

SECRETARY LEI WAI NONG HAS CALLED ON LABOUR BUREAU TO 'RIGOROUSLY ASSESS AND APPROVE REQUESTS FOR IMPORT AND CONTRACT RENEWAL OF TNRS'

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GAMING: ANALYSTS WARNED RECENT MAINLAND OUTBREAK MAY AFFECT NOVEMBER REVENUES

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YAHOO INC. SAID IT HAS PULLED OUT OF CHINA, CITING AN INCREASINGLY CHALLENGING OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

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Taiwan European Union parliamentarians met with Taiwan's premier Su Tseng-chang yesterday, in the first official visit of an EU delegation to the island. Thirteen members of the EU's committee on foreign interference in democratic processes are visiting Taiwan, after the EU parliament passed a resolution last month calling for the body to "intensify EU-Taiwan political relations."



Thailand A police colonel, dubbed "Jo Ferrari" for his extravagant collection of cars, and six other officers were charged with murder for allegedly killing a suspected drug dealer while trying to extort him for money, authorities said. Col. Thitsan Utthanaphon and the other officers also face charges of extortion, dereliction of duty.

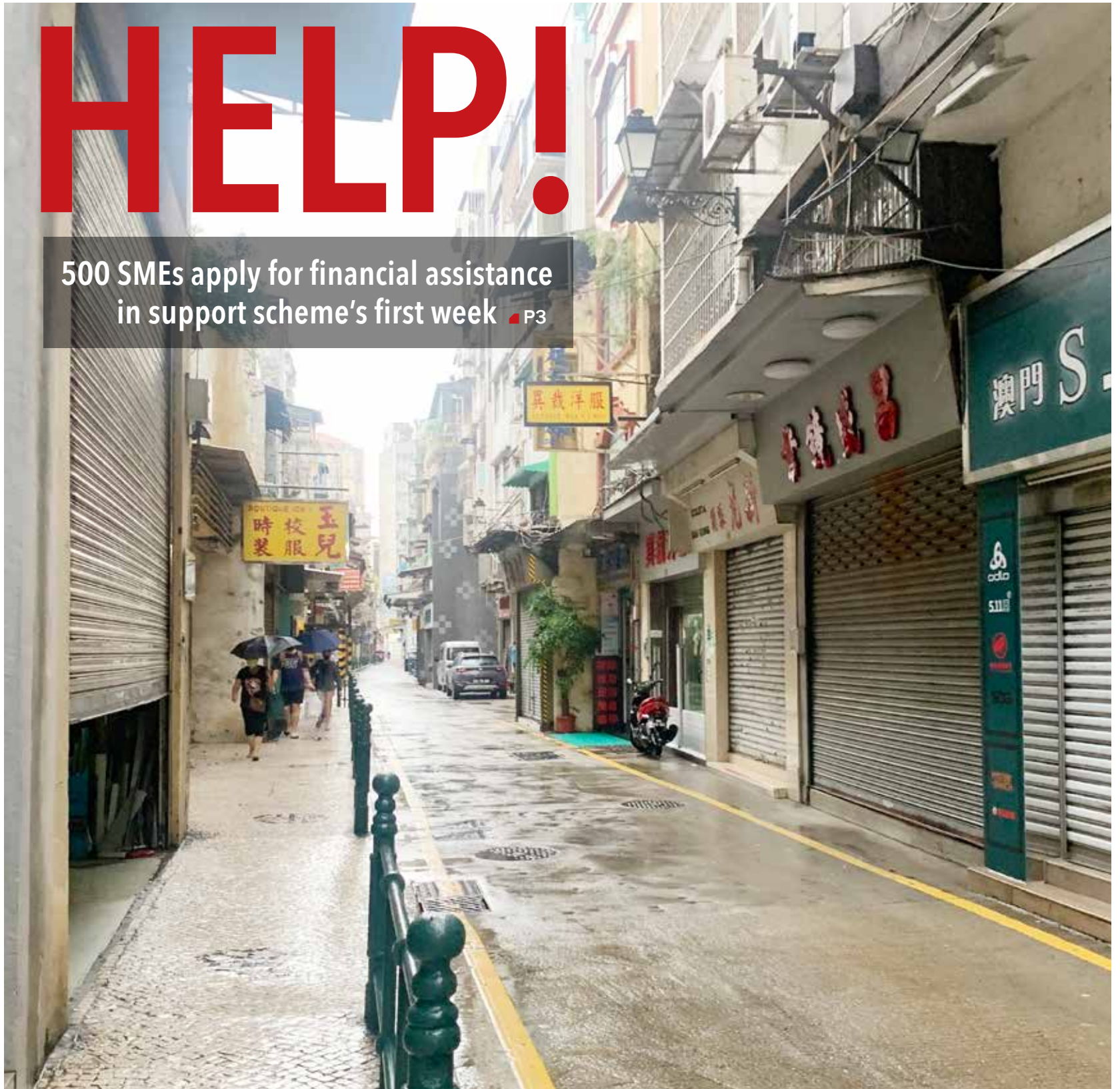
Afghanistan A roadside bomb struck a Taliban patrol in a stronghold of Islamic State militants in eastern Afghanistan yesterday, killing two people and wounding three, witnesses said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but the attack bore the hallmarks of previous IS strikes against the Taliban. The two groups are bitter rivals, and IS has stepped up attacks since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August.

Pakistan At least 22 passengers were killed in Pakistan's part of Kashmir after a bus they were on skidded off a mountain road and fell into a deep ravine, police said. The accident happened in Pulandri, a district in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, senior police official Fayyaz Abbasi said. He said several passengers were also injured in the crash and rescuers transported the dead and injured to a nearby hospital.

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500 SMEs apply for financial assistance in support scheme's first week P3



LYNZY VALLES

HENGQIN TO SIMPLIFY GOODS CUSTOMS CLEARANCE

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XINHUA

THE CONVERSATION

MANY SCIENTISTS ARE ATHEISTS, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY ARE ANTI-RELIGIOUS

ELAINE HOWARD ECKLUND,
RICE UNIVERSITY
AND DAVID R. JOHNSON,
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

DISTRUST of atheists is strong in the United States. The General Social Survey consistently demonstrates that as a group, Americans dislike atheists more than any other religious group. According to various studies, nearly half of the country would disapprove of their child marrying an atheist, some 40% of the public does not believe atheists share their view of American society, and only 60% of Americans would be willing to vote for an atheist in a presidential election.

There is one field, however, where atheism is often assumed: science.

People often view scientists as "Godless." Some of these views may be a result of people hearing more from vocal atheist scientists such as evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, neuroscientist Sam Harris and others who are at the vanguard of a movement known as "new atheism." New atheists are not simply scientists who are convinced there is no God or gods. They couple their irreligion with an aggressive critique of religious belief as a threat to societal well-being.

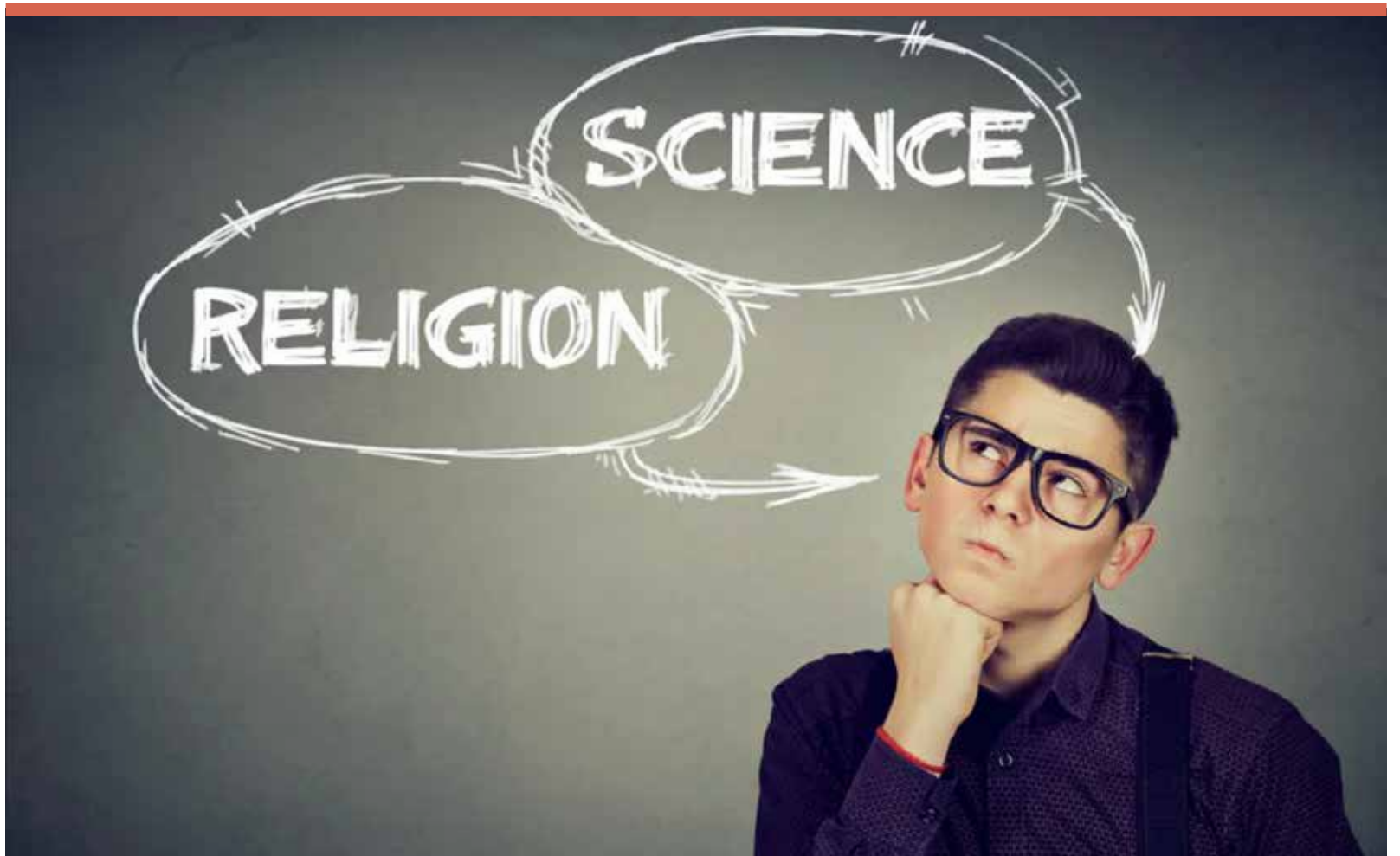
These scientists espouse a frequently derisive rhetoric on religion and the religious public. Dawkins, for example, has argued that religion is a form of "mental illness" and one of the world's "great evils" comparable to smallpox.

But such strident attitudes may not be representative of scientists in general.

A recent research study we conducted reveals that most atheist scientists in the U.S. and U.K. are not anti-religious.

THE REAL STORY OF ATHEISM IN SCIENCE

Drawing on quantitative surveys with 1,293 scientists who identified as atheists, 81 in-depth qualitative interviews conducted from 2013 through 2016 and context material collected since then, we found that scientists' views of



religion are much more diverse than the image conveyed by new atheists.

Each of the scientists in our study selected the statement "I do not believe in God" when asked about their views of God – and selected this choice over options including agnosticism, the view that the existence of God or the divine is unknowable.

As sociologists, we view religion as multidimensional – consisting of beliefs, practices, traditions and identities – and seek to understand such dimensions in the lives of atheist scientists and their views of religion.

One of our main findings is that most atheist scientists do not want to be aligned with rhetoric that condemns religious people. Although we did not specifically ask about Dawkins in interviews, scientists often brought him up.

As one biologist that we interviewed in the U.K. said of him, "Well, he has gone on a crusade, basically ... I think that [religion] is an easy target, and I think that he's rather insensitive and hectoring."

Even atheist scientists who harbored occasional negative views of religion expressed concerns that such rhetoric is bad for science.

Not only are many atheist scientists not hostile to religion, but some think religion can also be beneficial to society; in the words of one of our respondents, "you can see the benefits of going to church." Many, for example, discussed the sense of community one finds in churches. Others emphasized religious attendance as a force of good, encouraging people to act more charitably.

Indeed in the U.S., 29% of atheist scientists also say they are culturally religious. That is, despite their lack of belief in God, they routinely interact with religious individuals or organizations, such as having a religious spouse, sending their children to a religious school, or attending services themselves.

As one atheist biologist told us: "I enjoy going to church for the suspension of disbelief, for the theatrical experience, for reading, for the liturgy, for the magnificent

stories and the mythic quality of those stories, which is intensely spiritual. That's a real experience."

ATHEIST SCIENTISTS AND THE RELIGIOUS

We also found that atheist scientists and persons of faith have more in common than most people may think, such as the experience of awe and wonder. Whereas many religious individuals experience spirituality through their faith, some atheist scientists speak of their work with similar notions of awe and wonder.

These scientists talk about "intangible realities that imbue wonder, motivate their work and are beyond observation" – realities that they call spirituality.

As sociologists Penny Edgell, Joseph Gerteis and Douglas Hartmann explain, when asked about atheists on surveys, Americans are most likely imagining a theoretical person who rejects the idea of God, rather than thinking about an actual atheist they may have encountered.

Indeed, in an ideologically se-

gregated society such as the U.S., religious and nonreligious individuals may not interact in ways that would actually inform their perspectives of one another. As a result, religious and nonreligious individuals' views of one another are heavily reliant on stereotypes of each group.

Consequently, when people think about atheist scientists, it is all too easy to imagine the picture painted based on those presented in the public sphere, such as Dawkins and others, in the absence of one who inhabits their community.

What is more, it is difficult to know an atheist when you see one, especially if they are sitting down the pew from you in church, as our research indicates they might.

In an era where our lives literally depend on trust in the scientific community, telling the truth about who atheist scientists are through research on them, rather than allowing them to be represented by the loudest atheist scientist voices, is consequential. **MDT/AP**

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514 SMEs apply for financial support in scheme's first week

RENATO MARQUES

A total of 514 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have submitted applications for assistance under the government program set up to aid companies facing severe problems due to the economic impacts of the pandemic and the measures adopted to control it.

According to the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED), in just the first week of the scheme (October 26 to November 1), 514 applications were received.

The overwhelming majority (465) of these applications are for the "repayment adjustment measure" which allows companies to renegotiate the repayment of previous government loans through alternative subsidy schemes.

Another 48 applications were for the Support Plan for SMEs, and only one application was for the Bank Credit Interest Bonus Plan for SMEs.

According to DSED, applications for the interest-free loan and "adjustment of repayments" can be submitted online, simplifying



the procedure for the convenience of applicants.

The government has said that such measures can play an effective supporting role, particularly by "supporting SMEs to address shortages of short-term working funds and alleviating operational pressures."

Companies interested in applying for the "Support Plan for SMEs" (an interest-free loan) can do so by using DSED's online

application form on the bureau's official website.

As for applications for bank loans with lower interest rates, these should be addressed to the banks directly. The DSED can only assist with inquiries about the procedures involved.

Under the latter scheme, companies may apply for subsidized credit of up to 2 million patacas, with an annual bonus rate of up to 4% and a maximum bonus period

of three years.

Recently several lawmakers severely criticized this financial relief package in the Legislative Assembly, claiming that it will only lead companies that are already struggling further into debt.

The lawmakers called on the government to instead reverse certain policies, namely the border restrictions and the "zero cases" requirement for economic activity to resume, and called for businesses to be allowed return to normal operations as soon as possible.

120 APPLICATIONS FOR TAX REDUCTION

In a statement from the Financial Services Bureau (DSF), the bureau acknowledged having so far received a total of 120 applications for tax reductions under the same government package.

According to the DSF, these applications have been increasing significantly, prompting the bureau to allocate special service desks to handle the applications.

Simultaneously, it was announced that the DSF will accelerate the procedures for tax reductions related to the lowering of rental prices.

DSAL SHOULD THOROUGHLY REVIEW TNR IMPORT DATA: LEI WAI NONG

RENATO MARQUES

THE Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, has called on the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) to improve procedures and "rigorously assess and approve requests for import and contract renewal of non-resident workers (TNRs)."

The call came in response to a report from the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) which uncovered an illegal scheme in which a company allegedly forged documentation and data used in an application for quotas for the employment of TNRs.

A statement from the office of Secretary Lei said that local government "does not tolerate offenders, and once the existence of illegal or irregular contracting is verified, a fine will be imposed and the authorization to contract under the law will be revoked."

Furthermore, Lei's office noted that, apart from the sanctions already mentioned, under existing laws offenders may face

a ban on applying for new authorizations for a period of up to two years.

"In the case of criminal acts, such as false statements or false documents, the offender is also subject to the corresponding criminal liability," the statement concluded.

Last Monday afternoon, the city's corruption watchdog published a report claiming that a company which provides maintenance services for the Macau Frontier Post on the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge had allegedly falsified information on local employees provided to the DSAL.

According to the CCAC, the same company also submitted false documents to the Financial Services Bureau and the Social Security Fund as part of the same operation.

It is also alleged that the employees whose records were falsified illegally received payments of MOP15,000 from the local government's pandemic response support fund.

HENGQIN TO SIMPLIFY CUSTOMS CLEARANCE FOR FREIGHT BETWEEN MACAU AND GUANGDONG

RENATO MARQUES

HENGQIN will accelerate the development of the Guangdong-Macau In-depth Cooperation Zone, simplifying customs clearance for goods between Macau and Guangdong province, NewsGD, a Guangdong news outlet, reported.

According to the same report, the news came from a statement made by the director of the Executive Committee of the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin (Zone) and Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, in a meeting held with the Gongbei Customs authorities last Saturday.

In early September, the central authorities issued a general plan for the development of the Zone, stipulating that goods moving through a "first tier" between the Zone and Macau will be subject to registration-based management, a process which simplifies customs declaration procedures.

Additionally, all tax-exempt

goods moving from the Zone through the "second tier" into the mainland territory are required to undergo customs clearance procedures as importation goods, and tariffs and import duties will be imposed.

While pointing out that this policy is highly beneficial for the Zone, Lei also foreshadowed that as a next step, the two sides will accelerate the construction of infrastructure in the Zone.

At the moment, the construction of the second phase of Hengqin Port is underway, and the pile foundation of Lotus Bridge's new entry ramps has been completed.

The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2022, when Hengqin Port will start to implement a one-stop vehicle clearance model system facilitating the cross-border flow of vehicles and drivers.

The Zone plans to establish seven customs supervision sites in five "second tier" channels that have been put into operation.

MINIMUM TEMPERATURE TO DROP TO 15°C

The weather is expected to be relatively warm and humid during the weekend, according to forecasts from the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau. As a cold front reaches the South China coast on Sunday night, northerly winds will intensify with a few rain patches. The weather will then become significantly cooler. The minimum temperature in Macau will drop to about 15 degrees Celsius at the beginning of next week.

GP FAMILY CARNIVAL THIS WEEKEND

The 68th Macau Grand Prix Family Carnival will be held at Tap Seac Square this weekend. Entry to this year's event will be by online appointment, with several timeslots available throughout the weekend, each limited to 400 people per slot. The 68th Macau Grand Prix itself will be held from November 19 to 21 this year. This year's race program includes the SJM Formula 4 Macau Grand Prix; Sands China Macau GT Cup; Galaxy Entertainment Macau Guia Race; Melco Macau Touring Car Cup; MGM Greater Bay Area GT Cup; and the Wynn Porsche Carrera Cup Challenge. The concept of the carnival recreates the Guia Circuit in Tap Seac Square, complete with a mini racing track and interactive games.

TAP SEAC CRAFT MARKET TO BEGIN ON NOV. 19

The Tap Seac Craft Market will be held from November 19 to 21 and from November 26 to 28 at Tap Seac Square, presenting 36 creative handicraft workshops. The fee for each handicraft workshop is MOP50, according to the Cultural Affairs Bureau. In order to allow more residents to participate and enjoy the fun of handicrafts, each person may register for up to two workshops and only attend each type of workshop once. For family workshops, each child may register for up to two workshops and only once per workshop type. Successful applicants will be selected by the drawing of lots and will be notified by SMS on November 11.

'HUSH! 2021' TO PRESENT 50 LOCAL BANDS IN COLLABORATIVE PERFORMANCES

THE city's "hush! 2021" concerts kick off this weekend, showcasing 50 local bands, musicians and artists who will participate in Macau's annual pop music extravaganza.

This year's event is themed "musical feasts along the coast," referring to Macau's position as "a coastal city which embraces different cultures from all over the world, imbuing its pop music with the characteristics of openness and diversity which create a unique cultural landscape of its own," according to a statement issued by the Cultural Affairs Bureau.

The music event "Listen to hush! in the Tent" will open at the Macao Science Centre Square on November 6 and 7, offering the audience a variety of genres such as rock, jazz, folk, electronic, punk, heavy metal, pop and a cappella music.

There will be collaborative performances combining electronic music, BMX demonstrations and skateboarding. There will also be nearly 100 booths selling local cultural and creative products and co-branded hush! products,



offering concert-goers a diverse range of creative products and food from Macau.

The "Coastal Rock Concert," presented for the first time this year, will be held on November 21, and will be in two parts. The

first part, "Music Whirling under the Big Tree," will be held at Barra Square, where performances of handpan and modern folk music will be presented. Later, several bands will board a dredger owned by SJM Resorts, S. A. and perform

on the water while the sun sets.

Built in 1965, the dredger "STDM No. 1" has been retired from service, but since been turned into a lifting barge. Several seats over the sea will be provided and members of the public may

reserve seats to enjoy the performance up close.

On November 19, the concert "Lost in Cities - Looking for Rainbow" Electronic Music Night will be held at the Macao Contemporary Art Centre - Navy Yard No. 2, where electronic music artists will debut their latest creations produced using the Subsidy Programme for the Production of Original Song Albums. The next day, the "Upbeat Power Concert" will feature Japanese rock, heavy metal and pop music.

Set against the beautiful backdrop of the old quarters of the Inner Harbour and the coast of Wan Chai in Zhuhai, the "Rooftop Sunset Concerts" will be held at the Ponte 9 Rooftop on the evenings of November 27 and 28. The rooftop series will include the concert "Ladies Voices in Sea Breeze," featuring several female artists, as well as the concert "The Comfortable World of Music," showcasing a variety of genres from acoustic music to electronic music and singing bowls.

This year's hush! will also feature a range of music workshops. LV

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GAMING

Analysts warned new mainland outbreak may affect November revenues

LYNZY VALLES

GAMING analysts have expressed optimism for a recovery in gaming revenue this month, although the new outbreak of Covid-19 cases across mainland China is restraining the optimism of the predictions. The forecasts come following an October in which the city recorded its third lowest gross gaming revenue (GGR) since the pandemic began: a decline caused by a string of Delta cases which brought travel to a halt.

Data from the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau last month showed that casino revenues fell as much as 40% to MOP4.37 billion, the lowest figure this year.

Typically, October is the month which records the highest gaming revenues in the city, mainly due to the seven-day Golden Week holiday.

However, due to Covid-19 restrictions, the city recorded the lowest-ever Golden Week arrivals figure at just 8,159 visitors during the National Holiday: a plunge of 95% year-on-year and a severe



PHOTO ARCHIVE

blow to the city.

Meanwhile, analysts forecast a jump in this month's casino revenues.

Morgan Stanley's Praveen Choudhary and Gareth Leung forecast that the November GGR will increase 57% over October's figure to MOP6.9 billion.

However, the analysts expressed concern that the "recent Covid spike in the mainland could pose risks if cases spread into

Guangdong."

China's new locally transmitted Covid-19 cases spiked to a near three-month high. Yesterday, the National Health Commission confirmed 93 new local symptomatic cases from November 2, up from 54 the day before.

The figure is the highest daily count since August 9, which was at the peak of China's last major outbreak.

Brokerage Bernstein analysts

Vitaly Umansky, Louis Li and Kelsey Zhu are tipping that GGR for November this year will be more than 60% down from November 2019.

This analysis suggests revenue of between MOP7 billion and MOP8 billion.

"However, due to the new wave of Covid outbreaks in China, Macau has now imposed quarantine requirements on 21 cities/districts [in] 10 Chinese provinces," the analysts said.

"Six new cities/districts were added over the past week – some-

thing to watch," they added.

Meanwhile, JP Morgan's DS Kim, Amanda Cheng and Livy Lyu advise staying cautious about the sector into 2022, expecting no easing of border policies until after the Beijing Winter Olympics from February 4 to 20.

With just two months left before the year ends, it is now certainly impossible for the city to meet its goal of gambling revenues of MOP130 billion for 2021.

The accumulated revenue in the first 10 months of this year reached MOP72.152 billion.

GAMING LAW DRAFTED IN 'UNDETAILED MANNER'

359 individuals and organizations participated in the public consultation on the revision to gaming laws which ended last week. During the consultation, local officials advised that a plan to send government representatives to directly monitor casino operators will not affect business operations. One of the significant changes in the consultation document is the abolition of the statutory limit on gaming sub-con-

cessions. Macau-based lawyers João Nuno Riquito and Belmiro Leong from Riquito Advogados recently stated that "most of the items of the revision are set forth in a very general undetailed manner," as cited in the International Financial Law Review website. Another proposed change to the law is the restriction on dividends to shareholders of concessionaires without prior government approval.



RENATO MARQUES

Exhibition promotes Guia Circuit

THE fifth "Macau Guia Circuit to the World Heritage of UNESCO" exhibition presents to the public 40 artworks by 23 local artists.

The exhibition showcases a wide range of pieces in different mediums, including painting, photography, drawing, engraving, installation, Chinese calligraphy, glass fusing and video.

This year the exhibition is also honored by the participation of

the artistic make-up artist Sara Figueira, who will be attending and exhibiting her face painting skills on November 6 between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m., and November 13 between 11 a.m. and 12 p.m.

The exhibition is organized by the Macau Guia Circuit Promotion and Development Association (APDCGM), which aims to have Macau's Guia circuit listed as one of UNESCO's heritage sites in Macau.

President of the association José Estorninho told the Times on a previous occasion that the APDCGM seeks to use the exhibition to strengthen the case for listing the Guia circuit as a World Heritage Site with UNESCO.

The decision on the listing is not up to the local government, but rather to the central government which must propose and justify the addition of the Guia circuit to the classification of UNESCO.

The exhibition will be on display at the Ritz building (Largo do Leal Senado) until November 13 and can be visited free of charge every day from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. LV

APPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC HOUSING EXTENDED TO THE END OF THE MONTH

THE Housing Bureau (IH) has announced an extension to the application period for the government's economic housing program.

The application period, due to close on November 12, has been extended until the end of the month, according to an announcement published in yesterday's Official Gazette, justifying the extension by referring to the economic situation amid the pandemic.

Furthermore, the deadline for submitting missing documents to complete applications has also been moved to December 30.

The application process will

create a priority list for the acquisition of affordable housing units that will be built on the five land plots of Zone A of the New Urban Landfills (A1 to A4 and A12).

In total, the government aims to build 5,254 housing units.

This was also the first time that an application for public housing could be submitted online.

To reduce the risks associated with physical contact, the IH also mandated that appointments had to be booked to deliver documents in person.

During the tender period, the IH will publish and update the status of the applications on a specially dedicated website. RM



KEN MORITSUGU, BEIJING

PANDEMIC, POLITICS DRIVE XI'S ABSENCE FROM GLOBAL TALKS

CHINESE President Xi Jinping has been absent from the Group of 20 summit in Rome and this week's global climate talks in Scotland, drawing criticism from U.S. President Joe Biden and questions about China's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

China is the world's biggest emitter of carbon dioxide and has pledged to begin reducing that output by 2030 and obtaining carbon neutrality by 2060. The U.S. and others have urged Beijing to make bigger commitments, but Xi's administration has strongly implied those will only come in exchange for political concessions.

China has enforced tight travel restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic and Xi hasn't left the country since making a January 2020 trip to neighboring Myanmar.

That was just weeks before the outbreak, believed to have originated in the Chinese city of Wuhan, spread worldwide. China has come under heavy pressure to reveal more information about the origin of the pandemic and has been accused of mismanaging the outbreak and then seeking to cover up its mistakes.

Like all Chinese leaders, Xi is extremely image conscious and his public appearances are carefully choreographed to avoid potentially embarrassing confrontations.

His formerly heavy travel schedule took him across continents,

AP PHOTO



with first lady Peng Liyuan, an accomplished musician, on hand to add a bit of glamor and a human touch.

Those travels included trips to several African nations and a meeting with the former Japanese emperor in Tokyo. Xi rode in a gilded carriage with Britain's Queen Elizabeth and paid a visit to North Korea's capital that included a ride

through city streets lined by tens of thousands of cheering citizens of the hard-line communist state.

Such travels have underscored China's more assertive foreign policy, as the world's second-largest economy seeks to exert its influence beyond East Asia with Xi's signature "Belt and Road" overseas infrastructure investment program.

The president's decision not to attend the meetings in Rome and Glasgow seems at odds with that policy, although Xi isn't alone in staying away. Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose country has aligned with China in opposing U.S. influence in world affairs, also remained at home.

"I think it's been a big mistake, quite frankly, for China, with res-

pect to China not showing up," Biden said Monday at the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow.

Responding to Biden's remarks, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin yesterday said China's response to climate change "is concrete" and pointed to recent achievements in reforestation and renewable energy.

Friction in bilateral relations is complicating cooperation on climate change between the two countries, said Shi Yinong, professor of international relations at Beijing's Renmin University.

Biden has taken COP26 as "an important occasion for China and the U.S. to compete for global influence, ideology and image," said Shi, who attributed Xi's absence from the meetings to China's "zero tolerance" approach to dealing with the pandemic, which has been largely controlled within the country.

Despite not leaving China, Xi has remained in contact with foreign heads of state through virtual meetings, said Zhao Kejin, who teaches international relations at Beijing's Tsinghua University.

The U.S. wants Chinese cooperation in responding to climate change, but Beijing is also looking for changes in U.S. policy, including its support for the self-governing island of Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory, Zhao said.

"This result was produced by the U.S. failing to integrate ties with China into its overall multilateral relationships," Zhao said. **MDT/AP**

Yahoo pulls out of China, citing 'challenging' environment

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

YAHOO Inc. said yesterday (Macau time) it has pulled out of China, citing an increasingly challenging operating environment.

The withdrawal was largely symbolic, as many of the company's services were already blocked by China's digital censorship. But recent government moves to expand its control over tech companies generally, including its domestic giants, may have tipped the scales for Yahoo.

"In recognition of the increasingly challenging business and legal environment in China, Yahoo's suite of services will no longer be accessible from mainland China as of November 1," the company said in a statement. It said it "remains committed to the rights of our users and a free and open internet."

AP PHOTO



The company's move comes as the American and Chinese governments feud over technology and trade. The U.S. has put restrictions on telecom giant Huawei and other Chinese tech companies, alleging that they have ties with China's government, military or both. China says the U.S. is unfairly suppressing competition

and trying to block China's technological rise.

Yahoo is the latest foreign tech company to exit China. Google gave up several years ago, and Microsoft's professional networking platform LinkedIn said last month it would shutter its Chinese site, replacing it with a jobs board instead. The departures illustrate the choices in-

ternet companies face in a huge potential market, but one where the government requires them to censor content and keywords deemed politically sensitive or inappropriate.

In their place, Chinese companies have filled the void, creating an alternative internet with its own digital giants. The Baidu search engine has largely replaced

Yahoo and Google in China, and WeChat and Weibo are the leading social media platforms.

Yahoo's departure coincided with the implementation of China's Personal Information Protection Law, which limits what information companies can gather and sets standards for how it must be stored.

Chinese laws also stipulate that companies operating in the country must hand over data if requested by authorities, making it difficult for Western firms to operate in China as they may also face pressure back home over giving in to China's demands.

Yahoo was harshly criticized by lawmakers in the U.S. in 2007 after it handed over data on two Chinese dissidents to Beijing, eventually leading to their imprisonment.

Yahoo had previously downsized its operations

in China, dropping a music and email service in the early 2010s and shuttering its Beijing office in 2015. Anyone who tried to access Engadget China, a tech news site that it had continued to operate, was greeted Tuesday with a pop-up saying the site would no longer publish content.

China has also blocked most international social media sites and search engines, such as Facebook and Google. Some users in China circumvent the block by using a virtual private network (VPN) that masks who you are and where you are logging in from.

Verizon Communications Inc. acquired Yahoo in 2017 and merged it with AOL, but later sold the entity off to private equity firm Apollo Global Management in a \$5 billion deal. Apollo announced in September that its acquisition of Yahoo was complete. **MDT/AP**

China, Russia urge UNSC to end key sanctions on North Korea

EDITH M. LEDERER,
UNITED NATIONS

CHINA and Russia are urging the U.N. Security Council to end a host of sanctions against North Korea ranging from the export of seafood and textiles to the cap on imports of refined petroleum products and the ban on its citizens working overseas and sending home their earnings.

A draft resolution circulated to council members and obtained yesterday [Macau time] by The Associated Press stresses the economic difficulties in North Korea and says these and other sanctions should be lifted "with the intent of enhancing the livelihood of the civilian population."

The Security Council initially imposed sanctions on North Korea after its first nuclear test in 2006 and made them tougher and tougher in response to further nuclear tests and an increasingly sophisticated ballistic missile program. Former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley said in 2018 that the sanctions had cut off all North Korean exports and 90% of its trade and disbanded the pool of workers whom North Korea sent abroad to earn hard currency.

The draft resolution expands on a similar resolution Russia and China had circulated in December 2019. It faced opposition from Western nations when it was discussed and was never formally introduced at the council for a vote.

Several U.N. diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity because the draft has not been made public, indicated it would likely face a similar uphill struggle today, pointing to North

AP PHOTO



Workers carry boxes of seafood as they load a Chinese transport truck at the Suchae Bong Corp seafood factory in Rajin, North Korea (2013)

Korea's continuing violations of U.N. sanctions.

The U.S. Mission to the United Nations said North Korea has failed to comply with sanctions on its nuclear and ballistic missile programs and the Biden administration "remains committed to the sanctions regime" and calls on all member states to enforce the measures.

On Oct. 19, North Korea fired a newly developed ballistic missile from a submarine in its fifth round of weapons tests in recent weeks, all of which violated U.N. sanctions. It was the North's first underwater-launched test since October 2019 and the highest-profile test since President Joe Biden took office in January.

The China-Russia draft resolution makes no mention of the missile tests. Instead, it notes that the North has refrained from conducting nuclear tests since Sep-

tember 2017, has kept to a moratorium on further nuclear tests and test launches of intermediate-range and intercontinental missiles from April 21, 2018, and has taken additional denuclearization measures since.

The proposed resolution underscores "the necessity to respect the legitimate security concerns of the DPRK and ensure the welfare, inherent dignity and rights of people in the DPRK," using the initials of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It reaffirms that U.N. resolutions "are not intended to have adverse humanitarian consequences" and notes "the serious impact of sanctions and the COVID-19 pandemic" within the country.

North Korean is struggling to deal with soaring prices of goods and shortages of medicine and other essential supplies that have

accelerated the spread of waterborne diseases such as typhoid fever. The country has yet to report any cases of the coronavirus though experts have questioned its claim of a perfect record.

The China-Russia draft calls on all U.N. member nations to intensify their efforts to provide humanitarian assistance, "including but not limited to food, fertilizer and medical supplies," and to provide goods, materials, technology and financial services needed by North Korea to combat COVID-19, improve livelihoods and develop the economy.

The draft resolution would lift a ban on North Korea importing some industrial machinery and transport vehicles used to build infrastructure that can't be diverted to the country's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

The long list of construction and humanitarian items that

would be exempt from sanctions includes bulldozers and firefighting vehicles; materials for railways and traffic control; air conditioners and radiators for heating; iron or steel parts for roofs and windows; screws and bolts; sewing needles and vacuum cleaners; kitchen utensils and equipment; agricultural equipment, bicycles and fire extinguishers.

On the political front, the China-Russia draft welcomed "the positive outcomes" of talks between the DPRK and South Korea and between former President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. At Kim's second summit with Trump in Hanoi in February 2019, negotiations faltered after the U.S. rejected North Korean demands for broad sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of the North's nuclear capabilities.

The proposed resolution calls on the U.S. and DPRK to resume dialogue aimed at building lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. It calls on all parties to consider taking further steps to reduce military tension and the risks of military confrontation, including by adopting a declaration or peace treaty ending the 1950-53 Korean War. The war ended with an armistice, leaving the peninsula technically in a state of war.

South Korea, which has expressed a desire for engagement with the North within the boundaries of the U.N. sanctions, did not immediately react to China and Russia's proposals for lifting sanctions on the North.

During a period of diplomacy in 2018, South Korean President Moon Jae-in met three times with North Korea's leader and vowed to resume inter-Korean economic cooperation when possible, expressing optimism that the sanctions would end and allow such projects.

But North Korea cut off cooperation with South Korea as its diplomacy with the Trump administration derailed in 2019. **MDT/AP**

PHILIPPINES

Activists want Marcos son out of presidential race

HUMAN rights groups asked the Philippine Commission on Elections to disqualify the son and namesake of late dictator Ferdinand Marcos from running for president in next year's elections, saying he was convicted of tax evasion, could no longer hold public office and kept the damaging details from the public.

Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.'s spokesman, Victor Rodriguez, yesterday called the petition "propa-

ganda" and said they would address "this predictable nuisance" when they receive a formal copy of it. The issue, which should be resolved by elections commissioners before the May 9 vote, could spark a legal battle that could go all the way to the Supreme Court.

Marcos Jr. registered his candidacy early last month, angering activists who recalled the widespread human rights atrocities and plunder that marked the martial law era under his

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

Marcos Jr. has called the allegations against his father "lies."

At least six groups of petitioners asked the elections commission Tuesday to

either cancel or reject Marcos' candidacy because of "false material representation" for declaring his eligibility to run despite his 1995 tax evasion conviction.

"Petitioners claim that Marcos is not eligible to run for any public office as he is, plainly, a convicted criminal," the groups said in their joint petition. His declaration of eligibility to seek public office "was made with the deliberate intent to mislead, misinform and deceive the elec-

torate."

Marcos Jr. was convicted in July 1995 of failing to file mandatory income tax returns from 1982 to 1985, a decision which was upheld by Manila's Court of Appeals. The conviction became final in 2001, when he withdrew his appeal before the Supreme Court, making him ineligible to hold any public office under the law, according to the petitioners and their lawyer, Theodore Te.

It's unclear how Marcos

Jr. managed to stay as governor of northern Ilocos Norte province until 2007, unless his conviction was overlooked by the government or nobody challenged it. In 2010, he successfully ran for a Senate seat, and in 2016, he sought the vice presidency but was narrowly defeated and then unsuccessfully challenged the results.

The petitioners also accused Marcos Jr. and his family of failing to pay estate taxes with penalties and interests of more than 203 billion pesos (\$4 billion) following his father's death in 1989 in Hawaii despite repeated government demands. **MDT/AP**



GLASGOW SUMMIT

Leaders vow to protect forests, plug methane leaks at COP26

FRANK JORDANS & JILL LAWLESS, GLASGOW

WORLD leaders promised to protect Earth's forests, cut methane emissions and help South Africa wean itself off coal at the U.N. climate summit yesterday [Macau time] — part of a flurry of deals intended to avert catastrophic global warming.

Britain hailed the commitment by more than 100 countries to end deforestation in the coming decade as the first big achievement of the conference in the Scottish city of Glasgow, known as COP26 — but experts noted such promises have been made and broken before.

More than 120 world leaders were heading home after two days in which they received stark warnings about the state of the Earth from Johnson, naturalist David Attenborough, Queen Elizabeth II and — most powerfully — the people of countries and regions already facing climate upheaval.

Johnson said at a news conference that it was important to “guard against false hope,” but added that he was “cautiously optimistic” about the outcome of the talks. The conference aims to keep the world on track to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels — the goal set at the Paris climate conference six years ago.

Johnson had a message for negotiators from arou-

nd the globe who will strain over the next 10 days to turn politicians' climate promises into reality: “The eyes of the populations of the world are on you.”

The U.K. said it has received pledges from leaders representing more than 85% of the world's forests to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030. Among them are several countries with massive forests, including Brazil, China, Colombia, Congo, Indonesia, Russia and the United States.

More than \$19 billion in public and private funds have been pledged toward the plan.

Experts and observers said fulfilling the pledge will be critical to limiting climate change, but many noted that such grand promises have been made before — to little effect.

“Signing the declaration is the easy part,” U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said on Twitter. “It is essential that it is implemented now for people and planet.”

Alison Hoare, a senior research fellow at political think tank Chatham House, said world leaders promised in 2014 to end deforestation by 2030, “but since then deforestation has accelerated across many countries.”

Forests are important ecosystems and provide a critical way of absorbing carbon dioxide — the main greenhouse gas — from the atmosphere. But the value of wood as a commodity and the growing demand for agricultural and pastoral land are leading to widespread and

often illegal felling of forests, particularly in developing countries. Indigenous peoples are often among the hardest hit.

“We are delighted to see Indigenous peoples mentioned in the forest deal announced today,” said Joseph Itongwa Mukumo, an Indigenous Walikale and activist from Congo.

He called for governments and businesses to recognize the effective role Indigenous communities play in preventing deforestation.

“These are billions in investment towards environmental preservation, but it's very difficult for this money to reach Indigenous communities, reach traditional communities,” said Chief Ninawa, a leader of the Huni Kui people from the Amazon attending the summit.

Some campaigners said the forests pledge was a step forward. Luciana Tellez Chavez, an environmental researcher at Human Rights Watch, said there were “quite a lot of really positive elements.”

She said it was positive to see China and Brazil pledging to protect forests, but noted that Brazil's public statements don't yet line up with its domestic policies and warned that the deal could be used by some countries to “greenwash” their image.

Brazil's government has been eager to project itself as a responsible environmental steward in the wake of surging deforestation and fires in the Amazon rainforest and Pantanal wetlands that

sparked global outrage in recent years. Critics caution that its promises should be viewed with skepticism, and the country's president, Jair Bolsonaro, is an outspoken proponent of developing the Amazon.

On Tuesday, the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden launched a plan to reduce methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes significantly to global warming. The announcement was part of a broader effort with the European Union and other nations to reduce overall methane emissions worldwide by 30% by 2030.

Clamping down on methane flaring and leaks from oil wells and gas pipelines — the focus of the Biden plan — is considered one of the easiest ways to cut emissions. Reducing methane from agriculture, in particular by belching cows, is a trickier matter.

Helen Mountford, a climate expert at the World Resources Institute, said the agreement “sets a strong floor in terms of the ambition we need globally.”

Separately, the U.S., Britain, France and Germany announced a plan to provide \$8.5 billion in loans and grants over five years to help South Africa phase out coal.

South Africa gets about 90% of its electricity from coal-fired plants, a major source of greenhouse gas emissions.

But campaigners say the world's biggest carbon emitters need to do much more. Earth has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius. Current projections based on planned emissions cuts over the next decade are for it to hit 2.7C by the year 2100.

Increased warming over coming decades would melt much of the planet's ice, raise global sea levels and greatly increase the likelihood and intensity of extreme weather, scientists say.

“I don't think that activists are being heard here,” said Mitzi Jonelle Tan, a climate activist from the Philippines.

“We have to make sure that we really rally together and make sure that we're so loud that the world leaders can't keep ignoring us,” she said. “Because every fraction of a degree, every step towards the right direction is what matters here.”

At his end-of-summit news conference, Biden acknowledged the fierce skepticism from climate activists who say world leaders are not moving with enough haste. **MDT/AP**

this day in history



1980 REAGAN BEATS CARTER IN LANDSLIDE



The former Hollywood actor and Republican governor of California Ronald Reagan is to be the next president of the United States.

He has defeated Democrat Jimmy Carter in the US presidential elections by a huge majority.

At the age of 69, Mr Reagan will be America's oldest president. His running mate, former head of the CIA George Bush, will be his vice-president.

The Republicans took state after state in the east, south and mid-west, with results from their stronghold in the west still to come. So far Mr Reagan's electoral vote tally stands at 238 while Mr Carter's is just 35.

In the last speech of his campaign last night, Mr Reagan with his wife Nancy, addressed 30,000 supporters at a car park of a shopping centre in San Diego, California.

He spoke of the state of the American economy under President Carter as “a major tragedy for the American family”.

“In eight years here as your governor,” he said, “I learned to have faith in you, the people and I envision a leadership as President taking government off your backs and turning you loose to do what I know you can do best.”

His speech was followed by a dazzling firework display after which he returned to his home in Pacific Palisades, Los Angeles to spend polling day resting.

The outgoing president's popularity has suffered following the energy crisis and petrol queues. It seems his failure to negotiate a release of US hostages currently held in Iran has sealed his fate.

Surveys of public opinion also suggest Mr Reagan's performance in last Tuesday's televised debate convinced many he was the most suitable candidate.

President Carter is the first elected sitting president to be defeated since Herbert Hoover was beaten by Franklin D Roosevelt in 1932.

Even before the polls closed on the West coast, he drove from the White House to a Washington hotel to address his supporters an hour after congratulating Mr Reagan by phone.

He told them: “I can stand here and say it doesn't hurt.”

Putting on a brave smile he added: “The people of the United States have made their choice and I accept that decision.”

Mr Carter remains president until Mr Reagan is inaugurated next January.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Final results showed Ronald Reagan won 489 electoral votes against the Democrats' 49.

Mr Reagan was inaugurated as president on 20 January 1981.

Later that year he survived an assassination attempt. President Reagan cut taxes, increased defence spending and in 1983 approved the US invasion of Grenada and CIA operations in Nicaragua, in spite of Congressional opposition.

He was re-elected by a landslide in 1984 and began arms-control talks with the USSR that led to the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in 1987.

He remained extremely popular right till the end of his term in 1989 despite the scandal over US arms sales to Iran that provoked worldwide criticism.

In 1994 he announced he was suffering from Alzheimer's disease. He died ten years later aged 93.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Take a beat today to ponder about or jot down fresh new ideas around how you'd like your intimate relationships to prosper in a more functional, emotionally healing light.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

The new moon in intimate Scorpio arrives today, pushing you into a brand-new narrative around exploring the art of intimate partnership in the month ahead.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

If you've been hungry to mix things up on the work/life balance front, then look no further than the fresh potential offered under Thursday's skies, Gemini.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

The weeks ahead see you exploring your own stage to shine upon with a special talent of your choosing. Opportunities also arrive to spice up your sex life and enjoy some flirtations too!



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

The moon's hard square with emotionally-potent Pluto unearths work frustrations, but her supportive meeting with Venus afterwards offers a restored sense of peace.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

As a Virgo, you're passionate about educating yourself on the things you love. Learning new things brings you joy and enlivens your sense of self-expression.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Are your natural skills getting to shine, Libra? You have a variety of talents that are just waiting to be activated that you need only foster enough self-confidence to bring them to life.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

The coming weeks find you bravely redefining who you are and what you're here to do, so take a moment to jot down a few special intentions for yourself today.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

As a Sagittarian, you're naturally wired to view life from a big picture perspective. You're always aiming to absorb fresh facts and widen your scope of understanding on life's mysterious ways.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You're reaching a critical part of your story, Capricorn. Before you can continue to push forward with your goals, you need to hang back and re-examine which of your aspirations are really worth putting your all into.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

This is the strongest time of year to go after new potentials for advancement when it comes to your ambitions, so be clear about what it is you wish to bring to life and be fearless about making moves.

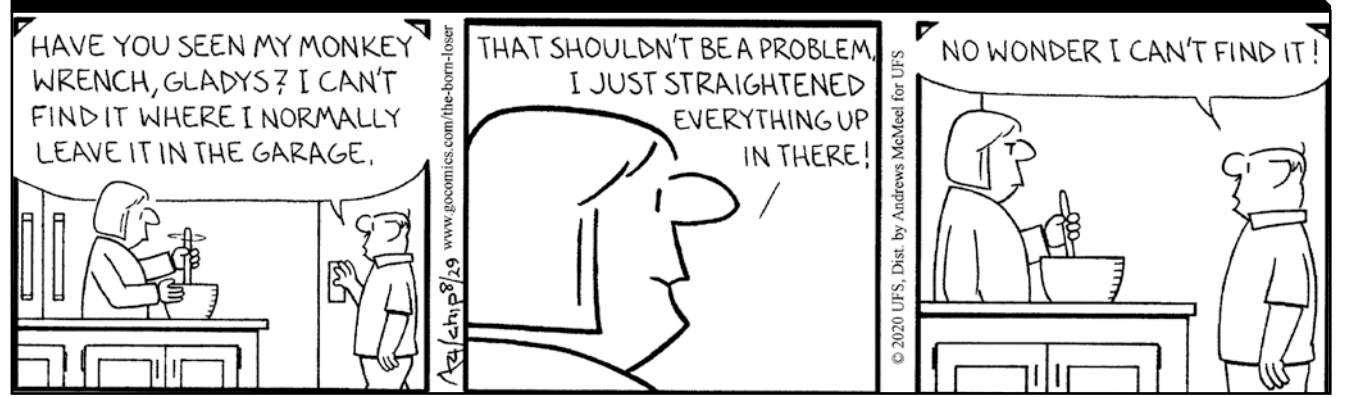


PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

At this juncture, you're widening your scope of understanding and are starting to ponder new opportunities for your continued journey towards self-expansion.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

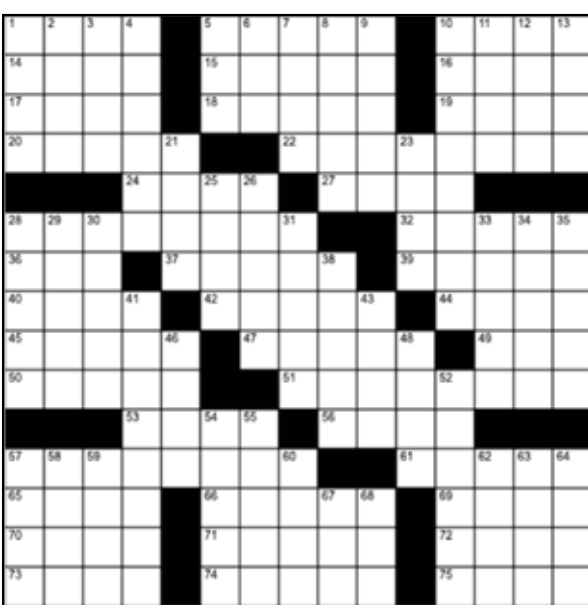
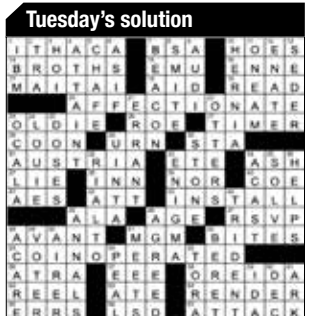
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	5	18	fine
Harbin	2	15	cloudy
Tianjin	15	21	rain
Urumqi	12	16	overcast
Xi'an	15	19	overcast
Lhasa	11	19	fine
Chengdu	19	22	rain
Chongqing	17	21	rain
Kunming	13	20	rain
Nanjing	23	28	rain
Shanghai	13	20	rain
Wuhan	-2	10	fine
Hangzhou	11	22	cloudy
Taipei	-3	13	fine
Guangzhou	21	27	cloudy
Hong Kong	23	27	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	6	7	rain
Frankfurt	5	9	rain
Paris	6	11	rain
London	2	9	overcast
New York	4	12	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Actor Stoltz; 5- Pale; 10- Mongolian desert; 14- Moon of Jupiter; 15- Hot spot; 16- Opaque gemstone; 17- Tar; 18- Dome home; 19- Tabula ___; 20- Sports area; 22- God; 24- There oughta be ___; 27- Helper; 28- Cold soup; 32- Red fluorescent dye; 36- Shelter; 37- Dictation taker; 39- Jacket material; 40- Heavenly bodies; 42- Thick slices; 44- Gets the picture; 45- Broadcasted; 47- Michelangelo work; 49- Sun ___-sen; 50- Gettysburg general; 51- Darnel; 53- Not ___ many words; 56- Portico; 57- Monotreme; 61- Grind together; 65- Author Morrison; 66- One of the Allens; 69- Corner; 70- The Ponte Vecchio crosses it; 71- Slack-jawed; 72- Bibliography abbr.; 73- Actor Connery; 74- Lover of Juliet; 75- Big name in PCs;

DOWN: 1- Lohengrin's bride; 2- Back; 3- Monty Python's Eric; 4- Doze; 5- ___ see it...; 6- Hang loosely; 7- Hawaiian native dance; 8- ___ Gay; 9- Model Campbell; 10- Beautiful; 11- Moonfish; 12- Strong woody fiber; 13- Now ___ me down...; 21- Exclamation to express sorrow; 23- Mid-month times; 25- Plays are divided up into these; 26- Young of the dog; 28- Twilight; 29- Lofty nest; 30- Horselike African mammal; 31- Broadcasting; 33- Later, dudel; 34- Brainstorms; 35- Bird homes; 38- Follows orders; 41- Incitement of rebellion; 43- Keep it, to an editor; 46- Say it ain't so; 48- Excited; 52- Raved; 54- Chucked weapon; 55- Expenditure; 57- School orgs.; 58- Learning; 59- Editor Wintour; 60- Ersatz; 62- Commedia dell'___; 63- Authenticating mark; 64- Hades; 67- Pet for King Solomon; 68- Classical beginning;



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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BCM Building office **HKD 85,000/mth**
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NEW

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1,663 ft² 3 2 1

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AD

TECH

FACEBOOK TO SHUT DOWN FACE-RECOGNITION SYSTEM, DELETE DATA

FACEBOOK said it will shut down its face-recognition system and delete the faceprints of more than 1 billion people amid growing concerns about the technology and its misuse by governments, police and others.

"This change will represent one of the largest shifts in facial recognition usage in the technology's history," Jerome Pesenti, vice president of artificial intelligence for Facebook's new parent company, Meta, wrote in a blog post yesterday [Macau time].

He said the company was trying to weigh the positive use cases for the technology "against growing societal concerns, especially as regulators have yet to provide clear rules." The company in the coming weeks will delete "more than a billion people's individual facial recognition templates," he said.

Facebook's about-face follows a busy few weeks. On Thursday it announced its new name Meta for Facebook the company, but not the social network. The change, it said, will help it focus on building technology for what it envisions as the next iteration of the internet -- the "metaverse."

The company is also facing perhaps its biggest public relations crisis to date after leaked documents from whistleblower Frances Haugen showed that it has known about the harms its products cause and often did little or nothing to mitigate them.

More than a third of Facebook's daily active users have opted in to have their faces recognized by the social network's system. That's about 640 million people. Facebook introduced facial recognition more than a decade ago but



gradually made it easier to opt out of the feature as it faced scrutiny from courts and regulators.

Facebook in 2019 stopped automatically recognizing people in photos and suggesting people "tag" them, and instead of making that the default, asked users to choose if they wanted to use its facial recognition feature.

Facebook's decision to shut down its system "is a good example of trying to make product decisions that are good for the user and the company," said Kristen Martin, a professor of technology ethics at the University of Notre Dame. She added that the move also demonstrates the power of public and regulatory pressure, since the face recognition system has been the subject of harsh criticism for over a decade.

Meta Platforms Inc., Facebook's parent company, appears to be looking at new forms of identifying people. Pesenti said the announcement involves a

"company-wide move away from this kind of broad identification, and toward narrower forms of personal authentication."

"Facial recognition can be particularly valuable when the technology operates privately on a person's own devices," he wrote. "This method of on-device facial recognition, requiring no communication of face data with an external server, is most commonly deployed today in the systems used to unlock smartphones."

Apple uses this kind of technology to power its Face ID system for unlocking iPhones.

Researchers and privacy activists have spent years raising questions about the tech industry's use of face-scanning software, citing studies that found it worked unevenly across boundaries of race, gender or age. One concern has been that the technology can incorrectly identify people with darker skin.

Another problem with face re-

cognition is that in order to use it, companies have had to create unique faceprints of huge numbers of people -- often without their consent and in ways that can be used to fuel systems that track people, said Nathan Wessler of the American Civil Liberties Union, which has fought Facebook and other companies over their use of the technology.

"This is a tremendously significant recognition that this technology is inherently dangerous," he said.

Facebook found itself on the other end of the debate last year when it demanded that facial recognition startup ClearviewAI, which works with police, stop harvesting Facebook and Instagram user images to identify the people in them.

Concerns also have grown because of increasing awareness of the Chinese government's extensive video surveillance system, especially as it's been employed

in a region home to one of China's largely Muslim ethnic minority populations.

Facebook's huge repository of images shared by users helped make it a powerhouse for improvements in computer vision, a branch of artificial intelligence. Now many of those research teams have been refocused on Meta's ambitions for augmented reality technology, in which the company envisions future users strapping on goggles to experience a blend of virtual and physical worlds. Those technologies, in turn, could pose new concerns about how people's biometric data is collected and tracked.

Facebook didn't provide clear answers when asked how people could verify that their image data was deleted and what the company would be doing with its underlying face-recognition technology.

On the first point, company spokesperson Jason Grosse said in email only that user templates will be "marked for deletion" if their face-recognition settings are on, and that the deletion process should be completed and verified in "coming weeks." On the second, point, Grosse said that Facebook will be "turning off" components of the system associated with the face-recognition settings.

Meta's newly wary approach to facial recognition follows decisions by other U.S. tech giants such as Amazon, Microsoft and IBM last year to end or pause their sales of facial recognition software to police, citing concerns about false identifications and amid a broader U.S. reckoning over policing and racial injustice. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China donates another MOP1m to tertiary institutions



Sands China Ltd. recently made its 15th consecutive donation in scholarship and fellowship funding to Macau tertiary institutions, presenting ceremonial cheques totalling MOP1.08 million to

representatives of seven institutions in a ceremony at The Venetian Macao.

"It is vital for Macau to continually expand its pool of diversified talent, so it is our pleasure to continue contri-

buting to that effort through this annual donation," said Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd.

With this year's donation, Sands China's total donations to tertiary scholarships and fellowships in Macau have reached MOP12.4 million, benefiting almost 1,500 students since 2006.

Each year, the educational institutions award these funds to students based on their academic performance and financial status during the previous academic year. This year's MOP1.08 million donation will be distributed to 108 students to support their studies for the current academic year.

Melco sponsors 'staycation learning experience' for IFTM students



Melco Resorts & Entertainment recently supported a two-day staycation at Studio City for around 30 students from the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM).

The staycation's objective was for students to gain first-hand experience of the For-

bes Five-Star services and facilities offered at Melco.

The staycation itinerary included exclusive insider tours of both Studio City's client-facing and employee-only Heart-of-House areas, a facilities and service experience session, as well as a

branding and marketing-focused seminar, the gaming operator said in a statement.

Furthermore, students were able to dine at Studio City's Michelin-recommended Bi Ying restaurant to gain practical F&B knowledge.

Akiko Takahashi, executive vice president and chief of staff to chairman & CEO of Melco Resorts & Entertainment, said, "Melco is committed to providing opportunities for local youth through education. We are glad to host this experience-driven staycation for IFTM students to help them develop in-depth, operational knowledge of the industry."

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

FOOTBALL | CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Bayern, Juventus through to knockout rounds

ROBERT Lewandowski missed a penalty yesterday [Macau time] but still got a hat trick.

The Poland star dominated on his 100th Champions League appearance to lead Bayern Munich into the last-16 after a 5-2 rout of Benfica.

Juventus also booked its place in the knockout rounds with a 4-2 win over Zenit St. Petersburg.

They're the first teams to progress this year with two games to spare from the group stage of Europe's premier soccer competition.

Cristiano Ronaldo rescued a 2-2 draw for Manchester United against Atalanta, scoring two goals and maintaining his record of scoring in each game so far. But it was an underwhelming performance from the Premier League team whose hopes rely on the brilliance of its Portuguese stars Ronaldo and Bruno Fernandes.

Barcelona had goalkeeper Mar-

c-André ter Stegen to thank for securing a nervy 1-0 win at Dynamo Kiev. The 19-year-old Ansu Fati's 70th-minute goal means the struggling Spanish giant can secure its progress with a win at home over Benfica in its next game.

Hakim Ziyech's goal was enough for defending champion Chelsea to win 1-0 at last-place Malmo.

GROUP E: The 33-year-old Lewandowski took his goal tally to 81 goals in 100 Champions League games for Bayern and previous club Borussia Dortmund.

Lewandowski had a chance to make it 3-1 before the break, but his penalty was poorly taken and Benfica goalkeeper Odysseas Vlachodimos gathered the ball easily. It was Lewandowski's first penalty miss since February and he reacted with a wry smile.

It was just the latest high-scoring win from Bayern, which previously beat Benfica 4-0, Dynamo Kyiv 5-0 and Barcelona 3-0.

Goalkeeper Manuel Neuer set up Lewandowski's third goal with a long kick out in the 84th minute. It was Neuer's first assist in his 123rd appearance in the competition.

Bayern coach Julian Nagelsmann was back on the sideline after recovering from the coronavirus.

The visitors were fortunate that Mircea Lucescu's Dynamo team was unable to make more of its chances. Dynamo is yet to score in the competition this season.

GROUP F: Manchester United still harbors strong hopes of reaching the last 16 thanks to Cristiano Ronaldo. The 36-year-old scored United's equalizer in injury time against Atalanta to leave Ole Gunnar Solskjær's team top of the group, level on seven points with Villarreal.

Villarreal enjoyed a 2-0 home win over Young Boys, which is bottom with three points.

Ronaldo's late goals have been



AP PHOTO

saving United. He previously had another late winner for the 3-2 win at home over Atalanta, and he scored an injury-time winner for the 2-1 victory over Villarreal.

GROUP G: French champion Lille kept the group wide open with a 2-1 come-from-behind win at Sevilla.

Lille's first win gives it five points after four games. It's two points behind group leader Salzburg, which lost 2-1 at Wolfsburg earlier. Wolfsburg also has five points, while Sevilla stayed on three points.

GROUP H: Paulo Dybala sco-

red twice, including a retaken penalty, as Juventus reached the last 16 with its win over Zenit St. Petersburg.

Dybala was given another opportunity from the penalty spot after he fired wide as visiting 'keeper Stanislav Kritsyuk had moved off his line. Dybala, who opened the scoring, made no mistake with his second chance before Federico Chiesa and Álvaro Morata sealed the Italian giant's win.

Juventus has now won all four of its matches to lead the group by three points ahead of Chelsea. **MDT/AP**

AD



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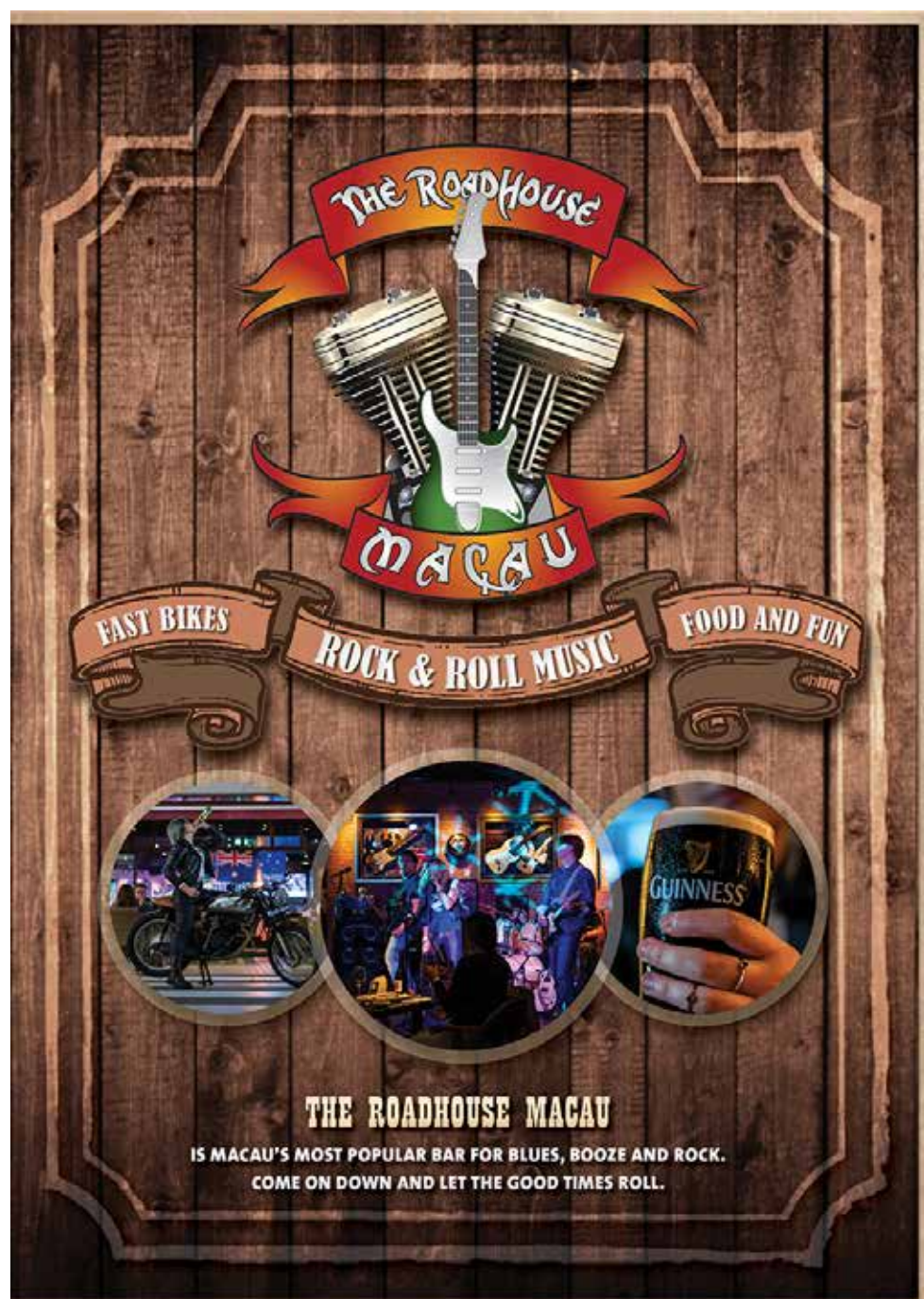
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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

MULTILATERALISM AND CONCRETE ACTIONS PRESCRIPTION FOR GREEN DEVELOPMENT

Whether in response to climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic or promoting a recovery of the global economy, multilateralism is a prerequisite. Addressing these challenges is a nonstarter if all countries have their own calculations based purely on their own interests.

Unilateralism is the reason why there has been so much foot-dragging in global endeavors to effectively cut greenhouse emissions and contain the global temperature rise and for the failure to keep the COVID-19 pandemic globally at bay.

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Developed countries in particular should shoulder their due responsibilities for their historical greenhouse gas emissions. Not only doing whatever they can to cut their own emissions but also helping developing countries to achieve their goals. Their aid in both funds and technologies is essential for substantial progress in containing climate change.

Shifting from fossil fuels to renewable energy and reducing consumption of energy through technology upgrading will not only make development more sustainable but also further the quality of economic growth.

China's development trajectory sets a good example for this green transition.

Its carbon intensity in 2020 was 18.8 percent lower than that in 2015, a better result than the target set in the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20). The figure was also 48.4 percent less than that in 2005, which means that the country has more than fulfilled its commitment to the international community — to achieve a 40-45 percent reduction in carbon intensity from the 2005 level by 2020. The drop in carbon intensity translates to a total reduction of about 5.8 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions from 2005 to 2020.

This means China has largely reversed the rapid growth of its carbon dioxide emissions.

At the same time, its economy has achieved leapfrog development. Its GDP in 2020 was more than four times bigger than in 2005. It has lifted nearly 100 million rural poor people out of poverty during this period, and succeeded in realizing the goal of eliminating absolute poverty.

So when President Xi Jinping put forward three suggestions in a written statement for the World Leaders Summit of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change — which can be summarized as upholding multilateralism, focusing on concrete actions and accelerating the green transition — it was based on China's successful practice and what it has achieved.

To build on these achievements, the country has a clearly defined timetable, road map and blueprint to realize its carbon peak and carbon neutrality goals. Guided by the vision of a community of life for man and nature, the country will take stronger actions to pursue a green and low-carbon path to development.

If all countries shelve their differences and uphold multilateralism and take concrete actions to advance the green transition, there may yet be hope that humanity can overcome the climate challenge.

'MY NAME IS CLEO': POLICE WEEP UPON RESCUING AUSTRALIAN GIRL

THE BUZZ

Police smashed their way into a suburban house yesterday and rescued a 4-year-old girl whose disappearance from her family's camping tent on Australia's remote west coast more than two weeks ago both horrified and captivated the nation.

Officials wept with relief after seeing body camera video of a police officer scooping up the girl, Cleo Smith, and hearing her say, "My name is Cleo." A 36-year-old local man was arrested after the late-night raid at the house in the coastal town of Carnarvon, which followed a tip to police on Tuesday.

The girl was reunited with her mother Ellie Smith and step-father Jake Gliddon soon after her rescue. "Our family is whole again," the mother said on social media.

Western Australia state Police Commissioner Chris Dawson would not detail what the girl had gone through. She is "as well as you can expect," Dawson said.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison reacted from the United Arab Emirates on his way home from Scotland, thanking police for finding Cleo and supporting her family.



An aerial view of Sombbrero Chino Island, Galapagos Islands, Ecuador

FOUR LATAM NATIONS CREATE FISHING-FREE CORRIDOR IN EAST PACIFIC

MANUEL RUEDA, BOGOTA

FOUR Latin American countries announced yesterday [Macau time] that they will expand and unite their marine reserves to create a vast corridor in the Pacific Ocean in hopes of protecting sea turtles, tuna, squid, hammerhead sharks and other species.

The new marine corridor will connect the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador with Colombia's Malpelo Island and the Cocos and Coiba Islands in Costa Rican and Panamanian waters, protecting migratory species from fishing fleets of hundreds of vessels that visit the eastern Pacific each year.

The announcement was made during the U.N. climate conference in Glasgow, Scotland, where world leaders gathered to discuss carbon emission targets and other environmental policies.

It comes amid growing

concern over industrial fishing in the eastern Pacific, where fishing fleets from China and other countries are hauling in hundreds of thousands of tons of marine life each year using questionable methods.

The presidents of Costa Rica, Colombia, Panama and Ecuador were in Glasgow to announce the expansion of their marine reserves.

"We are going to protect ecosystems like the Galapagos and the Cocos Islands, which are among the world's most valuable ecosystems," Costa Rican President Alvaro Quesada said.

Efforts to create a protected corridor in the eastern Pacific began in 2004, when Panama, Colombia, Costa Rica and Ecuador signed a declaration that sought to protect their island territories in the Pacific. Since then those countries have created marine reserves around the Galapagos, Malpelo,

Cocos and Coiba islands, which have very small human populations but are home to hundreds of marine and bird species.

The new corridor will create a protected area of around 500,000 square kilometers that will be off limits to industrial fishing fleets.

The Latin American countries said they are trying to contribute to a global initiative to preserve 30% of the world's oceans and land area 2030 as a way to address climate change.

Colombian President Ivan Duque said the new corridor is "the largest marine protected area in the Western Hemisphere."

Panamanian President Laurentino Cortizo said: "We have heard lots of speeches about climate change, lots of commitments that are not met. This is a powerful action, and that's what our country and the world needs." MDT/AP



Iraq More than three weeks after Iraqis voted in parliament elections, pro-Iran Shiite militias that emerged as the biggest losers are still rejecting the outcome of the vote, thrusting the country into uncertainty and political crisis. Militia supporters have pitched tents near the entrance to Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone in an ongoing sit-in, threatening violence unless their grievances are addressed.



Australia leaking French President Emmanuel Macron's text messages to the media was a "new low" and a warning to other world leaders that their private communications with the Australian government could be weaponized and used against them, the French ambassador said yesterday. French Ambassador to Australia Jean-Pierre Thebaud (pictured) used an address to Australia's National Press Club to make a withering attack on Canberra's surprise decision to scrap a 90 billion Australian dollar contract with France to build a fleet of 12 diesel-electric submarines.

Russia A top security official met the visiting chief of the Central Intelligence Agency on Tuesday, a rare encounter amid tensions between Moscow and Washington. Nikolai Patrushev, the powerful secretary of the Kremlin's Security Council, met CIA Director William Burns in Moscow to discuss U.S.-Russian relations. Patrushev's office said in a statement without providing any details.

Poland's foreign ministry said yesterday that it summoned a Belarusian diplomat over an "intrusion" into Polish territory of "uniformed individuals armed with long guns." Polish soldiers noticed three uniformed people with long weapons, said Stanislaw Zaryn, the spokesman for Poland's security services. "After meeting a Polish patrol, they reloaded their weapons and then departed towards Belarus," Zaryn said.