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MACAU electronics

GOV'T MULLING INTRODUCING PROVISIONS IN GAS SUPPLIER CONTRACT THAT COULD LEAD TO MORE COMPETITIVE PETROL PRICES

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SECOND PHASE OF DOMESTIC WORKERS PILOT PROGRAM TO BE IMPLEMENTED FROM MONDAY

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DEBATE SPARKS OVER CHINA'S INTEREST IN AUSSIE ELECTION

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AP PHOTO



Ukraine received pledges for \$6.5 billion more in humanitarian aid yesterday at an international donor's conference in Warsaw that sought to get Ukrainians urgent help while still planning for the country's post-war reconstruction. Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, a co-host of the conference, announced that \$6.5 billion was raised in donations, eliciting applause from leaders and other officials attending the one-day meeting, including representatives from the United Nations and companies such as Google.

AP PHOTO



Iraq Hundreds of Iraqis rushed to hospitals with breathing problems yesterday and the Baghdad airport suspended flights for several hours as a thick sandstorm blanketed the country, the fifth to engulf Iraq within a month. Iraqi state media said most of the patients suffered respiratory issues as clinics across the country's north and west struggled to keep up with the influx. Authorities urged citizens to stay indoors.

Armenia Tens of thousands of protesters blocked streets and gathered around government buildings in Armenia's capital to demand the prime minister's resignation over his calls for a formal peace agreement with neighboring Azerbaijan. The demonstrators used cement mixers and trucks to close off roads and bridges leading to the center of Yerevan. They marched, chanting "Armenia without Nikol," referring to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. Clashes broke out with police and several arrests were reported.

More on backpage

QUARANTINE WITH A VIEW

PAULO COUTINHO



Gov't assigns three more hotels for quarantine in a move towards relaxing restrictions on summertime

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AP PHOTO

BEIJING LOWERS QUARANTINE TO 10 DAYS FOR OVERSEAS ARRIVALS



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HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATE AT 59.5% DURING MAY GOLDEN WEEK

Industry figures indicated an average occupancy rate of 59.5% among local hotels during the mainland's Labor Day Holidays, up by 28.8 percentage points compared with the rate in April. As of April 30, the supply of hotels and economical accommodation establishments totals 44,668 rooms in the city. Macau has welcomed a cumulative volume of 137,000 visitor arrivals during the Golden Week. The single-day record of inbound visitors peaked at about 42,000 on April 30, an all-time high in 2022. During the holidays, the tourism bureau conducted a total of 36 inspections targeting major ports of entry, tourist attractions and hotels. No sign of irregularities was discovered.

RESIDENTS DEPOSIT SLIGHTLY DROPS TO MOP666B

Resident deposits dropped 0.3% from the preceding month to MOP665.9 billion while non-resident deposits also decreased 0.8% to MOP380.7 billion. According to the Monetary Authority of Macau, public sector deposits with the banking sector fell 0.6% to MOP263.1 billion. As a result, total deposits in the banking sector dropped 0.5% from a month earlier to MOP1,309.6 billion. Domestic loans to the private sector, meanwhile, decreased by 0.7% from a month ago to MOP558.2 billion, while external loans rose 6.8% to MOP794.4 billion.

UM TEAMS WIN ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMPETITION

Three teams from the University of Macau recently won prizes at the 2022 Bank of China Trophy One Million Dollar Macao Regional Entrepreneurship Competition. The winning teams will represent Macau in the grand final of the One Million Dollar Entrepreneurship Competition. This year's competition received a total of 71 applications, covering areas as medical equipment, biotechnology, smart city, and financial technology.

COVID-19

AUTHORITIES PROMOTE CHANGES TO QUARANTINE HOTELS AHEAD OF SUMMER HOLIDAYS

RENATO MARQUES

Local health authorities are promoting changes to quarantine hotel venues ahead of the summer holidays in preparation for the expected increase of demand for such facilities, namely from students abroad, the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center said yesterday at the weekly regular briefing.

From May 8, the Pousada Marina Infante will resume operations as a quarantine hotel, being classified as a designated general-purpose hotel and accepting local residents as well as non-resident workers (TNR) arriving from Hong Kong. Eligible residents of Macau can apply for the quarantine expenses at this venue to be waived.

At the same time, the Grand Coloane Resort will continue to serve as a general-purpose alternative hotel venue, being able to receive anyone coming from Hong Kong who wishes to select this hotel venue – guests who will, in this case, have to pay the expenses related to the 14-day stay at this venue in full.

Concurrently, two other hotels will be assigned duties as "Specialized Hotel Venues," namely the Regency Art Hotel and the Treasure Hotel.

While Treasure Hotel continues to be the designated specialized hotel, the Regency Art Hotel will take on such duties as an alternative venue.

While the Treasure Hotel will admit all local residents arriving from abroad as well as TNR coming from foreign countries and Taiwan (including those coming from the Philippines under the new pilot program for domestic workers), Regency Art Hotel will accept people arriving from foreign countries and Taiwan, except TNRs from the Philippines. In the case of the Regency Art Hotel, all quarantines will be funded by the guests, while eligible residents can be exempted from payment if they stay in the Treasure Hotel.

All these changes were presented by the representative of



the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), Lau Fong Chi, who explained that they aim to increase the offer in respect of the number of quarantine rooms during the period of summer holidays, as well as aiming to allow a better separation between people arriving in Macau from areas with different risk level for Covid-19 infection.

Lau also added that the changes undertaken, namely regarding people arriving from Taiwan, have to do with the recent outbreak that led to an increase in the level of perceived risk for Taiwan.

For that reason, Lau added, people arriving from Taiwan who already had other bookings made will be transferred, according to the new rules, to the Treasure Hotel, while other adjustments, including those involving bookings for Grand Coloane Resort, are still being made and will take further time, she said.

To accelerate the adjustments, these four hotel venues, from today noontime, will begin to accept bookings under the new arrangements.

Lau noted that reservations must be done exclusively using the e-mail provided; no reservations over the phone will be accepted.

As for the price of the quarantine stays, the same government official said that they vary according to each hotel, advising interested parties to consult the hotels for pricing information.

In response to a question about whether the Regency Art Hotel allows those quarantining in a closed-loop system, as the government said is strictly necessary, and commenting as to the reason why more alternatives for the Treasure Hotel could not be found, Lau said, "Both hotels need to have a closed-loop. Before being accepted as a quarantine venue, we inspected Regency and we have made some adjustments to ensure that this hotel could be

used as an alternative specialized hotel," she concluded.

According to figures cited by Dr. Leong Iek Hou, coordinator at the local Center for Disease Control and Prevention, there is a preliminary estimate that around 800 students abroad will want to return to Macau during their summer holidays.

She said that according to the information provided by the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ), some 773 students abroad have already expressed their wish to return between the months of May and September, with the large majority arriving aiming to arrive in the months of June and July.

RAPID ANTIGEN TESTS NOT GOING TO REPLACE NAT

WHEN questioned about the recent changes to the Macau Health Code and the possibility of people doing rapid antigen self-tests and reporting their results to the system, Dr. Leong Iek Hou said that antigen tests are only complementary to nucleic acid tests (NAT) and that the authorities will not allow the replacing of NAT with just a rapid antigen test. "Antigen tests are only complementary [to NAT]. We are not going to

replace the NAT with them," she said, explaining, "They are less sensitive and accurate and can provide a lot of false results. These [antigen tests] are most useful during an outbreak where we need to minimize movement and still ensure some feedback from people [in home isolation], but not in a situation where there is no severe outbreak, no lack of NAT resources, and no severe risks in doing them."

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DOMESTIC WORKERS ENTRY SCHEME

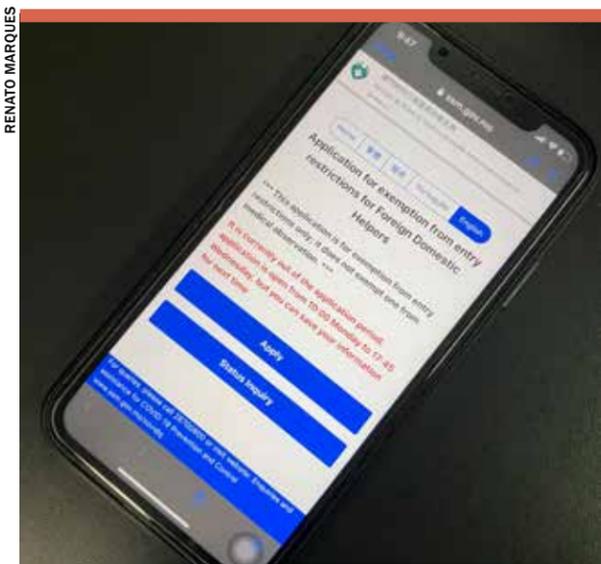
Second phase to be implemented from May 9

RENATO MARQUES

THE second phase of the pilot project allowing the entry of residents from the Philippines in order to work as domestic workers will be implemented from May 9.

According to Dr. Leong Iek Hou, coordinator at the local Center for Disease Control and Prevention, for this second phase, the authorities will allow an added number of conditions for applicant families, such as the increase of the age of the children from three up to 12-years-old, people with medical conditions, including disabilities, as well as the elderly (65 years old or above), who were already included in the first phase.

Leong also advanced that in the first phase, the services received a total of six applications, from which five were accepted



and only one was rejected.

She also advanced that, from the five applications that were accepted and preliminarily approved, two still need to undertake some formalities related to the delivery of certain documents.

Leong also said that for the second phase, the

application platform is also being improved to allow the information to be easily accessible and archived in the system, enabling applicants to input data every week from Thursday to Sunday, data that will then be submitted from Monday to Wednesday during office hours, as previously stated.

COMPANY FORMERLY LINKED TO THE 13 NOW HAS THREE LIQUIDATORS

THE Supreme Court of Bermuda has appointed a liquidation and inspection committee for South Shore Holdings, the former backer of The 13 Hotel, according to a company filing to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

The company, which was recently publicly listed on the Hong Kong market, noted in the filing that "on 11 March 2022, the Supreme Court of Bermuda ordered that Mr Edward Alexander Niles Whittaker of R&H Services Limited, and Mr Chan King Wai Leonard and Ms So Kit Yee Anita, both of Ernst & Young Transactions Limited, be appointed as the Joint and Several Liquidators of the Company and that a Committee of Inspection be formed under section 181(2) of the Bermuda



Companies Act 1981."

In the same filing, it is noted that on July 27, 2021, the company was ordered by the court to be wound up. At the same time, provisional liquidators were also appointed.

About three months later, on October 22, the company announced that poll results of a meeting

of contributories was held on October 15 in the same year.

The same filing also reiterated that trading in the shares of the company on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange had been suspended with effect from 9 am on July 2, 2021, and would remain suspended until further notice. **AL**

Q1 BUSINESS

Number of registered firms grows slightly to over 81,900

THE total number of registered companies in Macau grew to 81,942 in the first quarter of 2022, slightly up from the 81,060 recorded in the fourth quarter of 2021.

However, when compared year-on-year, the number of newly established firms during this year's first quarter decreased to 1,095, 422 fewer compared to the new companies incorporated in the first three months of 2021.

Data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) showed that the total value of registered capital of the new companies soared by 6,063.3% year-on-year to MOP13.51 billion, attributable to the incorporation of new companies with large capital in Financial Activities during the quarter.

Companies in dissolu-



tion totalled 208 in the first quarter, and the value of registered capital of these companies amounted to MOP49 million.

In terms of origin of capital, mainland China contributed MOP13.40 billion (99.1% of total) to the capital of newly incorporated companies, with MOP13.01 billion coming from Beijing. Capital from

the Mainland cities in the Greater Bay Area totalled MOP47 million, with Zhuhai accounting for 69.5% of this figure.

Analysed by size of registered capital, there were 766 new companies (70.0% of total) registered with capital under MOP50,000, and the value of capital (MOP20 million) made up 0.1% of the total. **LV**

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GOV'T MULLING INTRODUCTION OF COMPETITIVE GAS SUPPLIER CONTRACT

ANTHONY LAM

THE government has disclosed that it would “actively consider” introducing contract terms that could lead to greater competition in the gasoline supply industry.

President of the Consumer Council of Macao, Wong Hon Neng, made the disclosure in response to lawmaker Leong Sun Iok's written inquiry about gasoline prices, dated March 10 this year. The reply is dated April 19.

He noted that in the future, when the government auctions land for use as gasoline stations, explicit pricing mechanisms may be introduced in the contract, as well as terms that may lead to greater competition within the industry.

In addition, he disclosed that the government would also consider requesting that operators import new types of gasoline products or even new gasoline brands to Macao, so as to “[offer] wider choices to consumers.”

Apart from reactively managing gasoline prices by means such as centrally publicizing prices on the Economic and Technological Development Bureau's (DSED) website, the government's specific taskforce has also



regularly met with industry operators, who were told to maintain price and supply stabilities of the commodity.

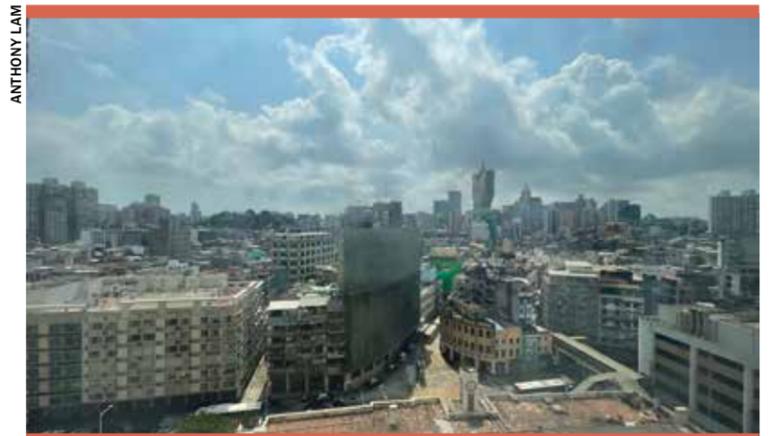
With regards to the reliability of local gasoline pumps, Wong reiterated that regular spot checks have been conducted to ensure the accuracy of the equipment. Investigations can be set off if irregularities are found.

Wong emphasized that there may be a number of causes of irregularities, with daily wear and tear of equipment being the main reason. Gasoline sellers are reminded to regularly to finetune

their pump meters.

In his inquiry, the lawmaker asked the government if it would commence considering the possibility of including consumer gasoline as a public business or enterprise, so that gasoline prices can be put under scrutiny and controlled by the government.

Furthermore, Leong also asked about measures to safeguard consumer rights, as previously many irregularities in gasoline pumps – such as supplying less gasoline than shown on the meter – had been found.



GBA strengthen ties in weather forecasts for Hengqin, Delta Bridge

In a recent meeting, weather forecasters for the Greater Bay Area (GBA) agreed to establish an information exchange platform concerning the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge.

A mechanism for cooperation between the meteorological entities from Macao, Guangdong and Hong Kong has long been in place. Meetings are regularly held to ensure communications and operations.

The most recent meeting was held both online and offline. The offline component was held in Hengqin and was attended by officials from Macao, Zhuhai and Hengqin, while weather officials from Guangdong and Hong Kong participated via video conference.

At the meeting, all parties

agreed to establish the aforementioned platform, which will facilitate the real-time sharing of weather data concerning the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge.

It will help consolidate weather data so that forecasts of the weather along the route of the bridge will be more appropriate and reliable.

The Zhuhai weather authority, meanwhile, has released plans to jointly announce weather forecasts concerning Hengqin with Macao, in which the sharing of weather data will be integral.

The Zhuhai officials have also presented on the city's low-carbon ecological and meteorological services. Participating officials also paid a visit to the weather station in Mangzhou Wetland Park in Hengqin. **AL**

NOT SHOWING DIGITAL DRIVING LICENSE DUE TO APP FAILURE EXCUSABLE

ANTHONY LAM

In the future, drivers may be allowed to show their driving licenses in a digital form and will not be punished if they fail to do so due to a failure of the government app, government officials told lawmakers yesterday.

The draft law for the Presentation of Driving-related Documents in Digital Form (the Bill) is now before the parliament's First Standing Committee for analysis.

Government officials assured committee members that if the bill is passed by the parliament, future drivers will not be subject to prosecution if the government app is not working, be that due to regular



maintenance, a malfunction or lack of network reception.

The digital version of the documents will supervise on the government's Macao One Account app.

In contrast, if the failure to present the documents in digital form is caused by the driver's own personal reason, such as a broken phone or lack of phone battery, the driver will be

obliged to present the documents in physical form.

Meanwhile, although police officers will be authorized to verify data on the backend, they will only be allowed to do so according to due process, so as to ensure privacy.

The enactment of the law is expected this October, according to Ella Lei, president of the parliamentary committee.

LUSOPHONE

IMF FORECASTS 2022 PORTUGUESE ECONOMIC GROWTH TO BE 4%

ACCORDING to the latest World Economic Outlook by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Portugal is forecast to see a 4% rise in annual Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) this year.

The projection is relatively optimistic when compared with those for other advanced economies, such as Japan (2.4%), Korea (2.5%) and Germany (2.1%). However, the country is expected to fall behind its neighbor, Spain, which is projected to see 4.8% growth in Real GDP.

Another Lusophone country, Brazil, is expected to have only 0.8% growth in Real GDP.

The indicator for inflation, Consumer Price



Index, was also presented in the outlook, which suggested that Brazil will see an 8.2% surge this year. In contrast to that, Portugal is estimated to see about half of Brazil's rise in consumer prices, at 4%.

An economic downturn is sweeping through the globe and turning into recession in some places. The Covid-19 pandemic was seen by many to be the major culprit of the

challenge.

An earlier report by the Times highlighted that, according to the same IMF outlook, Macao will see 15.5% growth in Real GDP this year.

The IMF emphasized that the projections for the current year are based on the authorities' approved budget, as adjusted to reflect the IMF staff's macroeconomic forecast. Projections thereafter are

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



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AP PHOTO

COVID-19

HONG KONG REOPENS BEACHES, BEIJING RELAXES QUARANTINE RULES

HONG Kong reopened beaches and pools yesterday in a relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, while China's capital Beijing began easing quarantine rules for arrivals from overseas.

Hong Kong had closed water sports venues during an outbreak of the highly transmissible omicron variant, but has been reducing restrictions as cases decline. Deaths from COVID-19 have fallen from a high of almost 300 per day in March to zero in recent days.

Restaurants are also allowed to seat up to eight customers per table — up from four previously — and masks will no longer be required during outdoor exercise, a change that's

important to organizers of group sporting events.

"We're looking forward to Mother's Day, and being able to have up to eight people sitting at a table," said William So, assistant general manager of the London Restaurant, a long-time destination for traditional dim sum.

"Business will go up, three generations of a family can sit down and eat together," said So, as carts piled high with steaming bamboo baskets of savory dumplings circulated through the packed dining room. Already, bookings have more than doubled since the relaxed seating policy was an-

nounced, he said.

A further round of easing is scheduled to begin May 19, when bars and clubs will be allowed to reopen and restaurants in the southern Chinese city will be permitted to serve customers until midnight.

Beijing will now require arrivals from overseas to quarantine at a hotel for 10 days

China has maintained its hard-line "zero-COVID" approach but has imposed less onerous restrictions in Beijing than in other cities such as

Shanghai, where millions were placed under strict lockdown.

Beijing will now require arrivals from overseas to quarantine at a hotel for 10 days, followed by another week of home isolation.

Previous rules required 21 days of isolation, at least 14 of them at a hotel, followed by seven days of regular health reporting.

With only a handful of daily international flights into Beijing, the rule change is expected to have little immediate impact on arrivals. Symbolically, however, it appears to show a willingness to compromise with demands for a less intrusi-

ve and economically damaging policy.

Still, the capital is taking no chances and on Wednesday closed 60 subway stations, more than 10% of its vast system, to reduce the possibility of the virus spreading.

Restaurants and bars are limited to takeout, gyms are closed and classes are suspended for at least another week. Major tourist sites in the city, including the Forbidden City and the Beijing Zoo, have closed their indoor exhibition halls and are operating at only partial capacity.

Districts have been sorted according to the perceived level of COVID-19 risk in each, and people living in districts in the highest categories are barred from leaving the city. A few communities where cases were discovered have been isolated.

All residents are required to undergo three virus tests during the week as authorities seek to detect and isolate cases without imposing the sort of sweeping lockdowns seen in Shanghai and elsewhere. A negative test result obtained within the previous 48 hours is required to enter most public spaces.

Beijing yesterday reported just 50 new cases, eight of them asymptomatic.

Shanghai also saw a drop to 4,651 new cases, all but 261 asymptomatic, with an additional 13 deaths. China's biggest city recorded a daily peak of 27,605 new cases on April 13.

Questions have arisen about the surprisingly low death toll amid an outbreak of more than 400,000 cases in the city that is home to China's main stock market and biggest port. **MDT/AP**

CHANGSHA

Survivor found almost six days after China building collapse

RESCUERS in central China have pulled a woman alive from the rubble of a building that partially collapsed almost six days earlier, state media reported yesterday.

The unidentified woman is the 10th survivor of the disaster in the city of Changsha, in which at least five people have died and an unknown number, possibly dozens, are still missing.

She was rescued shortly after midnight, about 132 hours after the rear of the six-story building suddenly caved in on April 29, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

The woman was conscious and advised rescuers



Rescue workers evacuate the 10th survivor pulled alive after being trapped 132 hours

on how to pull her out without causing further injury, Xinhua said. Teams had used dogs and hand tools

as well as drones and electronic life detectors in the search.

All the survivors were

reportedly in good condition after being treated in a hospital. Intermittent rain showers in recent days may have increased their chances of survival without food or water.

In an account of Monday's rescue of the eighth survivor pulled out, state media said rescuers faced an unstable pile of rubble that they had to work around rather than demolish. Prior to the rescue, they were able to feed in video equipment to communicate with the girl and establish that one of her legs was trapped.

Before retreating to draw up a strategy, they fed in saline solution for her to

drink, to which she responded, "Don't worry big brother, I know you'll be back for me right away," the reports said.

No other details about the girl or her condition were given.

At least nine people have been arrested in relation to the collapse of what Xinhua has described as a "self-built building," including its owner, on suspicion of ignoring building codes or committing other violations.

Also held were three people in charge of design and construction and five others who allegedly gave a false safety assessment for a guest house on the build-

ing's fourth to sixth floors.

The building also housed residences, a cafe and shops.

An increase in the number of collapses of self-built buildings in recent years prompted Chinese President Xi Jinping to call last month for additional checks to uncover structural weaknesses.

Poor adherence to safety standards, including the illegal addition of extra floors and failure to use reinforcing iron bars, is often blamed for such disasters. China also suffers from decaying infrastructure such as gas pipes that has led to explosions and collapses. **MDT/AGENCIES**

AUSTRALIA

Debate sparks over China's interest in election

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

AUSTRALIA'S defense policy debate heated up when the defense minister said there was evidence that the Chinese Communist Party wanted Australia's government to change at the May 21 election because a center-left Labor Party administration would attempt to appease Beijing.

Defense Minister Peter Dutton said yesterday the evidence included communication on the Chinese social media platform WeChat and how editors of Chinese-language newspapers in Australia had been pressured.

There were also "other elements, obviously, that I can't go into publicly," Dutton said in an apparent reference to classified security briefings.

Dutton made his allegation of a Chinese preference for Labor in answer to a reporter's question during a defense policy debate at the National Press Club with

opposition defense spokesperson Brendan O'Connor.

"There's no doubt in my mind that the Chinese Communist Party would like to see a change of government at the May 21 election. No question at all," Dutton said.

O'Connor said he did not agree with what he described as Dutton's "conspiracy theory."

"It's not in this country's interest for a political party to attack the other major political party on the basis of appeasing China — particularly when it's untrue," O'Connor said.

The Chinese Embassy in Canberra did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A year after the conservative government was first elected in 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Australia and addressed Parliament. Bilateral relations have dramatically soured since then. Chinese government ministers won't talk to their Australian

counterparts and China has imposed a series of formal and informal trade sanctions on Australian exports.

Dutton said Sen. Penny Wong, who would become Labor's foreign minister, would want to wind back the past nine years of Australia's conservative government actions toward China.

"Penny Wong believes that she can go to Beijing on a charm offensive and she could change the direction of China under President Xi," Dutton said.

Wong's office declined to comment.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's conservative Liberal Party-led coalition has been campaigning as lawmakers most likely to stand up against Chinese coercion.

A conservative lobby group Advance Australia has been displaying ads on the sides of trucks that depict Xi casting a vote for Labor.

Home Affairs Minister Karen Andrews last week suggested Chi-



Australia Defense Minister Peter Dutton, right, watches as Prime Minister Scott Morrison speaks at a press conference

na's announcement of a security pact with the Solomon Islands was deliberately timed to undermine her Liberal Party's reelection prospects.

O'Connor cited Dennis Richardson, former leader of the Defense Department, Foreign Department and main domestic spy agency, who warned against fabricating policy differences on China.

"The government is seeking to create the perception of a difference between it and the opposition on a critical national security issue, that is China; seeking to create the perception of a difference when none in practice exists," Richardson said in February.

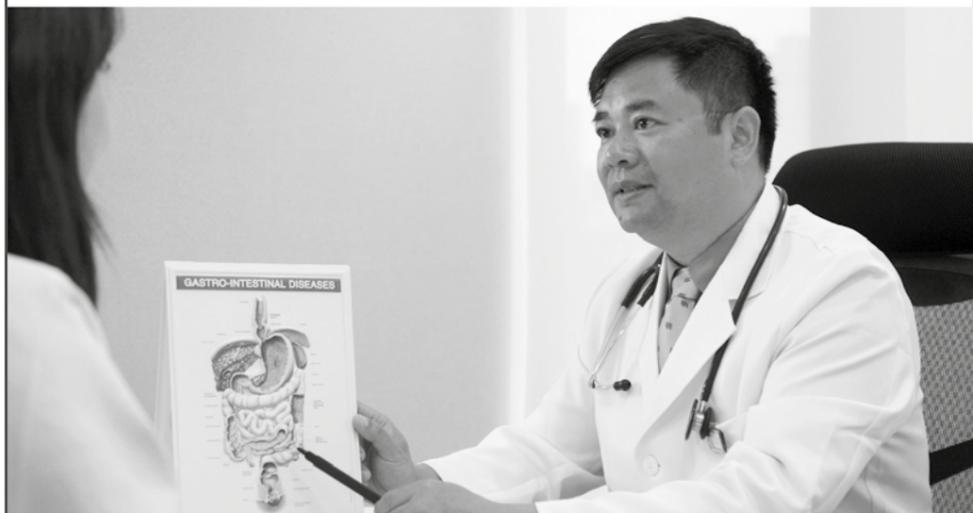
"That is not in the national interest. That only serves the interests of one country and that is China," Richardson added. MDT/AP

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Dietitian : Chan Lai U Joey



AustCham, BritCham and CanCham have the pleasure of inviting members and friends to celebrate together the 70 years' reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Date : Thursday, 2 June 2022

Venue : Turfan Room, Level 4, The Londoner Macao

Time : 6pm to 9pm

Members : MOP 500 per person

Non-members : MOP 600 per person

(includes free-flow wines, beers, juices and gourmet canapes)

Dress code : Smart casual ... perhaps with a touch of red, white and blue

Kindly RSVP by 23 May 2022 via email to :

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winnie.wong@britchammacao.org

lizy.yu@cancham.org.mo



PUTIN'S WAR

Mariupol steel mill battle rages as Ukraine repels attacks

JON GAMBRELL
& CARA ANNA, LVIV

HEAVY fighting raged yesterday at the besieged steel plant in Mariupol, as Russian forces attempted to finish off the city's last-ditch defenders and complete the capture of the strategically vital port.

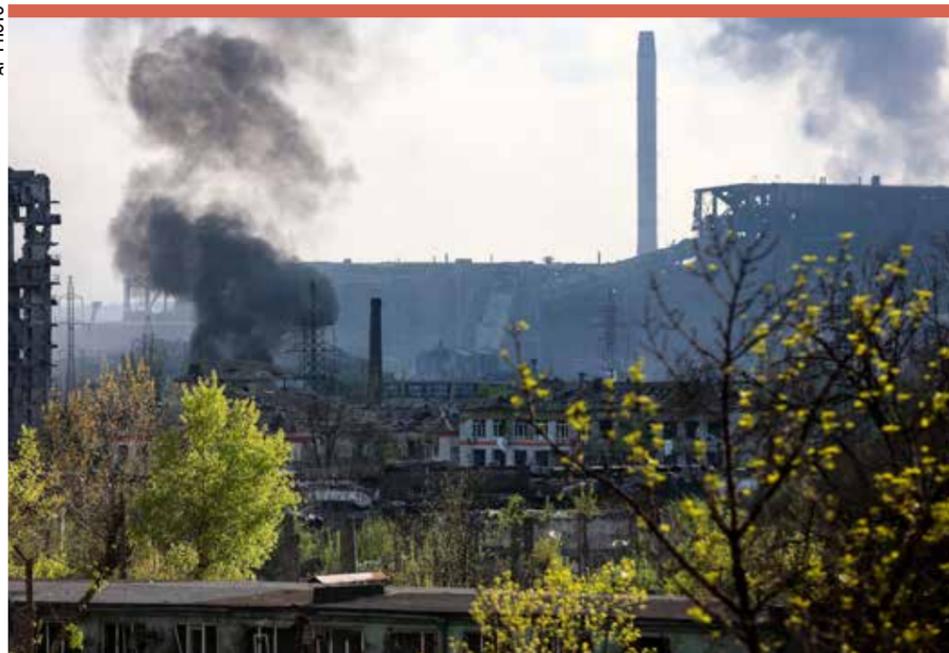
The bloody battle came amid growing suspicions that President Vladimir Putin wants to present the Russian people with a major battlefield success — or perhaps announce an escalation of the war — in time for Victory Day on Monday. That is the biggest patriotic holiday on the Russian calendar, marking the Soviet Union's triumph over Nazi Germany.

Ten weeks into a devastating war, Ukraine's military claimed it recaptured some areas in the south and repelled other attacks in the east, further frustrating Putin's ambitions.

Ukrainian and Russian forces are fighting village by village, as Moscow struggles to gain momentum in the eastern industrial heartland of the Donbas. Russia switched its focus to that region — where Moscow-backed separatists have fought Ukrainian forces for years — after a stiffer than expected resistance bogged its troops down and thwarted its initial goal of overrunning the capital.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko said he hadn't expected the Russian offensive to "drag on this way." Some Russian troops used ally Belarus as a launch pad for the invasion on Feb. 24, and Lukashenko publicly supported the operation.

In the most searing example of how Ukrainian forces have slowed Russia's progress, Ukrainian fighters are holed up in the tunnels and bunkers under the sprawling Azovstal steel mill in Mariupol — the last pocket of resistance in a city that is otherwise controlled by Moscow's forces. Civilians, believed to number around a few hundred,



Smoke rises from the Metallurgical Combine Azovstal in Mariupol

are also trapped inside the plant.

Ukraine said its fighters drove back a Russian assault into the giant mill, which was also being bombed from above. Videos shared online appeared to show the steel mill targeted by intense shelling at dawn yesterday.

The Kremlin denied that there was any ground assault.

Mariupol's fall would be a major battlefield success for Moscow, depriving Ukraine of a vital port and allowing Russia to establish a land corridor to the Crimean Peninsula, which it seized from Ukraine in 2014, and free up troops to fight elsewhere in the Donbas.

With his troops making slow progress elsewhere, Putin may be looking to declare a win at the plant in time for Victory Day. Some have also suggested he could use the celebrations to expand what he calls the "special military operation."

A declaration of all-out war would allow the Russian leader to introduce martial law and mobilize reservists to make up for significant troop losses. The Kremlin has dismissed the speculation.

The city, and the plant in particular, have come to symbolize the misery inflicted by the war. The Russians have pulverized most of Mariupol in a two-month siege that has trapped

civilians with little food, water, medicine or heat. Civilians sheltering inside the plant have perhaps suffered even more. About 100 of them were evacuated over the weekend — the first time some saw daylight in months.

A Ukrainian officer leading defenders at the last Mariupol bastion urged the global community to pressure Russia into allowing more civilians to be rescued along with wounded soldiers. It is unclear how many Ukrainian fighters are still inside the plant, but the Russians put the number at about 2,000 in recent weeks, and 500 were reported to be wounded.

"Wounded soldiers are dying in agony due to the lack of proper treatment," Capt. Sviatoslav Palamar, the deputy commander of the Azov Regiment, said in a video statement.

The Russian government said it would open another evacuation corridor from the plant during certain hours yesterday through Saturday.

As the battle raged in Mariupol, Russian forces shelled elsewhere in the Donbas and also kept up their bombardment of railroad stations and other supply-line targets across the country — part of an effort to disrupt the supply of Western arms, which have been critical to Ukraine's defense.

Ukrainian forces said they made some gains on

the border of the southern regions of Kherson and Mykolaiv and repelled 11 Russian attacks in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions that make up the Donbas.

Five people were killed and at least 25 more wounded in shelling of cities in the Donbas over the past 24 hours, Ukrainian officials said. The attacks damaged houses and a school as well.

A day after Russian attacks were reported near Kyiv, the capital; in Cherkasy and Dnipro in central Ukraine; and in Zaporizhzhia in the southeast, air raid sirens sounded anew yesterday in the western city of Lviv, which has been a gateway for western arms and served as a relative safe haven for people fleeing fighting farther east.

An assessment by the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War said Russian forces were struggling to gain traction.

"Ukrainian defenses have largely stalled Russian advances in eastern Ukraine," it said late Wednesday.

"Russian forces intensified airstrikes against transportation infrastructure in western Ukraine (on Wednesday) but remain unable to interdict Western aid shipments to Ukraine," it added.

Belarus announced the start of military exercises today [Macau time]. A top Ukrainian official said the country will be ready to act if Belarus joins the fighting. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1994 PRESIDENT AND QUEEN OPEN CHANNEL



The Queen and France's President Francois Mitterrand have formally opened the Channel Tunnel during two elaborate ceremonies in France and Britain.

After travelling through the tunnel, which took eight years and billions of pounds to build, the Queen said it was one of the world's great technological achievements.

The tunnel is the first land link between Britain and Europe since the last Ice Age about 8,000 years ago.

The first leg of the Queen's journey took her from London's Waterloo station through the tunnel by high-speed Eurostar passenger train.

She arrived at Calais at the same time as the President Mitterrand's train which had travelled from Paris' Gard du Nord via Lille.

The two locomotives met nose to nose - a computer that prevents two trains travelling on the same track was switched off for the occasion.

The two heads of state cut red, white and blue ribbons simultaneously to the sound of their respective national anthems played by the band of the French Republican Guard.

They were accompanied by their Prime Ministers John Major and Edouard Balladur and other government ministers to the Eurotunnel terminus.

Eurostar will not start carrying passengers until July at the earliest and private cars will have to wait until October.

After lunch, the Queen and President Mitterrand took the royal Rolls-Royce on Le Shuttle for the 35-minute trip to Folkestone.

There was a similar ribbon-cutting ceremony on English soil. Among those present were joint Eurotunnel chairmen Sir Alastair Morton and André Bénard as well as Frenchman Philippe Cozette, who drilled the hole that first joined the two ends of the tunnel in December 1990.

Behind today's celebrations lies the reality that the tunnel has run up huge debts. It cost £10bn to build, more than double the original forecast in 1987 - and there are serious doubts about its long-term financial viability.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

At first the Channel Tunnel looked like it was going to be a financial disaster. A year after the official opening, the tunnel operator Eurotunnel announced a loss of £925m, one of the biggest in UK corporate history at the time. To add to its woes, freight traffic was suspended for six months in 1996 after a fire broke out on a lorry in the tunnel. A scheme in which banks agreed to swap billions of pounds worth of loans for shares saved the tunnel from going under and in 1999, Eurotunnel was able to announce its first net profit - £64m. It still has huge debts - to the tune of £6.4bn in 2004. But it has become an accepted and popular mode of transport, not least among illegal immigrants trying to get into Britain from Europe.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Don't be too quick to respond to a plea for help. Try to have patience and refrain from being judgmental. Your mind will be on matters that deal with secret affairs.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Take care when dealing with older relatives. You may have been too agreeable to someone who just wanted to use you. You need to concentrate on solving existing problems.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
You can meet potential new mates, but make sure that they aren't already committed to someone else. You need to do something that will make you feel better about yourself.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You may be overreacting to a situation at hand. Social events will be plentiful. Group endeavors will provide you with entertainment. You may want to avoid the questions your lover is going to want to ask you.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Delve a little deeper if you really want to know the score. Double-check before you go out. Sudden changes regarding work and colleagues are apparent.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Try to keep ahead of the game. You are best to get out of the house today. Listen to the complaints of others. Your personal life will be under the gun.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Don't let relatives make demands of you. You may be looking through rose colored glasses. People who try to persuade you to do things their way will annoy you.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Try not to hang out with coworkers if you wish to avoid problems later. You can make money but not through harebrained schemes or gambling.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Your emotional state could leave you vulnerable and confused. Losses are likely if you have left your financial affairs in other people's hands. Today will be rather hectic on the domestic scene.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
If you haven't already, don't be afraid to start your own small business on the side. Changes regarding your image will bring you greater confidence. Keep your thoughts to yourself for the time being.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Go out with friends. Travel should be on your agenda. Expect to have more people on your domestic scene. You will be overly sensitive when dealing with your personal life.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
You have your own family to consider as well. Go after your professional goals. Verbal abuse may lead to walkouts; don't make any rash statements you may regret later.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

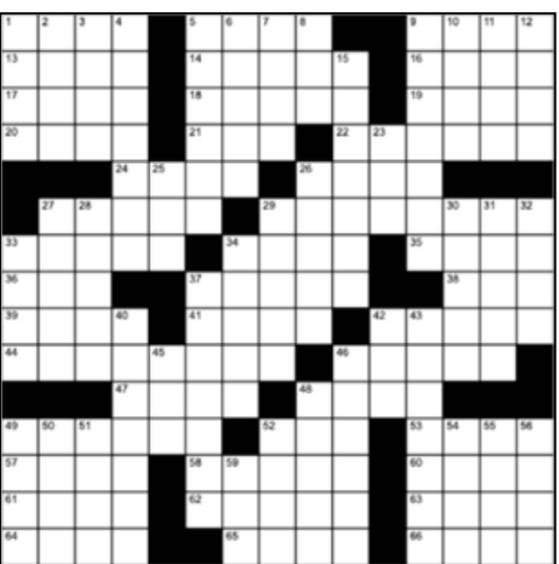
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	20	30	cloudy
Changchun	18	28	cloudy
Chengdu	16	29	overcast
Chongqing	18	31	fine
Fuzhou	17	27	fine
Guangzhou	18	30	cloudy
Guiyang	12	24	cloudy
Haikou	22	27	cloudy
Hangzhou	14	28	fine
Harbin	16	28	rain
Hefei	14	28	fine
Nanjing	14	29	fine
Shanghai	15	27	fine
Taipei	21	25	rain
Wuhan	16	31	fine
Hong Kong	22	25	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	6	15	overcast
Frankfurt	9	22	overcast
Paris	12	23	overcast
London	12	21	overcast
New York	10	16	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Leave; 5- Make angry; 9- Six-stringed instrument; 13- Girder type; 14- Deadly virus; 16- Trace; 17- Actress Downey; 18- Makes out; 19- Getting ___ years; 20- Test; 21- Mighty tree; 22- Comfort in misfortune; 24- Strait-laced; 26- Sign over; 27- Tint; 29- Sing for; 33- Home on the range; 34- Coup d'___; 35- Matching; 36- Corrida shout; 37- Copper and zinc alloy; 38- Absorb, as a cost; 39- Workers' rights org.; 41- Traditional passed-down knowledge; 42- Unfolds; 44- Ball-game target; 46- Bring to mind; 47- Alleviate; 48- Confess; 49- Mr. and Mr.; 52- King topper; 53- ___ Irae; 57- Large wading bird; 58- Cry from the bench; 60- Novel ending; 61- Animal raised by humans, abandoned by mother; 62- Castle water pits; 63- Greek letters; 64- Watched intently; 65- Melville tale; 66- Longings;

DOWN 1- Hibernia; 2- Microsoft game system; 3- ___ Camera; 4- Tread underfoot; 5- Impressionist Pierre; 6- Girder; 7- Device for securing; 8- Lodge member; 9- Immoderately vehement; 10- New Rochelle college; 11- Auricular; 12- Alley; 15- Declares positively; 23- Lyric poem; 25- ___ v. Wade; 26- Break off; 27- Big fiddle?; 28- Musical drama; 29- Square one; 30- Eight Days ___; 31- "Cheers" waitress; 32- Tolkien tree creatures; 33- Chinese secret society; 34- Uneven; 37- Bloom; 40- Sanctified; 42- Egg head?; 43- Like talc or volcanic ash; 45- Average; 46- Very; 48- Vinegary prefix; 49- House rodents; 50- Auction site; 51- Team; 52- Economist Smith; 54- Spillane's "___ Jury"; 55- Kind of collar; 56- Cong. meeting; 59- Friend of Tigger;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

DRIVE IN

IN 'HAPPENING,' A RIVETING ABORTION DRAMA

JAKE COYLE,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

HAPPENING, Audrey Diwan's Golden Lion-winner at last year's Venice Film Festival, is set in 1963 France but the period detail isn't prominent. Instead, it's an abortion tale that feels as though it could take place in many places, long ago or today.

It's filmed in square-like academy ratio and it's as if the edges of the frame are closing in on Anne Duchesne (Anamaria Vartolomei), a smart literature student — maybe even a brilliant one; we see her define "anaphora" without hesitation — who is shocked when a doctor informs her that she's pregnant.

This is 12 years before abortion would be legalized in France and Anne's predicament is immediately urgent. "Do something," she tells the doctor, who replies that it's impossible, "the law is unsparring." For Anne, her apparently first sexual encounter threatens

to derail her life just as it's getting started. She comes from a working class background. Her parents — and most of all Anne, herself — have high expectations for her.

"I want to continue my studies," she tells another doctor. "It's essential for me."

Films from Cristian Mungiu's "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days" to Eliza Hittman's "Never Sometimes Always Rarely" have captured the human toll of systems that give women little choice when faced with an unwanted pregnancy. What distinguishes "Happening," Diwan's second feature film, is, overwhelmingly, her and Laurent Tangy's tightly composed cinematography and Vartolomei's riveting, steely performance. To a remarkable degree, "Happening" is viscerally connected with its protagonist, closely detailing not just her navigation of social taboos and restrictions but capturing her unapologetic determination.

AP PHOTO



Anamaria Vartolomei in a scene from "Happening"

It's a movie about abortion, yes, but it's also a coming-of-age tale about a woman's resolve.

"Happening," which opens in select theaters Friday and expands afterward, is based on the 2001 memoir by celebrated French author Annie Ernaux, who framed her '60s experience as it was recalled decades later by sifting through old journals and memories. Diwan's film has no such framework, instead preferring to stay rigorously close to Anne's experience as it's unfolding. Abortion is to even her friends an unspeakable subject; just the hint of

promiscuity is enough to make her nearly an outcast. In one frightfully vulnerable scene, classmates confront her in the shower for being "loose" while they and she are naked.

It's a fittingly staged scene because in "Happening," there's no intimacy or pleasure for Anne's body. It's a battleground. When she's asked for her reading of Louis Aragon's "Elsa at Her Mirror," Anne describes the poem's war references. And she, too, is in a kind of war, with seemingly no one on her side, desperate for help — or at least for some ho-

nesty. Anne grows increasingly isolated but also hardened and defiant. Diwan films her clinical encounters at length and, in a film where no one wants to say the truth out loud, "Happening" culminates in Anne holding back screams of pain because the walls are too thin.

"Happening," an IFC Films release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for disturbing material/images, sexual content and graphic nudity. In French with subtitles. Running time: 100 minutes. ★★★★★

AD

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馬天龍 Nuno Sardinha da Mata °
趙魯 Zhao Lu °*
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TASTE OF EDESIA

Classics with a twist

IRENE SAM, MDT

RENOWNED for its culinary artistry, **Lai Heen's** meticulously curated gastronomic journey enables it to take its place in the highly respected accolades for six consecutive years between 2017 and 2022, including the one-star establishment from MICHELIN Guide Hong Kong and Macau, as well as the Best Restaurants Awards from T.Dining Hong Kong and Macau.

Located on the 51st floor of **The Ritz-Carlton**, Macau, Lai Heen, the highest Chinese restaurant in Macau, is headed by Chinese Executive Chef, Jackie Ho Hon-sing. Its unique interior design by Strickland, a design company based in Japan who has also designed The Ritz-Carlton Hotel in China and Malaysia, is known for incorporating local heritage and materials into its design, with handpicked art pieces to enhance the whole architectural style and atmosphere.

The designer's vision of blending Cantonese cuisine with Portuguese heritage can be seen from the blue earthenware along the corridor and the patterns of the Portuguese tiles on the wall – All aiming at bringing restaurant patrons back to Macau's ancient Chinese and Portuguese colonial past. At the entrance corridor, a featured waterfall welcomes guests with soothing sounds of water and lit-up waves, reminiscent of the old trading port of Macau. The corridor is decorated with intricate patterns hollowed out to decorate walls and ceramic vase chandeliers, creating a majestic and refined atmosphere.

The main dining area is carefully decorated with classic China vessels and decorations as well as blue glass pendants suspended from the four-meter high ceiling. When paired with the ceramic vase chandeliers, a sense of classic sophistication is portrayed. The walls are embellished with beautiful designs crafted from thousands of

pieces of Azulejo ceramic tilework.

Named after different precious stones from ancient Chinese culture, the five private dining rooms are ideal for intimate and celebratory occasions, providing a truly exclusive dining venue in which to delight in the high culinary art of the hotel. Part of the main dining area are separated by a sliding partition for flexible table arrangements.

With over 40 years of experience in Cantonese fine-dining, Chef Jackie Ho Hong-sing, Chinese Executive Chef, is highly proficient in bringing Southeast Asian touches to classic Cantonese dishes with a modern twist, infusing them with exciting new presentations and flavours that promise to elevate the dining experience. Signature dishes of Lai Heen include Pan-seared Superior Bird's Nest with Crab Meat, which showcases the marriage of premium Indonesian bird's nest and fresh, succulent crab from Vietnam. Chef Jackie carefully steams the ingredients together with egg white in a spoon to create a delightful, bite-sized version of this classic Cantonese dish. This concoction is then delicately placed with a flavourful broth that boiled for three hours.

Deep-fried Chilean Sea Bass Fillet with Crispy Garlic is inspired by Hong Kong-style stir-fried crabs with crispy garlic and chilli. Instead Chef Jackie prepares it with Chilean Sea Bass from the Southern Ocean near the Antarctica in particular for an even smoother texture and richer flavour. This dish demonstrates Chef Jackie's innovation as well as his expertise with seafood, to craft the ultimate balance between its crunchiness and umami.

For gourmards looking to further elevate their culinary journey, Lai Heen has curated an eclectic menu of wines and spirits, including a rich French Bordeaux selection dedicated to special vintages and a best-in-class Portuguese wine cellar. An extensive selection of premium aged Pu Erh tea is also available.



OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

GREATER EFFORTS REQUIRED TO STRIKE RIGHT BALANCE

The central decision-makers have made it clear that “lying flat” and “co-existence” with COVID-19 are not an option for the country, and the efficient “dynamic clearing” policy should be followed on a “uniform, nationwide chessboard”. The nation is doing just that.

By 9:00 am on Wednesday, there were 187 “key areas of concern” and 81 “key areas of control” across the country. Almost the whole of Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou as well as the most economically active parts of Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces are on the list.

Several localities, including Shanghai and Beijing, have made nucleic acid tests an everyday routine for access to public places, along with various forms and degrees of mobility control in their bid to control the latest wave of the novel coronavirus.

Notably, after reporting only nine confirmed and asymptomatic COVID-19 infections on Tuesday, Zhengzhou, the capital of central Henan province, and the 10th most populous city in China, was placed under a de facto lockdown on Wednesday, with exit and entry strictly “need-based” and subject to approval.

The public has largely displayed unconditional cooperation in the implementation of the corresponding control measures. Although supporting policies need to be in place to ensure that daily necessities are available and people have access to non-COVID medical services, if needed.

It is good to see local authorities seem to have learned the lessons from Shanghai about the critical importance of logistical support. The city had to rush to catch up after initially being caught somewhat on the hop.

Inadequately prepared residents facing the absence of basic supplies and services, are extremely vulnerable under lockdowns. Tragedies can be avoided if proper thought is given to their essential guarantees.

The fundamental aim of the dynamic clearing approach is to save lives, but as the “dynamic” in its descriptor indicates, it is not a one-size-fits-all-circumstances approach. All local governments should actively explore ways to balance the prevention and control work and normal business operations.

For Zhengzhou, a city of more than 10 million people, freezing mobility in much of the downtown area and putting the rest of the city proper under rigid control is no doubt a costly move. It is to be hoped that its bid to control the virus with a short, sharp lockdown proves effective, as lockdowns obviously take a toll on economic activities. The shorter they are the better.

According to the Zhengzhou authorities, the aim is to make the pandemic situation “generally controllable” in a week’s time. We wish them good luck.

To make sure the highly contagious and difficult to detect Omicron variant of the virus does not ruin the initial success in the country’s anti-pandemic campaign, and the national economy doesn’t suffer further damage from a widespread suspension of economic activities, the “early detection, early intervention” principle at the heart of the dynamic clearing approach needs to evolve in light of best practices to ensure the approach becomes increasingly effective and agile.

The Bank of England raised its key interest rate to the highest level in 13 years on Thursday as policymakers around the world combat inflation fueled by high energy prices, Russia’s war in Ukraine and lingering concerns about COVID-19.

The central bank hiked rates for the fourth time since December as U.K. inflation runs at 30-year highs. Its Monetary Policy Committee voted 6-3 to lift the rate that the Bank of England pays other banks by a quarter-percentage point, to 1%. The three members in the minority wanted to raise it even higher — by half a point to 1.25%, the bank said, in a sign of growing momentum for strong

action to counter rising consumer prices.

“Global inflationary pressures have intensified sharply following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. This has led to a material deterioration in the outlook for world and U.K. growth,” the bank said.

It said those developments and COVID-19 restrictions in China have worsened the supply chain shocks that the United Kingdom and other countries face.

The decision comes a day after the U.S. Fed approved the biggest rate increase in more than two decades and signaling that more are on the way, to a range of 0.75% to 1%.



COVID CONTINUES TO DECLINE, EXCEPT IN AMERICAS, AFRICA: WHO

THE World Health Organization said yesterday [Macau time] that the number of newly reported coronavirus cases and deaths globally continued to fall in the last week, continuing a decline that first began in March.

In its weekly report on the pandemic, the U.N. health agency said there were about 3.8 million new infections and more than 15,000 deaths last week, a 17% and 3% drop on the week respectively. But those figures are believed to be a significant underestimate of COVID-19’s true toll as increasing numbers of countries abandon widespread testing and surveillance.

Still, the WHO noted that cases rose by about a third in Africa and 13% in the Americas. There was also a nearly 70% jump in deaths reported in India, although that was attributed to delayed reporting rather than a recent surge of disease.

Last week, authorities in South Africa said they had noted an uptick in COVID-19 cases attributable to the BA.4 mutant

of omicron, although they said it was too early to tell if that would result in a significant new wave of disease. Although the BA.4 version of COVID-19’s omicron variant appears more infectious than omicron, the WHO said there was no evidence yet that it was leading to substantially higher rates of hospitalization or death.

Salim Abdool Karim, a public health expert at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, said that while only a “modest” rise in cases had been noted, South Africa was also in the middle of a holiday period and testing had dropped significantly. He said the cases were slowing and were “not following a rocket-like upward trajectory we would expect” in another spike of disease.

At a press briefing, WHO emergencies chief Dr. Michael Ryan said it was soon to tell if COVID-19 was entering a seasonal pattern and warned against countries dropping all of their restrictions too quickly — as many in the West have done.

“The jury is still out

as to how seasonal this virus will become,” he said, explaining that it wasn’t proven yet that COVID-19 would naturally drop off in the summer and that the world could yet face more unsettling variants. “If people are crowded together in conditions where a new variant is spreading, you will see high levels of transmission,” he said.

Meanwhile in China, authorities continued to crack down on cities including Beijing, where more than 10% of the subway system was shut down in an effort to curb the virus’ spread, after authorities in the capital already closed down indoor dining, gyms and school classes.

In Shanghai, rigid and widely derided restrictions have led to shortages of food and medical aid along with a wider — though likely temporary — impact on the national economy. Desperate, outraged citizens have confronted authorities at barricades and online, screamed out of their windows and banged pots and pans in a sign of frustration and anger.

OPEC and allied oil-producing countries have decided to stick to a modest increase in production, even as Europe’s proposed phaseout of Russian oil threatens to yank millions of barrels off a global market already thirsty for crude. At an online meeting yesterday, the alliance known as OPEC+ — which includes non-member Russia — stayed with its road map to gradually open the oil taps. It agreed to add 432,000 barrels per day in June.



Colombia extradited the alleged head of the feared Gulf Clan, who had been the country’s most wanted drug lord before his capture, to the United States Wednesday where he faces indictments in three federal courts. Colombian President Iván Duque said Dairo Antonio Úsuga David (pictured) is “comparable only to Pablo Escobar,” referring to the late former head of the Medellin drug cartel.



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has urged international donors to sustain funding for humanitarian operations in Africa and across the world even as they respond to the Ukraine crisis. Addressing reporters in Nigeria as he wrapped up his three-nation tour of West Africa, the U.N. chief said donors should actually increase funding for global aid so as not to “undermine” development activities in Africa and other parts of the world.

HOLIDAY TIMES
 Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will be back on the stands on Tuesday May 10. 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.