



**WYNN PARTNERS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL SERIES TO INTRODUCE A GOLF TOURNAMENT TO THE MACAU GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB IN MARCH 2024**

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**NATIONAL SECURITY AND PATRIOTIC EDUCATION NOTHING NEW TO MACAU**

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**XI MEETS BIDEN FACE-TO-FACE, ROUND TWO**

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AP PHOTO



**South Korean** President Yoon Suk Yeol slammed the purported illicit arms deal between North Korea and Russia, saying he'll emphasize its far-reaching security implications and discuss international response during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco this week. In written responses to questions from The Associated Press ahead of the APEC meeting, Yoon also said that North Korean provocations will invite immediate retaliation by South Korean and U.S. forces.

**Cambodia** The human rights group Amnesty International has strongly criticized UNESCO and its World Heritage program for failing to challenge the Cambodian government's ongoing mass evictions at the famous centuries-old Angkor Wat temple complex. The London-based organization in a report released Tuesday charged that the evictions of an estimated 10,000 families by Cambodian authorities violated international and national law. It said the evicted people have received little or no compensation and the government's two main resettlement sites have inadequate facilities in terms of roads, water and electricity supplies and sanitation.

AP PHOTO



**Emirates** Long-haul carrier Emirates signaled yesterday it will hold off on a major purchase of Airbus A350 aircraft over concerns about their Rolls Royce engines, marking a major blow for the European manufacturer as it hopes to close the sale during the Dubai Air Show this week. Emirates President Tim Clark's comments to journalists at the show came the day after his airline announced a \$52 billion purchase with Airbus' rival Boeing Co., while its sister airline FlyDubai bought another \$11 billion of aircraft from Boeing.

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# 'THERE IS NO SANDWICH CLASS'

**Sandwich-class housing on hold due to lack of demand, Ho says**

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**GAMING GALAXY TO EXPAND CONCERTS, MICE EVENTS IN 2024**

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**HO PREDICTS CASINO SECTOR TO 'UNLIKELY' REACH MOP180 GGR**

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MDT ARCHIVE



SPORTS

# Wynn partners with The International Series to bring in golf tournament

WYNN announced a new partnership with The International Series that will introduce a golf tournament to the Macau Golf & Country Club in March 2024, marking Macau's series debut.

The International Series Macau is a set of 10 events brought to the Asian Tour through a historic USD300 million investment with LIV Golf.

Golfing superstars, including five-time Major winner Brooks Koepka, 2022 Open champion Cameron Smith, and 2017 Masters champion Sergio Garcia have attended The International Series stage throughout the season.

A special press conference to announce the partnership and dates was held at the Wynn Macau, with 2018 Masters champion Patrick Reed, 2010 US Open champion Graeme McDowell, and 2023 International Series Order of



Merit leader Andy Ogletree all in attendance.

Rahul Singh, head of The International Series, said, "The International Series offers a dynamic platform with a proven track record for attracting big names. I would like to express my gratitude to Wynn Macau for allowing us to break new ground in Macau, helping the Asian

Tour and LIV Golf continue to develop what is now becoming the highest-level golf tournament series in Asia."

International Series Macau is set to become an integral part of The International Series' third season and stands as one of the most elite international sporting events to take place in Macau. LV

GAMING

# GALAXY TO HOST 50 CONCERTS AND 250 MICE EVENTS IN 2024

LYNZY VALLES

GAMING operator Galaxy Macau plans to host 50 concerts and 250 MICE events in 2024 as part of its pledge to diversify its non-gaming offerings.

During a keynote speech at the MGS Entertainment Show, Kevin Kelley, CEO – Macau at Galaxy, emphasized the need for industry stakeholders to align with the government's objective of expanding non-gaming offerings and move away from gaming as the pillar of Macau's economy.

Following the enactment of the city's largest gaming law overhaul, gaming concessionaires have pledged to invest USD15 billion in bold projects, the majority of which will be spent on non-gaming projects. This aligns with the government's call to diversify and shift the city's reliance away from gambling into tourism and leisure for the coming decades.

The casino firms promised to spend 108.7 billion patacas – more than 90% of their total investment – on "exploring overseas customer markets and developing non-gaming projects." For this reason, this year, gaming operators have begun holding international events, including sports events and large concerts.

According to Kelley, industry constituents including operators, manufacturers, and the government are working collaboratively to

achieve this objective.

"Galaxy alone will provide over 50 major concert nights and 250 MICE events in 2024," the executive said.

In a recent earnings call, Lui Che Woo, chairman of GEG, also revealed that the group is boosting its non-gaming offerings by continuing the construction of Phase 4, which will include "multiple high-end hotel brands, together with a 4,000-seat theater, extensive F&B, retail, non-gaming amenities, landscaping and a water resort deck."

Phase 4, spanning approximately 600,000 square meters of development, is expected to be completed in 2027.

## ELECTRONIC SEGMENT GAINING TRACTION

Kelley forecasts that slot machines and electronic table games are "growing faster than many people think," contrary to the popular belief that Macau is a table-centric market. It has been claimed that "slots and electronic gaming will never be as popular as table games in terms of revenue generation compared to table game."

For the executive, Macau will not revert back to its former focus on VIP table gaming, instead focussing on the growing popularity of slot machines and electronic table games.

This projection is based on the observed trend on the gaming operator's gaming floors and daily gaming revenues, according to Kelley.

## ONE SHOT NEWS

PAULO COUTINHO/MDT



**The King and us.** To mark King Charles III's 75th birthday yesterday, the Consulate-General in Hong Kong and Macao hosted an event at a city hotel, attended by over 70 guests. The ceremony was officiated by Secretary André Cheong and Consul General Brian Davidson. In a brief speech, Davidson recounted the enduring British presence in Macau and expressed gratitude to his compatriots for their contributions to the community and nation. Meanwhile, in London, King Charles used his birthday celebration to launch a new initiative aimed at combating food poverty and reducing waste.

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A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

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For subscription and general issues: general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

在經濟復甦、民生改善和社會和諧方面

TRANSFORMING TIMES

## Highlights of the Policy Address for the Fiscal Year 2024

### Consolidate Development and Enhance Diversification

In 2024, the Macao SAR Government shall join hands with all sectors of society to effectively safeguard national security. We shall make greater effort to implement the "1+4" appropriate economic diversification strategy, maintain the strong momentum for economic recovery, improve people's livelihoods, enhance governance capabilities, expedite the development of the Guangdong-Macau Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, and achieve new progress in the Macao SAR. We shall joyously celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the 25th anniversary of Macao's return to the motherland.



#### 1 Firmly safeguard national security and social stability

- Firmly uphold a socialist approach to national security.
- Further implement the principle of "jointly governing Macao", strengthen the collaboration to We-Share Macao's Stability (安) and We-Complete Macao's Prosperity (興), and promote the joint and orderly work of the Executive Office and various agencies.
- Strictly enforce the Law on Safeguarding National Security, strengthen the staff recruitment and mission education of national security departments, and fully pass on the National Security Affairs Subject and the National Security Beliefs and Subjects to all students in accordance with the law.
- Further strengthen education, guidance and national spirit in the new generation, strengthen national awareness and foster our sense of pride of being the country and of Macao, and
- Deepen inter-establishment efforts which include sports, culture and politics, further enhance the interaction, promotion and mutual benefits regarding education, promote the integration of education and research, and work to build a world-class level of the Cultural Protection Center, and promote the digital development of the cultural system.



#### 2 Further enhance appropriate economic diversification

- Implement the "1+4" strategy to promote appropriate economic diversification.
- Deepen market-oriented reforms, explore various business models, promote the development of emerging industries, and fully implement the revitalization action plan for old areas.
- Seize the opportunity arising from the opening of the Hengqin (Hengqin Hengqin and promote the progress of "mutual opening a market").
- Focus on the challenges of the local market, improve laws and regulations in the financial services sector, and promote the growth of services to new growth situations in the local and cross-boundary strategies in Macao.
- Revitalize investment in scientific research and development, particularly the high quality development of Macao-branded industries.
- Strengthen international influential brands, conventions and exhibitions in Macao, promote integrated development of sports, culture, and tourism industries, pioneer Macao as a "City of Internationality" and a "Digital Sports" city.
- Improve the business environment of small and medium enterprises, particularly helping difficult enterprises.

Strengthening Recovery, Fostering Diversification, Improving Livelihoods, Enhancing Development.

Budgeted expenditure totalling 28.7 billion patacas

#### Major welfare measures for the fiscal year 2024

##### All Macao residents

###### Lowering the individual income tax of the Greater Macao Region

- Tax rate band of 5,000 patacas for taxable residents
- Exemption for a maximum of 2,000 patacas for taxable residents

###### Family Housing Allowance

- 10,000 patacas per family's residents
- 4,000 patacas for non-resident residents

###### Healthcare subsidy

- 800 patacas per person (non-resident residents)

###### Allowance scheme for illness subsidy for long-term insured medical insurance in mainland China

- Provide allowance of up to 1,000 patacas to eligible Macao residents for long-term insured medical insurance in mainland China

###### Life insurance

- 1,400 patacas
- 800 patacas for family of the deceased

###### Continuing Education Programme (2021-2024)

- Maximum of 1,000 patacas per eligible resident

###### Summary table relating to residential work

- 258 patacas per month for residential work

###### Disability social relief subsidy

- Allow 1,000 patacas for residential and general non-residential work

###### Subsidy allowances for members of the public

- The Government will provide funding support for the elderly, people with disabilities, students, and other groups, including health care subsidy, the Transport Allowance, or people with disabilities support allowance by the Transport Bureau

###### Local public social relief subsidy

- Each citizen of the SAR (except other Macao residents)

###### Medical relief subsidy scheme

- Provide medical subsidy of 1,000 patacas for eligible residents

###### Subsidy for environmental health of the elderly and residential work

- Residents of the priority area can be awarded a special health subsidy, including 1,000 patacas for health care, a maximum amount of 1,000 patacas

##### Disadvantaged families

###### Minimum Allowance (2024)

- 4,000 patacas for three-person households

###### Financial assistance

- Continue Subsidy for members of financial assistance fund
- Continue an additional medical financial assistance for eligible families. The maximum amount of financial assistance is 2,000 patacas for each person (maximum of 10,000 patacas)

###### Special subsidy for three categories of disadvantaged families

- Housing subsidy (elderly): from 100 patacas to 700 patacas per month
- Medical subsidy: from 1,000 patacas to 7,000 patacas per month
- Subsidy for the elderly: 100,000 patacas to 1,000,000 patacas

###### Family Housing Allowance

- The Government will provide financial support for disadvantaged families from 2024 onwards for "moving in households" of 10-150 patacas for improvement of facilities. The number of eligible families will be approximately 1,000 families per year. Subsidy will be provided to eligible families with financial difficulties.

###### Best Area Field Activities Programme

- The Government will fund the "moving out" of eligible households with 8 times the minimum subsistence level.

###### Family Housing Allowance

- The Government will provide financial support for eligible families for a maximum amount of up to 200,000 patacas per month.

###### Special Life Support Grant

- Research Institute of the Government will provide financial support for eligible families. The family receiving financial assistance will be limited to a maximum of 1,000 families per year, for up to 18 months.

###### Community Employment Allowance Scheme

- The Government will provide financial support for eligible families with 1,000 patacas per month for residential work.

The Government made Macau's budget announcements this year

THE LEADING NEWSPAPER

Highlights of the Policy Address for the Fiscal Year 2024

Major welfare measures for the fiscal year 2024

The elderly

Old Age Allowance

7,000 per month per year

Subsidy

5,000 per month per year  
500 monthly for retirement age group

Additional 50 working hours for young workers

The basic allowance for parental childcare will be 100,000 per year for child's employment every 15 years of age



Students

Direct benefits for non-tertiary education

- 2,000 per month per student (secondary education)
- 1,000 per month per student (primary education)
- 2,000 per month per student (tertiary education)

Reduce the disability, direct allowance and statutory allowance for students from families with financial difficulties

- Reduce the disability:
  - Maximum 4,000 per month (secondary education)
  - Maximum 2,000 per month (primary education)
  - Maximum 4,000 per month (tertiary education)
- Direct allowance:
  - 200 per month per student (secondary education)
  - 100 per month per student (primary education)
- Statutory allowance:
  - Maximum 2,000 per month (secondary education)
  - Maximum 1,000 per month (primary education)

Reduce the disability and statutory allowance for tertiary students studying in overseas profiles

- Reduce the disability:
  - Maximum 2,000 per month (tertiary education)
  - Maximum 1,000 per month (tertiary education)
- Statutory allowance:
  - 200 per month per student (tertiary education)
  - 100 per month per student (tertiary education)
  - 100 per month per student (tertiary education)

Statutory Allowance for tertiary students

2,000 per month  
1,000 per month (Macao students)

Teaching staff

- Professional development allowance for teaching staff for school year 2024/2025, from 2,400 per year to 11,700 per year
- Direct allowance for school year 2024/2025, from 2,400 per year to 6,500 per year

Social workers

The existing basic monthly fee for social workers involved in substance abuse services for their job is raised by 10% per year

Employees

Personal Income Tax Amended and its relief

20% amount reduction in personal income tax with the lower allowance for personal income tax of 144,000,000 for general employees, 20% amount above of personal income tax applicable to 2000. Measures from the year 2022, raised to 1,000 of 14,000,000

People with disabilities

Disability subsidy

- Subsidy on the salary
- Subsidy on the pay per month

Employee with disabilities

Maximum 500 per month wage level

Employment for people with disabilities

A 50% allowance (up to 5,000 per year) on profit, net or personal income tax for employees with disabilities

Employment incentives

The government subsidy for employers for employing people with disabilities: 10,000 per year

Old Financial Support Scheme for the Acquisition of Adaptive Equipment and Residential Devices for the Disabled

Under the scheme, adults with disabilities (meeting the criteria of the existing financial assistance of up to 2,000 per year for acquiring welfare equipment) to spend maximum 20,000

Care Allowance

2,000 per month per month

The government will provide various services for people with disabilities in the world, offering 200 newly raised seats to provide rehabilitation, vocational training, and high-level training courses, support services to people of the age of 18 to 65 with intellectual disabilities (including 100 seats per year)



Business owners and related persons

Profit tax allowance with respect to 2000 persons

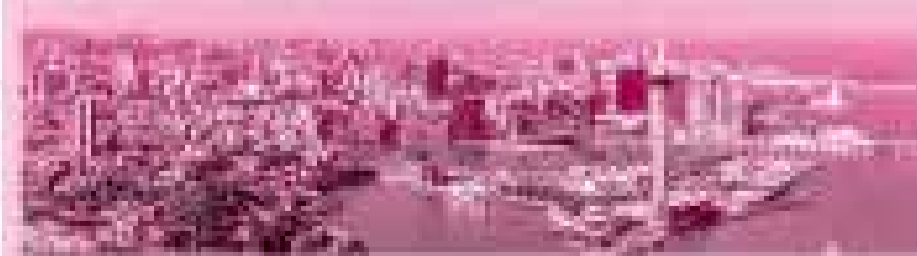
- Maximum 20% amount above of personal income tax for general employees, 20% amount above of personal income tax applicable to 2000. Measures from the year 2022, raised to 1,000 of 14,000,000
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在施政報告中，澳門政府將繼續推動

施政報告摘要

## Highlights of the Policy Address for the Fiscal Year 2024

### 3 Optimize people's quality of life

- Continuously improve the job market, labor force and welfare measures to ensure the ongoing utilization of resources for education, healthcare, housing and social welfare.
- Implement additional fund of 3,000 million patacas for the Central Provident Fund System, and carry out improvement of the Macau Housing Scheme.
- Ensure youth employment for local facilities and safeguard labor rights, and promote harmonious and friendly labor relations.
- Maintain price stability, government consumer rights.
- Improve the housing related policy, continue to address local housing issues.
- Optimize the healthcare system and enhance the quality of medical services.
- Strengthen social security and services, tackle the challenges posed by an aging population, and make the Green Transition Scheme permanent.
- Strengthen the rights of women and children, and enhance protection measures that create a favorable environment for children in all sectors of society and
- Actively prepare for the 20th anniversary.

### 4 Enhance overall quality and standards of governance

- Optimize "Macau One-Stop Service" and launch a digital commercial revolution.
- Streamline departmental functions and enhance the accountability of government officials.
- Strengthen legislative supervision.
- Conduct the activities of Civil Service Inspection in accordance with the law, and
- Strengthen public relations and communication and consulting efforts.

### 5 Expedite development of a livable, smart and green Macao

- Continue to study planning proposals for the Outer Harbor, Helder's Harbour District, Tapa and other areas.
- Continue to expedite completion of major infrastructure, including the fourth Macao-Taiwan Harbour Bridge, the LRT system, and the expansion and partial relocation for Macau International Airport.
- Improve traffic management, continue the open building approach for tall buildings and expand coverage and scope and applications regarding "World-class Traveler Macao" (Global) and manufacturing firms recognition.
- Support green city development, implement environmental protection measures, a set number of charging facilities in a study district, and expand open green space for the public use.
- Continue to explore the possibility for the Green use of Maritime Area.

### 6 Strengthen talent, culture, education and youth work

- Culture, sports and youth work included in the development of industries of the "1+4" diversification strategy.
- Expand the concept of "One River" and build a community.
- Improve education infrastructure, enhance teaching quality, further expand the capacity of higher education institutions, to enhance regional and international competitiveness, develop international "study + work" mode.
- Enhance the youth policy, actively plan, continue implementing the Macau Youth Professional Development Programme and local seminars among young people.

### 7 Promote high-level Macao-Hong Kong integration

- Deepen the integration and interconnection of regulations and mechanisms, and build policy connection between Macao and Hong Kong, promote the business investment.
- Establish a strategic relations development cooperation and Macao-Hong Kong Joint Development Association to boost integrated development and cooperative growth of Macao-Hong Kong domain.
- Facilitate the participation of Macao international domain with the focus on Macao-Hong Kong integration.
- Support and encourage Macao residents to work, employment, and businesses and live in the Guangdong-Macao Inland Cooperation Zone in Hong Kong, and
- Support and encourage Macao residents to work in the vicinity of the establishment of the Guangdong-Macao Inland Cooperation Zone in Hong Kong.

### 8 Proactively integrate into overall national development

- Proactively engage with national development, coordinate the arrangements of the "One country, two systems" policy and to cooperatively develop Macao's potential, actively working on cross-border cooperation.
- Cooperate with Guangdong and Hong Kong to jointly build a high quality Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.
- Actively continue to realize the wish of National Strategy of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries, to further expand and leverage the function as a platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.
- Strengthen cooperation with the Pan-Peru River Delta region and multiple China provinces, explore and build, and promote economic, trade and cultural exchanges and cooperation between Macao and Taiwan, and
- Utilize Macao's advantage as a key node in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area to influence and attract various Chinese, cross-generational cooperation with friendly cities, leverage Macao's unique strengths to foster international and industrial exchanges, and facilitate the implementation of the "Belt and Road" initiative.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



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# Major Policies on Various Areas

## Administration and Justice

In 2024, the Administration and Justice Director will move forward by synergising with the governance principles of the Chief Executive, and promote the implementation of various initiatives.

### Public administration

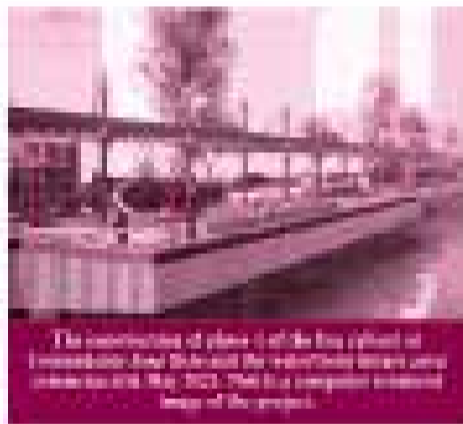
- Optimize the governance of department heads, supervisors, subordinates, accountability, and support for the Director of each administrative department.
- Expand services for the convenience of the public and business, by launching a digital government service platform, and enhancing the one-stop learning system for civil public usage establishments.
- Fully support the work of the Historical Affairs Commission, the Chief Executive's Historical Office, and the civil and archaeological visits with Chief Executive's direction.
- Improve utilization of civil servants, to strengthen their service commitment.

### Legal affairs

- Further implement varied regulatory plans and measures to strengthen the rule of law.
- Streamline the legislative process and improve procedures for their completion and property registration, to enhance legislative efficiency, contracting regulatory and administrative instruments, including their timely formalization, implementation, and further regulatory methods.
- Facilitate the establishment of the first court in the Developing Macao Region, Coordinating Group of Judges, to strengthen regional legal co-operation, and create a job opportunity for civil servants.
- Support the Commission Culture of the Macao Basic Law, and strengthen education and publicity on the Commission of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law of Macao.

### Historical services

- Strengthen cooperation of Rua de São Paulo, Património and the first culture in Fat On Kit, and work on upgrading the Fat On Kit area through various activities for various of its historical services.
- Proceed with the construction of phase two of the giant promenade along the coast shores of the Macao peninsula and the Fat On Kit Area by expanding the promenade area, quality landscaping.
- Strengthen government services and historic resources and protection of historical buildings, and historic sites.
- Revise the legal system to further strengthen the legislative normative work by Historical Affairs Office, and promote innovative operations of Table Mountain Market to optimize the market management and
- Expand community projects and promote old areas to promote public awareness of environmental conservation.



The completion of phase 2 of the first phase of the promenade along the coast shores of the Macao peninsula and the Fat On Kit Area by expanding the promenade area, quality landscaping.

## Facilitate the development of the Gauploco-Macao Intensive Concentration Zone in Portugal

- Priority funding of projects for Macao and Portugal, to facilitate the growth of the Gauploco-Macao Intensive Concentration Zone.
- Facilitate economic development zones for Macao and Portugal, to promote joint development of Macao and Portuguese territories.
- Continue promoting multi-formal cooperation between Macao and Portugal, to support Macao students with studies and other job resources in Portugal.



Facilitating joint study of the economy.

## Priority of integrate into the overall national development

- Support the organization of the First Ministerial Meeting of the Forum for Promoting and Table Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries, to promote inter-regional economic, trade cooperation and exchange between Chinese and Portuguese-speaking countries.
- Enhance Macao's government activities to connect with Asia and Brazil through various government and business and job resources.
- Actively participate in the development of the Greater Bay Area, and strengthen cooperation to further promote and expand joint projects.

## Public Security

The public security authorities will continue to safeguard security and law enforcement for major events, such as the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Macao SAR and the 20th anniversary Chief Executive election. In addition, the public security authorities will actively promote a new round of legislation to support national security, to promote public security law including legislation and enforcement, and accordingly increase the scientific decision-making and proactive deployment of police work, to prevent any threats endangering national security and stability of Macao, and safeguard the quality development of the country and Macao.

### National security

- Adhere to the principle of national security and joint development, to promote the development of security and law-enforcement national security.
- Prevent and resolve national security risks, and coordinate with the national security situation.

### Priority law enforcement

- Transition priority law enforcement, and increase police effectiveness in the Greater Bay Area.
- Strengthen the quality control of the national police force, to ensure the quality of the enforcement.



Active measures and the national security situation.

### Modern anti-protection

- Continue improving and promoting technological anti-protection capabilities in the economy, and
- Strengthen prevention policies and data collection, and production information capabilities.

### Flexible policy level management

- Actively improve policy flexibility and flexibility to address the public with comprehensive care and
- Priority workholding and the rational adjustment of the price level.

### Strengthening the public force through technology

- Proactively address smart policing, and promote the better cooperation of the "Big Eye" CCTV system, and
- Further police research, and enhance the technical level of Macao Police.

### Police-public collaboration

- Strengthen community liaison mechanisms, and promote online and offline consultation between the police and the public, and
- Produce wide-ranging public promotion campaigns, and focus on innovative initiatives to take on the police and the public.

### Enhance border control

- Enhance border control efficiency between Macao and Portugal in the form of passenger and goods in the Greater Bay Area, and
- Strengthen cooperation in port security, and enhance mutual assistance and job resources for the public.

### Correctional and rehabilitation services

- Improve prison management, and use smart technology to extend support for social rehabilitation, and
- Facilitate the completion of the prison project and the commencement of prison activities.

### Financial law enforcement

- Follow the departmental requirements, to further strengthen the prevention and control of financial crime.

## Economy and Finance

The key areas of work in the economy and finance domain will be to manage the system in the mid-term, to give the economy a full recovery, to expand employment, stimulate demand for goods, and improve people's livelihoods. The Government will do its utmost to administer the regulatory body for service tax, promote direct business and reinforce the synergies between the industries of Macao and Portugal, to proactively integrate into the overall national development plan, and maximize the role of Macao as an economic and trading activity platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

### Key up efforts to maintain the favourable economic momentum

- Continue promoting a robustness, to realize economic demand.
- Expand government projects for public and business, and support economic development of TSMs.
- Strengthen macroeconomic policies, to improve international competitiveness.
- Facilitate healthy economic environment, to promote people's livelihoods and safeguard consumer rights, and
- Continue expanding employment, and optimize processes of labor rights.

### Expand the establishment of an appropriately diversified economic system

- Improve the "six major" or diversified growing clusters.
- Accelerate the development of Chinese medicine and the "Big Health Industry".
- Enhance the modern financial services industry's competitiveness of year 10th anniversary of the government period (10th).
- Strengthen the overall economic and technological innovation and research activities, and promote the development of innovation-based industries along with the industrial safety, competitiveness and upgrading, and
- Facilitate the new economic and activities, to improve the level of innovation, to promote economic, technological, and professional activities activities.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



## Major Policies on Various Areas

### Social Affairs and Culture

In accordance with the objectives of the Second Five-Year Plan and the planning for the development of applying the strategic thrust for the Government will focus to improve services related to people's well-being, markets and urgent-minded people and promote the development of activities to bring social and cultural flour, closely connecting to industrial diversification. We shall intensify the provision of facilities for the Macao New Neighbourhood residential project and expand external cooperation and exchanges.

**Facilitating to improve services related to people's well-being and seeking better development opportunities for residents**

- Promote community and residential facilities, services, and amenities with built-in facilities through temporary arrangements. For Macao Urban Districts such as minor operations in places.
- Enhance residential and public facilities through temporary arrangements in public, already existing residential areas and temporary with no existing residential areas.
- Support activities for children for the winter, reduce the number of children in day care and arrangements for more operations with temporary facilities.
- Launch an integrated service system for people with disabilities and increase the number of places for wheelchair access.
- Promote the development of facilities related to elderly, education, cultural and sports activities.
- Support the concept of new facilities, reduce the dependence on a single mode of transport, reduce the distance to facilities, services and necessary provisions, and complete the publication of a list of implementing activities under the National Security Education and
- Promote operations of the House of the Family (Home) and explore construction of the new (rental) Home.



Promoting leisure, family education and improving the living environment

**Expanding various social and cultural initiatives to boost the needs of diversified development**

- Support the sectors using the health, fitness, medicine, tourism, the experience and learning, sports, the education and medical services, and other services to enhance the medical services.
- Promote cultural, academic and research work in Chinese medicine and health technology, and facilitate creation of scientific research results.
- Promote the development of National-level and support the local level of sports, fitness, recreation.
- Carry out cooperation work for the National Games and promote exchange between the cultural, educational and sports activities.
- Promote various social and cultural initiatives and support the growth of sports of interest people.

**Integrating with national and regional development and deepening external exchange**

- Coordinate education, health, sports, sports and other sectors activities for people, coordinated by the Macao New Neighbourhood, to support Macao residents in the National Competition Fair in Portugal.
- Develop external exchange and cooperation in the sports, language education, cultural, educational and sports.

### Transport and Public Works

To align with the Second Five-Year Plan, public implementation regarding transport and public works will be guided by the principle of serving the public's needs. The Government will implement the various tasks in an orderly manner and continue to diversify its growth efforts in public housing, transport, environmental protection, urban planning, urban renewal and public infrastructure.

#### Urban planning

- Carry out urban planning in various areas in Macao and coordinate the related work of building plan for Urban Districts (Urban) 1, Urban Districts (Urban) 2 and Urban Districts (Urban) 3.
- Carry out implementing the first stage work of the detailed plan for "Large Island Project".

#### Public work investment

- Complete construction of the South Macao Expressway Section Bridge and the South Macao Expressway (SME) and the South Expressway (SE).
- Proceed with expansion of the LRT Line 1.
- Proceed with construction of the massive project within the urban in the western New Urban.
- Complete construction of the South Expressway Section 1 and 2, and the urban connecting Road 1 and the Macao peninsula (M).



Large-scale transport construction work

#### Environmental protection

- Publish the report of the 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 environmental plans, open activities.
- Complete the expansion of the Macao Central Government Centre.
- Continue the construction of the recycling centre for organic resources, facilitate the expansion of industrial waste, and the Storage Treatment Plant for the Artificial Island and
- Develop public works in parks, in the second phase of the "Network Strategy for Recycling (I) and Integrated Management" with Sanitary Management, and Planning for Integrated Social Vehicle.

#### Security

- Continue expansion of the participation of the Security in Urban public housing project and the Home Ownership Scheme Housing in Urban (I), (II) and (III) in Urban.
- Enhance safety facilities in construction projects in line with the construction of the "Smart System for Security for the New Urban (I)", etc.
- Proceed with expanding urban fire facilities related to the Long Avenue Line.

#### Transport

- Complete the construction of the LRT Line 1 and its supporting facilities.
- Proceed the works of the LRT Line 2 for the Macao peninsula, and continue the operation of the New Urban Line and Transport Line 1.
- Improve the construction of the walking area to provide an emergency green emergency.

#### Public utilities management

- Promote coordination between public services systems to expand water operations.
- Complete the second phase of upgrading the network of Gas in National and
- Complete a periodical of the construction project for the gas pipeline network, across the Gas in Macao New Urban in the stage.

### Commission Against Corruption

In 2024, the Commission Against Corruption (CAC) will continue to carry out various activities for preventing and curbing corruption, and engage the anti-corruption education in line with the local development, seeking to build a culture of integrity and honesty in the future.

#### Implementing planning and strengthening monitoring

- Launch the Commission for Management Programme and carry out the anti-corruption procedures.
- Implement an operational and monitoring system, enhance the procedures for using vehicles owned by public, Government procurement bids.
- Deepen internal and external cooperation and exchange, to support internal management and operation of social institutions.
- Carry out various measures for monitoring activities.

#### Performing public administration in accordance with the law and enhancing the spirit of initiative and innovation

- Promote the internal control system and system strengthening the professional capacity, carry out strengthening activities.
- Support the development work through various ways and promote the role of the government and strengthening its monitoring in the future.
- Enhance the spirit of initiative and innovation, promote operating, creating, innovating and trying operations, mechanisms and form by further improvement of government management.

#### Promoting integrity and anti-corruption, and building integrity in all aspects

- Strengthen focus of integrity in Macao, with a focus on strengthening the function of integrity people in the field of integrity, to build a culture of integrity and anti-corruption.
- Strengthen support for integrity education and career training programmes on integrity education and career education for teachers.
- Launch projects about the law, including the project system in accordance with the Second Five-Year Plan and local government public works project, etc., to further promote integrity education and cooperation through an extensive collaboration approach.

#### Regional cooperation in pursuit of corruption-free governance

- Support the country's participation in the work of the Anti-Corruption of the Council of the Economic and Financial Commission (CEFC) and Anti-Corruption Committee of various international and regional organisations.
- Deepen cooperation with related China and Hong Kong, and actively interact with various international and regional organisations in the region.
- Explore the options for administrative cooperation under the regional framework of the Supporting Macao Economic Development (SMEDEV).

### Commission of Audit

Following the objective of the Strategic Direction of the Congress of the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (IOASG), the Commission will further strengthen and professionalise its work, and progressively strengthen the strategic positioning and function of audit work to promote social progress.

#### Performing audit in accordance with the law and in a timely manner

- Conduct audit operations on budget estimates and project audit reports to the general account, Finance, the public works and strengthening the effectiveness.

#### Learning system audit and performance audit

- Launch projects that help the Government to promote efficient service the implementation of policies, and promote public administration, coordinate their performance and resources for use of public resources, identify areas of improvement and enhance service.

#### Building a highly qualified, professional audit team

- Launch projects to provide targeted professional training for audit staff with the total support of the National Audit Office, to further enhance the audit team's professional knowledge, skills, and promoting the level.

#### Promoting awareness of auditing relevance

- Promote various activities on auditing culture, to improve the awareness of the public on auditing, especially cooperation with the audit services and raising public awareness.

#### Improving results in reflecting their needs

- Follow up on requests or advice to conduct research on the implementation of public accounts and departmental performance in a timely manner, to meet public expectations regarding transparency and accountability.

#### Strengthening internal communication

- The Commission of Audit (COA) will continue close contact with the National Audit Office, the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions, the Audit and Control Systems of the Commission of Portuguese Speaking Countries, the Audit and Control Systems of the Council of the Economic and Financial Commission and various local by their organizations, as needed.

#### Enhancing quality and efficiency

- In 2023, the COA will make a focus on increasing the efficiency, stability in operation and audit quality and improve internal control, enhance the audit work with an open, honest, and professional.

### UNIONPAY LAUNCHES QR-CODE CASH WITHDRAWALS

UnionPay International has launched its QR-based cash withdrawal service in Macau, with BNU being the first local bank to launch in the market. The Portuguese bank's customers can now use the bank's mobile application to withdraw cash from ATMs that support UnionPay's QR-based cash withdrawal service, not only in Macau but also from ATMs in mainland China and Hong Kong. According to a statement issued by the bank, "To withdraw cash, users can verify their identity on the BNU App and enter cash withdrawal instructions, then press the 'UnionPay QR code withdrawal' option at the ATM, scan the QR code displayed on the screen, and enter the password when prompted on the BNU App."

### GAC GROUP RETURNS AT MACAU AUTO SHOW 2023

GAC Group has returned to the China (Macau) International Automobile Exposition for the 13th consecutive year, launching its right-hand drive versions of EMZOOM, EMKOO, and AION Y PLUS. Alongside proven performers, the brand also showcased its industry-leading MegaWaves hybrid powertrain and the A480 supercharger. As one of Asia's most influential car expos, the Macau Auto Show brings together over 50,000 exhibitors and industry professionals across the world to explore the newest vehicles and automobile technologies available.

### UM TEAM WINS IN 'CHALLENGE CUP' CONTEST

The work of a team from the University of Macau stood out among more than 400,000 entries across the country in the "Challenge Cup" National College Students' Extracurricular Academic Science and Technology Contest held at Guizhou University. According to a statement, the team won one special prize, one first prize, one second prize and two third prizes. This year's competition attracted participation from more than 2,000 universities across the country, with more than 400,000 works, and more than 2.5 million students. It awarded 117 special prizes, 203 first prizes, 377 second prizes, and 974 third prizes in total.

### POLICY ADDRESS 2024

# Ho Iat Seng: Sandwich-class housing

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE sandwich-class housing project, a concept that Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng introduced to Macau after taking office, will be halted temporarily due to lack of demand, Ho told the Policy Address Press Conference yesterday evening.

In justification for the decision, he cited that the recent application round for Economic Housing or Subsidized Housing has not proven very popular, leading him to believe that there is no sandwich class.

When the demand is less than the supply, the application process continues and nobody misses out.

He even stated that before the launch of the sandwich-class housing plan, there was a sector of people who were not able to access Economic Housing due to a variety of reasons. "We listened to the community and tried to take care of these applicants," Ho said.

Regardless of the current demand, he added, the government must continue to plan ahead and prepare for the project. Apart from the land on Avenida de Wai Long that has been announced as the location for the sandwich-class housing project, there are several other locations reserved, Ho disclosed, adding that all planning

has been put into place.

He underlined that when the demand is must weaker than the supply, public funds should not be wasted on building the project.

However, the government will monitor market changes. When demand returns, the project can recommence anytime.

On the loosening of the restrictions on real estate market, he reiterated that the recent announcement concerned lowering stamp duty to the 2009 regime. This loosening is the outcome of a multitude of evaluations and discussions, Ho explained.

The outgoing measures have distorted the pricing of real estate, especially smaller units, he said, which were on average 20% to 30% more expensive than larger units in the same development. This occurred because sellers wanted to take full advantage of the measures, he explained, referring to the lowering of loan to value ratio (LVR) from 90% at maximum to 70%.

He was not happy about the situation because the units existed in the same building and used the same building materials. Young people suffered from higher prices, he said. "Although you can get access to a higher mortgage, the downside is, you need to repay more," he said.

On Economic Housing, he

ANTHONY LAM



pledged that the number of units to be built will shrink in order to keep the promises made by his predecessors. There will be 32,000 government housing units and 4,000 private housing units on New Urban Zone

A, he added. He believed that the next government will follow suit. He did not, however, reply to whether he will run for re-election.

He also explained that each application covers only five

### GAMING

## Casino sector to 'unlikely' reach MOP180 GGR

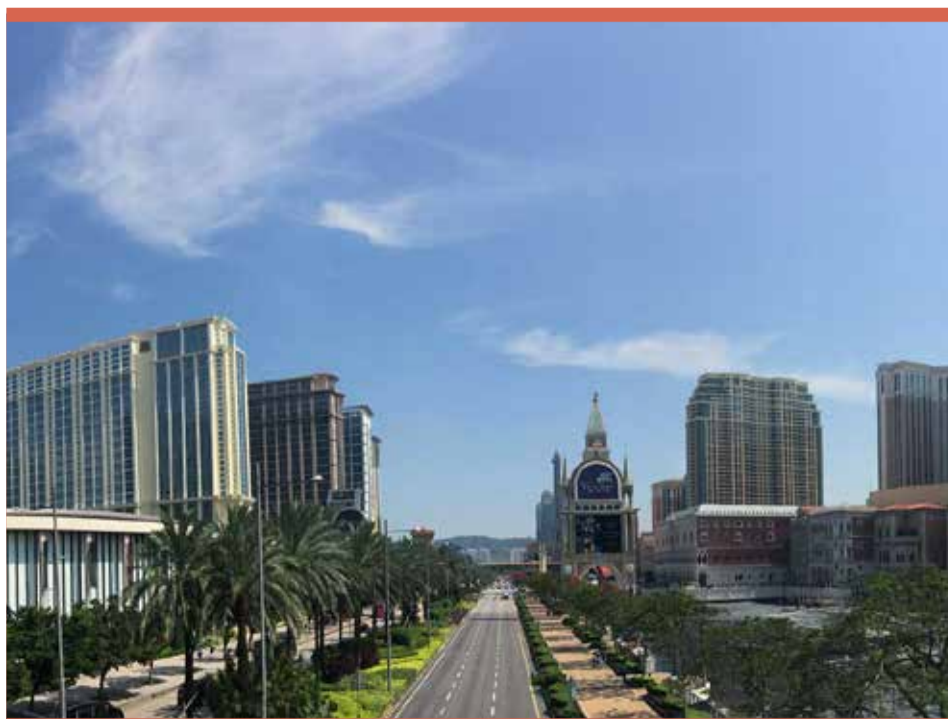
**C**HIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng doubts that gross gaming revenue (GGR) will reach MOP180 billion this year.

Ho was speaking yesterday at the Policy Address Press Conference.

The government's forecasts for this year are at only MOP130 billion.

However, the Macau government's contracts with the six gaming concessionaires stipulated that an additional 20% of its pledge in the non-gaming investment will be required if gaming revenues recover to MOP180 billion this year.

"As for the MOP180 billion GGR, I do not know what the annual GGR for this year will be like [but], I can tell you, MOP180 billion is not likely to be



achieved," said Ho.

Until October, the casino sector has already gener-

ated a GGR of MOP148.4 billion. This comes after October figures hit ano-

ther post-pandemic record high of MOP19.5 billion, buoyed by the National

Day Golden Week in early October.

Meanwhile, Macau has recorded a slight slowdown in its casino floor revenues during the Grand Prix, with Citigroup analysts noting that "some big players avoid[ed] going to Macau" during the races over the weekend.

The city's GGR for the first 12 days of November may have reached MOP6.6 billion, which is a daily run-rate of MOP543 million for the past week.

Analysts George Choi and Ryan Cheung said the figure is 3% lower than the first five days of the month.

However, its November GGR forecast of MOP16 billion remains unchanged, around 70% of pre-pandemic levels. LV



# on hold due to lack of demand



## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO SUBMIT REPORTS TO GOV'T ON SME ASSISTANCE

The Macao Chamber of Commerce will soon submit a report to the government with "practical suggestions" to assist local SMEs, Ho disclosed to the press conference.

He was questioned if the government has any additional measures to help local SMEs, who have often complained about difficulties in the market. Underlining that the Policy Address text has extensively elaborated on the topic, Ho admitted that not much additional work can be done.

Nonetheless, the chamber of commerce is working on a report to offer practical and viable suggestions. Suggestions such as operational transformation and development have become cliched, he hinted, but the key is to implement viable policies.

The head of the government admitted that many SMEs have experienced an even tougher environment after the resumption of normal travel. During the pandemic, he said, people were virtually confined in Macau with the minimal travel, which had benefitted local SMEs.

After the resumption, he further explained, many local people – especially those living in the Northern District which is only a checkpoint from mainland China – have chosen to spend their

free time in neighboring Guangdong Province instead of Macau, leaving local SMEs struggling for business.

The official added that the Northern District has no story to tell and not very appealing to tourists.

## HO HOPES LOCAL SMES FOLLOW PAY RISE

The government has proposed that in the coming year, all civil servants will receive a pay rise of 3.3%. When asked if it will further entice young people to be overly focused on working in the government and further drawing workforce from local SMEs, Ho believes it will not, citing the civil servant recruitment cap as the reason.

In addition, he commented that 3.3% pay rise is not much for civil servants, because their salaries have not been increased in the past three years. "It is only about 1.1% each year [if the last three years was taken into account]," he said.

The pay rise should be facilitated because it was proposed by a topical committee and "the government should respect the proposal," he said. He also does not think civil servants are very highly paid. "Some employees in private companies earn much more than civil servants," he commented.

He believes that local SMEs will try to give a 3.3% pay rise so as to retain stability in their workforce.

## NO CURRENT PLAN TO PROGRESS LGBT+ RIGHTS BECAUSE OF TRADITIONS

**B**ECAUSE LGBT+ identities are against Chinese traditions, he will not push for legal progress in the area unless with social consensus, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng said in response to a question from the Times.

The head of the government was asked if the lack of legal protection for LGBT+ communities will impact the city's attractiveness in terms of talent acquisition. To this, Ho said, "We do not have much to say about that, because this is a Chinese society. We need to develop some kind of consensus before we can make any decisions, because [LGBT+ rights are] quite different from our traditional values."

The talent acquisition plan in Macau will not offer protection or rights for same-sex married couples. This includes, for example, in areas such as dependent visas. In contrast, neighboring Hong Kong is willing to offer dependent visas to spouses in both same-sex or opposite-sex married couples.

On the other hand, Macau is the only jurisdiction in Greater China that does not allow transgendered people to change the gender markers on their ID documents. **AL**

projects, as the government needs to be able to respond to market changes. University of Macau has been commissioned once again to evaluate the required number of Economic Housing units.

Economic Housing, he believes, will not have a significant impact on the property market because it has no investment value. At the end of use, the owners can only resell it to the government.

## CE: National security and patriotic education nothing new to Macau



### ANTHONY LAM

**M**ACAU has a solid and established foundation when it comes to education on national security and patriotism, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng told the Policy Address Press Conference yesterday evening.

His presentation at the parliament on next year's policies opened with national security and patriotism. Ho pledged that the two topics will be further reinforced in the coming year. The city will introduce an allegiance-pledging law, among other laws related to national security and patriotism.

When asked to provide more concrete details, Ho

first reiterated that national security "is a very important assignment" for the Macau government, before saying that patriotic education "has a strong foundation in Macau and [did not only start] today."

"Education on these topics has existed in Macau for so long," he emphasized. "I believe the same happens in Portugal, that students will be taught to be patriotic. This is the obligation of the citizens of any country. This is mandatory."

Ho mentioned Portugal because the question was raised by an ethnically Portuguese journalist.

Details of the implementation of relevant curricula will be the task of the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ), Ho added. He also asked the journalist to read the Policy Address text for further details of national security and pa-

triotic education.

His parliamentary presentation also mentioned that "Macau must never become chaotic." When a journalist asked him what he believes is making Macau chaotic, he questioned whether the journalist understood the source of Hong Kong's turmoil in 2019. Ho was referring to the anti-extradition protests in Hong Kong.

"We are conducting early preparation and cannot only work to 'extinguish visible fires,'" he said. "I will not tell you if external infiltration is present or not, but external forces are constantly acting against us [in areas such as] cyberattacks against our government websites."

"External forces do not want One Country Two Systems to thrive, that is for sure," he continued saying. "You may see peace, but I see the constant ringing of alarms."

ANALYSIS

# This year's Biden-Xi summit has better foundation, but risks won't go away

KEN MORITSUGU, BEIJING

**T**HE course of events in the year since the last meeting between Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping offers cautious hope that they will have better luck this time around. But it also shows how easily any agreement they reach could once again veer off course.

The U.S. and Chinese leaders meet today [Macau time] while attending the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco.

They go into the meeting on the back of five months of government-to-government talks that have accelerated in recent weeks and expanded to cultural and business exchanges. In contrast, the November 2022 meeting in Bali, Indonesia, took place after China had suspended talks to express anger over a visit by then-U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan.

"This rests on a stronger foundation than the Bali meeting did," said Jude Blanchette, a China expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.



"Substantively and contextually this meeting is taking place in

a moderately better environment."

But tensions over Taiwan and

flare-ups between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea are a sobering reminder that

an unexpected incident could set back efforts to improve ties, just as an apparently errant Chinese balloon did early this year.

Talk also only goes so far with the two governments fundamentally at odds over technology, defense, trade and Taiwan. Last month, the Biden administration expanded restrictions on technology exports to China.

Recent experience has shown that more frequent communication "does not exclude the continued expansion and escalation of America's preparations for war and high-tech deterrence against China, nor does it exclude China's corresponding countermeasures, protests and preparations," said Shi Yinhong, an international relations professor at Renmin University of China.

Rather than achieving major breakthroughs, the hope is that the leaders will set the tone for meaningful dialogue on a range of issues in the coming months, Blanchette said. "The more probable reality is it's going to be a little bit of that but we have a lot of speed bumps that can trip up the two at any point." **MDT/AP**

RELIGION

# Head of China's state-backed Catholic church begins historic trip to Hong Kong

**T**HE head of the Catholic church in China began a trip to Hong Kong yesterday at the invitation of the city's pope-appointed Roman Catholic cardinal, marking the first official visit by a Beijing bishop in history.

Joseph Li, who was installed by China's state-controlled Catholic church as an archbishop, visited the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in the morning, public broadcaster RTHK said.

Li's five-day tour came after the city's newly installed Cardinal Stephen Chow invited him to visit Hong Kong during a landmark trip to Beijing in April — the first visit to the Chinese capital by the city's bishop in nearly three decades. Ex-

perts said the invitation was a symbolic gesture that could strengthen the fragile relationship between China and the Vatican.

Earlier this month, Chow said his job is to foster better communication between the sides, and underscored the importance of human connections when asked about the significance of Li's visit.

The Hong Kong diocese said Li would meet with Chow and "different diocesan offices to promote exchanges and interactions between the two dioceses." It said this is the first time a Beijing bishop has officially visited Hong Kong, without disclosing further details about Li's trip.

Li took part in an evening prayer service at a

chapel on Monday and exchanged gifts with Chow, according to Sunday Examiner, a publication operated by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong. It added Li would visit educational organizations and the Holy Spirit Seminary.

Beijing and the Vatican severed diplomatic ties in 1951 following the Communist Party's rise to power and the expulsion of foreign priests. Since the break in ties, Catholics in China have been divided between those who belong to an official, state-sanctioned church and those in an underground church loyal to the pope. The Vatican recognizes members of both as Catholics but claims the exclusive right to choose bishops.

The Vatican and China

signed an accord in 2018 over the thorny issue of bishop nominations, but Beijing has violated it. Most recently Pope Francis was forced to accept the unilateral appointment of a new bishop of Shanghai.

Francis in September insisted that the Vatican's relations with China were going well but said work must still be done to show Beijing that the Catholic church isn't beholden to a foreign power. During his trip to Mongolia that month, he also sent a special greeting to China's "noble" people, giving them a special shout-out at the end of a Mass.

The 2018 agreement has been harshly criticized by Hong Kong Cardinal Joseph Zen, who was detained in May last year



on suspicion of colluding with foreign forces under a Beijing-imposed national security law that jailed or silenced many activists. He was released on bail and has yet to

be formally charged, but he and five others were fined in a separate case last November for failing to register a now-defunct fund set up to help arrested protesters. **MDT/AP**

**NORTH KOREA**

# South Korea, US-led UN command warn Kim over its nuclear threat

**KIM TONG-HYUNG,  
SEOUL**

**S**ENIOR defense officials from South Korea, the United States and other nations yesterday warned North Korea over its nuclear ambitions and threats, vowing an unspecified collective response to any war-like aggression by the North toward its rival.

Their joint statement came after a meeting in Seoul involving U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, South Korean Defense Minister Shin Won-sik and officials from 16 other countries under the U.S.-led United Nations Command, which provided combat or medical forces in support of the South during the 1950-53 Korean War.

The meeting came a day after Austin and Shin held annual defense talks where the allies updated a bilateral security agreement with the aim of more effectively countering North Korea's evolving nuclear and missile threats.

In the statement, the defense ministers and other representatives of the U.N. Command's member states strongly condemned North Korea's "unlawful" nuclear and ballistic missile programs which violate multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions and called for Pyongyang to recommit to diplomacy aimed at defusing the nuclear standoff.

The U.N. Command's member states also declared "they will be united upon any renewal of hostilities or armed attack on the Korean Peninsula challenging the principles of the United Nations and the security of (South Korea)."

Shin during a speech at the meeting said the North would face a "strong response from the international community centered on the U.N. Command" if it ever attempts to invade the South again. He also issued a veiled warning against Pyongyang's growing alignment with Russia and China, as North Korean leader Kim Jong Un tries to break out of diplomatic isolation and insert Pyongyang



U.S. Secretary of Defense and South Korean Defense Minister attend a welcome ceremony before the meeting of the South Korea-United Nations Command Member nations in Seoul, yesterday

as part of a united front against Washington.

"If the countries that supported North Korea during the Korean War offer to do so again, they too will face the same punishment as North Korea," Shin said.

The Korean War was triggered by a North Korean sneak attack on the South in June 1950. The North was backed by forces from the newly formed People's Republic of China, which was aided by the then-Soviet Union's air force.

South Korea, the United States and troops from various countries under the direction of the United Nations fought to push back the invasion before the fighting was halted by an armistice in 1953, leaving the Korean Peninsula in a technical state of war. The U.N. Command has since remained in the South to enforce and maintain the armistice.

Before yesterday's meeting, North Korea's Foreign Ministry condemned the event as reflecting a "dangerous scheme to ignite a new war of aggression." The North's state media also criticized the visits by Austin and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who traveled to Seoul last week, calling them "warmongers" bringing a "new war cloud" to Asia.

Animosity between the Koreas has spiked in recent months after Kim ramped up his weapons demonstrations, including events he described as simulated nuclear attacks on the Sou-

th. He also authorized his military to launch preemptive nuclear strikes against enemies if it perceives Pyongyang's top leadership to be under threat.

South Korea has responded by expanding its combined military exercises with the United States as well as trilateral security cooperation with Japan. Seoul has also been seeking stronger public assurances from Washington that the United States would swiftly and decisively use its nuclear weapons to protect the South in case of a North Korean nuclear attack.

In the allies' latest drills, South Korea's military said it deployed warships, patrol aircraft and fighter jets to train with U.S. vessels and aircraft in a joint anti-submarine and counter special-operations exercise in South Korea's eastern seas. The training continues through Thursday.

Austin and Shin on Monday signed a new version of the Tailored Deterrence Strategy agreement, which was revised for the first time in a decade to address the growing threat of the North's nuclear program.

Shin said the new document spells out that the United States would mobilize its full range of military capabilities, including nuclear, to defend the South in the event of a North Korean nuclear attack. He also said the document will provide a template for the allies to strategize how South Korea could assist U.S. nuclear operations in such events

with its conventional capabilities but didn't elaborate further.

While Kim is also trying to strengthen relations with China, Russia has been his primary focus. A flurry of diplomacy between the

countries, highlighted by a September summit between Kim and Russian President Vladimir Putin, has triggered concerns about an arms arrangement in which North Korea provides badly needed mu-

nitions for the Russian war in Ukraine in exchange for Russian technology transfers that would upgrade Kim's military nuclear program.

A Russian delegation led by Alexander Kozlov, the minister of natural resources, arrived at Pyongyang's airport yesterday. While The Associated Press photographed the arrival, the North's state media did not immediately release details of the visit.

In written responses to questions from AP, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said he will discuss the international response to the purported weapons deal between North Korea and Russia during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco this week. He said such military cooperation not only poses a serious threat to the security of Asia and Europe but also undermines the rules-based international order.

Both Pyongyang and Moscow have denied U.S. and South Korean claims that the North has been supplying munitions and military equipment to Russia. **MDT/AP**

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ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

# China, Iran, Arab nations condemn Israeli minister's statement about dropping a nuclear bomb on Gaza

EDITH M. LEDERER,  
UNITED NATIONS

**C**HINA, Iran and a multitude of Arab nations condemned an Israeli minister's statement that a nuclear bomb on the Gaza Strip was an option in the Israel-Hamas war, calling it a threat to the world.

Yesterday's [Macau time] long-planned opening of a United Nations conference whose goal is to establish a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, many ambassadors expressed condemnations and criticisms of comments by Israel's Heritage Minister Amihai Eliyahu, who later called his remarks in a radio interview Sunday "metaphorical." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu quickly disavowed the comments and suspended him from cabinet meetings.

Israel has neither confirmed nor denied its nuclear capability. It is widely believed to possess nuclear weapons, and a former employee at its nuclear reactor served 18 years in Israeli prison for leaking details and pictures of Israel's alleged nuclear arsenal program to a British newspaper in 1986.

China's deputy U.N. ambassador Geng Shuang said Beijing was "shocked," calling the statements "extremely irresponsible and disturbing" and should be universally condemned.

He urged Israeli officials to retract the statement and become a party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, considered the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, as a non-nuclear weapon state "as soon as possible."

Geng said China is ready to join other countries "to inject new impetus" to establishing a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Mideast, saying there is greater urgency because of the situation in the current region.

U.N. disarmament chief Izumi Nakamitsu, who opened the fourth conference, didn't mention Israel. But she said: "Any threat to use nuclear weapons is inadmissible."



apons is inadmissible."

Nakamitsu reiterated the "urgency ... of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction," stressing that "cool heads and diplomatic efforts" must prevail to achieve peace between Israel and the Palestinians, based on a two-state solution.

Oman's U.N. Ambassador Mohamed Al-Hassan, speaking on behalf of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council which includes Saudi Arabia, said the threat to use nuclear weapons in Gaza "reaffirms the extremes and brutality of the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people" and their "disregard for innocent life." He called on the U.N Security Council and the IAEA to take decisive action on the matter.

Lebanon's Charge d'Affaires Hadi Hachem also condemned the Israeli heritage minister's comments, stressing that "this self-acknowledgment of having nuclear weapons and

the threat of using them by its officials, poses a serious threat to both regional and international peace and security."

He urged Israel to stop "such rhetoric or posturing" and join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapon state.

Iran's U.N. Ambassador Amir Iravani told the conference the nuclear threats directed toward Palestinians by high-ranking Israeli officials highlight Israel's "pride" in having these weapons in its hands.

"The secrecy surrounding Israel's nuclear capabilities poses a significant threat to regional stability," he said. "In these critical times, the imperative to establish such a zone in the Middle East has never been more urgent."

Israel did not speak yesterday but Netanyahu has said his country's biggest threat remains the possibility of a nuclear-armed Iran, and it is prepared to prevent that from happening.

Efforts to create a nuclear-

-weapon-free zone date back to the 1960s and include a call by parties to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 1995 and a 1998 General Assembly resolution asking countries to contribute to establishing it. The first U.N. conference aimed at creating a zone was held in November 2019.

Russia's ambassador to the IAEA and other U.N. organizations based in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, told delegates that given the new escalation of violence in the Middle East, a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region "is more pertinent than ever."

But he said Moscow is "extremely uncomfortable" that along with the two other sponsors of the 1995 resolution – the United States and the United Kingdom – the promise to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Mideast has not been met after almost 30 years. And for more than 20 years, "there's been almost no progress whatsoever," he said.

MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 1940 GERMANS BOMB COVENTRY TO DESTRUCTION



The German Luftwaffe has bombed Coventry in a massive raid which lasted more than 10 hours and left much of the city devastated.

Relays of enemy aircraft dropped bombs indiscriminately. One of the many buildings hit included the 14th century cathedral, which was all but destroyed.

Initial reports suggest the number of casualties is about 1,000. Intensive anti-aircraft fire kept the raiders at a great height from which accurate bombing was impossible.

Reports say 4,330 homes were destroyed and three-quarters of the city's factories damaged.

Other targets included two hospitals, two churches, hotels, clubs, cinemas, public-shelters, public swimming baths, a police station and a post office.

According to one report, some 500 enemy aircraft took part in the raid. Wave upon wave of bombers scattered their lethal payloads over the city. The night sky, already lit by a brilliant moon, was further illuminated by flares and incendiary bombs.

The German High Command has issued a communiqué describing the attack on Coventry as a reprisal for the British attack on Munich - the birthplace of the Nazi party.

The message continued: "Particularly heavy was the attack on Coventry, where numerous engine works and aero accessory factories as well as other targets of military importance were attacked with bombs of heaviest calibre, causing extensive damage." [...]

The city's tram system was destroyed. Nearly all gas and water pipes were smashed and people have been advised to boil emergency supplies of water.

The cathedral Provost, the Very Reverend Dick Howard and a party of helpers attempted to deal with 12 incendiary bombs by smothering them with sand. But another shower of incendiaries accompanied by high explosives forced them to give up their efforts.

Mr Howard said: "The cathedral will rise again, will be rebuilt, and it will be as great a pride to future generations as it has been to generations of the past."

Troops have been drafted in to help clear up the streets. Rescuers have also been working to free those who lay buried in the rubble, often in the remains of their own homes.

Home Secretary Herbert Morrison was on the scene within hours of the all-clear. He met the mayor and other local officials and afterwards paid tribute to the work of the National Service units of the city, who had "stood up to their duty magnificently".

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Two days later King George VI visited Coventry to see for himself the devastation caused by the German bombers.

There was a mass burial on 20 November and as further bodies were uncovered from the rubble another mass burial took place the following week. Of the 500 enemy aircraft despatched to Coventry only 449 reached the city. This was by far the heaviest bombing raid on Coventry. Figures for the number killed on the night of 14 November vary between 380 and 554 people killed and several hundred injured.

The destruction of the city hastened rebuilding plans which included Europe's first pedestrian precinct. A further £50m refurbishment project was completed in December 2003.

A new cathedral was built after architect Basil Spence won a competition for its design. It was consecrated on 25 May 1962 and now stands alongside the skeleton of the war-damaged ruin.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## YOUR STARS

**ARIES** Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
You may have difficulties with in-laws or family members. You can find out interesting information if you get a chance to talk to people you respect.

**GEMINI** May. 21-Jun. 21  
Relatives may play an important role in your personal life. Your own small business on the side could ease your financial stress. Your desire for excitement and adventure may be expensive.

**LEO** Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
You can make a big difference to children if you are understanding of the difficulties they are experiencing. Don't let your health suffer because of worry. Talk to someone you trust.

**LIBRA** Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Upgrading at this point is not a bad plan. Be sure to question any detail that you feel could leave you in a precarious position at a later date. You are best not to say too much to colleagues.

**SAGITTARIUS** Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Be honest if you wish to solve the problem. You will feel compelled to do some traveling. You can accomplish a lot if you put some effort into household duties or redecorating plans.

**AQUARIUS** Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Don't expect anything for nothing and you won't be disappointed. Try to calm down emotionally about personal financial matters. Limitation could set in if you've been spending too much.

**TAURUS** Apr. 20-May. 20  
Avoid getting too close to coworkers or employers. This will be a good day for research and for sitting down with some good, informative reading material.

**CANCER** Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Take the time to do something nice for your friends and relatives. You may get some opposition. Personal changes will be to your benefit. You may be looking through rose colored glasses.

**VIRGO** Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Opportunities for romance are present. You can travel for business or pleasure. Don't let your partner get you going. You are best to travel or attend lectures or seminars.

**SCORPIO** Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
Your own small business on the side could ease your financial stress. Erratic behavior may confuse others, and mood swings may result in isolation. You might find group functions tiring.

**CAPRICORN** Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Take care of the needs or responsibilities of elders. Try to keep a low profile. Chronic health problems are likely to surface if you are keeping your problems locked up inside.

**PISCES** Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Do what's best for the people you love most. Some of the best opportunities will crop up if you keep an open mind. You can pick up wonderful buys if you really look hard today.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



## SUDOKU

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

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

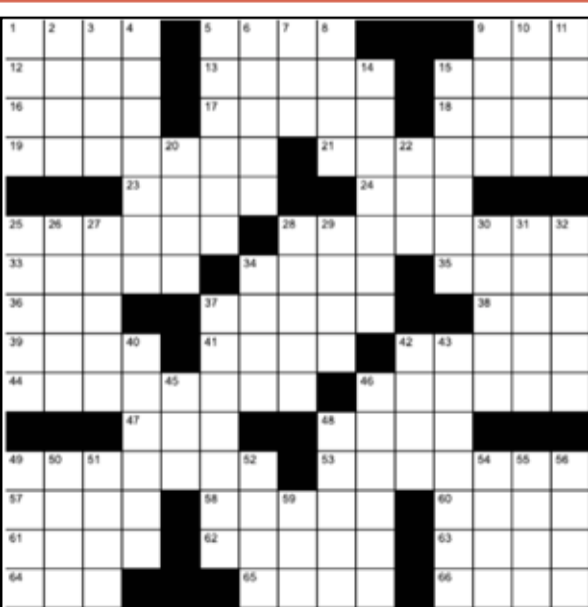
## WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-2	9	overcast
Changchun	-6	3	cloudy
Chengdu	9	16	rain
Chongqing	11	13	rain
Fuzhou	14	20	overcast
Guangzhou	14	23	cloudy
Guiyang	4	10	rain
Haikou	19	25	cloudy
Hangzhou	5	14	cloudy
Harbin	-12	-2	cloudy
Hefei	0	15	cloudy
Nanjing	2	14	overcast
Shanghai	7	16	overcast
Taipei	18	22	rain
Wuhan	2	14	rain
Hong Kong	21	24	overcast
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	-1	3	cloud
Frankfurt	6	12	rain
Paris	7	12	rain
London	5	12	overcast
New York	6	13	overcast

## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Turned right; 5- Sea east of the Caspian; 9- Life support?; 12- \_\_\_ breve; 13- Attach, as a patch; 15- Gammy; 16- Girder type; 17- Silk fabric; 18- Periods; 19- Large ships; 21- Illness; 23- Dies \_\_\_; 24- Sawbuck; 25- Remains of any organism preserved in rock; 28- Educated; 33- Wood strips; 34- Oklahoma Native; 35- Han \_\_\_ was a "Star Wars" character; 36- Skater Midori; 37- Judge, e.g.; 38- Purchase; 39- Tear apart; 41- Monetary unit of South Africa; 42- Celsius, for one; 44- Applying a remedy; 46- Virgin; 47- More than one male; 48- Duce; 49- Wandering; 53- Shah, e.g.; 57- Designer Cassini; 58- Commerce; 60- Salingir girl; 61- River to the Seine; 62- Threads; 63- Celestial body; 64- Yokohama drama; 65- Take \_\_\_ your leader; 66- Just okay;

DOWN 1- Canter, e.g.; 2- Exile isle; 3- Gusto; 4- Blackish; 5- Stellar; 6- Employ again; 7- Hole-punching tool; 8- "Damn Yankees" role; 9- River in central Switzerland; 10- Model married to David Bowie; 11- What's left; 14- Nor's partner; 15- Greek island; 20- Goddess and sister of Ares in Greek mythology; 22- The Lion; 25- Coquet; 26- Western; 27- Rock; 28- Sharp pain; 29- Like some dorms; 30- Like ears; 31- Dodge; 32- Senior member; 34- Algerian seaport; 37- Triad; 40- Injury; 42- Room in a casa; 43- See; 45- Slugger Williams; 46- To a greater extent; 48- Failed to; 49- High time?; 50- Assortment; 51- Engage, as gears; 52- Pull an all-nighter; 54- Ratio words; 55- Latin lesson word; 56- Pianist Peter; 59- 100 square meters;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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

AP PHOTO


**EVEN PICASSO HAD TO PRACTICE, PRACTICE**

# SKETCHBOOKS ON DISPLAY IN NYC SHOW WHIMSY, HUMOR, DETERMINATION

**JOCELYN NOVECK, NEW YORK**

**H**E was a giant of 20th-century art, but that doesn't mean Pablo Picasso needed a big canvas.

Matchbook covers, postcards, restaurant napkins — they all served as makeshift sketchpads for the artist at moments of inspiration.

And so it should perhaps not be surprising that some of Picasso's actual sketchpads were well smaller than, say, a compact disc cover — like the tiny one now on display at Manhattan's Pace Gallery as part of "Picasso: 14 Sketchbooks," a new exhibit marking 50 years since the legendary artist's death.

A stunningly complete self-portrait in pencil peeks out of that little book, with deep and piercing eyes, all 3 ¾ by 5 ½ inches of it. It was 1918 and Picasso, then in his mid-30s, had just married ballet dancer Olga Khokhlova. During a summer in balmy Biarritz, he painted on canvas but also kept this tiny notebook around, filling it with scenes of their villa, the beach and the town, and sketches of upcoming paintings. He also drafted a letter to his wife's doctor and listed addresses of friends.

The exhibit, which opened Friday, is a collaboration with the Madrid foundation run by a grandson of Picasso's, Bernard Ruiz-Picasso. It comes nearly 40 years after the gallery's initial 1986 show of Picasso sketchbooks, called "Je Suis le Cahier (I am the Sketchbook)" after a notation Picasso

made on one of his pads — which subsequently toured the globe.

The show comes at a busy time for Picasso developments — even in New York this very week, where the artist's famed 1932 "Femme à la montre" ("Woman with a Watch"), portraying his muse Marie-Thérèse Walter, sold for \$139.4 million at Sotheby's on Wednesday evening, making it the second most valuable Picasso ever sold at auction.

"He is the greatest artist of the modern period, and in many ways he thought of himself as a sketchbook," said Pace CEO Marc Glimcher, speaking to a crowd at a recent preview, referring to Picasso's efforts to refine his work through copious sketching.

He sounded almost evangelical when he urged the young people present to recognize that "everyone in this room sees the world differently because of Pablo Picasso."

In an interview, Glimcher explained that he feels the world needs to be reminded of Picasso's achievements at a time in our culture where, he said, it seems everything and everyone is being questioned anew. He also noted what he called the icon effect: "When something becomes so iconic it becomes by necessity oversimplified," he said. "People say, 'Oh, Picasso, got it.' We have to make sure they DO get it."

The show, in one large gallery, is organized chronologically, spanning the years 1900-1959, most of Picasso's career (he died in 1973). Each of the 14 sketchbooks

is presented in context with what was going on in his life — including in his romantic relationships, which figured so prominently in his artwork.

Many of the sketches are early versions of famed paintings like "Les Femmes d'Alger" (1907), for which one sketchbook tests out various figure renderings; "Dora Maar in an Armchair" (1939); and his "War and Peace" murals, for a chapel in southern France, that were finished in 1952.

There is also a film of Picasso, shirtless and in shorts, preparing for those giant murals, needing a ladder to reach the top of his canvas — and reminding us of the dimension of some of his masterworks.

But elsewhere in the show, the gems are in miniature size. Some of the images are fanciful, like the

monsters and clownlike figures, some in bright blue and red pencil, from a 1956-1957 sketchbook that resembles a whimsical children's book.

Others feel precise and more technical like the ink drawings in his Juan-les-Pins sketchbooks, from 1924, in which he experiments with shapes of guitars and other objects through patterns of dots and lines, known as "constellations." A long poem also appears in one of the sketchbooks, translated in an accompanying catalog.

With each sketchbook open to only one page, how to uncover the rest? The gallery's solution is to provide subsequent pages in video displays on a loop.

Ruiz-Picasso, the artist's grandson and son of Paul Picasso, said the sketchbooks deserve a fresh look because much has happened

in the past few decades in terms of research into Picasso's work and the context in which it was produced.

"We have better information now about what he was doing," Ruiz-Picasso said in an interview. "It's a kind of archaeological dimension, where we can go more deeply."

Ruiz-Picasso, who was 13 when his grandfather died, remembers children not being entirely welcome in the studio where the artist painted in Mougins, France, where he lived out his later years. But elsewhere in the home, he remembers him always sketching "until the last piece of paper available."

"He was permanently doing something," Ruiz-Picasso said.

The Pace Gallery show runs until December 22. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



**Bernard Ruiz-Picasso, grandson of artist Pablo Picasso, attends the Picasso: 14 Sketchbooks exhibit at Pace Gallery in New York**

FOOTBALL

# Italy faces showdown with Ukraine in Euro 2024 qualifying. Albania and Slovenia set to advance

GRAHAM DUNBAR, GENEVA

**T**HE final rounds of European Championship qualifiers sees defending champion Italy needing a strong finish to clinch a spot at the tournament, while Albania and Slovenia can secure surprising group victories.

Romania is another unlikely team controlling its own Euro 2024 destiny, although Israel still has an outside chance to secure direct advancement from that group.

Slovenia tops Group H ahead of Denmark, but could still be overtaken by an even lower-ranked team — Kazakhstan.

Twelve teams will secure advancement in the next week to the tournament hosted by Germany. Eight teams already qualified last month: France, England, Spain, Belgium, Portugal, Austria,



Ukraine's Mykhailo Mudryk (right)

Scotland and Turkey.

The Netherlands, Hungary and Serbia are best placed to confirm their qualification.

Three more teams will advance from a 12-team playoffs in March.

Among those in danger of not qualifying directly are Croatia, a finalist and semifinalist at the past two World Cups, and Italy, which failed to reach either of those tournaments.

Italy faces a high-stakes game against Ukraine on Monday, likely for second place behind England in Group C.

Ukraine will host Italy in Germany — at the stadium of Bundesliga leader Bayer Leverkusen — because it cannot play international games at home for security reasons during the military invasion by Russia. Russia was banned from Euro 2024 qualifying.

Italy is three points behind Ukraine but with a game in hand, and hosts North Macedonia on Friday — a fixture that could revive bad memories for the Italians. Italy's second straight failure to reach the World Cup came in a home loss to North Macedonia in a playoff semifinal in March 2022.

Albania has ridden its strong home form — three wins and no goals conceded — to currently top a group that includes the Czech Republic and Poland.

Coached by former Brazil, Arsenal and Barcelona left-back Sylvainho, Albania only needs a draw Friday at Moldova to advance. Albania finishes Monday at home to the Faeroe Islands.

Poland, which fired veteran Portugal coach Fernando Santos after just a few months, needs a win at home against the Czechs on Friday to maintain any chance of advancing directly, but captain Robert Lewandowski's team seems headed to the playoffs.

Slovenia has not qualified for a Euro since the 2000 edition, but leads Euro 2020 semifinalist Denmark on goal difference before they meet in Copenhagen on Friday. Even with a loss, Slovenia will need just a point to advance when hosting Kazakhstan on Monday.

Either Wales or Croatia will miss out on qualifying from Group D, where Turkey has already secured one of the top two spots.

Wales hosts Turkey next Tuesday potentially needing a win to advance and send Croatia to the playoffs. Wales holds the head-to-head tiebreaker after beating Croatia 2-1 last month.

Slovakia will join Portugal advancing from Group J by drawing at home to Iceland on Thursday. Third-place Luxembourg should be in the playoffs because of its Nations League results. **MDT/AP**

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**ARTYZEN**  
WILD LIFE WORLD  
EST. 2018

OPINION

World Views

Sylvia Hui, MDT/AP



WHY CAMERON IS A SURPRISING CHOICE AS NEW UK FOREIGN POLICY CHIEF

As political comebacks go, former British Prime Minister David Cameron's return to government as foreign secretary is more dramatic and unexpected than most.

After unsuccessfully campaigning during the 2016 Brexit referendum for Britain to vote to "remain" in the European Union, Cameron resigned immediately and has been out of politics since.

He is not even a lawmaker, and his return to senior government leadership as an unelected member of Parliament's House of Lords, though not unprecedented, is rare and has prompted concerns about accountability.

"I know it's not usual for a prime minister to come back in this way, but I believe in public service," Cameron told reporters Monday.

Monday's major Cabinet reshuffle announced by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak sees Cameron joining a small club of former British premiers who have returned to government in a lesser role. Only about a dozen other former British leaders have done so since the 1700s.

Questions have been raised about Sunak's decision given that Cameron's legacy on Brexit and other political decisions remains deeply contentious.

An Oxford-educated former public relations executive, Cameron led the Conservatives back to power in 2010 after 13 years in opposition. He led Britain for six years, and in the first of his two terms in office his party shared power with the smaller Liberal Democrats in an uneasy coalition.

Cameron was 43 when he entered No. 10 Downing Street as one of the youngest prime ministers in British history, and many observers at the time compared his youthful charisma to that of former Labour premier Tony Blair.

Like Blair he worked to steer his party toward the middle ground, championing what he called "compassionate Conservatism" in a bid to boost the Tories' popularity.

But for many, his harsh austerity economics and his fateful decision to hold the Brexit vote remain the landmarks of his time in power, with the impact of both still reverberating in the U.K.

Under Cameron, Britain's government made deep cuts to social welfare and other public spending in healthcare and education in the aftermath of the 2008 global economic crash.

His promise to hold a referendum on EU membership, a bid to placate rebellious Conservatives and to ward off the right-wing U.K. Independence Party, spelled his downfall. Cameron's "remain" side was defeated, gaining 48% of the vote compared to 52% for the "leave" camp.

The U.K. left the EU in 2020 after a messy divorce, and thorny post-Brexit trade disputes continue to loom over politics in Northern Ireland.

During his tenure, Cameron led closer economic and trade ties between Britain and China, presiding over a so-called "golden era" of Sino-British relations as he drank beer with Chinese President Xi Jinping at an English pub during a state visit.

His stance is now criticized by many in Britain as having been misguided given that Beijing's influence is increasingly seen as a threat to international security.

Sunak's office maintains that Cameron is "an established figure on the world stage" who can bring "a huge amount of experience" to the role.

But many observers see Sunak's move to bring back Cameron as a gamble with uncertain pay-off.

"(Sunak) is trying to look to others who might represent a smoother form of government than he's been able to deliver," Toby Helm, political editor of The Observer, told the BBC. But "it may look like he can't find enough sensible people in his own party," he said.

"Cameron will come across as a competent, appealing foreign secretary to some," he added. "But I think the imagery that surrounds him, the impression that appointment gives, is somewhat desperate." [Abridged]

UK CYBERSECURITY CENTER SAYS 'DEEPPAKES' AND OTHER AI TOOLS POSE A THREAT TO THE NEXT ELECTION

THE BUZZ

Britain's cybersecurity agency said yesterday that artificial intelligence poses a threat to the country's next national election, and cyberattacks by hostile countries and their proxies are proliferating and getting harder to track.

The National Cyber Security Center said "this year has seen the emergence of state-aligned actors as a new cyber threat to critical national infrastructure" such as power, water and internet networks.

The center — part of Britain's cyberespionage agency, GCHQ — said in its annual review that the past year also has seen "the emergence of a new class of cyber adversary in the form of state-aligned

actors, who are often sympathetic to Russia's further invasion of Ukraine and are ideologically, rather than financially, motivated."

Echoing warnings by Britain's MI5 and MI6 intelligence agencies, the center called the rise of China as a tech superpower "an epoch-defining challenge for U.K. security."

"We risk China becoming the predominant power in cyberspace if our efforts to raise resilience and develop our capabilities do not keep pace," it said.

The report also highlighted the threat posed by fast-evolving AI technology to elections, including a U.K. national election due to be held by January 2025.



Put it there! Widodo meets Biden at the White House

BIDEN HAILS 'NEW ERA' OF TIES BETWEEN US AND INDONESIA

CHRIS MEGERIAN & JOSH BOAK, WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Joe Biden celebrated a "new era" in the relationship between the United States and Indonesia as he met with Indonesian President Joko Widodo at the White House yesterday [Macau time], formalizing closer ties with the world's third largest democracy and a heavyweight player in Southeast Asia.

The announcement is a reflection of U.S. commitment to the region before Biden heads to San Francisco for a summit of Asian leaders, where he's scheduled to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Washington and Beijing have been jockeying for influence in Southeast Asia, which is a critical crossroads for trade and a potential flashpoint for global conflict.

"This will mark a new era in relations between the United States and Indonesia across the board," Biden said, sitting next to Widodo.

He added that Widodo, the leader of a tropical archipelago, mentioned that he was cold when he stepped out of his vehicle at the White House. Biden joked, "I told him I could take care of that immediately," and

there was a roaring fire in the Oval Office fireplace.

Biden and Widodo shared an afternoon tea and met with top advisers as they began their new strategic partnership. Also on the agenda was expanding the trade of critical minerals like nickel, which can be used to produce electric vehicle batteries. Indonesia is the world's largest producer of nickel.

Widodo described the U.S. as one of Indonesia's most important partners, and he said they must give "real meaning" to their strengthened relationship.

But there were also signs of friction over the war between Israel and Hamas. Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim country, and Widodo arrived in Washington after attending a summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where leaders criticized the Israeli bombardment and invasion of Gaza.

Widodo urged the U.S. "to do more to stop the atrocities in Gaza and have a ceasefire for the sake of humanity."

Biden has resisted calls for a ceasefire, although he's asked Israel to show more restraint in its military operations and called for pauses in the fighting that would allow the delivery

of humanitarian aid or the release of hostages held by Hamas.

The White House has cultivated ties with Indonesia in recent years. Biden attended the Group of 20 summit in Bali last year, and Vice President Kamala Harris attended a regional summit in Jakarta in September.

Before visiting the White House, Widodo stopped at Georgetown University, which is planning a new program in Indonesia. Widodo has described improving educational opportunities as critical for his country's development.

He said a closer relationship with the U.S. could pay dividends because "the United States is a big country, and its influence to any other country is also very big."

But he also was careful to emphasize Indonesia's neutrality at a time of tension between Washington and Beijing.

"Indonesia is always open to cooperate with any country, and not to take the side of any power, except to take the side of peace and humanity," he said.

Widodo also raised alarms about the death toll in Gaza, mentioning estimates that a child is killed every 10 minutes. MDT/AP



Russian President Vladimir Putin has approved changes to the law that governs presidential elections putting new restrictions on media coverage, local news agencies reported yesterday. Under the amendments that he approved, only journalists contractually employed by registered media outlets will be allowed to cover election commission meetings, potentially barring freelancers and independent journalists.

A Moscow court yesterday fined Google for failing to store personal data on its Russian users, the latest in a series of fines on the U.S. tech giant amid tensions between the Kremlin and the West over the fighting in Ukraine. A magistrate at Moscow's Tagansky district court fined Google 15 million rubles (about \$164,200) after the company repeatedly refused to store personal data on Russian citizens inside the country.

EU nations acknowledged yesterday that they risk failing to provide Ukraine with the ammunition they pledged to help Kyiv stave off the Russian invasion and win back its territory. Early this year, EU leaders promised to provide 1 million rounds of ammunition to Ukraine's front line by spring next year in what would have amounted to a serious ramp-up of production. But the 27-nation bloc, for over half a century steeped in a "peace, not war" message and sheltering under a U.S. military umbrella, is finding it tough to come up with the goods.



A flagship law intended to push European companies toward net zero faces being seriously weakened by member states, a confidential document passed to The Associated Press reveals, with firms seemingly no longer forced to implement Paris Agreement goals. The Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive was designed to make companies eliminate environmental and human rights violations throughout all areas of their business. The legislation was meant to ensure firms' operations were aligned with a global rise in temperatures of no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius.