



17 YEARS A-CHANGIN'

Advertise with us
+853 287 160 81

INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS OF MACAU RESIDENTS HAD RECORDED A TOTAL OF MOP1,104.5 BILLION AT CURRENT MARKET VALUE, A RISE OF 9.7%

P2

LAWMAKER CALLS FOR DEEPER LOOK INTO FRAUD CASE TRENDS

P2

AS IRAN PRESIDENTIAL VOTE LOOMS, TENSIONS BOIL OVER RENEWED HEADSCARF CRACKDOWN

P8



China A suspect has been detained after a knife attack at a school bus stop that injured three people, including a Japanese woman and her child, a spokesperson for the Japanese Embassy confirmed Tuesday. A man stabbed the woman and her child at a bus stop for a Japanese school, and then seriously injured a Chinese woman on the bus who tried to block him when he tried to get on, the spokesperson said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of embassy policy.



Philippines Former President Rodrigo Duterte plans to run for the Senate in mid-term elections next year, his daughter and the country's vice president said Tuesday. When Duterte's stormy presidential term ended in 2022, he said he would retire from politics, but he has walked back on his public pronouncements multiple times. Vice President Sara Duterte said her two brothers also plan to run in the election while she eventually intends to return to her family's southern political stronghold of Davao city.



South Korea A suspected hypersonic missile launched by North Korea exploded in flight yesterday, South Korea's military said, a development that comes as North Korea is protesting the regional deployment of a U.S. aircraft carrier for a trilateral military drill with South Korea and Japan. The missile launched from the North's capital region around 5:30 a.m. was aimed toward the North's eastern waters before the failure, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement.

MASS TOURISM

Amid IVS expansions, demand for package tours has skyrocketed by 187% y-o-y, while the hotel industry is exhibiting favorable trends

P5



LYNZY VALLES

**INTEGRATED RESORTS
NON-GAMING
REVENUE PROJECTED
TO BE 15% OF
TOTAL INCOME**

P3

**FINANCE
MACAU PASS
EYES BOOSTING
COMPETITIVENESS
IN THE GBA**

P3

LAWMAKER CALLS FOR DEEPER LOOK INTO FRAUD CASE TRENDS

VICTORIA CHAN

Lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho is calling for authorities to conduct a more in-depth analysis on the factors contributing to the apparent contradiction between the growing number of fraud cases and the high level of awareness among students about computer dangers, as highlighted by a recent survey by the Consumer Council (CC).

In a written statement, Coutinho drew attention to the "discrepancy" between the data presented by the CC and the reality of the increasing number of fraud cases affecting young people.

The CC's survey found that 93% of secondary school students stated they usually view comments from other customers before making online purchases to avoid being deceived.

The survey also found that 81% of respondents had already



RENATO MARQUES

shopped online, with 13% purchasing products online as early as primary school.

Coutinho believes that "a more in-depth analysis must be carried out by the authorities to understand the factors under-

lying this apparently contradictory reality," proposing "effective solutions to protect young people against fraud and scams, despite the supposed 'high awareness' about consumer rights."

The lawmaker highlighted,

for example, the CC survey, which concluded that "the majority of respondents demonstrate 'a high awareness of the defense of consumer and consumer rights'."

However, Coutinho noted the report also highlights a "worrying scenario" with the increase in cases of computer fraud that increasingly affects young people in secondary schools.

In the first quarter of this year alone, according to the CC survey, "there were 96 telephone frauds, which targeted 40 students," resulting in "losses of tens of millions of yuan." In this case, the victims "demonstrated 'a low awareness of their civic rights'."

Coutinho understood, therefore, that "the challenges of prevention and protection still remain significant, because, despite greater awareness of rights, consumers are still largely vulnerable to online fraud schemes."

He believed authorities "face increased difficulties in monitoring the evolution of criminal methods and providing effective responses, so education and awareness campaigns on digital security need to be intensified to empower consumers."

He would like to see "the social, educational and technological factors that may be contributing to this discrepancy between perception and reality" investigated.

He argued that authorities need to provide "effective solutions to protect young people against fraud and scams, despite the supposed 'high awareness' about consumer rights."

Coutinho's call for a more in-depth analysis by the authorities comes as the CC's survey findings seem to contradict the reality of the increasing number of fraud cases affecting young people.

The lawmaker believes that understanding the underlying factors and strengthening education and awareness campaigns on digital security are crucial to empowering consumers and addressing this "worrying scenario."

STATS

Residents' investments portfolio up 9.7% at the end of 2023

RENATO MARQUES

STATISTICS released by the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) show that the investment accounts of Macau residents (including individuals, the government, and other legal entities but excluding Macau's foreign exchange reserves) had recorded a total of MOP1,104.5 billion at current market value, a figure that represents a rise of 9.7% when compared year-on-year with the end-2022 and 3% up when compared with end-June 2023 (1H).

Among the various instruments of portfolio investment, equity securities (including mutual funds and investment trust units), long-term debt securities, and short-term debt securities were valued

at MOP335.3 billion, MOP693.8 billion and MOP75.5 billion respectively.

Compared with a year ago, the market values of equity securities and long-term debt securities increased by 4.4% and 16.5% whereas on the other hand, short-term debt securities decreased by 16.4%.

The Asian region continued to occupy the largest share of Macau residents' external portfolio investment, at 46.4% with the remaining mainly placed in North America (19.6%), Europe (15.9%), the North Atlantic and Caribbean (14.4%) and Oceania (1.6%).

Investment in securities issued by mainland entities, including those securities listed on non-mainland exchanges, continued to

assume the leading position, occupying 28.5% of local residents' portfolio investments outside Macau. Its market value decreased by 3.7% from end-2022 to MOP314.6 billion.

The investment consisted of MOP98.2 billion in equity securities, MOP185.0 billion in long-term debt securities, and MOP31.4 billion in short-term debt securities, taking up 29.3%, 26.7%, and 41.7% of the respective total.

On the other hand, the share of investment in securities issued by Hong Kong entities increased from 10.7% to 10.8%; the corresponding market value increased by 10% to MOP118.9 billion, of which equity securities and long-term debt securities amounted to MOP37.6 billion and MOP57.9

billion respectively.

All investments in North America are placed in the United States with the market value of residents' investments in US securities increasing by 26% from end-2022 to MOP187.6 billion while its share in total external portfolio investments rose from 14.8% to 17%.

Concurrently, investment in European securities rose by 1.9% to 15.9% and by 25.1% to MOP175.2 billion in market value from end-2022.

Of European countries, portfolio investments in Ireland, Luxembourg, and the UK took up larger portions, standing at MOP41.6 billion, MOP40.9 billion and MOP33.7 billion respectively.

The market value of residents' portfolio invest-



RENATO MARQUES

ments in the North Atlantic and Caribbean increased by 0.5% from end-2022 to MOP158.9 billion whereas its share in total external securities investments reduced from 15.7% to 14.4%.

From this, the market value of portfolio investments in the British Virgin Islands rose by 2.1% to MOP79.1 billion.

Investments in Belt and Road Initiative countries (excluding China) also increased by 14.6% from end-2022 to MOP103.9 billion, equivalent to 9.4% of total

external portfolio investments.

The market value of portfolio investments in Portuguese-speaking countries was MOP900.8 million, which was placed in securities issued by entities in Portugal and Brazil.

The compilation of the Coordinated Portfolio Investment Survey, jointly conducted by the AMCM and the Statistics and Census Service, follows the methodology advocated by the International Monetary Fund.

www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

REACHING OUT!

+25,000

Like us on facebook.com/mdtimes



MacauDaily 澳門每日時報
Times

DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR_Lynzy Valles
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS_Alex Torrão, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Seguí DESIGNER_Rebeca Almeida | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacaoNews, Xinhua SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Goldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com
OFFICE MANAGER_Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com
ADDRESS_Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84
Advertisement_advertising@macaudailytimes.com
For subscription and general issues: general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd



Charlie Zhang and moderator José Alvares

FINANCE

Macau Pass eyes further developments in realm of cashless payment options

NADIA SHAW

THE MPay mobile app has achieved exceptional penetration among Macau's local population, with its registered user base representing over 90% of the city's residents.

Based on information provided by AGTech, which is the Alipay+ network, MPay is accepted by "90% of local merchants" in Hong Kong and 88 million merchants across 57 countries and regions.

Speaking at a talk hosted by the France Macau Chamber of

Commerce (FMCC), Charlie Zhang, a key figure in the Macau Pass ecosystem, said Macau Pass intends to enhance the overall financial offerings and services it provides to Macau citizens, not just focusing on outbound payments.

With over 15 years of experience in the games, lottery and sports industry, Zhang currently leads AGTech's international expansion efforts, including the company's entry into the Indian market.

By collaborating with Alibaba, financial institutions, and partners, the company aims to "create

a more vibrant market and develop better products and services, strengthening Macau's competitiveness in the GBA financial sector," said the president of the firm's international business development.

In March 2022, AGTech Holdings Limited (8279.HK), an Alibaba affiliate, acquired Macau Pass for HKD778 million, which has enabled Macau Pass to benefit from a wider range of services provided through the Alipay system.

This has led to several enhancements to the e-payment pla-

form. Zhang believes there is a "huge synergy" that can justify the premium paid for Macau Pass, and AGTech is eager to inject its expertise to enhance the company's offerings in the form of a more comprehensive suite of services for users.

In late 2022, MPay partnered with Alipay+ (a global cross-border digital wallet and merchant network operated by Ant Group) and Taobao (Macau) to expand its e-commerce and digital services capabilities.

This strategic partnership has opened up new opportunities for Macau Pass, allowing the company to leverage Alipay+'s extensive network and cutting-edge technologies, Zhang said.

Following the acquisition, there are intentions to enhance the global reach of the service and "include additional countries to enhance the convenience for tourists" in utilizing the platform, for both incoming and outgoing transactions.

At present, users of the associated MPay application can make payments to more than 40 countries worldwide through Alipay+.

Looking ahead, Zhang, said Macau Pass is poised to introduce exciting new developments in the realm of cashless payment options, exploring innovative solutions to further streamline the payment process and provide users with a more convenient and secure experience.

As Macau continues to position itself as an international business hub with the "4+1" strategy, the advancements made by Macau Pass and its partners are crucial in supporting the city's growth, fostering collaboration and innovation within the financial technology sector and paving the way for a more connected and efficient future.

FINANCIAL RESERVE DROPS FOR FIRST TIME SINCE OCTOBER

Macau's financial reserve totaled MOP595.443 billion at the end of April, down MOP1.347 billion from March. This marks the first monthly decrease in the reserve since October 2023. The reserve has generated MOP10.186 billion in revenue from investments since January. The basic reserve, which covers 150% of appropriations for central services, was MOP153.394 billion. The extraordinary remaining balances, totaled MOP431.862 billion. The financial reserve peaked in February 2021 at MOP663.564 billion. The dip indicates fiscal pressures after two years of pandemic-related restrictions.

CULTURAL ENTITIES INVITED TO APPLY FOR CRAFT MARKET IN GUANGZHOU

The Cultural Affairs Bureau has opened applications for local cultural and creative entities to participate in the "Craft Market in the Greater Bay Area" in Guangzhou in August. The bureau said applications are free and will be accepted until July 2. As the largest platform for selling Macau cultural products, the market helps brands do trial runs and promote development. Last year's event was well received. This year, the event will be held August 23-25 at Lumina Guangzhou. A "Macau Fashion Pop-up Store" will showcase original fashion and expand sales channels in the Greater Bay Area region. The market supports goals of the culture development plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area.

DEMAND FOR JEFF SATUR'S TICKETS DISRUPTED SYSTEM

Extremely high demand is to be blamed for the disruption of the ticketing system for the local concert of Thai singer Jeff Satur, organizer Live Nation has said in a statement. According to the organizers, "overwhelming demand and traffic" caused a problem that led the company to pause sales temporarily. The same source said that sales resumed yesterday at 4 p.m. (local time) with all the tickets previously purchased to be valid and without a need for any procedures. Satur will present a concert in Macau as part of its "Space Shuttle No.8 Asia Tour" that is scheduled to take place Sept. 21 at the Broadway Theatre, Broadway Macau.

IRs' non-gaming revenue projected to grow by 15%

VICTORIA CHAN

MACAU is succeeding in diversifying its economy away from gambling, with projections that non-gaming revenue could make up 15% of integrated resorts' income by 2024.

According to analyst Vitaly Umansky of Seaport Research Partners, Macau gross gaming revenue is forecast to rise 26.1% to USD28.7 billion this year. At the same time, non-gaming revenue is expected to increase 17.7% to USD4.9 billion.

"This would see non-gaming equate to 15% of all revenues, boosted by



concessionaire spending on non-gaming initiatives as mandated under their current 10-year concession contracts," said a note by Seaport Research Partner analyst Vitaly Umansky.

The analyst has projec-

ted gambling revenue will grow to USD31.8 billion in 2025 while non-gaming climbs to USD5.3 billion, a slight decline to around 14% of total income.

"Property EBITDA for the industry is forecasted to rise 24.8% and 15.5%

year-on-year in 2024 and 2025, respectively," Umansky added.

Gaming revenues are also expected to rebound significantly in the second half of 2024.

"Macau GGR should surpass 80% of pre-Covid

levels in the third quarter of 2024, and reach 83.3% in Q4," Umansky said.

The analyst described June as "typically the worst or second worst month of the year," contributing to an estimated 2% quarterly drop in GGR and EBITDA for Q2 2022. But Q3 is seen bouncing back to 80.6% of 2019 levels with Q4 at 83.3%.

"Macau remains a long-term secular growth," Umansky said. "We do not see a slowdown and change in propensity to gamble by the core Macau customer base and Macau remains the funnel for servicing gaming demand in Greater China."

COTAI HOSPITAL RESHUFFLES STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Macau Union Medical College Hospital has made changes to its Strategic Development Committee members as it prepares for its September opening. Zhao Yupei has stepped down as chairman while Zhang Shuyang and Li Wei have become honorary advisors. The SAR government is still liaising with the mainland to appoint a new chairman and various members. The hospital has thanked Zhao, Zhang and Li for their early contributions. It has also thanked the National Health Commission and Peking Union Medical College Hospital for their support and guidance on the matter.

PUBLIC BUSES CARRY OVER 500,000 PASSENGERS DAILY

In 2023, the city's two bus operators Transmac and TCM transported a combined total of 213 million passengers. Transmac carried 101 million passengers, averaging 279,000 per day, while TCM transported 112 million, or roughly 308,000 daily. The bus companies have invested in new electric and natural gas vehicles with 708 new energy buses now in operation, accounting for over 60% of the total fleet. Transport Bureau data shows the two operators ran 86 routes with 1,091 buses driven by 1,406 captains at the end of 2023.

15TH CROSS-STRAIT AND HONG KONG AND MACAO ART FORUM OPENS

150 attendees arrived at the Macau Science Museum Convention Center, including Lui Yuyin, deputy director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in Macau, and Liu Xianfa, commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Macau. The forum's theme was "Chinese inheritance, development and national communication." Wu Zhiliang, chairman of the Macau Foundation and president of the Macau Federation of Cultural Circles, highlighted Macau's unique role in cultural exchange, while Ma Fengguo, president of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles Hong Kong, emphasized the importance of engaging youth in cultural inheritance through innovative means and the Greater Bay Area platform.

CRIME

AIRPLANE BURGLARY SUSPECT ARRESTED UPON ARRIVAL IN MACAU

HOWARD TONG

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) announced the arrest of a suspect in a case of aggravated theft that occurred on a flight from Singapore to Macau on June 24.

According to authorities, the incident was reported to the Airport Superintendent's Office of the Public Security Police at 11:37 p.m. on June 24.

Four non-local residents, three women and one man, reported that their belongings had been stolen and they had lost a total of approximately MOP23,500 in cash from their hand carry luggage during the flight.

The investigation allegedly revealed that a male passenger, identified as 52-year-old Chai, an unemployed mainland China resident, was witnessed by the cousin of one of the female victims rummaging through her handbag while she was away from her seat.

The cousin immediately in-



HOWARD TONG

formed the cabin crew, who then made an announcement for all passengers to check their belongings.

Three of the other passengers, the remaining victims, discovered that items had been stolen from their luggage as well. The losses included RMB2,400, HKD14,500 and SGD800.

When the flight landed, the

cabin crew contacted the police, and a search of the aircraft led to the recovery of the stolen currencies, which were found hidden in various locations on the plane, including overhead compartments and under seats. The recovered money matched the amounts reported stolen by the victims.

The suspect has refused to

cooperate with the investigation, and several foreign currencies and plastic bags like those used to conceal the stolen money were allegedly seized from him.

The authorities have said they will continue to investigate whether the suspect is involved in other similar cases and if there are additional victims.

CRIME

Man arrested for MOP140,000 inheritance theft

THE Judiciary Police (PJ) has arrested a 44-year-old male suspect, Chan, for his involvement in aggravated theft and improper access to a computer system.

The victim is a middle-aged female Macau resident. In late August 2020, the victim's husband passed away in Macau due to an illness. It was not until February 2023, when the victim was dealing with her husband's inheritance, that she discovered his Hong Kong Dollar and Macau Pataca bank accounts had been emptied.

Investigation revealed that about MOP140,000 (around HKD70,314 and MOP66,957) had been transferred out of the deceased's accounts and into the bank account of the suspect, Chan, in 15 instalments between September 1-3, 2020.

It was determined that, on the day the victim's husband passed away, the suspect went to the family's home and claimed the victim's cell phone had been purchased with his money and needed to be retrieved. The family members, knowing the suspect, handed over the phone without question.

The suspect then unlawfully accessed the deceased's mobile banking account and proceeded to transfer the substantial funds out of the accounts over the course of three days, clearing out the balances.

When the victim discovered the missing funds in February 2023 and reported the incident, the police launched an investigation. On the morning of June 25 this year, the suspect was arrested as he was attempting to leave Macau. **HT**

CRIME

PJ DETAINS 74 DRUG SUSPECTS FROM JANUARY TO MAY

In the first five months of this year, the Judiciary Police (PJ) detained 74 drug suspects, with 25 individuals arrested for drug trafficking and 46 for drug consumption. The PJ report revealed that three were between the ages of 16 and 21.

Police authorities apprehended 128 suspects involved in 61 drug cases last year, according to data from the PJ, who published a report on drug-related crimes in the city from January 2021 to May of this year.

Data shows that 92 individuals arrested for drug trafficking, 30 for

drug consumption, and six for other drug-related offenses such as drug manufacturing, possession of narcotics, psychotropic substances, drug paraphernalia, and encouraging drug use, representing a 29% increase compared to the previous year.

The government investigated 50 drug trafficking cases last year, a number lower than in 2021 but higher than in 2022.

This rise was primarily attributed to Macau's return to normalcy with the reopening of major border checkpoints in 2023 and the emergence

of new drug trafficking routes by criminal organizations in neighboring areas.

The PJ report indicated nine individuals under the age of 21 were involved in drug offenses last year, emphasizing that, despite all of them being non-local residents and the percentage of young people engaged in drug crimes being "extremely low," the risk has increased due to the recovery of Macau's economy and improved cross-border transportation links that drug gangs from outside Macau attempt to exploit. **LV**





Macau Ferry Terminal grant renewed for five years

THE Macau Special Administrative Region Government has renewed the contract granting operation rights of the key Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal to incumbent Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de Macau (STDM) for a new term of five years.

Under the terms of the newly signed 60-month deal, STDM will pay 18% of its pre-tax profits from running the terminal back to the government each year, replacing the previous agreement's fixed monthly fee of MOP1,800,800.

According to details published in the Official Gazette this week, the contract allows STDM to set operating hours and allocate waiting rooms, berthing positions and other facilities. In exchange, STDM must submit annual audited financial reports to the government by March 31 that outline profits from the concession.

While the government had announced in February it would open the terminal contract to competitive public tender, Transport Secretary Raimundo Arrais later revealed he had already notarized a renewed exclusive deal with STDM last month.

Another condition in the five-year grant allows the government to terminate the agreement if STDM's cumulative share transfers surpass 50% of its total stock during the contract period.

STDM is the majority owner of Macau casino operator SJM Resorts S.A. and is over 50% controlled by an alliance led by MGM China Chair Pansy Ho and also including the Fok Foundation. The renewed contract ensures continued ferry services and operations at the vital transportation link will remain uninterrupted. VC



STATS

Tourism numbers surge, hotel occupancy at 84% in May

VICTORIA CHAN

TOURISM numbers jumped significantly in Macau during May according to data released by the Statistics and Census Service.

Package tour visitors to Macau increased 187.3% to 242,000 compared to the same month last year, with visitors from mainland China making up 219,000 of that total—a 173% rise. International package tours soared 522.2% to 18,000, with sizable gains from South Korea and India.

For the January through May period, package tourists grew 225.3% to 928,000. Mainland Chi-

na visitors comprised 828,000 of that figure, up 198.5% year-over-year. International tours skyrocketed 1,404.3% to 88,000, fueled by outsized growth from South Korea and India.

Meanwhile, 46,000 Macau residents purchased outbound travel services in May, a 28% increase. From January to May, 202,000 residents booked outbound trips, rising 49.3% from the prior year period.

Hotel data also showed positive signs in May. There were 143 establishments with 47,000 available rooms, both a modest increase from a year ago. The occupancy rate jumped 4.9 points to a

robust 83.6%. International guest arrivals surged 66.1% while mainland China rose 9.7%.

For the first five months, hotel occupancy improved 7.7 points to 84.3%. Total guests increased 25% to over six million, indicating that a rebound is underway in Macau's crucial tourism sector following the pandemic downturn.

Macau was ranked the most satisfactory destination for outbound tourists from the Chinese mainland during the first quarter of this year—the first time it has received such a designation—thanks to a number of favorable policies that have bolstered the city's

tourism industry.

According to the China Tourism Academy, Macau scored 83.49 on the satisfaction-level rankings of destinations visited by mainland outbound tourists, ranking No 1, while Hong Kong secured the seventh spot with 81.77.

The results can be attributed to the expansion of the Individual Visit Scheme, which allows travelers from more mainland cities to visit Hong Kong and Macau, as well as the distribution of consumption vouchers and easier customs clearance, Dai Bin, president of the CTA, said in an article published on the academy's WeChat account recently.

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China hosts annual food kit build



Sands China Ltd. held its third annual Sands Cares Global Food Kit Build Tuesday to benefit community partner Caritas Macau. More than 280 volunteers from Sands China and Caritas Macau gathered at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo to assemble

3,000 food kits containing 21 tons of staple foods.

The food kits, which each contain 18 items like rice, oil and canned goods, will be distributed to the elderly, disabled, poor families and food bank recipients in Macau through Caritas Macau

service points in July and August.

"This event represents one of our most important contributions to the Macau community, as our team members once again demonstrated their commitment," said Dr. Wilfred Wong, executive vice chairman of Sands China Ltd.

Addressing food insecurity is a key focus of Sands Cares. Sands China has partnered with Caritas Macau since 2022 to assist at-risk communities. Paul Pun Chi Meng, Caritas Macau secretary-general, thanked Sands China for organizing the effort and involving senior volunteers, helping fulfill basic needs.

MGM participates in international gastronomy festival in Macau



MGM Macau helped co-organize the recent "International Cities of Gastronomy Fest, Macao" from June 14-23. As a co-organizer with Macau's

tourism office and nearly 30 other UNESCO Creative Cities of Gastronomy, MGM aimed to showcase the unique blend of tourism and cuisine through

events like the International Gastronomy Promenade and forum. During the 10-day event, MGM's food stall was popular for local delicacies like Macanese curry crab and roasted suckling pig sandwiches. MGM chefs also demonstrated innovative Macanese dishes and spoke at the gastronomy forum about culinary resilience.

To extend the celebrations, MGM brought guest chef Roberto Pongolini of Parma, Italy to its Coast restaurant until June 29. There, Pongolini and MGM chefs offered a tasting menu incorporating Italian classics with modern touches and workshops on Parma's renowned cuisine.

PARIS 2024

Americans favored to top overall medal count in Paris Olympics. China will challenge for most gold

STEPHEN WADE

THE United States is strongly favored to win the most overall medals when the Paris Olympics open in a month. The big question is this: will the Americans also top the gold-medal tally in a close race with China?

The United States is projected to win 123 medals overall — 37 gold, 34 silver, and 52 bronze. China is forecast to win 87 overall — 36 gold, 29 silver, and 22 bronze.

This forecast is done by Nielsen's Gracenote Sports, which supplies statistical analysis for sports leagues around the world. It also tracks major competitions involving Olympic sports leading up to the Games.

The United States and China finished 1-2 in both categories in 2021 in the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics.

Gracenote's ranking is based on overall medals won, although others focus the rankings on gold totals. The International Olympic Committee does not



An employee holds medals for the upcoming 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games after the finishing touches were added, in the workshops of La Monnaie de Paris, in Paris

compile rankings, leaving this to nations and local media.

This would be the eighth straight time the United States has won the most overall medals in the Summer Games. In

1992 at Barcelona, the so-called Unified team topped the overall count. Those athletes were from the former Soviet Union, which had just broken up as a sovereign state.

The last time the United States did not top the gold-medal count in the Summer Games was in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, where China invested heavily and saw dividends.

Next in line with overall and gold totals for Paris are: Britain (62-14), France (56-29), Australia (48-13), Japan (46-12), Italy (46-11), Germany (37-10), Netherlands (34-17), South Korea (29-8).

The next 10 are: Hungary (23-7), Canada (20-6), Spain (18-4), Ukraine (17-2), Brazil (16-7), New Zealand (16-4), Poland (15-5), Denmark (14-5), Turkey (14-4), Ethiopia (13-2).

And 21 through 30 are: Sweden (12-6), Georgia (12-3), Serbia (11-5), Belgium (11-3), Uzbekistan (11-3), Kazakhstan (10-2), Iran (9-4), Croatia (9-3), Romania (9-2), Ireland (9-2).

Host nations always get a bump in medals, and France is expected to get a big one and increase its overall total from 33 in Tokyo. France is forecast to nearly triple its gold-medal output from Tokyo, where Japan picked up a record haul.

Performing at home is an advantage, partly because host nations invest more heavily in training athletes. Then, of course, there are adoring home crowds and the familiar surroundings.

The unknown factor is the presence of Russian and — to a lesser extent — Belarusian athletes. They have been absent from most international competitions over the last two years because of the war in Ukraine. It's still unclear how many will participate and their influence is difficult to factor into the forecast, Gracenote acknowledges. **MDT/AP**

Gov't unveils new property stimulus measures

NADIA SHAW

THE Chinese government has rolled out a series of measures aimed at reviving the country's struggling property market, as new home prices in the country fell at their fastest pace in over eight years in March.

Last Friday, the government announced a re-lending program totaling RMB300 billion to support home purchases. This comes on the heels of other initiatives, such as relaxing home purchase restrictions and urging banks to expedite loan approvals, as well as lowering the minimum down payment for private residential mortgages. In May 2024,



China lowered down payment requirements to 15% for first-time buyers and 25% for second-time buyers, making homes more accessible.

Beijing has received more inquiries from prospective homebuyers in the past month, both online and offline, with property sales surging over

70% compared to the beginning of the year.

The Hang Seng Mainland Properties Index, which tracks Chinese property developers listed in Hong Kong, was up 1.80% in afternoon trading yesterday.

Mark Dong, co-founder and general manager of Minority Asset Management in Hong Kong, said to Reuters,

"There certainly is hope that the central and local governments will introduce more supportive measures. But apart from more interest rate cuts, other measures like capital support from local governments will be quite hard to implement, as we know they are facing constrained resources themselves." JPMorgan also echoed this sentiment, noting that a sustainable rally in the sector would require a meaningful sales recovery and stronger policy responses.

Most experts agree that the property sector will continue to negatively impact China's economy this year, with the government aiming for a 5% gross domestic product growth. Bloomberg quotes ING that a potential bottoming out of housing prices would only be the first step in the recovery process.

DIPLOMACY

SOLOMON ISLANDS PRIME MINISTER SAYS VISITS TO AUSTRALIA AND CHINA FOCUS ON CREATING JOBS

THE new prime minister of the Solomon Islands said yesterday that his visits to Australia and China are focussed on creating jobs in the developing South Pacific island nation.

Prime Minister Jeremiah Manele met his counterpart Anthony Albanese in the Australian capital of Canberra, during his first overseas trip since being elected last month. Manele will next visit China, and then Japan.

"We are keen to work with all partners, with Australia and China, (on) how we can partner together to create transformational projects and programs in Solomon Islands that create jobs," Manele said at a

joint press conference with Albanese.

The Solomons is on the front line in competition between the United States and China for influence in the Pacific.

During the five-year term of Manele's predecessor, Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, China's influence increased dramatically.

The election of Manele, Sogavare's former foreign minister and chosen successor, suggests the country will continue to follow a similar direction.

Albanese said Australia provides economic support for its Pacific neighbors that has mutual benefits and is not transactional. **MDT/AP**

KOREAS TENSIONS

Suspected N. Korean hypersonic missile exploded in flight, S. Korea says

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

A suspected hypersonic missile launched by North Korea exploded in flight yesterday, South Korea's military said, as North Korea protests the regional deployment of a U.S. aircraft carrier for a military drill with South Korea and Japan.

Later yesterday, South Korea conducted live-fire drills along its disputed western sea boundary with North Korea, its first since it suspended a 2018 agreement with the North aimed at reducing front-line military tensions in early June.

The North Korean missile was launched at about 5:30 a.m. and was aimed toward the North's eastern waters before the failure, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said. Missile fragments were scattered in the water up to 250 kilometers from the launch site near North Korea's capital, it said. No damage was immediately reported.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff said it believes the weapon was a solid-fueled hypersonic missile. The launch generated more smoke than normal launches, possibly because of an engine fault, it told South Korean



AP PHOTO

reporters at a background briefing. The contents of the briefing were shared with foreign media.

In a three-way phone call, senior diplomats from South Korea, the U.S. and Japan condemned the missile launch as a violation of U.N. resolutions and agreed to maintain close coordination in response to North Korean threats, according to South Korea's Foreign Ministry.

North Korea has performed a

series of hypersonic missile tests since 2021 in an apparent effort to acquire an ability to penetrate its rivals' missile defense shields. Foreign experts question whether the missiles have achieved their desired speed and maneuverability during the test flights. In recent years, North Korea has also been developing more missiles that use solid propellants. Launches of such missiles are harder to detect than

liquid-propellant missiles, which must be fueled before liftoff.

Wednesday's missile test came as the rival Koreas are engaged in Cold War-style psychological warfare using balloons and loudspeaker broadcasts.

South Korea said North Korea launched large balloons carrying trash across their border Tuesday night for the sixth time since late May. About 100 balloons with bags

of paper waste reportedly fell in South Korean territory.

The balloons resulted in the suspension of takeoffs and landings at South Korea's Incheon International Airport, about an hour's drive from the border, for three hours early Wednesday, in the second such disruption since the North's balloon launches began on May 28, according to South Korean aviation authorities.

North Korea says it is responding to balloons launched by South Korean activists that carried political leaflets into the North. On June 9, South Korea briefly conducted propaganda broadcasts from loudspeakers along the border for the first time in years in response to the North Korean balloons. South Korea's military said Monday it is ready to turn on its loudspeakers again.

On Wednesday, South Korean forces on front-line islands fired 290 artillery and missile rounds into the waters near the Koreas' western sea boundary, the site of several bloody naval skirmishes since 1999, the South Korean marine corps said. It said South Korea will regularly conduct firing drills there.

Such firing exercises were prohibited under the 2018 tension-easing deal with North Korea, which required both countries to cease all hostile acts along their land and sea borders. The deal had already been in danger of collapsing in recent months, with the two Koreas firing artillery rounds near the sea boundary in January and taking other steps that violated it.

Also Wednesday, South Korea and the U.S. flew 30 advanced fighter jets as part of joint drills this week. MDT/AP

MYANMAR

UN World Food Program decries looting and burning of its warehouse in western combat zone

THE United Nations' food agency earlier this week strongly condemned the looting of food supplies and burning of one of its warehouses over the weekend in a war-torn area in Myanmar's western state of Rakhine.

A statement released by the World Food Program said the destroyed building in Rakhine's Maungdaw township held 1,175 metric tons of food and supplies — enough to sustain 64,000 people for a month in case of an emergency.

The incident, which happened on Sunday, makes even more desperate a humanitarian crisis caused by bitter fighting between Myanmar's military



AP PHOTO

government and guerrillas of the Arakan Army belonging the Rakhine ethnic minority, which seeks autonomy from the central government.

The wider context of

the fighting is Myanmar's nationwide civil war, in which pro-democracy guerrillas and ethnic minority armed forces battle the country's military rulers, who took power in

2021 after the army ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

The fiercest fighting is currently taking place in Rakhine. The U.N. says that more than 3 million people have been displaced nationwide by fighting since the 2021 army takeover, causing a massive and largely unmet need for humanitarian assistance.

The WFP also called "on all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under International Humanitarian Law to ensure that humanitarian facilities and assets are respected and protected, and safe and secure access is provided for the delivery of vital assistance

to those in urgent need."

The statement did not identify the perpetrators of the looting. The Arakan Army blamed the attack on army soldiers and local Muslims said to be fighting alongside them.

However, Nay San Lwin, a co-founder of the Free Rohingya Coalition, an advocacy group based outside of Myanmar, said in a message to The Associated Press that members of both the Arakan Army and Myanmar's military had been separately involved in the looting and burning of the WFP warehouse, which held more than 20,000 bags of rice.

Maungdaw, in northern Rakhine and close

to the country's border with Bangladesh, appears to be on the verge of being seized by the Arakan Army.

Several days ago, the guerrilla group urged the residents of Maungdaw, who are mostly from the Muslim Rohingya ethnic minority, to evacuate from their houses urgently for their safety.

In May, the Arakan Army took over another Rakhine city, which like Maungdaw has a majority Rohingya population. At the time, the military government and the Arakan Army each blamed the other for burning down most of the city and forcing its residents to leave. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



IRAN

As presidential vote looms, tensions boil over renewed headscarf crackdown

NASSER KARIMI & JON GAMBRELL, DUBAI

SEEMINGLY every afternoon in Iran's capital, police vans rush to major Tehran squares and intersections to search for women with loose headscarves and those who dare not to wear them at all.

The renewed crackdown comes not quite two years since mass protests over the death of Mahsa Amini after she was detained for not wearing a scarf to the authorities' liking. A United Nations panel has found that the 22-year-old died as a result of "physical violence" wrought upon her by the state.

Amini's death set off months of unrest that ended in a bloody crackdown, and for a time morality police disappeared from the streets. But now videos are emerging of women being physically forced into vans by police as lawmakers continue to push for harsher penalties. Meanwhile, authorities have seized thousands of cars over women having their hair uncovered while also targeting businesses that serve them.

The renewed hijab push, which police are calling the Noor — or "Light" — Plan, began before President Ebrahim Raisi died in a helicopter crash, and whoever wins a vote to replace the hard-line cleric on Friday will have an influence over just how intense it becomes — and how Iran responds to any further unrest.

"An intervention ... under the Noor Plan will take us into darkness," reformist presidential candidate Masoud Pezeshkian

recently told a group of female supporters

Enforcement began ramping up in April, with videos spreading online showing women having violent encounters with female enforcers dressed in the all-encompassing black chador alongside uniformed police officers.

While police haven't published arrest numbers about the crackdown and media haven't given it major attention, it's widely discussed in Iran. But still, many women continue to wear their hijabs loosely or leave them draped around their shoulders while walking in Tehran.

On a recent afternoon in northern Tehran, women sat in cafes and other public places, as a police officer in his 50s told those passing by: "Please cover yourselves, ladies," and then muttered audibly: "My God, I am fed up repeating this without getting any attention."

"We know the police are not eager to fight women, but they are under pressure to," said Fatemeh, a 34-year-old math teacher who gave only her first name for fear of reprisal. "Sooner or later, the authorities will realize that it would serve their interests better to pull back."

Iran and neighboring Taliban-controlled Afghanistan are the only countries where the hijab remains mandatory — even conservative Saudi Arabia has dialed back on its morality patrols. While women attend school, work and can manage their own lives in Iran, hard-liners insist that the hijab must be enforced.

The garment has long has

been entwined with politics in Iran. Former ruler Reza Shah Pahlavi banned it in 1936, part of his efforts to mirror the West. The ban lasted only five years, but many middle and upper-class Iranian women chose not to wear it.

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, some of the women who helped overthrow the shah embraced the even more conservative chador. But others protested a decision by Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to order women to wear hijabs in public. In 1983, it became law, enforced with penalties including fines and up to two months in prison.

Amini's death in September 2022 sparked months of protests and a security crackdown that killed more than 500 people and saw over 22,000 detained. But less than two years later, hard-liners within Iran's theocracy have pressed forward with a crackdown.

The government's insistence on enforcing the hijab also reflects its conspiratorial view of the world. Iran's national police chief, Gen. Ahmad Reza Radan, has alleged without providing evidence that the country's enemies plan to transform the nation's culture by encouraging women to avoid the veil.

Already, "tens of thousands of women have had their cars arbitrarily confiscated as punishment for defying Iran's veiling laws," Amnesty International said in March. "Others have been prosecuted and sentenced to flogging or prison terms or faced other penalties such as fines or being forced to attend 'morality' classes."

On Saturday, police said they would release some 8,000 vehicles held over women not wearing the hijab in them for the Eid al-Ghadir holiday marked by Shiites.

There's also been a push to close down businesses that serve women who aren't wearing hijabs.

"The Islamic Republic is using the distraction of its presidential 'election' to go after its women activists and cow them into silence through imprisonment and abuse," said Hadi Ghaemi, the executive director of the New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran. The center said at least 12 women activists have been sentenced to prison since Raisi's death for their work.

But there are signs that Iran's government, and 85-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, know there are risks to escalating enforcement. A bill passed by Iran's parliament that could impose 10-year prison sentences for hijab violations has yet to be approved by the country's Guardian Council, a panel of clerics and jurists ultimately overseen by Khamenei.

So far among the presidential candidates, only Pezeshkian has criticized the hijab law. Others, including current parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, asked for the law to be implemented in a softer way. Candidate Mostafa Pourmohammadi, a Shiite cleric, criticized the use of violence against women, saying police should use "the language of trust and gratitude" rather than the baton. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1986 US GUILTY OF BACKING CONTRAS



The United States has been found guilty of violating international law by supporting armed Contra rebels in Nicaragua.

The International Court of Justice ruled that the US should compensate the country, although it has not yet fixed an amount.

But the Reagan administration has boycotted the case and says it will ignore the verdict of the United Nations court.

In the US there have been demonstrations against a vote by Congress in favour of aid to the Contras.

About 40 people were arrested during a protest in Minneapolis, and in Cleveland a group of demonstrators lay on the pavement to block the entrance to the federal building.

The UN court found the US guilty of contravening law by training, arming and financing paramilitary activities in and against Nicaragua.

These activities included the laying of mines in Nicaraguan waters in early 1984, as well as attacking a naval base and patrol boats.

The court held, by 12 votes to three, that the US was "in breach of its obligations under customary international law not to use force against another State, not to intervene in its affairs, not to violate its sovereignty and not to interrupt peaceful maritime commerce".

It ruled the US was under an obligation "to make reparation to the Republic of Nicaragua for all injury caused" by the breaches.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The US persisted with its refusal to recognise the court's judgement until it was announced in 1991 that, at Nicaragua's request, proceedings for compensation would be dropped.

America's illegal paramilitary campaign of the 1980s was aimed at overthrowing Nicaragua's left-wing government.

The Sandinistas had begun redistributing property and made notable progress in the sphere of education.

But the US regarded them with suspicion, fearing their policies were hostile to American interests.

Former Secretary of State George Schultz is reported to have warned, in March 1986, that if the Sandinistas "succeed in consolidating their power," then "all the countries in Latin America, who all face serious internal economic problems, will see radical forces emboldened to exploit these problems".

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Slow to consider your options. Avoid overstimulation and stay close to home. You're especially productive behind closed doors. Plan your moves in advance.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Stay out of someone else's argument. Tempers could spark. Contribute your part of a group effort. Keep bargains and agreements. Prioritize planning over action.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Stay calm in a chaotic professional situation. Consider options for potential solutions. Ignore distractions. Communication unlocks lucrative opportunities.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Monitor news, weather and traffic before setting off. Obstacles and challenges could be frustrating. Patiently explore options. Expand your investigation for valuable discoveries.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You can adapt to a financial challenge. Plan and strategize, rather than making big decisions or moves. Consider impacts to investments and long-term goals.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Compromise is golden. Keep your sense of humor with your partner today. Chaos and distractions abound. Collaborate and get more than either would solo.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Nurture your health with exercise, good food and rest. Use a gentle touch rather than brute force. Slow and steady wins the race.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Your objectivity proves calming to others. Navigate an obstacle with romance, family or creativity. Avoid impulsive moves. Withhold judgment. Relax and take it easy.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Domestic projects provide satisfying and practical results. Adapt with a structural breakdown. Clean messes, dig in the garden, and share something delicious with family.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Communication gets satisfying results. You get more with honey than with vinegar. Spice up your reports with interesting details. Share, network and connect.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Develop lucrative opportunities. Don't rely on luck. Intention and determination get farther. Profitable possibilities arise in conversation. Advance steadily and patiently for golden results.

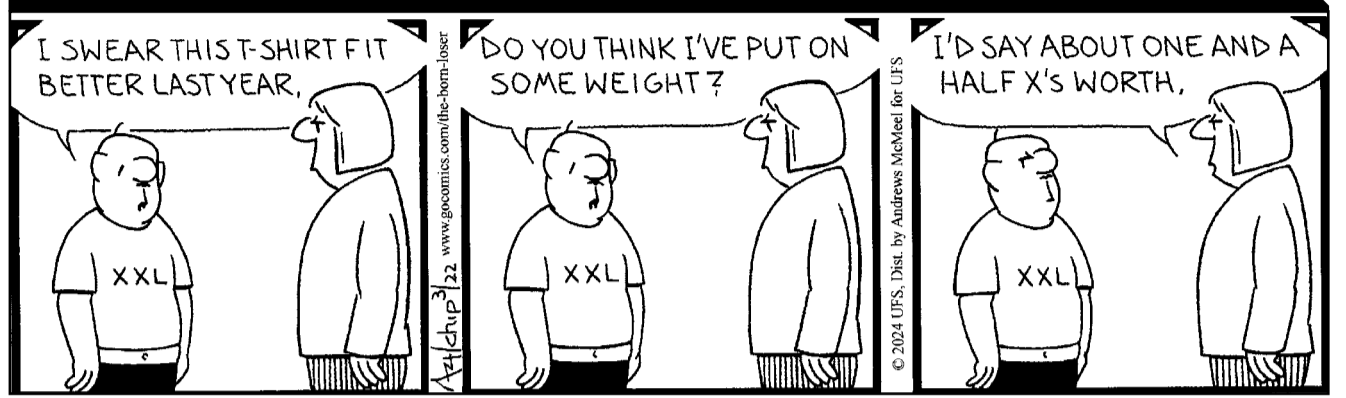


PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Energy surges are predicted. Push your personal agenda when possible. Relax in the meantime. Wear your power suit. Advocate for a cause with heart.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	24	35	cloudy
Changchun	20	31	fine
Chengdu	19	27	rain
Chongqing	21	24	rain
Fuzhou	27	35	cloudy
Guangzhou	27	33	thunderstorms
Guiyang	16	27	overcast
Haikou	26	34	cloudy
Hangzhou	21	24	rain
Harbin	17	29	fine
Hefei	21	27	rain
Nanjing	22	27	overcast
Shanghai	22	25	rain
Taipei	25	33	cloudy
Wuhan	22	26	showers
Hong Kong	28	32	showers
WORLD			
Moscow	15	27	sunny
Frankfurt	19	31	thunderstorms
Paris	14	31	cloudy
London	12	24	cloudy
New York	18	29	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Actor Penn; 5- Dressing ingredient; 8- I've ___ had!; 12- Woody Guthrie's son; 13- Tell me about it!; 15- Tolstoy's Karenina; 16- "Stay" singer Lisa; 17- Pipe cleaner; 18- Dismounted; 19- An organization; 22- Altar words; 23- ___-wop; 24- Ages; 26- Mescal; 29- Foolish persons; 31- Office transmission; 32- Pale purple; 34- Lover of Juliet; 36- Flatfoot's lack; 38- Actress Phoebe; 40- Lack; 41- One on slopes; 43- Track tipsters; 45- U-turn from SSW; 46- Comfortable; 48- Edible tuber; 50- Jittery; 51- Cribbage marker; 52- Not too bright; 54- Imperturbable; 61- Cool drinks; 63- Take to the soapbox; 64- Oscar Madison, for one; 65- Human bone, located in the arm; 66- Hinder; 67- Cubs slugger Sammy; 68- Wagers; 69- Golf ball prop; 70- ___-bitty;

DOWN 1- Room in a casa; 2- Greek love god; 3- Stout relatives; 4- Little guy; 5- Gumbo veggie; 6- ___ the finish; 7- Anderson of "WKRP in Cincinnati"; 8- Lamb's lament; 9- Enrollment; 10- Novelist Bagnold; 11- Defense grp. since 1949; 13- Stupid; 14- Courted; 20- Moderately cold; 21- Pinot ___ (wine); 25- High time; 26- Anorak; 27- Commotion; 28- Happy; 29- Freeze over; 30- ___ evil...; 31- Musical notes; 33- From ___ Z; 35- Keats work; 37- Pay attention to; 39- Cork; 42- Prego rival; 44- Pace; 47- Church council; 49- Two-time U.S. Open champ; 52- Paint crudely; 53- Twiddling one's thumbs; 55- Worry; 56- Tardy; 57- To ___ (perfectly); 58- Ink spot; 59- Couldn't find; 60- Auction site; 62- Eur. carrier;

Yesterday's solution

Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



It's prime time to **BUY & RENT!**

有關樓宇廣告法例資料請向職員查詢
For more information on advertising laws, please speak to one of our representatives.

jml property
CONTACT US & SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY!
hello@jmlproperty.com
www.jmlproperty.com
jmlmacau jmlproperty

Va Fat
HKD 3,780,000 2 bed 1 bath

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

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

EURO 2024 | REVIEW

DENMARK ADVANCES TO LAST 16 AFTER DRAW WITH SERBIA

DANIELLA MATAR, MUNICH

DENMARK 0, SERBIA 0

DENMARK advanced to the last 16 at the European Championship after a gritty 0-0 draw with Serbia yesterday.

Its reward? A matchup against host nation Germany — on Sa-

turday in Dortmund.

“Playing against Germany here with the Danish team, it can’t be better, can’t wait,” Denmark coach Kasper Hjulmand said. “It’s a great team but we’re a great team as well. And when we play the big the big nations, we always step up.”

The Danes finished Group C

with three points, the same as Slovenia, but ended up in second place because of a better disciplinary record. Slovenia, which drew 0-0 with group-winner England, also advanced to the knockout stage at Euro 2024.

Denmark had most of the chances even though Serbia needed a victory to reach the

next round. And almost all of those Danish opportunities came through Christian Eriksen, who was making a record 133rd appearance for his country.

Denmark and Slovenia finished even on points, goal difference and goals scored. There were also six yellow cards apiece for the players for both teams. But Denmark had a better disciplinary record after Slovenia assistant coach Milivoje Novakovic received a yellow card in his side’s opening match against Denmark.

Serbia finished just a point behind.

“We’re disappointed because of the result. We haven’t been able to make the step that was lacking,” Serbia coach Dragan Stojkovic said. “We were looking for this one opportunity, one goal, but unfortunately we didn’t succeed.”

“This is football. We have to be very proud. Serbia showed themselves positively in a very even group.”

Slovenia’s result against England also eliminated Croatia, which finished third in Group B.

Earlier Tuesday, Kylian Mbappé scored his first goal at a European Championship in France’s 1-1 draw with Poland. The French finished runner-up in Group D behind Austria, which beat the Netherlands 3-2.

Mbappé, who wore a mask af-

ter breaking his nose in France’s opening game against Austria, scored from the penalty spot. Robert Lewandowski equalized with spot kick to give already-eliminated Poland its first point of the tournament.

Tennis great Novak Djokovic was in the stadium in Munich to cheer on Serbia. He walked onto the field before the match to chants of “Nole, Nole” from his country’s fans.

Tuesday’s match had the longest wait for the first attempt in a Euro 2024 game, with Denmark defender Alexander Bah heading the ball wide in the 16th minute.

The Danes went closer five minutes later when Eriksen’s shot was pushed around the right post by Serbia goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic.

Denmark put the ball in the net moments later but it was disallowed because Jonas Wind had wrestled Rajkovic to the ground as both players and the ball went over the line following a corner from Eriksen.

Serbia also had a goal ruled out early in the second half. Luka Jovic, one of three halftime substitutes for Serbia, was offside before Joachim Andersen bundled the ball into his own net.

Disappointed Serbian fans hurled plastic cups onto the field after the disallowed goal, causing a brief stoppage as stewards ran to clear them. **MDT/AP**



Denmark’s Andreas Christensen (6), Kasper Dolberg (12) and teammates react after a Group C match between Denmark and Serbia at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Munich, Germany, yesterday

EURO 2024

Austria beats Netherlands, reaches knockout stage as group winner ahead of France

CIARÁN FAHEY, BERLIN

AUSTRIA 3, NETHERLANDS 2

MARCEL Sabitzer scored late for Austria to advance to the knockout stage of the European Championship as group winner with a 3-2 victory over the Netherlands on Tuesday.

Austria topped Group D thanks to France drawing with Poland 1-1 in the other game. Both France and the Netherlands were already assured of progress thanks to results in other games.

“Group winner, group winner!” the Austrian fans chanted in the warm evening sunshine as they streamed out of Berlin’s Olympiastadion. Their Dutch counterparts, thousands of them

dressed in vibrant orange, must now wait for the other groups to conclude to see which team awaits them in the next round.

Austria will play the second-place finisher in Group F — Turkey, Georgia or the Czech Republic — in Leipzig early today (Macau time).

“If you beat the Netherlands and finish first in the group, then you can’t be so bad,” said Sabitzer, who plays in Germany for Borussia Dortmund. “The top priority for us was to progress and we managed that. Now we need to bring it down a bit, get the heads clear, and then we’ll attack again.”

The Austrians had needed a point to be sure of advancing and got off to a great start with Dutch forward Donyell Ma-



Austria’s Marcel Sabitzer, front, celebrates after scoring his side’s third goal during a Group D match

len scoring an own goal in the sixth minute.

First-half substitute Xavi Simons set up Cody Gapko to equalize two minutes after the break, but Romano Schmid headed Austria back in front in the 59th.

Memphis Depay equalized with a brilliant finish in the 75th, though he had to endure a VAR check as referee Ivan Kruzliak felt he handled the ball. The check found Depay hadn’t.

But Sabitzer restored

Austria’s lead two minutes later with a fierce strike from a difficult angle.

It proved to be the winner despite a frenetic finale with chances at both ends.

Austria snapped a seven-game losing run against the Netherlands, including a group-stage defeat in the last edition of the tournament.

It was exactly 36 years to the day since the Netherlands won Euro ‘88 in Munich. **MDT/AP**

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

STEVE DOUGLAS,
DORTMUND

FRANCE 1, POLAND 1

EURO 2024

Kylian Mbappé scores on return from broken nose

KYLIAN Mbappé, wearing a mask to protect his broken nose, marked his return at the European Championship with a goal against Poland.

It wasn't enough for a victory yesterday, though, and it's not enough to solve France's growing problems at Euro 2024.

Mbappé removed his protective mask to celebrate in front of his team's fans after converting a 56th-minute penalty. But Robert Lewandowski secured a 1-1 draw for Poland with a 79th-minute spot kick that he got to take twice, leaving the French as the runners-up to Austria in Group D and dropping them into the same half of the draw with Portugal and Cristiano Ronaldo, host nation Germany and Spain — three of the continent's heavyweight nations.

Austria beat the Netherlands 3-2 in a match played at the same time.

The result also means France has yet to score an open-play goal at Euro 2024, having beaten Austria 1-0 on an own-goal and then drawn 0-0 with the Dutch — when Mbappé was missing after breaking his nose against the Austrians.

Les Bleus have advanced, sure, but they haven't been convincing.

"I would be a lot more concerned if there were no chances, but obviously there is a little bit of room for improvement," France coach Didier Deschamps said. "Maybe there are other teams who have given off something a bit different, but the fact we haven't scored limits our performance. We are here where we want to be."

Mbappé returned to the starting lineup against last-place Poland, which was already eliminated before the match began, and was clearly impaired by wearing a black mask that limits his peripheral vision.

He largely kept away from overly physical challenges and didn't compete for the ball in the air. He was often seen hanging back at the edge of the area, waiting for the ball to come to him.

Deschamps said it was "complicated" for Mbappé.

"I thought he was quite good on his feet with the mask — he needed to get used to it," the coach said. "But when he sweats, that sticks in his eyes and he needed to wipe his eyes." **MDT/AP**



Kylian Mbappe of France sores the opening goal by penalty kick during a Group D match between the France and Poland at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Dortmund, Germany, yesterday

UPCOMING GAMES

	Date	Time	Home	Away	ODDS
Sun	Jun 30	0:00	Switzerland	Italy	H 3.45, D 3.1, A 2.6
		03:00	Germany	Denmark	H 1.66, D 4.1, A 6

ODDSCHECKER.COM

AD



BENFICAMACAU
ACADEMY
澳門賓菲加體育學校



FOOTBALL | BASKETBALL | DAILY TRAININGS

Enjoy the **Good Life**
Boa Vida Starts Here

Discover
Now



T +853 2856 7888
Terms & conditions apply



OPINION

Business Views

Shuli Ren, Bloomberg



THERE IS NO SHAME IN BEING CHINESE

Companies like Shein that are shifting headquarters and erasing connections to China are making a mistake. No one buys it.

An economic slowdown at home has prompted Chinese firms to seek growth abroad, but the escalating US-China geopolitical tensions are getting in the way of doing business. Some are choosing to play down their connections to China. A few have gone too far.

The latest absurdity came from fast-fashion e-commerce retailer Shein Group Ltd, founded in China, but now headquartered in Singapore. In a speech at the Milken Institute Conference last month, Shein executive chair Donald Tang claimed it was essentially an "American company," even though most of its suppliers are in China.

Shein has been trying to downplay this remark, wary of Beijing's wrath as it still needs a regulatory green light to go public in the West.

The urge to pigeonhole a company — where it is from and the industry it belongs to — can be as ignorant as asking immigrants where their loyalty lies. However, sometimes these questions do matter. For instance, pitching itself successfully as a tech firm rather than a real-estate agent, WeWork Inc at its 2019 peak commanded a US\$47 billion valuation. It filed for bankruptcy last year.

In Shein's case, one can see why the e-commerce giant might want to cleanse its Chinese-ness. The retailer needs to go public and give long-time venture backers, such as Sequoia Capital and General Atlantic, an exit. Already, some investors have gotten impatient, selling shares in private markets at deep discounts. Being seen as a Chinese company limits demand for the initial public offering, especially from US-based pension and endowment funds, or global investors wary of Washington's economic sanctions.

Is it even possible to erase one's Chinese features? TikTok, an important marketing venue for Shein, spent years trying to distance itself from its Beijing-based parent ByteDance Ltd. It established a US headquarters and its chief executive is Singaporean. The social video app still faces a possible ban under a new law in the US.

Even some companies with no Chinese origins are under scrutiny simply because they want to capitalize on the country's technology. For example, Anzu Robotics' founding partners are American, its headquarters is in Texas, its drones are assembled in Malaysia and run on servers sitting in Virginia. However, since Anzu licensed the drone design from Shenzhen-based DJI, and about half of its parts came from China, lawmakers are frowning upon the start-up's business model.

Nor would it be wise to downplay one's ties to China. In Shein's case, its main selling point is the expansive supply chain there. It contracts with thousands of factories across the nation that churn out tens of thousands of new styles daily. Shein and Chinese rival Temu are now attracting more repeat shoppers than eBay Inc, largely because their products are cheap.

To be sure, the anti-China sentiment is real. These days, whenever I write something slightly critical about the US economy or showcase positive things in China, I get e-mails accusing me of being a spy for the Chinese Communist Party. This kind of vitriol was not at all present when I was living in the US in the 1990s and 2000s.

I do not mind these comments, but some Chinese are genuinely hurt. Businesspeople just want to make money and keep investors happy. They do not agree with Beijing's high-stakes jostle with Washington and certainly do not want to be the victim of it.

Some are also running away from Chinese President Xi Jinping's "common prosperity" drive, and want a fresh start abroad. Conscious of the political environment, the first instinct for many is to keep their heads down and pretend they are not Chinese.

It is a mistake.

From electric vehicles to smart home appliances and cross-border e-commerce, Chinese companies are gaining market share because of their access to the vast industrial catalogue and efficient supply chains at home. That gives them an edge, so they might as well celebrate it. There is no shame in being Chinese.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange returned to his homeland Australia aboard a charter jet yesterday, hours after pleading guilty to obtaining and publishing U.S. military secrets in a deal with Justice Department prosecutors that concludes a drawn-out legal saga.

The criminal case of international intrigue, which had played out for years, came to a surprise end in a most unusual setting with Assange, 52, entering his plea in a U.S. district court in Saipan, the capital of the Northern Mariana Islands. The American commonwealth in the Pacific is relatively close to Assange's native Australia and

accommodated his desire to avoid entering the continental United States.

Assange had flown from a London prison to Saipan in a charter jet and flew in the same aircraft to the Australian capital Canberra on the same day.

He was accompanied on the flights by Australian Ambassador to the United States Kevin Rudd and High Commissioner to the United Kingdom Stephen Smith, both of whom played key roles in negotiating his freedom with London and Washington.



AP PHOTO

LGBTQ+

US OFFICIANT MARRIES 10 SAME-SEX COUPLES IN HONG KONG VIA VIDEO CHAT

ALICE FUNG, HONG KONG

I 10 same-sex couples got married in the United States over the internet from Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous southern Chinese city that does not formally recognize such unions but offers them legal protections.

The event earlier this week was timed to mark Pride Month, with a registered officiant from the American state of Utah making their marriages official. Most states require the couple to appear in person to fill out paperwork and present identification, but Utah does not, and its digital application process has made it a go-to for online weddings since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Family members gathered in a hotel wedding hall in Hong Kong's Kowloon district as couples exchanged rings, then raised their glasses in a toast.

"I hope one day that

everybody would accept the fact that love is not just between a man and a woman. It's between two people who love each other," said Lucas Peng, a 66-year-old Singaporean businessperson living in Hong Kong, and one of the 20 people tying the knot in Tuesday's semi-virtual event.

"It's just two humans who love each other. That's the key. That's the important part. And to be able to publicly declare our love for each other today is a very important step for us, definitely," Peng said.

Wedding organizer Kurt Tung said he hoped the event would send a message to the public.

"In Hong Kong, there's not yet a way to go to a marriage registry to get married, but there's still this way we can offer for them to realize their dreams of getting married," Tung said.

Keeping with cultural and religious tradi-

tions, Hong Kong only recognizes weddings between a man and a woman.

Taiwan is the closest place that issues same-sex marriages, and Hong Kong recognizes those couples' legal rights, though the city doesn't call them marriages. It has no laws banning same-sex relationships.

In September, the Hong Kong's top court ruled that the local government should provide a legal framework for recognizing same-sex partnerships, including rights to inheritance, joint custody of children, taxation, spousal visas and benefits from employment with the local government.

That came after LGBTQ+ rights activist Jimmy Sham, who married his husband in New York in 2013, raised a challenge at the city's Court of Final Appeal that Hong Kong's laws violated the constitutional right to equality. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

Japan King Charles

III welcomed the Japanese emperor and empress for a state visit that began on Tuesday, offering the best in pomp and circumstance as the U.K. seeks to bolster its role as the most influential European nation in the Indo-Pacific region. Emperor Naruhito and Empress of Masako are to attend a banquet hosted by the king, lay a wreath at Westminster Abbey and tour one of Britain's premier biomedical research institutes. But the emperor began this week's trip by visiting a site that has special meaning: The Thames Barrier.

NATO appointed Mark Rutte as its next secretary-general yesterday, putting the outgoing Dutch prime minister in charge of the world's biggest security organization at a critical time for European security as war rages in Ukraine. Rutte's appointment was sealed by NATO ambassadors during a meeting at the 32-nation alliance's headquarters in Brussels. U.S. President Joe Biden and his counterparts will formally welcome him to their table at a summit in Washington on July 9-11.



AP PHOTO

Kenya Authorities

fired blanks to disperse protesters in Nairobi suburb overnight yesterday, hours after protestors stormed parliament in deadly demonstrations, burning parts of the building while legislators fled, as the country grapples with controversial tax increases. Police said they fired over 700 blanks in Githurai, a suburb east of the capital Nairobi. Videos of gunfire piercing the night air were shared online and reported by local media.

UK Britain's gambling regulator has alleged that five more police officers bet on the timing of the July 4 national election, the Metropolitan Police said yesterday (Macau time), as claims widen that people close to the government used inside information for their own profit. The Metropolitan Police said the Gambling Commission passed on information on the five officers' alleged misconduct. The officers, who provided protection for royalty, politicians and diplomats, have not been arrested.