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AP PHOTO



Japan is sending a vice foreign minister to the Solomon Islands amid worry over a recent security agreement that the South Pacific nation struck with China that could increase Beijing's military influence in the region. Vice Foreign Minister Kentaro Uesugi's three-day trip to Solomon Islands comes on the heels of a visit by a senior U.S. delegation, who warned that Washington would take unspecified action against the South Pacific nation should the security deal with China pose a threat to U.S. or allied interests.

AP PHOTO



Japan Rescuers searching since a tour boat carrying 26 people sank off far northeastern Japan have found the body of an 11th victim — a child — as questions intensified about why the vessel sailed in rough weather at a known hazardous location. The child was found late Sunday and later confirmed dead, the Coast Guard said yesterday. The bodies of seven men and three women were recovered earlier.

AP PHOTO

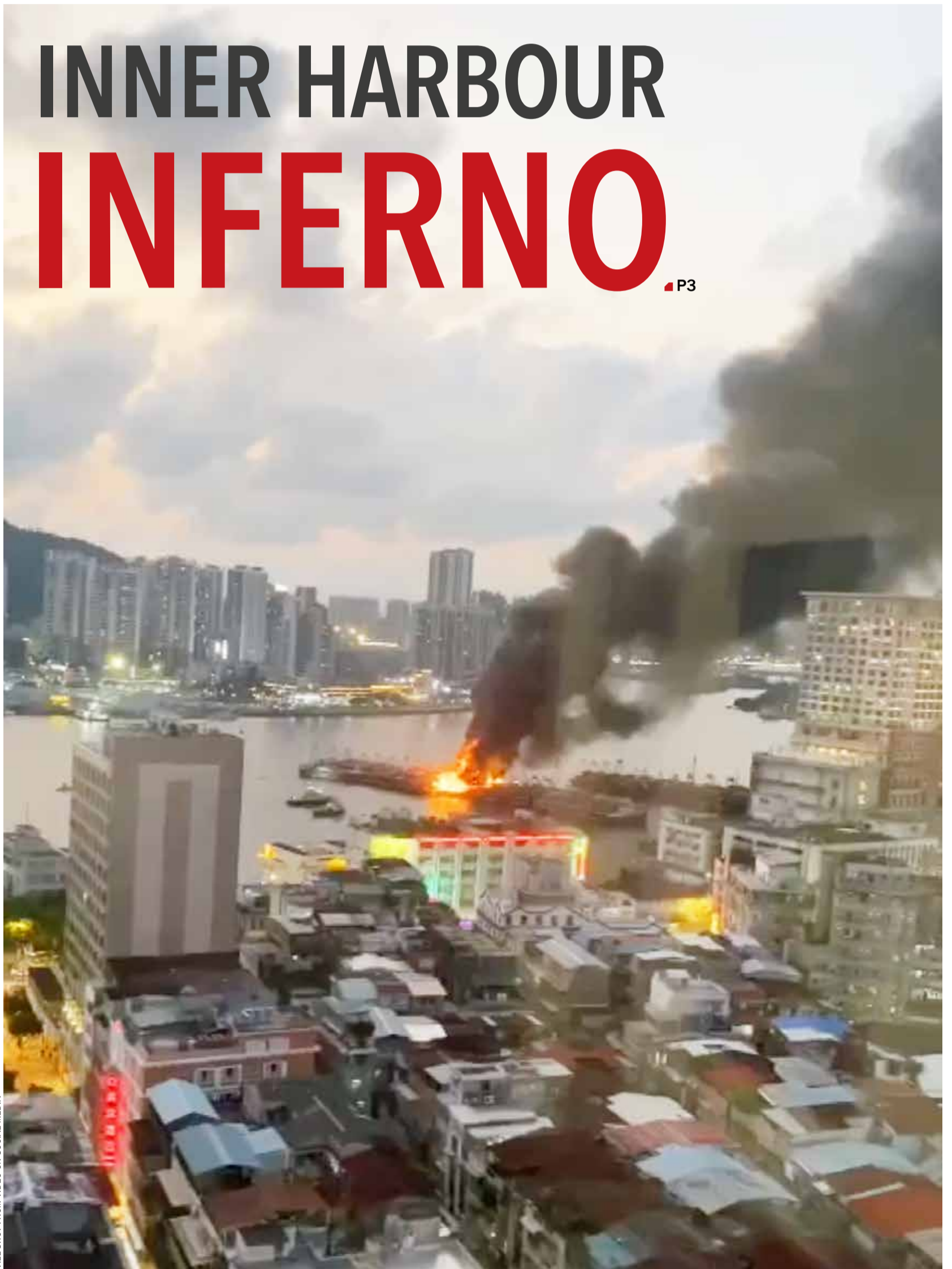


India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Himalayan Kashmir yesterday for his first public event since New Delhi stripped the disputed region's semi-autonomy and took direct control in 2019. Modi remotely inaugurated a tunnel and work on two hydropower projects before delivering a speech that was punctuated by his government's developmental achievements. He said that the territory was put on a path of unprecedented development since 2019 but made no political commitments to the region's people.

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STILL SHOT FROM VIDEO ON SOCIAL MEDIA

THESE ENERGY INNOVATIONS COULD TRANSFORM HOW WE MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE, AND SAVE MONEY IN THE PROCESS

STACY MORFORD

To most people, a solar farm or a geothermal plant is simply a power producer. Scientists and engineers see far more potential.

They envision offshore wind turbines capturing and storing carbon beneath the sea, and geothermal plants producing essential metals for powering electric vehicles. Electric vehicle batteries, too, can be transformed to power homes, saving their owners money.

With scientists worldwide sounding the alarm about the increasing dangers and costs of climate change, let's explore some cutting-edge ideas that could transform how today's technologies reduce the effects of global warming, from five recent articles in The Conversation.

1. SOLAR CANALS: POWER + WATER PROTECTION

What if solar panels did double duty, protecting water supplies while producing more power?

California is developing the United States' first solar canals, with solar panels built atop some of the state's water distribution canals. These canals run for thousands of miles through arid environments, where the dry air boosts evaporation in a state frequently troubled by water shortages.

"In a 2021 study, we showed that covering all 4,000 miles of California's canals with solar panels would save more than 65 billion gallons of water annually by reducing evaporation. That's enough to irrigate 50,000 acres of farmland or meet the residential water needs of more than 2 million people," writes engineering professor Roger Bales of the University of California, Merced. They would also expand renewable energy without taking up farmable land.

Research shows that human activities, particularly using fossil fuels for energy and transportation, are unequivocally warming the planet and increasing extreme weather. Increasing renewable energy, currently about 20% of U.S. utility-scale electricity generation, can reduce fossil fuel demand.



Putting solar panels over shaded water can also improve their power output. The cooler water lowers the temperature of the panels by about 10 degrees Fahrenheit (5.5 Celsius), boosting their efficiency, Bales writes.

2. GEOTHERMAL POWER COULD BOOST SUPPLIES

For renewable energy to slash global greenhouse gas emissions, buildings and vehicles have to be able to use it. Batteries are essential, but the industry has a supply chain problem.

Most batteries used in electric vehicles and utility-scale energy storage are lithium-ion batteries, and most lithium used in the U.S. comes from Argentina, Chile, China and Russia. China is the leader in lithium processing.

Geologist and engineers are working on an innovative method that could boost the U.S. lithium supply at home by extracting lithium from geothermal brines in California's Salton Sea region.

Brines are the liquid leftover in a geothermal plant after heat and steam are used to produce power. That liquid contains lithium and other metals such as manganese, zinc and boron. Normally, it is pumped back underground, but the metals can also be filtered out.

"If test projects now underway prove that battery-grade lithium can be extracted from these brines cost effectively, 11 existing geothermal plants along the Sal-

ton Sea alone could have the potential to produce enough lithium metal to provide about 10 times the current U.S. demand," write geologist Michael McKibben of the University of California, Riverside, and energy policy scholar Bryant Jones of Boise State University.

President Joe Biden invoked the Defense Production Act on March 31, 2022, to provide incentives for U.S. companies to mine and process more critical minerals for batteries.

3. GREEN HYDROGEN AND OTHER STORAGE IDEAS

Scientists are working on other ways to boost batteries' mineral supply chain, too, including recycling lithium and cobalt from old batteries. They're also developing designs with other materials, explained Kerry Rippy, a researcher with the National Renewable Energy Lab.

Concentrated solar power, for example, stores energy from the sun by heating molten salt and using it to produce steam to drive electric generators, similar to how a coal power plant would generate electricity. It's expensive, though, and the salts currently used aren't stable at higher temperature, Rippy writes. The Department of Energy is funding a similar project that is experimenting with heated sand.

Renewable fuels, such as green hydrogen and ammonia, provide

a different type of storage. Since they store energy as liquid, they can be transported and used for shipping or rocket fuel.

Hydrogen gets a lot of attention, but not all hydrogen is green. Most hydrogen used today is actually produced with natural gas – a fossil fuel. Green hydrogen, in contrast, could be produced using renewable energy to power electrolysis, which splits water molecules into hydrogen and oxygen, but again, it's expensive.

"The key challenge is optimizing the process to make it efficient and economical," Rippy writes. "The potential payoff is enormous: inexhaustible, completely renewable energy."

4. USING YOUR EV TO POWER YOUR HOME

Batteries could also soon turn your electric vehicle into a giant, mobile battery capable of powering your home.

Only a few vehicles are currently designed for vehicle-to-home charging, or V2H, but that's changing, writes energy economist Seth Blumsack of Penn State University. Ford, for example, says its new F-150 Lightning pickup truck will be able to power an average house for three days on a single charge.

Blumsack explores the technical challenges as V2H grows and its potential to change how people manage energy use and how utilities store power.

For example, he writes, "some homeowners might hope to use their vehicle for what utility planners call 'peak shaving' – drawing household power from their EV during the day instead of relying on the grid, thus reducing their electricity purchases during peak demand hours."

5. CAPTURING CARBON FROM AIR AND LOCKING IT AWAY

Another emerging technology is more controversial.

Humans have put so much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere over the past two centuries that just stopping fossil fuel use won't be enough to quickly stabilize the climate. Most scenarios, including in recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports, show the world will have to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, as well.

The technology to capture carbon dioxide from the air exists – it's called direct air capture – but it's expensive.

Engineers and geophysicists like David Goldberg of Columbia University are exploring ways to cut those costs by combining direct air capture technology with renewable energy production and carbon storage, like offshore wind turbines built above undersea rock formations where captured carbon could be locked away.

The world's largest direct air capture plant, launched in 2021 in Iceland, uses geothermal energy to power its equipment. The captured carbon dioxide is mixed with water and pumped into volcanic basalt formations underground. Chemical reactions with the basalt turn it into a hard carbonate.

Goldberg, who helped developed the mineralization process used in Iceland, sees similar potential for future U.S. offshore wind farms. Wind turbines often produce more energy than their customers need at any given time, making excess energy available.

"Built together, these technologies could reduce the energy costs of carbon capture and minimize the need for onshore pipelines, reducing impacts on the environment," Goldberg writes. **MDT/THE CONVERSATION**

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Inner Harbor fire consumes half dozen ships

LARGE flames off Inner Harbor yesterday evening consumed at least half a dozen fishing ships, with an undisclosed number of people injured as of press time.

The fire was located off Pier 16 and the former Peninsula Hotel, which is one of the shelters in Macau.

Videos taken from the balconies of the Sofitel Hotel were posted online as the fire was raging. The videos showed fire burning through a row of fishing ships bound together for protection against typhoons and monsoons.

Many ships have started docking at the shelter, as the fishing recess period is just around the corner; it will start on May 1 and end on August 16. The fishing recess period was initiated to avoid overfishing by leaving time for fish to reproduce.

Videos from various sources showed that the fire affected nearly a dozen ships, with about half of them destroyed.

Thick dark smoke was also seen at the scene. It rose to a great height and was blown towards the land. The smoke could be smelled throughout the Inner Harbor District.

The fire started at about 7 p.m. yesterday. Smoke and flames were still able to be seen two hours into the fire. It was nearly out by about 9:15 p.m.

The fire began on a fishing ship and spread to neighboring ships.

The Fire Services Bureau (CB), the Macao Customs (SA) and the Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) deployed teams to tackle the fire. The CB also deployed several dozen fire trucks on the ground.

On the sea the SA and DSAMA joined with the Chinese Coast Guard, aiming water cannons at the burning ships.

Public broadcaster Radio Macau reported that some fisherfolk were evacuated from the ships to the land. Some of them were agitated, begging rescuers to act promptly.

Crowds gathered at the quay to witness the scene but were requested to disperse by police officers. Traffic diversions caused congestion that affected the nearby road network.

Hours after the fire was extinguished, the intoxicating smell of burned wood, rubber and fuel was strongly felt in the surroundings of Pier 16 and Sofitel Hotel. The hotel management advised its guests not to use the balconies and locked the large 6th floor bar and pool area outside the restaurant on that floor, because of the hazardous toxic smoke exhaling from the burning ships.

Last week, the DSAMA held meetings with relevant entities to discuss the planning for fire safety during the upcoming fishing recess period. Present at the meeting were law enforcement entities, as well as health and municipal affairs bureaus. Representatives from the fishery associations were also at the meeting. **AL**



CRIME

STOREOWNER ACCUSED OF SEXUALLY ABUSING A 12-YEAR-OLD

RENATO MARQUES

A 62-year-old toy store owner from a local shopping mall has been accused of sexually abusing a 12-year-old girl when she visited his shop, a Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesperson has informed. The briefing came during the regular joint press conference of the Macau police forces.

According to the report, the case occurred on Wednesday last week (April 20), when the girl, in the company of her younger brother, visited the man's shop in a shopping mall in the northern district.

The victim reported that on that day, when she and her brother were looking at toys in the store, the man approached her from behind and hugged her from the back, touching her chest.

At the time she said she was very scared and that her only reaction was to get her little brother and run out of the store.

On the following day when

NATHAN DUMLAO



she returned to school, the girl mentioned the event to her school teacher who, following the notification protocol be-

tween schools and the PJ, informed the police force of the matter.

On the same day, a PJ inves-

tigator went to the store and apprehended the man. When questioned on the case, he confessed to the acts of which he

was accused, justifying them as acting on a "sudden impulse."

The case has been already referred to the Public Prosecutions Office for the formal charging of the man of the crime of sexual abuse of children.

According to the legal framework established by Article 166 of the Macau Penal Code, the suspect can face a penalty of imprisonment of between one and eight years.

According to statistics released by the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) in the year 2020, a total of 24 cases filed with the police for this crime were recorded, involving a total of 30 victims.

The same statistics show that the number of reported cases of this crime has been growing exponentially in Macau over the past 20 years, when the number of registered cases was six.

Experts have pointed out on previous occasions that the significant growth in the number of cases reported, in comparison with the past, is likely to also be related to the improvement of the mechanism of reporting, and more general awareness of this type of crime.

They said that an increased awareness, especially concerning young students, has prompted the filing of a greater number reports of incidents, which in the past may have been concealed.

CRIME

Overstayer performs scam simulating job opportunity

RENATO MARQUES

A man from the mainland who has been illegally overstaying in the Macau region since October last year has been accused of defrauding another person from the mainland, over an alleged job offer to a manager in a hotel in Cotai, the Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesperson said.

According to the victim, he was told by the suspect in early February of a job opening in a managerial position in a hotel in Cotai, which was of interest to the victim.

After contacting the suspect, the victim was told that he needed to pay some RMB50,000 as a fee to secure the job and to pay for document processing.

At least 50% of this amount was to be paid in advance and the balance

RENATO MARQUES



was to be paid after the documents were finalized.

At the time, the victim paid RMB3,000 by an electronic transfer to the suspect, arranging a meeting a few days later

in Macau to pay the remaining amount and to process some documents.

At this meeting on February 19, the suspect posed as a third person to the victim, saying that he

was a friend of the person that had contacted him, and collected an additional RMB24,500 from the victim, telling him that in about 40 days the documents would be ready and he could start the job.

After this meeting, the victim lost contact with the alleged agent and filed a complaint with the PJ on suspicion of fraud.

On April 21, the suspect, while attempting to leave Macau via the Qingmao border, was intercepted by the Public Security Police Force and handed over to the PJ for investigation.

When questioned by the PJ, he admitted to the crime, saying that he came to Macau in October last year to gamble but lost all his money, and since then had been trying to find ways to make money in an attempt to recover his casino losses.

He said that he used the money collected from the victim to play in the casino, and had lost all the money extorted from the victim, amounting to RMB27,500.

CRIME

MAINLAND MAN ARRESTED FOR THEFTS AT BUS STOPS

A 50-year-old male resident from the mainland has been apprehended by the Public Security Police Force (PSP) while committing a theft at the Ponte 16 bus stop, a PSP spokesperson reported during the regular joint press conference of the Macau police forces yesterday.

According to the PSP, on April 22 (Friday) officers spotted the man acting suspiciously at the bus stop near Ponte 16. The officers said that he was continually looking at passengers' belongings and movements, and then approaching them closely when they were about to get on the bus.

Police observed him for some time until they saw him stealing a purse from a passenger boarding a bus, when they immediately detained him.

Upon investigation, the police found out that the

same suspect had been involved in at least one other theft reported to the PSP on the previous day, carried out in the same way.

According to the report, he had stolen a wallet from another victim at the bus stop of Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro/Wing Hang.

This earlier victim reported the loss of some 1,250 patacas as well as other important documents. Searching the man, the PSP recovered some of the cash and other possessions believed to belong to the previous victim.

Upon being taken in for questioning, he admitted to the crimes, and told the PSP that he entered Macau on April 19 around 5 p.m. through the Border Gate border checkpoint.

He also admitted to being unemployed on the mainland and said he came to Macau specifically to steal for money to survive. **RM**

MGTO is looking for GP photos from the first 25 years

RENATO MARQUES

THE Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) is looking for photographs from the first 25 years, between 1954 and 1979, of the Macau Grand Prix (GP) for the launch of a photo contest aiming at these past editions of the GP, MGTO announced.

The competition titled "Photo Contest of Past Macau Grand Prix" will be open to all Macau residents for submission of entries from today until May 31.

Selected photographs will be displayed at the Macau Grand Prix Museum to share collective memories and witness the changes to the GP, MGTO said in a statement.

MGTO also noted that it aims to continue to promote several contests periodically for the purpose of enriching the museum collection, and to host special

annual exhibitions to attract visitors to return to the museum more often.

Those interested in participating in the "Past Macau Grand Prix Photo Contest" must be Macau residents aged 18 or over. Applicants need to complete the application form (including a written description of no more than 100 words) and submit one to five photographs. Entrants may choose to send the documents by email to mgpm@macaotourism.gov.mo, or deliver them in person to the GP Museum during government office hours.

After May 31, a jury appointed by MGTO will select the entries according to four evaluation criteria, including the link between the photographs and the theme of the Macau GP competition; the rarity of photographs; clarity of photographs; content and textual description.

The jury will decide on 18 award-winning photographs, including first, second, and third places, five honorable mention award prizes, and 10 participation prizes.

The winners will receive cash prizes of between 500 and 6,000 patacas as well as free tickets to the museum.

The list of winners will be published on the museum's official website.

Additionally, to boost the appeal of the museum, MGTO has announced the inauguration of a themed café next to the museum entrance.

The opening of the café took place last Saturday (April 23) after a public tender was launched last year for the space.

The themed coffee shop will operate under the integrated development concept of "tourism + sport + culture and creativity," selling coffee and drinks, light meals, and local cultural and creative products.

During the first two months of operation, those who purchase an entrance ticket to the Macau GP Museum will receive two limited offer discount coupons for drinks and souvenir purchases at the café.



Sports Bureau confounds lawmaker

DESPITE emphasizing the autonomy vested in local sports associations under the law, the Sports Bureau (ID) said it reserves its rights to the final approval when associations pick athletes to represent Macau.

The comment was made in a reply to an earlier inquiry by lawmaker Ron Lam, who questioned the ambiguity in the selection process of athletes, among other matters.

He cited a person, who had attained first runner-up in a regular competition hosted by the relevant sports association but was eventually not picked to represent Macau, to support his question.

Lam implied the existence of nepotism in the process.

In his reply, Lau Cho Un, acting president of ID, used nearly half of the text to explain that selection of athletes is within the autonomy of local sports associations.

It cited the Decree-Law No. 67/93/M, of which Article 23 stipu-



lates that sports associations have the responsibility to "promote, regulate and direct, in Macau, the practice of a sport."

In addition, the ID official cited Item C, Clause 2, Article 26 of the same legislation, which notes that registered sports associations have the rights to "[organize], either competitive teams that confer Macau champion titles, or the [selection] teams representing the

Territory."

With this said, ID appears firm on the autonomy of local sports associations, but adds that sports associations need to submit reports to the government to justify their selections.

The reports should consist of data concerning the picked athletes, selection methodologies and training plans. Only then shall the nominated athlete obtain approval to represent Macau.

Although this hints at ID's goalkeeping position, Lau emphasized that stakeholders in each type of sport have various channels to have the respective selection mechanisms recognized.

Lau promised the lawmaker that "ID [would] continue urging each sports association to release relevant information to improve transparency of the current mechanism in a timely manner." **AL**

GBA

GUANGDONG GDP EXCEEDS RMB2.85 TRILLION, UP 3.3%

GUANGDONG'S GDP reached about 2.85 trillion RMB in the first quarter of 2022, up 3.3% year-on-year.

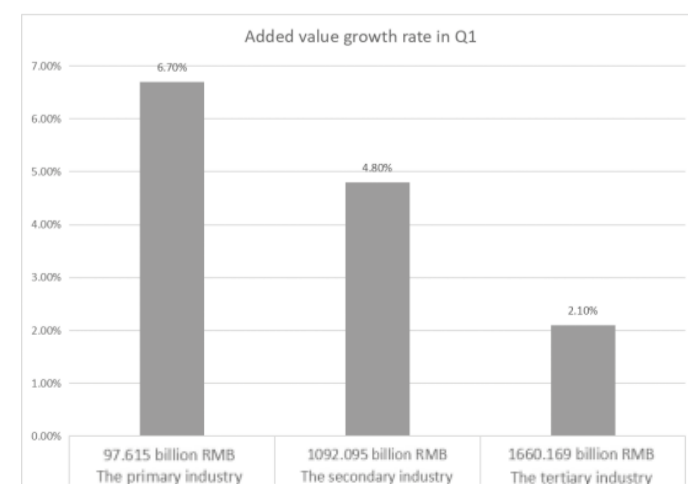
The province's added value of industries above designated size grew by 5.80%, its retail sales of consumer goods by 1.70%, and the total value of its import and export was 1.84 trillion RMB, an increase of 0.6% year-on-year.

Primary, secondary and tertiary industries registered a steady rise in the first quarter. The added value of the primary industry totaled 97.62 billion RMB, up by 6.70%, and that of the secondary and tertiary industry was 1092.10 billion RMB and 1660.17 billion RMB, up by 4.80% and 2.10% respectively.

In terms of other sectors, the value added of the mining increased by 17.90%, the manufacturing grew by 5.40% and the production and supply of electricity, thermal power, gas and water grew by 6.90%.

The service industry accounts for 58.3% of the GDP, up by 2.7 percentage points compared with the previous year.

According to the Statistics Bureau of Guangdong Province, the province maintained stable economic growth in general and saw strong resilience, industrial upgrading and sustained recovery in major fields despite challenges and pressure during the pandemic. **MDT/NEWSGD**





COVID-19

BEIJING DISTRICTS PLACED UNDER LOCKDOWN AS CASES MOUNT

BEIJING began testing millions of residents and shutting down residential and business districts yesterday amid a new outbreak of COVID-19.

While only 70 cases have been found so far in the city of more than 21 million since the outbreak surfaced Friday, authorities have implemented strict measures to prevent a further spread of the virus.

Residents were staying home and stocking up on food as a sa-

feeguard against the possibility that they could be confined indoors, as has happened in multiple cities including the financial hub of Shanghai.

Shanghai, which has been locked down for more than two weeks, reported more than 19,000 new infections and 51 deaths in the latest 24-hour period, pushing its death toll from the ongoing outbreak to well over 100.

Long lines formed in supermarkets in central Beijing.

Shoppers snapped up rice, noodles, vegetables and other food items, while store workers hastily restocked some empty shelves. State media issued reports saying supplies remained plentiful in Beijing despite the buying surge.

Shoppers appeared concerned but not yet panicked. One woman, carrying two bags of vegetables, eggs and frozen dumplings, said she is buying a little more than usual. A man said he isn't worried but is just

being cautious since he has a 2-year-old daughter.

Beijing health officials said 29 more cases had been identified in the 24 hours through 4 p.m. yesterday, raising the total to 70 since Friday.

The city has ordered mass testing across sprawling Chaoyang district, where 46 of the cases have been found. The more than 3 million residents of Chaoyang, as well as people who work in the district, need to be tested on Monday, Wed-

nesday and Friday.

Testing sites were set up overnight and in the early morning at residential complexes and office buildings around Chaoyang district.

"I think Beijing should be fine," said Gao Haiyang as he waited on line for a COVID-19 test. "Based on previous response made by my community, if there's any emergency, I think supply can be guaranteed. Plus there were lessons we learned from other cities. I think we can make good preparations."

The central city of Anyang, along with Dandong on the border with North Korea, also announced lockdowns as the omicron variant spreads across the vast country.

China's borders remain largely closed. **MDT/AP**

DIPLOMACY

Kazakh president, Chinese defense minister agree to strengthen military cooperation

KAZAKH President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and visiting Chinese State Councilor and Minister of National Defense Wei Fenghe voiced common readiness yesterday to step up bilateral cooperation.

At a meeting with Wei in Nur-Sultan, Tokayev said Kazakhstan and China will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year, and over the past three decades, the two countries have become permanent comprehensive strategic partners, maintained high-level coordination in

the international political arena, and achieved remarkable results in cooperation in various areas.

Tokayev recalled that he has frequently interacted with Chinese President Xi Jinping in recent years, injecting strong impetus to the development of bilateral relations.

The Kazakh president said he believes that relations between the two countries will see greater breakthroughs and achievements.

Tokayev said Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the military coo-

peration with China and hopes that the two militaries will continue to strengthen practical cooperation in peacekeeping operations, joint exercises, personnel training, military technology and other fields.

Wei said that Tokayev, an old friend of the Chinese people, has made outstanding contributions to the establishment and development of China-Kazakhstan permanent comprehensive strategic partnership.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Chi-

na and Kazakhstan, Wei said, adding that under the strategic guidance of the two heads of state, bilateral relations have maintained a momentum of vigorous development and enjoy a very bright future, setting a good example of good-neighborly friendship and mutual benefit.

China firmly opposes external forces deliberately instigating a "color revolution" in Kazakhstan and backs the Kazakh side in taking strong measures to safeguard national security and social stability, Wei noted.

The senior Chinese

official called for vigilance about certain major powers interfering in Central Asia to disrupt and undermine regional security.

Wei said his visit demonstrated that China attaches great significance to and firmly supports Kazakhstan, noting that no matter what risks and challenges the two countries may encounter, they will jointly maintain regional stability and push ahead with the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

In recent years, the exchanges and coopera-

tion between the Chinese and Kazakh militaries in various fields have been fruitful, he said, adding that the Chinese military is willing to continue to expand cooperation areas with the Kazakh side and deepen military-to-military relations between the two countries.

On the same day, Kazakh Defense Minister Ruslan Zhaksylykov held a welcome ceremony for Wei and had formal talks with him.

The two officials exchanged in-depth views on the international and regional security situations, the situation in Ukraine and the Afghan issue, and agreed that the two militaries will continue to strengthen strategic communication, conduct joint drills and training, and carry out practical cooperation. **XINHUA**

ANZAC DAY

Australia commemorates war dead with few Covid restrictions

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

LARGE crowds gathered in Australia yesterday to pay tribute to their war dead on Anzac Day largely free of pandemic restrictions for the first time since 2019.

Australia and New Zealand commemorate Anzac Day every April 25 — the date in 1915 when the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps landed in Turkey in an ill-fated campaign that was the soldiers' first combat of World War I.

Yesterday was the first such commemoration of casualties of all wars since both nations withdrew troops from Afghanistan last year.

The dawn service in New Zealand's largest city Auckland was initially planned to be closed to the public due to pandemic restrictions. But a veterans' association intervened and a smaller-than-usual crowd was allowed to attend. A Ukrainian flag was flown above the Auckland War Memorial Museum ceremony.

In Australia's largest city, Sydney, downtown Martin Place was filled to capacity with tens of thousands gathered for its dawn service.

There were no restrictions on numbers attending most Aus-

AP PHOTO



tralian services, although some, including at the west coast city of Perth, were ticketed events to reduce crowds.

Those who could not attend the Perth service in Kings Park were urged to pay their respects from their driveways at dawn as Australians have done on the pre-

vious two Anzac Days.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison and deputy opposition leader Richard Marles acknowledged Ukraine's fight for freedom when they spoke at a dawn service in the northern city of Darwin, which was devastated by Japanese bombing during World War II.

Marles was standing in for opposition leader Anthony Albanese who is isolating at his Sydney home after testing positive to COVID-19 last week.

Morrison is campaigning for a fourth three-year term for his conservative government at elections on May 21.

Anzac Day has focused attention on a new security threat to Australia, a bilateral security treaty between China and the Solomon Islands announced last week that could potentially result in a Chinese military presence 2,000 kilometers (1,200 miles) from the northeast Australian coast.

Morrison said at the Darwin ceremony that Australia's freedom had been secured by the sacrifices of previous generations in war.

"An arc of autocracy is challenging the rules-based order our grandparents had secured," Morrison said, referring to China, Russia and North Korea. "And democratic, free peoples are standing together again."

Australia is the Solomon Islands main security partner and largest donor of foreign aid. The opposition center-left Labor Party has described the Chinese security pact with the island nation as Australia's biggest policy failure in the Pacific since World War II.

President Joe Biden's administration has warned that the United States will take unspecified action against the Solomon Islands should the Chinese pact pose a threat to the U.S. or allied interests.

Cases of the highly transmissible omicron variant of the coronavirus, which was first detected in Australia in December, have peaked across the country in recent weeks.

Australia began relaxing pandemic restrictions late last year when 80% of adults were fully vaccinated. Australia has one of the most vaccinated populations in the world, with 93% of adults fully vaccinated. **MDT/AP**

DIPLOMACY

Ukraine removes Hirohito from video after Japan protests

MARI YAMAGUCHI, TOKYO

UKRAINE'S government has apologized and removed a photo of Japanese wartime Emperor Hirohito from a video showing him with Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini after Japan protested, officials said yesterday.

Japan will continue to support Ukrainians who are defending their country from Russia's invasion despite the "completely inappropriate" portrayal of Hirohito, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihiko Isozaki said.

The video, posted by the Ukrainian government on Twitter on April 1, criticized Russia's invasion as "rashism." Underneath the photos of the three Wor-

AP PHOTO



Late Emperor Hirohito of Japan poses for a photograph in Sept. 1967

ld War II-era leaders were the words "Fascism and Nazism were defeated in 1945."

Japan fought World War II in the name of Hirohito,

who was revered as a god until he renounced his divinity after Japan's defeat. Historical evaluations of his role in the war remain divided. He is known pos-

thumously in Japan as Emperor Showa.

"Portraying Hitler, Mussolini and Emperor Showa in the same context is completely inappropriate," Isozaki told reporters. "It was extremely regrettable."

Isozaki said Japan lodged a protest and demanded the removal of the emperor's image, which Ukraine has done.

"Our sincere apologies to Japan for making this mistake," the Ukrainian government tweeted Sunday. "We had no intention to offend the friendly people of Japan."

Ukraine Ambassador to Japan Sergiy Korsunsky also apologized in a tweet yesterday, saying the creator of the video lacked an understanding of history.

Hirohito's son, former

Emperor Akihito, devoted his reign to atoning for the impact of the war in and outside Japan.

The video has been replaced with one without Hirohito's photo, but many Japanese on social media continued to criticize the original as an insult and said Japan should stop supporting Ukraine. Others said Hideki Tojo, the Japanese wartime prime minister who was later convicted of war crimes and hanged, would have been a better choice than Hirohito for the video.

Some, however, raised concern that Japan's demand that the video be revised was censorship and said Ukraine's concession set a bad precedent that would embolden Japanese conservatives to further

rewrite Japan's wartime history.

Japan has worried that Russia's invasion of Ukraine could have an impact in East Asia, where China's military has grown increasingly assertive and has threatened to unite with Chinese-claimed Taiwan by force if necessary. Japan has tried to play a greater role as part of the Group of Seven industrialized nations in response to the invasion, joining a series of sanctions against Moscow and providing support for Ukraine in line with other members.

Japan provided \$300 million for Ukraine and neighboring countries that have accepted displaced Ukrainians, and has also accepted hundreds of evacuees since Russia's invasion in late February. **MDT/AP**

FRANCE

To Europe's relief, Macron wins but far-right becomes mainstream

JOHN LEICESTER, PARIS

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron comfortably won a second term Sunday, triggering relief among allies that the nuclear-armed power won't abruptly shift course in the midst of the war in Ukraine from European Union and NATO efforts to punish and contain Russia's military expansionism.

The second five-year term for the 44-year-old centrist spared France and Europe from the seismic upheaval of having fire-brand populist Marine Le Pen at the helm, Macron's presidential runoff challenger who quickly conceded defeat but still scored her best-ever electoral showing.

Acknowledging that "numerous" voters cast ballots for him simply to keep out the fiercely nationalist far-right Le Pen, Macron pledged to reunite the country that is "filled with so many doubts, so many divisions" and work to assuage the anger of French voters that fed Le Pen's campaign.

"No one will be left by the side of the road," Macron said in a victory speech against the backdrop of the Eiffel Tower and a projection of the blue-white-and-red tricolor French flag. He was cheered by several hundred supporters who happily waved French and EU flags.

"We have a lot to do and the war in Ukraine reminds us that we are going through tragic times where France must make its voice heard," Macron said.

During her campaign, Le Pen pledged to dilute French ties with the 27-nation EU, NATO and Germany, moves that would have shaken Europe's security architecture as the continent deals with its worst conflict since World War II. Le Pen also spoke against EU sanctions on Russian energy supplies and faced scrutiny during the campaign over her previous friendliness with the Kremlin.

A chorus of European



leaders hailed Macron's victory, since France has played a leading role in international efforts to punish Russia with sanctions and is supplying weapons to Ukraine.

"Democracy wins, Europe wins," said Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez.

"Together we will make France and Europe advance," tweeted European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

Italian Premier Mario Draghi called Macron's victory "splendid news for all of Europe" and a boost to the EU "being a protagonist in the greatest challenges of our times, starting with the war in Ukraine."

Macron won with 58.5% of the vote to Le Pen's 41.5% — significantly closer than when they first faced off in 2017.

Macron is the first French president in 20 years to win reelection, since incumbent Jacques Chirac trounced Le Pen's father in 2002.

Le Pen called her result "a shining victory," saying that "in this defeat, I can't help but feel a form of hope."

Breaking through the threshold of 40% of the vote is unprecedented for the French far-right. Le Pen was beaten 66% to 34% by Macron in 2017 and her father got less than 20% against Chirac.

She and hard-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon, one

of 10 candidates eliminated in the first round on April 10, both quickly pitched forward yesterday [Macau time] to France's legislative election in June, urging voters to give them a parliamentary majority to hamstring Macron.

Le Pen's score this time rewarded her years-long efforts to make her far-right politics more palatable to voters. Campaigning hard on cost-of-living issues, she made deep inroads among blue-collar voters in disaffected rural communities and in former industrial centers.

Le Pen voter Jean-Marie Cornic, 78, said he cast his ballot for her because he wanted a president who would prioritize "our daily lives — salaries, taxes, pensions."

The drop in support for Macron compared to five years ago points to a tough battle ahead for the president to rally people behind him in his second term. Many French voters found the 2022 presidential rematch less compelling than in 2017, when Macron was an unknown factor.

Leftist voters — unable to identify with either the centrist president or Le Pen — agonized with Sunday's choice. Some trooped reluctantly to polling stations solely to stop Le Pen, casting joyless votes for Macron.

"It was the least worst choice," said Stephanie

David, a transport logistics worker who backed a communist candidate in round one.

It was an impossible choice for retiree Jean-Pierre Roux. Having also voted communist in round one, he dropped an empty envelope into the ballot box, repelled both by Le Pen's politics and what he saw as Macron's arrogance.

"I am not against his ideas but I cannot stand the person," Roux said.

In contrast, Marian Arbre, voting in Paris, cast his ballot for Macron "to avoid a government that finds itself with fascists, racists."

"There's a real risk," the 29-year-old fretted.

Macron went into the vote as the firm favorite but faced a fractured, anxious and tired electorate. The war in Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic battered Macron's first term, as did months of violent protests against his economic policies.

In celebrating victory, Macron acknowledged a debt to voters who helped get him over the line, "not to support the ideas I hold, but to block those of the extreme right."

"I want to thank them and tell them that I am aware that their vote obliges me for the years to come," he said. "I am the custodian of their sense of duty, of their attachment to the Republic." **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1984: REAGAN ARRIVES IN CHINA

The US President, Ronald Reagan, has landed in China at the start of a six-day visit - the first by an American president since Nixon in 1972.

He arrived with his wife, Nancy Reagan, just after 1400 local time (0600 GMT), and was driven to Tiananmen Square, in the centre of the Chinese capital, Beijing, for a welcoming ceremony outside the Great Hall of the People.

He was greeted by the Chinese President, Li Xiannian, to the deafening sound of a 21-gun salute.

Mr Li told Mr Reagan he shared his view of the importance of the Pacific region, referring to a comment made by Mr Reagan in a statement before his arrival.

President Reagan then attended a banquet given in his honour by President Li.

Mr Reagan used the occasion to speak, in Chinese, about the need for "mutual respect and benefit" between China and the United States.

The president is accompanied in China by a party of more than 600 journalists, aides, secret service men and officials who guard the codes for launching nuclear missiles.

The talks start tomorrow, and are expected to address a variety of subjects.

The White House spokesman, Larry Speakes, said the United States and China are expected to reach an agreement to assist US companies in helping develop commercial nuclear power in China.

But there is no sign of any compromise over the key issue of Taiwan.

The government-controlled People's Daily newspaper has today re-stated the view of the Chinese government that relations with America are being held back by Washington's support for the Kuomintang nationalist regime in Taiwan.

Until Nixon's visit in 1972 Washington only recognised the ousted nationalist government in Taiwan, where it had been forced into exile after being overthrown by communist forces in 1949.

Nixon, however, signed the Shanghai Communique, which for the first time recognised the communist government in Beijing. It resulted in diplomatic relations between the two countries for the first time, as well as the transfer of diplomatic recognition to Beijing as the Chinese capital.

Washington still continues to support Taiwan, however, and maintains unofficial links, including the sale of arms, to the frustration and anger of the communist leadership in Beijing.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

There was, as expected, no agreement on the key issue of Taiwan. Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping told President Reagan the US "should not interfere" in the process of reunifying China.

The Sino-American relationship is widely seen as one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world, and has gone through many ups and downs.

Perhaps the lowest point was the Chinese army's brutal suppression of student democracy protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989. US-China relations were frozen for almost 10 years.

There have also been several difficult incidents, such as the Nato bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999, and the collision of a US spy plane with a Chinese jet in 2001. Washington continues to supply Taiwan with arms, and there is still little progress towards addressing persistent criticisms of China's human rights record.

But China's campaign for wider global acceptance resulted in its membership of the World Trade Organisation in 2001. Diplomacy between the two countries still remains fraught with difficulties, and looks set to remain a delicate balancing act for the foreseeable future.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 You may want to make drastic changes concerning your personal partner. Do yourself a favor and leave your plastic at home. Work at home if at all possible.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 If you keep busy you won't feel the personal pressures you are going through. Minor health problems will flare up if you don't take care of yourself. You will be in the doghouse if you are being.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Don't let your boss get the better of you. You will find travel and lectures most stimulating. Put your efforts into making constructive improvements to your environment and to your state of mind.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 You may come down with minor infections if you have allowed yourself to get rundown. Don't let your partner start any arguments. Passion should be redirected positively.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Try to have patience and refrain from being judgmental. This is a great day to start that new health regimen you've been talking about. You can't always have your own way.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Work quietly behind the scenes. You can make headway in the workforce if you put your mind to it. You must not make unnecessary changes today. You may want to try your hand at a little creative writing.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Use discretion in your dealings and refrain from making verbal promises of any kind. You can beautify your surroundings by renovating or redecorating. Be an observer before getting involved.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 You can get a great deal accomplished if you bring work home. Try to stay calm, and whatever you do, don't nag. Your ability to be practical in business will help.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Moneymaking ventures may just turn your life around. Past partners may try to come back into your life. Stay calm and focus on things that will help you understand the situation better.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Not the best day for business trips. You may have major blowups with someone you love if you don't back down. Don't offer to pay for others.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Unexpected romantic connections can be made if you go out with friends or take a pleasure trip. Female members of your family may be difficult to deal with. You have a real need to be vocal.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Organize your day well if you wish to accomplish all you set out to do. Losses are likely if you get involved with uncertain individuals. You will reap the benefits if you put money into upgrading your residence.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	13	29	cloudy
Changchun	7	25	cloudy
Chengdu	17	27	overcast
Chongqing	18	28	cloudy
Fuzhou	21	33	cloudy
Guangzhou	24	31	thunderstorms
Guiyang	16	26	cloudy
Haikou	26	34	cloudy
Hangzhou	17	31	rain
Harbin	5	17	cloudy
Hefei	19	27	fine
Nanjing	19	24	rain
Shanghai	18	27	rain
Taipei	23	27	cloudy
Wuhan	20	27	rain
Hong Kong	25	28	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	7	15	showers
Frankfurt	6	12	showers
Paris	6	18	overcast
London	4	16	overcast
New York	9	21	rain

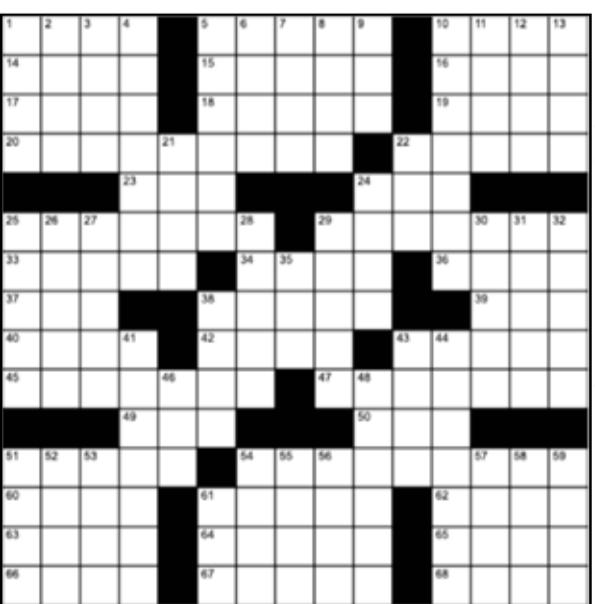
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Chooses; 5- Sao ___; 10- Advocate forcefully; 14- Underlying cause; 15- Goose genus; 16- Friends; 17- Glow; 18- Point in the desired direction; 19- Worry; 20- Playwright; 22- Peace goddess; 23- "___ had it!"; 24- Ambient music pioneer; 25- Edible seed parts; 29- Put in the ground for growth; 33- Lend ___; 34- Bedouin; 36- Very small; 37- Sprinted; 38- "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" musical; 39- Agnus ___; 40- Future doc's exam; 42- Cravings; 43- Long; 45- Map books; 47- Christmas item; 49- Atlantic food fish; 50- Thrice, in prescriptions; 51- Uses a sieve; 54- Like the oblique muscle; 60- Starting; 61- Inexpensive; 62- Prefix with plasm; 63- Andean country; 64- Artist Rousseau; 65- Lacking; 66- Authenticating mark; 67- ___ man with seven wives; 68- New Mexico art colony;

DOWN 1- Toward the mouth; 2- Rain hard; 3- When said three times, a 1970 war movie; 4- Staying power; 5- Soft subdued color; 6- Opposed; 7- Employs; 8- Internet writing system that popularized "pwn3d" and "n00b"; 9- Eight-time Norris Trophy winner; 10- Candid; 11- Hard to find; 12- Secluded spot; 13- Ferrara family; 21- Affirm solemnly; 22- Actress Balin; 24- Exile isle; 25- Destiny; 26- Perform or portray; 27- Kidney-related; 28- Rescues; 29- Sucker; 30- Wave-related; 31- Diciembre follower; 32- Like some arts; 35- Oysters ___ season; 38- Looked at; 41- Diplomatic; 43- Primordial substance; 44- Most strange; 46- Brillo rival; 48- System of social perfection; 51- Enervates; 52- Words of understanding; 53- ___ song (cheaply); 54- Attention getter; 55- Nota ___; 56- Tapered seam; 57- Final Four org.; 58- ___ extra cost; 59- A pitcher may take one; 61-X, to Xanthippe;

Yesterday's solution

GAILY CAEN HOT
 AGREE ANTI DANE
 SAABS NEAT EYES
 PITA LAWLSS
 NEREIO RHINAL
 ORNATE FRODE
 LENIN AVE GLLA
 TOR ECRIST TER
 ACAP TAN CIDER
 MUSIC TCHER
 AMELIA HERERY
 FOREPAW STEP
 AIRE STAN ASONE
 APAR OTIC RENTA
 ASP HENE IDEAL



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
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NERDWALLET

SMART-HOME DEVICES COULD SAVE YOU MONEY ON HOME INSURANCE

SARAH SCHLICHTER

A smart thermostat can turn up the heat in your home before you roll out of bed. A smart speaker can play your favorite podcasts with a voice command. A smart lightbulb can be turned on or off from across the room.

But smart-home devices aren't just about convenience. Because some of them can help keep your home safe and secure, they could also earn you a discount on your homeowners insurance.

DISCOUNTS FOR SMART-HOME DEVICES

NerdWallet reached out to a dozen insurance companies and found that most of them offer discounts to homeowners with smart-home devices designed to prevent water damage, fire or theft. In our research, we found companies advertising homeowners insurance discounts up to 13%, depending on the device and where you live.

Among the companies we surveyed, the smart devices most commonly eligible for discounts were water leak sensors, securi-



ty cameras and smoke detectors. However, insurers like Farmers and Lemonade also offer savings for smart locks, while Amica and Farmers give discounts for motion sensors.

If you already own a smart-home device, ask your carrier whether you're eligible for a discount.

Some insurers have partnered with smart-home technology

companies to make the devices more affordable — or even provide them for free. For example, State Farm policyholders in most states can sign up for three years of free Ting service. Ting provides a plug-in that monitors your home for electrical problems that could cause fires.

Hippo, a homeowners insurance startup, gives policyholders

in eligible states free smart home-monitoring kits from partners such as Kangaroo and SimpliSafe. As long as the policyholder installs the devices and keeps them active, they can save up to 13% on their homeowners insurance.

Amica policyholders can save when buying select smart-home devices from Moen, Guardian or Kangaroo, while Nationwide offers nearly 50% off the purchase of Notion smart sensors. These savings are in addition to the homeowners insurance discounts the companies will give you once you install the devices.

WHY INSURANCE COMPANIES REWARD SMART-HOME DEVICES

Insurance companies offer discounts for smart-home devices because the technology can help catch problems early, potentially preventing expensive claims.

Say you have a smart water sensor next to your water heater, and the appliance springs a leak. The device could sound an audible alarm and send an alert to your phone, enabling you to take immediate action. (Some devices

even have an automatic water shut-off feature.)

Without the sensor, you could end up filing a claim, paying a big deductible and having contractors in your basement cleaning up damage, says Brett Sobol, senior growth initiatives lead at Hippo. But with the sensor, the damage might be so limited that you wouldn't need to make a claim at all.

SHOULD YOU BUY SMART-HOME DEVICES?

The cost of smart-home technology can add up quickly. If you want to invest in a protective device but aren't sure which ones are worth the money, consider your home's unique risks, says Karen Collins, assistant vice president of personal lines at the American Property Casualty Insurance Association.

Ask your insurer whether the devices you're considering would qualify you for a homeowners insurance discount. Depending on the amount of the discount and the cost of the devices, they might pay for themselves within a few years.

Keep in mind that the benefits of smart-home technology could go beyond insurance savings. "Investing in smart-home technology can offer customers peace of mind," Sobol says, "knowing that their home is better protected."

MDT/NERDWALLET

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CRICKET

Former South Africa captain Smith cleared of racism

GERALD IMRAY, CAPE TOWN

FORMER South Africa cricket captain Graeme Smith was cleared of racism allegations yesterday by an independent investigation that looked into claims that he used his influence to ensure a Black player wasn't selected while leading the team a decade ago.

Smith had also been accused of being "racially biased" against Black colleagues in his role as South Africa's director of cricket after he retired from playing. And a third allegation was made against him that he was guilty of "unfair racial discrimination" when, in his role as director of cricket, he appointed former teammate Mark Boucher, who is white, as head coach of South Africa in 2019 ahead of another coach, Enoch Nkwe, who is Black.

The accusations were made late last year in a report that emanated from a series of hearings designed to look into the culture

AP PHOTO



of South African cricket as far back as the 1990s to establish if there was racism. That initial report made "tentative findings" against Smith but recommended a full investigation.

Smith was cleared of all three accusations in a decision released yesterday. Two independent lawyers ruled on the allegations and found no evidence of racism against Smith. With regard to the

accusations against Smith while he was captain of the team, the investigation found that he had opposed the selection of Black player Thami Tsolekile for South Africa from 2012-14 but it was

not proved "he did so by reason of Mr. Tsolekile's race."

The South African cricket federation had pursued the allegations and was ordered to pay Smith's legal costs.

Smith's contract as director of cricket expired at the end of last month and Cricket South Africa board chairman Lawson Naidoo said he would be leaving the role for "new challenges."

Naidoo also said that "CSA appreciates it has been difficult for Mr. Smith to endure the unwarranted public disclosures of his personal information." Details of Smith's salary became public during the course of the investigation.

Boucher, who is still South Africa coach, also faces allegations of racism in a disciplinary hearing that is scheduled for next month and could cost him his job. One of the allegations against the former South Africa wicketkeeper revolves around him singing a song in the changing room while he was a player in the 1990s that referenced the race of a Black teammate.

Smith and Boucher were stalwarts of the South Africa team during their playing days. Smith played 117 tests from 2002-14 and is the Proteas' longest-serving test captain. Boucher played 147 tests from 1997-2012, when his career was ended by a serious eye injury he suffered in a game. **MDT/AP**

AD



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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 worlds 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

Jiang Jianguo, China Daily



PROPER TRASH DISPOSAL CAN HELP US WIN FIGHT AGAINST VIRUS

Several Chinese cities and provinces are facing a novel coronavirus resurgence, with strict pandemic prevention and control measures, even lockdowns if necessary, being implemented in places where infection rates are abnormally high. Against this background, proper disposal of waste can help prevent the spread of the virus and contribute to the success of the dynamic clearing policy.

At the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, proper disposal of used face masks was accorded high priority. According to the guideline of the State Council, China's Cabinet, face masks used by healthy people should be treated as household waste, while masks worn by people suspected of being infected and confirmed patients should be disposed of as medical waste.

As such, special trash cans have been placed in public places for the disposal of used masks. Many neighborhoods, too, have introduced such cans so the masks used by confirmed patients and those suspected of having contracted the virus can be separated and disinfected.

Although most parts of China are at low COVID-19 infection risk, measures still need to be taken against the possible spread of the virus. Since some people in Beijing have contracted the virus from imported goods, and media reports have been saying the virus has been detected on overseas mails and clothing, the Beijing Center for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended that people unpack their overseas deliveries outdoors and get them sterilized, instead of carrying them inside the house.

Cleaners, sanitation workers and people who work in waste treatment plants should take special care when disposing of packaging and other waste from imported goods, and the government must make arrangements for their regular nucleic acid tests.

In particular, the garbage disposal process should be strengthened in places such as hospitals, including makeshift hospitals, quarantine hotels and neighborhoods with confirmed cases.

The guideline for the classification and disposal of domestic waste during the pandemic (trial implementation) published by the China Association of Urban Environmental Sanitation says trash generated by medical isolation units should be treated as medical waste, which according to rules, should be sealed, labeled "infectious waste" and dumped only at designated places. Also, it is important to spray the waste with chlorinated disinfectant (1,000 milligram per liter) after dumping them in a trash can and before loading them on trucks for transportation.

As for trash at quarantine centers, Beijing requires them to be collected, transported and disposed of as medical waste rather than being mixed with household garbage. While some cities facing outbreaks, such as Shanghai and Harbin, capital of Heilongjiang province, are following similar rules, Shenzhen has improved the trash disposal process in areas where infections have broken out.

Unlike in no-infection and low-infection areas, in places under lockdown or stricter anti-pandemic restrictions, waste is collected by designated people wearing personal protective equipment. Residents in such places are required to put all the garbage including leftovers and masks into special garbage bags, tie them tightly and keep them outside their door for the cleaners to collect.

The cleaners in turn put those special garbage bags in trash cans whose inside is lined with huge plastic bags to avoid direct contact between the garbage bags and the trash cans, tie the big plastic bags and load them on trucks for transportation to incineration plants.

This process has been strictly followed by places where cluster infections have broken out including Dongcheng district of Beijing. With the expansion of quarantine areas in Shanghai, its waste output has increased and so has the need for waste disposal. According to reports, on March 16, Minhang district of Shanghai, where infections had broken out, generated more than 200 tons of garbage. But despite the generation of huge amounts of garbage, Shanghai has been disposing them properly.

Overall, given the highly contagious Omicron variant of the virus and sporadic outbreaks in China, there is a need to attach greater importance to garbage disposal in order to avoid cross infection and bring the pandemic under control as soon as possible.

MACAU GOV'T EXTENDS BAN ON FOREIGN ENTRANTS

The Chief Executive has decided to extend the city's ban on foreign entries, with the announcement of an Executive Order to that effect taking place yesterday.

According to Executive Order No. 64/2022, published yesterday, existing entry measures remain unchanged for foreigners. However, the order increases the type of situations under which a non-Macau resident can be exempted from compliance with existing entry measures, and authorised to enter the Macau SAR.

Residents of Greater China Region who have not travelled to

any place outside the Region in the 14 days prior to their intended arrival in Macau will be granted entry to the city, provided that such people fulfil all relevant requirements set by the local health authorities.

The Executive Order also consolidated several such Orders previously in effect. No termination date to the measures was announced in yesterday's document released by the government.

Since an earlier phase of the current Covid-19 pandemic, the city's government has barred residents of jurisdictions outside of the Greater China region from entering Macau.

RENATO MARQUES



TOURISM

MGTO HOPES FOR 60% HOTEL OCCUPANCY AMID FURTHER EXTENDED NAT VALIDITY

ANTHONY LAM

WITH further easing of disease control measures, the head of the city's tourism board hopes the hotel occupancy rate will reach 60% over the coming Labor Day holiday period.

The validity for nucleic acid test (NAT) results for border-crossing purposes was extended to 72 hours, effective yesterday.

The Labor Day holiday period now amounts to five days in duration.

Speaking on her forecast, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), said yesterday that she is confident about its leverage in attracting more tourists to Macau.

"I believe this is everybody's hope too," Senna Fernandes said. She also called for the public to encourage their friends and relatives from across the border to visit Macau during the holiday period.

Senna Fernandes added that the tourism board has no plans to extend or schedule extra sessions of the drone show that will be staged during the Labor Day weekend, in consideration of the "uniqueness" of each show.

There will be eight 15-minute sessions. Each session will be unique, even if they are staged in the same evening, Senna Fernandes explained.

Despite the hopes of the head of the tourism board, the extension to the NAT validity has not supported the stock quotes of the six operators of local casinos.

Yesterday, the percentage points of stock quotes fell from between 2.26% to 5.5%, with Sands China Ltd. leading the fall. Galaxy Entertainment Group, meanwhile, braced well and berthed at the decrease rate of 2.26%. It also achieved the highest stock quote – at HKD43.2 – among the six operators.

The market is still in a watchful mode despite the extension of NAT result validity, which has initially benefitted locals and non-resident workers (TNRs) living on the other side of the border.

Local broadcaster TDM reported that some TNRs had described the extension as convenient, since they will no longer need to take the NAT as frequently as they did a week ago.

Previously, when the Covid-19 condition of Zhuhai was more intense, residents were required to take NATs every day. The test was free-

-of-charge, and the results could be used for border-crossing purposes, the Times was told. This is different from the case in Macau, where free-of-charge NAT results are not eligible for such purposes.

Some tourists also said that they would consider visiting Macau more, mainly because they find Macau "quite safe, [and] controlling the spread of the disease well." They even complimented Macau for "being distinctive on a national scale."

Relatively inexpensive hotel prices are also a factor that draw tourists' approval on Macau.

In spite of these positive factors, businesses have not yet seen the benefits from the NAT result extension. Shopkeepers in tourist areas admitted that businesses are mainly being supported by locals and TNRs at present. In general, locals tend to spend less than tourists.

Some business operators are not confident of increased revenue during the upcoming holidays as they think many mainland residents are still uncertain about traveling to Macau, fearing sudden implementation of disease control measures.

Israeli tanks fired into southern Lebanon yesterday in response to a rocket fired from the country, the Israeli military said. The incident along Israel's northern border comes at a time of heightened tensions between Israelis and Palestinians. Recent weeks have seen a string of deadly attacks inside Israel, lethal arrest raids by Israel in the occupied West Bank and rocket attacks into Israel launched from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip, as well as clashes in a key Jerusalem holy site.

Emirates The island kingdom of Bahrain announced it would start banning the import, distribution and sale of single-use lightweight plastic bags from mid-September, the latest move by an oil-producer to advance carbon reduction goals. The statement from Bahrain's state-run news agency did not specify how the upcoming ban would be enforced, whether by fining distributors of the ubiquitous thin bags or charging people for their use.

Egypt released more than three dozen prisoners yesterday, a week before the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which is typically a time of amnesty, a political party and state-run media said. Political activists and family members confirmed several high-profile detainees were freed. The Reform and Development Party said those freed had been political prisoners being held in pre-trial detention.



Russia A new intercontinental ballistic missile is capable of carrying several hypersonic weapons, a senior Russian military officer said. Col. Gen. Sergei Karakayev, the commander of the Russian military's Strategic Missile Forces, said in televised remarks that the new Sarmat ICBM is designed to carry several Avangard hypersonic glide vehicles. Russia's Defense Ministry said the Sarmat was test-fired for the first time last week from the Plesetsk launch facility in northern Russia.