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**VISITOR SPENDING IN 2021 SOARED TO MOP24 BILLION, A 104.8% INCREASE YEAR-ON-YEAR, DUE TO RISE IN VISITOR NUMBERS AND PER CAPITA SPENDING**

**CRIME: PJ EXPOSES CROSS-BORDER PROSTITUTION RING, ARRESTS EIGHT SUSPECTS**

**50 YEARS AFTER NIXON VISIT, CHINA-US TIES AS FRAUGHT AS EVER**



**Philippines** A police helicopter crashed yesterday as it was flying to pick up the country's police chief on a resort island, killing a crew member and injuring the two pilots, officials said. The Airbus H125 helicopter went missing after taking off from Manila and was found two hours later to have crashed in Quezon province, police officials said.



**Iran** A fighter jet crashed into a stadium in a city in northwest Iran, the country's state-run news agency reported yesterday. The crash killed two pilots and a civilian. IRNA said the F-5 fighter crashed into a stadium in a residential area of Tabriz, a city of 1.6 million residents. Authorities are investigating the incident, the report said.

**Israel** yesterday said it successfully tested a new naval air defense system, intercepting a series of threats in what officials called a key layer of protection against Iran and its proxies in the region. The "C-Dome" system is a naval version of the Iron Dome, which has been used to shoot down rockets fired from the Gaza Strip for the past decade. The C-Dome is being installed on Israel's latest-generation corvette warships.



**US** and Egypt yesterday launched a joint working group to prepare for the next climate change summit in November, the American envoy for climate issues said. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry said the group is focused on the United Nations' COP27 conference in Egypt's Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh. He said the country has already begun its preparations for the meeting.

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## THE CONVERSATION

# HAPPY TWOSDAY! WHY NUMBERS LIKE 2/22/22 HAVE BEEN TOO FASCINATING FOR OVER 2,000 YEARS



**BARRY MARKOVSKY**  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

**T**HIS Feb. 22, the world hits an unprecedented milestone. It's the date itself: 2/22/22. And this so-called "Twosday" falls on a Tuesday, no less.

It's true the number pattern stands out, impossible to miss. But does it mean anything? Judging by the thousands of commemorative products available for purchase online, it may appear to.

"Twosday" carries absolutely no historical significance or any cosmic message. Yet it does speak volumes about our brains and cultures.

I'm a social psychologist who studies how paranormal claims and pseudoscience take hold as popular beliefs. They're nearly always absurd from a scientific perspective, but they're great for illustrating how brains, people, groups and cultures work together to create shared meaning.

### SEEING PATTERNS

Twosday isn't the only date with a striking pattern. This century alone has had a couple Onesdays (1/11/11 and 11/11/11), and 11 other months with repetitions such as 01/01/01, 06/06/06 and 12/12/12. We'll hit Threesday, 3/3/33, in 11 years, and Foursday 11 years after that.

The brain has evolved a fantastic capacity to find meanings

and connections. Doing so once meant the difference between survival and death. Recognizing paw prints in the soil, for example, signified dangerous predators to be avoided, or prey to be captured and consumed. Changes in daylight indicated when to plant crops and when to harvest them.

Even when survival isn't at stake, it's rewarding to detect a pattern such as a familiar face or song. Finding one, the brain zaps its synapses with a little shot of dopamine, incentivizing itself to keep finding more patterns.

When a number sequence seems to jump out at us, this is an example of apophenia: perceiving meaningful connections between unrelated things. The term was first developed to characterize a symptom of schizophrenia.

Another example of apophenia is astrology, which visually connects stars into constellations. These are the familiar Zodiac signs such as "The Ram," Aries; or "The Archer," Sagittarius. Each sign is linked to meanings associated with its respective object. For example, people born under the sign of Aries are believed to be stubborn like rams. But those signs don't exist in the sky in any physical sense, and the system fails scientific tests.

### READING INTO NUMBERS

The date 2/22/22, though striking, carries no inherent mea-

ning beyond its function in our particular calendar. This is true for numbers in general: Their meanings are limited to measuring, labeling or counting things.

"Twosday" is a simple example of a popular form of arithmetical shenanigans: numerology, the pseudoscientific practice of attaching supernatural significance to numbers.

Numerology can be traced back 2,500 years to the Greek mathematician Pythagoras, with alternative systems appearing elsewhere, including China and the Middle East.

Numerology may look mathematical, but it's more akin to palmistry and reading tea leaves. It has been popularized through magazines, books, movies, television programs, websites and other social media. Assessing the extent of numerology's popularity is difficult, but the belief that certain numbers are good or bad is common. For example, nearly a quarter of Americans say 7 is lucky.

There are many kinds of numerology. The most popular form assigns numbers to names or other words, and then calculates their "root," also known as the "destiny number" or "expression number". It starts by assigning a number to each letter of the alphabet: A = 1, B = 2, up to I = 9, then the cycle repeats with J = 1, K = 2, etc.

For example, adding up the five numbers in my own first name – 2, 1, 9, 9, and 7 – yields 28. To find the root, add the digits in 28 to get 10, and then add up those two digits to get 1. For my middle and last names, the roots are 4 and 9. Adding the three roots returns 14; adding those digits reveals that my "destiny number" is 5, which numerology associates with being free-thinking, adventurous, restless and impatient.

### MORE THAN COINCIDENCE?

I was 10 years old when I first encountered numerology. A fellow coin collector showed me a clear plastic case holding two gleaming specimens: a copper Lincoln penny and a silver John F. Kennedy half dollar. On the back of the case was a printed label with numerical "facts" linking the two presidents. For example:

6: day of the week – Friday – of both assassinations

7: letters in Kennedy's and Lincoln's last names

15: letters in both assassins' names

60: year elected – Lincoln 1860, Kennedy 1960

When you compile enough of these, it gets eerie. The experience was astonishing enough that I still recall it over a half-century later.

Are the Lincoln-Kennedy facts just coincidences? What gets overlooked is that they've been

drawn from a pool of hundreds or thousands of numerical possibilities. Throw away the boring ones and you've framed the remaining coincidences in a way that gives them more credit than they deserve.

Another way of drawing eerie coincidences from very large pools of possibilities was exploited in "The Bible Code," a best-selling book in the 1990s. The author, Michael Drosnin, took the Old Testament and arranged it into a grid of text. A computer algorithm highlighted skip patterns in the grid, such as "every 4th character", or "2 across, 5 down," to produce a huge database of letter strings. These were then sifted by another algorithm that searched for words and phrases, and distances between them.

The method seemed to foretell many historical events, including the murder of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995: A particular skip pattern yielded his name near the phrase "assassin that will assassinate."

Findings such as these can seem impressive. However, critics have proved that the method works just as well using any sufficiently lengthy text. Drosnin himself laid down this gauntlet by challenging critics to find Rabin's assassination foretold in the novel "Moby-Dick." Mathematician Brendan McKay did exactly that, along with "prophecies" for many other deaths – Lincoln's and Kennedy's included.

Which coincidences people pay attention to is largely a social phenomenon. What sociologist Erich Goode terms "paranormalism," a nonscientific approach to extraordinary claims, is sustained and transmitted by group customs, norms and institutions. "The Bible Code" couldn't exist without religion, for example, and its popularity was fueled by mass media – such as its author's interviews on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and elsewhere. In her book "Scientifical Americans," science writer Sharon Hill makes a compelling case that popular culture in the U.S. helps to foster safe havens for individual and collective belief in the pseudoscientific and paranormal.

As for "Twosday," I'll conclude by plumbing its "hidden meaning." Take the three roots of 02, 22 and 2022. We arrive at 2 + 4 + 6 = 12, and the destiny number 3. Some numerologists associate this number with optimism and joy. Though I may reject the messenger, I'll accept that message. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

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# Women's Federation pushes for more jobseeker support

ANTHONY LAM

**L**AM Lok Ha, deputy executive director of the Women's General Association of Macau, has said that she hopes the government can set up more training and hands-on support for the unemployed.

She believes that these tools will provide greater support for this group of people so that they will have greater success in overcoming difficulties brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to the latest employment figures released by the government's Statistics and Census Service, the overall unemployment rate in the fourth quarter of last year rose slightly to 3.1%, while the unemployment rate for local residents also edged up to 4.1%.

Lam foresees that the pandemic's impact on the local labor market is expected to linger for some time, which will affect many families economically. She therefore hopes that more training and internship packages can be established to help the unemployed, so that they have a better chance of making it through tough economic times.

She pointed out that society is often concerned with employment issues. For example, junket closures and a protest at the Labour Affairs Bureau by construction workers have recently made news headlines.



After Lunar New Year, the market traditionally sees a rotation of workforce, Lam said. However, considering the impact on the employment market recently, local employers may not be able to absorb all of the excess workforce.

She hopes that the government will pay close attention to changes in the economic and employment environments, provide timely assistance to enterprises and employees, as well as avoid financial difficulties for more families.

Commenting on the rising unemployment rate, Lam pointed out that maintaining economic stability and residents' employment during the pandemic is the top priority. She put forward three suggestions: a recommendation that the government actively cooperate with more enterprises to launch internships, and consider the provision of appropriate internship subsidies to allow the unemployed to participate, so that they can, through on-the-job practical training, enhance their competitiveness and in-

crease their chance of finding employment in the future.

Furthermore, the government should evaluate and optimize on-the-job training work to develop more diverse training courses that are more modern and more competitive, in line with the future development of Macau's emerging industries. This will enable employees to better cope with changes and challenges in the human resources market, as well as increase opportunities for both horizontal and vertical mobility.

## VISITOR SPENDING DOUBLES IN 2021

**V**ISITOR spending for the whole of 2021 soared to MOP24.45 billion, a 104.8% increase year-on-year, due to the rise in visitor numbers and per capita spending. The total spends of overnight visitors (MOP21.32 billion) and same-day visitors (MOP3.13 billion) grew by 117.9% and 45.6% year-on-year respectively, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

Per capita spending by visitors increased 56.7% year-on-year to MOP3,173 in 2021, with that of overnight visitors (MOP5,767) and same-day visitors (MOP782) recording respective year-on-year growth of 66.3% and 11.7%.

Last year, total visitor arrivals reached 7.71 million, a year-on-year rise of 30.7%.

The majority of these arrivals were from mainland China, as Macau had its borders closed for international travelers. Spending by mainland visitors (MOP3,258) rose by 44.7% year-on-year.

Broken down by type of expense, per capita spending on shopping (MOP2,057), food and beverage (MOP510) and accommodation (MOP473) increased by 83.4%, 39.0% and 9.4% year-on-year respectively.

During the fourth quarter, visitor spending amounted to MOP6.31 billion, an increase of 7.4% year-on-year. Total spending by same-day visitors (MOP1.19 billion) surged by 86.8% while that of overnight visitors (MOP 5.12 billion) dropped by 2.2%.

Visitors from mainland China spent MOP3,346 on average, an increase of 2.8% year-on-year; per capita spending of those travelling under the Individual Visit Scheme (MOP7,345) grew by 9.2%. LV

**T**HE government has avoided providing specifics of anti-corruption efforts in the public sector raised by lawmaker Leong Sun Iok in a written inquiry.

In a reply addressed to the lawmaker by the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP), which noted that it had consulted the Office of the Secretary for Transport and Public Works before delivering the document, the bureau said that the Secretary has no additional information to provide regarding the corruption allegations surrounding the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau's (DSSOPT) former management.

However, Leong's en-

## Gov't evades lawmaker's question on anti-corruption measures in public sector

quiry related to the government's future plans to rectify potentially problematic practices inside the bureau. For example, the lawmaker asked the government about its review of the current system, as well as its plans to close existing loopholes, tighten supervision and improve transparency.

In the same inquiry, the lawmaker also asked the government about the accountability system in place for government officials and about anti-corruption efforts in other government bodies.

On the former question, the SAFP said that the first step the government will take on improving accountability of its officials is to review the General Regulations on Workers in Public Administration and other related laws.

This step is needed, the SAFP explained, so as to codify the scope of authority of officials on different levels. It added that the establishment of a unified disciplinary board would be considered.

Following the Uni-

ted Nations Convention against Corruption, the government will also tighten criminal penalties for occupational crimes.

On improving the capabilities of civil servants, the SAFP pointed out that the government, starting two years ago, has been organizing the delivery by the University of Macau of training sessions for civil servants to educate them about leadership.

It further said that the government plans to establish certification programs for managers and future leaders. AL



GAMING

# FITCH DOWNGRADES SJM RATING TO 'BB' DUE TO LOAN, CONCESSION UNCERTAINTY

RENATO MARQUES

**F**ITCH Ratings has downgraded SJM Holdings Limited's rating from "BB+" to "BB," the agency announced in a statement, adding that the rating remains on Rating Watch Negative (RWN).

The downgrade was explained by the company's apparent difficulties in obtaining a new HKD19 billion long-term syndicated loan facility to repay existing loans due at the end of this month.

According to Fitch, the process of obtaining the loan is happening "slower than we expected," noting that nevertheless "most banks have agreed to extend the existing loans by a year."

Uncertainty regarding SJM's gaming concession also contributed to the lowered rating. Current gaming license concessions are due to expire on June 26, and

it is not yet clear how long they will be extended prior to the tender for new licenses. The government hopes to launch the tender process as soon as the new gaming law, currently in the hands of lawmakers at the Legislative Assembly, is finally approved.

The reference to Rating Watch Negative reflects the potential for a potential downgrade if SJM cannot gain the security of long-term capital flow, or if it fails to secure a new gaming concession or is encumbered by more economically-onerous licensing conditions. Another reason that could justify a potential further downgrade of the company would be a lower-than-expected recovery in terms of gaming revenues.

Covid-19-related restrictions at borders have been slowing down the economy of Macau and its main driver – the gaming industry – since early 2020.

Although borders have remain-



ned open to the mainland, Macau's main market (by quantity), continued delays in the resumption of border activity between

Macau and the neighboring region of Hong Kong have been mentioned by experts as a decisive constraining factor for the

resumption of normal casino activities and other related economic activities such as the hospitality industry.

CRIME

# PJ exposes cross-border prostitution ring, arrests eight suspects

RENATO MARQUES

**E**IGHT people have been detained by the Judiciary Police (PJ) on suspicion of being involved with organizing and operating a cross-border criminal organization to exploit prostitution in Macau, the PJ announced yesterday in a special press conference.

The case arrived at the PJ after several pieces of information were collected over some time, with a PJ spokesperson dating some of these back to 2020.

After joint investigations with mainland authorities and the Zhuhai police force aiming to identify the ringleaders, the PJ launched a simultaneous operation yesterday morning on eight apartments, one car park, and two hotel rooms in different areas of Macau.

In the operation, the PJ detained eight suspects from a total of 29 people involved.

According to the PJ, the ring operated using social



media advertising to find women in the mainland who were interested in coming to Macau for sex work.

During the operation, the PJ found that one of the apartments used by the ring functioned as a storage facility for products related to the operation. Inside the unit, police found and seized over 20,000 condoms and other products including hygiene items and lubri-

cants.

In the same operation, the PJ seized a total of 240,000 patacas in cash and over 80 electronic devices, including mobile phones, tablets and computer storage devices.

Investigators found that the group had been operating for over three years.

The PJ spokesperson said that the police are currently analyzing the contents of the electro-

nic devices as well as the storage units, aiming to find more evidence and potentially uncover a higher number of involved suspects.

The eight suspects now in PJ custody will be transferred today to the Public Prosecutions Office to be charged with the crimes of exploitation of prostitution and running and participating in a criminal organization dedicated to such activity.

# SCHOOLS REQUIRED TO ACTIVELY PROMOTE COVID JABS

ANTHONY LAM

**C**ITING the "severe situation in Hong Kong" as justification, the local government is urging schools to "actively promote" Covid-19 vaccination to students.

The Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) has cited the law to support its "request." Mentioning the Law on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Infectious Diseases and the Statute for Private Schools of Non-tertiary Education, the bureau stressed that "schools of non-tertiary education in Macau are required to tie in with the government to promote student vaccination actively."

Students who are not vaccinated will be "registered," the government entity said, adding that "schools will be

required to learn about parents' intentions to get their children vaccinated in a short period of time, [...] notify parents every week to update students' vaccination status, collect data on vaccination intentions with ongoing efforts as well as devise ways and means to encourage parents to fully cooperate in student vaccination."

It is unclear if the government entity is attempting to influence parents or students by means of peer pressure.

To facilitate the new practice, the DSEDJ and the Health Bureau held a meeting with schools yesterday to assist in arranging students to attend community vaccination stations for vaccination or arranging outreach services to schools for mass student vaccination.



# Urban farmer: Incentives needed to encourage city greening

ANTHONY LAM

**M**ACAU needs more policy incentives to promote private urban greening, the operator of an urban farming firm said yesterday.

Guilherme Martins, founder of Mighty Greens, a firm that promotes and conducts urban farming, presented on the idea at a recent breakfast hosted by the British Chamber of Commerce in Macao (BritCham Macao).

Like Singapore, Macau has a small land area but a large population, making greening a prominent challenge in the city because land is primarily reserved for real estate. Parks, by contrast, have to be sacrificed.

The major difference, however, is that the Southeast Asian city-state began its urban greening projects much earlier and consequently has achieved far better results than Macau. Singapore makes use of building façades to foster "vertical greening." Podium and rooftop spaces are also used for the same purpose.

"Some things had to suffer [in the past] in order to bring sufficient accommodation to people," Martins admitted. "As we move forward, and as we have new territories in Macau, we need to start thinking, for instance, about certifying buildings with neutralized carbon emissions or a circular economy."

Circular economy is another term for the now-popular strategy



ANTHONY LAM

of "Dual Circulation", as it is termed by the Chinese government.

"[The government] should develop regulations and licenses as incentives to bring this forward, because if this is part of the rules, everybody has to do the same," Martins added.

In addition to that, "[the government also] can offer tax and fee incentives for companies willing to move forward with sustainability projects like this," Martins proposed. "It can also offer ecological compensation, because [by picking up the project] they're actually helping reduce carbon emission and the city become greener."

Investing in urban planning, Martins admitted, may be costly, but he suggests that investors consider the long-term returns.

"It can be more costly to build, but in the long-term, the effect will pay dividends," he explained. Using real estate investment as an example, he said, "These buildings will also help reduce energy consumption because [rooftop greening] creates thermal insulation."

Moreover, by introducing urban farming, investors are fulfilling corporate social responsibilities as well.

Having worked in construction, Martins added that challenges and barriers do exist in building premises that can support rooftop farming. For instance, he said, extensive assessments of the load capacity of the building have to be made. However, once this hurdle is crossed, "the design and construction are more possible and likely less difficult," he remarked.

The absence of balconies in many new residential properties rules out the possibility of greening within apartments. On this, Martins reiterated that the government can offer greater policy incentives.

On the sidelines of the event, Martins spoke highly about collaborations with other organizations. The Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM), for example, has conducted rooftop farming for many years, the produce of which is used in their Educational Restaurant.

The move has earned Macau's first Michelin Green Star for the restaurant, highlighting their efforts in sustainability.

"There's always an opportunity [to collaborate with the IFTM]," he said. "We need to keep our door open, because they're already doing a great job."

He further introduced that there are other restaurants pursuing the same initiative, planting fresh produce on their rooftops or in their gardens.

Martins wants a more consolidated effort for urban farming. "We want to connect all of them and try to collaborate, instead of competing with each other," he said. "Together we can have greater force."

"We can work together as the knowledge is already here in Macau," Martins added. "There are people and companies in Macau that are able to bring this forward. It's only the question of having a strategy."

## CE PRAISES GOOD SHOWING FROM CHINESE WINTER OLYMPIANS

With the curtain falling on the Winter Olympics in Beijing, and the Chinese team earning nine gold medals, four silver and two bronze – a record high, placing the team third in the medal tally – Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng sent his regards to the team. In a statement, Ho applauded the athletes on behalf of Macau, also highlighting the contributions made in China which turned a new page in winter sport. He went on to say that Macau was also closely connected with the games, which inspired patriotism. He pledged that the city will put its best efforts into hosting the National Games in 2025, in collaboration with Guangdong and Hong Kong.

## INSURANCE AGENCY OFFERS COVID-19-SPECIFIC POLICY PLANS

YF Life has announced that cash benefits and coverage for Covid-19 patients, as well as people suffering lingering effects from the disease or vaccinations, may be issued to clients on some specific policies. In a statement, the company noted that if the insured tests positive to SARS-CoV-2 within 30 days from the purchase of a relevant policy plan, they will receive a benefit of HKD10,000. Meanwhile, if existing individual policy holders with the company experience adverse effects from testing SARS-CoV-2 positive or from related vaccinations, they will receive a hospitalization subsidy, an out-patient subsidy and extra mortality coverage.

## 91% OF COVID CASES ARE OMICRON VARIANT

Since January this year, Macau has registered 23 imported cases of asymptomatic Covid-19 infection, of which 2 cases are the Delta variant (8.7%) and 21 cases are the Omicron variant (91.3%). The two Delta variant cases were recorded in early January, while all infections detected on January 7 and after are the Omicron variant. Health authorities urge people over 18 years of age who received their second vaccine dose more than six months ago to receive a booster dose as soon as possible.

GBA

# Hengqin pilot projects to encourage HK, Macau trade

**P**ILOT projects intended to protect and facilitate trade and investment will be carried out in Hengqin under China (Guangdong) Free Trade Zone measures announced this week by the provincial government, the Hengqin government has said in a statement.

For instance, Guangdong will support Hengqin in creating a national demonstration zone that promotes imports and innovation.

This will involve "two-step declaration" and "two-stage access" customs clearance, classified super-

vision of warehouse stock by status, inspection and quarantine of Macau food in temporary storage and transit, separate inspection and collective declarations, and "one certificate for multiple batches."

In addition, Hong Kong and Macau service providers will be encouraged to invest in Guangdong travel agencies with streamlined approval procedures.

"The province will use the national tourism supervision service platform to facilitate Hong Kong and Macau investors when handling relevant busi-

ness," the government said.

Furthermore, legitimate overseas ship inspection institutions will be allowed to inspect internationally registered ships in Guangdong pilot free trade zones (FTZs), including Hengqin.

In terms of improving judicial review, a one-stop public legal service platform for arbitrating foreign-related issues or those involving Hong Kong and Macau will be established in Hengqin. Training bases for foreign-related experts will cultivate talent in the sector.

Hengqin will also initiate an integrated bank



account system unifying domestic and foreign currencies, practices for financial leasing companies to bring in foreign debt more efficiently and securitization of intellectual property assets.

In all, there are 27 mea-

asures in 15 categories to enable Guangdong pilot FTZs to lead in reform and innovation. Locally, they will be coordinated and implemented by the Hengqin Office of the People's Government of Guangdong, LV



Then Chinese communist party leader Mao Zedong, left, and then U.S. President Richard Nixon shake hands as they meet in Beijing on Feb. 21, 1972

## 50 YEARS AFTER NIXON VISIT, US-CHINA TIES AS FRAUGHT AS EVER

KEN MORITSUGU, BEIJING

AT the height of the Cold War, U.S. President Richard Nixon flew into communist China's center of power for a visit that, over time, would transform U.S.-China relations and China's position in the world in ways that were unimaginable at the time.

The relationship between China and the United States was always going to be a challenge, and after half a century of ups and downs, is more fraught than ever. The Cold War is long over, but on both sides there are fears a new one could be beginning. Despite repeated Chinese disavowals, America worries that the democratic-led world that triumphed over the Soviet Union could be challenged by the authoritarian model of a powerful and still-rising China.

"The U.S.-China relationship has always been contentious but one of necessity," said Oriana Skylar Mastro, a China expert at Stanford University. "Perhaps 50 years ago the reasons were mainly economic. Now they are mainly in the security realm. But the relationship has never — and will never — be easy."

Nixon landed in Beijing on a gray winter morning 50 years ago on Monday. Billboards carried slogans such as "Down with American Imperialism," part of

the upheaval under the Cultural Revolution that banished intellectuals and others to the countryside and subjected many to public humiliation and brutal and even deadly attacks in the name of class struggle.

Nixon's 1972 trip, which included meetings with Chairman Mao Zedong and a visit to the Great Wall, led to the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1979 and the parallel severing of formal ties with Taiwan, which the U.S. had recognized as the government of China after the communists took power in Beijing in 1949.

Premier Zhou Enlai's translator wrote in a memoir that, to the best of his recollection, Nixon said, "This hand stretches out across the Pacific Ocean in friendship" as he shook hands with Zhou at the airport.

For both sides, it was a friendship born of circumstances, rather than natural allegiances.

China and the Soviet Union, formerly communist allies, had split and even clashed along their border in 1969, and Mao saw the United States as a potential counterbalance to any threat of a Soviet invasion.

Nixon, embroiled in the Watergate scandal at home, was seeking to isolate the Soviet Union and exit a prolonged and bloody Vietnam War that had divided American society.

He hoped that China, an ally of communist North Vietnam in its battle with the U.S.-backed South, could play a role in resolving the conflict.

The U.S. president put himself "in the position of supplicant to Beijing," said June Teufel Dreyer, a Chinese politics specialist at the University of Miami. Chinese state media promoted the idea that a "prosperous China would be a peaceful China" and that the country was a huge market for American exports, she said.

It would be decades before that happened. First, the U.S. became a huge market for China, propelling the latter's meteoric rise from an impoverished nation to the world's second largest economy.

Nixon's visit was a "pivotal event that ushered in China's turn outward and subsequent rise globally," said the University of Chicago's Dali Yang, the author of numerous books on Chinese politics and economics.

Two years after Mao's death in 1976, new leader Deng Xiaoping ushered in an era of partial economic liberalization, creating a mix of state-led capitalism and single-party rule that has endured to this day.

China's wealth has enabled a major expansion of its military, which the U.S. and its allies see as a threat. The Communist Par-

ty says it seeks only to defend its territory. That includes, however, trying to control islands also claimed by Japan in the East China Sea and by Southeast Asian nations in the South China Sea, home to crucial shipping lanes and natural resources.

The military has sent a growing number of warplanes on training missions toward Taiwan, a source of friction with the United States. China claims the self-governing island off its east coast as its territory. The U.S. supplies Taiwan with military equipment and warns China against any attempt to take it by force.

Still, Nixon's trip to China was touted afterward as the signature foreign policy achievement of an administration that ended in ignominy with Watergate.

Embarking on the process of bringing China back into the international fold was the right move, but the past half-century has yet to put relations on a stable track, said Rana Mitter, professor of Chinese history and modern politics at Oxford University.

"The U.S. and China have still failed to work out exactly how they will both fit into a world where they both have a role, but find it increasingly hard to accommodate each other," he said.

Chinese officials and scholars see the Nixon visit as a time

when the two countries sought communication and mutual understanding despite their differences. Zhu Feng, the dean of the School of International Studies at Nanjing University, said the same approach is key to overcoming the current impasse.

"The commemoration of Nixon's visit tells us whether we can draw a kind of power from history," he said.

Though his trip to China gave the U.S. leverage in its Cold War rivalry with the Soviet Union, America now faces a new geopolitical landscape — with echoes of the past.

The Soviet Union is gone, but the Russian and Chinese leaders, Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, are finding common cause as they push back against U.S. pressure over their authoritarian ways. The Vietnam War is over, but America once again finds its society divided, this time over the pandemic response and the last presidential election.

U.S. President Joe Biden has said he wants a more predictable relationship with China but major differences over trade and human rights make mutual understanding elusive. The prospect of long-term stability in ties raised by Nixon's visit seems to be ever farther out of reach.

"China-U.S. relations are terrible," said Xiong Zhiyong, a professor of international relations at China Foreign Affairs University. "There are indeed people hoping to improve relations, but it is utterly difficult to achieve." **MDT/AP**

# Australia welcomes back tourists with toy koalas, Tim Tams

**I**NTERNATIONAL tourists and business travelers began arriving in Australia with few restrictions yesterday, bringing together families in tearful reunions after separations of two years or longer forced by some of the most draconian pandemic measures of any democracy in the world.

Australia closed its borders to tourists in March 2020 in a bid to reduce the local spread of COVID-19, but yesterday removed its final travel restrictions for fully vaccinated passengers.

Tearful British tourist Sue Witton hugged her adult son Simon Witton when he greeted her at Melbourne's airport.

"Seven hundred and twenty-four (days) apart and he's my only son, and I'm alone, so this means the world to me," she told reporters.

Travelers were greeted at Sydney's airport by jubilant well-wishers waving toy koalas and favorite Australian foods including Tim Tams chocolate cookies and jars of Vegemite spread.

Federal Tourism Minister Dan



Tehan was on hand to welcome the first arrivals on a Qantas flight from Los Angeles which landed at 6:20 a.m. local time.

"I think there'll be a very strong rebound in our tourism market. Our wonderful experiences ha-

ven't gone away," Tehan said.

Danielle Vogl, who lives in Canberra, and her Florida-based partner Eric Lochner have been separated since October 2019 by the travel restrictions.

She said she burst into tears

when she heard about the lifting of the restrictions, which will allow them to reunite in April, and telephoned him with the news.

"I actually woke him up to tell him, because I thought it was big enough news to do that," Vogl told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

"He couldn't believe it. ... He was like 'Are you sure, is this true?' and I'm like 'Yes, it's happening. This is over now: we can be together again,'" she added.

Lochner was not eligible for an exemption from the travel ban because the couple weren't married or living together.

"It's been a very long and very cruel process for us," Vogl said.

Home Affairs Minister Karen Andrews said all travelers' vaccination status would be checked before they arrived to avoid a repeat of Serbian tennis star Novak Djokovic's visa debacle.

Djokovic was issued with a visa through an automated process before he left Spain to compete in the Australian Open in January but was deported after he arrived in Melbourne because he was not

vaccinated against COVID-19.

Tourism Australia managing director Phillipa Harrison said she expected tourist numbers would take two years to rebound to pre-pandemic levels.

"This is a really great start," Harrison said. "This is what the industry had been asking us for, you know, just give us our international guests back and we will take it from there."

Qantas was bringing in passengers from eight overseas destinations including Vancouver, Singapore, London and New Delhi.

The Sydney-based airline's chief executive Alan Joyce said bookings have been strong since the federal government announced two weeks ago that the country was relaxing restrictions.

"It has been a tough two years for everybody in the tourism industry, but today is really one of the big steps on the way back to a full recovery so we are very excited," Joyce said.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said 1.2 million people had visas to enter Australia with 56 international flights due to touch down in the first 24 hours of the border reopening.

Australia yesterday reported 17,736 new COVID-19 infections and 34 deaths. Australia's death toll since the pandemic began is 4,929. **MDT/AP**

AD

- 合夥人 PARTNERS:**  
 官樂怡 Rui José da Cunha<sup>o</sup>  
 山度士 Álvaro Rodrigues<sup>o</sup>  
 馬天龍 Nuno Sardinha da Mata<sup>o</sup>  
 趙魯 Zhao Lu<sup>o</sup>  
 馬傑安 João Nogueira Marques<sup>o</sup>
- 大律師 ASSOCIATES:**  
 高文軒 Adelino Correia<sup>o</sup>  
 羅善齡 Zelina Rodrigues<sup>\*</sup>  
 白秀蘭 Susana Batalha<sup>o</sup>  
 馬潔冰 Maria João Marques<sup>o</sup>  
 陶義德 António Isóo de Azeredo<sup>o</sup>  
 白穎怡 Iclia Berenguel<sup>o</sup>  
 冼玲鳳 Mariana Afonso Esteves<sup>o</sup>  
 馬秀文 Sofia Mendes Martins<sup>o</sup>  
 飛嘉華 Carlos dos Santos Ferreira<sup>o</sup>  
 杜力信 Nelson de Azevedo<sup>o</sup>  
 宋哲言 João Gonçalves Assunção<sup>o</sup>  
 莫永誠 Rui Velez de Moura<sup>o</sup>  
 安東尼 António Manuel dos Santos<sup>o</sup>  
 巴慧雅 Vera Bastos<sup>o</sup>  
 歐文傑 Miguel Evaristo<sup>o</sup>  
 陳芷喬 Joana Chan<sup>o</sup>  
 顏曉蓉 Teresa Xiaorong Yan<sup>o</sup>  
 諾瑪莉 Maria Noras<sup>o</sup>  
 康靜雅 Viviana Hong<sup>o</sup>  
 梁淑嵐 Ana Leon<sup>o</sup>  
 黃瀚賢 Frederico Vong<sup>o</sup>
- 實習律師 TRAINEE LAWYERS:**  
 張偉鴻 Cheong Wai Hong<sup>o</sup>  
 陳健雄 Eurico Chan<sup>o</sup>  
 吳靈鋒 Ng Teng Fong<sup>o</sup>  
 戴博晴 Tai Pok Cheng<sup>o</sup>  
 吳佩愉 Ng Pui U<sup>o</sup>
- 法律專家 JURISTS:**  
 羅成軒 José J. Rodrigues<sup>o</sup>  
 斐彥德 Gonçalo Figueiredo<sup>o</sup>  
 潘卡莉 Candice Pun<sup>o</sup>  
 陳子健 Kimi Chan<sup>o</sup>  
 伍福賢 Domingos Ng<sup>o</sup>  
 劉慧敏 Amanda Liu<sup>o</sup>  
 楊詩婷 Si Teng leong<sup>o</sup>



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# Biden-Putin meeting discussed as Ukraine war fears loom

VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV,  
YURAS KARMANAU &  
LORNE COOK, MOSCOW

**T**HE U.S. and Russian presidents have tentatively agreed to meet in a last-ditch diplomatic effort to stave off Moscow's invasion of Ukraine as heavy shelling continued yesterday in a conflict in eastern Ukraine that is feared will spark the Russian offensive.

French President Emmanuel Macron sought to broker a possible meeting between U.S. President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin in a series of phone calls that dragged into the night.

Macron's office said both leaders had "accepted the principle of such a summit," to be followed by a broader summit meeting also involving other "relevant stakeholders to discuss security and strategic stability in Europe." It added that the meetings "can only be held on the condition that Russia does not invade Ukraine."

White House press secretary Jen Psaki, said the administration has been clear that "we are committed to pursuing diplomacy until the moment an invasion begins." She noted that "currently, Russia appears to be continuing preparations for a full-scale assault on Ukraine very soon."

Macron's office said that U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov are set to lay the ground-

work for the summit when they meet Thursday.

It followed a flurry of calls by Macron to Putin, Biden and also British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said yesterday that Putin and Biden could meet if they consider it necessary, but emphasized that "it's premature to talk about specific plans for a summit."

"The meeting is possible if the leaders consider it feasible," he said in a conference call with reporters.

The prospective meeting offers new hope of averting a Russian invasion that U.S. officials said could begin any moment with an estimated 150,000 Russian troops amassed near Ukraine.

Adding to fears of an imminent attack, Russia and its ally Belarus announced Sunday that they were extending massive war games on Belarusian territory that offers a convenient bridgehead for an attack on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, located just 75 kilometers (less than 50 miles) south of the border with Belarus.

Starting Thursday, shelling also spiked along the tense line of contact between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatist rebels in Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, Donbas, where over 14,000 people have been killed since conflict erupted in 2014 shortly after Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Cri-

mean Peninsula.

Ukraine and the rebels have traded blame for massive cease-fire violations with hundreds of explosions recorded daily.

On Friday, separatist officials announced the evacuation of civilians and military mobilization in the face of what they described as an imminent Ukrainian offensive on the rebel regions. Ukrainian officials have strongly denied any plans to launch such an attack and described the evacuation order as part of Russian provocations intended to set the stage for an invasion.

The separatist authorities said yesterday that at least four civilians were killed by Ukrainian shelling over the past 24 hours and several others were injured. Ukraine's military said two Ukrainian soldiers were killed over the weekend, and another serviceman was wounded.

Ukrainian military spokesman Pavlo Kovalchuk said the Ukrainian positions were shelled 80 times Sunday and eight times early Monday, noting that the separatists were "cynically firing from residential areas using civilians as shields." He insisted that Ukrainian forces weren't returning fire.

In the village of Novogrativka on the government-controlled side, 60-year-old Ekaterina Evseeva, said the shelling was worse than at the height of fighting early in the conflict.

"It's worse than 2014,"

she said, her voice trembling. "We are on the edge of nervous breakdowns. And there is nowhere to run."

Evseeva said that residents were hunkering down in basements amid the renewed fighting: "Yesterday I saw my neighbor with her 2-month-old as she was running to the basement. It shouldn't be like this."

Amid the heightened invasion fears, the Kremlin reacted angrily to a New York Times report that the U.S. administration has sent a letter to the United Nations human rights chief claiming that Moscow has compiled a list of Ukrainians to be killed or sent to detention camps after the invasion. Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, said the claim was a lie and no such list exists.

Moscow denies any plans to invade Ukraine, but wants Western guarantees that NATO won't allow Ukraine and other former Soviet countries to join as members. It also urges the alliance to halt weapons deployments to Ukraine and roll back its forces from Eastern Europe — demands flatly rejected by the West.

Russian officials have shrugged off Western calls to deescalate by pulling back troops, arguing that Moscow is free to deploy troops and conduct drills wherever it likes on its territory. Last week, Western officials dismissed Russian statements about some of the troops returning to their bases, saying that Moscow was actually beefing up its forces around Ukraine.

Despite Biden's assertion last week that Putin has made the decision to roll Russian forces into Ukraine, Ukrainian officials sought to project calm, saying that they aren't seeing invasion as imminent.

Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov said that Russia has amassed 147,000 troops around Ukraine, including 9,000 in Belarus, arguing that the number is clearly insufficient for an offensive on the Ukrainian capital from the north.

"The talk about an attack on Kyiv from the Belarusian side sounds ridiculous," he said, charging that Russia is using the troops there as a scare.

Russia upped the ante Saturday with sweeping nuclear drills that included multiple practice launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles and cruise missiles that Putin personally oversaw. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history



### 1997 DOLLY THE SHEEP IS CLONED



Scientists in Scotland have announced the birth of the world's first successfully cloned mammal, Dolly the sheep.

Dolly, who was created at the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh, was actually born on 5 July 1996 although her arrival has only just been revealed.

Dolly is the first mammal to have been successfully cloned from an adult cell. Previous clonings have been from embryo cells.

The sheep's birth has been heralded as one of the most significant scientific breakthroughs of the decade although it is likely to spark ethical controversy.

Scientists in Scotland cloned a ewe by inserting DNA from a single sheep cell into an egg and implanted it in a surrogate mother.

They now have a healthy seven-month-old sheep - Dolly - who is an exact genetic duplicate of the animal from which the single cell was taken.

DNA tests have revealed that Dolly is identical to the ewe who donated the udder cell and is unrelated to the surrogate mother.

Identical sheep, which were clones of an original embryo.

The company which has bought the rights to the research, PPL Therapeutics, said Dolly would help to improve understanding of ageing and genetics and lead to the production of cheaper medicines.

US President Bill Clinton has set up a special task force to investigate cloning in order to examine the legal and ethical implications.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The cloning of Dolly the sheep raised moral dilemmas amid fears that the technique could be used to clone humans.

Dr Ian Wilmut, who led the team of Scottish scientists who were behind the birth of Dolly, described human cloning as both "repugnant" and illegal.

The news about Dolly's birth enraged animal rights activists and the Church of Scotland said while it was "fascinating" research work, it had reservations.

Dr Wilmut also revealed the thinking behind the sheep's name: "Dolly is derived from a mammary gland cell and we couldn't think of a more impressive pair of glands than Dolly Parton's."

A decision was taken in 2003 to put down Dolly after a veterinary examination showed she had a progressive lung disease. Her preserved body went on display at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**



**ARIES**

**Mar. 21-Apr. 19**

Moneymaking ventures may just turn your life around. Don't be too shy to promote your own interests. Drastic financial losses may be likely if you lend money.



**TAURUS**

**Apr. 20-May. 20**

One sided attractions are likely. You may find it difficult to communicate with someone at work. Someone you care about may let you down or criticize your methods.



**GEMINI**

**May. 21-Jun. 21**

Your philanthropic contributions will bring you praise. Use your ingenuity to manipulate things to get what you want. Someone you live with will be impossible.



**CANCER**

**Jun. 22-Jul. 22**

Older relatives may be a burden. Your hard work will payoff; advancement looks positive. You can make money if you put your mind to it.



**LEO**

**Jul. 23-Aug. 22**

Try not to let your emotions interfere with the completion of your work. Added knowledge will give you the edge when dealing with peers.



**VIRGO**

**Aug. 23-Sep. 22**

Use your obvious talent to work with detail and you can come up with something great. Listen and formulate your course of action. You will be indecisive.



**LIBRA**

**Sep. 23-Oct. 22**

Your partner may be erratic today if you haven't paid enough attention to him or her. You are better off visiting friends or relatives than entertaining at home.



**SCORPIO**

**Oct. 23-Nov. 21**

You can have a great time if you go out with the one you love. If boredom has set in, find new and unique directions that offer interesting friendships. You will feel compelled to do some traveling.



**SAGITTARIUS**

**Nov. 22-Dec. 21**

Socialize with friends, but don't overspend on lavish entertainment. Don't count your chickens before they hatch. Opportunities to make advancements through good business sense are apparent.



**CAPRICORN**

**Dec. 22-Jan. 19**

Correspondence may not clear up issues. You will need to take a look at the renovations that are necessary and try to find the cheapest way to get things done. Don't let your emotions take over.



**AQUARIUS**

**Jan. 20-Feb. 18**

Take care of matters involving institutions or government agencies. Don't bother getting even; they'll make themselves look bad. You may find that your family responsibilities are piling up.



**PISCES**

**Feb. 19-Mar. 20**

Stay out of other people's affairs. Drastic changes regarding your personal attitude are evident. Opportunities to travel will develop. You can have a great time if you go out with the one you love.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

**EASY**

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

**EASY+**

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

**MEDIUM**

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

**HARD**

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

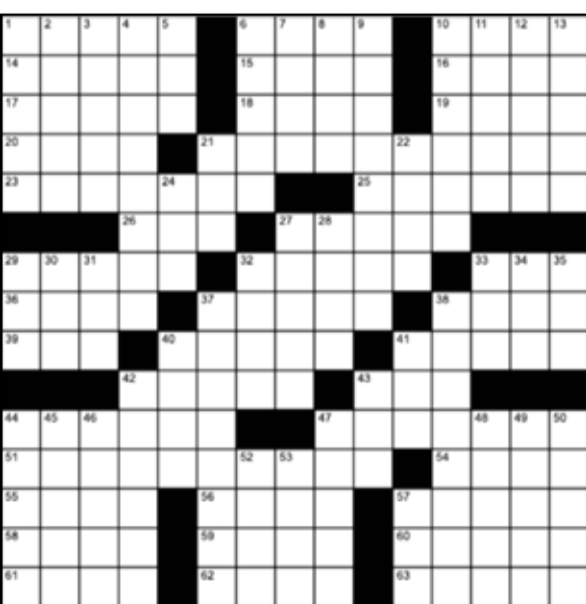
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-7	5	cloudy
Harbin	-18	-9	cloudy
Tianjin	2	5	overcast
Urumqi	3	5	rain
Xi'an	5	10	overcast
Lhasa	-5	1	fine
Chengdu	4	7	rain
Chongqing	2	4	overcast
Kunming	-2	0	snow
Nanjing	9	12	rain
Shanghai	0	8	cloudy
Wuhan	-1	8	cloudy
Hangzhou	-23	-12	cloudy
Taipei	-3	8	overcast
Guangzhou	4	6	rain
Hong Kong	10	12	rain
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	1	2	snow
Frankfurt	3	7	rain
Paris	6	11	cloudy
London	5	11	cloudy
New York	5	12	clear

**CROSSWORDS**

ACROSS 1- Fend (off); 6- Makes a move; 10- Novel ending; 14- High building; 15- Whence; 16- Lament; 17- Unpaid; 18- Actress Turner; 19- Formerly, formerly; 20- Temperate; 21- Judge; 23- In any case; 25- Upper; 26- NFL scores; 27- Ablaze; 29- El Greco's birthplace; 32- Home \_\_\_\_\_; Culkin movie; 33- Fannie \_\_\_\_; 36- Bruins' home; 37- Fork; 38- Tirade; 39- Beam of light; 40- Bingo!; 41- Melody; 42- Winter drink; 43- Feedbag bit; 44- Set upon; 47- Government sponsored inn; 51- Herbicide; 54- Vamp Theda; 55- Copied; 56- At hand; 57- Jewish scholar; 58- Big rig; 59- Olympus residents; 60- From the top; 61- Pianist Myra; 62- Dagger of yore; 63- Containing lard;

DOWN 1- Mouthlike opening; 2- Namely; 3- Where there's \_\_\_\_\_; 4- Private feud; 5- Unit of energy; 6- Black key; 7- Jutting rock; 8- Author Morrison; 9- Wonderful; 10- Develop; 11- The Pentateuch; 12- Try; 13- Computer key; 21- Ed.'s pile; 22- Air-filled rubber hoop, become fatigued; 24- Summer drink; 27- Luau greeting; 28- Receptacle for holy water; 29- Cad or heel; 30- Nipper's co.; 31- TV Tarzan Ron; 32- Golden Fleece ship; 33- Bell and Barker; 34- Singer DiFranco; 35- And so on; 37- Gleanings; 38- Variety of turnip; 40- Music genre; 41- Damage; 42- Woolen braid; 43- Lever for rowing; 44- Swimming (in); 45- Native American tent; 46- Abounds; 47- In itself; 48- Sponge gently; 49- Regular course; 50- Coming down; 52- Boxer Spinks; 53- Put aboard; 57- UK fliers;



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



AD

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

AP PHOTO



DEFENSE

# CHINA SANCTIONS RAYTHEON, LOCKHEED OVER TAIWAN DEAL

CHINA said yesterday it will impose new sanctions on U.S. defense contractors Raytheon Technologies and Lockheed Martin due to their arms sales to Taiwan, stepping up a feud with Washington over security and Beijing's strategic ambitions.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin announced the move at a daily press briefing, citing a newly passed Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law that took effect in 2021. It was in response to a \$100 million deal approved by the U.S. for maintenance of Taiwan's missile defense systems by the two companies.

"China once again urges the U.S. government and relevant parties to . . . stop arms sales to Taiwan

and sever military ties with Taiwan," Wang said.

"China will continue to take all necessary measures to firmly safeguard its sovereignty and security interests in accordance with the development of the situation," he said without giving any details.

Taiwan is a democratically self-governed island that communist-ruled China claims as its own territory. The two sides split amid civil war in 1949.

The U.S. has no formal relations with Taiwan but is its main ally. It has increased weapons sales in recent years, angering China with the sales. U.S. law requires the government to ensure Taiwan can defend itself.

Beijing regularly pressures American companies to

try to influence U.S. policy.

In October 2020, Beijing also announced sanctions against Raytheon and other defense contractors and "relevant American individuals." A day later, the State Department said it had notified Congress of plans for a \$2.37 billion sale of Harpoon attack missiles to Taiwan.

It's unclear what penalties, if any, were imposed. U.S. weapons or military aircraft sales to Taiwan in 2010, 2015 and 2019 drew similar threats of sanctions.

China maintains that U.S. arms sale to Taiwan violates its so-called "one-China principle" and provisions of agreements between Beijing and Washington.

Tensions over Taiwan

have been mounting as Beijing has stepped up military activity around the island to try to force concessions from the pro-independence administration of President Tsai Ing-wen. The Communist Party also is using the Chinese mainland's growing economic weight to pressure other governments to cut diplomatic and unofficial ties with Taiwan.

Raytheon, Boeing, Lockheed Martin and other defense industry giants face controls on sales to China of military and dual-use technologies that have both defense and commercial applications. But they also have major civilian businesses and China is a huge market for aviation, among other industries. MDT/AP

ENERGY

# AUSTRALIAN ELECTRICITY GENERATOR AGL REJECTS \$5.8B OFFER

AUSTRALIA'S largest electricity generator, AGL Energy, has rejected an 8 billion Australian dollar (\$5.8 billion) takeover bid from tech billionaire Mike Cannon-Brookes and Canadian investment firm Brookfield, who want to accelerate the company's transition away from coal-fired power.

The Australian founder of software company Atlassian and Brookfield made the preliminary and non-binding offer of AU\$7.50 (\$5.39) per share on Saturday, AGL said yesterday.

The target's board said in a statement the offer "materially undervalues the company on a change of control basis and is not in the best interests of AGL Energy shareholders."

Cannon-Brookes said he would continue negotia-

ting with AGL's board. "Look, it's obviously disappointing," Cannon-Brookes told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

"We've been trying to work with the board through the weekend and we'll continue to move forward," he added.

Federal Energy Minister Angus Taylor said energy companies, as providers of an essential service, had a responsibility to put consumers first.

"The key to this is balance," Taylor said.

Australia's Clean Energy Regulator said AGL is the nation's largest greenhouse gas polluter, accounting for 8% of the nation's total emissions.

AGL's share price jumped 10% on Monday, while shares in Atlassian fell 2%. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



## CORPORATE BITS

### MGM extends national and cultural education series



MGM has partnered with the Oral History Association of Macao and Hall of Culture to organize the "MGM National & Cultural Education Series: Symposium on the Intricacies & Charm of Macau History and Culture," POP-UP MACAU Book Donation Ceremony and

the Launch of Macau Youth History & Culture Series.

Kenneth Feng, president and chief strategic and financial officer of MGM, said "at the beginning of this year, we took a step further by presenting 'Macao: Back to Common Roots' at the MGM

Theater, telling the historical stories of Macau through a narrative film of original illustrations."

In the recent event, MGM donated POP-UP MACAU, a 3D-illustrated story book that connects history, architecture, historical persons, stories and culture of Macau, to local schools.

A launch ceremony for the Macau Youth History & Culture Series, a themed series organized by MGM, the Oral History Association and IFTM, taking place in the second half of this year, was also held.

The event concluded with the "Symposium on the Intricacies & Charm of Macau History and Culture."

### Starbucks debuts seasonal beverages



Starbucks is launching the Salted Caramel Cloud Macchiato and Caramel Macchiato to spark up this spring with two new companions, the Salted Caramel Cold Brew and Salted Caramel

Nitro Cold Brew. Soft and creamy "cloud foam" is layered on top of a rich salted-caramel-infused flat white or cold brew. Starbucks has also introduced a new Salted Caramel Coffee Fra-

ppuccino and Salted Caramel Cream Frappuccino to "excite tastebuds with cool and creamy sensations," the firm said in a statement.

Starbucks has further unveiled a lineup of cherry blossom and strawberry-themed delicacies, to be savored alongside the brand-new Vanilla Poached Pear Tart and Confetti Orange Muffin. Starbucks also welcomes the highly anticipated arrival of this year's cherry blossom collection. The Soft Blossom Collection Merchandise features 24 products including drinkware items, a teapot, a stainless steel cutlery set, a collapsible lunch box and an umbrella.

**FOOTBALL**

# Record hat trick of own goals leads US over New Zealand 5-0

**M**EIKAYLA Moore scored a hat trick against the U.S. — of own goals.

AP PHOTO



New Zealand goalkeeper Erin Nayler, left, and defender Meikayla Moore react after an own goal during the 2022 SheBelieves Cup soccer match against the U.S.

A perfect hat trick entirely in the first half: left foot, right foot and header.

"She had a tough day at the office," New Zealand coach Jitka Klimkova said after the Americans won 5-0 in Sunday's SheBelieves Cup match.

Ashley Hatch and Mallory Pugh scored second-half goals for the U.S., which is preparing for World Cup qualifying in July. The Americans extended their home unbeaten streak to 64 games, which includes seven draws.

Moore, a 25-year-old Liverpool defender, was on New Zealand's 2015 World Cup roster but didn't get into a match, then missed the 2019 World Cup following an Achilles injury. Making her 50th international appearance, she was replaced in the 40th minute.

The U.S. women had never

before benefitted from three own goals in a single match.

Sophia Smith's cross into the penalty area deflected off Moore's right leg and past goalkeeper Erin Nayler in the fifth minute, stopping a 181-minute U.S.

scoreless streak.

Just 82 seconds later, Sofia Huerta's pass into the center of the area went off Moore's head and in.

Then in the 36th minute, Margaret Purce's cross hit Moore's left

leg 4 yards out and beat Nayler. The U.S. had only twice received two own goals, in a February 2014 exhibition against Russia and from New Zealand at the Olympics last July.

"Obviously, she's sad and disappointed, but she's an unbelievable person and player who belongs on this team," Klimkova said. "We are all behind her in this tough moment for her."

U.S. coach Vlatko Andonovski said he thought Moore was in the right position to defend on all three own goals.

Alyssa Naeher made one save for the U.S. in her first match for club or country since Aug. 2, 2021, when she injured her right knee during the Olympic semifinal against Canada, forcing her from the game in the 30th minute.

Naeher was one of six changes in the starting lineup from Thursday.

Andonovski is evaluating younger players during the four-

-team round-robin tournament. Stars Alex Morgan, Megan Rapinoe, Christen Press and Tobin Heath are not on the roster.

"We're excited about the win. They needed to see goals and that's good. We're hoping that this is just the beginning," Andonovski said. "I thought that we were able to impose ourselves early on and set up a rhythm of pace that suits us."

Hatch entered at the start of the second half scored her third goal in the last three games for the national team in the 50th minute on a header from the center of the box from Huerta's cross.

"We've been working on swinging the ball around to our outside backs and our wingers and making sure that we're available in the box," Hatch said, "Laid a nice one across the face of the goal and I was able to head it in. So good cross and easy finish."

Pugh scored in stoppage time, splitting two defenders on a breakaway in the 93rd minute for her first international goal since Oct. 3, 2019.

New Zealand's best opportunity came in the 32nd minute when Olivia Chance's shot from the penalty area went wide.

The tournament concludes Wednesday in Frisco, Texas, with the U.S. taking on Iceland, while New Zealand faces the Czechs. **MDT/AP**

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**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**50 YEARS ON,  
 NIXON'S VISIT OFFERS  
 GUIDANCE FOR TIES  
 AT A CROSSROAD**

Monday marks the 50th anniversary of former US president Richard Nixon's visit to China.

The importance of that epoch-making trip can never be exaggerated, as not only did it herald the normalization of relations between the two countries but it also played an indispensable role in shaping the generally positive trajectory for bilateral relations in the ensuing decades.

It was due to the leaders of the two countries taking the overall situation into consideration and their shared willingness to pursue common interests while overcoming differences that enabled them to end the estrangement of more than 22 years.

Of course, the United States was more confident in itself 50 years ago, when China's gross domestic product was merely 9 percent that of the US. Relations between the two countries have soured in recent years because China's GDP is now about 78 percent that of the US, which has sparked worries in Washington that with China on a rising trajectory and the US on one of relative decline — thanks to its own lack of foresight and errors of judgment — China may challenge the US' hegemony unless its rise is checked.

Yet China does not seek hegemony. Instead it upholds mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation as the touchstones for international relations, including its relations with the US. Instead of brooding on how to hobble China's development, strategists in Washington should demonstrate the same foresight and wisdom that their predecessors did and look at the bigger picture of the times.

Thawing the ice that has formed between the two countries today will benefit the whole world as the two can then dedicate themselves to resolving common challenges confronting the world rather than each other. The common interests of the two countries are much greater than they were 50 years ago — the trade volume, for instance, has expanded from less than \$100 million in 1972 to more than \$755 billion last year — but so too are the common responsibilities they shoulder.

China has no intention of overturning the postwar order the US has established and dominates. Instead, it advocates for its improvement and contributes to it by serving as a growth engine, poverty reducer and promoter of sustainable development.

Sino-US relations are clearly at a fork in the road. Reviewing the circumstances in which Nixon's visit took place and the outcomes would be conducive to relations proceeding in the right direction.

That Beijing announced on Monday countermeasures against two US companies involved in repeated arms sales to Taiwan, serves to show how far the US has strayed from the commitments it made 50 years ago. Those commitments point the way to amicable ties. Washington should not renege on them without carefully considering the consequences.

Portugal's winter drought is getting worse, with the national weather agency reporting yesterday that 91% of the country is enduring "severe" or "extreme" drought conditions.

Average rainfall for Feb. 1-15 was just 7% of the average over a 30-year period, the IPMA said.

It added that no significant rainfall is expected for the rest of the month, while temperatures are forecast to remain above normal and the drought worsens.

The Portuguese government is already restricting the use of re-

servoirs for hydroelectric power production, in order to save water for public consumption, and farmers are asking for financial aid because of a lack of grass for their livestock.

Periods of droughts aren't unusual in Portugal, but the country has witnessed an increase in their frequency over the past 20-30 years, IPMA scientists say.

The most recent droughts were in 2005, 2012 and 2017.

Scientists estimate that Portugal will see a drop in average annual rainfall of 20% to 40% by the end of the century.



**LEAK GIVES DETAILS ON  
 OVER 30,000 CREDIT  
 SUISSE BANK CLIENTS**

A German newspaper and other media over the weekend said a leak of data from Credit Suisse, Switzerland's second-biggest bank, reveals details of the accounts of more than 30,000 clients — some of them unsavory — and points to possible failures of due diligence in checks on many customers.

Credit Suisse said in a statement that it "strongly rejects the allegations and insinuations about the bank's purported business practices."

The German daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung said it received the data anonymously through a secure digital mailbox over a year ago. It said it's unclear whether the source was an individual or a group, and the newspaper didn't make any payment or promises.

The newspaper said it evaluated the data, which ranged from the 1940s until well into the last decade, along with the Organized Crime and Corruption Repor-

ting Project and dozens of media partners including The New York Times and The Guardian.

It said the data points to the bank having accepted "corrupt autocrats, suspected war criminals and human traffickers, drug dealers and other criminals" as customers.

**The data ranged  
 from the 1940s  
 until well into the  
 last decade**

Credit Suisse said the allegations are "predominantly historical" and that "the accounts of these matters are based on partial, inaccurate, or selective information taken out of context, resulting in tendentious interpretations of the bank's business conduct."

The bank said it had reviewed a large number of accounts potentially associated with the allegations, and about 90% of them "are today closed or were in the process of closure prior to receipt of the press inquiries, of

which over 60% were closed before 2015."

As for accounts that remain active, the bank said it is "comfortable that appropriate due diligence, reviews and other control related steps were taken in line with our current framework." The bank also said the law prevents it from commenting on "potential client relationships."

Switzerland has sought in recent years to shed its image as a haven for tax evasion, money laundering and the embezzlement of government funds, practices carried out through the misuse of its banking secrecy policies. But those laws still draw criticism.

The Sueddeutsche Zeitung published an excerpt from a statement by the source of the leak.

"I believe that Swiss banking secrecy laws are immoral," it said. "The pretext of protecting financial privacy is merely a fig leaf covering the shameful role of Swiss banks as collaborators of tax evaders." MDT/AP

Myanmar's shadow civilian administration called on the United Nations' top court yesterday not to allow the country's military rulers to represent the Southeast Asian nation at hearings into a case accusing the country of genocide against the Rohingya ethnic minority. Four days of hearings into the Myanmar military's deadly 2017 crackdown on the Rohingya were scheduled to open yesterday at the International Court of Justice amid a dispute over who should represent the country in court.



Germany A huge fire broke out in an apartment building in the western German city of Essen yesterday, and three people were taken to a hospital after inhaling smoke, authorities said. The fire service said that about 100 people were evacuated from the building, roughly the number of people who lived there, news agency dpa reported. About 150 officers were dispatched to fight the fire.

UK Scientists warned the British government yesterday not to weaken the country's ability to monitor and track the coronavirus after Prime Minister Boris Johnson ends the requirement for people in England to self-isolate if they contract Covid-19. Johnson will announce details in Parliament of the government's plan for "living with Covid" by treating it like other transmissible illnesses such as flu. The legal requirement to self-isolate for at least five days after a positive coronavirus test is expected to be replaced by guidance, and mass testing for the virus will be scaled back.



Argentina Wildfires that have been ravaging northern Argentina for several weeks advanced relentlessly Sunday, although the light rains that began over the weekend gave some hope to firefighters. Corrientes province is the most affected area, where officials said at least eight separate fires continued to burn and had devastated at least 9% of its territory. The flames are consuming about 30,000 hectares a day in Corrientes, destroying almost 800,000 hectares so far.