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Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre

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AP PHOTO



South Korea will begin offering Novavax Inc.'s Covid-19 vaccine at hospitals, nursing homes and public health centers next week, officials said, adding another tool to fight a fast-developing omicron surge. The country reported a record 54,122 new coronavirus cases yesterday, according to the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, a 12-fold increase from daily levels seen in mid-January, when the omicron first became the country's dominant strain.

AP PHOTO



North Korea Satellite photos show hundreds of people in formation at a training ground in North Korea's capital in a possible sign the country is preparing for a military parade amid heightened animosities over its recent missile tests. The 38 North website, which specializes in North Korea studies, said Wednesday the Feb. 5 imagery taken on the Mirim airfield in Pyongyang — where rehearsals for past military parades occurred — likely signals a forthcoming parade.

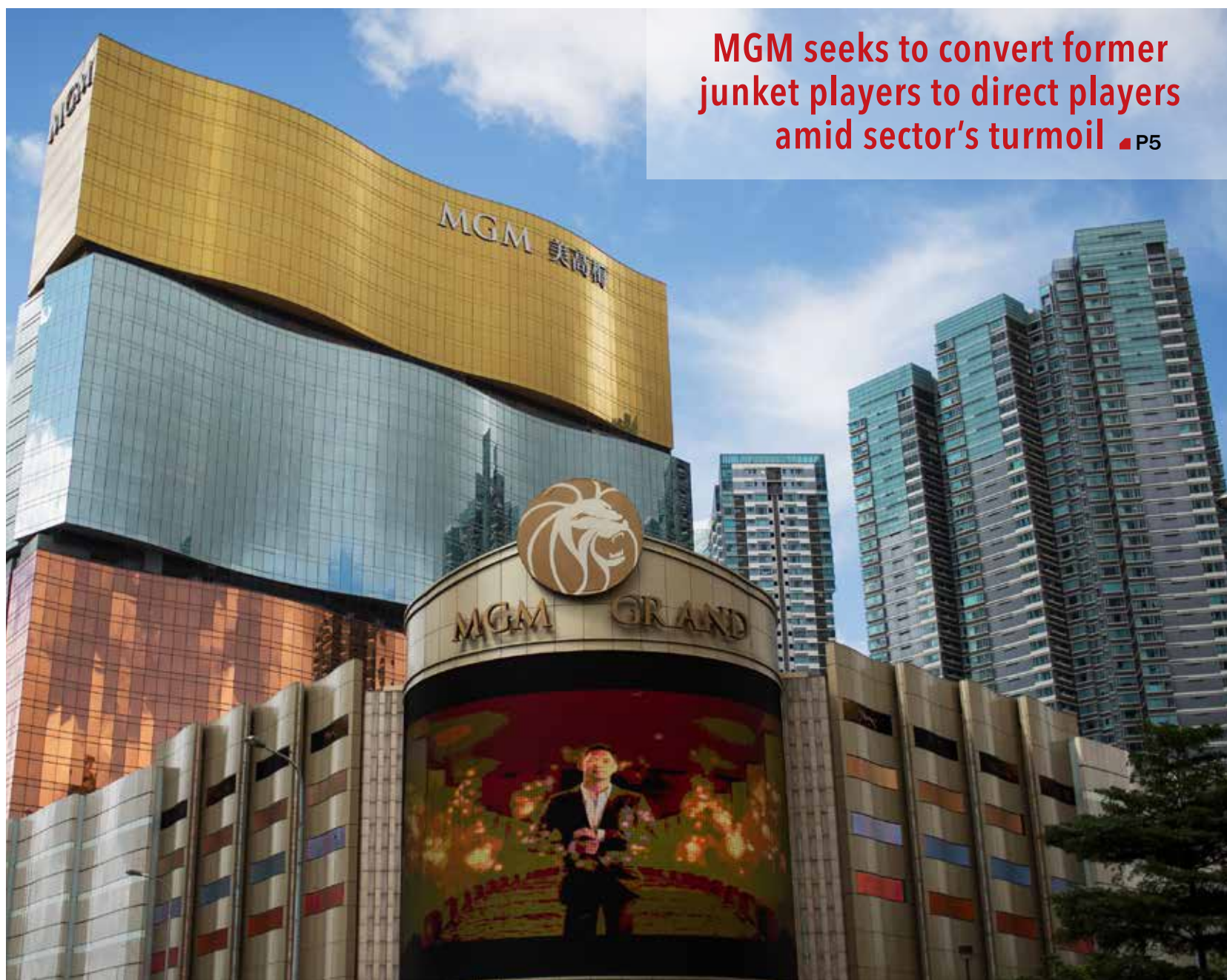
AP PHOTO



Australia A spy agency says it has disrupted a foreign government's attempt to illegally bankroll the election of candidates who are politically sympathetic or vulnerable to inducements. Mike Burgess (pictured), director-general of the Australian Security Intelligence Organization, did not identify the country when he delivered his annual security threat assessment.

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THE CONVERSATION

SKI JUMP: FLYING OR FALLING WITH STYLE?

AMY POPE
CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

IF you or I jump in the air as high as possible, we can stay off the ground for about half a second. Michael Jordan could stay aloft for almost one second. While there are many events at the Winter Olympics that feature athletes performing feats of athleticism and strength while high in the air, none blur the line between jumping and flying quite as much as the ski jump.

I teach students about the physics of sports. The ski jump is perhaps one of the most intriguing events in the Winter Games to showcase physics in action. The winner is the athlete who travels the farthest and who flies and lands with the best style. By turning their skis and bodies into what is essentially a wing, ski jumpers are able to fight gravity and stay airborne for five to seven seconds as they travel about the length of a football field through the air. So how do they do this?

HOW TO FLY

Three major concepts from physics are at play in the ski jump: gravity, lift and drag.

Gravity pulls any object in flight down toward the ground. Gravity acts on all objects equally and there is nothing athletes can do to lessen its effect. But the athletes also interact with the air as they move. It is this interaction that can produce lift, which is an upwards force produced by air pushing on an object. If the force produced from lift roughly balances the force of gravity, an object can glide or fly.

To produce lift, an object needs to be moving. As the object moves through the air, its surface collides with air particles and pushes these particles out of the path of the object. As air particles are pushed down, the object is pushed up according to Newton's Third Law of motion which says that for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Air particles pushing an object upwards are what create lift. Increasing speed as well as increasing surface area will increase the amount of lift.

AP PHOTO



The angle of attack – the angle of the object relative to the direction of air flow – can also affect lift. Too steep and the object will stall, too flat and it won't push down on air particles.

While this all may seem complicated, sticking your hand out of a car window illustrates these principles perfectly. If you hold your hand perfectly flat, it will stay more or less in place. However, if you tilt your hand so that bottom is facing the direction of the wind, your hand will be pushed upwards as the air particles collide into it. That is lift.

The same collisions between an object and air that provide lift also produce drag. Drag resists the forward motion of any object and slows it down. As speed decreases, lift does too, limiting the length of a flight.

For ski jumpers, the goal is to use careful body positioning to maximize lift while reducing drag as much as possible.

FLYING ON SKIS

Skiers start high up on a slope then ski downhill to generate speed. They minimize drag by crouching down and carefully steer to reduce friction between the skis and ramp. By the time they reach the end they can be going 60 miles per hour (96kph).

The ramp ends at a takeoff point which, if you look closely, is actually at a slight downward angle of 10 degrees. Just before the athletes reach the end of the ramp, they jump. The ski landing slope is designed to mimic the path a jumper will take so that they are never more than 10 to 15 feet above the ground.

Once the athletes are in the air, the fun physics begins.

The jumpers do everything they can to produce as much lift as possible while minimizing drag. Athletes will never be able to generate enough lift to overcome gravity entirely, but the more lift they generate, the

slower they will fall and the further down the hill they will travel.

To do this, athletes align their skis and body nearly parallel to the ground and place their skis in a V-shape just outside the form of the body. This position increases the surface area that generates lift and puts them in the ideal angle of attack that will also maximize lift.

As drag reduces the speed of the skier, lift decreases and gravity continues to pull on the jumper. Athletes will begin to fall faster and faster until they land.

THE RULES FOLLOW THE PHYSICS

With so much physics at play, there are a lot of ways wind, equipment choices and even the athletes' own bodies can affect how far a jump can go. So to keep things fair and safe, there are a lot of regulations.

While watching the events,

you may notice officials moving the starting point up or down the slope. This adjustment is made based on the wind speed as faster headwinds will produce more lift and result in longer jumps that could go past the safe landing zone.

Ski length is also regulated and tied to a skier's height and weight. Skis can at most be 145% of the skier's height and skiers with a body mass index less than 21 must have shorter skis. Long skis are not always the best as the heavier the ski, the more lift you need to produce to stay airborne. Finally, skiers must wear tight-fitting suits to ensure that athletes will not use their clothing as an additional source of lift.

As you tune into the Olympics to marvel at the physical power of the athletes, take a moment to consider also their mastery of the concepts of physics.

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TRANSPORTATION

Public bus budget at MOP970m in 2021

LYNZY VALLES

THE budget for public bus transport services last year was around MOP970 million, a lower amount than that of 2020, according to the Transport Bureau (DSAT).

Presenting to the Advisory Council, the bureau stated that there were 193 million total person-trips last year, with a daily average of 529,000 person-trips, an increase of around 16% compared to the previous year. 46 hybrid buses were introduced in 2021, paving the way for 200 more such buses, which have arrived in Macau and are about to be brought into service. The number of buses powered by renewable energy will represent more than 30% of the total fleet, the bureau reported.



In 2021, DSAT coordinated 127 roadwork operations that were carried out in a combined manner, reducing the overall time taken by more than 1,200 days, a reduction of 21%

compared to the previous year.

This year, 61 large-scale works will be carried out involving the main arteries, an increase of 11% from last year. These include

work on a rainwater pumping station near the Inner Harbor and work on the pavement and sewage of Rua de Pequim and Rua de Luís Gonzaga Gomes. DSAT said that it is actively coordinating with those responsible for the work to minimize the impact on traffic and the public.

The bureau will also attempt to start public consultation on the "General Planning of Traffic and Land Transport of Macau (2021-2030)" in the first half of the year.

"DSAT continues to promote smart traffic, improving real-time data collection and the early warning system of concentration on buses; increase the number of smart traffic light sets; and gradually launch more electronic services, such as online driving license revalidation," the bureau said.

To improve the pedestrian network, work has begun on the design of the pedestrian overpass on Rua Norte do Patane. In the last three years, 88 instances of work to optimize the crossings were completed, with the remaining 30 will be commenced gradually.

NO ILLEGALITY FOUND IN POLICE CNY INSPECTIONS

OF the 331 people who were stopped and questioned by Public Security Police Force (PSP) officers in the Lunar New Year operation, none were found to be breaking any laws, the PSP has announced.

This result is the outcome of a regular Chinese New Year operation from the PSP involving concerted efforts from officers of all departments.

The recent results announced refer to operations during February 8 and 9, and show that, of the 331 people who were questioned on the street, on public trans-

port, or in one of several establishments, all were found to be abiding by the law.

In the same period, the PSP also performed a total of 60 vehicle inspections, finding a total of seven traffic rules violations, involving drivers or passengers not wearing seat belts, illegal U-turns, and the riding of motorcycles on sidewalks and pedestrian-only areas.


This operation, aiming to enforce security during the Spring Festival and the first days of the New Year, will continue over the coming days. **RM**




RENATO MARQUES


AD


Seasons of Prosperity





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APPROVED RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL LOANS DECREASE

Residential mortgage loans approved by Macau banks fell by 22.5% month-on-month to MOP2.49 billion in December, according to data provided by the Monetary Authority of Macao. Of these, new loans to residents represented 98.5% of the total, down by 20.7% to MOP2.46 billion; the non-resident component decreased by 69.0% to MOP37.5 million. New commercial real estate loans, meanwhile, also fell by 13.6% month-on-month to MOP10.98 billion. Within this total, new commercial loans to residents made up 99.7% of the total, down by 13.8% to MOP10.94 billion, whereas those to non-residents increased by 96.1% to MOP36.5 million.

36 NURSING HOMES VISITED FOR VACCINATION OUTREACH

Authorities have so far visited 36 homes (including nursing homes and rehabilitation homes) to provide Covid-19 vaccination services to the elderly, since outreach services commenced in October 2021. According to a statement, the Health Bureau and the Social Welfare Bureau will continue to organize vaccination outreach services for homes in Macau, with the aim of further increasing the rate of vaccination against Covid-19. The government continues to appeal to residents, particularly the elderly, to get vaccinated.

SISTERS SUFFER CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

Two 11-year-old sisters have suffered carbon monoxide poisoning caused by a gas water heater, according to the Health Bureau. The two victims reported feeling dizzy and paralyzed in all four limbs, though fully conscious, after taking a shower around 9:30 p.m. on February 8. Their parents took them to Kiang Wu Hospital where hemoglobin concentrations of carbon monoxide (COHb) were detected, and they were diagnosed with carbon monoxide poisoning. The patients remain hospitalized but are now considered stable, having received high pressure oxygen treatment.



COVID-19

GOV'T WARNS OUTBREAKS MAY SUSPEND VACCINE PLAN

RENATO MARQUES

PEOPL**E** in Macau should get vaccinated against Covid-19 with urgency, as this might not be possible later on, health authorities stated during yesterday's regular Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center press briefing.

"We urge people in Macau to get vaccinated or take their booster shots as fast as possible," said Dr. Leong Iek Hou, coordinator at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, adding that vaccination at a later stage "might not be possible in case we have to perform other activities such as mass testing or if the Health Bureau (SSM) needs staff to attend to a potential outbreak."

Leong was speaking in response to media inquiries regarding the pandemic situation in the neighboring region of Hong Kong, which has been peaking in the last few days, hinting that there is a possibility that this outbreak will

reach Macau.

In the scenario of a potential outbreak, authorities might consider suspending the vaccination plan to allow all medical staff to be available to attend to other priorities, Leong remarked. She reminded the public that, for full effectiveness, the vaccine should have been administered at least 14 days before exposure to the virus.

Questioned about whether local authorities plan to enforce the mandatory presentation of vaccination certificates for access to some venues, Leong said that this remains a possibility, but would depend on the severity of the situation in Macau. For the time being, since Macau has been completely free of Covid-19 infections for some time, such a measure would not be considered.

GOV'T UNAWARE OF POSSIBLE IMPACT ON LOGISTICS

When questioned about logistics and imports, Leong admitted that health authorities

are unaware of potential impacts for Macau arising from the pandemic situation in Hong Kong.

"We know that most of the products arriving in Macau from Hong Kong come via maritime transportation. This has been the way for many years. We are reinforcing the work of supervision and the handling of those goods but, for the time being, we have no information on the potential impact that the situation in Hong Kong might have

in Macau," she said, adding that most attention is focused on frozen and chilled products.

NO PRIORITY GIVEN TO LOCALS FOR QUARANTINE HOTELS

No special measures for access to quarantine hotels, such as implementing a priority system for residents, are planned. This information was provided by Liz Lam, representing the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), in response to media questions.

The questions were raised in light of several university students from Macau who are in Hong Kong and wish to return, but cannot find vacant rooms in quarantine venues.

According to Lam, citing figures from the Education and Youth Development Bureau, there were 11 requests received from students in Hong Kong, but she said that some of them were still considering the best time to travel and do not have a clear date for their arrival to Macau.

She noted that the MGTO will find ways for residents who wish to return to be able to do so as soon as possible, but said that finding new quarantine venues is a difficult task due to the standards and characteristics required.

According to the figures announced, there are currently 934 people undergoing quarantine in local hotels, of whom more than half (495) are non-residents, including tourists (349).

AUTHORITIES CALL ON COMPANIES TO FOLLOW HEALTH GUIDELINES

LOCAL health authorities reiterated the need for local companies and entities to proceed with following the guidelines of the public sector, that is, verifying the health situation of their staff members, namely those who traveled abroad during the Chi-

nese New Year. Authorities are seeking strict compliance with the safety procedures to avoid an outbreak, which could be possible due to lack of supervision and lax compliance with infection prevention and control measures at workplaces.

CRIME

Man arrested for privacy intrusion and harassment over online broadcasting

A 34-year-old man from the mainland has been detained by the Public Security Police Force (PSP) after he uploaded a live-stream to the internet publishing private information about a local 28-year-old woman and encouraging viewers to call to woman's phone number to harass her, a PSP spokesperson reported.

The case came to the

attention of the police following a complaint from the victim. The woman told the PSP that after being receiving several harassing and threatening phone calls from unidentified strangers over a number of consecutive days, she discovered from a friend that the cause was the suspect's live-stream.

After identifying the man, the PSP detained him for questioning as

he was trying to reenter Macau. He initially denied the accusations, but after searching his mobile phone, the PSP found the software used for the live-stream.

Finally, the suspect confessed to the crime, justifying that it had to do with his personal history with the woman. At this point, the individuals who called the woman to harass her remain unidentified. **RM**



GAMING

MGM seeks to convert junket players to direct players amid sector's turmoil

LYNZY VALLES

MGM China is set to focus on targeting the mass market, saying "it is where the future resides," as the city's junket sector faces a crackdown.

Speaking on an earnings call with analysts, Hubert Wang, MGM China's president and chief operating officer, said recovery was in play for MGM in 2021, driven by the mass market segment.

Following upheavals in the junket industry, with arrests of junket moguls occurring in a matter of just two months, MGM is now focused on capturing and converting former junket players into direct players.

The executive feels that the marketplace is still quite dynamic insofar as the conversion of former junket players to in-house players and, to some extent, to premium mass players, is concerned.

"I think that all junket operators in the traditional sense have basically ceased operations in Macau. So the players or the agents working for the previous junket operators are trying to find a place to settle down," said Wang.

Currently, MGM's goal is to "capture as much conversion from junket to in-house to mass as possible. And on that note, I think that we are also looking at reallocating resources, particularly the table units to support the mass growth eventually," Wang added.

Previously, in an exclusive interview with the Times, Wang expressed confidence that the fate of Suncity would not have a dramatic financial impact on the firm, reiterating its focus on the mass premium market.

Macau's USD3 billion VIP sec-

tor was dealt a huge blow by the shutdown of junket operators, which serviced high-rollers. The arrests of junket moguls Alvin Chau and Levo Chan led to the termination of agreements by gaming operators with them amid the upcoming gaming concession renewals.

CNY BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

MGM China is satisfied with the business's Chinese New Year performance, particularly on the mass market side. The gaming operator reached 85% of pre-pandemic levels in terms of mass volume measured by table drop.

However, China's zero-Covid policy is a strong factor at play given it is the location of the vast majority of its potential customers.

Strict travel restrictions in China are heavily affecting the SAR, with Wang noting that "now in China, it's getting more and more precise."

"They can really do precise travel restrictions targeted to certain areas. But the impact into Macau is that these areas' travelers won't be allowed to come to Macau or they have to go through quarantine," said Wang.

The executive recalled that, in the past year, various restrictions were imposed in each quarter, and he has not ruled out the imposition of travel restrictions again in 2022.

Therefore, in terms of broad recovery, the group is set to consider travel policies and restrictions, and when these are likely to be lifted.

"But I'm pretty confident that 2022 will be a better year than 2021, driven again by mass [market], particularly the high end of the mass [market]," concluded the executive.

AP PHOTO



MGM REVENUE SURGES 85% TO HKD9.4B IN 2021

MMGM China's net revenue soared by 85% to approximately HKD9.4 billion in 2021, according to its recent earnings announcement.

The group had a turnaround to an adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) figure of approximately HKD390 million, compared to a negative adjusted EBITDA of HKD1.4 billion in 2020. The gaming operator's daily gross gaming revenue increased 81% year-on-year to approximately HKD29 million, about 40% of pre-pandemic levels, which is higher than the market recovery level.

Despite sustained chopiness in the operating environment driven by various travel restrictions

and structural shifts at the high end, MGM China reached an all-time record 14% in market share. According to Bill Hornbuckle, CEO and president at MGM Resorts International, the official launch of the Emerald Suites at MGM Cotai during the quarter enhanced their hospitality offerings and is helping grow market share.

"We believe MGM China remains well-positioned for the market's eventual rebound given its strengths in premium mass. Importantly, recent constructive developments around the concession renewals reaffirm our confidence in the government's judicious and fair approach to the process," Hornbuckle said on the recent earnings call. LV

GBA

Hengqin issues first license to Macau-owned clinic

THE first wholly Macau-owned medical institution in the Guangdong-Macau In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin has received its license to provide diagnostic and treatment services including internal medicine, surgery, dermatology, and sports medicine, according to Hengqin authorities.

The Zhuhai Hengqin Zhenlin Comprehensive Ambulant Clinic has a 1,300 sqm comprehensive facility at Zhenlin Villa in the Guangdong-Macau Cooperation Industrial Park, according to a statement released by Hengqin

authorities. It recently became the first medical institution introduced under the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) since the zone's establishment in September 2021. Zhu Jianling, who is in charge of the facility, said that many more medical

professionals from Macau will settle in the zone and provide Hengqin and Macau residents with international-standard, diversified, high-quality and convenient medical services. Hengqin has created new platforms and opportunities for the exchange

and cooperation of Hengqin and Macau medical institutions and talent, according to Huang Yujie, acting director of the zone's Livelihood Affairs Bureau. More effective measures will be taken to promote the high-quality development of medical and

health services in the cooperation zone, accelerate connectivity with Macau's medical public services, enhance the integrated development of medical services between the two regions and effectively expand high-quality living spaces for SAR residents, Huang added. LV

'POLITICS OF GRANDEUR': TWO OLYMPICS AND CHINA'S LOVE OF BIG

STEPHEN WADE, BEIJING

TIANANMEN Square. The Forbidden City. The Great Wall. The Three Gorges Dam. Dozens of high-end malls in Beijing.

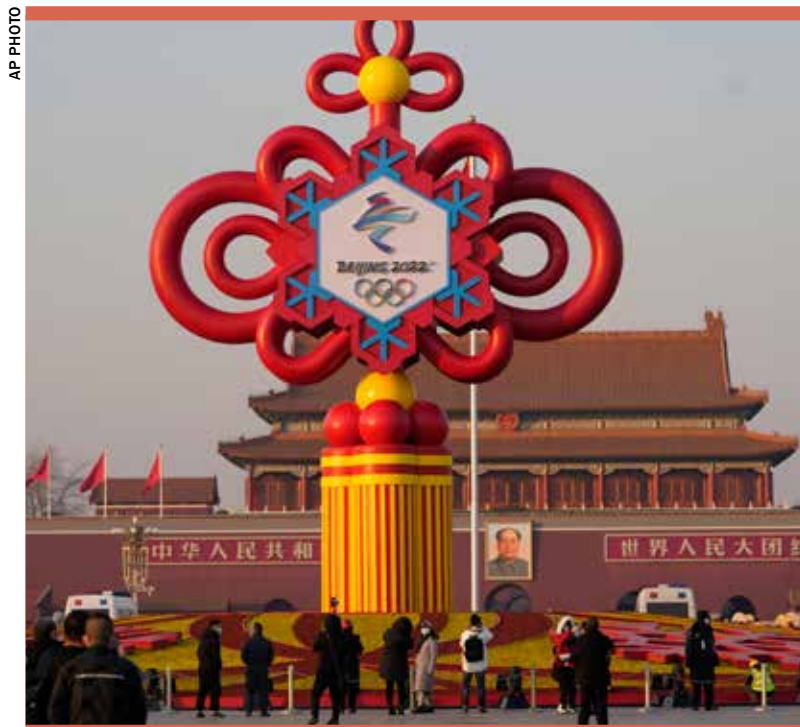
China has thousands of years of doing things in a really big way, reinforcing its perceived place in the world and the political power of its leaders — from emperors to Mao Zedong to the current leader, Xi Jinping.

Beijing becoming the first city to hold both the Winter and Summer Olympics may not be a feature on the actual landscape. But it's in the same realm for the world's most populous country, which has long framed itself at the center of the world, evident in its name in Chinese, "Zhongguo," or "middle country."

This affinity for bigness isn't new. It goes back to a dozen dynasties that ruled China for thousands of years — one of which re-created an entire army of terra cotta warriors to be buried with an emperor. It's a tradition of projecting large-scale power that was adopted by the Chinese Communist Party when it took over in 1949.

Writing in his book "Mandate of Heaven," U.S. China scholar Orville Schell explained how Mao, who led China's communist revolution, expanded Tiananmen Square in the 1950s to make it the largest public square in the world — 100 acres.

That's five times larger than Moscow's Red Square. And Mao even went the Russians one better by adorning the square with Soviet-style architecture,



the most famous of which is the Great Hall of the People. Eventually, after Mao's death in 1976, the square came to include his imposing mausoleum.

Schell wrote of Tiananmen, calling it "a propagandist's dream come true. Everything about it was gargantuan."

The colossal begins with the country's population of 1.4 billion and extends to public buildings all around China. Towering apartment blocks — some Soviet-inspired, others thrown up in a binge of modern development in the last few decades — are typically set far back from 10-lane avenues, shrinking the size of pedestrians on road-size sidewalks.

The vastness reaches to shopping malls, commercial spaces and to buildings like the Bird's

Nest stadium, a 91,000-seat colossus put up for the 2008 Olympics and used a week ago for the opening ceremony of these Winter Games.

A shopping mall in the western city of Chengdu, the New Century Global Center, is billed as the largest building on Earth. How big? Three Pentagons could fit inside. Or at least 300 football fields.

The seven-story, block-long media center for these Olympics — a convention center in normal times — replaces another outsized building that's a block away and was used as the media center for the 2008 Games.

Add the Beijing headquarters of China Central TV, a 768-foot (234-meter), two-leg tower known around town as "Big Underpants" for its unusual design.

Architect Rem Koolhaas famously said the building "could never have been conceived by the Chinese and could never have been built by Europeans. It is a hybrid by definition."

Then there's 40,000 kilometers of high-speed rail lines, and the Belt and Road Initiative — often described as the New Silk Road. Many view it as the largest building project in history, stretching from China and East Asia to Europe and consisting of rail lines, ports, highways and other infrastructure projects to expand China's trade and influence. Critics warn of the unsustainable debt burden for many participating countries.

China's attack on COVID-19 is fittingly mammoth, too, capable of locking down millions in a show of state power built partly on Orwellian surveillance architecture. Need a medical facility? During the pandemic, China built 1,000-bed hospitals in 10 days.

Maria Repnikova, a China specialist at Georgia State University, termed China's policy of going large as the "politics of grandeur," something that reaches beyond concrete to include scholarships for foreign students, exchanges, training, and economic aid.

"The idea is to give more to impress upon external audiences that we have so much to give you, that nobody else can compete with that," Repnikova said in an interview.

"The first thing you see (in China) is the intensity of the scale, whether it's the presidential buildings or whether it's

other sites or Olympic venues. That's something that at first catches someone's eye, and then it makes one wonder — how have they done it?"

But in the China context, what does big really mean? It's impressive and can literally change the landscape. Yet there's massive meaning, too, in the thinking behind it — particularly for a government that has long prized the projection of control outward to its sometimes disobedient hinterlands.

"Authoritarian use of political symbols and propaganda can serve two purposes: to persuade audiences of the regime's legitimacy, and to demonstrate state power," Sheena Greitens, who researches China at the University of Texas at Austin, wrote in an email.

"I suspect that Beijing will use both during the Olympics, presenting domestic and international audiences with humanizing stories about ordinary Chinese people while also making sure they witness impressive displays of the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) and state power."

Diana Fu, a China expert at the University of Toronto, said states such as PRC often build in a systematic way that she terms "spatial governance," which helps them put down any protests or insurrections.

"Small, winding streets and dense neighborhoods can foster a sense of neighborly feelings and trust, which is critical for collective action," Fu wrote to AP. "In contrast, large boulevards and predictably geometric patterns of streets and districts allow the state to better surveil and control its population. States like contemporary China are able to do so while facing little opposition from civil society."

MDT/AP

EVERGRANDE

Troubled Chinese builder promises 600,000 apartments

A Chinese real estate developer that is struggling under \$310 billion in debt is promising to deliver 600,000 apartments this year, a newspaper reported yesterday, in a show of confidence it can avert collapse and resume normal business.

Evergrande Group has left financial markets guessing at its status since the developer warned in December it might run out of cash. Its struggle to avoid default alarmed investors, but Chinese officials say any financial impact can be contained.

Xu Jiayin, the Evergran-



de founder, announced the plans to deliver apartments at a Feb. 6 meeting with employees, the Securities

Times reported. It said the company aims for monthly sales of 10 billion yuan (\$1.6 billion) to make sure cons-

truction can be completed.

The report suggested Evergrande aims to carry on normal business, contrary to expectations among investors the company might be broken up or shut down.

The target of 600,000 apartments is comparable to deliveries in one of Evergrande's busiest past years, the newspaper said.

Evergrande and some smaller developers are scrambling to comply with tighter limits on borrowing imposed in 2020 to rein in surging debt the ruling Communist Party worries is dangerously high.

Evergrande says it has 2.3

trillion yuan (\$350 billion) in assets, but the company has struggled to turn that into cash to pay bondholders and other creditors.

The company had "almost no capital inflow" since September, Xu said. He previously has said potential buyers were put off by news reports about its financial struggle.

However, Xu ruled out a "fire sale" of assets at reduced prices, according to the Securities Times.

Evergrande has missed deadlines to pay interest on some bonds but made payments before a grace period expired and it was declared

in default. Some bondholders can agree to be paid by receiving apartments.

Economists say Beijing's priority is to ensure families receive apartments they already have paid for while avoiding a bailout that would send the wrong signal to companies that are under pressure to cut debt.

The government of Evergrande's home province of Guangdong, adjacent to Hong Kong, sent officials to its headquarters in December to oversee risk management. Other provinces and cities have sent officials to local Evergrande operations. MDT/AP

AUSTRALIA

Blinken says century will be shaped by Indo-Pacific region

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

THE United States remains focused long-term on the Indo-Pacific region despite concerns over Russian aggression toward the Ukraine, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said yesterday.

Blinken is in the Australian city of Melbourne for a meeting today with his counterparts from Australia, India and Japan.

The four nations form the so-called "Quad," a bloc of Indo-Pacific democracies that was created to counter China's regional influence.

"There are a few other things going on in the world right now, some of you may have noticed. We have a bit of a challenge with Ukraine and Russian aggression. We're working 24/7 on that," Blinken said in his first public address since arriving in Australia on Wednesday.

"But we know, the president knows better than anyone else, that so much of this century is going to be shaped by what happens here in the Indo-Pacific region," he added.

The Indo-Pacific is the fastest growing region in the world, accounting for two-thirds of global economic growth over the past five years and home to half the world's population, Blinken said.

What matters in the region



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, visiting for Quad of foreign ministers, takes part in a health security partnerships roundtable at Biomedical Precinct, Melbourne

matters around the world and challenges like climate change and COVID-19 can't be tackled by any nation alone, he said.

"More than ever before, we need partnerships, we need alliances, we need coalitions of countries willing to put their efforts, their resources, their minds into tackling these problems," Blinken said.

"What really drives us is a shared vision" of a "free and open so-

ciety," he added.

Blinken's trip is designed to reinforce America's interests in Asia and its intent to push back against increasing Chinese assertiveness in the region. He will also visit Fiji and discuss pressing concerns about North Korea with his Japanese and South Korean counterparts in Hawaii.

Blinken said like-minded countries were standing up for shared values rather than

against China.

"This is not about standing against anyone in particular, it is about standing up for a rules-based order," Blinken told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

Asked whether the Biden administration viewed Russia or China as the greater threat to global security, Blinken replied: "These are ... very different challenges. Russia right now poses an immediate challenge."

Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne, who will chair the Quad meeting, said the agenda would include COVID-19 vaccine distribution, cyber and critical technologies, countering malicious and dangerous disinformation, terrorism, maritime security and climate change. India will be represented by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Japan by Foreign Minister Hayashi Yoshi-masa.

"As a network of liberal democracies, we are committed to very practical cooperation and ensuring that all Indo-Pacific nations — large and small — are able to make their own strategic decisions and make those decisions free from coercion," Payne said.

In Beijing on Wednesday, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian responded to a question about Blinken's visit with a lengthy attack on American democracy and a defense of China's contri-

butions to the global order.

"With its so-called democracy having collapsed long ago, the U.S. is forcing other countries to accept the standards of the American democracy, drawing lines with democratic values and piecing together cliques. That is a complete betrayal of democracy," Zhao told reporters.

Blinken is expected to address threats posed by a growing partnership between authoritarian Russia and China, particularly after the Sunday meeting in Beijing between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping at the opening of the Winter Olympics.

The U.S. had hoped that the Xi-Putin meeting would have demonstrated Chinese wariness about Russia's military buildup along Ukraine's borders. But Xi was largely silent on the matter.

Australian Defense Minister Peter Dutton expressed concern over the Russian-Chinese alliance and said the threat posed by China was growing.

"We know that our nation is facing the most complex and potentially catastrophic regional security environment since the Second World War," Dutton told Parliament yesterday.

Blinken has a family link to Melbourne through his stepfather Samuel Pizar, a lawyer and U.S. presidential adviser who died in 2015.

Polish-born Pizar was orphaned during World War II and sent by an aunt to Melbourne where he was cared for by two uncles who had immigrated in the 1930s.

Blinken visited the Melbourne Law School where Pizar had excelled before moving to the United States to continue his studies at Harvard University. **MDT/AP**

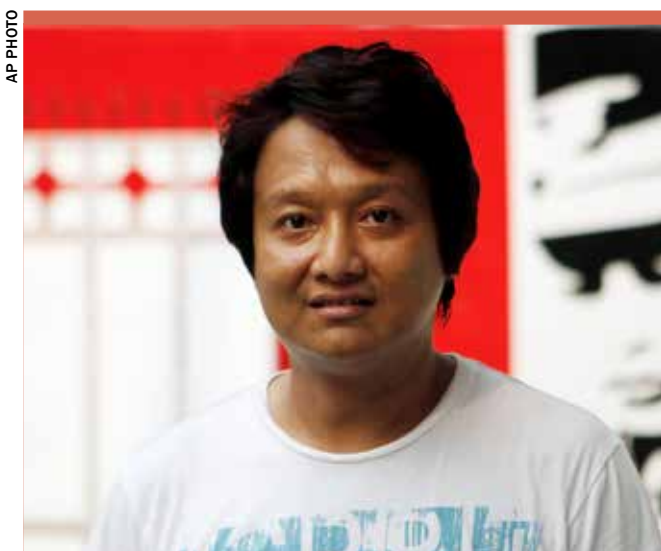
MYANMAR

Prominent filmmaker arrested after a year on the run

AN award-winning film director in Myanmar has been arrested almost a year after he was put on a wanted list for encouraging government employees to join in protests against military rule, a colleague and local media reported yesterday.

Htun Zaw Win, whose professional name is Wyne, was arrested Wednesday at his apartment in Yangon after spending most of the past year on the run, said the colleague, who is also a prominent figure in the entertainment industry. He spoke on condition of anonymity because of fear of arrest.

Wyne has won multiple awards for best director and



Myanmar filmmaker Htun Zaw Win

best screenplay from the Myanmar Motion Picture Organization. In addition to his popular feature films, he

has also worked on movies and shorts dealing with political themes, including land-grabbing and censorship.

The colleague said the 48-year-old Wyne is believed to have gone home to receive medical treatment. He has not fully recovered from a stroke in 2019.

According to the independent Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, 12,059 people have been arrested since Myanmar's military ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi on Feb. 1 last year. Of those, 9,056 remain detained.

The army takeover triggered widespread protests and the formation of a civil disobedience movement. Celebrities including film directors, actors, singers, artists, and models attended rallies against the

military and used social media to express their support of the nationwide movement against army rule.

By the end of February, the military government began issuing arrest warrants for celebrities, charging them with incitement for "spreading news to affect state stability," an offense punishable by up to three years in prison.

More than 100 celebrities who took part in the protests were sought and listed with their photos on state-run media.

At least 15 were arrested last year, about half of whom were convicted by special courts inside the country's notorious Insein

Prison in Yangon.

Last October, charges were dropped against 24 artists and 10 social media personalities under an amnesty order from Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, head of the ruling military council.

However, the military government continues to issue new arrest warrants, and according to the state-run Myanmar Alinn Daily newspaper, at least 187 people have been arrested by security forces since Jan. 27 this year.

The military suppression of peaceful protests gave rise to armed resistance, and a low-level insurgency is active in many parts of the country. **MDT/AP**

UKRAINE CRISIS

Diplomats meet in Moscow and Berlin as Russia holds drills

VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV,
MOSCOW

BBRITAIN'S top diplomat urged Russia yesterday to defuse tensions over Ukraine and take the path of diplomacy even as thousands of Russian troops engaged in sweeping maneuvers in Belarus as part of a military buildup near Ukraine that has fueled Western fears of an invasion.

U.K. Foreign Secretary Liz Truss again warned Russia that attacking its neighbor would "have massive consequences and carry severe costs," urging Moscow to abide by its international agreements that commit it to respecting Ukraine's independence and sovereignty.

Seated across a table from Truss with a grim face, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov set a stern tone for the talks, emphasizing that Moscow won't accept Western lecturing.

"Ideological approaches, ultimatums and moralizing is a road to nowhere," Lavrov said, noting that his talks with Truss marked the first meeting of the two countries' top diplomats in more than four years. Russia-U.K. ties have been badly strained by the March 2018 poisoning of former Russian spy Sergei Skripal in England and other sources of tension.

Russia has concentrated more than 100,000 troops near Ukraine's border and launched a series of military maneuvers in the region, but says it has no plans to invade the nation.

Moscow wants guarantees from the West that NATO won't allow Ukraine and other former Soviet countries to join as members, and for the alliance to halt weapon deployments to Ukraine and roll back its forces from Eastern Europe. The U.S. and NATO flatly reject these demands.

Russia's military buildup includes the deployment of troops on the territory of its ally Belarus for



sweeping joint drills that entered a decisive phase yesterday. The Ukrainian capital is located about 75 miles south of the border with Belarus, and Western nations voiced worry that Russia could use Belarusian territory to invade Ukraine.

Russia and Ukraine have been locked in a bitter conflict since 2014, when protests drove Ukraine's Kremlin-friendly leader from office, Moscow annexed Crimea and then backed a separatist insurgency in eastern Ukraine. The fighting between Russia-backed rebels and Ukrainian forces has killed over 14,000 people.

A 2015 peace deal brokered by France and Germany helped end full-scale hostilities, but frequent skirmishes have continued along the tense line of contact while efforts to negotiate a political settlement stalled. The Kremlin has accused Kyiv of sabotaging the peace agreement, and Ukrainian officials in recent weeks said that implementing it would hurt their country.

Foreign policy advisers from Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine, who met in Paris on Jan. 26 without scoring any visible progress, are scheduled to have another round of talks in Berlin on Thursday

to try to reach a common interpretation of the 2015 agreement and plan further steps.

The talks in Berlin are part of renewed diplomatic efforts to resolve the biggest security crisis between Russia and the West since the Cold War. French President Emmanuel Macron visiting Moscow for more than five hours of talks Monday with Russian President Vladimir Putin before meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv the next day.

Macron said Putin told him he wouldn't initiate an escalation, but also acknowledged that it will take time to find a diplomatic solution.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz plans to visit to Kyiv and Moscow on Feb. 14-15. He met Monday with U.S. President Joe Biden, who vowed that the Nord Stream 2 Russia-to-Germany gas pipeline would be blocked in the event of an invasion. Such a move against the pipeline, which has been completed but isn't yet operating, would hurt Russia economically but also cause energy supply problems for Germany.

NATO also has stepped up the deployment of troops to bolster the alliance's eastern flank.

The U.S. has begun to

move the 2nd Cavalry Regiment's stryker squadron from Vilseck, Germany, to Romania, which borders Ukraine. U.S. officials have said they would send about 1,000 NATO troops.

About 1,700 soldiers from the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division are being sent to Poland. About half of them have arrived, and more are expected to follow in coming days, Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said. Britain also has pledged to send 350 more troops to Poland and already has sent anti-tank weapons to Ukraine.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said yesterday after meeting in Brussels with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, that the 30-nation military alliance must "combine strong deterrence with patient diplomacy."

"I honestly don't think a decision has yet been taken" by Russia about whether to invade Ukraine, Johnson said. But he added that "our intelligence, I'm afraid to say, remains grim."

"But the stakes are very high, and this is a very dangerous moment," Johnson said. The prime minister is scheduled to head to Poland later for a visit that includes meeting British troops deployed to the country. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1990 FREEDOM FOR NELSON MANDELA



Leading anti-apartheid campaigner Nelson Mandela has been freed from prison in South Africa after 27 years.

His release follows the relaxation of apartheid laws - including lifting the ban on leading black rights party the African National Congress (ANC) - by South African President FW de Klerk.

Mr Mandela appeared at the gates of Victor-Verster Prison in Paarl at 1614 local time - an hour late - with his wife Winnie.

Holding her hand and dressed in a light brown suit and tie he smiled at the ecstatic crowds and punched the air in a victory salute before taking a silver BMW sedan to Cape Town, 40 miles away.

People danced in the streets across the country and thousands clamoured to see him at a rally in Cape Town.

Doctors treated over a hundred people as police clashed with youths looting shops in various cities and townships and several people were reported shot dead.

Mr Mandela, the deputy-president of the ANC, appeared on the balcony of Cape Town's City Hall to speak to the 50,000 people assembled outside at 2000 local time.

He acknowledged Mr de Klerk was a man of integrity, but said: "Our struggle has reached a decisive moment. Our march to freedom is irreversible."

"Now is the time to intensify the struggle on all fronts. To relax now would be a mistake which future generations would not forgive," he continued.

As he addressed the crowd South African state television broadcast a profile of Mr Mandela - including a BBC interview from 1961 - which was the first time he had been shown speaking on TV.

Now 71, the lawyer from the Transkei homeland was convicted of treason and sabotage in June 1964 and sentenced to life imprisonment.

He spent most of his sentence on Robben Island, off Cape Town, doing hard labour.

Since the 1980s he has refused numerous offers for early release from the government in Pretoria because of the conditions attached.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Nelson Mandela succeeded Oliver Tambo as president of the ANC later in 1991.

He divorced Winnie the next year following her convictions for kidnapping and being accessory to an assault.

Mr Mandela and FW de Klerk shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 for their efforts to transform South African society. In the first multi-racial elections in the country's history he was elected president and the ANC gained 252 of the 400 seats in the national assembly.

He was succeeded as ANC president by Thabo Mbeki in 1997 and stepped down in favour of Mr Mbeki as national president after the 1999 elections.

Mr Mandela re-married in 1998 and was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2001, aged 83.

Mandela died on December 5 2013, aged 95, in Johannesburg.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

<p>ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19</p> <p>Be aggressive and colorful, and you will get your way. Don't allow your lover to take advantage of your good nature. Your social activity should be conducive to finding love.</p>	<p>TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20</p> <p>Romance can develop; however, it will most probably be short-lived. Secret intrigues could get you into trouble. You may have more to do with children today; keep an open mind.</p>
<p>GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21</p> <p>The locks, stove, gas, or electric wires may not be secure. Empty promises will cause upset. Your home environment appears to be a little shaky.</p>	<p>CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22</p> <p>Too much talk will lead to disputes. You will get drawn into groups that are not favorable to you. You may find it difficult to discuss personal matters with family members.</p>
<p>LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22</p> <p>Do something special. Get promises in writing or you will be disappointed. Don't trust a deal that looks too good, or a lover who appears to have it all.</p>	<p>VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22</p> <p>Your lover will be extremely sensitive and now will not be a good time to make changes that they won't like. You will get along well in social situations.</p>
<p>LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22</p> <p>Be sure that you have all the facts before you take action. You can make professional changes and direct your energy into making all the right moves. Go after your goals.</p>	<p>SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21</p> <p>You'll feel much better when your slate is clean again. Older family members may try to make demands that are impossible for you to handle.</p>
<p>SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21</p> <p>Secret information will be eye opening. Help others solve their dilemmas. Someone may be trying to damage your reputation. Arguments with children or friends may leave you steaming.</p>	<p>CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19</p> <p>Look closely at motives and honesty in your personal encounters. You might find that the extra cash will come in handy when an opportunity to invest comes along.</p>
<p>AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18</p> <p>You can pick up some overtime today. Make sure that you have covered yourself legally and try not to let your temper get out of hand.</p>	<p>PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20</p> <p>Things at work have been moving quickly and you may be feeling a little uncertain about the changes taking place. Look to a close friend for advice.</p>

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-3	9	cloudy
Harbin	-9	-4	snow
Tianjin	3	5	rain
Urumqi	4	8	cloudy
Xi'an	7	10	overcast
Lhasa	1	7	fine
Chengdu	10	15	overcast
Chongqing	6	8	rain
Kunming	0	4	overcast
Nanjing	4	8	rain
Shanghai	20	27	cloudy
Wuhan	4	6	rain
Hangzhou	-16	-7	snow
Taipei	2	5	rain
Guangzhou	13	19	overcast
Hong Kong	17	20	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	-2	1	snow
Frankfurt	-1	6	rain
Paris	-1	9	overcast
London	3	8	overcast
New York	7	12	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Heartburn; 6- Name of a feudal Japanese clan; 9- point; where it all becomes clear; 14- Fabric of jeans; 15- Prefix with angle; 16- Small antelope; 17- Skinny; 19- Competitor; 20- Nine-digit ID; 21- Sign over; 22- Damp; 23- 1922 Physics Nobel; 25- Cluster; 26- Prima ballerina; 29- Trompe l'oeil; 31- Made; 32- Modernised; 36- Smelting waste; 37- Sch. group; 38- Apple product; 40- Voted into a seat; 43- Tater Tots maker; 45- Prefix with -drome; 46- Horse pen; 47- Anthology of artwork; 50- Locks up; 51- Regions; 52- Course list?; 54- Moo goo pan; 57- Summit; 58- Person who promotes disorder; 61- Foot bones; 62- Freight weight; 63- Soil; 64- Org.; 65- Vane dir.; 66- Stan's pal;


DOWN 1- Citrus drinks; 2- Precious stones; 3- ___ uproar; 4- Spasm; 5- Where ___?; 6- Sleek swimmer; 7- Historic Scott; 8- White House staffer; 9- Prescription; 10- The Hunter; 11- Honda model; 12- Make ashamed; 13- Rhythmic swing; 18- Needed liniment; 23- Pig out; 24- Cheer for Manolete; 25- Auction action; 26- Some MIT grads; 27- Story; 28- Like some history; 29- Top; 30- Clean air org.; 33- Layers; 34- Foreign dignitary; 35- Arp's art movement; 37- ___ diem; 39- "Silent" prez; 41- Sarcastic; 42- President pro ___; 43- Come about; 44- Caviar; 47- Tapestry; 48- Ogles; 49- Ezio Pinza, for one; 50- Silly; 51- Official records; 52- Floor coverings; 53- Slaughter of baseball; 54- Female child; 55- Italian wine city; 56- Spillane's "___ Jury"; 59- Bus. bigwig; 60- Golfer Sutton;

Yesterday's solution

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

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944	
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731	
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333	
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300	
IAM 28 387 333	
Tourism 28 333 000	
Airport 59 888 88	



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

AP PHOTO



Gal Gadot, left, and Ali Fazal in a scene from "Death on the Nile"

DRIVE IN

THE LONG-DELAYED 'DEATH ON THE NILE' RUNS AGROUND

JAKE COYLE, MDT/AP
FILM WRITER

KENNETH Branagh's Agatha Christie adaptation "Death on the Nile" begins with a flashback to the trenches of World War

I before shifting to 1930s London two decades later, but that's nothing compared to the time that's passed since Branagh's preceding 2017 whodunit "Murder on the Orient Express."

That film, which packed

a bevy of stars aboard an opulent locomotive, was a saggy contrivance that lacked the warm fizz of Sidney Lumet's 1974 version, with Albert Finney. But "Murder on the Orient" did offer a welcome reminder

of two immutable cinematic maxims: Train movies are irresistible and whodunits are, generally speaking, a hoot. It was an unexpected box-office hit, and a sequel, with Branagh again directing and returning as the mustachioed Belgian detective Hercule Poirot, was quickly ordered up with visions of something like a Christie-verse.

But the pandemic, which partly accounts for release postponements stretching two years, is not all that has delayed "Death on the Nile." One of its stars, Armie Hammer, plunged into scandal, and the studio reportedly considered reshooting the film with another actor. Even the studio disappeared when 20th Century Fox was acquired by the Walt Disney Co.

Still, the biggest sea change to swamp "Death on the Nile" may have been something else: Rian Johnson's "Knives Out" kind of blew it out the water. Johnson's 2019 mystery wasn't based on a Christie novel, but it was affectionately styled after one, and giddily brought the genre into contemporary times. Here, with Daniel Craig as the very Poirot-like investigator Benoit Blanc, was the exciting whodunit revival. (A Mediterranean-set sequel is due out later this year.)

So "Death on the Nile," with Hammer in tow, is making its humbled way

into theaters this Friday. A glossy, star-studded adaptation of Christie's 1937 novel, scripted by Michael Green, is a better movie than "Murder on the Orient Express" but still feels like a creaky murder mystery too insecure to simply let its talky characters and spiraling plot lines play out. Instead, "Death on the Nile," stuck somewhere between the past and today, tries vainly to spruce up an old-fashioned style of movie with buckets of CGI and a nervous camera that can't stop swooping around.

It begins with a flashback to Poirot as a soldier at war, where his cunning reading of the winds leads to a promising offensive, along with a battle wound that ultimately prompts Poirot's choice of facial hair. We know where the Joker got his malaise and Superman his powers; now we can finally account for the origin of Poirot's stache.

And certainly, Branagh's portrayal of Christie's seminal detective leans into the iconic. His Poirot is especially smirking, knowing and mustache-twirling. For much of the movie early on, we see him in mugging close-up and ominous silhouette simply watching — especially at a London blues club where Salome Otterbourne (Sophie Okonedo) is performing and a love triangle is possibly forming on the dance floor. There writhes the passionate lovers Simon Doyle (Hammer) and Jacqueline (Emma Mackey). She pauses to introduce her fiancé to the wealthy socialite Linnet Ridgeway (Gal Gadot) and appeal to her for a job for Doyle.

When Poirot turns up months later at the Pyramids in Egypt, Doyle and Linnet are married and honeymooning. The desert scene is computer generated and a little ridiculous. An old acquaintance, Linus Windlesham (a nicely against type Russell Brand), a doctor and Linnet's former fiancé, is flying a kite halfway up one of the pyramids. Linnet briefly is seen in the garb of Cleopatra, like a mini-coming attraction for an in-development movie trailed by its own controversy.

All, including a jilted, jealous Jacqueline, board the Karnak, a handsome riverboat steamer. For "Death on the Nile," it's a polished set for the movie's main action. Just about everyone on the ship has some connection to the newlyweds. Among the persons of interest are the painter Euphemia (Annette Bening), Linnet's lawyer, Andrew Katchadourian (Ali Fazal), Otterbourne and her niece (Letitia Wright), Linnet's godmother Marie Van Schuyler (Jennifer Saunders) and her companion (Dawn French).

As they float down river, "Death on the Nile" takes a while setting up the various characters, teasing possible motives and sending its cameras circling around the Karnak in pointless flourishes. But once there is a fresh body and a crime to untangle, "Death on the Nile" settles down. Poirot goes to work, the clues pile up and the craftiness of Christie's tale takes hold. An upside of the murder mystery is how it can isolate each actor in an ensemble and give them a chance to flourish. Here, that's true especially for Okonedo, whose chanteuse adds some gravity to the proceedings.

But by the time the movie finally finds a swifter current, Branagh's film has only embellished memories of the 1978 version, with Peter Ustinov as Poirot, and genuine Egyptian locations. As it is, this "Death on the Nile," for too long an affected and strained entertainment lacking any sense of place, floats well downstream from more bracingly constructed whodunits.

"Death on the Nile," a 20th Century Studios release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for violence, some bloody images, and sexual material. Running time: 127 minutes. ★★☆☆

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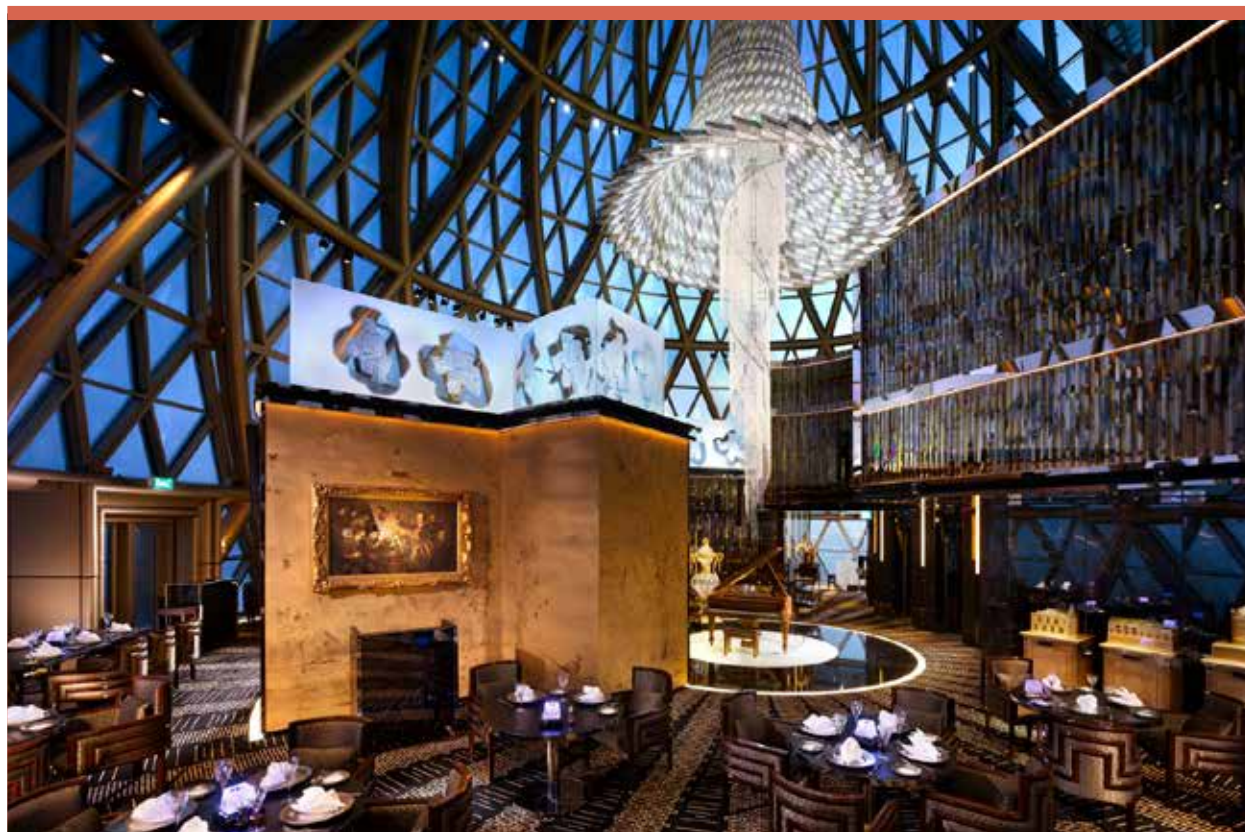
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TASTE OF EDESIA

Remarkable celebration

IRENE SAM, MDT

IN celebration of the recent announcement from Michelin Guide Hong Kong and Macau 2022, Grand Lisboa Hotel and Grand Lisboa Palace Resort Macau came up with new Michelin-starred culinary experiences, specially curated menus and joint promotions thoughtfully designed by award-winning chefs. For a remarkable 14th consecutive year, Robuchon au Dôme has consistently earned 3 stars. SJM's homegrown Chinese restaurant – The 8 – also earned 3 stars once again, and The Kitchen has retained its star for 9 consecutive years.

The esteemed chefs at Robuchon au Dôme, The 8 and The Kitchen will present menus featuring fan-favourite dishes of each restaurant. Executive Chef Julien Tongourian

and his team at Robuchon au Dôme are crafting an 8-course “Robuchon au Dôme Prestigious Celebration Menu” featuring exceptional Robuchon signature dishes. The signature dishes on the menu were designed by renowned Chef Joël Robuchon throughout the 14-year journey of earning 3 stars. As the perfect complement to this celebratory dinner, a vintage 2008 Dom Perignon Champagne has been specially selected in remembrance of the first year Robuchon au Dôme received 3 stars.

The award-winning culinary team from The 8 has masterfully assembled the restaurant's most acclaimed signature dishes to create an 8-course “The 8 Celebration Menu” in honour of achieving 3 stars for 9 consecutive years. Each one of the dishes on the menu will be uniquely paired with German wines dating back to

2014, when The 8 earned 3 stars for the first time.

The Kitchen, renowned for its fresh seafood and premium quality steaks is introducing a “The Kitchen Celebration Menu” that is uniquely its own, highlighting the freshness of ingredients and the restaurant's commitment to sustainability. The dinner menu will feature a sumptuous Seafood Tower, premium grilled beef and homemade desserts paired with specially selected New World wines from 2014 when The Kitchen received its first star.

The celebration continues at Grand Lisboa Palace, where for the first time, two Grand Lisboa Hotel restaurants-The 8 and The Kitchen, will collaborate with new rising stars from Grand Lisboa Palace-Palace Garden and Mesa for an exquisite limited-time gourmet experience. Presenting haute Chinese cuisine in an imperial garden setting, Palace Garden and The 8 will offer a delicate menu that is paired with signature cocktails and mocktails; exceptional Chinese teas; as well as fine wines and champagnes. At the same time, in chic and stylish ambiance, Mesa will collaborate with The Kitchen to present a petiscos menu of flavours that can be paired with premium quality beverages.



KNOW HOW

- Make Rice
- Cube Salmon
- Slice avocado
- Julienne carrot
- Add baby spinach
- Slice red cabbage
- Squeeze of lime
- Dash of light soy
- Sesame seeds



INGREDIENTS

- Scottish Salmon
- Avocado
- Carrots
- Baby spinach
- Red cabbage
- limes
- Light soy
- Sesame seeds



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BY ALEX TORRÃO
MDT

OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

SOUR GRAPES INTOXICATE TROLLS TO UGLY VILIFICATION

Despite some voices of dissatisfaction that Viktor Ahn was to coach the Chinese speed skating team, a strong rival of its Republic of Korea counterpart, it did not bring much trouble to the former ROK speed-skating legend when the news first broke.

Things took an abrupt turn for the ugly after the Chinese short-track speed skaters began their winning streak, particularly after they won both the gold and silver medals in the men's 1,000-meter final. Ahn has found himself in a vortex of abuse on the internet, mostly from his native country. Internet trolls accuse him of being a "traitor". The bullying has become so rampant and damaging that Ahn had to issue a plea for the trolls to spare his innocent family.

And the matter seems to be getting uglier against the backdrop of the ROK Olympic delegation's allegation that referees for the men's short-track speed skating semi-finals were biased in favor of China when they disqualified ROK contestants from the finals.

However, the International Skating Union has announced it found no problem in the judgment and turned down the appeal from the ROK Olympic delegation that the decision be overturned.

Uncomfortable as it may be, it is not just unfair, but downright pathetic to shift frustration with failures in the sports arena to the perfectly innocent Ahn, who deserves everyone's respect both as the most decorated Winter Olympic champion and as a successful coach now.

After all, there is nothing untoward in a retired Olympic champion assuming a coaching career overseas these days. The ROK's soccer team for one has benefited tremendously from European coaches. Not a few former Chinese table tennis, diving and gymnastics stars have been coaching foreign athletes over the years. And Ahn is only one of the star-studded team of foreign coaches now helping China improve its winter sports capabilities.

Not to mention that, legally, Viktor Ahn is no longer Ahn Hyun-Soo, the ROK Olympian hero, who won three golds among four medals for his birth country at the 2006 Torino Winter Games. He became a Russian citizen in 2011 after the doors to another Olympic adventure was shut to him at home, winning three golds among four medals for his adopted country at the 2014 Sochi Winter Games before retiring because of injuries.

Whoever he is, whatever citizenship he holds, Ahn is an outstanding athlete whose excellence in his sport brought, and keeps bringing, joy and inspiration to people around the world. His experience both as an Olympic contestant and coach has been a shining example of sportsmanship. Even all that aside, as an ordinary athlete and individual, he has every right to choose where and for whom to work within the bounds of law.

Hong Kong residents expressed growing frustration yesterday after new, tighter coronavirus restrictions went into effect, imposed by city leaders in line with Beijing's zero-COVID policy.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam ordered new strict measures to take effect as the highly-contagious omicron variant of the virus causes record daily cases.

That includes limiting public gatherings to two people and private ones to members of only two households. Places of worship, hair salons and other businesses were ordered to close.

Such measures are part of Hong Kong's effort to align itself with mainland China's "zero-COVID" policy, which aims to totally

stamp out outbreaks, even as infection numbers continue to rise and other countries shift their approach to living with the virus.

Newly confirmed cases fell slightly yesterday to under 1,000 after hitting a daily record 1,161 on Wednesday, Hong Kong health authorities reported. Overall, Hong Kong has seen only about 18,500 cases of COVID-19 and 215 deaths among its population of some 7.5 million.

Opponents of the zero-COVID approach contend that with nearly 65% of the population fully vaccinated and signs the omicron variant of the virus is less severe for those with some immunity, that it is time to change course.



AP PHOTO

PHILIPPINES WELCOMES BACK FOREIGN TRAVELERS AFTER TWO YEARS

JIM GOMEZ & JOEAL CALUPITAN, MANILA

THE Philippines lifted a nearly two-year ban on foreign travelers yesterday in a lifesaving boost for its tourism and related industries as an omicron-fueled surge eases.

Foreign travelers from 157 countries with visa-free arrangements with the Philippines who have been fully vaccinated and tested negative for the virus will be welcomed back and will no longer be required to quarantine upon arrival. The government also ended a risk classification system that banned travelers from the worst-hit countries.

"We will begin the next chapter in the road to recovery," Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat said. She added the border reopening would restore jobs and generate revenue across tourism-related enterprises and communities.

British tourist Ian Collins said at the airport arrival lobby that he flew back after two years because he "absolutely loved" the Philippines and wanted to reunite with Filipino friends. "It's just a wonderful country. I'm so glad that you're open

again," the 60-year-old Collins told The Associated Press.

Malaysian tourist Shaun James Stickney said the pandemic separated him and his Filipina partner for two years, so he took the first flight to Manila when the Philippines reopened to reunite with her and "God willing, get married."

The Philippines imposed one of the world's longest lockdowns and strictest police-enforced quarantine restrictions to quell a pandemic that caused its worst economic recession since the 1940s and pushed unemployment and hunger to record levels.

More than a million Filipinos lost their jobs in tourism businesses and destinations in the first year of the pandemic alone, according to government statistics. Tourism destinations, including popular beach and tropical island resorts, resembled ghost towns at the height of pandemic lockdowns, and a volcanic eruption and typhoons exacerbated losses.

The reopening had been set for Dec. 1 but was postponed as the highly contagious omicron variant of the coronavirus spread.

Less than a thousand

new cases were added daily during the Christmas holidays, when large crowds of shoppers trooped back to malls and restaurants despite constant government warnings. The subsequent surge peaked above 39,000 infections in a day in mid-January, but has since eased. Health officials reported about 3,600 infections on Wednesday with 69 deaths and have declared the entire archipelago, except for one southern region, at "low to moderate risk."

More than 60 million of nearly 110 million Filipinos have been fully vaccinated against the coronavirus and 8.2 million have received their booster shots in a campaign that has been hampered by vaccine shortages and public hesitancy.

President Rodrigo Duterte warned Filipinos in televised remarks Monday that "we are not over the hump" and urged the unvaccinated to get immunized soon.

"If you're unvaccinated and you die, well, I'll tell you, 'good riddance,'" the tough-talking president said. "You can walk around and if you get contaminated, you will be awfully very, very sorry for yourself and your family." **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

New Zealand police yesterday arrested dozens of protesters who were camped out on the grounds of the Parliament on the third day of a convoy protest against coronavirus mandates. The arrests came after Parliament Speaker Trevor Mallard took the rare step of closing the grounds. Police called in more than 100 extra officers from other parts of the country. Still, police seemed prepared to wait it out as officers formed a line and ordered people to leave but only very slowly advanced on them.

Berlin International Film Festival opened yesterday with a new movie from French director Francois Ozon and a pared-down format designed to bring audiences back but reduce Covid-19 infection risks. The first of the year's major European film festivals last took place in its regular format in 2020, just before the pandemic hit. Last year, it was split in two — with a largely online version held in March and an event with screenings for the public in June.



AP PHOTO

Paris police yesterday banned road blockades threatened by groups organizing online against Covid-19 restrictions, in part inspired by protesters in Canada. Citing "risks of trouble to public order," the Paris police department banned protests aimed at "blocking the capital" from Friday through Monday. Police will put measures in place to protect roads and detain violators.

USA Inflation soared over the past year at its highest rate in four decades, hammering America's consumers, wiping out pay raises and reinforcing the Federal Reserve's decision to begin raising borrowing rates across the economy. The Labor Department said that consumer prices jumped 7.5% last month compared with 12 months earlier, the steepest year-over-year increase since February 1982. The acceleration of prices ranged across the economy.