



**CASINO GGR IS FALLING TO THEIR LOWEST LEVEL IN MORE THAN SIX MONTHS IN JUNE, WITH GGR FOR THE FIRST 23 DAYS ESTIMATED AT MOP13.3 BILLION: JP MORGAN**

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**CHINESE LUNAR PROBE RETURNS TO EARTH WITH THE WORLD'S FIRST SAMPLES FROM THE FAR SIDE OF THE MOON**

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AP PHOTO



Indonesia's national data center has been compromised by a hacking group asking for a USD8 million ransom that the government says it won't pay. The cyberattack has disrupted services of more than 200 government agencies at both the national and regional levels since last Thursday, said Samuel Abrijani Pangerapan, the director general of informatics applications with the Communications and Informatics Ministry.

AP PHOTO



Kuala Lumpur Malaysia Airlines said one of its flight en route to Bangkok had to make a U-turn back to Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Monday after experiencing a "pressurization issue." It said the pilots initiated an emergency descent although cabin altitude was not exceeded and passenger oxygen masks were not deployed. The aircraft remained stable and landed safely at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, just over two hours after it departed, the airline said in a statement.

AP PHOTO



Iran's supreme leader called yesterday for "maximum" voter turnout in this week's presidential election to "overcome the enemy," denouncing politicians who he described as believing that everything good comes from the United States. While not naming any particular candidates, the comments by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (pictured) appeared to directly undercut the candidacy of the race's sole reformist candidate, 69-year-old heart surgeon Masoud Pezeshkian. In recent speeches, Pezeshkian has urged Iran to return to the 2015 nuclear deal and increase its outreach to the West.

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# MODUS OPERANDI

City experiences a surge in identity theft and cybercrime, with numerous paid ads posing as Macau brands appearing on social media platforms

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SCREENSHOTS FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

The image shows a collage of social media content. On the left, a screenshot of a 'News Channel' sponsored post features a man in a white shirt sitting on a couch. In the center, a screenshot of an Instagram profile for 'wuchun.1010' shows a bio with 550K followers and 194 posts. On the right, a screenshot of a 'New Yaohan' sponsored post advertises 'THANKFUL DAYS' with a Louis Vuitton bag and prices like MOP\$980 and MOP\$24200. A large, diagonal red stamp with the words 'FAKE NEWS' is overlaid across the entire collage.

RENATO MARQUES



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Before and after of Guardian Angel and Child, and Saint Joseph the Worker

RENATO MARQUES

CULTURE

# DIOCESE TO REPLACE DAMAGED STATUES AT KA HO, IC SUPPORTS

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Macao Diocese is going to replace three severely damaged statues that were part of the Village of Our Lady in Ka Ho.

The three works include a statue of Our Lady of Sorrows (formerly located at the top of the staircase), a statue of a Guardian Angel and Child (in front of the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows), and another image of Saint Joseph the Worker, located in the path in front of the old leprosarium houses.

The news came when the matter was discussed during yesterday's meeting of the Cultural Heritage Council.

According to the president of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), Deland Leong, who presided over the meeting, the three images will be soon replaced by the Diocese, which owns the space with the support of IC. The area is part of the Cultural Heritage of Macau and has comprised innumerable classified immovable properties.

In response to questions by the media, Leong noted that the original statues were severely damaged by exposure to the elements, as well as severe weather phenomena and a lack of maintenance, adding that the damages did not result from human actions.

One of the statues mentioned, name the one featuring Our Lady of Sorrows that was originally placed at the top of the staircase that gives access to the area, has been removed since the site underwent extensive renovations, before it was turned into a cultural and exhibition space.

Leong said the Diocese will replace the three statues with new ones to reestablish the original aesthetic of the space.

The village, founded in 1964, consists of the former Ka Ho Leprosarium, Our Lady of Sorrows Church, and other affiliated structures.

It is the only existing site of a leprosarium in Macau, which

also happens to be the site of the last leprosarium in the city to cease operation.

The prevention and treatment of leprosy in Macau began in the 16th century. In 1568, Father D. Belchior Carneiro opened a leprosarium affiliated with the Holy House of Mercy, an organization also founded by him.

Later, due to the requirements of isolation as treatment, a clinic dedicated to treating leprosy was established outside the city walls (now St. Lazarus Church).

By the middle to late 19th century, given urban development, the then-Portuguese government of Macau once again

moved the leprosarium to Pac-Sa-Lan in Hengqin, which was destroyed by a typhoon in 1883.

To separate male and female lepers, the government then built a new leprosarium in both Pac-Sa-Lan and Ka Ho, Coloane.

The Ka Ho Leprosarium completed in 1885 was designated for female lepers.

In 1963, Father Gaetano Nicosia from Salesians of Don Bosco started serving in the Ka Ho Leprosarium and suggested renaming it "Village of Our Lady" (Vila de Nossa Senhora). Three years later, the church of "Our Lady of Sorrows" was built, dedicated to the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The crucifix featured in the façade of the church was designed by the famed Italian sculptor Francisco Messina and the chapel was reused as a recreation room.

GUIA LIGHTHOUSE

# IC president refuses to comment on hypothesis

**I**N response to media questions, the president of IC refused to offer any further comments as to whether the view of the Guia Lighthouse would be affected by the construction of a flyover that will link Zone A and Zone B of new landfills.

Deland Leong noted that, according to the IC

evaluation, the construction of the flyover will not have a significant impact on the view of the lighthouse. "There is no need for any further actions," she said.

On whether the IC would communicate with UNESCO about this, and as to whether after the flyover's construction the situation would be different

to current expectations, she said, "Your question is just a hypothesis and I will not comment on it. What we did was what we had to do; that is, to verify if the construction of the flyover would clash with the provisions stated in the Chief Executive dispatch 83/2008. That is what we did," she said. "Additio-

nally, we need to see that the flyover is a structure but not a building."

The dispatch 83/2008 sets the maximum height of buildings in view of the lighthouse and was established in response to UNESCO's recommendation, after the property was listed on the World Heritage List. **RM**

RENATO MARQUES



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# Cyber-attacks of significant scale using identity theft as modus-operandi

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE city has recently experienced a surge in identity theft and cybercrime, with numerous paid advertisements appearing on social media platforms.

The Times has observed an increase in sponsored content on Facebook and Instagram directing users to suspicious websites in recent days.

The growing number of scam posts has also caught the attention of the Judiciary Police (PJ), who have issued a public warning that the purpose of these ads is to collect personal information for illicit purposes.

The Times learned that a recent scam page made use of so called "sponsored" ads on several social media platforms to advertise an alleged news report published by the Times.

The report includes an image of Wu Chun, a former member of a Taiwanese boy band, who boasts a significant following on social media.

His inclusion in the report suggests that he may have fallen victim to identity theft.

According to the report, he had disclosed his "money-making secret" before being "abruptly interrupted by a call from the Monetary Authority of Macao, instructing the live interview to be halted."

The photo and story, published online to a fake website using the Times logo and distinctive layout, is fraudulent.

The Times received several screenshots of the post on Monday from several readers.

Another post emerged yesterday that also involves the Times and the same Instagram user.

In this instance, the Times logo was placed in front of a photo of the actor, who was now depicted with injuries and blood was running down his nose.

The post also reported an alleged conversation, saying that "the people of Macau deserve to know the truth."

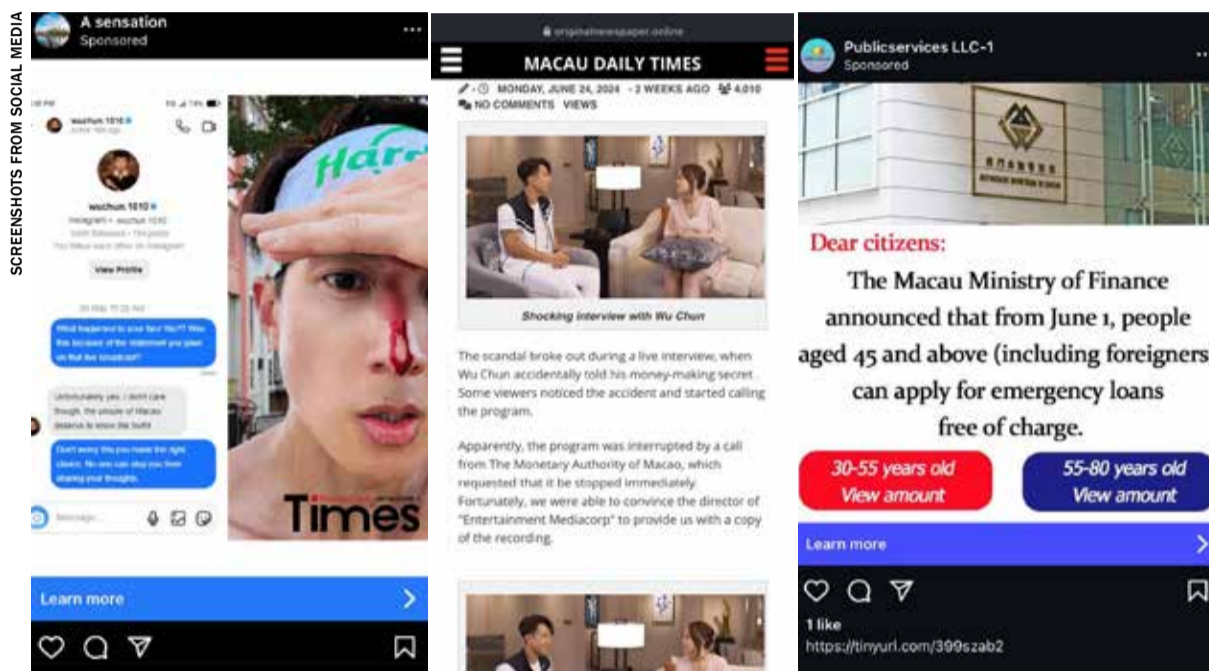
The Times has reported the Instagram post, but Meta chose not to take it down since the ad "is not in violation of our Community Guidelines."

Meta suggested hiding ads and adjusting ad preferences instead.

Meanwhile, a post claiming to be from the "Ministry of Finance" has also called on members of the public aged 45 and above (including foreigners) to "apply for emergency loans free of charge."

These occurrences pertain to a set of scenarios where fraudsters utilize the identities of different people and businesses, such as online posts, purporting to represent gaming companies offering significant markdowns on luxurious goods.

Sonny Lo, a political commentator who is aware of these events told the Times that both telecommunications fraud and identity theft are growing issues in Macau, with organized crime groups targeting unsuspecting individuals.



Therefore, regular education on these issues is needed through cell phone messages, television, university education, and casino-based publicity.

"Telecommunications fraud is not new and its cross-border nature has been complicated by loosely organized crime groups targeting people who are less technologically literate," said Lo.

"As such, people in Macau, including mainland visitors (such as tourists, students and business people) and locals will need to be educated," he added.

The commentator noted that Hong Kong and Macau may consider enacting cybersecurity laws, with penalties potentially revisited if they fall under matters of national security.

"Comparative data on

cybercrime and identity theft is limited, but recent attacks suggest a need for increased awareness and enforcement," Lo remarked.

"Identity theft was serious several years ago. It was brought under control but has since returned," he added.

Although no comparative data on cybercrime and identity theft is yet available, Hong-Kong based organizations were under attack by hackers in the first quarter.

In the first three months of the year, Hong Kong police recorded over 18,000 reports of cybersecurity attacks, with the most significant surge observed in incidents related to robot zombie computers.

Chief Superintendent Raymond Lam Cheuk-ho from the cybersecurity and technology crime bureau stated that

phishing attacks constituted nearly 46% of the total 18,758 incidents logged during this period, while malware reports accounted for an additional 29%.

The Times has contacted the PJ to request similar statistics but no reply was given by press time.

Businesses whose brands were also targeted on the fraudulent ads were also contacted, but did not provide a response by press time.

**\*Editors Note:**  
In case you have fallen victim to identity theft, please reach out to us by dialing +853 2871 6081/2, sending an email to [newsroom@macaudailytimes.com](mailto:newsroom@macaudailytimes.com), or contacting us through Facebook at [www.facebook.com/mdtimes](https://www.facebook.com/mdtimes).

# Report on 'falling stone' at St. Paul's points to lightning hit

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE final report on the stone that fell from the façade of the Ruins of St. Paul's earlier this month attributes the incident to a lightning strike from a thunderstorm, the president of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), Deland Leong, said during a press briefing yesterday after the meeting of the Cultural Heritage Council.

Leong said that this was one of the topics on the meeting's agenda presented to council members

in a full report, which included considerations as to how to prevent similar incidents from occurring.

For the time being, the president of IC claims that the area is safe for visitors and that IC is monitoring the situation.

She also said that works related to the repair and maintenance of the area affected will follow soon, though she was not sure if these would affect visitors' access to the monument.

"The structure is solid and safe but we need to

develop a system of repairs and maintenance. One of the things we are considering is the installation of a lightning rod to prevent the building from being hit by bolts again," she said. According to IC records, this was the first time that such an incident had taken place.

Also questioned on what kind of lightning rod would be used and if this would change the aesthetic of the monument, Leong advised that this will be discussed with field specialists. For the



time being, there are no details she can offer.

"Regarding the repair

works, we don't know yet if it will be necessary to close the venue to the

public. We will certainly put safety first," she concluded.



# STRENGTHENING GBA ENGAGEMENT ON YOUTH AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AGENDA

NADIA SHAW

**T**HE Macau Youth Affairs Committee held a press conference yesterday to announce the outcomes of their second plenary meeting in 2024. The meeting brought together government and youth representatives to discuss the efforts being taken to nurture and empower young people in Macau.

One of the main agenda items was the presentation of the "2023 Youth Awards" which recognize significant contributions by youth organizations in Macau. Three groups were awarded the "Youth Activity Award" for their impactful community projects. Notably, The Macau Cultural and Creative Arts Volunteer Association was honored for their "Eternal Love," which celebrated the lasting love of Macau's senior citizens through photographs. In addition, the "Civic Education Award" was presented to three other youth groups for their efforts in promoting active citizenship and positive values among Macau's youth.

## BOOSTING GREATER BAY AREA ENGAGEMENT

A key focus for the committee is enhancing youth engagement with the Guangdong-Macau in-depth cooperation zone. Cheong Man Fai, director of the Youth Department at the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ), outlined plans to organize internships, research opportunities, and study tours in the Cooperation Zone. These initiatives



aim to help young people better understand the development of key industries like integrated circuits, traditional Chinese medicine and artificial intelligence in the region, and explore potential collaboration between Macau and the mainland.

DSEDJ is currently hosting the ISF World High School Basketball Championships, which will span eight days, with 117 matches across three of Macau's sports venues. Both mainland China and Macau will compete today.

The meeting also underscored plans to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Macau's return to China in 2024. In late July, an International Youth Dance Festival and Academic Youth Show will

be held in Commemoration of Macau's Return to China. The two large-scale events will be combined, and DSEDJ hopes that combining the two occasions will yield a great festive atmosphere from teachers, students, and local dance teams. "We have invited 15 foreign teams, including more than 300 people from international teams. There will be almost 1,200 young students and teachers participating in these celebrations," said Cheong. Preparations for the event are currently underway.

## ENRICHING SUMMER ACTIVITIES

To provide opportunities and experiences that enrich the summer break for Macau's students,

DSEDJ is organizing a range of internship programs, particularly in industries related to Macau's "1+4" economic diversification plan. This includes integrated circuits, traditional Chinese medicine, and artificial intelligence. The internship programs are not limited to Macau, but also include opportunities in the GBA and other cities in mainland China, such as Nansha and Nanjing.

The internship program is part of the broader "youth leisure plan," providing Macau students with diverse opportunities to enrich their summer vacation and prepare them for future careers. The bureau also noted "over 1,800 students have participated in the Hengqin study tour program so

far, which will continue to be offered to senior high school students in Macau next year."

This initiative allows students to also participate and gain valuable experience. The internship programs are open to Macau students studying both locally and abroad.

In her closing remarks, Cheong told reporters, "The internship program this year is expected to offer over 470 placements, allowing more Macau students to gain practical experience [...] in the region." She further emphasized the government's commitment to supporting youth development and creating more opportunities for young people in Macau.

## GAMING

# JP Morgan: GGR falls to six-month low in June

**M**ACAU'S gross gaming revenues (GGR) have fallen to their lowest level in more than six months in June, with GGR for the first 23 days estimated at MOP13.3 billion or MOP578 million per day, according to JP Morgan's weekly channel checks.

"This suggests the daily run-rate fell to MOP514 million over the past week, the lowest level in over six months," wrote JP Morgan's analysts DS Kim, Mufan Shi and Selina Li.

The JP Morgan analysts attributed this decline mostly to soft seasonality, such as post-holiday slowdown and the impact of UEFA Euro 2024, as well as poor VIP win rates. They also noted that June is typi-

cally the seasonally weakest month of the year.

Despite the decline, JP Morgan still forecasts June's GGR to reach between MOP\$17.5 billion and MOP18 billion. For the second quarter to date, GGR is likely to edge down 2% to 3% quarter-on-quarter, led by a 2% decline in mass and 5% in VIP.

In May, Macau's mass GGR reached an all-time high at 115% of pre-COVID levels, according to JP Morgan. The bank noted that GGR in May jumped nearly 30% year-on-year to MOP20.2 billion, implying a daily run-rate of MOP651 million.

On the contrary, according to recent report from Moody's Ratings, Macau's

casino industry is poised for a stronger recovery in earnings and cash flow over the next 12 to 18 months when compared with other Asian gaming markets. This is driven by an expected rebound in visitor numbers as the region continues to emerge from the pandemic. However, the outlook is more uncertain for casinos in other parts of Asia as the Chinese government appears to be discouraging its citizens from gambling overseas.

The report states that Moody's expects full-year gross gaming revenue (GGR) in Macau to reach 75% to 80% of pre-pandemic 2019 levels by 2024 and 2025, compared to just 63% in 2023 and 14% in 2022.



"The pace at which revenue improves will slow compared with the surge in 2023 after China ended pandemic border restrictions," the report authors noted. They added that the 2024 improvement would be "despite slower economic growth in China this

year than last year."

Moody's observed that in the first quarter of 2024, Macau's GGR was already 75% of 2019 levels, and tourist arrivals to the city increased by 79% year-on-year. The report also found that mass-market GGR in the first three months

of 2024 was 110% of 2019 levels, and is expected to reach 115% by 2025, driven by growth in the premium mass-market segment.

However, the report warned that strict regulations for junket operators are likely to continue to curtail growth in Macau's VIP gaming market.

In contrast, the outlook for other Asian casino markets is less certain, with Moody's noting a "potential risk" to recovery rates for tourism and casino revenue due to reports that "Chinese embassies have warned citizens against gambling overseas."

The report stated that gaming operators in Singapore and Malaysia will be less exposed to this risk than those in Cambodia, as they are less dependent on Chinese tourists and have significant non-gaming operations. TC/NS



# Gov't video encouraging childbirth amid low-rate sparks public outcry

VICTORIA CHAN

A new birth encouragement video released by the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) has received public backlash, with many residents criticizing the government's messaging and perceived lack of understanding of the challenges faced by families.

Titled "Having children brings greater happiness," the one-minute clip, posted earlier this month, depicts a smiling baby and toddler to encourage married couples to have children. The video faced backlash for its simplistic messaging and failure to acknowledge the obstacles faced by prospective parents.

Within two weeks, the video received over 270,000 views on Facebook with more than 1,000 comments, largely critical.

Critics argued the clip's simplistic messaging overlooked key struggles like insufficient parental leave allowances, costly childcare and education, skyrocketing housing prices, and lengthy work hours that dominate residents' lives.

In overlooking these real concerns, critics argue the video provides an unrealistic portrayal of family life that does not reflect the complex considerations faced by parents.

Many netizens have also criticized the government's poor parental leave policies.

"Macau is really bad on birth policies. Macau has 70 days of ma-



A screenshot from the "Having children brings greater happiness" video

ternity leave, which is extremely unaccommodating for parents of breast-fed babies. The mainland and Hong Kong have at least 98 days of maternity leave," said one, who echoed dozens of similar comments.

"What is the point of the video? Is it just because babies are cute?" another questioned.

"To improve the birth rate, please improve the medical system first," another netizen said.

In response to the backlash, Choi Sio Un, the head of the IAS' Social Solidarity Department, acknowledged the criticism and offered assurances that authorities would consider their feedback.

"We take note of the public response. Of course, there are different insights and suggestions. We will take them on board and incorporate this in future campaigns," Choi said, as cited in a TDM report.

The official birth rate in Macau has been declining in recent years, dropping to just 5.5 per thousand people in 2023 – the lowest since 1985.

Local associations have called on the government to take more substantive action to address the issue, including developing a stronger culture of marriage and childbearing, as well as implementing more robust support measures for families.

# Gov't refutes US report on human trafficking in Macau

HOWARD TONG

THE Office of the Secretary for Security in Macau has expressed strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to the United States Department of State's 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report, which rated the Macau Special Administrative Region as a Tier 3 country.

According to the report, Macau's rating is due to fact that the city "does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do

so, based on publicly available information."

The "overall anti-trafficking law enforcement and victim protection efforts remained inadequate. The government did not report proactively screening vulnerable populations, such as individuals engaged in commercial sex work, for trafficking indicators, and the government has not reported identifying or providing services to any victims since 2022," the report claimed.

The report even featured a "Prioritized Recommendations" sec-

tion, advising the Macau government to "significantly increase proactive victim identification; significantly increase efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict sex and labor traffickers; develop, approve, and implement an updated anti-trafficking action plan; and provide anti-trafficking training to relevant government personnel."

As a response, the Office of the Secretary for Security highlighted Macau's longstanding efforts to prevent and control human trafficking and related illegal activities.

Under Law No. 6/2008 "Combating the Crime of Human Trafficking" and through the work of the Human Trafficking Deterrent Measures Concern Committee, Macau has actively participated in international cooperation, properly protected victims, and coordinated with judicial authorities to investigate and prosecute relevant crimes.

The local government also stated that related crimes have been effectively curbed, with Macau maintaining a very low or even non-existent crime rate for many years.

The response criticized the United States for failing to address the serious human trafficking situation within its own borders while making

"false accusations against various places."

The Security authority described the content related to Macau in the US report as untrue, and argued that the report's intention goes beyond preventing and controlling the crime of human trafficking, representing an interference in Macau's internal affairs.

In the statement, the SAR government reaffirmed its determination to continue its efforts to prevent human trafficking and other illegal activities through the Human Trafficking Deterrent Measures Concern Committee. The government pledged to work with the international community to eliminate human trafficking and all forms of exploitation.

## DFS OFFERS UNPAID LEAVE TO CUT COSTS

Global luxury travel retailer DFS Group is offering its Macau employees access to an unpaid leave program this summer in an effort to reduce costs as economic uncertainties persist. The program is "voluntary" and a "result of meticulous consideration of different schemes," which allows full-time employees to take six unpaid days off between July and August, as cited in a report by Allin News. The retailer, which operates duty-free shops worldwide, cited global uncertainties as contributing to the decision. A current DFS employee, speaking anonymously due to company policy, said the new leave policy has nonetheless caused apprehension among coworkers.

## EMPEROR ENTERTAINMENT HOTEL REPORTS STRONG REVENUE GROWTH

Emperor Entertainment Hotel Ltd reported a 171% year-over-year revenue increase to HKD789.2 million in the 12 months ending March 31, 2024, boosted by the recovery of gaming operations at its Macau casino at Grand Emperor Hotel. The company also recorded a HKD62.8 million profit compared to a HKD128 million loss last year. Gaming revenue jumped 424% to HKD459.2 million, accounting for 58.2% of total revenue. Emperor E also operates hotels in Hong Kong. With sustained recovery in Macau, the company remains optimistic about long-term growth in the key gaming market. The board recommended a final dividend of HKD0.015 per share for the fiscal year.

## IAS RECORDS 119 INDIVIDUALS USING DRUGS IN 2023

In 2023, the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) reported that 119 individuals were using drugs. This figure indicates a 40% increase from the previous year, but a 65% decrease compared to 2019. Data from the Central Registration System for Drug Abusers revealed that there was a minimum of five cases involving drug abusers under the age of 21, showing a year-on-year increase. Authorities noted that overall drug usage remained relatively low last year, with crystal methamphetamine being the primary illegal substance consumed, while cannabis exhibited a rising trend. The data also showed a decline in the rate of drug abuse among young students, dropping from 2.92% in 2018 to 0.96% in 2022.

**C**HINA'S Chang'e 6 probe returned on Earth yesterday with rock and soil samples from the little-explored far side of the moon in a global first.

The probe landed in northern China yesterday afternoon in the Inner Mongolian region.

"I now declare that the Chang'e 6 Lunar Exploration Mission achieved complete success," Zhang Kejian, Director of the China National Space Administration said shortly in a televised news conference after the landing.

Chinese scientists anticipate the returned samples will include 2.5 million-year-old volcanic rock and other material that scientists hope will answer questions about geographic differences on the moon's two sides.

The near side is what is seen from Earth, and the far side faces outer space. The far side is also known to have mountains and impact craters, contrasting with the relatively flat expanses visible on the near side.

While past U.S. and Soviet missions have collected samples from the moon's near side, the Chinese mission was the first that has collected samples from the far side.

The moon program is part of a growing rivalry with the U.S. — still the leader in space explo-

SPACE

# Chinese lunar probe returns to Earth with the world's first samples from the far side of the moon

ration — and others, including Japan and India. China has put its own space station in orbit and regularly sends crews there.

China's leader Xi Jinping sent a message of congratulations to the Chang'e team, saying that it was a "landmark achievement in our country's efforts at becoming a space and technological power."

The probe left earth on May 3, and its journey lasted 53 days. The probe has drilled into the core and scooped rocks from the surface.

The samples "are expected to answer one of the most fundamental scientific questions in lunar science research: what geologic activity is responsible for the differences between the two sides?" said Zongyu Yue, a geologist at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, in a statement issued in



Lander-ascender combination of Chang'e-6 probe taken by a mini rover after it landed on the moon surface

the Innovation Monday, a journal published in partnership with the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

China in recent years has launched multiple successful missions

to the moon, collecting samples from the moon's near side with the Chang'e 5 probe previously.

They are also hoping that the probe will return with material

that bear traces of meteorite strikes from the moon's past. With the successful reentry of the probe, scientists will begin studying the samples. **MDT/AP**

## Premier slams trade tensions as EV exports are hit by tariffs

SIMINA MISTREANU, TAIPEI

**O**PEN markets and green technologies are vital for stabilizing global growth, China's premier said yesterday, while criticizing trade tensions as he opened a conference in northeastern China.

Premier Li Qiang told political and business leaders attending the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting of the New Champions, also known as the "Summer Davos," that China is on track to attain Beijing's growth target this year of 5%.

Countries should "work closely together, reject bloc confrontation, oppose decoupling and disconnection, maintain the stability and smoothness of industrial and supply chains, and promote trade and investment

liberalization and facilitation," Li said in a speech to the conference.

"We cannot slow down our pace in green transition in exchange for short-term economic growth nor practice protectionism in the name of green development or environmental protection," he said.

China is facing pushback over its electric vehicle exports, which some governments fear will flood markets and hurt domestic producers. The European Union and Canada among others are mulling surtaxes on Chinese EVs.

China and the E.U. said over the weekend they are open to talks over the tentative tariffs after Beijing last week announced an anti-dumping probe into European pork, largely seen as retaliation for the EV duties.



Premier Li Qiang

Polish President Andrzej Duda and Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh joined the business leaders and economic and technology ministers attending the forum, held in the port city of Dalian.

China's economy grew at a 5.3% annual pace in January-March, though it has slowed significantly in recent years. Shutdowns and other disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic worsened a longer-

term weakening of growth as authorities cracked down on excess borrowing by property developers, tipping the industry into a downturn.

Li compared China's economy post-COVID to a person recovering from a serious illness who needs to readjust gradually. Beijing is aiding the recovery with tools such as industrial upgrades and support for the "silver economy" — businesses aimed at the country's ageing population — he said. **MDT/AP**

EV TARRIFS

## CANADA TO START 30-DAY CONSULTATION TO IMPOSE SURTAX ON CHINESE ELECTRIC VEHICLES

**C**ANADA'S government is investigating whether to impose a surtax on imports of Chinese-made electric vehicles.

A 30-day consultation on the issue will begin on July 2 to counter what Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland said yesterday (Macau time) is a clear effort by Chinese companies to generate a global oversupply.

Canada's move comes weeks after both the United States and the European Commission announced plans to impose higher import tariffs on Chinese EVs this summer.

"Our automotive sector supports nearly 550,000 good paying Canadian jobs," Freeland said. "Canadian workers and the auto sector are facing unfair competition from China's intentional state directed policy of overcapacity that is undermining Canada's EV sector ability to compete in domestic and global markets."

The consultation will seek input on what is driving China's surging EV exports, including unfair market practices as well as labor and environmental standards.

In addition to a surtax, the consultation will consider whether Canada should change which cars are eligible for the federal EV purchase rebate worth up to \$5,000 Canadian (\$3,661) per vehicle.

It will also look at whether to expand investment restrictions in Canada.

Right now the only Chinese-made EVs imported into Canada are from Tesla, made at the company's Shanghai factory. There are no Chinese-branded EVs sold or imported at the moment.

Freeland said Canada will act in concert with its allies in the United States and the European Union. She noted North America has an integrated auto sector, and said her government would ensure Canada doesn't become a dumping ground for Chinese oversupply.

U.S. President Joe Biden has said Chinese government subsidies for EVs and other consumer goods ensure that Chinese companies don't have to turn a profit, giving them an unfair advantage in global trade. **MDT/AP**



SOUTH KOREA

# Gov't slams N. Korea's fresh trash balloon launches and threatens loudspeaker broadcast

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

**S**OUTH KOREA threatened yesterday to restart anti-Pyongyang frontline propaganda broadcasts in the latest bout of Cold War-style campaigns between the rivals after North Korea resumed its trash-carrying balloon launches.

On Monday night, North Korea floated huge balloons carrying plastic bags of rubbish across the border in its fifth such campaign since late May — an apparent response to South Korean activists flying political leaflets via balloons.

In yesterday's speech marking a Korean War anniversary, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol called North Korea's balloon activities "a despicable and irrational provocation." He said South Korea will maintain a firm military readiness to repel any provoca-

tions by North Korea.

Later yesterday, Yoon boarded a visiting U.S. aircraft carrier docked at a southeastern port and told American and South Korean troops there that the two countries' alliance is the world's greatest and can defeat any enemy. Yoon became the first sitting South Korean president to board a U.S. aircraft carrier since 1994.

South Korea's military said North Korea floated about 350 balloons in its latest campaign, and about 100 of them eventually landed in South Korean soil, mostly in Seoul and nearby areas. Seoul is about 40-50 kilometers away from the border. The military said the trash carried by the North Korean balloons were mostly papers and that no hazardous items were found.

In its earlier balloon launches, North Korea dropped manure, ci-



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, center right, his wife Kim Keon Hee wave the national flags during a ceremony to mark the 74th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War in Daegu, South Korea, yesterday

garette butts and waste batteries along with cloth scraps and waste papers in various parts of South Korea. No major damage was reported. In response, South Korea redeployed gigantic loudspeakers June 9 along the border for the first time in six years and briefly resumed anti-North Korean propaganda broadcasts.

Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesper-

son Lee Sung Joon told reporters yesterday that the South Korean military is ready to turn on its border loudspeakers again. A written Joint Chiefs of Staff statement said officials would examine unspecified strategic operational circumstances and that broadcasts' resumption would depend on how North Korea acts.

Balloon launches and louds-

peaker broadcasts were among psychological campaigns that the two Koreas specialized in during the Cold War. The rivals have agreed to halt such activities in recent years, but occasionally resumed them when animosities rekindled.

North Korea is highly sensitive to South Korean border broadcasts and civilian leafletting campaigns as it bans most of its 26 million people official access to foreign news.

South Korean leafletting campaigns by civilian activists, mostly North Korean defectors, include leaflets critical of North Korea's human rights violations and USB sticks containing South Korean TV dramas, while the past South Korean border broadcasts included K-pop songs, weather forecasts and outside news. In a statement Friday, Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, called them "human scum" and "disgusting defectors."

South Korean officials maintain they don't restrict activists from flying leaflets to North Korea in line with a 2023 constitutional court ruling that struck down a law criminalizing such leafletting, calling it a violation of free speech.

Many experts say the North Korean balloon campaign is also likely designed to deepen a debate in South Korea over the civilian leafletting and trigger a broader internal divide. MDT/AP

AD



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AP PHOTO



WIKILEAKS

# Founder Julian Assange stops in Bangkok on his way to a US court and later freedom

JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI,  
ALANNA DURKIN RICHER &  
ERIC TUCKER, BANGKOK

A plane carrying Julian Assange landed yesterday in Bangkok for refueling, as the WikiLeaks founder was on his way to enter a plea deal with the U.S. government that will free him and resolve the legal case that spanned years and continents over the publication of a trove of classified documents.

A chartered flight from London that Assange's wife, Stella, confirmed was carrying her husband landed at Don Mueang International Airport. Officials there told The Associated Press the plane was scheduled to continue on to Saipan, the capital of the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. commonwealth in the Pacific, where Assange is expected to appear in court on Wednesday.

He's expected to plead guilty to an Espionage Act charge of conspiring to unlawfully obtain and disseminate classified national defense information, according to the U.S. Justice Department in a letter filed in court.

Assange is expected to return to his home country of Australia after his plea and sentencing. The hearing is taking place in Saipan because of Assange's opposition to traveling to the continental U.S. and the court's proximity to Australia, prosecutors said.

The guilty plea, which must be approved by a judge, brings an abrupt conclusion to a criminal case of international intrigue

and to the U.S. government's yearslong pursuit of a publisher whose hugely popular secret-sharing website made him a cause célèbre among many press freedom advocates who said he acted as a journalist to expose U.S. military wrongdoing. Investigators, in contrast, have repeatedly asserted that his actions broke laws meant to protect sensitive information and put the country's national security at risk.

Stella Assange told the BBC from Australia that it had been "touch and go" over the past 72 hours whether the deal would go ahead but she felt "elated" at the news. A lawyer who married the WikiLeaks founder in prison in 2022, she said details of the agreement would be made public once the judge had signed off on it.

"He will be a free man once it is signed off by a judge," she said, adding that she still didn't think it was real.

She told Britain's PA news agency that the flight was costing Assange \$500,000 and they would start a fundraising campaign to help pay for it.

Kristinn Hrafnsson, editor-in-chief of WikiLeaks, said the deal for Assange came about after the growing involvement of Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

"This is the result of a long, long process which has been going on for some time. It has been a tough battle, but the focus now is on Julian being reunited with his family," Hrafnsson told the PA news agency. "The most important thing is that Julian is free and he is finally able

to enjoy the big blue sky."

In a statement posted on the social media platform X, WikiLeaks said Assange boarded a plane and departed Monday after leaving the British prison where he has spent the last five years. WikiLeaks applauded the announcement of the deal, saying it was grateful for "all who stood by us, fought for us, and remained utterly committed in the fight for his freedom."

Albanese told Parliament that an Australian envoy had flown with Assange from London.

"Regardless of the views that people have about Mr. Assange's activities, the case has dragged on for too long," Albanese said. "There's nothing to be gained by his continued incarceration and we want him brought home to Australia."

The deal ensures that Assange will admit guilt while also sparing him from additional prison time. He had spent years hiding in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London after Swedish authorities sought his arrest on rape allegations before being locked up in the United Kingdom.

Assange is expected to be sentenced to the five years he has already spent in the British prison while fighting extradition to the U.S. to face charges, a process that has played out in a series of hearings in London. Last month, he won the right to appeal an extradition order after his lawyers argued that the U.S. government provided "blatantly inadequate" assurances that he would have the same free speech protections as an American citizen if extradited from Britain.

Assange has been heralded by many around the world as a hero who brought to light military wrongdoing in Iraq and Afghanistan. Among the files published by WikiLeaks was a video of a 2007 Apache helicopter attack by American forces in Baghdad that killed 11 people, including two Reuters journalists.

But his reputation was also tarnished by rape allegations, which he has denied.

The Justice Department's indictment unsealed in 2019 accused Assange of encouraging and helping U.S. Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning steal diplomatic cables and military files that WikiLeaks published in 2010. Prosecutors had accused Assange of damaging national security by publishing documents that harmed the U.S. and its allies and aided its adversaries.

The case was lambasted by press advocates and Assange supporters. Federal prosecutors defended it as targeting conduct that went way beyond that of a journalist gathering information, amounting to an attempt to solicit, steal and indiscriminately publish classified government documents.

The plea agreement comes months after President Joe Biden said he was considering a request from Australia to drop the U.S. push to prosecute Assange. The White House was not involved in the decision to resolve Assange's case, according to a White House official who was not authorized to speak publicly about the case and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1963: KENNEDY: 'ICH BIN EIN BERLINER'



The US President, John F. Kennedy, has made a ground-breaking speech in Berlin offering American solidarity to the citizens of West Germany.

A crowd of 120,000 Berliners gathered in front of the Schöneberg Rathaus (City Hall) to hear President Kennedy speak.

They began gathering in the square long before he was due to arrive, and when he finally appeared on the podium they gave him an ovation of several minutes.

The president had just returned from a visit on foot to one of the Berlin Wall's most notorious crossing points, Checkpoint Charlie.

He was watched from the other side of the border by small groups of East Berliners unable even to wave because of the presence of large groups of the East German People's Police.

In an impassioned speech, the president told them West Berlin was a symbol of freedom in a world threatened by the Cold War.

"Two thousand years ago," he told the crowd, "the proudest boast in the world was 'civis Romanus sum'. "Today, in the world of freedom, the proudest boast is 'Ich bin ein Berliner.'"

"Freedom has many difficulties and democracy is not perfect," he continued. "But we never had to put up a wall to keep our people in."

His speech was punctuated throughout by rapturous cheers of approval.

He ended on the theme he had begun with:

"All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words, 'Ich bin ein Berliner.'"

After the speech, the mayor of West Berlin, Willi Brandt, spoke out for the citizens of East Germany, saying they would be brought out in a few days to greet the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, whether they wanted to or not.

"But they would much rather be with us, freely gathered here," he said.

"We tell them, we will not give up. Berlin is true to those behind barbed wire as to fellow countrymen in the West and friends in the whole world."

His words were followed by the tolling of the Freedom Bell from the belfry of the Rathaus in remembrance of those in East Germany.

For the first time that day, the massive crowd fell silent.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

President Kennedy's "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech was seen as a turning point in the Cold War.

It was a major morale booster for West Germans, alarmed by the recently-built Berlin Wall.

It also gave a strongly defiant message to the Soviet Union and effectively put paid to Moscow's hopes of driving the Allies out of West Berlin.

Two months later, President Kennedy negotiated the first nuclear test ban treaty with the Soviet Union, in what was seen as a first step towards ending the Cold War.

But on 22 November that year, he was assassinated, shot in the head as he drove through Dallas, Texas, on his way to a political festival.

The Berlin Wall was finally brought down, piece by piece, in November 1989 as communism collapsed and the Iron Curtain fell from Eastern Europe.

Germany was re-united in October 1990.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Slow to consider your long-term strategy. Keep advancing with regular, small steps. Persistence and determination can realize a dream. Listen to your heart.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
Talk about what you love and want with people you respect and admire. You're making a good impression. Have fun together. Teamwork flowers.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
Continue doing the homework to prepare for a test. A professional dream appears within reach. A long-desired goal is ripe for the plucking.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Prepare for upcoming travels and studies. Visualize the perfect trip. Stay flexible to take advantage of spontaneous opportunities. Discuss ideas. Brainstorm for new possibilities.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
Discuss financial details with your partner. Together, advance a shared vision. Collaboration gets lucrative. Manage invoices, payments and purchases. Grab a lucky break.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Creative collaboration can flower with attention. Share brilliant ideas and solutions with your partner. Tap into creativity, fun and passion. Develop romantic possibilities.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Your workload could seem intense. Prioritize health and delegate when possible. Maintain self-care. Eat and rest well. Energize physical action for unexpected benefits.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
You're especially attractive and attracted. Make a delightful connection. Enjoy your favorite games, sports and people. Prioritize fun, romance and creativity. Discover unusual beauty.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Get your family on board with a domestic beautification project. Make repairs and upgrades. Fill the place with flowers, delicious treats and music.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Express your heart in words, art, music and poetry. Creativity percolates. Connect, collaborate and share what you're inventing. Develop dreams and imaginative ideas into reality.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Follow a lucrative hunch. Put your love into your work and profit. A plum assignment beckons. Expenses could also be high. Go for balance.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
A personal dream appears available. You're getting stronger. Go for it! Advance to make your move. Ask for what you want and get it.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	21	35	fine
Changchun	17	29	fine
Chengdu	22	31	rain
Chongqing	22	25	rain
Fuzhou	27	34	cloudy
Guangzhou	27	33	rain
Guiyang	17	23	showers
Haikou	26	34	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	19	22	rain
Harbin	16	27	thunderstorms
Hefei	20	28	overcast
Nanjing	22	28	overcast
Shanghai	21	25	rain
Taipei	25	32	rain
Wuhan	21	30	cloudy
Hong Kong	28	32	showers
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	14	23	cloudy
Frankfurt	18	31	sunny
Paris	21	32	sunny
London	17	29	sunny
New York	21	33	thunderstorms

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Deal (with); 5- Important times; 9- Guitarist Atkins; 13- Not for kids; 15- Price tag; 16- Magma; 17- Rings of a chain; 18- Very funny; 19- Lyric poems; 20- Permit; 21- Black, to Blake; 23- Runners-up; 25- Fit to \_\_\_; 26- Firstborn; 27- Goes by; 30- Grande; 31- \_\_\_ Dame; 32- Immense; 37- Dorothy's dog; 38- Fabric woven from flax yarns; 40- Baseball's "Walking Man" Eddie; 41- Norm; 43- Gift recipient; 44- Polished off; 45- Exceed; 47- Frightens; 50- Wings; 51- Go back into business; 52- Again; 53- Average guy; 56- Make \_\_\_ for it; 57- Fencing blade; 59- Perfect places; 61- Strong wind; 62- Sun, speeches; 63- Thorny flowers; 64- Verdi heroine; 65- Edinburgh native; 66- Lira replacement;

DOWN 1- Order into effect, such as a strike; 2- "Garfield" canine; 3- Football kick; 4- Wapiti; 5- Resounds; 6- Horse color; 7- Powdery residue; 8- Adult male horse; 9- Hard to call; 10- Mythical hell; 11- Tennis champ Chris; 12- Soviet news service; 14- Deadly fly; 22- Spelling contest; 24- Aroma; 25- Cookwear; 26- Sea eagle; 27- Tolkien tree creatures; 28- Booty; 29- \_\_\_ boy!; 32- Wrap up; 33- Mr. Magoo, for one; 34- A Chaplin; 35- Puts into service; 36- Canonized Fr. women; 38- Delay; 39- Angers; 42- Challenge; 43- Sliding compartment of furniture; 45- Most reasonable; 46- Suffix with glob; 47- Caravansary; 48- Was able; 49- Sleep disorder; 51- Hindu music; 52- Dynamic introduction?; 53- Bach's "\_\_\_ Joy of Man's Desiring"; 54- Lulu; 55- Exxon, formerly; 58- Chest muscle; 60- Anonymous John;

**Yesterday's solution**

**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	
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Tourism 28 333 000	
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EURO 2024 | REVIEW

# CROATIA STAR LUKA MODRIC IS THE OLDEST TO EVER SCORE AT A EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP. HE'S NOT DONE YET.

CIARÁN FAHEY,  
LEIPZIG, GERMANY

CROATIA 1, ITALY 1

A standing ovation, a man-of-the-match award and a record.

But Croatia star Luka Modric was in no mood to celebrate, regardless of the accolades, after what could have been his last appearance at a major tournament.

Modric scored against Italy yesterday (Macau time) to become the oldest goal-scorer ever at a European Championship.

Ultimately it wasn't enough to ensure his team stays in the competition. Mattia Zaccagni scored in the eighth minute of stoppage time for Italy to draw 1-1 and advance to the knockout stage.

Croatia needs an improbable series of other results going its way to remain at Euro 2024.

Modric, who is 38 years and 289 days old, claimed the opening goal on a rebound in the 55th minute, within a minute of having a penalty saved by Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

The previous record was held by Ivica Vastic, who was 38 years,



257 days old when he scored for Austria against Poland at Euro 2008.

Modric received standing ovations from fans when he went off in the 80th, and he was applauded again when he showed up for the post-game news conference.

One Italian journalist started by telling Modric he was one of the most magnificent players he had ever seen. He said he had no

question to ask, just a request for him never to retire from playing.

Modric seemed genuinely moved by the kind words.

"I'd also like to keep playing forever but there probably will come a time when I'll have to hang up my boots," he replied. "I'll keep playing. I'll continue, so I'm not sure when, we'll see."

Modric earlier this month extended his contract by another

year at Real Madrid, where he has amassed an impressive haul of trophies since joining from Tottenham in 2012, including another Champions League and Spanish league title last season.

Modric has played 178 games for Croatia since making his debut at age 20 under Zlatko Kranjcar in 2006. The 2018 Ballon d'Or winner is playing in his fifth European Championship. His goal

against Italy took his tally to four goals in 16 games at the tournament.

But Modric has enjoyed greater success with the national team at the World Cup, leading Croatia to the final in 2018, and third place in 2022.

The draw against Italy on Monday, and the manner in which it came with the last kick of the game, means Croatia is almost certain to be eliminated in the next days.

"It was very stressful. We kept fighting like lions right to the end. But football is cruel," Modric said. "That's part and parcel of football. Sometimes it brings a lot of happiness, but sometimes it makes you very sad as well."

"Losing like this is very difficult. It's hard to find words to describe how my teammates and probably the fans feel as well. Of course, we need to bounce back."

Modric, who is the team captain, took comfort from the performance.

"We gave everything for Croatia, and this is how Croatia presents itself, regardless of the cruelty of this result. We deserved more, but it's football," he said. "We can be proud of how we represented Croatia." **MDT/AP**

## Spain has to wait days to learn its next opponent, then rush to research them

JAMES ELLINGWORTH,  
DUESSELDORF

SPAIN doesn't know which team it plays next.

Croatia thinks it is out of contention but doesn't know for sure.

The tournament format means days of waiting for some teams, rushed work for their analysts, and a headache for fans trying to grasp where their team will play next.

The issue is because the European Championship has six groups, but only four of the third-place teams with the best records qualify for the round of 16. That means if you're

due to face a third-place team — like Spain is after winning Group B — you won't know who you have next until all of the groups have played.

"We might have to stay awake all night in order to study our rival when we find out who it is," Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said in translated comments after his team beat Albania 1-0 yesterday (Macau time).

"We need to wait until Wednesday probably, a couple of days, until we know who we're playing with. In any case, we'll be mentally prepared to go all out and try to get to the

next stage."

De la Fuente said his staff had prepared research on potential opponents for the game in Cologne on Sunday, but there were many of them.

Depending on how the remaining eight group-stage games unfold, Spain's potential opponents range from an underperforming heavyweight like Belgium to Austria, Ukraine or newcomer Georgia. It could even potentially run into the Netherlands or France — hardly the reward a group winner might expect.

Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic indicated he

thinks his team is out of the tournament. Still, it may not be official for two more days. Conceding a goal deep into added time in its 1-1 draw with Italy dropped Croatia from second to third in the group.

With just two points from three games and a poor goal difference, Croatia needs an improbable series of other results to go its way just to stay in the competition, starting with England beating Slovenia by at least three goals on Tuesday.

Also waiting is Hungary, which placed third in Group A thanks to its 1-0 win over Scotland on Sunday and is in line to qualify but doesn't yet know for sure.

Only one round-of-16 game is confirmed for sure. Italy will face Switzerland in Berlin on Saturday. **MDT/AP**

### SCOREBOARD

<b>Germany</b>	<b>5</b>	1	Scotland
Hungary	1	<b>3</b>	<b>Switzerland</b>
<b>Spain</b>	<b>3</b>	0	Croatia
<b>Italy</b>	<b>2</b>	1	Albania
Poland	1	<b>2</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>
Slovenia	1	1	Denmark
Serbia	0	<b>1</b>	<b>England</b>
<b>Romania</b>	<b>3</b>	0	Ukraine
Belgium	0	<b>1</b>	<b>Slovakia</b>
Austria	0	<b>1</b>	<b>France</b>
<b>Turkey</b>	<b>3</b>	1	Georgia
<b>Portugal</b>	<b>2</b>	1	Czech Republic
Croatia	2	2	Albania
<b>Germany</b>	<b>2</b>	0	Hungary
Scotland	1	1	Switzerland
Slovenia	1	1	Serbia
Denmark	1	1	England
<b>Spain</b>	<b>1</b>	0	Italy
Slovakia	1	<b>2</b>	<b>Ukraine</b>
Poland	1	<b>3</b>	<b>Austria</b>
Netherlands	0	0	France
Georgia	1	1	Czech Republic
Turkey	0	<b>3</b>	<b>Portugal</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	<b>2</b>	0	Romania
Switzerland	1	1	Germany
Scotland	0	<b>1</b>	<b>Hungary</b>
Albania	0	<b>1</b>	<b>Spain</b>
Croatia	1	1	Italy



EURO 2024 | PREVIEW

# Portugal chases third win against newcomer Georgia while wary of selfie-seekers

**P**ORTUGAL is already qualified for the European Championship knockout stages and can sign off from Group F in style with a third win when it plays newcomer Georgia today. A draw might give Georgia a chance at qualifying, depending on results elsewhere, but it's likely to need a shock win. The kickoff in Gelsenkirchen — at the same time as group rivals the Czech Republic and Turkey meet in Hamburg — is 12 a.m. local time (1900 GMT).

Here's what to know about the match:

**MATCH FACTS**

— There will be scrutiny of Euro 2024 security after no fewer than six different fans invaded the field or tried to seek selfies with Cristiano Ronaldo at Portugal's 3-0 win over Turkey. Four of them reached Ronaldo. UEFA said on Sunday it increased security but there was another fan on the field on Monday as Spain beat Albania 1-0.

— On its major tournament debut, Georgia has won praise for its battling style of play and nearly beat the Czech Republic in its second game if not for a last-second miss. Beating Portugal would be a huge upset and would guarantee Georgia a spot in the round of 16.

— Georgia will know before kickoff if a draw will potentially be enough to qualify as one of the four best third-place teams, or if only a win will do. If Georgia draws, it would still require the Czech Republic to lose against Turkey, though.

**TEAM NEWS**

— Ronaldo has yet to score at Euro 2024 and could potentially be rested against Georgia, since Portugal has won Group F no matter what.

— Georgia midfielder Otar Kiteishvili has yet to play at Euro 2024 amid fitness concerns.

**BY THE NUMBERS**

— One of the records the 39-year-old Ronaldo can break is that of oldest ever goal-scorer at the European Championships. Croatia's Luka Modric scored on Monday at age 38 against Italy to set a new record.

— Two more milestones for experienced Portuguese players: Ronaldo can play his 210th international game and 41-year-old Pepe can play his 140th.

**WHAT THEY'RE SAYING**

— "It's clearly an annoying situation, both for us and for our opponents. It worries us, we've already made the statement and let's hope that the situation improves in the next games, so that the football is richer." — Portugal goalkeeper Diogo Costa on fans invading the field. **MDT/AP**



Georgia's players celebrate their side's opening goal during a Group F match between Georgia and the Czech Republic at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Hamburg, Germany, Saturday

**UPCOMING GAMES**

	Date	Time	Home	Away	ODDS
Thu	Jun 27	0:00	Slovakia	Romania	H3.35, D 2.15, A 4.2
		0:00	Ukraine	Belgium	H 5.1, D 4.2, A 1.73
	03:00		Czech Republic	Turkey	H 2.63, D 3.4, A 2.88
	03:00		Georgia	Portugal	H 8.5, D 5.5, A 1.41

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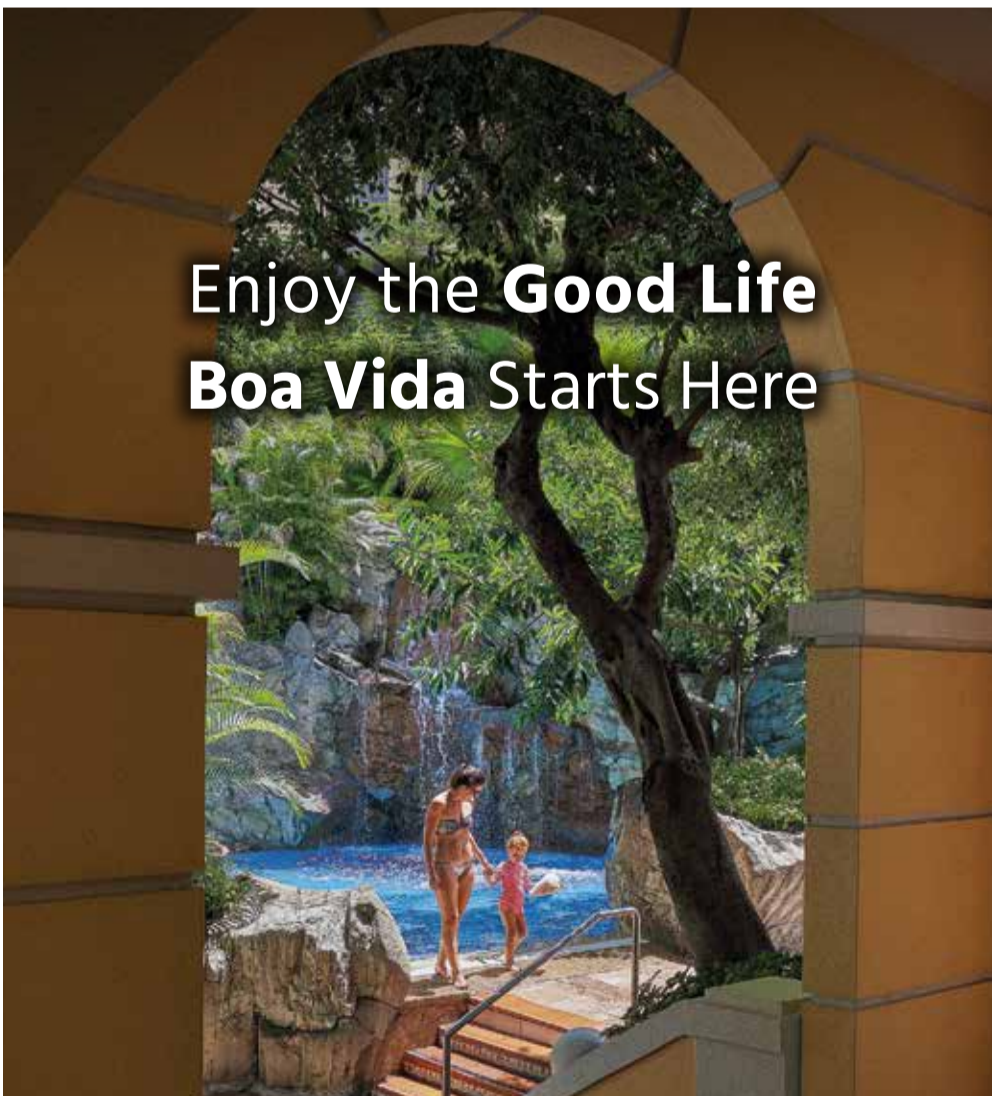
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**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**PROPOSED DEFENSE PARTNERSHIP CAUSE OF OFFENSE**

The protracted conflict between Russia and Ukraine has generated prevailing fear in Europe of either the hostilities spiraling out of control, or Russia expanding its “special military operation” to other European countries should it gain the upper hand on the battlefield in Ukraine. Meanwhile, the increasing likelihood of Donald Trump returning to the White House is driving louder calls for boosting independent European defense capacities.

And although European Union member states have begun joint weapons development and production, it is a remedy too slow to address what are perceived to be immediate needs. Given this severe geopolitical climate to European eyes, the EU seeking security and defense industry partnerships with Japan and the Republic of Korea would seem to be a matter of course. From this viewpoint, since intra-NATO resources have largely been mobilized, it is only natural Brussels should look to “like-minded” allies and partners such as Japan and the ROK to bolster the EU’s security confidence.

The EU initiative for joint weapons and equipment development and production is attractive to all three. Citing “the most severe and complex security environment since World War II”, Tokyo is trying everything possible to break the constraints of its “peace Constitution” and boost its military capabilities. It has signed a treaty to develop a sixth-generation fighter jet with the United Kingdom and Italy. It has jointly developed an advanced fleet-to-air interceptor missile with the United States, and is talking about deeper defense collaboration. It is proactively tightening defense cooperation with the Philippines along with the US and US allies, and proceeding with a joint military technology development project under the framework of AUKUS, the US’ “Indo-Pacific” security mechanism with Australia and the UK.

The revival of the military alliance treaty between Russia and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea having angered Seoul, the ROK government, which has until recently treaded cautiously to avoid provoking its northern neighbor, has just announced that it will lift the previous restraints on arms exports to Ukraine. Now, Brussels, too, has its eyes on the ROK as a desirable arms supplier.

From Brussels’ perspective, outreach to the two East Asian partners will further facilitate its plan to increase its military presence in the “Indo-Pacific”, both under NATO and on its own. Joint arms development will certainly deepen the parties’ broader security engagement on global and regional stages.

But as the Chinese Foreign Ministry has warned, the proposed partnership may have very adverse consequences for global and regional peace, as well as for China. As a result of growing geopolitical tensions and threats, the proposed partnership will inevitably further aggravate the tensions in Northeast Asia and throughout the Asia-Pacific.

That will give greater momentum to the vicious circle that has emerged in the region, which will be in no party’s interest.

**SOUTH KOREAN INVESTIGATORS SEARCH IN FACTORY RUINS AFTER FIRE KILLED 23, MOSTLY CHINESE MIGRANTS**

**THE BUZZ**

Forensic and other experts combed through the charred ruins of a factory building near South Korea’s capital to find the cause of a devastating fire that killed 23 people, mostly Chinese migrant workers, in one of the country’s deadliest blazes in years.

More than 100 people were working at the factory in Hwaseong city, just south of Seoul, when the fire tore through it Monday morning. Security cameras showed smoke engulfing the second-floor worksite of the factory, soon after sparks were detected from a site where lithium batteries were stored, fire officials said.

One victim was pronounced dead at a hospital, and fire workers retrieved 21 bodies from the factory one by one later Monday.

An additional body was recovered yesterday.

18 victims were Chinese, two were South Korean and one was Laotian.

The nationalities of the other two dead were being verified.

Chinese Ambassador Xing Haiming visited the factory site on Monday night and reportedly expressed condolences to the victims.



Former law professor Benny Tai

**HONG KONG**

**COURT EDGES CLOSER TO SENTENCING DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS INVOLVED IN UNOFFICIAL PRIMARY**

**KANIS LEUNG, HONG KONG**

A Hong Kong court began mitigation hearings for prominent pro-democracy activists who were convicted under a national security law and now face up to life in prison.

The activists were among 47 democracy advocates who were charged with conspiracy to commit subversion in 2021 for their involvement in an unofficial primary, in the biggest case brought under the national security law.

They were accused of attempting to paralyze Hong Kong’s government and topple the city’s leader by securing a legislative majority and using it to block city budgets.

45 of the defendants either pled guilty or were convicted by a three-judge panel whose membership was approved by the government. The judges said their plans to effect change through the election would have undermined the government’s authority and created a constitutional crisis, in a verdict that critics said raised doubt about judicial independence.

The first batch of defendants to plead for lenient sentences contains legal

scholar Benny Tai and activists Au Nok-hin, Andrew Chiu, Ben Chung and Gordon Ng. The mitigation hearings are expected to continue until early August.

Barrister Stewart Wong, representing Tai, told the judges that his client should be jailed for two years.

Hours before the hearing began, dozens of people were queuing up outside the court building tightly guarded by police. Some of them, including retiree William Wong, arrived at about 6 p.m. on Monday despite summer heat.

Wong said he voted in the primary and shared the defendants’ hopes for democracy.

“It’s a normal election. Why do people have to be jailed for this? I can’t accept this,” he said.

Tai, a former law professor at the University of Hong Kong, nodded and smiled at people sitting in the public gallery after he walked into the courtroom. Wearing a black blazer, he appeared to be relaxed during the hearing.

Tai is best known as a co-founder of the city’s 2014 Occupy Movement, during which demonstrators occupied streets for 79 days and brought traffic in some areas to a standstill, demanding

direct elections for the city’s leader.

The judges wrote in their verdict last month that Tai had laid out plans to block city budgets by acquiring a legislative majority, calling it a “constitutional weapon of mass destruction.” They said Tai’s aim was to use the plans to “undermine, destroy or overthrow the existing political system and structure” of Hong Kong.

Tai, Au, Chiu and Chung were among 31 activists who pled guilty. They have a better chance of receiving shorter prison terms.

The law authorizes a range of sentences depending on the seriousness of the offense and the defendant’s role in it, going from under three years for the least serious to 10 years to life for people convicted of “grave” offenses.

The convictions have drawn concern from foreign governments. The United States has said it plans to impose new visa restrictions on both Chinese and Hong Kong officials responsible for implementing the security law.

But the Hong Kong government insisted the city’s courts are not under any political pressure from mainland or Hong Kong authorities. **MDT/AP**



**USA** Surgeon general yesterday declared gun violence a public health crisis, driven by the fast-growing number of injuries and deaths involving firearms in the country. The advisory issued by Dr. Vivek Murthy (pictured), the nation’s top doctor, came as the U.S. grappled with another summer weekend marked by mass shootings that left dozens of people dead or wounded.



**Israel’s** Supreme Court yesterday ruled unanimously that the military must begin drafting ultra-Orthodox men for compulsory service, a landmark decision that could lead to the collapse of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s governing coalition as Israel continues to wage war in Gaza. The historic ruling effectively puts an end to a decades-old system that granted ultra-Orthodox men broad exemptions from military service while maintaining mandatory enlistment for the country’s secular Jewish majority.



**Microsoft** violated European Union antitrust rules with “possibly abusive” practices by tying its Teams messaging and videoconferencing app to its widely used business software, the bloc said. The European Commission said Monday it informed Microsoft of its preliminary view that the U.S. tech giant has been “restricting competition” by bundling Teams with core office productivity applications such as Office 365 and Microsoft 365. The commission said it suspects Microsoft might have granted Teams a “distribution advantage” by not giving customers a choice on whether to have Teams when they purchased the software.