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# Times

FOUNDER & PUBLISHER Kowie Geldenhuys EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

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**MACAU SAW ITS TEMPERATURE NEARING 39 DEGREES CELSIUS SATURDAY AS TROPICAL STORM TALIM CONTINUED TO EDGE**

**SECRETARY ANDRÉ CHEONG DEFENDS NON-PUBLIC BIDDING OF IAM PROJECTS**

**SPORTS: WORLD CYCLING'S GOVERNING BODY BANDS FEMALE TRANSGENDER ATHLETES FROM WOMEN'S EVENTS**

AP PHOTO



**US** On the heels of a trip to Beijing, U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is back in India for the third time in nine months, this time to meet finance ministers from the Group of 20 nations about global economic challenges like the increased threat of debt defaults facing low-income countries. Yellen told reporters yesterday that she was trying to foster warming relations between the U.S. and India. She also plans a stop in Hanoi, Vietnam, to address supply chain reliability, clean energy transition and other matters of economic resilience.

AP PHOTO



**Russian** President Vladimir Putin said in an interview published yesterday that Russia has a "sufficient stockpile" of cluster munitions, and warned that Russia "reserves the right to take reciprocal action" if Ukraine uses the controversial weapons. In his first comments on the delivery of cluster munitions to Ukraine from the U.S., Putin said that Russia has not used cluster bombs in its war in Ukraine so far.

AP PHOTO



**British** Defense Secretary Ben Wallace said he plans to resign at the next Cabinet reshuffle after four years in the job. Wallace has served as defense secretary under three prime ministers and played a key role in the U.K.'s response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He told The Sunday Times his departure was due to the strain his job had put on his family. He also said he would stand down as a lawmaker at the next general election.

# 12 MILLION AND COUNTING

**Macau recorded 12 million visitors during the first half of this year; Airport saw close to two million passengers**



ANTHONY LAM

**TALIM**  
**RETAILERS BRACE FOR STORM, RAIN EXPECTED ALL WEEK**

**ECONOMY**  
**GROUP FORECASTS 1H GDP TO RISE 70% Y-O-Y**

### MACAU TO SEE MORE FLIGHTS TO KOREA, THAILAND

Jeju Air is planning on resuming two flights per week between Jeju and Macau in August and one flight per day between Seoul and Macau in September. According to a statement issued by the Macau International Airport Company Limited (CAM), Jin Air currently maintain a daily flight between Seoul and Macau, and plans to increase to two flights per day in the first quarter of next year. Other international markets in Southeast Asia include Thailand's Nok Air and Thai Lion Air are planning to launch flights from Thailand to Macau at the end of July or early August. In the meantime, Aero K Airlines from South Korea will launch the route from Jeju to Macau in the next quarter.

### CROSS-BORDER DATA VERIFICATION PLATFORM ALLOWS RESIDENTS TO CERTIFY ASSERT

As of July, about 50 Macau residents have dealt with credit businesses via the Guangdong-Macau cross-boundary data verification platform, which takes only five minutes to certify assert, according to the Financial Development Bureau of the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin. As an open platform, it has been connected to a number of banking institutions including Hengqin branch of Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), and Hengqin Branch of China Construction Bank (CCB), Macao branch of Bank of China. Macau residents now can apply for assert certification through the Apps of ICBC and CCB.

### HENGQIN'S ONLINE CROSS-BORDER RMB TAX SERVICE TO BE REPLICATED

On July 10, the State Council released a circular on promoting 24 experiences of pilot Free Trade Zones across the country, among which, the online cross-border RMB tax service is pioneered by the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin. The online cross-border RMB tax service has broken through the difficulty that non-resident taxpayers have to open a bank account in the mainland or make cross-border remittances when paying taxes on their own in the past. Instead, it allows non-resident taxpayers to pay tax online via either overseas UnionPay credit card or UnionPay APP.



### WEATHER

# INNER HARBOUR RETAILERS BRACE FOR TYPHOON TALIM

STAFF REPORTER

**R**etailers along the Inner Harbour are bracing for the upcoming typhoon by installing tidal barriers, as severe Tropical Storm Talim approached about 290 kilometers south-southeast of Macau around 10:30 p.m. last night.

The probability of hoisting storm signal T8 between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. was "relatively high", according to the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) last night.

It is expected to move in the west-northwest direction, towards the west coast of Guangdong.

Under the influence of the outer rain band of Talim, showers and thunderstorms have become more frequent.

Winds are intensifying in Macau, and are expected to reach force 6 to 7.

According to the SMG forecast track last night, Talim will be about 200 kilometers south of Macau between the early hours of the morning and to-

morrow.

This is the closest the storm is expected to be to Macau.

Since Tropical Storm Talim is expected to further strengthen into a typhoon, and may take a more northward path than expected, the associated zone of gale winds will cover the Pearl River Delta area for a period of time.

Under the joint effect of storm surges and astronomical tides, flooding may occur within the Inner Harbour area, with flooding levels between

0.4 to 0.8m on the early morning today or tomorrow respectively.

Air Macau announced that a total of 14 flights were canceled yesterday and today due to the typhoon. The canceled flights included routes to and from Beijing, Shanghai, Taipei, Kaohsiung, Singapore, Hanoi and Bangkok.

The Hong Kong Observatory, issued the No 8 typhoon warning signal at 12:40 a.m. today as Talim edged closer to the city.

# Temperature soars as typhoon edges closer

ANTHONY LAM

**M**acau saw its temperature nearing 39 degrees Celsius Saturday as Tropical Storm Talim continued to edge towards the Southern Chinese coast.

Talim entered the 800-kilometer radius of Macau Friday evening, bringing scorching hot weather to the city during most of Saturday. The Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) issued the Orange High Tempe-

rature warning.

The mercury at the Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal recorded 38.6 degrees Celsius Saturday afternoon, while most of the city's other official measurement stations displayed temperatures at or over 36 degrees Celsius.

However, the hot weather did not discourage tourists.

Shops around the Central district were packed – in part because of the air-conditioning – while

streets were filled with people, some of whom were holding umbrellas to provide shelter from direct sunlight.

The weather only cooled slightly after midnight yesterday, when the city saw heavy rainfall that triggered a yellow rainstorm warning.

The soaring air temperatures also caused a slight increase in the number of cases of heat stroke, Dr Ho Chi Nap from the private Kiang Wu Hospital told local media outlet

Macao Daily News.

He revealed that recently, there had been more patients with heat stroke, but stressed that the rise was only in the single-digits. Most of those affected experienced minor heat stroke after being exposed to the outdoor environment. For the time being, there was no severe cases reported.

Ho suggested that dizziness, accelerated heartbeat and difficulty breathing can be preliminary symptoms of heat stroke.

People experiencing such symptoms should immediately stop whatever they are doing and relocate to shaded areas with good ventilation. Wet clothes may be used for comfort.

Two residents told the same media outlet that under the excruciating heat in the past few days, they have reduced outdoor activities and tried their best to remain indoors with air-conditioning. Children were also kept indoors to avoid the heat.

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**Times**  
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 Torráo, 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

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION  
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  
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**TOURISM**

# Macau closed 1H with almost 12 million visitors

RENATO MARQUES

**M**ACAU has recorded the arrival of almost 12 million visitors during the first half of this year (1H), the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has disclosed based on provisional statistics.

According to those records, some 11.65 million have entered Macau between January and June, a number that represents a daily average of over 64,000 visitors.

Although the numbers are still far from those recorded pre-pandemic (2019), the MGTO noted that the current numbers account for a rebound to 59.6% of 2019 numbers.

Struggling more to recover is the number of international visitor arrivals, which only reached approximately 475,000 in the first half of the year, accounting for a rebound of 31.2% of 2019 levels.

Citing the same provisional figures, the MGTO also remarked that the hotel occupancy rate averaged 80.1%. This is the segment of the tourism sector that has displayed a faster rebound, amounting to just a 10.7% difference from the 2019 rate (90.8%).

The MGTO attributed the good results to their "dedicated unreserved efforts in destination marketing" with a reliance on both online and offline promotional measures that have been rolled out since borders reopened.

Also contributing to the positive results were the public-private partnerships in events held every month, according to the MGTO.

For the upcoming months, the MGTO says that it will continue its efforts on increasing international visitation after the promotions held in Lisbon, Portugal and Bangkok, Thailand, in April and June and most recently, last weekend, in Seoul, Korea.

Additionally, the MGTO is participating in major regional and international travel fairs and trade networking events to promote Macau through different channels.

The MGTO is hopeful that Macau's tourism industry will continue to recover to levels closer to those seen in 2019 through to the end of this year. A series of large-scale events are planned for the second half of the year, including the 31st Macao International Fireworks Display Contest (in September), the 70th Macao Grand Prix (in November) and the Light up Macao event (in December), among others.

## AIRPORT RECORDS MOVEMENT OF CLOSE TO 2 MILLION

The Macau International Airport (MIA) has registered movement of almost 2 million passengers in the first six months of this year, the MIA company noted in a statistics release.

According to the same release, 1,953,065 passengers passed through the local airport between January and June, a figure that is

still some 59% shorter than the 4,721,549 registered in the same period of 2019.

Still, the number of passengers handled by the airport this year has shown a significant increase since January – when some 209,000 people were carried – to June which recorded some 431,000.

When it hit its record in 2019, the MIA carried some 9.6 million passengers in a year, an average of 800,000 per month.

The best single month on record occurred in August 2019, when 931,486 passengers were handled by the airport.



## PROMOTION OF LOCAL GASTRONOMY BY INFLUENCERS IN DOUYIN IN AUGUST

RENATO MARQUES

**A** new series of promotions by digital influencers from the mainland is set to roll out in August, aiming to attract more visitors to Macau during the summer holidays, the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED) has said in a press statement.

The DSED said that the initiative is the second series of such promotions, with the first one having been launched in June. The promotional activities use mainland influencers on the platform Douyin (the mainland equivalent to TikTok) to promote local restaurants and gastronomy in general.

Titled "Promotion plan by digital influencers in Douyin," the initiative aims to bring these influencers to Macau to explore different restaurants. The influencers will share their experiences online as recommendations ("planting seeds").

Several local stores considered to have 'unique characteristics' have been listed as participating in this promotional series.

The first group of influencers that visited the stores already released their video promotions last month. The second group will do the same in August, the DSED said.

The Bureau did not disclose any further details about the system nor the costs involved in the promotional activities, or whether and how it will be possible to verify that the promotions achieve the desired effect.

The use of digital influencers to promote places and activities in Macau has been used for some time by the Macao Government Tourism Office, who have made use of mainland Douyin users as well as other influencers from Hong Kong to reach a broader audience through different social media platforms.

**ECONOMY**

# Group expects 1H GDP to rise 70% y-o-y

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE estimated rise of the city's GDP for the first half of the year is 70% year-on-year, the Macau Economic Association (MEA) has noted in a statement.

Despite the significant increase, the aforementioned GDP figure will still represent about 65% of the average GDP recorded from 2017 to 2019, the association added.

Moreover, due to the abnormally low GDP in the second quarter of last year, the figure for the same period this year will see a



110% increase, the association estimated. The rise is due to the fact that the city was still under Covid-19 prevention measures during part of the second

quarter of last year.

In relation to the city's Prosperity Indices for June to September, the group expects scores between 5.6 and 5.8 points, which continue to fall within stable levels.

The optimism was mainly due to the rising daily average gross gambling revenue (GGR) – MOP502 million in May and MOP507 million in June – which were the highest since February 2020 and grew to 60% and 64% in the same months in 2019. Other determinants, such as the hotel occupancy rate and employment

rate, have also reflected a recovering market.

However, there is still some pessimism about the future. Internationally, the purchasing managers' indices for several developed countries have struggled below the prosperity line for several months, reflecting weakened demand and a dissatisfactory pace of recovery around the globe.

Moreover, central banks in European countries and the US might continue their interest rate hikes, signaling wider margins between the interest rates for USD as well as HKD and MOP.

In the meantime, in May, the M2 supply of USD rose by 46.6% while HKD dropped by 2.2%. This may lower affordability of capitalization. The city also saw 2.49% more bad debts in the non-resident group, the highest in history.

The index for May was 5.2 points, 0.1 points lower month-on-month. This is because the M2 currency supply in May recorded a 1.3% drop month-on-month, despite a consecutive rise in the preceding six months. In addition, May recorded 2.21 million counts of visitor arrival, a 2.6% drop month-on-month.

# SECRETARY ANDRÉ CHEONG DEFENDS NON-PUBLIC BIDDING OF IAM PROJECTS

ANTHONY LAM

**D**ESPITE the lack of open bidding procedures, the cleanliness of certain municipal projects will be upheld, Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong assured over the weekend.

Recently, Hac-Sa Reservoir has been closed off for construction. However, it has been revealed that the project did not undergo an open bidding.

Following this, lawmaker Ron Lam issued an inquiry, asking the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) to provide the reason behind the lack of open bidding. Pursuant to the relevant laws, public projects with a budget of MOP15 million and over must undergo open bidding.

The projects involve the design, production and installation of major sculptures, the foundation work for the summit plaza, renovation and improvement works at the reservoir park, and the design

and construction of a pedestrian tunnel and entrance plaza on Estrada de Hac Sá. Everything was budgeted at over MOP57 million.

After a recent Executive Council press conference, Cheong was asked for an explanation. He said that the projects were part of a larger project colloquially referred to as the seven-hectare project. The main project concerns the establishment of a youth adventure camp. Announcements on this were expected in the future along with that for the former Canidrome.

In defense, the senior official emphasized that the projects underwent a closed bidding process, or tender by invitation, rather than a direct designation. The main considerations behind opting for these procedures were time and efficiency. Cheong explained that public tender bidding usually takes much longer, obstructing efficiency.

In addition, he said that on



many occasions, the same constructors bid for different projects. "The end result [from an invited tender] will be no less similar to that from an open tender,"

Cheong said.

He also referenced his work experience history as the corruption watchdog to stave off doubts that irregularities might occur. He ad-

ded that the completed projects will be subjected to the scrutiny of "fellow constructors, who can tell if the price matches the end products."

## PUBLIC WORKS

### SECTION OF FOURTH BRIDGE FALLS ONTO BOAT, OBSTRUCTING WATERWAY OPERATIONS

ANTHONY LAM

**O**N Friday, a prefabricated section of the fourth Macau-Taipa bridge that should have been raised to the main bridge body fell back towards the boat.

The news first broke when the Times received information about the complete closure of the nearby waterway Friday morning, stating that no ship or ferry should enter or leave the Inner Harbour.

The same day, the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) issued a press release on the incident. The bureau, however, did not disclose if any injuries or damage to the boat were caused.

Only after receiving an inquiry from local media outlet All About Macau did the DSOP rule out any injury, but could not confirm if there was any damage to equipment.

According to the DSOP, the prefabricated section was set to be installed as part of the main bridge body Friday morning. During its elevation, at a speed of 3mm/s until a height of 4.5 meters was attained, the section tilted

RENATO MARQUES



northward and "slowly returned to the deck of the boat," according to the DSOP, which has already ordered an investigation on the incident.

The construction of the bridge has been assigned to a conglomerate comprising China Railway Major Bridge Engineering Group Co., Ltd, China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation and OMAS Construction and Engineering Company Limited, Macau.

Following this, Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal will operate as usual today, as the government has decided on a last-minute alteration to the

bridge's work schedule.

The Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) issued an announcement on the matter Friday evening. Originally, suspension of operations at the ferry terminal was planned for today, to make way for construction work for the bridge.

However, the DSAMA emphasized that incoming tropical cyclone Talim may create meteorological conditions that obstruct the smooth operations of ferry services. Passengers should adhere to the latest announcements from the government and ferry operators.

## EDUCATION

### MPU LAUNCHES 'ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS' STUDY BASE

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) inaugurated its "One country, two systems" Study Base on July 15. The Study Base is a new initiative that the university has said is intended to support the implementation of government education policies on "loving the motherland and loving Macau," the MPU said in a press statement.

The Study Base aims to cultivate patriotism in youth on multiple fronts, develop national education and tourism in synergy with each other, and link cross-disciplinary fields via an interlocking mechanism.

The inauguration ceremony featured the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong, and the Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the MSAR, Yan Zhichan, among others.

At the ceremony, the Rector of MPU, Professor Im Sio Kei, said that



the two-way exchange of Macau students to the mainland and mainland students to Macau will become a new means of transmitting the spirit of "loving the motherland and loving Macau," adding that MPU will "strive to build a series of activities into a national academic brand."

The "One Country, Two Systems" Study Base will launch study programs for young students and disseminate experiences on implementing the "One country, two systems" in Macau through activities such as seminars, workshops, field

visits and inspections. The Study Base aims to provide young students from all over the nation with a deeper understanding of the close relationship between Macau and the motherland, and the rich connotation of "One country, two systems."

The intention is to deepen their sense of national pride, patriotism and sense of responsibility in building a strong country, and integrate them into building the nation and community, thus contributing to the long-term prosperity and stability of the country.

RETAIL

# China's Shein hit with lawsuit citing RICO violations

MICHELLE CHAPMAN

CHINA'S fast fashion retailer Shein is facing a lawsuit that claims the clothing maker's copyright infringement is so aggressive, it amounts to racketeering.

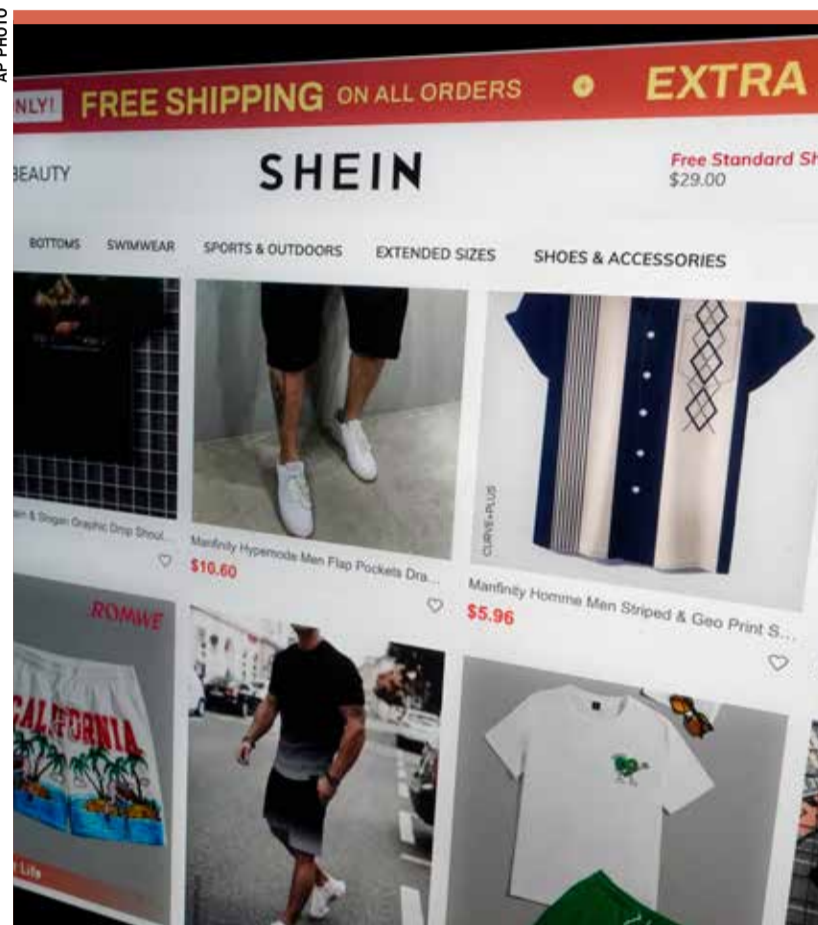
The filing this week claims that Shein is in violation of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, better known as RICO, a law originally crafted to prosecute organized crime.

"Shein has grown rich by committing individual infringements over and over again, as part of a long and continuous pattern of racketeering, which shows no sign of abating," the filing says.

In an organized effort to create as many as 6,000 new items per day, Shein uses a "byzantine shell game of a corporate structure" to rip off designers, a coordinated illegal operation that can best be combated through the use of RICO statutes, according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit is just the latest in a series of difficulties Shein has faced. In May a bipartisan group of two dozen lawmakers asked the Securities and Exchange Commission to put the brakes on an initial public offering by Shein until it verified that it does not use forced labor.

The lawsuit, filed by three fashion designers in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, alleges "Shein produced, distributed,



and sold exact copies of their creative work."

"At issue here, inexplicably, are truly exact copies of copyrightable graphic design appearing on Shein products," the civil lawsuit states.

The designers are seeking unspecified damages and want injunctive relief to prevent further racketeering activity.

"Shein takes all claims of infringement seriously, and we take swift action when complaints are raised by valid IP ri-

ghts holders," Shein said in a prepared statement Friday. "We will vigorously defend ourselves against this lawsuit and any claims that are without merit."

Shein hasn't said whether it plans to go public this year, but there are reports that the company is raising money in anticipation of a U.S. listing before the end of the year.

Shein spokesperson Peter Pernot-Day has said the company takes transparency across its entire supply chain seriously. **MDT/AP**



Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, center

## PAKISTAN LAUNCHES \$3.5 BILLION CHINESE-DESIGNED NUCLEAR ENERGY PROJECT

MUNIRAHMED, ISLAMABAD

PAKISTAN'S Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday launched the construction of a 1,200-megawatt Chinese-designed nuclear energy project, which will be built at a cost of \$3.5 billion as part of the government efforts to generate more clean energy in the Islamic nation.

The ceremony marking the start of the project comes less than a month after Pakistan signed an agreement with China's National Nuclear Corporation Overseas in the capital, Islamabad, to construct a Hualong One reactor — a third-generation nuclear reactor and is considered safer because of the latest security features.

Pakistan and China are longtime allies. Pakistan's relations with Beijing are so clo-

se that its leadership calls China their "Iron Brother." China is also building roads, bridges, power plants, and railways to link its far west with the Chinese-built port of Gwadar on the Indian Ocean.

The nuclear power plant known as Chashma-5 will be constructed at a site along the left embankment of the fast-flowing Indus River in Mianwali, a district in the eastern Punjab province. The site is already home to four Chinese-supplied nuclear power plants that were built in recent decades.

Sharif, in his televised remarks at a gathering of Pakistani and Chinese officials in Mianwali, said the Chashma-5 nuclear energy project by itself was a "huge milestone, a huge success story, and a wonderful symbol of the cooperation between two great friends." **MDT/AP**

## CORPORATE BITS

### MGM partners with Macau pass for consumption reward program



MGM joins hands with Macau Pass S.A. (Macau Pass) to launch the "MGM x MPay Community Consumption Reward" from July 15 to 31.

According to a statement issued by the gaming operator, the collaboration, which

will benefit nearly 20,000 merchant outlets across Macau, aims to stimulate community spending through offering 97,000 prizes worth over MOP4 million.

Prizes include 600 tickets

for the MGM exclusive "Mayday FLY TO MGM Concert." MGM dining discount, limited-edition Macau Pass cards as well as MPay Red Packets.

Hubert Wang, president and COO of MGM, said, "We will continue to strengthen the integrated development of 'Tourism+' to facilitate the growth of the tourism industry as well as its surrounding industries, and, more essentially, to activate the community economy and pragmatically support local SMEs."

MGM will collaborate with the band Mayday to present a tailored performance, "Mayday FLY TO MGM Concert" on Aug. 27 at MGM Cotai.

### Sands Resorts Macao promotes hotel offerings in Seoul



Sands Resorts Macao is participating in the 'Experience Macao Unlimited' Mega Roadshow until today in Seoul, Korea.

Taking place at Times Square in Seoul, the road-

show incorporates elements of Macao tourism into key visuals, with a novel board game theme.

Steve Zheng, assistant vice president of Destination Marketing, Sands China

Ltd., said, "Through multiple activities and channels, we aim to raise Macau's profile and arouse visitors' interest in Macau as a leading travel destination."

Sands Resorts Macao is highlighting its Michelin-starred and award-winning restaurants, world-class accommodation, duty-free shopping, MICE facilities, and exciting leisure and entertainment options.

Furthermore, two of the best-selling hotel packages — the Explore teamLab SuperNature Hotel Package and the Macao Summer Escape Hotel Package — are being promoted in the roadshow.

# Gov't accuses US of militarizing space following protest over Navy plane's Taiwan Strait transit

**A**MID a freeze in military-to-military contacts, China is accusing the United States of militarizing outer space, a day after it protested the passage of a U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon anti-submarine aircraft through the Taiwan Strait.

Chinese Defense Ministry spokesperson Col. Tan Kefei said on Friday that U.S. actions, including the establishment of the Space Force in 2019 as the newest branch of the military, have "had a great negative impact on space security and global strategic stability."

"In recent years, the United States has accelerated the militarization of space," Tan said. "I would like to reiterate here that China adheres to the peaceful use of space, firmly opposes the weaponization and the making of space into a battlefield, and opposes any form of arms race in space."

The ministry said that Tan was responding to recent concerns expressed by Space Force leaders over China's rising capabilities, calling that "classic cognitive dissonance." China's advances in space include its own orbiting space station and plans for a crewed lunar mission. In 2007,



it faced international condemnation after using a missile to blow up one of its defunct weather satellites, leaving a field of debris

that continues to threaten other objects in orbit.

While the U.S. has sent officials to Beijing including Secretary of

State Antony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, ties remain at a historic low.

China has pointedly refused to

reestablish contact between the two militaries.

Although it is recognized as international waters and airspace and functions as a crucial route for international trade, China continues to claim a proprietary role over the Taiwan Strait that separates the mainland from the self-governing island democracy.

China regards close U.S. ally Taiwan as its own territory to be annexed by force if necessary, and regularly sends planes and warships to harass the island's military and seeks to intimidate its 23 million citizens.

On Thursday, the Eastern Theater Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army — whose area of operations faces Taiwan — said it had scrambled fighters to "follow and monitor the U.S. plane throughout the process and dealt with it in accordance with laws and regulations."

Theater spokesperson Col. Shi Yi was quoted as saying on social media, "theater troops maintain a high level of alert at all times and will resolutely defend national sovereignty and security along with regional peace and stability."

The U.S. 7th Fleet said a Navy P-8A Poseidon transited the Taiwan Strait in international airspace on Thursday.

"By operating within the Taiwan Strait in accordance with international law, the United States upholds the navigational rights and freedoms of all nations," the fleet said on its website.

"The aircraft's transit of the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the United States' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. The United States military flies, sails and operates anywhere international law allows." **MDT/AP**

## RELIGION

# Pope recognizes China's unilateral appointment of Shanghai bishop

NICOLE WINFIELD,  
 ROME

**P**OPE Francis gave in Saturday to China's unilateral appointment of a new bishop in Shanghai, formally recognizing Beijing's installation of Bishop Shen Bin three months after the fact.

In its daily noon bulletin, the Vatican said Francis had appointed Shen as bishop of Shanghai, transferring him from Haimen. The announcement came after the Holy See conceded in April that it had learned of Shen's appointment to lead the Catholic Church in Shanghai from media accounts.

The Vatican secretary of

state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, said Francis decided to accept China's unilateral appointment for the "greater good" of the faithful in Shanghai. But Parolin made clear China's move had violated the "spirit of collaboration" outlined in a 2018 accord between the Holy See and Beijing on bishop appointments.

In comments to Vatican media explaining the pope's decision, Parolin said Francis approved Shen's appointment to allow the bishop to lead his flock and to "heal the canonical irregularity" created by Beijing's unilateral transfer in April, which he said occurred without the Holy See's

involvement.

He said he hoped future appointments would be made according to the letter and spirit of consensus called for in the accord.

"We need to together prevent disharmonious situations that create disagreements and misunderstandings even within Catholic communities," Parolin said. "The good implementation of the agreement is one of the means to do so, together with sincere dialogue."

China and the Vatican haven't had diplomatic relations since 1951, following the Communists' rise to power and the expulsion of foreign priests. The Va-

tican has sought in recent years to open contacts and reduce frictions, particularly over the appointment of bishops.

The Vatican previously acknowledged that the 2018 accord was far from ideal. It regularized the status of several bishops and paved the way for future nominations, but China has repeatedly violated it amid a broader overall crackdown on religious freedoms.

Full details of the agreement were never made public, but Francis has claimed he has final say in the bishop appointment process.

Beijing has long insisted that it must approve such



appointments as a matter of its national sovereignty. The Vatican has insisted on the pope's divine authority to choose the successors of Christ's apostles.

Since the break in China-Holy See ties, Catholics in China have been divided between members of

an official, state-sanctioned church, the Patriotic Catholic Association, and those who belong to an underground church loyal to the pontiff. Estimates of the total number of Chinese Catholics run between 6 million and 12 million. **MDT/AP**

# Crowds cheer as India launches a lander and rover to explore the moon's south

AIJAZ RAHI & ASHOK SHARMA,  
SRIHARIKOTA

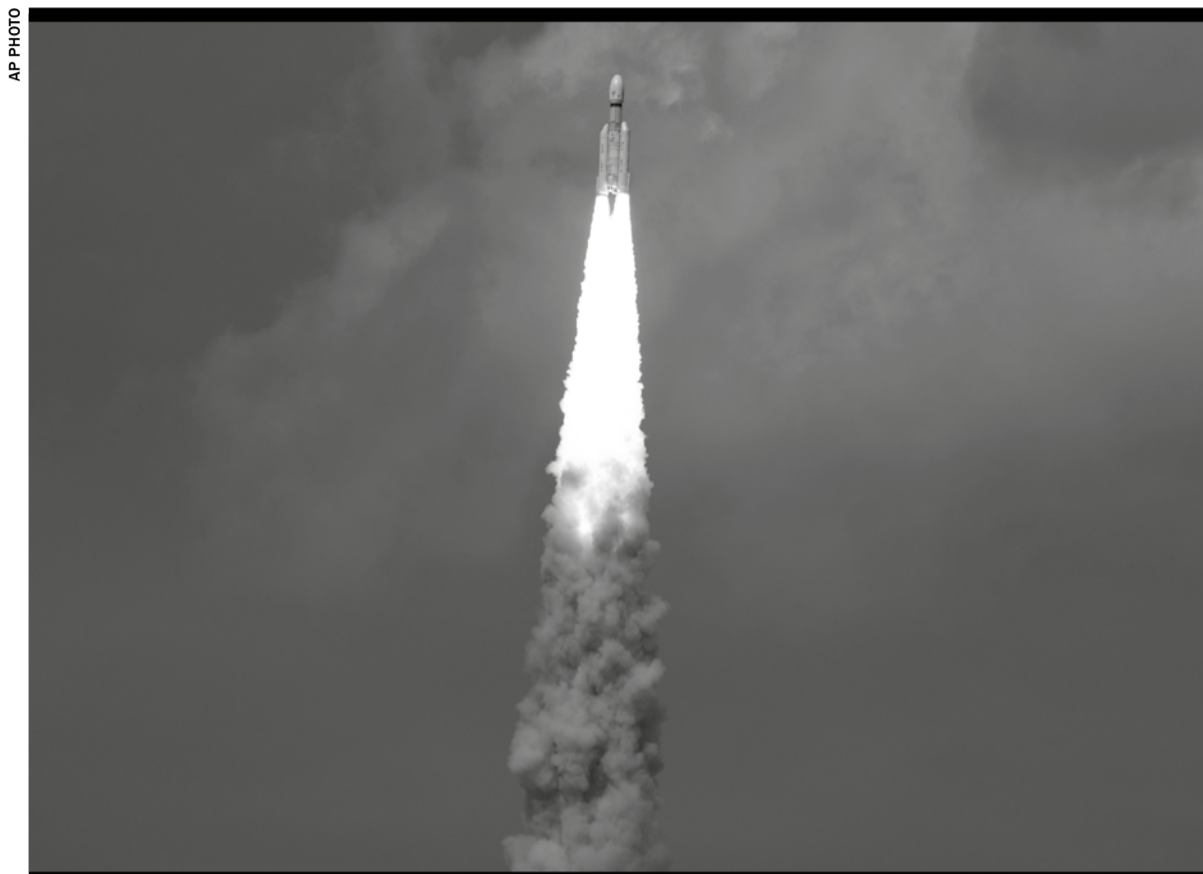
**A**n Indian spacecraft blazed its way toward the far side of the moon Friday in a follow-up mission to its failed effort nearly four years ago to land a rover on the lunar surface, the country's space agency said.

Chandrayaan-3, the word for "moon craft" in Sanskrit, took off from a launchpad in Sriharikota in southern India with an orbiter, a lander and a rover, in a demonstration of India's emerging space technology. The spacecraft embarked on a journey that is expected to last slightly over a month before landing on the moon's surface later in August.

Applause and cheers swept through mission control at Satish Dhawan Space Center, where the Indian Space Research Organization's engineers and scientists celebrated as they monitored the launch of the spacecraft. Thousands of Indians cheered outside the mission control center and waved the national flag as they watched the spacecraft rise into the sky.

"Congratulations India. Chandrayaan-3 has started its journey towards the moon," ISRO Director Sreedhara Panicker Somanath said shortly after the launch.

A successful landing would make India the fourth country — after the United States, the former Soviet Union, and China — to achieve the feat.



AP PHOTO

The six-wheeled lander and rover module of Chandrayaan-3 is configured with payloads that would provide data to the scientific community on the properties of lunar soil and rocks, including chemical and elemental compositions, said Dr. Jitendra Singh, junior minister for Science and Technology.

India's previous attempt to land a robotic spacecraft near the moon's little-explored south pole ended in failure in 2019. It entered the lunar orbit but lost touch with its lander that crashed while

making its final descent to deploy a rover to search for signs of water. According to a failure analysis report submitted to the ISRO, the crash was caused by a software glitch.

The \$140-million mission in 2019 was intended to study permanently shadowed moon craters that are thought to contain water deposits and were confirmed by India's Chandrayaan-1 mission in 2008.

Somanath said the main objective of the mission this time was a safe and soft landing on the

moon. He said the Indian space agency has perfected the art of reaching up to the moon, "but it is the landing that the agency is working on."

Numerous countries and private companies are in a race to successfully land a spacecraft on the lunar surface. In April, a Japanese company's spacecraft apparently crashed while attempting to land on the moon. An Israeli nonprofit tried to achieve a similar feat in 2019, but its spacecraft was destroyed on impact.

With nuclear-armed India

emerging as the world's fifth-largest economy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's nationalist government is eager to show off the country's prowess in security and technology.

"Chandrayaan-3 scripts a new chapter in India's space odyssey. It soars high, elevating the dreams and ambitions of every Indian," Modi said in a tweet after the launch.

India is using research from space and elsewhere to solve problems at home. Its space program has already helped develop satellite, communication and remote-sensing technologies and has been used to gauge underground water levels and predict weather in the country, which is prone to cycles of drought and flood.

"This is a very critical mission," said Pallava Bagla, a science writer and co-author of books on India's space exploration, adding that India will require soft landing technology if it wants to attempt more missions to the moon.

India is also looking forward to its first mission to the International Space Station next year, in collaboration with the United States as part of agreements between Modi and U.S. President Joe Biden at the White House last month.

This one-off visit by an Indian astronaut to the International Space Station will not hamper India's own program, which aims to launch an Indian astronaut from Indian soil on an Indian rocket in late 2024, Bagla said. **MDT/AP**

**SOUTH** Korean rescue workers pulled seven bodies from a flooded tunnel where around 15 vehicles were trapped in muddy water, as days of heavy rain triggered flash floods and landslides and destroyed homes across the country. Flooding and landslides have killed at least 33 people in Korea and forced thousands to evacuate, officials said yesterday.

Nearly 400 rescue workers, including divers, were searching the tunnel in the central city of Cheongju, where the vehicles, including a bus, were swamped by a flash flood Saturday evening, Seo Jeong-il, chief of the city's fire department, said in a briefing.

Fire officials estimated that the tunnel filled with water in as little as two or three minutes.

## SOUTH KOREA

# 7 bodies pulled from flooded road tunnel as rains cause flash floods and landslides

Photos and video from the scene showed rescue workers establishing a perimeter and pumping brown water out of the tunnel as divers used rubber boats to move in and out of the area.

Yang Chan-mo, an official from the North Chungcheong provincial fire department, said it could take several hours to pump out all the water from the tunnel, which was still filled with 4 to 5 meters of water dense with mud and other debris. Workers were proceeding slowly with

the work to prevent any victims or survivors from being swept out, Yang said.

Nine survivors were rescued from the tunnel and 11 others were believed to be missing based on reports by families or others, but the exact number of passengers trapped in vehicles wasn't immediately clear, Seo said.

South Korea has been pounded by heavy rains since July 9. The rainfall had forced more than 6,100 people to evacuate and left 27,260 households without electricity in the past se-

veral days while flooding or destroying dozens of homes, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety said. At least 22 people were being treated for injuries.

President Yoon Suk Yeol, who is on a trip to Europe, discussed the rain-related casualties and damages during an emergency meeting while traveling to Poland on a train after visiting Ukraine on Saturday, according to his office. Yoon called for officials to mobilize all available resources to respond to the disaster. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

# South Korea to expand support for Ukraine as President Yoon Suk Yeol makes a surprise visit

FELIPE DANA  
& HYUNG-JIN KIM, KYIV

**S**OUTH Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol made a surprise visit to Ukraine on Saturday, offering support for the invaded country in its war with Russia while demonstrating his own nation's cooperation with NATO.

Yoon's office said he traveled to Ukraine with his wife, Kim Keon Hee, following trips to Lithuania for a NATO summit and to Poland. It's his first visit since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Yoon toured Bucha and Irpin, two small cities near Kyiv where bodies of civilians were found in the streets and mass graves after Russian troops retreated from the capital region last year. He laid flowers at a monument to the country's war dead, before he sat down for a summit with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

South Korea, a key U.S. ally in Asia, joined international sanctions against Russia and has provided Ukraine with humanitarian and financial support to Ukraine. But the Asian nation, a growing arms exporter, hasn't provided weapons to Ukraine in line with its long-standing policy of not supplying arms to countries actively engaged in conflict.

During a joint news conference with Zelenskyy later Saturday, Yoon announced plans to expand support shipments to Ukraine but didn't touch upon weapons supplies.

Yoon began his statement with a mention of the U.N. forces' support of South Korea during the 1950-53 Korean War that helped repel a North Korean invasion.

"The current situation facing Ukraine reminds us of the past situation of the Republic of Korea," Yoon said.

Zelenskyy thanked Seoul for its "firm support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity" and the "significant political, security, economic and humanitarian aid" it has supplied since the start of Russia's invasion.

Yoon said that South Korea



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, left, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Saturday

will increase the shipments of nonlethal military items such as body armor and helmets this year. He said that South Korea will also provide humanitarian aid worth \$150 million this year, up from \$100 million last year. He said that South Korea has also sent the de-mining equipment and other aid items that had been requested by Ukraine.

Yoon said that he and Zelenskyy agreed on cooperating on post-war reconstruction efforts in Ukraine. Yoon said South Korea will also launch a scholarship fund named after him and Zelenskyy to expand support for Ukrainian students in South Korea.

South Korea isn't a NATO member, but like Japan, Pakistan and a handful of other countries, it's considered a global partner of the military alliance. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited Ukraine in March.

In his recent written responses to questions from The Associated Press, Yoon said that the security of the Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions is closely intertwined, saying: "In particular, the war in Ukraine has reminded us all that a security crisis in one particular region can have a global impact."

Yoon took office last year amid a mix of tough foreign policy challenges such as North Korea's advancing nuclear program and the intensifying rivalry between

the U.S., South Korea's main security ally, and China, its biggest trading partner.

During a January visit to South Korea, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg called for the country to provide direct military support to Ukraine, saying Kyiv was in urgent need of weapons to fight off the prolonged Russian invasion.

In May, when Yoon met Ukrainian first lady Olena Zelenska in Seoul, the president said he would expand South Korea's nonlethal aid to Ukraine. Yoon's office said at the time that Zelenska made no request for South Korean weapons supplies.

Later in May, Yoon and Zelenskyy met for the first time on the sidelines of a Group of Seven industrialized nations summit in Hiroshima, Japan. Zelenskyy thanked South Korea for its humanitarian shipments of medicines, computers and generators and requested additional provisions of non-lethal items, Yoon's office said.

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, South Korea has reached billions of dollars worth of deals to provide tanks, howitzers, fighter jets and other weapons systems to NATO member Poland.

An American official said in November that the United States had agreed to buy 100,000 artillery rounds from South Korean manufacturers to provide to Ukraine, although South Korean of-

ficials have maintained that the munitions were meant to refill depleted U.S. stocks.

"Yoon's visit to Ukraine reflects his globally-minded foreign policy and shows South Korean solidarity with NATO partners in defending the rules-based international order," Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, said. "Seoul's support of Ukraine includes not only humanitarian assistance, but also arms sales to backfill NATO countries providing military aid to Kyiv, and plans for post-conflict reconstruction of infrastructure."

Yoon and his wife's visit came two days after Russia launched another barrage of Iranian-made drones at the Kyiv region. Ukrainian officials said their air defenses intercepted the drones but that wreckage fell on four districts of the capital, wounding two people and destroying several homes.

Although Kyiv didn't come under attack in the hours before the South Korean president's arrival, Ukrainian forces on Friday and overnight downed 10 Russian drones across the country, the Ukrainian air force reported Saturday.

In a Telegram post, the air force added that Moscow fired six Iranian-made Shahed drones at Ukraine's south and east during the night, four of which were shot down. It did not immediately give details of any casualties or damage. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1987 Ex-GUINNESS BOSS OWES MILLIONS

Former Guinness director Thomas Ward has been ordered to re-pay £5.2m to the brewing giants.

The High Court heard Mr Ward had acted illegally by failing to disclose a transfer of funds to Guinness's directors during the £2.5bn takeover of drinks company Distillers Group last year.

In his judgement Vice Chancellor Sir Nicholas Browne-Wilkinson said: "Mr Ward has been and is wrongfully in possession of Guinness's money."

He received the cash in what the judge called a "secret agreement" with former Guinness chairman Ernest Saunders.

Thomas Ward, an American lawyer, was a key member of the so-called Guinness War Cabinet that masterminded the lucrative deal.

Mr Ward's lawyers - based in London - said he would appeal against the ruling arguing he received the money legitimately for his "valuable services".

In a 25-page document Sir Nicholas explained Ward's counter claim for payment did not impinge on Guinness's right to recover the £5.2m.

The judge also called for an inquiry into where the money had gone after it was paid through a Jersey company, Marketing and Acquisition Consultants, to Mr Ward.

Records show Mr Ward has paid \$4.7m (£2.9m) in US federal and state taxes.

He claims only £1.2m remains unspent in a London bank account. This is to be repaid by Wednesday next week, along with a \$300,000 investment.

He owes a further £500,000 in interest and has also been ordered to pay Guinness's legal fees.

The ruling puts the drinks' giants one step closer to recovering £25m of missing funds uncovered by auditors last November.

After the hearing Mr Ward's solicitors revealed their client is already involved in legal battles with Guinness in the US.

The company is suing Mr Ward over a £750,000 flat in the Watergate complex in Washington, whilst he is claiming unpaid fees from Guinness for his legal practice Ward Lazarus.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

On 23 July the judge rejected an application by Thomas Ward to keep the £5.2m until the appeal had been heard.

The appeal was set for 10 August 1987.

In August 1990 Ernest Saunders and three others were jailed for insider dealing over the Distillers Group takeover.

Thomas Ward's case was not settled until February 1993 when the High Court cleared Mr Ward of stealing the money.

At the time the Guinness trials was the most expensive ever legal battle in the British courts, costing over £20m in total.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

<p><b>ARIES</b>                  Mar. 21-Apr. 19                  Take care when dealing with older relatives. Be sure to look into travel opportunities that will provide you with mental stimulation.</p>	<p><b>TAURUS</b>                  Apr. 20-May. 20                  Quarrels will erupt if you get into philosophical debates with friends. Opportunities to learn important information will surface through discussions with peers or seminars you attend.</p>
<p><b>GEMINI</b>                  May. 21-Jun. 21                  Expect to experience a sudden reversal of fortune. Channel your energy into projects that will enhance your home. You will find that unfinished projects at home will be most satisfying.</p>	<p><b>CANCER</b>                  Jun. 22-Jul. 22                  Don't hesitate to look for alternatives that will enable you to raise the kind of donations you need to do the job right. Don't let your personal partner hold you back or slow you down.</p>
<p><b>LEO</b>                  Jul. 23-Aug. 22                  You can get ahead if you work diligently behind the scenes. Empty promises will cause confusion. You can accomplish the most if you travel for business purposes.</p>	<p><b>VIRGO</b>                  Aug. 23-Sep. 22                  You can have quite the romantic adventure if you take time to get to know your mate all over again. Involvement in groups of interest will bring you in touch with important individuals.</p>
<p><b>LIBRA</b>                  Sep. 23-Oct. 22                  There might be one who is quite willing to take the credit for your work. It might be time for you to take a quantum leap from one career to another.</p>	<p><b>SCORPIO</b>                  Oct. 23-Nov. 21                  Travel will be enjoyable but could be expensive. You may be emotional if you allow your lover to take advantage of your good nature.</p>
<p><b>SAGITTARIUS</b>                  Nov. 22-Dec. 21                  Be sure to get involved in self improvement programs that will bring you in contact with interesting people. You will be able to pick up on future trends if you keep your eyes peeled for unique ideas.</p>	<p><b>CAPRICORN</b>                  Dec. 22-Jan. 19                  Join groups of a humanitarian nature. You will gain knowledge through your adventure. Someone may not be thinking of your best interests. Try not to upset others with your plans.</p>
<p><b>AQUARIUS</b>                  Jan. 20-Feb. 18                  Overindulgent people will cause disruptions in your life. You may have some difficulties with someone you live with. Travel may be confusing.</p>	<p><b>PISCES</b>                  Feb. 19-Mar. 20                  Someone you least expect could be trying to make you look bad. You are best to work at home, clearing up overdue projects.</p>

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	21	34	fine
Changchun	18	25	rain
Chengdu	23	34	showers
Chongqing	25	36	fine
Fuzhou	27	33	rain
Guangzhou	25	30	rain
Guiyang	19	29	fine
Haikou	23	29	rain
Hangzhou	24	32	thunderstorms
Harbin	18	24	thunderstorms
Hefei	23	28	thunderstorms
Nanjing	23	29	rain
Shanghai	27	31	rain
Taipei	26	31	rain
Wuhan	25	32	cloudy
Hong Kong	28	30	thunderstorms
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	17	27	overcast
Frankfurt	12	27	overcast
Paris	14	27	overcast
London	13	23	overcast
New York	24	32	overcast

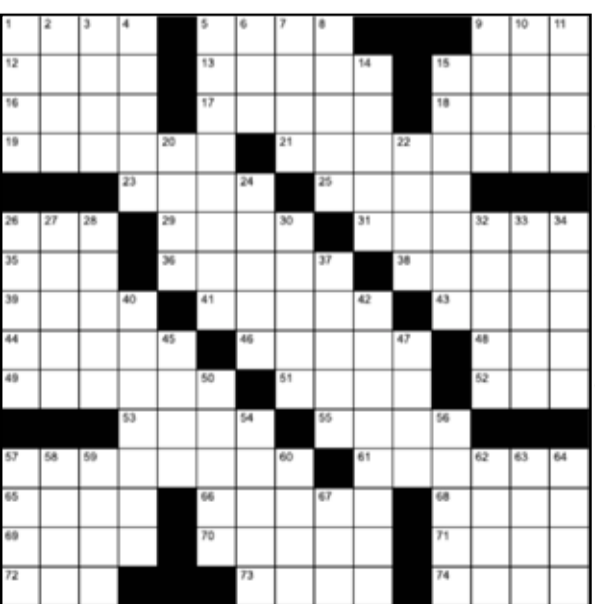
**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Midge; 5- Steinbeck; East of \_\_\_\_; 9- Rap's Dr. \_\_\_\_; 12- Hard to find; 13- Song part; 15- Cajole; 16- \_\_\_\_ arms (angry); 17- Conger catcher; 18- The \_\_\_\_ Ranger rode a horse called Silver; 19- European sea; 21- Pertaining to the management of public wealth; 23- Fast fliers; 25- Those, to Juan; 26- Genetic letters; 29- Peru's capital; 31- Stain; 35- Former nuclear agcy; 36- 2, 4, 6, 8, etc.; 38- Chou \_\_\_\_; 39- Ostrichlike bird; 41- Born before, senior churchman; 43- Mil. leaders; 44- Run of bird-song; 46- State not to "mess with"; 48- "You've got mail" co.; 49- Ra, in ancient Egypt; 51- Tennis units; 52- Compass dir.; 53- Crikey; 55- Trigonometric function; 57- Festive gathering; 61- Feathered fisher; 65- Rent-\_\_\_\_; 66- Actress Barkin; 68- Alleviate; 69- Swenson of "Benson"; 70- Stone marker; 71- Blues singer James; 72- Wreath of flowers; 73- Offer; 74- Prophet;

DOWN 1- Eats; 2- The \_\_\_\_ Valley is a Californian wineland; 3- Seed cover; 4- Camp sights; 5- Optional; 6- Recolor; 7- Author \_\_\_\_ Stanley Gardner; 8- Family tree member; 9- Adverse fate; 10- Royal Indian; 11- Corp. VIP, briefly; 14- Crucifix; 15- Shutting; 20- Archipelago part; 22- Short letter; 24- Silvery fish; 26- Pub game; 27- First prime minister of India; 28- \_\_\_\_ the hole; 30- Peruvian peaks; 32- Derive; 33- Massenet opera; 34- Grocery lane; 37- Male and female; 40- Branch of mathematics; 42- Lucid; 45- Trademark; 47- IRS IDs; 50- Challenges; 54- Shoulder muscles, briefly; 56- Sporting blades; 57- Monopoly board corner; 58- Skin eruption; 59- Biblical gift bearers; 60- Gen. Robert \_\_\_\_; 62- Appraise, charge per unit; 63- Ferrara family; 64- Age unit; 67- Building wing;

**Friday's solution**

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



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944	
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731	
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333	
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IAM 28 387 333	
Tourism 28 333 000	
Airport 59 888 88	

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# World cycling's governing body bans female transgender athletes from women's events

**F**EMALE transgender athletes who transitioned after male puberty will no longer be able to compete in women's races, world cycling governing body the UCI said Friday.

The International Cycling Union joined the governing bodies in track and field and swimming as top-tier Olympic sports addressing in this way the issue of transgender athletes and fairness in women's events.

The UCI's decision came after American rider Austin Killips became the first openly transgender woman to win an official cycling event in May.

"From now on, female transgender athletes who have transitioned after (male) puberty will be prohibited from participating in women's events on the UCI international calendar — in all categories — in the various disciplines," the international federation said in a statement.

The UCI said the ban, starting on Monday, was necessary to "ensure equal opportunities."



UCI President David Lappartient, right

Killips rode to victory in the fifth stage of the Tour of the Gila, one of the marquee U.S. stage races. Her victory provoked a negative

reaction by some cycling fans and former racers despite the 27-year-old athlete having adhered to a policy put in place by the UCI last

year requiring transgender athletes to have serum testosterone levels of 2.5 nanomoles per liter or less for at least 24 months before competing in women's events.

The UCI said Friday it "has taken note of the state of scientific knowledge, which does not confirm that at least two years of gender-affirming hormone therapy with a target plasma testosterone concentration of 2.5 nmol/L is sufficient to completely eliminate the benefits of testosterone during puberty in men."

It also noted the difficulty to "draw precise conclusions about the effects" of gender-confirming hormone therapy.

"Given the current state of scientific knowledge, it is also impossible to rule out the possibility that biomechanical factors such as the shape and arrangement of the bones in their limbs may constitute a lasting advantage for female transgender athletes," the UCI added.

In May, the UCI — led by its French president David Lappartient, an International Olympic

Committee member — said it expected to make a decision in August. The newly expanded world championships are being held from Aug. 3-13 in Glasgow, Scotland.

Instead, a decision which the UCI said in a statement was taken at an additional management board meeting held on July 5 was announced Friday — Bastille Day in France — during a key mountains stage in the Tour de France.

Despite the ban, Lappartient said "the UCI would like to reaffirm that cycling — as a competitive sport, leisure activity or means of transport — is open to everyone, including transgender people, whom we encourage like everyone else to take part in our sport."

The UCI said its men's category will be renamed "Men/Open" at international Masters events — which are below elite level for riders aged at least 30 — adding that "any athlete who does not meet the conditions for participation in women's events will be admitted without restriction." **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily

Xinhua Commentary

WHY YELLEN'S VISIT TO CHINA WINS RECOGNITION FROM BOTH COUNTRIES

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen recently concluded her visit to China, summarizing conversations during the four-day trip as "direct, substantive, and productive." The Chinese side also described the interaction as "candid, pragmatic, in-depth, and constructive."

The similar tone of both sides' evaluations reflects their shared emphasis on strengthening such communication and their common need to improve China-U.S. relations.

Overall, as recognized by both sides, this round of interaction has injected positive elements for stabilizing China-U.S. relations because it characterizes three keys to improving bilateral ties.

The first key is to deepen communication.

During her visit, Yellen expressed the willingness to implement the understandings reached by the two heads of state in Bali last year and strengthen communication between the two sides. As for China, it has always shown utmost sincerity in resolving differences with the United States through dialogue.

However, since the meeting between the two heads of state in Bali, the United States had not shown any restraint in smearing and suppressing China, severely poisoning the atmosphere for dialogue, and compelling the delay of the interactive agenda set by the two heads of state.

As Yellen said at a press conference before concluding her visit, the bilateral meetings during the visit, which totaled about 10 hours, "served as a step forward in our effort to put the U.S.-China relationship on surer footing."

Given the current state of China-U.S. relations, restarting communication is not an easy task, but what matters most is to sustain it based on mutual sincerity.

The United States should know that communication is not a one-time deal: it requires creating a favorable atmosphere beforehand, building consensus during the process, and solidly implementing them afterward.

To achieve more effective and meaningful interactions, the U.S. side should actively follow up on each dialogue and earnestly implement the consensus and outcomes reached during the discussions.

The second key is to address mutual concerns.

The aim of establishing communication channels is to facilitate a clear and smooth expression of major concerns and basic positions by both sides.

In recent years, the United States has imposed a string of economic sanctions and measures against China, which have undermined the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese market entities and eroded the popular support for bilateral relations.

During meetings with Yellen, the Chinese side reiterated its concerns regarding issues such as the removal of tariffs on China, cessation of suppression against Chinese companies, fair treatment of bilateral investments, relaxation of export controls on China, and lifting the ban on products related to China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

In response, Yellen said that the United States is willing to listen to China's concerns, does not seek to decouple from China, and has no intention of hindering China's modernization process.

In the current lowest point of China-U.S. relations since the establishment of diplomatic ties, this kind of constructive interaction is conducive to stabilizing and reversing the downward spiral in the bilateral relationship.

The third key is to seek consensus.

As the world's largest developing and developed economies, China and the United States have built their economic relationship over several decades.

Strengthening cooperation is a pragmatic necessity and the right choice for both nations. Through open and sincere communication, the two sides should seek consensus on important economic issues, injecting stability and positive energy into their economic relationship. [Abridged]

LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY VOICES ANXIETY OVER HUNGARY'S RESTRICTIVE LAWS

THE BUZZ

Thousands of participants of the Budapest Pride march wound through the streets of the Hungarian capital on Saturday with marchers voicing their anxiety over the increasing pressure on the LGBTQ+ community from the country's right-wing government.

The 28th annual event comes as the country's laws, which ban the depiction of homosexuality or gender transition, to minors under 18 have begun to be applied with increasing regularity, resulting in fines and other penalties for those who disseminate LGBTQ+ content.

Before the march, which began in Budapest's city park, Pride organizer Jojo Majercsik said that while the laws, passed in 2021, didn't have immediate practical effects, they are now increasingly being used to crack down on LGBTQ+ visibility.

"You can now see how the propaganda law passed two years ago is being applied in practice and how the public discourse has become more angry," Majercsik said, referring to the 2021 law. "It is now apparent how they are trying to limit the rights of LGBTQ people in the media world, in the world of movies, films and books."

AP PHOTO



NEW JERSEY

GAMBLING REVENUE UP NEARLY 14%, BUT MOST CASINOS STILL TRAIL PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

WAYNE PARRY, ATLANTIC CITY

NEW Jersey's casinos, horse tracks that take sports bets, and the online partners of both those types of gambling won more than \$457 million in June, an increase of nearly 14% from a year earlier.

But the key metric for Atlantic City's nine casinos — the amount of money won from in-person gamblers — continued to lag at seven of them, according to figures released Friday by the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement.

The amount of money the nine casinos collectively won from in-person gamblers in June narrowly surpassed the pre-pandemic level, at \$241 million. But that was largely due to strong performances from the only two casinos whose in-person gambling revenue was higher last month than it was in June 2019: Hard Rock and Ocean.

Those are the city's two newest casinos, having opened five years ago and steadily seizing market share.

James Plousis, chair of the New Jersey Casino

Control Commission, said online gambling and sports betting have become permanent fixtures of the Atlantic City gambling industry.

"Gains in all three reported areas — casino win, internet gaming win, and sports wagering revenue — demonstrate that online and traditional gaming are a winning combination," he said.

Casino executives, while welcoming the extra revenue streams, caution that they can be misleading because internet and sports betting money must be shared with partners like sports books and tech platforms, and is not solely for the casinos to keep. As much as 70% of online and sports betting money goes to these partners, they say.

Jane Bokunewicz, director of the Lloyd Levenson Institute at Stockton University, which studies the Atlantic City gambling industry, said the numbers illustrate a growing divide between Hard Rock and Ocean, and everyone else.

Between 2015 and 2019, the other seven casinos

consistently won more than \$1 billion from in-person gamblers in the first half of the year. At \$931.1 million for the first half of 2023, and \$911.5 million in the first half of 2022, they have yet to make up that lost ground.

The Casino Association of New Jersey, the trade group for the Atlantic City casinos, said the numbers show "that the industry continues to be in a rebuilding and recovery phase from where it was three years ago."

When internet and sports betting money is included, the market-leading Borgata won nearly \$105 million in June, up 5.3% from a year earlier.

Internet gambling brought in nearly \$150 million in June, up 12.1%. Caesars Interactive Entertainment NJ, an internet-only entity, won over \$9 million, down 3.6%.

More than \$591 million worth of sports bets were made in New Jersey in June, with casinos, tracks and their partners keeping \$66.3 million as earnings after paying off winning bets and other expenses.

MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Spain More than 2,000 people were evacuated as a wildfire rages "out of control" on La Palma in Spain's Canary Islands on Saturday, destroying around a dozen homes, authorities said. The blaze has affected an area of about 4,500 hectares and officials warned residents that the situation could worsen because a heat wave has made the terrain tinder-dry.

AP PHOTO



United Nations agency responsible for overseeing humanitarian aid has described conditions placed by the Syrian government on aid deliveries from Turkey to northwest Syria as "unacceptable." The future delivery of aid across Syria's northern border was thrown into question Tuesday after the U.N. Security Council was unable to agree on either of two competing proposals to extend the mandate for bringing aid from Turkey by way of the Bab al Hawa border crossing.

AP PHOTO



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was discharged yesterday after an overnight hospital stay for check-ups and monitoring following a dizzy spell. Netanyahu, 73, was rushed to Sheba Medical Center on Saturday after feeling mild dizziness. His office said he had left the hospital around midday after stating earlier that his test results were normal and that he was feeling "very good."

Mexico Nearly a thousand migrants that recently crossed from Guatemala into Mexico formed a group Saturday to head north together in hopes of reaching the border with the United States. The group, made up of largely Venezuelan migrants, walked along a highway in southern Mexico, led by a Venezuela flag with the phrase "Peace, Freedom. SOS." The men, women, children and teenagers were followed by Mexican National Guard patrols.