

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN MACAU SEEKING HELP DUE TO ALCOHOLISM-RELATED MENTAL ILLNESS IS GROWING SIGNIFICANTLY: ARTM

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AP PHOTO



China-USA A pair of giant pandas are on their way from China to the US, where they will be cared for at the San Diego Zoo as part of an ongoing conservation partnership between the two nations, officials said Wednesday. Officials with the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance were on hand in China for a farewell ceremony commemorating the departure of the giant pandas, Yun Chuan and Xin Bao.

AP PHOTO



Indonesian immigration authorities have detained 103 foreign nationals after a raid at a villa on the resort island of Bali, officials said yesterday. Those arrested, including Taiwanese, Chinese and Malaysians, were accused of misusing their visas and residence permits, along with possible cybercrimes. Immigration authorities said they conducted the raid on Wednesday at a villa in Kuku village in Tabanan district and detained 91 men and 12 women.

AP PHOTO



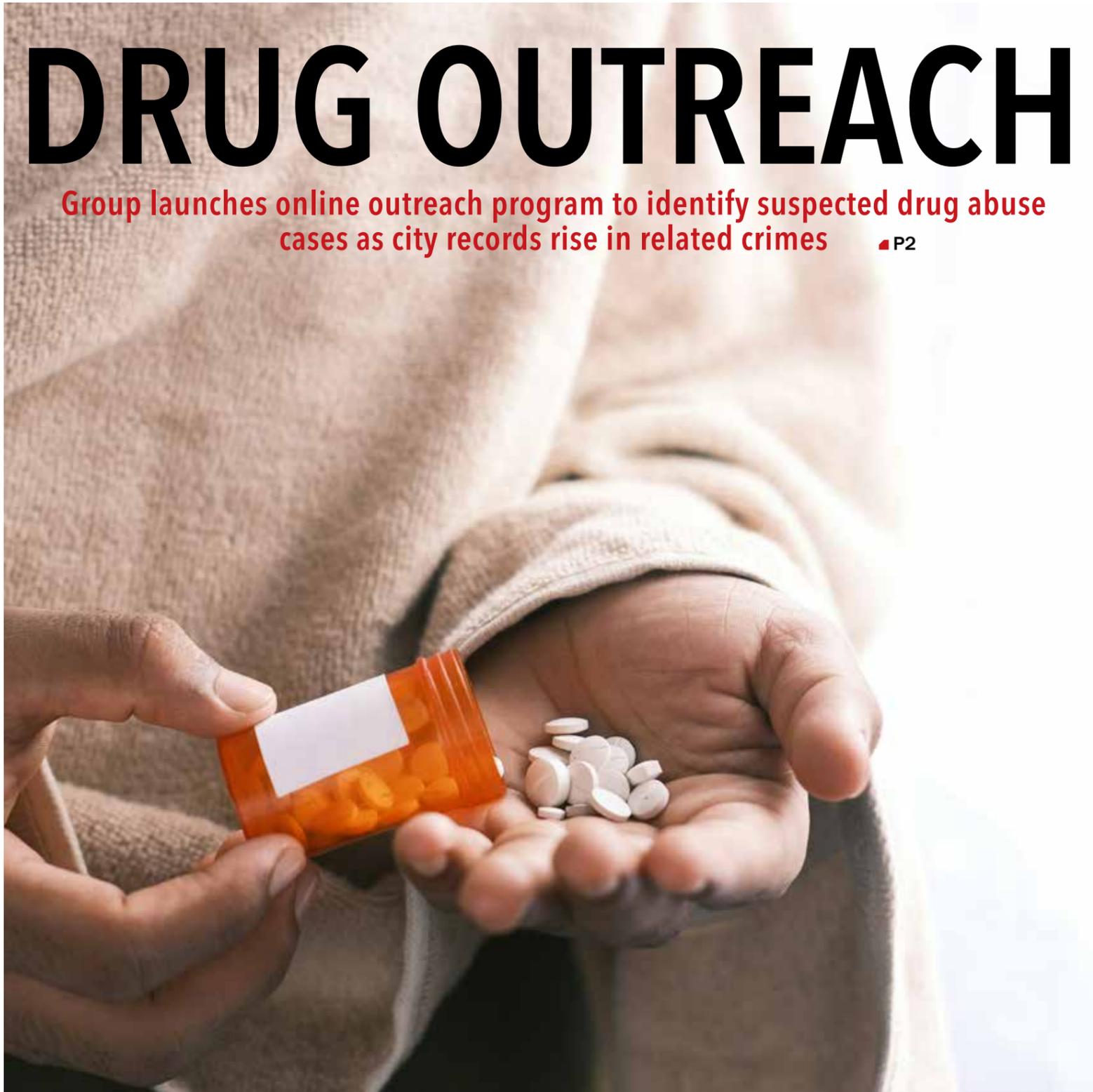
Mongolia A parliamentary election will be held today for the first time since the body was expanded to 126 seats, adding some uncertainty to a system that has been monopolized by two political parties and plagued by corruption. The election in a relatively new democracy — the country was a single-party communist state until 1990 — comes at a time when many Mongolians have soured on the government, which they see as benefiting business interests and the wealthy.

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DRUG OUTREACH

Group launches online outreach program to identify suspected drug abuse cases as city records rise in related crimes

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EXPORTS AT MOP1B IN MAY

The city's total merchandise exports amounted to MOP1.04 billion in May, down 11.6% year-on-year, according to the Statistics and Census Service. This was driven by a 10.9% decline in re-exports to MOP903 million, with large drops in re-exports of casino articles (-89.2%) and wine (-58.3%), though re-exports of perfume (+151.1%) and diamonds/jewelry (+57.1%) grew. For the first five months of 2024, total external merchandise trade was MOP59.59 billion, down 7.8% year-on-year. Exports grew 7.1% to MOP5.55 billion, with re-exports up 8.2% but domestic exports down 1.7%. Imports fell 9.1% to MOP54.04 billion. The merchandise trade deficit decreased from MOP54.27 billion to MOP48.50 billion.

FIRE AT TONG WA SAN CHUN ESTATE SENDS SIX TO HOSPITAL

A fire at Block 14 of Areia Preta's Tong Wa San Chun estate has left at least six individuals seeking medical attention for smoke inhalation, local authorities reported on Wednesday. Approximately 30 residents were able to evacuate the premises independently, while an additional 16 individuals took refuge on the rooftop. Of those affected, 12 people reported feeling unwell, including six who suffered from smoke inhalation and were transported to the public hospital for treatment. Officials suspect that the fire was caused by a malfunctioning charging device.

IC CALLS FOR PERFORMING ARTS PROPOSAL

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) is calling for the proposals for local commissioned productions, supporting stage works with potential to premiere in the next two years. With this project, IC aims to promote the production of outstanding artistic works in the city and foster the development of local performing arts. The submission deadline for proposals is September 8. The open call accepts proposals for brand-new productions, adaptation of existing works and revivals of previously staged productions, including musical, drama, dance and children's programmes, from local associations or companies registered in the SAR or holders of a valid Macau SAR Resident Identity Card.

GROUP LAUNCHES ONLINE OUTREACH PROGRAM TO IDENTIFY SUSPECTED DRUG ABUSE CASES

NADIA SHAW

In response to a concerning rise in drug-related crimes, Macau is taking proactive steps to address substance abuse issues, particularly among young people.

Over the first five months of 2024, the Judiciary Police (PJ) detained 74 drug suspects, with 25 individuals arrested for drug trafficking and 46 for drug consumption. Three of those arrested were between the ages of 16 and 21.

To combat this trend, an online outreach service has been proposed to identify suspected drug abuse cases among young people.

This comes as the PJ report indicates that while the percentage of young people engaged in drug crimes remains low, the risk has increased due to Macau's post-pandemic economic recovery and improved cross-border transportation links.

The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) already provides outpatient drug treatment services



and operates four drug treatment centers.

In 2023, there were a total of 389 drug treatment help cases, with about 10% being new cases. The IAS also launched a methadone maintenance treatment program in 2005, with more than 423 participants, and a clean needle program in cooperation with institutions since 2008, recovering over 380,000 contaminated needles annually.

In addition, the IAS has cooperated with social service agen-

cies to conduct promotional education for working people, reaching more than 18,000 participants in 112 sessions. Drug education courses have also served over 20,000 students, and various anti-drug activities have reached more than 5,000 people.

According to TDM, the New Life Christian Fellowship is proposing to use digital analysis to identify suspected drug abusers and high-risk youth groups. "We have followed up on more than 200 cases and discovered suspi-

cious cases through the Internet, contacting over 30 people since last year," said Liu Zhanrui, the group's director-general.

The rise in drug-related crimes among young people is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive approach. Investing in prevention, early intervention, and evidence-based treatment programs, Macau seeks to reduce the risk of drug cases increasing further due to mental illness and other related issues amongst the population.

ARTM

Growing cases of alcoholism-related mental illness in Macau

RENATO MARQUES

The number of people in Macau seeking help due to alcoholism-related mental illness is growing significantly, the president of the Association for Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers of Macau (ARTM), Augusto Nogueira said in an interview with public broadcaster TDM.

Nogueira's comments came amid the latest report from the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS), which noted a significant rise in drug consumption in Macau in 2023 when compa-



red to 2022.

The ARTM president noted that he is more concerned with the growing number of cases of alcoholism, as most recent cases of people seeking help from the association

are related to this issue and not to other drugs.

"We must do something about this. [Cases] of alcoholism associated with mental health issues are pretty high, which calls for more effective

and assertive work on this matter and thinking about new measures [to tackle it] as we are assisting a high number of people seeking help with this kind of clinical profile," Nogueira said.

Commenting on the 40% year-on-year increase in drug consumption in Macau, Nogueira noted that it is a reflection of the reopening of the borders and circulation of people after the pandemic. Although the percentage increase may seem high when compared to 2022, the numbers were actually lower prior to the pandemic in 2019.

As in earlier statements, Nogueira reaffirmed the need to treat the problem without resorting to increasing penalties for drug use, which he claims are disproportionate to the amount of drug use in Macau.

According to a statistical trend report from IAS, "ice" (crystal methamphetamine) and cannabis are growing in consumption.

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EMPLOYMENT

Unpaid leave at DFS sparks debate on labor rights

VICTORIA CHAN

LOCAL labor officials say they have received no complaints so far about a major duty-free retailer, DFS, requiring employees to take unpaid leave this summer. However, the move has reignited debate about protecting workers' rights.

The director of the Labour Affairs Bureau, Wong Chi Hong, said in an interview that unpaid leave can only be implemented by agreement between employees and management. He emphasized that, if a company wanted to lay off workers due to lack of business, it must fire foreign employees before locals and provide compensation to any local workers who are let go.

Wong said he has met with companies mentioned in media reports as having unpaid leave policies to remind them to temporarily use local hiring to offset foreign worker shortages. He called on employees who feel their



rights have been violated to file complaints with authorities.

If investigations confirm employment of foreign workers is hurting locals, quotas for foreign hires can be eliminated, Wong said. Some press attention has

focused on how authorities are prioritizing jobs for residents, like airport security roles.

Wong said investigations found locals can fill security jobs after training and certification. He hopes the public understands that

many positions require skills or credentials. Authorities will organize training to boost qualifications, he added.

Wong also noted his office runs three job-matching sessions weekly with labor unions. From

January through May, over 54 such meetings led to more than 6,000 successful local hires, a "very good result," he said.

However, Wong mentioned that attendance at over half the matchmaking events has been low. He called on the public to have a competitive spirit and make the most of opportunities to find employment.

Earlier this week, it was reported that 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.

According to a confirmation from DFS, 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.

The retailer, which operates duty-free shops worldwide, cited global uncertainties as contributing to the decision.

Government statistics show retail sales in Macau fell 12.5% in the first quarter from a year ago, primarily due to pent-up demand in 2021 as the pandemic began to slow. The anonymous DFS worker noted, "Most customers I had served appeared less willing to spend than before the Covid pandemic." They added, "It is not just us – some other luxury brands are also facing cost-conscious shoppers."

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LOCAL ECONOMY

BIG BRANDS CONTINUE WITH A MAINLAND-TOURISTS-ONLY SALES ORIENTATION

RENATO MARQUES

THE Times has learned that some local representatives of major electronics brands continue to have a mainland-tourists-only approach to sales, disregarding other markets such as the local market.

In the initial report, a reader reported to the Times that the local branches of technology company Apple would not help local customers acquire customized products and, instead, would only sell the company's standard products in Macau.

The Times has confirmed this report. The sales representative added that Apple Macau also will not help local clients place orders in the neighboring region of Hong Kong.

According to several salespeople, Apple Macau does not have an online store and only runs physical stores that can only provide the standard products they have in stock.

To learn more about the reasons behind this a commercial decision, the Times has reached out to a former employee of Apple Macau who agreed to give an anonymous interview.

This former employee explained that the sales policy of

RENATO MARQUES



Apple Macau is solely oriented to cater to mainland visitors and, because of that, are very focused on small devices such as mobile phones, smart watches, tablets and laptops.

The same person noted that, while the stores must provide aftersales assistance to all Apple clients in Macau, including products acquired from other official retailers, they purposely avoid sales of

larger items such as desktop computers and do not assist in purchases of customized products or orders from Hong Kong, contrary to what happens with other local Apple retailers.

A representative at Apple Hong Kong was surprised to learn that Apple Macau does not provide such a service. The service is common in any Apple Store in Hong Kong and

Macau clients can place customized orders through the Apple Hong Kong online store, but these orders need to be collected at a Hong Kong store and are not shipped to Macau.

ORDER FROM MACAU TO DELIVER IN MACAU

After several inquiries made at local Apple retailers in Macau, the Times also learned that local customers cou-

ld place customized orders in Macau and collect them locally if they use local retailers.

Sales representatives explained to the Times that the procedure is simple and uses the Apple Hong Kong online store. Clients can choose and customize an Apple product on the website and then inform the local retailer of the specifications.

The same representative also explained that such an order usually takes from two to three weeks to be delivered in Macau. When the order is placed, the local client needs to pay a deposit to secure the order, settling the remaining cost of the product when it is delivered.

The solution, although time-consuming, seems to be the only way for local customers to overcome the lack of integration between the Apple Stores in Macau and Hong Kong, which, as the former employee told the Times, is an intentional commercial decision by the company.

According to the retail sales representative, the sale prices are as stated on the Apple Hong Kong website, with the local companies not charging any extra fee for the service or shipping.

RETAIL

New M8 mall expected to open soon

NADIA SHAW

MACAU'S city center is set to welcome a new shopping destination in the third quarter of 2024, with the opening of the highly anticipated M8 mall. The nine-story complex, developed jointly by the Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT) and China State Construction International Holdings (CSCEC), will occupy a former dormitory for CTT staff located beside the Holy House of Mercy.

According to multiple reports, the 80,000 square-foot structure will feature six shopping floors and three basement levels, two of which will be dedicated to dining options. Three floors have already been reserved

VICTORIA CHAN



for the luxury retailer DFS Group, marking the brand's first presence outside Macau's integrated resorts.

Situated within the UNESCO area of Macau, this redevelopment project aims to make a po-

sitive contribution to the city's life as a cultural and commercial landmark drawing cues from Macau's heritage. The mall's name pays homage to Macau, with the "M" representing the city and the "8" denoting the

eight cultural heritage sites in the immediate vicinity.

The CSCEC project has already garnered several prestigious awards, including the Best Retail Development award at the International Property Awards 2024-2025 and Best Landmark Development (Hong Kong and Macau) at the PropertyGuru Asia Property Awards. M8 also holds the Guinness World Record for the largest curved stone-laminated glass panel, measuring an impressive 20.45 meters.

The mall's opening comes on the heels of the recent launch of Macau's Treasure Island Resort Shopping Centre (Galeries Lafayette Macau) earlier this year.

ASSOCIATION SAYS E-BIKES SOLD WITHIN MACAU ARE SAFE

HOWARD TONG

ELECTRIC motorcycle batteries catching fire have raised concerns among the public about the safety of these vehicles. However, the Business Association of Environmentally Friendly and Electric Motorcycles in Macau has provided reassurance and proposed measures to address the issue.

According to the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA), there are over 9,000 electric motorcycles in Macau, including around 2,500 heavy motorcycles and 1,000 light motorcycles. The association believes that the government's subsidy scheme, which encourages motorcyclists to replace their diesel bikes with electric vehicles, has

been successful.

The association acknowledged that the main reason behind many e-bike fire accidents is due to illegal modification of the devices, such as replacing the original batteries with oversized or substandard ones, or tampering with the regulators to increase the horsepower. This can make the batteries more prone to problems and safety issues.

To address this, the association proposed that the authorities aid in enforcing the law by issuing special labels on the batteries. This would make it easier for law enforcement officers to identify when a vehicle has been modified with non-original batteries, allowing them to take appropriate action.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



Melco boosts physical and mental wellness

IN alignment with the SAR government's emphasis on promoting physical and mental wellbeing, Melco Resorts & Entertainment encourages colleagues and the community to adopt healthier and more active lifestyles through its dedicated initiatives.

REACH! FOR WELLNESS

With regular exercise being essential for physical health, stress reduction and overall wellbeing, Melco's REACH! program, was launched in 2022 to promote exercise and participation in community sports among colleagues. The program offers physical and mental health benefits, fostering camaraderie and belonging, while supporting overall wellbeing.

Through training support and resources such as the supply of facilities, venues and sports medicine, REACH! aims to inspire colleagues of all fitness levels to maximize their full potential in sports and physical activities and helps those engaged in competitive sports achieve their best possible results.

Between January and May this year, over 500 Melco colleagues have participated in the program's plethora of activities, including sporting competitions, educational seminars, InBody health analyses services available at employee Heart of House areas, and a series of nearly 45 activity training sessions. Additional seminars and coaching programs covering topics as diverse as freediving, nutrition, child athletics and sports coach education are also in the pipeline for colleagues to join free of charge in the forthcoming months.

REACH! has further supported 28 colleagues' participation in official sporting competitions since the beginning of this year, with team members going on to win a total of 11 medals, including 3 champion awards, 2 first runner-up achievements and 2 second runner-up awards.

DRAGON BOATING AND FAOM CHARITY RACE SUCCESS

Earlier this month, Melco's REACH! Dragon Boat team excelled at the Macao Inter-

national Dragon Boat Races hosted by Sports Bureau and Dragon Boat Association of Macao, China, achieving the awards for 1st runner-up in the Macao International Invitation Standard Dragon Boat Race 500m - Category B, 6th and 13th place in the Small Boat Race 200m, and 5th place in the Macao Standard Boat Race 500m. And to congratulate them on their hard work and success, Melco Chairman & CEO Lawrence Ho met with the team at the City of Dreams' recent 15th anniversary party. This ceremony was especially meaningful for some colleagues who had been part of the City of Dreams team since its beginning in 2009.

Earlier in the year, Melco REACH! team members also participated in Macao Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM)'s Welfare Charity Run to attain notable results including:

- Women's Singles Race Champion - Icy Lao, Dealer, Table Games
- Men's Singles Race Champion - Wilson Sou, Global Marketing
- Men's Singles Race 1st

Runner Up - Next Leung, Table Games

- Men's Singles Race 6th Place - Dennis Ng, Marketing
- Team Relay Race 6th Place - Studio City colleagues Ray Chiu, Security; Fiona Cao, F&B; Mike Lam, Business Development; and Anatole Chen, Entertainment

PROMOTING MENTAL WELLBEING IN THE COMMUNITY

Melco also collaborates with Women's General Association of Macau on the Feel Better Mental Wellness Programs, providing women with diversified psychological counseling support services while responding to the government's concern for promoting physical and mental health, helping women develop a positive attitude and to have the tools to safeguard and enhance their mental wellbeing.

Since its launch in 2021, Feel Better has benefited over 3,700 participants, including through 128 seminar and small group sessions, and 825 personalized development support sessions.

Last year, Melco and Women's Association extended the programs' reach to families of Melco colleagues as well as members of the broader community. This year, the co-organizers will further increase the number of mental wellness seminars to reach a wider audience and to benefit more people. And to coincide with World Mental Health Day in October, the organizations plan to generate even greater awareness through promotional activities and the hosting of a special carnival in the community, further highlighting the importance of mental wellbeing and sharing positive energy with residents and visitors.

OTHER RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS:



Macau Women's Sports Festival 2024

Christy Wong, Elite Services; Debbie Kuok, Human Resources; Joey Lao, Learning Academy; Zero Leong, Entertainment; Katrina Lei, Executive Office; Sira Vong, Entertainment; Kiki Kong, Table Games; and Jun Leong, Learning Academy, Champion: Group A



Gaming Employees Table Tennis Competition

Team A colleagues from Table Games - Victor Wan; Tommy Chang; Shakes U; and Lei Chan, Second Runner-Up: Team Competition
Victor Wan, First Runner-Up: Men's Single
Tommy Chang, Third Runner-Up: Men's Single
Shakes U, Second Runner-Up: Women's Single



The 15th Zhuhai Macao Cup Traditional Martial Arts Open 2023

Benny Lei, Business Risk, Gold Medal: Men's Traditional South Style Kung Fu "Fu Hok Seung Ying Kuen" & Gold Medal: Men's Traditional short weapons "Lei Ga Short Bench"
Issac Yuen, Information Technology, Gold Medal: Men's Traditional Northern martial arts "Ba Ji Quan"



OFFICER INVESTIGATED FOR HAIR-PULLING INCIDENT AT HENGQIN CHECKPOINT

VICTORIA CHAN

THE Public Security Police (PSP) in Macau has launched an investigation into the conduct of one of its officers who was seen on video appearing to drag a woman by the hair after she was involved in a fight at the Hengqin border checkpoint, authorities announced on Wednesday.

The incident occurred around midday on Wednesday (June 26) on the Macau side of the Hengqin checkpoint, according to the PSP. Footage of the encounter has been widely shared on social media, which shows the police officer rushing over to the lady and grabbing her ponytail to forcibly drag her across the road by her hair.

In a statement quoted by TDM's Chinese-language radio station, the PSP acknowledged that, upon initial analysis, the officer's treatment of the woman appeared to be "inappropriate." The police explained that the incident happened after the woman had been in-

involved in an altercation with other individuals, and that the officer had chased and grabbed the woman by the hair in an attempt to prevent her from fleeing the scene.

Authorities stated that, if the investigation determines the officer's behavior was indeed inappropriate, the case will be addressed in accordance with the law. The PSP said the investigation will examine the circumstances leading up to and following the incident.

While the statement did not provide further details of the initial fight that prompted the officer's response, it emphasized that the police's primary concern is to ensure public safety and order. The PSP stressed that it takes such matters seriously and will take appropriate action based on the findings of the investigation.

The video clip circulating online has sparked discussions about the appropriate use of force by law enforcement officers, particularly in situations involving potential criminal activity.



BLUE CARD

Gov't simplifies non-resident worker permit renewal goes

IN a move to cut red tape, the Public Security Police (PSP) has introduced a new service to allow non-resident workers to renew their "authorization" to stay as a worker through the Macau One Account application.

The new service, available to workers from countries or regions outside mainland China from yesterday, aims to simplify the renewal process. According to a statement from authorities, once an employer's application for renewal of the authorization to remain as a worker has been approved, non-resident workers can handle confirmation formalities directly through the Macau One Account.

This new online service eliminates the need for non-resident workers to physically visit a servi-



ce desk or use self-service kiosks. Employers also no longer need to travel to handle the documentation, as the entire process can now be completed digitally.

Additionally, the new service allows non-resident workers to check the expiration date of their "blue card" and non-resident worker data page in realtime through the Macau One

Account. This feature provides workers with up-to-date information on the status of their authorization to stay.

The PSP have emphasized that non-resident workers can present their blue card and the non-resident worker data page from the Macau One Account as identification documents when required by the authorities.

The introduction of this streamlined renewal process is expected to significantly reduce bureaucratic hurdles faced by non-resident workers in Macau.

By leveraging digital tools and eliminating the need for in-person services, authorities aim to increase efficiency and convenience for this segment of the workforce.

COMMITTEE URGES CLARIFICATION ON ILLEGAL MAHJONG GAMBLING OPERATIONS LAW

HOWARD TONG

THE Legislative Assembly's Second Standing Committee continued discussions this week on a bill aimed at combating illegal gambling activities.

Committee chairman Chan Chak Mo said some members raised concerns about the measures against illegal operation of mahjong gambling establishments, such as whether restaurants and clubs could face legal consequences for simply providing venues for people to play recreational mahjong.

According to Chan, the government has explained that the relevant laws are targeted at unauthorized profit-making gambling operations. If a venue only allows "mahjong for fun" without allowing opportunities to gamble, it would not be committing a criminal offense. However, the committee is urging the government to provide further clarification on

this matter.

The proposed bill also includes provisions that would allow law enforcement to search homes between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. without the time restrictions outlined in the Criminal Procedure Code, but only for cases related to illegal online or offline betting operations.

When questioned as to why these exceptions were limited to gambling crimes and did not extend to other serious offenses like money laundering, terrorism or organized crime, the government stated it would consider expanding the measures. Authorities remained open to potentially amending the Criminal Procedure Law to apply the same search allowances more broadly.

Additionally, the bill aims to crack down on the counterfeiting, alteration or unauthorized use of gambling chips. This measure is not limited solely to casino chips, but encompasses all chips used for gambling activities, including mahjong.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

PUBLIC WORKS

Old city wall repair to cost up to MOP13 million

THE Cultural Affairs Bureau has announced that the cost to repair the old city wall next to Estrada de São Francisco will be up to MOP13 million. The project is expected to take 300 days to complete.

Around two years ago, a landslide near Estrada de São Francisco caused a section of the wall to collapse. For safety reasons, authorities made the decision to demolish an additional portion of the retaining wall.

A report by Macau's Civil Engineering Laboratory attributed the incident to heavy rainfall, inspection failures, and structural defects in the retaining wall.

The authorities noted



RENATO MARQUES

that the repair work will first require stabilizing the slope beneath the old wall. These preliminary consolidation efforts are scheduled to wrap up by the end of this month.

The Cultural Affairs Bureau has launched a public tender for the restoration project, and a total of eight bids ranging from MOP2 million to MOP13 million have been accepted. **HT**

EDUCATION

Macau universities rise in global rankings

THE University of Macau (UM) and the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) have made significant advances in the latest global university rankings, reflecting the growing reputation of higher education institutions in the region.

According to the 2024-2025 Best Global Universities rankings released by the U.S. News & World Report, UM has jumped to the 262nd position, up from its previous ranking of 379. MUST, on the other hand, has climbed to the 814th spot, a significant improvement from its previous rank of 1,002.

The rankings, which evaluate more than 2,250 schools from over 100 countries, focus on academic research and reputation. China, with 422 institutions on the list, has the most representation among the top-ranked universities



RENATO MARQUES

globally.

UM and MUST have also performed well outside the U.S. News & World Report rankings. In the recently released Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2025, UM has moved up nine places to the 245th position, while MUST has risen 41 places to the 464th spot.

Furthermore, in the Times Higher Education

(THE) World University Rankings 2024, UM broke into the world's top 200, ranking 193rd, while MUST was placed in the 251-300 range.

The consistent improvement in the global rankings of Macau's universities shows the region's commitment to enhancing the quality of higher education and positioning itself as a hub for academic excellence. **VC**

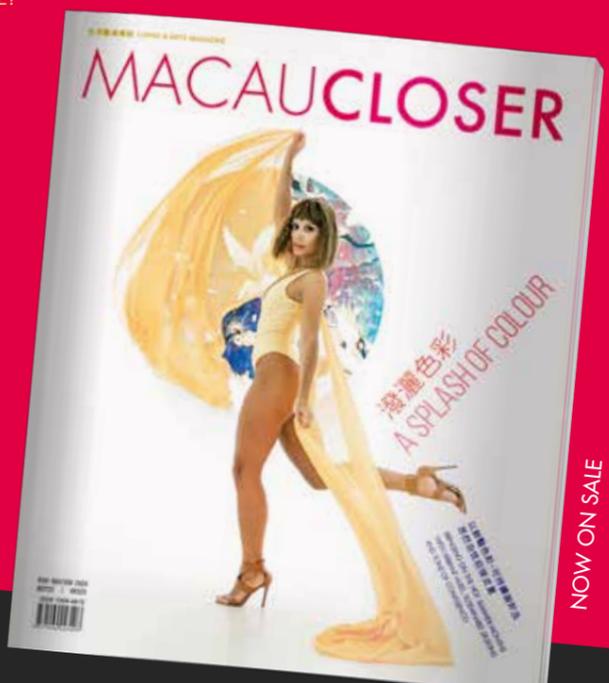
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MACAU'S CANADIAN COMMUNITY CAN 'BRIDGE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHINA AND US'

HOWARD TONG

As the Greater Bay Area (GBA) initiative continues to drive economic integration and collaboration across southern China, Macau's Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CanCham) is positioning itself to play a key role in this dynamic regional landscape.

The chamber sees opportunities for Canadian expertise and products in the GBA, particularly in areas like food production, accounting and education.

"Canadian chartered accountants are highly sought after, as well as Canadian teachers and educators," said Dr. Howard Stribbell, the president of CanCham, told the Times.

"We're Canadians, we're a friendly bunch. We're not too political. I think Canada can play a role in bridging the relationship between China and the US," he added.

The chamber plans to leverage its relationships with the Canadian Consulate General in Hong Kong to navigate the complexities of operating in the GBA.

"We can also work with the Canadian Consulate General in Hong Kong as well and help us navigate that," said Stribbell.

"So, in one way, our chamber partners with other Canadian chambers, like the Pearl River Delta (PRD) chamber in Guangzhou and the Hong Kong chamber - which is the largest Canadian chamber in the world."

By forging these inter-chamber con-



nections, CanCham can offer its members access to a broader network of resources and networking opportunities across the GBA.

"We just did a joint event in Zhuhai last month, which was very successful," the president said. "And then we work with all the other nationality chambers too, which provides a lot of synergy for us in doing events and building more networking going forward."

The leadership also recognizes the potential of the Hengqin area.

"We're really excited about the work that's happening in Hengqin and the continued development in Macau, and how that will play a role in the greater GBA," the chamber's president said.

Earlier this year, lawmaker Wong Sai Man has urged the government to lower the obstacles faced by foreigners residing in Macau who desire to work or live in Hengqin.

At the Legislative Assembly, Wong proposed that the SAR and mainland authorities simplify the travel restrictions for eligible foreigners by introducing a unique travel permit.

This permit would allow them to conveniently cross to Hengqin using their passports. Wong emphasized the importance of collaboration between the SAR government and relevant mainland departments in issuing this travel permit for seamless travel between Macau and Hengqin.

BRIEFS

GUANGZHOU METRO LOGGED 3B PASSENGER TRIPS IN 2023

Last year's passenger volume on the Guangzhou Metro surpassed 3.13 billion, again breaking the 3-billion mark after a four-year hiatus, according to Guangzhou Metro Group's annual report issued recently. The average daily passenger volume of the Guangdong provincial capital's 390-kilometer metro network - one of the longest in the world - reached 8.61 million in 2023, reflecting a 6% growth rate over that of the previous year, and accounted for 69% of the total number of commuters using the city's public transportation systems.

LEGAL AFFAIRS FACILITY ON HENGQIN GAINS POPULARITY

The Qin'ao International Legal Affairs Cluster in the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone on Zhuhai's Hengqin Island has provided legal services to more than 57,000 residents and 5,500 market entities since its establishment in June last year. Nine public legal service institutions have begun operating at the facility in the past year, including those specializing in arbitration, commercial mediation and enforcement. Legal claims lodged at the Hengqin International Arbitration Center amounted to 22.4 billion yuan (\$3.1 billion) - a six-fold increase from 2022.

CEPA GIVES HK EXPORTS TO MAINLAND A BIG LIFT

This year marks the 21st anniversary of the signing of the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Chinese mainland. The partnership has boosted the value of exports of Hong Kong products to the mainland by more than six-fold so far with zero tariffs - from 860 million yuan (\$118.5 million) to 6.11 billion yuan - benefiting nearly 9,000 types of Hong Kong-made products, according to Shenzhen authorities. In value terms, Shenzhen Customs processed nearly half of the goods the SAR exported to the mainland under the CEPA, ranking first nationwide.

TRANSPORT

Shenzhen-Zhongshan Bridge to open Sunday

NADIA SHAW

A commissioning ceremony for the Shenzhen-Zhongshan Bridge will be held on Sunday morning (June 30). The bridge is scheduled to allow crossings from 3 p.m. on Sunday, after seven years of construction.

The bridge, on which construction began in 2017, is a new 24-kilometer-long, eight-lane channel that will connect the cities of Shenzhen and Zhongshan in China's Guangdong province. It includes an underwater tunnel, artificial islands, and a cross-sea highway bridge.

The new bridge is expected to significantly reduce travel time between Shenzhen and Zhongshan from around two hours to just 30 minutes. It



will better connect the cities in China's Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area and support increased trade, logistics and tourism in the region. Fanny Yeung Shuk, executive director of the Travel Industry Council was quoted by The Standard as saying, "the new bridge

will better convenience travellers from Hong Kong heading north, as they will no longer need to pass through Fumun during their journey to Zhongshan."

According to media reports, there are already five guided tours, involving over 200 tourists, which will be travel-

ling through the sea crossing on the opening day. The tours will visit the former residence of Sun Yat-sen, have lunch and return to Hong Kong the same day via the bridge.

Acceptance checks on the bridge were passed on June 16, which has a design speed limit of 100km/h.

AP PHOTO



Prospect of low-priced EVs reaching US from Mexico poses threat to automakers

PAUL WISEMAN, WASHINGTON

IT'S a scenario that terrifies America's auto industry.

Chinese carmakers set up shop in Mexico to exploit North American trade rules. Once in place, they send ultra-low-priced electric vehicles streaming into the United States.

As the Chinese EVs go on sale across the country, America's homegrown EVs — costing an average of \$55,000, roughly double the price of their Chinese counterparts — struggle to compete. Factories close. Workers lose jobs across America's industrial heartland.

Ultimately, it would all become a painful replay of how government-subsidized Chinese competition devastated American industries from steel to solar equipment over the past quarter-century. This time, it would be electric vehicles, which America's automakers envision as the core of their business in the coming decades.

Low-priced Chinese EVs pose a potentially "extinction-level event" for America's auto industry, the Alliance for American Manufacturing has warned.

Especially worrisome: The 2020 U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement would potentially let Chinese cars assembled in Mexico enter the United States duty-free or at

a nominal 2.5% tariff rate. Either way, China could sell its EVs well below typical U.S. prices.

To defuse the threat, the U.S. has options. Customs officials could rule that Chinese EVs don't qualify for the low-duty or duty-free benefits of being made in Mexico. U.S. policymakers could also pressure Mexico to keep Chinese vehicles out of that country. Or they could bar Chinese EVs from the U.S. on the grounds that they would threaten America's national security.

The threat from Beijing is emerging just as U.S. automakers face slowing EV sales. High prices and a shortage of charging stations are keeping many American consumers away.

Cheap Chinese EVs might help by pushing down prices, accelerating sales and encouraging investment in charging stations. "It would be cheaper just to let the Chinese cars come in, forget all the tariffs and subsidies, let the market figure it out," said Christine McDaniel, a senior research fellow at George Mason University's Mercatus Center. "Yes, it would be disruptive. But EVs would get on the road in the U.S. a lot faster."

At stake is who stands to dominate the manufacture and sale of zero-emissions electric vehicles.

China has so far taken a daunting lead. It accounted for nearly 62% of the 10.4 million battery-powered EVs produced worldwide last year. The United States made 1 million — less than 10%

At stake is who stands to dominate the manufacture and sale of zero-emissions electric vehicles

of the total, according to Global-Data.

Chinese automakers have made remarkable strides holding down costs. China's BYD last year introduced a small EV called the Seagull that sells for just \$12,000 in China (\$21,000 for a version sold in four Latin American countries). The Seagull's lightweight design allows it to go farther per charge on a smaller battery. BYD has said it's considering building a factory in Mexico — but only for the Mexican market.

Critics note that BYD and other Chinese EV makers have achieved their cost efficiencies thanks to heavy subsidies from the Beijing government. The Chinese government spent more than \$130

billion on EVs and other green vehicles from 2009 through 2021, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Last month, President Joe Biden raised the tariff on Chinese EVs, from the 27.5% established during Donald Trump's presidency to 102.5%. It's meant to price

even the bargain-priced BYD Seagull out of the U.S. market. (The European Union says it plans to impose provisional tariffs of up to 38.1%

on Chinese EVs for four months starting in July.)

The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, though, potentially lets vehicles assembled by Chinese firms in Mexico enter the U.S. at a much lower tariff or none at all. If made-in-Mexico cars met the USMCA's requirements, they could enter the United States duty-free. At least 75% of a car and its parts would have to come from North America. And at least 40% of it must originate in places where workers earn at least \$16 an hour.

Still, for a Chinese EV maker like BYD, qualifying for duty-free treatment under the USMCA would be difficult. "Even North American automakers have a

challenging time reaching those thresholds," said Daniel Ujczko of the Thompson Hine law firm.

But there's an easier way Chinese EV makers could use Mexico to try to dodge Biden's killer 102.5% import tax: They would have to pay only 2.5% — the tax imposed on most cars imported to the United States — if they could show that assembling their EVs in Mexico involved a "substantial transformation" that essentially transformed them from Chinese into Mexican cars.

U.S. officials could reject the notion that a substantial transformation occurred during the assembly process. But the U.S. would struggle to prevail if that decision were challenged in the U.S. Court of International Trade, "given the substantial changes that typically take place in automotive assembly factories," David Gantz, a fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, has written.

The "most effective and quickest" way to keep Chinese EVs out of the United States, Gantz argues, would be to block them on national security grounds. Today's EVs, after all, are loaded with cameras, sensors and other technological gizmos that could collect images from the cars' surroundings and sensitive personal information from EV drivers. And China isn't merely an economic competitor. "U.S. fears regarding possible use of connected vehicles to spy on military installations or powerplants are not irrational," Gantz wrote. In February, Biden ordered his Commerce Department to investigate the technology in Chinese "smart cars," a potential prelude to blocking Chinese EVs on national security grounds. **MDT/AP**

SRI LANKA REACHES DEAL ON DEBT RESTRUCTURING WITH BILATERAL CREDITORS INCLUDING CHINA AND FRANCE

BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI,
COLOMBO

SRI LANKA'S President Ranil Wickremesinghe announced a debt restructuring deal with countries including India, France, Japan and China in a televised address to the nation Wednesday. The agreement marks a key step in the country's economic recovery after defaulting on debt repayment in 2022.

Sri Lanka is under an International Monetary Fund bailout program and the debt treatment deal is expected to reopen the doors to bilateral transactions and the resumption of foreign projects stalled when the island nation defaulted.

"This morning in Paris, Sri Lanka reached a final agreement with our official bilateral creditors. Similarly, we signed another agreement with China's Exim Bank today in Beijing. ... Sri Lanka won," Wickremesinghe said.

Sri Lanka declared bankruptcy in April 2022 and suspended repayments on some \$83 billion in domestic and foreign loans amid a severe foreign exchange crisis that led to a severe shortage of essentials such as food, medicine, fuel and cooking gas, and hours-long power cuts.

Sri Lanka's crisis was largely

AP PHOTO



Supporters of Sri Lanka's President Ranil Wickremesinghe watch a televised speech in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Wednesday

the result of staggering economic mismanagement combined with fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, which along with 2019 terrorism attacks devastated its important tourism industry. The coronavirus crisis also disrupted the flow of remittances from Sri Lankans working abroad.

Additionally, the then-government slashed taxes in 2019, depleting the treasury just as the virus hit. Foreign exchange reserves plummeted, leaving Sri Lanka unable to pay for imports or de-

fend its beleaguered currency, the rupee.

Wickremesinghe said with these agreements, Sri Lanka will be able to defer all bilateral loan instalment payments until 2028. Furthermore, Sri Lanka will be able to repay all the loans on concessional terms, with an extended period until 2043.

According to a previous president's office statement, the agreements would cover \$10 billion, but further details on the mode of restructuring were not immedi-

tely announced.

By 2022, Sri Lanka had to repay about \$6 billion in foreign debt every year, amounting to about 9.2% of gross domestic product. The agreement would enable Sri Lanka to maintain debt payments at less than 4.5% of GDP between 2027 and 2032.

As Wickremesinghe addressed the nation, his supporters the watched the speech on a giant screen in the capital Colombo and celebrated the announcement by lighting firecrackers and partaking

traditional milk rice.

The economic upheaval led to a political crisis that forced then-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to resign in 2022. The Parliament then elected Wickremesinghe as president.

Sri Lanka suspended repayment of its debt as it ran short of foreign currency needed to pay for imports of fuel and other essentials. Shortages led to street protests that changed the country's leadership. The IMF approved a four-year bailout program last March.

The economic situation has improved under Wickremesinghe and severe shortages of food, fuel and medicine have largely abated. But public dissatisfaction has grown over the government's effort to increase revenue by raising electricity bills and imposing heavy new income taxes on professionals and businesses, as part of the government's efforts to meet the IMF conditions.

After Sri Lanka declared bankruptcy, all projects funded by foreign loans were also halted.

on Wednesday, Wickremesinghe said the new agreements would pave way to resume the foreign funded projects such as highways, light railway and airport development and also initiate new projects too. **MDT/AP**

NORTH KOREA

Gov't says it tested a new multiwarhead missile. South Korea says it's covering up a failure

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

NORTH Korea said yesterday it had successfully tested a multiwarhead missile in the first known launch of a developmental weapon coveted by leader Kim Jong Un to overwhelm U.S. and South Korean missile defenses. South Korea quickly dismissed the claim as deception to cover up a failed launch.

North Korea's state media said the launch Wednesday tested the separation and guidance control of individual mobile warheads to ensure the capability of the Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicles. It said the separated warheads "were guided correctly to the three coordinate targets" and a decoy that separated

from the missile was verified by radar.

If confirmed, it would be North Korea's first public launch event related to the development of a multiwarhead missile, though at a preliminary stage.

South Korea's military said later Thursday that a joint analysis by South Korean and U.S. authorities assessed that the North Korean missile launch failed.

Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesperson Lee Sung Joon told reporters that the separation of warheads in MIRV tests happens in descending stages but the North Korean missile exploded in the initial stage of its flight. He said North Korean photos of the launch showed a weapon similar to a liquid-fuel Hwasong-17

AP PHOTO



ICBM that the country test-fired in March 2023.

The South Korean military's earlier assessment Wednesday was that a suspected solid-fueled hypersonic missile was launched and exploded off the North's east coast, scattering fragments in the water. It said it detected more smoke than

normal launches, suggesting a possible combustion issue caused by an engine fault.

A multiwarhead missile was among the high-tech weapons systems Kim cited on his wish list during a ruling party meeting in early 2021, along with spy satellites, solid-fuel intercon-

tinental ballistic missiles, hypersonic weapons and submarine-launched nuclear missiles. North Korea has since performed a series of tests to develop such weapons systems.

"I had been anticipating a MIRV test for some time now, as this was one of the last remaining items on Kim Jong Un's modernization wish list from the 8th Party Congress back in January 2021," said Ankit Panda, a senior analyst at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Panda said Wednesday's test appeared to be an initial evaluation of some of the key subsystems to develop a workable MIRV. He expect successive tests of the technology to follow, leading up to a launch of

an intercontinental ballistic missile on a lofted trajectory. Panda said it appeared that "South Korea misinterpreted the nature of this test initially."

Lee Choon Geun, an honorary research fellow at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute, said North Korea appeared to have begun testing individual technological elements of multiwarhead missiles. He said more tests are expected to perfect the separation and guidance control and other facets of multiwarhead missile technology.

Chang Young-keun, a missile expert at Seoul's Korea Research Institute for National Strategy, said the North Korean test hasn't yet proved it has sufficient MIRV controlling technologies needed for ICBMs. He said North Korea didn't release enough information to verify its MIRVs made successful atmospheric reentries and hit designated targets. **MDT/AP**

UK

Thousands of doctors go on strike a week before general election

SYLVIA HUI, LONDON

THOUSANDS of doctors in England are staging their 11th walkout yesterday in a long-running dispute with the government over pay and working conditions, disrupting hospital services just days before the U.K. general election.

The five-day strike by junior doctors — those in the early years of their careers — shines a spotlight on the troubles besetting the chronically underfunded National Health Service, Britain's state-funded public health system, a topic that is a top concern for voters going to the polls on July 4.

Junior doctors, who form the backbone of hospital and clinic care, have been locked in the pay dispute with the government since late 2022. They went on strike for six days in January — the longest in NHS history — and hospitals had to cancel tens of thousands of appointments and operations.

The latest strike begins Thursday and ends on Tuesday, just two days before voters cast their ballots to choose a new House of Commons.

The British Medical Association, the doctors' union, say their pay has dropped by a quarter over the last 15 years and have called for a 35% pay uplift. The union

AP PHOTO



says newly qualified doctors earn about 15 pounds (\$19) an hour — the U.K. minimum wage is just over 10 pounds an hour — though

salaries rise rapidly after the first year.

Dr. Sumi Manirajan, deputy chair of the junior doctors com-

mittee at the union, said that years of underinvestment has resulted in young doctors leaving in droves to countries that offer better pay,

with those left behind seriously overworked and underpaid.

"Doctors that I trained with in London, some of the best in the country, have left to go to New Zealand. And actually what it makes me think of is why am I not doing the same? I want to be valued for the work that I do," she said.

Manirajan, who recently graduated and works in obstetrics and gynecology, added that she sees many women waiting for more than a year for routine procedures.

"These patients are in pain, and it hurts us to see us see these patients come in again and again with the same problem that we know we could treat if we had enough doctors," she said.

The Conservative government says it gave the doctors pay raises of between 8.1% to 10.3% last year and said that it was a generous settlement. It maintained that authorities can't make a pay offer during the preelection period but the union refused to call off the strikes.

Manirajan said that it was unfortunate that the government chose to call an election while knowing that the dispute was unresolved.

The medics' union said it was ready to talk, and it has already had some discussions with the opposition Labour Party, which has a considerable lead in polls.

"It is difficult to comprehend how either the Conservative Party or the Labour Party can deliver on their manifesto commitment to recover NHS performance over the next Parliament without first ending the dispute," said Siva Anandaciva, chief analyst at The King's Fund think tank. **MDT/AP**

PUTIN'S WAR

Zelenskyy visits front-line troops under pressure from Russia's onslaught in eastern areas

ILLIA NOVIKOV, KYIV

UKRAINE President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his Commander in Chief Oleksandr Syrskyi on Wednesday visited troops in the eastern Donetsk region who have weathered fierce Russian ground and air assaults in recent months.

The Kremlin's army has escalated its efforts to dislodge exhausted and outnumbered Ukrainian forces holding eastern and northeastern areas. It aims to capture more land during spring and summer as muddy fields have dried out, allowing heavy military equipment to roll into key

positions across the countryside.

Russia illegally annexed parts of Donetsk and three other regions in 2022 shortly after it invaded Ukraine, and the Kremlin regards taking control of all of Donetsk as a priority. Moscow is looking to exploit its advantages in troops and weaponry before Ukraine can get promised additional Western supplies to the front.

Civilians have also felt the force of Russia's onslaught. Ahead of Zelenskyy's visit, Russian forces dropped a powerful glide bomb on the Donetsk city of Selydove, causing extensive damage to 37 homes,

AP PHOTO



six multi-story buildings and administrative infrastructure, regional authorities said Wednesday. They reported no injuries.

Over the previous 24 hours, the Russian military

shelled 20 Donetsk region settlements, killing one person and injuring at least nine, regional head Vadym Filashkin said.

About 250 people have been evacuated from their

homes in the Donetsk region since Tuesday, officials said.

Zelenskyy also discussed with local officials the public drinking water supply, social issues, evacuation plans and the rebuilding of local homes, he said.

Zelenskyy signaled he wants a better response from Kyiv officials overseeing those matters. He didn't elaborate on the perceived problems and which officials he would speak to.

Zelenskyy has frequently visited front-line areas during the war.

His said his trip to the Donetsk region was to introduce the new commander of the Joint Forces

Command, Andrii Hnatov.

Hnatov replaced Yuriy Sodomol, who had held the position since February 2023.

Zelenskyy didn't give a reason for the change, but it came after the widely admired chief of staff of the Azov brigade, Bohdan Krotevych, released a statement rebuking an unnamed general for having "killed more Ukrainian soldiers than any Russian general," in what was seen as a reference to incompetent management of troops.

Several Ukrainian media outlets, quoting unidentified sources in the armed forces, said he was referring to Sodomol. **MDT/AP**

ANALYSIS

No matter who wins Iran's presidential election, much may hinge on the 'Great Satan' US

JON GAMBRELL, DUBAI

IN the waning moments of Iran's final televised presidential debate, one of the top candidates to replace the late hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi invoked the name of the one person who perhaps has done more than anyone to change the trajectory of the Islamic Republic's relationship with the wider world in recent years.

The next president could be "forced to either sell Iran to Trump or spark a dangerous tension in the country" if economic problems aren't solved, warned Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, Iran's parliament speaker and a candidate in today's election.

President Donald Trump's decision in 2018 to unilaterally withdraw America from the Iran nuclear deal saw crushing sanctions reimposed and largely cut Tehran out of the world's economy. That worsened the political climate within Iran, already beset by mass protests over economic problems and women's rights. An escalating series of attacks on land and at sea followed, while Tehran also began enriching uranium at near weapons-grade levels.

Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel and Israel's subsequent war on the militants in the Gaza Strip only added jet fuel to a fire now threatening to burn nearly every corner of the wider Middle East. Iran's support of an array of militias, including Hamas, Lebanon's Hezbollah and Yemen's Houthis rebels, and its unprecedented direct attack on Israel during the war, has made it a direct belligerent in the conflict.

What happens in both the war and with Iran's future may hinge directly on the U.S., denounced by the Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as the "Great Satan" in the 1979 Islamic Revolution and still cursed at major events like a speech this week by the 85-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Despite the vitriol, the U.S. has come up again and again in the campaign. Khamenei warned this week against supporting candidates who "think that all ways to progress pass through America," a thinly veiled criticism of the only reformist



running in the race, Masoud Pezeshkian, who has fully embraced a return to the 2015 nuclear deal.

Among the six initial presidential contenders — two of whom had dropped out by Thursday — Trump has repeatedly emerged as a theme. One of them, former hard-line candidate Amirhossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi, contended that if Trump wins the U.S. presidential election "we can negotiate with Trump and impose our demands on him."

That wasn't an opinion shared by Shiite cleric Mostafa Pourmohammadi, who warned Iran should take part in talks now with the U.S. before a second possible Trump presidency. However, his campaign also printed a side-by-side poster showing the cleric and Trump in profile, declaring: "I am the one who can stand against Trump!"

Hard-line candidate Saeed Jalili also mocked his competitors as being "scared" of Trump, vowing to fight him.

For his part, Trump has brought up Iran while campaigning in recent days. Speaking to the "All In" podcast, Trump repeated that he had wanted to "make a fair deal with Iran" — while also trying to claim Iran's theocratic government that long has called for Israel's destruction would somehow have made a diplomatic recognition deal with Israel like the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain did during his presidency.

"A child could have made a deal with them — and Biden did nothing," Trump asserted.

Interestingly, President Joe Biden's name hasn't been mentioned during the Iranian election debates. Before Raisi's death in a May helicopter crash, the U.S. under Biden had several rounds of indirect talks with Iranian officials.

While broadly criticizing Iran, particularly in the wake of the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini and the women's rights protests that followed, the Biden administration has opened the door to Iran accessing some frozen assets abroad. That includes a deal that saw a prisoner swap between the countries in September, less than a month before the Israel-Hamas war began.

Then there's Iran's oil sales. While technically sanctioned, Iran recently reported selling 2.5 million barrels a day — with the lion's share likely going to China, possibly at a discount. Former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who struck the nuclear deal under the relatively moderate President Hassan Rouhani and now supports the reformist candidate Pezeshkian, directly attributed those sales to the Biden administration's policies.

"That the crude sales have gone up was not a work by our friends, but when Biden came power they had a policy to loosen the bolt of sanctions," said Zarif, obliquely referring to hard-liners. "Let Trump come and

find out what our friends will do."

While wider talks in Vienna with world powers to restart the nuclear deal collapsed, Biden may be trying to replicate a strategy from when he was vice president under Barack Obama — quietly working indirectly with the Iranians toward a deal that later can be brought to the table.

But much of whatever U.S. policy the Biden administration planned for the Middle East — including a possible Saudi security deal that could see Riyadh diplomatically recognize Israel — has been upended by the Israel-Hamas war.

Meanwhile, the real wildcard for Iran comes Nov. 5 when the U.S. holds its presidential election. Biden's re-election likely would see a continuation of the carrot-stick approach wielded so far during his term. If Trump is re-elected, it could portend more discussions about a deal while also carrying risks. Trump in 2020 launched a drone strike killing Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani while still insisting he wanted a deal with Tehran.

A war between Israel and Lebanon — or the Houthis potentially getting a missile strike on an American warship amid their campaign — also could drastically upend calculations in both Tehran and Washington.

For now though, Iran and the U.S. remain intertwined in tension, much like the nations have for decades. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2004 US TRANSFERS POWER BACK TO IRAQ



The United States has handed power back to the Iraqi people at a low-key ceremony in Baghdad.

US administrator Paul Bremer transferred sovereignty to an Iraqi judge at a handover brought forward two days in an attempt to prevent the occasion being marked by bloodshed.

Mr Bremer flew out of the country shortly after. His departure ends 15 months of US control in Iraq.

Iraq's interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, who attended the handover in the city's heavily-guarded "Green Zone", said it was an "historic day" for Iraq.

Mr Allawi's cabinet were sworn in at a later ceremony, also held in secret.

The new prime minister made a televised address after formally taking office.

He told Iraqis: "I call on our people to stand united to expel the foreign terrorists who are killing our children and destroying our country."

Although power is back in Iraqi hands, US President George Bush said American troops would remain in the country as long as they were needed.

The president added that US presence would also be at the request of the newly-formed interim government.

Mr Bremer defended his country's reasons for being in Iraq, referring to recently discovered graves where thousands of victims of Saddam Hussein's regime are believed to be buried.

The former Coalition Provisional Authority administrator said: "Anybody who has any doubt about whether Iraq is a better place today than it was 14 months ago should go down and see the mass graves in Hilla.

"Anybody who has seen those things that I have will know that Iraq is a much better place."

The power handover was welcomed by world leaders. The European Union and Nato alliance both pledged their support for Mr Allawi's government.

Mr Bush and Mr Blair were apparently the only leaders at the current Nato summit who knew the transfer of sovereignty would take place early.

The news was revealed by Iraqi foreign minister Hoshiyar Zebari, speaking after talks with the UK prime minister.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Bringing the handover forward and holding it in secret meant the transfer of power was not marked by attacks by insurgents.

But frequent attacks on US and UK forces as well as on Iraqi civilians have continued to take place in the country.

Neither the US nor Britain have yet committed to a date when troops will be removed.

Iraq held its first multi-party elections in 50 years in January 2005. An interim democratically elected government was sworn in on 3 May 2005 with Shia Ibrahim Jaafari as prime minister.

But finding an acceptable balance of power in the government between Iraq's national groups has proved difficult.

In December 2005 Iraqis voted for the first full-term government since the American-led invasion.

In January 2006 the Shia-led United Iraqi Alliance emerged as winners of the elections but without an absolute majority.

After four months of deadlock, President Talabani asked Shia compromise candidate Jawad al-Maliki to form a new government.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Recharge your batteries in private moments. Get enough rest, despite demands for your attention. An opportunity to fulfill long-held goals could arise.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Great ideas and opportunities flow through social channels. Ask for what you want. Share what you have extra. Contribute generously and reap extra rewards.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Take charge. Great professional advances are available. Leave misconceptions behind. You can make the changes you've been wanting. Try something new. Follow your heart.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Go explore! Abandon expectations. Make an amazing discovery. Resist the temptation to splurge on stuff you don't need. Take pictures. Leave only footprints.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Discover an unexpected bonus. Collaborate to take advantage of a lucrative opportunity. Work closely with your partner. Careful bookkeeping provides peace of mind.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Reinforce a connection of the heart. Rely on disciplined actions more than luck. Tight communication and coordination produce fabulous results. Love is your inspiration.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Test a crazy hunch. Listen to your intuition. Make repairs and improvements. Tweak your performance by altering your practice routines. Energize what works.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Family comes first. Unite efforts for practical purposes. Success requires showing up. Take care of duties, responsibilities and obligations. And then celebrate together.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Take advantage of a surprising opportunity at home. Make practical domestic improvements that fulfill your long-term plans, one step at a time. Steady efforts succeed.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Your influence is growing. Handle practical details and logistics for a creative project. Invite others to participate. Share your message far and wide.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Profitable opportunities arise in conversation. Connect with friends and relations to share ideas and possibilities. Energize your money-making efforts. Share resources and talents.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Make a beautiful upgrade to your personal image. Dress for the role you want. Practice doing what you love. Express yourself. Share your heart.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	24	36	fine
Changchun	22	32	fine
Chengdu	21	30	rain
Chongqing	21	26	rain
Fuzhou	26	34	thunderstorms
Guangzhou	28	34	showers
Guiyang	19	26	showers
Haikou	26	34	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	22	28	rain
Harbin	21	30	cloudy
Hefei	21	27	rain
Nanjing	21	26	rain
Shanghai	23	27	rain
Taipei	26	32	rain
Wuhan	22	26	rain
Hong Kong	27	32	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	18	30	sunny
Frankfurt	14	28	cloudy
Paris	14	25	cloudy
London	12	22	cloudy
New York	19	25	sunny

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Bay; 6- Concert venue; 11- Part of UNLV; 14- Laughs loudly; 15- Dirty looks; 16- Competitor of Tide and Cheer; 17- Spring up; 18- Festive occasions; 19- Bleat of a sheep; 20- Former Russian rulers; 22- Movie critic Roger; 24- Supervise; 28- Old Testament book; 29- Cash in; 30- Put back into service; 32- Formerly, formerly; 33- That is to say...; 35- Big name in PCs; 39- On a cruise; 40- Small batteries; 41- Robert ___; 42- Mustachioed artist; 43- Vacant; 45- Lotto-like game; 46- Grandmas; 48- Tarzan, e.g.; 50- Fondle; 53- Court order; 54- Grasps; 55- Spry; 57- Strong feeling of anger; 58- Consumers; 60- Somewhat; 65- Little green men, for short; 66- Wall painting; 67- Tractor maker; 68- Musical notes; 69- Uneven, as if gnawed away; 70- It's a wrap;

DOWN 1- One of the Gershwins; 2- Neither partner; 3- China's Chou En-___; 4- Trauma ctrs.; 5- African fly; 6- Aquarium buildup; 7- Backside; 8- Slippery fish; 9- Heston's org.; 10- Evaluate; 11- Trademark; 12- What you put on snooze; 13- Blind parts; 21- Highway hauler; 23- Guidebook for travelers; 24- Mountain nymph; 25- Vice ___; 26- Ford flop; 27- Kept; 28- Bit of wordplay; 30- Harvests; 31- Sunrise direction; 34- Baby's cry; 36- Varnish resin; 37- Horne and Olin; 38- Sierra ___; 43- USNA grad; 44- Southern pronoun; 47- Suppose; 49- Begg; 50- Tribe ruler; 51- Major artery; 52- Like non-oyster months; 53- Brides walk down it; 55- Dynamic start?; 56- Mardi ___; 59- California's Big ___; 61- Oh, give ___ home...; 62- Suffix with cloth; 63- Refrain syllable; 64- Poet's dusk;



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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EURO 2024 | REVIEW

CRISTIANO RONALDO JUST AVOIDED BEING HIT BY A FAN WHO JUMPED FROM THE CROWD TO GET TO HIM

JAMES ROBSON, DUESSELDORF

CRISTIANO Ronaldo narrowly avoided being hit by a fan who jumped from the crowd to try to get close to the soccer star when Portugal played Georgia at the European Championship on Wednesday.

A video widely circulated on social media appears to show someone leaping over the top of the players' tunnel at the Veltins Arena in Gelsenkirchen as Ronaldo headed to the locker room.

A safety steward rushed to shield the former Real Madrid and Manchester United star and other security staff race toward the fan, who falls away out of sight.

A bemused-looking Ronaldo stops, but appears to be unharmed. Portugal lost the game 2-0.

Portugal's Football Federation confirmed the incident, but did not comment. European soccer's governing body UEFA said it was aware of the incident.

Ronaldo is one of the most famous sporting icons in the world with a massive fan base, which includes 632 million followers on Ins-



tagram and nearly 112 million on X. During Portugal's previous match against Turkey in Dortmund on Saturday he was confronted on the field by four supporters who wanted selfies.

Ronaldo posed for a selfie with a young fan who evaded stewards to get on the field in the 69th minute, but looked frustrated when more entered the field later in the game and after the final whistle.

Portugal Roberto Martinez coach said after that game that the Al Nassr forward was fortunate not to have been harmed and raised concerns over his security.

"We all love a fan that recognizes

the big stars and the big icons in their minds," he said. "But you can understand it was a very, very difficult moment — if those intentions are wrong, the players are exposed and we need to be careful with that."

The 39-year-old has become the first player to appear at six European Championships and although he is yet to score at this year's tournament, he holds the record for the most goals at the Euros with 14.

Despite the shock loss to Georgia, Portugal advanced to the knockout phase of Euro 2024 and will play Slovenia in the round of 16 in Frankfurt on Monday. **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
Slovakia	1	1	Romania
Ukraine	0	0	Belgium
Georgia	2	0	Portugal
Czech Republic	1	2	Turkey

EURO 2024

In a Kyiv market, Ukrainians take heart from team's inspiring play

DEREK GATOPOULOS & ANTON SHTUKA, KYIV

UKRAINIAN fans took heart from their team's inspiring finish at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament, despite being eliminated from the tournament.

As Ukraine's match in Stuttgart ended 0-0 against Belgium on Wednesday, around 1,000 fans who had gathered at an indoor market in Kyiv sang the national anthem.

"A strong nation is one that stays united and supports each other at all times, both in defeat and in victory," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote in an online post after the game.

"Today, we thank

Ukraine's National Football Team. Despite the unfortunate result, they fought for our country. Our great victories are ahead."

Anastasia Plokha said she attended the fan event to honor the memory of her husband, who was killed in the war following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

"I so (strongly) supported our Ukrainian team today. They played excellently," the 27-year-old fitness trainer said. "I think it was a difficult game, but they fought a lot. And maybe (needed) a little bit of luck."

All four teams in Group E finished with four points. Romania ended up first, followed

by Belgium and Slovakia. Ukraine was last on goal difference.

Ukraine had lost to Romania 3-0 in its opening game and bounced back with a 2-1 win over Slovakia.

The viewing area Wednesday was set up inside Kyiv's Rye Market, a Soviet-era building, despite wartime restrictions on public gatherings.

A mascot, a cardboard cutout of the Ukrainian team, and outdoor games were available for

the children as the fans watched the game on a giant screen, often breaking out into chants of U-KRA-I-NA!

Yevhen Klopotenko, a Ukrainian celebrity chef who organized the event, said he was proud of the players.

"Our team showed they were ready to fight and that they wanted to win, and they were doing everything. Belgium is now one of the best football countries in the world," Klopo-



Ukraine fans display a banner reading 'Peace has a price' and a portrait of Nazariy Hryntsevich a fallen soldier a football fan, during a Group E match between Ukraine and Belgium, Wednesday

tenko said.

"They did a great job. And that's why I just

want to say thank you." Alex Babenko in Kyiv contributed. **MDT/AP**

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
Mon	Jul 1	0:00	England	Slovakia	H 1.44, D 4.6, A 10
		03:00	Spain	Georgia	H 1.23, D 7, A 17

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

BOOK IT

Hillary Clinton to release essay collection about personal and public life

HILLEL ITALIE

HILLARY Clinton's next book is a collection of essays, touching upon everything from marriage to politics to faith, that her publisher is calling her most personal yet.

Simon and Schuster announced Tuesday that Clinton's "Something Lost, Something Gained: Reflections on Life, Love and Liberty" will be released Sept. 17.

Among the topics she will cover: Her marriage to former President Bill Clinton, her Methodist faith, adjusting to private life after her failed presidential runs, her friendships with other first ladies and her takes on climate change, democracy and Vladimir Putin.

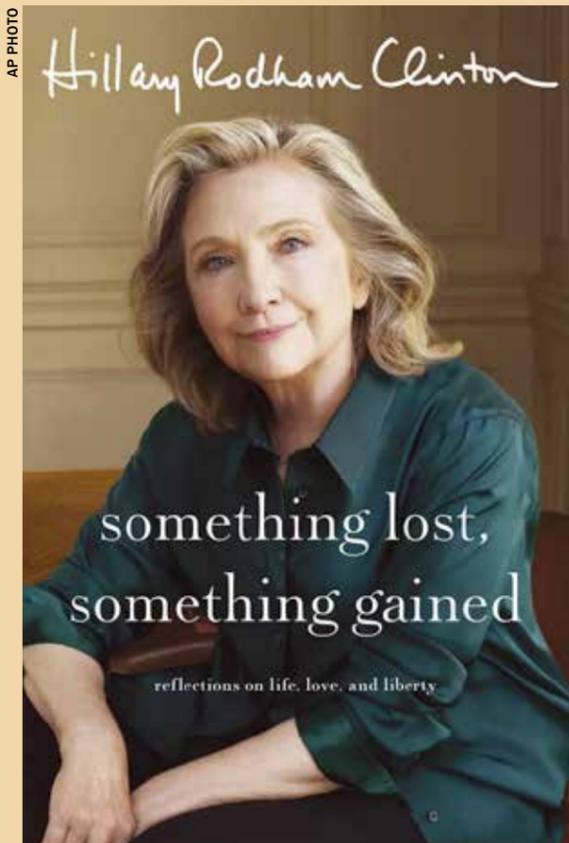
"The book reads like you're sitting down with your smartest, funniest, most passionate friend over a long meal," Clinton's editor, Priscilla Painton, said in a statement.

"This is the Hillary Americans have come to know and love: candid, engaged, humorous, self-deprecating — and always learning."

Clinton, the former first lady, U.S. senator and secretary and presidential candidate, will promote her book with a cross country tour. "Something Lost, Something Gained" comes out two months before Bill Clinton's memoir about post-presidential life, "Citizen."

Financial terms were not disclosed. Clinton was represented by Washington attorney Robert Barnett, whose other clients have included former President George W. Bush and former President Barack Obama.

Clinton's previous books include such best-sellers as "It Takes a Village," "Living History" and "What Happened." MDT/AP



TASTE OF EDESIA

Fusion of wonders

IRENE SAM, MDT

THIS month, **Palazzo Versace Macau's Don Alfonso 1890** presented an exceptional gourmet experience that fused Southern Italian culinary traditions with modern German gastronomy. It was a six-hand collaboration between Federico Pucci, head chef of Don Alfonso 1890, and twin chefs Thomas and Mathias Sühling from MICHELIN two-star restaurant Sühling. Together, 3 chefs brought along their signature dishes of time-honoured indulgence from each restaurant, as well as an all-new creation that showcases their innovation and skills.

As head chef of Don Alfonso 1890, Chef Federico embraces a farm-to-table philosophy, capturing the essence of Naples through the seasonality of products.

Calling upon his 16-year career in gastronomy, he serves up skilful dishes, artfully prepared to showcase his passion for and pride in Italian cuisine.

Chef Thomas and Chef Mathias own and operate Sühling in Bangkok, ranked at No. 7 on Asia's 50 Best Restaurants and No.23 on The World's 50 Best Restaurants in 2024. Drawing upon their childhood memories, family recipes and worldwide travels, they bring authenticity to the table with exceptional dishes that unite the essence of traditional German cuisine with contemporary influences from Central Europe.

Highlight from the menu included Eliche di Gragnano, Gragnano Eliche pasta with Red Prawn from Mazara del Vallo and Sea Urchin. It is a selection of pasta from Gragnano carefully selected by chef Federico Pucci. Pasta and prawn is a traditional Italian dish

that has been enjoyed for centuries in the rural regions of Italy where it was popular especially in Sicily. This dish presented by Chef Federico is enhanced with a connection of the Mediterranean Sea adding flavors using the exceptional red prawn from Mazara del Vallo and Sea Urchin from Hokkaido Japan.

Arctic Char, Butter poached Arctic Char, Cauliflower and Almond was one of MDT's favourite. The Arctic Char is freshwater fish found in the Lac Lemman. It has been poached in smoked butter and served with a puree made from cauliflower finished with a foam made from Thai rice blended with almond oil and lemon pepper. Once you've finished the fish, you can enjoy the tart on the side in one bite. It is made with roasted almond cream and topped with Ikura, and Kristal caviar.



OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

EU SHOULD TAKE A STEP BACK SO IT CAN SEE THAT IT IS BARKING UP WRONG TREE

In yet another blow to the China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership, the 27-member bloc imposed sanctions on 19 Chinese companies on Monday, alleging that they have supplied components and equipment to Russia's military industry.

A list published in the European Union's Official Journal includes several Chinese companies located in Hong Kong as well as two global satellite giants, which are now subject to strict restrictions over sales of "dual-use goods and technology" that the European Union claims could be used for the "enhancement of Russia's defense and security sector".

The unilateral move the EU has made targeting Chinese companies, which has no evidence to justify it and has no legal basis in international law, undermines the trust that has been the foundation for ties, and creates more uncertainties for the already fragile bilateral relations.

The mutually beneficial China-EU trade relationship is experiencing a difficult time as politicians in Brussels are turning to protectionism to safeguard European industries, with the bloc deciding recently to impose extra duties of up to 38.1 percent on imported Chinese electric cars from July on the grounds that they have received excessive and unfair government subsidies.

By pushing ahead with more punitive measures against Chinese enterprises rather than seeking constructive dialogue to properly handle their differences, the EU has shown it is intent on pursuing short-term political gains in disregard of long-term and stable relations with China.

That Head Aerospace Technology, one of the 19 Chinese companies hit by the latest EU sanctions, was already placed on a United States sanctions list in 2023 for allegedly selling satellite images to Russia, reflects the readiness of the EU to toe Washington's anti-China line in cracking down on Chinese high-tech companies using their unsubstantiated links to the Russian military as an excuse.

China, which is not a direct party to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, has actively worked to promote talks for a political settlement. The Chinese government has always strictly monitored the exports of dual-use articles in accordance with the laws and regulations, and has never fanned the flames of the hostilities or sought selfish gains in the ongoing conflict.

Thus the EU is barking up the wrong tree by trying to smear the normal exchanges and cooperation between Chinese and Russian businesses and pointing an accusing finger at China for allegedly supporting Russia's military-industrial complex.

China and the EU, as two major forces advancing multipolarity and two major markets in support of globalization, are important trading partners to each other. Over the past two decades, the two sides have developed broad-based and all-dimensional cooperation, with two-way trade having grown by six times and two-way investment more than five-fold. Their daily trade volume is about 2.3 billion euros (\$2.46 billion) on average, delivering tangible benefits to people on both sides.

As Ursula von der Leyen, who is poised for a second term as president of the European Commission, has previously said, the China-EU relationship "is far too important to be put at risk by failing to clearly set the terms of a healthy engagement".

Hopefully, Brussels will be rational, exercise strategic autonomy and work with China to manage their relationship, which has a direct bearing not only on the interests of the people on both sides, but also concerns global prosperity and security.

The EU should not let its concerns about Russia cloud its judgment or lead to paranoia. It should give full play to the role of dialogue to resolve any issues it may have with China instead of adopting the US' discriminatory approach, which after all is intended to diminish China to the detriment of all.

Former Chinese defense minister Li Shangfu was expelled from the ruling Communist Party and is being investigated for corruption and bribery, the official Xinhua news agency reported yesterday. Li was removed from office in October 2023 after disappearing from public view for almost two months.

China's former defense minister Li Shangfu has been expelled from the ruling Communist Party and accused of corruption, likely setting up a trial that could lead to his getting life in prison.

The Defense Ministry yesterday said Li had abused his authority to enrich himself by taking bribes and granting favors in violation of military and party discipline.

Such charges have been leveled in past by numerous military leaders under the rule of President and party leader Xi Jinping, who also heads the armed forces as chairman of the Central Military Commission.

Li dropped out of sight for almost two months last year before being removed from office.

SPACE

CHINA CALLS ON SCIENTISTS OF ALL NATIONS TO STUDY LUNAR SAMPLES, BUT NOTES OBSTACLE WITH THE US

HUIZHONG WU,
BANGKOK

CHINA'S space officials said yesterday they welcomed scientists from around the world to apply to study the lunar rock samples that the Chang'e 6 probe brought back to Earth in a historic mission, but noted there were limits to that cooperation, specifically with the United States.

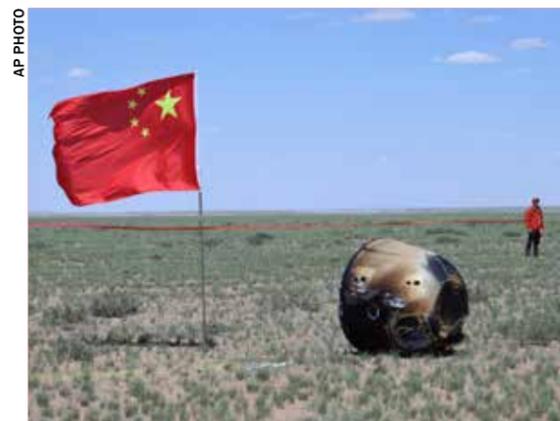
Officials said at a televised news conference in Beijing meant to introduce the mission's achievements that any cooperation with the U.S. would be hinged on removing an American law that bans direct bilateral cooperation with NASA.

"The source of the obstacle in US-China aerospace cooperation is still in the Wolf Amendment," said Bian Zhigang, vice chair of the China National Space Administration. "If the U.S. truly wants to hope to began regular aerospace cooperation, I think they should take the appropriate measures to remove the obstacle."

The Wolf Amendment was enacted in 2011 and prevents direct U.S.-Chinese bilateral cooperation except in cases where the FBI can certify that there is no national security risk to sharing information with the Chinese side in the course of work.

Still, China could cooperate with scientists of other countries. It worked with the European Space Agency, France, Italy and Pakistan in the Chang'e 6 mission.

"China welcomes scientists from all coun-



AP PHOTO

tries to apply according to the processes and share in the benefits," said Liu Yunfeng, director of the international cooperation office of the China National Space Administration.

Meanwhile, little information about the global first achieved Tuesday was announced. Chinese officials declined to reveal how many samples they actually gathered or any preliminary findings.

"I'm afraid this matter will not be revealed until tomorrow, so I hope everyone can wait patiently for another day," Chang'e 6 chief designer Hu Hao said at the news conference.

On Monday, Chinese scientists said that they 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 mission had aimed to gather two kilograms (more than four pounds) of material.

The near side of the moon 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 and is much more difficult to reach.

The probe's journey to the far side of the moon was historic in that it was the first time a probe had successfully taken off and brought back samples from the far side directly. Previous samples thought to be from the far side of the moon are from meteorites found on Earth.

The probe had landed in the moon's South Pole-Aitken Basin, an impact crater created more than 4 billion years ago. The samples scientists are expecting will likely come from different layers of the basin, which will bear traces of the different geological events across its long chronology, such as when the moon was younger and had an active inside that could produce volcanic rock.

Officials did announce some future plans, with a planned Chang'e 7 probe to explore resources on the moon's South Pole. Further down the line, they have planned Tianwen-3 for around 2030 to carry out a Mars sample return mission and a Tianwen-4 Jupiter exploration mission. MDT/AP



France With just three days to go until the landmark legislative election, the country's far-right leader yesterday raised the question of who would be in charge of the military if her party takes over the government after the two-round balloting. The early elections are plunging France into uncharted territory, and political scientists are scrambling to interpret how exactly President Emmanuel Macron and a prime minister who is hostile to most of his policies will share power if Marine Le Pen's (pictured) National Rally wins the majority in the National Assembly, France's lower house of parliament.



Vatican went on trial in a London court, as a British financier sought to recover from the harm he said he suffered to his reputation as a result of a Vatican investigation into its 350 million euro (around \$375 million) investment in a London property. It is believed to be the first time the Holy See has been forced to stand trial in a foreign court. A Vatican tribunal has already convicted Raffaele Mincione of an embezzlement-related charge, and sentenced him to more than five years in prison, for his role in the London deal.



Honduras A defiant former President Juan Orlando Hernández (pictured) was sentenced in New York to 45 years in prison for teaming up with some bribe-paying drug traffickers for over a decade to ensure over 400 tons of cocaine made it to the United States. Judge P. Kevin Castel sentenced Hernández to 45 years in a U.S. prison and fined him \$8 million, saying that the penalty should serve as a warning to "well educated, well dressed" individuals who gain power and think their status insulates them from justice when they do wrong.