



# MacauDaily 澳門每日時報® Times

FOUNDER & PUBLISHER Kowie Geldenhuys

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WEDNESDAY 24 May 2023



"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

MOP 8.00 HKD 10.00



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**HK CHIEF CONDEMNS 'UNUSUAL UPTICK' IN REGISTRATION WITHDRAWALS FROM ORGAN DONATION SYSTEM**

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AP PHOTO



**Mount Everest** Veteran Sherpa guide Kami Rita has scaled Mount Everest for the 28th time, beating his own record less than a week after setting it, as two guides compete with each other for the title of most climbs of the world's highest peak. Rita, considered one of the greatest mountain guides, reached the 8,849-meter summit at 9:20 a.m. local time yesterday, according to expedition organizer Seven Summits Treks.

AP PHOTO



**South Korea** A team of government experts has begun a two-day tour at the tsunami-wrecked Fukushima nuclear power plant yesterday to have a firsthand look of a controversial Japanese plan to release into sea treated by slightly radioactive wastewater. Officials from the Japanese government and the plant operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, were to escort the 21-member delegation to see several facilities related to treatment, safety checks, transport and dilution of the water.

AP PHOTO



**Guam** Authorities in Guam warned anyone not living in a fully concrete house to head to safety elsewhere and emergency shelters began to fill as residents braced for Typhoon Mawar, a powerful storm that could deliver the biggest hit in two decades to the U.S. territory in the Pacific. Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero urged residents in a YouTube message to remain calm and prepare for Mawar, which the weather service said could hit the southern part of Guam around midday today.

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# RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

AP PHOTO



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### TRAVEL EXPO TO ROLL OUT CLOUD INVITATIONS

Slated to run from June 30 to July 2, the 11th Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo (MITE) will roll out an array of Cloud Invitation and Briefing Sessions from today. With the theme "MITE connects the World," the 11th MITE will call for participation of industry delegates from near and far to expand regional and international tourism cooperation through on-site exhibitions, exchange and business networking. The expo will once again feature the online cloud series, including Cloud B2B, Cloud Live Broadcast, and Cloud Contract Signing, to widen the channels for business networking and sales and foster new partnerships.

### DSAL TO HOLD JOB-MATCHING SESSIONS FOR 140 VACANCIES

Three industry-specific matching sessions will be held by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) on May 30 and June 1, providing 141 job vacancies in sectors such as hotels and logistics and retail food. The hotel industry matching meeting will be held at the Studio City Recruitment Center on May 30, offering 35 vacancies for car drivers and entertainment ambassadors. The logistics industry matching and the food retail industry matching sessions will be held on June 1 at the Macau Federation of Trade Unions, providing 78 job vacancies.

### REGISTRATION OF SUMMER ACTIVITIES OPEN

The government's activities for the upcoming summer will include 509 projects and 1,976 classes, including 400 projects and 1,200 classes on culture and entertainment. 109 other projects and 776 classes will be dedicated to sport activities. With a registration period from May 24 to May 31, each participant can register for a total of three classes and will have to pay the fee electronically if accepted. The results will be announced on June 6. This year, the summer activities total budget is about MOP24.1 million, including MOP16.9 million dedicated to culture and entertainment and MOP7.21 million dedicated to sport, a decrease of almost 5% compared to last year.

# GOV'T RELAUNCHES SUBSIDY FOR OLD VEHICLES

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE government is launching a new subsidy plan for disposing of old diesel vehicles following the first scheme that ended mid-March this year.

The idea is to continue to remove highly polluting vehicles from Macau roads or replace them with new ones with better environmental performance, the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) announced early this week.

As before, the plan aims to subsidize owners of diesel-powered vehicles that are at least ten years old to dispose of them.

In the first phase of this scheme, launched in mid-September last year, the DSPA was aiming to remove vehicles 20 years and older from the roads across two phases.

In the first phase, applications will be accepted to dispose of old diesel vehicles licensed until Dec. 31, 2008, and, in the second phase, those licensed from Jan. 1, 2009 and up to Dec. 31, 2013.

The first phase kicks off on June 1 this year and will last for one year until May 31, 2024. The second phase will start immediately after and is expected to finish on May 31, 2025.

Under the new plan, there were some changes made to the subsidy amount to be granted to vehicle owners, with the minimum amount remaining at MOP25,000 and the maximum being raised from MOP115,000 to MOP155,000.

The measure applies both to passenger and cargo vehicles



as well as light and heavy-duty vehicles. The subsidy amounts to be granted relate to the type of vehicle, number of passengers that can be transported and gross weight of the vehicle.

Higher amounts are for cargo or mixed-use vehicles with a gross weight above 30 tons, while the minimum amount will be allocated to those same vehicles with a gross weight less than or equal to 1.9 tons.

As a reference, a common passenger vehicle with nine seats or fewer will be granted a subsidy of MOP30,000, while a bus with over 31 seats will be granted a MOP85,000 subsidy.

According to DSPA, under the first plan (which lasted only six

months), there was a participation rate of 33%, equivalent to 313 vehicles meeting the requirements for disposal.

The DSPA also clarified that after the application is submitted and vehicle owners are notified that they are eligible for the subsidy, they must dispose of the vehicle within 180 days.

Less popular was the plan that aimed to replace obsolete petrol-powered motorcycles with electric vehicles, according to the data provided by DSPA. The plan was intended to encourage the disposal of between 10% and 30% of such, but fell short of expectations and resulted in the disposal of only around 7%.

Nonetheless, the DSPA is also

launching a new round of the same plan. Unlike the diesel-powered disposal plan, the motorcycle to be disposed of can only be replaced by a new model.

The subsidy amount also remains unchanged (MOP3,500), with additional benefits via tax exemptions and fee waivers on the licensing of the new vehicle potentially reaching as much as MOP8,800.

As in the new plan for diesel vehicles, the new motorcycle plan also comprises two phases.

The first phase (in place up to May 31, 2024) will focus on motorcycles registered until Dec. 31, 2010, and the second phase will include those registered up to Dec. 31, 2013.

### WEATHER

## Macau to experience effects of Typhoon Mawar over the weekend

**S**UPER Typhoon Mawar, which is in the western Pacific near the island of Guam, will potentially affect local weather conditions.

According to forecasts, the typhoon should get

close to or hit the area of Luzon Island in the Philippines Sunday evening, but then change track to the northeast, passing east of Taiwan and heading towards east Japan.

Although the effects of

the typhoon on Macau are expected to be small, the proximity of the tropical cyclone, which has reached Super Typhoon level with winds reaching over 200 km/h, will bring unstable weather condi-

tions with very hot weather that progressively transforms into rain and potential thunderstorms around Monday or Tuesday, according to the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG).

For the time being, Philippine authorities have said the typhoon is not expected to hit any region of the country.

At the end of March, the SMG released their usual forecast, noting that Macau could be influenced by up to eight tropical cyclones this year. The bureau also noted that the temperatures during this period are likely to be higher than in previous years. **RM**

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# CE hopes Lusophone Commonwealth promotes Macau

ANTHONY LAM

**D**URING his meeting with businesses from the Lusophone Commonwealth, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng expressed his hopes that Macau would be promoted.

Officially known as the called Portuguese-speaking Countries Community, the Lusophone Commonwealth includes a Confederation of Enterprises, a delegation of which recently visited Macau.

Nelma Fernandes, president of the confederation and the head of the delegation, met Ho during the visit in Macau.

Ho understood this visit as a vote of confidence in Macau, Hengqin and the



Greater Bay Area (GBA).

He hoped the Confederation would work to promote Macau, Hengqin and the GBA to Lusophone companies, to “further streng-

then trade cooperation and escalate Macau's function as a Chinese-Portuguese platform.”

He also reiterated Macau's role in connecting

China and Lusophone countries, citing the consistent increase in bilateral trade over the past 20 years as proof.

Ho introduced Macau's strategies of development to Fernandes, and the inauguration of the China and Portuguese-Speaking Countries Economic Cooperation Forum (Macao) in 2003.

In response, Fernandes said that through this visit in the GBA, the Confederation hoped to build cooperation in the short, mid and long-term with Macau.

She also expressed her willingness to further promote relations between China and Lusophone countries, as well as escalating Macau's function as a Chinese-Portuguese platform.

She has also agreed to organize Lusophone enterprises to Macau during the next Ministerial Meeting of Forum (Macao).

The head of the Confederation has also described Ho's earlier visit to Portugal as effective in presenting Macau's situation after Covid-19 to the business circle in the country.

## BANK OF CHINA ISSUES RMB2B-YULAN BONDS

Yesterday, the local branch of Bank of China issued the world's first 'Yulan Bonds,' as part of its latest move to push for the internationalization of the RMB, according to its statement. The bonds have a two-year maturity and a total value of RMB2 billion. Fitch Ratings has assigned an expected rating of 'A(EXP)' to Bank of China Limited's proposed senior unsecured Yulan notes that are issued by the bank's Macau branch under the USD40 billion medium-term note (MTN) program. According to Fitch, the proposed notes will represent BOC's direct, unconditional, unsecured and unsubordinated obligations and they are rated in line with its Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR).

## APPLICATION FOR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR PALACE MUSEUM OPENS

Applications for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Youth Internship Programme at Palace Museum 2023 – Macao Internship Recruitment will be open until May 31, providing 48 different vacancies in 14 different types of museum work. The program is targeted at permanent residents of Macau aged between 18 and 30 who are currently studying full-time in colleges and universities for a bachelor's degree or above. The internship period is from July 14 to Aug. 26 and the cost of air tickets, transportation, accommodation, insurance and supporting activities during the internship will be borne by the sponsor.

# IAM familiarizes public with veterinary law through briefings

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has begun efforts to familiarize the public with the new veterinary law that will be enacted April 1, 2024.

It recently organized a briefing on the law – officially referred to as the Law on Veterinary Clinical Care and Commercial Activity of Animals – which was attended by 200 people. The bureau said some attendees were from the veterinary sector.

The bureau hoped to introduce the details of the law and the transitional arrangements through the event, as well as collect opinions on supplementary regulations. It also hoped to enable stakeholders to better understand the legal framework and be more cooperative with its implementation.

During the briefing, participants received details on the certification regime for professional accreditation and the registration requirements for veterinary surgeons.

They also enquired about the requirements for the issuing of licenses for establishments, the use of the establishments, re-



quirements for partitions, facilities and equipment, the obligations of license holders, and more, according to the IAM.

The bureau has also collaborated with local animal rescue group “Everyone Stray Dogs Macau Volunteer Group” to co-host a coloring competition to promote caring for animals, respect for life and responsible pet ownership.

The competition has three categories, for five to eight year olds, nine to 12 year olds, and 13 to 16 year olds. Applications will be accepted until July 28.

The competition welcomes the participation of local school students.

The competition will see 39 awardees, who will win cash prizes up to MOP1,500 and certificates.

## EVENT

# DRUNKEN DRAGON DANCE RETURNS FRIDAY

**C**ELEBRATORY events for Buddha's Birthday, such as drunken dragon and lion dances, will return in physical form May 26.

In the past three years of the Covid-19 pandemic, the event has been suspended. The celebratory event has usually gathered crowds of spectators, photography enthusiasts and pious believers.

At 8:30 a.m. Friday, organizers and marchers will first gather at the Sam Cai Vui Kun located at Central Macau Peninsula for religious rituals, before kicking off the dances at 9:30 a.m.

They will dance and march across various districts across the city.

Dragon boat rice, a traditional

rice dumpling, will be handed out at three locations. At 11 a.m. Friday, the rice will be distributed at the Provisional Red Market at Patane District. At noon, the distribution will start at Lao Hon Market. Three hours later, the distribution will return to the Sam Cai Vui Kun.

According to tradition, the rice, which symbolizes auspiciousness, is distributed as a sign of blessing and wishes for longevity and prosperity.

In the evening of May 25, dragon boat rice feasts will be held at the Provisional Red Market and the Sam Cai Vui Kun, which will accommodate people living nearby and volunteers for the event. **AL**



CRIME

# MAN ARRESTED FOR ALLEGEDLY BEATING AND ROBBING 'CO-WORKER'

ANTHONY LAM

A man has been apprehended on allegations of robbery and physical assault against a person he allegedly hired to conduct illegal currency exchange, according to the Judiciary Police (PJ).

The suspect, a mainland man surnamed Wang, 37, is reportedly unemployed. According to the police, he made and posted videos online seeking to hire people to come to Macau for illegal currency exchange business.

He allegedly pledged in the videos that the daily remuneration could reach RMB2,000 to RMB3,000.

His marketing efforts managed to recruit three people.

On May 17, the three arrived in Macau and met Wang for the first time. They were asked to pay a referral fee ranging between RMB8,000 and RMB10,000. Af-



ter receiving the fees, Wang took them to a casino in the NAPE district and started working with them.

The first day was unsuccessful, as they were asked to leave by casino security guards.

Seeing the low probability of receiving payment, the three requested a refund from Wang at 6

p.m. on May 20. When Wang declined, one participant called the police. In retaliation, Wang punched the whistleblower, stole his phone and disappeared.

The PJ were referred to the investigation by the Public Security Police Force (PSP) and intercepted Wang two hours later at another casino in the same district.

The phone was also seized. Upon questioning, Wang allegedly admitted to the conduct.

## WOMAN ACCUSED OF ADMINISTERING UNLICENSED MEDICAL PRACTICES

In another case, the person in-charge of a cosmetic parlor was apprehended on May 18 for admi-

nistering unlicensed medical practices.

The suspect, a local resident surnamed Ao leong and aged around 30, was accused of having provided cosmetic injections to around 70 customers since 2022, generating revenue of MOP300,000 in total.

The beauty parlor is located on Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida.

The PJ were called to investigate after receiving a report from the Health Bureau (SSM), which had received reports from members of the public.

During the search and seizure operation, the police discovered certain cosmetic medications and tools, which were later confirmed by the SSM and the Pharmaceutical Administration Bureau (ISAF) to be lipodissolve, fat-dissolving injections, Botox injections, slimming injections and hyaluronic acid, among other products.

The suspect admitted to administering the procedures without a license and to obtaining the medications and tools from mainland China. The SSM has confirmed to the police that the suspect was unlicensed to administer medical procedures.

GBA

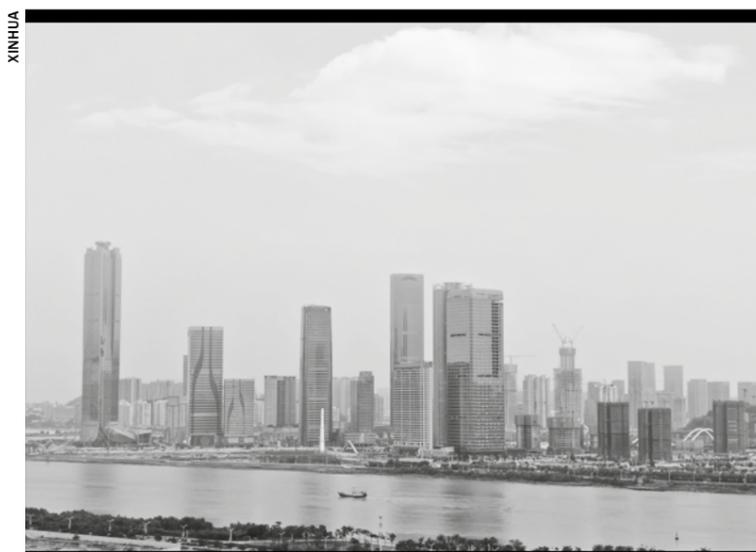
# Hengqin's new development model to create a 'Zero Carbon Demonstration Island'

WE can build houses like cars and change our production methods through intelligent technology to reduce construction waste and achieve pollution and carbon reduction." A new development model is taking shape in the Guangdong-Macao Deep In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

According to a plan issued by Guangdong, by 2025, the energy efficiency level of newly constructed residential buildings in the Cooperation Zone will increase by 30%, and the energy efficiency level of newly constructed public buildings will increase by 20%.

Since its inception, the Cooperation Zone has advocated for the concept of ecological priority in its development and construction. Currently, the Cooperative Zone has achieved good results in green and low-carbon development. A preliminary ecological island has emerged, with substantial improvements in water quality, air quality, and other ecological factors. The environment is beautiful, and the carbon emissions per unit of GDP are much lower than the majority of cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Under the Carbon Peaking and Carbon Neutrality strategy, the technical basis for low-carbon



development and good natural environment are valued by many businesses. In the park of the Southern Power Grid Company in the Cooperation Zone, a tall, spacious, and bright building is conspicuous. Its roof is covered by a distributed photovoltaic power plant with an installed capacity of 160 kWt. Recently, the energy management system of this near-medium-sized zero carbon building has started operation and passed its acceptance test.

Li Jianbin, acting deputy director of the Innovation and Development Division of the Financial Development Bureau of the Cooperation Zone, said that

promising businesses in the field of green technology, including intelligent energy systems, distributed energy research and development, and green building application technology, can enjoy a 15% preferential corporate income tax policy.

In addition, the Overall Plan for the Construction of the Guangdong-Macao Deep In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin requires the zone to create a livable and business-friendly living environment similar to that of Macau. How to create a green and low-carbon city has become a topic of focus for both regions to achieve integration and connectivity.

On April 30, nearly 30 Macau environmental science experts, scholars, advocates for sustainable development, and representatives of associations came to the Cooperation Zone, visited the demonstration sites of waste separation communities and waste sorting centers, and had an in-depth exchange on building a green and low-carbon city construction.

"By reusing kitchen waste resources and achieving ecological recycling, the Cooperative Zone replenishes nature, promotes the renewable resources industry to form a new economic growth point, and connects with nature, which is in line with the circular economic process of sustainable development. It provides a useful demonstration for the construction of a green and low-carbon city in Macau," said Professor Liu Chengkun, Director of the Institute for Sustainable Development of the Macau University of Science and Technology.

At present, the Bureau of Urban Planning and Construction of the Cooperation Zone is carrying out the construction of a carbon neutral pilot demonstration site in a stable and organized manner. It is striving to create a Hengqin model of a carbon neutral pilot demonstration. **MDT/NEWSGD**

## CIVIL SERVANT SUSPECTED OF SUICIDE

A 35-year-old man, working as a civil servant is suspected to have died by suicide Monday evening, the Judiciary Police (PJ) informed in a note to the press.

According to the PJ, who were called to investigate the case by the Fire Services Bureau, the man was found inside the pump room of the building where he resided in Taipa's Rua de Coimbra around 6:30 p.m. on May 22.

The PJ investigators said there were no signs indicating foul play and no traces of a fight or struggle. There was also no note at the scene.

The case has been temporarily listed as a case of a body being found with the cause of death to be determined through forensic examination.

The Social Welfare Bureau encourages residents to be conscious of their psychological and emotional state as well as that of their friends and relatives. If in need, residents can call Caritas' Life Hope hotline (28525222) or the IAS counseling hotline (28261126). **RM**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# Sands China opens ceramic exhibition to boost art amid city's robust recovery

**S**ANDS China has launched its latest art exhibition at Sands Gallery, the Fang Lijun Ceramic Works Exhibition, with the aim of boosting diversification of art and culture in Macau as the city continues to undergo a robust recovery.

Sands Gallery's exhibitions form a significant platform for the promotion of extensive exchange and cooperation among local and international art talent.

This one showcases nearly 60 works of art from Fang Lijun, an internationally sought-after artist known as one of the Four Giants of Chinese contemporary art.

The exhibition theme, "Bone of the Bone, Flesh of the Flesh," is inspired by the story of God creating Eve using one of Adam's ribs, and examines the idea that bones and flesh are the origin of life, and looks at their connection with the process of creation.

For Sands China, the company hopes the platform can help artists inspire each other in their creations.

"We do [also] have overseas artists participating. But our aim is really to get the top artists or promising young artists. So that's been our pattern," said Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd.

"We want more internationally renowned artists. But at the same time, we do not forget about the local artists who need some support. The previous one



was one from young artists... So, this pattern will continue, we will probably focus more on contemporary art," he added.

Grant Chum, chief operating officer and executive director of Sands China Ltd., said: "Sands China has held several international ceramic exhibitions featuring innovative artworks at our integrated resorts in recent years, bringing enlivening art experiences to our guests. We are honoured to shine a spotlight again on this ancient Chinese artistic medium – this time featuring Fang Lijun, one of the paramount representative figures of Chinese new art movements. We hope this and other exhibitions will cultivate art appreciation among our visitors, inspire Macao's artists, and stimulate the local cultural and

creative industries."

The exhibition was curated by veteran curator Luo Yi, who has more than 18 years of experience curating and managing museums in the contemporary art and design industry.

"The ceramic installations in the exhibition are the artist's inquiry into the millennia-old production tradition of the ceramic medium, whereas the ceramic prints continue the transformation of ceramics created by the artist on the theme of 'friends,'" the curator remarked.

As an artist, Fang is a pioneer of China's "Post-1989 New Art Movement," "Rascal Culture," and "China Pop." Over the past decade, he has continuously experimented with different materials, media, visual effects and artistic forms, applying them

in projects like ceramic installations, ink paintings, videos and outdoor public artworks. His works have been featured by major international art museums, art foundations, and public exhibitions.

The artist has explained that in making use of a topic to elaborate upon one's ideas, the method of communication and the dimension of understanding are completely diverted.

"The relationship between the work and the audience is dynamic. The language of this type of ceramic production is new. I look forward to seeing the relationship and reaction developed between the audience and my work," he said, when commenting on how he wants the audience to view his artworks.

Fang majored in ceramic

arts at the Hebei Light Industry College (now known as Tianjin Institute of Light Industry) and began to understand the concepts of ceramics.

In relation to encouraging local artists in the city to continually pursue their passion in art, he remarked: "Different dimensions and different altitudes will grow different plants; different cultural backgrounds will produce different artists."

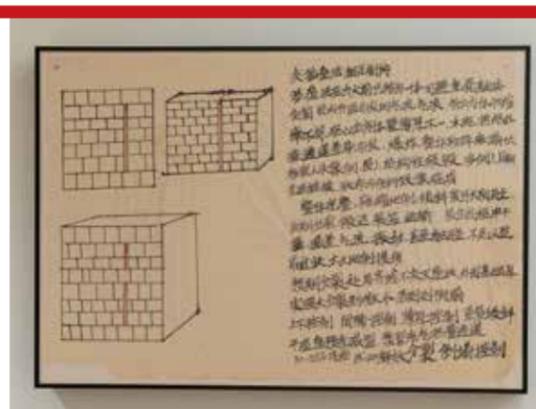
Sands Gallery has been dedicated to introducing a greater diversity of art exhibitions to the city and promoting the sustainable development of the local art and cultural industry.

To date, Sands Gallery has already organised six art exhibitions featuring Chinese and international artists.

As a curator, Luo stated that Sands Gallery stands out as it "does not have an empty white space like what typical art galleries do."

"Exhibiting at Sands Gallery is new for us, and we are very glad to bring contemporary art that goes beyond people's usual visual experiences to Sands China. We are very grateful for Sands China's extraordinary artistic foresight and for standing at the forefront to guide the public's viewing of art," she added.

Fang Lijun Ceramic Works Exhibition is open for public viewing daily at Sands Gallery with free admission, May 17-June 24, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., on the 6th floor of The Grand Suites at Four Seasons.



FDI

# Companies want 'clarity' after security rule changes, raids on consultants: Business group

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

**F**OREIGN companies in China are uncertain about what they are allowed to do following police raids on consulting firms and want "greater clarity" about how newly expanded national security and other rules will be enforced, a foreign business group said yesterday.

The British Chamber of Commerce in China said a survey of its members found they are more optimistic following December's lifting of anti-virus controls that blocked most travel into and out of China. It said they want to invest but are waiting for steps to "restore the trust and certainty" in China amid tension with Europe and Washington and official plans to promote economic self-reliance.

"If there is greater clarity and greater certainty, then we believe that companies will commit more to China," said the chamber chairman, Julian MacCormac, at a news conference. Some 70% of



Julian MacCormac, chair of the British Chamber of Commerce in China, speaks to the press at a hotel in Beijing

companies "are really waiting to see" how conditions develop before taking action.

The Chinese government says foreign companies are welcome and is trying to encourage them to invest more. But they are uneasy following the expansion of national security and other rules with little explanation and official plans to create competitors to global suppliers of processor chips and other technology,

sometimes using subsidies and market barriers that have strained relations with the European Union, Washington and other trading partners.

Earlier this week, the government banned use of products from the biggest U.S. maker of memory chips, Micron Technology Inc., in computers that handle sensitive information. It said Micron had unspecified security flaws but gave no explanation.

Companies are on edge after police raided offices of two consultancies, Bain & Co. and Capvision, and a due diligence firm, Mintz Group. Authorities have given no explanation. They say companies are obliged to obey the law but have given no indication of possible violations.

The British chamber represents some 650 companies, many of them in finance, consulting and other service industries that mi-

ght be affected by tighter curbs on what information can be gathered in China and how it can be used and stored.

Yesterday's report included 171 suggestions for Chinese regulators including "greater clarity" about data restrictions on the auto industry and addressing what it said is unfair treatment of foreign companies in government purchasing.

The chamber's director of government relations, Sally Xu, said member companies that responded to a request for questions ahead of a meeting next week with a Ministry of Commerce official all asked about the investigations of consultants.

"Our companies are concerned about this," Xu said. "They wonder, where is the line between what we can do and cannot do?"

A survey in April found 76% of companies that responded are more optimistic following the end of anti-virus controls that blocked most travel into and out of China, according to the chamber. But its report said the outlook is clouded by an unpredictable business environment, political tension and "increased talk of self-sufficiency."

"This language around security and self-reliance needs to be balanced against the message of 'welcome to come to China,' because I think there is some nervousness," McCormac said. "It raises uncertainty about, what's the future like for me as a company in China? MDT/AP

HONG KONG

# Lee condemns unusual uptick in registration withdrawals from organ donation system

**H**ONG Kong Chief Executive John Lee condemned an unusual rise in the number of withdrawal requests to the city's organ donation system, saying yesterday that police would investigate suspicious cases.

According to the government, the city's centralized organ donation registration system received nearly 5,800 withdrawal applications in the five months since December, when the government raised the possibility of establishing an organ transplant mutual assistance program with mainland China.

More than half of the withdrawal applications were found to be invalid, either as duplicate applications or coming from people who had never opted in.



At a regular press briefing, Lee pointed to those who withdrew their applications without ever registering, calling the moves suspicious.

"I severely condemn those who attempt to cau-

se damages to this noble system which saves lives through organ donations," he said. "This is a shameful act."

Hong Kong has a separate system for matching donated organs to patients

and does not have any standing mechanism to share cadaveric organs with institutions in mainland China. Cross-border organ transplants have been permitted on a case-by-case basis, if the situation warrants.

Under an opt-in system, Hong Kong currently has more than 357,000 registrants in the financial hub that houses 7 million people.

Organ donations have been met with resistance in both Hong Kong and China because of an ingrained cultural desire to keep bodies intact.

The government issued a strong-worded statement Monday, saying it could not rule out that a small number of people made withdrawal attempts in a bid to under-

mine the reputation of the system, and to increase administrative burden. Without naming any platforms or any individuals, it said it noticed a small number of people had distorted the virtue of organ donation by promoting the idea that donors should scrutinize the identity of the recipients online. Some also urged others to withdraw from the system, it added.

On Hong Kong's Reddit-like forum LIHKG — where pro-democracy supporters discussed strategies for the 2019 anti-government movement — some users were skeptical about the proposed system. Others posted a link for making withdrawals from the register.

The Hong Kong government floated the proposal

after a baby girl underwent the city's first transplant using a heart donated from mainland China in December. It said the organ assistance program under consideration could be activated immediately after medical personnel could not match a donated organ with a suitable patient locally.

Hong Kong's medical standards are considered some of the highest in the world. While China's medical system has advanced over the past few decades, many Hong Kongers remain skeptical about its health care services. Allegations of "forced organ harvesting in China," particularly targeting minorities in detention, have added to concerns about a cross-border organ cooperation.

In 2015, Beijing ceased transplanting organs taken from executed prisoners in response to human rights concerns and later provided data to the international community to show it was fighting against illegal organ transplants. MDT/AP

AUSTRALIA

# Modi wants closer bilateral defense ties with Canberra

RICK RYCROFT  
& ROD MCGUIRK, SYDNEY

**N**ARENDRA Modi has arrived in Sydney for his second Australian visit as India's prime minister and told local media he wants closer bilateral defense and security ties as China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region grows.

Modi is the only one of the Quad nations' leaders to continue with his Australian visit plans after President Joe Biden pulled out last week to return to Washington to focus on debt limit talks. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who hosted a Group of Seven meeting last week, later canceled his Australia trip as well.

Modi gave an address to the Indian diaspora at a sold-out 20,000-seat Sydney stadium yesterday.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese will attend the stadium event and has a bilateral meeting scheduled with his Indian counterpart today.

Modi told yesterday's edition of The Australian newspaper he wanted to take India's relationship with Australia to the "next level," including closer defense and security ties to help ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

"As two democracies, India and Australia have shared interests in a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific. There is alignment of our



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (right) is met by Australian politician Michelle Rowland in Sydney

strategic viewpoint," Modi told the newspaper.

"The high degree of mutual trust between us has naturally translated into greater cooperation on defense and security matters. Our navies are participating in joint naval exercises. I am confident that there is merit in working together to realise the true potential in closer defense and security cooperation," Modi added.

Albanese told Parliament that Australia will for the first time host the Malabar naval exercises invol-

ving India, the United States and Japan this year in another sign of a deepening commitment to the Quad.

"India is a key strategic partner," Albanese told Parliament.

"We are both part of a growing and dynamic region and Prime Minister Modi is a very welcome visitor to our shores," Albanese added.

Albanese also said he and Modi expected to complete negotiations on a free trade deal before the end of the year.

"That will create Australian jobs, helping our industries prosper, sparking growth in innovation," Albanese said.

Negotiations on the deal began in 2011. The Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement would increase the scope of a bilateral trade pact that came into force in December last year.

India is Australia's sixth largest trading partner with the two-way exchange of goods and services valued at 46.5 billion Australian dollars (\$31 billion) last year.

Australia is keen to increase trade with India as a means of diversifying from China, Australia's biggest trading partner. Australian efforts to improve trade relations with India have gained urgency in recent years as Beijing has closed down markets for targeted Australian exports.

Albanese also said cooperation on renewable energy would also be discussed.

Modi last visited Australia in November 2014 only months after his government was first elected.

Australia had pulled out of the original Quad security dialogue with India, the United States and Japan in 2008, fearing the grouping would provoke a Chinese military buildup. Since China took that course anyway, the Quad reformed in 2017 and Australia returned to joint Quad military exercises in 2020.

With the Sydney leaders' summit cancelled, a substitute Quad meeting was convened on the sidelines of the G7 summit.

Modi arrived in Sydney on Monday night from Papua New Guinea, where he had hosted a meeting with Pacific Island leaders to discuss ways to better cooperate.

Asked if Australian would raise Muslim and minority rights in India with the Hindu leader, Richard Marles, Australia's deputy prime minister, said he expected Albanese and Modi would have a "full conversation."

"We have never had a greater strategic alignment with India than we do right now. Both countries are deeply invested in the collective security of the Indo-Pacific region," Marles told reporters in the Australian capital Canberra. **MDT/AP**

SRI LANKA

# China's Sinopec signs agreement to enter retail fuel market

**C**HINESE petroleum giant Sinopec signed an agreement with Sri Lanka today [Macau time] to enter the South Asian island country's retail fuel market as it struggles to resolve a worsening energy crisis amid an unprecedented economic upheaval.

The contract agreement would enable Sinopec to import, store, distribute and sell petroleum products in Sri Lanka, which has had a fuel shortage for more than a year.

The move comes as Beijing looks to consolidate investments in Sri Lanka's ports and energy sector amid growing security concerns raised by the island nation's immediate neighbor, India, which con-



siders Sri Lanka to be its strategic backyard.

Sri Lanka, which is facing a foreign exchange crisis, hopes the deal will help to resolve its energy crisis.

The agreement signed this week in the Sri Lankan

capital, Colombo, was made to "ensure uninterrupted fuel suppliers to consumers," the president's office said in a news release.

Under the pact, Sinopec will be granted a 20-year license to operate 150 fuel

stations currently operated by Sri Lanka's state-run Ceylon Petroleum Corporation, and to invest in 50 new fuel stations and in the country's energy sector, the nation's Power and Energy Ministry said in a statement.

Sinopec can start operations within 45 days of license issuance and "this development brings hope for a more stable and reliable fuel supply, boosting the country's energy sector and providing assurance to consumers," the president's office said.

When the economic crisis hit Sri Lanka last year, the government couldn't find foreign currency to import fuel, triggering a severe shortage that lasted for

more than two months and forcing people to endure long lines at fuel stations. Sri Lankans are still allotted limited amounts of fuel that is distributed according to a QR code system.

In an effort to resolve the crisis, Sri Lanka opened its retail fuel market to foreign petroleum companies, asking them to use their own funds to purchase fuel, without depending on Sri Lankan banks for foreign exchange. The government has given approval to two other foreign companies — Australia's United Petroleum and U.S. company RM Parks in collaboration with Shell — to enter its fuel market.

An Indian oil company already operates in Sri

Lanka. But, India is concerned over the growing influence of China in Sri Lanka, which sits along one of the world's busiest shipping routes.

Sri Lanka borrowed heavily from China over the past decade for infrastructure projects including a seaport, airport and a city being built on reclaimed land. The projects failed to earn enough revenue to pay for the loans, a factor in Sri Lanka's economic woes. In 2017, Sri Lanka leased the seaport in Hambantota to China because it could not pay back the loan.

China accounts for about 10% of Sri Lanka's loans, trailing only Japan and the Asian Development Bank. **MDT/AP**

EASTTIMOR

# Opposition party won most seats in parliamentary election

GANTRY MEILANA, DILI

**E**AST Timor's opposition party won Sunday's parliamentary election, meaning independence fighter Xanana Gusmao is likely to return as prime minister in Asia's youngest democracy.

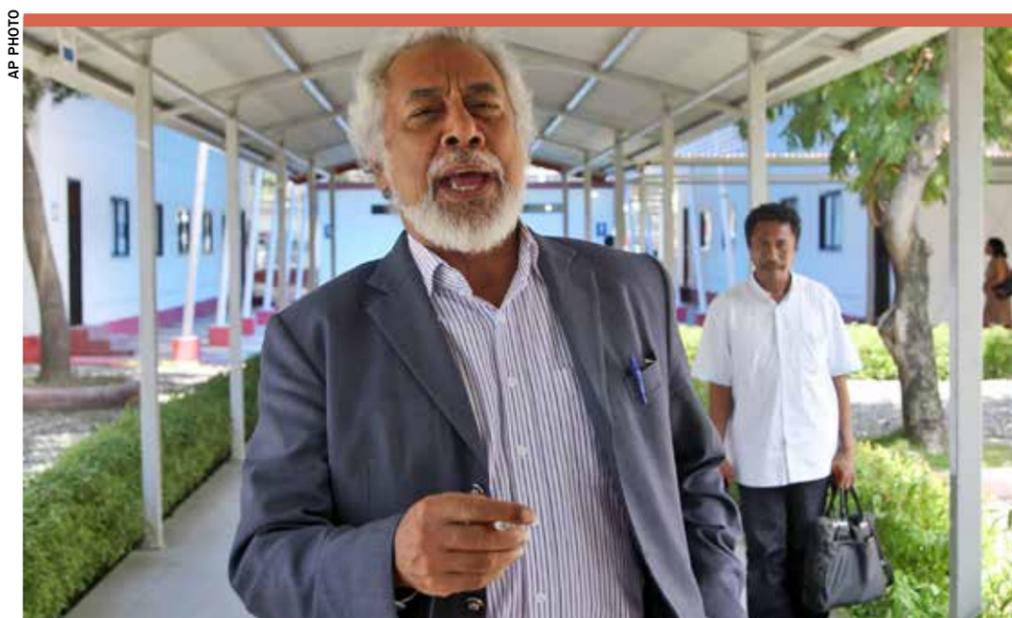
The final vote count released by the National Elections Commission yesterday showed the National Congress of the Reconstruction of East Timor, known as CNRT, won 41% of the votes and gained 31 seats out of 65 in the National Parliament.

The ruling Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor, or Fretilin, had 25% of the votes and 19 seats. It promised to accept the election outcome.

The Democratic Party won six seats, the rural-based Khunto Party five and the People's Liberation Party four.

A total of 17 parties ran. They were required to have a woman in at least every third position in their party list and seats were allocated for those with an electoral threshold of 4%.

No parties formed coalitions before the vote, leaving the choice of who will head the government between Gusmao, who chairs CNRT, and Fretilin leader Mari Alkatiri, who is also a resistance-



East Timor's Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao

ra figure.

Fretilin and CNRT have blamed each other for years of political paralysis. Tensions between the two largest parties since 2018 led to the resignation of Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak in 2020 after the government repeatedly failed to pass a budget.

But he agreed to stay until a new government was formed and to oversee the battle against the coronavirus pandemic. His government has operated without an annual budget and has relied on monthly injections from its sovereign fund, called the Petroleum Fund.

His governing coalition is currently made up of Fretilin, the PLP which he heads, and the Khunto party.

The former Portuguese colony was occupied by Indonesia for a quarter-century and gained independence after a U.N.-sponsored referendum in 1999. Indonesia's military responded with scorched-earth attacks that devastated the East Timorese half of the island of Timor.

East Timor's transition to a democracy has been rocky, with leaders battling massive poverty, unemployment and corruption as the country continues to struggle with the

legacy of its bloody independence battle and bitter factional politics that have occasionally erupted into violence. Its economy is reliant on dwindling offshore oil revenues.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations this year granted an observer status to East Timor ahead of it becoming the regional bloc's 11th member.

The U.N. estimates that nearly half of East Timor's population lives below the extreme poverty line of \$1.90 a day, and that 42 of every 1,000 babies die before their fifth birthday because of malnutrition.

media as Christian Brueckner, who was in the Algarve in 2007, was a suspect in the case. Brueckner has denied any involvement.

Brueckner is currently serving a seven-year prison sentence in Germany for a rape he committed in Portugal in 2005.

He is under investigation on suspicion of murder in the McCann case but hasn't been charged. He spent many years in Portugal, including in Praia da Luz, around the time of Madeleine's disappearance.

The case stirred worldwide interest for several years, with reports of sightings of her stretching as far away as Australia, along with a slew of books and television documentaries about the case.

Rewards for finding Madeleine, who would now be 20, reached several million dollars. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 2001 ISRAEL WEDDING PARTY TRAGEDY



At least 20 people have been killed and hundreds have been injured at a wedding party in Jerusalem after the dance floor collapsed.

Guests were left clinging to the sides of the Versailles wedding hall when the third floor suddenly gave way at about 2245 local time and crashed through two storeys below.

There were nearly 700 guests in the building, which is in the industrial Talpiot area of Jerusalem. Many were left trapped by the falling rubble which left a gaping hole through the centre of the building.

Reports say about 250 people have been taken to hospital but rescuers say there are signs of life beneath the debris. A special Israeli army rescue unit is at the scene.

The father of the groom, Zion Dror, said: "We were dancing, and all of a sudden three storeys collapsed. My family is fine, thank God."

The bride, Keren Dror, who was standing with the groom in the centre of a circle of dancers fell with him when the floor collapsed. She is reported to have injuries to her head and limbs and has been taken to hospital.

One wedding guest Efraim Rino told Israel Radio: "I grabbed my son as the floor collapsed. We fell one floor, and then the next floor collapsed. And the next. And I'm trying to hold my son's hand all the time. He's ten years old. We dropped all the way down. We were in the ruins. We had to be pulled out. "People were flying through the air, the orchestra, the loudspeakers, everything fell."

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert has already visited the scene and rejected suggestions of a terror attack.

There are some reports the Versailles banquet hall was built using a cheap method of construction, known as Pal-Kal, which was outlawed five years ago.

A caller to Israel's Army Radio said he had organised a wedding at the hall a week ago and had called the owners afterwards to say he was worried about the state of the dance hall floor.

Courtesy BBC News

PORTUGAL

# Police resume search for Madeleine McCann, missing since 2007

**P**ORTUGUESE police aided by German and British colleagues yesterday resumed their search for Madeleine McCann, the British child who disappeared in the country's southern Algarve region 16 years ago.

Between 20 and 30 officers, some in uniform, could be seen in the area by the Arade dam, about 50 kilometers from Praia da Luz, where the 3-year-old was last seen alive in 2007.

Portuguese police had set up a blue base tent and cordoned off the area to the media

and public. Eyewitnesses said police began searching shortly before 8 a.m. Tuesday in an area some kilometers away from the tent. More than a dozen cars and police vans could be seen arriving in the area.

On Monday, Portuguese detectives issued a statement saying the search was being resumed at the request of German authorities and with help from British officials.

German prosecutors in Braunschweig said in a written statement Tuesday that "criminal procedural measures are currently taking place in

Portugal as part of the investigation into the Madeleine McCann case."

They added that "the measures are being implemented by way of mutual legal assistance by the Portuguese prosecution authorities with the support of officers from the Federal Criminal Police Office."

"More detailed information on the background is not being released at this time for investigative tactical reasons," the statement said.

In mid-2020, German officials said a 45-year-old German citizen, identified by

## IN CONTEXT

The final number of dead was 23. Ten people were arrested by the Israeli authorities. They included the hall's owners, the engineer who invented the Pal-Kal method of cheap and lightweight ceiling construction and contractors and builders involved with recent renovations. An immediate safety check of all buildings using Pal-Kal was ordered. However, there were reports the checks were not thoroughly carried out and in the first six months after the disaster only one building, Lev Hagiva, was partly closed. Seven weeks after the banquet hall collapse families of the victims won their battle to have the tragedy declared a national disaster, so they could be entitled to compensation from the state. In December 2003 a report into the Versailles wedding hall disaster found it a "miracle" there had been no other collapses given the lack of action taken on sub-standard buildings. In October 2004 two of the owners of the hall were convicted of causing death through negligence. Two other employees were acquitted.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## YOUR STARS

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Relatives will not agree with the way you are dealing with your personal problems. Residential changes, renovations, or moves are likely to disrupt your routine.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
Social activity should be on your agenda today. Empty promises will cause upset. Your ability to get the job done will result in added responsibility and possible promotion.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
You might find that a coworker has been two faced. You can make changes to your home that will be pleasing to all concerned. Your diplomacy will be of utmost importance today.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Set the ball in motion and be relentless until you complete the project. It's a good time for long awaited relationships to begin. Past partners are likely to reappear.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
If everyone wants to do their own thing, let them. You should put your efforts into creative projects. Someone you work with could try to undermine you.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Changes in your home may be disruptive and upsetting. Take the initiative and go after your goals. Get busy trying to make more money.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Take that long overdue vacation if you can. You can make major accomplishments while on short trips. You need a job with more responsibility and a higher wage.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
Don't bang your head against a wall. Based on your excitement, serious-minded individuals will be more than interested in backing your ideas.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Complete those hobbies you started a long time ago. You can enjoy social events and meet new potential mates; however, avoid being lavish.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Move into a leadership position if you are determined to do so. Don't overspend on luxury items. Let your lover know what your personal intentions are.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Use some diplomacy to get your point across delicately. Be sure to think twice before you say something that might hurt your partner's feelings.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Put your energy into your work or moneymaking ventures rather than into your emotional life today. You can make money through your creative efforts.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



## SUDOKU

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

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

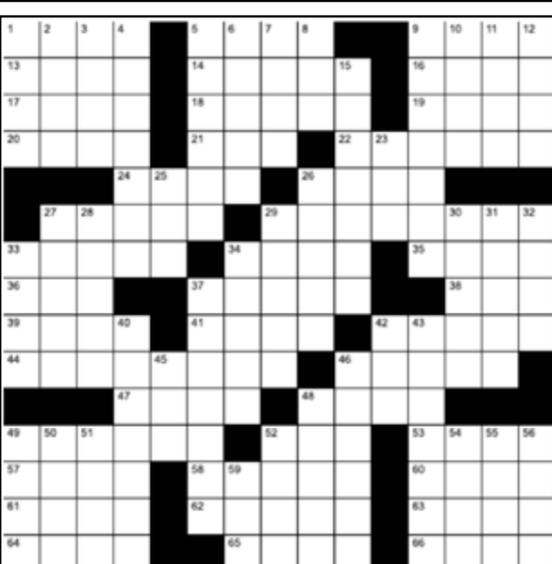
## WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	18	28	overcast
Changchun	16	28	fine
Chengdu	15	27	cloudy
Chongqing	17	29	cloudy
Fuzhou	19	26	overcast
Guangzhou	19	29	rain
Guiyang	12	25	cloudy
Haikou	26	33	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	16	20	rain
Harbin	18	29	cloudy
Hefei	15	22	cloudy
Nanjing	14	21	overcast
Shanghai	17	22	rain
Taipei	19	25	rain
Wuhan	16	25	cloudy
Hong Kong	27	28	thunderstorms
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	13	22	rain
Frankfurt	7	17	overcast
Paris	10	20	overcast
London	10	22	overcast
New York	11	22	overcast

## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- \_\_\_ impasse; 5- Mex. miss; 9- Jack of "Rio Lobo"; 13- Mandlikova of tennis; 14- Is inclined; 16- Flaky mineral; 17- Broadway opening; 18- Employ again; 19- Raines of film; 20- The closest one to us is the sun; 21- High-pitched; 22- Skylighted lobby; 24- Possesses; 26- Bit of kindling; 27- Violently intense; 29- Went before; 33- Baseball commissioner Bud; 34- Test choice; 35- Ricky's portrayer; 36- Sense of self; 37- Large divided leaf; 38- Off-road wheels, for short; 39- Social standing; 41- Chain piece; 42- Fight, disturbance; 44- Transient; 46- Ejects; 47- Record; 48- Weapons; 49- Device for applying ocular rinse; 52- Wind up; 53- Exile isle; 57- German composer; 58- Host; 60- Small notch; 61- Baseball family name; 62- One on track?; 63- Basic monetary unit of Ghana; 64- Quick sharp bark; 65- Beatty and Rorem; 66- Elysium of Genesis;

DOWN 1- Cries of discovery; 2- Diplomat's forte; 3- Architectural pier; 4- Capital of Kenya; 5- Maroon; 6- Staggers; 7- Hardware fastener; 8- Super Bowl highlights?; 9- Appeared; 10- Taylor of "Mystic Pizza"; 11- Rights org.; 12- Polite address; 15- Kelp; 23- Spasm; 25- Hairpiece; 26- Main stem of a tree; 27- Splendid; 28- Singly; 29- Fork; 30- Distributed cards; 31- Politico Kefauver; 32- Seedy joint; 33- Slave; 34- Triple; 37- Fin; 40- Condiment; 42- Silent; 43- Spirit; 45- 19th letter of the Greek alphabet; 46- Commands; 48- On \_\_\_-to-know basis; 49- Auction site; 50- Jodie Foster's alma mater; 51- Environmental sci.; 52- \_\_\_ homo; 54- Fibbed; 55- A followers; 56- Analogous; 59- Adult male;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## RUGBY ACADEMY

# GBA TOUCH DRAWS PUBLIC ATTENTION

DONALD SHAW, MDT

**L**AST Saturday saw the first Greater Bay Area Touch Rugby Championship take place in Macau.

The intense heat made for challenging conditions but some fast and exciting games held the spectators interest. Eight teams came from Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Macau and competed in two groups.

The Macau Insiders quickly stamped their authority on Group B by winning their three games against Guangzhou Hualang (2-0), Shenzhen Avocados (4-0) and HK University Unicorns (6-1) to qualify for the Cup final. Guangzhou Hualang finished second in the group to make the Plate final, with Shenzhen Avocados and University Unicorns qualifying for the Bowl and Shield finals, respectively.

Group A proved to be a much tighter affair with Macau Shark, Macau Marauders and Shenzhen Badgers all tied with 5 points each. Try difference was used to separate the teams and Shenzhen Badgers made it to the Cup final by one try over the Macau Sharks.

The Shield final saw the GBA Dragons overcome University Unicorns by 2-1 while the Bowl final was taken by Macau Marauders in an impressive 5-1 win over Shenzhen Avocados. In the Plate, a very competitive game between Macau Sharks and Guangzhou Halang needed extra-time to find a winner, the Sharks victorious by 3-2.

The Cup final saw another tight, competitive game with the Shenzhen Badgers edging the Macau Insiders by 1-0. A very good tournament played in a good spirit and all teams keen to repeat the experience next year.



AD

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INDIANAPOLIS 500

# Points change could keep series championship race tighter

MICHAEL MAROT,  
INDIANAPOLIS

**A**LLEX Palou took the IndyCar points lead with his first win of this season.

If the first Spaniard to win the Indianapolis 500 pole also collects his first career oval win last weekend, he'll extend his lead over his two nearest challengers, Pato O'Ward and Marcus Ericsson, though not by nearly as much as in recent years.

Series officials announced in February that after nine years of awarding double points in the series' marquee race, they'd revert to the standard single points format — a welcome change around Gasoline Alley.

"What we've always done a good job of is working on the priority of today," said Mike Hull, managing director at Chip Ganassi Racing, Palou's team. "If you were a little behind when you left here, you just had to work a little harder and we won some championships

AP PHOTO



Alex Palou, of Spain, drives during practice for the Indianapolis 500 auto race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway

some of those years."

The extra points certainly can help.

Palou took advantage of his 2021 runner-up finish to become the youngest IndyCar championship winner since his teammate Scott Dixon won his

first crown in 2003 at age 23. At Indy, Palou had a 49-point advantage over Josef Newgarden and wound up with a 38-point margin over Newgarden to win the crown. Newgarden has never won the 500.

Recent history has not been

good for 500 winners, either.

During the 2014-22 double points era, not a single Indy champ won the series title. The last driver to win both in one season was Dario Franchitti in 2010. And each of the last 17 years, the overall champion has been decided in the season finale.

Finally, the series gave in to those lobbying for a change.

"While double points at the Indianapolis 500 has not altered who has won the season-long championship, occasionally it has had a negative effect on the final position of the full-time teams," IndyCar president of competition and operations Jay Frye said then. "As our entry list grows, this move will provide consistency for teams competing for championship positions."

The biggest impact might be keeping an already tight points race much tighter.

Palou's victory on May 13 allowed him to leapfrog Ericsson, the defending Indy winner, and O'Ward, the 2021 championship

runner-up. Palou now holds a six-point edge over O'Ward and has a 19-point cushion over Ericsson.

Seven drivers including Dixon are within 50 points of the lead — the total awarded to each race winner. In years past, bad luck or a bad day could essentially end someone's title hopes as Dixon learned last year when he fell 21 points short of capturing a record-tying seventh series title.

Now the driver with more IndyCar wins (53) than anyone other than A.J. Foyt (67), more 500 poles (five) than anyone other than Rick Mears (six) and at least one victory in a series record 18 consecutive seasons could still be in contention no matter what happens coming Sunday.

But the 42-year-old Dixon, who qualified sixth, isn't racing for points. He wants to end his quest and join the list of multiple Indy winners on attempt No. 15.

"It's always about the win anyway," said Dixon, the 2008 Indy champ. "If you had a nice finish here, it was a nice bonus to have some good points. But it was doubly hard if you didn't. I know last year, I lost 76 points here (to Ericsson) and that took all year to try and regain."

Palou hopes to make it equally difficult on his teammates — and anyone else who could overtake him in the points chase with another strong performance this weekend. MDT/AP

AD

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OPINION

World Views

Paul Wiseman, MDT/AP Economics Writer



THE GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS OF A US DEBT DEFAULT

A potential U.S. debt default would have significant global ramifications, extending beyond the borders of the United States. The consequences would be far-reaching, impacting various sectors and countries worldwide. Chinese factories relying on U.S. orders could experience a decline in demand, Swiss investors holding U.S. Treasuries would suffer losses, and Sri Lankan companies would lose their dollar alternative. Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, warns that no corner of the global economy would be spared if a U.S. government default occurred and the crisis remained unresolved.

Moody's economists predict that even a brief breach of the debt limit would cause substantial economic weakening, resulting in the loss of approximately 1.5 million jobs in the U.S. If the default persisted into the summer, the consequences would be even more dire: U.S. economic growth would decline, 7.8 million jobs would vanish, borrowing rates would rise, the unemployment rate would soar from 3.4% to 8%, and a stock market plunge would wipe out \$10 trillion in household wealth.

While negotiations between the White House and House Republicans aim to avoid a default, the underlying issue remains concerning. Partisan divisions and increased spending have worsened the problem of U.S. debt. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen warns that without raising or suspending the debt ceiling, the government could default as early as June 1.

The Treasury debt's reputation as a safe asset has been a cornerstone of global commerce, fostering confidence in the United States' ability to meet its financial obligations. A default on U.S. debt would shatter the \$24 trillion Treasury debt market, freeze financial markets, and ignite an international crisis. The potential fallout is particularly worrisome as the world economy confronts numerous challenges, including inflation, interest rate surges, geopolitical tensions, and skepticism regarding the U.S. role in global finance.

U.S. Treasuries are widely used as collateral, as a buffer against bank losses, as a safe haven during uncertainty, and as a repository for central banks' foreign exchange reserves. The United States government's debt is held by foreign governments and private investors, amounting to nearly \$7.6 trillion, or around 31% of Treasuries in financial markets.

The U.S. dollar's dominant status as the global currency allows the country to borrow and finance its growing government debt with ease. However, a strong dollar can render American goods more expensive compared to foreign competitors, leading to persistent trade deficits. Moreover, the U.S. dollar represents 58% of foreign exchange reserves held by central banks worldwide.

In economies grappling with instability and devalued local currencies, such as Sri Lanka and Lebanon, reliance on dollars for transactions is common. Even during a crisis originating in the U.S., the dollar remains the preferred safe haven for investors. However, should a default occur, initial uncertainty and fear would drive investors to seek refuge in the United States. Nevertheless, the Treasury market would likely freeze, prompting investors to divert funds to U.S. money market funds or bonds issued by top-tier U.S. corporations. Over time, doubts would erode the value of the dollar.

During a debt-ceiling crisis, the U.S. government would prioritize interest payments to bondholders while delaying payments to contractors and retirees until sufficient funds are available. Lawsuits against the government and downgrades of U.S. debt by ratings agencies would be expected. Although the dollar retains its global dominance, it faces challenges as more entities turn to the euro and, to a lesser extent, China's yuan. The debt ceiling crisis intensifies concerns about the immense financial power of the United States and the role of the dollar.

Given the fragile state of the global economy, a crisis over the creditworthiness of U.S. obligations would be viewed as highly irresponsible. The urgency to promptly resolve the debt crisis and avoid a default is critical, as such an outcome could have severe consequences for both the United States and the world economy. [Abridged]

Prince Harry has lost a legal challenge over his bid to be allowed to make private payments for police protection, BBC reported.

His lawyers wanted a judicial review of the rejection of his offer to pay for protection in the UK, after his security arrangements changed when the prince stopped being a "working royal".

But a judge has ruled not to give the go ahead for such a hearing. Home Office lawyers had opposed the idea of allowing wealthy people to "buy" security from the police.

According to BBC, this ruling followed a one-day court hearing in London last week.

Since then the Duke and Duchess of Sussex have been involved in what their spokesperson described as a "near catastrophic car chase" involving paparazzi in New York.

But at the High Court last week, lawyers for Prince Harry had challenged the decision to reject his private funding for police protection for himself and his family when visiting the UK.



AP PHOTO

WHAT MAKES A STANDING OVATION LAST 22 MINUTES AT CANNES?

JAKE COYLE, CANNES

THE Cannes Film Festival is on, which means stopwatches are out.

Nowhere are the length of standing ovations at high-wattage premieres more carefully recorded and parsed than in Cannes. Did a movie garner a triumphant eight-minute standing ovation? Or did the audience stand for a mere four or five minutes?

How has such an unlikely metric come to reverberate around the world within minutes of a premiere? And why is everyone standing for so long? Doesn't anyone's hands get tired?

Such effusive displays of enthusiasm have come to be a hallmark of Cannes and, sometimes, a bit of marketing gimmick for films looking to resonate far from the Croisette. If Cannes, the world's largest and glitziest film festival, stands for cinematic excess, its thunderous standing ovations can seem like its greatest overindulgence.

Less widely understood, though, is how the pageantry of Cannes shapes and distorts standing ovations. When audiences rise after the credits roll in the Grand Theatre Lumière, Cannes' biggest screen, they aren't just standing and applauding the movie they just watched.

Immediately after a film wraps, a cameraman swoops in and begins shooting the filmmaker and cast members, who are sitting in the middle of the theater.

When "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" recently premiered in Cannes, the camera gave Mads Mikkelsen, Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Ethann Isidore, Harrison Ford and director James Mangold each their own moment to bask in adulation. In the end, trade publications — which have reporters inside the theater to keep time — clocked the standing ovation at five minutes. Variety pronounced it a "lukewarm" reception.

Inflation may be such a scourge that it's even affecting standing O's. In most places in the world, a five-minute standing ovation would count as a dream response. In Cannes, it's supposedly as tepid as a day-old espresso.

Reviews for "Dial of Destiny" were, indeed, mixed. But it's also possible that the audience — or the movie's stars — had had enough after a 142-minute movie that was preceded by a much-cheered tribute to Ford. The next day, a visibly emotional Ford called the experience "indescribable."

"The warmth of this place, the sense of community, the welcome is unimaginable," said Ford. "And it

makes me feel good."

Much of how long a standing ovation endures relates to whether the film's stars push it along or cater to the camera. At the premiere of Martin Scorsese's "Flowers of the Killer Moon," after the film's expansive cast had gotten their close-ups, Leonardo DiCaprio and others in the film kept clapping, even when most of the auditorium had stopped.

Nine minutes was ultimately the call for "Flowers of the Killer Moon," enough to mark a high for this year's festival. Scorsese's period epic drew the kind of headlines that every film wants out of Cannes. Movies don't get second chances for a first impression, after all.

The longest Cannes ovation on record belongs to Guillermo del Toro's "Pan's Labyrinth," which scored a 22-minute feting, enough time to watch an episode of "Seinfeld" without the ads. Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11," on its way to winning the Palme d'Or at the 2004 Cannes, was applauded for 20 minutes. Jeff Nichols' "Mud" was cheered for 18 minutes in 2012.

Cannes has long been known for its passionate responses. Some hugely revered films, like Francis Ford Coppola's "Apocalypse Now," have famously been booed at the festival. MDT/AP



AP PHOTO

Russian troops and security forces fought for a second day yesterday against an alleged cross-border raid that Moscow blamed on Ukrainian military saboteurs but which Kyiv portrayed as an uprising against the Kremlin by Russian partisans. Vyacheslav Gladkov, governor of the Belgorod region on the Ukraine border, said forces continued to sweep the rural area around the town of Graivoron, where the alleged attack on Monday took place. Twelve civilians were wounded in the attack.



AP PHOTO

Bolivia Pope Francis has sent one of his top sex crimes investigators to Bolivia at a time when the Andean nation is being shaken by an escalating pedophilia scandal involving priests. Monsignor Jordi Bertomeu, a leading member of the church's Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (pictured), arrived in Bolivia on the same day as a former Jesuit seminarian landed in the country vowing to reveal more information about alleged cases of abuse.



AP PHOTO

Cape Canaveral The International Space Station rolled out the welcome mat yesterday [Macau time] for two Saudi visitors, including the kingdom's first female astronaut. SpaceX's chartered flight arrived at the orbiting lab less than 16 hours after blasting off from Florida. The four guests will spend just over a week there, before returning to Earth in their capsule.

Wales Several dozen youths pelted police with objects and set cars and trash bins ablaze in Cardiff in local unrest that erupted after two teenagers died in a road accident, officials said yesterday. Police said "large scale disorder" broke out after officers were called to the scene of a crash in the Ely district of the Welsh capital.