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MGM LEADER REFUTES IDEA THAT CENTRAL GOV'T IS TIGHTENING CONTROL ON GAMING SECTOR

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LAND-STARVED HONG KONG PLANS TO BUILD MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN RESPONSE TO PUBLIC DEMANDS THAT HAVE FUELED SOCIAL UNREST

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AP PHOTO



Afghanistan The Taliban arrested four Islamic State members and seized their documents and weapons north of the Afghan capital, the group's chief spokesman said yesterday. Zabihullah Mujahid said the operation was carried out Tuesday night by special unit forces in the Pashai area of Paghman district in Kabul province. He provided no additional details.

UAE A court has sentenced five people to death who had been convicted in the first-degree murder and robbery of a businessman whose body was discovered in a refrigerator, state-run media reported. The criminal court in Ajman delivered the rare sentence to five foreigners in the country who allegedly stabbed the expat businessman to death and stole over \$29,600 from his home in the city-state.

AP PHOTO



Russia's daily coronavirus death toll surpassed 900 yesterday for the first time in the pandemic, a record that comes amid the country's low vaccination rate and the government's reluctance to impose tough restrictions to control new cases. The previous record, of 895 deaths, was registered the day before. Russia already has Europe's highest death toll in the pandemic at over 212,000 people, but some official data suggests that is an undercount.

LOCAL CONTAGION

In a 'lecture' on Macau's pandemic situation, the head of the public hospital finally admitted that import-related cases are local infections, and clarified other issues P3



OVER 500 CROSS-BORDER STUDENTS STILL STRANDED AFTER BORDER CHANGES

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THE CONVERSATION

WHY IMPROVISATION IS THE FUTURE IN AN AI-DOMINATED WORLD

RICH PELLEGRIN
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

In his autobiography, Miles Davis complained that classical musicians were like robots.

He spoke from experience – he'd studied classical music at Juilliard and recorded with classical musicians even after becoming a world-renowned jazz artist.

As a music professor at the University of Florida, which is transforming itself into an "AI university," I often think about Davis' words, and the ways in which musicians have become more machinelike over the past century. At the same time, I see how machines have been getting better at mimicking human improvisation, in all aspects of life.

I wonder what the limits of machine improvisation will be, and which human activities will survive the rise of intelligent machines.

THE RISE OF MACHINE IMPROVISATION

Machines have long excelled at activities involving consistent reproduction of a fixed object – think identical Toyotas being mass-produced in a factory.

More improvised activities are less rule-based, more fluid, chaotic or reactive, and are more process-oriented. AI has been making significant strides in this area.

Consider the following examples:

The trading pits of Wall Street, Tokyo and London were once filled with the vibrant chaos of traders shouting and signaling orders, reacting in real time to fluidly changing conditions. These tra-

ding pits have mostly been replaced by algorithms.

Self-driving technology may soon replace human drivers, automating our fluid decision-making processes. Autonomous vehicles currently stumble where greater mastery of improvisation is required, such as dealing with pedestrians.

Much live social interaction has been replaced by the sterile activity of carefully composing emails or social media posts. Predictive email text will continue to evolve, bringing an increasingly transactional quality to our relationships. ("Hey Siri, email Amanda and congratulate her on her promotion.")

IBM's computer Deep Blue defeated world chess champion Garry Kasparov in 1997, but it took 20 more years for AI to defeat top players of the board game go. That's because go has a far greater number of possible move choices at any given time, and virtually no specific rules – it requires more improvisation. Yet humans eventually became no match for machine: In 2019, former world go champion Lee Sedol retired from professional play, citing AI's ascendancy as the reason.

MUSIC BECOMES MORE MACHINELIKE

Machines are replacing human improvisation at a time when classical music has abandoned it.

Before the 20th century, nearly all of the major figures of Western art music excelled at composition, performance and improvisation. Johann Sebastian Bach was mostly known as an organist, with his first biographer describing his

organ improvisations as "more devout, solemn, dignified and sublime" than his compositions.

But the 20th century saw the splintering of the performer-composer-improviser tradition into specialized realms.

Performers faced the rise of recording techniques that flooded consumers with fixed, homogeneous and objectively correct versions of compositions. Classical musicians had to consistently deliver technically flawless live performances to match, sometimes reducing music to a sort of Olympics.

Classical pianist Glenn Gould was both a source and product of this state of affairs – he despised the rigidity and competitiveness of live performance and retired from the stage at the age of 31, but retreated to the studio to painstakingly assemble visionary masterpieces that were impossible to perform in one take.

Composers mostly abandoned the serious pursuit of improvisation or performance. Modernists became increasingly enthralled with procedures, algorithms and mathematical models, mirroring contemporary technological developments. The ultra-complex compositions of high modernism required machinelike accuracy from performers, but many post-modern minimalist scores also demanded robotic precision.

Improvisation ceased almost entirely to be a part of classical music, but flourished in a new art form: jazz. Yet jazz struggled to gain parity, particularly in the U.S., its country of origin, due in large part to systemic racism. The

classical world even has its own version of the "one-drop rule": Works containing improvisation or written by jazz composers are often dismissed as illegitimate by the classical establishment.

A recent New York Times article called on orchestras to open themselves up to improvisation and collaborate with jazz luminaries such as saxophonist Roscoe Mitchell, who has composed many orchestral works. But college and university music programs have segregated and marginalized jazz studies, leaving orchestral musicians bereft of training in improvisation. Instead, musicians in an orchestra are seated according to their objectively ranked ability, and their job is to replicate the motions of the principal player.

They are the machines of the music world. In the future, will they be the most disposable?

DAVIS PERFECTS THE ART OF IMPERFECTION

The march of AI continues, but will it ever be able to engage in true improvisation?

Machines easily replicate objects, but improvisation is a process. In pure musical improvisation, there's no predetermined structure and no objectively correct performance.

And improvisation isn't merely instantaneous composition; if it were, then AI would collapse the distinction between the two due to its speed of calculation.

Rather, improvisation has an elusive, human quality resulting from the tension between skill and spontaneity. Machines will always

be highly skilled, but will they ever be able to stop calculating and switch to an intuitive mode of creation, like a jazz musician going from the practice room to the gig?

Davis reached a point at Juilliard where he had to decide on his future. He connected deeply with classical music and was known to walk around with Stravinsky scores in his pocket. He would later praise composers from Bach to Stockhausen and record jazz interpretations of compositions by Manuel de Falla, Heitor Villa-Lobos and Joaquín Rodrigo.

Yet there were many reasons to abandon the classical world for jazz. Davis recounts playing "about two notes every 90 bars" in the orchestra. This stood in stark contrast to the extraordinary challenge and stimulation of late-night jam sessions with musicians like Thelonious Monk and Charlie Parker.

He experienced the reality of racism and "knew that no white symphony orchestra was going to hire [him]." (By contrast, Davis regularly hired white players, like Lee Konitz, Bill Evans and John McLaughlin.)

And he was the antithesis of a machine.

But in jazz, Davis was able to transform his technical struggles with the trumpet into a haunting, iconic sound. His wrong notes, missed notes and cracked notes became wheezes, whispers and sighs expressing the human condition. Not only did he own these "mistakes," he also actively courted them with a risky approach that prioritized color over line and expression over accuracy.

His was the art of imperfection, and therein lies the paradox of jazz. Davis left Juilliard after three semesters, but became one of the single most important musical figures of the 20th century.

Today the ground has shifted. Juilliard has a thriving jazz program led by another trumpeter versed in both classical music and jazz – Wynton Marsalis, who has received two classical Grammy awards for his solo work. And while the narrative of "the robots coming for our jobs" is cliché, these displacements are happening quickly, accelerated greatly by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are hurtling toward a time when actual robots could conceivably replace Davis' classical "robots" – perhaps some of the 20 violinists in a symphony orchestra – if only at first as a gimmick. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

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Import-related Covid-19 infections are local infections: SSM

ANTHONY LAM

NEUROSURGEON Tai Wa Hou, medical director of the public Conde de São Januário Hospital, admitted for the first time yesterday that import-related Covid-19 infections are actually local infections.

The categorization of infections was a debate topic at yesterday's regular health press briefing, following the questions by the public on why the Health Bureau (SSM) did not identify the cases as local or community infections. In contrast, the SSM has identified them as import-related infections.

When reporting the latest Covid-19 figures in Macau, different from his approach in the past months, he mentioned for the first time that import-related infections are actually local infections.

Journalists later followed up with the opinion. Tai stated that there are only two types of infections: local and imported infections.

As its name suggests, imported infections or cases are those that are detected during a person's quarantine period and before the person completes his quarantine period.

"When it's not the case, it's a local infection," Tai said.

However, he explained that there are two scenarios within the spectrum of local infections. "In the first scenario, the source of infection is clearly found, which is an imported case," Tai said. "These are identified as import-related cases."

The second scenario involves infections that have an unknown source. "These cases will be identified as local cases, or cases with an unknown source of infection," Tai added.

THE DEFINITION OF RELAPSE CASES

During this round of citywide SARS-CoV-2 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, several relapse cases have been found and quarantined, despite the SSM determining the risk of contagion being extremely small.

Tai was questioned by the Times on the medical definition of a relapse. For example, a patient with flu will not be considered as a relapse patient when they are tested positive for flu within the year.

In his response, Tai revisited the process of a hospitalized patient recovering and being discharged.

"Returning to the community implies the patient's recovery," Tai said. "However, in cases seen around the world, some patients were tested positive for the virus after a certain period of time after their recovery."

He stressed that usually these



positive results signal the detection of a part of the virus's DNA pattern. "It is usually uncommunicable," he added.

He said that there are other factors determining whether it is a relapse case, such as by testing the recovered patient's antibodies.

PUBLIC REMINDED TO UPDATE HEALTH CODE ADDRESS

Public health doctor Leong Iek Hou, coordinator at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), reiterated yesterday the importance of updating residential address when obtaining a health code.

As the city saw a series of new infections during the past two weeks or so, several red and yellow zones have been set up to cordon off interactions between communities with close contacts and the rest of the city.

"It came to our attention that a large number of residents had registered their old residential addresses," Leong disclosed. When these individuals arrived at stations for the citywide PCR test, they were sent to the hospital or the Taipa Ferry Terminal's Provisional Quarantine Area "due to unclear risks," Leong said.

Although they later could provide proofs to verify that they were not

connected with the Red or Yellow Zones, "it has put extra burden on our paramedic teams," Leong explained.

Leong recommends members of the public to update their residential addresses on the health code platforms. Leong also reminds them to contact the Identification Services Bureau (DSI) to update their addresses if they have permitted the SSM to obtain their addresses from the DSI when necessary.

THERAPISTS COLLECTING PCR SAMPLES

The Times were told by readers that the SSM has assigned therapists, such as physiotherapists and psychotherapists, to handle sample collection at the citywide PCR test.

In the attempts to verify the information yesterday, the Times were assured by Tai that all registered medical personnel in Macau are eligible to assist in the test. "Of course, they need to undergo certain training," Tai added.

"They have undergone technical and epidemiologic training," Tai further explained. "First, they were trained with the know-how of nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swabs. Second, they were educa-

ted about the danger in the sample collection process and thus how to lower the risks."

Tai added that the swabbing is not the most difficult; instead, it is more difficult to not get infected.

In contrast to the information obtained by the Times, Leong denied that the psychotherapists has participated in the sample collection process of this citywide PCR test.

THE BUS HANDRAIL IN QUESTION...

On the question as to why only an individual (the 66th patient) has been infected on the bus trip so far, Leong stressed that the source of infection is allegedly not the bus.

On Tuesday, the public health doctor disclosed that the 66th and 74th patients took the same bus and held the same handrail. "We don't dare say the point of infection is this [bus trip]," Leong admitted, adding that the health authorities are still in search of more evidence to rule in or out the point of infection.

She further explained that in some cases, not even members within a single family get infected by a diagnosed family member. "A person's immunity and healthcare habits are among the factors to achieve or obstruct infections," Leong said.

FIRST ROUND OF NATS AT ELDERLY HOME ALL NEGATIVE

The first round of nucleic acid tests (NATs) for the elderly and staff at the elderly home Asilo Vila Madalena were negative. The Social Welfare Bureau and the Health Bureau said that it will arrange several more rounds of nucleic acid tests in the coming days. At this stage, the elderly home is under closed loop management and is closed to visitors. The government departments appeal to the relatives of the residents who have visited the elderly home in the last seven days to pay close attention to their health condition.

FREE PARKING FOR TAXIS AT HKZMB

The Transport Bureau has announced that taxis can now enjoy free-of-charge parking in the West Parking Lot of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge Checkpoint. The free parking will be available until further notice. The bureau reminds taxi owners or drivers to obtain a ticket upon entry, even though no payment is required for the time being.

POLICE CALL ON PUBLIC TO TURN IN OVERSTAYERS

Lei Tak Fai, head of the Division of Public Relations of the Public Security Police Force, encouraged members of the public to report the individuals who are overstaying their visas. He was questioned by the press as to how the government can ensure those overstaying will participate in the mass PCR testing since they are unlikely to turn themselves in for the PCR test, as they are not able to obtain a valid health code anyway.

80.6% PEOPLE IN MACAU TESTED NEGATIVE

AS the third round of citywide polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test sees its third day today, as of 4 p.m. yesterday, more than 670,000 samples have been collected, among which 540,000 yielded a negative result at 9 p.m. yesterday.

Neurosurgeon Tai Wa Hou, medical director of the public Conde de São Januário Hospital, announced the figures at the press conference yesterday.

The citywide test was set to end at 9 p.m. yesterday. Only six test stations will remain open as part of the citywide test. Those taking the tests can walk-in to the test stations and may experience a waiting time

shorter than 15 minutes. However, prior reservation for the test is preferred.

The Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center reminds members of the public to take the test prior to the time of closure. Failure to do so will result in their health codes being converted to yellow.

Results obtained from the citywide PCR test will not be shown on the health code, which means that they are not eligible for immigration purposes. Those who want a result for such purposes should approach a paid station for the test. **AL**

OVER 500 CROSS-BORDER STUDENTS STILL STRANDED AFTER BORDER CHANGES

STAFF REPORTER

MORE than 500 students and their parents who do not have a living place in Macau have been arranged to stay in youth hostels and school dormitories, according to an updated issued by the education authority yesterday.

Currently, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEDJ) is planning to prepare learning equipment and environment for students to study in various camps.

"We hope that through various aspects of work, we try our best to facilitate the life and study of cross-border students who are staying in Macau," the bureau said.

Around 1,000 students residing in Zhuhai were stuck in Macau after returning to the SAR for classes which were scheduled to resume on Monday.

Classes had been canceled due to an announcement by the Health Bureau that a batched sample containing ten individual samples returned a preliminary positive test result for Covid-19.

DSEDJ only announced the suspension of classes when hundreds of students have already crossed the border.

Schools have been requested to



make appropriate arrangements and inform parents.

For cross-border students, DSEDJ was able to provide shelter in several different locations for the students in need of a place to stay, as well as providing assistance with other daily needs such as food and clothes.

The Hac Sa Youth Hostel, Cheoc Van Youth Hostel, University of Macau and other institutions

have provided the accommodation, following cleaning and disinfection of the premises.

Students who need accommodation or other assistance should contact their school or teachers as soon as possible so that the DSEDJ can collect data and make proper arrangements for the students.

The bureau requests that, where possible, students stay with friends or family so that accommodation

to be exempted from the 14-day quarantine.

Until now, such measure is suspended.

GOV'T ADMITS PERIOD OF RESTRICTIONS SHORTER

Leong Iek Hou, coordinator at the local Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), was questioned by the press Tuesday on the reasons for the comparatively rapid return to normality in the community following the previous outbreak. The school suspension, for example, was set to last for only 10 days had the renovation worker cluster not been detected.

She admitted the period of restrictions was shorter than on previous occasions and disclosed that it was a decision made jointly by the local authorities and a group of mainland experts who have studied the recent outbreaks in Guangzhou, the provincial capital of Guangdong province.

"93.2% of these cases [in Guangzhou] saw onset in seven days; 97.7% in 10 days and 100% in 14 days," Leong said, adding that, considering the last outbreak, the overall risks were low and manageable.

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MGM refutes idea that central gov't is tightening control on gaming sector

LYNZY VALLES

MGM Resorts International brushed off concerns relating to China tightening its control on Macau's gaming sector, which scared investors away when the proposed gaming law amendment was announced last month.

Speaking to Yahoo Finance, Bill Hornbuckle, CEO and president of MGM Resorts International and chairman of MGM China, said that he does not view the alleged gaming crackdown as "a major challenge" for the operator, though he conceded that the Chinese leadership is looking for greater "control and oversight."

"Until proven wrong [...] we're not overreacting to what is being hyped or said. [...] We are hoping rational minds have control in the end because this is the Macau economy," he said during the interview.

The lucrative casino licenses are up for rebidding next year, and the government aims to raise the general competitiveness of the sector amid the broad Beijing regulatory crackdown that is occurring in different sectors,

PHOTO ARCHIVE



from technology to real estate. In China, Beijing's crackdown has already cut off hundreds of billions of dollars in asset values.

Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong previously announced that the concessionaires will be under tighter scrutiny from the government, which will have a greater authority to verify the background of both the staff hired by the concessionaires or entities who work with them. Meanwhile, the Communist Party

of China stated that they are rolling out a system known as Social Credit to track every individual and company in China and punish any misstep, ranging from littering to dealing with business partners that break environmental rules.

Following Lei's announcement, the proposed gaming amendments have caused casino stocks to plunge by over USD18 billion in market value.

In contrast, Hornbuckle is confident that the Gaming Inspection

and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) already maintains "significant oversight over operators, and officials retain a constant presence" at its two properties in the SAR, as cited in the report.

"[Government oversight] is not that foreign to our industry and in our business. Obviously, government oversight in China implies something different, potentially," he said.

"[Local and national officials] recognize the value that it brings and ultimately the value that we've brought as operators to the greater community. I mean we do a lot in the community just beyond employment, which is a big piece of it, of course. So, I think we're all in good standing," the executive added.

Meanwhile, another proposed amendment to the gaming law is that it will require casinos to increase the percentage of share capital held by permanent residents of Macau – an initiative to maximize the economic value of the industry. Among the six gaming operators currently, only SJM, Galaxy and Melco are deemed local Chinese companies.

HK TO TEST CROSS-BORDER FINTECH APPLICATIONS

Hong Kong will facilitate financial institutions, and information and technology companies from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau, to test cross-border fintech applications, Hong Kong's Chief Executive (CE) Carrie Lam said during her 2021 policy address. The CE said that the region together with the mainland will explore the formation of a one-stop sandbox network to facilitate such companies. Yesterday, she unveiled an array of new measures to reinforce Hong Kong's status as a global financial hub, including improving the listing regime of the stock market and facilitating the cross-boundary flow of renminbi.

INT'L MUSIC FESTIVAL CANCELED

The Cultural Affairs Bureau announced that it will cancel the performances and activities of the "Macao International Music Festival – Music October," scheduled for this month. Some outreach activities in the community will be considered, if circumstances allow. The cancellation comes after the city recently recorded new cases that led to the third mass testing, as well as various performing groups not being able to visit Macau due to stricter border regulations.

FREE PARKING FOR TAXIS AT HKZMB

The Transport Bureau has announced that taxis can now enjoy free-of-charge parking in the West Parking Lot of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge Checkpoint. The free parking will be available until further notice. The bureau reminds taxi owners or drivers to obtain a ticket upon entry, even though no payment is required for the time being.

JETCO to launch cardless cash withdrawal service in the city

LYNZY VALLES

JOINT Electronic Teller Services Limited (JETCO) yesterday announced the launch of the cross-bank cardless cash withdrawal service in Macau, with an expectation to integrate the cross-bank cardless cash withdrawal feature in the automatic teller machines (ATMs) of all its member

banks in Macau by the end of the year.

This service enables local customers of all participating JETCO member banks to withdraw both Hong Kong dollars (HKD) and Macau pataca (MOP) from over 1,100 JETCO ATMs in Macau using their phones.

JETCO CEO Angus Choi said: "The launch of cross-bank cardless cash wi-

thdrawal [service] is a key milestone in the introduction of modern financial services to residents of Macau."

"With this launch, we are proud to play a part in realizing the government's vision to implement digital banking as part of Macau's smart city blueprint," the executive added.

JETCO is planning to

launch the second phase of the service in 2022, allowing customers of participating banks in Hong Kong and Macau to conduct cardless cash withdrawals in both cities.

To be able to obtain the cash, the customer needs to pre-set the withdrawal instructions on their mobile banking app and scan the QR code shown on the ATM screen.

The service is supported by seven local member banks.

These banks include Banco Comercial de Macau (BCM), Bank of China

(BOC), China Construction Bank, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (Macau), Luso International Banking, OCBC Wing Hang Bank and Tai Fung Bank.

The designated ATMs will be identifiable by a "Cardless Withdrawal" sticker.

Out of the seven banks, three have rolled out the cardless cash withdrawal feature in their mobile banking apps: BOC, Luso International Banking and Tai Fung Bank.

More member banks will implement this feature in the coming months.

JAI ALAI BUILDING, HOTEL REMAIN OPEN

THE gaming areas in the Jai Alai building and Hotel Jai Alai remain open, while Casino Oceanus is temporarily closed for disinfection works, SJM Resorts, S.A. disclosed in a statement.

The closure comes after the 72nd Covid-19 patient, a mainland Chinese worker, played in the casino for several hours.

Casino Oceanus, one of

the 18 properties owned by SJM Holdings Limited, currently has 300 gaming tables and 500 slot machines.

"SJM stands firm with the government and all Macau residents in efforts to control the spread of the coronavirus. [...] SJM maintains close communication with the relevant government departments to ensure all measures are put in place," the statement, issued yes-

terday, read.

The patient also stayed in three local hotels including Grand Emperor Hotel, Victoria Hotel and Sands Macao.

The government recently defended its decision to not cordon off Sands Macao, while designating Grand Emperor Hotel and Victoria Hotel as a red zone, arguing that the patient did not walk around the premise. LV



DIPLOMACY

BIDEN DISPATCHES SULLIVAN TO MEET CHINA DIPLOMAT IN ZURICH

AAMER MADHANI,
WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Joe Biden is dispatching White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan for talks with senior Chinese foreign policy adviser Yang Jiechi in Switzerland as the two countries find themselves at odds on a variety of issues, including Taiwan and trade.

The meeting, set for today [Macau time] in Zurich, comes after the White House on Monday criticized Beijing over several days of sustained military harassment against the self-ruled island of Taiwan.

The talks are to be a follow-up on Biden's call with President Xi Jinping last month as the administration continues "to seek to responsibly manage the competition" between the two countries, White House National Security Council spokesperson Emily Horne said in a statement.

The White House this week raised concerns that Beijing was undermining regional peace and stability with its "provocative" action. In recent days, China has sent dozens of fighter planes toward Taiwan — including a record 56 on Monday.

U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai said in a speech on Monday she plans frank conversa-



White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan

tions with officials in Beijing about an interim trade deal aimed at resolving a tariff war.

Tai said she did not want to "in-flame trade tensions with China." But her comments suggested that Biden will continue enforcing tough tariffs against China adopted by his predecessor, Donald Trump.

The latest incursions occurred after Taiwan applied to join a major regional trade pact. Beijing vehemently opposes efforts by the West that offer Taiwan the appearance of sovereign nation status and has expressed its opposition to the application.

China claims democratically ruled Taiwan as its own territory, to be brought under its control by force if necessary. It refuses to recognize the island's government and

has increasingly sought to isolate the independence-leaning administration Tsai Ing-wen.

Under longstanding policy, the United States provides political and military support for Taiwan, but does not explicitly promise to defend it from a Chinese attack. Asked about the recent surge in provocations by Chinese fighter jets, Biden on Tuesday noted that he has previously spoken to Xi about Taiwan and that his administration intends to "abide by the Taiwan agreement."

Biden has repeatedly called out China for what the administration sees as Beijing's coercive trade practices, human rights abuses against ethnic minorities and its handling of the coronavirus pandemic that originated from the

country's Wuhan province. At the same time, the administration has expressed hope that the two sides can work together on issues of mutual concern — including climate change and preventing a nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula — despite the differences.

Administration officials have expressed frustration that interactions with high-level Chinese officials in the early going of the administration have been less than constructive.

In June, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Yang had a tense call, with Beijing saying it told the U.S. to cease interfering in its internal affairs and accusing Washington of politicizing the search for the origin of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sullivan and Blinken also had heated exchanges with Yang when they met in March with top Chinese officials in Anchorage. At that meeting, Yang accused the U.S. of failing to deal with its own human rights problems and took issue with what he said was American hypocrisy.

The South China Morning Post first reported plans for the meeting between Sullivan and Yang.

Sullivan will also travel this week to Brussels and Paris for talks with allies. **MDT/AP**

TAIWAN

FRENCH SENATORS ARRIVE IN TAIPEI AMID TENSIONS WITH BEIJING

A group of French senators arrived in Taiwan for a five-day visit yesterday following a large Chinese show of force with fighter jets near the self-ruled island, and Beijing warned the trip will hurt its ties with France.

The group, led by senator Alain Richard, will meet with Taiwanese leader Tsai Ing-wen, economic and health officials and the Mainland Affairs Council. Richard, a former French defense minister, previously visited Taiwan in 2015 and 2018, according to Taiwan's semi-official Central News Agency, and heads the Taiwan Friendship group in the French Senate.

China tried to discourage the visit, with its embassy in France saying ahead of the trip that it will not only damage China's core interests and undermine Chinese-French relations, but will also France's own "reputation and interests."

The visit is part of normal and regular parliamentary exchanges between France and Taiwan, which were not politicized in the past, said Mathieu Duchatel, director of the Asia Program at the Institut Montaigne in Paris.

In its most recent display of sustained military harassment, China flew fighter jets 149 times toward Taiwan over four days from Friday to Monday. The White House called the flights risky and destabilizing, while China responded that the U.S. selling weapons to Taiwan and its ships navigating the Taiwan Strait were provocative.

Taiwan's Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng told legislators yesterday that the situation "is the most severe in the 40 years since I've enlisted." Chiu was answering questions as the legislature decides whether to approve a special budget for air and naval defense purchases. **MDT/AP**



French senator Alain Richard (left) is escorted by a Taiwanese official upon arrival at Taoyuan International Airport

HONG KONG

Facing social unrest, Carrie Lam looks to build more housing

LAND-starved Hong Kong plans to build more affordable housing in response to public demands that have fueled social unrest.

Chief Executive Carrie Lam announced a major development project yesterday for Hong Kong's border area with mainland China in the last annual policy address of her current term.

The "Northern Metropolis" plan aims to provide hundreds of thousands more homes and tens of thousands of jobs. It fits in with broader plans for closer ties across the border with mainland China.

Lam's administration is under pressure to ease a shortage of affordable homes that makes it difficult for some of Asia's best edu-



Hong Kong borderland, with the skyline of Shenzhen in the background

cated and most cosmopolitan citizens to find housing.

Public housing estates have not kept up with demand, and Hong Kong's property is among priciest in the world: it tied Zurich and Paris last year as the most expensive city in a

survey by the World Economic Forum.

Astronomical prices helped drive months of anti-government protests in 2019 that have prompted a major security crackdown by the central government in Beijing.

In her address, Lam repeatedly defended Hong Kong's National Security Law, imposed by Beijing last year, along with changes to the election system that reduce the number of members of the local legislature elected by universal suffrage and establish a strict vetting system to screen out candidates considered insufficiently patriotic.

Such measures led the U.S. to impose sanctions on Hong Kong and Chinese officials.

Hong Kong is mostly perched on mountains and islands and it has more than 90,000 people per square mile in its urban core. Much of its 1,100 square kilometers of wild space has not been developed.

Critics say the government restricted the amount of land available for housing after the 1980s to help drive prices higher, providing a windfall for developers but pushing home ownership out of the reach of the average family.

The average household has 15 square meters of living space per person, according to the territory's Census and Statistics Department. Most of the territory's 7.4 million people live in high-rise, government-owned apartment buildings.

Buying one of Hong Kong's cramped apartments costs an average of \$28,570 per square meter, 2 1/2 times the price in mainland China and 1 1/2 times Japan's level, according to a survey by Global Property Guide.

While living costs are high and rising, Hong Kong's median income has fallen by about 6% since last year, according to the statistics department. **MDT/AP**



PHILIPPINES

Dictator son's presidential run triggers protests

AARON FAVILA & JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

THE son and namesake of Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who was toppled in a 1986 pro-democracy uprising, registered his candidacy yesterday for

next year's presidential elections, sparking a protest by activists who angrily recalled the widespread human rights atrocities that marked the martial law era under his late father.

Former senator Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. filed his papers with the elections com-

mission, then waved at dozens of supporters chanting his name. The 64-year-old announced his candidacy Tuesday, vowing to unite Filipinos to overcome the challenges in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. But issues surrounding the Marcoses continue to stoke political divi-

sions more than three decades after the dictator's downfall.

More than 100 anti-Marcos activists vowed to campaign against Marcos Jr. and burned effigies of his father and the current president, Rodrigo Duterte, an ally of the Marcoses, in a protest at the Commission on Human Rights. They waved placards that read "never again" and recalled the massive rights violations that took place after Marcos placed the Philippines under martial rule from 1972 to 1981.

"This is like deja vu," said protest leader Tinay Palabay. "It's a slap on the faces of the victims of the widespread torture, rapes and disappearances. Some families are still looking for missing martial law victims until now."

Palabay said a coalition of left-wing and human rights groups would organize more street and online protests against Marcos Jr.'s candidacy and push the Supreme Court to uphold a graft conviction of his mother, former first lady Imelda Marcos, and ask other candidates not to align with him.

Marcos was ousted in a 1986 army-backed "people power" uprising and died in exile in Hawaii three years later without admitting any wrongdoing, including accusations that he and his family amassed an estimated \$5 billion to \$10 billion while he was in power.

Marcos placed the Philippines under martial rule on Sept. 21, 1972, a year before his term was to expire. He padlocked Congress, ordered the arrest of political opponents and ruled by decree.

A Hawaii court found Marcos liable for human rights violations

and awarded \$2 billion from his estate to compensate more than 9,000 Filipinos who filed a lawsuit against him for torture, incarceration, extrajudicial killings and disappearances.

Imelda Marcos and her children were allowed to return to the Philippines in 1991, and have since made a political comeback, winning seats in Congress and powerful provincial posts and laying the ground for a return to the presidential palace and the top job they felt was stolen from them.

Marcos Jr. is the latest to join the race to succeed Duterte, who has been in the crosshairs of human rights groups himself for a brutal crackdown on illegal drugs that has left thousands of suspects dead. Sen. Panfilo Lacson, a former national police chief who also was tough on crime, registered his candidacy yesterday. Retired boxing star Manny Pacquiao and Manila Mayor Isko Moreno have also enlisted for what is expected to be a crowded and hostile campaign.

Vice President Leni Robredo, who leads the opposition, is expected to announce her candidacy Thursday after talks failed among leading politicians to unite behind a single candidate against whoever Duterte and his ruling party will endorse to succeed him.

Marcos Jr. narrowly lost to Robredo in the 2016 vice presidential race and then unsuccessfully contested alleged elections irregularities. Robredo has criticized his refusal to apologize and express remorse for the abuses under his father's dictatorship and has said she was ready for a new faceoff. **MDT/AP**

INDONESIA

US woman in Bali 'suitcase murder' to be released Oct. 29

A Chicago woman convicted of assisting her boyfriend in her mother's murder and stuffing the body in a suitcase on Indonesia's resort island of Bali in 2014 is being released early from a 10-year sentence, a prison official confirmed yesterday.

Heather Mack, who was 18 when she was arrested a day after the discovery of Sheila von Wiese-Mack's body in the trunk of a taxi parked near the St. Regis Bali Resort, will be freed and deported to the United States on Oct. 29, said Lili, the Kerobokan Female Prison chief.

Lili, who goes by a single name, told The Associated Press that Mack received a total of 34 months of sentence reductions, which are

often granted to prisoners on major holidays, including a six-month remission of sentence awarded to her by the Indonesian government during the country's Independence Day in August.

"She has shown to be a good person, she was entitled to the sentence reduction," Lili said. "She looked happy when she learned this ... and began to pack up excitedly."

Mack and her then-boyfriend, Tommy Schaefer, were detained in August 2014 and convicted in April 2015. Schaefer received an 18-year sentence.

Before Mack was convicted, she gave birth to her and Schaefer's daughter, Stella Schaefer. There were also reports of a troubled

relationship between Mack and her mother, with officials confirming that police had been called to the family's Oak Park, Illinois, home dozens of times.

In 2016, Robert Bibbs, a cousin of Schaefer, pleaded guilty to helping to plan the killing in exchange for \$50,000 that Mack was expected to inherit, and was sentenced the next year to nine years in prison.

Upon her release, Mack can under Indonesian law be reunited with her daughter, who is now 6.

But her Indonesian attorney, Yulius Benyamin Seran, has said earlier that Mack, who has not seen the little girl for about 20 months because authorities halted prison visits during the coronavirus pandemic, had



Heather Mack of Chicago, Ill. (center) is escorted by police officers as she arrives at a Bali court for her sentencing hearing, in April 2015

asked Indonesian authorities to let the girl remain with her foster family to

avoid media attention. Under Indonesian law, a deported foreigner will be

rejected entry to Indonesia up to a maximum six months. **MDT/AP**



Czech Republic's Prime Minister Andrej Babis

CZECH REPUBLIC

Pandora Papers a worry for Czech PM Babis ahead of election

CZECH Prime Minister Andrej Babis is heading into a parliamentary election this week hit by yet another scandal that links him and hundreds of other wealthy people to offshore accounts.

Findings by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists dubbed the "Pandora Papers" shed light on how the elite and the corrupt used offshore accounts to shield their assets from taxes or to hide ill-gotten gains.

Here's a look at the previously hidden dealings making waves in the Czech Republic and the country's election taking place on Friday and Saturday:

WHAT DID BABIS DO?

In 2009, Babis, a populist billionaire, put \$22 million into shell companies to buy 16 properties in southern France, including a chateau, the investigation found. They were not disclosed in Babis' required asset declarations, according to documents obtained by the journalism group's Czech partner, Investigace.cz.

Babis has denied any wrongdoing and alleged that the recent revelation was meant to harm him in the election.

"I don't own any offshore. I don't own any property in France," he said. "It's nasty, false accusations that are

meant to influence the election. That's all."

The Czech Republic's organized crime police unit said it would investigate the situation. The country's political opposition is demanding that Babis prove his actions were in line with law.

WHAT'S THE POLITICAL SITUATION?

Babis, 67, has had a turbulent term featuring numerous scandals, but all public polls favor his centrist ANO (YES) movement to win the election with about 25% of the vote.

Five opposition parties with policies closer to the European Union's mainstream have put aside their differences to create two coalitions aimed at ousting the euroskeptic prime minister from power.

Babis has led a minority coalition government of ANO and the leftist Social Democrats with support from the Communists, giving the far-left party an indirect share of power for the first time since 1989. The Communist Party vehemently opposes NATO and maintains friendly ties with the ruling communists in Cuba, China and North Korea.

Both the Social Democrats and the Communists might struggle to win parliamentary seats at all, this time around. The main challenge

for Babis' main challengers is to get united.

The center-right Together coalition consists of the conservative Civic Democratic Party and Christian Democrats and the liberal-conservative TOP 09 party. The liberal Pirate Party and STAN, a group of mayors and independent candidates, formed a center-left coalition.

Each coalition is predicted to win about 20% of the vote.

Despite their differences on many issues, including climate change, same-sex marriage and the adoption of the euro, the opposition parties all support EU and NATO membership.

BABIS' POPULIST PLEDGE: NO MIGRANTS

Babis has bet on an aggressive campaign, with migration a major topic. He has promised voters that not a single illegal migrant would be allowed to enter the Czech Republic and accused the opposition — with no evidence — of inviting in refugees.

He has also pledged to protect the Czechs from the European Union, which he claims wants to destroy the country's sovereignty. The EU's plan to tackle climate change would also harm Czech people's way of life, Babis has claimed.

Targeting his key supporters, he increased pensions

more than required and lowered income taxes amid a record deficit caused by the pandemic, a move that worries economists.

"Babis is trying to divide the society, to create an atmosphere of fear for some of their safety and present himself as the only one to protect them," Palacky University political scientist Tomas Lebeda said. "It's a classic strategy used by most populists, by Donald Trump, by (Hungarian Prime Minister) Viktor Orban."

Babis, who calls Hungary's nationalist leader his friend, invited Orban to join him at an election rally last week.

"It's obviously a reason for concern, not just for Europe, but above all for the Czech Republic, given what's been going on in Hungary," Lebeda said.

Although Orban is popular in his country, critics accuse him of autocratic tendencies, citing his seizing control of Hungary's media to control political narratives. Several journalists from the Czech, German and French media were denied access to a news conference Orban and Babis held in the northern city of Usti nad Labem.

A POLITICIAN OFTEN QUESTIONED

The Pandora Papers report is not the first time that Babis' wealth and business activity have become a political issue since his party won the 2017 election.

A quarter of a million Czechs rallied against him twice in 2019 over his alleged fraud involving EU funds and allegations of his cooperation with the country's communist-era secret police. The protests were by far the biggest anti-government demonstrations since the country's 1989 Velvet Revolution.

An EU investigation found that as prime minister Babis had a conflict of interest from his former business empire. When he took office, Czech law required him to transfer his Agrofert conglomerate of around 250 companies into two trust funds, but the EU concluded that he still controls them. The companies include two national newspapers and a popular radio station.

His resolve to run the government as a company was tested by the coronavirus pandemic. Babis went through five health ministers, and the Czech Republic has reported more than 30,400 COVID-19 deaths among a population of 10.7 million. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2001 US LAUNCHES AIR STRIKES AGAINST TALEBAN



The United States has begun its military campaign, Operation Enduring Freedom, against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Cruise missiles and bombers have targeted the airports of Kandahar and Kabul and terrorist training camps near Jalalabad.

The attacks which began around 1630 GMT were quickly followed by a public broadcast from President Bush who promised a "sustained and relentless" campaign.

The Taliban has condemned the strikes and says it shot down a plane, a claim denied by the Americans.

Up to 50 cruise missiles are reported to have been launched from submarines in the Arabian Sea.

The US also flew in B52 bombers stationed on the island of Diego Garcia, and B2 Stealth bombers direct from the US itself.

Tony Blair confirmed the initial strikes involved a British contribution by HMS Illustrious and a small number of submarines.

They form part of a US-British naval coalition gathered in the region within striking distance of Afghanistan, including two US aircraft carriers.

Speaking at a news conference, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, said key targets would be terrorist training camps and Taliban communications, fighter planes and air defence installations.

But the Pentagon says it will be mounting operations from the air and the ground, and defence experts say special forces are likely to be used soon into the campaign.

In his broadcast, George Bush underlined America's commitment to pursue terrorism in light of the events of 11 September.

He warned there was "no neutral ground" and that any government sponsoring terrorism would be taking a "lonely path at their own peril."

The US administration has repeatedly rejected Taliban offers to bargain over the fate of its guest, Saudi-born militant Osama Bin Laden.

The al-Qaeda leader, who is accused of plotting the 11 September attacks, also released a speech to time with the strikes.

In a message delivered to Al-Jazeera television, an Arabic news channel, he sought to portray the bombing as part of a wider war of two sides, the "side of faith, and the side of infidelity".

Tony Blair pledged Britain's commitment to the campaign and stressed it would be fought on three fronts - military, diplomatic and humanitarian.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The strikes were the first retaliatory response to the 11 September 2001 terror attacks in which nearly 3,000 people died. The key objectives were to stop Afghanistan from remaining a terrorist haven and to find Osama Bin Laden. Within three months, the Taliban were effectively ousted. With help from the Northern Alliance, an army of rebel Afghan factions, coalition forces have been hunting down al-Qaeda militants, but Bin Laden has not been found then. He was shot and killed in his hideout in Pakistan by American special forces on May 2, 2011. A US-friendly Afghan administration was in place until 2004. International forces are helping to maintain order in Kabul, but warlords maintain powerbases in the regions. Human rights abuses are high and heroin production is up. Estimates of civilian deaths in Afghanistan vary between several hundred and several thousand. In August 2021, the Taliban once again regained control of the country, as many civilians, government officials and foreign diplomats were evacuated, following the withdrawal of American forces and NATO allies. A theocratic government was installed in Kabul.

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Accept the inevitable, and opportunities for advancement will follow. Your lover may disappoint you in such a way that estrangement will follow. Get involved in the activities of children.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Your fickle nature may cause jealousy. Minor health problems will flare up if you don't take care of yourself. Let others know what your intentions are and be honest in your approach.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
You may be emotionally unstable if you let someone you care about get away with verbal abuse. You will be misinterpreted if you get involved in other people's problems.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You can utilize your versatile mind and dazzle others with your speed and accuracy. Accept the inevitable. You'll feel much better when your slate is clean again.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Try out for a local sports team such as volleyball, tennis, lawn bowling, or whatever interests you. If you're preoccupied, be careful while operating a vehicle or any kind of equipment or machinery.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Those you work with may have little consideration for the underdog. You can benefit financially if you put money or maintenance into your living quarters.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
You could easily lose your temper at work. Don't push your opinions or ideas on others. Your childlike quality may get you into big trouble today if you neglect your responsibilities.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
You don't like confrontations at the best of times; however, you may find them difficult to avoid. You'll be angry if those you live with aren't pulling their weight.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Try to be understanding. Make changes that will enhance your appearance and entice potential partners. Deception and doubts may surround your involvement with friends and relatives.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
You must make them stand on their own two feet regardless of how much you want to make things better for them. You need to keep busy doing things that you both enjoy.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
A long, quiet walk alone may help you sort out your thoughts. Don't let friends or relatives make you feel guilty if you're not able to attend one of their affairs.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
If you can, try to work out of your home today. Make changes that will enhance your appearance. Lack of cash might be partly to blame for the problems at home.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	7	18	fine
Harbin	4	16	cloudy
Tianjin	19	28	overcast
Urumqi	17	21	cloudy
Xi'an	20	22	overcast
Lhasa	11	17	cloudy
Chengdu	25	29	rain
Chongqing	24	35	cloudy
Kunming	25	33	cloudy
Nanjing	19	26	cloudy
Shanghai	24	28	rain
Wuhan	24	30	rain
Hangzhou	4	16	cloudy
Taipei	18	22	overcast
Guangzhou	7	17	cloudy
Hong Kong	12	16	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	-1	11	clear
Frankfurt	7	16	overcast
Paris	7	18	overcast
London	13	19	cloudy
New York	17	24	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Render weaponless; 6- Hardy equestrian creatures; 11- Where the truck driver rides; 14- Ridge; 15- Transfer; 16- Road with a no.; 17- In the future; 18- Terra ____; 19- First name in Notre Dame football; 20- Sketches; 22- One in prison for good; 24- Photo of a raindrop on a rose petal, e.g.; 28- Shaped like the Big Top; 29- Reunion attendees; 30- Stylish; 32- American space agency; 33- Eminent; 35- Long poem, such as those attributed to Homer; 39- CPR experts; 40- Scratch the surface of; 41- 20th letter of the Hebrew alphabet; 42- Morse element; 43- Miter joint; 45- You've Made ____ Very Happy; 46- Silly; 48- Shares viewpoints; 50- Places of contest; 53- Flirting; 54- Having long gams; 55- Wild as wild ass of Tibet; 57- Layer; 58- Person of exceptional holiness; 60- Churns up; 65- Like cool cats; 66- Attorney follower; 67- Stan's pal; 68- ABA member; 69- Gossipmonger; 70- Confronts;

DOWN 1- Country bordered by Canada and Mexico; 2- Advanced degree?; 3- 100 square meters; 4- Inlet; 5- Infuriate; 6- Songwriters' org.; 7- Demonstrate; 8- Takes a load off; 9- Salamander; 10- Less fresh; 11- Skill; 12- Up ____ (trapped); 13- Facial hair; 21- Undoing; 23- Suspend; 24- Worked with wicker; 25- Beast of burden; 26- Ejects; 27- Wonderful; 28- Wee bit; 30- Fend (off); 31- Slight; 34- Portent; 36- Hammer parts; 37- Japanese immigrant; 38- Elected; 43- ____-relief; 44- Crazy as a ____; 47- Oppose; 49- Organized massacre; 50- ____-Bits; 51- Sublease; 52- Exodus origin; 53- Islamic decree; 55- Potter's oven; 56- ____ the finish; 59- Consumed; 61- Corrida shout; 62- Martinique, e.g.; 63- On; 64- Paris possessive;

Yesterday's solution

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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	

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788 ft² 2 1 1

Sands China Fully Supports NAT Drive



In support of Macao's two consecutive community-wide mandatory nucleic acid testing drives, Sands China Ltd. again made available The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo Halls A, B and C as a 24-hour testing station with free parking Oct. 4-6.

This week's mandatory NAT drive was Macao's third to date. At The Venetian's testing station, which began operating on the first day of the drive, Sands China team members took shifts around the clock, offering immediate assistance to those getting tested. Four dedicated lanes were available to community members needing special assistance, including seniors, pregnant women, those with children and infants, and people with disabilities.

And in the early hours of Oct. 6, Sands Cares Ambassadors also assisted with the operation of the testing station at the Tap Seac Multi-Sport Pavilion, in response to the Social Welfare Bureau's call for volunteers.

Sands China Ltd. will continue to engage with the local community and offer its assistance in support of the Macao government's epidemic-prevention efforts.



FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Denmark on brink, Kane on streak in WCup qualifying

JAMES ELLINGWORTH & STEVE DOUGLAS

EUROPEAN countries resume their qualifying campaigns for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar this week. Here are some things to look out for:

Sunday, 2:45
Moldova v Denmark
H 31, D 10, A 1.14

Christian Eriksen's future in soccer is still unknown following his collapse during a game for Denmark in the European Championship when suffering cardiac arrest. As Eriksen continues his recovery, his national team is coping extremely well without its star player. After reaching the Euro 2020 semifinals without the midfielder, Denmark is the only European team in World Cup qualifying to win its first six games. Beat Moldova away on Saturday then Austria at home on Tues-

AP PHOTO



day in Group F and Denmark will most likely be the first country to qualify for the tournament in Qatar. Mikkel Damsgaard, while not a like-for-like replacement for Eriksen, has stepped up as Denmark's most creative player in the ab-

sence of someone he calls his "role model." In setting up Joakim Maehle for the second goal in the Danes' 2-0 win over Scotland last month, Damsgaard took his goal involvement to nine in nine international games — scoring four

and assisting five — and he added another assist in a 5-0 win over Israel that has taken Denmark to the brink of qualifying.

Sunday, 2:45
Andorra v England
H 150, D 36, A 1.03

Without a goal for Tottenham in the Premier League this season, Harry Kane cannot stop scoring for England, particularly in qualifying for major competitions. Kane scored in each of England's three games in Group I last month and has now netted in each of the last 15 World Cup or European Championship qualifiers he has played in, stretching back to September 2017. That streak has seen him close in on Wayne Rooney's all-time scoring record for England of 53 goals. Kane has 41, putting him fifth on the list. England leads its group by four points and could qualify with wins over Andorra and Hungary, which visits Wembley Stadium a month after its fans

racially abused England players in Budapest. Hungary will have to host Albania on Saturday in an empty stadium as a punishment.

Friday, 2:45
Germany v Romania
H 1.13, D 12, A 26

Watch out for Karim Adeyemi as Germany takes on Romania on Friday and North Macedonia on Monday in Group J. The 19-year-old striker is making waves after scoring on his Germany debut against Armenia last month and grabbing two goals for Salzburg against French champion Lille in the Champions League. Adeyemi, a speedy player who can also be deployed out wide, is fast outgrowing the Austrian league with eight goals in 10 games this season and could be heading back to Germany soon. Bayern Munich, where Adeyemi spent time in the academy, is one option, along with Borussia Dortmund or Leipzig, which has a long history of signing young talents from its Red Bull sister club Salzburg. Germany isn't rich with strikers at the moment and Adeyemi is competing with Timo Werner as well as Kai Havertz, Leroy Sane, Serge Gnabry — three players who mostly play wide or as a deeper-lying forward — for a place. Germany leads the group by four points. **MDT/AP/ODDSCHECKER**

AD

HOLIDAY RENTAL HOUSES

Lugar das Letras Casa de Gouvães

The houses are set in the heart of the World Heritage Site of the Douro Valley and its famous winery landscape where the worlds Ports are produced. Both restored relics overlooking the Rio Douro, these eight rooms houses have been blessed with gorgeous wooden floors, plush queen beds and marble baths; the best have dazzling river views. But it is the welcome that makes this place stand out from the crowd.

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OPINION

Animal Farm

Albano Martins



DIVERSIFICATION INTO VANITY

Beauty products, make-up and skin care work their little miracles. Or to rephrase, when vanity helps this economy.

Exports of goods as a contribution to GDP exploded in 2020 (a year of very strong recession at 56.3%) and also in the second quarter of 2021.

Never in our economic life have we had so much to export (exports defined as sales to non-residents both outside and inside Macau). In the second quarter of 2021 alone, Macau exported the most on record, with the exception of 2004 and, of course, last year.

Why the diversification mantra? We already have it! And the technique is simple, continue to kill the goose that lays the golden egg and give life to exports of goods, even if practically nothing is produced here, almost all of which are re-exports.

Of course, diversification is done with low blows, but what does it matter if what matters is the weight of the "non-gaming" variables in the entire GDP?

The public consultation document on gambling says: "... In 2019, the added value of the gaming sector was 50.86%, while that of the non-gaming sector reached around 50% (...). Hence, it appears that the development of adequate diversification of the economy is showing preliminary positive results..."

At least they could have used two percentages that added up to 100 percent, rounding them both off! But that would give "non-gaming" only 49%!

Just imagine when they become aware of the activity of exports of goods in 2020 and in the second quarter of 2021. They will conclude that diversification is already a reality!

In 2020, exports of goods were already 72.7 percent of gaming revenues, and had risen 129.3 percent! And in the second quarter of 2021 they were already 1.05 times greater than gaming revenues and had already reached 52 percent of the exports of services.

And then the famous personnel consumption ("consumption for the economy")? It crashed at almost 16 percent!

But the miracle happened.

In the midst of the pandemic and restrictions on the entry and exit of visitors, even with the substantial reduction in visitors (-85%) and hotel occupancy (-72.5%), and with such a sharp drop in visitor expenses (-81.4%) and gaming (-79.33%), and a recession (-56.3%) the likes of which has never been seen in Macau's history, the export of goods grew 129.3 percent.

It's a miracle, gentlemen! Not even in periods of very strong GDP growth, and in gambling and visitors, has it grown so much.

This miracle was due to an assumption that no rational trader would hoard goods, so that in this way the only assumption remained that certain imported goods (beauty, makeup and skin care products) would have been all exported: The advantage of having vain people around who take care of themselves.

And the miracle was this, in this scenario of such a sharp fall in GDP, exports of goods in 2020 were more than three times higher than those of the External Merchandise Trade Statistics, which record what goes through customs, and 2.3 times higher than those from the year 2019!

Wouldn't it be natural that in a period of such a deep and complicated crisis, goods would not readily be sold and that movements in stock would therefore increase? But no, in our case, stock dropped by 10.9 percent.

In 2020 China's GDP growth was also affected by Covid-19, so that "in a rational market" purchases by non-Macau residents, who are mainly Chinese, were not expected to behave in the opposite way. I would even say that the correlation between these two variables is extraordinarily positive, as seen throughout the history of Macau's economy.

Two scientists won the Nobel Prize for chemistry yesterday for finding an "ingenious" new way to build molecules that can be used to make everything from medicines to food flavorings.

The work of Benjamin List of Germany and Scotland-born David W.C. MacMillan has allowed scientists to produce those molecules more cheaply, efficiently, safely — and with significantly less environmental impact.

"It's already benefiting humankind greatly," said Pernilla Wittung-Stafshede, a member of the Nobel panel.

Making molecules — which requires linking individual atoms together in specific arrangement — is a difficult and slow task.

Until beginning of the millennium, chemists had only two methods — or catalysts — to speed up the process.

That all changed in 2000, when List, of the Max Planck Institute, and MacMillan, of Princeton University, independently reported that small organic molecules can be used to do the same job as big enzymes and metal catalysts.

The new method, known as asymmetric organocatalysis, "is used widely today, for example, in drug discovery and in fine chemicals production," said Wittung-Stafshede.

Johan Åqvist, chair of the Nobel panel, called the new method as "simple as it is ingenious."

AP PHOTO



Vatican tribunal hearing a landmark fraud case ruled yesterday that prosecutors had deprived 10 defendants of their rights and ordered prosecutors to turn over key pieces of evidence and redo their investigation for some suspects. Tribunal President Giuseppe Pignatone said there had been "lamentable violations" by the pope's prosecutors in failing to give the suspects the chance to respond to all accusations against them during the preliminary phase of the investigation.

Canada The discovery of two inactive grenades inside a vehicle led to a seven-hour closure of Canada-bound traffic on the Ambassador Bridge at the busiest border closing with the U.S., Windsor police said yesterday. The inert grenades were found submerged in an unidentified white powdery substance, police said, leading to the closure from about 9 a.m. to about 4 p.m. Monday.

AP PHOTO



Germany The two parties that emerged as the likely kingmakers from Germany's election last month said yesterday that they will hold talks on a possible new government under the leadership of outgoing center-left Social Democrats. If ultimately successful, which is far from certain, the negotiations would send outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel's center-right Union bloc into opposition after 16 years at the helm of Europe's biggest economy.

Lybia At least 17 bodies, likely of Europe-bound migrants, have washed ashore, the Libyan Red Crescent said. They were found Tuesday near the western Libyan town of Zawiya, the Red Crescent's branch in the town said. The bodies were handed over to authorities for burial. The migrants likely drowned. The U.N. migration agency says more than 1,100 migrants were reported dead or presumed dead in numerous boat mishaps and shipwrecks off Libya so far this year.

SHOW ME THE WAY...

ZIMBABWE REOPENS BARS, BUT ONLY FOR VACCINATED DRINKERS

FARAI MUTSAKA, HARARE

ZIMBABWE is allowing bars to reopen for the first time in more than a year, but only fully vaccinated people will be allowed to take a swig from inside the premises.

The southern African country closed pubs and nightclubs in March 2020 as part of restrictions to slow the spread of COVID-19 and had ignored pleas by owners to ease the restrictions to rescue their collapsing businesses.

"It is a huge relief," Faith Masiya, a director of FC Lounge in the eastern city of Mutare, said yesterday. "Being closed for more than a year wasn't a joke, it nearly killed our business. We had a lot of overheads to meet like salaries, trading license fees, water and electricity bills."

Information Minister Monica Mutsvangwa said the decision to open pubs and nightclubs was out of "concern" that "the continued closure of licensed bars and ni-

ghtclubs has caused not only a loss of income and unemployment but also resulted in the mushrooming of illegal outlets."

Before the decision, alcohol sales were limited to supermarkets, small retail liquor stores, restaurants and hotels serving customers. Pubs and nightclubs will still have to close by 7 p.m., the time all non-essential businesses must close under existing restrictions, said Mutsvangwa.

For drinkers, this is still better than before when they had to play hide and seek with the police while drinking at illegal taverns or open spaces turned into drinking spots. To stay afloat, many outlets would also surreptitiously sell booze to patrons through small windows and often paid bribes for the police to look the other way.

Zimbabwe is one of the few African countries to use vaccine mandates to push a hesitant population to get jabs. Only fully vaccinated people are permitted to go to

places of worship and restaurants, for instance.

The government has also ordered all its workers to get vaccinated or lose their pay. Private sector employers are also telling workers to get the shots or lose their jobs.

Zimbabwe had recorded 131,335 infections, including 4,629 deaths, as of Oct. 5, according to government figures.

More than 15% of Zimbabwe's 15 million people are fully vaccinated — well above the overall African rate of 4% but far from the government's goal of 60%.

Once struggling with vaccine shortages, Zimbabwe received more than 3 million doses of Chinese vaccines but the rate of people getting jabs has been falling since the end of August, as a devastating third wave showed signs of receding and complacency crept in. Officials administered just over 190,000 shots last week, compared to the peak figure of about 500,000 during the third week of August, according to official figures. **MDT/AP**