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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' "

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THREE-TIME MACAU MOTORCYCLE GRAND PRIX WINNER PETER HICKMAN HAS FINISHED THIS YEAR'S EDITION OF THE TT AT THE ISLE OF MAN WITH ANOTHER VICTORY P4

BRITISH-BASED INSURER TO START WITH HEALTH PRODUCTS AS BRANCH OPENS IN MACAU P2

TONY AWARDS TELECAST MAKES INCLUSIVE HISTORY AND PUTS ON QUITE A SHOW P10-11



AP PHOTO



Philippines' most active volcano was gently spewing lava down its slopes yesterday, alerting tens of thousands of people they may have to quickly flee a violent and life-threatening explosion. More than 12,600 people have left the mostly poor farming communities within a 6-kilometer radius of Mayon Volcano's crater in mandatory evacuations since volcanic activity increased last week. But thousands more remain within the permanent danger zone below Mayon, an area long declared off-limits to people but where generations have lived and farmed because they have nowhere else to go. More on p7

AP PHOTO



India and Pakistan braced for the first severe cyclone this year expected to hit their coastal regions later this week, as authorities yesterday halted fishing activities and deployed rescue personnel. From the Arabian Sea, Cyclone Biparjoy is aiming at Pakistan's Sindh province and the coastline of the western Indian state of Gujarat. It is forecast to make landfall on Thursday and could reach maximum wind speeds of up to 200 kph, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department.

AP PHOTO



New Zealand The head of the public radio station apologized yesterday for publishing "pro-Kremlin garbage" on its website after more than a dozen wire stories on the Ukraine war were found to have been altered. Most of the stories, which date back more than a year, were written by the Reuters news agency and were changed at Radio New Zealand to include Russian propaganda. A digital journalist from RNZ has been placed on leave pending the result of an employment investigation.

More on backpage

THE SNOOPY CUSTOMER

F&B sector happy with IAM's new measures to ensure food safety good practices, including the introduction of the 'secret customer' system P3



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Q&A DR. AMY SO
PRESIDENT OF THE MACAO TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION

AVIATION LIBERALIZATION 'TO PROVIDE MORE OPTIONS, FACILITATE THE ROLE OF THE BIG-SIX'

RENATO MARQUES

THE government officially announced late last week the draft law that will establish the new regime for the operation of the civil aviation market, in a decisive step to liberalize Macau's aviation sector and end Air Macau's monopoly as Macau's only flag carrier.

To better understand the impacts and opportunities that such a new regime, based on the issuance of licenses instead of a concession, can bring to the hospitality and tourism sector, the Times interviewed the president of the Macao Tourism and Hospitality Association, Dr. Amy So on the topic.



Macau Daily Times (MDT) - What are the perceived impacts and opportunities [of the opening of the local aviation market] for the local tourism operators?

Dr. Amy So, President of the Macao Tourism and Hospitality Association (MacTHA) - The opening of the air transport market in Macau is expected to have a posi-

itive impact on the local tourism industry and create opportunities for tourism operators.

With the possibility of more airlines operating on Macau routes, it could attract more visitors to the city, which is in line with the economic policy of diversifying visitors and attracting international visitors.

This development supports the "1+4 strategy" by bringing international visitors to Macau and to the in-depth cooperation zone, which [will] create new opportunities for the tourism industry.

Additionally, the increased competition in the air transport market will provide Macau residents with more choices and con-

venience when traveling abroad, which is a significant benefit for locals [too].

Overall, the opening of the air transport market is expected to create new opportunities for the tourism industry and enhance the convenience of travel for both locals and visitors.

MDT - Do you perceive this opening to take effect this year?

MacTHA - The timing of the opening of the air transport market in Macau will depend on how quickly the necessary legislation and approval procedures can be processed. While it may be a bit tight to finish it within this year, the development is a positive step towards liberalizing the market and promoting increased competition.

MDT - How do you see this bid in terms of the creation of more opportunities for the influx of non-domestic visitors?

MacTHA - The opening of the air transport market in Macau is expected to create more opportunities for non-domestic visitors

to visit Macau. Improved transportation options such as direct or non-stop flights [could] significantly impact attracting visitors to Macau, which is likely to benefit the tourism industry and the local economy as a whole.

The increased competition in the air transport market could lead to lower fares, improved services, and more job opportunities. This, in turn, [would] create a more favorable environment for tourism operators.

MDT - Will this be a facilitating factor of the role attributed to the six gaming concessionaires to attract foreign visitors?

MacTHA - Yes, the opening of the air transport market is expected to facilitate the role of the six gaming concessionaires in attracting foreign visitors.

The increased competition in the air transport market will provide more options for travelers, making it easier for them to visit Macau. This could potentially result in increased business and revenue for tourism operators, as well as casino operators.

WE CORRECT

Due to an unfortunate technical error, Macau Daily Times yesterday erroneously published the name of the current Consul General of Portugal, Alexandre Leitão, in a caption of a photo illustrating a piece about the Day of Portugal reception, last Saturday. The personalities in the said picture – republished below – are, from left to right, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, Portuguese Secretary of State André Moz Caldas, Commissioner of Chinese Foreign Ministry Liu Xianfa, and Consul General Alexandre Leitão. We present our sincere apologies to Mr. Leitão and to our readers for the mistake. PC



INSURANCE

British-based Prudential to start with health products as branch opens in Macau

ANTHONY LAM

An insurance agency incorporated in England 175 years ago said it would focus on healthcare-related products amid the early phase of its official debut in Macau.

British-based Prudential PLC opened its Macau branch yesterday morning.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Chris Ma, general manager of Prudential Hong Kong Limited (Macau Branch), said that there is a growing demand for private medical care

in Macau and the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

When combined with the Macau government's proactive development of the Comprehensive Health Industry and Modern Finance Industry, a real opportunity and perfect environment for Prudential's entry to the Macau market has emerged, the executive underlined.

"We are committed to developing local skills and talent as we aim to be a positive influence contributing to the development of the Macau economy," added Ma.

On the sidelines of the opening ceremony, Ma pledged that the insurer will not engage in destructive competition in Macau. Expressing his confidence in his company's products, he believes that clients in Macau will gradually be attracted to the insurer.

In contrast to many incoming businesses that see Macau as a springboard for the mainland Chinese market, Ma said that Prudential would – at least during the early phase of local operations – focus on serving the people of Macau.

By leveraging its nearly 60 years of experience in Hong Kong offering healthcare insurance products, the insurer is confident that its similar products will be appealing to the Macau market as well.

Commenting on the branch opening, Anil Wadhvani, CEO of the insurer, said, "Prudential is here to become a trusted partner to our customers - using our global expertise and pioneering spirit to offer products and services locally that enrich lives and help customers secure their financial future."

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FOOD SAFETY

Industry happy with IAM's new measures to ensure good practices

RENATO MARQUES

THE Food and Beverage (F&B) industry is happy with the new measures launched by the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) which aim to ensure that establishments enforce good food safety practices systematically, said a representative from the sector interviewed by the media on the sidelines of the 2023 World Food Safety Day and Food Safety Industry Exchange Conference event, held yesterday at the Macau Tower.

Questioned by the media on the topic, Wu Tat Chong, representing the Industry and Commerce Association of Macau ZAPE, said that the idea of having a "secret customer" system, in which unidentified inspectors from IAM will visit stores regularly as a consumer to report on the practices of handling the food and beverage items, is "good for the industry," he said, noting that "with a good reputation comes more business."

Wu also noted that the industry has been paying a lot more attention to matters related to food safety especially since the Covid-19 pandemic, adding that several good practices regarding cleanliness and disinfection have persisted after the pandemic, improving the image of the establishments.

Questioned also on the practice of the broad disclosure of the name of the food establishments involved in cases of food poisoning, the same representative said that it would potentially contribute to extra care regar-

RENATO MARQUES



ding food safety practices.

Another representative of the industry, Lam Wai Ong, the head of the Macau Bakery, Food and Souvenir Business Association (Ou Mun Peng Sek Sao Son Ip Seong Wui) said that there are several practices currently in force that must be addressed, noting as an example the use of scissors holding pieces of jerky and other dried meat items being very popular at tourist landmarks. Lam said that this practice is dangerous and may cause severe harm to people, especially when the streets are crowded. He suggested the industry enforce cleaner and more appropriate practices including sample size packaging distribution of the products, ins-

stead of the current practice in which sellers just take samples from the items on display for sale.

During the seminar session held earlier on the current situation of the F&B industry in Macau, a representative from the IAM's Department of Food Safety, Lei Sok In, noted that in Macau there are currently 8,096 F&B-related licensed stores and venues. This includes not only F&B establishments but also food processing venues (276) and other food retailers (988), which includes supermarkets, fruit stalls, convenience stores, and wholesale venues.

Lei also noted that the current number of take-away establish-

ments (including bakeries, sushi shops, snack shops, and Char Siu meats stalls) have reached a total of 3,625.

The seminar and sharing sessions included over 150 representatives of the sector.

In the opening speech, O Lam, vice president of the IAM, highlighted the end of the pandemic and the return of visitors to Macau as a turning point for the industry that has been struggling over the pandemic times. She noted further that now that tourists are back in large scale it is necessary to pay "special attention" to food safety, and that the Bureau will continue to work to guarantee the good name of Macau as a "gourmet capital."

ENVIRONMENT

Lawmaker calls on gov't to clarify recycling processing

THERE is a need for the government to pinpoint a land plot to localize recyclable processing, lawmaker Ron Lam suggested in his latest written enquiry.

The lawmaker also hopes for the introduction of a 'polluter pays principle', so as to foster waste reduction at source, and facilitate the fulfilment of counter-pollution politi-

cal promises.

Lam recapped that in the Policy Address for 2019, the government promised to separate 15,000 square meters of land from the construction waste landfill for pre-export processing of paper, PVC plastic and metal. The rights to use the land were to be auctioned.

Furthermore, in the

same Policy Address, it was stated that a 30,000-square-meter land plot would be designated for kitchen waste processing facilities that could handle at least 50% of the city's daily kitchen waste generation.

Moreover, in the policy implementation conditions for 2018 of the Transport and Public Works sector, there were

plans that from 2023 to 2026, pre-export facilities that handle gadgets, glass bottles and other recyclables, as well as for a ship dock servicing recyclables would be constructed.

Despite the bold plans, the lawmaker pointed out that only the kitchen waste facilities had entered the planning phase. There have been no updates on the other plans, such as the 15,000-square-meter land plot for pre-export processing.

In support of his recommendation, the lawmaker highlighted that many jurisdictions, including mainland Chi-

na, have or are contemplating changing laws to bar imports of waste products and recyclables. Specifically, he pointed out that in 2021, mainland China stopped permitting imports of solid waste. Moreover, pursuant to the Basel Convention, cross-jurisdictional relocation of waste has become increasingly difficult.

In 2022, the city has an average daily waste production surpassing Singapore, Hong Kong, Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai, according to the lawmaker, despite greatly reduced tourism activities in light of Covid-19 border restrictions. **AL**

POLICE REMIND PEOPLE OF CYBER SCAMS

The Judiciary Police are reminding members of the public to be constantly vigilant against fraudulent lucky draw winner announcements. People are strongly advised to keep their credit card or bank details, as well as one-time passwords, secure. The police disclosed that recently, a multitude of similar reports of such scams have been received. Victims were contacted by their friends over instant messenger and asked for their phone numbers to participate in lucky draws. Afterwards, they were asked to surrender their credit card details and a subsequent one-time password. They then would discover that they were locked out of their social media accounts, and that their credit cards had been charged.

OUTER HARBOUR-HK FERRY SERVICES TO BE HALTED AGAIN BY BRIDGE WORKS

Due to the construction of the Fourth Macau-Taipa Bridge, TurboJET will need to suspend ferry services between Outer Harbour and Hong Kong on Jun. 15. The ferry operator has arranged a special schedule to divert all the affected sailings to Taipa Ferry Terminal for embarkation and disembarkation, with an exception for the Hong Kong-Outer Harbour sailing at 11:30 pm. Services between Macau and Shekou will be cancelled on the day. In addition, Jun. 14 sailings departing from Hong Kong to Outer Harbour at 5 pm and 11:30 pm, as well as Jun. 16 sailings from Outer Harbour to Hong Kong at 8:30 pm will be cancelled.

HEALTH CHIEF ATTENDS ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION FORUM IN SHANGHAI

Health Bureau director Alvis Lo attended and spoke at an organ transplantation forum in Shanghai. He said that the local government has always attached great importance to and been committed to promoting the development of organ donation and transplantation in Macau, and continuously improved the relevant laws and regulations, systems and mechanisms, personnel training, and technology development related to organ donation and transplantation. In addition, in June 2016, an organ transplant working group was established to coordinate the related work. With the support of the state and Guangdong Province, Macau completed the first living donor kidney transplant operation in November of the same year.

RETAIL

AGENT BOASTS YOHO RESORTS WORLD SHOPPING CENTER POPULARITY FOR TENANTS

ANTHONY LAM

THE leasing agent for the YOHO Resorts World project disclosed yesterday that the retail spaces are popular among business operators, with 80% retail floor space leased as of yesterday.

There are numerous international brands among the renters, JLL, the exclusive leasing and market management agent for the project, underlined in a statement. The agent interprets it as "signaling the gradual recovery of retailers' confidence in Macau's consumer market."

The realty agent further proclaimed the revival of Macau, despite the fact that local enterprises – especially small and medium enterprises that account for 99% of the city's businesses – have been plagued by plunging revenues, due to people being driven northward by the Northbound



Travel for Macau Vehicles scheme.

Citing visitor arrival and gambling revenue data from the Statistics and Census Service of Ma-

cau, JLL asserted that Macau's tourism and gambling industry is seeing a rebound, in line with "the unprecedented speed of recovery of Macau's retail market."

In a prior press briefing, the international realty agent announced that the future property will house Galeries Lafayette, a French premium department

store with a 128-year history and 65 locations worldwide; UFC Gym, a high-end fitness center; POP MART, a leading lifestyle toy retailer; Under Armour, a leading sports brand; Beebeeland, a large-scale game entertainment center; and Five Guys, a world-famous burger brand.

"Currently, the occupancy rate of the project has exceeded 80%, and there are plenty of lease requests, far exceeding the remaining floor space. Many of the retailers interested in leasing the mall are well-known international fashion, jewelry and watch brands," Oliver Tong, general manager of JLL in Macau and Zhuhai, said. "With the peak of new supply of large-scale shopping malls in Macau now over, shop rents are expected to rebound by the end of this year as new floor space is absorbed."

HERITAGE

Group sees overall development of Coloane shipyard necessary

THE neighborhood and auxiliary facilities of the Coloane shipyard should be developed in a supplementary fashion, the head of a local group and lawmaker has told a local newspaper.

This kind of development will help attract people residing in Coloane and other districts in Macau to visit the recently refurbished location, Nick Lei, executive director of Macau United Citizens Association and lawmaker, said in an interview with local media outlet Macao Daily News.

He believes that his suggestions will help improve visitors' experience at the location, which will eventually promote better local locations with historic and cultural values as community resources. Ultimately, it will empower the implementation of the "1+4" development strategy, he added.

It has been proposed by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) that special markets would be held at the Coloane shipyard on weekends from the end of June.



Despite supporting the proposal, Lei additionally suggests that IC install sufficient cooling equipment at the location to cope with the intensifying heat as summer approaches. Furthermore, as summer also means irregular and sometimes heavy rainfalls, contingencies must be made in case there are strong winds and heavy rainfall.

He pointed out that should weather preparations be inadequate, people will feel less keen to visit the location, which in the end will discourage stall tenants from operating there.

In addition, pedestrian facilities from the location to the closest parking lots should also be refined. Lei even suggested that shuttle bus services be provided during market periods to move people between the location and parking lots.

Another tactic to draw people to the location is the resumption of the intra-city marine tour from A-Ma Temple to Coloane Pier and back. The pier is a stone's throw away from the shipyard, which Lei considers very appealing to visitors setting off from Macau Peninsula. **AL**

MOTOR SPORT

MACAU'S THREE-TIME WINNER ROUNDS UP TT WITH FOUR WINS AND RECORD-BREAKING LAP

RENATO MARQUES

THE three-time Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix winner (2015, 2016, and 2018) Peter Hickman has finished this year's edition of the TT at the Isle of Man with yet another victory in the last race of the program, the Senior TT Race.

Hickman's outstanding performance at this year's edition granted the Englishman four wins and three runner-up finishes. He also smashed the all-time lap record for the mountain circuit with an average speed of 136.358mph (219.447km/h) on the way to his 11th career TT win in Friday's (June 9) Superstock Race 2.

At the controls of his FHO Racing BMW, Hickman smashed the previous lap record, recorded in 2018 with a Superbike machine, in the Senior TT race.

The achievement also gave the team principal, Faye Ho (granddaughter of late Macau gaming tycoon Stanley Ho) a new tattoo, allegedly a bet be-



tween Ho and her team rider Hickman.

In total, Hickman has raised his TT accolades this year to 13 wins, scoring first positions in the Senior TT Race, Superstock TT Races 1 and 2.

The last win by Hickman in the Senior TT Race also robbed his most challenging contender this year, TT legend Michael Dunlop, of his 26th win in the event.

Hickman and Dunlop have engaged in the most

impressive battles over this year's event, with Dunlop also winning four of the racing events.

Another prominent racer was Dean Harrison, a well-known face from Macau since 2013, although as yet he has not won the local race.

Although it is not yet officially confirmed, it is expected that Hickman will once again compete in the local race in November in a serious attempt to extend his accolades in Macau.

AGRICULTURE

China takes multi-pronged measures to ensure summer harvest

XINHUA FOCUS

CHINA is making multi-pronged efforts to reap a bumper harvest this summer, thereby safeguarding the country's grain security, despite adverse meteorological conditions.

Traditionally, the summer harvest spans from May to late June in China every year, with most of the work focused on reaping winter wheat, a staple grain crop. The grain output for the period makes up about a quarter of the annual total.

As of Sunday, the harvested area of winter wheat had exceeded 239 million mu (about 15.93 million hectares), completing over 75% of the annual workload for the summer harvest.

Central China's Henan Province, one of the country's main breadbasket provinces, has basically completed all of its tasks for the winter wheat harvest. To reduce the impact of continuous rainy weather, the province has conducted the summer harvest



XINHUA

at full throttle.

At a farmers' cooperative in Minquan County, 16 combine harvesters operated round the clock to enhance efficiency. The county also put 18 grain dryers into use and sent technicians to provide guidance, as part of

efforts to improve the quality of the grain crop.

To minimize grain losses due to rainfall, the agricultural bureau of east China's Anhui Province has introduced additional agricultural machinery from neighboring provinces, in-

cluding Shandong, Jiangsu and Henan, thereby speeding up the harvest.

Wu Tianchang, an operator of agricultural machinery, said the trucks were allowed to drive toll-free on expressways during the summer harvest period, whi-

le service stations were provided at each of the locations he had been to.

Since late-May, China CO-OP Group has coordinated over 1,300 personnel and about 400 agricultural machines to ensure the smooth running of the harvesting, sowing and field management in various regions.

Meteorological bureaus have also participated in supporting the summer harvest. The climate center of east China's Shandong Province has released a special report to guide farmers in ensuring work is completed on time.

To ensure the income of rural residents amid prolonged rainy days, China has stepped up financial aid to assist with the summer harvest.

On June 3, the country earmarked 200 million yuan (about \$28 million) of disaster relief funds to support Henan Province in harvesting in rain-hit wheat fields and drying wet grain.

The Agricultural Development Bank of China has issued 110 billion yuan of credit to support the purchase of summer grain.

Agricultural production needs to surmount various difficulties, said an official with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, calling for preparations to deal with risks and make improvements in disaster prevention and reduction. XINHUA

BANKING

UBS completes takeover of Credit Suisse in deal meant to stem global financial turmoil

UBS said yesterday that it has completed its takeover of embattled rival Credit Suisse, nearly three months after the Swiss government hastily arranged a rescue deal to combine the country's two largest banks in a bid to safeguard Switzerland's reputation as a global financial center and choke off market turmoil.

A statement from the bank said that "UBS has completed the acquisition of Credit Suisse today, crossing an important milestone."

UBS had said last week that it expected to complete the acquisition worth 3 billion Swiss francs (\$3.3 billion) as early as Monday — which will be the last trading day for Credit Suisse shares on the Swiss stock exchange. Credit Suisse will also no longer be tra-



ded on the New York Stock Exchange.

It's a pivotal moment for the two Zurich-based rivals, whose combination has raised concerns about thousands of expected job losses, drawn rebukes and lawsuits over the terms of the deal, and stirred fears about the impact of creating a Swiss megabank that

would be too big to fail.

The Swiss government orchestrated the rescue of Credit Suisse over a weekend in March after the lender's stock plunged and customers quickly pulled out their money, fearing its collapse could further roil global financial markets in the wake of the failure of two U.S. banks. MDT/AP

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CULTURE

US decides to rejoin UNESCO and pay back dues, to counter Chinese influence

ANGELA CHARLTON, PARIS

U.N. cultural and scientific agency UNESCO announced yesterday that the United States plans to rejoin — and pay more than \$600 million in back dues — after a decade-long dispute sparked by the organization's move to include Palestine as a member.

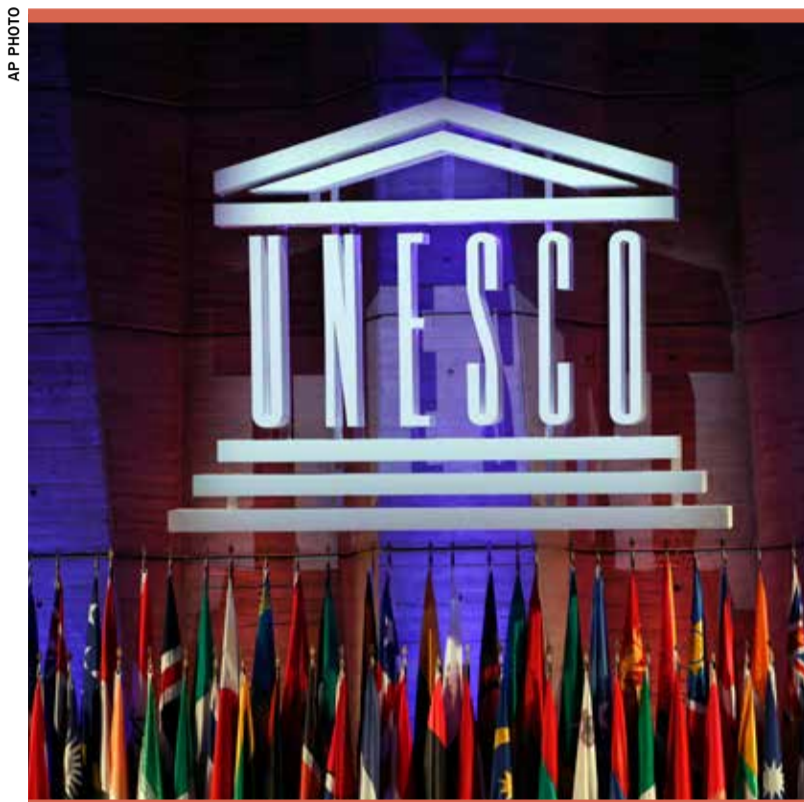
U.S. officials say the decision to return was motivated by concern that China is filling the gap left by the U.S. in UNESCO policymaking, notably in setting standards for artificial intelligence and technology education around the world.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Richard Verma submitted a letter last week to UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay formalizing the plan to rejoin.

Applause rang out in the solemn UNESCO auditorium as Azoulay announced the plan to ambassadors at a special meeting yesterday, and delegate after delegate stood up to welcome the news — and the new influx of money.

The return of the U.S., once the agency's biggest funder, is expected to face a vote by its 193 member states next month, according to a UNESCO diplomat.

The decision is a big financial boost to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural



Organization, known for its World Heritage program as well as projects to fight climate change and teach girls to read.

The U.S. and Israel stopped funding UNESCO after it voted to include Palestine as a member state in 2011, and both countries lost their voting rights in 2013. The Trump administration decided in 2017 to withdraw from the agency altogether the following year, citing anti-Israel bias and management problems.

In his letter last week, Verma noted efforts by UNESCO toward

management reform, and “decreasing politicized debate, especially on Middle East issues.” A delegation from Washington came to Paris last week to hand-deliver the letter, obtained by the AP.

Since her election in 2017, Azoulay has worked to address the reasons the U.S. left, through budget reforms and building consensus among Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli diplomats around sensitive UNESCO resolutions.

The U.S. decision to come back “is the result of five years of work,

during which we calmed tensions, notably on the Middle East, improved our response to contemporary challenges, resumed major initiatives on the ground and modernized the functioning of the organization,” Azoulay told The Associated Press.

She met with Democrats and Republicans in Washington to explain those efforts, according to a UNESCO diplomat. Thanks to those bipartisan negotiations, UNESCO diplomats expressed confidence that the U.S. decision to return is for the long term, regardless of who wins next year's presidential election.

The diplomats were not authorized to be publicly named discussing the behind-the-scenes work that led to the U.S. decision.

Under the plan, the U.S. government would pay its 2023 dues plus \$10 million in bonus contributions this year earmarked for Holocaust education, preserving cultural heritage in Ukraine, journalist safety, and science and technology education in Africa, Verma's letter says.

The Biden administration has already requested \$150 million for the 2024 budget to go toward UNESCO dues and arrears. The plan foresees similar requests for the ensuing years until the full debt of \$619 million is paid off.

That makes up a big chunk of UNESCO's \$534 million annual operating budget. Before leaving, the U.S. contributed 22% of the

agency's overall funding.

Undersecretary of State for Management John Bass said in March that the U.S. absence from UNESCO has strengthened China, and “undercuts our ability to be as effective in promoting our vision of a free world.”

He said UNESCO is key in setting and shaping standards for technology and science teaching around the world, “so if we're really serious about the digital-age competition with China ... we can't afford to be absent any longer.”

The U.S. absence plunged the agency into financial uncertainty. UNESCO diplomats described belt-squeezing across agency programs and aggressive efforts by Azoulay to boost voluntary financing from other countries to fill gaps.

One diplomat expressed hope that the return of the U.S. would bring “more ambition, and more serenity” — and energize programs to regulate artificial intelligence, educate girls in Afghanistan and chronicle victims of slavery in the Caribbean.

The diplomat said that the agency would also “welcome” Israel back if it wanted to rejoin.

The United States previously pulled out of UNESCO under the Reagan administration in 1984 because it viewed the agency as mismanaged, corrupt and used to advance Soviet interests. It rejoined in 2003. **MDT/AP**

ECONOMY

After good first quarter, China struggles with weaker recovery

SALES of Yizhuan Automobile Co.'s trash trucks picked up after China ended anti-virus controls in December, but their growth is in low gear as managers struggle to rebuild business lost during the pandemic.

China's economy rebounded at the start of 2023, but after a good first quarter, factory output and consumer spending are weakening. An official survey in April found a record 1 in 5 young workers in cities were unemployed.

Yizhuan's sales are up only by single-digit percentages from last year's depressed level, according to its deputy general manager, Yu Xiongli. The 300-em-

ployee company is in Hubei province, where the first coronavirus cases were detected in late 2019.

“It is still in the process of recovering,” Yu said. “Growth is quite slow.”

China's economic growth accelerated to 4.5% over a year earlier in the three months ending in March from the previous quarter's 2.9%, but forecasters say the peak of that recovery might already be past.

Growth would need to pick up further to reach the ruling Communist Party's target of “around 5%” for the year.

“For now, the ongoing momentum seems not that promising,” said UBS eco-

nomist Zhang Ning.

The economy needs a “domestic demand rebound” with government support to boost confidence for businesses and consumers, Zhang said.

The end of restrictions that isolated cities for weeks at a time and blocked most international travel prompted hopes for a consumer boom. But retail sales are weak. Shoppers are uneasy about the economic outlook and possible job losses and are reluctant to commit to big purchases.

Retail sales in April surged 18.4% over last year's lackluster level, but that was barely half the growth of up to 35% called for by priva-

te sector forecasts. Factory output fell 0.5% compared with March and investment growth slowed.

“I have misgivings about spending money,” said Xue Liang, who works in information technology in Beijing. “COVID-19 and changes in the international situation have made us worry a lot.”

Manufacturing contracted faster in May, according to a survey by the national statistics agency and an industry group. New orders and export orders declined.

Exports in May tumbled 7.5% from a year ago after global consumer demand was depressed by interest rate hikes by the Federal Re-

serve and central banks in Europe and Asia to cool inflation. Exports to the United States plunged 18.2%.

That is a challenge for automakers and other manufacturers that are trying to make up for weak demand at home by selling more abroad.

Tenglong Automobile Co., which makes electric buses in the southwestern city of Xiangyang, sent salespeople to Russia, South Korea and Southeast Asia as soon as travel controls ended to try to revive orders after a three-year gap.

“Last year, our foreign customers basically didn't come,” said Tenglong's deputy general manager,

Zhou Shengming. “But this year, we already have had several batches. In May, we had three.”

Yizhuan in Shiyuan, which also sells sanitation, cargo and dump trucks to city governments and construction companies, says it exports vehicles worth about \$20 million a year to Russia and Southeast Asia.

Li Yichun, who runs a bodyguard business in Beijing, said his customers are less willing to spend.

“It can be seen from my business that the economy is not recovering very well,” Li said. “A lot of clients who are bosses are not intending to spend on hiring as they did before.” **MDT/AP**

PHILIPPINES

Mayon Volcano spews lava in gentle eruption, thousands warned to be ready

JIM GOMEZ &
AARON FAVILA, LEGAZPI

THE Philippines' most active volcano was spewing lava down its slopes yesterday, prompting officials to warn tens of thousands of villagers to be prepared to flee from their homes if the gentle eruption turns into a violent and life-threatening explosion.

More than 13,000 people have left the mostly poor farming communities within a 6-kilometer radius of Mayon Volcano's crater in mandatory evacuations since volcanic activity increased last week. But an unspecified number of residents remain within the permanent danger zone below Mayon, an area long declared off-limits to people but where generations have lived and farmed because they have nowhere else to go.

With the volcano beginning to expel lava Sunday night, the high-risk zone around Mayon may be expanded should the eruption turn violent, said Teresito Bacolcol, director of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology. Bacolcol said if that happens, people in any expanded danger zone should be prepared to evacuate to emergency shelters.

"What we are seeing now is an effusive eruption," Bacolcol told The Associated Press. "We are looking at this on a day-to-day basis."



From a distance, Associated Press journalists watched lava flow down the volcano's southeastern gullies for hours Sunday night. People hurriedly stepped out of restaurants and bars in a seaside promenade of Legazpi, the capital of northeastern Albay province about 14 kilometers (8.5 miles) from Mayon, many of them snapping pictures of the volcano that's a popular tourist draw known for its picturesque conical shape.

Mayon's renewed restiveness has also struck fear and brought new suffering.

Marilyn Miranda said she, her daughter and 75-year-old mother, who recently suffered a stroke, fled their home in a village within the

danger zone in Guinobatan town on Thursday and sought shelter at a sweltering high school turned into an evacuation center. Her nephew returns to their home each day, as do other men in their impoverished rural neighborhood to guard their houses and farm animals, she said.

From the overcrowded evacuation center, they were terrified to see the bright red-orange lava streaks gushing down Mayon's slope on Sunday night. "We had this feeling that our end is near," Miranda told the AP, breaking into tears.

Mayon's new eruption was one of back-to-back tragedies that struck Amelia Morales and her family in recent days. Her husband

died of an aneurism and other illnesses on Friday and she had to hold his funeral wake in a crowded emergency shelter in Guinobatan because she and her neighbors had been ordered to stay away from their community near Mayon.

"I need help to bury my husband because we don't have any money left," Morales, 63, said as she sat near her husband's white wooden coffin under a flimsy open tent in a corner of the evacuation center. "I cannot do anything but cry."

With its peak often shrouded by the wisps of passing clouds, the 2,462-meter volcano appeared calm yesterday. Bacolcol said red-hot lava was continuing to flow

down its slopes but could not easily be seen by people under the bright sun.

The volcano had been raised to alert level three on a five-step warning system Thursday, meaning the volcano was in a state of high unrest and a hazardous eruption is possible in weeks or days.

With lava flowing down from the volcano gently, Bacolcol said the alert level would stay at three but it could be moved up higher if the eruption suddenly turns perilous.

The highest alert, level five, would mean a violent and life-threatening eruption is underway with ash plumes shooting into the sky and superheated pyroclastic streams endangering more communities at Mayon's lush foothills.

Mayon is one of 24 active volcanoes in the Philippines. It last erupted violently in 2018, displacing tens of thousands of villagers. In 1814, Mayon's eruption buried entire villages and reportedly left more than 1,000 people dead.

The archipelago is lashed by about 20 typhoons and tropical storms a year and is located on the so-called Pacific "Ring of Fire," the rim of seismic faults where most of the world's earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur.

In 1991, Mount Pinatubo north of Manila blew its top in one of the biggest volcanic eruptions of the 20th century, killing hundreds. **MDT/AP**

AUSTRALIA

Driver charged after bus carrying wedding guests in rolls over, killing 10 and injuring 25

THE driver of a bus was charged yesterday after the vehicle carrying wedding guests rolled over on a foggy night in Australia's wine country, killing 10 people and injuring 25 in the nation's most deadly road accident in almost 30 years, police said.

Brett Button has been in custody since the accident Sunday night and will appear in court on Tuesday on multiple charges of dangerous and negligent driving, a police statement said.

It was Australia's most deadly road accident since



Police inspect a bus on its side near the town of Greta following a crash in the Hunter Valley, north of Sydney

1994, when a bus skidded on its side across a highway and down a steep embankment in Brisbane, killing 12 people and injuring 38. Sunday's crash happened

just after 11:30 p.m. in foggy conditions at a roundabout on Wine Country Drive in the town of Greta in the Hunter Valley region of New South Wales state north of Sydney.

The guests had attended a wedding at the Wandin Estate Winery and were heading to their accommodations in the town of Singleton, Chapman said. One guest told Seven News it had been a nice day and a fairytale wedding.

A motorist who drove past the crash scene, identified by Australian Broadcasting Corp. only as Alison,

said the fog was so heavy she could not make out the colors of the flashing lights of police cars, ambulances and fire trucks.

"The fog was terrible," she told the ABC. "You could barely see in front of you."

Of the 25 people injured, one was in critical condition and several others remained in hospitals, the state government said. The conditions of the others were described as stable.

Police had said 18 passengers escaped injury. But they later said there were only 36 people on the bus:

the 10 dead, the 25 injured and the driver. The 18 were the least seriously injured among the passengers taken to hospitals.

Police Commissioner Karen Webb said investigators have not yet determined what caused the bus to roll on its side.

"The cause may not be known for some time. It will require scientific examination," Webb told reporters.

Whether passengers were wearing seatbelts also "will come under scrutiny," Webb said.

Chapman said rescuers smashed the front window to remove people from the wrecked bus.

Linq Buses, which provides school bus and event charters, owned the bus involved in the crash, media reported. Its website says all its buses are equipped with seatbelts. **MDT/AP**

ITALY

Berlusconi, scandal-scarred ex-premier, dies at 86

FRANCES D'EMILIO, MILAN

SILVIO Berlusconi, the boastful billionaire media mogul who was Italy's longest-serving premier despite scandals over his sex-fueled parties and allegations of corruption, died yesterday, according to his television network. He was 86.

Mediaset announced his death with a smiling photo of the man on its homepage and the headline: "Berlusconi is dead."

Berlusconi was admitted to the San Raffaele Hospital in Milan on Friday, his second hospitalization in months for treatment of chronic leukemia. He also suffered over the years from heart ailments, prostate cancer and was hospitalized for COVID-19 in 2020.

A onetime cruise ship crooner, Berlusconi used his television networks and immense wealth to launch his long political career, inspiring both loyalty and loathing.

To admirers, the three-time premier was a charismatic statesman who sought to elevate Italy on the world stage. To critics, he was a populist who threatened to undermine democracy, wielding political power as a tool to enrich himself and his businesses.

His center-right Forza Italia political party was a junior partner in the government of current Premier Giorgia Meloni, a far-right leader who came to power last year, although he held no position.

His friendship with Russian President Vladimir Putin put him at odds with Meloni, a staunch supporter of Ukraine. Meloni remembered Berlusconi as "above all as a fighter."

"He was a man who had never been afraid to defend his beliefs. And it was exactly that courage and determination that made him one of the most influential men in the history of Italy," Meloni said on Italian TV.

Former Premier Matteo Renzi recalled Berlusconi's divisive legacy on Twitter. "Silvio Berlusconi made history in this country. Many loved him, many hated him. All must recognize that his impact on political life, but also economics, sports and television, has been without precedence."

Berlusconi often boasted of his libido and entertained



friends and world leaders at so-called "bunga bunga" parties his villas. "I love life! I love women!" he said in 2010.

In 2013, guests included an underage Moroccan dancer whom prosecutors alleged had sex with Berlusconi in exchange for cash and jewelry. After a lurid trial, a court initially convicted Berlusconi of paying for sex with a minor and using his office to try to cover it up. Both denied having sex, and he later was acquitted.

The Catholic Church, sometimes sympathetic to his conservative politics, was scandalized by his antics, and his second wife of nearly 20 years divorced him. Berlusconi was unapologetic, declaring: "I'm no saint."

As he aged, some derided his perpetual tan, hair transplants and decades-younger girlfriends. For many years, however, Berlusconi seemed untouchable despite the scandals.

Investigations targeted his parties or his businesses, which included the soccer team AC Milan, the country's three biggest private TV networks, magazines and a daily newspaper, and advertising and film companies. Criminal cases either ended in dismissals in Italy's slow-moving justice system, or he won on appeals.

Only one ultimately led to a conviction — a tax fraud case stemming from a sale of movie rights in his business empire. The conviction was upheld in 2013 by Italy's top criminal court, but the 76-year-old Berlusconi was spared prison due to his age and ordered to do community service.

Still, he was stripped of his

Senate seat and banned from public office for six years.

He stayed at the helm of Forza Italia, although voters deserted the party. He eventually was elected to the European Parliament at age 82 and last year was returned to the Italian Senate by voters.

Born in Milan on Sept. 29, 1936, the banker's son earned a law degree, sang in nightclubs and on cruise ships, then started a construction company and built apartments for middle-class families.

His astronomical wealth came from media holdings. In the 1970s and 1980s, he circumvented Italy's state TV monopoly RAI by creating his own network of local stations. RAI and Mediaset accounted for about 90% of the national market in 2006.

When corruption scandals of the 1990s decimated the political establishment, Berlusconi founded Forza Italia in 1994 — its name comes from a soccer cheer, "Let's go, Italy." His first government collapsed after eight months when an ally who led an anti-immigrant party yanked support. But aided by an aggressive campaign, Berlusconi swept to victory in 2001 and was in power for five years, setting a record for government longevity in Italy.

As a businessman who knew the power of images, Berlusconi introduced U.S.-style campaigns that broke with the gray world of Italian politics. His rivals had to adapt.

A Group of Eight summit he hosted in Genoa in 2001 was marred by violent demonstrations. He constantly faced accusations of sponsoring laws

aimed at protecting himself or his businesses but insisted he always acted in the interest of all Italians.

An admirer of U.S. President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Berlusconi passed reforms that partially liberalized the labor and pension systems, among Europe's most inflexible.

Berlusconi saw himself as Italy's savior from what he described as the Communist menace, years after the Berlin Wall fell. He portrayed himself as the target of a judiciary he said was filled with leftist sympathizers.

His friendship with Socialist leader and former Premier Bettino Craxi was widely credited for helping him become a media baron. Still, Berlusconi billed himself as a self-made man.

His second term, from 2001-06, was perhaps his golden era, when he became Italy's longest-serving head of government and boosted its global profile through his friendship with U.S. President George W. Bush. Bucking opposition at home and in Europe, Berlusconi backed the U.S.-led war in Iraq and sent 3,000 troops.

He flouted political etiquette and stirred anger with some of his comments, such as claiming after 9/11 that Western civilization was superior to Islam.

But in 2006, as Italy was ridiculed as "the sick man of Europe," with its economy mired in zero growth and its budget deficit rising, Berlusconi narrowly lost the general election to center-left leader Romano Prodi.

He won his final term as premier in 2008, reluctantly stepping down in 2011 when financial markets lost faith in his ability to keep Italy from succumbing to the eurozone's sovereign debt crisis.

His party was eclipsed as the dominant force on Italy's right — first by the League, led by anti-migrant populist Matteo Salvini, then by Meloni's Brothers of Italy party, with its roots in neo-fascism. Following 2022 elections, Meloni formed a governing coalition with their help.

Berlusconi eventually lost his standing as Italy's richest man, although his media and luxury real estate holdings still left him a billionaire several times over. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1981 QUEEN SHOT AT BY YOUTH



A 17-year-old man has been arrested for shooting a replica gun at the Queen as she rode past crowds on horseback.

Marcus Serjeant pointed a pistol directly at the Queen as she turned down Horseguards' Parade for the start of the Trooping the Colour ceremony.

He fired six blank cartridges before being overcome by a Guardsman and police.

The shots, which came just before 1100BST, startled the Queen's horse, but she was able to bring it back under control within a few seconds.

The Queen had left Buckingham Palace 15 minutes earlier.

She had rode down the Mall and was turning into a crowded Horseguards' Parade when the incident occurred.

The monarch looked shaken by the episode, but soon recovered her composure.

She comforted her 19-year-old horse, Burmese, which she has ridden in birthday parades since 1969.

The procession continued as planned, and afterwards the Queen returned to Buckingham Palace by the same route, under the close watch of security services.

This is not the first time a member of the royal family has faced danger from within a crowd of spectators.

Seven years ago, a few yards down the Mall, Princess Anne was attacked by a gunman.

Half a mile away in 1936 King Edward VIII faced a man with a loaded revolver.

And Queen Victoria was also shot at by a man with a gun in the Mall.

Security will take on an increasing importance as next month's wedding between Prince Charles and Diana Spencer approaches.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Marcus Simon Serjeant was jailed for five years under the 1842 Treason Act, a law not used since 1966.

The former air cadet, from Folkestone, Kent, was found guilty of wilfully discharging at the person of Her Majesty the Queen a blank cartridge pistol, with intent to alarm her.

The court was told that Serjeant had at one stage planned to kill the Queen, but had failed to obtain a suitable lethal weapon.

"I wanted to be famous," he said later. "I wanted to be a somebody."

He served more than three years in jail, before being released in October 1984.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Don't put your professional reputation on the line. You may experience financial loss if you don't use good judgment. Don't lend or borrow.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 You are best to look into investments that will grow in value over an extended period of time. One of your female friends may try to disrupt your day.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Lack of funds may add stress to your already uncertain situation. You can make gains if you look at long-term investments. You can accomplish a lot if you work out of your home today.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Difficulties with children will surface if you try to break a promise you made. Don't cause a scene, but when you get home let your partner know how you feel and why.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Be sure to keep communication open with those you live with. Be firm when dealing with matters pertaining to your environment. Encourage the youngsters in your family.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Changes in your domestic situation will prove to be favorable in the long run. Try to be as mellow as possible. Your energetic personality will make you the center of attention at social gatherings.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Be up front if you don't want to be embarrassed. Make decisions about your professional objectives. Get involved in physical activities that will stimulate you.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Your mate needs extra attention and is feeling rather insecure when you're not in sight. Your support and concern will help. Be careful not to misplace your wallet or belongings.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Your need to obtain additional details will lead you into strange topics of conversation. Sign up for courses that will bring you more skills. Love could develop with someone of a different cultural background.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Don't start a dispute unless you're prepared to accept irreversible results. Don't be too eager to start any debates. You should consider getting into self improvement endeavors.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Don't trust coworkers with important or personal information. Recognition will be yours if you meet your deadline. You will be able to make financial gains.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Look into career choices and courses being offered. Seminars will provide you with knowledge and amusement. You'll get to your destination just as quickly.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	19	33	cloudy
Changchun	14	26	cloudy
Chengdu	20	32	overcast
Chongqing	23	32	cloudy
Fuzhou	24	32	cloudy
Guangzhou	26	34	thunderstorms
Guiyang	17	25	overcast
Haikou	26	31	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	22	31	rain
Harbin	13	27	cloudy
Hefei	21	31	cloudy
Nanjing	23	30	thunderstorms
Shanghai	22	29	overcast
Taipei	22	28	overcast
Wuhan	22	32	showers
Hong Kong	28	31	showers
WORLD			
Moscow	10	22	overcast
Frankfurt	13	27	fine
Paris	16	30	overcast
London	14	28	fine
New York	18	27	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- "___ quam videri" (North Carolina's motto); 5- Diner orders; 9- Truth; 13- Novelist Calvino; 15- Franc replacement; 16- Ladies of Sp.; 17- Philbin of TV; 18- Make ___ for it; 19- ___ avail; 20- French connections; 21- Select; 23- Observes Yom Kippur; 25- About; 26- System of social perfection; 27- Censure; 30- Free; 31- Wanting; 32- Care for an abandoned baby animal; 37- Twining plant stem; 38- Florida citrus center; 40- Della's creator; 41- Pertaining to an office; 43- Analyze a sentence; 44- Take steps; 45- Sanctified; 47- Greek letters; 50- What's left; 51- Negligent; 52- Smoke deposit; 53- Part of RSVP; 56- Getting ___ years; 57- "___ She Lovely?"; 59- Sister of Thalia; 61- The Ponte Vecchio crosses it; 62- Moonfish; 63- Bingo!; 64- Classic autos; 65- Badgers; 66- Apians;

DOWN 1- Greenland; 2- Leave in, to an editor; 3- Droops; 4- Yalie; 5- Lighthouse; 6- Hide in the shadows; 7- Capote, to friends; 8- Short composition; 9- Camera setting; 10- Rice-___; 11- Port of Crete; 12- General ___ chicken; 14- Feathered fisher; 22- Doctrine; 24- Sweeney ___; 25- More bizarre; 26- Orsk's river; 27- "Power Lunch" network; 28- Trompe!___; 29- Panamanian baby; 32- Golfer Sutton; 33- Sumptuous meal; 34- Slips up; 35- Additional; 36- Feat; 38- Particular time; 39- Members of the Felidae family; 42- Alpo alternative; 43- Bug; 45- Thin soups; 46- Zodiac sign; 47- Category; 48- Acid type; 49- Legendary ruler of Crete; 51- Din; 52- A reel problem; 53- Wise one; 54- Spillane's "___ Jury"; 55- A great deal; 58- Relaxing resort; 60- Corduroy feature;

Yesterday's solution

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

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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	
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AD

ON BROADWAY

Tony Awards telecast makes inclusive history and

MARK KENNEDY, NEW YORK

THE intimate, funny-sad musical "Kimberly Akimbo" nudged aside splashier rivals yesterday [Macau time] to win the musical crown at the Tony Awards on a night when Broadway flexed its creative muscle amid the Hollywood writers' strike and made history with laurels for nonbinary actors J. Harrison Ghee and Alex Newell.

"Kimberly Akimbo," with songs by Jeanine Tesori and a book by David Lindsay-Abaire, follows a teen with a rare genetic disorder that gives her a life expectancy of 16 navigating a dysfunctional family and a high school romance. Victoria Clark, as the lead in the show, added a second Tony to her trophy case, having previously won one in 2005 for "The Light in the Piazza."

Producer David Stone credited the musical's writers for penning a magic trick, calling "Kimberly Akimbo" a "musical comedy about the fragility of life, so healing and so profound and joyous that is almost impossible." The musical took home a leading five awards, including best book and score.

Earlier, Tony Awards history was

made when Newell and Ghee became the first nonbinary people to win Tonys for acting. Last year, composer and writer Toby Marlow of "Six" became the first nonbinary Tony winner.

"Thank you for the humanity. Thank you for my incredible company who raised me up every single day," said leading actor in a musical winner Ghee, who stars in "Some Like It Hot," the adaptation of the classic cross-dressing comedy film. The soulful Ghee stunned audiences with their voice and dance skills, playing a musician — on the run from gangsters — who tries on a dress and is transformed.

Newell, who plays Lulu — an independent, don't-need-no-man whiskey distiller in "Shucked" — has been blowing audiences away with their signature number, "Independently Owned." They won for best featured actor in a musical.

"Thank you for seeing me, Broadway. I should not be up here as a queer, nonbinary, fat, Black little baby from Massachusetts. And to anyone that thinks that they can't do it, I'm going to look you dead in your face that you can do anything you put your mind to," Newell said to an ovation.

AP PHOTO



David Stone (center) and members of the company of "Kimberly Akimbo" accept the award for best musical at the

Tom Stoppard's "Leopoldstadt," which explores Jewish identity with an intergenerational story, won best play, also earning wins for director Patrick Marber, featured actor Brandon Uranowitz and Brigitte Reif-fenstuel's costumes.

The British-Czech playwright,

who now has five best play Tony Awards, joked he won his first in 1968 and noted that playwrights were "getting progressively devalued in the food chain" despite being "the sharp ends of the inverted pyramid."

Second-time Tony Awards host Ariana DeBose opened a blank

script backstage before dancing and leaping her way to open the main show with a hectic opening number that gave a jolt of electricity to what is usually an upbeat, safe and chummy night. The writers' strike left the storied awards show honoring the best of musical theater and

AD

律師事務所



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



puts on quite a show despite Hollywood strike



76th annual Tony Awards

organizers for allowing a compromise.

"I'm live and unscripted. You're welcome," she said. "So to anyone who may have thought that last year was a bit unhinged, to them, I say, 'Darlings, buckle up.'"

Winners demonstrated their support for the striking writers either at the podium or on the red carpet with pins. Miriam Silverman, who won the Tony for best featured actress in a play for "The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window," ended her speech with: "My parents raised me to believe in the power of labor and workers being compensated and treated fairly. We stand with the WGA in solidarity!"

Jodie Comer, the three-time Emmy nominated star of "Killing Eve" won leading actress in a play for her Broadway debut, the one-woman play "Prima Facie," which illustrates how current laws fail terribly when it comes to sexual assault cases.

Sean Hayes won lead actor in a play for "Good Night, Oscar," which dramatizes a long night's journey into the scarred psyche of pianist Oscar Levant, now obscure but once a TV star.

"This has got to be the first time

an Oscar won a Tony," Hayes cracked.

Suzan-Lori Parks' "Topdog/Underdog," a Pulitzer Prize-winning play about sibling rivalry, inequality and society's false promises, won the Tony for best play revival. She thanked director Kenny Leon and stars Corey Hawkins and Yahya Abdul-Mateen II: "They showed up to be large in a world that often does not much want the likes of us living at all."

Bonnie Milligan, who won for best featured actress in a musical for "Kimberly Akimbo," also had a message to the audience: "I want to tell everybody that doesn't maybe look like what the world is telling you what you should look like — whether you're not pretty enough, you're not fit enough, your identity is not right, who you love isn't right — that doesn't matter."

"Cause just guess what?" she continued, brandishing her award. "It's right, and you belong."

Many of the technical awards — for things like costumes, sound, lighting and scenic design — were handed out at a breakneck pace during a pre-show hosted by Skylar Astin and Julianne Hough, allowing winners plenty of airtime for accep-

tance speeches but little humor.

The pre-show telecast on Pluto featured some awkwardly composed shots and some presenters slipped up on certain words. The tempo was so rapid, it ended more than 10 minutes before the main CBS broadcast was slated to start.

John Kander, the 96-year-old composer behind such landmark shows as "Chicago," "Cabaret" and "The Scottsboro Boys," was honored with a special lifetime award. He thanked his parents; his husband, Albert Stephenson; and music, which "has stayed my friend through my entire life and has promised to stick with me until the end."

Jennifer Grey handed her father, "Cabaret" star Joel Grey, the other lifetime achievement Tony. "Being recognized by the theater community is such a gift because it's always been, next to my children, my greatest, most enduring love," the actor said.

Echoing the theme of antisemitism, "Parade" — a doomed musical love story set against the real backdrop of a murder and lynching in pre-World War I Georgia that won Tonys as a new musical in 1999 — won for best musical revival, with Michael Arden winning for best mu-

sical director.

"'Parade' tells the story of a life that was cut short at the hands of the belief that one group of people is more valuable than another and that they might be more deserving of justice," Arden said. "This is a belief that is the core of antisemitism, white supremacy, homophobia and transphobia and intolerance of any kind. We must come together. We must battle this."

The telecast featured performances from all the nominated musicals and Will Swenson — starring on Broadway in a Neil Diamond musical — led the audience in a vigorous rendition of "Sweet Caroline." Lea Michele of "Glee" and now "Funny Girl" fame also performed a soaring version of "Don't Rain on My Parade."

It all took place at the United Palace Theatre, in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan — a new venue for the ceremony, many miles from Times Square and the theater district.

"Thank you all for coming up-town. Never in my wildest dreams, truly," Lin-Manuel Miranda joked onstage. He, of course, wrote the musical "In the Heights," set in Washington Heights. **MDT/AP**

plays without a script.

Before the pre-show began, DeBose revealed to the audience the only words that would be seen on the teleprompter: "Please wrap up." Later in the evening, virtually out of breath after her wordless opening performance, she thanked the labor

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

WORDS MAY SOUND BITTER YET OFFER GOOD ADVICE

Chinese Ambassador to the Republic of Korea Xing Haiming met with the ROK's main opposition Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung in Seoul on Thursday to exchange views on the development of Sino-ROK relations.

However, the ROK Foreign Ministry summoned Xing on Friday to protest the "senseless and provocative" comments he made in the meeting, accusing Xing of violating diplomatic protocols and interfering with the ROK's domestic politics, but without specifying the parts of Xing's comments it saw as inappropriate.

Interestingly, while the dialogue between Xing and Lee was widely reported in China, the ROK media outlets didn't cover it in detail, leaving the ROK people in the dark but also creating the space for Seoul to make the farce.

The only remark of Xing that the Yoon Suk-yeol government might construe as "provocative" was: It is hoped that the ROK side can get rid of the interference of external factors when dealing with its relations with China. The United States is trying to contain China, and some people bet on the US to win and China to lose. This is obviously a misjudgment and a failure to see clearly the historical trend.

No wonder the Yoon government's overreaction was promptly answered by the Chinese side. Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Nong Rong met with the ROK Ambassador to China Chung Jae-ho on Sunday to lodge representations over Seoul's inappropriate response to the meeting of Xing and Lee.

Expressing grave concern and dissatisfaction, Nong elaborated on China's views on the current China-ROK relations, pointing out that it is Ambassador Xing's duty to have extensive contact and exchanges with people from all walks of life in the ROK to enhance understanding, promote cooperation and promote China-ROK relations.

However, the Yoon government has discarded the ROK's long-term strategic autonomy in handling relations with China, allowing the ROK's ties with its largest economic and trade partner to be hijacked by Washington's China-containment strategy.

Seoul's reckless concession to mend ties with Japan by brushing aside historical issues has turned the ROK from a respectable and responsible regional player into a lackey of the US.

The ROK's greatest concern is its northern neighbor. But this cannot be eased by blindly adhering to the US agenda. Washington has no sincerity in seeking a rapprochement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as apprehensions about Pyongyang — cultivated by Washington — have driven the ROK and Japan closer to the US, and the large scale joint military drills give Washington an excuse for the US' oversized military presence in the region.

As Nong stressed, it is to be hoped that the Yoon government will reflect on the current problems in the ROK's relations with China and take them seriously, earnestly abide by the spirit of the joint communique on the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and the ROK, and work with Beijing to make positive efforts for the healthy and stable development of bilateral ties.

THE GREAT GRIFT: HOW BILLIONS IN COVID-19 RELIEF AID WAS STOLEN OR WASTED

THE BUZZ

Much of the theft was brazen, even simple. Fraudsters used the Social Security numbers of dead people and federal prisoners to get unemployment checks. Cheaters collected those benefits in multiple states. And federal loan applicants weren't cross-checked against a Treasury Department database that would have raised red flags about sketchy borrowers. Criminals and gangs grabbed the money. But so did a U.S. soldier in Georgia, the pastors of a defunct church in Texas, a former state lawmaker in Missouri and a roofing contractor in Montana. All of it led to the greatest grift in U.S. history, with thieves plundering

billions of dollars in federal COVID-19 relief aid intended to combat the worst pandemic in a century and to stabilize an economy in free fall. An Associated Press analysis found that fraudsters potentially stole more than \$280 billion in COVID-19 relief funding; another \$123 billion was wasted or misspent. Combined, the loss represents 10% of the \$4.2 trillion the U.S. government has so far disbursed in COVID relief aid. That number is certain to grow as investigators dig deeper into thousands of potential schemes. Full story on macaudailytimes.com.mo/category/buzz

AP PHOTO



A model shows sheets of postage stamps marking the 10th debut anniversary of K-pop band BTS at a post office in Seoul

BTS IS 10 YEARS OLD

SEOUL LANDMARKS TO BE LIT UP IN PURPLE TO CELEBRATE K-POP BAND'S ANNIVERSARY

SKYSCRAPERS, bridges and other landmarks in South Korea's capital will be lit up in purple as the country begins celebrating the 10th anniversary of K-pop band BTS, whose global popularity is a source of national pride.

The lights will provide the backdrop for various social media-driven events marking the 2013 debut of the seven-member group, which is now taking a hiatus as its singers begin to serve their mandatory military duties.

From last night, numerous Seoul structures, including City Hall, the 123-story Lotte World Tower, several Han River bridges, and the futuristic DDP — a Zaha Hadid-designed aluminum and concrete dome that's often used for visual art — will be bathed in purple, a color associated with BTS, according to city officials and the group's manage-

ment company, Hybe. Messages congratulating BTS were displayed on digital screens in buildings across Seoul, while postal authorities issued stamps marking the group's anniversary, which will be available at post offices starting today.

Seoul officials hope that the celebrations, which will continue for around two weeks, will boost tourism. The city has designated more than a dozen sites associated with BTS, including places where the group held major performances or shot some of their famous videos.

Fireworks are planned at a park near the Han River on Saturday night, hours after one of the BTS singers, RM, holds a live talk with fans that will be broadcast online.

Quickly garnering huge followings in Asia following their debut, BTS' popularity expan-

ded across the globe with their 2020 megahit "Dynamite," the band's first all-English song that made it the first K-pop act to top Billboard's Hot 100. BTS has since performed in sold-out arenas around the world and was invited to speak at United Nations meetings, supported by a legion of global followers who call themselves the "Army."

BTS' activities as a full group are currently on hold as the artists begin to serve in the military. Two BTS singers — Jin and J-Hope — have already started their compulsory 18-month service and other members are to follow in coming months, which likely means the group will reconvene around 2025.

In South Korea, all able-bodied men are required to serve in uniform 18-21 months under a system meant to deter aggression from rival North Korea. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Ukrainian military officials said yesterday their troops have retaken another southeastern village from Russian forces, among the first successes in stepped-up counteroffensive operations against Moscow's more than 15-month invasion of Ukraine. Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Maliar wrote on Telegram that Ukraine's flag was again flying over the village of Storozhov, and she predicted the liberation of "all Ukrainian land" would be the final outcome.

AP PHOTO



UK A committee of British lawmakers said that the U.K. will break its international human rights commitments if it goes through with government plans to detain and deport people who cross the English Channel in small boats. Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights said the Illegal Migration Bill "breaches a number of the U.K.'s international human rights obligations and risks breaching others." Scottish National Party lawmaker Joanna Cherry, who chairs the committee, said the law would leave most refugees and victims of modern slavery with no way of seeking asylum in Britain.

AP PHOTO



Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's governing Morena party decided that a series of five polls over the summer will decide the party's nomination for the June 2024 presidential election. All of the four Morena contenders will have to resign their government posts by Friday, including Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum, who is considered the frontrunner. That is meant to prevent primary candidates from using their posts to gain an unfair advantage. Each can campaign throughout the summer.