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AP PHOTO



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised salvo launches of the country's "super-large" multiple rocket launchers that simulated a nuclear counterattack against enemy targets, state media said yesterday. The report by North's official Korean Central News Agency came a day after the South Korean and Japanese militaries detected the North firing what they suspected were multiple short-range ballistic missiles from a region near Pyongyang, toward its eastern seas.

AP PHOTO



Australia Tech billionaire Elon Musk accused Australia of censorship after an Australian judge ruled that his social media platform X must block users worldwide from accessing video of a bishop being stabbed in a Sydney church. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese responded yesterday by describing Musk as an "arrogant billionaire" who considered himself above the law and was out of touch with the public.

AP PHOTO



India's main opposition party accused Narendra Modi of using hate speech after he called Muslims "infiltrators" — some of his most incendiary rhetoric to date about the minority faith in a campaign rally days after the country began its weeklong election. At the rally on Sunday in Rajasthan, Modi said that when the Congress party was in government, "they said Muslims have the first right over the country's resources." If it returns to power, the party "will gather all your wealth and distribute it among those who have more children."

UPGRADE



Huawei unveils Wi-Fi 7 products in bid to bolster MSAR's industrial development

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CULTURE

FUND GRANTS MOP197 MILLION FOR PROJECTS

FORUM MACAU

CONFERENCE OF ENTREPRENEURS EXPLORES BILATERAL OPPORTUNITIES

SHOPPING CARNIVAL TO KICK OFF AT FISHERMAN'S WHARF

The three-day Fisherman's Wharf Shopping and Consumption Carnival begins on Friday, featuring over 150 merchants from Hong Kong, overseas and Macau. Organizers said 35 percent of the 250 booths showcase products from outside Macau with 12 themed areas showcasing special products and promotions. "Exhibitors are enthusiastic about Macau's economic future," organizers said in a statement. Admission to the exhibition is free and features 12 product zones including various specials and promotions. The carnival runs through Sunday as part of efforts to boost Macau's economy.

EAST PARKING LOT AT HZMB TO RESUME TOLLING

The East Public Parking Lot of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Border Inspection Building will resume tolling from midnight on May 1 to further promote rational use of public parking spaces, according to authorities. The flat fee for light vehicles will be MOP10 per hour or fraction thereof, as all vehicles will now be charged by time regardless of period. Reservation-free entry will be maintained, but when parking spaces drop below 600, drivers will need to reserve a spot online before entering. The maximum permitted parking period is eight consecutive days, though extensions may be granted with proper justification.

LOCAL ARTIST HOLDS EXHIBITION FOR LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

"Above Zobeide, Exhibition from Macao, China", the Collateral Event of the 60th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, was recently inaugurated in Venice, Italy. Curated by Chang Chan, the exhibition showcases large-scale art installations and digital prints created by the young Macau artist Wong Weng Cheong, presenting a fictional world while conveying concerns about the development of human civilization. The exhibition will be ongoing until Nov. 24.

POP MART REVENUES IN MACAU GROW UP TO 250%

Pop Mart, the company known for selling collectable 'designer' toys in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and overseas, continued their previous high growth trend, with revenue increasing by 245-250% year-on-year. In its latest business situation for the first quarter of 2024, the group announced that the company's revenue increased by 40-45% year-on-year in the first quarter, of which mainland China's revenue increased by 20-25% year-on-year, and omnichannel achieved year-on-year growth.

FORUM MACAU

'CONFERENCE OF ENTREPRENEURS' EXPLORES BILATERAL OPPORTUNITIES

RENATO MARQUES

THE 6th Ministerial Conference of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries - Macau (Forum Macau) came to a close yesterday with the "Conference of Entrepreneurs."

This Conference, held on the sidelines of the main Ministerial Conference aimed at exploring different opportunities for bilateral relations and business between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries (PLP).

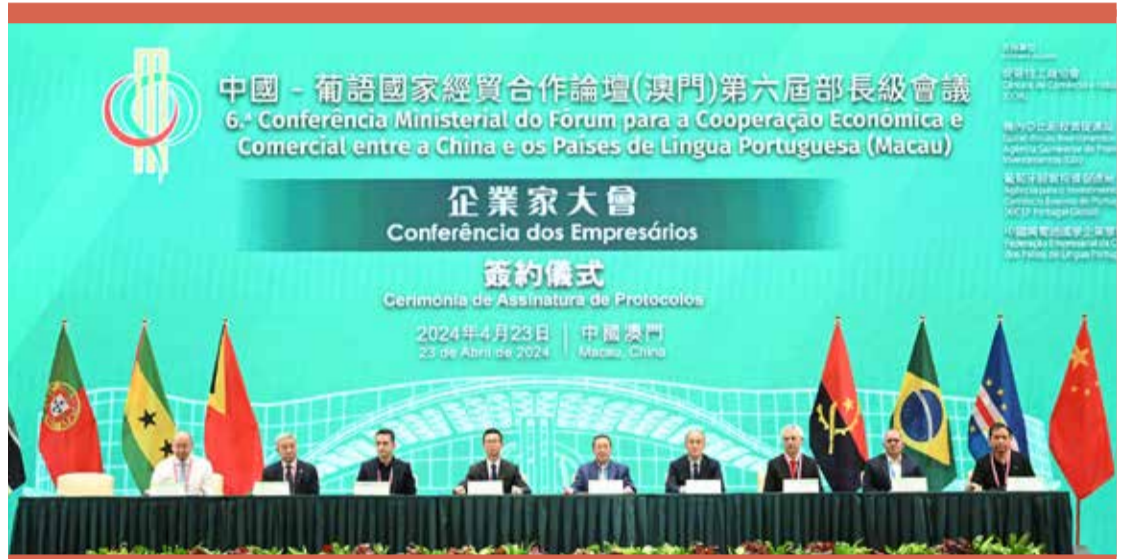
Themed "Promoting the New Trends of Digital Transformation and Sharing the New Opportunities Presented by Green Development," the conference gathered several local guests among leaders and representatives from governments, trade promotion organizations, chambers of commerce, and enterprises from mainland, the nine PLP, as well as from the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

As the theme suggests, the conference was mostly discussions and presentations to assist companies in taking opportunities in both digital transformation and green development.

At the conference, and after the opening speeches from the Vice Minister of Commerce of China, Guo Tingting, and the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, there was a signing ceremony several protocols of cooperation, followed by the first of two seminars.

The first seminar, titled "Acceleration of Digital Transformation, Providing New Dynamics to the Development of Industries," was moderated by Xu Jinli, Representative of the Presidency of the Business Federation of China and PLP and Head of the Bilateral Cooperation Department of the China International Chamber of Commerce. This seminar involved debates about the integration of digital technology in traditional industries.

The second seminar, titled



"Promoting the Green Economy for a Future Sustainable Development," was moderated by the deputy secretary-general of the Permanent Secretariat of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and PLP - Macau, Xie Ying, and addressed the topics of green economy and sustainable development.

The session closed with business matchmaking sessions aimed at helping companies from various regions explore opportunities such as the "1+4" industries and promote cooperation between Chinese and PLP enterprises with a focus on bringing opportunities for Macau's economy in the bid for its diversification.

The "Conference of Entrepreneurs" was jointly organized by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) and the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), and was co-organized by the Permanent Secretariat of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and PLP. Macau was also supported by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Angola (CCIA), the Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (ApexBrasil), the Cape Verde TradeInvest, the Guinea Investment Promotion Agency, the Chamber of Commerce of Equatorial Guinea, the Mozambique Investment and Export Promotion Agency (APIEX), the Portuguese

Trade and Investment Agency (AICEP), the Commerce and Investment Promotion Agency (APCI) of São Tomé, the TradeInvest Timor-Leste, and the China-PLP Federation of Entrepreneurs. The conference was held at the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Commercial and Trade Service Platform Complex.

GUO TINGTING INVITES COMPANIES TO USE 'MACAU'S PLATFORM'

In her opening speech at the Conference of Entrepreneurs, the Vice Minister of Commerce of China, Guo Tingting, called on the companies from the PLP to use Macau as a platform to reach the mainland markets, whilst also reinforcing an invitation made the day before by the vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Li Hongzhong, that invited the same companies to partake in the major exhibitions and fairs in China.

"Macau has become an invaluable bridge linking China to the PLP. We will continue to support Macau in playing its role well as a focal point between China and the PLP. Therefore, we invite companies from all parties to increase their participation in the Chinese market. China is willing, together with the participating countries, to improve the construction of the Macau platform, and also to improve the business envi-

ronment of the Chinese market to welcome more investments from the PLP," she said, adding, "We will actively encourage the PLP companies to participate in exhibitions and conferences of relevance, such as the International Exhibition of Importation of China, among others, to promote the participation of the PLP companies in the Chinese market."

LEI WAI NONG POINTED THE WAY TO HENGQIN

The Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong pointed out the existing opportunities in the cooperation zone in Hengqin, calling on PLP companies to join in new developments expected in this area.

"Macau's strategy of adequate economic diversification will also provide more opportunities for Chinese and Lusophone companies. The new model of synergistic development will be even more prominent. We welcome local companies as well as those from the PLP to join the development and cooperation in Macau and Hengqin," he said, adding, "We hope that the elites of both parties will explore new ways of synergistic cooperation to promote the continuous cultivation and modernization of supply and industrial chains through technological innovation, contributing to the development of high-quality economic and commercial cooperation."

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TECH

Huawei unveils Wi-Fi 7 products in bid to bolster SAR's industrial development

STAFF REPORTER

HUAWEI Technologies yesterday unveiled 13 new Wi-Fi 7 products in Macau with a goal to upgrade Macau's network infrastructure and support diversified industries.

China's tech giant launched products with enhanced features such as increased bandwidth, lower latency, stronger frequency, and improved security, aiming to upgrade Macau's Wi-Fi network and support diversified industrial growth.

During the Wi-Fi 7 product launched yesterday, Huawei's vice president of Data Communication Product Line, Steven Zhao emphasized the company's strategic investments in Macau, which have "contributed to the region's social development and technological progress."

"This year marks the advent of Wi-Fi 7, and Huawei has emerged as an industry leader, launching 13 Wi-Fi 7 products and establishing a robust Wi-Fi network," said Zhao.

Huawei's investment in wire-



Steven Zhao

less research and development has propelled advancements in Wi-Fi technology. The company dedicates over 20% of its annual research funding and has more than 1,000 wireless experts and 80 wireless labs globally.

"We owe our success in the enterprise wireless field to the support and opportunities provided by Macau," stated Zhao. "We have leveraged wireless technology from operators to facilitate rapid development in enterprise wireless."

"In terms of standard patents, Huawei has been at the fo-

refront during the Wi-Fi 5 and Wi-Fi 6 eras," the executive said. "In the Wi-Fi 7 era, we have become the world's first standard patent holder in wireless technology."

He said that Huawei recognizes the significance of information and communication technology infrastructure in facilitating Macau's digital transformation across various sectors. "We aim to build a robust ICT information platform that supports Macau's comprehensive industrial digital upgrade."

In addition to tourism, en-

tertainment, culture, technological development, digital finance, enterprise office, Zhao hopes the company will build a solid ICT information platform to achieve a comprehensive industrial digital upgrade in Macau.

"I understand that Macau's 1+4 industrial diversified development plan is also focused on industrial innovation. [This] provides more development space for modern finance, technological development, high-end manufacturing and export and trade," he added.

Meanwhile, general manager of Huawei Macau Jackie Li explained that the company has prioritized hiring local talent, with 70% localization. Initiatives like the annual ICT competition foster youth participation in technology.

Huawei also actively participates in social initiatives such as the annual ICT competition, collaborating with the Labor Bureau (DSAL), Macau Science Museum, and Macau Productivity and Technology Transfer Center to nurture young talent.

SSM RECORDS 57 MORE SCARLET FEVER CASES IN MARCH

The Health Bureau (SSM) reported a total of 1,963 cases of diseases that required declaration in March. Among these cases, there was a significant increase of 57% in scarlet fever infections compared to the previous month when there was a total of 239 cases. There were 121 cases of enterovirus infections, being a month-on-month increase of 23.5%. Furthermore, March also saw 22 tuberculosis cases, four asymptomatic HIV cases, two pertussis cases, one AIDS case, and one Legionnaires' disease case recorded. These numbers, according to the SSM, highlight the importance of monitoring and addressing various diseases to ensure public health and safety.

ORCHESTRA TO PERFORM CLASSICS FROM ALADDIN

Disney's Aladdin in Concert Live to Film, part of the Macao Orchestra Concert Season, will be held June 1 and June 2 at the MGM Theater, MGM Cotai. The Macao Orchestra will perform the award-winning music from Disney's classic Aladdin accompanied by the animated film displayed on the indoor LED screen at the MGM Theater. Tickets will be available from April 17 at the Macau Ticketing Network. Under the baton of Tony Cheng-Te Ye, the orchestra will present an audio-visual feast that combines animation, symphonic music and singing.

46% OF EMPLOYERS YET TO PAY FSS CONTRIBUTIONS

About 12,300 employers have not yet paid Social Security System's obligatory system contributions for their employees for the first quarter of 2024, accounting for about 46% of the total employers who must pay contributions. The Social Security Fund (FSS) reminds the public that employers are required to pay a late payment interest and penalties for late payment, and a failure to pay employment fee for non-resident workers on time may lead to a revoking of the employment permit.

LUÍS FIGO TO PLAY FOOTBALL MATCH MAY 19 IN MACAU

A friendly match will be held in Macau featuring a team of former Portuguese international footballers, including players like Luís Figo, who won the Ballon d'Or in 2000, and Ricardo Quaresma, the European champion in 2016. Alongside Figo and Quaresma, other notable players such as Pauleta, Nuno Gomes, Dimas, Maniche, Bosingwa, Tiago, and Hélder Postiga will also participate in the match. The event organizers have announced that the 5x5 football match will be played against the Chinese team GBA Flying Dragon.

DSEDJ introduces system to monitor instances of students remaining unaccompanied

STAFF REPORTER

THE government is planning to enhance its campus crisis management plan where the system will assess students' situations and offer counseling services to them when needed, the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) has announced.

This comes after a case of an unattended student who remained at a fast-food restaurant overnight.

After a concerning social media post surfaced showing a junior high school student alone at a fast-food restaurant late at night, authorities quickly mobilized to address the situation and ensure the

student's wellbeing.

According to Wong Ka Ki, the DSEDJ deputy director, the relevant student was promptly followed up by the school and student counselors. Wong emphasized that the authorities have a robust campus crisis management mechanism in place and, upon learning of the incident, they immediately launched a campus liaison network with relevant departments to understand the situation and provide counseling services as needed.

The official said that the mechanism ensures that the authorities are aware of such incidents and can provide counseling services and neces-

sary follow-up for the students involved.

Wong clarified that, contrary to earlier reports, the student had not been missing from the residential care home for several days. Rather, the student only failed to return to the home on the day in question. Wong stated that, according to the established protocols, the home notifies the security police and other departments if a resident does not return within a certain period.

The Judiciary Police, who initially investigated the case, has reiterated that their role is to investigate and prevent criminal cases. They will only intervene if the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) and the DSEDJ suspect any



criminal offenses.

The IAS, which has been providing temporary care, counseling, and other services to the student, has urged the student's parents to fulfill their responsibilities. However, the bureau did not specify further mea-

sures or whether the care home would be investigated.

Authorities have assured the public that student safety is their top priority and that the coordination and handling of this case complied with the current procedures in place.

FDC GRANTED MOP197 MILLION IN 2023 PROJECTS

LYNZY VALLES

THE Cultural Development Fund (FDC) initiated a total of 11 funding plans and approved a total of 1,762 activities and projects in 2023. The overall amount granted for these projects amounted to MOP197 million.

The FDC has issued a report on the funding applications and monitoring work carried out in 2023 in the areas of culture and art, cultural industries, and cultural heritage protection.

Within the cultural industry sector, 26 projects have been successfully completed, with a total investment of MOP108 million.

From these investments, 34% consisted of fund subsidies, resulting in the creation of 234 job opportunities. Among these projects, four managed to generate profits, while 22 experienced losses. The FDC has reported that, in terms of project outcomes, some of the completed projects were able to sell over 30,000 units of their own branded clothing during the two-year funding period, successfully entering the Thai market. Additionally, certain projects organized exhibitions at the Macau Science Center, attracting approximately 300,000 visitors.

In the realm of culture and art, the FDC has followed up on 585 completed cultural activities and projects. Furthermore, a total of 2,825 cultural activities were organized, serving over 31,000 individuals and reaching an audience of 548,000 people, according to its data.

GAMING

MORGAN STANLEY CUTS FORECAST FOR SANDS CHINA

STAFF REPORTER

INVESTMENT bank Morgan Stanley has issued a research report lowering its forecast for Sands China Ltd., citing a decline in the casino operator's mass market share and lower actual share in the first quarter of 2024.

The report dropped the gaming operator's estimated earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization for fiscal year 2024 by 8%, which is 10% below the market consensus. Morgan Stanley also forecasted earnings per share would be 14% lower for the period.

In the report, analysts said Sands China's actual mass market revenue share declined in the first quarter of 2024. Morgan Stanley cut its dividend per share forecast for fiscal year 2024 to HKD0.50, representing a 2.6% yield.

Additionally, Morgan Stanley reduced its fiscal year 2025 EBITDA forecast by 3%, which is 5% below market consensus, and dropped its EPS forecast by 4% for that year. However, the broker revised upward its fiscal year 2025 dividend per share (DPS) forecast to HKD1, or a 5.3% yield.

"Sands would prioritize capital expenditure and the USD180 million bond due in August 2025," the broker said in the report.

Morgan Stanley also lowered its target price on Sands China from HKD23.5 to HKD21, maintaining an Equal-weight rating. The broker believes the resumption of dividend payments in fiscal years 2025 and 2026 would be a key long-term positive for the stock, offering dividend yields of 5% and 11% respectively.

GOV'T PLANS TO OFFER COMPETITIVE SALARY TO EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS TO RETAIN TALENT

STAFF REPORTER

MACAU is currently facing a shortage of professionals in various fields, leading the government to plan ahead to retain local graduates.

The government has already recognized the exceptional students studying majors relevant to industries in Macau with approximately a dozen such majors identified. These majors primarily focus on science, engineering, and technology, which have historically had limited enrollment in Macau.

The hope is that the government can convince these students stay and develop their careers in Macau through this plan.

Speaking on the sidelines of an event, Elsie Ao Ieong, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture and Secretary of the Talents Development Committee, said, "Currently, Macau is experiencing a shortage of professionals in various fields, including computer science, computer applications, networks, specific areas in the health industry, and modern finance."



"To address this, the plan aims to keep academically gifted students in Macau by offering slightly higher salaries than those offered to local students and encouraging them to seek employment locally," she added.

The plan also aims to attract international students from top-ranked departments, similar to the approach taken in Hong Kong, where students were taken from programs ranked among the top 100 globally. The plan primarily focuses on outstanding candidates,

of which there are, currently, approximately 400, some of whom are still undergoing review.

While the range of the plan currently focuses specifically on students employed in Macau, the Secretary did hint at the possibility of students employed in Hengqin to be part of this plan in the future.

GOV'T EXPLORES POTENTIAL AREA FOR OUTDOOR CONCERT

The government is currently exploring potential

locations in Macau for the construction of a temporary outdoor performance venue capable of accommodating 50,000 individuals. Ao Ieong said that the government's preference was to establish the venue in Taipa and there are ongoing efforts to prepare the proposed site and assess its suitability.

Once confirmed, an official announcement will be made promptly. The objective is to host concerts in the first quarter of the upcoming year.

SPORTS

Melco to sponsor World School Basketball Championships

STAFF REPORTER

Melco Resorts and Entertainment will be the sponsor for the 2024 World School Basketball Championships that will be held in Macau from June 23 to July 3.

The championship is designed to promote exchange between young people from all over the world and enhance their physical fitness and sense of competition. It has, over the years, become one of the most important sporting



events for junior high school students in the world.

"Young people are

the future of society. This event will allow local elite teams to communicate and

learn during the competition. At the same time, it will help improve our local eco-

nomy and students understand the culture of different countries and regions, which can help to promote the international vision of young people in Macau," said Kong Chi Meng, director of the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSED), yesterday on the sidelines of a sponsorship signing ceremony.

"Additionally, as part of the government's plan for economic and cultural diversity development, we want to strengthen cooperation with the resorts in Macau to promote the co-development of both the comprehensive tourism leisure industry and the sports industry," the official added.

Sands China to bring aspiring filmmakers to the global stage through camp

SANDS China Ltd. is supporting a groundbreaking initiative aimed at nurturing and empowering the next generation of Asian filmmakers – the **International Film Camp (IFC)**. The camp took place April 9-13 at Sands China's integrated resorts, and was organised by the Asian Film Awards Academy with the patronage of the Hong Kong Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Macao SAR Government, and under the sponsorship of Create Hong Kong, the Film Development Fund, and Sands China Ltd.

IFC was yet another initiative in response to the government's calls to diversify the economy and boost local talents by merging them with global talents.

It invited world-class film professionals as mentors to provide specialised guidance to the young generation aspiring to develop careers in the film industry, focusing on film creativity and commercial aspects. It was met with tremendous interest, with 550 applications submitted from all over Asia.

The aspirants met their mentors and film professionals, and participated in discussion panels and masterclasses covering a range of topics. They also met with filmmaking pioneers who shared advice with them on how to take their productions to an international level.

Through artistic exchanges, the camp aimed to enrich the participants' creative potential, enhance their industry knowledge, and strengthen both their practical skills and industry connections, hence laying a solid foundation for their future endeavours in the world of cinema.

Dr. Wilfred Wong, chairman of Asian Film Awards Ceremony, said, "We have been encouraged by the response to this first film camp, and that has demonstrated that there are many young talents out there who want to be part of the next generation of Asian filmmakers."

Grant Chum, chief executive officer and executive director of Sands China Ltd., expressed his enthusiasm for the event and said, "The highly-anticipated inaugural International Film Camp is the result of an unprecedented collaboration between Hong Kong and Macau, marking a significant milestone for the development of the Macau film industry. Exceptional film talent from various Asian regions converged in the city, providing guidance and inspiration for the fu-



ture leaders of the film industry."

The mentorship team and guest speakers of the IFC included distinguished members such as renowned film festival director, producer, and writer Roger Garcia, acclaimed Hong Kong director and screenwriter Mabel Cheung, famous Singaporean director and screenwriter Anthony Chen, well-known Malaysia director Tan Chui Mui, famous Hong Kong producer Ding Yui Shan, as well as renowned film editor, veteran producer and screenwriter Liao Ching-sung, Taiwan senior film producer Yeh Jufeng, among others. Also, representatives from Salon Films and Shaw Studios also shared insights on films post production and distribution.

Eight project winners were selected to receive guidance from professional mentors throughout their production process and were awarded a sponsorship of HKD300,000 each to complete the filming of their short films on the theme "My Hometown."

"So, I think this is important because there are many film workshops where you go and you talk. You exchange ideas, you meet people, but then after that, what happens?" asked **Roger Garcia**.

"They fall down at that stage. And we don't want young filmmakers to fall down at that stage. I want them to go on off and make a movie.... So, what we are trying to do here is really help at least 50% of the campers to be able to realize their dream. I think that's very important," he said.

The eight completed projects will be showcased during the annual Asian Film Festival, providing them with increased exposure and development opportu-

nities in the global film industry.

For the veteran, there are a lot of film labs and film workshops that do this around the world, and in Asia as well but this IFC differs from others.

"Ours is really different, because at the end of the five days, the young filmmakers have to pitch

their project to a small panel, and that panel of the 16 filmmakers who are here, the panel will choose eight of them, and give each of them HK300,000 to go off and make a short film. Once they've finished their films, we'll help them with setting up screenings and distribution," he said.

At the closing ceremony and awards presentation, a panel discussion titled "The Future of Filmmaking" was held, where film directors Jack Ng, Norrie Wong and Sunny Chan shared their recent experiences and insights on creating remarkable works in a fiercely competitive environment.

WHAT THE WINNERS SAY:



The economy is not really good right now and we are new directors, so this funding is a significant help to us and we're lucky to have been chosen. This camp has allowed us to focus on our projects and not be distracted by budget constraints. As an aspiring director, people will forget you if you don't continue to make films, so this camp has really played a significant part for me as an aspiring director.

Lee Chak Hang of Hong Kong for "Sweet, Sour and Bitter"



During the camp, I have made friends, created connections. I cannot be more grateful that I got to meet all these great people. Because we are young, we are still young filmmakers, and it is exciting to see that we are all learning and struggling. But it's good to know that you have peers and you have people that are going through the same journey as you.

Galilee Ma of Macau for "Pop It"

THE WINNING DIRECTORS AND THEIR FILM PROJECT TITLES ARE

Director	Country / Region	Film Project
Song Dongxu	Mainland China	Ride Your Horse
Lee Chak Hang	Hong Kong, China	Sweet, Sour and Bitter
Galilee Ma	Macau, China	Pop It
Lkhagvadulam Purev-ochir	Mongolia	A South Facing Window
Chen Yun	Mainland China	Catching Alternative
To Chun Him	Hong Kong, China	Once Upon A Time There Was A Mountain
Lan Tian	Mainland China	One Home To Another
Ines Sothea	Cambodia	Homecoming Waves

AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Tensions between Beijing and Washington are the biggest worry for US companies in China

ELAINE KURTENBACH

SIMMERING tensions between Beijing and Washington remain the top worry for American companies operating in China, according to a report by the American Chamber of Commerce in China released yesterday.

The survey of U.S. companies said inconsistent and unclear policies and enforcement, rising labor costs and data security issues were other top concerns. It also said that, despite the insistence of Chinese leaders that Beijing welcomes foreign businesses, many still are hindered from free competition.

"The Chinese government has stated that it encourages foreign direct investment, but many of our members continue to encounter barriers to investment and operations including policies that discriminate against them and public relations campaigns that create suspicion of foreigners," the report said.

The report welcomed an improvement in relations in 2023 that was capped by summit meetings of Chinese leader Xi Jinping and President Joe Biden, but said the U.S. presidential election in November was "looming large" over the future business environment.

It's unclear what ramifications

AP PHOTO



a victory for either Biden or former President Donald Trump might have for relations. But Trump could deepen a trade war he started during his first term. His tough rhetoric on China and isolationist approach to foreign policy could ramp up uncertainties.

More recently, U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen visited Beijing, where she raised concerns that potential overcapacity in Chinese industries — such as electric vehicles, steel making and solar panels — might crowd out U.S. and other foreign manufacturers.

The fact that such visits are taking place shows "that on difficult issues, the two governments

are talking and they're able to do so in a way that's not acrimonious. So that was very positive," said the chamber's chair, Sean Stein.

The Chamber sees high-level exchanges and communication between the two sides as a top priority, the report said.

American businesses are frustrated by slow progress on promises to level the playing field between foreign and Chinese companies, the report said. Meanwhile, heightened U.S. export controls and other restrictions have raised the costs of doing business.

"So the end result is companies are getting squeezed between the two governments, and on the re-

gulatory front, what we're seeing is it's not getting easier to do business in China; it's getting harder," Stein said.

American companies operating in China saw improved profits last year, though slightly less than half expect to be profitable in 2024.

Still, many members of the American Chamber said they were more optimistic about growth of China's own economy.

Among its many recommendations the report urged China to create and implement "transparent and practical economic policies which treat domestic and foreign entities equally."

Referring to concerns that bu-

siness people are at risk of being caught up in accusations they have violated China's national security, it also appealed to China's leaders to clarify and narrow the scope of the country's anti-espionage law to prevent it from interfering with normal business operations.

Such requests follow repeated raids on foreign companies that Chinese authorities say were conducted on national security grounds. Raids on consulting companies also tend to hinder foreign companies from assessing the business environment, leaving less willing to invest, said Lester Ross, a co-chair of the chamber's policy committee.

The report also had recommendations for the U.S. side, including providing clear visa policies for Chinese students to show they will be welcomed. Similarly, American students should be encouraged to study in China, the report said.

It also called on U.S. officials to avoid resorting to unilateral controls that may be ineffective and fail to meet goals for national security and foreign policy. Washington should engage with Chinese companies to allow them to address export control concerns such as military use of civilian technologies before the companies are subjected to sanctions, it said.

The 617-page bilingual report provided hundreds of recommendations spanning a wide variety of industries, from sports and online streaming to occupational safety issues and rural traffic management.

American companies generally are not planning to move supply chains out of China given how large and important it is as a market of 1.4 billion people. But their willingness to increase investments there and make it their strategic focus has been decreasing as its advantages diminish, the report said. **MDT/AP**

GERMANY ARRESTS ANOTHER SUSPECT

Beijing deems accusations of spying as 'hyping up' to smear and suppress China

CHINESE Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said yesterday that "the recent reports in Europe about Chinese spying are all hyping up with an aim to smear and suppress China."

Beijing urges "the relevant parties to stop spreading disinformation about China's spy threat and stop political manipulation and malicious smears against China," he added.

Yesterday, a man who works for a German far-right lawmaker in the European Parliament has been arrested on suspicion of spying for China, authorities said. The detention came less than 24 hours after three people were arrested for spying for China in a separate German case.

The suspect was arrested Monday in the eastern German city of Dresden, federal prosecutors said in a state-

ment. They said that he has worked for a German lawmaker in the European Union's legislature since 2019.

The German national is accused of working for a Chinese intelligence service and of repeatedly passing on information on negotiations and decisions in the European Parliament in January. Prosecutors allege that he also snooped on Chinese dissidents in Germany.

Prosecutors didn't

identify the lawmaker for whom he works, but Maximilian Krah of the far-right Alternative for Germany, who is his party's top candidate in the European Parliament election in early June, said in a statement that he found out about the arrest of employee Jian Guo from the press yesterday.

"I do not have further information," Krah said. He added that "spying activity for a foreign

state is a serious allegation" which, if proven, would lead to the employee's immediate dismissal.

German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said the spying allegations were "extremely serious."

"If it is confirmed that there was spying for Chinese intelligence from inside the European Parliament, then that is an attack from inside on European democracy," Faeser said in

a statement.

"Anyone who employs such a staff member also carries responsibility," she added. "This case must be cleared up precisely. ... All the connections and background must be illuminated."

News of the arrest came a day after three Germans suspected of spying for China and arranging to transfer information on technology with potential military uses were arrested in a separate case.

Also on Monday, British prosecutors said a former researcher working in the U.K. Parliament and another man were charged with spying for China.

MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



A large drone carrying fertilizer flies over Vo Van Van's rice fields in Long An province in southern Vietnam's Mekong Delta

VIETNAM

Farmers reduce methane emissions by changing how they grow rice

ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL,
LONG AN

THERE is one thing that distinguishes 60-year-old Vo Van Van's rice fields from a mosaic of thousands of other emerald fields across Long An province in southern Vietnam's Mekong Delta: It isn't entirely flooded.

That and the giant drone, its wingspan similar to that of an eagle, chuffing high above as it rains organic fertilizer onto the knee-high rice seedlings billowing below.

Using less water and using a drone to fertilize are new techniques that Van is trying and Vietnam hopes will help solve a paradox at the heart of growing rice: The finicky crop isn't just vulnerable to climate change but also contributes uniquely to it.

Rice must be grown separately from other crops and seedlings have to be individually planted in flooded fields; backbreaking, dirty work requiring a lot of labor and water that generates a lot of methane, a potent planet-warming gas that can trap more than 80-times more heat in the atmosphere in the short term than carbon dioxide.

It's a problem unique to growing rice, as inundated fields stop oxygen from entering the soil, creating the conditions for methane-producing bacteria. Rice paddies contribute 8% of all human-made methane in the atmosphere, according to a 2023 Food and Agriculture Organization report.

Vietnam is the world's third-largest rice exporter, and the staple importance to Vietnamese culture is palpable in the Mekong Delta. The fertile patchwork of green fields crisscrossed by silvery waterways has helped stave off famine since the Vietnam War ended in 1975. Rice isn't just the mainstay of most meals, it is considered a gift from the gods and continues to be venerated.

It is molded into noodles and sheets and fermented into wine. In busy markets, motorcyclists lug 10-kilogram (22-pound) bags to their homes. Barges haul mountains of the grain up and down the Mekong River. Rice kernels are then dried and hulled by machines before they're packed for sale in factories, lined from floor to ceiling with sacks of rice.

Van has been working with one of Vietnam's largest rice exporters, the Loc Troi Group, for the past two years and is using a different method of irrigation known as alternate wetting and drying, or AWD. This requires less water than traditional farming since his paddy fields aren't continuously submerged. They also produce less methane.

Using the drone to fertilize the crops saves on labor costs. With climate shocks pushing a migration to cities, Van said that it's harder to find people to work the farms. It also ensures precise amounts of fertilizers are applied. Too much fertilizer causes the soil to release Earth-warming nitrogen gases.

Once crops are harvested, Van no longer burns the rice stubble — a major cause of air pollution in Vietnam and in its neighbors, as well as Thailand and India. Instead, it's collected by the Loc Troi Group for sale to other companies that use it as livestock feed and for growing straw mushrooms, a popular addition to stir-fries.

Van benefits in various ways. His costs are down while his farm yield is the same. Using organic fertilizer enables him to sell to European markets where customers are willing to pay a premium for organic rice. Best of all, he has time to tend to his own garden.

"I am growing jackfruit and coconut," he said.

Loc Troi Group CEO Nguyen Duy Thuan said that those methods enable farmers to use 40% less rice seed and 30% less water. Costs for pesticides, fertilizer and labor also are lower. Thuan said Loc Troi — which exports to more than 40 countries including in Europe, Africa, the United States and Japan — is working with farmers to expand acreage using its methods from the current 100 hectares to 300,000 hectares.

That's a long way from Vietnam's own target of growing "high quality, low emission rice" on 1 million hectares of farmland, an area more than six times the size of London, by 2030. Vietnamese officials estimate that would reduce production costs by a fifth and increase farmers' profits by more than \$600 million, according to the state media outlet

Vietnam News.

Vietnam recognized early on that it had to reconfigure its rice sector. It was the largest rice exporter, ahead of both India and Thailand, to sign a 2021 pledge to reduce methane emissions at the annual United Nations climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland.

Each year, the industry suffers losses of over \$400 million, according to recent research by Vietnam's Water Resources Science Institute. This is worrying, not just for the country but for the world.

The Mekong Delta, where 90% of Vietnam's exported rice is farmed, is one of the world's regions most vulnerable to climate change. A U.N. climate change report in 2022 warned of heavier flooding in the wet season and droughts in the dry season. Scores of dams built upstream in China and Laos have reduced the river's flow and the amount of sediment that it carries downriver to the sea. The sea level is rising and turning the river's lower reaches salty. And unsustainable levels of groundwater pumping and sand mining for construction have added to the problems.

Changing centuries-old forms of rice farming is expensive, and even though methane is a more potent cause of global warming than carbon dioxide, it only receives 2% of climate financing, Ajay Banga, the World Bank's president, told the U.N. climate summit in Dubai last year.

Combating methane emissions is the "one rare, clear area" where

low-cost, effective and replicable solutions exist, Banga said. The World Bank is supporting Vietnam's efforts and has begun helping the Indonesian government to expand climate resilient farming as a part of more than a dozen projects to reduce methane worldwide.

The hope is that more countries will follow, though there is no "one-size-fits-all," said Lewis H. Ziska, a professor of environmental health sciences at Columbia University. "The one commonality is that water is needed," he said, adding that different methods of planting and irrigation can help manage water better.

Growing more genetically diverse rice varieties would also help because some are more resilient to excess heat or require less water, while others might even emit less methane, he said.

Nguyen Van Nhut, director of the rice export company Hoang Minh Nhat, said its suppliers are using varieties of rice that can thrive even when the water is briny and the heat is extreme.

Now, the business is adapting to the unseasonal rains that make it harder to dry the rice, adding to risks from mold or insect damage. Typically, rice is dried in the sun immediately after harvest, but Nhut said his company has drying facilities in their packaging factory and also will install machinery to dry the grains closer to the fields.

"We don't know which month is the rainy season, like we did before," he said. **MDT/AP**

USA

Trump could avoid trial this year on 2020 election charges

GARY FIELDS,
WASHINGTON

FORMER President Donald Trump faces serious charges in two separate cases over whether he attempted to subvert the Constitution by overturning the results of a fair election and illegally remain in power.

Yet it's a New York case centered on payments to silence an adult film actress that might provide the only legal reckoning this year on whether he tried to undermine a pillar of American democracy.

Trump is charged in the so-called hush money case with trying to falsify business records, but it was hard to tell that as the trial opened this week.

Lead prosecutor Matthew Colangelo wasted little time during opening statements tying the case to Trump's campaigning during his first run for the presidency. He said the payments made to Stormy Daniels amounted to "a criminal scheme to corrupt the 2016 presidential election."

Whether the jury accepts that connection will be pivotal for Trump's fate. The presumptive nominee faces charges related to falsifying business records that would typically be misdemeanors unless the alleged act could be tied to another crime. Prosecutors were able to charge them as felonies because they allege that the false records were part of an effort to cover up state and federal election law violations — though that's still not the type of direct election interference that Trump is charged with elsewhere.

Trump himself has referred to the New York trial and the three other criminal cases against him as a form of election interference, suggesting without evidence that they're part of a Democratic plan to undermine his campaign to return to the White House.

He faces a four-count federal indictment in Washington, D.C., in connection with his actions in



Former president Donald Trump, center, awaits the start of proceedings at Manhattan criminal court

the run-up to the violent attack on the U.S. Capitol by his supporters on Jan. 6, 2021. He and others were charged in Georgia with violating the state's anti-racketeering law by scheming to illegally overturn his 2020 loss to Joe Biden. He has pleaded not guilty to all the charges against him in those cases and a fourth charging him with mishandling classified documents.

All the other cases are tied up in appeals that are expected to delay any trials until after the November election. If that happens, the New York case will stand as the only legal test during the campaign of whether Trump attempted to illegally manipulate an election — and the case isn't even about the election results he tried to overthrow.

On Monday, Trump's attorney quickly moved to undercut the idea that a case in which the charges center on record-keeping could seriously be considered an effort to illegally undermine an election.

"I have a spoiler alert: There's nothing wrong with trying to influence an election. It's called democracy," said his attorney, Todd Blanche. "They put something sinister on this idea, as if it's a crime. You'll learn it's not."

Some legal experts monitoring the cases against

Trump said they were skeptical of connecting the payments to a form of "election interference." Doing so also runs the risk of diminishing the gravity of the other charges in the public mind.

Richard Painter, a University of Minnesota Law School professor and former associate White House counsel during the George W. Bush administration, said he believed the facts of the case met the evidence needed to determine whether a felony had been committed that violated campaign law, but added, "The election interference part, I have a little bit of trouble on this."

Richard Hasen, a UCLA law school professor, said the New York case does not compare to the other election-related charges Trump faces.

"We can draw a fairly bright line between attempting to change vote totals to flip a presidential election and failing to disclose embarrassing information on a government form," he wrote in a recent Los Angeles Times column.

"When (Manhattan District Attorney) Alvin Bragg calls it an election interference case, that's more of a public relations strategy," said Paul Butler, a Georgetown University law professor and former federal prosecutor. "I think there was concern that people were

looking at the other prosecutions and they weren't discussing the Manhattan case."

Declaring the case a hush money trial made it seem less important than the others and "so they've styled it ... as a case about election interference. But again, what he's charged with is falsifying business records."

Trump has denied having a sexual encounter with Daniels and his lawyers argue that the payments to Cohen were legitimate legal expenses.

The key question in the prosecution's argument is why were the business records falsified, said Chris Edelson, an American University assistant professor of government. Their allegation is that "Trump was preventing voters from making an informed decision in the election."

It's an argument he believes prosecutors can make. "I think that the prosecutors will have to explain this to the jury. I don't think it's impossible to do," he said.

The New York trial revolves around allegations of a \$130,000 payment that Michael Cohen, Trump's former lawyer and personal fixer, made to Daniels to prevent her claims of a sexual encounter with Trump from becoming public in the final days of the 2016 race. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1982 FIRST BRITON DIES IN FALKLANDS CAMPAIGN



Britain has suffered its first casualty in the Falklands campaign before a single shot has been fired.

Petty Officer Kevin Stuart Casey is missing presumed drowned after the Sea King helicopter he was travelling in ditched into the sea.

Petty Officer Casey was in the Sea King's main cabin when the crash occurred.

The pilot was picked up by another helicopter from HMS Hermes but despite an intensive search there was no trace of his crewman.

The Defence Ministry will hold an official inquiry into the cause of the crash but bad weather probably had a lot to do with it.

The Task Force is heading south to the island of South Georgia where a group of Argentines raised their flag last month and laid claim to the Falkland Islands, sparking off intense diplomatic efforts to avert a war.

The weather at sea is getting worse as the Task Force head south and it is making helicopter operations more hazardous.

Today the forecast for South Georgia was wind gusting to 70 knots with 30-foot (9.1m) waves.

The Defence Ministry is refusing to comment on Argentine reports that British warships are now lying off South Georgia with a Royal Marine landing party. But if they are there, the commandos would have to be ferried ashore by helicopter.

Apart from rescuing the 15 British civilians still on the island the main task will be to formally expel 100 Argentine Marines from the island and re-establish British rule.

South Georgia may be inhospitable but it will provide the Task Force with safe, deep anchorage and an operating base, and it is also beyond range of Argentine Air Force bombers.

Meanwhile in Portsmouth, work has been completed in converting HMS Herald and HMS Hydra into casualty ferries.

They have now sailed to join the second wave of the Task Force.

Their job will be to ferry wounded troops from the Falklands' beachhead to the hospital ship Uganda.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The following day the Royal Marines landed in South Georgia.

South Georgia was the island where the Argentine invasion of the Falklands began in March 1982, when a group of scrap metal workmen landed and raised the Argentine flag.

On 3 April, an invasion force followed and the 22 Royal Marines on the island were forced to surrender.

The air, sea and land battle for the Falklands lasted three weeks. More than 900 people died - 655 Argentines, 255 British troops and three Falkland islanders.

Argentine forces surrendered and peace was declared on 20 June.

Argentina still lays claim to South Georgia, and to the rest of the "Malvinas", although the two nations are now at peace.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Try not to let your guard down. You don't have to be overly suspicious but you do have to remember that not everyone will be putting your interests first.

TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20
Expect a certain amount of negativity from people who fear your rise. Ignore those who say you are aiming too high.

GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21
You may need to get tough with someone who has let you down or failed to put in the required effort today. But don't overdo it and risk turning them against you forever. Be firm but fair.

CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Your judgment is valued, but don't get carried away and start believing you are some sort of guru. Common sense is all you need to make the right decisions.

LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Be proud of what you have achieved but don't fall into the trap of thinking that every move you make must lead to success. Your ego could easily get the better of you today.

VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Accusations will fly fast but your conscience is clear and you have no doubt that none of the mud that is being slung about will stick to you. You may be right but it would be smart to duck it anyway.

LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Be smart and count every cent that goes out and every cent that comes in. Just because you have some cash in your pocket does not mean you can act as if you are rich.

SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21
You may not be in a hurry to work with other people but you won't get much done if you try to do it all on your own. The simple fact is you need other people's help more than they need yours.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21
You may lack enthusiasm for what you are expected to do today but make the best possible job of it – not because you feel the need to impress other people but because you have high personal standards.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Creative and artistic matters are under excellent stars now but because there is a full moon today your efforts may not get the recognition they deserve.

AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18
You will be torn today about whether to focus on your career or your private life. It's a tough call to make but on balance you would be wise to put loved ones first – as they always do you.

PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Travel plans are under really good stars at the moment but you may have to get out and about on your own over the next 24 hours as friends and loved ones seem reluctant to leave hearth and home.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

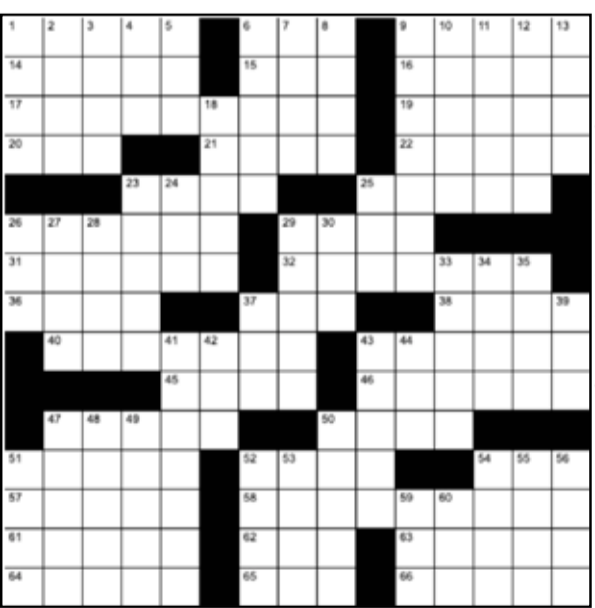
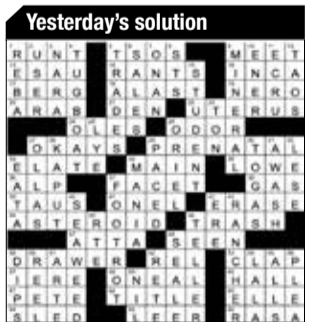
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	9	27	fine
Changchun	11	20	cloudy
Chengdu	14	25	overcast
Chongqing	18	23	rain
Fuzhou	21	24	overcast
Guangzhou	22	27	thunderstorms
Guiyang	14	22	thunderstorms
Haikou	26	34	cloudy
Hangzhou	15	25	cloudy
Harbin	8	20	cloudy
Hefei	10	24	cloudy
Nanjing	13	25	cloudy
Shanghai	15	24	overcast
Taipei	21	24	rain
Wuhan	13	25	cloudy
Hong Kong	24	26	thunderstorm
WORLD			
Moscow	8	14	cloudy
Frankfurt	3	9	cloudy
Paris	2	11	cloudy
London	3	11	cloudy
New York	4	20	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Pitcher Martinez; 6- Spider's creation; 9- Ran swiftly; 14- Lager holder; 15- City in GA; 16- You ___ right!; 17- Under-water vessel; 19- Animal; 20- ___ for tat; 21- Son of Rebekah; 22- Foundations; 23- The wolf ___ the door; 25- Gone up; 26- Portable PC; 29- Porn; 31- Builds; 32- Marine crustacean; 36- Morse element; 37- Golf prop; 38- Work without ___; 40- Period of being a young man; 43- Gambling house; 45- Alpo alternative; 46- Familiar with; 47- Time off; 50- Hollywood headliner; 51- Spasm; 52- Dole (out); 54- Compete; 57- Maxim; 58- Adorn with too much formality; 61- French farewell; 62- Sleep initials; 63- Merits; 64- Calls for; 65- Trauma ctrs.; 66- Peachy keen!

DOWN 1- Attention getter; 2- Needle case; 3- It's owed; 4- Margin; 5- ___ roll; 6- Belt site; 7- Sicilian spouter; 8- Chicken cordon ___; 9- Burrowing lagomorphs; 10- Bailiwicks; 11- ___ and desist; 12- City on the Ruhr; 13- Specks; 18- Harvests; 23- Like a mosquito bite; 24- Boozehound; 25- Chafe; 26- Showed the way; 27- Graceful horse; 28- Mexican money; 29- Vehicles with runners; 30- "The Simpsons" bartender; 33- Stun gun; 34- Novelist Bagnold; 35- Lease; 37- Male cat; 39- Inordinately; 41- Repulsive; 42- Lever for rowing; 43- More adorable; 44- Al Jolson's real first name; 47- ___ Island Red; 48- Shaw of swing; 49- Well-known; 50- Stalks; 51- Govt. agent; 52- Oliver Twist's request; 53- Constantly; 54- Aloe ___; 55- "___ She Lovely?"; 56- Exxon, once; 59- Cubby hole?; 60- ___ Dawn Chong;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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Va Fat HKD 3,780,000 2 bed 1 bath

Tou Un HKD 2,980,000 1 bed 1 bath

Jade Garden HKD 11,880,000 4 bed 3 bath

BASEBALL

CEASE ALLOWS 1 HIT OVER 7 INNINGS TO PITCH PADRES PAST SCUFFLING ROCKIES 3-1 AT COORS FIELD

CRAIG MEYER, DENVER

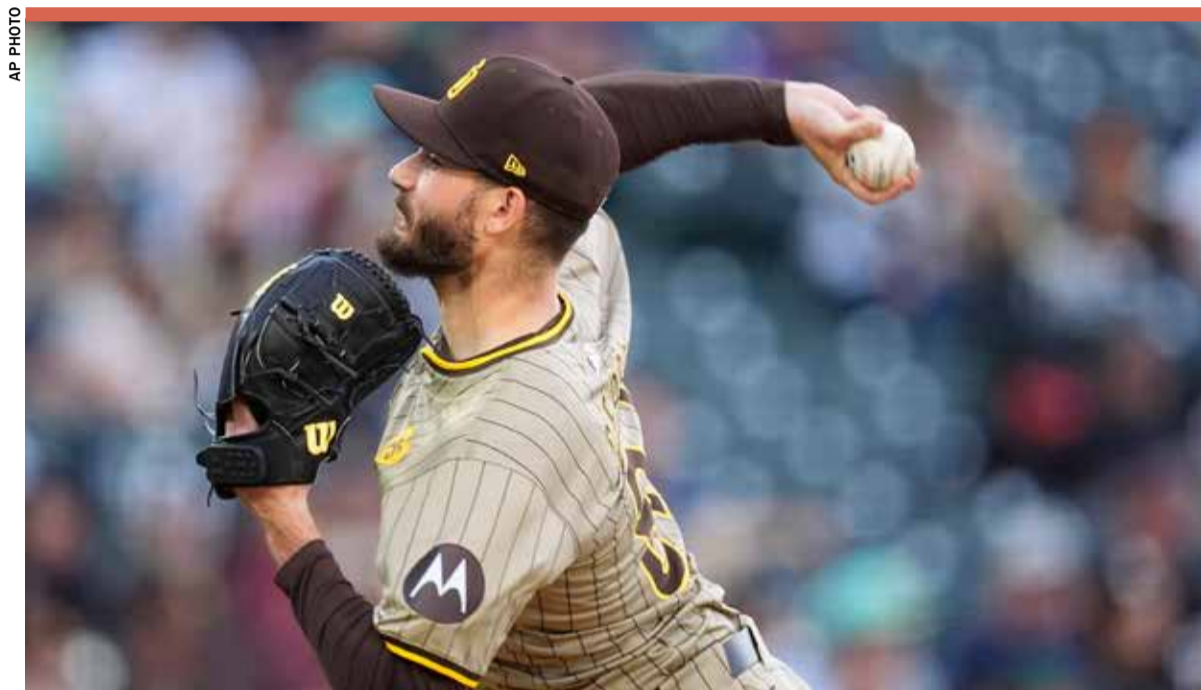
DYLAN Cease permitted one hit in seven innings and pinch-hitter Tyler Wade singled home the tiebreaking run in the eighth, sending the San Diego Padres to a 3-1 victory over the struggling Colorado Rockies on Monday night.

Cease (3-1) struck out eight and walked none. The only baserunner he allowed in a 90-pitch outing was Charlie Blackmon's leadoff double in the fourth.

"In control was the best way of saying it," Padres manager Mike Shildt said. "Everything was coming out clean, it was going where he wanted to throw it, it was filthy. It was just dominant stuff."

Acquired from the Chicago White Sox in a March 13 trade, the right-hander lowered his ERA to 1.82 — his best mark through five outings in six major league seasons.

"He's electric," Padres rookie outfielder Jackson Merrill said. "I'm very thankful we acquired him through the trade. I lost some



San Diego Padres starting pitcher Dylan Cease

friends to that, but it's so worth it. He's disgusting."

Luis Campusano had two hits for the Padres and scored the go-ahead run. San Diego has won 10

of the past 12 meetings between the NL West rivals dating to last April.

With runners at the corners in the ninth, Robert Suarez got Ryan

McMahon to ground into a game-ending double play for his eighth save.

Colorado lost for the eighth time in nine games and dropped to 5-18,

the worst record in the National League.

Nick Mears (0-2) gave up both Padres runs in the eighth.

Campusano doubled with two outs and scored when Wade singled to right field, barely beating a tag at the plate. Wade went to second on the throw home and scored on Merrill's single to make it 3-1.

"We've shown a lot of resilience late in games," Cease said. "For me, it was just hold them as long as I could and give them a chance to bring it home, which they did."

Jurickson Profar, who played 111 games last season for the Rockies before being released, had a two-out RBI single for San Diego in the third.

The Rockies have trailed in each of their 23 games this season, becoming the first team since the 1931 Cincinnati Reds to earn that ignominious distinction.

Colorado has scored only 12 runs in the past eight games. The Rockies have three or fewer runs in six consecutive home games, setting a franchise record.

"At some point, it's got to turn where we've got to get the bat to the ball and get some big hits," manager Bud Black said. "There's really no secret. We've got to do a better job."

McMahon's team-leading 13th RBI came on a sacrifice fly in the fourth. **MDT/AP**

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Urology : Dr. Lo Kwong Yin Richard, Dr. Zhao Yun Qiao

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Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

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FOOTBALL

Serie A title, second star and derby: Inter takes it all with win over Milan

DANIELLA MATAR, MILAN

WINNING the derby ended up being the cherry on top of a special night for Inter Milan.

Holding off AC Milan 2-1 yesterday [Macau time] clinched for Inter the Serie A title that had been sign-posted for weeks, and earned a coveted second star on its jersey for winning a 20th Italian league title, breaking a tie with its fierce city rival.

"I told the guys, 'We find ourselves in a situation that's never happened before,'" Inter captain Lautaro Martínez said. "We needed to take advantage of this opportunity, because look around, the entire stadium is ours now."

Not even the pouring rain could dampen the spirits of the Nerazzurri and their fans.

Francesco Acerbi and Marcus Thuram scored and, al-

though Fikayo Tomori's late goal for AC Milan threatened to delay the celebrations, Inter held on for the win that stretched its lead to an insurmountable 17 points over second-placed Milan, with five rounds remaining.

At the final whistle, a beaming Lautaro and teammate Federico Dimarco climbed onto the top of the goal frame at San Siro.

Flares and fireworks were set off in the stands, and the Inter players danced raucously in front of their fans. A banner was unfurled saying in Italian: "Repeat it to the Madonnina, who are the champions and who the crybabies."

The Madonnina is the statue on top of Milan cathedral that overlooks the city, and which the derby is named after.

After winning eight other trophies, Simone Inzaghi claimed his first league title as a coach.

"Winning the league with five matches left — more or less won with nine matches left, today making it mathematically certain — in a derby, with Milan the home team, that is something that will remain with us," Inzaghi said.

"Everyone gave their very valuable contribution so that we could reach goals like this."

A star is awarded for every 10 Serie A titles. Only Juventus has won more, with a record 36 and thus three stars on its jersey.

Despite the rain, the stars aligned for Inter to wrap up Serie A, another star and the Derby della Madonnina on one night at San Siro, the stadium both teams share. Inter was technically the away team and only one end of the stadium was reserved for its black-and-blue-clad support.

Inter had won the past five derbies, including both legs of the Champions League semifi-



nal last year and a 5-1 humiliation of Milan earlier this season in Serie A.

And the Nerazzurri went in front in the 18th minute when Benjamin Pavard nodded on Federico Dimarco's corner for an unmarked Acerbi to head in from close range.

Lautaro should have doubled Inter's lead seven minutes later when he was also left

woefully unmarked but the league's top goal-scorer inexplicably fired over the bar from point-blank range.

Milan seemed to draw confidence from that miss and Rafael Leão had a great chance to level following a rapid run on the counterattack from Tomori, but he fired straight at Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXCHANGES KEY TO TIES

The Doolittle Raid in World War II has been, and always will be remembered as a testament to enduring friendship between China and the United States.

On April 18, 1942, just months after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, the US sent 16 B-25 bombers on an air raid to strike Japan's main islands. After bombing Tokyo and other Japanese cities, Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle and his fellow pilots, facing fuel shortages and bad weather, were forced to parachute over the eastern parts of China. Local Chinese launched a massive rescue operation, and helped 64 of the 80 US pilots escape to safety, many of whom found refuge in Quzhou, Zhejiang province.

The Chinese people paid a heavy price for their kindness and bravery: some 250,000 civilians were killed by Japanese troops seeking revenge for the raid.

Last week, descendants of the Doolittle Raiders visited Quzhou from Tuesday to Thursday to commemorate the rescue operation and express their gratitude to the Chinese people. Actually, a strong bond has been forged between the Doolittle Raid survivors, their descendants and the Chinese people. The Doolittle Raid Memorial Hall, which opened in Quzhou in 2018, has served as "a witness to the hardships endured by our ancestors and a symbol of cooperation and friendship between China and the US", as Jeff Thatcher, the son of a rescued US pilot, said at the opening ceremony.

Such people-to-people exchanges are the foundation for China-US relations, and cement the bond of friendship between the two countries, which has withstood various tests over the years to be passed from generation to generation.

It is their shared belief in the importance of that bond that prompted the top leaders of the two countries to reach a consensus during their summit in San Francisco last November that they will work out more measures to promote people-to-people exchanges, including increasing direct passenger flights, holding a high-level dialogue on tourism, and streamlining visa application procedures.

The Chinese leader also announced a program for 50,000 US youths to visit China over the next five years for exchanges and study, saying the future of the Sino-US relationship depends on the two countries' youth.

More than 20 Muscatine High School students from Iowa paid an exchange visit to Beijing, Shanghai and Hebei province from Jan 24 to 30 as the first group of US students to visit China under the program.

Sino-US relations are experiencing one of the most difficult times, mainly as a result of China hawks in the US political circles seeing the country as the greatest threat and No 1 adversary to the US and taking all steps possible to contain its rise. It is therefore all the more necessary for the two peoples to reach out to each other. It is hoped that the goodwill and friendship that exist between them will help Beijing and Washington transcend their differences and bring their relationship back to the normal track.

In a positive sign in that direction San Francisco Mayor London Breed announced in Beijing on Friday that her city will receive a pair of pandas as a symbol of friendship from China next year. The pandas will add a new chapter to Sino-US friendship in the new era.

As former US president Richard Nixon said more than half a century ago, "the Chinese people are a great people, the American people are a great people. If our two peoples are enemies the future of this world we share together is dark indeed. But if we can find common ground to work together, the chance for world peace is immeasurably increased."

His words still ring true.

FOUNDATION TO CONVENE THIRD ANNUAL SUMMIT ON ANTI-ASIAN HATE, BUILDING AAPI COALITIONS

THE BUZZ

A foundation launched in the wake of anti-Asian hate will hold a wide-ranging conference bringing together Asian American and Pacific Islander notable figures for a third year.

The Asian American Foundation will hold a Heritage Month Summit next month in New York City for AAPI Heritage Month. Oscar-nominated actor Steven Yeun, Boston Mayor Michelle Wu and actor Maulik Pancholy — who had an upcoming appearance canceled by a Pennsylvania school board over his sexual orientation — are among those set to attend.

The summit will include various panels on issues like civil rights, extre-

mism and the importance of representation. There will also be showcases of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander entrepreneurs in various sectors such as nonprofits, food and philanthropy.

The Asian American Foundation, or TAAF, was established in May 2021 by prominent Asian American business leaders. The organization notably secured more than \$1 billion donor pledges for AAPI organizations through an "AAPI Giving Challenge" at the time.

The foundation's goal was to "close critical gaps of support for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and end the longstanding underinvestment in our communities."



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese walks with Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape as they start their trek along the Kokoda Track at Kokoda Village, yesterday

AUSTRALIA AND PAPUA LEADERS TREK TOWARD WWII SOUTH PACIFIC BATTLEGROUND

ROD MCGUIRK, MELBOURNE

Australia and Papua New Guinea's prime ministers yesterday began trekking into the South Pacific island nation's mountainous interior to commemorate a pivotal World War II campaign and to underscore their current security alliance, which faces challenges from China's growing regional influence.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese received an elaborate traditional welcome when he arrived by helicopter at Kokoda Village with his Papua New Guinean counterpart James Marape.

The pair will walk 15 kilometers over two days along the rugged Kokoda Track where the Japanese army's advance toward what is now the national capital, Port Moresby, was halted in 1942 in the wilds of the Owen Stanley Range.

"In forging a relationship of brothers and sisters, together as one we will go forward," Albanese told Australian Broadcasting Corp. as the pair set off from the village in tropical heat and humidity.

"We're walking step by step, symbolizing our two nations walking together," Albanese added.

Marape said their "shared journey today should send the world a message" that Papua New Guinea wants peaceful coexistence.

Australia and its nearest neighbor, Papua New Guinea, forged closer defense ties in December when Albanese and Marape signed a wide-ranging agreement in the Australian capital, Canberra.

The signing was delayed by six months after a security pact between Papua New Guinea and the United States sparked riots in the South Pacific nation over concerns that Papuan sovereignty was being undermined.

Marape said in December that his government's security agreements with the U.S. and Australia did not mean he was siding with those allies in their strategic competition with China.

Albanese said Marape had assured him during a state dinner in Port Moresby on Monday night that Australia remained its "referred security partner."

"This is a relationship that has never been closer, as symbolized by the fact that we'll be walking side-by-side down the Kokoda Track," Albanese told ABC in Port Moresby yesterday before flying to Kokoda Village.

Joe Biden had planned to

become the first sitting U.S. president to visit Papua New Guinea in May last year, in a sign of the region's growing strategic importance in the power struggle between the U.S. and China. But Biden canceled the visit to deal with a debt crisis in the U.S. Congress.

On top of disappointing Marape last year, Biden offended the prime minister last week by implying that the president's army aviator uncle, Second Lt. Ambrose J. Finnegan Jr., had been eaten by "cannibals" after his plane crashed in Papua New Guinea during World War II.

Marape released a statement on Sunday saying that his "people daily live with the fear" of unexploded bombs left behind by a war that they had been "needlessly dragged into."

Marape and Albanese will trek to a war memorial in the town of Isurava, the site of a bloody battle where U.S. and Australian troops fought the Japanese in August 1942.

Both leaders will commemorate Anzac Day at Isurava on Thursday, April 25 — the date in 1915 when the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps landed on Turkey in an ill-fated campaign that provided the soldiers' first combat of World War I. **MDT/AP**



USA Columbia canceled in-person classes, dozens of protesters were arrested at New York University and Yale, and the gates to Harvard Yard were closed to the public as some of the most prestigious U.S. universities sought to defuse campus tensions over Israel's war with Hamas. More than 100 pro-Palestinian demonstrators who had camped out on Columbia's green were arrested last week, and similar encampments have sprouted up at universities around the country.



English Channel At least five people have died while crossing the English Channel, according to French media, hours after the U.K. approved the migrant deportation bill. The Voix du Nord newspaper said the bodies were discovered at the Wimereux beach in northern France yesterday. The rescue operation is ongoing and helicopters and boats have been deployed, according to the regional newspaper. About 100 migrants have been rescued and placed aboard a French navy ship. They will be taken to the port of Boulogne, the paper said.



Uganda The World Bank has suspended funding for a tourism project in Tanzania that caused the suffering of tens of thousands of villagers, according to a U.S.-based rights group that has long urged the global lender to take such action. The World Bank's decision to suspend the \$150 million project, which aims to improve the management of natural resources and tourism assets in a remote part of southern Tanzania, was "long overdue," the Oakland Institute said in a statement yesterday.