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US The Navy said it seized a large cache of assault rifles and ammunition being smuggled by a fishing ship from Iran likely bound for war-ravaged Yemen. U.S. Navy patrol ships discovered the weapons aboard what the Navy described as a stateless fishing vessel in an operation that began on Monday in the northern reaches of the Arabian Sea off Oman and Pakistan. Sailors boarded the vessel and found 1,400 Kalashnikov-style rifles and 226,600 rounds of ammunition, as well five Yemeni crew members.

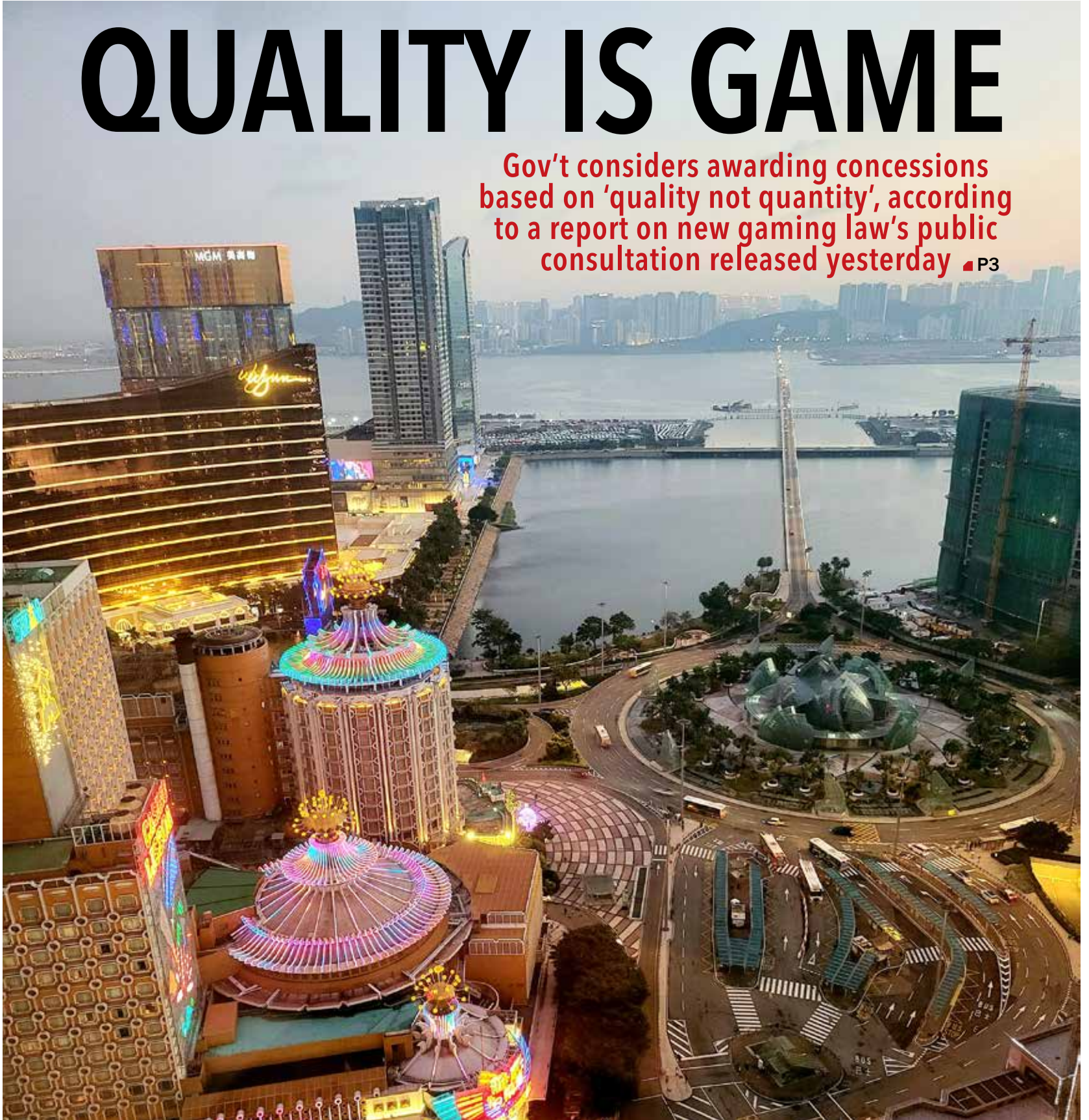


Russian President Vladimir Putin urged the West yesterday to move quickly to meet Russia's demand for security guarantees precluding NATO's expansion to Ukraine and the deployment of the military alliance's weapons there. Speaking during a marathon annual news conference, the Russian leader welcomed talks with the U.S. that are set to start in Geneva next month, but sternly warned that Moscow expects the discussion to produce quick results.



Israel Antiquities Authority announced yesterday the discovery of remnants of two shipwrecks off the Mediterranean coast, replete with a sunken trove of hundreds Roman and medieval silver coins. The finds made near the ancient city of Caesarea were dated to the Roman and Mamluk periods, around 1,700 and 600 years ago, archaeologists said. They include hundreds of Roman silver and bronze coins dating to the mid-third century, as well as more than 500 silver coins from the Middle Ages found amid the sediment.

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FESTIVE EVENTS TO CAP OFF THE YEAR

STAFF REPORTER

THE difficulty to travel should not keep the Christmas joy away from the city's residents, who live in this haven free from Covid-19. The Times has rounded up some festive events, performances, and markets where residents can take part in.

Also, other integrated resorts, from the peninsula to Cotai, are offering special season deals for accommodation and restaurants, and bookings are in great demand, the Times has learned.

SHOWS

The Macao Light Festival, organized by the Macao Govern-

ment Tourism Office (MGTO) and running since 2015, has become well-known and loved by locals and visitors to the city alike, and is now celebrated every year in different locations across the Macau Islands.

The Nam Van Lake area hosts part of the light festival as well as being home to the first edition of the Light Up Macao Drone Gala. The event has been dazzling the city twice each Saturday night, and its last shows will take place this week, on Christmas evening. The ongoing Lilies of Eternal Harmony - Winter Flower Show 2021 showcases a lively spectacle of blooms. Around 28,000 flowerpots will be on display in the show. The Municipal Affairs

Bureau will arrange a number of exhibitions and activities featuring lilies throughout the period of the show.

FUN

Tap Seac Square is again host to an annual Christmas Market, with a number of gift stalls and some snack stalls. The family-friendly market has many eye-catching features, such as a Christmas tree with dazzling lights, canopy light decorations, a manger and Christmas huts, creating a magnificent hub for photo opportunities. There is also other entertainment for children, including an outdoor merry-go-round, an artificial ski slope, an LED piano dance floor and inte-

ractive performances.

For even more fun and joy of the season, kids can unleash their creativity in the Sweet Tooth Workshops at MGM Cotai's Anytime.

Children and parents are invited to decorate their own donuts or gingerbread with colorful candy toppings at the Winter Festive Donut Decoration Workshop and Gingerbread Icing Cookie Decoration Workshop, creating their own edible masterpiece while also enjoying some time together as a family.

PERFORMANCES

MGM Cotai is hosting an innovative ethnic dance drama called "MGM Awakening

Lion," which pays homage to the classic cultural performances of the Greater Bay Area. The 70-minute techno-cultural dance drama is presented by MGM and the Guangzhou Song and Dance Theater, and has been re-arranged for the occasion, having been awarded best dance drama in the China Lotus Awards.

For young children, the Culture Center is presenting "Sleepless Rascals" from today until Sunday. The Little Devil, a lively and funny show originally created by the Shanghaiese children's theatre Little Player, illustrates the struggles many parents face with their kids at bedtime.

Monte do Pasto launches sustainable meat project with universities



LYNZY VALLES

MONTE do Pasto is developing a sustainable meat production project in partnership with Portuguese institutions including the University of Évora and the University of Minho.

The project, named "Ethical Meat - Integrated System for Sustainable Meat Production," aims to develop more sustainable meat products that respect animal welfare through re-

search, technology and innovation.

The project will invest in research and the development of innovative processes and technologies to enable the production of meat products with higher levels of animal welfare and sustainability.

Speaking to the Times, António Trindade, CEO and president of CESL Asia, the local company which acquired Monte do Pasto, said that the goal of the project is to be "econo-

mically sustainable."

"We are developing comprehensive standards," said Trindade, adding that the group signed a protocol to establish a share for sustainable agriculture and animal welfare.

"We will use [technologies] that is already there and take it and contribute to Macau, China and to the world by engaging in this program."

Parallel to the partnership already established between Monte do Pasto and Évora University for the development of "Ethical Meat," the two entities also agreed on a Collaborative Innovation partnership. The partnership will provide for the creation of a

new chair centered on the agricultural sector, animal welfare and sustainability, to develop that area and attract and retain qualified professionals in the region.

According to a joint statement, Clara Moura Guedes, managing director of Monte do Pasto, added that the project's ultimate goal is to "create a meat product that integrates high commercial value qualifiers: animal welfare, sustainability, quality standards, extended shelf life, sustainable packaging, reduction of food waste, ensuring a potential for capturing value and creating positive environmental and social impact throughout the chain."

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DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR_Lynzy Valles
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS_Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Viviana Segui
DESIGNERS_Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua
SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

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ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com
OFFICE MANAGER_Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com
ADDRESS_Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84
Advertisement_advertising@macaudailytimes.com
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GAMING LAW

Gov't considers awarding concessions based on 'quality not quantity'

LYNZY VALLES

A report on the public consultation on the amendment to the gaming law has revealed that most participants "agree with the general direction of the consultation document," considering the guidelines on the revision to the law as "correct."

According to the report reviewed by the Times, those whose opinions were collected understood that the revision of the law "will help to ensure the orderly development of the gaming sector."

The public consultation report stated that, in terms of administration, a majority believe that there must be more than one deputy administrator who is a permanent resident of Macau to exercise this position, preferably with qualifications in the relevant areas. Some respondents suggested the percentage of share capital held by a managing director be increased from 20% to 50%, as well as requiring the director to stay in Macau for a certain period of time (such as 183 days, for example) in order to understand the Macau market and the operating situation of concessionaires and sub-concessionaires.

Others considered that the percentage of share capital held by a managing director should be increased in stages to 50% or higher. Other respondents pointed out that an increase in the percentage of share capital held by the managing director effectively ensures that the exploitation of games of chance is not



used by international investors, safeguarding the interests of Macau and its government. This is expected to give the concessionaires and sub-concessionaires sufficient time to deal with the issues in question.

According to the report, to ensure the stability of the gaming market's size and operation, as well as the sustainable, healthy and orderly development of the gaming sector, the government understands that in determining the number of concessions to be awarded, it is appropriate that the line of consideration be "quality" and not "quantity."

A restriction on the number of concessions does not mean reducing the sector's competitiveness in the market, but aims to ensure

a balance between the stability of the gaming market and the liberalization of the sector, "allowing the government of the Macau SAR to attract companies with greater potential for development and sufficient financial capacity for the Macau gaming market, thus strengthening the competitiveness of the local tourism and gaming sectors in the international context," the report added.

On September 14, the SAR government announced that there would be public consultation on the amendment to Law no. 16/2001, which commenced on September 15 and ran for 45 days.

Following the announcement, gaming stocks tumbled as much as USD18 billion, the worst day for casino operators ever recorded.

The city's gaming operators and junkets immediately sought clarity in a 70-minute online meeting in which industry representatives and executives voiced full support for the idea that the 20-year-old gaming law should be updated.

During the 45-day consultation period, the government sought opinions on nine main aspects of the gaming law, namely: the number of gaming concessionaires; the duration of concessions; additional regulations regarding inspections; the increase of workers' security; the reinforcement of verification mechanisms for concessionaires as well as gaming promoters and partners; the introduction of new delegates from the government; promotion

of non-gaming projects; corporate social responsibility; and a new regime of both criminal and administrative responsibilities for the concessionaires.

Lei Wai Nong, Secretary for Economy and Finance, previously announced that concessionaires will be under tighter scrutiny from the government, which will have greater authority to verify the background of the staff hired by both the concessionaires and the entities who work with them.

With the lucrative casino licenses up for rebidding next year, the government aims to raise the general competitiveness of the sector amid a broad Beijing regulatory crackdown occurring in various sectors, from technology to real estate.

Beijing's crackdown has already cut hundreds of billions of dollars off asset values.

Analysts have expressed uncertainty and have warned of risks, given that the fundamentals in Macau are already "murky and difficult to analyze incrementally."

The high-profile arrest of junket king Alvin Chau has put the city on high alert for the potential direct and indirect repercussions — with analysts saying that the arrest also marks the end of the junket era.

The arrest also caused casino operators to shut down their VIP rooms.

The public consultation was supposed to comprise eight sessions, but was postponed three times due to pandemic control measures. The report cited a total of 359 respondents and 73 stakeholders.

Visitor arrivals reach peak in November

VISITOR arrivals surged by 144.1% month-on-month, reaching 801,300 in November, attributable to tourist events such as the Grand Prix and the Food Festival, according to recent data provided by the Statistics and Census Service.

The figure also reflects 25.9% year-on-year growth for the month.

The number of same-day visitors (513,887) rose by 64.4% year-on-year, while overnight visitors (287,413) fell by 11.2%. Meanwhile, the average visitor length of stay went down by 0.4 days year-on-year to 1.3 days, re-

flecting the 15% increase in the proportion of same-day visitors (64.1%).

In terms of the origin of visitors, the number of mainland visitors grew by 25.9% year-on-year to 741,226, with 195,868 of these travelling under the Individual Visit Scheme. Visitors from the nine Pearl River Delta cities in the Greater Bay Area totalled 482,543, of whom 61.8% came from Zhuhai. Additionally, there were 54,655 visitors from Hong Kong and 5,297 from Taiwan.

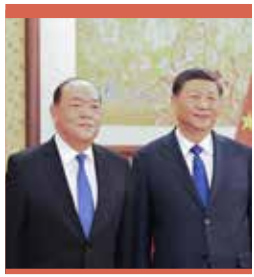
The city is anticipating a travel bubble with Hong

Kong, with government marketing in Hong Kong continuing uninterrupted.

As for the Christmas outlook, the increase in tourism arrivals is not expected to be significant since the period is not traditionally a holiday season in mainland China.

In the first eleven months of 2021, the number of visitor arrivals grew by 31.5% year-on-year to 6,885,073. The totals for same-day visitors (3,582,584) and overnight visitors (3,302,489) have increased by 27.7% and 35.8% year-on-year respectively. LV





PRESIDENT XI LAUDS WORK OF SAR GOV'T

President Xi Jinping said the central government fully affirmed the achievements of the Macau government, led by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng. President Xi noted that, in 2021, Macau remained stable and maintained the momentum of its development. Macau took effective measures – namely infection prevention and control work – to curb the spread of infections, strove to maintain a zero cases approach and had worked to normalize border crossing movements between the mainland and Macau, said the president. The Chief Executive said that over the past 12 months the SAR government had been “diligently implementing every Macau-related policy introduced by the central government, and had worked proactively to align itself with the country’s overall development.”

2020 GNI TOTALS MOP242.6B

Gross national income (GNI) amounted to MOP242.56 billion in 2020 at current prices, which was MOP38.15 billion more than gross domestic product (GDP) (MOP204.41 billion) at current prices, representing a net external factor income inflow of the same amount. In 2020, per capita GNI was MOP356,001, compared with per capita GDP of MOP300,007. Discounting the effect of price changes, 2020 GNI fell by 39.2% year-on-year in real terms, with a 54.0% decrease in GDP. Per capita GNI went down by 39.9% year-on-year in real terms, while there was a 54.5% fall in per capita GDP.

UM PRESENTS FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOCUSED ON INTERNAL GROWTH, COMMUNITY TRANSFER

RENATO MARQUES

THE University of Macau (UM) yesterday unveiled its first-ever five-year development plan. The plan, spanning the current academic year (2021-2022) until 2025-2026, comprises five main strategies and measures focused on the development of the university, its students and faculty at the local, regional and international levels.

At a press conference organized by the university yesterday morning, Rector Yonghua Song explained that the goals of the university’s plan come directly from both the local government’s second five-year plan and the central government’s 14th five-year plan, conforming with the directions of those plans.

“In the next five years, UM will take the motto of ‘being rooted in Macau, taking part in the development of the Greater Bay Area, integrating into the nation and going international’ as its development positioning,” Song said, adding that the university aspires to “become an internationally recognized university of excellence by implementing quality student-centered education, key research subjects with international impact and a high standard of community services.”

To this end, Song said that UM aims to grow in both size and quality of education, with the enrollment of more students in existing programs as well in new programs to be launched by the university soon.

“In the next five years, UM’s total enrolment will increase from the current [level of] about 12,000 to about 17,000 students. The number of postgraduate students is also expected to grow steadily based on the demands of [community], and the undergraduate enrolment will remain largely stable,” Song said. He added that UM also aims to “enlarge the intake of non-local students, targeting mostly candidates from the mainland, in particular, the Greater Bay Area, and Southeast Asian countries, Portuguese-speaking countries, and countries and regions along the Belt and Road Initiative,” he said.

In response to media questions on the topic, Song explained that, although the university has a goal of enrolling more non-local students, this growth will be always capped to a maximum of 30% of the student population, with the proportion of local students to be maintained at or above 70%.

“The minimum proportion [for local students] is 70%. Usually, this percentage is dynamic, seating around 74 or 75%. If the percentage [of local students] is higher than



75%, we allow more non-local [students] to enroll. This is the condition [we abide by],” the Rector explained.

To increase the study program offerings for new students, UM is planning to establish a department of arts and design, which will offer master’s and doctoral programs in fine arts.

A bachelor’s degree program in Chinese law and global law (English-taught), a master’s program in philosophy and religious studies, and more cross-disciplinary courses in the humanities and social sciences are also on the cards for the university by 2025.

Although the plan is not yet released in full, the details provided so far announce that UM also plans to launch new disciplines in advanced materials, marine science and

engineering, as well as launching a bachelor’s degree in pharmaceutical sciences and master’s programs in global public health, the internet of things, robotics and unmanned systems, and coastal and environmental engineering.

SERVING LOCAL COMMUNITY

Another of UM’s major goals for the next five years is increasing the community’s access to the results of research and project development done by the university. The aim is to provide not only applications of the project output, but also to contribute to public recognition of the work at a local and international level, thereby raising the reputation of the institution, the Rector said.

This aim is expected to be achieved in part by the improvement of the “5-in-1” system for research

innovation and results transfer, by consolidating and building a high-level industry-academia research platform incorporating the dimensions of innovation, service, management, cultivation and practice.

According to Song, “emphasis will be put on improving the quality and impact of the research achievements, systematically promoting technological innovation and research result transfer.”

The university also plans to capitalize on research platforms with outcomes that could be helpful in promoting Macau’s economic diversification.

This could be in the form of think tanks which will provide the government with accurate and up-to-date information and technical advice for problem-solving and enabling faster development.

UM TUITION FEE INCREASE ‘NOT A PROBLEM’

THE increase in tuition fees at the University of Macau (UM) over the past few years and specifically in this academic year is not discouraging the enrolment of new students, nor is it putting additional pressures on them, according to UM Rector Yonghua Song.

Questioned on the topic during a press conference held to present UM’s first five-year development plan, Song explained that the rise in tuition fees had been planned for some time and has been done progressively. It takes into account several factors, namely the fees of different institutions in Macau as well as the universities in the neighboring regions, he said.

Song said that UM enjoys a reputation for providing a quality education that is recognized beyond Macau’s borders, explaining that UM’s current tuition fees are still much lower than most mid-range universities, including in Hong Kong.

Noting that tuition fees do not, in many cases, cover the cost of course delivery, Song said that is only possible to continue providing the university’s quality of service due to government support through subsidies as well as scholarship programs and other protocols.

The Rector said that the competitiveness of UM’s tuition fees can also be seen in the number of candidates from outside Macau aiming to enroll in the university. In the current academic year, UM received 9,000 applications from non-local students competing for just 300 to 400 places.

Although tuition fees were raised from 30,000 patacas to 35,000 patacas in some cases, in Song’s view this increase looks “greater [as a percentage] because the baseline was too low.”

He also said that, at the same time, the government has provided a special subsidy for local students covering all the tuition increases, noting that UM had not received negative feedback from students.

“We have several programs, namely postgraduate courses, that also allow students to work as assistants to professors, as well as doing research, which can help local students, especially those enrolled in master’s and doctorate programs, to cover part of the tuition expenses,” Song explained. He added that “in cases of extreme financial need, we have mechanisms to help the students.” **RM**

COVID-19

QR itinerary tracking to remain optional

STAFF REPORTER

PUBLIC facilities will continue to allow entry of those who do not track their itinerary with the health code app, confirmed officials during the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center press conference yesterday.

As of yesterday, over 115,000 people have downloaded the Health Bureau's Macau Health Code application which tracks users' itineraries. Currently, the only locations in Macau where QR codes can be scanned to track movements are government departments, social service facilities, medical clinics run by the Health Bureau and public buses.

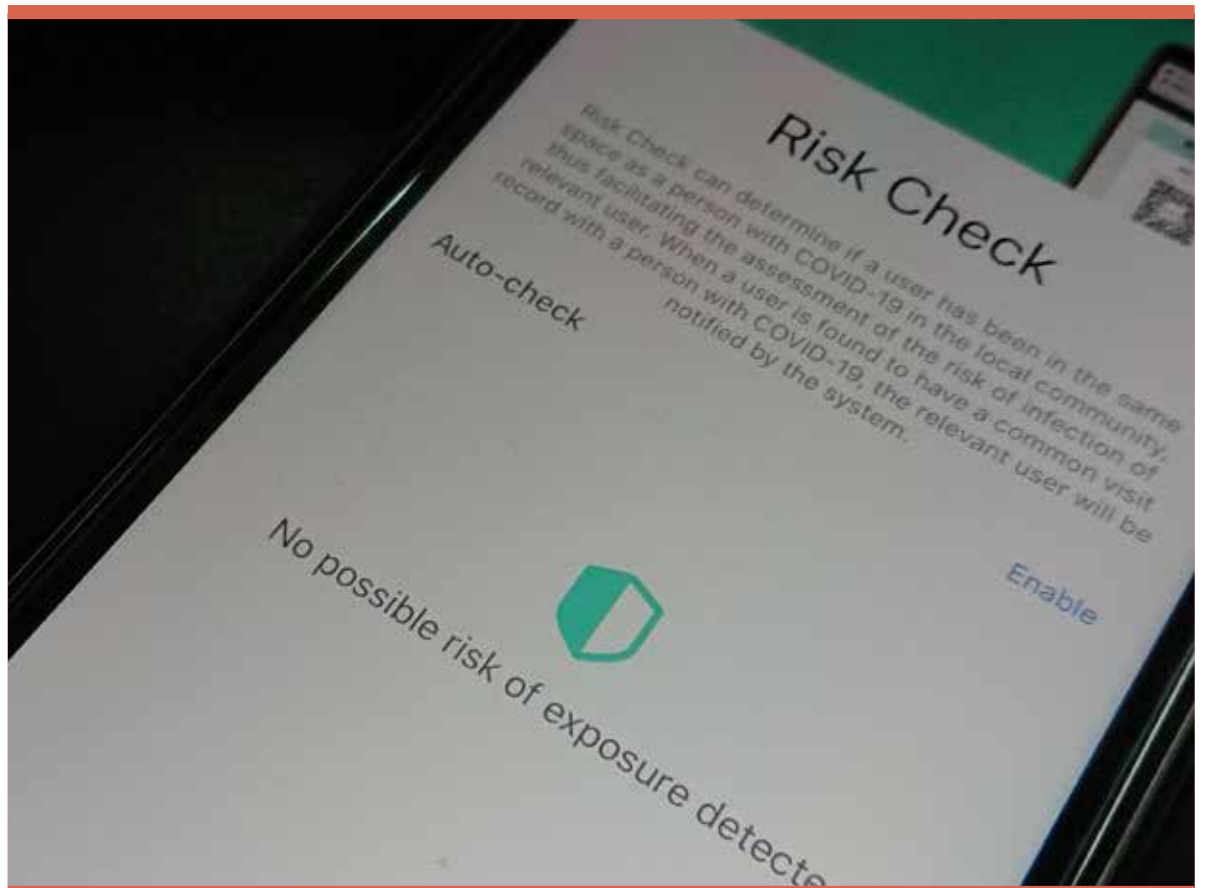
Health authorities are gradually expanding the number of locations with QR tracking codes, and hope to expand to food and beverage establishments, other medical facilities and entertainment venues all over Macau by the end of January 2022.

It isn't mandatory yet to scan a QR code on entering any establishments or facilities.

The current goal is for resi-

dents to get used to scanning the codes, said Dr Tai Wa Hou, coordinator of the health authorities' Covid-19 Vaccination Operation. Individuals have the option to refuse to scan the code and entry will still be permitted as long as they present a green health code. Health authorities will continue promoting their mobile application in the hope of encouraging more users, as they are planning to decommission the current health code website which most residents are still using.

Tai also acknowledged praise from President Xi Jinping, who earlier this week expressed his thoughts on Macau's current situation, and on the work of the Macau SAR government during the pandemic. President Xi said that, although the pandemic has created tough challenges, it also created opportunities for reflection. The advent of the pandemic has made the structural issues in the city's economy clear to the Macau public. Tai went on to say that the authorities "have worked hard over the past two years to fight the pandemic and will continue to work hard in maintaining safety for the city



of Macau." Although there were rough patches in the journey, authorities will continue fighting to prevent another local outbreak, mentioning initiatives

aimed at managing the pandemic, such as the health code app and vaccination program. The current vaccination rate in Macau is over 70%, and the Health

Bureau is promoting a third dose of the Covid-19 vaccine among citizens, as well as focusing on vaccination of children and the elderly.

CCAC FINDS LOOPHOLES IN SCHOOL SUBSIDY APPLICATIONS

LYNZY VALLES

THE Education Development Fund's (FDE) vague decision making process when reviewing, vetting and approving subsidy grants, and also when issuing and overseeing subsidies, has given rise to many irregular situations that were foreseeable or preventable, the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) said in a blistering statement.

The corruption watchdog identified several loopholes found in the rules and regulations of the "School Development Plan" subsidy application administered by FDE.

"Even after some of the problems were revealed in the audit report in 2015, the improvement work of the FDE still did not appear to be holistic and satisfactorily completed. The supervision work carried out by the FDE was in a careless manner and was merely a formality," the CCAC said.

The watchdog added that the FDE, which tacitly permitted schools to manage



and "reallocate" their subsidies, purported to provide management and oversight of the use of public money. However, its failure to take the initiative in following up the implementation of the financial supports allowed administrative improprieties to go unchecked.

"When it came to the implementation of the statutory refund mechanism, obviously, there was even administrative illegality," the CCAC statement continued.

In the "Comprehensive Investigation Report on the Granting of Subsidy for School Development Plan by the Education Development Fund," the CCAC pointed out that the Administrative Regulations of the Regime of Education Development Fund established a set of statutory

refund mechanisms, but from the time that the FDE's refund issue was first raised in the audit report until now, the FDE did not know that a refund regime already existed. "Instead, it put in effort to seek and create another set of mechanisms to deal with the issues of refund procedures and responsibilities," the corruption watchdog added.

Last year, former lawmaker Sulu Sou voiced out concerns about the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau's (DSEJ) lack of supervisory capacity, due to the high amount of subsidies that have been attributed to school institutions over the years. Sou's inquiry comes after it was revealed that two former school heads were involved in a case of fraud worth MOP20 million.

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CHINA PUTS 13 MILLION PEOPLE IN LOCKDOWN AHEAD OF OLYMPICS

CHINA is redoubling efforts to control new virus outbreaks with a lockdown of the 13 million residents of the northern city of Xi'an following a spike in coronavirus cases.

The measure comes just weeks before the country hosts the Winter Olympics in Beijing, roughly 1,000 kilometers to the northeast.

There was no word on whether the virus was the newly surging omicron variant or the far more common delta. China has reported just seven omicron cases — four in the southern manufacturing center of Guangzhou, two in the southern city of Changsha and one in the northern port of Tianjin.

China has also been dealing with a substantial coronavirus outbreak in several cities in the eastern province of Zhejiang near Shanghai, although isolation measures there have been more narrowly targeted.

Authorities have adopted strict pandemic control measures un-



Residents line up for tests at a Covid-19 testing site in Xi'an

der their policy of seeking to drive new transmissions to zero, leading to frequent lockdowns, universal masking and mass testing. While the policy has not been entirely successful and has led to massive disruptions of travel and trade, Beijing credits it with largely

containing the spread of the virus.

The Xi'an restrictions are some of the harshest since China in 2020 imposed a strict lockdown on more than 11 million people in and around the central city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus was first detected in late 2019.

Xi'an yesterday reported another 63 locally transmitted cases, pushing the city's total to at least 211 over the past week. Xi'an is the capital of Shaanxi province, famed for its imperial relics, as well as a major center of industry.

"We are not receiving any new guests and no present guests are allowed to leave the hotel," said a receptionist at the Hanting Hotel in Xi'an, who only gave her surname, Li.

"Including the guests, we are required to take a test once every two days," Li said. "There will be an impact on our business and we have no idea how long it will last."

The owner of a local bookshop said he had closed 10 days before, "fearing the worsening of the epidemic situation."

"I am now staying at home watching television," said the owner, who gave only his surname, Xiao.

Movement outside his compound requires permission from the local neighborhood committee, he said. "I think the situation will get better eventually, and I don't worry at all because we have the government behind us," Xiao said.

One person from each household will be allowed out every two days to buy household necessities, a government order said. It took effect at midnight Wednesday, with no word on when it might be lifted.

China has reported 4,636 deaths among a total of 100,644 cases of COVID-19. **MDT/AP**

HONG KONG

University takes down last monument for Tiananmen victims

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

A monument at a Hong Kong university that was the best-known public remembrance of the Tiananmen Square crackdown victims on Chinese soil was removed early yesterday, wiping out the city's last place of public commemoration of the bloody 1989 crackdown.

For some at the University of Hong Kong, the move reflected the erosion of the relative freedoms they have enjoyed compared to mainland China.

The 8-meter-tall Pillar of Shame, which depicts 50 torn and twisted bodies piled on top of each other, was made by Danish sculptor Jens Galschiot to symbolize the lives lost during the military crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989.

Billy Kwok, a University of Hong Kong student, said the Pillar of Shame has been treated as part of the university by many who studied there. It had been standing at the university for more than two decades.

"It's the symbol of whe-



The "Pillar of Shame" statue, a memorial for those killed in the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, is displayed at the University of Hong Kong in October

ther (there is still) [...] freedom of speech in Hong Kong," he said after the sculpture was taken away.

The university said it had asked that the sculpture be put in storage because it could pose "legal risks."

"No party has ever obtained any approval from the university to display the statue on campus, and the university has the right to take appropriate actions to handle it at any time," it said in a statement after its removal.

Each year on June 4, members of the now-defunct student union would

wash the statue to commemorate the massacre. The city, together with Macau, were the only places on Chinese soil where commemorations of the crackdown were allowed.

Authorities have banned annual Tiananmen candlelight vigils for two consecutive years and shut down a private museum documenting the crackdown. The group that organized the annual vigil and ran the museum, the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, has since disbanded, with some of its

key members behind bars.

The dismantling of the sculpture came days after pro-Beijing candidates scored a landslide victory in Hong Kong legislative elections, following amendments to election laws allowing the vetting of candidates to ensure they are "patriots" loyal to Beijing.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam traveled to Beijing this week to report on developments in the semi-autonomous Chinese city, where authorities have silenced dissent following Beijing's imposition of a sweeping national security law that

appeared to target much of the pro-democracy movement following mass protests in 2019.

The Pillar of Shame became an issue in October, when activists and rights groups opposed a university demand that it be removed following "the latest risk assessment and legal advice." Galschiot offered to take it back to Denmark provided he would not be prosecuted under the national security law, but has not succeeded so far.

Galschiot said he has been promised a spot for the sculpture in a park across from the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., and was also offered places in Norway, Canada and Taiwan.

He compared the removal of the sculpture to "driving a tank through Arlington Cemetery," a burial ground for American war veterans.

"Grave desecration is also very frowned upon in China, but that's really what it is. It is almost a sacred monument," he said. "It is a sculpture for those who died."

Danish Foreign Minister

Jeppe Kofod said its removal was another worrying development in Hong Kong.

"The Danish government cannot decide which art other countries' universities choose to exhibit. But for me and the government, the right to speak peacefully -- through speech, art or other means -- is a completely fundamental right for all people. This is also true in Hong Kong," he said.

An employee at the university, Morgan Chan, said removal of the Pillar of Shame "doesn't mean that history will be erased, and removing the pillar doesn't mean people won't learn about the history."

Wang Luyao, a student, had a more mixed reaction.

"To me, because I am from mainland China, perhaps my understanding of the Pillar of Shame is not as deep as the locals or students from Hong Kong and it is not that significant to me," Wang said.

"For me, it's like a landmark which provides an approach to understanding. For the University of Hong Kong, it should also be considered a landmark." **MDT/AP**

EAST TIMOR

American ex-priest found guilty of sex abuse

DAVID DOS SANTOS
GUSMAO, OECUSSE

A defrocked American priest accused of sexually abusing orphaned and disadvantaged young girls under his care in East Timor was found guilty Tuesday and sentenced to 12 years in prison, in the first case of its kind in the staunchly Catholic nation.

Richard Daschbach, 84, who spent decades as a missionary in the country's remote enclave of Oecusse, faced charges of child sexual abuse as well as child pornography and domestic violence.

The trial began in February but was postponed several times before concluding last month. During the proceedings, victims complained about threats and online attacks. Daschbach maintains strong backing from some, including former President Xanana Gusmao, who went to the court on Tuesday. East Timor is the most Catholic place outside the Vatican and Daschbach is revered for his role during the tiny Southeast Asian nation's fight for independence.

The church and foreign donors who once supported Daschbach's shelter said he confessed to the abuse, but the former priest and his lawyers have at various times refused to comment. They did not make their legal strategy public and court proceedings



Richard Daschbach, a former missionary from Pennsylvania, is escorted by a police officer upon his arrival for a trial at a courthouse in Oecusse, earlier this year

were closed.

Daschbach, the son of a Pittsburgh steelworker, was ordained in 1964 by the Society of the Divine Word at its headquarters outside of Chicago. He arrived in the country now known as East Timor several years later, setting up a shelter in the 1990s named Topu Honis, which means "Guide to Life."

Hundreds of children passed through the shelter under Daschbach's care. More than a dozen females came forward with abuse claims, but only nine were registered in the case due to legal technicalities. The Associated Press spoke with five of the accusers.

They recalled their experiences in vivid detail, saying Daschbach kept a list of young girls on his bedroom door and that every night one of those girls

would sit on his lap, surrounded by a ring of children and staff members praying and singing hymns before bed.

They said the girl on his lap would then sleep with him that night and that various types of abuse — from oral sex to rape — would occur, sometimes involving other children too. The accusers have not been identified because of fears of retribution.

Daschbach's lawyer, Miguel Faria, said they are disappointed with the court's verdict and plan to appeal the decision issued by the three judges.

"Evidence provided by the shelter matron and former students who lived in the orphanage were ignored by the court," Faria told reporters, alleging that some accusers changed their statements made ear-

lier to authorities in Oecusse after being taken to the capital, Dili, and the new statements became the sole basis for the judges' decision.

"We cannot accept this and will appeal," Faria said.

Dozens of Daschbach's supporters, including several children brought by Gusmao from Dili, wept and some were screaming as it became clear the court would sentence the former priest to jail. Some in the impoverished enclave revere Daschbach so highly, they believe he possesses special powers and is the victim of a conspiracy.

In a statement Tuesday, JUS Juridico Social, a group of human rights lawyers representing the accusers, applauded the verdict but said it would appeal, arguing that the sentence should be harsher. Under the law, Daschbach faced more than twice the prison time he received.

"The history written today is a bitter history for the entire nation," the group said. "Our children were subjected to horrendous crimes for such a long time because we, as a society, were blinded by the belief that a figure as the defendant in this case would not commit such crimes against children."

Separately, a U.S. federal grand jury in Washington, D.C., indicted Daschbach in August. He faces seven counts of engaging in illicit sexual conduct at the shelter. MDT/AP

THAILAND

Israeli man detained in Bangkok over virus

OFFICIALS in Thailand said yesterday an Israeli tourist who was the subject of a nationwide police manhunt after breaking out of quarantine while apparently infected with the omicron variant of the coronavirus has been detained on a southern resort island.

The 29-year-old man will be charged with breaking quarantine regulations and then deported and banned from Thailand for life following his release from hospital detention, authorities said.

Supakit Sirilak, director-general of the Depart-

ment of Medical Sciences, said yesterday that the tourist allegedly left quarantine at a Bangkok hotel on Dec. 7, before his coronavirus test result was completed. It eventually showed he was infected with the omicron variant.

Thailand has had a few dozen cases of omicron,

but all were found in quarantined individuals. It has only had two reported cases of domestic transmission, and the case of the missing Israeli dominated news reports.

Officials said two RT-PCR tests were taken after he turned himself in on the southern resort island of Kho Samui on Wednesday. Both were negative.

Supakit said the man could have recovered in the two weeks between his first test taken upon arrival on Dec. 7 and the Dec. 22 tests. MDT/AP

ADVERTORIAL

GREAT TIMES

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The festive wonder continues at the Spectacle. Spend the last hours of 2021 sipping flutes of bubbly and dancing to top hits as **Anytime** transforms into a spacious dance floor with live DJ and a backdrop of stunning visuals on 25 LED screens in the Spectacle. Why not make the best of the night and count down to 2022 with the restaurant's New Year's Eve party set that includes a bottle of Thienot Champagne, freshly shucked oysters and delicious bar bites at MOP 888 per set. In the month of December, it also extends its opening hours till midnight every Thursday to Saturday, where guests may savor the delish offerings at the restaurant and immerse into the winter wonderland for the countdown of the new year.

More fascinating experiences await. For enquiries and reservations, please visit mgm.mo or call (853) 8806 8888.



Anytime - New Year's Eve Champagne Set

UAE

Bustling bars, surging business: Dubai sees a post-vax boom

ISABEL DEBRE, DUBAI

NATIONS around the world are lurching into lockdown, steeling themselves for a brutal surge as the omicron variant spreads like wildfire.

But in Dubai, Donna Sese is bracing for a very different surge: countless restaurant bookings and meter-long drink bills.

"We're back and busy like the way things used to be," said Sese, manager of the Yalumba restaurant at the five-star Le Meridien hotel, where devotees of Dubai's Friday brunch pay \$250 for lavish spreads with free-flowing Clicquot Champagne.

The globalized city-state appears to be in the midst of a boom season, spurred on by one of the world's highest vaccination rates and government steps to lure businesses and de-escalate tensions with regional rivals.

Maskless debauchery has returned to dance floors. Brunch-goers are drinking with abandon. Home-buyers are flooding the market. Tourists are snapping up hotel suites. Expat millionaires are moving to the emirate. Coronavirus infections, although now making a comeback, remain below past peaks.

The Dubai government did not respond to request for comment.

It's déjà vu for those recalling the rush of December last year in Dubai, when the city courted tourists and influencers fleeing virus lockdowns and wintry weather. The open-door policy let revelers sate their pent-up desire to go out on New Year's Eve but infections soon rocketed to unseen heights, and hospitals filled up.

A year later, mass vaccination has left Dubai feeling like it's off the hook. There have been vanishingly few virus hospitalizations and deaths — even as the threat of omicron looms and daily infections surged over 660 on Wednesday after lows of under 100 for weeks.

While many Western countries have seen inoculation rates plateau, the UAE reports 99% of all of those eligible for vaccines — anyone over 12 — has received at least one dose.

Some have received five.

In the global vaccine scram-



Tourists enjoy on a yacht as they pass a traditional dhow serving a dinner cruise, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (file pic)

ble, the UAE relied on a shot made by Sinopharm, a state-backed Chinese company. Even as the nation's vaccination rate soared this spring, infections rose — as did concerns over Sinopharm's insufficient antibody response.

Now, Sinopharm is no longer an option in Dubai. Those who received both doses, including the emirate's legions of low-paid foreign laborers, also have opted for double vaccination with Pfizer-BioNTech. The government offers Pfizer boosters to all adults.

Months of trepidation have given way to unburdened excitement. Encouraged by widespread inoculation and record-low mortgage rates, more properties were sold in Dubai in November than in any other month in the last eight years, according to website Property Finder.

Sales prices have surged past pre-pandemic levels. Until June, prices were climbing 2.5% month on month, with wild appreciations in the luxury segment.

Market analysts have attributed the hot streak to a pause in villa construction and influx of Western European, Chinese and Indian financiers drawn to glittery Dubai's open offices, high vaccination and low tax rates.

A giant cryptocurrency conference in October drew dozens of young millionaires who paid cash upfront for beach villas, real estate agents said.

"You can go to restaurants. There's no debate about remote working. This is not the case in Europe where it's still locking down," said Christophe De Rassenfosse, the chief product officer of Property Finder, about why he moved his

family from Brussels to Dubai in October. "You don't necessarily have a huge percentage of elderly people which occupies the hospitals."

The government has promoted plans to make the sheikhdom more attractive to foreign investors and visitors, with new 10-year visas, retirement and freelance options and reforms to the country's Islamic legal code.

In its latest move as competition heats up with neighboring Saudi Arabia, the UAE will change its work week from Sunday-Thursday to Monday-Friday to align with the West.

The rebound is apparent in the city's full hotels, clogged roads and raucous nightclubs.

Hotel occupancy in Dubai exceeded 90% in mid-November, according to data firm STR. Long-haul carrier Emirates estimated over 1.1 million passengers would squeeze through its Dubai terminal ahead of the holidays.

Traffic during the first week of December surpassed 2019 levels, according to navigation company TomTom. Taxis have been missing from many street corners, with fleet owners that downsized operations during the pandemic citing shortages amid "unprecedented" demand.

Overall sales of alcohol by volume in the UAE rose to 117.5 million liters (31 million gallons) this year, up some 7.8% sold the year before, according to market research firm Euromonitor.

The growth has even extended to business with the UAE's long-time rivals — Turkey and Iran.

Politics had poisoned trade between the powerhouses in past years. But in a recent

flurry of diplomacy across the Middle East, UAE's de facto leader met Turkey's president in Ankara, and a top Emirati national security advisor visited Tehran.

From March to September 2021, Iran's imports from the UAE spiked 70% to \$5.4 billion, according to Iranian government figures. Emirati imports will hit levels unseen since America imposed crushing sanctions on Iran in 2018 by the year's end.

Trade between the UAE and Turkey also jumped over 100% to \$7.2 billion during the first half of this year, reported the official Emirati WAM news agency.

Iranian and Turkish business leaders in Dubai say the detente has eased restrictions on their licenses and visas.

Turkish business expert Fatma Nilgun Emrem of Tamimi Consulting has been inundated with requests from Turkish beauty salons, retailers and restaurants seeking to set up shop in Dubai.

"The policies and perspectives of the UAE are changing," she said.

Hossein Asrar Haghghi, board member of the Iran-UAE Business Council, similarly described "a relaxing" of trade regulations on Iranians and growing number of Iranian businessmen who secured the UAE's 10-year golden visas.

"The combination of Dubai getting out of COVID, reduction of regional tensions and new moves to attract businesses, it's a pretty good environment," said Gregory Gause, a scholar of the region at Texas A&M University. "But Dubai doesn't control what goes on around it." MDT/AP

this day in history

1974 'DROWNED' STONEHOUSE FOUND ALIVE



Former UK minister John Stonehouse has been found living under a false name in Australia after apparently faking his own death.

He was detained under an immigration law by Melbourne police at the seaside resort of St Kilda, where he told officers his name was Donald Clive Mildoon.

He is due to appear before a magistrate on Boxing Day and it is thought he is being held for entering the country with a false passport.

Mr Stonehouse, 49, was feared drowned after vanishing on a business trip to Miami Beach on 20 November.

He vanished while swimming in the sea and there was no trace of him but for the pile of clothes he left behind on the beach.

His wife, Barbara, is expected to travel to Australia to meet him although it is understood she did not know he was still alive.

The Labour MP for Walsall North is currently being questioned by police after they revealed their first interview with him proved "inconclusive" and he has been driven to a central police station.

It is thought he may have a second forged passport because he arrived in Australia from Hawaii on 27 November bearing the name J D Norman.

It has emerged he then left the country the following day and travelled between Singapore, Denmark and the Lebanon before returning to Australia around 10 December.

Melbourne police's "dog squad", so called because they hunt in packs, had placed Mr Stonehouse under surveillance from 10 December after a tip-off from overseas.

There are unconfirmed reports they believed him to be the missing Lord Lucan who disappeared after his children's nanny was found dead.

The re-emergence of the MP, once tipped as a future Labour leader, on the other side of the world has stunned Parliament and his colleagues at Westminster.

A Whitehall source said his future in Parliament was uncertain but it is too early in the proceedings to comment on whether he could be expelled.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Mr Stonehouse was planning to set up a new life in Australia with his former secretary Sheila Buckley, a 28-year-old divorcee. He was deported to Britain where in August 1976 he was convicted and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment on 18 counts of theft, fraud and deception after a marathon 68-day trial. The charges related to a string of failed fraudulent businesses set up before his disappearance. Ms Buckley was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, suspended for two years, for her part in Mr Stonehouse's get-rich-quick schemes. He left prison three years later, recovering from open heart surgery, after he suffered three heart attacks during his time in prison. Mr Stonehouse and Ms Buckley married in 1981. He died in 1988 aged 62.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Much knowledge can be obtained through the experiences you have. If they don't want to get involved, work by yourself. Don't hesitate to voice your ideas and opinions.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
You could overreact to emotional situations regarding your relationship. Secret affairs may be tempting, but keep in mind that they will damage your reputation if you decide to indulge.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
You may find that your anger stems from lending or borrowing money. New relationships will surface through work related events. Self-deception is likely.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Find out what they're up to, and see if you can pick up where you left off. You can make money if you get involved in real estate deals. Changes in your home may be disruptive and upsetting.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Accept the inevitable. This is probably causing upset and confusion on the home front. Don't make any drastic changes or begin new projects today.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
You may have some difficulties with someone you live with. You can evade the issue as usual by being affectionate, fun loving, and far too active for your lover to catch on.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Travel and social activity will bring about interesting talks, not to mention contacts. They may cost you dearly. Too many opportunities and too many changes going on.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Try to curb your bad habits, and compromise if your partner gives you an ultimatum. Take a long look at your present direction and consider your professional options.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Take precautions while traveling; you don't have to get anywhere that fast. Your obviously unique way of doing things has caught the eye of someone in a higher position.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Emotional upset at work will set you back. Stick to your work and avoid emotional confrontations. Social events should be the highlight of your day.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Go for interviews or send out resumes. Investments that deal with property will pay off but could cause conflict with some family members. Read some books on self awareness.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Make plans to attend group discussions or get together with friends who like to talk as much as you do. Don't give in too quickly. Be primed to use your intellect in order to get what you want.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-6	-3	cloudy
Harbin	-25	-20	fine
Tianjin	6	11	rain
Urumqi	7	13	cloudy
Xi'an	8	12	overcast
Lhasa	-12	-4	snow
Chengdu	15	21	cloudy
Chongqing	11	17	overcast
Kunming	6	12	overcast
Nanjing	18	21	rain
Shanghai	8	15	rain
Wuhan	-27	-20	cloudy
Hangzhou	1	7	rain
Taipei	-15	-7	fine
Guangzhou	14	22	cloudy
Hong Kong	19	23	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-9	-12	overcast
Frankfurt	3	8	cloudy
Paris	8	11	rain
London	7	11	rain
New York	4	8	overcast

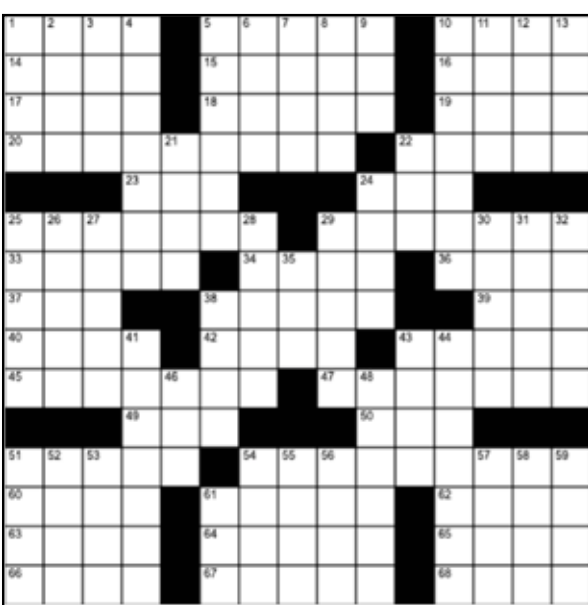
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Magazine contents; 5- Will, old-style; 10- Subsides; 14- Harvest; 15- Now; 16- Escaping fluid; 17- Take ___ from me; 18- Peace goddess; 19- Remove from text; 20- Aircraft with one set of wings; 22- Eagle's home; 23- Establish; 24- And not; 25- Protection; 29- Summit of an earthy mound; 33- Fowl pole; 34- ___ impasse; 36- Planetary revolution; 37- Neighbor of Leb.; 38- ___ of Two Cities; 39- From ___ Z; 40- Kind; 42- Grow weary; 43- Relaxes; 45- Patella; 47- Elastic; 49- Free (of); 50- Month after avril; 51- Pixyish; 54- Male ruminant closely related to the sheep; 60- Portrayal by an actor; 61- Actress Shire; 62- Architectural pier; 63- Mid-month times; 64- Old French expression meaning "goodbye"; 65- Locks up; 66- Immediately following; 67- Animal; 68- Vichyssoise ingredient;

DOWN 1- Composer Khachaturian; 2- Take ___ your leader; 3- Chief; 4- Objects; 5- Circus props; 6- Israeli round dance; 7- Yemeni port; 8- Alley; 9- Cleaning agent; 10- On in years; 11- Ale, e.g.; 12- Indonesian resort island; 13- ___-Ball; 21- Confined, with "up"; 22- "You've got mail" co.; 24- Baseball team; 25- Imbibe; 26- Reddish dye; 27- Physical power; 28- Kind of kitchen; 29- More robust; 30- Fluff, as bangs; 31- Western; 32- Tedious; 35- Pitch; 38- Not much; 41- Most strange; 43- Auction site; 44- Lady's maid; 46- Slender metal fastener; 48- Diacritic mark; 51- Ireland; 52- Rich supply; 53- Bend; 54- Expressed, as a farewell; 55- Hip bones; 56- Untruths, tells falsehoods; 57- On a single occasion; 58- To ___ (perfectly); 59- Piece of work; 61- Bar bill;

Yesterday's solution

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



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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Nam Long HKD 4,680,000
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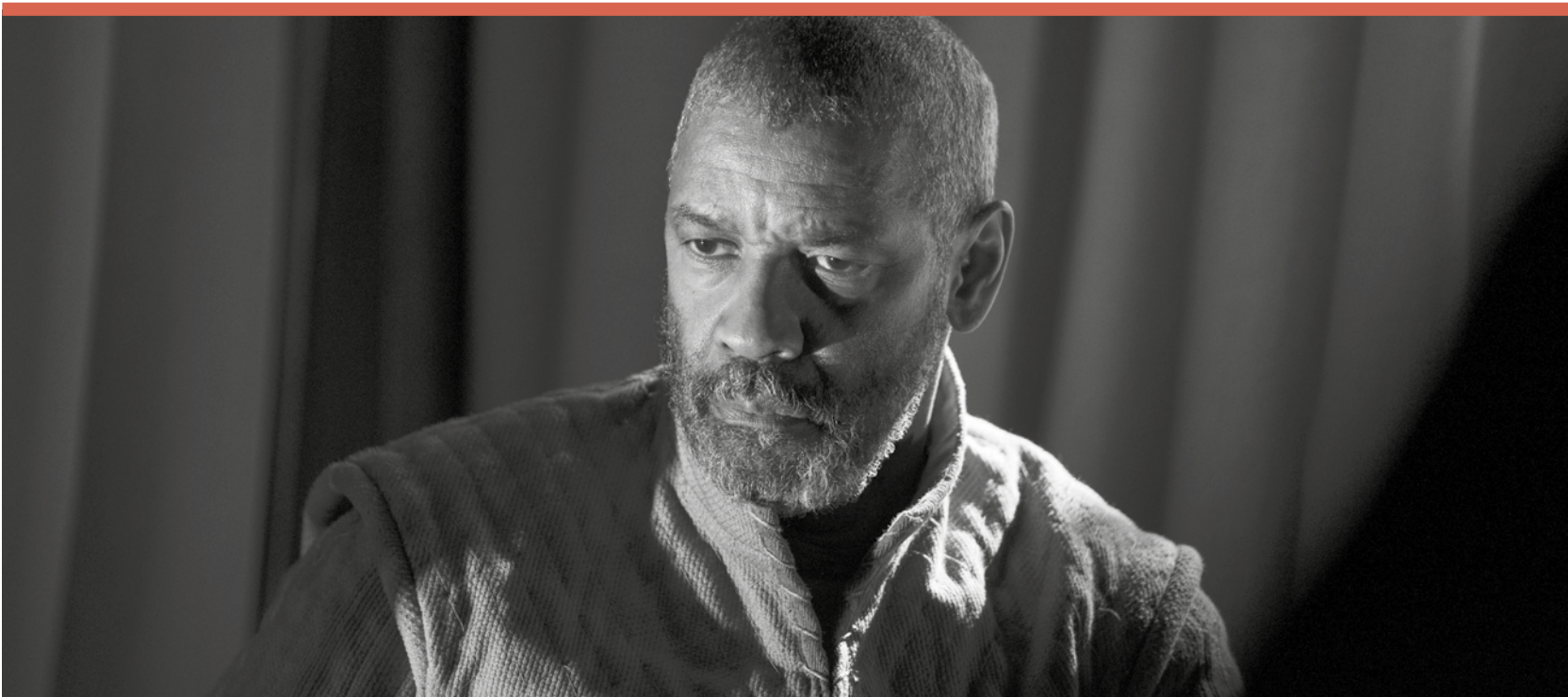
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1,720 ft² 3 1/2 2 1/2

Rain Dance Property
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Hellene Gardens HKD 7,980,000
1,663 ft² 3 1/2 2 1/2 1 1/2

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

AP PHOTO



Denzel Washington in a scene from "The Tragedy of Macbeth"

DRIVE IN

WASHINGTON'S AGING MACBETH IS ONE FOR THE AGES

JOCELYN NOVECK,
MDT/AP

HIS hair is graying. His nerves are fraying. Denzel Washington's Macbeth is a man quite literally running out of time

— even before he meets those witches.

At 66, Washington is certainly at the older end of the spectrum of conceivable Macbeths. But it makes wonderful sense: In Joel Coen's brilliantly

imagined, brilliantly executed "The Tragedy of Macbeth," we confront a man who knows in his bones — his aching bones — that the witches' prophecy has given him his last chance to be what

wants, no, deserves! King of Scotland.

For an actor of Washington's unique skill set, not to mention facility with Shakespearean verse, Macbeth at any age would be right, frankly. But there's something wonderful about the fact that it took this long, with all the experience and seasoning Washington now brings to bear. Still, this isn't simply a matter of an actor meeting a role at the right time.

No matter how cursed or unlucky the so-called "Scottish play" is in theater lore, the stars seem to be aligned here. First, the movie stars: As Lady Macbeth, Frances McDormand is a perfect partner to Washington in age (64) and every other way, adding her signature clear-eyed urgency — and a few legendarily icy stares — to an often caricatured role. And boy, do these two look right together. Maybe it's true, as somebody said, that the Macbeths have the only good marriage in Shakespeare — though the bar is not high. (Those teenagers Romeo and Juliet had a very short one.)

Completing the dream trio is director Coen (McDormand's husband, in his first solo outing without brother Ethan), creating an austere and chilling yet gorgeous and stylish cinematic universe. It's a world in black

and white and gray, full of fog, shadows and mist — a chiaroscuro vision that seems half real, half fantasy.

Designer Stefan Dechant's set, built onto sound stages, is populated by Brutalist-type structures, high walls, long corridors and tall staircases and dirt paths outside. The key sensation is emptiness: There seems barely a prop around except for swords, doing their vicious work. It feels vaguely medieval but unconnected to a specific period — and thankfully not 2021, either. Most strikingly, Coen and superb cinematographer Bruno Delbonnel present a film literally wrapped in a box, in what they call an academy-ratio square frame.

As befits the bard's briefest tragedy (albeit with a long list of murders most foul), Coen's film clocks in well under two hours. We begin, as we should, with the three witches, and the ominous "fair is foul, and foul is fair" line — meaning all is not what it seems, an understatement of Shakespearean proportions. In a terrific creative decision, Coen gives us only one actor, the wonderful veteran Kathryn Hunter, as a shape-shifting contortionist who morphs at will into three identical figures.

Despite a few judicious cuts, the language is preserved and the story is, of course, the same: After

the witches prophesize that Macbeth will become king, he decides, propelled by the tough-love urgings of his wife ("When you durst do it, THEN you were a man") to hasten the process by murdering much-loved King Duncan (Brendan Gleeson, excellent).

Washington's Macbeth, who often speaks in a soft voice — even a whisper — is racked with indecision beforehand. But what if we fail, he asks. "We fail?" his wife replies, but in McDormand's reading, it's essentially, "Look at us, what the heck do we have to lose?" (Don't answer that, folks.)

And so the bloody cycle begins. This "Macbeth" is, as always, about politics, power, and the corrosive effects of ambition. It is not, however, about sociopaths. It feels more about mediocrity — and the desperation that brings — than monstrosity.

There's much acting talent here beyond the leads. Corey Hawkins, a standout in pretty much anything he does, is a dashing presence as noble Macduff, who has the distinction of killing Macbeth (this swordfight doesn't disappoint) once he apprises him that he was "untimely ripped" from his mother's womb — very bad news if you're Macbeth. As Macduff's doomed wife, Moses Ingram makes much of her one scene.

Washington, who's played Shakespeare onstage numerous times (and onscreen in 1993) recently said that it's "where I started, and where I want to finish." As a student at Fordham University, he played Othello, a role he prepared for by listening to recordings of Laurence Olivier in the library.

When he speaks of finishing, one hopes he isn't referring to anytime soon. After all, King Lear awaits — right, Mr. Washington?

But as for his Macbeth, it's McDormand who perhaps said it best when asked recently about casting the role. "You don't make lists for a generation's Macbeth," she said. "One is born, and then they play it."

Sounds about right.

"The Tragedy of Macbeth," an A24/Apple release, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America "for violence." Running time: 105 minutes. ★★★★★

AD

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TASTE OF EDESIA

Christmas and chocolate

IRENE SAM, MDT

CHRISTMAS is the time of the year to gather with loved ones. For discerning gourmets who appreciate creativity and nuances in every element they enjoy, Four Seasons Hotel Macao is the place to be. From innovative dining options to sensuous indulgence, the luxurious holiday season will be an unforgettable one.

The hotel's cafe Xiao Ting is where one can bask in the joyful season while savouring bites of delicacy. Umami-filled starters and traditional dishes with a twist such as Turkey Wellington, seared thigh and caramel celeriac puree feature ingredients from the land and sea to ensure the festive meal would be a memorable one that is worthy of sharing with loved ones. Chestnut blackcurrant Mont Blanc with raspberry Coulis ends the meal with a sweet conclusion.

Valrhona Chocolate Afternoon Tea at Xiao Ting is a winter special presenting artful western savouries and sweets reflecting Valrhona

chocolate's superb quality. Displaying the ingenuity of the culinary team, exquisite delicacies includes a chocolate spice gingerbread cookie made with Manjari 64%. Liberating fresh and acidic notes of red fruit with a delicate finish of roasted nuts, the chocolate pairs beautifully with the warmth of ginger and spice, manifesting all its splendor in the form of a cookie. Best to be enjoyed with the Four Seasons festive hot chocolate made with Valrhona NYANGBO 68%.

For a relaxing spa experience that also includes chocolate, the spa at the hotel has a Pure Decadence treatment. Luxurious chocolate is applied to the body for a warm and silky sensation. The body is polished with a sugar scrub to remove dry skin before being cocooned in a decadent chocolate mud. A head massage follows and a gold Bioxedia mask hydrates the face. The body is then caressed with butter while the therapist skillfully performs a relaxing massage. The treatment ends with a soothing cup of hot chocolate.



AD

合夥人 PARTNERS:

- 官樂怡 Rui José da Cunha °
- 山度士 Álvaro Rodrigues °
- 馬天龍 Nuno Sardinha da Mata °
- 趙魯 Zhao Lu °*
- 馬傑安 João Nogueira Marques
- 大律師 ASSOCIATES:
- 高文軒 Adelino Correia °
- 羅善齡 Zelina Rodrigues *
- 白秀蘭 Susana Batalha
- 馬潔冰 Maria João Marques
- 陶義德 António Isó de Azeredo
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- 沈玲鳳 Mariana Afonso Esteves
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- 莫永誠 Rui Velez de Moura
- 安東尼 António Manuel dos Santos
- 巴慧雅 Vera Bastos
- 歐文傑 Miguel Evaristo
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- 劉慧敏 Amanda Liu
- 楊詩婷 Si Teng leong



To protect the health and safety of our Clients and Staff, we continue implementing prevention measures at the office entrance, as recommended by the local Authorities.

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**XI'AN SHOWS
 THERE MUST BE NO
 COMPLACENCY**

The pandemic situation on the Chinese mainland has turned grave lately, with Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi province, announcing on Wednesday night that it would start a citywide lockdown following a spike in coronavirus infections.

The country reported 71 new locally transmitted COVID-19 cases the same day, of which 63 were reported in Xi'an. The restrictive measures being taken there — suspending all transport to and from the city apart from special cases and allowing only one person from each household out every two days to buy daily necessities, among others — are the strictest since a lockdown was imposed on Wuhan, Hubei province, early last year.

The restrictions, despite heavily disrupting local businesses and social life, are imperative given how fast the virus can spread. Several cities have already detected cases linked to the latest Xi'an outbreak, including one in Beijing, the host city of the Winter Olympic Games.

Taking such resolute steps to break the chains of transmission as soon as possible not only allows economic and social activities in the rest of the country to stay on normal track, but also ensures that the preparations for the Games proceed smoothly. Doing its utmost to make sure that the sporting event can be staged safely is an international responsibility that China has to shoulder for the good of athletes and visiting delegations from all participating countries.

The fact that the holidays of New Year's Day and Spring Festival, Chinese Lunar New Year, are approaching, which will see a surge in the number of people traveling nationwide and thus increase the risks of the virus spreading, makes the prevention work even more challenging.

Of course there are lessons that can be learned from what is happening in Xi'an, where negative impacts on the economic front and people's lives could have been minimized if safety precautions had been better exercised, the public alert system activated earlier, and prevention and control measures more targeted. The experience the country has accumulated over the past two years and the success it has had in trying to contain the spread of the virus should not be an excuse for complacency.

Now the most pressing task for local officials in Xi'an is to ensure that the prevention and control measures, no matter how rigorous, are people-oriented and effective. They must make sure there are adequate supplies of food grains, oil and vegetables and their prices remain stable. They must also pay special attention to meeting people's medical needs, such as those requiring regular dialysis treatment. Based on experiences elsewhere, it is expected that the city will likely be able to effectively contain the virus in about four weeks.

If you have a sore throat, runny nose and a headache there is a good chance it will be Covid, warn UK researchers, as quoted by BBC last night.

The Zoe Covid study team has been tracking the pandemic using feedback from the general public, and estimates half of people with cold-like symptoms actually have Covid.

They describe an "explosion" of Covid cases over the last week, driven by the new Omicron variant.

About 144,000 people a day are catching it and then feeling unwell.

For most, Covid is a mild disease. Some get no symptoms at all.

But it can still cause very serious illness in some people, including those who have not been vaccinated.

If you have cold-like symptoms, take a Covid test, says lead scientist Prof Tim Spector, as quoted by BBC.

"The number of new symptomatic cases has exploded over the last week," he said.

"For most people, an Omicron positive case will feel much more like the common cold, starting with a sore throat, runny nose and a headache. You only need to ask a friend who has recently tested positive to find this out.

"We need to change public messaging urgently to save lives."

**INTEL APOLOGIZES FOR
 ASKING SUPPLIERS TO
 AVOID XINJIANG**

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

Intel Corp. apologized yesterday for asking suppliers to avoid sourcing goods from Xinjiang after the world's biggest chipmaker joined other foreign brands that face the fury of state media over complaints of abuses by the ruling Communist Party in the mostly Muslim region.

Intel's request was "arrogant and vicious," said Global Times, a newspaper published by the ruling party.

The reference to Xinjiang in a letter to suppliers was aimed at complying with U.S. regulations, Intel said on its social media account. Washington has barred imports of goods from Xinjiang over complaints of mass detentions, forced abortions and forced labor, which Beijing denies.

Tension over Xinjiang is rising as activists call for a boycott of February's Winter Olympics in Beijing, a prestige project for the ruling party. The White House says the United States won't send dignitaries. Beijing on Wednesday barred four members of a U.S. government religious freedom panel from China in retaliation for sanctions imposed by Washington on two Xinjiang leaders.

"So-called forced labor and other allegations on Xinjiang are completely lies concocted by anti-China forces," said a foreign ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian. He called on Intel to "respect facts and tell right from wrong."

Some commenters online, where comments the ruling party doesn't want are deleted by censors, called for a boycott of Intel products.

Intel processor chips are used in smartphones, computers and other products.

The letter caused "concerns among our cherished Chinese partners, which we deeply regret," said an Intel statement.



"We apologize for the trouble caused to our respected Chinese customers, partners and the public," the company said.

Other companies including retailer H&M and shoe brand Nike have been targeted for criticism and calls for boycotts after expressing concern about Xinjiang or saying they would stop using materials produced there.

" [The letter caused] concerns among our cherished Chinese partners, which we deeply regret

INTEL STATEMENT

The Chinese government rejects complaints of abuses in Xinjiang, but companies say they are unable to carry out independent audits of factories and other workplaces.

Pop singer Wang Junkai, also known as Karry Wang, announced Wednesday he was pulling out of a deal to act as "brand ambassador" for Intel's Core line of processor chips.

Other singers, actors and other celebrities have broken ties with foreign brands that were targeted for criticism over Xinjiang, giving up millions of dollars in income to protect their careers from official retaliation.

Xinjiang is a major supplier of silica used in making computer chips. Intel has a chip factory in Dalian in China's northeast — its only one in Asia and one of four outside the United States. The company also has a research facility in Beijing.

Criticism by state media might prompt consumers to look at products based on chips from other suppliers. But there are few alternatives. The include Advanced Micro Devices Inc. of the United States for chips in desktop PCs and servers and Britain's Arm Ltd. for smartphones.

The Communist Party has spent billions of dollars to build a Chinese chip industry and reduce reliance on the United States, Taiwan and other suppliers. But its manufacturers are far from achieving the level of precision required for the most advanced chips from Intel and other global suppliers.

Intel, headquartered in Santa Clara, California, reported 2020 profits of \$23.7 billion on sales of \$77.9 billion.

Smartphones and other products are designed to work with the characteristics of a specific chip from one supplier. Switching would require a design overhaul and testing. MDT/AP

Belgium The government tentatively committed itself yesterday to phasing out the country's existing nuclear power plants by 2025 while using gas as a bridge toward sustainable energy sources and possible new-technology nuclear options later. Under a complicated compromise agreement reached after all-night negotiations, an assessment will be made of whether Belgium's energy security can be assured if all seven nuclear plants are shut down. A definitive decision is expected to be made in March.

UK The government said yesterday it won't introduce any new coronavirus restrictions until after Christmas, and called early studies on the severity of the omicron variant encouraging. Health Secretary Sajid Javid said two studies suggesting omicron carries a significantly lower risk of hospitalization than the previously dominant delta strain was "encouraging news." But he said it was "not very clear yet...by how much that risk is reduced."



Nigeria destroyed more than 1 million expired doses of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine yesterday after authorities said they could not be used before their expiration date. Faisal Shuaib, head of Nigeria's National Primary Health Care Development Agency, said health officials in Africa's most populous country were left with little choice after receiving the donated doses that didn't have much shelf life left.

HOLIDAY TIMES

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will be back on the stands on Tuesday December 28. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.