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# Times

FOUNDER & PUBLISHER Kowie Geldenhuys

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho

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**MACAU SAW A 14% INCREASE IN VISITOR ARRIVALS TO 2.6 MILLION IN APRIL, RECOVERING TO 76% OF THE FIGURE IN THE SAME MONTH OF 2019**

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**GOV'T URGES CITIZENS TO GET VACCINATED FOR INFLUENZA**

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**MAN CHARGED WITH HELPING THE HK INTELLIGENCE SERVICE IN THE UK FOUND DEAD**

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AP PHOTO



**Thailand's** National Museum hosted a welcome-home ceremony this week for two ancient statues that were illegally trafficked from Thailand by a British collector of antiquities and were returned from the collection of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. The objects — a tall bronze figure called the Standing Shiva or Golden Boy and a smaller sculpture called Kneeling Female — are thought to be around 1,000 years old.

AP PHOTO



**Australia** The Australian military has flown 115 passengers on two flights from the restive French Pacific territory of New Caledonia and a French government flight was expected to evacuate another 100 stranded passengers yesterday. Six people have been killed, including two police officers, and hundreds have been injured during recent armed clashes, looting and arson in New Caledonia. [More on p7](#)

AP PHOTO



**Iran's** supreme leader prayed yesterday over the coffins of the country's late president, foreign minister and other officials who were killed in a helicopter crash earlier this week. Later, hundreds of thousands of people followed a procession honoring the dead down Tehran's main boulevard. Iran's Shiite theocracy views mass demonstrations as crucial evidence of its legitimacy and the people's support.

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GRAND PRIX 2024

# NEW FIA RULES TO DEBUT AT GUIA

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CENTRALINE

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GAMING HOTLINE

## TOURISTS ACCOUNT FOR 40% OF GAMBLING COUNSELING

P2

### CHINA VOLLEYBALL TEAM ARRIVES WEEK EARLIER

The Chinese team for the Women's Volleyball Nations League 2024 has arrived in Macau a week earlier as the rest of the teams are abroad competing. The remaining teams, namely Brazil, Italy, the Dominican Republic, Japan, the Netherlands, Thailand and France will join them in Macau to compete for the best ranking to qualify for the finals. With a record of three wins and one loss in the Rio de Janeiro leg of the tournament, the Chinese team sits in third-place on the ladder and will face the Netherlands, Japan, Thailand and Italy from May 29 to June 2.

### PROFESSIONAL TAX REFUND THIS FRIDAY

The Financial Services Bureau (DSF) has announced that the refund of professional tax for 2022 will commence from the upcoming Friday. A total of 158,000 taxpayers are set to receive their refunds through bank transfer or crossed cheque, as stated in the official announcement made today. 60% of the professional tax amount paid for the year 2022, up to a maximum of 14,000 patacas, will be reimbursed to taxpayers who hold a Macau resident identity card as of December 31, 2022. The issuance of crossed cheques is expected to be completed by early June.

### AIRPORT REVENUES SURGE 180%

Macau International Airport reported a revenue of MOP1.193 million last year, as cited in its financial report published in the Official Gazette. Albeit from a low base due to the pandemic and halt of flights, the figure recorded a surplus of 220 million patacas after three consecutive annual losses. Throughout the year, the airport facilitated over 5.15 million passengers and accommodated 42,504 aircraft movements. Since its establishment in 1995, the airport's numbers have surged, reaching a peak of 9.6 million passengers and 77,581 aircraft movements in 2019.

# PROPERTY MARKET BOUNCES BACK STRONGLY AFTER COOLING MEASURES LIFTED: CENTALINE

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE property market in Macau has seen a sharp turnaround in recent weeks after the government lifted all its cooling measures that were imposed to curb speculation last month. Industry insiders and analysts say transaction volumes are picking up significantly as buyers return to the market.

Some people in the real estate industry said that not only had the number of property inspections increased significantly recently, the transaction volume of first-hand and second-hand properties had also increased. Both are picking up, with many out-of-towners among the main buyers.

Roy Ho, director of Centaline Macau and Zhuhai Hengqin Property, said that since the removal of cooling measures, many developers had taken the opportunity to launch various offers to attract customers.

As of yesterday, the transaction volume of first-hand properties had exceeded 100, which has increased by about nine times based on initial data after cooling measures were lifted," noted Ho.

He also described that now is a time when quantity has increased and prices have stabilized, and first-hand properties have an average price of about 7,000 patacas

LYNZY VALLES



per square foot.

Ho also said the main reason for the surge in transactions was that many new real estate developers were taking advantage of loosening policies and were now able to bring back foreigner buyers. These foreigners are international students studying in Macau, as well as expatriate workers. Developers have launched some short-term discounts for these two categories of people, such as 5% to 10% price reductions, or discounted prices for parking spaces.

As for the second-hand market, the transaction volume has also increased by about 30% to 50%. Conversely, the transaction volume

of first-hand properties is not so obvious.

"But generally speaking, the transaction proportion is much higher," said Ho.

In terms of price, Ho described the situation after the removal of cooling measures in Macau as like that in Hong Kong. He believes that first-hand properties will be sold in the short term, but second-hand properties will be "flat" for the time being, due to the ongoing promotions and discounts.

"After the comprehensive removal of cooling measures, the real price of Macau's real estate market has fully reflected the acceleration. It was falling slowly before, but

now it is down 20% at a time."

Looking ahead, Ho expressed confidence that Macau's strong recovery abilities would manifest faster than other cities. He gave the example that developers are able to increase their prices by 30% after they sell 100 units.

According to data from the Monetary Authority of Macao, newly approved residential mortgage loans extended by Macau banks jumped 31.7% month-on-month to 900 million patacas in March. While delinquency rates edged higher to 3.6%, the overall outlook for demand and sales in the resilient property sector appears positive.

### SHENG KUNG HUI

# Tourists account for 40% of gaming counseling

LYNZY VALLES

**S**HENG Kung Hui's 24-hour gambling counseling hotline and online counseling has recorded 1,007 cases of distress, a year-on-year increase of 4%, of which tourists accounted for about 40% from January to April this year.

Hotline director Lau Mei Yi said a Chinese medicine intervention pilot program was launched last month.

It subsidized people troubled by gambling, as well as their family members, in receiving traditional Chinese medicine diagnoses and treatment services, and to learn about stress reduction methods.

It is hoped that, through Chinese medicine combined with psychological counseling, anxiety among participants in the program can be alleviated, Lau told TDM on the sidelines of an event yesterday.

Regarding illnesses such as depression and insomnia, if the trial results are satisfactory then it will be promoted to targeted members of the public in the second half of this year.

In addition, Lau recommended raising the public's awareness of gambling addiction, as well as raising the awareness of gamblers' family members in seeking help.

Recently, a study by local scholars showed

the majority of frontline casino staff in Macau face various obstacles that impede their capacity to intervene effectively in problematic gaming behaviors – despite themselves comprehensively grasping responsible gambling principles.

A recent academic paper by Manian Wongkun and Liu Shuang from the Centre for Gaming and Tourism Studies at Macao Polytechnic University has

highlighted that, amid responsible gaming campaigns hosted by the government and gaming operators, problem gambling has not been significantly reduced.

Also, most promotional efforts are primarily targeted towards Macau residents, neglecting non-resident gamblers.

It has also been inferred that problematic gambling may be more common among overseas gamblers.

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DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF\_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com  
ASSISTANT EDITOR\_Lynzy Valles  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS\_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS\_Alex Torrao, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Seguí DESIGNER\_Rebeca Almeida | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS\_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES\_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacaoNews, Xinhua SECRETARY\_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

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ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com  
OFFICE MANAGER\_Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com  
ADDRESS\_Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84  
Advertisement\_advertising@macaudailytimes.com  
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MACAU GP

# FIA promotes major Grand Prix revamp

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) has announced it will again promote a major revamp to its World Cup for single seaters this year.

According to the FIA, Formula Regional (FR) cars will debut in Macau this year in what is considered by FIA, the world's automobile racing governing body, to be "the most prestigious single-event competition in junior single-seater racing."

The former Formula 3 (F3) World Cup will be renamed to the FIA FR World Cup, first held in 2016 at the Guia Circuit as part of the Macau Grand Prix.

The FIA also noted the change - running F3 international cars into running FR ones - is permanent.

The federation said measure will continue "from this year onwards."

It said there is a need to make the event "even more accessible than ever, opening it up to a broad pool of potential drivers competing at the regional level."

Launched in 2018, when there was a major revamp of F3, including the transformation that gave way to the F3 International cars, the FR bridges the gap between various national Formula 4 series competitions and the global FIA Formula 3 Championship, which is held on the support bill of selected Formula 1 grand prix.

Currently, there are five different FIA FR series around the world: the championships in the Americas, Europe, Japan, the Middle East and Oceania, with over 90 drivers participating this year.

On the decision, Francois Sicard, FIA Single-Seater Strategy & Operations Director, said: "Bringing Formula Regional cars to Macau for the FIA World Cup is a natural consequence of the evolution of the junior single-seater landscape over the last couple of years. It is a logical step as we progress our plans. Macau's Formula 3 race has built its legendary reputation as an event that gathered the best junior racers from national series around the world at what is the world's most challenging street circuit. A move to

Formula Regional machinery very much revives that spirit and is an optimal long-term solution for the FIA-sanctioned single-seater competition in Macau."

## RETURN TO A GLORIOUS PAST

Although the details of the new competition are not yet unveiled, the idea of the FIA seems to be grounded on a return to the event's glorious past, called, until 2015, the F3 Intercontinental Cup. At the time, the event, unlike other races, such as the Masters of Formula 3, was not a part of any F3 Championship but was, instead, a standalone event open to entries from all F3 championships.

With the introduction of the FR World Cup, it is expected this winning formula would return, with the event likely to include some of the best racers from the five different FIA FR series around the world.

Another significant difference is that this series includes less experienced drivers than the F3 International Championship. Effectively, it is a platform for the launch of new

names into the crown jewel of motorsports.

## 'JUNIOR CAR' FOR JUNIOR RACERS

Another of the areas in which the FR World Cup suggests a return to its past is the cars that will run in this series.

While the F3 International cars, run last year, are larger and have a more powerful engine - 6-cylinders, 3.4 liters, naturally aspirated, and 380 horsepower - the FR cars use a more up-to-date version of the pre-2019 F3 cars. Those cars use a chassis similar to the current F4 cars and a variety of 4-cylinder turbo-charged engines that, according to the region, range from 1.8 to 2.0 liters in capacity and that produce about 270 to 300 horsepower.

In the FR Americas, the Ligier JS F3 chassis is used, powered by a Honda 2.0 L engine, while in the FR European and FR Middle East the Tatuus F3 T-318 chassis is used. In Europe, the 1.8 L Renault engine is used; in the Middle East, it is the 1.8 L Alfa Romeo engine.

The FR Japanese Championship uses the same Alfa Romeo engine but a different chassis, the Dome F111/3.

At the FR Oceania Championship, the Tatuus FT-60 chassis is used, powered by a Toyota 2.0 L engine.

Although there are a wide range of different specifications and manufacturers involved, all the cars, in reality, present very similarly in appearance and performance.

The different championships include the participation of motorsports teams with well-established names, such as Prema Racing, TOM's, ART Grand Prix, MP Motorsport, R-Ace GP, Trident Motorsport, and Van Amersfoort Racing.

The FR cars weigh almost the same as the F3 International cars (680-690kg) but have about 30% less power.

The most significant difference is in the price tag. The FR cars cost around MOP920,000 per unit, whereas F3 International series cars are priced at about MOP2.2 million each.

## IPIM SETS UP MACAU-HENGQIN PAVILION AT THE IMEX FRANKFURT

The Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) set up the "Macao-Hengqin Pavilion" at the "IMEX Frankfurt 2024", which was held in Germany from May 14 to 16. During the event, IPIM and 10 local MICE companies, including convention and exhibition service providers and integrated tourism and leisure enterprises, held seven Macao-Hengqin MICE Environment Promotion seminars and facilitated over 280 business matching sessions. IMEX Frankfurt is one of the largest conference and incentive travel exhibitions in Europe, with exhibitors from across the MICE industry.

## BUS DRIVER SUMMONED FOR USING PHONE WHILE DRIVING

A 30-year-old local bus driver has been charged with violating the Road Traffic Act after using his mobile phone whilst driving on the Friendship Bridge. A video that circulated on social media showed the driver watching his phone whilst driving, prompting the Public Security Police to investigate. That afternoon, the driver was called in for questioning at the police station.

## MAINLAND MAN ARRESTED FOR HKDIM FRAUD

A 36-year-old mainland man is suspected of defrauding a mainland woman of MOP1.03 million, using the pretext that he needed cash urgently. The case shows the victim came to Macau to gamble in May last year and met the man involved. The man claimed his bank account had been frozen by mainland police and that a mainland company had borrowed money from him for emergency compensation for a work-related injury. After the victim lent HKD330,000 in cash, the man transferred more than MOP630,000 to several different designated accounts, on the grounds that the company needed more cash flow.

## STATS

# April visitor arrivals back to 75.8% of pre-pandemic level

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE city saw a 14.4% year-on-year increase in visitor arrivals, to 2,600,717, in April 2024, recovering to 75.8% of the figure in the same month of 2019. However, the number represents a 4.4% month-on-month decline, the Sta-

tistics and Census Service (DSEC) has reported.

The growth was driven by a 23% surge in same-day visitors to 1.35 million and a 6.3% rise in overnight visitors to 1.25 million. The average length of stay held stable at 1.2 days, with overnight visitors staying 2.3 days (+0.1 day) and same-

-day visitors staying 0.2 day (-0.1 day).

Mainland China remained the primary market source, with visitor numbers increasing by 25.3% year-on-year to 1.74 million, accounting for 66.8% of total arrivals. Visitors from the nine Pearl River Delta cities in the Grea-

ter Bay Area jumped 28.6%, while those from Hong Kong dropped 22%.

International visitor arrivals rebounded strongly, up 91.9% year-on-year to 208,297, recovering to 68.6% of the April 2019 level. Southeast Asian markets, such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and

Thailand, showed robust recovery, while Northeast Asian markets, including South Korea and Japan, remained below pre-pandemic levels.

Visitor arrivals by land grew 13.1% to 2,012,501, with the Border Gate checkpoint accounting for the largest share at 47.3%. However, arrivals by sea declined 7.5%, while those by air surged 78%.

In the first four months of 2024, visitor arrivals increased 58.9% year-on-year to 11.48 million, recovering to 83.2% of the same period in 2019.

GAMING

# SJM EXPANDS CULINARY FOOTPRINT WITH STRATEGIC ACQUISITIONS

STAFF REPORTER

MACAU casino operator SJM Holdings has announced two separate agreements to acquire subsidiaries of its parent company, Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de Macau SA (STDM), valued at HKD197.5 million in aggregate. The transactions are aimed at enhancing the company's "culinary leadership" and strengthening its mass market presence in the Macau market.

Through the first deal, SJM will acquire the Kam Pek Community Centre, a three-story building located on Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro, for HKD166 million. The company plans to refurbish the property into a mass-market food and beverage hotspot, creating a "culinary anchor" at one end of the avenue with SJM's Grand Lisboa and Hotel Lisboa properties at the opposite end.

"This acquisition not only fulfils the group's commitment to non-gaming investments, as stipulated in the gaming concession contract, but is also a strategic initiative designed to develop a vibrant culinary hub in the heart of the historic city and enhance Macau's appeal as a top international destination," said SJM Chairman Daisy Ho.

In the second transaction, SJM has acquired the entirety of equity interest in, and a related sha-

LYNZY VALLES



Kam Pek Community Centre, a three-story building SJM purchased for HKD166 million to refurbish into a mass-market food and beverage hotspot

reholder's loan to, NYH European and NYH Italian, two STDM subsidiaries that are developing new restaurant concepts at the Grand Lisboa Palace resort in Cotai. The deal's total price tag is HKD31.5 million.

"These additions are part of a broader initiative to optimize our food and beverage portfolio at the

Grand Lisboa Palace, aligning with SJM's strategy to attract the mass market with a diversified range of international restaurants and cafes," the company stated.

"The acquisitions represent ideal opportunities due to both their prime locations and complementary natures to our existing operations," Ho said.

HEALTH

# GOV'T URGES CITIZENS TO GET VACCINATED FOR INFLUENZA

HOWARD TONG

INFLUENZA A infections surged from December 2023 to January 2024 before declining in February and then rising again in late March, according to Leong Iek Hou, director of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention at the Health Bureau.

The doctor attributed the recurrence to "weakened immunity caused by frequent mask-wearing during the Covid-19 pandemic."

Guesting on TDM Radio Macau to further elaborate on this issue, the director analyzed data from the five-month period, reporting that 16% of fever cases were severe cases of influenza, while 12% were due to a new coronavirus variant. Leong also noted a 75% year-on-year increase in cluster infections at schools and early childhood institutions, with influenza A accounting for 40% of these outbreaks.

"This year's influenza vaccine is consistent with the currently circulating viruses, and vaccination can effectively prevent severe influenza," Leong said.

According to the Health Bureau, as of last Wednesday 173,000 doses of the 2023/2024 influenza vaccine had been administered, a nearly 20% increase from the previous year. The vaccine will be available until August at the latest.

The influenza vaccine coverage rate in Macau's institutions exceeds 90% and the rate in kindergartens and primary schools is nearly 80%. Over 50% of people both under and over 65 have been vaccinated.

Macau has also seen significant increase in Covid-19 vaccinations, with 676,000 people vaccinated and over 1.85 million doses administered. Additionally, more than 20,000 people have received the XBB variant Covid-19 vaccine.

Meanwhile, the public hospital has reported that the number of respiratory infections in the region from January to April matches the total from the previous year.

During the previous month, the hospital documented 5,570 cases among children, with the highest infection rates occurring in children aged six to seven years old.

RENATO MARQUES

NICKNAMED "Betsy", the 1953 Morgan +4, with the Hong Kong license registration XX2795, is on sale, the car owner – or how he prefers to be addressed, "Betsy's Current Keeper" – Dick Worrall has told Hoje Macau newspaper.

Worrall, who is turning 80 years old, confided that, following a recent talk with a friend from the Classic Car Club of Hong Kong, it was "time to pass ownership of the car to someone else". Worrall added that it seemed best to sell Betsy in Macau or Hong Kong, where the car enjoyed its brightest racing days.

Worrall noted in the same interview that Betsy is one of a few vintage cars that still survive from those that took part in the first-ever Macau Grand Prix

## Car from first-ever edition of Macau GP for sale

in 1954. (The displayed Triumph TR2 from Portugal's Eduardo Carvalho, winner of that first edition is, as many others are in the Macau Grand Prix Museum, a replica, not the original car).

"There is no doubt that Betsy will be around much longer than I will," said Worrall, "and, therefore, I consider myself only her present guardian. I can't help but think how great it would be if, one day, she returned to Hong Kong and Macau, where she spent so many of her 70 years. In fact, that's where she belongs."

In the first-ever Macau GP, the car was raced by its then-British owner, Gordon John Bell ("Dinger"), who was at the time the



director of the Hong Kong Royal Observatory.

Although Dinger did not finish the race, he ended with a crash at the R Bend that sent him almost to the sea, history books, through documents and photogra-

phs, show that Betsy occupied pole position until the race's final few laps.

Besides this first-ever race, Betsy took part in Macau's classic car races on another four occasions, these times with Worrall



driving, a former police official in Hong Kong who acquired the car in 1968 together with his wife. The couple used the gifted money they received from their wedding to finance the purchase.

Worrall's first raced in 1978, during the GP's 25th anniversary celebrations. His last was in 1985. Betsy is currently in the UK, since 1997, where it has been well kept and maintained, according to Worrall.

DICK WORRALL

## Sands Macao Celebrates 20 Years in Macao

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



# PART 4: Sands China fosters growth of local SMEs

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.

Small and medium enterprises are integral parts of Macao's growth. Since establishing its roots in Macao 20 years ago, Sands China has been upholding the spirit of supporting local SMEs, continuously devoting resources to foster their growth, and implementing measures to prioritise local procurement.

Sands China launched its F.I.T. initiative in April 2017, offering Financial Support, Invitational Matching, and Training and Development to local SME suppliers. The initiative aims to encourage current and new local suppliers – local small, medium and micro suppliers; "Made-In-Macao" companies and Macao young entrepreneurs – to work with Sands

China. By 2023, Sands China had recorded a gross procurement amount of MOP 8.4 billion, 26% of which went to SMEs, compared to 19% when the F.I.T. initiative was first launched in 2017.

Fred Ma, president of the Macao Chamber of Commerce, said, "The ongoing collaboration between the Macao Chamber of Commerce and Sands China on the company's Local Small, Medium and Micro Suppliers Support Programme has been going smoothly, and the programme's achievements have gained widespread recognition from numerous SMEs."

### LOCAL SUPPLIER OPEN DAY

In terms of Invitational Matching, Sands China has organised

a Local Supplier Open Day several times. The event offers local suppliers the opportunity to engage with Sands China's procurement team and learn about the needs of various departments. Several categories of procurement booths have been set up: food and beverage, outside services and logistics, marketing and printing, operating supplies and equipment, facilities and construction, and Macao brand and made-in-Macao products, attracting the attendance of a large number of suppliers.

### SANDS PROCUREMENT ACADEMY

The Sands Procurement Academy is a first-of-its-kind training programme for local SME suppliers that invites professionals to share their expertise, and was co-organised by Sands China, the Macao Chamber of Commerce and the Macao Productivity and Technology Centre in 2017. Through the sharing of the most up-to-date business knowledge and skills, the academy helps SME suppliers gain experience and ca-

capacity for working with large-scale international corporations. While open to all local suppliers, the programme specifically targets the development of local SMEs, especially micro-enterprises, Macao young entrepreneurs, and "Made-in-Macao" enterprises. There have been 14 cohorts of trainees to date, with suppliers earning a completion certificate and gaining preferential procurement opportunities with Sands China upon graduation. By the end of 2023, the Sands Procurement Academy had delivered 8,114 training hours and trained over 520 local SME suppliers, with 486 participants having successfully graduated.

### SANDS SHOPPING CARNIVAL

Upholding the spirit of growing with SMEs and the intention of assisting Macao's economic revival efforts, Sands China organised its first Sands Shopping Carnival in 2020, and since then has provided a free business platform for local SMEs and Sands Retailers for four years straight. By bringing together international retail brands and local SMEs under one roof, this creates synergistic effects and empowers Macao brands to go global. Four years have passed, and the Sands Shopping Carnival has become an annual signature event for Sands China, giving local

residents and tourists an exciting summer extravaganza, while supporting Macao's development as a world centre of tourism and leisure. The carnival has welcomed over 420,000 visitors in four years to great acclaim, bringing positive benefits to the sales and promotion of local SMEs.

### MACAO SHOWCASE

After three years of a global pandemic, Sands China remained committed to assist local SMEs to expand in the global market. The company held its first large-scale event, Macao Showcase, at Marina Bay Sands last year. The three-day event invited sales and trade partners, regional and international media, Singapore's residents, and travellers to experience the multifaceted charm of Macao as a world centre of tourism and leisure and a premier MICE destination. Sands China led a delegation of 200 local SMEs and media travelling from Macao to Singapore to promote the unique beauty and products of the SAR. The event reflects the company's unwavering commitment to support the Macao SAR government in attracting more overseas travellers and diversifying visitor markets. The roadshow also facilitated a number of SMEs to engage in procurement with Marina Bay Sands, thus entering the global market.

## WHAT THE SMEs SAY:



"Through our collaboration with Sands China, we have come to realize the importance of establishing a strong and cohesive team, which has led to the expansion and development of our comprehensive engineering project team. Furthermore, the partnership has enabled us to broaden our knowledge of the latest industry technologies and practices, including fire safety systems, through Sands' extensive network. In 2008, we successfully expanded our business to Singapore, leveraging the overseas business opportunities provided by Sands China."

C.T. Leong, managing director of Min Da Construction & Engineering Company Limited



"Serene Garden is deeply grateful to Sands China for extending their support since our humble beginnings as a micro-enterprise. Without the initial opportunities and assistance, our budding venture may not have flourished. Sands China's contributions to supporting local SMEs are widely recognized and held in high esteem within the industry. Their support has not only revitalized existing local industries but also provided opportunities and nurturing for new start-up ventures, significantly contributing to the growth of SMEs in Macao."

Luis M. Silva, manager of Serene Garden



"Sands China upholds high standards for food safety, and our collaboration has heightened Kin Nam Hong's awareness of hygiene, safety, and environmental considerations in food transportation. As a result, we invested in Macao's first refrigerated truck and replaced foam boxes used for vegetable transportation with modern plastic crates. These measures have significantly elevated our service quality and fostered closer cooperation between Kin Nam Hong and Sands China. With Sands China's expanding business, Kin Nam Hong has also experienced growth, increasing our workforce to 35 employees."

Lei Iong Fai, managing director of Kin Nam Hong Co. Ltd



"Our collaboration with Sands China has provided valuable insights into the models and requirements for working with international enterprises, opening up opportunities for cooperation with larger companies. Additionally, this partnership has allowed us to accumulate extensive experience in logistics and transportation and develop our problem-solving capabilities. As a result, we are better equipped to meet diverse business demands and have established a strong reputation within the industry, enabling us to expand our operations and drive company growth."

Si Tou Chin Pang, general manager of Chi Kei Fo Van

ZHANG ZHAN

# Authorities release vlogger who filmed Wuhan lockdown

HUIZHONG WU, BANGKOK

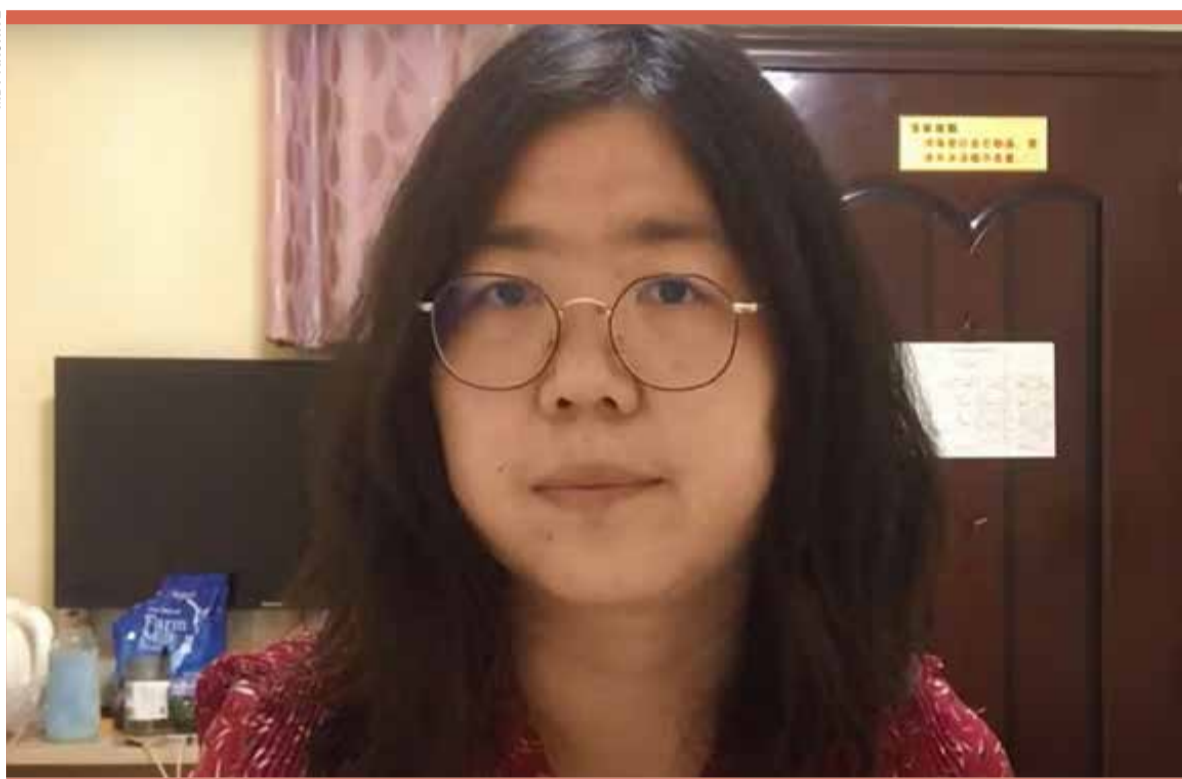
**Z**HANG ZHAN was released from prison after serving four years for charges related to reporting on the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan, China, according to a video statement she released Tuesday, eight days after her sentence ended, though there are concerns about how much freedom of movement she has.

Zhang was sentenced to four years in prison on charges of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble," a vaguely defined charge often used in political cases, and served her full term. Yet, on the day of her release, her former lawyers could not reach her or her family. Shanghai police had paid visits to activists and her former lawyers in the days leading up to her release.

In a short video, Zhang said she was taken by police to her brother Zhang Ju's home on May 13, the day she finished her sentence.

"I want to thank everyone for their help and concern,"

MDT ARCHIVE



she said in a soft voice, standing in what appeared to be a hallway of an apartment building.

The video was posted by Jane Wang, an overseas activist who launched the Free Zhang Zhan campaign in the

United Kingdom and is in contact with one of Zhang's former lawyers. However, Wang said in a statement that Zhang still has limited freedom. They became concerned that Zhang would be kept under further control by police

even if she was no longer in prison.

Ren Quanniu represented Zhang before being stripped of his license in February 2021. He said he confirmed the video was true by speaking with Zhang's family.

"She's not free, she's relatively free," he said in a message to the AP. "She's still under the watch and care of the police."

During her detention at Shanghai's Women Prison, Zhang staged a hunger strike and was hospitalized at one point in 2021. Zhang's family, who could often only speak to her by phone, faced police pressure during her incarceration, and her parents refused to speak to news outlets.

Zhang was among a handful of citizen journalists who traveled to the central Chinese city of Wuhan after the government put it under total lockdown in February 2020, in the early days of the pandemic. She walked around the city to document public life as fears grew about the novel coronavirus.

Others spent time in jail for documenting the early days of the pandemic, including Fang Bin, who published videos of overcrowded hospitals and bodies during the outbreak. Fang was sentenced to three years in prison and released in April 2023.

Chen Qiushi, another citizen journalist, disappeared in February 2020 while filming in Wuhan. Chen resurfaced in September 2021 on a friend's live video feed on YouTube, saying he had suffered from depression. He did not provide details about his disappearance. **MDT/AP**

ESPIONAGE

# Man charged with helping the Hong Kong intelligence service in the UK found dead

**A** man charged with assisting Hong Kong authorities with gathering intelligence in the United Kingdom has died in unexplained circumstances, British police said yesterday [Macau time].

Matthew Trickett, 37, was one of three men charged earlier this month with agreeing to engage in information gathering, surveillance and acts of deception that were likely to materially assist the Hong Kong intelligence service from late 2023 to May 2. Prosecutors also alleged that the men forced entry into a U.K. residential address on May 1.

The men had all been bailed and were next due to appear at London's Central Criminal Court for a hearing on Friday. They

haven't yet entered pleas.

Thames Valley Police said Trickett was found dead in a park in Maidenhead, west of London, on Sunday afternoon after a report from a member of the public.

Police said that an investigation is ongoing into the death, which is being treated as unexplained.

British media reports said Trickett was formerly a Royal Marine who recently worked as a Home Office immigration enforcement officer. He was also reportedly the director of a security consultancy.

He was charged along with Chi Leung (Peter) Wai, 38, and Chung Biu Yuen, 63. The men appeared at a brief court hearing to confirm their identities on May 13.

AP PHOTO



Police stand next to a black forensic tent in Grenfell Park in Maidenhead, west of London

Hong Kong authorities have confirmed that Yuen was the office manager of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in London.

Trickett's lawyer, Julian Hayes, said he was "shocked" at the news and was supporting Trickett's fa-

family. He declined to comment, because investigations were ongoing.

A police cordon remained in place in Grenfell Park in Maidenhead later yesterday, with several officers stationed next to a black forensics tent lo-

cated close to a children's playground.

Chinese authorities in both the U.K. and Hong Kong have decried the charges, saying they were the latest in a series of "groundless and slanderous" accusations that the

U.K. government has leveled against China.

Hong Kong's government demanded that the U.K. provide full details on the allegations and protect the rights of the office manager of the trade office.

The spying charges came amid simmering tensions between Britain and China.

In a separate and ongoing court case, two men, including a parliamentary researcher, were recently charged with spying for China. Christopher Cash and Christopher Berry were charged with violating the Official Secrets Act by providing information or documents that could be "useful to an enemy" — China — and "prejudicial to the safety or interests" of the U.K. between late 2021 and February 2023.

More than 100,000 Hong Kongers have moved to the U.K. since Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law triggered by the huge anti-government protests in the city in 2019. **MDT/AP**



To Lam swears in the position after he was elected as the president at the National Assembly in Hanoi, yesterday

VIETNAM

# Top security official To Lam confirmed as president

DAVID RISING, BANGKOK

**V**IETNAM'S top security official To Lam was confirmed yesterday as the nation's new president. He oversaw police and intelligence operations over a period when rights groups say basic liberties have been systematically suppressed, and its secret service was accused of violating international law.

Lam was confirmed by Vietnam's National Assembly after

his predecessor resigned amid an ongoing anti-corruption campaign that has shaken the country's political establishment and business elites and has resulted in multiple top-level changes in government.

Vietnam's presidency is largely ceremonial, but his new role as head of state puts the 66-year-old in a "very strong position" to become the next Communist Party general secretary, the most important political position in the country, said Nguyen Khac Giang,

an analyst at Singapore's ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

Communist Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong was elected to a third term in 2021, but at age 80, he may not seek another term after 2026.

Trong is an ideologue who views corruption as the gravest threat facing the party. As Vietnam's top security official, Lam has led Trong's sweeping anti-graft campaign.

Following Lam's confirmation as president, Deputy Public Security Minister Tran

Quoc To was appointed to take over from him at the ministry in an interim role.

Lam spent more than four decades in the Ministry of Public Security before becoming the minister in 2016. His rise took place while Vietnam's politburo lost six of its 18 members amid the expanding anti-graft campaign, including two former presidents and Vietnam's parliamentary head.

Lam was behind many of the investigations into high-profile politicians, said Giang.

Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh is seen as the other major contender to possibly succeed Trong, Giang said.

The current vice-speaker of Vietnam's parliament was confirmed Monday as the National Assembly speaker after his predecessor, Vuong Dinh Hue, resigned amid the anti-graft campaign. Until his resignation, Hue was also widely seen as a potential successor to Trong.

This unprecedented instability in Vietnam's political system has spooked investors as the country tries to position itself as an alternative for companies looking to shift their supply chains away from China.

A flood of foreign investment, especially in manufacturing of high-tech products like smartphones and computers, raised expectations it could join the "Four Asian Tigers" — Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, whose economies underwent rapid industrialization and posted high growth rates.

But the scandals and uncertainty — including the death sentence for a real estate tycoon accused of embezzling nearly 3% of the country's 2022 GDP — have brought with them uncertainty and bureaucratic reticence to make decisions. Economic growth slipped to 5.1% last

year from 8% in 2022 as exports slowed.

During Lam's years heading the Public Security Ministry, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and other watchdog organizations have strongly criticized Vietnam for its harassment and intimidation of critics.

In 2021, courts convicted at least 32 people for posting critical opinions about the government and sentenced them to multiple years in prison, while police arrested at least 26 others on fabricated charges, according to Human Rights Watch.

Under Tam's watch as Vietnam's top security boss, civil society faced further curbs, foreign aid restrictions introduced in 2021 were tightened in 2023, the country jailed climate activists, and laws were introduced to censor social media, said Ben Swanton of The 88 Project, a group that advocates for freedom of expression in Vietnam.

"With To Lam's ascent to the presidency, Vietnam is now a literal police state," said Swanton, adding that the Vietnamese ruling Politburo was now dominated by current and former security officials. He said he expected further intensification of repression and censorship.

While Vietnam was under a COVID-19 lockdown in 2021, a video surfaced showing Turkish chef Nusret Gokce, popularly known as Salt Bae, feeding Tam a gold-encrusted steak in London. Despite efforts to censor it, the video went viral, stoking widespread anger from people enduring virus lockdowns that exacerbated economic deprivations.

Meantime, a Vietnamese noodle vendor named Bui Tuan Lam, who followed the video with a parody of Salt Bae, was arrested on charges of spreading anti-state propaganda and sentenced to five years in prison. **MDT/AP**

NEW CALEDONIA

# Violent unrest in French Pacific territory impacting global nickel prices

**G**LOBAL nickel prices have soared since deadly violence erupted in the French Pacific territory of New Caledonia last week.

The overseas territory,

which has been under French rule for over 170 years, is a major global producer of the critical material that is needed to make electric vehicle batte-

ries, solar panels, steel and other everyday items.

Riots erupted after French lawmakers approved changes to the French Constitution that would

allow residents who have lived in New Caledonia for 10 years to vote in provincial elections.

Opponents fear the measure will benefit pro-

-France politicians in New Caledonia, where pro-independence indigenous Kanaks have long pushed to be free of France.

Kanaks are seeking independence for the archipelago of 270,000 people, while many descendants of colonizers and other non-indigenous people who have settled on the island want to remain part of France.

On May 15, France declared a 12-day minimum state of emergency on the island. It rushed in 1,000 troops to reinforce security forces that lost control of

some parts of the capital, Nouméa.

New Caledonia holds between 20-30% of the world's nickel reserves. It is a huge part of the archipelago's economy, comprising up to 90% of its exports and employing around a quarter of its workforce.

The European Union has named nickel as a critical raw material, which means it is economically and strategically important for the European economy but is considered to have a high-risk associated with its supply. **MDT/AP**



Smoke rises during protests in Noumea, last week



The Boeing 777-300ER aircraft of Singapore Airlines in foreground is parked at Suvarnabhumi International Airport, near Bangkok, yesterday

AVIATION

# Experts to begin probe of Singapore Airlines turbulence incident

NAPAT KONGSAWAD, BANGKOK

**A**VIATION investigators arrived in Bangkok yesterday to learn how and why severe turbulence sent a Singapore Airlines plane into a sudden dive that tossed passengers and crew around the cabin, leaving a British man dead and dozens others injured.

Twenty people remained in intensive care in hospital after Flight SQ321, which was flying from London's Heathrow airport to Singapore, hit the turbulence Tuesday over the Andaman Sea. The Boeing 777, which carried 211 passengers and 18 crew members, descended 6,000 feet (around 1,800 meters) in about three minutes, the carrier said.

The captain diverted the plane to Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport, where medical teams evaluated those aboard and sent over 80 to hospital. Singapore Airlines sent a special flight to Bangkok on Tuesday night to pick up those well enough to travel. The airline said that 131 passengers and 12 crew members arrived shortly after 5 a.m. at Singapore's Changi Airport.

An additional 79 passengers and six crew members stayed in Bangkok, where the majority remained in

hospital, said Singapore Airlines CEO Goh Choon Phong.

Samitivej Srinakarin Hospital, where most of the injured were taken, said 20 people were being treated in intensive care while 27 others have been discharged. The ICU patients include six Britons, six Malaysians, three Australians, two Singaporeans and one person each from Hong Kong, New Zealand, and the Philippines, it said.

The hospital said nine people underwent surgery Tuesday and five more operations were expected to be completed yesterday. It said it had provided 104 people with medical care, including 19 at its clinic at the airport.

Officers from Singapore's Transport Safety Investigation Bureau arrived in Bangkok late Tuesday, Singapore Transport Minister Chee Hong Tat said.

One of 56 Australians listed as passengers on board the flight told Sky News that the seatbelt sign had come on just ahead of the turbulence, but she could not act in time because she had been asleep.

Thirty-year-old Teandra Tukhunen, speaking from a hospital with her left arm in a sling, said she had been "thrown to the roof and then to the floor."

"It was just so quick, over in a couple of seconds and then you're just shocked. Everyone's pretty freaked out," she said.

Recounting the accident, British passenger Andrew Davies also told Sky News that the seatbelt sign was illuminated but crew members didn't have time to take their seats.

"Every single cabin crew person I saw was injured in some way or another, maybe with a gash on their head," Davies said. "One had a bad back, who was in obvious pain."

Thai officials had withheld the name of the dead man, but British media identified him as Geoffrey Kitchen, 73, who was going on a six-week holiday with his wife. She was among the passengers taken to hospital in Bangkok.

Kitchen was described as formerly working in the insurance industry, and in retirement was continuing his decades-long involvement with amateur theater.

A Thai airport official said Kitchen might have had a heart attack, though that hadn't been confirmed. Tracking data captured by FlightRadar24 and analyzed by The Associated Press showed Tuesday's flight cruising at an altitude of 37,000 feet (11,300 meters).

At one point, the Boeing

777-300ER suddenly and sharply descended to 31,000 feet (9,400 meters) over about three minutes, according to the data. The aircraft then stayed at 31,000 feet for under 10 minutes before diverting and landing in Bangkok less than a half-hour later.

Most people associate turbulence with heavy storms, but the most dangerous type is so-called clear air turbulence. Wind shear can occur in wispy cirrus clouds or even in clear air near thunderstorms, as differences in temperature and pressure create powerful currents of fast-moving air.

According to a 2021 report by the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board, turbulence accounted for 37.6% of all accidents on larger commercial airlines between 2009 and 2018. The Federal Aviation Administration, another U.S. government agency, has said there were 146 serious injuries from turbulence from 2009 to 2021.

"For flight attendants and passengers alike, the dangerous, shaky feeling in midair called turbulence comes from air currents shifting," said a statement from the U.S.-based Association of Flight Attendants.

"While details of Singapore Flight 321 are still developing, initial reports seem to indicate clear air turbulence, which is the most dangerous type of turbulence. It cannot be seen and is virtually undetectable with current technology. One second, you're cruising smoothly; the next, passengers, crew and unsecured carts or other items are being thrown around the cabin."

"Always follow crew instructions and wear your seatbelt whenever seated," it advised. "It is a matter of life and death."

Officials from the British and Malaysian embassies yesterday visited the Bangkok hospital where most of the injured were admitted to check on their condition.

Singapore Airlines said the passengers, in addition to the 56 Australians, included two Canadians, one German, three Indians, two Indonesians, one Icelander, four Irish, one Israeli, 16 Malaysians, two from Myanmar, 23 New Zealanders, five Filipinos, 41 from Singapore, one South Korean, two Spaniards, 47 from the United Kingdom and four from the United States. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history



### 1977 DUTCH CHILDREN HELD HOSTAGE



More than 100 children and six teachers have been taken hostage in a primary school in northern Holland.

The Dutch Prime Minister, Joop den Uyl, said the hostage-takers - who are from the South Molucca islands (formerly part of the Dutch East Indies) - had still not made any demands.

But he said they would probably want the release of 20 Moluccans imprisoned in 1975 for hijacking a train not far from the current sieges and raiding the Indonesian consulate in Amsterdam.

This second generation of Moluccans are campaigning for the Dutch government to press for an independent state for their people in Indonesia, even though most of them have never set foot in their homeland.

Their parents, many of whom fought on the side of the ruling Dutch during Indonesia's war of independence between 1945 and 1949, left Indonesia for fear of reprisals.

They hoped to return but were gradually integrated into Dutch society.

There are now some 40,000 South Moluccans living in the Netherlands. Many refuse to take on Dutch citizenship and tensions between the communities are at an all-time high.

South Moluccans freed

The gunmen took over the school in the village of Bovensmilde at around 0900 local time. They released 15 South Moluccan children, gathered the rest in two classrooms and covered the windows with newspapers.

Police and troops moved into the area and worried parents are waiting outside. The gunmen have accepted blankets and some food for their hostages.

At one point a mentally handicapped woman ran into the school grounds. At the insistence of the hostage takers police had to undress to escort her off the premises to show they were unarmed.

Seven other South Moluccans seized a train at the same time with about 50 passengers on board in open countryside near the city of Groningen.

The Rotterdam-Groningen express was brought to an abrupt halt when a young Moluccan girl pulled the emergency cord just before it reached its destination. Five heavily armed men then boarded the train from surrounding fields, released children and the elderly and separated women and men.

They have been given a telephone to negotiate with the government.

Mr Den Uyl indicated the government would take a hard line on any demands made to them. "Patience is the watchword but we are prepared to use controlled violence if necessary," he said.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Four days later all the children at the school were released after an outbreak of gastric flu - four teachers remained hostages along with 55 others on board the train near Groningen.

On June 11 - a record 20 days after the crisis began - Dutch marines stormed the train and the school. During a fierce gunbattle on the train, six of the nine hostage-takers were shot along with two of the hostages.

The Netherlands improved social and economic conditions for Moluccans in the following months and years.

In March 1978 Moluccans carried out another failed siege - of a government building in Assen - but since then there have been no further incidents.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Review the numbers. Pay bills and manage accounts. Fix an error and save. Keep cash flowing in a positive direction. Budget for a dreamy possibility.

TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Pull with your partner. A challenging moment reignites collaboration. Exchange agreements and promises for shared commitments. You're realizing a dream.

GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 With a busy schedule, slow to avoid accidents or mistakes. Prioritize healthy practices and exercise routines. Recharge with music, good food and rest.

CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Communication could seem stuck, especially with your sweetheart. Don't rely on luck. Apologize when appropriate. Share a persuasive invitation to a fun possibility.

LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Home tempts you in. Settle into your sanctuary. Clean and clear clutter. Contribute to a family project. What you're building has lasting value.

VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 Discover an exciting possibility within the chaos. Articulate it for the public. Use your communicative arts and skills to share a story. Get creative.

LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Follow the money. Do the research and backstage preparations for a later performance. A profitable opportunity is within reach with a polished presentation.

SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Slow to review personal plans before taking action on them. Consider alternatives and options. Breakdowns could require a different route. Discover buried treasure.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Find a private, peaceful spot to think. Consider things from a higher perspective. Look for hidden opportunities. Rest and make plans for later implementation.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Coordinate and strategize with your team. Get into a huddle and resolve who's doing what. Go for distance, not speed. Practice for later performance.

AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 A professional responsibility requires your focus. All is not as it appears. It's easier to ride a horse in the direction it's going.

PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Engage in an exploration. Consider long-term implications and consequences of different ideas and views. What might be the impacts? Investigate. Look before leaping.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

6 7 1 4 3 7 6 3 5 2 7 1 7 4 5 8 6 2

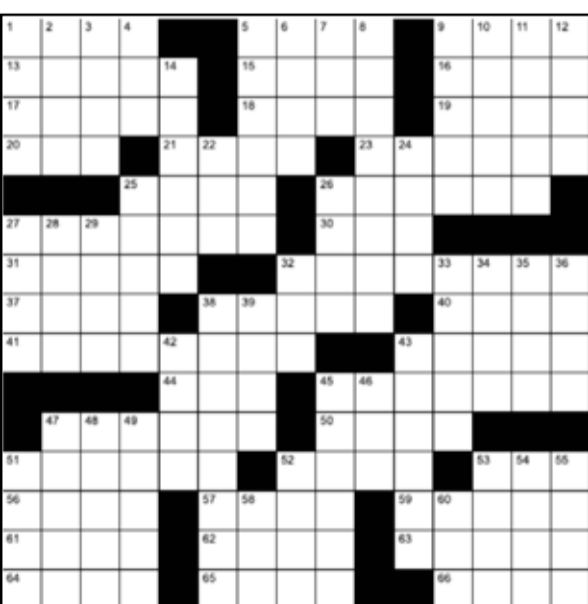
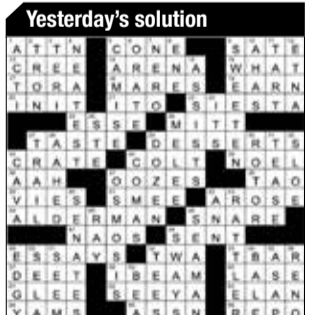
WEATHER

Table with columns: MIN, MAX, CONDITION. Rows include CHINA (Beijing, Changchun, Chengdu, Chongqing, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Guiyang, Haikou, Hangzhou, Harbin, Hefei, Nanjing, Shanghai, Taipei, Wuhan, Hong Hong) and WORLD (Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, London, New York).

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Tolkien tree creatures; 5- Dirty Harry's org.; 9- Silage storage tower; 13- Unfettered; 15- Rain cats and dogs; 16- Slippery \_\_\_ eel; 17- Pernod flavoring; 18- Barrett of gossip; 19- Woe \_\_\_; 20- Chat room chuckle; 21- Felt sorry about; 23- Operated by hand; 25- Galileo's birthplace; 26- Owner of a slave; 27- Paint oil; 30- Downed; 31- Shed \_\_\_; 32- Difficult problem; 37- Romance lang.; 38- Sir \_\_\_ Newton was an English mathematician; 40- PBS science series; 41- Usually; 43- Start; 44- \_\_\_ mo replay; 45- Sharon, e.g.; 47- Baffle; 50- Anthropologist Margaret; 51- Coarse sieve; 52- Bridge; 53- Monitor, for short; 56- Ear part; 57- That's \_\_\_ haven't heard; 59- Seat; 61- Arabian Sea nation; 62- Hostels; 63- Port-au-Prince is its capital; 64- Start of a counting rhyme; 65- Adam's third son; 66- Catch;

DOWN 1- Israeli airline; 2- Taboo thing; 3- Work hard; 4- Leaky tire sound; 5- Move apart; 6- Nourishment; 7- Bit of wordplay; 8- Theatrical; 9- Person of exceptional holiness; 10- Magazine copy; 11- Truman's Missouri birthplace; 12- Like Nash's lama; 14- More spine-tingling; 22- Application; 24- Wait \_\_\_; 25- Sacred song; 26- \_\_\_ Hari; 27- Reclined; 28- Sock \_\_\_ mel; 29- Approach; 32- Speak; 33- Mix dough; 34- Theater section; 35- 'The \_\_\_ Dead', classic horror movie; 36- Hindu queen; 38- State in the central United States; 39- Casino machine; 42- \_\_\_ forgive our debtors; 43- Tree limb; 45- Mischievous; 46- Briny expanse; 47- Carol start; 48- Cited; 49- Minuscule; 51- Gin flavorer; 52- Shipped off; 53- First son of Adam and Eve; 54- Hayworth or Moreno; 55- Math subject; 58- U-turn from SSW; 60- Owns;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



Real estate advertisement for JML Property. Includes the slogan 'It's prime time to BUY & RENT!', contact information (hello@jmlproperty.com, www.jmlproperty.com), and three property listings: Va Fat (HKD 3,780,000, 2 bed 1 bath), Tou Un (HKD 2,980,000, 1 bed 1 bath), and Jade Garden (HKD 11,880,000, 4 bed 3 bath).

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

AUTO RACING | NASCAR

# STAR DRIVER KYLE LARSON IS EMBRACING HIS INDIANAPOLIS 500 DEBUT

DAVE SKRETTA, INDIANAPOLIS

AP PHOTO



**KYLE LARSON** has been adamant about soaking up the entire Indianapolis 500 experience as the NASCAR superstar prepares to make his debut in "The Greatest Spectacle in Racing" on Memorial Day weekend.

He didn't expect to find himself under an udder yesterday [Macau time].

One of the most accomplished drivers of any generation is still just an Indy 500 rookie. And one of the somewhat new traditions at a place steeped in them is that rookies, after completing their harrowing qualifying runs and a penultimate practice on Monday, return to otherwise quiet Indianapolis Motor Speedway the next morning for a crack at milking a cow.

"What? Is that a thing?" Larson asked when first informed of the custom.

Told that it was, indeed, a thing, the driver of the No. 17 Arrow McLaren asked: "Do we get to glove up?"

So on a hot, sunny Tuesday at the speedway, there was Larson —

just as he had promised — standing alongside a black-and-white Holstein that was quietly munching away. Larson bent at the waist, reached with his right hand — ungloved, for the record — and gave one of the udders a couple of tentative tugs.

"I grew up in a city," explained Larson, who was born in suburban Sacramento, California. "I've never really been around a cow."

Just about everything Larson

does with a wheel in his hands seems natural to him, but a cow's udder? Pretty amateurish. Still, Larson got a couple of streams of milk to squirt, and really, that was the point.

On Sunday, he hopes to douse himself in the stuff.

That's another Indianapolis 500 tradition, of course, begun when parched 1936 winner Louis Meyer climbed from his car and asked for a glass of buttermilk. These days,

drivers are asked beforehand what version of milk they prefer — Larson picked whole, should he win — and upon reaching victory lane, generally take a quick swig before pouring it over their heads.

Yet so much is up in the air as Larson prepares for race day, including what would happen if he wins.

He qualified fifth in a joint effort between Arrow McLaren and Hendrick Motorsports, his NASCAR team, and plans to run the enti-

re race before flying to Charlotte, North Carolina, and driving in the Cup Series race that night. Only five drivers have ever attempted "The Double," as it has become known, and Tony Stewart in 2021 remains the only one to finish all 1,100 miles.

The schedule is tight: Larson will climb from his Indy car into an SUV, which will deposit him at a helicopter waiting at the speedway. That will whisk him to a nearby airport, where a jet will take him to Charlotte. After landing, another helicopter will take him to the track, where he will climb into his Cup Series car for the start of the race.

Any time spent celebrating an Indy 500 triumph would put Larson in the most welcome of predicaments.

"The pressure of being in the race and starting in a great starting spot, and knowing we have the Coca-Cola 600 to run," NASCAR team owner Rick Hendrick said.

Ah, yes, the rain. That's also in the forecast Sunday, a 50% chance for scattered showers early with more popping up in the afternoon.

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FOOTBALL

# Ronaldo to lead Portugal into record sixth Euro

**C**RISTIANO Ronaldo is set to make a record sixth appearance at the European Championship with Portugal's squad.

Ronaldo was among the 26 players picked for the tournament in Germany by coach Roberto Martínez this week.

The 39-year-old Ronaldo first played in the competition in 2004, and led the national team to the title in 2016.

There had been some doubts about whether Ronaldo would continue playing with the national team after the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, but he has remained a key player in Martínez's squad.

Also in the list was veteran Pepe, the 41-year-old Porto defender who will play in



MDT ARCHIVE

his fifth Euro.

Among those not included were forward

Francisco Trincão, midfielder Pedro Gonçalves and striker Ricardo

Horta. Raphael Guerreiro was dropped after injuring his ankle with Bayern Munich a few weeks ago.

Two of the surprises included forwards Pedro Neto of Wolverhampton and Francisco Conceição of Porto.

Portugal is in Group F with the Czech Republic, Turkey and Georgia. It will play three warm-up games in June against Finland, Croatia and Ireland.

## PORTUGAL SQUAD

**GOALKEEPERS:** Diogo Costa (Porto), José Sá (Wolverhampton), Rui Patrício (Roma)

**DEFENDERS:** João Cancelo (Barcelona), Nelson Semedo (Wolverhampton), Diogo Dalot (Manchester United), Danilo Pereira (Wolverhampton), Nuno Mendes (Paris Saint-Germain), Pepe (Porto), Rúben Dias (Manchester City), António Silva (Benfica), Gonçalo Inácio (Sporting Lisbon)

**MIDFIELDERS:** Bruno Fernandes (Manchester United), João Neves (Benfica), Palhinha (Fulham), Otávio (Al Nassr), Rúben Neves (Al Hilal), Vitinha (PSG), Bernardo Silva (Man City)

**FORWARDS:** Cristiano Ronaldo (Al Nassr), Diogo Jota (Liverpool), Francisco Conceição (Porto), Gonçalo Ramos (PSG), Joao Félix (Barcelona), Pedro Neto (Wolverhampton), Rafael Leão (AC Milan)

EURO 2024

# Scotland heads into opening game with concerns without key midfielder

**S**COTLAND'S chances of causing an upset in the signature opening game of the European Championship against host nation Germany have been hit by a crisis at right back and the loss of a key midfielder.

Scotland coach Steve Clarke named yesterday a provisional 28-man squad missing injured right backs Aaron Hickey and Nathan Patterson as well as Lewis Ferguson, the captain of Bologna voted the best midfielder in the Italian league this season, after he underwent knee surgery last month.

Selected were a 41-year-old goalkeeper, Craig Gordon, who recently spent a

year out with a double leg break and an uncapped 18-year-old Liverpool forward, Ben Doak, who hasn't played since December. Scotland's first-choice strikers are Lyndon Dykes and Che Adams, who have been playing in England's second tier this season.

Scotland, which beat Spain in qualifying, has been given the honor of playing in Euro 2024's curtain-raiser against Germany in Munich on June 14 before further group games against Hungary and Switzerland.

The national team has never gone past the group stage in 11 major tournament appearances.

MDT/AP

AD

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OPINION

THE CONVERSATION

Emily Hemendinger, University of Colorado



PETS GIVE COMPANIONSHIP, CUDDLES, JOY - AND UNAVOIDABLE STRESSES

Owning a pet can be a roller coaster. There are the highs, like when your dog greets you with a full-body wiggle when you return home, or when your cat purrs loudly as you cuddle next to one another. Then there are the lows, like stressful trips to urgent care, waking up to that unpleasant vomiting noise, or making the difficult choice to say goodbye because of medical problems or even intractable behavioral issues.

For those pet-owners who are struggling, it's beneficial to their mental health to acknowledge that pets can create stress and that some animals are more work than others.

Research has shown that both cats and dogs can have equally positive impacts on mental health.

Pets may be helpful at reducing stress, anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed, including in children. Pet ownership has also been shown to improve well-being by instilling people with a sense of purpose and responsibility.

Whether you're adopting or shopping, pets can bring a full range of emotions into our lives. Research has even shown that pets may benefit non-pet owners around them as well.

Research shows that dogs can reduce loneliness in their owners. In fact, being accompanied by a dog may even make you seem more approachable.

Pets, especially dogs, may help improve one's ability to socialize and feel connected with others, as well as increasing the prospects for social interactions.

Animals and pets have also been used to assist in detecting the onset symptoms of medical episodes, including seizures. Despite the many positive impacts of pet ownership, it also can have negative impacts. For example, one survey found that 47% of Americans felt separation anxiety when leaving their dogs at home.

The survey also found that 41% of pet owners declined social invitations because they did not want to leave their dog at home, and that 70% of pet owners would prefer to work remotely so they could stay at home with their pet.

Stress from pet ownership is common. There's the stress of house-training and making sure the pet is getting enough enrichment – both physically and mentally. Then there are the challenges associated with vet appointments and navigating illness, as well as financial stressors and finding pet sitters.

Finally, there's the reality that our pet companions live shorter lives than we do, leading to end-of-life planning, expensive treatments for older-age ailments, and, of course, the grief that will be felt from the loss of a pet. For some people, the loss of a pet may feel worse than human loss.

People may judge or criticize pet owners for an "overblown" grief reaction. The common experience of invalidation and lack of acknowledgment related to grief around pet loss – similar to the grief felt from divorce and miscarriage – is categorized as disenfranchised grief. This term refers to grief that is not acknowledged, validated or accepted socially.

Employers can be supportive by continuing to provide remote and hybrid work options, flexibility in scheduling and opportunities for employees to feel validated and receive support.

It remains important, however, to acknowledge the stressors and difficulties pet owners face. After all, the ups and downs of pet ownership, just like the ups and downs of the human experience, are what make life and relationships that much more meaningful.

[Abridged]

SPAIN, IRELAND AND NORWAY MAKE A JOINT MOVE TO RECOGNIZE A PALESTINIAN STATE

THE BUZZ

Norway, Ireland and Spain recognized a Palestinian state in a historic move yesterday.

Several European Union countries indicated in recent weeks that they plan to make the recognition, arguing a two-state solution is essential for lasting peace in the region. Some 140 countries have already recognized a Palestinian state — more than two-thirds of United Nations members — but none of the major Western powers have done so. The move could put more pressure continental heavyweights France and Germany to reconsider their position.

Israel and the United States were already dealing with fallout after

chief prosecutor of the world's top war crimes court requested arrest warrants for leaders of both Israel and Hamas. Among the prosecutors' allegations against Israel was using "starvation as a method of warfare." Israeli and U.S. leaders harshly condemned the accusations.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza has escalated over the past two weeks since Israel launched an incursion into Rafah that closed a vital border crossing, vowing to root out Hamas fighters. The fighting sent hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fleeing out of Rafah, many of whom were displaced earlier in the Israel-Hamas war.



Judge Albert Hoffmann from South Africa, President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea opens a session in Hamburg this week

GREENHOUSE GAS

UN MARITIME TRIBUNAL SAYS COUNTRIES ARE LEGALLY REQUIRED TO REDUCE POLLUTION

MOLLY QUELL

A U.N. tribunal on maritime law said yesterday [Macau time] that countries are legally required to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, a victory for small island nations that are on the front lines of climate change.

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea found that carbon emissions qualify as marine pollution and said countries must take steps to mitigate and adapt to their adverse effects.

It was the first ruling to come in three cases in which advisory opinions have been sought from international courts about climate change.

Experts say the decision, though not legally binding, could profoundly impact international and domestic law on climate change.

"The opinion is a clarification of international legal obligations," said Joie Chowdhury, a senior attorney at the Center for International Environmental Law.

China, Russia and India are among the 169 parties to the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, the treaty that underpins the court. The United States, which is the world's biggest historic emitter of greenhouse gas-

es, is not a party.

"States parties to the convention have the specific obligations to take all necessary measures to prevent, reduce and control marine pollution from anthropogenic (greenhouse gas) emissions," Judge Albert Hoffmann told a packed courtroom in Hamburg, where the tribunal is based.

The request for the opinion was made in 2022 by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law, a coalition of nations spearheaded by the Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda and the Pacific island country of Tuvalu.

The group asked the court to specify what obligations signatories of the maritime treaty have in relation to the effects of climate change caused by human activity, and to protecting the marine environment from ocean warming and sea level rise.

"This was everything that we asked for," Naima Te Maile Fifita, a lawyer from Tuvalu who represented her country at the tribunal, said after the hearing. She described it as a "historic win."

"The ocean can breathe a sigh of relief today," Cheryl Bazard, the Bahamas' ambassador to the European Union told reporters. Loui-

se Fournier, a legal advisor at Greenpeace, said in a statement that the tribunal's opinion "marks a significant step forward in international environmental law and the protection of our oceans."

Small island states are among the most vulnerable nations to climate change, facing encroaching seas, recording breaking temperatures and increasingly severe storms. Last year, Australia offered to allow residents of Tuvalu to relocate to escape the effects of climate change.

Ocean temperatures in particular have increased, worsening the impact on coastal states.

"Without rapid action, climate change may prevent my children and grandchildren from living on their ancestral home," Gaston Alfonso Browne, the prime minister of Antigua and Barbuda, told the tribunal last year.

Climate change is on the docket of a string of international courts. Last year, the same group of island nations asked the International Court of Justice to weigh in as well.

The U.N.'s top judicial body is set to hold hearings next year and more than 80 countries have already asked to participate. MDT/AP



Iranian communities from London to Los Angeles shed few tears over the death of late Ebrahim Raisi. But there are not always loud cheers, either. While some hope the demise of a powerful figure in Iran's authoritarian Islamic government may bring change, others fear it could result in more repression. "It's a better world without him," said Maryam Namazie, a U.K.-based women's rights campaigner.



USA The number of people of both Latino and Asian American or Pacific Islander heritage has more than doubled in the last 20 years yet it remains an often ignored demographic, researchers at UCLA said yesterday. The UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute analyzed Census Bureau data within the last two decades. This included the 2000 census count as well as American Community Survey 5-year estimates on population characteristics from 2010 and 2022.



USA Democrats introduced legislation that would prohibit U.S. officials from accepting money, payments or gifts from foreign governments without congressional consent, their response to a yearslong probe into former president Trump's overseas business dealings. The proposal led by Rep. Jamie Raskin (pictured) and Sen. Richard Blumenthal would enforce the Constitution's ban on emoluments, which prohibits the president from accepting foreign gifts and money without Congress' permission.