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07 Jun 2024

“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

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TWO UNDERAGE INDIVIDUALS FROM HONG KONG DETAINED FOR ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN A TELECOM FRAUD SCHEME

MGTO: NON-GAMING PUSH AIMS TO ATTRACT A WIDER RANGE OF TOURISTS TO MACAU

WILL YOU NOT? SURVEY SHOWS YOUNG ADULTS LESS WILLING TO MARRY OR HAVE KIDS



Indonesia Mount Ibu in Indonesia erupted three times yesterday, spewing red lava and grey ash clouds. No injuries were reported. Authorities raised the alert to the highest level, evacuating over 1,900 people from nearby villages. The volcano has been erupting almost daily since May, affecting thousands of hectares of farmland.



Australia NSW apologized for past laws criminalizing homosexuality, 40 years after decriminalization. Premier Chris Minns acknowledged the “unforgivable pain” caused. NSW was the last state to formally apologize. Convictions under these laws led to lost jobs and family estrangement. Legislative changes in 2014 allowed men to expunge past convictions.



Gaza Strip An Israeli strike on a Gaza school-turned-shelter killed over 30 people, including 14 children and nine women. Israel claimed it targeted a Hamas compound. The Health Ministry reported over 36,000 Palestinian deaths in the eight-month war. International pressure mounts for a ceasefire and humanitarian aid amidst widespread hunger in Gaza.



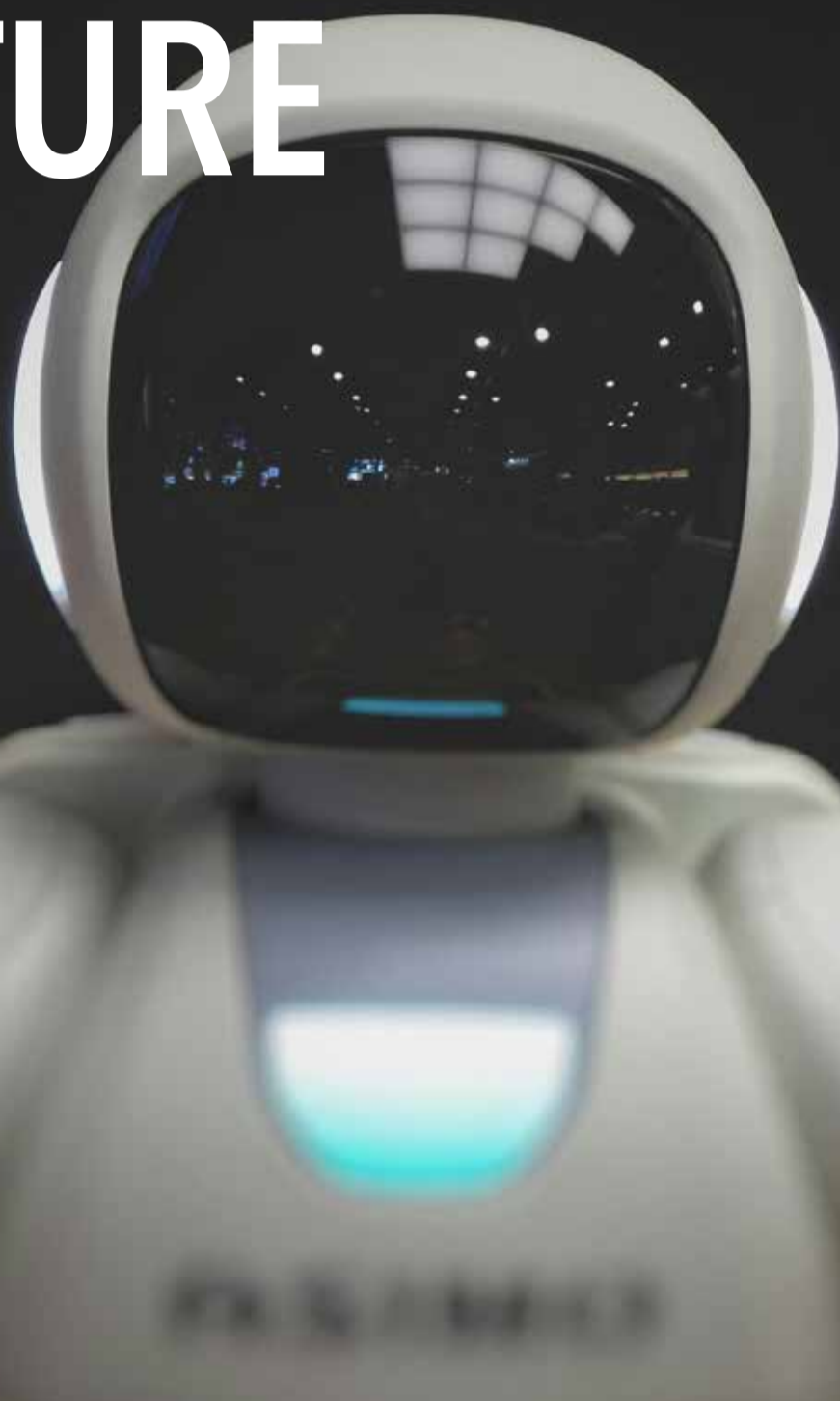
Yemen's Houthi rebels unveiled a solid-fuel “Palestine” missile, similar to an Iranian hypersonic model, and fired it at Israel’s Eilat port, causing no damage. The missile’s design resembles Iran’s Fattah. Iran denies arming the Houthis, despite evidence of Iranian weaponry. Hypersonic missiles pose challenges due to their speed and maneuverability.

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GAMING FACES THE FUTURE

AI and machine learning revolutionize casino marketing; adequate regulation is needed to combat problem gambling - G2E confronts the dilemma

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JUNE FEST DAY OF PORTUGAL TO BE SPECIALLY MARKED THIS YEAR

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TASTE OF EDESIA



P15

ZONE A: LOT B9 HOUSING PROJECT READY FOR RESIDENTS

Lot B9 public housing construction on Zone A landfill is complete, according to the city's public works website. This is the third building finished in Zone A following community centers at Lot B6 and an earlier project at Lot B10. The new complex includes 642 one-to-three bedroom apartments. Residents will have access to 583 parking spaces for cars and motorcycles located in the basement. The developments in Zone A represent ongoing efforts to convert the former landfill into housing and facilities for the growing neighborhood.

GOV'T PROMOTES LOCAL EDUCATION IN THE US

To promote higher education in Macau and attract more outstanding international academics and students to study and facilitate scientific research in the city, the local government and institutions visited the US to meet with local universities. During this journey, the delegation, led by Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Ao Ieong U, participated in the "U.S.-China Bay to Bay Dialogue," visited the Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in San Francisco, and held a two-session event titled 'Development Opportunities for Talents in Macao, China.'

NINE LOCAL FILMS TO PREMIER END OF MONTH

Since its inception in 2007, the "Macau Video New Force" film commissioning program has paved the way for the premier of nine local film productions, encompassing documentaries, short dramas, and animations, set to debut between 27 June and 30 June. The Cultural Affairs Bureau emphasized that this program not only provides financial support for production but also involves seasoned video creators as creative advisors. As a result, more than 150 production projects have been successfully translated into video content.

MGTO PREPARES LAUNCH OF HALAL FOOD CERTIFICATION

Expanding the source of tourist arrivals is a top priority for the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) this year, according to civic leader Choi Seng Hon. One key initiative is catering to the culinary needs of Muslim travelers, particularly those from Northwest China and Southeast Asia. The MGTO is preparing halal food certification programs in partnership with the local tourism industry, with the goal of introducing halal-certified options to Macau restaurants. This aims to provide more choices for tourists from the Islamic world. Choi did not provide a timeline for the launch of the halal certification scheme.

SURVEY SHOWS YOUNG ADULTS LESS WILLING TO MARRY OR HAVE KIDS

STAFF REPORTER

A recent survey by the Women's General Association of Macau has found a significant decline in the desire for marriage and childbearing among young adults aged 18 to 34 in Macau. The findings have raised concerns about the potential impact on the country's long-term social and demographic sustainability.

Nearly half of the 925 respondents were born in the 1990s, and more than 40% were born in the 2000s. The respondents overwhelmingly said that they had not considered marriage in the last five years.

The survey also found that the average score recording residents' intention to have children was 4.76 out of 10, a decrease of 1.57 points from the 6.33 points recorded in the 2022 fertility survey.

Wong Kit Cheng, a lawmaker and vice-chairman of the association, expressed concern that the survey results reflect a significant shift in young people's views on marriage and childbearing. She said that this may further exacerbate the de-



cline in marriage and childbearing rates in the future and will have a negative impact on the sustainable development of society.

To address the issue, the association has recommended a "combination punch" approach, including the introduction of family-friendly benefits such as childcare allowances and parental leave subsidies.

Additionally, the federation has suggested promoting re-

gular housing applications and providing more bonus points for married young families in application scores.

Experts believe that a multifaceted approach involving government, employers, and society as a whole will be necessary to encourage younger generations to embrace marriage and parenthood.

For Wong, the survey results serve as a wake-up call for policymakers to take proacti-

ve measures to support young families and address the declining birth rate.

Government data shows that the elderly population in Macau is growing at a fast pace, whereas the birthrate has significantly declined. Just a year ago, there was a nearly equal number of elderly individuals and young people, with approximately one dependent elderly person for every four working adults in the SAR.

SPORTS

ID: Anticipation for dragon boat races high despite rain

STAFF REPORTER

THE Macau International Dragon Boat Races are scheduled to take place over three consecutive days starting from Saturday until Monday.

In a blessing ceremony held yesterday, Sports Bureau (ID) director Pun Weng Kun remains optimistic about this year's event, noting that regardless of rain, the event will proceed as planned.

Pun said that anticipation is high among participants and spectators, with attendance ex-

pected to match or surpass last year's numbers.

Last year, the event drew in 16,000 attendees.

The official expoesed that dragon boat racing has evolved into a traditional sports event cherished by both residents and tourists.

Interest in participating this year remains strong, with around 200 teams from countries such as China, Thailand, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Moreover, various additional activities will be organized outside the main venue

to engage both citizens and tourists.

As in other editions, the first day of competition at the Nam Van Lake is dedicated to local races in small boats and over shorter distances. In contrast, the second day continues to feature local races but in larger boats over long distances, up to 500m.

On the final day, the competition will host international races, including the Open and Women categories, as well as a race dedicated to the universities.

The Dragon Boat festival, also known as

"Tuen Ng" in Cantonese, is associated with a story of a righteous official in ancient times who drowned himself after falling out of favor with his leader.

According to the lore, villagers rushed out to the river with boats to try and save him, and threw rice dumplings into the water to prevent fish from eating his body and to ward away evil spirits. Thus the tradition of dragon boating and eating rice dumplings, which are called zongzi in Chinese, was born.

The holiday is celebrated in mainland Chi-

na and regions like Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as in countries like Singapore that have a large Chinese diaspora.

PUN REFUTES OUTDOOR CONCERT RUMOR

Furthermore, reports circulating online suggest that a singer has applied to hold a concert at the Taipa Stadium. Questioned by the press on the topic, the official mentioned that no concert applications have been received by the authorities thus far.

Given that the sports ground is an outdoor facility with specific considerations, any future applications will be processed according to established protocols, including group discussions to manage large-scale performance events.

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CRIME

Two minors detained in telecom fraud case

HOWARD TONG

TWO underage individuals from Hong Kong have been detained for their alleged involvement in a telecommunications fraud scheme.

The minors are suspected of impersonating lawyers and paralegals and travelling to Macau to collect around MOP270,000 in fraudulent proceeds.

According to the authorities, after the initial judicial interrogation of the two suspects, the decision was made to detain them.

This measure was deemed necessary given that the individuals were not residents of Macau and the seriousness of the alleged crimes. The authorities sought to prevent the minors from fleeing Macau and continuing their criminal activities and disrupting public order and social stability.

The authorities indicated that they will continue the ongoing criminal investigation.



Statistics provided by the agency reveal that, from January 2023 to May 2024, there were 38 criminal cases against minors over the age of 16, and involving a total of 41 individuals. Additionally, there were 138 cases involving the education supervision or social protection system (those below 16 years old) with 183

people involved. The authorities have called on citizens to improve their legal awareness and the care and education of minors. This, the bureau believes, will help prevent young people from being exploited by lawless groups and encouraged to engage in criminal acts that endanger society.

CRIME

Gambler cashes out HKD500,000 casino win, falls victim to currency exchange fraud

A mainland resident man had recently won a significant sum of money totaling HKD500,000 while gambling in Macau. To transfer those winnings to the mainland, the man connected with a stranger through an online chat group in Wechat who claimed they could facilitate the currency exchange.

Last Saturday, June 1, the victim met with a woman who completed the exchange. The man handed over HKD500,000 in return for RMB470,000. However, shortly after the transaction, the victim found his mainland bank account had been frozen.

Believing he had been

the victim of a scam, he notified the police. He then contacted the individual he exchanged money with and falsely claimed he had an additional HKD300,000 to exchange. This led police to arresting a 23-year-old unemployed mainland Chinese man at a Cotai hotel in the early hours of June 4 while his accomplices are still on the run.

The police also discovered that the suspect's mobile phone had multiple fake pictures of mainland ID cards. This was sufficient evidence of large-scale fraud, money laundering, and electronic forgery, which led to his arrest by PJ. HT

AD

WIZARDING WORLD

Harry Potter

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DAY OF PORTUGAL TO BE SPECIALLY MARKED THIS YEAR

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS, BALLOTING OVER THE WEEKEND

PORTUGAL is electing its representatives for the European Parliament. The election takes place from 6 June to 9 June and those of Portuguese citizenship can exercise their voting rights over the weekend at the Consulate-General of Portugal in Macau and Hong Kong. On June 8 (Saturday) and 9 (Sunday), balloting stations will be available for voting between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., the Consulate-General announced. No matter where they may be registered, voters can vote on any diplomatic delegation abroad or any other polling station in Portugal. To vote, citizens only need to present their Portuguese Identity Card. Portugal will elect a total of 21 representatives for the European Parliament, the same number as in the 2019 elections.

RENATO MARQUES

THE Day of Portugal (June 10), formally known as the Day of Portugal, of Camões and the Portuguese Communities, will be celebrated in Macau this year “in a special manner” according to the Consul-General of Portugal in Macau and Hong Kong, Alexandre Leitão, on behalf of the celebrations’ organizing committee.

Leitão noted that this is the ninth year of festivities since the decision to extend the celebration of the Day of Portugal into the full month of June. Since then it has been named June, the Month of Portugal.

According to Leitão, this year’s edition is “particularly symbolic, as it marks several important dates for the Portuguese Republic.”

The year also marks the five-hundredth birthday of the poet Luís Vaz de Camões, who gives his name to National Day, and the 50th anniversary of the Portuguese revolution has also recently been celebrated. This

year was also the 25 years of the Macau handover and the forty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Portugal and China.

This year’s program includes an array of activities catering to all age groups and multiple interests, with contributions from the five entities that are part of the organizing committee and over 20 other associations and institutional partners in Macau, Hong Kong, and Portugal.

The Portuguese consul-general also noted that, for the first time, the event includes a project organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau.

Besides the common activities of June 10 with the visit to the Camões Grotto in the Camões Garden and the reception at the official residence of the Consul-General, the program includes a total of 28 other activities, including 10 exhibitions, film screenings, a concert, book presentations, seminars, theatre and gastronomy festivals, among others.

SOME OF THE MOST HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES

What	When	Where
Photography Exhibition – “To the Eyes of the Youngsters (at Heart)”	June 1 to June 30	Lower ground Gallery of Casa Garden
Exhibition – Tracing Portuguese Roots	June 2 to June 30	H2H Gallery, Estrada Nossa Senhora de Ka Ho (old Leprosarium)
Exhibition and Book launching – “Macau Patterns”	June 4 to June 15	Rui Cunha Foundation
Exhibition – “Macau Forever”	June 6 to June 15	Albergue SCM – Gallery A2
Concert – “Capitão Fausto X David Huang”	June 7 8 p.m.	MGM Theater, MGM Cotai
Gastronomy – “Portugal Food and Wine Festival”	June 7 to June 16	Clube Militar de Macau
Gastronomy – “Portugal National Day Chá Gordo Buffet”	June 8 1 to 3 p.m.	Club Lusitano, Hong Kong
Official Celebrations – “Flag Raising Ceremony”	June 10 9 a.m.	Consulate-General of Portugal in Macau
Official Celebrations – “Visit to Camões Cave”	June 10 10 a.m.	Camões Garden
Official Celebrations – “Community Reception”	June 10 6:30 p.m.	Bela Vista’s Consul-General Official Residence
Gastronomy – “Portuguese Gourmet Feast”	June 12 6:30 to 10 p.m.	Baccara Room, 6th floor, Sofitel Macau Ponte 16
Exhibition – “Made with Love”	June 15 to August 4	Amagao Gallery, Artyzen Grand Lapa Lobby
Street Party – “Saint Anthony Festival”	June 15 and 16	Macau Portuguese School
Exhibition and Seminar – “Centenary of historical air trip Portugal-Macau”	June 20 to June 30	Consulate-General of Portugal in Macau
Exhibition – “10.6 – June 10 Posters”	June 23 to July 22	Casa Garden Gallery
Talk – “500 years of Portuguese language and culture in Macau. Development and changes over time”	June 24 6:30 p.m.	Stanley Ho Auditorium of the Consulate-General of Portugal in Macau
Gastronomy – “Chá Gordo Dinner”	June 24 6:30 p.m.	Club Lusitano, Hong Kong
Seminar – “Portugal Investment Environment – Young Macau Chamber of Commerce”	June 25 5:30 p.m.	Macau Chamber of Commerce, 4th floor
Film Screening – “6th Portuguese Movie Screening”	June 28 to 30	Stanley Ho Auditorium of the Consulate-General of Portugal in Macau

MGTO: Non-gaming push aims to attract wider range of tourists to Macau

STAFF REPORTER

TOURISTS visiting Macau tend to be young and female, according to Cheng Wai Tong, deputy director of the Macau Government Tourism Office.

Cheng spoke at the Asia Pacific Responsible Gaming

Forum yesterday about changes in Macau’s tourism demographics.

He said tourists from Greater China returning to Macau from January to May have rebounded to 80-90% of 2019 levels, while international visitors have recovered close to 70%, which is higher

than last year, as cited in a TDM report.

The official subsequently pointed out that the bureau has identified a substantial number of the city’s tourist arrivals as being from the younger generation and female demographic.

Meanwhile, recovery in

the international market is led by South Korea and Southeast Asian countries, reflecting Macau’s focus on attracting more international tourists in the second half of 2023.

Beyond gambling, Cheng noted tourists now come to Macau for diverse, non-ga-

ming activities such as concerts, shopping, and in-depth local tours. As a result, authorities are promoting these tourist elements.

By diversifying its appeal, Macau aims to draw tourists across demographics as the enclave recovers its lucrative tourism industry from pandemic lows over the past two years.

Late last year, a research from travel agency giant Ctrip shows that Macau was among the most popular destinations for Chinese outbound travel.

Recently, Macau was the most satisfactory destination for outbound mainland travelers in the first quarter (Q1), the China Tourism Academy (CTA) has revealed.

While this trend is predicted to last, there is also a change in demographics.

Gaming operators have also observed that visitors are increasingly coming for shopping, diverse dining experiences and other forms of entertainment – unlike in the past where the primary reason for visiting was gambling.

'WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL NATIONS LEAGUE 2024 MACAO PRESENTED BY GALAXY ENTERTAINMENT GROUP' SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED

Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG), as a long-standing and prominent supporter of the city's sports development, welcomed the successful conclusion of another international large-scale sports event at its Galaxy Arena recently. Jointly organized by the Sports Bureau of the Macau SAR Government, GEG and the Volleyball Association of Macao, China, the six-day "Women's Volleyball Nations League 2024 Macao Presented by Galaxy Entertainment Group" was held between May 28 and June 2. Featuring eight elite international volleyball teams including China, Brazil, Italy, Dominican Republic, Japan, Netherlands, Thailand and France, the tournament at the city's newest and largest indoor arena aroused a volleyball craze across Macau. Prior to the tournament, the organizers co-hosted an array of diverse extended activities to extend the volleyball enthusiasm to residents and international tourists whilst deepening sports exchanges in the community.

Group" was held between May 28 and June 2. Featuring eight elite international volleyball teams including China, Brazil, Italy, Dominican Republic, Japan, Netherlands, Thailand and France, the tournament at the city's newest and largest indoor arena aroused a volleyball craze across Macau. Prior to the tournament, the organizers co-hosted an array of diverse extended activities to extend the volleyball enthusiasm to residents and international tourists whilst deepening sports exchanges in the community.



Galaxy Arena was filled with endless cheers and applause of passionate fans in support of their beloved volleyball teams.



Different national teams competed to their best performances, showcasing the vitality and excitement of the volleyball sport, as well as the tenacity and unity of the players.



Through the event organizers, Volleyball World donated official game balls to Macau's different communities in support of the promotion of the sports development.



Brazil's volleyball players attended an autograph session at the East Square of Galaxy Macau to interact with fans.



Event organizers invited China Women's National Volleyball Team to take photos at the East Square of Galaxy Macau.



GEG invited former captain of China's Women National Volleyball Team to share insights with Macau athletes and sports representatives.



Audiences cheered for their favorite volleyball players, igniting a fervent ambience inside the Galaxy Arena, which was highly-praised for its top-notch amenities and innovative design.



Members of the China's volleyball team received tremendous support from large group of volleyball fans holding cheering banners, signs and national flags.



Local SMEs expressed gratitude to GEG for supporting them to set up booths on site, to showcase their Macau-made products, which have been well received, on the international sports event platform.

NADIA SHAW

G2E ASIA

AI & MACHINE LEARNING REVOLUTIONIZE CASINO MARKETING

IMAGINE a world where casino marketing strategies are as seamless as a well-oiled machine, where every move is calculated, every decision is informed, and every player is treated like royalty. This is where artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) come into play.

AI refers to intelligent machines that can mimic human intelligence and capabilities. ML is a subset of AI that enables machines to learn from data and make improvements, predictions, or decisions without being programmed.

At the Global Gaming (G2E) Asia Expo, Pegasystems' Nihar Joshi, Go-To-Market Lead for Asia (GTM), shared the latest advancements in AI and ML.

These cutting-edge technologies possess a great capacity to reshape the gaming industry's marketing landscape, influencing strategic decisions and operational efficiencies that drive business success.

ENHANCING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

In his presentation, Nihar Joshi emphasized the potential for AI and ML to boost casino marketing, stating that they "transform marketing metrics into business benefits."

By leveraging AI and ML algorithms, casinos can analyze player behavior and preferences to conduct predictive analysis, allowing them to forecast player behavior and optimize their marketing strategies accordingly. This includes identifying high-value players, detecting anomalies, and providing targeted promotions in the form of "nudges, offers, or nurture messages."

By harnessing these innovative technologies, casinos can now leverage vast datasets on player behavior, preferences, and demographics to pinpoint specific customer segments.

This granular understanding empowers gaming properties to tailor their marketing efforts and interactions with unparalleled precision, changing the way they connect with customers and drive loyalty.

MARKETING EFFORTS AND RESULTS

During his presentation, Joshi drew attention to a Total Economic Impact (TEI) study con-

ducted by Forrester Consulting, which examined the marketing strategies of several major operators using Pegasystems.

The study revealed that these operators have achieved significant improvements in player retention and revenue, as well as enhanced cross-selling and up-selling capabilities, as a direct result of their targeted and personalized marketing efforts leveraging AI and ML.

The study's findings were striking, with a 589% return on investment and USD677 million in revenue growth, accompanied by USD11 million in cost savings.

The results demonstrate the substantial financial benefits that the Pega 7 Platform has brought to the organization.

SMART GAMING TABLES BOOST CASINO MARKETING

Integrating AI and ML with smart casino tables amplifies the impact on marketing effectiveness.

These smart gaming tables



track player behavior in real-time, providing valuable insights into preferences and tendencies.

This data optimizes game offerings, promotions, and table layouts to maximize engagement and satisfaction.

AI-powered tables also detect potential cheating or any anomalies, ensuring a fair and secure gaming environment.

The adoption of AI and ML

in casino marketing is transforming the industry in Asia.

By leveraging these technologies, casinos can provide personalized experiences, optimize marketing strategies, and enhance customer relations.

As the gaming industry continues to evolve, the integration of AI and ML will play a vital role in driving growth, engagement, and revenue.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

G2E ASIA

Experts urge to strengthen regulations to address gambling problem

STAFF REPORTER

RESPONSIBLE gaming advocates at the 3rd Asia Pacific Responsible Gaming Forum have renewed their calls for legislative intervention to combat problem gambling on casino floors in Macau. Experts emphasize the need for government action to protect vulnerable individuals who may spend days at a time at the gambling tables.

Speaking at a panel discussion at the Global Gaming Expo (G2E) Asia, Zeng Zhong Lu, president of the Asia Pacific Association for Gambling Studies, said, "Those who are pathological and problem gamblers should be subject to legal intervention." Zeng argued for measures that can protect these vulnerable individuals and minimize the harm caused by excessive gambling. He said the Macau government needed to establish "legal standards for problem gambling" in order to provide a safer



environment for those struggling with gambling addiction.

Su Guo Jing of the Asian Responsible Gaming Alliance echoed Zeng's sentiments, urging the Macau government to consider successful practices from other jurisdictions, stating "Not all approaches are applicable in Macau, but we could evaluate their effectiveness with the help of experts." Su suggested extending the scope

of protection to individuals from outside Macau, particularly those crossing the border. Zeng agreed, saying, "Protections for residents and casino workers are already somewhat in place, but those for guests are nowhere to be seen."

Both Zeng and Su emphasized the need for legislative updates to address emerging forms of gambling and to safeguard individuals who are not residents of Macau,

saying, "The Macau government should proactively promote the legislation in this regard, as casino operators may not prioritize such measures on their own." The involvement of stakeholders and pressure from various parties can motivate companies to prioritize responsible gaming initiatives.

Liu Day Yang, Professor Emeritus at the National Taiwan University of Science and Technolo-

gy, shared his experience in the gambling industry, noting that "There are a lot of good friends" in the industry, many of whom have passed away. He emphasized the need for research and responsible practices, stating, "We don't want the existence of the gaming industry to become very popular. We don't want people to spend all their money buying lottery tickets at home. We don't want children to buy lottery tickets right after school." Yang also highlighted the potential impact of gambling addiction on individuals, citing the case of a friend who "drank a lot of whiskey every night" and "almost died" due to the issue.

Zeng and Su's calls for legislative intervention were echoed by Liu Day Yang, who stressed the importance of responsible practices and research in the gambling industry. Yang's personal experiences and concerns underscored the need for a comprehensive approach to address problem gambling in Macau.

澳門特別行政區 二十五周年紀念
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A roller coaster is pictured near the European Central Bank in Frankfurt

ECONOMY & FINANCE

EUROPE CENTRAL BANK JUMPS AHEAD OF THE FED IN LOWERING RATES

DAVID MCHUGH, FRANKFURT

THE European Central Bank cut its key interest rate yesterday by a quarter point, moving ahead of the U.S. Federal Reserve as central banks around the world lean toward lowering borrowing costs - a shift with far-reaching consequences for home buyers, savers and investors.

The ECB cut its benchmark rate to 3.75% from a record high of 4% at a meeting of the bank's

26-member rate-setting council in Frankfurt.

The ECB said in a statement that "price pressures have weakened, and inflation expectations have declined at all horizons," allowing it to start loosening credit.

The bank warned however that "wage growth is elevated, and inflation is likely to stay above target well into next year." It declined to signal how far or how fast it might cut, saying it would

decide meeting by meeting.

Analysts say the quarter-point cut on Thursday would likely not usher in a swift series of further cuts as the bank waits to make sure inflation is under control while easing credit to help the economy.

While inflation at an annual rate of 2.6% in May is well down from peak of 10.6% in October 2022, the decline has slowed in recent months and inflation even ticked up slightly from 2.4% in

April. Inflation in the services sectors, a broad category that includes everything from medical care and haircuts to hotels, restaurants and concert tickets, remains elevated at 4.1%

The move represents a switch from the onset of the inflation surge, when the Fed took the lead in tightening credit by raising rates starting in March 2022, sending mortgage costs higher but also boosting returns for savers with money in certificates of deposit or money market funds. The ECB started four months later.

Major central banks around the world now are leaning toward lowering interest rates. Central banks in smaller economies have already cut rates, including in Sweden, Switzerland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

The Bank of England's policymakers are scheduled to meet on June 20, but it's not clear whether the governing board will cut the rate from 5.25%. Japan, an economic outlier among the world big economies, has started raising rates after years of below-zero rates and low inflation.

Central bank benchmarks are a big deal for governments, companies, home buyers, investors and savers. The benchmarks influence borrowing costs across the economy, so lower rates can mean lower mortgage costs and credit card charges for consumers

Lower rates also can boost stock prices and the value of retirement accounts since they lower returns on conservative holdings like bank accounts or certificates of deposit relative to stocks, and can mean stronger economic growth that will boost corporate earnings.

The ECB's higher rates quashed a nine-year-long rally in eurozone home prices and slammed construction activity, which is highly sensitive to borrowing costs. Higher rates have also rai-

sed the up-front costs for building new renewable energy production, raising fears that high rates could slow Europe's transition away from fossil fuels under the 2015 Paris climate accords.

The inflation surge in Europe was unleashed first and foremost by Russia cutting off most natural gas supplies to the continent, and by logjams in supplies of raw materials and parts as the global economy rebounded from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although the eurozone was hit first and hardest by the Russian cutoff, the resulting energy price spike has now largely subsided and inflation fell to 2.6% in May, down from a peak of 10.6% in October 2022 and within range of the ECB's goal of 2%.

As the central bank with the world's dominant currency, what the Fed does spreads ripples far and wide. Lagarde has said however that "we are data dependent, we are not Fed dependent," although ECB officials take into account economic conditions outside Europe, including the U.S. but also Japan and China.

Widening the rate gap between Europe and the U.S. could weaken the euro against the dollar by pulling more investment money out of the eurozone and into dollar holdings in search of higher returns. That would hurt the ECB's inflation battle by making imports more expensive. But in practice the euro has actually strengthened recently — from \$1.06 in mid-April to its current level around \$1.09 — even though the ECB has telegraphed a rate shift for weeks.

The Federal Reserve faces a very different economy, one in which inflation was fueled less by the Russian energy shock than by government pandemic recovery spending, and more robust growth fueled inflation. The U.S. consumer price index is at an annual 3.4%, some way from the Fed's goal, also 2%. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

OCBC commits HKD15 billion to strengthen technology and talent in Greater China



The Overseas Chinese Banking Corporation (OCBC) has announced plans to invest HKD1.5 billion to strengthen its technology platforms and develop its business in Greater China. At a media

conference in Hong Kong, OCBC Group CEO Helen Wong said the bank aims to recruit more than 300 professionals over three years and expand its business development center in Greater

China.

The new hires would help implement OCBC's digital transformation strategy and support business growth goals. Wang Ke, president of Greater China and CEO of OCBC Bank Hong Kong, said the rapid expansion of OCBC Hong Kong exemplifies the group's focus on ASEAN-Greater China opportunities through hub operations in Singapore and Hong Kong.

The bank plans to invest HKD1 billion to build a modern technology platform using AI to boost employee productivity and achieve 90% systems standardization within three years.

SJM launches 15th anniversary of responsible gambling promotions



SJM Resorts kicked off its 15th anniversary ceremony for promoting responsible gambling on 3 June at the Grand Lisboa Palace Resort Macau in collaboration with various Macau organizations dedicated to the cause. Atten-

dees included Daisy Ho, managing director of SJM Resorts, and officials from bodies like the Social Welfare Bureau.

From June 3 to 5, an exhibition was held to highlight Macau's gaming industry efforts to pro-

mote responsible behavior over the years. The launch included interactive games and workshops organized by problem gambling support centers.

"SJM is delighted to host the inaugural event and will sustain support through education and outreach," said Ho.

SJM has worked for many years with the Yat On Responsible Gambling Counselling Centre, organizing campaigns for employees and community groups. It also partners with social services, universities and agencies using expertise to impart practices and assist those in need, complementing the Macau government's efforts.



The X2, a flying car developed by Xpeng Aeroht affiliated with automaker Xpeng, is displayed at the 2023 Smart China Expo in Chongqing

GUANGZHOU ENVISIONED AS HUB FOR 'LOW-ALTITUDE ECONOMY'

ON THE AGENDA

GUANGZHOU, at the heart of the Greater Bay Area, plans to invest over 10 billion yuan (\$1.4 billion) by 2027 in the "low-altitude economy" to boost growth. This sector includes piloted and autonomous civilian aircraft flying up to 3,000 meters, unlike commercial jetliners flying at 10,000 meters.

The investment will fund infrastructure for flying vehicles, such as airborne taxis, with over 100 takeoff and landing points and a general aviation aerodrome with a shorter runway.

The city aims to become a hub for this industry, housing companies like Xpeng AeroHT and EHang, known for their electrically powered vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft. These battery-powered

aircraft can take off, hover, and land without a runway, ideal for urban environments.

eVTOLs are expected to become popular as air taxis and private passenger vehicles, with starting prices around 1 million yuan (\$138,000), making them accessible to wealthy individuals and businesses.

According to NikkeiAsia, Nasdaq-listed EHang received a production certificate in April to mass-produce its vehicles. The company plans to partner with hotels and businesses to commercialize tourism services, with inquiries from the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Despite having the necessary type and standard airworthiness certificates, EHang still needs an air operator certificate from Chinese regulators to start operations and is working on standardization with regulators.

Xpeng AeroHT is behind in certification, with its type certificate application accepted in March and expecting approval within a year and a half, according to a senior executive.

Traditionally controlled by the air force, China's airspace policy is gradually easing as Beijing explores new growth avenues amid economic pressure. This move aligns with Guangdong's guidance to develop the province as a "world-leading industrial hub for the low-altitude economy."

An April report by CCID Consulting indicated that China's low-altitude economy market exceeded 500 billion yuan in 2023, up 33.8% year-on-year, and is expected to top 1 trillion yuan by 2026. This investment reflects Guangzhou's ambitions to lead in this innovative sector.

MDT/AGENCIES

DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

China expects 30 % surge in border crossings during

TRAVELOG

CHINA'S National Immigration Administration has projected a 32.5% year-on-year surge in border entries and exits during the upcoming Dragon Boat Festival break, with a daily average of 1.75 million crossings nationwide, according to figures re-

leased yesterday.

The Dragon Boat Festival is one of China's major traditional holidays, falling on the fifth day of the fifth month of the lunar calendar, which this year is June 10.

As the holiday immediately follows a weekend this year, people will enjoy a three-day break from June 8 to 10,

with many expected to take advantage of the period to travel.

Major aviation hubs are expected to see a steady increase in passenger traffic, and daily average arrivals and departures at Shanghai Pudong Airport are projected to reach a combined 89,000.

Land border che-

ckpoints leading to Hong Kong and Macau will also face surging traveler volumes. Luohu Port in Shenzhen City is expected to handle a daily average of 217,000 crossings, while the Gongbei checkpoint in Zhuhai City is projected to see a daily average of 320,000 crossings.

MDT/XINHUA

GBA WHAT'S ON



Zhuhai QUADRO NUEVO

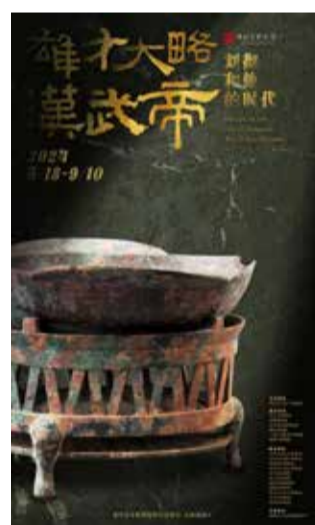
From traditional Chinese melodies to the ethnic rhythms of Central Asia, and from the unique beats of the Balkan Peninsula to the romantic vibes of the Mediterranean, the band explores a musical journey rich in diversity. With their signature fusion jazz style, they reinterpret classic music pieces from these regions. While preserving the original ethnic characteristics, their renditions incorporate the improvisation and innovative spirit of jazz, creating a uniquely blended musical experience.

June 10, 2024 Zhuhai Huafa & CPAA Grand Theatre, HuaFa&-CAPP Shizimen CBD Nanwan Avenue, Zhuhai

Dongguan THE REALM OF MEANING

Mark your calendars for the opening ceremony of the "Chinese Fans: Beauty in Motion - Contemporary Masters Fan Painting Exhibition 2024" at the Lingnan Art Museum on Saturday, May 18, 2024, at 7.30pm. Stay tuned for more updates!

Until June 16, 2024 Lingnan Art Museum, No.1 Keyuan North Road, Guancheng Street, Dongguan



Zhongshan HEROES IN THE ERA OF EMPEROR WU OF HAN DYNASTY

Discover the culinary secrets of ancient times! Join us on May 18 at Zhongshan Museum to explore the fascinating world of Yangxin Family Dyed Kitchenware, a unique fusion of cooking utensils and tableware from the Han Dynasty, owned by Princess Yangxin, the sister of Emperor Wu of Han. Experience first-hand how this historical artifact was used to prepare exquisite delicacies.

Until September 10, 2024 Zhongshan Museum, No.197 Sunwen Middle Road, Shiqi

Hong Kong SCHOOL OF ROCK THE MUSICAL

School of Rock the Musical is a rock musical with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Glenn Slater, and a book by Julian Fellowes. Based on the 2003 hit movie of the same name, starring Jack Black and written by Mike White, this hilarious and irresistible musical follows Dewey Finn, a failed, wannabe rock star who decides to earn an extra bit of cash by posing as a substitute teacher at a prestigious prep school. There, he turns a class of straight-A students into a guitar-shredding, bass-slapping mind-blowing rock band.



May 25 - June 16, 2024 Tickets available at Cityline Lyric Theatre, Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts

POLITICS

CPPCC vows to contribute to developing socialist market economy

XINHUA REPORTER, BEIJING

CHINA'S top political advisor Wang Huning said the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) will make active contributions to developing a high-standard socialist market economy.

Wang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the CPPCC National Committee, made the remarks at the closing meeting of the seventh session of the Standing Committee of the 14th CPPCC National Commi-



The seventh meeting of the Standing Committee of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) opens in Beijing this week

tee yesterday.

He noted that since the 18th CPC National Congress was held in 2012, the CPC leadership has

prioritized upholding and improving the socialist market economy in deepening reform across the board, with a series

of significant measures taken.

With a focus on advancing Chinese modernization and refining the systems underpinning the market economy, the CPPCC should conduct in-depth research and consultation, enhance democratic oversight and build broad consensus to make suggestions on and contribute to developing a high-standard socialist market economy, Wang said.

After the closing meeting, Yin Shouyi, vice-dean of the School of Integrated Circuits at Tsinghua University, gave a lecture on the prospect and challenge of China's chip industry. XINHUA

SOUTH CHINA SEA

JAPAN, US, S.KOREAN COAST GUARDS HOLD FIRST JOINT DRILL OFF JAPAN'S COAST

JAPANESE, U.S. and South Korean coast guard vessels conducted their first three-way drill yesterday off Japan's coast as the countries strengthen their maritime ties in response to increased assertiveness by China in pressing its territorial claims.

Skirmishes between Chinese and Philippine coast guard vessels have escalated in the South China Sea, triggering fears that the disputes could escalate to an armed conflict between China and the United States, a longtime ally of the Philippines.

Yesterday's joint drill followed an agreement by the leaders of the three countries last August to enhance security cooperation to safe-

guard peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Patrol vessels from each country and two helicopters joined search and rescue operations in waters off the northern coast of Maizuru in Kyoto prefecture, based on a scenario of rescuing crew members from a South Korean ship that caught fire after colliding with another boat, the Japanese coast guard said.

Coast guards from Japan, the United States and South Korea signed an agreement last month to work together to preserve maritime resources, counter illegal fishing, conduct search and rescue operations and improve maritime law enforcement capabilities in the region. MDT/AP

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C&C RECEIVED THE 1ST SILVER
"DEIGNAN AWARD"
FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN MACAU (2023)





South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and his wife Kim Keon Hee salute during a ceremony to mark the 69th Memorial Day at the Seoul National Cemetery, yesterday

SOUTH KOREA

Group flies propaganda leaflets across border following North's trash-balloon launches

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

A South Korean activists' group said yesterday it flew large balloons carrying propaganda leaflets toward North Korea, although the North has threatened to send more balloons with manure and trash across the border in response to such campaigns.

The launches are escalating animosities, with South Korea suspending a tension-easing deal with North Korea and preparing to resume frontline mili-

tary activities. North Korea had halted its flights of rubbish-carrying balloons but threatened to resume them if South Korean activists sent leaflets again.

The South Korean civilian group, led by North Korean defector Park Sang-hak, said it floated 10 balloons tied to 200,000 anti-Pyongyang leaflets, USB sticks with K-pop songs and South Korean dramas and one-dollar U.S. bills from a border town yesterday.

Park's long-running balloon activities have caused furious

protests from North Korea, which is extremely wary of any outside attempt to undermine Kim Jong Un's rule.

The North's state media previously called Park "human scum without an equal in the world."

After North Korea started launching hundreds of trash-carrying balloons on South Korea last week, Kim's powerful sister, Kim Yo Jong, said the campaign was meant to carry out the North's threat to conduct a tit-for-tat action against a South Korean

leaflet. Observers say North Korea was referring to Park's previous balloon activities in May.

"We sent the truth and love, medicines, one-dollar bills and songs. But a barbaric Kim Jong Un sent us filth and garbage and he hasn't made a word of apology over that," Park said in a statement.

"Our group, the Fighters for Free North Korea, will keep sending our leaflets, which are the letters of truth and freedom for our beloved North Korean compatriots."

North Korea's balloon campaign was seen as an attempt to cause a divide in South Korea over its conservative government's tough policy on the North.

South Korean officials say they have no legal grounds to ban private citizens from flying balloons to North Korea, after the country's constitutional court last year struck down a law criminalizing such leafleting as a violation of free speech.

In reaction to the North's balloon campaign, South Korea fully suspended a 2018 tension-easing agreement with North Korea. The suspension allows South Korea to restart live-firing exercises and anti-Pyongyang propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts at border areas, actions that are certain to enrage North Korea and prompt it to launch its own military steps.

"Recently, North Korea carried out a despicable provocation that would make any normal country ashamed of itself," South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said in a Memorial Day speech in Seoul yesterday. "The government will never overlook the threat from North Korea. We will maintain an ironclad readiness posture and respond to provocations resolutely and overwhelmingly."

In an apparent show of force against North Korea on Wednesday, the United States flew a B-1B bomber over the Korean Peninsula for its first precision-guided bombing drill with South Korea in seven years.

North Korea has previously responded to such flyovers of advanced U.S. aircraft with provocative missile tests.

Since 2022, North Korea has aggressively intensified its weapons tests in what analysts call an attempt to expand its nuclear arsenal and wrest greater outside concessions when diplomacy resumes with the United States. **MDT/AP**



Rescuers from the coast guard (orange shirts) carry a survivor of a vessel that caught fire at the vicinity waters off Naga City, Cebu

PHILIPPINES

Boat explosion and fire at sea kills six fishermen as six others are rescued

guard officials said yesterday.

The survivors, including the skipper of the F/B King Bryan, were still being treated at a hospital or were too traumatized to tell investigators what set off the explosion Wednesday night about 8 kilometers off Naga city in Cebu province, coast guard officials said.

One of the injured crewmen was in critical condi-

tion at a hospital, the coast guard said.

Video and pictures issued by the coast guard show flames and smoke billowing from the fishing boat as rescuers scanned the waters in the darkness. Crewmembers with burn injuries are carried to safety by coast guard personnel.

The wooden-hulled boat, which had bamboo

outriggers, apparently developed engine trouble before an explosion and a fire engulfed the vessel, injuring crewmembers and forcing others to jump into the sea in panic. A passing tugboat helped put out the blaze and a coast guard search and rescue operation was launched, coast guard officials said.

Sea accidents are common in the Philippine ar-

chipelago because of frequent storms, poorly maintained boats, overcrowding and spotty enforcement of safety regulations.

In December 1987, an overcrowded ferry, the Dona Paz, sank after colliding with a fuel tanker, killing more than 4,300 people in the world's worst peacetime sea disaster regarded by some as Asia's Titanic. **MDT/AP**

An explosion and fire on a wooden fishing boat at sea killed six Filip-

no crewmembers while six others were rescued in the nighttime darkness, coast

AP PHOTO



Chancellor Olaf Scholz takes part in a Bundestag German Parliament session in Berlin yesterday

GERMANY

Chancellor vows to deport criminals following brutal attack by Afghan migrant

KIRSTEN GRIESHABER,
BERLIN

CHANCELLOR Olaf Scholz vowed that Germany will start deporting criminals from Afghanistan and Syria again after a knife attack by an Afghan immigrant last week left one police officer dead and four more people injured.

The brutal attack in Mannheim, which was captured on video and quickly went viral online, shocked the country.

Scholz addressed parliament in a speech focused on security yesterday, just days before European elections in which far-right populists across the continent are expected to make big gains.

"It outrages me when someone who has sought protection here commits the most serious crimes. Such criminals should be deported, even if they come from Syria and Afghanistan," the chancellor said to the applause of lawmakers.

The 25-year-old attacker, who killed a 29-year-old police officer who was trying to stop him, came to Germany in 2014 as an asylum-seeker.

"Serious criminals and terrorist threats have no place here," Scholz added. "In such cases, Germany's se-

curity interests outweigh the interests of the perpetrator."

Migration has been one of the major topics during the European election campaign that far-right and mainstream parties have been exploiting in order to garner votes from Europeans who have felt disgruntled by millions of new arrivals looking for refuge from wars, hunger, climate change or just trying to build up a better future for themselves.

Referring to Friday's knife attack, Scholz said that "what happened in Mannheim — the fatal knife attack on a young policeman — is an expression of the misanthropic ideology of radical Islamism. There is only one term for this: terror. Let's declare war to terror."

Germany does not currently carry out any deportations to Afghanistan or Syria. The German government does not have any diplomatic relations with the Taliban in Kabul, and considers the security situation in Syria too fragile to allow deportations there.

However, the chancellor said in his speech that his government was already working on solutions to enable the deportation of convicted Afghans to Afghanistan's neighboring countries.

There have been discussion in Germany about allowing deportations to Syria again.

Scholz also promised that deportation rules for all others who commit or support terrorism will be toughened as well.

It is not clear how fast, if at all, the German government will be able to execute more deportations of criminal foreigners as the country's cumbersome bureaucracy often slows down any political decisions.

"The time of warnings and condemnations, of denials and announcements, that time is now over," said Friedrich Merz, the opposition leader from the conservative Christian Democrats. "People expect us to act. They expect decisions."

Britta Hasselmann, the parliamentary leader of the the environmental Greens, which are part of Scholz' governing coalition, questioned how realistic the chancellor's deportation plans were.

She said it would be difficult to negotiate a deportation agreement with the Taliban or Afghanistan's neighboring countries.

"It will have to be (...) examined for which third country it should be attractive to take in terrorists or serious criminals. I am looking

forward to seeing what answers we come up with," she said.

Many Germans initially welcomed migrants when more than 1 million people from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq came in 2015-16 following wars and instability in their home countries, but the mood has changed in recent years.

Germany's far-right Alternative for Germany, or AfD, has successfully exploited some Germans' concerns about the newcomers. However, in recent months, millions of Germans went out to the streets to protest radical plans by the far-right to deport millions of immigrants, even those with German passports, should they come to power.

A series of scandals involving the party's top candidates in the European elections pointing to their alleged closeness to Russia and China, as well as one of the party's top leaders' repeated use of Nazi slogans, have seen the party slump in recent polls.

Scholz and his Social Democrats as well as other mainstream parties have been trying to depict themselves as tough on migration and radical Islam in hopes that voters won't turn to AfD to tackle issues related to migration. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1981 ISRAEL BOMBS BAGHDAD NUCLEAR REACTOR



The Israelis have bombed a French-built nuclear plant near Iraq's capital, Baghdad, saying they believed it was designed to make nuclear weapons to destroy Israel.

It is the world's first air strike against a nuclear plant.

An undisclosed number of F-15 interceptors and F-16 fighter bombers destroyed the Osirak reactor 18 miles south of Baghdad, on the orders of Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

The army command said all the Israeli planes returned safely.

The 70-megawatt uranium-powered reactor was near completion but had not been stocked with nuclear fuel so there was no danger of a leak, according to sources in the French atomic industry.

The Israeli Government explained its reasons for the attack in a statement saying: "The atomic bombs which that reactor was capable of producing whether from enriched uranium or from plutonium, would be of the Hiroshima size. Thus a mortal danger to the people of Israel progressively arose."

It acted now because it believed the reactor would be completed shortly - either at the beginning of July or the beginning of September 1981.

The Israelis criticised the French and Italians for supplying Iraq with nuclear materials and pledged to defend their territory at all costs.

The statement said: "We again call upon them to desist from this horrifying, inhuman deed. Under no circumstances will we allow an enemy to develop weapons of mass destruction against our people."

The attack took place on a Sunday, they said, to prevent harming the French workers at the site who would have taken the day off.

There have been no reported casualties.

The Osirak reactor is part of a complex that includes a second, smaller reactor - also French-built - and a Soviet-made test reactor already in use. Cent' anni, M.!

Iraq denies the reactor was destined to produce nuclear weapons.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

News of the audacious raid did not actually emerge until 24 hours later when Israel made its announcement. Only then did Iraq admit it had happened and express indignation.

One of the pilots involved was Ilan Ramon who trained as Israel's first astronaut but was killed in the Columbia shuttle disaster in 2003.

Two weeks after the Osirak attack Israel admitted it had the capability of developing its own nuclear weapons.

And in 1986, Mordechai Vanunu, a former nuclear technician was found guilty of espionage after he told a British newspaper, the Sunday Times, that Israel was secretly building atomic bombs. French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac cultivated France's special relationship with Iraq during the 1970s to maintain an influence in a region dominated by Anglo-Saxons and boost trade links with the oil-rich nation.

He led the universal condemnation of Israel's attack on Osirak.

Then, 22 years later - as French president - Mr Chirac was vehemently against the USA and Britain going to war with Iraq over the issue of weapons of mass destruction.

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Possibilities spark in conversation over this two-week New Moon phase. Profit through communications. Creative projects flower. Express, share and connect. Write your story.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Discover fresh markets and rising prosperity as you begin a lucrative New Moon phase. Strengthen financial foundations for growth. Rake in a healthy harvest.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Pursue personal dreams. Expand talents, capacities and skills over two weeks with the New Moon in your sign. Grow and develop. Shine your light.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Insights, breakthroughs and revelations sparkle in tonight's New Moon. Dreams seem within reach. Enjoy a two-week creative, imaginative and organizational phase. Imagine possibilities.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Teamwork generates big results. Grow through friendships, social networks and community participation. Have fun together.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
This New Moon reveals professional opportunities. Develop interesting projects over the next two weeks. Your career, status and influence rise. Pursue exciting possibilities.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Consider new perspectives. Educational opportunities arise following tonight's New Moon. Make connections, contributions and discoveries.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Find creative ways to grow your family nest egg. A lucrative two-week phase dawns with tonight's New Moon. Launch valuable initiatives with your partner.

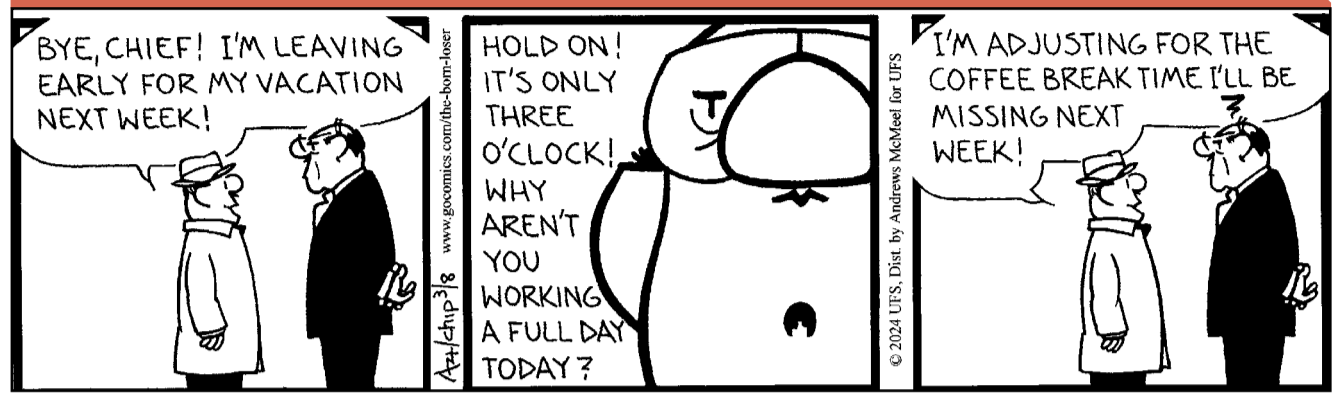
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Collaboration comes naturally, especially over two weeks following this Gemini New Moon. You're on the same wavelength. Take your partnership to the next level.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Energize your physical moves. This New Moon initiates two weeks of growing work, health and strength. Put your heart into your actions. Practice makes perfect.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Enjoy yourself. Stir up some romance. The New Moon begins a two-week family, fun and passion phase. Get creative. It's all for love.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Realize domestic visions with upgrades over a two-week New Moon phase. Get creative. Improve the beauty and functionality of your home. Nurture family.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	20	25	rain
Changchun	18	24	rain
Chengdu	19	28	cloudy
Chongqing	21	27	rain
Fuzhou	20	28	overcast
Guangzhou	23	29	rain
Guiyang	17	21	rain
Haikou	25	33	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	17	25	cloudy
Harbin	20	27	cloudy
Hefei	16	25	cloudy
Nanjing	17	26	overcast
Shanghai	18	26	cloudy
Taipei	22	27	rain
Wuhan	20	29	cloudy
Hong Kong	25	27	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	13	24	thunderstorms
Frankfurt	9	23	cloudy
Paris	11	22	sunny
London	10	19	cloudy
New York	17	29	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Scorch; 5- Oklahoma city; 10- Mah-jongg piece; 14- Autumn tool; 15- Unfolds; 16- Periods; 17- Speaker of Cooperstown; 18- Blue book filler; 19- Ages and ages; 20- Sleep problem; 22- Absence of sound; 24- Banned apple spray; 27- Moon goddess; 28- Namely; 32- Strength; 35- Sun, talk; 36- Miss America topper; 38- Tractor pioneer John; 40- Russian ruler; 42- Hand tool; 44- Gather; 45- More rational; 47- Sleight of hand; 49- Caustic substance; 50- Jockey; 52- Ball game; 54- Neighbor of Cambodia; 56- Supplements, with "out"; 57- Creatures; 60- Ham it up; 64- Sleep like ___; 65- Profundity; 68- Like the Sabin vaccine; 69- Interlock; 70- Potato-growing state; 71- Capone nemesis; 72- I'd hate to break up ___; 73- Ruhr city; 74- Medicinal amount;

DOWN 1- Mex. miss; 2- Tombstone name; 3- Related by blood; 4- Close up again; 5- Wing-tip tip; 6- FedEx rival; 7- Minus; 8- Gastropod mollusk; 9- Institution for mentally ill; 10- Mall-goer, often; 11- High-performance Camaro; 12- Highway division; 13- Slalom curve; 21- Dismounted; 23- Novelist Bagnold; 25- Not base; 26- Give guns again; 28- Concordes; 29- Actor Romero; 30- Teheran native; 31- Experiment; 33- Backs of feet; 34- Cafeteria items; 37- Pond scum; 39- Foil alternative; 41- Signal to stop; 43- Prepare a stamp; 46- Paper quantity; 48- Canadian First Nation; 51- Band aide; 53- Donny or Marie; 55- Snow conveyances; 57- Pub offerings; 58- It runs in the cold; 59- Pampering places; 61- Black-and-white cookie; 62- Soviet news agency; 63- Or ___; 64- Doc's bloc; 66- Common article; 67- Darlin'.

Yesterday's solution

A	S	C	A	P	C	H	A	R	V	I	N	E
M	I	A	T	A	R	O	T	O	A	D	O	S
B	A	R	E	R	U	N	T	O	N	E	S	S
I	M	P	E	D	I	M	E	N	T	I	S	E
O	R	B	S	I	T	S						
C	H	U	T	N	E	A	I	R	H	E	A	D
R	E	N	D	S	A	L	K	A	L	G	E	
E	L	I	S	O	L	D	I	E	S	C	A	T
A	G	O	A	L	F	E	S	U	I	T	E	
M	A	N	M	A	D	E	S	P	E	N	D	E
R	O	O	M	I	N	T	E	N	T	I	O	N
A	R	A	B	M	A	R	E	S	T	E	S	
G	E	R	E	S	E	R	E	S	T	A	T	
H	E	R	E	S	T	A	N	E	T			

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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

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AP PHOTO



Dakota Johnson in a scene from "Am I Ok?" (James Clark/Max)

DRIVE IN

DAKOTA JOHNSON BRINGS HER WINNING AUTHENTICITY TO SWEET FRIENDSHIP COMEDY 'AM I OK?'

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 TOWN FOR THIS YEAR'S MACAU LITERARY FESTIVAL



創刊17周年
17 YEARS OF PUBLISHING

JOCELYN NOVECK,
MDT/AP

WE start — why not? — with a veggie burger.

Lucy (Dakota Johnson) and Jane (Sonoya Mizuno), besties in their 30s, have been so close for so long that when they meet at the diner, Jane can just recite Lucy's regular order: Veggie burger and sweet potato fries.

And so when, late into "Am I Ok?," Lucy goes rogue and orders a tomato and spinach omelet, there's a look of subtle hurt that flits across Jane's face. It seems silly — it was just a veggie burger — but to Jane it signifies something familiar and comforting that's now gone.

There are similarly sweet, subtle touches peppered through this debut directorial effort by Tig Notaro and Stephanie Allynne — touches that land much better than the occasional attempts at broad humor that feel forced, or at least like a different movie (for example, the dialogue given to Jane's boss, played by Sean Hayes).

And of course, there's Johnson herself, the obvious focus of the lingering camera throughout, and for good reason: her always-winning authenticity, shining through

in film after film even at times when the material around her feels thin.

The story here is simple and heartfelt. It's a coming-out tale, but with the twist that the person coming out is 32, a decade (or even two) later than in most stories we see.

This particular story belongs to the film's writer, Lauren Pomerantz, who came out when she was 34. Her closeness to the proceedings is evident in a few startlingly poignant moments — for example, the pain that Lucy feels when a straight woman toys with her emotions (and more). It's one of the most moving passages in the film.

After an opening montage that establishes the female friendship at the core of the movie, we begin at the aforementioned diner, with Jane telling Lucy (over the aforementioned veggie burger) that she really needs to get together with a certain cute male friend who obviously likes her: "Just do it," she says. Lucy can't explain why she doesn't want to.

Meanwhile, Jane, the more professionally advanced of the two, has a major life change coming. Her boss offers her the chance to leave Los Angeles and set up a London office. Plus, her

very nice boyfriend (Jermaine Fowler, not given enough to work with for too much of the film) is coming along. But for Lucy, this news is devastating — and you can tell by the unconvincing way she keeps saying "Awesome!" when Jane tells her one evening over drinks.

After lots of tequila, the two friends end up crying together, as close friends do (at least in the movies) in the bathroom while peeing, and then later, on a sleepover. There, Lucy finally tells Jane that she likes girls.

Jane is nothing if not supportive. In fact, ever ambitious, she tells Lucy she'll be "the star of the lesbian community." And she resolves to help her find a woman, starting with an excursion to a gay bar. However, it's Jane who winds up kissing a woman on the dance floor. Lucy flees, embarrassed.

But there's this sensual masseuse (Kiersey Clemons) at the spa where Lucy's a receptionist. Brittany is flirting like crazy with Lucy, who finally gets up the courage to respond. She brings Lucy out of her shell, but with ultimately disheartening results. And Lucy's on the outs now with Jane, normally the first person she'd call with any heartache.

This movie may be about a pair of friends, but witnessing the supremely watchable Johnson navigate uncertainty and sadness, it's Lucy's life you'll find yourself caring about most. A last-minute obstacle to Jane's well-laid plans for her trip to London rings a bit false — or maybe it just seems wedged in as if to say, well, both women have issues.

In any case, it's been a good month for female buddy comedies. While Pamela Adlon's comedy "Babes," went all in for the raunch inherent in childbirth, "Am I Ok?" goes for a sweeter, soulful vibe. It feels good that we end up where we began — back at that table in the diner, hashing stuff out. The ultimate message here may be simple, but it's comforting: friendships may change but can still adapt, withstand and survive.

Even when a veggie burger yields to an omelet.

"Am I Ok?," a Warner Bros release, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association "for language, sexual references and some drug use." Running time: 86 minutes. ★★☆☆

BOCUSE D'OR

Macau chef wins championship in China culinary competition

MACAU chef Oscar Wang won the championship in the Bocuse d'Or 2024 China Selection, which ended in Guangzhou, earlier this week.

Wang, who defeated seven other chefs in the China selection finals, will now represent the country in the Asia-Pacific division of the Bocuse d'Or competition, aiming to qualify for the global finals to be held in Lyon, France, next year.

"During the monthlong period from being told I had qualified for the finals to standing on the finals stage, the tense and challenging preparation process not only improved my cooking skills but also honed my willpower," said Wang from the Sheraton Grand Macao and St. Regis Macao.

Wang, 40, said he would continue to train hard and constantly improve to achieve a good result in the Asia-Pacific finals to bring glory to his motherland, and will also act as a food ambassador to promote cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world.

In the finals of the China selection, Wang used water spinach, which is rarely found in Western cuisine, to make sauces paired with spices such as pepper oil, thyme and rosemary.

The prestigious Bocuse d'Or competition is sometimes called the "culinary Olympics".

Stefan Stiller, president of Bocuse d'Or Academy China, said it built a stage for chefs to demonstrate their cooking skills and exchange ideas and was a launchpad from which they could venture onto the international stage.

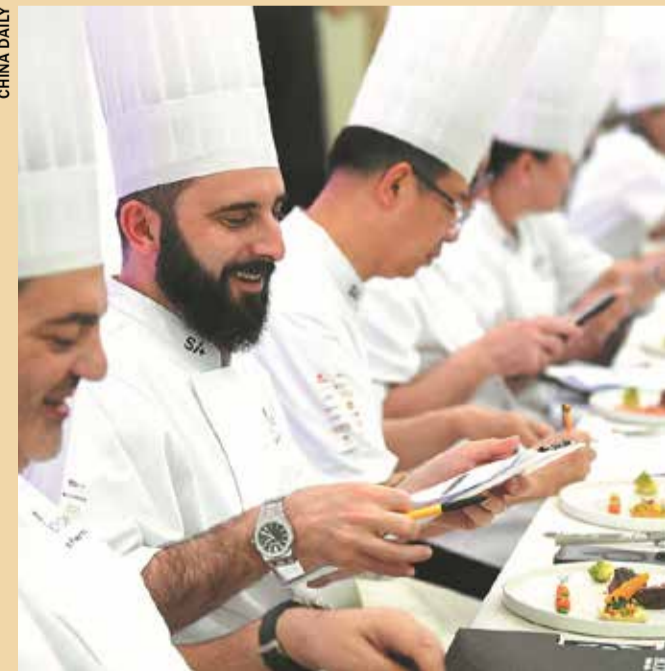
Jiang Guoyuan, deputy Party chief and general manager of Guangzhou Lingnan Group, said this year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and France, and is also the China-France cultural and tourism year.

As an important Sino-foreign cultural exchange activity, it would also inject strong momentum into Guangzhou's efforts to become a world-class tourist destination and an international consumer center, he said.

The Guangdong provincial capital has been dubbed one of China's "gastronomic capitals", he added.

Feng Qi, secretary-general of the Guangzhou Western Food Association, said cooking is not only a skill, but also a culture, an art and an attitude toward life.

MDT/CHINA DAILY



Judges of the Bocuse d'Or 2024 China Selection taste and score the dishes cooked by contestants in Guangzhou



Chef Hironori Satake



TASTE OF EDESIA

Sushi Heaven

IRENE SAM, MDT

GALAXY Macau announces the highly-anticipated opening of **Sushi Kissho by Miyakawa** this June, the first international outpost founded by the renowned Chef Masaaki Miyakawa and led by Executive Chef, Hironori Satake. With an impressive legacy as one of the five Japan-based sushi masters to have held three MICHELIN stars, Chef Miyakawa brings his unparalleled expertise in edomae sushi to the heart of Raffles at Galaxy Macau.

Derived from the Japanese word for "auspicious," Sushi Kissho by Miyakawa embodies the essence of wabi-sabi - the Japanese art of finding beauty in simplicity - in each meticulously crafted piece of sushi. Chef Miyakawa's philosophy emphasises sourcing the finest seasonal ingredients directly from Japan, ensuring every bite is a testament to peak freshness and fla-

avour. Led by the seasons, the dynamic omakase menu at Sushi Kissho by Miyakawa promises returning patrons a uniquely exceptional experience with every visit.

At Sushi Kissho by Miyakawa, a deep-rooted philosophy centers on a profound appreciation for nature's seasons, a relentless pursuit of freshness, and a dedication to the art of sushi-making. Central to the restaurant's mission is the pivotal role of its highly skilled sushi chefs, trained by Miyakawa himself and with a collective 98 years of expertise, including Hironori Satake, who helms Sushi Kissho by Miyakawa. Rigorous training spanning decades to master the intricate techniques, from rice preparation to knife skills, guarantees that each piece of sushi is crafted with the utmost precision and care.

Chef Miyakawa expertly blends Edomae sushi tradition with Hokkaido influences, showcasing his refined skills from years in tradi-

tional Japanese cuisine. With a focus on delicate small plates accentuating umami, every dish reflects a harmonious balance of flavours and textures. Emphasising the importance of perfectly seasoned shari rice, Miyakawa ensures that each sushi piece shines with the essence of the ingredients, offering a culinary journey that embodies his love for the craft.

Renowned as one of only six sushi masters in Japan to have attained three Michelin stars and only two worldwide, Chef Masaaki Miyakawa has made his mark on the global culinary scene with the debut of his first restaurant outside Japan, Sushi Kissho by Miyakawa at Raffles at Galaxy Macau. Central to Miyakawa's ethos is his unwavering commitment to sourcing the finest seasonal ingredients directly from Japan, ensuring each piece of fish achieves peak levels of freshness and flavour.

Chef Miyakawa, hailing from a rural Hokkaido town outside Asahikawa, displayed early craftsmanship skills despite his family's non-culinary background. After graduating from high school, his passion for sushi led him

to Sushiden Kenzen in Tokyo, where he met his future mentor and master, the three MICHELIN starred chef of Sushi Yoshitake. After seven years and a stint back in Hokkaido, Miyakawa's love for engaging with diners inspired his approach to hospitality. He diversified his expertise by training in fine French cuisine before returning to sushi. A pivotal moment at the age of 40 presented Miyakawa with an opportunity to work closely with his mentor in Sushi Yoshitake's Hong Kong outpost, culminating in the restaurant's three-star distinction in 2014.

Upon returning to Hokkaido, Chef Miyakawa founded his eponymous restaurant Sushi Miyakawa in 2014, achieving three Michelin stars in a remarkable three-year span by 2017. Miyakawa is the only Hokkaido-based sushi chef to have been awarded 3 Michelin stars. He launched Sushi Shin by Miyakawa in Niseko in 2017, followed by Sushi Shin by Miyakawa at Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo in 2019, and continues to shape the realm of sushi dining with his impeccable approach to artistry and culinary mastery.

OPINION

Multipolar World

Jorge Costa Oliveira



FOR WHOM THE MEDIA BELLS DO NOT TOLL

Data from various reputable organizations – the Global Conflict Tracker of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), and the World Population Review – show there are currently serious armed conflicts worldwide. Some are ongoing, while others are at a stalemate, leaving a vast trail of victims and misery.

From the wars between Russia and Ukraine and between Israel and Hamas to civil wars in Myanmar (34,000 dead in 2022-2023), Sudan (13,000 dead in 2023), Somalia (8,000 dead in 2023), Ethiopia/Tigray (100,000 dead in 2022-2023), the Central African Republic (1,300 dead in 2022-2023), Libya, Syria (6,000 dead in 2023), Yemen (10,000 dead in 2022-2023), Afghanistan (5,000 dead in 2022-2023), to terrorist insurgencies in Nigeria (18,000 dead in 2022-2023), Mali (9,000 dead in 2022-2023), Burkina Faso (12,000 dead in 2022-2023), the Democratic Republic of Congo (10,000 dead in 2022-2023), Cameroon (2,000 dead in 2022-2023), Niger (2,000 dead in 2022-2023), Mozambique (1,200 dead in 2022-2023), Iraq (3,200 dead in 2022-2023), to wars with drug cartels in Mexico (14,000 dead in 2022-2023) and Colombia (4,000 dead in 2022-2023) and criminal gangs in Haiti (3,500 dead in 2022-2023), to border conflicts between Afghanistan and Pakistan (4,000 dead in 2022-2023) or between China and India.

However, in the media and on social networks, news primarily focus on the war in Ukraine and the war between Israel and Hamas.

Unlike in the US – where the media cover national problems of a continent-country and little more (including Israel) – in Europe, there are a series of media outlets committed to providing good and comprehensive coverage of international events. However, in most newspapers and TV news channels, there is a blatant disinterest in the 17.7 million people that OCHA (a UN structure) estimates are currently facing acute hunger in Sudan, as well as the tens – if not hundreds – of thousands of deaths in Ethiopia/Tigray and the generality of wars, mortality, and suffering in Africa or Asia.

Since there is no curiosity or interest from the Western public regarding these conflicts, journalists are not sent to cover them, thus perpetuating the near invisibility of these conflicts in the media. Without media coverage, we also do not see Western university students tearing their clothes over these causes – or lifting a finger – on campuses or in demonstrations.

Regarding social networks, Diakopoulos teaches that “[we tend] to act based on the psychological predisposition to just expose ourselves to things we agree with,” which is facilitated and catalyzed by the algorithms of Google, Meta, and X, so nothing about these wars is shown to us.

The reason these numerous armed conflicts, with their cortege of deaths, suffering and misery, are unknown to the vast majority of people is that they do not receive adequate media attention, and they do not because the public has no particular curiosity or interest in remote “fly-ridden countries.” For these millions of dead and wounded, refugees, displaced, destitute, and starving people, the media bells do not toll.

[linkedin.com/in/jorgecostaoliveira](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jorgecostaoliveira)

Robinhood Markets Inc. is buying cryptocurrency exchange Bitstamp for about \$200 million in cash as the company looks to speed up its cryptocurrency expansion globally.

Bitstamp, founded in 2011, has offices in Luxembourg, the UK, Slovenia, Singapore, and the US. It has more than 50 active licenses and registrations worldwide and customers across the European Union, United Kingdom, United States and Asia.

Robinhood said yesterday that this will be its first institutional business.

“Bitstamp’s highly trusted and long standing global exchange has shown resilience through market cycles.”

By seamlessly coupling customer experience with safety across geographies, the Bitstamp team has established one of the strongest reputations across retail and institutional crypto investors,” Johann Kerbrat, general manager of Robinhood Crypto, said in a statement.

“Through this strategic combination, we are better positioned to expand our footprint outside of the U.S. and welcome institutional customers to Robinhood.”

The deal is expected to close in the first half of next year.

The news comes a month after Robinhood Markets announced that it had received a notice from the Securities and Exchange Commission about alleged securities violations at its crypto division.

AP PHOTO



Aisha Aliyu, 36-year-old mother of five, is photographed with her children in Kaltungo Poshereng Nigeria

UN SAYS A QUARTER OF THE WORLD’S CHILDREN UNDER 5 SUFFER FROM SEVERE FOOD POVERTY, MOST IN AFRICA

CHINEDU ASADU, KALTUNGO

THE 9-month-old twins cried nonstop and tugged at their mother, seeking food. They had received little in the past 24 hours, showing signs of deeper hunger with heads too big for their tiny bodies. Dorcas Simon, 38, struggles to breastfeed them and has three other children. “Not much milk comes out,” she said. “What will I give them when I don’t have food myself?”

In northern Nigeria, where conflict and climate change exacerbate food shortages, her twins are among 181 million children under 5 globally living in severe food poverty, according to a new U.N. report. This report, focusing on nearly 100 low- and middle-income countries, defines severe food poverty as consuming nothing or, at best, two out of eight recognized food groups in a day.

Africa’s population of more than 1.3 billion people is highly affected, accounting for one-third of the global burden and 13 of the 20 most affected countries. Despite this, progress has been made. In West and Central Africa, the percentage of children in severe food poverty fell from 42% to 32% over the

last decade due to diversified crops and performance-based health worker incentives.

Without vital nutrients, children with “extremely poor” diets face life-threatening malnutrition, known as wasting. “When wasting becomes very severe, they are 12 times more likely to die,” said Harriet Torlesse, one of the report’s authors.

In communities like Kaltungo, UNICEF trains thousands of women to boost their families’ nutrient intake using crops like cassava, sweet potato, maize, millet, and home-grown vegetables, and rearing livestock. More than a dozen women in Kaltungo’s Poshereng village recently learned new recipes using these foods, which can be grown in sand-filled sacks requiring little water.

Nigeria faces its worst cost-of-living crisis, making home-grown food essential. Aisha Aliyu, 36, said her youngest child “used to be skinny but is growing fatter” due to their home-grown food. Hauwa Bwami, 50, nearly lost her grandchild to severe protein malnutrition before UNICEF training a year ago. Now, she grows enough food to sell to others.

Kaltungo, in a semi-a-

rid agricultural region, has seen limited rainfall due to climate change, leading to past deaths from acute malnutrition. The training “is like answered prayers for me,” Simon said, but it can be a harsh lesson. Florence Victor, 59, helplessly watched her nine-month-old grandchild die from malnutrition in 2022.

Malnutrition weakens immune systems, making children vulnerable to fatal diseases. In the Sahel, a hot spot for extremism, acute malnutrition has reached emergency levels due to displacement and climate change, forcing families to eat leaves and locusts to survive, said Alfred Ejem of Mercy Corps. In conflict-hit Sudan, severe malnutrition claims many children’s lives.

In Nigeria’s troubled northwest, Doctors Without Borders reported at least 850 children died last year within 24 to 48 hours of hospital admission.

Inequality also drives severe food poverty in Africa. In South Africa, the most unequal country, about one in four children faces severe food poverty despite being the continent’s most developed nation. Governments and partners must act urgently, said Torlesse: “The work starts now.”

MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



The Netherlands

yesterday began four days of EU parliamentary elections, with far-right leader Geert Wilders (pictured) casting an early vote. Wilders seeks to shift power from the EU to national governments, focusing on immigration control. The elections, involving nearly 400 million voters across 27 nations, will impact policies on climate, defense, and migration.

AP PHOTO



Russia A court in Vladivostok yesterday began the trial of U.S. soldier Staff Sgt. Gordon Black for theft. Black, visiting his girlfriend, faces up to five years in prison. His arrest further strains U.S.-Russia relations, already tense due to the Ukraine conflict. Black’s unauthorized trip violated Pentagon travel policies.

AP PHOTO



Mexico A 59-year-old man in Mexico died from H5N2 bird flu, a strain not previously found in humans, the WHO reported. The man had no known exposure to poultry. The WHO stated the risk to the public is low. This follows three poultry outbreaks of H5N2 in nearby areas of Mexico.

HOLIDAY TIMES

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will be back on the stands on Wednesday June 12. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.