expecting to see more familiar brands like Chevrolet, Ford, Honda and Toyota.

This success isn't attributable to one single factor, such as short-lived marketing schemes like rock-bottom pricing or unsustainable rebates. Let's take a closer look at what these sister South Korean automakers are doing well and where they're still coming up short.

**DISTINCTIVE DESIGN:** First impressions matter, and this holds true when people are shopping for a new vehicle. Hyundai and Kia clearly recognize the importance of standing out in a crowd. Whether it's a family-friendly SUV with three rows of seating or an electric SUV on the technological cutting edge, a bold exterior draws attention and holds interest.

We'll start with EVs. While they share a platform and electric powertrains, the Hyundai Ioniq 5 and Kia EV6 take very different approaches to turning heads in the EV market. The Ioniq 5 is all edges and sharp angles, evoking Marty McFly's time-traveling De-

AP PHOTO



Hyundai Ioniq 5



Kia Sportage Hybrid

Lorean from 1984's "Back to the Future." The Kia EV6, on the other hand, is more traditionally handsome with its pointed front end, chunky fenders and sleek tapered tail. More is on the way too. The recently introduced Hyundai Ioniq 6 electric sedan is wildly curvaceous and has a swooping roofline that extends nearly to the rear bumper.

This bravado extends to the realm of conventional SUVs. When it arrived for the 2020 model year, the three-row Kia Telluride rocketed up sales charts thanks partly to its broad-shouldered stance and rugged design. However, style isn't everything. For

example, the Kia Forte and Hyundai Elantra sedans also have distinctive looks but come up a little short on the fundamentals. That's why the relatively conservative Honda Civic is still Edmunds' top-rated small sedan.

**THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY:** Modern vehicles are now as much four-wheeled computers as they are traditional cars or trucks. As the recent microchip shortage proved, the technology beneath a car's sheetmetal is extremely complex. But if the interface to this technology is so nuanced that it takes a degree from MIT to master, what's the point?

Hyundai and Kia have met

this challenge with infotainment systems that are simple to operate and come with sought-after features like Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, satellite radio and multiple USB ports. Many of the companies' latest vehicles also feature sleek-looking displays for both the instrument cluster and infotainment touchscreen, making some rival systems appear rudimentary by comparison.

A focus on technology shows up in the automakers' powertrain technology too. For example, the Ioniq 5 and EV6 have the capability to charge much more quickly at high-powered public DC fast-charging stations than many

EVs. The South Korean companies have also been front-runners by offering hybrid and plug-in hybrid versions of their small SUVs, the Hyundai Tucson and Kia Sportage. However, shoppers should know that the regular non-hybrid versions of the Tucson and Sportage suffer from lackluster power and fuel economy and drop in Edmunds' rankings as a result.

**STANDARD FEATURES AND VALUE:** Kia and Hyundai have upped the quotient of desirable technology and safety features across their vehicle lineups. Most importantly, they've done so without making car shoppers pay thousands extra. Many rival brands have routinely bundled tech and comfort touches into pricey option packages or limited availability to the priciest trims.

While the gap has narrowed, Hyundai and Kia cars and SUVs have a well-earned reputation for offering more features for a given price. The brands also provide exceptionally long warranty coverage, including a 10-year/100,000-mile limited powertrain warranty that no competitors match.

High consumer demand for certain Hyundais and Kias has put a damper on value, however. Particularly during the height of pandemic-related shortages, Kia Tellurides were known to carry dealer markups of thousands more than the manufacturer's suggested retail price. It's not as bad now, but Kia and Hyundai consumers still need to be wary of dealer markups that can easily erase a lot of baseline value.

**EDMUNDS SAYS:** Hyundai and Kia are on a roll with vehicles that have expressive designs, competitive prices and extensive standard features. These automakers have become the ones to beat in many car segments, but savvy shoppers will bear in mind that not every Hyundai and Kia is golden. **MDT/EDMUNDS**

## CORPORATE BITS

### Bar Patuá at MGM Cotai presents a four-hands malt cocktail pop-up



Bar Patuá at MGM Cotai presents the "Double Twists: Lorenzo Coppola x Paul Zhang" – a four-hands malt cocktail pop-up that features renowned mixologist Lorenzo Coppola, Creative Bar director of Aqua Restaurant

Group, and Paul Zhang, manager of Bar Patuá.

Together, the two mixologists will present a lineup of cocktails crafted with classic whisky labels, The Glenrothes and Highland Park, curating a two-nights-only

exclusive cocktail experience on May 26 and 27.

Featuring The Glenrothes 12 Years Old single malt, Coppola created Glenrothes Colada, a playful and lush twist of the tropical classic. With notes on the contrary, Zhang created Golden Embrace to highlight the depths of vanilla and cinnamon notes of the whisky with warm spices and more.

With the Highland Park 12 Years Old single malt, Lorenzo and Paul crafted two other innovative twists on the crowd favorite classic cocktails, Highland Park Highball, a bright fizz with hints of tart fruitiness, and Black Tea Manhattan, an interpretation inspired by Chinese tea culture.

### Sands continues tradition of giving boxed lunches to taxi drivers as it celebrates anniversary



Sands Macao celebrated its 19th anniversary yesterday with its annual tradition

of presenting complimentary boxed lunches to Macau taxi drivers.

Sean McCreery, executive vice president of operations for Sands China Ltd., said, "as we celebrate Sands Macau's anniversary each year, it is our pleasure to recognise Macau's taxi drivers for their day-in/day-out services to the city, and we are grateful for the work they do."

"With the resumption of normalcy and the rebound in the number of visitors, we look forward to providing ever-increasing standards of service together in contribution to the development of Macau's tourism industry," the executive added.

DIPLOMACY

# BEIJING ASKS EMBASSIES TO AVOID 'PROPAGANDA' IN APPARENT REFERENCE TO PRO-UKRAINIAN DISPLAYS

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

**F**OREIGN embassies in Beijing were asked by the Chinese government to avoid displaying what it calls propaganda in an apparent response to shows of support for Ukraine.

The Chinese government says it is neutral in Moscow's 15-month-old invasion of Ukraine but has repeated Russian justifications, accusing Washington and the U.S.-European military alliance NATO of provoking Moscow.

A Chinese envoy visited Ukraine this week and was due to go to Russia to discuss a possible "political settlement," but little progress is expected.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry asked diplomatic missions last week not to use their exterior walls to display "political propaganda," according to a European Union spokesperson and a diplomat from a European government.

The May 8 request cites a need to "avoid causing disputes between countries," but doesn't define propaganda or give other details, EU spokesperson Nabila Massrali wrote in a statement.

Massrali said the EU Delegation in Beijing "has not changed any items displayed at its front wall."

The request didn't mention Ukraine, according to the diplomats. But flags and placards set up by embassies of Canada,



People riding bicycles and scooters wait to cross an intersection near a sign reading "We stand with Ukraine" outside the Canadian Embassy in Beijing

France, Germany and other governments are the only public displays by most foreign missions, other than tourism advertisements.

The European diplomat, who asked not to be identified further due to the sensitivity of the issue, said his government doesn't "see any reason to change" its display.

A 2-meter-tall placard at the front gate of the Finnish Embassy has the flags of Finland and Ukraine and says "#WeStandWithUkraine." A billboard hung on Sweden's Embassy has the same phrase and flags of the two countries.

Those displays have been up for months. It wasn't clear why China made the removal

request now.

Some embassies also raised rainbow flags for Diversity Week and Wednesday's International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. Such issues are considered politically sensitive by China's ruling Communist Party.

Asked for confirmation and details, foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said embassies were obliged to "respect Chinese laws and regulations," but gave no details.

"China calls on embassies of all countries in China and representative offices of international organizations in China to perform their duties in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations or relevant

international agreements," Wang said.

## UKRAINE ENVOY MET WITH ZELENSKYY

China said yesterday its special envoy met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during talks in Kyiv earlier this week.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said the meeting came amid discussions between envoy Li Hui and Ukraine's foreign minister and other government officials.

"There is no remedy to resolve the crisis," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing. "All parties should create favorable conditions and accumulate mutual trust for the political settlement."

The visit followed an earlier phone call between Zelenskyy and Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

Over two days, Li and Ukraine Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba discussed "ways to stop Russian aggression," the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Kuleba briefed Li, a former Chinese ambassador to Moscow, "about the principles of restoring a stable and just peace based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine."

According to the statement, Kuleba repeated his government's position that Ukraine wouldn't accept any proposal involving the loss of its territories or the "freezing of the conflict."

Xi's government says it's neutral and wants to serve as mediator in the 15-month-long conflict, but has supported Moscow politically and economically.

China sees Moscow as a diplomatic and military partner in opposing United States domination of global affairs. Beijing has refused to criticize the invasion and used its status as one of five permanent United Nations Security Council members to deflect diplomatic attacks on Russia.

Beijing released a proposed peace plan in February, but Ukraine's allies largely dismissed it, insisting that Russian President Vladimir Putin must withdraw his forces. Zelenskyy's own 10-point peace plan also includes a tribunal to prosecute war crimes committed by Russia.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry has said Li also will visit Poland, France and Germany, but didn't give details of his schedule.

Political analysts see little hope for a peace agreement because neither Ukraine nor Russia is ready to stop fighting.

African countries are also undertaking a peace initiative over the war in Ukraine. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

# Lee defends removal of politically sensitive books in public libraries

**H**ONG KONG'S leader said yesterday the city's public libraries would not recommend books featuring "bad ideologies" to residents after they pulled titles related to the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown and certain political figures.

Chief Executive John Lee was addressing a lawmaker's question about dozens of books in public libraries that were taken down without a clear explanation. Those include publications about the bloo-



dy crackdown and others written by pro-democracy politicians and political commentators.

Critics said the book

pulling would further undermine Hong Kong's reputation for having free access to information and freedom of expression.

But Lee defended the sweeping law at the legislature, saying Hong Kong's freedoms are protected by the city's constitution.

"The books we offer for residents to borrow are those that we recommend," he said. "We would never recommend books that are illegal and violate copyrights. We would never recommend those that we deem to be featuring bad ideologies."

He said residents could still find such books to read elsewhere. He did not elab-

orate on what was considered "bad ideologies" and why the books were removed.

The government has not immediately responded to a request for comment.

The removal of the books was reported by local media outlets after a Chinese newspaper stopped publishing works by the city's most prominent political cartoonist on Sunday following government complaints. Comic strip collections by the cartoonist were also no longer available in public libraries.

Since a sweeping security law was enacted in 2020, the city's art and media communities have learned to be wary of crossing vaguely defined red lines in producing art and other content that might be per-

ceived as challenging the Chinese Communist Party's control.

The group that organized Hong Kong's annual vigil in remembrance of the Tiananmen Square crackdown also voted to disband in 2021 under the shadow of the security law.

The annual vigil was the only large-scale public commemoration of the event on Chinese soil and was attended by massive crowds until authorities banned it in 2020, citing anti-pandemic measures. Macau also used to organize annually the vigil.

Supporters say the group's closure shows that the freedoms and autonomy promised when Hong Kong returned to China in 1997 are diminishing. **MDT/AP**



INDIAN OCEAN

# China asks Australia to increase search for 39 aboard capsized boat as 2 bodies reportedly found

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

A Chinese envoy asked Australian authorities yesterday to increase efforts to find survivors in the search for 39 crew members who were aboard a Chinese fishing boat that capsized in the Indian Ocean, as Chinese media reported two bodies had been recovered.

"We wish that they could send more — more aircraft, more ships and more staff," Ambassador to Australia Xiao Qian told reporters. "We wish that our Australian colleagues would coordinate with other international or foreign vessels or ships near that area ... to help the search and rescue to save as many lives as possible."

Xiao said China wanted to coordinate with "friendly countries," including Australia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, in the search and rescue effort.

The search coordinator, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, said three aircraft and seven ships including three Chi-



China's Ambassador to Australia Xiao Qian

nese navy ships were involved in the search in the center of the Indian Ocean. A Sri Lankan navy ship was also heading for the scene, the authority said in a statement.

Two days after the capsizing of the Lu Peng Yuan Yu 028, the authority "remains hopeful for a successful outcome, however the time elapsed combined with the weather conditions experienced

make survival more challenging," it said.

Two bodies were pulled from the ocean yesterday afternoon by the Chinese navy, China's official Xinhua News Agency reported.

No survivors or life rafts have been spotted.

The upturned hull was spotted Tuesday from a cargo ship 5,000 kilometers northwest of the Australian west coast city of Perth, the Australian search coordinator said.

Chinese authorities say the missing crew includes 17 from China, 17 from Indonesia and five from the Philippines.

On Wednesday, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Li Qiang ordered Chinese diplomats, as well as the agriculture and transportation ministries, to assist in the search for survivors.

The search authority said the multinational search effort continued yesterday over an area of 12,000 square kilometers south of where the upturned hull was found.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Chinese and international agencies remained positive about the search and rescue operation.

"The Chinese government expressed its sincere gratitude and high appreciation. The relevant search and rescue operations are still ongoing," Wang said at a daily briefing in Beijing.

The capsized boat was based in the eastern coastal province of Shandong and operated by Penglai Jinglu Fishery Co. Ltd.

Another Chinese vessel, Lu Peng Yuan Yu 018, had been operating near the upturned hull and continued to search yesterday, the Australian authority said. **MDT/AP**

TRADE

# Beijing lifts ban on Australian timber imports

CHINA opened its doors yesterday to Australian timber imports for the first time in more than two years, in another sign that the tattered bilateral relationship is being repaired.

Timber was on a list of Australian exports subjected to official and unofficial Chinese trade barriers imposed in 2020 after Australia called for an independent inquiry into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The list that included coal, wine, barley, beef, seafood, cotton and copper was estimated to cost Australian exporters \$14 billion a year.

But relations have improved since the center-left Labor Party came to power a year ago, ending nine years of conservative rule in Australia. Australian coal, cotton and copper exports to China have re-



cently resumed.

Chinese Ambassador to Australia Xiao Qian said the timber ban had been lifted from yesterday because Australian exporters had satisfied China's quarantine

concerns. The Australian government was officially informed on Wednesday.

"So from today on, the Australian timber is going back to China," Xiao told reporters.

The breakthrough came after Trade Minister Don Farrell visited Beijing last weekend seeking to lift trade barriers especially on Australian wine and barley.

Foreign Minister Penny

Wong welcomed the return of the timber trade with China. It had been worth \$1 billion a year before the ban.

"We are pleased with this development," Wong said during a joint press conference with her Philippine counterpart Enrique Manalo during a visit to Manila.

"We do believe that removal of these trade impediments benefits both parties," she added, referring to China and Australia.

Treasurer Jim Chalmers said China's decision on timber was a step toward his government's objective to stabilize the economic relationship with China.

"It's a crucially important market for us and we want to stabilize the relationship and any progress in lifting these trade restrictions is welcome," Chalmers told reporters.

The Australian Forest Products Association, which represents a range of forestry and paper industries, also welcomed China's decision.

"When the ban came into effect more than two years ago, it caused a great deal of upheaval and uncertainty for many timber exporters and the broader forest sector and this resolution is welcomed," the association's chief executive Joel Fitzgibbon said in a statement.

China is Australia's biggest trading partner, with two-way trade totaling \$287 billion last year.

In April, Australia suspended a complaint to the World Trade Organization in a bid to reopen the Chinese market to Australian barley.

In return, China has agreed to review its decision to impose an 80% tariff on the grain. Australia hopes that China will agree within months to lift tariffs on both Australian barley and wine. **MDT/AP**



Joe Biden with Fumio Kishida ahead of a bilateral meeting in Hiroshima, yesterday

JAPAN

# BIDEN CONSULTS WITH KISHIDA AHEAD OF GROUP OF SEVEN SUMMIT IN HIROSHIMA

JOSH BOAK, ZEKE MILLER  
& MARI YAMAGUCHI,  
HIROSHIMA

**P**RESIDENT Joe Biden arrived in Japan yesterday and greeted Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida by saying, “When our countries stand together, we stand stronger” — a sign of how the economic and national security alliance between the two countries has grown.

The U.S. president began his remarks by noting that Kishida said during a January Washington visit that the world faced one of the “most complex” security environments in recent history. “I couldn’t agree with you more,” Biden said.

“We very much welcome that the cooperation has evolved in leaps and bounds,” Kishida told Biden about Japan’s relationship with the U.S. in their meeting ahead of the Group of Seven summit that begins Friday.

The Kishida family’s home city of Hiroshima will host the gathering of major industrialized nations known at the G-7. The setting of Hiroshima, where the U.S. dropped the first nuclear bomb in 1945 during World War II, carries newfound resonance. The U.S., Japan and their allies are strategizing on how to deal with Russia’s ongoing war in Ukraine as well as concerns about the increased cadence of North Korea’s ballistic missile tests and Iran’s nuclear program.

Biden is appearing on the world stage while trying to manage a divide back in the U.S. on how to raise the debt limit. He opted to cut short what was supposed to be an eight-day trip to Asia, so he can return to Washington to try to avoid a potentially catastrophic default in June that could ripple across the global economy. It’s a drama that reveals how internal U.S. politics can spillover into global forums.

Jake Sullivan, the White House national security adviser, said the Russian invasion looms large, and would be a significant conversation during the G-7.

“There will be discussions about the battlefield,” Sullivan said aboard Air Force One, stressing that the G-7 leaders would work to seal off any loopholes in sanctions so their effect can be maximized. “There’ll be discussions about the state of play on sanctions and the steps that the G-7 will collectively commit to on enforcement in particular.”

Sullivan said Biden and Kishida, are aiming to advance a relationship that’s progressed over the course of the last two years “in every dimension, whether it’s the military dimension of the alliance, the economic dimension, the recently concluded agreement on clean energy, the work we’re doing together on economic security.”

Last year, Biden came to Tokyo to discuss Indo-Pacific strategy and launch a new trade framework for the region, with the U.S. pre-

sident and Kishida engaging in an 85-minute tea ceremony and seafood dinner. The president’s first stop in Japan yesterday was to greet U.S. troops at the Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, before he headed to Hiroshima for talks with the Japanese prime minister.

Kishida was quick to call out the risks of nuclear-power Russia invading Ukraine in 2022, saying then, “Ukraine today could be East Asia tomorrow.”

China has declared a limitless friendship with Russia, increasing trade in ways that blunted the ability of financial sanctions to constrain the war. But the U.S. and its allies say China has yet to ship military equipment to Russia, a sign that the friendship might have some boundaries.

Biden and Kishida also have economic matters to consider. The U.S. and Japan have begun to redefine global trade with an eye toward supply chain resilience and national security. They recently signed an agreement on critical mineral supply chains. They’re also cooperating on the development of renewable energy sources and partnering on efforts to limit China’s access to advanced computer chips.

Kishida hopes to discuss further strengthening of deterrence and response capability with Biden in the face of China’s assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region, as well as confirming the importance of the Taiwan Strait for global peace and stability. China has asserted

that self-governing Taiwan should come under its rule. U.S. officials have been briefed on the possible economic damage caused by a war over Taiwan, which would disrupt the supply of advanced computer chips.

Japan is also keen to discuss ways to reinforce its three-way partnership with the U.S. and Seoul following an April agreement between the United States and South Korea to strengthen their tools to deter the risk of a nuclear attack by North Korea.

Kishida and Biden will hold a trilateral summit with South Korea’s Yoon Suk Yeol on the sidelines of the G-7 summit. But Kishida is in a complicated position by discussing efforts to respond to nuclear threats by North Korea with Japan’s history of also calling for a world free from nuclear arms, said Kan Kimura, a Kobe University professor and an expert on South Korea.

In the wake of World War II, Japan embraced pacifism. The atomic bomb scorched Hiroshima, killing 140,000 people and destroying most of the river delta city’s buildings. But current conditions are testing Japan’s pacifism and anti-nuclear weapon tradition.

“Kishida is from Hiroshima, believes deeply in the disarmament agenda,” said Christopher Johnstone, a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. “Of course, Kishida is walking a

fine line. He recognizes the need for the nuclear umbrella, Japan’s dependence on U.S. extended deterrence — that that’s more vital than ever, frankly, in the current security environment.”

There are outstanding issues between the U.S. and Japan. During his January meeting with Kishida, Biden brought up the case of Lt. Ridge Alkonis, a U.S. Navy officer deployed to Japan who last year was sentenced to three years in prison after pleading guilty to the negligent driving deaths of two Japanese citizens in May 2021, according to a senior administration official. Alkonis also agreed to pay the victims \$1.65 million in restitution. His family is seeking his release, saying he was detained until he confessed.

The early return to Washington to deal with the debt limit means Biden will skip planned stops in Papua New Guinea and Australia, where take part in a meeting of the so-called Quad partnership with leaders of Australia, India and Japan. The Papua New Guinea visit would have been the first to the Pacific Island country by a sitting U.S. president.

“The work that we need to do bilaterally with Australia and with the Pacific Islands is work that can be done at a later date, whereas the final stretch of negotiations over the debt limit or the budget cannot be done at a later date,” Sullivan said Wednesday. **MDT/AP**

MYANMAR

# Military imported \$1 billion in weapons since 2021 coup: UN expert

EDITH M. LEDERER,  
UNITED NATIONS

**M**YANMAR'S military has imported at least \$1 billion worth of weapons and related material from Russia, China and other countries since its February 2021 coup, some of which it has used to carry out atrocities against civilians, according to a U.N. report released yesterday [Macau time], which was promptly criticized by Beijing.

The weapons continue to flow to the military despite overwhelming evidence of its responsibility for the atrocities, including some that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, said Tom Andrews, the U.N. independent investigator on human rights in Myanmar.

As an example of what he called the junta's brutality, Andrews pointed to its April 11 airstrike using a Russian Yak-130 fighter jet on a ceremony attended by some 300 opponents of army rule, which was quickly followed by an attack by Russian Mi-35 helicopters on those who came to help. He said at least 160 people were killed, including many children.

In addition, the machine guns and bombs used in the attacks included parts and materials from companies located in Singapore, China and Thailand, he said.

Myanmar is mired in strife

AP PHOTO



because of a political crisis unleashed when the military took power. Its takeover prompted widespread peaceful protests that security forces suppressed with deadly force, triggering armed resistance throughout the country that the army has been unable to quell. Andrews said at least 22,000 political prisoners have been detained since the coup, at least 3,500 civilians have been killed and 1.5 million people have been forcibly displaced.

The report documents over 12,500 purchases that were shipped directly to the Myanmar military or known Myanmar arms dealers working for the military from Feb. 1, 2021, when the military ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, until December 2022, Andrews said at a news conference.

He said the volume and diversity of equipment the military received was "staggering," ranging from fighter jets and attack helicopters and drones to advanced missile systems, tank upgrades, sophisticated communications equipment, radar complexes and components for naval ships.

Andrews, a former Democratic congressman from Maine, said he had received "highly credible and detailed information from confidential sources" identifying the major networks and companies involved in the arms trade with Myanmar.

The report to the Geneva-based Human Rights Council identifies \$406 million in weapons and material that went to the Myanmar military from Russia, \$267 million from China, \$254 million from Singapore,

\$51 million from India and \$28 million from Thailand.

Since the coup, the report said, 28 Russian private and state-owned companies have transferred fighter jets and their spare parts, advanced missile systems, reconnaissance and attack drones, attack helicopters and other systems to the junta.

The report identified 41 private and state-owned companies registered in China and Hong Kong that supplied the Myanmar military with an extensive array of arms, equipment and raw materials between October 2021 and December 2022, including advanced trainer jets, light attack aircraft, tank upgrades and repairs for Chinese fighter jets, which make up the Myanmar Air Force fleet, the report said.

They also supplied aluminum,

copper, steel, rubber and lubricants for use in Myanmar's domestic weapons manufacturing, it said.

He said companies in Singapore are of critical importance to the junta, having supplied spare parts, raw materials and manufacturing equipment, especially for Myanmar's KaPaSa weapons factories. Thai companies have done the same, the report said.

Twelve Thai companies were established after the coup, many by sanctioned arms networks already operating in Singapore, which suggests arms dealers may be looking at Thailand as an alternative route to avoid scrutiny, the report said.

Andrews said Singapore has a policy prohibiting the transfer of arms to Myanmar, and he reported his detailed findings to the government, which he said expressed appreciation for the information and indicated it was reviewing the effectiveness of its export controls.

If the Singapore government stopped all arms shipments to the Myanmar military, he said, the impact on the ability of the junta to manufacture arms "would be significant."

Andrews said China and Russia both criticized the report, saying it went beyond his human rights mandate, and accused him of "vilifying legitimate arms trade." **MDT/AP**

SOUTH CHINA SEA

# Australia to provide surveillance drones to Philippines

**A**USTRALIA will provide surveillance drones and other high-tech gear to the Philippine coast guard and is considering whether to take part in joint patrols in the disputed South China Sea, Australia Foreign Minister Penny Wong said yesterday.

Wong, who held talks in Manila with her counterpart, Enrique Manalo, also thanked the Philippine government for its help in the discovery of a ship that sank during World War II in the northern Philippines, killing nearly a thousand Australians "in a very sad chapter in our history."

The United States and the Philippines, which are

longtime treaty allies, have been holding talks on proposed joint naval patrols in the South China Sea, where China has fortified its vast territorial claims by transforming disputed reefs into missile-protected island bases and deploying Chinese coast guard and militia ships on constant patrols.

Aside from China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei are also embroiled in the territorial disputes.

Washington lays no claims to the disputed waters but has deployed warships and fighter jets on patrols which it says are aimed at ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight.

In February, Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles and his Philippine counterpart said in Manila that they were looking at Australian and Philippine forces possibly carrying out joint patrols.

Responding to a question at a news conference yesterday about the prospects of Australia joining such patrols with the U.S. and the Philippines, Wong said that "we are open to cooperating with all our partners to exercise freedom of navigation and overflight."

"Our departments are discussing the best pathway to take this forward, and we want to keep working with the Philippines on that,"

Wong said, without elaborating.

She added that Australia wants "a region that is predictable" where "sovereignty is respected."

In her talks with Philippine officials, Wong said she discussed ways to bolster security cooperation, including "Australia providing drone equipment, training and other technology to strengthen your coast guard in maritime domain awareness and protection capabilities."

The two countries are also discussing plans for more joint military training and exercises, Wong said.

The United States and Australia have both struck

agreements with the Philippines for temporary visits by troops for joint combat exercises in the country. The Philippine Constitution prohibits the permanent basing of foreign troops and their involvement in local combat.

Wong thanked the Philippines for its help in the recent discovery of a sunken Japanese ship, the Montevideo Maru, off the northern Philippine province of Ilocos Norte.

A team of explorers announced in Australia last month that it had found the ship, which was transporting Allied prisoners of war when it was torpedoed off the Philippine coast in 1942,

resulting in Australia's largest maritime wartime loss.

The Montevideo Maru was transporting prisoners and civilians who were captured after the fall of Rabaul in Papua New Guinea. The ship was not marked as carrying POWs, and on July 1, 1942, the American submarine Sturgeon, after stalking the ship through the night, fired four torpedoes which sank the vessel in less than 10 minutes. More than 1,000 prisoners from 14 nations were killed, including 979 Australians.

"This has been a very sad chapter in our history, and we are glad for your assistance in that work," Wong said. **MDT/AP**

PUTIN'S WAR

# Russia fires 30 cruise missiles at Ukrainian targets; Kyiv says 29 were shot down

SUSIE BLANN, KYIV

**R**USSIA fired 30 cruise missiles against different parts of Ukraine yesterday in the latest nighttime test of Ukrainian air defenses, which shot down 29 of them, officials said.

One person died and two were wounded by a Russian missile that got through and struck an industrial building in the southern region of Odesa, according to Serhiy Bratchuk, a spokesperson for the region's military administration.

Amid the recently intensified Russian air assaults, China said its special envoy met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during talks in Kyiv earlier this week with Ukraine's chief diplomat.

Beijing's peace proposal has so far yielded no apparent breakthrough in the war, and Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said yesterday that the warring parties needed to "accumulate mutual trust" for progress to be made.

Ukrainian officials sought during the talks to recruit China's support for Kyiv's own peace plan, according to Ukraine's presidential office. Zelenskyy's proposal includes the restoration of his country's territorial integrity, the withdrawal of Russian forces and holding Russian President Vladimir Putin legally accountable for the invasion in February 2022.

Meanwhile, Kremlin-installed authorities in occupied Crimea reported the derailment of eight train cars yesterday because of an explosion, prompting renewed suspicions about possible Ukrainian saboteur activity behind Russian lines. Russian state media reported that the train was carrying grain.

The state news agency RIA Novosti, quoting a source within the emergency services, said the incident occurred not far from the city of Simferopol. The Crimean Railway company said the



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Police Press Office, fragments of a Russian rocket which was shot down by Ukraine's air defence system are seen after the night rocket attack in the Kyiv region

derailment was caused by "the interference of unauthorized persons" and that there were no casualties.

Ukraine officials refuse to comment on possible acts of sabotage. Ukraine's military intelligence spokesperson, Andriy Yusov, noted on Ukrainian television that Russian train lines "are also used to transport weapons, ammunition, armored vehicles."

Overnight, loud explosions were heard in Kyiv as the Kremlin's forces targeted the capital for the ninth time this month in a clear escalation after weeks of lull and before a much-anticipated Ukrainian counteroffensive using newly supplied advanced Western weapons.

Debris fell on two Kyiv districts, starting a fire at a garage complex. There was no immediate word about any victims, Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv Military Administration, said in a Telegram post.

Ukraine also shot down two Russian exploding drones and two reconnaissance drones, according to authorities.

The missiles were launched from Russian sea, air and ground bases, General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, the Ukrainian commander in chief, wrote on Telegram.

Several waves of missiles were aimed at areas of Ukraine between 9 p.m. Wednesday and 5:30 a.m. Thursday, he said.

Russian forces used strategic bombers from the Caspian region and apparently fired X-101 and X-55-type missiles developed during Soviet times, Kyiv authorities said. Russia then deployed reconnaissance drones over the capital.

In the last major air attack on Kyiv, on Tuesday, Ukrainian air defenses bolstered by sophisticated Western-supplied systems shot down all the incoming missiles, officials said.

That attack used hypersonic missiles, which repeatedly have been touted by Putin as providing a key strategic advantage. The missiles, which are among the most advanced weapons in Russia's arsenal, are difficult to detect and intercept because of their hypersonic speed and maneuverability.

But sophisticated Western air defense systems, including American-made Patriot missiles, have helped spare Kyiv from the kind of destruction witnessed along the main front line in the country's east and south.

While the ground fighting is largely deadlocked along that front line, both sides are

targeting each other's territory with long-range weapons.

The most intense fighting has focused on the battle for the city of Bakhmut and the surrounding area, in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk province, with a Ukrainian military official claiming yesterday that the army advanced up to 1.7 kilometers (more than a mile) there over the previous day.

At the same time, Yevgeny Prigozhin, the millionaire owner of Russia's private military contractor Wagner whose troops have spearheaded the battle, claimed that Russian army units had retreated from their positions north of the city. Prigozhin is a frequent critic of the Russian military.

At least seven Ukrainian civilians were killed, including a 5-year-old boy, and 18 people were wounded over the previous 24 hours, the presidential office said.

Also, two people were wounded in a drone attack in Russia's southern Kursk region, which borders Ukraine, the regional governor reported.

In a Telegram post, Roman Starovoit claimed Ukrainian forces dropped an explosive device from a drone on a sports and recreation complex. MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 1997 LABOUR TO STUB OUT TOBACCO SPONSORSHIP

The sponsorship of sports events by tobacco firms is to be outlawed, according to Labour's Health Secretary, Frank Dobson.

The announcement, made in a speech to the Royal College of Nursing's annual conference in Harrogate, could spell the end of the British Formula One Grand Prix.

Other sports like rugby, snooker, darts, cricket and ice hockey could also lose around £10 million in sports sponsorship in Britain.

Mr Dobson told the conference: "We will ban tobacco advertising. It will cover all forms, including sponsorship."

But he acknowledged the move would come as a severe blow to sports organisers of major events like the Silk Cut Challenge Cup snooker final and the Embassy World Professional Darts Championship.

"We recognise that some sports, like some smokers, are heavily dependent on tobacco sponsorship. We will therefore give them time and help to reduce their dependency on the weed," he said.

In an uncompromising speech he said: "The tobacco industry kills around 120,000 of its customers every year. So it has to recruit 120,000 new smokers to its ranks each year to make up for the casualties."

He said the final details would have to be ironed out before a draft White Paper was published in the coming months.

Health professionals are delighted by the move, promised during the recent election campaign that saw Labour to a resounding victory.

In a statement, the Imperial Cancer Research Fund said: "We welcome any moves to ban tobacco advertising and sponsorship."

A spokesperson for the British Medical Association added: "It's unacceptable for tobacco, the major cause of preventable ill health, to be linked with sport."

And a representative from anti-smoking group ASH said: "We're delighted and excited. We hope to be able to help the Government to work out a draft Bill."

The tobacco industry is now seeking urgent talks with the government to discuss the issue.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

In November 1997, the government decided Formula One racing would be exempt from the sponsorship ban. But weeks later, the press revealed that the prime minister, Tony Blair, had met representatives of Formula One before the decision was announced. It also emerged that Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone had donated £1 million to the Labour Party before the general election.

Although Labour and Mr Ecclestone strongly denied any connection between the donation and the exemption, Labour gave him back his £1 million. In December 1997, the European Union passed a law banning tobacco advertising and sponsorship - bar Formula one - across Europe.

It was overturned by the European Court of Justice after appeals from the tobacco industry.

In The UK tobacco advertising in shops and newsagents was outlawed in December 1999 and tobacco sponsorship of sports ended in 2003.

In July 2005 the European Union imposed a ban on tobacco advertising and sponsorship of sporting events, apart from events that are purely local.

After the British Grand Prix advertising ban came into effect, some tobacco producers switched to using logos or colour schemes similar to their usual adverts to promote their products at races.

This was a severe financial blow to snooker which had to look for new backing. The 2006 snooker World Championship was the first in 30 years not to be sponsored by Embassy cigarettes.





MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

LINDSEY BAHR,  
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

DRIVE IN

# SMELLING DIRT WITH JOEL EDGERTON IN SCHRADER'S MURKY 'MASTER GARDENER'

**P**AUL Schrader plants the seeds of an intriguing melodrama in his latest creation "Master Gardener."

Sigourney Weaver is a wealthy dowager with a stately name (Norma Haverhill), a large house and a dog she's named porch dog. She also has a horticulturist (Joel Edgerton) in her employ who she occasionally calls on for extracurricular, indoor activities. There's even a big charity auction coming up that she and the gardening staff are intensely focused on.

But this being a Schrader film (he wrote and directed), it is mostly window dressing. There even is a palpable (and, I'd imagine, intentional) artificiality to the whole endeavor, creating an unease that looms over the most mundane and superficially pleasant interactions. The ceremony never feels quite right. The house, though grand, is also sparse in its décor. It feels like a set — not a place that a real human being lives. We don't even get to see the charity auction in full swing, never fulfilling Edgerton's Narvel Roth (yes, Narvel) tease how much fun it is to "watch grown men in pastel pants outbid each other for a flower."

This story is about a man with a violent past who has been saved by

AP PHOTO



Joel Edgerton in a scene from "Master Gardener"

the precision of gardening. Even if it's not a perfect trilogy, it's at least in dialogue with his recent films "The Card Counter" and "First Reformed," both about solitary, tortured men whose professions double as metaphor. Actually, that's true of most Schrader films. And it invites some memorable writing, mostly in voiceover, as Norvel opines and explains that "gardening is a belief

in the future."

But Narvel didn't come into the world as a gardener, or Narvel for that matter — these are identities he adopted later in life. This dutiful, buttoned up green thumb has underneath his practical coveralls a body covered in telling tattoos and a memory full of racially motivated murders. He is reformed now, mostly, but the music gets ominous

when the shirt comes off and he stares at his past in the mirror. Like any good gardener knows, he can try to manage nature but that only goes so far.

The chaos factor comes in the form of Norma Haverhill's great-niece, whose drug-addict mother has died and who she decides should apprentice with Narvel in the garden. Maya (Quintessa Swindell)

quickly takes to gardening, clashes with Norma (who called her "mixed blood" and is reluctant to form a relationship) and falls for Narvel.

Before he started shooting the film, Schrader said he was thinking about a man torn between two women, one old enough to be his mother, one young enough to be his daughter.

"What would happen in 'Taxi Driver' if Cybill Shepherd and Jodie Foster went out to get coffee?" he asked.

That premise, while possibly interesting, is really only given one scene that's not quite as revelatory as Schrader suggested.

That kind of goes for the whole movie, which moves at a glacial pace even when it veers into thriller and revenge territory. But Edgerton is a sly and captivating performer, Weaver makes a meal out of every backhanded remark (and outfit), and Swindell, who is nonbinary, is a luminous presence.

Like a haphazardly planted garden, it's lot of ideas that don't seem to create anything terribly coherent but it has its individual pleasures nonetheless.

"Master Gardener," a Magnolia Pictures release in theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "brief sexual content, nudity and language." Running time: 107 minutes. ★★★★★

AD

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大律師 ASSOCIATES:

高文軒 Adelino Correia °  
羅善齡 Zelina Rodrigues  
馬潔冰 Maria João Marques  
陶義德 António Isóo de Azeredo  
白穎怡 Iclia Berenguel  
冼玲鳳 Mariana Afonso Esteves  
馬秀文 Sofia Mendes Martins  
飛嘉華 Carlos dos Santos Ferreira °  
莫永誠 Rui Velez de Moura  
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C&C RECEIVED THE 1ST SILVER  
"DEIGNAN AWARD"  
FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
IN MACAU (2023)





TASTE OF EDESIA

# Michelin celebration

IRENE SAM, MDT

**Z**i Yat Heen, the signature restaurant at Four Seasons Hotel Macao, has received a Michelin star for the fourteenth consecutive year, a distinguished recognition from the Michelin Guide Hong Kong Macau 2023. Charles Cheung, the Executive Chinese Chef of Four Seasons Hotel Macao, who helms Zi Yat Heen, received the one-star Michelin award at the Star Revelation Ceremony.

In celebration of this recognition, Zi Yat Heen launches three new signature dishes. Pan-fried Kagoshima Wagyu A5 beef cubes exude elegance in simplicity. Beautifully marbled beef is precisely cut to be lightly cooked in minimal oil,

sealing in moisture. Finally, a Japanese pumpkin gravy sauce adds to all the richness. On the palate, sumptuous cubes radiate heat as flavours burst and melt to create a satisfying and delicious experience.

Sautéed Star Garoupa fillet with French Haricot Verts and Chinese olive vegetables, pairs the umami taste of the sea with the earthy aroma of French beans. East Star Garoupa is a luxurious ingredient known for its smooth texture. When stir-fried, the outer part of the fish is slightly more cooked than the interior, thrilling the palate with its dynamic and refined structure while showcasing Chef's incredible cooking skills in handling the wok, oil, and heat application. A unique condiment of Chinese olive vegetables is ho-

memade by Chef Charles to complement the main ingredients.

Zi Yat Heen offers sumptuous appetizers (Honey glazed barbecued pork, 15-year Hua Diao drunken chicken, Sichuan style marinated fresh shrimp with spicy sauce). Juicy and tender, the honey-glazed barbecued pork pleases discerning guests with a hint of sweetness in the mouth. Hua Diao drunken chicken is famous for its aroma characterized by traditional Chinese yellow wine made from fermented rice, the secret element in Chef Charles' recipe. Sichuan Style marinated fresh shrimp with spicy sauce, plays on umami taste enhanced with a spiciness that opens up the taste buds and surprises with intensity and zest.

tTUNES

## Jonas Brothers' 'The Album' is a summer hit for incurable romantics

**I**F, like many of us, you got burned trying to get tickets to the Jonas Brothers recent tour, their latest work "The Album" is a sweet consolation to keep your mind off it.

The Jonas Brothers are all about love in their latest project. Married with kids, every lyric hides a nudge to their homes. And while their music is focused on that familiar tender feeling, the experimentation into new genres makes it more special and fresh.

From the get-go with the track "Miracle" we are introduced by a sexy groove with show stopping high-pitched verses, while keeping that carefree vibe they are known for.

Even romantic ballads gain extra spice, such as "Vacation Eyes," a track with great potential to be a first dance tune at weddings for the new generation. "I got vacation eyes, I'm gonna have them for the rest of my life." The upbeat drums and the use of a chromatic harmonica elevate the song, making it more engaging and amusing — a jollification of your classic, slow love track.

The trio of Nick, Joe and Kevin released their single "Wings," with "The White

Lotus" actress and super fan Haley Lu Richardson leading in a music video that resembles a "get ready with me" tutorial from heaven.

In the lyrics the brothers reveal that no matter what happens, everything will be figured out when we share a special ordinary moment with our loved ones. "Deep conversations at the waffle house," they sing in the chorus.

On the topic of love and family, there's an impossible to miss heartfelt acoustic melody about fatherhood and their baby girls, titled "Little Bird."

The brothers, who broke hearts all over the world as they said, 'I do,' reflect about that bittersweet moment in the future when they will not be their girls' No. 1 guy anymore. "Cause I know if I'm doing my job correct/ Nights like these will happen less/ So please just keep me in your heart/ When you fly into somebody else's arms."

Jonas Brothers' "The Album" is a celebration of love in all its forms, perfect for people that see life through adoring rose-tinted glasses. **MARTINA REBECCA INCHINGOLO, MDT/AP**



"The Album" by Jonas Brothers (Republic Records)

**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**COOPERATION AT  
 HEART OF MODERN  
 SILK ROAD**

The success of the bilateral meetings President Xi Jinping held respectively with the leaders of the five Central Asian countries in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, on Wednesday and Thursday, undoubtedly lays a solid foundation for the China-Central Asia Summit to be held in the city on Friday realizing its objectives of promoting common development and deepening mutual trust.

The summit will be the first in-person meeting of the six leaders, underscoring the two sides' shared desire to join hands and support each other in the face of common challenges. Tasked with lifting reciprocal cooperation between China and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to a higher level, the China-Central Asia Summit will promote closer interaction and stronger solidarity among the six nations.

The leaders of the six countries are holding multiple meetings in which they will not only exchange views on bilateral, multilateral, and major international and regional issues, but also sign an array of cooperation documents covering areas including economy, trade, investment and connectivity.

President Xi proposed to build the Silk Road Economic Belt during his visit to Kazakhstan in 2013. Central Asian countries were among the first group of countries to publicly support what subsequently became the Belt and Road Initiative.

Having visited the region seven times in the past decade, Xi has personally championed upgraded China-Central Asia cooperation. And thanks to that, the two sides have steadily strengthened their economic and security cooperation, thus laying a solid foundation for further deepening their trade, economic and investment cooperation.

Since unveiling the Global Development Initiative at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2021, President Xi has also put forward the Global Security Initiative and Global Civilization Initiative as facilitators for the realization of a community with a shared future for mankind. In light of this, the China-Central Asia Summit is a natural event warranting no raised eyebrows.

The bid to strengthen cooperation and coordination in the region is not intended to form a clique, nor is it targeted at any third party. It is an outcome of the six countries' shared recognition that to achieve the development they are striving for, there needs to be greater economic interdependence among them and effective regional security governance; these require the establishment of effective multilateral mechanisms.

No doubt the United States and its allies will try to cast this in a different light, because to them the Central Asian countries are just pawns to play in their zero-sum games against China and Russia. But the summit shows that the Central Asian countries have no desire to play that allotted role.

**SYRIAN PRESIDENT HEADS TO SAUDI ARABIA FOR REGIONAL SUMMIT, SEALING COUNTRY'S RETURN TO ARAB FOLD**

**THE BUZZ**

Syrian President Bashar Assad headed to Saudi Arabia yesterday to attend a regional summit, his first visit to the oil-rich kingdom since Syria's conflict began in 2011, the president's office said.

Assad's attendance at the Arab League summit, which starts Friday, is expected to seal Syria's return to the Arab fold following a 12-year suspension and open a new chapter of relations after more than a decade of tensions.

The 22-member league, which is convening in the Saudi city of Jeddah, recently reinstated Syria and is now poised to welcome Assad, a long-time regional pariah, back into its ranks. The

Syrian president was officially invited to attend the summit last week.

During Syria's civil war, Saudi Arabia had been a key backer of armed opposition groups attempting to overthrow Assad. However, in recent months, Riyadh has called for dialogue to end the conflict that has killed half a million people and displaced half of Syria's pre-war population.

Assad's troops have taken control of much of Syria thanks to his main allies Russia and Iran that helped tip the balance of power in his favor.

AP PHOTO



**PRINCE HARRY AND  
 MEGHAN MADE GETAWAY  
 IN NYC TAXI AFTER BEING  
 TRAILED BY PAPARAZZI**

PRINCE Harry and his wife, Meghan, were trailed in their car by photographers as they left a New York City charity event this week, briefly taking refuge at a police station before being whisked away in a yellow taxicab.

The pursuit and media frenzy evoked memories of the 1997 car chase through Paris that killed Harry's mother, Princess Diana — though in this case, police said, no one was hurt.

The royal couple set off alarms when their spokesperson claimed yesterday [Macau time] that they had been dangerously pursued by paparazzi in a "near catastrophic car chase" through the streets of Manhattan. That account led New York City Mayor Eric Adams to condemn the paparazzi chasing them as "reckless and irresponsible."

Later, though, police said the pursuit was relatively short and led to no injuries, collisions or arrests, and warranted no further investigation.

The cab driver who drove them from the police station said he instantly recognized his passengers and that paparazzi "were following us the whole time," though he said wouldn't call it a chase.

"They had this look on their faces," the driver, Sukhcharn Singh, said. "All of a sudden papara-

zzi came out and started taking pictures."

Police issued a short statement confirming an incident Tuesday night involving photographers and the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, who were accompanied by Meghan's mother.

Meanwhile, police in California were called this week about an episode near the couple's property in Montecito.

In New York on Tuesday night, the couple left Manhattan's Ziegfeld Ballroom — where Meghan had just accepted the Ms. Foundation's Woman of Vision Awards with Black Voters Matter co-founder LaTosha Brown — and got into an SUV as crowds of pedestrians and photographers gawked, according to video posted to social media.

Harry and Meghan's vehicle was then followed by photographers in a scene that their office said "resulted in multiple near collisions involving other drivers on the road, pedestrians and two NYPD officers." The couple's office called the incident "near catastrophic."

Police intervened and, assisting the couple's private security detail, led them to a police station about 18 blocks from the ballroom, a law enforcement official told the AP.

The couple spent several minutes at the police station, waiting for the situation to de-escalate. Once it was safe, they left in a taxi, according to the official, who was not authorized to speak publicly about the matter and did so on condition of anonymity.

"While being a public figure comes with a level of interest from the public, it should never come at the cost of anyone's safety," the couple's office said in a statement.

Bruce Cotler, the president of the New York Press Photographers Association, said the way photographers allegedly acted Tuesday night violated the basic photojournalism principle of covering news "as documentarians and observers" and the code of ethics to which his members and "any press photographer with respect for themselves and the profession" are expected to adhere.

The award presentation was Meghan's first public appearance since she skipped the coronation of her father-in-law King Charles III earlier this month.

In a statement, the Ms. Foundation said it was "absolutely horrified" about what happened and that "Everyone, especially the media, must do better." **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



**Pakistan** Police surrounded the home of former Prime Minister Imran Khan yesterday [Macau time], claiming he was sheltering dozens of people allegedly involved in violent protests over his recent detention. The police deployment was likely to anger Khan's many followers and raised concerns about more clashes between them and the security forces.

AP PHOTO



**India** A searing heat wave in parts of southern Asia in April this year was made at least 30 times more likely by climate change, according to a rapid study by international scientists released yesterday [Macau time]. Sizzling temperatures of up to 45 degrees Celsius were recorded in monitoring stations in parts of India, Bangladesh, Thailand and Laos last month — which was unusually high for the time of year.

AP PHOTO



**USA** Dancers at a Los Angeles bar could soon become the only unionized group of strippers in the U.S. The Actors' Equity Association labor union says owners of the Star Garden Topless Dive Bar in North Hollywood have withdrawn their opposition and agreed to recognize the strippers' union. For 15 months, dancers at the club have sought safer workplace conditions, better pay and health insurance, among other benefits.

AP PHOTO



**Cannes** Indiana Jones and Harrison Ford will swing into Cannes today [Macau time] for the world premiere of "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" in one of the most anticipated events of the French Riviera festival. Ford, 80, who has said "Dial of Destiny" will be his last performance as the character, is also set to receive an honorary Palme d'Or from the Cannes Film Festival.