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**GAMING: THE PREMIUM MASS MARKET IS EXPECTED TO REMAIN THE BIGGEST DRIVER FOR THE CITY'S OPERATORS IN 2022, MORGAN STANLEY FORECASTS** P3

**NEWS FROM ANCHORAGE: CHINA SEEKS BIDEN-XI SUMMIT IN APRIL, US DOESN'T SEE THAT HAPPENING** P6-7

**THE JUDICIARY POLICE RESPONDS TO GROWING DIGITAL CRIMES WITH NEW RECRUITS AND MODIFIED TRAINING, THE CORPORATION SAID** P4



**China** yesterday accused a scholar and outspoken critic of its policies toward Muslim minorities of fabricating charges that have helped bring sanctions against Chinese officials and companies. The ruling Communist Party's deputy head of propaganda, Xu Guixiang (pictured), made the accusations against Adrian Zenz in the latest of a series of news conferences aimed at deflecting criticism over China's detention of more than 1 million Uyghurs and other Muslims in reeducation camps.



**Japan** said yesterday it would end a monthslong state of emergency in the Tokyo area set up to curb the spread of the coronavirus, despite concerns the spring party season and next week's Olympic torch relay could fuel a resurgence. The emergency measures are set to be lifted this weekend, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga announced during a government task force meeting.



**Indonesia** Twenty-two suspects arrested in recent weeks were connected to the banned Jemaah Islamiyah militant group — among them a convicted leader who was recruiting and training new members, Indonesian authorities said yesterday. The 22 men were flown under the guard of Indonesia's elite counterterrorism squad from to a police detention center in the national capital Jakarta for further questioning.

More on backpage

# COMPASSIONATE RELEASE

**A US judge sanctioned an early release of bribery convict Ng Lap Seng who will return to Macau due to his deteriorating health** P3



**REALTOR EXPECTS MACAU TRANSACTION TO RISE TO 500-LEVEL** P4

**PRESS**  
**AIPIM'S BOARD TO REMAIN FOLLOWING ABSENCE OF LISTS FOR ELECTION** P2

# AIPIM'S BOARD TO REMAIN FOLLOWING ABSENCE OF NEW CANDIDATES LIST

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE current board of the General Assembly of the Macau Portuguese and English Press Association (AIPIM) will remain in their positions, as no list of candidates were submitted for the 2021/2023 governing bodies.

A statement issued yesterday by the association explained, "The General Assembly of AIPIM did not receive, until the time limit provided for in the Statutes, any candidate list for the governing bodies for the 2021/2023 biennium."

The statement is in accordance with paragraph 3 of article 32 of the AIPIM Statutes, "The holders, however, will remain in their respective positions until the investiture of those who replace them."

It informed the members that the General Assembly convened for March 27 will still be held as planned, with the agenda including the annual management report and the balance sheet and accounts for 2020.

The current vice president of AIPIM and adjunct director of

BLOOMBERG



TDM's Portuguese Information and Programs Channels, Gilberto Lopes, came up with a list but decided to retract it.

"I removed the list that I had presented," Lopes briefly told the Times.

When questioned as to the association's plans given that the board members will continue their existing roles, the current

president of the General Assembly, Joao Francisco Pinto, only stressed that, according to the association by-laws, the current managing bodies will continue to serve until they are replaced by those elected.

Pinto serves as the director of TDM's Portuguese Information and Programs Channels.

Both the tenure of Lopes and

Pinto at TDM has recently been renewed for six months. The normal period of tenure is one year.

## ENSURING PRESS FREEDOM

Another press group, the Macau Journalists Association (AJM), has asked TDM for a position that guarantees freedom and does not treat journalists as tools for political purposes, local media reported.

This comes after recent reports on TDM's alleged latest editorial guidelines, which note that news coverage should promote patriotism, respect and love for the motherland and Macau.

Failure to do so may result in dismissal.

The statement published by AJM came on Tuesday night following a meeting with TDM reporters and management on Monday, calling on TDM to assume the role of public broadcaster without constraints.

"TDM directors must take a clearer stand to guarantee independence in news coverage and rebuild the confidence of their reporters. The association expects TDM to be able, through its actions, to fulfill its promise to 'maintain the editorial line' and 'report the truth', as previously stated in a statement," AJM said.

The association, which consists of Chinese-speaking journalists, also urged the government

to "recognize its contribution and commit to the protection of press freedom, in accordance with the Basic Law."

In a statement last week, TDM said that it has not changed its current policy on news coverage.

AIPIM has also issued a statement expressing "grave concern about the seriousness of the implications" for freedom of press.

# CONSTRUCTION OF LRT HENGQIN EXTENSION COMMENCES

HONEY TSANG

**T**HE initiation ceremony of the construction of the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) extension to Hengqin took place yesterday.

The Nam Kwong (Group) Company Limited, a state-owned enterprise founded in 1949 and headquartered in Macau, was commissioned by the SAR government in February 2021 to helm the extension project.

The LRT extension to Hengqin will link the Lotus Bridge checkpoint at Cotai with Hengqin Port, a transport hub on the island. It follows a hybrid structure of flyovers and an underwater tunnel — spanning 2.2 km, with



900 meters underground — and will comprise two stations.

According to a statement released yesterday by the Infrastructure Development Office (GDI), the preliminary works of the project have been underway, including compiling construction drawings, formulating measures for temporary traffic diversions and pipeline

rearrangements, setting up deformation monitoring points, and so on.

Soon after the construction kicks off, the construction firm will demolish the buildings surrounding the former Lotus Border Checkpoint and relocate the pipelines at Rotunal Marginal to clear the site for the main construction.

According to the offi-

cial statement, the project is intended to bring about the direction stipulated in the "Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area" and promulgated by the central government in February 2019, which is to build a rapid transportation network to expedite cross-border travel within the Greater Bay Area.

It is a joint construction project between Macau and Zhuhai with a budget of MOP3.5 billion. It is expected to be completed in four years.

On Macau's side, construction works such as excavation, pile foundations, and a tunneling shield are expected to be underway in the second quarter of 2021. The construction for Hengqin's side will commence after the official construction at Macau begins.

# CHINESE INVESTORS MAY SOON BE ALLOWED IN FOREIGN BOND MARKETS

**M**AINLAND authorities are close to establishing southbound bond trading, Julien Martin, general manager at Bond Connect Company Limited (BCCL), recently revealed.

The new arrangement will allow mainland Chinese investors to enter foreign bond markets.

The executive added that the authorities are in search of ways to ease the pressure on an inflating Chinese currency.

As of February, 3.5% of Chinese bonds denominated in Chinese yuan were held by foreign investors. With a stable inflow of bond investments, the value of the Chinese yuan has risen by 10% since the low in May last year.

In response, Chinese authorities are in search of channels to stabilize the rising currency.

"When there is such a significant influx of capital, there will be a need for outflux," Martin said.

BCCL is a joint venture established by the China Foreign Exchange Trade System and the Hong Kong Stock Exchange to support Bond Connect related trading services. Established in Hong Kong in 2017, BCCL supports the admission and registration of northbound investors, and liaises closely with the recognized access platforms through which international investors are able to trade certain Chinese financial products. **AL**

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ELECTIONS 2021

# CAEAL ping-ponged with IAS on alleged gun-jumping campaigning

ANTHONY LAM

**A**LTHOUGH the Electoral Affairs Committee (CAEAL) has deemed that an act by a traditional association that was alleged to constitute campaigning ahead of schedule did not violate the law, its president noted it is ultimately the Social Welfare Bureau's (IAS) authority to determine the act's appropriateness.

A week or so ago, a traditional association was accused by certain members of the public of taking advantage of its publicly-funded elderly care hotline service to campaign ahead of the official campaign period.

After a committee plenary meeting yesterday, Justice Tong Hio Fong, president of the committee, deemed that the act did not constitute campaigning ahead of time, "because obtaining nominations must involve naming the concerned organization or list," Tong said.

He added that the committee saw no promotional factor in the act, which according to the complainants constituted a violation,



and so ruled in favor of the association.

At the occasion, a media organization disclosed that the IAS, when questioned about the matter, replied that it would follow the CAEAL's judgment.

When questioned yesterday as to whether the act was appropriate, Tong said that it was within the IAS' authority to determine the appropriateness.

The committee has previously required the media to conceal its online election campaign materials on the cool-down day. It was argued that the requirement is full of grey areas.

Tong insisted yesterday that it is a legal requirement to abide by this order. He further explained that the order only concerns campaigning materials and online platforms.

"I believe the media is more professional than me in differentiating a 'report' from a 'promotion,'" the judge said.

When asked to elaborate, Tong cited the law, saying that if an article incites, expressly or implicationaly, voters to vote for a particular group, the article may need to be concealed on the cool-down day.

Regarding the nomination process, the committee president dis-

closed that there will be a major change to the nomination form.

In previous elections, the nomination form was printed similarly to a petition collection form, with a cover page denoting the nominated list and empty pages that follow with grids for voters to sign their names.

Tong disclosed that the previous format was in need of refinement in order to reduce any possible loopholes.

As such, this year the nomination form will only have one page with details of the nominated list and a space for the nominating voter's name, ID number and other necessary particulars.

Each voter can only nominate one list and other crucial legal requirements will also be printed on the nomination form. Nominating voters may need to make corresponding notes to declare that they have acknowledged the reminders and legal requirements. Tong remarked that once the declaration is made, the nominating voters may face criminal charges if suspected of any violation.

Tong reiterated that voters who have relocated to a new address should update their address with the committee "as soon as possible" and "on or before May 31" in order for the update to take effect, so that they will be assigned to a polling station in accordance with their updated addresses. Otherwise, polling station assignments will be made according to their old addresses.

## BRIBERY CONVICT NG LAP SENG TO BE RELEASED EARLY

HONEY TSANG

**A** U.S. judge yesterday (Macau time) sanctioned an early release from prison on compassionate grounds for bribery convict Ng Lap Seng, Macau's real estate tycoon, who will return to Macau due to his deteriorating health.

The U.S. District Judge Vernon Broderick said the exemption was granted for Ng as it would be safer for him to stay in Macau than in a Pennsylvania prison, where hundreds of Covid-19 cases have been reported, according to a report by Reuters.

In 2017, Ng was sentenced to four years' imprisonment for bribing two ambassadors from the United Nations (UN) to pave the way for building a multibillion-dollar conference center in Macau, that would host the annual United Nations Global South-South Development Expo and other events.

The implicated UN ambassadors were Francis Lorenzo, a former UN Ambassador from the Dominican Republic, and



John W. Ashe, the late former Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the UN and the 68th President of the UN General Assembly.

As of now, Ng, the founder of Macau-based real estate developer Sun Kian Ip Group, has served 34 months of his four-year term at a Pennsylvania prison in the U.S.. He has been suffering from diabetes.

Some prosecutors urged the judge to reconsider the decision, seeing as Ng has not yet received the second dose of Moderna Inc's Covid-19 vaccine, scheduled on Tuesday.

However, the judge turned down the request, saying at the hearing that "there is a certain

level of humanity that I've decided to exercise."

Ng's lawyer Benjamin Braffman commented that Broderick made the decision as he "understood the human toll that changing his mind would have imposed on Mr. Ng, to first be told you are going home only to then be told that the court had changed its mind."

It is an additional "trauma" Broderick would not allow, Braffman added.

It is expected that Ng will be fully vaccinated and sent to the custody of immigration officials before flying to Macau.

Ng was originally scheduled to be released on December 23, 2021.

## GAMING

### MORGAN STANLEY EXPECTS PREMIUM MARKET TO BE 2022'S DRIVER FOR GGR GROWTH

**T**HE premium mass market is expected to remain the biggest driver for the city's gaming operators in 2022, given the increasing number of luxury hotels in the upcoming year, according to Morgan Stanley.

With the upcoming openings of Grand Lisboa Palace and Raffles at Galaxy – which offer 2,000 and 700 rooms respectively – and The Londoner's 970 rooms converted from The Holiday Inn, the brokerage's analysts are expecting the region to be positioned for a recovery.

"Macau will look and feel different in 2022 when compared to the pre-Covid world," analysts Praveen Choudhary, Gareth Leung and Thomas

Allen stated in a report issued yesterday.

With the overall room capacity in Cotai increasing by 13% in 2022 compared to 2019, the brokerage added, "These customers come to Macau and expect high-end hotels, free entertainment and F&B amenities. Companies with better hotel products (such as the Ritz Carlton and Morpheus) have done better [with] premium mass business historically."

In terms of the VIP sector's revenue contribution to the region's GGR this year, the analysts noted, "We expect VIP to contribute around 25% of total GGR in 2021 and beyond. This compares with 70% in 2012. With VIP being de-

emphasized, we are looking at mass revenue, which has been on a structural growth path."

Earlier this year, Morgan Stanley has lowered its projected tally for GGR by around 10% to nearly USD23.7 billion, owing to the strong headwinds against the VIP gaming sector.

The financial firm forecasts that the receipts from the VIP sector in 2021 to reach only 40% of 2019 levels. It also previously noted that it does not expect the figures to rebound to 2019 levels, even in 2022. However, the mass market may perform better than the VIP sector, with its 2021 revenue expected to generate around 80% of 2019 levels.

# PJ RESPONDS TO GROWING DIGITAL CRIMES WITH NEW RECRUITS AND MODIFIED TRAINING

HONEY TSANG

**I**N response to increasingly complicated criminal behaviors, the Judiciary Police (PJ) has vowed to modify its training schemes at the Judiciary Police School and recruit more digital forensic officials.

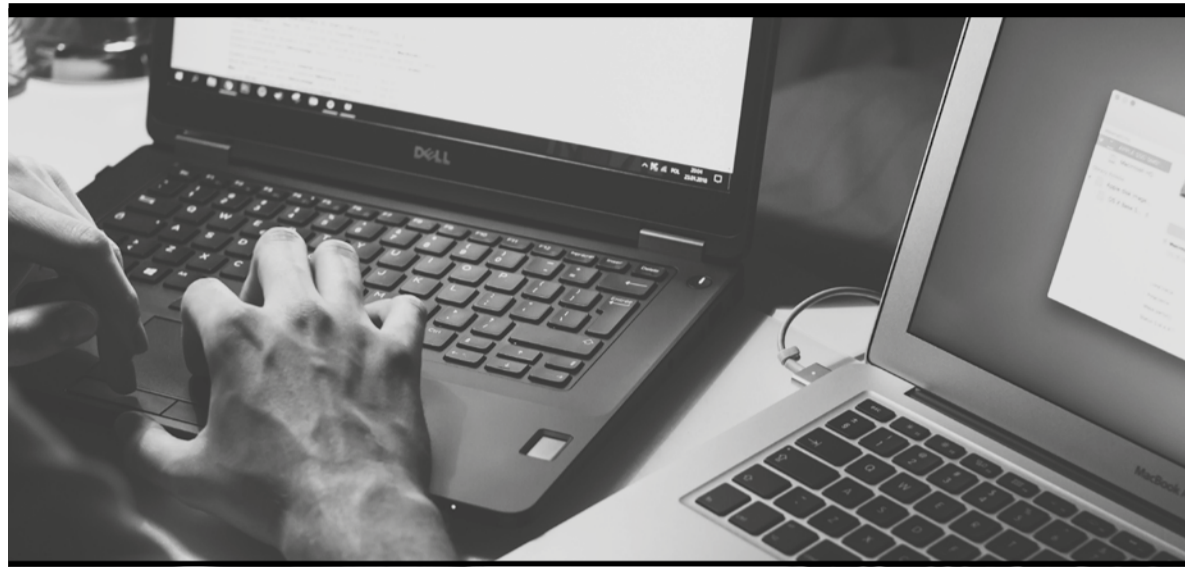
According to the Judiciary Police School, a 35-year-old institution dedicated to cultivating local professional police officials, the requirements for educational qualifications held by candidates intending to enlist in the PJ are becoming higher.

The number of candidates who were engaged in law and information technology has also been climbing.

The institution offers pre-employment training for would-be inspectors and on-the-job training for existing staff.

Director of the Judiciary Police School Suen Kam Fai told TDM that the institution will strengthen the force's sense of national security and knowledge in combatting internet crimes.

"Also, [the school] will proactively explore new training methods with the use of innovati-



ve technology to deal with the increasingly complicated environment for law enforcement," Suen added.

The endeavors, he added, are designed to align with the government's plan to develop Macau into a smart and safe city.

According to the data provided in February by the Secretary for Security, the city's police force investigated a total of 10,057 cases in 2020, down 29.1%, year-on-year. Despite the overall drop, there were 531 computer crime cases last year, a two-fold uptick from the pre-

vious year, of which the cases related to illicit credit card use surged by 2.5 times to 411.

In response to the growing trend of digital crime, the PJ has begun to enlist digital fo-

rensic professionals.

"We already hosted the first round of recruitment. We hope that we can enlist people who specialize in digital forensics," Luís Leong, head of Criminal Investigation Department at the PJ told TDM in an earlier interview.

The department aims to hire six senior forensic officers and eight forensic officers. The recruitment process is now at the information vetting stage, Leong said.

Over the past two years, 20 people resigned from PJ, most of whom retired from the Criminal Investigation Department. The overall workforce has remained very stable, according to PJ.

## POLICE REFER OVER 270 PEOPLE TO MP FOLLOWING OPERATION

**MORE** than 270 people were referred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) following the month-long Winter Prevention Operation of the Macau Unitary Police Service (SPU), which investigated cases involving usury, drugs, theft and fraud, among others.

In a statement issued yesterday, SPU said that a total of 7,158 members of the police force were dis-

patched throughout the operation. 21,581 people were investigated in total, 1,132 of whom were taken back to the police station for further investigation and a total of 359 people were deported from Macau. Among those that were referred to the MP, 18 persons were subject to detention and interception orders from the judiciary, seven of whom were immediately sent to prison to

serve their sentences. In addition, 121 persons suspected of illegal foreign currency exchange were also taken into custody. SPU said in a statement that the operation had "achieved remarkable results," adding that the overall environment of public security remains "stable and good." The operation took place from January 22 to February 21.

# Realtor expects Macau transaction to rise to 500-level

**A**S the March real property viewing frequency has been on the rise, the market is seen to be heating up and the number of transactions is expected to increase to at least 500, Ho Siu Hang, senior director of Centaline Macau and Heng-qin was quoted as saying in an interview.

According to the data

released by the Financial Services Bureau, the city recorded 354 real property transactions in February, a decrease of 116 transactions compared with the figure from January. The Macau Peninsula saw 265 transactions, Taipa had 66 and Coloane had 23.

With an average usable area of 65 square meters or

about 700 square feet, the average property price in February was MOP94,205 per square meters, or MOP8,752 per square feet.

Ho said he not only expects the number of transactions will rise in March, but also foresees that it will rise to 1,000 in April. He saw a rising trajectory of property prices, when a comparison

between those from January and March was conducted. The prices from the two months differ by about 5%.

On the prospects of Macau's real property market, Ho complimented the government's efforts in actively solving various problems. These efforts, according to him, have given the public confidence. Meanwhile, the level of deposits has not fallen drastically and prospective purchasers have halted their purchase plans for a year due to the first outbreak last year. Additionally, the demand for real property in Macau is solid.

With these factors combined, Ho believes that buyers will be invigorated and start making purchases again. He would not be surprised to see a V-shape bounce-back in the number of property transactions.

In terms of shops, Ho foresees the number of transactions in May will return to about 60% of that observed pre-Covid. It may even rise to 80% in August, he said. **AL**



Aida Rafaela da Rosa de Jesus, aged 105, passed away peacefully at the Centro Hospitalar Conde de S. Januario on Wednesday, 17 March, 2021.

Funeral Mass: Monday, 22 March 2021  
Place: Casa Mortuária Diocesana de Macau  
Time: 8 p.m.

\*\* In lieu of flowers, please donate to St. Anthony Church

# China determined to oppose external interference: official

HONEY TSANG

**C**HINA has always been and will always be an “indispensable and trustworthy force” for promoting world peace and development, Ran Bo, Director General of the Policy Research Department of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Macau Special Administrative (SAR) Region, said at an event yesterday.

In the event themed “Understanding China’s diplomacy: An important power promoting world peace, stability and prosperity” hosted by Britcham Macao, Ran underscored China’s endeavors in fostering global concord and advancement.

Over the past four decades since China adopted the policy of reform and opening up, the country has lifted 850 million people out of poverty, contributing to over 70% of the global poverty reduction — which is the largest huma-



Ran Bo, Director General of the Policy Research Department of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in MSAR

nized project globally, he said.

Last year, 15 countries, including China, Japan, South Korea, ASEAN countries, Australia and New Zealand, inked the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world’s largest free-trade pact, to accelerate the region’s economy during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many companies worldwide have also shown continual investment interest in China.

A survey by the European

Union Chamber of Commerce in China showed that 89% of European companies surveyed would like to continue to invest in China. A survey by the American Chamber of Commerce in South China indicated that 94% of American companies see a bright future in China’s market. Also, the British Chamber of Commerce in China said that British businesses still believe China is one of the key trading partners of the U.K..

Despite these positive opinions, there have always been some contradictory views grounded in “fake” news that “slander” and “discredit” China. Such defamation usually comes from “a small number of countries”, he stressed.

Hong Kong has historically been a place where the US and a number of other countries intervened in China’s internal affairs. However, the passage of the Hong Kong national security law and the approved resolution to enhance its electoral system can safeguard national security and the steady implementation of “One country, two systems,” he added.

“I assure you that, in a matter of two or three years, Hong Kong’s situation will be restored,” Ran said.

The country has “unshakeable determination to oppose external interference in the internal affairs of Hong Kong and Macau,” and has full confidence in the future of both cities, he added.

## MOBILE PAYMENT PLATFORMS ACHIEVING IDENTITY VERIFICATION FOR MINORS

Several mobile payment platforms have confirmed that they are either attempting to or have already achieved identity verification for junior users in light of the debate over the eligibility of such users for the government’s latest stimulus rollout. The Bank of China, Macau Branch stressed that it has been providing mobile payment options to junior users. The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China’s Macau Branch has given similar updates to the Monetary Authority of Macao. Macau Pass has applied for approval from the government to enable identity verification for junior users.

## HEALTH AUTHORITIES CALL TO WITHDRAW CONSUMPTION OF SLIMMING COFFEE

According to information published by the Hong Kong’s Department of Health, a weight loss product of LKS Coffee has been detected to contain an appetite suppressant (sibutramine) that may also increase consumers’ risk of contracting cardiovascular disease. The authority is appealing to residents not to purchase or consume this product. According to the Health Bureau (SSM), the importation of this product to the Macau market is not authorized. The SSM is monitoring circulation of this product in Macau and calls on citizens not to purchase or consume it.

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## BNU Anti-Epidemic Measures

To protect the economy, the MSAR Government has introduced a number of measures to protect the livelihood of its residents. As a note-issuing bank of Macau, BNU also cooperates to prevent the spread of the virus and recuperate the economy by developing a set of anti-epidemic initiatives to help the community.

- ◆ SME Anti-Epidemic Loans
- ◆ Individual Loans with Principal grace period up to 6 months
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- ◆ Funds donation to several local associations to help minimize the financial burden related to Covid-19
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- ◆ Local spending stimulation
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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



# China slams US plan to expel phone carriers in tech clash

CHINA'S government yesterday called on Washington to drop efforts to expel three state-owned Chinese phone companies from the United States in a new clash over technology and security.

The Federal Communi-

cations Commission voted to begin revoking the companies' U.S. licenses. It said they are security risks controlled by the communist Beijing government.

The foreign ministry accused Washington of misusing security complaints

to hurt Chinese commercial competitors.

The United States should "stop the wrong practice of generalizing the concept of national security and politicizing economic issues" and "stop abusing state power to unreason-

ably suppress Chinese enterprises," said a ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian.

The decision adds to mounting U.S.-Chinese conflict over the ruling Communist Party's industrial plans, access to American technology and accusations of computer attacks and theft of business secrets.

President Joe Biden has said he wants a better relations with Beijing but has given no indication he will roll back sanctions imposed by his predecessor, Donald Trump, that limit Chinese access to U.S. technology and financial markets.

The latest announcement came as U.S. and Chinese envoys were flying to Alaska for the highest-level face-to-face meeting between the two sides since Biden took office in January.

Zhao said Beijing will "take necessary measures to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises" but gave no details. Officials have issued similar warnings in the past but those usually have resulted in no action.

The latest action targets China Unicom Americas, a unit of China Unicom Ltd.; Pacific Networks Corp. and ComNet (USA) LLC,

a unit of Pacific Networks. They sell international voice and data service.

The companies were ordered to explain their ownership and operations, and "failed to address the serious national security threats posed by their continued operation in the U.S.," said Commissioner Brendan Carr in a statement.

National security officials "advise that traffic on these networks 'remains subject to exploitation, influence, and control by the Chinese government,'" Carr said. He said some Chinese telecom companies have operated in the United States for decades and "security threats have evolved substantially in the intervening years."

Earlier, state-owned China Mobile Ltd. was blocked in 2019 from entering the U.S. market on security grounds.

Trump also blocked access to most U.S. technology for telecom equipment giant Huawei Technologies Ltd. and some other Chinese tech companies. Trump issued an order prohibiting Americans from investing in securities of companies deemed by the Pentagon to be linked to China's military. MDT/AP

# China seeks April if A

JENNY LEONARD

BEIJING is seeking a meeting between Joe Biden and Xi Jinping next month if the first high-level U.S.-China talks in Alaska this weekend are productive, according to people familiar with the situation.

The Biden-Xi meeting as envisioned by Chinese officials would be organized around Earth Day on April 22 to show both leaders are focused on combating climate change, one of the people said. Biden is already set to gather global leaders together on that day to push the world for greater ambition in curbing greenhouse gas emissions. The prospect of the meeting was first reported by the Wall Street Journal.

When asked whether the diplomats will discuss a Xi-Biden meeting during their talks in Alaska and if a meeting of the two leaders is planned, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said no such arrangements have been made. He later added that the two countries will discuss a range of topics.

Both the U.S. and China have played down expectations for the talks in Alaska, which are set to run

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CHINESE POETRY IN PORTUGUESE  
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# Weeks Biden-Xi summit in Alaska talks succeed

AP PHOTO ARCHIVE



The Biden-Xi meeting would be organized around Earth Day on April 22: Beijing

The Alaska meeting wasn't meant to establish regular encounters between the two sides: White House

start today for two Canadians accused of violating national security laws who were taken in shortly after the December 2018 arrest of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou, the daughter of company founder Ren Zhengfei. China has often linked the cases to Meng's, with a Foreign Ministry spokesman telling reporters last year that halting the extradition "could open up space for resolution to the situation of the two Canadians."

The U.S. and China have sparred over issues such as Hong Kong, Taiwan and Xinjiang in calls since Biden took office, which Beijing has insisted are "internal" issues. But U.S. officials have also sought to stress areas of potential cooperation, including on climate change and nuclear nonproliferation.

In Seoul, Blinken noted that Biden's approach toward North Korea was still under review and stressed China's "clear self-interest" in getting its neighbor and Cold War ally back to the table.

Yesterday, China's official Xinhua News Agency published a commentary saying a new U.S. sanctions move sent the "wrong message" before the talks. The State Department added more than a dozen Chinese officials to a list of people that banks must avoid Wednesday, putting global financial institutions on notice.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters Tuesday that the Alaska meeting wasn't meant to establish expectations for regular encounters between the two sides.

"I wouldn't see this as one in a series," she said. "This is a meeting that our national security adviser and secretary of state are attending, and I wouldn't build it out beyond there at this point in time."

MDT/BLOOMBERG

this weekend [Macau time]. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan will represent the U.S., while Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Politburo member Yang Jiechi will speak for China.

China's expectations for the meeting aren't "too high," Cui Tiankai, China's ambassador to the U.S., said in comments reported by state-run

China Central Television. It will be a success if it starts a "honest, constructive and rational" dialogue, he added.

The Chinese delegation arrived in Anchorage earlier yesterday, state broadcaster China Central Television reported. Blinken was scheduled to depart Seoul later in the evening.

The countries have sparred over how to describe the talks, with the

U.S. disputing China's characterization of the meeting as a "high-level strategic dialogue." Blinken earlier said it would be an opportunity "to very directly, face-to-face, share with our Chinese counterparts the concerns that the United States has, that our allies and partners have about some of the things that China is doing."

China has urged the Biden ad-

ministration to remove tariffs and sanctions imposed during Donald Trump's presidency, as well as measures to restrict sales of key technology to Chinese companies. The Foreign Ministry in Beijing last week said the U.S. "isn't a reliable country that is to be trusted" after administration officials tightened restrictions on Huawei Technologies Co.

China announced trials would

## Blinken urges Beijing to convince North Korea to denuclearize

AMERICA'S top diplomat yesterday pressed China to use its "tremendous influence" to convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear program, hours after the North said it will ignore U.S. offers to resume negotiations.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke at the end of high-profile security talks in Seoul, which included Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and South Korean foreign and defense ministers. The so-called "two plus two" meeting, the first of its kind in five years, came as President Joe Biden is pushing to restore America's alliances in Asia in the face of growing challenges from China and North Korea.

"Beijing has an interest,

a clear self-interest in helping to pursue denuclearization of (North Korea) because it is a source of instability. It is a source of danger and obviously a threat to us and our partners," Blinken told a news conference.

He said Beijing has "a critical role to play" to persuade North Korea to denuclearize because most of the North's external trade goes through China. Blinken stressed that China is obligated by U.N. Security Council resolutions to fully enforce sanctions imposed over North Korea's nuclear and missile tests.

China, the North's last major ally and biggest aid benefactor, has long been suspected of avoiding completely implementing sanctions on the North.

Some observers say China believes a unified, pro-U.S. Korea established on its doorstep would undermine its strategic interests, and worries that a humanitarian disaster in North Korea could push swarms of refugees flooding over the countries' border.

Earlier, Choe Son Hui, North Korea's first vice foreign minister, confirmed Blinken's previous announcement that Washington had reached out to Pyongyang through several channels starting in mid-February, but it hasn't received any response.

Choe called the U.S. outreach a "time-delaying trick" and said North Korea would keep discarding similar offers for talks unless Washington withdraws its hostility. MDT/AP



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken (left) bump elbows with South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong in Seoul yesterday



Amanda Seyfried (left) and Gary Oldman appear in a scene from "Mank," a Netflix release

OSCARS

# 'Mank' leads nominations in a year of record diversity

JAKE COYLE, MDT/AP  
FILM WRITER

**A**FTER a pandemic year that shuttered movie theaters and suspended the movie business, Academy Awards nominations this week went to two female filmmakers for the first time, to a historically diverse slate of actors and to David Fincher's lead-nominee "Mank," a traditional kind of Oscar contender — an old Hollywood homage — in very untraditional year.

Fincher's "Mank," a black-and-white, period drama about "Citizen Kane" screenwriter Herman Mankiewicz, easily topped nominations for the 93rd Academy Awards — delayed two months by the coronavirus pandemic — with 10 nominations, including best picture, best director, acting nods for Gary Oldman and Amanda Seyfried, and a host of others for its lavish craft.

Nominations were spread among a wide variety of contenders. Six films, all of them also up for best picture, score six nods: "Judas and the Black Messiah," "Nomadland," "Minari," "Sound of Metal," "The Trial of the Chicago 7" and "The Father." Also nominated for best picture was Emerald Fennell's "Promising Young Woman."

History was made in the best director category. Only five women have ever been nominated before. For the first time, two were this year. Sino-American Chloé Zhao got a nod for her elegiac road-trip drama "Nomadland" alongside first-time feature

filmmaker Fennell for her pitch black #MeToo revenge comedy. "Never going to stop crying," Fennell, also nominated for best screenplay, said on Twitter.

Zhao, the first woman of color nominated for best director, is the most nominated woman in a single year in Oscar history. She was also tipped for the film's adapted screenplay, editing and as a producer in the best picture category. The other directing nominees were Lee Isaac Chung for the tender family drama "Minari," Fincher for "Mank" and Thomas Vinterberg for his heavy-drinking Danish tragicomedy "Another Round."

For performers, it's the most diverse group of nominees ever — and a far cry from the all-white acting nods that spawned the #OscarsSoWhite hashtag five years ago. Nine of the 20 acting nominees are people of color, including a posthumous best-actor nomination for Chadwick Boseman ("Ma Rainey's Black Bottom"), as well as nods for Riz Ahmed ("Sound of Metal"), Steven Yeun ("Minari"), Viola Davis ("Ma Rainey's Black Bottom") and Andra Day ("The People vs. Billie Holiday") and supporting nominations for Daniel Kaluuya and Lakeith Stanfield ("Judas and the Black Messiah"), Leslie Odom Jr. ("One Night in Miami") and Yuh-Jung Youn ("Minari").

"We have to recognize how hard these people have worked," said Day, nominated for her performance as Billie Holiday. "We have to recognize their talent."

"When you hear your own name it's a weird feeling," said Ahmed, the first Muslim nominated for best actor. "I just quietly gave thanks and felt some gratitude."

Davis, who won for her performance in 2016's "Fences," landed her fourth Oscar nomination, making her the most nominated Black actress ever. Yeun is the first Asian American ever nominated for best actor. "Judas and the Black Messiah," Shaka King's powerful Black Panther drama, is the first best-picture nominee with an all-Black producing team (King along with Ryan Coogler and Charles D. King). Overall, a record 70 women were nominated for 76 Oscars, the academy said.

The other nominees for best actress are: Carey Mulligan ("Promising Young Woman"); Frances McDormand ("Nomadland"); Vanessa Kirby ("Pieces of a Woman"). The remaining nominee for best actor is Anthony Hopkins for the dementia drama "The Father."

With moviegoing nearly snuffed out by the coronavirus, the best-picture nominees had hardly any box office to speak of: \$14.1 million in U.S. and Canada ticket sales. For the first time, Hollywood's biggest and most sought-after awards belong to movies that were almost entirely seen at home.

"We learned a lot of hard lessons last year, but a nice one was that people will find a way to go to the movies, even if they can only go as far as their living rooms," said Aaron Sorkin, writer-director

of "The Trial of the Chicago 7," in a statement.

Netflix, as expected, led all studios with 35 nominations. The streaming service is still hunting its first best-picture winner, and this year has two shots in "Mank" and "The Trial of the Chicago 7" — a movie Paramount Pictures sold off during the pandemic. Netflix led last year, too, with 24 nominations, but came away with just two wins.

Other streamers were in the mix. Amazon Studios, in particular, was well represented with "Sound of Metal," "Borat Subsequent Moviefilm" and "One Night in Miami" — leading to 12 nominations overall. Both Apple TV+ ("Wolfwalkers," "Greyhound") and Disney+ ("Soul," "Onward") landed their first nominations. The film that tried to lead a box-office revival — Christopher Nolan's "Tenet" — walked away with nominations for production design and visual effects.

Among the films that had hoped for a better result was Spike Lee's "Da 5 Bloods" — which was nominated only for its score. Just eight out of a possible 10 movies were nominated for best picture, leaving out Golden Globe winner "Borat Subsequent Moviefilm."

Despite the best-picture snub for "Borat," Sacha Baron Cohen, who created the title character, was still a nominee for his supporting role as activist Abbie Hoffman in "The Trial of the Chicago 7," and "Borat" star Maria Bakalova was nominated for best supporting actress. Also nominated in the category: Glenn Close for "Hillbilly Elegy" and Olivia Colman for "The Father."

The most competitive category might have been documentary, where "Collective," "Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution," "The Mole Agent," "My Octopus Teacher" and "Time" ultimately landed nominations. "Collective," the Romanian documentary about investigative journalism and government corruption, became just the second film nominated for both best documentary and best international film. The other international film nominees were "Quo Vadis, Aida?," Bosnia and Herzegovina; "Another Round," Denmark; "Better Days," Hong Kong; and "The Man Who Sold His Skin," Tunisia.

The nominees for best animated feature: "Onward"; "Over the Moon"; "A Shaun the Sheep Movie: Farmageddon"; "Soul"; "Wolfwalkers." MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 1976 PRINCESS MARGARET AND LORD SNOWDON TO SPLIT



Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon are to separate after 16 years of marriage, it has been announced by Buckingham Palace.

After weeks of speculation a 39-word statement was issued by the Palace today.

It said: "HRH The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon, and the Earl of Snowdon have mutually agreed to live apart."

"The Princess will carry out her public duties and functions unaccompanied by Lord Snowdon. There are no plans for divorce proceedings."

Earl Snowdon, who is currently in Australia to open a photographic exhibition of his work, said he was "desperately sad".

It is understood he knew nothing of the announcement prior to its release.

He appealed for understanding for his two children, 14-year-old Viscount David Linley and 11-year-old Lady Sarah Armstrong-Jones.

Princess Margaret's spokesperson, John Griffin, said: "A separation has been a possibility for some time and once the final decision had been reached it was obviously best to implement it straight away."

"A separation was the best course to take in all the circumstances bearing in mind in particular the interests of the two children."

Princess Margaret, who becomes the first member of the Royal family to divorce since Henry VIII, married Antony Charles Robert Armstrong-Jones on 5 May 1960.

Just five years earlier she had called off plans to marry divorcee Group Captain Peter Townsend with whom she had been linked for several years.

Her acquaintance with 29-year-old Roddy Llewellyn, son of Olympic gold medallist horseman, Lt-Col Harry Llewellyn, has fuelled rumours about her marriage.

Last month the couple spent time on the Caribbean island of Mustique, where the Princess has taken several extended holidays without her husband since their marriage.

The Queen is said to be very sad but has had no influence in the decision.

It is understood the 45-year-old Princess, who is fifth in line to throne, will continue to take £35,000 a year from the Civil List and will continue with her public duties.

Lord Snowdon, 46, will be required to find alternative accommodation. He has never received funds from the Civil List.

In a statement the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Donald Coggan, who is in the West Indies said: "One hopes that every understanding will be shown to the Royal Family at this time of distress."

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The Princess was granted a decree nisi on 24 May 1978 at the Law Courts in London.

Six weeks later the decree became absolute, marking the official end to the marriage.

Lord Snowdon married film production assistant Lucy Lindsay-Hogg, 14 years his junior, in December 1978.

That marriage ended in divorce in 2000.

Princess Margaret never remarried although her relationship with Roddy Llewellyn continued for several years. He eventually went on to marry a younger woman.

Throughout her life, Margaret was dogged by ill health. She continued to smoke although she had to have part of her lung removed. In later years she had a number of strokes and died in February 2002.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Today's skies make it easy to stay on task and get productive, as the hardworking Taurus moon forms a series of supportive, mood-boosting alignments.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
The moon also reaches out to diligent Saturn, helping you work long hours and stay committed to any career undertakings that require patience and persistence.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
This union makes you quick to irritability and liable to make impulsive choices. Fortunately, the moon's link to steady Saturn can help you stay the course and find a physical outlet for your excess energy.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
The easygoing Taurus moon spends the day in a positive alignment with lover Venus and the illuminating sun, helping smooth over any rocky relationship terrain.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
This supportive and productive union of energies makes it easy to get any usually difficult or laborious tasks more easily off the ground. Do be aware of irritable moods - especially in the company of friends.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
This transition initiates the most psychologically rich time of year for you, in which you'll be taking a deeper look into intimacy, commitment, and shared financial structures.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
You're feeling a fresh burst of energy emerge under Friday's skies, Libra. Don't keep yourself cooped up... instead, let yourself act on your desire for spontaneity and new environments!

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
As a Scorpio, you can rarely stomach surface-level interactions and small talk. Friday's skies turn that feeling all the way up, as the moon treks through reflective Gemini.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
This union can either raise tempers and voices, or turn up the heat romantically - it's your choice how that plays out! Fortunately, Luna's link to stable Saturn helps keep conversations grounded in reality.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
These energies make it easy to conquer all of the tasks on your to-do list and to do them well. You also need a release for pent-up energies as well, so incorporate exercise if you can.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
You're not likely to be in the mood for labor today, Aquarius. Rather, you're looking to reconnect with those activities in life that bring you a sense of joy and creative fulfillment.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
The heady Gemini moon aligns with go-getter Mars and stable Saturn, helping you send persistent energy towards any home projects or family concerns that need addressing.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

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

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

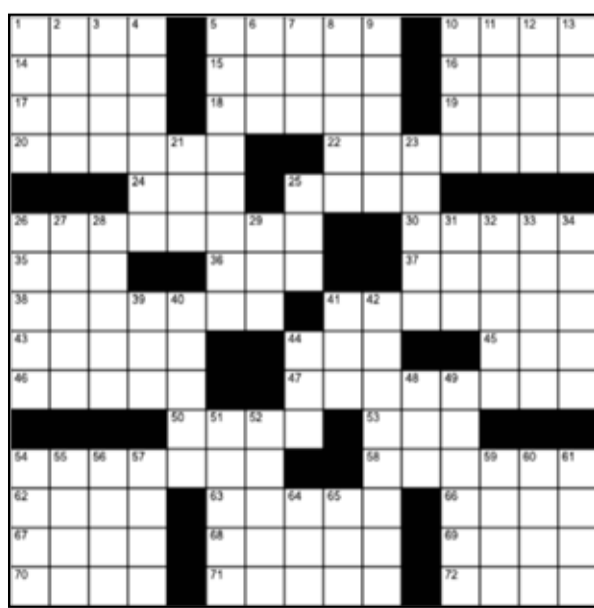
**WEATHER**

|              | MIN | MAX | CONDITION                |
|--------------|-----|-----|--------------------------|
| <b>CHINA</b> |     |     |                          |
| Beijing      | 3   | 13  | drizzle                  |
| Harbin       | -6  | 8   | cloudy                   |
| Tianjin      | 4   | 13  | overcast                 |
| Urumqi       | -10 | -3  | clear                    |
| Xi'an        | 7   | 10  | drizzle                  |
| Lhasa        | 0   | 15  | cloudy                   |
| Chengdu      | 14  | 20  | overcast                 |
| Chongqing    | 18  | 22  | overcast                 |
| Kunming      | 11  | 26  | clear                    |
| Nanjing      | 10  | 12  | drizzle                  |
| Shanghai     | 11  | 14  | drizzle                  |
| Wuhan        | 9   | 11  | moderate rain            |
| Hangzhou     | 11  | 14  | drizzle to moderate rain |
| Taipei       | 19  | 22  | cloudy                   |
| Guangzhou    | 22  | 30  | cloudy                   |
| Hong Kong    | 22  | 27  | cloudy                   |
| <b>WORLD</b> |     |     |                          |
| Moscow       | -5  | 4   | cloudy                   |
| Frankfurt    | -2  | 9   | sleet                    |
| Paris        | 3   | 5   | drizzle                  |
| London       | 6   | 10  | drizzle                  |
| New York     | -1  | 10  | sleet                    |

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS** 1- Anklebones; 5- Prospect; 10- Permits; 14- Not "fer"; 15- \_\_\_ alia; 16- Peter Fonda title role; 17- Unnecessarily; 19- Pigeon coop; 20- Where Columbus was born; 21- Taller and thinner; 23- Japanese sash; 25- Pertaining to the kidneys; 26- Whaler's direction; 29- In the neighborhood; 31- Decoration; 35- VCR button; 36- With "eye," unerring aim; 37- Gambling house; 38- Encode; 40- Remain longer; 41- Unmitigated; 42- Morse element; 43- Acapulco aunt; 44- Ornamental coronet; 45- Portnoy's creator; 46- Child's toy; 47- Host; 49- "\_\_\_ don't say!"; 51- Taproom; 54- Deplete; 58- Opposed to; 59- Bad luck; 63- Part of a process; 64- Bar, legally; 65- Art Deco artist; 66- Being, to Brutus; 67- Former Russian rulers; 68- Corner piece;

**DOWN:** 1- Strong taste; 2- "The Morning Watch" author; 3- Legal claim; 4- Not alfresco; 5- Contend; 6- Officeholders; 7- Ave. crossers; 8- Bank employee; 9- Ancient Indo-European; 10- Unfortunate; 11- "The Time Machine" race; 12- Mal de \_\_\_; 13- Psychic; 18- Test site; 22- Super Bowl III MVP; 24- Bungling; 25- Far out; 26- Pay for; 27- Artist Rousseau; 28- Capital on the Gulf of Guinea; 30- Use, consume; 32- Same here; 33- For want of \_\_\_; 34- Devoted; 36- Electric generator; 37- Soft and comfortable; 39- Early fruit; 40- Muesli bit; 42- Her partner would be a buck; 45- Negligent; 46- Cloth for cleaning horizontal surfaces; 48- Celestial body; 50- Lord's Prayer starter; 51- Ignoble; 52- Fornicary residents; 53- Hwys.; 55- Franc replacement; 56- A law \_\_\_ itself; 57- Spy; 60- RR stop; 61- In place of; 62- Goddess of fertility in Roman mythology;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

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- 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
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F&B

# PORTUGUESE WINES VYING TO CRACK CHINA MARKET

**T**HE agreement signed by China and the European Union (EU) in September 2020 to protect the geographical indications (GIs) of local products directly impacts one of Portugal's most valued specialties - the red wines from the regions of Porto, Dao, Douro and Alentejo.

The landmark China-EU agreement, which took effect on March 1, protects and guarantees the authenticity of 100 GIs

from each side. GI sign is used to show the specific geographical origin of a product and identify its qualities or reputation due to that origin. It is an important type of intellectual property right and a quality guarantee.

As a result of the deal, the total number of EU GIs protected in China increased to 134 while Chinese GIs that are officially protected in the EU were up to 110.

Frederico Falcão, president of the Board of ViniPortugal, the Interprofessional Association of the Portuguese Wine Industry, considers this "long-awaited" agreement "historic," because "China is a strategic market for Portugal."

"China is currently our 16th largest market, but only because business was not good in 2020 due to the pandemic, and our exports declined a lot," he explained

ned in an interview with Xinhua.

"China is a country in which Portugal wants to continue to invest in terms of promoting its wines and is a place where we place a lot of hope, and that is why we have an ambitious investment plan in this market to try to increase the sale of Portuguese wines," he said.

According to Falcão, the Portuguese wine industry plans to invest close to half a million euros (600,000 U.S. dollars) in participation in fairs in Shanghai, visits to the market and promotional actions in several cities, including Hong Kong and Macau.

China has been a promising market for Portuguese wines before 2020, Falcão said, "and we hope that 2021 will bring improvements," he said.

In 2019, for example, Portugal exported about 20 million euros worth of wines to China, making it the sector's 13th largest market ahead of traditional trading partners, such as Spain.

"Portuguese wine has become popular in China," he said, where people consider it "not an alcoholic drink but a drink that complements a healthy lifestyle."

"Although we are a very small country, in terms of wine we are the ninth largest exporters in the world. Portugal boasts a wide range of different climates, soils and grape varieties, and therefo-

re each of the country's regions has its unique, flagship wine styles," he told Xinhua.

Falcão highlighted port, a full-bodied sweet red wine made by adding brandy to fermenting wine. It is higher in alcohol content than unfortified wines.

This unique wine "comes from the north-central Douro Valley, one of the world's oldest demarcated wine regions, which produces complex wines "with more structure, more body, more aging potential."

According to Falcão, in China, port wine "has not yet earned the deserved recognition, and for this reason our exports are still limited."

The Dao region just south of the Douro Valley has a "more continental climate with hot days and cold nights," and the wines produced there are lighter but equally unique, he said.

The southern Alentejo region has a slightly better soil diversity of sand, granite and clay, he said. This region has a growing number of mostly young wineries, but its products already feature high on the list of Portugal's wine exporters.

According to Falcão, most connoisseurs would argue that the Alentejo wines have become the closest competitors to the Douro Valley wines on the Chinese market. XINHUA

AD

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# Evolution of masterpieces

IRENE SAM, MDT

**T**HE latest evolution of **The Manor's** menu is here and it is indeed one of the most exciting selections of gastronomic masterpiece in town. Showcasing a range of exclusive ingredients and distinctive presentations under the tutelage of St. Regis Macao's Executive Sous Chef, Michele Dell'Aquila, it introduces the highly sought after Okan Wagyu beef from Australia and George Bruck foie gras from France, as well as a new version of the much-loved Glacier 51 tooth fish from depths of the Indian Ocean. For the latest menu, Chef Michele's idea is to highlight the distinct attributes of each ingredient by imparting each dish with a combination of local, eastern and western flavours.

"The finest dining experiences in the world are always founded on the highest quality ingredients, and the menu has been crafted around that principle, and I feel honoured to be able to share what is simply some of the best providence from the land and the sea," he says.

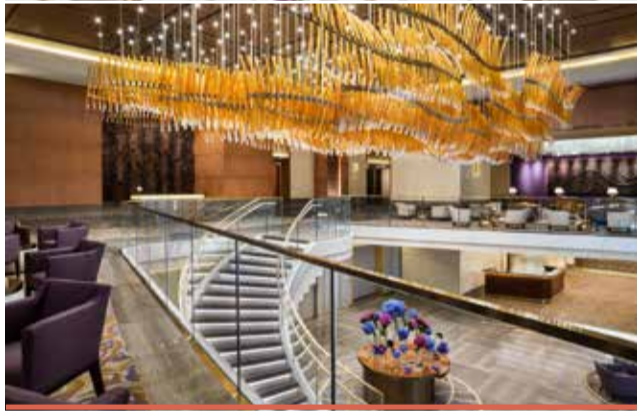
Okan Australian Wagyu tenderloin is delicately seared to maximize the succulent texture and distinctive flavour, complemented with a buttery Jerusalem artichoke purée, earthy morels and the gentle bitterness of broccolini. Less common than conventional

wagyu breeds and highly sought after, Okan Wagyu is sourced from the rolling green hills of southern Australia, and was recently awarded a gold medal in the Australian 2020 Wagyu Branded Beef Competition.

Next, a mouthwatering presentation of George Bruck foie gras, served with red berries for acidity and paired with the warm, nutty aromas of Japanese kinako, provides a umami sensation. Hailing from Strasbourg in eastern France, George Bruck foie gras is cultured slowly to impart an intense, earthy flavour while maintaining a silky-smooth texture with an unmistakably indulgent mouthfeel.

Glacier 51 tooth fish sourced from the deep, icy waters of the Indian Ocean more than 4,000 kilometres from the Australian mainland remains a star on the menu. Completely re-envisioned, the Glacier 51 tooth fish is infused with subtle flavours, served on a 'migas' of Portuguese chouriço and squid ink, finished with a Champagne emulsion, providing a perfect balance to the wagyu-like buttery texture and mild ocean flavour of the fish.

Dessert is aptly titled Coffee. For this last creation, Chef Michele pays homage to his homeland and draws inspiration from the classic Italian tiramisu, combining indulgent mascarpone cream, caramelised almond and a Baileys foam with the sweet yet gently bitter flavour of rich coffee.



## Macau Racing Tips

By Davy Chiu, MDT



### LAST WEEK TIP:



Sheng Li Superstar last Sunday returned a very generous dividend of MOP136 (Win) and MOP63.5 (Place) - per MOP10 bet.

### THE LUOYANG 1200 TURF (DIV 1)

2021-03-20 | Sat | 16:20

I am going again for another outsider this Saturday in **Sheng Li Star**. Again he is also an underdog in this low class race. He has not won in MJC in his racing career, but looking at his preps especially Wednesday morning when his trainer was on him, he was so relaxed and yet full of energy and when asked for a bit more he responded so well in the straight. This is a piece of work that gives me the feeling that he is ready for a good crack in his coming up races. His rating stands at 31 which in my humble opinion is very modest. With the booking of L. Corrales this Saturday in a weak race, let's bank on him and hopefully that he can offer our readers with some handsome return.

Race 5 | Horse no. 8 Sheng Li Star Win & Place bets



**OPINION**

**World Views**

The Editors, MDT/Bloomberg

**TO WIN OVER ASIA,  
 TALK TRADE**

President Joe Biden is showing he understands that Asia matters. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin visited Japan and South Korea this week — their first trips abroad as members of the new administration. But in managing its relationships with the region, the Biden team is in danger of forgetting something that matters a lot to its partners, and should matter no less to the U.S. And that's trade.

Suspicion of agreements such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) — an 11-nation pact that in its earlier form included the U.S. — runs deep among Democrats, and especially with their union base. Biden has repeatedly vowed not to sign any new trade deals before first investing more in American workers.

He ought to do both. On trade, there are real costs to standing on the sidelines. With the conclusion of the 15-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership last fall, the U.S. stands outside the two biggest trade agreements in the world's fastest-growing region. That puts American workers and companies at a disadvantage, and allows other countries — including China — to write the rules of trade for the coming decades.

It also does serious damage to the very thing Biden is trying to rebuild: U.S. credibility. While most Asian nations want the U.S. engaged in the region as a counterbalance to China, they have no interest in being shoehorned into an overtly anti-Beijing coalition. Their priority remains growth and development, all the more so after the devastation wrought by the Covid-19 pandemic. They're looking to the U.S. as a market, a source of investment and technology, and a champion of the open global trading system that enabled their rise. Choosing not to engage on trade will undermine support for Biden's other goals in the region.

At a minimum, the administration should make clear it understands this reality. It could start by launching talks on a narrower sectoral agreement, such as one focused on digital trade, to build confidence. Much of the groundwork has already been done, both in the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement, which improved on the CPTPP's digital provisions, and in separate pacts struck by countries such as Singapore, Australia and New Zealand.

Another target might be an agreement focused on green goods and services. Building on commitments the U.S. just made with its so-called "Quad" partners (India, Australia and Japan), the administration could also widen talks on securing supply chains for critical materials and technologies, including rare earths and semiconductors.

And Biden shouldn't give up on rejoining CPTPP. This needn't be as hard as the president appears to think. Polls suggest that support for trade is stronger among the public than in Congress, and changes made to the pact since the U.S. withdrew should also make it more appealing to Democrats.

In any case, Biden should be guided by what's good for the country and its workers, not by what seems most politically convenient. Standing aside from TPP (as it then was) rivals Brexit as an unforced act of economic self-harm. Biden's team should be quietly conferring with key countries such as Japan to sketch out the stricter labor and environmental provisions that would be needed for the U.S. to rejoin. At the same time, the White House should accelerate measures to support the workers most affected by foreign trade.

International economic cooperation is vital to sustain the global economic recovery, raise productivity and living standards, and advance America's security interests in Asia. Biden says the U.S. is once again ready to lead. The president needs to lead on trade, too.

Chinese authorities summoned 11 companies including Alibaba and Tencent for talks regarding the security of voice software, as Beijing steps up scrutiny over the internet sector.

The internet watchdog the Cyberspace Administration of China said yesterday that the talks were about security assessments of technology used in voice-based social media and deepfake technology that can potentially manipulate and create synthetic audio content of people speaking.

The move comes as authorities in recent months have increased oversight over technology firms in the country, over

concerns of anticompetitive behavior. Twelve technology companies, including Tencent and Baidu, were fined for flouting anti-monopoly rules.

Companies called in for talks with the CAC included smartphone maker Xiaomi, TikTok parent company ByteDance and live-streaming firm Kuaishou.

Authorities urged them to comply with cybersecurity laws and conduct security assessments, improve risk prevention and control and "take effective rectification measures" for any previously unknown safety hazards.



AP PHOTO

ONE GOOD THING

**VENEZUELAN TEEN SELLS  
 DRAWINGS ON TWITTER  
 TO BUY FOOD**

**JUAN PABLO ARRÁEZ  
 & REGINA G. CANO,  
 BARQUISIMETO**

**S**AMUEL Andrés Mendoza carefully chooses from dozens of colored pencils spread out on his kitchen table, humming a reggaeton song as he deftly applies contrast to the Dragon Ball anime character taking shape on his sketch pad.

It is not just a pastime anymore for the 14-year-old. Without his mother's knowledge, he began selling his drawings on his Twitter page to help the family get by and to pay for a special diet doctors say he needs in Venezuela's troubled economy.

"Hi. I'm Samuel, I'm selling my drawings for \$1 to help my mom with my diet, buy her a house and a shop so she won't work on the street and get sick with COVID-19 and buy peanut butter for me. Thank you, sir and madam," he tweeted along with photos of four drawings.

It caught the eye of many and he now has more than 15,000 followers, selling dozens of drawings he has worked up at a table between a worn-out couch and a rusting refrigerator in the small family home

in Barquisimeto, about five hours west of Venezuela's capital, Caracas.

"The truth is I did not know that I was going to draw like that, but time has passed, and I have managed to paint for real," Samuel said this month, showing his finished drawing of Dragon Ball's Goku. "And here it is."

In a crisis-wracked country where workers earn an average of \$2 per month, his sales can make a big difference for a family budget strained by his need for high-protein foods to deal with a form of

**"Hi. I'm Samuel,  
 I'm selling my  
 drawings for \$1 to  
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 house and a shop..."**

TWEET

malnutrition.

Like millions of other Venezuelans, Samuel and his mother, Magdalena Rodríguez, emigrated in search of better conditions. They went to Colombia in 2019 when widespread power outages hit her homeland just as she learned of her son's diagnosis.

But they came home in December after she lost

her job and found increasing prejudice against the growing number of Venezuelan migrants.

The mother of three now sells snacks from a table in Barquisimeto's main plaza. She also found work as a cleaner. Still, it has been difficult to afford the relatively expensive high-protein foods needed by her son, who also has a diagnosis of Asperger syndrome, a broad branch of the autism spectrum.

"It's not easy," Rodríguez said.

Rodríguez, 38, discovered Samuel's effort when he asked for her bank account information so that people could pay for his work.

Samuel, who said he began drawing at age 5, has an inclination for anime characters, but has also portrayed soccer superstar Cristiano Ronaldo and the animated SpongeBob SquarePants.

Venezuelan artist Oscar Olivares, who runs an art academy, saw Samuel's tweets and gave him a scholarship to study drawing. Social media followers have also gifted him a laptop, a set of artists' pencils — and peanut butter, a good source of protein.

"I'm proud of him, really. I don't have words," Rodríguez said. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

**Afghanistan** A helicopter crash overnight has taken the lives of at least nine Afghan military personnel in a central province, the defense ministry said yesterday. In a statement, it said that four crew members of the MI-17 helicopter along with five security personnel were killed in the crash, in the Behsud district of Maidan Wardak province. It gave no further detail except to say that investigations were ongoing.

**Russia** hosted a peace conference for Afghanistan yesterday, bringing together government representatives and their Taliban adversaries along with international observers in a bid to help jump-start the country's stalled peace process. The one-day gathering is the first of three planned international conferences ahead of a May 1 deadline for the final withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops from the country.



AP PHOTO

**Vatican** A former altar boy has testified to being a victim of sexual abuse in the Vatican's youth seminary, saying his initial shock gave way to resignation because he feared being sent home. Accuser L.G. testified for the first time yesterday in the Vatican's criminal courtroom, in the first-ever case to go to trial alleging sexual abuse within the Vatican walls.



AP PHOTO

**Spain** Hundreds of yellow-and-black taxi cabs disrupted traffic in Barcelona yesterday to protest the return of the ride-hailing giant Uber to the northeastern Spanish city after a 2-year hiatus. The U.S.-based multinational was driven out of the streets of Barcelona in February 2019, when regional authorities ordered that rides arranged through mobile apps had to be hired at least 15 minutes in advance.