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**PEREIRA COUTINHO SAYS MANY RESIDENTS ARE CONCERNED WITH THE ‘MASS TOURISM’, CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO RETHINK TOURISM PROMOTION STRATEGY**

**RAISED DUTY-FREE QUOTA APPLICABLE AT ALL BORDERS EXCEPT HENGQIN**

**BYD, UBER FORM PARTNERSHIP TO DEPLOY 100,000 EVS IN EU AND LATIN AMERICA**



AP PHOTO



**India** yesterday offered a \$300 million loan to build up Vietnam's maritime security, as the two sides said they want to double their trade and investment within five years. Prime Minister Narendra Modi told visiting Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh that India considers Vietnam a key pillar of its policy toward Southeast Asian nations and an important partner in its Indo-Pacific vision.

AP PHOTO



**USA** Arrests of migrants for illegally crossing the border to the United States from Mexico plummeted about 30% in July to a new low for Joe Biden's presidency, U.S. authorities said Wednesday, raising prospects that a temporary ban on asylum may be lifted soon. The U.S. Border Patrol continued making arrests Wednesday, the last day of July.

AP PHOTO



**United Kingdom** The BBC said it is shocked at the “abhorrent” behavior of its former top news presenter Huw Edwards, who admitted to accessing indecent images of children sent to him by a man via the WhatsApp messaging service. During a 26-minute hearing at Westminster Magistrates' Court in central London, the 62-year-old Edwards pleaded guilty to three counts of making indecent images of children.

More on backpage

# GAMING ON ALERT

Casinos' revenue falls short of estimates amid China's illegal money flow clampdown P3

**GAMING**  
**MGM EYES THAILAND CASINO DEVELOPMENT AMID STRONG REVENUE**

P2

## TASTE OF EDESIA

P15

GAMING

# MGM EYES THAILAND CASINO DEVELOPMENT AMID STRONG Q2 REVENUES

NADIA SHAW

**M**GM China Holdings Limited has reported strong financial results for the second quarter of 2024, revealing a significant surge in net revenues as the company sets its sights on potential casino development in Thailand.

Yesterday, MGM China announced net revenues of HKD7.96 billion (USD1.02 billion) for Q2 2024, marking a remarkable 37% increase year-on-year. The adjusted property EBITDAR reached a record HKD2.44 billion (USD312.7 million), reflecting a 40% rise from the previous year. This growth follows the lifting of covid-19 travel restrictions, which has led to a surge in visitor numbers to Macau, where MGM maintains a market share of approximately 16% with strong margins of 29%.

For the first half of 2024, MGM China's total revenue reached HKD16.2 billion (USD2.07 billion), a 52% jump compared to the same period last year. MGM Cotai generated revenues of HKD4.70 billion, up 45% year-on-year, while MGM Macau reported HK\$3.26 billion, a 26% increase.

This growth trajectory has seen MGM increase its market share from 9.5% in 2019 to 16.5% by June 2024 - ending 2023 with a



14.9% share. This growth was attributed to the company's "deep understanding of customer preferences and a commitment to enhancing guest experiences", particularly through the implementation of smart tables, or RFID tables, in its casinos.

During the second-quarter earnings call, Kenneth Feng, president and executive director of MGM China, expressed optimism about the company's growth trajectory, aligning its offerings with Macau's vision to become a global tourist destination.

Additionally, MGM Resorts CEO Bill Hornbuckle conveyed optimism about the company's future, highlighting the continued positive financial results and growth in Las Vegas. He

noted that "MGM Macau has become the top producer on the Peninsula side," a position the company aims to maintain through ongoing investments in its properties. Hornbuckle emphasized the importance of the market's recovery, stating, "MGM is well above that," and expressed excitement about the company's strategic priorities moving forward.

In tandem with its strong performance in Macau, MGM Resorts is eyeing expansion opportunities in Thailand. Hornbuckle confirmed that any bid to develop an integrated casino resort in Thailand would be made through MGM China. He and MGM China chairperson, Pansy Ho, "plan to visit Thailand in August

to further explore this opportunity."

This interest is timely as the Thai Ministry of Finance is expected to release findings from a feasibility study on legalized casino gaming in the coming weeks, which could significantly influence MGM's decision-making process.

The Thai casino study was commissioned in March, after house members approved a draft Entertainment Complex Bill 253-4 to boost tourism and investment.

Due Wednesday, the report will weigh the economic, social and cultural impacts of legal casinos in the kingdom. It will also recommend a legal and regulatory framework for the industry, including tax rates, license requirements, and restrictions on casino size and operations.

Hornbuckle described Thailand as a "compelling market," citing the attractive cost of doing business and potential profit margins. Analysts at CLSA estimate that Thailand could develop into a \$15 billion market if fully realized, with four of Macau's six gaming concessionaires reportedly interested in pursuing a license.

The Thai government has proposed to issue between five to eight casino licenses with locations in key economic zones

and popular tourist destinations being prime candidates. The licenses will have an initial duration of 20 years, with the potential of renewal every five years.

The Thai Prime Minister, Srettha Thavasin, has been a vocal supporter of casino resorts, viewing them as a way to boost tourism and curb illegal gambling.

The proposed tax rate on gross gaming revenue is set at a relatively low 17%, which, combined with plans for extensive industry development, signals a welcoming environment for investors. Hornbuckle has expressed confidence in the dialogue with the Thai government, stating, "the cost to do business there, the margins that could be had would be compelling".

MGM Resorts is not only focused on Thailand but is also exploring opportunities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The company is involved in a development in the UAE that will feature three MGM-owned hotel brands and is looking to incorporate casino gaming into that project, contingent on local government licensing. Hornbuckle noted the recent issuance of the UAE's first lottery license as a positive sign for the regulatory environment, stating, "I'm encouraged that the rest of this will roll out as defined now".

PUBLIC WORKS

# New public housing estate planned for Iao Hon

**M**ACAU Urban Renewal Limited (MUR) is pushing forward with the redevelopment of Iao Hon Estate, an old neighborhood located near Rua Sete do Bairro Iao Hon and Avenida da Longevidade. The project, which is MUR's first urban renewal initiative, aims to transform the aging estate into a modern, livable community.

According to an announcement yesterday from the Public Works Bureau

(DSOP), the new development will feature a 30-story building with 250 housing units, a three-story public parking garage accommodating around 100 car and motorcycle spaces, and commercial and community facilities.

To facilitate the redevelopment, MUR is helping condominium owners set up management committees and reach an agreement on the plan. The local area plan adopts an approach where redeve-

lopment will take place without increasing resident population density or household numbers.

DSOP will oversee the project, which will be tendered in two phases - foundation and superstructure. The foundation phase alone is expected to take up to 600 working days. Given the project's proximity to older buildings and unique construction challenges, stringent safety measures will be required

during development.

As part of the urban renewal process, MUR is building temporary housing units on Lot P in Area Preta to serve as temporary accommodation for property owners when their homes are being redeveloped. The temporary housing project went into full swing in 2021 with the construction of the pile foundation now complete and excavation and lateral support works currently underway. NS



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DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com  
ASSISTANT EDITOR Lynzy Valles  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

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

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

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ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com  
OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com  
ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84  
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GAMING

# July revenue falls short of expectations amid China's illegal money flow clampdown

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE growth of gaming revenue continued to be lackluster in July, falling short of analysts' projections despite the popular summer travel season.

This could signal rising concerns among gamblers over China's crackdown on the gambling hub.

According to data published by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau yesterday, gross gaming revenue (GGR) increased by 12% to MOP18.6 billion for the month.

This figure is below the median analyst forecast of a 14% year-on-year rise and represents 76% of the gaming revenue levels seen prior to the pandemic in 2019.

This trend indicates that Beijing's efforts to curb illegal money exchange and cross-border gambling have negatively impacted player sentiment.

According to a recent study by Citibank, despite concerns



over Beijing's intensified efforts to curb illicit cross-border capital flows, Macau's premium mass gaming segment has continued to demonstrate remarkable resilience.

Analysts George Choi and Ryan Cheung noted the number of premium mass players increased 61% year-on-year to 575 individuals, while total wagers surged 34% to reach HKD12.2 million.

"Our July 2024 table survey suggests that concerns by

some investors about a crackdown on illegal cross-border fund flows and its negative impact on Macau's GGR are likely overstated," the analysts stated in their report.

In June, revenue from casinos amounted to MOP17.69 billion in June, the lowest monthly total since November of last year.

Since June, Beijing and state-owned media have highlighted a series of arrests involving illegal money exchange and loan sharks, along with cross-border

gambling. These actions by the Chinese government have likely contributed to the decline in vi-

sitor arrivals.

That same month, Macau reported 2.55 million visitor arrivals, which was about 82% of the pre-pandemic level. The city is expected to release data for July later this month, but industry analysts anticipate the numbers will show a continued slowdown.

This trend is partly due to China's easing of international travel restrictions and visa regulations, which have encouraged mainland Chinese tourists - Macau's dominant visitor group - to travel overseas instead.

The economic slowdown in China has also weakened tourist spending in Macau, with travelers cutting back on luxury shopping in favor of more budget-friendly eating and drinking options.

Brokerage CLSA Ltd has revised its forecast for gaming revenues and earnings before interest, taxation, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) for 2024 and 2025, lowering projections in 2024 to MOP232.7 billion, a 27% year-on-year increase, and expects 3.9% growth to MOP241.7 billion in 2025.

## MONTHLY GROSS GAMING REVENUE

	2024	2023	Variance
Jan	19,337	11,580	+67.0%
Feb	18,486	10,324	+79.1%
Mar	19,503	12,738	+53.1%
Apr	18,545	14,722	+26.0%
May	20,188	15,565	+29.7%
Jun	17,694	15,207	+16.4%
Jul	18,595	16,662	+11.6%

AL PLENARY

# Lawmaker concerned with physical and mental health of gaming workers

RENATO MARQUES

**L**AWMAKER Leong Sun Lok, together with the Macau Federation of Trade Unions, has expressed concern over the physical and mental health of gaming industry workers. In a spoken inquiry delivered at the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday, Leong noted that, while the gaming industry has been thriving after the reopening of the borders and easing of the pandemic restrictions, the industry has not yet reestablished the number of workers and benefits to pre-pandemic levels, which often forces workers of the gaming concessionaires to handle unreasonable numbers of patrons.

"With the gradual reco-



very of gaming revenue, I have received several requests for support from frontline workers who complain that, after the pandemic, the number of visitors [has] increased and, due to lack of manpower, they had to at-

tend to more customers," he said, adding, "furthermore, they are constantly dealing with fraudsters and have also been forced to adapt to new electronic gaming tables and new equipment. If they make a mistake, they easily receive

warning letters, and there have even been cases in which workers have been fired for work-related mistakes, or even advised to voluntarily quit."

Leong claims that such an attitude from the gaming concessionaires is

causing problems for both the physical and mental health of the workers.

"Many workers complain about the shifts, as they are many and very busy, which affects their working hours and their family and social life, putting them under physical and psychological pressure," the lawmakers said.

The lawmaker said that, although there is a new gaming law in force that establishes several obligations around concessionaires' relationship with their workers, there is a lack of scrutiny on enforcement.

He noted that the gaming sector is where the largest number of workers are employed and accordingly supports tens of thousands of families, but reaffirmed

the need for companies to see their staff members as "precious assets."

"I appeal to concessionaires to reduce the pressure on workers, hiring more workers promptly and helping them resolve problems according to their needs. Warning letters should not be issued [so readily] but should be only for good reason in the name of keeping a harmonious employment relationship."

The same lawmaker also called on authorities to optimize the regime that regulates the work on shifts and to provide workers with proper training on the new electronic gaming tables and others.

He concluded by noting that a recovery in the gaming industry results is expected to match an improvement in the benefits and working conditions of the workers to boost morale, promote the physical and mental health of workers, and the sustainable and healthy development of the sector.

## LRT SEES INCREASE IN PASSENGER NUMBERS IN JULY

The Light Rail Taipa Line carried an average of 13,200 passengers per day in July, a 1,600 passenger increase from the previous month. The figure is a 76% increase from July 2023's figure of 7,500. From January to July 2024, the LRT Taipa Line's average daily passenger capacity exceeded 11,000 (13,071) with a peak of 16,700 in February, which is the second-highest since the line's opening. The Macau LRT announced yesterday that its service hours will extend until 11:59 p.m. on August 2 and 9 (Fridays) to accommodate the increased demand from a large-scale entertainment event in Cotai. Moreover, The LRT company expects passenger numbers to further increase with the planned opening of the Seac Pai Van and Hengqin Lines later this year.

## TOURIST FIGURES MEET MGTO'S EXPECTATIONS

The tourism sector anticipated approximately 3.02 million visitors in July, aligning with their earlier projections. Cheng Wai Tong, deputy director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), highlighted that hotel occupancy rates exceeded 88% in the first half of the year and are expected to surpass 90% this month. As the summer vacation approaches, MGTO emphasizes quality over quantity in tourism, enhancing market inspections to ensure standards. Additionally, new measures increasing duty-free allowances for mainland tourists will be implemented across all entry points, promoting a boost in tourism revenue during this peak season.

## FALLING GLASS INJURES PASSENGER GETTING OFF THE BUS

A piece of glass fell from a residential unit and hit a passing bus near Riviera Garden around 6 p.m. yesterday. The glass struck a 22-year-old Macau resident who was getting off the bus, causing cuts to his left ear. A statement from the Fire Services Bureau noted that he was conscious and in stable condition. The bureau mentioned that the glass seemed to have fallen from a nearby building. An investigation into the incident has been initiated by the police.

## ZONE A SPORTS FACILITIES TO COST UP TO MOP270M

21 companies have submitted bids to build a recreational and sports facilities building on Lot A9 of Zone A. The proposed prices for the project vary from MOP241 million to MOP270 million, and the completion times range from 877 to 879 working days. The project entails constructing a 9-storey recreational and sports facilities building, along with 2-storey underground car parks. It will feature four sports halls, a 25-meter swimming pool, six badminton courts, two basketball courts, and a table tennis hall. Construction is set to commence in the first quarter of 2025.



## AL PLENARY

# PEREIRA COUTINHO AGAINST 'MASS TOURISM'

RENATO MARQUES

**LAWMAKER** José Pereira Coutinho says many residents are concerned with the "mass tourism" over the past few months, calling on the government to rethink tourism promotion and consider the type and number of tourists that Macau can sustain without damaging the life of local residents.

The lawmaker expressed these thoughts during the period before the agenda of Wednesday's session of the Legislative Assembly.

In a spoken inquiry, Pereira Coutinho claimed that his office has received many complaints from residents concerned with the tourism capacity of Macau and the adverse effects of over-tourism.

"In recent times, our office has been receiving many opinions and complaints

from residents regarding the uncontrolled increase in the number of tourists concentrated in certain tourist areas with a high population concentration resulting in 'mass tourism' or 'over-tourism' and causing saturation and degradation of public spaces and affecting the quality of life of residents," he said, adding, "after all, how many more tourists can this small city receive without affecting the quality of life of its residents, causing degradation at the places visited, increasing of criminality (particularly related [to] usury and currency exchange), increase in noise pollution and overcrowding in public transport?"

The lawmaker cited official figures to note that, in the first half of this year, when Macau was visited by 16 million tourists, only around 1 million, or 7.3%, were foreign visitors, hinting that the policies from

the central government focusing on visitors from abroad are not being followed, and, instead, Macau is continuing to focus on mass group tourism from the mainland.

At the same inquiry, the lawmaker also noted the need to improve the service and competitiveness of the Macau International Airport (MIA), noting it is the "main tool to attract more foreign tourists."

To achieve this goal, Pereira Coutinho said it will be necessary to "eliminate the monopoly on air routes, [as well as] the protectionism of flight schedules (slots) and airport taxes, ground services, and introducing cheaper and more attractive airfares, etc."

Beyond the "current limitations," he also said it was "imperative to expand and modernize the airport with investment in infrastructure such as the construction of

an additional runway and the updating and modernization of equipment to increase the operational capacity."

Although criticizing over-tourism, the lawmakers noted that "there is no doubt that tourism is considered one of the largest industries in the world, registering great growth annually and will continue to grow further in the future. But this growth must be a healthy one with a focus on the sustainability of public transport (buses and taxis) with the fundamental interests of residents and tourists in terms of travel being a priority."

He remarked that is important for the authorities to evaluate and take into account the opinions of residents when defining a tourism strategy for Macau noting, "whatever tourism strategy is adopted for Macau, it must be a clear and well-defined strategy for the sake of the interests of residents, especially the interests of residents of the most affected areas, which must never be ignored, but on the contrary, residents must be previously consulted about what they want for their locations," remarking that only in this way will tourism be able to be sustainable and take into account the interests of locals and visitors.

The topic of over-tourism has been recently on the agenda with several cities, mostly in Europe, taking measures to reduce the impacts of mass tourism including Venice, Capri, Rome, Sardinia, and Florence (in Italy); Athens, Santorini, and Mikonos (in Greece); Hallstatt in Austria; Amsterdam, in the Netherlands; Barcelona, Mallorca, Menorca, and Seville (in Spain); Sintra in Portugal, Prague in Czechia and many others.

In Asia, similar measures have been enforced in Okinawa in Japan; Bali in Indonesia, Boracay in the Philippines, and Maya Beach in Thailand.

# Raised duty-free quota applicable at all borders except Hengqin

**THE** Chinese government is extending its measure to increase the duty-free limit for tourists entering Macau to all ports of entry - except Hengqin - from yesterday, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) reported.

The measures were first implemented last month at six border crossings, including Border Gate and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge.

Beijing announced in late June that travelers from mainland

China aged 18 and over who enter from Macau with personal items purchased for personal use will now be exempt from tax up to a total of RMB12,000.

Such visitors are allowed to purchase a certain amount of duty-

free goods at duty-free shops at border crossings, with a total value not exceeding RMB 15,000, including personal items purchased before crossing the border.

Macau Customs reported that, in the first month of implemen-

tation, the number of mainland tourists entering and exiting Macau through the Border Gate and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge increased significantly.

To address this, Customs said it has strengthened monitoring of areas near the Border Gate and has occasionally discovered cases of individuals soliciting outbound personnel to assist in carrying parallel imports. LV

# Local woman falls victim to fraud losing MOP1m

LYNZY VALLES

**A** young woman is believed to have fallen victim to a scam involving a suspect pretending to be a police officer.

The victim, after following the instructions provided by the scammer and inquiring about the status of her case with the local police station, discovered that she had been deceived and had lost MOP1 million.

According to police reports, the victim received a phone call in June, during which she was accused of being involved in various crimes, including intimidation, fraud, and illegal gambling. The scammer was able to provide details about the victim's home return permit, which led her to



believe the claims were legitimate.

Consequently, she followed the instructions to book a hotel for three consecutive days, conducted daily video calls, and reported her whereabouts to the scammers, who posed as "public security" officials, without reaching out to anyone else.

The same instructions were given to an elderly woman who also fell victim to the scam, as reported by the police authorities Wednesday.

The police officer further explained that the scammer falsely asserted that the victim needed to deposit funds into a bank account to demonstrate that she had

no financial issues.

The young woman complied and made multiple deposits totaling MOP800,000. Although the bank identified unusual transactions in her account and attempted to contact her, she ignored their calls. Ultimately, all MOP200,000 remaining in her account was transferred out.

## LABOR

# Former employees file complains over MASTV

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) has received complaints from four former employees of the now-bankrupt MASTV satellite television channel.

The channel declared bankruptcy on July 24.

In response to an inquiry from Rádio Macau, DSAL stated that it is "attentive to the interests and labor rights" of the former MASTV employees.

As of July 25, DSAL was monitoring four labor dispute cases involving ex-employees of the Macau satellite TV station.

The labor dispute cases filed with DSAL relate to complaints about unpaid wages and benefits owed to the former MASTV workers.

According to the report, DSAL also noted that Macau residents who lost their jobs due to the MASTV bankruptcy have several options to re-enter the labor market.

These include professional

matching sessions for different sectors, as well as utilizing the Macao One Account system to seek new employment opportunities.

The closure of MASTV has left a number of local workers without jobs.

Established June 2001, the television station also broadcasts in Hong Kong, mainland China, and Taiwan. Labor disputes arose in Taipei in 2018 where about 30 employees were not paid as promised, leading to similar conflicts in Macau the following year.

Despite facing financial challenges, the station received a 15-year license extension from then-Chief Executive Chui Sai On. At its peak, MAST had up to 150 employees.

The broadcaster heavily relied on government funding to sustain its programs, primarily focused on promoting Macau, receiving an annual grant of MOP8 million in 2019 and 2020.

AD

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RECREATIONAL DRUGS

# NYC'S LATEST CRACKDOWN ON ILLEGAL WEED SHOPS IS FINALLY SHUTTING THEM DOWN

CEDAR ATTANASIO &  
JENNIFER PELTZ, NEW YORK

**T**HOUSANDS of marijuana shops boldly opened without a license in New York City after the state legalized recreational use of the drug, but after more than a year of lax enforcement, new state rules are finally allowing officials to padlock their doors.

New York City's sheriff's office says it has shuttered around 700 illegal stores since new state regulations passed in April. The unsanctioned shops had become ubiquitous across the Big Apple, when the city's power to step in had been limited and the legal market was mired in red tape.

Officials had estimated there were some 2,900 unlicensed vendors throughout New York City — compared to around 60 licensed dispensaries currently operating. But cannabis industry licensees say the sheriff is starting to bring order.

Enforcement used to be “kind of a joke, and now it's not,” said Sasha Nutgent, retail director of Manhattan's Housing Works Cannabis Co., which rang up the state's first legal marijuana sale in December 2022.

Around 100 shops have successfully defended themselves against the fines since April, sometimes by citing faulty paperwork or the sheriff's lack of evidence, according to analyses of city administrative hearing data by The Associated Press and the City Council's investigative arm. But some of those businesses still closed anyway.

When New York first legalized marijuana in 2021, the regula-

AP PHOTO



tions initially didn't give local law enforcement agencies much power to punish unlicensed sellers, assigning that to the nascent state Office of Cannabis Management. Officials stressed that they didn't want to “recriminalize” the drug as they tried to make up for decades of prosecutions.

Meanwhile, strict eligibility requirements on who could receive a license to open a dispensary, bureaucratic delays and lawsuits slowed the launch of legal stores. Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Democrat, declared the rollout a “disaster.”

New York still has only 150 dispensaries statewide. By comparison, California has around 1,200, though the state has also struggled to shut down illegal shops.

New York City and state officials have promised tough enforcement in the past. Last year, lawmakers expanded the state's powers for inspections, seizures and fines, which it then used to close some stores, while Manhattan's district attorney sent hundreds of sternly-worded letters to landlords. But most of the stores

persisted, ignoring the threat of eviction or financial fines, and were able to continue operating as lengthy appeals played out.

While Housing Works has reported \$24 million in sales in its first year, Nutgent said some licensed stores have struggled because of the illicit competitors. They don't pay the additional taxes that helped legalization become palatable to legislators, and often flout state restrictions on advertising and promotions.

But since the new enforcement powers came in, business

at licensed dispensary The Cannabis Place in Queens has increased by around 35% “because the customers in the area didn't have anywhere else to go,” said manager Tamer Eltabib.

The powers, passed in the state budget, gave local authorities the ability to padlock stores while administrative hearings play out. Because the sheriff's office can inspect businesses without a court order, it's able to quickly raid retail stores and seize products. A lawsuit was filed in federal court arguing the practice denies stores due process, but has not won any favorable ruling that would stop it. The law firm representing some two dozen shuttered stores in the lawsuit declined to comment.

The sheriff's office says it has also issued violations amounting to more than \$57 million since April, though it's unclear how much of that sum has been collected.

The sheriff's office declined to comment, referring questions to City Hall, which said 15 teams of deputies and NYPD officers are being sent out daily.

“If you are operating an illegal cannabis business, our administration is sending a clear message: You will be shut down,” the office of Democrat Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement.

City Council Member Gale Brewer, a Democrat who strove for two years to shutter an unlicensed weed shop across the street from her office on Manhattan's Upper West Side, says the latest effort is finally helping to nip the problem in the bud.

“There's no question about it,” she said. MDT/AP

## CORPORATE BITS

### S&P Global ranks Sands China in Top 1% for ESG performance



Sands China Ltd. has earned Top 1% rankings in both the China edition and the Global edition of the S&P Global Sustainability Yearbook 2024.

In an announcement, the gaming operator said that the recognition highlights “Sands China's accomplishments across its three corporate responsi-

bility pillars: People, Community and Planet.”

Sands China is the only company in the Casinos & Gaming industry category to achieve this distinction.

More than 1,700 companies across 60 industries from mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau were assessed in

the China edition of the 2024 yearbook. Sands China was one of only 12 companies achieving Top 1% ESG performance.

In the Global edition, Sands China was among only 66 companies that scored Top 1% ESG performance. The yearbook assessed over 9,400 companies across 62 industries.

### Melco hosts heart-of-house F&B minibar product roadshow



Melco Resorts & Entertainment hosted a food and beverage (F&B) minibar product roadshow at its Studio City Heart-of-House employee area to help generate direct sales and marketing opportunities for 18 local small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

And, to enable longer-term

collaboration, Melco's Housekeeping and Supply Chain department executives met with attending SMEs and carried out product tastings of potentially suitable minibar products. The opportunity allowed Melco and SMEs the chance to develop a better mutual understanding through

direct dialogue, learning about one another's products, services, business ethics and standards.

Augusta Vargas-Prada, vice president of Supply Chain of Melco, said, “SMEs and micro enterprises form the backbone of local economies, driving economic activity and job creation along the value chain.”

“A signature event for our colleagues and local SMEs is our regular Heart-of-House Roadshows where we open our doors and provide rent-free retail space to provide an effective platform for SMEs to share their projects and services with our teams,” the executive added.



# MGM "SUMMER HYPE" SERIES UNLEASHES FAMILY FUN AND VITALITY IN BARRA DISTRICT

Barra District has transformed into a vibrant and family-friendly walkable lifestyle destination this summer as MGM presents the "Summer Hype" Series Event. Collaborating with local entrepreneurs and creative partners, MGM has launched a wide array of trendy, artistic, leisure and retail activities starting from July.

The series begins with "BERTILO Drifts in Barra" giant inflatable floating installation in Lago da Barra. For the first time, renowned IP BERTILO, the pink chubby character, is showcased in Macau through the collaboration of Italian artist Bertil Butturini and Chinese artist Jingo Li. Prepare to immerse yourself in a pink frenzy as you explore the adorable photo spots and savor the limited edition snacks, including Pink Chubby Burger Sticks, Pink Chubby Summer Ice Cream, Canal cover-shaped Pink Grills, and Chubby Custard Bun and Drinks available at the food trucks. Adding to the excitement, don't miss the exclusive Macau merchandise infused with the cool and chill vibes of BERTILO.



More "Summer Hype" adventures await you and your family to explore in Barra. The interactive art installation exhibition, "Fantastic Art World from Centre Pompidou: The Plantamouves" created by artistic duo Clédad & Petitpierre, has launched at the former Barra slaughterhouse site and become a must-go indoor attraction for families in Macau this summer. With choreographic tutorials, children aged 3 or above are invited to unleash their creativity and co-craft the multicolored, proliferating artwork with dance moves and wearable extensions of the body, bringing parents and children closer together through sensory art exploration.

Last but not least, for the first time in Macau, Barra will feature a pet-friendly space and the first illustration exhibition of renowned Japanese artist Matsui, "Matsui the dog", which is launching in August along with themed dining experience, fashion collaboration and retail elements. Get ready for a fun-filled day out with your furkids.



Experience a trendy and fun-filled summer like no other in the enchanting Barra District. For more information, visit [mgm.mo](http://mgm.mo).

HONG KONG

# YOUNG PEOPLE STRUGGLE TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES AFTER BEING JAILED UNDER CRACKDOWN

KANIS LEUNG, HONG KONG

**A**FTER spending five months in jail for publishing seditious Instagram posts, Joker Chan returned to a harsh reality.

Chan, 30, was sentenced in 2022 for posts containing slogans like "Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times," which were popularly chanted during massive anti-government protests in the city in 2019. Authorities said such slogans could imply separating Hong Kong from China — a red line for Beijing.

Upon his release, Chan's criminal record barred him from returning to the hotel industry, where he previously worked as a chef. Tattoos on his arms, legs and the sides of his neck — some related to the protests — made his job search more difficult. Now, he works as a part-time waiter, earning about half of what he used to make.

Some of his friends severed ties with him, fearing their association might lead to police investigations. His family also expressed disappointment in him, and when he went out with other former protesters they asked him whether he planned to stir trouble.

"I felt helpless. I can't understand this," he said, wearing a black t-shirt that read "I am Hongkonger" and with a tattoo of his inmate number on his arm.

Five years after the protests erupted, the lives of some young people who were jailed or arrested during Beijing's political crackdown on the city's pro-democracy movement remain in limbo. Unlike famed activists, these former protesters usually receive little attention from most of the city, even though their activism for the same democratic goals has exacted a similarly heavy toll.

Since the protests broke out five years ago, more than 10,200 people have been arrested in connection with the often-violent social unrest sparked by a now-withdrawn extradition bill, which would have allowed suspects in Hong Kong to be sent to mainland China. According to police, about one-fifth of them have faced or were facing "legal consequences" as of the end of May.

The government crackdown expanded after NPC's promulgated a national security law in 2020 and the enactment of similar, home-grown legislation in March. About 300 others were arrested under the two security laws and other offenses linked



Joker Chan poses for photographs after an interview, in Hong Kong, this week

to endangering national security as of June, with half of them already convicted by courts, the city's security bureau said.

Chan fought for a more democratic Hong Kong. Reflecting on his actions, Chan said he would have been more cautious if he could go back in time, but he doesn't regret what he did.

"Regret can lead you to overturn what you originally stood for," he said.

Chan was an exception in agreeing for his full name to be published in this article. Two other interviewees The Associated Press spoke with asked to be identified only by partial names over fears of government retribution.

Another former inmate, also surnamed Chan, said he panicked every time he saw police on the streets after he finished serving his sentence in 2022, worrying he would be arrested again. Chan, who is in his 20s, refused to provide more details about his prosecution since he feared being identified by authorities.

Before he landed his current

job in the creative industry, he sent applications to about 40 companies seeking employment, with only a handful offering him an interview. He said one interviewer was concerned that convicted people like him could affect their corporate image.

Even when he secured a posi-

## Paul Yip, a professor at HKU, said local employers were becoming more accepting of these young people

tion at another firm, he said he was treated unfairly by former pro-China colleagues. He said they also did not allow him to work on certain projects.

"Some (who were jailed) for political cases like me, when released, are treated as pariahs in society in a hidden manner," he said.

Others who did not go to jail have also lived in fear for years. Nick, a former protester who was arrested in 2019, said he didn't know for years whether he would be charged until police this year confirmed they had dropped his case.

Brandon Yau, secretary of the prisoners' support group Waiting Bird, said while some former inmates could return to the industries they previously worked in, many teachers, medical professionals and social workers — whose positions are linked to a license or public sector organizations — face greater challenges in returning to their old sectors.

Convicted students who were formerly jailed are concerned about whether schools will accept them. Some institutions have been unsupportive of their students after they were arrested, Yau said.

According to his group, many of the hundreds of convicts they supported are expected to be released in the next two years. Yau said the city should plan for ways to accommodate them.

Official data show hundreds of people were sent to correctional services facilities each year over offenses linked to the protests or for allegedly endangering national security between 2020 and 2023. By the end of 2023, about 780 people were in

custody for such offenses, up nearly 50% from a year earlier.

Hong Kong's security minister Chris Tang previously said many young people who were jailed over civil disturbances were influenced or incited by others and went astray. He said local society won't give up on them as long as they "genuinely" want to turn over a new leaf.

But critics say Tang's remarks overlook the deeper grievances and aspirations that drove young people to protest five years ago.

Paul Yip, a professor at The University of Hong Kong's department of social work and social administration, said local employers were becoming more accepting of these young people, possibly after seeing former inmates perform well in their jobs.

Yip, also the director of a suicide prevention research center, said the young people he hired were enthusiastic about their future and usually had a strong sense of responsibility.

He said it is important to help such people get back on track.

"We say young people are our future. They are the young people. If you don't give them a future, then how will we have a future?" he said. **MDT/AP**



TECH

# China is restricting export of drones that can be used for military purposes

HUIZHONG WU, BANGKOK

**C**HINA will ban the export of all unregulated civilian drones that can be used for military purposes or in terrorist activities and restrict certain drone features as Beijing faces repeated Western criticism for its stance on the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The Commerce Ministry said in a statement this week the decision was made also to prevent the use of drones in "the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction," adding that aspects such as infrared imaging equipment lasers for target indication and high-precision inertial measurement equipment will be placed on an export control list.

The ministry also said it was removing temporary restrictions

placed on civilian drones. It didn't specify which type, but last year Beijing restricted the exports of long-range drones while citing Russia's war in Ukraine.

The regulations take effect Sept. 1.

Media reports and U.S. government intelligence have frequently said Russia has bought drones from China for military use. In April, U.S. officials who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive findings said China's sales to Russia have surged to be used against Ukraine, and that both have been working to jointly produce unmanned aerial vehicles inside Russia.

Drones have become integral in the Russia-Ukraine war.

China is the fourth-largest exporter of weapons in the world, according to the Stockholm Inter-

AP PHOTO



national Peace Research Institute, after the U.S., France and Russia. The bulk of its exports went to Pakistan, SIPRI data shows, while it also sold arms to states in Asia

and Africa.

U.S. security officials have increasingly become concerned about the use of Chinese drones by U.S. government departments.

DJI Technology Co., a Chinese company, is one of the global industry's top producers of drones, used widely across the world. **MDT/AP**

DIPLOMACY

# China sanctions US McGovern for 'interference' in its domestic affairs

HUIZHONG WU & DIDI TANG, BANGKOK

**C**HINA sanctioned a U.S. congressman Wednesday for "frequently interfering" in China's domestic affairs, in its latest effort to express displeasure with U.S. politicians who have criticized China's policy and practice.

Rep. Jim McGovern is the top Democrat on the House Committee on Rules, and he co-chairs the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. He represents Massachusetts and is a member of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, which focuses on China's human rights record.

The sanctions against him are symbolic, since McGovern has no assets or business dealings in China. The sanctions include freezing his

AP PHOTO



Ranking Member Jim McGovern, D-Mass., of the House Rules Committee

assets and properties in China, prohibiting any organization or individual in China from conducting transactions or working with him, and denying him and his family a visa to enter the country, according to a statement from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

McGovern called the sanctions absurd and said he would

wear his "as a badge of honor."

Beijing has previously sanctioned a number of U.S. lawmakers, former Trump administration officials, and companies.

It sanctioned Rep. Michael McCaul, also chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and former Rep. Michael Gallagher over their support for Taiwan. In

2020 it sanctioned Rep. Chris Smith and several U.S. senators, including Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz.

McGovern and McCaul, along with two senators, last year introduced bicameral legislation calling for stronger U.S. support for Tibet. Congress approved the bill in June, and President Joe Biden signed it into law in July. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



URBAN TRANSPORT

## BYD, UBER FORM PARTNERSHIP TO DEPLOY 100,000 EVs IN EU AND LATIN AMERICA

**T**HE ride sharing giant Uber and Chinese automaker BYD plan a partnership to introduce 100,000 BYD model EVs on the Uber platform in Europe and Latin America, eventually expanding to other markets, the companies announced.

The arrangement would offer Uber drivers access to favorable pricing, insurance, financing and other services for BYD vehicles, the companies said in a statement seen yesterday.

Plans call for the partnership to expand to the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand.

The companies said the plan would help accelerate the switch to EVs and that they also plan to collaborate in introducing autonomous-capable EVs on the Uber platform. BYD, China's largest EV maker, has

fast been expanding its reach into world markets after switching entirely to production of EVs and hybrids in 2022.

The rapid emergence of low-priced EVs from China is shaking up the global auto industry in ways not seen since Japanese makers arrived during the oil crises of the 1970s.

The European Union imposed provisional duties on Chinese electric vehicles in June, alleging that government subsidies give automakers in China an unfair advantage. BYD EVs aren't being sold in the U.S. now largely because of 27.5% tariffs on the sale price of Chinese vehicles when they arrive at ports.

But Chinese makers are moving production overseas. BYD, has opened a plant in Thailand and plans to build factories in Brazil, Hungary and Turkey. **MDT/AP**

INDIA

HOPES OF FINDING MORE SURVIVORS IN THE MUD AND DEBRIS WANE AFTER LANDSLIDES KILL 194

RISHI LEKHI & RAFIQ MAQBOOL, WAYANAD

HOPES of finding more than 1180 missing people alive waned as rescue workers searched through mud and debris for a third day yesterday after landslides set off by torrential rains killed at least 194 people in southern India.

The rescue work was challenging in a forested, hilly area while more rain fell, said P.M Manoj, a spokesman for Kerala state's top elected official. Nearly 40 bodies were found downstream after being swept some 30 kilometers (20 miles) down the Chaliyar River from the area in Wayanad district where the main landslides occurred. Body parts were also recovered.

Torrents of mud and water swept through tea estates and villages in hilly areas in the district early Tuesday. They flattened houses and destroyed bridges, and rescuers had to pull out people stuck under mud and debris. "This is one of the worst natural calamities Kerala state has ever

witnessed," Kerala's top elected official, Pinarayi Vijayan, said.

Manoj said 187 people were unaccounted for as of yesterday. In addition to the dead and missing, 186 people were injured. Local media reported most of the victims were tea estate workers.

More than 5,500 people have been rescued, Vijayan said, with some 1,100 rescue personnel, helicopters and heavy equipment involved.

The army was constructing a temporary bridge after the main bridge in one of the worst-affected areas was swept away. Images from the site show rescue workers making their way through muck and floodwaters, while a land excavator was clearing the debris.

O.S. Jerry, a cardamom estate manager, said he regularly traveled through the district. "There was a lovely school over here," he said, adding that many houses were now gone.

The Mundakkai and Chooralmala areas are destroyed with extreme devastation, Vijayan said.

Manoj said more than 8,300 people have been moved to 82



Rescuers make their way to the upper regions as they search mud and debris for a third day after landslides set off by torrential rains in Wayanad district, Kerala state, yesterday

government-run relief camps. The government is ensuring food delivery and essential items to the relief camps.

Kerala, one of India's most popular tourist destinations, is prone to heavy rains, flooding and landslides. The Indian Meteorological Department said Wayanad district had up to 28 centimeters (11 inches) of rain on Monday and Tuesday.

Heavy rains also wreaked havoc in other parts of India this week.

New Delhi, the Indian capital, shut schools yesterday after torrential downpours the previous day submerged roads, left residents stranded and killed at least two people, news agency Press Trust of India reported. More rains were expected this week.

In the mountainous state of

Himachal Pradesh, popular with tourists, three people were killed and around 40 were reported missing after heavy rains and two cloudbursts washed away homes, flooded roads and damaged infrastructure, authorities told PTI. Four people were also killed Wednesday in the neighboring Uttarakhand state following heavy rains.

Meanwhile, at least 13 people, including three children, were killed in lightning strikes in eastern Bihar state yesterday, a statement from the chief minister's office said. Most of the victims had gone to plant paddy in the fields when lightning struck them.

India regularly has severe floods during the monsoon season, which runs between June and September and brings most of South Asia's annual rainfall. The rains are crucial for rainfed crops planted during the season, but often cause extensive damage.

Scientists say monsoons are becoming more erratic because of climate change and global warming. MDT/AP

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



IRAN

# Supreme leader prays over the coffin of Haniyeh, whose killing risks a wider war

ABBY SEWELL, BEIRUT

**I**RAN'S supreme leader and representatives of Palestinian militias he backs prayed yesterday over the coffins of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and his bodyguard who were killed in a shocking assassination blamed on Israel that risked escalating into an all-out regional war.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei prayed over Haniyeh's coffin at Tehran University while Iran's new President Masoud Pezeshkian stood next to him. State television later showed the coffins placed in a truck and moved on the street toward Azadi Square in Tehran and people throwing flowers at them.

After the funeral services in Tehran, Haniyeh's remains are to be transferred to Qatar for burial Friday.

Haniyeh came to Tehran to attend the inauguration of Pezeshkian. Associated Press photos showed the Hamas leader seated alongside leaders from the Pales-



Iranians follow a truck, center, carrying the coffins of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and his bodyguard who were killed in an assassination blamed on Israel

tinian Islamic Jihad militant group and Hezbollah, and Iranian media showed him and Pezeshkian hugging. Haniyeh had met earlier with Khamenei.

Hours later, he was killed in an airstrike that hit a residence Haniyeh uses in Tehran. Iranian authorities said the attack is under investigation but haven't provided details.

Israel had pledged to kill Haniyeh and other Hamas leaders over the group's Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel that sparked the war in Gaza. The strike came just hours after Israel targeted a top commander in Iran's ally Hezbollah in the Lebanese capital Beirut.

Iran supports Hamas, as well as Hezbollah and other Palestinian

militant groups fighting Israel in Gaza.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said "all parties" in the Middle East must avoid escalatory actions that could plunge the region into further conflict.

Speaking in the Mongolian capital of Ulaanbataar yesterday, Blinken appealed for countries to "make the right choices in the

days ahead" and said a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza was the only way to begin to break the current cycle of violence and suffering. Blinken did not mention Israel, Iran or Hamas by name in his comments.

Bitter regional rivals, Israel and Iran risked plunging into war earlier this year when Israel hit Iran's embassy in Damascus in April. Iran retaliated, and Israel countered in an unprecedented exchange of strikes on each other's soil, but international efforts succeeded in containing that cycle before it spun out of control.

During Pezeshkian's inauguration ceremony, in his speech, he spoke in support of Palestinians, saying "Iran demands a world where no Palestinian child's dreams are buried under the rubble of their home."

"We are seeking a world where the proud people of Palestine are freed from occupation, oppression and imprisonment and genocide," Pezeshkian said. MDT/AP

AD

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AP PHOTO



Sheep are released to graze as the sun sets and temperatures go down, at the Liborio Mangiapane farm, in Cammarata central Sicily, yesterday

ITALY

# EXTENDED DROUGHT PARCHES SICILY, WORRIES FARMERS

PAOLO SANTALUCIA,  
CAMMARATA

ON a scorching July afternoon, a municipal water truck rolls up in a cloud of dust on Liborio Mangiapane's farm in southern Sicily. Some of the precious liquid gets transferred to a smaller cistern on a tractor that Mangiapane's son will use to fill troughs for 250 cattle and sheep, but by tomorrow, all 10,000 liters from the truck will be gone.

Crippling drought from a nearly rainless year, coupled with record-high temperatures, has burned out much of the region's hay and is pushing farmers to the limit. For Mangiapane, every day is a struggle to find water, with frantic phone calls, long trips to faraway wells and long waits for municipal tankers.

If rain doesn't come by the end of August, he's afraid he'll have to sell off his livestock.

"We are in a moment of extreme heat and therefore animals need a lot of water," Mangiapane said. "It's a constant anxiety to keep the animals from suffering, but also just to have a chance to wash ourselves."

The worst year for rainfall in more than 20 years has sent fodder production down 70% across Sicily, according to Coldiretti, Italy's primary farmers association. The main water basins are almost empty and authorities are strictly rationing water.

The region is one of Italy's

breadbaskets, producing 20% of the country's durum wheat that goes into pasta. Coldiretti estimated that the drought could reduce production on the island by as much as 70%, leading to greater reliance on imports. In coming months, the dry year may hit olive oil and peach production. Hot weather has caused the grape harvest to start nearly four weeks early, though that crop is so far undamaged.

In May, the national government declared a state of emergency in Sicily and allocated 20 million euros (\$21.7 million) to buy water tankers, dig new wells and fix leaky aqueducts. Coldiretti has donated 1.5 million tons of fodder and the regional government allocated subsidies for farmers forced to buy hay from third parties.

Parts of Sicily have had rainfall deficits of up to 60%, according to the meteorology department at Italy's National Research Council. The regional meteorological service reported above-average temperatures throughout June, with highs frequently topping 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) in many areas.

Farmers have seen basins, lakes and ponds that used to be reliable watering spots vanish.

Luca Cammarata watched as his sheep searched for water on his farm in the province of Caltanissetta, one of the hardest-hit parts of Sicily. The area has seen almost no rain

for a year, reservoirs are all but empty, and wells and aquifers will have to be tapped at critical levels if it doesn't rain soon.

"Here in this small basin, water has never been lacking," Cammarata said, as his sheep's bells tinkled as they searched for water in the place they used to find it. Soon, the animals would have to return to their barns to avoid the blazing sun.

Nearby Lake Pergusa used to be a haven for migratory birds — a natural basin with an area of 1.4 square kilometers (0.5 square mile) and an average depth of about 2 meters. Now it looks like a puddle.

The story was the same on Mangiapane's place, a little over an hour to the northwest near the municipality of Cammarata. He peered from his barn toward an area where rainwater usually collected in a large pond, providing water for his animals, but the pond was now "as dry as a football pitch."

August typically brings the start of the winter rainy season, said Mangiapane, a long-time rancher who has gained a reputation as an outspoken supporter of natural grazing and small-scale cheese-making over industrial-scale agriculture.

"I wish it will be a bit better than the past season, because this year we had to make a huge effort, both economically and in terms of human resources, with zero profi-

ts," he said. "We worked the whole year without profits. No wheat, nor fodder for the cows. And neither the regional government, nor the national one have taken strong measures."

Local authorities have rushed to open new wells, fix desalination equipment and bring in water. In late July, the first Italian navy tanker ship docked in Licata to supply 12 million liters (3.2 million gallons) to the most affected areas.

The local water basin authority is tightly rationing water for almost a million residents, with water flowing as little as two to four hours a week in the most affected areas. While the taps are off, households and farms are being supplied by tankers since Sicily's aqueducts lose up to 60% of the water they carry, according to local water company AICA.

As climate change has made rainfall more erratic and driven temperatures higher, there's hope that aqueduct renovations, new reservoirs and deep wells will help Sicily adapt.

Giulio Boccaletti, scientific director of the Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change, said Sicily is experiencing "the new normal" of climate change, and the region will have to examine whether its scarce water is used for the right things — including what farmers produce. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1965 RIVIERA FIRES FORCE CAMPERS TO FLEE



Thousands of British campers on holiday in the south of France have been forced to abandon their tents when forest fires threatened to engulf them.

At least 7,000 people, mostly holidaymakers, spent a sleepless night on the beach as fires swept the hills between the Provence resorts of Hyeres and St Tropez.

Narrow roads were clogged with cars trying to make their escape from the hills to the safety of the coast. There they were rescued by pleasure boats, steamers and four minesweepers requisitioned by the French authorities.

Most of the campers lost all their equipment and some no longer have their passports or money.

Mr Barnott from Hampstead in London told The Times newspaper of his escape to the beach from the Camp du Domaine site last night.

"The whole area was thick with smoke. We had to go to the water's edge to breathe and we put wet towels round our heads. People were kneeling on the sand praying and children were crying," he said.

The fire brigade chief at Le Lavandou has made assurances that there was no "further danger to life".

But last night two elderly residents of Borme-les-Mimosas died just yards from their home, overcome by smoke as they were trying to run from the flames.

Fire brigades and volunteers from all over the region are helping 1,000 troops and hundreds of gendarmes to control the fires with the aid of a dozen helicopters and Catalina "water bomber" aircraft.

But the hot wind known as the "mistral" is fanning the flames and making their job very difficult.

The blazes have destroyed farmland, campsites, villas and more than 30 square miles (77 sq kms) of forest land that could take years to recover.

Forest fires occur every summer in this part of France - usually as a result of arson or carelessly discarded cigarette ends, or a combination of the two.

But this year has been described as one of the most savage in the region's history. Now local residents are demanding serious action from the government to tackle the problem.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

It was another two days before the fires were finally brought under control.

But it was too late for the thousands of British campers who decided to cut short their holiday after returning to their sites to find total devastation.

On 16 August the minister of agriculture, Edgard Pisani, visited the stricken region and announced he would press for various measures to prevent forest fires.

They included the provision of fire-breaks and walls to contain blazes, special fire-watchers in vulnerable dry areas, more water storage facilities on the roadsides and tougher penalties for those caught discarding cigarette ends.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES** Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Stick close to home. Don't worry about money. Household issues require attention. Emotions prevail where logic fails. Prioritize family and the rest works itself out.

**TAURUS** Apr. 20-May. 20  
Avoid automatic reactions with surprising news. Look for hidden opportunities. Keep private things private. Details matter. Learn from a fictional character. Practice diplomacy.

**GEMINI** May. 21-Jun. 21  
Discover lucrative opportunities made possible by recent changes. Listen to intuition. Stick to budgets while allowing flexibility for quick adaptation to catch more.

**CANCER** Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Go ahead and get spontaneous. Adapt with personal changes. An unexpected opportunity could be a lucky break. Follow up, at least. Find out.

**LEO** Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
Changes offer new conditions. Slow to think before reacting. Adapt plans for new opportunities. There may be hidden options. Research, prepare and plot.

**VIRGO** Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
An unexpected opportunity arises through your social networks. Collaborate with a powerful team. Take advantage of a spontaneous chance to have fun with friends.

**LIBRA** Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Keep an open mind. Develop professional opportunities with newly favorable conditions. Discover an open door. Go for what you want. Grab a plum prize.

**SCORPIO** Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
Don't fear deviation from the common path. Explore to the beat of your own drum. Discover and follow a fascinating thread for valuable insight.

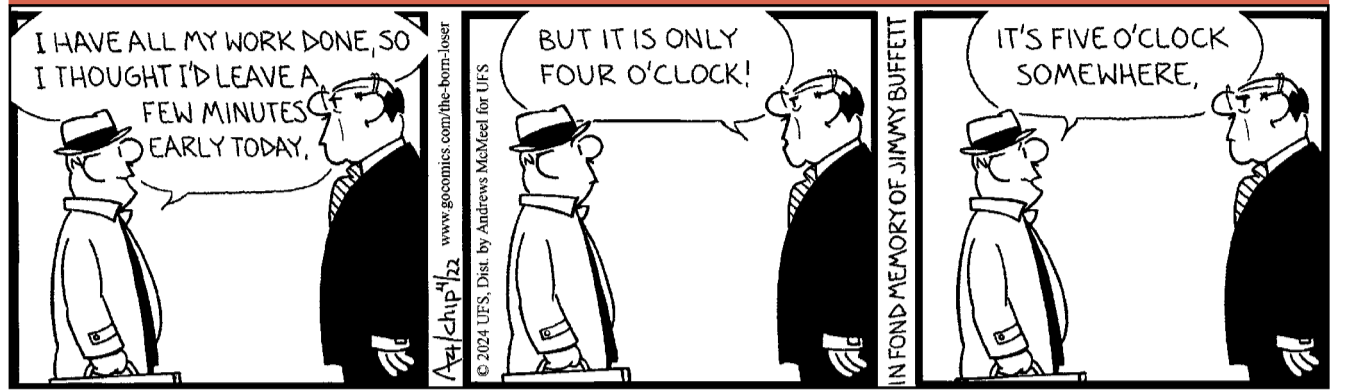
**SAGITTARIUS** Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Consider new factors in your financial planning. Discuss lucrative opportunities with your partner. Grab while the door is open. Support each other for shared objectives.

**CAPRICORN** Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Keep a flexible attitude with your partner. Abandon expectations while maintaining positive intentions. Allow for spontaneous opportunities to collaborate and have fun together.

**AQUARIUS** Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Grab a lucky break with your work, health and fitness. Expand routines. Allow for unexpected delights. Take the trail less traveled. Try something new.

**PISCES** Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Follow your heart. Abandon romantic preconceptions. Reality doesn't match a fantasy... it's better. Give in to spontaneous opportunities for love, connection and fun.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sanson**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

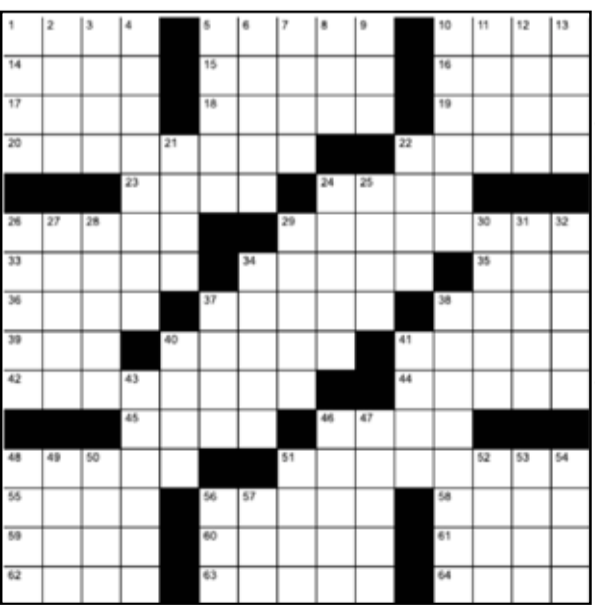
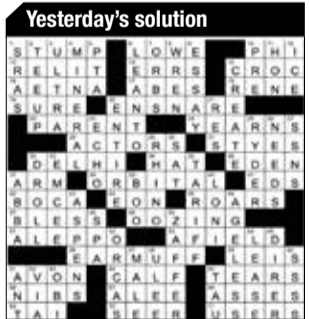
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	25	33	rain
Changchun	22	27	rain
Chengdu	24	33	rain
Chongqing	27	37	cloudy
Fuzhou	29	38	fine
Guangzhou	26	34	cloudy
Guiyang	21	26	showers
Haikou	26	35	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	30	41	thunderstorms
Harbin	21	27	rain
Hefei	27	34	cloudy
Nanjing	29	37	thunderstorms
Shanghai	30	39	cloudy
Taipei	26	32	fine
Wuhan	28	35	overcast
Hong Kong	29	33	showers
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	14	21	cloudy
Frankfurt	16	28	cloudy
Paris	16	29	cloudy
London	17	28	cloudy
New York	24	32	thunderstorms

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS** 1- Moist; 5- Sudden convulsion; 10- School orgs.; 14- "Night" author Wiesel; 15- Brief appearance; 16- This can't bel; 17- Banned apple spray; 18- a customer; 19- Get, as a job; 20- Cracks; 22- Assumed name; 23- Baseball's Hershiser; 24- Carson's successor; 26- Jargon; 29- Wages; 33- Aquarium buildup; 34- First name in cosmetics; 35- Attack a sub?; 36- Audacity; 37- Japanese dish; 38- Woody's son; 39- Compass point opposite WSW; 40- \_\_\_ Grows in Brooklyn; 41- Sigh; 42- It happens as the world turns; 44- Deputised group; 45- Messes up; 46- Quantity of paper; 48- Fauna's partner; 51- Throbs; 55- Punjabi princess; 56- Hot stuff; 58- Make weary; 59- Gen. Robert \_\_\_; 60- Apartment sign; 61- \_\_\_ uproar; 62- Soviet news agency; 63- Pee Wee of the Dodgers; 64- Fluid-filled sac;

**DOWN** 1- Unwilling to listen; 2- \_\_\_ want for Christmas...; 3- Farrow and Hamm; 4- Private; 5- Cross the goal line; 6- Discussion group; 7- Iowa college town; 8- Harden; 9- Sound of a cow; 10- Hoi \_\_\_; 11- Bangkok native; 12- Tolstoy's Karenina; 13- Lays the lawn down; 21- Impulse; 22- Singer Murray; 24- Shop shaper; 25- \_\_\_ saw Elba; 26- More wise; 27- Grassy plain; 28- Shoelace tip; 29- City on the Ruhr; 30- Peter and a Wolfe; 31- Festive occasions; 32- Rock; 34- Continental cash; 37- Use a swizzle stick; 38- Odoriferous; 40- Name on a razor; 41- Transcript figs.; 43- Hawk homes; 46- Governs; 47- Select group; 48- Worry; 49- In \_\_\_ land; 50- Washington bills; 51- Heap; 52- Very small; 53- Important times; 54- Dispatched; 56- Geom. point; 57- Weed whacker;



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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**Tou Un (Taipa)**  
HKD 2,750,000 1 bed 1 bath

**Jade Garden (Taipa)**  
HKD 11,880,000 4 bed 3 bath

AD



Leon Marchand, of France

OLYMPICS 2024

# LÉON MARCHAND PULLS OFF ONE OF THE MOST AUDACIOUS DOUBLES IN SWIMMING HISTORY

PAUL NEWBERRY, NANTERRE

**T**URNS out, those comparisons to Michael Phelps weren't farfetched at all when it comes to Léon Marchand.

They certainly weren't a burden for the 22-year-old Frenchman.

Marchand completed one of the most audacious doubles in swimming history yesterday [Macau time], winning the 200-meter butterfly and the 200 breaststroke about two hours apart in front of a home crowd cheering his every stroke.

Two grueling races. Two very different strokes. Two Olympic records. Two gold medals.

Take that, Phelps, who did several doubles of his own while claiming a record eight golds at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"I'm a really shy person," Marchand said. "I was kind of the center of attention during those two races. I was trying to get the energy from the whole crowd. They're amazing to me, pushing me in every final."

Thrilling the French fans and claiming the spotlight even on a night when Katie Ledecky romped to another gold medal, Marchand notched his second and third victories at La Defense Arena and stamped himself — with the Olympics not even a week old — as one of the faces of the Games.

After rallying to beat world-record holder and defending Olympic champion Kristóf Milák in the 200 fly with a finishing kick for the ages, Marchand made it look easy

in the 200 breast.

He led all the way, touching in 2 minutes, 5.85 seconds as more than 15,000 fans — many of them holding up cardboard cutouts of his smiling face — nearly blew the roof off La Defense Arena.

"Léon! Léon! Léon!" they screamed, a chant that was sure to carry on through the night in Paris.

Marchand gets thing rolling

Trailing most of the way in the 200 fly, Marchand surged past the Hungarian Milák on the final lap to finish with an Olympic record of 1:51.71, touching first by just by four-hundredths of a second.

Marchand's final lap was nearly 0.66 faster than anyone else in the field — and 1.26 clear of Milák.

"I've been watching so many races from him," Marchand said. "I know he has a lot of speed, way more than me, so I was just trying to get as close as possible, and then just push it until the end."

The bronze went to Canada's Ilya Kharun.

Following up his dominating victory in the 400 individual medley on Sunday, Marchand waved one finger and shook his head just a bit, as if he couldn't quite believe what he had done.

Then, he hustled off the deck to another rousing cheer to begin his warm down, though those preparations were interrupted by a mandatory return for the victory ceremony.

After a boisterous rendition of "La Marseillaise," the other two medalists walked slowly around the pool, getting their



Pan Zhanle, of China

pictures made.

Not Marchand. He hustled back to the practice pool. There was another race to go.

## LEDECKY'S RECORD GOLD

The American star made the most of her guest appearance on The Marchand Show by romping to her seventh individual Olympic gold medal -- she also has a relay gold -- and 12th medal overall with a runaway victory in the 1,500 freestyle.

The 27-year-old Ledecky tied fellow Americans Dara Torres, Natalie Coughlin and Jenny Thompson for the most medals ever by a female swimmer. Ledecky already held the mark for most individual gold medals by a woman coming into these games.

"I try not to think about history very much," Ledecky said. "But I know those names, those people that I'm up there with, they're swimmers that I looked up to when I first started swimming. So it's an honor just to be named

among them."

Ledecky led right from the start and steadily pulled away, touching in an Olympic-record 15:30.02 in an event that joined the women's program at the Tokyo Games in 2021.

This was similar to the race three years ago: Ledecky far in front and everyone else racing for a silver.

France's Anastasiia Kirpichnikova finished nearly a half lap behind but thrilled the home fans by claiming the second spot on the podium in 15:40.35.

The bronze went to Germany's Isabel Gose at 15:41.16.

After starting the Paris Games with a bronze in the 400 freestyle, this result looked more familiar for Ledecky.

She was clearly thrilled to be on top again, splashing the water and pumping her fist several times walking across the deck — a rare show of emotion for a stoic athlete who performs with machine-like efficiency.

"I know a lot of other people expected it of me," Ledecky said. "That doesn't make it easy. I mean, it's not easy to always follow through and you get the job done."

## MARCHAND RETURNS FOR MORE GOLD

As Ledecky was walking off the deck with her gold medal, it was time for Marchand to go for his second of the night,

No problem. He blew away the field in the 200 breaststroke with an Olympic record of 2:05.85, knocking off another champion from Tokyo.

Australia's Zac Stubblety-Cook settled for the silver this time, nearly a second behind in 2:06.79. Claiming the bronze was Casper Corbeau of the Netherlands.

"The most exciting part of that whole race and watching him soak it all up and have his moment," Stubblety-Cook said. "I think it's awesome. It's great for the sport of swimming and it's great to see the better half of 15,000 people chanting one person's name and watching swimming live."

Marchand climbed out of the pool and stared at the scoreboard. He tussled his mop of curly hair a few times, then threw his arms in the air.

"I'm so very proud of him," said his coach, American Bob Bowman, who also was Phelps' coach. "That's a tremendous, historic effort."

## CHINA'S PAN ZHANLE SETS FIRST SWIMMING WORLD RECORD

Nearly lost in all the hoopla was China's Pan Zhanle setting the first world record of these Games, breaking his own mark in the 100 freestyle.

He won in 46.40, easily knocking off the mark of 46.80 he set in February at the world championships in Doha.

It was an impressive performance given the shallow pool at La Defense Arena, which has been cited as the big reason no world records fell over the first four days of the meet.

Australia's Kyle Chalmers claimed the silver and David Popovici of Romania nabbed the bronze.

## SWEDISH GOLD FOR 5-TIME OLYMPIAN SJÖSTRÖM

Sarah Sjöström made her fifth Olympics a gold-medal celebration with a victory in the 100 freestyle.

Sjöström had pared down her program at the last two world championships, swimming only the 50 free. She decided to add the 100 at the Paris Games, and boy did that decision pay off.

Her winning time was 52.16, with the U.S. settling for another silver medal -- its eighth of the swimming competition -- when Torri Huske finished in 52.29. Siobhan Haughey of Hong Kong took the bronze. **MDT/AP**

tTUNES

# Chrystabell & David Lynch channel 'Twin Peaks' with new album

If you listen to Chrystabell & David Lynch's new album, there's a good chance that it will make you dream.

Not that "Cellophane Memories," the latest collaboration between the auteur and his "Twin Peaks: The Return" co-star will put you to sleep — although its moody, ethereal sound might help you chill out.

The Oscar-nominated surrealist director behind "Mulholland Drive" and "Blue Velvet" has long stressed the importance of taking time to let your imagination wander, particularly when it comes to creating art.

He and Chrystabell help listeners achieve that state of contemplative wonder with their latest 10-track collaboration. It's difficult to categorize "Cellophane Memories" within a genre, but it consists of austere lyrics and ambient soundscapes carried by Chrystabell's hypnotic, reverbed vocals.

Although Lynch is known more widely for filmmaking, this is hardly the director's first foray into music, nor is it his first project with Chrystabell. The pair have collaborated in various capacities for decades, beginning with the song "Polish Poem," which was featured on Lynch's 2006 film, "Inland Empire."

Produced and written by Lynch and engineered by Chrystabell, the album is Lynch's first since his longtime creative partner Angelo Badalamenti died in 2022. The late composer contributed to two tracks — "She Knew" and "So Much Love" — which are both carried by Badalamenti's synthesizer.

The album is a sonic feast that, like so many of Lynch's films, challenges modern attention spans. Listening to "Cellophane Memories" feels like doing yoga, or perhaps transcendental meditation. The impulse to find additional stimuli in the moment is strong, but the result, if you can stick it out, is a feeling of rejuvenation and boosted creative energy.

Much of the album sounds like it could have come straight from "Twin Peaks"; one wonders if its title is a nod to the series' ultimate dead girl Laura Palmer being found wrapped in plastic. "Cellophane Memories" even occasionally employs the familiar, backward dialogue effect used in scenes in the red room to turn Chrystabell's vocals into a kind of haunting instrument — like on the brooding "Reflections in a Blade."

Hopeful and longing, at times disturbing and even seedy (particularly "The Answers to the Questions," thanks to its slowed tempo and foregrounded percussion), the album vacillates between light and darkness — themes Lynch has throughout his career been keen to explore. His simpatico relationship with Chrystabell, whose creative use and mixing of her own voice elevates "Cellophane Memories," is palpable in this record. **KRYSTA FAURIA, MDT/AP**



"Cellophane Memories" by Chrystabell & David Lynch (Sacred Bones)



## TASTE OF EDESIA

# Cool for the summer

IRENE SAM, MDT

FOR those who are thinking of where to enjoy a good time this summer, W Macau is certainly one of the coolest venue to eat and drink. Nestled by the hotel lobby, the hotel's **Living Room** sets the stage for an unforgettable gastronomic experience starting with its new summer blend coffee

collection. This curated selection of five specialty coffees is an artful creation, skilfully blending the finest Panama and Costa Rica (S.O.E.) coffee beans sourced from Trek Coffee, a local coffee roaster in Macau, to create a delightful range of iced specialty beverages that harmoniously fuse the invigorating essence of coffee with tantalizing bursts of tropical fruit.

From the velvety Creamy Frappé, to the enticingly fruity Orange Daydream, each sip of these exquisite coffee creations perfectly complements the Living Room's decadent Chocolate Rum Raisin Cake, creating an irresistible combination to be savoured during the sun-kissed days of summertime. MDT is particularly impressed with Orange Daydream harmoniously mixing Trek Selected Cold Brew, homemade tropical fruit flavored syrup and cream, taking guests on a summer holiday where the vibrant tropical notes dance on the palate.

Living Room's bar snacks, designed as shared plates, embody the

vibrant and convivial ambiance where the unique essence of Portugal and the distinctive Macau twist transport you to a summer filled with remarkable flavors. Delight in the delicate Surf and Turf Skewers - Angus Beef & Prawns, enjoy the crisp Deep-fried Bacalhau Balls, or indulge in the succulent Portuguese Chicken Skewers that are meticulously crafted to showcase the finest aspects of Portuguese and Macanese cuisine. Inspired by the vibrant flavors of Portugal and Macau, Living Room offers a culinary extravaganza for guests, highlighting Macau's unique identity as a historical port bridging East and West.

**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
Editorial, China Daily

**'PROJECT 2025' RAISES GENUINE CONCERNS**

The Heritage Foundation unveiled its so-called Project 2025: Presidential Transition Project as early as April last year. But it was not until Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump had to respond to the Democrats' attack on him, citing what the conservative think tank claims is a 922-page blueprint for the next president of the United States, that the project rang any alarm bells for the public.

Reportedly more than 140 people working in the former Trump administration took part in the project, dozens of whom hold posts in the conservative organizations behind the project, including Trump's former senior advisers Mark Meadows and Stephen Miller. That prompted the Democrats to cite the report — which calls for an overhaul of the US governance system to centralize power in the hands of the president — as highlighting the prospective threat to US democracy if Trump wins the White House this year.

In her first public remarks as the leading Democratic presidential candidate, US Vice-President Kamala Harris vowed to defeat two enemies: Trump and "his extreme Project 2025 agenda". In response, the former US president said on social media that he knows nothing about the project. "I have no idea who is behind it. I disagree with some of the things they're saying and some of what they're saying is absolutely ridiculous and abysmal ... I have nothing to do with them."

That the director of the Project 2025, Paul Dans, who was previously chief of staff at the Office of Personnel Management in the Trump administration, is departing from the role on Tuesday, which was welcomed by Trump's team, can be regarded as the Republican Party's latest attempt to cool down the situation to avoid the report from becoming a stumbling block to Trump's election campaign.

"Reports of Project 2025's demise would be greatly welcomed and should serve as notice to anyone or any group trying to misrepresent their influence with President Trump and his campaign — it will not end well for you," said a statement of the Trump team.

Notably, neither the Democrats nor the Republicans have bothered to provide solutions or even suggestions on the numerous questions the report raised. Instead, they have only used the report as a tool to smear each other.

Although the suggestions the report proposes are indeed absurd, including abolishing the US Department of Education to realize fair and true education of the US, many problems it touches upon are real obstacles to enhancing the US' domestic governance.

The Sino-US relationship remains at a critical juncture of de-escalation and stabilization. The US side needs to meet China halfway in their common efforts to continue to recalibrate the direction, manage risks, properly address differences, remove interference, and advance cooperation.

The report shows that the rise of the far right is by no means a phenomenon restricted to the political circle of Europe but is instead becoming a defining trend in Western politics. The rest of the world should be fully prepared for the West tilting increasingly to the right, which means more self-centered policies that care little about the spillover effects of national policies, less coordination and cooperation to address common challenges and hotspot issues, and more international governance reforms stalled in an all-your-fault blame game. [Abridged]

**BANK OF ENGLAND LOWERS ITS MAIN INTEREST RATE BY 0.25%, ITS FIRST CUT IN OVER FOUR YEARS**

**THE BUZZ**

The Bank of England has cut interest rates for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020.

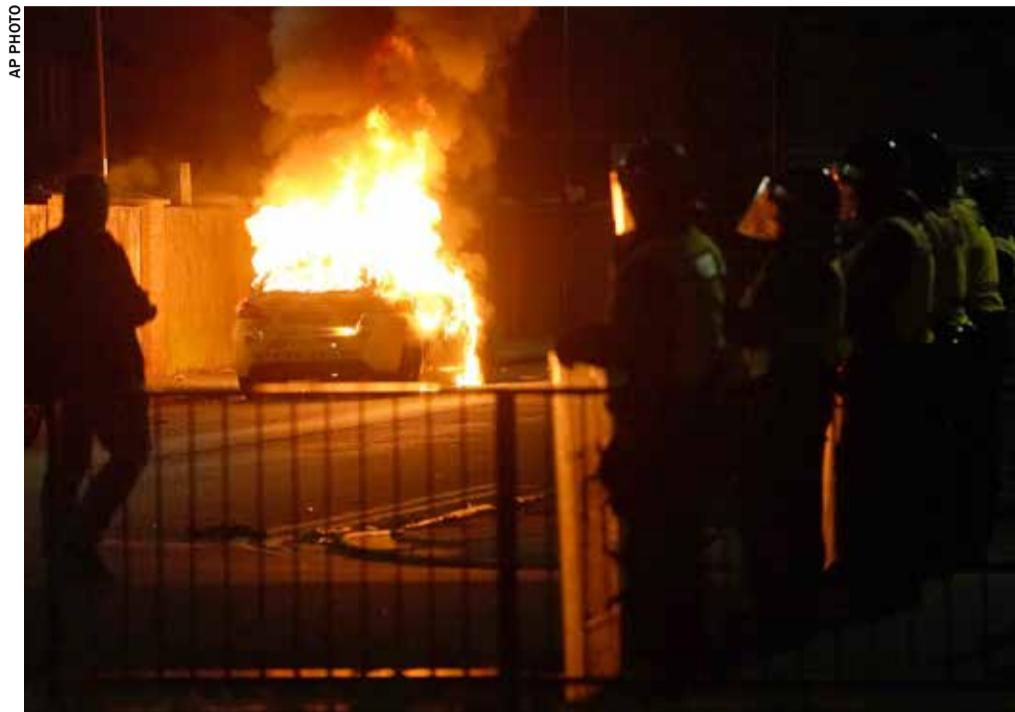
In a statement yesterday, the bank said that by a 5-4 margin, its nine-member policymaking panel backed a quarter-point reduction in its main interest rate to 5%, from the 16-year of 5.25%.

Economists were divided as to whether the bank, which is independent of government, would cut rates given persistent price pressures in the services sector, which accounts for around 80% of the British economy.

Yet inflation in the U.K overall has already hit the bank's target of 2%.

Interest rates in the U.K. have been unchanged for a year after a dramatic series of hikes but it's been clear for a few months that the Monetary Policy Committee had been moving towards a cut.

"Inflationary pressures have eased enough that we've been able to cut interest rates today," said Bank Gov. Andrew Bailey. "But we need to make sure inflation stays low, and be careful not to cut interest rates too quickly or by too much. Ensuring low and stable inflation is the best thing we can do to support economic growth and the prosperity of the country."



A police car burns as officers are deployed on the streets of Hartlepool, England

UK

**PM, POLICE HOLD CRISIS MEETING OVER UNREST AS ATTACK SUSPECT DUE IN COURT**

JILL LAWLESS, LONDON

PRIME Minister Keir Starmer summoned British police chiefs for a crisis meeting yesterday over violent unrest that followed a stabbing attack that left three young girls dead. A 17-year-old suspect appeared in court to face three counts of murder and 10 of attempted murder.

The attack on children at a Taylor Swift-themed summer holiday dance class shocked a country where knife crime is a long-standing and vexing problem. The deaths have also been used by far-right activists to stoke anger at immigrants and Muslims — though the suspect is not an immigrant, and his religion has not been disclosed.

The suspect has not been named because he is under 18, but police say he was born in Britain. He has not been charged with terrorism offenses but faces three counts of murder over the deaths of Alice Dasilva Aguiar, 9, Elsie Dot Stancombe, 7, and Bebe King, 6, in the seaside town of Southport in northwest England.

He also has been charged with 10 counts of attempted

murder over eight children and two adults who were injured. Several of the victims remain in critical condition.

The suspect made a brief appearance at Liverpool Magistrates' Court yesterday. He was not asked to enter a plea and was ordered detained until his next hearing, scheduled for later in the day.

Far-right demonstrators — fueled, in part, by online misinformation — have held several violent protests, ostensibly in response to the attack, clashing with police outside a mosque in Southport on Tuesday and causing a melee near the prime minister's office in London the next day.

Starmer's office said he would tell police leaders that "while the right to peaceful protest must be protected at all costs, he will be clear that criminals who exploit that right in order to sow hatred and carry out violent acts will face the full force of the law."

Hundreds of protesters chanting "we want our country back" hurled beer cans and bottles near the prime minister's Downing Street residence in London on Wednesday evening, [yes-

terday, Macau tie] and launched flares at a nearby statue of wartime leader Winston Churchill. More than 100 people were arrested for offenses including violent disorder and assault on an emergency worker, London's Metropolitan Police force said.

Police officers were pelted with bottles and eggs in the town of Hartlepool in northeast England, where a police car was set ablaze, as far-right groups seek to stir anger over an attack they have sought to link to immigrants. A smaller disturbance was reported in Manchester.

On Tuesday night a crowd of several hundred people hurled bricks and bottles at riot police in Southport, set garbage bins and vehicles on fire and looted a store, hours after a peaceful vigil for the stabbing victims.

"I am absolutely appalled and disgusted at the level of violence that was shown towards my officers," Merseyside Chief Constable Serena Kennedy said. "Some of the first responders who attended that awful scene on Monday ... then were faced with that level of violence."

MDT/AP

**Germany** An overnight protest by climate activists at Leipzig/Halle Airport in eastern Germany forced a three-hour halt to cargo flights, officials said yesterday. The protest by the Last Generation group followed demonstrations last week at Cologne-Bonn Airport and then at Frankfurt Airport, Germany's busiest, which significantly disrupted passenger flights.



**Ukraine** Western countries have pledged F-16s to Kyiv, and some have arrived in Ukraine, officials in Washington confirmed yesterday [Macau time] to The Associated Press. The fighter jets are expected to start flying sorties in Ukrainian skies soon and will be a much-needed boost to the country's current fleet of Soviet-era jets to counter Russia's invasion.



**France** Covered with pins and adornments, Vivianne Robinson is hard to miss in the streets of Paris. The Olympics superfan has attended seven Summer Games over the span of 40 years. But this trip to Paris came at a hefty price — \$10,000 to be precise. Robinson, 66 and from Los Angeles, maxed out her credit cards and worked two jobs to afford the trip and the 38 event tickets she purchased.



**Nigeria** Frustrated with growing economic hardships, Nigerians are planning nationwide protests this week against the country's worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation. And with momentum soaring on social media, authorities fear a replay of the deadly 2020 demonstrations against police brutality in this West African nation — or a wave of violence similar to last month's protests in Kenya, where a tax hike led to chaos in the capital, Nairobi.