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AP PHOTO



Pakistan Leaders from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization met yesterday in Islamabad to discuss enhanced cooperation. Russian and Chinese officials agreed to strengthen mutual ties. Pakistan emphasized the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and regional stability, urging Afghanistan to prevent terrorism. The summit reaffirmed support for China's Belt and Road initiative.

Japan-France Sea Shepherd founder Paul Watson yesterday requested political asylum in France to avoid extradition to Japan. Watson was arrested after an Interpol request from Japan for his anti-whaling activities. Sea Shepherd France supports the request, emphasizing Watson's commitment to environmental advocacy and ocean conservation.

AP PHOTO



India Kashmir held its first local election since the region's special status was revoked. National Conference leader Omar Abdullah was sworn in yesterday as chief minister. Despite winning the most seats, the new government remains largely powerless, with Kashmir continuing to be under New Delhi's direct control.

AP PHOTO



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy unveiled yesterday [Macau time] his victory plan, emphasizing NATO membership and justice in any future negotiations with Russia. Western partners are pressuring for negotiations, while Zelenskyy rejected territorial compromises. The plan aims to strengthen Ukraine's position in ongoing and future peace efforts.

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AP PHOTO



BUSINESS COMMUNITY REACTS TO SAM HOU FAI'S ELECTION

NADIA SHAW

The election of Sam Hou Fai as Chief Executive (CE) has stirred a mix of optimism and skepticism among local business leaders and expatriates.

With a sweeping victory, securing 394 of 400 votes from the Election Committee, Hou is set to become the first leader born in mainland China, marking a significant shift in the region's governance.

In conversations with prominent figures from various chambers of commerce and the expat community, sentiments about Hou's leadership are largely hopeful.

Rutger Verschuren, Chairman of the France Macau Chamber of Commerce, expressed confidence in Sam's ability to address pressing issues.

"In a recent dialogue with Mr. Sam, we were impressed by his keen interest in addressing our concerns," Verschuren said.

Sam emphasized the need for systematic improvements in human resources policies and government efficiencies to attract foreign investment while support-

ing local businesses.

"His commitment to fast-tracking economic diversification and integration with the mainland is promising for Macau's development within the Greater Bay Area while protecting local business and residents' interests," Verschuren said.

Former International Legal Affairs Bureau head and Gaming Law Commissioner Jorge Costa Oliveira echoed these sentiments, highlighting Sam's integrity and intelligence as key indicators for his administration.

"There are great expectations as regards Sam Hou Fai's mandate as Chief Executive," Oliveira said. He noted diversifying Macau's economy is crucial, suggesting initiatives to promote Macau as a leisure and entertainment hub across Asia.

President of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Howard Stribbell, expressed enthusiasm about the future of Macau under the new administration.

"This is an exciting time for Macau's future development," he said, emphasizing the administration's commitment to enhancing the lives of residents, particularly

those who are less fortunate.

He said the focus on improving living conditions and encouraging economic diversity are not mutually exclusive; rather, they work in tandem. "When the overall economy of Macau improves, both Macau as a SAR and its residents benefit," he explained.

The Canadian Chamber president highlighted the importance of talent acquisition and capacity building in the workforce, asserting that "Macau is poised to develop at an incredible speed" and should seek additional talent while continuously upgrading the skills of its resident workforce.

He said that external entities like the Canadian Chamber serve as vital conduits for fostering productive relationships between Macau and Canada, which can further enhance economic collaboration.

Rui Pedro Cunha, president of the Macau European Chamber of Commerce (MECC), commented that whilst we would need to see the composition of the new government to project the level of continuity and change, the future Chief Executive's electoral campaign and announcements

have created the expectation that he would institutionalize regular channels of consultation with citizens from all sectors to obtain timely feedback and inform government decision-making.

He remarked that "a critical stage has been reached by small and medium-sized enterprises that do not directly benefit from tourism, and the simplification and acceleration of the licensing process for new businesses is essential," adding that he also believes that it'd be important, "to reach more agreements to avoid double taxation to attract multinational companies and skilled professionals, which would increase employment and further professional development."

MECC president believes that Macau should "take better advantage of the huge market in the Greater Bay Area." And that "It is also in Macau's interest to open up more to the outside world and enhance its role as a platform between China and the world that has been a key part of its history."

"It will be up to the government to create the conditions to facilitate the establishment of new industries. For example, ensuring

the availability of workers with the requisite skills, knowledge, and experience by lining up talent attraction, industrial development, and education; a joined-up approach between government departments and the legislative assembly in law-making; modernizing the legal framework to remove inconsistencies and anachronisms; more agreements to avoid double taxation and government investment funds to guide capital into the new sectors, etc. The private sector then needs to take the initiative by taking advantage of these conditions". "All this takes time, but the sooner we start, the better."

Lawyer and Political Scientist Sérgio de Almeida Correia was more cautious, reflecting on past disappointments with previous administrations.

"I don't have high hopes for the future Chief Executive because we've all had enough disappointments," he said. Yet, he acknowledged that Sam's background could lead to better governance. "He is undoubtedly better prepared than his predecessors," he added, emphasizing the need for reform in public administration.

The challenges ahead for the new CE are significant. With Macau heavily reliant on gambling revenue, diversifying its economy remains a top priority.

Analysts predict that while Sam aims to enhance tourism and explore sectors like traditional Chinese medicine and finance, the gambling industry will continue to play a pivotal role in funding public welfare.

Local businesses have felt the pinch as residents increasingly shop across the border in Zhuhai for better prices and variety.

As Correia noted, creating a robust legal framework to attract financial entities is essential for fostering economic growth. He also proposed cultural initiatives, such as establishing a contemporary art museum akin to the Guggenheim in Bilbao, to draw international tourists.

As Sam prepares to take office in December, local leaders are hopeful yet wary about his ability to navigate these complexities. The overarching sentiment remains one of cautious optimism as Macau embarks on this new chapter under his leadership.

"Let's grasp the opportunities and meet the challenges," Sam said during his acceptance speech, signaling his commitment to serve a city he deeply loves. Only time will tell if he can transform these aspirations into reality for Macau's diverse community.

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RENATO MARQUES



Illegal gaming law passed on its final reading

RENATO MARQUES

THE Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday unanimously voted to approve the new illegal gaming law.

The new bill, one of several new gaming industry-related laws approved in recent years, will criminalize some gaming-related activities, such as illegal currency exchange, and penalize all activities related to side and parallel betting.

Second Standing Committee AL president Chan Chak Mou said the new law unifies the

treatment for the cases of illegal gambling activities, whether these occur inside or outside the casinos, something that did not happen in the previous law.

Crimes related to parallel betting and side betting are also specifically targeted in this new law.

The legislators also focused on online gaming activities, with Chan noting there was no significant change between the new law and the previous law.

But Chan noted the new law, taking into account developments in the industry, promotes legislative change in

this area.

One of the big amendments to the final version from the government side was about illegal currency exchange for gambling, an activity now considered a crime whether it occurs in or out of the casinos.

Chan said the bill penalizes those who engage in such activities and not casino patrons.

Several new and stricter rules targeted money loans for gambling.

Almost all lawmakers approved the law's final version without any discussion or debate.

Lawmaker Ron Lam, howe-

ver, questioned the government on the new rules for the exploitation of lotteries, an activity that now carries a penalty of two years' imprisonment.

Lam was concerned that, in Macau, several stores sell the Hong Kong Lottery – Mark 6, a taboo topic over many years and one Lam wanted to see finally resolved.

In response, the Secretary for Administration and Justice, André Cheong, said the law must apply to all forms of lotteries from abroad or some that potentially someone could create locally, noting the law targets

the commercial exploitation of this activity and not cases when “a friend asks another friend to help him to buy a Mark 6.”

Lam was unconvinced and requested the article to be voted in separately.

The lawmaker wanted the government to make a clear decision and eliminate the sale of the Hong Kong Lottery in Macau to avoid people getting entangled in legal limbo.

Two other bills passed their final reading during the session: one about the “Electronization of the services of land and commercial registries and notaries” and another about amendments to the Civil Procedure Code for eviction orders and procedures.

KOU HOI IN WARNS OF THE HERCULEAN TASKS AHEAD

The AL resumed its activities yesterday after the legislative holidays that took place from Aug. 15 to Oct. 15.

In the opening remarks, President Kou Hoi In warned lawmakers of the “complexity of the year ahead in legal workload.”

Kou said there are currently 15 bills for lawmakers to address, plus “an uncertain number of others the new government will potentially propose for review over this legislative year.”

Kou noted that 2025 is an AL election year, which means any bills not finalized within the AL term that ends August 15, 2025, will be dropped as, by law, there cannot be legal work and amendments moving across different terms.

Lucky 7 new side bets to mirror Singapore's success

VICTORIA CHAN

NEW baccarat side bets called “Lucky 7” and “Super Lucky 7” have debuted in Macau casinos, with industry experts anticipating the potential for these offerings to mirror the success of Singapore's popular “Dragon Tiger” variant.

During the October Golden Week festivities in China, GGRAsia observed the introduction of these ‘7s’ bets in Macau's gaming landscape, marking a significant shift in the city's traditional baccarat offerings.

By Oct. 3, these innovative side bets had permeated most casino establishments, with nota-



ble exceptions in the Cotai casinos under Sands China Ltd., such as the Venetian Macao and the

Londoner Macao.

Industry sources have revealed the ‘7s’ bets originated in Singapore's

‘Dragon Tiger’ baccarat game, which shares similar game rules but with slight differences

in payouts compared to the Macau version.

The “Dragon Tiger” game has been a hit in the Singapore market, with the “Tiger Baccarat” game at Marina Bay Sands serving as its foundation.

While the new side bets in Macau share similarities with the renowned “Dragon Tiger,” they offer unique payout structures, creating a fresh dynamic for gamers.

Singapore-based industry commentator Daniel Cheng said the appeal of these new-to-market side bets lies in their perceived ability to offer players a better chance of winning, even though the mathematical house edge may increase.

“It's the perception of increased success that drives engagement,” he said.

Citigroup's analysts said the house advantage of the ‘7s’ side bets in Macau is in the mid- to high- teens, more favorable for the casinos compared to the ‘Small 6/Big 6’ side bets launched in May this year.

This, along with the potential for high payouts of up to 100-to-1, is expected to contribute to the new side bets' popularity among players.

Experts believe the new bets could boost player engagement and revenues if they mirror “Dragon Tiger's” success in Singapore.

DSEC ENHANCES PUBLIC ACCESS TO 'GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL DATA'

The Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) has launched a new Government Statistical Data service on the Macao One Account platform, effective yesterday, Oct. 16. This initiative aims to improve access to official statistical data for residents. The service offers three categories of data: Main Indicators, Statistical Publications, and Statistical Computation Maps. Users can subscribe to specific data sets, which will be automatically updated for convenience. Additionally, the platform allows seamless integration with the DSEC website and mobile app, enhancing user experience by synchronizing subscribed data across all platforms. DSEC continues its commitment to optimizing statistical services for the public.

VEHICLE QUOTA ALLOCATION CONTINUES FOR HONG KONG CROSSING

The government has resumed the allocation of 980 regular quotas for private vehicles traveling between Macau and Hong Kong, effective today. This phase includes 810 quotas for private entities and 170 for commercial use, following a lottery-based sorting system established earlier this year. Eligible applicants can apply online from Oct. 16 to Jan. 24 next year. The Traffic Affairs Bureau (DSAT) emphasizes the importance of timely submissions to avoid waiving quotas. All relevant details are available on the DSAT website, where applicants will receive notifications via SMS about their application status.

HALFTONE CALLS FOR MEMBERS' WORKS FOR ANNUAL EXHIBITION

The Halftone Association, a non-profit cultural association for photography, will organize its second annual photographic exhibition in December. The association is calling on its members to submit photographic works for this event. All Halftone members can participate by submitting one single, framed, photographic work. The "Open Call" for this exhibition continues until Nov. 1, with the exhibition to take place from Dec. 2 to 14 at the Rui Cunha Foundation gallery. As in the previous edition, no specific theme has been set, and any photographic genre is welcome. Interested parties should contact the association through its usual contacts.

LAWMAKER ZHENG: MEASURES TO BOOST OLD NEIGHBORHOODS FAILING

RENATO MARQUES

GOVERNMENT measures to revitalize the economy of community neighborhoods are not working as they should, lawmaker Zheng Anting said yesterday in a speech at the Legislative Assembly (AL).

Zheng noted that while Macau saw an incredible influx of visitors over the Golden Week of the National Day Holidays, this inflow, as on previous occasions, had only caused problems in the local public transport network and brought little benefit to local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the old neighborhoods.

The lawmaker suggested the government amend its policies and measures.

"Additional transit facilities must be improved at the most popular tourist attractions, and the difficulty of taking a taxi must be solved," he said.

"There are no bus routes to connect some tourist attractions, and it is difficult to get a taxi, so visitors can only get around on foot, which affects their experience and results in crowds."

"The government must, in the short term, create special bus routes in the most visited tourist spots and increase the frequency of routes during holidays, to transport visitors



'point to point,' thus allowing greater fluidity in visit itineraries."

Another aspect that needs improvement is the enforcement of online taxi-hailing services as well as an improved radio taxis service "to ensure better quality transport for citizens and tourists."

Zheng also wanted the government to "create more modern commercial elements in residential areas, to attract more tourists."

He noted the exaggerated agglomeration of tourists in just one or two popular areas.

Last but not least, the same lawmaker called for the government to seriously evaluate the effects of the consumption incentive measures launched.

The so-called "Consumption Carnivals" that attribute bonuses to buyers while acquiring products and services are having a disastrous effect.

"According to some citizens, there was an unreasona-

ble increase in prices in some stores after the launch of the consumption benefit, and when prices rise, they rarely fall again, which can cause an economic burden in the long term," Zheng said.

He hopes the government can supervise the situation more rigorously and create an evaluation system for stores that play by the rules, distinguishing them from others that take advantage of these benefits to exploit the consumers.

Discounted flights lure international tourists

VICTORIA CHAN

MACAU'S initiatives to boost international visitation have paid dividends, with bookings for discounted flights tailored to global tourists surpassing 70,000 by Q2 of 2024.

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) said the government has allocated MOP235 million this year to support these efforts, which include collaborations with Air Macau and other international airlines.

This has facilitated ticket discounts, buy-one-get-one-free offers, and discounts on multi-destination tickets for international flights from markets



like Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, South Korea, and North America.

These travel incentives are part of the government's broader strategy to attract more international visitors to the city.

Besides the special airfare deals, the MGTO has also extended offers on cross-border transportation, hotel accommo-

dation, dining, entertainment, and show tickets.

"To expand the high-value tourist segment and entice more visitors with spending potential to explore Macau, the MGTO will persist in actively exploring both domestic and international tourist source markets," the tourism office said.

The results are already evident. Initial

data shows Macau saw about 25.94 million visitors in the first nine months of the year, a 30.2% increase compared to the same period last year.

This represents a rebound to 85.9% of pre-pandemic levels in 2019.

There were nearly 1.68 million international travelers during this time frame, a 95.2% increase

year-on-year, though still only 70.8% of the international visitor number from the same period in 2019.

The MGTO also highlighted the success of travel roadshows held in six major overseas tourist markets, which attracted over 880,000 attendees and 870 travel industry operators.

The same tourism authorities said it is undertaking wide-ranging efforts to further promote Macau's tourism offerings and accelerate the recovery of the tourism sector, including extensive online and offline advertising, exhibiting at international travel expos, roadshows, seminars, and familiarization trips.

Sands China: leading the way in sustainability and corporate responsibility

SANDS China Ltd. has emerged as a beacon of corporate responsibility and sustainable development over the last two decades.

The company has not only established itself as a leader in the integrated resort industry but has also made significant strides in supporting the local community and fostering sustainable practices.

This year, the gaming operator had a remarkable achievement of earning Top 1% rankings in both the China and Global editions of the S&P Global Sustainability Yearbook 2024.

This prestigious recognition reflects its unwavering commitment to excellence in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices.

At Sands China, the group believes in making a positive impact through its three pillars of corporate responsibility: People, Community, and Planet.

With the dedicated efforts of its 26,000 team members and valued community partners, the gaming operator is the only company in the Casinos & Gaming industry to achieve this significant distinction from S&P Global.

Sands China has been a cornerstone of Macau's workforce development, standing tall as the city's largest private employer, having catalyzed the local tourism industry by creating more than 1,400 diverse job types and providing over 90,000 employment opportunities for Macau residents.

SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Sands China's commitment to community support is evident in its long-standing partnership with Caritas Macau.

Pun Chi Meng, Secretary-General of Caritas Macau, emphasizes the company's role in providing essential resources.

"Sands China has always shouldered its corporate social responsibility and given back to the community," he states. Their extensive volunteer efforts have been crucial in supporting various social enterprises, including Caritas.

Reflecting on a significant moment, Pun recalls how Sands China responded during Typhoon Hato in 2017: "When the typhoon hit Macau, many of our service vehicles were flooded and ruined. Sands China immediately donated to Caritas Macau and even lent us their vehicles and drivers." This generous act allowed Caritas to maintain vital services for patients in need, showcasing Sands China's unwavering commitment to community welfare.



Pun expresses gratitude for the ongoing support: "I hope that Sands China can continue to support Caritas Macau and other social enterprises, thereby providing loving help in times of need." This commitment fosters awareness of disadvantaged groups and promotes a harmonious community.

CARING FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Sands China's corporate social responsibility extends far beyond its properties.

The company actively engages in charity work and has organized or participated in more than 650 volunteer activities over the years to help address the needs of disadvantaged groups.

Through partnerships with local organizations and educational institutions, Sands China is making a significant impact on both the community and the environment. In one of its initiatives, the company helps fast-track nonprofit organizations toward the next stage in their evolution through a unique program, the Sands Cares Accelerator.

Joe Chan, from the small-scale environmental organization Green Future, speaks passionately about the partnership with the company.

"We are honoured to be a partner in the Sands Cares Accelerator program. I would like to thank Sands China for providing various substantive assistance," he states.

This collaboration has been pivotal in establishing a resource-recycling enterprise and launching various recycling programs, benefiting environmental protection efforts across the region.

Chan recalls a memorable project that highlights Sands China's commitment: "During a recycling promotional video shoot in a very crowded location, Sands China helped to contact its sources and provided many technical suggestions, which made the shoot a success."

NURTURING LOCAL TALENT

Sands China is dedicated to nurturing local talent. Matthew T. Liu, PhD, from the University of Macau, emphasizes the impact of the "Professional Diploma in Management Studies for Sands China" program. "Taking part in this program is beneficial to staff career development in many ways," he notes. The course is designed to enhance management skills across various critical topics, including innovation, finance, and project management.

Liu explains the broader implications of this education: "These skills not only help staff perform well in their roles but also lay a solid foundation for career development." By welcoming employees without university diplomas, Sands China is opening doors for personal growth and professional advancement.

The collaboration between Sands China and the University of Macau has spanned over a decade, focusing on continuous improvement. "We discuss students' feedback and up-to-date development trends every year," Liu shares, highlighting the adaptive nature of the curriculum.

Recent additions include digital management and cross-cultural communication, ensuring that employees are equipped to thrive in a diverse environment.

BOOSTING SOCIAL IMPACT

The company has partnered with Clean the World to create impactful hygiene initiatives. "We are deeply grateful for Sands China's support of Clean the World and applaud their leadership in giving back to underserved communities," says Shawn Seipier, founder and CEO of Clean the World.

Since 2014, Sands China has

assembled an impressive 356,000 hygiene kits, which have been distributed to schools, elderly centers, and various charities.

This initiative not only addresses immediate health needs but also transforms waste into valuable resources. "Their commitment has enabled us to recycle soap that would otherwise end up in landfills," the representative shares, highlighting the significant social impact of these efforts.

IMPRESSIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

Workforce Development: In 2023, Sands China invested an impressive 2.33 million hours in workforce training, showcasing its commitment to nurturing talent.

Environmental Stewardship: The company achieved a 17.5% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions ahead of schedule, highlighting its proactive approach to environmental conservation.

Community Engagement: The Sands Cares Ambassadors, the company's volunteer team, have contributed over 310,000 hours of community service, exemplifying Sands China's dedication to social responsibility.



MIF 2024 LAUNCHES WITH RECORD PARTICIPATION

NADIA SHAW

THE 29th Macao International Trade and Investment Fair (MIF) and the Macao Franchise Expo (MFE) kicked off yesterday at the Cotai Expo in the Venetian Macao, attracting over 1,300 exhibitors from various regions.

Open to trade visitors yesterday (Oct 16), the event will welcome the public from Oct. 17 to 19.

This year's fairs are themed "Economic Diversification and Development Opportunities" for MIF and "Brands Gathering with Business Opportunities" for MFE, aiming to foster collaboration and innovation in the region.

The opening ceremony featured notable attendees such as Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, who in his address emphasized the fairs' significance for local businesses, sta-

ting, "These events are crucial for connecting local businesses with international markets."

Vincent U, President of the Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), said this year's MIF includes a record 195 exhibitors from the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA).

"We aim to create a more effective platform for collaboration,"

U said, noting that extending the duration of the fair would facilitate deeper discussions among participants.

Spanning 38,000 square meters across six exhibition halls, this year's fair features ten distinct zones.

A highlight is a new smart exhibition area designed to integrate technology into various industries.

U noted the importance of exhibitors from Portuguese-speaking countries: "This year, we have 183 exhibitors from these countries, reflecting our commitment to fostering these important connections."

The MFE also celebrated its sixth inauguration ceremony yesterday.

Ian Man Wong, President of the Directors Board of the Macao Chain Stores and Franchise Association, underscored the role of franchise models in expanding local businesses.

"Our priority is to assist local enterprises in developing overseas through chain franchises," Wong said, adding that such initiatives are vital for enhancing the competitiveness of Macau's small- and medium-sized enterprises.

In addition to exhibitions, over 80 trade promotion sessions are scheduled throughout the fair's

duration. These sessions aim to facilitate business matching and investment opportunities across various sectors including technology, finance, and tourism.

This year's MIF will feature Shenzhen as the Partner City, hosting the "Shenzhen Pavilion."

Under the themes "Mountain-Sea Vistas" and "City of Innovation," the pavilion will showcase over 40 leading enterprises in innovative technology, cultural tourism, and creative industries.

Its objectives include enhancing industrial collaboration between Shenzhen and Macau while deepening economic ties.

The pavilion will span over 400 square meters and consist of three thematic zones: Urban Image and Cultural Tourism, Technological Innovation, and Healthy Life—alongside a functional zone for business promotions.

The Urban Image and Cultural Tourism Zone will host the "2024 China (Shenzhen) ICIF-Macao Expo," providing an immersive experience showcasing Shenzhen's cultural strengths.

The Technological Innovation Zone will highlight cutting-edge advancements from Shenzhen enterprises, including innovations like holographic screens and drones.

Fire services see surge in calls

THE Fire Services Bureau's (CB) firefighting operations rose 7.42% from January to September compared to the same period last year, statistics show.

The CB responded to 680 firefighting operations from January to September, a 7.42% increase compared to the same period last year.

Most of these incidents,

554 cases or 81.47%, were extinguished without using hoses.

The leading causes of fires were stoves left unattended, electrical short-circuits, burning incense or candles, and flames not fully extinguished. These types of fires accounted for 452 cases or 66.47% of the total.

Simultaneously, the



bureau recorded a surge in ambulance deployment, which rose by

2,131 to 34,124 cases.

This increase was primarily driven by a rise

in minor health complaints, such as dizziness, headaches, and mild indispositions.

The most common issues addressed by emergency medical services included dizziness, abdominal discomfort, fever, and bruises, comprising 53.71% of all ambulance callouts.

The CB has conducted 12,236 inspections in 5,156 buildings, involving 54,598 residents.

By September, where warnings had gone

unheeded or where situations had been deemed serious, 32 administrative sanction procedures had been implemented.

Since the promulgation of a new fire prevention law about three years ago, 66 cases have been finalized, mainly involving objects left in escape routes or motorcycles parked in no-parking areas. Nine other sanction procedures were also opened.

VC

CORPORATE BITS

CESL Asia showcases AI-driven sustainable solutions at MIF



CESL Asia is participating in the 29th Macao International Trade and Investment Fair (MIF), where it is presenting AI-driven digital solutions aimed at enhancing sustainability in operations and construction management, according to a press release, according to a press release distributed yesterday by the Macau-based company. CESL Asia will showcase four key products: ORTUX, ACCEN-

TAAI, OSMOS, and NOVADE.

ORTUX, developed with a local technology partner, is a platform for managing people, assets, and resources. It aims "to improve operational efficiency by over 35% and reduce facility maintenance costs by up to 35%" through AI-based strategies. ACCENTA AI, developed with the EREN Group, optimizes energy consumption in buildings, reducing

carbon emissions by up to 95% and cutting energy use by up to 80%, the statement reads.

OSMOS, also from EREN Group, uses data-driven maintenance strategies to extend the lifespan of infrastructure, while NOVADE digitizes construction site processes, enhancing productivity and safety. Already established in regions such as Singapore and Hong Kong, NOVADE is designed to streamline maintenance management and reduce safety compliance time by 50%.

CESL Asia's participation at MIF also "underscores its commitment to developing local talent and strengthening Macau's technology sector." Visitors are invited to explore these innovations at booth M38, the company said.

Sands Resorts wins Best Integrated Resort Award



Sands Resorts Macao has been named "Best Integrated Resort (Asia Pacific)" at the Travel Weekly Asia Readers' Choice Awards 2024. This recognition highlights the resort's role as a leader in the region's travel and leisure industry, known for its extensive range of guest experiences. Sands China Ltd (SCL) said in a statement.

Stephanie Tanpure, Vice President of Sales at SCL, said, "We are honoured to be recognised once again by Travel Weekly Asia. This award underscores our team's dedication to delivering unmatched luxury, entertainment, and relaxation to our guests." She added that Sands Resorts Macao will continue to contribute to raising Macau's

profile as a global tourism hub.

According to the press release, Sands Resorts Macao includes The Venetian, The Parisian, and The Londoner, offering ten international hotel brands, over 150 restaurants, and duty-free shopping at 850 stores. The resort complex also features world-class entertainment and extensive meeting and exhibition spaces.

The Travel Weekly Asia Readers' Choice Awards celebrate excellence in the travel industry, with winners selected by travel professionals and readers of the publication. Sands Resorts Macao "continues to enhance its reputation as a top destination" for both business and leisure travellers.

DIRE STRAIT

Xi makes rare visit to province facing Taiwan following war exercises

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping made a rare visit to a province facing Taiwan following military exercises that mobilized China's navy, air force, missile force and land troops to simulate a blockade of the self-governing island that is Chinese territory and Beijing threatens to annex by force.

Xi did not comment on the military exercises during his visit to Fujian province, according to the official Xinhua News Agency, but his visit came on the heels of China's dispatch of a record 125 aircraft, as well as its Liaoning aircraft carrier and ships, in large-scale military exercises surrounding Taiwan and its outlying islands Monday.

According to state broadcaster CCTV, Xi inspected Dongshan county in Fujian on Tuesday afternoon.

The Taiwan-facing island county has served as a regular



base for PLA exercises in the past. According to the CCTV report yesterday, Xi inspected

work on rural revitalisation, inheriting the Communist Party's revolutionary tradition and

protecting cultural heritage.

Xi has largely avoided public appearances and foreign travel

over the past year, but bringing Taiwan under Beijing's control remains a priority for his administration as head of the ruling Communist Party and its military, the People's Liberation Army.

Taiwan's leader Lai Ching-te has been vociferously criticized by Beijing for rejecting the position that Taiwan is a part of China.

The drills came four days after Taiwan celebrated the founding of its government on its "National Day," when Lai Ching-te said in a speech that China has no right to represent Taiwan and declared his commitment to "resist annexation or encroachment."

Taiwan split away in 1949 when Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists fled to the island as Mao Zedong's Communists defeated them in a civil war and took power. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

Lee cuts liquor tax in an effort to reignite its nightlife industry

KANIS LEUNG,
HONG KONG

HONG Kong's leader announced a cut in liquor taxes yesterday, in a bid to revive the Asian financial hub's reputation as a travel destination with a vibrant nightlife and dining scene.

After fulfilling Beijing's long-standing imperative to enact a homegrown national security law, which has furthered concerns about the curtailing of civil liberties in the city, Chief Executive John Lee now faces challenges with economic competitiveness against regional rivals like Singapore, Japan and mainland Chinese metropolises.

Changes in residents' lifestyles and a wave of middle-class emigration during the COVID-19 pandemic have dampened local spending. Many residents now prefer to spend their weekends in mainland China, attracted by its lower prices and a wider variety of entertainment options. Meanwhile, visitors from

the mainland are spending less in the city than before.

Vacant shops are commonly seen in the city's most popular shopping districts, and revenue at the city's bars was down about 28% in the first half of 2024 from the same period in 2019, preliminary official data showed.

In his annual policy address, Lee said the duty rate for spirits with an import price of more than 200 Hong Kong dollars (about \$26) would be slashed from 100% to 10% for the portion above that price starting yesterday. He said he hoped it would foster the logistics, storage, tourism and high-end dining industries.

The government previously told lawmakers that after wine duties were abolished in 2008, imports jumped 80% in a year and the city welcomed hundreds of new wine-related businesses.

Lee highlighted the city's various global rankings near the end of his speech at the legislature, but said



past performance does not guarantee future success.

"We must remain confident in ourselves and uphold our morale, standing firm against any efforts to downplay our success story," he said.

Lee, a former security chief handpicked by Beijing to lead Hong Kong, pushed through the new security law in March. Critics fear the law will further erode the civil liberties promised to the former British colony when it returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

That law follows similar national legislation Beijing imposed in 2020 to quell huge anti-government pro-

tests. Since that law took effect, many of the city's leading activists have been prosecuted, forced into self-exile or silenced. The Hong Kong government said the security laws are necessary for the city's stability.

But in the wake of such dramatic political changes, many middle-class families and young professionals have emigrated to Britain, Canada, Taiwan and the United States.

To attract more wealthy migrants, Lee revised a plan that awards residency to applicants who invest a minimum of 30 million Hong Kong dollars (\$3.9 million) in some types of assets.

Starting yesterday, purchases of homes valued at 50 million Hong Kong dollars (\$6.4 million) or more can count toward up to a third of the requirement, he said.

Simon Lee, an adjunct faculty member in finance at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen, said slashing taxes on liquor will help stimulate trades of spirits. But he added that the impact on tourism and bar businesses isn't expected to be significant because the numbers of those consuming strong alcohol may be limited.

Lee, the city's leader, also pledged to turn the city into an international hub for post-secondary education by offering scholarships to overseas students, and promised moves to develop the "silver economy" and "low-altitude economy" — Beijing's buzzwords for markets like elderly care, private aviation and drones. He also announced plans to build an international gold trading market and create a "new commodity trading ecosystem."

Lee also proposed to regulate the city's subdivided flats, which are notorious for their tiny size and poor living conditions but provide a relatively affordable housing option in one of the world's most expensive

housing markets.

Some 110,000 households live in such homes, and one of Beijing's top officials for Hong Kong affairs has called for Lee's government to abolish them.

Lee said owners of subsidized flats must ensure each home has windows, an individual toilet and a minimum floor area of 8 square meters (86 square feet) after a grace period.

Lo Kin-hei, chairman of the Democratic Party, one of the city's few remaining pro-democracy parties, expressed concerns about the impact of the new rules, saying it could force people living in larger but windowless homes to move to smaller flats with windows.

"Can the standards directly translate into improvements in the lives of residents who reside there?" he said.

Hours before Lee's speech, a small group of activists from the League of Social Democrats, another pro-democracy party, held a tiny demonstration outside the government headquarters. They called for universal suffrage for chief executive elections and a retirement pension scheme.

"Return to democracy, improve people's livelihood," they chanted. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



IEA REPORT

The world will be fueled by electricity but more clean energy is needed

TAIWO ADEBAYO, MDT/AP

THE world is set to make abundant energy by the second half of the decade as the production of batteries and solar panels surges — but there'll also be an excess of planet-warming fossil fuels, a report released yesterday by the International Energy Agency said.

"We're now moving at speed into the Age of Electricity," IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol said in a press statement marking the release of the annual World Energy Outlook. Energy worldwide will "increasingly be based on clean sources of electricity," he said.

But the report also notes that the world is still way off what's needed to cap warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial times — the limit set in the Paris Agreement — because emissions would decline too slowly. It expects demand for oil and gas to peak later this decade and puts the world on pace to hit 2.4 degrees (4.3 Fahrenheit) of warming.

China in particular — the world's current biggest emitter of greenhouse gases but also the main manufacturer of solar panels and batteries — is driving global energy trends, the report said.

In recent years, China has accounted for most of the growth in oil demand, but electric vehicles now make up 40% of new sales of cars there, and 20% of sales globally, putting major oil and gas producers "in a bind."

The report indicates that China's emissions of planet-warming gases may peak by 2025, but "given the changes underway in China we think that might be a bit pessimistic," said Bill Hare, CEO of Climate Analytics.

Hare said "there's every chance" China's emissions have already peaked in 2023, but more data is needed to be sure.

China already accounts for half the world's electric cars on the road. By 2030, it's projected that 70% of new car sales in China will be electric. With its massive additions of new wind and solar power, China is aligned with its target for addressing climate change.

The report outlines a future where EV adoption continues to gain momentum, potentially displacing up to 6 million barrels per day of oil demand by 2030. The agency said based on current trends and policies and the availability of materials, EVs will reach 50% of global car sales in 2030.

The clean energy expansion, however, is happening alongside a rise in demand for energy, including power produced by burning coal, according to the Paris-based agency. "This has meant that even as we saw record growth in clean energy installations and additions, emissions kept increasing," said Lauri Myllyvirta, lead analyst at the think tank Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

Electricity demand is growing even faster than expected, "driven by light industrial consumption, electric mobility, cooling, and data centers and AI," the report said. The contours of switching heating, vehicles and some industry over to electricity, it said, are beginning to become clear.

Globally, the IEA said that the expansion of wind

and solar power alongside the increasing adoption of EVs will ensure a peak in demand for coal, oil and gas within the decade, with carbon emissions also reaching their highest point and ramping downward.

As China's rapidly switches toward batteries and renewable energy, oil companies find they can sell more of their product to India.

The IEA projects that India will add nearly two million barrels per day of oil to its demand by 2035, potentially offering a lifeline to oil producers looking to offset declining growth in other regions.

Laveesh Bhandari, president of the New Delhi-based think tank Centre for Social and Economic Progress, said India's booming economic growth means it will take the energy it can get.

"While demand for EVs will rise exponentially, the growth will not be able to cover all of the additional growth in demand for vehicles," Bhandari said. "So fossil fuel-powered vehicles use will increase for some time before leveling off and falling."

this day in history

1968 BLACK ATHLETES MAKE SILENT PROTEST

Two black American athletes have made history at the Mexico Olympics by staging a silent protest against racial discrimination.

Tommie Smith and John Carlos, gold and bronze medalists in the 200m, stood with their heads bowed and a black-gloved hand raised as the American National Anthem played during the victory ceremony.

The pair both wore black socks and no shoes and Smith wore a black scarf around his neck. They were demonstrating against continuing racial discrimination of black people in the United States.

As they left the podium at the end of the ceremony they were booed by many in the crowd.

At a press conference after the event Tommie Smith, who holds seven world records, said: "If I win I am an American, not a black American. But if I did something bad then they would say 'a Negro'. We are black and we are proud of being black."

"Black America will understand what we did tonight." Smith said he had raised his right fist to represent black power in America, while Carlos raised his left fist to represent black unity. Together they formed an arch of unity and power.

He said the black scarf represented black pride and the black socks with no shoes stood for black poverty in racist America.

Within a couple of hours the actions of the two Americans were being condemned by the International Olympic Committee.

A spokesperson for the organisation said it was "a deliberate and violent breach of the fundamental principles of the Olympic spirit."

It is widely expected the two will be expelled from the Olympic village and sent back to the US.

In September last year Tommie Smith, a student at San Jose State university in California, told reporters that black members of the American Olympic team were considering a total boycott of the 1968 games.

He said: "It is very discouraging to be in a team with white athletes. On the track you are Tommie Smith, the fastest man in the world, but once you are in the dressing rooms you are nothing more than a dirty Negro."

The boycott had been the idea of professor of sociology at San Jose State university, and friend of Tommie Smith, Harry Edwards.

Professor Edwards set up the Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR) and appealed to all black American athletes to boycott the games to demonstrate to the world that the civil rights movement in the US had not gone far enough.

He told black Americans they should refuse "to be utilised as 'performing animals' in the games."

Although the boycott never materialised the OPHR gained much support from black athletes around the world.



Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

That evening, the silver medalist in the 200m event, Peter Norman of Australia, who was white, wore an OPHR badge in support of Smith and Carlos' protest. But two days later the two athletes were suspended from their national team, expelled from the Olympic village and sent home to America. Many felt they had violated the Olympic spirit by drawing politics into the games. On their return both men were welcomed as heroes by the African-American community but others regarded them as trouble-makers. Both received death threats. Thirty years after their protest, the two men, who went on to become high school athletics coaches, were honoured for their part in furthering the civil rights movement in America.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Smile for the cameras. Keep high standards. You can find what you need. Use charm, not force. Step into the spotlight and shine. Peace and quiet nurture your spirit.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Contemplate your next moves. Plan today for action later. Consider consequences. Undergo a transformation. Make harmony a goal.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
You have more friends than realized. Network for common solutions. Diversity provides strength. Share and contribute. Thank people for their gifts.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Career opportunities tempt. Review the options. Wait for developments and hold out for the best deal. Consider the consequences before choosing. Sort resources.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Slow to enjoy the scenery. Avoid traffic by lingering at a scenic detour. Investigate a tempting possibility. Avoid delays or pitfalls with detailed planning.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Reaffirm financial commitments. Stick to practical priorities. Review plans before making a move. Opportunities abound but some roads are blocked.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Rely on support from a strong partner. Don't get pushy, though. Share resources, talents and experiences. Revise plans for new circumstances.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Your practices are paying off. Focus on details and refine technique. Avoid distractions. Put your heart into your work. Healthy routines get satisfying results.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Relax and enjoy the view. Celebrate with people you love. Do something nice for someone. Stay frugal. Savor simple pleasures like a shared sunset.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Home and family have your attention. Stay objective with a domestic breakdown. Listen to every view. Avoid passing judgment.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Practice your creative arts and skills. Issue public comments and promotions. Your greatest strength is love. Find interesting ways to articulate your passion.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Your work's in demand. Can you raise rates? Do the market research. Your morale gets a boost with increased cash flow. Monitor closely.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

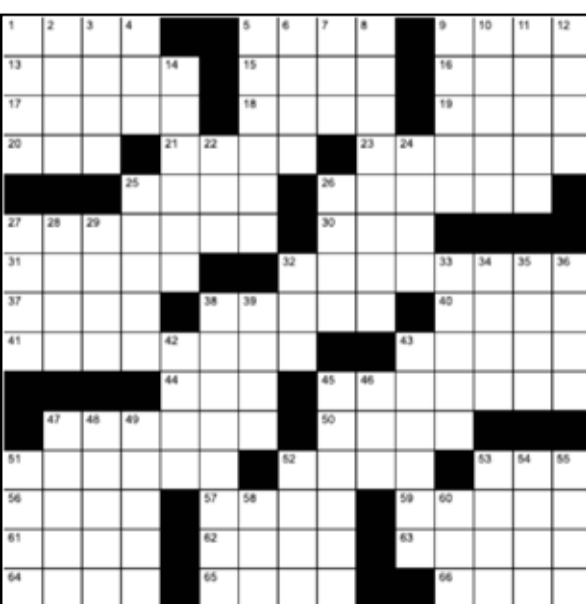
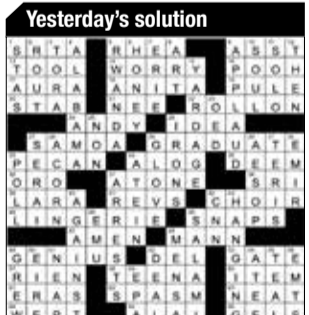
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	12	17	rain
Changchun	4	16	cloudy
Chengdu	16	26	cloudy
Chongqing	18	24	rain
Fuzhou	22	29	cloudy
Guangzhou	23	31	showers
Guiyang	12	23	showers
Haikou	24	29	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	19	26	cloudy
Harbin	1	13	cloudy
Hefei	18	24	rain
Nanjing	19	24	thunderstorms
Shanghai	20	26	rain
Taipei	24	28	cloudy
Wuhan	20	25	rain
Hong Kong	27	29	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	-2	7	cloudy
Frankfurt	11	19	cloudy
Paris	13	19	rain
London	8	17	cloudy
New York	9	17	fine

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Swelled heads; 5- Edinburgh native; 9- Mater preceder; 13- Word after Anglo; 15- Monetary unit of Greece; 16- Farrow and Hamm; 17- Concert venue; 18- Comic fox; 19- Comrade in arms; 20- Coffee server; 21- Phooey!; 23- Give; 25- Extent of space; 26- Llama relative; 27- Suit makers; 30- Bridal bio word; 31- Long-tailed parrot; 32- Ship crustacean; 37- Half brother of Hercules; 38- Eats to a plan; 40- Pole, for one; 41- Young bird; 43- Task; 44- PC panic button; 45- Forbidden by law; 47- Middy nap; 50- Vegas gas; 51- Mother of Calcutta; 52- Inquires; 53- Bar bill; 56- Track shape; 57- Nick Charles's wife; 59- "The ___ has landed."; 61- Dole (out); 62- James of "The Godfather"; 63- Motionless; 64- Uncle Remus title; 65- Fish-eating eagle; 66- Think nothing ___.

DOWN 1- Son of Rebekah; 2- Teri of "Tootsie"; 3- Farm team; 4- Mama's boy; 5- Some mattresses; 6- Billiard implements; 7- Old California fort; 8- Young children; 9- Appliance brand; 10- Light purple; 11- Island near Sicily; 12- ___ sow, so shall...; 14- Of little width; 22- ___ Lingus (Irish carrier); 24- Dentist's request; 25- As ___ resort; 26- Med. school class; 27- Certain Fed; 28- River in central Switzerland; 29- Frozen treats; 32- Panhandle; 33- Pale; 34- Thick-soled shoe; 35- Dr. Zhivago's love; 36- First name in daredevilry; 38- Space between two objects; 39- Machu Picchu resident; 42- Not as much; 43- Shuts; 45- Certifiable; 46- Monetary unit of Albania; 47- Cut off; 48- Hot under the collar; 49- Sniggler; 51- Grave; 52- Irish island group; 53- End-of-workweek shout; 54- ___ want for Christmas...; 55- Waist band; 58- Dinghy need; 60- From ___ Z.



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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How China's gaming revolution is fueling its tech power

SHAORYU YUAN
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY -
NEWARK

JUN XIANG
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

IT may sound far-fetched, but the future of global technology supremacy could hinge on a video game.

Black Myth: Wukong, China's latest blockbuster, isn't just breaking gaming records – it could be driving a critical shift in the global balance of technological power. What seems like just another action-packed video game is, in reality, a vital component in Beijing's larger strategy to challenge Western dominance in the tech industry.

The game, released by Chinese company Game Science on Aug. 19, 2024, is based on the legendary 16th century Chinese novel "Journey to the West." The novel tells the story of a monk, Xuanzang, who journeys to India in search of Buddhist scrolls. The monkey Sun Wukong protects the monk by confronting and battling various demons and spirits.

Black Myth: Wukong has captivated millions with its stunning visuals and storytelling. It quickly became a cultural sensation in China and abroad, attracting widespread attention and praise for its graphic fidelity and technological sophistication.

As global affairs scholars, we see that the game's success goes beyond the number of downloads or accolades. It's what this success is driving within China's technology sector that has far-reaching consequences.

VIDEO GAMES AND GLOBAL POWER

For years, China has been playing catch-up in the tech race, particularly in the production of semiconductors – the tiny microchips that power everything from smartphones to advanced artificial intelligence systems. The United States has maintained its dominance in this field by limiting China's access to the most advanced chip-making technology.

As of 2024, China has shifted away from its aggressive "wolf warrior" diplomacy to a more cooperative approach in order to rebuild international ties. The government has also issued mandates for companies like Huawei to develop domestic chips. However, China's success in boosting semiconductor development and production using these approaches has been limited.

Historically, video games have played a significant role in driving technological innovation in the semiconductor industry. From the early days of the 8-bit Nintendo Entertainment System to the modern PlayStation 5, gaming has always pushed chipmakers to develop faster, more efficient processors and graphics processing units, or GPUs. The intense graphical requirements of modern games – high resolutions, faster frame rates and real-time rendering – demand the most advanced semiconductor technology. The development of advanced GPUs by companies like NVIDIA was directly influenced by the gaming industry's needs.

Gamers require advanced processors to enjoy Black Myth: Wukong's high-end visual and gameplay experience. Built using the state-of-the-art Unreal Engine 5 video game development tool, the game is a visual spectacle featuring lifelike graphics, seamless open-world environments and complex combat systems. The game is available for PlayStation 5 and PCs, and Game Science plans to release an Xbox version.

As Black Myth: Wukong sweeps across gaming platforms, it not only puts pressure on China's semiconductor makers to build more and better chips, but it also reveals the vast market potential for high-performance hardware, especially for gaming PCs

equipped with powerful GPUs. The game's success showcases just how big the demand is.

Market analysts expect the Chinese video game industry to reach revenues of US\$66.13 billion in 2024, compared with \$78.01 billion in the U.S. Analysts predict the game will have annual sales of 30 million to 40 million copies in 2024.

China's gaming industry has surged into a global powerhouse, yet it remains dependent on foreign-made chips. Coupled with the West's restrictions on chip exports, Wukong has become a key catalyst for China's semiconductor development, and domestic companies now face growing pressure to innovate.

This pressure aligns with Beijing's broader technological ambitions. The government's "Made in China 2025" plan calls for technological self-reliance, particularly in sectors like semiconductors, where China lags behind. And advanced GPUs haven't been confined to the entertainment industry. They have become integral to advances in AI, including deep learning and autonomous systems.

FLEXING CHINA'S CULTURAL MUSCLE

While it might seem strange to link video games with geopolitics, Black Myth: Wukong is more than just entertainment. It's a tool in China's soft power arsenal. Soft power is nations influencing each other through cultural

exports. For decades, the West, particularly the U.S., dominated global culture through Hollywood, music and video games.

Now, China is flexing its cultural muscle. The success of Black Myth: Wukong abroad, where it has been hailed as a game-changing title, is part of Beijing's strategy to export its culture and technological prowess. Millions of gamers around the world are now being exposed to Chinese mythology, art and storytelling through a highly sophisticated digital medium.

But Black Myth: Wukong isn't just a cultural triumph for China; it's a warning shot. The country is taking advantage of its booming gaming industry to drive advances in a field that will define the future of technology. This game not only exports Chinese culture but also strengthens its tech base by accelerating the demand for domestic semiconductors.

While Black Myth: Wukong entertains millions, it also shows China's growing influence in the digital realm. In the future, we might not look back at Black Myth: Wukong as just a successful video game, but as a catalyst that helped China close the technological gap with the West. Beijing is playing a long game, and video games like Black Myth: Wukong are turning out to be effective weapons.

MDT/THE CONVERSATION

SAILING

'The comeback is on': Britannia scores first points of America's Cup final

JOSEPH WILSON, BARCELONA,

INEOS Britannia got back into the America's Cup final after scoring its first two wins over Emirates Team New Zealand, cutting the deficit in the first-to-seven wins to 4-2 yesterday.

The British capitalized on uncharacteristic mistakes by the Kiwis, who gifted their rivals a huge lead before Race 5 even started and then suffered another slip that hurt their chances of catching Britannia on a close Race 6.

"There is still a long way to go, but the comeback is on," Britannia skipper Ben Ainslie said from his cockpit.

Later, he added on shore: "It's a massive day for our team to really believe we can get back in this, and now the trick is to ride that momentum all the way."

The British have never won the America's Cup in its 173-year history and are in their first final in six decades. New Zealand is trying to win the Auld Mug, the oldest trophy in international sport, for a

AP PHOTO

Ineos Britannia crosses the finish line as they win the race 5 of the Louis Vuitton 37th America's Cup Day 4, in Barcelona, yesterday



third straight time and fifth overall.

New Zealand had sailed flawlessly to sweep the first four races held in view of the Barcelona beachfront. But the defenders couldn't handle the low winds and high waves and made their first error of the series when their yacht fell off its foils during a turn in the pre-start buildup.

The Taihoro was left flailing while Britannia buzzed it twice before taking off to build a huge advantage. When Britannia crossed the line New Zealand was almost 1,200 meters behind.

"It was a dream scenario for a start to have one boat off the foils and be able to get away with a clean start," said Britannia trim-

mer Bleddyn Mon.

The British followed that up with a second victory that will surely be a bigger boost to their confidence. The Kiwis were closing when a dip of the hull into the water cost them valuable time in a contest that was decided by just seven seconds.

"You make a few little mistakes and you lose races," New Zealand

skipper Peter Burling said. "That's what we love about sport, and we also have a battle on our hands."

Ainslie said that practicing on Tuesday in similarly choppy waves, while New Zealand stayed at base, helped prepare his team for similar waters once the racing resumed. That and a Britannia hull design suited for wavier water, compared to the New Zealand boat which he said appeared to perform better in flat seas.

As reigning champion, New Zealand had a guaranteed spot in America's Cup finals, in addition to picking the venue and the rules. The Taihoro hadn't raced for a month until the finals started on Saturday as it sat out the playoff rounds.

Races 7 and 8 are scheduled for Friday, giving New Zealand one day to figure out what went wrong.

"We didn't really executed our best today, so we let ourselves down," ETNZ helmsman Nathan Outteridge said. "We will go and review that tonight and come back in better shape." **MDT/AP**

AD

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Paediatric Surgery : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

Paediatrics : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

Obstetrics & Gynaecology : Dr. Fong Kuan Io

Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery : Dr. Lam U Lin

Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

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OPINION

Multipolar World

Jorge Costa Oliveira



BEING GREEN LIKE NORWAY

Like other European countries, Norway has adopted a strategy for a low-carbon economy by 2050, with emission reduction targets that are even more ambitious than those of the EU. While it is behind on meeting these goals, it is far less so than most EU countries.

In addition to generating 92% of its electricity through hydroelectric power, Norway leads the world in electric vehicles (EVs) per capita. To a great extent due not only to a generalized green conscience but to generous government subsidies for the purchase of EVs and harsh penalties on the sale of new engine combustion vehicles.

Portugal ranks 6th in the EU for renewable energy production, but it doesn't have Norway's natural conditions for hydroelectricity. Despite a strong environmental consciousness among the population, EV consumption remains low due to their high cost and the government's inability to provide generous incentives (or penalties).

Portugal and Norway are among the European countries with the largest maritime exclusive economic zones and continental shelves. Norway, a country of 5.5 million people with no natural resources and a harsh climate, realized around 1960 that leveraging its marine economy was a unique opportunity. As a result, it promoted oil and gas exploration on its continental shelf and became a pioneer in offshore wind farming.

The exploitation of oil and gas by Equinor (67% controlled by the Norwegian state, previously known as Statoil) led to the creation of two Oil Funds, one (small) that can be used for normal government policies, and another (large) as savings for the next generations; these Oil Funds own 1.5% of all publicly traded companies worldwide. These Oil Funds provide financial resources that support a model social market economy, while also ensuring that future generations will have available generous financial resources.

In Portugal, a small Southern Europa country with limited resources and low-mid range income per capita (for EU standards), even the mere attempt to prospect what minerals, oil, gas or other resources may exist in the continental shelf has been blocked. How is it possible that even the mere assessment of the resources existing in its continental shelf is boycotted? Without assessing such resources and the potential environmental impact of its exploitation – and means of limiting it – it is not possible to have a serious discussion on the pros and cons of exploiting the continental shelf.

This position stems from a wide-spread idea that the maritime continental shelves should be overprotected in order to avoid environmental harm. Although the departing point is correct, it makes no sense to pre-decide not to have any exploitation of any part of the continental shelf irrespective of an assessment on the environmental impact involved.

Let us not forget that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (to which Portugal is a signatory) allows for such exploration and that the International Seabed Authority has been authorizing exploration (including deepsea mining) in "The Area" (continental shelves beyond national jurisdictions). In Portugal, after 20 years of speeches, the "commitment" of successive governments is the 16 years spent on selectively collecting geological samples from Portugal's extended continental shelf with just one ROV (remotely operated vehicle).

Norway is a good example of how it is possible to reconcile maritime resources exploitation with green public policies aimed at a sustainable development.

Future generations of Portuguese (and other European) will greatly benefit if its elites (and governments) abandon their [impoverished] aristocratic complexes and follow Norway's example.

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BODIES OF FIVE RUSSIAN CLIMBERS WHO DIED ON A NEPAL PEAK HAVE BEEN RETRIEVED

THE BUZZ

The bodies of five Russian mountaineers who died on the world's seventh-highest peak were retrieved from the mountain and flown to Kathmandu.

The bodies were picked up by rescue helicopters from base camp yesterday. They were then transported from the airport in Kathmandu to the morgue at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital.

The Russians were climbing the 8,167-meter (26,788-foot) high Mount Dhaulagiri during Nepal's autumn climbing season.

The climbers were reported missing on Oct. 6 and a rescue helicopter spotted their bodies two days later. Bad weather and the location of the

bodies made it difficult for rescuers to retrieve the bodies.

Two of the climbers reached the summit, the while other three had turned around without reaching the top before teammates at base camp lost radio contact with them.

The autumn climbing season began last month. Mountains are less crowded and the permit fees are lower than during the more popular spring season.

The deceased climbers have been identified as Alexander Dusheiko, Oleg Kruglov, Vladimir Chistikov, Mikhail Nosenko and Dmitry Shpilevoy.



This photo provided by Bloomberg Philanthropies shows vendors selling produce at the Friday Market in Rourkela, India

PHILANTHROPY

'GLOBAL MAYORS CHALLENGE' LAUNCHES EVER TO INSPIRE CITY LEADERS GLOBALLY

GLENN GAMBOA, MDT/
 AP BUSINESS WRITER

THE beauty of Rourkela, India's city-changing idea is in its simplicity. Giving farmers affordable access to cold storage for their crops reduces waste and increases sales.

What turned that idea into an award winner in the annual Bloomberg Philanthropies Global Mayors Challenge was the ambition of its execution. Rourkela made the cold storage affordable by powering it with solar panels. It enlisted women from the community to manage the units, providing them with new skills and a new source of income. And it encouraged farmers to store excess produce there rather than selling at reduced prices to avoid spoilage in the Indian heat.

"This is not new technology. It is not rocket science," said Rourkela's commissioner Ashutosh Kulkarni. "It is a question of ideas. I believe that ideas can move mountains."

To support more innovative ideas from cities around the world, Michael R. Bloomberg, former mayor of New York City and founder of Bloomberg L.P. and Bloomberg Philanthropies, yesterday announced the largest

Mayors Challenge ever. The expanded initiative will provide 50 cities with \$50,000 and an invitation to Ideas Camp so the city leaders can hone and test their ideas. The 25 cities with the best ideas will then receive \$1 million and the technical support needed to enact them.

"This new challenge will empower cities to re-think the way they deliver essential services in ways that better meet the everyday needs of residents," Bloomberg said in a statement from the Bloomberg CityLab 2024 meeting in Mexico City. "Bloomberg Philanthropies believes in the power of cities to affect change and we're looking forward to seeing the bold proposals that mayors put together – and helping their cities bring them to life."

The most successful of those ideas may go into the new Bloomberg Cities Ideas Exchange program, where municipal leaders share what has worked and what hasn't, so other cities can replicate those ideas.

Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego says that through the Bloomberg Cities program, she has already informally learned about municipal tree-planting programs in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and how

Rochester, New York, was able to get more women hired in construction – two issues that are important in her city. And Gallego has happily shared with numerous cities how she started Phoenix's "mobile career units" program, which travels to areas where people have challenges with transportation to inform them about job opportunities and offer interviews. That program was also a Mayors Challenge award winner.

"Cities are the beginnings of innovation for the world," Gallego said. "We come up with so many of the solutions for different challenges and we get real results. So many countries are failing to meet their Paris climate agreement goals, but many cities are ahead of schedule."

James Anderson, who leads Bloomberg Philanthropies' Government Innovation program, said he was excited about the expansion of the Mayors Challenge initiative, especially with its focus on reimagining core municipal services. The new initiatives are designed to get mayors to dream bigger, he added, because they get things done.

"Cities care for the well-being of the world," Anderson said. **MDT/AP**



United States Experts warn that Donald Trump's economic proposals, including high tariffs and mass deportations, would worsen inflation. Economists predict significant price surges if Trump's policies are implemented. The Biden-Harris administration's economic policies, while also criticized, are not expected to have the same inflationary impact.



United States The U.S. Navy was searching yesterday for two aviators whose plane crashed during a routine training flight. The EA-18G Growler jet from the Electronic Attack Squadron crashed east of Mount Rainier at about 3:23 p.m. Tuesday, according to Whidbey Island Naval Air Station.



Middle East Israeli jets targeted southern Lebanon and Beirut's suburbs, killing at least 21 people, including a city mayor. Hezbollah vowed to intensify attacks on Israel following an airstrike that killed 22 people. The ongoing conflict has led to increased regional tensions and daily cross-border fire.



United Kingdom A new bill to legalize assisted dying for terminally ill people was introduced in the UK Parliament. The proposed law would allow doctors to help end patients' lives under strict conditions. The bill has sparked public debate, with both supporters and opponents voicing concerns.