



THE PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL CALLED ON COMMUNITY TO REFRAIN FROM ORGANIZING PUBLIC GATHERINGS WITHOUT OBTAINING PERMITS

▲ P5

GAMING LAW EXPERT ADVOCATES DIRECTLY AWARDED GAMING CONCESSIONS

▲ P2

SINGAPORE POSTPONED THE APPEAL HEARING FOR A MALAYSIAN MAN ON DEATH ROW BELIEVED TO BE MENTALLY DISABLED, DIAGNOSED WITH COVID

▲ P7



Japanese electronics maker Sony and TSMC of Taiwan said yesterday they plan to jointly build a computer chip plant in Japan with an initial investment of \$7 billion. The plant in the southwestern city of Kumamoto will be the first foundry in Japan for TSMC, one of the world's leading chipmakers. Construction will start next year for the plant to be up and running by 2024, employing 1,500 high-tech professionals.



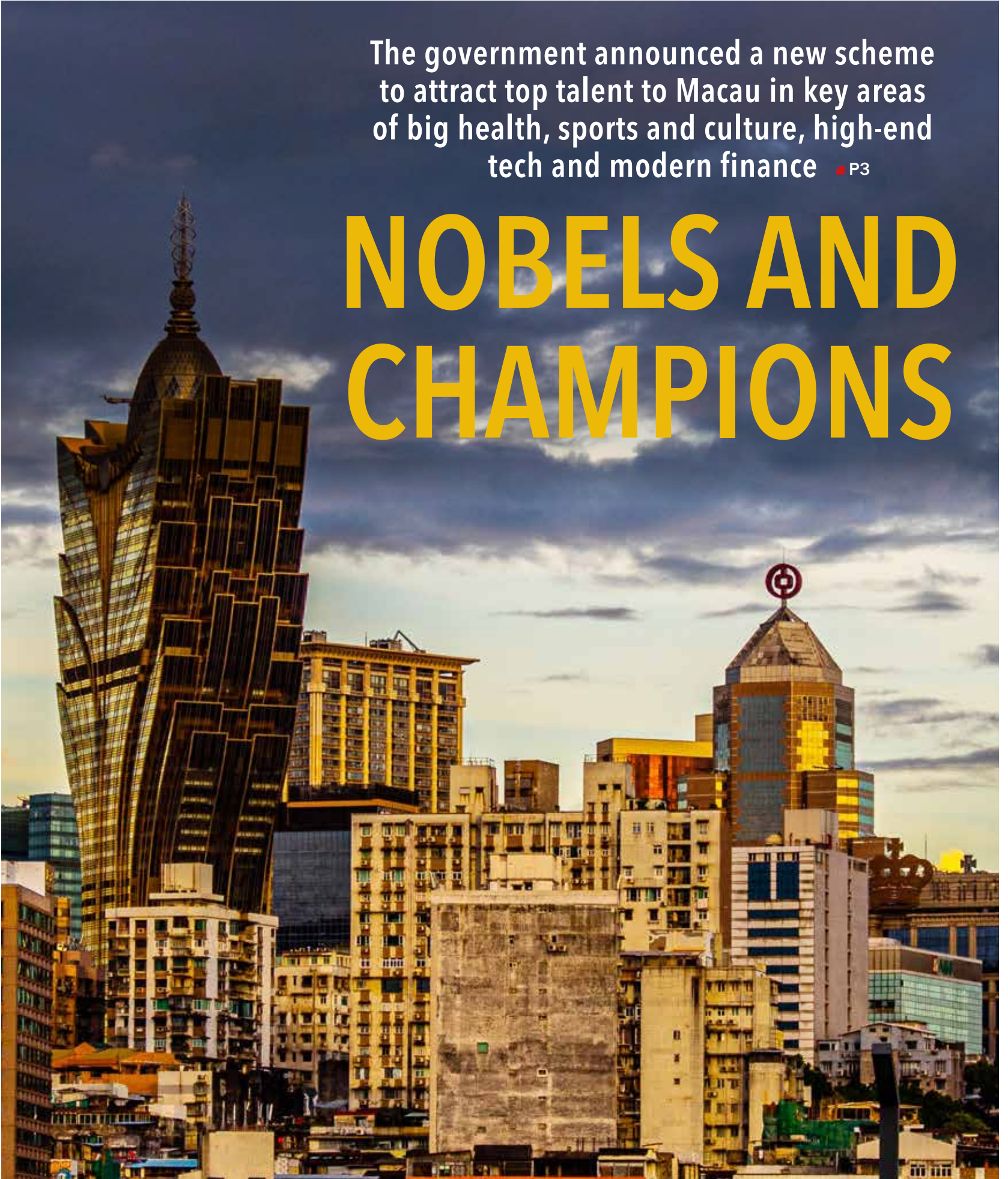
India A fire swept through a newborn care unit in a hospital in central India, killing four infants, officials said. An investigation was ordered into the fire at the Kamla Nehru Children's Hospital in Bhopal, said Shivraj Singh Chauhan, the chief minister in Madhya Pradesh state. There were 40 children in total in the unit, out of which 36 have been rescued.



Pakistani authorities have announced a month-long cease-fire with a key militant group behind numerous attacks on security forces and civilians over the last 14 years. Government spokesman Fawad Chaudhry said on Twitter that the Taliban government in Afghanistan helped facilitate the cease-fire between the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan and the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan. The cease-fire beginning Nov. 9 will remain in place until Dec. 9, during which both sides will form a committee to continue talks.

More on backpage

JIMMY WOO



The government announced a new scheme to attract top talent to Macau in key areas of big health, sports and culture, high-end tech and modern finance ▲ P3

NOBELS AND CHAMPIONS

CAUGHT IN ILLEGAL FISH NET

MAN ALMOST DROWNED IN HAC-SA WATERS

▲ P4

IPIM BRINGS 46 LOCAL ENTERPRISES TO INT'L IMPORT EXPO

The Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) has organised 46 enterprises from Macau to exhibit at the China International Import Expo (CIIE). Participating entrepreneurs agreed that they had achieved their expected results, and gained an understanding of the latest business and industry developments from various regions through exchanges of ideas. The 4th CIIE is held from November 5 to 10 at the National Exhibition and Convention Centre in Shanghai. Nearly one third of Macau's enterprises are joining the event for the first time this year.

MGTO AWARDS 10 CONTENT CREATOR TRAINEES

Ten trainees were designated "Outstanding Content Creators on Tourism" in the "Incubation Plan for Macao's KOL in Tourism" at an award ceremony held at the Macao Young Entrepreneur Incubation Centre on Saturday. The incubation plan was organized by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) in coordination with the Macao Live Streaming Association. Under the plan, trainees were enrolled for the content creation camp with the aim of encouraging Macau residents to use their content creation skills to highlight the city as a "wonderful destination with diverse travel experiences to offer." MGTO and the association had enrolled 50 trainees for the content creation training camp of the incubation plan.

SMG DISCUSSES TYPHOON AND STORM SURGE WITH GBA COUNTERPARTS

At the recent Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Meteorological Technology Conference, the Meteorological and Geophysics Bureau had discussions with its counterparts within the region regarding the weather phenomena most common to Macau, such as typhoons and storm surges. Bureau Director Leong Weng Kun presented on the modes of tropical cyclone and storm surges, extreme rainfall and high temperatures, as well as meteorological services for the Macau International Airport. The conference is an annual event held to discuss development, collaborations and implementation of projects, among other topics.

GAMING LAW EXPERT CALLS ON GOV'T TO DIRECTLY AWARD GAMING CONCESSIONS

LYNZY VALLES

THE Macau government should consider an amendment to the gaming law to provide for the possibility of directly awarding the casino gaming concessions to the current casino operators, according to gaming legal expert Antonio Lobo Vilela.

Under the current legal and regulatory framework on casino gaming, granting casino gaming concessions by a direct award is not allowed, unlike all other types of permitted gambling in Macau.

The Macau government had long announced that it would open a public (international) tender for the award of the casino gaming concessions, which are set to expire in June 2022.

In his opinion cited in Asia Gaming Brief, the author of the book, Macau Gaming Law, recalled that one of the main points of the public consultation on the revision of the gaming law refers to the number of concessions.

"Although practical meaning and the Macau government's intention [behind the public consultation], which proposes to 'study and review the number of concessions,' is unclear, three hypotheses are possible: decreasing, increasing, or maintaining the current number of casino gaming operators," the gaming law expert said.

"The option for a decrease has the immediate and inevitable



consequence of a significant surge in the unemployment rate," he opined.

With unemployment rates affected in this manner, this also means that the city's small and medium enterprises would be affected.

Meanwhile, the option for the increase would "lead to the entry of new players into the market at an economically challenging time."

Hence, and by exclusion, Vilela argued that the "maintenance of the number of casino gaming operators proves to be the only viable option given the current reality."

"If maintenance is the way forward, what public interest is there in opening a public tender to award the casino gaming concessions?" he questioned.

The public consultation on the gaming law recently ended after 45 days of the government seeking input on which aspects

of the law should be revised.

Revision of the number of concessions, the removal of the sub-concessions, and the revision of the regular term of the concessions were among the topics that were put forward.

According to a note authored by João Nuno Riquito and Belmiro Leong of Riquito Advogados, one of the most significant changes in the consultation document is the removal of the legal status of the gaming sub-concessions. Such is the mechanism under which The Venetian Macau, MGM Grand Paradise and Melco Resorts are currently operating in the city.

However, the lawyers noted that "most of the proposed items of the revision are set forth in a very general undetailed manner," as cited International Financial Law Review.

In September, following the announcement of the proposed changes to the SAR's gambling

laws that wiped out over USD18 billion in stock market value, the gaming operators and junkets have sought clarity from the government.

"Whatever legislative policy choice, we can only hope that the unfolding of this entire process relating to the new casino gaming concessions, which began troubled, proceeds smoothly. It needs to be in the public interest and must safeguard the economy and image of Macau, to make sure it does not turn into a 'Mak Mak' in the gaming industry," Vilela concluded.

Another lawyer Jorge Menezes had previously criticized the public consultation document for providing similarly little insight, noting that the move is a "rare show of governmental incompetence." For the lawyer, there is not much to expect from this consultation noting that the paper is "packed with nuances and ambiguities."

New group set up to assist gov't in construction of securities market

A new group has been established with the aim of helping the government swiftly develop the securities market in Macau. The establishment of such a body is deemed that a natural development of a securities market would occur too slowly for the requisite scale for the city.

The Securities and Funds Industry Association of Macao was established yesterday with the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (Macau) Limited, represented by Chairperson Jiang Yisheng, as the founding president.

According to the new association, the securities

industry is a new element in Macau. Under the current environment, its natural development will be too slow to reach the Macau's goal.

The association, according to Jiang, will proactively build an ecology in Macau to attract the necessary elements for swift development, as well as

providing opinions and suggestions to the government on relevant legislation and regulation.

The refinement of infrastructure is also a focus for the association.

During his speech at the inauguration ceremony, Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, revealed that

the government is rapidly improving both software and hardware for the finance industry. Additionally, Lei noted that communication will continue with mainland authorities with regards to the implementation of cross-border financial policies.

Jiang disclosed that in the past two years, a 30% increase in wealth management investment has been recorded in Macau. The total scale of bond issuance and listing has reached MOP250 billion. **AL**

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New regime aims to attract 'overseas Chinese' talent

RENATO MARQUES

THE new Regime for the Attraction of Qualified Personnel will aim to draw qualified Chinese people who are currently living overseas to live and work in Macau, the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong revealed yesterday during a press conference on the draft system.

Questioned by the media on whether the government already has a list of preferred people to occupy such positions, Ao Ieong said, "We would like to attract the overseas Chinese to come to Macau."

The Secretary also added that while there is no specific list of roles that the government is aiming to attract, she noted that there are several "specialists that we know can satisfy our [objectives]," since the government already previously engaged with these candidates and consequently holds existing knowledge of their suitability. However, she confirmed that these people are "obviously not my friends."

Ao Ieong added that the government has not yet begun to invite these highly qualified people to join the program, "because we do not have yet the legal regime," in an apparent contradiction to the idea of the system being presented at the press conference and entering into



public consultation today.

According to the explanation provided just minutes earlier by both the Secretary and the Secretary-General of the Talents Development Committee (SCDT), Chao Chong Hang, the system is far from being an invitational one. Instead, it is an initiative by the local government that requires a formal application, following strict criteria and involving a relatively long process of evaluation, cross-examination, and selection, before a final decision is formally made by the Chief Executive (CE).

Still, the Secretary admitted that the government had certain

iconic figures in mind whose decision to come to the region to live and work could improve economic diversification and enrich and highlight the public image of Macau.

NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS AND OLYMPIC MEDALISTS WANTED

In relation to the people capable of improving public relations for Macau, Chao mentioned that the government is interested in potentially attracting Nobel prize winners and Olympic medalists among other renowned and exceptionally talented people. Such people would fall

under one of the three types of qualified professionals across the four priority areas of culture and sports, big health, high-end technology, and modern finance.

The government says that there are no quotas for individuals seeking to apply as "highly qualified professionals", and every single person falling under this category would be considered.

As for the other two categories including "excellent professionals" and "highly specialized professionals", the SCDT Secretary-General noted that the government aims to establish a maximum quota of 1,000 applications accepted per year.

This quota is equivalent to the upper limits established by other regions including the neighboring region of Hong Kong that has a population of about 10-fold that of Macau. When questioned on the rationale behind such a high limit, Chao said, "We know that people might think that this is too much since Macau is a small territory, but we need to understand that we are also at a less developed stage of talent attraction and economic development, so we need to attract more people to help us to develop the different sectors. After this has been done, we can consider [reducing] this quota."

The public consultation period starts today and will be ongoing until December 24.

NO SOLUTIONS TO RETAIN CURRENT TALENT

IN response to questions on the government's decision to launch measures to attract new talent at a time when a large number of specialized workers – including local workers – are currently leaving or preparing to leave Macau, Secretary Ao Ieong could not provide an explanation or

solution for retaining current talent. For Ao Ieong, the lack of economic diversification does not allow the retaining of such talent, and the official added that the purpose of such measures is to ensure that an exodus of highly qualified professionals will not be repeated in the future.

'Talents Regime' to replace current ones running under IPIM

RENATO MARQUES

WHEN approved, the new Regime for the Attraction of Qualified Personnel will replace the two existing methods under which individuals may apply for residency permits in Macau. The new regime will also be managed by the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), officials said yesterday during the presentation of the new scheme in a press conference.

According to the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong, after this new regime is approved and enters into force, it will revoke the regime for granting residency via significant investment

and qualified staff, both of which have been in force since 2005.

It has been known for some time that the government has sought to overhaul the troubled existing system, especially since the far-reaching fraud and corruption scandal involving IPIM and other government high officials was first revealed, leading to it now reaching the local courts.

With the new system, the government aims to solve two problems in one, creating a new regime to attract Chinese talent as well as finally put an end to the infamous processes of IPIM, which in some cases saw applications being processed for several years wi-

thout a final and conclusive decision.

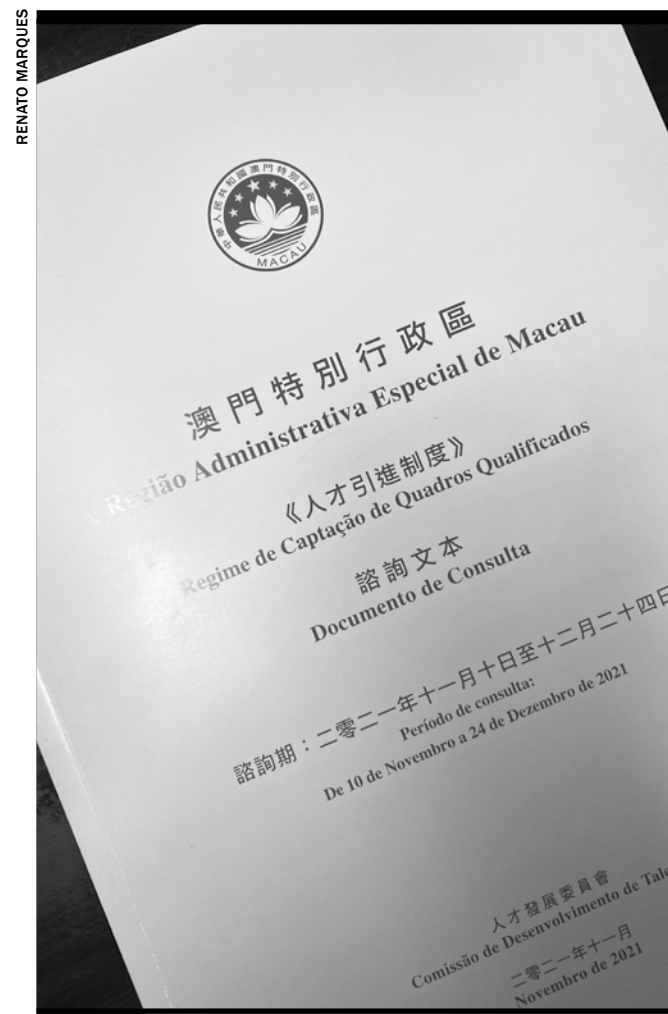
The new system is said to be "fair, open and applying scientific methods" to attract qualified personnel who can offer a clear contribution to local economic diversification in well-defined business sectors and economic sectors.

The new imported talent residency applicants should comply with a series of criteria such as being over 21 years old, possessing a university degree, having a high degree of language skills in Portuguese, English, and Chinese, and providing proof that they have enough resources to start businesses or participate in economic activities in Macau.

Those seeking Highly Specialized Personnel positions must also already have an employer and an employment contract that supports and justifies their permanence and residency attribution.

The government aims to attract talent based on the "advantages offered by Macau," such as low income taxation, a good reputation for education and health systems, and a preferential positioning to benefit from central government policies, officials said.

Questioned by the media, Ao Ieong explained that IPIM will continue to handle those processes it currently oversees until the system is fully replaced by the new one.



ANTHONY LAM

MAN ALMOST KILLED BY ALLEGED ILLEGAL NET FISHING AT HAC-SA

A man was reportedly trapped by fishing net near Hac-Sa Beach and nearly drowned while playing wing foil, a reader told the Times.

Professional diver and water activity enthusiast Anderson Leo told the Times that his friend was playing wing foil off the coast from Hac-Sa Beach on the night of October 7. His friend became trapped by an unidentified object and was towed underwater.

The victim attempted to disentangle himself, but became increasingly ensnared the harder he resisted. He fortunately managed to reach the beach before he could escape, later discovering that he had been trapped by a fishing net, which he removed from his leg.

Lei said that the net was about 100 meters long.

Coincidentally that same night, another friend of Lei's was dining at the Miramar Restaurant. The friend confirmed to Lei that he saw at least four men holding remote controls and eyeing the direction of the sea.

He added that swimmers and other beach users had been previously observed to be trapped or disturbed by fishing nets. "Even I have experienced that personally," he revealed.

He stressed that the situation poses risks to users of the beach.

On the night of the incident, he notified the Macao Customs, who reacted within 15 minutes by deploying a ship to the nearby waters. However, except for the remote-controlled ship, the Customs officers saw nothing.

They then deployed land officers and apprehended two suspects, who claimed that they were only playing with remote-controlled ships. However, with the net wrapped around the victim's leg, the Customs decided to press charges against the two suspects.

Lei was told by the Customs authority that the case has been forwarded to the Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) for further investigation, as fishing in that area is against the law.

A statement issued by the DSAMA confirmed that the incident did take place. The Customs authority and the DSAMA jointly held an operation yesterday to clear about 150 meters of fishing net from the area.

The DSAMA condemned the placement of fishing net in the swimming area as it jeopardizes the safety of beach users. The act may incur civil and criminal res-



possibilities, the DSAMA added. The Times enquired about the progress of investigation in an

email yesterday, but no response was received from either governmental authority by press time.

Lei expressed his appreciation that the government reacted quickly in the incident.

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Consulate prompts Filipino community to avoid political assembly

LYNZY VALLES

THE Philippine Consulate General in Macau has called on the Filipino community to refrain from organizing public gatherings without obtaining prior permits from the relevant Macau authorities.

This comes after a group of the community gathered on Sunday, wearing red shirts to show support to a political party running for the 2022 presidential elections in the Philippines. Reportedly, the authorities detained over a dozen people for gathering without permission for 24 hours.

In Macau, to organize public gatherings, one must obtain a permit from the Public Security Police Force if the gathering relates to politics, or a permit from the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) if the assembly is related to cultural or social activities.

In a statement, the consulate called on the community to “desist from engaging in gatherings, assemblies, or other activities that have a political or partisan character, including the use of banners and uniforms.”



The consulate also wished to “emphasize that all non-resident workers in Macau must strictly follow the laws, rules and regulations of the host government and that any violation of these may be a basis for the termination of the employment contract and the consequent cancellation of the permit to stay.”

On Sunday, over a dozen Filipinos were brought to the police station for an investigation related to the two gatherings: one at

the Ruins of St. Paul and another at Sai Van Lake.

One of the detainees, who refused to be identified, told the Times that they were detained for 24 hours – implying that they were only released from the police station on Monday night, adding that there were 16 Filipinos and one Nepalese who were detained.

“They invited us saying they would only ask us questions. When we got there, they asked a lot of questions. They asked for finger-

prints at the police station and at the immigration and took a mugshot,” said one of the detainees.

“They asked us why we were there, and who organized the event. They then took our phones [...] because we had photos of the gathering on those phones,” the detainee added.

It was alleged on a social media post that a group also distributed campaign leaflets with the Macau flag – an act that is illegal because, according to the law, the

flag may not be displayed or used in trademarks or advertising. The fine for such a breach ranges from MOP2,000 to MOP20,000.

The Times contacted the PSP to enquire whether there would be charges against those who were invited to the police station for questioning.

No reply was given by press time.

The large crowd gathered to show support for the presidential candidate, son of the late dictator, Marcos Ferdinand “Bongbong” Romualdez Marcos Jr., whom human rights groups asked the Philippine Commission on Elections to disqualify on the basis of being convicted of tax evasion.

In response, Marcos Jr. called the petition “propaganda” and said his team would address “this predictable nuisance” when they receive a formal copy of it.

Marcos Jr. registered his candidacy early last month for the May 9 2022 elections, angering activists who recalled the widespread human rights atrocities that marked the martial law era under his father, who was toppled in an army-backed “people power” revolt in 1986.

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SOUTH CHINA SEA

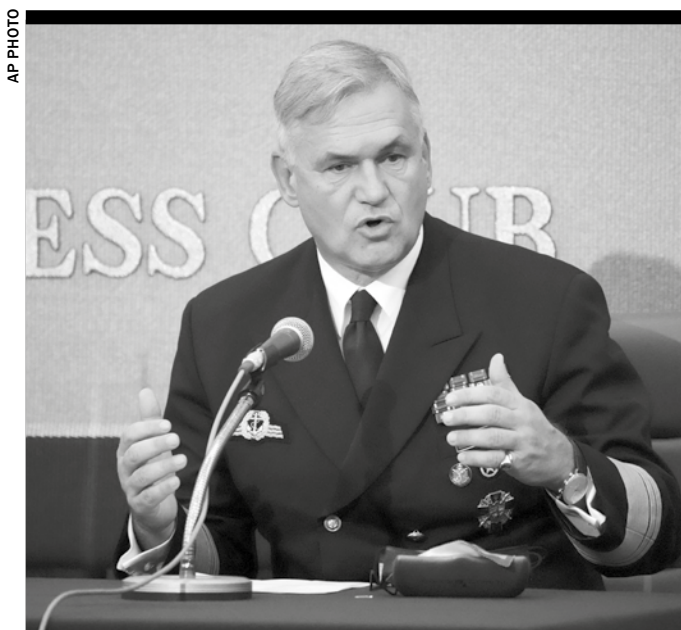
GERMAN NAVY CHIEF VOWS LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO INDO-PACIFIC

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

The chief of Germany's navy said yesterday that its dispatch of a warship to the Indo-Pacific underscores his country's concern that freedom of navigation and the rule-based international order are being threatened in the region, an apparent reference to its biggest trading partner, China.

Vice Adm. Kay-Achim Schonbach, in Tokyo for a port call by the frigate Bayern, said escalating tensions, territorial disputes and the changing military balance in the region can have an extensive impact beyond Asia.

Speaking at a news conference, he said the ship's dispatch is to show support for Japan, the United States and other partners, and joins their efforts in advocating peace, free navigation and the rule-based international order. The Bayern will travel through the South China Sea, where China is increasingly pressing its territorial claims, to demonstrate its



Germany's Chief of Navy Vice Adm. Kay-Achim Schonbach attends a press conference at the Japan National Press Club yesterday

right to freedom of passage.

The frigate arrived in Tokyo on Friday, becoming the first German warship to visit Japan in nearly 20 years. It conducted joint exercises with other militaries along the way, including two days of exercises with a Japanese destroyer in the Pacific Ocean, German officials said.

Beginning in mid-November, it will monitor ac-

tivities by North Korean ships for three weeks, including possible ship-to-ship transfers of banned cargoes, under a U.N. Security Council resolution.

It is Germany's first time to participate in the mission, which started in 2018 and has been joined by New Zealand, Australia, the United States, Canada, Britain, France and Japan.

The frigate left Ger-

many in August as part of the country's recent shift to the Indo-Pacific region and follows similar moves by other European countries including Britain, France and the Netherlands. Warships from those countries recently conducted joint naval exercises in the East and South China seas.

Schonbach said the Bayern's visit is the beginning of a long-term commitment to the region by Germany. It plans to dispatch military aircraft next year and a fleet of frigates and supply ships within two to three years, he said.

China, which claims most of the disputed South China Sea as well as Japanese-held islands in the East China Sea, has defended its growing maritime activities and says it has the right to defend its sovereignty, security and development interests.

Japanese officials say Chinese vessels routinely violate Japanese territorial waters around the islands in the East China Sea, sometimes threatening fishing boats. **MDT/AP**

ZHANG ZHAN

US ASKS CHINA TO FREE JAILED WUHAN CITIZEN JOURNALIST

The U.S. state department has urged China to release citizen journalist Zhang Zhan, expressing deep concerns over her deteriorating health, BBC reported.

Zhang was given a four-year jail term over her reporting of the Covid-19 outbreak in Wuhan when the pandemic began.

She has been on an intermittent hunger strike since she was detained in May last year.

The U.S. moves comes after reports that she is perilously close to death.

"We have repeatedly expressed our serious concerns about the arbitrary nature of her detention and her mistreatment during it," U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price told reporters.

Zhang, a 38-year-old lawyer, had initially travelled to Wuhan in February 2020 after reading

an online post by a resident about life in the city during the outbreak.

Once there, she began documenting what she saw on the streets and hospitals in livestreams and essays, despite threats by authorities, and her reports were widely shared on social media, the BBC report says.

According to BBC, in May she was found guilty of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble."

Zhang started a hunger strike in protest while in jail. Since then, she has drastically lost weight and reportedly been held in physical restraints and force-fed through a tube.

Her family have sought medical parole amidst fears she will not make it through the winter. However, her brother told Hong Kong media that the chance of approval is "extremely slim." **MDT**

COVID-19

BEIJING COMMITTED TO ADDRESSING GLOBAL VACCINE INEQUALITY: RUSSIAN MEDIA

CHINA has shown its determination to improve COVID-19 vaccine accessibility and affordability in developing countries, urging all countries involved in vaccine production to strive towards this goal, according to an article recently published on The Free Press Internet.

"Rich countries can afford vaccinations and treatment, while developing countries that lack modern medicine are struggling to sustain themselves," the Russian online media outlet said in the article.

"China is the only country trying to break this vicious circle by offering grant aid to dozens of states," the article said.

China has so far provided over 1.6 billion do-

ses of vaccines for more than 100 countries and international organizations, and promised at the 16th Group of 20 Leaders' Summit to provide over 2 billion doses for the world in the whole year, it added, calling China an "absolute leader in terms of vaccine supplies."

Moreover, Beijing strongly opposes any kind of politicization when it comes to vaccine supply as well as humanitarian aid to developing countries, it noted.

The United States, in contrast, has repeatedly praised and exaggerated its own achievements in vaccine supply, which yet in reality, has engaged in a large propaganda campaign, the article added. **XINHUA**

Taiwan says China seeking to degrade its military and morale

TAIWAN yesterday said China is seeking to take control of the island by wearing down its military capabilities and influencing public opinion, while avoiding an all-out military conflict that could likely draw in the United States.

Taiwan's Defense Ministry said in a biennial report that Beijing is employing "gray zone" tactics to ratchet up pressure on the self-governing island republic which China claims as its own territory.

China has been stepping up its threats to use force to against Taiwan by holding military exercises and sending planes close to the island.

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.

The report said that reflects Beijing's effort to degrade Taiwan's air force through wear and tear and heavy requirements on its personnel. It said the strate-

gy also includes cyberwarfare, propaganda and a campaign to isolate Taiwan internationally to force it to accept China's terms without engaging in a shooting war.

China and Taiwan separated during a civil war in 1949. While the U.S. cut formal diplomatic relations with Taipei in 1979 in or-

der to recognize Beijing, Washington is committed by law to ensure the island can defend itself and to treat all threats toward it as matters of grave concern.

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

While Taiwan relies on the U.S. for much of its military hardware, Tsai Ing-wen has been pushing for a revitalization of its domestic defense industry, including the production of conventionally powered submarines. **MDT/AP**

SINGAPORE

Top court delays appeal hearing on disabled man's execution

ANNABELLE LIANG,
SINGAPORE

SINGAPORE'S top court yesterday postponed the appeal hearing for a Malaysian man on death row believed to be mentally disabled, after he was diagnosed with COVID-19, in a case that has drawn international attention.

Nagaenthran K. Dharmalingam, 33, was scheduled to be executed by hanging today for trying to smuggle a small amount of heroin into the country — less than 43 grams.

The Malaysian national was sentenced to death in November 2010, under Singapore's strict anti-drug laws. Previous attempts to reduce his sentence to life in prison or receive a presidential pardon have all failed, despite pleas from the international community and rights groups.

The Court of Appeal's Judge Andrew Phang said Nagaenthran had tested positive for COVID-19, after the defendant had been brought into dock but then abruptly taken away again.

The court dismissed a prosecutor's suggestion to have Nagaenthran testify via video.

"We have to issue a stay of the execution until all proceedings are concluded. That is the proper order of things," Phang said.

The stay on the execution



Activists attend a candlelight vigil against the impending execution of Nagaenthran K. Dharmalingam

followed a court ruling on Monday that had already granted a similar order, pending the result of the appeal at Singapore's highest court.

Nagaenthran's defense lawyer, M. Ravi, has based his appeal on the argument that executing a mentally disabled person is a violation of Singapore's Constitution.

Death penalty opponents say Nagaenthran's IQ of 69 was disclosed during an earlier lower court hearing, a level that is internationally recognized as an

intellectual disability.

But the court ruled that Nagaenthran knew what he was doing and upheld the death sentence.

Defense lawyer Ravi told reporters that he was "pleasantly surprised" by Tuesday's development and will use the extra time to bolster his case.

"A state-sanctioned murder ... has been averted by a COVID disease. That seems to be the irony of this development today," he said.

Nagaenthran's mother, two younger siblings and cousin were not present in the courtroom yesterday, but have been allowed daily prison visits since traveling from their hometown of Ipoh in northern Malaysia last week.

His older sister, Sarmila Dharmalingam, who didn't make the trip, said these visits will be replaced by phone calls, given the news.

While she worries about her brother's condition, she is relieved that his execution has been stayed. "But I'm only a little bit happy, be-

cause I know they haven't actually stopped the execution, only given it a temporary stay," Dharmalingam said.

Legal experts — including with the Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network and Amnesty International — have called the execution of an intellectually disabled man inhumane and a violation of international law.

Members of the international community, representatives of the European Union, and global figures such as British business magnate Richard Branson have also called for Nagaenthran's life to be spared, and used the case to draw attention toward anti-death penalty advocacy.

Malaysian Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob reportedly asked for leniency "purely on humanitarian grounds" in a letter addressed to Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, dated Nov. 3.

Malaysia's anti-drug laws are similarly harsh, with the majority of people on death row in the country due to drug offenses.

Singapore's home affairs ministry said the country takes a "zero-tolerance stance against illicit drugs," in response to media queries on Friday.

"The penalties, including the death penalty, for the illegal trafficking, importation or exportation of drugs are made clear at our borders, to warn traffickers and syndicates of the harsh penalties they potentially face," the ministry said.

Anyone found with over 15 grams of heroin faces the death sentence in Singapore, although judges can reduce this to life in prison at their discretion.

The last execution in Singapore was in 2019. **MDT/AP**

AUSTRALIA

PM announces policy to boost electric car sales

AUSTRALIA'S prime minister yesterday announced plans to encourage people to buy electric vehicles weeks after his government was accused at a U.N. conference in Scotland of being a laggard in fighting climate change.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the price of the technology would reduce in time and offered no subsidies to buyers of electric cars.

"The costs of technology are coming down, and that means the choices available to Australians and right around the world are becoming more accessible, so our plans are all about supporting those choices," Morrison said.



"Our plans aren't about sending a lot of taxpayers' money off to big multinationals to get costs down. They'll do that themselves.

They've a keen interest in doing that," he added.

The 250 million Australian dollar (\$185 million) plan would partner with

private enterprise to accelerate the rollout of 50,000 charging and hydrogen refueling stations.

The conservative government expects that would result in 30% of new passenger and light commercial truck sales in Australia being battery electric or plug-in hybrid electric by 2030.

Less than 2% of new vehicles sold in Australia are electric, and the transport sector is a major reason why Australia, on a per capita basis, is one of the world's worst greenhouse gas emitters.

Electric vehicle groups expressed disappointment at the policy.

Electric Vehicles Coun-

cil chief executive Behyad Jafari, an advocate for the electric vehicle industry in Australia, described the policy as a "fizzer" that lacked initiatives to boost uptake.

The opposition center-left Labor Party went to the last election in 2019 with a target of 50% of new cars being electric by 2030.

Morrison argued at the time that Labor's policy would "end the weekend" because electric vehicles could not tow boats and caravans or replace SUVs.

Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese said if Labor wins elections due by May, his government would make electric vehicles cheaper by reducing taxes on them.

"The government ..., during the last campaign, said that electric vehicles would 'end the weekend,' and now ... in the lead-up to an election campaign, they want you to believe that now electric vehicles are all okay and they want to encourage uptake," Albanese said.

"Well, they can't have it both ways. This is a government that is scared of change," he added.

At the U.N. climate conference in Glasgow, known as COP26, Morrison committed Australia to achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

But he was widely criticized for leaving Australia's 2030 target unchanged at the relatively modest aim of reducing emissions by 26% to 28% below 2005 levels. Other countries have made steeper commitments. **MDT/AP**



In this photo released by the Chin Human Rights Organization, fires burn in the town of Thantlang in Myanmar's northwestern state of Chin, Oct. 29

UN says over 3 million in Myanmar need 'life-saving' aid

EDITH M. LEDERER,
UNITED NATIONS

THE U.N. humanitarian chief urged Myanmar's military leaders yesterday [Macau time] to provide unimpeded access to the more than 3 million people in need of life-saving humanitarian assistance since government forces seized power on Feb. 1 "because of growing conflict and insecurity, COVID-19 and a failing economy."

Martin Griffiths warned that without an end to violence and a peaceful resolution of Myanmar's crisis, "this number will only rise."

He also urged donors to respond to the U.N. appeal, saying less than half of the \$385 million required has been raised since the military ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Monday was the first anniversary of the 2020 elections in Myanmar, which "were deemed free and fair by domestic and international observers," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. They were won by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party with approximately

80% of the elected seats in the upper and lower houses of Parliament. The military rejects the results, claiming the vote was fraudulent.

"The United Nations reiterates its call on the military to respect the will of the people and put the country back on track to democratic transition," Dujarric said, stressing that the U.N. remains "gravely concerned about the intensifying violence in Myanmar" and again urges unimpeded humanitarian access.

Griffiths' statement was issued as members of the U.N. Security Council held a closed-door meeting on Myanmar requested by the United Kingdom. Diplomats said Russia and China objected to a proposed press statement that would express concern at recent violence including air strikes and reaffirm the council's support for the country's democratic transition, but discussions were continuing.

UK deputy ambassador James Kariuki told reporters before heading into the meeting that Britain is particularly concerned about the buildup of military action in northwest Chin state, "and we are

concerned that this rather mirrors the activity we saw four years ago ahead of the atrocities that were committed in Rakhine against the Rohingya" Muslim minority.

"So, we're very keen to make sure the council is focused, and the military know that we're watching," he said.

Since Suu Kyi's ouster, Myanmar has been wracked by unrest, with peaceful demonstrations against the ruling generals morphing first into a low-level insurgency in many urban areas after security forces used deadly force and then into more serious combat in rural areas, especially in border regions where ethnic minority militias have been engaging in heavy clashes with government troops.

On Sept. 7, the National Unity Government, the main underground group coordinating resistance to the military which was established by elected legislators who had been barred from taking their seats when the military seized power, called for a nationwide uprising. Its "People's Defense Forces" operate in many areas and have received training and weapons from some ar-

med ethnic groups.

Christine Schraner Burgener told The Associated Press shortly before her 3 1/2 year term as the U.N. special envoy for Myanmar ended on Oct. 31 that "civil war" has spread throughout the country.

She said the U.N. has heard that many soldiers are on the ground conducting "clearing operations" in Chin state, and reminded the world that the military's "clearing operation" in Rakhine state in 2017 saw villages burned down, widespread rapes and more than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims flee to neighboring Bangladesh.

Griffiths also called the situation in the northwest "extremely concerning, with an escalation in hostilities between the Myanmar Armed Forces and the Chinland Defense Force in Chin state, and with the People's Defense Forces in Magway and Sagaing regions."

"More than 37,000 people, including women and children, have been newly displaced, and more than 160 homes have been burned, including churches and the offices of a humanitarian organization," Griffiths said. "Attacks directed against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including humanitarian workers and facilities, are clearly prohibited under international humanitarian law and must stop immediately."

Since Feb. 1, he said, hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to flee their homes due to violence across the country, and 223,000 people remain internally displaced.

"This includes 165,000 in the southeast of the country and is on top of a significant population of people who were already displaced in Rakhine, Chin, Shan and Kachin states prior to the takeover," Griffiths said. He noted that 144,000 Rohingya people are still confined to camps or living in camp-like settings in Rakhine, many since their displacement in 2012, and more than 105,000 people have been displaced in Kachin and Shan, many for years.

The U.N. undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs said he is also "increasingly concerned about reports of rising levels of food insecurity in and around urban areas, including in Yangon and Mandalay." **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1995 NIGERIA HANGS HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS



The writer and human rights activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa, has been executed in Nigeria despite worldwide pleas for clemency.

The country's military rulers ordered the execution of Mr Saro-Wiwa and eight other dissidents should go ahead at 0730 local time (0830 GMT).

They were taken in chains to a prison in the southern city of Port Harcourt and hanged.

The activists were condemned to death 10 days ago after being found guilty of involvement in four murders.

Mr Saro-Wiwa insisted they were framed because of their opposition to the oil industry in the Niger-Delta region of southern Nigeria.

At his trial Mr Saro-Wiwa said the case was designed to prevent members of his tribe, the Ogoni, from stopping pollution of their homeland and getting a fair share of oil profits.

Dozens of Ogonis have been imprisoned by the military regime led by General Sani Abacha who seized power two years ago.

The government is fearful of their opposition to mining driving the companies away, especially the Anglo-Dutch group, Shell.

Shell is the largest operator in Nigeria and oil it extracts in the Niger-Delta region provides most of Nigeria's export earnings.

The deaths of Mr Saro-Wiwa and the other activists looks likely to lead to Nigeria's expulsion or suspension from the Commonwealth whose leaders are currently meeting in New Zealand.

After news of the executions became public, South African President Nelson Mandela said his delegation would recommend Nigeria's suspension until a democratic government was elected.

British Prime Minister John Major called the executions "judicial murder" and said he did not see how Nigeria could now remain in the Commonwealth.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The following day Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth and the European Union imposed sanctions on the country.

Both the suspension and sanctions lasted until after the death of General Sani Abacha in 1998.

Shell's facilities in Ogoniland were sabotaged after the executions and the company was forced to abandon production there temporarily.

However, it continues to be the dominant oil company in Nigeria despite attacks on installations by members of the Ogoni and other tribes.

In September 2001 a court in New York granted relatives of Ken Saro-Wiwa and another of the executed activists, John Kpuien, the right to sue Shell.

The suit alleges the company fabricated evidence to support murder charges against the two men.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
This pairing may slam the brakes on important plans, especially those concerning long-term goals and your sense of community. Aim to embrace a realistic mindset and respond at a slower pace.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Uncomfortable pairing is likely to frustrate existing partnerships as tensions emerge around career goals and collaborations. Work to acknowledge the discomfort without being consumed by it.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Potent pairing is likely to frustrate work circumstances as well as travel and educational plans. Aim to adopt a serious mindset without being overtaken by pessimism.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Frustrations are likely to be running high under Wednesday's skies, Cancer. Expressive Mercury and action-taking Mars both lock into an uncomfortable square with stifling Saturn.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Give yourself space to navigate whatever comes up without needing to wrestle for control as mental Mercury and self-concerned Mars square off against reality-checking Saturn.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Prepare to pump the brakes, Virgo. Your ruling planet, expressive Mercury, finds itself locked into a tense configuration with wall-building Saturn today.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Challenging contacts are likely to put a stop to plans, especially those concerning finances, creative potency. Use this energy to slow down and re-examine your current course of action.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Uncomfortable pairing is likely to bring plans to a halt their weak points, especially when it comes to independent action and family concerns. This too shall pass, so long as you slow your pace and reassess.

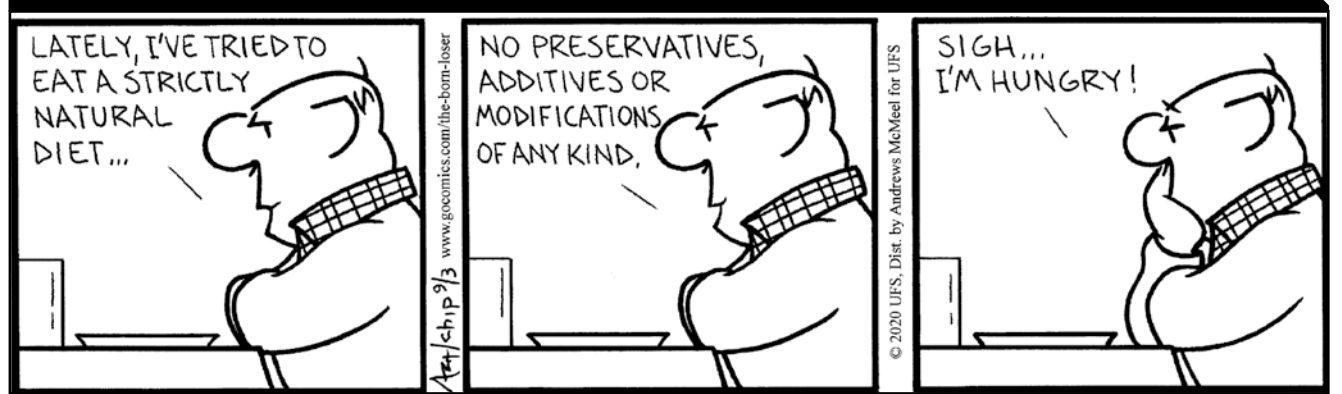
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Expressive Mercury and motivated Mars form a difficult square with reality-checking Saturn, bringing mental health and communication concerns to the forefront of your awareness.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Brace yourself to face frustration today, Capricorn. Your ruling planet, stoic Saturn, receives an uncomfortable visit from hotheaded Mars and communicative Mercury.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Today's skies present you with some challenging terrain to navigate. Your ruling planet, reality-check Saturn, finds itself locked into a harsh square with both messenger Mercury and action-taking Mars.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
You're likely to be going through it under Wednesday's frustrating cosmic landscape as both self-motivated Mars and expressive Mercury square off with limitation-setting Saturn.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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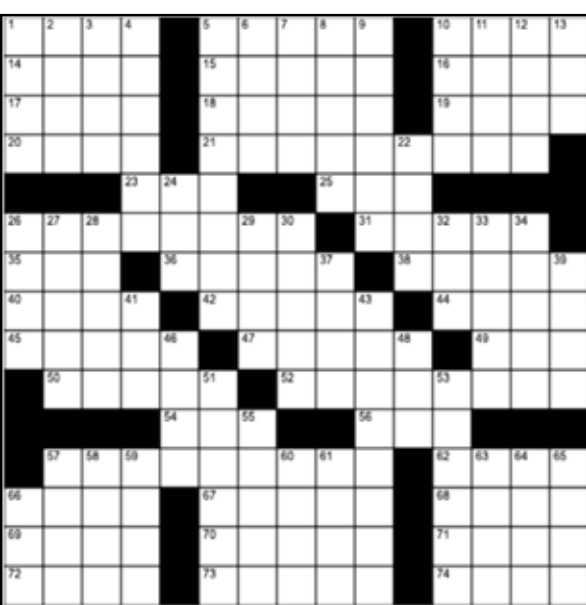
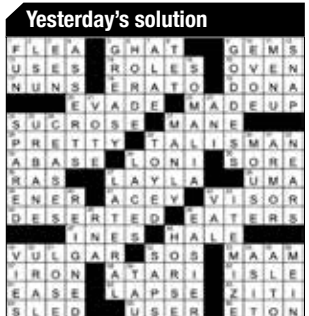
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	1	14	fine
Harbin	-7	-3	snow
Tianjin	6	18	fine
Urumqi	6	17	fine
Xi'an	7	15	cloudy
Lhasa	6	10	cloudy
Chengdu	11	21	fine
Chongqing	12	22	cloudy
Kunming	9	22	cloudy
Nanjing	4	14	cloudy
Shanghai	17	23	cloudy
Wuhan	6	16	fine
Hangzhou	-12	-3	snow
Taipei	2	15	fine
Guangzhou	12	22	cloudy
Hong Kong	18	24	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	-1	2	overcast
Frankfurt	-1	8	overcast
Paris	2	9	overcast
London	9	14	rain
New York	8	19	clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Honolulu's island; 5- Piece of music written for a solo instrument; 10- Letter after theta; 14- This can be guilty or not guilty; 15- Connoisseur; 16- Cease; 17- Conifer; 18- Run in the wash; 19- Gimlet garnish; 20- Actress Ward; 21- Pseudo-intellectual speech; 23- Furrow; 25- Sucker; 26- Republic in S Asia; 31- Coming down; 35- ___ Saud; 36- Actress Barkin; 38- Circa; 40- Composition in verse; 42- Goad; 44- Open ___ night; 45- Chou ___; 47- Yellow-fever mosquito; 49- Part of the Holy Trinity; 50- Give a seat?; 52- Ceremonial robe; 54- Sis's sib; 56- ___ kwon do; 57- Uncompounded; 62- "Give that ___ cigar!"; 66- Toward the mouth; 67- Maker of Pong; 68- Portent; 69- Take a meal; 70- Claw; 71- Public disturbance; 72- Witnessed; 73- Exactly; 74- Cravings;

DOWN: 1- Chooses; 2- Winglike parts; 3- Hades; 4- Naked-faced Amazon monkey; 5- Fortify; 6- Baby powder; 7- Optic layer; 8- Exploits; 9- Make beloved; 10- Land in water; 11- Elevator man; 12- Voluminous volume; 13- Copycat; 22- Movie-rating org.; 24- Put into service; 26- Hollow cylinder; 27- Dry as ___; 28- Mournful sound; 29- Pond organism; 30- Israeli desert region; 32- Notebook maker; 33- Din; 34- Klondike territory; 37- Network point; 39- Portable shelter; 41- Fannie ___; 43- Young bird; 46- SDI concern; 48- RR stop; 51- Picks up the check; 53- Recollection; 55- Available; 57- HOMES part; 58- Alley; 59- Elysium of Genesis; 60- Currency unit in Western Samoa; 61- "East of Eden" brother; 63- Gallic girlfriend; 64- Light gas; 65- Farm dwellers; 66- Takes too much;



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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AD

TRADE

APEC LEADERS MEETING TO CHART PATH FORWARD FROM PANDEMIC

NICK PERRY, WELLINGTON

U.S. President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping will have a rare virtual encounter this week as they gather online with other Pacific Rim leaders to chart a path to recovery out of the crisis brought on by the pandemic.

New Zealand is hosting this year's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, which culminates in a leader's meeting on Saturday. Continued outbreaks of the coronavirus and related travel restrictions have confined the meeting to the virtual realm for a second straight year.

As usual, the 21 APEC members will be seeking areas where members can cooperate on easing barriers to trade and economic growth instead of trying to settle longstanding feuds.

The focus will be on "charting a path to recovery out of this once-in-a-century crisis," New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, host of the leader's meeting, said in a statement.

In all, APEC members account for nearly 3 billion people and about 60% of the world's GDP. They span the Pacific rim, from Chile to Russia to Thailand to Australia.

Officials say they've made significant progress during some 340 preliminary meetings. APEC members have agreed to reduce or eliminate many tariffs and border holdups on vaccines, masks and other medical products important to fighting the coronavirus, said Vangelis Vitalis, chair of the Se-

AP PHOTO



nior Officials' Meeting.

But big power frictions are the inevitable backdrop for the closed door summit meetings of APEC, which as an economic forum includes both Hong Kong and Taiwan in addition to communist-ruled mainland China.

Both Taiwan and China have put in applications to join a Pacific Rim trade group, the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership, with Beijing saying it will block Taiwan's bid on the basis that the democratically governed island refuses to accept that it's part of China.

Stephen Hoadley, an associate professor of politics and international relations at the University of Auckland, said Biden will be looking to reverse the course set by predecessor Donald Trump, who spurned

regional trade deals with his America First foreign policy approach.

Since Biden has taken office, Washington has shifted back to a more internationalist approach to trade liberalization, supporting global and regional efforts such as the rules-making World Trade Organization.

However, Biden has kept most trade, technology and investment restrictions that Trump imposed on Chinese exports and companies in place while also moving to counter Beijing's sway in the region.

One such effort is a recent new defense agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom and the U.S. that raised eyebrows because it did not include New Zealand or other U.S. allies. The development of nuclear submarines is a major

part of the new defense arrangement, and New Zealand has a longstanding nuclear-free policy.

Hoadley said the China-U.S. rivalry can be seen even in the way they describe the region, with China calling it the Asia-Pacific and the U.S. having switched years ago to calling it the Indo-Pacific, to include the democratic counterweight of India — which is not an APEC member.

Apart from the geopolitical tensions simmering at all times, the pandemic has added to uncertainty in a region that has long been viewed as an increasingly important engine of global growth.

Many economies are still struggling to emerge from the downturns that hit the region hard in 2020, stalling travel and many other activities. Prolon-

ged outbreaks of COVID-19 infections, slow progress in vaccinations and other disruptions both to manufacturing and shipping have added to uncertainty and dragged millions of the region's most vulnerable people back into poverty.

"Unfortunately, too, there's been rising protectionism around the globe, and that has also made for an incredibly challenging environment for us to be operating in," Vitalis said during a media briefing.

He said there are areas of common ground, including improving environmental sustainability, and enhancing the untapped potential of Indigenous groups.

New Zealand's Trade Minister Damien O'Connor said Tuesday that APEC should send a powerful message to the world ahead of a World Trade Organization meeting.

"We are facing the biggest economic shock in 75 years. We know that trade will be a strong driver in our recovery. We absolutely cannot afford to turn our attention away from an institution that has underpinned APEC's work since its inception," O'Connor said.

Ahead of the main leader's meeting APEC will host a youth summit and its usual CEO summit featuring addresses by leaders and a keynote speech by human rights lawyer Amal Clooney. Ardern and German Chancellor Angela Merkel will hold a dialogue on how the pandemic has changed the world.

The pandemic APEC meetings lack the pomp and glamour of past in-person gatherings. No fancy shirts or gala balls. New Zealand made the decision last year to switch to a virtual summit. Malaysia also opted to host the 2020 APEC leader's meeting online due to the pandemic. MDT/AP

CORPORATE BITS

Local bakery raises funds to support breast cancer awareness



The Lord Stow's Bakeries & Cafes have donated HKD10,773 to the Hong

Kong Breast Cancer Foundation. The money came from 50% of their total sa-

les revenue of 'Pink Ribbon Cookies' and 'Rose Coffees' sold during October, according to a statement.

"We thank our local customers for their continued support. Without them, this donation would not be possible," said the company's director, Audrey Stow.

"Of course, our business is affected by the current pandemic, but this is no time to turn our backs on charities; we must do what we can," Stow added.

The Hong Kong Breast Cancer Foundation is dedicated to mitigating the threat of breast cancer through education and patient support.

MGM presents another round of support to Tung Sing Tong



MGM provided another year of support to Macau Tung Sing Tong Charitable Society's annual fundraising campaign with a donation of MOP600,000.

Supporting the association for the fourteenth consecu-

tive year, MGM's donations have cumulatively reached a total of MOP6.6 million that have contributed towards the provision of local social welfare services at large.

The cheque presentation was concluded with a sha-

ring session, where MGM and Tung Sing Tong exchanged their ideas on local charity development and the current needs of the community, according to a statement issued by the gaming operator. "As a member of the local community, MGM strives to give back to society to create shared value, joining hands with different sectors of the community to live out the ethos of 'Building a Better Macau' together. [...] By partnering with more community organizations, we hope to further contribute to bettering our community," said Kenneth Feng, president, chief Strategic & Financial officer of MGM said.

FOOTBALL

Germany player tests positive for virus, four more quarantined

A player on Germany's national soccer team has tested positive for the coronavirus and four more are in quarantine as a precaution ahead of World Cup qualifying games against Liechtenstein and Armenia.

The German soccer federation said yesterday that the unnamed player was fully vaccinated and does not have any symptoms. The other four tested negative for the virus but have been instructed by the local health authority in Wolfsburg to isolate because of their proximity to the infected player.

Germany has already qualified for next year's



World Cup ahead of its final qualifiers. The team hosts Liechtenstein in Wolfsburg on Thursday and then

plays Armenia in Yerevan on Sunday.

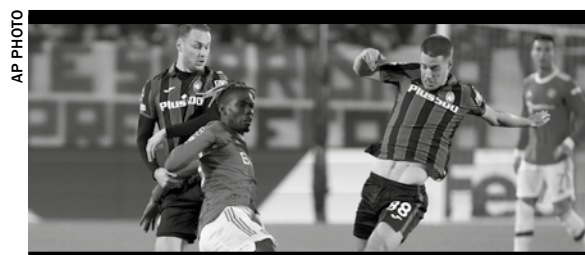
Germany's rate of infections has been climbing steadily in recent weeks and reached a new pandemic-high yesterday of 213.7 new cases per 100,000 residents over the past seven days.

"This news is very bitter so close to the final two games in World Cup qualifying – for the coaching team as well as for the entire team," Germany team director Oliver Bierhoff said. "But health comes first. I wish the player who tested positive a speedy recovery and that he continues to remain symptom-free."

The Bild tabloid reported that Bayern Munich defender Niklas Süle was the affected player. Süle tested positive for COVID-19 a year ago.

Bayern coach Hansi Flick had called up Bayer Leverkusen defender Johnathan Tah to the squad without explanation on Monday.

Last weekend, a second-division game in Germany was called off after one of the clubs reported 18 new coronavirus cases among players and staff. **MDT/AP**



FOOTBALL

INJURED POGBA TO MISS FRANCE'S WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

PAUL Pogba will miss France's World Cup qualifiers against Kazakhstan and Finland because of a right thigh injury, the national team said yesterday.

Video footage on French media showed the Manchester United midfielder pull up after taking a shot in training on Monday, before hobbling away.

Jordan Veretout has come into the squad as a replacement for Pogba, who would likely have started for France in Saturday's home game against Kazakhstan.

The French lead their

qualifying group by three points and need one win from their final two games to seal first place and advance automatically to next year's tournament in Qatar.

France plays Finland, which is four points behind in third place, on Tuesday.

Pogba has been serving a domestic suspension for United after getting sent off against Liverpool last month after coming on as a substitute, meaning he has missed the team's last two Premier League games. **MDT/AP**

AD

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

SULLIVAN'S REMARKS WERE REASSURING BUT THEY NEED MATCHING WITH DEEDS

Talking about the United States' relations with China and the Joe Biden administration's China policies in a Sunday interview with CNN, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said the present administration's goal "is not containment. It's not a new Cold War".

Calling the relationship one of "competition", Sullivan, who has been known for advocating a "clear-eyed coexistence" with China, said attempting to fundamentally transform the Chinese system through US policies was "one of the errors" of the previous US approach to China.

The objective of the Biden administration, in his words, "is not to bring about a fundamental transformation of China itself".

This may or may not be intended as an official reply to what Beijing set as one of its three "redlines" for relations with Washington, and which Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi reiterated during his July meeting with US Deputy State Secretary Wendy Sherman in Tianjin.

But it certainly serves as a significant assurance to Beijing, which has long suspected Washington has a hidden agenda to seek regime change in China, and which has thus been on high alert for any attempts to engineer a "color revolution".

If there had been an impression of a "peaceful evolution" of China-US relations over the past decades, the Donald Trump administration's all-round attack on China-US relations rekindled and considerably escalated Beijing's fear of US pursuit of regime change in China.

While framing China as "increasingly aggressive" in international affairs, the previous US administration launched whole-government assaults on China, openly targeting the Communist Party of China and the Chinese political system, sparking speculation of a new Cold War.

But despite toning down the foreign policy rhetoric, the Biden administration has done little to actually break from the course the previous administration had set. Beijing places considerable weight on the principle of mutual respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs in state-to-state relations, which it believes is essential to fair, equitable international relations.

Sullivan's latest remarks are important for his Chinese audience. His comments will help decision-makers in Beijing judge Washington's policy orientation. Taking regime change off the table is such a necessity in Beijing's preconditions for normal China-US relations that it was the foremost "redline" Beijing drew for Washington. But whether the Biden administration will match its words with deeds or not will determine the future of bilateral ties.

Sullivan's personal statement that the US is not trying to cross that red line will surely be conducive to reducing mistrust, and hence increase confidence that the two major powers can operate in the international system. But the rub is the US wants that system to be "favorable to American interests and values", and that makes it unfair to China.

Hong Kong could open up to global travel in roughly six months, after officials have successfully navigated the introduction of quarantine-free borders with mainland China and boosted the local vaccination rate, a government adviser said as reported by Bloomberg.

The neighbouring SAR needs to finish negotiating open borders with the mainland, while using the next few months to increase the flagging Covid-19 inoculation rate among the city's elderly, Lam Ching-choi, a member of Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam's advisory Executive Council, said in an interview with Bloomberg.

"We maybe need half a year or so to develop an adequate vaccination rate, especially among the older people," said Lam, who is also part of the government's working group on vaccinations. "Hopefully by then, we have opened up the border with China and we might have conditions favorable to open up the border to other places."

Despite procuring enough vaccines when they first became available, Hong Kong has struggled to inoculate its population of about 7.4 million people.

According to WHO latest statistics, Hong Kong has a rate of vaccination of 59.6%.

AP PHOTO



The morning sun shines through a forest outside Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk on Sakhalin Island in Russia's Far East

RUSSIA COMES IN FROM COLD ON CLIMATE, LAUNCHES FOREST PLAN

A Russian island north of Japan has become a testing ground for Moscow's efforts to reconcile its prized fossil fuel industry with the need to do something about climate change.

More than two-thirds of Sakhalin Island is forested. With the Kremlin's blessing, authorities there have set an ambitious goal of making the island — Russia's largest — carbon neutral by 2025.

Tree growth will absorb as much planet-warming carbon dioxide as the island's half-million residents and its businesses produce, an idea the Russian government 4,000 miles to the west in Moscow hopes to apply to the whole country, which has more forested area than any other nation.

"The economic structure of Sakhalin and the large share of forestland in the territory and carbon balance distribution reflect the general situation in Russia," said Dinara Gershinkova, an adviser to Sakhalin's governor on climate and sustainable development. "So the results of the experiment in Sakhalin will be representative and applicable to the whole Russian Federation."

The plan reflects a marked change of mood in Russia on climate change.

President Vladimir Putin joked about global warming in 2003, saying that Russians would be able to "spend less on fur coats, and the grain harvest would increase" if it continued.

Last year, he acknowledged that climate change "requires real actions and way more attention," and he has sought to position the world's biggest fossil fuel exporter as a leader in the fight against global warming.

The country's vast forests are key to this idea.

"By aiming to build a carbon-neutral economy by no later than 2060, Russia is relying, among other things, on the unique resource of forest ecosystems available to us, and their significant capacity to absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen," Putin said in a video address Nov. 2 to the U.N. climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland. "After all, our country accounts for around 20% of the world's forestland."

Scientists say that natural forms of removing carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, from the atmosphere will indeed play a key role in tackling global warming.

Many of the countries at the climate summit rely on some form of absorbing emissions to achieve their targets of being "net zero"

by 2050 — that is, emitting only as much greenhouse gas as can be captured again by natural or artificial means.

But experts say the math behind such calculations is notoriously fuzzy and prone to manipulation by governments, who have a vested interest in making their emissions figures look good.

"Russia makes an enormous contribution in the absorption of global emissions — both its own and others' — by means of absorptive capacity of our ecosystems, firstly of forests, which is estimated at 2.5 billion (metric) tons of CO2 equivalent a year," said Viktoria Abramchenko, deputy prime minister for environmental issues, speaking at a recent conference in St. Petersburg.

The figure came as a surprise to scientists contacted by The Associated Press. It constitutes a five-fold increase on the 535 million metric tons of CO2 absorption that Russia reported to the U.N. climate office for 2019.

Natalia Lukina, the director of the Center of Ecology and Productivity of Forests, a government-funded research institute, said the estimates are actually assumptions because "there is no real accurate data." MDT/AP

Dubai A top prosecutor in the United Arab Emirates has called for the detention of the chairman of real estate developer Union Properties while an investigation into the company is underway, according to a disclosure filed by the company. The disclosure, posted on the Dubai Financial Market stock exchange website, included the Arabic letter from the public prosecutor for public funds informing of the decision to order the detention of Khalifa Hassan al-Hammadi, chairman of the board of directors of Union Properties, pending investigation.

Russian authorities have named a prominent LGBT rights group and several lawyers as "foreign agents", continuing a months-long crackdown on activists, opposition supporters and independent media. The designation implies additional government scrutiny and carries strong pejorative connotations that can discredit recipients. The Russian LGBT Network has advocated for civil rights in Russia since 2006 and has 17 branches across the country.

Azerbaijan Tens of thousands marched across Azerbaijan's capital yesterday to mark the one-year anniversary of the country's victory in the six-week battle over Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev declared Nov. 8 as Victory Day to mark the capture of the strategic city of Shusha by Azerbaijani forces. The city's capture forced Armenia to accept a Russia-brokered truce two days later.

AP PHOTO



Polish riot police and coils of razor wire faced off yesterday against migrants, including families with young children, who were camped just across the border in Belarus, amid a tense standoff on the European Union's eastern border. Polish authorities reported that the situation on the border was calm overnight, but said they were bracing for any possibility. Poland's Defense Ministry said that a large group of Belarusian forces was moving toward the migrant camp.