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MASDAW IS FACING THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE OF ITS HISTORY AS IT AIMS TO RAISE MOP1.2 MILLION TO MOVE TO A NEW SHELTER BY MID-JANUARY

GEG: SUGGESTED PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE GAMING REGULATORY OVERSIGHT

LAWMAKERS EXPRESSED CONCERNS ABOUT TALENT ACQUISITION AND RELATED POLICIES STRESSING THAT THE CITY LACKS SPECIFIC SKILLED WORKERS

AP PHOTO



Myanmar A court in Rangoon sentenced U.S. journalist Danny Fenster to 11 years in prison with hard labor, the maximum penalty under three charges, despite calls by the United States and rights groups for his release. It was the harshest punishment yet among the seven journalists known to have been convicted since the military ousted the elected government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi in February.

AP PHOTO



Sudan The Qatar-based satellite news network Al-Jazeera said yesterday its bureau chief in Sudan was detained by security forces, a day after mass protests across the country against last month's military coup. The network said on Twitter that Sudanese forces raided the home of al-Musallami al-Kabbashi and detained him.

AP PHOTO



Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel called on all unvaccinated Germans to get their shots as quickly as possible as the country's coronavirus infection rate hit the latest in a string of new highs and death numbers were growing. "If we stand together, if we think about protecting ourselves and caring for others, we can save our country a lot this winter," Merkel said in her weekly podcast.

More on backpage

RADICAL DESTINATIONS

The tourism bureau proposed 16 new action plans to promote quality tourism as it aims to reach up to 41 million tourist arrivals in 2025

EVA BUCHO



AP PHOTO



COP26

NATIONS COMPROMISE ON COAL TO STRIKE UN CLIMATE AGREEMENT

MAINLAND, SAR TO EASE HENGQIN'S BORDER-CROSSING TRAFFIC

ANTHONY LAM

A videoconference was recently held to discuss the administrative borderline, single-license vehicles entering Hengqin, and Macau LRT's Hengqin extension, among other topics.

The conference was held by mainland officials and SAR officials, led by Secretary for Security Wong Sio Chak. The two parties delved deeply into topics crucial to the construction and establishment of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin (the Zone).

Consensus was achieved on multiple issues at the conference.

Border-crossing traffic will enjoy a one-stop border clearance, similar to travelers crossing on foot.

The so-called one-stop border clearance will only require travelers to present their ID documents once, after which both mainland and Macau immigra-

tion will be cleared.

At the conference, both parties agreed that a taskforce on the vehicle one-stop border clearance must be set up as soon as possible to establish the plan's details.

Although the one-stop practice is currently being implemented for pedestrian border crossings at three of the city's border checkpoints — the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge Checkpoint, the Hengqin Border Checkpoint and the Qingmao Border Checkpoint — it has never been used for travelers in vehicles.

Immigration officers at borders currently need to ensure both the vehicle and the passengers, including the driver, have the requisite registration and documentation to cross the border.

The one-stop crossing policy is set to be applied to passenger and cargo vehicles.

Additionally, the two parties discussed and came to a phasal agreement on single-license vehi-

cles entering Hengqin. Currently, Macau vehicles need mainland car plates to enter Zhuhai. Under the single-license arrangement, these vehicles would be able to enter Hengqin with Macau car plates only. However, they could only be driven on the island of Hengqin.

The border checkpoint building on Hengqin will expand with a second phase. The expansion will include a station for the Macau LRT's Hengqin extension line.

At the conference, the two parties discussed the arrangement and progress of construction of the LRT extension, with particular focus on the station to be built beneath the border checkpoint building.

The administrative body of the zone stressed that it would coordinate all parties to ensure smooth progress of the construction and the security of the border checkpoint building. Further work will be done to improve peak-hour traffic at the checkpoint.



MASDAW seeks community support to raise MOP1.2m

STAFF REPORTER

THE Macau Association Stray Dogs and Animal Welfare (MASDAW) is facing the biggest challenge of its history as it celebrates its 7th anniversary. The animal rescue association is launching a crowdfunding campaign to raise MOP1.2 million to move to a new shelter by mid-January, as they need to vacate the existing premises.

MASDAW is calling on the local community and businesses for help, as they do not have any major sources of income from the government or large corporations. The funds will mostly be used to cover renovation work on the new shelter. Without



the help of the local community, MASDAW will not be able to survive, and the lives of over 130 dogs under their care will be at risk. Additionally, the association will need to continue to raise funds to cover yearly expenses of MOP1.5 million.

The association has set up three ways to donate: MPay, Bank of China and BNU bank trans-

fer. Interested individuals also have other avenues for supporting MASDAW, such as giving donations in kind, purchasing an association membership, adopting or fostering a dog, as well as providing volunteer work.

MASDAW was founded in 2014. Their central focus is rescuing and rehoming stray and abandoned animals in Macau.

GUANGDONG AND MACAU TO STRENGTHEN EXCHANGE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

STAFF REPORTER

GUANGDONG and Macau recently signed three cooperation agreements on social security services, a "one test, multiple certificates" talent evaluation model, and vocational skilled talent evaluation. These agreements further strengthen exchange of human resources and social security services between the two cities.

An innovation and entrepreneurship incubation base "1+12+N" system was established by Guangdong for the youth of Hong Kong and Macau in 2020. As a result, a range of public institutions in GD have attracted over 1,000 applicants from Hong Kong and Macau since last year.

As part of the new social security cooperation arrangements, Guangdong and Macau have initiated the convergence of systems and rules, as well as the "Bay



Area Social Security Service" program. To facilitate Hong Kong and Macau residents in gaining and using social security cards, Guangdong has set up card issuing outlets in the Greater Bay Area across most cities, districts and counties. Hong Kong and Macau residents can apply for the card at their nearest domestic outlets.

To benefit both the people and the overall economic and social development of Guangdong and Macau, the two cities will work together to promote cooperation in employment, social security,

talent and governance. Guangdong has implemented a "one test, multiple certificates" talent evaluation model, allowing talented individuals from Hong Kong and Macau to obtain several certificates at once after passing a single vocational qualification in Guangdong. The region will also carry out a pilot project in which skilled vocational qualification certificates from Macau are directly recognised, and advanced vocational skill standards with the curriculum content from Macau and international societies are to be introduced.

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MGTO to promote quality tourism amid review on tourism master plan

ANTHONY LAM

PROMOTION of quality tourism and improvements to precise marketing are areas that need refinement, as outlined by the Review Study Report on Macao Tourism Industry Development Master Plan (Master Plan).

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) commissioned a research institute at the end of 2020 to examine the implementation progress of the Master Plan in various areas over the past five years. The report is the result of this review.

Comments were given by the research institute on amendments, rejuvenation, consolidation and addition of policies in order to cope with the ever-changing environment of the tourism industry.

Apart from the aforementioned areas, the MGTO has also determined that tourism products and facilities should be enriched in the future, urban construction should be refined, smart technologies utilized, and regional and international cooperation be explored.

After the review, the MGTO noted that 16 new action plans needed to be added to the Master Plan, as the city is soon to face drastic changes to the state of regional cooperation and integration.

Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, director of the MGTO, further explained the content of the report on the sidelines of a public event over the weekend.

According to her, the 16 new plans will include, among other elements: cooperation with e-businesses; exploring new tourists' attractions, such as marine tours; the implementation of more precise marketing plans; and consideration of new approaches from an urban construction perspective.



EVA BUCHO

Amid new opportunities that may be brought on by the Greater Bay Area and the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, the MGTO head revealed that development in both regions has been discussed.

On the topic of Macao-Hengqin tours, Senna Fernandes revealed that the two deputy directors of the office recently paid a visit to Hengqin to study the factors there. They have come up with a lot of new thoughts and avenues for cooperation.

In addition to attractions on Hengqin, the MGTO director said her office will explore island tours. However, details cannot be revealed now because they would concern cross-border grouped tours, which are currently suspended by Beijing.

"For now, there is no guided tours yet, as it involves the issue of cross-border tours. But first we will have some packages for tourists under individual visiting schemes, or introduce other attractions," she explained.

To make up for this, Senna Fernandes said that individual tourist packages will be promoted in

this phase, alongside the promotion of other attractions.

Collaboration with Hengqin will also be expanded. This will include inviting teams from Hengqin to participate in events held in Macau. A recent example of this approach is a Hengqin production team's participation in the Macao Light Festival.

The two parties will also preferentially promote each other in mainland cities. Promotions

in overseas territories will also be under consideration once conditions change.

Additionally, ecological tours and high-end tours are also within the scope of the MGTO. Public-private partnerships in tourism as well as the fostering of tourism+ are also being planned.

The MGTO will also employ Big Data studies to better target marketing to attract high-value visitors. Innovative technologies will also be employed to upgrade visitors' experience and the overall business environment.

The Master Plan, compiled in 2015, identified the developmental direction and goals of the city's tourism industry to 2030. Announced in 2017, the Master Plan stipulated eight key goals, 33 strategies, 29 suggestions on planning, and 76 action plans each focusing on the short-, mid- and long-term.

Currently, 90% of the targets set forth in the Master Plan for the first five years have been accomplished.

The report is available in Chinese, English and Portuguese, and is downloadable from the MGTO's website.

TOURIST ARRIVALS MAY REACH 41M IN 2025

THE Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) forecasted that the estimated number of tourist arrivals in the region will be around 36 million to 41 million in 2025.

Up to September, visitor arrivals totaled 5.76 million, a year-on-year surge of 43.2%.

Despite the pandemic situation's temporary impact upon visitor arrivals since September until early this month, visitor numbers have rebounded within a relatively short time once restriction measures were loosened across the border, followed by the promotional campaign rolled out by MGTO.

The figures show an obvious increase in visitor arrivals in recent months compared with the visitor numbers before. Average daily visitor arrivals between October 20 and November 10 reached 25,168, which rose by 20% compared with the average daily volume of visitors in September. LV

MACAO ORCHESTRA CANCELS 'THE SONG OF THE EARTH' CONCERT

The Macao Orchestra has decided to cancel the concert titled "Commemorating the 110th Anniversary of the premiere of Mahler's work: The Song of the Earth - Macao Orchestra and Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra." The concert, originally scheduled for November 20, was canceled due to the Mainland's pandemic control measures, and the fact that some performers will not be able to visit Macau. The Macao Orchestra will instead present "A Night of German and Austrian Serenades" on the same day.

DSEDT JOINS MEETING OF THE KIMBERLY PROCESS 2021

The Director of the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSEDT) Tai Kin Ip participated in the plenary meeting of the Kimberly Process 2021, representing Macau as part of the Chinese Delegation. The meeting took place both in person and via online Zoom video conferencing from November 8 to 12 in Moscow, Russia. During the meeting, the participants of the Kimberly Process listened as the working groups presented the works they developed over the last year, outlined guidelines for future work, and more.

City stages automobiles, yachts and aircraft expos

THREE expositions featuring automobiles, yachts and business aircraft opened Friday, presenting the public with a range of the latest products from home and abroad.

The three-day expo for automobiles—the 11th of its kind in Macau—had a thematic focus of helping the SAR develop into a zero-carbon city. Covering an area of 65,000 square meters, the expo showca-

sed nearly 400 vehicles of major domestic and overseas brands from over 20 countries and regions.

According to Nam Kwong (Group) Company Limited, a co-organizer of the three events, the Macao International Automobile Expo was the largest held in the Hong Kong and Macau SARs, and showcased the most Chinese automobile brands in a single expo

outside of the mainland.

A forum on the development of new energy and smart transportation was also held, together with a cruise, miniature automobile racing for children, and a "green" market on low-carbon life.

Over 40 vessels ranging from luxury yachts to light fishing boats were also exhibited, alongside a forum to discuss traveling

by yacht in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and stepping up utilization of island resources.

The exhibition of business aircraft covered an area of 24,000 square meters at the Macau International Airport. It was paired with a forum and interactive entertainment activities to attract participation from youth. MDT/XINHUA



LAWMAKERS QUESTION CITY'S TALENT ACQUISITION POLICIES

ANTHONY LAM

LAWMAKERS expressed concerns about talent acquisition and related policies in Macau during a parliamentary plenary late last week.

Indirectly-elected lawmaker Ho Ion Sang pointed out that, although the government aims to attract foreign talent to the industries of big health, finance and technology, and sports and culture, the city is still missing these skilled workers and thus no industries have been established so far.

He also stressed that Macau has been losing skilled workers. Citing a survey conducted earlier by the Talent Development Committee, Ho said that poor career prospects are the main reason why skilled migrants chose not to return to Macau.

He suggested that the

MARTEN BJORK



government establish professional and occupational accreditation, in addition to refining arrangements for childcare, accommodation, dependent visas and

other matters, so as to entice skilled locals to return to Macau after completing their professional education.

Speaking on the same issue, directly-elected

Leong Sun Iok commented on the recently revealed Talent Acquisition System.

Leong complimented the proposed legal framework, saying that talent acquisition will help the city's economic diversification and nurturing of future talents. However, he pointed out, the previous talent acquisition program handled by the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute was marred by exploitation and corruption, causing a loss of public confidence in the scheme.

Members of the public may also fear that the newly proposed scheme will reduce the number of employment opportu-

nities available for local residents.

To address this, the lawmaker urged the government to clarify the criteria for incoming talent to focus on the most suitable candidates. Furthermore, he argued that regular reviews should take place so that those who enter Macau via the scheme but make no contribution to local industry would have their permanent residency applications restricted. At the same time, Leong also urged the government to establish a local talent incubation environment and to ensure local talent is represented in corporate management positions.

Directly-elected

lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho slammed the government for neglecting economic diversification over many years in his speech.

For the past 20 years, he said, locals graduating from university, whether in the city or overseas, could only develop their careers in either the casino industry or civil service. Many high-caliber talents therefore chose to stay outside Macau because there were no local job opportunities in their areas of expertise.

To support his speech, he cited data showing that, in the 2019-2020 academic year, the number of locals that attained a master's degree or doctoral degree was 2213 and 439 people, respectively. 10 years ago, by comparison, there were just 468 and 64 locals, respectively, who obtained the same two levels of degree.

Another directly elected lawmaker, Lam Lon Wai, bashed the proposed Talent Acquisition System for not having an inheritance mechanism to ensure that new talents are nurtured in Macau when skilled foreign workers are invited to the city.

He suggested the government add stipulations on apprenticeships into the system to address this issue.

Lam also proposed that the age ceiling on acquired talent be raised from 21 to 26 years old, "so as to acquire more experienced talent. The city should also prioritize locals among high-caliber professionals."

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NEW COMMERCIAL PROPERTY LOANS DOWN 20% IN SEPTEMBER

STAFF REPORTER

THE value of new Commercial real estate loans (CRELs) decreased by 19.7% from the previous month to MOP3.09 billion in September, according to statistics from the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM).

New CRELs issued to residents, which represented 95% of the total loans in this category, fell 22.3% to MOP2.94 billion, while the total

of new CRELs made to non-residents rose to MOP154.5 million. The monthly average value of new CRELs approved between July and September decreased by 21.1% to MOP6 billion.

Meanwhile, new approvals of residential mortgage loans (RMLs) by banks in Macau dropped by 1% from the previous month to MOP3.43 billion in September. New RMLs to residents, representing 98.3% of total loans

in this category, dropped 1.8% to MOP3.37 billion. The monthly average value of new RMLs approved between July and September this year declined 3.7% from the previous quarter to MOP3.7 billion.

Resident RMLs constituted 94.9% of loans. Compared to the previous month, outstanding RMLs to residents grew by 0.5%, while those to non-residents dropped by 0.3%.

Suggested gov't gaming proposal would secure economic viability: GEG

LYNZY VALLES

GALAXY Entertainment Group's (GEG) Lui Che Woo expressed his belief that suggested proposals to the gaming law, if implemented, would improve the industry's regulatory oversight, increase the sectors transparency, and secure the long-term viability of Macau's most important economic pillar.

The public consultation sessions regarding the draft proposals for amendments ended on October 25.

The amendments aim at three main aspects: perfecting the inspection juridical regime, raising the general competitiveness, and developing a healthy and stable gaming sector. Although the casino concessions are due to re-bid next year, the government has not yet provided guarantees that existing concessions will be renewed following their slated expiration in June 2022.

In a statement released by the gaming operator, GEG chairman said that the company would continue to invest in Cotai Phases 3 and 4, "which will support the on-

EVA BUCHO



going economic development and industry diversification of Macau including the MICE market, particularly following the opening of the Galaxy International Convention Center."

Phase 3 includes Raffles at Galaxy Macau, which features an approximately 450 all-suite tower, which GEG intends to open in step with prevailing market conditions in 2022.

"We intend to follow this with

the opening of the GICC and Andaz Macau in anticipation of the recovery of the MICE and entertainment markets. We are also continuing to proceed with the construction of Cotai Phase 4, our next generation integrated resort, which will complete our ecosystem in Cotai," said the business magnate.

"We remain highly confident about the future of Macau [in which] Cotai Phases 3 and 4 will

support Macau's vision of becoming a World Centre of Tourism and Leisure," Lui added.

During the third quarter, GEG's net revenue was HKD4.3 billion, in contrast to a net revenue of HKD1.6 billion in Q3 2020 and HKD5.6 billion in Q2 of 2021.

As of September 30, 2021, cash and liquid investments were HKD38.4 billion and net cash was HKD27.8 billion. Total debt accrued was HKD10.6 billion on

30 September 2021, including HKD10.2 billion associated with GEG's treasury yield enhancement program and HKD0.4 billion in core debt.

REVENUE BOUNCE BACK IN OCTOBER

Analysts from brokerage Sanford C. Bernstein Ltd have noted that Galaxy saw "business immediately bounce back to the high level [measured] before the July [Covid-19] outbreak, in both casino and non-gaming."

This comes after the relaxation of travel restrictions between Macau and Zhuhai on October 19.

Sanford C. Bernstein Ltd analysts Vitaly Umansky, Louis Li, and Kelsey Zhu recalled that October was "almost breakeven" after just 10 days of normal operation, as cited in a report issued by GGRAsia.

According to the brokerage firm, "Galaxy remains prudent, and will launch [Cotai] in prevailing market conditions in 2022, together with the Raffles and Andaz hotels and the rest of the features in Phase 3."

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XI-BIDEN SET VIRTUAL SUMMIT FOR TODAY TO DISCUSS TENSIONS

PRESIDENT Joe Biden and China's Xi Jinping will hold their much-anticipated virtual summit today as the two sides look to dial back tensions after a rough start to the U.S.-China relationship since Biden took office earlier this year.

The White House is setting low expectations for the video call between the leaders. Biden looks to stress that the two nations need to set guardrails in deepening areas of conflict in the increasingly complicated relationship between the two nations. White House officials said that no major announcements are expected to come from the meeting.

"I wouldn't set the expectation ... that this is intended to have major deliverables or outcomes," said White House press secretary Jen Psaki, who added that the two leaders would discuss how to manage the countries' competition and cooperate in areas where



interests align.

The meeting will be the third engagement between the two leaders since February. It comes after the U.S. and China this week pledged at U.N. climate talks in Glasgow, Scotland to increase their cooperation and speed up action to rein in climate-damaging emissions.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan and senior Chinese foreign policy adviser Yang Jiechi

came to an agreement on holding the Biden-Xi virtual summit by year's end when they met last month for talks in Zurich but the two sides had not settled on a date.

The virtual meeting was proposed after Biden, who spent a substantial amount of time with Xi when the two were vice presidents, mentioned during a September phone call with the Chinese leader that he would like to be able to see Xi again, according

to the White House.

Xi has not left China during the coronavirus pandemic. White House officials proposed a virtual summit as the best available substitute for the two leaders to have a substantive conversation on a number of issues that have put strains on the U.S.-China relationship.

"We hope the U.S. will work together with China to jointly strive to make the leaders' summit a success and bring China-U.S. ties back to the right track of sound and stable development," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said last week.

There has been no shortage of tension in the relationship in recent months as Biden has made clear he sees Beijing's actions on a number of fronts as concerning.

The president has criticized China for human rights abuses against ethnic minorities in northwest China, squelching pro-democracy efforts

in Hong Kong, and resisting global pressure to cooperate fully with investigations into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic. Tensions have also been exacerbated recently by the Chinese military's flying dozens of sorties near the self-ruled island of Taiwan, which Beijing considers part of its territory.

The White House suggested that Biden would raise his concerns on many of those issues during Monday's meeting. "There will be a broad range of topics that will be discussed and the President is certainly not going to hold back on areas where he is concerned," Psaki said.

Biden, at the Group of 20 meeting in Rome and again at the U.N. climate gathering, criticized Xi for failing to show up to the summits, where world leaders discussed the way forward on the pandemic and steps to ease the impact of climate change.

Both leaders took part in Friday's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) virtual meeting, where leaders discussed efforts to end the COVID-19 pandemic and support the global economic recovery. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

Authorities deny visa to Economist journalist

HONG Kong authorities declined to renew a visa for a foreign journalist working for The Economist without any explanation, the magazine said.

Sue-Lin Wong, who is Australian, was based in Hong Kong and covered China and the southern semi-autonomous city.

"We regret their decision. ... We urge the government of Hong Kong to maintain access for the foreign press, which is vital to the territory's standing as an international city," Zanny Minton Beddoes, The Economist's editor-in-chief, said in a statement last week.

Immigration authorities did not immediately respond to an email request for comment. Phone calls to the information office outside of business hours went unanswered.



Many have worried about the erosion of press freedom in a city that was once a bastion for it.

Last week, a survey by the Hong Kong Foreign Correspondents' Club found nearly half its members were considering leaving the city. They said they were concerned about a decline in press freedoms under a sweeping national security law imposed by Beijing following massive anti-government protests in 2019.

"Very sad I won't

be able to continue reporting from Hong Kong. I loved getting to know the city and its people. I will miss you all," Wong said in a message posted on Twitter.

Wong previously worked for the Financial Times and Reuters in China.

In August last year, Hong Kong immigration authorities denied a visa to Aaron Mc Nicholas, an incoming editor for Hong Kong Free Press, an independent news outlet, without giving a reason. **MDT/AP**

ITALIAN CITY DEFIES BEIJING, OPENS EXHIBIT BY DISSIDENT ARTIST

A provocative exhibit by dissident Chinese artist Badiuca opened this weekend in the industrial northern Italian city of Brescia despite pressure from the Chinese embassy in Rome to cancel it.

A letter from the embassy included veiled economic threats, noting Italy's trade with China, in a bid to prevent the first solo exhibit by Badiuca — the pseudonym used by the artist whose work takes aim at China's policies and human rights record.

Brescia Mayor Emilio Del Bono "responded with delicacy and firmness," said Elettra Stamboulis, curator of the exhibit at the city's Museum of Santa Giulia.

"Of course we are always a little worried, not so much for the artist's safety, but because we know there are more creepy ways to silence dissident artists," she said.

After a previous attempt to stage a solo show in Hong Kong in 2018 was canceled under pressure, Badiuca said he is "proud and happy" that the Brescia exhibit is finally open to the public.

"Because my art is always focusing on human rights issues in China ... it makes me almost the type of No. 1



Artist Badiuca (right) speaks to the media at the opening of his exhibition in the Santa Giulia Museum, in Brescia, Saturday

enemy," Badiuca said. "They hunt me down. They harass me, harass my families, threatening the people working with me constantly. So that is why, for me, it is really hard to actually having an exhibition in an established a gallery, a museum like this."

The exhibition, which runs until Feb. 13, traces Badiuca's artistic career from its start to most recent works created in response to the health crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. A former assistant to the Berlin-based Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei, Badiuca currently works in exile from Australia.

The artist kept his identity

secret for many years, wearing masks during public appearances to protect his family members. The long-held secrecy drew comparisons to British graffiti artist Banksy, whose true identity remains shrouded in mystery.

But Badiuca said any comparison misses key points.

"If Banksy's identity gets revealed he is not or she is not going to be hunted by the UK's national security police, which in my case is totally different," he said. "But also, I am really mad at Banksy, because he never does any artwork that criticizes the Chinese government." **MDT/AP**

MYANMAR

Political standoff leaves economy in tatters

ELAINE KURTENBACH

THE military takeover in Myanmar has set its economy back years, if not decades, as political unrest and violence disrupt banking, trade and livelihoods and millions slide deeper into poverty.

The Southeast Asian country was already in recession when the pandemic took hold in 2020, paralyzing its lucrative tourism sector. Political upheavals after the army ousted its civilian government on Feb. 1 have heaped further misery on its 62 million people, who are paying sharply higher prices for food and other necessities as the value of the kyat, the national currency, plummets.

With no end to the political impasse in sight, the outlook for the economy is murky.

U.N. humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths appealed last week to Myanmar's military leaders to allow unimpeded access to more than 3 million people needing "life-saving" aid "because of growing conflict and insecurity, COVID-19 and a failing economy."

Griffiths said he was increasingly concerned about reports of rising levels of food insecurity in and around the cities.

Hundreds of thousands of people in the country have lost their jobs and poverty has deepened as Myanmar's inflation has skyrocketed.

"Imported foods and medicines cost double what they used to . . . so people buy only what they need to buy. And when traders sell an item for 1,000 kyats one day and 1,200 the next, it means that the seller is losing while selling," said Ma San San, a trader in Mawlamyine township who sells Thai goods.

Myanmar's economy is forecast to shrink by 18.4% in 2021, according to the Asian Development Bank, one of the deepest recent contractions anywhere.

The civilian government ousted in February had been making slow but steady progress toward weaving impoverished Myanmar into the global economy after decades of quasi-isolation under past military regimes. Exports surged over the last decade, after the generals relaxed their decades-long hold on power. Eager to tap a young and low-cost workforce, foreign investors set up factories making garments and other light manufactured goods.

Yangon, the former capital and largest city, was transformed as moldering buildings dating back to British colonial days were spruced up or demolished, making way for new roads, industrial zo-

AP PHOTO



nes, shopping malls and modern apartments. Private businesses popped up, creating jobs and meeting long-deprived demand for products like cellphones and new cars.

But the military still controlled key government ministries and many industries, and corruption and cronyism thrived. Months into Myanmar's political crisis, the country has returned to the days of black market trading and dollar hoarding.

"Now most people are losing faith in the Myanmar currency and buying dollars, so prices are soaring," said Soe Tun, chairman of the Myanmar Automobile Manufacturers and Distributors Association and an official of the Myanmar Rice Association.

Trade has been hindered both by the global shortage, and surging costs, of shipping containers and by China's closure of its border to exports from Myanmar to help control coronavirus outbreaks.

Myanmar's total trade fell 22% from a year earlier in the 10 months from October 2020 to July 2021, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, who led the army's takeover, recently told his military-installed cabinet. He said the country logged a trade deficit of \$368 million.

The less Myanmar exports, the less it earns in foreign currency — mainly dollars — making the

greenback all the more scarce and valuable versus the kyat.

In January, the dollar bought 1,300-1,400 kyats. In late September, it hit a record high 3,000 kyats among money changers on downtown Yangon's Shwembontha Street, informally known as Broker Street.

That has driven up prices in kyats for necessities such as cooking oil, cosmetics, food, electronics, fuel and other increasingly costly supplies that have to be imported using dollars.

The authorities suspended vehicle imports from Oct. 1 to conserve foreign exchange. To stanch the kyat's plunge, the Central Bank of Myanmar has intervened in the market 36 times since February. But such operations have had scant impact, traders say, since most dollars sold by the central bank go to pro-military businesses.

"Some say the dollars issued by the central bank do not meet domestic demand, and we accept that is true," Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, the military administration's chief spokesperson, told reporters.

"As a government, we have to take responsibility for what happened in our time rather than blaming the past," he said. "I want to say that our government is working hard to find the best solution."

Some people have set up mo-

ney changing groups to swap kyats for dollars online despite the risks, and the central bank recently issued a notice banning such non-official dealings.

"Online is easier these days. You can easily find people who want to buy or sell. But you need to build trust between sellers and buyers. There are also scammers online," said Ko Thurein, who often posts dollar sales in the Myanmar Money Changer Group.

Fuel scarcity has become a major problem. Partly thanks to rising global oil prices, the cost of gasoline, which is imported since Myanmar has scant refining capacity, has more than doubled to a record of about 1,500 kyats per liter from about 700 kyats in January.

Zaw Min Tun, the military's spokesperson, said Myanmar was working on long-term hydro-power and wind power projects while trying to conserve energy and cut imports since it could not "cover the demand for fuel."

Top leader Min Aung Hlaing has exhorted the public to help reduce energy use.

"It's difficult to buy dollars, and oil companies are no longer selling us on credit," said an official from Max Energy, a major conglomerate operating dozens of filling stations. "You cannot buy everything you want and we have a hard time building trust with them. So we are just trying not to

lose too much at the moment."

He blamed the political crisis. "Even in our country, people do not trust each other, and there is no doubt that foreigners do not trust us. It is also because the banking system is in turmoil," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity given the sensitivity of the topic.

"Gasoline prices have skyrocketed, so we have to raise fares. But passengers don't want to pay. I know everyone is impoverished right now, so people are using buses instead of taxis," said Moe Myint Tun, a taxi driver in Yangon. "When we have high fuel prices, we lose a lot of passengers."

Like many other modern amenities, bank services have been periodically disrupted by protests and strikes, forcing people wanting to access their cash to use mobile banking apps and pay 5%-7% fees at so-called Pay Money shops providing financial services.

"Because of inflation, the money in our hands automatically decreases in value. Once the money in the bank can't be withdrawn, we have to pay a commission at the Pay Money shops. Finally, we have nothing left," said Su Yee Win Aung, a sales clerk at a telecommunications company in Yangon.

"It can be said that it is the most difficult time for us," she said. **MDT/AP**



COP26

Nations compromise on coal to strike UN climate agreement

SETH BORENSTEIN,
GLASGOW

ALMOST 200 nations accepted a compromise deal yesterday [Macau time] aimed at keeping a key global warming target alive, but it contained a last-minute change that watered down crucial language about coal.

Several countries, including small island states, said they were deeply disappointed by the change promoted by India to “phase down,” rather than “phase out” coal power, the single biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions.

“Our fragile planet is hanging by a thread,” United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement. “We are still knocking on the door of climate catastrophe.”

Nation after nation had complained after two weeks of U.N. climate talks in Glasgow, Scotland, about how the deal did not go far or fast enough. But they said it was better than nothing and provided incremental progress, if not success.

In the end, the summit broke ground by singling out coal, however weakly, by setting the rules for international trading of carbon credits, and by telling big polluters to come back next year with improved pledges for cutting emissions.

But domestic priorities both political and economic

again kept nations from committing to the fast, big cuts that scientists say are needed to keep warming below dangerous levels which would produce extreme weather and rising seas capable of erasing some island nations.

Ahead of the Glasgow talks, the United Nations had set three criteria for success, and none of them were achieved. The U.N.’s criteria included pledges to cut carbon dioxide emissions in half by 2030, \$100 billion in financial aid from rich nations to poor, and ensuring that half of that money went to helping the developing world adapt to the worst effects of climate change.

“We did not achieve these goals at this conference,” Guterres said. “But we have some building blocks for progress.”

Swiss environment minister Simonetta Sommaruga said the change will make it harder to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius since pre-industrial times - the more stringent threshold set in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

U.S. climate envoy John Kerry said governments had no choice but to accept India’s coal language change: “If we hadn’t done that we wouldn’t have had an agreement.”

But he insisted the deal was good news for the world.

“We are in fact closer than we have ever been before to avoiding climate chaos and securing cleaning air, safer

water and healthier planet,” he said later at a news conference.

Many other nations and climate campaigners criticized India for making demands that weakened the final agreement.

“India’s last-minute change to the language to phase down but not phase out coal is quite shocking,” said Australian climate scientist Bill Hare, who tracks world emission pledges for the science-based Climate Action Tracker. “India has long been a blocker on climate action, but I have never seen it done so publicly.”

Others approached the deal from a more positive perspective. In addition to the revised coal language, the Glasgow Climate Pact included enough financial incentives to almost satisfy poorer nations and solved a long-standing problem to pave the way for carbon trading.

The agreement also says big carbon polluting nations have to come back and submit stronger emission cutting pledges by the end of 2022.

Negotiators said the deal preserved, albeit barely, the overarching goal of limiting Earth’s warming by the end of the century to 1.5 degrees. The planet has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius compared to preindustrial times.

Governments used the word “progress” more than 20 times Saturday, but rarely used the word “success” and then mostly in that they’ve

reached a conclusion, not about the details in the agreement. Conference President Alok Sharma said the deal drives “progress on coal, cars, cash and trees” and is “something meaningful for our people and our planet.”

Environmental activists were measured in their not-quite-glowing assessments, issued before India’s last minute change.

“It’s meek, it’s weak and the 1.5 C goal is only just alive, but a signal has been sent that the era of coal is ending. And that matters,” said Greenpeace International Executive Director Jennifer Morgan, a veteran of the U.N. climate talks known as the Conferences of Parties.

Former Irish President Mary Robinson, speaking for a group of retired leaders called The Elders, said the pact represents “some progress, but nowhere near enough to avoid climate disaster [...] People will see this as a historically shameful dereliction of duty.”

Indian Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav argued against a provision on phasing out coal, saying that developing countries were “entitled to the responsible use of fossil fuels.”

Yadav blamed “unsustainable lifestyles and wasteful consumption patterns” in rich countries for causing global warming.

After Yadav first raised the specter of changing the coal language, a frustrated European Union Vice President Frans Timmermans, the 27-nation EU’s climate envoy, begged negotiators to be united for future generations.

Kerry and several other negotiators said that good compromises leave everyone slightly unsatisfied and that countries had more work ahead of them over the coming years.

“Paris built the arena and Glasgow starts the race,” the veteran U.S. diplomat said. “And tonight the starting gun was fired.”

Chinese negotiator Zhao Yingmin echoed that sentiment.

“I think our biggest success is to finalize the rule-book,” Zhao told the Associated Press. “Now we can start implementing it and delivering it on our achieved consensus.”

As negotiators left the final session after congratulating themselves, they passed a young lone protester who sat silently with red blood-like writing on crossed arms that said: “We are watching.” **MDT/AP**

this day in history



1951: MURDER ON MALAY RUBBER ESTATE



Anti-government rebels have ambushed and killed 11 people in an attack on a rubber plantation in Malaya.

The dead include a London director visiting the area, the manager of the estate and nine special constables on a foot inspection.

The attack is the latest in a long campaign by Communist forces opposed to British control of the Federation of Malaya.

It began with the murder of three British rubber planters in June 1948 - which led to the British declaring a state of emergency.

There have been more terror attacks in the Malay peninsula in the past few weeks than at any time since 1948.

On average, about 100 police officers have been killed every month this year.

The guerrillas’ latest tactics include threatening to nail rubber tappers to the trees unless they go on strike.

Work on over 50,000 acres (202 square kilometres) of estates has now stopped - representing a daily loss of about 60,000 lbs (27,216 kg) of rubber.

Most of the estates affected are in the south-western states of Negri Sembilan and Malacca.

Workers on four other estates have defied the Communists and returned to work after they were given increased protection from security forces.

Intimidation by the rebels has led to problems recruiting labour to work on the plantations, even for higher wages in areas prone to attack.

This latest surge in guerrilla activity suggests the British government’s expensive Briggs plan has failed.

The scheme - which has also proved very unpopular with locals - involved moving many of them from their jungle homes to new villages in areas more easily protected from the rebels.

It seems clear many local people are still afraid to co-operate with the security forces for fear of reprisals from the guerrillas.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The Rubber Producers’ Council admitted later the Communists were stealing 20% of rubber tapped on Malayan plantations and using the proceeds to finance their terrorist activities.

The British changed their tactics to win more local support and began addressing political and economic problems with the distant promise of independence.

A government amnesty was offered to terrorists in 1955 and from then on the guerrilla campaign began to peter out. It was finally defeated in 1960. Independence was granted in August 1957 and the state of emergency lifted in July 1960.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Your love life is starting to generate some real heat! Make sure that while you're conversing with all those prospects that you keep things diverse. Save as much time for culture as you save for intellectual pursuits.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
 One person is probably sacrificing too much for the sake of keeping things peaceful. But the resentment is there, and it is growing. It's time to get it all out in the open. Work out a compromise.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
 There is a new, fresh, and light kind of energy coming into your life. It will be just what you need to get through a few heavy days. Sunshine outside won't be any match for the sunshine in your heart.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Don't let others swollen pride be an excuse for you not to recognize just how well they've done. Be sure to let them know that you're proud of them. It won't cost you anything, and it will mean a lot to them.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 You've been working hard and you deserve some time off. You might not be able to take a full-blown vacation, or even leave town, but that doesn't mean you can't give your brain a break.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 You are feeling more flexible than ever in your mind and your body! This is a great day to explore a new physical exercise, like Pilates or tae kwon do or even salsa dancing!

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 There is no such thing as being too hopeful right now. Even if the worst-case scenario comes to fruition, you'll still be better off for having let yourself believe in the best.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 You could benefit more from conflict and challenge than you do from collaboration and agreement today. Don't worry if you feel like making some waves.

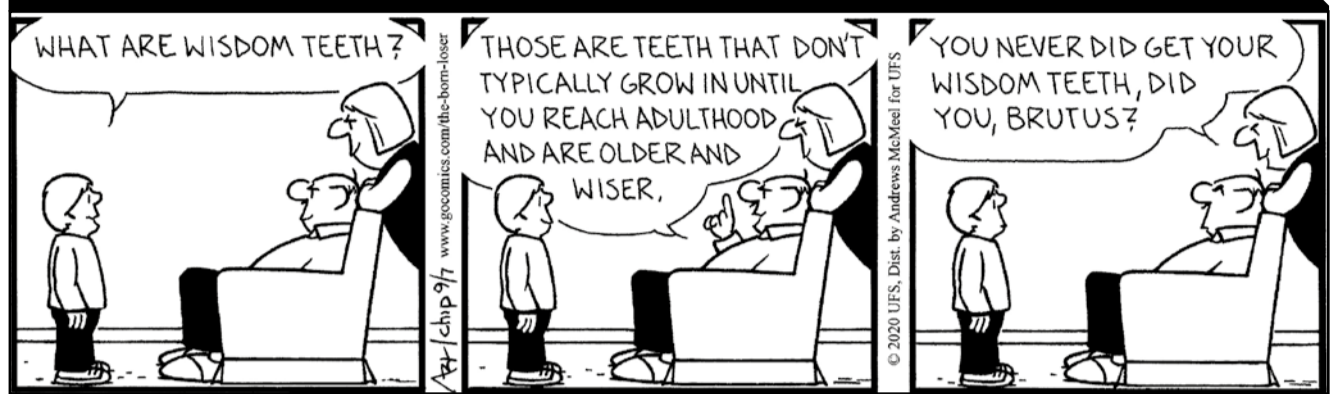
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 The conflict that has been brewing between you and another is going to start to fade today, so you can breathe a sigh of relief and enjoy being friends again.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Sharing isn't necessarily a good thing after all, at least not right now. If you share your resources in your typically generous way, you're going to end up with the short end of the stick.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 You have a lot more control over today's events than you think you do, and it's time to flex your muscle a bit. It will help you to victory in an entertaining power struggle.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 If you're currently watching what you eat, you can expect some rewarding news to come your way today. Your progress has been a bit more significant than you thought!

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	0	14	fine
Harbin	-12	-2	fine
Tianjin	10	20	cloudy
Urumqi	6	16	cloudy
Xi'an	9	13	cloudy
Lhasa	5	10	fine
Chengdu	13	21	cloudy
Chongqing	15	19	cloudy
Kunming	7	10	overcast
Nanjing	19	25	cloudy
Shanghai	9	17	fine
Wuhan	-9	-3	fine
Hangzhou	4	16	cloudy
Taipei	-7	4	fine
Guangzhou	13	25	fine
Hong Kong	18	25	fine
WORLD			
Moscow	2	5	snow
Frankfurt	1	7	overcast
Paris	9	13	overcast
London	11	15	rain
New York	9	19	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Pass into disuse; 6- Truman's birthplace; 11- Officeholders; 14- Son of Abraham; 15- Quick and nimble; 16- OT. book; 17- Pertaining to the Netherlands; 18- Loud; 19- Turkish honorific; 20- Last letter of the Greek alphabet; 22- Do-nothing; 24- Kind of medicine; 28- Develop gradually; 29- Exit; 30- Devoured; 32- Brio; 33- Iota preceeder; 35- ___ well...; 39- Fender flaw; 40- UN agency; 41- Lacking slack; 42- I'd hate to break up ___; 43- Paradises; 45- "The Joy of Cooking" author Rombauer; 46- More robust; 48- 31st president of the U.S.; 50- Adorn; 53- Long tapering flag; 54- Muscat native; 55- Bucolic; 57- Hide-hair connector; 58- Same here; 60- Butler's love; 65- Hot time in Paris; 66- Mountaineer's tool; 67- Spring sign; 68- Flushed; 69- Soft and comfortable; 70- Pluck;


DOWN: 1- Cover; 2- Tempe sch.; 3- Bit of butter; 4- Animal pouch; 5- Resounds; 6- Tennis great Rod; 7- Excited; 8- Flaky mineral; 9- In the manner of; 10- Experience again; 11- Total; 12- Israeli desert region; 13- Apportion; 21- Spar; 23- Contribution; 24- I ___ vacation!; 25- Citrus hybrids; 26- Large wading bird; 27- Grow longer; 28- Zeta follower; 30- Conger catcher; 31- Lots and lots; 34- Screen; 36- Insect stage; 37- Light unit; 38- Square one; 43- Antlered animal; 44- Queens stadium; 47- Like toxic rainfall; 49- Borrowed; 50- Stupid mistake; 51- Chew the scenery; 52- Called one's bluff; 53- Stand-in; 55- Hwys.; 56- Beehive State; 59- Hosp. area; 61- Charlemagne's realm; Abbr.; 62- Life support?; 63- Accelerate; 64- Enzyme ending;

Friday's solution

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

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Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944	
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731	
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333	
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300	
IAM 28 387 333	
Tourism 28 333 000	
Airport 59 888 88	



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Property of the Week



Hellene Gardens
HKD 9,988,000 2,073 ft² 4 3

Hellene Gardens is a fabulous complex to own your own property and this medium size apartment could be yours.

The current owners made some modifications to the original design, increasing the size of the kitchen, turning it into a user friendly galley style kitchen. The apartment now has four bedrooms, two with ensuite shower rooms and another separate guest bathroom.

The living room views are stunning looking across the garden nurseries with the islands mountains in the background and Grand Coloane Hotel to the right. From the master bedroom you have the most amazing views across Hac Sa to enjoy the magical sunrises without having to get out of bed.

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



Ref: 2111 6002

Property Hotlist



Retail shop
HKD 12,980,000
833 ft²



SCAN ME
Ref: 2111 6001



Patio De Guia
HKD 3,600,000
1,200 ft²

3
2



SCAN ME
Ref: 2111 6003



Va Fat
HKD 9,500/mth
740 ft²

1
1



SCAN ME
Ref: 1910 1006

More Listings

For Sale

- [Taipa] Nam Long 1 1 590 ft² **HKD 3,480,000** Ref: 2108 6002
- [Macau] Jardim do Dragao 2 1 980 ft² **HKD 6,680,000** Ref: 2106 6001
- [Taipa] Manhattan 3 2 1,720 ft² **HKD 12,980,000** Ref: 1909 6006
- [Taipa] Nova Taipa 1 3 2 2,105 ft² **HKD 15,000,000** Ref: 2103 6004
- [Taipa] Manhattan 4 2 2,305 ft² **HKD 17,980,000** Ref: 1807 5558

For Rent

- [Taipa] Chun U Villa 4 3 1,979 ft² **HKD 16,500/mth** Ref: 2104 1001
- [Macau] One Central 2 2 1,269 ft² **HKD 16,500/mth** Ref: 2005 1002
- [Cotai] One Grantai 3 3 2,158 ft² **HKD 20,000/mth** Ref: 2105 1002
- [Cotai] One Oasis 3 2 2,100 ft² **HKD 28,000/mth** Ref: 2011 1002
- [Taipa] One Central 3 3 2,332 ft² **HKD 29,800/mth** Ref: 2010 1001

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JOHN DUERDEN, SEOUL

FOOTBALL

AUSTRALIA is hoping to get its World Cup qualification campaign back on Tuesday in Sharjah with a win that would almost certainly end China's slim hopes of returning to the Middle East next November.

One point from the last two games has resulted in the Socceroos slipping into second in Group B at the halfway stage, three points behind Saudi Arabia, the two teams drew 0-0 in Sydney on Thursday, and just one above Japan. Only the top two from each of the six-team groups are guaranteed a place at the Qatar World Cup.

Failure to win in Sharjah, the game has been switched from China due to travel restrictions put in place by Beijing to combat the spread of COVID-19, could see Australia slip out of the two places that guarantee a place in the Qatar World Cup in each of the six-team groups.

Coach Graham Arnold is staying positive despite the recent setbacks. "We're in a great spot, it's all in our hands," Arnold said. "If you've got something that's in your hands, you're in a great position rather than having to rely on other results."

AP PHOTO



Australia will be without Harry Souttar as the giant Stoke City defender picked up a knee injury against Saudi Arabia.

China, with just one World Cup appearance in its history, has just four points out of the five games so far to increase pressure on coach Li Tie. Defeat

would likely spell the end of any ambitions of finishing third and entering the play-off route to the World Cup.

Following the 1-1 draw with Oman on Thursday, there have been growing calls for Li to resign though former China coach Zhu Guanghu has defended the current boss.

Australia looks to reignite WCup campaign against China

"Very few of the current crop of Chinese players are hungry for football," Zhu said. "Just like what Sir Alex Ferguson said about the Chinese players, they can play the ball well when not being challenged. But when under challenge with limited space, they cannot do it."

"It's too late to deal with their deficiencies at the national team stage, this should be done when they are young," he added.

Saudi Arabia can move a step closer to a sixth World Cup appearance with a win over Vietnam which has lost all five games so far. Japan travels to Oman currently with seven points from five games,

In Group A, Iran and South Korea are moving clear. Iran scored twice in the closing minutes to defeat Lebanon 2-1 on Thursday to stay first with 13 points. Iran takes on Syria, bottom of the group with just two

points while Korea will stay on course for a tenth successive World Cup appearance with a win over Iraq in Qatar.

Korea captain Son Heung-min hit the woodwork twice as Korea defeated United Arab Emirates 1-0 on Thursday and the Tottenham Hotspur star is looking for more goals.

"This is my third time playing in the final qualifying phase for the World Cup, and things have never been easy," Son said. "Our job isn't done. I want us to finish this with a flourish, and I'll prepare for every remaining match like it's the final."

"We're obviously not trying to win every match 1-0. One-goal leads are always tough to play with," Son said. "Our opponents work as hard as we do, and winning is more important than anything."

In the group's other fixture, Lebanon in third hosts United Arab Emirates. **MDT/AP**

AD

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OPINION

World Views

Frank Jordans, MDT/AP



**GOOD COP, BAD COP?
 TAKEAWAYS FROM THE
 NEW UN CLIMATE DEAL**

After two years of preparation and 13 days of tough talks, did negotiators at the U.N. climate meeting in Glasgow save the planet?

In short: no.

But they were hardly expected to do so. The annual Conference of the Parties, just held for the 26th time, is all about getting countries to gradually ratchet up their measures to defuse global warming.

The focus of the Glasgow talks was not to forge a new treaty but to finalize the one agreed to in Paris six years ago and to build on it by further curbing greenhouse gas emissions, bending the temperature curve closer to levels that don't threaten human civilization.

Going into the Glasgow talks, most countries, including the United States, China and the 27 members of the European Union, declared new, more ambitious targets for reducing emissions.

Some, such as India, announced additional measures at the meeting itself. Side deals brokered by host country Britain covered issues such as reversing deforestation, boosting electric vehicles, phasing out coal, clamping down on methane emissions and unlocking investor cash for the fight against climate change.

Within the official negotiations, countries agreed to firmly focus on the most ambitious goal in the 2015 Paris accord, of keeping global warming from going beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit). Experts and vulnerable countries have long advocated that threshold, but some nations previously held onto the option of aiming for "well below 2 C (3.6 F)."

They also agreed to explicitly target coal use and fossil fuel subsidies, though the original proposals were greatly watered down.

In a bid to spur further ambition, major emitters will be asked to present new targets at the 2022 U.N. climate conference in Egypt.

There was bad blood going into the meeting because rich countries have failed to meet their pledge of providing \$100 billion each year by 2020 to help poor nations cope with climate change.

The final agreement expressed "deep regret" about the funding failure and urges rich nations to come up with the money as soon as possible.

The share and amount of money earmarked for poor countries to adapt to rising sea levels and other impacts of climate change was also increased, though not by as much as they had demanded.

Fixing the rules on international cooperation for reducing emissions, including carbon markets, had eluded nations since Paris. Six years on, it remained one of the hardest-fought issues in the negotiating room over the past two weeks.

The rules covering what's known as Article 6 will become increasingly important as countries and companies aim to cut their emissions to "net zero" by 2050 by balancing out any remaining pollution they produce with an equal amount of carbon captured elsewhere.

While a compromise was found that proponents say could add trillions of dollars to the battle against climate change, some countries and environmental groups fear the deal left significant loopholes which could undermine the integrity of the system by allowing certain emissions cuts to be counted twice.

A shift by Brazil, under pressure by some of its major companies, proved decisive in clinching the deal. In return, the country gets to keep some carbon credits it amassed under an older system that experts say wasn't credible.

A small surcharge on carbon trades will go toward a fund to help poor countries adapt to global warming, but campaigners had hoped for the levy to be applied more broadly and blamed U.S. opposition for that happening in Glasgow.

Countries agreed to several tweaks to the rules on how and how often they need to report what they are doing to reduce emissions.

China has been particularly wary of having others scrutinize its efforts too closely. Along with other developed and emerging economies, it is now expected to report every five instead of every 10 years.

**AS VIRUS SURGES IN EASTERN EUROPE,
 LEADERS SLOW TO ACT**

At the main hospital in Romania's capital, the morgue ran out of space for the dead in recent days, and doctors in Bulgaria have suspended routine surgeries so they can tend to a surge in COVID-19 patients. In the Serbian capital, the graveyard now operates an extra day during the week in order to bury all the bodies arriving.

For two months now, a stubborn wave of virus infections has ripped mercilessly through several countries in Central and Eastern Europe, where vaccination rates are much lower than elsewhere on the continent. While medical workers pleaded for

tough restrictions or even lockdowns, leaders let the virus rage unimpeded for weeks.

While several Western European countries are seeing spikes in infections, it is nations to the East that are driving fatalities. Romania, Bulgaria and the Balkan states recorded some of the highest per-capita death rates in the world in the first week of November, according to the WHO.

Experts say fumbled vaccination campaigns and underfunded and mismanaged health systems set the stage for the latest outbreaks.



Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte (center) poses for a selfie outside the City Hall in Davao city, southern Philippines

**DUTERTE'S DAUGHTER
 TO RUN FOR VP WITH
 EX-DICTATOR'S SON**

PHILIPPINE President Rodrigo Duterte's daughter this weekend registered her candidacy for vice president in next year's elections and was chosen as the running mate of Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the late dictator's son, in an alliance that has alarmed human rights activists.

Sara Duterte backed out this week from her reelection bid as mayor of southern Davao city then took the place of a largely unknown vice-presidential candidate of her political party, Lakas CMD, in a maneuver that allowed her to seek the second-highest post even after a deadline lapsed for candidates in the May 9 elections.

Marcos Jr. filed his papers at the Commission on Elections last month. His party, Partido Federal ng Pilipinas, named Sara Duterte on Saturday as his running mate.

In a chaotic turn of events that bolstered speculations of a discord between the president and his daughter, the elder Duterte suddenly trooped to the elections commission Saturday to accompany his former aide, Sen. Bong Go, who shifted his vice-presidential candidacy to a presidential run. Duterte may even reconsider his earlier plan, which he has dropped, to run for vice president, said Communications Secretary Martin Andanar. Such a race

would pit the president, who is constitutionally limited to a single six-year term, against his daughter.

Philippine presidents and vice presidents are elected separately and could forge an alliance even if they run under different political parties. If they're elected from rival camps, they often end up in a hostile relationship.

Ferdinand Marcos, who was toppled in a 1986 "people power" pro-democracy uprising and died in U.S. exile three years later, and the current president both have been criticized for gross human rights abuses.

Marcos had placed the Philippines under martial law in 1972 in an era that was marked by widespread atrocities and economic plunder. Duterte has been condemned by Western governments and human rights groups for a brutal anti-drugs crackdown that has left more than 6,000 mostly poor suspects dead in large-scale killings that are being investigated by the International Criminal Court.

"The Marcos-Duterte tandem is the biggest threat to the democratic aspirations of the people," said Renato Reyes of Bayan, a prominent left-wing coalition. "It has the most self-serving aims: a Marcos restoration and the protection of outgoing President Rodrigo Duterte."

Reyes said the Duterte-Marcos alliance "serves only the narrow interests of their dynastic families." His group immediately launched an online protest and scheduled a rally at the Commission on Human Rights on Sunday.

There were no immediate comments from Sara Duterte or Marcos Jr., a former senator and provincial governor who is widely known by his nickname Bongbong. Initially, Duterte and his ruling party wanted his daughter to succeed him. That prospect has renewed calls for Philippine Congress to enact a law to enforce a constitutional prohibition against political dynasties in a Southeast Asian country where powerful and wealthy clans have dominated local politics for generations.

The 43-year-old Sara, a mother of three and a lawyer like her father, has been a longtime mayor of Davao, an economically vibrant city where the elder Duterte first carved a political name with his populist rhetoric and often bloody approach against criminality, especially the widespread trafficking and use of illegal drugs, before he rose to the presidency in 2016.

Duterte's rule, which ends in June next year, became one of the most tumultuous and controversial in Philippine history, after Marcos. MDT/AP

New Zealand Pacific Rim leaders agreed to do all they can to improve access to coronavirus vaccines and reduce carbon emissions, but failed to reach agreement on whether the U.S. should host talks in two years' time. U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping were among those taking part in the online meeting of 21 leaders at the end of the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum on Saturday, which was being hosted virtually by New Zealand.



Ecuador A prolonged gunbattle between rival gangs inside Ecuador's largest prison killed at least 68 inmates and wounded 25 yesterday [Macau time], while authorities said it took most of the day to regain control at the Litoral Penitentiary, which recently saw the country's worst prison bloodbath.



USA Steve Bannon, a longtime ally of former President Donald Trump, has been indicted on two counts of criminal contempt of Congress after he defied a subpoena from the House committee investigating the violent Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. Each count carries a minimum of 30 days of jail and as long as a year behind bars.



New York City ushered in the holiday season Saturday with the arrival of a 24-meter Norway spruce that will serve as one of the world's most famous Christmas trees, in Rockefeller Center. The 12-ton tree was trucked in from the Price family home in Elkton, Maryland — the first time the tree has come from that state since the tradition began eight decades ago. The lighting ceremony is scheduled for Dec. 1.