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CRIME: A WOMAN HAS BEEN ARRESTED ON CHARGES THAT ON 20 OCCASIONS SHE STOLE CASINO CHIPS STRAIGHT FROM THE GAMBLING TABLE

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AP PHOTO



Hong Kong reported a record-high 34,466 new infections yesterday as deaths continued to climb, with health authorities saying that a lockdown has not been ruled out even though the city's leader previously said that a citywide lockdown was unrealistic. Hong Kong is currently grappling with the fifth wave of the coronavirus, driven primarily by the omicron variant.

AP PHOTO



Japan Toyota is suspending production at all 28 lines of its 14 plants in Japan starting today, because of a "system malfunction" at a domestic supplier, the automaker said yesterday. Public broadcaster NHK TV and other Japanese media said a major Toyota supplier had been hit by a suspected cyberattack. No details were given. It was unclear when production would resume.

AP PHOTO



Afghanistan Taliban forces have arrested dozens of criminals, kidnapers and smugglers in operations across Kabul, a Taliban government spokesman said. The clearance operations began in the capital and neighboring provinces two days ago, and will continue, Zabiullah Mujahid said in a press conference. The aim was to collect weapons and arrest suspects, he added.

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Over 8,000 people to be tested in Border Gate vicinity after regular commuter from Zhuhai tests positive

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HOTEL OCCUPANCY AT 44% IN JANUARY

The average occupancy rate of guest rooms was 44%, a growth of 3.7 percentage points year-on-year. However, data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) shows that the rate represented a month-on-month drop of 10.8 percentage points. This is because the number of overnight visitors dropped by 38.1% in January compared to December 2021 amid the tightening of border-control measures between Zhuhai and Macau. The number of hotel guests establishments in January rose by 14.2% year-on-year to 515,000, with mainland guests (418,000) and local guests (68,000) increasing by 10.8% and 40.5% respectively. In January, over 2,000 visitors joined local tours and a total of 7,000 Macau residents purchased outbound services through travel agencies.

MERCHANDISE EXPORTS REGISTER SLIGHT GROWTH

The total merchandise exports amounted to MOP1.43 billion in January 2022, up 0.3% year-on-year. Value of domestic exports (MOP199 million) rose 18.1%, with that of garments and copper and copper articles rising 37.3% and 42.0% respectively. Meanwhile, total merchandise imports rose 33.6% year-on-year to MOP14.07 billion. External merchandise trade totaled MOP15.50 billion in January 2022, up 29.7% compared to MOP11.96 billion a year earlier, while the merchandise trade deficit in January 2022 totaled MOP12.63 billion.

MAINLAND, MACAU SIGN AGREEMENT ON PRESERVATION MEASURES IN ARBITRATION

The Supreme People's Court (SPC) on recently signed an agreement with Macau on mutual assistance in preservation measures to aid arbitration proceedings: the fifth judicial assistance agreement between the two sides. The agreement was signed by He Rong, vice president of the SPC, and Cheong Weng Chon, Secretary for Administration and Justice of the Macau SAR government. The agreement defines the categories of preservation measures, the arbitration proceedings to which they apply, and the stages at which these measures may be applied for. He Rong said the agreement symbolizes a more optimized, improved and comprehensive judicial cooperation between the mainland and Macau in civil and commercial matters.

COVID-19

ABOVE 8,000 PEOPLE AFFECTED AMID NEW MACAU-RELATED COVID-19 PATIENT

ANTHONY LAM

WITH the announcement that a Covid-19 patient in Zhuhai's Tanzhou District was a regular traveler to Macau, it was revealed that at least 8,000 people would be affected by additional disease-control measures. The Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre held a special press briefing yesterday afternoon to announce the implementation of certain measures following news of the new Tanzhou patient.

The patient, a female mainland resident, crossed the Border Gate Checkpoint several times between February 22 and 27. She mainly visited the Border Gate District.

Meanwhile, her SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid tests (NATs) conducted on February 15, 17, 19, 21, 23 and 25 yielded negative results. She was tested positive on Sunday.

Luís Gomes, acting department head of non-tertiary education at the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ), told the press that in response to the newly detected patient in Tanzhou, teachers and students at local schools – tertiary or non-tertiary – who had lived in Tanzhou in the preceding 14 days are required to stay home in mainland China.

The arrangement will take effect from today.

For students, their classes or



lectures will be conducted online, or they will conduct revisions at home. For teachers, arrangements will be made between them and their employers.

The DSEDJ official stressed that the bureau will stay in constant communication with the Health Bureau (SSM) on the development of the situation in Tanzhou. The date for the resumption of normal lectures for affected students will be determined based on the situation in the mainland district.

However, as the news broke out at midday, those already returned to school will be treated in accordance with SSM guidelines. Schools have been advised on the matter, Gomes said.

On the other hand, Gomes also strongly discouraged students, teachers and school workers from visiting Tanzhou.

When he was asked how

many teachers and students will be affected, the education official disclosed that, according to the bureau's records, about 300 teachers and students had registered their residential addresses in Tanzhou.

Nonetheless, he stressed that the bureau is collecting more information to confirm which individuals have actually stayed in Tanzhou and which have not.

Besides, the Coordination Centre will also conduct a one-off district-wide NAT testing operation between 5 p.m. yesterday and noon today. Those affected are residents or workers who were present in 12 residential estates directly opposite the Border Gate between February 25 and 27. Those who made brief visits, such as cargo or food delivery workers, are also encouraged to take the free test.

Nonetheless, the test results will not be uploaded to the Macau Health Code.

The centre added that those who booked regular NATs for slots between 5 p.m. yesterday and noon today would be exempt from the one-off mass test.

Approximately 8,000 people will be affected, the centre added.

On the other hand, 28 people have so far been identified as having connections with the Tanzhou patient. About half of them have taken their first NAT. The results were all negative.

Regardless of whether they have taken their first NAT, they will be relocated to a specific quarantine hotel.

The Health Bureau, for the time being, has not decided whether to classify the area as a Yellow-code District.

Unemployment rises to 12,400

THE number of the unemployed has risen to 12,400, up 500 from the previous period, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

Among the unemployed searching for a new job, most were previously engaged in Gaming & Junket Activities and in the Construction sector.

The number of the underemployed fell by 3,100 from the previous period to 12,600, with a notable drop in the number of those engaged in Gaming & Junket Activities.

Meanwhile, the proportion of new entrants to the labor market, those seeking their first job, fell by 1.1 percentage points to 9.7% of the total unemployed.

Recent data shows that both the general unemployment rate (3.2%) and the unemployment rate of local residents (4.2%) for November 2021-January 2022 increased by 0.1 percentage points from the previous period (October-December 2021).

The underemployment rate dropped by 0.8 percentage points to 3.2%.

The labor force living in Macau totaled 391,400 and the labor force participation rate was 69.9%.

Meanwhile, the total employment went up by 1,900 from the previous period to 379,000 and the number of employed residents rose by 2,000 to 284,500. This may be attributed to an increase in the demand for local manpower in connection

with a number of events held before the Lunar New Year.

According to the preliminary estimates from the movement records, an average of about 86,600 people, both Macau residents and non-resident workers, worked in Macau while living outside the territory during the reference period. If these individuals are included, the labor force totaled 478,000, an increase of 2,900 from the previous period. LV

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Concerns over quarantine facilities in AL

RENATO MARQUES

SEVERAL lawmakers have expressed concerns yesterday regarding the Covid-19 situation in the neighboring regions and its potential impact on Macau.

While expressing support for the recent words of the Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng, who said that the local government would continue to fight Covid-19 and maintain the “zero-cases policy,” several lawmakers noted the difficulties concerning quarantine arrangements for residents coming from outside Macau, specifically from Hong Kong.

During yesterday's plenary session at the Legislative Assembly (AL) and during the period before the meeting, several lawmakers spoke on the matter, including Ma Io Fong, Ho Ion Sang, and Zheng Anting.

Ma called on the government to prepare and provide more timely information concerning policy changes, specifically on the decision to reserve certain quarantine venues for specific categories of travellers. Ma accused the executive of taking the decision too hastily that returnees from Hong Kong must quarantine in the Treasure Hotel. The measure “has caught the public off guard,” he said.

While agreeing with the reasons behind the decision, Ma said that “the government must have its work prepared and coordinated in advance.” He asserted that there are many problems related to the booking of lodgings, as well as transportation from Hong Kong to Macau, which the local authorities have been ignoring for want of solutions.

“Some residents managed to book a room but were unable to buy a bus ticket, and there were even cases where they managed to book a room, but, due to policy changes, had to cancel their reservations, and were not sure where to turn to for help.”

The lawmaker advised the authorities to “strengthen communication with the hotels designated for medical observation, helping the staff to respond to the residents.” He further proposed that the government should “coordinate the work of booking rooms and bus tickets for residents who had previously booked rooms [that had been canceled], as [these

travellers] already had everything prepared, but [their plans were upset] due to changes in the measures.”

Due to the scarcity of venues and the challenges for local authorities in finding suitable quarantine venues, Ma also called on the government to consider the possibility of negotiating with Zhuhai authorities. He suggested that the two regions “study the possibility of Macau residents returning from Hong Kong to be quarantined in hotels in the mainland, providing them with more options.”

On the same matter, lawmaker Ho also urged the government to seriously prepare for an eventual outbreak, claiming that in a city with such a high population density “a large-scale outbreak would have unimaginable consequences.”

Ho also said that the community expects the government to take into account the experience of other regions, particularly Hong Kong, to thoroughly prepare contingency plans for a potential new outbreak. The government must make plans “especially concerning quarantine hotels, isolation beds, human health resources, testing capacity, etc., and disclose, as soon as possible, plans to respond to a possible outbreak in the community to clear the concerns residents' anxieties.”

Ho claimed that the reason for such a large-scale outbreak in Hong Kong was due to a “shortage of hospital beds and quarantine facilities, which resulted in the impossibility to effectively separate the sick and close contacts from healthy people.” Ho therefore called on the government to accelerate as much as possible the construction of the infectious disease facility currently being built at the Conde de São Januário Hospital Center, “so that it can start operating as soon as possible, to protect the local public health.”

Also addressing the same issues, Zheng called on the authorities especially support those residents who had already made reservations at quarantine hotels, which due to the change of policy, been canceled, and whose hopes of returning to Macau were postponed.

“In my opinion, the government should improve how rooms are reserved and, for example, create an online



Ho Ion Sang



Ma Io Fong

room-reservation system, intended exclusively for the reservation of rooms in observation hotels, to facilitate, with greater precision and effectiveness, the reservation of rooms for resi-

dents,” Zheng said.

Zheng also warned the government to take into account the treatment capacity for patients while searching for quarantine venues. The lawmaker said that

if Macau accepts too many people coming from regions of high risk who could be potentially infected, there might not be the capacity in the local health system to treat them.

AL APPROVES MERGER OF THREE EDUCATION FUNDS

THE Legislative Assembly passed a bill yesterday that merges the Education Development Fund (FDE), the Higher Education Fund, and the Student Welfare Fund into a single autonomous fund.

During the brief debate before the final approval, some lawmakers expressed concerns regarding the management of the education funds, specifically in light of a report from the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) in late December last year slamming the FDE management over unlawful subsidies granted to schools.

On the matter, the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong, said that the government has already acknowledged the concerns over the issue and has taken the necessary lessons from the CCAC report.

Ao Ieong said that the new autonomous fund which merges the three previous funds will have much closer supervision and additional transparency, including the online publication of all fun-

ding projects approved by it, as well as an audit system to be conducted by an independent third party.

One of the lawmakers most actively seeking guarantees from the government that this fund would not be another waste of public money was Ron Lam. He questioned the Secretary on several aspects of the bill, and voted against or abstained from several articles which he said he did not support or which required further protection and support for schools and teachers, particularly concerning access to scholarships and permanent funding projects.

After the vote which finally approved the bill, lawmaker Lam, in a declaration of his vote, expressed once again his “hopes that government will fulfill the promises made at this plenary.” He also hopes that the government will follow the regime of acquisition from both tertiary and non-tertiary education institutions, to ensure the good use of public money. **RM**

CRIME

WOMAN ARRESTED FOR STEALING CHIPS FROM CASINO TABLE

ANTHONY LAM

A woman has been arrested on charges that on 20 occasions she stole casino chips straight from the gambling table, the Judiciary Police (PJ) revealed yesterday.

The woman worked as a croupier at the casino in question.

According to the police, she managed to steal HKD300,000 worth of chips in total.

The local suspect, named Hung and aged 47, was caught red-handed on February 23 while making her 22nd attempt. On detecting the attempted theft, the casino management immediately reported the case to the police.

During the on-site search, the police found a chip to the value of HKD20,000. From casino surveillance camera footages, the police inspectors were called to attention 10 times of similar act between February 8 and 23. The total value of chips that she stole was HKD179,000.

During the preliminary interrogation, the suspect admitted to the theft, adding that she had stolen chips on 20 occasions since the start of this year. The total monetary



value of the chips was about HKD300,000.

As the law prohibits casino employees from entering local casinos when not on duty, the chips were cashed by her accomplice. Despite admitting to spending the cash, the suspect declined to reveal the identity of the accomplice.

Investigations are still ongoing.

In another case of missing

casino chips, a mainland Chinese man in his 40s rose from a rest in his hotel room to find that his stack of casino chips to the value of HKD110,000 had disappeared. Following his report, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) discovered a case of illicit addictive substance use.

The 31-year-old female suspect from mainland China, named Jiang, is a girlfriend of the

victim.

The victim discovered the loss of his casino chips from his pocket on February 23. Initially he thought he had accidentally misplaced them. Preliminary investigations, however, found that his girlfriend had cashed some of the chips. The victim said they had met each other two years ago in Macau.

PSP officials searched the

hotel room rented by the victim and found Jiang inside. Moreover, a small quantity of addictive substances and tools were also found.

Following that the discovery, the officers searched the hotel room in NAPE District rented under Jiang's name. In there, the officers found 2.2 grams of methamphetamine, separated into four small packets. The officers were told that the substances were purchased from a male stranger for HKD6,000.

Jiang was taken to a hospital, where medical checks showed that she had consumed the narcotic.

The suspect confessed that she had taken the chips from the victim. After cashing them, she transferred about HKD60,000 to the mainland and kept only about HKD20,000.

A recent case of arson against the PSP has led to a PJ investigation.

Early Sunday morning, a fire broke out at the back of a PSP vehicle parked next to the station on Rua do Pequim. The PJ was notified and a 24-year-old local man was apprehended.

According to the PJ, the suspect could not converse coherently. Inspectors also found the man's disability card, issued by the Social Welfare Bureau, and thus suspected the man being of mentally disabled.

The man was sent to the government hospital for further assessment.

PROPERTY MOGULS DEFENDANTS IN CORRUPTION CASE TRIAL

LYNZY VALLES

PROPERTY developers William Kuan Vai Lam and Sio Tak Hong have been confirmed as additional defendants in the ongoing corruption trial of Li Canfeng, the former director of the Land, Public Works, and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT).

Back in December, the city's anti-corruption watchdog discovered in the course of their investigation into suspected bribery that Li had allegedly received several high-value benefits from business people, both directly and through family members.

The Commission Against Corruption revealed that Li stands accused of several crimes, including receiving bribes for illegal activity, money laundering, and docu-

ment forgery. The other individuals involved have also allegedly committed these crimes.

The investigation had led to the detention of the former director and "two other suspects" who had obtained the support and cooperation of mainland authorities.

Media reports noted that these two suspects were named Kuan and Sio. In a recent note, the Court of Second Instance has rejected the bail applications filed by Li, Kuan and Sio.

Property mogul Kuan is the president of the board of directors of the Association of Property Agents and Realty Developers of Macau, as well as the developer of Sun Kian Ip Group.

The latter was established by Ng Lap Seng, who made headlines

back in 2017 for bribing two UN ambassadors to pave the way for building a multibillion-dollar conference center in Macau.

Kuan also holds various positions in the real estate sector, as well as being the owner of the Capitol Theater.

Sio is the executive chairman of the board of Capital Estate Ltd., an investment holding company that engages in the property investment and development, hotel operation, financial investment, and related activities in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau.

The property mogul is also the chairman of the board of Hotel Fortuna Limited in Macau, as well as a standing committee member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference of Guangdong province.

SEPTUAGENARIAN PASSES OUT WITH CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

A 70-year-old female resident became unconscious during a shower and was diagnosed with carbon monoxide intoxication, the Health Bureau (SSM) has announced.

The victim was found passed out in her bathroom by her family at about 3:20 p.m. Saturday as she was having a shower. She was sent immediately to the private Kiang Wu Hospital for treatment.

It was suspected that she opened the window only slightly during her shower, which allowed toxic gas to accumulate and caused her to faint.

The SSM reminds residents to be mindful of potential carbon monoxide poisoning, which causes symptoms of dizziness, nausea, and vomiting. Severe carbon monoxide intoxication, moreover, can cause coma or death.



When suspected carbon monoxide poisoning occurs, the SSM recommends those affected to stay calm, evacuate to areas with good ventilation and call emergency services for help.

They should also help remove unconscious victims, if any, and loosen their clothing.

Suggestions on avoiding carbon monoxide poisoning

include placing the water heater exhaust pipes outside the apartment, choosing the appropriate type of water heater and using it according to safety guidelines.

Whenever gas combustion devices are used, sufficient ventilation should be ensured. Motor vehicles should not be left running in poorly ventilated areas, such as underground car parks. **AL**

Lawmaker calls for more transparent Macau sports team operations

ANTHONY LAM

ALLEGED nepotism in the selection of athletes to represent Macau in international competitions must be eradicated, lawmaker Ron Lam requested in his latest written inquiry.

The lawmaker advised that his office has recently received a request from a local resident, who told him that despite winning second place in a local league-level competition, the complainant was not selected into the Macau representative team of the sport in question.

The complainant had no chance to join the team as they are over the age limit.

Lam pointed out that similar complaints had been seen or heard regularly and frequently. He believes that the cause of the problem is the lack of transparency in the selection process. There are no codified and public selection criteria, he said.

As such, there will be room for nepotism in the selection pro-



cess. It is not a fair environment, he said, to all stakeholders, including athletes, coaches, associations and federations. It will also develop poor morale and image.

According to the law, the go-

vernment requires sports federations that take government subsidies to submit their training plans, lists of athletes and annual reports. The subsidized amounts are published in the Official Gazette every quarter.

What the lawmaker finds unsatisfactory is that the Official Gazette announcements had not included the lists and numbers of, as well as the selection criteria for, athletes. Although a small number of sports fede-

rations publicize their lists of athletes on their websites, the selection criteria are publicized only in very rare cases.

Furthermore, Lam was also told by complainants that the criteria for use of the Athletes Training and Development Centre, located next to the Macao Dome, are still unclear.

The lawmaker highlighted the fact that Macau athletes sacrifice their own time and make effort to equip themselves. The triumphs they attain – hence the glory – are shared across Macau.

The lawmaker requested the government's responses as to whether it will publicize details of the Macau representative teams in each sporting event. He also asked if the selection criteria would be clarified and codified, to eliminate room for potential nepotism, confusion and argument.

Moreover, Lam also requested the criteria for use of the Athletes Training and Development Centre be clarified. He has also requested the government explain the mechanism for subsidization of each sport, whether the representative teams for each sport have enough training venues or spaces, as well as how the government will improve the situation should resources be insufficient.

POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE BECOMES UNIVERSITY: 30% STUDENT INCREASE

MACAO Polytechnic Institute (IPM) will change its name to Macao Polytechnic University today, and the schools of higher education will become colleges, the Executive Council announced Friday.

Degrees in Science and Engineering are to be offered in applied Mathematics, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Media Application Technology as new administrative regulations amend the institution's statutes.

According to the authorities, the change is "in order to implement the Government's main aim of strengthening work in the fields of education, youth, culture and sports, and improving the introduction of skilled personnel, [as stated] in the Governmental Action Guidelines Report 2022, as well as to pursue the Government's principles of promoting Macau's prosperity through education and building Macau through the training of talent," a spokesperson from the Executive Council indicated.

"After changing its name to Macao Polytechnic University, [the institution] will continue to promote the development of innovation in higher education, strengthening the transformation of academic research to [industry applications] and promoting the development of



market-oriented and high quality higher education in Macau," the authorities said.

In addition, the School of Arts will change to the Faculty of Arts and Design. Moreover, "it is clearly stated that the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture is responsible for the supervision of Macao Polytechnic University."

"At the same time, the university will strengthen its work in language teaching and research to support Macau in its role as a platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries."

IPM's president Marcus Im Sio Kei said that IPM, which currently has a student population of 4,500, will expand its enrolment to over 6,000 once it changes its status to university next month. There will be a gradual increase of 30% to 40% in student numbers over the next five years.

He added more mainland students would be admitted, however, he stressed that priority would be given to protect local students, and that the proportion of local students would greatly exceed that of mainland students. **JW**

GBA

FIRST MACAU-FUNDED CLINIC TO OPEN IN HENGQIN BY APRIL

THE Macau-owned Zhuhai Hengqin Zhenlin Comprehensive Ambulant Clinic will start operations in April, offering additional choice of medical treatment and rehabilitation services for Hengqin and Macau residents.

The clinic was licensed on January 29 to become the first medical institution established in Hengqin under the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) since September 2021. It will mainly provide services in disease prevention and recovery, as well as treating sleep disorders, high blood pressure, and diseases affecting the elderly.

With floor area of 1,300 sqm, the clinic will include departments of internal medicine, surgery, dermatology, and sports medicine.

The medical facility is located in the 100,000-sqm Zhenlin Villa, which one of the first projects approved by the Macau Special Administrative Region Government

to settle in Hengqin. The villa is set to establish a health-care community integrating potential disease treatment, anti-aging treatment, health management, and relaxation adhering to the sustainable development model.

Zhu Jianling of the clinic noted that the institute will popularize the concept of medical convalesce to the residents of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and improve their lifestyles.

Zhu added that the facility is expected to become a benchmark for attracting more Macau-funded companies to the cooperation zone and establish a new platform for medical experts in Hengqin and Macau for further communication and cooperation.

Employees from the Chinese mainland will be hired as well as from Macau so that together they can exchange and learn the latest medical technologies around the world, according to Zhu. **MDT/GDNEWS**

DIPLOMACY

AS TENSIONS SIMMER, CHINA DEMANDS US ACTION TO IMPROVE TIES

CHINA's top diplomat called on the U.S. yesterday to take steps to improve ties, as tensions simmer over Taiwan, trade and other issues.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi's remarks were delivered virtually to a forum marking the 50th anniversary of the Shanghai Communique signed during the icebreaking 1972 visit to China by President Richard Nixon.

That trip led seven years later to the U.S. and China establishing diplomatic relations, upon which the U.S. cut formal ties with Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary.

Wang urged Washington to "reinstate a reasonable and pragmatic China policy" and work with China to put their relations on track. He reiterated China's complaints that the U.S. was not upholding its commitments but didn't mention any specific steps China would take.

The sides need to view their relations "in the broader perspective, with a more inclusive attitude, and choose dialogue over confrontation, cooperation over conflict, openness over seclusion, and integration over decoupling," Wang said.

AP PHOTO



In this image made from video, FM Wang Yi delivers an address during a forum marking the 50th anniversary of the Shanghai Communique

China has been particularly irked by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's characterization of ties as "competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be, adversarial when it must be," saying the sides should be cooperating across the board, in spite of their sharp differences.

"The United States should truly see China as a partner in the course of development, rather than an adversary, and power ga-

mes," Wang said.

Rapprochement between Washington and Beijing in 1972 was largely driven by their mutual distrust of the Soviet Union. In the decades since, China has grown increasingly close to Moscow, while U.S.-Russia tensions have soared over the war in Ukraine.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Beijing earlier this month and China has refused to either

condemn or endorse Russia's actions, despite its insistence on upholding national sovereignty above all.

China, along with India and the United Arab Emirates, abstained in Friday's 11-1 vote on a U.N. Security Council resolution demanding that Moscow immediately stop its attack on Ukraine. Yesterday, the Foreign Ministry said the imposition of sanctions on Russia would "disrupt the process of political se-

tlement."

"China must decide where to stand and understand that bilateral relations with the U.S. will only become more strained in the absence of a clear choice to stand with international law," said forum participant Jacob Lew, chair of the influential National Committee on U.S.-China Relations and a former U.S. treasury secretary.

The Shanghai Communique dwelled extensively on the status of Taiwan, which split from the mainland amid civil war in 1949 and has never been governed by the communist People's Republic of China. Following the 1979 break in ties with Taiwan, the U.S. Congress passed legislation assuring that the U.S. would ensure Taiwan could defend itself and treat threats to the island as issues of "major concern."

Taiwan continues to be the main irritant in U.S.-China relations, particularly as successive U.S. administrations have approved arms sales to the island and increased high-level contacts with the democratically elected government in Taipei.

On Saturday, China's Defense Ministry protested as provocative the passage of the guided-missile destroyer USS Ralph Johnson through the Taiwan Strait. The Strait is in international waters and the U.S. Navy said the ship's passage "demonstrates the United States' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. The United States military flies, sails and operates anywhere international law allows." **MDT/AP**

XINHUA FOCUS

The name of the plum

"YOUR experience is just like your name," President Xi Jinping told Mi Xuemei after hearing her story at an annual session of China's top legislature, the National People's Congress (NPC), to which they are both deputies.

"Xuemei," Mi's given name, is a literal translation of the two characters for "snow and plum." If Chinese people hear this combination, it immediately conjures up images of plum blossoms, blooming in the snow. The hardy fruit is renowned for flowering amid the bitter winter months.

Throughout her life, Mi has been as resilient as her namesake flower. She came from a poor rural family in northwest China. At 22, Mi joined the country's hundreds of millions of migrant workers who leave the countryside behind for jobs in the city. Her destination of choice was Guangdong

Province, an industrial hub in south China.

Initially employed as a security guard, over 20 years, she worked her way up to department director at an enterprise in the city of Zhongshan. There, she was elected an NPC deputy. Despite her achievements over the years, Mi still remembers where she came from.

"I was especially touched by one sentence in particular in your New Year Address - happiness is achieved through hard work," Mi said to Xi when he joined deputies from Guangdong at the NPC session in 2018.

In response, the president quoted a classic Chinese verse, "Fragrant plum blossoms in the bitter cold," to summarise Mi's journey.

Mi might be happily settled in Zhongshan with her family, but she still thinks of herself as a migrant

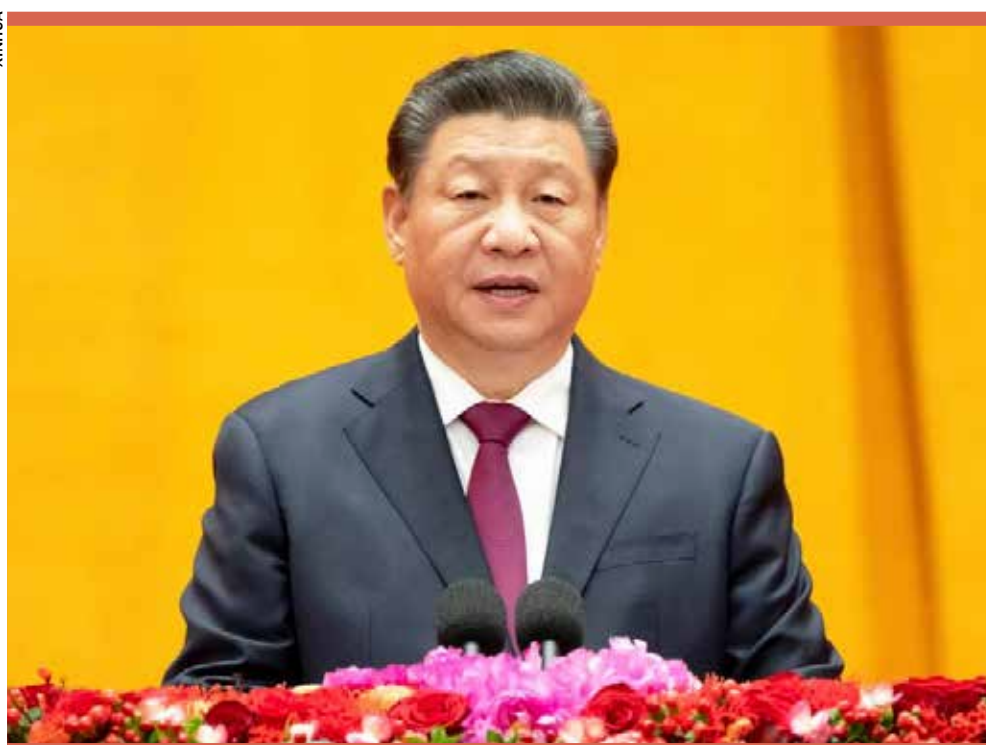
worker and prides herself on understanding dreams and struggles of migrant workers.

In her role as an NPC deputy, she has dedicated herself to representing the rights and beliefs of over 200 million people. In particular, Mi raised issues such as better access to education for migrant workers' children.

"The issue of education for migrant workers' children, which Mi just brought up, is quite common," Xi told the NPC group deliberation attendees. "While pushing ahead with urbanization construction, we should make every effort to help migrant workers have stable lives -- with their children." He also stressed that rural areas should not be left behind as urbanization gains momentum.

Over the years, Xi has been paying very close at-

XINHUA



tention to the well-being of migrant workers. He wrote to them, visited their workplaces and chatted with them when there was an opportunity.

"When formulating policies, we should put ourselves in the shoes of migrant workers and focus on issues that need our attention and support the most," Xi once

said. China has unveiled its "No. 1 central document" for 2022, outlining essential tasks to comprehensively push forward rural vitalization this year.

Dedicating a part to rural migrant workers, the document called for implementing a package of pro-job policies to help

migrant workers stabilize employment and integrate into cities. It also urged the creation of more jobs in the fields of home services, delivery, elderly care and nursery.

More job training was emphasized, as well as better healthcare and pension coverage for migrant workers. **XINHUA**



Russian armored personnel carrier burns after fighting in Kharkiv



UN says over 500,000 people have fled Ukraine since Russia invaded

PUTIN'S WAR

Ukraine slows Russian advance as talks are underway

YURAS KARMANAU, KYIV

OUTGUNNED but determined Ukrainian troops slowed Russia's advance and held onto the capital and other key cities — at least for now. In the face of stiff resistance and devastating sanctions, President Vladimir Putin ordered Russia's nuclear forces put on high alert, threatening to elevate the war to a terrifying new level.

Explosions and gunfire that have disrupted life since the invasion began last week appeared to subside around Kyiv overnight, as Ukrainian and Russian delegations met yesterday on Ukraine's border with Belarus. It's unclear what, if anything, those talks would yield.

Terrified Ukrainian families huddled in shelters, basements or corridors, waiting to find out. Exact death tolls are unclear, but the U.N. human rights chief said 102 civilians have been killed and hundreds wounded — warning that figure was likely a vast undercount — and Ukraine's president said at least 16 children were among the dead. More than 500,000 people have fled the country since the invasion, another U.N. official said — among the millions who have left their homes.

Russia's Central Bank scrambled to shore up the tanking ruble yesterday and the U.S. and European countries upped weapons shipments to Ukraine. While they hope to curb Putin's aggression after he unleashed Europe's biggest conflict since World War II,

the measures also risked pushing an increasingly cornered Putin closer to the edge.

"I sit and pray for these negotiations to end successfully, so that they reach an agreement to end the slaughter, and so there is no more war," said Alexandra Mikhailova, weeping as she clutched her cat in a makeshift shelter in the strategic southeastern Ukrainian city of Mariupol. Around her, parents sought to console children and keep them warm.

In Kyiv, long lines formed outside supermarkets as residents were allowed out of bomb shelters and homes for the first time since a curfew imposed Saturday.

The relative lull in warfare Monday morning in Ukraine was unlikely to last.

Neighboring Belarus could send troops to help Russia as soon today [Macau time], according to a senior American intelligence official with direct knowledge of current U.S. intelligence assessments. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

U.S. officials say they believe the invasion has been more difficult, and slower, than the Kremlin envisioned, though that could change as Moscow adapts. The British Defense Ministry said yesterday that the bulk of Putin's forces are about 30 kilometers north of Kyiv, their advance having been slowed by Ukrainian forces.

Western nations ramped up the pressure with a freeze on Russia's hard currency reserves, threatening to bring Russia's economy to its knees. Russians with-

drew savings and sought to shed rubles for dollars and euros, while Russian businesses scrambled to protect their finances.

In addition to sanctions, the U.S. and Germany announced they will send Stinger missiles to Ukraine among other military supplies. The European Union — founded to ensure peace on the continent after World War II — is supplying lethal aid for the first time, including fighter jets.

EU defense ministers were to meet today [Macau time] to discuss how to get the pledged weaponry into Ukraine. Germany's defense minister said without elaborating that her country has "channels and possibilities" to do that, and a trainload of Czech equipment arrived Sunday. Blocking off those shipments will clearly be a key Russian priority.

It remains to be seen how much the weaponry will help Ukraine fend off Russia's vastly greater arsenal.

The increasingly erratic Putin made a clear link between ever-tightening sanctions and his decision Sunday to raise Russia's nuclear posture. He also pointed at "aggressive statements" by NATO as a reason for his move, a reference to his long-running stance that the U.S.-led alliance is an existential threat to Russia.

U.S. and British officials played down Putin's nuclear threat, and its practical meaning was not immediately clear. Russia and the United States typically have land- and submarine-based nuclear forces that are prepared for combat at all times, but nuclear-capable bombers and other air-

craft are not.

A tiny sliver of hope emerged as talks began between Ukrainian and Russian officials yesterday. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's office said it would demand an immediate cease-fire.

While Ukraine sent its defense minister and other top officials, the Russian delegation is led by Putin's adviser on culture — an unlikely envoy for ending the war and a sign of how Moscow views the talks. It wasn't immediately clear what Putin is seeking in the talks or from the war itself.

Western officials believe Putin wants to overthrow Ukraine's government and replace it with a regime of his own, reviving Moscow's Cold War-era influence. His comments Sunday raised fears that the invasion of Ukraine could lead to nuclear war, whether by design or mistake.

With the Ukrainian capital besieged, the Russian military offered to allow residents to leave Kyiv via a safe corridor, raising fears a further onslaught is coming. The mayor of the city of nearly 3 million had earlier expressed doubt that civilians could be evacuated. Authorities have been handing out weapons to anyone willing to defend the city. Ukraine is also releasing prisoners with military experience who want to fight, and training people to make firebombs.

Battles also broke out in Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, and strategic ports in the country's south came under assault from Russian forces. Mariupol, a strategic port city on the Sea of Azov, is "hanging on," said

Zelensky adviser Oleksiy Arestovich.

The Russian military claimed yesterday it had taken full control of Ukraine's airspace after showering its air bases and air defense batteries with air and missile strikes. But a similar claim on the first day of the invasion turned out to be untrue, and U.S. officials said Sunday that Moscow has failed to fully control Ukrainian skies.

In Mariupol, where Ukrainians were trying to fend off attack, a medical team at a city hospital desperately tried to revive a 6-year-old girl in unicorn pajamas who was mortally wounded in Russian shelling.

During the rescue attempt, a doctor in blue medical scrubs, pumping oxygen into the girl, looked directly into the Associated Press video camera capturing the scene.

"Show this to Putin," he said angrily. "The eyes of this child, and crying doctors."

Their resuscitation efforts failed, and the girl lay dead on a gurney, covered by her blood-splattered jacket.

Nearly 900 kilometers away, Faina Bystritska was under threat in the city of Chernihiv.

"I wish I had never lived to see this," said Bystritska, an 87-year-old Jewish survivor of World War II. She said sirens blare almost constantly in the city, about 150 kilometers from Kyiv.

Among Western sanctions is a freeze on Russia's hard currency reserves, which Putin had built up in recent years to increase the country's economic independence. The unprecedented move could have devastating consequences for the country's financial system.

The U.S., European Union and Britain also agreed to block selected Russian banks from the SWIFT system, which facilitates moving money around thousands of banks and other financial institutions worldwide. **MDT/AP**

ANALYSIS

Ukraine war forces United Arab Emirates to hedge

JON GAMBRELL

THE United Arab Emirates campaigned hard for a seat on the U.N. Security Council in the country's international push to highlight the 50-year anniversary of its formation. But it got more than it bargained for with Russia's war on Ukraine.

The federation of sheikhdoms, home to Dubai's skyscrapers, abstained in a Security Council vote late last week condemning Moscow's invasion. The Emirates now carefully hedges its statements to avoid angering a country crucial to its economy as it tries to shake off the coronavirus pandemic.

Meanwhile, the United States, whose military provides security guarantees to the Emirates amid tensions over the collapsing nuclear deal with Iran, has lobbied the UAE to add its voice against Moscow.

That pressure on the UAE will only grow as the U.N. prepares for only its 11th-ever emergency session of the General Assembly over the war. The Security Council will likely hold more votes as well seeking to condemn Russia.

For the Emiratis, they face a major risk in upsetting Russia, which has become an important trade partner, a source of tourists to the UAE and a military power across the wider Middle East.

Russia firmly rooted its presence in the region during the chaos of the civil war in Syria with its military backing of President Bashar Assad. Russian aircraft, along with Assad's air forces, "attacked civilian neighborhoods, including crowded markets during the day, with explosive bombs with wide-area effects, killing and injuring civilians in attacks that amounted to war crimes," the U.N.'s Human Rights Council said in a report last year.

Those strikes amounted to "systematic failure to take any precautions to spare civilians from harm," the report added.



Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan

But after opposing Assad for years, the UAE has re-established diplomatic and economic ties with Syria, with one Emirati official even praising Assad's "wise leadership" during a war that continues today.

Israel, which diplomatically recognized the UAE in 2020, similarly has issued cautiously worded statements since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Israel does not want to disrupt its quiet understanding with Moscow that enables it to carry out airstrikes against Iranian-linked targets in Syria.

In Libya, despite a U.N. embargo, the UAE and Russia, along with other countries, have transported weapons to their common ally in the turmoil plaguing that country since the 2011 uprising and killing of dictator Moammar Gadhafi, according to U.N. investigators. The UAE also "may provide some financing" for the Russian mercenary firm Wagner in Libya, a Pentagon inspector general report claimed in 2020, though the Emirates disputed the allegation.

Russian influence extends beyond the battlefield into the hushed diplomatic meetings ongoing in Vienna over the Iranian nuclear deal. The collapse of the accord after then-President Donald Trump's unilateral withdrawal of America has sparked years of attacks across the Mideast that have slowly drawn closer and closer to the Emirates.

Since the start of this

year, Abu Dhabi has faced a series of drone and missile attacks from Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, including one that killed three people and wounded six others at a state oil depot. The UAE, which has been part of a Saudi-led coalition fighting the Houthis, long has viewed Iran as an existential threat but has sought to cool tensions with Tehran amid the negotiations.

The Emiratis' effort to avoid directly blaming Russia for the Ukraine war likely raised attention in Washington — particularly since U.S. military forces fired Patriot missiles batteries in combat for the first time in nearly 20 years to defend Abu Dhabi from the recent attacks.

Russia's ambassador in Vienna has been a vocal proponent of restoring the nuclear deal. Iran's hardline president, meanwhile, has echoed Moscow's stance by repeatedly calling NATO expansion in Europe a "serious threat," even as protesters recently braved security forces in Tehran to chant, "Death to Putin!"

That tensions can even be seen in the staid realm of government statements. In a call Thursday to Emirati Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke about "Russia's premeditated, unprovoked and unjustified attack against Ukraine," according to Blinken's office.

A later Emirate statement described the two as merely discussing "bi-

lateral strategic relations and ways of strengthening joint cooperation." There was no mention of Ukraine or Russia -- just like in another statement acknowledging a call between Sheikh Abdullah and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Sheikh Abdullah also had been scheduled to visit Lavrov today [Macau time] in Moscow, according to the Russian Foreign Ministry. Their meeting was to come ahead of another U.N. Security Council vote over an Emirati proposal to put an expanded arms embargo on the Houthis. Emirati officials, however, did not acknowledge the scheduled meeting.

Emirati-Russian relations also focus largely on business as well, something visible in the Cyrillic signs dotting the UAE's cavernous malls and airport concourses.

Russia led oil producers outside of OPEC into a production deal that propped up prices, to the benefit of the Emirates and neighboring Saudi Arabia. The UAE also is Russia's largest economic partner in the wider Gulf Cooperation Council, with total trade last year between the two countries estimated at \$4 billion.

Among the throngs flooding to Dubai's beaches and nightclubs amid the pandemic, Russians made up their third-largest source market for tourists in 2021. For the northern emirate of Ras al-Khaimah, Russians represented their No. 1 tourist market last year. **MDT/AP**

this day in history



1950 COMMUNIST SPY JAILED FOR 14 YEARS



A top nuclear scientist has been jailed for fourteen years at the Old Bailey for spying for the Soviet Union.

Klaus Emil Julius Fuchs, 38, a civil servant from Harwell in Berkshire, pleaded guilty to four offences under the Official Secrets Act.

German-born Fuchs, who fled his home country to escape Nazi persecution in 1933, had come to be regarded as one of Britain's top atomic scientists.

But beneath the facade was a committed Communist who had been passing secrets to the Russians for most of the past decade.

He was convicted on four counts of disclosing atom secrets "calculated to be directly or indirectly useful to an enemy" - in England in 1943 and 1947 and in the United States in 1944 and 1945.

The Attorney General, Sir Hartley Shawcross KC, who opened the case for the prosecution, said Fuchs had undoubtedly passed information to the Soviets on many more than four occasions even though he was on trial for four specific offences.

His motivation, said Mr Shawcross, was his "unswerving devotion to Communism".

Fuchs, who until his arrest last month was employed as senior principal scientific officer at the Harwell Atomic Research Establishment, arrived in Britain from Germany, via France, in 1933.

When France was invaded by the Germans in 1940, Fuchs was interned and deported to Canada.

He was released in 1942 and was head-hunted by Birmingham University to carry out atomic research.

It was at this stage he made contact with the Soviets and began regularly passing information relating to atomic energy, the court was told.

Between 1944 and 1946 he worked in the American Atomic Research department in Los Alamos, New Mexico, where he was involved in the construction of the first atomic bomb.

The court was told that it was information from the Americans which first led British detectives to suspect Fuchs of espionage.

Defending, Mr Derek Curtis-Bennett, KC, said it was at about this time that his client had started "having doubts about the Russian policy" and began to "see the light".

He added the first three offences had in fact been committed when Russia was an ally of Britain and therefore information passed could not have been regarded as prejudicial to the interests of the state.

Passing sentence, Lord Chief Justice Lord Goddard said: "You have betrayed the hospitality and protection given to you by this country with the grossest treachery."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

After the trial the British security services were criticised for not having made the appropriate checks on Klaus Fuchs, who never denied his Communist connections.

But in a statement to the House of Commons, the Prime Minister Clement Attlee said although it was a "most deplorable and unfortunate incident" there was no evidence to suggest any wrong-doing on the part of MI5.

Ten months after Fuchs was jailed another Harwell scientist, Professor Bruno Pontecorvo, went missing and it was later discovered he had fled to Russia.

Fuchs was released in 1959 and went to live in East Germany where he became deputy director of the Central Institute for Nuclear Research in Rossendorf.

Klaus Fuchs died on 28th January, 1988.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Your temper may erupt if you have allowed others to cost you too much money. You should make sure that your personal papers are in order. Focus, and concentrate on yourself and your future.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 You will feel so much better about yourself if you can control your addictions. Problems with in-laws may cause friction in your personal relationship.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 You can get your point across and make valuable connections. You can make money, but try not to let it slip through your fingers. You will be on the rampage today.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Serious-minded individuals will be more than interested in backing your ideas. Your best efforts will come through hard work. You'll find love and you'll get into tiptop shape at the same time.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Don't be too eager to spend money that you really don't have. You would be wise to consider attending lectures that will broaden your awareness concerning your professional direction.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Romantic opportunities will develop through friends or relatives. Try not to upset others with your plans. Lowered vitality could affect your work. Think before you act.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 You are best to avoid joint ventures, and whatever you do, don't lend to friends or relatives. You will accomplish the most through orderly activities. Social events will lead to a strong and stable relationship.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Get back down to earth and to basics. You may find it difficult to communicate. You could make extra cash through creative hobbies. Being unappreciated by your boss could make it hard to work effectively.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Try to make your lover understand that you need to do things with your friends. Do not let them blow situations out of proportion.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Don't be too open or put your faith in unreliable coworkers. You can meet new and exciting lovers through work related projects. Make a point of working on yourself.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Your ability to converse with charm will entice someone you may have had an interest in for some time now. You will be full of energy and you need to find something constructive to do.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Unexpected events may upset your routine. Don't let any small misunderstandings get in the way. Catch up on any correspondence you've neglected.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

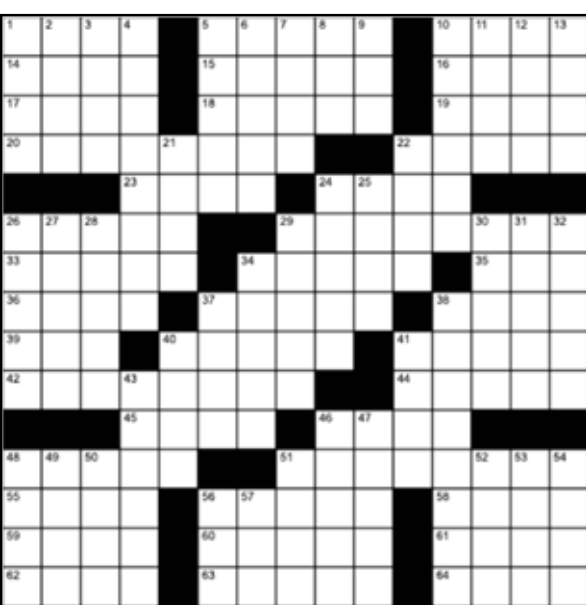
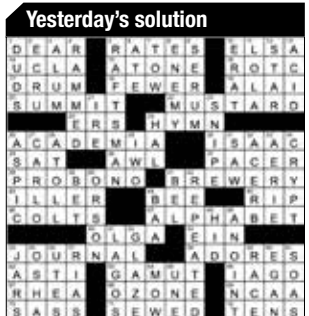
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-2	13	fine
Harbin	-8	3	cloudy
Tianjin	6	19	cloudy
Urumqi	6	15	cloudy
Xi'an	8	17	cloudy
Lhasa	2	9	fine
Chengdu	11	21	cloudy
Chongqing	10	19	cloudy
Kunming	6	17	cloudy
Nanjing	14	22	cloudy
Shanghai	6	15	fine
Wuhan	5	14	fine
Hangzhou	-12	1	cloudy
Taipei	0	17	fine
Guangzhou	10	23	cloudy
Hong Kong	18	20	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	-13	0	overcast
Frankfurt	-3	9	fine
Paris	3	13	fine
London	6	12	rain
New York	-3	2	fine

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Apply powder to oneself; 5- Helpful; 10- Seethe; 14- Consumer; 15- Lowest point; 16- Writer Bombeck; 17- "Mon Oncle" director; 18- Forest make-up; 19- Longstanding argument; 20- On an upper floor; 22- Impudent; 23- Inwardly; 24- Kind of ticket; 26- Area of land; 29- Lacking a definite shape; 33- Dike, Eunomia and Irene; 34- Bring about; 35- City in GA; 36- "The Clan of the Cave Bear" author; 37- Baseball manager Joe; 38- Remain; 39- "Cats" monogram; 40- Herbert Hoover, for one; 41- Egg exterior; 42- Chosen; 44- Tall and thin; 45- Antlered animal; 46- Enlarge, as a hole; 48- Groundwork; 51- Period of high birthrate; 55- Zwei cubed; 56- Merchandise; 58- Peru's capital; 59- Langston Hughes poem; 60- Mother of Perseus; 61- Some Ivy Leaguers; 62- In excess of; 63- Severe; 64- Fast fliers;

DOWN 1- Ballerina's skirt; 2- Quickly, quickly; 3- Permits; 4- Crucial; 5- Before; 6- Loiter; 7- Bad time in the Senate; 8- Fairway position; 9- Hesitant sounds; 10- To happen to; 11- Raw materials; 12- Don of talk radio; 13- Godiva, for one; 21- Poker payment; 22- Just the ___; 24- Feel grief; 25- Scottish Gaelic; 26- Amore; 27- Awaken; 28- Staggering; 29- Capacitance unit; 30- Devoured; 31- Stem; 32- With cunning; 34- Crouch in fear; 37- Carry; 38- Scene of destruction; 40- Locks up; 41- Kill; 43- Newspaper executive; 46- Radiolocation; 47- Clampett player; 48- Scott of "Charles in Charge"; 49- When Hamlet dies; 50- Sneaker or loafer; 51- Mother Hubbard's quest; 52- Lubricates; 53- Pass over; 54- Aggregate; 56- Mdse.; 57- Feedbag bit;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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AD

ANALYSIS

US-EU SANCTIONS WILL PUMMEL THE RUSSIAN ECONOMY

DAVID CORTRIGHT
& GEORGE A. LOPEZ,
UNIVERSITY
OF NOTRE DAME

THE Biden administration, in extraordinary and rapid cooperation with allies over a period of three days, has doubled down on its vow to impose “severe sanctions” against Russia for its military aggression against Ukraine.

On Feb. 26, the U.S. and Europe agreed to cut off some Russian banks from the SWIFT messaging system, which is used to make trillions of dollars’ worth of transactions every day, an option so devastating it has been called “the nuclear option” of sanctioning. They also vowed to prevent Russia from accessing some of its foreign reserves, making it harder to offset the effects of the sanctions.

Two days earlier, the White House announced a multifaceted sanctions package that cuts off Russia’s major banks and companies from Western financing and imposed direct financial costs on many of Russian Presi-



dent Vladimir Putin’s top allies. It also restricted Russia’s access to semiconductor products and the technologies it needs to sustain its industrial sector and military capabilities. Western governments also sought to punish Putin personally in separate sanctions targeting his personal assets held abroad.

As experts on the effectiveness of sanctions, we believe the combination of these measures comprise an unprecedented global at-

tack on a national economy – in this case, Russia’s – the negative impact of which will increase by the hour.

POWERFUL NEW SANCTIONS

In their Feb. 24 sanctions package, the U.S., its European allies and other supportive countries froze the assets of Russia’s largest banks and several of the country’s richest and most powerful oligarchs and imposed other financial sanctions on them.

These measures cover nearly 80% of all Russian financial assets, which the U.S. Treasury Department called the “core infrastructure of the Russian financial system,” blocking Sberbank, VTB Bank and other Russian banks from accessing credit and currency markets and impeding the ability of state-owned and private entities to raise capital.

By imposing steep costs on these financial firms as well as on Putin’s main allies, such as Aleksandr Bortnikov, head of Russia’s Federal Security Service, and his son, Denis Bortnikov, who chairs VTB’s board, the sanctions should undermine the investment and development that drives the Russian economy.

The sanctions also include export controls that prohibit companies and countries from exporting technological equipment to Russia with components that use U.S.-built or U.S.-designed microchips.

Since the U.S. continues to dominate in making the kinds of high-end semiconductors necessary for advanced technologies, this provides important leverage. The export controls target Russia’s defense, aerospace and maritime sectors and will cut off Russia’s access to vital technology, which will likely lead to the atrophy of key sectors of its industrial base.

While Russia imports most of its semiconductors from China, these are the type of low-end chips used to run washing machines, for example – not to operate a guided missile. Russia relies on U.S. semiconductor

components for many of its most important technological applications.

Similar export controls on semiconductor products are being imposed by many others, including Europe, Japan and Taiwan.

MASSIVE BANK RUNS

And after intense pressure from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and others, the U.S. and European Union agreed on Feb. 26 to cut off some Russian banks from SWIFT, which stands for the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication and connects thousands of financial institutions around the world. This is especially notable because some countries, in particular Germany and Italy, had previously been opposed to this step.

When Iran was first cut off from SWIFT in 2012, it lost half of its oil export revenues and 30% of its foreign trade.

The U.S. and allies also announced on Feb. 26 that they would block the Russian central bank’s access to some of its over US\$600 billion in foreign currency reserves. Elina Ribakova, deputy chief economist for the Institute of International Finance, said this measure would have a dramatic effect on Russia’s economy and banking system and lead to “massive bank runs,” a selloff of rubles and “possibly a full-on collapse of Russia’s financial system.”

Altogether, these sanctions – if sustained – should have a devastating effect on Russia’s economy, as well as curtail its strategic capabilities by hurting the powerful

energy sector and military industrial companies, which are bulwarks of Putin’s regime.

WHAT MAKES SANCTIONS STICK AND STING

We’ve studied the effectiveness of past sanctions both in terms of their economic impact and whether they attain their political objectives.

We’ve found two conditions are necessary for sanctions to be effective, at least when it comes to their economic impact: They must be multilateral, meaning they involve a broad coalition of governments, and they must be implemented by countries that have extensive commercial relations with the targeted regime.

Furthermore, the countries with deep ties to the target must accept the risks and costs that result from their actions.

That’s why the participation of a growing number of like-minded nations – including the U.K., Germany, France and other European states that have a much higher volume of trade with Russia than does the United States – is so crucial in making these sanctions succeed.

This unity and collective economic clout explain why the Russian stock market went into a nose dive and the ruble fell to a record low against the dollar after Russia launched its invasion and the new sanctions emerged. As a result, Russia’s billionaires lost an estimated \$71 billion on Feb. 24, and Standard & Poor’s and Fitch Ratings slashed the country’s credit rating to “junk” status.

Because the sanctions are multilateral in design and being implemented in close coordination with allies in Europe, Japan, Australia and other countries around the world, our research suggests they will have a significant impact on Russia. Previous estimates have suggested aggressive sanctions like the ones being unleashed now could shrink Russia’s annual gross domestic product by 3% to 5% or more.

Bearing the costs of imposing sanctions

Discussions are continuing and pressure may build to take other, more severe measures in response to the Russian assault, especially if its military is deemed to be guilty of committing war crimes. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

Casa do Brasil
INVITES
Carnaval Costume Party
Saturday March 5th
Live Show Dança Brasil
Live DJ
Free entrance
From 10pm till late
At The Roadhouse Macau
R/C, Shop E, C016-C019, Broadway Hotel, Rotunda do Dique Oeste, Taipa

BEIJING 2022

Ukraine's 20 Paralympic athletes have yet to arrive in China

STEPHEN WADE

NONE of the 20 athletes from the Ukrainian Paralympic team has reached Beijing with the Games opening at the end of the week, the International Paralympic Committee said yesterday.

IPC spokesman Craig Spence, in an interview with The Associated Press, said he was hopeful the athletes would arrive in China for Friday's opening ceremony despite difficult logistics.

He declined to disclose the team's whereabouts, citing safety concerns and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"We're in regular dialogue with Ukraine about their participation at the Games, and we're working hard behind the scenes to get them here," Spence said.

He said there were no flights out of the Ukrainian capital Kyiv. In addition, flights entering China for the Paralympics — as well as for the just-closed Olympics — can originate only from a few designated hub airports.



A Russian honor guard soldier salutes as Ukraine's Oleksandra Kononova covers her gold medal with her hand after winning the women's biathlon 12.5 km

This is part of China's severe "closed-loop system" for the Olympics and Paralympics, which limits athletes, staff and journalists to designated hotels, venues, and a media center with no contact with Beijing and its 20 million residents.

"For several reason we are not confirming their location or pro-

viding specific updates," Spence said. "The health and welfare of the delegation is our No. 1 priority. The less said about where they are, the better."

Spence said a few non-athletes from the Ukrainian delegation were on hand.

He said some of Russia's 71 athletes had arrived, but he did

not exactly know how many.

About 650 athletes from 49 delegations, including Ukraine, are expected for the Paralympics, which open Friday and close on March 13.

The Beijing Winter Olympics drew 2,900 athletes from 91 delegations. It closed on Feb. 20.

Athletes from Ukraine and el-

sewhere have sent an open letter to Olympic and Paralympic leaders, asking them to suspend the Russian and Belarusian Olympic and Paralympic Committees.

Spence said the IPC board — it has no Russian or Ukrainian members — would meet Wednesday to tackle that and other questions. As of now, Russian athletes are expected to compete.

They will not represent Russia, but represent the Russian Paralympic Committee.

Russian athletes in the Winter Olympics competed representing the Russian Olympic Committee, a fallout from a state-sponsored doping scandal — and coverup — dating from the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

It's theoretically possible that some Paralympic athletes may refuse to compete against counterparts from the Russian team. Spence said issues like this might come up in Wednesday's board meeting.

"We're aware of the talk that's out there and the views of everyone," he said. "Clearly we'd love the focus right now to be on sport, but at the moment that's not the focus."

The IPC and IOC have condemned Russia's breach of the Olympic Truce ahead of the Beijing Paralympics. But since the outbreak of the war last week, neither the IOC nor the IPC has taken direct action against Russia. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

World Views

Ken Moritsugu, MDT/AP



UKRAINE WAR TESTS GROWING CHINA-RUSSIA PARTNERSHIP

Three weeks ago, the leaders of China and Russia declared that the friendship between their countries “has no limits” as they met in Beijing on the eve of the Winter Olympics. But that was before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, a gambit that is testing just how far China is willing to go.

The nuclear-armed neighboring giants have grown closer in recent years, raising the specter of an alliance of authoritarian states that could challenge a U.S.-led democratic West in a new Cold War. Yet China has much to lose in such a scenario, and President Xi Jinping has spoken out against the “Cold War mentality” of those who portray his country’s rise as a threat.

The emergence of a China-Russia axis is far from a foregone conclusion. Trade with Europe and the United States is a major driver of China’s economic growth, even as its estrangement with the U.S. and its appetite for energy have led it to deepen ties with Russia.

“The ongoing conflict in Ukraine will reveal whether there is a deeper bond or whether the relationship is essentially transactional,” Anthony Saich, a China expert said in a Q&A posted on the website of Harvard University’s Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation.

He outlined three possible actions that would indicate “China has thrown its lot in with Russia.” These include Beijing using a veto, rather than an abstention, of any U.N. resolution to criticize Russia’s actions; recognition of a puppet regime in Ukraine put in place by Russia; and a refusal to call the attack an invasion even after civilian deaths are clearly confirmed.

China, along with India and the United Arab Emirates, already abstained from voting on a U.N. Security Council resolution Friday demanding Russia stop its attack on Ukraine. Russia vetoed it. China abstained again on another vote on Sunday, though it was a procedural one not open to veto.

“The two abstentions show that China has adopted a more prudent attitude than before amid the extremely broad criticism and protest of the world against Russia’s all-round attacks,” said Shi Yinhong, an international relations expert at Renmin University of China.

Li Fan, a Russian studies professor at Renmin, said that China and Russia have “a neighborly, friendly strategic partnership” but that China isn’t taking sides in the current crisis.

Russia’s move to put its nuclear forces on high alert Sunday, escalating the crisis, may make China more cautious.

China has said that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations must be respected — a stance that runs counter to an invasion — while also opposing sanctions on Russia and blaming the U.S. and NATO’s eastward expansion for being the root cause of the crisis.

For many of those imposing sanctions, China’s actions amount to “support for the invasion.”

In a series of calls with European counterparts last week, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said “the present situation is something we do not want to see.”

It is unclear whether Putin sought Xi’s support when he came to Beijing for the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics on Feb. 4.

A joint statement was issued after Xi and Putin met that declared “friendship between the two states has no limits, there are no ‘forbidden’ areas of cooperation.”

Without mentioning Ukraine, the Russo-Chinese statement clearly opposed NATO expansion and coalitions that “intensify geopolitical rivalry” — a likely reference to U.S. President Joe Biden’s efforts to strengthen ties with other democratic nations in the face of China’s rise.

The communique also declared the “new inter-state relations between Russia and China are superior to political and military alliances of the Cold War era.”

Half a century ago, in the midst of the Cold War, it was China and the United States who found common cause against Russia.

At the time, China’s ties with the Soviet Union had soured, and its leaders were worried about a Soviet invasion. Fifty years later, the relationship among the three great powers has changed in hard-to-imagine ways. U.S.-China ties are on the rocks, and Beijing and Moscow are reaching out to each other instead.

[Abridged]

RUSSIA CLOSES ITS AIRSPACE TO 36 NATIONS, WEBSITES ATTACKED

THE BUZZ

Russia has closed its airspace to carriers from 36 nations, including European countries and Canada, responding in kind to their move to close their respective airspaces to all Russian aircraft.

The move, announced yesterday by the state aviation agency, follows a decision by the EU and Canada over the weekend to close their skies to the Russian planes in response to Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

It added that planes from those countries could only enter Russia’s airspace with special permission.

Meanwhile, websites of several Russian media outlets were hacked

yesterday, with a message condemning Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine appearing on their main pages.

The developments reflect a growing anti-war sentiment among Russians.

Protests against the devastating attack on Ukraine have been taking place all across the country for four days now, and nearly 1 million people signed an online petition demanding to stop the war.

The state news agency TASS, the pro-Kremlin newspaper Izvestia, St. Petersburg news site Fontanka, and a number of others suffered from the hacking attack.



KIM’S PEEPING

NORTH KOREA SAYS IT TESTED CAMERAS FOR SPY SATELLITE

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

NORTH Korea said yesterday it tested cameras to be installed on a spy satellite, a suggestion that it’ll likely soon conduct a banned long-range rocket launch to modernize its weapons arsenal and apply more pressure on the Biden administration.

The United Nations and others view a satellite launch by North Korea as a cover for tests of missile technology, as ballistic missiles and rockets in satellite lift-offs share similar bodies, engines and other technology. Concerns about a North Korean satellite launch flared after it recently threatened to lift a four-year moratorium on big weapons tests to cope with what it called U.S. hostility.

The official Korean Central News Agency said Sunday’s test involved cameras for a reconnaissance satellite conducting vertical and oblique photography of a specific area of Earth. It said the test “is of great significance in developing the reconnaissance satellite” and released photos of the Korean Peninsula that appeared to be taken from space.

North Korea didn’t directly acknowledge any missile launch, but the KCNA statement suggests

North Korea fired a rocket or a missile to take space-based photos. U.S., South Korean and Japanese officials said Sunday they detected a new ballistic missile launch by North Korea, the eighth of its kind this year.

Lee Choon Geun, an honorary research fellow at South Korea’s Science and Technology Policy Institute, said the photos were likely taken when the missile was soaring or reached its apogee. But Lee said he couldn’t verify the quality of the North Korean cameras because it didn’t release higher-resolution satellite images.

After repeated failures, North Korea successfully put its first satellite into orbit in 2012 and second one in 2016. North Korea says both are Earth observation satellites launched under its peaceful space development program.

Lee said North Korea developed both satellites to spy on its rivals. He said the second satellite is said to be still in orbit but there is no evidence that it has relayed any imagery back to North Korea.

Experts say the North’s past satellite launches have still improved its missile programs. In 2017, North Korea performed three intercontinental ballistic missile tests that de-

monstrated its potential ability to attack the U.S. mainland with nuclear weapons.

A spy satellite is among an array of sophisticated weapons systems that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed last year to develop under five-year military build-up plans. It remains unclear whether North Korea has developed or secured sufficient levels of cameras to be put on a satellite and enable it to monitor South Korean and U.S. military activities.

Cheong Seong-Chang at the private Sejong Institute in South Korea said that North Korea is expected to launch a rocket carrying a spy satellite ahead of a major political anniversary in April, the birthday of state founder Kim Il Sung, the late grandfather of Kim Jong Un.

He suggested that Washington’s strained ties with Moscow and Beijing — both veto-wielding powers at the U.N. Security Council — would make it difficult for the U.N. to slap additional sanctions on North Korea over the satellite launch. He said tensions would still deepen as the United States would strengthen military drills with South Korea, which North Korea views as an invasion rehearsal, in response. MDT/AP



New Zealand is ending a requirement that incoming travelers isolate themselves as it continues to remove coronavirus border protections in the face of a growing domestic outbreak. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern yesterday said the requirement that vaccinated travelers isolate for a week after arriving would end tomorrow. Initially the changes will apply only to returning New Zealanders, as tourists are still not allowed to visit.



Australia Parts of the country’s third-most populous city Brisbane were under water yesterday after heavy rain brought record flooding to some east coast areas and killed eight people. The flooding in Brisbane and its surroundings is the worst since 2011 when the city of 2.6 million people was inundated by what was described as a once-in-a-century event.

Sports FIFA drew a swift backlash from European nations for not immediately expelling Russia from World Cup qualifying on Sunday and only ordering the country to play without its flag and anthem at neutral venues under the name of its federation — the Football Union of Russia. Protesting against FIFA’s response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Poland said it would still refuse to play the country in a World Cup playoff semifinal, which is scheduled for March 24.

Israeli tech company NSO Group has filed a libel lawsuit against an Israeli newspaper after it published a series of explosive articles claiming Israeli police unlawfully used its spyware on dozens of public figures. The articles by the Israeli business newspaper Calcalist published over recent weeks triggered an uproar over what the newspaper claimed was the police’s unfettered use of sophisticated phone hacking software on a broad swath of figures.