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THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES CROSSING BETWEEN MACAU, HONG KONG AND ZHUHAI DURING THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS EXCEEDED 1 MILLION

GOV'T AI-ASSISTED SPEECH THERAPY SYSTEM SEES OVER 13,000 USERS

RUSSIA, CHINA LOOK TO ADVANCE AGENDAS AT SUMMIT OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN JOHANNESBURG

AP PHOTO



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un observed the test-firing of strategic cruise missiles, state media reported Monday, as the U.S. and South Korean militaries kicked off major annual drills that the North views as an invasion rehearsal. The North's report on missile tests came three days after the leaders of the U.S., South Korea and Japan held their first stand-alone trilateral summit and agreed to increase their cooperation on their ballistic missile defenses to counter North Korea's evolving nuclear and missile threats.

AP PHOTO



Pakistan Authorities in Pakistan are promising 2 million rupees in compensation for each of nearly 100 poor Christians who lost their homes when a Muslim mob angered over the alleged desecration of a Quran stormed their neighborhoods, burning at least 19 churches and damaging houses, officials said. Police said they have arrested dozens more rioters in ongoing raids, bringing the total number of detainees to 160. Last week's attack was one of the most destructive in the country's history. The violence drew nationwide condemnation.

AP PHOTO



Syria Protests spread yesterday in two government-held provinces amid widespread anger over increasing prices, the crash of the Syrian pound and the dwindling purchasing power of many people in the war-torn country, opposition activists said. The rare protests are still limited to southern Syria and are far from government strongholds along the Mediterranean coast, the capital Damascus and the largest cities, including Aleppo and Homs.

More on backpage

ROLLING HIGH

High rollers have their bets back on the city's gaming tables; Revenues set to fully recover to pre-Covid levels by Golden Week



SANDWICH-CLASS

INCOME CEILINGS FOR HOUSING APPLICATION SET

ENTRIES FOR 70TH MACAU GP OPEN UNTIL SEPT. 15

Entries for racers in the 70th edition of the Macau Grand Prix opened yesterday and close on September 15, the Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee (MGPOC) has revealed in a press note. According to the same information, applications must be made to the Automobile General Association Macao-China, located on the ground floor of the Macau Grand Prix Building at Avenida da Amizade during working hours (Monday to Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and, 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.). This year, the commemorative edition of GP will take place over two weekends, including Nov. 11 and 12, and from Nov. 16 to 19 with 11 races being held at Macau's Guia Circuit.

GAMING EMPLOYEES' EARNINGS UP 6%

At the end of the second quarter of 2023, there were 51,693 full-time employees in the gaming sector, a decrease of 1,899 year-on-year. Among them, dealers totaled 23,675, down by 418 year-on-year. In June, average earnings (excluding irregular remuneration) of full-time employees in the gaming sector were MOP24,730, up by 6.3% year-on-year. Average earnings of dealers rose by 5% to MOP20,330. At the end of the second quarter, there were 113 job vacancies in the gaming sector, an increase of 94% year-on-year.

CPI GROWS SLIGHTLY IN JULY

The Composite Consumer Price Index (CPI) for July (104.76) grew slightly by 0.78% year-on-year. The increment was attributed to higher charges for eating out and package tours, and rising tuition fees, as well as increases in hotel room rates and clothing prices. The rise, however, was partially offset by lower rentals for dwellings and reduced airfares. Among the various sections of goods and services, the price indices of education, recreation and culture and clothing and footwear climbed by 9.98%, 6.80% and 5.07% year-on-year respectively, whereas the indices of transport and housing and fuels dropped by 4.38% and 1.74% respectively.

GAMING

CITIGROUP: HIGH ROLLERS BACK ON CITY'S GAMING TABLES

LYNZY VALLES

HIGH rollers seem to have their bets back on the games of chance in Macau.

A weekly channel check from Citigroup noted that it has observed 24 whales so far this month – a figure that marks the highest single tally this year amid a weakening economy.

Whales are used to describe players that bring to the table HKD100,000 to 500,000 per hand.

Citigroup analysts George Choi and Ryan Cheung said, "The 31% increase in player count likely implies the return of more casual Premium Mass players as well. However, their return dilutes the average wager per player by 20% in our survey."

The analysts noted that both Grade-A Premium Mass players and the more casual Premium Mass players remain important for the sector as both players drive the city's gross gaming revenue recovery during the second quarter.

"The number of Premium Mass players seen during our August 23 survey amounted to 468, compared to 357 last month, re-



presenting a 31% monthly increase and only 4% shy of this year's peak attained in January 2023, which was Chinese New Year Golden Week."

Tourism arrivals in the city are still on the rise during summer. In particular, the number of visitors from mainland China jumped by 25,994.4% year-on-year to 1,910,371, with 1,087,315 of them traveling under the Individual Visit Scheme.

Meanwhile, a note from JP Morgan Securities (Asia Pacific

Ltd. suggested that the revenues from mass-market players are set to recover to 100% of pre-Covid levels in the upcoming Golden Week in October.

The investment bank also stated that in the first 20 days of August, revenues have reached MOP11.2 billion, a daily average of MOP560 million.

Analysts have also pointed out that the turnover of the mass market reached 90% to 95% of pre-Covid levels.

Further, a report from the Wall

Street Journal has stated that the flock of visitors from the mainland amid China's faltering economy has propelled the city to reclaim the title of the world's gambling hub from Las Vegas.

In 2019, gambling revenue in Macau was six times that of Las Vegas, making Macau the world's gambling hub.

However, gaming floors emptied during the pandemic due to Macau's adherence to Beijing's zero-Covid policy, causing casinos to bleed cash for three years.

TRANSPORTATION

Over 1 million vehicles traveling between HK, Zhuhai and Macau over the summer holidays

RENATO MARQUES

THE number of vehicles crossing the border between Macau, Hong Kong and Zhuhai over the period of the summer holidays has already exceeded 1 million, the Gongbei Customs District authority has said in a news release.

According to the same authority, the total number of customs clearance passenger vehicles traveling between the three regions passed the 1-million mark last Aug. 19, with an

average daily figure exceeding 20,000 vehicles.

The figure represents a customs clearance volume increase of 83% when compared with the same period in 2019 (pre-pandemic).

On the line is the implementation of the "Northbound Travel Scheme" for both Macau and Hong Kong vehicles, which has led also to the increase of the border clearance of passenger vehicles at the Zhuhai Port of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge to 366,400, twice

the figure reached in the same period (July and August) in 2019.

In the same given period, some 382,600 cross-border passenger vehicles were also cleared at the Gongbei Port, which continues to rank as the number one border crossing point for vehicles between Macau and Zhuhai.

Hengqin Port registered the inspection and clearance of some 249,400 passenger vehicles, of which about 70% were vehicles from Macau



with a single license plate.

The Gongbei Customs also said that the double-plated vehicles (Macau

and Zhuhai) continue to cross the border mainly between the two sides via the Gongbei Port.

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PROPERTY

Income ceilings for sandwich-class housing application set

RENATO MARQUES

THE government has established the minimum and maximum limits for the income of those aiming to apply for the so-called “sandwich-class housing.”

The government’s official gazette contains details about the new law regulating this new type of acquisition of public-built housing.

To be eligible for this type of housing unit, the candidate (if single) or the candidate’s household (in the case of marriage or a de facto relationship) cannot possess a monthly income lower than 50% of the maximum ceiling established for the acquisition of this housing. To establish the upper limit the maximum ceiling established for the acquisition of this housing is used as a reference, plus 10%.

In practical terms, and considering the currently established ceilings, a single candidate needs a monthly income between 19,175 and 42,185 patacas, while a couple (or larger household) will need a minimum income of 38,345 and a maximum of 84,359 patacas to be eligible.

An amendment to these limits can happen at any time via an order from the Chief Executive, without the necessity of changing the law.



The candidate’s assets before an application also play a role with 20% to be added to the maximum limit in use for the economic acquisition housing.

In this sense, a single candidate can have assets with a net worth of 1,505,880 patacas, while this amount rises to 3,011,760 patacas in the case of a couple or larger household.

Also, one of the requirements is related to the age of the applicant, with single candidates

needing to have a minimum age of 23 years, while in the case of those married, the requirement

falls to 18 years.

In both cases, applicants need to be permanent residents of Macau and will need to effectively live in the housing unit acquired under this system for a minimum of 183 days per year.

After purchase these housing units cannot be resold before 16 years have passed. Even after this selling period has expired, the house unit owner can only resell the unit to the government, in this case represented by the Housing Bureau (IH).

The IH will reacquire the unit for the same price as the initial sale, deducting from that amount the price of any renovation works necessary to reestablish the unit’s livability conditions.

When the law (Law 17/2023) was passed at the Legislative Assembly, the major concern raised by the lawmakers was the fact that there is no forecast from the government side on the selling price of the units to be built under this scheme.

The government currently expects to build some 4,000 units under this scheme, which are to be located at the Avenida de Wai Long in the former land of the La Scala development.

The government is said to be considering building up to 10,000 sandwich-class housing units depending on the real needs and acquisitive power of the residents.

This new regime comes into force on April 1, 2024.

INCOME CEILINGS

Candidate or his household	Min. Income (per month)	Max. Income (per month)	Max. Assets
1 person	MOP19,175	MOP42,185	MOP1,505,880
2 or more people	MOP38,345	MOP84,359	MOP3,011,760

Four motorbikes crash on Sai Van Bridge two days after dedicated lane suspension



ANTHONY LAM

AN accident involving four motorcycles took place yesterday afternoon on Sai Van Bridge, two days after the suspension of the motorcycle lane.

The motorcycle lane was suspended to make way for the replacement of the bridge’s expansion joints. The suspension is set to end 10 a.m. Sunday.

The accident took place near the end of the Taipa-bound direction. Four riders, 32 to 56, three men and a

woman, were injured and sent to the hospital.

At a press conference to announce the suspension, government representatives stressed that drivers are reminded to use caution and drive safely during the seven-day suspension of the motorcycle lane.

In another case, the police announced yesterday that a Filipino man, 40, had been apprehended for allegedly stealing sports clothing worth about MOP2,500.

He was said to have used a magnet to disarm the security lock on the clothing.

A shop in Taipa discovered the loss of some clothing and hence notified the police on Aug. 15. Locking down the suspect with public surveillance cameras, the police arrested him the next day near Guia Hill. He admitted to committing the crime. Meanwhile, the police have seized the magnet and the clothing from his residence.

Meanwhile in main-

land China, the Gongbei Customs have discovered and seized ivory products from two people – one entering and the other leaving the country – at the Jiuzhou Maritime Port. Upon discovery, customs officers were not completely certain of the material of the products. Later tests confirmed that the products – two bracelets – were both made of ivory, which is sanctioned material for import and export in China.

The Customs reminds the public that ivory can only be imported or exported with proper documentation from Chinese authorities. Importing and exporting such material is a crime in China.

GOV'T AI-ASSISTED SPEECH THERAPY SYSTEM SEES OVER 13,000 USERS

ANTHONY LAM

AN AI-assisted speech therapy system owned by the Health Bureau (SSM) has seen over 13,000 users, with 1,200 children having used it between March 2022 and June 2023.

The data was released by director of SSM Alvis Lo in response to lawmaker Pereira Coutinho's written inquiry on the availability of speech therapy in Macau. The official added that in 2016 and 2017, the government set up a children's comprehensive assessment center and a children's rehabilitation and therapy center. They have catered to the screening, assessment, therapy and rehabilitation needs of children with developmental disorders aged between 0 and six years.

In addition, Lo said that SSM has introduced an AI-assisted speech therapy system, to allow needy children to receive constant online rehabilitation training.

In terms of training speech therapists, the official said that Macao Polytechnic University started offering a topical Bachelor degree program in the 2017/2018 aca-



demical year. A total of 58 students have graduated from the program. In the imminent academic year, 20 new students are expected in the program.

Lo also assured that with electronic methodologies, his bureau guarantees that the first consultation and the conclusion of assess-

ment will not happen later than four weeks and eight weeks after the first intervention.

In another inquiry, lawmaker Nick Lei asked the government about its decision on the parking lot at the new Central Library. Earlier, director of Culture Leong Wai Man said no public parking lot

will be built at the new facility, given the small size of the land plot.

In response, citing the Transport Bureau, acting director for Culture Cheang Kai Meng explained said the land plot of the future library is L shaped and the elevation means that a slope as long as 60 meters is needed for traffic. The

slope will also take up 200 square meters.

He added that the design team has trialed several plans and even with the best plan, a two-story parking lot will only hold a maximum of 33 light vehicles, not taking into account the compliance with traffic regulations that may pose further challenges.

In contrast to previous disclosures, Cheang said that analysis is still being conducted and no decision has been made yet.

Another inquiry by lawmaker Leong Sun Iok investigated the government's expenditure on office rentals. The director of Finance, Iong Kong Leong, said the government has recorded dropping rental expenditures for four years in a row. In fact, the spending on rental for December of each year from 2019 to 2022 has fallen from MOP70 million to MOP57 million. For May this year, the government has spent MOP54 million on rental of office and storage spaces. Iong expects the amount will continue to fall as the government is set to gradually relocate its offices and storage to self-owned premises.

In addition, Iong said the government has or will have office or mixed-use premises in New Urban Zone A, ZAPE, NAPE and Co-tai. All of them will equate to a total space of 130,000 square meters.

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科學技術發展基金
Fundo para o Desenvolvimento das Ciências e da Tecnologia

Notice

Proposal for 2023 Funding Scheme for Enterprise Innovation and R&D (Type C) of Science and Technology Development Fund

(I) Objectives

In line with the Macao SAR government's policies, the Science and Technology Development Fund (FDCT) is committed to enhance innovation and R&D in Macao enterprises, create a research-friendly environment, and inspire enterprises to increase their R&D investment through providing financial support, so as to further promote the industry-university-research partnership, facilitate the transformation of scientific research achievements, cultivate emerging industries, and promote the moderately diversified development of related industries in Macao.

(II) Support Areas

The research projects shall align with the Second Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the Macao SAR, the Macao SAR Government's Policy Address for the Fiscal Year 2023, related planning and programs of Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, etc., especially the projects that can promote scientific research and industrial development in the fields such as Chinese medicine, integrated circuits, electronic components, Internet of Things, big data, artificial intelligence, new energy, advanced materials and biomedicine.

(III) Target Group

Commercial enterprises that fulfill the following conditions are eligible to submit application:

1. Enterprises registered in the Macao SAR for one year or more;
2. The enterprise is not in arrears with tax and social security contributions (if any) in the Macao SAR;
3. Enterprises with no less than five full-time employees;
4. The enterprise shall be certified by the *Technology Enterprises Certification Program*, or an "enterprise engaged in scientific and technological innovation activities" accredited by the "Scientific and Technological Innovation Commercial Enterprise Accreditation Committee" according to law as stipulated in Article 6 of Law No. 1/2021 - "Tax Preference System for Enterprises Engaged in Scientific and Technological Innovation Activities", or an enterprise previously funded by FDCT, without prejudice to the high-tech enterprise certification issued by other government departments.

(IV) Application Requirements

For each project, a 5-year research plan and corresponding budget shall be provided in the proposal.

(V) Applied Amount and Duration

1. The amount applied for each project ranges from MOP 3,000,000 to MOP 5,000,000. Each project has a funding duration of 3 years.
2. Application for continuous funding for the fourth and fifth years can be submitted within six months after two years of research duration, with the applied amount ranging from MOP 3,000,000 to MOP 5,000,000.

(VI) Requirements for Expected Results

1. The supporting funds invested by the applying enterprise for R&D shall not be less than the funding amount of FDCT.
2. The expected project findings shall include software, hardware (prototype, mock-up), technical standards, formulas, new materials, new technologies, etc., and specify the potential economic or social benefits after the utilization of the project.
3. Upon project conclusion, the expected TRL of the project shall be TRL 6 or above after 3 years' research duration; and TRL 8 or above after 5 years' research duration.

(VII) Assessment Criteria

1. The assessment is performed by FDCT according to the *Funding Regulations of the Science and Technology Development Fund* approved by the Chief Executive's Dispatch No. 93/2023.
2. Key considerations will be given to the followings: (refer to the online Application Guidelines for details)
 - 2.1 Assessment of technologies and research findings;
 - 2.2 Competence of the applying entity;
 - 2.3 Project planning.

(VIII) Application Period

From August 22nd to September 22nd, 2023

(IX) Application Method

The applying entities shall log in the online application system to complete the proposal prior to the deadline of application: <https://apps.fdct.gov.mo/sams/public/main-page.faces>
Paper documents submitted to: Room K, 11/F, the Macau Square, No.43-53A Avenida do Infante D. Henrique, Macao; Enquiry: 28788777.

President of the Administrative Committee of Science and Technology Development Fund
Che Weng Keong
August 22nd, 2023

Finance Secretary studies Hainan's free trade experience

ANTHONY LAM

SECRETARY for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong has led a delegation to Hainan Province to study its experience as a free trade port, among other topics.

Lei conducted the visit also in his capacity as the director of the Executive Council of the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin (the Cooperation Zone).

He first thanked the Hainan government for assisting with the visit, and explained that the Cooperation Zone has an area of 106 square kilometers, which is set to become a new home for Macau residents. "A new system on par with Macau's standards and openness is being constructed," he said.

Lei then cited the province's experience as a free trade port, complimenting the orderly progression of special customs operations on the island province, the accelerated formation of a modern industrial system, the



continuous strengthening of new drivers of economic development, and the continuous optimization of the business environment, which will provide experience and reference for the establishment and improvement of the Guangdong-Macao co-consultation, co-construction and sharing system.

Meanwhile, Vice Governor Ni Qiang of the province under-

lined that it is the ardent desire of the Party Central Committee and General Secretary Xi Jinping to jointly promote the mutual development of Guangdong and Hainan, and to promote the joint development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Hainan Free Trade Port.

The delegation visited Boao Lecheng International Medical

Tourism Pioneer Area to witness the permanent International Innovative Medicine and Equipment Exhibition. They also made visits to understand the basic situation of the industrial development of the Yangpu Development Zone, and the implementation of the province's special tariff policies, as well as the situation of Yangpu port special operations and construction projects.

HENGQIN TOURISM REVENUES SURGE TO RMB1.9B IN 1H

According to statistics, in the first half of 2023, the tourism revenue in major scenic areas of the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin amounted to RMB1.186 billion, up 642.69% year-on-year. The number of visitors to the Cooperation Zone also surged, with a 432.32% increase to RMB5.16 million. During the first half of the year, the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute attracted more than 20,000 exhibition visitors to Macau. It is estimated that Macau will hold about 100 exhibition events this year related to the four major industries of the Cooperation Zone.

ZHUHAI AIRPORT-HENGQIN EXPRESS ROUTE ADDS NEW STOP AT PORT

Starting Aug. 23, the Zhuhai Airport-Hengqin express route will be adjusted and a new stop at Hengqin Port will be added. Passengers will be able to buy tickets via WeChat or at the ticket counter. The first bus departs Zhuhai Airport at 9:33 a.m. with a 30-minute interval. The drop off stops at Chimelong Spacechip Hotel, Chimelong Circus Hotel, Hengqin Bay Hotel and Chimelong Penguin Hotel, with the last departure at 6:33 p.m. According to the timetable, the first bus that departs Hengqin Port to Zhuhai Airport is at 8:20 a.m. while the last stop is at 5:50 p.m.

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Notice

Proposal for 2023 Funding Scheme for Scientific Research and Innovation (Type C) of Science and Technology Development Fund

- (I) **Objectives**
In line with the Macao SAR government's policies, the Science and Technology Development Fund (FDCT) is committed to promote the industry-university-research partnership, facilitate the production of application-based research findings, so as to improve the contribution of scientific and technological innovation to social and economic development in Macao.
- (II) **Target Group**
1. Local higher education institutions under the supervision of the Macao SAR government;
2. Laboratories or other entities engaged in scientific and technological R&D in the Macao SAR;
3. Private non-profit organizations registered in the Macao SAR;
4. Researchers engaged in R&D activities in the Macao SAR.
- (III) **Application Requirements**
This Funding Scheme includes two categories: "Technical Requirements Category" and "Application Development Category", and the research projects shall cover the research contents and meet all assessment indicators in line with the corresponding guideline directions (refer to the online Application Guidelines for details).
1. "Technical Requirements Category" is divided into two fields: "Traditional Chinese Medicine and Biomedicine" and "Big Data and Artificial Intelligence", and each field includes a number of technical requirements put forward by enterprises or other application institutions. The applying entity shall carry out R&D catering to the relevant requirements.
2. "Application Development Category" is divided into three fields: "Biomedicine", "Information Technology" and "Engineering and Materials", and each field includes several specific research directions set by FDCT. The applying entity shall carry out technology R&D for practical applications in a specific research direction.
3. For each project, a 5-year research plan and corresponding budget shall be provided in the proposal.
- (IV) **Applied Amount and Duration**
1. The amount applied for each project ranges from MOP 3,000,000 to MOP 5,000,000. Each project has a funding duration of 3 years.
2. Application for continuous funding for the fourth and fifth years can be submitted within six months after two years of research duration, with the applied amount ranging from MOP 3,000,000 to MOP 5,000,000.
- (V) **Requirements for Expected Results**
1. The expected project findings shall include software, hardware (prototype, mock-up), technical standards, formulas, new materials, new technologies, etc., and specify the potential economic or social benefits after the utilization of the project.
2. Upon project conclusion, the expected TRL of the project shall be TRL 5 or above after 3 years' research duration; and TRL 6 or above after 5 years' research duration.
- (VI) **Assessment Criteria**
1. The assessment is performed by FDCT according to the *Funding Regulations of the Science and Technology Development Fund* approved by the Chief Executive's Dispatch No. 93/2023.
2. Top priority goes to the projects of "Technical Requirements Category".
3. For the "Application Development Category", top priority goes to partnerships with enterprises in Macao and Hengqin, especially those that have been certified under the *Technology Enterprises Certification Program* of the Economic and Technology Development Bureau.
4. Key considerations will be given to the followings: (refer to the online Application Guidelines for details)
4.1 Assessment of technologies and research findings;
4.2 Competence of the applying entity;
4.3 Project planning.
- (VII) **Application Period**
From August 22nd to September 22nd, 2023
- (VIII) **Application Method**
The applying entities shall log in the online application system to complete the proposal prior to the deadline of application: <https://apps.fdet.gov.mo/sams/public/main-page.faces>
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President of the Administrative Committee of Science and Technology Development Fund
Che Weng Keong
August 22nd, 2023

PHILANTHROPY

CLINTON GLOBAL INITIATIVE WILL RETURN TO NYC WITH JOSE ANDRES, ORLANDO BLOOM, AND MATT DAMON

GLENN GAMBOA, NEW YORK

THE Clinton Global Initiative 2023 will convene “leaders, innovators and dreamers” – ranging from World Bank President Ajay Banga and The Bahamas’ Prime Minister Philip E. Davis to Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky, World Central Kitchen founder Jose Andres and Ford Foundation CEO Darren Walker, as well as A-list actors Orlando Bloom, Matt Damon, and Ashley Judd – in New York on Sept. 18 and 19 to keep up the momentum addressing global issues generated by the conference when it returned last year after a six-year hiatus.

Former President Bill Clinton, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and Clinton Foundation Vice Chair Chelsea Clinton announced Monday that the conference would seek more commitments to address climate change, health care issues, gender-based violence, the war in Ukraine and



other issues.

“Every day, billions of people around the world, even in the face of the most dire circumstances, make a profound decision to choose hope and keep going,” former President Bill Clinton told

The Associated Press in an emailed statement. “At CGI, we’re focusing on how to move forward in the face of daunting challenges—to act now, find new partners, and stick with it to make a positive difference in people’s lives.”

At the Clinton Global Initiative, or CGI, in 2022, more than 140 commitments were announced, including the \$1 billion plan from Water.org, co-founded by Damon, to help 100 million people in Africa, Asia and Latin America get lasting access to water and sanitation. Damon is set to return to CGI in September to further discuss the issue.

Carolina García Jayaram, CEO of the Elevate Prize Foundation, told The Associated Press that she is also set to return to the conference to announce the nonprofit’s next winner of The Elevate Prize Catalyst Award. Last year, the foundation presented the award to Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai at CGI.

“One very important thing I love about CGI -- and I think Malala really embodied it so powerfully -- is the idea of making a real-time commitment on the stage and challenging the people in the audience, both in person

and remotely, to do the same,” Jayaram said. “And I think being in the room with so many changemakers and leaders who are making those commitments in real time is almost infectious. It catalyzes more and more people to do the same. That’s unique to the CGI formula.”

Bringing together leaders in politics, business and philanthropy in one place can help bring new solutions to light, said Jayaram, whose foundation is one of the conference sponsors this year, alongside corporations like Cisco, JetBlue and Pfizer, as well as other nonprofits, including The EKTA Foundation, Fondation Botnar, and Global Education Foundation.

Though CGI maintains an international focus, it will include appearances from governors Maura Healey, from Massachusetts, Kathy Hochul, from New York, Wes Moore, from Maryland, and J.B. Pritzker, from Illinois, as well as Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. Oscar-winning directors The Daniels, artist Ai Weiwei, supermodel Karlie Kloss, and television host and author Padma Lakshmi will also be on hand, along with David Miliband, CEO of the International Rescue Committee, and Catherine Russell, executive director of UNICEF. **MDT/AP**

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BRICS

China, Russia look to advance agendas at summit of developing countries in Johannesburg

GERALD IMRAY,
JOHANNESBURG

RUSSIA and China will look to gain more political and economic ground in the developing world at a summit in South Africa this week, when an expected joint dose of anti-West grumbling from them may take on a sharper edge with a formal move to bring Saudi Arabia closer.

Leaders from the BRICS economic bloc of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa will hold three days of meetings in Johannesburg's financial district of Sandton, with President Xi Jinping's attendance underlining the diplomatic capital his country has invested in the bloc over the last decade-and-a-bit as an avenue for its ambitions.

Russian President Vladimir Putin will appear on a video link after his travel to South Africa was complicated by an International Criminal Court arrest warrant against him over the war in Ukraine.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa will be at the summit alongside Xi.

The main summit on Wednesday — and sideline meetings today and Thursday — are expected to produce general calls for more cooperation among countries in the Global South amid their rising discontent over perceived Western dominance of global institutions.

That's a sentiment that Russia and China are more than happy to lean into. Leaders or representatives of dozens more developing countries are set to attend the sideline meetings in Africa's wealthiest city to give Xi and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who will represent Putin in South Africa, a sizeable audience.

One specific policy point with more direct implications will be discussed and possibly decided on — the proposed expansion of the BRICS bloc, which was formed in 2009 by the emerging market countries of Brazil, Russia, India and China, and added South Africa the following year.

BLOCK EXPANSION

Saudi Arabia is one of more than 20 countries to have formally applied to join BRICS in another



President Xi Jinping with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa (left) at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing, in 2018

possible expansion, South African officials say. Any move toward the inclusion of the world's second-biggest oil producer in an economic bloc with Russia and China would clearly draw attention from the United States and its allies in an extra-frosty geopolitical climate, and amid a recent move by Beijing to exert some influence in the Persian Gulf.

"If Saudi Arabia were to enter BRICS, it will bring extraordinary importance to this grouping," said Talmiz Ahmad, India's former ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

Even an agreement on the principle of expanding BRICS, which already consists of a large chunk of the developing world's biggest economies, is a moral victory for the Russian and Chinese vision for the bloc as a counterbalance to the G-7, analysts say.

Both favor adding more countries to bolster a kind of coalition — even if it's only symbolic — amid China's economic friction with the U.S. and Russia's Cold War-like standoff with the West because of the war in Ukraine.

Nations ranging from Argentina to Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia and United Arab Emirates have all formally applied to join alongside the Saudis, and are also possible new members.

If a number of them are brought in, "then you end up with a bigger economic bloc, and from that a sense of power," said Prof. Alexis Habiaryemye of the College of Business and Economics at the University of Johannesburg.

While Brazil, India and South Africa are less keen on expansion and seeing their influence diluted in what's currently an exclusive developing world club, there is momentum for it. Nothing has been decided, though, and the five countries must first agree on the criteria new members need to meet. That's on the agenda in Johannesburg amid Beijing's push.

"BRICS expansion has become the top trending issue at the moment," said Chen Xiaodong, China's ambassador to South Africa. "Expansion is key to enhancing (the) BRICS mechanism's vitality.

I believe that this year's summit will witness a new and solid step on this front."

The U.S. has stressed its bilateral ties with South Africa, Brazil and India in an attempt to offset any outsized Russian and Chinese influence emanating from BRICS. In the buildup to the summit, the State Department said that the U.S. was "deeply engaged with many of the leading members of the BRICS association."

The European Union also will closely follow happenings in Johannesburg, but with almost sole focus on the war in Ukraine and the bloc's continued effort to draw united condemnation for Russia's invasion from the developing world, which has largely failed so far.

With Xi, Lula, Modi and Ramaphosa coming together, European Commission spokesman Peter Stano said the EU was calling on them to use the moment to uphold international law.

"We look forward to their contribution to make Putin stop his illegal, destabilizing behavior,"

Stano said.

If a BRICS foreign ministers meeting in Cape Town in June, the precursor to the main summit, is anything to go by, there will be no public criticism of Russia or Putin over the war. A planned protest by the Amnesty International rights group and the Ukrainian Association of South Africa outside the Sandton Convention Centre will likely be the only condemnation heard.

FAVORING RUSSIA

If anything, Russia might see the summit as an opportunity to leverage some favor.

Having halted a deal allowing the passage of grain out of Ukraine last month, Putin might use the BRICS gathering to announce more free Russian grain shipments to developing countries, as he has already done for several African nations, said Maria Snegovaya, senior fellow at the Europe, Russia, and Eurasia Program at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

It would allow Putin to demonstrate "goodwill" to the developing world, Snegovaya said, while cutting Ukraine out of the process.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Putin would have "full fledged participation" in the summit despite appearing on a video link and would make a speech.

What's also likely to be aired regularly over the three days in Johannesburg is the developing world's gripes over current global financial systems. That has streamlined in the months and weeks leading up to the summit into a criticism of the dominance of the U.S. dollar as the world's currency for international trade.

BRICS experts are generally united in pointing out the difficulties the bloc has in implementing policy due to the five countries' differing economic and political priorities, and the tensions and rivalry between China and India.

But a focus on more trade in local currencies is something all of them can get behind, said Cobus van Staden, an analyst at the China Global South Project, which tracks Chinese engagement across the developing world.

He sees BRICS pushing a move away from the dollar in regional trade in some parts of the world in the same way he sees this summit as a whole.

"None of this is the big sword that's going to slay the dollar. That's not the play," said van Staden. "It's not one big sword wound, it's a lot of paper cuts. It won't kill the dollar, but it's definitely making the world a more complicated place."

"They don't need to defeat the dollar ... and they don't need to defeat the G-7. All they particularly want to do is raise an alternative to it. It's this much longer play." MDT/AP

ZIMBABWE

President, a former guerrilla fighter known as 'the crocodile,' is seeking reelection

FARAI MUTSAKA, HARARE

ZIMBABWEAN President Emmerson Mnangagwa is a former guerrilla fighter and bodyguard who responded to being fired as vice president by unseating Robert Mugabe, his own mentor and one of the world's longest-ruling leaders, in a coup.

Mnangagwa is now seeking reelection for a second term as president in a vote this week that could see the ruling ZANU-PF party extend its 43-year hold on power in the southern African nation struggling under international sanctions. Zimbabwe has been governed by ZANU-PF ever since it won independence from white minority rule in 1980.

Mnangagwa's nickname — "the crocodile" — fits well for a man praised by supporters for his political cunning and criticized by others for a ruthless streak.

Mnangagwa replaced the autocratic Mugabe as president after a military-led coup in 2017, won a disputed election in 2018, and has become Zimbabwe's new strongman in the same Mugabe mould, critics say. It's despite promises he made of freedom and democracy for the country's 15 million people when he replaced a man he supported - and once protected as a bodyguard.

Mugabe had led Zimbabwe for 37 years and appeared immovable.

Under the constitution, this should be the 80-year-old Mnangagwa's last term if he wins this election. However, parts of his party have said the law should be changed back to the way it was during much of Mugabe's time to allow Mnangagwa to stay on as president.

"We want him to rule for life," Mnangagwa supporter Rosedale Ndlovu said.

Mnangagwa has not rejected the idea, telling a Christian group recently: "If you want to rule the country forever, you come to church and be prayed for."

At stake is the direction of a nation with rich agricul-



Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa at a campaign rally in Harare, last week

tural and mineral potential but which has been shunned by the West for more than two decades because of human rights abuses, and has increasingly turned to China and Russia amid its long-running economic problems.

Zimbabwe has Africa's largest deposits of the highly sought-after battery mineral lithium to attract renewed interest from China.

While Mnangagwa promised a break from the repressive and isolationist era under Mugabe, there's been little sign of change.

The crackdown on political opposition under Mugabe — who died in 2019 in Singapore — has continued under Mnangagwa, international rights groups Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch say, referring to it as "brutal."

U.S. and European sanctions on Zimbabwe remain in place.

Some say it's not surprising that little has changed considering how Mnangagwa rose to power under Mugabe, first as his bodyguard during the bloody independence war in the 1970s, then as a Cabinet minister in the 1980s and 1990s, and finally as vice president before they became political enemies

and he was fired by Mugabe.

Before they fell out, Mnangagwa was known as Mugabe's enforcer.

As president, Mnangagwa has been "skillful in deploying a delicate balance" in continuing Mugabe's approach in some areas, but not all, said Zimbabwe political analyst Alexander Rusero.

While Mugabe was happy to openly oppress any opposition and rant at the West, Mnangagwa has employed a much smoother PR approach.

Asked about his crocodile nickname, Mnangagwa has described himself as being "as soft as wool." He often intersperses his speeches with chants of "hallelujah" in a strongly Christian country. During the election campaign, he told supporters they would go to heaven if they voted for his party. He has said that Zimbabwe is now "a mature democracy" under him.

He almost always appears in public wearing a scarf in the colors of the Zimbabwean flag, framing himself as the savior of the country.

"We are improving the standard and quality of life for the people of Zimbabwe, brick upon brick, stone upon stone," Mnangagwa said at an election rally attended

by thousands of supporters. "Step by step, we are building Zimbabwe into a modern, industrialized and prosperous country."

Mnangagwa can claim some success in reviving parts of the agricultural sector, there has been a mining boom, and infrastructure is being built. But the economy is still deeply troubled and a pre-election survey by leading African pollster Afrobarometer said about two thirds of Zimbabweans think the country is going in the wrong direction.

The Citizens Coalition for Change -- the main opposition party that will challenge ZANU-PF and Mnangagwa in the election today — says its supporters have been subjected to violence and intimidation by ruling party followers, have been arrested and harassed by police, and have had their rallies banned and broken up. Mnangagwa denies his party is oppressive.

Political analyst Rusero said another Mnangagwa election victory would likely lead to a "repetition of Mugabe's legacy."

"One thing they largely share is not leaving anything to chance as much as power consolidation is concerned," Rusero said. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1978 KENYA'S FOUNDING FATHER DIES



Kenya's president, Jomo Kenyatta, has died at his home in Mombasa.

An official announcement on Voice of Kenya radio said Mr Kenyatta died peacefully in his sleep on Tuesday morning.

Shops and offices in the capital, Nairobi, and other cities have closed for the day as a mark of respect.

In public appearances yesterday, Mr Kenyatta, 89, appeared to be in good health so news of his death has come as a shock to most Kenyans.

However, last week he called a family conference in Mombasa leading to speculation about his health.

Mr Kenyatta was widely seen as the founding father of his nation which he had led since its independence in 1963.

A member of Kenya's largest tribe, the Kikuyu, he was one of the first and best-known African nationalist leaders.

Baptised Johnstone Kamau, he changed his name to Kenyatta - Swahili for "light of Kenya" in the 1920s.

After spending 15 years in London promoting the cause of Kenya's independence from Britain, he returned to his homeland in 1946.

In 1952 he was imprisoned by the British and spent the next nine years in captivity.

In spite of his time in prison, Mr Kenyatta was regarded as the most pro-British of African presidents and under his leadership the Kenyan economy prospered.

But he was intolerant of dissent in Kenya and outlawed some opposition parties in 1969.

The Queen has sent a message of sympathy to Mr Kenyatta's wife and the Kenyan people.

The Commonwealth Secretary General, Shridath Ramphal, said Mr Kenyatta's death had deprived Kenya of a great leader.

"We have lost a major figure of our time," Mr Ramphal said.

Mr Kenyatta's deputy, Daniel arap Moi, has assumed the office of president for 90 days during which time new elections must be held.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Jomo Kenyatta is still revered in Kenya and has a public holiday in October named in his honour.

Daniel arap Moi took over as president after Jomo Kenyatta's death. A one-party state was created in 1982.

External pressure led to elections in 1992 and 1997 but they were marred by widespread violence and fraud and President Moi remained in power.

Under President Moi, Kenya's economic situation deteriorated and was exacerbated by the worst drought in 30 years.

In December 2002 Mwai Kibaki and his National Rainbow Coalition party swept to victory in Kenya's elections.

Mr Kibaki defeated Daniel arap Moi's chosen successor, Jomo Kenyatta's son, Uhuru.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 You may find that others do not do things the way you want; however, if the job gets done, let it pass. Don't draw too much attention to yourself at work. Don't make promises you can't keep.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 You will be confused about the intentions of someone you work with. Try to join groups of interest such as ballroom dance classes or perhaps an internet organization.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 You could easily lose your temper at work. Don't push your opinions or ideas on others. Be careful of disclosing personal information.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Your ability to relate will close the generation gap. Your charm will mesmerize members of the opposite sex today. You will have a tendency to put on pounds.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Think twice before you say something you might regret later. Trips will be exciting. Sudden changes could result in estrangements.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Don't let your mate talk you into going somewhere you'd rather not go. You can make progress professionally. You can expand your circle of friends if you get out and socialize.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Don't play on your partner's emotions. Deceit with coworkers is apparent. Romantic relationships should stabilize. Hold back until you find out a little more about the person who's coming on to you.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Don't let your mate talk you into going somewhere you'd rather not go. Do not blow situations out of proportion. Be discreet about your feelings.

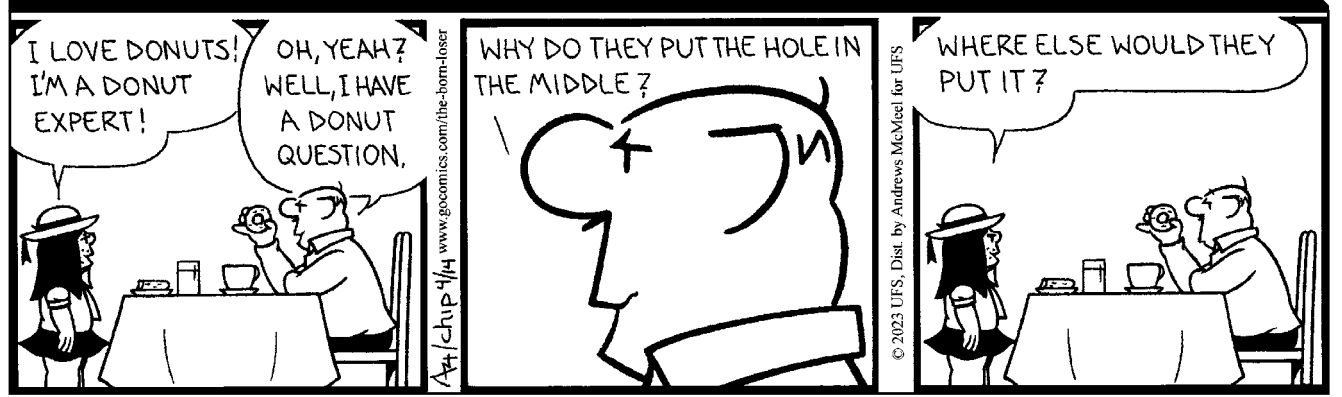
SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 A change in position could be better than you thought. Try not to be too harsh with loved ones; there will always be two sides to an Issue.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Have a heart-to-heart talk with family and find out what the problems are. You can gain distinction; however, it may be for the wrong reasons. Hidden matters are likely to surface.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Try to be considerate in your personal obligations. Your lover may not understand your needs so you must figure out a way to communicate them.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Spend time with youngsters today. Get proper medical attention and confront your situation decisively. You can make adjustments in your domestic scene today.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	25	33	fine
Changchun	22	30	thunderstorms
Chengdu	24	32	cloudy
Chongqing	29	39	fine
Fuzhou	26	32	rain
Guangzhou	25	32	rain
Guiyang	22	29	thunderstorms
Haikou	26	34	cloudy
Hangzhou	24	31	rain
Harbin	22	29	thunderstorms
Hefei	24	35	cloudy
Nanjing	25	33	cloudy
Shanghai	27	32	rain
Taipei	25	28	rain
Wuhan	26	35	cloudy
Hong Hong	28	31	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	17	30	thunderstorms
Frankfurt	20	32	overcast
Paris	22	32	overcast
London	18	23	rain
New York	18	29	thunderstorms

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Round object, often used to store computer data; 5- Roman emperor; 9- Soprano Lily; 13- Optic layer; 14- Belief involving sorcery; 16- Like Nash's lama; 17- Composition in verse; 18- Russian liquor; 19- Sci-fi princess; 20- Gaelic language of Ireland or Scotland; 21- Neither Rep. nor Dem.; 22- Captivating; 24- Fine and delicate; 26- Bruins' home; 27- Fur scarf; 29- Physically active; 33- Tumults; 34- Buffalo's county; 35- Go out with; 36- Summer slaker; 37- Passed out; 38- Sprinted; 39- Novi Sad native; 41- Peace Nobelist Wiesel; 42- Metal fastener; 44- Never converging or diverging; 46- Sister of Calliope; 47- Primordial giant in Norse myth; 48- Bridle; 49- Lozenge-shaped; 52- Whimsical; 53- Campus area; 57- Boxer Spinks; 58- Shout of exultation; 60- High hair style; 61- French 101 infinitive; 62- Judge, e.g.; 63- Catchall abbr.; 64- Fellow; 65- Kitchen addition; 66- Voluminous volume;

DOWN 1- Bamboozle; 2- Actor Novello; 3- Goes out with; 4- King Arthur's palace; 5- Beginner; 6- D. eburnum, a tropical tree; 7- Comic Fox; 8- Acorn dropper; 9- Danced at Oktoberfest, perhaps; 10- That's ___ haven't heard; 11- Dresden denial; 12- Smelting waste; 15- Tomahawk; 23- Entirely; 25- Capp and Capone; 26- Functional; 27- Cassette half; 28- Start of a saying on forgiveness; 29- Thin as ___; 30- Fortune-telling cards; 31- Novelist Calvino; 32- 1/100 of a monetary unit; 33- Coarse file, angry tone of voice; 34- Conger catcher; 37- Rapture; 40- Daggerlike weapon; 42- Mentalist Geller; 43- Feast; 45- K-O connection; 46- Pooh pal; 48- Sublease; 49- Designer Cassini; 50- ___ noire; 51- Bereft; 52- Flutter; 54- As far as; 55- Madam, I'm ___; 56- Distribute, with "out"; 59- 100 square meters;

Yesterday's solution

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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 HKD 22,000/mth 4 bed 3 bath

AD

AP PHOTO



SOCIOLOGY

WHAT MUSK AND ZUCKERBERG'S CANCELED CAGE MATCH SAYS ABOUT MASCULINE ANXIETY

KRISTEN BARBER, UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY

WHILE the cage fight between Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Tesla CEO Elon Musk seems to be on hold, if these men do ever end up sparring, it'll give a whole new meaning to the term "tech bro."

The two billionaires' business interests have butted heads in the past: Musk's 2016 test launch of a SpaceX rocket destroyed Zuckerberg's US\$200 million satellite. In 2022, Musk said Zuckerberg shouldn't dominate social media and encouraged people to abandon Meta-owned Facebook. Meta also recently launched Threads, which competes directly with Musk's X, formerly known as Twitter.

But threatening to beat the pulp out of each other represents a new – if not bizarre – form of one-upmanship for the two men. At one point, it was rumored that the livestreamed fight would take place in Rome's Colosseum, where gladiators once gruesomely battled to the death.

What in the name of Maximus is going on?

Though Musk and Zuckerberg have attempted to frame their pugilistic pursuit as a once-in-a-generation event, they are far from alone. They join the ranks of

other high-profile men in public and political positions who have shown off their physical strength to burnish their status.

As a gender scholar, I've seen how these fights – let's call them "performances of virility" – tend to coincide with beliefs that masculinity is either in crisis or under attack.

MONEY CAN'T BUY MASCULINITY

You don't usually see two wealthy white billionaires duking it out. So what would Musk and Zuckerberg gain from fighting each other?

As sociologist Scott Melzer writes in his study of fight clubs, "Manhood Impossible," fighting is culturally associated with masculinity, and U.S. culture celebrates men's violence in the right contexts.

For white-collar white men, Melzer explains, fighting can help them to feel they have passed a test of adulthood and fulfilled the cultural requirement of strength. The fighting helps them prove to themselves that they are "real men," despite their soft – probably manicured – hands.

To me, the chest puffing between Musk and Zuckerberg is a desperate display of masculinity for two tech nerds with deep po-

kets. They say money can't buy happiness. Perhaps money can't buy masculinity, either.

Kris Paap, author of "Working Construction," explains that men who don't take risks are often seen by their peers as weak and effeminate. Men who risk their health and well-being, on the other hand, prove their bravado for the respect of their peers.

This is particularly the case for working-class men. But politicians have also put on gloves to fight for admiration – and political clout – through displays of physical prowess.

In 2012, Justin Trudeau squared off against Senator Patrick Brazeau in a boxing match. A member of Canada's Parliament who came from money and political royalty, Trudeau declared before the match that he was "put on this planet to do this ... I fight – and I win."

After emerging from the bout victorious, Trudeau's image as a scrawny nepo baby all but evaporated. Three years later, he became prime minister just like his dad.

There are countless examples of other powerful men looking to showcase their virility. Russian President Vladimir Putin famously rode horses shirtless, while U.S. President Joe Biden once said that when he was in high

school, he would have taken Donald Trump "behind the gym and beat the hell" out of him.

For almost two centuries, performances of masculinity – from William Henry Harrison to Donald Trump – have been a part of successful U.S. presidential campaigns.

THE END OF MEN ... AGAIN AND AGAIN

It is no coincidence that Musk vs. Zuckerberg comes at a time when there is popular perception that masculinity is in crisis. Women are obtaining college degrees at a faster clip than men, while income gaps are closing. Suicides and overdoses among men – often termed "deaths of despair" – are on the rise.

Belief in a "crisis of masculinity" spikes during times of progressive social change. And proponents of this view tend to blame feminists and other social progressives for critiquing traditionally masculine mores and values, which, they claim, is causing men to spiral.

Gender scholars point to the turn of the 20th century and the 1990s as other moments of social change that sparked similar anxieties.

In 1890, moves toward co-education stoked debates around girls and boys being taught the

same curriculum. Advocates suggested that sex shouldn't matter in the classroom and that girls' education should prepare them for jobs outside the home.

This didn't go over well with men who benefited from gender segregation. The Boy Scouts of America actually emerged in 1910 so that boys were assured a space where girls and women weren't allowed – and where boys would be "sufficiently" acquainted with masculinity.

Similarly, the emergence of identity politics in the 1990s, which highlighted rights-based ideologies, scrutinized, in particular, the privileges of white men.

Today, social progress – whether it's more women in the workplace, more women in political office or girls permitted to join what is now referred to as "the Scouts" – seems to stoke men's insecurities. You can see it in the popularity of men's rights advocates like Jordan Peterson, who claims men are being asked to castrate themselves in the name of equality. And you can see it in conservative commentator Ben Shapiro's scorn toward the "Barbie" movie, which has been lauded for calling out patriarchal values.

In these moments, men have historically taken predictable actions to reclaim the idea that they are inherently different from women – and thus belong in different spaces.

Sociologist Martha McCaughey has pointed out how evolutionary biology has become the popular way to argue that men just can't help their "innate propensities."

This includes the urge to dominate others, whether that's in business, in bed – or, yes, in the ring. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

FOOTBALL

Ronaldo and big-spending Saudi clubs primed to dominate ACL

JOHN DUERDEN, SEOUL

Tuesday, 18:20
Al-Nassr v Shabab Al-Ahli
H 1.14, D 5.50, A 12

ODDSCHECKER.COM

CRISTIANO Ronaldo gets his first taste of Asian competition this evening as Al-Nassr meets Shabab Al-Ahli of Dubai in a Champions League preliminary round playoff with the rest of the continent wondering if big-spending Saudi Arabian clubs can be stopped.

Al-Nassr finished second in its domestic league last season but since signing the five-time Ballon D'Or winner in December, has added more stars this summer. Marcelo Brozkovic, Sadio Mane, Alex Telles and Seko Fofana have arrived from Inter Milan, Bayern Munich, Manchester United and Lens respectively.

The club has lost its first two games of the new Saudi Professional League season and Shabab



Al-Ahli may be champion of the United Arab Emirates but Al-Nassr is still seen as a strong favorite to progress to the group stage, especially as the single elimination

game will take place at its Riyadh home.

"In the past, only Japanese and South-Korean clubs could compete with Saudi clubs," Roel

Coumans, who left his position as head coach of Saudi Arabian club Abha in the summer, told Associated Press. "The gap with Saudi teams will become bigger and bigger."

During his time with Abha, the Dutch tactician grew accustomed to the underdog role while taking on the likes of Al-Nassr. "Now, from ten games in the Asian Champions League, eight will be won by Saudi teams but it is a matter of preparation and you need a belief that you can achieve your ambition and of course you need a little bit of luck."

If Al-Nassr defeats Shabab Al-Ahli, it will give Saudi Arabia four teams in the group stage that starts in September and they will present formidable opposition for the rest of the continent's contenders. Al-Hilal, which as a record four Asian titles, has signed Brazilian superstar Neymar and Fulham striker Aleksander Mitrovic in the past week, with Al-Ittihad adding FIFA Ballon D'Or holder Karim Benzama from Real Madrid

as well as N'Golo Kante and Fabiinho from Chelsea and Liverpool.

Earlier in August, the new strength of the leading Saudi Arabian teams was clear for all to see at the Arab Club Cup as rivals from Egypt, Morocco, Algeria and elsewhere in the region struggled to compete.

Saudi Arabia dominated the 16-team tournament with three of the four representatives reaching the last four. Al-Nassr lifted the trophy, defeating Riyadh rival Al-Hilal in the final with Ronaldo finishing as tournament top scorer.

With the Asian Champions League split into two geographic zones until the final, there is some hope for the eastern powers.

Urawa Reds of Japan defeated Al-Hilal in the final in May but needs to defeat Hong Kong's Lee Man to progress to the group stage this time.

South Korea's Incheon United meets Vietnam's Haiphong. China will be hoping that both Shanghai Port and Zhejiang will progress to the group stage with victories over Thai opposition, BG Pathum United and Port respectively.

For now though, the focus is on Riyadh and on whether Ronaldo, who won the UEFA Champions League with Manchester United and four with Real Madrid, can lead his new team towards another continental prize. **MDT/AP**

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