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AP PHOTO



Australian police arrested seven teenagers accused of following a violent extremist ideology in raids across Sydney yesterday, as a judge extended a ban on social media platform X sharing video of a knife attack on a bishop that started the criminal investigation. The seven, aged 15 to 17, were part of a network that included a 16-year-old boy accused of stabbing a bishop in a Sydney church on April 15, police said.

AP PHOTO



Nepal's president asked the emir of Qatar, who is on a two-day visit to the South Asian country, to help release a Nepali student held hostage by Palestinian militant group Hamas, officials said yesterday. President Ram Chandra Poudel met with Sheik Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani at the president's house in the capital, Kathmandu. Al Thani said he would do everything possible to help release Bipin Joshi.

AP PHOTO



USA The Senate passed legislation that would force TikTok's China-based parent company to sell the social media platform under the threat of a ban, a contentious move by U.S. lawmakers that's expected to face legal challenges and disrupt the lives of content creators who rely on the short-form video app for income. The TikTok legislation was included as part of a larger \$95 billion package that provides foreign aid to Ukraine and Israel and was passed 79-18.

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BEIJING, MACAU REFUTE US ACCUSATIONS OF CITY FACING HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

STAFF REPORTER

THE SAR government and the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Macau have expressed their “strong opposition” to the recent human rights report of Washington, describing the report as “baseless.”

The US Department of State's 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices claims Macau faces “significant human rights issues, including credible reports of: serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom including censorship; substantial interference with the freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association; and the inability of citizens to change their government peacefully through free and fair elections.”

In the statement, the Macau government “urges the US to respect objective facts, and to abandon a ‘double-standard’ mentality.”

“The US should adhere to the principles of international law and the basic norms of international relations. It must stop interfering in Macau's internal af-



fairs and China's domestic affairs on the pretense of human right issues,” the statement added.

The Washington report also said Macau's citizens were unable “to change their government peacefully through free and fair elections” and accused the local government of imposing “serious and unreasonable restrictions on political participation.”

According to the report, Macau's laws “do not fully protect

members of racial or ethnic minority groups against violence and discrimination.”

Within the executive summary, it also claimed that there were “serious and unreasonable restrictions on political participation; and trafficking in persons.”

Meanwhile, the SAR noted the amendments to the SAR's Law on Safeguarding National Security have been “meticulously crafted.”

“They draw extensive referen-

ces from legislative experience in other jurisdictions while fully considering Macau's legal traditions and social realities, and they strictly adhere to international human rights conventions,” the local government said.

The 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report published by the US Department of State also shares a similar critique of the local government.

According to that US report,

the local government “does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts, if any, to do so even considering the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.” The report also mentioned that the government had not convicted a trafficker since 2019 and has never identified a victim of forced labor in Macau.

A spokesperson for the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Macau has criticized the US, stating it claimed to be a human rights defender but “ignored and destroyed human rights itself.”

In 2022, Beijing published a report called “The State of Democracy in the United States,” which described the US as having a vicious cycle of democratic pretensions, dysfunctional politics and a divided society. The report noted problems such as money politics, identity politics, social rifts, and wealth inequality in the US.

It accused Washington of behaving with a sense of superiority and lecturing other democracies despite its own mounting problems at home.

Grand Prix Museum presents new exhibition with Lego

STAFF REPORTER

THE Macao Grand Prix Museum has partnered with Lego Hong Kong to present a new special exhibition featuring a true-to-size Lego Formula 3 race car model.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is a 1:1 scale Lego model of a Formula 3 race car, designed and built by “Lego Certified Master” Hung Tze Kin. The car, made from over 300,000 LEGO bricks, took seven weeks to complete and features a lotus pattern and the number 25, representing the 25th anniversary of the Macau SAR.

“We are very pleased

that the Macau Grand Prix Museum has cooperated with Lego Hong Kong for the first time to organize a special exhibition at the museum,” said Macao Government Tourism Office director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes.

In addition to viewing the life-sized replica, visitors can build their own miniature racers using Lego pieces at interactive workshops running through to Aug. 31. Special offers include a coupon for a free set, or a 10% discount on select Lego products.

“It is hoped that this event will enrich visitors' experience of visiting Macau, promote the cross-

-border integration of “Tourism + Sports,” complement the SAR Government's strategy of appropriate economic diversification, whilst simultaneously celebrating the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Macau SAR,” Fernandes said.

The museum has previously partnered with Lego Hong Kong to depict Macau landmarks, like the Ruins of St. Paul's and Senado Square, using Lego bricks. This exhibit represents their most ambitious collaboration to date.

“This is probably the biggest Lego exhibit we have created with Lego Hong Kong.”

Fernandes said the mu-



seum regularly collaborates with brands “to make itself more interesting every time” and to give it “new life.” Along with Lego, past exhibits have involved Ma-

dame Tussauds wax figures and virtual reality technology from PICO.

The special exhibition runs through to Aug. 31. The Macao Grand Prix Mu-

seum aims to attract locals and tourists enjoying the Labor Day holiday and summer breaks through its interactive focus on motorsports culture.

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Portuguese community celebrates 50th anniversary of 'Carnation Revolution'

RENATO MARQUES

THE Portuguese community in Macau is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the "Carnation Revolution," which took place on April 25, 1974, in Portugal.

At the time, the military coup overthrew the authoritarian Estado Novo [New State] government to produce major social, economic, territorial, demographic, and political changes in Portugal and its overseas colonies. This "Revolutionary Process" ultimately resulted in Portugal's transition to democracy and the end of the Portuguese Colonial Wars.

To commemorate the half-century milestone since the revolution, several institutions within the Portuguese sphere, such as the Consulate-General of Portugal in Macau and Hong Kong (CGPMHK), the Camões Institute, the Portuguese Institute of the Orient (IPOR), the Casa de Portugal em Macau (Macau Portuguese Association), Orient Foundation (FO), the Macau Portuguese School (EPM), and many more, have joined forces to present programs to mark the date.

From exhibitions to concerts, from movies and documentary screenings to a book fair, a lot of Portuguese cultural aspects related to the revolution will be available in Macau throughout the month, as well as, in some cases, in May and even June.

On the topic, and in an interview with the Times, the Portuguese Consul-General in Macau, Alexandre Leitão, said that, according to the decision made in Portugal by the Commemorative Commission, the celebrations are, in fact, much larger and are part of an extensive program that began on March 23, 2022 and will extend until December 2026; this final date celebrates 50 years of the Portuguese Constitution.

Leitão also noted that the current activities program in Macau is just the start of this larger celebration, and that more events will soon be announced.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE REVOLUTION FROM MACAU

One of the most anticipated events of the program is the screening of a new documentary by the journalist and researcher, João Guedes.

Titled "April 25: Perspectives of the Revolution from Macau," the documentary was screened already at the EPM, as well as at a special screening held yesterday



RENATO MARQUES

at the CGPMHK, followed by a debate on the topic.

Today, the same documentary will be broadcast by local public broadcaster TDM on its Portuguese-language channel.

The documentary addresses precise historical facts. It argues that although the Portuguese revolution paved the way for a series of significant changes to life in Macau, which are still seen today, the Carnation Revolution had little to no immediate impact on Macau, despite the city and its territory being under Portuguese rule. This is due to the political and geographic distance between Macau and Portugal.

Such facts are explained in the documentary, which involves dozens of interviews with some of Macau's prominent figures, some of whom have passed away, such as Henrique de Senna Fernandes.

Guedes said the documentary aimed to explain these "not so immediately visible" repercussions and their importance in relation to Macau's past and current life.

Guedes said that when the revolution erupted in Portugal, most of the population did not notice it or was unaware of any differences, although there were some exceptions, such as high officials and journalists working for the Macau Daily newspaper.

The fact that Macau was always a "unique" case among "Portuguese overseas colonies" was also widely explored in both the author's and interviewees' opinions.

Intellectuals, writers, and historians of the time, such as Char-

les Boxer, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, and Austin Coates, have all testified as primary to clarify the times surrounding 1974.

Guedes, as well as many of those cited in the documentary, noted that although there was a smooth and delayed impact on Macau, it was the Portuguese revolution that allowed, for example, the establishment of the Legislative Assembly.

The Legislative Assembly then existed in a similar format to the Legislative Assembly of today. The revolution also restarted diplomatic relations between Portugal and China, which eventually resulted in the Macau handover.

The many differences between Macau and the Portuguese colonies were also seen in the fact that in Macau there was no colonial war. The territory governance was very different from other Portuguese colonies, and there were no actual prosecutions of dissidents and people with dissenting political ideals.

The documentary also portrays how a kind of revolution in Macau occurred earlier than in Portugal, due to the so-called "12-3 incident" on Dec. 3, 1966.

Historians and academics, such as Professor Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, also note this fact. They say that, at the time of April 25, 1974, there was not much of an impact on local society because of the 12-3 incident, which had already promoted many changes and the inclusion of Chinese local major institutions and personalities, such as Ho Yin, who was known as the "Chinese governor of Macau."

IMPORTANCE OF PASSING VALUES TO NEWER GENERATIONS

One of the first places that hosted a screening of the documentary "April 25: Perspectives of the Revolution from Macau" was the EPM.

Questioned on the importance of continuing to educate newer generations on the relevance of the April 25 Revolution, Leitão said: "It is very important. The revolution occurred in the name of ideology, or collections of principles and values that people promoted and adhered to. These were felt by a large majority of the Portuguese people. These people understood that it was time to turn the page and to consecrate some of these principles such as

democratic citizenship; that is, the right and duty to freely participate actively in, among other things, governance and elections. This is not a criticism of other systems; it is the model that we have chosen and which we are very proud of."

"We also understand that the distance and the absence of lived memories from the period of repression leads to some relativization of these values by some youngsters. This is normal and natural but this is why it is important to fight this dimming of the beliefs and enthusiasm for the virtues of democracy with education, with disclosure, to explain well how Portugal was before, and the consequences of having a closed regime, even in relation to the People's Republic of China," he said.

He noted the need to contrast those times with today in pursuit of a clear perspective, as well as what subsequently followed, such as Portugal's entry into the European Community and many other aspects.

"I believe that youngsters nowadays cannot imagine the possibility of not having freedom of expression and other freedoms, and it is good to remind them that freedom did not emerge from no action but, rather, from acts of resistance for many years that culminated in the continuous symbolism of April 25," Leitão recalled.

He said there is a need to explain democratic values, and that these need to be constantly addressed. New generations must be incentivized to understand and practice these values, as well as understand why they are important.



Portuguese Consul-General Alexandre Leitão

Lawrence Ho advocates multiple-entry permit scheme into Hengqin

LYNZY VALLES

MELCO'S Lawrence Ho has advocated for a proposed plan that would allow multiple trips between Hengqin and Macau, noting that such a plan would greatly benefit the long-term growth of the gaming industry.

This comes as the local government proposed a multiple-entry visa scheme, which aims to cater to Chinese tour groups and facilitate multi-entry access between Macau and Hengqin within a specified timeframe.

Current regulations only allow for a single trip by mainland visitors to Macau via a visa, hindering lodging arrangements.

In an interview with local media, chairman and CEO of Melco Resorts & Entertainment, Ho, emphasized the potential advantages of commencing the multiple-entry visa scheme, stating that it would have a positive impact on the development of both



Macau and Hengqin.

Ho also pointed out the significant difference in hotel room availability between Macau and Las Vegas, with Macau only having one-third of the hotel rooms found in the

latter, highlighting the affordability of hotel accommodation in Hengqin compared to Macau.

"The only problem in Macau now is whether there are enough hotel rooms, and at

the moment 90% of the hotel rooms are often full," said Ho.

"The number of hotel rooms in Macau is only one-third of the number in Las Vegas. Hotel rooms in Hengqin are also cheaper than those in Macau,

so if [mainland travelers] can make multiple round trips to Macau through Hengqin, it will be better for the development of Macau and Hengqin in the long run," the executive added.

The proposal seeks to simplify accommodation procedures for tour group visitors, allowing them to explore Macau while staying in Hengqin hotels.

In the recent question and answer session at the Legislative Assembly, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng addressed the multiple-entry permit policy, noting that the scheme is primarily intended for mainland tour groups. The CE has disclosed that a comprehensive document outlining the specifics of the scheme is anticipated to be released soon.

During the first quarter of 2024, there was a substantial increase in visitor arrivals, reaching a total of 88.84 million, which is a 79.6% increase from the same period in the previous year.

GAMING

Morgan Stanley forecasts GGR recovery for May Golden Week

STAFF REPORTER

MORGAN Stanley has forecast gross gaming revenue (GGR) for Macau's upcoming May Day Golden Week could reach between MOP800 to 850 million per day, translating to a 73% to 77% recovery compared to the same period in 2019, according to a research note.

Analysts Praveen K. Choudhary and Gareth Leung indicated the estimated figures are 5% to 10% lower than Chinese New Year revenue seen earlier this year. The May holiday period spans from May 1-5 due to the mainland's holiday schedule.

The analysts noted the shorter duration of May's Golden Week, when compared to Chinese New Year, could negatively impact April's GGR, which is already seeing pressure from poor weather and stands at about MOP600 million per day.

RENATO MARQUES



A survey of 28 Macau hotels found average daily rates and occupancy will likely be weaker for most properties during May's Golden Week, as opposed to figures reported for Chinese New Year and May 2019. MGM China appeared to perform better than its peers, while Sands

China hotels seemed to face a bigger decline, partly due to renovations.

The analysts suggested investors remain cautious in the near term as downside catalysts include weak April revenue, potential May Golden Week data disappointment, and negative earnings revisions.

MACAU Q1 TAX REVENUE UP 117%

STAFF REPORTER

THE city experienced a significant increase of 116.8% in tax earnings compared to the same period last year, according to data from the Financial Services Bureau (DSF).

Financial results for the initial three months show Macau accumulated approximately MOP21.92 billion in fiscal revenue from taxes imposed on gaming activities. In contrast, in the first quarter of 2023, Macau collected MOP10.11 billion in taxes.

Gaming-related revenue accounted for 84.2% of the city's total revenue during this period, which ended March 31. In March alone, gaming taxes contributed around MOP7.13 billion to the government. However, there was a 4.4% decrease in revenue for March compared to the

RENATO MARQUES



same month in 2023.

According to Macau's gaming regulator, the aggregate casino gross gaming revenue (GGR) for the first three months of 2024 was MOP57.33 billion, representing a significant increase of 65.5%.

Comparing year-on-year results for GGR is challenging because of the time delay between the recording of GGR and the registration of taxes by the govern-

ment, resulting in significant variations in the reported figures.

The Macau government recently unveiled its budget plan for 2024, aiming to generate approximately MOP83.61 billion by the end of the year.

In 2023, the government earned MOP65.26 billion in revenue from gaming taxes, surpassing the planned budget by 28.3%.



Phone fraud doubles amid low awareness: PJ

STAFF REPORTER

THE number of new phone fraud cases opened by the Judiciary Police (PJ) has doubled in the first two months of 2024 compared to the same period last year, according to the Anti-Fraud Coordination

Center of PJ.

Residents suffered MOP320 million in losses to telecom fraud in 2023, according to the PJ spokesman. Common scams involve fraudsters posing as law enforcement or investment professionals, tricking victims into transferring money.

While scams significantly

increased last year, the PJ noted that the situation is getting worse. New phone scams registered by the police jumped 100% and new internet scams rose over 73% in January and February. Scammers are now using more complex tactics, such as telling victims they are involved in an international

criminal case and must travel to Southeast Asia.

"In some cases, scammers aim to get the victim to leave Macau and go into hiding. They then instruct the victim to contact their family and report a fake kidnapping," Cheong Un Hong of the PJ's anti-fraud center said during a TDM radio talk show yesterday.

Police figures show continued low fraud awareness in the community. The public is urged to use the police's WeChat anti-fraud app to identify scammers. On average, the search engine sees 1,700 weekly uses, with 180 returning medium-high risk results. About 60 fraud reports are filed weekly.

Among the most common tactics used by fraudsters is through posing as law enforcement officials and asking victims to transfer their money to certain accounts for "verification," or posing as investment professionals and persuading victims to deposit money into so-called investment accounts.

The PJ stresses that knowing personal details does not mean the caller is a real officer. They urged residents to verify suspicious situations with police.

CRIME

Driver arrested for suspected drunk hit-and-run

STAFF REPORTER

A 28-year-old Macau man has been arrested for a suspected drunk driving hit-and-run that injured a 68-year-old mainland woman, Public Security Police (PSP) said.

The incident occurred around 10 p.m. Tuesday night on Avenida Wai Long in Taipa, near the airport.

The woman and a companion were attempting to cross the road when they were hit by a private car, as seen in a clip that circulated on social media. The driver fled the scene immediately after the collision.

Responding officers found the injured woman unconscious and brought her to the hospital with head and hand lacerations, as well as a fractured pelvis. Her present condition is stable.

Police located the involved vehicle and returned with the driver to the police station. An alcohol test showed his blood alcohol content was 0.7 grams per liter, above the legal limit of 0.5. Damage to the car matched the collision.

The driver claimed he had drinks after the incident and was picking up a friend. The driver now faces charges of hit-and-run, abandonment, negligent injury and drunk driving.

He was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office yesterday for further investigation. The PSP continue to investigate the case.

Authorities reiterated the importance of using designated pedestrian crossings and urged all drivers to refrain from driving under the influence of alcohol.

CHINA MANNED SPACE AGENCY

SELECTION OF FOURTH BATCH OF ASTRONAUTS TO BE COMPLETED SOON

THE selection of the fourth batch of Chinese astronauts will be completed soon, the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) announced at a press conference yesterday.

This fourth batch

will work with other active astronauts to carry out follow-up space station missions, as well as realizing the country's manned lunar landing, said Lin Xiqiang, deputy director of the CMSA.

Lin said China has essentially completed the selection of payload specialists in Hong Kong and Macau for the fourth batch of astronauts. Details will soon be officially released.

Scientific research

institutions in Hong Kong and Macau have proposed a group of new space science and application projects, such as a project on high-resolution global greenhouse gas detection, which hopefully will be carried out at

the country's space station, Tiangong, in the future, according to Lin.

China selected 14 astronauts from its 1998 air force pilot cohort and seven from its 2010 cohort. In 2020, it completed the selection of its third batch of 18 astronauts, which includes space pilots, flight engineers and payload specialists.

MDT/XINHUA

CORPORATE BITS

MGM hosts 'World Reading Day' celebration series



MGM recently organized the "MGM World Reading Day Celebration Series" under the theme of "Nurture Great Talent and Craftsmanship" to celebrate World Reading Day.

The series of events, which includes a sharing session and two roadshows, also marks the launch of the "Golden Lion Reading Corner," where team members

can read during their breaks at the company. In addition, the Cultural Affairs Bureau has designated MGM as a "Reading Point" of "Reading in the City" campaign "to promote a vibrant reading culture and support the personal growth of team members through reading," as cited in a statement from the gaming operator.

In addition, the Worker Book House of the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) has provided various resources for the Golden Lion Reading Corner, covering genres such as literature, history, psychology, and philosophy.

Diageo World Class Competition HK, Macau returns



The Diageo World Class Competition, a prestigious event in the bartending industry, is set to make its comeback in

Hong Kong and Macau. This year's competition will kick off with a World Class Cocktail Festival, featuring 20 participating

mixologists from both cities.

The 20 bartenders have been tasked with crafting cocktails using Johnnie Walker Black Label and Don Julio to tackle the themes – "Beyond A Nightcap", exploring the limitless possibilities of Johnnie Walker Black Label; and "2030 Margarita", a visionary take on the classic Margarita cocktail.

Until May 10, drinks lovers can embark on an adventure by visiting the local participating bars including Aji, Aux Beaux Arts, Gordon Ramsay Pub and Grill, the Mews and Vida Rica Bar.

DIPLOMACY

Blinken begins key China visit as tensions rise over new US foreign aid bill

MATTHEW LEE, SHANGHAI

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has begun a critical trip to China armed with a strengthened diplomatic hand following Senate approval of a foreign aid package that will provide billions of dollars in assistance to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan as well as force TikTok's China-based parent company to sell the social media platform — all areas of contention between Washington and Beijing.

Blinken arrived in Shanghai yesterday just hours after the Senate vote on the long-stalled legislation and before President Joe Biden signed it into law to demonstrate U.S. resolve in defending its allies and partners. Passage of the bill will add further complications to an already complex relationship that has been strained by disagreements over numerous global and regional disputes.

Still, the fact that Blinken is making the trip — shortly after a conversation between Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping, a similar visit to China by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and a call between the U.S. and Chinese defense chiefs — is a sign the two sides are at least willing to discuss their differences.

Of primary interest to China, the bill sets aside \$8 billion to counter Chinese threats in Taiwan and the broader Indo-Pacific and gives China's ByteDance nine months to sell TikTok with a possible three-month extension if a sale is in



Secretary of State Antony Blinken waves as he boards a plane en route to China

progress. China has railed against U.S. assistance to Taiwan, which it regards as a renegade province, and immediately condemned the move as a dangerous provocation. It also strongly opposes efforts to force TikTok's sale.

The bill also allots \$26 billion in wartime assistance to Israel and humanitarian relief to Palestinians in Gaza, and \$61 billion for Ukraine to defend itself from Russia's invasion. The Biden administration has been disappointed in China's response to the war in Gaza and has complained loudly that Chinese support for Russia's military-industrial sector has allowed Moscow to subvert West-

ern sanctions and ramp up attacks on Ukraine.

Even before Blinken landed in Shanghai — where he will have meetings today before traveling to Beijing — China's Taiwan Affairs Office slammed the assistance to Taipei, saying it "seriously violates" U.S. commitments to China.

China and the United States are the major players in the Indo-Pacific and Washington has become increasingly alarmed by Beijing's growing aggressiveness in recent years toward Taiwan and Southeast Asian countries with which it has significant territorial and maritime disputes in the South China Sea.

The U.S. has strongly condemned Chinese military exercises threatening Taiwan, which Beijing regards as a renegade province and has vowed to reunify with the mainland by force if necessary. Successive U.S. administrations have steadily boosted military support and sales for Taiwan, much to Chinese anger.

A senior State Department official said last week that Blinken would "underscore, both in private and public, America's abiding interest in maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. We think that is vitally important for the region and the world."

In the South China Sea, the

U.S. and others have become increasingly concerned by Chinese actions in and around disputed areas.

In particular, the U.S. has voiced objections to what it says are Chinese attempts to thwart legitimate maritime activities by others in the sea, notably the Philippines and Vietnam. That was a major topic of concern this month when Biden held a three-way summit with the prime minister of Japan and the president of the Philippines.

On Ukraine, which U.S. officials say will be a primary topic of conversation during Blinken's visit, the Biden administration said that Chinese support has allowed Russia to largely reconstitute its defense industrial base, affecting not only the war in Ukraine but posing a threat to broader European security.

"If China purports on the one hand to want good relations with Europe and other countries, it can't on the other hand be fueling what is the biggest threat to European security since the end of the Cold War," Blinken said last week.

China says it has the right to trade with Russia and accuses the U.S. of fanning the flames by arming and funding Ukraine. "It is extremely hypocritical and irresponsible for the U.S. to introduce a large-scale aid bill for Ukraine while making groundless accusations against normal economic and trade exchanges between China and Russia," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Tuesday. **MDT/AP**

DIRE STRAIT

China blasts US military aid to Taiwan, saying the island is entering a 'dangerous situation'

CHINA blasted the latest package of U.S. military assistance to Taiwan yesterday, saying that such funding was pushing the self-governing island republic into a "dangerous situation."

The U.S. Senate passed \$95 billion in war aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan after months of delays and contentious debate over how involved the United States should be in foreign wars. The packa-

ge included \$8 billion for Taiwan, meant to counter the threat of invasion by China, which claims the entire island as its own territory and has threatened to take it by force if necessary.

The mainland's Taiwan Affairs Office said the aid "seriously violates" U.S. commitments to China and "sends a wrong signal to the Taiwan independence separatist forces."

Office spokesperson Zhu Fenglian added that

Taiwan's ruling pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, which won a third four-year term in January, is willing to "become a pawn for external forces to use Taiwan to contain China, bringing Taiwan into a dangerous situation."

On Tuesday, Taiwan's leader-elect Lai Ching-te told a visiting U.S. Congressional delegation that the aid package would "strengthen the deterrence against

authoritarianism in the West Pacific ally chain" and "help ensure peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and also boost confidence in the region."

The package has had broad congressional support since Biden first requested the money last summer. But congressional leaders had to navigate strong opposition from a growing number of conservatives who question U.S. involvement in fo-

reign wars and argue that Congress should be focused instead on the surge of migration at the U.S.-Mexico border.

The package covers a wide range of parts and services aimed at maintaining and upgrading Taiwan's military hardware. Separately, Taiwan has signed billions in contracts with the U.S. for latest-generation F-16V fighter jets, M1 Abrams main battle tanks and the HIMARS rocket sys-

tem, which the U.S. has also supplied to Ukraine.

China launches daily incursions into waters and airspace around Taiwan by navy ships and warplanes. It has also sought to pick away Taiwan's few remaining formal diplomatic partners.

However, only two People's Liberation Army Air Force planes and seven navy vessels were found operating in areas around Taiwan between Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning, possibly as a result of heavy rainstorms and low visibility overnight along the island's west coast facing China. **MDT/AP**

JAPAN

IAEA team inspects treated radioactive water release from Fukushima plant

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

A team of experts from the U.N. nuclear agency inspected the tsunami-hit Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant yesterday for a review of its discharge of treated radioactive wastewater into the Pacific.

The International Atomic Energy Agency inspection was part of a four-day visit to Japan that started Tuesday, its second since the water discharge began last August despite strong protests from fishing groups and neighboring China, which has banned Japanese seafood. The IAEA team will issue a report later.

The Japanese government and the plant operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, or TEPCO, say the discharges are diluted to better than international standards, and IAEA chief Rafael Mariano Grossi said in March that they were being carried out safely.

During the site visit, the plant suffered a temporary blackout when some underground digging apparently damaged an electrical cable in an area separate from the water discharge. The blackout halted the water discharges for

AP PHOTO



several hours, but the IAEA was nonetheless able to complete its inspection, according to TEPCO.

One excavation worker suffered burns and had to be treated in hospital, but the plant's cooling systems were unaffected and the water discharge resumed safely yesterday evening, TEPCO said.

The IAEA did not immediately comment on the blackout.

A 2011 earthquake and tsunami damaged the Fukushima plant's power supply and reactor cooling functions, triggering meltdowns of three reactors and cau-

sing large amounts of radioactive wastewater to accumulate. After more than a decade of cleanup work, the plant began discharging the water after treating it and diluting it with seawater on Aug. 24, starting a process that's expected to take decades.

After the plant visit, the IAEA team members are expected to have more discussion in Tokyo through Friday. Data and samples collected from the Fukushima plant will be corroborated at IAEA labs and independent third-party labs from China, South Korea,

Switzerland and the United States, and will be released in a report later.

"This independent, objective and science-based approach will help build confidence to the people in Japan and beyond," mission leader Gustavo Caruso, director of safety and security coordination at IAEA, said at a meeting Tuesday with Japanese officials.

The team includes independent international experts from 10 countries – Argentina, Australia, Britain, Canada, China, France, Russia, South Korea, the Uni-

ted States and Vietnam.

Japan's government and TEPCO note that the treated water is filtered and diluted by large amounts of seawater. Results of monitoring of seawater and marine life samples near the plant show concentrations of tritium, the only inseparable radioactive material, are far below recommended limits, they say.

Fishing groups worry about a negative reputation from the release, and neighboring China has not been convinced of the safety. China banned all imports of Japanese seafood immediately after the release began.

The plant has released about 31,200 tons of the treated water in four batches. The ongoing fifth batch of 7,800-ton release lasts through May 7.

Yesterday's cable damage and blackout was a latest in a series of incidents at the plant in recent months. In October, two workers were hospitalized after being splashed with radioactive liquid while cleaning a water treatment system, though they had no health problems from the exposure. In February, some contaminated water leaked at another facility on the plant due to human error. **MDT/AP**

NORTH KOREA

Kim sends a delegation to Iran in a growing effort to break its diplomatic isolation

A high-level North Korean economic delegation was on its way to Iran, the North's state media said yesterday, for what would be the two countries' first known talks since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Embracing the idea of a "new Cold War," North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is pushing to build up cooperation with countries confronting the United States, as his intensified weapons tests prompted the U.S. and South Korea to expand their military drills.

Pyongyang's delegation led by Yun Jung Ho, North Korea's minister of external economic relations, flew out Tuesday for the trip to Iran, official Korean Central News Agency said yes-

terday. State media did not immediately provide further details.

Pyongyang and Tehran are among the few governments in the world that support Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, and both have been accused of providing Russia with military equipment.

The last known time North Korea sent senior officials to Iran was in August 2019, when a group led by Pak Chol Min, vice chair of Pyongyang's rubber-stamp parliament, made a weeklong visit. The two countries had active diplomatic exchanges until North Korea sealed its borders in an effort to stave off the pandemic, before a cau-

AP FILE PHOTO



tious reopening in 2023.

South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles affairs with the North,

did not immediately comment Yun's visit to Iran.

North Korea has made efforts for months to boost

the visibility of its ties with Russia and China as Kim attempts to break out of diplomatic isolation and join a united front against the U.S.

In 2023, Kim visited Russia's Far East for a rare summit with Putin, which highlighted the countries' expanding military cooperation, including the North's alleged transfers of artillery shells, missiles, and other munitions to Russia.

Earlier this month, Kim hosted top Chinese official Zhao Leji, who heads the parliament and ranks third in the ruling Communist Party hierarchy. It was the highest-level meeting between the countries in years.

Yesterday, Kim Yo Jong,

the North Korean leader's powerful sister, slammed the latest rounds of U.S.-South Korean joint military drills and insisted that the allies will never break the North's determination to build up "our overwhelming and most powerful military muscle."

The statement comes a week after U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield called for the international community to be alert to the possibility of military cooperation between North Korea, Iran and Russia. Iran has been accused of providing drones to Russia for use in the war against Ukraine.

"We are concerned about ... the Iranians providing weapons to the Russians and the Russians also supporting efforts to help (North Korea) expand their own research into developing weapons. And certainly, that would be the case with Iran as well," she said. **MDT/AP**

USA

Doctors combine a pig kidney transplant and a heart device to extend woman's life

LAURAN NEERGAARD,
NEW YORK

DOCTORS have transplanted a pig kidney into a New Jersey woman who was near death, part of a dramatic pair of surgeries that also stabilized her failing heart.

Lisa Pisano's combination of heart and kidney failure left her too sick to qualify for a traditional transplant, and out of options. Then doctors at NYU Langone Health devised a novel one-two punch: Implant a mechanical pump to keep her heart beating and days later transplant a kidney from a genetically modified pig.

Pisano is recovering well, the NYU team announced yesterday. She's only the second patient ever to receive a pig kidney -- following a landmark transplant last month at Massachusetts General Hospital -- and the latest in a string of attempts to make animal-to-human transplantation a reality.

This week, the 54-year-old grasped a walker and took her first few steps.

"I was at the end of my rope," Pisano told The Associated Press. "I just took a chance. And you know, worst case scenario, if it didn't work for me, it might have worked for someone else and it could have helped the next person."

Dr. Robert Montgomery, director of NYU Langone Transplant Institute, recounted cheers in the operating room as the organ immediately started making urine.

"It's been transformative," Montgomery said of the experiment's early results.

But "we're not off the hook yet," cautioned Dr. Nader Moazami, the NYU cardiac surgeon who implanted the heart pump.

"With this surgery I get to see my wife smile again," Pisano's husband Todd said.

Other transplant experts are closely watching how the patient fares.

"I have to congratulate them," said Dr. Tatsuo Kawai of Mass General, who noted that his own pig kidney

AP PHOTO



Lisa Pisano looks at photos of her dog after her surgeries at NYU Langone Health in New York on Monday

patient was healthier overall going into his operation than NYU's patient. "When the heart function is bad, it's really difficult to do a kidney transplant."

THE PIG ORGAN QUEST

More than 100,000 people are on the U.S. transplant waiting list, most who need a kidney, and thousands die waiting. In hopes of filling the shortage of donated organs, several biotech companies are genetically modifying pigs so their organs are more humanlike, less likely to be destroyed by people's immune system.

NYU and other research teams have temporarily transplanted pig kidneys and hearts into brain-dead bodies, with promising results. Then the University of Maryland transplanted pig hearts into two men who were out of other options, and both died within months.

Mass General's pig kidney transplant last month raised new hopes. Kawai said Richard "Rick" Slayman experienced an early rejection scare but bounced back enough to go home earlier this month and still is faring well five weeks post-transplant. A re-

cent biopsy showed no further problems.

A COMPLEX CASE AT NYU

Pisano is the first woman to receive a pig organ — and unlike with prior xenotransplant experiments, both her heart and kidneys had failed. She went into cardiac arrest and had to be resuscitated before the experimental surgeries. She'd gotten too weak to even play with her grandchildren. "I was miserable," the Cookstown, New Jersey, woman said.

A failed heart made her ineligible for a traditional kidney transplant. But while on dialysis, she didn't qualify for a heart pump, called a left ventricular assist device or LVAD, either.

"It's like being in a maze and you can't find a way out," Montgomery explained — until the surgeons decided to pair a heart pump with a pig kidney.

TWO SURGERIES IN EIGHT DAYS

With emergency permission from the Food and Drug Administration, Montgomery chose an organ from a pig genetically engineered by United Therapeutics

Corp. so its cells don't produce a particular sugar that's foreign to the human body and triggers immediate organ rejection.

Plus a tweak: The donor pig's thymus gland, which trains the immune system, was attached to the donated kidney in hopes that it would help Pisano's body tolerate the new organ.

Surgeons implanted the LVAD to power Pisano's heart on April 4, and transplanted the pig kidney on April 12. There's no way to predict her long-term outcome but she's shown no sign of organ rejection so far, Montgomery said. And in adjusting the LVAD to work with her new kidney, Moazami said doctors already have learned lessons that could help future care of heart-and-kidney patients.

Special "compassionate use" experiments teach doctors a lot but it will take rigorous studies to prove if xenotransplants really work. What happens with Pisano and Mass General's kidney recipient will undoubtedly influence FDA's decision to allow such trials. United Therapeutics said it hopes to begin one next year. **MDT/AP**

this day in history



1974 REBELS SEIZE CONTROL OF PORTUGAL

Army rebels are in control of Portugal tonight after an almost bloodless dawn coup ended nearly 50 years of dictatorship.

Shortly after midnight, tanks rolled into the centre of Lisbon. The Salazar Bridge over the River Tagus was seized and the airport, radio and television centres were taken.



Troops armed with machineguns stormed the barracks where the Prime Minister, Dr Marcello Caetano, and several of his ministers had taken refuge.

The former deputy armed forces minister, General Antonio de Spinoza, received the surrender of the prime minister, who has now fled into exile to the Portuguese island of Madeira.

By sunrise the Movement of the Armed Forces, or MFA, was in control. It issued an immediate proclamation appealing for calm and patriotism.

After almost five decades of dictatorship, it promised to restore civil liberties and hold general elections to a national assembly as soon as possible.

The MFA condemned Portugal's foreign policy. After 13 years of fighting, it said, Portugal had been unable to achieve peace "between Portuguese of all races and creeds".

It also called for a clean-up of state-run institutions which had legitimised the abuse of power.

A seven-man junta, led by General Spinoza, would oversee the transition period until democracy could be established.

General Spinoza and his troops received a hero's welcome from crowds, who gave them cigarettes, food, newspapers and carnations which were in full bloom at the time.

In one violent outburst, up to six civilians were killed after shots were fired from the headquarters of the police station - and troops responded by storming the building.

The Democratic Elections Commission group, which contested last year's parliamentary elections against the Government, issued a statement today saying that the group considered as positive "an act which could lead to the overthrow of a regime which for 50 years has oppressed the people of Portugal."

The majority of Portuguese troops, nearly 140,000 out of 204,000, are posted overseas, propping up Portugal's tottering colonial empire in Angola, Guinea and Mozambique.

General Spinoza was sacked from his job as deputy armed forces minister last month after writing a book, Portugal and the Future, in which he argued that the Portuguese could not win its African wars by military means alone.

He was Governor and Commander in Chief of Portuguese Guinea between 1968 and 1972 and was widely respected for trying to win over the hearts and minds of the local population.

His book was regarded as heretical by the country's right-wing establishment - in particular his stated claim that Portugal was not defending the West and its civilization by colonising African states.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The 25 April coup became known as the Carnation Revolution. It ended the longest dictatorship in Europe, the Estado Novo.

The new regime pushed through a rapid and hasty programme of decolonisation. Over the next few years Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Cape Verde Islands, Sao Tome and Principe, and Angola all became independent. General Spinoza served briefly as interim president and was succeeded by General Francisco da Costa Gomes. Between them they nationalised about 60% of the economy and carried out a major redistribution of land. Hundreds of political prisoners were released.

Over the course of the next decade a stable two party system was established.

Caetano spent the rest of his life in exile in Brazil.

Freedom Day is now celebrated as a national holiday on 25 April.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Your disciplined efforts are paying off. Harvest sweet fruit from seeds earlier planted. Collaborate to realize shared dreams. Pull together with your partner.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Collaboration and romance spark anew. Benefit from dedicated efforts. Reinforce basic support structures. Share support for common dreams. Stand for each other.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Practice your moves. Disciplined actions build strength, ease and endurance. Balance a busy work schedule with fresh air, exercise, good food and rest.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Creative dreams come true with steady action. Practice your skills and talents. You're building foundational support. Develop a passionate obsession into new beauty.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Dreamy domestic renovations unfold to fulfill creative visions. Physical action gets results. Clean, declutter and give stuff away. Follow the plan. Collaborate with family.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Keep your objective in mind. Disciplined communications advance your cause. Implement plans to fulfill a creative dream. Review and edit carefully. Find solutions in conversation.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Disciplined efforts reward with extra gold. Pour on the steam. You're building for a dream. Nail your marks and deadlines. Enjoy and celebrate results.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Your self-discipline is paying off. Advance a personal dream with an energized push. Keep doing what's working. Stretch for more and get it.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You can get especially productive behind closed doors. Peaceful privacy suits you. Take time to dream and plot. Imagine perfection. What would it take?



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Friendships deepen and mellow like fine wine. Discuss dreams, visions and crazy ideas. Align your forces for common good. Stand for each other.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Fulfill a professional dream with steady, disciplined steps. Imagine the prize as already won, and notice what came before to chart your course backwards.

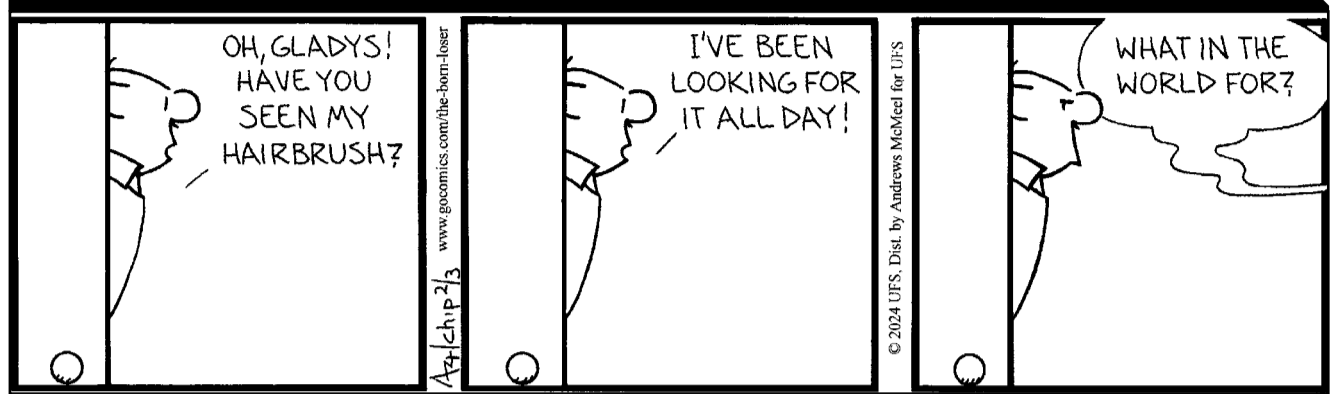


PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Learn from a master. Gain skills faster with expert support. You're building for a dream. Put in disciplined work behind the scenes for later glory.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	11	28	fine
Changchun	11	23	fine
Chengdu	14	26	overcast
Chongqing	18	25	fine
Fuzhou	17	23	rain
Guangzhou	22	26	rain
Guiyang	14	24	cloudy
Haikou	25	35	cloudy
Hangzhou	15	25	rain
Harbin	9	20	cloudy
Hefei	12	27	overcast
Nanjing	15	25	overcast
Shanghai	16	23	rain
Taipei	19	25	rain
Wuhan	16	24	rain
Hong Kong	27	28	thunderstorm
WORLD			
Moscow	12	20	showers
Frankfurt	2	11	cloudy
Paris	6	14	cloudy
London	4	12	cloudy
New York	5	13	sunny

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Racer Yarborough; 5- Furnace output; 9- Scottish boys; 13- Clear the slate; 15- Caesar's wings; 16- "Rhyme Pays" rapper; 17- Hard to call; 18- Nicholas II, for one; 19- Pith helmet; 20- Dawn deity; 21- Seldom seen; 23- Reflecting surface; 25- Sever with the teeth; 26- Soundless; 27- Kelp; 30- U-turn from SSW; 31- Sacrifice site; 32- Young; 37- Actor Penn; 38- Swedish imports; 40- Mont Blanc, par exemple; 41- Devil worship; 43- Singer Baker; 44- Harem room; 45- Writing space; 47- Out, in bed; 50- Catch sight of; 51- Remember; 52- Major ending; 53- ___-Wan Kenobi was a character in "Star Wars"; 56- Jog; 57- ___ of Man; 59- Parachute material; 61- ___ kleine Nachtmusik; 62- Modernists; 63- Family car; 64- Visionary; 65- Expel gas or odor; 66- Trawler equipment;

DOWN 1- Gospel singer Winans; 2- Singer Guthrie; 3- Vientiane is its capital; 4- Double curve; 5- Intense dislike; 6- Ultimatum ender; 7- Battery type; 8- End of a railroad line; 9- Petrol unit; 10- Squirrel stash; 11- Station; 12- Agitate; 14- More spine-tingling; 22- Had a bite; 24- Belinda Carlisle's "Should ___ You In?"; 25- African sir; 26- Nose-in-the-air type; 27- Mouth off; 28- Zeno's home; 29- Rat-___; 32- Sweet potato; 33- Sniffer's need; 34- Dart; 35- ___ no good; 36- Spring; 38- Remove from action; 39- Prontol; 42- Christmas carol; 43- Quaking trees; 45- Abhor; 46- Cornerstone abbr.; 47- Eagle's nest; 48- Biscuitlike quick bread; 49- "See ya!"; 51- Hwys.; 52- "The Time Machine" race; 53- Ye ___ Shoppe; 54- Gravy ___; 55- Roadside rests; 58- Religious sch.; 60- Hankering;



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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HKD 11,880,000 4 bed 3 bath

BASEBALL

ANGELS' TROUT BATS LEADOFF FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 2020, HOMERS IN FIRST AT-BAT AGAINST ORIOLES

JOE REEDY, ANAHEIM

LOS Angeles Angels manager Ron Washington was hoping to get a spark by putting Mike Trout in the leadoff spot yesterday [Macau time] against the Baltimore Orioles.

The three-time AL MVP quickly obliged.

Hitting leadoff for first time since 2020, Trout drove a fastball from Baltimore's Grayson Rodriguez off the auxiliary scoreboard above the wall in right-center field in the first inning in the Angels 7-4 victory over the Orioles.

"Mike set the tone right away and we didn't look back," Angels pitcher Griffin Canning said.

It was the sixth leadoff homer of Trout's career and first since Sept. 28, 2012, against Texas.

Coincidentally, Washington was the Rangers' manager when Trout took Ryan Dempster deep in that game.



Los Angeles Angels' Mike Trout (right) celebrates his home run with third base coach Eric Young Sr.

"I didn't know that until I was told coming in here (the postgame interview room)," said Washington, who is in his first season with the Angels. "So that was a big move I made tonight. The credit goes to Mike, it doesn't go to me."

According to the Elias Sports Bu-

reau, the 11 years and 208 days is the second-longest span between consecutive leadoff homers in MLB history. The longest is 12 years, 286 days by Omar Vizquel.

Trout's nine home runs this season are tied with Atlanta's Marcell Ozuna for the major league

lead. He went 1 for 4 as the Angels snapped a five-game losing streak.

It was the 163rd time in Trout's 14-year, big league career that he topped the lineup, the first since the second game of a doubleheader against Houston on Aug. 25, 2020.

"I'm just trying to shake things up and trying to see if I can get some different cohesiveness with my lineup," Washington said before the game.

Washington is also hoping that moving Trout up will help put him back on track.

Trout hit .290 (18 for 62) with seven home runs in his first 16 games, but has struggled at the plate over the past eight games. He has gone 4 for 31 with 10 strikeouts since April 16, including getting caught looking for the final out with the bases loaded in yesterday's 4-2 loss to the Orioles.

Trout's .237 batting average is on pace to be his lowest average in March and April in his career. He hit over .300 through the end of April the past three seasons.

Trout hit leadoff in 138 games during his first full season in the majors in 2012, when he was voted AL Rookie of the Year.

He had batted first in only five games since 2014.

"He's done it before, so it's not foreign to him. If we can put him in there and get a run in the first inning I'm all for that. I'm just looking to try different things and see what works," Washington said.

Trout is a career .321 hitter when in the leadoff spot with 34 home runs and a .397 on-base percentage. **MDT/AP**

AD



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SKI

Marcel Hirscher is coming out of retirement to ski for the Netherlands, his mom's nation

ANDREW DAMPF

EIGHT-TIME overall World Cup champion Marcel Hirscher is planning to return to ski racing next season after five years in retirement. And he's going to compete for the Netherlands — his mother's country — instead of his native Austria.

The Austrian winter sports federation announced yesterday that it had released the 35-year-old Hirscher and endorsed his nation change.

"We have of course tried very hard to offer Marcel the best possible and individual conditions in the event of a return to Alpine racing and were able to explain these to him in a personal exchange," the federation, known as ÖSV, said. "Of course, we very much regret his decision to request a change of nation to the Dutch Ski Association but in

the end we supported it."

Hirscher was born and raised in Austria to an Austrian father and a Dutch mother, Sylvia. His father, Ferdinand, coached him throughout his career.

Patrick Riml, the ski racing director at Red Bull, Hirscher's sponsor, said that Hirscher plans to enter lower-level FIS races in New Zealand in August to get the necessary points to return to the World Cup circuit and that his main aim is to compete at next season's world championships in Saalbach-Hinterglemm, Austria.

"He's been training the whole season. He's been on snow pretty much every day of the winter testing his equipment," Riml said, adding that Hirscher plans to compete in both slalom and giant slalom.

Hirscher retired in 2019 following his record eighth straight overall World Cup title.

So can he still compete at the highest level?

"He was amazing when he was racing, he was the best one out there," Riml told The Associated Press. "Marcel is Marcel."

Hirscher's return follows that of another Red Bull athlete, Lucas Braathen, who is switching from Norway to Brazil — his mother's home nation.

Skiers must comply with International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) rules to change national eligibility — though the process is made easier if the team they are leaving agrees to the move.

Riml said there was no shared planning or communication between Hirscher and Braathen, and noted that Hirscher has not formally joined the Dutch association yet.

"My understanding is that the last couple of years, he was always

thinking about it," Riml said. "Then he decided on very, very short notice that he really wants to do this. And then we basically got to work trying to get all the documentations in place and everything will be submitted today to the FIS council for approval, which is just a formality."

Might Hirscher extend his comeback to the Milan-Cortina Olympics in 2026? Hirscher won two golds at the 2018 Pyeongchan-

ge Games and a bronze at the 2014 Sochi Games.

"It's hard to predict anything right now," Riml said. "We just have to see how things are going. It's a step by step process. ... The goal right now is to get back on track, train hard and get some first races and then see where he's at. ... Right now the goal is this season. But then then you never know, right?"

Riml stepped down as the U.S. Ski Team's Alpine director a few months ago but remains a consultant for the Americans.

"This was not in the plan when it came up, but it's very exciting for the sport in general," Riml said of having Hirscher back along with Braathen.

So which skiers will change nations next?

"You never know what's coming up," Riml said. "I'm pretty sure that those two guys are inspirations for a lot of athletes. So we'll see." **MDT/AP**





Forerunner Marcel Hirscher



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OPINION

Editorial

Paulo Coutinho



THE CARNATION DISCOLORED

On April 25, 1974, Portugal was transformed by the Carnation Revolution, a bloodless coup that swept away decades of dictatorship. As we mark the 50th anniversary of this pivotal moment, the country finds itself at a crossroads, its society divided and its commitment to the democratic ideals of the revolution under strain.

The Carnation Revolution was more than a mere change of government; it was a profound societal upheaval that promised freedom and democracy.

Led by young military officers and supported by a populace weary of authoritarian rule, the movement quickly dismantled the Estado Novo regime, of Salazar and Caetano.

The transition was not without its challenges.

The period following the coup, known as the Ongoing Revolutionary Process (PREC), was marked by intense political and social instability. Figures such as Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho advocated for a socialist direct democracy, while others notably Mário Soares (Socialist Party leader and founder), Francisco Sá Carneiro (Social Democratic Party leader and founder) and Ramalho Eanes (who represented the moderate faction of the Armed Forces) pushed for a Western-style parliamentary system. The latter eventually prevailed, steering Portugal towards the democratic norms of Western Europe.

Reflecting on those days, I remember being a 13-year-old in Aveiro, a small but vibrant town in Northern Portugal. Soon enough, the revolution's echoes were loud and clear in our school corridors. Our classes were often interrupted for general assembly meetings or news of another strike. At a point, for weeks, soldiers patrolled the school grounds, a jarring reminder of the nation's fragility, tasked with preventing clashes between students of diverging political views. This was a time when many families, including those who had hurriedly returned from former colonies amid a controversial decolonization process, were trying to find their footing in a rapidly changing Portugal.

Now, decades later, residing in Macau, these events are like glimpses from another planet or another life. Yet, the revolution played a critical role in shaping Macau's future as well.

In the years following the coup, Portugal, who administered the territory, granted Macau autonomous status with its own mini-constitution in 1976, a precursor to the Basic Law that governs the region today.

Recent developments in Portugal have cast a shadow over the revolution's legacy, despite the significant strides towards democracy over the half century. The latest elections revealed a stark divide, with over 1.2 million people casting their votes for Chega, a far-right party. This shift towards nationalism and the far-right is alarming, particularly because many of these voters are disillusioned with what they perceive as the failed promises of the revolution.

Recent public opinion surveys reveal a nuanced picture: while two-thirds of the Portuguese populace view the revolution positively, there is a significant minority that is against the revolution. This division highlights a broader debate about the nature of democracy and freedom in Portugal, questioning whether the revolution truly delivered on its promise of an equitable society.

As we commemorate this anniversary, it is crucial for us to reflect on the achievements of the revolution, acknowledging its successes in dismantling a dictatorship of 48 years and establishing a democratic framework. However, we must also confront the revolution's unfinished business, particularly its inability to fully integrate all segments of society into a cohesive democratic process, resisting the allure of authoritarian solutions in times of crisis.

As someone who witnessed firsthand the transformative power of the Carnation Revolution, I remain hopeful yet cautious about our democratic journey. This anniversary should serve as a moment of reflection and a call to action: to renew our commitment to the democratic ideals that once inspired a nation, and to ensure they are robust enough to withstand the tests of time and division.

THE HEAD OF MEXICO'S DETECTIVE SERVICE SAYS HIS COUNTRY IS THE 'CHAMPION' OF FENTANYL PRODUCTION

THE BUZZ

The head of Mexico's detective service acknowledged that the country is "the champion" of fentanyl production, something that appears to run counter to past statements by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

López Obrador has hotly denied in the past that any fentanyl is produced in Mexico, saying Mexican cartels only press it into pills or add finishing touches.

But Felipe de Jesus Gallo, the head of Mexico's Criminal Investigation Agency, said that since the 1990s "Mexico has been the champion of methamphetamine production, and now fentanyl." He spoke at a U.S.-Mexico conference on synthetic drugs in Mexico City.

Experts agree that cartels in Mexico use precursor chemicals from China and India to make the synthetic opioid and smuggle it into the United States, where it causes about 70,000 overdose deaths annually.

While fentanyl is not widely abused in Mexico, methamphetamine addiction is commonplace.

Gallo said that Mexican cartels have launched industrial-scale production of meth in many states throughout the country and now export the drug around the world.

"Believe me, methamphetamine production has become industrialized, it's not just in the mountains anymore," Gallo said.

AP PHOTO



Astronauts for the upcoming Shenzhou-18 mission, from left, Li Guangsu, Ye Guangfu and Li Cong wave as they arrive for a meeting with the press at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center, yesterday

CHINA TO SEND THREE ASTRONAUTS TO TIANGONG SPACE STATION

ANDY WONG, JIUQUAN SATELLITE LAUNCH CENTER

CHINA'S space agency is making final preparations to send the Shenzhou-18 crew into low-Earth orbit today as part of its ambitious space program that aims to put people on the moon by 2030.

In a press conference yesterday, the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) introduced the three astronauts: Commander Ye Guangfu, 43, a veteran astronaut who was part of the Shenzhou-13 mission in 2021; and astronauts Li Cong, 34, and Li Guangsu, 36, who will go to space for the first time.

The three-member crew's spacecraft is set for lift-off at 8:59 p.m. (1259 GMT) from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on the edge of the Gobi Desert in the country's northwest. They will relieve the Shenzhou-17 team, who have manned China's Tiangong space station since last October.

The crew will spend about six months on the space station. They will

conduct scientific tests, install space debris protection equipment on the space station, carry out payload experiments, and popularize science education, among other things, according to Lin Xiqiang, deputy director of the CMSA.

Lin also said China was working toward eventually offering access to its space station to foreign astronauts and space tourists.

"We will accelerate the research and promotion of the participation of foreign astronauts and space tourists in flights with China's space station," he said. "We definitely expect to see astronauts of different identities on China's space station."

China built its own space station after being excluded from the International Space Station, largely due to the United States' concerns over the People's Liberation Army's — the Chinese Communist Party's military arm's — involvement in the program.

This year, the Tiangong space station is slated for two cargo

spacecraft missions and two manned space-flight missions.

China conducted its first manned space mission in 2003, becoming the third country after the former Soviet Union and the U.S. to put a person into space using its own resources.

The U.S. space program is believed to still hold a significant edge over China's due to its spending, supply chains and capabilities. However, China has broken out in some areas, bringing samples back from the lunar surface for the first time in decades and landing a rover on the less explored far side of the moon.

The U.S. — the only country to have previously put astronauts on the moon — aims to put a crew back on the lunar surface by the end of 2025 as part of a renewed commitment to crewed missions, aided by private sector players such as SpaceX and Blue Origin.

Four countries, the U.S., Russia, China and India, have landed spacecraft on the moon. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Germany Prominent far-right lawmaker Maximilian Krah (pictured) said yesterday that he will dismiss an assistant who was arrested on suspicion of spying for China, but will remain the Alternative for Germany party's top candidate in the upcoming European Parliament elections. His assistant, Jian Guo, was arrested Monday. Prosecutors accuse Guo of working for a Chinese intelligence service and of repeatedly passing on information on negotiations and decisions in the European Parliament in January.

AP PHOTO



UK The world is seeing a near breakdown of international law amid flagrant rule-breaking in Gaza and Ukraine, multiplying armed conflicts, the rise of authoritarianism and huge rights violations in Sudan, Ethiopia and Myanmar, Amnesty International warned yesterday as it published its annual report. The human rights organization said the most powerful governments, including the United States, Russia and China, have led a global disregard for international rules and values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with civilians in conflicts paying the highest price.

AP PHOTO



Argentina Raising their textbooks and diplomas and singing the national anthem, hundreds of thousands of Argentines filled the streets of Buenos Aires and other cities yesterday [Macau time] to demand increased funding for the country's public universities, in an outpouring of anger at libertarian President Javier Milei's harsh austerity measures. The scale of the demonstration in downtown Buenos Aires appeared to exceed other massive demonstrations that have rocked the capital since Milei came to power.