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**IMF WARNS OF A SHARPER CONTRACTION IN CHINA'S PROPERTY SECTOR AND HIGHER INTEREST RATES ABROAD, WHICH COULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT MACAU'S GROWTH**

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**REAL MADRID SEALS 15TH CUP AFTER WIN OVER BORUSSIA DORTMUND**

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AP PHOTO



**Myanmar** Tin Oo, co-founder of Myanmar's National League for Democracy and a close associate of Aung San Suu Kyi, died at 97. He passed away on Saturday at Yangon General Hospital due to health complications. Tin Oo, a former military leader, was respected for his courage and outspokenness. He endured years of imprisonment and house arrest under military rule and played a crucial role in Myanmar's pro-democracy movement.

AP PHOTO



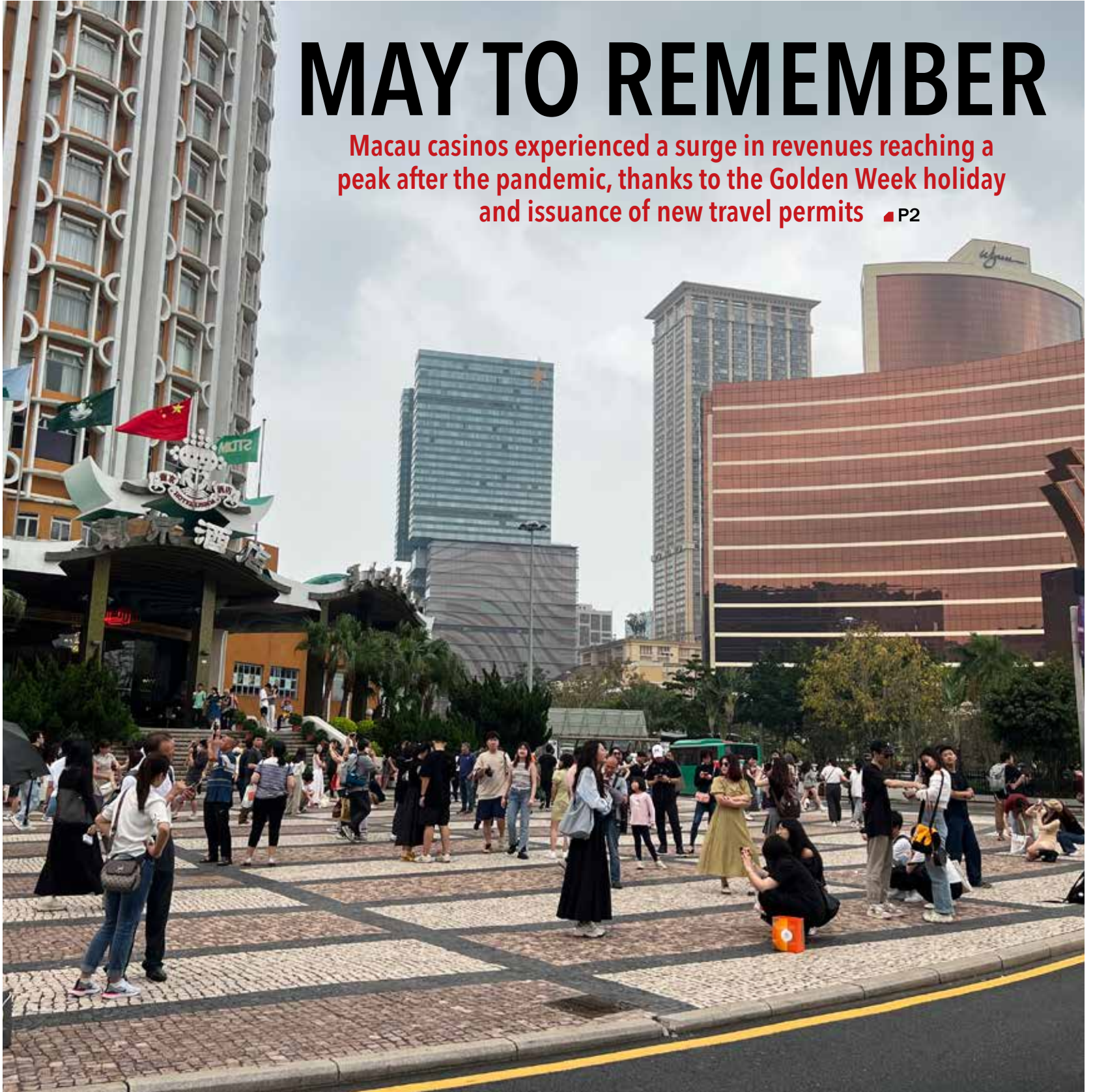
**Israeli** Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces growing pressure following U.S. President Joe Biden's proposal to end the fighting in Gaza. Many Israelis urge Netanyahu to accept the deal, while far-right allies threaten to collapse his government if he does. Biden's plan includes a cease-fire and hostage release, but Netanyahu insists on the destruction of Hamas' capabilities before agreeing.

AP PHOTO



**USA** The Democratic National Committee's proposal for campaign guidelines on the ethical use of artificial intelligence went nowhere. Concerns among Democratic campaign organizations included potential limitations on AI deployment and donor reactions. The plan aimed to promote responsible AI use but sparked internal debates about its value, reflecting broader uncertainty over AI's role in campaigns amid disinformation risks.

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# MAY TO REMEMBER

Macau casinos experienced a surge in revenues reaching a peak after the pandemic, thanks to the Golden Week holiday and issuance of new travel permits

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RENATO MARQUES/MDT



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STAFF REPORTERS

GAMING

**M**ACAU casinos saw revenues spike to a post-Covid high in May, driven by the Golden Week holiday and the introduction of new travel permits for Chinese tourists, which boosted spending.

Gross gaming revenue (GGR) reached 20.2 billion patacas for the month, matching analyst forecasts of a 30% year-on-year increase, as reported by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau during the weekend.

During China's five-day Labor Day holiday, Macau experienced a notable increase in visitors, with daily tourist arrivals up 23.2% year on year, achieving 76% of the 2019 levels, according to a report Saturday by Bloomberg.

The city recorded 2.6 million visitors in April, about 76% of pre-pandemic figures, with May's data expected to be released later in the month.

New regulations allow Chinese citizens to secure multiple-entry travel permits to Macau for various activities, including attending exhibitions and entertainment events.

This ease of travel, which began in May, is expected to further boost visitor numbers.

Moreover, the extension of eligibility for individual travel permits to residents from more mainland cities indicates significant government support, highlighted by analysts from JPMorgan Chase, according to Bloomberg.

Despite economic uncertainty, Macau's affluent visitors have continued robust spending. Bloomberg noted the Bloomberg Intelligence index of Macau casino operators rose 4.57% in May, surpassing the Hang Seng Index's gain of 1.78%.

**DIVERSIFICATION REMAINS CRUCIAL**

Macau Institute of Management (MIM) president Samuel Tong said gambling revenue from January to May this year recovered to about 76% of the same period in 2019. Speaking to TDM, Tong attributed the increase to the introduction of 10 new mainland cities for Individual Visit Scheme to Hong Kong and Macau, as well as other policies.

He expects annual gambling revenue will reach MOP220 billion to MOP230 billion. However, Tong said the current passenger structure is like that before 2019, with 70% coming from the mainland and 20% from Hong Kong.

To diversify the tourist base, Tong suggested Macau should organize activities such as concerts, sports, and conven-

# Holiday boosts casinos' revenues to post-Covid high



tions and exhibitions, as well as expand its routes at Macau International Airport to make it easier to travel to neighboring regions.

Professor Ip Kuai Peng, vice-rector of City University, also expressed optimism about Macau's economic recovery, saying May gambling revenue was satisfactory and approaching past levels.

Ip emphasized the importance of balancing the development of gaming and non-gaming elements in Macau's "1+4" moderately diversified

development strategy.

With the continued rollout of policies to support Macau's tourism and diversification efforts, industry experts are cautiously optimistic about the region's

economic outlook. However, they caution more work is needed to reduce Macau's reliance on the gaming sector and broaden its appeal to a wider range of visitors.

## MONTHLY GROSS GAMING REVENUE

	2024	2023	Variance
Jan	19,337	11,580	+67.0%
Feb	18,486	10,324	+79.1%
Mar	19,503	12,738	+53.1%
Apr	18,545	14,722	+26.0%
May	20,188	15,565	+29.7%

\*UNITS IN MOP BILLION

# Unemployment rate back to pre-pandemic levels

STAFF REPORTER

**D**ATA from Macau's Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) has revealed a positive shift in the region's unemployment landscape, with rates now mirroring those of December 2019 - February 2020.

The latest Employment Survey, indicates a decline in both the general unemployment rate and the rate among local residents. These rates decreased 0.2 percentage points to 1.9% and 2.5%, respectively, compared to the previous period (January - March 2024).



Concurrently, underemployment also fell 0.1 percentage points to 1.4%, reflecting improvements in both non-gaming and gaming sectors.

Total employment sur-

ged 1,200 to 372,300, primarily fueled by growth in non-gaming industries, with notable increases in Financial Services and Construction sectors.

Conversely, employ-

ment in Real Estate & Business Activities declined. The decline in unemployment was particularly pronounced among 16-34 year olds, with unemployment dropping by 600 to 7,400

and underemployment by 0.1 to 1.4%, impacting young professionals and recent graduates in sectors like Construction and Transport.

This fall in unemployment is a positive economic trajectory, especially for younger workers and those with tertiary education. The majority of the previously unemployed were concentrated in Construction, Retail Trade and Gaming & Junket Activities.

Comparing with February - April 2023, the labor force participation rate, unemployment rate, and

underemployment rate all decreased by 0.2, 0.9, and 0.7 percentage points respectively, indicating a trend towards stable employment opportunities and a strengthening economy.

The decreasing figures suggest a tightening labor market as the economy progresses. For those seeking new opportunities, a job matching session hosted by the Labour Affairs Bureau and the Federation of Workers on June 6-7 offers 385 professional vacancies, presenting a promising avenue for job seekers in Macau.

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on the 17<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
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*永利* 永利



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

### GRAND PRIX MUSEUM MARKS THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF EXPANSION

The Macau Grand Prix Museum celebrated its third anniversary of expansion Tuesday, having welcomed over 264,812 visitors since reopening June 1, 2021, according to Tourism Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes. Fernandes was originally worried that inclement weather yesterday might curb attendance, but over 500 people had entered by noon. The museum holds activities and runs a gift redemption area in hopes of letting residents and tourists enjoy its offerings. Last year alone, it saw 18,856 visitors, a 1.25 times increase from the year before. The museum aims to preserve Grand Prix racing culture through "edutainment and entertainment." Monthly attendance has grown 1.36 times higher on average so far this year than the same period in 2021.

### MACAO FOUNDATION CONTINUES FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO NGOS

The Macao Foundation announced the launch of the "Financial Support Plan for Operating Expenses of Associations" for the year 2025. According to the announcement, organizations interested in applying must do so between from today until July 12. Eligible entities are non-profit associations established in SAR on or before December 31, 2010. Additionally, these associations must have a physical location for their services, employees, and have received financial aid from the Macao Foundation or other public entities in the region to support their activities or operating expenses in 2024.

# Education bureau orders EPM to comply with labor law following turmoil

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE city's education bureau has ordered the under-scrutiny Portuguese School of Macau (EPM) to check its deployment of staff complies with labor laws and its contracts with teachers.

This comes as controversy hit the school after the termination of contracts of 12 teachers, sparking shock and indignation among the faculty, parents and the Portuguese community, though EPM's director has rejected claims of a "restructuring process" and has cited management reasons for the decision.

In a press statement yesterday, the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) said that it



TORI CHAN

"has been in continuous communication with the school."

The statement comes after the bureau visited the school late last week.

"The bureau understands that the Portuguese School

regularly communicates with the Ministry of Education of Portugal regarding the arrangement of staff assignments," the bureau said.

"The DSEDJ will continue to monitor the implementation of the school's curricu-

lum and the allocation of teachers to ensure that they meet the requirements in terms of the number of courses and the necessary qualifications, with particular emphasis on the approval of teaching personnel qualifications."

Every year, there is normal staff mobility in schools due to retirements and transfers and schools hire suitable teaching staff according to their development and needs.

The DSEDJ said all private schools must comply with relevant laws and guidelines when hiring or arranging staff. Before the start of the new school year, the bureau conducts a strict review to ensure schools have enough teachers.

Last week, school management called EPM teachers to a "personal meeting" where they were told their employment relationship with the school would be renewed.

The school ended the contracts of three teachers in the Portuguese department. All three hold permanent resident cards and are in Macau under a special license from Portugal.

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### MGM Unveils the First "Macau Space Dream Project"



MGM is committed to fostering scientific education among Macau's youth. Following the two-year cooperation agreement inked last year with the Association for Promotion of Science and Technology of Macau (MAPST), MGM rolls out the "MGM Youth Popular Science" series events this year.

One of its flagship initiatives is the "Macau Space Dream Project" (Project) – co-launched with the Chinese Society of Astronautics (CSA), the Nation's first-grade academic institution of aerospace. The Project, themed on aerospace technology, not only marks CSA's maiden science education event in Macau, but also Macau's first education series of space science designed exclusively for local youth through a three-pronged approach of "Learning, Practice & Research". This project is also designed to strengthen local youth's practical abilities in science and technology with the aim to cultivate future leaders in this field, and thus further contribute to Macau's "1+4" development and inject young vitality into the Nation's high-tech progress.

The Project is comprised of two programs, one is the "Macau Youth Creative Design Competition of Space Experiment" for Form 1 to 5 high school students, which is designed based on "2024 International Space Science and Scientific Payload Competition" (ISSSP 2024). Prior to the competition, young participants can receive precious and systematic training taught by national-level aerospace experts. After the training, each participating team has to submit a creative space experiment design to a panel of judges composed of CSA experts and professionals of Macau's technology sectors for evaluation. Selected teams will have the opportunity to conduct research on the "International Moon Day" in Harbin this summer, while the champion will represent Macau to compete at the ISSSP 2024 held in Hong Kong this August.



Another program is "Call from Deep Space" Experiential Camp for Primary 5 to 6 students. This immersive one-day experiential camp enables participants to learn aeronautical theories and hands-on knowledge from an interactive "script game". It includes workshops such as making and launching water rockets, as well as assembling satellite models, allowing students to learn and practice science through fun. Distinguished participants will be able to join an in-depth study tour of the China International Aviation & Aerospace Exhibition in Zhuhai this November.



Apart from the Project, MGM will continue to support other science-focused educational events hosted by MAPST, where the Company will share its expertise in science application within integrated resorts, providing participating students with a deeper knowledge of technology through real-life case studies to improve their overall scientific literacy. These initiatives are under the "MGM Youth Popular Science" series.

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RENATO MARQUES



# IMF: Potential real estate crisis in China may have a negative impact on Macau economy

STAFF REPORTER

A report from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) highlighted several downside risks, including a sharper contraction in China's property sector and higher interest rates abroad, which could negatively impact Macau's financial system and growth.

Private investment is expected to pick up "partly due to commitments from gaming concessionaires to invest in non-gaming sectors."

However, the IMF warned "a stronger contraction in mainland China's property sector and higher interest rates abroad" could negatively impact Macau's financial system and growth. Extreme climate events also posed risks.

While the current account balance improved last year due to strong services exports, the IMF said Macau's "external position in 2023 was stronger than medium-term fundamentals warranted." The IMF attributed this in part to "high precautionary savings and subdued investment."

To address these challenges, the report recommended Macau's fiscal policy should support non-gaming activity, enhance sustainability of medium-term growth, and contribute to external rebalancing through increased spending on human and physical capital.

The report also emphasized the importance of strengthening environmental protection and disaster preparation plans to guard against the risks posed by extreme climate events.

"Diligent implementation of the government's environmental-protection and disaster prevention plans would help guard against costly natural disasters," the IMF said.

Meanwhile, the report said Macau's economy, heavily reliant on property and tourism, grew an impressive 80.5% in 2023. This growth was driven primarily by a surge in services exports, particularly in the gaming and tourism industries.

Inflation in the region remained low around 1% in 2023 due to declining rental prices, while the current account balance also improved significantly due to the rebound in services exports.

"GDP is projected to grow 13.9% in 2024, driven by further recovery in the gaming sector and pickup in private investment, partly due to commitments from gaming concessionaires to invest in non-gaming sectors," the IMF said.

Overall, the institution's report paints a positive picture of Macau's property market recovery, but also highlights the need for continued vigilance and strategic policy interventions to ensure the long-term sustainability of the region's growth.



# CONGRATULATIONS ON THE 17<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF MACAU DAILY TIMES





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| Daniel Chen            | Maria Colette Lei | Boris Sun                 |
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HOWARD TONG



Ren Zhe

ART

# MGM OPENS 'LEGENDS OF CHIVALRY' EXHIBITION WITH REN ZHE

HOWARD TONG

CHINESE artist Ren Zhe is showcasing a diverse body of work that seamlessly uses China's rich cultural heritage in his current exhibition at MGM Cotai.

The collection includes a wide range of mediums, from striking sculptures depicting iconic figures like Guan Yu from the Three Kingdoms period, to contemporary furniture, lifestyle products and fashion designs.

Ren Zhe, a graduate from Tsinghua University in the Academy of Fine Arts and member of the GBA "Top Talent Scheme," has previously held other art exhibitions and has recently seen his work gain fame from collectors in the Asian and international auction art markets.

His exhibition includes nine sculptures of classic characters from Jin Yong's martial arts novels, 11 sculptures from Ren's iconic "Warrior" series, numerous manuscripts and prints, a series of home decor products and a selection of neo-Chinese apparel.

"The overall goal is to create contemporary expressions and interpretations of traditional Chinese culture and aesthetics, to make them relevant and accessible in modern life and daily living," the artist said in a media interview.

Intertwined with the art pieces are the artist's forays into the world of lifestyle and fashion. The "ARTI\_DIVINE" home decor brand, which the artist serves as art director, showcases a range of products that seamlessly blend traditional Chinese elements with modern design.

From tea sets to wine collections, the brand aims to redefine the contemporary Chinese lifestyle, drawing inspiration from the country's rich cultural legacy.

The artist's venture into the fashion industry with the "RE\_DIVINE" brand further exemplifies their holistic approach to integrating Chinese aesthetics and values into all facets of life.

"We also hope that in the future life, we will be related to beauty

everywhere," said the artist.

"At the same time, the beauty is not only visual, but is also the beauty of thought, civilization and culture," he added, underscoring the deeper significance behind their creative endeavors. The fashion collection aims to capture the spirit of revered literary and martial arts traditions, offering stylish menswear and womenswear infused with subtle Chinese influences.

"When we wear clothes, we're not just looking at fabric and tailoring," the artist said. "We're expressing a deeper cultural ethos - the traditions, values and sense of identity that these designs represent."

Meanwhile, speaking at the opening ceremony, Pansy Ho, chairperson and executive director of MGM China Holdings Limited, said, "We aspire to not only promote traditional Chinese culture to locals and tourists through Ren Zhe's contemporary sculptural works, but also to inject commercial elements into the local art scene."





# CONGRATULATIONS TO MACAU DAILY TIMES ON ITS 17<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



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GAMING

# SJM Resorts expands satellite casino deals

STAFF REPORTER

**S**JM Resorts S.A. has revised payment caps and extended a lease agreement with two satellite casinos majority owned by co-chairman Angela Leong. According to filings Friday, the gaming operator said it has more than doubled the annual maximum payment to Leong's wholly owned L'Arc Entertainment for services and use of hotel and casino areas at its peninsula property.

The new caps are HKD908.3 million for fiscal 2024 and HKD960 million for 2025, up from HKD351.7 million and HKD450.1 million, respectively.

SJM said payments

under the existing L'Arc agreement had risen 44.7% to HKD157.4 million in the first quarter of 2024, justifying the increased caps due to expected tourism growth.

In a separate filing, SJM entered a new three-year lease agreement to operate Casino Oceanus at Jai Alai, of which Leong owns 97%, and other facilities. Monthly rent will climb from HKD3.5 million in the first year to HKD4 million and HKD4.5 million in subsequent years.

The company said steady growth at Casino Oceanus and projected high visitor volumes in coming years will drive continuous high hotel room demand, allowing SJM to operate there at low cost



and without disruption. SJM's business has been recovering, with gross gaming revenue up 77% year-over-year to HKD6.89 billion in the first quarter, according to the company.

# Election process for CE nomination begins

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE Electoral Affairs Commission for the Chief Executive Election of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) has announced that the election process will begin today, with voters submitting nomination forms until July 2.

The Chief Executive Election Committee will be responsible for nominating and electing the Chief Executive.

Election Day is set for August 11, 2024, as announced by Song Man Lei, the chairman of the Chief Executive's Election Committee.

Polling stations will be set up at the Macau Polytechnic University Sports Pavilion, the Macau Forum, and the Luso-Chinese Technical-Professional School – the same venues used five years ago.

Song also revealed that this year's election will use electronic voting in an effort to increase accuracy and efficiency at the polls.

As the government prepares for this event, the committee has pledged that it remains committed to upholding the principles of 'One country, two systems' and ensuring the continued prosperity and stability of the Macau SAR.

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VOLLEYBALL

# Wins confirm Brazil's VNL dominance

RENATO MARQUES

**T**EAM Brazil has confirmed its dominant status with four straight wins in four matches in the Macau round of the Volleyball Nations League (VNL) at the Galaxy Arena from May 28 to June 2.

The South Americans, currently second in the world ranking, defeated Japan, the Netherlands, Italy and Thailand.

In the last match yesterday afternoon, Brazil won comfortably over Thailand (3-0) with the Asians only leveling the score in the first set (25-22).

The Brazilian players were most dominant in their second game, winning comfortably 25-14.

On the previous day, the Brazilians struggled to beat Italy (3-2), having to recover from a disadvantage (of 1-2).

Similarly, Brazil encountered a strong Japan in their first Macau match, on Day 1 (May 28) winning with the minimum advantage (3-2) and, as with Italy, saw themselves initially losing (1-2).

Despite the difficulties posed by Italy and Japan, Brazil leaves Macau for the next round with the same ranking position and with 382.13 points.

Turkey currently leads the world ranking with 385.71 points.

In the Macau round, and despite the loss (2-3) to Brazil in their first match, Japan scored important points, securing three wins in the following three matches with the highlight being the win



(3-1) to China.

The results put Japan in seventh position in the World Ranking with 329.62 points.

In the event's last match, Italy beat China 3-0 securing the 5th position in the World Ranking with 349.21 points.

Italy scored three dominant wins (3-0) in Macau against France, the Dominican Republic, and China, only losing in the decisive

tiebreaker with Brazil.

China ended Week 2 in 6th position overall with two wins (over the Netherlands and Thailand) and another two defeats with Japan and Italy.

While the last score was not so costly, in ranking terms, as Italy was already classified in a higher position, the defeat against Japan raised the Japanese one position in the rankings from 8th to 7th

making it a threat to China's 6th place.

France's ranking dropped significantly in Macau, with four defeats against Italy, Japan, Thailand and the Netherlands.

France's three defeats (against Italy, Japan and Netherlands) were by 3-0, sending France down to 19th position in the World Ranking (a drop of four positions).

The only match in which the Europeans were close to scoring a win was against Thailand when they lost by the minimum margin (2-3) and when they made an impressive comeback after losing (0-2) and managed to balance the score to 2-2.

The VNL moves now to Fukuoka, Japan, where a new series of matches will start tomorrow (June 4).

ISLE OF MAN TT

# Michael equals 'Uncle Joey' with 26 wins

RENATO MARQUES

**M**ICHAEL Dunlop made history Saturday afternoon (L.T.) at the Isle of Man Tourism Trophy (TT) Races with his 26th win in the multi-race event.

With this win at the Monster Energy Supersport TT Race 1, Dunlop equaled the record of his uncle, Joey Dunlop, which stood for 24 years.

Michael's win, in the first of several races in this major event of the Road Racing calendar, opens the door for a potential record-breaking year at the TT.

But his win was not easy. He had to overcome the ef-

forts of two heavyweights of the Macau Grand Prix, former contenders Dean Harrison and Davey Todd.

Harrison led the race in the early stages but gradually dropped to third.

Todd, who finished last November's Macau GP second behind Peter Hickman, also came second in this race, behind Dunlop who crossed the finish line some 8.5 seconds faster.

Last year's winner of the Macau event, Hickman, finished in eighth position.

Besides equaling his uncle Joey's win, Dunlop also achieve his 12th Supersport category win and his 40th podium finish at the TT.

The last time Harrison raced in Macau was in 2017.

Dunlop made his only appearance in the Guia Circuit in 2011 in the company of his brother William following in the steps of their father Robert who won in 1989.

The TT continues until Saturday (June 8) with the much-awaited Milwaukee Senior TT Race.

Many names familiar from the Macau race will contend, as the TT is known to be the competition where local organizers recruit racers who will in November participate in the local racing event.





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# CHINESE SPACECRAFT LANDS ON MOON'S FAR SIDE TO COLLECT ROCKS IN GROWING SPACE RIVALRY WITH US

A Chinese spacecraft landed on the far side of the moon yesterday to collect soil and rock samples that could provide insights into differences between the less-explored region and the better-known near side.

The landing module touched down at 6:23 a.m. Beijing time in a huge crater known as the South Pole-Aitken Basin, the China National Space Administration said.

The mission is the sixth in the Chang'e moon exploration program, which is named after a Chinese moon goddess. It is the second designed to bring back samples, following the Chang'e 5, which did so from the near side in 2020.

The moon program is part of a growing rivalry with the U.S. — still the leader in space exploration — and others, including Japan and India. China has put its own space station in orbit and regularly sends crews



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, technical personnel work at the Beijing Aerospace Control Center (BACC) in Beijing, yesterday

there.

The emerging global power aims to put a person on the moon before 2030, which wou-

ld make it the second nation after the United States to do so. America is planning to land astronauts on the moon again

— for the first time in more than 50 years — though NASA pushed the target date back to 2026 earlier this year.

U.S. efforts to use private sector rockets to launch spacecraft have been repeatedly delayed. Last-minute computer trouble nixed the planned launch of Boeing's first astronaut flight Saturday.

Earlier Saturday, a Japanese billionaire called off his plan to orbit the moon because of uncertainty over the development of a mega rocket by SpaceX. NASA is planning to use the rocket to send its astronauts to the moon.

In China's current mission, the lander is to use a mechanical arm and a drill to gather up to 2 kilograms of surface and underground material for about two days.

An ascender atop the lander will then take the samples in a metal vacuum container back to another module that is orbiting the moon. The container will be transferred to a re-entry capsule that is due to return to Earth in the deserts of China's Inner Mongolia region about June 25.

Missions to the moon's far side are more difficult because it doesn't face the Earth, requiring a relay satellite to maintain communications. The terrain is also more rugged, with fewer flat areas to land. **MDT/AP**

AD

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China's Defense Minister Dong Jun

SECURITY FORUM

# Minister accuses US of causing friction with its support for Philippines

DAVID RISING, SINGAPORE

**C**HINA'S defense minister yesterday acknowledged the importance of newly renewed military-to-military communications with the United States as tensions escalate in the Asia-Pacific, while at the same time accusing Washington of causing the friction with its support for Taiwan and the Philippines.

"We will not allow anyone to bring geopolitical conflicts or any war, whether hot or cold, into our region," Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun told the Shangri-La defense forum in Singapore through a translator.

"We will not allow any country or any force to create conflict and chaos in our region," he added.

China has been increasingly assertive in pressing its claim to virtually the entire South China Sea, a key global shipping route, which has led to a growing number of conflicts, most notably with the Philippines, whose ships have been rammed by Chinese vessels and hit with water cannons.

Dong insisted that China's "strategic culture is anchored in universal love and non-aggression," before threatening the Philippines, which has grown rapidly pro-American since the election of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in 2022.

Since territorial hostilities with China surged last year in the South

China Sea, Marcos Jr.'s administration has taken steps to forge new security alliances with a number of Asian and Western countries and allowed a larger U.S. military presence in more Philippine bases under a 2014 defense pact.

Dong accused the Philippines of deliberately provoking China, "emboldened by outside powers."

"China has recognized great restraint in the face of such infringements and provocations," he said. "But there is a limit to our restraint."

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Saturday said that American support for the Philippines was "ironclad" and praised Marcos' Friday speech at the forum as a powerful statement "about how the Philippines is standing up for its sovereign rights under international law."

Austin also stressed the significance of renewing military-to-military communications between China and the U.S. to avoid "misperceptions" and prevent "miscalculations."

"There are a number of things that can happen at sea or in the air, we recognize that," he said. "But our goal is to make sure that we don't allow things to spiral out of control unnecessarily."

Dong is a former naval commander who was appointed in late December after his predecessor, Li Shangfu, was abruptly removed from office.

Dong met with Austin on Friday on the sidelines of the Singapore forum, which were the first in-person talks between top Chinese and American defense officials since contacts between the two countries' militaries broke down in 2022 after then-U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan, infuriating Beijing.

China regards Taiwan as a renegade province that must come under its control, by force if necessary.

The U.S., like most countries, does not have formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan but is bound by its own laws to provide the island with the means to defend itself. Washington is Taiwan's biggest provider of military hardware and congressional delegations regularly visit Taiwan's leaders.

Dong said China remains "open to exchanges and cooperation with the U.S. military," but added "this requires efforts from both sides."

He accused the U.S. of emboldening Taiwan's new government, which refuses to accept Beijing's insistence that the island is part of China, of "pursuing separation in an incremental way."

"We will take resolute actions to curb Taiwan independence and make sure such a plot never succeeds," he said. "Anyone who dares to separate Taiwan from China will only end up in self-destruction." MDT/AP

## OPINION

### CHINA'S CARBON COMMITMENT BLUEPRINT FOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

Kaiser Nawab\*, China Daily

China's determined climate commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 and peak carbon emissions by 2030 marks a significant turning point in the global fight against climate change. By declaring its intent to meet these targets independently, China is signaling a robust and self-reliant approach to environmental sustainability that could serve as a model for other nations.

Driving this commitment are stringent climate policies being actively implemented across major municipalities and provinces such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong. These regions are leading the charge with comprehensive strategies for green, low-carbon development, emphasizing technological innovation and the integration of sustainable practices across various industries. This shift towards carbon neutrality reflects a profound transformation in China's economic growth model, one that prioritizes environmental stewardship alongside economic development.

Renewable energy is at the heart of this transformation, experiencing rapid and unprecedented growth within China. This surge is creating a ripple effect across various market sectors, spurring advancements in electric vehicles (EVs), energy storage solutions and other cutting-edge technologies. The expansion of renewable energy not only bolsters China's energy security but also positions it as a frontrunner in the global green economy.

At the corporate level, Chinese businesses across manufacturing, construction and logistics are embracing this green revolution. Companies are increasingly integrating solar panels, adopting electric vehicle fleets and implementing a wide range of clean energy practices. This transition is driven by a combination of government policies and market incentives, with both state-owned and private enterprises proactively setting and meeting challenging emission reduction targets. This dynamic reflects China's evolving energy landscape, shaped by national and local government priorities, market transformations, significant investments in the energy sector and the implementation of carbon tax schemes.

Chinese suppliers are also excelling within the global supply chain, particularly in innovation, production efficiency and emissions reduction. Many suppliers have already established stringent climate reduction targets and actively participate in industry-wide collaborations. For example, the UNFCCC China group's initiative in the apparel industry highlights how Chinese suppliers are leading the charge in sustainability. Global companies and buyers can leverage these suppliers' commitments to continuous improvement, robust investments and dedication to low-carbon practices, thereby enhancing their own sustainability efforts.

China's "30/60" decarbonization goal—reaching a carbon peak before 2030 and carbon neutrality before

2060—places significant emphasis on the role of finance in facilitating the green and low-carbon transition. The country has developed a multi-tiered green finance market system, with green loans and bonds ranking among the highest globally. This financial framework is supported by top-down government policies and bottom-up local initiatives, such as the carbon trading market and green finance pilot zones.

Over the past decade, these efforts have spurred rapid growth in green industries. Notably, BYD, a Chinese company, has surpassed Tesla to become the world's best-selling brand of electric vehicles. Additionally, China's share of renewable energy capacity, primarily from solar, wind and hydro sources, now constitutes about 50 percent of its total generation capacity. In 2023, the clean energy sector accounted for 40 percent of China's GDP growth, highlighting the significant economic benefits of the green transition.

China's success in green finance initiatives is a testament to its commitment to sustainable development. Green finance pilot zones and the carbon trading market are pivotal in directing investments towards green projects, fostering innovation and driving the transition to a low-carbon economy. These initiatives demonstrate how financial mechanisms can be effectively leveraged to support environmental goals.

Nevertheless, China's journey towards carbon neutrality is fraught with challenges. The country must balance economic growth with environmental protection, ensure energy security while reducing carbon emissions, and foster innovation in green technologies. Despite these hurdles, the progress made thus far is promising and sets a strong foundation for achieving the 2060 carbon neutrality goal.

China's approach to integrating environmental sustainability with economic development offers valuable lessons for the global community. By prioritizing technological innovation, embracing green finance and fostering a culture of sustainability, China is paving the way for a greener future. The country's efforts underscore the importance of a coordinated and comprehensive approach to addressing climate change, involving government policies, corporate actions and community engagement.

As the world grapples with the urgent need to address climate change, China's example offers hope and direction, demonstrating that with determination, innovation and collaboration, a sustainable future is within reach.

**\*Kaiser Nawab is a president of the Belt and Road Initiative for Sustainable Development (BRISD) and a dynamic Global Climate Youth Leader, and has played an active role in the proceedings of COP- 26, 27, 28 and 29.**



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INDIA

# Modi touts roaring economy as he seeks reelection, but many feel left behind

KRUTIKA PATHI &  
SHEIKH SAALIQ SAMASTIPUR

**N**ARENDRA MODI swept to power a decade ago on promises to transform India's economy, and it would be hard to argue he hasn't made strides. As he seeks a third term as prime minister, the country's economic growth is the envy of the world, its stock markets are booming, and new buildings and highways are popping up everywhere.

There are cracks in the facade, though, that his political challengers hope to benefit from, including high unemployment, persistent poverty and the sense that only a small portion of India's 1.4 billion people has been able to cash in on the good fortune.

"You have a booming economy for people higher up on the socioeconomic ladder, but people lower down are really struggling," said Milan Vaishnav, director of the South Asia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party have remained popular since he was first elected prime minister in 2014 on a strident Hindu-first platform and pledges to succeed where past governments had failed by finally transforming the economy from rural to industrial.

He promised to clamp down on deeply rooted corruption and to leverage the country's manpower advantage to turn it into a manufacturing powerhouse. While campaigning this spring — the six-week-long election concludes Saturday — Modi has vowed to make India's economy the world's third-largest, trailing only those of the U.S. and China. Votes will be counted Tuesday.

Modi has had successes. The economy is growing by 7% and more than 500 million Indians have opened bank accounts during his tenure — a big step toward formalizing an economy where many jobs are still off the books and untaxed. His administration has also poured billions of dollars into the country's creaky infrastructure to lure investment, and notably streamlined its vast welfare program, which serves around 60% of the population and which his party is leveraging to try to win over poor and disillusioned voters.

Despite these advances, thou-

AP PHOTO



gh, Modi's economic policies have failed to generate employment that moves people from low-paying, precarious work to secure, salaried jobs. With inequality, joblessness and underemployment soaring, they've become central themes of the election.

Even as India's millionaires multiply, nearly 90% of its working-age population earns less than the country's average annual income of around \$2,770, according to a World Inequality Lab study. The top 1% own more than 40% of the country's wealth, while the bottom 50% own just above 6%, the study found.

To stem economic discontent, Modi and the BJP are hoping to win over poor and disgruntled voters with more than \$400 billion in welfare subsidies and cash transfers.

At the heart of their welfare agenda is a free ration program, which serves 800 million people. It existed under the previous government and is a right under India's National Food Security Act. But it was greatly expanded during the pandemic to provide grain for free, instead of just cheap, and then extended for another five years beginning in January.

Through roughly 300 pro-

grams, hundreds of millions have received household goods ranging from cooking gas cylinders to free toilets. Millions of homes have been built for the poor, who now have greater access to piped water, Wi-Fi and electricity. And the government has ramped up cash transfers to farmers and other key voting blocs.

When Rajesh Prajapati lost his job at a chemical factory in Prayagraj, a city in India's largest state, Uttar Pradesh, his family of five survived on government grain.

"For almost a year, the free

## He promised to clamp down on deeply rooted corruption and to leverage the country's manpower advantage to turn it into a manufacturing powerhouse

ration was our only solace," he said, adding that it was the reason they voted for Modi again.

Indian parties have always used welfare to win elections. But experts say the BJP has done it better.

Benefits such as subsidies, pensions and loans are now delivered through cash transfers directly to bank accounts linked to each individual's biometric identity card, which the government says has helped eliminate leakages and corruption by cut-

ting out intermediaries.

These large-scale handouts provide relief, but some say they are only a temporary fix and a sign of rising economic distress. To reduce inequality, they should be accompanied by investment in health and education, which have stagnated in recent years, said Ashoka Mody, an economist at Princeton University.

Subsidies are helpful, "but they do not create the ability of people to put themselves on a trajectory where they and their children can look forward to a better future," he said.

Tuntun Sada, a farmworker from Samastipur, a city in the eastern state of Bihar, said the 18 kilograms (40 pounds) of free grain that helps feed his family of six each month has only marginally improved their lives. He still earns less than \$100 a month after working the fields of wealthier landowners.

"People like us don't get very much," Sada said. "Modi should walk the talk. If we don't earn enough, how will we raise our children?"

The free rations don't last through the month, piped water has yet to reach his community and there are no nearby schools for his four kids to attend. What he really needs, he said, is a better job.

Modi's opposition, led by the Congress party, are betting on the jobs crisis to dent the BJP's chances of securing a majority. Before the election, a survey by the Center for Study of Developing Societies found that more than 60% of voters were worried about unemployment and believed finding a job had become tougher. Only 12% felt like economic opportunities had increased.

Official government data, which many economists question, shows the unemployment rate declining. But a recent report from the International Labor Organization found that youth unemployment in India is higher than the global average, that more than 40% of Indians still work in agriculture, and that 90% of workers are in informal employment.

The liberalizing of India's economy in the 1990s laid the foundation for the remarkable growth since, with millions escaping poverty and spawning a middle class. But it has also allowed for the growing disparity between rich and poor, economists say.

Rahul Gandhi, the main face of the opposition, has sought to tap into the growing resentment felt by the country's many have-nots by promising to take on the issue of wealth distribution if his alliance gains power.

Modi, who says his government has lifted 250 million Indians out of poverty, is unapologetic. In a TV interview this month, he said wealth distribution is a gradual process and dismissed criticism of the growing inequality by asking, "Should everyone be poor?"

Both the BJP and the Congress party say they will create more employment through various sectors including construction, manufacturing and government jobs. Experts say this is crucial for reducing economic disparities, but it's also hard to do.

Mass unemployment and underemployment have always been intractable problems in India, so parties inevitably fall back on the promises of handouts, said Mody, the Princeton economist. Case in point: The Congress party has pledged to double people's free rations if voted into power.

"It's completely the wrong focus... what we need is job creation," Mody said. "And there is no one today who has an idea of how to solve that problem."

MDT/AP



MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD

# IRAN'S HARD-LINE FORMER PRESIDENT REGISTERS FOR JUNE 28 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

JON GAMBRELL, DUBAI

IRAN'S hard-line former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad registered yesterday as a possible candidate for the presidential election, seeking to regain the country's top political position after a helicopter crash killed the nation's president.

The populist former leader's registration puts pressure on Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. In office, Ahmadinejad openly challenged the 85-year-old cleric, and his attempt to run in 2021 was barred by authorities.

The firebrand, Holocaust-questioning politician's return comes at a time of heightened tensions between Iran and the West over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program, its arming of Russia in its war on Ukraine and its wide-reaching crackdowns on dissent. Meanwhile, Iran's support of militia proxy forces throughout the wider Mideast have been in increased focus as Yemen's Houthi rebels attack ships in the Red Sea over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

Ahmadinejad is the most prominent candidate to register so far. Speaking after his registration, he vowed to seek "constructive engagement" with the world and improved economic relations with all nations.

"The economic, political, cultural and security problems are beyond the situation in 2013," Ahmadinejad said, referring to the year he left the presidency after two terms.



Iran's former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad flashes a victory sign as he registers his name as a candidate for the June 28 presidential election at the Interior Ministry, in Tehran, Iran, yesterday

After speaking to journalists in front of a bank of 50-odd microphones, Ahmadinejad said, his finger in the air: "Long live the spring, long live Iran!"

Before his arrival at Iran's Interior Ministry, his supporters chanted and waved Iranian flags. They quickly surrounded Ahmadinejad, 67, shouting: "God is the greatest!"

He descended the stairs at the ministry, showing his passport as is custom to dozens of photographers and video journalists on hand for the registration process. As a woman processed his candidacy, he sat, turned to the journalists, nodding and smiling for the cameras. He was expected to give remarks after concluding his registration.

tration.

An election is planned June 28 to replace Khamenei's hard-line protégé President Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a helicopter crash in May along with seven other people.

Former parliament speaker Ali Larijani, a conservative with strong ties to Iran's former relatively moderate President Hassan Rouhani, has already registered, as has former Iranian Central Bank chief Abdolnasser Hemmati, who also ran in 2021.

Who else will seek to run remains in question. The country's acting president, Mohammad Mokhber, previously a behind-the-scenes bureaucrat, could be the front runner because he has already

been seen meeting with Khamenei. Also discussed as a possible aspirant is former reformist President Mohammad Khatami, but, as with Ahmadinejad, whether he would be allowed to run is another question.

The five-day registration period will close on Tuesday, and the Guardian Council is expected to issue its final list of candidates within 10 days. That will allow for a shortened two-week campaign before the vote in late June.

Ahmadinejad previously served two four-year terms from 2005 to 2013. Under Iranian law, he became eligible to run again after four years out of office, but he remains a polarizing figure even among

fellow hard-liners. His disputed re-election in 2009 sparked massive "Green Movement" protests and a sweeping crackdown in which thousands of people were detained and dozens were killed.

Abroad, he became a caricature of Western perceptions of the Islamic Republic's worst attribute, questioning the Holocaust, insisting Iran had no gay or lesbian citizens and hinting Iran could build a nuclear weapon if it chose to do so.

But Ahmadinejad remains popular among the poor for his populist efforts and home-building programs. Since leaving office, he's raised his profile via social media and written widely publicized letters to world leaders. He's also criticized government corruption, though his own administration faced graft allegations and two of his former vice presidents were jailed.

Khamenei warned Ahmadinejad in 2017 that his standing for office again would be a "polarized situation" that would be "harmful for the county." Khamenei said nothing during Ahmadinejad's 2021 attempt, when his candidacy was rejected by the 12-member Guardian Council, a panel of clerics and jurists ultimately overseen by Khamenei. That panel has never accepted a woman or anyone calling for radical change to the country's governance.

That panel could reject Ahmadinejad again. However, the race to replace Raisi has yet to draw a candidate with clear, overwhelming support from Khamenei. MDT/AP

HEALTH

## WHO member countries approve steps to bolster regulations to better brace for pandemics

THE World Health Organization said member countries on Saturday approved new steps to improve global preparedness for and response to pandemics like COVID-19 and mpox, and set a new deadline for agreeing on a broader treaty.

Countries agreed by consensus to amend the International Health Regulations, which were last changed in 2005, such as by defining the term "pandemic emergency" and helping developing countries to gain better access to financing

and medical products, WHO said.

The move came as the U.N. agency ended its six-day World Health Assembly this year, after plans to adopt a more sweeping pandemic "treaty" at the meeting was shelved largely over disagreements between developing countries and richer ones about better sharing of technology and the pathogens that trigger outbreaks.

But countries agreed to complete negotiations on the pandemic accord with the year, "at the latest," WHO said.



Workers in protective gear lower a coffin of a COVID-19 victim to a grave for burial at the Cijenjo Cemetery in Bogor, West Java, Indonesia, 2021

"The success of the IHR amendments demonstrates that in our divided and divisive world, countries can still come together to find

common cause and common ground," Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

Lawrence Gostin, a public health law expert at Georgetown University, hailed a "big win for health security," and posted on X that the move "will simplify negotiations for the pandemic agreement."

WHO said countries have defined a pandemic emergency as a communicable disease that has a "wide geographical spread" or a high risk of one, and has exceeded or can exceed the ability of

national health systems to respond.

It's also defined as an outbreak that has or could cause "substantial" economic or social disruption and requires quick international action, the agency said.

WHO legal officer Steven Solomon said the move to revise the health regulations does not take effect immediately, but will come into force a year after Tedros formally notifies countries of the decision.

Yuanqiong Hu, a senior legal and policy adviser at Doctors without Borders, said that the changes adopted Saturday include "important provisions addressing equity in access to health products during global health emergencies." MDT/AP



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CLIMATE CHANGE

# UN official highlights how better preparation has shrunk disaster deaths despite worsening climate

SETH BORENSTEIN

**A**S climate change makes disasters such as cyclones, floods and droughts more intense, more frequent and striking more places, fewer people are dying from those catastrophes globally because of better warning, planning and resilience, a top United Nations official said.

The world hasn't really noticed how the type of storms that once killed tens or hundreds of thousands of people now only claim handfuls of lives, new United Nations Assistant Secretary-General Kamal Kishore, who heads the UN's office for disaster risk reduction told The Associated Press. But he said much more needs to be done to keep these disasters from pushing people into abject poverty.

"Fewer people are dying of disasters and if you look at that as a proportion of total population, it's even fewer," Kishore said in his first interview since taking office in mid-May. "We often take for granted the progress that we've made."

"Twenty years ago there was no tsunami early warning system except for one small part of the world. Now the whole world is covered by a tsunami warning system" after the 2004 tsunami that killed about 230,000 people in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand, Kishore said.

People are getting better warnings about tropical cyclones — also called hurricanes and typhoons — so now the chances of dying in a tropical cyclone in a place like the Philippines are about one-third of what they were 20 years ago, Kishore said.

As the former disaster chief for India, Kishore points to how his country has cut deaths thanks to better warnings and community preparedness such as hospitals being ready for a surge in births during a cyclone. In 1999, a supercyclone hit eastern India, killing almost 10,000 people. Then a nearly similar sized storm hit in 2013,



but killed only a few dozen people. Last year, on Kishore's watch, Cyclone Biparjoy killed fewer than 10 people.

The same goes for flood deaths, Kishore said.

The data backs up Kishore, said disaster epidemiologist Debarati Guha-Sapir of the Catholic University of Louvain in Brussels, who created a global disaster database. Her database — which she acknowledges has missing pieces — shows that global deaths per storm event has dropped from about a ten-year average of 24 in 2008 to ten-year average of about 8 in 2021. Flood deaths per event have gone from ten-year averages of nearly 72 to about 31, her data indicates.

While there are fewer deaths globally from disasters, there are still pockets in the poorest of countries, especially in Africa, where deaths are worsening or at least staying the same, Guha-Sapir said. It's much like public health's efforts to eradicate measles, success in most places, but areas that can least cope are not improving, she said.

India and Bangladesh are poster nations for better dealing with disasters and preventing deaths, especially in cyclones, Guha-Sapir said. In 1970, a cyclone killed more than 300,000 people in Bangladesh in one of the 20th cen-

tury's greatest natural disasters and now "Bangladesh has done fantastic work in disaster risk reduction for years and years and years," she said.

Pointing out wins is important, Guha-Sapir said: "Gloom and doom will never get us anywhere."

While countries such as India and Bangladesh have created warning systems, strengthened buildings such as hospitals and know what to do to prepare for and then react to disasters, a lot of it is also just because these countries are getting richer and better educated and so they can handle disasters better and protect themselves, Guha-Sapir said. Poorer countries and people can't.

"Fewer people are dying, but that's not because climate change is not happening," Kishore said "That is despite the climate change. And that is because we have invested in resilience, invested in early warning systems."

Kishore said climate change is making his job tougher, yet he said doesn't feel like Sisyphus, the mythical man pushing a giant boulder up a hill.

"You are getting more intense hazards, more frequently and (in) new geographies," Kishore said, saying places, like Brazil that used to not worry too much about floods now are

getting devastated. The same goes for extreme heat, which he said used to be an issue for only certain countries, but now has gone global, pointing to nearly 60,000 heat wave deaths in Europe in 2022.

India, where temperatures have been flirting with 122 degrees (50 degrees Celsius), has reduced heat deaths with specific regional plans, Kishore said.

"However with the new extreme temperatures we are seeing, every country needs to double its efforts to save lives," he said. And that means looking at the built environment of cities, he added.

Cutting deaths is only part of the battle to reduce risk, Kishore said.

"We are doing a better job of saving lives but not of livelihoods," Kishore said.

While fewer people are dying "you look at people who are losing their houses, people who are losing their businesses, a small farmer that is running a poultry farm," Kishore said. When they get flooded or hit by a storm, they may survive but they've got nothing, no seeds, no fishing boats.

"On that we're not doing as well as we should," Kishore said. "We cannot accept that losses will occur. Of course they will occur, but they could be minimized by an order of magnitude." **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1962: 130 DIE IN PARIS AIR CRASH



A chartered Air France Boeing 707 headed for Atlanta, Georgia, has crashed on take-off at Orly Airport in Paris, killing 130 people on board.

It is the worst ever recorded air disaster involving one aircraft.

Miraculously, two of the 10 crew survived. The air stewardesses, who had been sitting at the rear of the plane, escaped with minor injuries.

Three hours after the disaster another steward was found alive in the wreckage but he died later in hospital.

Most of the 122 passengers were American - members of the Atlanta Art Association on their way home after a trip of a lifetime to visit the art treasures of Europe.

Eyewitnesses said the plane, known as the Chateau de Sully, was travelling at about 200 mph (321 km/h) and seemed unable to take off, barely rising above seven feet (two metres).

Its right wing dipped and hit the ground and the plane crashed into gardens and an empty house, then exploded about 50 yards (45 m) from the end of the runway.

Only the tail section of the aircraft remained intact - which is where the two survivors were found.

The intense heat of the burning wreckage prevented local residents from helping the rescue effort, and it was one and a half hours before firefighters could reach the victims.

Air France has launched an immediate inquiry into the accident.

Initial investigations revealed brake marks running for about 1,500 ft (457 m) at the end of the runway, proof that the pilot had tried desperately to abort take-off.

President Kennedy has sent a message of sympathy to the Atlanta Art Association and victims' families.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The Orly air crash of June 1962 left the city of Atlanta stunned.

An arts complex was built in memory of the dead, among them some of the city's most prominent figures in the arts world.

It was called the Atlanta Memorial Arts Center, later renamed the Woodruff Arts Center, and opened on 5 October 1968.

The accident itself was caused by a technical fault but by the time the pilot realised there was a problem the plane was past the point of no return.

The US courts granted the largest settlement from a single accident at the time.







THE TURKISH ONE

# TURKISH SOCCER GIANT FENERBAHCE ANNOUNCES MOURINHO AS COACH

**F**ORMER Real Madrid boss Jose Mourinho was to be unveiled as the new coach of Fenerbahce yesterday, tasked with winning the club a first league title since 2014 after six runner-up finishes.

Mourinho arrives at the storied Istanbul club one week after it was edged yet again for the Turkish league title by its eternal rival Galatasaray which has now won it five times in the past 10 years.

Fenerbahce, whose fans include Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, missed out in the title race despite a points tally of 99 and losing only one league game all season.

After days of strong indications Mourinho was to take charge, Fe-



nerbahce said in a social media post the Portuguese manager was to attend a ceremony at its Sukru Saracoglu ground.

Mourinho was later photographed getting off an airplane that Fenerbahce posted with the simple message "THE SPECIAL ONE" — a description he gave himself on arriving at Chelsea 20 years ago,

leaving Porto as a new Champions League winner.

Now aged 61, Mourinho should lift the profile and status of a club that never won a European title and will enter the Champions League in the early qualifying rounds in July.

Mourinho has won Champions Leagues with Porto and Inter Milan, the Europa League

— or its predecessor the UEFA Cup — with Porto and Manchester United, and a Europa Conference League with Roma two years ago.

He has coached teams to win eight domestic league titles in Portugal, England, Italy and Spain.

Late Saturday, Fenerbahce posted a video message from Mourinho in which he told Fe-

nerbahce fans he would "see you tomorrow in Kadikoy and let's start our journey together."

It's his first job since he left Roma in January after two and a half years marked by the Europa Conference League title in 2022 and a series of disputes with referees.

The Portuguese has not worked outside of the top five European leagues since 2004, when he left Porto after winning the Champions League and joined Chelsea, which was on the rise under then-owner Roman Abramovich.

Since then he has also coached Inter Milan, Real Madrid, Manchester United and Tottenham in a career filled with trophies and off-field controversy.

It would surprise few people if Mourinho and Fenerbahce is a combustible mix in a fiercely passionate soccer city.

Fenerbahce clashed with Turkish soccer authorities last season, including by taking its team off the field during a Turkish Super Cup game in protest. **MDT/AP**

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL HALTED INSIDE A MINUTE DUE TO PITCH INVADERS

**T**HE Champions League final was halted inside the first minute because of pitch invaders, with one taking a selfie with Real Madrid star Vinicius Junior yesterday.

The final between Madrid and Borussia Dortmund was stopped almost immediately after kickoff.

Two invaders were quickly removed by Wembley Stadium security staff, but then another person ran onto field to the visible annoyance of some players. It took four security staff to apprehend the last invader.

Madrid was aiming to win a record-extending 15th European Cup, while Borussia Dortmund was going for its second Champions League title. **MDT/AP**



AD

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FOOTBALL | CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

# Real Madrid seals 15th cup after win over Borussia Dortmund

JAMES ROBSON, LONDON

REAL MADRID 2, DORTMUND 0

**I**N an explosion of gold and silver confetti, Real Madrid held aloft the Champions League trophy for a record-extending 15th time yesterday [Macau time].

The most familiar sight in European club soccer's greatest competition felt as fresh as ever after a 2-0 win against Borussia Dortmund in the final at Wembley Stadium.

"Getting used to it? Never," said Carlo Ancelotti, who extended his own record of wins as a coach to five. "The dream continues."

A white wall of Madrid fans at one end of the stadium serenaded their conquering heroes after goals from Dani Carvajal and Vinicius Junior sealed the victory.

A predictable result came in less than predictable circumstances after Dortmund dominated the chances in the first half.



Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior, second from left, scores his side's 2nd and decisive goal

"It was a very difficult game, much more difficult than we had expected," Ancelotti said. "We changed things because in the first half we were a bit lazy."

Carvajal headed Madrid in front in the 74th minute and Vinicius doubled the Spanish giant's

lead nine minutes later.

Ancelotti's fifth Champions League title was his third in two spells with Madrid and two more than his closest rivals Zinedine Zidane, Pep Guardiola and Bob Paisley.

Carvajal, Luka Modric, Toni

Kroos and Nacho won the trophy a sixth time to equal the benchmark set by Madrid icon Paco Gento.

Madrid's win comes just a year after Manchester City lifted the trophy for the first time, a victory many believed would herald a new era of dominance for Guardiola's team in Europe. Instead, it was Ancelotti who underlined his case to be considered the finest coach of his generation for his continued supremacy in the Champions League.

As well as three titles with Madrid, he was a two-time winner with AC Milan. He also lifted the Spanish title this season - his sixth league championship won in five different countries.

Madrid's dominance of the competition defies belief, having won more than double than anyone else. Milan is the second most successful club with seven.

"This is the love story between Real Madrid and the European Cup. Players come, players go, but

we can say that this is our competition," Madrid president Florentino Perez said.

Its dominance will take some breaking with Kylian Mbappe widely expected to join as a free agent from PSG during the off-season and Brazil's rising star Endrick on his way.

Not that Perez would confirm Mbappe's arrival.

Ancelotti, though, is already thinking about the future.

"In this club there is constant demand. It is never satisfied," he said. "We will come back with same eagerness and with same excitement and anticipation as before."

Dortmund paid the price for not making the most of its first half superiority when Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois pulled off a series of saves and Niclas Fullkrug hit the post.

Madrid took full advantage after the break when Carvajal met Kroos' corner at the near post to power a header past Dortmund keeper Gregor Kobel.

Vinicius fired past Kobel to make it 2-0 and raced off in celebration after his goal killed off Dortmund hopes of pulling off one of the biggest Champions League upsets in recent memory. Later, Vinicius celebrated and posed for selfies with rapper Jay-Z, who was in the crowd of 86,000.

MDT/AP

AD

For seventeen years, *Macau Daily Times* has been an invaluable information source that brings news on noteworthy developments in local, national and international affairs to its reading audience.

**17th**

Congratulations on seventeen years of accomplishments!  
Best wishes for many more years of thrivingness and prosperity!

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OPINION

World Views

Jonel Aleccia, MDT/AP Health Writer



**INTERMITTENT FASTING  
 MAYBE NOT BETTER THAN  
 COUNTING CALORIES**

As weight-loss plans go, it's easy to see the allure of intermittent fasting: Eat what you want, but only during certain windows of time — often just eight hours a day. Instead of counting calories or measuring portions, dieters just have to pay attention to the clock, said Courtney Peterson, a nutrition researcher at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. "You have this really simple rule: Eat or don't eat," Peterson said.

The technique has skyrocketed in popularity in recent years, becoming a trending topic on social media. But does time-restricted eating, a form of intermittent fasting, really help people shed pounds and boost health?

Intermittent fasting is a meal strategy where people switch between fasting and eating on a regular schedule, defined as at least 14 hours with no food, Peterson said. Variations include eating every other day, eating five days a week and then fasting for two days, or limiting daily eating to certain hours. Time-restricted eating, where people condense all of their eating into a daily window of 10 hours or less, is the most popular form. Diners will delay breakfast until 10 a.m. or noon and then eat dinner by 6 p.m. or 8 p.m., forgoing food the rest of the time.

The theory behind time-restricted eating is that it supports the circadian rhythm, or the body's internal clock. Spending more time in a fasting state may boost the body's processes that govern blood sugar and fat metabolism. Early studies in mice starting in 2012 showed health benefits from time-restricted eating. Small studies in people with obesity suggested the practice might help them lose weight and improve other health markers.

Research has shown that people on time-restricted eating plans tend to eat fewer calories, which could explain weight loss. Results from combined studies suggested that adults with obesity who limited their eating hours without focusing on calories naturally reduced their energy intake by 200 to 550 calories a day, losing 3% to 5% of their baseline body weight. But a larger study of people observed over a longer period showed that the time restrictions alone might not matter.

A 2022 study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* tracked 139 people with obesity for a year. Participants either followed a calorie-restricted diet during a certain time window or ate the same number of calories throughout the day. Both groups lost weight — 14 to 18 pounds on average — but there was no significant difference between the strategies. "Our data right now suggests that time-restricted eating isn't any better or worse than cutting calories," Peterson said. Nor does the technique help burn more calories, she added. Still, Peterson said, the simplicity of time restriction might be easier to maintain than a typical diet. "Almost no one likes calorie counting," she said.

Early clinical trials with eating windows of six to 10 hours found that time-restricted eating was "generally safe," researchers reported in the journal *Obesity*. But headline-grabbing research presented this year at an American Heart Association scientific session suggested that people following an 8-hour time-restricted diet had a much higher risk of death from cardiovascular disease than those who ate over 12 to 16 hours. That research hasn't been published in a peer-reviewed journal, noted Dr. Francisco Lopez-Jimenez, of the Mayo Clinic. But he said there is reason to be cautious. Longstanding evidence suggests that skipping breakfast may be linked to cardiovascular disease and death.

People should check with their health care providers before they try restricted eating, especially if the fasting window lasts until midday. "It's a call for pausing before you just recommend a particular diet," Lopez-Jimenez said.

[Abridged]

Macau Daily Times, the newspaper, turned 17 years old on June 1st, with a new vigor, a firm stance, and the same goal as on day one: to inform and engage our community of English language native or bilingual speakers toward a better understanding of current affairs in Macau, Greater China, the Asia-Pacific, and major world affairs.

After over three years of harsh times, due mainly to the pandemic of COVID-19, we stood up in the universe of SMEs—never giving up on our mission, while never getting any support and being neglected as such. Some sponsors, mainly in the gaming sector, at a point, noticed that and came to "our rescue" as they understood our role in the society of an international cosmopolitan city. The government also eventually woke up with understanding for our place in this historically melting pot that is this little-big town of ours.

Back to the future is what matters now.

Difficult and challenging days lie ahead in an environment that is, to say the least, challenging for fully expressing our fundamental rights, namely the right to inform and be informed. We are wary of what happened with the possible censorship of Patua "recita maquista" as well as the lack of transparency in the EPM's imbroglio, which is still unfolding.

Hopeful winds blow from the Greater Bay Area, and we have been proactively contributing to bringing news and critical thinking on this major political plan to our audience.

At 17, nobody should be surprised if we are modern, bold, or even a tad rebellious. As The Beatles sang: "Well, she was just seventeen / If you know what I mean ... / Why should I dance with another?"

Oh, we feel at home — why should we dance with another?

Opinion by Paulo Coutinho



Participants hold a rainbow flag during the Pride Parade in Bangkok, Thailand, Saturday

PRIDE MONTH

**AFTER A QUARTER  
 CENTURY, THAILAND'S  
 LGBTQ PARADE IS SEEN  
 AS A POPULAR AND  
 POLITICAL SUCCESS**

**T**HAILAND kicked off its celebration of the LGBTQ+ community's Pride Month with a parade Saturday, as the country is on course to become the first nation in Southeast Asia to legalize marriage equality.

The annual Bangkok Pride Parade Can filled one side of a major thoroughfare with a colorful parade for several hours in one of the Thai capital's busiest commercial districts. Pride Month celebrations have been endorsed by politicians, government agencies and some of the country's biggest business conglomerates, which have become official partners or sponsors for the celebration.

Ann "Waaddao" Chumaporn, who has been organizing Bangkok Pride since 2022, said in a recent interview with The Associated Press that she hopes the parade can be "a platform that allows everyone to call out for what they want and express who they really are."

Waaddao thinks Thai society has shifted a lot from a decade ago, and the issue has now become a fashionable social and business trend.

Thanks in part to her work, a marriage equality bill granting full legal, financial and medical rights for marriage partners of any

gender could become reality sometime this year.

But the public celebration of gender diversity was not always so popular in Thailand despite its long-standing reputation as an LGBTQ+ friendly country.

The first big celebration for the community in Thailand was held on Halloween weekend in 1999 and called the "Bangkok Gay Festival." It was organized by Pakorn Pimton, who said that after seeing Pride parades on his overseas travels, he wanted Thailand to have one, too.

It was hard organizing such an event back then, when Thai society was much less open, he said.

"Everyone told me, even my boyfriend, that it would be impossible," he said in an interview with AP.

Organizing such an event in a public space requires permission from authorities, and it didn't go that smoothly for Pakorn, yet he eventually pulled it off.

Pakorn said some police officers treated him well, but there were others who gave him dirty looks, or were dismissive. He recalled hearing one officer say, "Why do you even need to do this? These katoey ..."

"Katoey," whose rough equivalent in English would be "ladyboy," has generally been used as a slur against

transgender women or gay men with feminine appearances, although the word now has been claimed by the community.

After getting the permit, Pakorn, who then was actively working in show business, said he tried contacting television stations for advertising and finding sponsors for his project, but they all rejected him.

"There were no mobile phones, no Facebook, no nothing. There were only posters that I had to put up at gay bars," he said.

Because of that, Pakorn said, he was bewildered to see thousands of people, not only Thais but many foreigners, take to downtown Bangkok's streets for that first celebration in colorful and racy costumes, carrying balloons and dancing on fancy floats.

The event got attention from both domestic and international media as both Thailand's first gay parade and one of the first in Asia. It was described as energetic and chaotic, not least because the police did not completely close it off from traffic, resulting in marchers, dancers and floats weaving their way through moving buses, cars and motorbikes.

Pakorn organized it for several more years but eventually stopped. **MDT/AP**



**USA** After his historic guilty verdict, Donald Trump attacked the U.S. criminal justice system, claiming a "rigged" trial. Russian President Vladimir Putin and other autocrats could use Trump's statements to undermine U.S. democracy. Analysts warn that Trump's rhetoric benefits leaders like Putin, who seek to exploit American political chaos and strengthen their global standing by criticizing U.S. institutions.



**Ukraine** imposed emergency power shutdowns following a large-scale Russian attack on energy infrastructure. The attack injured at least 19 people and caused significant damage, prompting power cuts across most regions. Russian forces also claimed gains in the Donetsk province, while Ukraine's air defenses intercepted all drones launched overnight. The ongoing conflict continues to strain Ukraine's energy resources and infrastructure.



**Mexicans** are choosing their next president, deciding between Claudia Sheinbaum, who promises to continue current populist policies, and Xóchitl Gálvez, who pledges a tougher fight against drug cartels. This election is likely to give Mexico its first female president and serves as a referendum on outgoing President López Obrador. Nearly 100 million voters will also elect governors, congressional candidates, and other local officials.



**South Africa's** ANC will not consider demands for President Ramaphosa to step down in coalition talks, following a landmark election result ending its 30-year majority. ANC Secretary-General Filile Mbalula said Ramaphosa will remain as leader and emphasized that no party will dictate terms to the ANC. The ANC is open to talks with all parties to form a stable government reflecting the people's will.