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POLICE ARREST MAN LINKED TO MOP4.7M GOLD LAUNDERING SCHEME

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WAR CRIMES: PROSECUTOR SEEKS ARREST OF ISRAELI AND HAMAS LEADERS

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China A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said yesterday that China urges the United States to earnestly abide by its commitments of not using Taiwan as a tool to contain China, and stop hollering out the one-China principle. Spokesperson Wang Wenbin made the remarks at a daily press briefing in response to a query about U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's "congratulations" to the new leader of the Taiwan region, Xinhua reported.



Australia's deputy prime minister pledged support to the Solomon Islands during a visit to the archipelago nation yesterday, as Canberra intensifies efforts to counter China's growing influence in the South Pacific. The trip of Richard Marles (pictured) to the capital, Honiara, was the first by an Australian government minister since Jeremiah Manele was elected Solomon Islands' new prime minister earlier this month.



South Korea The world's leading artificial intelligence companies pledged at the start of a mini summit on AI to develop the technology safely, including pulling the plug if they can't rein in the most extreme risks. The two-day meeting also comes as major tech companies like Meta, OpenAI and Google roll out the latest versions of their AI models. In November, at the AI Safety Summit at Bletchley Park in the UK, participating countries agreed to work together to contain the potentially "catastrophic" risks posed by breakthrough advances in AI.

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MORE FOREIGN VISITORS IN MAY: MGTO

There have been 7,000 to 8,000 international tourists per day on average this month, which is 1,000 to 2,000 more than the daily average in April, according to data from the tourism bureau. Deputy director of the Macao Government Tourism Office, Cheng Wai Tong, also said that there has been an increase in the number of international cruise passengers visiting Macau. Since March, 500 people have visited Macau in groups, while many cruise passengers have chosen to explore Macau independently. Cheng said that authorities have distributed 250,000 copies of promotional material including discounts on air tickets and ferry tickets, which have proven to be effective in attracting tourists.

HELIPORT HOLDS FULL-SCALE EMERGENCY EXERCISE

The Outer Harbour Heliport conducted a full-scale emergency exercise last night, simulating a helicopter accident with injuries. The simulation involved a helicopter crash upon take-off resulting in two passengers suffering severe injuries while crews were uninjured. Upon receiving notification of the incident, emergency responders including customs, police, fire and medical personnel assembled at the command center. Fire crews provided initial medical care to the injured passengers before their simulated transport to the hospital. The hour-long exercise was intended to test the heliport's emergency response procedures and coordination between agencies, and involved approximately 100 personnel and seven rescue vehicles.

SPORTS DAY AT TAP SEAC SQUARE FROM JUNE 15

The Sports Bureau and MR.J Sports Association of Macau will co-host a two-day mass participation sports event sponsored by AXA Macau. Taking place June 15-16 in Tap Seac Square, the AXA Sports Carnival will feature three activity zones for all ages, including parent-child games, booth games, and an inflatable obstacle course. "We aim to provide relaxation and fitness through sport amid busy schedules," said MR.J Sports Association head Manuela Chan. New elements include healthy food booths and a parent-child experience area for bonding over games. Chan said AXA shares the event's goal of promoting positivity through an active lifestyle.

LRT LAND AT BORDER GATE

LAW APPROVED, PRICE TO PAY TO ZHUHAI NO LONGER AN ISSUE

RENATO MARQUES

THE law that will regulate the use of the land granted to Macau by a decision of the Permanent Committee of the National People's Congress on December 29 last year has been approved after its final reading yesterday afternoon at the Legislative Assembly.

The final voting on the law, which commences the day after its publication, occurred without any major issues being raised by lawmakers who approved the bill unanimously.

Unlike the first reading, this time no lawmakers expressed concerns or raised any questions related to the price of the exclusive lease of the land for the construction of the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) East Line in its connection to the Border Gate area.

During the first reading, several lawmakers queried the price, and the Secretary for Administration and Justice, André Cheong, failed to provide the rent figure.

At the time, when question-



ed on the matter, Cheong said only, "in future, we will have an agreement between the two sides [Zhuhai and Macau]. For the time being, we don't know the price for certain."

There is also uncertainty about the actual area that is being rented by the Zhuhai authorities to Macau, with Cheong continuing to say yesterday, like in early April, that the final size and markings will be defined by the central government authorities and published.

"After the land is formally delivered to Macau Special Admi-

nistrative Region, we will be able to see all these details," he said in response to an enquiry on the matter by lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho, adding that there is no immediate relation between the law being approved and the delivery of the land.

Pereira Coutinho has questioned the rush from the government to present a bill that does not even have concrete data on the land parcel and queried why it cannot wait until the details are all finalized.

Cheong explained that the government wants to have the

law ready and in force so that, on the date of land transfer, "we can move forward immediately."

Other lawmakers, including Leong Sun Iok and Ron Lam, also called on Cheong to use the land well and improve it aesthetically since the LRT will only use the underground areas. Cheong noted that, according to the rules, "there isn't much that Macau can do at the surface at all."

Questioned also by Lam on the extension of the East Line to Qingmao Port, the Secretary refused to provide an answer, stating that it was irrelevant.

AL PLENARY

Lawmakers call for further support as many SMEs still face difficulties post-pandemic

HOWARD TONG

ENOMY rebounds with the return of tourism, many of the city's small, medium, and micro enterprises face significant difficulties, lawmaker Nick Lei said before the Legislative Assembly yesterday.

During his pre-agenda speech, the legislator outlined the challenges facing these businesses, particularly in sectors like catering, retail, and convention and exhibition, despite the overall improvement in the city's economic environment.

"Although Macau's economy has recovered well with the rapid recovery of tourism after the epidemic, not all industries can fully recover," Lei said. "Many small, medium, and micro enterprises have actually failed to benefit from the general environment of tourism recovery."

The lawmaker noted that rising rent and operating costs, combined with insufficient customer traffic, have left these businesses struggling even as their loan repayment obligations from government assistance programs have come due.

"Small, medium, and micro enterprises need to repay more than MOP100,000 per installment, and some even need to repay up to MOP300,000 per installment. The pressure is huge," he said.

To address this situation, Lei put forward several recommendations for the Macau government including the introduction of new measures to allow small, medium, and micro enterprises facing repayment difficulties to spread out their loan obligations over a longer period, reducing the monthly repayment burden.

He also asked the government to reopen applications for "interest-only" and "adjustment of repayment of various assistance programs" loan products to help enterprises that have missed the initial application window.

"The operating conditions of small, medium, and micro enterprises in health areas are more severe than during the pandemic, and they urgently need the government's attention," Lei concluded.

Similarly, legislator Chan Chak Mo shared the same sentiment, urging the government to reserve enough resources in its

upcoming budget to combat the persistent difficulties facing the community economy.

"Behind every small business is a family's livelihood," Chan emphasized. "The deterioration of the community economy will further affect the lives of grassroots families and disadvantaged groups."

His speech echoes broader concerns about the unequal nature of Macau's post-pandemic economic recovery, with leading industries rebounding strongly while smaller enterprises in community-oriented sectors continue to struggle.

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RENATO MARQUES

AL PLENARY

Gov't proposes bill to discourage non-compliant tenants

THE government has proposed a new bill that aims to create an alternative method for landlords to deal with non-compliant tenants.

The bill, presented yesterday at the Legislative Assembly (AL) for its first reading, generated a broad debate with a total of twelve lawmakers questioning the Secretary for Administration and Justice, André Cheong, on several of its proposed provisions and aims.

The main topic of discussion related to the establishment of a five-month non-compliance period before the landlord can commence eviction action.

Most lawmakers questioned this requirement, finding the period of non-compliance excessive as well as vulnerable to a potential loophole: if one full rent payment is made before the end of this period.

Others also wanted the government to explain how the executive reached the figure of five months. Ella Lei, Nick Lei, Ron Lam, Ip Sio Kai, and Leong Sun Iok were among those lawmakers who wanted an answer to this particular query.

Other lawmakers, including Zheng Anting, said that the bill only addressed repossession of the unit by the owner and not "the problem itself, which is the lack of related penalties that may create a deterrent effect," he said.

In response, Cheong noted that this new bill does not aim to replace the current processes of eviction and calls for compensation that the laws provide for but, instead, creates a simplified system for landlords to be able to vacate the units they are renting to tenants who are intentionally breaching their responsibilities with regard to rent payments.

Cheong explained, "the government doesn't wish [landlords] to



resort to this system too easily. The purpose of creating this regime is to have a deterrent effect, not to be an automatic procedure," he said, claiming that in many of the current situations, the landlords refrain from commencing any procedure as the sums in debt do not justify a complex process that will require lawyers and other court-related procedures that are very time-consuming.

"In many cases, it is not worth starting an [eviction] process as the debt is not that big when compared to the costs and time [it takes] to run the process, which is usually long."

"[It] affects the market as many landlords refrain from listing their units in the rental market due to being afraid of cases of non-compliance."

Cheong also added in response to an inquiry from lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho that the purpose

is to tackle cases of intentional delay of rent payment and not cases of force majeure, adding, "this is also the reason that the period [of five months] is not shorter – to allow time for the tenants to solve temporary financial problems."

He also advanced that the government hopes that "where there are simple issues, they can be solved with communication."

'FIVE-MONTH PERIOD' MAY CAUSE A MASSIVE IMPACT ON THE MARKET

According to lawmaker Ip Sio Kai, the five-month period before eviction may have a significant impact on the market, explaining, "if the period of non-compliance with rent payments becomes five months, rent deposits will likely also move from the current two to five months. This will have a massive impact on the market." He called on the government to han-

dle this matter with care.

In reality, Cheong failed to produce any justification for the choice of five months other than to say that the government is taking a "balanced approach to the matter and seeing both sides," a reason earlier also invoked by Pereira Coutinho to call for the reduction of the "waiting period" to two months, which is commonly in use.

Questioned on the number of cases of this kind happening in Macau, Cheong also failed to produce an exact number, saying instead that "it happens very frequently, although there is no exact number of cases [available]."

The Secretary noted that the only concrete figures are the ones related to the cases of eviction that are heard in courts, which in 2023 was 59.

Still, Cheong explained that most cases are never heard in

court as such a process is costly and long. This is precisely why, according to Cheong, the government is promoting this new bill: to allow a cheaper and easier method for owners to evict non-compliant tenants and repossess units.

According to his rough calculations, a process handled using this method can be solved in six to 11 months, while the current processes do not have an upper time limit.

GOV'T OPEN TO NEGOTIATION

Facing many inquiries and suggestions to improve the bill, the Secretary said the government will be open to negotiating some aspects of the bill at the AL Standing Committee, "as long as the main goal is kept and fulfilled," adding that this is a complementary method and a simplified alternative that aims only to repossess units and is not about other compensation, which are separate matters.

Among the most extreme proposals Cheong heard were the ones from lawmaker Lam who proposed the establishment of a "blacklist of tenants" as well as another from lawmaker Leong who wanted to enforce a similar regime to the one approved for the cases of water infiltration that allows the interruption of water and electricity supply to the unit.

To such proposals, Cheong responded only that they could cause many issues and conflict, noting about the second suggestion that, "we have this procedure just for cases of housing units being used as illegal hostels."

CRIME

Police arrest man linked to MOP4.7m gold laundering scheme

STAFF REPORTER

POLICE have arrested a 28-year-old Hong Kong man suspected of laundering MOP4.7 million as part of an electronic fraud group that targets Macau, authorities said yesterday.

The Judiciary Police (PJ) received a tip on Saturday from mainland China's National Anti-Fraud Center that criminals were using compromised bank cards to make large gold purchases in Macau to launder illegal funds, according to

a police statement. After an investigation, police identified suspects and learned the group planned another transaction, the statement said.

On Monday, police arrested the 28-year-old at a Cotai jewelry store as he bought approximately MOP63,800 worth of gold bars and nuggets, police said. He is believed to be a key member of the criminal group.

An investigation revealed the group was involved in at least eight electronic fraud cases on the mainland resulting in over

MOP5.5 million in losses, the statement said. The group would purchase gold in Macau to conceal the illicit money. Group members used others' identifying documents to conduct transactions and avoid scrutiny, masking their true identities, according to police.

At least one suspect remains at large. Police believe the group laundered money in Macau on at least 12 prior occasions totaling some MOP4.7 million using the same method. The PJ said the investigation is ongoing.



THINK TANK CONSIDERS THRESHOLD FOR TALENT RECRUITMENT SCHEME 'VERY HIGH'

STAFF REPORTER

THE threshold for the first phase of Macau's new talent introduction program is "very high" compared to the neighbouring region, according to Andy Loi, vice-chairman of the Collective Wisdom Policy Center.

According to the official from the think tank, around "three to four of every 10 applicants were admitted" in the first phase.

The Talent Development Committee has announced that the first phase of Macau's new talent introduction program has received over 1,000 applications.

As the special administrative region looks to optimize its programs to attract more professionals, Loi, also a committee member, has discussed the standards and differences compared to other regions.

Loi explained the initial phase focused on talent demands and is avoiding "vicious competition in human resources." For outstanding talent and senior professional categories, the committee targeted people who are "definitely needed" in Macau's four major



industries - finance, technology, tourism, and creative.

"The people we need are more important than the people we can accept," Loi stated, as cited in an Exmoo report.

Using finance and technology as examples, he said Macau has done well developing those industries so the standards protect local jobs while introducing professionals to support industry growth.

In total, 1,107 applications

were deemed valid with 387 candidates gaining recommended talent status as of April 30. This included 22 high-end talents, 83 outstanding talents, and 282 senior professionals.

Loi said the figures from the first phase achieved the desired results. As certain results are realized, the next phase of the plan will relax and focus on optimization. However, he emphasized Macau's program standards differ from other regions.

The SAR government has launched a new phase of the talent introduction program, which will accept applications for three categories of talent until November 20, for a total of nine programs. The authorities also announced that there was a total of 1,107 valid applications for the first phase of the talent introduction plan, and 387 people have been included in the list of recommended talents.

For the committee member, there is a clear gap between the

results of this data and Hong Kong's efforts to attract more than 100,000 people to Hong Kong through various talent programs.

Loi added that some scholars have pointed out that there are differences in the talent introduction plans of Macau and Hong Kong, emphasizing that Macau has formulated talent introduction standards for the development of four major industries and that, during the implementation process, it focuses on preserving local employment.

The differences demonstrate how Macau tailors its talent introduction to strategically support identified industry needs as the special administrative region continues optimizing programs to attract top global professionals.

The talent assessment entity will review the documents and information submitted by applicants in accordance with the applicable talent introduction plan and based on each applicant's contribution to improving the innovation, competitiveness, international reputation of the Macau SAR or promoting moderate economic diversification.

PJ: No foul play in death of baby at Taipa nursery

STAFF REPORTER

POLICE have ruled out foul play in the death of a four-month-old girl at a Taipa nursery late last year, according to a spokesman for the Judiciary Police's (PJ) Criminal Investigation Department. The infant's sudden death on October 19, 2023 prompted a thorough police investigation of the nursery's facilities, procedures, and staff, as well as forensic analysis of the baby's blood sample.

The spokesman explained that, after a comprehensive investigation, any criminal elements were ruled out. He added that no one was found to be involved in crimes related to the infant's death while napping.



Fong Chong (Taipa) Nursery, 2022

The spokesman added that, while the cause of death and full forensic results could not be disclosed for privacy reasons, the report would be forwarded to Public Prosecutions Office.

Following the unfortunate incident, the Secretary for So-

cial Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong, pledged better training will be provided to childcare facilities.

Ao Ieong pledged improved communications must be applied to ensure nurseries are compliant with relevant guidelines. She said adequate training

must be conducted for nursery operators and workers.

Last week, the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) reaches agreement with daycare centers on installing surveillance cameras. Officials are waiting for privacy guidelines before finalizing the plan.

"On one hand, cameras are required in some situations, but privacy of the children must also be ensured," IAS director Hon Wai. "Under what circumstances can cameras be turned on? We reached some consensus but need alternatives if parents disagree."

TOURISM

HZMB SETS NEW RECORD AS PASSENGERS INCREASE BY 120% Y-O-Y

THE number of people crossing the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge has significantly grown this year due to increasing exchanges between Hong Kong, Macau, and the mainland.

As of 9:40 a.m. yesterday, data from the bridge border inspection station revealed that the number of passengers entering and exiting through the Zhuhai Highway Port has exceeded 10 million so far in 2024.

This figure represents a year-on-year increase of over 127.7%.

This milestone was reached four months earlier than achieved in 2023, setting a new record for quickest to reach 10 million passenger trips in a year since the port opened. Analysis by the border inspection station revealed that more residents of Hong Kong and Macau are traveling to the Chinese mainland for tourism, leisure, and consumption via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge.

Since the beginning of this year, the number of passenger trips from Hong Kong and Macau crossing the border has reached 6.025 million, a year-on-year increase of 126.3%.

These trips account for 60.4% of the total passenger flow at the port.

Additionally, the number of single-license plate vehicles from Hong Kong and Macau has surpassed 1.095 million, with a monthly growth rate of over 10%.

Furthermore, the number of mainland travelers using Hong Kong and Macau tourist visas has exceeded 1.9 million since the beginning of this year, marking a year-on-year increase of 130%. LV

Sands Macao Celebrates 20 Years in Macao

A five-part series on the growth of Sands China since 2004



PART 3: Sands China jointly building City of Performing Arts

As the city's first international integrated tourism and leisure enterprise, Sands China has been rooted in Macao for 20 years now, since the opening of Sands Macao in 2004. After introducing Las Vegas Sands' successful integrated resort model to Macao – combining entertainment, retail, MICE, food & beverage, and accommodation all under one roof – the company continues to invest and actively contribute to the development of Macao into a world centre of tourism and leisure.

As Macao's largest integrated resort operator, Sands China is determined to provide local residents and tourists a variety of exciting non-gaming entertainment options, host diverse and influential arts and cultural activities such as international film festivals and award ceremonies, and invite world renowned and local artists to organize exhibitions. The group's property portfolio provides six multifunctional entertainment venues, with a combined capacity of over 26,300 seats, where guests can enjoy top-tier international entertainment performances. Since 2007, over 4.7 million people have enjoyed more than 740 performances.

facilities, the group is determined to create a new era of brilliance in Macao's performing arts sector."

In order to enhance the development of tourism industry, expand international tourism, and increase the number of repeat visitors, Sands China plans to continue bringing more top-rate concerts, international sporting events, theatre productions, new-to-market attractions and other exciting entertainment options.

CONCERT ECONOMY

In 2023, Sands China organized over 60 entertainment events and performances – inviting famous singers and bands to perform, including A-Mei, Hacken Lee, Eason

Sands China launched a new initiative, the Sands Performing Arts Program, in a bid to broaden the scope of performing arts in Macao by introducing and promoting premier national local and overseas performing art projects. The program fully utilizes Macao's role as a platform for international exchange, in alignment with the Macao SAR government's vision for the diverse development of the integrated tourism and leisure industry.

The Program brought a total of 13 top-notch performances to Macao in 2023, attracting over 14,000 audience members. While bringing performing arts projects that combine both classical and innovative elements, Sands China hopes to foster the growth of culture and creativity in the city. The company also organized two masterclasses for local art enthusiasts to engage with professional Cantonese opera singers and musicians, promoting exchange events among arts and culture and encouraging the professional development of performing arts.

VISUAL ARTS

Sands China has continually invited local and world-renowned artists to organize a variety of arts and cultural exhibitions, further enriching the art experiences of local residents and tourists. The company launched its Sands Gallery in 2022, born out of Sands China's desire to assist Macao in its positioning as a multi-cultural exchange and cooperation base with an emphasis on Chinese culture. Sands Gallery's ultimate objective has always been to provide Macao with a platform for exchanging artistic ideas and showing appreciation of the arts. To this end, Sands Gallery offers a high-end exhibition space for artists to exchange their ideas and display their work as the company introduces masterpieces created by renowned artists. Sands Gallery aims to play an active role in enhancing public interest in art appreciation, and further inspiring

local artists through various art exhibitions.

SPORTING EVENTS

Over the years, the company has sponsored and organised a wide range of sports events and invited international sports personalities to participate in events such as tennis and basketball exhibition matches and training camps, boxing title fights, golf workshops, and others, encouraging the general public to exercise and attracting foreign tourists and athletes to experience the unique charm of Macao.

For instance, Sands China has been supporting the annual Macao International 10K, fully supporting and promoting the integrated development of sports tourism in Macao. The Sands China Macao International 10K was first held in Macao in 2021, with Sands China title-sponsoring the event each year. For the 2024 Sands China Macao International 10K, Sands China joined the Sports Bureau of the Macao SAR government and the General Association of Athletics of Macao as an organizer, with the event expenses borne by Sands China. This year's race saw an overwhelming response with nearly 10,000 runners from 48 countries and regions joining either the 10K race or the Fun Run. In addition, Sands China offered full support to event coordination and to promoting the event in Macao, Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area, further driving the integration of "tourism + sports."

Sands China was also a major sponsor of last year's 70th anniversary Macao Grand Prix, in a bid to facilitate a group of competent young racers to enter the international stage and build Macao into a world centre of tourism and leisure. Simultaneously, the company featured several time-limited community and cultural tourism events. For instance, the company held a series of themed activities, family-friendly workshops and photo installations at The Venetian Macao

and at Sands China's community revitalisation projects at the former Iec Long Firecracker Factory. Two concerts were also held during the two Grand Prix weekends, further promoting the integration of sports and cultural tourism.

COMMUNITY REVITALISATION

Since September 2023, when the Macao SAR government entrusted integrated tourism and leisure enterprises with promoting community revitalisation, Sands China has followed the principle of "reconstruction, activation, and integration of the old and the new," when launching different projects. In addition to working with the Macao SAR government to promote the community revitalisation projects at the former Iec Long Firecracker Factory, the Taipa Houses, Pátio da Eterna Felicidade, and Rua das Estalagens, and Macao Cultural Centre Square, the company continues to collaborate with local SMEs and introduced a holographic A.I. photobooth and parent-child workshops at Iec Long during Grand Prix, Chinese New Year, and early summer periods. The company also set up large-scale romantic photo spots at the Taipa Houses and held winter concerts at the Macao Cultural Centre Square during the Christmas holidays. By adapting to the local context, Sands China explores unique revitalisation models that have been well-received by the public.

Sands China has recently announced a major initiative to solicit entrepreneurial proposals for Rua das Estalagens. By integrating the old and the new, it aims to encourage businesses to establish themselves in the area, attract diverse commercial elements, and to promote sustainable community economic development, thereby reviving Rua das Estalagens. To be eligible for the programme, entrepreneurs must possess a minimum capital of MOP 300,000 and establish their businesses on Rua das Estalagens. Sands China will provide operational subsidies in phases to businesses with outstanding performance, offering up to twice the initial capital investment, capped at MOP 1 million. The selection process considers factors such as innovation, feasibility, uniqueness, store attractiveness, and sustainable business models.

4,700,000+ attendees
740+ performances

"Over the past two decades, Sands China has hosted numerous internationally acclaimed concerts and performances, propelling the rapid development of Macao's performing arts scene and transforming it into the 'City of Performing Arts,'" said Andy Wu, Chairman of the Travel Industry Council of Macao. "The significant investment in venue infrastructure has had a direct and positive impact on Macao's performing arts industry. With the first privately funded large-scale concert venue [Cotai Arena] in Macao, it attracted a considerable number of visitors who were eager to witness these exceptional performances. By continuously optimising and expanding their venue

Chan, and Westlife. Cantopop superstar Jacky Cheung performed a record-breaking 12 shows at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Arena between June and July, selling more than 109,000 tickets on the first leg of the FWD Insurance 10th Anniversary Presents: Jacky Cheung 60+ Concert Tour. Originally slated for six nights only, the number of shows doubled after quickly selling out, reflecting the company's determination to continue enhancing Macao's moderate economic diversification.

PERFORMING ARTS

To further the company's support towards the development of local culture and art in Macao,

HONG KONG

Gov't watching internet platforms for non-compliance with ban on 'Glory' song

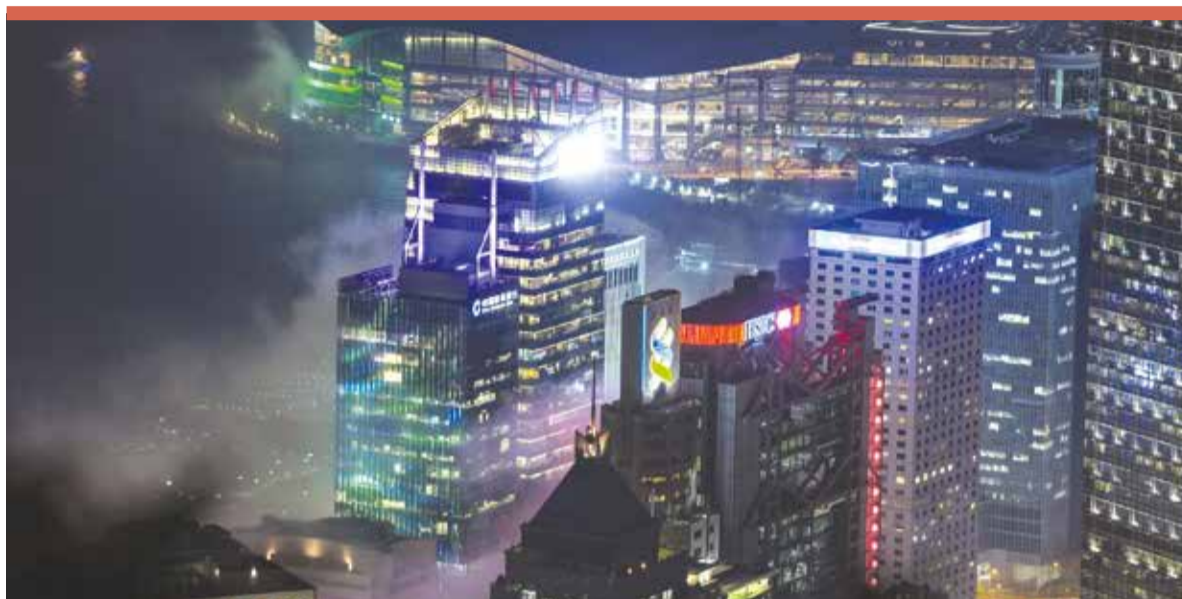
KANIS LEUNG, HONG KONG

HONG KONG'S leader said yesterday his administration would keep monitoring for any non-compliance with a court order that bans a popular protest song, days after YouTube blocked access to dozens of videos of the tune in the city.

The ban targets anyone who broadcasts or distributes "Glory to Hong Kong" — popularly sung during huge anti-government protests in 2019 — to advocate for the separation of the city from China. It also prohibits any actions that misrepresent the song as the national anthem with the intent to insult the anthem.

In his weekly news briefing, Chief Executive John Lee said if the government found any instances of non-compliance, it would then notify the relevant internet platforms about the content of the injunction.

"I believe that operators in general operate within the law, so we will



continue to monitor the situation," Lee said.

The court ban sought by the government has raised concerns over a further decline in the city's freedom of expression and internet freedom. Critics have also warned it might disrupt the operation of tech giants and undermine the city's

appeal as a global financial hub.

Last week, YouTube blocked access to 32 videos of the song that were deemed to be "prohibited publications" under the injunction for viewers in the city. The tech company said it was disappointed by the court's decision and would continue to consider its options for

an appeal.

In the news briefing, Lee said there is no link relating to the song shown on any local platforms and "Google's search doesn't show any link to the song in question." A government transcript of his comments later clarified Lee was referring to links specified in the injunc-

tion order.

The Associated Press found videos of the song on YouTube yesterday morning. The song is also available on Spotify and Apple Music.

It is unclear whether the tech giants will block access to more video or audio clips of the song for Hong Kong viewers. Google, Spotify and Apple did not immediately comment.

"Glory to Hong Kong" is widely seen as the protest anthem of the 2019 movement, which was followed by a crackdown that has silenced dissenting voices in the city.

Instances where the song was mistakenly played as the city's anthem at international sporting events, instead of China's national anthem "March of the Volunteers," also have angered city officials.

The government went to the court last year after Google resisted pressure to display China's national anthem as the top result in searches for the city's anthem instead of the protest song. **MDT/AP**

AD

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3. Request for Tender Document:	The interested Bidders shall call the Senior Secretary of the Engineering and Maintenance Branch (E&M) of the Airport Operations Department of CAM at (853) 88982386 and collect the tender document at the following location until 31 May 2024 before 13:00 (Macau Local Time). <u>Location for collecting the tender document</u> CAM – Macau International Airport Co. Ltd. Macau International Airport Engineering and Maintenance Branch E&M Building 1st Floor, Office 41020 Taipa, Macau For any enquiry regarding the Tender Procedure, please reach our Engineering and Maintenance Branch at (853) 88982386.
4. Location for Submission of Proposals:	CAM – Macau International Airport Co. Ltd. Av. De Wai Long CAM Office Building, 4 th Floor Reception Taipa, Macau Attention: Mr. Chu Tan Neng – Executive Director
5. Tender closing time and date:	At 12:00 (noon) on 17 June 2024 (Macau Local Time)
CAM reserves the right to reject any Proposal in whole or in part without stating any reason.	

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GAZA STRIP

War crimes prosecutor seeks arrest of Israeli and Hamas leaders, including Netanyahu

JOSEF FEDERMAN,
JERUSALEM

THE chief prosecutor of the world's top war crimes court sought arrest warrants yesterday [Macau time] for leaders of Israel and Hamas, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, over actions taken during their seven-month war.

While Netanyahu and his defense minister, Yoav Gallant, do not face imminent arrest, the announcement by the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor was a symbolic blow that deepened Israel's isolation over the war in Gaza.

The court's prosecutor, Karim Khan, accused Netanyahu, Gallant, and three Hamas leaders — Yehya Sinwar, Mohammed Deif and Ismail Haniyeh — of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip and Israel.

Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders condemned the move as disgraceful and antisemitic. U.S. President Joe Biden also lambasted the prosecutor and supported Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas.

A panel of three judges will decide whether to issue the arrest warrants and allow a case to proceed. The judges typically take two months to make such decisions.

Israel is not a member of the court, so even if the arrest warrants are issued, Netanyahu and Gallant do not face any immediate risk of prosecution. But the threat of arrest could make it difficult for the Israeli leaders to travel abroad.

Netanyahu called the prosecutor's accusations against him a "disgrace," and an attack on the Israeli military and all of Israel. He vowed to press ahead with Israel's war against Hamas.

Biden said the effort to arrest Netanyahu and Gallant over the war in Gaza was "outrageous," adding "whatever this prosecutor might imply, there is no equivalence — none — between Israel and Hamas."

Hamas also denounced the ICC prosecutor's actions, saying the request to arrest its leaders "equates the victim with the executioner."

Netanyahu has come under heavy pressure at home to end the war. Thousands of

Israelis have joined weekly demonstrations calling on the government to reach a deal to bring home Israeli hostages in Hamas captivity, fearing that time is running out.

In recent days, the two other members of his war Cabinet, Gallant and Benny Gantz, have threatened to resign if Netanyahu does not spell out a clear postwar vision for Gaza.

But on Monday, Netanyahu received wall-to-wall support as politicians across the spectrum condemned the ICC prosecutor's move. They included Israel's president, Isaac Herzog, and his two main political rivals, Gantz and opposition leader Yair Lapid.

It is unclear what effect Khan's move will have on Netanyahu's public standing. The possibility of an arrest warrant against Netanyahu could give him a boost as Israelis rally behind the flag. But his opponents could also blame him for bringing a diplomatic catastrophe on the country.

Yuval Shany, an expert on international law at Hebrew University and the Israel Democracy Institute, a Jerusa-

lem think tank, said it was far more certain that Netanyahu's already troubled international standing could be further weakened.

"This is going to make Netanyahu an outcast, and his ability to move around the world will be seriously compromised," said Shany. Even if the ICC does not issue the arrest warrant, other countries may now be more reluctant to provide support and assistance, he said.

Hamas is already considered an international terrorist group by the West. Both Sinwar and Deif are believed to be hiding in Gaza. But Haniyeh, the supreme leader of the Islamic militant group, is based in Qatar and frequently travels across the region. Qatar, like Israel, is not a member of the ICC.

The latest war between Israel and Hamas began on Oct. 7, when militants from Gaza crossed into Israel and killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took 250 others hostage.

Since then, Israel has waged a brutal campaign to dismantle Hamas in Gaza. More than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed in the fighting, at least half of them women and children, according to the latest estimates by Gaza health officials.

The war has triggered a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, displacing roughly 80% of the population and leaving hundreds of thousands of people on the brink of starvation, according to U.N. officials.

Speaking of the Israeli actions, Khan said "the effects of the use of starvation as a method of warfare, together with other attacks and collective punishment against the civilian population of Gaza are acute, visible and widely known."

The United Nations and other aid agencies have repeatedly accused Israel of hindering aid deliveries throughout the war. Israel denies this, saying there are no restrictions on aid entering Gaza and accusing the U.N. of failing to distribute aid.

Of the Hamas actions on Oct. 7, Khan, who visited the

region in December, said that he saw for himself "the devastating scenes of these attacks and the profound impact of the unconscionable crimes."

In their rampage, Hamas militants gunned down scores of revelers at a dance party and killed entire families as they huddled in their homes. "These acts demand accountability," Khan said.

International human rights lawyer Amal Clooney served on a five-member expert panel that advised Khan. She said the panel had agreed unanimously that there are "reasonable grounds" to believe that both the Hamas and Israeli leaders had committed war crimes, according to a statement.

South Africa, which has been leading a genocide case against Israel at the U.N. world court, welcomed Khan's announcement seeking the arrest of Israeli and Hamas leaders. "The law must be applied equally to all in order to uphold the international rule of law," the office of President Cyril Ramaphosa said.

The ICC was established in 2002 as the permanent court of last resort to prosecute individuals responsible for the world's most heinous atrocities — war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and the crime of aggression.

The U.N. General Assembly endorsed the ICC, but the court is independent.

Dozens of countries don't accept the court's jurisdiction over war crimes, genocide and other crimes. They include Israel, the United States, Russia and China.

The ICC accepted "The State of Palestine" as a member in 2015, a year after the Palestinians accepted the court's jurisdiction.

In 2020, then U.S. President Donald Trump authorized economic and travel sanctions on the ICC prosecutor and another senior prosecutor. The ICC staff were looking into U.S. and allies' troops for possible war crimes in Afghanistan. Biden lifted the sanctions in 2021.

Last year, the court issued a warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin on charges of responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine. Russia responded by issuing its own arrest warrants for Khan and ICC judges.

France, Belgium and Slovenia released statements supporting the world's top war crimes court and its chief prosecutor's request for arrest warrants for leaders of Israel and Hamas, after Israel and the United States both harshly condemned the effort. **MDT/AP**



Clockwise from top left: Ismail Haniyeh (Hamas), Benjamin Netanyahu (Israel), Yoav Gallant (Israel), and Yahya Sinwar (Hamas)

EXPLAINER

WHAT'S NEXT FOR IRAN'S GOVERNMENT AFTER DEATH OF PRESIDENT RAISI IN HELICOPTER CRASH

THE death of Iran's president is unlikely to lead to any immediate changes in Iran's ruling system or to its overarching policies, which are decided by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

But Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a helicopter crash Sunday [early Monday, Macau time], was seen as a prime candidate to succeed the 85-year-old supreme leader, and his death makes it more likely that the job could eventually go to Khamenei's son.

A hereditary succession would pose a potential crisis of legitimacy for the Islamic Republic, which was established as an alternative to monarchy but which many Iranians already see as a corrupt and dictatorial regime.

Here's a look at what comes next.



People hold up posters of late President Ebrahim Raisi during a mourning ceremony for him at Vali-e-Asr square in downtown Tehran

any other well-known candidate from running against him, and turnout was the lowest in the history of the Islamic Republic. He succeeded Hassan Rouhani, a relative moderate who had served as president for the past eight years and defeated Raisi in 2017.

After Raisi's death, in accordance with Iran's constitution, Vice President Mohammad Mokhber, a relative unknown, became caretaker president, with elections mandated within 50 days. That vote will likely be carefully managed to produce a president who maintains the status quo.

That means Iran will continue to impose some degree of Islamic rule and crack down on dissent. It will enrich uranium, support armed groups across the Middle East and view the West with deep suspicion.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SUCCESSION?

Presidents come and go, some more moderate than others, but each operates under the structure of the ruling system.

If any major change occurs in Iran, it is likely to

come after the passing of Khamenei, when a new supreme leader will be chosen for only the second time since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Khamenei succeeded the founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, in 1989.

The next supreme leader will be chosen by the 88-seat Assembly of Experts, who are elected every eight years from candidates vetted by the Guardian Council. In the most recent election, in March, Rouhani was barred from running, while Raisi won a seat.

Any discussion of the succession, or machinations related to it, occur far from the public eye, making it hard to know who may be in the running. But the two people seen by analysts as most likely to succeed Khamenei were Raisi and the supreme leader's own son, Mojtaba, 55, a Shiite cleric who has never held government office.

WHAT IF THE AYATOLLAH'S SON SUCCEEDS HIM?

Leaders of the Islamic Republic going back to the 1979 revolution have por-

trayed their system as superior, not only to the democracies of a decadent West, but to the military dictatorships and monarchies that prevail across the Middle East.

The transfer of power from the supreme leader to his son could spark anger, not only among Iranians who are already critical of clerical rule, but supporters of the system who might see it as un-Islamic.

Western sanctions linked to the nuclear program have devastated Iran's economy. And the enforcement of Islamic rule, which grew more severe under Raisi, has further alienated women and young people.

The Islamic Republic has faced several waves of popular protests in recent years, most recently after the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini, who had been arrested for allegedly not covering her hair in public. More than 500 people were killed and over 22,000 were detained in a violent crackdown.

Raisi's death may make the transition to a new supreme leader trickier, and it could spark more unrest. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1972: PRESIDENT NIXON ARRIVES IN MOSCOW



America's President Richard Nixon has arrived in Moscow for talks with Soviet leaders.

He was given a modest welcome as he stepped off the plane at Vnukovo airport with his wife today.

The welcome party consisted of Soviet president Nikolai Podgorny, Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko.

A twenty-minute ceremony, during which the president briefly inspected a guard of honour, was held and broadcast live by Moscow television.

The national anthems of both countries were played and a carefully selected group of Soviet citizens dutifully, but silently, waved American and Soviet flags.

President Nixon, the first US president to visit Moscow, was said to be surprised that Leonid Brezhnev, general secretary of the Communist Party, was not at the airport.

But Soviet officials said Mr Brezhnev's absence was according to protocol, as he does not hold a government position.

However, following a high-speed motorcade through Moscow, President Nixon was invited to unscheduled talks with Mr Brezhnev at the Kremlin.

The meeting lasted 105 minutes and, although US officials would not give details, Ronald Ziegler, the White House press secretary, said the two men discussed "international issues".

Many observers were hoping the war in Vietnam and the nuclear arms race would be high on the agenda.

For the first time in history the stars and stripes flag of America flew over the Grand Palace of the Kremlin to mark the visit.

[...] President Nixon spoke about the need for co-operation and reciprocity between the two countries in their efforts to conquer disease, improve the environment, and to expand bilateral trade and economic links.

He said he was eager to make the summit a memorable one for its substance.

During his speech he alluded to Vietnam: "We should recognise that it is the responsibility of great powers to influence other nations in conflict or crisis to moderate their behaviour."

He also spoke of a possible arms agreement [...]

President Podgorny said the Soviet Union wanted not just good but friendly relations with the US. [...]

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

During the week-long summit several agreements between the two countries were reached.

On 26 May a treaty to halt the nuclear arms race, known as the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (Salt), was signed in the Kremlin by President Nixon and Mr Brezhnev.

The agreement, which was the culmination of nearly three years of talks between the two superpowers limited each superpower to 200 defensive nuclear missiles and froze the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles for the next five years.

An agreement designed to establish more favourable conditions for developing commercial and other economic ties between the USA and the USSR was also reached.

The two countries also agreed to make their first joint manned venture into space in June 1975.

Other agreements relating to incidents at sea, science and technology, health and the environment were also made.

Little progress was made on the Middle East or Vietnam although the two sides did agree to further negotiations on both subjects.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Financial breakdowns could arise. Keep receipts and statements. Sort facts from fiction. Avoid misunderstandings or arguments over money. Keep a low profile. Collaborate.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Let go of a preconception, especially one that impacts your partner. An illusion evaporates in broad daylight. Maintain patience. Keep your tone respectful.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Proceed with caution or risk accidents. Don't fund a fantasy. Stick to stable ground. Wait for better visibility before leaping. Nurture your health.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Relax and slow down. Avoid breakdowns or misunderstandings. Enjoy the comfort of familiar routines and activities with beloved people. Indulge your creativity and passion.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Relax into domesticity. Avoid gossip or noise. Find creative ways to beautify your home. Give away extra stuff for more space. Enjoy private productivity.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
A creative project unfolds. Action gets farther than talk. Don't reveal it until it's ready. Keep secrets and surprises. Research, edit and polish first.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
A communications breakdown could thwart a profitable intention. Avoid conflict with authority figures. Listen generously. Accept responsibility where you can.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Take extra time for yourself. Delays and misunderstandings abound. Wait for revelations. Consider your own dreams. Imagine a perfect personal situation. Plot your moves.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Organize plans privately. If something goes against your grain, turn it down. Deception gets revealed. Soothe doubts with facts. Your work reflects you well.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Your team can see your blind spots. Work together. Learn from trusted allies.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Unexpected tasks can interfere with existing responsibilities. Patiently wait out a chaotic rush. Discover a fallacy or dispelled illusion. Connect with reliable sources.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
The first stage in realizing a dream is noticing everywhere it's missing. Visualize perfection and outline requirements. Every epic journey unfolds step by step.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

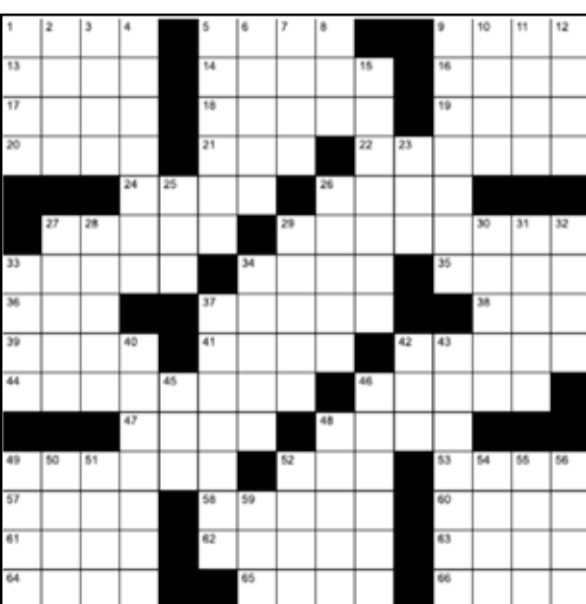
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	17	33	fine
Changchun	17	29	cloudy
Chengdu	20	32	rain
Chongqing	21	31	fine
Fuzhou	21	24	rain
Guangzhou	21	28	thunderstorms
Guiyang	16	27	cloudy
Haikou	25	30	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	19	25	overcast
Harbin	16	25	cloudy
Hefei	19	30	cloudy
Nanjing	20	29	cloudy
Shanghai	20	26	cloudy
Taipei	22	26	rain
Wuhan	21	28	rain
Hong Kong	26	28	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	9	23	sunny
Frankfurt	11	21	cloudy
Paris	12	20	showers
London	12	16	rain
New York	19	28	sunny

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Envelope abbr.; 5- Volcano shape; 9- Fill to excess; 13- Canadian First Nation; 14- Gladiator's venue; 16- Come again?; 17- When said three times, a 1970 war movie; 18- Female horses; 19- Merit; 20- What's ___ for me?; 21- Judge Lance; 22- Midday nap; 24- "___ quam videri" (North Carolina's motto); 26- Catcher's glove; 27- Sip; 29- Sweets; 33- Orange container; 34- Young male horse; 35- Christmas; 36- Satisfied sound; 37- Seeps; 38- Chinese "way"; 39- Contends; 41- Hook's helper; 42- Got up; 44- Councillor; 46- Trap; 47- Greek temple; 48- E-mailed; 49- Compositions; 52- Airline until 2001; 53- Ski lift; 57- Insect-repelling chemical; 58- Girder; 60- Use a surgical beam; 61- Elation; 62- Later!; 63- Flair; 64- Edible roots; 65- Org.; 66- Seized vehicle;

DOWN 1- Play opening; 2- 1982 Disney film; 3- Garr or Hatcher; 4- Most tidy; 5- Loose shirt; 6- Speechify; 7- Whodunit hero Wolfe; 8- Opposite of WSW; 9- Add sugar; 10- Cries of discovery; 11- Fruit-filled pie; 12- Europe's highest volcano; 15- Aids; 23- T.G.I.F. part; 25- Canonized mite; 26- Free-for-all; 27- Bring up the rear; 28- Oohed and ___; 29- Group of 12; 30- Copter part; 31- Rib; 32- Gin type; 33- Vena ___; 34- Deep sleeps; 37- Subtle absorption; 40- Governing bodies; 42- Raggedy doll; 43- Dangerous snake, familiarly; 45- Narrow beam of light; 46- Sailor; 48- Influences; 49- Nervous; 50- Actress Ward; 51- Appear; 52- Golf pegs, northern English river; 54- Bundle; 55- Pronto; 56- City in Western Nevada; 59- Maude portrayal;



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 2,980,000 1 bed 1 bath

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



Solar panels power a rest station and provide power for electric vehicles along a highway on the outskirts of Jinan in eastern China's Shandong province

AGRICULTURE

CORN, MILLET AND ... ROOFTOP SOLAR? FARM FAMILY'S NEWEST CROP SHOWS CHINA'S SOLAR ASCENDANCY

HUIZHONG WU AND
HAN GUAN NG, JINAN

SHI Mei and her husband earn a decent enough living by growing corn and millet on their small farm in eastern China's Shandong province. In 2021, they diversified by investing in solar energy — signing a contract to mount some 40 panels on their roof to feed energy to the grid.

Now, the couple get paid for every watt of electricity they generate, harvesting the equivalent of \$10,000 per year that Shi can track through an app on her phone.

"When the sun comes out, you make money," Shi said.

The Shi family is on the leading edge of a solar boom in China, which has long dominated global solar manufacturing but didn't always install a lot of it at home. That's changing as the government focuses on the urgency of cutting its worst-in-the-world greenhouse gas emissions at the same time it grows its green economy. China wants one-fifth of its power to come from renewables by 2025, and it's offered a wide range of subsidies to local govern-

ments and businesses.

The push — in both industrial solar and in rooftop installations like Shi's — is working so well that the grid now has more power than it can handle. Shi was fortunate to get in early; some cities across Shandong province, including her village, are halting new rooftop solar installations.

Analysts and solar companies say the future remains bright if China can quickly adapt to the oversupply. Companies and utilities are scrambling to build battery capacity to store all the power being generated. They'd like to see more flexible energy pricing that could shape demand to better match supply. And they'd like technology that makes it easier to start and stop coal power so it's not always the clean energy of solar power that gets "curtailed" — in industry jargon — when the grid can't take any more supply.

"China has the great potential and opportunity to make its power sector achieve its carbon peak by 2025," said Grace Gao, a Climate and Energy senior campaigner at Greenpeace in China. "I am

looking forward to seeing Shandong truly become a leader in renewable energy and showcase its best practices to the rest of China."

SOLAR POWERHOUSE

As with many infrastructure projects in China, it is installing solar at breakneck speed and scale. China added 216 gigawatts of solar in 2023, a little over half in large solar farms, according to the country's National Energy Administration. China's total is more than half of what the entire world added last year, according to research from the consultancy Wood Mackenzie.

A gigawatt of solar is enough to supply the energy needs of about 320,000 Chinese households for a year, Gao said.

Shandong province added about 14 gigawatts of solar in 2023, and the province now has the ability to produce more power than it can use at certain times during the day. It's the leading province for renewable energy capacity, but that also means it's the first to encounter the difficulties of rapid growth.

"Other provinces will also meet these problems, because there will

be more and more solar energy," said Peng Peng, the secretary general of China New Energy Investment and Financing Alliance, an industry group.

BOOMYEARS

After China announced subsidies for both rooftop and industrial solar in 2014, Shandong, with an advanced manufacturing industry, was a good candidate to take the early lead in solar development compared to less populous provinces like Qinghai or Inner Mongolia.

Wang Xingyong installs and maintains rooftop solar panels for clients ranging from villagers to factories, and said his business has doubled every year since 2016.

"In the beginning, maybe we'd just do a project for one client, a farmer, and it'd be worth ten thousand yuan, fifty thousand," he said. "Later, we'd do a couple hundred thousand, millions, for just one project."

The business model varies, but many companies like Wang's solicit villagers and factories for the chance to use their roofs. Villagers buy the systems and get payouts from selling the electricity to the grid. Wang gets paid to build and maintain the solar setups for factories that use the electricity they generate.

Wang said the concept was a hard sell at first, with few people believing the government would pay them for generating electricity. Wang said he slowly won people over, starting with his family and friends, putting forward the money for the equipment himself, and then moving on to other villages with the results.

While pitching, few talk about big concepts like the country's target to ensure carbon emissions peak at 2030. It comes down to cash in people's pockets. Shi, the farmer, said her neighbors installed solar panels on their roofs after seeing her investment do well.

"Compared to just putting your money in a savings account, the rate of return is higher," she said. Thanks to her contract from 2021, she's still earning money even though the village has stopped allowing new installations.

A second model allows families to basically get paid rent to allow solar to be installed on their roof — as much as 3,000 yuan (\$414) a month, said Liu Wenping, an investor in solar companies. They might also get a free air conditioner or refrigerator as an extra incentive, and get a small percentage from the electricity sold, though not as much as people who buy the solar equipment.

SOLUTIONS IN PROGRESS

Chinese battery companies, EV manufacturers and utilities are all racing to develop more advanced batteries to store the electricity from solar panels. Batteries are getting cheaper, but still affect the overall model's profitability. The

Shandong provincial government is running a pilot program in Dezhou with lithium iron phosphate batteries that can store power during peak production and feed it to the province's grid later as needed.

Other fixes include moving to what's called spot market pricing, with the price fluctuating in an open market. China currently uses prices set by regulators for its electricity, updated after intensive research. Without pricing flexibility, China can't incentivize customers to shift some use to non-peak times by lowering prices during those times.

But just last year, regulators in Shandong introduced trough pricing, with prices slashed sharply to encourage people to use electricity right when it was being generated abundantly but use was very low — in this case, the lunch period when factories typically all break at the same time. Factories responded by shifting some of their use to get some of the cheaper power.

Solar analysts say they expect China to eventually move towards completely market-driven pricing with the grid.

Meanwhile, China is intent on improving its grid. The National Development and Reform Council, which oversees economic policy and implementation, in February called on provinces to focus on increasing flexibility to the grid. It included a call to retrofit old coal plants with new technology so they can power up and down much more quickly. The council also wants a "smart" grid that can quickly decide the best time to distribute the power being generated.

"Every country in the world that is installing a lot of renewables and then facing the challenges that arise from all this variable intermittent generation, is searching for smart ways, intelligent AI-enabled or at least model-backed approaches to distributing this power and using it in the most efficient and effective way," said David Fishman, a senior manager at the Lantau Group consultancy who tracks China's energy industry. "Certainly that's where China is heading."

There's no sign of a pause in China's solar buildout. Companies are flocking to other provinces in the south that aren't as far along as Shandong.

And in Shandong, Wang, the solar installer, is optimistic about his prospects despite the halt in new projects, because he still has industrial clients. He's already planning to invest in upgrading transformers. And he's intrigued by a trend driven by China's electric car explosion, with the installation of all-in-one stations that combine solar generation, battery storage and electric vehicle charging.

"I trust the future will be better and better," he said. **MDT/AP**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

GOLF | PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

Schauffele gets validation, records with one memorable putt

XANDER Schauffele might have to watch the replay of his 6-foot putt to see how it dipped into the left side of the hole and looked as though it might spin out. When it comes to him winning the last two years, that's what usually happens.

And then it quickly slipped out of sight, and the rest was a blur.

"When it lipped in — I don't really remember it lipping in," Schauffele said Sunday at Valhalla, a course named for the heaven of Norse warriors in mythology, and the PGA Championship felt every bit like a battle.

"I just heard everyone roaring," he said, "and I just looked up to the sky in relief."

That one putt — 6 feet, 2 inches, to be precise — brought more than he ever imagined.

Until that final hole of great theater, so typical of the PGA



Xander Schauffele hits his tee shot on the fifth hole during the final round of the PGA Championship golf tournament at the Valhalla Golf Club

Championship at Valhalla, Schauffele was wearing the wrong kind of labels.

He was among the best without a major, the back-hand-

ded compliment that acknowledges the talent and questions the heart.

That could fall to a number of players over the years

— Viktor Hovland, Patrick Cantlay, Rickie Fowler — it's just that Schauffele was the current flavor as an Olympic gold medalist in Japan in 2021 and the No. 3 player in the world.

"It's just noise," he said. Now it's quiet.

Worse than not winning a major were the whispers he couldn't close. Schauffele had won a Tour Championship and a World Golf Championship, yet he was coming up on the two-year anniversary of his last win at the Scottish Open in the summer of 2022.

And that noise got even louder this year when he played in the final group four times — the Sentry Tournament of Champions, the Genesis Invitational, The Players Championship and the Wells Fargo Championship.

The last two were particularly tough because he had a 54-hole lead. Scottie Scheffler

tracked him down with a 64 to win The Players Championship (Schauffele didn't help himself with two bogeys on the back nine) and Rory McIlroy had an eight-hole stretch of 8 under in closing with a 65 to beat him at Quail Hollow.

"Definitely a chip on the shoulder there," Schauffele said. "You guys are asking the questions, probing, and I have to sit here and answer it."

And he does it well. Schauffele is not big on excuses, and that much was evident when he shared one of many life lessons from his father, Stefan, the man he affectionately calls "Ogre." Commit, execute and accept. He only struggled with the first two.

But then he looked over at the Wanamaker Trophy — silver and shiny, and more valuable than the gold he won at the Olympics.

"It's a lot easier to answer it with this thing sitting next to me now," he said.

It was quite the test. Schauffele started out tied with Collin Morikawa, grabbed the lead with a 30-foot birdie putt on the opening hole, shot 31 on the front nine and was mildly surprised to see he still had little margin for error with Bryson DeChambeau and Hovland at his heels. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

WHATEVER SUPPORT SECESSIONISTS GET, 'INDEPENDENCE' AIN'T GOING TO HAPPEN

By announcing a new round of sanctions on three US companies for their involvement in arms sales to China's Taiwan island on Monday, Beijing has sent an unmistakable message to the United States that it has both the resolve and the means to counter any challenge to the one-China principle.

Boeing's Defense, Space & Security unit, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, and General Dynamics Land Systems have been added to China's Unreliable Entities list. Their inclusion on the list, which was established in February 2023, means the three US companies will face a ban on trade with China, as well as huge fines.

Those who should be heeding Beijing's message certainly include Lai Ching-te, the new administrative chief on the island, and other secessionist-minded politicians on the island, as the fresh sanctions on US companies were announced on the same day Lai took office and delivered his inauguration speech, which was laden with "Taiwan independence" fallacies and provocative language.

Although in his statement congratulating Lai on taking office, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken stressed the "unofficial" nature of the US' relationship with the island, the Lai authorities will understand what he meant by pressing Taiwan to advance their "shared interests". Although it seems carefully crafted to avoid provoking Beijing, when put together with the US' intensive playing of the Taiwan card in the past few years, his words just serve to show the US' stubbornness in sticking to its game plan of saying one thing while doing another.

Lai has obviously taken a leaf out of the US book for his own speech. Despite ostensibly setting forth a "pro-peace", "pro-dialogue" and "pro-cooperation" stance, Lai's remarks only demonstrate his readiness to go further than his predecessor, Tsai Ing-wen, in attempting to split Taiwan from the motherland. Revealing himself to be a radical secessionist, Lai has exposed his willingness to do the US' bidding to help push the envelope of Beijing's redline in a bid to impel Beijing to resort to force to prevent the island being severed from the motherland, with the intention of providing the US with an excuse to drag other countries into its game so it can deal with Russia and China together.

As such, backing from the US, especially its colossal arms sales to Taiwan, is deemed an "independence lifeline" by Lai and his ilk. It is not unreasonable to conclude that such weapons deals lend him and those of a like-minded bent the courage to seek "Taiwan independence" by instilling a sense of false confidence that their agenda can be realized through force of arms. Lai displayed that misjudged confidence in his inauguration address in Taipei on Monday.

That he has the audacity to claim that the island, with the backing of Washington, can strive for a "reciprocal" negotiation on an "equal footing" with the Chinese mainland from "a position of power" just serves to expose he is making a disastrous miscalculation by betting on the US' commitment to protecting the island. Taiwan compatriots can see clearly that since no US blood is being shed, such arms sales are just a lucrative business for the US. By inviting the wolf into the house, the "pro-independence" forces in Taiwan are inviting ruin to the island. In doing so, they are traitors to the entire Chinese nation and people.

[Abridged]

ONE DEAD, OTHERS INJURED AFTER LONDON-SINGAPORE FLIGHT HIT SEVERE TURBULENCE

THE BUZZ

One person has died aboard a London-Singapore flight that encountered severe turbulence, Singapore Airlines said yesterday, in which the plane apparently plummeted for a number of minutes before it was diverted to Bangkok, where emergency crews rushed to help injured passengers amid stormy weather.

The Boeing 777-300ER, with a total of 211 passengers and 18 crew members on board, landed in Bangkok at 3:45 p.m. (0845 GMT), the airline said in a Facebook post.

Tracking data captured by FlightRadar24 and analyzed by The Associated Press showed the Singapore Airlines flight cruising at an altitude of

37,000 feet. Just after 0800 GMT, the Boeing 777 suddenly and sharply pitched down to 31,000 feet over the span of some three minutes, the data shows.

The aircraft stayed at 31,000 feet for just under 10 minutes before rapidly descending and landing in Bangkok in just under half an hour. The descent happened as the flight was over the Andaman Sea approaching Myanmar.

Emergency crews from Samitivej Srinakarin Hospital, about 12 miles away from Suvarnabhumi Airport, were on site to transfer injured passengers from Flight SQ321 from Heathrow off the runway for treatment.

AP PHOTO



Shanghai Bishop Joseph Shen Bin (left) talks with Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin during an international conference to celebrate "100 years since the Concilium Sinense" organized by the Pontifical Urbaniana University, in Rome, yesterday

VATICAN MAKES FRESH OVERTURE TO CHINA

CATHOLIC CHURCH 'IS NO THREAT TO SOVEREIGNTY'

NICOLE WINFIELD, ROME

THE Vatican made another big overture to China yesterday, reaffirming the Catholic Church poses no threat to Beijing's sovereignty and admitting that Western missionaries had made "errors" in past centuries in their zeal to convert the Chinese faithful.

The Vatican hosted the head of China's bishops conference for an unprecedented, high-level commemoration of a landmark 1924 meeting in Shanghai that affirmed the need for foreign missionaries in China to give way to local church leaders.

The presence of Shanghai Bishop Joseph Shen Bin alongside the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, at the Pontifical Urbaniana University was in itself noteworthy. It marked the first time in memory that a mainland bishop has been allowed by Beijing to participate in a public Vatican event as the keynote speaker.

It was also significant given the controversy over Shen's 2023 appointment. Pope Francis in July was forced to recognize China's unilateral appointment of Shen as bishop of Shanghai. The appoint-

ment seemingly violated the Holy See's 2018 accord with Beijing over bishop appointments.

Francis opened the conference with a video message in which he made no mention of recent troubles but instead pointed to the 1924 meeting in Shanghai as a turning point for Vatican-China relations. The first and only Chinese church council, he said, recognized that the church in China must "increasingly have a Chinese face."

"But the Council of Shanghai did not only serve to forget the erroneous approaches that had prevailed in previous times," Francis said. "The participants of the first Chinese Council looked to the future. And their future is our present."

It was a reference to the French, Italian and other Western missionary religious orders that evangelized China over the centuries but refused to cede leadership authority to local Chinese clergy. Their attitudes helped fuel the anti-Western and anti-Christian sentiment behind the Boxer Rebellion, which aimed to rid China of foreign influences.

Shen in his remarks re-

ferred to the "superior" attitude of those Western missionaries and their work to "protect foreign powers" through "unequal treaties" that China signed with various European nations over the centuries.

Speaking through an interpreter, Shen said the Catholic Church today must have a Chinese point of view, respect Chinese culture and develop alongside Chinese society. He also noted that the pope has underlined that being a good Christian is an integral part of being a good citizen.

The Vatican has been working for years to try to improve relations with China that were officially severed over seven decades ago when the Communists came to power. The aim is to unite the country's estimated 12 million Catholics, who were divided into an official, state-recognized church and an underground church that stayed loyal to Rome.

Relations had long been stymied over China's insistence on its exclusive right to name bishops as a matter of national sovereignty, while the Vatican insisted on the pope's exclusive right to name the successors of the original Apostles. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Sri Lankan government declared yesterday a national mourning day for the death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi. The government also ordered all state institutions to hoist the national flag at half-staff. Raisi visited Sri Lanka in April to inaugurate a long-delayed hydropower and irrigation project. The project, valued at \$514 million, was started in 2010. It was scheduled for completion in 2015 but was delayed by the sanctions, technical issues and the COVID-19 pandemic.

AP PHOTO



Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen claimed yesterday they shot down an American drone over the impoverished Arab county. The U.S. military did not immediately acknowledge the claim. If confirmed, this would be the second MQ-9 Reaper drone downed by the Houthis over the past week as they press their campaign over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

AP PHOTO



Cannes Donald Trump's reelection campaign called "The Apprentice," a film about the former U.S. president in the 1980s, "pure fiction" and vowed legal action following its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival. But director Ali Abbasi is offering to privately screen the film for Trump. Following its premiere in Cannes, Steven Cheung, Trump campaign spokesperson, said in a statement that the Trump team will be file a lawsuit "to address the blatantly false assertions from these pretend filmmakers."