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GRIEVING PARENTS PRESENT 8,000 SIGNATURES IN PETITION CALLING FOR NURSERY SURVEILLANCE

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XI AND BIDEN ARE SET TO MEET THIS WEEK AT THE APEC SUMMIT

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AP PHOTO



Myanmar A military court has sentenced a general who until recently was a senior member of the country's ruling council to five years in prison for abusing his authority and taking bribes, state-run media reported. Lt. Gen. Soe Htut, who was home affairs minister as well as a member of the ruling State Administration Council, is the latest senior officer to be jailed for corruption since the army seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi more than 2 1/2 years ago.

AP PHOTO



Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pushed back Saturday against growing international calls for a cease-fire, saying Israel's battle to crush Gaza's ruling Hamas militants will continue with "full force." A cease-fire would be possible only if all 239 hostages held by militants in Gaza are released, Netanyahu said in a televised address.

AP PHOTO



UK Pro-Palestinian demonstrators marched peacefully through central London on Saturday, even as right-wing counter-protesters clashed with police, after a week of angry debate over whether to permit the event on a day when Britain honored its war dead. The day unfolded in a backdrop of tensions fueled by Home Secretary Suella Braverman who earlier this week characterized pro-Palestinian demonstrations as "hate marches" and called for Saturday's event to be blocked.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

THONG SECURES FINAL WIN AT TCR ASIA CHALLENGE

RENATO MARQUES

HONG Kong driver Shaun Thong secured victory in the final race of the TCR Asia Challenge event at the Macau Grand Prix this weekend.

After a qualifying session in which he took the pole position on Friday in a very interesting race with fellow Hong Kong racer Lo Sze Ho, Thong managed to recover from a challenging race from which he was forced to withdraw after a series of incidents.

Starting from the ninth position on the grid in the last race of the weekend, Thong initiated a brilliant recovery.

He had already surged to fifth place at Lisboa Bend on the first lap and quickly moved up.

At the end of Lap 1 or 9, he was fourth. Once again at Lisboa Bend, he executed an impressive overtake on the inside turn, moving into second place behind Li Ka Hei in an

Audi RS3 LMS.

With Thong constantly putting Li to the test at the braking zone to Lisboa, and with five laps to go, a series of crashes led the race to a Safety Car period at the precise time that Thong passed Li.

More problems emerged on the final lap as the Safety Car pulled into the pits, with a multi-car crash at the fast Mandarin Bend.

Number 35 Lam Ka Chun lost control on the exit of the bend and hit the barriers, crossing the track. He collided with drivers who could not avoid the crash, including Ryan Wong and Cheong Chi On and, later, Wong Kiang Kuan who also could not avoid Cheong's car. A major pile-up at the Mandarin Bend forced race control to red flag the event. Thong was declared the winner in his Honda Civic FK7.

Li secured second place in the Audi, and Lo, another Hong Kong racer, placed third in the

Hyundai Elantra NTCR.

Lo also finished first in the race 1 event earlier that day.

At the press conference, Thong expressed his joy at the win, noting that it marked his return to the Macau race track after a decade-long absence.

The previous day, Thong had noted that although he had raced in Macau before, the track felt different to him and he had to relearn it.

"The track felt new to me. It felt like I had never been here before, so I'm learning it like it's a new track. There's a lot to learn and I'm very happy to extract what I have from the car."

Thong's previous racing experience in Macau dates back to 2013 at the event's 60th anniversary, when he was at the wheel of a Formula Master car, an open-wheel junior series. This is a very different vehicle from the TCR car Thong drove to win the Macau GP race, or the larger GT cars that he has driven in recent years.



Lotus makes 'picture perfect' debut of Emira GT4

RENATO MARQUES

IN its world premiere over the weekend in Macau, the Emira GT4 could not have had a better start in the competitive arena, securing a double win in Macau's Greater Bay Area (GBA) GT Cup.

The two Emira GT4s driven by Chinese driver Luo Kailuo and British Adam Christodoulou have exhibited complete dominance in the class, culminating in a final victory for Luo in yesterday's race, and a one-two finish for Christodoulou.

Despite the well-deserved celebration for Lotus and Toro Racing (the team that operated the cars in Macau), the victory was somewhat diminished by a red flag that brought the race to a premature end. Racers were denied the

opportunity to cross the finish line, an unfortunate outcome for the third-best racer and last year's winner, Alex Liang, who was driving a new BMW M4 GT4.

Nevertheless, the Lotus drivers, and particularly Christodoulou, should be relieved by the results especially given that on the first lap he almost collided with Han Lichao's Toyota Supra GT4 EVO. Lichao, while attempting to recover from a bad start, missed the braking zone for Lisboa Bend and slid across the track into the runoff area, narrowly avoiding Christodoulou's car by millimeters.

The race was stopped at Lap 4 due to an unusual situation in which Taiwanese driver Lee Yen Han, in another BMW M4 GT4 F82, attempted to over-

take the Mercedes-AMG GT4 driven by William Cheung in the narrowest area of the track. The area between Dona Maria Bend and Melco Hairpin is especially narrow and has a fixed yellow flag, indicating that overtaking is not permitted at any time. Despite this, Lee attempted to pass and was hit by Cheung who was unaware of his attempted overtake.

The collision resulted in Lee's car spinning against the racing direction, resulting in a pile-up of several cars unable to avoid the blockade.

The victory ultimately ended well for the two Emira GT4 cars, which had already made the one-two during the Qualifying session, with Christodoulou at the front.



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RENATO MARQUES



Lindblad justified favoritism by winning F4 Race

RENATO MARQUES

B RITISH racer Arvid Lindblad has won the Macau Formula 4 (F4) Race, concluding the program of the first weekend of the local Grand Prix.

At the wheel of an F4 car from SJM Theodore PREMA Racing team, Lindblad confirmed the credentials earned in previous sessions, including a win in the early Sunday morning wet Qualification Race, leading to a win in the main race on Sunday evening.

It was the first time that Lindblad, who is a Red Bull Academy junior racer, raced in Macau and his position as favorite and his

driving skills were well put to test in different and tricky conditions.

Starting from the Pole Position after the morning race win, Lindblad remained in control of the race, with only the local racer and two-time winner of the F4 event able to follow his pace.

A few interruptions caused by the Safety Car more than once regrouped the pack but Lindblad was perfectly in control, securing the win on the final 12-lap race.

After the race, the winner expressed gratitude for the experience and happiness with the double win in Macau, expressing a desire to return to the territory next year to race on the Formula 3 race.

Leong, after the race, also said

he was happy with the result in a new car he had not raced before and that he was still adapting to. He said that he was also happy with the return of international racers, especially as the presence of the best racers of this category in Macau has proven his ability to compete with the best and learn from the experience.

Coming second to Lindblad during qualifying races, Freddie Slater had a less-than-ideal final race. Despite putting early pressure on Lindblad's lead during the first few laps, his race performance took a downturn particularly on the braking point to Lisboa Bend, forcing the first to brake late and lock the wheels on at least two occasions.

With half the race to go and after the deployment of the Safety Car due to a crash at Faraway Hill, Slater had dropped to sixteenth position. He recovered to finish in ninth position overall, far from his true potential.

With Slater's drop, Leong secured second place, and Rashid Al Dhaheri secured third place, maintaining these positions until the end.

Also recovering from several mishaps during the race was local racer Tiago Rodrigues, who made a great recovery to take the sixth position overall, one step away from the TOP 5 that he said was his aim in his Macau debut.

Still, the 16-year-old racer has left a good impression and certainly gained valuable experience over the weekend in Macau.

TSE WINS ROADSPORT CHALLENGE

HONG KONG driver Tse Ka Hing dominated the Macau Roadsport Challenge category of the Macau Grand Prix, winning the race on Sunday after taking the pole position on Saturday. Tse comfortably controlled the race from start to finish, facing challenges only from competitors vying for second position onwards.

In the end, local racer Lam Kam San, coming from sixth on the grid, took second place on the podium, followed by Ivan Szeto who had started second. Lam was the only Macau racer to secure a spot in the Top 10, which was predominantly filled with drivers from the neighboring region of Hong Kong.

O'Young wins again on GT3

RENATO MARQUES

HONG Kong racer and multiple Macau Grand Prix winner, Darryl O'Young, has had yet another win in the GT3 category.

This time O'Young won the Greater Bay Area GT Cup in the GT3 category after a weekend where he had the upper hand in every session.

With a win yesterday, O'Young added to his successful Macau record after claiming pole position by consistently topping the time sheets during the qualifying session.

In reality, this was a less

competitive racing category over the first weekend of the event, with O'Young and Phantom Pro Lamborghini driver Ling Kang being the main contenders. Even so, Ling never seemed to be able to close the gap on the Craft-Bamboo racer in the Mercedes AMG GT3.

At almost all sessions, the Safety Car impacted race dynamics over the weekend, closing the time gap between the racers.

With 5 laps to go, the Safety Car returned to the pits, paving the way for racing action on track. While Ling tried his best to exert pressure on O'Young, the

Hong Kong racer clocked a victory with just under a one-second advantage over the Lamborghini driver.

Macau racer Kevin Tse had a great performance over the weekend at the wheel of his Mercedes AMG GT3 from Toro Racing, qualifying in third place.

Unfortunately, a spin on lap 1 at Lisboa after a less-than-ideal start jeopardized his chances of reaching the podium.

Despite this, he managed to fight his way to ninth position after falling to last position overall. On the very last lap, while ne-

RENATO MARQUES



gotiating Fisherman's Bend and with only a few hundred meters away from the

finish line, he spun again and finished 11th overall in a result that did not reflect

the quality of his driving and performance over the weekend.

HOUSING

GOV'T PROPOSES EASING REAL PROPERTY TRANSACTION RESTRICTIONS IN NEW BILL

ANTHONY LAM

LOCAL restrictions on real property transactions will be relaxed pending the passage of a new bill, the Executive Council (ExCo) announced to a press conference over the weekend.

The bill has recently left the ExCo following discussions and will be submitted to the parliament. The proposed adjustments are anticipated to take effect on the first day of 2024.

The proposal includes a universal reduction of the maximum loan to value ratio for mortgages for residential units, from 90% to 70%. Currently, the maximum ratio depends on the property prices concerned.

However, the ratio for government subsidized housing – also known as Economic Housing – will remain at 90%.

The government has also proposed that in addition main-



taining a mortgage applicant's debt-service coverage ratio at not higher than 50% of their income, banks should also run stress tests on applicants to ensure the deb-

t-service coverage ratio does not surpass 60% of income, even with a 2% interest hike.

Tax incentives are also part of the proposal, with the 5% acqui-

sition stamp duty for the second concurrent property acquired suggested for elimination. However, the 10% stamp duty for the third property will remain.

Existing stipulations and requirements will continue to govern transactions until the bill is enacted.

The current laws were enacted in 2010, aimed at curbing speculation and addressing the residential needs of local residents, the ExCo added.

In another bill, the government proposes further steps towards a paperless system real property registration, business registration and notarial services.

Documents such as ownership transfers, mortgage applications and mortgage cessations can be submitted digitally by buyers, sellers and their lawyers. Notaries will also be authorized to notarize digital documents, and entrepreneurs will be permitted to conduct

certain procedures electronically.

The government also proposes to empower certain civil servants to validate signatures, and the Commercial and Movable Property Registry will be authorized to nullify long-term unused registered business brands.

INSURANCE AGENTS TO SEE UPDATED REQUIREMENTS

Another Bill introduces minimum educational requirements for insurance agents, to be monitored and verified by the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM). The validity of licenses is proposed to be extended to two years, and renewals will be subject to proof of the requisite training.

The concept of Main Intermediary and Business-keeper will also be introduced by the Bill, and the number of these roles will be determined by the AMCM. The supervision of insurance intermediaries is set to be escalated.

ELECTORAL AFFAIRS

Bill to overhaul parliamentary selection requirements passes ExCo

ANTHONY LAM

A bill aimed at rebuilding the Legislative Assembly selection procedure has successfully passed the Executive Council (ExCo) and will be submitted to parliament, as revealed by the ExCo to a press conference over the weekend.

The ExCo noted in a statement that the restructuring is necessary "to further implement the principle of Macau being governed by patriots through the legal system and practical mechanisms."

Among the most significant changes are the empowerment of the National Security Committee to vet the eligibilities of nominees – in terms of upholding the Basic Law and pledging allegiance to the Special Administrative Region (SAR) – by issuing binding opinions to the Electoral Affairs Commission. Another impactful change is the criminalization of public advocacy against voting or advocating for the casting of void or null votes.

The opinions from the committee will be so powerful that it will eliminate the right to appeal.

In the last selection procedure in 2021, 20 nominees were disqualified on the grounds of viola-



ting the Basic Law and allegiance to the SAR, leaving only 14 lists to compete for 14 seats in parliament.

The disqualification prompted people to take to social media platforms, calling for people to abstain from attending at the polling stations or promoting the casting of blank or null votes. While the effectiveness of this movement was uncertain, the selection resulted in a historically low turnout of only 42.38% and a high percentage of invalid votes (3.8%), both unprecedented since the establishment of the SAR.

It is also proposed that a no-

minee be disqualified if they have been legally identified as not upholding the Basic Law or not pledging allegiance to the SAR in the selection year or the five preceding years.

The bill also suggests advancing a campaign blackout date to the day following the cessation of the nomination period. Severe penalties are proposed for anyone who engages in malpractice in the announcement of polls.

The bill also proposes that each voter can only nominate one candidate and certain amendments concerning indirect election were also proposed.

TWO LOCAL UNIVERSITIES MAKE QS UNIVERSITY RANKING

BOTH University of Macau (UM) and Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) have ranked in the latest edition of QS University Ranking, ranking 254th and 505th respectively.

UM has also earned five QS Stars. UM is ranked 21st in the international faculty ratio and has achieved 97th position for citations per faculty worldwide. Its hospitality and leisure management program achieved the best ranking across all programs offered and is ranked between the 51st and 100th positions.

MUST, on the other hand, has a 9:1 ratio of international to domestic staff, but it is unclear whether mainland faculty members are categorized as domestic or international by the ranking body.

In last year's rankings, UM was ranked 304th and MUST ranked between 290th and

581st. In the 2024 QS University Ranking, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) topped the list, with two British institutions – University of Cambridge and University of Oxford, often referred to collectively as Oxbridge – occupying second and third places. Harvard University and Stanford University are ranked fourth and fifth, respectively.

The highest-ranking Asian institution is the National University of Singapore, securing eighth place. Sharing the 17th place, meanwhile, is China's Peking University, followed by China's Tsinghua University eight places behind.

Sharing 26th place is Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and The University of Hong Kong.

Taiwan's leading institution, National Taiwan University, is ranked 69th. **AL**



Grieving parents present 8,000 signatures in petition calling for nursery surveillance

ANTHONY LAM

THE parents of the three-month-old who passed away at Taipa Fong Chong Nursery almost a month ago have presented 8,000 signatures to the government, demanding surveillance camera in nurseries.

Civil servant unionist lawmakers José Pereira Coutinho and Che Sai Wang helped submit the petition.

Currently, surveillance cameras are permitted in public areas but not in nursery care rooms, pursuant to a 2014 directive from the Personal Data Protection Office (GPDP). The Office cited privacy as the reason behind the ban.

Although investigations are still ongoing, the mother of the deceased child told local media that she could not accept not knowing details of the incident after nearly a month had transpired. She expressed her wish that the government would "release the truth" sooner.

She pointed out that she had sent her late infant to the nursery with confidence in the professionalism and safety of the facility. This confidence was grounded



in the fact that not all facilities in Macau accept infants of that age. The nursery's decision to accept a three-month-old infant was the basis of her trust, and she highlighted that she was unable to accept her baby passing away without understanding the cause or reason.

COUTINHO REGARDS CURRENT SITUATION AS UNACCEPTABLE

The lack of surveillance in activity areas and napping rooms in local nurseries is raising concerns among local parents, lawmakers said in a statement.

Coutinho and Che said that

they had accompanied the parents of the deceased infant to meet with the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) to seek an explanation for the incident.

The lawmakers have also pointed out on the sidelines of the submission that the city had witnessed several cases of physical abuse in nurseries.

Coutinho and Che also said that the parents have requested the installation of smart surveillance cameras and cloud storage across private and public nurseries across all areas, to allow both parents and operators to have access to footage to ensure the wellness and safety of infants.

They also called for the GPDP to strike a balance between personal privacy and the safety of infants.

Coincidentally, in Hong Kong, entertainer Ella Koon recently asked about the presence of surveillance cameras in classrooms while seeking out extracurricular activities for her daughter. According to several Hong Kong media outlets, the entertainer is concerned about classroom sex offences.

WOMAN LOSES MOP2 MILLION IN CRYPTO SCAM

A local woman has lost MOP2 million in an alleged cryptocurrency scam. The suspect convinced her to download an app to invest in cryptocurrency. During the relevant period, her account displayed a profit, but withdrawal attempts failed. The victim was asked to reach a designated "trading target" before cash could be withdrawn. On Nov. 4, the victim was asked to pay a handling fee, raising suspicions that she had fallen victim to a scam.

SHOWCASE OF PORTUGUESE WINES FROM KEY REGIONS ON NOV. 14

A group of 26 wine producers from key wine regions including Douro, Alentejo, Dão, Lisboa, and Setúbal will showcase their wines in Macau on Nov. 14. Wines available for tasting will include more than 15 Premium Gold, Gold, and Silver medal award winners at the national competition Wines of Portugal Challenge 2023. Approximately a dozen producers are seeking regional representation, according to the organizer.

GBA WITNESSES PATENT GROWTH IN DIGITAL ECONOMY

By the end of 2022, the number of valid invention patents in the core industries of the digital economy was 1.273 million, of which the Yangtze River Delta, Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region accounted for 71.3%. Ge Shu, a senior official of the National Intellectual Property Administration, disclosed at a press conference, that patents applied by foreign enterprises, saying the number of foreign companies applying for invention patents in these sectors has increased from 6,418 in 2016 to 7,613 in 2022. By the end of 2022, patent holders from 95 countries and regions owned 327,000 invention patents in the core industries of China's digital economy.

Hotel sector to strengthen room cleaning amid global bed bug infestation

THE Macau Hoteliers & Innkeepers Association have made assurances that no hotels in Macau are affected with bed bugs amid soaring infestations in different regions, including Asia.

Deputy president Tai Cheng said that the hotel industry will participate in the bed bug prevention and control seminar orga-

nized by the Macao Government Tourism Office, held tomorrow.

In addition to routine cleaning measures, third-party pest control companies have been hired to conduct comprehensive inspections, spray cleaning and disinfection liquids, and maintain hotel rooms, said Tai.

Bed bugs have become

a significant concern worldwide, affecting different regions from the US, UK, France to South Korea and Hong Kong and having been found in homes and on public transport.

The South Korean government has allocated 500 million won (USD383,000) and established a response team to address the issue. At least 17 outbreaks have

been reported in the capital of Seoul and in the cities of Busan and Incheon.

In Hong Kong, authorities are distributing bedbug warning leaflets to passengers at the airport.

A photo of a bedbug went viral online on the seat of an Airport Express train. The MTR Corporation said on Friday that it has inspected and cleaned

the affected.

Meanwhile, the Health Bureau has warned travelers to be vigilant for bed bugs, reminding residents to avoid placing luggage on the ground and keep luggage closed when not in use. The public is also urged to be mindful and check beds, pillows and mattresses in hotel rooms for potential infestations. **LV**

GOV'T: MICE EVENTS TO INCREASE BY 50% IN 2024

STAFF REPORTER

THE number of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) events is projected to increase by 50% year-on-year to 1,500, as efforts to return to pre-pandemic levels intensify.

According to U U Sang

from the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), the convention and exhibition industry has experienced growing demand for venue rental and services for next year. He added that key initiatives for the year ahead are to expand international

customer sources, focusing on the ASEAN countries market. He revealed that Macau will soon add direct flights to other ASEAN countries to foster this objective. The authorities continue to actively engage with international convention and exhibition industry organi-

zations, participating in promotional activities in Barcelona, Spain later this month (November) and planning to attend special events of the International Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI) in the Netherlands early next year.

According to U, the

Portuguese-speaking market is also a focus. Authorities and representatives from various departments are conducting business inspections in Portugal. 40 MICE events are scheduled to take place until December this year, with the goal of attracting over 400,000 participants.

APEC SUMMIT

Xi and Biden are set to meet this week

WILL WEISSERT &
DIDI TANG,
WASHINGTON

WHEN President Joe Biden meets Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Wednesday, there will be no such thing as a small detail.

How they greet? If they eat? Where they sit? Will there be flowers? Bottled water or in a glass? "Pretty intense," senior administration officials say of navigating delicate protocols.

Any encounter involving the president and a foreign leader means managing tricky logistics, political and cultural, and every occurrence or utterance can potentially jolt the world order. But few nations are more attuned to etiquette than the Chinese, and the often-conflicting interests between Washington and Beijing might mean the seemingly trivial becomes meaningful.

There's probably "very detailed planning of the actual choreography of



who enters a room where, if there will be pictures taken and all of that," said

Bonny Lin, senior fellow for Asian security and director of the China Power

Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Biden and Xi will meet while both attend next week's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco. So far, even basic information has remained closely guarded. Statements Friday by China's government didn't mention the day or location. The White House, citing security concerns, says only that the meeting will be held "in the Bay area."

That could only increase the pressure as both sides potentially haggle over everything from meeting time and length to who enters the room first. Will they use a table or easy chairs? What about security presence and interpreter access?

Then there is the more obviously substantive: Will there be a joint statement after the meeting and how much of the session will be in public view?

The plan is to set aside enough time for in-depth conversations on issues that will be divided into different sessions, senior administration officials say. That recalls Biden's nearly three-hour meeting with Xi before the start of last

year's G-20 summit in Bali.

The officials also noted that this will be Xi's first trip to the United States in six years, and his first to San Francisco since he was a provincial Communist Party secretary.

Victor Cha, former director for Asian Affairs on the White House's National Security Council, said organizing such meetings at APEC is easier than at a formal location. But, he said, hammering out talks on summit sidelines is still "a logistics nightmare."

"China, normally, if they come to United States, they want everything. They want all the pomp and circumstance. They want the highest possible respect that can be paid to them," Cha said. "That is politically not possible. And so, having APEC in San Francisco solves that problem in the sense that it's not the official White House that's hosting the meeting."

Even informal settings can bring high stakes.

When President Richard Nixon visited China in 1972, aiming to ease decades of animosity, he brought a new pair of shoes with rubber soles to climb the Great Wall.

President Barack Obama

and Xi didn't wear ties during their 2013 meeting at Sunnylands, a modernist mansion in Rancho Mirage near Palm Springs, California. It was news then that Obama stayed overnight there while the Chinese delegation returned to a nearby hotel.

President Donald Trump and Xi wore dark suits for dinner at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida four years later. The meal featured what Trump called "the most beautiful piece of chocolate cake."

Bonnie Glaser, managing director of the Indo-Pacific program at the German Marshall Fund, said that, for the upcoming meeting, Xi's team likely pushed for a venue away from the APEC site and talks lasting longer than those in Bali.

"The Chinese want a separate summit," she said.

The Chinese attach importance to the location, which this time may be more like Sunnylands than Anchorage, Alaska, where top U.S. and Chinese officials held rather tense 2021 talks. Chinese state media might fixate on the weather as a barometer for bilateral relations. Early forecasts are calling for rain with a high in the mid-60s for San Francisco.

Even on-site flowers could be important, as certain choices can symbolize harmony in Chinese culture. Plum blossom is a well-liked flower known in China for persevering amid harshness, while lotuses convey peace in the Chinese language. Chrysanthemums, by contrast, are associated with death.

Xi may expect Biden to greet him upon arrival. Xi's team could also want the leaders photographed together without staff to convey a personal relationship.

"Chinese officials will want to project to their domestic audience that Xi is received by Biden with dignity and respect," said Ryan Hass, director of the John L. Thornton China Center at the Brookings Institute. He suggested that required "imagery of both leaders interacting on a personal basis, beyond the customary handshake in front of a bank of flags in a hotel conference room." MDT/AP

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MGM Celebrates "Art of Living" with Local Community

Embracing its ethos of "Art of Living", MGM presented the signature exhibition of "To Infinity and Beyond: The Art of Hsiao Chin" ("To Infinity and Beyond" exhibition) at MGM Theater of MGM COTAL this summer. As an initiative to support the city-wide international art event organized by the Macao SAR government, "Art Macao: Macao International Art Biennale 2023", the exhibition was truly one-of-a-kind that brings forth the avant-garde concept of "ART-TECH-TAINMENT" by transcending the confines of spaces. In view of extending such unique concept of art interpretation to our community, the Company has organized the "MGM x Art Macao CSR Outreach Program" last month, which engaged nearly 50 parents and children from Caritas Macau and Macao New Chinese Youth Association with themed interactive art workshops.



Reputed as one of the most significant Chinese artists in the past 60 years, Hsiao Chin has dedicated his whole life exploring the "Circle of Life" through the Punto Movement, striving to create a perfectly idealistic spiritual state of art. Celebrating this artistic spirit of the renowned Chinese abstract master, the Program started off with presenting the first-ever art film created by the artist himself, which provided a holistic picture of Hsiao Chin's art world, as well as his imagination of the universe to the participants. An interactive digital art creation experience was to follow,

where participants were able to immerse into the "ART-TECH-TAINMENT" concept featured in the exhibition with a lineup of digital Art Jamming games.

Shortly after, participants moved onto the Planets Painting Night Lamp Workshop brought by the "M Art" team members of MGM, where they put their own imagination of the universe into crafts. By utilizing luminous paint and adopting cosmic energy symbols inspired by Hsiao Chin, participants unleashed their creativity into their space sphere night lamp paintings, which truly embraced MGM's core art philosophy of "M Art" – everyone can be an artist.



One of the participants, Kitty Chen from Caritas Macau, said, "The Program introduced to us an influential Chinese abstract artist, Hsiao Chin, whose creative journey and perspective of the universe were very inspirational. While getting to know a world-class artist, the Program also let us create our own artwork with our loved ones that can also be integrated into our daily lives, making it than just an ordinary weekend parent-and-child art workshop."



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11.11
Worried shoppers scrimp, dimming the appeal of a Singles' Day shopping extravaganza

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

SHOPPERS in China have been tightening their purse strings, raising questions over how faltering consumer confidence may affect Saturday's annual Singles' Day online retail extravaganza.

Singles Day, also known as "Double 11," was popularized by e-commerce giant Alibaba. In the days leading up to the event, sellers on Alibaba and elsewhere often slash prices and offer enticing deals.

Given prevailing jitters about jobs and a weak property market, it's unclear how this year's festival will fare.

A Bain & Company survey of 3,000 Chinese shoppers found more than three-quarters of those who responded plan to spend less this year, or keep spending level, given uncertainties over how the economy is faring.

That includes people like Shi Gengchen, whose billiard hall business in Beijing's trendy Chaoyang district has slowed.

Shi said the economy was in a bad condition and had affected his business. "There are fewer customers than before," he said, adding that his sales are just 40% of what they were before the pandemic.

"I don't spend a lot," he said. "Of course, everyone has a desire to spend, but you have to have the money to spend."

Chinese consumers were much more eager to splurge before COVID-19 hit in 2020. Shoppers spent \$38 billion in 24 hours on Alibaba's e-commerce platforms during Singles' Day in 2019.

But the Chinese have become much more cautious over

splashing out on extras, analysts say.

"The hype and excitement around Singles' Day is sort of over," said Shaun Rein, founder and managing director of Shanghai-based China Market Research Group. "Consumers have over the last nine months been getting discounts on a steady day-to-day basis so they aren't expecting major discounts on Singles' Day except for consumables," he said.

Rein said shoppers will likely be keener to pick up deals on daily necessities like toothpaste, tissue paper and laundry detergent, rather than high-end cosmetics and luxury brands.

E-commerce platforms are emphasizing low prices for this year's festival, hoping to attract value-conscious customers looking for good deals. For the 2023 campaign, Alibaba's Tmall boasts "Lowest prices on the web," while e-commerce platform JD.com's tagline for its Singles' Day campaign is "Truly cheap." Rival retailer Pinduoduo's is "Low prices, every day."

Some of their business strategies helped boost sales.

JD.com said yesterday its transaction volume, order and user numbers during the festival all hit another high, without providing specific figures. It said more than 60 brands have recorded over 1 billion yuan (\$137 million) in sales and that nearly 20,000 brands saw their transaction volume surge more than three times from the same period last year. Earlier, the retailer said its new merchants saw their number of orders jump more than five times compared to the same period last month.

MDT/AP

CLIMATE CHANGE

Drought and mismanagement have left a French island parched

GREGOIRE MEROT,
MAMOUDZOU

DROP by disappearing drop, water is an ever more precious resource on Mayotte, the poorest place in the European Union. Taps flow just one day out of three in this French territory off Africa's eastern coast, because of a drawn-out drought compounded by years of underinvestment and water mismanagement.

Diseases like cholera and typhoid are on the rebound, and the French army recently intervened to distribute water and quell tensions over supplies. The crisis is a wakeup call to the French government about the challenges and cost of managing human-caused climate change across France's far-flung territories.

Racha Mousdikoudine, a 38-year-old mother of two living in Labatoir, washes dishes with bottled water, when she can get it. When the water taps run, she says, "I have to choose between taking a shower or preserving my water supply."

"This shortage will be global in a few years. This is an opportunity for all French people to stand in solidarity with us. To be with us, to find solutions and make visible the situation happening in Mayotte," she said. "Because this can happen in all French departments."

She is helping coordinate a protest movement called "Mayotte is Thirsty" that is demanding accountability for alleged embezzling, leaks and lack of investment in sustainable water supplies. At one recent protest, residents sang, shouted and banged empty plastic bottles as they marched into the Mayotte water management company.

The government is pinning its hopes on the upcoming rainy season, though residents say it won't be enough to fix the deep-seated water problems. On a crisis visit last week, France's minister for overseas territories thanked the people of Mayotte for "accepting the unacceptable."

The water taps determine the rhythm of life in Mayotte, an island territory of about



Demonstrators gather to protest the water crisis in Mamoudzou, on the French Indian Ocean territory of Mayotte

350,000 people northwest of Madagascar.

Once every three days, water flows between 4 p.m. and 10 a.m. Families rush to prepare food, wash dishes, clean their homes and anything else involving water. Those living in Mayotte's poorer neighborhoods without plumbing line up at public taps with paint buckets, plastic jerrycans, reused bottles — anything to collect water.

Then for 48 hours, they're dry again.

"It is important to keep talking with the authorities, but we are not going to sit idly by," said Mousdikoudine. "If we stay at home, politicians will still say that the population is resilient, that we can manage this situation. But we cannot do it, lives are at stake, our physical and mental health, as well as our children's lives."

The most disadvantaged communities are hit the hardest by the water crisis in Mayotte, where the population is majority Black and many are struggling migrants from neighboring Comoros facing a new government crackdown.

Previously, water was among Mayotte's rare riches. The mountainous and forested district of Combani, in central Mayotte, is full of springs and interspersed with rivers. The reservoirs of

Combani, and Dzoumogne further north, provide 80% of the water distributed on the island.

Now the bare banks of the reservoir at Combani are cracked by the sun. Its capacity is 1.75 million cubic meters, but it now stands only 10% full. The Dzoumogne reservoir is at 6.5% capacity.

Mayotte is in its sixth year of drought, and just had its driest year since 1997, according to the national weather service. Scientists say human-induced climate change has made drought more frequent and extreme in some parts of the world.

But even without drought, Mayotte's water system wasn't capable of fulfilling local needs.

Overseas Affairs Minister Philippe Vigier said during a visit last week that 850 leaks have been spotted since September. Residents regularly film facilities of water network management company Smae, a subsidiary of big French utility Vinci, spewing water into the void and share them online.

And only one new water borehole, delivering a few hundred cubic meters per day, has been put into service so far as part of an ambitious "Marshall Plan" for water announced in September.

The local water union blames the water rationing on

lack of production capacity, not lack of water.

The central government is promising emergency work on drilling for new springs, the renovation of a desalination plant, and extending state distribution of bottled water to all residents and not just the most vulnerable.

Residents worry it won't come fast enough, and have heard such promises before. The desalination plant has already faced years of delays, missed deadlines and allegations of pocketed subsidies.

It doesn't have to be this way.

In the neighboring Comoros, with a similar volcanic terrain and wet and dry seasons, the U.N. Development Program has a \$60 million water management project aimed at better capturing rainwater and tracking usage.

While Comoros is one of the world's poorest countries, France is one of the world's richest and shouldn't need U.N. aid. But Mayotte's water crisis underlines inequalities and often awkward relationships between the central government in Paris and former colonies that remain part of France.

On Mayotte, richer residents invest in personal water tanks at a cost of 1,600 euros (\$1,700) for each installation, to ensure water flows continuously. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1979 TIMES RETURNS AFTER YEAR-LONG DISPUTE



The Times newspaper has been published for the first time in nearly a year.

The paper's disappearance from news stands followed a dispute between management and unions over manning levels and the introduction of new technology.

After talks broke down, the Times' Canadian owners, the Thomson Organisation, suspended publication last November pending an agreement.

Production of the four other publications in the Times group, including its sister paper the Sunday Times, was also suspended.

It was the first break in the production of the Times, known affectionately to its readers as "the Thunderer", since it was founded in 1788.

The dispute is estimated to have cost the Thomson Organisation more than £30m.

A settlement reached late last month paved the way for today's publication.

The Sunday Times is also expected to appear again this weekend.

'Tragic'
Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has welcomed the Times reappearance "with enthusiasm".

Mrs Thatcher said: "The absence of the Times has been tragic and over-long."

About 500,000 copies of the paper were produced for the Times' first edition on Tuesday - an extra 200,000 on its pre-suspension print run.

The personal columns carried a long string of welcome-back messages from advertisers while readers announced births and deaths spanning the period of the Times' absence.

Three special obituary supplements are also planned as well as a news review covering the months the Times was out of print.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The 1978 dispute was the forerunner of an inexorable move towards automation and the abandonment of old-fashioned printing methods.

Matters came to a head in 1986 when Australian media tycoon, Rupert Murdoch - who had bought the Times and the Sunday Times in 1981 - moved his publications and staff from Fleet Street to Wapping in east London. New technology introduced at Wapping resulted in 4,000 print workers losing their jobs.

In spite of months of vociferous picketing of the Wapping plant by print unions Rupert Murdoch was able to produce and distribute his papers at a vastly reduced cost.

Mr Murdoch's success encouraged other newspapers to adopt new technology and leave Fleet Street for cheaper premises in east London.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Find ways to mellow out. A change of attitude has probably disrupted your home environment. You will be extremely sentimental, and if pushed by others you may hold a lasting grudge.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Make plans to meet again in the near future. Your partner may push buttons that infuriate you. You will have a greater involvement in groups; however, they may not be to your advantage.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Financial gains can be made through wise investments. Don't forget family obligations. Don't try to hide your true feelings from your mate.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Invite friends or relatives into your home. Be careful not to misplace your wallet or belongings. Investments that deal with property will be lucrative.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Involvement with prestigious organizations will be to your advantage. Put your efforts into being creative. Do not overexpand if you have your own business. Sit tight.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Take time to find out if anyone has a better suggestion before you make arrangements for the whole family. You will profit from home improvement projects and real estate deals.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Catch up on overdue phone calls and correspondence. Jealousy may be a contributing factor to your emotional ups and downs. You can make adjustments in your domestic scene today.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Your health may have suffered due to neglect or abuse. Try to get away with your mate. You could do extremely well in competitive sports events.

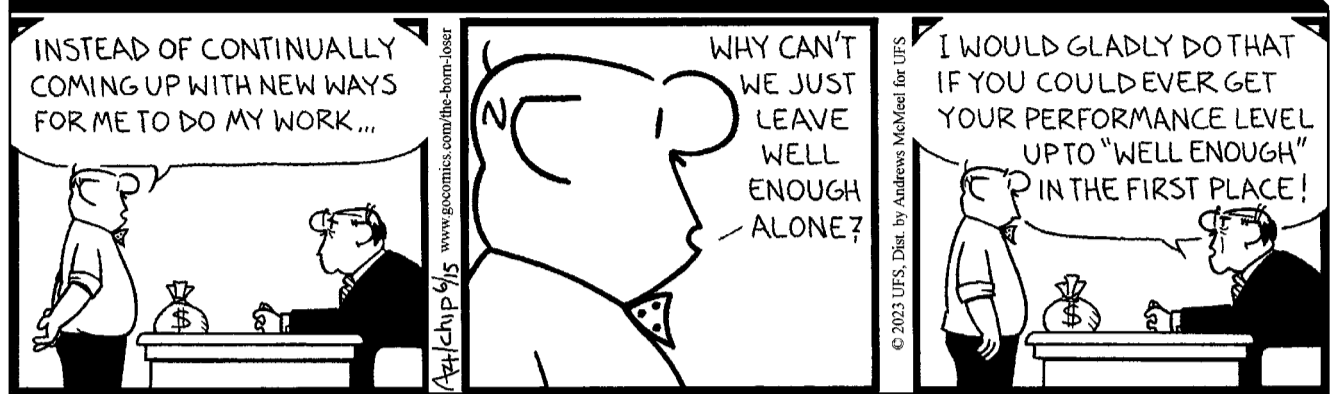
SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 You will be overly sensitive when dealing with your personal life. Talk to employers in order to promote your career objectives. Do not sign your life away.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Don't be too confident that coworkers are on your side. Your ability to deal with humanitarian groups will enhance your reputation.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Get together with friends who like to participate in indoor sports. Throw yourself into your profession. Don't push your luck with authority figures.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Your generous nature could be taken advantage of. Go with the flow and don't let the unsettled atmosphere get on your nerves.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-2	9	cloudy
Changchun	-13	-3	fine
Chengdu	7	14	cloudy
Chongqing	11	14	rain
Fuzhou	15	18	cloudy
Guangzhou	16	23	cloudy
Guiyang	4	8	overcast
Haikou	23	24	rain
Hangzhou	5	10	cloudy
Harbin	-13	-3	fine
Hefei	1	7	cloudy
Nanjing	2	10	cloudy
Shanghai	6	13	cloudy
Taipei	17	19	rain
Wuhan	5	9	cloudy
Hong Kong	19	24	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	3	6	rain
Frankfurt	9	15	rain
Paris	12	18	showers
London	10	15	rain
New York	6	12	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Role for Valerie; 6- Horne and Olin; 11- Animal pouch; 14- Fortune-telling cards; 15- Bikini blast; 16- Attorney's org.; 17- Senior; 18- Suckle; 19- Sweetie; 20- 1961 Heston role; 22- Thick-skinned charger; 24- Prophecy; 28- Navy builder; 29- Establishes; 30- Ulan ___; 32- Edges; 33- Rubberneck; 35- Fiddlesticks; 39- Internet writing system that popularized "pwn3d" and "n00b"; 40- Sweet suffix; 41- Psychic; 42- ___ breve; 43- Scheduled; 45- Enormous; 46- Lake in the Sierra Nevada; 48- Dried grape; 50- Morals; 53- Most moist; 54- Husk of corn; 55- Budget alternative; 57- "... ___ the cows come home"; 58- Boring tool; 60- "See ya!"; 65- Historic time; 66- Summit; 67- Sister of Calliope; 68- Radical '60s org.; 69- Leg joints; 70- Gravy, for one;

DOWN 1- Hwy; 2- Golfer Sutton; 3- Old California fort; 4- Female deer; 5- Still; 6- Cavalry weapon; 7- Sewing case; 8- Square; 9- Knucklehead; 10- Sound investment?; 11- Indian term of respect; 12- Dry as ___; 13- Boat often made of birch bark, canvas, or fiberglass; 21- Not so much; 23- Deprivation; 24- Gal's guy; 25- Bay window; 26- Drive back; 27- Glad all over; 28- ___-Foy, Quebec; 30- Moistest while cooking; 31- Neck of the woods; 34- Up ___ good; 36- Employ again; 37- Protection; 38- Lott of Mississippi; 43- Cries of surprise; 44- London stroller; 47- Antiaircraft fire; 49- Soap plants; 50- Adlai's running mate; 51- Next after the second; 52- Hawaiian dances; 53- Bar game; 55- "A Death in the Family" author James; 56- ___-majesté; 59- Samovar; 61- First name in Notre Dame football; 62- Kind of cross; 63- And so on; Abbr.; 64- ___ v. Wade;

Friday's solution

V	E	R	A		L	A	R	G	E		R	E	N	A
A	S	E	C		A	L	I	E	N		E	V	A	N
S	A	A	R		T	I	G	E	R		L	E	N	D
T	U	P	O		L	E	V		R	O	M	A	N	C
O	E	C	A		N	T								
A	O	R	T		A									
R	N	A												
R	M	E												
S	A	L	I		N	A								
T	R	I	C		O	R	N							
A	I	N												
L	E	R												
E	L	S												

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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

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2,060 ft² | HKD22,000/mth



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FOOTBALL

Messi's 8th Ballon D'Or trophy celebrated by Inter Miami in exhibition match

TIM REYNOLDS,
FORT LAUDERDALE

LIONEL Messi held the Ballon D'Or over his head as fireworks lit up the sky to bring a pregame ceremony to a close. And with that, Inter Miami got to celebrate the game's greatest player one more time in 2023.

Messi was on the field for his Major League Soccer club on Friday night for a friendly against New York City FC, a match put together to commemorate his eighth time winning the Ballon D'Or — presented annually to the game's top player — at a black-tie ceremony in Paris last month. No other player has won that award more than five times.

Messi — carrying the trophy in his left hand — walked to midfield on a gold carpet laid out across the pitch, where MLS Commissioner Don Garber was among those awaiting his arrival for a brief pregame ceremony. He embraced Garber, Inter Miami owners Jorge



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi holds his Ballon d'Or trophy before the team's club friendly soccer match against New York City FC

and Jose Mas, then hoisted the trophy as the crowd roared.

"To me, it is something beautiful to share with you," Messi said.

"I've only been here a little while but it really feels like I've been here a long time."

Here's how big a deal the mo-

ment was: Even Garber pulled out his cell phone to take a picture of the moment.

"You, Inter Miami fans, have the best player who's ever played the game," Garber said. "The winner of his eighth Ballon D'Or, the guy who lifted as captain the League Cup for your team, thank you Leo for your belief in Major League Soccer and making your club and your league a league of choice."

The game was almost irrelevant: NYCFC prevailed 2-1, and Messi had a 25-yard free kick that could have tied the game in stoppage time — but it sailed high, and the final whistle blew moments later.

It was a perfect bookend to Messi's first four months officially as part of club: Year 1 started with an on-field party and ended with another celebration with a look ahead to Year 2.

"He's the main star of this match and we want to join him celebrating his eighth Ballon D'Or," Inter Miami coach Gerardo "Tata"

Martino said. "It's an opportunity also for us to compete. Even if it's a friendly it's an opportunity for the people and the fans to see Leo and his teammates on the field and say goodbye to the year."

It was a bonus chance at a farewell, at least on the home turf. Inter Miami's home schedule was completed more than three weeks ago, with Messi not playing that night — he had just gotten back from a pair of World Cup qualifiers with Argentina.

Inter Miami was supposed to play a pair of games in China earlier this month, only to see that trip fall through because of what the team called "unforeseen circumstances." When that fell through, Inter Miami settled on another option — getting NYCFC to play an exhibition between teams that missed the ongoing MLS playoffs. Messi has been training with the team for much of the last two weeks, arriving at the team facility the morning after getting the Ballon D'Or in Paris. **MDT/AP**

AD



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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

TOP MEETING CAN SET CLEAR NAVIGATION MARKS TO KEEP BILATERAL RELATIONS ON STEADY COURSE

Briefing the press on the talks between Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng and United States Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, Vice-Minister of Finance Liao Min highlighted the “three important consensuses” that had been reached: more communication, no “decoupling”, and joint efforts to address common challenges. The talks, he said, were “candid, pragmatic, in-depth, and rich in constructiveness”.

As she has done multiple times, Yellen said after the meeting that the US does “not seek to decouple our economy from China’s”. Washington is after “a healthy economic relationship with China that benefits both countries over time”, she emphasized.

The He-Yellen talks have therefore set the stage for what it is hoped are productive talks between the two countries’ leaders, who are expected to have in-depth face-to-face discussions in San Francisco with the aim of clarifying positions with a view to getting relations firmly back on to the track of “healthy, steady” development.

A lot has happened since the two leaders last met in-person in Bali, Indonesia, on the sidelines of the G20 Summit last November, with the balloon going up on the extent to which the hard-line anti-China caucus in Congress has been able to appropriate policy for their own ends.

The meeting between the two leaders will be held in tandem with the San Francisco APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting, which will focus on the region being “interconnected, innovative and inclusive” so as to create a resilient and sustainable future for all.

However, given US policy toward China at the moment that admirable agenda seems to be unrealistic. Present-day US efforts to realize US-centric supply chains are aimed at excluding China from the global industry and supply chains with the intention of severing economic interdependence and suppressing China’s endogenous innovation.

Beijing is especially annoyed that, despite the verbal commitments to improve ties made by the US side in Bali, the US administration goaded by Congress has demonstrated worrisome “action deficits”, and indeed has acted conversely. Following the 2022 move to block the exports of advanced microchips to China, the administration moved to choke US investment in key Chinese industries in August, making it no secret that its intention was to prevent Chinese technological advancement.

Thus instead of being portrayed as an “inflection point” from whence bilateral ties will show remarkable improvement, the two sides have prudently positioned the upcoming meeting as a stabilizing effort for the troubled relationship.

While that has kept expectations for the meeting to produce significant breakthroughs realistically low, it does not diminish the significance of the meeting as an opportunity to increase mutual understanding of the importance of preventing frictions sparking a mutually damaging confrontation.

Hopefully, the meeting between the two leaders can show real progress in that direction, applying the necessary touches to ensure the two countries are not on collision courses.

CROATIA’S DEFENSE MINISTER SACKED AFTER CAUSING A FATAL CAR CRASH THAT ALSO LEFT HIM HOSPITALIZED

THE BUZZ

Croatia’s defense minister was sacked on Saturday after he apparently caused a traffic collision in which one person died and he was also seriously injured.

Defense Minister Mario Banozic was overtaking a truck in bad weather when he crashed into a van coming from the opposite direction, authorities said. The van driver died in the crash and Banozic was hospitalized with serious injuries.

“I have removed Minister Banozic from duty of the defense minister, considering the extraordinary



circumstances,” Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic said shortly after initial findings were published about the crash in eastern Croatia.

The accident happened around 6 a.m. on Saturday. Banozic, 44, was driving his personal car and was traveling on his own.

“We are expressing our condolences to the family of the person who was killed,” government spokesman Marko Milic said earlier on Saturday on X, formerly known as Twitter.

SOUTH CHINA SEA

PHILIPPINES JOINS JAPAN-LED NAVAL DRILLS AS BRUSHES WITH CHINA RISE IN THE DISPUTED SEA

MARI YAMAGUCHI, ABOARD THE USS CARL VINSON

JAPAN led an annual multinational naval exercise that included the Philippines as an observer for the first time, as Filipino coast guard vessels are increasingly harassed by China in the disputed South China Sea.

The Annualex exercises that began Saturday off Japan’s coast also included the United States, Australia and Canada. Their aim is to demonstrate and increase ways the navies can work together, and show their presence and commitment to defend a “free and open” Indo-Pacific, which the allies say is hampered by China’s growing ambitions that include sweeping territorial claims.

On Saturday, a selected group of journalists, including The Associated Press, flew on an V-22 Osprey aircraft to the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier to observe takeoffs and landings of F-35C “Lightning” stealth fighters, as well as F/A-18 Super Hornet jets and E/A-18 Growlers. The Japanese



destroyer Hyuga showed its presence next to the carrier.

The exercise comes in the wake of the latest confrontation between the Philippines and China in the South China Sea on Friday, adding to the territorial disputes that risk turning into a more serious armed conflict.

The Philippines accused a Chinese coast guard ship and accompanying vessels of dangerous maneuvers and blasting a Philippine supply ship with a water cannon, while China defended its action as appropriate.

Territorial conflicts in the South China Sea involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have long been regarded as a potential flashpoint

and a delicate fault line in the U.S.-China rivalry.

“The Philippines is an extremely important country for Japan, and we hope to cooperate with the Philippine navy at every opportunity in the future,” Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Commander-in-Chief Akira Saito said. He added that the drills are not targeting any specific nation and that the Philippines’ participation was decided before its latest encounter with China.

About 30 navy ships and 40 warplanes from the four countries, as well as Philippine navy personnel, are participating in the joint exercises that also address new threats such as cyber, space and information warfare, Saito said. **MDT/AP**



Poland Tens of thousands of people walked through Warsaw on Saturday in a march organized by nationalist groups as Poland celebrated its Independence Day holiday, 105 years after the nation regained its statehood at the end of World War I. Participants carried Poland’s white-and-red flag and some burned flares as they marched along a route leading from the city center to the National Stadium.



Latvia’s president says Russia is planning for a long war in Ukraine and he has a message for countries wavering on continuing military support to Kyiv: Keep supplying arms or the Ukrainians will lose and Russia will have a green light for threatening others in the future. Edgars Rinkēvičs (pictured) said in an interview with The Associated Press that “it is important to actually fight for international peace, and peace in Europe, because if we stop Russia in Ukraine, then Russia is not going to be able to challenge other countries.”

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Rajesh Kumar Singh



Festival of Lights. Lamps light up the banks of the river Saryu on the eve of the Hindu festival of Diwali, Saturday



Vatican Pope Francis on Saturday ordered the removal of the bishop of Tyler, Texas, a conservative prelate active on social media who has been a fierce critic of the pontiff and has come to symbolize the polarization within the U.S. Catholic hierarchy. A one-line statement from the Vatican said Francis had “relieved” Bishop Joseph Strickland of the pastoral governance of Tyler and appointed the bishop of Austin as the temporary administrator.