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THE CONVERSATION P2



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TWO CASES OF FRAUD INVOLVING CURRENCY EXCHANGE WITH A TOTAL VALUE OF RMB190,000 DETECTED BY POLICE, PJ REPORTED

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WEATHER: RAIN TO BE MORE FREQUENT IN COMING DAYS, SMG WARNS

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BEAGLES' BREEDER FOR RESEARCH PLEADS GUILTY TO NEGLIGENCE, ORDERED TO PAY RECORD USD35M FINE

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China yesterday sanctioned 12 U.S. defense-related companies and 10 executives over arms sales to Taiwan in retaliation for American sanctions on Chinese companies tied to Russia. The sanctions target units of Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and General Dynamics. China's measures include freezing assets and banning business dealings with Chinese firms. This move stresses escalating tensions between China and the U.S. over Taiwan and Russia.



AP PHOTO

South Korea yesterday announced the suspension of a 2018 military agreement with North Korea in response to North's balloon launches carrying trash. The suspension allows South Korea to resume frontline military activities and propaganda broadcasts. This decision comes amid rising tensions and North Korea's provocations. The military agreement previously aimed to reduce hostilities between the two Koreas during a brief reconciliation period.



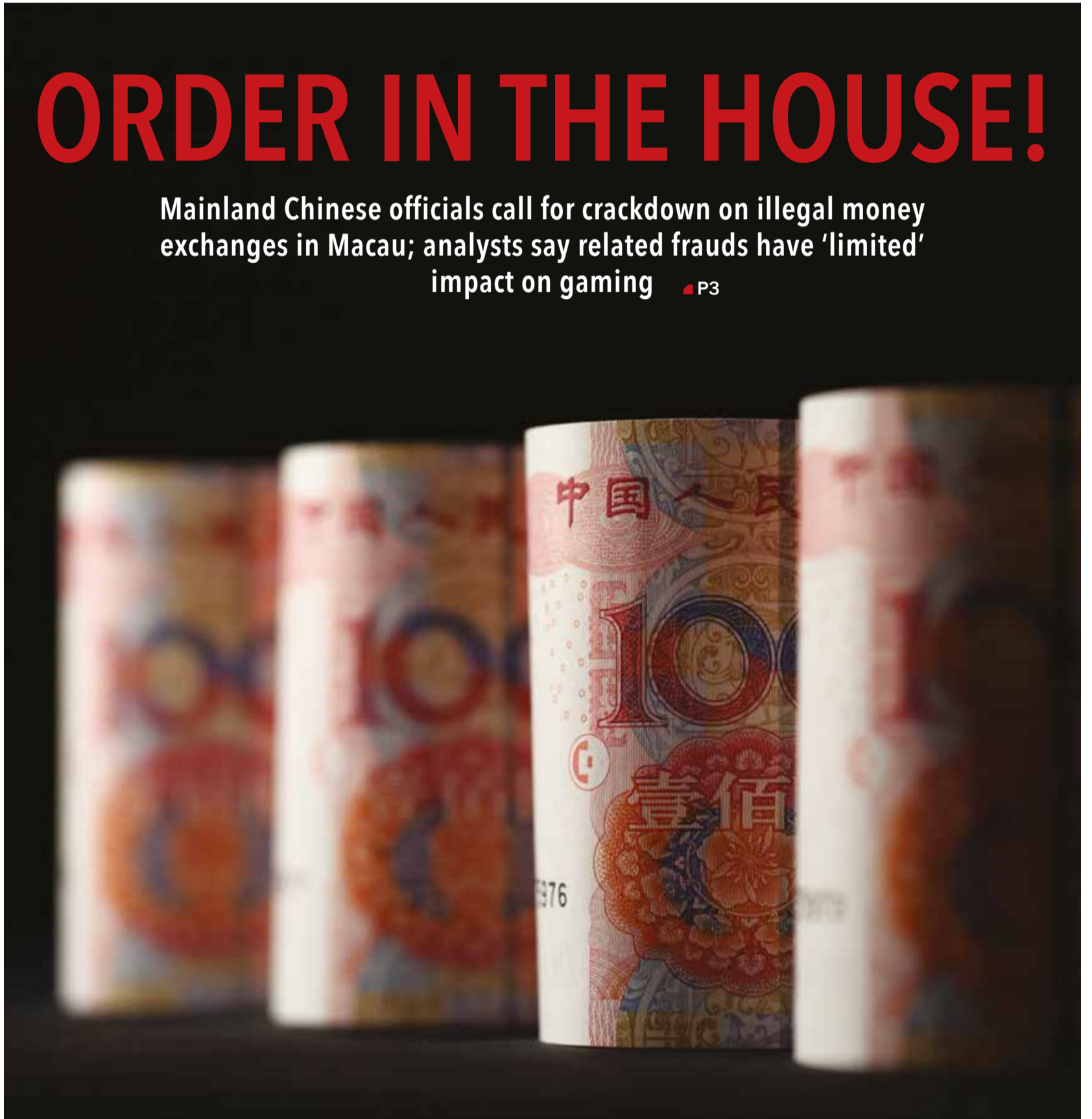
AP PHOTO

India began counting votes from its six-week election seen as a referendum on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decade in power. Early leads showed Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies leading in 283 constituencies, while the opposition INDIA alliance led in 232 constituencies. Nearly 970 million people were eligible to vote, with a turnout averaging 66%. The election results are expected to challenge the status quo.

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ORDER IN THE HOUSE!

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POLITICAL SCIENCE

WHY THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY COULD DEPEND ON YOUR GROUP CHATS

NATHAN SCHNEIDER
UNIVERSITY OF
COLORADO BOULDER

I became newly worried about the state of democracy when, a few years ago, my mother was elected president of her neighborhood garden club.

Her election wasn't my worry – far from it. At the time, I was trying to resolve a conflict on a large email group I had created. Someone, inevitably, was being a jerk on the internet. I had the power to remove them, but did I have the right? I realized that the garden club had in its bylaws something I had never seen in nearly all the online communities I had been part of: basic procedures to hold people with power accountable to everyone else.

The internet has yet to catch up to my mother's garden club.

When Alexis de Tocqueville toured the United States in the early 1830s, he made an observation that social scientists have seen over and over since: Democracy at the state and national levels depends on everyday organizations like that garden club. He called them "schools" for practicing the "general theory of association." As members of small democracies, people were learning to be citizens of a democratic country.

How many people experience those kinds of schools today?

People interact online more than offline nowadays. Rather than practicing democracy, people most likely find themselves getting suspended from a Facebook group they rely on with no reason given or option to appeal. Or a group of friends join a chat together, but only one of them has the ability to change its settings. Or people see posts from Elon Musk inserted into their mentions on X, which he owns. All of these situations are examples of what I call "implicit feudalism."

IMPLICIT FEUDALISM

"Feudalism" is a term for what the Middle Ages never really were: a system of rigid fiefdoms where local nobles wield absolute power. But as I describe in my book, "Governable Spaces," feudalism describes life online quite well. Admins, moderators and



John Trumbull's painting: declaration of Independence, plus emoticons

influencers rule their communities with powers that the software grants them. They suppress conflict through the digital equivalent of censorship and exile. Big companies and their CEOs are like the kings and popes. But people experience feudalism most directly among fellow users who happen to hold moderation roles.

I call this feudalism "implicit" because people carry it out unconsciously. People use their online spaces to talk about democratic politics, and tech companies often say they are "democratizing" something, whether it is free speech or food delivery. But in practice, democracy is usually missing in these spaces.

I believe that implicit feudalism is becoming a template for politics more broadly. Admin power is political power, and the two are blending in the public imagination. After the 2016 election, some observers speculated that Mark Zuckerberg would run for president.

Donald Trump came to power not by holding office but as a viral influencer; after leaving the presidency, his consolation was to start his own social media fiefdom, Truth Social. Controlling his own server means he doesn't have to follow anyone else's rules for acceptable speech, and it lends him the status of a platform owner. The archetype of a leader is shifting from a responsible and accountable elected official to an unelected, minimally constrained tech CEO.

Various pathologies of online life also become easier to unders-

tand in light of implicit feudalism. Take the phenomenon of so-called "cancel culture." Critics often blame the people who participate in online pile-ons against public figures they disagree with. But under implicit feudalism, what better options do people have? You can't elect a new admin. If you submit a report about the harm someone caused, it goes into a black box – not a jury of peers or any other clear process of adjudication.

In her book "We Will Not Cancel Us," the writer and activist adrienne maree brown observed that the problem with online callouts and takedowns is that many people don't have a better choice. She contrasts this to her work as a facilitator in offline groups, where she can guide people through a process to resolve their conflicts. Online platforms, however, aren't designed for problem-solving. Instead, they make problems either disappear or go viral.

DIGITAL DEMOCRACY

In the hopes that online life can catch up to my mother's garden club, I have looked for places where people are exploring the possibilities for democracy on and through the internet.

Hidden behind the scams and meme coins, the advent of blockchains has enabled a new industry of online governance tools to help users co-manage systems holding billions of dollars in digital assets. There are experiments with delegated voting, continuous voting and reputation-based voting. There are crypto-ju-

ries and crypto-guilds.

Closer to planet Earth, governments have started encouraging technology for online democracy. The city of Barcelona, for instance, supported Decidim, a governance platform now used both by other cities and civic organizations. People have built modules on it to support digital versions of a wide range of democratic processes, from debates and assemblies to petitions and participatory budgeting.

The fate of democracy anywhere, I have come to believe, depends on experiments like these.

People around the world are losing faith that democracy is responsive to their needs. As the technologist Bruce Schneier has argued, "The modern representative democracy was the best form of government that mid-18th-century technology could conceive of. The 21st century is a different place scientifically, technically and socially."

Online communities can start this work on their own. They can adopt basic charters that keep the people with admin powers in check. Founders can make plans for transitioning their power to other group members, what I call "exit to community." Different communities can share their rules and learn from each other.

PRACTICING DEMOCRACY

Groups of users, however, cannot defeat implicit feudalism alone.

Policymakers have a role to play. They can facilitate online

communities that are user-governed for the public interest. Decades ago, the U.S. Congress filled the gaps in rural electrification by creating a framework for financing user-owned cooperatives. Successes like this can guide the future.

As artificial intelligence systems become more widespread, democracy can help keep them useful and safe. For example, the Collective Intelligence Project, a technology incubator for guiding progress toward the common good, has shown that assemblies of ordinary people can bring insights to AI governance that even experts miss. As policymakers design rules around these new technologies, they can emphasize the voices of those whose livelihoods are at stake.

When W.E.B. Du Bois wrote his classic history of the Civil War's aftermath, "Black Reconstruction in America," he landed on a choice phrase: "abolition democracy." The idea is that abolishing slavery and racism is not a one-time event; a just society requires the vigilance of democratic participation as a way of life, wherever people find themselves.

That is why Du Bois devoted himself not just to legal advocacy through the NAACP but also to supporting Black-led cooperatives, where workers could practice democratic ownership and governance every day.

Online spaces have become the new schools of association. Unless democracy reigns there, it is in peril everywhere. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

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HOWARD TONG

BEIJING is intensifying efforts to curb illegal money exchange activities in Macau's casino industry, as part of a broader initiative to combat illegal gambling and money laundering.

According to a report in the People's Daily, China's Ministry of Public Security convened a high-level meeting last week to coordinate a nationwide crackdown on these illicit operations.

The move is part of a wider plan to tackle illegal activities such as underground gambling, money laundering, loan sharking, and scams that have led to "fights, fraud, thefts, illegal immigration and other crimes," according to a post on the ministry's website.

Authorities report that unauthorized currency exchanges and loan sharks have been rapidly expanding in Macau, often connected to other criminal activities like violence, scams, and smuggling that are "seriously affecting social stability" in the city.

The planned response includes strengthened border controls, better coordination to apprehend fugitives, and deeper investigations to trace the sources and dismantle the "entire industry chain" of these criminal syndicates. Closer cooperation with Macau's po-

Beijing calls for crackdown on illegal money exchanges in Macau



RENATO MARQUES/MDT

lice force is also on the agenda.

Beijing has long targeted illegal gambling, money laundering, and underground banking in Macau, the only place in China where casino gambling is legal. The latest

moves come as the city's gaming revenues reached their highest levels since the Covid-19 outbreak, boosted by the easing of travel restrictions for mainland Chinese tourists.

Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, also stated in a re-

port last week "the substantial increase in the number of tourists, while accelerating the recovery of the gaming industry, will inevitably lead to an increase in relevant illicit activities, especially illegal money exchange activities that have

become more intense."

"People who engage in the illegal exchange of money, commonly known as 'money exchange scammers,' have been disrupting the security environment of casinos and peripheral areas for a long time, and are responsible for several serious crimes."

Macau has seen a sharp rise in crimes related to illegal money exchanges, with 8,124 people intercepted in the first half of 2023 - nearly triple the figure from a year earlier when pandemic controls were still in place, according to the city's security office.

Additionally, local police intercepted a cross-border fraud syndicate and arrested over 110 people, seizing more than 30,000 exchange coupons. This involved at least 70 local cases worth over HKD18 million.

Peng Peng, the executive chairman of the Guangdong Society of Reform, said the fact that the problem had been raised to a national level showed that it is seen as a risk to China's overall financial security and also aligned with President Xi Jinping's corruption crackdown.

"In order to protect China's financial security, [we must] tackle the problem of corruption and prevent the illegal outflow of money, the government sees a need to hinder the illegal industry of money exchange," Peng said.

Illicit money exchange to have 'limited' impact on gaming

LYNZY VALLES

THE crackdown on illegal money exchange will have a limited impact on the city's gaming, as the issue is not new. However, "there will obviously be a Balloon Effect," according to investment bank JP Morgan. The institution noted that illicit currency exchanges on or around casino floors only target a very specific and niche cohort of players. Therefore, the "impact should be relatively limited - our best guess is less than 10% of total GGR is using these 'services' at most."

The investment bank argued that while stock prices may reflect a negati-



ve knee-jerk reaction today, many investors are likely to feel this is "nothing really new at this stage, and that the stock reactions could be somewhat modest

and short lived." "Macau authorities have been stepping up efforts to clamp down on these money exchangers since mid-last year and, to

us, this seems to be an extension of such initiatives, as most of the illegal operators are from mainland China," the analysts added.

China's Ministry of Public Security has urged security forces in Macau and the mainland to strengthen their cooperation in cracking down on illegal money exchange businesses operating in Macau.

However, this is not the first time that authorities have vowed to crack down on similar activities in Macau.

Authorities in Macau have previously taken action against illegal UnionPay POS machines and underground banks in the Greater Bay area.

Efforts to combat illegal money exchangers have intensified since last year, with many operators coming from mainland China.

CRIME

PJ DISCOVERS MORE MONEY EXCHANGE FRAUDS

TWO cases of fraud involving money exchange parties were discovered by police officers, with a total value of approximately RMB190,000, the Judiciary Police (PJ) reported yesterday.

In one of the cases, a suspected gang member posed as a money changer and collaborated with another party to fraudulently obtain over RMB47,000.

The first case involved around two mainland men who met at a casino with one of them, a 27-year-old money changer, claiming to have access to customers while the other party handled the payments.

The suspect falsely stated that a customer had requested an exchange on the afternoon of June 2.

After the victim exchanged money and received a screenshot of a fake transfer following the remittance, the money never materialized, and the victim lost contact with the other party.

The victim encountered the suspect at the casino later that evening, sought assistance from another person, and together they reported the crime to the police.

In another case, a 45-year-old mainland man falsely promised to exchange Hong Kong dollars for cash at a favorable rate. The victim made multiple transfers totaling RMB142,000, but faced delays due to various reasons. The suspect was arrested on June 3 at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge while attempting to enter Macau. LV

NADIA SHAW

G2E ASIA

SHIFTS IN CONSUMER PREFERENCES HAVE WEIGHTY IMPLICATIONS FOR GAMING SECTOR'S FUTURE

A gaming expert has highlighted the significance of Macau's gaming industry, emphasizing its status as one of the industry's largest markets and "home to some of the most iconic gaming properties."

In his keynote address at the Global Gaming Expo (G2E) Asia and the Asian IR Expo that officially commenced yesterday, Bill Miller, CEO and president of the American Gaming Association (AGA), noted that whilst post-Covid recovery began slowly, it is now gaining momentum, with Macau's gross gaming revenue already reaching 75% of its pre-pandemic level. Miller believes that this growth will be sustained.

The gaming expert also drew attention to the growing importance of non-gaming investments, which are expanding the gaming industry's customer base.

He praised Macau and Singapore's substantial recovery from the pandemic and highlighted the Philippines' emergence as one of the fastest-growing markets in the Asia Pacific region.

Meanwhile, shedding light on the industry's future trajectory, Miller's remarks centered on the post-Covid landscape, stating that "guests now place a higher premium on their experiences than ever before." He emphasized that modern gaming enthusiasts not only value the casino floor but also the overall property experience, encompassing amenities, dining, and entertainment options. These shifts consumer preferences have significant implications for the industry's future.



The CEO delved into the rapidly evolving Asian gaming landscape, highlighting the UAE's Wynn Resort as a prime

example. Located on Al Marjan Island, this luxurious property will boast a range of high-end

amenities, including a casino, upscale dining options, and world-class recreational facilities. Scheduled to open in 2027, the Wynn Resort marks a major milestone in the region's gaming history.

Miller then drew a spotlight to Japan, where MGM is building a massive USD10 billion integrated resort in Osaka. He praised the project, likening it to the iconic Sydney Opera House, and predicted that it will draw an estimated 20 million visitors once it opens. This ambitious project is set to transform the Osaka gaming scene and cement its position as a major

tourist destination.

The two major gaming and resort-related trade fairs, the G2E Asia and the Asian IR Expo officially commenced yesterday.

This year marks a significant milestone, the 15th edition of G2E Asia - the leading gaming-related exhibition in Asia. The three-day gaming showcase will continue until June 6, offering an unparalleled experience for gaming industry professionals and enthusiasts alike.

The event is organized by the AGA and Reed Exhibitions, and is expected to attract over 8,000 participants from across the region.

ORGANIZERS PROJECT 'MUCH STRONGER DEMAND' FROM THE MARKET

THIS year, the Global Gaming Expo (G2E) Asia will be held alongside the Asian IR Expo for the second time, focusing on the non-gaming aspects of integrated resorts.

Events organizer Reed Exhibitions emphasized the importance of this joint event, saying, "gaming operators are now diversifying into integrated resorts." "We need to evolve ourselves to meet their needs, to understand what they're looking for, the technologies they are going after, and the suppliers they want to talk to," said Chien Ee Yeh, president of Reed Exhibitions (Asia-Pacific).

The concurrent hosting of the Asian IR Expo alongside G2E Asia aligns with Macau gaming operators' efforts to explore non-gaming offerings, particularly as the city's new 10-year gaming concessions commence in 2023.

"In the mid-term, I don't see us separating the two [shows]. They will be co-located because that makes sense for our customers and visitors," the executive said.

The organizers are pleased with the reception to both events. "We're very excited to come back this year, full-scale. I

think we're going to see a much stronger demand and response from the market," expressed Chien.

New highlights of G2E Asia 2024 + Asian IR Expo include the Technology Zone and Tech Talk Stage on the exhibition floor, showcasing the latest industry innovations and featuring presentations on identity management, security, hospitality, and customer relationship management.

The Sports and Entertainment Zone will also host exhibitors specializing in sports marketing, sports event management, and live entertainment, including TVB. NS

STAFF REPORTERS

TOURISM

AUTHORITIES will make good use of the "Culture City of East Asia" award to promote the SAR, according to Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO).

Speaking to the press on the sidelines of the G2E Asia kick off yesterday, director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes said that there will be a series of different types of activities in 2025, and that the city will conduct exchanges and cooperate with some cities in South Korea and Japan.

These include inviting relevant cities come to Macau to participate in activities such as float parades, and other cultural activities.

Echoing the same sentiments, Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) director Deland Leong remarked, "we also

Culture City accolade to boost exchanges with different markets: MGTO

hope to promote exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations, and speak to the world on behalf of China."

Meanwhile, when asked about the number of international tourists visiting Macau during the summer holidays, Fernandes said that this year's goal is to exceed two million international tourists. She believes that the current momentum is good and hopes to promote relevant work through cooperation with different airlines to attract more overseas tourists.

She also said that in addition to participating in travel exhibitions in Asia, the authorities are considering whether to increase efforts to participate in exhibitions in other remote tourist source markets or places next year.

The MGTO has been promoting the city to different markets recently, with the latest being Korea, having held a roadshow in Seoul's largest mall.

The SAR has been awarded the title of "Culture City of East Asia 2025," where the government noted that the designation will serve

as an opportunity to further enrich Macau's cultural content, improve the public cultural service system and infrastructure, and promote exchanges among civilizations.

The final evaluation of the title was held in May this year, according to the office.

The Culture City of East Asia program is an art and culture event launched by China, Japan, and South Korea. Each year, the three nations will name one or two cities from each country as the "Culture Cities of East Asia" to promote cultural exchanges and cooperation.



G2E ASIA

Gaming market in Asia poised for growth, Macau leads the way

STAFF REPORTER

THE Asian gaming market, with Macau at the forefront, holds significant potential for growth, according to a conference presented at the Global Gaming Expo (G2E) Asia.

Praveen Choudhary, the managing director of Morgan Stanley, provided key insights into the market's performance and future prospects yesterday as part of the G2E Asia 2024.

"Macau is the biggest gaming market, but there is also interest in other Asian markets like Singapore, Thailand, UAE, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam," Choudhary said.

He compared the gaming market in Las Vegas and Macau to demonstrate the growth potential in Asia. Choudhary explained that Las Vegas has reached a saturation point with a penetration rate of around 12% to 13%, while Macau and Guangdong China have much lower penetration rates, suggesting further growth potential.

He emphasized the need to assess markets based on their stage of development, noting that while Las Vegas has higher non-gaming revenue compared to Macau, the latter has experienced a shift from VIP to mass market gaming, which is considered more sustainable in the long run.

Choudhary's report also del-



Praveen Choudhary, managing director of Morgan Stanley

ved into the performance of Singapore's gaming market, stating, "Singapore's massive revenue has grown from 101% last year to 135%, whereas Macau is running at 60% to 130%."

He added that Singapore's "neutral place in Asia allows them to also keep wealth," and its position as a gateway to Asia has contributed to its attractiveness for wealth and business growth.

The analyst discussed the impact of concessions, stating that, "the first 10 years are always the good period" for concession. However, he mentioned that governments then ask for more money, and the returns become much lower. He then emphasized the need to ensure returns do not

fall too low compared to the cost of capital.

The conference also addresses various aspects of the market, including capital expenditures and returns on investment (ROI).

The executive noted that the capital expenditure numbers provided revealed a range of figures "like 48%, 50%, 20%", and over 4% for an engine prototype. He added that the returns are still decent, with Starboard at 50%.

However, he cautioned that some of the numbers are "not that flattering" and that the hope is that the Q1 numbers will improve further, but noted that "this market is not as exciting or high ROIC as it used to be."

Meanwhile, regarding rein-

vestment costs, he said that companies are claiming they are paying higher reinvestment costs compared to the pre-Covid-19 period, but added that this is "just a cost of acquisition or customer," not necessarily a problem. He noted that companies may need revenue to be "130% of pre-Covid levels" to reach pre-Covid EBITDA levels, despite having 80% fewer employees globally compared to the pre-Covid period.

The institution executive also highlighted the differences in market recovery across various regions. Choudhary said that the US, Singapore, and Philippines have seen stronger recoveries in terms of GGR compared to visitation, adding that Singapore's VIP market has grown, now making up 31% compared to 8% previously.

Moreover, the Asian gaming market, led by Macau, holds substantial growth potential, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. Choudhary's comprehensive analysis provides insights into market dynamics, highlighting the differences between Las Vegas and the Asian markets, as well as opportunities and considerations for investors and industry players. As the market continues to evolve, the ability to adapt and capitalize on the changing landscape will be crucial for the industry's success.

CENTRAL LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY

The first phase of construction of the new Central Library is underway and expected to be completed in December next year (2025).

According to the website of the Public Works Bureau, the project has been listed as an ongoing project. The first phase of the project includes the demolition of the old Estoril Hotel and the construction of the foundation and basement of the new library. The project cost is MOP 69.78 million and the construction period is 450 working days. The new library covers an area of approximately 2,960 square meters.

IAM HALTS IMPORT OF POULTRY MEAT FROM IOWA

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) stated that an outbreak of the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza occurred in Sioux County, Iowa, USA. Poultry meat and poultry products from affected areas will not be approved for import. The IAM has notified local importers of the incident and will continue to monitor the situation, strictly controlling poultry and poultry products imported and sold in Macau.

LOCAL DELEGATES INTRODUCE HENGQIN BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN THE US

The Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) and the Economic Development Bureau of Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Co-operation Zone in Hengqin jointly held an investment promotion event in the San Francisco Bay Area, United States. Here, they introduced enhanced investment opportunities for the Macao-Hengqin integrated development to over 10 international business executives in fields of big health and high-tech. According to some executives, the integrated development of Macau and Hengqin has great investment potential, connecting the vast market in mainland China with the resources of Macau and Portuguese-speaking countries.

PUBLIC WORKS

LRT Seac Pai Van Line construction complete, undergoing testing

RENATO MARQUES

CONSTRUCTION has completed on the Seac Pai Van line of the Light Rapid Transit (LRT), the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) announced on their webpage.

The line, with a total length of around 1.6 kilometers, will pass through Estrada do Istmo, Rotunda de Seac Pai Van, and Estrada de Seac Pai Van and comprises two stations: Seac Pai Van and Islands Hospital.

The Seac Pai Van Station is located on Seac Pai Van Road and will allow access



on both the north and south sides. It also includes a pedestrian flyover that will connect to the existing Seac Pai Van public housing complex flyover.

The Islands Hospital Station is located on Estrada do Istmo and will have access both from the east and west sides, with a pedestrian flyover that con-

nects to the entrance of the hospital.

The Seac Pai Van line is linked to the Taipa line through a station that also connects to the Islands Hospital Station, extending the Seac Pai Van to the Taipa Ferry Terminal on one end and the Barra Station on the other.

According to the DSOP, the construction of the Seac Pai Van line has suffered a delay of 43 working days in total due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Construction of the line was also subject to an authorized extension of the execution time due to

restrictions on road works and the drainage network resulting from the installation of new fire hydrants in the area.

In late May, during the start of the testing stage, trains collided at the Seac Pai Van line and injured four workers. The incident was said to have been caused by human error. The company added that testing resumed shortly after and is proceeding as normal.

The Seac Pai Van line is expected to open to the public later this year in conjunction with the opening of the Hengqin (extension) line that will connect the Taipa line, at Lotus Station, to the Hengqin Border Post.

With the opening of these two extension lines, the authorities hope that usage of the LRT will increase significantly.

TRANSPORT

TOURISTS UNIMPRESSED WITH LRT SERVICE, OFFER SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

RENATO MARQUES

VISITORS to Macau are dissatisfied with the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) system, the Times learned from several interviewees, and cited operational flaws and significant room for improvement.

Hong Kong residents Johnson and Rita, interviewed by the Times at the Pai Kok station near Taipa's old village, said that they had tried the service multiple times and it was not convenient.

Rita pointed out the long waiting times, noting that a 10-minute interval between trains is too long. She was required to shelter from the elements under an umbrella, remarking, "if we were not already at [the platform], I would have turned back and taken the bus instead."

Johnson added that the stations do not provide enough shelter, particularly during heavy rain or extreme heat, which makes the wait time uncomfortable for passengers. "It is a shame because I see that this system could be very convenient. For example, for those of us who arrive at the Taipa Ferry [Terminal] and want to walk around the Cotai area, the LRT could be a good way to commute between the Ferry and the Hotels. But, in reality, there is no link between the stations and the buildings [properties]."

Telling the Times that they were staying for three days, Rita added, "we are staying at the Wynn Palace and we were told that there is a [LRT] station nearby. Upon our arrival, we quickly realized that the station is not as close as it seems, especially in heavy rain. There is no shelter. We needed to go down from the platform to the street level and then walk for 5 or 10 minutes until we reached the closest entrance of the hotel, which was not even close to the area where we had to do our check-in. The transport system seems completely disconnected from the hotels and malls. I think it needs serious rethinking."



RENATO MARQUES/MDT



Despite these issues, the couple reportedly enjoys visiting Macau at least once every two months for shopping. In contrast to Hong Kong, Rita explained that the luxury brand stores in Macau "offer a more relaxed feeling."

"In Hong Kong I probably need to wait some 15 to 30 minutes or more to enter some of the stores because there are a lot of people and we need to wait in a queue at the door before entering the store. In Macau, there isn't usually such a hassle. We arrive and immediately enter the store. The prices are the same or even cheaper," she explained.

At the LRT station of Cotai West, the Times encountered two visitors from Malaysia. Janice Yee agreed to speak with the Times and provide her impressions of the LRT.

"It's our first time trying the trains in Macau. They are a bit cold inside but they are clean

and provide a fun trip," Yee said, saying that she and her friend had traveled to Macau over the weekend to watch the Volleyball Nations League (VNL) matches live, particularly the matches from Japan, which is their favorite team.

Staying at Galaxy Hotel, Yee said they did not have extensive transportation needs other than to commute between the airport and the hotel upon arrival in Macau.

"We were actually waiting for a taxi at the airport to take us to the hotel, but then a security staff member, I think from the airport, told us about the trains so we decided to give it a try," Yee said. Yee noted that there was no information about this transport system in Malaysia before they traveled to Macau.

Finding the trip fast and generally pleasant, Yee only expressed some questions regarding the

payment methods.

"I just don't understand the payment," she said, "it seems strange that we can use e-payment for everything in Macau but for transportation we need to go to the counter and pay for the tickets and get a plastic coin that then we need to use to enter and exit the stations. It is a bit time-consuming and somewhat inconvenient. We were wondering if local people also need to do this or if there are easier ways to get tickets."

Questioned about their opinion on the connectivity between the LRT station and other venues, Yee also expressed surprise about the disconnection.

"The Galaxy Arena is a new venue, right? I think it's a bit odd that since it is new and was built after the LRT, there isn't a more straightforward way to enter the venue. It would have made sense to build a short flyover to get

to the Galaxy International Convention Center."

"There is also no connection to Venetian," Yee's friend (who asked to remain anonymous) added.

According to the latest information from the Macao LRT Corporation (MLM), the number of passengers transported by the LRT has dropped once again in May this year to a daily average of 11,800.

The figure represents the lowest number of passengers transported this year. Previously, the lowest month had been March, with an average of 12,000 passengers per day.

The Times has contacted both the MLM and the Transport Bureau (DSAT) seeking comments from the authorities on the issues presented by the visitors, as well as suggestions for improving the service but, until press time, no responses were received.

WEATHER

Rain to be more frequent, SMG warns

THE city has continued to face heavy rain from noon yesterday, with a maximum total rainfall of 22.2mm in the Macau Peninsula.

Taipa recorded 20mm of rain, and 15.4mm of rainfall was seen in Coloane by 5 p.m.

The city will experience cloudy weather with

showers and a few thunderstorms today due to the persistent influence of a low-pressure trough. A statement from the Meteorological and Geophysical

Bureau states that the rainfall may be heavy initially, leading to possible flooding in low-lying areas.

Tomorrow, the wea-

ther is expected to remain mainly cloudy with intermittent showers and thunderstorms, adding that showers are expected to be more frequent throughout the week. Looking ahead to early next week, there will be a slight improvement in the weather, with periods of sunshine

during the day but still a chance of some showers.

On Monday, the school closed in the afternoon due to heavy rains. In the morning, in just one hour, the bureau recorded 65mm of rain in the Macau Peninsula, setting a new record for the region. LV

Company that bred beagles for research pleads guilty to neglect, ordered to pay record USD35m fine

MATTHEW BARAKAT

A company that bred beagles for medical research agreed yesterday (Macau time) to pay a record \$35 million as part of a criminal plea admitting it neglected thousands of dogs at its breeding facility in rural Virginia.

Prosecutors said the penalties amount to the largest ever levied in an animal-welfare case.

The plea deal also bars the company that operated the facility, Envigo RMS, as well as parent company Inotiv, from breeding or selling dogs in the future.

The federal investigation of Envigo drew national attention in May 2022 when federal authorities conducted a search of the breeding facility in Cumberland County, Virginia, and found nearly 450 animals in acute distress.

The company later agreed to relinquish all 4,000 beagles at the facility, which were sent around the country for adoption.

U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Virginia Christopher Kavanaugh, whose office prosecuted the case, said Monday after a plea hearing at federal court in Charlottesville that Envigo and Inotiv "prioritized profits and convenience over following the law."

He said the company generated \$16 million in revenue between 2019 and May 2022, when the search occurred, through the sale of 15,000 beagles over that time.

But he said the company refused

AP PHOTO



to make the investments necessary to provide for the animals' basic care. Cages were cleaned twice a month rather than every day as required. Animals were euthanized, including by direct injections to their heart, without sedation, he said. Dogs were routinely injured by getting their paws caught in flooring composed of metal grates that left space for paws to easily fall through. Food and water were lacking and unclean

Court records show that 300

puppies died over a seven-month stretch around 2021 for what was described as "unknown causes."

He said the company continued to employ a veterinarian who had botched surgeries and oversaw numerous violations because executives believed it would be too difficult to find a replacement.

Todd Kim, assistant attorney general for the environment and natural resources division of the Justice Department, said Envigo "unlawfully enriched itself by fail-

ing to spend the necessary money for upgrades and by failing to hire enough trained and competent staff."

The Cumberland facility, which employed nearly 40 people, has been shuttered. Kavanaugh said it was woefully understaffed to care for thousands of dogs.

The plea deal calls for an \$11 million fine for violating the Animal Welfare Act and an \$11 million fine for violating the Clean Water Act. The deal also requires Inotiv to spend \$7 million over

the next three years to improve its facilities and meet standards in excess of the Animal Welfare Act requirements.

The plea deal includes an admission that Envigo violated the Clean Water Act by discharging hundreds of thousands of gallons of improperly treated wastewater.

It also includes a \$3.5 million for environmental repairs in Cumberland County and requires the company to pay the cost of a compliance monitor while it's on probation, which will run for a period of three to five years.

The plea agreement also requires the companies to pay roughly \$1.9 million to the Humane Society of the United States for assistance it provided to the investigation.

Prosecutors also said their investigation is ongoing and that criminal cases against individual employees remain possible.

West Lafayette, Indiana-based Inotiv issued what it called a "statement of contrition" Monday after the plea hearing.

"In committing the crimes identified in the charging document, and by not making the necessary infrastructure upgrades and hiring the requisite staff, we fell short of our standards for animal and environmental welfare and apologize to the public for the harm caused by our conduct, the company said. "In resolving this matter, we renew our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of animal care." MDT/AP

CORPORATE BITS

Sands Children's Day brings joy through art



Local families were treated to an artistic experience celebrating children at the Sands Children's Day for Music and Arts event on May 29, hosted by Sands China Ltd.

The 70 participants from the Children's Dream Alliance immersed themselves in the installations at teamLab

SuperNature Macao as part of the 15th anniversary of the Sands Cares Ambassador program. A quartet performance of beloved movie soundtracks added to the magical atmosphere.

"We are thrilled to celebrate the 15th anniversary of our Sands Cares Amba-

sador program with such a meaningful event," said Wilfred Wong, executive vice chairman of Sands China Ltd. Founder and president Helena Ng of the Children's Dream Alliance thanked Sands China for the "interesting Children's Day event."

Following the performance, guests explored the innovative fusion of technology and art within the exhibition. The event extended International Children's Day wishes on June 1 by presenting gift packages to the children. Initiatives like this reflect Sands China's commitment to serving the local community through the Sands Cares Ambassador program.

MGM execs bless dragon boat team for upcoming race



Senior executives of MGM Resorts International blessed the casino operator's dragon boat team yesterday ahead of the 2024 Macao International Dragon Boat Races. Led by president and chief operating officer Hubert Wang, executives performed rituals including offering incense and carving pork

to extend wishes for a safe and successful competition.

Nearly all 95 members of MGM's six-team dragon boat squad are local employees. They will compete in four categories at the June races. Wang remarked that MGM encourages sports participation for health and community

engagement. The dragon boat races showcase Macau's culture and vitality as a city of sports, while uniting different groups, he added. MGM's dragon boaters have previously scored well, bringing pride to the company. Wang wished the team good luck in the upcoming competition.

HEAVY SECURITY IN BEIJING AND HONG KONG

'THE THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY IS REAL,' JOHN LEE SAID ON JUNE 4

CHECKPOINTS and rows of police vehicles lined a major road leading to Beijing's Tiananmen Square yesterday as China heightened security on the 35th anniversary of a crackdown on pro-democracy protests.

AP PHOTO



Life went on mostly as normal in the Chinese capital yesterday, with tourists lining the streets leading to gates to enter Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, the former imperial palace across from the north side of the square.

"As to the political disturbance that occurred in the late 1980s, the Chinese government has long had a clear conclusion," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said without elaborating. Asked about Western government statements on the anniversary, she added, "We are firmly opposed to anyone using this as a pretext to attack and smear China and interfere in China's internal affairs."

Tiananmen Mothers, a group formed by families of

the victims, made an online appeal to the Chinese government to publish the names and numbers of those who died, grant compensation to the victims and their relatives

and pursue the legal responsibility of those responsible.

Tiananmen memorials have also been scrubbed out in Hong Kong. A carnival organized by pro-Beijing groups

was held yesterday in Victoria Park.

Officers were out in force, one day after they briefly detained a performance artist in the bustling Causeway Bay

shopping district close to the park.

"It's different from the past," said Hong Kong resident Keith Law. "Many people seem to act as if there's nothing happening, including myself."

Hong Kong's leader John Lee did not answer directly when asked yesterday whether residents could still publicly mourn the crackdown. He urged residents not to let down their guard against any attempts to cause trouble.

"The threat to national security is real," Lee said at a weekly briefing. "Such activities can happen all of a sudden and different people may use different excuses to hide their intention."

The crackdown on protesters at the Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989 became a turning point in modern Chinese history, ending a crisis in favor of Communist Party hardliners who advocated for stability instead of political reforms.

The economy boomed in the ensuing decades, turning a once impoverished country into the world's second largest economy.

China's historians view the protests of 1989 as a movement that aimed to subvert the Chinese regime, aligning with the ruling Communist Party narrative. **MDT/AP**



Tourists visit Jinci Temple, a historical site known for its ancient buildings, in Taiyuan, Shanxi province

HERITAGE

Popularity of ancient Chinese architecture stands strong

LIN GUODONG'S trip from Shanghai to Yuncheng, Shanxi province, over the May Day holiday this year was his third visit to the region known for ancient buildings.

"I have loved history since I was a child. Compared to reading books,

a study trip offers a multidimensional experience. It allows me to feel history up close and systematically enrich my knowledge," said Lin, 29.

There are some 28,000 ancient buildings in Shanxi, including three Tang Dynasty (618-907) wooden structures and

the world's tallest wooden pagoda.

The province also boasts 509 Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) wooden structures, accounting for over 80 percent of such buildings in China. It has more colorful sculptures, murals and ancient stages than

anywhere else nationwide.

In recent years, an increasing number of young people like Lin have flocked to Shanxi to explore its treasure of ancient buildings, sharing their experiences and travel tips on social media platforms such as Weibo and Xiaohongshu.

"Although my itinerary was already packed, there were still many places I didn't visit. Shanxi is worth multiple visits," wrote Zhou Zhiyu, a 21-year-old student at Beijing Institute of Technology, on Xiaohongshu.

Zhou, who grew up in Zhejiang province, has been to Shanxi twice to explore its ancient buildings. She fondly recalls watching a flock of birds fly over the colorful glazed pagoda at Guangsheng Temple in Hongtong county.

Yang Jie, an ancient building enthusiast born in the 1980s, shares Zhou's passion. In 2016, he left his job to pursue his love for history. The following year, he founded

Jinjingji research and study center, which specializes in in-depth educational tours focused on history and culture.

Yang and his team are devoted to selecting the iconic ancient buildings from across the country and hiring professionals to explain their structures, murals and sculptures, in an effort to perfectly blend tangible heritage with expert knowledge.

The growing enthusiasm for ancient buildings is fueled by the revival of traditional Chinese culture. As more people seek to understand Chinese history and civilization through these historical sites, the movement for ancient building conservation is also gaining strength.

Wang Kai, an ancient building enthusiast working at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, is dedicated to ancient building protection. Inspired by the works of renowned late architect Liang Sicheng, he followed in Liang's

footsteps and began to visit ancient buildings in 2015.

"There are many old photos in the books, and I wanted to see what these ancient buildings look like now. It quickly became an unstoppable passion, and I've since visited hundreds of them," Wang said.

He believes ancient buildings are crucial carriers of traditional Chinese culture, with their sculptures, murals and inscriptions being significant elements.

After visiting many buildings, Wang and other enthusiasts such as He Yanjun from Changzhi city, Shanxi, established a volunteer service center for cultural heritage protection, where they plan to organize voluntary patrols and introductions at ancient buildings.

As an overseas returnee, Wang decided to print his photos into books with English captions to introduce the materials and aesthetics of Chinese traditional architecture to foreign visitors. **CHINA DAILY**

SPACE

Craft unfurls China's flag on the far side of the moon and lifts off with lunar rocks

EMILY WANG FUJIYAMA, BEIJING

CHINA said its lunar spacecraft unfurled the country's red and gold flag for the first time on the far side of the moon before part of the vehicle blasted off early yesterday with rock and soil samples to bring back to Earth.

The mission was hailed as a success in China, which has made significant advances in a space program that aims to put a person on the moon before the end of this decade.

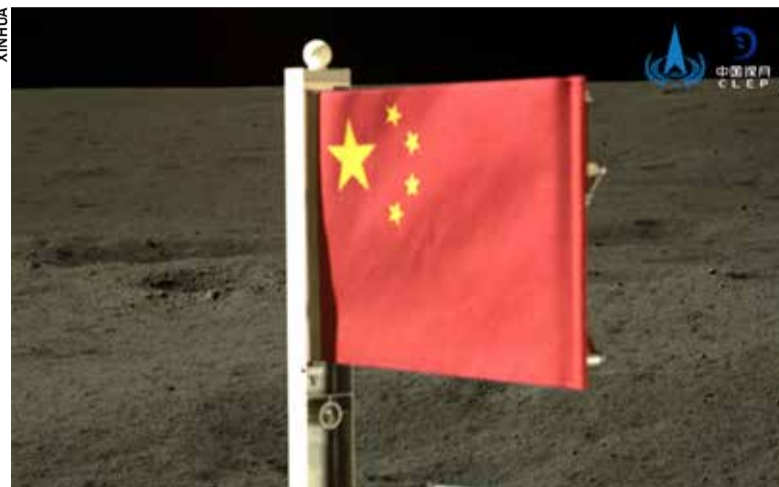
The Chang'e-6 probe was launched last month and its lander touched down on the far side of the moon Sunday. Its ascender lifted off Tuesday morning at 7:38 a.m. Beijing time, with its engine burning for about six minutes as it entered a preset orbit around the moon, the China National Space Administration said.

The agency said the spacecraft withstood a high temperature test on the lunar surface, and acquired the samples using both drilling and surface collection before stowing them in a container inside the ascender of the probe as planned.

The container will be transferred to a reentry capsule that is due to return to Earth in the deserts of China's Inner Mongolia region about June 25.

The small flag, which the agency said was made of special composite materials, emerged on a retractable arm deployed from the side of the lunar lander and was not placed onto the lunar soil, according to an animation of the mission released by the agency.

"Mission accomplished!" Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying wrote on X. "An unprecedented feat in



A Chinese national flag carried by the lander of Chang'e-6 probe unfurls at the moon's far side early yesterday

human lunar exploration history!"

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.

Xinhua said the probe's lan-

ding site was the South Pole-Aitken Basin, an impact crater created more than 4 billion years ago that is 13 kilometers deep and has a diameter of 2,500 kilometers.

It is the oldest and largest of such craters on the moon, so may provide the earliest information about it, Xinhua said, adding that the huge impact

may have ejected materials from deep below the surface.

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 there.

China aims to put a person on the moon before 2030, which would 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. **MDT/AP**

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SOUTH KOREA

PRESIDENT VOWS TO EXPAND AID CONTRIBUTION, MINERAL TIES WITH AFRICA

TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea will expand development aid to Africa and pursue deeper cooperation with the region on critical minerals and technology, President Yoon Suk Yeol said yesterday as he hosted a meeting with dozens of African leaders in Seoul.

In a speech to the Korea-Africa Summit, Yoon also urged African countries to take firmer steps in an international pressure campaign against North Korea. The North recently accelerated its tests of nuclear-capable weapons systems and flew hundreds of balloons to drop tons of trash and manure on South Korea as relations between the war-divided Koreas worsen.

Representatives from 48 African nations, including 25 heads of state, are attending the two-day summit, where talks are expected to focus on trade and investment.

Trade with African nations currently accounts for less than 2% of South Korea's total imports and exports. South Korean officials say expanding ties in the area of minerals and resources would help improve the country's supply chain resilience in key technology industries.

Following yesterday's meeting, South Korea and the African nations announced that they will start high-level talks



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol (right) shakes hands with Mauritania President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani after the joint press conference for the 2024 Korea-Africa Summit in Goyang, yesterday

aimed at improving cooperation over minerals. The African region is a major source of minerals such as nickel, cobalt, graphite and lithium, which are crucial for technology industries such as semiconductors, batteries and electric vehicles, which are major export items for South Korea.

There are concerns in South Korea that it may face growing challenges in securing a stable supply of core minerals since it has so far secured a much smaller number of mines than

the United States, China and Japan.

Yoon also said South Korea plans to expand its cumulative development aid contributions to Africa to around \$10 billion by 2030 and separately provide \$14 billion in export financing to encourage South Korean investment in the region.

"We will also explore sustainable ways of cooperation in issues that are directly tied to future growth, including the stable supply of critical minerals and digital transformation,"

Yoon said.

The countries also vowed stronger collaboration in the building of sustainable infrastructure in Africa, including data-driven smart cities and intelligent transportation systems.

South Korea's outreach to Africa comes at a time when North Korea is becoming more active in trying to break out of its diplomatic isolation and build cooperation with countries confronting the United States, as its leader Kim Jong Un embraces the idea of a

"new Cold War."

North Korea also has long-standing relations with several African nations, including Uganda, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, although some governments in the region have scaled back their ties with the North amid tightened U.N. sanctions over its nuclear weapons and missile programs. U.N. experts for years have accused North Korea of raising illicit revenue from Africa through infrastructure projects, weapons sales and other activities.

Yoon said the security situation of the Korean Peninsula is in a "very serious state" following a series of North Korean provocations and military activities, including an unsuccessful launch of a military reconnaissance satellite last month. He expressed hopes for coordinating with African nations to build pressure on North Korea.

In a joint statement, South Korea and the African nations reaffirmed their commitment to the full implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions against North Korea and highlighted the "importance of the efforts of the international community to achieve a complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

MDT/AP

JAPANESE police are searching for the suspects who spray-painted the word "toilet" on a Tokyo shrine that commemorates the country's war dead, in an apparent protest against the release of treated radioactive wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear power plant, officials and news reports said.

The red graffiti on a stone pillar at the entrance of Yasukuni Shrine was discovered early Saturday. In a video posted on Chinese social media, a man who identified himself as Iron Head criticized the discharge of wastewater from the damaged nuclear power plant into the ocean.

"Faced with the Japanese government's permission to discharge nuclear wastewater, can we do anything?" the man asks. "No, I will give them some color to see."

JAPAN

Police search for suspects in spray-painting of graffiti at controversial war shrine

In another part of the video taken at night, he is seen apparently urinating on the pillar and using spray paint to write "toilet" in English.

Tokyo police are investigating at least two suspects, the person who appeared in the video and another who shot it, according to Japanese media including NHK public television and Kyodo News agency. The reports said police believed the incident occurred late Friday after the shrine closed and that the perpetrator is believed to have already left Japan, they said.

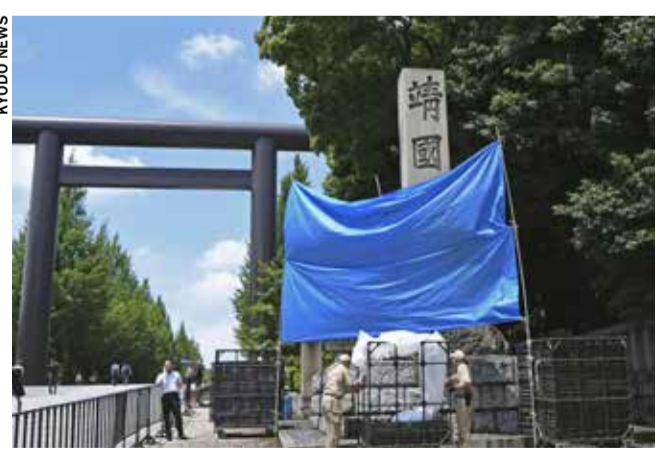
Police declined to confirm the reports.

Yasukuni Shrine, in a statement emailed to the Associated Press, said the graffiti was "extremely regrettable" and said it was "an act of degrading the dignity of the shrine." The shrine said it will continue patrolling so that visitors can pay respects in "a tranquil environment." Yasukuni Shrine declined further comment, saying it has reported the damage to police and investigation is underway.

The discharge of wastewater from the damaged Fukushima nuclear

plant has been opposed by fishing groups and neighboring countries, especially China, which imposed a ban on all imports of Japanese seafood immediately after the release began in August. The ban has particularly affected Japanese scallop growers and exporters to China.

Yasukuni Shrine honors about 2.5 million Japanese war dead, including convicted war criminals. Victims of Japanese aggression during the first half of the 20th century, especially China and the Koreans, see the shrine as a symbol of Japanese militarism. The



Workers prepare to remove a graffiti on Yasukuni Shrine's stone pillar, covered under a blue sheet in Tokyo

countries criticize visits by Japanese lawmakers to the shrine as signs of their lack of remorse over Japan's

wartime actions.

The graffiti appeared to have been cleaned by Monday. MDT/AP

AUSTRALIA

Military will recruit some noncitizens in a bid to boost troop numbers

ROD MCGUIRK, MELBOURNE

THE Australian military will begin recruiting some noncitizens in a bid to boost troop numbers, the government said yesterday.

Only people from other members of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing partnership who hold Australian permanent residency will be eligible.

The move is part of a push to build a military that can resist foreign coercion through blocked trade routes in the future, Defense Minister Richard Marles said.

Marles, who is also deputy prime minister, said the change was a major step toward addressing a 4,400-person shortfall in the Australian Defense Force, whose target strength is 63,600 full-time personnel. The government intends to increase that number to 80,000 by 2040.

Relatively low unemployment is one of the factors working against the Australian military attracting and retaining personnel.

Australia is particularly reliant on open sea and air routes as an island nation that trades with the world and is therefore susceptible to coercion from foreign militaries, Marles said.

"We are not trying to make ourselves a peer of the United



In this photo provided by the Australian Defense Force, students climb a wall at the Recruit Training Unit course at RAAF Base in Wagga

States or of China," Marles told delegates at a security conference. "That's not a credible thing to propose."

"In a far less certain world, do we have an ability to be able to resist coercion of any adversary and to make our way?" he added.

New Zealanders who have lived in Australia for at least a year will be eligible to join the military from July, and permanent residents from the United States, Britain and Canada will be eligible from January 2025.

Australia's Five Eyes partners are also struggling to hit military recruitment targets. In Britain, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has promised that 18-year-olds will have to perform a year of mandatory military or civilian national service if his government is re-elected at elections next month.

The New Zealand Defense Force is short of 1,300 uniformed personnel, officials reported in February, after losing 30% of its military personnel between 2021

and last year.

New Zealand Defense Minister Judith Collins said Australia's criteria for recruiting New Zealanders, including a ban on those who had served in a foreign military in the past two years, meant the two militaries won't be competing for personnel.

"Australia is New Zealand's only ally, and we continue to have a very close relationship," Collins said in an email to The Associated Press in response to the new recruiting rules.

Australia has struck a partnership with the U.S. and Britain that promises to create an Australian fleet of submarines powered by U.S. nuclear technology.

China has protested the so-called AUKUS partnership and Australian plans to acquire the vessels.

Tensions between the two militaries in waters where China has contested territorial claims have been building in recent months.

Marles said he had raised a recent clash between the two militaries at a weekend meeting with Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun.

Australia accused a Chinese fighter jet of endangering an Australian navy helicopter flying over the Yellow Sea by dropping flares in its path.

China accuses the Australian air crew of spying on a nearby Chinese navy training exercise.

"It was a good meeting. It went longer than was anticipated. It was very frank," Marles said of his meeting with Dong on the sidelines of the Shangri-La defense forum in Singapore.

"We know how to engage with each other on bases which are safe and professional," Marles said. "It's not enough that it happens only in the vast bulk of occasions. It needs to happen on every occasion." **MDT/AP**

CAMBODIA

US defense secretary meets top officials to push for stronger ties

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin traveled to Cambodia yesterday to push for stronger military ties with China's closest ally in Southeast Asia.

Austin met his Cambodian counterpart, Tea Seiha, and Prime Minister Hun Manet during a one-day visit to Phnom Penh, Cambodia's Defense Ministry said in a statement. It said Austin's visit would strengthen the ongoing good cooperation between the countries that has lasted more than 70 years.

Austin arrived from Singapore, where he attended the Shangri-La



In this photo released by Agence Kampuchea Press (AKP), U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin (left) shakes hands with Cambodian PM Hun Manet in Phnom Penh yesterday

defense forum and held talks with his Chinese counterpart, Adm. Dong

Jun, as the the U.S. and China gradually work to repair lines of communi-

cations between their militaries that could be critical as tensions continue

to rise between the two in the Indo-Pacific region.

U.S. relations with Cambodia have been frosty for years, in large part because of Phnom Penh's close ties with China, and particularly China's military presence at a navy base in the Gulf of Thailand that has been upgraded with Beijing's assistance. Washington has also been vocal about what it sees as Cambodia's poor human rights record, which has seen continuing clampdowns on political dissidents and critics.

Cambodian officials deny China will have any special basing privileges and say their country maintains a neutral defense posture.

The visit was Austin's first visit to Cambodia since Hun Manet became prime minister last year, succeeding his father

Hun Sen, who held office for 38 years. The handover has led to speculation of a reset in U.S.-Cambodia relations, though so far Hun Manet has maintained his father's policies.

Hun Manet was Cambodia's army commander before becoming prime minister last August. Both Austin and he graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point — Austin in 1975 and Hun Manet in 1999, as Cambodia's first cadet there.

Austin also held separate talks Tuesday with Hun Sen, who is now the president of the Senate.

From Cambodia, Austin will go to France to attend events commemorating the 80th anniversary of the World War II D-Day landing, the U.S. Defense Department said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



A stockman watches over the Nelore cow known as Viatina-19 at a farm in Uberaba, Minas Gerais state

BRAZIL

She's the world's most expensive cow, and part of a plan to put beef on everyone's plate

DAVID BILLER, UBERABA

BRAZIL has hundreds of millions of cows, but one in particular is extraordinary. Her massive, snow-white body is watched over by security cameras and an armed guard.

Worth \$4 million, Viatina-19 FIV Mara Movéis is the most expensive cow ever sold at auction, according to Guinness World Records. That's three times more than the last recordholder's price. And — at 1,100 kilograms — she's twice as heavy as an average adult of her breed.

Along a highway through Brazil's heartland, Viatina-19's owners have put up two billboards praising her grandeur and beckoning people to make pilgrimages to see the supercow.

Climate scientists agree that people need to consume less beef, the largest agricultural source of greenhouse gasses and a driver of Amazon deforestation. But the cattle industry is a major source of Brazilian economic development and the government is striving to conquer new export markets. The world's top beef exporter wants everyone, everywhere to eat its beef.

The embodiment of Brazil's cattle ambitions is Viatina-19, the product of years of efforts to raise meatier cows. Prizewinners are sold at high-stakes auctions — so high that wealthy ranchers share ownership. They extract the eggs and semen from champion animals, create embryos and implant them in surrogate cows that they hope will produce the next magnificent specimens.

"We're not slaughtering elite cattle. We're breeding them. And at the end of the line, going to feed the whole world," one of her owners, Ney Pereira, said after arriving by helicopter to his farm in Minas Gerais state. "I think Viatina will provide that."

The cow's eye-popping price stems from how quickly she put on vast amounts of muscle, from her fertility and — crucially — how often she has passed those characteristics to her offspring, said Lorrany Martins, a veterinarian who is Pereira's daughter and right hand. Breeders also value posture, hoof solidity, docility, maternal ability and beauty. Those eager to level up their livestock's genetics pay around \$250,000 for an opportunity to collect Viatina-19's egg cells.

"She is the closest to per-

fection that has been attained so far," Martins said. "She's a complete cow, has all the characteristics that all the proprietors are looking for."

INDIA TO BRAZIL

In Brazil, 80% of the cows are Zebus, a subspecies originating in India with a distinctive hump and dewlap, or folds of draping neck skin. Viatina-19 belongs to the Nelore breed, which is raised for meat, not milk, and makes up most of Brazil's stock.

The city of Uberaba, where Viatina-19 lives, holds an annual gathering called ExpoZebu that bills itself as the world's biggest Zebu fair. Held several weeks ago, it was a far cry from the Brazil that's imagined abroad. The dress code was boots, baseball caps and blue jeans. Evening concerts drew 10,000 spectators belting out their favorite country songs. But the main attraction was the daily cattle shows where cows compete for prizes that boost an animal's auction price.

The most prestigious auction is called Elo de Raça, held April 28. As the first cow entered the paddock, speakers blared Queen's "We Are the Champions." But that cow was a mere appeti-

zer before this year's starlet, Donna, and three of her clones; the final sale price put her total value at 15.5 million reais (\$3 million.)

A commodities boom in the 2000s turbocharged Brazilian agriculture, especially with a rising China buying soy and beef. Today, agriculture's influence extends to Brazil's Congress and the national consciousness. And Brazil, along with the U.S., is at the forefront of cattle genetics.

Showstoppers like Donna and Viatina-19 are rarities in Brazil, which has more than 230 million cows, according to the USDA. It's the world's largest beef cattle population, and that's problematic; huge swaths of Amazon rainforest have been slashed to create pasture, releasing carbon stored in trees. And cows belch methane that's far worse for the climate.

Genetic improvements that reduce cows' slaughtering age are helpful but limited ways to reduce warming. Simpler, more effective measures include planting better grass for grazing and regularly moving cattle from pasture to pasture, said Beto Veríssimo, an agronomist and the co-founder of an environmental nonprofit called Imazon.

Meanwhile, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has been working to open new markets. Last month, he met Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan, home to the premium, marbled Wagyu beef; he urged his counterpart to taste Brazilian meat and become a believer.

"Please," he said, addressing his vice president at the event, "take Prime Minister Fumio to eat steak at the best restaurant in Sao Paulo so that, the following week, he starts importing our beef." **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1967 ISRAEL LAUNCHES ATTACK ON EGYPT



Israeli forces have launched a pre-emptive attack on Egypt and destroyed nearly 400 Egypt-based military aircraft.

Fighting broke out on the Israel-Egypt border but then quickly spread to involve other neighbouring Arab states with ground and air troops becoming embroiled in battle.

Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol said in a statement that the Egyptian Air Force had taken a great beating and Jordanian and Syrian air forces had been largely destroyed.

The attack follows a build-up of Arab military forces along the Israeli border.

The Arab states had been preparing to go to war against Israel with Egypt, Jordan and Syria being aided by Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Algeria.

On 27 May the President of Egypt, Abdel Nasser, declared: "Our basic objective will be the destruction of Israel. The Arab people want to fight."

Egypt signed a pact with Jordan at the end of May declaring an attack on one was an attack on both. This was seen by Israel as a clear sign of preparation for all-out war.

Israel took decisive action today claiming the element of surprise was the only way it could stand any chance of defending itself against the increasing threat from neighbouring states.

Israeli troops claim to have captured the key town of El Arish in north Sinai and are now advancing towards Abu Gela.

Hundreds of thousands of Arabs are said to be fleeing the crossfire in Jordan's West Bank.

So far the US state department has announced, "Our position is neutral in thought, word and deed." This follows its recent stance declaring Israel would not be alone unless it decided to go it alone.

The path for war was cleared on 16 May when President Nasser ordered the withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Forces from the Egyptian-Israeli border.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

After a period of relative peace in the Middle East, Palestinian guerrilla groups, supported by Egypt and Syria, started a series of attacks on the Israeli border in 1965.

These were followed by Israeli reprisals and a gradual build-up of Arab military forces around Israel's border. The Second Arab-Israeli war that began on 5 June 1967 ended on 10 June and became known as the six-day war - it changed the face of the Middle East conflict.

At the end of the war Israel had succeeded in almost doubling the amount of territory it controlled.

Israel seized Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt in the south and the Golan Heights from Syria in the north. It also pushed Jordanian forces out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Israeli forces evicted Jewish settlers from the Gaza strip in August 2005 and began to demolish some settlements on the West Bank as well. Egypt and Jordan are the only Arab nations that have made peace with Israel since 1967.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Funding could arise from unexpected sources. Check with your network for interesting opportunities. Share what you want. One good connection leads to another.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Enjoy yourself. All work and no play makes a person dull. Mix it up. Dress to impress and go have fun with someone interesting.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Find a private place for planning and organization. You're especially imaginative. Write your ideas. Sketch and note the possibilities. Create something beautiful from nothing.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Teamwork can make magic. Put your heads together to solve a problem. Work it out patiently. Discover unexpected solutions. Together, you're unbeatable.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Your work is gaining attention. Polish your presentation before sharing. Take changes in stride. Adapt gracefully. With communication and care, gain a professional prize.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Seek out solutions to a challenging puzzle. Explore your options. Test your ideas before launching in public. You're gaining wisdom with each discovery.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Collaboration can reap golden rewards. Work together to take advantage of an unexpected opportunity. Luck reveals a valuable prize, ripe for the plucking.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Discuss common passions, interests and commitments. Invent fun possibilities with your partner and develop them into reality. Persuade with sweet enticements. Collaboration flowers.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Physical action gets satisfying results. Your work is gaining respect. Practice your moves. Score extra points with a natural connection. Get outside and enjoy.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Prioritize fun, romance and playfulness. Grab a spontaneous opportunity to reconnect with someone interesting. Learn from children. Savor your favorite flavors, games, sports and arts.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Enjoy domestic comforts and beautification projects. Work from your favorite chair. Rearrange the furniture. Cook homemade treats and share the delicious results with family.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Great ideas spark like wildfire. Take note! You're especially creative. Advance communication projects. Talk about what you love. Share solutions, news and resources.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	21	30	overcast
Changchun	17	28	cloudy
Chengdu	19	28	cloudy
Chongqing	18	27	cloudy
Fuzhou	20	25	rain
Guangzhou	23	27	rain
Guiyang	14	22	showers
Haikou	27	32	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	21	24	rain
Harbin	13	27	thunderstorms
Hefei	20	27	cloudy
Nanjing	21	26	overcast
Shanghai	21	25	rain
Taipei	22	25	rain
Wuhan	20	26	overcast
Hong Kong	25	27	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	17	27	cloudy
Frankfurt	10	21	cloudy
Paris	11	20	cloudy
London	8	16	cloudy
New York	21	27	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Madras dress; 5- This is only ___; 10- "Give that ___ cigar!"; 14- Plugging away; 15- Finds pleasing; 16- Utah city; 17- Lays down the lawn; 18- Actress Verdugo; 19- ___ yellow ribbon...; 20- Language communication; 22- Group of fruit trees; 24- Author Tolstoy; 25- Estimator's phrase; 26- Recently discovered; 30- Frozen rain; 35- Sister of Zsa Zsa; 36- Call on; 37- Rib; 38- U.S. space probe to Jupiter; 41- Aids; 43- Utopias; 44- Chem. or biol.; 45- Asian occasion; 46- Vice ___; 47- Hermits; 50- Hardy lass; 53- Relatives; 54- Store for safekeeping; 58- Tidy up; 62- Cheese; 63- "Inferno" writer; 66- Used to be; 67- Galileo's birthplace; 68- Sewing machine inventor Howe; 69- Ticklish doll; 70- Celestial body; 71- Like non-oyster months; 72- Faculty head;

DOWN 1- Smart talk; 2- Looking down from; 3- Travel on; 4- In and of ___; 5- Tavern; 6- Up to, in ads; 7- Just manage, with "out"; 8- Mexican mister; 9- Romanov rulers; 10- Sweater eater; 11- Horne solo; 12- ___-do-well; 13- Diary of ___ Housewife; 21- Corp. bigwig; 23- Prices paid; 25- Lyric poem; 26- Israeli desert region; 27- Elude; 28- Strong Australian horse; 29- Classical beginning; 31- Kauli keepsake; 32- Some bridge players; 33- First name in cosmetics; 34- Lab work; 39- ___ and outs; 40- Atty.-to-be exams; 41- "___ Ventura" was played by Jim Carrey; 42- Illness; 44- Grads-to-be; 48- Falsehood; 49- Not impressed; 51- Duck with soft down; 52- Stable compartment; 54- Workout count; 55- Revise; 56- Que ___?; 57- General Bradley; 59- Prefix with conference; 60- Columnist Bombeck; 61- Light gas; 64- Never, to Nietzsche; 65- Univ. aides;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999
Fire department 28 572 222
PJ (Open line) 993
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
PSP 28 573 333
Customs 28 559 944
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
IAM 28 387 333
Tourism 28 333 000
Airport 59 888 88

Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
Telephone - Report 1000
Electricity - Report 28 339 922
Macau Daily Times 28 716 081

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Best Moments of Volleyball Nations League 2024 Macao presented by GEG



After a four-year break, the Volleyball Nations League (VNL) has returned to Macau, filling for the first time, the amphitheater of the Galaxy Arena at the Galaxy International Convention Center.

With an extended edition covering a total of six days and with the presence of eight top-tier teams from the international volleyball panorama, the VNL 2024 Macao has gathered the attention of tens of thousands of fans who had the chance to not only watch some exciting high volleyball matches but also to meet and greet with their favorite players from the national teams of China, the Dominican Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, Brazil, Thailand, Japan, and France.

In line with its tradition of 14 years, Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) has sponsored the event, which, for the first time, was jointly organized by the Sports Bureau of the Macao SAR Government, GEG, and the Volleyball Association of Macao, China, as noted by GEG's director, Philip Cheng. In the press conference that launched the event, he highlighted GEG's efforts to contribute to Macau becoming a "City of Sports."



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

BRUCE SCHREINER,
LOUISVILLE (KY.)

BOXING LEGEND

Ali's childhood home is for sale in Kentucky after being converted into a museum

THE pink house where Muhammad Ali grew up dreaming of boxing fame — and where hundreds of fans gathered for an emotional send-off as his funeral procession passed by decades later — is up for sale.

The two-bedroom, one-bathroom house in Louisville was converted into a museum that offered a glimpse into the formative years of the boxing champion and humanitarian known worldwide as The Greatest. The house went on the market yesterday along with two neighboring homes — one was turned into a welcome center-gift shop and the other was meant to become a short-term rental.

The owners are asking \$1.5 million for the three properties. Finding a buyer willing to maintain Ali's childhood home as a museum would be "the best possible result," co-owner George Bochetto said.

"This is a part of Americana," said Bochetto, a Philadelphia attorney and former Pennsylvania state boxing commissioner. "This is part of our history. And it needs to be treated and respected as such."

The museum opened for tours shortly before Ali's death in 2016.



In this June 10, 2016, file photo, people line the street in front of the boyhood home, center with the pink wall, of Muhammad Ali as they wait for Ali's funeral procession

Bochetto and his business partner at the time renovated the frame house to how it looked when Ali — known then as Cassius Clay — lived there with his parents and younger brother.

"You walk into this house ... you're going back to 1955, and

you're going to be in the middle of the Clay family home," Bochetto told The Associated Press during a 2016 interview.

Using old photos, the developers replicated the home's furnishings, appliances, artwork and even its pink exterior from

Ali's days living there. The museum featured videos focused on the story of Ali's upbringing, not his storied boxing career.

"To me, that's the bigger story and the more important story," Bochetto said in an interview last week.

Ali got his start in boxing after his bicycle was stolen. Wanting to report the crime, the 12-year-old Ali was introduced to Joe Martin, a police officer who doubled as a boxing coach at a local gym. Ali told Martin he wanted to whip the culprit. The thief was never found, nor was the bike, but Ali became a regular in Martin's gym.

Ali lived in the home when he left for the 1960 Olympics. He returned as a gold medal winner, launching a career that made him one of the world's most recognizable figures as a three-time hea-

vyweight boxing champion and globetrotting humanitarian.

The home became a worldwide focal point on the day of Ali's burial, when hundreds of people lined the street in front of the house as his hearse and funeral procession slowly passed by.

Despite its high-profile debut, the museum ran into financial troubles and closed less than two years after opening. The museum is situated in a western Louisville neighborhood several miles from downtown, where the Muhammad Ali Center preserves his humanitarian and boxing legacies.

As efforts to reopen the childhood museum languished, offers to move the 1,200-square-foot house to Las Vegas, Philadelphia and even Saudi Arabia were turned down, Bochetto said. **MDT/AP**

AD

NOW ON SALE

MACAUCLOSER

法朵驕女 FADO FEMININITY

MARTA PEREIRA DA COSTA

瑪麗亞今年澳門文學節

MARTA PEREIRA DA COSTA COMES TO TOWNS FOR 17th MACAU GREENY FESTIVAL

創刊17周年
17 YEARS OF PUBLISHING

MACAU 澳門

BENFICAMACAU ACADEMY

澳門賓菲加體育學校

FOOTBALL | BASKETBALL | DAILY TRAININGS

OPINION

World Views

Christopher R. Dennison,
 University at Buffalo



**PERCEPTION OF
 CAMPUS POLICE IS
 MORE NEGATIVE
 AMONG STUDENTS
 FROM MINORITY
 GROUPS**

Racial, ethnic and self-identified sexual minorities possess more negative views of campus police compared with nonminorities.

That's the key finding from a new study in which we analyzed data from approximately 400 undergraduate students to assess being stopped by campus police. We also looked at perceptions of campus police more generally. Eighty-two percent of our sample identified as non-Hispanic white, 31% identified as being male, and 64% identified as being heterosexual.

We found few differences between students with and without a history of being stopped by campus police.

We believe our findings highlight how the racial bias experienced by minority communities in police investigations has spilled over into the views of all police figures, including campus police.

The fact that we found few differences between students with and without a history of being stopped by police is telling. To a certain extent, it could suggest that minority students in our study are being treated fairly by campus police. However, if this is the case, then it remains unclear why we still found that minority students report more negative views of campus police.

It is here where we believe that the history and ongoing racism in law enforcement could be playing a role. It is possible that the skepticism of law enforcement more generally gets carried onto campus by students. This is especially true among minorities who historically have been unfairly treated by the police.

It could also be that widespread, systemic racism – not only in the criminal justice system but also in institutions of higher education – plays a role. There are racial and ethnic biases that exist in higher education, such as stereotyping and unfair grading practices. Therefore, it may not be unreasonable for students to assume that such biases may exist among campus police.

More studies are needed to tease out why and how students have varying perceptions of campus police. We also encourage future studies to assess whether the patterns observed in our sample are present on other campuses. Our findings can only speak to one university in the Northeast region of the U.S., so their broad applicability is limited. With that being said, we controlled for several background characteristics – including arrest history – in hopes of best capturing what influences campus police contact and perceptions.

Our overall goal with this research is to better understand dynamics between people and figures of authority. Improving our understanding in this area will guide us toward a solution to address today's conflicts.

**WITH TIME SHORT, VETERANS SEIZE THE CHANCE TO
 KEEP THEIR D-DAY MEMORIES ALIVE FOR OTHERS**

**THE
 BUZZ**

Ken Hay's part in the invasion of Normandy lasted just a few weeks, but he wants to make sure the experiences of those who fought and died to end the Nazi grip on Europe live forever.

The British Army veteran was captured a few weeks after the D-Day (June 6) landings in northern France when his patrol was surrounded by German troops during the two-month battle for strategic high ground outside the city of Caen known simply as Hill 112. Nine members of his platoon were killed that night. Hay spent the next 10 months as a prisoner of war.

Now 98, Hay visits schools whenever he can to tell his story, so the battle to liberate France and defeat Nazi Germany doesn't become a dusty relic of history like the Greek and Roman wars he read about as a child.

Veterans know this is likely to be the last major event to commemorate the sacrifices of those who fought and died to liberate France.

World leaders have recognized the significance of the event.

Full story on macaudailytimes.com.mo/category/buzz

AP PHOTO



Women wearing Romanian traditional blouses, known in Romanian as an "IE" (pronounced "E-eh"), pose for a selfie photograph during an event celebrating the country's rural national outfits in Bucharest

**ROMANIA'S CULTURE
 MINISTER ASKS
 LOUIS VUITTON TO
 ACKNOWLEDGE A
 TRADITIONAL BLOUSE
 INSPIRED ITEMS**

ROMANIA'S minister of culture says she will ask French luxury fashion house Louis Vuitton to acknowledge that a traditional Romanian blouse directly inspired items in one of its 2024 collections.

"We will request that Louis Vuitton recognize the heritage and cultural value of the traditional blouse model with ribbons," Raluca Turcan wrote on Facebook yesterday [Macau time], adding it's an opportunity for international recognition of the "inestimable value" of Romanian tradition.

The blouse in question is known in Romanian as an "IE" (pronounced "E-eh"), which typically has intricate embroidery and tassels and is widely recognized as a symbol of

the country's rich folk culture. In 2022, the garments with a specific style of embroidery were added to a UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage.

Louis Vuitton did not immediately respond to questions sent by The Associated Press.

The allegedly inspired garments were in Nicolas Ghesquiere's Resort 2024 collection for Louis Vuitton, where many items cost thousands of dollars (euros).

The campaign for Louis Vuitton to "give credit" to Romanian heritage was launched on Sunday by the online community La Blouse Roumaine, which has long urged fashion houses to credit collections that appropriate traditional clothing.

"We need to protect our intangible cultural heritage. It's our cultural right to express our identity through these garments, through these traditional costumes," Andreea Diana Tanasescu, the founder of La Blouse Roumaine, told the AP. "They are part of Romanian history."

The outcry is not the first of its kind in Romania. In 2017, U.S. designer Tory Burch changed the description of one of her designs, a traditional Romanian-style coat, after her brand angered thousands of Romanians for marketing it as a garment inspired by Africa. Burch said they had "missed a reference to a beautiful Romanian coat which inspired one of the pieces." **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



USA Senate Intelligence Committee Chair Mark Warner warned that the U.S. may be less prepared for election threats than in previous years. Improved disinformation tactics by Russia and China, domestic disinformation spreaders, and AI-generated misleading content pose new challenges. Tech companies have rolled back efforts to combat misinformation, and debates over government monitoring complicate efforts to safeguard the 2024 election against foreign interference.

AP PHOTO



Serbia International observers noted irregularities in Serbia's rerun of a municipal election. The coalition led by President Aleksandar Vucic's Serbian Progressive Party won convincingly amid concerns of vote secrecy issues and vote buying. Despite these issues, fundamental freedoms were respected. The election results reaffirmed Vucic's control, though opposition groups criticized the election process, highlighting political tensions in Serbia.

AP PHOTO



Belgium Ahead of EU elections, Belgian farmers, supported by far-right parties, protested against environmental regulations affecting agriculture. Farmers opposed policies limiting manure and pesticide use and land conversion for biodiversity. The protests reflect broader EU tensions between agricultural interests and environmental goals. The center parties are shifting rightwards, influenced by populist support, as agriculture becomes a pivotal issue in the EU elections.