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COURTS: THREE DIRECTORS OF TWO ASSOCIATIONS WERE SENTENCED TO JAIL AND ORDERED TO PAY COMPENSATION FOR COMMITTING SUBSIDY FRAUD

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CORRECTIONAL SERVICES REQUIRE NEGATIVE NAT FOR VISITORS

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MACAU RESIDENCY REQUIRED FOR FUTURE CASINO COLLABORATORS

▲ P2



Cambodia yesterday announced new measures that significantly ease pandemic-related restrictions for foreign visitors, including dropping mandatory COVID-19 tests for travelers who have been vaccinated. Fully vaccinated travelers no longer need to present a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken 72 hours before their arrival in Cambodia, according to a statement issued by Health Minister Mam Bunheng. The new regulations go into effect immediately.



US Olympic figure skater Alysia Liu and her father Arthur Liu – a former political refugee – were among those targeted in a spying operation that the Justice Department alleges was ordered by the Chinese government, the elder Liu said. Arthur Liu told AP he had been contacted by the FBI last October, and warned about the scheme just as his 16-year-old daughter was preparing for the Winter Olympics that took place in Beijing in February. The father said he did not tell his daughter about the issue so as not to scare her or distract her from the competition.

UK Defense Secretary Ben Wallace says his country will deploy a missile defense system to NATO ally Poland in reaction to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. During a visit to the Polish capital, Wallace said the United Kingdom is sending the Sky Sabre medium-range anti-air missile system to Poland with about 100 personnel. He said the move is “to make sure that we stand alongside Poland in protecting her airspace from any further aggression from Russia.”

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UKRAINE WAR

XI, BIDEN TALK RUSSIA TODAY



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ANTHONY LAM



to the Gaming Committee, the Chief Executive has the right to terminate a concession on six grounds, such as jeopardizing the security of China or of the Macau Special Administrative Region.

The Chief Executive is vested with the power to make this executive decision. However, the concessionaire in question will have the right to file a judicial appeal. The act of filing a judicial appeal will not suspend the executive decision of the Chief Executive.

The reason for this, Chan explained by citing the government officials, is that the duration of each concession is capped at a maximum of 13 years. If the termination decision needs to go through judicial procedures, a termination may not be meaningful when the judgment is available.

But the government did not explain if a concessionaire will be entitled to have its time repaid should it be eventually found innocent by the judiciary.

Chan explained that the criteria for termination are listed in the Bill and are likely to be based on the times and severity of violations.

Article 50 of the Bill proposes that a concessionaire company be dissolved in accordance with the Commercial Code if it fails to obtain a renewed or reissued license. Chan admitted that both committee members and existing concessionaires have strong opinions on this given that they operate a wide range of businesses in addition to gambling.

Chan said the government admitted to the incompatibility of this proposal with existing commercial realities. The government addressed the fact that current concessionaires operate non-gambling businesses such as catering, convention and exhibitions, as well as shopping.

On this, Chan said the government had agreed to refine the proposal. The best case scenario that Chan could envisage was that companies would be to cease casino operations from their charters and continue operating their other businesses.

Chan expects one more meeting will be required to conclude discussions with the government. The committee will then request that the government deliver an updated version of the bill for further discussion.

Five lawmakers who are not members of the committee also attended the meeting yesterday.

GAMING

MACAU RESIDENCY REQUIRED FOR FUTURE CASINO COLLABORATORS

ANTHONY LAM

As proposed in a current draft law and promoted by the government, it is very likely in the future that all casino intermediaries or junkets will be held by Macau residents.

The Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly continued to meet with government officials yesterday to discuss the amendment bill on the Gaming Law.

Chan Chak Mo, president of the committee, held a post-meeting press briefing, opening with a discussion on the role of collaborators. Collaborators are to assist with the concessionaires' casino operations, such as providing customer care services. Committee members have raised multiple questions in this respect. For example, collaborators have no legal relationship with concessionaires and can be understood as intermediaries.

Collaborators should complete

a list of staff and provide such lists to the concessionaires with whom they collaborate. Concessionaires will then submit the list to the Gaming Supervision and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) for approval.

While processing the application, the DICJ will look into the qualifications of the proposed staff, such as their criminal record and whether they have Macau residency.

The committee president also discussed the concept of joint liability or responsibility, which is proposed within Clause E, Article 48 in the bill. Under this, concessionaires will be held responsible for acts related to the gambling business conducted by their collaborators in their casinos.

Questions were then raised as committee members expressed concerns about the potential for conflicting principles in this regard. Of particular concern was the inability for joint liability or

responsibility to exist in the absence of any direct relationship between concessionaires and their collaborators.

In response, government officials emphasized that these concepts do exist in the current law, adding that a new law will be made to clarify these relations.

The government previously informed the committee that they would convert the current Executive Regulation governing gambling collaborators into law, with the aim of completing the conversion by August 15 this year.

Future collaborators, as proposed by the bill, will need to be Macau residents. The necessity of this proposal, according to Chan, is driven by the fact that collaborators are more readily held responsible for transgressions such as tax evasion or violations of workers' rights.

In addition, the government has not disclosed to the committee whether the proposal con-

cerns permanent or non-permanent Macau residents.

Chan further disclosed that the DICJ has recently begun restricting collaborator rights to Macau residents.

Article 40 of the bill proposes that any unfinished investment in or construction of casinos and related goods such as slot machines will revert to the government in the event that a gambling concessionaire fails to obtain a new casino license. In this case, the construction of the casino should be immediately suspended.

The government promised the committee that it will refine the wording of this Article in order to reflect that fact that only gambling areas or facilities will be affected. Hotels, restaurants, shopping malls, exhibition venues and other non-gambling facilities will not fall within the coverage of this proposal.

Article 47 of the bill concerns the termination of a concession. It proposes that, after listening

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TOURISM

February visitors down 5.6% despite CNY arrivals

LYNZY VALLES

THE Macau SAR saw a decrease of 5.6% month-on-month in visitor arrivals, which totaled 655,505 in February, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

The Lunar New Year holiday fell partially within February, although the number of visitor arrivals nevertheless fell short of the government's expected 20,000 daily visitors.

Typically one of the busiest months, last month's arrivals are still significantly up 53.5% year-on-year, albeit from a low base.

The number of visitors from mainland China grew by 60.1% year-on-year to 609,249, with 196,523 visitors within this cohort travelling under the Individual Visit Scheme. Visitors from the nine cities in the Pearl River Delta in the Greater Bay Area totalled 384,303, 59.1%



of whom came from Zhuhai. There were 41,409 visitors from Hong Kong and 4,742 from Taiwan.

Macau, however, has seen visitor arrivals' rise following the Lunar New Year holidays with up to 28,000 arrivals on a single day.

The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) had

previously noted that the region saw more overnight visitors, which is believed to provide a boost to all sectors.

Same-day visitors (376,033) and overnight visitors (279,472) increased by 106.8% and 13.9% year-on-year respectively. Meanwhile, the average length of stay of visitors shortened by 0.4 days year-on-year to 1.5

days, on account of an uplift in the proportion of same-day visitors. The duration of stay for same-day visitors remained at 0.1 days while that of overnight visitors increased by 0.1 days to 3.3 days.

The MGTO recently launched a new promotional scheme to attract more visitors to Macau with an ongoing partnership with Macau's flagship airline Air Macau, as well as online hotel and travel booking platforms.

Dubbed "My Treat for You, See You in Macao," the initiative aims to attract more visitors to Macau and encourage them to stay longer in a bid to boost consumption and revive the tourism sector.

In the first two months of 2022, the number of visitor arrivals grew by 37.2% year-on-year to 1,349,935. Same-day visitors (826,461) and overnight visitors (523,474) increased by 76% and 1.8% year-on-year respectively.

OVER 130 APPLICATIONS TO OBSOLETE MOPEDS WITH ELECTRIC

More than 130 applications for the "Plan for Granting Financial Support for the Scrapping of Obsolete Motorcycles and their Replacement with New Electric Motorcycles" have been received by Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA). Last month, DSPA announced that it will offer motorcycle owners MOP3,500 in compensation for each eligible motorcycle that is replaced by a new electric version. The government is aiming to remove a high number of these motorcycles – most of which run on two-stroke engines – from the streets, because they account for a significant share of air pollution in Macau according to the DSPA.

BASE RATE OF DISCOUNT WINDOW RAISED TO 0.75%

The Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) raised the base rate of the discount window yesterday by 25 basis points to 0.75%. As the pataca is linked to the Hong Kong dollar, the movements of policy rates in Hong Kong and Macau should be consistent in order to maintain the effective operation of the linked exchange rate system. Hence, the AMCM followed the Hong Kong Monetary Authority to adjust its base rate. Under the linked exchange rate system between the HKD and the USD, the related policy rate adjustment of Hong Kong was based on the policy action by the US Federal Reserve to raise the federal funds rate target range by 25 basis points on Wednesday.

AD

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TRIO OF ASSOCIATION ADMINISTRATORS SENTENCED FOR SUBSIDY FRAUD

THREE administrators from two associations have been sentenced to imprisonment and ordered to pay compensation by a court of law after being found guilty of committing subsidy fraud, local media reports.

According to a report by local Chinese newspaper the Macao Daily News, the accused are Cheung Chi Pong and Mo Wan Ping from the Macao People with Visually Impaired Right Promotion Association, and Tang Kam Seong from Ou Mun Mou Tou Hip Vui (Macao Dance Association).

Cheung and Mo were sentenced to seven years of imprisonment, and Tang was sentenced to nine months of imprisonment with 1.5 years of probation. They are also required to pay compensation ranging between MOP740 and



MOP256,000 to the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS), the then Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) and the Macao Foundation.

As a visually impaired person, Cheung has been the executive director of the association since 2011 and has been assisted in his job by Mo, who was officially hired by the association in 2012.

Cheung and Mo were accused of overstating the costs of the government-

subsidized events. In doing so, they were able to retain the portion of unused funds that would otherwise have been returned back to the subsidizing body.

The report noted that they have transgressed in this manner at least 24 times. In addition to these instances, other acts have passed the statutory limitation period and charges in respect of these can no longer be pressed. **AL**

Correctional services require negative NAT prior to visiting facilities

THE Correctional Services Bureau (DSC) stated that those seeking to enter its facilities, including the Coloane Prison and the Youth Detention Institute, must possess a negative SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test (NAT) result issued within the 48 hours preceding the visit.

In response to an enquiry by the Times, the bureau said that the requirement applies to all visitors, including lawyers, the DSC stressed. The bureau explained that this new requirement was implemented in response to the high transmissibility of the Omicron Covid-19 variant and aims to safeguard the health and safety of residents in its facilities.



RENATO MARQUES

Meanwhile, as Hong Kong is facing an outbreak of Covid-19 among prisoners, the region is moving infected inmates to an isolation facility as the city struggles to snuff out a record number of cases by implementing China's

“zero tolerance” strategy.

Hong Kong's Correctional Services Department previously said that the Sha Tsui facility on Lantau Island was designated for quarantining infected prisoners, whose numbers are expected to grow. **AL**

CALL FOR SUBMISSION FOR INT'L SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

THE organizers of the Macau International Short Film Festival are calling for submissions to the international short film competition, SHORTS, and the international music video competition, VOLUME.

To be showcased at the Macau International Short Film Festival from December 1 to 8, the Institute of European Studies of Macau with Creative Macau - Center for Creative Industries

aims to foster collaboration in international and local short film productions to compete in the SAR.

The festival will present finalist films and videos from the Fiction, Documentary and Animation category and Music Videos category to the public. The films and videos to be presented will be selected by international juries, resulting in the official selection lists for the SHORTS and VOLUME competitions.

The organizers stated that they foresee the number of submissions to the SHORTS and VOLUME competitions to be similar to 2021 numbers, where 4,054 submissions were received.

The festival will feature the latest local and international music videos, produced from 1 January 2021 to 20 July 2022. Each submitted music video must be produced to music from a Macau band. **LV**

CRIME

MAN ACCUSED OF ASSAULT AND DAMAGE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY

RENATO MARQUES

A 46-year-old local resident has been accused of trespassing and wreaking havoc at an industrial building located at the Avenida do Ouvidor Arriaga, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) reported.

According to the police, the man, who works as an electrician, had attended a party at a friend's house on the evening of February 7 where he consumed a lot of alcohol. On his way home,

while passing through the industrial building, he entered the security office and attacked the security guard on site.

He then urinated on a table and chairs, as well as in the building lobby, leaving the scene a few minutes later.

After identifying the suspect through surveillance footage, the PSP detained him for questioning on March 9.

After reviewing the footage, the man admitted to

the offenses charged, but claimed not to have any memory of the events. He could not explain why he did such things or was in the industrial building.

The man is not known to anyone in the company or building and has no record of ever working on the site or at the company.

In addition to the assault charges, the security company is claiming compensation of MOP3,000 for cleaning and damage caused to equipment.

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COVID-19

Gov't presents plans to face an outbreak, capacity increased to 2,700 beds

RENATO MARQUES

THE Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center presented yesterday the contingency plans in the event of a large-scale outbreak of Covid-19 in Macau.

The plan comes almost 26 months after the first confirmed case of the virus in Macau and at a time when the pandemic appears to be under control, with the last local cases of infection having been recorded in October last year.

Nevertheless, the health authorities stated that there is a need to establish a comprehensive plan that includes specific measures according to different levels of severity of the outbreak.

Explaining the different sections and areas of intervention, the director of the Health Bureau (SSM), Alvis Lo, noted that the plan raises the capacity to treat patients by over 10-fold, from the current 266 beds up to a total of 2,700 in the most severe of the forecasted scenarios.

The government will make use of makeshift hospital facilities, treatment community centers, and hotels for a plan that also includes the installation of mobile and inflatable laboratories for nucleic acid tests (NAT).

The "Large Scale Emergency Plan" also includes the creation of 15 specialized groups in different areas that will continuously analyze the situation and adjust the plan if required.

These groups include a wide range of areas from communication, patient history, triage, testing, transportation, isolation, treatment, food and supplies as well as the handling of hazardous waste, disinfection and hygiene as well as the arrangements for the deceased.

COTAI SPORTS FACILITIES INCLUDED ON PHASE 1

The Cotai sports facilities that include the Macao East Asian Games Dome as well as the Athletes Training and Development Centre, located next to it, are part of what the health authorities call Community Treatment Center, or phase 1 of the enforcement of the plan.

This center would enter into operation if the number of people infected with Covid-19 is between 100 and 1,499. It includes several facilities for testing, isolation, and treatment of patients with a maximum capacity of 1,400 beds.



These facilities will be solely dedicated to people with asymptomatic infections or mild symptoms, which, according to available evidence, make up the large majority of infections, said Lo.

Patients who present with or develop severe symptoms will be sent to the isolation wards of the Conde de São Januário Hospital Center or Public Health Clinical Center in Coloane.

According to the director of the SSM, these facilities can be assembled and become operational in around 10 days. This timeframe includes clearing of the facilities, cleaning, and assembly of the special facilities and necessary equipment.

Lo remarked that local makeshift facilities will not only comply but exceed the standards recommended by the World Health Organization in the number of bathroom and showering facilities per patient.

If the number of cases reaches 1,500, the authorities will initiate phase 2, in which hotel units will be also called upon to provide rooms for asymptomatic patients to isolate and to allow that those who are recovering after treatment to be transferred in order to free up isolation rooms in the treatment facilities.

MOBILE AND INFLATABLE LABS TO INCREASE NAT CAPACITY

According to the results of the population-wide mass testing, the plan designed by the authorities includes the transportation and assembly in Macau of mobile NAT sample collection and an inflatab-

le laboratory that would raise the current testing capacity of 34,000 per day, adding another 25,000 tests.

Lo explained that under normal circumstances, laboratory analysis is done on a 10 samples per tube ratio, making it possible to test the whole population in a very short time.

Lo also advanced that the government has already spoken with the equipment suppliers and confirmed that they can be brought to Macau and start operations within three to four days.

466 MEDICAL STAFF REQUIRED

The plan also addresses the need for medical staff to operate the temporary medical facilities.

According to Lo, if the 1,400 beds available at the Communi-

ty Treatment Center are full, the health authorities would need at most, 466 staff including doctors, nurses, and other assistant staff to maintain around-the-clock operations.

Lo said that this number is not as high as initially expected because these workers will deal with people without symptoms or with mild symptoms. By keeping the number of staff efficient, the operation will not interfere with regular health services.

Lo said that the SSM has enough resources to deal with most scenarios and help will be requested from the private hospitals in Macau if required. In cases of extreme need, "we can request help also from private clinics and private practitioners as we did in the past with the mass testing.

They are already prepared and trained." Lo refused the idea that there may be a need to request help from beyond Macau's borders.

EMERGENCY HOTLINE '222' TO BE ESTABLISHED

Following on the difficulties reported by users over the past two years in accessing help via phone, the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center will also enforce, as part of this contingency plan, the establishment of a new emergency hotline solely dedicated to Covid-19. The new hotline "222" will have a capacity of 30 lines concurrently and aims to provide support through the internet, which Lo says is preferred by the majority of the citizens.

GOV'T TO ALLOW COVID-19 SELF-TESTS IN ADDITION TO NAT

THE government will enforce the use of Covid-19 rapid antigen self-tests in specific cases as an additional source of testing to the nucleic acid tests (NAT).

At the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center press briefing, Dr. Leong Iek Hou explained that the government will acquire a large quantity of these tests and also allow the importation of 23 different types and brands of these tests.

The measure does not replace the NAT but is intended to ease the number of tests that need to be conducted by certain people in the course of their employment.

For specific groups of workers including those working in logistics and deliveries, parcel han-

dling, cold chain products, workers in elderly homes, boat crews, prison staff, and workers in closed-loop quarantine hotel facilities, the government will supply rapid antigen tests free of charge. Others must acquire the tests in pharmacies and distribution points to be noted by the health authorities.

Leong also noted that, in the event of an outbreak requiring a lockdown, rapid antigen tests can also be supplied to people undergoing home quarantine.

Leong explained that the rapid antigen tests will not replace NATs but will help to reduce the pressure at NAT testing stations in cases where a large number of tests are required to be administered. **RM**



U.S. President Joe Biden meets virtually with President Xi Jinping, last November

Biden to call Xi to discuss Russia, economic issues

PRESIDENT Joe Biden will speak today with Chinese President Xi Jinping to discuss ongoing economic competition between the two countries and Russia's war against Ukraine.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki announced the upcoming phone call in a statement last night that said it's "part of our ongoing efforts to maintain open lines of communication" between the United States and China.

The call follows an intense seven-hour meeting in Rome this week between White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan and senior Chinese foreign policy adviser Yang Jiechi.

U.S. officials have warned that China has amplified Russian disinformation that could be a pretext for Putin's forces to attack Ukraine with chemical or biological weapons. There are also reports — denied by the Kremlin — that Russia has reached out to China for aid as it faces sanctions and an invasion that faces stiff resistance by Ukrainians.

At the meeting, Sullivan wanted more transparency on Beijing's posture regarding Russia and repeated that any attempts by China to help Russia avoid sanctions would be costly for Xi's

government.

Though the war in Ukraine has dominated Biden's focus of late, White House officials insist they haven't lost sight of China — and are watching intently to see how Xi Jinping decides to play his hand.

Biden's national security team was somewhat surprised that Pacific partners — Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore and South Korea — moved so quickly to hit Russia with sanctions following the invasion, according to a U.S. official familiar with the administration's thinking.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to talk about private discussions, said there was a recognition among the Pacific allies that Beijing is watching how the world responds to Russia as China calculates how aggressive it can be with its smaller neighbors in the region. In backing sanctions, the Pacific nations were trying to send a message to Xi as well as Putin, the official added.

From the first days of his presidency, Biden has said the aims of his China policy are to find ways to cooperate with Beijing on issues of mutual interest — such as stopping North Korea from developing nuclear weapons

and coaxing Tehran to return to the Iran nuclear deal with the U.S., China, Russia and other world powers — and to avoid confrontation.

To that end, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan and senior Chinese foreign policy adviser Yang Jiechi met earlier this week for an intense, seven-hour talk about the Russian invasion and other issues. They spent part of their time together discussing North Korea's recent intercontinental missile tests.

Still, Beijing's approach to the Russian invasion is causing Washington concern. The White House has made clear to Beijing that throwing a lifeline to Russia's collapsing economy or assisting its bruised military would be hazardous to a country that sees itself as the next great world power. The White House has not publicly specified what actions it would take should China assist Russia.

"We don't need China to be with us. We just need them not to be against us," said Frank Jannuzzi, president of the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation, which focuses on U.S.-Asia relations.

Xi and Putin met in early February, weeks before the inva-

sion, with the Russian leader traveling to Beijing for the start of the Winter Olympics. During Putin's visit, the two leaders issued a 5,000-word statement declaring limitless "friendship."

In the days after Putin ordered the invasion, Xi's government tried to distance itself from Russia's offensive but avoided criticizing Moscow. The government supported French and German efforts to promote peace talks and denounced trade and financial sanctions against Russia.

At other moments, Beijing's actions have been provocative.

Last week, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian echoed unsubstantiated Russian claims that there were 26 bio-labs and related facilities in Ukraine in "which the U.S. Department of Defense has absolute control." The United Nations has said it has received no information backing up such accusations.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki took to Twitter to charge that the Russian claim was "preposterous" and could be part of an attempt by Russia to lay the groundwork for its own use of such weapons of mass destruction against Ukraine. She also blamed China for having "seemingly endorsed this propaganda."

Xi's government has also sought to use the conflict to accentuate Chinese ascendancy and the decline of the West.

But China has its own internal troubles, including a major economic slowdown, difficulties that sanctions against Russia

could make worse.

"The Ukraine war has proceeded in ways China did not expect and the war is not conducive to China's rise or development," said Xiong Zhiyong, professor of international relations at China Foreign Affairs University.

Still, concerns that China could come to Russia's aid have only deepened at the White House in recent days.

On the same day of the Sullivan-Yang meeting, the U.S. informed Asian and European allies that American intelligence had determined that China had signaled to Russia that it would be willing to provide both military support for the campaign in Ukraine and financial backing to help stave off the impact of severe sanctions imposed by the West.

White House officials said Sullivan made clear there would be "severe" consequences should China assist Russia.

Ryan Hass, who served as China, Taiwan and Mongolia director at the NSC during the Obama administration, said Beijing faces a "momentous decision" on whether to aid Russia.

If Xi decides to do that, "It's hard for me to see how the path remains open for China to maintain non-hostile relations with the United States and others in the West," Hass said.

At the White House, Psaki said any country doing business with Russia should "think about where you want to stand when the history books are written on this moment in time." **MDT/AP**

ADVERTORIAL

SANDS CHINA NEWS

We Care: Sands China supports communities through hard times

Sands China believes in the power of serving the community and has made sure that its series of services and support initiatives are an answer to the government's call to support society.

To fully utilize its resources, Sands China has a strong team of volunteers who have given continual support to the company's community partners.

In August 2009, Sands China founded the Sands Cares Ambassador programme, becoming the first integrated resort operator to establish a volunteer team in Macau. To better cope with the expansion of its services and its membership, a Working Committee was set up in 2020, aiming to organise more community activities with the overall goal of serving more people in the community.

Membership in the programme now surpasses 3,300 team member volunteers from across all Sands China properties. They have contributed more than 175,000 cumulative hours of voluntary community service, and have organised and participated in 500 community events to date.

Sands China has cooperated with 520 non-profitable associations and private institutions to date, and by doing so, the company believes it can make an impact on society that will further promote social harmony. Sands Cares Ambassadors have organized and participated in a wide array of volunteer activities with these entities.

Some highlights from the Sands Cares Ambassador programme include:

Spreading warmth

- Hosting local disadvantaged groups at The Londoner Macao and at teamLab SuperNature Macao interactive art space
- Providing platforms for social enterprises to run booths at the Sands Shopping Carnival in 2020 and 2021

Combating poverty in Congjiang

- Continuous procurement of Congjiang agricultural goods
- 560 solar-powered street lamps donated to five villages

Participation in NAT drives

- Cotai Expo provided as mass testing site twice
- 2,400 team members took shifts to offer 24-hour assistance

Sheraton Grand Macao as 'medical observation hotel'

- 4,000 rooms provided at peak of "medical observation hotel" initiative
- Utilised as a medical observation hotel seven times since March 2020

Pre-typhoon support to community

- 8,000 personal hygiene items donated to Caritas Macau ahead of tropical cyclone Kompasu
- Parking arranged for NGO vehicles to prevent damage



China watchdog weighs letting US inspect company audits: report

CHINA'S securities regulator is weighing a proposal that would allow U.S. regulators to inspect auditors' working papers for some companies as soon as this year, people familiar with the matter said, in a bid to prevent Chinese firms from being forced to delist en masse from U.S. exchanges, Bloomberg has reported.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission is considering allowing U.S. officials to inspect documents on firms that don't possess sensitive data, the people said, asking not to be identified as the information is private. Companies such as quick service restaurant operator Yum China Holdings Inc. could be examples of those that the provision would apply to, the sources said. Travel platform Trip.com Group Ltd. is another potential example, one of the people said.

Despite the offer, according to sources cited by Bloomberg, the CSRC would still seek to retain some ability to withhold sensitive data from inspection by the U.S.'s Public Company Accounting Oversight Board. U.S. officials have previously insisted that inspectors need access to unredacted audit papers.

Deliberations are ongoing and Chinese regulators could decide not to extend the proposal – that was first reported by the Financial Times.

A PCAOB representative said that the board remains interested in a relationship with Chinese authorities, and this must begin with core principles such as access to audit firm personnel, testimony and other information or documents deemed relevant, including audit work papers free from redactions, Bloomberg added.

Regulators in China are battling on two fronts. They're working to rein in what Beijing sees as unacceptable security risks derived from the reckless expansion of

capital in overseas markets, while also trying to mollify U.S. officials' concern about opaque ownership structures and, more recently, steep crackdown-driven losses.

China has suggested fresh approaches in the past, though they have gained little traction in negotiations.

In 2020, Beijing put forward offers of joint inspections that would allow the PCAOB to pick any of its state-owned companies, and separately, an initiative to jointly examine private-sector firms. Both offers would have involved some information redacted because of national security concerns.

The PCAOB's then-chairman characterized the CSRC's proposals as "materially deficient." The Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act would help level the playing field for all issuers in the U.S. stock market, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission officials said ahead of the bill's signing in December 2020.

Both the PCAOB and the CSRC issued statements last week affirming they are talking about the issue, after the SEC published a provisional list of issuers facing a ban under the act. The SEC declined to comment.

China supports overseas listing and has achieved positive progress in discussions with Washington over Chinese stocks listed in U.S. markets, according to a Xinhua News Agency report on Wednesday citing a meeting chaired by Vice Premier Liu He, adding that both sides are working to formulate a detailed cooperation plan.

According to Bloomberg, companies identified by the SEC, a group which includes Yum China and four other U.S.-traded Chinese firms, will be forced to give up their listings if they can't bring themselves back in compliance. The law is expected to apply to nearly 200 companies in total.

MDT/AGENCIES



PUTIN'S WAR

21 killed in pre-dawn Russian attack on school

ANDREA ROSA, KYIV

TWENTY-ONE people have been killed by Russian artillery that destroyed a school and a community center in Merefa, near the northeast city of Kharkiv, officials said.

Merefa Mayor Veniamin Sitov said the attack occurred just before dawn yesterday.

The Kharkiv region has seen heavy bombardment as stalled Russian forces try to advance in the area.

"Russia is committing war crimes and targeting civilians," Britain's U.N. Mission tweeted, announcing the call for the meeting that was joined by the U.S., France and others. "Russia's illegal war on Ukraine is a threat to us all."

Also yesterday, Ukrainian authorities struggled to determine the fate of hundreds of civilians who had been sheltering in a theater smashed by a Russian airstrike in the besieged city of Mariupol as officials said Russian artillery yesterday destroyed more civilian buildings in another frontline city.

Some hope emerged, as an official said some people had managed to survive the Mariupol theater strike.

A photo released by Mariupol's city council showed an entire section of the large, 3-story theater had collapsed after the strike yesterday [Macau time]. Several hundred people had taken refuge in the building's basement, seeking safety amid Russia's 3-week, strangulating siege of the strategic Azov Sea port city.

At least as recently as Monday, the pavement in front of and behind the once-elegant theater was marked with huge white letters spelling out "CHILDREN" in Russian, according to images released by the Maxar space technology company.

Rubble had buried the entrance to the shelter inside the theater, and the number of casualties was unclear, Pavlo Kyrylenko, head of the Donetsk regional administration, said on Telegram. Ukrainian parliament member Sergiy Taruta, a former governor of the Donetsk region where Mariupol is located, later said on Facebook that some people had managed to escape alive from the destroyed building. He did not provide any further details.

Kyrylenko said Russian



AP PHOTO

airstrikes also hit a municipal swimming pool complex in Mariupol where civilians, including women and children, had been sheltering. "Now there are pregnant women and women with children under the rubble there," he wrote, thought the number of casualties was not immediately known.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called for more help for his country in a video address to German lawmakers yesterday, saying thousands of people have been killed in the war that started almost a month ago, including 108 children.

He also referred to the dire situation in Mariupol. "Everything is a target for them," he said, including "a theater where hundreds of people found shelter that was flattened yesterday."

The address began with a delay because of a technical problem caused by "an attack in the immediate vicinity" of where Zelenskyy was speaking from, Bundestag deputy speaker Katrin Goering-Eckardt said.

Zelenskyy's address to the Bundestag came a day after he delivered a speech via video to the U.S. Congress that garnered several ovations as he called for more help.

The Russian defense ministry denied bombing the theater or anywhere else in Mariupol on Wednesday.

Zelenskyy's office said Russia carried out further airstrikes on Mariupol early yesterday morning, as well as artillery and airstrikes around the country overnight, including in the Kalynivka and Brovary suburbs of the capital, Kyiv. There was no immediate word on casualties.

In Kyiv, where residents have been huddling in homes and shelters, a fire broke out in

an apartment building hit by remnants of a downed Russian rocket earlier yesterday, killing one person and injuring at least three others, according to emergency services. Firefighters evacuated 30 people from the top floors of the 16-story building and extinguished the blaze within an hour.

Russian President Vladimir Putin went on television Wednesday to excoriate Russians who don't back him.

Russians "will always be able to distinguish true patriots from scum and traitors and will simply spit them out like a gnat that accidentally flew into their mouths," he said. "I am convinced that such a natural and necessary self-purification of society will only strengthen our country."

He said the West is using a "fifth column" of traitorous Russians to create civil unrest.

"And there is only one goal, I have already spoken about it — the destruction of Russia," he said.

The speech appeared to be a warning that his authoritarian rule, which had already grown tighter since the invasion began on Feb. 24, shutting down Russian news outlets and arresting protesters, could grow even more repressive.

In a sign of that, Russian law enforcement announced the first known criminal cases under a new law that allows for 15-year prison terms for posting what is deemed to be "false information" about the Ukraine war. Among those charged was Veronika Belotserkovskaya, a Russian-language cookbook author and blogger living abroad.

But it also came amid signs that talks were finally making progress.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said after Tuesday's meeting that a neutral military status for Ukraine was

being "seriously discussed" by the two sides, while Zelenskyy said Russia's demands for ending the war were becoming "more realistic."

Wednesday's talks, held by video, appeared to wade more deeply into technicalities.

Zelenskyy adviser Mikhailo Podolyak said Ukraine demanded a cease-fire, the withdrawal of Russian troops and security guarantees for Ukraine from several countries.

"This is possible only through direct dialogue" between Zelenskyy and Putin, he tweeted.

An official in Zelenskyy's office told The Associated Press that the main subject under discussion was whether Russian troops would remain in separatist regions in eastern Ukraine after the war and where the borders would be.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive talks, said Ukraine was insisting on the inclusion of one or more Western nuclear powers in the negotiations and on a legally binding document with security guarantees for Ukraine. In exchange, the official said, Ukraine was ready to discuss a neutral status.

Russia has demanded that NATO pledge never to admit Ukraine to the alliance or station forces there.

Earlier, Zelenskyy went before the U.S. Congress via video and, invoking Pearl Harbor and 9/11, pleaded with America for more weapons and tougher sanctions against Russia, saying: "We need you right now."

President Joe Biden announced the U.S. was sending an additional \$800 million in military aid to Ukraine. He also called Putin a "war criminal," in his sharpest condemnation since the invasion began.

Although Moscow's ground advance on the Ukrainian capital appeared largely stalled, Putin said earlier that the operation was unfolding "successfully, in strict accordance with pre-approved plans." He also decried Western sanctions against Moscow, accusing the West of trying to "squeeze us, to put pressure on us, to turn us into a weak, dependent country."

The fighting has led more than 3 million people to flee Ukraine, the U.N. estimates. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1974 VIOLENT BORDER CLASHES AT GOLAN HEIGHTS



Two Israeli soldiers have been killed and three others injured in the worst day of violence along the Golan Heights in three months.

Initial reports say Syria began shelling the northern sector of the Golan Heights, captured by Israel, at 1100 local time.

An hour later the shooting is reported to have spread southwards, ceasing for a while before there was an exchange of fire at 1630.

A statement released by the Syrian military said it had begun shelling after attempts by Israel to strengthen its hold in the central and northern sectors of the region captured during the war.

Israeli gunners reported hitting Syrian bunkers and various military positions throughout the day in retaliation for the highest casualty toll in a single day along the border.

The five hour exchange of fire came on the seventh day of border clashes along the Golan Heights.

Defence minister Moshe Dayan is expected to visit troops along the Golan Heights front tomorrow.

Israel declared a state of alert on the front two weeks ago after receiving what it described as "terrorist information" suggesting a possible Syrian offensive.

Despite an unarmed 110-man UN Truce Supervision Organisation, including Soviets and Americans, based at 19 posts along the Golan front, there has been little let up in the violence.

The clashes have placed a strain on negotiations currently taking place behind the scenes to broker a disengagement agreement between the two countries.

Senior Israeli officials are expected in Washington for talks, to be followed, it is understood, by their Syrian counterparts.

Israel first captured the Golan Heights during the 1967 war but Syria and Egypt launched an attack in October 1973 to retake them.

They made some gains before being pushed back by Israeli troops.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

There were more casualties in the days that followed including the deaths of some UN workers patrolling the area, which brought widespread condemnation.

Many rounds of shuttle diplomacy were undertaken by US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger after the 1973 war.

In May 1974 the Israel-Syria disengagement agreement was signed

This reduced Israel's positions in both the Sinai Peninsula, with Egypt, and the Golan Heights. But in December 1981 Israel formally annexed part of the Golan Heights. The move was not recognised internationally.

There are more than 30 Jewish settlements on the heights, with about 17,000 settlers. There are some 20,000 Syrians in the area, most of them members of the Druze sect.

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You will be confused about the intentions of someone you work with. Don't consume more than necessary. Friends from your past may come back into your life.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Moves or the possibility of having someone different living with you may be difficult at first. Be prepared for an active but rewarding day. Arguments will flare up if you get backed into an emotional corner.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Use your creative talent in order to accomplish your goals. Relatives may play an important role in your social activities. You may find yourself in the midst of a pretty good deal.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You may be able to get some good advice about your personal problems. You can get a promotion if you put in a little extra detail. Your home environment may be volatile if precautions aren't taken.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Use your innovative mind to surprise youngsters. Keep your eyes and ears alert for any evasive or deceptive statements. You will have the stamina and the know how to raise your earning power.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Travel will promote romantic connections. Be sure not to reveal private information to the wrong individuals. Don't make promises that you can't possibly keep.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Your temper could be short if someone criticizes your efforts. You could overreact to emotional situations regarding your relationship.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Make those phone calls and pay your bills. Your words will be taken out of context if you're evasive with coworkers or employers. This is probably causing upset and confusion on the home front.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
It might be best to work on your own; if possible, do your job out of your home today. Trips will be enjoyable, and communication with your lover will clear up any misconceptions.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
You may find that your anger stems from lending or borrowing money. Don't make promises you can't keep. A lot has changed and so have you.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
You'll be surprised how much you can accomplish. Do not give your heart to someone who may not live up to your standards. You can count on getting a pat on the back for your efforts.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Your tendency to dramatize may be a little much for your partner to take constantly. Your anger may be impossible to contain if you get into debates with family members.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

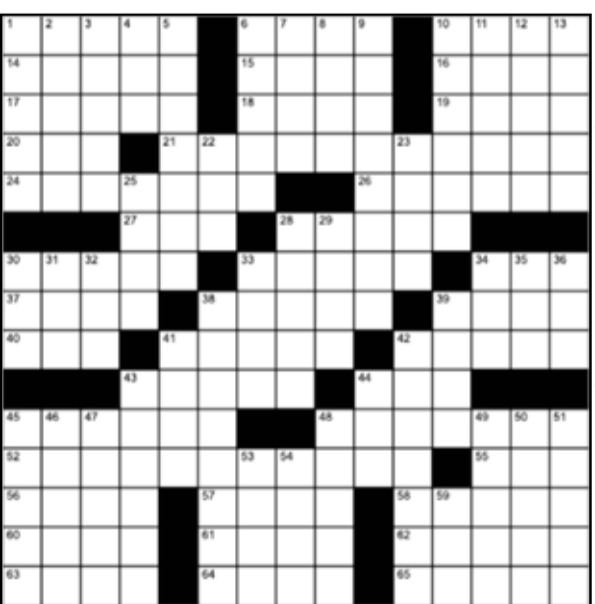
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-1	2	snow
Changchun	-8	2	overcast
Chengdu	16	28	fine
Chongqing	18	30	fine
Fuzhou	17	26	fine
Guangzhou	19	26	showers
Guiyang	13	24	fine
Haikou	22	27	cloudy
Hangzhou	8	17	overcast
Harbin	-12	-1	cloudy
Hefei	3	15	cloudy
Nanjing	6	14	cloudy
Shanghai	10	14	overcast
Taipei	20	21	overcast
Wuhan	5	16	cloudy
Hong Kong	21	27	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	-7	3	overcast
Frankfurt	3	14	clear
Paris	6	16	clear
London	6	16	overcast
New York	11	22	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Hitching post?; 6- Colorless; 10- Tobacco plug; 14- Vessel; 15- Leprechaun land; 16- Portrayal by an actor; 17- Prenatal care centers?; 18- Banned apple spray; 19- The King ___; 20- Lunar plain; 21- Sac in which bile is stored; 24- Died out; 26- Upcountry; 27- Driving peg; 28- Type of artist's crayon; 30- Clear; 33- Home on the range; 34- Cartesian conclusion; 37- Hearing organs; 38- Radiolocation; 39- Clinton's birthplace; 40- Tango need; 41- Flower segment; 42- Nervous person, maybe; 43- Pertaining to the moon; 44- Sleep stage; 45- Ancient; 48- Cold weather head protector; 52- Bougie by-product?; 55- Mme., across the Pyrenees; 56- Sleep like ___; 57- Circular band; 58- A Musketeer; 60- Ad word; 61- Switch back?; 62- ___ my case; 63- Whaler's direction; 64- Phooey!; 65- Dratt!

DOWN 1- To use improperly; 2- Juice of the rubber tree; 3- Rare delight; 4- Cabinet dept.; 5- Ruled; 6- Passed out; 7- Small rivulet; 8- Bedouin; 9- Inventor of the gramophone; 10- Tiny bed; 11- Accord maker; 12- Pilgrim John; 13- Off-the-wall; 22- Opening-day starter; 23- Get in a hand; 25- How sweet ___!; 28- Cupressus; 29- Opaque gemstone; 30- Tennis do-over; 31- Motor City gp.; 32- ___-Magnon man; 33- Cheerio!; 34- Summer Games org.; 35- Pet for King Solomon; 36- Debussy's "La ___"; 38- Portrayed; 39- Soccer star Mia; 41- Haul; 42- Relate; 43- One who lives in rented rooms; 44- Encouraging word; 45- ___ of thousands; 46- Australian cockatoo; 47- ___ Gay; 48- Goad; 49- Member of the wedding; 50- Frozen dew; 51- Observes Ramadan; 53- Old Italian money; 54- Are you ___ out?; 59- It's past due;



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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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

JAKE COYLE,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

DRIVE IN

IN 'X,' A 1970S PORN SHOOT RUNS INTO TROUBLE

IN Houston 1979, a small film crew arrives to make a porn film in a rented cottage on a farm belonging to an aged couple, one of whom greets the producer at the door with a shotgun and — unaware of their cinematic ambitions — an order for “discretion.” What could possibly go wrong?

But in Ti West’s “X,” it’s never in doubt that a bloodbath is to follow. The aftermath is glimpsed in the movie’s opening scene, when a police detective steps timidly through hallways strewn with bloody sheets covering corpses and a black-and-white TV blares with a local televangelist preaching about “a world of sin.”

Sex has long been a punishable offense in slasher movies but “X” cleverly flips the script. The movie, which opens in theaters Friday, juggles all the expected tropes but shuffles them around to make not a whole-cloth original but a patchwork homage that turns tired formulas new — quite appropriately since “X” is ultimately a gory struggle between young and old.

The first thing you notice about “X” is its command of atmosphere and camera movement. It opens in boxy academy ratio but pulls out to widescreen — an early hint that the film will conjure a ‘70s spirit in a way that’s highly conscious of the movie legacy its working in. “The Texas Chainsaw Massacre” is the most obvious

AP PHOTO



Mia Goth in a scene from “X”

touchstone here, but there are references throughout to films like “Psycho” and “The Shining.” Yet while a whole host of movies have eagerly cribbed from those films and others that “X” alludes to, it’s striking how much the tensions and palpably human characters of “X” feel realistically grounded and viscerally their own. It’s the difference between a glossy knockoff and the genuine article.

In a Dodge van marked

“Plowing Service” are a group of amateurs who think they can make it big with their first porn film. Their chipper, confident leader and executive producer Wayne (Martin Henderson) is a cowboy who believes his girlfriend Maxine (Mia Goth) has “that x factor” to make her a star. She, with turquoise eyeshadow and a cocaine habit, agrees. Just as eager is Bobby-Lynne (Brittany Snow) and her boyfriend Jackson (Scott

Mescudi, a.k.a. Kid Cudi), a laid-back Vietnam veteran. Directing and camera operating is RJ (Owen Campbell) who has brought his girlfriend Lorraine (Jenna Ortega) to hold the boom. She’s slightly shocked to discover that they’re making “smut,” as she says. RJ, explaining his artistic ambitions to prove that a dirty movie can be a good one, asks her when she became “such a prude.”

Right about then, in your avera-

ge slasher, you might be thinking Lorraine, in her noble piety, is sure to outlast them all.

Now about that older couple. Their names are Howard (Stephen Ure) and Pearl (Goth, again, unrecognizable under prosthetics). Pearl, we learn in surprisingly tender scenes with Maxine, still has yearnings despite her decrepit appearance. (Pearl’s makeup seems modeled after the mother in “Psycho.”) Once a great beauty who could make her husband do anything she wanted, he’s now too old for lovemaking. Those feelings of inadequacy and frustration, for the kids out back making a porno, spell trouble.

“X” loses some of its grip once the killings start.

Still, this is strong genre filmmaking by West, a writer-director of horror films and thrillers. The photography by cinematographer Eliot Rockett is vivid — there’s one arresting shot from overhead of an alligator trailing a naked Maxine during a swim. The actors are uniformly good. And by fusing two types of films that have long been bedfellows — slashers and pornography — “X” makes for a gripping shotgun marriage of genres.

“X,” an A24 release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for strong bloody violence and gore, strong sexual content, graphic nudity, drug use, and language. Running time: 105 minutes.★★★★

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Jazzy Celebration

IRENE SAM, MDT

THE season, St. Regis Bar's "Jack's Club" Jazz Events are starting on March 26, 2022 with a series of live jazz performances that showcase a catalogue of jazz musicians. The event series combines enhanced jazz experiences and exquisite entertainment with one of the world's leading single malt whisky brands, The Macallan. Featuring Harmony Collection Rich Cacao crafted from a harmonious combination of European and American oak casks, the rich single malt whisky is characterised by its deep and dark chocolate profile accompanied with delicate tastes of vanilla, date and cinnamon. Other specialty whiskies from The Macallan will be also available.

"Jazz music is synonymous with The St. Regis brand," says Daniella Tonetto, General Manager of Sales and Marketing at The St. Regis Macao. "Back when the Astor family was building the original St. Regis hotel in New York, they fostered a deep appreciation for this popular genre. Through their continued support and willingness to showcase this musical style and its artists, the legacy of jazz lives on as a thriving part of our hotel's heritage today," she added.

The evening show will feature contemporary compositions, as well as modern interpretations of beloved classics, paying homage to the brand's flagship hotel in 1939s New



Chanel

Aaron Lo



York City, at the height of the Jazz Age. Named in honour of The St. Regis founder, John "Jack" Jacob Astor IV, the monthly event kicks off with live performances by the venue's resident musicians Aaron Lo, vocalist Yaya Lam, saxophonist Paulo Pereira followed by a special appearance by Chanel Lan's Band from Guangzhou

performing all night long. Lead singer, Chanel has graced the stages of Guangzhou TV Station and various events in Hong Kong and Macau. She was also the winner of the World Chinese young singer competition in 2006 and her first album released in 2010 received many favourable reviews from the music industry.



CHICKEN SATAY

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons reduced sodium soy sauce
- 2 1/2 teaspoons yellow curry powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons turmeric
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon freshly grated ginger
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs

Peanut Sauce

- 3 tablespoons creamy peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon reduced sodium soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons chili garlic sauce, or more, to taste
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated ginger



KNOW HOW

To make the peanut sauce, whisk together peanut butter, soy sauce, lime juice, brown sugar, chili garlic sauce and ginger in a small bowl.

combine coconut milk, soy sauce, curry powder, turmeric, garlic, ginger, brown sugar and fish sauce and marinate the chicken.

Marinate for 2 hours

Make skewers

Cook over high heat brushing with canola oil

finish with peanut sauce



RECIPES

www.eighty8s.com



BY ALEX TORRÃO
MDT

FASHION

BEAUTY OF THE OUTDOORS

FOR their latest Spring campaign, Canada Goose has partnered with photographer and actor Cole Sprouse and a diverse collective of creative talent on an elevated outdoor experience. The campaign, centered around the brand's Live in the Open ethos, celebrates the strength and importance of a tight-knit community while showcasing Canada Goose styles being put to the test outside in Big Sur, California.

This Spring, the brand is releasing the Crofton and Cypress Puffer Boots. With lightweight comfort that seamlessly transitions from indoor to outdoor, the boots offer optimal comfort that is perfect for travel. Their insulated upper maintains its original shape after wear, holds balanced insulation throughout and dries quickly in wetter conditions. Inspired by the Cypress and Crofton family of lightweight jackets, hoodies and vests, these boots



incorporate the lightweight versatility of their original counterparts. The boots, with a Thermal Experience Index rating of 2, can withstand temperatures up to -15° C – ideal for all seasons and transitional weather.

In addition to the new boots, the campaign also features a wide variety of outerwear and apparel styles in new, vibrant colours.

The Cypress Jacket, an everyday essential, transitions seamlessly from city sidewalks to mountain trails with its versatile details, like the option to pack into its interior pocket for effortless travel. Ideal for lightweight comfort, the Crofton Hoody has a down-filled adjustable hood with a cordlock that adds warmth and element protection in any season.

OPINION

World Views

Zeke Miller, MDT/AP



**ZELENSKY, BIDEN SHOW
 DIFFERENT STYLES, MISSIONS**

U.S. President Joe Biden and Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy are men of different generations, countries and styles — and with very different missions.

Zelenskyy is fighting to save his nation. Biden to restore a shattered world order — without igniting a world war.

The contrasts were on vivid display Wednesday. First the Ukrainian leader delivered an impassioned plea to Congress for additional military assistance to fight off Russia's three-week old invasion. Then came Biden, with a more technocratic address promising more arms and humanitarian assistance but making clear the limits of what the U.S. is willing to do.

Zelenskyy, 44, was vigorous though unshaven and fatigued. In military green, he appealed for lethal aid via video link from a nondescript bunker. Biden, nearly 80, was staid as he spoke of sanctions and coalition building from the made-for-television set built next to the White House.

"I'm almost 45 years old; today my age stopped when the hearts of more than 100 children stopped beating," Zelenskyy told U.S. lawmakers. "I see no sense in life if it cannot stop the deaths."

Speaking for 15 minutes, he invoked uniquely American moments of strife and significance: the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Sept. 11 attacks, the quest led by Martin Luther King Jr. for civil rights. He called on Biden to be "the leader of peace."

It marked the latest stop on Zelenskyy's livestreamed global tour, as he seeks to portray Ukraine as defending more than just its own land and tries to elicit even tougher military and other action against Russia.

"We are fighting for the values of Europe and the world," he told lawmakers.

Zelenskyy begged the U.S. to engage more directly to help his people — including for the U.S. to help Ukraine get Soviet-built aircraft to use against Russia and for an enforced no-fly zone over Ukraine, even if he acknowledged it was unlikely. Biden has warned that fulfilling such requests could push Russia and the U.S. — two nuclear-armed nations — into direct conflict. It's a chance he's not willing to take.

Biden watched Zelenskyy's speech from the White House residence and called it "powerful."

His own remarks — three hours later and half as long — were less lofty, delivered from a small auditorium studio to a room full of reporters. He spoke of what the U.S. can do now, stopping well short of granting all Zelenskyy sought.

Biden has spent the past several months working to align NATO allies and Group of Seven partners behind stiff economic sanctions against Russia. That began as an attempt to head off the invasion and has now shifted to an effort to ensure the conflict leaves Russia isolated and economically debilitated.

Biden ticked through the U.S. arms to come in the latest tranche of missiles, drones and bullets. He reviewed the sanctions already imposed on Russia and the humanitarian assistance flowing to Ukraine. Mostly, though, while lamenting the horrific casualties so far, he cast America's interest in the conflict in terms of protecting democracy around the globe — rather than focusing on Ukraine itself.

"What's at stake here are the principles that the United States and the united nations across the world stand for," Biden said. "It's about freedom. It's about the right of people to determine their own future. It's about making sure Ukraine never -- will never be a victory for Putin, no matter what advances he makes on the battlefield."

Max Bergmann, a former State Department official who is now a senior fellow at the Democratic-leaning Center for American Progress, said that despite their general alignment, Biden and Zelenskyy are playing very different roles.

For Zelenskyy, "this is an existential threat to him. The very survival of Ukraine is at stake here." The Ukrainian leader, he said, shows "determination and desperation."

Biden, he said, is showing empathy for Zelenskyy's position.

But Biden, he said, has limits. "There's going to be a difference and we just have to understand that. That's part of what being the leader of the free world is about, which is weighing those competing demands."

Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will meet with his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, to strengthen their partnership in the Indo-Pacific and beyond in view of China's growing footprint in the region, an Indian official said yesterday.

The meeting tomorrow will provide an opportunity to exchange views on regional and global issues of mutual interest, said Arindam Bagchi, India's External Affairs Ministry spokesman. But Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the relationship with China are expected to figure prominently in their discussions.

Kishida will be in India over the weekend, he said.

Japan has announced comprehensive financial sanctions to isolate Russia, including export controls on semiconductors and other high-tech products. But India has refrained from taking sides in the conflict and abstained from voting against Russia at the U.N. or criticizing President Vladimir Putin.

India says ties with Japan are key to stability in the Indo-Pacific region. The two nations, along with the United States and Australia, are members of the Indo-Pacific alliance known as "the Quad" that is grappling with a rising China's coercive economic practices and military maneuvering.



**SHENZHEN TO REOPEN,
 STILL TRYING TO
 CONTAIN VIRUS**

JOE MCDONALD

COMPANIES in Shenzhen, a major Chinese business center, will be allowed to reopen while efforts to contain coronavirus outbreaks progress, the government said yesterday, following a citywide shutdown that rattled financial markets.

Testing of everyone in the city of 17.5 million people is "progressing smoothly," said a deputy mayor, Huang Qiang, at a news conference. He said 71 new cases were found in the 24 hours through midnight Wednesday.

China's case numbers in its latest wave of outbreaks in areas throughout the country are relatively low. But authorities are enforcing a "zero tolerance" strategy that has temporarily shut down major cities to find isolate every infected person.

"We will organize enterprises to return to work," Huang said, according to a transcript released by the government. He gave no timetable but said businesses are required to step up strengthen anti-disease measures and monitor employees for the virus's telltale fever. Chinese leaders appear

to be trying to fine-tune their disease-control system to maintain their goal of zero cases while reducing economic and social disruption from stringent controls.

A meeting yesterday of leaders of the ruling Communist Party "stressed the need to maintain normal production" but said disease control work should be "carried out strictly," state TV reported on its evening news.

"We should accelerate the reform of the disease control system," the party leaders were cited as saying at the meeting. The report gave no details of possible changes under consideration.

Businesses in Shenzhen, a finance and technology hub, were ordered to close Monday, except those that supply food, fuel and other necessities. Bus and subway service shut down. Residents were told to stay home while authorities carried out three rounds of testing.

That prompted alarm about the possible impact on smartphone manufacturing and other industries that are centered on Shenzhen, which abuts Hong Kong. Economists said a potential threat to trade loomed if anti-virus

controls spread to Shenzhen's Yantian Port, one of the world's business.

Elsewhere, the industrial center of Changchun in the northeast shut down and travel controls were imposed on its surrounding province of Jilin.

Volkswagen AG said production at its factory in Changchun would remain idle Friday. The German automaker said a factory in Shanghai, where anti-disease controls also were tightened, would operate.

Shenzhen is home to some of China's biggest companies including telecom equipment maker Huawei Technologies Ltd., Ping An Insurance Co. of China, electric vehicle maker BYD Auto and Tencent Holding, operator of the popular WeChat message system.

In Shenzhen, the "epidemic prevention and control situation is positive," Huang said.

However, Huang warned Shenzhen still was suffering "sporadic outbreaks." He said 71 confirmed infections were found in the 24 hours through midnight Wednesday.

"Epidemic prevention and control work cannot slacken at all," Huang said. **MDT/AP**



UK The Bank of England is likely to raise its key interest rate for the third time since December as it pushes ahead faster than other central banks in combating a global wave of inflation fueled by soaring energy prices. Economists expect the Bank of England to boost its key rate to 0.75% after Russia's war in Ukraine pushed oil prices to a 13-year high earlier this month. The U.S. Federal Reserve raised its benchmark short-term rate to 0.25% on Wednesday to tame the worst inflation since the early 1980s.

Russia Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov says Moscow "can't take into account" the ruling of the International Court of Justice that ordered Russia to halt its operation in Ukraine. During his daily conference call with reporters, Peskov noted that both sides need to agree on implementing the ruling, and on Russia's side "there can be no consent." Peskov also said that talks between Russia and Ukraine will continue today in some form.

Lithuania's parliament has unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a no-fly zone over Ukraine, joining countries including Estonia and Slovenia in the appeal. The resolution said a no-fly zone would allow United Nations peacekeepers to ensure the security of humanitarian corridors and the safety of Ukraine's nuclear power plants and nuclear waste storage facilities. NATO has categorically ruled out any role in the setting-up of a fly-zone.



Sahara A huge dust storm swirling over Europe from the Sahara desert made it hard to breathe in large parts of Spain and Portugal for a second straight day and gave cleaning crews extra work as far away as Paris, London and Belgrade to remove the film of dirt falling on cars and buildings. Europeans woke up to eerie skies, from the grimy gray in Madrid to orange-hues in the Swiss Alps, caused by the tiny particles that had traveled thousands of kilometers across the Mediterranean Sea.