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**GASTRONOMY: CITY RANKS 10TH WORLDWIDE MICHELIN RESTAURANT DENSITY**

**ASIA-PACIFIC GAMING INDUSTRY UNDERGOING A TRANSFORMATIVE SHIFT**



**Indonesia** A court in Bali yesterday began the trial of an Australian man who faces up to 12 years in prison if convicted of possessing methamphetamine under the country's tough drug laws. Troy Andrew Smith (pictured), from Port Lincoln in South Australia, was arrested on April 30 after police raided his hotel near Kuta beach, a popular tourist spot, and seized 3.15 grams of crystal methamphetamine from his room, authorities said.



**Israel-Hamas** U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan yesterday pushed back against assertions that Israel isn't fully committed to the cease-fire proposal with Hamas that President Joe Biden outlined in late May at the White House. "Israel has supplied this proposal. It has been sitting on the table for some time. Israel has not contradicted or walked that back," Sullivan said yesterday in Italy, where Biden was set to attend the annual Group of Seven leaders' summit. "To this day they stand behind the proposal." "I don't think that there is a contradiction in the Israeli position," Sullivan added.



**SpaceX** Eight former employees sued SpaceX and its CEO Elon Musk, alleging that Musk ordered them fired after they challenged what they called rampant sexual harassment and a hostile "Animal House"-style work environment at the company. The employees, who filed suit in a California state court, detailed their complaints in a 2022 open letter to management they shared via a company intranet. The next day, four of the plaintiffs were fired, they alleged; others were terminated later after an internal investigation.

More on backpage

# REVENUE MACHINE

The SAR has established itself as the leading tourism revenue generator in China, while the country has regained its status as top spender: UNWTO



**MUST SURVEY**  
**RESIDENTS' CONSUMER SATISFACTION HAS LARGELY STABILIZED**



**EURO 2024**

Another surprise? Europe's biggest soccer show to begin and as usual it's unpredictable





# ASIA-PACIFIC GAMING INDUSTRY UNDERGOING A TRANSFORMATIVE SHIFT

NADIA SHAW

**T**HE Asia-Pacific gaming industry is undergoing a transformative shift, with various countries implementing new regulatory frameworks to balance growth and player protection. A panel discussion at the recent 2024 G2E Expo shed light on the latest trends and challenges shaping this dynamic landscape.

The panel included experts from various countries who shared insights on gaming regulation in their respective regions.

Moderator Rui Pinto Proença, managing partner of MdME, led the discussion with panelists Lau Kok Keng, partner and head of Gaming Law Practice at Rajah & Tann (Singapore); Tomohiro Takagi, partner at Nishimura & Asahi (Japan); Jaewoo Kwak, Partner at Lee & Ko (Korea); Long Gia Nguyen, partner at Tilleke & Gibbins (Vietnam); and Marie Antonette Quiogue, CEO and principal of Arden Consult (Philippines).

## STRICT REGULATIONS AND MONEY LAUNDERING SCANDAL

The Singaporean government has implemented a regulatory framework that allows casinos to operate only in the form of integrated resorts (IRs), such as the iconic Marina Bay Sands. Despite only having two casinos, com-

bined gaming revenue surged to SGD5.25 billion (MOP31.35 billion) in 2023.

In 2020, a major money laundering scandal rocked Singapore, involving a network of PRC Chinese nationals who had taken on "different nationalities" to evade detection.

"The scandal led to the seizure of assets worth SGD3 billion (MOP17.9 billion), with the majority belonging to individuals who had fled the country, so of course there is need to regulate," said Kok Keng.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) reacted to the scandal and has issued warnings to its citizens not to gamble in Singapore. The Chinese embassy in Singapore posted a statement on WeChat, urging Chinese citizens to refrain from gambling, even if it is legal in Singapore.

The scandal has had significant implications for the gaming sector in Singapore; with the courts never having the chance to determine whether gains derived from a licensed operator overseas would be considered proceeds of crime. This has raised concerns about the potential for cross-border money laundering and the impact on the industry.

## PLAYER PROTECTION

Singapore has been at the forefront of player protection, with measures in place to limit the

number of visits by local players to casinos. The entry levy has increased to SGD150 (MOP 895) per 24 hours, and annual passes now cost SGD 3,000 (MOP17,908). The government has also extended the exclusion scheme to include individuals receiving social assistance and those who receive criminal legal aid.

Comparably, Japan's gaming industry has also undergone significant changes, with the introduction of the IR Promotion Law and the IR Implementation Law.

The country has learned a lot from Singapore and other jurisdictions, with measures in place to protect local players. The entry fee in Japan, described by Takagi, "locals must pay JPY6,000 and are limited to playing three days a week and ten times a month."

## STRICT GAMING REGULATIONS AND SOCIAL IMPACT

Macau is one of the most mature gaming markets in Asia and it focused on the traditional casino model. Newer gaming hubs like Singapore, the Philippines and Vietnam are investing in integrated resorts and online gaming, which may be more attractive to players.

Macau's gaming revenue was MOP80.14 billion (USD9.93 billion) in the first half of 2023, a 205% year-on-year surge. In contrast, South Korea's casino revenues are roughly a sixth the size

of Las Vegas's alone, generating around \$1.3 billion (MOP10.4 billion).

In South Korea, there are around 20 casinos, but most are "foreigner only," meaning only non-Korean citizens can enter and play. The only place where Korean nationals can enjoy casino gambling legally is Gangwon Land Casino.

Conversely, Macau allows both locals and foreigners to gamble. Allowing locals to gamble is crucial for market growth, but South Korea is unlikely to change this regulation anytime soon.

When asked about the social impact of gaming in the Philippines, Quiogue noted that while formal statistics are not yet available, the industry's effects could be understood through general statistics and societal context.

"The Philippines is predominantly Catholic, with approximately 80% of the population identifying as Catholic."

This strong religious influence has shaped the way gaming has been introduced to society, with the Catholic Church exerting a significant influence on both politics and society in the Philippines.

Despite all countries experiencing a backlash about the societal impact of the gaming industry, the government and casino operators hope to continue regulating the industry and promoting transparency, with a focus on responsible gambling measures to mitigate these concerns.

## GROWING MARKETS

While traditional gaming hubs like Macau focus on the casino model, newer markets in the region are embracing integrated resorts and online gaming.

Vietnam's pilot program for local players "requires a minimum age of 21 and a minimum income of \$400 (MOP3,219), and it has been successful," said Nguyen. The government is considering extending the program and making it more flexible for foreign investors.

"We are looking at ways to attract more capital investment into the country," said Nguyen. "We want to make sure that the regulatory framework is robust enough to attract foreign investors and allow them to build integrated resorts."

The Philippines has also seen significant growth in its gaming industry, with a focus on integrated resorts and land-based casinos.

"We have seen a lot of interest from foreign investors in our ga-

ming industry," said the CEO of Arden Consult.

"We are working to create a regulatory framework that is attractive to foreign investors and allows them to build IRs."

Quiogue describes new projects as "expanding beyond Manila, with Clark experiencing a resurgence in growth and plans to replicate this in Boracay."

The Philippines has been actively promoting its gaming industry, with a focus on integrated resorts and land-based casinos. The country's unique "hybrid model" allows land-based casinos to offer online gaming services, making it an attractive destination for customers.

When asked about online gaming, Quiogue said the adoption of online gaming casinos in the Philippines.

In 2020, during the pandemic, land-based casinos were permitted to offer online gaming services to their existing VIP clients. This allowed domestic players to bet online through a limited licensing regime extended to existing land-based casinos as an online component to their current land-based license.

## NEW HORIZONS: THAILAND

Thailand is also looking to legalize casinos, with a draft bill currently being considered.

"We are looking at ways to legalize casinos and create a regulatory framework that is attractive to foreign investors," said Kok Keng. "We want to make sure that the industry is regulated in a way that protects players and prevents problem gambling."

They have proposed a tax rate of at least 30% on gaming revenues and minimum age and earnings requirements for players.

The gaming expert shared his insights on Thailand, stating, "I heard that the tourism department in Thailand has signaled that they are trying to push back on the proposal." The suggestion is that they are seeking to obtain the advantage that would come with the tourism. "But from the government's perspective, I think there's always a tax element to be collected from the big casino registration."

"Thailand is currently proposing a very competitive rate of 17%. I don't know if that can happen, but that rate is very competitive compared to 30% in Vietnam and Japan or 20% in Korea." Kok Keng believes that this nevertheless represents a very feasible plan, which may happen in the future in Thailand, approximately in 2029.

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# Macau leads China in tourism revenue: UNWTO

STAFF REPORTER

**M**ACAU has solidified its position as the top tourism revenue generator in China, surpassing other prominent na-

tions, according to a report from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Macau secured 13th position in the global ranking of countries and regions generating the highest revenue in the tourism sector.

With an impressive growth rate of 275% in 2023 compared to the previous year, Macau's tourism revenue amounted to a staggering USD32.6 billion.

The latest data from the UNWTO reveals Macau's excep-

tional performance, with its tourism revenue outstripping that of countries like India and Mexico. The United States topped the list with USD175.9 billion in tourism revenue, followed by Spain with USD92 billion and the United Kingdom with USD73.9 billion.

Chinese tourists played a significant role in driving international tourism spending, surpassing the United States in 2023.

China has recovered its position as top spender on international tourism in 2023 as Asia and the Pacific consolidates its recovery from the impacts of the pandemic.

In 2022, the list of top spenders was headed by the United States. France, Spain and USA took the top spots for most-visited destinations.

Last year, Chinese travelers spent a staggering USD197.7 billion, reaffirming their position as the top spenders on international tourism. North American tourists, on the other hand, spent USD123.2 billion internationally.

The recovery of Asia and the Pacific region from the pandemic's impact played a crucial role in China's resurgence as the leading spender on international tourism in 2023.

Among the top 10 spenders in 2023, China was followed by the United States (USD150 billion), Germany (USD112 billion), the United Kingdom (USD110 billion),

and France (USD49 billion).

Notably, India rose to the eighth position, showcasing the country's growing importance as a source market.

While France retained its position as the world's most visited destination with 100 million international tourist arrivals in 2023, Macau solidified its standing as a top earner in international tourism receipts, securing a place among the top 15 tourism earners globally.

As the world looks ahead to a full recovery in the tourism sector in 2024, Macau's growth and contribution to the industry serves as a positive sign.

The global tourism landscape is expected to witness a 2% growth above 2019 levels, supported by robust demand, improved air connectivity, and the ongoing recovery of major Asian markets, including China.

Recently, Macau, for the first time, was ranked the most satisfactory destination for mainland outbound tourists in the first quarter of the year, thanks to a number of favorable policies that have bolstered the city's tourism industry.

According to the China Tourism Academy (CTA), Macao scored 83.49 in the satisfaction-level ranking of destinations visited by mainland outbound tourists, ranking top, while Hong Kong secured seventh spot with 81.77.

## GASTRONOMY

# Macau ranks 10th worldwide Michelin restaurant density

STAFF REPORTER

**M**ACAU ranks 10th worldwide and 3rd in Asia for cities with the highest concentration of Michelin starred restaurants per capita, according to a recent report by Chef's Pencil.

Despite Macau's modest population of 680,000, the territory has attracted an impressive 16 Michelin-starred restaurants, including two establishments that have been awarded the coveted three-Michelin-star rating.

Robuchon au Dôme, located in the Grand Lisboa casino hotel, has been praised for its French fine dining and theatrical dining experience. Renowned French chef Joël Robuchon runs the restaurant, and is known as the "Chef of the Century."

Jade Dragon in The



Lisboa Hotel specializes in Cantonese cuisine and has earned three Michelin stars for over 10 years, a remarkable achievement for a Chinese restaurant.

With 16 Michelin restaurants but a small population of under 700,000, Macau has shown it can punch above its weight in attracting and supporting high-end gastronomy. This has helped elevate its reputation as a global culinary destination alongside other Asian powerhouses like Hong

Kong and Tokyo.

Globally, Macau ranks behind only Kyoto, Japan, and Paris, France, in terms of Michelin restaurant density. Kyoto tops the list with one Michelin establishment for every 14,637 residents, while Paris has one for every 17,235 people.

Rounding out the top five are Washington, D.C., Antwerp, and Osaka. Macau's culinary rival Hong Kong, meanwhile, has 79 restaurants, or one for every 94,823 people.

There are 16 Macau restaurants listed in the

Michelin Guide Hong Kong and Macau 2024, including the three-star establishments Jade Dragon and Robuchon au Dôme. The territory also has six two-star restaurants and eight one-star restaurants in the guide.

Macau's Michelin stars dropped in the 2024 "Michelin Guide Hong Kong Macau" despite new additions to the list.

Previously, food critics have noted that the wider options in Macau securing Michelin stars this year is a signal the city should have a more diverse dining offering.

While promoting itself as a UNESCO City of Gastronomy, Macau has been accused of having too narrow a choice of cuisines. It is also part of the reason more local residents have decided to go north for food.

# STOCK SLUMP FOR CASINOS AFTER FREE SNACK BAN

**S**HARES of Macau casino stocks generally slumped Wednesday after reports the government had asked casinos to cease providing complimentary snacks to patrons, according to a research report from Morgan Stanley.

The financial firm believes this new measure could affect overall casino footfall, though the impact on gross gaming revenue (GGR) is expected to be minimal.

This is because the policy primarily aims to discourage non-gambling tourists from taking advantage of the free food offerings, while regular gamblers will still be able to easily obtain complimentary snacks.

"The new measure mainly targets preventing non-gambling visitors from enjoying free snacks in the casinos, while gamblers can still

easily obtain the complimentary refreshments," the Morgan Stanley report stated.

The Macau government has not yet issued an official statement on the reported measure, but industry analysts believe it is part of the region's efforts to promote responsible gambling and streamline casino operations.

Several readers told the Times that they have observed on a casino floor Wednesday that certain food and drinks were exclusively available to VIP card holders, in contrast to the past when they were accessible to all, including non-VIP card holders.

A catering company employee also noted a significant decrease in orders from a gaming operator who previously purchased various pastries and bread from the company.



## DENGUE FEVER RISK HIGH IN MACAU

Health authorities have warned residents to guard against dengue fever after weeks of heavy rainfall and high humidity. "Macau is experiencing a high-risk season and the probability of local cases arising has not been excluded," the statement said. The *Aedes Albopictus* (tiger mosquito) species can transmit dengue fever and is common in Macau, preferring small pools of stagnant water. The bureau noted neighboring regions, such as Singapore and Malaysia, have seen significant increases in Dengue Fever cases this year. Local cases have also been reported in Hong Kong and Guangzhou.

## MPU RANKS IN TOP 400 IN TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION

The Times Higher Education World University Impact Rankings 2024 has placed Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) between 301st and 400th. This marks MPU's debut in the overall rankings and positions as the top-ranked university in the SAR. The Times Higher Education World University Impact Rankings is a global assessment of universities that ranks institutions across four areas: research, stewardship, outreach, and teaching, aligning with the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). MPU has also advanced to the 72nd position globally in the scope of "Decent Work and Economic Growth" among the United Nations' sustainable development goals.

## MGTO RETURNS TO FESTAS DE LISBOA TO PROMOTE THE CITY

The Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) made its return to the Lisbon Festivities this year, marking the first time the organization has participated since the Covid-19 pandemic. The highlight of Macau's involvement was a dazzling display of traditional dragon dancing as part of the Lisbon Popular Marches parade on the evening of June 12. The Popular Marches parade is an iconic annual event that celebrates the city's month-long festivities. With over 90 years of history, the parade features elaborate costumes and performances from diverse neighborhoods across Lisbon.

## HELICOPTER SERVICES POSSIBLE AT TAIPA TERMINAL IN 2025

Helicopter services could be available as early as the second half of 2025 at Taipa's ferry terminal, according to a Civil Aviation Authority official. Fong Wai Long, vice president of the AACM, told lawmakers recently authorities have been communicating with service operators to increase flight routes and destinations based on market demand starting in 2025. Since the opening of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, demand for helicopter flights has decreased under less favorable conditions, the official said. The discussion emerged as lawmakers explored developing a "low-altitude economy," revolving around manned and unmanned aviation in low altitudes. Safety concerns include Macau's limited airspace and high building and population density.

## GRAND PRIX

# FIA OPENS APPLICATION FOR DRIVERS TO RACE AT GT WORLD CUP AND FR WORLD CUP

RENATO MARQUES

**ENTRIES** for the FIA GT World Cup are now open and will be accepted until July 29 via a dedicated registration platform, with a maximum of 23 grid slots, the FIA announced through several online platforms.

The governing body of international motorsports also noted that entries to the FIA FR World Cup will be open until July 24, with the grid being able to accommodate a maximum of 27 Tatuus Formula Regional chassis equipped with Autotecnica-built Alfa Romeo engines.

Both competitions will be held across two race heats, with Saturday's qualifying races followed by Sunday's title-deciding main races.

As in previous iterations of this historic competition, the FIA FR World Cup will feature two qualifying sessions.

Race durations for the GT World Cup machinery will be 12 and 16 laps respectively, while Formula Regional cars will race on distances of 10 and 15 laps.

Maintaining the tradition of FIA-sanctioned single-seater racing at the Guia Circuit, the FIA FR World Cup winner will also be recognized as the overall winner of the Macau Grand Prix.



This year marks the seventh edition of the FIA GT World Cup and the inaugural FIA FR World Cup, which replaces the role of the FIA F3 World Cup.

On the topic, Emanuele Pirro, president of the FIA Single-Seater Committee, said, "The FIA FR World Cup represents the ultimate test for drivers on the junior single-seater ladder. Macau is a dream circuit and the ideal location for such a one-off event. With the opening of the entry process on June 12, we

are anticipating a great deal of interest from teams and drivers from across the global network of Formula Regional Championships, Certified by FIA and beyond. The entry process will be rigorous, and we will ensure that the brightest emerging talents are the ones who take to the track in Macau in November. The drivers will love it."

On behalf of the FIA GT World Cup, Marek Nawarecki, FIA Senior Circuit Sport Director, said, "Last year's re-

turn of the FIA GT World Cup to Macau turned out to be a great success story. The GT3 ruleset is going from strength to strength, with pretty much all the premium manufacturers not only having a presence in this class but also developing new cars. Therefore, for 2024, we are looking forward to perhaps an even stronger event with some of the world's best GT drivers on the grid and hopefully even more manufacturers represented."

# Water consumption rises 10%, but government keeps rates steady

STAFF REPORTER

**M**ACAU has seen a significant rise in water consumption in the first five months of 2024, with an approximately 10% increase compared to the same period last year.

Nacky Kuan, the executive director of the Macao Water Supply Company, attributes this surge to the strong demand from the industrial and commercial sectors as tourism activity rebounds following pandemic restrictions.

The data reveals water



use by hotels, restaurants, and other businesses directly supporting the tourism industry is 20% higher, effectively reflecting Macau's broader economic recovery as a popular global tourism

destination.

However, not all sectors have fully regained their pre-pandemic levels of water usage, with smaller businesses like shops and service providers classified as small

and medium enterprises still trailing behind.

Interestingly, household water use has seen a slight year-on-year decrease, which Kuan attributes to residents more consciously conserving water and pursuing outbound travel opportunities outside of Macau more than before the pandemic.

Despite rising costs, as the price of untreated water imported from mainland China has increased 20% in the past two years, the Marine and Water Bureau has reassured the public that

there are no imminent plans to pass these additional expenses directly onto citizens in the form of higher water rates.

Director Susana Wong said the government's policy is to annually subsidize over MOP200 million to offset rate increases and keep water affordable for all residents.

Kuan expected the rate of increase in water consumption to slow down in the latter half of this year, leading to an estimated year-on-year rise of 5.5% in the full-year water consumption.



EDUCATION

# TIS highlights success of alumni in awards ceremony

NADIA SHAW

**T**HE International School of Macau (TIS) honored the achievements of former students at its annual alumni awards ceremony last night, inspiring the next generation of students.

Established in 2002, TIS has come a long way since its first batch of graduates left in 2009, and the school's dedication to setting its students up for success has never wavered.

The current cohort of students have received an impressive 600+ university offers worldwide, including prestigious institutions like Columbia, UCL, University of Edinburgh, Parsons, Purdue, MUST, and the University of Hong Kong.

These remarkable results underscore TIS' commitment to providing its students with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in their future endeavors.

The alumni awards ceremony



recognized the outstanding contributions and successes of TIS alumni in various fields, including aviation, veterinary science, medicine, performing arts and motorsports.

Awards were given to three alumni, Daniel Figueiredo - class of 2012 (Aviation), Tiffany Ng - class of 2017 (Occupational Therapy), Joy Kuai - class of 2017 (Aviation). These individuals showcase TIS' ability

to foster diverse talents and the positive impact its graduates have on the world.

Before the celebration, the Times spoke to Lorne Schmidt, head of School to highlight the history, achievements and unique experiences offered to students who attend TIS.

TIS offers the Alberta educational framework and is also authori-

zed to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB) to senior students. From grade 10 onwards, students must complete the Alberta High School Diploma, while the IB is optional.

"IB is well known in the university circles for its rigor," said Schmidt.

Students have the flexibility to choose between the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Alberta High School Diploma, but Schmidt said universities are well aware of the caliber of students they receive from TIS.

He highlighted the school's unique approach to learning, which focuses on developing a conceptual understanding in the content that students study. This approach goes beyond mere information gathering, "as anyone can access information online." Instead, TIS students learn "to apply and utilize the information" they gather, making them valuable assets to universities and future employers.

The school prioritizes skill de-

velopment around the typical curriculum, preparing students better for university and their future careers.

"We incorporate a lot of STEAM projects within our curriculum, even in subjects that are not science or math or art, but social studies and language arts."

Schmidt emphasized the importance of critical thinking as "being able to voice one's opinion and being open-minded to different perspectives and viewpoints."

The school's focus on developing "essential skills" in its students prioritizes engagement in learning and building conceptual understanding rather than mere memorization.

In an effort to foster personal growth and development, educators at TIS encourage students to take risks and step out of their comfort zones.

This includes public speaking, such as "giving presentations, which is a valuable skill that can be honed through extracurricular activities like student council, volunteer work, and clubs like Model United Nations. The Duke of Edinburgh program also provides opportunities for students to expand their skill set and develop personally."

By embracing risk-taking, students can build confidence and become well-rounded individuals, he said.

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AL PLENARY

# RETRIEVED LAND RESERVES NOT IDLE, SECRETARY CLAIMS

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, has refuted claims from several people and most recently from lawmaker Zheng Anting that the land plots previously retrieved by the government due to concession expiration are idle or abandoned.

This assertion came at a recent plenary session at the Legislative Assembly.

In a response to an inquiry by lawmaker Zheng, who called on the government to utilize these land plots for sports and leisure, Rosário said, "It is not within my competence to decide on the purpose for the land recovered for the Macau land reserves." He added there are no unused or wasted land plots in the government's possession.

Rosário also disclosed statistical data showing the government has used around 27% of the 720,000 square meters of idle land plots with expired concessions in recent



RENATO MARQUES

years. He reiterated that various public services and departments have the right to propose uses for these land resources.

Regarding the remaining 73% of the land reserves yet to be allocated, he said the government must preserve some of these valuable resources for future development and needs.

"You can say that the government is stingy or tight-fisted, for using only 27% of the land resources, but it is a deli-

berate government decision," Rosário said. He added that future administrations could choose to use all the reserves if they wish.

Rosário compared land reserves to financial reserves, noting that both have the same general purpose.

Several lawmakers proposed temporarily using some of the land plots as parking lots while awaiting development, which can take several years.

However, Rosário said

there are currently enough parking spaces in Macau for existing vehicles, adding these land reserves would be unsuitable for use as parking lots given most of the unassigned land resources are located in Taipa and Coloane, where there is no pressing need to increase parking capacity.

He acknowledged the suggestion could be beneficial if suitable spaces in the Peninsula were included, where demand for parking is higher.

MUST SURVEY

# MACAU CONSUMER SATISFACTION HOLDS STEADY

HOWARD TONG

**A** new survey from the Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD) at the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) has found Macau residents' consumer satisfaction has largely stabilized.

On a 100-point scale, satisfaction with clothing and footwear purchases scored 75.4, a slight increase of 1.21% from 2023. Satisfaction with dining and drinks, however, dipped 1.79% to 71.2, primarily due to a decline in the "value for money" index.

MUST conducted the 2024 Consumer Satisfaction Index Survey from March 19 to April 11, gathering responses from 919 Macau residents.

"The results are more stable than expected," said Li Yanchen, Assistant Professor at MUST's Faculty of Business.

"Last year saw a sharp rebound as the economy recovered, but this year the indices have remained relatively flat, which is a positive sign of industry efforts."

The survey also found consumer satisfaction in Zhuhai has surpassed Macau for two consecutive years, both in dining and clothing/footwear. Li said factors like transportation, service, product variety, and exchange rates play a major role.

"We hope local merchants will continue improving product quality and stabilizing prices to provide good value for consumers," Li added.

PUBLIC WORKS

# NEW LANDFILL FLYOVERS SET TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION IN Q4

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE construction of flyovers in Zone A and B of Macau's new landfills is slated to commence in the fourth quarter of this year, according to government officials.

The project, which has drawn media attention regarding its potential impact on the landscape surrounding the Guia lighthouse, was addressed by Deland Leong, the president of the Cultural Affairs Bureau in a recent TDM Forum.

She said only a small portion of the project would require the Chief Executive's approval for the lighthouse's landscape, and preliminary analysis has suggested the area involved would not be considered a building, thus minimizing its impact on the historical city.

The flyover will span approximately 3.2 kilometers, with a maximum elevation of 25.8 meters.

According to the Public Works Bureau, the project is not considered a building construction venture, and the height restriction around the Guia lighthouse does not apply.

Furthermore, the project's location is not designated as a real property under the Cultural Heritage Protection Law, nor is it situated within a buffer zone.

The government official said the bureau and UNESCO have been in regular communication about the project, ensuring the necessary considerations are made to preserve the historic landscape.

AL PLENARY

# Access of foreigners to Hengqin 'none of our business,' Wong Sio Chak says

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE easing of border procedures for foreigners to access Hengqin was once again a topic of discussion at the recent plenary session at the Legislative Assembly.

Lawmaker Wang Sai Man once again called for facilitating border procedures to Hengqin to foreigners, including Macau residents.

In response, the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, said visa-related issues for entering the mainland are beyond the scope of local authorities and depend exclusively on Central government policies.

Wong said the Macau border post area at Hengqin Border Post operates through a one-stop border, which



"is intended for residents of mainland China, holders of the 'Safe conduct for Travel to Hong Kong and Macau,' and permanent residents of Macau and Hong Kong who hold the 'Safe conduct for entry and exit from China for residents of Hong Kong and

Macau."

He said mainland authorities are considering expanding the coverage of the channel's recipients to include foreigners residing in Macau.

"If there is any relevant progress, it will be announ-

ced in due course," he said, noting that suggestions such as issuing a special safe conduct or other documents, or creating a link between a visa and local identification cards are matters that fall exclusively under the jurisdiction of the mainland government.



ADVERTORIAL



The Minister of Education, Science, and Innovation of Portugal, Fernando Alexandre

# Portuguese authorities to audit all overseas schools

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Minister of Education, Science, and Innovation of Portugal (MECI), Fernando Alexandre, has asked the Court of Auditors for an audit on the management of all Portuguese Schools operating in the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), including Macau, the office from the Minister has confirmed to the Times. According to a written response to a Times inquiry, the audit was requested May 26 and will involve schools in Cape Verde, Angola, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, Timor-Leste, and Macau.

The office also confirmed there was a previous complaint filed with the Ministry regarding the Portuguese School of Dili (Timor-Leste) and the management of Acácio de Brito, the current director of the Portuguese School of Macau (EPM).

According to the Alexandre's office, the Inspectorate-General of Education and Science had previously conducted an inspection following the complaint to the Portuguese School of Dili. However, this did not produce conclusive results, "which led the previous government to order the case to be archived," the Minister's office said.

As the Times reported yesterday, the Alexandre's office has also recently notified the management of the EPM it will not provide additional teachers to replace those who may be laid off in the future.

"In the meantime, given the lack of teachers in Portugal, MECI has already noted teachers will not be made available to replace those the school management may dismiss," Alexandre was quoted as saying to the Portu-

guese language newspaper Hoje Macau.

The office of the minister also admitted to communicating with the school board, seeking additional clarification and information on the dismissal of over a dozen teachers from the school at the end of the academic year.

As the Times has reported earlier, a letter issued by the local section of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) has called for the resignation of the Consul-General of Portugal in Macau, Alexandre Leitão, amid controversies surrounding the dismissal of EPM teachers.

The letter includes allegations and suggestions about teachers who have been suggested to have been hired to replace those dismissed as "close friends and the girlfriend" of the EPM director, calling on the director to return to Portugal before those "intimately connected to him" arrive in Macau to teach in the school.

Over the weekend, the consul general defended the school against allegations regarding internal hiring and restructuring decisions.

Speaking to the public broadcaster TDM, Leitão argued there is a mandate for the Portuguese School of Macau Foundation, stating, "there are corporate bodies, and they have the responsibility to make decisions and they are responsible for the results. When we are given the opportunity to analyze the results, we will be available to ask questions, query the results, and make any assessment that needs to be made," Leitão said.

Fernando Alexandre took office as the new MECI April 2 this year, after a government restructure in Portugal following the legislative election results on March 10.

## SANDS CHINA NEWS

### 'Sands Children's Day for Music and Arts' Shares Magic of Music

Performances and immersive exploration at teamLab SuperNature Macao

A group of Sands Cares Ambassadors hosted local families from the Children's Dream Alliance at teamLab SuperNature Macao May 29, in celebration of International Children's Day.

The **Sands Children's Day for Music and Arts** was held as part of the ongoing celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Sands Cares Ambassador programme, giving the 70 participants a day of immersive art experiences and creating lasting memories together in a vibrant and creative environment.

Sands Children's Day for Music and Arts was aimed at bringing art into every home in the community and fostering a sense of joy and fulfilment through art interaction. The participating families were treated to a mesmerising quartet performance featuring beloved movie soundtracks known to every household. The Macao Orchestra specially arranged enchanting and lively musical pieces for the event, filled with a magical atmosphere and upbeat rhythms, aimed at letting everyone step into a world of childlike wonder through music.

The delightful musical experience took place in the enchanting setting of teamLab SuperNature Macao. Following the performance, guests had the opportunity to freely explore the innovative fusion of technology and art within the exhibition, immersing themselves in a captivating world of creativity.

In celebration of the spirit of International Children's Day on June 1, the Sands Cares Ambassadors extended their warm wishes to the children at the event by presenting them with gift packages purchased from the Fuhong Society of Macau.

Initiatives like Sands Children's Day for Music and Arts are an outlet for Sands China to carry out its commitment to the local community through the Sands Cares Ambassador programme. Established in August 2009, the programme has grown to include over 3,300 dedicated volunteers, serving as a platform for them to serve the local community by organising a wide range of community activities and engaging in volunteer work. Through sharing warmth and care with disadvantaged groups, Sands China seeks to actively contribute to the social development of Macao and help build a harmonious and inclusive society.





# CHINA TO PROPEL ENERGY STORAGE INDUSTRY IN THE GREATER BAY AREA

## ANALYSIS

**C**HINA is actively advancing the new energy sector in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) in southern China, attracting top-tier manufacturing firms to the region.

An exemplary achievement in this initiative is an energy storage company in the Nansha District of the Greater Bay Area. Within just 320 days, the company transformed a 270,000-square-meter wasteland into a lithium-ion battery manufacturing base and a research and development center, as reported by China Central Television (CCTV).

Zhu Kunqing, the general manager of Guangzhou Rongjie Energy Technology, explained that the decision to establish operations in the GBA was influenced by the area's abundant talent pool.

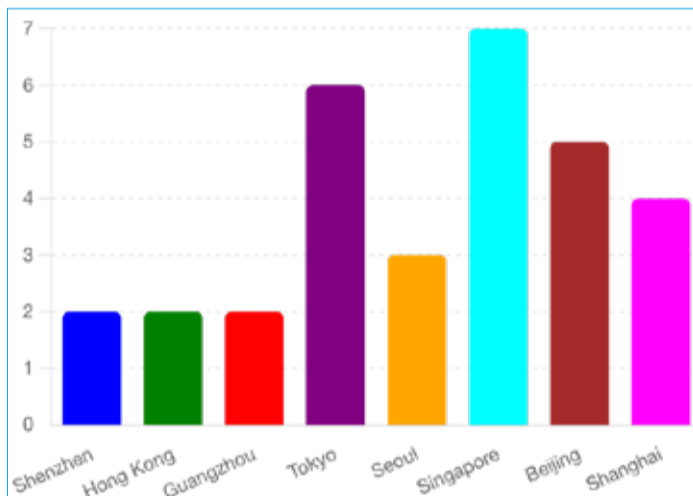
"Lithium-ion batteries, especially those used in energy storage, represent a highly technical and expansive industry, necessitating a significant demand for skilled professionals. The Pearl River Delta is recognized as the cradle of the lithium battery industry, providing us access to a wealth of talent," CCTV quoted Zhu Kunqing.

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization's Global Innovation Index 2023, the Shenzhen-Hong Kong-Guangzhou science and technology cluster has consistently ranked second globally for four years in a row, Emirates News Agency has reported.

To remain at the forefront of the industry, Zhu revealed that the company has made a substantial investment of \$2.7 billion and anticipates an annual revenue of \$4.8 billion. The company employs a research and development team of over 300 experts to steer production.

"In ensuring the implementation of our technical concepts, our construction, planning, and design teams bring extensive experience. This expertise is a key reason for our rapid development," Zhu stated.

Looking ahead, Guangdong Province has set an ambitious target to achieve an annual revenue of CN¥1 trillion (approximately \$138 billion) from its new energy storage industry by 2027. Cheng Hailiang, deputy director of the Nansha District



Bureau of Development and Reform, emphasized that the government provides robust support to foster entrepreneurship in this emerging field.

"We offer policy support for land use and project incubation to new energy enterprises. Additionally, we have dedicated teams to ensure projects transition smoothly from construction to operational phases," Cheng noted.

Lithium-ion batteries play a crucial role in various sectors, including electronics and clean energy industries, such as electronic devices, solar energy storage, electric vehicles, and medical equipment.

### INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT DRIVING GROWTH

The consistent high ranking of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong-Guangzhou science and technology cluster in the Global Innovation Index reflects the region's robust innovation ecosystem. The cluster's second-place ranking for four consecutive years is a clear indication of its global competitiveness and innovation capacity.

Guangzhou Rongjie Energy Technology's substantial investment of \$2.7 billion demonstrates the company's commitment to leading the industry. The anticipated annual revenue of \$4.8 billion highlights the economic potential of the energy storage sector in the Greater Bay Area.

The company's research and development team, comprising over 300 experts, plays a pivotal role in driving innovation and ensuring the realization of advanced technical concepts. The emphasis on experienced personnel in construction, planning, and design has been crucial in achieving rapid development and operational efficiency.

The Guangdong Provincial Government's goal of achieving CN¥1 trillion in annual revenue from the new energy storage industry by 2027 stresses the strategic importance of this sector. The government's proactive approach in providing policy support, land use facilitation, and project incubation is designed to create a conducive environment for the growth of new energy en-

terprises, according to Chinese media.

Cheng Hailiang's remarks on the government's support mechanisms highlight the comprehensive framework in place to assist companies in the new energy sector. The presence of dedicated teams to facilitate smooth project execution from construction to operation ensures that enterprises can navigate the complexities of the industry effectively.

### THE FUTURE OF ENERGY STORAGE IN GBA

As China continues to promote the new energy industry in the Greater Bay Area, the region is set to play a crucial role in the global energy transition. As recently reported by Guangdong media, the combination of a robust talent pool, substantial investment, and government support "creates a favorable environment for the growth and development of the energy storage industry."

Guangzhou Rongjie Energy Technology's rapid establishment of its lithium-ion battery manufacturing base and research center is an indication of the region's potential. The company's success serves as a model for other enterprises looking to tap into the opportunities presented by the Greater Bay Area.

The strategic focus on innovation, investment, and support from the government aligns with China's broader goals of achieving sustainable development, technological leadership, and economic prosperity. The Greater Bay Area's development as a hub for the energy storage industry will have far-reaching implications for the region and beyond. **MDT/AGENCIES**

## GBA WHAT'S ON



### Zhuhai GUEST SHIFT AT YDM

The rainy season has passed, and the skies have cleared! Join us this Friday for a special guest shift event. It's the perfect excuse to gather and enjoy some drinks together!

**June 14, 9pm - midnight** YDM Bar, Cold Tea & Bistro, No.78-5 Beishan Zheng Jie, Beishan Village, Nanping, Xiangzhou



### Huizhou MELOMANIA MUSIC FEST

Join us for an epic lakeside party in Huizhou on June 15! Enjoy live DJ performances, unlimited fun, and a stunning view. Early Bird tickets for the first 30 buyers are just RMB88, Advance tickets at RMB108, Late tickets at RMB158, and Door tickets at RMB188. Each ticket includes event access, one free drink, and washroom facilities. Shuttle bus service from Shenzhen available for RMB80. BBQ dinner options and additional food on-site. Don't miss out on this unforgettable experience!

**June 15, 2024** Tickets: via WeChat Pandora Parties, The Lake's, Qingxunshan Forest in Xunliao Bay, Huidong County, Huizhou



### Dongguan GUEST SHIFT AT ORIGIN

Join us for ORIGIN 2.0's first guest shift! We're thrilled to welcome Sisi, the founder of Guangzhou's NOKEY Bar and the 2022 Cointreau Queen. Don't miss this exciting event!

**June 15, 8pm - midnight** ORIGIN, A202, Bld.36, 33 Village, Dongcheng





Premier Li Qiang (centre) stands with New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and New Zealand Governor General Dame Cyndi Kiro during the official welcome ceremony in Wellington, yesterday

DIPLOMACY

# Premier Li is visiting New Zealand, security fears vie with trade hopes on the agenda

CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-MCLAY,  
WELLINGTON

**C**HINA'S Premier Li Qiang arrived in New Zealand yesterday, beginning a rare visit to its closest partner among Western democracies, where a celebration of trade links is expected to vie with concerns about South Pacific security on Wellington's agenda.

China's No. 2 official, Li is the first Chinese premier to visit New Zealand since a 2017 visit by Li Keqiang. He will also visit Australia and Malaysia, China's Foreign Ministry said this week. The trip coincides with easing tensions between Australia and China that have vexed the relationship in re-

cent years.

New Zealand's Prime Minister Christopher Luxon is expected to salute trade links with China in public statements this week. China is the South Pacific nation's largest trading partner, with two-way trade worth 36 billion New Zealand dollars (\$22 billion). They signed a bilateral free trade agreement in 2008 — China's first with an Organization for Cooperation and Development nation — and the visit marks the 10th anniversary of a pledge to bolster ties signed in 2014 when China's President Xi Jinping last visited Wellington.

But while Luxon hailed the visit in remarks to reporters on Monday as presenting renewed

opportunities for business, Wellington has long sought to diversify the country's export market away from dependence on China and the visit will not be a simple story of economic success as engagements with New Zealand leaders have sometimes been before.

As China and the U.S. vie for influence in the Pacific, Luxon spoke ahead of a tour of Niue and Fiji this month of "increasingly choppy geostrategic waters" for the region, although he stopped short of naming China.

New Zealand has in recent years taken a less assertive line with Beijing on security matters than its Western partners in the Five Eyes intelligence sharing

partnership and has sought a consistent foreign policy approach to Beijing that spans political parties and administrations. But Luxon told reporters Monday that there were areas where, in talks with Li, Wellington would "call out our differences and discuss those openly, too."

One point of friction is likely to be New Zealand's contemplation of joining one tranche of the AUKUS security pact among Australia, the United States and Britain.

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi decried New Zealand and Australia's security concerns in meetings with his New Zealand counterpart during a visit to Wellington in March.

"They're real," Luxon said of regional threats.

Yesterday, more than 100 people held banners and Chinese and New Zealand flags aloft as they lined a side street near the airport in chilly, overcast conditions to watch Li's Air China flight arrive — an unusual sight in the capital, Wellington, population 215,000, which is absent from many international air routes.

The normally sleepy beachside suburb of Lyall Bay had a bolstered presence of law enforcement officers. As Li's motorcade emerged from the airport, drumming, chanting and singing from those assembled greeted the leader, prompting questions from bemused retail workers arriving to open nearby stores.

Li tomorrow will head to Australia's capital, where Beijing's relations in recent years have not been as smooth.

His visit to Canberra caps two years of efforts to rebuild China-Australia relations after a period of intense hostility and celebrates what both sides hope is a sustainable return to normalcy in ties, despite their differences on regional security and human rights.

His visit, the first by a Chinese premier in seven years, follows Albanese's trip to Beijing last November and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's trip to Australia and New Zealand in March. China has been steadily rolling back tariffs and other restrictions it placed on imports from Australia as relations soured in 2020.

China is opposed to Australia's plan to acquire nuclear-powered submarines with assistance from the U.S. and the U.K., which it sees as part of American efforts to constrain China by deepening military ties with other countries in the region.

But with Australia is unlikely to bend on that issue, Li's focus will likely be on moving past their differences and deepening economic ties. Australia, which has a trade surplus with China, is a major supplier of iron ore and other minerals to the world's second largest economy. **MDT/AP**

CLASSIFIED

# Chinese history buff finds military secrets in a pile of old papers he bought for under \$1

**C**HINESE state media said yesterday that a military history buff found a collection of confidential documents related to the country's military in a pile of old papers he bought for under \$1.

The collector reported the documents to

security units after recognizing their sensitive nature.

The reports didn't say what the documents were or whether anyone had been arrested, other than to say two people involved in the second-hand book and magazine business involved

were being questioned.

The purchaser, identified only as a retiree surnamed Zhang, is an avid fan of military history and soon realized that the items contained information stamped as confidential.

China's state security bodies and the control-

led legal system often make it difficult to tell what is considered a state secret. Chinese and foreign consultancies operating within the country have been placed under investigation by state security bodies for possessing information about the economy

that in other countries would be considered part of the public record.

China's military has grown massively in recent years, and it now boasts the world's largest navy, an air force with cutting-edge stealth fighters and a

gigantic missile force that appears intended to back the country's claims to the self-governing island of Taiwan, the South China Sea and disputed islands controlled by Japan, and ultimately driving its major rival the U.S. out of the region.

In response, the U.S. has strengthened ties with allies such as Australia, the Philippines, Japan and South Korea, while boosting arms sales and military cooperation with Taiwan. **MDT/AP**



G7 SUMMIT

# Deal to use Russian assets for Ukraine as EU's traditional powers recalibrate

NICOLE WINFIELD

**A** Group of Seven summit is opening today [Macau time] with agreement on a U.S. proposal to back a \$50 billion loan to Ukraine using frozen Russian assets as collateral, giving Kyiv a strong show of support even as Europe's political chessboard shifts to the right.

Diplomats confirmed that an agreement had been reached on the deal before the leaders even landed in southern Italy for the three-day summit. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is on hand and is expected to sign a separate bilateral security agreement with U.S. President Joe Biden.

Beyond the war in Ukraine, Pope Francis will become the first pope to address a G7 summit, adding a dash of celebrity and moral authority to the annual gathering that is being held this year in Italy's sun-drenched Puglia region. He'll be speaking Friday about the promises and perils of artificial intelligence, but is expected to also renew his appeal for a peaceful end to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

The G7 includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. Italy, which is hosting the summit, has invited several African leaders — Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, Kenyan President William Ruto and Tunisian President Kais Saied — to press Italy's development and migration initiatives on the continent.

Other guests include Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, fresh off his own election, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

With Biden, U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and now French President Emmanuel Macron facing elections in the coming months, pressure was on the G7 to get done what it can while the status quo lasts.

Frozen Russian assets to support UkraineThe U.S. proposal involves engineering a \$50 billion loan to help Ukraine in its fight against Russia that would use interest earned



on profits from Russia's frozen central bank assets, most of them held in the European Union, as collateral.

A French official, briefing reporters Wednesday, said a political decision by the leaders had been reached but that technical and legal details of the mechanism to tap into the assets still had to be worked out. The issue is complicated because if the Russian assets one day are unfrozen — say if the war ends — then the windfall profits will no longer be able to be used to pay off the loan, requiring a burden-sharing arrangement with other countries.

In addition to the deal, Sunak announced up to 242 million pounds (286 million euros or \$310 million) in non-military aid to Ukraine for humanitarian, energy and stabilization needs. Washington also sent strong signals of support, with widened sanctions against Russia to target Chinese companies that are helping its war machine.

Europe's new political chessboardItalian Premier Giorgia Meloni goes into the meeting fortified at home and abroad after her far-right party had an even stronger showing in the European Parliament election than the national general election in 2022 that made her Italy's first female premier. Known for its revolving-door

governments, Italy is now in the unusual position of being the most stable power in the EU.

The leaders of the G7's two other EU members, Germany and France, didn't fare nearly as well, rattled after hard-right parties made strong showings in the vote. Macron called a snap election and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz saw his Social Democrats finish behind mainstream conservatives and the far-right Alternative for Germany.

As a result, Meloni is likely to be able to steer the three-day meeting to her key priority items as she further cements her role on the world stage, analysts said. One sign of her flexed far-right muscles: Meloni's office denied media reports that Italy was trying to water down language about access to abortion in the final communique.

A French official, speaking anonymously in line with Macron's office customary practices, said there were diverging views with Italian negotiators on some topics, including on sexual and reproductive health and vaccines.

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani confirmed abortion was being discussed, but said discussions were continuing.

"While it's unlikely the recent results will radically shift the focus of the upcoming G7 Sum-

mit, this electoral win offers Premier Meloni additional leverage to frame this as an essentially 'Mediterranean Summit,'" said Nick O'Connell, deputy director of the Atlantic Council.

That includes pushing her migration agenda as Meloni seeks to leverage her program for a nonexploitative relationship with Africa to boost development while curbing illegal migration to Europe.

The pope and artificial intelligencePope Francis has called for an international treaty to ensure AI is developed and used ethically, acknowledging the promise it offers but emphasizing the grave and existential threats it poses.

He'll bring that campaign to the world's industrialized countries as wars are raging across multiple fronts. One of his greatest concerns has been on the use of AI in the armaments sector, which has been a frequent focus of the Jesuit pope who has called even traditional weapons makers "merchants of death."

But Francis is also concerned about what AI means for the poorest and weakest: technology that could determine the reliability of an applicant for a mortgage, the right of a migrant to receive political asylum or the chance of reoffending by someone previously convicted of a crime. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1972 PILOTS THREATEN WORLDWIDE STRIKE



Hundreds of thousands of holidaymakers face flight delays and cancellations after pilots threatened to strike over hijack fears.

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots Associations (IFALPA) has called a 24-hour stoppage and accused governments of failing to take action to halt air piracy.

British Air Line Pilots Association spokesman (BALPA), Gordon Hurley, said hijacking was on the increase, and striking was the "only effective way of dealing with it".

"Until governments take the matter seriously and make airports secure and stop this hijacking, this menace, this piracy, this is the only alternative we have," he said.

BALPA's vice chairman, Jack Linstead, said he was issuing a strike notice reluctantly, but added that it was a reflection of the pilots' strength of feeling on the issue.

The strike ballot had returned "a very clear mandate to take industrial action," he said, adding that there was still time for the dispute to be resolved.

IFALPA wants governments across the world to fulfil three basic demands.

These are: to increase international airport security; to adopt the International Civil Aviation Organisation's convention against air hijacking; and to speed up the pace of ratification of other anti-hijacking conventions.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The 24-hour strike went ahead at 0600BST on 19 June, affecting civil air travel all around the world.

Although the British pilots' association withdrew its official support for the stoppage, after reassurances from the government, many pilots chose to remain at home anyway. British European Airways reported about a third of its flights had been cancelled.

As the strike took effect, IFALPA said it believed the action had "given a new impetus and a new direction" to solving the problem of hijacking.

The aviation industry later introduced metal detectors to identify any weapons carried onto aircraft.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Wait for better visibility before leaping. Proceed with caution or risk accidents. Don't fund a fantasy. Stick to stable ground. Nurture your health.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
Relax and slow down. Avoid breakdowns or misunderstandings. Enjoy the comfort of familiar routines. Indulge your creativity and passion.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
Relax into domesticity. Avoid gossip or noise. Find creative ways to beautify your home. Give away extra stuff for more space. Enjoy private productivity.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
A creative project unfolds. Action gets farther than talk. Don't reveal it until it's ready. Keep secrets and surprises. Research, edit and polish first.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
Stay calm. A communication breakdown could thwart a profitable intention. Avoid conflict with authority figures. Old assumptions get challenged. Listen generously.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Take extra time for yourself. Delays and misunderstandings abound. Wait for revelations. Consider personal dreams and desires. Imagine a perfect situation. Plot your moves.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Your work reflects you well. Organize plans privately. If something goes against your grain, turn it down. Deception gets revealed. Soothe doubts with facts.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Your team can see your blind spots. Work together. Learn from trusted allies.

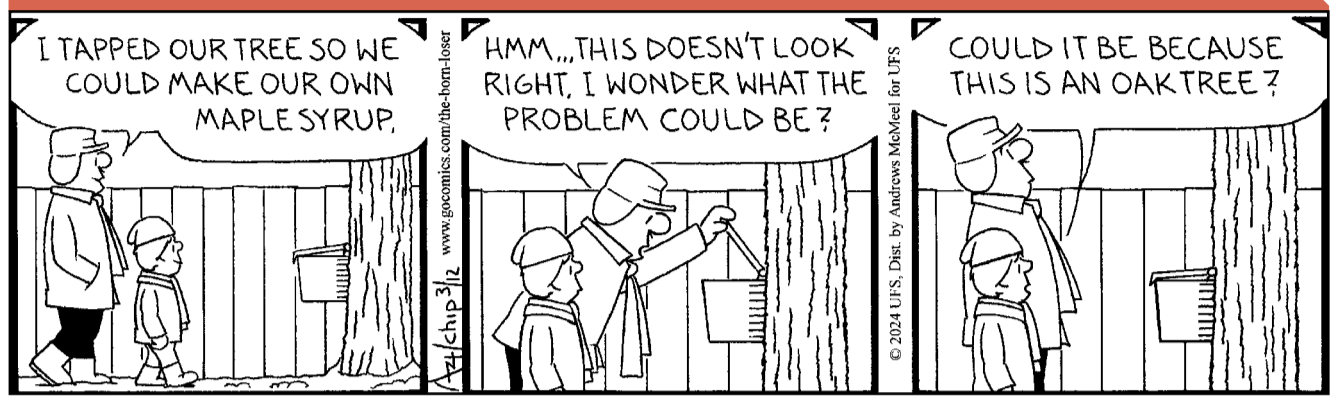
**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Unexpected tasks can interfere with existing responsibilities. Patiently wait out a chaotic rush. Discover a fallacy. Dispel an illusion. Connect with reliable sources.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
The first stage to realize a dream is to notice where it's missing. Visualize perfection. Outline requirements. Unfold your epic adventure step by step.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Financial breakdowns could arise. Keep receipts and statements. Sort facts from fiction. Avoid misunderstandings or arguments over money. Keep a low profile. Collaborate.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Let go of a preconception, especially one that affects your partnership. Maintain patience. Keep your tone respectful and your sense of humor awake.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

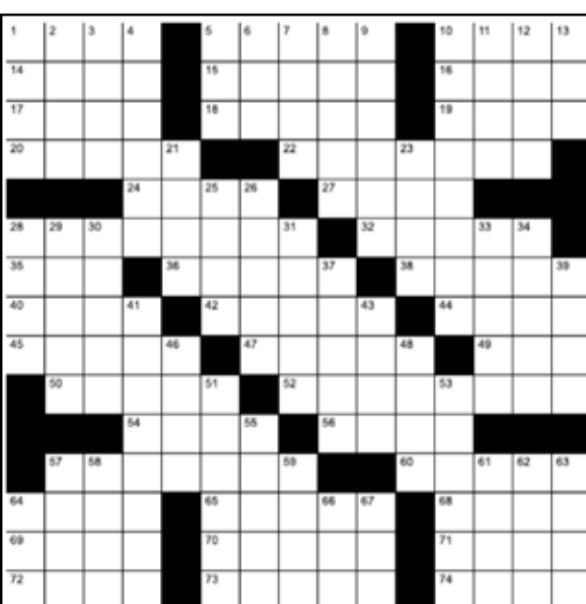
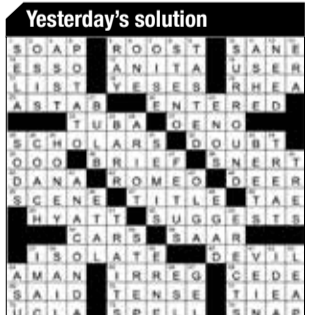
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	23	34	fine
Changchun	18	27	rain
Chengdu	23	36	cloudy
Chongqing	24	34	fine
Fuzhou	25	31	rain
Guangzhou	26	30	rain
Guiyang	19	28	cloudy
Haikou	25	37	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	23	33	cloudy
Harbin	18	25	thunderstorms
Hefei	23	37	fine
Nanjing	24	34	cloudy
Shanghai	23	32	cloudy
Taipei	25	30	overcast
Wuhan	25	35	showers
Hong Kong	29	32	thunderstorms
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	14	22	cloudy
Frankfurt	14	19	cloudy
Paris	12	22	showers
London	10	17	showers
New York	19	29	thunderstorms

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Super Bowl XXXIV champs; 5- Betelgeuse's constellation; 10- Disrespectful back talk; 14- Would \_\_\_ to you?; 15- Young purrer; 16- Cain's victim; 17- Contented cat sound; 18- Pub perch; 19- At no time, poetically; 20- Ham it up; 22- Bring back into stock; 24- Budget rival; 27- Hissy fit; 28- Forced high notes; 32- Throat bug; 35- \_\_\_ king; 36- Bank offerings; 38- Bird of prey, score in golf; 40- Just okay; 42- Cream-filled cookies; 44- Bristol baby carriage; 45- Unit of heat; 47- Declare; 49- Tolkien tree creature; 50- Dispute; 52- Performs surgery; 54- \_\_\_ time (never); 56- Hook's helper; 57- Loss of memory; 60- Whiskey type; 64- \_\_\_ Arabian Nights; 65- Extreme; 68- To \_\_\_ (just so); 69- Collections of anecdotes; 70- So spooky as to be frightening; 71- Sailors; 72- Pre-Easter period; 73- Hauls; 74- Joy Adamson's lioness;

DOWN 1- Ready for picking; 2- Graduate, for short; 3- Picasso contemporary; 4- Some mattresses; 5- Approves; 6- Mus. slow-up; 7- Like \_\_\_ not; 8- Siouan speakers; 9- Hose; 10- Golf hazard; 11- Have \_\_\_ in one's bonnet; 12- Visionary; 13- Camera type, briefly; 21- First name in daredevilry; 23- Ceremonial act; 25- Langston Hughes poem; 26- Constellation components; 28- Speedy; 29- Hilo hello; 30- Modern surgical tool; 31- \_\_\_ a customer; 33- Everglades bird; 34- Flat surface; 37- Lathers; 39- 911 respondents; 41- Person who plays the cathedral pipes?; 43- Goblet part; 46- Silent; 48- \_\_\_ saw Elba; 51- Came after; 53- Add fizz; 55- Crude carrier; 57- First-class; 58- Grumble; 59- Big name in razors; 61- Romance lang.; 62- Sun. speeches; 63- For \_\_\_ Jolly Good Fellow; 64- Proverb ending?; 66- Tractor-trailer; 67- DDE opponent;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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



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**Tou Un**  
HKD 2,980,000 1 bed 1 bath

**Jade Garden**  
HKD 11,880,000 4 bed 3 bath



LE MANS 2024 | ANALYSIS

# IF WE EVER LOSE PARIS, WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE LE MANS

SÉRGIO DE ALMEIDA CORREIA, MDT, LE MANS

THE echoes of last year's Centenary Day have not yet faded, and we're already back in the golden week of Le Mans and the La Sarthe circuit. If in 2023, after Ferrari's masterful comeback and fabulous victory, the premier Hypercar category featured sixteen cars from seven manufacturers (Cadillac, Ferrari, Vanwall Vandervell, Porsche, Toyota, Peugeot, Glickenhaus), the departure of Vanwall and Jack Glickenhaus' team could have led to fears that this year's field would be smaller. Fortunately, this was not the case. The brands that had previously announced their future participation in the World Endurance Championship (WEC) didn't miss out and are showing the strength of the most competitive of the world's motor racing championships in its various categories.

That's why when former French football star Zinedine Zidane waves the tricolor flag next

Saturday for the start of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, 23 cars will be on the Hypercars grid from nine different manufacturers.

In addition to the manufacturers who have increased the number of cars (Ferrari is present with three cars for Fuoco/Molina/Nielsen, Per Guidi, Calado/Giovinazzi and a third 499P for Kubica/Schwartzman/YifeiYe, this one in yellow colors, joined by the three Porsche 963s of the Americans from Porsche Penske Motorsport in a squadra with two more cars from Hertz Team Jota and one from the Proton Competition team), Peugeot continued with the 9X8 model from the French Total Energies team.

To those must be added the usual two cars from the official Toyota team with the GR-010-Hybrid, and the three Cadillac V-Series.R, two from the official team and one from the Americans from Action Express Racing, where the names of Brazilians Pipo Derani, Felipe Drugovich and the very fast Felipe Nasr stand out, joined by you-

ng Englishman Jack Aitken, his experienced compatriot Nick Tandy and Frenchman Mathieu Jaminet.

What's new is the arrival of the Italian manufacturer Isotta Fraschini with the TIPO6-C model, the car that reached the fastest straight-line speed in practice last weekend, hitting 346 km/h, with Thai driver Bennett, great champion Jean-Karl Vernay and Antonio Saravale, the young Canadian hope at just 21 years old, all looking for a place in the sun.

The Alpine Endurance Team's new Alpine A424, with two cars for Chatin/Ferdinand Habsburg/Milesi and Nicolas Lapierre/Mick Schumacher/Vaxivière, and the Lamborghini SC63 both make their debut (Grosjean/Caldarelli/Cairoli and Bortolotti/Kvyat/Mortara) in this year's edition. Finally, BMW will be returning to Le Mans to compete in the premier class with two M-Hybrid V8 cars, entrusted to the Belgians from WRT (Vanthoor/Marciello/Wittman and Van der Linde/Frijns/Rast).

After the initial prologue in Qatar, where the first race was also held, and the Imola and SPA-Francorchamps stages, Le Mans will be the fourth race of the season. If in Qatar the dice were rolling in favor of Porsche, which placed three cars on the podium, then at the 6 Hours of Imola, which saw a race with an uncertain winner until the end, Toyota won, relegating the two Penske cars to the next places, in SPA the victory went to the Hertz Jota team, their first win in the WEC, followed by the Penske number 6 car and the number 50 Ferrari of Fuoco/Molina/Nielsen, in what was the first podium of the season for the winners of the "Course du Siècle".

As for the other two categories present at Le Mans, LMP2, with 16 cars at the start, and the young LMGT3, with 23 cars, only the latter counts for the WEC, since the other has been eliminated by the FIA, although it will continue to take part in Le Mans, there will be a European championship and the popular Le Mans series, which in any case does not invalidate the fact that the entry list is still impressive in terms of the quality of the teams and drivers. It should be noted that there are fourteen former Formula 1 drivers competing this year.

In addition to what will be ha-

ppening on the track and in the pits, there will be plenty of entertainment and parallel activities. Last week the scrutineering and technical checks took place in the city center, and there was a Hypercar parade. Today the town will see the popular parade of participating drivers in classic vehicles and the usually crowded streets. And those who don't want to follow the races (in addition to the main race there will be support races) always have plenty of options.

From the daily concerts to a visit to the 24H Museum, with the Alpine Esprit Tricolore exhibition, and where the Bentley 3L Sport that won the 24 Hours in 1924 will also be on display for classic lovers, to the brand exhibitors or a visit to the Hydrogen Village, an increasingly strong bet by some manufacturers.

As for the championships, everything is open. And since anything can happen at Le Mans, it's certain that a fierce and close fight is expected right up until the end, to the delight of the 300,000 spectators who follow the race live here, in an atmosphere that is as glamorous as it is popular, frenetic, welcoming and always full of novelties, all contributing to the guarantee of continuity and success for another hundred years. Long live the 24 Hours. Le Mans is a party.

SÉRGIO A. CORREIA/MDT



Le Mans circuit: Warming up the machines in free training sessions yesterday



**EURO 2024 | ANALYSIS**

# Another surprise? Europe's biggest soccer show to begin in Germany and as usual it's unpredictable

**JAMES ROBSON,  
SOCCER WRITER**

**A** returning Cristiano Ronaldo, a rampant Kylian Mbappé and a resurgent Germany.

Throw in a Harry Kane-powered England and defending champion Italy and Euro 2024 is wide open.

That's without mentioning three-time winner Spain.

The unpredictability of the European Championship, which begins in Munich on tomorrow, is what makes it such compelling viewing. Even in its expanded format of 24 teams, there is always the potential for a surprise.

This is the tournament, after all, that was won by rank outsider Greece in 2004. In 1992, it was won by Denmark, a team that hadn't even qualified for the finals but was granted entry at the 11th hour when war-torn Yugoslavia was banned.

Host nation Germany hopes to create a welcoming and festive atmosphere for millions of soccer fans who will watch the games in stadiums or fan zones across the country – like it did when it hosted the 2006 World Cup.

However, this tournament will be played in a different political context. Europe's biggest sporting event since the Russian invasion of Ukraine is taking place in the shadow of the most devastating conflict in Europe since World War II.

Ukraine is participating and can expect a warm reception in Germany, which hosted the team's home matches during the qualifying campaign. Russia was excluded from qualifying – it has been suspended from all international competitions by European soccer body UEFA as well as global counterpart FIFA.

Meanwhile, Georgia is coming to its first major soccer championship as a political crisis deepens at home. The South Caucasus country has seen weeks of protests against a controversial law that opponents say would crack down on media freedom and hinder efforts to join the European Union.

## **POLITICS AND HOOLIGANISM**

And across the EU, voters will still be digesting the results of elections to the European

AP PHOTO



Parliament – the 27-member bloc's legislature – as the tournament gets underway. Early results Monday showed a surge in nationalist and far-right sentiment, which has often manifested itself in Europe's soccer stadiums, particularly among hardcore ultras.

As always, the threat of hooliganism looms over the European Championship, where clashes between rival fans have become a common feature. The threat of terrorism and political violence is an even bigger security concern, following a series of attacks on politicians in Germany.

German authorities are stepping up border controls during the tournament. More than 20,000 police officers will be on duty.

Given the tensions surrounding the Gaza war, UEFA and Germany avoided even higher security concerns when Israel was knocked out in the playoffs for Euro 2024.

On the field of play, there is reason to expect an exciting tournament, without the COVID-19 restrictions that were in place during the previous Euros in 2021.

England and France are among the favorites.

Three years ago, England was just a penalty shootout away from winning its first trophy since the 1966 World Cup but lost the final to Italy. Since then, manager Gareth Southgate has seen the emergence of Jude Bellingham as

one of the top talents in world soccer, while Phil Foden is living up to the hype he generated when first emerging at Manchester City. Meanwhile, Harry Kane scored 44 goals in 47 games in his first season at Bayern Munich.

France also suffered the heartbreak of a shootout defeat when it lost the World Cup final in Qatar to Argentina. Mbappé remains its star attraction, but he is surrounded by top class talent throughout the French squad in the

form of Antoine Griezmann, Eduardo Camavinga, Aurélien Tchouameni, Ousmane Dembélé and Kingsley Coman.

## **RONALDO BACK IN EUROPE**

Ronaldo will be back competing in Europe after heading to Saudi Arabia to play his club soccer. Even at the age of 39 the former Real Madrid and Manchester United striker is still a goal machine – scoring 10 during Portugal's perfect qualifying campaign.

Germany is a question mark after a string of disappointments at recent major tournaments, but new coach Julian Nagelsmann has lifted the mood of the host nation just in time for Euro 2024, with morale-boosting wins in friendlies against France and the Netherlands.

It's a dangerous game to make predictions about Italy after the traditional powerhouse of international soccer failed to qualify for the last two World Cups but won the Euros in between.

Spain is looking to restore its former glory after having dominated international soccer from 2008-2012 when it won two Euros and was also crowned world champion. There is no shortage of talent at coach Luis de la Fuente's disposal, with Man City midfielder Rodri establishing himself as arguably the best in his position and Barcelona's Lamine Yamal among its emerging stars.

Other teams to watch include Croatia, which came third at the Qatar World Cup, and still has Luka Modric producing at the highest level with Real Madrid. Belgium's golden generation has disbanded, yet it still qualified as a group winner, with striker Romelu Lukaku the top scorer with 14 goals.

If this is the year of another surprise winner, potential candidates could include Ralf Rangnick's Austria, which impressed during qualifying; Denmark, a semifinalist in the last Euros; or Serbia, which has some serious attacking talent.

In a tournament that has produced some of international's biggest shocks - anything seems possible. **MDT/AP**

## **UPCOMING GAMES**

	Date	Time	Home	Away	ODDS
<b>Sat</b>	Jun 15	03:00	Germany	Scotland	H 1.32, D 6.5, A 11
<b>Sat</b>	Jun 15	21:00	Hungary	Switzerland	H 3.5, D 3.25, A 2.35
<b>Sun</b>	Jun 16	0:00	Spain	Croatia	H 1.97, D 3.5, A 4.4
<b>Sun</b>	Jun 16	03:00	Italy	Albania	H 1.41, D 4.9, A 10
<b>Sun</b>	Jun 16	21:00	Poland	Netherlands	H 6.5, D 4.2, A 1.6
<b>Mon</b>	Jun 17	0:00	Slovenia	Denmark	H 5.5, D 3.6, A 1.8
<b>Mon</b>	Jun 17	03:00	Serbia	England	H 8, D 4.75, A 1.48
<b>Mon</b>	Jun 17	21:00	Romania	Ukraine	H 4, D 3.5, A 2.06



DRIVE IN

# 'TUESDAY,' WITH JULIA LOUIS-DREYFUS, IS STRANGE, EMOTIONAL AND FIERCELY ORIGINAL

LINDSEY BAHR,  
FILM WRITER

AP PHOTO



Julia Louis-Dreyfus in a scene from "Tuesday" (A24)

DEATH has taken many forms in cinema. It's been portrayed by actors like Bengt Ekerot, Ian McKellen, John Cleese, and even Brad Pitt. In "Tuesday," filmmaker Daina O. Pusi's bold debut, death looks like a worn-out macaw.

Covered in grime and missing feathers, "Tuesday's" Death can be as big as a room or as small as an ear canal. Its booming, gravelly voice, provided by actor Arinzé Kene, is ancient and otherworldly, creating a profoundly unsettling presence. It's not a comforting welcome into the afterlife.

"Tuesday," which expands nationwide Friday, explores death and acceptance between a mother and her dying daughter. This is no Hallmark affair; it's prickly, wry, somewhat unsentimental, gritty, and painfully realistic. You might find yourself in tears as a result.

A parent coming to terms with a child's imminent death is emotionally charged territory. Thank-

fully, "Tuesday" is filled with immense creativity and vision, both in front of and behind the camera. This includes the writer-director and the special effects team responsible for Death, as well as the haunting and innovative sound design.

Lola Petticrew plays the titular Tuesday, a teen with a "Breathless" pixie cut, a love of jokes and rap music, and a terminal illness that confines her to an oxygen tank and

a wheelchair. Her mother, Zora (Julia Louis-Dreyfus), is disconnected from the situation. She tiptoes around the house, leaving the care to nurse Billie (a lovely Leah Harvey). Zora pawns household items to pay for care, ignores Tuesday's calls, and occasionally sleeps on park benches. At home, she avoids talking to Tuesday about serious matters, repressing everything and driving everyone crazy.

The day we meet Zora and

Tuesday is the day Death arrives. Billie leaves Tuesday on the patio briefly, and the girl has an episode, gasping for air, when the macaw lands by her side. Death is the first character introduced in an unnerving series of deaths, setting an ominous tone. Some characters are ready to go, some are scared, but all have the same outcome once Death claims them.

Tuesday, however, decides to tell Death a joke. This disarms

Death, and they start a conversation. She gives Death a bath, plays music, and asks for a favor: to say goodbye to her mom first. Death obliges.

The story becomes a combination of body horror, fairy tale, domestic drama, and apocalypse thriller. It is weird and transfixing, never predictable or boring. Louis-Dreyfus is both chilling and deeply empathetic as Zora, a woman paralyzed by grief even before her daughter's death. She seems to be preparing for her own death, unable to process life without her daughter. Petticrew holds her own, going head-to-head with Louis-Dreyfus, exhibiting wisdom beyond her years.

"Tuesday" is ultimately a cathartic experience, whether death is top of mind or not. It marks the arrival of a daring filmmaker worth following. **MDT/AP**

**"Tuesday," an A24 release in theaters nationwide Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for language. Running time: 111 minutes. ★★★★★**

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FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
IN MACAU (2023)





BOOK IT

# 'Swole' or, what masculinity could be in a hyperconnected, TikTok-imaged world

**AUTHOR** Michael Brodeur takes the gym too seriously, and not seriously at all at the same time, in his book "Swole: The Making of Men and the Meaning of Muscles" in an effort to show the readers that the overly online world of hypermasculinity is an illusion and what a man can be is what you make of it.

Brodeur evokes his own autobiography to guide the reader through the history of weightlifting and the role of men in society. He's a middle-aged, Gen-X, self-described "meathead" who brags about the depths of his squats and size of his biceps and butt, but also lives a life as the classical music critic for The Washington Post and a gay man.

These dueling identities weave through Brodeur's "Swole." The narrative works, most of the time, but sometimes Brodeur's chapters feel more like miniature essays surrounding a broader theme of masculinity than a comprehensive whole.

He celebrates male bodies and men wanting to be bigger, stronger, and uses humor and the history of idols like Arnold Schwarzenegger, He-Man, and professional wrestling to show how men's identities have evolved and changed since he was a child struggling to come to terms with his own sexual orientation.

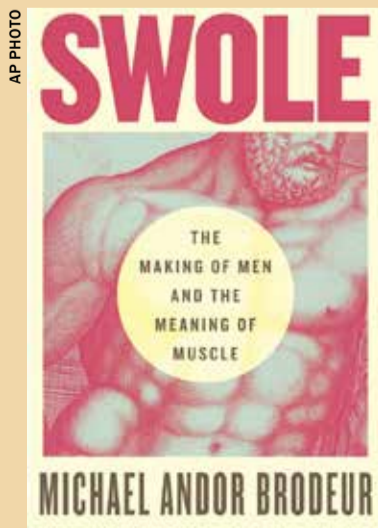
Brodeur appears to reject the modern-day gym industry that often sells their version of the ideal body: A place where calorie counts are perfected, macronutrients are measured and microtargeting of muscle groups are a must.

Instead, Brodeur tells the reader to reach for the ideal you want — be comfortable looking at yourself in a mirror, and know it's also OK to be somewhat embarrassed about looking at yourself in a mirror.

Brodeur also warns about the rising influence that internet personalities like Andrew Tate or the Liver King are having on younger men, or the unending number of TikTok personalities that basically lay out easy ways for young men to purchase and abuse anabolic steroids.

"Adrift and allegedly emasculated by the mass rejection of 'real masculinity,'" men are now balls-deep in an imaginary internet-based civil war with themselves," he writes.

"Swole" allows men to celebrate masculinity as they want to define it. **KEN SWEET, MDT/AP**



"Swole: The Making of Men and the Meaning of Muscles" by Michael Andor Brodeur (Beacon Press)

# Elegance in Minimalism

IRENE SAM, MDT

**R**ECENTLY, Executive Chinese Chef Anthony Ho presented his new tasting menu at Four Seasons Hotel Macao's award-winning Chinese restaurant **Zi Yat Heen**. Savoir-faire in handling traditional cooking methods while featuring a modern approach to visual presentation is reflected upon subtlety in taste and minimalistic elegance. Chef Ho wows gourmets through simplicity that unveils his vast and profound interpretation of Cantonese cuisine, of which he is most passionate.

The memorable gastronomic experience commences with Zi Yat Heen Deluxe Appetizers. Dalian Sea Cucumber is marinated to perfection while Sichuan Peppercorn Chilled Foie Gras Cube with Fragrant Red Wine delightfully surprises with a light, sumptuous acidity that unfolds into a creamy finish with a hint of spiciness. Finger Lime Roasted Suckling Pig with Kristal Caviar and Gold Leaf wows the palate with its crispy texture and rich flavors combined with umami, spherical wonders.

Chef Ho's mastery in using the wok as a tool to work his magic is revealed in his next dish, Sautéed Kagoshima A5 Wagyu Beef Cubes with Boletus Mushroom and Black Pepper Sauce. Each cube of beef still radiates a delicate amount of heat on the palate as the opulence of mushroom complements with sprinkles of peppery wonders.

Roasted Crystal Shi-Qi Baby Pigeon demonstrates Chef Ho's awe-inspiring skills in temperature control as well as innovative ability to produce a recipe of Chinese spices for the purpose of marination, which precisely enhances the taste of the pigeon without covering its original



flavor.

Another highlight of the meal, Inaniwa Noodles and Scallop in Lobster Bisque, delights with utmost simplicity. Elements of the sea are layered on a bed of noodles soaked in a decadent bisque created with four types of shrimp and lobster. The result is a match made in heaven, unveiling a spectrum of tastes that woo the senses while exhibiting understated elegance in a most nuanced manner.

A seasonal sweet conclusion to the spectacular gastronomic journey, Baked Egg Tartlet and Milk Jelly with Bird's Nest and Chilled Passion Fruit is the choice for the summer. The jelly slowly melts in the mouth as the acidity of passion fruit enchants through complexities, sweet and sour, refreshing yet satisfying. The egg tartlet is the epitome of refinement, blending layers of textures in one bite.

# Healing through Sound

**H**IMALAYAN singing bowls are nowadays extremely trendy in the world of wellness and are often seen at hotel spas and resorts. Last week, the establishment ceremony of the Macau Singing Bowl Cultural Association was held at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. Anne Iao, the founding president of the association, said that the establishment of the association aims to promote the singing bowl culture and uses singing bowls as a carrier to raise society's attention

to physical and mental health through spreading compassion through sound. The group was radiating positive energy on Global Health Day together with the Macau Holy Light Choir of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Mind-Body Balance Exchange Association. They performed a one-hour singing bowl sound bath session for guests. Participants agreed that the sound therapy brought physical and emotional relaxation to all. **IS**





**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**VISITS AIM TO STRENGTHEN EXCHANGES AND TRUST, AND DEEPEN COOPERATION**

Chinese Premier Li Qiang is in New Zealand on an official visit, the first leg of his third overseas trip of the year that will also take him to Australia and Malaysia.

These visits have aroused broad interest as Li will be the first Chinese premier to visit New Zealand and Australia in seven years. And there has been no official visit to Malaysia by a Chinese premier since 2015.

The visits present a precious opportunity to strengthen the respective bilateral relations during this period of profound geopolitical challenges. There certainly is plenty to discuss after such long intervals.

Judging from the messages from the four capitals so far, the focus of discussions is mainly on economic and trade cooperation. China is a salient cooperation partner of New Zealand and Australia. As important countries in the Asia-Pacific with high economic complementarity and promising futures for strengthened cooperation, China has worked with both countries to overcome any difficulties encountered to sustain the sound and steady growth of relations.

With broad common interests and great untapped cooperation potential in sight, the Chinese guest and his New Zealand and Australian hosts seem intent on not allowing their differences on security and geopolitics to get in the way of shoring up their economic and trade relations. After years of sometimes bitter exchanges, even in the form of trade disruptions, the three parties appear to have concluded that whatever their disagreements, at the end of the day they have to make things work, get along and get down to business.

Numerous previously thriving small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly in the private sector, are either struggling or have gone bankrupt as a result of the Western economies reshuffling their supply chains. And Australian exporters reportedly lost on average \$13 billion a year as a result of the previous government's diplomatic row with Beijing.

China-Australia relations have thawed since Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's visit to Beijing in November 2023. During that visit the two governments agreed to resume key bilateral dialogues and further cooperation in a number of areas. In fact, Beijing has already dropped tariffs on Australian beef, barley and wine, lifted an import ban on timber and resumed coal shipments. Besides comparing notes on bilateral, regional and international issues of common concern, Li and Albanese are also expected to meet with Australian and Chinese business leaders.

"Premier Li Qiang's visit to Australia is an important opportunity to engage directly on key issues for both our nations," said Albanese. Saying that Australia continues to pursue a stable and direct relationship with China, with dialogue at its core, is recognition that letting Washington exclusively have its ear will be detrimental to Australian interests.

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, too, sees Li's visit as a valuable opportunity for exchanges on deepening and broadening cooperation. In Wellington, officials are reportedly saying their discussions with the Chinese guest are aimed at realizing their goal of doubling exports to China in a decade.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations half a century ago, ties between China and Malaysia have enjoyed a sound momentum of growth, with deepening strategic mutual trust, fruitful high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and increasingly closer cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Both countries champion the Asian values featuring peace, cooperation, inclusiveness and integration, and contribute significantly to peace, prosperity and stability in the region.

[Abridged]

**UNUSUALLY HEAVY MONSOON RAINS IN PAKISTAN WILL AFFECT 200,000 PEOPLE: UN**

**THE BUZZ**

An estimated 200,000 people in Pakistan could be affected by the upcoming monsoon season, which is expected to bring heavier rains than usual, a top U.N. official warned yesterday.

The United Nations, with help from local authorities, has prepared a contingency plan, with \$40 million set aside to respond to any emergencies, said Mohamed Yahya, the newly appointed Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan.

Yahya told journalists in Islamabad that the weather forecas-

ters in Pakistan are projecting above-normal rainfall in the coming weeks. However, the rains would not be as heavy as in 2022 when devastating floods killed 1,739 people, destroyed 2 million homes, and covered as much as one-third of the country at one point.

Pakistan is one of the countries in the world most vulnerable to climate change, in part because of its immense northern glaciers, which are now melting as air temperatures rise. Warmer air can also hold more moisture, intensifying the rains of the monsoon.

AP PHOTO



This photo provided by Linda Mitchelle shows Orville Allen of Poplar Bluff, Mo., hugging his great-grandson in March 2024. Allen died May 29, 2024

**A 98-YEAR-OLD MAN'S LIVER WAS DONATED. HE IS BELIEVED TO BE THE OLDEST AMERICAN ORGAN DONOR EVER**

JIM SALTER, ST. LOUIS

**O**RVILLE ALLEN lived a lifetime of service, and when he died at age 98 he had one last thing to give: his liver.

Allen, a veteran of both World War II and the Korean War and a longtime educator in rural southeastern Missouri, is the oldest American to ever donate an organ, transplant organizations said. He died on May 29 and his liver was successfully transplanted to a 72-year-old woman, according to Mid-America Transplant.

Allen was in robust health until he suffered a fall while picking up storm debris at his home in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, on May 27, his daughter, Linda Mitchelle said. He struck the back of his head and was flown to St. Francis Medical Center in Cape Girardeau.

Swelling around Allen's brain couldn't be healed. As the family was preparing to say goodbye, hospital staff had a question: Would they consider donating his liver?

Given Allen's age, it was a question that caught the relatives by surprise. But

surgeons had examined him and determined the organ was acceptable for transplant.

Knowing their dad's nature — always the first to check in on people, always at the doorstep of a needy neighbor — the siblings didn't hesitate.

"It turned it from being such a sad loss of our dad to having this little ray of joy because he was doing what he'd done all his life," Mitchelle said. "He was giving one more gift."

Previously, Cecil Lockhart of West Virginia was the oldest person to donate an organ upon death, according to the Center for Organ Recovery & Education, which coordinated recovery of his liver. He was 95 when he died in 2021, and his liver was successfully transplanted to a woman.

More people than ever are getting new organs, according to data from the United Network for Organ Sharing, or UNOS, a nonprofit organization that has run the transplant system under a government contract for nearly four decades. Last year was a record year for donations from the deca-

sed — more than 16,000 — and for the number of organ transplants performed — more than 46,000 — according to UNOS. Liver transplants topped 10,000 for the first time ever.

Still, more than 100,000 people are on the nation's list for a new organ and many will die waiting. The need is so great that scientists are working on alternatives to ease the ongoing shortages. Earlier this year in Massachusetts, Richard "Rick" Slayman became the first recipient of a genetically modified pig kidney. He died two months after the transplant.

Increasingly, older adults can donate organs upon their death, said Kevin Lee, president and CEO of Mid-America Transplant.

"As we've seen advances in medical science, we have been educating over the past five years nurses and hospital staff not to think about age when they call in those referrals, but really allow our medical team and transplant physicians to evaluate the medical eligibility of each individual," Lee said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



**US** The Supreme Court yesterday unanimously preserved access to a medication that was used in nearly two-thirds of all abortions in the U.S. last year, in the court's first abortion decision since conservative justices overturned *Roe v. Wade* two years ago. The nine justices ruled that abortion opponents lacked the legal right to sue over the federal Food and Drug Administration's approval of the medication, mifepristone, and the FDA's subsequent actions to ease access to it. The case had threatened to restrict access to mifepristone across the country, including in states where abortion remains legal.

AP PHOTO



**Argentina's** Senate narrowly approved President Javier Milei's sweeping proposals to slash state spending and boost his own powers yesterday, handing the libertarian leader a much-needed first legislative victory. Milei hailed the vote as a "triumph" even as opposition senators scrapped an income tax package and tweaked some contentious elements after an hourlong debate marred by violent clashes between police and protesters in downtown Buenos Aires.

AP PHOTO



**Yemen's** Houthi rebels launched a boat-borne bomb attack against a commercial ship in the Red Sea on Wednesday, authorities said, the latest escalation despite a U.S.-led campaign trying to protect the vital waterway. The use of a boat loaded with explosives raised the specter of 2000's USS *Cole* attack, a suicide assault by al-Qaida on the warship when it was at port in Aden, killing 17 on board. Associated Press journalists saw the *Cole* in the Red Sea on Wednesday, now taking part in the U.S. campaign while visiting one of her sister ships, the USS *Laboon*.