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AP PHOTO



Japanese PM Fumio Kishida said his son is resigning as his executive policy secretary to take responsibility for using the prime minister's residence for a private party at which the merrymaking was exposed in magazine photos that triggered public outrage. Shotaro Kishida, his father's executive secretary for political affairs and eldest son (pictured), invited a group of people including relatives to a year-end party on Dec. 30 at the Prime Minister's Official Residence.

AP PHOTO



North Korea said yesterday it would launch its first military spy satellite in June and described space-based reconnaissance as crucial for monitoring the United States' "reckless" military exercises with South Korea. The statement came a day after North Korea notified Japan's coast guard that the launch, sometime between May 31 and June 11, might affect waters in the Yellow Sea, East China Sea and east of the Philippines' Luzon Island.

AP PHOTO



Bangladesh should not bear the burden of more than 1 million Rohingya refugees alone while U.N. agencies are facing challenges to feed them, a United Nations official said. Olivier De Schutter, a U.N. special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights (pictured), made the statement at the end of a 12-day trip to Bangladesh, where he visited camps sheltering the refugees from Myanmar.

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RENATO MARQUES



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### TAIPA SEES THIRD HIGHEST TEMPERATURE SINCE 1952

The Taipa Grande Station recorded 34.8 degrees Celsius yesterday, the third highest in May since 1952, according to the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG). Several districts in Macau have seen temperatures above 36 degrees Celsius, among which the highest temperature was recorded at 37 degrees Celsius at the Outer Harbour Station. According to some weather applications, the temperature stood at 36 degrees Celsius yet felt like 42 degrees Celsius due to humidity. The bureau has issued an orange hot weather alert and it is expected to be extremely hot today.

### TAIWAN MINISTRY PROPOSES EXTENSIONS OF STAY FOR SOME FOREIGNERS

The Ministry of the Interior (MOI) has proposed many amendments targeted at allowing foreign nationals to extend their stay in Taiwan after graduation or to care for family members who have residency in the country and who have been hospitalized with serious illness. To encourage foreign talent to work in Taiwan, those who study in the country can extend their residency for a year after graduation and another year if needed, according to the amendments. The proposed rule change would also apply if either parent is a resident of Hong Kong or Macau who has been granted residency in Taiwan.

### EXPORTS AT MOP860 MILLION IN APRIL

Total merchandise exports amounted to MOP858 million in April 2023, down by 28.1% year-on-year, according to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). The value of re-exports (MOP731 million) dropped by 24%, of which re-exports of diamond and diamond jewelry and watches declined by 51.6% and 45.9% respectively, while those of items for casino and machines, apparatuses and parts surged by 146.1% and 29.9% respectively. From January to April this year, the total value of merchandise export dropped by 20.9% year-on-year to MOP4.01 billion. External merchandise trade totaled MOP51.31 billion from January to April 2023, down by 9% compared with MOP56.38 billion a year earlier.

### ALBANO MARTINS

# FORMER ANIMA PRESIDENT WANTS INTERNATIONAL ANIMAL SHELTER IN PORTUGAL

RENATO MARQUES

**T**he former president and honorary life president of the animal rights protection group Anima Macau, Albano Martins, is seeking support to create an old ambition of his – an international animal shelter in Portugal.

The International Center for the Collection and Rehoming of Animals at Risk ('CIAR' based on the Portuguese acronym) – a tentative name provided to the Times by Martins – is to be managed by a new organization called ANIMA (Portugal). Martins stated he has been in contact with the current president of ANIMA Macau seeking authorization to use this name.

Martins noted that despite the similarity in name, the two organizations are independent and have no official ties. Further, Anima Macau will not share any costs or responsibilities under the project, to be hosted in Portugal's Alentejo region.

Martins said the first steps to



establish the center are still underway, and the project is far from completion.

For the time being, Martins is focusing his efforts on establishing the management organization as well as obtaining the necessary funds to set up the center.

According to Martins, the final project could occupy an area of between 10 to 50 hectares – ano-

ther reason behind the choice of the Alentejo region, where Martins already owns some land that he will donate for the project.

He explained that contrary to the work of Anima in Macau, which focuses mostly on pets, the CIAR has a much broader spectrum of operation. The CIAR's intended operation can include both domestic and wild animals.

The idea is that the center can serve as a temporary shelter in case of different needs where the animals can be cared for before being relocated or placed back in the natural environment or protected habitats.

Such work would be done in cooperation with worldwide animal protection organizations, with which CIAR hopes to establish cooperative relationships.

This project has occupied Martins' time since he left Macau around 18 months ago after more than 40 years of residing and working in the city, to return to Portugal.

He said this is his last project and one that he intends to work on for the rest of his life. Further to this, he anticipates the project needs to be carefully considered, planned, organized, led, and controlled so that "we don't just have an 'animals' warehouse' as we unfortunately have in many places and that is neither good for the animals nor for the animal rights protection cause."

### SURVEY

# 80% of students unsure about parents' help in career planning

ANTHONY LAM

**A** survey result released yesterday revealed that over 80% of responding students expressed uncertainty with their parents' ability to help with their career planning, local media reports.

The survey was conducted between February and May this year and was led by The Women's General Association of Macau and the City University of Macau. A total of 1,556 valid responses were obtained from students from only five local high schools. Half of the



students were in Grade 9.

The survey results disclosed that 36% of the students thought that their parents could not provide assistance in supporting the students' career planning. The survey operators interpreted this result to mean that

the students felt unsure as to whether support and assistance on their career development could be provided by their parents, according to local media Exmoo.

In addition, 41% of the students reported low levels of guidance in

their career development from their parents, based on their responses to a question on whether the respondents' parents had discussed or provided information or knowledge on available professions and career options.

Students also reported feeling that their parents lacked knowledge in their own professions, implying that their parents could not provide enough help to their children on career exploration and professional capacities, among other areas.

The survey also discovered that over 70% of the

students described their relationship with their parents as fairly good. Nearly 50% of students reported daily communication of an hour's duration with their parents.

The survey operators suggested that parents discuss career exploration and development with their children. Examples of such topics included discussions on their own work and career so as to deepen their children's understanding of the various occupations and professions.

Another benefit of such discussions, the operators noted, is that such conversations would allow parents to be more sensitive to their children's emotions, such as uncertainty towards the future and setbacks faced in school.

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# Despite zero public discussion, Secretary defends necessity for Cotai hospital expert residences

ANTHONY LAM

**R**ESIDENCES for non-local experts for the future Cotai hospital are still subject to discussion by the Urban Planning Committee (CPU), Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong said yesterday in defense of the project.

The official was asked to discuss the matter on the sidelines of a Cultural Development Advisory Committee meeting.

The project was unearthed and reported by Chinese newspaper Cheng Pou on May 9. Before that, no disclosure was made by the government.

Lawmaker Ron Lam also criticized the government's manner of handling the issue during one of his pre-agenda speeches at the parliament. He questioned if public funds are at the government's disposal without even being discussed by society.

To ease debates, the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong, emphasized that the project has not yet been approved, because its plan still needs to be discussed at the CPU.

Legally, the CPU has no right to veto plans submitted by the government. Previously, the plan for a new wing of a criminal court building, despite generating widespread public objection, has been approved by the CPU.

Ao Ieong disclosed that according to government plans, there will be 230 apartments.

The current land plot has the capacity for 340 apartments.

Nonetheless, she said the government, as of yesterday, did not have an exact figure on the number of non-local medical specialists needed by the future hospital. However, the first phase of the hospital's operation will see about 50 people being sent in from outside of Macau.

Despite hoping to hire as many managerial staff members in Macau as possible to fill about 500 positions, Ao Ieong said the odds of hiring medical specialists in Macau are small. She assured that the income generated by the future hospital will go towards the government's accounts rather than the operator's.

She further disclosed that during negotiations with the



Peking Union Medical College Hospital (PUMCH), the Secretary recalled that one of the many core topics was where medical experts from Beijing should stay during their services in Macau.

"There was a process," Ao Ieong said.

Her reason for providing such a defense was that when the Cotai hospital was planned, there was no indication that it would be managed by the PUMCH, and therefore the government had no idea about the need to import such a large cohort of medical staff from outside the city.

"There was no such plan," she said.

As time went by, the Secretary said, and "as we realized that we have nice facilities, we started to contemplate whether we needed additional medical staff to help cure diseases of people in Macau, so that they will not need to travel outside for cures for severe illnesses, such as cancer."

Later, she explained that the government realized that while there were good facilities and experienced medical staff, "they have nowhere to stay."

She admitted that the Cotai hospital has a dormitory for medical staff, "but it was built for emergency service medical staff, which is on stand-by

during severe meteorological scenarios."

The dormitory also does not have enough rooms, according to the Secretary.

Renting apartments privately was not an appropriate option, she said, for the government has no means to maintain stable and affordable rental levels.

Meanwhile, on her trip to Portugal, the Secretary's delegation focused on healthcare and medicine as well as education and culture, and met with officials overseeing these areas. Exchanges were also conducted with entities, schools and universities.

Medical collaboration deals, such as recruiting doctors from Portugal, were also discussed with the Portuguese Minister of Health.

"The Minister welcomed the suggestion and we will now work to identify retirement plans for doctors from Portugal," Ao Ieong disclosed. "We have also confirmed deals to send local doctors for training in Portugal."

The official further disclosed that discussions on attracting Portuguese pharmaceutical companies to Macau were also held.

In the area of culture, Ao Ieong said that research collaborations will commence on archival documents. "The Por-

tuguese Archive has certain documents written in Chinese, and we will consider the possibility of sending staff from our Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) to work on the documents together," she said. "It will also be beneficial to the professional development of our staff at the IC."

On education, the Ao Ieong said that discussions were held with regard to Macau secondary school students studying medicine in English at the Catholic University of Portugal.

Recruitment of native Portuguese language teachers was also discussed but not much progress was seen, the official said. On the other hand, the Secretary also wanted to hire Portuguese Special Education Needs (SEN) teachers.

Yesterday's meeting discussed subsidies for films made in or featuring elements of Macau. Each project has a ceiling of MOP2 million for the former and MOP250,000 for the latter. The total budgets respectively will be MOP12 million and MOP2.5 million.

A key requirement is that the sponsored films should not contain erotic elements or elements that violate national security of the People's Republic of China. Public screening of the productions is also a requirement.

## CE: 2024 BUDGET NO LARGER THAN THIS YEAR'S

As Macau is still in recovery following nearly three years of economic downturn, the Chief Executive has issued an order that all government departments and agencies must carefully evaluate the necessity and rationality of various budgetary expenditures when preparing budget proposals for 2024. According to the dispatch, the budget amount should not exceed the current year budget. The instructions also state that the headcount in each department should not exceed the approved benchmarks. The order stipulates that all departments should submit budget proposals for next year to the Chief Executive before October 9.

## PJ ARRESTS A DOMESTIC HELPER SUSPECTED OF OFFERING FAKE JOBS

The Judiciary Police (PJ) has arrested a 45-year-old Filipino woman working as a domestic helper in Macau and suspected of offering fake jobs to foreigners from the Philippines and Nepal. According to the police, the woman was involved in cases from March to May, defrauding 10 foreign employees and gaining over MOP62,570. The suspect told her victims she knew many school teachers and could introduce them to apply for cleaning work, charging each person thousands but never referring them.

## IPIM AWARDED BY MICE ASSOCIATION IN GERMANY

The Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) was awarded the Excellence Award by the International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) in Germany. This award follows IPIM's participation to the IMEX Frankfurt held from May 23 to 25, which is one of the largest conference incentive travel exhibitions in Europe, where IPIM set up a Macau Pavilion to promote the advantages of the MICE environment. As part of this, IPIM hosted several events, including the Macau MICE Environment Promotion Seminar and the Precise Business Matching to facilitate 250 business matching sessions.

## UM SIGNS COOPERATION AGREEMENTS WITH PORTUGUESE UNIVERSITIES

During a recent visit in Europe, the rector of the University of Macau (UM), Yonghua Song, signed many strategic cooperation agreements with Portuguese universities such as University of Coimbra and University of Porto to strengthen cooperation exchanges in research and education sectors. While cooperation between UM and University of Coimbra will focus on AI, robotics, neuroscience, law, business and international relations, the agreement with University of Porto will highlight medicine, law, talent development and faculty exchanges as priorities.

1MDB SCANDAL

# MALAYSIA CONFIRMS JHO LOW 'HIDING IN MACAU', ANOTHER SUSPECT DEPORTED FOR OVERSTAYING

**FUGITIVE** Malaysian financier Jho Low, wanted for his key role in the multibillion-dollar 1MDB scandal, is believed to be hiding in Macau, Malaysia's anti-corruption watchdog confirmed to Al Jazeera.

According to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) it "believes the individuals wanted for the 1MDB case, especially Jho Low, are hiding in Macau."

"This was also confirmed by several individuals who have seen Jho Low in Macau," MACC added.

The confirmation came weeks after the arrest of a relatively unknown 1MDB suspect, Kee Kok Thiam.

According to the MACC, its government did not receive any notification from Macau regarding Kee's repatriation, but noted, "Kee was being deported from Macau based on intelligence networking."

In early May, Kee was arrested upon touching down at Kuala Lumpur International Airport after being deported from Macau for allegedly overstaying his visa.

As cited in a report issued by Al Jazeera, Macau authorities declined to comment on specific cases, but said they wanted to emphasize that cases involving foreigners are always handled "in accordance with the law and procedures, as well as relevant international practices."

Meanwhile, MACC said that Kee confirmed he met Jho Low and a number of other 1MDB fugitives – including Eric Tan Kim Loong, Casey Tang Keng Chee, Geh Choh Heng and Nik Faisal – in Macau and that Jho Low instructed him "not to return to Malaysia as a witness in the 1MDB case," as cited in the report.

The Times contacted the local immigration department to con-

firm Jho Low's presence in Macau. No reply was given by press time.

Last month, Malaysia's government was reportedly in talks with China seeking the extradition of fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho.

In 2020, the Office of the Secretary for Security refuted the claims of Malaysian authorities that the fugitive businessman was in the SAR. The renewed claims come as Malaysia continues to seek the financier of the state's 1MDB financial scandal, who has eluded law enforcement since at least 2016.

It was also in 2020 when the Malaysian court sentenced former Prime Minister Najib Razak to serve 12 years after finding him guilty in the first of several corruption trials linked to the multibillion-dollar looting of the 1MDB state investment fund that brought down his government in 2018. LV



CRIME

# PJ detains two suspects of investment scam that harmed 30 people

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Judiciary Police (PJ) has detained one man and a woman suspected of being part of a larger group that lured at least 30 local residents into a fraudulent investment scheme, the PJ announced yesterday in a special press conference.

The cumulative losses resulting from the fraudulent scheme have been calculated at about HKD 48.8 million.

The case dates from 2017, when the group allegedly started to operate, to March 2021.

According to the PJ, 30 Macau residents aged between 27 and 68 years old, have submitted similar reports complaining of the actions of this group.

Together they are said to have lost about HKD48.8 million in a scheme that aimed to invest in a company alleged to be listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

The victims gave evidence that they had been approached by the shareholders of an investment company that was promoting the investment via the acquisition of stocks of the company that was apparently listed in the neighboring regions. According to these people, such an investment would yield very high returns as, after the listing, the value of the stocks



would be much higher than the acquisition price.

The victims invested sums ranging between HKD40,000 and HKD29 million.

In December 2021, the Monetary Authority of Macao released a statement on the illegal operations of this investment company. The company was not recognized as a legal entity authorized to perform such investments. That is when the victims understood that they had been involved in a fraudulent investment scheme and had lost their money. They subsequently reported the case to the PJ.

After an investigation, the police detained the two suspects, who are aged 48 and 58 years old respectively and are the shareholders of the investment company.

The police said their company was involved in establishing an offshore company with the purpose of creating a fraudulent investment scheme and defrauding the victims.

The police also said they believed at least two other people were involved in the case but that they remain at large.

The PJ will continue to investigate this case.

14TH IIICF

# FORUM TO SEE MORE LOCAL ENTERPRISES IN ATTENDANCE, EXPECTS UP TO 3,000 GUESTS

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE 14th International Infrastructure Investment and Construction Forum (IIICF) will see its exhibition area 1.5 times greater than that of the previous edition and over 90% of it is taken up by specifically customized booths.

To be held from June 1 to June 2, at The Venetian Macao Cotai Expo, the forum is expected to draw more than 3,000 guests this year, more than doubling the number of attendees from the previous year.

The forum will be held fully offline under the theme of "Green Leadership, Digital Intelligence, Financial Empowerment, Win-Win Co-operation."

Activities such as brand promotion, enterprise roadshows and business meetings will be held throughout the forum to "create a new dimension for win-

-win cooperation in infrastructure construction," the organizers disclosed at a press conference yesterday.

During the event, two thematic forums and 10 parallel forums will be set up, "fully leveraging the professional platform to deepen international exchanges and networking among the political, business and academic elites from the infrastructure sector, and jointly promoting sustainable development of the international infrastructure construction."

Moreover, apart from the continued participation of the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, 10 local enterprises and organizations will also be exhibiting for the first time, which is expected to further help Macau enterprises to keep abreast of the new international trends and seize new opportunities in infrastructure construction.



WHATSAPP

# UK gov't fights demand to hand over Boris Johnson's messages to Covid-19 inquiry

JILL LAWLESS, LONDON

AS Britain's prime minister, Boris Johnson established an independent inquiry into his government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now the inquiry wants to see, in full, what Johnson wrote to other U.K. officials as the outbreak raged — but the government is fighting a demand to hand over the material.

Inquiry chairwoman Heather Hallett, a retired judge, has asked the Conservative government, now led by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, to produce full copies of Johnson's WhatsApp messages and notebooks, after initially being given redacted versions.

Government officials said they only cut out material that was "unambiguously irrelevant" to the investigation, but Hallett wants to be the judge of that. She said "the entire contents of the specified documents are of potential relevance to the lines of investigation being pursued by the inquiry."

Hallett — who has the power to summon evidence and question witnesses under oath — set a deadline of 4 p.m. (1500 GMT) Tuesday for the government to hand over the documents, covering a two-year period from early 2020.

But hours before the deadline, the government asked for more time, claiming it didn't have Johnson's WhatsApp messages or notebooks. Hallett denied a request to move the deadline to Monday, but agreed to extend it by 48 hours, until tomorrow.

The inquiry said if the WhatsApp



AP PHOTO

pp messages and notebooks can't be produced, the government must provide witness statements from senior officials setting out what efforts have been made to find them.

Sunak, who took office after Johnson left office in September — to be succeeded, for a few weeks,

by Liz Truss — said the government had already handed over tens of thousands of documents to the inquiry and was "considering next steps carefully." The government is worried about the precedent that disclosing Johnson's full, unredacted conversations might set.

Johnson's office said the former leader had "no objection to disclosing material to the inquiry," but that decisions on redactions were for the Cabinet office, a government department, to make.

Bob Kerslake, a former head of the civil service, said that the government was likely resisting dis-

closure "to save embarrassment of ministers" — an approach he called "misguided."

The U.K. has recorded more than 200,000 deaths among people with COVID-19, one of the highest tolls in Europe, and the decisions of Johnson's government have been endlessly debated. Johnson agreed in late 2021 to hold an inquiry after pressure from bereaved families.

Hallett's inquiry is due to investigate the U.K.'s preparedness for a pandemic, how the government responded, and whether the "level of loss was inevitable or whether things could have been done better." Public hearings are scheduled to start in June, and Johnson is among the senior officials due to give evidence.

The inquiry has already landed Johnson in hot water. He was one of dozens of people fined last year for breaking his own government's pandemic lockdown rules in the so-called partygate scandal. Earlier this month, government-appointed lawyers helping Johnson prepare his submissions and testimony came across evidence of more potential breaches of COVID-19 restrictions.

The new evidence relates to alleged visits to Chequers, the prime minister's official country retreat, as well as potential breaches in the leader's Downing Street residence.

Civil servants reported the information to police, who say they are assessing the new evidence. Johnson denies wrongdoing. **MDT/AP**

## CORPORATE BITS

### MGM holds May Fourth Movement activities



To commemorate the 104th anniversary of the May Fourth Movement, MGM China co-organized the "MGM Commemoration of China's May Fourth Movement Activities" ai-

med to transmit the May Fourth Movement spirit in a bid to develop young people's "patriotism and sense of national belonging." Attended by at least

150 participants from local schools and youth associations, the event included numerous activities such as a sharing session on "Macau Youth's Development in the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin" and a screening session of "Back to Common Roots Narrative Film."

"This program enables team members and the general public to understand the core spirit and historical significance of the movement, inspiring them to adhere to the patriotic spirit and contribute to the nation," executive vice president of Human Resources of MGM, Wendy Yu, said.

### JW Marriott and The Ritz-Carlton receive Macao Green Hotel Gold Awards



JW Marriott Hotel Macau and The Ritz-Carlton, Macau have been awarded the Gold Award in the 2022 Macao Green Hotel Award for their commitment to sustainable practices and environmental stewardship.

Organized by the SAR Government, the Macao Green

Hotel Award is an annual initiative that promotes sustainable tourism and recognizes hotels that have made significant efforts to reduce their environmental impact.

The award is based on a comprehensive assessment of a hotel's environmental policies, practices, and per-

formance.

Rauf Malik, vice president of Operations at JW Marriott Hotel Macau and The Ritz-Carlton, Macau, said, "We pledge to continuously and consistently implement green practices in our everyday operation and engage in more sustainable initiatives with the support of Serve 360."

Marriott International, the parent company of JW Marriott Hotel Macau and The Ritz-Carlton, Macau, has a long-standing commitment to sustainability and social impact."

The company's Serve 360 program outlines its goals and initiatives in areas such as environmental sustainability, human rights, and community engagement.

DIPLOMACY

# BEIJING SAYS NO MEETING BETWEEN US, CHINESE DEFENSE CHIEFS AT SINGAPORE GATHERING

**P**ROSPECTS for a renewed high-level military dialogue between China and the U.S. remain dim, with Beijing saying their defense chiefs will not hold a bilateral meeting while both are attending a weekend security conference in Singapore.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning yesterday blamed the U.S., saying Washington should "earnestly respect China's sovereignty and security interests and concerns, immediately correct the wrongdoing, show sincerity, and create the necessary atmosphere and conditions for dialogue and communication between the two militaries."

Mao gave no details, but tensions between the sides have spiked over Washington's military support and sales of defensive weapons to self-governing Taiwan, China's assertions of sovereignty to the contested South China Sea and its flying of a suspected spy balloon over the U.S.



AP PHOTO

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin is scheduled to address the Shangri-La Dialogue on Saturday, while Chinese Defense Minister Gen. Li Shangfu will speak at the gathering on Sunday.

Austin met privately with Li's predecessor, Wei Fenghe, at last year's Shangri-La Dialogue, which appeared to do little to smooth

relations between the sides. In his address to the forum, Wei accused the U.S. of seeking to contain China's development and threatening to assert its claim to Taiwan by military force.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping and U.S. President Joe Biden met on the sidelines of the Group of 20 meeting of large economies in

November in Indonesia, but contacts have proceeded only sporadically since then, with only side meetings on neutral territory.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken canceled a visit to Beijing in February after the U.S. shot down a Chinese spy balloon that had crossed the United States. He later met with the Communist

Party's senior foreign affairs adviser Wang Yi in Austria.

China refused to take a phone call from Austin to discuss the balloon issue, the Pentagon said. Always beset by mistrust and accusations, communications on the military level have yet to show signs of improvement.

Beijing also was angered by Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen's April stopover in the U.S. that included an encounter with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy. China's People's Liberation Army holds military exercises and sends fighter jets, drones and ships near the island to advertise its threat to attack and wear down Taiwan's defenses.

China also protests movements of U.S. Navy ships and aircraft through the Taiwan Strait and close to Chinese-held islands in the South China Sea, dispatching its own ships and planes and raising the possibility of confrontations or collisions. **MDT/AP**

TRADE

# Musk meets FM Qin, who calls for 'mutual respect' in US-China relations

JOE MCDONALD,  
BEIJING

**C**HINA'S foreign minister met Tesla Ltd. CEO Elon Musk yesterday and said strained U.S.-Chinese relations require "mutual respect," while delivering a message of reassurance that foreign companies are welcome.

U.S.-Chinese relations are especially tense after Washington shot down a Chinese balloon believed to be gathering intelligence and warned Beijing against supplying arms to Russia for its war against Ukraine.

The Wall Street Journal reported China has rejected a request for its defense minister to meet the U.S. defense secretary when both are in Singapore this weekend.

"We need to keep the steering wheel in the right direction of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation," Qin Gang told Musk, according to a ministry statement.



AP PHOTO

In this photo taken yesterday and released by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qin Gang (right) poses for photos with Tesla Ltd. CEO Elon Musk in Beijing

The two sides should "avoid 'dangerous driving,'" Qin said. He gave no details of steps to improve relations.

Musk's visit comes at a time when the ruling Communist Party is trying to revive investor interest in China's slowing economy. Foreign companies are uneasy following raids on consulting firms and given the strained Chinese relations with Washington.

Qin said China will

"unswervingly promote high-level opening up" and create a "market-oriented, law-based and internationalized business environment," according to the statement. "China's development is an opportunity for the world."

China's electric vehicle market "has broad prospects for development," the ministry quoted Qin as saying. China accounts for half of global electric vehicle sales and is the

site of Tesla's first factory outside the United States.

Tesla opened the first wholly foreign-owned auto factory in China in 2019 after Beijing eased ownership restrictions to increase competition and speed up industry development.

The Chinese statement cited Musk as saying Tesla was willing to expand its business in China and "opposes decoupling," a reference to fears the world may split into multiple

YUNNAN

# CROWD CLASHES WITH POLICE OVER PLANS TO DEMOLISH MOSQUE

**B**EIJING is calling on protesters to turn themselves in after a crowd clashed with police over plans to demolish a mosque in the country's southwest as the government seems to tighten control over religion and society.

Protesters threw water bottles at officers with helmets and shields outside the blue-domed Najiyang Mosque in Yuxi, a city in Yunnan province, according to videos on social media. One punched a police officer's helmet but little other violence was shown.

The Associated Press confirmed the location of the protest. Videos showing the protests were removed from Chinese social media.

Police called on "criminal suspects" to turn themselves in following Saturday's incident and said those who do might receive lighter punishment. A police statement vowed "zero tolerance" toward "criminal activities that impede social management."

People who answered the phone yesterday at the

police headquarters referred questions to the local government propaganda office. An employee who answered the phone there said the office had no information.

A court in 2020 ordered the Najiyang Mosque demolished after ruling it was built without official permission, according to a document on the court website.

The protesters were Hui, whose ancestors were members of China's majority Han ethnic group and adopted Islam, according to the videos.

A man in a ripped T-shirt was shown wearing handcuffs but it was unclear whether he was in police custody. According to AP, a caption said some 30 people were detained but the public dragged some away from police.

Two female spectators in Yuxi wore Muslim headscarves. Protesters and other spectators were men in T-shirts and trousers or shorts, the AP has reported.

**MDT/AP**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

HONG KONG

# Amnesty Int'l says Uyghur student reported to be missing did not travel to HKSAR

KANIS LEUNG & HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

**A**MNESTY International said yesterday that a Uyghur student who it had said was missing in Hong Kong after being interrogated did not travel to the city, easing concerns over his safety but raising questions over how the allegations first emerged.

The human rights group said last Friday that Abuduwaili Abudurehe-

man, who was born in Xinjiang in western China, had traveled to Hong Kong from South Korea to visit a friend on May 10 and had not been heard from since he texted his friend about being questioned at the city's airport.

But Amnesty International said the student told the group yesterday that he did not travel to Hong Kong, "contrary to previous information received."

"We are pleased that Abuduwaili Abudurehe-

man is accounted for," it said. "We will continue to strive to offer support to people who reach out to us when they believe they or their loved ones are at risk of human rights violations."

It did not provide further details about what had happened, and did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

The correction by Amnesty International came after Seoul's Kookmin University, where the student is pursuing a doc-

torate in sports studies, told The Associated Press that he was still in South Korea. It said the student has been frequently contacting his professor over his doctoral preparations.

The school declined to provide the student's contact details, citing privacy concerns. It did not provide evidence of the student's whereabouts, but said the professor communicated with him and confirmed his presence in South Korea. The professor didn't respond to calls from the AP.

Abuduwaili Abudureheman has been studying in Seoul for seven years. In alleging his disappearance, Amnesty International said last Friday that he appeared to have been detained and interrogated at Hong Kong's airport.

A day later, the Hong Kong government called the accusations "groundless and unfounded" and an attempt to smear it. It said government records showed the student had not entered the city, nor was he refused entry, and it requested an apology from the group. **MDT/AP**

DIPLOMACY

# BEIJING EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR SERBIA IN RENEWED KOSOVO CLASHES

**C**HINA yesterday expressed its support for Serbia's efforts to "safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity" following renewed violence between ethnic Serbs and NATO peacekeeping troops in Kosovo.

China's ruling Communist Party has long been a critic of the NATO alliance, stemming partly from the bombing of Beijing's embassy in Belgrade during the 1999 air campaign to end Serbia's brutal crackdown on ethnic Albanian separatists in Kosovo.

The bombing, in which three Chinese journalists were killed, has long been used by Beijing to mobilize anti-Western sentiment. The U.S. apologized for the attack, blaming it on faulty intelligence. Its diplomatic missions in Beijing and other Chinese cities were assaulted in the fallout, setting ties on a negative trajectory that has grown ever more tense in recent years.

China, along with Russia and Serbia, does not recognize



Kosovo's 2008 independence and Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning yesterday placed the blame for the violence on a failure to respect Serbian political rights.

"We oppose unilateral actions by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo," Mao said at a daily news briefing, referring to the Kosovo government in Pristina.

Despite Serbs boycotting recent local elections and seeking to prevent ethnic Albanian mayors from taking office, Mao said Serbs should be granted control over municipalities where they form majorities. **MDT/AP**

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PUTIN'S WAR

# Russia says drones damage Moscow buildings in pre-dawn

SUSIE BLANN, KYIV

A rare drone attack jolted Moscow Tuesday morning, lightly damaging some buildings and leading to the evacuation of others, while Russia pursued its relentless bombardment of Kyiv with a third assault on the city in 24 hours.

The Russian defense ministry said five drones were shot down and the systems of three others were jammed, causing them to veer off course. It called the incident a "terrorist attack" by the "Kyiv regime."

The attack brought the war to civilians at home in Russia's capital for the first time. It caused "insignificant damage" to several buildings, according to Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin. Two people received medical attention for unspecified injuries but did not need hospitalization, he said in a Telegram post. Residents of two high-rise buildings damaged in the attack were evacuated, Sobyenin said.

Andrei Vorobyov, governor of the wider Moscow region, said some of the drones were "shot down on the approach to Moscow."

Ukraine made no direct comment on the attack, which would be one of its deepest and most daring strikes into Russia since the Kremlin launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than 15 months ago.

Russian President Vladimir Putin started work early on Tuesday to receive information about the drone attack from various government agencies, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Putin isn't planning to address the nation in the wake of the assault, he said.

Asked by the Associated Press whether there is concern in the Kremlin that the invasion of Ukraine is endangering Russian civilians, Peskov said only that attacks on Russia reinforce the need to prosecute the war.

Russian political analyst Tatiana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, said the Kremlin's policy is to downplay the attacks.

"You ask, why is Putin



Ukrainian air defense intercepts a Shahed drone mid-air in the third Russia aerial attack on the capital in the last 24 hours in Kyiv

behaving like this, does he really not understand and fear the consequences?" she wrote in a Telegram post. "Apparently he isn't afraid, and everything is built on the idea that has been voiced more than once about a patient people who will understand everything and endure everything."

Still, the attacks have raised questions about the effectiveness of Russia's air defense systems.

A senior Russian lawmaker, Andrei Kartapolov, told Russian business news site RBC that "we have a very big country and there will always be a loophole where the drone can fly around the areas where air defense systems are located."

Kartapolov said the purpose of the attacks was to unnerve the Russian people. "It's an intimidation act aimed at the civilian population," RBC quoted him as saying. "It's designed to create a wave of panic."

Moscow residents reported hearing explosions before dawn. Police were seen working at one site of a crashed drone in southwest Moscow. An area near a residential building was fenced off, and police put the drone debris in a cardboard box before carrying it away.

At another site, apartment windows were shattered and there were scorch marks on the building's front.

It was the second reported attack on Moscow. Russian authorities said two drones targeted the Kremlin earlier this month in what they portrayed as an attempt on President Vladimir Putin's life.

Ukrainian drones have reportedly flown deep into Russia multiple times. In December, Russia claimed it had shot down drones at airfields in the Saratov and Ryazan regions in western Russia. Three soldiers were reported killed in the attack in Saratov, which targeted an important military airfield.

Before that, Russia reported shooting down a Ukrainian drone that targeted the headquarters of its Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol in Russia-annexed Crimea.

In Ukraine, Russia launched a pre-dawn air raid on Kyiv, killing at least one person and sending the capital's residents again scrambling into shelters.

At least 20 Shahed explosive drones were destroyed by air defense forces in Kyiv's airspace in Russia's latest attack on the Ukrainian capital. Overall, Ukraine shot down 29 of 31 drones fired into the country, most of them in the Kyiv area, the air force said.

Before daylight, the buzzing of drones could be heard over the city, followed by loud explosions as they were taken down by air defense systems.

A woman who was killed in Kyiv's Holiiv district died

after she had "come out onto her balcony to look at drones being shot down," Mayor Vitali Klitschko said in a Telegram post.

A high-rise building in the same district caught fire after being hit by debris either from from drones being hit or interceptor missiles. The building's upper two floors were destroyed, and people were feared to be lying under the rubble, the Kyiv Military Administration said. More than 20 people were evacuated.

Resident Valeriya Oreshko told The Associated Press in the aftermath that even though the immediate threat was over, the attacks had everyone on edge.

"You are happy that you are alive, but think about what will happen next," the 39-year-old said.

A resident who gave only her first name, Oksana, said the whole building shook when it was hit.

"Go to shelters, because you really do not know where (the drone) will fly," she advised others.

Elsewhere in the capital, falling debris caused a fire in a private house in Darnytskyi district and three cars were set alight in Pechersky district, according to the military administration.

The series of attacks that began Sunday included a rare daylight attack Monday that left puffs of white smoke in the blue skies. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1998 GINGER LEAVES THE SPICE GIRLS



Gerri Halliwell, aka Ginger Spice, has left the chart-topping Spice Girls band.

The announcement follows days of increasingly feverish speculation, after Gerri - the driving force behind the band - missed the BBC's National Lottery Show on Wednesday, and two concerts in Norway.

Earlier today, the group said a statement would be made at the offices of their solicitors in central London at 1400 BST.

About 30 journalists gathered outside the offices of Lee & Thompson and tension mounted as the deadline passed.

Almost half an hour later and after several false alarms Ms Halliwell's solicitor, Julian Turton, and Alan Edwards, the spokesman for the remaining four members of the band, finally emerged.

Mr Turton read out a statement which he said was written by Gerri.

"Sadly I would like to confirm that I have left the Spice Girls. This is because of differences between us. I'm sure the group will continue to be successful and I wish them all the best... PS, I'll be back."

This was followed by the announcement on behalf of the remaining four members of the group, which said they were "upset and saddened" but would carry on and fulfil their commitments including the forthcoming American tour.

The group are due to play 40 dates in the United States, beginning in nine days' time, followed by a charity concert in Rome and four dates in Britain.

It said they were supportive of Gerri in whatever she wanted to do, but added, "The Spice Girls are here to stay ... Friendship never ends".

It remains to be seen whether this is the beginning of the end of Britain's most successful band since the Beatles, or whether they can shrug off their differences and move on to greater things.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Although not known for being the most talented of the five, Gerri Halliwell had helped give the group its identity as the leaders of Girl Power. She said differences with her fellow members had forced her to quit, but it was widely reported there had been a power struggle between herself and Melanie Brown.

Gerri travelled the world as a UN goodwill ambassador, went on to have a successful solo career and her autobiography, *If Only*, published in 1999 was a best-seller.

The singer has consistently remained in the public eye with her image changes, TV documentaries and relationships regularly featuring in the tabloid newspapers.

The Spice Girls continued to perform as a four-some but by the end of 2001 fizzled out as a band to concentrate on solo careers.

Gerri produced a third solo album in 2005. In May 2006 she gave birth to a daughter, Bluebell Madonna.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Visit friends who have not been well. You will want to complain about the injustice that is going on. Try not to take others for granted. Tempers could get out of hand today.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
Don't evade issues or twist the truth around. You will be popular with acquaintances; however, loved ones could feel left out and insecure.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
Joining organizations will provide you with stimulating romantic contacts. Rewards for past good deeds will be yours. Romantic encounters will be full of excitement.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Love can be yours if you get out and about. Stop those bad habits. It's time to let loose. Your ability to deal with others will help you in getting the support you need.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
Payoff all your debts before you go out and celebrate. You can get into self awareness groups or look into physical enhancement programs.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Hassles with female colleagues may lead to problems with your boss. You could be cornered, so be prepared to tell the truth. One-sided relationships are likely.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
You need to be sure that you aren't in your present relationship because it is convenient. Don't let relatives get the better of you. You must be careful not to trust just anyone.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
Direct your energy into physical exertion. Residential moves will be favorable. Your lover may disappoint you in such a way that estrangement will follow.

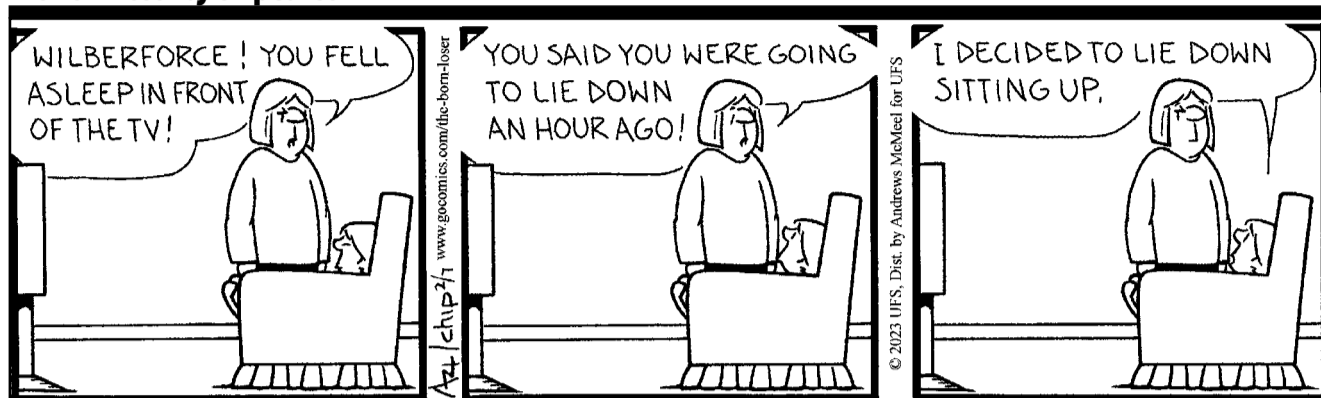
**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Look for professional guidance if it will help unite the family. You will have to face each issue separately and in person. Don't jump into investments too quickly.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
You will have opportunities to advance, but you may have to be willing to make some changes and possibly a residential move. Deceit with coworkers is apparent.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Be careful that you don't overextend yourself. If you can include them in your plans, do so. You will have a problem dealing with groups.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
There might be a problem with a will or with an insurance policy. It would be in your best interest to stay away from any intimate involvement with a client or coworker.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sanson**



**SUDOKU**

**EASY**

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

**EASY+**

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

**MEDIUM**

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

**HARD**

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

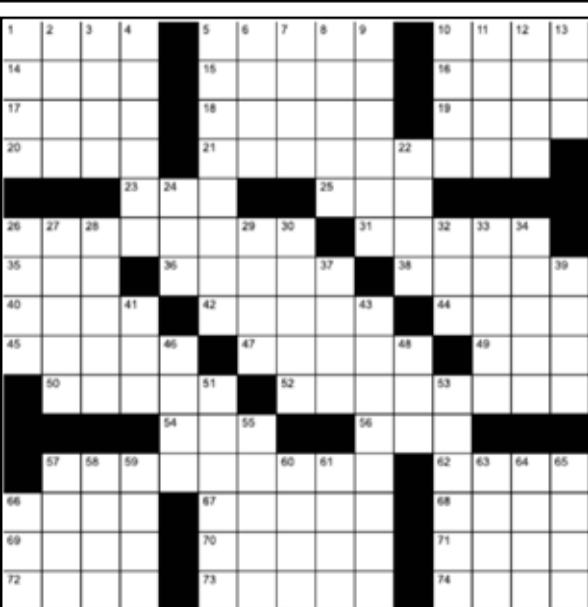
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	15	26	cloudy
Changchun	13	25	rain
Chengdu	24	31	cloudy
Chongqing	25	32	rain
Fuzhou	25	36	cloudy
Guangzhou	28	37	fine
Guiyang	21	30	overcast
Haikou	26	34	cloudy
Hangzhou	23	29	overcast
Harbin	10	25	cloudy
Hefei	21	25	overcast
Nanjing	20	26	overcast
Shanghai	21	28	overcast
Taipei	24	26	rain
Wuhan	22	30	cloudy
Hong Hong	28	32	cloudy
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	8	16	rain
Frankfurt	12	26	fine
Paris	14	27	overcast
London	9	21	overcast
New York	15	24	overcast

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Tear apart; 5- "Crazy" singer Patsy; 10- One of a matching pair; 14- Black-and-white cookie; 15- Every sixty minutes; 16- River to the Seine; 17- Cab; 18- Wonderland girl; 19- Designer Cassini; 20- Env. notation; 21- Capital of Tennessee; 23- Choke; 25- \_\_\_ the land of the free...; 26- Categorize; 31- \_\_\_ Ark; 35- "You've got mail" co.; 36- Twisted expression?; 38- \_\_\_-foot oil; 40- Comic Rudner; 42- Where Columbus was born; 44- Ready for plucking; 45- Rare delight; 47- Hiding place; 49- At a great distance; 50- Clear the boards; 52- Cut off; 54- Colonial insect; 56- It's a moray; 57- Lab. for one; 62- Woe is me!; 66- 9th letter of the Hebrew alphabet; 67- Profits; 68- Gammy; 69- Ratio words; 70- 1957 hit for the Bobbettes; 71- Corrida cries; 72- Celestial body; 73- Australia's \_\_\_ Rock; 74- Metal containers;

DOWN 1- Church court; 2- Quod \_\_\_ demonstrandum; 3- Barber's call; 4- Activities; 5- Altering; 6- "Damn Yankees" role; 7- Coloured part of the eye; 8- Tortilla topped with cheese; 9- Craps natural; 10- Kit item; 11- Volition; 12- Of course!; 13- Bit of film, to a photog; 22- Tiger's choice; 24- Mule's sire; 26- Wagon; 27- France's longest river; 28- Change; 29- Dues; 30- Gossipmonger; 32- \_\_\_ Lingus; 33- Israeli seaport; 34- Mar. honoree; 37- Travel aimlessly; 39- Shrivelled, without moisture; 41- Car club; 43- Slanders; 46- Boris Godunov, for one; 48- Shade; 51- Riddle; 53- Aztec god of rain; 55- Weeping; 57- What's left; 58- Bluesy James; 59- Red-bearded god; 60- Objectionable; 61- Cabinet dept.; 63- In \_\_\_ land; 64- Grace period?; 65- Cong. meeting; 66- \_\_\_ the season...;



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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FOOTBALL | EUROPA LEAGUE

# Sevilla, Roma's Mourinho put perfect European records on line in final

Thursday, 3:00  
Sevilla v Roma  
H 2.93, D 3, A 2.95

ODDSCHECKER.COM

A remarkable perfect record in European soccer must fall today [Thursday, 3:00] when Sevilla faces José Mourinho's Roma in the Europa League final.

Sevilla has played six and won six finals of the Europa League, or the UEFA Cup as it was called when winning the first of those titles in 2006.

Mourinho has a 5-0 career mark in finals of the three major European club competitions, dating back to the UEFA Cup triumph in 2003 with Porto.

Mourinho actually has more European title wins than Sevilla coach José Luis Mendilibar has total games managed in those same competitions. The 62-year-old Mendilibar's career is peaking since joining then-struggling Sevilla just two months ago.

Only one record can survive



their meeting at the Puskás Aréna in Budapest where the Europa League trophy is just the start of the rewards for the winning club.

Neither Roma nor Sevilla can finish in the top four of their domestic leagues that would have ensured qualifying for the Champions League.

Their only path to the Champions League next season – and

the potential tens of millions of euros (dollars) in extra prize money from UEFA – is taking the group-stage place protected for the Europa League winner.

The high value of this Europa League to both clubs is in stark contrast to a Mourinho comment from 10 years ago that became infamous.

"If I win the Europa League it

will be a big disappointment for me because I don't want to play in it," he said on being re-hired by Chelsea. It was seen as throwing shade on his predecessor Rafa Benítez who weeks earlier as Chelsea interim coach won the 2013 Europa title.

Mourinho and Benítez are among four coaches who led two different teams to win the 52-year-old competition.

The Roma coach can make more history by becoming the first coach to win the Europa League with three different clubs, joining his Porto and Manchester United (2017) teams. And this just one year after the latest team in his storied career won the inaugural Europa Conference League to make Mourinho the first coach with titles in each of the three club competitions.

Mendilibar has a more modest background yet has arguably outcoached Mourinho in his brief spell at Sevilla.

Replacing former Argentina coach Jorge Sampaoli in March,

Mendilibar became Sevilla's third coach this season with the team just two points clear of the La Liga relegation zone.

Mendilibar's Sevilla has lost only two of 11 league games, is one point off seventh place going into the final round this weekend, and is unbeaten in the Europa League while eliminating Man United — despite trailing 2-0 after 83 minutes at Old Trafford in the first leg — and Juventus.

"People did not expect we would do something like this and we have achieved it," Mendilibar said.

Roma came to Budapest having gone seven Serie A league games without a win, and advancing to the final with a 0-0 draw in the second leg at Bayer Leverkusen, managing just one goal attempt compared to 23 for the Germans.

Still, Mourinho fans can point to that being a classic performance by one of his teams — doing exactly what was needed to win. **MDT/AP**

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Dusan Stojanovic, MDT/AP

**WHY DO KOSOVO-SERBIA  
 TENSIONS PERSIST?**

**Tensions** between Serbia and Kosovo flared anew this weekend after Kosovo's police raided Serb-dominated areas in the region's north and seized local municipality buildings.

There have been violent clashes between Kosovo's police and NATO-led peacekeepers on one side and local Serbs on the other, leaving dozens of people injured on both sides.

Serbia raised combat readiness of its troops stationed near the border and warned it won't stand by if Serbs in Kosovo are attacked again. The situation has again fueled fears of a renewal of the 1998-99 conflict in Kosovo that claimed more than 10,000 lives and left more than 1 million homeless.

Kosovo is a mainly ethnic Albanian populated territory that was formerly a province of Serbia. It declared independence in 2008.

Serbia has refused to recognize Kosovo's statehood and still considers it part of Serbia, even though it has no formal control there.

Kosovo's independence has been recognized by about 100 countries, including the United States. Russia, China have sided with Serbia. The deadlock has kept tensions simmering and prevented full stabilization of the Balkan region after the bloody wars in the 1990s.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that the situation in Kosovo is alarming and that it could provoke another conflict in Central Europe.

"A huge explosion is being prepared in the center of Europe, in the place where, in 1999, NATO attacked Yugoslavia, violating every imaginable (international) principle," he said, according to Russian state news agency RIA Novosti.

China said that it was closely following the developments.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Nin urged NATO to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity "of the relevant countries and truly do what is conducive to regional peace."

After Serbs boycotted last month's local elections held in northern Kosovo, where Serbs represent a majority, newly elected ethnic Albanian mayors moved into their offices with the help of Kosovo's riot police last Friday.

Serbs tried to prevent them from taking over the premises, but the police fired tear gas to disperse them.

On Monday, Serbs engaged in fierce clashes with NATO peacekeepers, leaving more than 50 rioters and 30 international troops injured.

The election boycott followed a collective resignation by Serb officials from the area, including administrative staff, judges, and police officers, in November 2022.

The dispute over Kosovo is centuries-old. Serbia cherishes the region as the heart of its statehood and religion.

Numerous medieval Serb Orthodox Christian monasteries are in Kosovo. Serb nationalists view a 1389 battle against Ottoman Turks there as a symbol of its national struggle.

Kosovo's majority ethnic Albanians view Kosovo as their country and accuse Serbia of occupation and repression. Ethnic Albanian rebels launched a rebellion in 1998 to rid the country of Serbian rule.

Belgrade's brutal response prompted a NATO intervention in 1999, which forced Serbia to pull out and cede control to international peacekeepers.

There have been constant international efforts to find common ground between the two former wartime foes, but there has been no final comprehensive agreement so far.

EU officials have mediated negotiations designed to normalize relations between Serbia and Kosovo. Numerous agreements have been reached during the negotiations, but were rarely implemented on the ground. Some areas have seen results, like introducing freedom of movement within the country.

International officials are hoping to speed up negotiations and reach a solution in the coming months.

Both nations must normalize ties if they want to advance toward EU membership. No major breakthrough would mean prolonged instability, economic decline and constant potential for clashes. [Abridged]

Scientists and tech industry leaders issued a new warning yesterday about the perils that artificial intelligence poses to humankind. "Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war," said the statement posted online.

Sam Altman, CEO of ChatGPT maker OpenAI, and Geoffrey Hinton, a computer scientist known as the godfather of artificial intelligence, were among the hundreds of leading figures who signed the statement, which was posted on the Center for AI Safety's website.

Worries about artificial intelligence systems outsmarting humans

and running wild have intensified with the rise of a new generation of highly capable AI chatbots such as ChatGPT.

More than 1,000 researchers and technologists, including Elon Musk, signed a letter earlier this year calling for a six-month pause on AI development because, they said, it poses "profound risks to society and humanity."

Countries around the world are scrambling to come up with regulations for the developing technology, with the European Union blazing the trail with its AI Act expected to be approved later this year.



A crane lifts a part of the new roof of the Notre Dame de Paris cathedral, last week

TIME MACHINE

**REBUILDING NOTRE  
 DAME'S FIRE-RAVAGED ROOF  
 TRANSPORTS WORKERS  
 BACK TO MIDDLE AGES**

JEFFREY SCHAEFFER, SAINT-LAURENT-DE-LA-PLAINE

**I**f time travel was possible, medieval carpenters would surely be amazed to see how woodworking techniques they pioneered in building Notre Dame Cathedral more than 800 years ago are being used again today to rebuild the world-famous monument's fire-ravaged roof.

Certainly the reverse is true for the modern-day carpenters using medieval-era skills. Working with hand axes to fashion hundreds of tons of oak beams for the framework of Notre Dame's new roof has, for them, been like rewinding time. It's given them a new appreciation of their predecessors' handiwork that pushed the architectural envelope back in the 13th century.

"It's a little mind-bending sometimes," says Peter Henrikson, one of the carpenters. He says there are times when he's whacking mallet on chisel that he finds himself thinking about medieval counterparts who were cutting "basically the same joint 900 years ago."

"It's fascinating," he says. "We probably are in some ways thinking the same things."

The use of hand tools to

rebuild the roof that flames turned into ashes in 2019 is a deliberate, considered choice, especially since power tools would undoubtedly have done the work more quickly. The aim is to pay tribute to the astounding craftsmanship of the cathedral's original builders and to ensure that the centuries-old art of hand-fashioning wood lives on.

"We want to restore this cathedral as it was built in the Middle Ages," says Jean-Louis Georgelin, the retired French Army general who is overseeing the reconstruction.

"It is a way to be faithful to the (handiwork) of all the people who built all the extraordinary monuments in France."

Facing a tight deadline to reopen the cathedral by December 2024, carpenters and architects are also using computer design and other modern technologies to speed the reconstruction. Computers were used in the drawing of detailed plans for carpenters, to help ensure that their hand-chiseled beams fit together perfectly.

"Traditional carpenters had a lot of that in their head," Henrikson notes. It's "pretty amazing to think about how they did this with what they had, the tools and technology that they had at the time."

The 61-year-old American is from Grand Marais, Minnesota. The bulk of the other artisans working on the timber frame are French.

The roof reconstruction hit an important milestone in May, when large parts of the new timber frame were assembled and erected at a workshop in the Loire Valley, in western France.

The dry run assured architects that the frame is fit for purpose. The next time it is put together will be atop the cathedral. Unlike in medieval times, it will be trucked into Paris and lifted by mechanical crane into position. Some 1,200 trees have been felled for the work.

"The objective we had was to restore to its original condition the wooden frame structure that disappeared during the fire of April 15, 2019," says architect Remi Fromont, who did detailed drawings of the original frame in 2012.

The rebuilt frame "is the same wooden frame structure of the 13th century," he says. "We have exactly the same material: oak. We have the same tools, with the same axes that were used, exactly the same tools. We have the same know-how. And soon, it will return to its same place."

"It is," he adds, "a real resurrection." **MDT/AP**



Russia's Interior Ministry issued an arrest warrant for U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham (pictured) following his comments related to the fighting in Ukraine. In an edited video of his meeting on Friday with the Ukrainian president that was released by Zelenskyy's office, Graham, a Republican from South Carolina, noted that "the Russians are dying" and described the U.S. military assistance to the country as "the best money we've ever spent."



USA President Joe Biden lauded the sacrifice of generations of U.S. troops who "dared all and gave all" fighting for their country and called on Americans to ensure their "sacrifice was not in vain" in Memorial Day observances at Arlington National Cemetery. Biden was joined at the traditional wreath-laying ceremony by the first lady, Vice President Kamala Harris and husband for the 155th National Memorial Day Observance.



USA Hundreds of people flocked to a small town in Missouri this week and last to see a Black nun whose body has barely decomposed since 2019. Some say it's a sign of holiness in Catholicism, while others say the lack of decomposition may not be as rare as people think. Sister Wilhelmina Lancaster was exhumed in April, according to a statement from the Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles, in Gower, Missouri.

Senegal Police fired tear gas and demonstrators burned cars yesterday [Macau time] near the home of Senegal's main opposition leader, as tensions rise in the capital days before a court verdict is expected on charges against the politician. Ousmane Sonko is being tried for rape and death threats against a woman working at a massage parlor, and could face up to 10 years in prison. If convicted, he would be barred from running in next year's presidential elections.