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FRESH GOVERNMENT DATA SHOWS THAT MACAU EXPERIENCED A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN MICE ACTIVITIES DURING THE FIRST QUARTER

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EMERGING MINERAL HUB, NIGERIA IS CRACKING DOWN ON ILLEGAL MINING

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AP PHOTO



WHO The World Health Organization opened its annual meeting yesterday, aiming to bolster global pandemic preparedness post-COVID-19. Efforts to adopt a comprehensive pandemic treaty stalled after 2.5 years of negotiations. WHO Director-General Tedros A. Ghebreyesus expressed confidence in reaching a consensus despite setbacks. Discussions will now focus on amending the International Health Regulations to improve global responses to health emergencies, with prominent international figures addressing the assembly.

AP PHOTO



Israel faced new condemnation for strikes on Rafah, Gaza, killing at least 45 Palestinians. Prime Minister Netanyahu acknowledged a "tragic mistake" and announced an investigation. The attack, targeting Hamas militants, has drawn international criticism, including from the U.S. and France. Netanyahu emphasized efforts to avoid civilian casualties. The Gaza Health Ministry reported half the victims were women, children, and elderly. Israel's military is also examining the incident.

AP PHOTO



Iran has increased its uranium stockpile enriched to near weapons-grade levels, according to a UN nuclear watchdog report. Iran now possesses 142.1 kg of uranium enriched up to 60%, close to the 90% needed for weapons. The IAEA noted Iran's refusal to allow experienced inspectors and the recent deaths of key Iranian officials have paused discussions. Negotiations continue on expanding inspections and improving cooperation.

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THE AFFLUENCE FACTOR

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VOLLEYBALL CHINA LOOKS TO SECURE BERTH IN PARIS OLYMPICS

P3

CONSTRUCTION SITE FINED FOR ILLEGAL SEWAGE DISCHARGE

A construction site in Nam Van illegally discharged muddy wastewater into the public sewer, authorities say. The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) discovered unfiltered yellow mud entering the sewer from illegally connected pipes at the site. The bureau stopped work at the site and fined the responsible party for the violation. It called on all construction sites to properly inspect wastewater filtration equipment and not dump materials like cement slurry illegally. The fined party was also ordered to clean affected sewers. Sewer inspections the next day found no further issues. The bureau conducted nearly 200 inspections in the first quarter, down from a year ago, issuing eight violation notices for suspected illegal discharges.

DRUNK DRIVER CRASH HOSPITALIZED

A suspected drunk driver was hospitalized after crashing his car into a rock wall in Zone A of the new landfills early Monday, according to police. The single-vehicle crash occurred around 1 a.m. on Avenida Doutor Ma Man Kei, when the 35-year-old Macau man's car struck the wall. He suffered bruising to his hands and feet but was conscious and in a stable condition when taken to the hospital for treatment, police said. Public Security Police said the man registered a blood alcohol content level of 1.83 grams per liter on a breath test, above China's legal limit of 0.02. He is being investigated on suspicion of drunk driving. The cause of the crash remains under investigation.

OVER 1,700 NEW UM GRADS

The University of Macau (UM) will see a total of 1,718 undergraduate students graduate from bachelor programs this coming Saturday. Among them, 66 outstanding students from different faculties have completed the Honors College Certificate Program. This year's congregation will continue to be held in a hybrid format so that graduates and their families and friends from around the world can join in the joyous occasion online.

WYNN MACAU TO HOST SNOOKER EXHIBITION MATCH

Wynn Macau Ltd has announced an upcoming "Snooker Legend and Rising Star Exhibition Game," set to take place at Wynn Macau on May 31. The event will pit seven-time World Snooker Champion Ronnie O'Sullivan against up-and-coming Chinese star Si Jiahui in a one-night-only match. By hosting cross-industry activities, the company said it aims to boost the city's "Tourism+" initiatives, building on the success of last year's "Wynn Presents - 2023 Macau Snooker Masters" series held at Wynn Palace in December.

ONLY ONE SUPERMARKET KEPT PRICES STEADY BETWEEN APRIL AND MAY

RENATO MARQUES

A regular monthly price inspection of a series of products in local supermarkets has found that in general, only one store kept the prices stable since the last inspection a month ago, the Consumer Council (CC) shows in their most recent report on the topic.

According to the CC, only the Tai Fung supermarket located at Jardim Triangular da Areia Preta has maintained the prices of 108 products of common use to the household, including rice, noodles, canned foods, beverages, and personal hygiene products, among others.

For this reason, this store was classified by the CC as the "cheapest" in Macau.

The ranking is followed by a large number of stores (30) from the local brand "Royal" that presented the best price in all but one product, scoring 107 points.

In third place was the San Miu store of the La Baie Du Noble building, followed immediately by the San Miu store



of Seac Pai Van.

Other San Miu, as well as branches of Lee Fong supermarkets, scored mixed results respectively in seventh, eighth, and ninth positions. The Top 10 closed with five stores from the chain Sunscoco.

Among the most expensive and with more price increases in the products in analysis were several stores on the Vang Kei as well as Seng Cheong brands, with the last taking places 22 and 23 and the first the 25th position of the ranking.

The most expensive store in

analysis for this month was Tai Chon (Pak Wai) with a score of just six points.

According to the CC, in the analysis were a total of 103 stores and a total of 600 goods and products divided into 14 categories.

The CC also noted that citizens can search on their page or mobile application for the "Cheaper Supermarkets" listing, as well as, the listing of products in which the CC found a price gap of over 50% between stores, for the reference of the public.

In a different price inspection

from the same entity, the inspectors found no differences in the prices of eight popular bakery products from the previous inspection with all the prices remaining stable from the previous month. In this case, a total of 75 bakery stores were surveyed.

As the Times reported yesterday, according to the Statistics and Census Service the Composite Consumer Price Index for April rose by 0.92% year-on-year.

This indicator provides a reference for the general inflation in Macau.

Emperor Entertainment Hotel acquires HK serviced apartments building for HKD700m

STAFF REPORTER

EMPEROR Entertainment Hotel Ltd, which operates the Grand Emperor Hotel and casino in Macau, has agreed to acquire a 25-story serviced apartment building in Hong Kong for HKD700 million, the company announced late last week.

Under the deal, Emperor E will acquire Star Omen Limited, the owner of the Central district property, from its parent company Emperor International Holdings Ltd. Emperor E will make an initial HKD150 million deposit and pay another

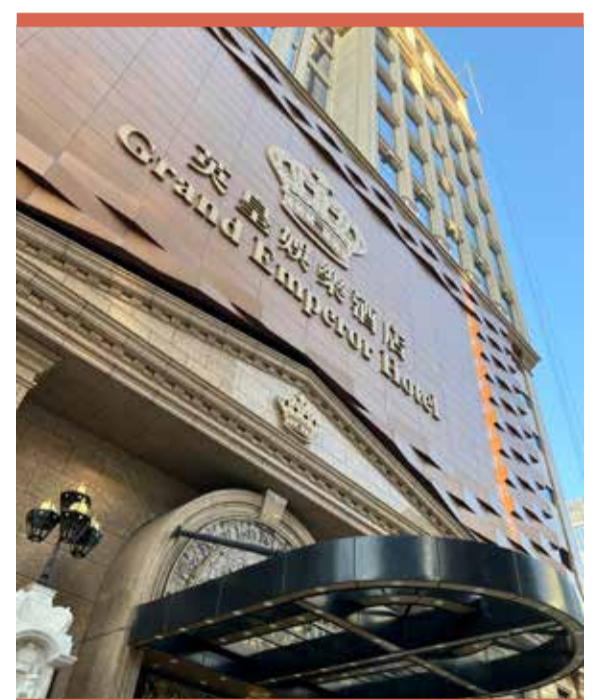
HKD350 million upon settlement. The remaining HKD200 million will be paid in seven quarterly installments.

Explaining the purchase, Emperor E said in a statement that "the transaction will enable the group to expand its assets portfolio within the scope of its principal business, thereby further widen its revenue base and expand its market presence."

The company cited growing long-term stay demand in Hong Kong from mainland Chinese citizens under new immigration schemes as

well as students and businessmen. "Particularly after the resumption of international travels, the hotels have shifted back their focus from long-stay amid the pandemic to short-stay, thereby increasing the demand for long-stay in serviced apartments," the statement said.

The 69-unit building will boost Emperor E's hospitality portfolio in Hong Kong and Macau. Emperor International, which owns 71.63% of Emperor E, will gain about HKD654.5 million in net proceeds from the deal.



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FIVB

China looks to secure Paris Olympics berth with return of star player Zhu Ting

HOWARD TONG

THE FIVB Women's Volleyball Nations League is set to make its return to the city today until June 2 at the Galaxy Arena. Beginning today, the city will host the second week of qualifying matches for the prestigious international tournament.

The Macau leg of the competition will feature some of the world's top volleyball powerhouses, including China, the Dominican Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, Brazil, Thailand, Japan, and France.

China, the reigning champion, will take on the Netherlands on May 29, Japan on May 31, Thailand on June 1, and Italy on June 2. The overall competition takes place from May 14 to June 23, with a total of 16 teams competing in



China coach Cai Bin and captain Yuan Xinyue

three weeks of preliminary rounds across seven different locations, before the finals in Bangkok.

The Women's Volleyball Nations League was last held in Macau in 2019 but was suspended for four years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This year's venue, the

Galaxy Arena, accommodates up to 16,000 people, a significant increase from the 4,000-seat capacity of the Macao Forum used for the previous tournament.

In a press conference, captain Yuan Xinyue and coach Cai Bin of Team China expressed a positive

outlook for this leg of the competition to once again qualify for the Paris Volleyball Qualifiers, thanks to the return of Zhu Ting, their star outside hitter, who has been away from the team from the last two years.

Without Zhu Ting, Team China

narrowly missed out on securing an Olympic berth during the FIVB Road to Paris Volleyball Qualifiers held in Ningbo last September, finishing third in their pool just below the qualification threshold, the team said.

Currently ranked sixth in the world, China is the highest-ranked Asian team in the women's FIVB World Rankings, placing them in the best position to clinch the continental ticket to the Paris Olympics.

Representatives from Team Brazil, ranked second in the world and also participating within this leg, welcomed her return, with their Team Captain Gabriela Guimarães stating "We have competed against Zhu before, and we know she is a challenge to face, so we look forward to a very competitive match with Team China."

TOURISM

Macau expects summer spike in IVS tourists from mainland China

STAFF REPORTER

MACAU'S travel industry is anticipating a summer spike in Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) tourists from mainland China, according to Andy Wu Keng Kuong, president of the Macau Travel Industry Council.

According to Macao Daily News, Wu cites several factors as contributing to the expected surge, including the recent addition of eight new mainland cities to the IVS scheme.

Effective yesterday, Taiyuan, Hohhot, Harbin, Lhasa, Lanzhou, Xining, Yinchuan, and Urumqi have become active members of the IVS program, which allows mainland Chinese residents to visit Macau individually without the need for a tour group. While Wu acknowledged that these newly eligible cities in the northwest and northeast regions of China are unlikely to be major contributors



to Macau's tourism volume compared to the neighboring Guangdong province, he noted that visitors from the far north are more likely to stay overnight, as they have traveled a greater distance.

The IVS scheme has seen its first update since the pre-pandemic era, with the addition of two large mainland population centers, Qingdao and Xi'an, in a move announced by China's State Council just three months ago. Data from Macau's Statistics and Census Service shows that during the first

four months of 2024, these two cities contributed a combined 86,000 visitors to Macau, representing 1.07% of the 8.03 million mainland Chinese arrivals.

Of the 8.03 million mainland visitors in the January-April period, nearly 53.1% or 4.26 million utilized IVS permits. The top three mainland markets supplying IVS travelers to Macau were Guangdong province (2.83 million), Shanghai (321,074), and Beijing (189,194).

The IVS-traveler volume for the first four mon-

ths of 2024 represented a recovery rate of 88.78% compared to the same period in 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the census service data.

While the newly added IVS cities are not expected to be major contributors to Macau's tourism in the short term, their inclusion in the scheme, coupled with the continued strength of the traditional IVS markets, suggests a promising summer season for the city's hospitality and leisure industries, according to Wu.

CITY SEES SURGE IN MICE EVENTS AND REVENUES IN Q1

HOWARD TONG

FRESH government data shows that Macau experienced a significant increase in MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) activities during the first quarter of 2024.

The total number of MICE events held in the SAR reached 307, a 31.2% year-on-year increase. This included 289 meetings and conferences, 12 exhibitions, and six incentives. The number of MICE participants and attendees grew to 178,000 year-on-year, although this represented an 11.5% decline due to a drop in exhibition attendance.

MICE-driven receipts for Macau's non-gaming industries also soared, estimated at MOP900 million for Q1 2024, a more than 50% increase from the same period in 2023 (MOP600 million). This can be attributed to higher spending by MICE visitors.

"The growth in MICE events and revenue is a testament to Macau's continued appeal as a premier

destination for business events," said the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) report. "We anticipate this momentum to continue as Macau further develops its MICE infrastructure and attracts more international events."

The data also revealed that the majority of events held in Q1 2024 were centered around "Commerce & Management," accounting for 41.4% of the total. Events related to "Finance," "Information Technology," and "Medical & Health" also saw significant activity.

In an announcement last year, the government said it wants Macau to host around 1,500 MICE events next year – a 50% increase on 2023's tally, which is an average of 125 per month.

The government has implemented various measures, including marketing campaigns, participation in international trade shows and exhibitions, and collaboration with industry associations and event organizers in bid to position the region as a "leading MICE destination."

MGTO TO PROMOTE MACAU IN SEOUL

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) will roll out the four-day "Experience Macao roadshow in Korea" this Thursday preceded by the "Macao Tourism + MICE Product Updates Seminar & Travel Mart" tomorrow. The roadshow will take the stage in Shinsegae Department Store – Gangnam Branch at the upscale center of the city, Gangnam District. The average daily volume of pedestrian flow exceeds 800,000 in the vicinity. With the total sales exceeding 2.3 billion US dollars in 2023, Shinsegae Department Store Gangnam is the top department store in Korea. Choosing this prime location for the roadshow, MGTO endeavors to capture the interest of potential high-end international visitors for vacation and spending in Macau.

DSAL RECORDS 10 DEATHS FROM WORK-RELATED ACCIDENTS

The Labor Affairs Bureau (DSAL) has disclosed that 10 individuals lost their lives in Macau last year due to work-related accidents, as stated in the "statistical analysis report on work accidents" for the year 2023. DSAL has reported that a total of 5,293 individuals suffered injuries in work accidents during the same period. According to the DSAL, the primary causes of work accidents were falls (25.1%), entrapment, piercing, or cutting incidents (20.1%), and excessive efforts or twisting (16%). In 2023, DSAL conducted 3,794 inspections related to occupational health and safety across various work establishments.

SUBSIDIES FOR NON-HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS INCREASE 3%

The allowance for professional development and the direct allowance for non-higher education teachers will see an increase of approximately 3% in the upcoming academic year, as cited in the Official Gazette. The Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao leong, has announced that the updated subsidy tables will come into effect on September 1, benefiting both public and private non-higher education teachers regardless of their academic qualifications or pedagogical training. For instance, a teacher with a degree and pedagogical training will now receive 6,500 patacas per month, while a teacher without a higher education qualification or pedagogical training will receive 3,100 patacas per month following this adjustment.

CRIME

EMPLOYEES SUSPECTED OF COLLUDING WITH CRIMINAL GROUP TO DEFRAUD CASINOS OF MOP4.5 MILLION

STAFF REPORTER

A criminal group is suspected of recruiting casino employees to help "tamper" with casino cards, resulting in the defrauding of Cotai casinos of a total of MOP4.54 million.

In a press conference yesterday, the Judiciary Police said they have arrested eight Macau men and women aged 33 to 42 years old in connection with the scheme. Five of the suspects are gaming table managers, directors, and dealers, and are suspected of being recruited by the criminal group. The remaining three are believed to be key members of the group and are responsible for planning the crimes.

According to the police, the criminal group collaborated with the casino employees to remove playing cards from the casino while on duty, manipulate them, and then hand them over to the gaming table for fraud. The police received a report from the casino last Thursday and conducted an investigation, leading



to the arrests on Saturday.

The police believe the criminal group committed two separate incidents of fraud in late March and early May. Each of the casino employees involved in the crime could potentially have made a profit of MOP170,000 to MOP500,000.

The situation is described as a serious breach of trust and a significant financial loss for the casino. They stated that the police are

committed to investigating this matter fully and bringing all those involved to justice.

The police believe there are still many people involved in the fraud at large, and the investigation is ongoing.

MONEY EXCHANGER ROBBED IN HOTEL ROOM

A money exchanger was threatened with a wine bot-

tle opener and robbed of about MOP100,000 during what was meant to be a routine money exchange meeting at a Macau hotel room, police said.

The victim had successfully exchanged money with the man in the past, but during their meeting on May 12, the other party repeatedly delayed the exchange, citing transfer issues. It was then that the man and an accomplice attacked the victim, police said. They stole HKD60,000 in cash and MOP40,000 in chips before fleeing.

The victim escaped and alerted hotel security, launching a police investigation. Officers soon determined the two suspects, a 53-year-old mainland Chinese man and a woman, had left Macau.

The man was intercepted last Saturday trying to cross from Macau to Hong Kong via the bridge and detained, but he refused to cooperate with the investigation. Police are still searching for the female suspect.

CRIME

Foreign employees suspected of theft at frozen meat company

STAFF REPORTER

Two male Filipino foreign employees of a frozen meat company have been arrested on suspicion of stealing goods from the warehouse and selling them to local restaurants, causing the company to lose at least MOP120,000 in the past two months.

According to the police, the two employees worked as delivery drivers and workers, respectively. One of them had a blue card indicating he was employed as a driver. The investigation revealed that the

suspects started committing the crimes in December 2023, taking advantage of their work duties during lunch breaks to enter the company's warehouse and steal frozen meat products. They then resold the stolen goods to a restaurant on R. da Praia do Manduco Street at a lower price, making a profit of MOP3,000 to MOP5,000 each time. The suspects have been accused of committing more than 40 crimes, with a total profit of about MOP200,000.

The police said that the stolen money was remitted to

the suspects' hometowns and used for their daily expenses. After receiving a report last Saturday (May 25th), the police intercepted the two suspects at the frozen meat company and also arrested the 53-year-old restaurant manager suspected of receiving the stolen goods. The three individuals have been transferred to the procuratorate for further processing.

The case highlights the need for stronger security measures and employee oversight in the frozen meat industry to prevent such incidents.

EDUCATION

DSEDJ ANNOUNCES APPLICATIONS FOR STUDENT LOANS, SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PORTUGAL

RENATO MARQUES

Applications for tertiary education studies in Portugal as well as for loan grants, under the Higher Education Financing Plan from the Education Fund, will take place from June 3 to 24 this year, the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) announced.

The applications are related to the academic year 2024/2025 and the plan covers not only regular majors but also other higher education courses, from pre-university to doctoral degrees.

Under this Plan, study grants for continuing studies in Portugal aim to support Macau students to pursue their studies in that country, with the grants awarded based on document analy-

sis and a selection exam. The DSEDJ also said that the loan grants are intended to support students with financial difficulties, with assessment and approval to be made based on the monthly income of the applicant's household in 2023.

The lists of qualified applicants and conditionally admitted applicants for study grants for studies in Portugal will be published on August 23. Those conditionally admitted must submit the missing documents by August 30.

The list of the selection exam will be published on October 10 and the final results list will be published on November 29, 2024. The list of results for the loan grant applications will be published on November 8, 2024.

GAMING HISTORY

Closed casino hotels in Mississippi could house unaccompanied migrant children

OFFICIALS are considering a proposal to house unaccompanied migrant children at two former casino hotels in northwest Mississippi, an idea that has drawn opposition including from the local sheriff who said the county lacks resources to accommodate the plan.

Local news outlets reported that the repurposed facility would house as many as 2,000 children and teens at the hotels that were part of the Harrah's casino complex, which closed in 2014. The casino was demolished, and other proposals to reuse the hotels have not succeeded.

County supervisors met in executive session Monday to discuss the project, but Tunica County Attorney John Keith Perry told WREG-TV that supervisors have not officially endorsed the plan.

"Obviously, anything that deals with immigration is a hot-

AP PHOTO



-button issue," Perry said.

Perry said the current owners are in talks with a private entity interested in buying the property, which he says is in good condition after being closed for 10 years.

Any facility housing immi-

grants ages 17 and younger would have to meet federal regulations, Perry said, and his understanding is the facility would be "self-contained."

"So, you don't have children that would be out and about for their safety reasons," he said.

The facility would also have to comply with a court settlement governing how the federal government treats migrant children, including limiting how long they can be confined.

Tunica County Sheriff K.C. Hamp said Wednesday that the county doesn't have resources, including a hospital, to care for immigrants, and they would have to be taken to neighboring communities.

"When it concerns public safety, public healthcare, along with child protective services, Tunica County does not have a local hospital in the event of an emergency," Hamp said in a statement.

State Rep. Cedric Burnett, a Democrat from Sardis who represents the area, also opposes the plan, saying he supports efforts to redevelop the complex to enhance tourism and gambling in Tunica County.

"I think that location should

be used to compliment the gaming industry," Burnett told WREG-TV. "You know Tunica is a tourism town, we depend on gaming."

Burnett said the benefits of using the hotels to house migrants would be limited to the current owners and the people operating the facility.

Harrah's opened in 1996 as the Grand Casino and was conceived on a grand scale, topping out with 1,356 hotel rooms across three buildings. Its now-demolished casino floor was the largest between New Jersey and Las Vegas.

Tunica's casino market has been in decline for more than a decade. While it was once the nearest gambling destination to parts of the South and Midwest, most of those states now have their own casinos. A casino in West Memphis, Arkansas, has also lured away patrons. MDT/AP

AD

銀河娛樂集團
世界女排聯賽澳門2024
LIGA DAS NAÇÕES DE VOLEIBOL FEMININO MACAU 2024
APRESENTADA PELO GALAXY ENTERTAINMENT GROUP
WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL NATIONS LEAGUE 2024 MACAO
PRESENTED BY GALAXY ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

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SEOUL SUMMIT

Premier Li agrees to cooperate with Seoul, Tokyo, but issues veiled rebuke against their US ties

HYUNG-JIN KIM &
HUIZHONG WU, SEOUL

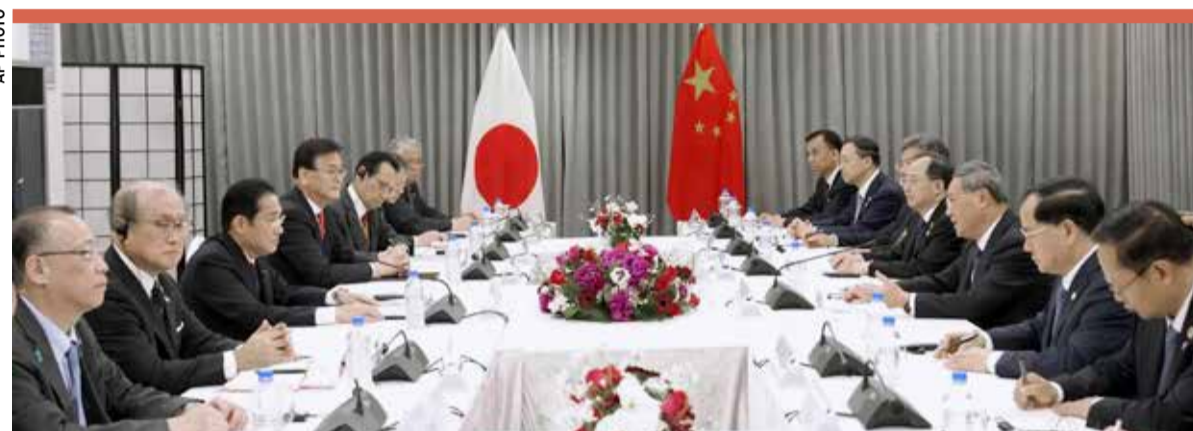
CHINA'S premier agreed yesterday to revive three-way cooperation with South Korea and Japan in the face of shared challenges, but issued a veiled rebuke against the two countries' expanding security cooperation with the United States.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang met South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Seoul in what was their countries' first such trilateral meeting in more than four years.

Many experts say just restarting the countries' highest-level annual meeting and agreeing on the need to improve ties is a positive sign for cooperation among the three Northeast Asian neighbors, as they all face economic uncertainties caused by wars and instability around the world. But how drastically their cooperation will be promoted is unknown as the three countries have a range of long-running complex issues.

In a joint news conference after the meeting, Li said China wants to cooperate with South Korea and Japan on economic issues, especially on supply chains and the restart of talks on a three-way free trade deal.

Yoon said the three leaders agreed to promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges, estab-



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (third left) holds a meeting with Premier Li Qiang (third right) Sunday

lish safe supply chain networks and work together to tackle shared environmental, health and other issues. Kishida said the three countries share a big responsibility for regional peace and that Japan will chair the next round of the trilateral leaders' meeting.

Despite the seemingly amicable mood of the meeting, however, Li at one point expressed Chinese uneasiness about Japan and South Korea's moves to beef up their security partnership with the U.S., which Beijing views as an attempt to form a bloc to contain China.

"We need to have honest dialogues to better enhance trust and resolve doubts. We must uphold the spirit of strategic autonomy and maintain our bilateral relations," Li said in comments at the start of the meeting with Yoon and Kishida. "We need to promote multipolarity in the world and oppose the formation

of blocs or camps."

China is wary of Japan's plan to deploy 400 U.S. Tomahawk long-range cruise missiles and allow repair and maintenance of U.S. warships in Japan to support their operations in the western Pacific. The expansion of military drills among South Korea, the U.S. and Japan have also drawn protests from China.

The trilateral meeting was also briefly overshadowed by North Korea's abrupt notification to Japan of its plan to launch a satellite by early next week, an apparent bid to place its second spy satellite into orbit.

The U.N. bans any satellite launches by North Korea, viewing them as disguised tests of the country's long-range missile technology. North Korea has said it needs spy satellites to better monitor South Korea and the U.S. and enhance the precision-attack

capabilities of its missiles.

Yoon called for stern international action if North Korea goes ahead with the launch. Kishida urged North Korea to withdraw its satellite launch plan. But Li didn't mention the launch plan as he offered general comments about promoting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula through a political resolution.

South Korea, Japan and the U.S. have long urged China — North Korea's major ally and economic pipeline — to use its leverage to persuade the North to abandon its nuclear ambitions. But China is suspected of "avoiding fully implementing U.N. sanctions" on North Korea.

In a bilateral meeting with Li on Sunday, Yoon asked China to contribute to promoting peace on the Korean Peninsula, while speaking about North Korea's nuclear program and its deepening military

ties with Russia.

After meeting with Li on Sunday, Kishida also told reporters that he expressed "serious concerns" about the situation in the South China Sea.

Yesterday, Li still didn't respond directly to the outside accusations against the Chinese actions in the South China Sea or surrounding Taiwan.

"China, Japan and South Korea should appropriately handle sensitive issues and points of difference, and take care of each other's core interests and major concerns," Li said. "And truly construct a real multilateralism."

The three Asian nations together represent about 25% of global gross domestic product, and they are closely linked to one another economically and culturally. But their relations have suffered on-again, off-again setbacks owing to issues stemming from Japan's wartime aggression. China's ambitions of greater global influence and a U.S. push to bolster its Asian alliances have also threatened to hurt ties among the three Asian countries.

The China-South Korea-Japan trilateral meeting was supposed to happen annually following their first meeting in 2008. But the sessions stalled since the last one in December 2019 in Chengdu, China because of the COVID-19 pandemic and often-complicated ties among the three countries.

Experts say the three countries all want better relations. China is the biggest trading partner for both South Korea and Japan. Analysts say China likely thinks any further strengthening of the South Korea-Japan-U.S. security ties would not serve its national interests.

"Washington can trust its allies in their diplomatic efforts with Beijing," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul. "The China-Japan-South Korea trilateral summit is more about reducing frictions than reshaping geopolitics." **MDT/AP**

DIRE STRAIT

US lawmakers pledge support for Taiwan's Lai; Beijing slams the visit

A U.S. congressional delegation met Taiwan's new leader yesterday in a show of support days after China held drills around the self-governing island in response to his inauguration.

Rep. Andy Barr, the co-chair of the Taiwan caucus in the U.S. Congress, said the United States is fully committed to supporting Taiwan militarily, diplomatically and economically.

"There should be no doubt, there should be no skepticism in the United States, Taiwan or anywhere in the world, of American resolve to maintain the status quo and peace in the Taiwan Strait," the Republican from Kentucky said at a news conference in Taipei.

The Chinese government expressed strong opposition to the congressional visit, saying it undermined China-U.S. relations

and peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, referring to the waterway between China and Taiwan.

The lawmakers' five-day visit "ran against the political commitment of the U.S. government to maintain only unofficial relations with Taiwan, sending a seriously wrong signal to the separatist force of Taiwan independence," Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning said in Beijing.

China firmly opposes the U.S. arming Taiwan, Mao said.

Lai, who took office one week ago, is expected to continue the policies of Tsai Ing-wen, his predecessor from the same Democratic Progressive Party.

The delegation included four Republicans and two Democrats and was led by Rep. Michael McCaul, the chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Last



Taiwan's Lai Ching-te (right) puts on a cowboy hat given by Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas during a meeting in Taipei yesterday

year, China sanctioned the Texas Republican after he visited Taiwan in April.

The other delegation members were Republicans Young Kim from Cali-

ornia and Joe Wilson from South Carolina and Democrats Jimmy Panetta from California and Chrissy Houlahan from Pennsylvania. **MDT/AP**

NORTH KOREA

Kim plans to launch a rocket soon, likely carrying its second military spy satellite

NORTH Korea announced plans to launch a rocket apparently carrying its second military spy satellite during an eight-day period starting Monday, drawing quick, strong rebukes from neighbors South Korea and Japan.

The notification of the planned launch, banned under U.N. resolutions, came as South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida met Chinese Premier Li Qiang in Seoul for their first trilateral meeting in more than four years.

Japan's coast guard said it was notified by North Korea about its planned launch of a "satellite rocket," with a warning of caution in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and China and east of the main Philippine island of Luzon beginning yesterday through midnight June 3.

North Korea provides Japan with its launch information because Japan's coast guard coordinates and distributes maritime safety information in East Asia.

North Korea's planned launch is thought to be an attempt to put its second military spy satellite into orbit. South Korea's military said Friday it detected signs of suspected preparations to launch a spy satellite at North Korea's main Tongchangri launch facility in the northwest.

The U.N. bans North Korea from conducting any satellite launches, viewing them as covers for testing long-range missile technology. North Korea has steadfastly maintained it has the right to launch satellites and test missiles. It says spy satellites will allow it to better monitor the U.S. and South Korea's moves and enhance the precision strike capability of its nuclear-capable missiles.

In phone talks earlier yesterday, senior diplomats from Japan, South Korea and the United States agreed to call on North Korea to abandon the launch.

Later yesterday, South Korea mobilized 20 fighter jets for a drill meant to demonstrate its resolve to punish North Korea in the event of provocation, according to South Korea's military. Japanese officials said their missile interceptors remain ready to shoot down any debris from a North Korean rocket if it falls on Japanese territory. **MDT/AP**



This photo provided by the North Korean government supposedly shows the launch of the Mallyong-1, a military spy satellite, into orbit on Nov. 21, 2023

THAILAND

Court sentences opposition lawmaker to two years in prison for defaming the monarchy

JINTAMAS
SAKSORNCHAI,
BANGKOK

A Thai court yesterday sentenced a lawmaker from a progressive opposition party to two years in prison after finding her guilty of defaming the monarchy in a speech she made during a protest rally three years ago.

Chonthicha Jangrew of the Move Forward Party was greeted by several supporters when she arrived at the Thanyaburi Provincial Court in Pathum Thani province, north of Bangkok, with some party colleagues. Chonthicha, popularly known by her nickname "Lookkate," represents a constituency in Pathum Thani.

Her charges stemmed from her speech in 2021 that demanded the release of all political prisoners during a rally in front of the same court that delivered yesterday's sentence.

She was found guilty for parts of the speech concerning how the government then led by Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha had amended laws to give King Vajiralongkorn more power to control the palace wealth, which is managed by the Crown Property Bureau.

The judge said her speech could misinform the public by suggesting that King Vajiralongkorn can spend taxpayers' money for his personal use and use his influence to interfere with politics, which could tarnish his reputation.

The judge originally sentenced her to three years in prison, but reduced it to two years because of her cooperation in the trial. The law for defaming the monarchy, an offense known as lese majeste, carries a penalty of three to 15 years imprisonment. It is widely referred to as Arti-



Move Forward Party's Chonthicha Jangrew [center] arrives at the Thanyaburi Provincial Court in Pathum Thani province, north of Bangkok, yesterday

cle 112 from its place in the Criminal Code.

Chonthicha was afterwards released on bail of 150,000 baht (\$4,100). Had bail not been granted and she been sent directly to prison, she would have immediately been removed from her seat in Parliament.

She told reporters that she wasn't surprised about the verdict as the majority of 112 charges led to convictions.

She said she will appeal, adding that she was glad to have been granted release on bail but wished that other political prisoners were given the same right.

A young activist charged with lese majeste died in detention earlier this month after carrying out a monthlong hunger strike to protest the revocation of her bail in January.

Chonthicha and nine other defendants in the case were charged with other offenses including illegal assembly and violating an emergency de-

crete enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. All 10 were acquitted of those charges. Chonthicha was the only one who had been charged with violating the lese majeste law.

Before becoming a politician, Chonthicha had been an activist since she was a college student. She became a high-profile figure in the youth-dominated movement by confronting the police during the mass street protests that demanded democratic reform of several powerful institutions including the monarchy.

Chonthicha, 31, won a seat in last year's general election, part of a surprise victory for the progressive Move Forward Party that shook Thai politics.

However, it failed to take power after the party was out-maneuvered by influential conservative forces, as members of the Senate refused to approve the party's leader as prime minister.

Criticism of Thailand's

monarchy is considered taboo, and insulting or defaming key royal family members is punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

But student-led pro-democracy protests began to challenge that taboo in 2020, openly criticizing the monarchy. That led to vigorous prosecutions under what was previously a little-used law. Critics say the law is often wielded as a tool to quash political dissent.

The advocacy group Thai Lawyers for Human Rights says that since early 2020, more than 270 people — many of them student activists — have been charged with violating Article 112.

In December, another lawmaker from the Move Forward Party was convicted and sentenced to six years in prison over two posts she allegedly shared two years ago on the social media platform X, then known as Twitter. She appealed and was granted release on bail. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Miners work at an allegedly illegal tin mining site in Jos, Nigeria, last April

NIGERIA

Authorities are cracking down on illegal mining in emerging mineral hub

TAIWO ADEBAYO, ABUJA

NIGERIA'S government is cracking down on illegal mining, making dozens of arrests of unlicensed miners since April for allegedly stealing the country's lithium, a critical mineral used in batteries for electric vehicles, smartphones and power systems.

The recent arrests come as Nigeria seeks to regulate its mining operations of critical minerals, curb illegal activity and better benefit from its mineral resources. The clean energy transition, a shift away from coal, oil and gas and toward renewable energy and batteries has spiked global demand for lithium, tin and other minerals.

Illegal mines are rife in the country's fledging industry as corruption among regulatory officials is common and the mineral deposits are located in remote areas with minimal government presence. Officials say profits from illicit mining practices has helped arm militia groups in the north of the country.

In the most recent arrests in mid-May, a joint team of soldiers and police conducted a raid on a remote market in Kishi, in the country's southwestern Oyo State. Locals said the market, once known for selling farm produce, has become a center for illicit trade in lithium mined in

hard-to-reach areas.

The three-day operation resulted in the arrest of 32 individuals, including two Chinese nationals, local workers and mineral traders, according to the state government and locals. Loads of lithium were also seized.

Jimoh Bioku, a Kishi community leader, said there had been "clandestine searches" for the mineral at remote sites tucked away in the bush in the past years by Chinese individuals before "they engaged people to dig for them and turned the market into a transit point." The community was "particularly worried about the insecurity that usually follows illegal mining and that was why we reported to the state government," he said.

China is the dominant player in the global EV supply chain, including in Nigeria where China-based companies employ mostly vulnerable people leaving Nigeria's far north — ravaged by conflicts and rapid desertification — to work in mining operations throughout the country. Many of those companies are frequently in the spotlight for environmentally damaging practices, exploitative labor and illicit mining. There have been at least three cases of illegal mining arrests involving Chinese individuals in two months.

President Bola Tinubu has repeatedly blamed illegal mi-

ning for the worsening conflicts in the country's north and asked the international community for help to stop the problem, which provides armed groups with the proceeds needed to sustain and arm themselves.

The Chinese embassy in Abuja did not respond to an Associated Press request for comment on the arrests and claims of illegal operations. But in a statement last year following a report by The Times of London alleging Chinese miners were bribing militants for access, the embassy said it "always encouraged and urged the Chinese companies and nationals in Nigeria to abide by the laws and regulations of Nigeria."

Nigeria is emerging as a new source of lithium in Africa as the world's largest producers, like Australia and Chile, are unable to fulfill the growing demand worldwide. But illegal activities thrive in Nigeria's extractive sector, denying the government due revenues, said Emeka Okoro, whose Lagos-based SBM Intelligence firm has researched illicit mining and terrorism financing in northern Nigeria.

And the combination of conflict and climate change effects, such as once fertile land rapidly turning into useless arid sand in northern Nigeria, has produced a cheap workforce for mining sites.

The arrests of "both Chi-

nese nationals and young Hausa boys from conflict-affected regions underscore a troubling pattern," Okoro told the AP. "The socioeconomic strain stemming from conflict and the repercussions of climate change has given rise to a vulnerable demographic desperate for survival."

To fight resource theft that causes losses of \$9 billion to the government annually, according to the country's extractive industry transparency watchdog, the West African nation has set up a 2,200-strong "corps of mining marshals" earlier in the year.

While existing law enforcement agencies are still combating the problem, the new corps is geared at curbing "the nefarious activities of illegal miners," said Segun Tomori, spokesperson for the solid minerals ministry.

Before the Kishi raid, the mining corps arrested two trucks laden with lithium on the outskirts of the capital Abuja in April. Later that month, the corps raided a location in Karu, Nasarawa State, near Abuja, leading to the arrest of four people and the seizure of tons of lithium. Tomori said the cases are now in court.

On April 22, a federal court in Ilorin, in the north-central region, convicted two Chinese individuals for illegal mining and sentenced them to a one-year jail term, although with an option of a fine.

Nigeria has long neglected the solid minerals sector, which allows some communities like the northern-central town of Jos — which is tin-abundant — to depend on subsistence mining for their livelihood.

For those communities where livelihood is tied to mining, Tomori said the government is encouraging artisanal miners there to form cooperatives and operate legally. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1951 GLASGOW POWERS UP FOR THE FESTIVAL



Her Royal Highness, Princess Elizabeth, has formally opened the Exhibition of Industrial Power in Glasgow, the latest show in the Festival of Britain.

The exhibition tells the story of industrial power and showcases energy, technology and science.

In a speech at the opening ceremony, Princess Elizabeth described herself as "a lover of Scotland," and said she was delighted that Glasgow had been chosen to host the exhibition.

"It is a well-deserved compliment to the land of so many famous engineers and inventors," she said.

However, she added, the exhibition - like all of the Festival of Britain - belongs to the whole country.

The exhibition, in the Kelvin Hall - itself named after pioneering physicist Lord Kelvin - has a series of halls, each showing a different aspect of power and technology.

In the Hall of Power, visitors can get into a pit cage and go down into a replica of the working face of a coal mine.

Even the operator of the pit cage is authentic - Albert Hamble was temporarily laid off from the colliery where he works after it flooded.

In the steel section, there is a blacksmith's forge from an earlier day when horses were the main form of transport.

And a model shows how a modern power station works in the hydro-electricity stage of the exhibition.

The Princess referred to the age of electricity as "the second industrial revolution" in her speech, and a large part of the show is dedicated to showing how the technology has transformed lives.

Since the National Grid was completed six years ago, even crofters' houses in remote parts of Scotland can access electricity, and one of the most vivid displays is of two replica cottages - one with, and the other without electrical power.

The Festival of Britain, a country-wide celebration of Britain's history, achievements and culture, has been a great success since it was opened by King George VI on 3 May.

More than 100,000 people attended Festival events in the first two days alone, despite the bad weather. The exhibition organisers in Glasgow are expecting similar numbers, and the show continues until August.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

After the devastation and resulting austerity of the war years, the Festival of Britain aimed to raise the nation's spirits whilst promoting the very best in British art, design and industry. Some criticised the event as a waste of public money but the London exhibitions alone attracted 8.5 million visitors in five months. By contrast, the Millennium Dome built some 50 years later pulled in 6.5 million in the 12 months of its controversial existence. Princess Elizabeth succeeded [King George VI] as Queen Elizabeth II.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Together, you're a powerful force. Socializing provides lasting value. Enjoy gatherings, meetings and community connection. Share laughter. Collaborate with friends for a good cause.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Launch into a professional opportunity for lasting gain. A dream lies within reach. Angels guide your actions. Take advantage of a lucky break.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Travels and studies take you to a new world. Discover unexpected beauty. Make a fantastic discovery. Participate in a conversation for new possibilities.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Find clever financial solutions. Collaborate for mutual gain. It's a good time to talk about money. Make long-term agreements. Sign on the dotted line.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Collaboration blossoms, saving time and resources. Plan and strategize for the future. Coordination and partnership can realize dreams. Pledge your support. Share your heart.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Discuss dreams with your coaches, team and partners. Discipline with your work, health and fitness pays with lasting gains. Discover beautiful and satisfying views.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Advance creative projects with purpose and heart. Passion, fun and romance flower naturally. Share dreams. Grab a lucky break. Fall in love again.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Raise the beauty level at home. Domestic improvements provide lasting value. Beautify your place for an upcoming gathering. Share something delicious with your family.

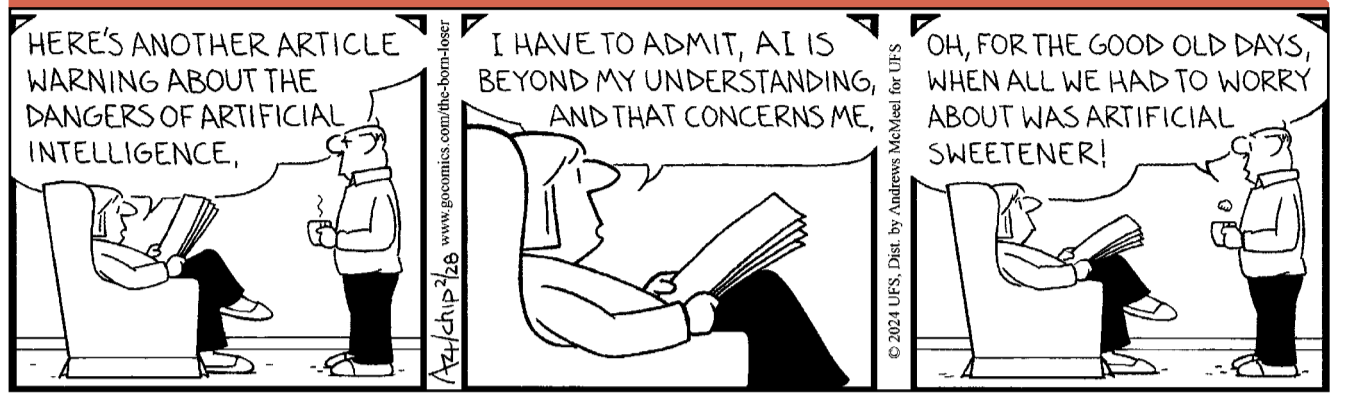
SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Communication channels flow freely. Creativity flowers. Write, express and share your story. Make agreements, deals and sign contracts. Connect and share exciting news.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 A valuable prize lies within reach. Disciplined efforts pay extra. Contribute to realize lucrative deals. Pitch to a powerful team. Sign contracts and agreements.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Take charge for a personal dream. Actions taken now have long-term benefits. Use your power, talents and confidence for good. Grab a lucky chance.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Savor peaceful reflection. Get into thoughtful planning mode. Consider long-term goals and dreams. Notice blessings and gratitude. Discover epiphanies, insight and hidden opportunities.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

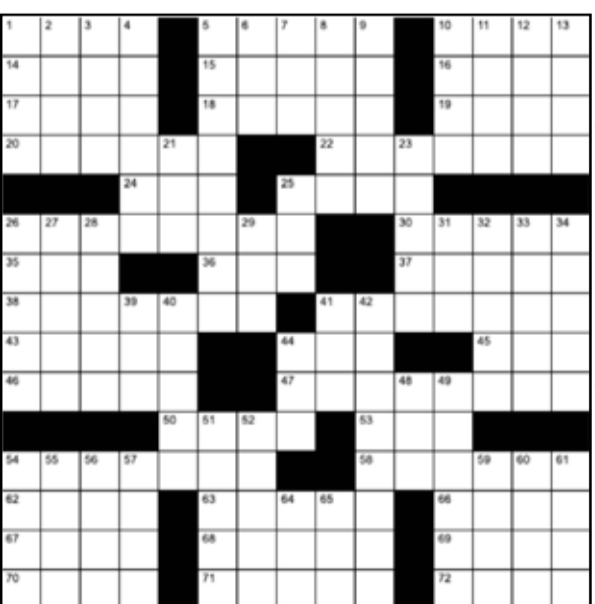
	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	15	31	fine
Changchun	10	24	cloudy
Chengdu	21	32	rain
Chongqing	25	30	rain
Fuzhou	23	26	overcast
Guangzhou	24	28	rain
Guiyang	19	24	overcast
Haikou	26	30	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	17	27	fine
Harbin	9	22	rain
Hefei	11	26	overcast
Nanjing	13	26	fine
Shanghai	18	26	fine
Taipei	22	23	rain
Wuhan	14	29	cloudy
Hong Kong	26	30	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	14	27	sunny
Frankfurt	13	21	cloudy
Paris	14	18	showers
London	13	17	showers
New York	17	28	sunny

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Swarm; 5- Contour feather; 10- Up and ___; 14- "Othello" villain; 15- Healing plants; 16- Identify; 17- Son of Rebekah; 18- Big name in vermouth; 19- Part of the eye; 20- It had a part in the Bible; 22- Suit makers; 24- Grads-to-be; 25- ___ It Romantic?; 26- Higher in rank; 30- Oxlike antelope; 35- Clean air org.; 36- Lilt syllable; 37- I agree!; 38- Fugitive; 41- Teachers in habits; 43- Country dances; 44- Prohibition; 45- Peer Gynt's mother; 46- Narrow furrow; 47- Unscathed; 50- Show the way; 53- Family card game; 54- Nightclothes; 58- Ripe; 62- Juan's water; 63- Mouthlike opening; 66- Beginning on; 67- Phnom ___; 68- Pine; 69- Student's hurdle; 70- Summer coolers; 71- Bandleader Shaw; 72- Periods of history;

DOWN 1- Wedding cake feature; 2- Relaxation; 3- Crique!; 4- Sweet dessert; 5- Sponger; 6- "Xanadu" band, for short; 7- Rejections; 8- Bird homes; 9- Continental identity of a Chinese person; 10- Indigo source; 11- Poi ingredient; 12- Chieftain, usually in Africa; 13- Pigsty; 21- Miss the mark; 23- Things; 25- 401(k) alternative; 26- Fortune tellers; 27- Unexpected victory; 28- Indiana basketballer; 29- Metal-bearing mineral; 31- Permit; 32- Mr. T's former group; 33- Like Thor; 34- Gave medicine to; 39- Actress MacGraw; 40- Sacred song; 41- ___ Quentin; 42- Barbaric; 44- Partially opened flower; 48- Santa ___ winds; 49- Take turns; 51- Snap course; 52- Late bloomer; 54- Daddy; 55- Old; 56- Sixth month of the year; 57- Sounds of pleasure; 59- ___-friendly; 60- Parks on a bus; 61- Newts; 64- Granola morsel; 65- Hosp. procedure;

Yesterday's solution



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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 HKD 11,880,000 4 bed 3 bath

FOOTBALL

EUROPA LEAGUE CHAMPION ATALANTA BEATS TORINO

ATALANTA 3, TORINO 0

ATALANTA followed up its Europa League title with a 3-0 win over Torino in Serie A yesterday [Macau time] and ended Roma's hopes of qualifying for the Champions League.

Gianluca Scamacca and Ademola Lookman scored first-half goals for Atalanta and Mario Pasalic added a penalty after the break as the Bergamo side moved up to fourth place, one point ahead of Bologna.

Lookman was coming off a hat trick in Atalanta's 3-0 win over Bayer Leverkusen in the Europa League final on Wednesday, and the Europa League trophy was on the sideline before kickoff.

Sixth-place Roma, which later lost 2-1 at Empoli, needed Atalanta to finish fifth to qualify for the Champions League.

It's the final round of the Italian league but Atalanta still has a game to make up against Fiorentina next Sunday.

Scamacca scored first after being set up by Charles De Ketelaere.

AP PHOTO



He did it again: Atalanta's Ademola Lookman celebrates after scoring during the soccer match against Torino

laere then Lookman tapped in a rebound of a shot from Pasalic following another set-up from De Ketelaere. Midway through the second half, Lookman was fouled to provide the penalty for Pasalic.

Afterward, Atalanta coach Gian

Piero Gasperini announced that he plans to stay with the club — ending speculation that he might head to Napoli.

"I am tied to Atalanta and will continue to be," Gasperini said. "I am faithful."

Also, defending champion Napoli was held to a 0-0 draw at home by Lecce and finished 10th to miss out on all European competitions. Torino is ninth and can still qualify for the Europa Conference League if Fiorentina wins

the third-tier European trophy on Wednesday.

RELEGATION RESOLVED

Three teams entered the final day of the season attempting to avoid relegation and Udinese and Empoli stayed up while Frosinone went down.

Empoli needed to win and went ahead with an early goal from Matteo Cancellieri but Housssem Aouar equalized for Roma. Then M'Baye Niang won it for the Tuscan club by finishing off a counterattack in stoppage time. It was Niang's sixth goal for Empoli since joining the club in January.

Udinese beat Frosinone 1-0 with a late goal from English forward Keinan Davis, meaning that coach Fabio Cannavaro fulfilled his assignment of avoiding the drop zone after being hired last month.

Udinese has been in the top division uninterrupted since 1995.

Also, Italian champion Inter Milan was held 2-2 at Hellas Verona, and Lazio drew 1-1 with already-relegated Sassuolo.

Before kickoff at the Stadio Olimpico, former Lazio coach Sven-Goran Eriksson was honored.

Eriksson revealed in January that he has cancer and might have less than a year to live. He coached Lazio to the Serie A title in 1999-2000 **MDT/AP**

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羅善齡 Zelina Rodrigues
馬潔冰 Maria João Marques
陶義德 António Isóo de Azeredo
白穎怡 Icília Berenguel
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IN MACAU (2023)



JEROME PUGMIRE,
MONACO

AUTO RACING | F1

Ferrari's Leclerc wins Monaco GP after 1st lap crash

FERRARI driver Charles Leclerc won the restarted Monaco Grand Prix from pole this weekend for his first Formula 1 victory in nearly two years.

Leclerc was on pole for the third time in four years, but had previously never finished on the podium at his home race. His first win since Austria in July 2022 took his career tally to six, all with Ferrari.

"Tonight's going to be a big night," he told his team over the radio.

A Monaco victory felt extra special for him, having grown up in a flat overlooking the start-finish line watching cars zooming past below.

"No words can explain that. It was the race that made me want to be a Formula 1 driver one day," the 26-year-old Leclerc said. "Seeing so many of my friends on the balcony, so many people I know. It means a huge amount to me."

The last 15 laps were the most difficult as the realisation of how much winning would mean dawned on him.

"I must say I was thinking about my dad," Leclerc said of his late father. "It was a dream of ours for me to race here and win, so it's unbelievable."

Championship leader Max Verstappen is bidding for a fourth straight F1 title and saw his lead trimmed to 31 points over second-place Leclerc — 169-138 — with eight races completed.

Verstappen started and finished the race sixth for Red Bull, whose other driver Sergio Perez went out of the race after a big first-lap crash.

The crash also took out Haas drivers Kevin Magnussen and Nico Hulkenberg, and caused it to be interrupted by a red flag for 40 minutes. The drivers were not hurt.

The race restarted on Lap 3 of 78 and the drivers pulled away cleanly but slowly, with Leclerc managing his tires on a track notoriously difficult for overtaking.

Leclerc finished about 8 seconds ahead of McLaren's Oscar Piastri and 9 seconds clear of Ferrari teammate Carlos Sainz Jr.

in third.

McLaren's Lando Norris was fourth and Mercedes driver George Russell held off Verstappen to take fifth place.

Seven-time F1 champion Lewis Hamilton was seventh, with Yuki Tsunoda (Racing Bulls), Alex Albon (Williams) and Pierre Gasly (Alpine) completing the top 10. It was the same order as the starting grid, reflecting Monaco's reputation as the hardest track to overtake in F1.

"The pace at the beginning was incredibly slow," Piastri said. "But it's been a great weekend for the team."

All of the drama came at the start.

Perez's right rear wheel was clipped by the front left tire of Magnussen behind him and put Perez into the crash barrier. Perez's car almost split in half and also sent Hulkenberg's Haas spinning as he followed behind.

A red flag came out with debris littering the track to allow Perez's mangled Red Bull to be cleared away by a crane. The Mexican driver walked back accompanied by two race marshals. His team said he did not need medical checks.

Then, two Alpines tangled near the tunnel with Esteban Ocon's front nose sending teammate Pierre Gasly's car up in the air. With other cars just behind and the tunnel approaching, a serious accident was avoided. Ocon will serve a five-place grid penalty at the next race, the Canada GP on June 9.

"Today's incident was my fault," Ocon said. "The gap was too small in the end."

Governing body FIA ordered a standing restart with Leclerc in pole ahead of Piastri and Sainz going from third, despite puncturing moments after the start. He was trying to pass Piastri and had to use a run-off area at Casino Square.

French soccer star Kylian Mbappé and FIFA

AP PHOTO



Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc of Monaco steers his car during the Formula One Monaco Grand Prix race

president Gianni Infantino were among the guests enjoying the bright sunshine.

But the race proved a processional affair.

Following the restart, cars trundled around the 3.3-kilometer (2-mile) narrow street circuit as Leclerc seemed determined to make his tires last until the end.

Piastri sat on his tail, and by the halfway point he was around 1 second behind, but Leclerc picked up the pace.

"To be honest Charles has been mega all weekend," Piastri said. "It probably would have taken the best lap of my life (in qualifying). I'm happy with P2."

There was not much action to entertain fans, some of whom spent thousands on VIP tickets.

Lance Stroll's left tire came off as he entered the pit lane on lap 50, but little else happened as Leclerc gradually extended his lead and ended his barren run.

"It's just impossible to get past on the streets of Monaco," Sainz said. "But I'm very happy for Charles." MDT/AP



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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**GOODWILL SHOULD BE
 TURNED INTO ACTIONS FOR
 TRILATERAL COOPERATION
 AND EXCHANGES**

Even those trying to sow discord among the three neighbors in recent years cannot deny the fruitful outcomes of the first Trilateral Summit Meeting of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea in five years that concluded in Seoul on Monday.

Attended by Premier Li Qiang, ROK President Yoon Suk-yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, the meeting demonstrated the shared willingness of the three countries to expand common interests, if not a more mature model to get along with each other featuring more tolerance toward disputes and differences than before. The three parties issued not only a joint declaration of the meeting, but also several joint statements on their cooperation in different fields over the coming decade, and agreed to designate 2025-26 as the China-Japan-ROK Year of Cultural Exchange. In doing so, the three neighbors showed they are taking the initiative to repair their ties that have been damaged by the divisive efforts of Washington.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of their trilateral cooperation mechanism, which had stalled since December 2019. The three neighbors need to firmly stand by the shared commitment that gave birth to this mechanism of cooperation, and uphold openness, inclusiveness, mutual respect, mutual trust, mutual benefit and mutual learning. Drawing on their experiences, the three countries need to build on past achievements, and regitalize and accelerate their trilateral cooperation. The proposals Li put forward in the meeting to deepen the trilateral cooperation are all pertinent to removing the obstacles hindering regional cooperation.

A prerequisite is that the three countries need to uphold strategic autonomy and resist external interference, so that they can respect each other's core interests and major concerns, and fully unleash the potential of trilateral cooperation. To this end, they should nurture new areas of cooperation and make their bilateral relations and trilateral cooperation mutually reinforcing.

Meanwhile, the three countries should strengthen their commitment to collaborative innovation and cooperation in frontier areas. To provide a platform to synergize these endeavors, China will establish a China-Japan-ROK Innovation Cooperation Center, which will help the three countries accelerate the cultivation of new innovation drivers.

As Li said, the three countries should make good use of their respective development advantages, actively respond to the needs of the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other countries in the region, and create new engines of regional cooperation.

That the leaders of the ROK and Japan said they hope that the three countries will take this trilateral summit meeting as a new starting point to deepen their cooperation across the board and jointly promote East Asian cooperation is hopefully a positive indication that they want to lessen the frictions that have developed and reduce the trust deficit that has grown between them and China.

If the goodwill displayed by the three leaders and the outcomes of their meeting can be transformed into concrete actions, projects and results, it will certainly promote more stable and amicable relations among the ROK, Japan and China than has been evinced in recent years. That will not only deliver more benefits to their people but also help stabilize the regional and global situations. But for that to happen, Seoul and Tokyo must not let Washington dictate their relations with Beijing.

[Abridged]

Twelve people were injured when a Qatar Airways plane flying from Doha to Dublin yesterday [Macau time] hit turbulence, airport authorities said. Eight of the injured were hospitalized.

Dublin Airport said in a statement that flight QR017, a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, landed safely as scheduled before 1 p.m. (1200 GMT).

It said that upon landing the aircraft was met by emergency services, including airport police and the fire and rescue department, "due to six passengers and six crew ... reporting injuries after the aircraft experienced turbulence while airborne over Turkey."

The airport said all passengers were assessed for injuries aboard the

plane, and eight were then taken to hospital.

Passenger Paul Mocc told Irish broadcaster RTE that he saw "people hitting the roof" and food and drink flying everywhere.

Another traveler, Emma Rose Power, told RTE that after the turbulence, "some of the flight attendants I saw, they had scratches on their face, they had ice to their face. There was one girl that had a sling on her arm."

Qatar Airways said in a statement that "a small number of passengers and crew sustained minor injuries in flight and are now receiving medical attention."

It said "the matter is now subject to an internal investigation."

AP PHOTO



Spectators watch a film from boats during the Muyuna Floating Film Festival, showcasing films from countries with tropical forests, in the Belén neighborhood of Iquitos, Peru

PADDLE IN

**POOR NEIGHBORHOOD
 IN PERU'S AMAZON
 REGION HOSTS FILM FEST
 FOR TROPICAL FORESTS**

**RODRIGO ABD &
 FRANKLIN BRICEÑO,
 BELÉN**

In the heart of Peru's Amazon region, a poor neighborhood put aside the trials and tribulations of everyday life and celebrated an international film festival with works from countries with tropical forests.

Many who attended the 10-day event had never seen a movie on the big screen, and the one used for the festival was itself unique due to the area's geography.

"The festival aims to be a tribute to the jungles of the world and its people, to the Indigenous communities, in which we believe lies the answer to the challenges and destruction that forests face now that everyone is talking about climate change," Daniel Martínez-Quintanilla, co-executive director of the festival that ends today [Macau time], said.

Life in the community of Belén revolves around water. Houses and businesses are built on stilts because rains regular-

ly lead to monthslong floods. Families own canoes to move around, but children who lack one sometimes use large plastic containers instead.

So, members of the Muyuna Floating Film Festival — muyuna in the Quechua language means "a whirlpool formed in mighty rivers" — set the screen on a 10-meter (33-foot) high wooden structure, allowing residents to enjoy the films from their canoes or the windows of their homes.

"For the first time, we are getting to know these settings that are bringing us to this community," said Belén resident Jorge Chilicahua, a 60-year-old farmer who raises chickens and plants cassava, corn and vegetables to meet his family's needs. He has never been to a movie theater.

Much of the population of Belén comes from rural areas of the Peruvian Amazon and are part of various Indigenous groups, including the Kukama, Yagua and Bora, that migrated

in search of better economic, educational and health opportunities. Their challenges abound.

People fish by making holes in the wooden floors of their houses, which forces mothers to keep a watchful eye over their children who do not yet know how to swim so that they don't fall into the water and drown. Health authorities have reported malnutrition and diarrhea are common due to lack of drinking water.

Martínez-Quintanilla said the event included films from Thailand, Brazil, Taiwan, Panama and other countries with tropical forests, as well as others made by young Peruvians.

The works screened included the Peruvian animated short film "The Engine and the Melody," which tells the story of an ant that fells Amazonian trees and a cicada that manages to regenerate the forest by playing a prodigious flute — until everything changes when a forest fire occurs.

MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Uzbekistan over the weekend for talks with President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, focusing on deepening bilateral relations. This marks Putin's third foreign trip since starting his fifth term in May, following visits to China and Belarus. The visit includes informal discussions and a formal meeting yesterday, emphasizing trade and economic cooperation between the two nations.

AP PHOTO



United States Severe storms over Memorial Day weekend killed at least 21 people across central and southern U.S. states, including Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Kentucky. The storms caused widespread destruction, power outages, and additional casualties in rural areas. Governors declared states of emergency, urging residents to remain vigilant. The extreme weather, coupled with an early heat wave, reflects a trend of increasing storm severity linked to climate change.

AP PHOTO



Papua New Guinea A landslide in Enga province buried over 2,000 people, significantly higher than initial estimates of 670. The National Disaster Center has requested international aid. Efforts to recover bodies are hampered by challenging terrain, tribal conflicts, and unstable conditions. The disaster also buried a major highway, complicating relief efforts. The government faces difficulties due to a lack of reliable census data and remote location challenges.