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AP PHOTO



Myanmar's military-controlled government has extended the state of emergency it imposed when the army seized power from an elected government 2 1/2 years ago, state-run media said yesterday, forcing a further delay in elections it promised when it took over. MRTV television said the National Defense and Security Council met Monday in the capital, Naypyitaw, and extended the state of emergency for another six months starting Tuesday because time is needed to prepare for the elections. The NDSC is nominally a constitutional government body, but in practice is controlled by the military.

AP PHOTO



Russian missiles slammed into an apartment complex and a university building in the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih yesterday, killing four people and wounding scores of others as the blasts trapped residents beneath rubble, Ukraine's interior minister said. One of the two missiles destroyed a section of the apartment building between the fourth and ninth floors, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said. Video showed black smoke billowing from corner units and burned out or damaged cars on a tree-lined street.

AP PHOTO

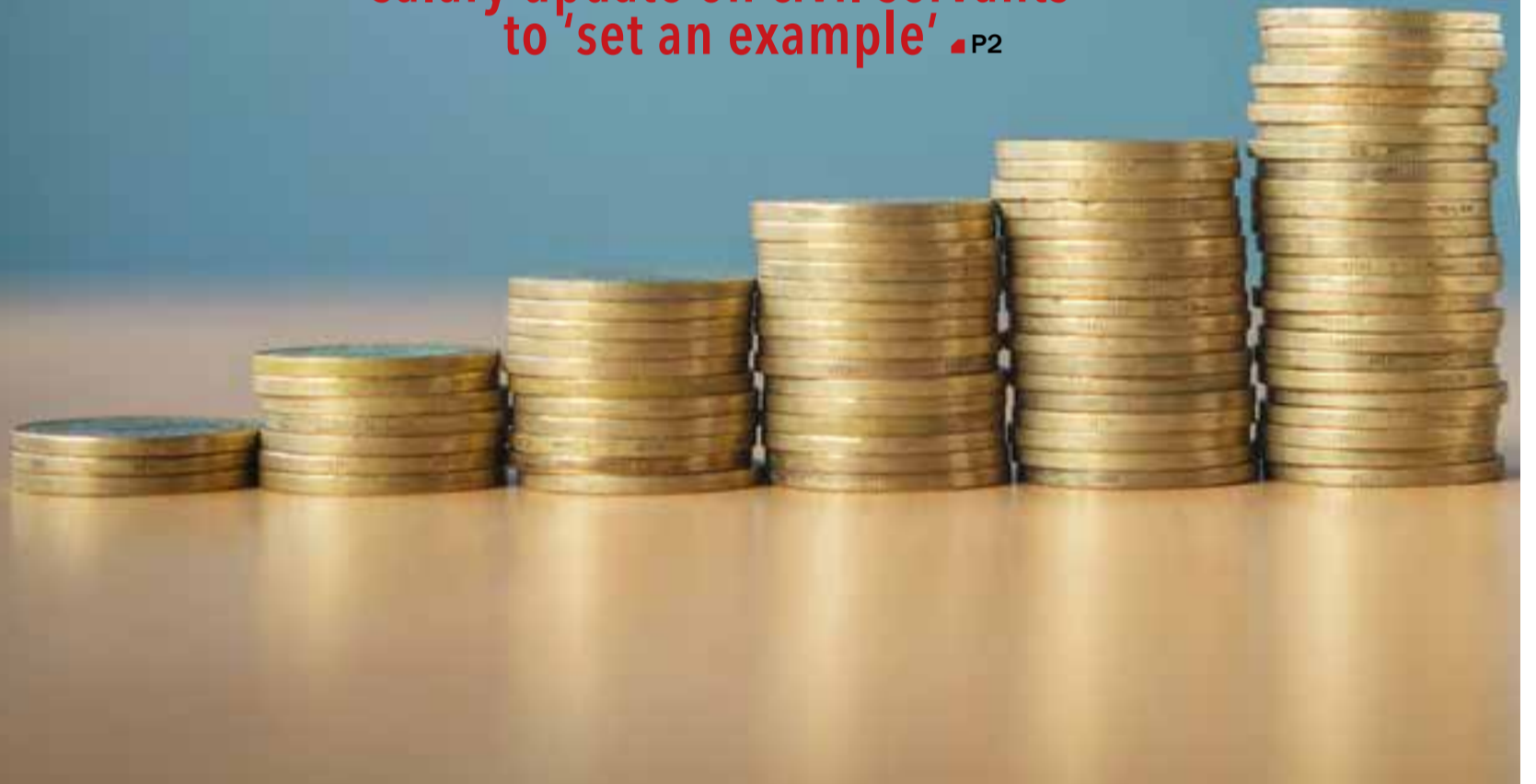


Denmark's foreign minister said the government will seek to make it illegal to desecrate the Quran or other religious holy books in front of foreign embassies in the Nordic country. Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen said in an interview with the Danish public broadcaster DR that the burning of holy scriptures "only serves the purpose of creating division in a world that actually needs unity."

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AMCM WARNS OF FRAUDULENT CALLS

The Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) announced yesterday that it was aware of calls to members of the public impersonating the authority. In the calls, the call recipients were told that they had an important document for collection at the AMCM. The authority clarified that it would never contact members of the public by phone for collection of important documents or for personal information. It has called on the public to exercise additional caution. Meanwhile, if they have any doubts, they can contact the AMCM at 2856 8288 or the Judiciary Police's anti-scam hotline at 8800 7777.

MACAO ORCHESTRA SHOWDOWN COMING SEASON'S REPERTOIRE

In its coming concert season, Macao Orchestra (OM) will revolve around Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninoff as a motif to celebrate the 150th anniversary of his birth. The orchestra has invited young local musician Lio Kuokman to replace Lu Jia as music director and principal conductor. A highlight of the season is the concert with animation featuring Disney's Aladdin, which will celebrate its 31st anniversary next year. There is another concert that will present pieces from renowned Cantonese opera Floral Princess with western instruments. Tickets to concerts are now available for sale.

EXCHANGE PERIOD FOR COMMEMORATIVE BANK NOTES TO END NEXT FRIDAY

The exchange period for the Tiger and Rabbit Zodiac banknotes and the previously issued XXIV Olympic Winter Games banknotes will end Friday, Aug. 11, the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) announced yesterday. It is reminding those registrants who have not yet done so to make the exchange for their subscribed notes at their previously selected bank during the remaining exchange period. It recommends members of the public call its hotline: 2856 5071 / 2856 5072 during business hours, or browse its website for additional information.

JIANGSU, MACAU, HONG KONG EDUCATION FEDERATION INAUGURATED

The Foundational Education Cooperation Federation of Jiangsu, Hong Kong and Macao was officially inaugurated in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province on July 21. At the inauguration ceremony, the federation announced some of its upcoming plans, such as thematic exchange and learning activities for primary and secondary school students from Jiangsu, Hong Kong and Macau, exhibition of classic-reading results, as well as exchange and training activities for teachers in Jiangsu, Hong Kong and Macau. The government said in a statement that Jiangsu and Macau have close ties and mutually good foundations in education. There are 18 Macau-Jiangsu sibling schools.

LEI CHAN U WANTS SALARY UPDATE ON CIVIL SERVANTS TO 'SET AN EXAMPLE'

RENATO MARQUES

THE lawmaker, Lei Chan U, affiliated with the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM), wants the government to enforce a salary rise for civil servants to boost their morale and promote efficiency, remarking that in doing so, the executive would be also "setting an example" to be followed by the private sector.

Lei's comments were made yesterday at the Legislative Assembly during the period before the agenda of the plenary session.

In a spoken inquiry, the lawmaker noted that with the arrival of the pandemic, the government froze all salary raises for civil servants, a situation that has lasted for over three years.

Making a direct comparison with the system in force in the neighboring region of Hong Kong, Lei noted that the government of Hong Kong



Lei Chan U

has recently announced that civil servants' wages would be increased this year by 2.87% and 4.65%, according to different levels.

Although noting the differences between the two regions, Lei noted that considering the perceived situa-

tion in Macau and the level of economic recovery, it would be sensible to proceed with a wage increase for next year, "to ease on their pressure, keep their purchasing power at a reasonable level, boost their morale and serve as an example for the salary upda-

te of workers in private companies."

The inquiry was one of several delivered yesterday that seemed to be oriented to the Policy Address for 2024 (LAG24), which the Chief Executive said was the start of hearing the civil society on the topic.

With the fast-approaching legislative vacations to start in two weeks, several lawmakers, namely the directly elected ones, are turning their attention to the LAG24 to be announced around mid-November.

In a separate inquiry, also linked with FAOM, lawmaker Ella Lei also called on the government to resume the suspended benefits to the population, namely in the transference of funds to the pension funds of older adults, something that has not happened since 2020, as the funds are tied to the government accounts surplus.

ATFPM protests delayed OT payment to civil servants during the pandemic

RENATO MARQUES

THE Macao Public Servants Association (ATFPM) has protested the non-payment of overtime (OT) work performed by civil servants during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a written inquiry to the government via the Legislative Assembly signed by the lawmaker and leader of ATFPM, José Pereira Coutinho, the lawmaker claims that the many extra hours put in by many of the government workers including from the Health Bureau, Security Forces, among others have yet to be paid.

According to Pereira Coutinho, several workers have reported the issue to his office after finding no answers from



RENATO MARQUES

their supervisors and leaders in the public services as to when these OT payments will be made.

The lawmaker also notes in more general terms that after the pandemic, living costs have suffered a significant increase, with the prices of many essential goods skyro-

cketing.

Taking such a fact into account, he also calls on the government to update the salary index as well as existing subsidies so that workers can meet the higher costs resulting from inflation.

Citing the conclusions of the study that originated in

the Global Wage Salary Report 2022-2023, which addresses the impact of Covid-19 on wages and purchasing power, the lawmaker notes that on average it is estimated that worldwide salaries have dropped (in purchasing power) by 0.9% in the first half of 2022, being the first time in this century that real salary growth was negative.

The study also shows that those with lower incomes are the ones suffering the most from the pandemic impacts, as they spend most of their wages on essentials.

With the inquiry, the lawmaker aims to call the attention of the government to the drop in purchasing power from the local workers, namely the civil servants, that has been happening since 2021.

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Ho Ion Sang concerned with pedestrianization of Happiness Street

RENATO MARQUES

THE indirectly elected lawmaker, Ho Ion Sang, representing the Macau General Union of Neighborhood Associations, commonly referred to as “Kai Fong,” has expressed concerns over the idea of removing vehicle traffic from the Rua da Felicidade (Happiness Street) in central Macau.

In a spoken inquiry delivered yesterday at the Legislative Assembly (AL) in the period before the agenda, Ho noted that the implementation of such a measure would “inevitably increase traffic pressure in the surrounding areas, affecting the movement of residents and the loading and unloading of goods by traders in the area.”

The lawmaker called on the government, before advancing such an idea, to communicate with the interested parties and find a balanced way to convey the interests of both sides.

Implying that the residen-

ts and shop owners in the area are not happy with the government’s decision, Ho asked the government to consider experimenting first, implementing the measure as a trial before considering full implementation.

Such a phased implementation should also follow a plan to be disclosed in advance to all interested parties so that reorganization of traffic and contingency plans to respond to emergencies, among others, could have proper planning as well as reduce the perceived impacts on the public.

Ho noted that currently the number of tourists is already quite high when compared with the pandemic times, and so implementing such a measure, as occurred before with the trial project of making the Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro a pedestrian zone for some time, could increase the agglomeration of people, instead of spreading of the visitors to different areas of the city.

In the same inquiry, the lawmaker also called on the authorities to improve the transportation and the general environment at the recently created tourist attractions, such as the former Iec Long Firecracker Factory in Taipa, the Village of Our Lady of Ka Ho, and the old Shipyards of Lai Chi Vun in Coloane, so that tourists will be motivated to visit such places.

“I hope the government will continue to improve transport to these attractions, and introduce new elements to increase the attractiveness. Itineraries need to be reviewed and optimized within the scope of the ‘Taking a Walk through the Streets of Macao’ and ‘Feel Macau’ step-by-step’ initiatives. New routes need to be defined, and publicized and general promotion needs to be strengthened,” he remarked.

The announcement of the idea of turning the street into a pedestrian zone came at last week’s meeting of the Cultural Development Committee.

RENATO MARQUES



EDUCATION

MUST Business School earns int’l accreditation

THE School of Business at Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) has earned an international accreditation, signaling its position in the world’s top 6% of business schools.

The accreditation was conferred upon the business school by The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

“AACSB accreditation recognizes institutions that have demonstrated a focus on excellence in all areas, including teaching, research, curriculum development and student learning,” said

Stephanie M. Bryant, Executive Vice-President and Chief Accreditation Officer of AACSB.

The chair of the Peer Review Team of the AACSB concluded that “the School of Business presented evidence of continuous improvement and high quality in its academic programs, activities, teaching, research and assurance of student learning. The school successfully met or exceeded the requirements for the Accreditation Standards.”

“MUST is honored to receive the prestigious AACSB accreditation for our School

of Business. This honor is a recognition that the MUST School of Business provides high-quality business education and impactful research that has a positive societal impact,” said President Joseph Hun-wei Lee.

Founded in 1916, AACSB is the longest-serving global accrediting body for business schools, and the largest business education network connecting learners, educators and businesses worldwide. Less than 6% of the world’s schools offering business degree programs hold AACSB business accreditation. **AL**



AD

醫療券
Vale do Saúde

Healthcare Subsidy Scheme 2023

Electronic Healthcare Vouchers made easy with Macao One Account

Eligibility and period of use

- The Macao SAR Government will issue healthcare vouchers of MOP600.00 to each person who holds a valid or renewable Macao SAR Permanent Resident Identity Card as at 30th April 2024.
- Vouchers can be used during the period from 1st May 2023 to 30th April 2025.

Use of vouchers

- Method 1: Beneficiary may use his electronic identity in the Macao One Account to deduct the relevant voucher amount from the Healthcare Voucher System without presenting his Macao SAR Permanent Resident Identity Card.
- Method 2: Beneficiary presents his Macao SAR Permanent Resident Identity Card to the health professional, who would then deduct the relevant voucher amount from the Healthcare Voucher System.

Transfer of vouchers

Transfer can be made through the Macao One Account, a self-service kiosk, the Health Bureau website or Health Bureau mobile app, or with assistance by the health professional at the time of consultation or by the support centre staff.

Enquiry

Website: www.vh.gov.mo Hotline: 2822 5050 Facsimile: 2822 3030 Email: vh@sm.gov.mo

澳門特別行政區政府衛生局
Serviço de Saúde do Governo do Território Administrativo Especial de Macau

NINE HOTEL PROJECTS IN PROGRESS, DSSCU SAYS

The Land and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU) disclosed yesterday that as of the second quarter of this year, nine hotel project constructions are in progress, which equates to 3,732 rooms. Meanwhile, eight hotels have reached design phase and aim to provide 1,308 rooms. In addition, five private construction projects, 34 units, received Building Use Licenses, with no parking spaces. Fifty-six others were still in progress, and they were expected to provide 2,242 units. Ninety-eight residential projects, 6,571 units, were still in design phase.

HENGQIN'S GDP UP 3% TO 23.634 BILLION RMB IN 1H

According to the Statistics Bureau of Guangdong Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, in the first six months of 2023, the cooperation zone recorded RMB23.63 billion of regional GDP, with an increase of 3% year on year. There are 55,370 registered enterprises in the cooperation zone by the end of June this year, marking a 1.9% increase compared to last year. Among them, there were 5,688 Macau-funded enterprises, showing a growth of 15.3% year-on-year.

MERCHANDISE EXPORT CONTINUES TO RISE IN JUNE

The total merchandise export amounted to 1.18 billion patacas in June, up 23% year-on-year, the statistical service said yesterday. The merchandise import went up 14.9% year-on-year to 11.97 billion patacas, and the merchandise trade deficit totaled 10.79 billion patacas in June, the latest report from the Statistics and Census Service showed. The value of re-exports rose 29.2% to 1.05 billion patacas, whereas the value of domestic exports decreased 10.4% to 135 million patacas, the report said.

GOV'T ANNOUNCES CRITERIA FOR TALENT ACQUISITION APPLICATIONS

ANTHONY LAM

THE government yesterday announced the criteria for talent acquisition applications after the relevant law's enactment early July.

In the latest Official Gazette, the Chief Executive publicized the relevant details for the three types of talents the government aimed at attracting: high-end talents, Big Health talents and elite professional talents.

The first type of talents are required to improve the city's innovation, competitiveness and reputation, according to the government. To qualify, a person should possess excellent abilities or skills with international accreditation or major contributions.

In clarification of the criteria, the government listed certain accreditations or awards that an interested person should possess, depending on their area of profession. These awards or accreditation include honors such as the Nobel Prize, national medals, positions in international entities or private companies such as the UN, the WTO and the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, the Oscars and the Golden Lion Award of La Biennale di Venezia.



As for the two latter types of talents, this would include people with excellent achievements or performance in medical services, hospital or pharmaceutical management, smart healthcare technology development, innovative medication research, development, supervision and management, standardization of medical equipment and tools, medicine, medication and biological education and

research, as well as medicinal registration, trademark and marketing. They should also possess a bachelor or higher level degrees in medicine, pharmacy, public health, medical administration, life sciences or similar disciplines.

The second type of talent will also need at least four years of relevant work experience and the third type at least two years. If they possess degrees in other disciplines,

their work experience thresholds will increase to six and four years respectively.

The minimum age for application is 21 years and the applicants must show competency in any of Chinese, Portuguese or English.

There are six scoring criteria to evaluate the ranking of applicants. While other criteria apply, the mode of application will be announced later.

Association criticizes Calçada de Gaio building, saying construction violates CE dispatch

LYNZY VALLES

THE association calling for the protection of the Guia Lighthouse has once again sought the assistance of UNESCO to persuade the local government to suspend the construction of the unfinished building at Calçada de Gaio.

In a letter sent to the director-general of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay, the Concern Group for the Protection of the Guia Lighthouse has stated that the height limit and design of this unfinished building should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Centre and the advisory bodies before it is finalized and implemented.

"As to the unfinished building at Calçada de Gaio, to reduce the height of this building to 52.5 meters is a solemn commitment the State Party



made in 2008 in the face of imminent threat to the landscape and the visual

integrity of the world cultural heritage site posed by nearby high-rise bui-

ldings," the association said.

For the association, the present Macau government decision to allow the unfinished building to be completed at a height of around 80 meters is "not fair and cannot be justified and is a clear violation of the Macau Chief Executive Directive 83/2008."

"We request UNESCO-WHC to seek permission of the State Party to disclose details of the HIA for the unfinished building and to provide valid reasons to explain why the State Party could not stand firm on the height limit," it added.

The building at Calçada de Gaio 18-20, which has been embroiled in a long-running dispute regarding the development height, finally resumed construction in February.

Construction was halted for years due to claims

that the project interfered with the UNESCO-classified heritage site of the Guia Lighthouse and Fortress at Guia Hilltop.

The construction has been granted a license for the conclusion of the works valid from February 9, 2023, until January 10, 2026.

In the letter, the association also regretted that the government has proceeded with the construction of the 90-meter building at Avenida do Dr. Rodrigo Rodrigues, in close proximity to the Guia Lighthouse.

In early May, the government decided to continue to allow two buildings over 50 meters in height to be built within the buffer zone of the Guia Lighthouse, despite UNESCO's opinion on the detrimental impacts these developments will have on the views around the lighthouse.

PERSONAL FINANCE

How to stay safe from financial scams

KIMBERLY PALMER,
NERDWALLET

ONE of the biggest mistakes you can make when it comes to protecting yourself from financial scams is thinking you're too smart to be duped by one.

"We're all vulnerable — we can all fall for a scam given the right set of circumstances," says Eva Velasquez, president and CEO of the Identity Theft Resource Center, a nonprofit organization that provides advice and assistance related to identity theft. Keeping yourself safe starts with accepting that fact, she adds.

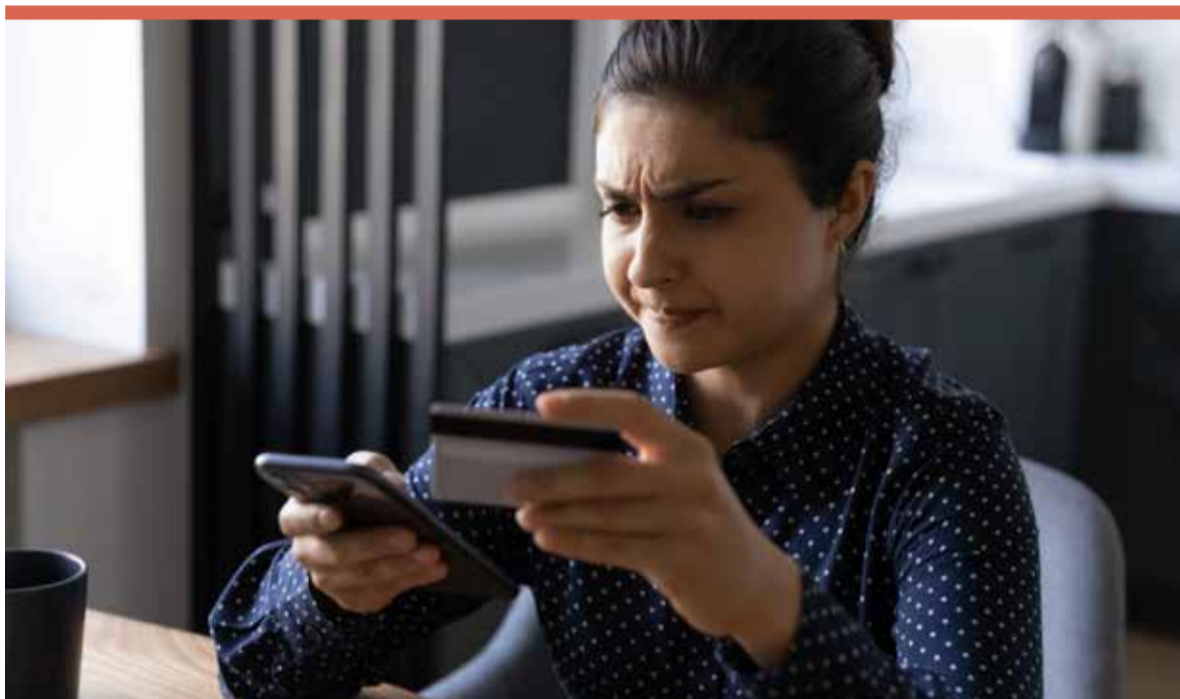
"You look at the profiles of victims who filed complaints and it runs the gamut from highly educated, high-income people all the way down to the most vulnerable people in our population," says John Breyault, vice president of public policy, telecommunications and fraud at the National Consumers League, a nonprofit advocacy group that speaks out about consumer concerns.

While there isn't a "foolproof solution to stay safe from all scams," as Breyault puts it, there are strategies you can employ to reduce your risk. Here are four of the most important ones:

HANG UP AND 'GO TO THE SOURCE'

If you're contacted by anyone claiming to be your bank or other familiar company, end the conversation and call the institution's verified number yourself, Velasquez says. "We always say, 'If you did not initiate the interaction, then you need to go to the source,'" she adds.

AP PHOTO



Otherwise, you don't actually know who's on the other end of the line, she says, especially because scammers can spoof the number that shows up on your caller ID so it might look legitimate.

In some cases, you might want to pay your bank a visit in person to get clarification. When Thorn Roberts, owner of a small business in Elizabeth, West Virginia, received a payment request he didn't recognize, he went to his bank to ask about it.

"They knew it was a scam," he says. As a result, he immediately canceled his accounts and created new ones. Thanks to his quick action and the bank's help, his money was safe.

SECURE AND MONITOR YOUR ACCOUNTS

Basic online security practices can also help protect you, Velasquez says. She recommends ena-

bling multifactor authentication on your financial accounts, creating unique passwords and not sharing personal details such as your birthdate online.

Jason Zirkle, training director at the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners and former fraud analyst with law enforcement, suggests checking your financial accounts at least once a week and investigating any unidentified charges immediately. Even one small erroneous charge could suggest someone has access to your account, signaling the beginning of a larger problem.

GET FAMILIAR WITH COMMON SCAMS

The Federal Trade Commission reports that the top scams of 2022 include people impersonating institutions like banks, phony sweepstakes and fake job postings. "You don't have to become an expert in

each one, but you need to understand the hallmarks of most scams: They contact you first, dangle some sort of bait in front of you and create a sense of urgency," Zirkle says. Then, they ask for either money or personal information, which they use to access your money.

That's what happened to former government executive and security expert Ken Westbrook's mother earlier this year. A fake tech support window popped up on her computer, which likely came from a malicious ad. It connected her to criminals who persuaded her to call them and send gift cards and cashier's checks under the guise of protecting her bank accounts from being hacked.

"My mom knew gift cards were a red flag, but she did it anyway because they scared her," says Westbrook, who lives in the Washington, D.C., area. Eventually, Westbrook discovered what was ha-

ppening and put a stop to it, but only after his mom lost thousands of dollars.

These scammers "sound like the nicest tech support people that you've ever dealt with," says Chris Pierson, founder and CEO of BlackCloak, a cybersecurity firm. "They install remote management tools to see what's on your screen and then can suck out your files and extort you."

REPORT SCAMS AND BE YOUR OWN ADVOCATE

Reporting fraud to government agencies and private organizations allows for better fraud tracking. While there's no centralized source for fraud tracking, you can report it to the Federal Trade Commission, your state's attorney general's office, the FBI, your local police station, your bank's fraud department, the Better Business Bureau's Scam Tracker and the Identity Theft Resource Center, among others.

Most people who lose money to scams never see it again. "The first thing you need to do is accept your money is probably gone and you won't get it back," Zirkle says. He suggests "being your own advocate" with your bank and police. In some cases, your financial institution or law enforcement might be able to help you recover some or all of it.

Still, some losses are harder to quantify. "In addition to a financial crime, it's an emotional crime," Westbrook says. "People are affected by this for the rest of their lives. What I tell everyone, and tell my mom, is, 'It's not your fault. The thieves work for organized crime gangs who are very good at what they do.'" **MDT/NERDWALLET.**

CORPORATE BITS

MGM unveils 'To Infinity and Beyond: The Art of Hsiao Chin'



MGM presents the signature exhibition of "To Infinity and Beyond: The Art of Hsiao Chin" at MGM Theater of MGM Cotai, an exhibition that brings forth "the avant-garde concept of 'Art-Techtainment'" by transcending the confines of spaces.

The exhibition, open to the public from now until September 24, is part of the gaming operator's initiative to support Art Macao: Macao International Art Biennale 2023.

Showcasing the masterpieces of Chinese modern abstract art master Hsiao Chin from the 1960s to

today, the exhibition metamorphosed Hsiao's museum-level masterpieces innovatively into digital, three-dimensional formats, and integrated with audio-visual elements.

"To Infinity and Beyond" exhibition is curated by Calvin Hui, an acclaimed cultural entrepreneur from Hong Kong, and has Philip Dodd, a renowned curator from the United Kingdom, to be the curatorial consultant.

Pansy Ho, chairperson and executive director of MGM China Holdings Limited, said, "Being the largest multimedia exhibition throughout Hsiao Chin's lifetime career, this exhibition is another

breakthrough of MGM's art endeavors. We will continue to set milestones through the integration of tourism, art and culture — elevating the appeal of Chinese culture on the world stage."

MGM also commissioned local artist Eric Fok to create a new artwork of large technical pen drawing named "Renaissance" for the "Invitational Exhibition by Local Artists", one of the key events of Art Macao. The artwork sails off from the Renaissance era and Age of Discovery, dives into the integration of Eastern and Western cultures and knowledge throughout the history of civilization.

TRADE

China imposes curbs on drone exports, citing Ukraine, concern about military use

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

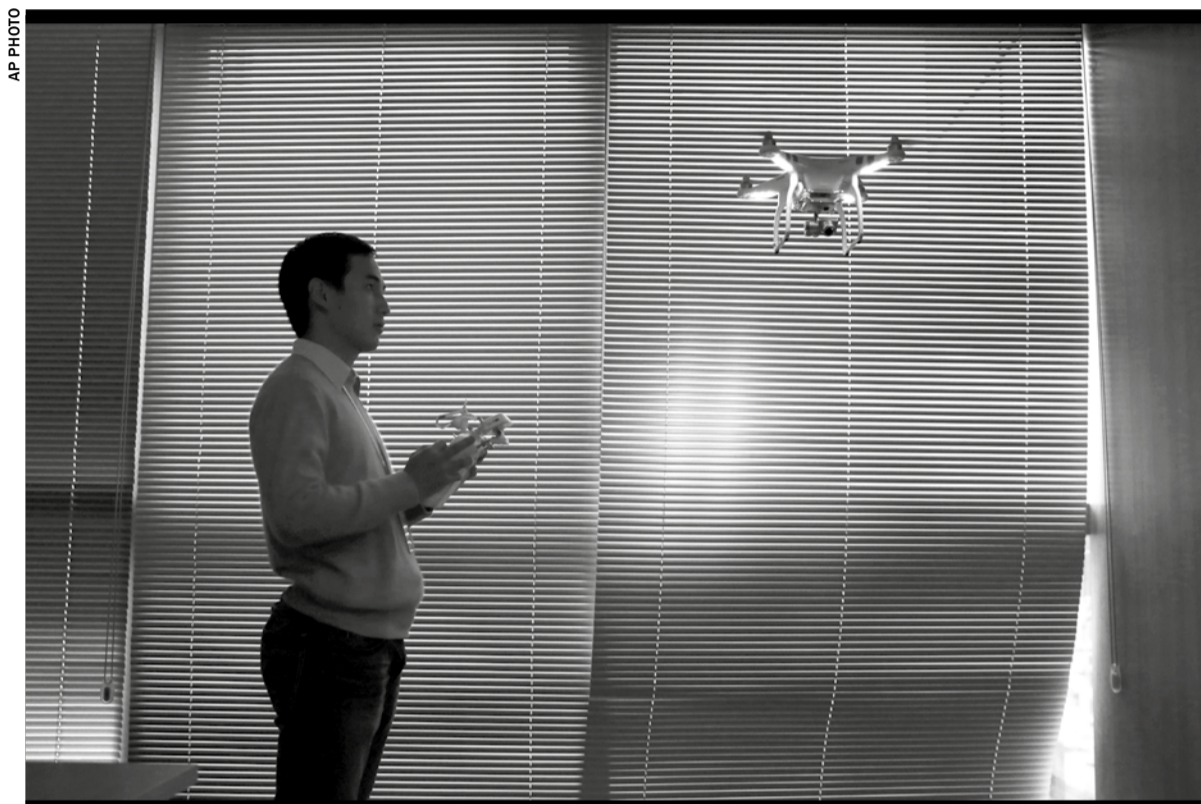
CHINA imposed restrictions yesterday on exports of long-range civilian drones, citing Russia's war in Ukraine and concern that drones might be converted to military use.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping's government is friendly with Moscow but says it is neutral in the 18-month-old war. It has been stung by reports that both sides might be using Chinese-made drones for reconnaissance and possibly attacks.

Export controls will take effect today to prevent use of drones for "non-peaceful purposes," the Ministry of Commerce said in a statement. It said exports still will be allowed but didn't say what restrictions would apply.

China is a leading developer and exporter of drones. DJI Technology Co., one of the global industry's top competitors, announced in April 2022 it was pulling out of Russia and Ukraine to prevent its drones from being used in combat.

"The risk of some high specification and high-performance civilian unmanned aerial vehicles being converted to military use is



AP PHOTO

constantly increasing," the Ministry of Commerce said.

Restrictions will apply to drones that can fly beyond the natural sight distance of operators or stay aloft more than 30 minutes, have attachments that can throw objects and weigh more than seven kilograms (15½ pounds), according to the ministry.

"Since the crisis in Ukraine, some Chinese civilian drone companies have voluntarily suspended their operations in conflict areas," the Ministry of Commerce said. It accused the United States and Western media of spreading "false information" about Chinese drone exports.

The government on Friday de-

fended its dealings with Russia as "normal economic and trade cooperation" after a U.S. intelligence report said Beijing possibly provided equipment used in Ukraine that might have military applications.

The report cited Russian customs data that showed Chinese state-owned military contractors

supplied drones, navigation equipment, fighter jet parts and other goods.

The Biden administration has warned Beijing of "unspecified consequences if it supports the Kremlin's war effort." Last week's report didn't say whether any of the trade cited might trigger U.S. retaliation.

Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin declared before the February 2022 invasion that their governments had a "no-limits" friendship. Beijing has blocked efforts to censure Moscow in the United Nations and has repeated Russian justifications for the attack.

China has "always opposed the use of civilian drones for military purposes," the Ministry of Commerce said. "The moderate expansion of drone control by China this time is an important measure to demonstrate the responsibility of a responsible major country."

The Ukrainian government appealed to DJI in March 2022 to stop selling drones it said the Russian ministry was using to target missile attacks. DJI rejected claims it leaked data on Ukraine's military positions to Russia. **MDT/AP**

Fans pay tribute to Coco Lee, Hong Kong singer who had international success

FANS of singer and songwriter Coco Lee, who was known for her powerful voice and live performances, were gathering with flowers to pay their respects to their idol at her funeral in Hong Kong yesterday.

The memorial services was attended by her family and friends, including singers Elva Hsiao and Jenny Tseng, as well as other supporters. Lee died July 5 at age 48.

She was born in Hong Kong and attended school in San Francisco before releasing her first album in 1994 at age 19. She began her career as a Mandopop singer but branched out to release albums in Cantonese and English.

She was the first Chinese singer to break into the American market, and her English song "Do You Want



AP FILE PHOTO

Hong Kong born U.S. singer CoCo Lee

My Love" climbed to #4 on Billboard's Hot Dance Breakouts chart in December 1999. In 2001, she sang "A Love Before Time" from Ang Lee's movie "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" at

the Academy Awards, becoming the first Chinese American to perform at the Oscars.

Lee was also the voice of heroine Fa Mulan in the Mandarin version of Dis-

ney's "Mulan," and sang the Mandarin version of the movie's theme song "Reflection."

Lee was married to Bruce Rockowitz, former CEO of Hong Kong supply chain company Li & Fung. She had two stepdaughters.

Her death had shocked fans. Her siblings posted on Facebook that she had depression for years and had attempted suicide at home on July 2. She died a few days later.

Yesterday afternoon, more than 100 fans dressed in black were waiting outside the funeral home.

Lin Jing, a fan from Fujian province in the southeast, said she admired Lee's smile and appearance, adding: "She was really talented. She always tried to improve and she inspired women to feel indepen-

dent."

Inside the funeral hall, three pink hearts made of flowers and other floral decorations were displayed below Lee's photo.

Her close friend, Hsiao, said during the ceremony that Lee was perfect idol to her even when she watched her performances as a student. After they became friends in the entertainment industry, Lee encouraged her when she was lost and treated her as "a little sister."

"She brightened my life with her happiness and bravery. I will keep preserving her spirit," she said in a quavering voice.

In a video for her memorial service, actors and singers from Hong Kong, mainland China and Taiwan recalled their memories with Lee and mour-

ned her death.

Action star Jackie Chan said in the video that everyone was proud of her when she sang at the Oscars.

"To friends like us, Coco was a passionate and kind friend who showed care to us. She was really a good person. That's why we are so reluctant to accept she has left us," he said.

Award-winning director Ang Lee recalled his exchanges with the late singer before the Oscars and said it was a pity she died so young. "We miss her very much. Coco, rest in peace," he said in the video.

In Coco Lee's recent social media posts, she kept spreading positivity. In March, she posted about having to relearn how to walk after undergoing surgery for an old leg injury.

"Successful surgery. Even though I'm in a lot of pain and I have to re-learn how to walk again, I know I can do it," she wrote in a Facebook post. "Yes I can and I will!" **MDT/AP**

SOUTH KOREA

Dog meat farmers push back against growing moves to outlaw their industry

HYUNG-JIN KIM, PYEONGTAEK

THE dogs bark and stare as Kim Jong-kil approaches the rusty cages housing the large, short-haired animals he sells for their meat. Kim opens a door and pets one dog's neck and chest.

Kim says he's proud of the dog meat farm that has supported his family for 27 years, but is upset over growing attempts by politicians and activists to outlaw the business, which he is turning over to his children.

"It's more than just feeling bad. I absolutely oppose these moves, and we'll mobilize all our means to resist it," Kim, 57, said in an interview at his farm in Pyeongtaek city, just south of Seoul.

Dog meat consumption is a centuries-old practice on the Korean Peninsula and has long been viewed as a source of stamina on hot summer days. It's neither explicitly banned nor legalized in South Korea, but more and more people want it prohibited. There's increasing public awareness of animal rights and worries about South Korea's international image.

The anti-dog meat campaign recently received a big boost when the country's first lady expressed her support for a ban and two lawmakers submitted bills to eliminate the dog meat trade.

"Foreigners think South Korea is a cultural powerhouse. But the more K-culture increases its international standing, the bigger shock foreigners experience over our dog meat consumption," said Han Jeoungae, an opposition lawmaker who submitted legislation to outlaw the dog meat industry last month.

Prospects for passage of an anti-dog meat law are unclear because of protests by farmers, restaurant owners and others involved in the dog meat industry. Surveys suggest that one in three South Koreans opposes such a ban, though most people don't eat dog meat anymore.

Dogs are also eaten in China, Vietnam, Indonesia, North Korea and some African countries, including Ghana, Cameroon, Congo and Nigeria.

Earlier this month, Indonesian authorities announced the end of dog and cat slaughter at an animal market on the island of Sulawesi following a yearslong campaign by local activists and world celebrities. The Tomohon Extreme Market will become the first such market in Indonesia to go dog and cat meat-free, according to the



Dogs are seen in a cage at a dog farm in Pyeongtaek, South Korea, last week

anti-animal cruelty group Humane Society International.

South Korea's dog meat industry receives more international attention because of its reputation as a wealthy, ultra-modern democracy. It is also the only nation with industrial-scale farms. Most farms in South Korea have more than 500 dogs, according to a dog farmers' association.

During a recent visit, Kim's farm, one of the country's largest with 7,000 dogs, appeared relatively clean but there was a strong stench in some areas. All dogs are kept in elevated cages and are fed with food waste and ground chicken. They are rarely released for exercise and typically are sold for meat one year after they are born.

Kim said two of his children, age 29 and 31, are running the farm with him, and that business has been going pretty well. He said the dogs bred for their meat are different from pets, an idea opposed by activists.

It's difficult now to find dog meat restaurants in Seoul's bustling downtown, though many still exist in the countryside.

"I only earn one-third of the money I used to make. Young people don't come here. Only ailing old people come for lunch," said Yoon Chu-wol, 77, the owner

of a dog meat restaurant in Seoul's Kyungdong traditional market. "I tell my elderly customers to come and eat my food more frequently before it's banned."

Farmers also face growing scrutiny from officials and increasingly negative public opinion. They complain that officials visit them repeatedly in response to complaints filed by activists and citizens over alleged animal abuse and other wrongdoing. Kim said more than 90 such petitions were filed against his farm during a recent four-month span.

Son Won Hak, general secretary of the dog farmers' association, said many farms have collapsed in recent years because of falling dog meat prices and weaker demand. He thinks that's a result of activist campaigns and unfair media reports focusing on farms with inferior conditions. Some observers, however, say consumption of dog meat was already declining, with younger people staying away from it.

"Quite honestly, I'd like to quit my job (as a farmer) tomorrow. We can't confidently tell our children that we're raising dogs," Son said. "When my friends called me, they said 'Hey, are you still running a dog meat farm? Isn't it illegal?'"

The number of farms across South Korea has dropped by half from a few years ago to about 3,000 to 4,000, and about 700,000 to 1 million dogs are slaughtered each year, a decline from several million 10 to 20 years ago, according to the dog farmers' association. Some activists argue that the farmers' estimates are an exaggeration meant to show their industry is too big to destroy.

In late 2021, South Korea launched a government-civilian task force to consider outlawing dog meat at the suggestion of then-President Moon Jae-in, a pet lover. The committee, whose members include farmers and animal rights activists, has met more than 20 times but hasn't reached any agreement, apparently because of disputes over compensation issues.

Agriculture officials refused to disclose the discussions in the closed-door meetings. They said the government wants to end dog meat consumption based on a public consensus.

In April, first lady Kim Keon Hee, the wife of current President Yoon Suk Yeol, said in a meeting with activists that she hopes for an end to dog meat consumption. Farmers responded with rallies and formal complaints against

Kim for allegedly hurting their livelihoods.

Han, the lawmaker, said she "highly positively appraises" influential figures speaking out against dog meat consumption.

Han said her bill offers support programs for farmers who agree to close their farms. They would be entitled to money to dismantle their facilities, vocational training, employment assistance and other benefits, she said.

Ju Yeongbong, an official of the farmers' association, said farmers want to continue for about 20 more years until older people, their main customers, die, allowing the industry to naturally disappear. Observers say most farmers are also in their 60s to 70s.

Borami Seo, a director of the South Korea office of the Humane Society International, said she opposes the continued killing of millions of dogs for such a prolonged period. "Letting this silent cruelty to (dogs) be committed in South Korea doesn't make sense," Seo said.

"(Dog meat consumption) is too anachronistic, has elements of cruelty to animals and hinders our national growth," said Cheon JinKyung, head of Korea Animal Rights Advocates in Seoul. **MDT/AP**

PAKISTAN

People bury dead from massive suicide attack at political rally that killed 54

ANWARULLAH KHAN
& RIAZ KHAN, KHAR

HUNDREDS of mourners attended funerals in Pakistan yesterday after a suicide bombing killed at least 54 people at an election rally for a pro-Taliban cleric, carrying caskets draped in colorful cloths to burial sites in the hills.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for Sunday's bombing [early yesterday, Macau time] in Bajur that killed at least five children and wounded nearly 200 people.

The attack appeared to reflect divisions between Islamist groups, which have a strong presence in the district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province that borders Afghanistan. It targeted the Jamiat Ulema Islam party, which has ties to the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban.

At least 1,000 people, according to police, were crowded into a tent near a market for the rally ahead of fall elections.

"People were chanting God is Great as the leaders arrived," said Khan Mohammad, a local resident who said he was standing outside the tent, "and that was when I heard the deafening sound of the bomb."

Mohammad said he heard people crying for help, and minutes later ambulances arrived and began taking the wounded away.

Police said their initial investigation suggested that the Islamic State group's regional affiliate, a rival of the Taliban, could be responsible, while a Pakistan security analyst pointed to breakaway factions of the Pakistani Taliban as possible suspects.

The Pakistani military spent years fighting the Pakistani Taliban, also known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP, in Bajur before declaring the district clear of militants in 2016. But the Jamiat Ulema Islam party, headed by hard-line cleric and politician Fazlur Rehman, has remained a potent political force.



Yesterday, police recorded statements from some of the wounded at a hospital in Khar, the district's principal town.

The Islamic State in Khorasan Province, which police identified as a suspect in the attack, is based in neighboring Afghanistan's Nangarhar province and is a rival of the Afghan Taliban and al-Qaida.

Pakistani security analyst Mahmood Shah said some TTP members have been known to disobey their top leadership to carry out attacks, as have breakaway factions of the group.

Shah said such factions could have perpetrated the attack to cause "confusion, instability and unrest ahead of the elections."

Yesterday, female relatives and children wailed and beat their chests at family homes as the dead were taken for funerals, following local customs. Hundreds of men followed the caskets to mosques and open areas for special funeral prayers and then into the hills for burial.

As condolences continued to pour in from across the country, dozens of people who had lesser injuries were discharged from hospital, while the critically wounded were taken to the provincial capital of Peshawar by army helicopters. The death toll continued to rise as some critically wounded people died in hospital, physician Gul Naseeb said.

Gul Akbar, the father of an 11-year-old boy who was wounded in the attack, told

The Associated Press that his entire family was in a state of shock after hearing about the bombing Sunday. He said he first went to the scene of the attack, and later found his son Taslim Khan being treated in a hospital in Khar.

"What would I have done if he had also been martyred? Five children died in this barbaric attack, and we want to know what our children did wrong," he said.

Rehman's party is preparing to contest elections, which are expected in October or November. Abdul Rasheed, one of the party's senior leaders, said the bombing was aimed at weakening the party but that "such attacks cannot deter our resolve."

Rehman's party is part of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's coalition government, which came to power in April 2022 by ousting former Prime Minister Imran Khan through a no-confidence vote in the legislature.

Sharif called Rehman to express his condolences and assure the cleric that those who orchestrated the attack would be punished. Khan condemned the bombing Sunday, as did the U.S. and Russian embassies in Islamabad.

The Pakistani Taliban also distanced themselves from the bombing, saying that it was intended to set Islamists against each other. Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesman for the Afghan Taliban, wrote in a tweet that "such crimes cannot be jus-

tified in any way."

The bombing came hours before Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng arrived in Islamabad, where he signed new agreements to boost trade and economic ties to mark a decade of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a sprawling package under which China has invested \$10 billion in Pakistan over 10 years, according to Sharif.

"We will not tolerate any obstacles in the way of friendship with China," Sharif said, as he stood next to He.

But the government canceled a cultural event that had been arranged in honor of He, according to Sharif, while the nation mourns.

Some Chinese nationals have also been targeted by militants in northwestern Pakistan and elsewhere.

Rehman, who has long supported Afghanistan's Taliban government, survived at least two known bomb attacks in 2011 and 2014, when bombings damaged his car at rallies.

Sunday's bombing was one of the worst in northwestern Pakistan in the last decade. In 2014, 147 people, mostly schoolchildren, were killed in a Taliban attack on an army-run school in Peshawar.

In January, 74 people were killed in a bombing at a mosque in Peshawar. And in February, more than 100 people, mostly policemen, died in a bombing at a mosque inside a high-security compound housing Peshawar police headquarters. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1976 LAUDA FIGHTS FOR LIFE AFTER GRAND PRIX CRASH



Formula One racing driver Niki Lauda is in a critical condition in hospital after an horrific accident at the Nurburgring Grand Prix in Germany.

The Austrian-born driver became trapped inside his Ferrari after it swerved off the track before bouncing back into the path of the oncoming cars and catching fire.

Fellow driver Guy Edwards managed to avoid the blazing wreckage but Harald Ertl and Brett Lunger both hit it.

All three drivers raced to the burning Ferrari and, with the help of the Italian driver Arturo Merzario, who also stopped, eventually managed to pull 27-year-old Lauda from his vehicle.

Lauda, who has led this drivers' championship since the beginning of the season, began the race second on the grid behind James Hunt in pole position.

Guy Edwards said they had had problems getting the trapped driver out.

"Lauda was basically sitting in the middle of a fire and I would guess it would be about a minute before we managed to get the belts undone."

"In the meantime Ertl had got a fire extinguisher from somewhere and was aiming it towards the central cockpit area so he was able to keep the fire under some sort of control."

"Lauda was conscious most of the time and was saying 'get me out.'"

Mr Lauda was taken to nearby Adenau hospital with serious burns. From there he was flown to the University Hospital in Mannheim where his condition is described as critical.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Within six weeks of the Nurburgring accident Niki Lauda was back behind the wheel.

He fought for his life for several days following the accident and suffered horrendous burns to his head and face.

Part of one of his ears was burnt off and his tear duct mechanism was severely damaged which affected his vision in subsequent races. Lauda won the World Championship a total of three times - in 1975, 1977 and 1984. He retired from F1 in 1985.

Before the 1976 accident he had been well on course to win it again - but eventually lost by just one point to James Hunt.

At the end of the 1970s he launched his own airline Lauda Air, which was later sold to Austrian Airlines.

He managed the Jaguar F1 racing team from 2001-2. In late 2003 he launched another airline, Niki.

Guy Edwards was awarded a Queen's Gallantry Medal for his bravery.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

<p>ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Your lack of responsibility and attention has been a key issue in your relationship. You can pick up additional responsibility that will lead to higher wages and a better position.</p>	<p>TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Based on your excitement, serious-minded individuals will be more than interested in backing your ideas. Don't let anyone take credit for a job you did.</p>
<p>GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Things will be emotional with your mate. Keep an eye on your weight. Try not to make waves.</p>	<p>CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Take care of any paperwork concerning institutional or governmental agencies. Don't try to hide your true feelings from your mate. Don't be too hard on your mate.</p>
<p>LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Avoid functions that will bring you in contact with those you find difficult to get along with. Restrictions may be difficult for you to live with, but try to do things by the book.</p>	<p>VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 Your self esteem will come back if you take part in organizational functions that allow you to be in the lime light. You may need the space, but you need the extra cash more.</p>
<p>LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Opportunities for romance will develop through group endeavors; however, the association isn't likely to last. Deal with the needs of children and get into groups that deal with self awareness.</p>	<p>SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 It might be time to do some of those chores at home. Emotionally you won't see things accurately. You will find that unfinished projects at home will be most satisfying.</p>
<p>SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Try not to hang out with coworkers if you wish to avoid problems later. Tempers could boil if someone you work with has not been pulling their weight.</p>	<p>CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 A passionate encounter with your mate should help alleviate that pent-up energy. Be prepared to lose friends or alienate loved ones due to your stubborn nature lately.</p>
<p>AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 The stamina you possess will be apparent in your approach to your hobbies and creative projects. Don't jump as quickly as you usually do.</p>	<p>PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Opportunities to get together with friends will be enlightening and entertaining. You will drive your emotional partner crazy today.</p>

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

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

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Gobs; 5- Acquire; 8- Latin lesson word; 12- Unconscious states; 14- It's used to walk the dog; 15- Wither; 16- Like soft-boiled eggs; 17- Aha!; 18- Lotion ingredient; 19- Statue inscription; 21- Human mind; 23- Employ; 24- AFL partner; 25- Possessed; 26- Son of Jacob and Rachel; 30- They're metered; 32- O. Henry device; 33- Went down; 37- Heavy metal; 38- Angry; 39- Commedia dell'arte; 40- Bullfighters; 42- Glide along smoothly; 43- Salivate; 44- Move unsteadily; 45- Compass dir.; 48- Mont Blanc, e.g.; 49- Coffee, slangily; 50- Film on copper; 52- View of the ocean; 57- Border on; 58- Toll rds.; 60- We're Off ___ the Wizard; 61- Sat on the back of a horse; 62- Son of Isaac and Rebekah; 63- Projecting window; 64- Meerschmum part; 65- Mus. slow-up; 66- Hearing organs;


DOWN 1- Farm measure; 2- Half-mask; 3- Old Dodge model; 4- Zingy taste; 5- Gee whiz!; 6- Check out; 7- Footwear; 8- Absent; 9- Yielding milk; 10- Island greeting; 11- Spirited horse; 13- Mawkish; 14- Holy moly!; 20- Blonde shade; 22- A bit; 24- Prices paid; 26- Leave at the altar; 27- Black-and-white cookie; 28- Rise sharply, as a bird would; 29- Finished, terminated; 30- Bit of wisdom; 31- Reptile; 33- Lose tautness; 34- Fiddlesticks!; 35- Novel ending; 36- Antlered animal; 38- Worshiper of Baal, Hathor, or Jupiter; 41- Irish island group; 42- Takes care of; 44- Get thee ___ nunnery; 45- Fights; 46- Wooden shoe; 47- Piece of music written for a solo instrument; 49- Bach's ___ Joy of Man's Desiring; 51- Bit of gossip; 52- Three-handed card game; 53- Heart; 54- Bhutan's continent; 55- Jury member; 56- Electric fish; 59- Letter before omega;

Yesterday's solution

A	S	T	A	R	C	H	I	C	O	S	L	O
P	H	O	N	E	R	I	C	H	S	L	A	B
L	E	N	D	S	A	V	E	R	P	A	T	E
F	L	O	S	U	P	E	R	I	O	R	I	T
A	F	F	A	I	R	S	C	E	N	E	S	
P	L	E	B	E	N	I	G	M	A	T	A	P
S	A	G	A	S	O	R	R	N	A	I	V	E
I	N	G	C	A	R	T	E	L	I	N	G	
A	S	S	O	R	T	L	O	O	S	E	N	S
R	H	O	D	E	I	S	L	A	N	D	C	I
J	O	L	A	S	A	A	B	I	L	L	E	R
S	W	A	T	A	L	D	O	C	O	A	C	T
E	V	R	E	N	E	R	E	S	T	E	S	

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

JAPAN TROUNCES SPAIN TO TOP GROUP C

STEVE MCMORRAN,
WELLINGTON

JAPAN 4, SPAIN 0

JAPAN scored three times from lightning breaks in the first half, once in the second and defended resolutely to trounce Spain 4-0 yesterday and top Group C at the Women's World Cup.

Hinata Miyazawa scored twice, Riko Ueki scored once and both were instrumental in each other's goals as Japan switched swiftly from defense to counter-attack and scored from its only three attempts on goal before halftime.

Mina Tanaka came off the bench to score the last in the 82nd minute as Japan, with only 22% of possession, turned on a counter-attacking master class in front of 21,000 fans.

"While the other side had the ball, in that duel and once we recovered the ball we tried to have maximum speed," Japan coach Futoshi Ikeda said. "I think we were quite effective."

Both teams had already clinched places in the round of 16, Japan for the fourth World Cup

in succession and Spain for the second. Both had beaten Zambia 5-0 and Spain had the better goal differential after both teams beat Costa Rica. A draw would have been enough to see Spain finish atop a group for the first time in its history.

But Spain has struggled against Asian teams in World Cup matches, losing to South Korea in 2015 and drawing with China in 2019. The loss yesterday was its first against Japan and its heaviest in 11 years.

Japan now will play Group A runner-up Norway on Saturday in the round of 16 and Spain will play Group A winner Switzerland.

Spain coach Jorge Vilda admitted his team's failings were not only in defense but also on attack — it had to wait almost to the end of the first half for its first corner.

"We have not seen the best of the Spain team and I'm sure against Switzerland we will react positively," he said. "The team is together and in a few days we have to play a round of 16 game."

Japan played with a strong and cold wind at its back in the first half and that added carry to long



Spain's Salma Paralluelo, left, and Japan's Jun Endo vie for the ball

balls forward which helped catch the Spain defense in retreat.

Spain had an overwhelming majority of possession in the half;

by the 25-minute mark it had enjoyed 68% and had more than 230 completed passes to Japan's 43. But it was timid, reluctant to

go forward and played mostly around the middle of the field, keeping the ball on the ground in the face of the wind. MDT/AP

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大律師 ASSOCIATES:

高文軒 Adelino Correia °
羅善齡 Zelina Rodrigues
馬潔冰 Maria João Marques
陶義德 António Isóo de Azeredo
白穎怡 Iclia Berenguel
冼玲鳳 Mariana Afonso Esteves
馬秀文 Sofia Mendes Martins
飛嘉華 Carlos dos Santos Ferreira °
莫永誠 Rui Velez de Moura
安東尼 António Manuel dos Santos
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斐彥德 Gonçalo Figueiredo
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C&C RECEIVED THE 1ST SILVER
"DEIGNAN AWARD"
FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN MACAU (2023)



F1

Verstappen's dominance makes a 3rd straight title look like a formality

JEROME PUGMIRE, PARIS

MAX Verstappen's dominance is so total that it already feels like he's won his third straight Formula One title, even with 10 races remaining following the mid-season break.

With a lead of 125 points over his nearest rival, the Red Bull driver is already in position to watch a highlights reel of his season and list his favorite wins. There have been 10 out of 12 races so far, plus a further two victories when including sprint races.

After winning the Belgian Grand Prix with another emphatic drive on Sunday, Verstappen was asked which of the victories he likes the most.

"It's difficult to choose. There have been a lot of nice ones," he said. "I think the one actually which I really enjoyed was like back in time in Miami."

Back in time?

May 7, to be precise, although it may seem long ago in Versta-



Driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands celebrates with his trophy on the podium after winning the Formula One Grand Prix at the Spa-Francorchamps racetrack in Spa, Belgium, Sunday

ppen's world considering he has won every race since.

At that point in the season, however, his Red Bull teammate

Sergio Perez was a self-declared title contender and still actually looking like one.

The Mexican driver had just

done the main race-sprint race double at Azerbaijan, and his confidence was boosted further when he took pole position for Miami with Verstappen qualifying in a lowly ninth.

"Tough qualifying," Verstappen said. "So probably for me, that was a very enjoyable one."

Not for Perez, who finished second behind Verstappen and has not won since. He's acknowledged that his confidence was badly shaken, and it showed in the results after Miami: Perez was 16th in Monaco, fourth in Spain and sixth in Canada. He also went five straight races without qualifying in the top 10 despite Red Bull having easily the best car in F1.

"It's been a bit of a rough patch," Perez said after finishing second in Belgium. "I really look forward to not leaving the podium anymore from now until the end of the year."

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, who was third on Sunday, is also contending himself with podiums.

"This was the best we could

achieve today, no doubt," said Leclerc, who has not won a race since July 10 last year.

Verstappen is the youngest driver to win an F1 race, doing so when he was 18 years old on his Red Bull debut in 2016.

Now he's racing in his own world, alone in front as he chases more milestones and records.

If Verstappen wins on his home track at the Netherlands GP on Aug. 27, then he will equal Sebastian Vettel's record of nine straight wins from 2013, which was during Vettel's heyday with Red Bull.

Verstappen's own F1 record of 15 wins from last year also looks to set to be crushed.

Despite being only 25, he's already on 45 F1 wins overall.

Next on the list is four-time F1 champion Alain Prost, who is fourth all-time with 51 wins.

Such is Verstappen's intensity and thirst for victory that even Vettel's tally of 53 might even be within his reach this year.

It's increasingly hard to back against Verstappen. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**FRANCE SETS
 EXAMPLE AGAINST
 'DECOUPLING'**

Among the Western powers, France has distinguished itself with its diplomatic foresight and strategic autonomy, especially when it comes to handling relations with China. That France has always managed to achieve win-win cooperation with the world's second-largest economy despite the differences that exist between them underscores the solidity of the foundation of the bilateral relationship and the friendship between the two peoples.

Thus it will be to no one's surprise if French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire reaps fruitful results from his ongoing visit to China, which started on Saturday. How to gain wider Chinese market access for French companies and attract Chinese investment in France's electric car industry are on top of his agenda. "There is a need to improve access to the Chinese market. I think that was at the core of our discussions," Le Maire said in an interview, calling the trade talks he conducted with Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng on Saturday "constructive". The two senior officials co-chaired the ninth China-France High Level Economic and Financial Dialogue.

The visit is a sign of the sound momentum in the development of the two countries' economic and trade relations, as it comes at a time when the United States and many of its allies are pursuing a "de-risking from China strategy" to reduce what they call economic dependency on the country, after admitting complete "decoupling" is out of the question.

It would be constructive if France could use its deepening economic and trade cooperation with China to illustrate that any attempt to seek decoupling in the name of de-risking would mean breaking away from development opportunities. As Le Maire emphasized, de-risking does not mean that China is a risk.

During French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to China in April, the two countries' top leaders agreed to further open their markets to each other, and strengthen technological and industrial cooperation. The consensus has enabled bilateral economic and trade relations to continue to thrive. France has decided to extend Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei's 5G licenses in some cities.

Moreover, Le Maire said France is ready to welcome Chinese investments in France's auto industry, describing the scenario as "a very good thing".

China has not and will never pose any risks to any country seeking economic exchanges and partnership based on equality and mutual benefit. Rather, it provides a vast market and great business opportunities, as evidenced by the fact that Le Maire's visit has already seen important advances made in sectors such as cosmetics, aerospace, and food and beverages, which constitute the lion's share of France's exports to China. All this points to the bright prospects for Sino-French economic cooperation.

**FRENCH DAREDEVIL WHO CLIMBED TOWERS AROUND WORLD
 BELIEVED TO HAVE FALLEN TO HIS DEATH IN HONG KONG**

**THE
 BUZZ**

A French man is believed to have fallen to his death from a high-rise residential building in Hong Kong last week, police said yesterday, with local media outlets identifying him as daredevil Remi Lucidi.

Police said a 30-year-old man's body was found on a patio in the city's upscale Mid-Levels area. He was believed to have engaged in extreme sports, police said, without identifying him.

Officers conducted an initial investigation and said he apparently fell from a rooftop. No suicide note was found at the scene, they said. The cause of his death would have to be verified by an

autopsy, they added.

Local media, including the South China Morning Post, said the man was Lucidi, 30. The Post cited an unnamed source saying he was last seen alive knocking on a penthouse window on the 68th floor of a residential tower on Thursday evening. The Associated Press has not been able to verify his identity.

Lucidi, who used the name "Remi Enigma" on social media, last posted a photo of Hong Kong's night view a week ago on Instagram and tagged the location as Times Square in shopping district Causeway Bay.

AP PHOTO



E.U. President Ursula von der Leyen at a joint press conference, at the Malacanang Presidential Palace in Manila, yesterday

**EUROPE WON'T
 TOLERATE AGGRESSION:
 'NOT IN UKRAINE, NOT
 IN THE INDO-PACIFIC'**

**JIM GOMEZ, MANILA,
 PHILIPPINES**

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen warned on Monday that Europe won't tolerate aggression in Ukraine or the Indo-Pacific as she reaffirmed the EU's recognition of a 2016 arbitration decision that invalidated China's expansive claims in the disputed South China Sea.

Von der Leyen spoke at a joint news conference with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. after holding talks in Manila that aimed to bolster trade, economic and security relations. The leaders announced the 27-nation bloc would resume negotiations with the Philippines for a free-trade agreement that stalled in 2017 under Marcos's predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte.

She stressed the need for security cooperation, citing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which she said shows how authoritarian leaders "are willing to act on their threats."

"Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine shakes the foundation of the international order. It is in viola-

tion of the U.N. charter and the fundamental principles of international law, such as territorial integrity and sovereignty," she said.

"This is why Europe supports Ukraine's brave fight against the aggressor because the illegal use of force cannot be tolerated, not in Ukraine, not in the Indo-Pacific," von der Leyen said. "Security in Europe and security in the Indo-Pacific is indivisible. Challenges to the rules-based order in our interconnected world affect all of us."

"This is why we are concerned about the rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific," she said, adding that the EU backs a free and open Indo-Pacific "because an Indo-Pacific free of the threats of coercion is key to all our stability to our peace, and to the prosperity of our people."

Her veiled rhetoric echoed that of U.S. leaders, who have raised alarms over China's increasingly aggressive actions in the disputed South China Sea.

Without naming China, von der Leyen underscored the EU's recognition of a decision by a U.N.-backed tribunal that invalidated China's territorial claims in vir-

tually the entire waterway on historical grounds. China has rejected the arbitration decision as a sham and continues to defy it.

The award "is legally binding" and provides the basis for a peaceful resolution of the disputes, she said.

The European Union is ready to boost cooperation with the Philippines to foster regional maritime security by sharing information, carrying out threat assessments and bolstering the Philippine coast guard, she said.

China has warned the United States and its allies from meddling in what it says is a purely Asian dispute.

It has turned seven disputed reefs into missile-protected island bases in the last decade, further alarming Western governments and rival claimants, including the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

Von der Leyen's visit to the Philippines is a sign of improving ties after a stormy period between the EU and Duterte over human rights. It's the first such top-level visit in nearly six decades of relations with the Philippines. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Britain said yesterday it will grant hundreds of new oil and gas licenses in the North Sea in a bid for energy independence, ignoring calls from environmental campaigners and the United Nations to stop the development of new fossil fuel projects. The plans announced by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak include a pledge to invest 20 billion pounds in carbon capture and storage projects as Sunak maintained the government's commitment to eliminate net carbon emissions by 2050.

AP PHOTO



Greece's prime minister said yesterday that his government wants to take full advantage of a developing positive political climate with neighboring Turkey in order to improve bilateral relations despite a string of decades-old disputes. But Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said that doesn't mean Turkey has "substantially changed" its stance on key differences between the two countries and needs to "decisively abandon its aggressive and unlawful conduct" against Greece's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

AP PHOTO



Niger West African nations have given Niger's coup leaders one week to reinstate the country's democratically elected president and have threatened to use force if the demands aren't met. The announcement came at the end of an emergency meeting of West African countries Sunday in Nigeria, where the regional bloc, known as ECOWAS, convened to respond to last week's military takeover. President Mohamed Bazoum remains under house arrest and has yet to resign.