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WYNN LOST SOME MARKET SHARE FOR THE SECOND QUARTER AMID A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE PROMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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MACAO FOUNDATION GRANTS OVER MOP198 MILLION IN FINANCIAL SUPPORT

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CHINESE AMERICAN SCHOLAR CONVICTED IN US OF GIVING CHINA INTEL ON DISSIDENTS

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AP PHOTO



China's exports rose 7% in July from a year earlier, below economists' forecasts for growth closer to 10% as trade tensions and weakening growth in the United States and other major markets weighed on demand. Chinese leaders have ramped up investment in manufacturing to rev up an economy that stalled during the pandemic and is still growing more slowly than hoped. But moves to tame inflation by raising interest rates have bit into consumer demand in affluent Western countries. *More on p5*

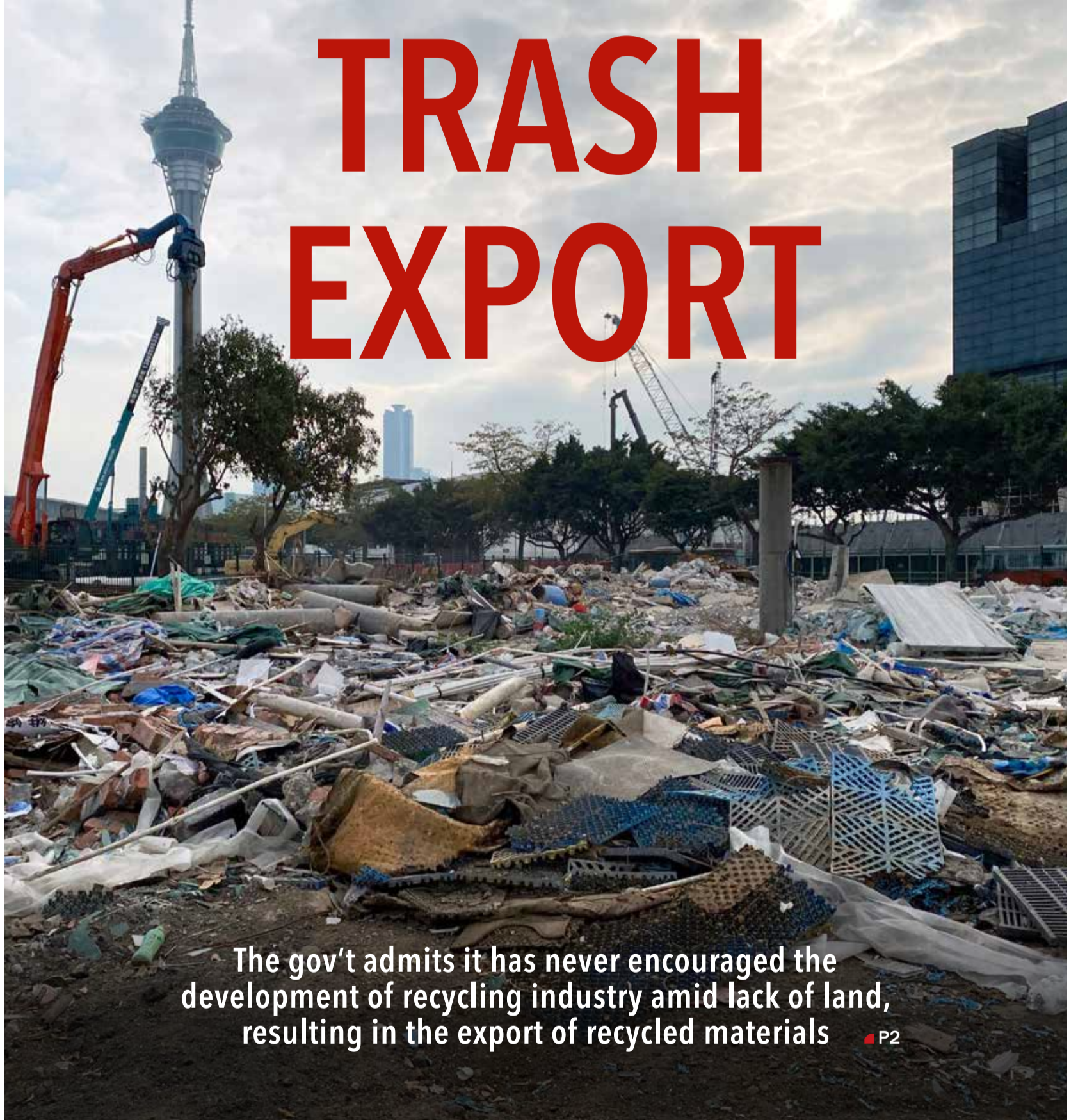
Nepal A helicopter with five people on board crashed yesterday in the mountains just north of the country's capital, police said. The helicopter had taken off from Kathmandu international airport and was heading towards the town of Syaprubeshi. The helicopter, which belongs to Nepal-based Air Dynasty, had lost contact with the tower minutes after takeoff. The four passengers are Chinese nationals, and the pilot is a Nepali man. No further details were immediately available.

AP PHOTO



UAE Dubai International Airport saw a record 44.9 million travelers pass through its cavernous terminals in the first half of this year, putting the world's busiest airport for international travel back on track to beat its all-time record as aviation booms after the coronavirus pandemic. The results released yesterday follow a record-breaking annual profit for the long-haul carrier Emirates that calls the airport known as DXB home — and comes as Dubai plans to move operations to a planned, nearly \$35 billion airfield in the next decade.

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TRASH EXPORT

The gov't admits it has never encouraged the development of recycling industry amid lack of land, resulting in the export of recycled materials P2

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AL PLENARY

ROSÁRIO: MACAU WITHOUT LAND FOR RECYCLING INDUSTRY

RENATO MARQUES

MACAU has no available land for the recycling industry, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário said yesterday at the Legislative Assembly Q&A session with lawmakers on various topics.

In response to questions from lawmakers on the need to find land for the local recycling industry, Rosário said, "We have never incentivized the creation of this industry in Macau and we do not have land available for recycling activities. We need land resources for other purposes and industries." He added that the government's approach is to "treat recyclable residues and send them outside Macau for recycling."

Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) director Raymond Tam concurred, noting, "Macau is very small and can hardly sustain recycling industries. We will need to rely on regional cooperation for this."

He explained that glass bottles



collected in Macau are sent to Hong Kong for recycling, while batteries are exported to either South Korea or Japan. Other recyclable items such as plastic materials, metals, paper, and cardboard are exported to the mainland.

In response to an inquiry from lawmaker Leong Hong Sai and further follow-up questions from lawmakers about increasing the

use of renewable energy sources like solar, Rosário said that calls to place solar panels in local reservoirs were unrealistic.

"Our reservoirs are too small and unprepared for this. It will not be of any utility," he said. His view was supported by the DSPA director, who said the government had already implemented solar panels in places where this was feasible.

He mentioned several locations where solar panels had been installed, noting that there were further plans to install more at public facilities in Zone A of the new landfills.

FOCUS ON CONSTRUCTION WASTE LANDFILL

Regarding environmental protection, Tam highlighted that the

government's efforts have increasingly focused on improving incineration capacity rather than recycling. Such capacities will soon increase when the new incineration unit in Pac On becomes operational.

Tam noted that since the establishment of the Organic Waste Recovery Center – a unit to process food residue – is already ongoing, the government's current priority is to find new solutions to deal with construction waste.

As the Times previously reported, the new food processing unit will cost MOP1.15 billion and must be completed in 38 months.

Once it commences operation, the recovery center will be able to produce electricity from biogas generated from the fermentation of food waste.

Yesterday, Tam reaffirmed that the center will be able to process approximately 150 tons of food waste per day.

"We hope that this volume will meet our needs and that the center will be able to handle these volumes," he said.

When asked about cooperation with the six gaming concessionaires, Tam said, "The integrated resorts are already using glass bottles instead of plastic to provide drinking water to guests in hotel rooms."



TRAFFIC

Sai Van Bridge to undergo resurfacing, motorcycle lane temporarily closed

THE Sai Van Bridge will undergo resurfacing starting tomorrow, officials announced at a joint press conference yesterday.

This work aims to enhance safety and

improve traffic conditions at the crucial link between Macau and Taipa.

The resurfacing project will commence at 10 a.m. on Aug. 9 and is scheduled to

conclude by 3 p.m. on Aug. 31. During this period, the motorcycle lane from Macau to Taipa will be closed, followed by the closure of the opposite lane from Taipa to Macau

starting Aug. 11.

Authorities are urging drivers to seek alternative routes, including access points from Avenida Panorâmica do Lago Sai Van and the Taipa access roads.

In addition to the motorcycle lane closure, vehicle access on the Macau side will be restricted to one lane from Aug. 9 to 28.

The Public Works Bureau (DSOP) and the Transport Bureau (DSAT) have assured the public that police will be present to manage traffic and minimize delays.

Officials urged drivers to plan their routes in advance to avoid congestion during the construction period. The phased approach aims to ensure a smooth transition and improved roadway conditions upon completion of the project. NS

MGTO TO REVIEW HOTEL SWIMMING POOL GUIDELINES FOLLOWING DROWNING INCIDENT

NADIA SHAW

MACAU'S tourism authorities will reassess hotel swimming pool regulations after a tragic drowning incident involving a young boy in Coloane. ChengWai Tong, acting director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), confirmed that the existing guidelines were developed in collaboration with the Health Bureau (SSM), Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), and Sports Bureau (ID). These guidelines encompass facility standards and management practices but do not impose mandatory requirements.

Speaking to the press on the sidelines of an event, Cheng noted that the presence of lifeguards at hotel swimming pools is not mandatory.

Nevertheless, hotels are required to clearly communicate whe-

ther a lifeguard is on duty and to outline the regulations pertaining to the use of the facilities by minors.

The recent incident, where a non-resident boy was found submerged in a hotel pool, raised concerns about compliance with these guidelines.

At the time of the drowning, the pool was marked as having no lifeguards, and children under 16 were required to be supervised by adults, indicating no violations occurred.

The Judiciary Police (PJ) are investigating the drowning, which was reported shortly after 2:20 p.m. on Sunday. Despite immediate rescue efforts, the boy was pronounced dead at the hospital, with preliminary findings indicating no foul play. The case remains under investigation by the special unit of PJ.

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AL PLENARY

Islands Hospital LRT Station to open on Sept. 1 without train service

RENATO MARQUES

THE government will open the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) station at the Islands Hospital on Sep. 1, the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário, announced at the Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday afternoon.

In response to an inquiry from lawmaker Ngan Iek Hang, Rosário noted current advancements that have been achieved to date and planned throughout the rest of this year. "From Sep. 1, we will open the Islands Hospital [LRT] Station," he said, although noted that the Seac Pai Van Line would not begin operations yet.

The Secretary explained that only the station facility would be open to the public. This would allow pedestrians to transfer from the Lotus Station through a passageway to the Islands Hospital Station, facilitating direct access to the hospital without using other transportation or walking at the street level.

Rosário also reiterated the government's intention to open the Seac Pai Van Line and the Hengqin Line, which connect to the Taipa Line of the LRT, until the end of this year as a compromise.

"Until the end of the year,

we will open both the Seac Pai Van and Hengqin Lines and I believe that more people will use Taipa Line after this," he said. He also expressed hopes that the East Line, linking Pac On area in Taipa to the Border Gate, will open in 2029.

LACK OF MOBILE PAYMENT METHODS TO CONTINUE

One of the questions raised by lawmaker Ngan was in relation to the ticketing and payment methods for the LRT. This has been raised on many occasions, however, the government has yet to find a solution.

"As our network expands and adds more stations and lines, we will need to evaluate the current ticketing system," the secretary said. He explained that the government aims to spend the five years between 2024 and 2029 (being the date of the East Line's opening) to modernize the ticketing and payment system. He suggested that the current aim by authorities is to change the current system prior to the East Line becoming operational.

The director of the Public Works Bureau (DSOP), Lam Wai Hou, noted that as the Hengqin Line reaches the final stages of construction, train testing will commence on the line by the end of this month or alternatively in

September.

"We are at the last phase of the work. All construction, including of access points and links to other transportation, will be completed by November this year for the Hengqin Line," Lam said. Regarding payment methods, Lam said, "To improve the gating system, we need to consider the compatibility of other stations and lines. Hardware and payment systems will need to be replaced. At present, the extension lines to be opened are currently linked to and dependent on

the Taipa Line. We cannot change anything for the time being," he said.

In response to intervening comments by lawmaker Ngan and other lawmakers, Rosário explained that in addition to the costs associated with changing the gates and payment methods, time pressure also poses challenges. He noted that to change existing systems would require significant time investment. Given that maintenance work for the LTR occurs between midnight and 6 a.m. the following day, "there is not enough time to proceed with such works without interfering with the LRT operations."

In opposition to this statement, lawmaker Ron Lam said that given the LRT currently carries a relatively low number of passengers, "this would be the ideal opportunity to change to the QR Code reading system." This would ensure that systems were already in place by the time the Taipa Line receives a surge of passengers due to the opening of the Seac Pai Van and Hengqin lines.

INTERCHANGE WITH BUSES ALSO A PROBLEM

Ngan and other lawmakers also raised concerns about connectivity between the LRT and other public transportation such as buses.

Lawmakers warned government officials that an increase in LTR passengers could create chaos if the current system's flaws were not addressed.

In response, the DSOP director said that the authorities "will adjust bus routes before opening new lines, as we did before the opening of Barra station." However, Lam did not elaborate on the changes the government intends to make in that regard.

GOV'T ADMITS CLOSING AGAIN LRT STATIONS FOR 'CROWD MANAGEMENT'

In response to follow-up questions from several lawmakers including Ella Lei, Rosário admitted that the government would consider closing the LTR stations again for crowd management. This measure could be necessary to address service capacity issues, particularly for large-scale events at the new outdoor venue the government is setting up in Cotai.

Rosário said that the closure of the LRT Stations of Stadium and Jockey Club, which occurred in late January this year when the Korean band Seventeen performed at the Olympic Stadium in Taipa, might occur again in the future, should this be the deci-

sion of multidepartment groups responsible for evaluating the associated risks.

"The decision to close station access during the concert was a risk mitigation strategy to avoid potential stampedes. We closed the stations so that the crowd could be dispersed to several locations. There is also an LRT station near the new concert venue, so we need to continue to evaluate these risks," he said. Further, he noted, "We have also tested this during this year's 'Walk for a Million' event. In this case, we did not need to close Barra station. It all depends on the risk assessment made at the time."

IC CALLS FOR LOCAL FILMMAKERS' PROPOSALS

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) of Macau has opened applications for its "Local View Power" program. The program encourages independent local filmmakers to create more homegrown movies. Applicants must be local residents aged 18 or above and meet program requirements. The categories include documentary, short feature, and animation, each with advanced, open, and beginner levels. IC will select up to 16 projects and provide up to MOP1.55 million in production funding, with a maximum of MOP280,000 per project. Since 2007, the program has supported nearly 160 proposals, resulting in a variety of local cinematic works. The application deadline is Sep. 5.

CASH HANDOUTS COMPLETED WITH OVER 580,000 BENEFICIARIES

The distribution of the "Wealth Partaking Scheme 2024" was completed by the end of July. Permanent residents received MOP10,000 while non-permanent residents received MOP6,000. Over 580,000 beneficiaries received their payments via bank transfer, totaling around MOP5.71 billion. An additional 161,000 crossed cheques worth MOP1.59 billion were mailed out. Residents can continue to check their disbursement details on the scheme's website or through their Macau One Account. They can also apply for cheque reissuance if they did not receive the payment. Information is also available at self-service kiosks of the Identification Services Bureau across Macau.

RESIDENTIAL PRICES DECLINE 3.4%

Macau's overall residential property price index declined 3.4% quarter-on-quarter to 218.8 in the second quarter of 2024, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service. Prices on the Macau Peninsula fell by 4.3%, while Taipa and Coloane saw a 0.1% increase. The index for existing homes dropped 3.1%, with the Macau Peninsula down 4.0% and Taipa/Coloane down 0.2%. However, the index for pre-sale units rose 4.5%. Compared to Q2 2023, the overall index fell 13.1%, with the Macau Peninsula down 13.7% and Taipa/Coloane down 10.6%.

NORTH DISTRICT CONSUMPTION CARNIVAL GENERATES MOP150 MILLION

The 20-week "Weekend Consumer Rewards in Northern District" event has concluded, with the Economic and Technological Development Bureau reporting strong results. A total of 1,255 North District merchants participated in the event, leading to MOP150 million in increased spending, representing a five-fold boost. Approximately MOP29.75 million was written off, with 64% of the benefits going to the retail industry and 36% to the catering sector. The authorities are evaluating the success of the activities and plan to continue collaborating with industry associations to organize similar community-focused promotional events. The goal is to improve the business environment and strengthen sustainable economic development in the region.

GAMING

WYNN MACAU LOSES MARKET SHARE IN Q2 AMID COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

NADIA SHAW

WYNN Macau lost some market share for the second quarter, impacted by low hold in the mass segment and a disciplined player reinvestment policy amid a highly competitive promotional environment.

Wynn Macau contributed USD280 million (MOP2.3 billion) in EBITDAR, despite a slight decline in market share.

In an earnings call with analysts, the gaming operator revealed that its gross gaming revenue share decreased by 150 basis points (bps) to 12.7% on a quarter-over-quarter basis.

Wynn Resorts CEO Craig Billings acknowledged the competitive landscape in Macau, where operators are intensifying promotions to capture market share.

"We generated \$280 million of EBITDAR in the second quarter on slightly lower market share than we have experienced over the previous several quarters and slightly lower mass hold quarter over quarter," said Billings.

"There has been a lot of chatter in the market about the elevated promotional environment in Macau with concessionaires jockeying for market share," the executive added.



For the three months ending June 30, 2024, Wynn Macau reported total operating revenues of \$885.3 million (MOP7.1 billion), up 15% year-on-year but down 11.3% compared to the previous quarter.

Adjusted property EBITDAR fell by 17.4% quarter-on-quarter to \$280.4 million (MOP2.3 billion), primarily due to a subdued performance from the peninsula property, Wynn Macau.

The Wynn Macau property reported operating revenues of \$337.3 million (MOP2.7

billion) in Q2 2024, an 11.8% increase year-on-year but an 18% decrease sequentially.

At Cotai's Wynn Palace, operating revenue increased by 17% year-on-year to \$548 million (MOP4.4 billion), despite falling 6.6% quarter-on-quarter. Casino revenue at Wynn Palace reached \$445 million (MOP3.6 billion), up 21.8% year-on-year.

Meanwhile, Billings emphasized Wynn's commitment to disciplined operational expenditures and player reinvestment, resulting in an EBITDAR margin that exceeds

pre-pandemic levels.

The company is also progressing on a new destination food hall in Macau, set to open in 2025, which will further enhance its offerings in the region.

"We continue to elevate our product offering in Macau through new and innovative food and beverage concepts and unique programming," said Billings.

"We also continue to advance construction work on our second major concession-related project, our destination food hall, which we expect to

open in 2025," said Billings.

In the Middle East, Wynn is making significant strides with its Wynn Al Marjan Island project in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The CEO recently visited the site and noted rapid construction progress, with the hotel structure now reaching 90 meters, making it the tallest building in the UAE.

The company has invested \$357 million (MOP2.9 billion) in equity for this joint venture, which includes land for the hotel and additional acreage for future developments.

Billings expressed optimism about the UAE market, calling it "the most exciting opportunity for the gaming industry in decades."

The company has also acquired additional land for potential future developments.

Meanwhile, Wynn Resorts, in the second quarter, achieved a record EBITDAR of US\$571.7 million (MOP4.6 billion)—the highest in the company's history.

"Our second quarter results, including a new record for adjusted property EBITDAR, reflect continued strength throughout our business. I am incredibly proud of our teams in Las Vegas, Macau, and Boston," Billings stated during the earnings call.

With a robust liquidity position of over \$3.9 billion (MOP31.3 billion), Wynn Resorts is also exploring potential developments in gateway cities such as New York and Bangkok, ensuring a balanced approach to growth in both established and emerging markets.

Macao Foundation grants over MOP198 million in financial support

THE Macao Foundation (FM) approved nearly 700 applications for financial support in the second quarter of 2024, granting a subsidy amount of over MOP198 million, a 3% increase compared to the previous quarter.

The Macao General Union of Neighborhood Associations (UGAMM) continued to receive the most subsidies, totaling over MOP19.2 million, or nearly 10% of the total amount granted. The Macao Portuguese School Foundation received MOP3.6 million in financial support, down from MOP4.5 million in the



previous quarter. The foundation provided financial support to over 400 entities and individuals, covering nearly

700 applications. The total amount of MOP198.8 million marks a significant decrease of 27.8% compared to the same

period last year, when MOP275.6 million was approved.

Other notable recipients include the Casa de Portugal in Macau, which received 3.4 million, and the Macao Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM), which ranked second among entities with the most financial support, totaling over MOP15 million.

The FM has already provided MOP391.3 million in financial support between January and June this year, equivalent to an annual growth of 14% compared to the first half of 2023. NS

MOBILE PAYMENTS WITNESS ROBUST GROWTH IN Q2

The second quarter of 2024 saw a significant increase in the use of local mobile payment tools and a rise in credit and debit card transactions. According to the latest statistics released by the Monetary Authority of Macao, the number of transactions carried out by local mobile payment tools increased by 15.9% year-on-year to 85.6 million in the second quarter. The transaction value totaled MOP7.2 billion, an increment of 5.3% from the preceding year. The average amount per transaction was MOP83.8. At the end of June 2024, the number of mobile payment terminals and QR code signs amounted to 102,667, indicating a growing adoption of mobile payment services in Macau.

PJ INVESTIGATES TWO CASES OF BODY DISCOVERY

A young local woman was found lifeless in a public toilet of the A-Ma Cultural Village yesterday morning. According to a report by the Judiciary Police (PJ), a female cleaner discovered the young woman in a cubicle with a package of items and a bottle of water. PJ suspects the death was due to a drug overdose. PJ has also reported the discovery of a deceased individual in a residential unit during the afternoon yesterday. The body was located in the bedroom alongside charcoal. This incident follows the building administrator's observation of an unpleasant odor emanating from the premises.

EVS

Tesla is recalling more than 1.6 million cars in China for a remote software fix

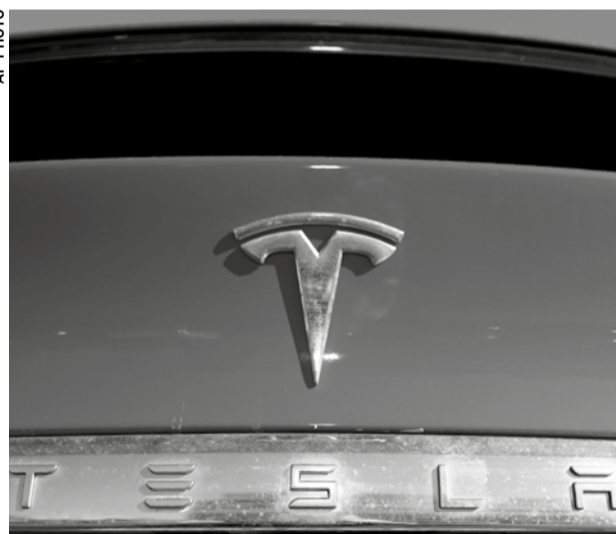
TESLA is recalling 1.68 million cars in China for a remote software upgrade to ensure that they warn the driver when the trunk is not locked shut, China's market regulator said.

The announcement yesterday [Macau time] also said that vehicles with faulty trunk latches will be repaired free of charge. The recalls affect some imported Model S and Model X vehicles and domestically made Model 3 and Model Y cars manufactured between Oct. 15, 2020 and July 17, 2024.

The recall notice said that an unlocked trunk lid could open during driving, interfering with the driver's vision. It did not say whether that had ever happened to any Tesla cars. The U.S.-based electric vehicle maker will fix the problem through a remote software upgrade, the State Administration for Market Regulation said.

China is a major market and production base for Tesla while also a source of growing competition from Chinese EV makers. The company reported a sharp decline in second-quarter net income last month, as sales fell despite price cuts and low-interest financing. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



TRADE

China's exports grow 7% in July, less than forecasts, while imports pick up pace

ELAINE KURTENBACH,
BANGKOK

CHINA'S exports rose 7% in July from a year earlier, below economists' forecasts for growth closer to 10% as trade tensions and weakening growth in the United States and other major markets weighed on demand.

Chinese leaders have ramped up investment in manufacturing to rev up an economy that stalled during the pandemic and is still growing more slowly than hoped. But moves to tame inflation by raising interest rates have bit into consumer demand in affluent Western countries.

Imports climbed 7.2% to \$215.9 billion, picking up momentum on stronger trade with other Asian countries that now supply many industrial components, materials and consumer products to China. Exports to the United States rose 2.4% year-on-year while shipments to Southeast Asian countries, now Beijing's biggest trading partner overall, jumped 11%.

Exports totaled \$300.6 billion in July, expanding at the slowest pace in three months and leaving a trade

AP PHOTO



surplus for July of \$84.7 billion. That was down from a record \$99.1 billion the month before, but the surplus rose nearly 8% in January-July from the same period a year earlier.

During the first seven months of the year, China's exports climbed 4% from a year earlier, while imports were up a lackluster 2.8% as growth in consumer demand remained muted.

China's exports are forecast to weaken in coming months as sharp hikes

in U.S. and European tariffs on electric vehicles take effect. As reports said freighters have been seen carrying big shipments of vehicles to European ports to try to beat those duties, exports of vehicles rose 18% in the first seven months of the year from the same period in 2023.

The rebound in imports in July is likely to take hold as the government moves to support consumer demand and revive China's ailing property sector, Zi-

chun Huang, China economist at Capital Economics, said in a report.

"We expect import volumes to rise further in the coming months. The leadership appears more worried about the near-term outlook compared to a few months ago, and has signaled a step-up in fiscal spending. This is likely to boost construction activity, driving up demand for industrial commodities," Huang said. MDT/AP

CORPORATE BITS

Artyzen Grand Lapa unveils Mid-Autumn Festival offerings



Artyzen Grand Lapa is launching "exquisite mooncakes" to celebrate the upcoming Mid-Autumn Festival, a tradition that

brings families and friends together.

The property invites the public to savor the classic mooncake flavors with lo-

tus seed paste and double egg yolk, or indulge in the "creamy richness of mooncakes with egg custard."

"These delicacies are perfect for sharing with loved ones and honoring the festive season," the statement read.

Additionally, the property offers a hamper featuring a fine bottle of wine, an artistically designed mooncake box, a red brocade Chinese tea gift box with eight exquisite teas, a box of Lee Kum Kee six-head premium abalone, and many more.

The hotel also provides an early bird offer with a 25% discount when mooncakes are purchased between August 1 and 31.

MGM promotes responsible gaming with series of initiatives



MGM has been working with stakeholders in Macau to promote responsible gambling (RG) through various initiatives aimed at building a healthy and sustainable society.

Earlier this year, the company unveiled the "MGM Financial Education School Tour 2024 - Hero of Egg Waffle." This program features an interactive musical drama that conveys posi-

ve messages about financial awareness and gaming prevention to students.

Tian Han, executive vice president of Gaming Operations & Strategic Marketing at MGM, said the school tour visits 20 local primary and secondary schools annually, reaching over 3,000 students.

MGM has also partnered with City University of Macau to launch the "Responsible Gaming Project at Campus," providing RG training and lectures to university students.

Beyond the education sector, MGM has organized public awareness initiatives such as a photo exhibition exploring the history of Macau's gaming industry and RG efforts.

COURTS

Chinese American scholar convicted in US of giving China intel on dissidents

JENNIFER PELTZ, NEW YORK

A Chinese American scholar was convicted yesterday [Macau time] of U.S. charges of using his reputation as a pro-democracy activist to gather information on dissidents and feed it to his homeland's government.

A federal jury in New York delivered the verdict in the case of Shujun Wang, who helped found a pro-democracy group in the city.

Prosecutors said that at the behest of China's main intelligence agency, the Ministry of State Security, Wang lived a double life for over a decade. He held himself out as a critic of the Chinese government so that he could build rapport with people who actually opposed it, then betrayed their trust by telling Beijing what they said and planned, prosecutors said.

"The indictment could have been the plot of a spy novel, but the evidence is shockingly real that the defendant was a secret agent for the Chinese government," Brooklyn-based U.S. attorney Breon Peace said in a statement after the verdict.

Wang had pleaded not guilty. His lawyers cast him as someone who was forthcoming with U.S. authorities about activities he saw as innocuous, and they disputed that his communications were truly under Chinese officials' direction or control.

"The jury felt they were and that was enough to convict him, even though there was no evidence that what he did caused any harm, was of any benefit to the Chinese government or that Professor Wang is anything other than a patriotic American who has devoted his life to fighting the authoritarian regime in Chi-



Chinese American scholar Shujun Wang in New York

na," attorney Zachary Margulis-Ohnuma said after the verdict.

Wang, 75, was convicted of charges including conspiring to act as a foreign agent without notifying the attorney general. The charges carry the potential for up to 25 years in prison, though sentencing guidelines for any given case can vary depending on a defendant's history and other factors.

Wang's sentencing is set for Jan. 9. Meanwhile, four Chinese officials who were charged alongside him remain at large.

They are among dozens of people whom U.S. prosecutors have pursued to fight what Washington views as "transnational repression," or deploying government operatives to harass, threaten and silence critics living abroad.

The Chinese embassy in Washington disputes that the country engages in the practice, saying that it doesn't interfere in other countries' internal affairs, abides by international law and respects foreign nations' judicial sovereignty.

Liu Pengyu, a spokesperson for the Chinese embassy, said in a statement that he was unaware of the specifics of the Wang case but that China opposes the United States' "slander," "political manipulation" and "malicious fabrication of the so-called 'transnational suppression' narrative and its blatant prosecution of officials from relevant Chinese departments."

Wang came to New York in 1994 to teach after doing so at a Chinese university. He later became a U.S. citizen.

He helped found the Queens-based Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang Memorial Foundation, named for two Chinese Communist Party leaders who were sympathetic to calls for reform in the 1980s. A message was sent to the foundation seeking comment on Wang's case.

Prosecutors say that underneath a veneer of advocating for change in China, Wang acted as a covert pipeline for information that Beijing wanted on Hong

Kong democracy protestors, advocates for Taiwanese independence, Uyghur and Tibetan activists and others in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Wang composed emails — styled as "diaries" — that recounted conversations, meetings and plans of various critics of the Chinese government.

One message was about events commemorating the 1989 protests and crackdown in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, prosecutors said. Other emails talked about people planning demonstrations during various visits that Chinese President Xi Jinping made to the U.S.

Instead of sending the emails and creating a digital trail, Wang saved them as drafts that Chinese intelligence officers could read by logging in with a shared password, prosecutors said.

In other, encrypted messages, Wang relayed details of upcoming pro-democracy events and plans to meet with a prominent Hong Kong dissident while the latter

was in the U.S., according to an indictment.

During a series of FBI interviews between 2017 and 2021, Wang initially said he had no contacts with the Ministry of State Security, but he later acknowledged on videotape that the intelligence agency asked him to gather information on democracy advocates and that he sometimes did, FBI agents testified.

But, they said, he claimed he didn't provide anything really valuable, just information already in the public domain.

Wang's lawyers portrayed him as a gregarious academic with nothing to hide.

"In general, fair to say he was very open and talkative with you, right?" Margulis-Ohnuma asked an undercover agent who approached Wang in 2021 under the guise of being affiliated with the Chinese security ministry.

"He was," said the agent, who testified under a pseudonym. He recorded his conversation with Wang at the latter's house in Connecticut.

"Did he seem a little lonely?" Margulis-Ohnuma asked a bit later. The agent said he didn't recall.

Wang told agents his "diaries" were advertisements for the foundation's meetings or write-ups that he was publishing in newspapers, according to testimony. He also suggested to the undercover agent that publishing them would be a way to deflect any suspicion from U.S. authorities.

Another agent, Garrett Igo, told jurors that when Wang found out in 2019 that investigators would search his phone for any contacts in the Chinese government, he paused for a minute.

"And then he said, 'Do anything. I don't care,'" Igo recalled. **MDT/AP**

ACADEMIA

Physicists laud late Nobel laureate Lee

IN his Nobel acceptance speech in 1957, 31-year-old physicist Tsung-Dao Lee reflected on how his breakthrough discovery of the violation of the principle of parity was built on existing knowledge produced by many other scientists.

"It is often the reaping that is remembered but

the tilling forgotten," said Lee, who shared the Nobel Prize in physics with Yang Chen-Ning and remains the second-youngest winner of the award.

Lee died at his home in San Francisco in the United States on Monday. His death triggered a wave of condolences from top universities and research

institutions that extolled not only his scientific achievements, but also his commitment to advancing science education in China.

"As one of the first Chinese-born Nobel laureates, Lee strove for breakthroughs in quantum field theory, elementary particle theory, nuclear physics,

statistical mechanics, fluid dynamics, astrophysics and many other areas ... and made lasting and significant contributions to the development of physics," Shanghai Jiao Tong University and the China Center of Advanced Science and Technology said in a joint eulogy this week.

It added that Lee also

translated his love for his motherland into promoting high-energy physics research in China and establishing academic programs, research funds and facilities in the country.

Tsinghua University said in a statement released on Tuesday that the China-US Physics Examination and Application program, or CUSPEA, initiated by Lee in 1979 had helped over 900 Chinese researchers study abroad by 1988.

"The program nurtured a batch of top researchers and created a model for cultivating urgently needed high-level talent," it said.

Lee was also one of the earliest advocates for establishing postdoctoral programs in China in the 1980s, and he set up another academic foundation in 1998 to fund basic research for undergraduates and proposed a special education pathway for gifted young people. **MDT/CHINA DAILY**

SOUTH CHINA SEA

US, Australia, Canada, Philippines stage naval, air force maneuvers

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA, PHILIPPINES

THE United States, Australia, Canada and the Philippines held air and naval maneuvers yesterday in what they said was a show of force to promote the rule of law in the disputed South China Sea, where China has increasingly asserted its territorial claims. In an apparent response, China said it conducted air and sea combat patrols on the same day.

Adm. Samuel Paparo, who heads the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, and top military and defense commanders from Australia, Canada and the Philippines said in a joint statement that they “stand together to address common maritime challenges and underscore our shared dedication to upholding international law and the rules-based order.” They said they were staging the two-day exercises to uphold unhindered passage in the Indo-Pacific region.

China has long claimed much of the South China Sea, a key global trade and security route, and vowed to defend its territorial interests at all costs. Its claims overlap those of smaller coastal states, including the Philippines and Vietnam, hampering their access

AP FILE PHOTO



to traditional fishing areas and disrupting oil and gas exploration in their internationally recognized exclusive economic zones.

“The naval and air force units of participating nations will operate together, enhancing cooperation and interoperability between our armed forces,” the commanders said. “The activity will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with international law and with due regard to the safety of navigation and the rights and interests of other states.”

A Philippine military official said the navy ships and fighter jets would conduct anti-submarine warfare drills, combined sea passage maneuvers and communications checks. The official spoke on condition of anonymity

any country but are “a collective expression of support for a rules-based international order.”

China said it held joint sea and air combat patrols yesterday near Scarborough Shoal, a disputed territory in the South China Sea,

China said it held joint sea and air combat patrols near Scarborough Shoal in an apparent response to the exercises

ahead of the release of specific details of the maneuvers.

A Philippine navy spokesperson, Rear Adm. Roy Trinidad, said the exercises are not directed at

in an apparent response to the exercises.

A short statement from the Chinese military's Southern Theater Command indicated that it was aware of “military activities that disrupt the South China Sea” and that they were “under control.” China regularly

accuses the U.S., the Philippines and others of undermining regional peace and stability through their military activities.

Paparo and the other military commanders, Adm. David Johnston of the Australian Defense Force, Gen. Jennie Carignan of the Canadian Armed Forces and Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr. of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, said their countries “uphold the right to freedom of navigation and overflight, other lawful uses of the sea and international airspace, as well as respect for maritime rights under international law.”

They did not mention China by name but said their nations affirm a 2016 arbitration ruling on the South China Sea disputes “as a final and legally binding decision on the parties to the dispute.” The ruling invalidated China's expansive claims in the South China Sea, but Beijing refused to participate in the Philippines-initiated arbitration, rejected the decision and continues to defy it.

Hostilities in the disputed waters have flared particularly between Chinese and Philippine coast guard and naval forces at two disputed shoals since last year, renewing fears that the confrontations could degenerate into a larger armed conflict involving the United States, Manila's longtime treaty ally.

After an alarmingly violent June 17 confrontation at Philippine-occupied Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea, China and the Philippines reached a temporary agreement last month aimed at preventing further clashes. **MDT/AP**

BANGLADESH

Nobel laureate Yunus will head interim government after unrest ousted Hasina

NOBEL laureate Muhammad Yunus will head Bangladesh's interim government after longtime Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country amid a mass uprising that left hundreds of people dead and pushed the South Asian nation to the brink of chaos.

The decision, announced yesterday by Joyal Abedin, the press secretary of the country's figurehead President Mohammed Shahabuddin, came during a meeting that included military chiefs, organizers of the student protests that helped drive Hasina from power, prominent business leaders and civil society members.

A longtime political opponent of Hasina, Yunus is expected to return soon from Paris, where he is advising Olympic organizers, media reports said.

An economist and banker, he was awarded the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for his work developing micro-credit markets. Yunus has been hailed for bringing thousands out of poverty through Grameen Bank, which he founded in 1983, and which makes small loans to businesspeople who wouldn't qualify for regular bank loans.

Other members of the new government would be decided soon, after discussions with political parties

and other stakeholders, Abedin said. The president had dissolved Parliament on Tuesday, clearing the way for an interim administration and new elections.

Shahabuddin also ordered the release of opposition leader Khaleda Zia from house arrest, a longtime Hasina rival who was convicted on corruption charges in 2018.

The streets of Dhaka, the capital, were calm, a day after violence swept parts of the country amid Hasina's sudden departure. On Tuesday, jubilant protesters thronged the ousted leader's residence, some posing for selfies with soldiers guarding the building after

Monday's wave of looting.

The Bangladesh Police Association went on strike after police stations and security officials were attacked across the country Monday. The association said “many” officers had been killed but gave no number. Officers would not return to work unless their safety is assured, the association said. It also apologized for police attacks on student protesters, saying officers were “forced to open fire.”

Yunus, who had called Hasina's resignation the country's “second liberation day,” had faced corruption charges during her rule that he derided as

AP PHOTO



Nobel Peace Laureate Muhammad Yunus, Chairman of the Yunus Centre

politically motivated. He could not immediately be reached for comment, but a key organizer of the protests, Nahid Islam, said he had agreed to head the interim administration.

Islam said protesters would propose more names for the Cabinet and suggested that it would be

difficult for those in power to ignore their wishes.

Hasina fled to India by helicopter as protesters defied a military curfew to march on the capital, with thousands eventually storming her residence and other buildings associated with her party and family. **MDT/AP**

USA

Utility's proposal to rat out hidden marijuana operations raises privacy concerns

DAVID SHARP,
BANGOR (MAINE)

OPERATORS of illegal marijuana grow enterprises hidden inside rural homes in Maine don't have to worry much about prying neighbors. But their staggering electric bills may give rise to a new snitch.

An electric utility made an unusual proposal to help law enforcement target these illicit operations, which are being investigated for ties to transnational crime. Critics, however, worry the move would violate customers' privacy.

More than a dozen states that legalized marijuana have seen a spike in illegal marijuana grow operations that utilize massive amounts of electricity. And Maine's Versant Power has been receiving subpoenas — sometimes for 50 locations at a time — from law enforcement, said Arrian Myrick-Stockdell, corporate counsel. It'd be far more efficient, he suggested to utility regulators, to flip the script and allow electric utilities to report their suspicions to law enforcement.

"Versant has a very high success rate in being able to identify these locations, but we have no ability to communicate with law enforcement proactively," Myrick-Stockdell told commissioners.

The proposal, to be deliberated next week by the Maine Public Utilities Commission, is being criticized by consumer privacy advocates and others who think the utility is veering outside its lane.

The nonprofit Electronic Privacy Information Center believes such a regulatory rule would be unconstitutional because the electric utility would be allowed to provide private information about consumers with "no probable cause, no warrant, no judicial review," Alan Butler, the group's executive director, told The Associated Press.

The Washington-based group has never heard of a proposal like this, he said, though federal courts have authorized the sharing of consumer data from so-called

AP PHOTO



"smart" electric meters for the limited purposes of managing the power grid.

Jay Stanley, an American Civil Liberties Union privacy expert, compared a utility combing through customer data to an illegal dragnet. "Utilities should not be doing that. They have a duty of protecting their customers' privacy," he said.

Historically, the courts have given special privacy protections for what happens inside a home.

The U.S. Supreme Court in 2001 ruled that federal agents' use of thermal-imaging equipment without a search warrant to detect heat from marijuana grow lights inside an Oregon man's home was unconstitutional.

The Maine utility regulatory proceeding comes as law enforcement officials target marijuana grow operations in which rural homes are purchased, gutted and transformed into sophisticated, high-yield indoor farms.

All told, 20 states have been dealing with phenomena similar to what's happening in Maine.

The common denominator is that criminals appear to be taking advantage of laws legalizing marijuana in an attempt to fly under the radar to produce marijuana that's sold in states where cannabis is illegal. The FBI and Drug Enforcement Administration are investigating any ties these operations might have to

criminal syndicates including Chinese organized crime.

In Oklahoma, farms, empty nursing homes, bowling alleys and warehouses were transformed into marijuana production operations after voters legalized cannabis for medical use in 2018. Police began cracking down after realizing straw owners in China and Mexico were running many of the licensed operations, said Mark Woodward, spokesperson for the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics.

In Maine, it looks different with purchases of low-price homes in off-the-beaten-path locations, installations of power-hungry grow equipment and upgraded electrical service to support the operations. Police have taken note of that power consumption. At one of the homes busted in Maine, the monthly electric bill grew from about \$300 to nearly \$9,000, according to court documents. There were more than 100 of them at one point.

The grow houses operate according to a similar playbook regarding the kinds of residences used and interior set-ups with powerful lights, climate control and chemicals. However, they're not linked together like a typical franchise arrangement, making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to link them to a single syndicate, Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew Lizotte told The Associated Press.

In Somerset County, Sheriff Dale Lancaster, whose deputies have executed search warrants on 21 marijuana operations, said law enforcement works best with community support, and he described Versant's proposal as a "good first step."

Republican Sen. Susan Collins, who has aggressively pressed the FBI about the illegal marijuana operations, also supports Versant's efforts to be an ally with law enforcement agencies. "Cooperation between Maine's electric companies and law enforcement could be of tremendous help to the county sheriffs and other officials who have been working tirelessly to target these illegal grow operations," she said.

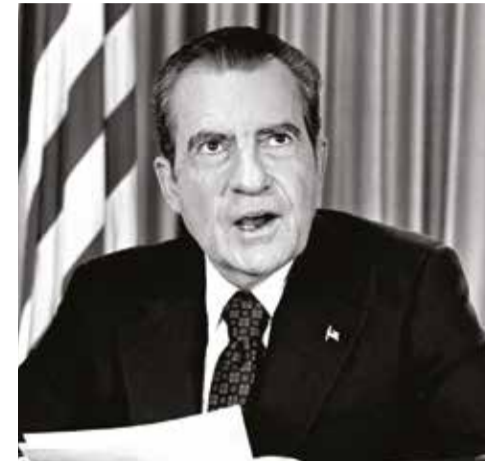
Versant's proposal was discussed by the Maine Public Utilities Commission earlier this year.

Derek Davidson, a member of the commission staff, mused about the possibility of a threshold for reporting electric consumption spikes to police, but noted that there are sometimes legitimate users "who just have astronomical usage."

Mark Morissette from Central Maine Power said it "seems like an eerie line to even consider crossing" and backed his call for caution with an example of a 100-fold increase in electricity consumption after a flood, which necessitated temporary heaters and fans to dry it out. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1974 PRESIDENT NIXON TO RESIGN FROM OFFICE



Richard Nixon has announced he is stepping down as president of the United States - the first man ever to do so.

He has announced his departure in the face of an imminent impeachment trial - and possible removal from office - over the Watergate affair.

The president broke the news of his resignation in a television broadcast from the White House on Thursday at 2100 local time. It will take effect from noon tomorrow.

Mr Nixon, 61, said initially he had believed it was his duty to complete his term of office despite the Watergate charges.

"In the past days, however, it has become evident that I no longer have a strong enough political base in the Congress to justify continuing that effort," he said.

"As president I must put the interests of America first."

Mr Nixon has been charged by the House Judiciary Committee with "high crimes and misdemeanours".

The charges stem from a 1972 break-in at the offices of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate complex.

The break-in, during that year's election campaign, was traced to members of a Nixon-support group, the Committee to Re-elect the President (CREP).

Tape recordings have shown the president subsequently tried to influence the police investigation into the crime.

Mr Nixon is leaving office with more than two years of his second term left to run.

In his address Mr Nixon said he would be succeeded by US vice-president Gerald Ford.

Mr Ford will be sworn in as the 38th president of the United States tomorrow.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Richard Nixon's resignation meant he avoided an impeachment trial and therefore being removed from office.

His successor, President Gerald Ford, issued an unconditional pardon in September 1974 for any offences Mr Nixon might have committed as president, saving him from possible prosecution.

But the five Watergate burglars and two co-plotters - former White House staff G. Gordon Liddy and Howard Hunt - were jailed.

In total 40 government officials were either indicted or jailed.

Richard Nixon eventually re-established himself as a respected statesman. He died in 1994.

In June 2005, former FBI deputy head Mark Felt was revealed to be the anonymous source "Deep Throat", who helped Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein uncover the Watergate affair.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Practice your physical routines. Don't push yourself too hard. Take care with sharp tools. Consider from multiple angles before launching. Slow and steady wins.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Follow your heart. Go for practical values over superficial appearances. Wait for developments; you don't have the full picture. Relax and have fun.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Prioritize home and family. Clean house and clear clutter. Think before you speak. Automatic reactions lead to regrettable outbursts. Disagree respectfully.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Creative thoughts and ideas abound. Capture them on film, paper or another medium. Craft stories and images. Consider words carefully.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Luck hides underneath changes. Discover ways to make money. Spending it comes easier too, so watch out. Fact-check your intuition. Keep a positive balance.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
You're getting stronger. Don't steamroll anyone in your enthusiasm. Sometimes the best action is none. Compromise for a mutually agreeable solution.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Adapt to changes at the top. Avoid loud spaces. Favor peaceful introspection and private productivity. Look back for insight on the road ahead. Walk outdoors.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Coordinate to refine your team strategy. Distractions abound and things may not go as planned. Not everyone likes the situation. Investigate all options together.

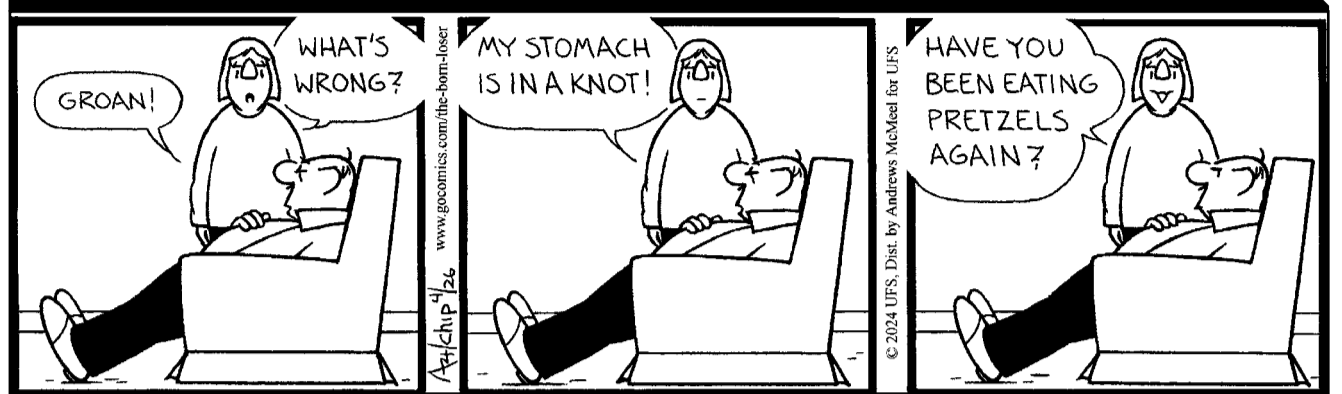
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Take care of business. Things could seem especially dynamic. Monitor changes. Find hidden opportunities. Postpone what you can go for a tempting prize.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Expect travel delays. Plan carefully. You can still explore. Follow a dream. Study a subject of your passion. To learn, go to the source.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Make financial decisions carefully. Not everyone agrees. Don't act without team alignment. Get terms of a deal in writing. Align on the best options first.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Slow down. Let things develop with your partner. Avoid arguments and controversy. Disagreements can spark easily. Share the load. Relax and have fun together.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

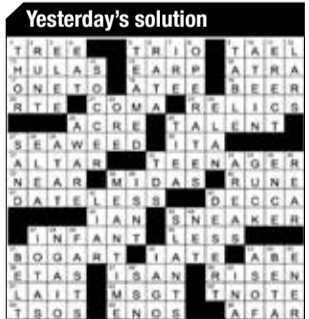
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	24	34	cloudy
Changchun	23	29	rain
Chengdu	26	32	rain
Chongqing	30	40	fine
Fuzhou	28	37	cloudy
Guangzhou	26	37	fine
Guiyang	22	30	cloudy
Haikou	26	35	cloudy
Hangzhou	29	40	fine
Harbin	21	29	cloudy
Hefei	27	38	fine
Nanjing	30	40	cloudy
Shanghai	28	40	rain
Taipei	26	31	rain
Wuhan	29	39	cloudy
Hong Kong	30	34	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	15	21	thunderstorms
Frankfurt	14	26	overcast
Paris	18	28	overcast
London	18	22	cloudy
New York	21	22	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Give it ____; 6- Actress Thurman; 9- Numbers game; 14- Stiller's partner; 15- Doze; 16- On ____-to-know basis; 17- Convert into a fossil; 19- Island in the Bay of Naples; 20- Colo. clock setting; 21- Roman road; 22- Marketing connection; 23- Thick cord; 25- Apple centers; 26- Out, in bed; 29- Farrow and Hamm; 31- Frost's field; 32- Went in; 36- Europe's highest volcano; 37- ICU workers; 38- Suffix with buck; 40- Not blind; 43- Occupied by a metropolis; 45- Egyptian cobras; 46- In ____ (sort of); 47- Skin of the upper part of the head; 50- Memorable times; 51- Sash; 52- Grime; 54- Thrive, in prescriptions; 57- Shaft shot from a bow; 58- Fellow student; 61- Capital of Yemen; 62- CIA predecessor; 63- Components; 64- Abrasive mineral; 65- Not for a Scot; 66- Personal quality of material belonging;

DOWN 1- Kind of radio; 2- Classic cars; 3- Bridge seat; 4- SAT takers; 5- Mai ____; 6- Band together; 7- Labyrinth; 8- Copycat; 9- Milk sugar; 10- Studio sign; 11- Conical shelter; 12- Garr and Hatcher; 13- Sleipnir's rider; 18- Impudent (slang); 23- Label anew; 24- ____ the fields we go...; 25- Siamese, calico, or tabby; 26- Gibbon, e.g.; 27- Drunkards; 28- Director Riefenstahl; 29- Fixes; 30- ____ and outs; 33- Gives a 9.8, say; 34- ____ Brockovich; 35- Female rabbits; 37- Agent, briefly; 39- Keats piece; 41- To midpoint; 42- Recipe amt.; 43- Wagons; 44- This ____ test...; 47- Beat it!; 48- Chili con ____; 49- Bellowing; 50- Wipe out; 51- Manuscript enc.; 52- Pest control brand; 53- "Casablanca" role; 54- Sailors; 55- Novel ending; 56- Take five; 59- Hot tub; 60- Barker and Bell;



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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AD

OLYMPICS 2024

Parisians once scoffed at hosting the games.

JOCELYN NOVECK, PARIS

LIKE most self-respecting Parisians, Mathilde Joannard and Franck Tallieu had been training for the Olympic sport of Olympics-bashing.

Of course the Olympics were going to be a mess, the couple had reasoned when they learned the Games were coming to town. Like so many Parisians, the human resources executives assumed it would be crowded, or beastly hot, or chaotic, or a pain in the derrière to navigate. Or all the above.

So how did they end up dressed in rented "Three Musketeers" costumes with painted-on goatees, waving the tricolor flag gleefully for the cameras at the fencing competition?

They're not really sure.

"We just decided to have fun with it," said Joannard, engaging in some Gallic understatement as the couple enjoyed ice cream pops outside the majestic Grand Palais during a break in fencing on a brilliant summer day. She herself seemed a bit shocked by what she was saying.

"We're really, really enjoying it," she repeated. "I'm so glad we're here."

It seems many Parisians have undergone the same happy metamorphosis. At first pooh-pooing the audacious plan to turn the capital into one big Olympic venue — launched by an even more audacious opening ceremony along the Seine River — many have come to think it was a pretty cool idea after all.

And they're taking it all in. Those who stayed, that is. As for those who left, some are sorry to have missed the fun.

Where's the evidence of fun, you ask? How about a conga line? At beach volleyball, in the absurdly photogenic stadium nestled under the Eiffel Tower, a crowd of volunteers began just such a line Sunday night. A gaggle of fans joined in, following them around an upper tier of the stadium.

How about street dancing? The marquee cycling event a day earlier brought countless Parisians into the streets to cheer riders on, a mini-Tour de France showcasing the glittering capital. To the barricades, Parisians went — setting up

speakers and dancing, even doing the wave with police officers at one spot.

Sure, many international visitors were among them, replacing some of the residents who purposely left early on summer holiday. But there have been countless local fans, displaying French pride with painted flags on their cheeks as they flocked to favored events like judo, featuring French star Teddy Riner, and swimming, where France's hero of these Games, Léon Marchand, was holding court.

If you were around in 1998, you might have recalled a similar mood enveloping the city when France captured its first World Cup. For days afterward, briefcase-toting office workers rode the Metro with the tricolor on their cheeks. One could often hear spontaneous chants of "Et un, et deux, et trois-zéro" — a nod to the 3-0 score against Brazil in the final.

So perhaps it wasn't surprising that at fencing last weekend, the crowd suddenly launched into the very same chant. To one longtime Parisian, that didn't sound like an accident — and not just because these Games have seen a

stellar French performance, with the country's medal haul currently third after the United States and China.

"That 1998 World Cup was when we French realized we could be world champions," said Dan-Antoine Blanc-Shapira, an event planner. "Maybe that's also when we learned as a country that we could pull off something like this."

Blanc-Shapira stayed in Paris for much of the Games. He and his family went to watch women's rugby and track events, and simply wandered the Champs-Élysées, delighted to see the smiling faces on the famous boulevard.

"This may not be the real world right now, but it's a very pleasant one," he said. "Maybe we should do this more often."

Even some of those who've eschewed the often-pricey Olympic competitions — and many Parisians have indeed been priced out — say they've experienced an unexpectedly pleasant, even relaxed feeling in the city.

"It's unusually calm," said writer Cathy Altman Nocquet. She chose not to attend Olympic events, but was delighted to stay in town. "It's

as if the entire city took a pill."

Others noted the contrast between the current mood and the tense atmosphere just weeks earlier, as the country went through elections and political turmoil.

"This is such a nice distraction," said Craig Matasick, a policy analyst who's lived in Paris for 10 years. He and his family left for part of the Games because they thought things would be a mess, but found the city pleasant and much more relaxed than anticipated upon return.

Matasick's family of four has taken advantage of the offerings, visiting the Olympic cauldron in the Tuileries gardens, the Club France fan hangout, table tennis and cycling so far. "This vision of the city as backdrop for the Games could have been a total logistical nightmare," Matasick noted, "but it hasn't been."

Give Elodie Lalouette a medal — this Parisian had faith from the start. Lalouette, who works in communications for a national radio network, applied a year ago to be a volunteer. Now she's taking two weeks' annual leave to work at the field hockey venue.

AD

ACCURATE, TIMELY & COMPETITIVE TRANSLATIONS

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Now, here come the conga lines



From left, Parisians Mathilde Joannard and Franck Tallieu pose with friends Jakub Mroz and Pawel Czechowicz while taking a break during the fencing competition at the 2024 Summer Olympics at the Grand Palais in Paris

"I was sure it would be super," she said during a break this week. "And it has — it's been incredible." Most valuable are the interactions she's had with people from around the world. And, perhaps even more, with fellow Parisians. "They see me on the Metro, and they say 'Salut' and tell me it's great

that I'm doing this," she said. Some who left have had regrets. Teacher Judith Levy surprised herself by watching the competition on TV nonstop for the first few days. Then she had to leave for Italy, a trip booked months in advance. "At the time, I felt like everything

was going to go wrong," she said of her travel plans. "Now I feel like I'm missing the party." Claire Mathisjen, too, has watched it all from afar — on holiday in Brazil. The Paris-based psychologist lengthened her usual August holiday to avoid the Games. But watching for hours on TV, she has

found herself transfixed. And while she isn't necessarily consumed with regret, she does feel something else: pride. "I watched that opening ceremony and truly felt proud to be French, and a Parisian," she said. "We pulled it off!" Jean-Pierre Salson would not

dispute that. What he's discovered, though, is that what's good for the national soul may not be good for the bottom line.

Salson, who owns a clothing store in the tourist-frequented Marais neighborhood, calculated just before the Games opened that business had tanked by 30-40% — a result of Parisians leaving and non-Olympics tourists staying away. He hoped things would improve after the opening ceremony, when security loosened.

Contacted again, he said they had not. Tourists had already spent too much on tickets and such, and weren't focused on clothes.

Still, Salson will take no part in Olympics-bashing.

"I have nothing bad to say, I think it's great," he said of his country's successful Games. "But for business, I think we will have to wait."

He doesn't have long to wait — the Olympics are closing in on their grand finale. For their part, Joannard and Tallieu, the temporary Musketeers, plan to keep enjoying events — including at the Paralympic Games.

The couple are grateful now for a dinner they had sometime before the Games with a few American friends, which helped transform their attitudes.

"We were doing the bashing," says Tallieu. "But they were optimistic. You know what? They were right." **MDT/AP**

AD

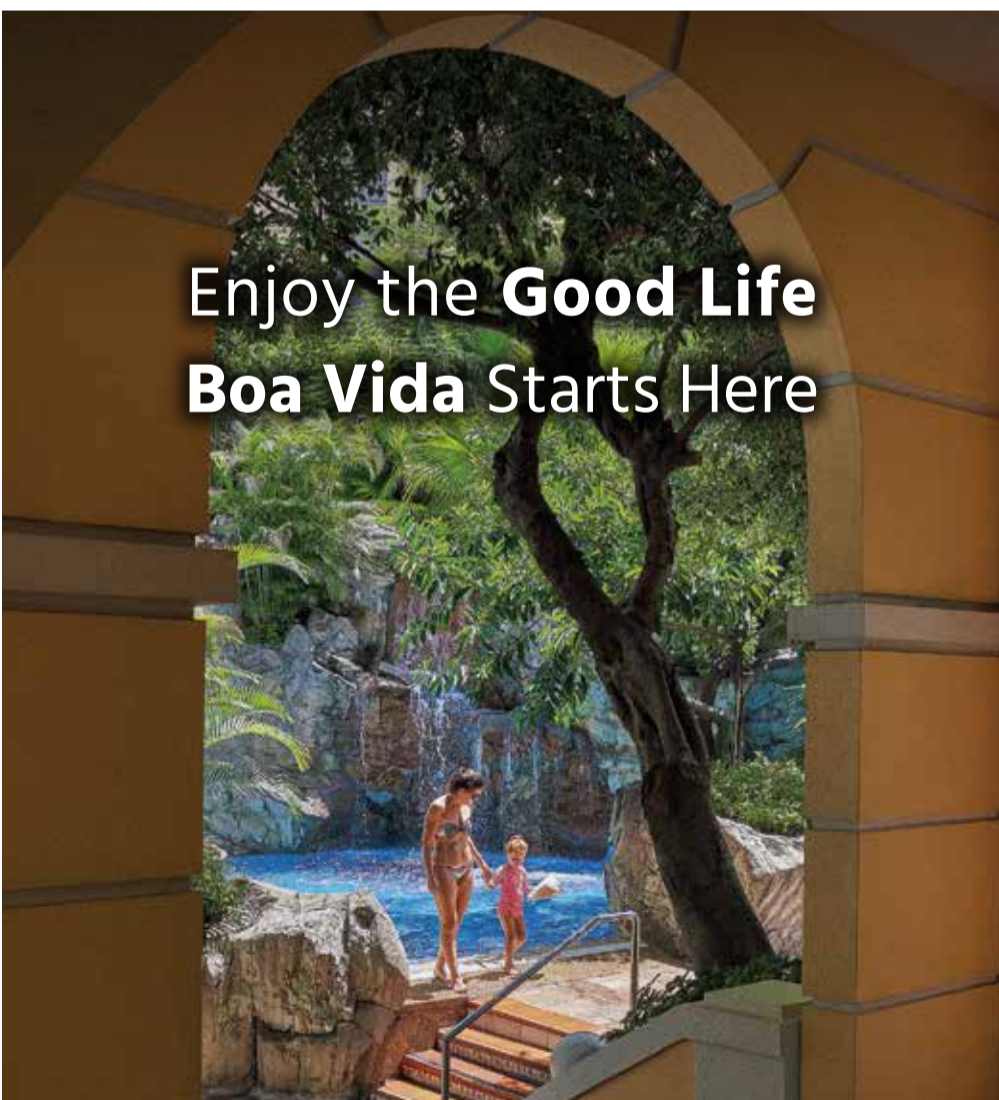


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OPINION

Business Views

Shuli Ren, Bloomberg



CHINA'S HAD ENOUGH OF ITS OWN TOXIC PRICE WARS

China's Politburo, its most powerful political body, recently pledged to boost consumer spending and curb "vicious competition" among businesses. This unusually direct statement reflects growing concerns over intense price wars across various sectors, from bubble teas and electric vehicles to generative AI. Companies are undercutting each other in a bid to attract a consumer base that has become increasingly thrifty amid a prolonged economic downturn. For example, EV maker BYD Co. has cut prices on more than 100 models this year, intensifying a price-cutting trend initiated by Tesla Inc. in late 2022. Manufacturers were offering an average discount of 8.6% in June, according to HSBC Holdings Plc.

Some companies have grown weary of this mentality. German luxury brand Bayerische Motoren Werke AG (BMW) has recently raised prices across its lineup and reduced revenue targets to alleviate sales pressure. This shift suggests that aggressive promotions are harming the premium segment's profitability. Li Auto Inc., a major competitor to Tesla in China, sold a record 51,000 units in July, a 49.4% year-on-year increase, but reported an operating loss in the first quarter.

China's biggest e-commerce companies are also reconsidering their strategies. After declaring victory in the midyear shopping festival with "10 billion yuan subsidy" programs, Bytedance Ltd. and Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. are adjusting their algorithms, which previously favored the lowest-priced sellers. Douyin, the mainland counterpart of TikTok, missed its internal target for gross merchandise value (GMV) partly due to promoting excessively cheap products.

This pervasive discount war is affecting smaller businesses and consumer behavior. Auto dealers, for instance, are reluctant to take inventory due to potential losses. Some Porsche dealers have objected to high sales targets, and China Grand Automobile Services Group Co. reported a first-half net loss of at least 583 million yuan (\$82 million). The company's share price fell below 1 yuan for 20 consecutive trading days by mid-July, triggering a forced delisting.

Small online merchants are also struggling. Big e-commerce platforms, emphasizing low prices, have adopted a "refund only" policy allowing shoppers to get refunds without returning products, leading to predatory behavior from those seeking freebies. Alibaba recently scrapped this feature for its most-valued sellers.

Beijing hopes that reviving consumer spending will boost the economy. The State Council has introduced new plans to encourage people to eat out, travel, and shop. For instance, those replacing conventional cars with EVs can receive a 20,000 yuan cash subsidy per vehicle, double the amount announced three months earlier. However, after a year of relentless discount wars, consumers may expect prices to continue dropping, making cash subsidies less enticing.

This deflationary consumer mindset is a significant challenge for policymakers at the Politburo. Businesses are eager for an end to this intense competition, but it's uncertain if the worst is over, as some market leaders have benefited greatly. BYD's price cuts significantly boosted its EV sales, with the company selling 426,000 units in the second quarter, nearing Tesla's figures. BYD's Chairman Wang Chuan-Fu stated that "competition is the rule of nature."

The ball is now in Beijing's court. President Xi Jinping has considerable power, and his urgent task is to encourage consumer spending. Regulators might label price cuts as dumping, but moving towards a command economy is a daunting prospect, even for Xi. [Abridged]

Courtesy Shuli Ren/Bloomberg

Around 7 in 10 Americans say in the last year extreme heat has had an impact on their electricity bills, ranging from minor to major, and most have seen at least a minor impact on their outdoor activities, according to new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

As tens of millions of Americans swelter through another summer of historic heat waves, the survey's findings reveal how extreme heat is changing people's lives in big and small ways.

The poll found that about 7 in 10 Americans have been personally affected by extremely hot weather or extreme heat waves over the

past five years.

That makes extreme heat a more common experience than other weather events or natural disasters like wildfires, major droughts and hurricanes, which up to one-third of U.S. adults said they've been personally affected by.

Sizable shares of Americans — around 4 in 10 — report that extreme heat has had at least a minor impact on their sleep, pets or exercise routine.

Last year Earth was 2.66 degrees Fahrenheit (1.48 degrees Celsius) warmer than it was before pre-industrial times, according to the European climate agency Copernicus.

AP PHOTO



American pilot Ethan Guo poses for the photographer in Geneva, this week

SEVEN CONTINENTS

TEEN VIES FOR RECORD SOLO FLIGHT TO RAISE MONEY FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH

JAMEY KEATEN, GENEVA

A Chinese American teen is vying to become the youngest person to fly solo to all seven continents in a quest that also aims to drum up donations for research into childhood cancer.

Ethan Guo, who turned 19 last month, began his quest in May in Memphis, Tennessee. He made multiple overnight stops and visited seven countries to get to the Swiss city of Geneva on Tuesday, before jetting off toward Heraklion in Greece.

The plan is to cover 50,000 miles (80,000 kilometers) over 100 days with stops in 60 countries. He hopes attention to the journey will drum up donations and raise up to \$1 million for cancer research, an ambition born of the Stage-4 blood cancer diagnosis for a cousin of his.

That prompted the tousled-haired teen to reach out to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital based in Memphis.

"We came up with the idea of ... how we can work on this together," Guo said,

"how we can make this world a better place."

So far, he has raised about \$20,000, but he's convinced he will draw more donations.

A press handler for Guo showed The Associated Press an email exchange with an official at Guinness World Records Ltd. about the teen's hope to become the youngest person to fly solo to seven continents. The London-based company did not immediately respond to an email from the AP seeking comment.

Guo started learning to fly at age 13, and four years later had his pilot's license, but insurance companies balked at covering a minor for his adventure, so he had to wait. He has clocked 700 flight hours and flown to all of the 48 contiguous states in the U.S.

On the tarmac near Geneva airport, Guo said only about one in 10 of the companies he pitched to become sponsors actually came through.

Logos of companies large and small adorn Guo's modified four-seater Cessna 182. Visitors can track his progress on the website

flightagaincancer.com.

Born in Tianjin, China, and currently living in West Palm Beach, Florida, Guo said he wanted to become a pilot to challenge himself. He foresees a career in business and tech, not aviation.

Guo's parents were worried about his project and actively tried to stop him, forcing him to do it on his own with help from volunteers, sponsors and other supporters, he said.

He understands the risks.

"Through my experiences — like an engine failure on the very beginning of the trip ... I was forced to face the fact that I could die at any point of the trip," he said.

He's made preparations like stocking the plane with cold-weather gear for Antarctica, a survival kit if he gets stranded in the desert, and an inflatable raft if he lands in an ocean.

"I'll be lying to tell you if I wasn't scared," Guo said. "But every day I reaffirm myself. I say 'This is what I believe in.' (...) So I'm going to fight on until the very end." MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Pakistani man alleged to have ties to Iran has been charged in a plot to carry out political assassinations on U.S. soil, including potentially of former President Donald Trump. The case disclosed by the Justice Department yesterday (Macau time) comes two years after officials disrupted a separate scheme that they said was aimed at former Trump administration national security adviser John Bolton. Asif Merchant traveled to New York in June for the purpose of meeting with men he thought he was recruiting to carry out the killings, even paying a \$5,000 advance to two would-be assassins who were actually undercover law enforcement officers, federal officials said.

AP PHOTO



Germany Part of a hotel in a winemaking town on the Mosel River in western Germany collapsed, leaving two people dead and several others trapped in the wreckage, authorities said yesterday. 14 people were in the hotel in Kroev when one story of the building collapsed early yesterday. Police said five were able to get out of the building unhurt because they weren't in the part that collapsed. But others were trapped.

AP PHOTO



UK British police are gearing up for another night of violence amid concerns that far-right groups plan to target as many as 30 locations around the United Kingdom yesterday following a week of rioting and disorder. Authorities are mobilizing about 6,000 specially trained officers to respond to disorder throughout the U.K., and London's Metropolitan Police Service said it would do "everything in our power" to protect the capital.