



MACAU HAS RECORDED A TOTAL OF 38 SUICIDES BETWEEN JANUARY AND SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR, A DECREASE OF 31% COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR

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COMPANIES IN CHINA WOULD NEED GOV'T APPROVAL TO TRANSFER IMPORTANT DATA ABROAD UNDER PROPOSED RULES

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Japan A man brandishing a knife on a Tokyo commuter train yesterday stabbed several passengers before setting a fire, police said. NHK public television said at least 10 passengers were injured, including one seriously. The attacker, only identified as a man in his 20s, was arrested on the spot and is being investigated, NHK said.



Pakistan's government and an outlawed radical Islamist party yesterday reached an agreement to end a 10-day long rally calling for the closure of France's embassy and the release of the party's leader. Neither Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi nor religious leader Mufti Muneebur Rehman, who took part in the talks, gave any details of the agreement at a news conference in the capital Islamabad.

India and the U.K. will launch a project that aims to create a solar grid connecting countries in different parts of the world at the upcoming U.N. climate talks in Glasgow, Scotland. The project, known as the "Green Grids Initiative," is being initiated by the International Solar Alliance, which was launched by India and France at the 2015 Paris climate conference to promote solar energy. The U.K. and India agreed to join forces in the initiative in May this year.



US Air Force said it flew a B-1B strategic bomber over key maritime chokepoints in the Mideast with allies including Israel amid ongoing tensions with Iran as its nuclear deal with world powers remains in tatters. The B-1B Lancer bomber flew Saturday over the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20% of all oil traded passes. It also flew over the Red Sea, its narrow Bab el-Mandeb Strait and Egypt's Suez Canal.

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CHASTAGNER THIERRY

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AQUACULTURE VACCINE PROJECT WINS '928 CHALLENGE' STARTUP COMPETITION

RENATO MARQUES

A start-up project aiming to produce probiotic vaccines for aquaculture was the grand winner at the final of the first competition for university start-ups between Portuguese-speaking countries and China, hosted in Macau.

Designed by a team of students from the University of Porto, Portugal, the project won the grand prize of the "928 Challenge" event, which came to an end last Saturday. The event brought together a total of 780 students in 153 teams, representing 50 universities from Macau, Hong Kong, mainland China, and Portuguese-speaking countries.

In second place was a project dedicated to the installation and use of solar power energy in the Gabu region in eastern Guinea-Bissau, presented by a team of students from the Universidade Lusófona of Guinea-Bissau.

Third place was shared by projects from the State



Online bootcamp connecting speakers and students

University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and by a team from the Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University, who presented start-up proposals on biofertilizers and soap production from coffee beans, respectively.

Due to restrictions imposed by the pandemic situation, the final took place at the facilities of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries -Macau (Forum

Macau), and only local teams were able to present their projects on stage. The other teams presented using online virtual presentation tools.

Initially, the final of the 928 Challenge was expected to take place at the Macao International Trade and Investment Fair, but was reorganized due to the postponement of the fair until December of this year.

In the first phase, the teams delivered a total of 89

pitch projects, of which the organizers had to choose the best 16 for the final events. There, they were evaluated by a team of experienced judges.

According to José Alves, dean of the Faculty of Business at the City University of Macau and co-founder the event, the competition was a major success. Conversations have already started with the Forum Macau about the organization of the next year's edition, he told TDM.

MERCHANDISE IMPORT STOOD AT MOP12B

MACAU'S total merchandise import went up by 13.3% year-on-year to 12 billion patacas in September 2021, while total merchandise export amounted to 981 million patacas, up by 5.8% year on year, the special administrative region's (SAR) statistical service said on Thursday.

The latest report from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) showed that the import of articles for casino, gold jewelry, watches and handbags and wallets swelled by 404.3%, 213.%, 89% and 78.9% respectively, whereas that of beauty, cosmetic and skincare products and perfumes declined by 39.8% and 11.8% respectively.

The value of re-exports grew 3.7% to 783 million patacas in September, with that of perfumes and diamond and diamond jewelry surging by 247.8% and 125.5% respectively. Meanwhile, the value of domestic exports increased by 14.9% to 198 million patacas, the DSEC report added.

The merchandise trade deficit in September totaled 11.02 billion patacas.

In the third quarter of 2021, the total value of merchandise export and merchandise import grew by 10% and 49.5% year-on-year to 3.17 billion patacas and 39.53 billion patacas respectively, resulting in a trade deficit of 36.36 billion patacas.

MDT/XINHUA



XINHUA



PHOTO ARCHIVE

Unemployment rate of local residents at 3.9%

STAFF REPORTER

THE general unemployment rate for July to September was 2.9% and the unemployment rate of local residents was 3.9%, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). Rates were up by 0.1 and 0.2 percentage points, respectively, from the previous period (June-August). The underemployment rate was 3.9%, up by 0.2 percentage points.

The total labor force in Macau was 386,800 and labor force participation rate was 68.5%. Total employment was 375,600, and the total number of employed residents was 279,200, down by 700 and 400 respectively.

The number of unemployed increased by 600 to 11,200. Meanwhile, the number of underemployed rose to 15,000, up 600, with the majority working in Gaming and Junket Activities and in the Construction sector.

Employment in Gaming and Junket Activities rose by 2,600 to 80,100, while Real Estate and Business Activities went down by 1,600 to 31,700.

Median monthly employment earnings of the employed in the third quarter was MOP16,000, with those working in Gaming & Junket Activities and the Construction sector earning MOP20,000 and MOP15,000 respectively. Median earnings of employed residents specifically stood at MOP20,000.

Based on movement records, an average of about 85,600 Macau residents and non-resident workers worked in Macau but lived outside the territory during the reference period. Including these individuals, the total labor force increased by 500 to 471,400.

The employment survey covers all residential units in Macau, excluding collective living quarters such as dormitories and care homes for the elderly. Macau residents and non-resident workers who work in Macau but live outside the territory are also excluded.

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Trade Union law public consultation proposes restrictions on several sectors

RENATO MARQUES

THE government has finally launched a public consultation on the proposal to establish a Trade Union law in Macau.

The public consultation document, presented on Saturday by the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL), contains remarks on the government's intent to create a regime that excludes some professional sectors. These include civil servants and other professions related to public services such as healthcare, transportation, and public utilities. The government intends to regulate their participation in professional associations through separate regulations.

Regarding the security forces, the government intends to completely exclude those working in these professions, citing the law's incompatibility with their professional duties.

"Concerning professions or sectors that provide services in response to the basic needs of the population — for example, sectors of public interest including water supply, electricity, public transport, and communication infrastructure, among others, as well as the health sector that assumes the responsibility of saving lives — it is necessary to maintain [their] continuous



functioning, to guarantee the interests of society," the public consultation document reads, in the chapter concerning the law's scope and application.

The same document adds: "Considering the public interest, it seems appropriate, except for agents of the security forces and services, to establish regulations on the exercise of trade union rights for workers in certain professions."

The matter of these restrictions informs a series of questions in the public consultation. The government is calling on the public to express an opinion on which, if not all, professions should be included under a separate regime due to their direct impact with people livelihood.

The decision to exclude the security forces and services, as well

as creating a special regime for civil servants and other public service workers, was said to come from reviews and comparisons of similar regulations enforced by several other countries and regions, including Singapore, Malaysia, Portugal, mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

According to DSAL, "most of those countries or regions establish provisions for two types of professions (militarized personnel and public service workers) concerning organizing and participating in trade union associations, or even exercising the right of associations, which are different from those of workers in general."

The DSAL officials also claim that the exclusion of the members of security forces and services from the union law is also justified by the

terms of their bylaws and statutes regarding their duties. These bylaws state that these workers must "[abstain] from being affiliated with any associations of a political or union nature, or participating in any activities carried out by them, as well as presenting or promoting petitions addressed to the government or hierarchical superiors on matters of a political or service nature," among other duties.

The same officials also said that a significant component of the preparation of the trade union law was "finding a balance" between the rights of citizens and the duties imposed by professions, especially in the case of civil servants and other public-services workers.

The public consultation was open to comments and input from the public as of yesterday, and will remain so until December 14 — a total of 45 days.

Additionally, the DSAL will also hold four public sessions where the public can express their opinions in person.

The sessions will take place at the World Trade Center building, on November 7, 12 and 27, and December 5.

Registration and submission of opinions can be done online via a specially dedicated page for this public consultation, available only in Chinese and Portuguese languages.

CE TO DELIVER POLICY ADDRESS ON NOVEMBER 16

Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng will deliver the Policy Address for the Fiscal Year 2022 at the Legislative Assembly (AL) on November 16. The AL session will be followed by a press conference at the Government Headquarters, where Ho will answer media questions. The CE will attend a plenary meeting of the AL the next day to explain the policy program and take questions from AL members.

MGTO CALLS FOR ARTISTIC TROUPE FOR CNY PARADE

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) is now inviting registered artistic troupes, schools, community organizations and institutions in Macau to join the "Parade for Celebration of the Chinese New Year." Those interested can submit applications between October 30 and November 22. MGTO plans to stage the Chinese New Year parade on February 3 and February 12 (3rd and 12th day of Lunar New Year). The event will feature a range of highlights, including the float parade, cultural and artistic performances, and a float exhibition.

IAM CONTINUES OPTIMIZING GARBAGE COLLECTION FACILITIES

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) continues optimizing garbage collection facilities by upgrading suitable garbage collection points into compacting trash bins and improving garbage transport mode for the communities, the bureau announced in a statement. IAM has been conducting research projects to improve the use of the facilities for a clean community environment. The bureau said it will closely observe the operation and use of the facilities to assess whether the public can adapt to them before exploring further expansion.

FOREIGN NATIONALS WITH BIONTECH VACCINE ELIGIBLE FOR CHINESE VISA

LYNZY VALLES

FOREIGN non-resident workers in the Macau SAR who have been inoculated with the BioNtech vaccine are now eligible to apply for a visa for the mainland.

To apply, all foreigners in the region must have been inoculated with vaccines against Covid-19 recognized by Macao Health Bureau and carrying valid certificates of vaccination issued by Macao Health Bureau. They can apply for all categories of visas to the mainland of China, as cited in a FAQ list of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China in the SAR.

In March, China eased visa rules for foreigners who had gotten Sinopharm jabs.

Following the suspension of visas for about a year, Macau residents without Chinese nationality were only able to apply for Chinese visas from March 15.

Foreigners visiting the main-



land for work will face less paperwork in the visa application process if they are able to prove they received vaccines produced in China, as cited in a Bloomberg report. The change comes as China promotes its home-grown shots globally, amid competition from Western vaccines.

Following this mandate, many non-resident workers — particularly those who wish to change jobs — have taken the Chinese job to fulfill one of the requirements so that they can change

employers.

Since the implementation of the new labor law for migrant workers late last year, non-resident workers who wish to change employers should leave Macau and only return with a working permit issued by the immigration department. This permit is similar to a working visa.

In Macau, the current vaccination rate is about 70% of the population. Almost 800,000 doses of the vaccines had been distributed, and almost 350,000 people had been fully vaccinated.

CIVIL SERVANTS WANT A DAY OFF TO VACCINATE

CIVIL servants are calling for an extra day off work to vaccinate against Covid-19, the Macau Civil Servants Federation (MCSF) said, citing the conclusion of a survey conducted among around 500 workers.

The civil servants noted that the best solution to incentivize the vaccination is to give workers a full day off the day they have undergone inoculation, so they can rest and recover from the procedure.

According to the findings of the survey, a large majority (70%) are also in favor of the prevention and control measures imposed by the government, that require the presentation of vaccination proof or a negative nucleic acid test every seven days, TDM reported.

According to the MCSF president, Pang Kung Hou, the Federation suggests that the government follow the wishes of the workers, so they can have a proper rest and recover from any side effects that often result from the inoculation. **RM**

STAFF REPORTER

Report: Mandatory provident fund only feasible in 2026

THE SAR is recommended to institute a three-year observation period due to the impact of Covid-19 on Macau's economy, and implement the Mandatory Central Provident Fund System in 2026 or 2028, according to a report issued by the Social Security Fund (FSS).

On Friday, the bureau issued the Fund System Review Report, which indicated that three years since the system was implemented, certain results were achieved, and that conditions have been met to move towards its mandatory implementation.

The review report points out that the government has cumulatively appropriated more than MOP28.6 billion from 2010 to 2020. An account owner can be allocated funds and income, up to a total of MOP86,910, which lays the foundation for the construction of the system. In the three years since its implementation, participation in the system, the size of pension funds, and the returns on investment have all continued to grow, indicating that the system has been operating "smoothly." As of September 2021, 364 employers have participated in the System, 24,000 employees have participated in the joint provident fund scheme, and around 75,000 residents have set up

individual provident fund schemes.

The report also points out that if Macau had taken advantage of the momentum of 2019, it would already have conditions for mandatory implementation. However, Covid-19 and its recurrent outbreaks worldwide have had a major impact on Macau's economy.

Therefore, careful consideration should be given to advancing the process of the fund. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts that the real GDP of Macau in 2025 can roughly return to 2019's level. The report then recommended that the 2021—2023 period is set as an observational period and, subject to economic recovery, a five- and seven-year probation period plan can follow. Given success across this timespan, the Mandatory Central Provident Fund could be implemented as early as 2026 or 2028.

The University of Macau's research team was commissioned to compile the report by summarizing the implementation data relating to the Non-Mandatory Central Provident Fund.



38 SUICIDE CASES RECORDED Q1 TO Q3

LYNZY VALLES

MACAU has recorded a total of 38 suicides between January and September this year, a decrease of 30.9% compared to the previous year according to data recently released by the Health Bureau.

Between July and September, there were 16 suicides (nine men and seven women), of which 15 (93.8%) victims were residents. One was a non-resident worker.

Last year, the city's suicide cases totaled to 76, including 65 residents (41 men and 24 women).

The total 2020 suicide rate was 11.1 per 100,000

inhabitants, an increase of 13.3% compared to 2019.

"A single case of suicide is too many, so cooperation between all sectors of society is necessary for all of us to protect our lives", the SSM previously stated in an announcement.

According to the World Health Organization worldwide, in 2019 more than 700,000 people committed suicide worldwide — one in every 100 deaths was a suicide case.

The causes of suicide are complex and often involve several factors. Therefore, SSM reminds those suffering or facing difficulties to seek help from health professionals.

The bureau also noted that its health centers have opened an external mental health consultations, including the following locations: Tap Seac, Fai Chi Kei, Areia Preta, Ilha Verde, Jardins do Oceano, Nossa Senhora do Carmo — Lago, and Praia do Manduco.

Previously, local psychologists the Times has spoken to attributed increases in anxiety and depression last year to the unemployment situation in the SAR caused by the pandemic outbreak.

Another ongoing issue is the inability to overcome the stigma of mental illness, which has led people with mental health concerns to "save face" and refrain from seeking help, according to a study conducted last year by the Fuhong Society of Macau and the University of Macau.

The study showed there was a larger proportion of residents suffering from depression in Macau than in Hong Kong or the mainland. The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) encourages residents to be conscious of their psychological and emotional state, as well as those of their relatives and friends. If in need, residents can call Caritas' Life Hope hotline (28525222) or IAS' counseling hotline (28261126).

CEILING COLLAPSES AT GALAXY PHASE 3, INJURING FIVE

RENATO MARQUES

A ceiling structure has collapsed at Galaxy Macau Phase 3 construction site, injuring five workers.

The accident occurred at 11 a.m. on Saturday, October 30. A rescue team deployed by the Fire Services (CB) managed to retrieve one of five workers injured after they had been trapped under the fallen structure.

According to reports from CB, two of the workers presented significant injuries and were sent to the Conde de São Januário Hospital Center for treatment.

One of the workers sent for care was a 36-year-old mainland resident, with injuries to his back, head, and knees. A second male, a 33-year-old local resident, was sent to the hospital due to an open fracture on one of his elbows.

The three other local men were treated on-site for minor injuries, and also sent to the hospital as a precautionary measure.

The Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) deployed staff to investigate and follow up on the accident. According



to them, the cause(s) of the collapse of 150 square meters of ceiling structure is yet to be determined.

Preliminary investigations carried out by DSAL staff have indicated that the cause(s) of the accident may be related to either a design fault or the quality of the structure's workmanship.

DSAL added that they have ordered the contractor to suspend all work in the accident area to ensure the safety of workers and allow continued investigation.

The Bureau has also said that it will follow up closely on the injured workers, and ensure that they get the necessary medical treatment,

as well as compensation for the work accident suffered.

The Galaxy Macau Phase 3 construction site has been affected by several construction accidents, which have resulted in the death of four workers.

The most serious accident occurred in March 2020, claiming the lives of three workers. It was then the DSAL called the construction site unsafe.

In mid-August 2021, another worker from the same site lost his life after falling from a height of five floors. According to the Judiciary Police report, the man fell after being electrocuted while working on electrical wiring.



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BLINKEN RAISED CONCERNS ABOUT TAIWAN WITH CHINA

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi as part of the Group of 20 summit yesterday — an outreach designed to ensure that the intensely competitive relationship between the world's two largest economies doesn't veer into open conflicts.

Senior State Department officials described the conversations as candid, constructive and productive, saying that Blinken was clear about U.S. concerns during the roughly hourlong meeting. The officials insisted on anonymity to discuss the exchanges.

One of the U.S. goals is to maintain an open line of communication with China and set a virtual meeting later this year between U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Blinken said at the meeting that China has increased tensions with regard to Taiwan and that America wants to continue its "one-China policy," which recognizes Beijing but allows informal relations and defense



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, left, and Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi meet, yesterday

ties with Taipei. During China's National Day weekend in early October, China dispatched 149

military aircraft southwest of Taiwan in strike group formations, causing Taiwan to scramble

aircraft and activate its air defense missile systems. Biden alarmed China shortly after by

saying that the U.S. has a firm commitment to help Taiwan defend itself in the event of a Chinese attack.

Asked in a CNN town hall whether the U.S. would come to Taiwan's defense, Biden said, "Yes, we have a commitment to do that." U.S. officials immediately moved to clarify that there had been no change to U.S. posture toward Taiwan.

China and Taiwan separated during a civil war in 1949.

The U.S. does not openly contest China's claim to Taiwan, but is committed by law to ensure the island can defend itself and to treat all threats toward it as matters of grave concern.

Blinken noted that the G-20 summit is being followed by the United Nations climate summit in Scotland, saying that the U.S. expects China to curbs its greenhouse gas emissions as a responsible global power for the good of the world.

Trade issues did not come up in any detail, as the conversation largely stayed in the political realm. Nor was China's recent test launching of a nuclear-capable hypersonic missile discussed by the two leaders. **MDT/AP**

Gov't tightens control over company data with transfer rules

COMPANIES in China would need government approval to transfer important data abroad under proposed rules announced Friday that would tighten Beijing's control over information and might disrupt operations for international corporations.

The measure is needed to protect the Chinese public and "safeguard national security," the Cyberspace Administration of China said.

President Xi Jinping's government sees information about China's 1.4 billion people as a potential security risk in private hands. It has issued a flurry of rules tightening control over how companies gather and handle information.

A crackdown on data security launched in late 2020 fueled anxiety among investors, who have knocked more than \$1.3 trillion off the total market value of e-commerce



platform Alibaba, games and social media operator Tencent and other tech giants.

Companies that want to transfer important data abroad would have to report on how much and what type of information is involved and security measures, according to the CAC. Regulators would decide within a week whether to accept that or conduct their own review, which could last up to 60 days.

The rules would apply to transfers that

involve "sensitive personal information" of at least 10,000 people or any company that handles information on more than 1 million people. They give no details of what is important or sensitive.

Rules imposed earlier prohibit companies from storing information about Chinese citizens abroad.

That prompted complaints that global companies are put at a disadvantage because they can't combine information from China with other countries,

while Chinese competitors can collect all their data at their headquarters.

A separate law that takes effect today establishes security standards, prohibits companies from disclosing information without customer permission and tells them to limit how much they collect. Unlike data protection laws in Western countries, the Chinese rules say nothing about limiting government or ruling Communist Party access to personal information. **MDT/AP**

EVERGRANDE

TROUBLED CHINESE DEVELOPER MAKES DELAYED BOND PAYMENT

A troubled Chinese developer whose struggle to avoid a multibillion-dollar debt default has rattled global financial markets made an overdue \$45.2 million payment on a bond Friday, one day before it would have been declared in default, a newspaper reported.

Evergrande Group made the payment on a \$951 million bond that matures in March 2024, The South China Morning Post newspaper reported, citing unidentified sources.

Friday was the end of a 30-day grace period after Evergrande missed a payment due Sept. 29. It was the second time the developer, which owes 2 trillion yuan (\$310 billion), paid bondholders one day before it would be declared in default.

Evergrande's struggle to comply with tighter official curbs on borrowing has prompted fears a

default might trigger a financial crisis. Officials have tried to allay investor fears by saying the debt problems can be controlled and there should be no impact on the financial industry.

The ruling Communist Party is pressing companies to reduce debt levels it considers dangerously high.

Economists say Beijing can prevent a credit crunch if Evergrande defaults on debts to Chinese banks and bondholders but wants to avoid appearing to arrange a bailout while it tries to force other companies to rely less on borrowed money.

A slowdown in construction helped depress China's economic growth to an unexpectedly low 4.9% over a year earlier in the three months ending in September. Forecasters expect growth to decelerate further if the financing curbs stay in place. **MDT/AP**



Japan votes in national election, first key test for Kishida

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

JAPANESE voters casted ballots in national elections yesterday, a first big test for Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to determine if he has a large enough mandate to tackle a coronavirus-battered economy, a fast-aging and dwindling population and security challenges from China and North Korea.

Up for grabs are 465 seats in the lower house, the more powerful of the two-chamber Japanese Diet, or parliament.

Kishida's governing Liberal Democratic Party is expected to lose some seats from pre-election levels, but maintain a comfortable majority together with its junior coalition partner Komeito.

Kishida, 64, was elected prime minister on Oct. 4 after winning the leadership race in his ruling party, as its conservative leaders saw him as a safe status-quo successor to Yoshihide Suga and his influential predecessor Shinzo Abe.

Kishida's immediate task has been to rally support for a party weakened by Suga's perceived high-handed approach to pandemic measures and his insistence on holding the Tokyo Summer Olympics despite widespread opposition.

Kishida dissolved the lower house only 10 days after taking office, calling for this election and

AP PHOTO



declaring that he wanted a mandate from voters for his new government before getting to work.

The short, 17-day interval between the lower house dissolution and the vote that followed the LDP leadership race, which had dominated media coverage, unfairly gave Kishida's party an advantage over the opposition, some experts say.

Kishida's long-term grip on power will depend on how well he does in the election.

Kishida repeatedly stressed his determination to listen to the people and to address criticism that the nine-year Abe-Suga leadership

had caused corruption, tamed bureaucrats and muzzled opposing opinions.

The campaign has largely centered on COVID-19 response measures and revitalizing the economy.

While Kishida's ruling party stressed the importance of having a stronger military amid worries over China's growing influence and North Korea's missile and nuclear threat, opposition parties focused on diversity issues and pushing for gender equality.

Opposition leaders complain that recent LDP governments have widened the gap between rich and poor, did not support the economy

during the pandemic and stalled gender equality and diversity initiatives. Japan this year ranked 120th in the World Economic Forum's 156-nation gender-gap ranking.

Kishida has set a modest goal for the LDP and its coalition partner Komeito. He wants to jointly keep their majority, which would be 233 seats in the 465-member lower house. That's a low bar, considering that the LDP alone had 276 seats before the election. A big drop, even if the party keeps its majority, would be a bad start for Kishida's weeks-old administration.

Media polls suggest the LDP is likely to lose seats, in part because five opposition parties formed a united front to unify candidates in many small electoral constituencies and are expected to gain positions there.

If, as many predict, the ruling coalition secures 261 seats, they could control all parliamentary committees and easily push through any divisive legislation.

Most results are expected by early Monday.

The opposition has long struggled to win enough votes to form a government after a brief rule of the now-defunct center-left Democratic Party of Japan in 2009-2012, as they have not been able to show a grand vision for Japan.

On the economy, Kishida has emphasized growth by raising incomes, while opposition groups focus more on redistribution of wealth and call for cash payouts to pandemic-hit low-income households.

Kishida, in his final speech Saturday in Tokyo, promised to spur growth and "distribute its fruit" to the people as income. "It's for you to decide who can responsibly do so."

The LDP opposes legislation guaranteeing equality for sexual minorities and allowing separate surnames for married couples.

Of the 1,051 candidates, only 17% are women, despite a 2018 law promoting gender equality in elections, which is toothless because there is no penalty. Women account for about 10% of parliament, a situation gender rights experts call "democracy without women." MDT/AP

MYANMAR

Court gives Suu Kyi confidante 20-year prison term

GRANT PECK, BANGKOK

A court in Myanmar found a close colleague of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi guilty of treason and sentenced him Friday to 20 years in prison, a member of their political party said. Local media also reported the court's decision.

The sentence given 79-year-old Win Htein appeared to be the most severe so far for any of the top members of Suu Kyi's government and party who were detained after the military seized power on Feb. 1. Suu Kyi is being tried on several criminal charges that her supporters say were fabricated to discredit her.

Win Htein is a longtime confidante of Suu Kyi and a patron of her National League for Democracy party.

AP PHOTO



In this image from video, Win Htein flashes the three-finger protest gesture as a symbol of defiance, Feb. 2, 2021, in Naypyitaw, Myanmar

He publicly called for civil disobedience to oppose the military's takeover and was arrested on Feb. 4. Suu Kyi's party had won a landslide victory in a November 2020 general election.

The army's takeover was met with widespread

peaceful protests but the resistance hardened after security forces used deadly force to put down the demonstrations, and there is now an incipient insurgency in many parts of the country.

Kyaw Thiha, a member

of the party's Central Committee and one of its elected members of parliament, said he learned from a court source about the sentence and the judge's order that Win Htein be sent immediately to a prison in the central city of Mandalay.

Myanmar media, which are mostly operating online without permission under military rule, also reported the court's action. A text message from the Information Ministry to journalists confirmed that Win Htein had received a 20-year prison sentence but gave no other details.

Win Htein was apparently arrested for remarks he made just after the takeover.

"The curse of the coup is rooted in our country and this is the reason why our

country still remains poor. I feel sad and upset for our fellow citizens and for their future," Win Htein, who had been a political prisoner under a former military government, said on Feb. 2.

"All the voters who gave their backing to us in the 2020 general election should follow Aung San Suu Kyi's instructions to carry out civil disobedience," he said, referring to a note posted on Facebook attributed to her. There has been some dispute about whether Suu Kyi was its actual author.

Win Htein was able to inform the Myanmar-language service of Britain's BBC radio about his arrest before his contact with the outside was cut off.

"They don't like what I've been talking about. They are afraid of what I'm

saying," he told the BBC in a phone call.

Win Htein was charged under Section 124(A) of the Penal Code, a statute that falls under the general heading of treason, though it is sometimes referred to as sedition.

The law, which had a maximum penalty of three years' imprisonment, was changed shortly after his arrest by the newly installed military government.

It had originally criminalized attempts to "bring into hatred or contempt, or excite or attempt to excite disaffection towards the government," but was amended to also cover "Defense Services or Defense Services Personnel," and the penalty was increased to seven to 20 years' imprisonment. MDT/AP

US intel doesn't expect to determine origins of Covid-19

NOMAAN MERCHANT,
WASHINGTON

BARRING an unforeseen breakthrough, intelligence agencies won't be able to conclude whether COVID-19 spread by animal-to-human transmission or leaked from a lab, officials said Friday in releasing a fuller version of their review into the origins of the pandemic.

The paper issued by the Director of National Intelligence elaborates on findings released in August of a 90-day review ordered by President Joe Biden. That review said that U.S. intelligence agencies were divided on the origins of the virus but that analysts do not believe the virus was developed as a bioweapon and that most agencies believe the virus was not genetically engineered.

China has resisted global pressure to cooperate fully with investigations into the pandemic or provide access to genetic sequences of coronaviruses kept at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, which remains a subject of speculation for its research and reported safety problems. Biden launched the review amid growing momentum for the theory — initially broadly dismissed by experts



AP PHOTO

— that the virus leaked from the Wuhan lab. Former President Donald Trump and his supporters long argued that a lab leak was possible as they sought to deflect criticism of his handling of the pandemic.

China remains an exceedingly difficult place for intelligence operations and has fought back against allegations that it mishandled the emergence of the pandemic, which has killed 5 million people worldwide. Senior officials involved in the full report's drafting said they hoped it would better inform the public about the challenges of determining the virus's origins.

"We don't think we're one or two reports away from being able to understand it," said one official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters.

The full report notes that the Wuhan Institute of Virology "previously created chimeras, or combinations,

of SARS-like coronaviruses, but this information does not provide insight into whether SARS Cov-2 was genetically engineered by the WIV."

Information that lab researchers sought medical treatment for a respiratory illness in November 2019 "is not diagnostic of the pandemic's origins," the report said.

And allegations that China launched the virus as a bioweapon were dismissed because their proponents "do not have direct access to the Wuhan Institute of Virology," are making scientifically invalid claims or are accused of spreading disinformation, the report said.

Four agencies within the intelligence community said with low confidence that the virus was initially transmitted from an animal to a human. A fifth intelligence agency believed with moderate confidence that the first human infection was linked to a lab.

Prior to writing the report,

analysts conducted what the report describes as a "Team A/Team B" debate to try to strengthen or weaken each hypothesis.

The report identifies types of data that investigators still want China to provide access to, including records and tissue samples from several markets in Wuhan, including the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, Qiyimen Live Animal Market, Dijiao Outdoor Pet Market and others. Scientists originally believed the virus emerged from animals sold at the Huanan market, which has since been ruled out by some as the origin site.

Confirming with 100% certainty the origin of a virus is often not fast, easy or always even possible.

In the case of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS — a disease caused by a beta coronavirus, like the current coronavirus — researchers first identified the virus in February 2003. Later that year, scientists discovered the likely intermediary hosts: Himalayan palm civets found at live-animal markets in Guangdong, China. But it wasn't until 2017 that researchers traced the likely original source of the virus to bat caves in China's Yunnan province. **MDT/AP**

resisted attempts for a G-20 declaration on phasing out domestic coal consumption.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said before the Rome summit that he tried but could not get a commitment on a coal phase-out from Xi, who did not travel to the gathering.

In Glasgow, Johnson said, "we want these leaders ... to focus on the commitments they can make, moving away from the use of fossil fuels, moving away from coal-fired power stations domestically."

Climate campaigners were hoping that rich G-20 countries would take steps to meet a long-standing but yet-to-be-fulfilled commitment to raise \$100 billion annually to help developing countries move toward greener economies and adapt to the changing climate.

Prince Charles, a long-time environmentalist, was set to address the G-20. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1986 CHEMICAL SPILL TURNS RHINE RED



There has been a catastrophic fire at a chemicals factory near Basel, Switzerland, sending tons of toxic chemicals into the nearby river Rhine and turning it red.

The fire broke out early this morning in a storage building used for pesticides, mercury and other highly poisonous agricultural chemicals.

Local residents were woken by sirens sounded by local authorities to alert them to the disaster.

People in the city of Basel and the surrounding region on the border between Germany and France were told to stay indoors.

Witnesses reported a foul smell of rotten eggs and burning rubber.

Fourteen people, including one of the firemen fighting the blaze, were treated in hospital after inhaling the fumes.

It is thought the chemicals were washed into the river in the water used by firefighters to tackle the fire. The West German Chemicals Industry Association is to carry out an internal report and says it could take weeks to determine the cause of the disaster.

The factory is owned by Sandoz, one of Switzerland's largest chemical firms.

About 30 tons of pesticides were discharged into the river, western Europe's most important waterway.

The river flows through four countries - Switzerland, Germany, France and Holland - before flowing into the North Sea.

Environmentalists are now struggling to prevent the pollution sweeping down the Rhine and into the rest of Europe.

The spillage has reversed 10 years of painstaking work to clean up the Rhine, so grossly polluted by industrial expansion in France, Germany and Switzerland that fish disappeared and it was too dangerous to swim in.

The Dutch are particularly concerned about the presence of mercury in the chemical cocktail now heading their way.

A similar pollution incident in Japan 25 years ago revealed the extremely poisonous nature of mercury after fish were contaminated and then caught and eaten by fishermen and their families in the area.

Hundreds of people suffered an agonising death as a result of that incident, which saw mercury deposits similar to those expected to accumulate along the North Sea coast near Holland.

Courtesy BBC News

G-20

Leaders turn to climate change on last day of summit

KARL RITTER, ROME

LEADERS of the world's biggest economies tackled climate change yesterday, the final day of a weekend summit in Rome that is widely expected to set the tone for a major conference on the same issue taking place in Glasgow, Scotland, over the next two weeks.

The Group of 20 countries, which represent more than three-quarters of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, are looking for common ground on how to reduce emissions while helping poor countries deal with the impact of rising temperatures.

If the G-20 summit ends with only weak commitments, momentum could be lost for the larger annual talks in Glasgow, where countries from around the globe will be represented including poor ones most vulnerable to rising seas, desertification and other effects.

The future of coal, a key source of greenhouse gas emissions, has been one of the hardest things for the G-20 to agree on. However, the U.S. and other countries are hoping to get a commitment to end overseas financing of coal-fired power generation, said a senior U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity

to preview President Joe Biden's plans.

Western countries have moved away from financing coal projects in developing countries, and major Asian economies are now doing the same: Chinese President Xi Jinping announced at the U.N. General Assembly last month that Beijing would stop funding such projects, and Japan and South Korea made similar commitments earlier in the year.

China has not set an end date for building domestic coal plants at home, however. Coal is still China's main source of power generation, and both China and India have

IN CONTEXT

The leak at the Sandoz factory was Europe's worst environmental disaster for a decade.

Within 10 days the pollution had travelled the length of the Rhine and into the North Sea.

An estimated half a million fish were killed, and some species were wiped out entirely.

There was a public outcry, resulting in the Rhine Action Programme of 1987, sometimes known as "Salmon 2000" because its stated target was to see the return of salmon to the Rhine by the year 2000.

The agreement achieved a 50% reduction in pollution by nitrates and phosphorus in the river, and some other types of pollution have been reduced by 80 to 100%.

Salmon - known for its sensitivity to water pollution - returned in 1997, three years ahead of schedule.











The Rhine 2020 Programme aims to make the Rhine clean enough to swim in.

The chemical companies around Basel have increased their safety precautions, including giant catch basins to trap water used in putting out fires.

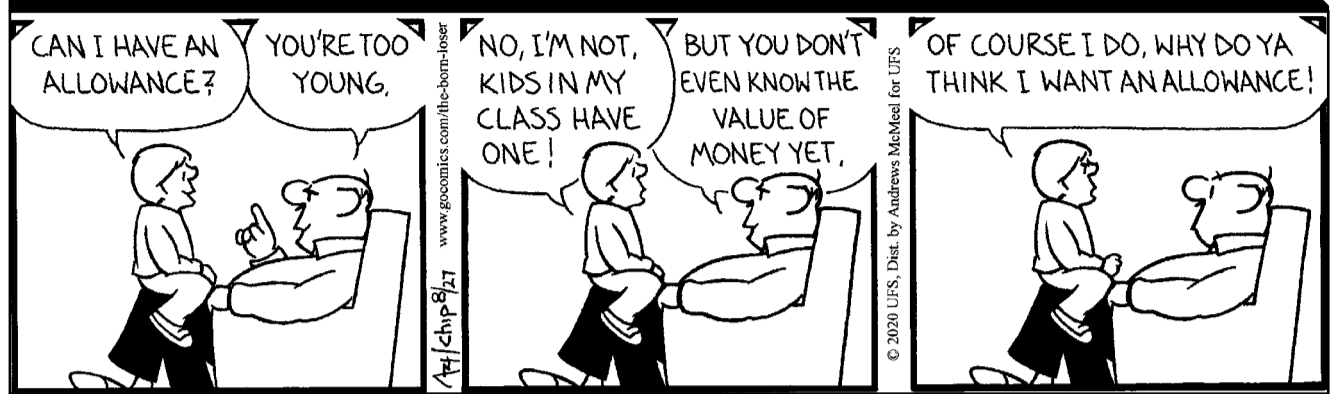
The chemical firm Sandoz merged with fellow chemical company Ciba-Geigy in 1996 to form Novartis, a world-leading drugs and chemicals company.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

 ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You have to know what your boss wants if you expect to do your job correctly. It's time to get yourself back on track. You should consider submitting some of your written work for publication.	 TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Your childlike quality may get you into big trouble today if you neglect your responsibilities. Your partner may push buttons that infuriate you. This will not be the day to have minor surgery.
 GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Problems with in-laws or relatives may be more damaging than you realize. Take matters in hand when it comes to dealing with clients or colleagues. Put your thoughts into action.	 CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You can stabilize your situation if you compromise. Your lover may feel rejected. It's time to get yourself back on track.
 LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Be firm when dealing with matters pertaining to your environment. Involve yourself in group endeavors. Finish off old projects before starting something new.	 VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 You can make extra cash by moonlighting. Try to keep a low profile. You need adventure and excitement in your life.
 LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Stabilize your own position by locking up your savings. You need to mingle with people who can spark enthusiasm and confidence in you.	 SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Tempers may flare if you haven't been completely honest about your intentions or your whereabouts. Reevaluate your position and make decisions about your future goals.
 SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You may find that someone you live with may be irritable; you're best to leave them alone. They will jump at the chance to do something without you if it sounds like more fun.	 CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You should channel your efforts into getting rid of bad habits. Your involvement in organizational events could open doors to new and exciting opportunities.
 AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Do not yield to children or relatives when they really don't deserve it. Relatives may play an important role in your personal life. Arguments may flare up in your home.	 PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Unexpected bills may set you back. Try not to let relatives or friends cause any friction with your mate. Be careful; your ideas are good but make sure that you're realistic and start off on solid ground.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	7	20	fine
Harbin	5	14	cloudy
Tianjin	11	22	cloudy
Urumqi	13	18	rain
Xi'an	16	18	rain
Lhasa	13	18	overcast
Chengdu	19	23	overcast
Chongqing	15	25	cloudy
Kunming	10	14	overcast
Nanjing	21	25	cloudy
Shanghai	12	21	cloudy
Wuhan	5	12	cloudy
Hangzhou	9	21	cloudy
Taipei	1	14	fine
Guangzhou	18	28	cloudy
Hong Kong	22	26	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	2	7	overcast
Frankfurt	5	15	overcast
Paris	8	17	overcast
London	14	17	overcast
New York	13	17	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- High cards; 5- Characteristic; 10- Mountain lake; 14- Formerly, formerly; 15- Therefore; 16- Double curve; 17- Parks on a bus; 18- More bizarre; 19- That was close!; 20- Pertaining to the U.S. legislative body; 23- Repudiate; 24- Indian honorific; 25- Person who dresses stones; 28- French connections; 31- Farm birds; 35- Turnout; 37- Corrida shout; 39- Semi; 40- Make a trade?; 44- Auditory apparatus; 45- Alien's subj.; 46- Brings out; 47- Snow conveyances; 50- Stutz contemporary; 52- ___ of thousands; 53- Swiss river; 55- Cutty ___; 57- Mimic; 63- Pass the breaking point; 64- Saltpeter; 65- Reflected sound; 67- I've Got ___ in Kalamazoo; 68- Vigilant; 69- Go sky-high; 70- Easy to manage; 71- ___ luck; 72- Tease;


DOWN 1- ___ Lingus; 2- Plastic clog; 3- Canadian gas brand; 4- Tie or draw; 5- Sharp-pointed plant outgrowth; 6- Night flight; 7- No ifs, ___; 8- Locks up; 9- Garr and Hatcher; 10- Off-campus local; 11- Turkish bigwig; 12- Film spool; 13- Fresh; 21- Bottled spirit; 22- Assn.; 25- Acts down; 26- Hearing-related; 27- Put away; 29- Sheer fabric; 30- ___-mo; 32- "All My Children" vixen; 33- Dimensions; 34- Discharge; 36- Lao-___; 38- Hydrocarbon ending; 41- Georgia, once: Abbr.; 42- I don't give ___!; 43- Most fortunate; 48- Mottled marking; 49- Mediterranean isl.; 51- Willows; 54- Of the kidneys; 56- Trunk line; 57- Swenson of "Benson"; 58- Polite address; 59- Structure for storing grain; 60- Editorial notation; 61- Garbage boat; 62- Baht spender; 63- Watched the kids; 66- Meal crumb;





Friday's solution

C	O	M	B	O	C	O	E	D	C	R	I
A	D	D	U	P	H	A	S	T	E	O	E
D	E	I	C	E	A	S	S	E	T	S	P
R	O	O	T	E	S	T	E	S	T	E	S
G	U	F	F	A	W	R	A	S	C	A	L
O	P	I	A	T	E	A	O	R	T	A	
M	O	R	S	E	A	R	M	I	S	T	I
E	N	E	A	C	T	E	D				
R	A	D	I	C	H	I	O	S	M	E	L
T	P	U	R	E	S	E	R	A	P	E	
S	T	O	R	E	D						
B	U	R	S	T							
A	N	A	A	S	H	E	N	T	R	E	S
A	N	D									
L	Y	E									

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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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Property of the Week



FOR SALE

Tai Nin
HKD 3,880,000 720 ft² 1 1

Tai Nin located just across from Macau's Cathedral in one of the oldest parts of Macau. This delightful property is walk up, located on a street with many cafes and close by the main post office, as well as banks and a wet market. The apartment was renovated from a two bedroom into a one bedroom apartment with walk in shower room and open plan kitchen, living and dining area. The views from this apartment are lovely, looking over a beautiful square. The apartment can be sold with out without the furniture. This property is a lovely first time home or investment property.

Viewings can be arranged by appointment.
Find out more on www.jmlproperty.com



Ref: 2110 6001

Property Hotlist



FOR SALE

Centro Internacional
HKD 3,990,000

800 ft²

2
1



Ref: 2108 6003



FOR RENT

BCM Building office
HKD 85,000/mth

4,100 ft²



Ref: 2101 1001



FOR RENT

Old Taipa studio
HKD 7,200/mth

376 ft²

1



Ref: 2110 1002

More Listings

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- [Taipa] Lun Vo 2 1 770 ft² **HKD 5,200,000** Ref: 2107 6001
- [Taipa] Taipa Village 4 2 1,404 ft² **HKD 8,380,000** Ref: 1909 6006
- [Macau] Basement style 2 2 2,200 ft² **HKD 9,990,000** Ref: 1511 5464
- [Coloane] Hellene Gardens 1 2 2,170 ft² **HKD 10,880,000** Ref: 2107 6005
- [Taipa] Hellene Gardens 4 2 2,305 ft² **HKD 14,980,000** Ref: 2106 6003

For Rent

- [Taipa] Old Taipa Studio 1 440 ft² **HKD 8,200/mth** Ref: 2110 1001
- [Taipa] Va Fat 1 1 740 ft² **HKD 10,900/mth** Ref: 1910 1006
- [Coloane] One Oasis 2 2 1,185 ft² **HKD 11,200/mth** Ref: 2109 1001
- [Coloane] One Oasis 2 2 1,033 ft² **HKD 11,900/mth** Ref: 2107 6003
- [Taipa] One Central 3 3 2,332 ft² **HKD 29,800/mth** Ref: 2010 1001

Rain Dance Property "WE DANCE UNTIL IT'S SOLD!"



FOR SALE

Hellene Gardens
HKD 7,980,000

1,663 ft²

3
2
1



Ref: 2109 6001

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PREMIER LEAGUE

Liverpool held 2-2 by Brighton

BRIGHTON came the closest of any opponent in six months to ending Liverpool's 24-match unbeaten run by recovering from two goals down to draw 2-2 in the Premier League at Anfield on Saturday.

Mohamed Salah failed to score for the first time in 11 games for Liverpool, but the hosts still looked like easing to victory when Jordan Henderson and Sadio Mane scored inside the first 24 minutes.

However, Enock Mwepu curled in a long-range shot for his first Premier League goal to reduce the deficit in the 41st and Leandro Trossard equalized in the 65th after collecting a pass from Adam Lallana, a former Liverpool player.

Brighton had the better chances to win the game from that point and Trossard had a late goal disallowed in front of The Kop.

Part of Brighton's success lay in becoming only the second team this season, after Burnley in August, to stop Salah finding the net. His scoring streak was brought to a halt with his only chance seeing an effort ruled out for offside in the second half.

Liverpool was looking to follow

AP PHOTO



up last weekend's 5-0 thrashing of Manchester United but was never comfortable against Brighton, for whom Yves Bissouma had a shot tipped onto the post by Alisson Becker at 1-0.

Henderson's goal came when Virgil Van Dijk's pass out to the right isolated Salah against Marc Cucurella. The Egypt international weaved one way and then the other, before cutting the ball back

for Henderson to plant a sidefooted finish past Robert Sanchez.

With Roberto Firmino dropping deep to link play with quick layoffs and one-twos, Jürgen Klopp's side produced some incisive passing moves. Firmino was guilty of unnecessary over-complication when he tried to lob Sanchez after Mane and Naby Keita had combined, but there was nothing but an efficient simplicity about

the second goal.

Keita, who had recovered quickly from being carried off at Old Trafford last Sunday, lasted 19 minutes but replacement Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain made an immediate impact.

Within five minutes of coming on, his inviting cross dipped at just the right angle to drop between Brighton's two center-backs and Mane headed home his

fourth goal in five league matches at Anfield.

A sprawling challenge from Lewis Dunk blocked Firmino's shot while VAR denied Mane a second when the Brighton center back put his goalkeeper under pressure on the goalline. Sanchez's clearance was blocked by the studs of Mane and bounced up onto the forward's right arm before going in.

And it proved a double blow for Liverpool when Mwepu whipped a first-time shot from the 30 meters up and over Alisson and just under the crossbar.

Salah's hopes of scoring in a club record-extending 11th successive match were dashed by an offside flag early in the second half but much of the fluency had gone from Liverpool's game as Brighton pushed back, led by the indefatigable Lallana.

With Liverpool no longer in full control nor creating the chances it did before the break, Brighton sensed an opportunity and seized it.

The hosts were carved open down their left — resulting in Henderson and Oxlade-Chamberlain having a heated exchange about who was at fault — and Lallana teed up Trossard to cut inside and score in the 65th.

The momentum was all with Brighton and Trossard was denied what he thought was the winner by an offside flag. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

World Views

Beverly Moran, Vanderbilt University, MDT/The Conversation



WHY TAXING US BILLIONAIRES' WEALTH - AS BIDEN TRIED TO DO - WILL NEVER WORK

The speed with which a tax on billionaires came and went as a means to pay for President Joe Biden's economic agenda shows why it's so hard to tax wealth in the U.S. Democrats unveiled their proposal on Oct. 27, 2021, and it was nixed that same day, replaced with a surcharge on millionaire incomes.

The idea of taxing the richest Americans' fortunes has been batted around for some time, and perhaps with good reason from a tax perspective. The total wealth of U.S. billionaires soared by US\$1.8 trillion during the COVID-19 pandemic as of mid-August. And recent reporting has found that despite their massive riches, billionaires tend to pay very little in taxes.

As an expert on tax policy, I have observed that there's a big obstacle standing in the way of a wealth tax: the Constitution.

Concerns about inequality have increased in recent decades.

Americans enjoyed substantial economic growth and broadly shared prosperity from the end of World War II into the 1970s.

But in the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan dramatically slashed taxes on the wealthy - twice - cutting the top rate on wages from 70% to 28%.

Studies have shown lower income and corporate tax rates, combined with other "trickle-down" policies such as deregulation, have led to steadily rising income for the richest Americans and wealth inequality.

The most affluent 1% controlled 39% of all wealth - including all cash, real estate, stocks, bonds and other investments - in 2016, up from less than 30% in 1989. At the same time, the bottom 90% held less than a quarter of America's wealth, compared with more than a third in 1989.

Currently, the federal government taxes all income above \$518,400 at 37% for single filers, with an additional 3.8% investment tax on incomes over \$200,000. Of course, as a ProPublica cache of tax documents shows, loopholes and tax dodges result in actual income tax rates being significantly lower.

Unlike an income tax, a wealth tax reaches the root of both wealth and income inequality.

But there are strong arguments that a federal wealth tax is unconstitutional. Wealth taxes violate Article I, Section 2, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution, which forbids the federal government from assessing "direct taxes" that aren't apportioned equally among the states.

A direct tax is a tax on a thing, like property or income. An indirect tax is a tax on a transaction: for example, a sale or a gift.

The income tax is a direct tax and constitutional because of the 16th Amendment, which specifically allows income taxes without apportionment. As for property, you may notice that only states and cities levy real estate taxes. In almost every case, the federal government cannot tax real estate or any other form of wealth absent a transaction.

Barring a victory before the conservative-leaning Supreme Court or an arduous amendment to the Constitution, the federal government is shut out of taxing wealth.

I agree with progressive lawmakers that the United States should return to economic policies that seek to lift all boats.

Although American wealth and productivity have surged in the past 40 years, most Americans have not seen their lot improve nearly as much as the richest have - and are paying higher tax rates. In 2020 alone, America's billionaires saw their wealth increase \$560 billion, even as tens of millions were unemployed or depended on food donations to get enough to eat.

The U.S. tax system is at least partly responsible for these gaps. While a wealth tax may not be a workable solution, there are other means, such as higher income tax rates for the well-to-do or a wealth transfer tax that focuses on the transfer of wealth to a billionaire's heirs. These approaches could not only help solve the problem of inequality but would pass legal muster too.

[Abridged]

G20: US, EUROPEAN ALLIES WARN OF IRAN'S 'PROVOCATIVE' NUKE STEPS

THE BUZZ

President Joe Biden said Saturday that nuclear talks with Iran would resume as he and European leaders warned Tehran that "accelerated" and "provocative nuclear steps" it has taken will jeopardize its return to compliance under a 2015 nuclear agreement.

Biden and the leaders of Germany, France and Britain met as Iran continues to enrich uranium to near-weapons-grade levels. The leaders are trying to revive the 2015 deal and restore Iran's program to where it was under the pact, which kept the Islamic republic at least one year away from the potential to

field a nuclear weapon.

In a joint statement issued after the meeting, Biden, Germany's Angela Merkel, France's Emmanuel Macron and Britain's Boris Johnson "expressed our determination to ensure that Iran can never develop or acquire a nuclear weapon."

The leaders shared "our grave and growing concern" that Iran "has accelerated the pace of provocative nuclear steps" after it halted negotiations on a return to the nuclear agreement, formally known as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).



AP PHOTO

G20
US, EU REACH AGREEMENT TO SETTLE RIFT OVER TRUMP-ERA TARIFFS

ZEKE MILLER & JOSH BOAK, ROME

THE U.S. and European Union have reached an agreement to settle their diplomatic rift over Trump-era steel and aluminum tariffs, the White House announced Saturday, as President Joe Biden is in Rome attending the Group of 20 summit.

The Trump administration had placed taxes on EU steel and aluminum in 2018 on the claim that the foreign products produced by American allies were a threat to U.S. national security. Europeans and other allies were outraged by Trump's use of Article 232 to justify the tariffs, leading many to impose countertariffs on U.S.-made motorcycles, bourbon, peanut butter and jeans, among other items.

National security adviser Jake Sullivan, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo announced the agreement Saturday. They said that the Article 232 tariffs won't be removed entirely but that some quantity of

European steel and aluminum will be allowed to enter the U.S. without tariffs under the deal.

"We were able to reach an agreement whereby the EU will drop their retaliatory tariffs (on American goods)," Raimondo said. The agreement would ensure "that all steel entering the U.S. via Europe is produced entirely in Europe," Raimondo added.

The easing of the tariffs is a key step in unwinding one of Trump's legacies as Biden has tried to reset the U.S. relationship with Europe.

This back-and-forth hurt European producers and raised steel costs for American companies. The tariffs also did not achieve Trump's stated goals of creating jobs at steel mills. The Bureau of Labor Statistics show that jobs in the manufacturing of primary metals did rise slightly, to as much as 389,100 in 2019. But mills shed workers during the pandemic, and employment in the sector is roughly half of what it was in 1990.

The European Union took steps in May to improve relations. On

some retaliatory tariffs, the EU temporarily suspended planned increases. This meant that American whiskey faced a 25% tax in Europe, instead of a planned 50% tax. The two sides faced a December deadline to avoid the higher tax rate.

The summit's host, Italian Premier Mario Draghi, in a statement Saturday night expressed "great satisfaction" for the tariff accord. The decision "confirms the further reinforcement underway of the already close Transatlantic relations and the progressive overcoming of the protectionism of the last years," he said.

The announcement also was welcomed by Chris Swonger, president and CEO of Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, after what he called "three very difficult years of sagging American whiskey exports."

"Lifting this tariff burden on American whiskeys not only boosts U.S. distillers and farmers, it also supports the recovery of EU restaurants, bars and distilleries hit hard by the pandemic," Swonger said. MDT/AP



AP PHOTO

US President Joe Biden told Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday that their countries must better manage disagreements after the partnership between NATO allies was tested by Turkey's threat to no longer recognize the U.S. envoy and its purchase of a Russian missile defense system. "We're planning to have a good conversation," Biden said as the leaders appeared in front of journalists before nearly an hour of closed-door talks.

UN secretary general urged Sudan's generals yesterday to reverse their takeover of the country, a day after tens of thousands of people took to the streets in the largest pro-democracy protest since last week's coup. Antonio Guterres said the generals should "take heed" of Saturday's protests. "Time to go back to the legitimate constitutional arrangements," he said in a tweet.



AP PHOTO

Poland's lawmakers have approved the speedy construction of a \$402 million barrier on the European Union member's border with Belarus, seeking to stop the increasing flow of migrants. Now the plan proposed by the right-wing government only needs the approval from President Andrzej Duda, a government ally. Construction of the wall with motion sensors is to start upon the approval.

German federal police apprehended 23 migrants along the German-Polish border yesterday morning and detained two suspected traffickers, German news agency dpa reported. Among the people discovered inside a van during a routine checkup were several children, police said. All the migrants were from Iraq, while the two suspected traffickers were Syrians. The car was stopped near the east German border town of Goerlitz.