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SECRETARY CHEONG REVEALED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO PLAN TO START SPECIFIC LEGISLATION GOVERNING LEISURE AND THEME PARK FACILITIES

ABSENCE OF SECRETARY TO ANSWER ABOUT LOGISTICS CENTER UPSETS AL PRESIDENT

BANKS ASSOCIATION SEEKS ALLIANCE BETWEEN LOCAL AND LUSOPHONE BANKS AT VIRTUAL MEETING WITH CPLP'S BUSINESS CONFEDERATION DUE IN MID-APRIL



Sri Lanka's president asked opposition parties to form a unity government yesterday after his Cabinet resigned amid public protests over the country's worst economic crisis in memory and deepening mistrust in his leadership. All 26 ministers of the Rajapaksa government handed in their resignations after thousands of people held street protests denouncing the government despite a countrywide state of emergency and a curfew.



Pakistan's top court began hearing arguments yesterday on whether Prime Minister Imran Khan and his allies had the legal right to dissolve parliament and set the stage for early elections. Opposition leader Shahbaz Sharif (pictured, center) is challenging the latest moves by Khan, a former cricket star turned conservative Islamist leader who came to power in 2018, contending they are a ploy by Khan to stay in power.



Hungary As nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban prepares to continue his autocratic governance of Hungary for another four years, he faces a shattered opposition at home but an increasingly isolated position abroad, where his flouting of democratic standards and approach to the war in Ukraine has riled the European Union and other nations.

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CARRIE, OUT



Hong Kong's Carrie Lam won't seek new term after rocky five years as Chief Executive; media hints her No. 2 John Lee is likely to succeed her

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WHO IS A BETTER ALLY FOR THE US – RUSSIA OR CHINA?

JEREMY FRIEDMAN
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

FORTY-five years ago last February, U.S. President Richard Nixon returned from a visit to China that shocked the world and unsettled leaders in Moscow, who were awaiting a visit from Nixon a few months later.

Soviet leaders wondered if they were finally witnessing the birth of a U.S.-China alliance that they had feared ever since the breakdown of the Sino-Soviet alliance in the early 1960s.

As Washington and the media convulse over every new outrage emanating from Moscow, while President Trump repeatedly asks “Wouldn’t it be nice if we actually got along with Russia?” U.S. policymakers are faced with the same choice between Russia and China, though this time the stakes might be even higher.

The history of persistent tensions between Russia and China suggests two choices: Accommo-

date and reconcile with Russia to balance against the greater power – China. Or, align with China to defend a rules-based international order from its most powerful antagonist – Russia.

It should be clear by now that we can no longer oppose Russia and China at the same time. Though that route might seem tempting and natural, given the historical aspirations of U.S. foreign policy to protect territorial sovereignty, promote human rights and provide a framework for free trade, we are no longer equal to the task.

At a minimum, that would require decisive U.S. action in Syria, firm military support for the government in Kiev, a drastic military buildup of NATO forces across Eastern Europe and a more confrontational posture in the South and East China seas. Doing that would further stretch a U.S. military that is already facing a personnel shortage. It would also represent a burden that the Ame-

rican people apparently no longer wish to carry.

Lost in the discussion of whether Trump’s “America First” bravado reflects militarism or isolationism are the ways in which our options have been shaped by the administration that preceded him.

We have only begun to reckon with the foreign policy legacy of Barack Obama, but he has clearly done more to shape the current global predicament than Trump has. When the Russian, Iranian and Turkish foreign ministers met in Moscow in the final weeks of the Obama administration to solve the Syrian crisis by themselves without inviting the U.S., they were making a startling declaration: The nation that had once declared itself to be “indispensable” was now very clearly dispensable. It would have been unthinkable at any point since Pearl Harbor for American interests to be discounted so brazenly in solving the most pressing

international crisis.

It is hard to separate the factors that brought us to this point. Is this simply an inevitable product of relative, or even absolute, American decline? Is it a product of a president who sought to “lead from behind” and whose fundamental foreign policy principle was that sins of commission are always worse than sins of omission? Or did Obama conclude he was dealing with a country, already exhausted by wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, that was no longer willing to shoulder the burden of defending the free world? Either way, Trump has inherited a country that is no longer willing and able to play the leadership role it once did in world affairs.

So where do we go from here? If we cannot oppose both Russia and China, then we need to compromise with at least one of them.

Make friends with Russia?

Arguing for a Russian alignment is the notion that China already does more damage to American interests around the globe than Russia does. China damages U.S. economic interests through unfair trade practices, our standing in Asia by undermining our alliances, and our ability to promote democracy, particularly in Africa, by offering aid and investment without good governance conditions. As China grows more powerful and assertive, its efforts to drive the U.S. out of East Asia, coupled with increasing challenges to American interests around the globe, will amount to a full-spectrum challenge to the current U.S. position in the world.

In contrast, Russia’s challenges to American interests are relative pinpricks. Russia does not have the ability to turn either Eastern Europe or the Middle East into its own sphere of influence. It is even losing the competition for economic influence in Central Asia, its own post-Soviet backyard, to China.

Putin might not be an evil dictator bent on doing as much damage to the West as possible, but rather a spurned pragmatist with a realistic view of Russia’s position in the world who had initially hoped to cooperate with Western leaders, but has been embittered by poor treatment by them. Putin’s Russia, therefore, would represent not a mortal threat to the international world order, but rather a missed opportunity, one that can still perhaps be salvaged.

Or choose China instead?

Alternatively, we could align

with China against Russia.

This approach makes sense if you believe Putin began as a pragmatist, but that was only a temporary tack, given his KGB background and nationalist authoritarian inclinations. But now that he has seen how weak his opponents are and how much havoc he can wreak, he has set his sights higher. Fifteen years ago he might not have imagined he could break NATO or the EU, but now that seems within reach, and nothing will deter him from this chance to realize the fondest dreams of his Soviet predecessors. What could we possibly offer him to match such dreams? He would revel in the chaos that would follow.

Chaos, however, is precisely the opposite of what the leaders in Beijing desire. China’s resurgence is built on a world of peace and trade, a world ultimately sustained by American military strength. For China to seek to challenge such an order, it would have to imagine that it could not only fill the role the U.S. currently fills, but manage the transition in such a way as to avoid a chaotic interlude. Chinese leaders are far too clear-headed for such a gambit, and in any case they see no need to rush such a transition before conditions for it have matured.

President Xi Jinping is anyway preoccupied with ensuring the indefinite continuation of Communist Party rule. What could jeopardize that more than a world in chaos and economic disaster?

With Russia against China? With China against Russia?

There is no question such a choice is unpalatable. Not only would either alternative involve morally difficult concessions, but having to make the choice at all implies that the United States is no longer capable of defending the world order it has long sponsored. This is a difficult reality to accept.

And broaching the possibility of such a choice leads to more difficult questions.

Could Russia even be persuaded to align with the U.S. against China or China against Russia? What would we have to offer either side? What would this mean for our allies, especially in Europe and East Asia? The latter question might not be as insoluble as it may seem, because our allies have long since begun anticipating just such a scenario. But if we are no longer able and willing to perform the role we once did, we need to reckon with the consequences.

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Absence of Secretary to answer about logistics center upsets parliamentary head

ANTHONY LAM

KOU Hoi In, president of the Legislative Assembly, was not completely satisfied that no senior official was present to answer lawmakers' question on the long-proposed logistics facility on the delta bridge's Macau island.

Yesterday's parliamentary plenary was reserved for lawmakers' oral enquiries.

Lawmaker Ip Sio Kai asked about the proposed logistic facility on the Macau Border Checkpoint Island of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, as well as its progress.

Instead of any senior official, the government was represented by the director-general of the Macao Customs, Vong Man Chong, for this particular agenda item.

After rounds of lawmakers raising their questions on the topic, the president of the parliament could not hold it and voiced out his concerns. This is not uncommon for the head of the parliament to voice out to defend the legislature's dignity.

Kou highlighted his understanding on the importance of the logistics facility. He believed that government representatives should



have been able to give lawmakers – as well as members of the public – on the impact of the bridge on our logistic industry.

Furthermore, he believed the government should have also been able to disclose its evaluation on the matter.

With the government revealing that the scale of the logistics facility will be shrunk, the parliamentary head addressed that he understood the government is trying to lower costs, but many questions were left unanswered.

Vong reiterated at the plenary that facilities on the Inner Harbor will be ultimately relocated to the

dock in Ka-Hó, but Kou himself had wondered whether the facility in Ka-Hó has sufficient capacity to handle all extra workload.

"These questions cannot be answered by the present officials. I don't think the director-general can answer our questions today," Kou admitted. "But how come there is no senior official present? Probably because the government has no idea who should take the lead."

During the inquiry session, Vong disclosed that the logistics facility will be handled by three bureau-level entities. The Transport Bureau (DSAT) will handle the design and construction phase. The

Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED) will be responsible for the operation of the future facility. The Customs, of course, will handle cargo clearance.

This the reason why Kou made his comment. He expressly emphasized that the project of the logistics facility is a cross-departmental operation.

Vong said the facility should be expected at the end of year 2024. Originally planned for an area of about 56,000 sqm., the future logistics facility will only measure 16,000 sqm. when built, after the government decided to

shrink the scale.

The government's justification on the downsizing is that the Urban Planning Law stipulates a different use of the piece of land in question. The government needs to change its plans so as not to violate the law that it had drafted.

The positioning of the facility will also be changed from a logistics center to a cargo transport facility, a move that some lawmakers found downplaying or insulting to the logistics industry of Macau. Lawmaker Si Ka Lon even pointed out that government has not tried its best to secure enough parking spaces for the trucks.

In addition, lawmaker Ron Law wondered how the government would develop logistics in Macau with a downgraded facility on a transport hub. He stressed that many industries, such as the meeting, incentives, convention and exhibition (MICE) industry, rely heavily on seamless logistics. He questioned the government with a downgraded facility, how can the city diversify its economy.

Some lawmakers doubted the government's reliance on the Ka-Hó Dock, which will eventually push up delivery costs because trucks have to travel a long way to delivery cargo.

Gov't sees no plan for specific legislation on leisure, thematic facilities

SECRETARY for Administration and Justice André Cheong revealed that the government had no plan to start specific legislation the governs leisure and theme park facilities.

In his oral inquiry, lawmaker Ron Lam urged the government to make specific laws to govern leisure and theme park facilities, considering the fact that Macau will see more of them as it further develops into a tourism destination.

"I don't think we need specific legislations for leisure facilities," he told the parliament, adding that there are the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), Sports Bureau (ID) and the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), among other bureaus, handling various aspects of such facilities.

With that said, as well as recapping precedents, different government bodies



will have authorities over different facility in a particular setting, such as an integrated resort. The ID, for example, has authority over the swimming pool of a particular resort, besides the Health Bureau (SSM) or the IAM has authority over aquatic hygiene in

such facility.

Lawmaker Pereira Coutinho did not agree with this. He pointed out that in many European countries, specific laws are made to govern different types of leisure facilities. For example, he said, different laws can be made to govern chil-

dren's playground, swimming pools, water theme parks, as well as other leisure facilities.

He added that the city does not even have specific laws that govern the import of toys for children, meaning that it cannot determine prior to importation for which age group a particular toy is suitable.

Cheong is confident about the effectiveness of the existing system. He stressed that the lack of a specific law does not equate to the evasion from responsibilities. "Operators will still be held responsible for accidents that happen in their properties [if they're proved so]," Cheong said. "They don't want accident to take place, because it will affect their image."

Lawmaker Ella Lei pointed out that although the competent government entities are authorized to issue

guidelines, but operators can merely neglect it. The means to do so is by posting a signboard that indicates the absence of lifeguard service in the facility. This waiver has led Lei to consider if the guidelines from the government is actually effective.

This somewhat loophole will inaugurate a bad image of Macau because, as Lei and some of her colleagues pointed out, tourists visiting Macau may not be familiar with this, hinting that they may use habits from their hometowns to fill the puzzle.

In response, Cheong emphasized that if accidents happen, the victim or their families can file complaints against the properties in question. It will not leave the operators at large.

He also said that even if insurance companies are not legally required to pay

compensations, the complainants can still pursue civil liabilities against the facility operators in question.

Lawmaker Che Sai Wang and Lo Choi In raised concerns over insurance coverage, with the former mentioning that the industry may not be willing to insure theme parks.

As to theme park facilities, the secretary highlighted that the Land and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU) has the Mechanical and Electrical Facility Department to monitor these.

However, several lawmakers recapped Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário for saying that the workforce in the department is tight and will only be able to monitor elevator and escalator regular checks. Hence, they doubted if the department will be able to handle an extra task.

In his final reply, the secretary promised that the government would consider the direction of specific legislation.

PHILIPPINE CONSULATE SEES RECORD VOTER REGISTRATIONS FOR UPCOMING ELECTION

LYNZY VALLES

THE Philippine Consulate General in Macau has briefed association leaders on the overseas voting for the upcoming Philippine Presidential Election which will run from April 10 to May 9.

The polling station will be at the Harborview Hotel for the first time.

The station will be open for voting for 30 calendar days from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., except on the first and last days, when it will be open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., respectively.

Officials remind voters to not wear any political colors at the venue since candidates in the ongoing Philippine presidential campaign have used certain colors as part of their political branding.

The consulate also reminds qualified Filipinos to vote and not wait until the last minute, and encouraged the citizens to "use social media responsibly." Social media has become a key battle-

ground in the upcoming election, and many fear that fake news or disinformation could make the already intense race even more toxic.

More than 65 million Filipinos have registered to vote in the country and another 1.8 million have done so overseas.

The Times has obtained access to the certified list of voters for the Macau jurisdiction, which shows that over 14,630 Macau-based workers are registered – a surge of nearly 200% compared to the number of voters in the last presidential election in 2016.

However, it is still unknown what the turnout will be, given that some 5,761 workers have been repatriated since the start of the pandemic.

Back in 2016, only about 5,000 of the workers were registered voters.

On the last day of Overseas Voters Registration on October 18, several hundred flocked to the consulate's office which required the intervention of the Public Se-



curity Police for the long queue surrounding the AIA Tower.

About a dozen Filipinos showed support for the son of the late dictator, Marcos Ferdinand "Bongbong" Romualdez Marcos Jr. on the last day of registration by wearing red t-shirts, while several dozen of them gave verbal expressions of support.

Back in November, the Philippine Consulate General in Macau called on the Filipino community to refrain from organizing public gatherings without obtaining prior permits from the relevant Macau authorities.

This comes after a group of the community gathered on a Sunday, wearing red shirts at the

Ruins of St. Paul and another at Sai Van Lake - which led to authorities detaining over a dozen people for 24 hours for holding a demonstration without permission.

The main candidates for the presidential election include Marcos Jr., current vice-president Leni Robredo, and boxing champion Manny Pacquiao.

Still no flight application from Cebu Pac following promo announcement

THE Macau Civil Aviation Authority has so far received no application from Cebu Pacific Air to resume flights to Macau.

In a post on March 29, the low-cost carrier announced ticket promotions which included the route from Macau to Manila, costing MOP39. The offer was listed as being open from April 1 to September 30.

In a reply to the Times, the spokesperson said so far that they have not received any information on flights operated by Cebu Pacific in April.

In early January, Cebu Pacific Air said that it would resume direct weekly flights between Macau and Manila, beginning February 5, which will be scheduled every Saturday.

However, this plan was frustrated by the SAR's compliance with a zero-Covid strategy which has led to the restriction of foreign arrivals.

The Times has also contacted Cebu Pacific, seeking comment concerning the announcement, but has re-



ceived no reply so far.

On April 1, the carrier returned dozens of stranded Filipinos to Hong Kong as the neighboring region lifted the ban the entry of passen-

gers from nine countries, including the Philippines, following the recent improvement in Covid numbers.

Cebu Pacific resumed its Manila-Hong Kong flights

late last week, noting that it will regularly operate flights 5J 272 and 5J 114, both bound for Hong Kong.

The announcement of the lifting of the ban was welcomed in Hong Kong, because the city is facing a shortage of domestic workers – similar to the situation Macau families are facing.

However, to date Macau has no plans to open its borders to stranded foreign workers until the vaccination rate is higher. Recent figures show that the city's vaccination rate is at 85%.

Health Bureau director Alvis Lo recently told the Chinese press that the shortage of quarantine rooms are a significant factor, since the designated hotels are primarily used for Macau residents. Following the lifting of the ban in Hong Kong, the city is seeing high demand for quarantine hotels. LV

DSAL IN COMMUNICATION WITH GRAND EMPEROR, SJM CONCERNING CASINO CLOSURE

THE Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) has already contacted the Grand Emperor Hotel and concessionaire SJM, regarding the closure of the casino.

Concerning casino workers, the concessionaire has a duty to undertake due diligence in favor of the company's workers, the bureau announced in a statement.

DSAL said the bureau will hold information sessions on labor rights for affected workers in order to guarantee their legitimate rights and interests. The bureau will also organize employment seminars and provide employment support services to affected workers.

Emperor Entertainment Hotel Limited stated in a filing

to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange that in view of the gloomy outlook for the high-end gaming market, the casino at Grand Emperor Hotel will cease operations as they will not renew the service agreement with gaming concessionaire SJM, which expires June 26, citing the "difficult business environment."

Lawmaker Ella Lei has already said that a significant number of people will be affected by announcement of the casino ceasing operations, and hopes that the company will take the initiative to assist staff by keeping them employed through arrangements at other casinos, and hopes that staff will be informed of such arrangements as soon as possible. LV

GOV'T ADMONISHES AIRLINES FOR CARELESS CERTIFICATE CHECKING

THE government has warned two airlines for their casual checking of negative vaccination certificates.

The warning comes after two Macau residents were diagnosed with Covid-19 and were able to board flights operated by Singapore Airlines and Scoot without having to present the documents. The Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre said that the Health Bureau will

conduct an appropriate investigation, emphasizing that a warning has been issued.

In a revision of health regulations, the city has partially eased its requirements for residents returning to Macau and travelers entering Macau. From today, people who have been infected with Covid less than two months ago are permitted to enter Macau, provided that they present three Covid-19 tests taken at least 24 hours apart.

CE-CPLP MEETING

ABM to bring alliance between local and Lusophone banks

RENATO MARQUES

THE Macau Association of Banks (ABM) aims to bring a proposal that establishes an alliance between Macau banks and those of the Portuguese-speaking countries to an upcoming meeting of the Business Confederation of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CE-CPLP), Portuguese business newspaper Jornal de Negócios reported citing ABM vice-president Sam Tou's interview with Lusa.

According to ABM's vice president, the meeting, to be held online, will take place mid-April and will be the opportunity the association has been waiting for to launch the idea of linking the banking sector of Macau with the Portuguese-speaking countries.

This idea comes from the creation of ABM, where the board of directors had previously decided on forming a committee exclusively dedicated to fi-



nancial services between China and the Portuguese-speaking markets, led by Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU).

The committee also includes the Bank of China's Macau branch, the Well Link Bank, and the Macau branch of Haitong Bank, the successor to Banco Espírito Santo Investimento, the local branch of the Portuguese bank Millennium BCP, the branch of Industrial and Com-

mercial Bank of China (ICBC) in Macau, and the local branch of the Hong Kong-based CMB Wing Lung Bank.

ABM has been a member of the CE-CPLP since June 2020 and took part in its first meeting with the group in February this year.

According to Tou, the establishment of this banking alliance is dependent on the acceptance of the proposal by

the CE-CPLP members, noting that the ABM has been working closely with its contacts in Portuguese-speaking countries to gather support for this project.

If successful, the alliance could favor the support of the launch in China of financial products from Portuguese speaking countries as well as offer financial services to Chinese companies interested in investing in Portuguese-speaking markets.

Ultimately, the alliance would "contribute to Macau's role as a commercial and service platform between China and Portuguese-speaking markets," said Tou noting the role attributed to Macau by the central government is also one of ABM's missions.

The same official also recalled that since May 2019, the association has signed a cooperation agreement with associations of banks in Portugal, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and São Tomé and Príncipe to reinforce cooperation and establish stronger ties.

SLIGHT DECLINE IN BROAD MONEY SUPPLY

Macau's supply of broad money retreated 0.6% month-on-month to MOP688.3 patacas in February 2022, the special administrative region's monetary watchdog said yesterday. According to statistics released by the Monetary Authority of Macao, the currency in circulation and demand deposits decreased by 4.0% and 0.7% respectively. M1 thus dropped 1.7% from the previous month. Resident deposits dropped 0.5% from the preceding month to MOP667.6 billion, whereas non-resident deposits increased 0.1% to MOP383.7 billion. Meanwhile, public sector deposits with the banking sector rose 0.9% to MOP264.7 billion. As a result, total deposits in the banking sector remained virtually stable at MOP1,315.9 billion.

NO PROGRESS ON PROJECTS WORTH MOP7B

A committee has revealed that seven projects under the government's Investment and Development Expenditure Plan (PIDDA) budget in 2021, amounting to MOP6.9 billion, saw no progress whatsoever. Chairman of the Follow-up Committee on Public Finance Affairs, Wong Kit Cheng, also revealed that some 253 projects were financed by PIDDA, while 27 projects were cancelled. The committee is requesting clarifications on 21 of the cancellations.

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The entrance to a noodle store is locked and sealed in the Jingan district of western Shanghai

COVID-19

China sends in military to help with Shanghai virus outbreak

KEN MORITSUGU, BEIJING

CHINA has sent more than 10,000 health workers from around the country to Shanghai, including 2,000 from the military, as it struggles to stamp out a rapidly spreading outbreak in its largest city under its zero-COVID strategy.

Shanghai was conducting a mass testing of its 25 million residents yesterday as what was announced as a two-phase lockdown entered its second week. Most of eastern Shanghai, which was supposed to re-open last Friday, remained locked down along with the western half of the city.

While many factories and financial companies have been allowed to keep operating if they isolate their employees, concern was growing about the potential economic impact of an extended lockdown in China's financial capital, a major shipping and manufacturing center.

The highly contagious omicron BA.2 form of the virus is testing China's ability to maintain its zero-COVID approach, which aims to stop outbreaks from spreading by isolating everyone who tests positive, whether they have symptoms or not. Shanghai has converted an exhibition hall and other facilities into massive isolation centers where people with mild or no symptoms are housed in a sea of beds separated by temporary partitions.

China yesterday reported more than 13,000 new cases nationwide in the previous 24 hours, of which nearly 12,000 were asymptomatic. About 9,000 of the

cases were in Shanghai. The other large outbreak is in northeastern China's Jilin province, where new cases topped 3,500.

The Shanghai lockdown has sparked numerous complaints, from food shortages to limited staff and facilities at hastily constructed isolation sites. Some people who tested positive have remained at home for extended periods because of a shortage of isolation beds or transportation to take them to a center, the business news publication Caixin said.

Asked about the anxiety of parents separated from their children, Shanghai health commission official Wu Qianyu said that they are required to be kept apart if the child tests positive and the parent tests negative, according to the Paper, an online news outlet.

If both test positive, the parent is allowed to stay with the child at an isolation site for children and receive any treatment there, Wu was quoted as saying at a news conference yesterday.

The China Daily newspaper said nearly 15,000 medical workers from neighboring Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces left for Shanghai early yesterday from their hospitals by bus. More than 2,000 personnel from the army, navy and a joint logistics support force arrived on Sunday, a Chinese military newspaper said.

At least four other provinces have also dispatched doctors, nurses and other medical workers to Shanghai, the state-owned China Daily said.

Workers wearing blue protec-

tive clothing held up signs saying "Keep one meter distance" and "Do not crowd" as people lined up for testing in one part of western Shanghai. The testing was being done in batches, 10 people at a time. If the sample comes back positive, all 10 are tested individually.

While most shops and other businesses in Shanghai are shut down, major manufacturers including automakers General Motors Co. and Volkswagen AG say their factories are still operating. VW has reduced production because of a disruption in supplies of parts.

Businesses that are operating are enforcing "closed loop" strategies that isolate employees. Thousands of stock traders and other people in financial industries are sleeping in their offices, according to the Daily Economic News newspaper.

Three out of five foreign companies with operations in Shanghai say they have cut this year's sales forecasts, according to a survey conducted last week by the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai and the American Chamber of Commerce in China. One-third of the 120 companies that responded to the survey said they have delayed investments.

Shanghai has set up temporary vegetable warehouses to boost supplies, and an online grocery delivery service has doubled the staff at one of its warehouses to try to keep up with demand, the official Xinhua News Agency said. City officials have apologized for the government's handling of the lockdown. **MDT/AP**

Hong Kong leader

ZEN SOO & VINCENT YU,
HONG KONG

HONG Kong leader Carrie Lam said yesterday she wouldn't seek a second term after a rocky five years marked by huge protests calling for her resignation, a security crackdown that has quashed dissent and most recently a COVID-19 wave that overwhelmed the health system.

Her successor will be picked in May and the city's security chief during the 2019 protests is among the possible choices.

"I will complete my five-year term as chief executive on the 30th of June this year, and I will also call an end to my 42 years of public service," Lam said at a news conference. She thanks her team of local officials and the central authorities in Beijing, and said she plans to spend more time with family, which is her "sole consideration."

Speculation had swirled for months about whether she would seek another term, but she said that her decision had been conveyed to the central government in Beijing last year and was met with "respect and understanding."

"Less than two years into my chief executive term, because of the anti-extradition bill and because of interference from foreign forces and also the attack of COVID-19, I was under great pressure," Lam said. "However the motivation for me to press on was the very staunch support behind me by the central authorities."

She presided over a period in which Beijing firmly established control over the former British colony that was returned to China in 1997. For years, the city rocked back and forth between calls for more freedom and growing signs of China extending its reach into the city, even after Hong Kong was promised 50 years of freedom to govern itself semi-autonomously from the mainland.

Lam's popularity sharply declined over her five-year term, particularly over legislation that would have allowed crime suspects to be extradited to mainland China for trial and later over her leadership during the 2019 protests. The mass demonstrations were marked at times by violent clashes between police and protesters. Authorities insisted foreign interference was fueling the movement, rather than organic local activism, while protesters denounced police actions as excessive and said the violence and seditious claims were attempts to undermine the

MDT ARCHIVE



pro-democracy cause.

She also strongly supported the national security law initiated by Beijing and implemented by her government that was seen as eroding the "one country, two systems" framework that promised after the handover from Britain that city residents would retain freedoms not found in mainland China, such as a free press and freedom of expression.

The security law and other police and court actions in the years since have virtually erased the city's pro-democracy movement, with activists and the movement's supporters either arrested or jailed. Others have fled into exile.

Hong Kong media say the city's No. 2 leader John Lee is likely to enter the race to succeed Lam. Chief Secretary Lee was the city's head of security during the 2019 protests and is known for his support for the police force during the protests and his tough stance against protesters.

Hong Kong's leader is elected by a committee made up of lawmakers, representatives of various industries and professions, and pro-Beijing representatives such as Hong Kong deputies to the China's legislature. One of the unfulfilled demands of the 2019 protests was direct election of the city's chief executive.

The election for the chief executive had been set on March 27

Lam won't seek new term after rocky five years



Hong Kong media say that Carrie Lam's No. 2 John Lee (left) is likely to enter the race to succeed her

variant. It has strained the healthcare system, with hospitals at times placing patients on beds outdoors. Nearly 8,000 people have died in the latest outbreak, and mortuaries operating at capacity have used refrigerated containers to temporarily store bodies.

Lam's government has been widely criticized for flip-flopping policies, including mixed messaging in February and March on whether a lockdown and compulsory mass-testing would be implemented. The uncertainty sparked panic among residents, who cleared out store shelves to hoard daily necessities.

The plans for compulsory mass-testing were dropped, and Lam last week urged all residents to test themselves with rapid antigen kits between April 8 to 10. She later said the exercise was voluntary as it was not possible to enforce.

Lam, 64, previously served as chief secretary and secretary for development and in other civil service positions. She earned the nickname "good fighter" for her tough stance and refusal to back down in political battles.

Lam renounced her British nationality in 2007 when she was appointed secretary for development. Her husband and two children have retained their British nationalities. **MDT/AP**

but was postponed until May 8 as the city endures its worst coronavirus outbreak of the pandemic.

Lam said that holding the polls as originally scheduled would pose "public health risks" even if

a committee of only 1,462 people is involved.

Hong Kong has reported near-

ly 1.2 million cases, 99% of the during the fifth wave driven by the highly transmissible omicron

TIMELINE

THE LIFE AND CAREER OF CARRIE LAM

HONG Kong leader Carrie Lam announced yesterday that she will step down in June after 42 years in government service, ending with a tumultuous 5-year term as the city's chief executive. Some highlights of Lam's life and career:

May 13, 1957: Born Cheng Yuet-ngor in Hong Kong. She attends St. Francis' Canossian School, a Catholic girls' school, where she failed only once to finish at the top of her class, and later said she cried because of it.

1980: Graduates from the University of Hong Kong and joins the Hong Kong government as a civil servant. During her career, she is known for having a strong work ethic.

1982: Studies at the University of Cambridge, where she meets her future husband, mathematician Lam Siu-por.

1984: Marries Lam Siu-por.

July 1, 1997: Britain returns Hong Kong to China. Under the one-China, two-systems framework, Hong Kong becomes a special administrative region with its own laws and system of government.

July 1, 2007: Appointed secretary for development. Renounces her British nationality as required under Chinese rule for senior officials of the Hong Kong government.

July 1, 2012: Appointed to the city's No 2 position, chief secretary for administration.

July 1, 2017: Sworn in by Chinese President Xi Jinping as Hong Kong's chief executive after winning 777 votes in March from a 1,194-member elections committee.

Feb. 2019: The Hong Kong government proposes amendments to the city's laws that would allow extraditions on a case-by-case basis to mainland China.

March 2019: Thousands take to the streets of Hong Kong to protest the extradition bill.

June 9, 2019: A massive protest against the bill draws more than 1 million people by organizers' estimates. Protests and political strife shake the city for more than six months.

Sept. 2019: Lam announces her government will withdraw the extradition bill.

The protests continue over other issues, turning increasingly violent at times as demonstrators battle police in the streets.

June 2020: Beijing imposes a national security law on Hong Kong, outlawing secession, subversion, terrorism and colluding with foreign powers to intervene in the city's affairs.

July 31, 2020: Lam invokes an emergency regulations ordinance to postpone Legislative Council elections by a year, citing public health risks from the pandemic. The opposition pro-democracy camp accuses her of using the pandemic to delay a vote in which it expected to make gains.

Aug. 2020: The U.S. imposes sanctions on Lam and other Chinese and Hong Kong officials "for undermining Hong Kong's autonomy and restricting the freedom of expression or assembly of the citizens of Hong Kong." Lam later says she had to store "piles of cash" at home as she had no access to banking services.

May 2021: China revises Hong Kong's election laws, reducing the proportion of those directly elected by voters to the legislature and ensuring that only those loyal to Beijing are allowed to run for office.



Carrie Lam at a news conference in Hong Kong yesterday

Dec. 2021: Voter turnout sinks to 30% in the delayed Legislative Council election, which returns a heavily pro-Beijing majority after the pro-democracy camp doesn't field any candidates.

Jan 2022-present: An omicron-driven outbreak overwhelms the health system, leading to more than 8,000 deaths. Lam's government is widely criticized for mishandling the outbreak.

April 4, 2022: Lam announces she will retire after her five-year term expires on June 30.

PUTIN'S WAR

Russia faces growing outrage amid new evidence of atrocities

OLEKSANDR STASHEVSKYI & NEBI QENA, BUCHA

RUSSIA faced a fresh wave of condemnation yesterday after evidence emerged of what appeared to be deliberate killings of civilians in Ukraine. Some Western leaders called for further sanctions in response, even as Moscow continued to press its offensive in the country's east.

Germany's defense minister suggested the European Union discuss a ban on Russian gas imports, but more senior officials indicated an immediate boycott was not possible — a sign that leaders could struggle in the short-term to ramp up already severe sanctions on Russia.

Ukrainian officials said the bodies of 410 civilians were found in towns around the capital, Kyiv, that were recaptured from Russian forces in recent days. In Bucha, northwest of the capital, Associated Press journalists saw 21 bodies. One group of nine, all in civilian clothes, were scattered around a site that residents said Russian troops used as a base. They appeared to have been shot at close range. At least two had their hands tied behind their backs.

In Motyzhyn, to the west of Kyiv, AP journalists saw the bodies of four people who appeared to have been shot at close range and thrown into a pit. Residents said the mayor, her son, and her husband — who had been bound and blindfolded — were among them.

The images of battered corpses lying in the streets or hastily dug graves unleashed a wave of outrage that could signal a turning point in the nearly 6-week-old war. But sanctions have thus far failed to halt the offensive, and rising energy prices along with tight controls on the Russian currency market have blunted their impact, with the ruble rebounding strongly after initially crashing.

Western and Ukrainian leaders have accused Russia of war crimes before, and the International Criminal



A mass grave in Bucha, on the outskirts of Kyiv, Ukraine

Court's prosecutor has opened a probe to investigate the conflict. But the latest reports ratcheted up the condemnation even further, with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and some Western leaders going so far as to accuse Russia of genocide.

In a video shown during the Grammy Awards in Las Vegas for musicians and other artists, Zelenskyy implored them to support his nation and "fill the silence with your music."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov rejected the allegations, describing the scenes outside Kyiv as a "stage-managed anti-Russian provocation." He said the mayor of Bucha made no mention of atrocities a day after Russian troops left last week, but two days later scores of bodies were photographed scattered in the streets.

He said Russia is pushing for an urgent meeting of the United Nations Security Council to discuss the matter, but the U.K., which currently chairs the body, has refused to convene it. The United States and Britain have accused Russia in recent weeks of using Security Council meetings to spread disinformation.

European leaders, meanwhile, left no doubt about who they thought was behind the killings.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said "the Russian authorities are responsible for these atrocities, committed while they had effective

control of the area."

"The perpetrators of war crimes and other serious violations as well as the responsible government officials and military leaders will be held accountable," he added.

French President Emmanuel Macron said yesterday that there is "clear evidence of war crimes" in Bucha that demand new measures. "I'm in favor of a new round of sanctions and in particular on coal and petrol. We need to act," he said on France-Inter radio.

Poland's Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki described Russia as a "totalitarian-fascist state," saying "the bloody massacres perpetrated by Russian soldiers deserve to be called by name: This is genocide." Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez also used the word "genocide," saying those responsible should answer for their crimes.

The crime of genocide is difficult to prove, as prosecutors would have to show that the killers or their commanders had a "specific intent" to partially or wholly destroy a group of people.

In the meantime, the U.S. and its allies have sought to punish Russia for the invasion by imposing sweeping economic sanctions. But they may be reluctant to impose measures that cause further harm to a global economy still recovering from the coronavirus pandemic. As a major oil and gas exporter, Russia stands to benefit from any rise in already high global

energy prices.

Europe is in a particular bind, since it gets 40% of its gas and 25% of its oil from Russia. Governments have been scrambling to find ways to reduce that reliance without causing a substantial loss of economic output.

German Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck, who is also the economy minister and responsible for energy, said Europe can go "significantly further" in imposing sanctions against Russia. But he said Germany is right to take a longer-term approach to abandoning Russian energy imports.

Germany has faced criticism for opposing an immediate halt to Russian energy deliveries. The country says it hopes to end Russian coal imports this summer and oil imports by the end of the year, but halting gas will take longer.

"We are working every day on creating the conditions for and steps toward an embargo," Habeck said. "We are on the right track."

Wolfgang Buechner, a German government spokesman, meanwhile said Putin and his supporters "will feel the consequences," of additional measures to be approved in the coming days, without elaborating.

Asked on ARD television Sunday evening whether there should be a halt to gas deliveries, German Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht replied that "exactly that" should be discussed by EU ministers.

The head of Ukraine's delegation in talks with Russia has said Moscow's negotiators informally agreed to most of a draft proposal discussed during talks in Istanbul, but no written confirmation has been provided.

Britain's Defense Ministry said yesterday that Russia continued to flood soldiers and mercenaries from the Wagner private military group into the Donbas. It said Russian troops are still trying to take the region's strategic port city of Mariupol, which has seen weeks of heavy fighting and some of the worst suffering of the war.

"Mariupol is almost certainly a key objective of the Russian invasion," the ministry said, "as it will secure a land corridor from Russia to the occupied territory of Crimea," in the south, which Moscow annexed in 2014.

yesterday, the Ukrainian military said its forces had retaken some towns in the northern Chernihiv region and humanitarian aid was being delivered. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1988 HIJACKERS FREE 25 HOSTAGES



Hijackers who took control of a Kuwait Airways jumbo jet have released 24 women passengers and one man with a heart condition.

They were freed after negotiations between the prime minister of Iran, where the plane landed earlier today, and the hijackers - believed to be six or seven Arab men.

They hijacked Kuwait Airways Flight 422 as it travelled from Bangkok in Thailand to Kuwait with 111 passengers and crew aboard and forced the pilot to land in Mashhad, Iran.

Since then the men, armed with hand grenades and guns, have demanded the release of 17 Shiite Muslims guerrillas held in Kuwait.

They have threatened to destroy the plane if anyone approaches it and also to kill three members of the Kuwaiti royal family who are on board if their demands are not met.

Kuwait is said to be sending a delegation to Iran to negotiate.

The released male passenger, Rafiq Mustafa Issa from Jordan, told Iranian officials the men seized control of the jet about three hours into the flight.

Mr Issa said the hijackers tied up the passengers but otherwise treated them well.

"They told us: 'Don't worry, we are after redressing our rights denied by the Kuwaiti government'," Mr Issa said.

An almost identical hijacking happened four years ago when another Kuwaiti airliner was forced to land in Iran by men seeking the release of the same 17 terrorists named today.

Two American passengers were shot dead before Iranian security forces stormed the plane after six days and freed the remaining hostages.

America and Kuwait suspected the Iranians had been working with the hijackers.

Those suspicions were reinforced by Iran's refusal to extradite them and their subsequent disappearance.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The hijack lasted 16 days after Kuwait refused to release the 17 terrorists as demanded.

The situation was also complicated by Kuwait's support for Iraq in the ongoing Iran-Iraq war and the fact most of the 17 terrorists held by Kuwait were Iranians.

Nevertheless, hopes of an early end to the hijack were raised when 32 more hostages were released on 6 April.

But three days later the hijackers forced the Iranian authorities to refuel the jet and flew to Cyprus.

During a four day stopover in Lamaca they released one passenger but killed two others to force the authorities to give them more fuel.

On 13 April the hijackers flew to Algeria where a week later they finally freed their remaining 32 hostages and surrendered.

A few days later it was reported the men - widely believed to have links to Islamic groups holding about 25 Westerners hostage in Beirut - had been flown to Lebanon.

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 may interest some of them in a service you have to offer. You should make sure that your personal papers are in order.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Mingle with those who can help you get ahead. Don't settle for less than the best. You should be able to make major career gains if you plan your intentions carefully.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Be prepared for an active but rewarding day. Your diplomacy will be of utmost importance today. Take some time out. Be sure to use your charm and diplomacy when dealing with potential new clients.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 You need to spend time with friends and family. Uncertainties are still prevailing. You will be confused about the intentions of someone you work with. Get out and experience the spice of life.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Do not let the reactions of others get you going. Think twice before you agree to take on any new projects. Don't let your mate bully you into thinking that you owe them your time and your life.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Avoid arguments with relatives who might be conservative and outdated. The emotional state of peers may cause a problem for you. You will attract potential lovers, but be sure that they're unattached.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 You will be attracted to unusual forms of entertainment and foreign cultures. Travel and social activity will bring about interesting talks, not to mention contacts.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Find out exactly what's expected of you and you'll be surprised to find out how capable you are. Romantic encounters will develop through group activity.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Your self esteem will come back if you take part in organizational functions that allow you to be in the lime light. Finish those changes you've been talking about making to your residence.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Don't overspend or give too freely to others. Don't let domestic problems interfere with your objectives. You will need to do a lot of research if you wish to get to the bottom of things.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Try not to be too harsh with your mate. Your best results will come through business trips. Today is not the day to try to corner people by giving them ultimatums.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Your charisma will no doubt attract a lot of attention. Changes in your domestic situation will prove to be favorable in the long run. Be discreet with private information.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	9	25	fine
Changchun	7	9	cloudy
Chengdu	11	23	cloudy
Chongqing	14	21	overcast
Fuzhou	11	25	fine
Guangzhou	11	27	fine
Guiyang	10	16	overcast
Haikou	17	23	cloudy
Hangzhou	10	19	overcast
Harbin	4	7	rain
Hefei	10	23	cloudy
Nanjing	11	22	cloudy
Shanghai	10	17	overcast
Taipei	17	23	cloudy
Wuhan	14	23	fine
Hong Kong	19	23	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	1	4	cloudy
Frankfurt	8	13	rain
Paris	8	16	showers
London	9	14	cloudy
New York	9	12	showers

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Smash; 6- Investigation; 11- Casino area; 14- TV producer Michaels; 15- Speed contests; 16- May ___ excused?; 17- Looks after; 18- Scheduled; 19- Code-cracking org.; 20- Cab; 22- Western; 24- On in years; 28- Ticket; 30- Package; 31- Prize money; 32- Pub perch; 33- Carnival; 37- Oklahoma First Nation; 38- Travels on; 39- Year abroad; 40- Musical; 43- Israeli desert; 45- Panorama; 46- Tranquil; 47- Comes to mind; 49- Hair knot; 50- I ___ vacation!; 51- Bump into; 52- Chucklehead; 53- Central nervous system; 56- Piles; 61- "The Bells" poet; 62- Minimum; 63- Kett and James; 64- Appropriate; 65- Group character; 66- Perch

DOWN 1- Sandwich initials; 2- Fish eggs; 3- Directional suffix; 4- Not to mention; 5- Small falcon; 6- Agent; 7- Wife of a rajah; 8- Halloween mo.; 9- Actress Arthur; 10- Marry; 11- Old Ford; 12- Norwegian dramatist; 13- Muscle injury; 21- Wholly; 23- Primates with short tails or no tail; 24- ___ salts; 25- Starbucks order; 26- Salivate; 27- Green prefix; 28- Heals; 29- Raw materials; 31- "The Taming of the Shrew" setting; 33- Tumults; 34- Broadway actress Uta; 35- Bridge bid, briefly; 36- Interlaced; 38- Ascend; 41- "Ars Amatoria" poet; 42- Cripple; 43- Nor's partner; 44- Unit of energy; 46- Seagoing pronoun; 47- Man of morals; 48- Bowling alley button; 49- Some change; 50- The ___ Valley is a Californian wineland; 51- Japanese soup; 54- Not emp.; 55- Satisfied sound; 57- DDE's command; 58- From ___ Z; 59- ___ de deux (ballet dance); 60- Atl. crosser;

Yesterday's solution

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

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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

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Martin Pei, chief technology officer, SSAB, holds an engraved piece of steel made using the HYBRIT process in Stockholm

ENERGY

'GREEN STEEL' HEATING UP IN SWEDEN'S FROZEN NORTH

JAMES BROOKS, LULEA

FOR hundreds of years, raging blast furnaces — fed with coking coal — have forged steel used in cars, railways, bridges and skyscrapers.

But the puffs of coal-fired smoke are a big source of carbon dioxide, the heat-trapping gas that's driving climate change.

According to the World Steel Association, every metric ton of steel produced in 2020 emitted almost twice that much carbon dioxide (1.8 tons) into the atmosphere. Total direct emissions from making steel were about 2.6 billion tons in 2020, representing around 7% of global CO2 emissions.

In Sweden, a single company, steel giant SSAB, accounts for about 10% of the country's emissions due to the furnaces it operates at mills like the one in the northern town of Lulea.

But not far away, a high-tech pilot plant is seeking to significantly reduce the carbon emissions involved in steel production by switching some of that process away from burning coking coal to burning hydrogen that itself was produced with renewable energy.

HYBRIT — or Hydrogen Breakthrough Ironmaking Technology — is a joint venture between SSAB, mining company LKAB and Swedish state-owned power firm Vattenfall launched in 2016.

"The cost of renewable energy,

fossil-free energy, had come down dramatically and at the same time, you had a rising awareness and the Paris Agreement" in 2015 to reduce global emissions, said Mikael Nordlander, Vattenfall's head of industry decarbonization.

"We realized that we might have a chance now to outcompete the direct use of fossil fuels in industry with this electricity coming from fossil-free sources," he added.

Last year, the plant made its first commercial delivery. European carmakers that have committed to dramatically reducing their emissions need cleaner steel. Chinese-owned Volvo Group became the first carmaker to partner with HYBRIT. Head of procurement

Kerstin Enochsson said steel is a "major contributor" to their cars' carbon footprint, between 20 and 35%.

"Tackling only the tailpipe emissions by being an electric company is not enough. We need to focus on the car itself, as well," she said.

Demand from other companies, including Volkswagen, is also sending a signal that there is demand for green steel. Steelmakers in Europe have announced plans to scale up production of steel made without coal.

The HYBRIT process aims to replace the coking coal that's traditionally used for ore-based steel making with hydrogen and renewable electricity.

It begins with brown-tinged iron ore pellets that react with the hydrogen gas and are reduced to ball-shaped "sponge iron," which takes its name due to pores left behind following the removal of oxygen. This is then melted in an electric furnace.

If the hydrogen is made using renewable energy, too, the process produces no CO2.

"We get iron, and then we get water vapor instead," said SSAB's chief technology officer Martin Pei. "Water vapor can be condensed, recirculated, reused in the process.

"We really solve the root cause of carbon dioxide emissions from steel making," he said.

Steel is a recyclable material, but demand for the alloy is expected to grow in the coming years, amid a push to transform society and build wind turbines, solar plants, power transmission lines and new electric vehicles.

"Steel is a superb construction material. It is also possible to recycle steel again and again," said Pei. "You can reuse steel as many times as possible.

"The only problem today is the current way of making steel from iron ore emits too much CO2," he said.

By the end of this decade, the European Union is attempting to cut overall CO2 emissions in the 27-nation bloc by 55% compared to 1990 levels. Part of that effort includes making companies pay for their CO2 emissions and encourage the switch to low-carbon alternatives.

Sweden's steel industry has set out plans to achieve "fossil-free" operations by 2045. SSAB in January brought forward its own plans to largely eliminate carbon dioxide emissions in its steel-making processes by the end of the decade.

"The companies are well aware of their possibilities and limitations in the current processes and that they have to do something about it," said Helen Axelsson, director of energy and environment at Jernkontoret, the Swedish steel producers' association.

But according to the World Steel Association, over 70% of global steel production takes place in Asia, where steel producers don't have access to the same quantities of old scrap steel as countries that have been industrialized for a longer time. That's another reason why average emissions per ton of steel are higher in the global south.

Filip Johnsson, a professor in energy technology at Gothenburg's Chalmers University, said the vast amounts of renewable electricity necessary to make hydrogen and cleaner steel could make rolling out the HYBRIT process difficult in other parts of the world.

"I would say that the major challenge is to get loads of electricity and also to provide it sort of constantly," he said.

The small Lulea pilot plant is still a research facility, and has so far produced just a couple of hundred tons. There are plans to construct a larger demonstration plant and begin commercial deliveries by 2026. MDT/AP

CORPORATE BITS

Floral surprises at Sands Resorts Macao



To embrace the breeze this Spring, guests can take a gondola ride on the outdoor lagoon at The Venetian Macao.

Macao ID cardholders can enjoy a buy-one-get-one-free offer for outdoor gondola ride ticket until June 30, 2022.

For flower lovers, a must-go destination is the art installation — teamLab SuperNature Macao. Multiple flower-themed artworks which blossom according to the changing seasons can be found throughout

the space.

At The Londoner Macao, vivid flower blossoms and colorful floral feature walls — which can be found across the resort — provide the perfect backdrop for photos with family and friends.

In May, the Rotunda of The Parisian Macao and Shoppes at Parisian will transform into a romantic Tulip Garden, presenting giant floral artworks to create a spring like atmosphere with a background of magnificent French style architecture.

The Lounge at JW Marriott Hotel Macau expands menu



The Lounge at JW Marriott Hotel Macau has expanded its menu, offering brand new cocktails, small plates and other culinary creations. At The Lounge, guests can savor treats from across

the globe, including new signature dishes such as Marinated Flank Steak Fajitas, Prawn and Avocado Tostada, Beef Tenderloin Rendang and Grilled Spicy Thai Pork Collar.

Apart from a variety of light tapas and sharing plates, for guests looking for the full experience, The Lounge also offers the Signature Tasting Menu, which comes in two alternative versions. The two-person set showcases five of the venue's most popular dishes and different drink pairing choices; while the four-person set comprises seven courses, plus wine or cocktails.

The Lounge will present a quartet of brand new JW Marriott Mixologist cocktails, developed in partnership with Tippling Bros. under the guidance of celebrated nutritionist Keri Glassman.

FOOTBALL | CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Six European champions highlight the quarterfinals

THE Champions League resumes this week with the first-leg matches in the quarterfinals, which are dominated by English and Spanish teams and include a couple of surprises among many of the usual heavyweights.

A look at the four matches in the last eight:

Wednesday, 03:00
Benfica v Liverpool
H 9.2, D 5.25, A 1.41

ODDSCHECKER.COM

To many, Liverpool landed the plum draw in the last eight, with former champion Benfica the big outsider having reached this stage for the first time in six years. It strengthened the belief that maybe a quadruple of major trophies really is possible for the English team, which has already won the English League Cup, is into the FA Cup semifinals and trails Manchester City by just one point in the English Premier League. That Liverpool will play the second leg at Anfield, the scene of so many famous European nights, made Jurgen Klopp's team an even bigger favorite as the club looks to become European champion for a seventh time. Two-time European champion Benfica is hoping for a repeat of its upset against Liverpool in 2006, when it eliminated the English club 3-0 on aggregate in the round of 16. The teams also met in the 2010 quarterfinals, when Liverpool advanced 5-3 on aggregate. Benfica midfielder Adel Taarabt is expected to return to the squad after recovering from a muscle injury.

Wednesday, 03:00
Man City v Atletico
H 1.37, D 5.3, A 1.1

Get ready for a contrast of styles at Etihad Stadium, with the free-flowing, possession-based approach of Pep Guardiola's City clashing with the counterattacking, defensively obstinate mode preferred by Diego Simeone's Atletico. The coaches are una-



pologetic about their way of playing and it has brought them great success — indeed, their teams are current champions of their countries — but Guardiola and Simeone have found winning the Champions League a step too far over the past decade. Guardiola's last title was with Barcelona in 2011 and this is his sixth try at City, which has yet to win the biggest prize in European soccer. Atletico has lost three times in the European final, including twice to Real Madrid in 2014 and 2016. The team is back in Manchester, having beaten Manchester United at Old Trafford last month to advance from the last 16. Simeone may be without one of its main central defenders after José María Giménez got injured in the final minutes of the team's 4-1 win over Alavés in the Spanish league on Saturday, when former Liverpool striker Luis Suárez scored twice in the second half coming off the bench.

Thursday, 03:00
Chelsea v Real Madrid
H 2.15, D 3.45, A 3.85

Chelsea is attempting to retain the title to the back-

drop of an off-field crisis. Chelsea is for sale after its billionaire owner, Roman Abramovich, was sanctioned by the British government for his close links to Russian President Vladimir Putin following the invasion of Ukraine. Chelsea's future is up in the air — the preferred new owner should be known sometime this month — and the players have been doing their best to keep their focus on the field, with back-to-back wins over Lille in the last 16 achieved with the minimum of fuss. Indeed, Chelsea has lost only once amid all the unrelenting takeover talk — to Brentford on Saturday. Real Madrid will provide a much tougher challenge than Lille, though. The 13-time European champion lost to Chelsea in the semifinals last season, when it still couldn't play at Santiago Bernabéu Stadium because of renovation work and the coronavirus pandemic. Karim Benzema, who led Madrid to a historic comeback victory over Paris Saint-Germain in the round of 16, remains red hot after scoring both goals for the club in a win over Celta Vigo on Saturday to solidify the team's lead in La Liga.

Thursday, 03:00
Villarreal v Bayern
H 5.8, D 4.33, A 1.62

Well on its way to a 10th consecutive Bundesliga title, Bayern Munich hopes to crown the season with its seventh European title and its second in three years. It's Bayern record 20th quarterfinal. The Bavarian powerhouse is already eyeing the semifinals as it would be a major surprise if Villarreal, currently seventh in Spain, was to stop the German side's progress. The teams met before in the group phase in 2011, when Bayern won both games by a combined score of 5-1. Julian Nagelsmann's team warmed up for Wednesday's visit to Spain's east coast with a 4-1 win at high-flying Freiburg — the second consecutive game in which it scored four goals — while Unai Emery's Villarreal slumped to its second consecutive Liga defeat at second-to-last Levante after losing to Cádiz in its previous game. Emery didn't rest many of his regular starters. Villarreal, which won the Europa League last season, is trying to return to the Champions League semifinals for the first time since 2006. **MDT/AP**

AD

HOLIDAY RENTAL HOUSES

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The houses are set in the heart of the World Heritage Site of the Douro Valley and its famous winery landscape where the world's Ports are produced. Both restored relics overlooking the Rio Douro, these eight rooms houses have been blessed with gorgeous wooden floors, plush queen beds and marble baths; the best have dazzling river views. But it is the welcome that makes this place stand out from the crowd.

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

EU SHOULD STAND ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HISTORY BY UPHOLDING AUTONOMY

Despite the two sides' divergences on the Ukraine crisis and some other issues, the virtual meeting between President Xi Jinping and European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen late Friday prove they can still focus on their common interests and shared responsibility to the world.

This is the first meeting between the Chinese and European Union leaders since the flare-up of the Ukraine conflict. It serves as a good opportunity for the two sides to deepen their mutual understanding and trust on not only the Ukraine issue but also their general bilateral relations.

Xi's emphases that the EU should form its own knowledge on China and uphold autonomous China policies, and the bloc should play a leading role in building a balanced, effective and sustainable security mechanism in Europe should have stricken a chord with the two EU leaders, who should know that Xi has hit the nail on the head in pointing out the root cause of the dilemma the bloc is facing at present.

The retirement of former German chancellor Angela Merkel, whose tenure saw the EU's effort to seek its status as an independent and responsible power while balancing well its ties with the United States, China and Russia, proves a turning point as after that it started surrendering its hard-earned initiatives in diplomacy, development and security to the US.

But what it has reaped from that, over less than three months after Merkel's step-down, should have awoken the EU leaders to the fact in doing so the bloc is quickly downgrading itself into an expendable piece on Washington's geopolitical chessboard.

The returns the US paid it back include stalled ties with China, its largest trade partner, major investor and stable partner in addressing global warming, an all-round confrontation with Russia, its largest natural gas provider and major industrial raw material provider, the largest war and humanitarian crisis in Europe since World War II. And the US is seemingly at least gaining an upper hand over almost all stakeholders simply by pulling the EU to its sides to disturb the balance.

If the EU leaders really know about that, which even outsiders see clearly, they should give a serious thinking to President Xi's warning that the Cold War mentality, something the US has tried to breathe life into and brainwash the European stakeholders with, should not be adopted to construct world and regional security framework, which could only result in politicization and weaponization of economy, finance, technology, trade, energy and food.

With nearly 5 million Ukrainian refugees fleeing to the EU — Washington only agrees to accept 100,000 of them in principle at least — and nearly all of the bloc's natural gas supplies being disrupted — the US only agrees to make up for less than 10 percent of the gap — the EU leaders must have a first-hand experience of the justification of Xi's warning.

China is doing nothing but encouraging the EU to bear a bigger picture in mind and stand on the right side of history.

Also, with Xi reassuring them that China's stance on advancing Sino-EU relations remains unchanged, the EU leaders' plausible positive statements on the bloc's readiness to further promoting bilateral exchanges and cooperation on various fronts should be seen as originating from the EU's pressing needs to find back a reliable partner to help pull it out of its current quagmire rather than only symbolic etiquette.

Next year marks the 30th anniversary of the founding of the EU. It is also an original aspiration of its founders, if not a painful lessons they have drawn from the Cold War, that the EU should be a united and responsible player in a multi-polar world. But that will not be viable until it achieves its autonomy on the world stage.

JON BATISTE TOPS GRAMMYS; SILK SONIC SOARS, RODRIGO CROWNED

Olivia Rodrigo made an impressive Grammy debut, Silk Sonic claimed two major awards and Jon Batiste had the most stunning victory of the night winning the top prize at Sunday's Grammy Awards.

Batiste won five Grammys Sunday including album of the year for "We Are" pulling off an upset in a loaded category filled with tough competition from Rodrigo, Billie Eilish, Taylor Swift and

the combined talents of Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga. After his win, the multi-genre performer honored the artists he beat, telling the audience that "the creative arts are subjective. Be you."

"I just put my head down and I work on the craft every day," said Batiste, who won for his song "Cry," the video for "Freedom" and his work with the Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross on the soundtrack for "Soul."

THE BUZZ



WHO SAYS 99% OF WORLD'S POPULATION BREATHE POOR-QUALITY AIR

JAMEY KEATEN, GENEVA

THE U.N. health agency says nearly everybody in the world breathes air that doesn't meet its standards for air quality, calling for more action to reduce fossil-fuel use, which generates pollutants that cause respiratory and blood-flow problems and lead to millions of preventable deaths each year.

The World Health Organization, about six months after tightening its guidelines on air quality, yesterday issued an update to its database on air quality that draws on information from a growing number of cities, towns, and villages across the globe — now totaling over 6,000 municipalities.

WHO said 99 percent of the global population breathes air that exceeds its air-quality limits and is often rife with particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs, enter the veins and arteries, and cause disease. Air quality is poorest in WHO's Eastern Mediterranean and Southeast Asia regions, followed by Africa, it said.

"After surviving a pandemic, it is unacceptable to still have 7 million preventable deaths and countless preventable lost years of good health due to air pollution," said Dr. Maria Neira, head of WHO's department of environment, climate chan-

ge and health. "Yet too many investments are still being sunk into a polluted environment rather than in clean, healthy air."

The database, which has traditionally considered two types of particulate matter known as PM2.5 and PM10, for the first time has included ground measurements of nitrogen dioxide. The last version of the database was issued in 2018.

Nitrogen dioxide originates mainly from human-generated burning of fuel, such as through automobile traffic, and is most common in urban areas. Exposure can bring respiratory disease like asthma and symptoms like coughing, wheezing and difficulty in breathing, and more hospital and emergency-room admissions, WHO said. The highest concentrations were found in the eastern Mediterranean region.

Particulate matter has many sources, such as transportation, power plants, agriculture, the burning of waste and industry — as well as from natural sources like desert dust. The developing world is particularly hard hit: India had high levels of PM10, while China showed high levels of PM2.5, the database showed.

"Particulate matter, especially PM2.5, is capable of penetrating deep into the lungs and entering the bloodstream, causing

cardiovascular, cerebrovascular (stroke) and respiratory impacts," WHO said. "There is emerging evidence that particulate matter impacts other organs and causes other diseases as well."

The findings highlight the sheer scale of the changes needed to combat air pollution, said Anumita Roychowdhury, an air pollution expert at Center for Science and Environment, a research and advocacy organization in New Delhi.

India and the world need to brace for major changes to try to curb air pollution: electric vehicles; a shift away from fossil fuels; a massive scaling-up of green energy; and households separating their types of waste, she said.

The Council on Energy, Environment and Water, a New Delhi-based think tank, found in a study that more than 60% of India's PM2.5 loads are from households and industries.

Tanushree Ganguly, who heads the council's program on air quality, called for action toward reducing emissions from industries, automobiles, biomass burning and domestic energy.

"We need to prioritize clean energy access for households that need it the most, and take active measures to clean up our industrial sector," she said. **MDT/AP**



Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic (pictured) and his populist right-wing party appeared headed to victory in Sunday's national election, extending a decade-long authoritarian rule in the Balkan country, according to early pollsters' projections. The IPSOS and CESID pollsters, which have proven reliable in previous Serbian ballots, predicted Vucic would end up with nearly 60% of the votes. If confirmed in the official tally, Vucic would win outright a second five-year term as president and a runoff vote would not be needed.

France Vintners are lighting candles to thaw their grapevines to save them from a late frost following a winter warm spell, a temperature swing that is threatening fruit crops in multiple countries. Ice-coated vines stretched across hillsides around Chablis as the Burgundy region woke Monday to temperatures of minus 5 C. Fruit growers are worried that the frost will kill off large numbers of early buds, which appeared in March as temperatures rose above 20 degrees Celsius, and disrupt the whole growing season.



USA The usual crowds filled the streets as bars and nightclubs were closing in Sacramento, California when the sound of rapid-fire gunshots sent people running in terror. In a matter of seconds, the latest U.S. mass shooting had left six people dead and 12 wounded. Police said they were searching for at least two people who opened fire around 2 a.m. Sunday on the outskirts of the city's downtown entertainment district, anchored by the Golden One Arena that hosts concerts and the NBA's Sacramento Kings.

HOLIDAY TIMES

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will be back on the stands on Thursday April 7. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.