



**AN EXECUTIVE CHEF WAS ACCUSED OF SOLICITING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS IN BRIBES FROM SUBORDINATE STAFF OVER TWO YEARS**

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**LABOR MARKET SHOWS UNEVEN RECOVERY IN FIRST QUARTER**

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**HONG KONG POLICE ARREST SIX PEOPLE ACCUSED OF VIOLATING THE CITY'S NATIONAL SECURITY LAW**

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**China** A building collapse yesterday in Tongling, eastern China, killed at least four people and injured one. A 12-year-old girl was found alive. The collapse involved a 10-unit apartment block, and the cause is under investigation, though recent heavy rains are suspected. Rescue efforts included cranes and backhoes to stabilize remaining structures.



**Philippines** A typhoon has left at least seven dead and thousands displaced in the Philippines. Typhoon Ewinar caused severe flooding and toppled trees, affecting Quezon and Misamis Oriental provinces. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. yesterday reported over 26,700 people affected, with many seeking shelter in evacuation centers. The typhoon's shift spared Manila, but flooding and damage were extensive.

**Australia** A man was arrested after running naked through a Virgin Australia flight from Perth to Melbourne, causing the plane to return to Perth. He knocked down a flight attendant during the incident. Police arrested him and took him to a hospital for assessment. The airline apologized for the disruption and emphasized passenger safety.



**Israeli** Foreign Minister yesterday accused Spain of inciting genocide after Spain moved to recognize a Palestinian state. Ireland and Norway plan similar actions. The diplomatic move adds pressure on Israel amid its war with Hamas. Israel's airstrike in Rafah killed at least 45 people, intensifying international criticism over civilian deaths and adherence to international law.

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# CRIME WAVE

Q1 data from the Security Office indicates a spike in violent crimes; Secretary Wong, however, asserts rise in gaming-related crimes is 'normal' P3



**THIS SUMMER  
MACAU TO HOST  
FIRST INT'L ARTS  
FESTIVAL FOR  
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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

### LAWRENCE HO INCREASES STAKE IN MELCO INTERNATIONAL

Lawrence Ho, chairman and chief executive of Melco International Development Ltd, has increased his stake in the Hong Kong-listed company to 63.28%, up from 62.26% in early April, according to company data. The data shows that Ho increased his stake in Melco International through 31 transactions between April 8 and May 22. These transactions involved nearly 15.6 million shares, at an aggregate value of just under HKD90.71 million. The per-share price ranged from HKD5.00 to HKD6.77. During the same period, the executive also received an aggregate of nearly 1.37 million shares in Melco International, contributing to his 63.28% stake in the company.

### WORLD POKER TOUR CANCELS WPT MACAU EVENT

The long-awaited return of international poker to Macau has been delayed once again as the World Poker Tour (WPT) announced the cancellation of the WPT Macau event previously scheduled to take place at Wynn Palace from June 18 to 24. In a statement, the WPT said that they, along with its partners Wynn Macau Ltd and Allied Gaming and Entertainment, "regret any inconvenience or disappointment for players from around the world who were planning to travel to Macau and play in the event." The organization added, "WPT remains committed to working with Wynn Macau and AGAE in the future to bring world-class poker tournaments back to the region."

### FOOD DELIVERY DRIVER ALLEGEDLY WORKING DESPITE PROHIBITION

Police have revealed that a local resident in his 20s, who worked as a delivery person on a food delivery platform, was suspected of driving in violation of a driving ban. He allegedly continued to drive his car to deliver food until he was stopped by the public security police. The public security police said that this man was suspended for one year and nine months for drunk driving last month (April). He admitted that he did not notify the food delivery platform of the driving ban because he wanted to maintain a stable form of income and continue to deliver food.

### STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE Macau government announced the debut of Macau International Arts Festival for Children during the 3rd plenary meeting of the Advisory Council for Cultural Development yesterday.

The festival, scheduled from July to August this year, aims to foster early exposure and appreciation of arts and culture among families and children in the city. The festival will feature diverse programs presented by artistic groups from around the world and Macau, including stage performances, a film festival, an art exhibition, a book fair, large-scale outdoor installations, art camps, workshops, and a musical presented by The Palace Museum from Beijing for the first time in Macau.

"We hope that the Macau International Children's Art Festival will be a cultural event for children and young people from all walks of life," said Deland Leong, president of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC).

"In July and August, we will have a performance of our cultural center's play. In addition, we are also planning to hold a film festival for children and young people. We will also hold an art exhibition and cooperate with a well-known contemporary art museum in France. Some beautiful children's exhibitions and

# MACAU TO HOST FIRST INT'L ARTS FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN



Leng Weng Fat and Deland Leong

works of art will be featured, and launched during the summer," Leong explained.

The meeting also covered Macau's candidacy for the "Cultural Cities of East Asia 2025" event, an initiative by China, Japan, and South Korea to enhance the international competitiveness of regional culture through cultural exchange and cooperation. Macau is one of six cities being considered for the event.

Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Ao Ieong U, led the delegation that participated in the final evaluation for the "Cultural Cities of East Asia 2025" event in May 2024. During the presen-

tation, the delegation highlighted Macau's urban construction work, long-term cultural system establishment, plans for various activities, and the city's unique cultural characteristics.

The meeting also discussed the launch of an updated version of "Enjoy Macau," the city's activities website. The revamped page features a user-friendly design and seven categories including music, events, cultural performances, exhibitions, sports and leisure, trade fairs, and workshops. The accompanying mobile app offers three display modes and provides users with event notifications based on

their preferences.

Leng Weng Fat, a committee member, commended the new platform, stating, "I think it is very good. I hope this app will have a great impact on tourism and culture in the future."

Leng also expressed his support for the initiatives presented during the meeting. "All the committee members are very happy to hear this. The government has adopted this approach to promote a very rich and positive attitude," he said, commending the Macau International Arts Festival for Children and the city's candidacy for the "Cultural Cities of East Asia 2025" event.

### CRIME

# Executive chef accused of soliciting bribes from subordinates

### STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE corruption watchdog received a report accusing a food and beverage executive chef of soliciting hundreds of thousands in bribes from subordinate staff over two years.

According to the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) report, the chef abused his power to recruit, dismiss and promote workers in the department between September 2020 and February 2023 by soliciting "fees" from subordinates each month as kickbacks for job recommendations

and contract renewals. He did this through taking advantage of his position, as he would repeatedly ask his subordinates to "show respect" to him by paying "fees" every month over the past three years, totaling MOP240,000. The unnamed chef has since been fired by the gaming company that wholly owns the food and beverage department.

An investigation found there was merit to the accusations, with the chef allegedly committing "passive bribery" as defined in Macau's law against private sector

corruption. No other details about the company or individuals involved were disclosed.

The case has been referred to Public Prosecutions Office for potential criminal proceedings. CCAC urged the public to report any illicit acts such as bribery immediately and reminded private sector workers and companies of their legal obligation to operate with integrity.

While bribery corrodes professional standards and the rule of law, reporting such offenses helps protect workers and ensures a level playing



field for businesses, the CCAC representative said. The bureau encouraged anyone discovering potential corruption to come forward to aid in prevention and prosecution efforts.

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SECURITY

# Violent crimes increase by 24.2% in Q1 y-o-y

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE number of violent crimes in the first three months (Q1) of this year has continued to increase, according to a quarterly report from the Secretariat for Security presented yesterday.

According to the official figures, violent crimes have increased year-on-year by 24.2%, with 15 more cases in Q1 this year than in 2023.

Kidnapping cases recorded the highest growth, rising 1,300% year-on-year, from just one case in 2023 to 14 cases this year.

A concerning increase in rape cases was also recorded, with 14 cases reported in Q1, an increase of 55.6%.

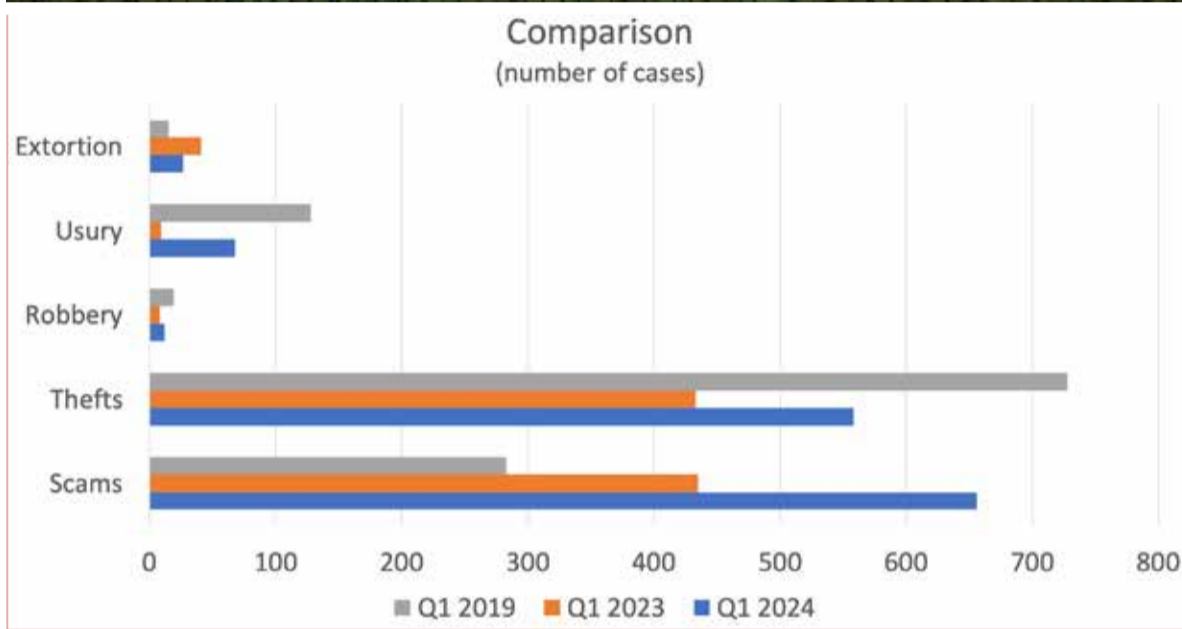
Other violent crimes such as bodily harm and other offenses against physical integrity also registered growth, although the number of cases recorded was relatively small (1 or 2).

The increase in violent crime was only somewhat offset by a decrease in homicide, arson, and sexual abuse of children, with the last type dropping 60% (from 10 to 4 cases).

Property crimes showed a general increase of 23.9%.

Usury crimes surged by 655.6%, pickpocket thefts by 146.3%, and scams by 50.8%. Notably, there were 656 scams in Q1, an increase of 221 or an average of over seven cases per day this year.

The crime category with the highest overall increase in general



was miscellaneous crimes, which are not related to a specific category but rather include various offences under different laws.

This category recorded growth of 37.3%, driven mainly by cybercrimes and fraudulent documents related to fake marriages and work contracts for residency permits.

Cybercrime recorded an increase of 97.9% in the number of

cases to 186, while the forged documents for residency purposes increased by 37% (37 cases).

Drug consumption cases also increased slightly, with one more case reported (from 3 to 4).

At the press conference, the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, acknowledged the increase in crime but noted that the figures might be inflated due to the resumption of normal border

traffic, which only took full effect in February 2023. This makes the 2023 comparison base abnormally low, which in turn makes this year's figures appear higher. He added that in most cases, crime rates in Macau are still below pre-pandemic levels, except for scams which are now 231.8% higher than Q1 2019.

Crimes of extortion also surged in 2024 even when compared to

2019, being 80% higher than pre-pandemic times.

Wong noted that, in general, the increase in crime is related to the "continuous increase in the crime of fraud, and in particular fraud using telecommunications and cyber fraud, [which is] a common issue globally." Despite higher figures for violent crimes, the Secretary concluded that since "the numbers recorded [now] were significantly lower than in the first quarter of 2019, this leads to the conclusion that the prevention and combat measures applied by the police have had an effect."

## 52 ATTEMPTED SUICIDES IN Q1

**SECRETARY** for Security, Wong Sio Chak, also presented data on suspected suicides investigated by the Judiciary Police. A total of 52 suspected suicides have been recorded in the first quarter of this year, involving 20 males and 32 females, slightly lower than last year's figure. 22 cases related to the ingestion of various drugs or chemical compounds. Most cases (29) involved individuals aged between 15 and 34 years old. During the first three months of the year, the city saw 22 suicide cases, according to the report. In Q1 2023, authorities recorded 68 cases of attempted suicides.

**C**RIMINAL activity relating to the gaming industry has increased 122.2% year-on-year in the first quarter (Q1) of this year, compared to the same period in 2023, according to a report from the Secretariat for Security.

Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, downplayed the increase, stating that it was expected due to the recovery of the tourism industry and the significant influx of visitors to Macau during this period.

Wong highlighted that, although the number of cases appeared to grow significantly (from 193 to 351), it is still lower than figures recorded in 2019.

According to the figure stated at the press conference from the security officials yesterday

morning, the 2024 figure is 19.9% lower (87 fewer cases) than in 2019.

"The number of gambling-related crime cases in the first quarter of this year showed a certain increase compared to the same period last year, and the reason is believed to be related to the substantial increase in the number of tourists and the recovery of the gaming industry," the Secretary said. He added that, as he had mentioned earlier in the main crime statistics report, 2024 figures are slightly inflated due to the base of comparison. Full resumption of border crossings only occurred in February, affecting the comparison between the two periods.

"According to data from the Statistics and

# Increase in gaming-related crimes is normal, Security Chief says

Census Service, the number of tourists who visited Macau in the first quarter of 2024 exceeded 8.8 million, approximately 1.8 times the same period last year," he said. Given the influx of tourists, the rise in crime should be considered in context.

Wong also noted a change in the typology of gaming-related crimes, with scams (particularly those related to illegal currency exchange activities) comprising 21.7% of the total.

He also noted that traditional crimes such as usury and kidnapping



have decreased, with usury cases now amounting to less than half of

2019 (down from 128 to 63) and kidnapping cases now representing only

2.8% of all the crimes related to this industry (down from 81 to 10). **RM**



**TOURISM**

## PACKAGE TOUR VISITORS INCREASE BY 140% IN APRIL

STAFF REPORTER

**T**he number of visitors on package tours significantly increased compared to the previous year in April. According to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), there was a remarkable increase of 142.3% with a total of 216,000 arrivals.

The majority of these tour visitors were from mainland China, with a year-on-year growth of 123.3% to reach 194,000 visitors. The data also revealed a substantial surge in international visitor arrivals on package tours, which skyrocketed by 979.8% to 20,000 in April. Among these visitors, there was a notable increase in tourists from Korea, with a stage-

ring growth rate of 2,382.3% to reach 8,000 visitors.

Similarly, visitors from Malaysia experienced a significant surge of 1,402.2% year-on-year, totaling 2,000 visitors. Looking at the first four months of 2024, the overall number of visitors on package tours showed a remarkable uplift of 257.9% compared to the previous year, reaching a total of 720,000 arrivals.

Mainland China contributed significantly to this growth, with a year-on-year increase of 226.3% to reach 643,000 visitors. Additionally, international visitor arrivals on package tours experienced a substantial increase of 2,292.5% to 70,000 visitors. Tourists from Korea and Thailand witnessed

remarkable growth rates of 7,896.4% and 449.2% year-on-year respectively, with 31,000 and 7,000 visitors.

Regarding hotel occupancy rates, the average occupancy rate of guest rooms in April experienced a year-on-year increase of 4.0 percentage points, reaching 83.3%. The rates for 5-star and 4-star hotels also saw positive growth, with increases of 7.1 and 1.0 percentage points respectively. However, the rate for 3-star hotels suffered a decline of 4.9 percentage points, reaching 81.1%.

From January to April 2024, the average occupancy rate of hotel guest rooms increased by 8.4 percentage points compared to the previous year, reaching 84.5%.

## FOREIGN CONSULS GENERAL VISIT HENGQIN GUANGDONG-MACAO COOPERATION ZONE

HOWARD TONG

**I**n celebration of the third anniversary of the establishment of the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China in the SAR organized a visit for 23 foreign consuls general and representatives from Macau and Hong Kong to Hengqin May 26 to May 27.

The delegation, led by Liu Xianfa, Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, toured the Hengqin Exhibition Hall, second-tier inspection area of the customs arrangements, and cross-border e-commerce and live broadcast base. They learned about



Commissioner Liu Xianfa

the zone's overall planning, convenient customs clearance process, and thriving cross-border e-commerce sector.

Liu noted that in the past three years, Hengqin's economic aggregate has grown nearly 4% annually,

with industrial development becoming increasingly prosperous. In Q1 2024, Hengqin's GDP reached RMB1.21 billion yuan, up 1.2% year-on-year.

The official highlighted Hengqin's closed-off management model that fa-

cilitates the entry and exit of people, enabling "scientific research in Macau and transformation in Hengqin" and "living in Macau and working in Hengqin."

He expressed hope that the visiting consuls would gain a deeper understanding of Hengqin's industrial policies, legal system, and business environment, and help promote more visa facilitation measures for foreigners to visit the cooperation zone.

Many consuls remarked that the trip gave them a deeper understanding of Hengqin's development, noting its preferential tax policies, complete infrastructure, and strong potential in cross-border e-commerce, high-tech, and cultural tourism.

## Macau establishes Coloane Marina Immigration Station to boost regional yacht tourism

STAFF REPORTER

**M**ACAU'S government has approved the establishment of the Coloane Marina Immigration Station, a move that aims to facilitate the flow of yacht travelers in and out of the region, as part of a broader effort to enhance regional tourism cooperation.

The Official Gazette of the Macau Special Administrative Region published an administrative order, approving the creation of the Coloane Yacht Terminal Immigration Station. The station will be operational as needed and will exclusively serve individuals traveling to and from Macau by yacht.

The administrative order is set to take effect 90

days after its promulgation, marking a significant step forward in Macau's efforts to revive the "Yacht Free Tour" project, which was previously suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The project, which was jointly launched by the Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macau regions in 2017, aims to enhance regional tourism cooperation and facilitate the movement of yachts across the border.

With the easing of cross-border customs clearance in Zhuhai, Macau, and other mainland cities, the local government is now working to reinvigorate the "free yacht travel" initiative, hoping to position Macau as a hub for superyacht tourism in the region.

**STATS**

## LABOR MARKET SHOWS UNEVEN RECOVERY IN Q1

**D**ATA from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) has revealed an uneven recovery, with the tourism-related sectors showing stronger growth, while other industries experienced more mixed or even declining employment figures.

The survey found that the number of full-time employees in the hotel industry grew significantly by 23.2% year-on-year, reaching 56,414 by the end of the first quarter. This surge was driven by soaring visitor arrivals and the steady recovery of the tourism sector. In contrast, the restaurants industry saw a 6.2% increase in full-time staff, while elderly care and manufacturing also experienced moderate growth of 5.6% and 4.6%, respectively.

The average earnings (excluding irregular re-

muneration) of full-time employees showed a mixed picture. Hotels and restaurants recorded year-on-year increases of 2.6% and 3.5% respectively, reaching MOP20,470 and MOP10,610 per month.

Other sectors, such as elderly care, child-care, and electricity, gas & water supply, also saw modest wage growth, ranging from 1.9% to 3.2%. The lone exception was manufacturing, where average earnings edged down by 0.9% to MOP12,520.

While the hotel and restaurant industries experienced growth in employment, the survey also revealed a cooling in hiring demand. Job vacancies in hotels and restaurants declined by 1,156 and 574 respectively year-on-year, as many vacant positions were filled, which reflected in the decline in job vacancy rates. **HT**

ECONOMY

# Education, social safety vital for Asia to grow rich, cope with aging: UN report

ELAINE KURTENBACH, TOKYO

**A**S economies in Asia and the Pacific slow and grow older, countries need to do more to ensure that workers get the education, training and social safety nets needed to raise incomes and ensure social equity, a United Nations report said yesterday.

The report by the International Labor Organization said that growth in productivity has slowed, hurting incomes and undermining the purchasing power of the region's 2 billion workers. By improving productivity, governments can boost incomes and better prepare for the aging of their work forces, the report said.

Two in three workers in the region were in informal employment in 2023, such as day labor, lacking the kinds of protections that come from formal jobs.

"The lack of job opportunities that meet decent work criteria, including good incomes, not

only jeopardizes social justice in the region, but it also presents a risk factor for the labor market outlook," the report said.

Showing the potential for improvement, labor productivity grew at an average annual rate of 4.3% in 2004-2021, helping to raise incomes per worker in terms of purchasing power parity, which compares standards of living in different countries using a common currency, to \$15,700 from \$7,700. But it has slowed in the past decade, the report said, hindering progress toward greater affluence.

It highlighted various challenges, especially unemployment among young people not in school, which is more than triple the adult rate, at 13.7%.

Increasing use of artificial intelligence and other automation technology will cause some people to lose their jobs, it said, with women engaged in clerical and information technology work most likely to be affected as



Commuters walk in a passageway during a rush hour at Shinagawa Station, in Tokyo

companies roll back their reliance on offshore call centers jobs in countries like the Philippines and India.

Other factors such as trade disputes and political turmoil threaten to disrupt.

The ratio of people in Asia aged older than 65 to those 15-64 years old is projected to double to nearly a third by 2050 from about

15% in 2023, the ILO report says.

In places like Japan, short-handed employers have moved to alleviate work loads by using robots and computerized ordering in restaurants, cutting hours and installing self-checkout machines.

The report noted that a key reason why some countries face labor shortages despite having

ample numbers of unemployed or underemployed workers is a mismatch between jobs and skills and education.

"The region still has huge potential for upskilling, productivity improvements and efficiency gains, which can alleviate demographic pressures on the labor market," it said.

The report noted that more than a third of workers in the region have educational levels too low for their occupations, compared with 18% of workers in high-income countries.

Among other findings:

People in Asia and the Pacific still work more hours than workers in other regions, at 44 hours per week on average, though that is down from more than 47 hours in 2005.

In 2023, nearly 73 million workers in the region lived in extreme poverty, with daily incomes of less than \$2.15 in purchasing power parity per person. MDT/AP

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HONG KONG

# Police arrest six people accused of violating the city's new national security law

KANIS LEUNG, HONG KONG

**H**ONG KONG police yesterday arrested six people, including a former organizer of the city's decades-long annual vigil that commemorated the Tiananmen Square crackdown, for allegedly publishing seditious social media posts, in what were the first publicly known arrests under the city's new national security law.

Secretary for Security Chris Tang said Chow Hang-tung, a former leader of the group behind the vigil, alongside five others, used a Facebook page to anonymously publish the posts. Police said their acts began in April and that the suspects were targeting a "sensitive date."

The authorities have not detailed the content of the posts. But the page started publishing a series of posts to mark the upcoming 35th anniversary of the

1989 crackdown, a politically sensitive topic in Hong Kong and mainland China, on April 30.

Tang alleged the group made the posts with the intent to incite dissatisfaction or even hatred against the Chinese central government, the Hong Kong government and the judiciary. The posts also aimed to encourage netizens to organize activities "endangering national security," he said.

"Although Hong Kong has embarked on the journey from stability to prosperity these days, we cannot let down our guard. We are still facing national security risks," Tang told reporters at a briefing.

The authorities did not specify the content of the posts or identify the other five suspects.

The introduction of the new security law in March — four years after Beijing imposed a similar law that had all but wiped

AP PHOTO



Hong Kong's Final Court of Appeal

out public dissent — has deepened worries about the erosion of the city's freedoms.

The new law, known locally as "Article 23," has expanded the government's power to deal with future challenges to its rule, punishing treason and insurrection with up to life imprisonment.

Under the legislation, offenders who commit seditious offenses face harsher penalties than before. They face a maximum jail term of seven years if convicted for committing seditious acts or uttering seditious words — up from the previous

maximum sentence of two years.

But Tang said it is not illegal to merely mention sensitive dates.

"The main crime is not about the subject. It's about they're utilizing the subject during which they incited hatred," he said.

The six suspects are between 37 and 65 years old. Authorities raided the homes of five of them and seized items including electronic devices that officers suspect were used to publish the seditious messages, police said.

Chow and two former leaders of the group were also charged with subversion under the Beijing-imposed law and are being held in custody.

The annual commemoration at Hong Kong Victoria Park used to draw thousands of people.

The Beijing and Hong Kong governments say the law helped return stability following anti-government protests in 2019. MDT/AP

# Shanghai makes it easier for people to buy property there

**S**HANGHAI removed more restrictions on home buying, allowing eligible single buyers to buy pre-owned homes in the downtown area and families with more than one child to buy an extra residential property, according to official sources.

The municipal government of the East China metropolis issued a nine-item notice on Monday that takes effect from yesterday that includes the adjustment of home purchase restrictions to support reasonable home living requirements for families with more than one child, the optimization of credit policies, encouragement of trade-ins, and improvement of land and housing supply.

Specifically, non-local people will be able to buy an apartment in the city, as long as they have paid tax in Shanghai for three years.



This photo taken on Nov 3, 2023 shows a city view of Shanghai at sunrise

Previously, the requirement called for them to have paid tax in the city for five years or more.

Non-local single buyers who do not have a property in Shanghai but who work there are eligible to buy a used apartment in the city.

On Jan 30, Shanghai issued a new policy stating that non-local people in Shanghai, who have paid tax for five

years or more, can buy a flat beyond the city's Outer Ring Road with the exception of the Chongming district.

All families with two children or more can buy an extra residential property, the notice added.

The decision was made to support reasonable home living demands and promote the stable and healthy development of the property market,

said the notification issued jointly by the Shanghai Municipal Administrative Committee of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, the Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Housing Management, the Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Planning and Natural Resources, and the Shanghai Municipal Tax Service of the State Taxation Administration. CHINA DAILY

AP PHOTO



TAIWAN

# THOUSANDS GATHER OUTSIDE THE LEGISLATIVE YUAN TO OPPOSE CHANGES

**T**HOUSANDS of people gathered outside Taiwan's legislature yesterday to oppose changes being pushed through by the opposition Nationalist Party and its allies that would give the body greater power.

The Nationalists, also known as the KMT, took control of the legislature with a single-seat majority after elections in January, while the presidency went to Lai Ching-te of the Democratic Progressive Party, which favors Taiwan's de facto independence from China.

The Nationalists officially back unification with China, from which Taiwan separated during a civil war in 1949. The proposed legislative changes would give them more power to control budgets, including defense spending that the KMT has blocked in what many see as a concession to the Mainland.

Taiwan's legislative chamber was festooned with banners promoting both sides in the dispute, while arguments on the floor broke out into shouting and pushing matches. MDT/AP



People watch a news program broadcasting file images of a rocket launch by North Korea, at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, yesterday

NORTH KOREA

# Rocket carrying its second spy satellite explodes shortly after launch

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

A rocket launched by North Korea to deploy the country's second spy satellite exploded shortly after liftoff Monday, state media reported, in a setback for leader Kim Jong Un's hopes to operate multiple satellites to better monitor the U.S. and South Korea.

The failed launch came hours after leaders of South Korea, China and Japan met in Seoul in their first trilateral meeting in more than four years. It's highly unusual for North Korea to take provocative action when China, its major ally and economic pipeline, is engaging in high-level diplomacy in the region.

The launch drew rebukes from the North's neighbors because the U.N. bans North Korea from conducting any such launches, viewing them as covers for testing long-range missile technology.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said it launched a spy satellite aboard a new rocket at its main northwestern space center. But KCNA said the rocket blew up during a first-stage flight soon after liftoff due to a suspec-

ted engine problem.

KCNA cited the unidentified vice director of the National Aerospace Technology Administration as saying that a preliminary examination showed that the explosion was related to the reliability of operation of the newly developed liquid oxygen-petroleum engine. He said other possible causes will be investigated, according to KCNA.

Japan's government briefly issued a missile warning for the southern prefecture of Okinawa, urging residents to take shelter inside buildings and other safer places. The warning was lifted later because the region was no longer in danger, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said.

Japanese Defense Minister Minoru Kihara called the North's launch "a serious challenge to the entire world." The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command criticized the launch as a "brazen violation" of U.N. Security Council resolutions and said it involved technologies that are directly related to North Korea's intercontinental ballistic missile program. South Korea's Unification Ministry called a satellite launch by the North "a provocation that seriously threatens our and re-

gional security."

North Korea has steadfastly maintained it has the right to launch satellites and test missiles in the face of U.S.-led military threats. North Korea says the operation of spy satellites will allow it to better monitor the U.S. and South Korea and improve the precision-striking capabilities of its missiles.

During the trilateral meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Chinese Premier Li Qiang earlier Monday, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol called for stern international action if North Korea went ahead with its launch plan.

Kishida, for his part, urged the North to withdraw its 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.

Earlier Monday, North Korea had notified Japan's coast guard about its planned launch with a warning to exercise caution in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and China and east of the main Philippine island of Luzon during a launch window from Monday through June 3.

Some observers say that North Korea's satellite launch on the first day of its eight-day window might have been aimed at casting a chill over the Seoul-Beijing-Tokyo meeting and registering its displeasure with China. Kim Jong Un has been embracing the idea of a "new Cold War" and seeking to boost ties with Beijing and Moscow to forge a united front against Washington, so China's diplomacy with Seoul and Tokyo might have been a disturbing development for Pyongyang.

Kim's primary focus in recent months has been on Russia, as Pyongyang and Moscow — both locked in confrontations with Washington — expand their military cooperation. China, which is much more sensitive about its international reputation, has joined Russia in blocking U.S.-led efforts at the U.N. Security Council to tighten sanctions on the North but has been less bold and open about supporting Kim's "new Cold War" drive.

North Korea's Foreign Ministry on Monday strongly criticized a joint statement issued by Li, Yoon and Kishida, calling it "wanton interference in its internal affairs." The ministry took issue with parts of the joint statement that said the three leaders re-emphasized their existing positions on the issue of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

While North Korea focused much of its criticism on South Korea for allegedly being chiefly responsible for the statement, it's still extremely rare for North Korea to slam a statement signed by China.

The failed satellite launch is a blow to Kim's plan to launch three more military spy satellites in 2024 in addition to his country's first military reconnaissance satellite that was placed in orbit last November.

The November launch followed two failed liftoffs.

In the first attempt, the North Korean rocket carrying the satellite crashed into the ocean soon after liftoff. After the second attempt, North Korea said there was an error in the emergency blasting system during the third-stage flight. MDT/AP

ADVERTORIAL

# GREAT TIMES

Michelin-Starred Sushi Master Hiroyuki Sato Returns to Present Seasonal Omakase at MGM

Celebrating the mastery of an authentic Edo-mae-style omakase experience, SUSHIDAN at Rossio of MGM MACAU is set to captivate connoisseurs once again with its Stellar Omakase - Summer Sea with the return of Michelin-starred sushi chef Hiroyuki Sato, who will join forces with SUSHIDAN's head chef Manato Ueno to present a limited-time omakase dinner from June 18 to 21.



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AP PHOTO



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

UKRAINE-SPAIN

# Zelenskyy gets more air defense missiles from Spain to fight Russian glide bombs

**U**KRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskyy secured from Spain a pledge of additional air defense missiles to help fight the about 3,000 bombs that he says Russia launches every month at Ukraine in the third year of the war.

However, Ukraine still urgently needs another seven U.S.-made Patriot air defense systems to stop Russia hitting the power grid and civilian areas, as well as military targets, with devastating glide bombs that wreak wide destruction, Zelenskyy said.

"If we had these modern Patriot systems, (Russian) airplanes wouldn't be able to fly close enough to drop the (glide) bombs on the civilian population and the military," Zelenskyy told a news conference in the Spanish capital.

Glide bombs are heavy Soviet-era bombs fitted with precision guidance systems and launched from aircraft flying out of range of air defenses. The bombs weigh more than a ton and blast targets to smithereens, leaving a huge crater.

Two Patriot systems are needed to protect the northeastern Kharkiv region, where the Kremlin's forces launched a cross-border offensive on May 10 that left Ukrainian troops reeling, Zelenskyy said. The

death toll from a glide bomb attack on a Kharkiv shopping mall Saturday rose to 18, regional Gov Oleh Syniehubov said yesterday [Macau time], with five people still missing.

The Kharkiv push has further strained Ukraine's already depleted army, which in recent months has been fighting Russia's intense drive deeper into the partially occupied eastern Donetsk region. Zelenskyy said on Sunday that the Kremlin's army is mustering at another point in Russia, farther north but close to the approximately 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line, aiming to stretch Ukraine's depleted army thinner and crack its resistance in the area.

Zelenskyy and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez signed a bilateral security agreement that allocates 1 billion euros (\$1.1 billion) of military aid to Ukraine in 2024, and 5 billion euros (\$5.4 billion) by 2027. More Leopard tanks and artillery ammunition also feature in the package.

"After more than two years (of war), Russia's aggression continues, and that's why it is more necessary than ever to redouble our support," Sánchez told the joint news conference.

The Patriot is a surface-to-air guided missile system

that was first deployed in the 1980s and can target aircraft, cruise missiles and shorter-range ballistic missiles. It is expensive but is effective and sought after by armies around the world.

European countries have hesitated to send Patriot systems to Ukraine, fearing they may need them.

Spain's King Felipe VI earlier welcomed Zelenskyy at the capital's Barajas airport. Zelenskyy is due in neighboring Portugal today [Macau time].

He had been due to visit Spain earlier this month but postponed all his foreign trips after Russia launched its offensive in the Kharkiv region.

Ukraine has repeatedly tried to strike behind Russian lines, often with drones, though Russia's response to the new technology used in unmanned vehicles has improved in recent months.

A Ukrainian long-range drone set a new distance record by attacking overnight an early-warning radar in the Russian city of Orsk, some 1,800 kilometers (1,120 miles) from the Ukrainian border, Ukrainian officials claimed.

The operation was conducted by Ukraine's military intelligence, GUR, an intelligence official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity

because the person was not authorized to comment publicly. Ukraine's previous long-range attack record was at 1,500 kilometers (930 miles) when a drone struck an oil refinery in Russia's Bashkortostan on May 9.

It was not immediately possible to verify either claim.

Meanwhile, a Western intelligence assessment suggested that Russia's Kharkiv offensive has subsided.

"The northern Kharkiv front has likely stabilized with Russian territorial control fragmented and not joined up," the U.K. Defense Ministry said Sunday. "Russia's gains in this axis will be limited in the coming week, as Russia's initial momentum has been contained by Ukrainian resistance."

That is in line with Zelenskyy's claim last Friday that Ukrainian forces have secured "combat control" of areas where Russian troops entered the Kharkiv region.

The onslaught unfolding as the weather improves has brought Ukraine's biggest military test since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. Slow deliveries of support by its Western partners, especially a lengthy delay in U.S. military aid, have left Ukraine at the mercy of Russia's bigger army and air force. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1968 MANCHESTER UTD WIN EUROPEAN CUP



Manchester United have become the first English club to win the European Cup beating Portuguese side Benfica by four goals to one.

Ten years after the Munich air crash, which killed eight of Matt Busby's young team, Manchester United have reached the pinnacle of European football.

Celtic became the first Scottish and British club to win the cup the previous year.

United's star player, George Best, was named European Footballer of the Year - just a fortnight after being named the football writers' Footballer of the Year.

Tonight's match at Wembley was watched by a crowd of 100,000 and an estimated 250 million TV viewers. It was the biggest television audience since the World Cup final two years before.

As both teams wear red kit, United opted to play in their blue away strip for the game.

The first half passed in a flurry of fouls before Bobby Charlton headed the opening goal in the second half to make it 1-0.

With only 10 minutes left to go, Benfica scored the equaliser - and very nearly won the match when their feared striker Eusebio broke away from Nobby Stiles, the player tasked with marking him, and blasted the ball towards the net.

But it was saved by keeper Alex Stepney and the game went into extra time.

Two minutes into extra time Best put United ahead again, slipping round the keeper and gently tapping it over the line.

It was followed by two more United goals, from 19-year-old Brian Kidd and captain Bobby Charlton, taking the final score to 4-1. [...]

But they struggled on to complete the 1958/59 season and when Busby returned to the manager's role the following season he began the task of rebuilding the side.

The club won the league in 1965 and 1967, but today's win marks the pinnacle of the club's achievements.

Charlton and Bill Foulkes were the only survivors of the crash who played in today's final.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The European Cup marked the highlight of Matt Busby's long career at Manchester United and he later received a knighthood. He retired after the following season to become the club's general manager. For George Best it was the highlight of his footballing career. The same year he was also named European Footballer of the Year.

He was regarded by many as one of the greatest footballing talents in the world, ranked alongside the greats Pelé and Eusébio.

He was the first footballer to gain superstar status - but his fame led him into a life of womanising and alcohol.

By 1972 he had announced his retirement from the game - he returned to United a year later but by early 1974 he had left for good.

In 2002 he had a liver transplant. He died in November 2005.

Bobby Charlton had a distinguished playing career for England and Manchester United. He scored 48 goals for England, a record which still stands. He was knighted in 1994.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

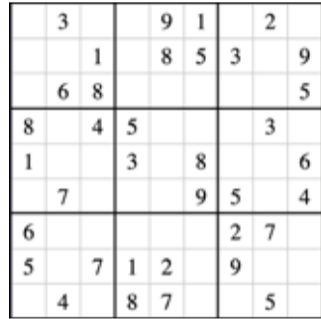
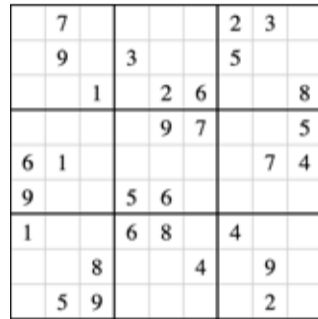
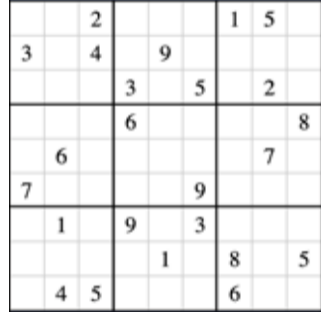
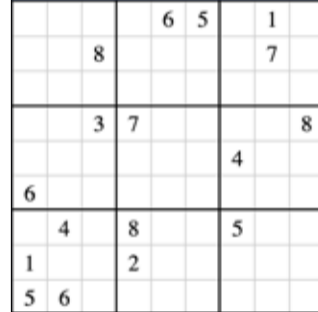
**YOUR STARS**

 <b>ARIES</b> <b>Mar. 21-Apr. 19</b> A shared dream lies within sight. Set long-term goals with group projects. Reach for a prize that satisfies your mission. Advance farther than expected.	 <b>TAURUS</b> <b>Apr. 20-May. 20</b> A dreamy career opportunity opens. Take advantage of favorable conditions to launch. Align words and actions for an exciting possibility. Connect and network.
 <b>GEMINI</b> <b>May. 21-Jun. 21</b> Embark on an adventure. Research unfolds potential for lasting benefits. Travel where your investigation leads. Follow a fascinating possibility.	 <b>CANCER</b> <b>Jun. 22-Jul. 22</b> Discuss dreams, goals, ambitions and possibilities with someone you love. Make plans to realize them. Work out the numbers. What would it take?
 <b>LEO</b> <b>Jul. 23-Aug. 22</b> Coordinate collaborative efforts. Together, get farther than expected with a disciplined push. A shared dream is within reach. Grab a golden opportunity. Teamwork wins.	 <b>VIRGO</b> <b>Aug. 23-Sep. 22</b> Make physical and health goals. A long-desired dream seems attainable. Practice and train for strength and endurance. Nurture your mind, body and spirit.
 <b>LIBRA</b> <b>Sep. 23-Oct. 22</b> Make a romantic connection. Weave a beautiful dream together. Discuss what you could build. Fortune blesses bold promises and declarations today. Express your heart.	 <b>SCORPIO</b> <b>Oct. 23-Nov. 21</b> Consider ways to realize long-held domestic dreams. It may be easier than you think. Upgrade infrastructure for family support. Make improvements for lasting benefit.
 <b>SAGITTARIUS</b> <b>Nov. 22-Dec. 21</b> Discoveries abound. Mysteries reveal their secrets. Share what you're learning. Creative projects grow and flower. Follow your muse. Write, publish and broadcast your views.	 <b>CAPRICORN</b> <b>Dec. 22-Jan. 19</b> Grab a lucrative opportunity and run with it. Financial obstacles dissipate. Do what worked before. Disciplined efforts pay extra. Wheel and deal. Sign contracts.
 <b>AQUARIUS</b> <b>Jan. 20-Feb. 18</b> Take charge to realize personal dreams. A long-desired prize lies within reach. Take advantage of favorable conditions. Apply your strengths and talents. Go for it!	 <b>PISCES</b> <b>Feb. 19-Mar. 20</b> You're especially creative behind closed doors. Get quiet. Review plans. Listen to intuition and notice unspoken clues. You can see for miles and miles.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

<b>EASY</b> 	<b>EASY+</b> 
<b>MEDIUM</b> 	<b>HARD</b> 

**WEATHER**


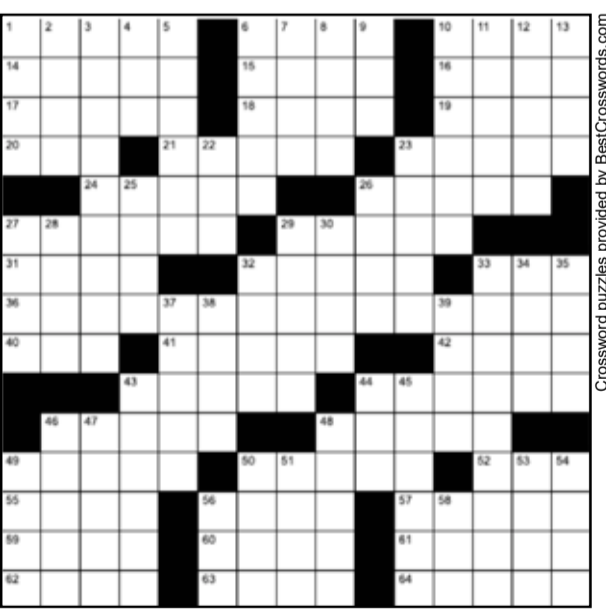
	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	20	27	cloudy
Changchun	12	17	rain
Chengdu	19	23	rain
Chongqing	21	23	rain
Fuzhou	18	27	fine
Guangzhou	23	29	showers
Guiyang	18	23	showers
Haikou	26	28	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	16	26	cloudy
Harbin	8	19	cloudy
Hefei	16	27	overcast
Nanjing	14	27	cloudy
Shanghai	18	28	cloudy
Taipei	21	26	cloudy
Wuhan	17	29	rain
Hong Kong	25	28	cloudy
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	17	21	sunny
Frankfurt	12	18	rain
Paris	12	18	showers
London	11	19	cloudy
New York	16	26	thunderstorms

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Director Welles; 6- Silver screen; 10- Out of port; 14- Hotelier Helmsley; 15- Sandwich cookie; 16- Glass ornament; 17- Shoe ties; 18- The \_\_\_ Ranger rode a horse called Silver; 19- Civil rights leader Parks; 20- "Rope-a-dope" boxer; 21- Backbone; 23- Sulky; 24- Anew; 26- Russian range; 27- Edible nut; 29- Trimmed; 31- "On the Waterfront" director Kazan; 32- Have a feeling about; 33- Kauai keepsake; 36- In spite of; 40- Peg used on the first in golf; 41- Runs into; 42- \_\_\_ extra cost; 43- Geeky guys; 44- One or the other; 46- Eastern; 48- Roast host; 49- White as a ghost; 50- Bicker; 52- Paris possessive; 55- Crude cartel; 56- Injury reminder; 57- Aromatic spice; 59- World's longest river; 60- Comedian Johnson; 61- Anouk of "La Dolce Vita"; 62- Congers; 63- Nipple; 64- Equals;

DOWN 1- \_\_\_ podrida; 2- Genuine; 3- Debutante; 4- Formula \_\_\_; 5- Capital of the Bahamas; 6- General Powell; 7- Press; 8- Hawaii's state bird; 9- Fair-hiring abbr; 10- Overseas; 11- Capital of South Korea; 12- Bridge positions; 13- An apple \_\_\_; 22- Casino area; 23- Primp; 25- Chew on; 26- Bear in the sky; 27- Proceeded; 28- Moisturizer ingredient; 29- Nuisances; 30- Formicary residents; 32- Molt; 33- Supple; 34- Feminine ending; 35- Helicopter pioneer Sikorsky; 37- That is to say...; 38- Gull's cousin; 39- Go out with; 43- Sisters' daughters; 44- Outback bird; 45- Polar cover; 46- Easy \_\_\_; 47- Egg exterior; 48- Plumed heron; 49- First-rate; 50- Farm measure; 51- Pro \_\_\_; 53- At any time; 54- Goes out with; 56- Warmed the bench; 58- Tell it like it isn't;

**Yesterday's solution**

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	



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## ETHNOGRAPHY

## THE EXCLUDED BACKGROUNDS OF AMERICA

**Armenians, Hmong, Brazilians and other groups feel US race and ethnicity categories don't represent them**

TERRY TANG & MIKE SCHNEIDER

**T**HE U.S. federal government recently reclassified race and ethnicity groups in an effort to better capture the diversity of the United States, but some groups feel the changes miss the mark.

Hmong, Armenian, Black Arab and Brazilian communities in the U.S. say they are not represented accurately in the official numbers. While the revisions were widely applauded, these communities say the changes have created a tension between how the federal government classifies them versus how they identify themselves.

The groups say money, political power and even health could be at stake. Being lumped into the wrong column can mean a gain or loss of government funds that are distributed based on data. For some, it's about their identity and feeling seen by their own country.

The Office of Management and Budget said the working group that oversaw the revisions held 94 "listening sessions" with many advocacy groups, academics and the general public, and it will continue to reach out to communities.

#### HMONG AND THE SECRET WAR

During the Vietnam War and unbeknownst to the American public, the CIA recruited Lao and Hmong people to fight the spread of communism throughout Southeast Asia. Tens of thousands of Hmong soldiers died while others fled to the U.S. as a result of what became known as the "secret war."

By the 1970s, many Hmong had resettled in Minnesota, Wisconsin and central California. Today, Hmong in the U.S. number more than 300,000. Some states recognize Hmong and Lao veterans with annual ceremonies, and in April, the Wisconsin governor signed a law mandating that Hmong American history be taught in schools.

Given their history fighting in that region for the U.S., many Hmong feel strongly that they



Sophia Armen (center) passes a dish to Dr. Armond Aghakhanian and joined for lunch with other members of Armenian-American census coalition

should be classified as Southeast Asian. But because China is considered the Hmong ancestral homeland, the U.S. Census Bureau categorized them as East Asian after the 2020 census.

"That has been very hurtful to our elders and to our veterans who sacrificed so much to get us here to this country after everything they did to help the U.S. during the Vietnam War," said May yer Thao, president and CEO of the St. Paul, Minnesota-based Hmong American Partnership.

The East Asian label also pains them because the Hmong were oppressed in China as an ethnic minority and sought refuge in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, according to Quyen Dinh, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Southeast Asia Resource Action Center.

Those who object to the classification also have a practical concern: the East Asian grouping could hide socioeconomic disparities between Hmong and other Asian households that need to be addressed. The per capita income of Hmong was almost \$26,000, while it was more than \$53,000 for Asians overall, according to the 2022 American Community Survey.

"We are still one of the most impoverished communities in this nation," Thao said.

The Census Bureau says it's working with the Hmong community to improve their classification.

#### THE EXCLUDED GROUPS

When the government revised its race and ethnicity standards in March — its first major alteration since 1997 — its seven categories included a new one, Middle Eastern or North

African, or MENA. The revisions also encouraged detailed data collection about respondents' backgrounds, such as African American, Jamaican and Haitian under the Black category.

Missing from the list of backgrounds under the new MENA category: Black Arabs from such countries as Somalia and Sudan, and Armenians. The groups were left out after a 2015 field test by the Census Bureau found that most Armenians still identified as white and most Somali and Sudanese respondents identified as Black even when MENA was an option.

Some advocates said the decision to omit Black Arabs from being included in the MENA category was based on outdated research.

For many Armenian Americans, not having their own category amounts to an existential threat as a large part of their diaspora's culture is now concentrated in the United States. Ethnic Armenians also have communities around Europe and the Middle East, in particular Lebanon.

Many are descendants of those who fled the 1915 campaign by Ottoman Turks in which some 1.5 million Armenians died in massacres, deportations and forced marches. The atrocities, which emptied many ethnic areas in eastern Turkey, are widely viewed by historians as genocide. Turkey rejects the description of genocide, saying the toll has been inflated and that those killed were victims of civil war and unrest during World War I.

Without Armenian inclusion in the MENA subcategories, many will likely categorize themselves as being from a different country. That could

diminish their official numbers and reduce their power when it comes to redrawing political districts in places with large Armenian communities, said Sophia Armen, chair of the Census Taskforce of the Armenian National Committee of America-Western Region.

"We will now be undercounted by potentially hundreds of thousands of people," Armen said. "It spells out a very real destruction of Armenian identity in the next two generations."

During the last redistricting round following the 2020 census, Armenians in greater Los Angeles — which has the largest concentration of Armenians outside Armenia — were almost split up into different city districts, but the redistricting plan was modified after they sounded the alarm. There are an estimated 460,000 Armenian Americans in the U.S., with half living in California, according to the 2022 American Community Survey.

Being identified in the data correctly also is important to local health departments. It can influence anything from vac-

nation outreach in the proper language to tailoring health campaigns for specific communities.

Armenian Americans, for instance, are more likely to suffer from hypertension than the general population, but there's not a lot of data.

#### MANY BRAZILIANS IDENTIFY AS HISPANIC

A coding error last year in an annual Census Bureau survey offered unprecedented insight into how large numbers of Brazilians in the U.S. identify as Hispanic or Latino.

An analysis by Pew Research Center showed that the coding mistake revealed at least 416,000 Brazilians, or more than two-thirds of Brazilians in the U.S., also identified as Hispanic in the 2020 American Community Survey.

Usually, if someone marks Hispanic and Brazilian on the survey, they are recoded as "not Hispanic" when the numbers are crunched.

Not including Brazilians, or Haitians for that matter, in the definition of Hispanic or Latino, means that large numbers of Afro-Latinos aren't counted, Michelle Bueno Vásquez, a Ph.D. candidate in political science at Northwestern University, wrote the Office of Management and Budget.

"The OMB as it stands fails Latinos, especially Afro-Latinos who continually suffer double discrimination and marginalization, on top of statistical invisibility, in the United States," she said.

Researching the impacts of categorizing Brazilians as Hispanic was among the recommendations a Census Bureau advisory committee made last month.

"Policy is driven by data, first and foremost," Armen said of people who feel missed in the classifications. "It just seems like we are purposely being ignored." MDT/AP



Armen, chair of the Census Committee of ANCA/Western Region and members of the Armenian-American Census Coalition in Glendale, California, earlier this month

FOOTBALL | CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

# Ancelotti has 'really difficult' decision to make in goal ahead of final

ALES AZZONI, MADRID

**R**EAL Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti knows he will have a tough decision to make in goal for the Champions League final against Borussia Dortmund on Saturday.

Will he pick Andriy Lunin, who has played in goal nearly the entire season, or Thibaut Courtois, the veteran who has won the Champions League before but has just returned from injury?

"It's really difficult," Ancelotti said this week. "Both of them deserve to play this final. Lunin, because he did a fantastic season, and Courtois, because he is back from his injury and everyone knows the quality of Courtois."

Lunin was nursing a fever and was the only Madrid player who didn't train on Monday. But Ancelotti said the Ukrainian was expected to be available for the final in London.



Real's goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois attends a training session during a Media Opening day in Madrid

The illness surely doesn't help Lunin's chances, though, and many had already expected Ancelotti to go with the more experienced Courtois despite his lack of minutes.

"After you get injured you are not the best anymore, you have to come back and show that you

are the same as you were before, and even better than before," Courtois said. "I'm glad that I'm

playing and training well and that I'm available to play."

Courtois ruptured a left-knee ligament in August, just two days before the start of the season. The 32-year-old Belgian then also ruptured the meniscus in his right knee in March, when he was close to making a comeback.

He was sidelined until the beginning of this month, when he started in a 3-0 win over Cadiz, a victory that secured Madrid's 36th Spanish league title.

Lunin was back in goal when Madrid beat Bayern Munich in the Champions League semi-finals. He saved two penalties in the decisive shootout win over Manchester City in the quarter-finals.

Lunin earned the starting po-

sition over Kepa Arrizabalaga, the former Chelsea player who is Madrid's other reserve goalkeeper. Ancelotti said Lunin was the best goalkeeper in the world right now.

Courtois has proven experience in finals, though, having won the 2022 Champions League with Madrid, the FA Cup with Chelsea, the Europa League with Atletico Madrid, and two Copa del Rey titles (one for Madrid, one for Atletico), among other titles.

"Both deserve to play for various reasons," Ancelotti said.

Ancelotti joked he will wait as long as possible to announce the starting goalkeeper because otherwise the debate would be over, and "I like the debate."

MDT/AP

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

	Date	Time	Home	Away	ODDS
Sun	June 2	03:00	Borussian Dortmund	Real Madrid	H 5.25, D 4.25, A 1.67



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

**Paediatric Surgery** : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

**Paediatrics** : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

**Obstetrics & Gynaecology** : Dr. Fong Kuan Io

**Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery** : Dr. Lam U Lin

**Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine** : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

**ENT** : Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang

**Cardiology** : Dr. Jin Chun, Dr. Leong Man Kin

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OPINION

China Daily  
Editorial, China Daily

**SINO-ARAB SPIRIT OF SOLIDARITY WILL CARRY FORWARD**

China and Arab states enjoy a long history of friendly exchanges. But their relations are now the best they have ever been, the two sides having nurtured a friendly partnership featuring solidarity and mutual assistance, equality and mutual benefit, and inclusiveness and mutual learning.

China has been the largest trading partner of Arab countries for many years in a row, and it has signed cooperation documents on the Belt and Road Initiative with all 22 Arab countries and the Arab League. The two sides have implemented more than 200 large-scale cooperation projects under the BRI framework, benefitting people on both sides.

In December 2022, the two sides held their first summit and agreed to make every effort to build a China-Arab community with a shared future, and planned the blueprint for the development of China-Arab relations. The upcoming 10th ministerial meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum that opens in Beijing on Thursday is of great significance, as it is the first since the China-Arab Summit two years ago.

This year is the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum. Over the past 20 years, the forum has sought to strengthen dialogue and cooperation between the two sides for the purpose of promoting peace and development.

In an increasingly turbulent world, the two sides, which share similar views on regional and global issues, have supported each other on their respective development paths and sought to work together to jointly safeguard the common interests of the Global South. Hence, it can be expected that the upcoming gathering will not only help expand new horizons for China-Arab cooperation in a wide range of fields but also facilitate communication and forge consensus on issues of mutual concern.

With the Gaza conflict raging and wreaking havoc in the Middle East, it is anticipated that the two sides will voice a joint stance on the Palestine issue.

In stark contrast to the United States which has been the source of trouble and strife in the Middle East, China has always been committed to building peace and stability in the region and resolving differences and defusing conflicts through dialogues and negotiations.

It is expected that at their meeting in Beijing this week, the two sides will enhance their communication and exchanges and carry forward the spirit of China-Arab friendship by strengthening their solidarity.

The Palestine issue is fundamental to peace and stability in the Middle East. The injustices done to the Palestinian people should end immediately and their demand for an independent state should be met. It is to be hoped that the meeting in Beijing will help give greater momentum to the efforts to end the ongoing conflict in Gaza and build long-term stability in the Middle East.

POPE APOLOGIZES AFTER BEING QUOTED USING VULGAR TERM ABOUT GAY MEN IN TALK ABOUT BAN ON GAY PRIESTS

THE BUZZ

Pope Francis apologized yesterday after he was quoted using a vulgar and derogatory term about gay men to reaffirm the Catholic Church's ban on gay priests.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni issued a statement acknowledging the media storm that erupted about Francis' comments, which were delivered behind closed doors to Italian bishops on May 20.

Italian media on Monday had quoted unnamed Italian bishops in reporting that Francis jokingly used the term "faggotness" while speaking in Italian during the encounter. He had used the term in reaffirming the

Vatican's ban on allowing gay men to enter seminaries and be ordained priests.

Bruni said Francis was aware of the reports and recalled that the Argentine pope, who has made outreach to LGBTQ+ Catholics a hallmark of his papacy, has long insisted there was "room for everyone" in the Catholic Church.

"The pope never intended to offend or express himself in homophobic terms, and he extends his apologies to those who were offended by the use of a term that was reported by others," Bruni said.

AP PHOTO



Britain's Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Rishi Sunak

UK ELECTION

**SUNAK'S PLAN TO MAKE 18-YEAR-OLDS DO NATIONAL SERVICE IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

JILL LAWLESS, LONDON

ALL 18-year-olds in Britain will have to perform a year of mandatory military or civilian national service if the governing Conservative Party wins the July 4 national election, the party said last weekend.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak pledged to bring back a form of national service for the first time in more than 60 years, seeking to energize his election campaign after a faltering start.

The U.K. introduced military conscription for men and some women during World War II, and imposed 18 months of mandatory military service for men between 1947 and 1960. Since then Britain has had an all-volunteer military whose size has steadily shrunk.

Under the plan, a small minority of 18-year-olds — 30,000 out of an estimated 700,000 — would spend 12 months in the military, working in areas such as logistics or cyber defense. The rest would spend one weekend a month working for charities, community groups, or organizations such as hospitals, the police and the fire service.

Sunak said the pro-

gram would help "create a shared sense of purpose among our young people and a renewed sense of pride in our country."

It remains unclear how it will be made compulsory. Home Secretary James Cleverly said no one would be forced to serve in the military.

Cleverly said that the main goal of the new plan was not boosting the military but building "a society where people mix with people outside their own communities, mix with people from different backgrounds, different religions, different income levels."

The Conservatives estimated the cost of the national service plan at 2.5 billion pounds (\$3.2 billion) a year. They said it would be paid for partly by taking 1.5 billion pounds (\$1.9 billion) from the U.K. Shared Prosperity Fund, which was set up in 2022 to regenerate poor communities.

Labour said the national service announcement was a "desperate 2.5 billion pound unfunded commitment" from a party "bankrupt of ideas."

Former Labour Home Secretary Alan Johnson said the Tory plan amounted to "compulsory volunteering" and predicted

"it'll never happen."

Elections in the United Kingdom have to be held no more than five years apart. The prime minister can choose the timing within that period and Sunak, 44, had until December to name the date.

He took most people — including those in his own party — by surprise when he announced on Wednesday that the election would be held on July 4. The Conservatives, who have been in office for 14 years, are trailing the opposition Labour Party led by Keir Starmer in opinion polls and are trying to overcome a widespread sense that voters want change.

Sunak's election announcement outside 10 Downing Street saw him drenched with rain and drowned out by protesters blasting a Labour campaign song. One of his first campaign stops was at the Belfast shipyard where the doomed ocean liner Titanic was built — another detail seized on gleefully by opponents.

Voters will elect lawmakers to fill all 650 seats in the House of Commons. The leader of the party that can command a Commons majority — either alone or in coalition — will become prime minister. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



**Gaza Strip** Prime Minister Netanyahu said a "tragic mishap" caused an Israeli strike in Rafah. The incident, which targeted a Hamas compound, has intensified international criticism of Israel's actions in Gaza. Netanyahu promised an investigation, acknowledging efforts to avoid civilian casualties. The strike is one of the deadliest in the ongoing conflict.

AP PHOTO



**Belgium** has pledged \$1 billion in military aid to Ukraine as President Zelenskyy continues his European tour. The aid includes 30 F-16 fighter jets and a Patriot air defense system. This support follows Spain's promise of significant military aid. The European Union faces internal challenges as Hungary blocks centralized aid distribution to Ukraine. **More on p8**

AP PHOTO



**Russia and Uzbekistan** yesterday signed an agreement for Russia to build Central Asia's first nuclear power plant in Uzbekistan. The plant will have six reactors with a total capacity of 330 megawatts. President Putin emphasized the importance of the project. This move strengthens Russia's influence in Central Asia amid ongoing tensions with the West.

AP PHOTO



**Mexicans** will vote Sunday in historic elections likely to elect the country's first female president. The election, involving over 20,000 positions, is marked by cartel violence. Leading candidates are Claudia Sheinbaum and Xóchitl Gálvez. President López Obrador's legacy and policies are significant factors. Gender-based violence and machismo culture are central campaign issues.