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NEWS



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AP PHOTO



Koreas Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit North Korea for two days starting today, both nations announced. Putin will meet Kim Jong Un to discuss military cooperation amid escalating tensions with the U.S. This marks Putin's first trip to North Korea in 24 years, raising global concerns.

AP PHOTO



Indonesia Muslims in Asia celebrated Eid al-Adha, marked by communal prayers and animal sacrifices. In Jakarta, worshippers prayed for Gaza's suffering people. Traditional rituals, such as the "gunungan" parade in Yogyakarta and "manten sapi" in East Java, highlighted local customs. The festival commemorates Prophet Ibrahim's faith and sharing meat with the poor.

AP PHOTO



China Southern China faces severe flooding, forcing tens of thousands to evacuate, while northern China endures a heatwave, threatening drought conditions. One person has died, and over 36,000 have been displaced due to landslides and floods in Fujian province. The government emphasizes disaster preparedness amid climate change.

AP PHOTO



USA Hot and cold extremes hit the U.S. as a heatwave moves east, heavy rains threaten the Gulf states, and snow falls in the Rockies. Over 63 million people are under heat advisories. Phoenix sees record heat, while Montana expects up to 20 inches of snow. Weather extremes challenge nationwide preparedness.

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SPORTS

DSEDJ EXPECTS TO HOLD 117 MATCHES IN UPCOMING ISF BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

NADIA SHAW

THE upcoming 2024 ISF World School Basketball Championship will feature participants from more than 20 countries and regions, the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) announced in a press conference yesterday.

The tournament will include 20 male teams and 17 female teams, with nearly 600 athletes competing in an eight-day tournament.

"We expect to hold a total of 117 matches," said DSEDJ director Kong Chi Meng.

A press conference was held yesterday by the DSEDJ for the upcoming 2024 ISF World School Basketball Championship that will run from June 23 to July 3 in the region.

The ISF World School Basketball Championship is an international school-level basketball competition organized by the In-



ternational School Sport Federation (ISF). The event is hosted by a different country or region each year, with the DSEDJ hosting and Melco Resorts, sponsoring this year's event in Macau.

The tournament aims to promote school sports, promote cultural exchange and understanding, and provide a platform for young athletes of all genders to

showcase their skills, and encourage the practice of basketball in schools.

"The event will also feature special guests, Chinese basketball legends, both from the Guangdong Southern Tigers, Du Feng (head coach) and Zhou Qi (center) who will share their experiences with participants," said Kong.

The opening ceremony and

first match will be held at Tap Seac Sports Pavilion on June 23, while the championship will take place at three venues across Macau - at the Macau University Sports Complex, Mong-Há Sports Center, and Tap Seac Sports Pavilion.

China and Macau will field both male and female teams in the tournament, with matches

scheduled for June 24 to June 25. The group stage will be held from June 24 to 28, and the knockout stage will take place from June 29 to July 3.

On June 24, the male teams will compete, with China facing Bulgaria at 10:00 a.m. (Mong-Há) and Macau taking on India at 3:30 p.m. (Tap Seac).

On June 25, both male and female teams will participate.

The Chinese male team will face Hong Kong at 10:00 a.m. at the Mong-Há Sports Center, while the female teams will compete at the Macau University Sports Complex. The Chinese female team will face France at 11:45 a.m., Macau will face India at 1:30 p.m., and Turkey will face China.

The ISF World School Basketball Championship 2024 is part of the ISF's efforts to promote school sports and foster cultural exchange among young people worldwide.

Gaming tax revenue down nearly 10% in May

STAFF REPORTER

THE government reported gaming tax revenue of MOP7.15 billion for May, which is a 9.9% decline from April's MOP7.94 billion. However, the May figure represented a 25.4% year-over-year increase, which highlights the continued recovery in the territory's gaming industry.

The May gaming tax revenue corresponds to Macau's gross gaming revenue (GGR) for April, previously reported by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) as MOP18.55 billion. This decline in monthly GGR was likely driven by a range of factors.

For the first five months of 2024, combined gaming tax revenue reached MOP37.0 billion, up 78.2% compared to the same period in 2023, ac-

cording to the Financial Services Bureau (DSF). The government has projected full-year gaming tax revenue of around MOP83.6 billion for fiscal year 2024, with the budget execution rate at 44.3% through May.

Macau's total government revenue for the first five months of 2024 amounted to MOP43.6 billion, a 72.3% increase year-over-year. Gaming tax from concessionaires accounted for an outsized 84.9% of the total, underscoring the continued dominance of the gaming sector in the territory's economy.

Macau's casino revenues are expected to see a low point this year in June, due to a combination of exceptionally wet weather and the impact of China's university admission exams on family leisure activities, according to a report by banking institution Citigroup.

GOV'T PLANS TO LAUNCH NEW ROUND OF MATERNITY LEAVE COMPENSATION SUBSIDY

HOWARD TONG

THE Macau authorities have concluded an evaluation of the provisional measures regarding the subsidy for maternity leave remuneration and have proposed a fresh round of these subsidies.

The Standing Committee for Social Coordination held a plenary meeting where government representatives briefed both labor and management on the review of the maternity leave compensation subsidy measures and listened to their views.

Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) director Wong Chi Hong stated that the government plans to launch a new round of temporary maternity leave compensation subsidy scheme that allows eligible



small and medium-sized enterprises to apply for relevant subsidies from the Macau SAR government.

The revised Labor Relations Law, which took effect on May 26, 2020, increased maternity leave from 56 days and established a three-year tran-

sition period for maternity leave remuneration to protect the income of female employees during maternity leave.

The applicable transition period concluded in May 2023, prompting the government to reassess the pertinent subsidy policies.

Data shows that a

total of 1,360 local female employees were approved for subsidies, accounting for 16.7% of the total number of local employees who gave birth in Macau during the same period, and the value of the subsidies approved was approximately MOP14.3 million.

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Ho Iat Seng projects double-digit growth by end of 2024

NADIA SHAW

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng announced yesterday that the government is expecting a double-digit growth by the conclusion of 2024.

This announcement was made at the beginning of an eight-day media campaign in Macau aimed at boosting economic investment in the Greater Bay Area.

The CE spoke about the region's economic prospects and the government's efforts to diversify the economy beyond the gaming industry, which has long been the backbone of Macau's economy.

Ho expressed optimism about the region's financial prospects, predicting a surplus budget for next year.

The city's top official highlighted the government's efforts to diversify the economy beyond the gaming industry, and emphasized the importance of integrating Macau into China's global development.

He highlighted the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area as the path to development.



The Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin was specifically mentioned as the first step in this process.

Ho also highlighted the success of Macau's non-gaming initiatives, including the development of performing arts, conventions and exhibitions, and international sporting events.

He noted that these initiatives

have generated "significant revenue for the government, with ticket sales exceeding MOP10 billion in 2023."

Macau's economy grew by 25% year-on-year in the first quarter of this year, and Ho believes this upward trend will continue. He pointed out that the SAR government has been working to develop four major industries, including

tourism, finance, logistics, and technology, as part of its 5-year economic diversification development plan.

"GBA cities should develop their distinctive industries based on their own positioning," he stressed during the media briefing. He noted that Macau may be weak in certain industries, but is confident in its ability to co-deve-

lop with other GBA cities.

In addition to these initiatives, Ho announced that the government has found a new outdoor performance venue that can accommodate "50,000 to 80,000" people.

The announcement was made prior to the official release of statement by the Cultural Affairs Bureau. The venue, located near the Grand Lisboa Palace and MGM Cotai, will not impact residents and is expected to be operational by 2025.

The Chief Executive called on the public to work together to enhance Macau's "Golden Business Card," emphasizing the need for the public to protect and love Macau. He also highlighted the success of Macau's economic recovery, noting that the region's GDP reached MOP434.67 billion in 2019 and recovered to 80% in 2023.

Ho also highlighted the success of Macau's economic recovery, noting that the region's GDP reached MOP434.67 billion in 2019 and has already recovered to 80% of that level in 2023, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

The Chief Executive's remarks underscored the need for a collective effort from the public to maintain and strengthen Macau's reputation as a premier destination, as the government works to diversify the economy and reduce reliance on the gaming industry.

EVENTS

Outdoor performance venue for up to 50,000 spectators coming to Cotai by 2025

THE Macau Outdoor Performance Area will be established on a 94,000 square meter state-owned land in Cotai, as announced by the government yesterday. This temporary venue is projected to be operational by 2025 and has the capacity to accommodate approximately 50,000 spectators.

The establishment of this performance area near Grand Lisboa Palace will provide ideal conditions for Macau to host large-scale outdoor events in the future and attract top-notch performances to the region, according to the Cultural Affairs Bureau.

Over the years, numerous large-scale performing arts events have taken place in Macau. Apart from indoor venues, there has been a growing demand for large outdoor



performance spaces.

After consideration of the city's spatial conditions, geographical location, and other factors, the Cotai site was chosen.

Various departments of the SAR government are currently working on program design and project bidding for the performance area.

Equipped with essential facilities for hosting large-scale performances, the Ma-

cao Outdoor Performance Area will leverage the new venue's amenities to bring in international-level performing arts programs, the IC pledged.

It aims to attract both domestic and foreign organizations planning cultural festivals, performing arts events, and touring activities on a grand scale to Macau.

The need for such a venue has been long discus-

sed by officials, particularly after a recent concert by K-pop group Seventeen at the Olympic Sports Centre Stadium.

The January event sparked a wave of noise and traffic complaints from nearby residents. The event also resulted in damage to the stadium's pitch, which the promoter was required to pay for.

To address these issues, the government established an interdepartmental task group to coordinate and handle applications for large-scale outdoor events in public facilities.

Social Affairs and Culture Secretary Elsie Ao Ieong stressed the need for an outdoor space capable of "accommodating at least 20,000 people," as local resorts currently offer a range of indoor venues but lack a suitable outdoor space for such events – even if the outdoor concert area is a temporary setup.

While there is currently no timeline for the hosting of events and performances on the site, the project is expected to be a significant addition to Macau's entertainment landscape. LV/NS

TOURISM

MACAU SEES BOOM IN 2024 AS ARRIVALS REACH 82.5% OF PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

STAFF REPORTER

THE Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has reported a remarkable recovery in the city's tourism sector, with the number of tourist arrivals in the first five months of 2024 exceeding 14 million, which is a year-on-year increase of approximately 50%.

According to MGTO director Helena de Sena Fernandes, the daily average of visitors during this period was over 93,000, reaching 82.5% of the same period in 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic. The data indicates that mainland Chinese tourists accounted for 9.9 million of the total arri-

vals, or 81% of the pre-pandemic level.

Visitors from Hong Kong have recovered to 97.1% of 2019 levels, while the number of tourists from Taiwan, at 324,000, has reached 73.4% of pre-Covid levels. The number of overseas visitors, a key focus for the SAR's tourism authorities, reached 978,000, a 1.75-fold increase year-on-year, representing almost 67% of the same period in 2019.

Fernandes expressed confidence that Macau will see a full-year visitation of 33 million in 2024, with the city expected to return to pre-Covid levels in 2025. The city welcomed a total of 39.4 million tourists in 2019.

CENTENARY OF FIRST FLIGHT FROM PORTUGAL TO MACAU CELEBRATED THIS WEEK

This week, a Portuguese delegation is visiting Macau and Hong Kong to celebrate the centenary of the first flight between Portugal and Macau. In 1924, pioneering aviators Brito Paes, Sarmiento de Beires, and Manuel Gouveia made a daring flight from Vila Nova de Milfontes in Portugal to Macau, a journey that began on April 7 and ended on June 20. The celebrations are part of the "June - Month of Portugal in Macau" program. The delegation will participate in a series of activities, including conferences, the presentation of a book titled "From Portugal to Macau - Pátria Flight," the inauguration of a traveling exhibition "Portugal in the Flying Adventure," and the unveiling of a commemorative plaque.

IAS CONFIRMS WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT GOAL PLAN ON TRACK

The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) has confirmed that the Macau Women's Development Goal Plan is on track to be fully implemented by next year. Among the five measures that will be further promoted this year are initiatives aimed at enhancing family-friendly policies within the public sector and fostering a supportive environment for women in private enterprises. IAS data indicates women's remarkable progress in various domains, including the professional sphere. The governing bodies will persist in advocating for pertinent initiatives and urging companies to enhance the prospects for career advancement among their female staff.

HENGQIN PLOT AUCTIONED OFF IN INDUSTRIAL PARK DEVELOPMENT

Hengqin has auctioned off its first industrial land plot, which was won by Hengqin Qinao Innovation Industrial Park Development and Construction Co., Ltd. This company plans to construct a comprehensive industrial park that will integrate health products, food, biomedicine, medical equipment, and other industries. The land parcel in question spans approximately 116,000 square meters. The Economic Development Bureau Hengqin has announced that upon completion, the industrial park will provide an additional 400,000 square meters of production and manufacturing space for the district.

INT'L GASTRONOMY FORUM

REDEFINING THE CULINARY LANDSCAPE: EXPERTS EXPLORE APPROACH TO HOLISTIC GASTRONOMY

STAFF REPORTER

EXPERTS from various sectors came together yesterday in a gastronomy forum to explore the transformative potential of holistic gastronomy within the business sector and its crucial role in sustainable tourism.

The panel of professionals shared their insights on the meaning of holistic gastronomy and its relevance to their work at the International Gastronomy Forum, which is a part of the 10-day International Cities of Gastronomy Fest Macao.

From larger organizations in Macau, Ruby O, assistant vice president of sustainability and business synergy at MGM, and Maria Fatima Pun, director of sustainability at Wynn Palace and Wynn Macau, shared their perspectives on sustainable dining.

They highlighted the need for a systematic, collaborative approach involving all stakeholders in the value chain, emphasizing the significance of considering the entire life cycle of food, from sourcing ingredients to transportation and service, to promote sustainability and minimize environmental impact.

Pun addressed the importance of balancing short-term needs with long-term sustainability goals, emphasizing that "sustainability is primarily driven by environmental and social impact, as well as governance" and

VICTORIA CHAN



the need for "a data-driven, technology-enabled approach" to manage food waste.

The panel discussion underscored the necessity for a holistic, systemic approach to gastronomy, calling for the consideration of cultural, economic, environmental, and social factors, as well as the relationships between all stakeholders in the food system.

Pun further addressed the importance of balancing short-term needs with long-term sustainability goals, emphasizing that sustainability encompasses environmental, social, and governance factors.

She advocated for measuring impact and progress using technologies like artificial intelligen-

ce to track food waste and adjust menus accordingly, as incorporating technology was crucial to reducing food waste and preserving the environment.

To nudge consumers towards greener decisions, the panelists proposed various strategies, including education and awareness-raising, making sustainable options accessible and affordable, leveraging influencers and community leaders, and providing effective sustainability training to hospitality staff.

The panelists also discussed practical ways in which Hong Kong and Macau can enhance holistic gastronomy and sustainability, emphasizing the importance of focusing on the quality and nutrition of ingredients,

closing the loop by giving back to the land, reducing expenditure on middlemen, fostering meaningful relationships and experiences for customers, and considering various stakeholder needs.

As the discussion continued, the panelists exchanged best practices and ideas, including the suggestion of growing local herbs in urban areas to support sustainable practices and the local community, contributing to the local economy and fostering a sense of community while providing unique culinary experiences.

Meanwhile, Mariana Oliveira Dias, executive director of health and wellness at Sands China, emphasized the interconnectedness of physical, mental, and social aspects in the culinary experience. Holistic gastronomy, according to Dias, involves "the use of whole foods where we emphasize whole and minimal processed ingredients, where we use the ingredients that are closer to its natural state, use their benefits as well." She also stressed the importance of "encouraging this conscience and the present focus when you approach the act of eating, where you are also inviting that sensory experience and that also promotes well-being."

In conclusion, the panel discussion shed light on the transformative potential of holistic gastronomy within the business sector and its significance in sustainable tourism. The insights shared by the panelists underscored the need for a comprehensive, collaborative, and systemic approach to gastronomy that considers cultural, economic, environmental, and social factors. The panelist concluded that, by embracing holistic gastronomy, businesses and destinations can create meaningful experiences while safeguarding the environment and promoting sustainable practices.

SEMINAR

Macau's 'golden business card' in focus

STAFF REPORTER

A seminar explored ways of polishing Macau's "golden business card" by leveraging the city's diverse strengths and advantages.

The event, recently hosted by the Union of Macau Scholars, brought together academics to discuss a range of topics, including policies, education, and the cooperation between Macau and Hengqin.

In his speech, Wu Zhi-liang, the president of the

Union of Macau Scholars, emphasized the significance of the fusion of Western and Eastern cultures as a key aspect of the city's promotional strategy.

"Macau, a city where Chinese and Western cultures converge, is ideally positioned to disseminate Chinese culture, values, and concepts to the world and to participate in the construction of a common homeland for humanity," he said.

Academics also engaged in the study of bilateral relations between Macau and Hengqin, suggesting that for Macau to benefit from the opportunities presented by the Hengqin cooperation zone, the city must first enhance the flow of people into Hengqin.

"The focus of our attention should now be on the question of how to bring more people together in Hengqin and how to better link the industrial chains between Macau and Hengqin," said Ip Kuai Peng, the vice president of the

Union of Macau Scholars. The discussion also touched on the potential of utilizing Macau as a platform to attract more international firms to invest in Hengqin, with the academics proposing to enhance the promotion of policies, markets and tolerance in the city.

Separately, the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) announced the launch of the first "Macao International City of Gastronomy Carnival," which aims to

leverage Macau's status as a UNESCO "Creative City of Gastronomy" and further consolidate its position as a "World Tourism and Leisure Center."

MGTO Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes said the event would promote the cross-border linkage of "tourism + food" and expand the influence of Macau's "Creative City of Gastronomy" designation, contributing to the broader efforts to enhance Macau's "golden business card."

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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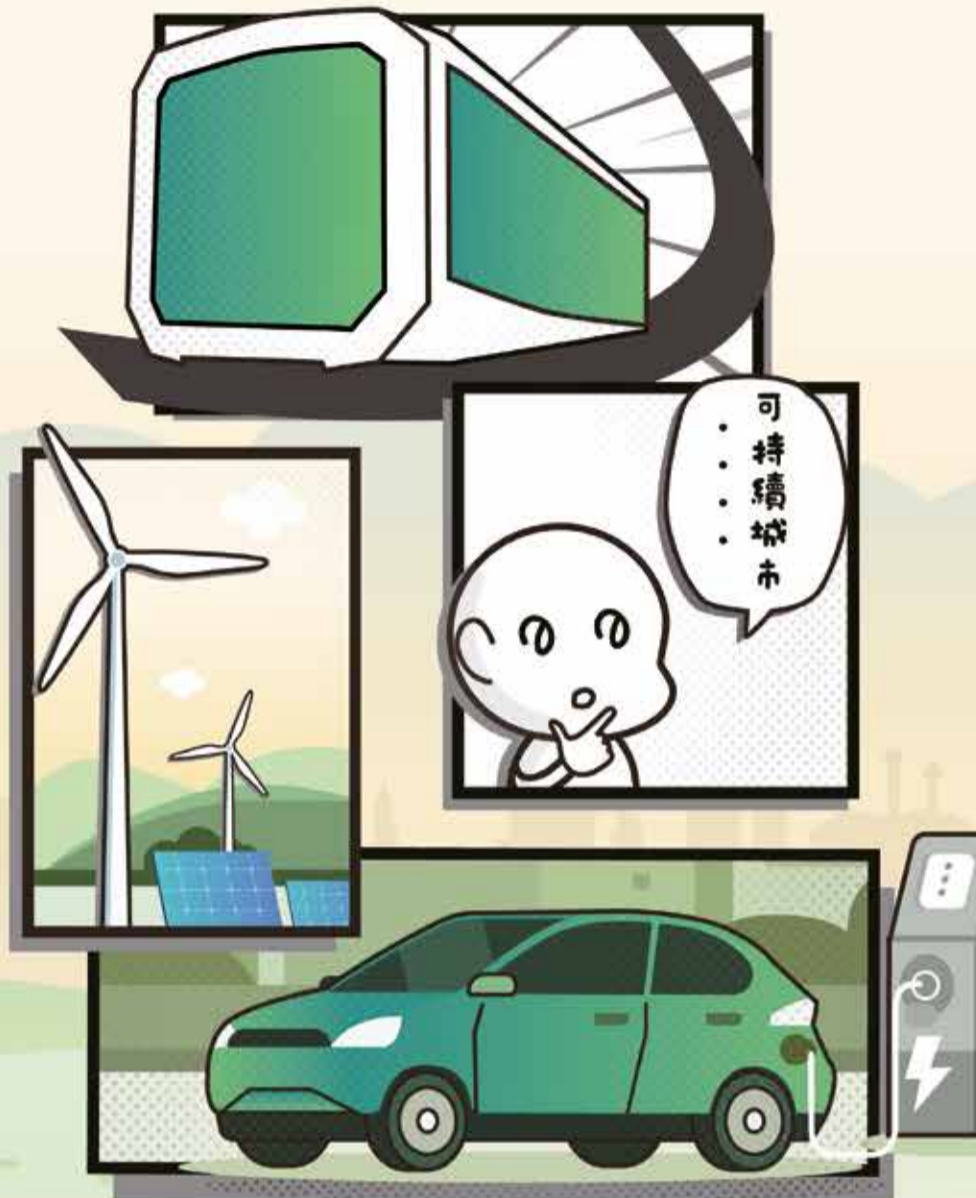
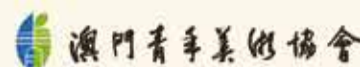
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DIPLOMACY

Premier Li agrees with Australia to 'properly manage' differences

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CHINESE Premier Li Qiang said he agreed with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on yesterday to properly manage their nations' differences as they emerge from a hostile era in which minister-to-minister contacts were banned and trade barriers cost Australian exporters up to 20 billion Australian dollars (\$13 billion) a year.

Li, Albanese and senior ministers of both administrations met at Parliament House to discuss thorny issues, including lingering trade barriers, conflict between their militaries in international waters and China's desire to invest in critical minerals.

Li, China's most senior leader after President Xi Jinping, arrived in the South Australian state capital of Adelaide on Saturday and the national capital of Canberra late Sunday in the first visit to the country by a Chinese premier in seven years.

Li told reporters after yesterday's meeting that the bilateral relationship was "on the right track of steady improvement and development."

"We ... had a candid exchange of views on some differences and disagreements and agreed to properly manage them in a manner befitting our comprehensive strategic partnership," Li said through an interpreter.

Albanese, who in November last year became the first Australian prime minister to visit China since 2016, described the discussions as "constructive."

"Australia advocates that we should all work together to promote a regional balance where no country dominates and no country is dominated," Albanese said.

"I've made it clear as nations with different histories, political systems and values, we will coo-



Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese shake hands after making opening remarks at Parliament House in Canberra, yesterday

perate with China where we can, disagree where we must and engage in the national interest," the Australian leader added.

Their relations have improved markedly since Albanese's center-left Labor Party was elected in 2022 following nine years of conservative government in Australia.

Most of the official and unofficial trade barriers Beijing introduced in 2020 on coal, cotton, wine, barley and wood have been lifted since Albanese was elected.

Beijing had banned minister-to-minister contacts as it froze out the previous Australian government diplomatically.

Agriculture Minister Murray Watt said before the meeting that he would raise the issue of China's ban on Australian rock lobsters and exports from two beef processing plants.

"The mere fact that we have the first visit by a Chinese premier, the second-most powerful person in China, ... since 2017 is an enormous opportunity to continue that dialogue, to continue stabilizing our relationship and address some of the outstanding issues," Watt said.

Li was served lobster at a business lunch with winemakers on Sunday and wagyu beef at a state lunch yesterday, news media reported.

Li planned to unders-

core China's interest in buying a bigger stake in Australia's critical minerals sector, which is essential to the global transition to renewable energy sources, by visiting a Chinese-controlled lithium processing plant in Western Australia state today.

Li visited New Zealand before Australia and is scheduled to stop in Malaysia late today before returning to China.

Australia shares U.S. concerns over China's global dominance in critical minerals and control over supply chains in the renewable energy sector.

Citing Australia's national interests, Treasurer Jim Chalmers recently ordered five Chinese-linked companies to divest their shares in the rare earth mining company Northern Minerals.

Watt said Chinese investment was not banned from the sector, but must meet national security criteria.

Albanese later told Li at a state lunch, "We won't always agree and the points on which we disagree won't simply disappear if we leave them in silence."

That appeared to be in response to a statement by Li, released by the Chinese Embassy in Canberra on Sunday, that he recommended "shelving differences" between the two countries in the interests of bolstering relations.

Albanese confirmed he

had raised with Li recent clashes between the two countries' militaries in the South China Sea and Yellow Sea that Australia argues endangered Australian personnel.

Chinese and Australian officials had agreed at the meeting to discuss improving military-to-military communications to avoid unintended incidents, Albanese said.

Relations tumbled over Australian legislation that banned covert foreign interference in Australian politics, the exclusion of Chinese-owned telecommunications giant Huawei from rolling out the national 5G network due to security concerns, and Australia's call for an independent investigation into the causes of and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The two countries signed several agreements on Monday to cooperate on trade, education, climate change, culture and intellectual property.

Beijing would like to remove Australian opposition to China joining a trade bloc known as the CPTPP, more investment in Australian critical minerals and ambitious new cooperative agreements on science and technology, Benjamin Herscovitch, a China expert at Australian National University, said.

But Australia had already made a concession to China in rebuilding relations through inaction by not imposing sanctions on Chinese entities that help Russia's war effort in Ukraine, he said.

"Australia is essentially giving China a free pass on that issue," Herscovitch said, while Australian allies, including the United States, Britain and the European Union were imposing sanctions.

Hundreds of pro-China demonstrators, human rights activists and democracy advocates have lined the routes of Li's cavalcades in Adelaide and Canberra. **MDT/AP**



ECONOMY

Central bank keeps lending rate unchanged as data show housing market is still struggling

CHINA'S central bank kept a key lending rate unchanged yesterday, choosing not to loosen credit as data for May showed signs of persisting weakness in the world's No. 2 economy's manufacturing and real estate sectors.

The central bank kept its rate for 1-year medium-term lending facility loans, used as a benchmark for other lending rates, at 2.5%. The decision aligned with expectations: instead of cutting already low interest rates Beijing has focused on channeling spending to areas considered to be high priorities such as high-tech industries.

The government reported yesterday that factory output fell 5.6% in May from the year before, slowing from 6.7% in April, though analysts noted some impact due to more work days in this year compared with the year before.

Property investments fell 10% year-on-year and home sales sank 30.5%, suggesting a raft of measures to try to turn around a real estate slump have yet to take hold.

Home prices in major, so-called Tier 1 cities like Beijing and Shanghai, fell 3.2%.

The downturn in the property industry followed a crackdown on excessive borrowing by property developers several years ago. That led many to default on their debts as they meanwhile have struggled to deliver apartments that buyers had already paid for. That also hit contractors and suppliers of building materials, appliances and other household goods.

Disruptions and job losses during the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with falling prices for homes — a staple form of investment for most Chinese families — have left many Chinese unwilling or unable to spend, sapping the economy of another major driver of business activity.

"Although the external environment is complex and changeable and the domestic economy is also facing some troubles and challenges, the fundamentals of economic recovery and long-term improvement have not changed," Liu Aihua, spokesperson for the National Bureau of Statistics, told reporters in Beijing.

She pointed to rising retail sales and investments in various high-tech industries as signs of progress. A program encouraging Chinese families to recycle old appliances and trade in their cars for new, electric vehicles is helping revive consumer spending, Liu said.

Sales of products online, which account for about a quarter of all retail sales, rose 11.5% in May, while sales of household appliances and "audio-visual goods" such as televisions rose nearly 13% in May.

Chinese buyers also have returned to auto showrooms, with vehicle sales climbing 8.3% from a year earlier to nearly 11.5 million units in January-May, the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers reported last week. Auto sales rose 1.5% in May.

"Buying capacity and consumer confidence needs further improvement, but there are many favorable factors supporting continued growth of the consumer market," Liu said. **MDT/AP**

SOUTH CHINA SEA

China blames Philippines for a ship collision, which Manila says is deceptive

MISTREANU AND
JIM GOMEZ, TAIPEI

A Chinese vessel and a Philippine supply ship collided near the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea yesterday, China's coast guard said, in the latest flare-up of escalating territorial disputes that have sparked alarm.

The coast guard said a Philippine supply ship entered waters near the Second Thomas Shoal, a submerged reef in the Spratly Islands that's part of territory claimed by several nations. The Philippine military called the Chinese coast guard's report "deceptive and misleading."

The Chinese coast guard said in a statement on the social media platform WeChat the Philippine supply ship "ignored China's repeated solemn warnings ... and dangerously approached a Chinese

vessel in normal navigation in an unprofessional manner, resulting in a collision."

"The Philippines is entirely responsible for this," it added.

In Manila, the Philippine military said it would "not discuss operational details on the legal humanitarian rotation and resupply mission at Ayungin Shoal, which is well within our exclusive economic zone." It used the Philippine name for the shoal, where Filipino navy personnel have transported food, medicine and other supplies to a long-grounded warship that has served as Manila's territorial outpost.

"We will not dignify the deceptive and misleading claims of the China coast guard," military spokesperson Col. Xerxes Trinidad said. "The main issue remains to be the illegal presence and actions of Chinese vessels within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone, which infringes on our



Philippine navy ship BRP Sierra Madre is seen at the Second Thomas Shoal, locally known as Ayungin Shoal, at the South China Sea, April 23, 2023

sovereignty and sovereign rights."

"The continued aggressive actions of the CCG are escalating tensions in the region," Trinidad said.

The Philippines says the shoal, which lies less than 200 nautical miles (370 kilometers) from its coast, falls within its internationally recognized exclusive economic zone and often cites a 2016 international arbitration ru-

ling that invalidated China's expansive claims in the South China Sea based on historical grounds.

Several incidents have happened in recent months near the shoal, where the Philippines maintains an outpost aboard the BRP Sierra Madre, which had been encrusted with rust since it was deliberately grounded in 1999 but remains an actively commissioned military vessel, mea-

ning an attack on it could be considered by the Philippines as an act of war.

China has increasingly become assertive in pressing its claim to virtually the entire South China Sea, which has led to a rising number of direct conflicts with other countries in the region, most notably the Philippines and Vietnam.

A new law by China, which took effect Saturday, authorizes its coast guard to seize foreign ships "that illegally enter China's territorial waters" and to detain foreign crews for up to 60 days. The law renewed a reference to 2021 legislation that says China's coast guard can fire upon foreign ships if necessary.

At least three coastal governments with claims to the waters — the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan — have said they would not recognize the law. **MDT/AP**

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



AP PHOTO



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (center) attends the plenary session during the Summit on peace in Ukraine, in Obbürgen

SWISS CONFERENCE

78 countries agree Ukraine's territorial integrity must be basis of any peace

JAMEY KEATEN, OBBÜRGEN

NEARLY 80 countries called yesterday [Macau time] for the "territorial integrity" of Ukraine to be the basis for any peace agreement to end Russia's two-year war, though some key developing nations at a Swiss conference did not join in. The way forward for diplomacy remains unclear.

The joint communique capped a two-day conference marked by the absence of Russia, which was not invited. Many attendees expressed hope that Russia might join in on a road map to peace in the future.

The all-out war since President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has killed or injured hundreds of thousands of people, unsettled markets for goods like grain and fertilizer, driven millions from their homes and carved a wedge between the West — and Russia, China and some other countries.

About 100 delegations, mostly Western countries, attended the conference that was billed as a first step toward peace. They included presidents and prime ministers from France, Germany, Britain, Japan, Poland, Argentina, Ecuador, Kenya and Somalia. The Holy See was also represented, and Vice President Kamala Harris spoke for the

United States.

India, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates — represented by foreign ministers or lower-level envoys — were among countries that did not sign the final document, which focused on issues of nuclear safety, food security and the exchange of prisoners. Brazil, an "observer," did not sign on but Turkey did. China did not attend.

The final document signed by 78 countries said the U.N. Charter and "respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty ... can and will serve as a basis for achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine." That has been a nonstarter for Putin, who wants Ukraine to cede more territory and back away from its hopes of joining the NATO military alliance.

Viola Amherd, the Swiss president, told a news conference the "great majority" of participants agreed to the final document, which "shows what diplomacy can achieve." Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis said Switzerland would reach out to Russian authorities but did not say what the message would be.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hailed the "first steps toward peace" at the meeting and said Ukraine was in talks with some countries, which he did not name, that had offered to host a "second peace summit." No time-

table was laid out.

Zelenskyy earlier this month accused China, backed by Russia, of attempting to undermine the Swiss conference, a claim denied by Beijing.

Allies of Ukraine now face the task of trying to keep up momentum toward peace. Zelenskyy said national security advisers would meet in the future, and "there will be a specific plan" afterward.

Testifying to war fatigue and other preoccupations, only about half of U.N. member countries took part. It's a far cry from March 2022, when condemnation of Russia's invasion led to passage of a non-binding resolution at the U.N. General Assembly by 141 countries calling for Russian troops to leave Ukraine.

It wasn't clear why some developing countries attending didn't line up behind the final statement, but they may be hesitant to rankle Russia or have cultivated a middle ground between Moscow, its ally China and Western powers backing Kyiv.

"Some did not sign — even though very few — since they are playing 'Let's have peace based on concessions' game, and they usually mean concessions by Ukraine, and basically accommodating Russian demands," said Volodymyr Dubovyk, a Ukraine expert and senior fellow at Center for European Policy Analysis, a Washington-based think tank. "They also like this 'neutrality'

positioning."

Dubovyk said the way forward for Ukraine was to receive aid — weapons and humanitarian assistance — that could improve its situation on the ground and thus give it a better negotiating position.

At the Swiss event, the challenge was to talk tough on Russia but open the door for it to join a peace initiative.

"Many countries ... wanted the involvement of representatives of the Russian Federation," Zelenskyy said. "At the same time, the majority of the countries do not want to shake hands with them (Russian leaders) ... so there are various opinions in the world."

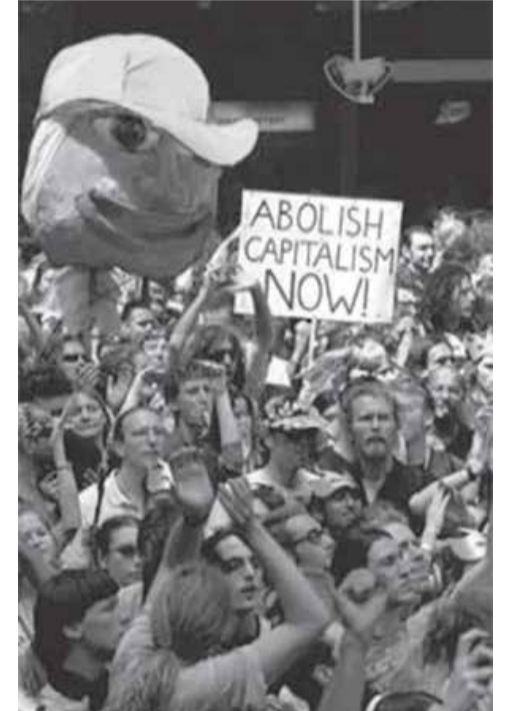
Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Union's executive Commission, said peace won't be achieved in a single step and asserted that Putin isn't serious about ending the war.

"He is insisting on capitulation. He is insisting on ceding Ukrainian territory -- even territory that today is not occupied by him," she said. "He is insisting on disarming Ukraine, leaving it vulnerable to future aggression. No country would ever accept these outrageous terms."

Analysts suspected the conference would have little concrete impact toward ending the war because Russia, was not invited. China and Brazil have jointly sought to plot alternative routes toward peace. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1999 ANTI-CAPITALISM DEMO TURNS VIOLENT



Police and protesters have clashed at a demonstration against capitalism in the centre of London's financial district.

The rally was timed to coincide with the start of a summit of the world's richest countries in Germany.

More than 4,000 people took to the streets of London in protest at the burden of debt owed by the world's poorest countries to the Group of Eight nations.

They were joined by about 300 cyclists, who disrupted traffic by riding slowly into the city centre, carrying banners.

But what began as a peaceful gathering became violent after a small crowd of demonstrators began attacking buildings and smashing windows.

Some protesters vented their anger on the Liffe Building, which forms part of the London Stock Exchange.

Massive clear-up

One group managed to break into the building but a safety shield was activated, preventing them from reaching the trading floor.

Police said they were attacked with stones and bottles. One woman was taken to hospital with suspected concussion and a broken leg after she was hit by a police van.

At least 42 protesters and four police officers have been injured. A number of arrests have been made and the violence is now said to be largely under control.

A massive clear-up operation will shortly be underway, as well as an investigation into the violence.

The London rally had been timed to coincide with other protests around the world.

German police were expecting up to 100,000 demonstrators to protest in Cologne, where the summit was being held, and call for the debt of the world's poorest countries to be cancelled.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

On the day 16 people were arrested for offences including criminal damage and assault.

One website sympathetic to the activists' aims described the event as a protest against "an economy that puts money, growth and the 'free market' above everything else, leading to poverty, the Third World Debt and environmental destruction."

In the House of Commons Home Secretary Jack Straw condemned the "deplorable outbreak of public disorder and violence".

Billed as a Carnival Against Capitalism, the City of London protest marked the first in a series of major anti-capitalist demonstrations in central London.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Family communications improve. Solutions to domestic problems arise in conversation over the next three weeks, with Mercury in Cancer. Shift from theoretical to practical.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Study, research and write your discoveries. Your communications and networking skills are especially hot over the next three weeks, with Mercury in Cancer.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Practice your moves. You can make a bundle, with Mercury in Cancer for three weeks. Communication leads to profits. Make valuable connections. Share and network.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Ask for what you want. Over three weeks, with Mercury in your sign, talk about personal aims, dreams and ambitions. Develop ideas in conversation.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 There's no place like home. Take it easy, with Mercury in Cancer for three weeks. Make long-term plans. Envision perfection and note possible options.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Group communications buzz for the next several weeks, with Mercury in Cancer. Friends offer good advice. Confer with your team. Network, socialize and share resources.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Use cleverness, communication and wit to advance professionally, with Mercury in Cancer. Determine what you want. Generate rising status over three weeks. Discuss the possibilities.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Dress for success. Expand your territory over three weeks, with Mercury in Cancer, including long-distance communications and transport. Study the situation. Discuss plans and destinations.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 File papers and sign contracts. Talk about money with your partner, with Mercury in Cancer for three weeks. Discuss family financial goals and dreams.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Your partner has great ideas. Brainstorm and converse. Listen carefully. Discuss ideas to create together, with Mercury in Cancer over three weeks. Invent possibilities.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Use your communications and networking skills. Study health matters, with Mercury in Cancer. Talk with doctors, coaches and your team for higher performance.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Explore new territory. Express your creativity, passion and affection over three weeks, with Mercury in Cancer. You're especially charming. Discuss what you love.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	23	37	fine
Changchun	15	30	fine
Chengdu	22	31	rain
Chongqing	23	28	rain
Fuzhou	25	30	rain
Guangzhou	26	32	thunderstorms
Guiyang	20	25	showers
Haikou	28	36	cloudy
Hangzhou	20	29	cloudy
Harbin	13	24	fine
Hefei	21	33	overcast
Nanjing	22	33	cloudy
Shanghai	22	32	cloudy
Taipei	25	29	rain
Wuhan	23	32	cloudy
Hong Hong	29	32	showers
WORLD			
Moscow	16	22	thunderstorms
Frankfurt	17	28	cloudy
Paris	15	23	rain
London	12	21	cloudy
New York	21	32	sunny

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- RR stops; 5- Note taker; 10- Tale starter; 14- Division of a school year; 15- Queues; 16- Time for lunch; 17- End in ___ (draw); 18- ___ a time; 19- That's ___ haven't heard; 20- Egg yolk; 22- Hindmost part; 24- Best; 25- Starting; 26- Chef's measure; 30- Clan; 35- Math subj.; 36- Family; 37- Flip-chart holder; 38- A chewy candy; 41- Cocktail; 43- Alamo's county; 44- Maui memento; 45- Cpl., e.g.; 46- ___ evil...; 47- Without a bend; 50- Stated; 53- Metal container used for frying; 54- Explorer; 58- Timmy's dog; 62- Ticklish Muppet; 63- Later!; 66- ___ girl!; 67- Home to billions; 68- ___ a million; 69- Gloomy; 70- Plaster backing; 71- Tubular pasta; 72- Actor Omar;

Down
 1- Remain; 2- Head of France?; 3- Seed covering; 4- Separates metal from ore; 5- Dawdler; 6- Can metal; 7- U-turn from WSW; 8- Closes in on; 9- Bony prefix; 10- ___ about (approximately); 11- What the fourth little piggy had; 12- "Barton Fink" director; 13- Novelist Bagnold; 21- Alley-___; 23- In pursuit of; 25- ___-Margret; 26- Folded food; 27- Happy; 28- Be of one mind; 29- Texas tea; 31- Deserter; 32- Of Thee ___; 33- Long hard seat; 34- "Silas Marner" author; 39- Prince Valiant's son; 40- Bullwinkle, for one; 41- Encountered; 42- Flying vessel; 44- Timothy Leary stash; 48- Battery size; 49- Within; 51- Author of fables; 52- "Goodnight" girl; 54- Ring out; 55- Rick's love in "Casablanca"; 56- Leave off; 57- Flood survivor; 59- Discontinue; 60- The jig ___; 61- Hearing organs; 64- Poet's dusk; 65- Yang's counterpart;

Yesterday's solution

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

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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Jade Garden
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LE MANS 2024 | ANALYSIS

THE GREATNESS OF SIMPLE THINGS MAKES PEOPLE HAPPY

SÉRGIO DE ALMEIDA CORREIA, MDT, LE MANS

THIS year's weather conditions weren't particularly good for the public, the cars, and the drivers. During the drivers' parade, there was even a small shower, and the temperature was almost always below 20°C, even dropping to 11°C, with some wind and rain. In any case, that didn't stop the party. Those who attended Le Mans this year once again had an unforgettable day.

The sun and the heat always make a big difference when it comes to filling terraces, inviting people to enjoy the green spaces around the circuit or its many activities. Despite this, the atmosphere, the friendliness, the politeness, the civility, the knowledge of how to welcome people from all over the world, has not changed one bit.

And I'm not just referring to the detached smile and

the vehement, luminous gaze of a sometimes tender and affectionate good morning at the top of one's lungs.

The drivers' parade remains a highlight. Seeing the way the drivers interact with the public, under the complacent but never inattentive gaze of the public and private security men, is remarkable. Apart from the children, who are eager to collect all the gifts offered by the teams, from caps to t-shirts, fans, posters, and stickers, there is no pushing, confusion, or trampling. This also applies to public transport, whether it's the light rail, which I use a lot these days, or cabs.

On the day I arrived, I had to take a cab to collect my accreditation. I apologized to the driver for the short journey, to which he smiled and said he would take me wherever I wanted to go, near or far. When I arrived at my destination, even though

I was only carrying a small suitcase, he made a point of getting out of the car, handing me the suitcase, and saying goodbye. What a contrast to other places where taxi drivers remain seated and motionless, usually in a bad mood, ignoring whether the passenger has a lot or a little luggage, is old or young, a pregnant woman or a woman with her child.

Even in the direction of the crowds, there is good humor on faces and in words, and there are many police officers or private security guards with a sense of humor, who throw in a friendly tease before giving us the concise and precious information and wishing us "Bonne journée, Monsieur!"

I believe that the secret to the success of the 24 Hours of Le Mans lies precisely in the immaculate organization of the ACO, in this interaction with the city, its people, and with all those who come to it from other parts of the hexa-

gon or from abroad.

And in two short, simple, meaningful, and ever-present words: freedom and responsibility.

This will always be the difference between the way of approaching all the problems inherent in an organization of this size, which brings 300,000 people to a racetrack, between free and tolerant systems that focus on the citizen and rely on them to consolidate and evolve, and autocratic systems that distrust everything and everyone, turning their citizens into small, suspicious, and intolerant people, who spend their days being watched and trampled underfoot for the tiniest benefits and privileged access to instances of power, available for anything that begins with subservience and pampering.

Any general entrance to the circuit allows free movement through all areas of the circuit, except the pits, pa-

ddock, and track. But even this is open to the public, and twice it has been open, allowing the public, as in Japan and elsewhere, to walk around the pit lane, take photographs, and chat with drivers and mechanics. On Friday, the track was open to the public from 3 pm to 8 pm. Anyone who wants to can walk, cycle, or skate around it.

The volunteers, from marshals to track stewards to young hosts, come from all over the world, from multiple countries. They speak all languages and support the drivers and teams from their countries. The organization reserves a special period before the track opens to the public so that the stewards who ensure the organization's good performance can also socialize in a relaxed way, take photos in the pits, collect autographs from the drivers who show up, and receive small souvenirs.

The ease of access to the drivers, the teams, the organization, the schedules that are almost always met, whether for press conferences or other events. For some, like Valentino Rossi, an extra dose of patience is required, which doesn't become the tireless way he responds

to every request. The same applies to others, whether it's the Iron Dames or the drivers from Team Jota, Alpine, United, Ford, or any other team.

This year I talked to Jenson Button, the former Formula 1 world champion, as well as Phil Hanson and the young star Oliver Rasmussen, who drive one of the Porsche Hypercars entrusted to Hertz Team Jota as if they were in a hotel or café. Good-humored, polite, patient, with no security guards around pushing me away from people.

I'd like to mention the "navettes gratuites" that connect various points on the circuit. I don't know if it was because of the rain or something else, but they didn't work as they have in previous years. Routes 4 and 5 between Arnage and Mulsanne and Mulsanne and the East Gate formed long queues. Nobody liked it, but everything went smoothly without any hassle, respecting the queues and the turn.

Apart from this, here, the public or the press are not semi-detainees who have to be kept away and under control and away from all the places of interest. You only have to look at the photos of the drivers' parade, the tours of the pit lane and pits, and the paddock and surrounding areas to understand what I'm saying.

And if you add to all this the surprise of walking into a restaurant, a year on from the last time I was there, being recognized by the boss and the waitress who, when she takes my order, tells me that "you were here last year," then there's no shortage of reasons to do it again next year.

And in the years to come, as long as we're healthy and those in charge of the ACO, the WEC, and the FIA, the people of Le Mans and the thousands of volunteers continue to give fans all over the world, children and adults alike, the right to simple things. Yes, because as the Iron Dames say, ever more aptly in a world that is sometimes violent and inhumane out there, "every dream matters." Children's dreams matter even more. And they are the ones who have the greatest right to the essence of simple things.

Sportingly, it was a success, another Ferrari win and double podium for Maranello house fans, despite the heavy rain and all the shenanigans throughout the 24 Hours. But we'll talk about that another time.



SÉRGIO A. CORREIA/MDT

AP PHOTO

AP PHOTO

SÉRGIO A. CORREIA/MDT



UPCOMING GAMES

	Date	Time	Home	Away	ODDS
Wed	Jun 19	0:00	Turkey	Georgia	H 1.76, D 3.75, A 5.5
		3:00	Portugal	Czech Republic	H 1.53, D 4.7, A 7
		21:00	Croatia	Albania	H 1.5, D 4.6, A 8

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SCOREBOARD

Germany	5	1	Scotland
Hungary	1	3	Switzerland
Spain	3	0	Croatia
Italy	2	1	Albania
Poland	1	2	Netherlands
Slovenia	1	1	Denmark
Serbia	0	1	England
Romania	3	0	Ukraine

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EURO 2024 | PREVIEW

Ronaldo on verge of European Championship record as Portugal opens vs Czech Republic

CRISTIANO Ronaldo can become the first player to feature at six European Championships when Portugal opens its Euro 2024 campaign against the Czech Republic. But Ronaldo is not the only danger for the Czechs, who are making their eight successive appearance. Kickoff is at 9 p.m. local time today (Wednesday, 3:00). Here's what to know about the match:

MATCH FACTS

This will be the fourth meeting between the countries at the tournament. The Czechs

won the first 1-0 in 1996, and Portugal won in 2008 and 2012. Portugal has won the last four meetings between the teams, without conceding in the last three.

— Both teams reached the knockout stage of Euro 2020, with defending champion Portugal losing to Belgium in the round of 16 while the Czechs lost in the quarterfinals to Denmark.

— While Portugal won Euro 2016, the Czechs need to go back to 1976 for their triumph.

— Spanish coach Roberto Martínez was in charge of the

Belgium team that knocked Portugal out of the last edition. He's now the Portugal coach, and his team eased through qualifying for Euro 2024 as the only team to win every game. Martínez' side scored 36 goals and conceded only two as it qualified with three matches to spare.

— Even without Ronaldo, Portugal boasts a formidable attacking lineup with Barcelona's João Félix, Paris Saint-Germain's Gonçalo Ramos and Milan's Rafael Leão all providing options for Bruno Fernandes in midfield.

— But it's clear Ronaldo is

still the main attraction for fans. Police had to intervene to remove some enamored supporters from Portugal's open training session in Gütersloh on Saturday when they ran onto the field to take selfies with the Portugal star. Some 8,000 fans attended the training session.

TEAM NEWS

Neither team had any major injury worries before Monday's final news conferences.

— Ronaldo, who made his tournament debut at Euro 2004 where Portugal reached the final, already has the records

for the most goals (14) and appearances (25) at the tournament. The 39-year-old forward showed he's not finished yet by scoring two goals as Portugal warmed up with a 3-0 win over Ireland.

— Ronaldo bagged five goals at Euro 2020, the same as Czech striker Patrik Schick to share the top-scorer award. Schick is again the main target for the Czech team and arrives at the tournament full of confidence after helping Bayer Leverkusen win the Bundesliga.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

"Ronaldo always thinks in big proportions, and we want to support him because he is our captain. He's the one who has won the most among us." — Portugal central defender Diogo Dalot.

"I believe we all have the highest ambitions and that's clear to see. We could be knocked out in the group stage, or we could win it. These are the two possible options." — Czech Republic coach Ivan Hašek. **MDT/AP**

EURO 2024 | REVIEW

Yamal, 16, leads Spain's new generation to win over Croatia

CIARÁN FAHEY, MDT/
AP SPORTS WRITER

SPAIN 3, CROATIA 0

LAMINE Yamal became the youngest player to appear in a European Championship as Spain's new generation brushed aside Croatia's challenge 3-0 in their opening game last weekend.

And the Spanish did it without dominating ball possession for the first time in 136 competitive games tallied by stats analyst Opta. Spain



Spain's Lamine Yamal dribbles the ball during a Group B match between Spain and Croatia

had only 46% possession against Croatia, according to UEFA.

Yamal, aged 16 years,

338 days, also became the youngest to set up a goal at the tournament when he crossed for

Dani Carvajal to score Spain's third goal before the break.

The 21-year-old Nico Williams starred on the other flank for Spain, which is going for its fourth European title.

Midfielder Fabián Ruiz scored one goal and set up the opener for captain Álvaro Morata in a dominant performance from the team in red.

"We have to stay wary, stay calm and be proud. We have to keep improving in the next game," Spain coach Luis De La Fuente said. He warned

Spanish journalists not to get carried away. "We just have to stay calm and be professional."

Spain goalkeeper Unai Simón saved a penalty in the 80th from substitute Bruno Petkovi, who thought he scored when Ivan Periši sent in the rebound. But the goal was ruled out after a VAR review as Periši was too keen and encroached on the penalty area before Petkovi took the spot kick.

Defending champion Italy was playing Albania in the other Group B game later.

The Croatia fans, who greatly outnumbered their Spanish counterparts, tried rousing the team before the end at Berlin's Olympiastadion, where the final will be played on July 14.

Hundreds gathered before the game near the Brandenburg Gate in the center of Berlin, and also at Breitscheidplatz in the west of the city, where they set off flares, waved flags, jumped up and down, and sang along to Croatian folk songs.

Croatian emigrants were among those who moved to Germany as so-called guest workers to help the country's post-war economy and never returned. Germany also became home to many Croatian refugees who fled the country's war of independence in the 1990s.

But it was a disappointing start to Euro 2024 from Zlatko Dali's team. The Spanish players were faster, more committed, and cleverer. **MDT/AP**

OPINION

Business Views

Shuli Ren, Bloomberg



SINGAPORE-WASHING HAS HIT A WALL

Can private wealth management hubs stay neutral and discreet in an increasingly polarized world? Private banks in Zurich lost some of their shine after Switzerland decided to adopt the European Union's sanctions against Russia in 2022 over the war in Ukraine. Singapore, long a haven for the super wealthy, is about to find out.

A recent S\$3 billion (\$2.2 billion) money-laundering scandal is putting the island-state on the back foot. It's forcing the government to ask if the sharp influx of new money is too hot to handle.

Call it Singapore-washing. Chinese companies have been moving to the Southeast Asian nation to sidestep US-China geopolitical tensions. Some are also running away from President Xi Jinping's "common prosperity" drive. Between 2019, when this trend started to pick up, and 2022, direct investment from China grew by more than one-third. Fast-fashion e-commerce unicorn Shein Group Ltd., aiming to go public at an above \$60 billion valuation, is now headquartered in Singapore. So is Hillhouse Investment, best known for backing some of China's biggest tech startups.

It's been a boon for Singapore, especially the banks. In 2022 alone, the country attracted S\$435 billion in new money, or about 70% of its gross domestic product.

The one risk involved, though, is reputation. Unlike the 1MDB scandal, which got Goldman Sachs Group Inc. into trouble, this time, the entire Singapore brand — its private banking industry as well as money-laundering regulations — is being judged. After all, a full suite of banks, not just one or two, got caught up in the recent case. A group originally from China laundered billions of dollars in proceeds from online gambling through more than a dozen banks in Singapore.

With its image at stake, Singapore is now ramping up scrutiny of family offices — a broad, opaque, unregulated subset space of private wealth. It's also nudging banks to step up due diligence to avoid exposure to illicit flows.

Singapore-washing is just a new iteration of an old problem — the city was once referred to as Indonesia's money laundromat. Wealthy Southeast Asians, some with questionable connections, parked their money there. Singapore-based entities at one point were the third-largest source of weapons materials to the Myanmar military. But it has taken new Chinese money to put the issue in the international spotlight. After all, China is much bigger. The sheer scale and speed of fund flows from there force Singapore to address weaknesses in its financial system.

To be sure, as a small, open economy, Singapore is structurally exposed to money laundering, especially if it wants to develop wealth management. In 2022, it had S\$4.9 trillion assets under management, many times over its GDP. Only 24% of these funds were sourced domestically, and 88% were invested into assets outside of Singapore. The question is how much the government wants to examine the money that comes in and goes out. More scrutiny would set back the growth of its banks.

Being a glitzy global financial center has a lot of appeal. Prestige aside, a booming banking industry boosts employment, the local economy, as well as real estate values. But then compliance is also a big headache. Dubai has decided to welcome all shades of gray, making itself a playground for crypto and Russian billionaires. Singapore, it turns out, still cares about its reputation. Singapore-washing has finally hit a wall. [Abridged]

Courtesy Shuli Ren/Bloomberg

US SURGEON GENERAL CALLS FOR WARNING LABELS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA, LIKE THOSE ON CIGARETTES

THE BUZZ

The U.S. surgeon general has called on Congress to require warning labels on social media platforms similar to those now mandatory on cigarette boxes.

In a Monday opinion piece in the *The New York Times*, Dr. Vivek Murthy said that social media is a contributing factor in the mental health crisis among young people.

"It is time to require a surgeon general's warning label on social media platforms, stating that social media is associated with significant mental health harms for adolescents. A surgeon general's warning label, which requires congressional action, would regularly remind

parents and adolescents that social media has not been proved safe," Murthy said. "Evidence from tobacco studies show that warning labels can increase awareness and change behavior."

Murthy said that the use of just a warning label wouldn't make social media safe for young people, but would be a part of the steps needed.

Social media use is prevalent among young people, with up to 95% of youth ages 13 to.

Last year Murthy warned that there wasn't enough evidence to show that social media is safe for children and teens.



JAN M. OLSEN, COPENHAGEN

THE world's nine nuclear-armed states continue to modernize their nuclear weapons as the countries deepened their reliance on such deterrence in 2023, a Swedish think tank said yesterday.

"We have not seen nuclear weapons playing such a prominent role in international relations since the Cold War," said Wilfred Wan, director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's weapons of mass destruction program.

Earlier this month, Russia and its ally Belarus launched a second stage of drills intended to train their troops in tactical nuclear weapons, part of the Kremlin's efforts to discourage the West from ramping up support for Ukraine.

In a separate report, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, ICAN, said the nine nuclear-armed states spent a combined total of \$91.4 billion on their arsenals in 2023 — equivalent to \$2,898 per second. The Geneva-based coalition of disarmament activists won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017.

The group said that figures show a \$10.7 billion increase in global spending

on nuclear weapons in 2023 compared to 2022, with the United States accounting for 80% of that increase. The U.S. share of total spending, \$51.5 billion, is more than all the other nuclear-armed countries put together.

"There has been a notable upward trend in the amount of money devoted to developing these most inhumane and destructive of weapons over the past five years," said Alicia Sanders-Zakre, Policy and Research Coordinator with ICAN.

The next biggest spender was China at \$11.8 billion, she said, with Russia spending the third largest amount at \$8.3 billion.

SIPRI estimated that some 2,100 of the deployed warheads were kept in a state of high operational alert on ballistic missiles, and nearly all belong to Russia or the USA. However, it said that China is also believed to have some warheads on high operational alert for the first time.

"Regrettably we continue to see year-on-year increases in the number of operational nuclear warheads," said Dan Smith, SIPRI's director. He added that the trend will likely accelerate in the coming years "and is extremely concerning."

Russia and the United States have together almost 90%

of all nuclear weapons, SIPRI said. The sizes of their military stockpiles seem to have remained relatively stable in 2023, although Russia is estimated to have deployed around 36 more warheads with operational forces than in January 2023, the watchdog added.

In its SIPRI Yearbook 2024, the institute said that transparency regarding nuclear forces has declined in both countries in the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and debates around nuclear-sharing arrangements have increased in importance.

Washington suspended its bilateral strategic stability dialogue with Russia, and last year Moscow announced that it was suspending its participation in the New START nuclear treaty.

Of the total global inventory of an estimated 12,121 warheads in January, about 9,585 were in military stockpiles for potential use. An estimated 3,904 of those warheads were deployed with missiles and aircraft — which is 60 more than in January 2023 — and the rest were in central storage.

In Asia, India, Pakistan and North Korea are all pursuing the capability to deploy multiple warheads on ballistic missiles, the institute said. **MDT/AP**



USA President Joe Biden's reelection campaign is spending \$50 million on advertising, highlighting Donald Trump's felony conviction. The campaign aims to define the candidates ahead of the first debate on June 27. Ads target Black, Hispanic, and Asian American voters, emphasizing Trump's legal troubles and contrasting Biden's focus on families.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dissolved the War Cabinet after Benny Gantz left the government. Netanyahu will now hold smaller forums for war-related issues, relying more on his far-right allies. This move comes as Israel faces critical decisions regarding the ongoing war in Gaza and potential cease-fire deals.



Germany Riot police in Germany intervened to stop clashes between Serbia and England fans before their Euro 2024 match in Gelsenkirchen. Social media footage showed men throwing chairs outside a restaurant. Seven Serbian supporters were taken into custody. The match was classified as high risk due to concerns about potential fan violence.



Italy Milan Fashion Week showcased designers' responses to global turbulence. Prada's collection emphasized optimism and lived-in styles. Simon Cracker highlighted political themes with upcycled apparel. JW Anderson's collection featured oversized quilted jackets and structural designs, exploring permissiveness and storytelling in fashion. The shows reflected designers' concerns over current world events.