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PSYCHOTHERAPISTS ADVOCATE DE-STRESSING, SEEKING HELP AMID RISE IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HARDSHIP P5

CITING XI JINPING, CE INSTRUCTS YOUTH TO REMAIN PATRIOTIC P2

CHINA SAYS WHO'S REMARKS ON ZERO-COVID 'IRRESPONSIBLE' P6



AP PHOTO



Japan's capital has announced it will start recognizing same-sex partnerships to ease the burdens faced by residents in their daily lives, but the unions will not be considered legal marriages. Support for sexual diversity has grown slowly in Japan, but legal protections are still lacking for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Japan does not legally recognize same-sex marriages, and LGBTQ people often face discrimination at school, work and at home, causing many to hide their sexual identities.

AP PHOTO



Sri Lankan authorities deployed armored vehicles and troops in the streets of the capital yesterday, two days after pro-government mobs attacked peaceful protesters, triggering a wave of violence across the country. Security forces have been ordered to shoot those deemed to be participating in the violence, as sporadic acts of arson and vandalism continued despite a strict nationwide curfew that began Monday evening.

AP PHOTO



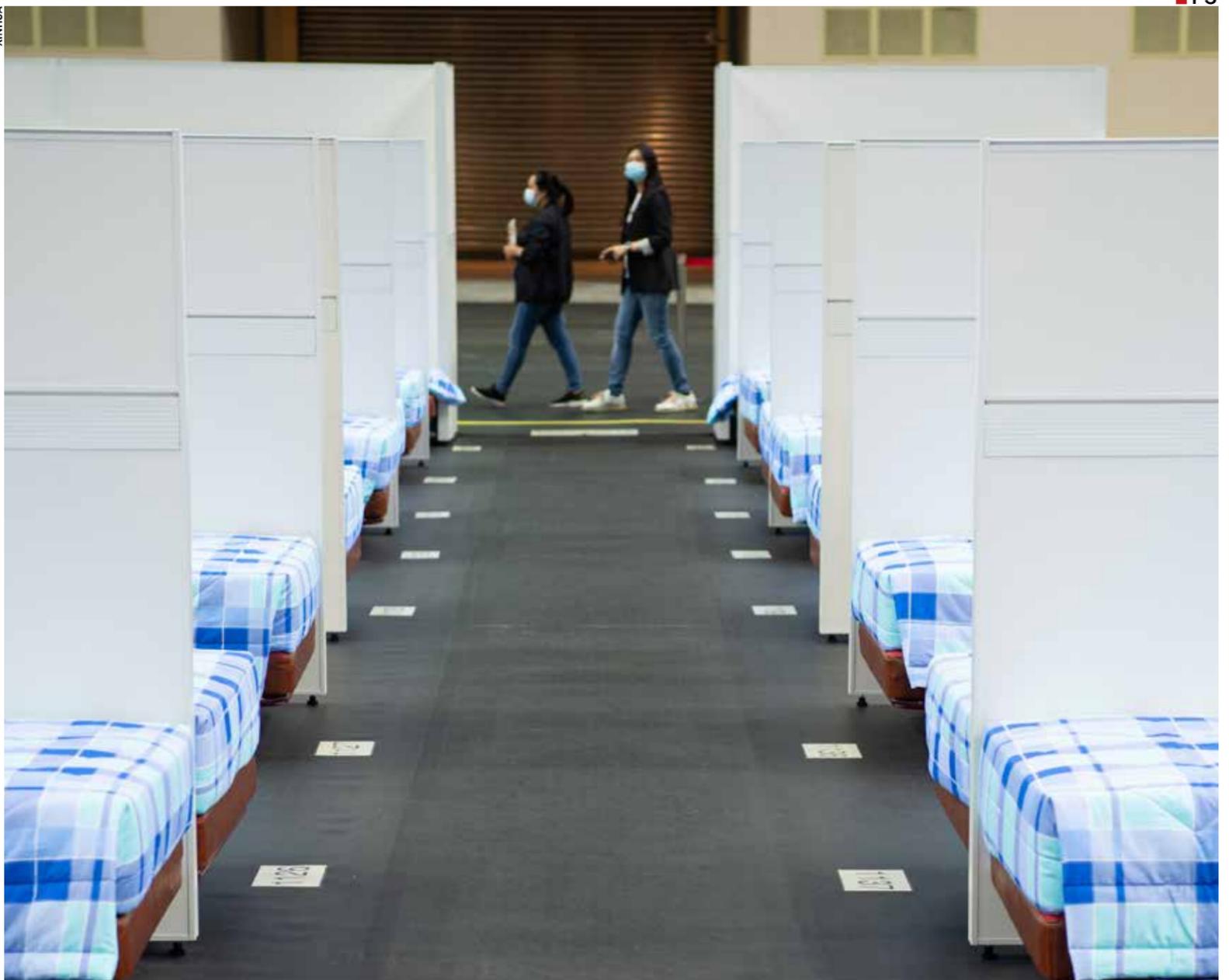
India's top court put the country's colonial-era sedition law on hold yesterday. Critics say the government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi was increasingly using it to silence criticism and dissent. The Supreme Court order asked the Indian government and state authorities to refrain from registering fresh cases under the harsh law while it was under review and allowed accused people detained under it to seek bail from courts.

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XINHUA



GAMING
WYNN RESORTS' CEO OPTIMISTIC ON MACAU DESPITE HEAVY LOSSES

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CRIME
MASSEUSE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BY CUSTOMER

P4

EDUCATION BUREAU TO CLOSELY MONITOR WEATHER IMPACT IN COMING FEW DAYS

Mainland weather forecasters are gearing up for bad weather and Zhuhai is facing floods over extensive areas. In response to these threats Director Kong Chi Meng of the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) stated yesterday that his bureau will be vigilant against any possible intensifying weather conditions that could affect schooling. The bureau will continue communicating with the local weather forecaster in case school suspension is necessary. Meanwhile, Kong said that with the rainy season around the corner, schools have been reminded about response tactics, while children would be permitted to return to school if they do not have guardians at home during workhours.

SUBSIDIZED TRAINING REGISTRATIONS TO START NEXT MONDAY

A new round of subsidized training programs will start receiving registrations from Monday to Friday next week. The Labour Affairs Bureau will accept registrations on its website. The programs will focus on two areas, namely competency improvement and an employability-oriented program. Both programs focus on polishing the skills of participants, but the latter will conduct job-matching or job referral after the completion of the course. Subjects taught will include business administration, culture and creativity, e-commerce, personal development, language and information technology, among other areas. After conclusion of the courses and the meeting of required thresholds, financial subsidies will be given to participants.

DRONE MAPPING MAY BE SHOWN YEARLY AMID POPULARITY

After claiming that the past drone mapping shows have achieved a viewership of 1 million over various channels, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) hinted that it would work hard to "develop the show into an iconic annual activity in Macau." It will "enrich the nocturnal entertainment experience of locals and tourists," the MGTO added. The bureau-level agency explained that on the four show nights, the shows attracted over 100,000 on-site spectators and nearly 950,000 viewers on MGTO's social media platforms. The agency described the shows as "[having] played a significant enhancement to the influx of people into the district."

GAMING

WYNN MACAU LOSSES USD98.3M IN Q1 AMID TOURISM DROUGHT

LYNZY VALLES

AS Macau's market continued to experience decreased visitor numbers during the first quarter, particularly in the second half of the quarter, Wynn Macau recorded a loss of USD98.3 million in the first three months of this year – 31% higher compared to the losses over the same period last year.

However, according to the financial results revealed yesterday, the downturn narrowed from the USD128.2 million losses registered in the fourth quarter of 2021.

In an earnings call with analysts, Craig Billings, CEO of Wynn Resorts remarked, "Encouragingly, during periods where the market is accessible, we see demand return very rapidly with hotel occupancy in the 65% to 75% range during portions of the recent May holiday."

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 Macau welcomed a cumulative volume of 137,000 visitor arrivals during the Golden Week.

MDT ARCHIVE



"Longer term, we remain excited about the prospects for Macau with so much latent demand in the region. The market is evolving, and we are prepared to adapt and grow our business as we embrace those changes," said Billings.

Gaming operators have seen customers in the junket business resurface in different segments and find new ways of monetizing the casino.

Previously, Rob Goldstein, chairman and CEO of Las Vegas Sands, said that the business will evolve to a different structure, adding that the customers are here to stay.

This comes after the start of the turmoil in the junket sector

following the arrests of the junket moguls.

The same goes for MGM China which is focused on capturing and converting former junket players into direct players. The operator also believes that the marketplace is still quite dynamic insofar as the conversion of former junket players to in-house players and, to some extent, to premium mass players, is concerned.

The same sentiment applies for Wynn. According to Billings, "What I find fascinating is throughout the course of Covid-19, we've seen new customers come to Macau, different customer motivations than perhaps historically we've seen, shopping mo-

tivation, leisure motivation."

Part of the reason, according to him, is because Hong Kong has not been accessible. This fact piques the group's interest on the development of Macau from a non-gaming perspective.

"Now we're under no illusion that we're talking about a Las Vegas-style non-gaming market.

It's just a very, very different dynamic there. But [with] the ability to adapt and change our business as the market changes and adapts or even leads, which we've historically done here in Las Vegas, is something that I personally find both fascinating and a very, very interesting investment – [an] incremental investment opportunity," he added.

Citing Xi, CE instructs youth to remain patriotic

AT a seminar recounting Chinese president Xi Jinping's recent speech, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng instructed local youth to retain a patriotic sentiment, among other advice.

On the occasion commemorating the Centenary of The Communist Youth League of China, Xi gave a speech recognizing the contribution of the country's young people in reviving the country, besides expressing his vision for youth.

To celebrate this speech, the local seminar was held and the head of the local government suggested local young people



learn from the spirit underlying the speech. They should also help guide others to build a strong sense of patriotism.

In addition, Ho set out four points for local youths to follow. His first

instruction is to learn how to distinguish right from wrong, and remain on the right path. They should aim to strengthen their political and national security mentalities.

Secondly, they should

polish their skills and competitiveness in addition to cultivating a sense of innovation. Being moral and kind is his third instruction, as distinct from viewing success and failure as "the

wealth of life".

Lastly, they should throw themselves into the masterplan of the country's development, with particular reference to the Greater Bay Area and Hengqin. AL

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ANTHONY LAM

COVID-19

SSM reaffirms position on zero-Covid target

ZERO-Covid policy is the “best option for Macau and should be continued,” pulmonologist Alvis Lo, director of the Health Bureau (SSM), said yesterday on a TDM radio show.

Elaborating on his message, the medical doctor added that the stratagem had been implemented following the same policy in mainland China. The country has been following the zero-Covid policy since the early phase of the Covid-19 pandemic through various tactics, with the current strategy being a dynamic zero-Covid policy.

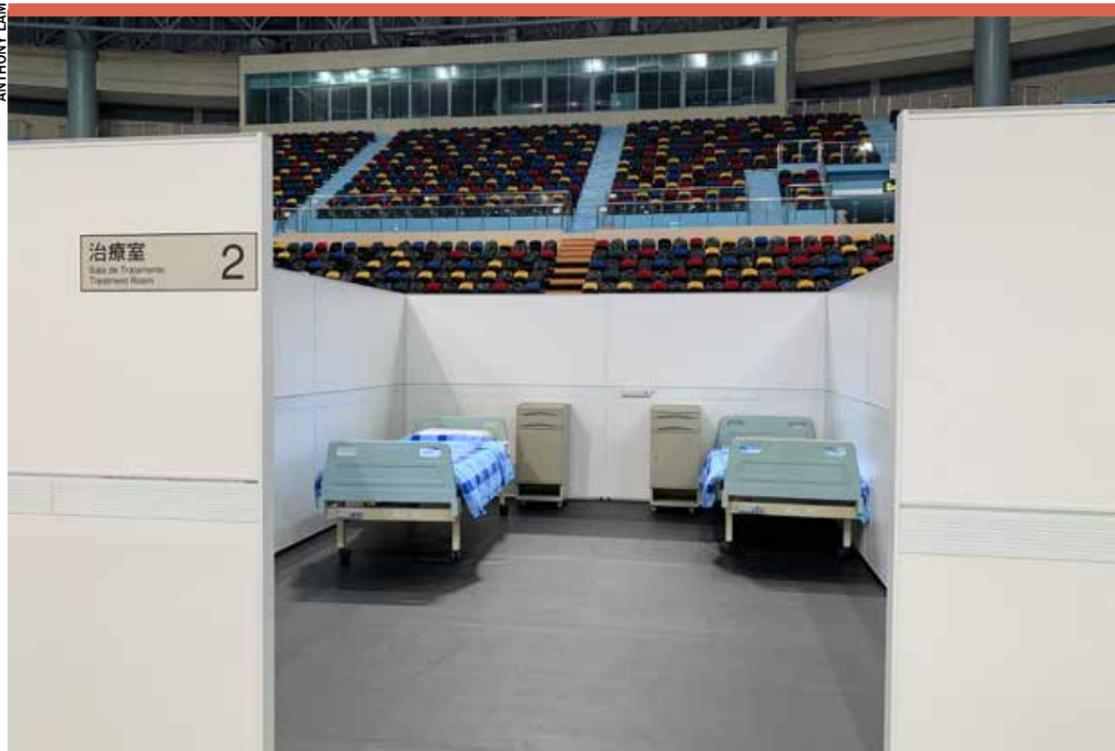
“There is no room for autonomous relaxation,” the medical doctor added.

In fact, the SSM has several times explained that in order to retain relative border normality with mainland China, the city has to maintain the policy.

World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus spoke against the policy on Tuesday for the first time, saying he had been discussing with Chinese experts the need for a different approach in light of new knowledge about the virus.

“When we talk about the ‘zero-Covid,’ we don’t think that it’s sustainable, considering the behavior of the virus now and

ANTHONY LAM



what we anticipate in the future,” Tedros said, as cited in a report issued by the Associated Press.

In response, China yesterday defended sticking to its strict zero-Covid approach, calling critical remarks from the head of the

WHO “irresponsible.”

Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said at a daily briefing yesterday, “We hope that rele-

vant people can view China’s policy of epidemic prevention and control objectively and rationally, get more knowledge about the facts and refrain from making irresponsible remarks.”

FATALITY RESPONSE PLAN

Discussing possible deaths from Covid-19, Lo also disclosed that discussions had been held locally and across the border to prepare response tactics should Covid-19 result in fatalities in the city.

Due to the lack of consensus following debates years ago on the construction of a crematorium in Taipa, the city currently has no such facility. Meanwhile, the law forbids the exportation of bodies with deaths caused by infectious diseases.

The head of the health agency disclosed that the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) would remain in discussion with their Mainland counterparts in search of a solution to this issue. He added that the SSM had already coordinated temporary storage of bodies with funeral homes and other organizations capable of handling freezing processes.

Lo assured the audience of the radio show that the health agency would continuously refine contingencies on outbreak-response, such as personnel training, resource allocation and cross-departmental drills.

SPORTS

TRAMPOLINE GYMNASTICS CHAMPIONSHIP 2022 TO BE HELD THIS SUNDAY

RENATO MARQUES

THE Macau Trampoline Gymnastics Championship is once again moving forward this year. Scheduled for this Sunday (May 15), the championship, organized by the Trampoline and Acrobatic Sports Association of Macau (AT-DAM), will once more take place at the Gymnasium of the International School of Macau.

Around 100 young gymnastics talents representing the Gymnastics Club Macau and the Macau Portuguese School (EPM) are expected to participate.

In the past, this event has had participants from other gymnastics schools and clubs, mostly from the neighboring region of Hong Kong, but due to the current border restrictions on people arriving from outside Macau, those athletes have not been able to take part since 2019.



The event will be divided into two different competitions, one for mini-trampoline, to take place in the morning, and another for tumbling, in the afternoon.

As in the past, participants will be divided into four age groups starting from the younger ones (aged 9 to 10 years old) up to the Junior level (aged 15

years old or older).

The event will start at 9 a.m. and finish around 6 p.m. when the prize award ceremony will be held.

This championship has been held since 2014 when the first tournament took place at the EPM and it is the only championship dedicated to gymnastics hosted in Macau.

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CRIME

MASSEUSE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BY CUSTOMER

RENATO MARQUES

A 43-year-old woman has allegedly been a victim of sexual assault at her workplace, a Judiciary Police (PJ) spokesperson said yesterday during the regular press conference of the police forces.

The case came to light after the non-resident employee from Vietnam, working as a masseuse in a massage parlor in central Macau, called the 999 emergency hotline asking for help from the police.

When the police officers arrived, she told them that the client, a local 45-year-old man working as a doorman, had assaulted her during the massage.

She explained that the man had arrived at the parlor around 2 a.m. May 5 and requested a massage. While she was doing the massage he suddenly got up and tried to rip off her clothes and take off her panties in an attempt to rape her.

After some struggling, she managed to run away from the massage room located on the upper floor of the shop to the lower level calling for other staff members to ring the police.



When the police arrived, the suspect was still in the shop and was intercepted. The case was then transferred to the PJ for investigation.

The PJ investigation called for a medical examination of the woman, which showed clear signs of struggle resulting in scratches and minor wounds on the woman's right thigh.

The suspect denied the accusation and refused to give any testimony to the police, instead remaining silent.

The case has been transferred to

the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) May 6 where the man is being charged of sexual coercion, the PJ said.

MAN ACCUSED OF RAPING, EXTORTING A PROSTITUTE

In a different case also reported by the PJ yesterday, a 32-year-old man from the mainland is being accused of extorting and raping a 35-year-old mainland woman, who was in Macau working as a prostitute.

The case was reported to the police May 10 and occurred on the previous day at a hotel in the Pe-

ninsula central district.

According to the woman, during the sexual service, the client, arranged by a third person, slapped her in the face. She stopped and wanted to leave the room but he prevented her from leaving by a series of threats.

She said that when arriving in the room, the man had asked to see her documents and he saw that she was overstaying in Macau. When the physical assault occurred, he made use of the information to threaten the woman saying that he would report her to the police, the-

reby forcing her to continue to have sex against her will and also to surrender all her money (MOP6,000) to him.

The woman told the PJ that she had come to Macau sometime earlier after meeting a man through a social media platform. The man allegedly told her that he could help her to get clients in Macau for prostitution, asking for a 50% commission. She said that she never met this man nor had any idea what he looked like.

The PJ said that they are investigating the pimping case separately, and trying to find this third person. They have not yet excluded the possibility that the pimp and the man who allegedly sexually assaulted and extorted the woman are the same person.

The rape and extortion case has already been transferred to the MP. The PJ spokesperson stated that besides these crimes, they are also considering an aggravated criminal charge against the suspect since he extorted a person in an illegal immigration situation, a new crime established by recent amendments to the immigration law.

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Experts advocate de-stressing, seeking help amid rise in domestic violence

ANTHONY LAM

LIVING conditions across the region have fluctuated significantly and frequently, causing prolonged stress for many people, according to surveys recently conducted in the region. Knowing how to relax in order to alleviate stress is a crucial factor in the maintenance of a positive lifestyle.

As the American Psychological Association (APA) states, "stress is a normal reaction to everyday pressures, but can become unhealthy when it upsets your day-to-day functioning."

Stress is as commonplace as breathing, eating, and drinking. It occurs regularly and most of the time does not require special attention. However, as the APA says, it may require greater attention if it starts to affect a person's regular functioning.

Recent data from the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) shows that Macau has recorded 81 cases of suspected domestic violence in 2021, an increase of over 100% compared to data from 2020, when 38 cases were recorded.

Reasons for the increase include more time spent with family members during the pandemic, additional pressure on parents in the education of their children and increased conflict between spouses relating to the education of their children.

It can be recalled that earlier this year, a mother has been apprehended by the Judiciary Police (PJ) for committing violence against her eight-year-old son.



The incident was discovered accidentally, as the son reported experiencing pain during school hours. Workers at his school's medical room discovered bruises on his body and notified the police.

At the hospital, bruises were found on his head, both hands and the left side of his abdomen. The boy revealed that he was beaten several times each week, reporting that the most recent time occurred in response to him failing to wring the laundry dry before hanging it up. He was beaten on his back by his mother using a stick.

Speaking to the Times, a Macau-registered psychotherapist, Nadia Chan, explained, "In general, when we encounter a stressor, we have stress response, such as the fight-flight-freeze series, which

will affect our emotion, action, thinking and physical reactions."

'Fight-flight-freeze' is a psychological term to describe the set of reactions that a person may experience when they encounter danger or threat. In a dangerous or threatening situation, a person may fight against the danger, flee the scene, or freeze to evaluate the situation and identify escape options.

Stress is not always unfavorable, according to Chan. "It could be helpful to keep us alert, motivated and ready to avoid danger."

"In terms of the typical normal acute stress response, usually the reactions gradually reduce after the stressor [is removed]," Chan explained. Echoing the APA, Chan noted that stress did not always correspond to poor physi-

cal and mental health.

Dissociation between the physical and mental elements of a person is common in modern day living. To effectively determine the existence of stress, Chan suggests people study their normal behaviors, such as their patterns of resting, eating and digestion.

Meanwhile, recent survey from the General Union of Neighborhood Associations (UGAMM) shows that nearly 50% of the 721 respondents in the city experience anxiety and stress at moderate or higher intensity.

According to the Macau Society of Registered Psychotherapists (MSRP), 36% of all clients seeking help are teenagers and adolescents, double the former figure of 15%.

Chairman of the association, Henry Lao, previously told the Times that the severity of clients' cases has increased. Prior the pandemic, 15 to 16% of the clients had suicidal ideation or self-harm. But now, around 44% are having suicidal ideation.

Such statement echoes the data released by the PJ, which shows that in the first quarter, the number of suicides has increased by an alarming 300%.

The association, therefore, calls on Macau residents, who according to the association, tend to be more reticent about seeking professional help, in seeking for help.

Meanwhile, Chan call for the public to "take good care of and observe daily life function." She said that this process is essential to destressing.

A skill called mindfulness, which is similar to meditation and involves focusing on the 'here and now,' is becoming more popular. It encourages users to concentrate fully on the exact moment at which they are practicing the skill.

Nonetheless, the psychotherapist remarked that people facing traumatic stresses – those triggered by a traumatic event such as violence – should use mindfulness with caution, because it may trigger unwanted emotional or physical consequences.

She added that physical exercise is also a good way to destress. "If exercising is not possible, taking some time out for stretching could be helpful to reduce muscle tension, which could affect our stress response," she explained.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population decrease still attributable to decline in non-resident workers

LYNZY VALLES

THE total population as at end-March 2022 decreased by 1,500 quarter-to-quarter to 681,700, mainly attributable to a drop in the number of non-resident workers living in the SAR.

The number of non-resident workers at end-period (167,738) dropped by 3,360.

Pre-pandemic, the number of migrant workers totaled 196,538 as at the end of 2019. However, that figure plunged to 171,098 as at the

end of 2021, recording a 12% decrease.

Dozens of repatriation flights have been held to accommodate the non-resident workers, as commercial flights out of Macau are still not operating – except for flights to the mainland and to Singapore.

Also, as previously reported by the Times, a number of domestic workers have opted to go back home for good with many deciding that not seeing their families for over two years is a

big price to pay for a minimum wage.

Government figures show that the number of domestic workers in the region has declined to 27,100 in 2021, a 13% decrease from 2020 figures that stood at 31,100.

Meanwhile, data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) shows that women outnumbered men, with the female population (361,300) accounting for 53.0% of the total population,

A total of 1,178 live bir-

ths were delivered in the first quarter of the year, a decrease of 114 quarter-to-quarter.

In the first quarter of 2022, new arrivals from mainland China with one-way permits (620) and individuals newly granted right of abode (215) increased by two and 124 respectively quarter-to-quarter.

A total of 817 cases of marriage registration were recorded in the first quarter, up by five quarter-to-quarter.



WHO-CHINA

BEIJING LABELS TEDROS REMARKS ON 'ZERO-COVID' 'IRRESPONSIBLE'

CHINA yesterday defended sticking to its strict "zero-COVID" approach, calling critical remarks from the head of the World Health Organization "irresponsible."

The response from the Foreign Ministry came after WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said he had been discussing with Chinese experts the need for a different approach in light of new knowledge about the virus.

"When we talk about the 'zero-COVID,' we don't think that it's sustainable, considering the behavior of the virus now and what we anticipate in the future," Tedros said.

Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said at a daily briefing, "We hope that relevant people can view China's policy of epidemic prevention and control objectively and rationally, get more knowledge about the facts and refrain from making irresponsible remarks."

"The Chinese government's policy of epidemic prevention and control can stand the test of history, and our prevention and control measures are scientific and effective," Zhao said. "China is one of the most successful countries in epidemic prevention and control in the world, which is obvious to all of the international community."

Earlier yesterday, deputy director of Shanghai's Center for Disease Control Wu Huanyu reaffirmed the approach's importance in eli-



minating a waning outbreak. He told reporters that while progress has been made, relaxing prevention and control measures could allow the virus to rebound.

"At the same time, now is also the most difficult and critical moment for our city to achieve zero-COVID," Wu said at a daily briefing.

Wu gave no indication he was aware of the comments by Tedros.

Tedros was joined by Mike Ryan, the WHO's emergencies chief, who said all pandemic control actions should "show due respect to individual and human rights."

Countries need to "balance the control measures, the impact on

society, the impact on the economy. That is not always an easy calibration to make," Ryan said.

The incident marked a rare public show of friction between China and the WHO, which has been accused of succumbing to Chinese pressure to avoid criticism and awkward questions about the origins of the virus that was first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019.

China's ruling Communist Party has strictly controlled all discussion about its controversial approach, which aims to totally stamp out outbreaks, and said it would tolerate no criticism, questioning or distortion of the strategy. The entirely state-controlled

media did not report on the comments by Tedros and Ryan and references to them on the Chinese internet appeared to have been removed by censors.

The ruthless and often chaotic implementation of zero-COVID has stirred considerable resentment in Shanghai, where some residents have been under lockdown for more than a month. As yesterday, more than 2 million people in the city remained confined to their residential compounds, while restrictions had been slightly relaxed for most of the other 23 million.

However, the easing appears to now be on hold, even as the number of new cases falls in the city that is home to China's busiest port, main stock market and thousands of Chinese and foreign firms. People in some areas have been ordered to stay home again after having been let out for limited shopping in recent weeks. On Tuesday, service was suspended on the last two subway lines that were still operating.

Complaints have centered on shortages of food and other daily necessities and the forced removal of thousands of people to quarantine centers after having tested positive or having been in contact with an infected person, standard procedure in China's zero-COVID approach.

Along with the human cost, the adherence to "zero-COVID" as many other countries loosen restrictions and try to live with the

virus is exacting a growing economic toll.

However, the party under leader Xi Jinping shows no sign of backing off amid efforts to ensure stability and shore up its authority ahead of a major party congress this fall.

Chinese experts such as Wu have been careful to toe the party line, saying the strategy has been effective in limiting the official death toll in mainland China and that any let-up risks sparking a major new surge.

The daily number of new cases in Shanghai reported today had fallen to less than 1,500, down from a peak of 26,000 in mid-April. Seven more COVID-19-related deaths were reported, raising the toll from the outbreak to 560.

While China says more than 88% of its population is fully vaccinated, the rate is considerably lower among the vulnerable elderly. Questions have also been raised about the efficacy of Chinese-produced vaccines compared to those from Europe and the United States.

In the capital Beijing, residents have been ordered to undergo mass testing in a bid to prevent a major outbreak like that in Shanghai. The city, which reported 37 new cases yesterday, has locked down individual buildings and residential compounds, shut about 60 subway stations and banned dining at restaurants, allowing only takeout and delivery.

The vast Forbidden City museum complex, the ancient home of China's former emperors, will also be closing from Thursday to "reduce the danger of virus transmission in society posed by the circulation of people," it said in a statement. **MDT/AP**

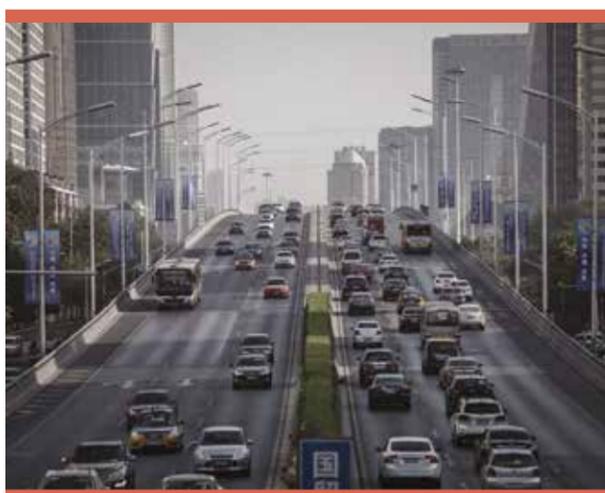
ECONOMY

Vehicle sales plunge 48% but EVs strong as BYD gains

CHINA'S overall vehicle sales for April plunged almost 48 per cent from a year earlier as COVID-19 lockdowns hit factories and showrooms, but sales of electric vehicles surged and Chinese brands took share from global rivals, Reuters reported.

The monthly sales volume was the lowest for the month in a decade, underscoring the economic toll of the tough restrictions China put in place in April in Shanghai and other cities to control the spread of COVID.

The tally released yesterday by the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM) includes sales to dealers of passen-



ger cars and commercial vehicles. Retail sales of passenger cars alone dropped almost 36 per cent in April, data released Tuesday by a separate trade group showed.

Overall, vehicle sales in the first four months of 2022 were down 12 per cent from the same period a year earlier in the world's biggest car market, the CAAM said, as quoted by Reuters.

The bright spot remained sales of electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids, a fast-growing segment China has supported as "new energy vehicles", and where made-in-China brands now dominate. Sales of EVs and plug-in hybrids were up 45 per cent in April and more than doubled over the first four months of the year from 2021 levels.

Among Chinese brands, BYD was the biggest winner, posting a 164 per cent jump in sales in the first four months of the year, including April when its U.S. rival Tesla was hobbled by supply constraints.

BYD, which also makes EV batteries, accounted for 32 per cent of all batteries

installed in electric vehicles in April, trailing CATL, which accounted for 38 per cent, data from the China Automotive and Battery Innovation Alliance showed.

Shares in BYD closed up 8.3 per cent.

Tesla's sales plunged 98 per cent in April with exports down to zero, as Shanghai's lockdown disrupted logistics near its plant, data released Tuesday showed.

Tesla Chief Executive Officer Elon Musk said on Tuesday he expected China's COVID restrictions to be less disruptive and that China sales would account for 25 per cent to 30 per cent of its overall sales in the long term.

"I had conversations with the Chinese government in recent days and it's clear that the lockdowns are being lifted rapidly," he said.

According to Reuters, the CAAM and some private analysts said they also expected production and demand to begin to catch up in coming weeks for the losses in April, when dozens of cities were in full or partial lockdown.

Daiwa Capital Markets said in a note on Tuesday it expected major automakers would "catch up in the coming months to make up for the sales loss in April" with normal production levels in Shanghai this month. **MDT/AGENCIES**

AP PHOTO



Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., the son of the late Filipino dictator, declares victory in presidential election

ANALYSIS

Marcos Jr. presidency complicates US efforts to counter China

DAVID RISING
& JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

FERDINAND Marcos Jr.'s landslide victory in the Philippine presidential election is raising immediate concerns about a further erosion of democracy in Asia and could complicate American efforts to blunt growing Chinese influence and power in the Pacific.

Marcos, the namesake son of longtime dictator Ferdinand Marcos, captured more than double the votes of his closest challenger in Monday's election, according to the unofficial results.

If the results stand, he will take office at the end of June for a six-year term with Sara Duterte, the daughter of outgoing President Rodrigo Duterte, as his vice president.

Duterte — who leaves office with a 67% approval rating — nurtured closer ties with China and Russia, while at times railing against the United States.

He walked back on many of his threats against Washington, however, including a move to abrogate a defense pact, and the luster of China's promise of infrastructure investment has dulled, with much failing to materialize.

Whether the recent trend in relations with the U.S. will continue has a lot to do with how President Joe Biden's administration res-

ponds to the return of a Marcos to power in the Philippines, said Manila-based political scientist Andrea Chloe Wong, a former researcher in the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs.

"On the one hand you have Biden regarding the geostrategic interests in the Philippines, and on the other hand he has to balance promoting American democratic ideals and human rights," she said.

"If he chooses to do that, he might have to isolate the Marcos administration, so this will definitely be a delicate balancing act for the Philippines, and Marcos' approach to the U.S. will highly depend on how Biden will engage with him."

His election comes at a time when the U.S. has been increasingly focused on the region, embarking on a strategy unveiled in February to considerably broaden U.S. engagement by strengthening a web of security alliances and partnerships, with an emphasis on addressing China's growing influence and ambitions.

Thousands of American and Filipino forces recently wrapped up one of their largest combat exercises in years, which showcased U.S. firepower in the northern Philippines near its sea border with Taiwan.

Marcos has been short on specifics about foreign policy, but in interviews he said he wanted

to pursue closer ties with China, including possibly setting aside a 2016 ruling by a tribunal in The Hague that invalidated almost all of China's historical claims to the South China Sea.

A previous Philippines administration brought the case to the tribunal, but China has refused to recognize the ruling and Marcos said it won't help settle disputes with Beijing, "so that option is not available to us."

Allowing the U.S. to play a role in trying to settle territorial spats with China will be a "recipe for disaster," Marcos said in an interview with DZRH radio in January. He said Duterte's policy of diplomatic engagement with China is "really our only option."

Marcos has also said he would maintain his nation's alliance with the U.S., but the relationship is complicated by American backing of the administrations that took power after his father was deposed, and a 2011 U.S. District Court ruling in Hawaii finding him and his mother in contempt of an order to furnish information on assets in connection with a 1995 human rights class action suit against Marcos Sr.

The court fined them \$353.6 million, which has never been paid and could complicate any potential travel to the U.S.

The United States has a long history with the Philippines, which was an American colony for

most of the early 20th century before gaining independence in 1946.

Its location between the South China Sea and western Pacific is strategically important. And while the U.S. closed its last military bases on the Philippines in 1992, a 1951 collective defense treaty guarantees U.S. support if the Philippines is attacked.

The U.S. noted their shared history in its remarks on the election. "We look forward to renewing our special partnership and to working with the next administration on key human rights and regional priorities," State Department spokesperson Ned Price told reporters in Washington.

Even though the Biden administration may have preferred to work with Marcos' leading opponent, Leni Robredo, the "U.S.-Philippines alliance is vital to both nations' security and prosperity, especially in the new era of competition with China," said Gregory B. Poling, director of the Southeast Asia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

"Unlike Leni, with her coherent platform for good governance and development at home and standing up to China abroad, Marcos is a policy cipher," Poling said in a research note. "He has avoided presidential debates, shunned interviews, and has been silent on most issues."

Marcos has been clear, however, that he would like to try again to improve ties with Beijing, Poling said.

"But when it comes to foreign policy, Marcos will not have the same space for maneuver that Duterte did," he said. "The Philippines tried an outstretched hand and China bit it. That is why the Duterte government has reembraced the U.S. alliance and gotten tougher on Beijing over the last two years."

Marcos Sr. was ousted in 1986 after millions of people took to the streets, forcing an end to his corrupt dictatorship and a return to democracy. But the election of Duterte as president in 2016 brought a return to a strongman-type leader, which voters have now doubled-down on with Marcos Jr.

Domestically, Marcos, who goes by his childhood nickname "Bongbong," is widely expected to pick up where Duterte left off, stifling a free press and cracking down on dissent with less of the outgoing leader's crude and brash style, while ending attempts to recover some of the billions of dollars his father pilfered from the state coffers.

But a return to the hard-line rule of his father, who declared martial law for much of his rule, is not likely, said Julio Teehankee, a political science professor at Manila's De La Salle University.

"He does not have the courage or the brilliance, or even the ruthlessness to become a dictator, so I think what we will see is a form of authoritarian-lite or Marcos-lite," Teehankee said.

The new Marcos government will not mean the end of Philippine democracy, Poling said, "though it may accelerate its decay."

"The country's democratic institutions have already been battered by six years of the Duterte presidency and the rise of online disinformation, alongside the decades-long corrosives of oligarchy, graft, and poor governance," he said.

"The United States would be better served by engagement rather than criticism of the democratic headwinds buffeting the Philippines."

Marcos' approach at home could have a spillover effect in other countries in the region, where democratic freedoms are being increasingly eroded in many places and the Philippines had been seen as a positive influence, Wong said.

"This will have an impact on Philippine foreign policy when it comes to promoting its democratic values, freedoms and human rights, particularly in Southeast Asia," she said. "The Philippines is regarded as a bastion of democracy in the region, with a strong civil society and a noisy media, and with Bongbong Marcos as president, we will have less credibility." **MDT/AP**

PUTIN'S WAR

Ukraine cuts Russia gas at one hub, underlining risk to supply

ELENA BECATOROS
& JON GAMBRELL,
ZAPORIZHZHIA

UKRAINE stopped the flow of Russian natural gas yesterday through one of the hubs that feed Western European homes and industry, while a Kremlin-installed official in a southern region seized by Russian troops said the area will ask Moscow to annex it.

The talk of annexation in Kherson — and Russia's apparent willingness to consider such a request — raised the possibility that the Kremlin will seek to break off another piece of Ukraine as it tries to salvage an invasion gone awry. Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

"The city of Kherson is Russia," Kirill Stremousov, deputy head of the Kherson regional administration installed by Moscow, told Russia's RIA Novosti news agency. He said regional officials want Russian President Vladimir Putin to make Kherson a "proper region" of Russia.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that it would be "up to the residents of the Kherson region" to make such a request, and that any move to annex territory would have to be closely evaluated by experts to make sure its legal basis is "absolutely clear."

Russia has repeatedly used annexation or recognition of breakaway republics as tactics in recent years to gain pieces of fellow former Soviet republics Ukraine and Georgia. Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 after holding a referendum on the peninsula over whether it wanted to become part of Russia.

Kherson, a Black Sea port of roughly 300,000, provides access to fresh water for neighboring Crimea and is seen a gateway to wider Russian control over southern Ukraine. It was captured early in the war, becoming Ukraine's first major city to fall.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak mocked the notion of its annexation, tweeting: "The invaders may ask to join



even Mars or Jupiter. The Ukrainian army will liberate Kherson, no matter what games with words they play."

Meanwhile, Ukraine's natural gas pipeline operator said it would stop Russian shipments through a hub in a part of eastern Ukraine controlled by Moscow-backed separatists because of interference from enemy forces, including the apparent siphoning off of gas.

The hub handles about one-third of Russian gas passing through Ukraine to Western Europe. But the immediate effect of the cutoff is likely to be limited since much of the gas can be directed through another pipeline, gas analyst Zongqiang Luo at Rystad Energy said.

Preliminary flow data suggested that was already happening, though Russia's state-owned giant Gazprom indicated the amount of gas flowing to Europe through Ukraine was down 25% from the day before.

European gas futures seesawed on the news, meaning consumers may face higher energy bills at a time of already rising prices.

The cutoff highlights the broader risk to gas supplies in the war and holds symbolic significance as the first time Ukraine has disrupted the flow westward.

"Yesterday's decision is a small preview of what might happen if gas installations are hit by live fire and face the risk of extended downti-

mes," Luo said.

He added that the interruption would also make it harder for European countries to refill underground storage for next winter and would "hasten Europe's plans to move away from imports of Russian gas."

The European Union has sought to reduce its dependence on Russian energy, phasing out its use of coal and considering doing the same for oil. Gas presents a more complicated problem, given both how much Europe uses and the technical difficulties in finding suppliers elsewhere.

It was not clear if Russia would take any immediate hit, since it has long-term contracts and other ways of transporting gas.

On the battlefield, Ukrainian officials said a Russian rocket attack targeted an area around Zaporizhzhia, destroying unspecified infrastructure. There were no immediate reports of casualties. The southeastern city has been a refuge for civilians who have fled the Russian siege in the devastated port city of Mariupol.

Russian troops continued to pound the steel plant that is the last bastion of Ukrainian resistance in Mariupol, its defenders said. The Azov Regiment said on social media that Russian forces carried out 38 airstrikes in the previous 24 hours on the grounds of the Azovstal steelworks.

The plant, with its network of tunnels and bunkers, has sheltered hun-

dreds of Ukrainian troops and civilians during a month-long siege. Scores of civilians were evacuated in recent days, but Ukrainian officials said some may still be trapped there.

In his nightly address Tuesday, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy suggested Ukraine's military is gradually pushing Russian troops away from Kharkiv, the country's second-largest city and a key to Russia's offensive in the Donbas, the eastern industrial region that the Kremlin has said is its main objective.

Zelenskyy said his troops drove Russian forces out of four villages near Kharkiv, in the country's northeast.

Ukraine is also targeting Russian air defenses and resupply vessels on Snake Island in the Black Sea in an effort to disrupt Moscow's efforts to expand its control over the coastline, according to the British Ministry of Defense.

The ministry said Russian resupply vessels have minimum protection since the Russian Navy retreated to Crimea following the sinking of the flagship of its Black Sea fleet.

Separately, Ukraine said it shot down a cruise missile targeting the Black Sea port city of Odesa yesterday.

The gas cutoff came as Western powers have been looking to ratchet up economic pressure on Moscow and bolster Ukraine's defenders. The U.S. House approved a \$40 billion Ukraine aid package Tuesday. Senate approval appeared certain.

Still, there is growing fear that the fighting in Ukraine may remain a source of continental and global instability for months or even years.

U.S. officials and NATO have expressed concern that Russia may be digging in for a protracted conflict as the war grinds into its third month with little sign of a decisive military victory for either side and no resolution in sight.

this day in history

1967 STANSTED TO BECOME LONDON'S THIRD AIRPORT



The British Government has given the green light to plans to convert Stansted into London's third airport.

President of the Board of Trade Douglas Jay told the House Of Commons that the small airfield in Essex would become the site for a £47m international airport by 1974.

Announcing the decision following the conclusions of a White Paper, Mr Jay said the verdict had been reached "after very careful consideration".

There had been considerable support for an alternative site on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent but Stansted was eventually selected by an inter-departmental committee.

The cost of developing Stansted, where there was already an airport with a 10,000ft runway, would be far cheaper than building a new airfield from scratch.

But Mr Jay said that the government had carried out a thorough re-examination and was satisfied that Stansted, though by no means ideal, was the best area for the airport.

Under proposals in the White Paper, the current airfield will be extended from 800 acres to 2,500 acres and once operational will include two parallel runways for supersonic and jumbo jets.

On top of the £41m development, another £6m will be allocated for road and rail access.

When the new travel facilities are completed it will take 70 minutes by road using the M11 and 45 minutes by rail to reach the airport from central London.

The development will also create jobs for over 20,000 people.

But 20 schools and a hospital will have to close and around 7,000 houses will be exposed to high levels of noise.

Peter Kirk, MP for Saffron Walden, objected to the development and said the decision would be received with "deep resentment and bitterness in his constituency".

But Mr Jay said: "We realise there will be regret in the neighbourhood but this is inescapable wherever the airport is placed.

"No matter where the airport is sited, there will be a disturbance to some people who live and work in the area."

Farmers also objected to the development on the grounds that it would lead to the loss of good agricultural land. [...]

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The decision to build Britain's third airport at Stansted came against a background of 10 years of discussion. More than 3,000 people from towns and villages in north Essex and east Hertfordshire took part in a rally in the weeks following the announcement.

The airport's first terminal building opened in 1969 and was expanded a year later to handle a growing number of holidaymakers.

In 1979 it was, once again, designated as London's third airport.

In 1984, the government approved a plan to develop Stansted in two phases, involving both airfield and terminal improvements that would increase the airport's capacity to 15 million passengers per year.

Construction of the current terminal building began in 1986 and was completed in 1991.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You can come up with solutions to the problems responsible for inefficiencies at work. Be wary of those who have overly strong convictions. Your partner may make you feel jealous and unloved.

TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20
Your high energy will enable you to take the role of leader in group functions. A long discussion is in order if you wish to clear the air. Family members may feel anxious if you make promises you don't deliver.

GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21
Travel should be on your agenda. Expect to pay more than anticipated for entertainment or other purchases. Don't forget to read the fine print.

CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You'll be able to discuss your ambitions with your mate. Romance can surface if you get into some of those fitness programs you've been putting off.

LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Your need to be in a leadership position will help you surpass any rivals you might encounter. Be sure to pay attention to your financial status.

VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Look into physical activities that will help get rid of some of that tension you may be feeling. Plan to do things with your faithful pet or with youngsters who have interesting hobbies.

LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22
You may be overly emotional when dealing with your mate. You can get into self awareness groups or look into physical enhancement programs. Don't confront the situation if you don't feel you can keep your cool.

SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Partnerships may be strained if one of you has been erratic and hard to deal with. Don't get depressed, get busy. You can accomplish a lot if you're willing to put in a little extra time.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21
You can make extra cash if you act on a hunch. Someone you live with may cause drastic alterations in your usual routine. You need to make your lower feel wanted, not like a piece of the furniture.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Spend time getting into physical activities. Romance can surface if you get into some of those fitness programs you've been putting off. Don't let your mate talk you into going somewhere you'd rather not go.

AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Don't let your boss make you feel guilty enough to take work home with you. Travel and family gatherings should be in order. This will be a very hectic day if you've made promises to too many people.

PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20
For best results get out of the office and do your job en route. You will have opportunities to advance, but you may have to be willing to make some changes and possibly a residential move.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	10	22	fine
Changchun	9	17	cloudy
Chengdu	18	28	overcast
Chongqing	20	26	rain
Fuzhou	20	25	rain
Guangzhou	23	25	rain
Guiyang	14	20	rain
Haikou	25	31	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	16	25	overcast
Harbin	8	17	showers
Hefei	15	21	rain
Nanjing	16	21	overcast
Shanghai	18	24	overcast
Taipei	22	24	rain
Wuhan	15	22	overcast
Hong Kong	26	27	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	9	22	rain
Frankfurt	12	23	overcast
Paris	10	22	overcast
London	9	18	overcast
New York	15	22	cloudy

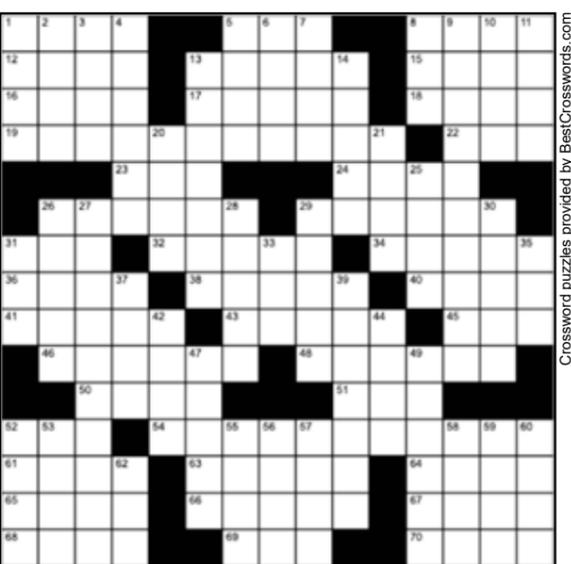
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Aggregate; 5- Perform in a play; 8- Big do; 12- Bluesy James; 13- Nonsense; 15- "Stay" singer Lisa; 16- Unwritten; 17- Arrive at; 18- Bald eagle's relative; 19- Showing affection; 22- Sea arm; 23- Black gold; 24- Actress Singer; 26- Sails collectively; 29- Upward trend; 31- Jockey Turcotte; 32- Group character; 34- Family car; 36- Scraps; 38- Relaxes; 40- One of the Simpsons; 41- Conductor Zubin; 43- Awkward boors; 45- Comic Louis; 46- Correctly; 48- Monetary unit of Tonga; 50- Length times width; 51- Calendar abbr.; 52- PC key; 54- Important; 61- Churn; 63- "The Family Circus" cartoonist Bil; 64- Human leg joint; 65- Bit; 66- Open, as a gate; 67- School founded by Henry VI; 68- French summers; 69- Nine-digit ID; 70- Swedish soprano Jenny;

DOWN 1- Feline line; 2- Gillette brand; 3- Toronto paper; 4- Falls-jumping fish; 5- On or towards the Mediterranean, for example; 6- Burn slightly; 7- Diplomacy; 8- Schooner fill; 9- Sinister; 10- Actress Sofer; 11- Mind; 13- Church dignitary; 14- Young of the dog; 20- Shelter for honeybees; 21- Improvised bed; 25- Monetary unit of Cambodia; 26- Chick of jazz; 27- Hard coal; 28- Biblical verb; 29- Deplete; 30- Gut course; 31- CD-; 33- Barcelona bear; 35- Not for a Scot; 37- Be up and about; 39- Employee; 42- Matures; 44- Dress often worn by Hindu women; 47- Japanese three-line verse; 49- Metallic element; 52- HOMES part; 53- Chimney residue; 55- Mil. leaders; 56- Apprehends; 57- ___ uproar; 58- Not pro; 59- Light gas; 60- Watch over; 62- Part of UNLV;

Yesterday's solution

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



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- 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
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- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
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MARKETS

ASIAN STOCKS MIXED, CHINA GAINS AHEAD OF US PRICE DATA

ELAINE KURTENBACH,
BUSINESS WRITER

SHARES were mixed in Asia yesterday with Chinese benchmarks pressing higher after a rally in technology companies helped reverse most of an early slide on Wall Street.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose 1.1% to 19,853.66 and the Shanghai Composite index climbed 1.4% to 3,079.40.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 added 0.3% to 26,249.83 while the S&P/ASX 200 edged 0.1% lower to 7,041.20. In Seoul, the Kospi was unchanged at 2,596.63.

Investors are awaiting the release today [Macau time] of the Labor Department's report on consumer prices for April. On Thursday, it will release its report on producer prices, or wholesale prices that impact businesses, for April.

The pace of price increases will influence the Federal Reserve's strategy on interest rates and other monetary policy. The concern is that aggressive action to tame inflation might cause the



economy to tip into recession. "Some wait-and-see is largely in place, as participants refrain from taking on excessive risks while awaiting how markets will react to the expected decline in US CPI — the first in seven months," Jun Rong Yeap of IG said in a commentary.

Stocks ended mixed on Wall Street Tuesday after a rally in technology companies helped reverse most of an early slide.

The S&P 500 wound up 0.2% higher at 4,001.05 after giving up most of an early gain of 1.9%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 0.3% to 32,160.74.

The Nasdaq composite rose 1% to 11,737.67.

Big technology stocks, which have been swinging sharply both up and down recently, accounted for much of the S&P 500's turnaround. Apple rose 2.2% and Microsoft rose 2.2%.

Gains in communication and health care stocks also helped lift the market, outweighing declines in financial, real estate and other sectors.

Bond yields were mixed. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 2.99% from 3.08% late Monday.

Treasury yields have been rising and stocks have been extremely volatile recently as Wall Street adjusts to the central bank's moves to raise interest rates from historic lows to fight persistently rising inflation, which is at its highest levels in four decades.

The central bank has raised its benchmark rate from close to zero, where it sat for much of the coronavirus pandemic. Last week, it indicated it will double the size of future increases.

Higher prices on raw materials, shipping and labor have been cutting into corporate financial results and forecasts. Many companies have been raising prices on everything from clothing to food, raising concerns that consumers will eventually cut spending, which would hurt

economic growth.

Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine has only increased worries about rising inflation. The conflict pushed already high oil and natural gas prices even higher, while putting more pressure on costs for key food commodities like wheat. Wheat prices are up more than 40% for the year.

U.S. crude oil prices fell 3.2% on Tuesday, but are up about 36% in 2022. The U.S. benchmark gained \$2 to \$101.76 per barrel yesterday in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Brent crude, the international basis for pricing oil, jumped \$2.14 to \$104.60 per barrel.

Investors are reviewing the latest round of corporate earnings with mixed results. Peloton tumbled 7.4% as the former pandemic darling of investors reported results that were much weaker than Wall Street was expecting. Food distributor Sysco rose 8.2% after beating analysts' forecasts.

Migraine treatment developer Biohaven Pharmaceutical surged 69% after Pfizer said it will buy the company for \$11.6 billion. Pfizer already owns a portion of the company.

In currency dealings, the dollar slipped to 130.37 Japanese yen from 130.43 yen. The euro rose to \$1.0537 from \$1.0532. **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 world's Ports are produced. Both restored relics overlooking the Rio Douro, these eight rooms houses have been blessed with gorgeous wooden floors, plush queen beds and marble baths; the best have dazzling river views. But it is the welcome that makes this place stand out from the crowd.



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TENNIS

Nadal bounces back from loss to Alcaraz, beats Isner in Rome

ANDREW DAMPF, ROME

ONCE is enough when it comes to beating Rafael Nadal on a clay court.

Throughout his career, Nadal has never lost consecutive matches on his favorite surface and the Spaniard extended that perfect record on Wednesday by beating John Isner 6-3, 6-1 to reach the third round of the Italian Open.

Nadal was coming off a loss to 19-year-old Carlos Alcaraz in the Madrid Open quarterfinals last week. After a first-round bye, he improved to 44-0 in matches on clay following a loss on the surface.

Perhaps more importantly, Nadal regained some confidence as he works his way back from a rib stress fracture that kept him out for six weeks before the tournament in Madrid.

While he would clearly love to add to his record total of 10 Italian



Open titles, Nadal's bigger objective is regaining his top form in time for the French Open, which starts in less than two weeks. Nadal has won 13 of his 21 Grand Slam titles at Roland Garros.

When the match finished, Nadal headed straight to the practice court to hit more balls. He explained that he's a "bit in a rush"

to find his best form "as soon as possible."

"I need to work as much as I can," Nadal said. "The match today was not that demanding physically."

It was essentially decided during one brief stretch.

Nadal struggled on his serve at 3-3 in the first set, missing a fo-

rehand into the net then double-faulting to set up break points for Isner. But the American made unforced errors on both of his break-point opportunities and Nadal eventually held.

In the following game, Nadal broke Isner's serve when the 6-foot-10 American missed a comfortable forehand volley into the net. Nadal then held at love to close out the first set and broke Isner's serve in the opening game of the second.

"I finished better than I started — without a doubt," Nadal said. "He had some chances on the returns. I was in his hands in that moment. Lucky that he missed those shots."

Nadal improved to 19-0 against Americans on clay, having been forced to a deciding set only twice — both times by Isner, who pushed Nadal to five sets at the 2011 French Open and three sets at the 2015 Monte Carlo Masters.

Up next, Nadal meets Denis Shapovalov, the Canadian he beat

at the same stage last year in a grueling three-set comeback victory in which the Spaniard saved two match points.

"Super lucky," Nadal said, reflecting back to playing Shapovalov last year. "I know how dangerous he is. I need to play better than today."

Second-seeded Alexander Zverev, who was routed by Alcaraz in the Madrid final on Sunday, beat Sebastian Baez 7-6 (6), 6-3 to end the Argentine qualifier's eight-match winning streak.

Wearing a ribbon with the colors of Ukraine's flag pinned to her hat, defending women's champion Iga Swiatek extended her winning streak to 24 matches with a 6-3, 6-0 victory over Romanian qualifier Elena-Gabriela Ruse.

The top-ranked player from Poland will next face former No. 1 Victoria Azarenka, who beat Camila Osorio 6-2, 6-4.

Also, 2019 French Open semifinalist Amanda Anisimova eliminated Olympic gold medalist Belinda Bencic 7-6 (5), 6-1, and Croatian qualifier Petra Martic beat fifth-seeded Anett Kontaveit 6-2, 6-3.

Madrid finalist Jessica Pegula advanced when Anhelina Kalinina withdrew before their match because of an upper back injury. The American will next face third-seeded Aryna Sabalenka. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

NUCLEIC ACID TESTING FOR PEOPLE'S OWN GOOD

The fight against the novel coronavirus in Beijing continues, with the capital reporting 50 new confirmed cases on Monday. To cut the chain of transmission of the more infectious Omicron variant of the virus, the city is implementing strict prevention and control measures, including halting operations of all businesses except for those that are vital for people's daily needs, requiring all people to work from home in certain districts considered risky, and conducting round after round of testing.

Since April 25, Beijing has conducted eight rounds of nucleic acid testing and more may be on their way, which has prompted some to question whether it is necessary to do so with such high frequency.

The answer is yes, as this is determined by the very features of the Omicron variant, which spreads faster than any previous variant, with a doubling infection rate of two to three days, according to the World Health Organization. Worse, it is very hard to detect the Omicron variant during the early stages of infection, which has made it necessary to conduct nucleic acid testing repeatedly to identify hidden infections as early as possible to contain the spread of the virus.

The government has devised a strategy of "early detection, early quarantine and early hospitalization" to win the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic, with mass nucleic acid testing being the most effective weapon in this race against time. Once a new case is detected, public health workers and officials will kick-start related work such as epidemiological investigation, tracing of close contacts and targeted lockdowns within the shortest possible time. This tried and tested formula has helped save thousands of lives, and generally kept the country's economic activities basically on a normal track.

Thanks to this dynamic clearing approach, and with the cooperation of local residents, Shenzhen in Guangdong province quickly resumed normal work and production at the end of March having suspended them earlier in the month, while community transmission has been contained in Jilin province since mid-April after lockdowns were imposed in March. There is therefore every reason to believe Beijing will return to normalcy in the near future.

The lockdowns come at a price of course, both socially and economically. But the effort is still worthwhile given the huge potential risks if the virus is allowed to spread unchecked. To avoid the worst-case scenario, it requires all residents to cooperate and make some short-term sacrifices for long-term gains. Each member of society must realize the severity of the challenge and do his/her due part by following the government's anti-pandemic guidelines and getting tested as required.

FINNISH PM SAYS JOINING NATO WILL STRENGTHEN SECURITY

Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin said the possibility of her country joining NATO was for the security of its citizens and called for the international community to unite in stepping up sanctions against Russia during talks yesterday in Japan.

Non-aligned Finland and Sweden are set to announce their positions on NATO membership this week in what could be a serious blow to Russia as its military struggles to make decisive gains in Ukraine.

"If Finland makes this historical step it is for the security of

our own citizens," Marin told a news conference after holding talks with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. "Joining NATO will strengthen the whole international community that stands for common values."

Marin said she and Kishida discussed "Russia's horrible aggression against Ukraine and its consequences." She said that sanctions against Moscow need to cover energy, finance and transport sectors "more broadly than now."

Kishida thanked Marin for traveling all the way from Helsinki while her government is deciding on NATO membership.

THE BUZZ



Hong Kong's outspoken cardinal Joseph Zen (center) and other religious protesters during a protest in 2012

HONG KONG AUTHORITIES ARREST CARDINAL ZEN, THREE OTHERS: REPORTS

HONG Kong authorities arrested a Roman Catholic cardinal, a singer and two others yesterday on suspicion of colluding with foreign forces to endanger China's national security, reports said.

Cardinal Joseph Zen, singer-actress Denise Ho, lawyer Margaret Ng and scholar Hui Po-keung were detained by Hong Kong's National Security Police, the U.K.-based human rights group Hong Kong Watch said.

The arrests were apparently related to their roles as trustees of the 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund, which provided legal aid to people who took part in 2019 pro-democracy protests that were quashed by security forces, the group said. The fund closed in 2021, it said.

Scores of pro-democracy activists have been arrested under a sweeping National Security Law imposed on the city by Beijing in 2020 following the demonstrations. The city's independent media have been gutted and its legislature reorganized to

pack it with Beijing loyalists.

90-year-old Zen, the retired archbishop of Hong Kong, is a fierce critic of China and has been blistering in his condemnation of the Vatican's 2018 agreement with Beijing over bishop nominations, which he has said was a sellout of underground Christians in China.

The Vatican didn't immediately respond when asked for comment on his reported arrest.

Ho also has been outspoken in her advocacy of civil and political rights. Her manager, Jelly Cheng, confirmed Ho's arrest but said she had no other information.

Hui was arrested at Hong Kong's international airport as he sought to leave the city, Hong Kong Watch said.

"Today's arrests signal beyond a doubt that Beijing intends to intensify its crackdown on basic rights and freedoms in Hong Kong," said the group's chief executive, Benedict Rogers.

"We urge the international community to shine a light on this brutal

crackdown and call for the immediate release of these activists," Rogers said.

Several leading Hong Kong activists have fled to Taiwan, Britain or elsewhere, while thousands of other Hong Kongers have chosen to leave the city, raising concerns about the economic future of the Asian financial center of 7.4 million.

The arrests follow the selection on Sunday of Hong Kong's new leader, John Lee, a hard-line former security chief who ran unopposed in a process supervised by Beijing.

The European Union and foreign ministers from the Group of Seven industrialized countries — Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the U.K. and the U.S. — condemned the election as fundamentally undemocratic and a betrayal of the "one country, two systems" principle under which Hong Kong was supposed to retain its own political, legal and economic system for 50 years after the end of British colonial rule. **MDT/AP**

United Nations was seeking \$144 million yesterday needed to fund the salvage operation of a decaying tanker full of oil moored off the coast of Yemen, a ship whose demise could cause an environmental disaster. The amount includes \$80 million to transfer the more than 1 million barrels of crude oil the FSO Safer is carrying to storage, said David Gressly, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Yemen.



European Union will no longer require masks to be worn at airports and on planes starting next week amid the easing of coronavirus restrictions across the bloc. The European Union Aviation Safety Agency said it hoped the joint decision, made with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, would mark "a big step forward in the normalization of air travel" for passengers and crews.

French judges at the Paris Tribunal yesterday opened an investigation into torture allegations against Interpol President Maj. Gen. Ahmed Nasser al-Raisi of the United Arab Emirates. Two British citizens, Matthew Hedges and Ali Issa Ahmad, who had both been detained in the UAE before al-Raisi was elected president of the France-based world police agency, will on Wednesday give evidence against him at the Specialized Judicial Unit for Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes of the Paris Tribunal, their lawyers said.

El Salvador A court has sentenced a woman who suffered an obstetric emergency that ended her pregnancy to 30 years in prison for aggravated homicide, according to a nongovernmental organization assisting in her defense. The Citizen Group for the Decriminalization of Abortion said yesterday in a statement that a woman they identified only as "Esme" was sentenced Monday. The woman had already been in pre-trial detention for two years following her arrest when she sought medical care in a public hospital.