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AP PHOTO



Indonesian government bought 12 drones worth \$300 million from Turkish Aerospace as part of efforts to strengthen Indonesia's defense system, according to a written statement from the Indonesian Defense Ministry yesterday. The purchase aims to increase the variety, quantity and quality of Indonesia's military defense equipment with the contract signed Feb. 3 with Turkish Aerospace. The 12 units of ANKA drones are expected to be delivered before November 2025.

Taiwan has detained an army officer and several collaborators on suspicion of handing military secrets to China. The Taipei government said yesterday that a lieutenant colonel surnamed Hsieh and other defendants were suspected of having been recruited by China to leak national defense secrets and other information. The detentions come as military tensions between China and Taiwan continue to rise.

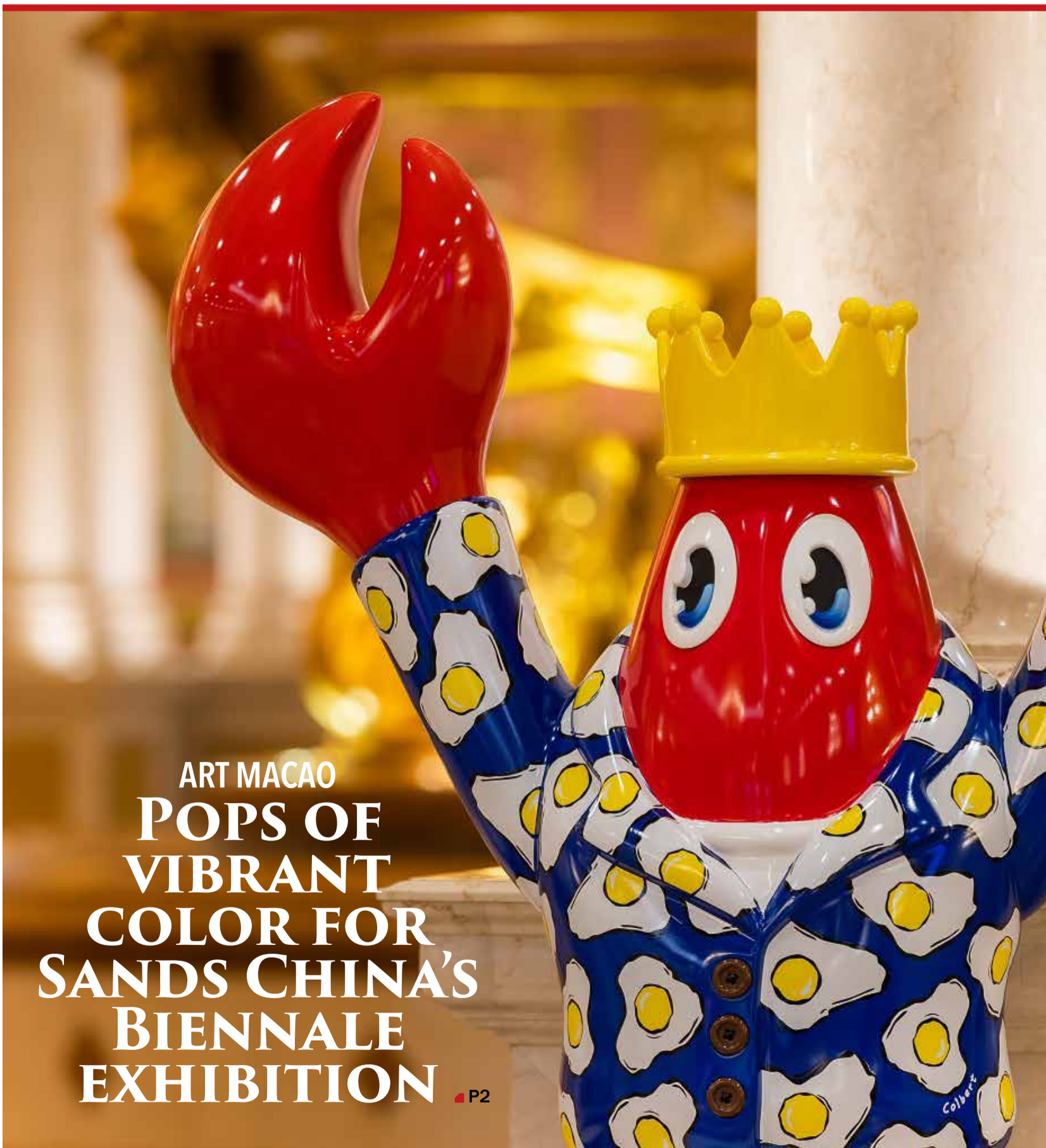
AP PHOTO



Ukraine Russian forces hit port infrastructure in southern Ukraine with drones close to the border with NATO member Romania, damaging a grain elevator and causing a huge fire at facilities that transport the country's crucial grain exports. Since leaving a deal that allowed Ukraine to export grain to world markets through the city of Odesa, Russia has hammered the country's ports with strikes.

GRUESOME MURDER IN ZHUHAI

PJ arrest Macau suspect in Zhuhai murder over petty dispute P3



ART MACAO
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ART MACAO

POPS OF VIBRANT COLOR FOR SANDS CHINA'S BIENNALE EXHIBITION



SANDS China's pop art exhibition for Art Macao, "Meet the Magic: In celebration of Disney 100" by Philip Colbert and Jason Naylor had its opening ceremony yesterday, with the exhibition aiming to spark hope and bring color to its properties.

The exhibition is one of the special exhibitions of Art Macao: Macao International Art Biennale 2023 and is on display Aug. 3-Oct. 15.

In the Meet the Magic exhibition, British contemporary pop artist Philip Colbert and American graffiti artist Jason Naylor each present their artistic interpretations of Mickey

Mouse, in celebration of Disney's 100th anniversary. Philip Colbert uses his mastery of pop art to revolutionize centuries of legend into his iconic larger-than-life lobster character, while Jason Naylor is known for employing a kaleidoscope of street art colors to transform giant installations.

Co-organised with Forward Fashion Holdings and curated by ASCE Diverse and Explorative Art Hub and ARTOX GROUP, the artists' outdoor installations, each over five meters, will be on display at The Parisian Macao's Le Jardin and The Venetian Macao's lagoon area.

Additionally, on Level 2 of The Londoner Macao, the brand new ASCE Diverse and Explorative Art Hub will showcase Disney's commemorative products launching in Macau for the first time.

Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd., said: "In a year defined by 'restart' and 'hope,' Sands China is so pleased to introduce to Macau these two international artists, whose vibrantly colored artworks inspire enthusiasm, hope and exhilaration."

"By inviting two internationally renowned artists to exhibit their iconic works at our resorts and collaborating with local artists in different formats, we hope to not only attract the attention of the global art community to Art Macao, but also to assist young artists in Macau in stepping onto the international stage," he added. LV

MACAU-LED RESEARCH DEVELOPS AI MODEL TO PREDICT COVID PATHOGENIC VARIANTS

An international team led by researchers at the Macau University of Science and Technology has developed an artificial intelligence (AI) model that can predict the pathogenic variants of Covid-19. Named UniBind, the model can predict which variants of Covid-19 can increase the infectibility of the virus or help it develop resistance to antibodies or vaccines, through analyzing the over six million pieces of viral sequence data generated from global monitoring, according to the team. The study was published in the latest edition of Nature Medicine, a monthly journal.

RECEPTION HELD TO CELEBRATE PLA FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Garrison in the SAR held a reception Tuesday to mark the 96th founding anniversary of the PLA at its barracks on Taipa Island, expressing gratitude to all walks of life in Macau for their long-time support. Yu Changjiang, commander of the Chinese PLA Garrison in Macau, said that the PLA Macau garrison will always stand with Macao compatriots, firmly support the Macao SAR government in governing Macau in accordance with the law as well as the economic and social development of the SAR, and make new and greater contributions to the successful practices of 'One country, two systems' in Macau.

GAMING

INCREASING INVESTMENT PROMISED BY GAMING OPS: WILFRED WONG

ALL six casino operators have promised the government that, over the next 10 years, during the new concession period, the integrated operators will promote the non-gaming

aspects of their work, Sands China president Wilfred Wong has reiterated.

Speaking on the sidelines of the gaming operator's art exhibition opening yesterday,

Wong said, "We're contributing to creating a more colorful spectrum of life in Macau. We're not just investing in culture and sports. We're also investing in health, MICE and [other areas].

We're honoring our promise."

This year, the six gaming concessionaires will all, unlike in previous years, sponsor the upcoming Grand Prix with MOP20 million each - representing a 421% increase in contributions as last year's combined contribution was only MOP28.5 million.

In Art Macao, the big

six have also invited and commissioned their own artists to present their exhibitions.

"Every year we have a masterplan. Every quarter, we monitor the performance. [Investment] could be doubling or tripling, depending on the need. I think Macau citizens and tourists can expect a more colorful Macau in the coming years," said Wong. LV

SANDWICH-CLASS HOUSING BILL MAY BE ENACTED IN APRIL

ANTHONY LAM

THE Third Standing Committee of the parliament has completed its study of the Sandwich-class Housing Bill, which may be enacted in April next year if passed.

The second reading of the bill has been set for Aug. 15.

Committee president Vong Hin Fai told a press conference the government has taken into account all opinions provided by committee members, expanding the bill from 54 articles

to 56. The additional articles relate to electronic procedures, proposing that an electronic platform be established. Applicants should submit required documents digitally and any relevant notifications from the government should be sent digitally as well.

The aim of the bill has also been changed to helping Macau residents in specific financial circumstances, with income and asset conditions, solve housing problems, in particular helping them obtain residences.

The amended bill

proposes that only non-residents be required to submit copies of identification documents.

Per the bill, this type of housing will have a 16 year blackout period from the date of delivery of each unit, during which units can only be resold to permanent residents of Macau.

It is proposed in the bill that, should an owner become unable to repay a mortgage during the blackout period, the proceeds from auction will be used to repay the government before the bank.



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No regrets for local swimmer despite low pay for athletes

ANTHONY LAM

A local swimmer has expressed no regrets for going professional, despite the city's low remuneration for athletes, Hong Kong media has reported.

Dubbed the "King of Breaststroke of Macau," with 29 local records under his belt, 27-year-old swimmer Terence Chao Man Hou recently completed his journey to the 20th World Aquatics Championships, held in Fukuoka, Japan between July 14 and 30. The swimmer finished 27th and 38th in the Men's 50-meter and 100-meter events, with times of 27.84 seconds and 1 minute, 2.19 seconds respectively.

Chao finished the 50-meter event in the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games two places ahead of Japanese swimmer Daiya Seto.



Macau swimmer Terence Chao

Despite these good results, he did not get commensurate time in the limelight. In an in-

terview with Hong Kong media outlet HK01, he conceded that the most famous attractions in

Macau are Portuguese custard tarts, casinos and the Macau Grand Prix.

Following his achievements at the Asian Games, he made it to elite athlete accreditation, but said that he is only mid-stream.

The news report cited the Sports Bureau of Macau's disclosure that elite athletes are entitled to remuneration ranging from MOP1,500 to MOP25,000 per month, with the highest level going to gold medalists at World Championships or Asian Games.

Chao told the Hong Kong media outlet that there are not many full-time or professional athletes in Macau. Many consider ending their sporting careers early, and he suspects the cause is the lack of participation in the Olympic Games.

Having decided to go professional, life has not been easy. To Chao, glory comes first, as he told the media that he wants to show Macau to the world.

Several days ago, the government published its criteria for talent acquisition, under which world champion athletes and Olympic or Asian Games gold medalists will be eligible to apply for residency in Macau.

CRIME

PJ arrest local suspect in Zhuhai murder over apartment noise

RENATO MARQUES

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) announced yesterday morning in a special press conference that a local 44-year-old man has been detained, suspected of having killed another man aged 54, also local, during a brawl in the neighboring city of Zhuhai.

According to the PJ, the incident occurred in the early hours of Monday (July 31), when the suspect and his wife were partying in an apartment building.

It is suspected that the victim, annoyed by the noise, confronted the suspect at his door and an argument began.

A few minutes later, in the heat of the discussion, the suspect is alleged to have challenged the victim to go downstairs and fight.

In the middle of the fistfight which eventuated, the suspect is suspected to have taken a pair of scissors from a nearby fruit stall and stabbed the victim, fleeing the scene immediately after.



The victim eventually died from the stab wounds.

Alerted by the Zhuhai authorities, local police detained the suspect the same day at the Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal, where he was preparing to leave Macau for Hong Kong.

Questioned by the PJ, the suspect admitted having used the scissors to stab the victim at least twice, once in the thigh and again in the abdomen.

Although the two residents of Macau seemed to

live in the same building in Zhuhai, Gongbei district, the police said that they did not know each other and had no history of previous disputes.

It is suspected that the brawl started over the trading of insults related to noise coming from the apartment of the suspect and escalated due to alcohol consumption.

A forensic examination of the body of the victim to ascertain cause of death is ongoing.

AL PLENARY

PARLIAMENT ADDS MOP7M TO ITS BUDGET THIS YEAR

ANTHONY LAM

THE parliament passed an internal bill Tuesday to add MOP7 million of spending to its budget this year, pushing the budget as high as MOP205.6 million.

The additional budget is required for salaries, business trips and maintenance for the exterior and interior of the parliament building.

Introducing the bill, the parliament's Executive Council president, Angela Leong, said that more trips will take place this year as society returns to normal. It is also expected that the number of plenary and committee meetings in the second half of the year will increase compared to last year. In addition, a new consultant was hired earlier this year, requiring additional funds for salaries and remuneration.

With this amendment, personnel costs have increased by MOP2.5 million (1.48%) and operational costs by MOP4.9 million or 20.03%.

Before this, the parlia-



ANTHONY LAM

ment's plenary also passed the Unitary Police Service Amendment Bill for its first reading. The major change is that the Financial Intelligence Office (GIF) will be acquired by the Unitary Police Service (SPU) if the bill becomes law.

Lawmakers Nick Lei and Ron Lam asked government representatives about the legal status of the GIF, the transition of its team, as well as the improvement in efficiency after the merger of the GIF.

Secretary of Security Wong Sio Chak responded by explaining that the status of the acquired office will not change, although the government had contemplated lowering

its status. Due to international requirements, the office must retain its independence and sufficient resources. As a result, its legal status will remain after "thorough discussions at the Executive Council," Wong confirmed. All 40 employees will be transferred to the SPU after the acquisition.

Wong added that the acquisition will improve mutual support between the office and police.

A copy of the bill was emailed to the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units, which refrained from making comment, as it normally only provides opinions on promulgated laws or regulations.

LYNZY VALLES

GAMING

MELCO Resorts & Entertainment's operating revenue for the second quarter of 2023 jumped to USD947.9 million, an increase of approximately 220% from USD296.1 million for the comparable period in 2022.

The increase in total operating revenues is primarily due to improved performance in all gaming segments and non-gaming operations, but is also partially attributable to the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions in the city, the openings of Studio City Phase 2's Epic Tower and indoor waterpark in April 2023 and the launch of residency concerts at Studio City in the same month.

Operating income for the second quarter of 2023 was USD64.3 million, compared with an operating loss of USD209.2 million in the second quarter of 2022.

Losses also narrowed as the company reported a net loss of USD23.4 million for the quarter – significantly reduced from the USD251.5 million loss recorded the previous year.

Lawrence Ho, chairman and CEO, said "the strength of our Macau recovery is evident in the 43% increase in gross gaming re-

MELCO LOSSES NARROW AS REVENUE JUMPS TO USD948M



MDT ARCHIVE

venue in the second quarter of 2023 compared to the first quarter of 2023. We've seen mass drop increase month-to-month and

turnover in our premium direct VIP segment continued to exceed 2019 [levels] during the second quarter."

Earnings, meanwhile, are still not at a level of gross gaming revenue to produce an increase on the 2019 EBITDA.

This is partially due to the lower-spending customer profile that the business has attracted post-Covid.

"If you look at the air lifts going into Macau right now, it is probably at around 50%," Ho said in an earnings call, adding that Macau, "over the last six months, since the recovery has started, has become very much a weak end-market."

Earlier this year, Macau casinos were forced to close thousands of hotel rooms due to labor shortages, with operators unprepared for the opening of borders.

One contributing factor was the lengthy processes for hiring new non-resident workers, as these workers need to come from their country to process employment paperwork.

However, Ho said that labor supply issues in Macau have largely been resolved.

"We have been able to provide our customers with Melco's full suite of services and amenities. We expect to add another 560 hotel rooms to our portfolio with the opening of W Macau at Studio City in September and are well positioned to support the continuing increase of customers in Macau," he said.

CRIME

DRIVERS CHARGED FOR DANGEROUS DRIVING AFTER 'STREET RACE' AT AV. DR. SUN YAT-SEN

RENATO MARQUES

TWO local drivers in their thirties are being charged with dangerous driving under the provisions of Article 279(b) of the Macau Penal Code, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) has confirmed.

The police launched an investigation into the drivers' behavior after onboard footage from one of the cars was uploaded and spread quickly on several social media platforms.

The PSP said the case occurred on July 29 and noted that, according to the road monitoring system, the drivers chased each other at high speed on the Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, reaching a maximum speed of about 160 km/h, far above the 60 km/h speed limit.

The PSP noted that, in addition to the high speed, the drivers changed lanes recklessly, overtaking other vehicles including in areas with a continuous lane line and over traffic island marking zones and committed other traffic rule offenses, "seriously endangering the lives of other road



users."

Line (b) of article 279 of the Penal Code states that those found guilty of driving a motorized vehicle and offensively violating the road rules, creating danger to life, danger to the physical integrity of others, or danger to other people's high-value property, are to be punished with imprisonment for up to three years or an equivalent fine.

The PSP advised that the drivers have already been questioned and acknowledged

the incident, and told the police that they did not know each other before this event and that the dangerous stunts were not planned.

The case has been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office for further investigation and accusation of the suspects.

In light of the case, the PSP has appealed to road users to refrain from any dangerous behavior that might affect their safety as well as that of other road users.

ISLANDS DISTRICT ADVISOR SUGGESTS HENGQIN CHECKPOINT OPERATE UNDER T8

ANTHONY LAM

A municipal affairs advisor has suggested normal operations for the Hengqin Border checkpoint under typhoon signal number eight or higher.

Advisor Si Lai Kuan, who is also deputy executive director at the Macau United Citizens Association, suggested the governments of Macau and Hengqin consider opening the Hengqin checkpoint even under extreme weather circumstances.

She supported her plan by saying that, under typhoon signal eight or higher, land border checkpoints on the Macau side remain in normal operation, but not the Hengqin checkpoint, causing inconvenience to those needing to return to mainland China through the checkpoint. Under typhoon signal eight or higher, public transport is suspended. Taxi drivers have the discretion to decide whether



to operate.

The lawyer added that, with the completion of the bridges between the Hengqin border and the University of Macau, as well as the future operations of the Light Rapid Transit to Hengqin, conditions for normal operation of the checkpoint exist.

Meanwhile, advisor Vong Vai Tin, regular deputy president of the Four Temples Charity Association of Coloane, pointed out that the confusion around taxi services under typhoon signal eight or higher will jeopardize Macau's

image as a tourism destination.

Apart from increasing the number of taxis, residents and tourists should also be advised to limit outdoor movement under such weather circumstances, he said. In addition, he suggested the government take the lead in inaugurating a digital taxi-hiring platform to compensate for the lack of available taxis.

Information to tourists about weather conditions and service suspensions should also be improved, the advisor added.

F&B

Starbucks reports record revenue as China booms

DEE-ANN DURBIN

STARBUCKS reported record revenue in its fiscal third quarter as its China business roared back to life.

Still, the company's results were mixed for the 13 weeks ending July 2. While its earnings surpassed Wall Street's forecast, its revenue and same-store sales were lower than expected as North American store traffic slowed.

Starbucks shares were down 1% in after-market trading Tuesday.

Same-store sales — or sales at stores open at least a year — jumped 46% in China, reversing last year's declines due to COVID restrictions. At Chinese stores opened in 2019 or earlier, morning routines are fully back to 2019 levels, the company said.

Starbucks CEO Laxman Narasimhan, who spent part of the quarter visiting stores in China, noted that the company now has a record 20 million active Starbucks Rewards users in the country. And he said he's convinced there's a long runway ahead. Narasimhan noted that Chinese consumers drink an average of 12 cups of coffee per year; U.S. customers drink 380.

"We are still in our early days in China," Narasimhan said during a conference call with investors.



But North American same-store sales growth slowed to 7% after three quarters of double-digit gains. Customers paid more for their drinks and food, and revenue rose 11% to a record \$6.7 billion for the region. But customer traffic was up just 1%.

Narasimhan said new equipment, including warming ovens and cold foam blenders, have now rolled out to all U.S. company-operated stores and are improving service times. Cold drinks now make up 75% of Starbucks' U.S. beverage sales, he said, and cold foam is the fastest-growing add-on.

The Seattle-based coffee giant said its overall revenue

rose 12% to \$9.2 billion in the quarter. Analysts had expected revenue of \$9.3 billion, according to FactSet.

Starbucks' global same-store sales increase of 10% was also lower than Wall Street's forecast of 11%.

The company's net income rose 25% to \$1.1 billion, or 99 cents per share. Excluding restructuring costs, the company earned \$1 per share. That was higher than the 95 cents analysts forecast.

Starbucks Chief Financial Officer Rachel Ruggeri said the company now expects its full-year earnings to grow 16% to 17% this year. The company had previously forecast growth of 15% to 20%.

MDT/AP

MEDIA

MAINE'S BIGGEST NEWSPAPER GROUP IS NOW A NONPROFIT

WITH advertising shrinking and newspapers vanishing, Maine's largest newspaper group became the latest to try a nonprofit model with the completion of the sale of more than 20 daily and weekly newspapers, including the Portland Press Herald.

The National Trust for Local News, which already owns two dozen newspapers in Colorado, is expanding its portfolio through the purchase of five daily newspapers and 17 weekly newspapers that were part of Masthead Maine. Former Masthead owner Reade Brower retained ownership of several weeklies that weren't part of the deal.

The newspapers will now fall under the umbrella of the Maine Trust for Local News with the closing of the deal yesterday [Macau time]. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

The deal, which covers all of the state's daily newspapers except the Bangor Daily News, represents a trend toward a nonprofit business model as newspapers continue to struggle.

"I wouldn't say it's sweeping the country but we're seeing this trend. And it's a healthy one.

Commercial news organizations are struggling from loss of

advertising revenue," said Tim Franklin, senior associate dean and leader of the Local News Initiative at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism.

The transformation from a commercial business to a nonprofit was a positive outcome compared to other alternatives including corporate ownership that could have been more focused on making cuts to maximize profits, executives told Portland Press Herald employees at a meeting and celebration in South Portland.

"Too many corporate news owners across the country have abandoned their missions in the name of short-term profits. That will not happen here," Steve Greenlee, editor of the Portland Press Herald, told The Associated Press in a statement.

Former Masthead Maine CEO Lisa DeSisto, who will continue her leadership role as CEO and publisher of the Maine Trust for Local News, called the deal "an incredible outcome for our

Local news is in crisis with the nation losing a quarter of its newspapers since 2005 and advertising revenue declining by as much as 80% over a decade, Franklin said.

MDT/AP



CORPORATE BITS

Wynn presents new immersive art exhibition for Art Macao



Wynn officially unveiled a new immersive art exhibition "The Contour of Light: A Re-encounter with Leonardo da Vinci" as part of the Art Macao: Macao International Art Biennale 2023.

Until October 15 at Wynn Palace, "the multisensory exhibition will use cutting edge technology including Holograms, light and shadow projections and Virtual Reality (VR) to create an unparalleled, 360 degree holistic experience," the gaming operator said in a statement.

The exhibition also aims to bring an immersive cul-

tural atmosphere to the entire city as a gallery and an art garden.

The exhibition is designed to lead visitors on a journey that follows and retraces Leonardo da Vinci's life and works through the modernity of images, lights and sounds.

Complementing the digital art, the exhibits use Virtual Reality (VR) and Hologram technology as well as computer-built 3D spaces with visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory simulated experiences to break through the barriers of traditional, physical exhibitions.

In tandem with the grand opening, Wynn also hosted an engaging art semi-

nar to discuss in an effort to encourage more people to explore the city's rich cultural and artistic events, while also integrating art and culture into the community.

In her welcome speech, Linda Chen, president and vice chairman of the Board of Wynn Macau, Limited, said that "elegance and intellect are intertwined with Wynn's artistic vision."

Wynn pledged to continue to "play a proactive role in advancing Macau's cultural industries, promoting the integration of 'culture and art + tourism', creating local cultural tourism offerings, and contributing much more toward achieving moderately diversified economic development."

ANDY WONG &
HUIZHONG WU, ZHUZHOU

WEATHER

CHINA'S capital has recorded its heaviest rainfall in at least 140 years over the past few days after being deluged with heavy rains from the remnants of Typhoon Doksuri.

The city recorded 744.8 millimeters of rain between Saturday and yesterday morning, the Beijing Meteorological Bureau said.

Beijing and the surrounding province of Hebei have been hit by severe flooding because of the record rainfall, with waters rising to dangerous levels. The rain destroyed roads and knocked out power and even pipes carrying drinking water. It flooded rivers surrounding the capital, leaving cars waterlogged, while lifting others onto bridges meant for pedestrians.

Among the hardest hit areas is Zhuozhou, a small city in Hebei province that borders Beijing's southwest. On Tuesday night, police there issued a plea on social media for lights to assist with rescue work.

It's unknown how many people are trapped in flood-stricken areas in the city and surrounding villages.

Yesterday, waters in Gu'an county in Hebei, which borders Zhuozhou, reached as high as halfway up a pole where a surveillance camera was installed.

Gu'an county resident Liu Jiwen, 58, was evacuated from his village on Tuesday night. "There's nothing we can do. It's natural disaster," he said.

Two other people were trying to pass through the flooded areas to

rescue a relative trapped in a nearby village.

Nearly 850,000 people have been relocated, local authorities in Hebei province said.

Yesterday, the number of confirmed deaths from the torrential rains around Beijing rose to 21 after the body of a rescuer was recovered. Wang Hong-chun, 41, was with other rescuers in a rubber boat when it flipped over in a rapidly flowing river. Four of her teammates survived.

At least 26 people remain missing from the rains.

The previous record for rainfall was in 1891, the Beijing Meteorological Bureau said yesterday, when the city received 609 millimeters of rain. The earliest precise measurements made by machines are from 1883.

Thousands of people were evacuated to shelters in schools and other public buildings in suburban Beijing and in nearby cities. The central government is disbursing 44 million yuan (\$6.1 million) for disaster relief in affected provinces.

The severity of the flooding took the Chinese capital by surprise. Beijing usually has dry summers but had a stretch of record-breaking heat this year.

The record rainfall from Typhoon Doksuri may not be the last.

Beijing records 29 inches of rain, its most in at least 140 years



Residents are evacuated by rubber boats through flood waters in Zhuozhou in Hebei province

KHANUN MOVES TOWARD CHINA AFTER POUNDING OKINAWA

A powerful typhoon slammed Okinawa and other islands in southwestern Japan yesterday with high winds injuring more than 20 people as it moved west making its way toward mainland China.

Typhoon Khanun, which means jackfruit in Thai, was heading west at speeds of 10 kph, packing surface winds of up to 180 kph. It was at sea southwest of Okinawa's main island, according to the Japan Meteorological

Agency.

Twenty-two people were injured, most of them minor, according to the Okinawa prefectural government. The typhoon damaged homes and forced transportation to halt and stores to close as it slowly moved west.

In the Ogimi village in northeastern Okinawa, a man was found without vital signs after a garage collapsed on him due to violent wind, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency said. Several other homes were also damaged.

Hundreds of domestic and international flights in and out of

the Naha airport were canceled, and public transportation, including buses, light rail transit systems and ferries connecting the region's islands, were suspended.

Violent weather hit the region as the typhoon traveled slowly westward to the East China Sea.

Up to 20 centimeters of rainfall were expected in the Okinawa region by midday Thursday, the agency said.

Officials warned residents against flying objects due to violent winds and urged them to stay indoors and away from windows. **MDT/AP**

DIPLOMACY

US concerned with Chinese firm's hand in island-building near its Manila embassy



Barges are seen beside reclamation sites in the rain in Manila bay

THE United States has expressed concerns over major land reclamation projects in Manila Bay near its heavily secured embassy due to the involvement of a Washington-blacklisted Chinese company, the U.S. Embassy said yesterday.

American Embassy spokesperson Kanishka Gangopadhyay said the U.S. also expressed its concerns over the potential environmental impact of the ongoing reclamations in Manila Bay in discussions with Philippine government officials.

Environmental groups have staged protests against the yearslong government-approved re-

clamations, mostly by real estate companies seeking to build islands on which to anchor upscale hotels, casinos, restaurants and entertainment centers in a bay long notorious for pollution. Others worry that high-rise buildings built on reclaimed land would block ordinary folks' view of Manila Bay's famous sunset.

"We have expressed concerns about the potential negative long-term and irreversible impacts to the environment, the resilience to natural hazards of Manila and nearby areas, and to commerce," Gangopadhyay said in a statement.

"We are also concerned that the projects have ties

to the China Communications Construction Co., which has been added to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Entity List for its role in helping the Chinese military construct and militarize artificial islands in the South China Sea," he said.

There was no immediate comment from Chinese government officials.

Chinese companies that have been placed on the list are restricted from trading with any U.S. firms without gaining a nearly unobtainable special license. China protests the U.S. sanctions as illegal.

The state-owned China Communications Construction Co. has said that

one of its subsidiaries, China Harbour Engineering Company Ltd., was involved in a project that includes building three artificial islands at the bay near suburban Pasay city in the capital region.

Washington does not lay a claim to the South China Sea but has said that freedom of navigation and overflight in the strategic passage — where a bulk of the world's trade transits — and the peaceful resolution of the decades-long disputes were in the U.S. national interest.

The long-simmering territorial conflicts have become a delicate front in the U.S.-China rivalry. U.S. warships and fighter jets have patrolled the disputed waters to challenge China's expansive territorial claims, often provoking Chinese warnings for the U.S. to stop meddling in the disputes or face unspecified punitive steps. **MDT/AP**

AUSTRALIA

Senate committee recommends ban on TikTok be extended to WeChat

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

AN Australian Senate committee has recommended a ban on the Chinese-owned video-sharing app TikTok from federal government devices be extended to China's most popular social media platform, WeChat.

The Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media also recommended in a report late Tuesday night that social media giants such as Facebook and Twitter should become more transparent or be fined.

Committee chair James Paterson said yesterday the report's recommendations would make Australia a more difficult target for the serious foreign interference risks that the nation faced.

"It tackles both the problems posed by authoritarian-headquartered social media platforms like TikTok and WeChat and Western-headquartered social media platforms being weaponized by the actions of authoritarian go-



vernments including Facebook, YouTube and Twitter," Paterson told reporters.

The committee was established last year to examine uses of social media that undermine Australia's democracy and values,

including the spread of misinformation and disinformation.

The committee found that "China and other authoritarian regimes continue to pose an unacceptable risk to democracies" through targeted online

disinformation campaigns that leverage social media platforms "to skew public debate and undermine trust in institutions."

The committee was particularly concerned by ByteDance-owned TikTok and Tencent-owned WeChat, which is popular with the Chinese diaspora in Australia, because they were run by Chinese authorities, the report said.

Australia in April became the last of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing partners that include the United States, Canada, Britain and New Zealand to ban TikTok from government devices on the advice of security agencies.

The committee recommended the government consider extending that ban because WeChat posed similar data security and foreign interference risks.

Tencent said it was reviewing the report in detail and was committed to protecting user privacy.

"While we disagree with the depiction of WeChat in the report, we will continue to work

with stakeholders in Australia to address any further concerns and ensure Australians can continue connecting with others through WeChat," a Tencent statement said.

The committee also recommended that large social media platforms that operate in Australia meet a minimum set of transparency requirements that are enforceable with fines.

Meta, owner of Facebook and YouTube, and Twitter did not immediately respond to requests for comment yesterday.

Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil said her government would consider the report's recommendations and respond at a later date.

The government was already taking concrete action, including a review of security challenges associated with social media companies, taking into account information provided by Australian national security agencies, her office said in a statement. **MDT/AP**

NORTH KOREA

KIM CALLS US HUMAN RIGHTS ENVOY A 'POLITICAL HOUSEMAID' IN PROTEST OF CRITICISMS

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

NORTH Korea hurled misogynistic insults yesterday at a newly confirmed United States special envoy to monitor the country's human rights issues and warned of unspecified security consequences if Washington continues to criticize its human rights conditions.

The statement published by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency described Julie Turner as a "wicked woman" who was picked by the Biden administration as a "political housemaid" to launch groundless attacks on the country's human rights record.

The U.S. Senate confirmed Turner's appointment July 27. She previously served as the director of East Asia and the Pacific at the State Department.

The statement said the



Biden administration's public criticism of North Korea's human rights situation highlighted its hostility toward Pyongyang in the face of an intensifying nuclear standoff between the countries. KCNA described Turner's past criticisms of North Korea's human rights record as absurd, and said the U.S. "revels in meddling in the internal affairs of a sovereign state and slandering it."

"Turner should know that she was chosen as a

political housemaid and scapegoat for the 'human rights' plots to pressure the DPRK, a poor policy set forth by the Biden administration driven into a scrape in the DPRK-U.S. nuclear confrontation," the agency said, using the initials of the North's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The agency said the continued U.S. criticism on North Korean human rights issues could "backfire on it, spawning severe security issues." **MDT/AP**

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PORTUGAL

Pope hopes to inspire at World Youth Day as the church reckons with a sex abuse fallout

NICOLE WINFIELD & HELENA ALVES, LISBON

POPE Francis arrived in Portugal yesterday to open the first edition of World Youth Day since the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of large gatherings, as he hopes to inspire the next generation of Catholics while coping with the church's ongoing clergy sexual abuse scandal.

More than 1 million young people from around the world were expected to attend the gathering in Lisbon, which takes place over several days.

Francis' plane arrived on a dull, warm day in the Portuguese capital, though the skies were forecast to clear and temperatures were expected to hit 35 C by the weekend's final papal Mass. The pontiff, in a wheelchair, was met on the tarmac by Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa accompanied by two young children.

Busloads of pilgrims started arriving before Tuesday and braced for the high summer temperatures at the open-air events.

"Stay hydrated!" read a slogan promoted by Portuguese health authorities for the event. Prime Minister António Costa advised youth day volunteers Monday to carry a lot of water with them and a hat because of the heat.

Cardinal-elect Américo Aguiar, a Lisbon bishop who is organizing the festival, said that two years of COVID-19 lockdowns made this year's edition of World Youth Day unique. He said it was an important encounter for Catholic youths, especially with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and economic uncertainties around the globe.

"The pope always says this event is the joy and the possibility of coming together, of the culture of coming together," Aguiar said in an interview. "After such limitations and difficulties, young people from all over the world will be able to meet again, with certain freedom."



Portugal's President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa speaks with Pope Francis at the Welcome Ceremony at the Belem presidential palace in Lisbon

In the afternoon, Francis makes his way to the 16th-century Jeronimos Monastery and church, arguably Portugal's greatest monument. There, he met with the Portuguese Catholic hierarchy, which recently began the process of reckoning with its legacy of clergy sexual abuse.

Portuguese bishops were widely criticized for their initial response to the findings of an independent commission, which reported in February that at least 4,815 boys and girls were abused in the country since 1950, most of them ranging in age from 10 to 14.

The bishops long insisted there were only a handful of cases, and they initially balked at suspending active members of the clergy who were named in the commission's report. They also flip-flopped on paying reparations to victims, at first insisting they would only pay if ordered to by court rulings.

The Portuguese Catholic Church also promised in March to build a memorial to victims that would be unveiled during World Youth Day, but organizers scrapped the plan a few weeks ago.

In its place, victims' advocates launched a campaign called "This is our memorial." Hours before the pope arrived, they put up a billboard in central Lisbon re-

ding "4,800+ Children Abused." They said it was paid for by a crowdfunding campaign that was so successful they have enough money to put up more around the city. It didn't lie on the pope's route during his stay.

St. John Paul II launched World Youth Day in the 1980s as a way to invigorate the next generation of Catholics in their faith, and the event is returning to European soil for the first time since 2016.

Ukrainian and Russian youths were expected to attend, and the war in Ukraine will likely take center stage Saturday when Francis visits Fatima, the Catholic shrine which for over a century has been associated with an apocalyptic prophecy about peace and Russia.

"I think World Youth Day brings hope, after the pandemic, after being locked down, not able to live our faith as we were used to, as we wished for," Alfredo Hernández, a World Youth Day volunteer from Guatemala, said. "The event gives a ray of hope to get out on the streets again."

Hot weather could be an issue during the five-day visit, given temperatures in Lisbon are expected to hit 35 C (95 F) on Sunday. Many young people were expected to camp out in the vast, unshaded Tagus Park starting Saturday afternoon, first

to participate in an evening vigil and then to be in place Sunday morning for Francis' final Mass.

Organizers said they installed 32 water tanks with 640 taps for filling water bottles, while the Lisbon City Council says it doubled the number of drinking fountains in the city to around 400.

Registered participants are receiving reusable water bottles and sunhats in their welcome knapsacks, but some were more worried for Francis, given his weakened condition: The 86-year-old Argentine pope was hospitalized for nine days in June to repair a hernia and remove scar tissue from previous intestinal surgeries.

Francis, who travels with a doctor and nurse on his foreign trips, is likely to refer to the heat given his repeated alarm about climate change, including as recently as last week, when he urged action in the face of wildfires ravaging Greece.

"I'm going to pray that he is going to be OK," said Theresa Guettler, a nurse from Florida who is volunteering at the event.

She recommended that Francis stay hydrated and follow his medical team's advice.

"I trust that he has good doctors and good people taking care of him," Guettler said. MDT/AP

this day in history

2003 ANGLICAN CHURCH APPROVES GAY BISHOP



The Anglican Church in America has voted to approve the appointment of an openly gay bishop.

The Reverend Canon Gene Robinson, of New Hampshire, was approved by a substantial majority of the Episcopal Church's House of Deputies, composed of clergy and lay people.

The vote must be confirmed by the House of Bishops tomorrow, but correspondents say it is likely this vote will also be in favour of Mr Robinson.

The decision has brought an angry reaction from conservatives and religious leaders in the US and all over the world.

Some have already threatened to walk out if the vote goes in Mr Robinson's favour, and join a breakaway faction with supporters from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean outside the Anglican Convention.

Mr Robinson described himself as "calm but joyous" after the vote, and said he hoped the decision would lead to growth rather than a split in the church.

"I think I can do more for gay and lesbian folk in the Church by being a good bishop than by being the gay bishop," he said.

Mr Robinson is a divorced father of two and has lived with his male partner for 14 years.

His supporters have also stood by him throughout the storm his appointment has stirred up, and simply ask that he should be judged and celebrated for the work he does.

Religious leaders in the UK have also warned that the decision could split the Church of England.

The Anglican Church has traditionally tolerated a wide spectrum of beliefs, and its communion includes about 80 million people worldwide.

But the current controversy seems likely to stretch the elastic nature of the church to breaking point.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The vote by the House of Bishops to confirm Gene Robinson's appointment was delayed after allegations of sexual misconduct were made against him.

The charges were dropped, and on 5 August - a day late - the House of Bishops voted for the Anglican Church's first openly gay bishop by a two-thirds majority.

An emergency meeting of Anglican Church leaders at Lambeth Palace in October 2003 strongly rebuked the American Episcopal Church for the appointment, but stopped short of expelling the church outright.

Gene Robinson was consecrated in November 2003, amid further objections voiced during the service, and took up his post in March 2004.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Be careful not to consume too many spicy foods, or minor health problems could put you out of commission for the day. Get involved in physical activities that will stimulate you.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
A lack of support and negativity have been the main problems. Sign up for courses that will help you understand yourself better. Don't be too quick to voice your opinion.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
You will be misinterpreted if you get involved in other people's problems. Lowered vitality could affect your work. Abrupt changes concerning your professional position are evident.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Get involved in physical activities that will stimulate you. You can help them with difficult projects. You will have a problem sorting out your true feelings when it comes to your relationship.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Involvement in fitness clubs will be conducive to engaging romantic connections. Entertainment could be pleasing if it is of an energetic nature.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Try spending the day catching up on any responsibilities that need to be taken care of. Sudden changes regarding work and colleagues are apparent.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
If you're uncertain of your feelings, keep your opinions to yourself. Clear up domestic chores that have remained undone for some time.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Don't let relatives make demands of you. Your mate may be distressed if you refuse to make a commitment. You should be doing something special with children.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
If you've been really busy, try to schedule some time to spend with loved ones. Try to avoid functions that will bring you in contact with those you find difficult to get along with.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Your romantic inclination should lead to a committed relationship. Opportunities to get together with people in powerful positions could help you get ahead.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Empty promises are evident. Your ability to deal with humanitarian groups will enhance your reputation. Keep important information to yourself.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
You may want to take another look at the investment you are about to make. Rid yourself of that which is old and no longer of use.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

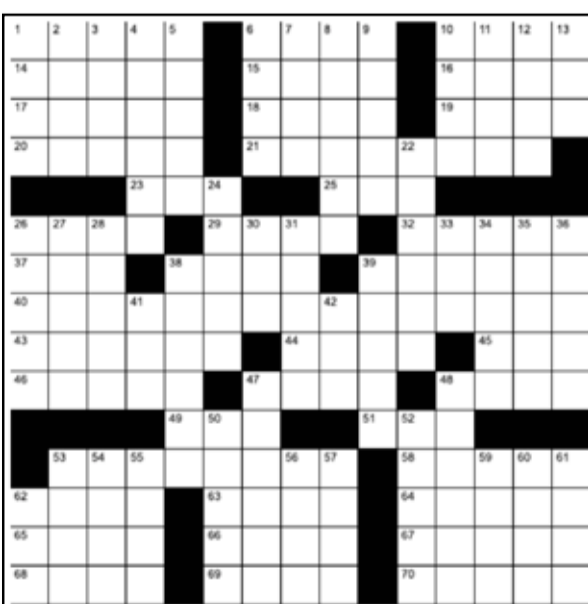
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	26	34	overcast
Changchun	23	29	rain
Chengdu	23	29	showers
Chongqing	26	33	rain
Fuzhou	27	36	cloudy
Guangzhou	27	35	cloudy
Guiyang	20	27	showers
Haikou	25	32	rain
Hangzhou	26	33	thunderstorms
Harbin	22	27	rain
Hefei	24	34	fine
Nanjing	26	34	cloudy
Shanghai	27	32	overcast
Taipei	26	28	rain
Wuhan	27	36	cloudy
Hong Hong	27	30	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	19	29	overcast
Frankfurt	14	21	rain
Paris	14	19	rain
London	14	22	overcast
New York	21	28	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Joe; 5- Perched on; 9- After John in the NT; 13- Follows orders; 15- Electronics g Toward the stem; 6- Treaty; 10- Director Vittorio De ___; 14- Vive ___; 15- Switch back?; 16- Molecular component; 17- Funny Anne; 18- Melodies; 19- Underlying cause; 20- Pianist Rubinstein; 21- Authorization; 23- Damage; 25- Seine contents; 26- Chooses; 29- Charles Lamb's pen name; 32- Hiding place; 37- Filled pastry crust; 38- Witnessed; 39- Rarely encountered; 40- Typical instance; 43- Passenger ships; 44- School founded by Henry VI; 45- Part of the Holy Trinity; 46- Bobby of the Black Panthers; 47- German Mrs; 48- Spanakopita ingredient; 49- Candle count; 51- Shot; 53- Stringed musical instrument; 58- Stan's pal; 62- He played Ricky; 63- Fork feature; 64- Flaming; 65- Actor Stoltz; 66- Some time ago; 67- Copter part; 68- Highest point; 69- At hand; 70- Dictation taker;

DOWN 1- Soprano Gluck; 2- Ale, e.g.; 3- Smell ___; 4- Public meetings; 5- Ornamental coronet; 6- Legumes; 7- Met highlight; 8- Eye membrane; 9- Scarpa's killer; 10- Dress often worn by Hindu women; 11- Langston Hughes poem; 12- Masked critter; 13- Qty; 22- From Florence, e.g.; 24- Staggers; 26- Autobahn autos; 27- Sprite; 28- "Lovegirl" singer ___ Marie; 30- Wreath of flowers; 31- Deduce; 33- Sylvester, to Tweety; 34- Emerge; 35- Dart; 36- Tropical plant used in cosmetics; 38- Move apart; 39- Reconnoiter; 41- ___ Brooks, filmmaker responsible for "Blazing Saddles"; 42- Give ___ rest; 47- Catlike; 48- Swastika; 50- Boarded; 52- Lion sounds; 53- Slight; 54- Bhutan's continent; 55- Small notch; 56- South American Indian; 57- ___-do-well; 59- Lo-cal; 60- Wrinkle remover; 61- Architect Saarinen; 62- Passbook abbr;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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Supreme Flower City
HKD 22,000/mth 4 bed 3 bath

CLIMATE CHANGE

AS SUMMER BREEZES FADE, SWELTERING EUROPEANS GIVE AIR CON A SKEPTICAL EMBRACE

COLLEEN BARRY
& NICOLE WINFIELD, MILAN

DURING Europe's heat wave last month, Floriana Peroni's vintage clothing store had to close for a week. A truck of rented generators blocked her door as they fed power to the central Roman neighborhood hit by a blackout as temperatures surged. The main culprit: air conditioning.

The period — in which temperatures hit 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) — coincided with peak electricity use that came close to Italy's all-time high, hitting a peak load of more than 59 gigawatts on July 19. That neared a July 2015 record.

Intensive electricity use knocked out the network not only near the central Campo de Fiori neighborhood, where Peroni operates her shop, but elsewhere in the Italian capital. Demand in that second July week surged 30%, correlating to a heat wave that had persisted already for weeks, according to the capital's electricity company ARETI.

Like many Romans, Peroni herself does not have AC either in her home or her shop. Rome once could count on a Mediterranean breeze to bring down nighttime temperatures, but that has become an intermittent relief at best.

"At most, we turn on fans," Peroni said. "We think that is enough. We tolerate the heat, as it has always been tolerated."

In Europe, though, that is starting to change.

AIR CON IS LESS A PART OF EUROPEAN CULTURE

Despite holdouts like Peroni, rising global temperatures are dropping air conditioning from luxury to a necessity in many parts of Europe, which long has had a conflicted relationship with energy-sucking cooling systems deemed by many to be an American indulgence.

Europeans look with disdain at overcooled U.S. buildings, kept to near meat-locker temperatures, where a blast of cold air can shoot across city sidewalks as people come and go, and where extended indoor appointments necessitate a sweater even in the height of summer.

By contrast, event organizers in Europe may offer hand fans if events are expected to overheat. Shoppers can expect to sweat in under-cooled grocery stores, and movie theaters are not guaranteed to be climate-controlled. Evening diners have typically opted for outside tables to avoid stuffy restaurants, which rarely offer AC.

AP PHOTO



Tourists under heat in Rome

To deal with the heat, Italy and Spain typically shut down for several hours after lunch, for a riposo or siesta, and most vacation in August, when many businesses shut down completely so families can enjoy a holiday at the seaside or in the mountains. Italians in particular are happy to abandon overheated art cities to foreign tourists, which reduces the urgency for a home AC investment.

Still, European AC penetration has picked up from 10% in 2000 to 19% last year, according to the International Energy Agency. That is still well shy of the United States, at around 90%. Many in Europe resist due to cost, concern about environmental impact and even suspicions of adverse health impacts from cold air currents, including colds, a stiff neck, or worse.

Cooling systems remain rare in Nordic countries and even Germany, where temperatures can nudge above 30 degrees (into the 90s Fahrenheit) for extended periods.

But even those temperate climates may cross the threshold of discomfort if temperatures increase beyond 1.5 degrees C to 2 degrees C, according to a new study by the University of Cambridge. In that scenario, people living in northern climes like Britain, Norway, Finland and Switzerland will face the greatest relative increase in uncomfortably hot days.

Nicole Miranda, one of the study's authors, said their estimate, which would mean surpassing

the international goal of limiting future warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times, are conservative.

"They don't take into account the urban island effects," she said, when cities are unable to cool at night and surfaces become radiators. "From a scientific point of view, if we all run to the go-to solution, which is air conditioning, we are going to get into a different type of problem, because there is high energy consumption and high carbon emissions related to air conditioning."

Cities should consider less intensive solutions, like shading buildings, and incorporating cooling bodies of water, she said. She also advocated a trend toward cooling individuals, instead of spaces, using personal devices like ice packs in jackets or high-tech textiles that dissipate body heat more efficiently.

THERE'S A GROWING — IF RELUCTANT — DEMAND

In Italy, sales of air conditioning units grew from 865,000 a year in 2012 to 1.92 million in 2022, mostly for business and not residential use, with growth reported in the first quarter of this year, according to the industry association Assoclimate. Most are split heat air pump systems, which can heat spaces in the winter, which Assoclimate said can reduce gas consumption as prices spike during the war in Ukraine. That dual use attracts consumers.

France, with a slightly larger

population, is showing more resistance, selling 1 million units a year. Air conditioning was rare in France until a 2003 heat wave killed thousands, mainly among the elderly. Still, most private homes and apartments there aren't air conditioned, and many restaurants and other businesses aren't either. Businesses with AC will often advertise to attract customers on hot days.

AC aversion persists, both among French conservatives who see it as a frivolous American import and French people on the left who see it as environmentally irresponsible.

Cécile de Munck and Aude Lemonsu, meteorologists at France's national weather service, warned this summer that if the number of AC units doubles in Paris by 2030, the city temperature would rise by 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) because of heat released by the pump systems.

Despite the concerns over energy costs, air conditioning is rapidly conquering homes in Spain, a country that traditionally bent towards the use of fans and drawing heavy blinds, a very Spanish fixture. A study by Ca' Foscari University projects that half of Spanish households will have AC by 2040, up from just 5% in 1990.

With the cooler indoor air come disputes as neighbors complain about noise from external units. That means problems for Spain's real estate managers. "Some people can't open a window because they get a puff of

fire," said Pablo Abascal, president of Spain's council of real estate managers. "With the increase of AC systems in homes, many buildings will soon have nowhere to place the devices."

Air conditioning and cooling was found to be key for older populations in extreme heat, reducing strain on cardiovascular functions in a heat wave of 37 degrees Celsius (99 degrees Fahrenheit), according to a study at the University of Ottawa in Canada. But even in countries like Cyprus, where heat waves of 40 degree Celsius have become the norm, the sustained use of AC isn't an affordable option for many elderly people living on fixed incomes.

Many on the Mediterranean island nation restrict usage to the hottest times of day, sometimes confining themselves to a single room.

"Undoubtedly, this scenario significantly impacts their mental well-being as well," said Demos Antoniou, director of the Cyprus Third Age Observatory, a seniors-rights group. "The prevailing fear is that refraining from using air conditioners could potentially lead to heat stroke."

At 83, Angeliki Vassiliou thinks both about her energy bill and future generations before she hits the "on" button.

"There's no sense in wasting energy. Waste is unfair," Vassiliou said. "Waste of any resource is wrong, because what would happen to our planet because of all this waste?" MDT/AP

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Magaia provides as South Africa beats Italy to reach last 16

STEVE MCMORRAN,
WELLINGTON

SOUTH AFRICA 3, ITALY 2

PLAYER of the match Hil-dah Magaia called the moment "life-changing." Coach Desiree Ellis flagged something deeper, though, after South Africa beat Italy 3-2 yesterday to qualify for the round of 16 at a Women's World Cup for the first time.

South Africa had to beat eighth-ranked Italy to progress. A draw would have been enough to take Italy through. And in a turbulent final 20 minutes, both teams stood on the brink of qualifying.

The halftime score was 1-1 after Arianna Caruso's penalty and Benedetta Orsi's own goal. Magaia scored to put South Africa ahead 2-1 and left them on the brink of history, before Caruso equalized from a Cristiana Girelli corner.

At last, in the second minute of

AP PHOTO



South Africa's Noko Matlou (left) and Gabriela Salgado celebrate after the victorious match

stoppage time, Magaia provided the assist for Themba Kgatlana's match-winner and South Africa was through in a moment of huge significance for women's sport in their country.

"They call me the breadwin-

ner. So without the breadwinner, there's no bread," Magaia said. "I had to provide the bread for the nation."

"This really means a lot," she added, "especially knowing that we were so close to going home. It

is an emotional one."

Magaia's comment carried literal force. In advancing to the last 16, each South Africa player will take home at least \$60,000, a life-altering sum. Magaia said she now will be able to properly care for her mother.

A dispute over pay that clouded South Africa's preparation and only was resolved on the eve of the world tournament, now is well in the background, one of many trials the team had to overcome to get to the World Cup.

All of that struggle was reflected in their jubilation at fulltime. As the second half seesawed they threw everything into a last bid for victory

"I think there was a time on the line when we had five coaches and the captain giving direction, it was that tough," Ellis, the veteran coach, said. "We knew it was going to be a tough game but we knew what we were capable of."

"The girls are just freaking

amazing. I mean I speak through every challenge they faced in the past," she added. "We know that no-one gave us a chance today but we knew what we were capable of and they fought like warriors out there."

In previous group matches, South Africa lost 2-1 to Sweden after leading 1-0 with a Magaia goal and drew 2-2 with Argentina after leading.

On a night of high drama and low temperatures, Caruso's 11th-minute penalty and Orsi's own goal kept it tight in the first half in Wellington, where a southerly wind dropped temperatures close to freezing and reduced the crowd to around 10,000, mostly South Africans.

Arianna Caruso's penalty in the 11th was canceled out by an own goal in the 32nd. Magaia scored in the 67th to put South Africa ahead 2-1, but Caruso equalized and momentum swung back to Italy.

At last Jermaine Seoposenwe went forward and squared the ball to midfielder Magaia who, rather than shooting, crossed to Kgatlana to strike the ball home.

The tension continued as stoppage time exceeded 11 minutes, and then it was over. Some South African players danced, many embraced. Others, Kgatlana among them, seemed too overwhelmed. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

World Views

Wyatte Grantham-Philips, MDT/AP Business Writer

**GAS PRICES RISING ON
 EXTREME HEAT, OIL
 PRODUCTION CUTS**

Drivers are in for another headache at the pump as U.S. gas prices continue to rise.

The national average for gas prices stood at about \$3.78 a gallon on Tuesday — about 25 cents higher than that seen one month ago, according to motor club AAA. While today's prices at the pump remain far lower than they were last year, when energy costs soared worldwide in the months following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, experts say such a jump is unusual.

"Usually it takes a hurricane to move prices that much," said AAA spokesperson Andrew Gross, who said the rise is especially interesting as "fewer people are fueling up" their cars this summer compared to years past.

In the U.S., gasoline prices are highly dependent on crude oil.

There are a few factors causing oil prices to rise, including global supply production cuts and impacts of this summer's extreme heat on refineries. Here's what you need to know.

This summer's record temperatures are partly to blame for the rising gas prices.

"While the heat may be keeping people home, it's also keeps refineries from making refined product," Gross explained, noting that refineries are typically designed to operate between 32 and 95 degrees Fahrenheit.

There are about 10 million daily barrels of U.S. refining capacity on the Gulf Coast. The heat wave has caused those refineries to operate below normal capacity — resulting in a loss of hundreds of thousands of barrels each day.

Still, "the fact that some refineries are struggling has meant that the ones who are able to operate are making really nice profits," Gross said. Today's U.S. domestic demand is about 9 million barrels a day, about a half a million below expectations for peak summer months, but the country is exporting a lot of gasoline, he added.

Beyond the heat, OPIS global head of energy analysis Tom Kloza pointed to crude supply cuts from major producing countries in the OPEC+ alliance. In July, for example, Saudi Arabia starting reducing how much oil it sends to the global economy by 1 million barrels each day. Russia is also exporting less.

The cuts aren't OPEC-wide, Gross noted. As inflation eases, he suspects that better economic prospects may also be putting pressure on oil worldwide.

It's hard to know what gas prices will look like in the coming weeks, experts say.

While relief from the heat can hopefully be expected as we enter the fall, both Gross and Kloza pointed to risk of hurricanes — which, of course, leads refineries to power down.

"If you could guarantee we're not going to have tropical storm force or hurricane winds in the Gulf of Mexico, I'd say it's going to be clear sailing for the rest of the year. But that's a real fly in the ointment," Kloza said, pointing to the unprecedented water temperatures the region has seen recently.

Finally, if you're looking to save money and cut back on trips to the pump, there are a few ways you can maximize your mileage per gallon.

One important habit is staying on top of getting your tire pressure checked. In addition to safety risks, low tire pressure is not maximizing your fuel efficiency, costing you more money down the road, he said.

AAA offers additional gas saving tips — which include using cruise control when possible, not overfilling your tank at the pump and removing unneeded items in your car's trunk to cut down on excess weight.

[Abridged]

Human-caused global warming made July hotter for four out of five people on Earth, with more than 2 billion people feeling climate change-boosted warmth daily, according to a flash study.

More than 6.5 billion people, or 81% of the world's population, sweated through at least one day where climate change had a significant effect on the average daily temperature, according to a new report issued yesterday by Climate Central, a science nonprofit that has figured a way to calculate how much climate change has affected daily weather.

"We really are experiencing climate change just about everywhere," said Climate Central Vice President for Science Andrew Pershing.

Researchers looked at 4,711 cities and found climate change fingerprints in 4,019 of them for July, which other scientists said is the hottest month on record. The new study calculated that the burning of coal, oil and natural gas had made it three times more likely to be hotter on at least one day in those cities.

(SEE P10)

AP PHOTO



French and other nationals gather at the international Airport to be airlifted back to France on a French military aircraft, in Niamey, yesterday

**FOREIGN NATIONALS
 EVACUATE NIGER AS
 REGIONAL TENSIONS
 RISE AFTER COUP**

SAM MEDNICK, NIAMEY

FOREIGN nationals lined up outside an airport in Niger's capital, Niamey, yesterday to wait for a French military evacuation flight, while a regional bloc continued talks about its response to the military coup that took place last week.

France, Italy and Spain all announced evacuations for their citizens and other Europeans Niamey following concerns that they could become trapped after soldiers detained President Mohamed Bazoum and seized power.

The United States has yet to announce plans for an evacuation, but some of its citizens have left with the help of the Europeans.

France's first two flights evacuated more than 350 French nationals, as well as people from Niger and at least 10 other countries, the French Foreign Ministry said. The Paris airport authority said two more evacuation flights are scheduled to land early today [Macau time].

Some 1,200 French citizens are registered at the French embassy, said the Foreign Ministry, and about half have asked to be evacuated.

An Italian military aircraft landed in Rome yesterday with 99 passengers, including 21 Americans and civilians from other countries,

said the Italian defense minister.

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said, "In some way, we were authorized by the new government, which gave permission for the operation."

Germany, which has encouraged its civilians in Niger to evacuate on French flights, said that it doesn't currently see any need to evacuate the approximately 100 troops it has in the country, largely connected to the U.N. mission in neighboring Mali.

Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said he spoke with the German commander at the air base in Niamey on Tuesday, "and he told me clearly they are not at all worried about their safety at the moment; they are in close contact with the Nigerien military; they are driving out accompanied by the Nigerien military." Supplies also are assured, he said.

Before sunrise yesterday, hundreds of people lined up outside the terminal at Niamey's airport hoping to leave, after a French flight was canceled the night before. Some slept on the floor, while others watched television or talked on the phone.

A passenger who did not want to be named for security reasons said they tried to shield their children from what was happening, telling them "just that they're going

home."

The passenger said they feared reprisal attacks against civilians if Niger's regional neighbors follow through on threats to intervene militarily.

Niamey has calmed after protests supporting the junta turned violent Sunday, but some say the mood is still tense.

During Tuesday's evacuation flights at the airport, a passenger who did not want to be named for security reasons said that Nigerien soldiers raised middle fingers at waiting evacuees as the soldiers sped off after escorting an Italian military convoy to the airport.

On Sunday, West African regional bloc ECOWAS said it would use force against the junta if it didn't release and reinstate the president within a week. The announcement was immediately rejected by neighboring Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea, all of which are run by mutinous soldiers who toppled their governments.

Mali and Burkina Faso's leaders said a military intervention in Niger "would be tantamount to a declaration of war" against them.

The defense chiefs of ECOWAS' 15 members will meet in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, from yesterday to Friday to discuss next steps in resolving the crisis, the bloc said in a statement. MDT/AP

USA The federal indictment of Donald Trump yesterday [Macau time] marks the first time that the former president has been formally held accountable for his efforts to overturn his 2020 election defeat. It adds new details to what was already known about his actions in the weeks leading up to the violent Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection. Due to the "dishonesty, fraud and deceit" by Trump and some of his closest allies, the indictment says, his supporters "violently attacked the Capitol and halted the proceeding."

AP PHOTO



USA Firefighters aided by rain fought to contain a massive blaze that swept through the California desert into Nevada and could threaten the region's famous spiky Joshua trees. The York Fire that erupted last Friday was California's largest wildfire this year. As of Tuesday night it had burned through more than 125 square miles of land but showed little growth during the day and was 23% contained, fire officials said.

AP PHOTO



Hollywood Union leaders told striking Hollywood writers Tuesday night that they plan to meet with representatives for studios to discuss restarting negotiations after the first official communication between the two sides since the strike began three months ago. The Writers Guild of America sent an email to members saying that the head of the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers requested a meeting on Friday to discuss the resumption of contract talks.

France Journalists at the emblematic Sunday newspaper Le Journal du Dimanche ended a 40-day strike after unsuccessfully protesting the appointment of an editor-in-chief they denounce as a far-right supporter. It was the longest journalists' strike in France in decades. The newspaper, also known as the JDD, was absent from newsstands for the sixth week in a row Sunday. The publisher said the printed version would resume publication in mid-August.