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**China-Cyprus** Chinese-led consortium yesterday pulled out of its contract with Cyprus to build the island nation's first natural gas import terminal over what it says was the Cypriot government's failure to pay what it owed for work completed this year. The CPP-Metron Consortium said in a statement that the Cypriot government failed to live up to its commitments to pay up, despite promises made during a March meeting chaired by President Nikos Christodoulides.



**Bangladesh** Police clashed yesterday with student protesters attempting to impose a "complete shutdown" in the capital, following days of violent confrontations during demonstrations over a system of allocating government jobs, with media reports saying at least 10 more people have died across the country. The Prothom Alo newspaper, which has a strong network of reporters across the country, said it received reports of 10 deaths in Dhaka and elsewhere yesterday.



**India** A passenger train derailed yesterday in the north, killing at least two passengers and injuring 20 others, a railroad official said. The cause of the accident is being investigated. Naveen Kumar, a state relief commissioner, said dozens of rescuers, a 40-member team of doctors and paramedics, and 15 ambulances have reached the site of the accident. The injured have been moved to hospitals and government health centers in the area, he said.

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# SCAN AND GO

From today, QR code technology will streamline entry process for over 300,000 Macau residents when entering Hong Kong through electronic channels

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TOURISM

# MGTO CONFIDENT IN HITTING 33 MILLION TOURIST ARRIVALS IN 2024

VICTORIA CHAN

THE territory is optimistic that it will surpass its target of 33 million visitors by the end of 2024. This confidence is bolstered by a strong summer travel season and a series of upcoming events and promotions.

According to Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, the director of Macau's Government Tourism Office (MGTO), Macau saw an improvement in average daily tourist arrivals in July as compared to June, indicating a positive momentum heading into the second half of the year. The MGTO director expressed confidence in exceeding the 33 million target, though she refrained from estimating figures as high as 35 or 40 million.

"We think that in the second half of the year, if we take advantage of the good summer vacation momentum and there are more activities held in Macau in the second half of the year, we estimate that it should be possible to exceed 33 million by the end of the year," said Fernandes, who was speaking on the sidelines of the opening of the Sands Shopping Carnival.

Fernandes highlighted several

VICTORIA CHAN



initiatives planned for the remainder of 2024, including a large-scale online promotion targeting overseas markets through international media outlets such as CNN and the BBC. Macau will also host its annual fireworks competition

and the Macao Light Festival, which is expected to run from early December to mid-February.

The official noted that shopping was the main reason for tourists visiting Macau in the first quarter of 2024, making up

48% of the total, with accommodation and dining following closely behind.

To further boost tourism, the government is exploring ways to collaborate with tourism companies and small-to-medium enterprises to offer spe-

cial promotions in December, coinciding with the 25th anniversary of Macau's return to China. Additionally, the MGTO will continue its efforts to promote Macau's entry and exit policies in various mainland Chinese cities.

Regarding international markets, Fernandes acknowledged that the recovery of Portuguese-speaking countries has lagged behind the overall rebound in overseas visitors. However, Macau has been actively engaging with the Portuguese travel industry, including hosting their annual association meeting next year and participating in promotional events.

When asked about the possibility of reintroducing a tourism tax, the MGTO director reiterated that the previous government-led research concluded it was not recommended, as Macau aims to position itself as a world-class tourism and leisure hub. Instead, the focus is on improving supporting facilities and diversifying tourism elements across different districts to better distribute visitors.

Fernandes expressed confidence in exceeding the two million target for international visitor arrivals by the end of 2024.

"After a lot of work, everyone has seen that the recovery rate of our overseas tourists in the first half of this year is actually quite good," she added.

## Sands China Shopping Carnival returns with increased number of SMEs

LYNZY VALLES

THE Sands Shopping Carnival made a comeback yesterday at The Venetian Macao, featuring more than 580 booths, with a record-breaking 325 booths dedicated to local SME suppliers.

This is the fifth year that Sands China is running the shopping and leisure hotspot, with total visitation for the last four carnivals surpassing 420,000.

Open until July 21, the 2024 Sands Shopping



Carnival offers a free business platform for local SMEs and Sands retail-

ers, helping them create more business opportunities.

Wilfred Wong, executive vice chairman of Sands China Ltd., said:

"We have successfully created nearly 2,800 exhibition booths over the years. [...] Our commitment to supporting local SMEs is unwavering, and we embrace the philosophy of growing with SMEs."

Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, director of the Macao Government Tourism Office, announced that, in the first quarter of this year, 48% of visitor expenditure in Macau was dedicated to shopping, which constituted the largest category of tourism expenditure followed by accommodation and dining.

"It is essential for the retail service industry to catch up with market

demands by continuously introducing products that cater to customers' preferences and providing meticulous and personalized services," she said.

Sands Shopping Carnival has been attracting over 100,000 participants annually, according to the firm's data, becoming one of the largest discount sale events in the region.

The gaming operator also noted that the carnival has seen a continuous increase in the number of participating community organizations, encompassing a wide range of areas including culture and creativity, as well as food and beverages.

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IMMIGRATION

# Macau and Hong Kong residents can now use QR codes for automated clearance

NADIA SHAW

**S**TARTING today, over 300,000 Macau and Hong Kong permanent residents will be able to use electronic QR code channels to enter Hong Kong using a new QR code-based electronic entry system.

The encrypted QR code can be used to complete automated immigration clearance at Hong Kong's e-channels, without the need to present a physical ID card. This will save those eligible, the hassle of presenting physical documentation.

"This measure will be important in the context of cooperation between the two regions, namely in increasing the movement of people at border posts," said Chao Wai leng, director of the Identification Services Bureau (DSI), in a press conference yesterday.

The new measure, jointly launched by the governments of Macau and Hong Kong, will allow eligible Macau permanent residents to ge-

nerate a unique QR code through the Macao One Account mobile app – after updating to the latest version. The new function will be found in the 'My border crossing' section on the home page.

"This new QR code system will bring a better traveling experience to residents in Hong Kong and Macau using the automated immigration service," said Benson Kwok Joon-fung, Hong Kong Director of Immigration (IDSM). "It aligns with the development of the Greater Bay Area as part of the national strategy."

The move is the latest in a series of measures aimed at facilitating cross-border movement between the two cities. In 2009, Hong Kong and Macau signed an agreement allowing eligible permanent residents from both sides to enter each other's territory using just their ID cards, without having to fill out entry and exit declarations.

Since then, nearly 2.5 million Hong Kong residents have registered

to use Macau's self-service customs clearance lanes, while over 300,000 Macau residents have signed up for the same service in Hong Kong.

"The new customs clearance convenience measures will further enhance the quality of immigration services between the two places," said Kwok.

According to DSI's Chao, the QR code system was made possible after updating Macao One Account platform and border control systems. He noted that the new system respects personal data protection laws and does not store any sensitive information.

The launch of the QR code service is part of the government's broader efforts to promote the development of e-government and digital public services. Over 600,000 Macau residents, or more than 90% of the population, have already registered for the Macao Account platform, which provides access to nearly 400 government services.

"These measures can create

convenient customs clearance conditions for personnel exchanges, economic and trade exchanges between the two places, and the development of Macau's key industries," said Chao.

In the future, Hong Kong and Macau will continue studying optimization measures to further improve convenience for residents traveling between the two cities. The automated clearance system has been tested to handle large numbers of users, with clearance times reduced to around two seconds.

The launch of the QR code service comes as part of the government's broader push to develop e-government and electronic services.

Over 600,000 residents, or 90% of Macau's population, have opened accounts on the government's One Account platform which provides nearly 400 services. The electronic ID card project launched in 2023 has also seen over 350,000 people bind their ID data to mobile apps for use in various scenarios.

## UNSTABLE WEATHER COMING DAYS

The local weather bureau report warned yesterday of the potential formation of a tropical storm near Macau in the upcoming days. The area of concern is currently a low-pressure system located south of the Philippines, and there is a possibility of it developing as it moves into the South China Sea. Additionally, there is another weather system to the east of the Philippines that could impact the aforementioned system, although there are uncertainties about its evolution. Regardless of whether it intensifies into a more severe storm, there is a chance of heavy rainfall and potential flooding in the coming week if it approaches.

## THEFT CASE LEADS TO DISCOVERY OF WOMAN OVERSTAYING HER VISA

The Public Security Police were alerted to a case of theft when a man reported his clothes and mobile phone stolen while trying on clothes in a store earlier this week. Through surveillance, police authorities apprehended the suspect near the Central District the following day. Upon questioning, the suspect confessed to the crime, revealing that he had overstayed his visa for three months. Stolen items were recovered from the suspect's residence, leading to the discovery that a Filipino woman in her 50s had been residing with him since April. She claimed ignorance of his visa overstay, stating they were in a relationship.

## ELDERLY SPORTS DAY ON AUG. 1

The Elderly Sports Day is scheduled for August 18 at Tap Seac Stadium. The Sports Bureau (ID) aims to promote active participation in sports and physical fitness among senior citizens through various activities. There will be a total of eight recreational and sports activities at the event, including aerobics, bowling, and more. Additionally, three physical fitness testing booths will be available for the seniors to assess their physical condition and understand the importance of exercise. According to the bureau, the goal is to help the elderly develop a "proper understanding of exercise through games and to discover their interest in sports."

GAMING

# CreditSights analysis shows casino comeback decelerates as market recovers

**C**ASINO gross gaming revenue (GGR) is expected to recover to between 75% and 80% of 2019 levels, or around USD28 billion, in 2024, according to a report by CreditSights, a division of the Fitch group. However, the institution notes that the year-on-year growth trends have "decelerated as the recovery matures."

While casino GGR for 2023 stood at MOP183.06billion, up 333.8% year-on-year, CreditSights expects the full-year 2024 GGR to be a 24% increase from the previous year. "While we expect to see additional growth for the remainder of 2024, year-on-year trends have decelerated as the recovery matures," the

institution stated in its report.

The report also highlights that the recovery has been uneven, with the mass market segment leading the way. "Since coming out of Covid, we've seen a quicker recovery for the mass market, which now represents the majority of Macau's GGR," CreditSights observed,

as cited in a GGRAsia report.

In the first half of 2024, Macau received nearly 16.73 million visitors, about 82.5% of the same period in 2019. The overall figure represented an average of 91,918 arrivals per day during the period.

According to CreditSights, the near extinction of junket-promo-

ters has "meaningfully impacted the recovery for VIP GGR." The institution also noted that among the casino operators in Macau, MGM China Holdings Ltd has emerged as "the biggest winner coming out of Covid," benefiting from a "meaningful increase in market share" following its recent concession renewal. VC

VICTORIA CHAN

CRIME

# PERSISTENT CAR THIEF DETAINED FOR STEALING AND DEFRAUDING

POLICE have detained a 28-year-old unemployed Macau resident male in connection with the theft and fraud of goods worth HKD320,000.

On July 15, the Judiciary Police received a referral from the Public Security Police Force regarding a theft from a vehicle. The victim, a local man, had parked his private car in a public parking lot in North District on the morning of July 13. When he returned to his car on July 15 at around 9 a.m., he discovered his watch - valued at HKD320,000 - was missing and suspected it had been stolen.

After an investigation, police identified the suspect as Chan, a 28-year-old unemployed resident of Macau. According to the investigation, Chan stole the watch from the parking lot on July 15 and pawned it at a shop in New Port for HKD25,000. He used the money to gamble at a nearby casino, losing everything. He then borrowed money from a friend to redeem the watch and pawned it again, this time at a shop in Central, receiving HKD180,000. He again lost the full amount gambling.

Police succeeded in retrieving the watch from the second pawn shop. The shop demanded that the perpetrator be held criminally liable. On

VICTORIA CHAN



July 17 at 1:30 p.m., criminal investigation officers intercepted Chan near the Areia Preta area and brought him in for further questioning.

Chan reportedly has a lengthy criminal history. Records

show a previous prison sentence for theft at the end of 2020, with his release in June 2023. However, he did not remain out of trouble for long. In September 2023, police arrested Chan again for another

theft. Separately, in January and June 2024, Chen was arrested twice more - both times for theft from vehicles. In each instance, he was transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office. Based on the investigation's

findings, police believe Chan committed the theft in this case as well. The bureau will transfer the case to the Public Prosecutions Office to press charges of theft and major fraud against Chan.

CRIME

# 'Guaranteed wins' gambling scheme defrauds victim MOP180,000

VICTORIA CHAN

A 33-year-old mainland resident has been detained by Macau authorities for his alleged involvement in a large-scale fraud case wherein he is accused of duping a victim out of MOP180,000 through a fraudulent gambling investment scheme.

The victimized mainland man told the police that the suspect claimed to be able to win Baccarat with a "lose one, buy two" method, and offered to sign a "guaranteed agreement."

The suspect, surnamed Pui, was arrested on July 17 as he was leaving the Macau International Airport. Pui, who is unemployed, allegedly approached the victim, also a mainland resident, through WeChat last October,

VICTORIA CHAN



claiming to be an expert in gambling with a guaranteed winning formula.

Pui reportedly persuaded the victim to invest RMB200,000 with the promise of regular returns. At first, the suspect did provide some returns to the victim, but then he began making excuses and eventually stopped paying the

victim altogether.

According to a police statement, the suspect "used the above-mentioned investment and gambling methods to defraud the victim's money and used the defrauded money to gamble in the casino."

Authorities added that Pui "did not have any so-

called winning formula or method" and "lost most of the money given by the victim."

The victim reported the case to the Macau authorities on July 13, stating that he had lost contact with Pui and the MOP180,000 he had invested. On July 17, the Macau police successfully intercepted Pui at the Macau International Airport and seized HKD6,000 from the suspect, which they believe is related to the case.

The case has now been transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office for further investigation. Authorities have warned the public to be cautious of such fraudulent investment schemes, particularly those involving promises of guaranteed gambling profits.

HEALTH

# SSM REPORTS FIFTH IMPORTED DENGUE CASE

THE Health Bureau (SSM) announced recently the city's fifth imported case of dengue fever this year. The patient, a 41-year-old local woman, recently returned from business trips to Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

The woman developed symptoms including a headache, joint pain, fever, and a rash after her travels. She tested positive for Grade III dengue at the University Hospital in Taipa.

Authorities have classified the case as imported based on her travel history and the onset of symptoms.

The SSM has taken measures to eliminate mosquitoes around the patient's residence in Ocean Gardens, Taipa. None of her family members or colleagues on the Sri Lanka trip

have shown symptoms so far.

Most cases of dengue are mild, with symptoms like fever, headache, and rash. However, severe dengue can lead to complications like internal bleeding and organ impairment. There is no specific treatment, but supportive care is crucial, especially for severe cases requiring hospitalization.

Travelers to dengue-prone regions are advised to take precautions like wearing protective clothing, using insect repellent, and staying in mosquito-proof accommodation.

Prompt medical attention should be sought for any fever or flu-like illness within two weeks of returning home.

Comparatively, Macau reported seven imported dengue cases in 2023. NS

# Alvin Chau's property prices slashed in half ahead of court auction

VICTORIA CHAN

**O**NLY two of imprisoned former junket boss Alvin Chau's original 36 properties have been sold so far, with the remaining 34 going up for auction later this month at prices roughly half of what they were initially listed for.

The first public auction, held in September 2023, aimed to sell 31 parking spaces and five commercial units owned by Chau in Taipa for a combined opening bid of nearly MOP600 million.

However, only two commercial units were sold at that time. The upcoming auction scheduled for Oct. 22 will see one parking space listed at MOP1.019 million and 30 others at around MOP1.07 million each. Meanwhile, three remaining commercial buildings will be auctioned with asking prices of approximately MOP49.97 million, MOP66.37 million and MOP159 million.

Court records show the slashed prices are a result



of the previous auctions failing to attract interested buyers.

The auction's purpose is to help offset the almost 25 billion Hong Kong dollar compensation Chau owes the Macau government. This was ordered after he was convicted in 2021 on charges including illegal gambling operations and association with a criminal

group, as the former boss of junket operator Suncity Group.

Chau, 50, is currently serving an 18-year prison sentence handed down by the Court of Final Appeal earlier this month after he unsuccessfully appealed his conviction and sentence. He maintains his innocence and penned an open letter to Chinese President

Xi Jinping last year declaring he did not break the law.

The sale of Chau's diminished real estate portfolio is one way authorities are seeking to recoup funds. However, with values now half the originals, it remains doubtful how much the upcoming auction will generate towards his substantial debts and obligations.

# Residents call for a more pedestrian-friendly city

NADIA SHAW

**M**ACAU should prioritize making its streets more pedestrian-friendly, according to a recent survey conducted by the Macau New Chinese Youth Association.

The poll found that residents are willing to spend 20 minutes on foot when navigating the city, with 74 % of respondents willing to walk for at least 20 minutes.

The survey, which interviewed 769 macau residents between 18 and 44 years old, also revealed that 57 % of respondents are satisfied with the current state of macau's pedestrian walkways, but 60 % believe they should be better con-



nected to bus stations and taxi stands.

The association's deputy director, Ku Heng Cheong, emphasized the importance of creating safe, convenient, accessible, and friendly pedestrian routes. He suggested that the go-

vernment should use the 20-minute walking distance as a basis for developing future. The association recommends that the government create a "20-minute comfortable walking circle" by effectively separating pedestrians from

vehicles, considering the flow of people, and setting up multiple entrances and exits. To further aid the development of future pedestrian systems, Ku underlined the need for walkways to be shielded from the elements, well lit, and connected to public transportation hubs to encourage residents and tourists to use the walkways.

The survey also revealed that while 27 % of respondents considered cover as an important feature of a walkway, most (48.4 %) prioritized elevators and escalators, followed by non-slip floors (32.2 %). The findings have significant implications for urban planning in macau as they suggest that the city should focus on creating a comprehensive and user-friendly pedestrian system that integrates public transportation hubs, business districts, and tourist hotspots.

ADVERTORIAL

## GREAT TIMES

Dive Into a Pink Summer with "BERTILO Drifts in Barra"

**M**GM brings excitement to Barra District with "Summer Hype" mega event series, kicking off the series is the "BERTILO Drifts in Barra" Giant Inflatable Floating Installation at Navy Yard No.1.



Floating on the Lago da Barra, the installation is jointly curated by Italian artist Bertil Butturini and Chinese artist Jingo Li. BERTILO, the pink chubby Italian character, embodies a laid-back and relaxed lifestyle, encouraging everyone to slow down, wander, and uncover the hidden gems of Barra. Alongside adorable pink photo spots in the area, the public installation immerses visitors in a burst of joy throughout the entire summer.



Adding to the sweetness is a delightful array of themed delights served by food trucks featuring local food and beverage outlets. Photo-worthy pink eats and drinks, including Pink Chubby Burger Sticks, Pink Chubby Summer Ice Cream, Canal cover-shaped Pink Grills, and Chubby Custard Bun and Drinks await you at the Open Area of Navy Yard No.2. Even the food trucks are wrapped in shades of pink! For those who wish to bring the chill vibes of BERTILO into everyday life, be sure to take home the limited BERTILO merchandise. Time to slow down and BE FAT, BE COOL, BE CHILL together with BERTILO at Barra this summer!



HOSPITALITY

# MGM SHENZHEN OPENS, ENHANCING THE CITY'S LUXURY HOTEL OFFERINGS

NADIA SHAW

SHENZHEN has added another luxurious gem to its portfolio of hotels with the opening of MGM Shenzhen. This new hotel, situated on the picturesque Xiaomeisha beachfront, is part of a grand initiative by the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone Development Group (SDG) to create an international coastal resort.

The MGM Shenzhen, unveiled earlier this week, is designed by CCD Hong Kong and managed by Diaoyutai MGM Hospitality. The property features 321 modern ocean-view rooms, ranging from 50-square-meter Deluxe Ocean View Rooms to the luxurious 390-square-meter Presidential Suite – with each room offering stunning views of Xiaomeisha Bay.

For business gatherings and



social events, MGM Shenzhen features a 1,056-square-meter ballroom, alongside their Baikal Lake and Poseidon venues, available for various events.

Zhou Feng, president of Diaoyutai MGM Hospitality, commented on the development, saying, "Under SDG's guidance, Xiaomeisha is evolving into a top-tier destination for coastal leisure. We are proud to contribute significantly to

this transformation [...]."

The MGM brand is renowned for its entertainment offerings, and MGM Shenzhen upholds this legacy by presenting the renowned M Show from Las Vegas. Guests can expect magic, circus acts, fire dancing, and more. In addition, the hotel features the Leo Kids Club, providing comprehensive childcare services and a range of fun activities for families to enjoy.

ARTS FESTIVAL

# Percussion troupe aims to inspire children's creativity

VICTORIA CHAN

PERCUSSION and acrobatic troupe CRASSH Duo Circus will be performing today until Sunday, featuring a team of creators that possess an array of talents, skilled in percussion, circus arts, clowning, and drama. Performing as part of the 1st Macao International Children's Arts Festival, the duo from Portugal will be using everyday elements, in aesthetic and sound exploration.

As the Portugal-based performers told the Times in a recent interview, "Our company WeTumTum, created in 2011, is 100% dedicated to families and children. Therefore, we are personally concerned about children's involvement with the arts, but, above all, we believe that every



human being is capable of creating, regardless of their origins and abilities, using different artistic disciplines as a common and universal factor of communication."

The duo combines disciplines like juggling, music and comedy to "constantly invite the public to participate in the show in an active and participatory way." They use "everyday ele-

ments, in aesthetic and sound exploration" to craft their performances.

CRASSH Duo Circus perform detail-oriented shows that capture the maximum attention of children. Their "creative process is based on the assumption that everything is possible to use, without barriers or limits," as they transform ordinary objects into rhythmic instruments.

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





People watch the final scheduled volcano show during the final night of operations and gaming at The Mirage, earlier this week

LAS VEGAS STRIP

# The last cards have been dealt as the iconic Mirage closes its doors

KEN RITTER, LAS VEGAS

**A** final blast from The Mirage's signature volcano marked the passage Wednesday of an aging Las Vegas resort that wowed crowds when it opened in 1989 and went on to revolutionize the casino resort industry and reshape Las Vegas as a tourist destination.

"What would The Mirage be without one last volcano eruption?" asked Joe Lupo, property president of The Mirage, as he ended a closing ceremony that drew hundreds of onlookers, including 137 employees who worked at the 3,044-room resort from the beginning.

Jim Allen, head of the property's new owner, Florida-based Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming, said work would "literally start tomorrow" to raze the volcano, which thatrumbled and gushed nightly for nearly 35 years.

Plans call for a 600-room hotel in the shape of a guitar that renderings depict with guitar string-like beams spiking into the night sky from a purplish 660-foot (201-meter) tower. Allen promised more details

in months to come.

Lupo, who remains the property president following the change of hands, said the new Hard Rock Las Vegas will open in 2027.

Elaine Wynn, billionaire philanthropist and ex-wife of casino mogul Steve Wynn, who built the property, recalled that two performing tigers belonging to resort headliners Siegfried & Roy were the first "guests" through the door in November 1989. She said the first wave of people stopped, stared and applauded beneath the entry atrium. It featured lush tropical foliage beneath a domed glass ceiling and a faint piña colada scent in the air.

Its last week drew a frenzy of standing-room crowds wagering to win a total of \$1.6 million in slot machine progressive jackpot winnings that state regulations said had to be disbursed to clear the books before the doors closed. Slot players lucky enough to get a seat vied for daily prize

pots totaling up to \$250,000 per day. Nevada Gaming Control Board spokesman Michael Lawton said Wednesday that he could not by law provide information about how the effort went

Costing \$630 million, The Mirage was no simple gam-

**Costing \$630 million, The Mirage was no simple gambling hall. It was the world's largest hotel when it opened.**

bling hall. It was the world's largest hotel when it opened. Visitors were met by two bronze mermaid statues on the way to check in at a desk with

**"To call The Mirage a catalyst would be an understatement**

WYNN

a huge shark and fish tank behind it.

It had glitzy shops, celebrity chef restaurants and theater-size showrooms featuring

headliners like Johnny Mathis, Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton. The illusionist duo Siegfried & Roy and their tigers performed for 14 years, ending in 2003. Later, it became home to The Beatles-themed Cirque du Soleil show "Love," which ended its 18-year run this month.

"Instead of neon, a garden of dozens of rich Canary Island palm trees and a cool refreshing waterfall," Steve Wynn recalled in a statement of recollections he released Monday through his Las Vegas attorney, Donald Campbell.

Wynn titled it "An Homage to Lady Mirage." He did not attend Wednesday's ceremonies.

In his statement, Wynn noted that The Mirage was the first new hotel in Las Vegas in several years and opened amid competition from casinos in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and the expansion of tribal gambling in California. He pointed to a decade-long resort building boom

that followed, helping make Las Vegas one of the fastest-growing cities in America.

"To call The Mirage a catalyst would be an understatement," Wynn wrote.

By 2000, more than 30,000 new hotel rooms were added as new Las Vegas Strip resorts went up: Excalibur, Luxor, Treasure Island, MGM Grand, New York-New York, Monte Carlo, Bellagio, Mandalay Bay, Venetian and Paris Las Vegas. Many were funded by Wall Street bonds. Wynn bought and demolished the 50-year-old Desert Inn to build and open his eponymous Wynn Resort in 2005.

Wynn, now 82 and living in Florida, paid a \$10 million fine to Nevada gambling regulators last year and cut ties with the industry he helped shape to end a yearslong legal fight stemming from media reports in 2018 that he sexually harassed or assaulted several women at his hotels. He has always denied the allegations.

Bo Bernhard, director of the International Gaming Institute at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, studies the emergence of what he terms the "fun economy" around the world. The Mirage, he said, set a standard for resort development in places like Singapore and Sydney.

"The Mirage changed the image Las Vegas projected to the rest of the world," Bernhard said. It was "much more than just gambling" and "transformed everything," he said.

The Seminole Tribe acquired the Hard Rock brand in 2007 from an MGM Resorts International deal worth nearly \$1.1 billion. It became the first Native American operator in the lucrative and competitive Las Vegas Boulevard corridor. The tribe also operates seven casinos in Florida and owns the Hard Rock Hotel & Casinos business with locations in 76 countries. It purchased naming rights in 2016 to Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida.

An off-Strip former Hard Rock Hotel in Las Vegas was separately owned. A group that included billionaire Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Group, acquired that hotel-casino in 2018 for about \$500 million. It was renovated and reopened in 2021 as Virgin Hotels Las Vegas.

"Las Vegas always reinvents itself," said Michael Green, a UNLV history professor whose father dealt blackjack for decades at casinos, including the long-ago-imploded Stardust and Showboat. "The Mirage is no longer state-of-the-art." **MDT/AP**

## PROPERTY

# CENTALINE: GUANGZHOU EASES HOME PURCHASE RESTRICTIONS TO ATTRACT FOREIGN INVESTMENT

VICTORIA CHAN

**S**TANLEY Poon, the managing director of Centaline Property, welcomed Guangzhou's recent decision to ease home purchase restrictions for residents of Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. Poon sees this policy shift as a strategic move that will attract more foreign capital and promote the city's development as a commercial center in the Greater Bay Area.

"This is a very good policy change," Poon said. The new regulations, introduced by the Guangzhou Municipal Housing and Urban-Rural Development Bureau, allow eligible individuals from the three regions to acquire residential properties located in designated areas without any limitations on the number of properties or size of the units. Previously, the city had imposed strict controls on home purchases, particularly in certain restricted areas.

Poon believes this move aligns with Guangzhou's aspirations to position itself as a leading commercial hub within the Greater Bay Area, a regional integration initiative that aims to connect the city with Shenzhen, Hong Kong,



Macau, and other cities in the region. "Everyone hopes to compete with each other in the Greater Bay Area," he said. "If we can get rid of these external restrictions and policies, it will bring benefits to the development of commercial real estate in the whole city."

The managing director emphasized that a commercial city like Guangzhou needs to be able to "accumulate foreign funds to set up a company, set up a headquarters, or set up a branch company" in order to "promote bu-

business, economic development, and some company activities." By welcoming more investment from the nearby regions, Guangzhou can strengthen its position as a hub for commercial activities and foster a more vibrant business environment.

According to the realtor, Guangzhou's new policy is following a similar path to Shenzhen, which had previously lifted restrictions on commercial real estate purchases by Hong Kong residents and foreigners. Poon explained

that by allowing non-residential property acquisitions, Guangzhou aims to attract more foreign funds and diversify its investor base. He believes this policy change will inject new vitality into the city's commercial real estate sector and enhance overall market liquidity.

The designated areas for the relaxed home purchase policies have already been identified by the city authorities, with six districts currently classified as such. This strategic move is seen as a

way to attract more investment, especially from the nearby regions of Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, which have long been important sources of capital and business activities for Guangzhou.

Poon emphasized the historical significance of Guangzhou as an open and welcoming city, known for its early trade links with foreign countries, and has laid the foundation for this policy change. "In the early days, Guangzhou was already quite open. To accept some foreign funds, foreign companies, or trade with foreign countries," he said. "It was more developed in the early days. However, due to some restrictions, these measures have made it impossible for foreign investment in some commercial real estate in Guangzhou. This time, I believe that the overall policy is to welcome Hong Kong and Macau, or some foreign funds to enter the market."

The realty expert believes that the relaxation of home purchase restrictions in Guangzhou reflects the city's aspirations to excel in the Greater Bay Area competition.

By removing external barriers and attracting foreign investments, Guangzhou aims to strengthen its position as a commercial hub and foster increased business activities.

Centaline is optimistic about the potential opportunities this policy shift will bring to the development of commercial real estate in the city, as the influx of foreign funds can spur the establishment of new companies, headquarters, and branch offices, promoting economic growth and creating a more vibrant business environment.

## BUSINESS

## Hengqin incentivizes e-commerce growth with Macau

NADIA SHAW

**T**HE Hengqin Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone has unveiled a comprehensive set of policies to support the development of cross-border e-commerce industries, with a particular focus on assisting Macau-funded enterprises.

The support measures offer a range of incentives, including subsidies of up to RMB100 million for qualified e-commerce demonstration parks and other e-commerce related activities, to support the coordinated development of Macau and Hengqin.

China has established a network of national e-commerce demonstration parks to support the growth of the e-commerce indus-



try. These designated parks receive government subsidies and policy support to develop e-commerce infrastructure, attract e-commerce enterprises and foster innovation.

For example, the city of Hangzhou in Zhejiang province has the Alibaba-backed Xiaoshan E-commerce Industrial Park, which provides office space, logistics facilities and training

programs for e-commerce startups.

Similarly, the Guangzhou E-commerce Industrial Park in Guangdong province offers financial incentives, logistics hubs and shared services to cultivate an e-commerce ecosystem.

These demonstration parks help concentrate e-commerce resources, promote the adoption of new technologies, and

enable small businesses to leverage the benefits of e-commerce.

"These new policies are designed to create a thriving cross-border e-commerce ecosystem in the cooperation zone, leveraging Macau's international advantages and its role as a gateway to Portuguese-speaking countries," said a spokesperson from the Hengqin authorities.

Under the support measures, demonstration parks can receive one-time subsidies of up to RMB100 million, based on 30% of their fixed asset investment.

Growth model parks are eligible for up to RMB20 million in one-time support, based on 20% of their investment.

To further strengthen the industry, the policies also provide annual operating subsidies of up to 20 million yuan for leading demonstration parks and RMB5 million for growth parks.

In addition to the park-level incentives, the measures aim to improve the live broadcast e-commerce industry chain. Subsidies of up to RMB3 million will be offered for the construction of live broadcast e-commerce bases, and support

will be provided to attract leading online live broadcast brokerage agencies and outstanding anchors to the cooperation zone.

To cultivate talent, the policies encourage enterprises to collaborate with universities in Macau and mainland China to provide e-commerce training. Macau youth who complete the training and join enterprises in the cooperation zone can receive subsidies of up to RMB4,000.

E-commerce industry clusters and leading enterprises with an international competitive edge are regarded as empowering the development of the real economy.

Building a cross-border e-commerce demonstration park and promoting e-commerce strategies will enhance the training of e-commerce talents and support the coordinated development of the two regions.

PARTY PLENUM

# Communist Party policy meeting endorses leader Xi's high-tech vision for economy

KEN MORITSUGU & ELAINE KURTENBACH, BEIJING

**C**HINA'S ruling Communist Party wrapped up a top-level meeting yesterday by endorsing policies aimed at advancing the country's technological power and fortifying its national security.

A statement released when the four-day meeting ended provided only a broad-brush summary. More details are likely to emerge in the coming days.

"The current and future period is a critical time for comprehensively promoting the construction of a strong country and the great cause of national rejuvenation using Chinese-style modernization," the statement said.

It said the tasks outlined in the meeting would be completed by 2029, the 80th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

The statement said it is necessary to coordinate development and security, a nod to concern that expanding national security enforcement is weighing on the economy.

But it stressed that "national security is an important foundation for the steady and long-term development of Chinese-style modernization," noting that the "leadership of the party is the fundamental guarantee" for achieving that goal.

The meeting also endorsed leader Xi Jinping's repeated calls for "high-quality development,"



AP PHOTO

signaling Beijing will continue to prioritize investing in technologies and encouraging companies to upgrade their equipment and knowhow at a time when China faces tightening restrictions on access to Western advanced technology, such as leading-edge computer chips and artificial intelligence.

"High quality development is the primary task of building a modern socialist country in an all-round way," the statement said.

Foreign investors and markets were watching to see what the party might do to counter the slump in China's real estate sector and weak consumer confidence that has hindered China's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Economic growth slowed to 4.7% on an annual basis in the April to June quarter, as investments in real estate and property sales continued to decline despite a raft of measures aimed at encouraging families to buy housing.

Addressing concerns that have weakened consumer confidence, Thursday's statement acknowledged the need to improve "basic and bottom-up livelihood, solve the most direct and realistic interests of the people and continuously meet the people's yearning for a better life."

It promised improvements to income distribution, job markets, social security and the medical system, but gave no specifics.

Likewise, the statement mentioned the need to address risks in the property market and other threats to the economy, without providing details.

Another priority is relieving the financial squeeze on local governments that have built up huge amounts of debt after a crackdown on heavy borrowing by property developers pushed the real estate industry into crisis, cutting off a vital source of tax revenues from sales of land-use rights.

The announcement yesterday only alluded in general terms to

the need to reform the tax system and better integrate cities and the countryside.

Chinese leaders have repeatedly said the country will remain open to foreign investment and improve the business environment, despite ever-extending Communist Party controls over companies, social media, financial regulators and other aspects of life.

Yesterday's statement repeatedly reiterated the need for openness and open markets, but also said the party must prevent any "ideological risks."

The meetings are unlikely to make a major change in policies, Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics said in a commentary. "And there still appears to be a tension between policies aimed at boosting economic security and expanding the supply-side of the economy, and those aimed at giving market forces a greater role and rebalancing growth toward consumption," he said.

This week's meetings are the third plenary session of the 205-member party Central Committee, which began a five-year term in 2022. Delayed from last year, third plenums usually set major economic and policy decisions. Past landmark plenums launched China into its ascent as a world manufacturing and financial power in an era of "reform and opening up."

Details of any policy decisions will come gradually, and probably after the party's powerful Politburo meets later this month.

The meeting also dealt with disciplinary actions against some former senior officials. It dismissed former Foreign Minister Qin Gang from the Central Committee and approved investigation reports on three former military officials.

Qin was removed as foreign minister about a year ago after only a few months in office. The government has yet to explain why.

The reports from the Central Military Commission investigated what the statement called "serious violations of discipline and laws" by former Defense Minister Li Shangfu and two officials dismissed from the military's rocket force, former commander Li Yuchao and former chief of staff Sun Jinming.

The Defense Ministry said last month that Li, the ex-defense minister, had abused his authority by taking bribes in exchange for granting favors. He was dismissed last year after less than a year in his post.

The unexpected dismissals of the new foreign and defense ministers raised questions about party leadership but don't appear to have affected government policy.

The statement emphasized the importance of modernizing the military at a time of growing tensions with the United States and Asian neighbors. It called for improving the leadership and management of the military and operations across its different branches. **MDT/AP**

**C**HINESE investigators suspect construction work sparked a fire that caused 16 deaths in a shopping mall in the southwestern city of Zigong. The fire broke out Wednesday evening and took almost 10 hours to extinguish, state media reported.

The 14-story commercial building was evacuated, with 75 people led to safety, according to the official news agency Xinhua. The building houses a department store, offices, restaurants and a movie theater.

## Investigators suspect construction work caused fire that killed 16 in shopping mall

Social media video posts showed clouds of thick black smoke coming out of windows on the building's lower levels.

Local media said firefighters used several drones to combat the flames.

Fire hazards remain a problem in China, which reported 947 fire fatalities up to late May, up 19% from those re-

ported by the same time last year, according to Li Wanfeng, a spokesperson for the National Fire and Rescue Administration.

Li said the number of fires in public places such as hotels and restaurants rose 40% over that period, and that the most common causes were leaking gas lines and a failure to follow sa-

fety procedures.

In January, a fire killed 39 people in a commercial building in the southeastern Chinese province of Jiangxi, caused by unauthorized welding in the basement. In February, another 15 people were killed in a residential building in the eastern city of Nanjing.

**MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

AP PHOTO



Tae Yongho

## EX-N. KOREAN DIPLOMAT APPOINTED A VICE MINISTER IN S. KOREA THE HIGHEST POST FOR ANY DEFECTOR

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

**S**OUTH Korea's president yesterday appointed a former North Korean diplomat as a vice minister, the highest-level government job for any of the thousands of North Koreans who have resettled in South Korea.

Tae Yongho was a minister of

the North Korean Embassy in London when he defected to South Korea in 2016. Tae is the highest-ranking North Korean who has resettled in South Korea in recent years. He has said he did so because he didn't want his children to live "miserable" lives in North Korea and he fell into "despair" over leader Kim Jong Un's execu-

tions of officials and nuclear ambitions.

North Korea called him "human scum" and accused him of embezzling government money and committing other crimes.

President Yoon Suk Yeol appointed Tae secretary general the Peaceful Unification Advisory Council, which gives the presi-

dent policy advice on peaceful Korean unification.

The appointment made Tae the first North Korean defector appointed to a vice-ministerial job in South Korea, among about 34,000 North Koreans who have resettled in South Korea, according to Seoul's Unification Ministry.

In 2020, Tae was elected to South Korea's parliament. There have been other North Korean defectors who have served as lawmakers in South Korea.

Yoon's office said in a statement that Tae was the right person for the post because he can utilize his living experience in North Korea and work experiences as a member of South Korea's parliament's committee on foreign policy and unification issues.

Most of the defectors left North Korea after a devastating famine in the mid-1990s. Upon arrival in South Korea, North Korean defectors are given citizenships, almost-free apartments, resettlement money and other benefits. But coming from authoritarian, impoverished and nominally socialist North Korea, many experience diverse discrimination and severe difficulties in adjusting to new lives in capitalistic, highly competitive South Korea, according to their interviews and surveys.

Yoon promised to provide greater government support to improve the lives of North Korean defectors on the inaugural "North Korean Defectors' Day" on Sunday.

Most of the North Korean defectors are women from the North's poorer northern regions along the a long, porous border with China. But in recent years, the number of North Korean elites to flee to South Korea has steadily increased, according to the Unification Ministry.

On Tuesday, South Korea's spy agency said that Ri Il Kyu, a counselor of political affairs at the North Korean Embassy in Cuba, had defected to South Korea last November. **MDT/AP**

### NORTH KOREA

## Gov't plans to launch major tourism site next year though it still blocks foreign tourists

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

**N**ORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un visited a major tourism site being constructed on the country's eastern coast and discussed steps to open the zone by next year, state media reported yesterday, though the country still blocks visits by most foreign tourists.

The Wonsan-Kalma zone is one of Kim's most talked-about tourism projects. For years, North Korea has been building luxury hotels and recreational facilities there to create a key attraction for international visitors. But the project reportedly suffered setbacks due to shortages of

construction materials as a result of toughened U.N. sanctions and COVID-19 restrictions.

Kim toured the Wonsan-Kalma zone with top deputies on Tuesday and discussed preparations for its opening by May 2025 as decided by a ruling party meeting in January, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

"A coastal wonderland to be known to the world as the best tourist resort of (North Korea) would be successfully built," Kim was quoted as saying by KCNA. It cited Kim as saying construction has entered its final stages.

North Korea has been slowly easing its harsh pan-

AP PHOTO



democratic-era curbs and entry restrictions as part of its efforts to revive its economy. But it still hasn't reopened

its borders to foreign tourists, except for a relatively small number of Russians who visited earlier this year

as ties boomed between the two countries.

A return of Chinese travelers would likely provide

a much bigger source of revenue as they represented about 90% of international tourists visiting North Korea before the pandemic. In 2019, a record 300,000 foreign tourists visited North Korea, earning the country between \$90 million and \$150 million, experts say.

The U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization said Wednesday its director-general visited North Korea from July 13 to 16, in the first trip by a U.N. principal since 2019. It said Director-General Qu Dongyu's trip was meant to strengthen its partnership with North Korea and address food security and nutrition challenges in the country.

It wasn't immediately clear when North Korea will allow the return of international staff of U.N. agencies. North Korea's stringent pandemic curbs included the departure of diplomats and foreign nationals. **MDT/AP**

# Japan hosts Pacific Island leaders summit to firm cooperation amid growing China influence in region

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

**J**APAN hosted a summit yesterday with leaders from more than a dozen Pacific island nations, seeking to deepen cooperation and increased support for a rules-based free and open Indo-Pacific amid China's growing influence in the region.

The Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting, or PALM, launched under Japanese initiative in 1997, has become Japan's key diplomatic tool to deter China's security and economic influence in the region by strengthening its ties with the Pacific Island Forum members, stressing its willingness to stand by them and maintaining unity.

In his opening remarks, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said he hoped to elevate Japan's ties with the Pacific islands to a higher stage and renew its commitment to "walk together toward the future." He stressed the importan-



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida

ce to join hands to quickly tackle mutual issues such as the climate change.

Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown, who is co-chairing this year's summit, welcomed Ja-

pan's approach to work with the PIF members "as equals" to achieve their 2050 strategy for the Blue Pacific, "our vision for a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity."

He noted climate resilience and disaster risk management, sustainable management of oceans, economic resilience, ensuring people-centered development and investment in techno-

logy and connectivity as key areas for cooperation.

Japan also seeks to share with the leaders the importance of maintaining the rules-based, free and open international order in the region, with China in mind but carefully not spelled out.

South Pacific island nations have become a focus of security concern among Japan and its ally the United States and their regional partners such as Australia and New Zealand in recent years as Beijing increases its presence in the region where many island nations are economically China-dependent, as with many other countries.

Leaders from 18 Pacific Island Forum member nations and regions are expected to adopt a joint statement stating their commitment to work together in areas including maritime security, defense cooperation, climate change and economic development and other key issues at the end of the meeting yesterday.

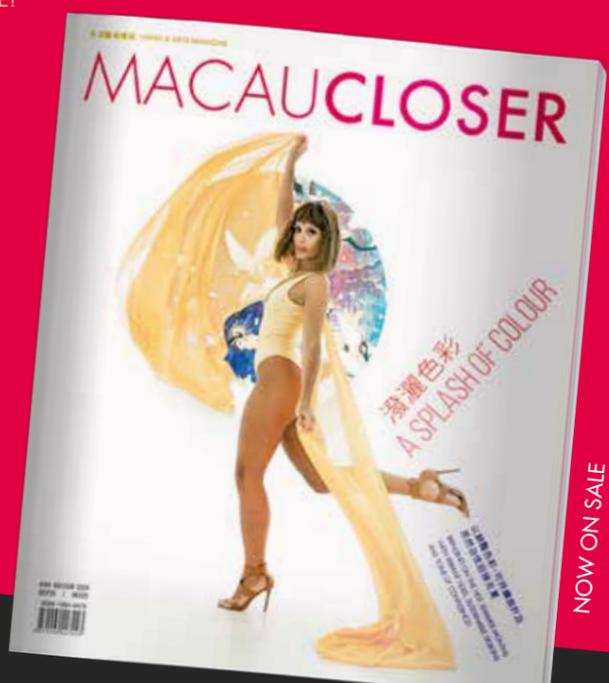
Kishida has been also holding bilateral meetings with the leaders since earlier this week on the sidelines of summit.

In his separate meetings Wednesday with several leaders, including Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Niue and Papua New Guinea, Kishida announced Japan's support for infrastructure, fishing projects and other areas. **MDT/AP**

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

# Von der Leyen re-elected to a second term as president

MIKE CORDER &  
JEAN-FRANCOIS BADIAS,  
STRASBOURG

AP PHOTO



European Commission President  
Ursula von der Leyen

**L**AWMAKERS at the European Parliament yesterday re-elected Ursula von der Leyen to a second 5-year term as president of the European Union's executive commission, giving her a comfortable majority and heading off a possible leadership vacuum.

Von der Leyen raised both fists in victory as the Parliament President Roberta Metsola read out the result at the legislature.

"5 more years. I can't begin to express how grateful I am for the trust of all MEPs that voted for me," she said on the social media platform X.

The re-election ensures leadership continuity for the 27-nation bloc as it wrestles with crises ranging from the war in Ukraine to climate change, migration and housing shortages.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz was quick to send his congratulations on X, calling von der Leyen's re-election "a clear sign of our ability to act in the European Union, especially in difficult times. Europeans expect us to take Europe forward. Let's do it!"

A majority in the 720-seat legislature voted for the German Christian Democrat after a speech in which she pledged to be a strong leader for Europe in a time of crisis and polarization.

Von der Leyen gained 401 of the 707 votes cast. There were 284 votes against her candidacy, 15 abstentions and seven void ballots.

The secret ballot came hot on the heels of strong gains by the far right in last month's election for the European Parliament.

"I will never let the extreme polarization of our societies become accepted. I will never accept that demagogues and extremists destroy our European way of life. And I stand here today ready to lead the fight with all the Democratic forces in this house," von der Leyen said in her final pitch.

If lawmakers had rejected her candidacy, it would leave leaders of the 27-nation bloc scrambling to find a repla-

cement as Europe grapples with crises ranging from the war in Ukraine to climate change. Instead, the continent now has an experienced pair of hands at the helm.

In a speech that sought to shore up support from across the political spectrum, von der Leyen pledged to strengthen the EU economy, its police and border agencies, tackle migration and pursue policies tackling climate change while also helping farmers who have staged protests against what they call stifling EU bureaucracy and environmental rules.

She also vowed to tackle housing shortages across Europe and said she would appoint a commissioner for the Mediterranean region due to the multiple challenges it faces.

She also took a swipe at Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his recent visit to Russia shortly after his country took over the rotating six-month EU presidency.

"This so-called peace mission was nothing but an appeasement mission," von der Leyen said as she vowed that Europe would remain shoulder-to-shoulder with Ukraine.

One radical right lawmaker, Diana Iovanovici-Sosoaca of Romania, was escorted out of the parliament's chamber for heckling a speaker during the debate

following von der Leyen's speech. Iovanovici-Sosoaca briefly wore what appeared to be a muzzle and held up religious icons before being led out of the room.

Over the past five years, von der Leyen has steered the bloc through a series of crises, including Britain's exit from the EU, the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. She has also pushed a Green Deal aiming to make the EU climate-neutral by 2050.

Von der Leyen's election came as newly elected U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer was welcoming some 45 heads of government to discuss migration, energy security and the threat from Russia as he seeks to restore relations between the U.K. and its European neighbors.

EU leaders signed off on the conservative German von der Leyen at a summit meeting late last month. The 65-year-old von der Leyen's bid was boosted when the European People's Party, which includes von der Leyen's Christian Democratic Union, remained the largest group at the EU Parliament after the elections.

The German politician has been praised for her leading role during the coronavirus crisis, when the EU bought vaccines collectively for its citizens. But she also found herself receiving sharp criticism for the opa-

city of the negotiations with vaccine makers.

The EU general court ruled Wednesday that the commission did not allow the public enough access to information about COVID-19 vaccine purchase agreements it secured with pharmaceutical companies during the pandemic.

Before voting got underway, a majority of lawmakers rejected a motion from a leftist bloc in parliament calling for the election to be delayed until September in light of the court ruling.

Following the elections for EU Parliament, European Union leaders agreed on the officials who will hold the key positions in the world's biggest trading bloc in the coming years for issues ranging from antitrust investigations to foreign policy. At the side of von der Leyen will be two new faces: Antonio Costa of Portugal as European Council president and Estonia's Kaja Kallas as the top diplomat of the world's largest trading bloc.

While Costa's nomination only needed the leaders' approval, Kallas will also need to be approved by European lawmakers later this year. The Estonian prime minister is a staunch supporter of Ukraine and a fierce critic of Russia within the European Union and NATO. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1996 'WAR CRIMINAL' KARADZIC RESIGNS



The Bosnian Serb President, Radovan Karadzic, has agreed to resign and withdraw from political and public life.

He was ordered to step down by the Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic, after marathon talks with the United States special envoy, Richard Holbrooke.

Mr Karadzic is currently a fugitive after an arrest warrant was issued for him last week by the International War Crimes Tribunal.

He was indicted last year, along with his army chief, Ratko Mladic, for crimes of genocide and other atrocities.

His continued refusal to resign was jeopardising the first post-war elections in Bosnia, due to be held on 14 September.

Under the Dayton peace accords, which brought an end to the war in the former Yugoslavia last year, indicted war criminals cannot stand for public office.

Mr Holbrooke announced the agreement in Belgrade, saying, "He [Karadzic] will not appear in public, or on radio or television or other media or participate in any way in the elections."

But he admitted he had failed in his aim to secure the extradition of Mr Karadzic.

"I want to make clear that we are not satisfied," he went on. "It falls short of our goals. Indicted war criminals should be at The Hague to face trial under due process of law, and that includes Mr Karadzic."

Mr Karadzic will be replaced by his deputy president, Biljana Plavsic, a Serb nationalist who is known to be opposed to the Dayton agreement.

The news was greeted cautiously by other international mediators, who have been struggling for six months to oust Mr Karadzic.

"We must await events since there have been so many agreements not properly implemented in this country," said Michael Steiner, deputy to the International High Representative in Bosnia.

Reaction from other political leaders in Bosnia was also lukewarm.

"I don't doubt that Karadzic will continue in his own way, creating a parallel system and obstructing the Dayton agreement and peace in the region, until he is completely removed," said the vice-president of the Muslim-Croat Federation, Ejup Ganic.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic continued to evade arrest.

Nato troops carried out several raids on places he and Mladic were thought to have been hiding, but always without success.

The United States and European Union put pressure on the Bosnian Serb authorities to find them, and a €3.5m reward offered, again without result. Karadzic was finally arrested in Belgrade in July 2008 and is expected to face trial at The Hague, but General Mladic is still at large.

Slobodan Milosevic was forced to resign by his own people after he refused to recognise the victory of opposition leader Vojislav Kostunica in the 2000 general election.

He was jailed by the Serb authorities in April 2001, accused of corruption and abuse of power.

Two months later the Serbian government handed him over to the international community to stand trial on more than 60 charges of genocide and crimes against humanity at the International War Crimes Tribunal at The Hague.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Apr. 20-May. 20  
Together, advance your shared financial plan. Align on priorities and determine who will do what. Resolve how to meet upcoming expenses. Replenish reserves.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
Share the tricks you're learning with your partner. You can make your own luck. Talk about what you love. Discover unexpected synchronicity. Pull together.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
The workload increases and so does the tempo. Put your heart into your actions. Focus on the present moment for an excellent performance.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
Have fun with people you love. Express your passion and creativity. Persistent, steady action gets farther than luck. Get playful. Discover hidden beauty.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Sink into domestic comforts. Focus on home and family, before looking farther out. Make renovations and organize the space. Give away what's no longer needed.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Pay a kindness forward. Ask for what you need and get it. Give and take. Share inspiration. Provide excellence. Network connections open new doors.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
You can sense long-term potential. Avoid emotional spending, risk or conflict. A good idea may not work in practice. Invest wisely. Keep it simple.

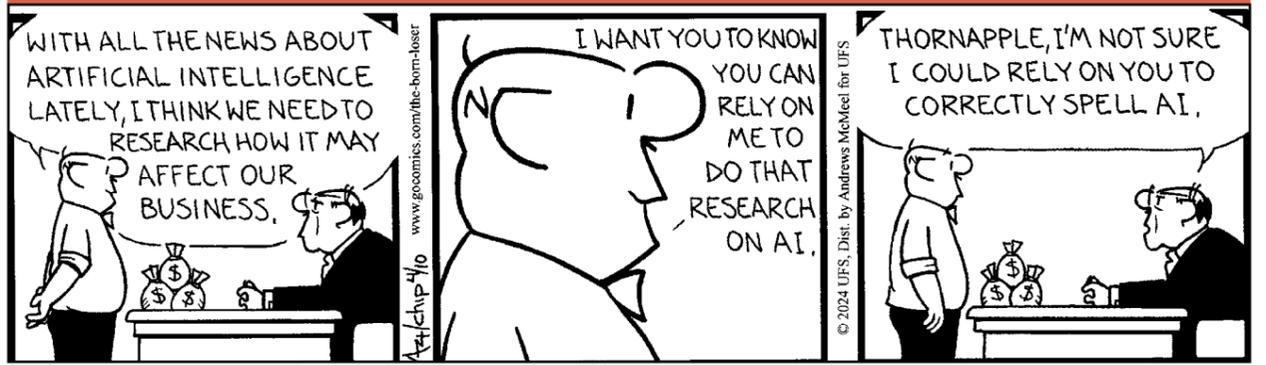
**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Your energy could surge from power and confidence to self-doubt. Articulate what you want. Take extra care of yourself. Private time recharges you.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Slow to consider the options. Complete one project and put things away before beginning the next. Review budgets, schedules and plans. Savor private rituals.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Community action gets results. Connect with your team and pull together. Write your representatives and share your views. Show up and be counted.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Anticipate professional changes or challenges. Look for lucky breaks and prepare for grabbing. One opportunity could prove especially lucrative. Get team support as needed.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



## SUDOKU

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

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

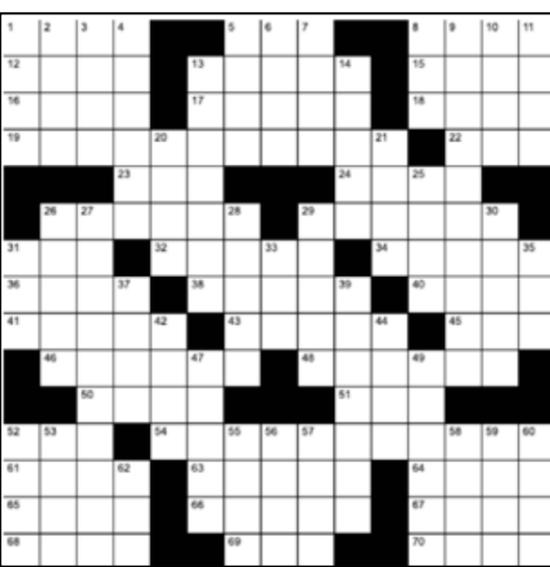
## WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	25	36	cloudy
Changchun	21	31	cloudy
Chengdu	23	30	rain
Chongqing	29	37	cloudy
Fuzhou	29	40	fine
Guangzhou	26	34	showers
Guiyang	22	29	cloudy
Haikou	26	32	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	28	39	fine
Harbin	20	31	thunderstorms
Hefei	26	34	cloudy
Nanjing	28	35	cloudy
Shanghai	30	38	overcast
Taipei	27	33	cloudy
Wuhan	30	35	fine
Hong Kong	30	33	showers
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	17	24	showers
Frankfurt	17	31	cloudy
Paris	21	33	cloudy
London	17	30	sunny
New York	21	30	sunny

## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- March time; 5- Launch site; 8- Support; 12- Vincent Lopez's theme song; 13- Satisfies; 15- Precious stones; 16- Prison room; 17- Run of bird-song; 18- Deck quartet; 19- An organization; 22- Canadian prov.; 23- Sculling need; 24- Tip off; 26- Ravenous; 29- Evaluate; 31- Prefix with profit or fiction; 32- Hunker; 34- Singer Baker; 36- No ifs, \_\_\_ or buts; 38- Sketches; 40- Idyllic place; 41- Excess fluid in an organ; 43- Distributed cards; 45- Ich bin \_\_\_ Berliner; 46- Places of contest; 48- Converted, in a way; 50- Tennis matches are divided into these; 51- Doze; 52- L.A. clock setting; 54- Hand tool; 61- Goof off; 63- Without \_\_\_ in the world; 64- Prefix with space; 65- Arm bone; 66- Mum's mate; 67- Speaker of baseball; 68- Bubbly drink; 69- Common ID; 70- Per;

DOWN 1- Member of a great Peruvian people; 2- Female deer; 3- Building additions; 4- Old West watering hole; 5- Graph prefix; 6- Plugging away; 7- Sandwich shop; 8- Links org.; 9- Think about changing; 10- Sign of the future; 11- You there!; 13- Agitated; 14- Reduces speed; 20- Shrewd; 21- American space agency; 25- Russo of 'Tin Cup'; 26- Accord maker; 27- Comprehend; 28- Gridiron units; 29- Nobelist Sadat; 30- Lager holder; 31- Scot's refusal; 33- \_\_\_ Dawn Chong; 35- First name in advice; 37- Captain Hook's sidekick; 39- Thin; 42- Aardvark's prey; 44- Ski lift; 47- Tin Pan Alley org.; 49- Narcotic; 52- Asset; 53- Han \_\_\_ was a 'Star Wars' character; 55- Some DVD players; 56- Consumes; 57- Small songbird; 58- Aloe \_\_\_; 59- Slang expert Partridge; 60- \_\_\_ Hashanah; 62- JFK watchdog;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



Scottie Scheffler of the United States

# SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER IS ADJUSTING TO LINKS GOLF AND HIS ROLE AS BEST PLAYER IN THE WORLD

DOUG FERGUSON,  
TROON

**T**HE first stage of Scottie Scheffler's rise to the top of golf felt like warp speed. He went from

No. 15 in the world to No. 1 in the span of five tournaments, and that was before he won the Masters for the first time.

Now he's on a level not seen since Tiger Woods

was in his prime.

Scheffler is not the biggest draw at the British Open, not with Woods in the field. Rory McIlroy remains a big attraction, especially in the U.K., and

he comes into Royal Troon as a sentimental favorite from his sad collapse in the U.S. Open and going 10 years without a major.

But any conversation at the final major of the year starts with Scheffler, a heavy favorite as he has been in every major this year. And that has taken him time to fully appreciate his status in the game.

"I never really thought of myself as anything but a golfer," Scheffler said Tuesday. "I was never trying to be famous. I didn't want to be a celebrity or whatever. I just wanted to become a good golfer and get the most out of myself. It's brought me this far, so I continue to just try to keep my head down and put in the work that got me here and just continue to practice and hopefully continue to get better."

His six PGA Tour victories before the calendar turned to July are the most since Arnold Palmer in 1962. Someone pointed out to Scheffler that Palmer's seventh victory that year was a claret jug he won at Royal Troon.

He wasn't sure how to react to that except to shrug his shoulders and say, "Yeah, that would be great."

"I love the history of the game, and there's certain things that I know and certain things that I don't. That was some-

thing that for some reason I just never stumbled across," he said, searching for the right answer. "So I had no idea that that was a thing."

The British Open figures to present his biggest test.

Scheffler is still relatively new to links golf — everything about his rise to No. 1 is new — having played this style in 2021 for the first time. He has learned to adjust the flight of his ball since links turf creates a little more spin on certain shots. The greens can be slower. Bunkers are to be avoided.

He is a two-time Masters champion, missed a U.S. Open playoff by one shot at The Country Club and was runner-up in the PGA Championship at Oak Hill. But he has never seriously contended in golf's oldest championship.

Even so, the love of the links is there.

He went to the J.P. McManus Pro-Am in Ireland a few years ago and took side trips to Lahinch and Ballybunion. He began this trip across the Atlantic Ocean by skipping the Scottish Open at The Renaissance Club — links style, but not links turf — and going to Turnberry with Sam Burns for a match with their caddies, both good players.

"A tremendous amount of fun," he said.

And then it was time for work at Royal Troon, the links renowned for having the longest hole (the 623-yard sixth) and shortest hole (the 123-yard eighth) in the British Open rotation.

Most peculiar about

Troon is that the outward nine — typically with at least a wee breeze at the players' back — has two par 5s and measures 3,539 yards. The inward nine with the wind in the face has one par 5 and is 3,846 yards.

"It's basically a tale of two nines on this course," McIlroy said. "You feel like you have to make your score on the way out and then sort of hang on coming in."

McIlroy has far more experience on links golf — and a claret jug to show for it from his victory at Royal Liverpool in 2014 — but it still takes time to adjust because "you play 11 months of your golf every year in very different conditions."

Players also are preparing for weather described as "mixed," a gentle way of saying it probably won't be terribly pleasant for most of the week. Sunshine gave way to spells of rain on Tuesday, and that was before lunch was served.

PGA champion Xander Schauffele might be the second-most consistent player in golf behind Scheffler — nothing but top 20s in his last 10 starts and 51 cuts in a row — and has acquired a taste for less-than-pleasant conditions, particularly in the Open.

"If the weather gets really bad, you just have to take the bunkers out of play and really try and plot your way around," he said. "It doesn't have to be super pretty. Just kind of place the ball around the property and really just try and get it in the hole in as few shots as possible."

MDT/AP

AD



**BENFICAMACAU**  
**ACADEMY**  
澳門賓菲加體育學校



**FOOTBALL | BASKETBALL | DAILY TRAININGS**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

TASTE OF EDESIA

# Korean Cantonese Delicacies

IRENE SAM

**T**HIS July, Wynn welcomes culinary icons from around the world to participate in the ongoing 'Wynn Guest Chef Dining Series'. Some of the world's most celebrated chefs make their way to Macao to partner with Wynn's award-winning culinary masters for a series of collaborative dinners that celebrate the diverse landscape of international regions.

Celebrating excellence, culinary identities and gastronomic diversity, the 'Wynn Guest Chef Dining Series' aims to inspire conversation and innovation as influential chefs around the world use their combined talents to push the creative boundaries of gastronomy.

'Wynn Guest Chef Dining Series' provides an ideal platform for culinary talents to exchange knowledge, share culinary traditions and promote the rich culture of regional cuisines, committed to promoting Macao's status as a UNESCO-designated Creative City of Gastronomy.

One of the participating restaurants and chefs included Chef Tam

Kwok Fung of Chef Tam's Seasons (Macao) and Chef Park Seung-hun of Hansik Goo (Hong Kong). Since the launch of Chef Tam's Seasons at Wynn Palace in 2023, the restaurant has earned critical plaudits.

Under the stewardship of Chef Tam Kwok Fung, the Cantonese restaurant debuted on the 2024 list of Asia's 50 Best Restaurants and earned a Michelin star within a year of opening. For two nights, Chef Tam teamed up with Chef Park Seung-hun, widely regarded as one of South Korea's finest chefs.

As Executive Chef of the Michelin-starred Hansik Goo in Hong Kong, Chef Park showcases the diversity of Korean cuisine reframed through a modern lens. Blending classic Cantonese delicacies with contemporary Korean dishes, Chef Tam and Chef Park created an enticing tasting menu of cross-cultural cuisines. Superb cooking techniques and a deep understanding of both cultures were displayed by the chefs, and MDT was particularly impressed with the Lobster, Crab meat and Pine Nut Soup, which paired umami aspects of the sea with the earthy and creamy pine nut.



Chef Tam Kwok Fung and Chef Park Seung-hun



F&B

# This nearly 10-foot Gatsby sub is made by a South African restaurant with a taste for the supersized

GERALD IMRAY, CAPE TOWN

**T**HE idea came — as the nutty ones often do — over a few drinks in a bar.

A South African restaurant served up a 3-meter-long sandwich recently in the latest offering from an establishment with a taste for the supersi-

zed. The giant submarine sandwich produced by Annie's Ladies Bar in Cape Town follows a burger it cooked up in 2019 that weighed in at a whopping 124 kilograms.

With no less than 10 layers of fillings, the sandwich tipped the scales at 65.27 kilograms after it was balanced precariously on a weighing machine

using a tray with supports. It took over four hours to prepare at a cost of about \$160 for the ingredients, said Joe Redelinghuys, who came up with the plan and runs the restaurant and bar with his wife and owner, Annie.

Those ingredients included: 3 kilograms of tomatoes. About 20 kilograms of meat, from

three types of sliced sausage to steak to burger patties and chicken fillets. Three layers of french fries weighing a total of around 10 kilograms to break up the meats. A layer of calamari for those who prefer seafood. And, finally, a generous helping of onion rings on top. All in a sandwich. MDT/AP



Annie Redelinghuys poses with a giant Gatsby sandwich on display at the establishment in Cape Town, South Africa

OPINION

China Daily  
Editorial, China Daily

REFORM MUST CONTINUE ACROSS THE BOARD FOR COUNTRY TO REALIZE ITS MODERNIZATION

To the question of what can be expected of the third plenary session of the 20th Communist Party of China Central Committee, there is no doubt that plans for further comprehensively deepening reform will be the answer.

Reform has proved to be always necessary for China to make progress in its economic and social development since it was first initiated in the late 1970s.

Without reform, China would not have achieved what it has. From rural reform to unleash the potential of rural villagers for agricultural production to the reform for upgrading of industries, the country has undergone an unprecedented transformation in almost every aspect of its economic and social life.

The exploration for the most appropriate approach to economic and social development knows no bounds, nor does the emancipation of mind for reform. That explains why comprehensively deepening reform has become a key endeavor for the Party since it was first proposed at the third plenary session of the 18th CPC National Congress in 2013. Given its political system with the CPC as the ruling party and its upholding of socialism with Chinese characteristics, China has been blazing a path of its own for economic and social development.

The country has lifted all of its poverty-stricken people out of extreme poverty, made a great achievement in improving its people's lives, and raised its international standing as the second-largest economy. The reform of the household registration system in the recent couple of years has made it possible for 140 million rural residents to become urban residents. The reform of income tax has brought benefits to 250 million residents. The policy for local governments to purchase houses and then rent them to residents for rents much lower than the market rate has also solved housing problems for many low-income residents.

The Chinese people have also benefited considerably from what the country has achieved in environmental protection and ecological conservation with the number of parks, wetlands and nature reserves witnessing rapid increase in recent years.

All these achievements would have been impossible without reform.

Despite all these achievements, the leadership is not content and does not want to rest on its laurels. It has a long-term vision for China's rejuvenation, transforming it into a strong country through a Chinese path to modernization. New quality productive forces, a concept proposed by the CPC Central Committee, have placed emphasis on the development of new industries, future industries and renewal and upgrading of traditional industries, which will hopefully lay a solid foundation for advancing Chinese modernization. The fact that China has become a manufacturing power in the world has vindicated the decision to implement reform in the past several decades. Deepening reform in this regard will further boost the strength of the country's manufacturing industry and the level of its science and technology at large.

In its efforts to deepen reform in various sectors, the CPC Central Committee has reiterated the importance of innovation, not just innovation in science and technology, but also innovation in governing institutions and governance. Comprehensively deepening reform will also help the Party and government to constantly discover shortfalls and problems concerning both the governing institutions and practical work, and then addressing them. It is therefore sagacious of its leadership to realize that there is much to be desired as far as its system is concerned and its governance of a nation of 1.4 billion people.

President Xi Jinping has said that whether the people get their share of the fruit of economic and social development is the benchmark for the success of reform. That will be the yardstick for the outcomes of this important plenary session.

Two buses carrying Chinese tourists veered off the same stretch of road in perilous weather conditions on New Zealand's South Island yesterday, with 15 passengers taken to hospital, two of them seriously hurt.

The buses were traveling in the same direction on a stretch of highway popular with tourists when they slid from the road and overturned, at about the same time and only 100 meters apart, New Zealand's police said in an emailed statement. Temperatures in the area were freezing and others driving on the highway

reported heavy fog and black ice on the road at the time.

Their cause was not known, New Zealand officials said. A spokesperson would not confirm the nationality of those on board but the Chinese consulate in Christchurch told The Associated Press by email that the buses were carrying Chinese tourists.

The local ambulance service said 15 people were taken to hospital, two by helicopter in a serious condition. Eight of those hospitalized were moderately hurt and five had minor injuries.



Gay couple So Seong-wook, left, and Kim Yong Min, leave the Supreme Court building in Seoul, South Korea, yesterday

SOUTH KOREA

IN LANDMARK VERDICT, TOP COURT RECOGNIZES SOME RIGHTS FOR SAME-SEX COUPLES

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea's top court ruled yesterday that same-sex couples are eligible to receive the same health insurance benefits as heterosexual couples, a landmark verdict hailed by human rights groups.

The Supreme Court said it ruled that the state health insurance agency's refusal to provide spousal insurance coverage for gay couples was an act of discrimination that violates the constitutional principle of equality.

Yesterday's ruling is final and cannot be appealed.

"Today's ruling is a historic victory for equality and human rights in South Korea," Amnesty International said in a statement. "The court has taken a significant step

towards dismantling systemic discrimination and ensuring inclusivity for all."

A legal battle between a gay couple, So Seong-wook and Kim Yong-min, and the National Health Insurance Service began after the insurance agency revoked So's registration as a dependent of Kim, prompting So to file an administrative suit.

In 2022, the Seoul Administrative Court ruled in favor of the insurance agency. But in February 2023, the Seoul High Court overturned the earlier verdict, saying that denying So's spousal coverage rights without reasonable grounds was discriminatory because such benefits are given to heterosexual spouses.

Public views on gender issues in South Korea have gradually changed in recent years, but critics say

the Asian country still has a long way to go compared with other developed countries. South Korea doesn't legally recognize same-sex marriages.

"While this decision is a major milestone, the case itself is a sobering reminder of the lengthy judicial processes that same-sex couples must endure to secure basic rights that should be universally guaranteed," Amnesty International said.

So and Kim welcomed the ruling.

"When I listened to the verdict, I was so moved that I couldn't hold back my tears," So told reporters outside the court. He said he hopes the ruling will lead to South Korea legally accepting same-sex marriages.

Kim said he is "very happy" because he thinks the court recognized his love for So. MDT/AP



UK Leaders from across Europe expressed support for Ukraine and concern about the direction of the United States yesterday at a security-focused summit clouded by worries about whether the U.S. will remain a reliable ally if Donald Trump wins a second presidency. Newly elected U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer (pictured) welcomed some 45 heads of government to a grandiose English country mansion to discuss migration, energy security and the threat from Russia as he seeks to restore relations between the U.K. and its European Union neighbors four years after their acrimonious divorce.

Germany An American man who made threats against Taylor Swift on social media was detained ahead of her first concert in the German city of Gelsenkirchen and will be kept in custody until her shows there are over, police said Thursday. The suspected stalker, a 34-year-old whose name wasn't released, had a ticket to Swift's concert at Gelsenkirchen's Veltins-Arena on Wednesday, police said in a statement. They said that, because an initial investigation couldn't entirely rule out a risk, he was detained during entry checks to the event.



Paris 2024 A special kind of iron curtain came down across central Paris yesterday, with the beginning of an Olympic anti-terrorism perimeter along the banks of the River Seine sealing off a kilometers-long area to Parisians and tourists who hadn't applied in advance for a pass. The words on many lips were "QR code," the pass that granted access beyond snaking metal barriers that delineated the security zone set up to protect the Olympic Games' opening ceremony on July 26.