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AP PHOTO



US, Japan and Australia are planning a joint navy drill in the South China Sea off the western Philippines this week to underscore their commitment to the rule of law in the region after a recent show of Chinese aggression in the disputed waters, Filipino security officials said yesterday. On Aug. 5, Chinese coast guard ships used water cannons against Philippine vessels in the contested waterway where disputes have long been regarded as a potential flashpoint and have become a fault line in the rivalry between the U.S. and China in the region.

AP PHOTO



Bangladesh Police used batons and tear gas to disperse opposition activists amid a political dispute over who would oversee the next election, which is expected to be held in January, police and activists said yesterday. Around 300 people were injured in the clash on Saturday evening, including some with bullets, the country's leading Bengali-language daily newspaper Prothom Alo reported, adding that police had opened fire on supporters of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which is led by former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

AP PHOTO



Pakistan A bus caught fire after hitting a van parked on the shoulder of an intercity highway in eastern Punjab province, killing at least 18 people and injuring 13 others, police and rescue officials said yesterday. The accident occurred yesterday near Pindi Bhattian, where the Islamabad-bound shoulder of the Lahore-Islamabad Motorway, senior police officer Fahad Ahmed said. The van was carrying fuel drums, which caused an inferno that engulfed the bus, Ahmed said.

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ON TRIAL

HAPPINESS Street will become a trial pedestrian zone from Sept. 29, the government announced.

The plan is to block these streets and reserve them exclusively for pedestrians from morning to evening, and motor traffic will only be allowed partially during off-peak hours.

The pilot plan is expected to be implemented before the Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day holidays at the end of September.

The SAR government said it will perform several works in the relevant areas, including widening and optimizing the walking space, setting up corresponding traffic signs and pedestrian area signs, and optimizing road paving, lighting and environmental sanitation.

As cited in a TDM report, Secretary for Social Affairs

HAPPINESS STREET TO TURN INTO PEDESTRIAN ZONE SEPT. 29

and Culture, Ao Ieong U, said the government surveyed opinions, and 95% of residents and business owners had no objection with nearly 80% favoring the plan. Only five people opposed it.

The government will review the trial this year after the trial run. If it is successful, it will be continued.

Leong Wai Man, director of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) has said there are 102 buildings on either side of the pedestrian area, involving about 100 residents. There are 58 buildings on Happiness Street, 51 are commercial buildings, and seven are residential.

Recently, lawmaker Ho Ion Sang has expressed concerns over the idea of removing vehicle traffic from the area.

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."

Meanwhile, the IC also announced that it will hold two Mid-Autumn Festival concerts at the Ruins of St. Paul's on the day of the Mid-Autumn Festival to celebrate the festive season with the public.



CRIME

PJ-China police detain six for RMB4.5m theft at Outer Harbour Terminal

RENATO MARQUES

THE Judiciary Police (PJ), working with mainland police authorities, has announced the arrest of six people in connection with a theft at the Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal.

The arrests were made Thursday after a theft two days earlier, according to information from the PJ.

The local police are also said to have arrested four local men suspected of being part of a cross-border crime ring created to perform this type of activity, while another two suspects were arrested with the assistance of the mainland authorities at the city of Zhaoqing (Guangdong) and Wuhan (Hubei).

According to the PJ,



the victim, a local resident, was carrying several pieces of luggage containing RMB4.5 million and had been earmarked by the group that was following him waiting for an opportunity to steal

the bags with the cash.

The group's opportunity arose when the victim visited the toilet at the Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal, he told the PJ.

After the investigation, the PJ said the four

residents arrested are allegedly part of the criminal organization that had the duty of keeping and laundering the money so that the police would lose track of it.

Two of them are family members (mother and brother) of the alleged ringleader, a local 23-year-old man that was later detained in the mainland city of Wuhan.

The two people arrested on the mainland planned the Outer Harbour theft.

With the arrest of the suspects, the PJ recovered part of the stolen cash, amounting to RMB1.3 million, with the PJ suspecting the rest had been transferred to different accounts.

The case is still under investigation with the PJ saying it is still trying to understand how the group knew that the victim would be carrying such a high amount of money in the luggage.

The PJ spokesperson said it is also suspected the ringleader's mother and brother are linked to operations related to illegal currency exchange.

SAI VAN BRIDGE MOTORBIKE LANE SUSPENDED TILL SUNDAY

THE motorcycle lane on Sai Van Bridge has been suspended until 10 a.m. next Sunday to facilitate road works, the government has announced.

The bridge's two suspension towers and the expansion joints on the driveway level have been undergoing maintenance. The expansion joints, according to the government, have reached their expiration date and must be replaced. The current work will change the joints on the motorcycle lane.

During this period, all motorcycles will share the same lanes as other vehicles on the bridge. The motorcycle lane was originally established because of the many motorcycle accidents – many of them fa-

tal – during the early phase of the bridge's opening.

A transport officer has reminded bridge users to drive responsibly. He said large signs will remind drivers of the special arrangements, although large signs have not proved helpful on roads near the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, for example, according to many drivers.

Asked whether it was possible to open the lower level of the bridge for motorcycles during the work, the transport officer said the LRT is conducting some tests on the lower level, making it "unsafe" for motorcycles, although the lower level was designed for both motor and railway traffic to pass simultaneously. **AL**



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MacauDaily 澳門每日時報 * **Times** DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com ASSISTANT EDITOR_Lynzy Valles CONTRIBUTING EDITORS_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

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

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

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ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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Unpopularity of LRT Jockey Club parking lot still unsolved

ANTHONY LAM

PARKING spots at the heavy vehicle parking lot at the LRT Jockey Club station are not been regularly used after a year or so of operations, local media has reported.

After its report on the poorly maintained and widely blocked outdoor area at LRT Jockey Club Station, local media All About Macau noted its readers' reports of vacant parking spots at the 58-spot underground parking lot at the same station.

The government built the parking lot for heavy vehicles such as tour coaches. It was opened on May 4, 2022. Some of the spots are available for monthly lease, while the rest are for hourly parking. Each partial or full hour of parking equates to MOP12 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and to MOP6 for the rest of the day.

The local media reported observations conducted Friday and Saturday afternoons. No vehicle entered the parking lot during



the hour of observation on either day. The vacant spaces indicator remained unchanged, showing 38 available parking spots.

The outdoor parking lot near the Nam San Garden residential estate and the main entrance of the Jockey Club also provides parking spots for tour coaches

free-of-charge, making having a charged indoor parking lot for the same type of vehicle contradictory.

During its observation period Friday, the media discovered three private ambulances, an LRT motorcar and a truck in the parking lot. They are all tenants of

the parking spots. Parking lot officers told the media that peak hours occur near and after midnight, which explains the high vacancy rate.

A day later, at more or less the same time, the media conducted another observation that lasted 1.5 hours. The same five vehicles

were seen at the same spots, without any additional vehicles entering the parking lot.

Near midnight Sunday, the media conducted another observation and saw a sixth vehicle, a minibus from a social service organization, parked in a monthly leased spot.

Two social affairs advisors have each criticized the situation, and have made suggestions for improvement.

Lam Ka Chun has suggested the indoor parking lot's per-hour parking fee be lowered. If vacancies persist, some spaces could be transformed into parking for light vehicles and motorcycles.

Another advisor, Ho Chong Chun, criticized the mode of information dissemination by the parking lot administrator as being "not transparent." As it is managed by the LRT Company, the number of vacant parking spots is not published on any Transport Bureau platform. He also suggested to release some of the spots for light vehicles and motorcycles.

In response, the LRT Company has blamed district-wide parking spot distribution and drivers' habits for the vacancy.

At a previous parliamentary session, transport minister Raimundo do Rosário said the parking lot had seen zero income in its first five months of operations.

TRANSPORTATION

Gov't committed to retaining 'changing-charging' e-motorbike strategy

ANTHONY LAM

THE government has committed to introducing parallel battery changing and charging for e-motorcycles, although riders prefer the charging mode.

Currently, the city has over 120,000 motorcycles, of which fewer than 1,000 are electric-powered.

According to a parliamentary committee report on the promotion and utilization of e-motorcycle, the government found the mode of battery changing unsuitable for Macau.

In Taiwan, where the use of e-motorcycles has thrived, battery charging docks have been set up across different cities. When an e-motorcycle runs low on battery power, the rider can drive to the nearest charging dock with charged batteries available to replace batteries one-for-one.



Macau employed the same strategy some years ago, with several battery charging dock and changing stations in several locations but closed them. Only a few remain.

The reason cited is low use of the service. Only 20% applicants opted for battery changing, according to the government motorcycle replacement scheme. Later, it was discovered that most riders were unwilling to pay the

surcharge for the battery changing option.

The government insisted on the battery changing mode because of its convenience for food deliverers, as they are always on the move. The changing mode takes about a minute for each replacement and is more suitable for them.

Some lawmakers noted the 21 gas stations across the city would be wonderful facilities to

help with the situation, even with 10 of them having battery changing docks. This model is actually widely used in Taiwan, with battery changing docks set right outside gas stations for bikers.

Meanwhile, the government has plans to establish 500 charging stations at 42 parking lots with motorcycle parking spaces, which equates to about five to 10 stations at each parking lot.

ETIAS

EU TO REQUIRE SARS PASSPORT HOLDERS AUTHORIZATION UPON TRAVEL

MACAU and Hong Kong passport holders will be required to present an authorization letter when entering European Union countries in 2024.

The requirement will be enforced once the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) becomes operational next year.

This comes as the EU works to strengthen border security as well as digitally screen and track travelers entering and leaving EU countries.

ETIAS is an electronic system that tracks visitors from countries who do not need a visa to enter the Schengen Zone.

ETIAS aims to ensure these people are not a security threat.

The multiple entry travel authorization allows holders to travel to Schengen countries for a total stay of 90 days per entry for tourism, transit, business or



medical treatment Purposes.

Travelers between 18 and 70 must apply via the ETIAS website or app, which costs 7 euros.

The requirement will affect residents from 59 countries that are outside the EU but are visa-free.

The ETIAS proposal was finalized in November 2016. **MDT**

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Juliet Risdon
(853) 6680 9804
juliet@jmlproperty.com
AI-1003469-6



Windy Lam
(853) 6881 1007
windy@jmlproperty.com
AI-10010081-9

EU REPORT HIGHLIGHTS RISKS UNDERMINING FREEDOMS; CENTRAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES REFUTE ACCUSATIONS

RENATO MARQUES

BOTH the local government and the central government have issued statements condemning the report issued by the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union (EU) for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

The report is their 23rd annual report to the European Parliament and the Council on political and economic developments in the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR).

The Commission's report, which covers local developments in 2022, expressed concerns over the risks undermining fundamental freedoms mostly related to the growing focus on national security and "eroding the 'One country, two systems' principle and Macau's high degree of autonomy."

The Macau government expressed in a statement its "strong opposition to content within the 2022 annual report on the MSAR, issued lately by the EU."

In the same statement, the government said, "The report blatantly defamed the work Macau has done regarding revising the city's Law on Safeguarding National Security, and made smears regarding the condition of human rights and rule of law in Macau."

It added, "It also contained baseless claims concerning Macau's successful implementation of the 'One country, two systems' principle. In doing so, the report demonstrated completely its attempt at political manipulation based on bias."

The local government also said that since the handover, "the city has seen rapid economic development, while the city's residents have fully enjoyed extensive rights and freedoms enshrined in the Basic Law of Macau. The 'One country, two systems' principle has also been successfully implemented. These are undeniable facts."

The statement added that "With the strong support of the central government, along with concerted effort from across the community, Macau will surely see further achievements under the 'One country, two systems' principle."

References to the interference of the EU on Macau's internal affairs and, consequently to China's domestic affairs were also noted with the government urging the EU "to act in line with international law and the fundamental



norms of international relations regarding a 'non-intervention' approach to the internal affairs of other countries."

The government called on the EU to act on their pledges of support to Macau's ruling principles, matching the "positive words with actions."

Concurrently, the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in Macau, Liu Xianfa, has also issued a statement, expressing "strong dissatisfaction and resolute opposition to the publication by the EU of the Annual Report on political and economic developments of Macau in 2022."

Liu noted that the Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Macau considers the report a rude interference in the affairs of the MSAR as well as China's internal affairs as it undermines the 'One country, two systems' principle, shamelessly attacking Macau's national security laws and ignoring the local economic and social development as well as human rights and the rule of law.

The EU report focused mainly on the passing of the bill to amend the 2009 national security law.

"The amended law expands the scope of the existing offenses to include non-violent actions

under subversion and further widens the definition of sedition. The scope of the charge of collusion has been broadened to include any organization, association and individual outside of Macau," the Committee noted in a press statement after the adoption of the report.

In the report's summary, the EU noted that regular reports on Macau's status and developments have continued since the handover in 1999, with the EU and its member states closely following Macau's political and economic developments under the 'One country, two systems' principle.

The EU also stated its support for the 'One country, two systems' principle and its implementation under the Macau Basic Law, "which is intended to ensure that the way of life, rule of law and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms in Macau remains unchanged until 2049."

According to the report, the EU is particularly concerned with what they called the "acceleration of Macau's integration into the national development plan."

The report also mentions a "drastic change in the gaming environment," with the trial of Alvin Chau, the chairperson of the largest casino junket operator, and

the adoption of a new gaming law.

In the chapter dedicated to the political, legal and social developments, the report mentions the disqualification of 21 candidates ahead of the Legislative Assembly (AL) elections in 2021, noting that "the opposition is no longer represented in the Assembly," while the annual AL report mentions that the efficiency of this body had "significantly increased" in 2022.

It is also mentioned that the same AL president, Kou Hoi In, had been reelected among the local delegates to the National People's Congress (NPC), noting that from the 12 delegates elected, nine were former NPC members.

The changes at the helm of the Macau Lawyers' Association which elected Vong Hin Fai as the new president were also noted, with the report noting, once again, Vong's ties, as an AL lawmaker and an NPC member.

Other changes that concern the EU and were also listed in the report are related to pressure over press freedom since "the Macau Portuguese and English Press Association, elected a new board that pledged to work with the government and to obtain more funding from the Government Information Bureau (GCS)."

2023MIECF SEES NEARLY 40 PARTNERSHIPS CLINCHED

Nearly 400 business matching meetings were conducted at the 2023 Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum & Exhibition (2023MIECF), with almost 40 partnerships clinched. The four-day event incorporated close to 20 forums and meetings held by professional organizations in different industries and five business matching sessions were arranged by the 2023MIECF. The two-day "Green Forum" invited more than 30 experts, scholars and industry leaders in environmental protection-related industries from mainland China, Portuguese-speaking countries, Europe, Southeast Asian countries, Hong Kong and Macau as speakers.

IFTM WELCOMES 600 NEW STUDENTS FOR 23/24 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM) has welcomed round 600 new undergraduate and postgraduate students in its academic year 2023/2024. In the speech to the new students during the ceremony, president Fanny Vong stated that IFTM is paying close attention to how technologies and big data are enhancing the development of the tourism and hospitality industry and the demand for sophisticated talents. The institute is offering this academic year the Master of Science in Digital Marketing and Analytics as well as the Master of Philosophy in International Hospitality and Tourism Management, with multiple specializations.

NEARLY 1,400 PROPERTIES SOLD IN Q2

A total of 1,368 building units and parking spaces were purchased and sold in the second quarter of 2023 as per the stamp duty record, and the total value of transactions was MOP7.44 billion, up 13.3% and 7.4% respectively quarter-to-quarter. According to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), the purchase and sale of residential units increased by 30 quarter-to-quarter to 878 units, and the total value rose 3.4% to MOP5.78 billion. The number of existing residential units transacted (831 units) decreased 1.4% and the transaction value (MOP5.48 billion) fell 1.6%.

As Maui rebuilds, residents reckon with tourism's role in their recovery

RIO YAMAT & BOBBY CAINA
CALVAN, LAHAINA

LONG before a wind-whipped wildfire blasted through the island of Maui, tension existed between Hawaii's kamaaina, or long-time residents, and the visitors some islanders resent for turning their beaches, mountains and communities into playgrounds.

It's a love-hate relationship that dates back generations. But now that tension is building in the aftermath of a blaze that killed over 100 people and scorched the historic town of Lahaina, making it the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century.

A week after the fire, a state flag blew upside down in the breeze along a road leading to a neighborhood designated for residents of Hawaiian descent, signifying that the community is in distress. Beneath the flag, a sign scrawled in blue paint ordered tourists to "KEEP OUT."

"Tourism has definitely been a hinderance at this point, because we need to take care of our families – our ohana," said Kapali Keahi, who lives in the neighborhood. Keahi said those affected by the fire, himself included, are still "getting out of the survivor mode."

The Maui Economic Development Board says tourism is "irrefutably" the economic engine of Maui, which saw 1.4 million visitors in just the first half of 2023. About 70% of every dollar generated in Maui can be attributed to tourism, according to the board.

Yet as the island looks to rebuild,

AP PHOTO



ld, residents like Keahi wonder what role tourism should play in the long road ahead to recovery. Experts say there's no easy answer.

"You do have this time where you have to stop everything and focus on the disaster, but there does come a time when you have to start to rebuild, and that means keeping people employed," said Rafael Villanueva, a member of the Tourism Expert Network, which provides consulting services to businesses like hotels.

Villanueva said that's the general roadmap he and his then-

-colleagues at the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority followed in 2017 after the deadliest mass shooting in modern America unfolded at a country music festival on the Las Vegas Strip. Support the victims and the community first, then worry about the tourists.

Within an hour of the shooting that would leave 60 dead and hundreds more injured, the publicly funded body charged with promoting Las Vegas had halted its advertising promising that "What Happens Here, Stays Here." Villanueva said they filled

billboards with a message that the community instead could rally around: "Vegas Strong."

Then they opened up their convention center for recovery efforts, including victim notifications. But eventually, they shifted their messaging, inviting visitors back to a Strip that they promised was a safe tourist destination.

"You need to do what you can to not let the situation snowball into something much worse," Villanueva said.

Hawaii Gov. Josh Green said in a statewide address Friday night that tourists should avoid fire-ra-

vaged West Maui while emphasizing that the rest of the island and state were open and safe.

"We continue to welcome and encourage travel to our beautiful state," he said, "which will support the local economy and help speed the recovery of those who have already suffered so much."

Green also has said it would be "catastrophic" if Maui's tourism industry came to a halt right now, warning that it could lead to a "mass exodus" of residents.

It's a situation that Maui resident Julie Sumibtay said she wants to avoid, even if she understands how other locals want the space to grieve and deal with their profound pain without the prying eyes of outsiders.

"Some of us need work," said Sumibtay, who works at the front desk of a condominium complex in Kihei, where some of the units are used as vacation rentals. "So if they're saying Maui is closed, then there are no tourists coming in, and then we lose our jobs."

Already the deadly fire and its aftermath has prompted some would-be tourists to change their plans, opting to head to other islands instead.

Tom Bailey and his family from the Sacramento area of California arrived on Maui the week before the fire spread from hill-sides and raced toward historic Lahaina.

They had seen the smoke in the distance from their hotel in Kaanapali just up the road from Lahaina. At first, they were reassured that the blaze posed no immediate danger. But in the night, the glow of the fire intensified, prompting hotel officials to suggest guests voluntarily evacuate.

Bailey and his family packed up and left to spend the final five days of their vacation on Oahu.

"We just wanted to stay out of the way," Bailey said, adding that he understands the local residents "need time." **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

TTG China names Sands Resorts Macao as Best Resort in China



Sands Resorts Macao has been awarded the Best Resort in China at the 2023 TTG China Travel Awards for the fourth consecutive year, and the sixth time overall.

Consisting of three integrated resorts, The Venetian Macao, The Parisian Macao and The Londoner Macao, Sands Resorts Macao "continues to stand out from its competitors due to the comprehensive range of outstanding activities, entertainment options and premium facilities available in these interconnected resorts," the group said in a statement.

Sands Resorts Macao's guests can enjoy an itinerary without ever stepping outside, including luxury accommodation, cuisines from around the world at more than 150 restaurants, duty free shopping at approximately 850 shops, and world-class arts, culture and entertainment choices, including the popular immersive and interactive teamLab Super Nature Macao.

Kris Kaminsky, senior vice president of Hotel Operations, Sands China Ltd., said, "It is such an honour to be recognised and once again be the winner of the pres-

tigious Best Resort in China at the 2023 TTG China Travel Awards, and I would like to thank the readers of TTG for their acknowledgment. Winning this coveted industry award for the sixth time recognises our team members' dedication and professionalism, and motivates us to maintain excellence in all we do."

TTG China Travel Awards was established in 2008 and the esteemed annual event celebrates stellar travel suppliers across airlines, hotels and resorts, serviced residences and travel services segments.

Chinese military launches drills around Taiwan as a 'warning' after a top island official went to US

THE Chinese military launched drills around Taiwan on Saturday as a "stern warning" over what it called collusion between "separatists and foreign forces," its defense ministry said, days after the island's No. 2, William Lai, stopped over in the United States.

Lai's recent trip to Paraguay to reinforce relations with his government's last diplomatic partner in South America included stops in San Francisco and New York City. The mainland's ruling Communist Party claims democratic Taiwan as part of its territory and says it has no right to conduct foreign relations.

A spokesperson for China's Eastern Theater Command said in a brief statement that the military exercises involved the coordination of vessels and planes and their ability to seize control of air and sea spaces.

It was also testing the forces' "actual combat capabilities," Shi Yi said. The drills in the waters and airspace to the north and southwest of Taiwan were a warning over provocations from pro-Taiwan independence forces and foreign forces, he added.

The command released footage of the drills online that showed soldiers running, as well as military boats and planes.

State media CCTV reported



In this grab from video released by Taiwan, Chinese navy ship Xuzhou-class sails off the Taiwan coast on Saturday

that missile-equipped boats and fighter jets were involved in the operation and that units worked together to simulate the surrounding of Taiwan.

Taiwan's defense ministry said on the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, that its forces detected 45 Chinese military aircraft and nine vessels around the island between 6 a.m. Saturday and 6 a.m. Sunday. It

said 27 of the planes, including Su-30, J-10 and J-11 fighters, crossed the midline of the Taiwan Strait — an unofficial boundary considered a buffer between the island and the mainland — and entered the island's air defense identification zone.

Taiwan deployed aircraft and vessels and activated land-based missile systems in response to the drills and was closely moni-

toring the situation, the ministry said.

The ministry also strongly condemned what it called the "irrational, provocative moves" in a separate statement. It said its military would stand ready in the face of the threats posted by the Chinese army, adding that its forces have "the ability, determination and confidence to safeguard national security."

It posted a video on Facebook that showed previous military drills and said the Chinese military exercises reflected a militaristic mentality.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 following a civil war that ended with the ruling Communist Party in control of the mainland. The self-ruled island has never been part of the People's Republic of China, but Beijing sees Taiwan as a breakaway province to be retaken by force if necessary.

China's official Xinhua news agency on Saturday reported that an unnamed official in China's Taiwan Work Office strongly condemned what it called further collusion between Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party and the U.S. and said it was a "new provocative move."

The official pointed to the stopovers in the U.S., an interview Lai gave to news outlet Bloomberg and his meeting with U.S. officials in Paraguay, the report said. The official said Lai had used "Taiwan independence" rhetoric in the interview.

The official also accused Lai of using his stopovers in the U.S. to sell out the interests of Taiwan to seek gains in the island's election, and described him as a "troublemaker who will push Taiwan to the dangerous brink of war," the report added.

Lai is his party's candidate for the 2024 presidential election in January.

Taiwan's top office's spokesperson Olivia Lin accused China of trying to influence its election by sparking fears and condemned the provocation in a Facebook post. She said the international community has repeatedly stressed the importance of maintaining peace in the Taiwan Strait and urged China to stop such moves. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

Judges propose a further delay in the trial of activist publisher Jimmy Lai

KANIS LEUNG,
HONG KONG

HONG Kong judges on Friday proposed a new delay until December in the trial of a prominent activist publisher who was arrested in August 2020 under the national security law.

Jimmy Lai, the 75-year-old founder of the now-defunct pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily, faces up to life in prison if convicted under the law. He has already been sentenced to five years and nine mon-

ths in a separate case.

His trial, originally scheduled to begin last December, had already been delayed by judges until September while the Hong Kong government appealed to Beijing to block his attempt to hire a British defense lawyer.

His arrest under the security law was part of Beijing's crackdown on the city's pro-democracy camp. More than 260 people have been arrested under the law, including many prominent pro-democracy leaders.

In a hearing Friday, Judge Esther Toh suggested that Dec. 18 would be a better time to start the trial because lawyers and one of her colleagues were handling another case. She said rescheduling would allow them to finish their work in that case first.

The prosecution voiced no objection. Lai's lawyer, Steven Kwan, said he would need to discuss the proposed timeline with a key member of his team.

Lai is accused of conspiring with others to call for international sanctions or

engage in hostile activities against Hong Kong or China. He also faces a charge of collusion with foreign forces to endanger national security, and a separate sedition charge under a colonial-era law that is also increasingly used to subdue the opposition.

Beijing hasn't directly ruled on whether foreign lawyers who do not normally practice in Hong Kong can handle national security cases. It said the power to decide belongs to the city's leader and the committee for safeguard-



Jimmy Lai walks through the Stanley prison in Hong Kong, on July 28

ing national security.

The committee later concluded that allowing Lai's choice, Timothy Owen, to represent him would likely pose national

security risks and advised the director of immigration to refuse any work visa applications by Owen that involve representing Lai in the case. **MDT/AP**



The USS Bataan at the Strait of Hormuz, in the mouth of the Persian Gulf, yesterday

IRAN

Tanker believes to hold sanctioned oil starts offloading near Texas despite Tehran's threats

JON GAMBRELL, DUBAI

AN American-owned oil tanker long suspected of carrying sanctioned Iranian crude oil began offloading its cargo near Texas late Saturday, tracking data showed, even as Tehran has threatened to target shipping in the Persian Gulf over it.

Ship-tracking data analyzed by The Associated Press showed the Marshall Islands-flagged Suez Rajan was undergoing a ship-to-ship transfer of its oil to another tanker, the MR Euphrates, near Galveston, some 70 kilometers southeast of Houston.

The fate of the cargo aboard the Suez Rajan has become mired in the wider tensions between the U.S. and the Islamic Republic, even as Tehran and Washington work toward a trade of billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets in South Korea for the release of five Iranian-Americans held in Tehran. Iran has been trying

to evade sanctions and continue selling its oil abroad, while the U.S. and its allies have been seizing cargoes since 2019 after the country's nuclear deal allowing the trade collapsed.

Already, Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard has warned that those involved in offloading the Suez Rajan's cargo "should expect to be struck back." The U.S. Navy has increased its presence steadily in recent weeks in the Mideast, sending the troop-and-aircraft-carrying USS Bataan through the Strait of Hormuz in recent days and considering putting armed personnel on commercial ships traveling through the strait to stop Iran from seizing additional ships.

U.S. officials and the owners of the Suez Rajan, the Los Angeles-based private equity firm Oaktree Capital Management, did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The saga over the Suez Rajan began in February 2022, when the group United

Against Nuclear Iran said it suspected the tanker carried oil from Iran's Khargh Island, its main oil distribution terminal in the Persian Gulf.

For months, the ship sat in the South China Sea off the northeast coast of Singapore before suddenly sailing for the Gulf of Mexico without explanation. Analysts believe the vessel's cargo likely has been seized by American officials, though there still were no public court documents early Sunday involving the Suez Rajan.

In the meantime, Iran has seized two tankers near the Strait of Hormuz, including one with cargo for U.S. oil major Chevron Corp. In July, the top commander of the Revolutionary Guard's naval arm threatened further action against anyone offloading the Suez Rajan, with state media linking the recent seizures to the cargo's fate.

"We hereby declare that we would hold any oil company that sought to unload our crude from the vessel responsible and we also hold

America responsible," Rear Adm. Alireza Tangsiri said at the time. "The era of hit and run is over, and if they hit, they should expect to be struck back."

Iran's mission to the United Nations did not respond to a request for comment over the offloading of the Suez Rajan. The state-run IRNA news agency acknowledged this AP story, but did not elaborate. Western-backed naval organizations in the Persian Gulf in recent days also warned of an increased risk of ship seizures from Iran around the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers saw it regain the ability to sell oil openly on the international market. But in 2018, then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the accord and re-imposed American sanctions. That slammed the door on much of Iran's lucrative crude oil trade, a major engine for its economy and its government. It also began a cat-and-mouse hunt for Iranian oil cargo — as well as series of escalating attacks attributed to Iran since 2019.

The delay in offloading the Suez Rajan's cargo had become a political issue as well for the Biden administration as the ship had sat for months in the Gulf of Mexico, possibly due to companies being worried about the threat from Iran.

In a letter dated Wednesday, a group of Democratic and Republican U.S. senators asked the White House for an update on what was happening with the ship's cargo, estimated to be worth some \$56 million. They said the money could go toward the U.S. Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund, which compensates those affected by the Sept. 11 attacks, the 1979 Iran hostage crisis and other militant assaults.

"We owe it to these American families to enforce our sanctions," the letter read.

The U.S. Treasury has said Iran's oil smuggling revenue supports the Quds Force, the expeditionary unit of the Revolutionary Guard that operates across the Mideast.

Claire Jungman, the chief of staff at United Against Nuclear Iran, praised the transfer finally happening.

"By depriving the (Guard) of crucial resources, we strike a blow against terrorism that targets not only American citizens but also our global allies and partners," Jungman told the AP. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1983 FILIPINO OPPOSITION LEADER SHOT DEAD



The Philippines opposition leader, Benigno Aquino, has been assassinated just minutes after returning home from exile.

Mr Aquino, 50, had spent the last three years in the US but was returning home to contest next year's expected elections.

Speaking aboard the plane returning him to Manila, Mr Aquino told reporters he was well aware of the risk he was taking.

"I suppose there's a physical danger because you know assassination's part of public service," he said.

"My feeling is we all have to die sometime and if it's my fate to die by an assassin's bullet, so be it."

When his plane landed at Manila airport Mr Aquino was taken into custody by soldiers and escorted off the plane.

Shortly afterwards witnesses on the plane said a volley of shots rang out and they saw him lying in a pool of blood on the runway tarmac.

The body of the man said to have been the assassin was nearby.

Mr Aquino's long-time rival, Philippines dictator Ferdinand Marcos, has said the assassin was a "professional killer".

But his claim that Mr Aquino was the victim of a lone gunman has not convinced many in the Philippines or the wider world.

The opposition parties in the Philippines are in disarray after nearly 20 years of rule under Ferdinand Marcos.

But it was widely expected that Mr Aquino would be able to unite them and mount a challenge to President Marcos in next year's elections.

Before his self-imposed exile he looked set for presidency after becoming the country's youngest member of parliament at the age of 35.

But after the imposition of martial law in 1972 he was labelled a Communist by President Marcos and imprisoned for seven years.

Three years after being sentenced to death for subversion in 1977 he was offered the chance to leave the country for heart surgery in the US.

After his treatment he did not return and became a focal point for dissidents in the US.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Millions of Filipinos rallied at Benigno Aquino's funeral in what was the start of a mass challenge to President Marcos.

Three years later the opposition parties united behind Mr Aquino's widow, Corazon, in her challenge for the presidency.

In spite of evidence to the contrary, Ferdinand Marcos was declared the winner.

But a popular revolt forced him and his wife, Imelda, to flee the country.

He died in exile in 1993.

Corazon Aquino was president of the Philippines for six years.

In September 1990 a special court convicted 16 Filipino military personnel of murdering Mr Aquino and his "assassin" Ronaldo Galman.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Relatives will not agree with the way you are dealing with your personal problems. Residential changes, renovations, or moves are likely to disrupt your routine.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Social activity should be on your agenda today. Empty promises will cause upset. Your ability to get the job done will result in added responsibility and possible promotion.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 You might find that a coworker has been two faced. You can make changes to your home that will be pleasing to all concerned. Your diplomacy will be of utmost importance today.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Set the ball in motion and be relentless until you complete the project. It's a good time for long awaited relationships to begin. Past partners are likely to reappear.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 If everyone wants to do their own thing, let them. You should put your efforts into creative projects. Someone you work with could try to undermine you.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Changes in your home may be disruptive and upsetting. Take the initiative and go after your goals. Get busy trying to make more money.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Take that long overdue vacation if you can. You can make major accomplishments while on short trips. You need a job with more responsibility and a higher wage.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Don't bang your head against a wall. Based on your excitement, serious-minded individuals will be more than interested in backing your ideas.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Complete those hobbies you started a long time ago. You can enjoy social events and meet new potential mates; however, avoid being lavish.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Move into a leadership position if you are determined to do so. Don't overspend on luxury items. Let your lover know what your personal intentions are.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Use some diplomacy to get your point across delicately. Be sure to think twice before you say something that might hurt your partner's feelings.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Put your energy into your work or moneymaking ventures rather than into your emotional life today. You can make money through your creative efforts.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY					EASY+				
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6	9			1 8				2	7 3
2	9	6		1			8	7	
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MEDIUM					HARD				
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7	1		3				2		8
	3		4	1	5				3
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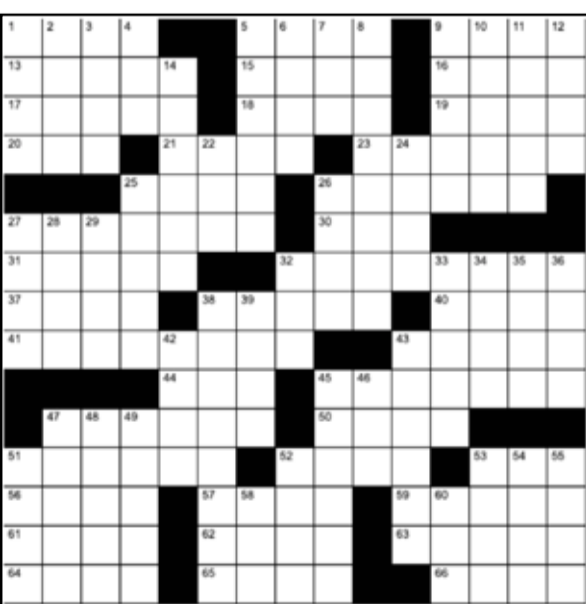
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	24	34	cloudy
Changchun	20	31	cloudy
Chengdu	25	34	cloudy
Chongqing	29	38	cloudy
Fuzhou	26	33	rain
Guangzhou	25	33	rain
Guiyang	20	28	showers
Haikou	27	35	cloudy
Hangzhou	25	31	rain
Harbin	21	31	cloudy
Hefei	24	30	thunderstorms
Nanjing	25	32	thunderstorms
Shanghai	27	31	rain
Taipei	26	29	rain
Wuhan	25	36	fine
Hong Kong	26	30	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	17	28	fine
Frankfurt	18	27	thunderstorms
Paris	20	29	thunderstorms
London	17	24	overcast
New York	22	28	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- For one; 5- Queue before Q; 9- House rodents; 13- Letter cross-line; 15- The last Mrs. Chaplin; 16- Thought; 17- Shakers et al.; 18- Regrets; 19- Woeful word; 20- La-la lead-in; 21- Some digits; 23- Least feral; 25- Seemingly forever; 26- Contusion; 27- Cleansing preparation; 30- Van Gogh had one later in life; 31- Nostrils; 32- Capital of Syria; 37- Robert of "The Sopranos"; 38- Part of Hispaniola; 40- Bishop of Rome; 41- Companion of a child; 43- Swollen part; 44- Comedian Philips; 45- Religious discourses; 47- Pitch tents; 50- Straight; 51- Everett of "Citizen Kane"; 52- He played Ricky; 53- Punching tool; 56- North Carolina college; 57- Get as a result; 59- Carousal; 61- Fermented grape juice; 62- Famous last words; 63- Ships' officers; 64- Bird feed; 65- Thought-provoking; 66- Cookbook amts.;

DOWN 1- No. 2; 2- Equal; 3- Killer whale; 4- Cavity; 5- To a greater extent; 6- Entre ___; 7- United; 8- Deli meat; 9- Heat home; 10- Runs without moving; 11- Discontinue; 12- Bridge seat; 14- Lens settings; 22- Lennon's lady; 24- Ambience; 25- Very hard mineral; 26- Strike forcefully; 27- Barbershop sound; 28- Auditorium; 29- Neck of the woods; 32- Fizzle out; 33- Foam; 34- "It's Impossible" singer; 35- Atop; 36- Sun. speeches; 38- Blotto?; 39- Riding; 42- Intend; 43- Aphorism; 45- Increase; 46- Hesitant sounds; 47- "Dallas" matriarch; 48- Peter of Herman's Hermits; 49- Worked with wicker; 51- Puts in stitches; 52- Go out with; 53- They may be fine; 54- Read 'em and ___; 55- Not as much; 58- Hot time in Paris; 60- Touch lightly;



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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Vibrant artworks turn Sands China's resorts into lively pop art showcase



Sands China is currently presenting a colorful pop art exhibition at its integrated resorts in support of Art Macao 2023, highlighted by two giant Disney-themed outdoor installations greeting visitors on the Cotai Strip.

'Meet the Magic: In celebration of Disney 100 by Philip Colbert and Jason Naylor' features two world-renowned artists whose works bring vivid colors of hope and happiness, creating an exuberant atmosphere and cultural vitality for the community's residents and tourists alike.

British contemporary pop artist Philip Colbert and American graffiti artist Jason Naylor have each presented their unique interpretations of Mickey Mouse, in celebration of Disney's 100th anniversary – Colbert through his iconic lobster character and Naylor with his well-known kaleidoscope of street art colours.

Outdoors, Colbert's Lobster Mickey and Naylor's Technicolor Mickey, each over 5 metres, welcome visitors at The Venetian Macao's lagoon area and at Le Jardin, respectively.

Indoors meanwhile, their the vibrant, eye-catching installations have transformed The Venetian Macao's hotel lobby.

And on Level 2 of The Londoner Macao, the brand new ASCE Diverse and Explorative Art Hub is showcasing Disney's commemorative products launching in Macau for the first time, along with the two artists' new original works – providing a unique opportunity for all to enjoy the world of art.



FOOTBALL

Spain wins its first Women's World Cup title, beating England 1-0 in the final

ANNE M. PETERSON, SYDNEY

SPAIN won its first Women's World Cup title less than a year after a player rebellion, holding off England 1-0 yesterday after Olga Carmona's first-half goal.

The victory made La Roja the first team to hold the under-17, under-20 and senior world titles at the same time. Spain is the fifth winner in nine editions of the Women's World Cup and joins Germany as the only two nations to win both the men's and women's tournament.

At the final whistle the Spanish players piled on each other in front of their goal and were still dancing on the field until the trophy presentations.

Carmona's left-foot shot in the 29th minute went into the far corner of the net and just out of reach of diving England goalkeeper Mary Earps.

In celebration she raised her jersey to reveal the word "Merchi" scrawled in ink on her un-



Spain's players celebrate as they defeated England after the Women's World Cup soccer final at Stadium Australia in Sydney, Australia, yesterday

dershirt, an apparent nod to her former school.

Carmona also scored the game-winner in the 89th minute of Spain's 2-1 semifinal victory over Sweden, becoming the first player since Carli Lloyd in 2015 to score in a World Cup semifinal and final.

Spain had a chance to doub-

le the lead in the 68th but Jenni Hermoso's penalty attempt was saved by Earps, who anticipated perfectly and dived to her left.

Spain's victory comes despite a near-mutiny by players last year. Fifteen players said they were stepping away from the national team for their mental health while also calling for a more

professional environment.

Three of those players — Ona Batlle, Aitana Bonmatí and Mariona Caldentey — reconciled with the federation and were at the World Cup.

England had momentum going into the tournament after winning the European Championship at home last summer. But three of the team's best players, captain Leah Williamson, Fran Kirby and Beth Mead, all had knee injuries that kept them off the World Cup squad.

England coach Sarina Wiegman was the first coach to take her teams to back-to-back World Cup title matches. She led the Netherlands to the final in 2019, but fell 2-0 to the United States. She's now 0-2 in the championship match.

England was coming off a 3-1 victory over host Australia in the semifinal. Lauren James, who was the team's top scorer with three goals and three assists, was forced to sit out two matches because of a suspension for stom-

ping on Nigeria's Michelle Alozie to open the knockout stage.

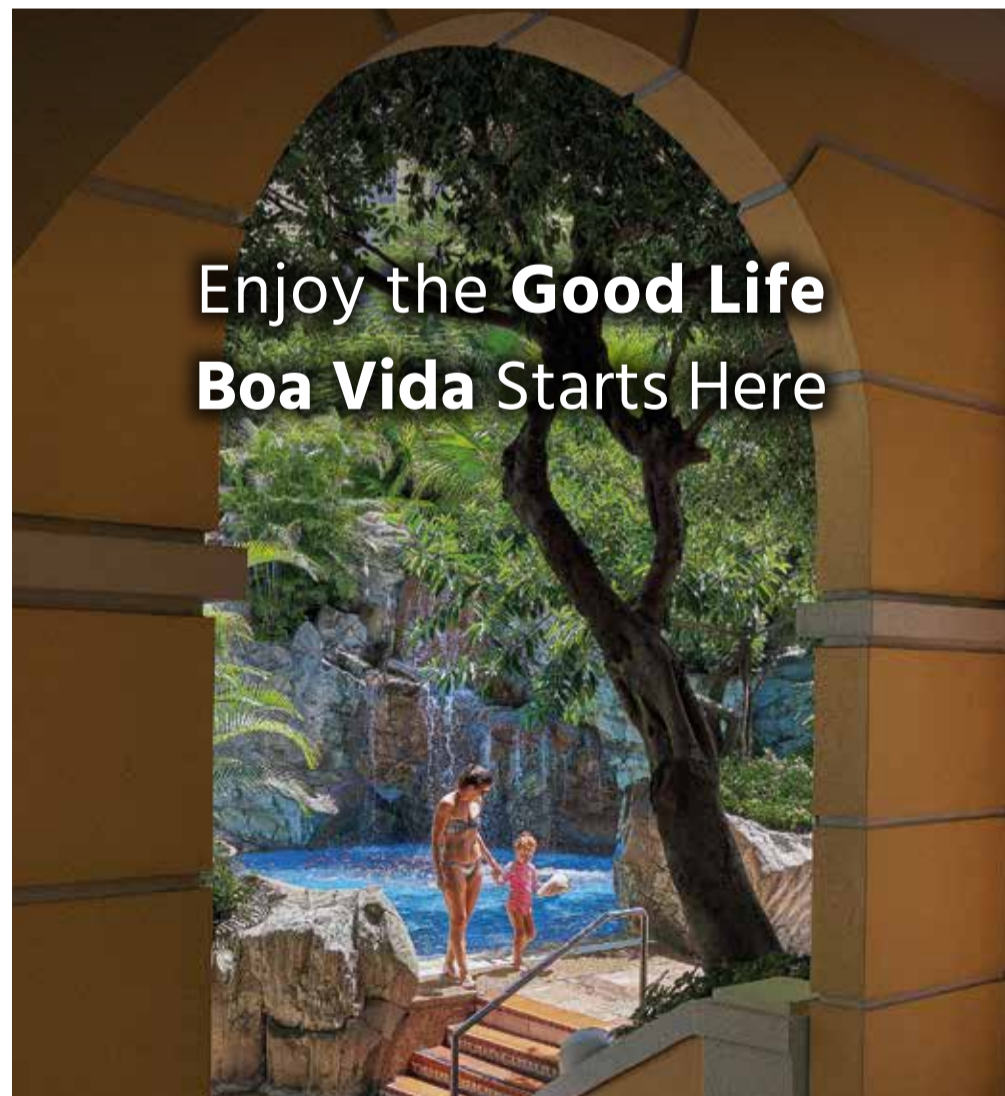
While James was available for the final, Wiegman started Ella Toone and used James as a second-half substitute in a double change to spark the attack.

The game was briefly interrupted in the 25th minute by a person who raced onto the field but was quickly tackled by security.

One of England's best chances was in the 16th when Lauren Hemp's blast caromed off the crossbar. A minute later, Salma Paralluelo raced to the goal but couldn't get a clean shot and Earps stopped Alba Redondo's attempt in the scramble in front of the net.

Vilda started 19-year-old Paralluelo, who scored the breakthrough goal for Spain against Sweden, and the game-winner in extra time over the Netherlands in the quarterfinals. Those efforts contributed to her winning the young player of the tournament award. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

The Conversation

Mihaela Papa, Tufts University, MDT

As BRICS COOPERATION ACCELERATES, IS IT TIME FOR THE US TO DEVELOP A BRICS POLICY?

The leaders of the BRICS group of large emerging economies – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – meet in Johannesburg for two days beginning on Aug. 22, 2023, foreign policymakers in Washington will no doubt be listening carefully.

The BRICS group has been challenging some key tenets of U.S. global leadership in recent years. On the diplomatic front, it has undermined the White House's strategy on Ukraine by countering the Western use of sanctions on Russia. Economically, it has sought to chip away at U.S. dominance by weakening the dollar's role as the world's default currency.

And now the group is looking at expanding, with 23 formal candidates. Such a move – especially if BRICS accepts Iran, Cuba or Venezuela – would likely strengthen the group's anti-U.S. positioning.

So what can Washington expect next, and how can it respond?

Our research team at Tufts University has been working on a multiyear Rising Power Alliances project that has analyzed the evolution of BRICS and the group's relationship with the U.S. What we have found is that the common portrayal of BRICS as a China-dominated group primarily pursuing anti-U.S. agendas is misplaced.

Rather, the BRICS countries connect around common development interests and a quest for a multipolar world order in which no single power dominates. Yet BRICS consolidation has turned the group into a potent negotiation force that now challenges Washington's geopolitical and economic goals. Ignoring BRICS as a major policy force – something the U.S. has been prone to do in the past – is no longer an option.

Reining in the America bashing

At the dawn of BRIC cooperation in 2008 – before South Africa joined in 2010, adding an “S” – members were mindful that the group's existence could lead to tensions with policymakers who viewed the U.S. as the world's “indispensable nation.”

As Brazil's former Foreign Minister Celso Amorim observed at the time, “We should promote a more democratic world order by ensuring the fullest participation of developing countries in decision-making bodies.” He saw BRIC countries “as a bridge between industrialized and developing countries for sustainable development and a more balanced international economic policy.”

While such realignments would certainly dilute U.S. power, BRIC explicitly refrained from anti-U.S. rhetoric.

After the 2009 BRIC summit, the Chinese foreign ministry clarified that BRIC cooperation should not be “directed against a third party.” Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon had already confirmed that there would be no America bashing at BRIC and directly rejected China's and Russia's efforts to weaken the dollar's dominance.

Rather, the new entity complemented existing efforts toward multipolarity – including China-Russia cooperation and the India, Brazil, South Africa trilateral dialogue. Not only was BRIC envisioned as a forum for ideas rather than ideologies, but it also planned to stay open and transparent.

BRICS alignment and tensions with the US

Today, BRICS is a formidable group – it accounts for 41% of the world's population, 31.5% of global gross domestic product and 16% of global trade. As such, it has a lot of bargaining power if the countries act together – which they increasingly do. During the Ukraine war, Moscow's BRICS partners have ensured Russia's economic and diplomatic survival in the face of Western attempts to isolate Moscow. Brazil, India, China and South Africa engaged with Russia in 166 BRICS events in 2022. And some members became crucial export markets for Russia.

The group's political development – through which it has continually added new areas of cooperation and extra “bodies” – is impressive, considering the vast differences among its members.

[Abridged]

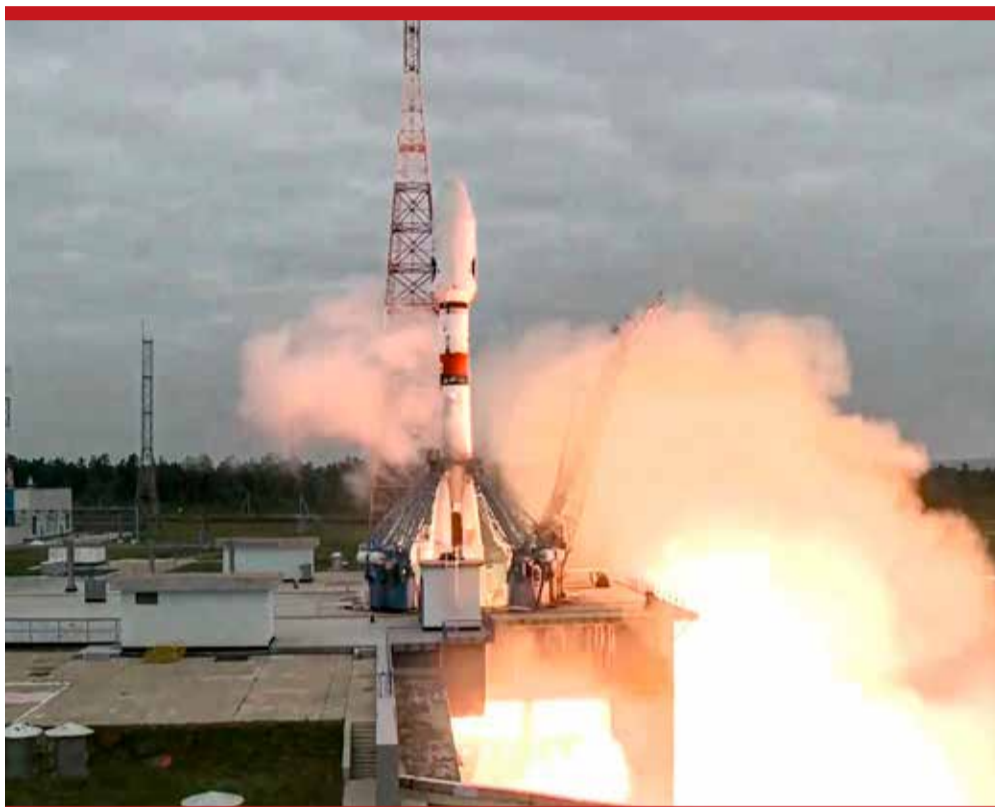
The Netherlands and Denmark announced yesterday they will give F-16 warplanes to Ukraine, in a long-awaited announcement that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called an important motivation for his country's forces that are embroiled in a difficult counteroffensive against Russia.

The timeline depends on how soon Ukrainian crews and infrastructure are ready for the powerful U.S.-made jets, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte told Zelenskyy as the two visited a Dutch air base.

Ukraine has long pleaded for the sophisticated fighter to give it a combat edge. It recently launched a long-anticipated counteroffensive against the Kremlin's forces without air cover, placing its troops at the mercy of Russian aviation and artillery.

Zelenskyy welcomed the “historic” announcement and praised Rutte for making the Netherlands the first country to offer the planes. The announcement came minutes after the two leaders inspected two gray F-16 jets parked in a hangar at the Dutch base in the southern city of Eindhoven.

AP PHOTO



RUSSIA

LUNA-25 SPACECRAFT CRASHES INTO THE MOON, ENDING ITS BID TO REACH THE LUNAR SOUTH POLE

RUSSIA'S Luna-25 spacecraft crashed into the moon after it spun into an uncontrolled orbit, the country's Roscosmos space agency said yesterday.

The pilotless spacecraft was aiming to be the first ever to land on the south pole of the moon, an area where scientists believe there could be important reserves of frozen water and precious elements. It had been expected to land Monday.

However, Roscosmos said it lost contact with the Luna-25 on Saturday after the spacecraft ran into difficulties and reported an “abnormal situation.”

“The apparatus moved into an unpredictable orbit and ceased to exist as a result of a collision with the surface of the moon,” read a statement from the agency.

The Luna-25 was in a race with an Indian spacecraft launched on July

14 to be the first to reach the south pole. Both were expected to reach the moon between Aug. 21 and 23.

The lunar mission was Russia's first since 1976, when it was part of the Soviet Union. Only three governments have managed successful moon landings: the Soviet Union, the United States and China.

The Luna-25 was in a race with an Indian spacecraft launched on July 14 to be the first to reach the south pole

The lunar south pole is of particular interest to scientists, who believe the permanently shadowed polar craters may contain frozen water in the rocks that future explorers could transform into air and rocket fuel.

A previous Indian attempt to land at the south

pole in 2019 ended when the spacecraft crashed into the moon's surface.

Roscosmos said it wanted to show Russia “is a state capable of delivering a payload to the moon,” and “ensure Russia's guaranteed access to the moon's surface.”

Sanctions imposed on Russia since it began its actions in Ukraine have affected its space program, making it more difficult to access Western technology.

The Luna-25 was initially meant to carry a small moon rover but that idea was abandoned to reduce the weight of the craft for improved reliability, analysts said.

The craft launched from the Vostochny Cosmodrome in Russia's Far East on Aug. 10. The spaceport is a pet project of Russian President Vladimir Putin and key to his efforts to make Russia a space superpower. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy yesterday vowed stern retaliation for a Russian missile strike in the center of the northern Ukrainian city of Chernihiv that killed seven people and wounded almost 150 others the day before. “I am sure our soldiers will respond to Russia for this terrorist attack. Respond tangibly,” Zelenskyy said in a video address published yesterday at the end of a visit to Sweden, his first foreign trip since attending a NATO summit in Lithuania last month.

AP PHOTO



Ecuador is held a special election yesterday to pick a new president, with police and soldiers on guard against unprecedented violence, including the assassination of a candidate this month. Front-runners include an ally of exiled former President Rafael Correa and a millionaire with a security background promising to be tough on crime. Authorities have deployed more than 100,000 police and soldiers to protect the vote against more violence. Some Ecuadorians still said they would not even leave home for the election.

AP PHOTO



Niger The leader of mutinous soldiers who ousted the democratically elected president said Saturday night that they will return the country to civilian rule within three years. Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani gave no details on the plan, saying on state television only that the principles for the transition would be decided within 30 days at a dialogue to be hosted by the junta.