



**AIR MACAU EXPERIENCED A NEARLY ONE-THIRD YEAR-ON-YEAR INCREASE IN LOSSES ACROSS 2022, REACHING OVER ONE BILLION PATACAS**

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**GOV'T TO LAUNCH PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON ELECTION LAWS**

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**CHINESE NAVY SHIP PAYS PORT CALL TO PHILIPPINES IN GOODWILL TOUR**

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AP PHOTO



**Japan** An 18-year-old army trainee shot three fellow soldiers at a firing range on an army base yesterday, killing two of them, officials said. The suspect was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder at the scene in Gifu prefecture in central Japan, police said. The suspect fired a rifle at other soldiers during a shooting exercise at the Hino Kihon firing range, police said. Among the three wounded is a 25-year-old soldier, police said.

AP PHOTO



**South Korea** filed a 44.7 billion won damage suit against North Korea yesterday for blowing up a joint liaison office just north of their border in 2020, which highlighted a revival of tensions between the rivals. The symbolic lawsuit filed with the Seoul Central District Court comes amid a prolonged freeze in diplomacy and growing concerns over North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs.

AP PHOTO



**Vietnam** Power outages are leaving homes and businesses without power for hours at a time, as a prolonged drought and high temperatures strain the fast-growing economy's capacity to keep up. A long-anticipated plan meant to fix the energy crunch and help achieve ambitious climate change goals will offer some relief but may not go far enough in weaning the country off of fossil fuels, experts say.

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### AMCM WARNS ABOUT FAKE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

The Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) issued a warning to the public regarding a fraudulent social media page that impersonates a local currency exchange facilitator. Sun Fu Lon Exchange Ltd., according to the AMCM, has answered the latter's request for clarification about its website and social media page and the fake pages which impersonate it. The AMCM reminds the public to report similar cases of fraudulent impersonation to the police and concerned businesses. The exchange facilitator underlined that the fake page had illegally used its trademark, logo, product information and images. It also condemned the act and said it would reserve the right to seek accountability.

### PRIVATE, PUBLIC SCHOOLS JOIN HANDS TO PROMOTE INCLUSION

Flora Public School and Kao Yip Middle School held two Inclusive Sports Days in May to promote the concept and practice of inclusion. Students from the two schools started each day with competitions that upheld friendship, equity and inclusion. Students said they liked and had learned a lot from the experience. Afterwards, the staff of the public school shared their insight on Special Educational Needs (SEN) education with the students from the private school. SEN education, they said, is highly reliant on campus counselors, speech therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and SEN teachers. They encouraged students aspiring to the sector to study the discipline.

### UM HOLDS TALKS TO BROADEN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' SCIENTIFIC HORIZONS

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the University of Macau (UM) Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), Associate Professor Tam Kin Yip and Research Assistant Professor Li Bei in the FHS gave talks on 'Pharmaceutical Century - Ten Decades of Drug Discovery' and 'Body Chemistry Balance', respectively, to over 300 students at Xin Hua School. The talks sought to enrich students' knowledge and broaden their horizons in science. Prof Tam pointed out that medical advancement relies on drug development, and the application of new drugs in clinical practice is pivotal to the well-being of humanity. Meanwhile, Prof Li told the students about the importance of hormones in the human body.

### SPORTS

# DRAGON BOAT RACES PROGRAM TO EXTEND TO TWO WEEKENDS WITH MACAU-HK CUP

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HIS year's Macau International Dragon Boat Race will not just be back to a fully international format, as previously announced, but will comprise two full weekends due to the inclusion of a new trophy, the president of the Sports Bureau (ID), Pun Weng Kun announced yesterday on the sidelines of the worship ceremony held at the Nam Van Lake Nautical Centre.

According to Pun, this year's edition of the Dragon Boat event, initially planned to take place on June 17, 18 and 22, will extend into the weekend of June 24 and 25 when a newly added Macau-Hong Kong Dragon Boat Cup will be held.

With this addition, the program extends to five days of competitions at the Nam Van Lake including, as usual, the local and the international races in the categories of small and large Dragon Boats, and short and long distance.

Pun also said a total of 200



teams have registered to participate in the event, including some international teams who were not part of the groups invited by the ID but who will instead join at their own initiative and expense.

In total, 17 foreign teams are expected to participate in the event, including teams represent-

ing Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, and Australia.

The ID president said that the interest from the international teams comes as the Macau Dragon Boat Races event is a well-established "brand" of the international sports panorama.

As usual, besides the races, there will be a series of booths

selling souvenirs and cultural and creative industries at the Nam Van "white tent" area.

Pun said he believes that with so many attraction points, the stands will be filled with visitors who will take the opportunity to visit Macau while helping the races contribute to the synergy between sports and tourism.

### TRADE

# Macau to premiere in Shanghai tech fair

**M**ACAU is set to debut itself at a 195-square-meter pavilion with nearly 40 participants at the 9th China (Shanghai) International Technology Fair (CSITF), the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) announced in a statement yesterday.

In response to the theme of the fair and fully drive Macau's development strategy of "1+4" industries, the IPIM has gathered nearly 40 entrepreneurs from Macau to participate.

Nine exhibitors, all in the science and technology innovation sector from Macau and Hengqin will



showcase their achievements, as well as explore new markets.

The theme of the Macau pavilion will revolve

around the construction of scientific innovation ecology. The nine exhibitors will showcase products or services that

foster smart city, enhance digitization of business operation and assist chip design, among other products and services.

At the pavilion, the science and innovation environment in Macau will be introduced through multimedia presentations. The IPIM will also promote its one-step trade and investment assisting services with video consulting services. The outlook and opportunities of the four major industries in the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin will also be introduced.

The fair is a national-level professional fair targeting international technology trade, with the core philosophy being "Better Technology, Better Life". AL

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HUMAN RESOURCES

# Newborn care course popular among local career-path switchers

ANTHONY LAM

**N**EWBORN and mother care courses have become attractive to local women who want or had to change career paths in the past three years, the head of a local group in the profession pointed out yesterday.

On the sidelines of a sector event, Elaine Leong, president of Macau Domestic Workers Promotion Association, said that many local women currently aged between 45 and 65 years are open to taking newborn and mothercare courses, for changing career paths or domestic caregiving.

In addition, she disclosed that many younger people who have lost their jobs during the past three years of economic downturn have decided to become better equipped to work in the newborn and mother caretaker sector.

According to her, one of the main reasons is that the courses may help graduates take better care of their daughters-in-law and grandchildren, even if they do not decide to work in the sector professionally.

This, Leong underlined, will



help ease domestic tension.

"During [the] recruitment process, many of these women have faced time constraints, age challenges and domestic pressure," she explained. "They may not be able to invest too much time for work as they have elder

and younger generations to care for at home. They are also not as physically fit as the younger generations for certain positions, such as housekeeping."

She even referred to the suicide rate of the city, saying that these courses could help peo-

ple construct their own sense of value by becoming able to help out in a professional manner with domestic elderly and child care.

This will also help ease household financial burdens, she added, as the monthly salary for a caretaker starts at MOP30,000.

One successful career path changer is a former accounting clerk, surnamed Lou, 68, who graduated from a recent sectoral programme. She admitted that her job seeking efforts had not worked out following her previous employer going out of business three years ago.

Not seeing the chance to return to her accounting career, Lou decided to take the government's training-with-subsidy to broaden her horizons. This program is the second course she has taken under the scheme. Despite passing the retirement age, she preferred to continue working.

In terms of changing one's mentality, Lou suggests fellow career path switchers can face the change with ease. She admitted that the psychological challenges in changing career paths could be tough, but she decided to 'go with the flow' and be optimistic, which she descri-

bed as within her character.

She disclosed that she has also taken courses at the Senior College of the Macau Polytechnic University.

Another graduate, former junket marketer surnamed Cheong, who had been unemployed for over a year, decided to change her career path firstly because she has an interest in infant care and secondly because she heard about the good income in the sector.

She said she had always wanted to work in the sector but did not see any way in. The course has opened a door for her, she admitted.

Yesterday, the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) and the Macau United Citizens Association (API) co-hosted a graduation ceremony for the 15 graduates from the 80-hour course of beginner-level infant and parent caretaker training program. The program complies with national standards, so graduation from secondary school is a prerequisite.

A cooperative agreement signing ceremony was held following the graduation ceremony. The organizer and three local care centers signed agreements to provide internship opportunities to the 15 graduates. The graduates will soon commence their 10-hour internships at these centers to gain real-life experiences before starting to work independently.

Monday saw the opening for application for the next round of the programme, with all places filled within two days, Leong disclosed.

ECONOMY

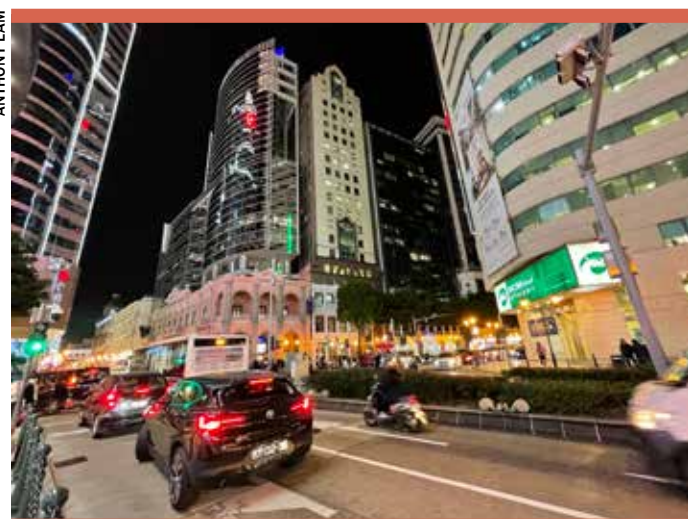
# City's Prosperity Index remains at 'Stability' level

**W**ITH a projected Prosperity Index at 5.5 for June 2023, Macau's economy should retain robust synergy and achieve better results during the summer holiday, the Macau Economic Association (MEA) announced yesterday.

Each month, the group studies local economic data to formulate the Prosperity Index.

The Index for April is 5.3, the group revealed. The projected Indices for May to August are 5.6, 5.5, 5.8 and 5.8 for each respective month in the period.

As the group explained, its optimism is brought about by continuous reinvigoration of the city's economy. It highlighted that data from the first five months of the year has surpassed expectations, with nearly MOP65 in



billion gross gambling revenue (GGR), equating to half the amount expected by the government.

The group also commended the government on policy implementations, in addition to noting that local resorts had escalated their efforts by organizing an increasing

number of performances and sporting events, which would accelerate the city's diversification and enhance its attractiveness to leisure seekers and global tourists.

Moreover, it pointed out that in the past two months, the city has seen five consecutive months of year-over-

-year increase in M2 currency supply, reflecting investors' growing confidence in Macau.

Additionally, escalating counts of visitor arrivals have pulled up hotel occupancy rates to 90% of the 2019 level, which is the highest rate since 2020. The unemployment rate dropping to 2.8% is also good news.

Despite all the good news, the group warns of unclear factors, such as pressure from projected inflation and tightening currency policies. The American dollar's soaring interest rate is a heavy punch on both emerging markets and developed economies, the group added.

It forecasts that there will be another round of interest hikes in the second half of the year, considering intense inflation in America, and that the high rate will remain for at least another year. This will burden capitalization in Macau as the interest difference between the two currencies may further expand. The group therefore suggests caution. **AL**

VOTING SYSTEM

# GOV'T TO LAUNCH PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON ELECTION LAWS

**T**HE government is ready to launch a public consultation on the election laws that rule both the election of the Chief Executive (CE) and the members of the Legislative Assembly (AL).

Details on the public consultation document and on which parts the government seeks to make amendments will be only known later today when a press conference will be held by the Office of the Secretary for Administration and Justice, André Cheong, on the topic.

The last time that the laws were amended was in 2017 for the law that regulates the AL elections, and in 2018 for the election of the CE.

Each term of the Macau CE has a duration of five years, with members eligible for the reelection for a second five-year term. The 33 lawmakers that compose the AL have a term duration of four years.

Currently, the composition of the AL is determined through direct election (14 lawmakers), indirect election (12 lawmakers), and direct appointment of the CE (seven lawmakers). The CE is elected by a college composed of 400 members. **RM**



# SEMI-ELECTRONIZATION OF MACAU ID LIKELY TO START LATE THIS MONTH

RENATO MARQUES

**D**ISCUSSION over the new law updating the rules regulating the issuing and use of the Macau Identity Card (Macau ID) has concluded at the Legislative Assembly (AL) First Standing Committee.

Soon to be raised to plenary for final voting, the proposed date at which new law will enter into force is June 30.

One of the main reasons for the amendments to the law regulating the Macau ID cards was said to be related to the so-called electronization of the document, although the president of the Standing Committee, lawmaker Ella Lei, admitted yesterday that for the time being what will be enforced in just a "semi-electronization." The use of the physical document will still be necessary for the majority of situations.

The main exception to this, for which the government aims to have legally enshrined regulation as early as the end of this month, has to do with the cross-border automated passages.

As soon as the law comes into force, it will be possible to ge-



nerate a QR code via the Macao One Account platform that will be scanned by the border crossing automated gates allowing a touch-free and quicker immigration procedure, the government said.

Lei noted that this will be the first phase of the implementation of the new bill's measures. At a later stage, several other functions will be introduced.

As the Times noticed when the bill was first presented, there will

also be changes in the physical cards that will have less information displayed as the information will be stored in the electronic chip inside the cards.

At a later stage, the government will start to discuss the needs of various associations and services to access information stored in the chip. As Lei said, different organizations and services might have different degrees of access to the information on the card ac-

ording to their needs.

Questioned on the matter by the media, Lei clarified that if any entity needs to have access to the information stored in the ID card chip, access must be granted through a request to the Identification Services Bureau (DSI). The DSI will analyze the request and its grounds and decide whether or not to grant authorization.

Some entities that the government considers essential to ha-

ving access to the full information are being equipped with card readers that can read all the information, Lei said, noting that the law has specific articles that regulate this matter.

The Times asked whether the replacement of the ID with an electronic version in the Macao One Account, as already happens with other documents such as driving licenses and vehicle documentation, was a possibility.

Lawmaker Lei replied that for the time being only "some scenarios" are being considered by the government for the non-mandatory presentation of the physical document when requested by the authorities.

However, she noted that nonetheless that there will be a possibility of police authorities being able to verify someone's identity through electronic means.

As for the new ID cards, according to previous information from the Secretary for Administration and Justice, André Cheong, they should start to be issued before the end of this year.

Cheong also advanced that the change for the new system, which includes changes to IT equipment as well as readers and physical card models, is expected to cost 155 million patacas, of which 64 million is for software and hardware changes and 91 million is for the production of the physical cards.

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# MACAU'S FIRST ARTISTIC SWIMMING MEGA EVENT: WITNESS THE BEAUTY OF WATER BALLET UP CLOSE

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& MACAO OPEN ARTISTIC SWIMMING COMPETITION

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The highlight of the three-day gala will be the “Elite Extravaganza” featuring star-studded performances by top-tier athletes from China's National Artistic Swimming Team, Beijing Artistic Swimming Team, and Sichuan Artistic Swimming Team at the opening (June 24) and closing ceremony (June 25). In recent years, China's national artistic swimming team has risen to great heights on the international stage.

Shi Haoyu, Yang Shuncheng and Dai Shiyi, recently won gold medals in the Mixed Duet Free Routine, and Men's and Women's Solo Free Routine Categories respectively at the World Aquatics Artistic Swimming World Cup, will put on spectacular performances at the event before they strive to compete in the next Olympic Games.

In addition, a total of around 180 athletes from all over the country will converge in Macau to compete at the “Open Artistic Swimming Competition”. Undoubtedly, alongside the elite extravaganza, this event will be the largest of its kind in Macau in the past two decades.

The mega sports event aims to foster the diversified development of sports and arts in Macau. The public is invited to support and appreciate the beauty of artistic swimming on the spot. Don't miss this rare opportunity and be a part of the captivating aquatic sport event.

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**DATE**  
June 23 - 25

**VENUE**  
Olympic Sports Centre in Taipa –  
Aquatic Centre

For more event details, please visit [mgm.mo](http://mgm.mo).





GAMING

# Macau Legend to sell Laos operation for \$45m

RENATO MARQUES

**L**OCAL hospitality and casino services operator, Macau Legend Development Limited, has announced it has signed a letter of intent to sell its operation in Laos.

The announcement came over a filing with the Hong Kong Stock Exchange that gave a note of the listed company's intention to sell all its holdings in the Savan Legend casino resort, located in Savannakhet, for a total of \$45 million (MOP363 million).

"The Board is pleased to announce that on 13 June 2023 (after the trading hours of the Stock Exchange), the Company (as the vendor) entered into the Letter of Intent with the Purchaser, pursuant to which, the Company intends to sell, and the Purchaser intends to acquire, the entire equity interest in the Target Company, an indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of the Company, which in turn wholly owns Savan Legend



(the Company's operation in Lao PDR)," the notice stated. It also noted that the potential buyer is a Japanese national, residing in Japan, identified as Shundo Yoshinari, "or a company controlled by him as the Purchaser."

Macau Legend justified the sale due to the financial instability of the company, adding that "such business is subject to increasingly onerous restraints in Laos PDR, thereby limiting its profitability in the future."

It also added that the company

intends to use the funds from the sale to "reallocate more financial resources to its business operation in Macau and for overall future development."

Currently, Macau Legend owns the Macau Fisherman's Wharf development, which includes the Legend Palace casino. This casino has been operating since January this year and according to the new gaming regulations, under a temporary (3 years) license provided by the gaming concessionaire SJM Holdings.

RENATO MARQUES



AVIATION

## AIR MACAU LOSSES MOUNT IN 2022

**A**IR Macau, the city's flagship airline, experienced a nearly one-third year-on-year increase in losses across 2022, reaching over one billion patacas (\$124 million), according to recently released data, cited by Lusa.

The company attributed the worsened losses to "the impact of the pandemic resurgence [in China] and rising oil prices," as stated in Air Macau's financial results published in the territory's Official Gazette.

Air Macau's operational revenue amounted to MOP887 million patacas (\$110 million), marking a 26% reduction compared to 2021.

Since the onset of the CO-

VID-19 pandemic, the airline has faced unparalleled losses, primarily due to restrictions imposed on tourists from mainland China, which constitutes Macau's main market.

In December, Air Macau's shareholders, under the control of China's state airline Air China, decided to decrease the company's share capital by MOP1.4 billion (\$173.5 million) "to offset the incurred losses."

The accompanying report from Air Macau's Fiscal Council highlighted that the airline "continues to encounter numerous challenges, including debt obligations and the escalating fuel prices." PC

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SOUTH CHINA SEA

# Chinese navy ship pays port call to Philippines in goodwill tour

IYA FORBES, MANILA

A Chinese navy training ship with hundreds of cadets made a port call in the Philippines yesterday, its final stop on a goodwill tour of four countries as Beijing looks to mend fences in the region.

Cadets in dress whites stood at attention on the deck of the Qi Jiguang as they were welcomed at the port in Manila by Philippine military officials on shore, while artists in dragon costumes performed a traditional dance and onlookers waved Chinese and Philippine flags.

China's ambassador to the Philippines was on hand for the ceremony but neither he nor any of the Philippine officials made any comment to the media.

It was a rare visit for a Chinese naval ship to the Philippines, whose new government under Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has been strengthening ties with the United States, including more joint military exercises and in February granting the American military greater access to the country's military facilities.

China, meantime, has be-



Chinese navy sailors wave as they arrive on board their naval training ship, Qi Jiguang, for a goodwill visit at Manila's port, yesterday

come increasingly assertive in pressing its broad claims to the strategic South China Sea, which has put it at odds with the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei.

In February, a Chinese coast guard ship aimed a military-grade laser at a Philippine patrol vessel off a disputed reef, temporarily blinding some crew members and prompting the Philippines to intensify its patrols in the South China Sea.

The ship's visit comes a week

after joint U.S., Japanese and Philippine coast guard law enforcement drills in the area.

President Joe Biden's administration has been broadly working to reinforce alliances in the Indo-Pacific to push back against China's sweeping maritime claims.

The largest naval training ship of China's People's Liberation Army Navy, the Qi Jiguang was to be in port for three days. It was the end of a nearly 40-day voyage for 476 naval cadets and

sailors from China's well-known Dalian Naval Academy.

Before the port call in Manila, it made stops in Vietnam, Thailand and Brunei.

When it set off in mid-May, there was no mention of the various territorial disputes China is embroiled in, with official media reporting it as an opportunity for the cadets to visit foreign military vessels, academies and training facilities, and help "deepen the friendship with local people."

Only members of the Chinese-Filipino community were allowed to board the Qi Jiguang yesterday, but the ship was to be opened to the broader public today and tomorrow.

Yong Ning Cai, a Chinese-Chinese businessman who was on the pier to watch the Qi Jiguang's arrival, was one of those allowed to board the ship and said he was impressed by its "advanced and high-end" equipment.

"This is a ship of our motherland and it is built very well, better than those in other countries," he said. "This visit is very successful and will definitely promote the friendship between China and the Philippines."

MDT/AP

DIPLOMACY

## FM QIN AIRS CONCERNS IN PHONE CALL WITH BLINKEN AHEAD OF PLANNED VISIT

UNITED States Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang shared concerns on a phone call yesterday ahead of a planned visit by the U.S. official to China meant to shore up relations.

"Spoke tonight with PRC State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang by phone," Blinken's official Twitter account read. "Discussed ongoing efforts to maintain open channels of communication as well as bilateral and global issues."

The Chinese foreign ministry said in a statement on one of its social media pages that Qin urged the United States to respect "China's core concerns" such as the issue of Taiwan's self-rule, "stop interfering in China's internal affairs, and stop harming China's sovereignty, security and development interests in the name of competition."

Qin noted China-U.S. ties "have encountered new difficulties and challenges" since the beginning of the year, and the two sides' responsibility is to work together to properly manage differences, promote exchanges and cooperation and stabilize relations.

Blinken is reportedly planning a trip to China this week, after several weeks in which the two countries made diplomatic overtures to one another in an attempt to ease tensions. Blinken had scrapped a trip to Beijing in February after a suspected Chinese spy balloon flew over U.S. territory.

China has since largely rejected U.S. attempts at official exchanges, but some overtures were made. Last week, Daniel Kritenbrink, assistant U.S. secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, was the highest-ranking U.S. official to visit China since the downing of the balloon.

In May, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo met her Chinese counterpart Wang Wentao in Washington to discuss trade. MDT/AP



Antony Blinken

DIPLOMACY

# China inks 'strategic partnership' with Palestinian Authority

CHINA said yesterday it has established a "strategic partnership" with the Palestinian Authority during a visit to Beijing by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

The announcement marks another step in China's campaign to gain political and economic influence in the Middle East, where it is competing for influence with the United States.

China is seeking energy resources and markets for its military and civilian exports, while promoting its version of authoritarian government in a joint challenge with Russia to the Western-led democratic world order.

China has appointed a special envoy to meet with Israeli and Palestinian officials, but its experience in the region is mainly limited to construction, manufacturing and other eco-



Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang meets with Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad Al-Maliki in Beijing

nomic projects.

Beijing has long maintained diplomatic ties with the Palestinian Authority and Abbas was welcomed with full military honors at the Great Hall of the People in central Beijing.

"We are good friends and partners," Chinese president and head of the ruling Commu-

nist Party Xi Jinping told Abbas at the start of their meeting. "We have always firmly supported the just cause of the Palestinian people to restore their legitimate national rights."

"China is willing to strengthen coordination and cooperation with the Palestinian side to promote a comprehensive, just

and lasting solution to the Palestinian issue as soon as possible," he said.

Xi called the strategic partnership an "important milestone in the history of bilateral relations," but its financial details were not immediately released.

China relies on such partnerships to bolster its diplomatic posture and give large Chinese corporations a leg-up when negotiating infrastructure deals in line with the government's "Belt and Road Initiative" that has left some countries in deep debt to Chinese banks, according to media reports.

China has also sought close ties with Israel to both expand its diplomatic presence and gain access to high technology.

Abbas' visit comes after China recently hosted talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia that resulted in the restoring of diplomatic relations between the two Mideast rivals and boosting China's standing in the region.

The Riyadh-Tehran rapprochement is seen as a diplomatic victory for China as Gulf Arab states perceive the United States as slowly withdrawing from the wider region. MDT/AP



USA

# In court, Trump faced charges with no cameras present; outside, he campaigned

JOSHUA GOODMAN  
& SARA BURNETT, MIAMI

**F**ORMER President Donald Trump gave a wave and a thumbs-up to crowds outside the federal courthouse in downtown Miami after pleading not guilty to criminal charges. He then headed to a Cuban restaurant where he warmly greeted waiting supporters in a camera-ready scene that resembled a campaign stop, and later he railed against the charges before a friendly crowd of invited guests at a private golf club he owns.

In the largely unseen moments yesterday [Macau time] — his attorney entering his plea, Trump sitting grim-faced with arms folded across his chest — the gravity of being the first former president charged with a federal crime was apparent.

In the seen moments, broadcast around the world in real time, there were a long motorcade, flag-waving supporters and a smaller number of anti-Trump protesters outside the courthouse. Then the former president and 2024 candidate had a detour in mind, to a popular restaurant where he was all smiles, greeted by supporters, prayed over by a rabbi and shadowed by his personal aide, who also has been charged in the case.

Then Trump flew on his private jet to New Jersey, where backers welcomed him with rally-like enthusiasm, music and chants for a speech delivered before a clubhouse with columns resembling the White House. The remarks, with live coverage only from his favored cable channel, were rife with errors and falsehoods that went unchallenged in the moment.

Trump has long been adroit at creating his own portrait of events, ever mindful of the power of television to shape an impression even as his actions have strained the safeguards of American democracy. The post-court itinerary was an orchestrated effort at counterprogramming as he campaigns again



AP PHOTO

for president and maintains that he has been unfairly targeted by political rivals.

The international attention and the screaming crowds were more signs of the extraordinary nature of the day's events and the person at the center of it all. A defendant like no other, Trump was the first former president to appear before a federal judge on criminal charges. He also is leading the Republican field for the 2024 presidential nomination, holding his status as frontrunner even as he has faced these and other legal troubles.

Hardly any of those gathered in Miami interacted with Trump, if they saw him at all through the window of his SUV. He arrived as part of a motorcade that entered the courthouse garage for his hearing on felony charges. The former president also left in the SUV with the windows rolled up before heading to Versailles, a restaurant, coffee shop and bakery that is a required stop for politicians visiting Miami. There, the crowd serenaded him with the "Happy Birthday" song, one day before the former president's 77th birthday.

"Some birthday! We've got a government that's out of control," Trump said.

Trump has been making frequent stops at local restaurants during his campaign trips, in part to contrast his easy rapport with his supporters with his chief Republican rival, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. But yes-

terday's stop was different, aimed at showcasing Trump's continued support from GOP voters and signaling that he remains unbowed by the indictments.

He then headed to the airport for his flight back to New Jersey. At Bedminster, he called the 37 felony charges against him "election interference and yet another attempt to rig and steal" an election, repeating false claims about his 2020 loss to Joe Biden.

Some of Trump's most high-profile supporters turned out yesterday. In Miami, failed U.S. Senate candidate Kari Lake of Arizona, whom Trump endorsed last year, walked through the crowd. Among those at Bedminster was election conspiracist Mike Lindell, founder of MyPillow.

Outside the Miami courthouse earlier in the day, security was tight, with police vehicles blocking a palm tree-lined breezeway and public entrance to the building. A helicopter passed overhead at times, and officers circled the perimeter on bicycles.

The scene included what is now a staple of a Trump appearance or rally. People selling T-shirts with Trump's face in a mock mugshot, with large letters reading "NOT GUILTY," others hawking hats but also, fitting for Miami, mangoes.

Some waved Trump 2024 flags, supporting his bid for president. Another man, who opposes Trump, dressed in black-and-white pri-

son stripes and held a sign reading "LOCK HIM UP." At times, people shouted past each other, and small groups of pro-Trump supporters and anti-Trump protesters squabbled, occasionally yelling obscenities at each other.

Domenic Santana, who showed up in the jailhouse uniform complete with handcuffs and a plastic ball and chain, said he "wanted to join the circus."

Santana came to the U.S. as a child from Cuba and retired in Miami after decades operating an eatery in the New York area. The 61-year-old considers himself a political independent and says his mother and daughter voted for Trump.

"A fellow New Yorker can spot a rat a mile away," he said. "Frankly, he should've been locked up ages ago."

More typical, among the earliest arrivals outside the courthouse were the father-son duo of Florencio and Kevin Rodriguez, who came to the U.S. 15 years ago as asylum seekers fleeing dictatorship in Cuba.

Wearing a shirt that read "Jesus is my savior, Trump is my president," the younger Rodriguez, Kevin, said it was possible that Trump was guilty of illegally retaining classified documents.

But he questioned the fairness of the proceedings in light of what he said was prosecutors' lax attitude toward President Joe Biden and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton — both of whom have also been accused of mishandling classified intelligence, though without any intention of hiding their actions.

"Even if he's guilty, we will still support him," Rodriguez said.

Others came to counter the Trump supporters. Jack Kaplan, 68, drove two hours from Fort Pierce. Carrying a copy of the indictment affixed to a clipboard and a sign reading "Trump is Toast," the retired car dealer said he'll celebrate with a \$1,400 bottle of Mouton Rothschild red wine if the former president is locked away. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 2000 BRITISH MARINES LEAVE SIERRA LEONE



The major contingent of the British military task force sent to help restore order in the West African state of Sierra Leone has left the country.

The departure of the prestigious Royal Marines was overseen by British Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott, who said his government was proud of what they had done to restore stability.

Britain, the former colonial power in Sierra Leone, is handing responsibility for security to the United Nations.

About 300 UK troops and support staff will stay on in the war-torn African country for the next six to eight weeks to help establish a UK military advisory training team.

Most people in Freetown would prefer to see the British military continuing their confidence-building street patrols, but British ministers always insisted their mission to help the UN forces there was a short-term one.

Brigadier David Richards, commander of the British forces in Sierra Leone, told BBC Radio's Today programme: "The UN have a much stronger resolve now and are clearer about their mandate and have shown that they have the resolve to fight."

"When we arrived here about six weeks ago, they did appear on the verge of collapse. Today they have been transformed."

At the core of the continuing British effort will be the retraining of the demoralised Sierra Leone army.

Many of its soldiers - some of whom are children - are poorly trained and equipped.

Sierra Leone continues to face horrendous problems. A war is being fought in the countryside about which there is little reliable information.

The UN says that one million people have been affected.

The rebels hold the main diamond-producing area, which deprives the government of revenue and, it is alleged, attracts support for the rebels from neighbouring Liberia.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Sierra Leone's civil war saw nearly half the country's 4.5 million population displaced.

At least 50,000 people died in the fighting and there were an estimated 100,000 victims of mutilation.

The economy was left in ruins and the country's infrastructure collapsed.

British troops entered Sierra Leone because a peace deal between government and rebels had broken down and rebel forces were scoring successes against the Sierra Leone army and the UN peacekeeping force.

In 2002 more than 17,000 foreign troops disarmed tens of thousands of rebels and militia fighters. The country now faces the challenge of reconstruction.







AP PHOTO



Anna Delvey, also known as Anna Sorokin, is on house arrest at her apartment in New York

## SOCIAL MEDIA

# UNDER HOUSE ARREST, FAKE HEIRESS ANNA 'DELVEY' SOROKIN LAUNCHES PODCAST TO REHAB PUBLIC IMAGE

JOHN CARUCCI, NEW YORK

IT'S a weekday afternoon and Anna Sorokin is on house arrest in a New York apartment building that has been condemned as imminently perilous to life. So she's attempting to capture outside attention and relieving her boredom in the most quotidian way: starting a podcast.

"So many people became famous for bad things and were able to kind of segue it into something different," she recently told The Associated Press in her East Village apartment.

"The main theme of my podcast is productive rule-breaking," she said of "The Anna Delvey Show."

For now, she wants to reimagine her public image to shake her reputation of being a con artist and a scammer.

"I'm on 24/7 house arrest. I'm only allowed to leave for my parole check-ins, my ICE check-ins and for medical emergencies," she said. Behind her is a life-size cutout of her likeness — created by artist Kenny Schachter — which, like Sorokin herself, is wearing an ankle monitoring device.

Going by the name Anna Delvey, she posed as a German hei-

ress and lied about having a \$67 million trust fund in order to apply for loans, run up debts and secure a historic building for a private arts club. She falsely claimed to be the daughter of a diplomat or an oil baron. Arrested in late 2017, she was convicted in 2019 on multiple counts of larceny and theft for bilking banks, hotels and wealthy New Yorkers out of \$275,000.

She was sentenced to four to 12 years in prison. After serving three years in prison though — about half of which was at Rikers Island jail complex — Sorokin, a German citizen, was detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Later, she was released after posting a \$10,000 bond in the fall to home confinement, pending a deportation hearing.

Now she's taking advantage of her time at home by launching a weekly podcast series that she hopes will tell her side of the story, featuring various expert and celebrity guests. Sorokin's conversations with Julia Fox, "Pharma Bro" Martin Shkreli and Ottessa Moshfegh will be on upcoming episo-

des, according to Reunion Audio, the podcast company, who have also said she is interviewing Emily Ratajkowski though her team has not confirmed that.

Sorokin's fraud case became the basis for the Emmy-nominated Netflix series "Inventing Anna," based on a New York magazine story. Sorokin, played by three-time Emmy winner Julia Garner, said she was a consultant on the show, but didn't have "any control" over the final product.

## Sorokin's fraud case became the basis for the Netflix series 'Inventing Anna,' based on a New York magazine story

"For me to say I'm rehabilitated would be to admit something was wrong with me to begin with. Like, I was just young. I made some mistakes," she said. "I'm trying to learn from them. My case, my criminal case is on direct appeal."

"Inventing Anna" was inspired by real-life events, but every episo-

de included a disclaimer that the story was true except for the parts that were made up.

"I know some of the stuff like definitely did not happen," Sorokin said. "But it's not really up to me to sit here and go over the series piece-by-piece, because it's literally a Shonda Rhimes interpretation."

While Sorokin was jailed, her fanbase grew — even organizing a "Free Anna Delvey" art show that included some of her drawings, as well as works by other artists. Since then, she has attempted to sell pencil drawings for up to \$25,000.

The podcast gives her the opportunity to take back some control over the narrative, and it's something she's thought about doing for some time.

"I wanted to start recording in jail, actually over the jail phone because, you know, there are some rappers who record whole albums while being incarcerated. I was like, 'Why not record a podcast?'" Sorokin said.

She was never able to do it, because it was "logistically difficult" to record episodes, according to

the podcast company.

As far as her time behind bars, Sorokin called prison a "transformative experience," saying that she's no longer the person who was arrested in 2017.

"It's been five years, a bit more than five years since I got arrested. So, I just like — I changed. I learned so much," she said. Dressed in a white blouse, her signature black-ribbon tie and dark slacks, her ankle bracelet is clearly visible.

She lifts her pants leg to show it off and even explains how it works.

"Sometimes you see the banks all operate the biggest fraud on a huge scale, but like if you bounce, I don't know, a \$500 check, then (it's) fraud," Sorokin said.

This week, Sorokin's guest on "The Anna Delvey Show" was model and rocker Julia Cumming of the New York City band, Sunflower Bean.

During a discussion about what makes a real New Yorker, Cumming says Sorokin's impact in the city qualifies her.

"You are the first person I've ever hung out with under house arrest," she said. "So that's a huge accomplishment."

Sorokin agreed that she didn't know anyone under house arrest either.

Cumming responded: "It's like you and Lindsay Lohan," who was under house arrest in Los Angeles more than a decade ago.

Sorokin believes her notoriety makes it's easy for her to bring guests on the show.

"I can get pretty much anybody up here," she said with brash confidence.

But there's one guest she won't be able to get: Theranos founder Elizabeth Holmes, who just began an 11-year prison sentence for overseeing a blood-testing hoax that became a parable about greed and hubris in Silicon Valley.

"I'd love to speak to Elizabeth. I definitely think she's an interesting person," Sorokin said. "I can relate a little bit more is because we're both females and have been trying to build something."

She would also consider having U.S. Rep. George Santos on the podcast, but doesn't feel she has much in common with him. The New York Republican who fabricated an identity as a rich, Wall Street dealmaker while running for Congress, and was recently charged in a 13-count indictment that included fraud, money laundering, and theft of public funds.

"I'm sure some of it is true, some of it — it's not," Sorokin said of things written about Santos.

She added: "I get so many requests to give George Santos advice, jail advice or something. I kind of stayed away from that."

So, for now, the subject of the "Inventing Anna" series waits to find out if people tune into the podcast, available this week on all major platforms — and if her campaign to reinvent herself works. **MDT/AP**



FOOTBALL

# Messi, Argentina set to pull a big crowd in Beijing friendly vs Australia

**L**IONEL Messi and his World Cup-winning Argentina teammates are expected to draw almost 70,000 fans to Beijing Worker's Stadium for an exhibition against Australia.

With tickets starting at around \$80 for today's game, local supporters are excited to see Messi and continue the World Cup celebrations. Fans have flocked to all opportunities to see the Argentine star since the team arrived in China, with large crowds angling for photographs and chanting his name.

Messi's move to "continue my path" in Miami last week made global headlines after he turned down extremely lucrative offers from Al-Hilal in Saudi Arabia in favor of Major League Soccer.

He said that after winning the World Cup, it was his time to go the United States and "live football in another way."

Before then, he's with the Argentina squad that is scheduled



Chinese fans wait to catch a glimpse of the soccer superstar Lionel Messi in Beijing, Tuesday night

to play Australia in the Chinese capital and take on Indonesia in Jakarta four days later.

Australia coach Graham Arnold said he was looking forward to giving a selection of young players some valuable experience.

"There's no better team to test

yourself against than he best in the world," Arnold said in an interview for Chinese TV. "It's going to be great for the players — not only the players, but for everyone here in China and back in Australia — to see Lionel Messi play.

"He's such a wonderful player

and obviously best in the world. To have those privileges to test yourself against him, it's important."

Messi led Argentina to a 2-1 win over the Australians in the Round of 16 at the World Cup last year in Qatar.

For the Socceroos, though, this rematch is not about revenge for a defeat but more the journey to the next Asian Cup, at Qatar in January, and beyond.

"It's a younger squad but I'm also looking with one eye on the World Cup in 2026 and getting players ready for that," Arnold said. "I don't believe there's a better way to test them out."

Australia, which joined the Asian Football Confederation in 2006 and won the regional title on home soil in 2015, will take on India, Syria and Uzbekistan at the Asian Cup.

Arnold has handed first call-ups to Italian-based defender Alessandro Circati and Melbourne City goalkeeper Thomas Glover,

and has recalled Gianni Stensness and Denis Genreau.

In other international friendlies this week, Japan will play El Salvador and South Korea, led by former U.S. head coach Jurgen Klinsmann, will take on Peru on Friday.

Klinsmann is sweating on the fitness of Tottenham star player Son Heung-min, who had a hernia operation after the end of the English Premier League season. According to Korea Football Association officials, Son wants to play but it has yet to be decided.

Oh Hyeon-gu, who helped Celtic to the Scottish championship, could make the step up in Son's absence.

"I don't know about playing time, but whether I am given one minute or 90 minutes, I will do my best," Oh said. "I traveled to Qatar for the World Cup. I was so desperate to play and I know all the stadiums ... I want to make those dream moments if I can go to the Asian Cup." MDT/AP

AD

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OPINION

China Daily  
Zhang Weiwei\*, Xinhua



CHINA'S POVERTY ERADICATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS GOVERNANCE

With more than 40 years of reform and opening-up, China has eradicated extreme poverty, lifted about 800 million people out of poverty, and brought over 400 million people into the middle-income group. This is a miracle in the history of human civilization and has far-reaching implications for global human rights governance.

The United States has never considered poverty eradication a human rights issue, while Europe considers it an obstacle to the realization of human rights at most. However, China has politically recognized poverty eradication as not only a human right, but also a core one, and has put it into firm, vigorous, and extensive practice. Therefore, China is at the forefront of poverty eradication in the world. It provides great inspiration for all developing countries since almost all of the biggest challenges facing developing countries are related to poverty eradication.

The achievements made in eradicating poverty in the course of Chinese modernization are much better than those achieved under the West-led development pattern. The main reason is the huge difference in human rights awareness between the two patterns. Chinese civilization has never been disrupted in its continuity in the world. In its modernization drive, China continues to formulate policies based on the people's needs, national conditions, and cultural traditions.

As a Chinese saying goes, "The people are the foundation of a state. When the foundation is strong, the state will be secure." In other words, the people are the cornerstone of a country, and only by consolidating the cornerstone of the country can the country be peaceful, and how well people's livelihood issues are resolved will determine the future and destiny of a country. Furthermore, as another Chinese saying goes, "issues related to people's livelihoods are paramount."

Now, it seems that China's philosophy that "people's livelihoods are paramount" has corrected a deviation that has been in existence for a long time in the Western philosophy of human rights governance, that is, importance is only attached to the political rights of citizens, but their rights to survival and development are ignored. Looking back, we can find that when European enlightenment thinkers in the 18th century proposed human rights such as freedom, equality, and private property rights, they represented the emerging proprietary classes at that time.

Today's world has entered the 21st century, but hundreds of millions of people still suffer from extreme poverty. Many developing countries that follow Western political systems have not yet solved the basic issue of people's livelihood. In this context, we may better understand the global significance of the Chinese path to modernization. The Chinese people, through their great practice of poverty eradication, are, in a sense, redefining modernization and modernity.

In contrast, the 20-year war waged by the United States in Afghanistan cost some \$2.3 trillion according to studies, and resulted in human rights violations, countless deaths, and innumerable displaced people.

The U.S. political system has long been kidnapped by U.S. military-industrial interest groups. They have made a lot of money through wars, including the Afghanistan War, but they have brought crises and even disasters to the people of the world, including the American people. How can such a country be qualified to talk about human rights in today's world?

The China-proposed Global Development Initiative calls for staying committed to development as a priority and a people-centered approach. Only through development can poverty be eliminated and the root causes of many conflicts be removed. Seen from the perspective of human rights protection, this initiative and China's complete set of philosophies and practices for poverty eradication have greatly enriched the philosophy and practice of global human rights governance. [Abridged]

\*The author is director of the China Institute of Fudan University in Shanghai.

GREECE: 59 MIGRANTS DEAD, DOZENS FEARED MISSING AFTER FISHING VESSEL CAPSIZES

THE BUZZ

At least 59 people have died and dozens are feared missing off the coast of southern Greece after a fishing boat carrying migrants capsized and sank, authorities said yesterday.

A large search and rescue operation was launched in the area. Authorities said 104 people have been rescued so far following the nighttime incident some 75 kilometers southwest of Greece's southern Peloponnese region.

Four of the survivors were hospitalized with symptoms of hypothermia. It was unclear how many passengers might remain missing at sea after the 59 bodies were recovered, the Greek coast guard said.

Six coast guard vessels, a navy frigate, a military transport plane, an air force helicopter, several private vessels and a drone from the European Union border protection agency, Frontex, were taking part in the ongoing search.

The Italy-bound boat is believed to have sailed from the Tobruk area in eastern Libya.

Libyan authorities have launched a major crackdown on migrants earlier this month across eastern Libya. Activists have said several thousand migrants, including Egyptians, Syrians, Sudanese and Pakistanis, have been detained. Libyan authorities deported many Egyptians to their home country through a land crossing point.



European Commissioner for Europe fit for the Digital Age Margrethe Vestager

GOOGLE MUST BREAK UP DIGITAL AD BUSINESS OVER COMPETITION CONCERNS: BRUSSELS

KELVIN CHAN & SAMUEL PETREQUIN, BRUSSELS

EUROPEAN Union antitrust regulators took aim at Google's lucrative digital advertising business in an unprecedented decision, saying yesterday that the tech giant must sell off some of its ad business to address competition concerns.

The European Commission, the bloc's executive branch and top antitrust enforcer, said its preliminary view after an investigation is that "only the mandatory divestment by Google of part of its services" would satisfy the concerns.

The 27-nation EU has led the global movement to crack down on Big Tech companies — including groundbreaking rules on artificial intelligence — but it has previously relied on issuing blockbuster fines, including three antitrust penalties for Google worth billions of euros.

It's the first time the bloc has told a tech giant that it must split up key parts of its business over violations of the EU's strict antitrust laws, though details on what that would look like have not been released.

Google can now defend itself by making its case be-

fore the commission issues its final decision. The company said it disagreed with the finding and "will respond accordingly," with the EU's investigation focusing on a narrow part of its ad business.

"Our advertising technology tools help websites and apps fund their content, and enable businesses of all sizes to effectively reach new customers," said Dan Taylor, Google vice president of global ads. "Google remains committed to creating value for our publisher and advertiser partners in this highly competitive sector."

The commission's decision stems from a formal investigation that it opened in June 2021, looking into whether Google violated the bloc's competition rules by favoring its own online display advertising technology services at the expense of rival publishers, advertisers and advertising technology services.

European Commission Vice President Margrethe Vestager says Google is dominant on both sides of the ad-selling market. Google abused that position by favoring its own ad exchange, reinforcing its ability to charge a high fee for its services, the commission said.

"Google is representing the interests of both buyers and sellers. And at the same time, Google is setting the rules on how demand and supply should meet," she said at a news conference. "This gives rise to inherent and pervasive conflicts of interest."

YouTube was one focus of the commission's investigation, which looked into whether Google was using the video sharing site's dominant position to favor its own ad-buying services by imposing restrictions on rivals.

Google's ad tech business is also under investigation by Britain's antitrust watchdog and faces litigation in the U.S.

Brussels has previously hit Google with more than 8 billion euros (now \$8.6 billion) worth of fines in three separate antitrust cases, involving its Android mobile operating system and shopping and search advertising services.

The company is appealing all three penalties. An EU court last year slightly reduced the Android penalty to 4.125 million euros. EU regulators have the power to impose penalties worth up to 10% of a company's annual revenue. MDT/AP



India Rival ethnic groups fired at each other in fresh violence in India's remote northeast that left at least nine people dead and some injured, officials said. Security forces rushed to Khamenlok village in Manipur state's Kangpokpi district after clashes broke out Tuesday night between the Kuki and Meitei communities, said L. Sushindro, a state government minister. Police found nine bodies.



Russian President Vladimir Putin suggested that he could order his troops to try to seize more land in Ukraine to protect bordering Russian territory — a threat with questionable credibility because the Kremlin lacks full control over areas it already annexed.

In some of his most detailed remarks about the war in months, the Russian leader also asserted that Ukrainian forces had suffered "catastrophic" losses in a new counteroffensive, and he said he was not contemplating a new troop mobilization, as many Russians have feared.

Ukraine Russian forces fired cruise missiles at the southern Ukrainian city of Odesa overnight and shelling destroyed homes in the eastern Donetsk region, killing at least six people and injuring more than a dozen others, regional officials said. A Ukrainian military spokesman said Russian forces have stepped up aerial strikes, just as the country's troops have reported limited gains in an early counteroffensive.



Germany is unveiling its first comprehensive national security strategy in Berlin as part of an effort to address what it views as growing military, economic and social threats to the country. Chancellor Olaf Scholz and four of his top ministers are due to present the new strategy, which has been months in the making.