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FOLLOWING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIGH-FREQUENCY NUCLEIC ACID TEST ON MINORITY GROUPS, SOME SHOPS HAVE ALLEGEDLY STARTED BANNING CUSTOMERS OF VIETNAMESE ORIGIN P5

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New Zealand Most health care workers and teachers will soon be legally required to get vaccinated against the coronavirus, the government announced yesterday.

Iraq Voter turnout in the elections was 41 percent, according to preliminary results announced yesterday, a record low in the post-Saddam Hussein era, signaling widespread distrust of the country's leaders and the vote for a new parliament.



Lebanon Firefighters extinguished a huge blaze that broke out in a storage tank at one of Lebanon's main oil facilities in the country's south yesterday.



LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS COME FIRST

Government launches new modest package of economic relief, cash handout to low-income residents P3

TYPHOON KOMPASU SIGNAL 8 MAY BE HOISTED TONIGHT P3



THE CONVERSATION

HOW YOUR EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC CHANGED YOUR BEHAVIOR AND YOUR SENSE OF TIME



PHILIP GABLE
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

THE COVID-19 pandemic, now in its 19th month, has meant different things to different people. For some, it's meant stress over new school and work regimes, or anxiety over the prospect of catching COVID-19 and dealing with the aftereffects of an infection. But for others, it's created space and freedom to pursue new passions or make decisions that had been put off.

Our upended lives – for better or for worse – also likely influenced our perception of time.

In June 2020, we were part of a team of researchers who presented initial evidence that an individual's sense of time during the pandemic was closely related to their emotions.

People who reported feeling high levels of stress and nervousness in March and April 2020 also tended to feel that time was passing more slowly, but people who reported feeling high levels of happiness felt that time was passing more quickly. (Yes, believe it or not, there was a good chunk of people who enjoyed their time spent in lockdown.)

It turns out that even during a pandemic, time flies when you're having fun.

With a year's worth of data, we were able to see how people's views on the progress of the pandemic were related to their sense of time, their emotional states and whether they behaved in ways intended to slow the spread of COVID-19.

WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

Time is a funny thing. On the one hand, it's incredibly precise and consistent – an objective measure. Each day on Earth lasts exactly 23.934 hours, the length of time it takes the Earth to rotate once along its axis.

On the other hand, how we feel or perceive time passing is neither consistent nor precise. Many people will probably agree that 23.934 hours seem to pass much faster on a Saturday than on a Monday.

Dr. Gable has spent the past decade exploring how two highly related concepts – emotion and motivation – play a large role.

Motivation is a part of emotion and can either be described as "approach motivation" or "avoidance motivation." The former is characterized by the tendency to engage with others or pursue goals when we experience positive emotions, such as excitement and joy. The latter refers to the tendency to pull away from others when we experience nega-

tive emotions, such as sadness or fear.

Approach motivation is associated with time passing more rapidly, which ultimately results in spending more time engaged with something that makes us feel good.

Avoidance motivation is associated with time passing more slowly, which motivates us to escape from potentially harmful situations.

Under normal circumstances, these relationships help us effectively pursue our goals and maintain our safety. Consider how long you'll spend absorbed in a good book and how quickly you try to escape from a threatening situation.

But what happens in extreme circumstances? Thanks to a grant from the National Science Foundation, we were able to investigate for the first year of the pandemic how people's motivations and emotions altered their sense of time.

INITIAL RESULTS

In April 2020, Dr. Gable and his team asked 1,000 Americans about their sense of time and emotional experiences over the previous month.

Almost 50% of these individuals reported that time seemed to be dragging by, which was

strongly related to higher levels of stress and nervousness. These respondents also reported practicing social distancing more often. Roughly 25% of participants said time seemed to be flying by, which was associated with feeling happy and glad. The remaining 25% of participants felt no change in their sense of time.

A month later, we contacted the same people and asked the same questions. About 10% of those who had previously reported time passing slowly said it was moving more quickly. And more of them said they felt relaxed and calm.

THE REST OF THE YEAR

With a full year's worth of data, we were able to analyze the results across 12 months of the pandemic. (The analysis is still under peer review.) We found that individuals who reported being relaxed, happy and confident felt that time was passing more quickly.

In contrast, participants who reported strong feelings of fear, anxiety or anger – or who felt that their lives were out of control – perceived time passing slowly. This sensation of time moving sluggishly was also associated with greater worry about personally getting COVID-19, anxiety about whether a family member would become infected and con-

cern about how the virus would affect personal finances.

We also found an interesting pattern of results related to participants' beliefs about the dangers of COVID-19 and the ability to address the spread of the virus. Specifically, participants who felt the government could effectively control the pandemic and that there were effective treatments for COVID-19 felt time was passing more quickly. Participants who felt there was an insufficient amount of medical equipment to treat COVID-19 and felt the virus was highly lethal reported time passing more slowly.

Then there's the way time perception was connected to behavior.

Over the course of the pandemic, we found that when people were feeling time was moving by more quickly, they were more likely to wear a mask. Meanwhile, when people perceived time passing more slowly, they tended to avoid large gatherings.

Both limit the spread of the virus. So what might explain the likelihood of one behavior over the other?

Individuals wearing a mask are engaging in more approach-motivated behavior, as wearing a mask doesn't protect the wearer as much as it protects those in their vicinity. The more positive people felt, the more likely they were to wear a mask to protect others around them.

Those who avoid large gatherings are engaging in more self-protective, or avoidance-motivated behavior. It prevents you from getting the virus from other people, with fear and avoidance influencing the behavior.

In other words, if you see a light at the end of the tunnel – through treatments and faith in the government's responses – you're more likely to have an upbeat attitude and be more motivated to engage in behaviors that help others. If you feel utterly hopeless or sense foreboding doom, time creeps by. This seems to motivate the impulse to hunker down and protect yourself.

As our understanding and awareness of COVID-19 variants increases, so does our understanding of ourselves and how we behave. These findings may highlight the importance of maintaining good habits and finding hobbies that foster positive emotions. That way you won't be trapped in a cycle of despair, which is only compounded by the sense that time is creeping by. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

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Gov't launches new round of support to SMEs, low-income residents

ANTHONY LAM

THE government yesterday announced a new set of support measures for struggling small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and low-income residents as the pandemic crisis continues to threaten local businesses.

Resident workers, who earned less than MOP144,000 in 2020, and qualified freelancers will get MOP10,000 as part of the latest support scheme from the government.

Similar to previous rounds of support, in order to obtain eligibility, these resident workers must have completed their tax registrations for the concerned fiscal year. Eligibility will thus rely on the taxation records with the Financial Services Bureau (DSF).

Not only will part of the resident workforce benefit from the support scheme, business operators, when criteria met, will also be subsidized between MOP10,000 to MOP200,000.



In order to be eligible, business operators – registered payers of Revenue Supplementary Tax and Occupational Tax (Group 2) – ought to have made no profit in their operations in the 2020 fiscal year.

Eligible business operators will receive, from the government, a subsidy amounting to 5% of the average operational costs in the last three years.

Other elements in the support scheme also include the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) encouraging providers of the Simply Pay service to offer service charge deduction or rebate for half a year.

The Simply Pay payment gateway is a government-led consolidated mobile payment channel incorporating eight local mobile payment platforms, such

as the MPay operated by the Macau Pass and the BOC Pay by the Bank of China, Macau Branch.

ADJUSTED LOAN REPAYMENT PLANS

The AMCM will encourage local banks to adjust loan repayment plans for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Such adjustments will be reflected for interest repayment only, and extension of loan validity, among other means that the banks deem appropriate and of which the risks are controllable.

Tenants of government premises will also benefit from this support scheme. The government will waive three months of rental and remuneration on tenants of such properties.

Moreover, the government will encourage local landlords to conduct similar measures. The government's incentive measure will reflect in the lowering of taxations. Landlords who are willing to lower rentals can apply to the DSF for a rebate on Housing Tax and Stamp Duty on Rental.

The DSF will operate such applications at a designated counter so as to speed up the application procedure.

The application to the Bank Credit Interest Rebate Plan for Small and Medium Enterprises is temporarily open, with an interest rebate on bank credits being provided to SMEs of up to 4%, with a validity of three years. The application period for the plan will last for 12 months.

Meanwhile, SMEs that have operated for only one year are now eligible to apply for the eight-year government loan of MOP600,000 at maximum.

The application period for the delayed government loan repayment has been postponed and will run to the end of January 2023. Companies that are repaying the loans can request a reduction in the amount of each of the last two installments not repaid to MOP1,000, with the remaining amounts being repaid, in equal parts, in the remaining instalments.

The government explained that the new support scheme is implemented due to the recent instability of the Covid-19 epidemic situation, which has made a great impact on the economy. Public opinions have thus called on the government to provide adequate support to affected SMEs.

TYPHOON KOMPASU

Issuance of T8 'relatively high' tonight

LYNZY VALLES

THE probability of hoisting a Typhoon Signal 8 between tonight and tomorrow morning is "relatively high." This comes just a few days after the city saw its longest T8 that lasted for 20 hours between Saturday to Sunday.

Yesterday, the Unitary Police Service called on

the public to take precautions against the typhoon and flooding following the weather bureau's announcement that the severe tropical storm "Kompasu" will enter the alert area of Macau around midnight today.

Winds are expected to intensify significantly and further affect the region.

Last night at 8 p.m., the Meteorological and

Geophysical Bureau (SMG) hoisted T1.

The signal will be raised to T3 at dawn.

Last night, long queues can be seen at local supermarkets as residents prepare for the typhoon. The Times has observed that some supermarkets have ran out of fresh produce.

It is forecasted that Kompasu will intensify today and tomorrow and

will move across the northern part of the South China Sea quickly.

Under the joint influence of Kompasu and the northeast monsoon, the weather in the city will be unsettled in the coming days. Winds will intensify significantly, with the possibility of the wind force reaching level 8, as well as thunderstorms.

"[The typhoon] will come closest to Macau in the early morning on Wednesday, around 400km south to Macau, and move in the general direction to Hainan," the statement read.

Flooding around 0.5m is also expected in low-lying areas on these days.

Hong Kong has already issued T3 at 8 p.m. yesterday.

The Labour Affairs Bureau issued a statement last night reminding specialists in construction

sites to carry out detailed inspections, and take measures to strengthen the equipment to avoid objects falling.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau has also deployed garbage removal work before and after the typhoon.

It called on the public to not dispose domestic garbage during the storm, as well as dispose bulky garbage after the peak garbage collection period, so as to not increase the burden of garbage removal.

SANDS CHINA DEPLOYS 2,400 EMPLOYEES DURING MASS TESTING DRIVES

LYNZY VALLES

SANDS China has deployed over 2,400 Sands China team members, including Sands Cares Ambassadors, who took shifts around the clock during the second and third community-wide mandatory nucleic acid testing (NAT) drives.

These employees offered 24-hour onsite assistance for a total of five days to those getting tested during Macau's two consecutive testing drives, which began

at 3 p.m. on September 25 and at 9 p.m. on October 4, respectively.

According to a statement issued by the gaming operator, they also volunteered to assist with the operation of the testing station at the Tap Seac Multisport Pavilion, and offered support to those needing special assistance at the two testing stations.

At its peak, the firm said that there were 28 testing booths in operation at The Venetian's station – including four dedicated lanes

for community members needing special assistance. Around 65,000 tests were conducted at Cotai Expo during the two NAT drives.

"At this critical moment in the Covid-19 fight, it is our duty to assist in the citywide NAT drives with a testing site at Cotai Expo, so that we can help the government complete the testing as soon as possible," said Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd.

The gaming operator offered Cotai Expo Halls A, B and C as a 24-hour testing

station during the mass testing.

Sands China is providing a total of 4,000 rooms at the Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel under the "medical observation hotel" initiative. After initially offering 2,000 rooms, the company has, since October 5, 2021, reserved an additional 2,000 rooms for medical observation purposes.

This is the seventh time that the Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel has been utilised as a medication observation hotel since March 2020.



VACCINE REQUIRED FOR ATTENDEES OF AL SWEARING-IN CEREMONIES

The swearing-in ceremonies of the lawmakers and the president of the seventh Legislative Assembly (AL) will take place, respectively, at 12 p.m. and 4 p.m. on October 16, in the Noble Hall of the Service Platform Complex for Commercial Cooperation between China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries. All individuals who participate in the ceremonies must be inoculated with at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. Simultaneously, they must also present the certificate with a negative result of the valid nucleic acid test issued in the 48 hours prior to the event. Upon entry, the presentation of the Green Health Code is also mandatory.

SJM REOPENS CASINO OCEANUS

Casino Oceanus was re-opened on October 9 after thorough cleaning and disinfection was conducted and the Health Bureau had carried out inspections, the operator announced. SJM Resorts, S.A. (SJM) said in a statement that it strictly adheres to the Covid-19 pandemic prevention and control measures of the Macau SAR Government to ensure a "safe and hygienic environment, safeguarding the health and safety of employees, guests and the entire Macau community." Last week, the Casino Oceanus was closed for sanitation after the 72nd Covid-19 patient was found to have gambled at the premises.

HAO VS LVS

WITNESS REAFFIRMS MAJOR CHANGES TO BIDDERS SCORE DONE BY COMMISSION

RENATO MARQUES

THE former member from the gaming consultants' team who was hired by the government to evaluate and grade tender bidders for Macau gaming licenses in 2002 - David Green - has reaffirmed during a court session, held yesterday at the Court of First Instance (TJB), that the government's gaming commission had promoted changes to the tender bidders score list elaborated by the consultancy company Arthur Andersen LLC.

The topic, which was addressed last Friday when Green appeared for the first time on the witness stand, was raised once again by defense lawyer Luis Cavaleiro Ferreira and then by the judge presiding the trial.

To both, Green clarified that in the final ordination list in the report from Arthur Andersen to the government commission in 2002, from the bidders who scored higher in the consultancy company's evaluation, to the third best, only Wynn Resorts was granted a gaming license. He explained that this was due to adjustments made to the list at a later stage by the government gaming commission.

"There were adjustments made to the scoring. I believe they [the gaming commission] added a 10% bonification to Wynn [Resorts] because Steve Wynn [who at the time was the CEO of Wynn Resorts] was the pioneer of what is now called the Integrated Resorts," Green said. He added that the commission should have valued the fact that Steve Wynn was the forerunner of this new method, which was created in Las Vegas in 1999. Steve Wynn had significant experience in applying it on casino venues including The Mirage and Bellagio, among others.

On the initial list elaborated by Green as part of the Arthur Andersen team, the bid for Galaxy Entertainment Group (GEG) would come in fifth, he noted in a reply to Ferreira. Ferreira tried once more to highlight the importance of having gaming experience to the high scores attributed by the consultancy company.



TOBIAS SMJETANA

Questioned also by the defense lawyer if there was any potential flaw or issue that would justify the adjustments made in the second stage by the gaming commission, Green said, "At Arthur Andersen, we always had this policy called 'Four Eyes Review,' which meant one of the partners would review all the methodology and results obtained by other. I am confident that the ranking was correct based on the application of our methodology."

Returning to the topic of the comparison between the scores obtained in the evaluation of the Asian American Entertainment Corporation (AAEC), headed by Marshall Hao and of Galaxy, the judge requested once more a confirmation from Green on his previous statements which indicated that none of those companies had any proven experience in gaming, a reason to which they were in a similar position with low scores.

"There was my clear recollection that there was no experience in any of those parties, except for Las Vegas Sands (LVS), which partnered with them," said Green.

Answering the judges' questions on the matter, Green insisted that the experience on other aspects such as running hotel businesses or food and beverage venues, among

others, would only score points if these "were somehow related with the gaming activities."

"The ancillary services had to be related with the gaming activities because this was a license for gaming not for hotels or other entertainment or complementary facilities," he said. "There might have been some kind of judgment made that would take into account other things but we were working on casinos, so we were basing our evaluation on the model of turning Macau to a gaming destination, the model which was invented in Nevada in 1999," Green added.

Green also noted that on several occasions, the government officials, including the Chief Executive at that time, made it very clear to the consultancy team.

The witness, also added, replying to a question from the judge, that there was no way of either the AAEC or Galaxy were scored as having gaming-related experience and if they did, they would have been ranked much better.

Green also explained that the consultancy team only analyzed and evaluated the bidders based on the documents provided by the gaming commission and no further investigation or research was done apart from those official documents.

"We would just evaluate and rank the bidders using the documents provided by the commission. We could not even Google them to try to ensure if the information stated was real or not," Green said remarking that there was a director from Galaxy that claimed to have gaming experience but that the team disregarded this during the evaluation because "we had no way to verify and make proof that such information was real."

With no further questions to the witness, the judge dismissed Green as a witness, meaning that his testimony is completed in court.

The court case involves a filing by the AAEC. Hao's company is claiming compensation amounting to an equivalent to USD12 billion (MOP96.2 billion) on the grounds of the role the AAEC claims to have played ensuring in the granting of LVS's casino operator license in Macau almost 20 years ago. The court case will continue, according to the judge, until at least mid-December, when at least one more defense witness, who is currently in Canada, is expected to be heard in court.

Discussing procedural matters with both legal representatives, the judge also noted that the court is expected to reach a final decision on the eligibility of some of the witnesses to testify.

This comes after the claimant's lawyer, Jorge Menezes, appealed to the court claiming legal impediment from three lawyers who have been listed as witnesses by the defense.

According to Menezes, the lawyers who were called as witnesses have worked directly with both parties on this case in the past, a fact that Menezes says would breach the universal and professional pact of the relation between the client and his lawyer.

For Menezes, if these witnesses are allowed to testify, they might have to reveal details that are strictly confidential and held by a trust pact between clients and lawyers and this might jeopardize a fair decision regarding this case.

Transmac 'severely condemns' violent behavior against driver

LYNZY VALLES

BUS company Transmac "severely condemns" the assault of its bus driver on October 4, which involved a senior citizen punching the driver when

he was not permitted to disembark while the bus crossed a bridge.

According to a statement issued by the company, at about 4 p.m. on Sunday, while bus route 34 was passing across Friend-

ship Bridge, a male passenger, about 70 years old, asked the driver to stop at the bridge to allow him to alight.

The captain explained that he could not stop along the bridge.

Feeling dissatisfied, the passenger walked to the middle door to urinate in a bag, the statement said.

After urinating, he allegedly threw the plastic bag full of urine into the driver's cab.

After that, the passenger punched the bus driver's face, and two male passengers tried to stop the assault.

The driver notified the operation control center to report to the police after the bus crossed the bridge. The injured bus driver was sent hospital for treatment and has returned to his home to recuperate.

The specific bus was immediately arranged to

return to the factory and undergo deep disinfection and cleaning.

"The behavior of the passenger has posed a threat to the safety of the [driver] and all passengers in the bus. The company once again strongly condemns any form of violence," Transmac said in a statement.

The company will pursue legal action against the passenger.

COVID-19

Gov't stresses two racial groups have low-risk amid alleged discrimination

ANTHONY LAM

FOLLOWING the announcement of the high-frequency nucleic acid test (NAT), some shops have allegedly started banning customers of Vietnamese nationality, as raised yesterday in a press conference.

When questioned if these shops are violating any law by doing this, Tai Wa Hou, medical director of the public Conde de São Januário Hospital, reiterated about the groups having low risks.

Certain occupational and racial groups of individuals – identified as key groups by the Health Bureau (SSM) – have been ordered to take four NAT tests in eight days. The new series of tests concerns workers in construction, laundry and security trades, as well as non-resident workers from Nepal and Vietnam.

“These groups of individuals are only key groups. It doesn't imply that they have high risks or



are suspected [to be infected],” Tai said. “They don't even hold a yellow health code, meaning that they are eligible to take the bus.” “Even I have to take the test every seven days [being a frontline medical staff, which is a key group],” Tai added.

No one from the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center was able to refer to any institutional means in order

to stop the discrimination from occurring.

The neurosurgeon disclosed that the SSM had done a calculation on the number of concerned individuals from the high-frequency NAT key groups. There are about 22,000 individuals.

The government's five regular sample collection stations will only accommodate 35,000 test-takers per day. The 22,000

individuals are required to take a test every two days for a period of eight days.

10 HOTELS AS HIGH-FREQUENCY NAT STATIONS

A total of 10 hotels and resorts will operate to support the high-frequency NAT between today and next Sunday, neurosurgeon Tai announced yesterday.

The 10 hotels and resorts are the Grand Lisboa, the Sands Macao, The Venetian Macao, the Wynn Macao, the Wynn Palace, the Broadway Macao, the StarWorld Hotel, the MGM Macao, the MGM Cotai and the Macao Studio City.

BUSINESS SUSPENSION STANDARDS

Certain entertainment venues, such as gyms, karaoke venues, and bars, have been suspended from operating for about a week. However, restaurants and casinos can remain open although mask wearing is literally impossible in the former establishment.

Public health doctor Leong Iek

Hou, coordinator at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, recapped the government's justification of striking a balance between disease control and economic maintenance.

“Not suspending restaurants is to ensure public needs are met,” she said. “Imagine if we ban restaurant operations or dine-in, the public will be faced with an extremely inconvenient scenario.”

She added that the government is not banning all economic activities, meaning that some members of the public need to work. Hence, they will need catering establishments for meals.

“Of course, if a restaurant gets packed with people chatting without [wearing] masks extensively, that will make an unsatisfactory condition,” Leong added.

Defending the operation of casinos, Leong said that all casino entrants are required to have their health codes inspected upon entry. “Only green code holders are allowed to get in,” she said, adding that casinos have strict environmental hygiene measures.

AD

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An Indian army convoy moves on the Srinagar- Ladakh highway at Gagangeer, northeast of Srinagar, Indian-controlled Kashmir (2020)

INDIA, CHINA ARMY TALKS TO DEFUSE BORDER TENSIONS FAIL

ASHOK SHARMA, NEW DELHI

TALKS between Indian and Chinese army commanders to disengage troops from key friction areas along their border have ended in a stalemate and failed to ease a 17-month standoff that has sometimes led to deadly clashes, the two sides said yesterday.

The continuing standoff means the two nations will keep troops in the forward areas of Ladakh for a second consecutive winter in dan-

gerously freezing temperatures.

India's defense ministry, in a statement, said it gave "constructive suggestions" but the Chinese side was "not agreeable" and "could not provide any forward-looking proposals." A statement from a Chinese military spokesperson said "the Indian side sticks to unreasonable and unrealistic demands, adding difficulties to the negotiations."

The commanders from both armies met for the talks Sunday af-

ter a gap of two months at Moldo on the Chinese side in the Ladakh area.

Since February, both India and China have withdrawn troops from some faceoff sites on the northern and southern banks of Pangong Tso, Gogra and Galwan Valley, but they continue to maintain extra troops as part of a multi-tier deployment.

Troops have been added at Demchok and Depsang Plains, Indian media reports say.

Sunday's talks came amid frustration expressed by the Indian army chief at what he called the massive deployment of troops and weaponry by the Chinese side.

"Yes, it is a matter of concern that the large-scale buildup has occurred and continues to be in place, and to sustain that kind of a buildup, there has been an equal amount of infrastructure development on the Chinese side," Gen. M.M. Naravane said on Saturday.

"So, it means that they (China)

are there to stay. We are keeping a close watch on all these developments, but if they are there to stay, we are there to stay, too," he said.

The Chinese statement from Senior Col. Long Shaohua of the Western Theater Command said "China's determination to safeguard its sovereignty is unwavering, and China hopes India will not misjudge the situation."

Temperatures in the forward areas in Ladakh drop to 30 below zero Celsius around January. The troops from both sides used to retreat to their traditional summer holding positions around this time, but since the faceoff started in May 2020 have continued to remain close to the disputed border.

Both countries have stationed tens of thousands of soldiers backed by artillery, tanks and fighter jets along the de facto border called the Line of Actual Control. Last year, 20 Indian troops were killed in a clash with Chinese soldiers involving clubs, stones and fists along the disputed border. China said it lost four soldiers.

The Line of Actual Control separates Chinese and Indian-held territories from Ladakh in the west to India's eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims in its entirety. India and China fought a deadly war over the border in 1962.

Since the standoff began last year, the Chinese have been building build dozens of large weather-proof structures along the LAC in eastern Ladakh for their troops to stay in during the winter. New helipads, widening of airstrips, new barracks, new surface-to-air missile sites and radar locations have also been reported by Indian media. **MDT/AP**

CLIMATE

Flooding sends bus into river; 120,000 evacuated

A bus fell into a river in northern China yesterday, leaving at least three people dead and 11 others missing after flooding from heavy rains destroyed homes and covered farmland.

Video posted online showed people on top of an almost submerged bus in a rushing river flowing over a nearby bridge outside the city of Shijiazhuang, about 265 kilometers southwest of Beijing.

Authorities in Hebei province said in a social media post that 37 of the 51 people on the bus had been rescued. State broadcaster CCTV said that three had died, and 11 were missing.

In neighboring Shanxi province to the west, more than 120,000 people had been evacuated as thousands of houses collapsed

and 190,000 hectares of crops were damaged, the official Xinhua News Agency said Sunday.

Operations have been suspended at 60 coal mines in Shanxi, a major coal producing area, because of the rains, the provincial government said late last week. The stoppage comes as the government is trying to address power shortages that have affected industry and even some homes.

Shanxi, normally a dry region, has also shuttered 166 tourist sites. The heavy rains damaged a 25-meter section of a wall in the historic town of Pingyao, a UNESCO World Heritage site, Xinhua said. Continuous rain is the biggest threat to the city's ancient clay structures, the state news agency said. **MDT/AP**



An aerial photo shows an overflowing Yellow River near the Lianbo Village in Hejin City, Shanxi Province

NORTH KOREA

Kim calls for improved living conditions

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

NORTH Korea said yesterday leader Kim Jong Un urged officials to overcome a “grim situation” facing the country and make stronger efforts to improve the food and living conditions of his people.

But state media didn't mention any specific comments toward Washington and Seoul while reporting on Kim's speech marking the 76th anniversary of the ruling Workers' Party's founding.

Nuclear negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang have stalled for more than two years over disagreements in exchanging the release of crippling U.S.-led sanctions against North Korea and the North's denuclearization steps.

The country has ramped up its missile testing activity in recent weeks while making conditional peace offers to Seoul, reviving a pattern of pressuring South Korea to get what it wants from the United States.

Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said Kim during his speech on Sunday said his party is determined to achieve

the economic goals set during the party's congress in January, when he acknowledged his previous economic plans weren't succeeding and issued new development plans for the next five years.

The agency said Kim confirmed the determination of the party to efficiently carry out the five-year plan to boost “the national economy and solving the people's food, clothing and housing problems.”

The KCNA said Kim analyzed the “unprecedented difficulties” facing the North and called for the party's single-minded unity in developing the state economy in face of the “grim situation.”

Analysts say Kim is facing perhaps the toughest moment of his near decade in power. He failed to win badly needed sanctions relief in his summitry with then-President Donald Trump in 2018 and 2019, then the coronavirus pandemic caused North Korea to close its borders and unleashed further economic shock after decades of mismanagement and sanctions over Kim's nuclear weapons program.

The World Health Organization said last week some of its COVID-19 medical supplies had

AP PHOTO



arrived at a North Korea port, an indication the North was easing one of the world's strictest pandemic border closures to receive outside help.

Kim has so far rejected the Biden administration's offers to restart dialogue without preconditions, saying that Washington

must first abandon its “hostile policy,” a term the North mainly uses to refer to sanctions and U.S.-South Korea military exercises.

But the North in recent weeks have also restored communication lines with the South and said it could take further steps to improve bilateral relations if Seoul

abandons its “double-dealing attitude” and “hostile viewpoint.”

Analysts say North Korea is using the South's desire for inter-Korean engagement to drive a wedge between Washington and Seoul and to pressure the South to extract concessions from the Biden administration on its behalf. **MDT/AP**

PHILIPPINES

Official says journalist's Nobel Prize not a slap on Duterte

PHILIPPINE President Rodrigo Duterte's administration belatedly congratulated journalist Maria Ressa yesterday for being one of two winners of this year's Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her fight for freedom of expression under grave risks.

However, it rejected criticism that it was a slap on Duterte's administration despite Ressa being a critic of the president, who opponents say veers toward authoritarianism.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said Ressa, the 58-year-old co-founder of the Rappler news website known for its probing reportage into Duterte's bloody anti-drug crackdown, has been convicted of cyber libel and faces other criminal charges which courts would independently decide on. Journalists were not being muzzled in the country, he said.

It was the first time the Duterte administration has



publicly reacted since Ressa won the award over the weekend.

“There is no slap there because as everyone knows, no one has ever been censored in the Philippines,” Roque said in reply to a question at a news conference.

Roque sought to back up his statement by citing a Filipino National Artist awardee, Francisco Sionil

Jose, who said in a statement that Ressa did not deserve the award and that “the Philippine press is alive and well” not because of her, and added that there were no writers in jail nor did censorship exist in the country.

Duterte has not shut down any newspaper or radio station, Jose said. Even though the president exerted influence on Congress,

which did not renew the license of leading TV network ABS-CBN, leading to its closure last year, that was not a press freedom issue, he said.

Jose conceded that journalists have been killed after attacking local politicians and officials under Duterte — similar to what had happened under his predecessors. However, “those killings cannot be

laid at Duterte's door,” said the 96-year-old multi-awarded novelist, whose comments drew intense criticism and ridicule.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee noted that Ressa's Rappler news site, which was set up in 2012, has put a spotlight on Duterte's “controversial, murderous anti-drug campaign” in the Philippines. Other domestic and international news agencies have also closely reported on the brutal campaign, which Duterte launched when he took office in 2016, and which has left more than 6,000 mostly poor suspects dead.

Western governments and human rights groups have repeatedly expressed concerns about the level of brutality and lack of due process.

Duterte has openly lambasted journalists and news sites who report critically about him, including the Philippine Daily Inquirer, a leading daily, and

ABS-CBN, which was shut down by the government's telecommunications regulator after its 25-year license expired.

The shutdown has been criticized as it cut off a major source of information on the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Philippines has remained one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists even after the 1986 downfall of dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who had muzzled the media, imprisoned journalists and opponents and tortured activists.

In 2009, 58 people were gunned down in the country's volatile south in a brazen assault sparked by an electoral rivalry between two powerful political clans that horrified the world. Thirty-two of those gunned down were local reporters and media workers in the world's single worst recorded attack on journalists. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in Jerusalem, last weekend

MIDEAST

Israel can't 'lose sight' of deal with Palestinians: Merkel

JOSEF FEDERMAN,
JERUSALEM

GERMAN Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday implored Israel not to "lose sight" of the need to establish a Palestinian state, as she wrapped up a two-day farewell visit.

Merkel's support for a two-state solution has been one of the key disagreements with Israel's leadership during her 16 years in office, which were characterized by unwavering support for Israel.

Speaking at an Israeli think tank, Merkel welcomed the historic diplomatic agreements reached last year between Israel and four Arab countries - led by the United Arab Emirates. But she said the deals, known as the Abraham Accords, did not erase the need for Israel to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians.

"We must not lose sight of the right of the Palestinians to have a chance to live," she said. "Therefore one should under no circumstances, even as it becomes more and more difficult because of the settlements, lose sight of the issue of a two-state solution," Merkel told a panel

at the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv.

Backers of the Abraham Accords, which were brokered by the Trump Administration, have praised them as breaking the long-standing belief that Israel could not forge ties with the Arab world before reaching an agreement with the Palestinians.

Israel's new prime minister, Naftali Bennett, a hard-liner who opposes a Palestinian state on Israeli-occupied lands, has ruled out peace talks with the Palestinians. Instead, he has advocated what he says is a more pragmatic approach of improving living conditions for the Palestinians as a way of lowering tensions. His government, a patchwork of dovish, nationalist and Arab parties that took office in June, so far has not announced any major changes in policy.

Merkel welcomed Bennett's intentions but said such an approach would not be enough.

"I think that such a long-running issue (the conflict with the Palestinians) will not disappear from the agenda, even if there are improved relations with neighboring Arab states," she said.

Throughout Merkel's vi-

sit, she was welcomed as a "true friend" of Israel. Her agenda included meetings with Israeli leaders and a stop at Israel's national Holocaust memorial, Yad Vashem.

She repeatedly professed Germany's commitment to Israel's security and said she was confident that her country's next government — to be determined in lengthy coalition talks following an inconclusive election last month — would take a similar stance.

A key issue on the agenda was Iran's nuclear program. Germany was one of the world powers that negotiated the 2015 international nuclear deal with Iran.

The deal fell apart after then-President Donald Trump, with Israel's support, withdrew in 2018. The Biden administration has been trying to revive that deal over Israeli objections.

Israel considers Iran its greatest enemy, citing the country's military presence in neighboring Syria and its support for hostile militant groups across the region. It accuses Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons — a charge Iran denies — and believes that interna-

tional deal did not contain sufficient safeguards.

In the meantime, Iran has marched forward with its nuclear activities, such as increased uranium enrichment - a step that can move it closer to building a bomb.

Merkel said that disagreements among the world powers that negotiated the original deal have weakened their position and allowed Iran to buy time and expand its military activities across the region.

"Iran knows this, and therefore we face a very serious situation," she said. She acknowledged that she does not have a solution, but called on key players, including Russia and China, to take a stronger public stance against Iran.

"The more countries make it clear that they don't accept the ambitions and aggression of Iran, the better for the region," she said.

Israel was formed in the wake of the Holocaust in 1948 and the two countries only established diplomatic ties in 1965. But over the decades, those ties have warmed and Germany is one of Israel's closest and most important international allies and trade partners.

Merkel was scheduled to visit in August, but the trip was postponed after the crisis in Afghanistan in which the Taliban seized power. She then delayed the visit until after last month's German election. She now remains in office in a caretaker capacity until a new government is formed, a process that could take weeks or even months. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2002: DOZENS KILLED IN BALI NIGHTCLUB EXPLOSION



Reports from the Indonesian holiday island of Bali say more than 50 people have been killed in two explosions.

At least 10 foreigners died and more than 120 people were injured - including tourists from Australia, the US, Britain and Europe.

One of the bombs exploded at a nightclub in Kuta Beach, the island's main tourist resort.

Another smaller explosion occurred in nearby Denpasar, Bali's capital, close to the United States Honorary Consulate.

Local police say bomb squad officers are investigating, although the cause of the explosions has not been confirmed.

The explosion in Kuta occurred at about 2330 local time when the bars would have been packed with tourists.

Witnesses say the blast destroyed the Sari Club and the resulting fire then engulfed a neighbouring bar, Paddy's Irish Club.

Other buildings and several cars were also damaged in the blast and ensuing fire.

One witness, Richard Poore, a cameraman for a New Zealand TV company, said the force of the explosion was so strong it severely damaged his hotel nearly 1km away.

"The windows of the hotel blew out, the upper floors have lost their ceilings and dropped in and there was an incredible amount of smoke in the sky."

Mr Poore explained that his "first instinct was to run up the road with a camera" to film the scenes of devastation.

"I have just never seen anything like it. It was horrendous. Total carnage," he said.

The US embassy in Jakarta has issued a series of warnings in recent weeks that its nationals could be targeted by Islamic militants linked to the al-Qaeda terror group.

The embassy itself closed for several days last month after intelligence reports indicated militant groups were planning car bomb attacks.

Indonesian officials have in the past denied that militants linked to al-Qaeda are active in the country.

Known as the Island of the Gods, Bali is a popular holiday resort - 1.5 million tourists visited in 2001.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

A huge car bomb killed 202 people, mainly Australians. No injuries occurred in the American consulate explosion.

The dead and injured came from as many as 24 different countries.

The regional Islamic group Jemaah Islamiah (JI), was named as a key suspect in the 2003 Bali bomb. JI has alleged links to al-Qaeda.

Three men were sentenced to death for the bombings - Amrozi bin Nurhasyim, his brother Mukhlas and Imam Samudra. Ali Imron was sentenced to life imprisonment. More than a dozen others were given lengthy jail sentences for their part in the plot.

On 1 October 2005 Bali was targeted again when three suicide bombers blew themselves up in tourist areas killing at least 19 people, mostly Indonesians. Jemaah Islamiah is once more suspected of carrying out this attack.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 You may cause a fuss if you come on too strongly in public. Others may want to steal your thunder when they realize your ideas are pretty solid.

TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20
 You need to do something that will make you feel better about yourself. Move into a leadership position if you are determined to do so.

GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21
 Try not to take everything so seriously. Do not lend money to friends, or contribute more than necessary to groups unworthy of your cash.

CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 You can write beautiful love letters today. Your lover will cost you dearly if you let them. Get busy trying to make more money.

LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Take a look at yourself and prepare to make those changes you've been contemplating. Rewards for past good deeds will highlight your day. You will need to spend extra time sorting through your work.

VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Finish projects that have been hanging over your head. Refuse to get involved in idle chatter; it will only make you look bad. Don't put limitations on yourself.

LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Don't try to get even without having all the facts. Nagging has never been something that you could tolerate, and it's once again driving you into a lonely state of affairs.

SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 You may want to sign up for lectures or courses that will bring you mental stimulation. Dinner, theater, or a comedy club may be just the place. Mingle with those who can further your goals.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 You may be overreacting to a situation at hand. Renovations to your domestic scene will pay high rewards. You can stabilize your financial situation if you make property investments.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 If you've been under stress and worrying about older members of the family, it's time to come to terms with the situation. You must try to help. Take the day to relax and pamper yourself.

AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Put your thoughts into action. Mingle with those who can help you get ahead. You need to control your temper and deal with the situation rationally.

PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Don't overspend on luxury items. There'll be difficulties if you spend too much. You are best to avoid joint ventures, and whatever you do, don't lend to friends or relatives.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

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	4	1						5

HARD

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	5					7	1	
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				6				

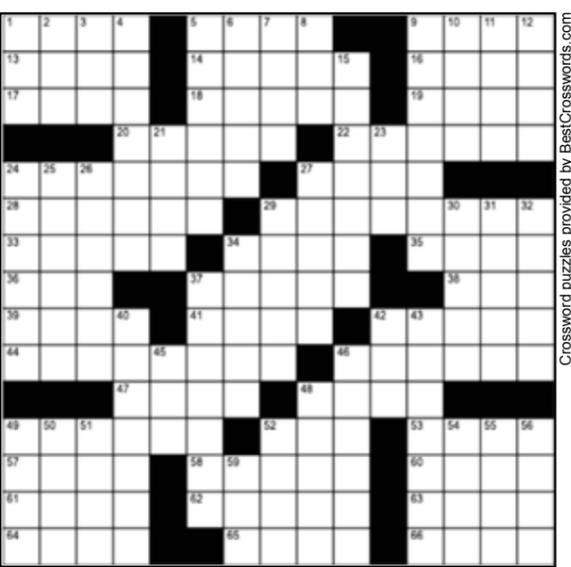
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	5	19	fine
Harbin	3	18	fine
Tianjin	15	20	cloudy
Urumqi	14	18	overcast
Xi'an	14	22	cloudy
Lhasa	10	19	fine
Chengdu	25	27	rain
Chongqing	22	30	cloudy
Kunming	16	22	cloudy
Nanjing	12	17	overcast
Shanghai	24	28	thunderstorms
Wuhan	18	22	rain
Hangzhou	4	17	fine
Taipei	13	19	fine
Guangzhou	22	27	cloudy
Hong Kong	26	28	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	6	13	overcast
Frankfurt	4	12	rain
Paris	7	17	overcast
London	8	16	overcast
New York	16	23	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Copycat; 5- Stuffed shirt; 9- Famous last words; 13- Lone; 14- In shape; 16- Small batteries; 17- Seaweed; 18- Shed ___; 19- Adhesive; 20- "Bolero" composer; 22- Builds; 24- Bound; 27- Nicholas II was the last Russian one; 28- Palm leaves; 29- Languid; 33- Mob scenes; 34- Sharpen; 35- It's used to walk the dog; 36- Part of i.e.; 37- Ventured; 38- ___-Cat; 39- ___-Ball; 41- Brain wave; 42- Prufrock's creator; 44- Lightest element; 46- Spirit distilled from wine; 47- Journalist Jacob; 48- A hobgoblin; 49- Igneous rock of a lava flow; 52- Bagel topping; 53- Swedish pop band whose hits include "Waterloo"; 57- Zwei cubed; 58- Maker of Pong; 60- Put on; 61- Sewing case; 62- Burdened; 63- Grad; 64- Brass component; 65- Titanic's undoing; 66- Edible roots;

DOWN 1- Inquire of; 2- "The Bells" poet; 3- Former measure of length; 4- Later edition; 5- Used in building casks; 6- Eminent; 7- Like Nash's lama; 8- Actress Arthur; 9- Ardently; 10- Apply powder to oneself; 11- Lacking slack; 12- Employs; 15- Clad; 21- No ifs, ___; 23- Deserter; 24- Anew; 25- Playful; 26- Having feet; 27- Fungal infection of the skin or nails; 29- "Arabesque" actress; 30- Red fluorescent dye; 31- Church council; 32- Like a smokestack; 34- Where the Styx flows; 37- Pertaining to the fingers; 40- Unpredictable; 42- Bit of work; 43- Purchasing option; 45- Lubricate; 46- Fist fighting; 48- Tree insect; 49- Folk singer Joan; 50- Broadway opening; 51- Steer clear of; 52- Put aboard; 54- Actor Lugosi; 55- Oz creator; 56- Upper limbs, weapons; 59- Decorative flap on a garment;



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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MANUFACTURING

MURANO GLASSBLOWING MODEL SHATTERED BY METHANE PRICE SURGE

COLLEEN, VENICE

THE glassblowers of Murano have survived plagues and pandemics. They transitioned to highly prized artistic creations to outrun low-priced competition from Asia. But surging energy prices are shattering their economic model.

The dozens of furnaces that remain on the lagoon island where Venetian rulers transferred glassblowing 700 years ago must burn around the clock, otherwise the costly crucible inside the ovens will break. But the price for the methane that powers the ovens has skyrocketed fivefold on the global market since Oct. 1, meaning the glass-blowers face certain losses on orders they are working to fill, at least for the foreseeable future.

"People are desperate," said Gianni De Checchi, president of Venice's association of artisans Confartigianato. "If it continues like this, and we don't find solutions to the sudden and abnormal gas prices, the entire Murano glass sector will be in serious danger."

A medium-size glassblowing business like that of Simone Cenedese consumes 12,000 cubic meters of methane a month to keep his seven furnaces hissing at temperatures over 1,000 degrees Celsius 24 hours a day. They shut down just once a year for annual maintenance in August.

His monthly bills normally range from 11,000 euros to 13,000 euros a month, on a fixed-price consortium contract that expired Sept. 30. Now exposed to market volatility, Cenedese is projecting an increase in methane costs to 60,000 euros (\$70,000) in October, as the natural gas market is buffeted by increased Chinese demand, uncertain Russian supply and worryingly low European stockpiles.

Artisans like Cenedese now must factor in an insurmountable increase in energy costs as they fill orders that had promised to lift them out of the pandemic crisis that stilled the sector in 2020.

"We cannot increase prices that have already been set. ... That means for at least two months we are forced to work at a loss," said Cenedese, a third-generation glassblower who took over the business his father started. "We sell decorations for the house, not necessities, meaning that if the prices are not accessible, it is obvious that there will be no more orders."

Cenedese, like others on the island, is considering shutting down one of his furnaces to confront the crisis. That will cost 2,000 euros for the broken crucible. It

AP PHOTO



A glass-worker heats a glass artistic creation in a methane powered oven in Murano island, Venice

also will slow production and imperil pending orders.

His five glass-blowers move with unspoken choreographed precision to fill an order of 1,800 Christmas ornaments speckled with golden flakes bound for Switzerland.

One starts the process with a red-hot molten blob on the end of a wand that he rolls over gold leaf, applying it evenly before handing the form to the maestro, who then re-heats it in one oven before gently blowing into the wand to create a perfect orb. It is still glowing red when he cuts it from the wand, and another glassblower grabs it with prongs to add the final flourish, a pointy end created from a dab of molten glass applied by an apprentice.

As that dance progresses, another starts, weaving and bobbing into the empty spaces. Together, they can make 300 ornaments a day, working from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. "No machine can do what we do," said maestro Davide Cimaresti, 56, who has been working as a glassblower for 42 years.

Murano glassblowers decades ago transitioned from wood

ovens, which created uneven results, to methane, which burns at temperatures high enough to

create the delicate crystal clarity that makes their creations so highly prized. And it is the only gas

that the glassblowers are permitted to use, by law. They are caught in a global commodities Catch-22.

For now, artisans are hoping the international market calms by the end of the year, although some analysts believe volatility could persist into the spring. If so, damage to the island's economy and the individual companies could run deep.

The Rome government has offered relief to Italian families confronting high energy prices but so far nothing substantial to the Murano glassblowers, whose small scale and energy intensity make them particularly vulnerable. The artisans' lobby is meeting with members of parliament next week in a bid to seek direct government aid, which De Checchi said is possible under new EU rules put in place after the pandemic.

Beyond economic losses, the islanders fear losing a tradition that has made their island synonymous with artistic excellence.

Already, the sector has scaled back from an industry with thousands of workers in the 1960s and 1970s to a network of mostly small and medium-sized artisanal enterprises employing a total of some 300 glassblowers. Venice's glassblowing tradition dates back 1,200 years, and on Murano it has been passed down from father to son for generations. But even at its reduced size and despite its creative rewards, it struggles to attract young people to toil in workshops where summertime temperatures can reach 60 degrees Celsius (140 degrees Fahrenheit).

"The value of this tradition, this history and this culture is priceless, it goes beyond the financial value of the glass industry in Murano," said Luciano Gambaro, co-owner of Gambaro & Tagliapietra. "Over 1,000 years of culture can't stop with a gas issue." **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Sheraton Grand Macao recognized in The World's Best Hotels in Asia - China



Sheraton Grand Macao has been ranked 15th in The World's Best Hotels in Asia - China in Condé Nast Traveler's annual Readers' Choice Awards. Multi-property Vice President of Sheraton Grand Macao and The St. Regis Macao, Janet McNab (pictured), said she was thrilled to receive the honor for the fourth year in a row and Sheraton Grand Macao is the only hotel in Macao to be included in the top 15.

"It is a true honor to see that Sheraton Grand Macao is recognized by the readers of Condé Nast Traveler as one of their favorite hotel in

China alongside many esteemed properties," McNab said.

"I would like to thank the readers of Condé Nast Traveler for their endorsement, as well recognizing the strong team at Sheraton Grand Macao who go above and beyond, day after day, to ensure the numerous of guests we welcome every day have a wonderful and memorable experience."

More than 800,000 Condé Nast Traveler readers submitted responses rating their travel experiences across the globe and providing a full snapshot on the places they are keen to return to.

FOOTBALL

France wins Nations League with late goal from Mbappé

DANIELLA MATAR, MILAN

SPAIN 1, FRANCE 2

KYLIAN Mbappé scored late as world champion France came from behind to win the Nations League with a 2-1 victory over Spain in the final yesterday [Macau time].

Mbappé netted with 10 minutes remaining as France was again forced to fight back, just as it had done in the semifinals against Belgium.

There were few chances in a cagey final in Milan but the match burst into life shortly after the hour mark.

Moments after France hit the woodwork, Mikel Oyarzabal fired Spain in front but its lead lasted less than two minutes before a magnificent finish from Karim Benzema.

"This is the first piece of silverware I've won with France so I'm very proud and delighted," said Benzema, who only

AP PHOTO



recently returned to the France squad after a five-year absence.

"We played two top-level performances. We went out there to win the trophy so I'm delighted for the team as a whole and I'm proud as an individual."

There was a video review for a possible offside on Mbappé but the goal was given as Spain defender Eric García was the

last to touch the ball as he attempted to intercept the pass to the France forward.

"I'm used to not talking about referees and I concentrate on what I can control," Spain coach Luis Enrique said. "I don't think I've ever talked bad about referees."

"I've got nothing to say. I concentrate on trying to make my teams play the best way and

accepting wins and losses."

European champion Italy beat Belgium 2-1 in the third-place match earlier.

Spain beat Italy 2-1 in their semifinal game with Ferran Torres netting both goals. There had been doubts about Torres' fitness but he recovered to start the final. Midfielder Adrien Rabiot was absent for France after testing positive for the coronavirus.

France started well and almost took an early lead as Benzema rounded Spain goalkeeper Unai Simón and attempted to roll across for Mbappé but the ball was cleared by César Azpilicueta.

Spain went closer five minutes later as Torres threaded the ball through to Pablo Sarabia but his fairly tame shot was an easy catch for France goalkeeper Hugo Lloris.

Spain dominated possession but created few chances. It was the only side to have a shot on target in the first half though.

Theo Hernández had scored the last-minute winner for France against Belgium and he ignited the final when his effort crashed off the underside of the bar and out in France's first real sight of goal in the 63rd minute.

Moments later, however, it was Spain which broke the deadlock as Oyarzabal raced onto Sergio Busquets' ball over the top and fired into the bottom right corner.

Oyarzabal had set up both of Torres' goals in the semifinal match.

But France was swiftly back on level terms as Benzema cut in from the left and curled a sumptuous effort into the top right corner.

And the stage was set for Mbappé to score the winner as he and France continue their revival. Mbappé was judged to have sprung the offside trap as he raced onto Theo Hernández's through ball and placed it into the bottom right corner.

Lloris pulled off two great saves from point-blank range to deny first Oyarzabal and then Yereimi Pino as France survived a late siege by Spain.

Mbappé has now scored in successive matches, after two goals in his previous 13 internationals.

It was the third straight victory for France. **MDT/AP**

AD

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OPINION

China Daily

Yang Yuming, in China Daily

YUNNAN IDEAL TO HOST UN
BIODIVERSITY MEETING

Kunming is ready to host the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, which will review the "post-2020 global biodiversity framework" to draw a blueprint for biodiversity conservation in the future.

The meeting from Oct 11 to 15 will form the first part of the 15th UN biodiversity conference, with the second part, to be held in person in the first half of 2022, likely to see broad and deepened negotiations on an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

It's fitting that the UN biodiversity is being held in Yunnan, as it is known as the "Kingdom of Animals and Plants" and ranks first in terms of biodiversity in China. Among the 36 biodiversity hotspots in the world, Yunnan is linked to three: the eastside of Himalayas; Indo-Myanmar tropical mountains; and the Mountains of Southwest China.

Although Yunnan accounts for only 4.1 percent of China's land area, it is home to 19,333 vascular plants, accounting for 50.1 percent of the country's biological species.

As the province faces geological challenges in improving residents' lives, boosting the local economy is as important as conserving biodiversity, because ecological resources form the foundation of bio-economy. As such, the province has great potential for developing green industry.

Balancing the use and conservation of natural resources is an accepted global practice. And Yunnan has been implementing the policy of green development for almost 10 years according to the concept of "green mountains and clear water are equal to mountains of gold and silver".

Yunnan is home to 476 types of ecosystems, among which the wetland and forest ecosystems ranks the highest in terms of their overall numbers and the number of species they are home to. To boost the integration between ecological resources and tourism, the province has stepped up efforts to build national parks, among which the Pudacuo National Park is the first of its kind on the Chinese mainland.

The authorities attach great importance to the sustainable development of villages in the park, by introducing favorable policies to boost employment. For instance, villagers are trained as drivers, security guards and cleaners. In fact, the about 350 villagers turned workers account for 53.3 percent of employees in the park.

The government spends about 15 million yuan (\$2.3 million) a year to support 3,696 farmers who have benefited by converting their marginal farmlands into forests and grasslands. And while ecological conservation and tourism have replaced traditional agricultural and animal husbandry, ecological protection has been integrated with villagers' livelihoods.

From 2012 to 2019, the Pudacuo National Park has received 9.45 million visitors, generating revenue of about 1.89 billion yuan. Since national parks bring economic benefits to local villagers, many villagers today realize the importance of environmental protection.

Addressing the UN Summit on Biodiversity in September 2020, President Xi Jinping said: "We need to respect nature, follow its laws and protect it. We need to find a way for man and nature to live in harmony, balance and coordinate economic development and ecological protection".

Yunnan's efforts to better protect the environment are a reflection of Xi's idea. And non-wood forest products and ecological services that depend on non-expendable resources have become the key characteristics of Yunnan's ecological preservation and resource utilization campaign.

As an extension of this policy, ecological tourism and bio-economy should replace mining and chemical-dominated industries and become the pillar industries in Yunnan. Only then can Yunnan be put on a new path of modern and green growth.

Actually, in 2018, Yunnan became the first province in China to pass local regulations on protecting biodiversity, in order to boost sustainable development, strike a balance between biodiversity conservation and development and help build a shared future for all life on Earth.

[Abridged]

A U.S.-based economist won the Nobel prize for economics yesterday for pioneering research that showed an increase in minimum wage does not lead to less hiring and immigrants do not lower pay for native-born workers, challenging commonly held ideas. Two others shared the award for creating a way to study these types of societal issues.

Canadian-born David Card of the University of California, Berkeley, was awarded one half of the prize for his research on how minimum wage, immigration and education affect the labor market, while the other half was shared by Joshua Angrist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Dutch-born Guido Imbens from Stanford University for their

framework for studying issues that can't rely on traditional scientific methods.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said the three have "completely reshaped empirical work in the economic sciences."

"Card's studies of core questions for society and Angrist and Imbens' methodological contributions have shown that natural experiments are a rich source of knowledge," said Peter Fredriksson, chair of the Economic Sciences Committee. "Their research has substantially improved our ability to answer key causal questions, which has been of great benefit for society."

AP PHOTO



BOSNIAN MAKES ROTATING
HOUSE A MONUMENT OF
LOVE FOR HIS WIFE

SABINA NIKSIC, SRBAC

IT'S not exactly on par with India's Taj Mahal, but a family house in a small town in northern Bosnia is in its own way a monument to love.

The house in Srbac was designed and built by 72-year-old Vojin Kusic.

With a green facade and red metal roof, it can rotate a full circle to satisfy his wife Ljubica's shifting desires as to what she would like to see when she looks out of its windows.

"After I reached an advanced age and after my children took over the family business, I finally had enough time to task myself with granting my wife her wish" to be able to change the position of rooms in her house whenever she wants, Kusic said.

Many years ago when they married, Kusic had built another, typical house for himself and his wife in which they raised their three children. At

the time, his wife wanted their bedrooms to face the sun, so they did. But this meant their living room faced away from the road. After a while, he says his wife complained that "she could not see people entering our front yard" and Kusic had to remodel everything.

"After I reached an advanced age and children took over the family business, I finally had enough time to task myself with granting my wife her wish."

VOJIN KUSIC

"I had to tear down the wall between our two bedrooms to turn them into a living room and move all (electrical) installations. It was a very demanding task, it took a lot from me, but I did what she wanted," he said.

Then six years ago, the only one of Kusic's three

children not to fly the nest, a son, got married and his parents decided to let him live on the top floor of their family house while they moved to the ground floor.

"Once again, this time on the ground floor, I had to start tearing down some walls, at which point, to

not wait for her to change her mind again, I decided to build a new, rotating house so that she can spin it as she pleases," Kusic said.

Kusic, who did not have a chance to go to college, designed and built his rotating house by himself, using electric motors and the wheels of an old military transport vehicle.

"Now, our front door also rotates, so if she spots unwanted guests heading our way, she can spin the house and make them turn away," he joked.

In Bosnian, his wife's name means "loved one." She declined to be interviewed. MDT/AP

Tunisia got a new government yesterday after more than two months without one, with the prime minister naming her Cabinet, including a record number of women. The ministerial appointments announced by Prime Minister Najla Bouden filled a vacuum that had persisted since President Kais Saied abruptly dismissed his former cabinet and suspended parliament 11 weeks ago, concentrating all executive powers.

AP PHOTO



Austria got a new chancellor yesterday, two days after former leader Sebastian Kurz resigned amid corruption allegations, but the direction of government policy was not expected to change. Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen swore in Alexander Schallenberg (pictured), the former foreign minister, as chancellor. Career diplomat Michael Linhart became the country's new foreign minister.

Poland Police in Warsaw said that four people, including the prime minister's nephew, were detained during a massive protest against government policy that critics say could cost Poland its European Union membership. Organizers and city authorities say up to 100,000 people took part in the protest in Warsaw on Sunday to show their support for the EU. A nephew of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki alleged that a police officer kicked him in the head while he was on the ground being detained.

AP PHOTO



UK police have announced they will not take any action against Prince Andrew after a review prompted by a Jeffrey Epstein accuser who claims that he sexually assaulted her. Virginia Giuffre claims she was trafficked by Epstein to have sex with Andrew in London in 2001, when she was 17 and a minor under U.S. law. She is suing the prince in a U.S. court.