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CHINA'S VICE PREMIER HAS CALLED ON MACAU TO MAKE A CONCERTED EFFORT IN ORGANIZING THE 2021 LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

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GRAND LISBOA PALACE TO RECEIVE OPERATING PERMIT SOON: SJM

P4

A REPATRIATION FLIGHT TO NEPAL TOOK HOME SOME 45 STRANDED NEPALESE, INDIAN AND BHUTANESE WHO HAVE BEEN STRANDED IN THE CITY DUE TO COVID-19

P3

HEIGHTENED ALERT

AP PHOTO



Iraq's Interior Ministry said yesterday that 82 people died and 110 were injured in a catastrophic fire that broke out in the intensive care unit of a Baghdad hospital tending to severe coronavirus patients. Negligence on the part of hospital authorities has been blamed for the fire, which initial reports suggest was caused when an oxygen cylinder exploded in the ward of Ibn al-Khatib hospital. Iraq's prime minister fired key hospital officials hours after the catastrophic incident.



AP PHOTO



Armenia's prime minister has resigned, a step necessary to hold snap parliamentary elections in June. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced the June 20 elections last month to try to resolve political tensions that arose after last year's defeat in a war with Azerbaijan. Under a cease-fire signed by Pashinyan, Armenia ceded large swaths of territory in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.



Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak called for improvements in the security operation following the Crystal Fish drill

P3



AP PHOTO



Australia On another Anzac Day turned lonesome by the global pandemic, solitary actions showed all the more how the sacrifices of Australia and New Zealand during World War I are far from forgotten. While global attention turned at dawn yesterday to the beaches of Turkey's Gallipoli where the two emerging countries crafted a sense of nationhood from the horrors of war in April 1915, all along the front line in Europe, small ceremonies highlighted gratitude for the so-called Anzac troops over a century after the war ended.



NG LAP SENG BACK IN TOWN

P2



More on backpage

BRIBERY CONVICT NG LAP SENG BACK IN MACAU

HONEY TSANG

NG Lap Seng, the local real estate tycoon convicted of bribery, was granted early release from prison in the U.S., and was confirmed to have returned to Macau on Wednesday, April 21, a source who wishes to stay anonymous has told the Times.

The Times contacted the Public Security Police Force last Friday and is waiting for their confirmation regarding Ng's current whereabouts.

As Ng has returned to Macau from the U.S., he should be observing mandatory quarantine in one of the designated facilities in Macau for 21 days, and undergoing self-health management measures for at least seven days.

"He was chatting all the time, laughing and complaining at the same time," a guest, who had checked into the same quarantine hotel as Ng, revealed to the Times.

Earlier on March 18 (local time), a U.S. District Judge Vernon Broderick gave permission for Ng to be released from prison early on compassionate grounds due to his deteriorating health.

The exemption was sanctioned as, Broderick explained, it would be safer for Ng to stay in Macau than in a Pennsylvania prison, where hundreds of Covid-19 cases have been reported.

In 2017, Ng, Macau's real estate tycoon, was sentenced to four years' imprisonment for bribing two United Nations (UN) ambassadors. The bribe was intended to

ensure the construction of a multibillion-dollar conference center in Macau to host the annual United Nations Global South-South Development Expo and other events.

Ng had been serving a four-year term at a Pennsylvania prison in the U.S.

Previous news reports stated that Ng would be flying to Macau after he is fully vaccinated with two doses of the Covid-19 vaccine. However, the exact date for him to land in Macau had not been specified.

It is said that Ng has been suffering from diabetes. He was originally scheduled to be released from prison on December 23 this year.

Ng is the founder of Macau-based real estate developer Sun Kian Ip Group.



ELECTIONS 2021

Ex-New Macau member Scott Chiang likely to run with Ng Kuok Cheong

INCUMBENT lawmaker António Ng Kuok Cheong hinted yesterday on his social media platform about a possible partnership with previous New Macau Association (ANM) member Scott Chiang Meng Hin in the upcoming parliamentary election.

For two days in a row, the lawmaker has made posts on his social media platform with pictures depicting the ex-ANM member speaking or helping at his nomination kiosks across the city.

Captions to the photographs typed by the lawmaker were ambiguous. Ng referred to his team, among them Chiang, as "brave youths," but did not explicitly ascribe to Chiang any position or title.

The most explicit post came with a picture of Ng's wife, Kong Son Mei,



who expressed support for Chiang being the number-one candidate on Ng's list. Kong described Chiang as wise, brave, pragmatic and realistic.

Kong has normally run with Ng as the last candidate on his list.

When asked about the speculation, Chiang did not offer a direct answer. He has neither admitted to nor denied the spe-

culatation. Nonetheless, "I think one won't be at fault if [they] just assume I admitted so," Chiang said to the Times.

In previous years, Chiang has been a full-time househusband, only writing column articles occasionally for multiple media organizations in and out of Macau. Most of the time he has posted on social media about gro-

cery shopping and price comparisons, as well as recipes.

Some social media users were pondering whether Chiang's wife, who seldom appears in the public eye, would run as the last candidate on the list, similar to the previous practice of Kong.

Chiang brushed off this speculation, hinting that it would be unlikely. **AL**

10 RETURNNEES SENT TO CLINICAL CENTRE IN COLOANE

A total of 10 residents who returned from Nepal to the SAR were sent to the Public Health Clinical Centre in Coloane for quarantine after five of them tested positive for Covid-19 antibodies.

According to a statement issued yesterday, the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre explained that one resident's nucleic acid test was unclear. The other four residents, who also tested positive for antibodies, tes-

td negative on their nucleic acid tests. Another test will be conducted today.

10 of them arrived in the city via a chartered flight.

From today, residents returning to Macau who have been to Nepal and Brazil within 28 days prior to entering the SAR will have to undergo a 28-day quarantine period, according to the centre. Upon completion of the quarantine, there is no need for an additional seven-day self-health management. **LV**



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CRYSTAL FISH 2021

Security chief identifies five aspects to improve

RENATO MARQUES

THE Joint Civil Protection Operations Centre held a typhoon drill on Saturday – codenamed “Crystal Fish 2021” – to test the operation capacity of the Civil Protection system ahead of the typhoon season.

After the drill, the Secretary for Security and Commander of Joint Civil Protection Opera-

tions, Wong Sio Chak, noted five aspects to be improved in the operation of the security forces. He also noted changes to operations to be made by other governmental and non-governmental entities that comprise the Civil Protection structure.

In his remarks, Wong noted that members of the civil protection structure should act quickly and be able to promptly activate the Civil Protection Operations

Center (COPC), noting that a real emergency requires an immediate response.

Another aspect that Wong wants to see improved is the capacity to observe and respond to online rumors, saying that immediate clarification will avoid unnecessary panic.

The Secretary also noted that, according to the newly entered into force Civil Protection Legal Regime, members must pay at-

tention to entry and closure of the alert level regulated by orders of the Chief Executive, in order to ensure that actions are always taken according to the laws.

Wong also wants members of the Civil Protection team to upload relevant information faster and more accurately, enabling other members to be more effective and oriented in command and decision-making.

Finally, the Secretary sees room for improvement in the inspection and evacuation procedures for low-lying areas. Wong noted that each department in charge of these tasks needs to continue to be proficient in improving skills and procedures so that, during a real emergency, the application of the measures can be more efficient. He highlighted in a briefing to the media

the effectiveness of the “Crystal Fish 2021” typhoon drill.

The drill started at 1:45 p.m. on Saturday, lasted for about four and a half hours and simulated around 60 types of incidents likely to occur during a super typhoon in conjunction with an extremely high tide. This event would raise the water levels about 2.5 meters over the road surface in the low-lying areas of the city.

Around 2,700 people participated in the drill, including participants from 17 non-governmental organizations and 420 volunteers.

In the drill, the Civil Protection centre also simulated the evacuation of a total of 2061 households.

The drill, which has become an annual event, aims to review the effectiveness of implementing current emergency plans in various departments. It also seeks to strengthen the communication, coordination, and connection among different parts of the civil protection structure, and to increase public awareness and knowledge regarding the evacuation methods and routes.

Concurrently, the drill also tested capacity to respond to several kinds of emergencies, including: a traffic accident with a dangerous products truck; refusal from residents in low-lying areas to evacuate from their homes; a rescue in narrow streets; a fire in a ship; a traffic accident in the tunnel of the Sai Van Bridge; and an emergency water supply dispatch. It also evaluated responsiveness to emergencies related to objects falling from buildings, among others that are common during severe typhoons.

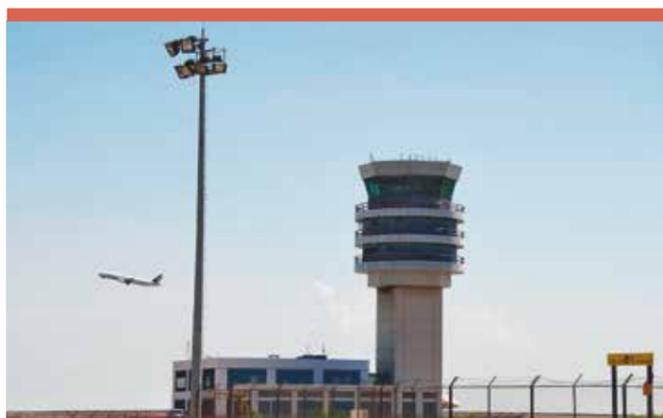
Repatriation flight takes all stranded Nepalese home

HONEY TSANG

A repatriation flight yesterday took around 45 stranded Nepalese, Indian and Bhutanese people from Macau to Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. The president of the Nepalese Chamber of Commerce, Sudarshan Magar, revealed the details of the flight to the Times.

The flight – numbered H9 8662 – was provided by Himalaya Airlines and arranged by the Nepalese Chamber of Commerce.

Yesterday, April 25, the flight helped repatriate around 45 people stranded in Macau to Nepal. Approximately 30 of them were Nepalese, eight were Indian citizens, and the others were Bhutanese.



The Nepalese Chamber of Commerce also arranged for another flight to send Indian citizens to India upon their arrival in Nepal.

The scheduled flight departed Macau yesterday at around 4:45 a.m. and landed in Ka-

thmandu on the same day at around 9:25 a.m. (local time).

Most of the passengers were employed in Macau resorts and were rejected when they attempted to renew their working visas with employers, Magar revealed.

This was the second repatriation flight organized by the Nepalese Chamber of Commerce. The first, carrying a total of 172 passengers, departed from Macau to Nepal on April 1.

The second flight succeeded in assisting almost all stranded Nepalese in Macau to return to their home country.

“I don’t think we have stranded Nepalese people left in Macau after this repatriation flight for now. But there are still around 40 stranded Indian citizens in Macau,” Magar told the Times.

The same plane, deployed from Nepal to Macau on April 24, a day before carrying out the repatriation mission, also brought back seven Macau ID holders and four Nepalese people from Nepal to Macau.

The four Nepalese people were granted an exemption to enter Macau by the Health Bureau (SSM) to serve as prison guards in Macau.

PRICE INDEX CONTINUES GRADUAL DESCENT

The Composite Consumer price index (CPI) last month dropped by 0.97% year-on-year, official statistics released by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) show. The Composite CPI for March (102.29) decreased once more, after having dropped by 0.95% year-on-year in February. The decrease was justified by lower charges for package tours and telecommunication services, as well as the falling prices of pork, gasoline, and clothing.

BLOOD TRANSFUSION CENTER ANNOUNCES REQUIRED INTERVALS FOR VACCINATED DONORS

In order to ensure the quantity and safety of blood in Macau, the Blood Transfusion Center has announced that the required blood donation interval for those who have taken inactivated vaccines, including Sinopharm CNBG and CoronaVac, will be 48 hours after the day of completion of each dose. For other vaccines, such the mRNA vaccine, the required interval will be 14 days after the completion of each dose.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

GROUP DEFENDS VEGETARIAN DIET FOLLOWING AO IEONG'S REMARKS

ANTHONY LAM

THE assertion that adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet will result in malnutrition is groundless, Simpson Lee, committee member of the Macau Association of Vegetarian Culture, said yesterday.

The comment was made at a public event, where he was asked about an earlier remark made at the Legislative Assembly by Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Ao Ieong U.

At that particular parliamentary plenary, Ao Ieong was asked whether the government would offer vegetarian options at public facilities, such as hospitals, prisons, library cafés, kindergartens and schools.

In response, the senior official said that it was unlikely for the time being because a "vegetarian diet may result in malnutrition in infants and children."

Bolstering his answer, Lee cited a study conducted by the American Dietetic Association about



a decade ago. "They published a position paper about 10 years ago, saying that a 100% plant-based diet is healthy for all people in all stages of life, including pregnancy, lactation and infancy," Lee said.

He said that a lot of govern-

ment bodies "referenced their studies for implementing public health and nutrition guidelines."

An article titled "Becoming a Vegetarian," last updated on April 15, 2020 on Harvard Health Publishing, operated by the Harvard

Medical School, noted that "studies are confirming the health benefits of meat-free eating."

The article also cited the American Dietetic Association in pointing out that "appropriately planned vegetarian diets, including total vegetarian or vegan diets, are healthful, nutritionally adequate, and may provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases."

It further explained that an "appropriately planned vegetarian diet" is comparable to a mainstream diet in terms of the absorption of nutrients. A balanced diet is as important in the context of vegan or vegetarian diets as in the case of a mainstream one. It is crucial that an individual carefully select a wide range of foodstuffs in order to obtain sufficient nutrients for the body.

Lee also appealed to religious bodies to support his view. "If eating a vegetarian diet is unhealthy, we wouldn't have [had] monks and vegetarian Buddhists for hundreds of years," he remarked.

30% OF LOCALS REGULARLY TAKE VEGETARIAN MEALS: SURVEY

THE Macau Association of Vegetarian Culture recently held a press conference to announce the results of the city's first vegetarian demographic study. The study found that 30% of Macau people consume a vegetarian meal on a regular basis, be that once a week or every day. The association commissioned the Macau Research Centre to conduct face-to-face interviews for the survey. Some 313 successful interviews were

conducted in several districts in the city between June 12 and 27 last year. The survey found that 29% of respondents believed the availability of vegetarian options would lead to an expansion of the vegetarian population. Yesterday, the association also launched the city's first vegetarian food map, on which 57 vegetarian restaurants and grocery stores are listed.

GAMING

Grand Lisboa Palace to receive operating permit soon: SJM

RENATO MARQUES

THE Grand Lisboa Palace integrated resort, owned by local gaming operator SJM Holdings Ltd (SJM), has passed final government inspections and is expected to receive its operating licensing soon. The news was relayed by the company's vice chairman, CEO, and executive director Ambrose So in SJM's annual report.

In the report released late last week regarding new developments soon to begin operation in Cotai, So said, "At Grand Lisboa Palace, we have passed several of the final government inspections, and we expect to receive our operating permit soon."

In the same report, the company reaffirmed its previous intentions to open the Cotai development during the first half of 2021. So added that certainty regarding this timeframe would help ease the pressure currently faced by the company from retaining a large number of



staff members considered unnecessary for the operations of the other casino and hotel venues of SJM due to the drop in visitors.

"The opening of the Grand Lisboa Palace will relieve some of the cost pressures on our existing operation, as we will be able to transfer a large number of current employees to the new property."

The Grand Lisboa Palace project is comprised of three separate hotels, including the Grand Lisboa

Palace Hotel, the Palazzo Versace Hotel, and the Karl Lagerfeld Hotel, adding in aggregate almost 2,000 new hotel rooms to Cotai.

Along with the casino, the development also includes meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) venues, dining, and entertainment venues and a shopping arcade.

In a recent report, investment bank JP Morgan hinted that while the casino venues and some of the hotel rooms will open

by the end of June, other venues within the development are unlikely to open until later this year or even early next year.

Important factors in the potential postponement would be the progress of Covid-19 containment and the recovery of in-bound figures of tourists to Macau.

SJM posted a net loss of over HKD3 billion in 2020 and reported a drop in revenue by around 78% in 2020 when compared with the previous year.

NEW LOCAL TOURISM INITIATIVE KICKED OFF YESTERDAY

THE "Stay, Dine and See Macao" initiative began yesterday, with the first batch of local tour groups setting off. The project is the newest bid from the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) to revive the local tourism economy.

The six groups, totaling around 230 participants, embarked on their local tours at the Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal.

At the departure point, MGTO director, Helena de Senna Fernandes, said she was delighted to hear about residents' interest in the new initiative. She added that she believes that the tours can not only familiarize residents with local tourism resources, but also bolster the travel trade and stimulate spending in communities.

Applications for the tours began on April 15, and will feature six different tour itineraries and hotel experiences.

The project incentivizes residents to explore Macau and, according to MGTO, has been attracting many applicants.

According to figures cited by MGTO, the most popular tour is the helicopter ride experience and yacht trip, which has received 15,552 applications. As of last Saturday, 2,209 residents had signed up for the other five itineraries. The "staycation" offer, which began last Friday, has registered 1,569 hotel packages as sold, and is set to host around 4,000 residents.

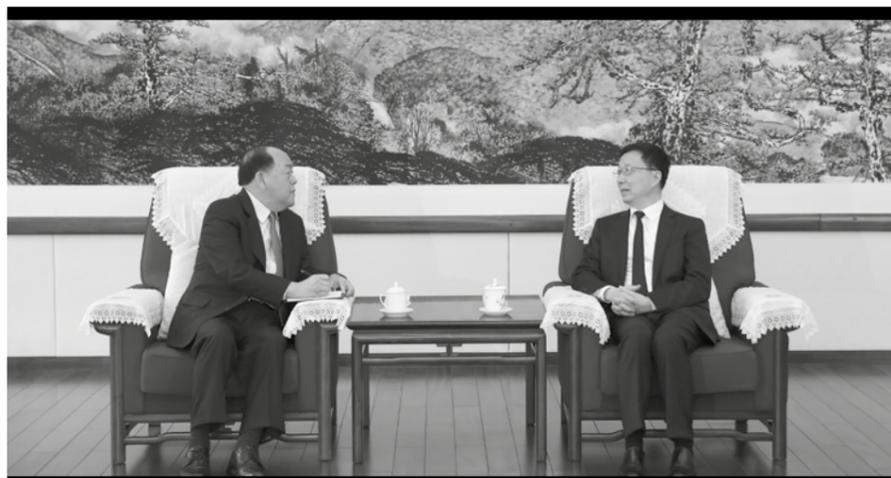
The "Stay, Dine and See Macao" initiative will run local tours between April 25 and December 31. Tours will be available on weekends and public holidays from April to June and September to December. The frequency of tours will be increased to daily operation during the summer holidays period in July and August. **RM**

Vice Premier meets SARs' top officials, calls to exert effort for 2021 elections

CHINA'S Vice Premier Han Zheng has called on the Macau SAR to make a concerted effort in organizing the election of its seventh Legislative Assembly during a meeting with the Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng in Guangzhou.

Ho, along with Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam, traveled to Guangzhou to attend a meeting of the group spearheading the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area.

Han, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, urged the Hong Kong SAR to step up local legislation related to its electoral reform and ensure that local elections



in 2021 and 2022 are properly organized.

Both SARs should prioritize Covid-19 prevention and control in reviving their economies and improving their people's livelihoods, Han said. He added that the central government would "continue offering its full support, as always."

Han urged for joint efforts to develop the Greater Bay Area and maintain the long-term prosperity and stability of the Hong Kong and Macau SARs, thus pushing forward the principle of "One country, two systems."

Lam and Ho both pledged to actively participate in the development of the

Greater Bay Area and carry out relevant work.

Regarding the development of the Guangdong-Macau Intensive Cooperation Zone planned for Hengqin, the MSAR pledged that it would devote further effort to realise aspirations raised by President Xi Jinping in key speeches. **LV**

SELECTION PROCESS FOR HOME SWAP HOUSING TO COMMENCE IN MAY

MACAU Urban Renewal Company (MUR) will start the flat selection process for home swap housing units on Lot P in Areia Preta in May, the company has announced.

To date, of the 1,932 applications that have registered their properties, 1,902 have been accepted and 30 are still being suspended for handling. 12 applications have been rejected because they have failed to register their properties. MUR rejected these applications in accordance with relevant laws and orders.

Based on the layout plan of Lot P, six residential towers for home swap housing will be built on Lot A, providing about 2,000 units

for eligible applicants who are original Pearl Horizon pre-sale buyers affected by the cancellation of a previous land concession. The original unit design of Pearl Horizon featured more than 10 types of units.

MUR will hold home swap housing flat selection explanatory meetings in phases from May for eligible applicants, explaining in detail the flat selection procedure and the similar home swap housing unit type available for pairing.

The construction of home swap housing units will be completed by the end of 2024. Eligible applicants do not need to make any pre-payments at this stage. **LV**



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CHINESE FIRMS ARE LISTING IN THE US AT A RECORD-BREAKING PACE

JULIA FIORETTI
& JOHN CHENG

CHINESE companies are listing in the U.S. at the fastest pace ever, brushing off tensions between the world's two biggest economies and the continued risk of being kicked off American exchanges.

Firms from the mainland and Hong Kong have raised USD6.6 billion through initial public offerings in the U.S. this year, a record start to a year and an eightfold increase from the same period in 2020, data compiled by Bloomberg show. The largest IPO is the \$1.6 billion listing of e-cigarette maker RLX Technology Inc., followed by the \$947 million offering of software company Tuya Inc.

That's even as Sino-U.S. tensions show few signs of easing and the threat of Chinese firms being delisted from U.S. exchanges remains. In fact, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission said last month it would begin implementing a law forcing accounting firms to let U.S. regulators review the financial audits of overseas companies. Non-compliance could result in a delisting from the New York Stock Exchange or Nasdaq.

The risk for mainland firms is high given China has long refused to let U.S. regulators examine audits of its overseas-listed



companies on national security concerns.

"They would acknowledge this is a potential risk, and if something happens they might need to get prepared for a rainy day," said Stephanie Tang, head of private equity for Greater China at law firm Hogan Lovells. "But the risk itself would not prohibit those companies from going to the U.S., at least in the second half of this year or probably toward next year."

Despite all the risks, the pipeline continues to grow, setting up 2021 to potentially exceed last year. Chinese firms raised almost

\$15 billion through U.S. IPOs in 2020, the second highest on record after 2014, when e-commerce giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. fetched \$25 billion in its float.

Didi Chuxing has filed confidentially for a multi-billion-dollar U.S. IPO that could value the Chinese ride-hailing giant at as much as \$100 billion, Bloomberg News has reported. Uber-like trucking startup Full Truck Alliance is also working on a U.S. listing this year that could raise about \$2 billion, people familiar with the matter said, requesting not to be named because the ma-

tter is private.

"Chinese companies in the new economy do not seem to have been deterred from seeking U.S. listings despite the ongoing tensions," said Calvin Lai, a partner at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer. "They take that as one of the risks but that doesn't tilt the pendulum."

Additional share sales by Chinese companies have also been well-received in the U.S. this year, delivering an average return of 11% from their offering prices in the following session, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

And while rival financial cen-

ters like Hong Kong have in recent years changed their listing rules to make it easier for new economy firms to go public there, that has not stopped the flow of firms going stateside. In fact, the traffic now goes both ways, with U.S.-traded Chinese firms getting a second listing in Hong Kong to expand their investor base and as a hedge against the delisting risk.

Such secondary listings raised almost \$17 billion last year and have fetched over \$8 billion this year already, Bloomberg data show. Bankers said many companies go to the U.S. knowing they can subsequently list in Hong Kong.

For example, Didi is also exploring a potential dual offering in Hong Kong later, a person familiar with the matter has said, while Chinese electric carmaker Xpeng Inc. is also looking into a share sale in the financial hub less than a year after going public in New York.

U.S. capital markets have long attracted Chinese companies for a number of reasons: their greater liquidity, broader investor base, and the cachet associated with a U.S. listing. Technology and fintech firms have flocked to the U.S. because of its more streamlined process as well as greater openness to loss-making businesses.

"The U.S. still remains a magnet for the IPOs of Chinese technology companies," Tang said. "Just in terms of the pipeline, I don't see any pause to that. I think the pipeline is very strong."

BLOOMBERG

ByteDance's IPO plans snarled by regulatory demands, SCMP Says

JULIA FIORETTI

TIKTOK parent ByteDance Ltd.'s plans for an initial public offering have been put on hold as it seeks to comply with regulatory demands from both China and the U.S., the South China Morning Post reported, citing unidentified sources.

The owner of China's most popular video app Douyin faces difficulties in finding a business structure that can please both Beijing and Washington, the SCMP report said. One major challenge lies in separating Douyin's China-based operations from TikTok's global ones given both apps share the same algorithm, according to one of the sources



in the report.

An unnamed Beijing-based government official

involved in regulating ByteDance said the IPO had to be postponed because

of tensions between the U.S. and China, the newspaper said. ByteDance and

TikTok declined to comment to the SCMP.

Following weeks of speculation that a public offering was getting closer, the world's most valuable startup said on Friday it currently has no plans to seek an IPO, adding that it had made a careful study and concluded it doesn't meet listing conditions for the time being. Beijing-based ByteDance had been working with advisers on a float of some of its flagship domestic assets such as Douyin, news aggregator Toutiao and video platform Xigua that could raise billions, Bloomberg News reported earlier this month.

The company last month hired its first chief financial officer - Chew Shou Zi, who oversaw Xiaomi Corp.'s IPO as finance chief more than two years ago. The appointment fueled speculation over the social media giant's plans to go public. Its value has soa-

red in recent weeks, with shares changing hands in the secondary market at a valuation of more than \$250 billion.

Video-sharing app TikTok, which is hugely popular in the U.S., has been a source of tension between the world's two biggest economies, with Washington claiming it's a potential security threat if the app is used for propaganda or if the Chinese government uses collected data to create profiles of Americans.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump attempted to ban U.S. residents from doing business with TikTok but that effort foundered in the courts. ByteDance was also under pressure to sell its U.S. operations and it struck a deal with American companies including Oracle Corp. and Walmart Inc. last year. That is now on hold, as the Biden administration reviews its policies toward China. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

ADVERTORIAL



This file image made available by the China National Space Administration shows the Tianwen-1 probe en route to Mars

AEROSPACE

Official: China's moon probe will carry French, Russian gear

CHINA will launch its next robot lunar lander in 2024, and it will carry equipment from France, Sweden, Russia and Italy, the official news agency reported.

Plans call for Chang'e 6 to land near the lunar south pole and collect samples for return to Earth, the program's chief designer, Hu Hao, said at a conference Saturday, according to the Xinhua News Agency.

The Chang'e landers are part of Chinese space exploration efforts that also include a probe that is preparing to land a robot rover on Mars. There are also plans for a crewed orbital station, landing a human on the moon and retrieving soil from an asteroid.

In December, the previous moon probe, Chang'e 5, returned lunar rocks to Earth for the first time since the 1970s.

Chang'e 6 is to "collect lunar samples automatically for comprehensive analysis and research," Hu was quoted as saying at the conference in the eastern city of Nanjing.

The lander is expected to carry instruments developed by scientists from France, Sweden, Italy and Russia, Hu said. He gave no details of what they will do.

The announcement reflects growing interaction between China's secretive, military-linked space program and other countries. AP

CYBERSECURITY

UK spy chief warns China, Russia threats to web freedom

KITTY DONALDSON

THE freedom and security of the internet is at risk from the competing world views of China and Russia, and Western nations must adapt to face the threat, a U.K. spy chief will say on Friday.

Jeremy Fleming, director of GCHQ - the branch of British intelligence dealing with intercepts and cyber security - will use a speech to warn that if left unchecked, foreign adversaries could threaten the security of future technologies such as smart cities. He will invite further collaboration with the private sector to counter the risk.

"Without action it is increasingly clear that the key technologies on which we will rely for our future prosperity and security won't be shaped and controlled by the West; we are now facing a mo-

ment of reckoning," Fleming will say, according to extracts of his speech released by his office. "In the natural world, during a period of rapid change, the only option is to adapt. And it's the same for us."

The U.K. should develop sovereign technologies in key areas like quantum, developing cryptographic technologies to protect sensitive information, Fleming will say. The country should also work with allies to build cyber defenses, according to the remarks.

The U.K. characterizes Russia and China as different types of threat. In November, Ken McCallum, Director General of MI5 - the U.K.'s homeland security branch - said that while Russia might provide "bursts of bad weather" espionage activity by Chinese spies is "changing the climate." MDT/BLOOMBERG

SANDS CHINA NEWS

Sands China Organises 'National Security Education Exhibition' Tour for Team Members

Nearly 40 Sands China team members enjoyed a tour of the 2021 National Security Education Exhibition at the Complex of Commerce and Trade Co-operation Platform for China and Portuguese-speaking Countries April 19, as part of the company's ongoing effort to promote professionalism education.

The aims of the activity were to increase team members' awareness of safeguarding national security and to cultivate the spirit of "Loving the Motherland and Loving Macao."

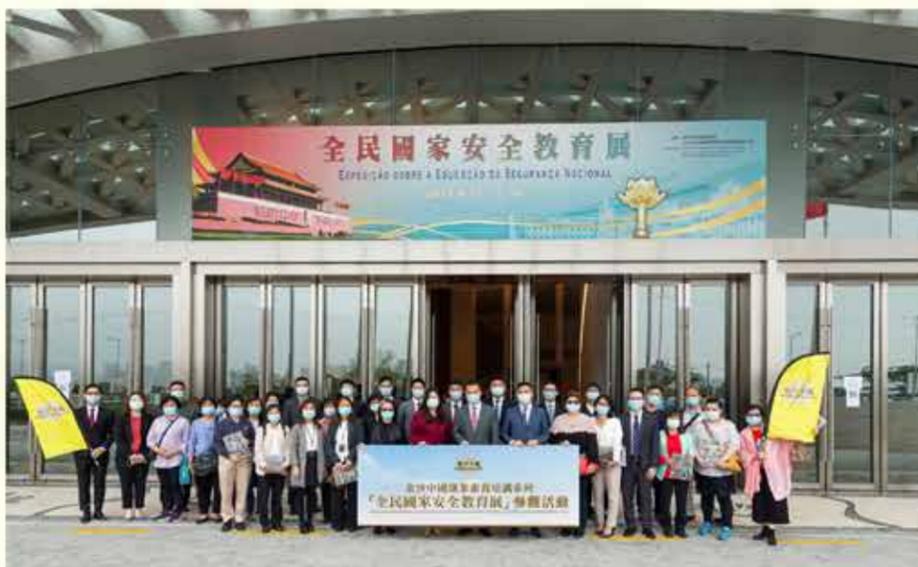
Team members received a guided tour of the exhibition, consisting of four sections: "National Security amid Unprecedented Changes of the Century," "Shaping the Landscape of Safety with a National Security Mindset," "Upholding National Security for the Long-term Success of 'One Country, Two Systems'" and "National Security as the Responsibility of All."

The visit supported the Macao SAR government's efforts to promote public awareness and education regarding national security in the community, and enabled team members to deepen their understanding of the importance of national security in the context of Macao and mainland China.

"Sands China was very pleased to be able to arrange a visit to this exhibition for our team members for the third time, so that they could gain a more comprehensive understanding of the importance of national security," said Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd. "National security is the responsibility and obligation of every individual. I encourage team members and the entire Macao community to take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about the role that we can play in the context of national security, thereby contributing toward the prosperity, safety and stability of the city and the country."

Sands China had also organised a team member visit to the first and second National Security Education Exhibitions in 2018 and 2019.

Jointly hosted by the Macao SAR government and the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR, the 2021 National Security Education Exhibition highlights mainland China's and Macao's extraordinary achievements over the past year through nationwide anti-pandemic measures, and their latest progress in enhancing the national security system.





ASEAN leaders tell Myanmar coup general to end killings

NINIEK KARMINI,
JAKARTA

SOUTHEAST Asian leaders demanded an immediate end to killings and the release of political detainees in Myanmar in an emergency summit Saturday with its top general and coup leader who, according to Malaysia's prime minister, did not reject them outright.

The leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations also told Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing during the two-hour talks in Jakarta that a dialogue between contending parties in Myanmar should immediately start, with the help of ASEAN envoys.

"The situation in Myanmar is unacceptable and should not continue. Violence must be stopped, democracy, stability and peace in Myanmar must be returned immediately," Indonesian President Joko Widodo said during the meeting. "The interests of the people of Myanmar must always be the priority."

Daily shootings by police and soldiers since the Feb. 1 coup have killed more than 700 mostly peaceful protesters and bystanders, according to several independent tallies.

The messages conveyed to Min Aung Hlaing were unusually blunt and could be seen as a breach of the conservative 10-nation bloc's bedrock principle forbidding member states from interfering in each other's affairs. But Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said that policy should not lead to inaction if a domestic si-

tuation "jeopardizes the peace, security, and stability of ASEAN and the wider region" and there is international clamor for resolute action.

"There is a tremendous expectation on the part of the international community on how ASEAN is addressing the Myanmar issue. The pressure is increasing," Muhyiddin said. The current ASEAN chair, Brunei Prime Minister Hassanal Bolkiah, and the bloc's secretary general should be allowed access to Myanmar to meet contending parties, encourage dialogue and come up with "an honest and unbiased observation," he said.

Such a political dialogue "can only take place with the prompt and unconditional release of political detainees," the Malaysian premier said.

A formal statement issued by ASEAN through Brunei after the summit outlined the demands made by the six heads of state and three foreign ministers in more subtle terms. It asked for the "immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar" and urged all parties to "exercise utmost restraint," but omitted the demand voiced by Widodo and other leaders for the immediate release of political detainees. It said ASEAN would provide humanitarian aid to Myanmar.

In a news conference late Saturday, Muhyiddin said

that Min Aung Hlaing told ASEAN leaders that he will find a way to solve the problem and agreed that violence must stop.

"Our proposals would be accepted, the general in his response did not reject [them]," Muhyiddin said, "This is very encouraging progress."

When asked about Min Aung Hlaing's response to the demand to cease the violence, Muhyiddin said that ASEAN leaders tried not to accuse his side too much because "we don't care who's causing it, we just stressed that the violence must stop."

"For him, it's the other side that's causing the problems," said Muhyiddin. "If that's the case, we hope that he will find a way to stop it even before the ASEAN representatives go to Myanmar."

"The situation in Myanmar is unacceptable and should not continue. Violence must be stopped, democracy, stability and peace in Myanmar must be returned immediately"

INDONESIAN PRESIDENT JOKO WIDODO

Muhyiddin also denied allegations that ASEAN has not done enough to address the crisis.

"We are concerned about what's happening and we've taken steps and made decisions," he said. "The best thing is that there is a repre-

sentative from Myanmar who says they are ready to accept our representative there."

It was the first time Min Aung Hlaing traveled out of Myanmar since the coup, which was followed by the arrests of Aung San Suu Kyi and many other political leaders.

Critics have said ASEAN's decision to meet the coup leader was unacceptable and amounted to legitimizing the overthrow and the deadly crackdown that followed. ASEAN states agreed to meet Min Aung Hlaing but did not treat or address him as Myanmar's head of state in the summit, a Southeast Asian diplomat told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity for lack of authority to discuss the issue publicly.

The divergent ties of many of ASEAN members to either China or the United States, along with a bedrock policy of non-interference in each other's affairs and deciding by consensus, has hobbled the bloc's ability to rapidly deal with crises.

Amid Western pressure, however, the group has struggled to take a more forceful position on issues but has kept to its non-confrontational approach.

The London-based rights watchdog Amnesty International urged Indonesia and other ASEAN states ahead of the summit to investigate Min Aung Hlaing over "credible allegations of responsibility for crimes against humanity in Myanmar." As a state party to a U.N. convention against torture, Indonesia has a legal obligation to prosecute or extradite a suspected perpetrator on its territory, it said.

Indonesian police dispersed dozens of protesters opposing the coup and the junta leader's visit.

The leaders of Thailand and the Philippines skipped the summit to deal with coronavirus outbreaks back home. Laos also canceled at the last minute. The face-to-face summit is the first by ASEAN leaders in more than a year.

Aside from Myanmar, the regional bloc is made up of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1993 RECESSION OVER - IT'S OFFICIAL



The government has reacted with relief to news that Britain's economy grew by 0.2% in the first three months of this year, and declared the longest recession since the 1930s officially over.

The figures, from the Central Statistical Office, show a 0.2% rise in gross domestic product (GDP), and a 0.6% increase in activity in the onshore economy, excluding oil and gas production.

It's the first sign of growth in the economy for over two years. The recession has been longer, but less severe, than the last one in the 1980s. Output has fallen by 3.9%, compared with a 5.5% fall last time.

Prime Minister John Major called on industry to make the most of the "unparalleled opportunities" offered by the combination of low inflation and interest rates, and a competitive exchange rate.

The Chancellor, Norman Lamont, was also upbeat, saying the figures were "the best evidence so far that the economy is recovering across a broad front."

In a BBC interview, Mr Lamont said Britain was starting to see the reward of policies that the government had been pursuing during the past few years.

The Institute of Directors, though, disagreed with the Chancellor on the reasons for the upturn. Their latest survey said improved performance was due to Britain's departure from the European exchange-rate mechanism (ERM), a policy decision forced on the government.

Black Wednesday

The pound was driven out of the ERM last September by frantic currency speculation, on what became known as Black Wednesday.

In a catastrophic day for the government's policy on Europe and the economy, Mr Lamont was forced to spend billions in an attempt to prop up the pound, which failed as it dropped below its minimum level in the ERM.

He had no choice but to devalue and pull out of the ERM.

The Shadow Chancellor, Gordon Brown, greeted the figures cautiously, saying he hoped the recession was over, but warning that skills shortages and an investment gap with the UK's competitors could stymie future growth.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The British economy began improving steadily, and has not been in recession since.

Norman Lamont's career, however, never fully recovered from Black Wednesday. A month after announcing the end of the recession, he had resigned.

In his resignation speech to the Commons, he launched a vitriolic attack on John Major's leadership. Famously, he accused the government of being "in office, but not in power".

He never spoke to John Major again, and became one of his fiercest critics from the backbenches.

The Black Wednesday debacle is also credited with destroying confidence in the Conservatives' ability to manage the economy. It contributed to their defeat in the 1997 general election.

John Major refused to include his former Chancellor in his resignation honours list in 1997. Mr Lamont was made a peer by John Major's successor, Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair, in 1998.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You might be a tad overindulgent today. Overstatement will be your downfall. Old friends may not like your choices. Be precise in your communications to avoid any misunderstandings and arguments.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

You may find your self in a romantic situation. Partnerships could be tense. Don't push your luck. You can enhance your cash flow if you pick up additional skills.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You will easily blow situations out of proportion. Be prepared to take care of the issues at hand. Don't expect romantic encounters to be lasting.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Physical work or exercise should be part of your schedule. Your interest in helping others may take you back to school. Someone you live with may feel totally neglected.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Emotional upset at work will set you back. You need an outlet that will help take your mind off any troubles at work. Make changes in your domestic scene.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Expect your workload to be heavy. It may not be the best time to socialize with clients or colleagues today. Your ability to relate will close the generation gap.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Any capricious behavior will confuse loved ones and your mood swings will result in loneliness. A little rest will do wonders. Focus on forming business partnerships.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You will be a bit of a spendthrift today. Moves or the possibility of having someone different living with you may be difficult at first. You can enjoy short trips.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Pamper yourself; the self esteem it brings you will be most gratifying. Opportunities for new and exciting relationships will be yours if you get out and join groups.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Courses dealing with psychology or health care will be of interest. Don't rely on others to do your work. Don't be too eager to spend what's left over; more unexpected expenses are evident.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

The existing problems must be dealt with one way or another. Extravagance and overindulgence are not a cure if you're feeling sorry for yourself. Get involved in creative groups.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Verbal abuse could lead to carelessness. Business or pleasure trips will be knowledgeable as well as highly successful. You may need a good friend to lean on.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

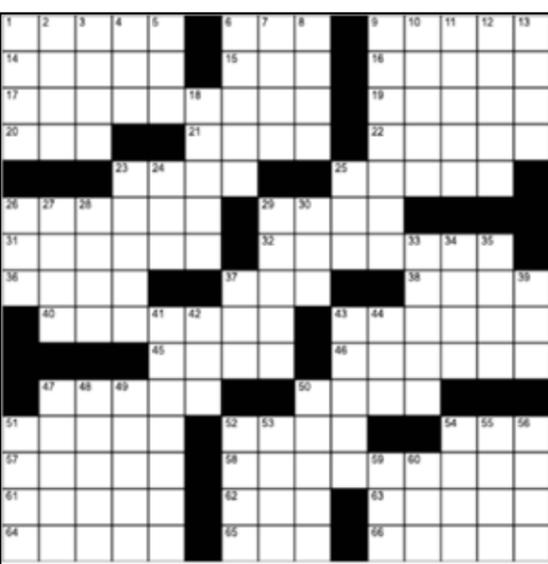
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	10	20	drizzle
Harbin	2	18	cloudy
Tianjin	11	20	shower
Urumqi	1	13	clear
Xi'an	10	22	cloudy
Lhasa	3	17	overcast
Chengdu	14	26	cloudy
Chongqing	17	21	overcast
Kunming	15	25	shower
Nanjing	16	22	shower
Shanghai	16	24	overcast
Wuhan	13	21	drizzle
Hangzhou	15	24	cloudy
Taipei	20	23	drizzle
Guangzhou	22	27	drizzle
Hong Kong	23	26	shower
WORLD			
Moscow	1	8	clear
Frankfurt	2	12	cloudy
Paris	6	15	cloudy
London	4	13	cloudy
New York	7	16	clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Delight; 6- Actress Alicia; 9- Crucifix; 14- Boring tool; 15- ___es Salaam; 16- Sniffer's need; 17- Cloudburst; 19- That is to say...; 20- Bit of wordplay; 21- Basics; 22- Diminish; 23- Achy; 25- Benjamin; 26- Become visible; 29- Horse's gait; 31- Discover; 32- Stiffly; 36- Irritated state; 37- Meadow; 38- 500 sheets; 40- Declares positively; 43- The Last Frontier; 45- Heels; 46- Can't stand; 47- Give it ___; 50- Fish appendages; 51- Silvery fish; 52- Dies ___; 54- Occupational suffix; 57- Good witchcraft; 58- Society girl; 61- Oppositionists; 62- Conger; 63- Razor sharpener; 64- Mercurial; 65- Malt beverage; 66- 2, 4, 6, 8, etc.

DOWN 1- 1994 Costner role; 2- Hawaiian outdoor feast; 3- Not "fer"; 4- Sawbuck; 5- Trauma ctrs.; 6- Sun-dried brick; 7- DEA agent; 8- Weaponry; 9- Dry red table wine of Italy; 10- Stallone role; 11- ___ a time (singly); 12- Glide along smoothly; 13- New Year's word; 18- Dawdle; 23- Shakers et al.; 24- Thole insert; 25- Gear tooth; 26- Commercials; 27- Clinton cabinet member Federico; 28- Pitchfork-shaped letters; 29- Long lock of hair; 30- Narrow inlet; 33- Mild oaths; 34- ___-majesté; 35- Tibetan oxen; 37- Old Ford; 39- Floor covering where the cat sat; 41- Rapturous delight; 42- Squealer; 43- Old French expression meaning "goodbye"; 44- Sportscaster Berman; 47- Acid type; 48- Right-hand page; 49- 1961 Heston role; 50- Legend; 51- Did the butterfly; 52- Notion; 53- Winder for holding flexible material; 54- Memo opener; 55- School founded in 1440; 56- Gym counts; 59- Lao-___; 60- Off-road wheels, for short;



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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Property of the Week



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We sometimes find units at One Central with awkwardly shaped balconies, oversized or undersized stairways and hallways. Like wearing high heels all day or wearing a tailored suit that chaffs, sometimes beauty comes at a cost. Usually, the cost is worth it. If every building was perfectly space efficient, they would all be square boxes and dreadfully boring. We don't want that.

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3 2



Property Hotlist



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\$7,450,000
720 ft²
2 1



Ocean Gardens, Taipa
\$14,000/mth
1,030 ft²
2 2



Taipa Village apartment
\$11,500/mth
900 ft²
2 1



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- [Taipa] 2 Apartment Connected 4 2 1,404 ft² **\$8,380,000** (ref: 19096006)
- [Macau] Unique Loft unit 2 2 2,200 ft² **\$9,990,000** (ref: 15115464)
- [Taipa] Chun U Villa 4 3 1,979 ft² **\$12,880,000** (ref: 21046001)
- [Taipa] Nova Taipa 1 3 2 2,105 ft² **\$15,000,000** (ref: 21036004)
- [Taipa] Manhattan D unit 4 2 2,305 ft² **\$17,980,000** (ref: 18075558)

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- [Taipa] Manhattan spacious 3 2 1,720 ft² **\$18,800/mth** (ref: n/a)
- [Cotai] One Oasis high ceiling 3 2 2,100 ft² **\$30,000/mth** (ref: 20111002)

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Chelsea the big winner in EPL's top 4 race as Liverpool held

STEVE DOUGLAS

CHELSEA has made a significant move in the English Premier League's frenetic race to qualify for the Champions League, a competition the club's hierarchy secretly tried to destroy in its ill-fated attempt to form a European Super League.

A 1-0 win at West Ham, coupled with Liverpool conceding a stoppage-time goal to draw with lowly Newcastle 1-1 at Anfield, saw Chelsea open up a gap to its two main rivals for a top-four finish on Saturday.

With five games remaining in the league, Chelsea occupies the fourth and final Champions League qualification place — three points ahead of West Ham and four clear of sixth-placed Liverpool.

"It was a six-pointer," said Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel, whose team's packed end to the season also includes an FA Cup final against Leicester and a Champions League semifinal

AP PHOTO



Chelsea's Timo Werner, centre, celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal during the EPL soccer match between West Ham United and Chelsea, London, Saturday

against Real Madrid.

A smiling Tuchel congratulated each of his players on the field after the final whistle at the Olympic Stadium, a contrast to the reaction of Liverpool counterpart Jurgen Klopp after a dramatic finish at Anfield when his team's season-long vulnerability in defense proved costly again.

Joe Willock's deflected goal in the fifth minute of injury time

has left Liverpool a big outsider to finish in the top four of a league it won by 18 points last season.

"I didn't see that we deserved today playing Champions League next season," a deflated Klopp said. "We learn, or we don't play Champion League."

A failure to reach the Champions League — and all the riches that come with it — will be

painful for a club whose American ownership, Fenway Sports Group, was one of the key instigators in the scheme to set up the breakaway Super League.

That would have seen 12 of the continent's biggest clubs create a 20-team rival to the Champions League with finances dwarfing the current elite competition, and Liverpool's place locked in courtesy of it being a founder member.

How galling, then, that the Reds could yet end up in next season's Europa League — or not playing European competition at all.

In Liverpool's favor is a benign schedule that sees Klopp's team finish its league campaign with games against Southampton, West Bromwich Albion, Burnley and Crystal Palace — teams placed 13th or lower. Before that, though, is a trip to fierce rival Manchester United next week, a match that will be marked by protests owing to both clubs' American owners' attempts to create the Super League.

There were fan protests outside both of the teams' stadiums on Saturday.

SALAH MILESTONE

Mohamed Salah moved onto 20 goals, becoming the first Liverpool player to score at least that total in three different Premier League campaigns.

It was a superbly taken goal, too, the Egypt forward bringing down a high ball with his left foot and swiveling to fire a fierce finish high into the net.

Salah missed the best of Liverpool's following 21 shots in a chaotic match that had a fittingly wild ending as Newcastle poured forward.

Substitute Callum Wilson had an equalizing goal disallowed in the second minute of stoppage time when the ball rebounded off his arm from Alisson's save, before the striker bundled it into the net. There was still time for Willock to score with a shot that deflected in off sliding Liverpool defender Fabinho, continuing the on-loan Arsenal midfielder's role as a recent super-sub.

Three late goals from Willock have earned Newcastle four points just this month: An 85th-minute equalizer against Tottenham on April 4, an 82nd-minute winner against West Ham last weekend, and now his goal at Anfield. MDT/AP

FRANCE MACAU Chamber of Commerce
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FMCC champions Breakfast Meetings in town with key speakers sharing their views on current business affairs. Our monthly events take place every last Wednesday of the month at Sofitel Macau at Ponte 16. Open to all!

The Greater Bay Area Financial Integration: Towards a Single Market?
Speaker: **Dr Weng Chi (Florence) Lei**, Assistant Professor, Coordinator for the Master of Government Studies Programme, Faculty of Business and Law, USJ

FMCC Breakfast Meeting
Wednesday, 28 April 2021

Introduction:
The new plan for an accelerated financial integration of the Greater Bay Area has been unveiled last year by the Chinese central government, with the ambition of further driving financial openness and deepening financial cooperation between Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau. Join us and hear from Finance expert Dr. Florence Lei, on real and uncovered interest parities and purchasing power parity, and their implications on real and financial integration of the GBA.

Date: Wednesday, 28 April, 2021
Time: 9:00a.m. -10:30a.m. (Reception: 8:45am)
Venue: Sofitel Macau at Ponte 16
Baccara Ballroom, 6th floor

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OPINION

World Views

Hal Brands, MDT/Bloomberg



THE COLD WAR PLAYBOOK WON'T HELP ALEXEY NAVALNY

Should the U.S. put the fate of dissidents at the core of its Russia policy? The question has become unavoidable. Russian President Vladimir Putin's government seems set on killing, slowly or quickly, jailed regime critic Alexey Navalny. U.S. President Joe Biden's administration has warned that there will be unspecified consequences if that occurs. That Navalny ended his hunger strike and his life isn't in imminent danger — for now — doesn't remove the underlying issue.

Today's debate harkens back to the history of U.S. policy toward Soviet dissidents during the Cold War. The lesson is that support for the liberal opposition can be morally and strategically worthwhile, even though it surely won't transform Putin's regime any time soon.

The relevant Cold War history is often told as follows. During detente in the 1970s, U.S. officials unwisely tolerated the repression of Soviet dissidents in their quest for stability with Moscow. In the 1980's, President Ronald Reagan reversed this craven orthodoxy by standing up for critics of the Soviet regime, thereby helping bring an evil empire crashing down from within.

Important pieces of this narrative are true, but the overall story is more complicated.

Here's what is true. Reagan did make solidarity with dissidents such as Andrei Sakharov, then languishing in internal exile, a central pillar of his Cold War strategy. He publicly blasted the Soviets for jailing and harassing their domestic critics. He privately pressed Soviet leaders to release political prisoners and reform the Soviet legal system. He even met openly with Soviet dissidents on a trip to Moscow in 1988.

He did so because moral clarity was a tool of political warfare. Highlighting the political and ethical bankruptcy of the Soviets was a way of pressuring that regime domestically and isolating it diplomatically. Reagan also believed, correctly, that political reform would eventually make the Soviet Union a less authoritarian and less threatening enemy.

In the end, the policy worked brilliantly. Soviet dissidents were inspired by what they called "Reaganite readings" — speeches in which Reagan castigated Moscow for its sins. (The president even announced "Andrei Sakharov Day" from the White House Rose Garden in 1983.) Kremlin leaders admitted, privately, that Reagan's "especially strong anti-Soviet agitation" was energizing domestic critics and delegitimizing the Soviet Union abroad.

In the late 1980s, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev realized that the regime could not repair its relations with the West until it changed its approach to political liberties and human rights. Support for dissidents was part of an ideological offensive that brought excruciating strain on a totalitarian state.

Yet this isn't the whole story. For one thing, Reagan wasn't the first U.S. leader to focus on Soviet repression. Congressional human-rights advocates such as Democratic Senator Henry Jackson had started doing so in the 1970s, and President Jimmy Carter had infuriated Soviet leaders by pressing them, face to face, on the well-being of particular dissidents.

America's European allies had also begun focusing attention on Eastern Bloc human-rights violations during the 1970s, through the Helsinki Accords, and often helped the Reagan administration push multilaterally on this issue during the 1980s.

More important, none of that advocacy — by Carter, Reagan or the Europeans — meaningfully improved political conditions in the Soviet Union through the mid-1980s.

Soviet leaders, like most authoritarians, knew that relaxing repression of dissidents was a dangerous game, because it could set off growing resistance to an unpopular government. They felt so threatened by Carter's and Reagan's ideological warfare that they responded by squeezing dissent and dissenters even harder.

"The leadership is convinced that the Reagan administration is out to bring their system down and will give no quarter," one Soviet commentator explained in 1983. "Therefore they have no choice but to hunker down and fight back."

What changed in the late 1980s? The Politburo chose a leader, Gorbachev, who actually cared about international legitimacy — in part because Reagan had so successfully denied it to the Kremlin — and who was willing to gamble that a bit more political freedom would rejuvenate a dying system. (He lost that bet, spectacularly.)

[Abridged]

INDONESIA NAVY DECLARES LOST SUB WITH 53 ABOARD SUNK

Indonesia's navy on Saturday declared its missing submarine had sunk and cracked open after finding items from the vessel over the past two days, apparently ending hope of finding any of the 53 crew members alive.

Military chief Hadi Tjahjanto said the presence of an oil slick as well as debris near the site where the submarine last dove Wednesday off the island of Bali were clear proof the KRI Nanggala 402 had sunk. Indonesian officials earlier considered the vessel to be only missing, but said the submarine's oxygen supply would have run out early Saturday.

Navy Chief of Staff Adm. Yudo Margono said at a press conference in Bali, "If it's an explosion, it will be in pieces. The cracks happened gradually in some parts when it went down from 300 meters to 400 meters to 500 meters. [...] If there was an explosion, it would be heard by the sonar."

The navy previously said it believes the submarine sank to a depth of 600-700 meters, much deeper than its collapse depth of 200 meters, at which point water pressure would be greater than the hull could withstand.

THE BUZZ

AP PHOTO



Multiple funeral pyres of victims of COVID-19 burn at a ground that has been converted into a crematorium for mass cremation in New Delhi, Saturday

COVID-19

INDIA'S CREMATORIAL OVERWHELMED AS VIRUS 'SWALLOWS PEOPLE'

SHEIKH SAALIQ & AIJAZ HUSSAIN, NEW DELHI

India's crematoriums and burial grounds are being overwhelmed by the devastating new surge of infections tearing through the populous country with terrifying speed, depleting the supply of life-saving oxygen to critical levels and leaving patients to die while waiting in line to see doctors.

For the fourth straight day, India on Sunday set a global daily record for new infections, spurred by an insidious, new variant that emerged here, undermining the government's premature claims of victory over the pandemic.

The 349,691 confirmed cases over the past day brought India's total to more than 16.9 million, behind only the United States. The Health Ministry reported another 2,767 deaths in the past 24 hours, pushing India's COVID-19 fatalities to 192,311.

Experts say that toll could be a huge undercount, as suspected cases are not included, and many deaths from the infection are being attributed to underlying conditions.

The crisis unfolding in India is most visceral in its graveyards and crematoriums, and in heart-breaking images of gasping patients dying on their way to hospitals due to lack of oxygen.

Burial grounds in the Indian capital New Delhi are running out of space and bright, glowing funeral pyres light up the night sky in other badly hit cities.

In central Bhopal city, some crematoriums have increased their capacity from dozens of pyres to more than 50. Yet officials say there are still hours-long waits.

At the city's Bhadbhada Vishram Ghat crematorium, workers said they cremated more than 110 people on Saturday, even as government figures in the entire city of 1.8 million put the total number of virus deaths at just 10.

"The virus is swallowing our city's people like a monster," said Mamtesh Sharma, an official at the site.

The unprecedented rush of bodies has forced the crematorium to skip individual ceremonies and exhaustive rituals that Hindus believe release the soul from the cycle of rebirth.

"We are just burning bodies as they arrive," said Sharma. "It is as if we are in the middle of a war."

The head gravedigger at New Delhi's largest Muslim cemetery, where 1,000 people have been buried during the pandemic, said more bodies are arriving now than last year. "I fear we will run out of space very soon," said Mohammad Shameem.

The situation is equally

grim at unbearably full hospitals, where desperate people are dying in line, sometimes on the roads outside, waiting to see doctors.

Health officials are scrambling to expand critical care units and stock up on dwindling supplies of oxygen. Hospitals and patients alike are struggling to procure scarce medical equipment that is being sold at an exponential markup.

The crisis is in direct contrast with government claims that "nobody in the country was left without oxygen," in a statement made Saturday by India's Solicitor General Tushar Mehta before Delhi High Court.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is facing mounting criticism for allowing Hindu festivals and attending mammoth election rallies that experts suspect accelerated the spread of infections.

In one such election rally two weeks ago, Modi barely managed to hide his delight when he declared to his supporters in West Bengal state: "I have never seen such huge crowds." At that time, the virus had already started to rear its head again and experts were warning a deadly surge was inevitable.

With the death toll mounting, Modi's Hindu nationalist government is trying to quell critical voices. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Belarus' authoritarian leader says he will change the law on presidential succession so that power in the Eastern European nation will be transferred if he dies to the national security council where his son plays a prominent role. Many observers have suggested that President Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled with an iron fist since 1994, aims to establish a political dynasty, although Lukashenko denies this.

Turkey's foreign ministry has summoned the U.S. ambassador in Ankara to protest the U.S. decision to mark the deportation and killing of Armenians during the Ottoman Empire as "genocide." Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Onal met with David Satterfield to express Ankara's strong condemnation. "The statement does not have legal ground in terms of international law and has hurt the Turkish people, opening a wound that's hard to fix in our relations," the ministry said.

AP PHOTO



Vatican Pope Francis yesterday gave the Catholic church nine new priests, encouraging them in an ordination ceremony in St. Peter's Basilica to be humble and compassionate and to stay close to the rank-and-file faithful, whose trust in clergy has been sorely tested by decades of sex abuse scandals.

AP PHOTO



French authorities detained a fifth person yesterday in an anti-terrorism investigation seeking to identify potential accomplices and motives after a police official was fatally stabbed at a police station outside Paris. French police killed the 37-year-old Tunisian attacker shortly after he stabbed the unarmed administrative employee on Friday at the entrance of her police station in the town of Rambouillet.