



**A COURT AUCTIONED OFF THE ASSETS BELONGING TO FORMER JUNKET MANAGER ACCUSED OF EMBEZZLING NEARLY HKD100 MILLION FROM A VIP ROOM**

P2

**DOMESTIC ABUSE CASE PROMPTS CALL FOR GREATER SUPPORT**

P3

**CHINESE FIRMS EYE MOROCCO AS WAY TO CASH IN ON US ELECTRIC VEHICLE SUBSIDIES**

P6



AP PHOTO



**India** Thousands of people at a religious gathering rushed to leave a makeshift tent, setting off a stampede Tuesday that killed at least 116 people and injured scores, officials said. It was not immediately clear what triggered the panic following an event with a Hindu guru known locally as Bhole Baba. Local news reports cited authorities who said heat and suffocation in the tent could have been a factor. Video of the aftermath showed the structure appeared to have collapsed.

AP PHOTO



**Australia** A state government minister said yesterday a 14-year-old boy accused of stabbing a student at the University of Sydney has faced charges that were dismissed by a court, while newspapers reported he was accused of threatening to shoot fellow students. The boy is the third Australian child to be accused of a stabbing attack linked to online radicalization since April, prompting authorities to warn parents to beware of internet dangers.

AP PHOTO



**United Nations** Human rights experts say Russia violated international law by imprisoning Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich (pictured) and should release him “immediately.” The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, made up of independent experts convened by the U.N.’s top human rights body, said there was a “striking lack of any factual or legal substantiation” for spying charges leveled against Gershkovich, 32.

More on backpage



# GREEN PASTURES

**Gov't commits to allocate idle land for public facilities and green spaces in bid to enhance quality of life, while committee warns vacant plots pose growing dengue fever**

P4

**URBAN PLANNING**  
**DISCUSSIONS UNDERWAY FOR NEW HOTEL NEAR RUINS OF ST. PAUL'S**

P3

**CASE CLOSED**  
**TOP COURT MAINTAINS ALVIN CHAU'S 18 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT**

P2



# COURT SELLS EX-JUNKET MANAGER'S ASSETS IN EMBEZZLEMENT CASE

VICTORIA CHAN

**T**HE Court of First Instance has auctioned off the assets belonging to former junket manager Chan Yan Hung, who is accused of embezzling nearly HKD100 million from a VIP room at L'Arc Macau in 2016. The court-ordered sale is a step towards recovering the stolen funds.

The Court of First Instance has taken a significant step towards recovering the embezzled funds from a former Macau junket manager, Chan Yan Hung.

Chan, who was vice president of VIP operations at L'Arc Macau, allegedly embezzled almost HKD100 million from a VIP room in 2016 before disappearing without a trace.

The casino promptly reported the case to the Macau police, who investigated it as fraud but were unable to locate Chan.

To address the debts left behind by Chan, the Court of First Instance ruled in May 2021 that his wife would be jointly liable for HKD20 million of her husband's debt,



despite her having already filed an application for a division of property.

Now, the court has announced the auction of Chan's assets.

The assets include two residential properties in Ocean Gardens, which were sold by

the court for nearly MOP7.6 million as well as a parking space in Ocean Gardens valued at MOP1 million. Furthermore, shares in three of Chan's companies will also be sold, although the total value of the sale is only MOP20,047.

The recovery of Chan's assets marks a significant development in the battle against embezzlement in Macau's VIP rooms.

Between 2014 and 2016, several cases involving the misappropriation of funds from VIP rooms came to light, drawing attention to the need for stricter regulations.

Notably, in 2021, the Court of Final Appeal of Macau held Wynn Macau Ltd and Dore Entertainment Company Limited jointly liable for stolen funds owed to a VIP customer.

These incidents have prompted Macau to implement a new Gaming Law in 2023, imposing stricter restrictions on junkets. The new laws prohibit junkets from entering revenue share contracts with concessionaires and from engaging in lending or borrowing money.

The auctioning of Chan Yan Hung's assets by the Court of First Instance is a significant step towards recovering the nearly HKD100 million embezzled from L'Arc Macau's VIP room in 2016.

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE Court of Final Appeal has dismissed appeals of the Suncity co-defendants, including former junket mogul Alvin Chau.

Chau's sentence of 18 years' imprisonment remains unchanged, marking the official closure of a landmark case that initiated the crackdown on junkets in the SAR.

In a statement, the Office of the President of the Court of Final Appeal said other co-defendants including Si Tou Chi Hou and Cheung Yat Ping Ellute were sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment, while Ali Celestino and Cheong Chi Kin, were sentenced to 12 years and six months' imprisonment.

Chau Chun Hee, Lou

Seak Fong, Wong Pak Ling Philip and Leong Su Weng were also sentenced between nine years' to 12 years and six months' imprisonment.

Chau was accused of making HKD17.66 billion and HKD7.2 billion from parallel betting as well as telephone and online betting.

He and two co-defendants had made about HKD616.97 million and RMB17 million in profit from money laundering.

Late last year, the middle court also ruled Chau and eight co-defendants must pay the government, jointly, for the amounts.

The management of the parallel betting companies held by Chau should also compensate the government for proceeds of parallel betting, jointly and severally.

## CASE CLOSED

# Suncity's Chau, co-defendants to pay HKD25 billion to gov't

In a statement yesterday, the final court maintained that all defendants should pay the Macau government "HKD24.865.076.093,70, which is the total value of the illicit proceeds obtained through the illicit exploitation of gambling."

Chau, the boss of the former casino intermediary, Suncity, has been sentenced to 18 years in prison for illegal gambling, running a triad and for major fraud, among other charges in January 2023.

Chau was charged with 289 allegations, of which



229 concern operating illicit gambling in authorized venues.

The court convicted him of 103 of the 229 allegations.

The remaining 126 charges were dropped due to the statute of limitations.

Chau was found guilty on 59 other charges and

was cleared of the charge related to money laundering.

Following the convictions, Chau has made multiple appeals.

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RENATO MARQUES



## URBAN PLANNING

# New hotel to potentially rise near Ruins of St. Paul's

RENATO MARQUES

A new hotel will potentially soon be built in an area close to the Ruins of Saint Paul's. The urban conditions plan (PCU) for the project was discussed yesterday afternoon at a meeting of the Urban Planning Committee.

The project will be in a land plot located between the Rua de Santo António and the Rua da Tercena, in

an area surrounded by the Calçada do Embaixador.

The project includes two plots (A and B) that will be connected, allowing the future development to be accessible from both streets.

The major concerns from the committee members came precisely regarding the access located at the Rua de Santo António which includes an old portal and a section of the old wall.

The plots are included in the

protected area of Macau's Historical Center and subjected to the so-called Plan of the Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro.

In the binding opinion of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) it is noted that both the Portal and the fencing wall need to be fully preserved and the building outlook should be "harmonized" with the portal and old wall style.

In the plot's A section (closer to the Portal), the building's ma-

ximum height is capped at 16.4 meters, while in the B section it is allowed to rise to 20.5 meters. The last two stories must be indented from the normal alignment of the building.

The total land plot area is 448 square meters and the information that it is to be a hotel was only revealed after committee members asked why the PCU only considered the purpose "Tourism and Leisure 1" (TD1), as opposed to other options of a commercial or residential nature.

At this time the director of the Land and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU), Lai Weng Leong, said no other purpose was considered as the bureau was following up on the request from the owner which was for the construction of a hotel unit.

Further explanation on the project paid by a staff of the DSSCU also noted that section B will include a portion that will be reserved for a public passage that will allow pedestrians to access between both sides of the slope and that will connect to the Pátio das Escondidas.

No reserved space for a parking lot was considered by DSSCU since, in its words, "the building type is of the 'M class' so there is no consideration to do in this case."

Currently, the land plot is occupied with a temporary private car park, not having any constructions on it.

According to information that the Times investigated, the hotel unit to be built on the plot is likely to be a budget hotel or inn, like several others that have been built in recent years in Macau's central district.

## MAINLAND MAN ARRESTED FOR IN-FLIGHT THEFT

A mainland Chinese man was arrested for stealing passengers' belongings during a flight from Singapore to Macau, causing losses totaling MOP23,000. After preliminary investigations, the suspect was indicted for qualified theft and placed in preventive detention to prevent escape, disturbance of public order and continuation of criminal activity. He is now awaiting trial and may face a prison sentence of up to five years.

## MONETARY INDICATORS SHOW MIXED TRENDS IN MAY

Macau's broad money supply (M2) grew 1.4% in May, even as currency in circulation and demand deposits declined, according to the latest statistics from the Monetary Authority of Macao. Resident deposits increased 1.4% from the previous month, while non-resident deposits rose 0.9%. Total deposits in the banking sector grew 1.1%. Domestic loans to the private sector increased 0.5%, while external loans jumped 3.8%. The overall loan-to-deposit ratio for both resident and non-resident sectors rose from 86.2% to 87.2%. The non-performing loan ratio ticked up from 4.3% in April to 4.4% in May.

## GOV'T RECOVER PARCEL OF LAND IN ZONE B

Yesterday, the SAR government initiated a collaborative clearance effort involving various departments to reclaim a parcel of state-owned land, spanning approximately 27,000 square meters in Zone B, that had been illegally occupied. The site is currently occupied by vehicles, containers, construction machinery, equipment, and miscellaneous items. The Public Works Bureau had previously commenced procedures for the vacation of the land, mandating that illegal occupants vacate and return the land to the SAR government within a specified timeframe.

VICTORIA CHAN

THE recent domestic violence case with serious criminal circumstances has sparked calls for increased efforts to combat and prevent such incidents.

The director of the Women's General Association of Macau, Wong Lei Lei, has emphasized the need for continued follow-up by judiciary and social assistance departments to protect victims' rights and help them escape cycles of abuse.

Wong urged victims to seek help bravely and use judicial procedures to prevent domestic violence from recurring.

Responding to the police details, Wong expressed deep concern over the abuser's repeated violence against his wife, underscoring the violation of the victim's dignity and human rights. This incident not only affects those involved but

# Domestic abuse case prompts call for greater support

also has a broader negative impact on society.

Wong stressed the importance of condemning such behavior and recommended comprehensive measures to address the issue.

Despite progress in increasing awareness, Wong acknowledged that domestic violence still persists due to underlying factors, such as economic constraints, housing instability, and concerns about children and family harmony.

Wong called on society to actively promote legal knowledge on the dangers of domestic violence, empowering victims, their loved ones, and even neighbors to identify and report potential cases promptly.

To provide long-term assistance, Wong suggested the government establish a comprehensive domestic violence family support plan, addressing employment, economic support, stable living environments, child care services, and legal assistance. This would strengthen victims' determination to seek help, break the cycle of abuse and foster a safer environment.

The Women's Association continues its efforts to achieve "zero domestic violence." The organization will provide shelter services while working to improve the "Law on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence" and associated support mechanisms.



On Tuesday, the Judiciary Police said that suspect for the most recent domestic violence case was engaged in drunken behavior, and accused the victim, his wife, of having an affair.

He allegedly stripped

her clothes, beat her, forced her to kneel and pray, tied her up with a telephone wire, and covered her mouth with a cloth. The abuse lasted for over two hours, leaving the victim's head and body injured in multiple places.



# Vacant land poses growing dengue fever, flooding risks

NADIA SHAW

As Macau grapples with heavy rainfall and high humidity this summer, idle plots lacking proper management are raising concerns.

These vacant, unmanaged plots have emerged as prime mosquito breeding grounds and are highly susceptible to flooding.

Local health authorities and health experts are continually warning residents to be on high alert for the growing threat of dengue fever.

The Aedes albopictus mosquito, which transmits the dengue virus, has become increasingly prevalent in the city, raising concerns about potential outbreaks.

Symptoms of dengue fever include fever, headaches, severe joint and muscle pain, and in severe cases, internal bleeding and organ impairment.

Compounding the issue, Macau has numerous vacant land plots. There are many idle pieces of land adjacent to residential buildings in Taipa, Seac Pai Wan, and Coloane.

In Taipa, there are four idle plots of land on Avenida Kwong Tung, with one of them successfully securing a construction bid last year. However, the BT8 lot failed to receive any bids, and the BT7 and BT9 lots were also not tendered.

The proposal is to use the future building space to build a multi-purpose complex that incorporates facilities such as parks, children's playgrounds and a sports center.

Some health experts are questioning the management of these areas, deeming them ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes due to their deteriorating sanitary conditions, according to the Social Advisory Committee.

The committee has urged cross-departmental cooperation to address this problem, calling for the planning and development of these vacant spaces into recreational facilities that can help reduce mosquito populations.

To mitigate the dengue fever risk, the committee has called on the Public Works Bureau, Municipal Affairs Bureau and Health Bureau establish a "joint mechanism" to improve the environment of idle land.

This could include installing mosquito control devices, conducting regular inspections, and strengthening monitoring of mosquito breeding conditions.

"In the summer, Macau has experienced continuous heavy rains, high temperature and humidity, and the mosquito problem is particularly prominent," said Ng Hong Kei from the committee.

"As we enter the summer vacation, residents' travel and passenger movements will increase the risk of cross-border spread of dengue fever."



# GOV'T COMMITS TO ALLOCATING IDLE LAND FOR CREATION OF ADDITIONAL PUBLIC FACILITIES

NADIA SHAW

The government has affirmed yesterday that the utilization of land reclaimed by the administration in the past few years will strictly adhere to the Land Law and the Urban Planning Law.

The primary goal is to enhance the quality of life of the population by establishing additional green areas and communal amenities, according to a statement released yesterday by the Public Works Bureau.

The bureau emphasized

its adherence to land laws and regulations in managing the city's limited land resources, adding that the government reviews applications for temporary use of state-owned land and only approves those that provide public benefits.

Recent examples include the seaside area near the Kun Iam Statue, Hac Sá Temporary Green and Leisure Area and the recently announced "Macau Outdoor Performance Area" next to Grand Lisboa Palace and Lisboaeta Macau.

When the government

implements the final use of the land, it will reclaim the temporarily utilized areas. This measured approach ensures that state-owned land benefits the public, rather than sitting idle. It can be said that it is reserved as a land bank for future public uses aligned with Macau's development policies and urban planning.

In the statement, the bureau remarked that about 26% of the 720,000 square meters of "state-owned land" has been used for public facilities like gover-

ment offices, elderly housing, and public housing.

The city's Master Plan proposes to divide Macau into eight zones by land use and 18 planning districts to facilitate detailed zoning and provide development parameters. It aims to increase land for commercial use to 4% of the total area, up from the current 0.6%, by adding more commercial areas clustered around residential zones to reduce commuting time and ease traffic congestion, enhancing accessibility and connectivity.

RENATO MARQUES

The Monetary Authority of Macau (AMCM) has issued a warning to the public regarding a series of fake, sponsored advertisements that appear to have been issued by Macau banking institutions, which have been surfacing on several social media platforms.

According to the AMCM, several banks have been impersonated by the same type of fraudulent ad, which offers "emergency loans" for people in Macau, including foreigners.

The Times has reviewed several of these ads, both in Chinese and English. They offer different types of loans according to different age groups, promising

# AMCM ISSUES WARNING OVER FAKE SOCIAL MEDIA BANK LOAN ADS

free applications and "approvals within three minutes."

The AMCM has warned the public to not trust this type of advertising and to not click on any links associated with the fraud, so as to avoid financial loss.

"We hereby advise the public not to rely on online loan advertisements and to seek financial services through the channels provided by local, authorized financial institutions. The list of authorized financial institutions, their websites, and contact details are available on our website (www.amcm.gov.mo)," the

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

**Emergency Loans**



The Macau Ministry of Finance announced that from June 1, people aged 45 and above (including foreigners) can apply for emergency loans free of charge.

**Born1940-1960  
See the amount**

**Born1960-1990  
See the amount**

authority noted.

It also advised those who had provided personal information, bank card numbers or

bank account information, including passwords, through the scam's hyperlinks to immediately contact their

financial institution(s) and call the Judiciary Police's (PJ) fraud prevention hotline on 8800 7777, or the hotline for reporting fraud on 993.

According to PJ, the force has recently received reports of seven cases of phishing text messages pretending to be from telecommunications companies, which have led victims to lose MOP262,000.

After the victims followed links in the text messages and entered personal information, such as credit card data, scammers used the information to make international purchases.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



This five-storey building will offer both retail and restaurant facilities, drawing design features from the merchant properties that historically occupied the site.

The other five projects will contribute an additional 20,000 square feet of commercial space to the village, adopting a more contemporary design with bright, spacious retail areas and airy, open terraces.

Pamela Chan, managing director of Taipa Village Destination, an affiliate of Sniper Capital, said, "Our latest ventures represent a substantial investment in Taipa Village's future. The projects' innovative designs draw inspiration from the area's rich history, creating attractive settings that resonate with the cultural charm of the neighborhood."

She said the new properties, located close to more than 30,000 hotel rooms on Cotai, are curated to cater to the growing number of visitors flocking to Taipa Village.

Through sensitive refurbishment, repurposing and redevelopment of local village houses, the firm, in collaboration with Taipa Village Destination, has transformed the area into one of Macau's most distinctive districts.

Chan expressed enthusiasm about continuing to work closely with local authorities to optimize the neighborhood's environment and introduce more creative venues that will further elevate Taipa Village's cultural and lifestyle appeal.

## GAMING

# Casino projected for EBITDA decline in Q2

**T**HE earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) for Macau's gaming industry properties are expected to decline 4% in the second quarter of 2024.

According to a report from Morgan Stanley analysts Praveen K. Choudhary and Gareth Leung, gaming operators' operating expenses are forecasted to increase 3-4% quarter-on-quarter.

Increase in operating expenses for gaming operators is the primary reason for the decline, though they noted reinvestment costs could be flattening.

In June, Macau recorded its lowest monthly gross gaming revenue (GGR) this year at MOP17.69 billion, down 12% from the previous month. The figure recovered to 74% of the pre-pandemic level in 2019.

"We think June GGR number is positive amidst several concerns for the sector: (1) no free snacks for non-gamblers,

(2) fewer referral programs, and (3) weaker retail sales and China macros," the analysts wrote.

Morgan Stanley also projected Macau's second quarter gross gambling revenue would fall 2% quarter-on-quarter to USD7.1 billion, reaching 77% recovery versus pre-pandemic level.

Another brokerage, Citibank, said Macau's daily gambling revenue run rate is expected to rebound from seasonal lows around mid-July.

Citibank analysts forecast July revenue reaching MOP19 billion, translating to a daily average of MOP613 million and a 78% recovery compared to 2019. Despite recent declines, Citibank maintains a full-year growth estimate of 26%.

If Morgan Stanley and Citibank projections hold true, Macau gaming companies can expect earnings weakness, though stabilization may lie ahead in the seasonal summer months. VC



## PROPERTY

# Sniper Capital targets Taipa Village for six new projects

VICTORIA CHAN

**S**NIPEr Capital, a real estate investment firm, has unveiled plans for six new property projects in the heart of Taipa Village.

The latest ventures will introduce an additio-

nal 50,000 square feet of commercial space, transforming and enhancing Taipa Village's shopping, leisure, and dining offerings.

The new developments, scheduled for progressive completion by 2025, feature expansive al fresco terraces and flexible

layouts designed for both food and beverage and retail operations.

The flagship project, covering more than 30,000 square feet, will boast a generous 50-meter frontage within a spacious pedestrianized square in the heart of Taipa Village.

## CORPORATE BITS

### MGM x RRIHK culinary masters concludes gastronomy journey



Over 400 guests from 10 countries gathered at MGM COTAI June 28-30 for the

conclusion of Asia's only MGM x RRIHK Culinary Masters event. Six internationally

renowned chefs from hailing from those Asian, European, and Middle Eastern regions along the historic Silk Road collaborated to produce an unprecedented 12-course dinner.

The meal paid tribute to the evolution of culinary exchange along the Silk Road through innovative fusion of ingredients and techniques. Guests delighted in dishes showcasing the artistic influence of Middle Eastern, European, and Asian cooking traditions.

Also, participants enjoyed hands-on cooking sessions with celebrity chefs, cultural tours, and a community engagement activity where over 140 local culinary students joined demonstrations.

### Sands China awarded top training program honor



Sands China Ltd. has received the prestigious 2023 Excellence in Practice Award from the Association for Talent Development for its "The Knowledge - Be a Londoner Guide" training program.

The award underscores

Sands China's commitment to talent development and continuous investment in team members, said Paulo Cheong, vice president of human resources. "Receiving this esteemed award from ATD is truly an honor," Cheong said.

The training program at The Londoner Macao empowers over 6,000 team members to create memorable guest experiences. Since launching in 2021, "The Knowledge" has earned acclaim from Asia Pacific HR groups and significantly enhanced professionalism and brand awareness at The Londoner Macao.

Sands China's dedication to training is evidenced by averaging 88.3 training hours per team member in 2023, far exceeding the ATD standard of 40.6 hours. This commitment has earned numerous honors for the integrated resort operator focusing on retention, work-life balance, and team member experience.



## AUTOMOBILE

# Chinese firms eye Morocco as way to cash in on US electric vehicle subsidies

SAM METZ, TANGIERS

**A**FTER the United States passed new subsidies designed to boost domestic electric vehicle production and cut into Beijing's supply chain dominance, Chinese manufacturers began investing in an unlikely place: Morocco.

In the rolling hills near Tangiers and in industrial parks near the Atlantic Ocean, they have announced plans for new factories to make parts for EVs that may qualify for \$7,500 credits to car buyers in the United States.

Similar investments have been announced in other countries that share free trade agreements with the United States, including South Korea and Mexico.

But few countries have seen the kind of boom that Morocco has.

At least eight Chinese battery makers have announced new investments in the North African kingdom since President Joe Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act, the \$430 billion U.S. law designed to fight climate change, according to an Associated Press tally.

By moving operations to U.S. trading partners like Morocco, Chinese players that have long dominated the battery supply chain are seeking a pathway to cash in on increasing demand from American carmakers like Tesla and General Motors, said Kevin Shang, a senior battery analyst at the consulting firm Wood Mackenzie.

"Chinese companies definitely don't want to miss this big party," he said.

The United States and European Union have both imposed major new tariffs on Chinese vehicle imports since May. The United States also finalized eligibility rules governing the tax credits in May. The latter limit companies with ties to U.S. adversaries, but give carmakers time to reduce their reliance on China. To qualify for the subsidies, carmakers cannot source critical minerals or battery parts from manufacturers in which China and other "foreign entities of concern" control more than 25% of the company or its board.

Critics say the rules are a giveaway to China and will extend its EV dominance. The Biden administration says the rules pave the way for billions



in investment in EV manufacturing in the United States.

**BETWEEN EAST AND WEST**

In Morocco, a largely agrarian economy where the median income is \$2,150 a month, giant industrial parks full of American, European and Chinese component makers have sprung up in the rural outskirts of Tangiers, Kenitra and El Jadida.

Expanding on infrastructure that has made Morocco a car manufacturing hub, they hope to meet growing demand and overcome rules designed to exclude them from the incentives the Inflation Reduction Act is injecting into the U.S. car market, the world's second-largest.

The rules "have led Chinese producers to increase investment in countries with whom the US has free trade agreements, namely South Korea and Morocco, to get past some IRA barriers," the policy research firm Rhodium Group said in a report earlier this year.

Some of the new China investments in Morocco explicitly cite the new U.S. subsidies as a reason.

Many are joint ventures that have cited their ability to tinker with board seats and governance to comply with U.S. rules.

That includes CNGR, one of China's largest battery cathode producers, which in September announced a \$2 billion plan to build what it called a "base in the world and pan-Atlantic region" in a joint venture with the

Moroccan royal family's investment group, Al Mada.

Though CNGR owns slightly more than a 50% stake in the project, Thorsten Lahrs, CEO of its Europe division, said he's confident its cathodes can qualify for the tax credits and change its board composition if necessary. If not, the company would pivot to other markets, including Europe, which just hiked tariffs on electric vehicles imported from China.

"To ride the wave of the IRA, you have to execute fast and comply with its regulations," he said in an interview before the U.S. finalized its rules. "We have flexibility to be able to comply with all the changes in interpretation or rules."

The Chinese battery projects include at least three joint ventures and several that reference Morocco's trade ties with the United States.

The largest among them is Chinese-German battery-maker Gotion High-Tech, which signed a deal with Morocco last year for \$6.4 billion investment to construct Africa's first electric vehicle battery factory.

Investments also include Youshan, a joint venture backed by Korean giant LG Chem and China's Huayou Cobalt. It declined to provide details about the size of their investment but said the Morocco base means their cathodes "will be supplied to the North American market and subsidized by the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act as Morocco is a

signatory to the U.S. Free Trade Agreement."

LG Chem said the venture would adjust ownership shares as necessary to comply with U.S. rules.

China's BTR Group's announcement of a cathode factory in April noted that Morocco's trade status with the United States and Europe would ensure "a seamless entry for the majority of its manufactured products into these regions."

Abdelmonim Amachraa, a supply chain expert who previously worked in Morocco's Ministry of Industry and Trade, said Morocco was profiting from its "ability to coexist when a link can't be found between China and the United States."

Officials in Morocco have publicly and privately worked to foster ties up and down the automotive supply chain in both the East and the West. The country hosts more than 250 companies that manufacture cars or their components, including Stellantis and Renault as well as Chinese, Japanese, American and Korean factories that make seats, engines, shock absorbers and wheels. The industry exports almost \$14 billion in cars and parts annually.

As the world transitions to electric vehicles, Morocco may appear to be a surprising beneficiary as China, the United States and Europe compete for market share. But its officials worry that anti-competitive policies like tariffs and subsidies could ultimately make it more difficult to lure investment.

Ryad Mezzour, the country's minister of industry and trade, said in an interview that all the new investment doesn't tell the full story. Morocco has also lost out on some projects due to what he called "a new age of protectionism."

**A GIANT LOOPHOLE**

The investment has been a boon to countries like Morocco. But in Washington, Chinese firms have raised alarm by angling to access the American subsidies.

"Under the Biden administration's electric vehicle regulations, America's working families will have to watch their hard-earned tax dollars go to line the pockets of Chinese billionaires and businesses with links to the Chinese Communist Party," U.S. Rep. Jason Smith, a Missouri Republican, said of the new guidelines.

But at issue are the complexities of both the electric vehicle supply chain and the Inflation Reduction Act, which seeks to grow adoption of EVs and boost domestic manufacturing, too.

The U.S. Energy and Treasury departments have tried to strike a delicate balance, working to reduce reliance on Chinese manufacturers while also ensuring enough vehicles qualify for the credits. The Department of Energy did not respond to questions about what its rules meant for Chinese investments in countries that share free trade agreements with the United States. But in a statement, a spokesperson called the transition to electric vehicles "an industry-wide, global trend" and said new policies "help the US strengthen its energy security and competitiveness—including outcompeting China."

China has spent years subsidizing companies that extract critical battery minerals, manufacturers of cathodes, anodes and electrolyzers and carmakers like BYD. Those companies' eagerness to invest in Morocco to cash in on the Inflation Reduction Act shows how decoupling Chinese manufacturers from the supply chain will take years, if not decades, said Chris Berry, an adviser to battery companies and investors. "There is not going to be a lithium ion battery supply chain that does not have Chinese influence for a long time," Berry said. **MDT/AP**



DISPUTED SEA

# China and the Philippines hold crucial talks to ease tensions after intense clash

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

**C**HINA and the Philippines held a crucial meeting Tuesday to try to ease mounting tensions following their worst confrontation in the disputed South China Sea that sparked fears of a wider conflict that could involve the United States.

There was no mention of any major agreement, however, after the daylong meeting in Manila that could prevent a repeat of the June 17 clash at Second Thomas Shoal which caused injuries to Filipino navy personnel and damaged two military boats.

The shoal off the northwestern Philippines has emerged as the most dangerous flashpoint in the disputed waters, which China claims virtually in its entirety. Chinese coast guard, navy and suspected militia ships have surrounded the Philippine marines aboard a grounded ship to prevent delivery of food and other supplies to Manila's territorial outpost.

The Chinese and Philippine delegations "affirmed their commitment to de-escalate tensions without prejudice to



Philippine Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro, left, and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Chen Xiaodong

their respective positions," the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said in a statement Tuesday night. "There was substantial progress on developing measures to manage the situation at sea, but significant differences remain."

Philippine Foreign Undersecretary Theresa Lazaro told her Chinese counterpart, Vice Foreign Minister Chen Xiaodong, "that the Philippines will be relentless in protecting its

interests and upholding its sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction" in the South China Sea, according to the Philippine side.

The Chinese government did not immediately issue any statement about the talks.

An agreement was signed to improve communications during emergencies at sea and both sides agreed to continue talks on enhancing ties between their coast guards but no

details were provided. Another confidence-building plan was the convening of an academic forum among scientists and academics to improve marine scientific cooperation.

Ahead of the meeting, the Philippines planned to formally ask China's delegation to return at least seven rifles that Chinese coast guard personnel seized during the June 17 faceoff at the shoal and pay for damage, a Philippine official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity for lack of authority to discuss the sensitive matter publicly.

The Asian neighbors first agreed to hold what they call the Bicameral Consultation Mechanism meetings in 2017 to peacefully manage their conflicts. But despite the on-and-off talks, the confrontations have persisted especially under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who, unlike his predecessor, has nurtured closer defense ties with the United States as a counterweight to China.

Under Marcos, who took office in 2022, the Philippines launched a campaign to expose aggressive Chinese actions by making public videos and pho-

tographs and allowing journalists to join coast guard patrol ships, which have figured in dangerous faceoffs with Beijing's forces.

The U.S. has no claims to the contested waters, but it has deployed warships and fighter jets for patrols that it says aim to ensure freedom of navigation and overflight and to reassure allies like the Philippines and Japan, which similarly has territorial disputes with China over islands in the East China Sea.

After last month's confrontation in Second Thomas Shoal, where Chinese forces were caught on video brandishing machetes, an axe and improvised spears, Washington renewed a warning that it's obligated to help defend the Philippines under the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty if Filipino forces, including the coast guard, come under an armed attack, including in the South China Sea.

Marcos said the Chinese actions would not activate the treaty because no shots were fired but stressed that the Philippines would continue to defend its territorial interests at all costs. **MDT/AP**

MALAYSIA

# Court tosses jailed ex-Prime Minister Najib's bid to serve graft sentence in house arrest

**A** Malaysian court yesterday dismissed a bid by imprisoned former Prime Minister Najib Razak to serve his remaining corruption sentence under house arrest.

In an April application, Najib said he had clear information that then-King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah issued an addendum order allowing him to finish his sentence under house arrest. Najib claimed the addendum was issued during a Jan. 29 pardons board meeting chaired by Sultan Abdullah, which also cut his 12-year jail sentence by half and sharply reduced a fine.

Najib's counsel, Mohamed Shafee Abdullah, said it was disappointing for the High Court to rule Wednes-

day that the government has "no legal duty" to verify if such an order existed. He said they would file an appeal.

"The court said there is no legal duty but in terms of ethics, the government should have answered," Shafee told a news conference at the court building.

In his application, Najib has accused the pardons board, home minister, attorney-general and four others of concealing the sultan's order "in bad faith." Sultan Abdullah hails from Najib's hometown in Pahang. He ended his five-year reign on Jan. 30 under Malaysia's unique rotating monarchy system. A new king took office Jan. 31.

Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said he had



Former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak

no knowledge of such an order as he wasn't a member of the pardons board. The others named in Najib's application have not made any public comments.

Shafee said Najib's application was not based on

hearsay but that there was "digital evidence" of the addendum as Trade Minister Zafrul Aziz had taken a snapshot of it on his mobile phone when told by Sultan Abdullah. He said the government's silence also implied

there is such an addendum order.

"One thing is clear, not one person or any government institutions have said that this addendum doesn't exist. If it doesn't exist, just say so. ... If the government dare says clearly there is no addendum, we can all go home and sleep," he said.

Najib, 70, served less than two years of his sentence before it was commuted by the pardons board. His sentence is now due to end Aug. 23, 2028. He was charged and found guilty in a corruption case linked to the multibillion-dollar looting of state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad.

The pardons board didn't give any reason for its decision and wasn't required to explain. But the move has

prompted a public outcry on why Najib appeared to be given special privileges compared to other prisoners.

The Malaysian Bar, which represents over 20,000 lawyers, filed an application to challenge the pardons board decision that it said was illegal, unconstitutional and invalid. It said the decision made a mockery of Najib's other ongoing criminal cases. The hearing for the Bar's challenge started this week.

Najib set up the 1MDB development fund shortly after he took office in 2009. Investigators allege at least \$4.5 billion was stolen from the fund and laundered by Najib's associates through layers of bank accounts in the United States and other countries, financed Hollywood films and extravagant purchases that included hotels, a luxury yacht, art and jewelry. More than \$700 million landed in Najib's bank accounts. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO



President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, left, and Chinese President Xi Jinping attend an official welcome ceremony at the palace in Astana, Kazakhstan, yesterday

## this day in history

### 1995 MAJOR WINS CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP



The Prime Minister, John Major, has won his battle to remain leader of the Conservative Party. Mr Major received backing from 218 of the party's MPs in the leadership ballot.

His sole challenger, John Redwood, got 89 votes.

There were eight abstentions with 12 spoilt papers. Two Conservative MPs failed to vote.

Mr Major's victory represented support from two-thirds of the parliamentary party - more than enough to win the contest outright in the first round.

"I believe that has put to rest any question and speculation about the leadership of the Conservative Party up to and beyond the next general election," Mr Major said.

The prime minister's resignation as leader of the Conservative Party last month was widely seen as a ploy to bring to a head deep divisions in the party over the highly contentious issue of Europe.

There were also persistent rumours of a leadership challenge from inside the cabinet.

But Michael Portillo and Kenneth Clarke - both floated as possible leadership contenders - backed the prime minister.

The defeated challenger, John Redwood, who resigned as Welsh Secretary to contest the party leadership, moved swiftly to congratulate the prime minister.

"He won fair and square under the rules and I pay tribute to that victory," he said.

"I and my colleagues have fought a strong campaign - we have raised many important issues."

Mr Redwood attracted support from those in the party who wanted a tougher approach to growing European integration.

But his distant and unemotional manner earned him the nickname 'Mr Spock' or 'The Vulcan' after the character from the television series, Star Trek.

John Major is now expected to re-assert his authority with an immediate cabinet reshuffle.

CourtesyBBCNews

# Leaders of Russia and China meets in Central Asian summit in a show of deepening cooperation

EMMA BURROWS

**R**USSIAN President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping is meeting for the second time in as many months as they visit Kazakhstan for a session of an international group founded to counter Western alliances.

Putin and Xi last got together in May when the Kremlin leader visited Beijing to underscore their close partnership that opposes the U.S.-led democratic order and seeks to promote a more "multipolar" world.

Now they'll be holding meetings amid the annual session of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization until today in the Kazakh capital of Astana.

A look at the summit:

## WHAT IS THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION?

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was established in 2001 by China and Russia to discuss security concerns in Central Asia and the wider region. Other members are Iran, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Observer states and dialogue partners include Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

## WHO'S ATTENDING THIS YEAR?

Besides Putin and Xi, and summit host President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, other leaders there will be Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan,

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan, President Emomali Rakhmon of Tajikistan, and President Sadyr Zhaparov of Kyrgyzstan. President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus will attend because his nation is becoming a full member.

Iran is still choosing a successor to President Ebrahim Raisi, killed in a helicopter crash in May, with a runoff election Friday, so acting President Mohammad Mokhbar will attend.

Other guests of the SCO include President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey and President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan.

Also present will be U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres, who is visiting Central Asia. Guterres wants "to position the U.N. as an inclusive organization that's talking to all the big clubs," said Alexander Gabuev, director of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center.

## WHAT SCO LEADERS WON'T BE THERE?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India is sending his foreign minister. Indian media reports speculated the recently reelected Modi was busy with the parliament session that began last week. He attended the recent Group of Seven summit in Italy, and some reports also speculated he wants to balance India's relationship with Russia and the West.

## WHAT ARE THEIR GOALS?

Putin wants to show that Russia is not isolated over Western sanctions from the

invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

An arrest warrant has been issued for him by the International Criminal Court for war crimes, accusing him of personal responsibility for abductions of children from Ukraine. Kazakhstan is not party to the Rome Statute and thus is not obliged to arrest him.

For Putin, the meeting is about "prestige and the symbolic optics that he's not alone," Gabuev said.

The meeting is another chance for Putin and Xi to demonstrate the strong personal ties in their "strategic partnership" as they both face soaring tensions with the West.

Putin's meeting with Xi in May showed how China has offered diplomatic support to Moscow and is a top market for its oil and gas. Russia has relied on Beijing as a main source of high-tech imports to keep its military machine running.

The SCO helps China project its influence, especially across Central Asia and the Global South. Xi called for "bridges of communication" between countries last week and wants to further promote China as an alternative to the U.S. and its allies.

Erdogan could use the meeting to hold talks with Putin, who has postponed several visits to Turkey. The leader of the NATO member has balanced relations with both Russia and Ukraine since the war began, frequently

offering to serve as a mediator.

For host Kazakhstan and the other Central Asian nations, the meeting is a way to further their cooperation with bigger, more powerful neighbors. Kazakhstan, for instance, frequently engages with both neighboring Russia and China, while also pursuing links with the West, with visits this year from U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and British Foreign Secretary David Cameron.

## WHAT WILL BE DISCUSSED?

Countering terrorism is a key focus. Russia had what it has called two terrorist attacks this year, with more 145 people killed by gunmen at a Moscow concert hall in March, and at least 21 people were killed in attacks on police and houses of worship in the southern republic of Dagestan in June. In the March violence, the U.S. warned Russian officials about the possibility of an attack — information that was dismissed by Moscow.

The SCO is not a collective security or economic alliance, and there are "significant security differences between its members," said Nigel Gould-Davies, a senior fellow for Russia and Eurasia with the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London and a former British ambassador to Belarus. The "principal value" of the organization lies in the optics of non-Western countries gathering together, he added.

MDT/AP



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## YOUR STARS



### ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Communication gets lucky today. Use it to cut through chaos and illusions. Gently and patiently maintain focus. Edit carefully. Keep your story on track.



### TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Lucrative opportunities develop. Follow the rules. Hold onto what you get. There's a power play in progress. Track your earnings. There's plenty available.



### GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You're especially attractive and charismatic. Don't let this distract you. Focus on advancing a personal project. Ignore naysayers. Take one practical step at a time.



### CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Listen to your intuition; it's trying to tell you something. Tune out noise, crowds and distractions. Stick to practical plans and priorities. Get peaceful.



### LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Others vie for your attention. Stay out of somebody else's argument. Make a fortunate connection, despite chaos, confusion or illusions. Share a common cause.



### VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Stick to the job at hand. Ignore gossip, rumors or distractions. Schedule carefully. You may need to make a mess. Clean up later.



### LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Explore and investigate the possibilities. Allow for spontaneous detours. Stay flexible and follow a curious thread for magical discoveries. Learn new tricks. Consider all options.



### SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Collaborate for shared benefits. Avoid reckless spending, despite a temporary sense of overload. Optimism rules. Keep things simple. Reduce expensive frills. Contribute to savings.



### SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Discuss ideas with your partner. Anticipate disagreement. Share interesting proposals. Keep an open mind to find solutions that work for both of you.



### CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Prioritize physical health and fitness. Nurture yourself. Spontaneous opportunities are worth pursuing. Stay respectful, despite confusion. Discover something new.



### AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Keep an open mind. Accept fun opportunities. Get creative. Adjust schedules as needed. Share a delightful connection with someone special. Allow for spontaneous romance.



### PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Indulge your domestic homebody side. Bake something delicious. Enjoy a home decoration or renovation project. It may take a mess for a beautiful change.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



## SUDOKU

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

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

## WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	21	32	cloudy
Changchun	17	24	cloudy
Chengdu	23	30	rain
Chongqing	24	32	thunderstorms
Fuzhou	27	38	fine
Guangzhou	27	35	cloudy
Guiyang	20	26	cloudy
Haikou	26	33	cloudy
Hangzhou	26	37	fine
Harbin	18	26	rain
Hefei	26	35	cloudy
Nanjing	26	34	cloudy
Shanghai	28	36	fine
Taipei	26	33	cloudy
Wuhan	24	33	fine
Hong Kong	29	32	thunderstorms
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	21	34	sunny
Frankfurt	11	22	cloudy
Paris	12	22	cloudy
London	13	19	sunny
New York	22	28	cloudy

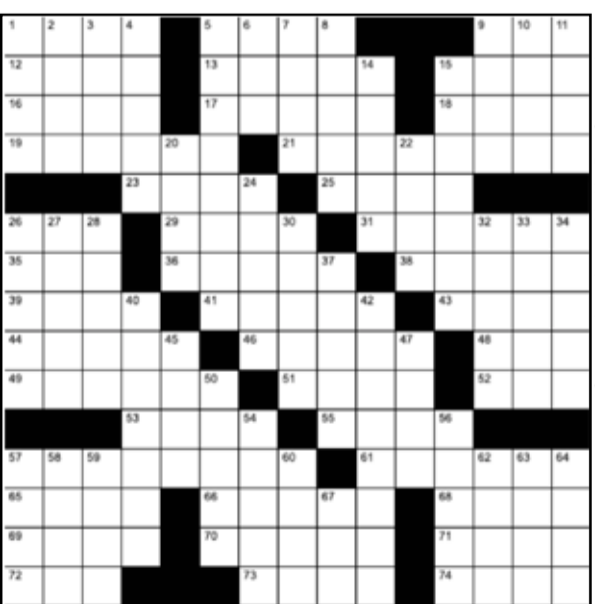
## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1-Bruins' sch.; 5- Fortuneteller; 9- Lisa, to Bart, briefly; 12- Narrow cut; 13- Conceals; 15- Heavenly strings; 16- Church service; 17- Bridge bid, briefly; 18- Opera solo; 19- Become visible; 21- Not a direct hit; 23- Opposed to; 25- Notable times; 26- Small battery size; 29- Takes home; 31- Half-hour funny show; 35- Sun. speech; 36- Cravat; 38- Inclines; 39- Discontinue; 41- Pulsate; 43- Felt sorry about; 44- "Delta of Venus" author Nir; 46- Affirmatives; 48- Sellout sign; 49- Stewart of home tips; 51- Zaire's Mobutu \_\_\_\_ Seko; 52- Serpentine shape; 53- Something to fill out; 55- Greek vowels; 57- You're on!; 61- Monetary unit of Indonesia; 65- Blunt; 66- Excuse; 68- Sock \_\_\_\_ me!; 69- And others, briefly; 70- Rose; 71- Collar type; 72- Summer mo.; 73- Diarist Frank; 74- Auld Lang \_\_\_\_;

DOWN 1- West Point initials.; 2- Give it up for a performer?; 3- Speech problem; 4- Cruising; 5- Least lengthy; 6- Ich bin \_\_\_\_ Berliner; 7- Steinbeck: East of \_\_\_\_; 8- Actress Zellweger; 9- Indian garment; 10- Coloured part of the eye; 11- Body shops?; 14- Flies high; 15- Short-tailed, burrowing rodent; 20- Tolstoy's Karenina; 22- Banister; 24- Like a mosquito bite; 26- Indian state; 27- Big name in insurance; 28- Bellowing; 30- Sensitive spots; 32- Bring about; 33- Lulus; 34- Windows predecessor; 37- We're off \_\_\_\_ the Wizard; 40- Trap for the unwary; 42- Straddle; 45- Not barefoot; 47- Linebacker Junior; 50- Bailiwicks; 54- Island near Sicily; 56- Secret agents; 57- New thought; 58- Ballerina's skirt; 59- Smelting waste; 60- Large cat; 62- \_\_\_\_-bitty; 63- Like \_\_\_\_ of bricks; 64- Put an edge on; 67- \_\_\_\_ voyage!

**Yesterday's solution**

EMMA	START	YATS
LOAN	CEDAR	HIMOS
STNA	ARENA	RBIS
CONCERN	SOILS	
IRANI	OLAS	SLOB
HOLDS	AMASSING	
ELLA	EAGLE	SRMA
ALA	NASAL	STELL
REHEARSE	MIDAS	
RAVES	LENORE	
ELEV	KDITS	ONNA
ELIE	TAROT	ONAT
FINN	DRESS	YENS



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



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EURO 2024 | REVIEW

# MUCH-IMPROVED NETHERLANDS BEATS TO REACH FIRST QUARTERFINAL IN 16 YEARS

DANIELLA MATAR, MUNICH

NETHERLANDS 3, ROMANIA 0

**T**HE Netherlands could be peaking at just the right time.

The Dutch team reached its first European Championship quarterfinal in 16 years with a 3-0 win over Romania on Tuesday after its best performance by far at Euro 2024.

Cody Gakpo broke the deadlock in the 20th minute and substitute Donyell Malen scored two late goals to send the Dutch to their first quarterfinal in the tournament since 2008.

"I think the whole performance today was outstanding and that's what we need to have a chance to continue in this tournament," coach Ronald Koeman said. "This is the level. If you go down in that level, then we don't reach the final."

The Netherlands had missed a plethora of earlier opportunities to add to the lead and captain Virgil van Dijk also hit the woodwork. It was nevertheless a much-improved display compared to its disappointing group stage performance, which ended in a 3-2 loss to Austria.

Koeman's side could get a quick rematch in Berlin on Saturday if Austria beats Turkey in the final round of 16 match later Tuesday.

"Sometimes it's difficult to explain why you play bad," Koeman said. "Even today, the start was difficult. They were really aggressive. But finally we found our ball position."

"What we created was good football ... Maybe one critical point was that it took too long to score the second one. ... It's difficult to explain why one time you play badly and the next time you are really sharp from the beginning."

It was nevertheless a match to remember for Romania and its loud mass of yellow-clad fans, who have lit up the tournament. It was only the second time Romania had qualified for the knockout stage at a European Championship and it did so as group winner.

The bouncing yellow wall at one end of the stadium gave its team such a magnificent send-off — singing and applauding the players long after the final whistle — that it was almost as though Romania had won the game.

"Today we ended a great story, which we started two years ago. We continued that story here in Germany along with the fans of the national team," Romania coach Edward Iordnescu said. "The team gave a great effort, but

AP PHOTO



Netherlands' Donyell Malen celebrates after scoring his side's third goal during a round of sixteen match between Romania and the Netherlands



Denzel Dumfries of the Netherlands fights for the ball against Romania's Valentin Mihaila

there is some sadness.

"We wanted more, but we gave our all. Thank you to my lads, the supporters and Romanians everywhere in the world who supported us."

Romania had dominated possession until Gakpo's goal, but never really tested Netherlands goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen. Instead the opener came when Xavi Simons surged forward before finding Gakpo on the left. The Liverpool forward cut inside the blue-haired Andrei Răduț and fired into the near bottom corner.

It was Gakpo's third goal of the tournament, making him joint top scorer along with Germany's Jamal Musiala, Georgia's Giorgi Mamaladze and Slovakia's

"We tried to surprise the Netherlands today and I think it worked well until the 20th minute," Iordnescu said.

The goal seemed to give the Dutch confidence and they had several chances to extend their lead. A huge section of their orange-clad fans thought they scored again six minutes later when Stefan de Vrij was allowed a free header on a corner but he planted it just wide of the right post, rippling the sidenetting.

A combination of good goalkeeping from Florian Ni and wayward finishing from the Dutch kept Romania firmly in the match until seven minutes from time.

Van Dijk also saw a header come off the right post in the se-

cond half and Gakpo had a goal chalked off for offside, but turned provider when he managed to just keep the ball in play, under pressure from Radu Drăguș, and prodded it back from the byline for Malen to poke home.

And the Dutch capped a dominant performance in stoppage time when Simons released Malen for a surging run from the halfway line before slotting past Ni.

Not only did Malen have to dodge the Romanian defense, which had rushed back to frantically try to close him down, but he also had to cut around a shoe on the field — presumably thrown by a Romanian fan behind the goal.

Ni had kicked away the other shoe from the same pair as Malen was bearing down on his goal. **MDT/AP**

## SCOREBOARD

Round of 16	<b>Switzerland</b>	<b>2</b>	0	Italy
Round of 16	<b>Germany</b>	<b>2</b>	0	Denmark
Round of 16	<b>England</b>	<b>2</b>	1	Slovakia
Round of 16	<b>Spain</b>	<b>4</b>	1	Georgia
Round of 16	Romania	0	<b>3</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>
Round of 16	Austria	1	<b>2</b>	<b>Turkey</b>



EURO 2024 | REVIEW

# Mert Gunok's wonder-save sparks Turkish celebrations, and praise from Austrian rivals

A moment of Mert Gunok brilliance sparked celebrations for Turkish fans and a big exclamation from Austria rival Michael Gregoritsch, who described it as one of the best saves he'd ever seen.

Goalkeeper Gunok pulled off one of the saves of the European Championship deep into injury time on Tuesday to secure Turkey's place in the quarterfinals.

He leaped instinctively into a full-stretch dive to his right to palm away a close-range header from Austria's Christoph Baumgartner four minutes into stoppage time, preserving his team's 2-1 win and preventing the round-of-16 match from going into extra time.

"I think that's one of the best saves I've ever seen live on the field," Gregoritsch said. "You have to give credit to the Turkish goalkeeper because I think it was extremely difficult to stop. Unbelievable, really."

Austria coach Ralf Rangnick was asked if the goal reminded him of England goalkeeper Gordon Banks' famous stop to deny Pelé at the 1970 World Cup.

"True," he replied. **MDT/AP**

EURO 2024

# Ronaldo says he is playing his 'last European Championship'

STEVE DOUGLAS, HAMBURG

**C**RISTIANO Ronaldo has confirmed this year's European Championship will be the last of his career.

The Portugal superstar, who is 39, is playing at the Euros for a record sixth time and has helped his country reach the quarterfinals — where Kylian Mbappé and France await in Hamburg Saturday (local time).

Speaking to Portuguese public broadcaster RTP after the penalty-shootout victory over Slovenia on Monday, Ronaldo said: "It is, without doubt, my last European Championship."

"But I'm not emotional about that. I'm moved by all that football means — by the enthusiasm I have for the game, the enthusiasm for seeing my supporters, my family, the affection people have for me."

Ronaldo, who is one of the most prolific scorers in soccer history and has a record 14 goals at European Championships, said his main motivation now was "making people happy." He was reduced to

AP PHOTO



tears during the Slovenia game after having a penalty saved in extra time.

"It's not about leaving the world

of football," he said. "What else is there for me to do or win? It's not going to come down to one point more or one point less." **MDT/AP**

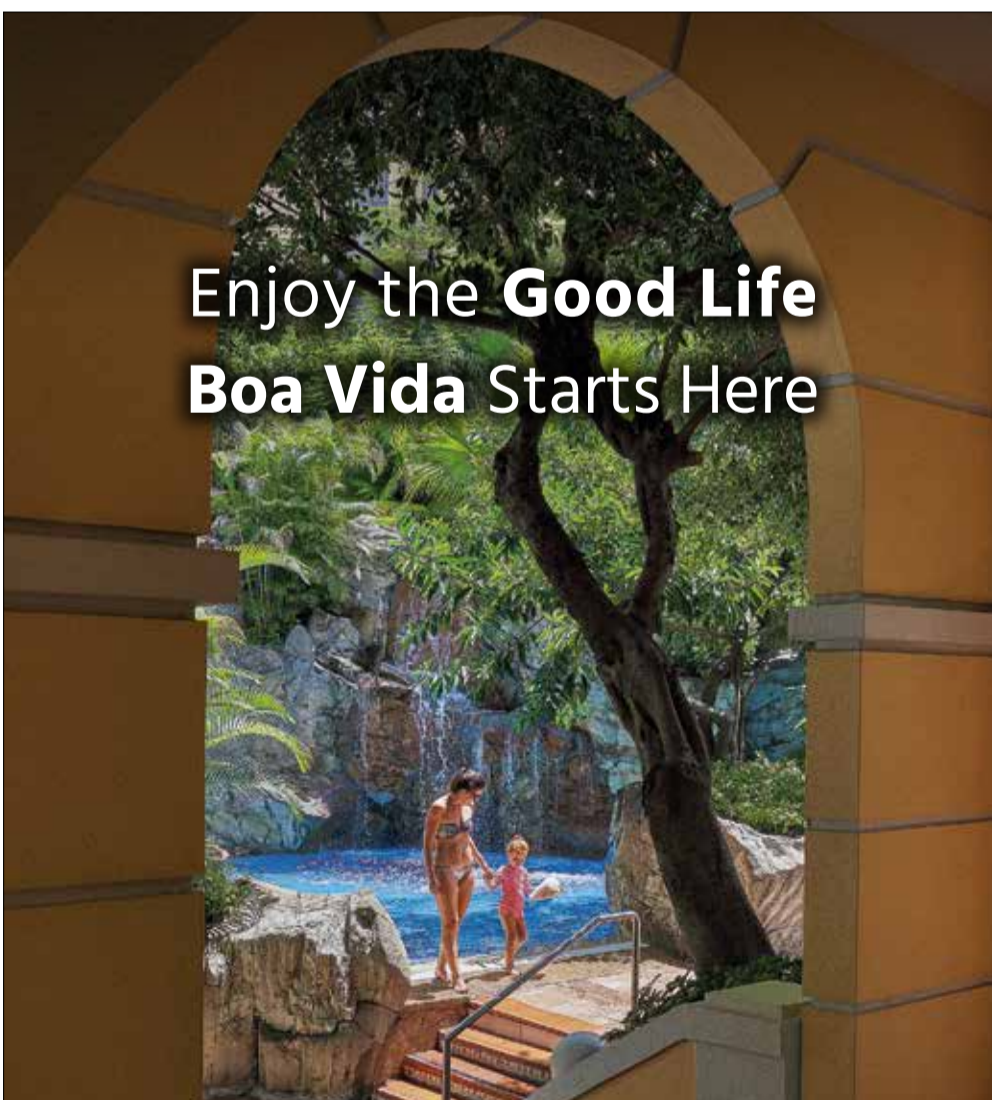
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OPINION

China Daily

Zhao Jiasong & Zou Xuemian, Xinhua Commentary

WASHINGTON NEEDS TO TAKE  
HISTORICAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR  
WAR-TORN AFGHANISTAN

Washington can't shake off its responsibility of amending the damage it had caused to Afghanistan, a call made by the Afghan public and the international community for the participating parties at the third round of UN-convened talks on Afghanistan being held in Doha, the Qatari capital.

At the end of August 2021, the last U.S. troops left Afghanistan after two decades of war, leaving a war-battered and even more impoverished country behind.

"We did not go to Afghanistan to nation-build. And it's the right and the responsibility of the Afghan people alone to decide their future and how they want to run their country." That's what U.S. President Joe Biden has claimed on the U.S. army's withdrawal from Afghanistan in July 2021.

As irony would have it, Washington, as the president's remarks suggested, was blatant to assume moral high ground after 20 years of chaos and bloodshed. The reality of the violent history won't be altered as the war killed 174,000 Afghans, including more than 30,000 civilians, and displaced nearly one-third of the population.

The United States has a "moral obligation" to Afghanistan and a responsibility to contribute to its economic reconstruction, said Jalal Bazwan, an expert in international relations at Kabul-based Kardan University.

An exploded bomb killed four children, who had mistaken it for a toy, in north Afghanistan's Faryab Province on June 16. Such tragic incidents, occurring with alarming frequency, underscore the lingering peril posed by the 1,228 cluster bombs with 248,056 bomblets dropped by U.S. forces in 2001 and 2002, according to the Cluster Munition Coalition.

Over 20 percent of the bombs do not explode on impact and remain active on the ground, being the source of civilian casualties, said medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières, or Doctors Without Borders. The International Committee of the Red Cross pointed out that children are the most vulnerable victims of unexploded ordnance, noting in its report that 640 children were killed or injured in 541 incidents involving landmine explosions and explosive remnants between January 2022 and June 2023.

Unexploded bombs have led to grave consequences for Afghanistan's agriculture, on which the landlocked country's economy is mainly dependent, said Sadiq Shinwari, an Afghan military expert.

Afghanistan, among many countries, is bearing the brunt of coercive financial statecraft. The United States should stop exacerbating Afghanistan's predicament by freezing some 7 billion U.S. dollars' worth of assets of Afghanistan's central bank and imposing sanctions. These measures have further destabilized the Afghan economy, driving price rises and reducing international assistance.

An estimated 23.7 million Afghans require humanitarian aid in 2024 -- more than half of the country's population, with a staggering nine out of 10 people living in poverty. The Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024 necessitates 3.06 billion U.S. dollars to 17.3 million Afghans targeted for assistance, but it had only received 16.2 percent of the required funds as of May 15.

Natural calamities, including last year's earthquake in the western Herat province and recent floods in the north, claimed nearly 3,000 lives, leading to an even direr humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Yet, U.S.-induced disaster is equally devastating. The war-ravaged infrastructure doubled the time required for aid to reach disaster zones. Sanctions on the banking system restricted withdrawals, leaving victims unable to access enough relief funds in time.

The U.S.-initiated sanctions imposed on the Afghan caretaker government have undermined vital humanitarian aid supply to the war-torn country, said Martin Schüepf, director of operations of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). "It is key that all sanctions have humanitarian exemptions, which allows humanitarian organizations such as the ICRC to operate and to be able to reach the people in need."

[Abridged]

Taiwan said yesterday that China warned Taiwan's coast guard against interfering in the detention of a Taiwanese fishing boat.

The incident comes amid heightened political tensions following the election of the island's leader William Lai Ching-te, whose party rejects unification with the mainland, and an apparent threat by Beijing to execute "diehard" advocates of Taiwan independence.

Taiwan's coast guard repeated its call for the release of the boat and its crew members who were taken from waters off the Taiwa-

nese-controlled island of Kinmen just off the Chinese coast on Tuesday night.

A spokesperson for Taiwan's coast guard, Hsieh Ching-chin, said the boat was not in Chinese waters when it was boarded by Chinese agents and steered to a port in the Chinese province of Fujian.

The Dajinman 88 was intercepted by two Chinese vessels, and Taiwan dispatched three vessels to help but the one that got close to the fishing boat was blocked by three Chinese boats and told not to interfere, the coast guard's initial statement said.

UK ELECTION

IN THE CAMPAIGN'S  
FINAL HOURS, SUNAK  
BATTLES TO THE END AS  
LABOUR'S STARMER EYES  
VICTORY

JILL LAWLESS, LONDON

Rishi Sunak has covered thousands of miles in the past few weeks, but he hasn't outrun the expectation that his time as Britain's prime minister is in its final hours.

United Kingdom voters will cast ballots in a national election today, passing judgment on Sunak's 20 months in office, and on the four Conservative prime ministers before him. They are widely expected to do something they have not done since 2005: Elect a Labour Party government.

During a hectic final two days of campaigning that saw him visit a food distribution warehouse, a supermarket, a farm and more, Sunak insisted "the outcome of this election is not a foregone conclusion."

"People can see that we have turned a corner," said the Conservative leader, who has been in office since October 2022. "It has been a difficult few years, but undeniably things are in a better place now than they were."

But even a last-minute pep talk at a Conservative rally Tuesday night by former Prime Minister Boris Johnson — who led the party to a thumping election victory in 2019 — did little to lift the party's mood. Conservative Cabinet minister Mel Stride said Wednesday it looked like Labour was heading for an "extraordinary landslide."

Labour warned against taking the election result for granted, imploring supporters not to grow complacent about polls that have given the party a solid



double-digit lead since before the campaign began. Labour leader Keir Starmer has spent the six-week campaign urging voters to take a chance on his center-left party and vote for change.

Most people, including analysts and politicians, expect they will. Labour has not set pulses racing with its pledges to get the sluggish economy growing, invest in infrastructure and make Britain a "clean energy superpower."

But nothing has really gone wrong, either. The party has won the support of large chunks of the business community and endorsements from traditionally conservative newspapers including the Rupert Murdoch-owned Sunday Times.

Former Labour candidate Douglas Beattie, author of the book "How Labour Wins (and Why it Loses)," said Starmer's "quiet stability probably chimes with the mood of the country right now."

"The country is looking for fresh ideas, moving away from a government that's exhausted and divided," Beattie said. "So Labour are pushing at an open door." The Conservatives, meanwhile, have been plagued by gaffes. The campaign got off to an inauspicious start when rain drenched Sunak as he made the announcement outside 10 Downing St. on May 22. Then on June 6, Sunak went home early from commemorations in France marking the 80th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, missing a ceremony alongside United States President Joe Biden and France's Emmanuel Macron. Several Conservatives close to Sunak are being investigated by the gambling regulator over suspicions they used inside information to place bets on the date of the election before it was announced. It has all made it harder for Sunak to shake off the taint of political chaos and mismanagement that's gathered around the Conservatives since Johnson and his staff held lockdown-breaching parties during the COVID-19 pandemic. MDT/AP



Russia French citizen arrested in Russia has pleaded guilty to criminal charges involving illegally collecting information on military issues in the country, state news agency Tass said yesterday. Laurent Vinatier (pictured) was arrested in the Russian capital in June as tensions flared between Moscow and Paris following French President Emmanuel Macron's comments about the possibility of deploying French troops in Ukraine.

Sierra Leone A bill that bans child marriage has been signed into law. President Julius Maada Bio said late Tuesday, in an effort to protect girls in the West African nation where about a third are married before adulthood. The law is being celebrated widely. It criminalizes marrying any girl who is under 18 years old. Offenders face up to 15 years in prison or a fine of around \$4,000 or both. Witnesses to such marriages will also face jail or a fine.



Sweden A construction elevator that killed five people when it collapsed last year in Stockholm was missing the bolts that were supposed to hold its mast together, authorities said yesterday. The deadly crash "was caused by failure to perform relevant safety inspections of the hoist assembly," the Swedish Accident Investigation Authority said.



Gaza Strip An Israeli airstrike killed a prominent Palestinian doctor and eight members of his extended family on Tuesday after they complied with military orders to evacuate their home and moved into an Israeli-designated safe zone. The Hamdan family — around a dozen people from three generations — fled their home in the middle of the night after the Israeli military ordered an evacuation from the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis.