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# Times

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**TOP COURT UPHELD A LOWER COURT RULING THAT PARKING LOTS DECLARED AS COMMON PARTS OF A BUILDING ARE OWNED BY ALL OWNERS WITHIN THE PREMISES**

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**TOURISM: MAY GOLDEN WEEK FAILS TO HALT TOURIST DROP**

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**CHINESE ONLINE SHOPPERS ARE ENTICED BY DEEP DISCOUNTS, PAYMENT PLANS AS ZEST FOR SPENDING LAGS**

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AP PHOTO



**Japan** Five people were killed and 12 others taken to the hospital after a truck collided with a bus in Hokkaido in northern Japan, according to local media reports. Police said the truck might have strayed into oncoming traffic, Kyodo news agency reported. The bus was carrying 15 passengers at the time of the accident, which occurred. The drivers of both vehicles died in the crash, Kyodo said.

AP PHOTO



**India** Nearly 170 people have died in two of India's most populous states in recent days amid a sweltering heat wave, officials said, as hospitals are overwhelmed with patients and routine power outages add to the challenges. In the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, 119 people have died from heat-related illnesses over the last several days while in neighboring Bihar state 47 people have died, according to local news reports and health officials.

AP PHOTO

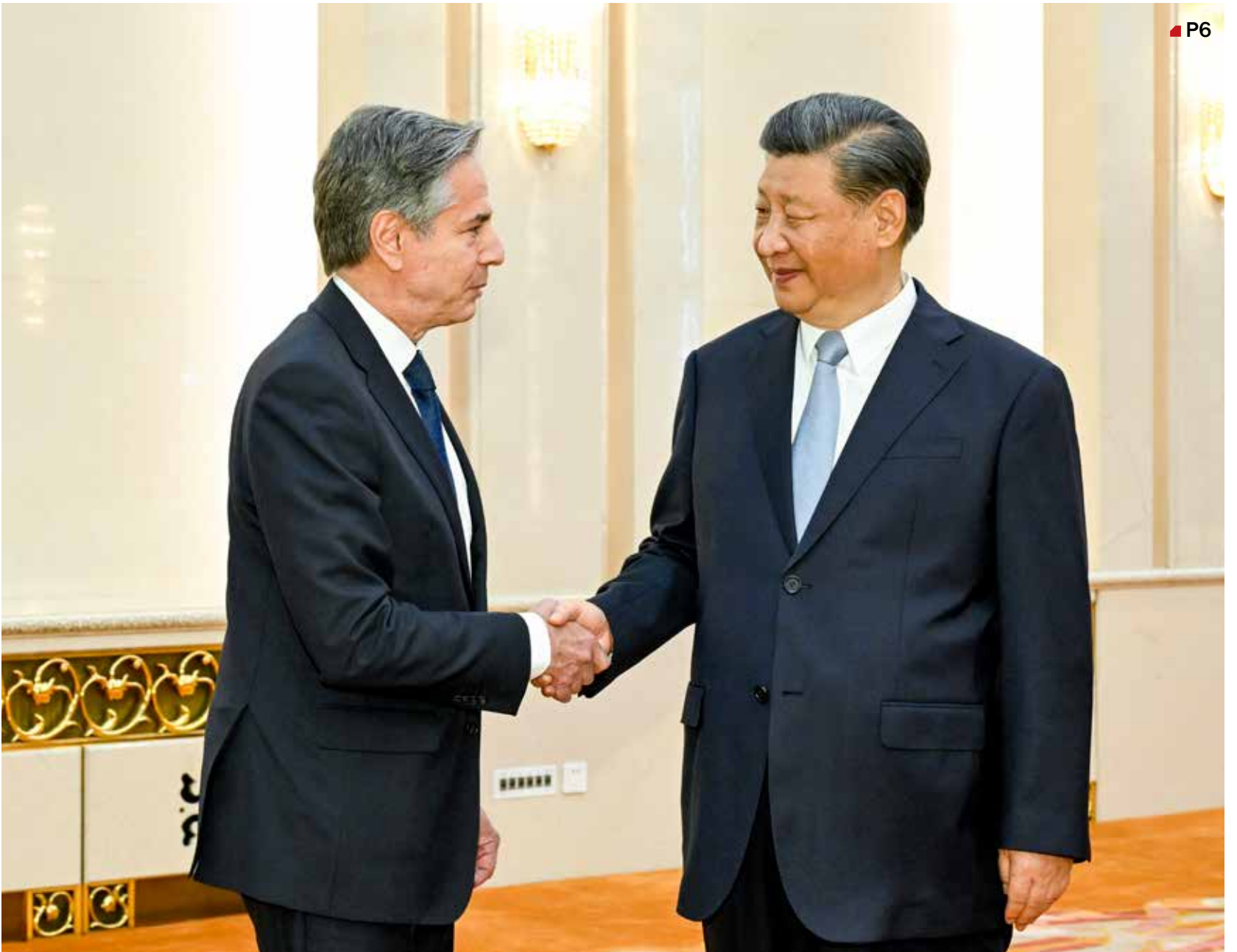


**Pakistan** yesterday widened its manhunt for human traffickers after a tragedy off the Greek coast last week that left more than 500 migrants feared drowned, including many Pakistanis, officials said. With no definitive casualty numbers announced, families feared for the fate of their loved ones and the nation observed a day of mourning Monday, declared by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's government.

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ANTHONY LAM

# TOP COURT RULES BUILDING OWNERS OWN RESIDENTIAL PARKING LOT

**T**HE Court of Final Appeal has upheld a lower court ruling that parking lots declared as common parts of a building are owned by all owners within the premises.

The story started when a residential building built in 1989 which had individual ownership registered in 1992 – hereinafter referred to as M Garden – saw its parking spaces illegally rented out by the security and management company, Company Y, from 2002.

M Garden's owners' administrative committee filed a lawsuit against the act, stating that Company Y had neither sufficient proof nor approval from the committee before conducting the act. Before seeking a judicial resolution, in 2003, the committee ordered Company Y to return the rights to the parking lot to it, but the company declined.

The Court of First Instance referred to the building manuals and noted the parking lot was registered as a common section pursuant to Clause 2, Article 1421 of the then promulgated Civil Code.

As a result, whether under the then enacted Civil Code or Items i

and j, Clause 1, Article 1324 of the current Civil Code, the parking spaces concerned ought to be seen as a common part of the building, which would mean all building owners have ownership of the parking lot.

More importantly, Company Y had been ruled in another lawsuit as not having commercial rights to the parking lot, and ordered to terminate its lease of the parking lot. Therefore, the ruling in that case had and should have precedence over this case.

The base court also ordered Company Y to pay the committee approximately MOP953,000 as compensation. If this is not honored, the company will have to pay additionally MOP6,500 per day until the former compensation is honored.

Disagreeing with the judgement, the company sought appeal from the Court of Second Instance – which ruled against it – and then the top court – which also ruled against it.



ANTHONY LAM



## EVENTS

### ARTYZEN GRAND LAPA TO HOST MOZAMBIKAN DINING PROMOTIONS

**R**ESIDENTS and visitors will be able to sample cuisines from Africa's Mozambique, a lusophone country, right in Macau, Artyzen Grand Lapa Hotel announced yesterday at a press conference.

The event saw the participation of Dr. Rafael Custódio Marques, Consul General of Mozambique in Macau, Tiago Azevedo, vice-president of The Mozambique Friends Association, Carlos Graça, Guest Chef of the dining

promotions, as well as Desmond Hill, area culinary director of the hotel.

Co-presented with the Mozambique Friends Association, the dining promotions aim at staging "a cultural celebration of one of the most extraordinary traditional cuisines in the world and in line with the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Forum for China and Portuguese-speaking countries," the hotel said.

During his speech at the press conference, Consul-General Marques said that on June 25, his country will celebrate 48 years of independence.

Meanwhile, Chef Graça was introduced to have been born to a family that owned and ran a Chinese restaurant in Mozambique. He visited Macau some decades ago to work at the then Hyatt Regency Hotel in Taipa.

The dining promotions will run from June 21 to July 2, and come as semi-buffet lunch, set dinner and dinner buffet. **AL**

## TOURISM

### WORKER'S DAY 'GOLDEN WEEK' FAILS TO HALT TOURIST DROP IN MAY

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE good results in terms of the influx of tourists during the so-called Golden Week of the Worker's Day (May 1) failed to maintain the increasing trend in the number of visitors, an official statistics release from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) shows.

According to the release, May 2023 registered a drop of 2.65% month-on-month when compared to April.

The official figures show that in April this year, some 2,274,050 people arrived in Macau while in May this figure dropped to 2,213,807 (-60,243).

This figure is particularly significant as in April visitor arrivals recorded a hike of 16.2% month-on-month.

An even more important drop was registered



in overnight visitors in May (1,088,830), representing 87,626 fewer visitors (-7.45%) when compared to the previous month. The overall result was only offset by a better performance of same-day visitors that increased by 27,383 visitors or 2.49%.

Compared year-on-year with May 2019 (pre-pandemic), the number of visitors to Macau is currently 34.83%, below the 2019 level when it registered

3,396,835 visitors.

In the first five months of 2023, visitor arrivals reached 9,436,215 with a higher number of overnight visitors (4,904,039) than same-day visitors (4,532,176).

The first five months (Jan to May) figure also indicates that at the end of May this year the number of visitors arriving in Macau is still 45.1% less than those arriving in the first five months back in 2019.

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**DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF** Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com  
**ASSISTANT EDITOR** Lynzy Valles  
**CONTRIBUTING EDITORS** Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

**NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS** Alex Torrão, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Seguí  
**DESIGNERS** Miguel Bandeira, Rebeca Almeida | **ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS** JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | **NEWS AGENCIES** Associated Press, MacauHub, MacaoNews, Xinhua  
**SECRETARY** Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

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**ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com  
**OFFICE MANAGER** Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com  
**ADDRESS** Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR  
**Telephones:** +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84  
**Advertisement** advertising@macaudailytimes.com  
**For subscription and general issues:** general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd



ELECTION LAWS

# Patriotism and central gov't core values are to be defended

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE first sectorial section of the public consultation of the amendments to the electoral laws for the election of the Chief Executive (CE) and legislators took place yesterday at the Complex of Commerce and Trade Co-operation Platform for China and Portuguese-speaking Countries.

Highlighted in the speeches from several representatives of local civil associations, as well as figures including the president and vice president of the Legislative Assembly (AL), were calls for the safeguarding of the "Macau ruled by patriots" principle aside from the reassurance of the defense of central government's "core values".

In one of the most emotive speeches of the afternoon, the president of the General Union of Neighbourhood Associations of Macau (Kai Fong), Ng Siu Lai said, "The democracy of Macau cannot affect the core values of the central government. And this is why all people in the government posts need to be people who love the country and Macau above everything else." She added that this principle should always prevail to "avoid negative influences by someone with diabolical intentions."

Expressing her unequivocal support for the changes proposed, Ng, like many other speakers, did not make any remarks on proposals to be included in the final bill.

Also expressing full support for the changes was AL president Kou Hoi In, who noted in his pre-written speech that the fact that the changes come at the same time for both the CE elections and the legislators is appropriate and timely, ahead of next year's CE elections.

Kou said these changes are proof of the support from the central government for the autonomy of Macau, adding that the eligibility criteria [chosen] can guarantee that holders of these posts [CE and

RENATO MARQUES



legislators] are patriots.

Contrary to most of those expressing opinions yesterday, Kou said the amendments of the laws, "Still need some perfecting, via the introduction of specific [eligibility] criteria," although without unveiling which criteria need to be better defined.

Kou also supported the idea of the impossibility of appeal from the decision of the National Security Defense Commission (CDSE) that will replace the Electoral Affairs Commissions in the task of inspecting and evaluating the eligibility of the candidates for both elections.

Kou remarked that by being a special matter, "I think this [the lack of appeal from the decision] is very rational and follows the central government's intentions."

In a long speech, the president

of AL still had time to express his feelings on the general amendments of the electoral laws, which he said would be "a step forward to the progressive perfection of the basic law," expressing wishes that the process is swift and can be concluded before the new CE election.

Following a similar tone and opinion was also Lao Ngai Leong, a local delegate of the National People's Congress who also said that the changes proposed are "articulated with the reality of Macau and to implement the [principle] of Macau ruled by patriots."

Lao noted that electoral law changes are necessary to "better implement the one country, two systems principle" as well, calling on the government to have a proper and clear clarification and broad disclosure of the eligibility criteria "to avoid any doubts."

For the vice president of AL, Chui Sai Cheong, the changes in the electoral laws represent "the start of a new era, in which we can see the principle of patriots ruling Macau fully implemented," he said, noting the amendments proposed to be "important for the security of our country" and the review to be "on time and necessary."

Making a few remarks on the comments from the different speakers, the Secretary for Administration and Justice, André Cheong, said the purpose of the changes to the laws is "to consolidate the [seven] criteria previously defined by the AL Electoral Affairs

Commission (CAEAL) and to effectively embed them into the law, making them official."

Cheong also said the ongoing public consultation plays an important role in "civic education for the population on this topic."

## RON LAM DISAGREES WITH APPEAL REMOVAL

Lawmaker Ron Lam has said he disagrees with the proposal of the impossibility of an appeal from a candidate after qualification as non-eligible by the CDSE.

In an interview with the Portuguese news agency, Lusa, Lam said the right of appeal should be retained in cases of exclusion of candidates, contrary to what is proposed in the amendments to the law.

"The possibility of an administrative and judicial appeal should be retained because this is the best way to ensure a balance between national security and the protection of candidates," he was quoted saying to Lusa.

"I respect our country's requirements concerning national security. Hong Kong, Macau, and the mainland are aligned," he said noting he agrees with the right to veto of the candidates from CDSE.

"However, I have to emphasize that the rule of law in Macau, the system in this territory, has always been that all matters related to human rights, including the right to stand for election, have a corresponding administrative and judicial appeal system," he remarked.

## F&B REVENUES RISE IN APRIL

Receipts of the interviewed establishments rose 57.0% year-on-year in April, with notable growth in the receipts of western restaurants (+134.0%) and Chinese restaurants (+82.3%), according to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). In addition, sales of the interviewed retailers grew 73.5% year-on-year in April. As for May business expectations, 26% of the interviewed restaurants and similar establishments expected receipts to increase month-on-month. On the other hand, 26% of the interviewed retailers predicted receipts would decrease month-on-month in May.

## AMBROSE SO RETIRES FROM SJM LEADERSHIP

Ambrose So, a long-time SJM Holdings vice-chairman, executive director and CEO, officially retired last week at the company's 2023 annual general meeting.

During the meeting, he did not seek re-election as an executive director. So, however, will remain a director of SJM Resorts Ltd. In August last year, Ambrose So sold 30 billion shares of SJM Holdings, for HK\$87 million, reducing his stake in the company from 3.29% to 2.79%.

## OVER 1,300 POSITIONS IN DSAL SUMMER INTERNSHIP

The three-month summer internship program hosted by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) will have 1,338 positions on offer this year from 65 companies, covering nine industries and 15 types of business. This year will also see 15% more companies not from the casino industry offering opportunities. Interns will get a subsidy of MOP8,000 per month or MOP50 per hour, while employers must purchase labor insurance for interns. Interested parties can apply from now until July 18 on the DSAL website.

## ELECTION LAWS AMENDMENTS TO MOVE FORWARD AT TWO DIFFERENT SPEEDS

**T**HE Secretary for Administration and Justice, André Cheong, admits to moving forward with election laws amendments at two different speeds and timings, he said yesterday at the first sectorial section of the public consultation of the amendments to the electoral laws for the election of the Chief Executive (CE) and legislators.

In response to the calls from differ-

ent individuals for a swift process with hopes that the new CE election could already be undertaken under the new law, Cheong said that the government intends to move forward with the amendments related to the election of the CE and submit the bill to the Legislative Assembly (AL) first, he said, saying he hopes that at least this part can be submitted and approved by the AL this year.



### PUBLIC WORKS SECRETARY CONFIDENT ABOUT NEW PUMP STATION

On the sidelines of yesterday's opening ceremony of Mong-ha Post Office, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, expressed confidence about the Inner Harbour South Pumping Station's capabilities of easing flooding in the district. When asked for comments on an earlier Audit Commission Report that criticized flaws in the Inner Harbour North Pumping Station, he declined to comment, but said the project was not administered by his bureau. Public works departments handled their jobs well, he said, but he would not comment on jobs conducted by other departments.

### CENTRAL GOVERNMENT APPROVES HENGQIN BORDER MACAU SECTION

The State Council of the People's Republic of China has approved the opening of the Macau section of the Hengqin Border checkpoint and certain related sections. These areas will be administered under Macau laws. These places have an area of over 100,000 square meters. Three sections of the total area were opened on April 20, including certain vehicle passage lanes and parts of the Lotus Bridge originally under mainland administration. The fourth section will be the bridge connecting the University of Macau and mainland China.

### ZHUHAI TOURISM DOUBLES YEAR-OVER- YEAR IN Q1

The Zhuhai government has announced that in the first quarter of this year, the city received about 6.82 million visitors, a 218% increase year-over-year. Despite the overwhelming rise, the visitor count was still 3.8% below the same period in 2019. In terms of tourism revenue, the city saw RMB6.25 billion, a 171% increase year-over-year. It was also announced a collection of Zhuhai-Hong Kong-Macau events will be organized in the second half of the year, such as orchestra, choir and pop music concerts.

### MPU CO-LAUNCHES 'EDUCATION + TOURISM' PROJECT

The Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) and Association of Macao Tourist Agents held the launching ceremony of the "Education + Tourism" project yesterday to promote the construction of a demonstration base for education, cultural tourism for Macau's World Centre of Tourism and Leisure. They will jointly develop education services and tourism to meet the needs of Southeast Asia, the country and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area for international and national examinations and certification services, and assist the work of the Examination and Certification Centre of Macau.

# EMPHASIZING DIFFICULTY, PUBLISHER PROMOTES CHINESE CULTURE THROUGH PORTUGUESE MAGAZINE

ANTHONY LAM

A new magazine has been officially launched to promote Chinese culture using the Portuguese language, targeting the lusophone population.

A seminar that marked the official launching of the magazine Via do Meio, now with two editions, was held last week with its publisher, media veteran Carlos Morais José, speaking about the project.

On the sidelines of the event, José told the Times that the main difficulty of the project, apart from keeping it running in terms of human resources, is to translate Chinese texts, many from ancient dynasties, into Portuguese. The two cultures are completely different.

"It is exceptionally difficult to present Chinese culture in Portuguese. They are two very



Carlos Morais José

powerful civilizations that grew separately until a point in time," José suggested. "[In fact], it's difficult to translate Chinese language and concepts into European languages, not only Portuguese."

Poetry is especially difficult to

translate. However, José wonders if it is "worthwhile to translate at least the meaning and the sense" to spread knowledge and ideas.

The media veteran was not certain if the project would generate profits. "If it pays [for] itself, it's already a victory," he said.

Nonetheless, he is not overly pessimistic, for he hopes that firms – Chinese or Portuguese – in Portugal will follow buy advertisements when the magazine is published in the country.

Currently, it is only published physically in Macau.

The digital version of the magazine, according to José, is available in mainland China, particularly in universities. "Because it is a cultural magazine, it's not like a normal magazine selling normal advertisements," he explained. "It's a little different."

"It's difficult to follow the bureaucratic steps to apply for government support," he suggested. "I think the government will look at my work and come to us so we can cooperate."

For the time being, he said he will focus on the quality of the publication first.

## GBA forum promotes biodiversity accounting and ecotourism

STAFF REPORTER

THE Greater Bay Area Industry-Academia Forum was recently held with aims to promote understanding of biodiversity accounting and ecotourism, raise awareness of biodiversity conservation and explore new directions for developing in Macau and the Greater Bay Area.

Titled "Biodiversity Accounting, Sustainability and Ecotourism: Opportunities in the Greater Bay Area", the forum was jointly organized by the



Macau Institute for Corporate Social Responsibility in Greater China (MICSRCG) and Macao

Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM).

The forum also provided a platform for com-

munication and discussion for participants from various sectors to promote cooperation and development in the field of regional ecological environmental protection.

Sandy Sio, president of the Administrative Council of the MICSRCG, said in her opening speech, "Through this forum, the institute aims to create a platform for delegates from various sectors to discuss on the possibilities of launching biodiversity accounting, ecotourism and ecological civilization for supporting

the aforementioned initiatives, and for achieving the sustainable development goals in Macau and the Greater Bay Area."

The forum combined the three elements of industry, academia, and research, and invited experts and scholars from the biodiversity accounting and ecotourism fields, representatives from relevant government departments.

Connie Loi, vice president of IFTM, said "There is an urgent need for collaborative forces from the industry, academia and research sectors to put forth the development of biodiversity and ecotourism."

\*Macau Daily Times was a media partner of the event.

## YOUTH GROUP HOSTS EVENT TO PROMOTE YOUTH-ELDERLY INTERACTIONS

THE Hou Kong Junior Chamber kicked off this year's senior-youth event Sunday with the aim to promote health through physical exercise.

This is the third year the group has organized the event, which mainly involves interactions between youths and se-

niors, such as familiarizing seniors with new technologies and fostering domestic harmony with psychological skills.

"This year, we will [promote physical education], giving participants certain tasks to be completed within 35 days. This will provide opportunity for partici-

pating youths and their senior counterparts to interact," Kevin Ng, president of the group, said on the sidelines of yesterday's event.

Thirty-five days later, on Jul. 23, there will be a sports day at Choi Kou Middle School, which Ng said would welcome members of the public

and those who had already signed up for the tasks.

"We expect 300 people, which equates to 150 pairs, to participate in the sports day, which will comprise certain newer types of sport, such as pickleball, for participants to keep up with trends," Ng further introduced.

When asked about the

physical nature of the event, Ng said that physical activity is crucial to all age groups. "We also want to bridge people from different generations to ease generational tension and friction," he said.

The main goal of the event is to allow youths to promote new knowledge to seniors, while the latter widen horizons for the former against hardship and challenges, Ng concluded. AL



EMPLOYMENT

# Amazon, Marriott and other companies vow to hire thousands of refugees in Europe

COURTNEY BONNELL,  
LONDON

**M**ULTINATIONAL companies including Amazon, Marriott and Hilton pledged Monday to hire more than 13,000 refugees, including Ukrainian women who have fled the war with Russia, over the next three years in Europe.

Just ahead of World Refugee Day today, more than 40 corporations say they will hire, connect to work or train a total of 250,000 refugees, with 13,680 of them getting jobs directly in those companies.

"Every number is a story of an individual family who left everything, seeking safety, seeking protection and wanting to be able to rebuild as quickly as possible," said Kelly Clements, U.N. deputy high commissioner for refugees. "So the commitments that businesses are going to make on Monday are absolutely essential."

She says 110 million people have been displaced worldwide, with an estimated 12 million from Ukraine, nearly half of whom are living in Europe after the continent's largest movement of refugees since World War II.

The hiring push in Europe was organized by the Tent Partnership for Refugees, a nonprofit founded by Chobani CEO Hamdi Ulukaya that connects businesses and refugees, and is being unveiled at a gathering in Paris. The group's first summit in the U.S. last year led to commitments to hire 22,725 refugees.



In the new round, Amazon leads the pack, vowing to hire at least 5,000 refugees over the next three years in Europe, followed by Marriott and Hilton with 1,500 each, Starbucks and ISS with 1,000 each, and smaller commitments from brands like Adidas, Starbucks, L'Oreal, PepsiCo and Hyatt.

"This is good for us as a company because the opportunity to add diversity to our workforce will continue to make us a stronger company," said Ofori Agboka, Amazon vice president overseeing human resources. "With diversity brings innovation, creativity, different insights."

He said the vast majority of jobs will be hourly roles at fulfillment and storage centers and in transport and delivery.

Amazon announced 27,000

job cuts earlier this year, part of a wave of layoffs after tech companies ramped up hiring during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those layoffs primarily affected salaried office jobs, Agboka said.

Daria Sedihi-Volchenko fled Kyiv last year and now works in Warsaw, Poland, as a senior program manager for an Amazon Web Services program providing free tech training for Ukrainians. She says about 40% of those in the program have no tech background.

"I went through the same way as many of our learners ... are going through," she said. "I had to learn, and I took a commitment on my interview. I said that 'OK, if we can agree and I can start working for you, I promise to learn Polish and I promise to learn

technical skills.'"

A year ago, Sedihi-Volchenko woke up to explosions from Russia's invasion.

"I was terrified. I was so scared for Ukraine, for the nation, for the future, for my own life," she said. "But also that was a shocking moment when I understood that everything in my life is changing."

She began living in basements but left as Russian forces approached Kyiv. She drove 40 hours to reach Moldova, thankful that she "didn't drive on a single land mine and nobody shot into my car."

She went to Poland to find work, embarking on an IT path after working as a project manager for government ministries and as an economist in Ukraine.

Companies are hoping refugees can fill staffing needs after

the economy bounced back from the pandemic. In Europe, unemployment is at its lowest since the euro currency was introduced in 1999.

"We're seeing record levels of demand for our properties across many markets here in Europe," Marriott International CEO Anthony Capuano said. "And so we are hiring aggressively to make sure we can accommodate our guests as demand ramps up."

Marriott's jobs will largely be hourly positions like housekeepers, kitchen staff and front desk attendants.

European nations have welcomed Ukrainians, and while Clements applauded opening schools, workplaces and other opportunities to them, she said the same should be offered to others fleeing conflict and crises in places like Syria, Sudan and Afghanistan.

Sedihi-Volchenko knows the challenges ahead for refugees, even as some companies offer help with language skills, counseling and training. Job listings can be difficult to decipher, and like her, they may have difficulty securing a stable internet connection or work clothes.

"It's important to give a refugee just time to learn the language, but the person can start working because if you bring experience with IT systems or finance or project management or any other area, naturally, you understand, it's not so much about the language. You understand the flow of work," she said. **MDT/AP**

## CORPORATE BITS

### Sands China sponsors 'Sea of Plastic' exhibition



Organized by the Institute of Science and Environment (ISE) at the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) and sponsored by Sands China Ltd., "The Sea of Plastic: A Recycled Art Exhibition," the culmination of a year-

-long project to raise awareness about plastic pollution and to promote sustainable practices, held its opening and award ceremony recently at The Venetian Macao. To commemorate World

Environment Day, which centered on the theme "Solutions to Plastic Pollution," the event exhibited art from local artists and participants of the Plastic Pollution Artwork competition, who are currently pursuing studies at various levels.

The featured pieces emphasized the effects of plastic pollution on the environment. All artworks have been exclusively created or composed from fully recycled or reused materials.

In celebration of World Environment Day, Sands China turned off exterior lights and non-essential indoor lights at its properties on June 5 for one hour to support the annual global event.

### GalaxyArt hosts workshops alongside current exhibition



The GalaxyArt at Galaxy Macau is presenting the "Artists-in-Residence: Summer Love - Live Mural Painting and Exhibition." The event

features five resident artists from Hong Kong and Macau collaborating on a 50-meter mural inspired by the theme of Summer Love. Over the

course of six-weeks, each artist painted a 10-meter section of the mural at the GalaxyArt while the public observed.

Meanwhile, GalaxyArt has hosted a range of initiatives, including art workshops, artist dialogues, parent-child workshops, and over 30 other art activities and docent-led guided tours for over 600 students and teachers from local primary and secondary schools and universities.

During the live-art event, Galaxy invited over 10 local students through the Sheng Kung Hui Macau Social Services Coordination Office to participate in one of the art workshops.



AP PHOTO



# Xi and Blinken pledge to stabilize US-China ties in Beijing talks

**U**.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met yesterday with Chinese President Xi Jinping and said they agreed to “stabilize” deteriorated U.S.-China ties, but America’s top diplomat left Beijing with his biggest ask rebuffed: better communications between their militaries.

After meeting Xi, Blinken said China is not ready to resume military-to-military contacts.

Yet Blinken and Xi pronounced themselves satisfied with progress made during the two days of talks, without pointing to specific areas of agreement beyond a mutual decision to return to a broad agenda for cooperation and competition endorsed last year by Xi and President Joe Biden at a summit in Bali.

And, it remained unclear if those understandings can resolve their most important disagreements, many of which have international implications. Still, both men said they were pleased with the outcome of the highest-level U.S. visit to China in five years.

Blinken said later that the U.S. set limited objectives for the trip and achieved them. He told reporters before leaving for a Ukrai-

ne reconstruction conference in London that he had raised the issue of military to military communications “repeatedly.”

“It is absolutely vital that we have these kinds of communications,” he said. “This is something we’re going to keep working on.”

The U.S. has said that, since 2021, China has declined or failed to respond to over a dozen requests from the Department of Defense for top-level dialogues.

According to a transcript of the meeting with Blinken, Xi said he was pleased with the outcome of Blinken’s earlier meetings with top Chinese diplomats and said restarting the Bali agenda were of great importance.

“The Chinese side has made our position clear, and the two sides have agreed to follow through the common understandings President Biden and I had reached in Bali,” Xi said.

“The two sides have also made progress and reached agreement on some specific issues,” Xi said without elaborating, according to a transcript of the remarks released by the State Department.

“This is very good.”

In his remarks to Xi during the 35-minute session at the Great Hall of the People, a meeting that was expected but not announced until an hour before it started, Blinken said “the United States and China have an obligation and responsibility to manage our relationship.”

**“The two sides have also made progress and reached agreement on some specific issues.”**

PRESIDENT XI JINPING

“The United States is committed to doing that,” Blinken said. “It’s in the interest of the United States, in the interests of China, and in the interest of the world.”

Blinken described his earlier discussions with senior Chinese officials as “candid and constructive.”

Despite the symbolism of his presence in China, Blinken and other U.S. officials had played down the prospects for any significant breakthroughs on the most vexing issues facing the

planet’s two largest economies.

Instead, these officials have emphasized the importance of the two countries establishing and maintaining better lines of communication.

Thus, China’s refusal to resume the military-to-military contacts was a hitch.

“Progress is hard,” Blinken told reporters. “It takes time, it takes more than one visit.”

Blinken’s trip is expected to herald a new round of visits by senior U.S. and Chinese officials to each other’s countries, possibly including a meeting between Xi and

Biden in India or the U.S. in the coming months.

## **BLINKEN MEETS TOP DIPLOMAT WANG YI**

Before meeting with Xi, Blinken met earlier with China’s top diplomat Wang Yi for about three hours.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, noted that Blinken’s visit comes at a critical juncture in China-U.S. relations, and a choice needs to be made between dialogue and confron-

tation as well as between cooperation and conflict.

History always moves forward, and China-U.S. relations will also move on. “Reversing the wheels of history will lead nowhere, and overturning what has been achieved is even less desirable,” Wang said.

We need to shoulder our responsibilities to the people, history and the world, avert the downward spiral of the relationship, bring it back to the track of sound and steady development, and jointly explore the right way for China and the United States to get along with each other in the new era,” he said.

Noting that relations between China and the United States are at a low point, Wang underscored that the root cause is U.S. misperceptions toward China, which have led to misguided China policies.

China-U.S. relations have gone through ups and downs, and it is necessary for the United States to reflect upon itself, and work with China to jointly manage differences and avoid strategic surprises, Wang said.

He pointed out that in order to stabilize China-U.S. relations, the most urgent task is to act on the common understandings reached between the two presidents with real actions.

He also urged the U.S. side not to project onto China the assumption that a strong country is bound to seek hegemony and not to misjudge China with the beaten path of traditional Western powers. “This is key to whether the United States can truly return to an objective and rational policy toward China.”

Wang demanded that the United States stop playing up the so-called “China threat”, lift illegal unilateral sanctions against China, stop suppressing China’s scientific and technological advances, and do not wantonly interfere in China’s internal affairs.

He stressed that safeguarding national unity has always been the core of China’s core interests. It is where the future of the Chinese nation lies and the abiding historical mission of the CPC.

On the Taiwan question, China has no room for compromise or concession, Wang said.

He said the United States must earnestly abide by the one-China principle set out in the three China-U.S. joint communiques, respect China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and unequivocally oppose “Taiwan independence.”

Blinken said that the U.S. side is committed to going back to the agenda set by the two presidents during their summit in Bali and looks forward to enhancing communication with China, managing differences responsibly and cooperating in areas of common interests. **MDT/AGENCIES**



# North Korea calls failed spy satellite launch 'the most serious' shortcoming, vows 2nd launch

HYUNG-JIN KIM  
& KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

**T**OP North Korean officials vowed to push for a second attempt to launch a spy satellite as they called their country's first, and failed, launch last month "the most serious" shortcoming this year and harshly criticized those responsible, state media reported Monday.

In late May, a North Korean rocket carrying a military reconnaissance satellite crashed soon after liftoff, posing a setback to leader Kim Jong Un's push to acquire a space-based surveillance system to better monitor the United States and South Korea.

The failed launch and North Korean efforts to modernize its weapons arsenal were discussed extensively at a three-day ruling party meeting that ended Sun-



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, center, attends an enlarged plenary meeting of the ruling Workers' Party's Central Committee, which was held between June 16 and 18, at the party's headquarters in Pyongyang, North Korea

day, with the presence of Kim and other top officials.

A lengthy Korean Central News Agency dispatch on the meeting

didn't clearly say who spoke, but said a report to the meeting "bitterly criticized the officials who irresponsibly conducted the prepara-

tions for (the) satellite launch."

The report set forth tasks for officials and scientists to learn the lessons of the failed launch, find what caused the rocket's crash and make a successful launch in a short span of time, KCNA said.

It didn't say exactly when North Korea might attempt a second launch. But South Korea's spy agency earlier told lawmakers that it would take likely take "more than several weeks" for North Korea to determine what went wrong in the failed launch.

North Korea monitoring groups haven't reported any purges or dismissals of scientists or others involved in the failed launch.

A spy satellite is among several high-tech military assets Kim has publicly vowed to acquire to cope with what he calls U.S.-led hostility. Other weapons systems Kim wants to possess are a multi-

-warhead missile, a nuclear submarine, a solid-propellant intercontinental ballistic missile and a hypersonic missile.

Since the start of 2022, North Korea has carried out more than 100 missile tests, some of which were related to developing a spy satellite and other powerful weapons on Kim's wish list.

During the meeting, Politburo members also analyzed the "extremely deteriorating security situation" in the region caused by the "reckless war moves" of North Korea's rivals, the report said, apparently referring to the expanded U.S.-South Korea military drills.

The United States and South Korea have been expanding their military drills in response to North Korea's advancing nuclear arsenal and warn that any attempt to use nuclear weapons would result in the end of Kim's government.

The Politburo members set down unspecified "important tasks" for strengthening solidarity with countries that are "opposed to the U.S. brigandish strategy for world supremacy," KCNA said.

North Korea has pushed to boost relations with Russia, including defending its military action in Ukraine. It says Russia is protecting itself against the West's "hegemonic policy." MDT/AP

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PUTIN'S WAR

# UN complains Russia won't let aid workers into areas hit by dam collapse in southern Ukraine

SUSIE BLANN, KYIV

**T**HE United Nations has rebuked Moscow for allegedly denying its aid workers access to Russian-occupied areas affected by the recent Kakhovka dam collapse in southern Ukraine, which stranded residents, threatened power supplies and caused an environmental calamity as the war approaches 16 months.

The U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Ukraine, Denise Brown, said in a statement late Sunday that the organization has engaged with Moscow and Kyiv, each of which occupies parts of the southern Kherson region where the dam and reservoir are located, to address the "devastating destruction" caused by the breach.

The Russian government "has so far declined our request to access the areas under its temporary military control," Brown said.

"We urge the Russian authorities to act in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law," her statement added.

Exclusive drone photos



Water flows over the collapsed Kakhovka Dam in Nova Kakhovka, in Russian-occupied Ukraine, June 7

and information obtained by The Associated Press indicate Russia had the means, motive and opportunity to blow up the dam, which was under Russian control, earlier this month.

The explosion occurred as Ukraine mustered for a counteroffensive. Kyiv's forces have intensified attacks along the 1,000-kilometer front line recently.

The dam lies on the Dnieper River, which forms the front line between Russian

and Ukrainian forces on the eastern and western banks, respectively. Some analysts saw the dam breach as a Russian effort to thwart Ukraine's counteroffensive in the Kherson region.

The U.K. Defense Ministry said Monday that Russia has recently redeployed several thousand troops from the banks of the Dnieper to buttress its positions in the Zaporizhzhia and Bakhmut sectors, which reportedly have seen heavy fighting.

The move "likely reflects Russia's perception that a major Ukrainian attack across the Dnieper is now less likely" following the dam's collapse, it said in a tweet.

Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Maliar says Kyiv's forces have liberated a total of eight settlements in the course of two weeks on the Berdyansk and Melitopol axes of their counteroffensive in the country's southeast. **MDT/AP**

tion and statements by his top associates. His allies said the charges retroactively criminalize all the activities of Navalny's foundation since its creation in 2011.

One of Navalny's associates, Daniel Kholodny, was relocated from a different prison to face trial alongside him.

While imprisoned, Navalny has spent months in a tiny one-person cell, also called a "punishment cell," for purported disciplinary violations such as an alleged failure to properly button his prison robe, properly introduce himself to a guard or to wash his face at a specified time.

Navalny's associates and supporters have accused prison authorities of failing to provide him with proper medical assistance and voiced concern about his failing health. **MDT/AP**

RUSSIA

## COURT STARTS TRIAL OF OPPOSITION LEADER NAVALNY THAT COULD KEEP HIM LOCKED UP FOR DECADES

**A**Russian court yesterday opened a new trial of imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny that could keep him behind bars for decades.

The trial is taking place at a maximum security prison in Melekhovo, 250 kilometers east of Moscow, where Navalny — the Kremlin's archfoe — is serving a nine-year sentence for fraud and contempt of court.

Navalny, 47, who exposed official corruption and organized major anti-Kremlin protests, was arrested in January 2021 upon returning to Moscow

after recuperating in Germany from nerve agent poisoning that he blamed on the Kremlin.

Navalny has said that the new extremism charges, which he rejected as "absurd," could keep him in prison for another 30 years. He said an investigator told him that he would also face a separate military court trial on terrorism charges that could potentially carry a life sentence.

The new trial comes as Russian authorities are conducting a sweeping crackdown on dissent amid the fighting in Ukraine, which Navalny has harshly criticized.

The Moscow City Court, which opened the hearing Monday at Navalny's IK-6 prison, didn't let the media into the room and they watched the proceedings via video feed from a separate building. Navalny's parents were also denied access to the courtroom and followed the hearing remotely.

Navalny, clad in his prison garb, looked gaunt but spoke emphatically and gestured energetically as the trial got underway.

The new charges against Navalny relate to the activities of his anti-corruption founda-

## this day in history

### 1984 O-LEVELS TO BE REPLACED BY GCSEs



O-Level and CSE exams are to be abolished and replaced by a new examination for 16 year olds, in the biggest exam shake-up for over 10 years.

Education Secretary Sir Keith Joseph said schools would begin teaching the General Certificate for Secondary Education, or GCSE, in autumn 1986, with the first pupils sitting the exam in 1988.

The new system will put all children on the same scale on a range of seven grades from A to G.

The 29 examination boards are to merge into five groups to reduce the large and complex system of assessment which currently operates.

The groups will adhere to an agreed national standard to ensure that the same range of knowledge will be required to attain certain grades throughout the country.

Sir Keith said: "The system we propose will be tougher, but clearer and fairer.

"It will be more intelligible to users, better than O Levels, and better than CSE.

"It will stretch the able more and stretch the average more."

It was also more intelligible and therefore more useful for employers, he added.

At the higher end of the range there will be scope for a new distinction certificate for those achieving consistently high grades, and in some subjects children will set their own standards and decide which grade to aim at.

GCSEs will also place more emphasis on oral and practical skills where possible, the minister said.

Teachers' unions welcomed the announcement. Fred Jarvis, of the National Union of Teachers, said: "This is one decision of Sir Keith's which will be applauded throughout the teaching profession".

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Under the old O Level and CSE system, grades were awarded primarily according to statistical rules which measured each candidate's performance relatively against those of competing candidates.

The introduction of the GCSE meant that, for the first time, grades would be allocated with reference to absolute standards of knowledge, understanding and skill.

Despite concerns about the exams getting easier and of girls outdoing boys, the government is committed to retaining the system. Speaking after the publication of results in August 2002, Education Minister Margaret Hodge said: "GCSEs remain a vital indication of young people's progress".



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
 You will be viewed as a sensitive, compassionate individual and others will ask you for advice. You really can't do anything to change matters today. Chances are they are jealous.

**TAURUS**  
 Apr. 20-May. 20  
 Older members of your family may try to take advantage of you. You will be uncertain of your feelings. You can make excellent purchases today.

**GEMINI**  
 May. 21-Jun. 21  
 Children may be difficult to handle. Make changes that will enhance your appearance. You should put your efforts into creative projects.

**CANCER**  
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
 Be honest with yourself before getting involved with someone who is likely to lead you on. Unexpected visitors will be a welcome surprise.

**LEO**  
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
 Don't expect the whole family to be overjoyed. Call siblings or old friends to catch up on recent news. Your energy will be high.

**VIRGO**  
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
 It's a good time for long awaited relationships to begin. Watch your weight gain due to water retention. You can expect to feel confused about your personal prospects.

**LIBRA**  
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
 New partnerships will develop if you join investment groups. Your involvement in groups will be favorable for meeting new and exciting individuals.

**SCORPIO**  
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
 You will be able to pick up on future trends if you keep your eyes peeled for unique ideas. If you go shopping, only take what you can afford to part with.

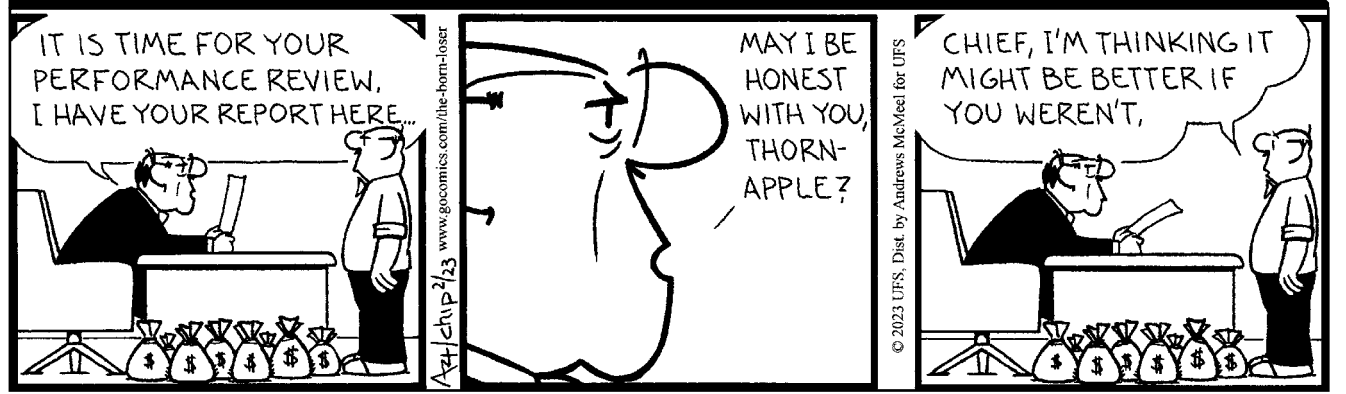
**SAGITTARIUS**  
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
 Romantic relationships could be under pressure. Don't get talked into get rich quick schemes. You're best to channel your energy into work.

**CAPRICORN**  
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
 Your interests may take you back to school. Travel if it's needed to start the ball rolling. You can make changes to your living quarters that should please family members.

**AQUARIUS**  
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
 Don't let your family put demands on you. This will be a good day for research and for sitting down with some good, informative reading material.

**PISCES**  
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
 You can make a difference if you take a position of leadership. Organize your house and be sure to include the whole family in the projects you have set out to do.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

**EASY**

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

**EASY+**

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

**MEDIUM**

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

**HARD**

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

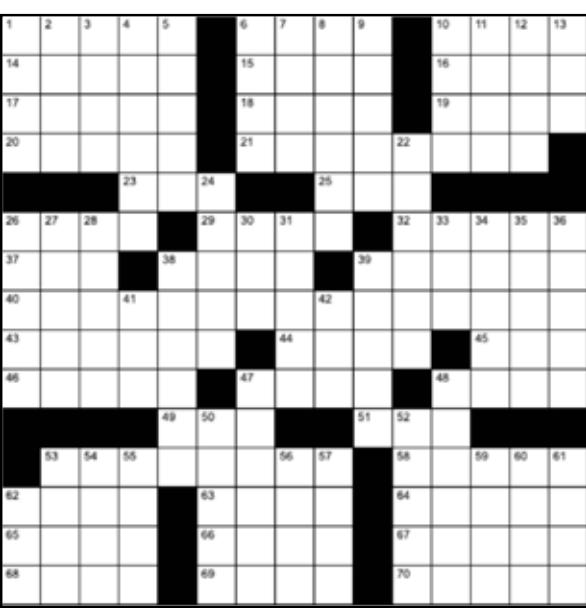
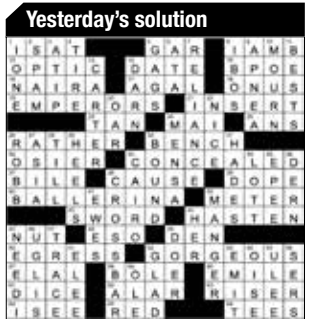
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	20	32	cloudy
Changchun	20	27	thunderstorms
Chengdu	21	30	overcast
Chongqing	23	33	cloudy
Fuzhou	25	35	rain
Guangzhou	26	33	thunderstorms
Guiyang	18	25	overcast
Haikou	27	34	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	24	30	rain
Harbin	21	27	thunderstorms
Hefei	22	31	overcast
Nanjing	23	30	cloudy
Shanghai	23	30	overcast
Taipei	25	30	overcast
Wuhan	23	32	cloudy
Hong Kong	28	33	thunderstorms
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	9	24	overcast
Frankfurt	19	33	overcast
Paris	18	26	thunderstorms
London	14	24	rain
New York	17	24	cloudy

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Swedish imports; 6- Mongolian desert; 10- Serbian folk dance; 14-Bay; 15- Ireland; 16- River in central England; 17- Family tree member; 18- Like some orders; 19- Observe the Sabbath; 20- City on the Allegheny; 21- Long-finned tuna; 23- Base; 25- Hole-boring tool; 26- Metric unit of mass; 29- Assuming that's true; 32- Industrialist Schindler; 37- DDE's rival; 38- Biblical birthright seller; 39- "Hotel \_\_\_"; 40- Failure to understand; 43- Close at hand; 44- \_\_\_ ex machina; 45- Monk's title; 46- Flower part; 47- Patches things up?; 48- Fender ding; 49- Long, long time; 51- CBS symbol; 53- One wearing the same colors, perhaps; 58- Everglades bird; 62- Hot; 63- On \_\_\_ with; 64- Diving bird; 65- HOMES part; 66- Poor actors; 67- Style; 68- Pismires; 69- To \_\_\_ (perfectly); 70- Attack;

DOWN 1- Prefix with Tibetan; 2- Natural blue dye; 3- Sheltered, nautically; 4- Pacify; 5- Dictation taker; 6- "\_\_\_ grip!"; 7- Like some history; 8- Seaport in N Spain; 9- Relative by marriage; 10- Syrup brand; 11- Superior to; 12- Shake; 13- Thunder Bay's prov.; 22- Buffoons; 24- Gossamer; 26- Profits; 27- Actress Taylor; 28- Tin Pan Alley org.; 30- At a great distance; 31- Jacket material; 33- KLM rival; 34- Cutting instrument; 35- Enhance; 36- Charged; 38- Symbol; 39- Employ again; 41- ... \_\_\_ mouse?; 42- Fell; 47- Be short with; 48- Extent; 50- City on the Missouri; 52- Safecrackers; 53- Small gull; 54- Egress; 55- Affirmative votes; 56- Domesticated; 57- Scottish Gaelic; 59- Hire; 60- River of Spain; 61- High schooler; 62- Multitude;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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



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AD



# HIGH ART BECOMES BODY ART AS VISITORS TO AMSTERDAM'S REMBRANDT HOUSE MUSEUM GET INKED

**H**ENK Schiffmaker's needle whirrs as he tattoos the familiar lines of an elephant on Lilian Rachmaran's back.

AP PHOTO



"Highbrow to lowbrow" is how the famous Dutch tattoo artist describes his latest project — inking sketches by Rembrandt van Rijn onto the skin of visitors to the building the Golden Age master once called home.

Or call it high art to body art. The Rembrandt House Museum has transformed one of its rooms into a tattoo parlor for a residency it calls "A Poor Man's Rembrandt," featuring Schiffmaker and other top Amsterdam tattoo artists for a week starting Monday.

For between about 50 euros and 250 euros (\$54 - \$270), visitors can get their own permanent reminder of Rembrandt.

"It's a juxtaposition — a jump from high to low, from highbrow to lowbrow," Schiffmaker told The Associated Press. "And it's great that these two worlds can visit one another. Actually it's really one world because it's

about art."

Museum Director Milou Halbesma said the event is a way of attracting new visitors to the his-

toric house and getting people closer to the artist.

"I think it's a very good contemporary way to have your own

Rembrandt," she said.

The workshop has already proved a hit. All appointments available online were filled wi-

thin 10 minutes, she said, though there are still some slots available for people who walk into the museum and wait their turn.

Schiffmacher and his colleagues have adapted some of Rembrandt's sketches to make them suitable for tattooing — making lines thinner so they don't grow together as the tattoo ages.

They see similarities between their work and the artist's quick sketches — but there is one key difference.

"The canvas is different," Schiffmacher said. "The canvas can talk to you, move too much, float, even faint. That didn't happen for Rembrandt."

Rachmaran, who works at the museum, was the first person in Schiffmacher's chair.

She got his version of one of Rembrandt's famous sketches of an Asian elephant believed to be Hansken, which first arrived in Amsterdam in 1633 on a ship from Ceylon — now Sri Lanka — as a gift for the Prince of Orange.

"I love the animals, they're so spiritual and smart and impressive and Rembrandt also made Hansken, the first elephant in Europe," she said.

Getting a work by Schiffmacher in between her other tattoos was also part of the attraction Monday.

"I'm very honored to have one made by Henk himself," she said. **MDT/AP**

AD



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# Red Sox, Nationals, A's among MLB teams commemorating Juneteenth

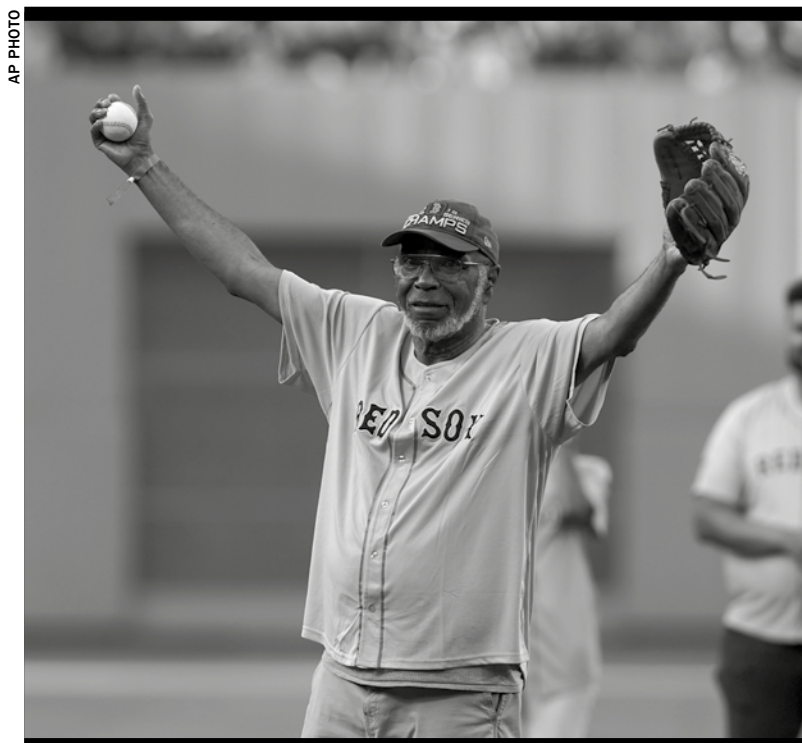
JIMMY GOLEN, BOSTON

**J**UNETEENTH flag designer Ben Haith stood on the mound at Fenway Park before the Red Sox hosted the Yankees on Sunday, waving his arms to pump up the crowd.

A collection of Black community leaders and Red Sox employees fanned out behind him, all wearing special Juneteenth commemorative jerseys that bore Haith's creation on the back.

"It feels like I'm living in a miracle," Haith said before throwing a ceremonial first pitch as part of baseball's commemoration of Juneteenth, which marks the date that news of the end of slavery reached Texas — two years after the Emancipation Proclamation. Juneteenth became a federal holiday in 2021.

"It wasn't always comfortable for me to come to Fenway Park, because sometimes I would hear people called names," said Haith, who designed the red-and-blue Juneteenth flag with the exploding white star that was first raised



in the Boston neighborhood of Roxbury in 1979. "But things have changed and it's like a miracle."

The last team in the major leagues to integrate their roster, the Red Sox were among the teams

marking the June 19 holiday this weekend.

WWE announcer Samantha Irvin performed "Lift Every Voice and Sing," known as the Black National Anthem, as well as the "Star-Spangled Banner." On

Monday, an exhibit from the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, "Barrier Breakers: From Jackie to Pumpsie," will open at nearby Emerson College.

"Lift Every Voice" was also performed in Oakland before the Athletics' game against the Phillies and in Friday's game between Arizona and Cleveland. The Diamondbacks marked the occasion by hosting a workshop featuring former Arizona outfielder Scott Hairston, pitcher Steve Randolph and infielder Junior Spivey for 34 high school baseball players. The Buffalo Soldiers, an African-American Army unit formed after the Civil War at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, presented the colors.

The Mariners celebrated on Saturday with "Salute to the Negro Leagues" day, wearing jerseys from the Seattle Steelheads from the 1940s. The Nationals will mark the occasion on Monday with a special matinee start for their series opener against St. Louis; fans buying a special ticket package received a Nationals Juneteenth

T-shirt, and \$5 from each of those sales will be donated to the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

The occasion was especially poignant for Haith, who learned about Juneteenth while growing up in Virginia. (His aunt's husband was named June — "the name stuck with me," Haith said.) He lived for a time in Connecticut and followed the Yankees, Dodgers and Giants, and after moving to Boston never felt the pull of the Red Sox.

Haith had heard the stories about how the Red Sox gave Jackie Robinson a sham tryout and also opted not to sign Willie Mays. The ballclub did not field a Black player until Pumpsie Green in 1959 — more than a dozen years after Robinson broke baseball's color barrier.

Former Boston Mayor Kim Janey, who was the first woman and the first person of color to hold the office, said the team has come far since then.

"I've been so impressed with the Red Sox organization and everything that they are trying to do to really make sure that there's healing in our city, to make sure that we are righting wrongs of the past," said Janey, who also took part in the pregame ceremony. "It's wonderful to see, and we need to do more of it." **MDT/AP**

AD

## ACCURATE, TIMELY & COMPETITIVE TRANSLATIONS

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Email: amy@ktranz.com.mo  
Tel: +853 2871 6081/2 Fax: +853 2871 6084

Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edf. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR



OPINION

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Zhao Wencai, Xinhua

WHY CHINESE PREMIER PAYS FIRST OVERSEAS VISIT TO EUROPE

At the invitation of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and the French government, Chinese Premier Li Qiang is scheduled to visit the two countries from June 18-23, which sends out a clear message that China attaches great importance to its relations with Europe.

China and Europe have maintained close communication and cooperation. Seeing the European Union (EU) as a strategic force in the international arena, China has made developing China-EU relations a top priority in its foreign policy.

Over the years, Chinese and European leaders have made frequent contacts. Even in the COVID-19 pandemic, they made phone calls or held video meetings. Since the end of last year, a slew of European leaders, including German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron, have visited China.

Economic and trade ties between the two sides have become ever closer. They have been major forces in maintaining world peace, promoting shared development, and advancing human civilization, whose relations serve the common interests of not only the two sides, but also the international community at large, particularly as global challenges continue to escalate.

China is committed to developing its relations with the EU in a spirit of mutual benefit and win-win results. The two sides have established more than 70 mechanisms for consultations and dialogue covering various fields such as politics, economy, trade, culture, science and technology. Trade between the two sides in various fields, like lithium batteries and new energy vehicles, is rapidly expanding. Chinese investment is supporting the EU's transition to green, digital, and intelligent industries.

By the end of 2022, the stock of bilateral investment had exceeded 230 billion U.S. dollars. In 2022, Europe invested 12.1 billion dollars in China, a significant increase of 70 percent compared to the previous year, with the automotive industry continuing to be the largest hot spot. During the same period, Chinese investment in Europe increased by 21 percent to 11.1 billion dollars. Both sides have benefited from such mutually beneficial ties.

By choosing Europe as the destination of his first overseas visit since taking office, the Chinese premier is set to give another boost to the already fruitful bilateral relations.

In Germany, Li will hold the seventh China-Germany inter-governmental consultation, attend the 11th China-Germany Economic and Technical Cooperation Forum, and have in-depth exchanges of views with representatives from the economic communities of the two countries.

In France, he will attend the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact initiated by President Macron, and have in-depth communication with the French side on strengthening exchanges and cooperation in various fields as China and France will celebrate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties next year.

Instead of being a so-called "risk," "challenge" or "rival," China is proving itself to be a reliable partner for Europe. A recent survey conducted by the European Council on Foreign Relations among more than 16,000 people in 11 EU countries has revealed that the majority of Europeans believe Europe should maintain economic and trade relations with China. The prevailing view in almost every country the institution polled is that China is Europe's "necessary partner."

In its first and newly released national security strategy, Germany recognizes that China "remains a partner without whom many global challenges and crises cannot be resolved." European leaders like Macron have also shown the courage to issue a clarion call for greater cooperation with China, echoing the sentiment of most Europeans.

[Abridged]

JAPAN'S EMPEROR MEETS WITH INDONESIAN PRESIDENT ON HIS FIRST OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRIP AS MONARCH

THE BUZZ

Japanese Emperor Naruhito met with Indonesian President Joko Widodo yesterday during his first official foreign trip since ascending the Chrysanthemum Throne in 2019.

Widodo and first lady Iriana welcomed Naruhito and Empress Masako at the Bogor presidential palace, along with greeters wearing Indonesian traditional clothes and a military band that played both national anthems.

"I feel very honored because Indonesia is the first destination for the Japanese emperor's bilateral state visit abroad," Widodo said.

Naruhito is seeking to underline the friendship between Japan and Indonesia during his weeklong visit, and officials said the two leaders would talk about cooperation between the countries.

Naruhito said he and Masako have been able to deepen their understanding of Indonesia's people and culture while also reflecting on its history.

"I also sincerely hope that exchanges between young people from both countries will lead to further development of friendly relations between our two countries," Naruhito said at a joint news conference at Bogor Palace.



CHINESE ONLINE SHOPPERS ARE ENTICED BY DEEP DISCOUNTS, PAYMENT PLANS AS ZEST FOR SPENDING LAGS

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

Chinese shoppers were treated to deep discounts, new products and payment plans as online merchants sought to revive their sluggish appetite for spending during China's first major online shopping festival after the end of zero-COVID policies.

For the first time, e-commerce retailer JD.com did not release the results of its 618 shopping festival, which ended Sunday, making it hard to know just how much was spent. A bigger shopping festival, Single's Day, held on Nov. 11 each year rakes in billions of dollars.

Analysts said most consumers have become more price-conscious and reluctant to spend given the sluggish economy.

"Chinese consumer confidence remains weak due to a mix of geopolitics, continued weakness from COVID-19 and domestic Chinese politics," said Shaun Rein, founder and managing director of the China Market Research Group in Shanghai.

Rein said that overall, consumers likely spent less during 618 as online retailers already were discounting heavily because of the pandemic, so the deals on offer were not much of an improvement.

"For months, Chinese consumers have been price-conscious, looking for deals and trading down across most product categories," Rein said.

Retail sales — a key indicator of consumption — missed growth forecasts in May, increasing 12.7% from a year earlier and slowing from an 18.4% jump in April, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

China's leaders have for years been trying to shift the economy from one driven by construction and other investments to one fueled by the consumer spending that is the lifeblood of the U.S. and other advanced economies.

But with the recovery from disruptions due to the pandemic already faltering, shoppers have yet to resume spending as freely as in the past.

To entice customers and boost spending, e-commerce platforms have been investing billions of yuan in incentives and subsidies for customers and merchants alike.

In March, JD.com launched a "10 billion yuan subsidies" program to compete with rival Pinduoduo, which is known for its low-priced goods. The CEO of Alibaba's e-commerce business unit, Trudy Dai, also has promised "huge, historic" investments to attract users to its

platforms.

Despite soft overall consumption, categories like cosmetics and luxury goods saw bigger gains in sales. Many luxury brands took part in the online festival, according to Jacob Cooke, CEO of e-commerce consultancy WPIC.

"Luxury coming back online is a big trend, because that's the category that's been hit really hard over COVID-19," said Cooke. "Some brands may see up to a 10-fold increase in sales over last year."

Chinese media reports said those willing to splash out did so, with early results showing strong sales of high-end brands such as Bulgari and Celine. Other upscale brands like Max Mara, Valentino, and Maison Margiela saw a 20-fold increase in sales compared to the year before, according to JD.com data at the beginning of the festival.

Burberry, Chloe and Miu Miu's sales in the first 30 minutes of the 618 festival, at the end of May, exceeded their total sales during the shopping festival a year earlier, according to Tmall data.

This year, more luxury brands took part as they sought to boost sales in China after their first decline in five years amid China's strict "zero-COVID" policies and lockdowns that hammered retail spending. MDT/AP



Israeli helicopter gunships struck targets yesterday in the occupied West Bank as a gunbattle raged in the city of Jenin between Israeli troops and militants, killing four Palestinians, including a 15-year-old boy, officials said. The violence marked a rare use of Israeli airpower in the territory. During the clashes, Palestinian militants detonated a roadside bomb next to an Israeli military vehicle. At least 45 Palestinians were wounded, five seriously.



France Defense ministers and other representatives of about 20 European countries will hold a conference in Paris on how to better defend Europe's airspace, a long-divisive issue that takes on new urgency because of Russia's war in Ukraine. The talks will include anti-drone combat and ballistic missile defense. French organizers said, noting that Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has shown the importance and effectiveness of such equipment. Nuclear weapons deterrence will also be on the agenda.



Britain's House of Commons is likely to endorse a report that found Boris Johnson lied to lawmakers about lockdown-flouting parties in his office, a humiliating censure that would strip the former prime minister of his lifetime access to Parliament. Lawmakers will debate a report by the Privileges Committee that found Johnson in contempt of Parliament, and are expected to approve its findings. It's unclear whether there will be a formal vote or whether the report will be approved by acclamation.