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AN INMATE WAS FOUND DEAD INSIDE THE LAVATORY OF HER CELL AT THE COLOANE PRISON EARLY YESTERDAY MORNING, THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES BUREAU CONFIRMED P2

CHANNEL CHECKS INDICATE VISA DENIAL OF FREQUENT GAMBLERS: BERNSTEIN P4

STUDENTS STAGE PEACEFUL PROTEST IN BEIJING UNI AGAINST COVID RESTRICTIONS P6



Indonesia is lifting its outdoor mask mandate because its Covid-19 outbreak is increasing under control, President Joko Widodo said yesterday. However, a mask mandate remains in place for indoor activities and public transportation, he said. Widodo also said all fully vaccinated travelers will no longer be required to undergo Covid-19 tests to enter Indonesia.



Japan's government announced yesterday it will begin allowing small package tours from four countries later this month before gradually opening up to foreign tourism for the first time since it imposed tight border restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic. Transport Minister Tetsuo Saito said the tours will be allowed from Australia, Singapore, Thailand and the United States as an experiment. Participants must be triple-vaccinated and the tours must have guides and fixed itineraries.



India At least 11 people have died in floods and mudslides triggered by heavy rains in India's remote northeast region, officials said yesterday. Several railway stations were closed because of floods, said Nazreen Ahmed, a senior official in Assam's Dima Hasao district. She said nearly 200,000 people in the district were cut off from the rest of the state as roads and bridges were either blocked by landslides or washed away. The army deployed helicopters to help with rescue efforts.

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NOT ON AGENDA

Metaverse and cryptocurrency not on Secretary Rosário's current legislation agenda P3



CRIME

SUSPECT OF DOUBLE HOMICIDE ARRESTED IN HUNAN

CRIME

SUSPECT OF COTAI MURDER APPREHENDED IN HUNAN

THE male suspect in a murder case that took place in a resort in Cotai on May 7 was apprehended yesterday by the mainland police in the Hunan Province of China.

According to earlier disclosure by the local Judiciary Police (PJ), two women were found to have been strangled to death in a room of MGM Cotai

The PJ held a press conference to announce the arrest yesterday afternoon.

On the question whether the male suspect, aged 34 years, will be expedited for trial in Macau, a PJ spokesperson said that negotiations with the mainland police will determine the outcome.

As per current investigations, the PJ discovered that the suspect arrived in Macau on April 29 and stayed in several hotels. These hotel rooms were rented under his name except the last room, where the crime took place.

The room that formed the crime scene was rented by somebody else, with the

AP PHOTO



booking either being sold or lent to the suspect.

The local police disclosed that the suspect asked the first victim to come to his room at about 9 p.m. on May 5, claiming he would get his money exchanged to another currency.

At 1 a.m. the next morning, he started gambling with HKD600,000, which au-

thorities believe he had been robbed from the victim. He lost all the money to the casino.

Three hours later, he brought another woman, the second victim, into the room. It was believed that he procured sexual services from the woman.

At about 7 a.m., he left Macau through the Border Gate.

The PJ explained the difficulty of the investigations, saying that the suspect had worn wigs and hats, cleaned the crime scene, and taken property and identification from the victims.

Meanwhile, the Hunan Police announced that it mobilized more than 700 officers to arrest the suspect in a mountainous area in the province. **AL**

GOV'T REITERATES BAN ON JOB CHANGE OF BLUE CARD HOLDERS

THE SAR government has restated that it regulates the job changes of non-resident workers in accordance with the law.

According to the current "Law on the Employment of Non-resident Workers", non-resident workers can only work for the employer and do the work associated with the position specified on the Non-resident Worker's Identification Card, colloquially known as a blue card.

In the statement, the government reiterates that if a non-resident worker resigns at his or her own instigation without negotiating with the employer, or is terminated with just cause by their employer before the expiry of the labor contract, the Authorization to Stay as Worker granted to the non-resident worker will be revoked or invalidated.

In addition, the so-called "big employment ban" will restrict the job change of the non-resident worker, meaning that he or she will not be granted a new Authorization to Stay within six months.

The Times is aware that many migrant workers have changed jobs during the pandemic, making use of the "Covid-19 visa" being given to the "stranded workers," as there are still no regular flights.

Some employees who have been banned from acquiring work for six months have managed to remain in the region due to the visa given to them while they look for new potential employers.

The Times is also aware of several cases where former domestic helpers have opted to seek employment at cleaning companies when their contracts ended.

Meanwhile, if the Authorization to Stay as Worker is terminated before the expiry of the labor contract for the following four reasons: the employment authorization granted to the employer is revoked, the employer and the employee agree to terminate the employment, the employer terminates the labor contract unilaterally or without just cause, the employee terminates the labor contract with just cause, the so-called "small employment ban" will restrict the job change of the non-resident worker.

This means that he or she will be granted a new Authorization to Stay as Worker only when his or her new job within six months is the same as the occupation approved in the most recent employment authorization. **LV**



MACAU PHOTO AGENCY

Inmate found dead at Coloane Prison

AN inmate was found dead inside the lavatory of her cell at the Coloane Prison in the early hours of yesterday morning, the Correctional Services Bureau (DSC) has confirmed.

The 35-year-old resident of mainland China had been in the preventive detention at the Coloane Prison since January 2020, for the crimes of "aggravated homicide and committing the crime of prohibited weapons."

She was sentenced to 24 years in prison.

At around 3:26 a.m. yesterday, while the guards were patrolling the cells, everything was in its usual state. However, when the guards returned to patrol at 3:40 a.m., they discovered that the inmate appeared to have hanged herself.

RENATO MARQUES



When the guards came to her, her heart was still beating and she was breathing poorly.

The prison medical team arrived at the scene to provide first aid and summoned the ambulance to transport her to the public hospital for

emergency treatment. However, the death of the inmate was confirmed at 4:49 a.m. after unsuccessful emergency treatment. The incident was referred to the Judiciary Police for investigation.

The inmate committed self-harm and attempted suicide

in 2020, therefore, she had been provided with psychiatric counselling sessions.

At the same time, security and surveillance measures were reinforced, including an increase in the frequency of patrolling prison guards and the placement of the inmate in a non-individual cell so as to benefit from the care of her cellmates.

The DSC said it has contacted the inmate's family to provide the necessary assistance and support.

The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) encourages residents to be conscious of their psychological and emotional state as well as those of their relatives and friends. If in need, residents can call Caritas' Life Hope hotline (28525222) or IAS' counseling hotline (28261126). **LV**

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Metaverse and crypto not on Rosário's current legislation agenda

ANTHONY LAM

AT this stage, the concepts of 'metaverse' and cryptocurrency will not be on the telecom-related legislation agenda, Secretary for Transport and Public Works Raimundo do Rosário has said.

Yesterday, on the sidelines of a government event, the senior official was asked by the Times whether the emerging concept of 'metaverse,' in which cryptocurrency is possibly the only means of payment, will be reviewed in his legislation plan.

Discussing the future of local telecom services, Rosário reiterated that his team had been working on the topic "in an overall perspective," but that the concepts of metaverse and cryptocurrency would not be included in the current agenda.

"Treat us with more patience," Rosário said.

In addition, he reiterated that 5G infrastructure and incubation is in progress.

"I hope the public can give us more time as, for the time being, I have no update on the matter," Rosário said. "We are confident, though."

Repeatedly highlighting the complexity of the topic, the senior official emphasized that 5G services are being prioritized. "We are quite confident that we



can at least start the operation of 5G services this year," he added.

When questioned about whether the Telecom Law should pass through the parliament before 5G services are commenced in Macau, the senior official said he had no comment.

However, Rosário expects to see them before the end of the year.

He added that the government is still within the process of sorting concession assets in the telecom industry.

What will also commence this year are land auctions and the East Line of the Light Rapid Tran-

sit (LRT), he added.

On the recent suspension of Macau Pass services on LRT ticketing, the senior official explained it was so that the Macau Pass tap-and-go function could be installed at gates.

He was then asked whether the government will foster bus and LRT interchange discounts. To this, he gave a quick "no": "Bus and LRT are two different systems operated by three different companies."

"Although the LRT Company is a company, it is nearly completely owned by the government," he added. "It is virtually impos-

sible for a government-owned company to negotiate discounts with private entities."

He even added that experiences in nearby places demonstrated that discount offers were difficult, even between two private companies.

As for the issuances of rainstorm warnings last week, Rosário assured that he was "very satisfied" with the performance of the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG), adding that rainstorm forecasts can hardly be highly accurate, considering the city's small size and the mutability of dark clouds.

PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS TUMBLE 28%

The total value of transactions pertaining to building units and parking spaces in the first quarter of 2022 was MOP7.29 billion, down by 28.3% and 26.4% respectively, quarter-to-quarter. According to the the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), a total of 1,407 building units and parking spaces were purchased and sold in the first quarter of 2022 as per Stamp Duty records. The number of existing residential units transacted (786 units) dropped by 24.2% and the transaction value (MOP5.29 billion) fell by 23.5%. Moreover, transaction volume (40 units) and value (MOP 285 million) of pre-sale residential units tumbled by 78.3% and 76.2%, respectively, quarter-to-quarter.

NEARLY 316,000 COMPLETE REGISTRATION FOR E-VOUCHER

The period for awarding the third round of the e-voucher scheme will commence on May 23 and end on January 17. Residents who registered for the option of "mobile payment" until May 18 will have the amounts automatically deposited by their financial institutions from May 23. For residents who have registered for the "consumption card" option, they will be able to charge by tapping at the respective charging stations. As of Monday, 315,866 residents had completed their registration, of which 144,639 residents opted for the "mobile payment method" and 171,227 for the "consumer card."

Gov't to ensure smooth ICT operations if city enters grid lockdown

ANTHONY LAM

IF Macau enters a grid lockdown under a Covid-19 outbreak, seamless services of information and communication technologies (ICTs) will be ensured, Lau Wai Meng, director of Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau (CTT), has said.

A grid lockdown is a relatively new arrangement for Macau, but is quite familiar in mainland China. Under the arrangement, the city would be separated into coordinates and lockdowns would only be conducted within specific coordinates.

The CTT director admitted that under grid lockdown, telecom services will see a heavy workload. The bureau will remain in contact with service providers



to ensure the reliability of the service.

In fact, when people are under lockdown, it is foreseeable that they will spend more time using the inter-

net. They may conduct heavy-traffic tasks such as video streaming. Meanwhile, health agencies may need to contact people using video calls or conference te-

chnologies.

As a result, "service providers will be reminded to maintain sufficient bandwidth to [facilitate necessary services]," Lau added.

In addition, she pointed out that, under a grid lockdown, people would be restricted to point-to-point commuting between work and home. The CTT will ensure that sufficient resources are mobilized to provide stable services, such as pinpointing sites of malfunction and repairing them within the shortest possible period.

When an area is under lockdown, the delivery of mail may not be possible. On this matter, the CTT director said it would be considered as per the actual situation at the time.

Yesterday also saw the CTT organize the celebration for the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (World Telecom Day). The celebration was held in the form of

a ceremony with a seminar afterwards.

During her speech, Lau pointed out that the theme of this year's World Telecom Day, as determined by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), was digital technologies for older persons and healthy ageing.

She added that by determining such a topic, the ITU aimed to encourage the use of digital technologies to support people to retain mental and physical health, as well as mutual contacts.

Lau highlighted that following this theme, local telecom service providers had also started to provide accessible technologies to groups of senior citizens so that they will be able to reap these benefits.

GAMING

CHANNEL CHECKS INDICATE VISA DENIAL OF FREQUENT GAMBLERS: BERNSTEIN

LYNZY VALLES

CHINA'S National Immigration Administration has recently reconfirmed strict Covid-19 border policy and restrictions on non-essential travel, a move that could further hamper arrivals, particularly of bettors, into the SAR.

Last week, the administration indicated in a report that since 2021, it had barred over 90,000 people who were allegedly "engaged in gambling activities" from leaving the country, according to a report issued by GGR Asia.

The report did not include the destinations to which the people were supposed to travel.

Given the announcement, "We expect near-term visitation [to Macau] and [casino] revenue may remain constrained," said brokerage Sanford Bernstein.

According to the memo released earlier this week by the firm, the "latest channel checks have indicated that frequent gamblers to Macau have seen [their] visa issuance denied by China immigration offices."

In terms of gross gaming reve-



nue (GGR), the brokerage considers May 10 to May 15 revenues to have been the "worst" since October 2020, the month that the mainland resumed IVS [individual visit scheme travel] visas.

Analysts' figures show that the GGR of that week was only MOP50 million daily, on average.

Even though May included a Golden Week holiday, revenue

performance was still down from May 1 to May 9, as analysts saw a 75% plunge.

The city, according to the brokerage, has so far earned MOP2.1 billion for the first 15 days of the month, with a "month-to-date average daily rate of MOP140 million, down 83% compared to the May 2019 average daily rate, and down 58% versus

the May 2021 average daily rate."

Late last week, the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly said that there is a goal of exploring foreign markets rather than focusing on mainland China, following announcement that it was considering lowering the casino taxes by up to 5% if casinos are able to bring in players

from outside China.

The committee has cited the enactment of Article 303 of the Mainland's Criminal Law, which foreshadows that anyone who "organizes" gambling trips or activities for mainland citizens to Macau will be considered to be breaking the law, may affect the flow of tourists from the mainland.

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New gaming law analysis to end Jun. 10

RENATO MARQUES

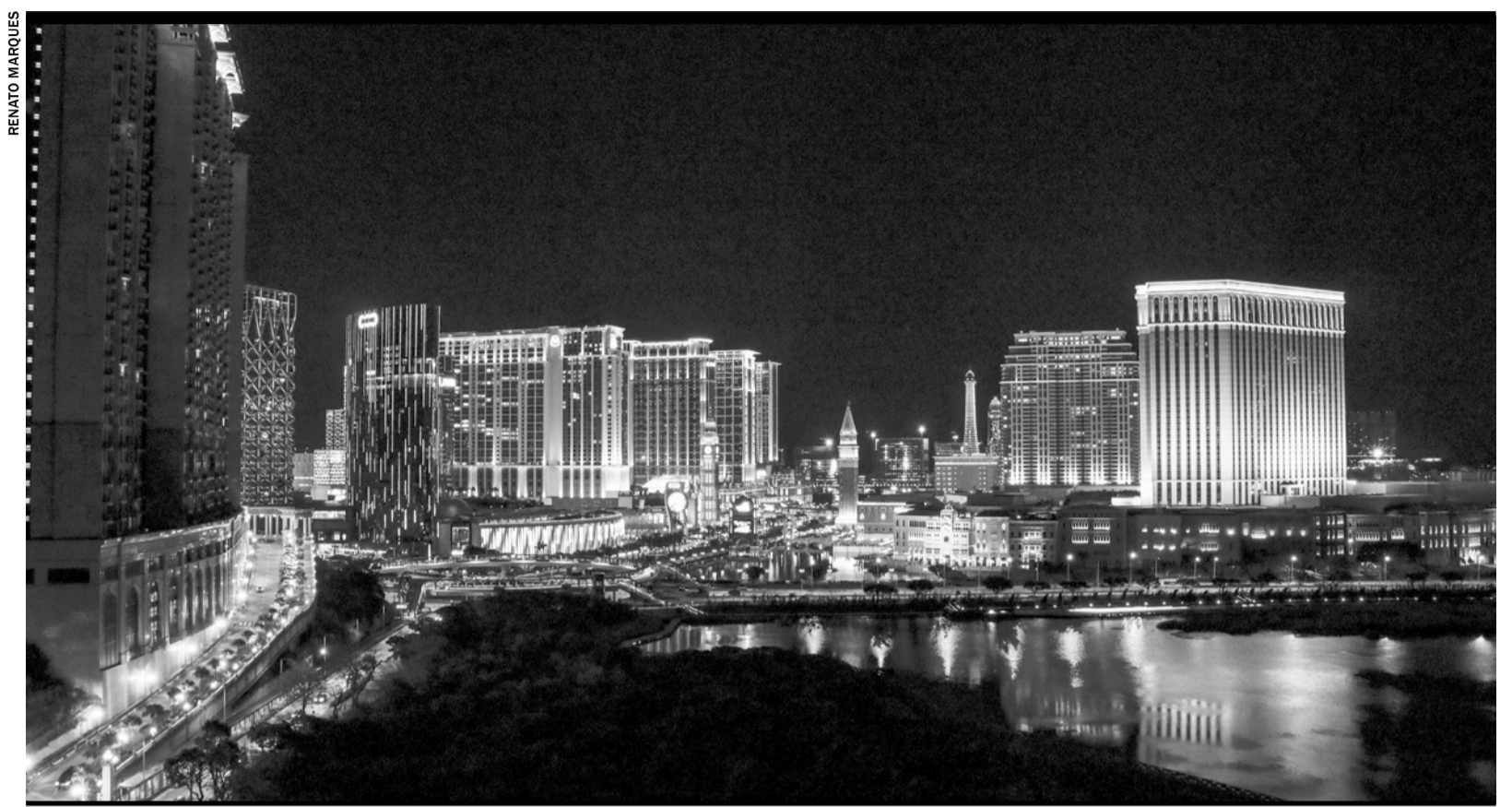
THERE is already a date and time set for the signing of the final opinion of the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL) on the new Gaming Law. June 10 was the date chosen for the committee members to gather one last time to sign the final opinion attached to the final version of the bill, sending it back to the plenary for the final approval.

The information came from the president of the committee, lawmaker Chan Chak Mo, yesterday during a press briefing following a committee meeting.

According to Chan, the bill is now undergoing the final stages of perfecting the writing of some of its articles and lines. Soon the final version of the bill will arrive at the committee table for a final reading and issuing of opinion.

"At this moment the government will work on a new version of the bill, then we will organize a meeting with the government to review and discuss any final details. The final version will be attached to the opinion from the committee that will be signed on June 10 to then be raised to the plenary for the final voting," Chan explained, noting that the government at this point will only be perfecting some writing.

"We believe that there will be no big changes anymore. The new version will only present minor



RENATO MARQUES

changes on technical matters, not on policy," he remarked.

In a meeting that served to revise minor details amended by the government on the second version of the bill, presented to the committee late last week, the president said that there are no significant changes but, instead, several clarifications of the intention of the government in the legal production.

One of the clarifications made yesterday had to do with the ad-

dition of a line to Article 48-J regarding the competencies of the concessionaires.

According to Chan, a new line was added to clarify that, when imposing a sanction on a concessionaire that involves a temporary or a permanent ceasing of operations, the concessionaires must pay full compensation to the workers (who are to be dismissed), as in the termination of contract without a just cause.

Chan explained that this idea

is not new, but following the insistence of some lawmakers from the labor sector, the government decided it was best to clearly state what the procedure will be to secure this right for workers.

Another of the changes has to do with the Articles 49 and 50, which clarified that new companies wishing to take part in the gaming license tender do not need to establish a completely new company, but can just promote a change to their statutes

in respect of the legal purpose to include the operation of gaming facilities such as casinos or other gaming venues.

Following a similar method, companies that are currently gaming concessionaires, in case they lose their license, do not need to dissolve the company, but may just remove the gaming operations from their by-laws, and will be able to continue to operate in other business sectors and activities.

DURING the press briefing of the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL), committee president Chan Chak Mo took the opportunity to clarify some information aired during Monday's briefing, in which he had mentioned that there was a change promoted to Article 5-C related to the number of gaming tables and gaming machines to be allocated.

Chan said that after his comments of the previous day, the government had notified him that while there was a slight change in the writing of this article, there was no intention to change the policy, which states that is the Chief Executive (CE) who has the power and duty to establish a maximum ceiling for the number of tables and machines to be potentially used by the industry and all the gaming concessionaires.

On Monday, Chan said that the committee had interpreted the new writing

GAMING LAW

No changes to tables and machines allocation

as if the CE would regulate, through an order to be published on the government official gazette, the maximum ceiling of the tables and machines to be used for each concessionaire, an interpretation that the government said was incorrect.

Yesterday, Chan clarified that the rule remains unchanged and that after the CE establishes the maximum ceiling for the whole industry the Secretary for Economy and Finance will regulate "according to the conditions and market" how many tables and machines each concessionaire can take.

As explained on previous occasions, each table will be subjected to an evaluation based on its performance against a minimum ceiling of receipt (not yet

established). In case the tables requested by the concessionaire and approved by the government cannot reach this minimum of receipt, the concessionaire will have to pay the difference to the government as a special contribution.

This measure aims to control the size of the industry as well as the allocation of an unnecessary number of tables to a concessionaire that does not have enough demand to justify it.

This measure also aims to cool down the market in respect of the demand for certain casino job posts such as croupiers, which is a role that has had in the past a great demand and attractiveness from the local residents, as they were considered "very well paid."



MDT ARCHIVE

PEKING UNIVERSITY

PEACEFUL STUDENT PROTEST AS DISCONTENT RISES OVER ZERO-COVID POLICY

KEN MORITSUGU
& DAVID RISING, BEIJING

ADMINISTRATORS at an elite Beijing university have backed down from plans to further tighten pandemic restrictions on students as part of China's "zero-COVID" strategy after a weekend protest at the school, according to students yesterday.

Graduate students at Peking University staged the rare, but peaceful protest Sunday over the school's decision to erect a sheet-metal wall to keep them further sequestered on campus, while allowing faculty to come and go freely. Discontent had already been simmering over regulations prohibiting them from ordering in food or having visitors, and daily COVID-19 testing.

A citywide lockdown of Shanghai and expanded restrictions in Beijing in recent weeks have raised questions about the economic and human costs of China's strict virus controls, which the ruling Communist Party has trumpeted as a success compared to other major nations with much higher death tolls. While most people have grumbled privately or online, some Shanghai residents have clashed with police, volunteers and others trying to enforce lockdowns and take infected people to quarantine centers.

Many of the Peking University students protesting Sunday outside a dormitory took cellphone videos as Chen Baojian, the deputy secretary of the university's Communist Party committee, admonished them through a megaphone to end the protest and talk with him one-on-one.

"Please put down your mobile phones, protect Peking University," he said, to which one student yelled: "Is that protection? How about our rights and interests?"



An entrance to the main campus of Peking University, Beijing

The crowd of about 200 clapped and cheered as a half dozen protesters broke through the sheet-metal barrier behind Chen.

The phone videos were quickly shared over social media, but just as quickly removed by government censors. Some supportive comments remained, though many were also taken down, while some videos remain on Twitter, which is blocked in China.

"Peking University students are great!" wrote one person on the popular social media platform Weibo. "Fight for rights. A single spark can start a prairie fire."

The Communist Party moves quickly to quash most activism and any sign of unrest, which it sees as a potential challenge to its hold on power. Peking University is among a handful of elite institutions that have played prominent roles in political movements

including the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution and the student-led 1989 pro-democracy protests centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square that were crushed by the army.

Following the protest, university leaders met with student representatives and agreed to remove the sheet-metal barrier, the South China Morning Post reported yesterday.

One graduate student who took part in the protest, who did not want her name published due to possible repercussions, said the wall had been taken down a short time later, and that other concessions were made to the students, including organizing free supermarket deliveries.

"We achieved our goals Sunday night," said the student, who said she had been confined to the university's Wanliu residential compound for seven days before the protest.

The compound is about 5 ki-

lometers southwest of the main Peking University campus, housing young professors and graduate students. It also has a gym, a supermarket and other facilities.

Authorities have tightened restrictions on access to campuses and monitoring of classroom instruction and student life, making such protests extremely rare. In 2018, police detained students at schools including Peking University who had sought to form an alliance with protesting factory workers, displaying their refusal to tolerate even mild attempts at political activism.

As most other countries in the world have begun to ease restrictions and gradually open back up, China has stuck tenaciously to its zero-COVID policy.

The strict lockdowns with most public areas closed down have played havoc with employment, supply chains and the economy in general, and are becoming increasingly hard on people as the

highly transmissible omicron variant proves more difficult to stop.

In Beijing, authorities restricted more residents to their homes in a now 3-week-long effort to control a small but persistent COVID-19 outbreak in the Chinese capital.

Seven adjoining areas in the city's Fengtai district were designated lockdown zones for at least one week, with people ordered to stay at home in an area covering about 4 kilometers by 5 kilometers. The area is near a wholesale food market that was closed indefinitely on Saturday following the discovery of a cluster there.

The added restrictions come as Shanghai, China's largest city, slowly starts to ease a citywide lockdown that has trapped most of its population for more than six weeks.

China recorded 1,100 new cases on Monday, the National Health Commission said yesterday. Of those, about 800 were in Shanghai and 52 were in Beijing. The daily number of new cases in Shanghai has declined steadily for more than two weeks, but authorities have been moving slowly to relax restrictions, frustrating residents.

In Beijing, the number of cases has held steady but new clusters have popped up in different parts of the city. City spokesperson Xu Hejian said that Beijing's top priority is to screen people related to the cluster at the wholesale food market and isolate those who test positive. A second wholesale food market in Fengtai district was shut down yesterday.

Most of Beijing is not locked down, but the streets are much quieter than usual with many shops closed and people working from home. **MDT/AP**

Taiwan's leader condemns California church shooting

TAIWAN'S leader has condemned the shooting at a Taiwanese church in California by a man reportedly driven by hatred of the island.

Tsai Ing-wen's office issued a statement yesterday saying she condemned "any form of violence," extended her condolences to those killed and injured and had asked the island's chief representative in the U.S. to fly to California to provide assistance.

The suspect in the

shooting, David Chou, 68, of Las Vegas, had ties to a Chinese-backed organization opposed to Taiwan's independence, according to Taiwanese media. Those details could not immediately be confirmed.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory to be annexed by force if necessary and regularly denounces Tsai, her ruling Democratic Progressive Party and their foreign supporters in increasingly violent terms.

Tensions between Chi-

na and Taiwan are at the highest in decades, with Beijing stepping up its military harassment by flying fighter jets toward the self-governing island.

Chou was expected to appear in California state court today [Macau time] on suspicion of murder and attempted murder. Police said he hid firebombs before Sunday's shooting at a gathering of mostly elderly Taiwanese parishioners at the church in Orange County outsi-

de Los Angeles. One man was killed and five people wounded, the oldest 92. A federal hate crimes investigation is also ongoing.

Chou, a U.S. citizen, apparently had a grievance with the Taiwanese community, police said. Chou was born in Taiwan in 1953, Taiwan's Central News Agency reported, citing the head of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Los Angeles, Taiwan's de-facto consulate in the city.

In Taiwan, DPP legislator Lin Ching-yi said "ideology has become a reason for genocide" in a message on her Facebook page.

Lin said Taiwanese need to "face up to hateful speech and organizations," singling out the United Front Work Department that seeks to advance China's political agenda in Taiwan and among overseas Chinese communities.

Asked about Chou's reported political leanings,

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Beijing had "noted the relevant reports."

"We hope the U.S. government will take effective measures to resolve the worsening gun violence issue at home," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing.

The U.S. is Taiwan's chief political and military ally though it doesn't extend the island formal diplomatic ties in deference to Beijing. **MDT/AP**

PHILIPPINES

Activists ask top court to void Marcos Jr's presidential win

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

HUMAN rights activists have asked the Philippine Supreme Court to block Congress from proclaiming Ferdinand Marcos Jr. as the next president, alleging that he lied when he said he had not been convicted of any crime.

The Commission on Election had twice dismissed the petition and six other similar complaints to cancel Marcos Jr.'s candidacy papers ahead of the May 9 vote. The petitioners elevated the case to the highest court on Monday, saying Marcos Jr. had been convicted of tax evasion, which should have permanently barred him from seeking public office.

Most of the petitioners are leaders of groups representing survivors of martial law in the 1970s under late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, the father of the presumptive next president. They want the court to temporarily block the Senate and the House of Representatives from undertaking an official canvassing of votes starting next week that would eventually proclaim Marcos Jr. as the winner.

"Our petition notes that a candidate's imminent victory cannot cure his ineligibility," said Fides Lim, spokeswoman of one of the human rights groups.



AP PHOTO

"If the Supreme Court were to allow such a brazen lie to trump the rule of law, all substantive eligibility requirements in all future elections can be circumvented by ineligible candidates who happen to secure a victory," she said.

Marcos Jr. had more than 31 million votes in an unofficial count in what's projected to be one of the strongest majority man-

dates for a Philippine president in decades. His vice-presidential running mate and daughter of the outgoing populist leader, Sara Duterte, appeared to have also won with a massive margin.

His electoral triumph is an astonishing reversal of the army-backed but largely peaceful "People Power" revolt in 1986 that forced his father out of office following

years of massive human rights atrocities and plunder that Marcos Jr. never acknowledged.

Unofficial counts also show that the allies of Marcos Jr. and Sara Duterte were set to capture most of the 300 seats in the House of Representatives and half of the 24-seat Senate that was up for election, and likely the chambers' top leaderships.

The 12 winning senators, including lone opposition Sen. Risa Hontiveros, who ran for reelection, were to be proclaimed Wednesday by the Commission on Elections.

All key challengers of Marcos Jr., including current Vice President Leni Robredo, a human rights lawyer, and former boxing star Manny Pacquiao, have conceded defeat.

U.S. President Joe Biden, Chinese President Xi Jinping and other world leaders have congratulated Marcos Jr. and Duterte on their huge victory and the relatively smooth conduct of the elections. The separately elected president and vice president are set to take office on June 30 for a single, six-year term after Congress confirms the results.

Marcos Jr. and Duterte have defended the legacies of their fathers.

Court cases and legal issues still hound the late dictator's family, including payment of a huge estate tax, a 2018 corruption conviction of his widow, Imelda Marcos, which is on appeal, and full compensation of thousands of victims of torture, detentions, disappearances and other atrocities committed in the martial-law era when he was in power.

A brutal anti-drug crackdown launched by outgoing President Rodrigo Duterte, which killed thousands of mostly petty drug suspects, has sparked an investigation by the International Criminal Court as potential crimes against humanity. The outgoing leader has said he would likely face more criminal complaints when he steps down on June 30. **MDT/AP**

NORTH KOREA

Authorities report another fever surge amid Covid-19 crisis

NORTH Korea yesterday reported another large jump in illnesses believed to be COVID-19 and encouraged good health habits, as a mass outbreak spreads through its unvaccinated population and military officers were deployed to distribute medicine.

State media said the anti-virus headquarters reported another 269,510 people were found with fevers and six had died. That raises North Korea's deaths to 56 after more than 1.48 million people became ill with fever since late April. North Korea lacks test kits to confirm coronavirus infections in large numbers, and the report didn't say how many of the fever cases were COVID-19.



AP PHOTO

The outbreak is almost certainly greater than the fever tally, considering the lack of tests and resources to monitor and treat the sick. North Korea's virus response comes down to isolating people with

symptoms at shelters, and as of yesterday, at least 663,910 people were in quarantine.

In addition to lacking vaccines for its 26 million people, the country also grapples with malnourish-

ment and chronic poverty, and lacks public health tools, including antiviral drugs or intensive care units, which suppressed hospitalizations and deaths in other countries.

Some experts suspect North Korea is underreporting deaths to soften the blow for authoritarian leader Kim Jong Un, who already was navigating the toughest moment of his decade in power. The pandemic has further damaged an economy already broken by mismanagement and U.S.-led sanctions over Kim's nuclear ambitions.

The North's fatalities may surge in coming weeks as those who develop symptoms later succumb to the illness.

It's also possible that fe-

ver cases are underreported by officials who worry about punishment or people don't report their symptoms because they fear the strict quarantine measures, analysts say.

North Korea acknowledged domestic COVID-19 infections for the first time last Thursday, ending a widely doubted claim it was virus-free throughout the pandemic.

Describing the outbreak as a "great upheaval," Kim imposed measures including restrictions on movement and quarantines. But while he raised alarm over the virus, Kim also stressed that his economic goals should be met, indicating large groups of people will continue to gather for agricultural, industrial and

construction work.

The official Korean Central News Agency said yesterday that the military had deployed officers from its medical units to help with the transport of medicine to pharmacies in Pyongyang, which began to stay open 24 hours a day to deal with the crisis. The types of medicine being given was unclear.

KCNA said the army units "expressed their will to convey the precious medicines, elixir of life, associated with the great love of Kim Jong Un for the people to the Pyongyangites."

State media are also driving public campaigns aimed at promoting health and hygiene and teaching people "common sense" on disease prevention. **MDT/AP**

PUTIN'S WAR

Mariupol fighters in Russian hands; both sides claim wins

OLEKSANDR STASHEVSKYI
& CIARAN MCQUILLAN,
KYIV

HUNDREDS of Ukrainian fighters, including wounded men carried out on stretchers, left the vast steel plant in Mariupol where they mounted a dogged last stand and turned themselves over to Russian hands, signaling the beginning of the end of a siege that became a symbol of Ukraine's resistance to Moscow's invasion.

Russia on Tuesday called the operation a mass surrender. The Ukrainians avoided using that word — but said the garrison had completed its mission, and that they were working to pull out the fighters that remain.

On Monday, more than 260 fighters left the Azovstal plant — their last redoubt in Mariupol — and were transported to two towns controlled by Moscow-backed separatists, officials on both sides said. Other fighters — their precise numbers unknown — remain inside the ruins of the fortified mill that sprawls over 11 square kilometers in the otherwise now Russian-held city.

Azovstal's fall would mark the complete capture of Mariupol, a significant milestone in one of the bloodiest battles of the war. It would give Russia its biggest victory of the war yet after multiple setbacks — both military and diplomatic. Its troops have suffered costly losses and President Vladimir Putin is increasingly isolated internationally, with Finland and Sweden announcing in recent days that they intend to join NATO, a major blow to the Russian leader.

Wrapping up the siege of Mariupol could also free Russian forces for fighting elsewhere in the industrial heartland of eastern Ukraine.

But Ukraine sought to turn the evacuation into a symbol for its side, too, highlighting the role that the Azovstal fighters played in boosting Ukrainian morale and tying up Russian forces who couldn't be deployed elsewhere.



Russian servicemen watch Ukrainian servicemen boarding a bus as they are being evacuated from the besieged Azovstal steel plant in Mariupol

"Ukraine needs Ukrainian heroes to be alive. It's our principle," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in announcing that troops had begun leaving the relentlessly bombarded mill and its warren of tunnels and bunkers.

"The work continues to bring the guys home and it requires delicacy and time," he said.

It's not clear what will happen to the fighters — and a Russian official cast doubt over whether Moscow would agree to hand over all of the men in a prisoner of war exchange.

Ukraine Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Maliar said 264 fighters were evacuated from the plant, including 53 "heavily wounded" brought to a medical facility. Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov gave slightly different numbers: 265 evacuees, 51 of them seriously wounded. The discrepancy couldn't immediately be explained.

After nightfall Monday, several buses pulled away from the mill accompanied by Russian military vehicles. Russian Defense Ministry video of some evacuees did not show any that were armed. In the footage, troops patted down and searched the fighters. Some were on stretchers as they were loaded onto the buses.

Oleksandr Danylyuk, a Ukrainian former national security chief and finance

minister, told the BBC that because Ukrainian forces were unable to liberate the plant, the negotiated evacuation to Russian-controlled territory had been "the only hope" for Azovstal's defenders.

Those remaining in the plant are still "able to defend it. But I think it's important to understand that their main mission is completed and now their lives need to be saved," he said.

A full negotiated withdrawal could save lives on the Russian side, too, sparing Russian-backed troops from what almost certainly would be a bloody and difficult battle to wrest the labyrinth-like plant from Ukrainian control.

Danylyuk added that those evacuated should be swapped for Russian prisoners — but Vyacheslav Volodin, speaker of the lower house of the Russian parliament, said without evidence that there are "war criminals" among the plant defenders and they should not be exchanged but tried.

Russia has repeatedly falsely portrayed the war as a battle against Nazism, and Volodin again levied that accusation.

Maliar, the Ukrainian official, heaped praise on the fighters but said it been impossible to liberate them "by military means."

"Mariupol's defenders have fully accomplished all missions assigned by the commanders," she said.

Retired French Vice Admiral Michel Olhagaray, a former head of France's center for higher military studies, said Azovstal's fall would be more of a symbolic boost for Russia than a military one.

"Factually, Mariupol had already fallen but not symbolically because of this incredible resistance," he said. "Now Putin can claim a 'victory' in the Donbas," the eastern Ukrainian region that is now his focus.

But because Azovstal's defenders tied down Russian troops Ukraine can also claim that it came out on top.

"Both sides will be able take pride or boast about a victory — victories of different kinds," he said.

After Russia's failure in the initial stages of the Feb. 24 invasion to take the capital, Kyiv, the focus of the fighting has shifted to the Donbas but also has turned into a slog.

Strikes have also occasionally hit other areas of the country. The western city of Lviv was rocked by loud explosions early yesterday. Witnesses counted at least eight blasts accompanied by distant booms. The sky west of the city, which was under an overnight curfew, was lit up by an orange glow.

The governor of the Lviv region, Maksym Kozzytsky, said Russian strikes targeted railroad and military facilities around Yavoriv, west of the city. MDT/AP

this day in history



1950 US AND EUROPE AGREE NATO AIMS



Almost exactly a year after signing the North Atlantic Treaty, 12 nations have agreed a permanent organisation for the defence of the United States and Europe.

The final meeting of the fourth session of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, or Nato as it has become known, was held in front of cameras at Lancaster House in London.

The 12 foreign ministers sat around a horseshoe table, with the United States Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, at the centre. A large audience of newspaper and newsreel correspondents, cameramen and photographers broadcast their speeches around the world.

During negotiations over the past few days, the ministers have reached agreement over a communiqué outlining the aims of the Organisation, and setting out a six-point plan for strengthening ties between their countries.

Key among these was the establishment of a council of deputies, with a permanent chairman and a full-time staff, to put the objectives of the Treaty into action.

Opening the meeting, Mr Acheson thanked all his colleagues for their "tireless efforts" and said that "genuine progress" had been made.

"Throughout its deliberations, the council has recognised that only through coordinated plans and effort could its great objectives be achieved," he said.

He then went on to read the communiqué, which spoke of the principles behind Nato and outlined the objectives the organisation is working towards.

It stressed the importance of seeking a diplomatic solution before military force is used, but where some nations are not willing to cooperate, it said, "the maintenance of peace and the defence of freedom require the organisation of adequate military defence."

The communiqué also includes directives on defence, finance and economics, and establishes a North Atlantic planning board for shipping.

The British Foreign Minister, Ernest Bevin, called the agreement one of "historic significance".

"I'm afraid we cannot arrive at sensational decisions," he told the meeting. "This business of building for peace is a very grim business, and it has to be worked for day in and day out."

"We must never give up faith in its ultimate trials."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The 12 nations who signed the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949 were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Britain, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the United States.

Later in 1950, US general and future president Dwight D Eisenhower was appointed Nato's first supreme commander.

Nato soon ran into controversy when West Germany was included in the Treaty in 1955. The Soviet Union saw it as a direct threat, and in the same year created a counter-alliance called the Warsaw Pact. When the Cold War ended, the Warsaw Pact was dissolved in 1991.

No longer directed at the perceived threat of Soviet aggression, Nato formed closer ties with Eastern Europe and began a major re-evaluation of its role.

The Organisation's first aggressive action took place in 1995, in a campaign of airstrikes launched against Bosnian Serb positions in the former Yugoslavia.

It was followed in 1999 by an 11-week campaign of airstrikes over Kosovo which it undertook without United Nations approval.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You need to look into ways to change your self-image. Delve into your work if you can't make amends at home. Sudden changes regarding your domestic scene are probable.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20

You may want to get a little extra rest. You are prone to infections and fevers. Accept the inevitable. Don't let any small misunderstandings get in the way.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21

You may get upset with peers or relatives. You will learn easily if you put forth an effort. Try not to let relatives or friends cause any friction with your mate.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Changes regarding your image will bring you greater confidence. Hold on; your time will come. Don't do something silly just to get back at your mate.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Avoid being overly opinionated or you will alienate friends. Communication will be your best bet. You can make a big difference to children if you are understanding of the difficulties they are experiencing.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22

You may be emotionally unstable if you let someone you care about get away with verbal abuse. Opportunities may come up at prestigious affairs. Keep your ears open, especially to those who care about you.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Do not give your heart to someone who may not live up to your standards. You mustn't be so trusting. Secret affairs will only lead to deception.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Don't ruffle the feathers of those you care about most. Everything is moving quickly, just the way you like it. Your magnetic, outgoing personality will capture hearts.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Keep tabs on your spending. Social activity should be on your agenda today. You can learn valuable information if you listen and observe what others are doing and saying.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Don't hesitate to go ahead with any plans for entertainment. Do your job and then spend some time with family; you'll be glad you did. You may not be too pleased with the actions of those you live with.

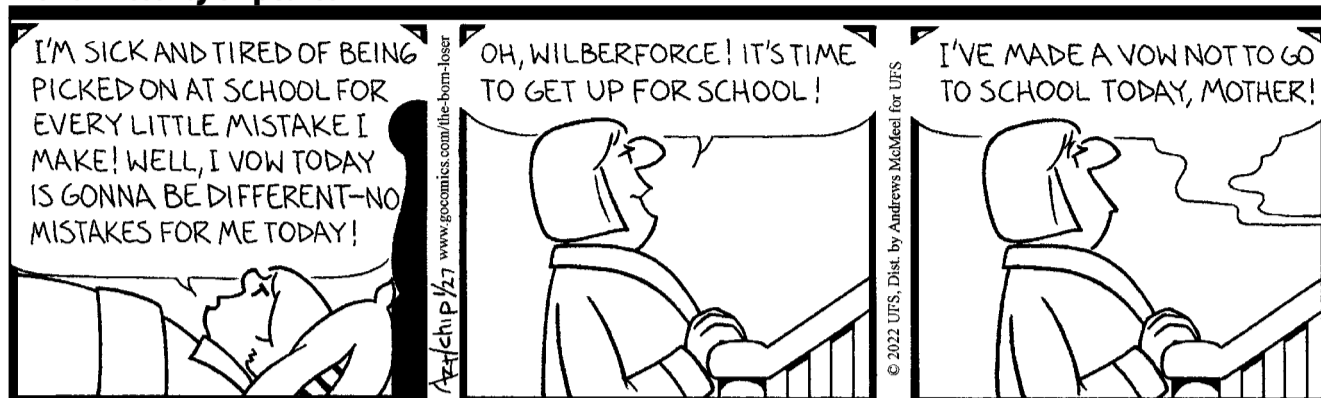
AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Don't deny yourself today. Face any emotional problems head-on to avoid situations getting out of hand. A change is as good as a rest. Don't go looking for change.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Older family members may try to make demands that are impossible for you to handle. Family members may want you at home, when your heart is telling you to spend time with someone you recently met.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	12	30	cloudy
Changchun	11	26	cloudy
Chengdu	14	20	rain
Chongqing	16	24	rain
Fuzhou	13	25	fine
Guangzhou	16	27	cloudy
Guiyang	10	19	cloudy
Haikou	20	26	cloudy
Hangzhou	13	26	cloudy
Harbin	8	23	thunderstorms
Hefei	13	28	cloudy
Nanjing	15	29	fine
Shanghai	17	28	overcast
Taipei	19	25	overcast
Wuhan	13	27	cloudy
Hong Kong	21	24	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	7	14	overcast
Frankfurt	14	29	overcast
Paris	19	30	overcast
London	13	22	overcast
New York	14	23	overcast

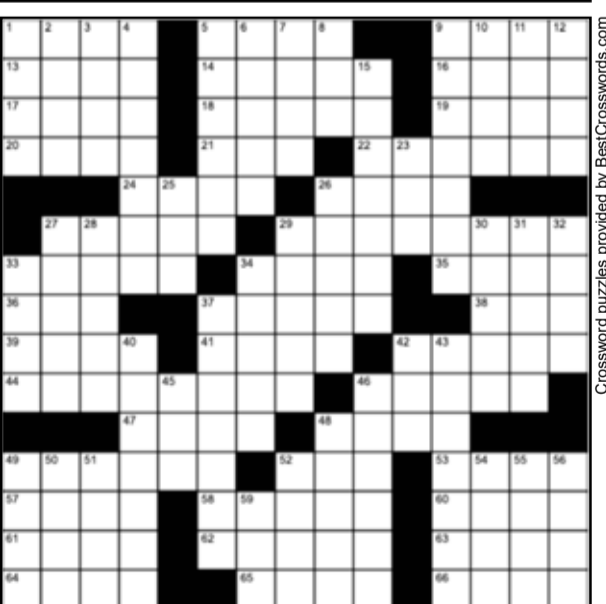
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Little helper?; 5- Room in a casa; 9- Jane Austen classic; 13- Practice pugilism; 14- Hangs on to; 16- Unit of currency in Iran and Yemen; 17- Clinton cabinet member Federico; 18- Muse with a lyre; 19- Concerning; 20- Appear; 21- Shakespearean contraction; 22- Interlocks; 24- Step; 26- Support for a broken limb; 27- Disgusting dirt; 29- Candy; 33- Scuffle; 34- Royal Indian; 35- First name in fashion; 36- Whitney; 37- Terra ___; 38- ___-tzu; 39- Now ___ me down...; 41- To ___ (perfectly); 42- Skin of the upper part of the head; 44- Heater; 46- ___ firma; 47- At any time; 48- Ballerina's skirt; 49- Having only magnitude; 52- It's cold!; 53- Frozen treats; 57- Grasp; 58- Habituate; 60- Beget; 61- Della's creator; 62- Prevention dose; 63- Harrow rival; 64- Like a noted Norwegian Blue parrot?; 65- Prepared to drive; 66- Breather;

DOWN 1- Egyptian cobras; 2- Graf ___; 3- Having a sound mind; 4- Tread underfoot; 5- Rough design; 6- Lofty nest; 7- Grazing sites; 8- To the point; 9- Controversial; 10- Ho Chi ___; 11- Female horse; 12- Draft picks; 15- East African nation; 23- Alien's subj.; 25- Consumed, usually food; 26- Type of artist's crayon; 27- Gal's guy; 28- Greek epic poem; 29- "See ya!"; 30- Like some bears and icecaps; 31- Florida citrus center; 32- Lowdown; 33- Gilda of Israel; 34- Chopper topper; 37- Indulge; 40- Ceded; 42- A collection of articles; 43- Warship; 45- Humphrey's costar in "The Barefoot Contessa"; 46- Rotated; 48- Instant; 49- Discard; 50- Reactor part; 51- ___ breve; 52- Ruination; 54- Quote; 55- Greek god of love; 56- Posted; 59- Furrow;

Yesterday's solution

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



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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SOCIAL MEDIA

MUSK'S CHINA TIES ADD POTENTIAL RISKS TO TWITTER PURCHASE

ELON Musk's ties to China through his role as electric car brand Tesla's biggest shareholder could add complexity to his bid to buy Twitter.

Other companies that want access to China give in to pressure to follow Beijing's positions on Taiwan and other issues. But Twitter is shut out by internet barriers that block most Chinese users from seeing global social media, which gives Beijing no leverage over the company, though the ruling Communist Party uses it to spread propaganda abroad.

Tesla Inc.'s ambitions in China might give Beijing that leverage to pressure Twitter to silence human rights activists and other critics or ease its rules on propaganda if Musk's \$44 billion purchase goes ahead, some experts suggest. Chinese customers bought half the Teslas sold last year. Its busiest factory and "main export hub" is in Shanghai.

"The Chinese exert tremendous leverage over businesses," said Anne Stevenson-Yang of J Capital Research. "If you care



about the Shanghai operation (of Tesla), then you're going to put everything else in service to that."

Musk says he sees "no indications" Beijing might use Tesla as leverage, but other companies don't wait for government orders. Automakers, clothing brands and others take pre-emptive action to protect their access to China by changing marketing or products sold worldwide to re-

flect official positions such as the ruling party's claim that self-ruled Taiwan is part of its territory.

Whether the Twitter deal will go ahead remains an open question. Musk tweeted yesterday that it can't happen unless the company shows public proof that the number of Twitter accounts without real users behind them is below 5% of the total.

On Monday, he said at a business conference in Miami that a

deal at a lower price wasn't "out of the question," Bloomberg News reported. That supported suggestions by industry analysts that Musk wants out of the deal or a lower price due to a fall in the value of Tesla stock, some of which he has pledged to finance the purchase.

Trying to use an investor's stake in one company to pressure a different company outside China would be a new tactic. But foreign investors know the ruling party is increasingly assertive about defending its "core interests" worldwide and attacks global brands even when that imposes costs on China and its public.

Officials have warned companies must "respect the feelings of the Chinese people" and avoid "eating Chinese rice while smashing Chinese bowls."

A handful have given up opportunities in China to avoid cooperating with official censorship or surveillance or suffering a consumer backlash abroad over human rights or other issues. More common are companies such as hotel operator Marriott,

which in 2018 fired an employee who "liked" a Twitter post praising a customer survey outside China that called Tibet a country.

Regulators can pressure automakers by blocking them from expanding output while ordering them to stay silent about the reason. More openly, state media have called for boycotts of Japanese, South Korean and other brands during disputes with their governments.

Tesla's sales in China rose 226% last year to 473,600 vehicles, according to LMC Automotive. That was about half of its 935,222 global deliveries.

Musk, who is Tesla's chairman, was asked about the possibility the automaker might be used by Beijing as leverage over Twitter while appearing virtually at a May 11 event hosted by The Financial Times newspaper on the auto industry's future.

"I've seen no indications to that effect," Musk replied.

Musk said he expects China to be 25% to 30% of Tesla's market in the long term.

The South African-born billionaire said he doesn't see another Tesla factory in China in the near term but the company will expand in Shanghai.

The company, headquartered in Austin, Texas, didn't respond to questions by email about its expansion plans. **MDT/AP**

AD

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SAPPHIRE CROWN: DSL 律師事務所
PRINCIPAL MEDIA PARTNER: Times

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

FOOTBALL

English soccer player Jake Daniels says he is gay

ROB HARRIS, LONDON

ENGLISH soccer player Jake Daniels said he is gay yesterday [Macau time] in a trailblazing moment for the European men's game.

The 17-year-old forward made the announcement at the end of his first season as a professional player with second division club Blackpool.

"This season has been a fantastic one for me on the pitch," he said in a statement. "But off the pitch I've been hiding the real me and who I really am. I've known my whole life that I'm gay, and I now feel that I'm ready to come out and be myself."

"It's a step into the unknown being one of the first footballers in this country to reveal my sexuality."

While women's soccer features many prominent LGBTQ+ players, the men's professional game lacks players who are pu-

blicly gay and has seemed to have even hostile attitudes in locker rooms.

At the weekend, Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Idrissa Gueye was left out of the matchday squad for a game at Montpellier amid reports he refused to wear a team jersey with a rainbow-colored number.

It was part of a French league-wide campaign against homophobia and the Senegal international has a strong Muslim faith. PSG has not denied the reports or made an official comment.

Daniels said he was inspired by Josh Cavallo of Australian team Adelaide United, who is the only openly gay man currently playing in a top division in world soccer following the 22-year-old midfielder's announcement in October.

"I've hated lying my whole life and feeling the need to change to fit in," Daniels said. "I want to be a role model myself by doing this. There are people out there in the

same space as me that may not feel comfortable revealing their sexuality.

"I just want to tell them that you don't have to change who you are, or how you should be, just to fit in. You being you, and being happy, is what matters most."

Daniels said teammates at Blackpool embraced his sexuality after confiding in them. The northwest English club said it was "incredibly proud that he has reached a stage where he is empowered to express himself both on and off the pitch."

The English Football Association said Daniels was an "inspiration" to the sport.

"This is a hugely positive step as we strive to build an inclusive game that we can all be proud of," the governing body tweeted. "We are with you and we hope your story will help to give people across the game the strength and encouragement to be their true self."



Blackpool's player Jake Daniels

The only openly gay man to have played in English soccer's professional leagues was Justin Fashanu, who was not active at a high level when he made the announcement in 1990. The former Nottingham Forest and Norwich City striker was found hanged in a London garage at age 37. The Justin Fashanu Foundation calls him the "world's first openly gay professional footballer."

Soccer in England is still dealing with trying to eradicate homophobic chants at some games.

"If, by me coming out, other people look at me and feel maybe they can do it as well, that would be brilliant," Daniels told broadcaster Sky Sports.

"I think if a Premier League footballer does come out that would just be amazing. I feel like I would have done my job and inspired someone else to do that. I just want it to go up from here. We shouldn't be where we are right now," he said.

It is a rarity in team sports for men to announce they are LGBTQ+. MDT/AP

AD

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The Experience Economy: A Brief History of Subliminal AI Systems and the Law of Tomorrow
Speaker: Prof. Rostam J. Neuwirth, Head of Department of Global Legal Studies, Faculty of Law of University of Macau

FMCC Breakfast Meeting
Wednesday, 25 May 2022

Introduction:
Artificial Intelligence (AI) used with other innovative technologies brings unprecedented opportunities to all aspects of life. These technologies, however, raise ethical concerns, especially in the context of the manipulation of the human mind and behaviour, which is of great relevance in the experience economy. Join us and hear from Prof. Rostam J. Neuwirth on the history of subliminal AI perception, AI regulation within the EU, and the future of law and society.

Date: Wednesday, 25 May, 2022
Time: 9:00a.m. - 10:30a.m.
Venue: Sofitel Macau at Ponte 16
Baccara Ballroom, 6th floor

RSVP before 2p.m. on 23 May
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OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

**BANKING ON GETTING
ILLUSORY US PROTECTION
RUINOUS GAMBLE FOR
TAIWAN SECESSIONISTS**

In recent years, the annual “Han Kuang” military exercises staged by the Taiwan island’s “defense forces” have been plagued by embarrassing mishaps. Last year, the command center even caught fire. It remains to be seen what will bedevil this year’s exercises, which began on Monday.

The yearly contretemps are a sign of the political intention that has raised the ambition for the exercises beyond the island’s capability to execute them without misfortune.

The war games involving all branches of the island’s armed forces are supposedly designed to test their combat readiness in the event of an “invasion” by the Chinese mainland. This year the previous computerized format for the simulations has apparently been dropped in favor of a physical tabletop map aimed at encouraging “face-to-face” talks among the island’s top brass to debate and brainstorm tactics based on “scenarios” drawn from the conflict in Ukraine.

The tabletop exercise, simulating “all possible actions (the mainland) could take to invade Taiwan”, will be followed by live-fire drills based on analysis of the simulations, according to “Major-General” Lin Wen-huang, who is in charge of combat and planning at the island’s so-called defense department. Lin said that the aim was to take reference from the lessons of the Russia-Ukraine conflict to enhance the island’s asymmetrical warfare capabilities.

Since the Ukraine conflict erupted, Taipei and Washington have continually sought to parallel Russia’s “special military operation” in Ukraine with potential military action by Beijing targeting Taiwan, in a bid to justify the promises of US officials that the United States will “help Taiwan in the same way it supports Ukraine”. They are doing so, despite the Taiwan question being fundamentally different from the Ukraine issue and the repeated assertions of the Joe Biden administration that it continues to uphold the commitments the US has made to the one-China principle.

Although Beijing seeks to realize reunification of the island with the motherland by peaceful means, it has made it clear that it does not rule out the use of force should the secessionists on the island cross its redline by going too far in pursuit of something that is pure invention on their part. This has been seized on by the anti-China lobby in Washington as a stick with which to beat Beijing, accusing it of “coercion” and “aggression”.

Many residents on the island seem to have a more sober appreciation of the situation than those who have organized the war games. A poll released by the Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation on April 26 shows that up to 54 percent of people on the island do not believe that the US will send troops to “help defend Taiwan” if war breaks out across the Straits.

Although the US is bound by an act of Congress to provide the island with weapons, and would no doubt be willing to do so to draw out the conflict as long as possible as it has with Ukraine, the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and the devastation of the country, not to mention the severe spillover effects that threaten millions around the world with starvation, should show the Taiwan authorities and their supporters in Washington the disastrous folly of letting their fantasies rob them of reason.

President Joe Biden will host Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson of Sweden and President Sauli Niinistö of Finland at the White House for a meeting Thursday amid their push to join NATO in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The White House said they would discuss the two countries’ applications to join the mutual defense alliance, as well as European security broadly. The requests by the long-neutral nations to join NATO have been widely lauded within the alliance as a rebuke of Russia after its invasion of Ukraine, though Turkey has expressed reservations.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu told reporters in Berlin that Finland and Sweden had also imposed restrictions on defense sales to Turkey that were “unacceptable.”

But NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said his understanding is that Turkey wants to have its concerns over Finland and Sweden addressed but does not intend to block their membership.

Nonetheless, Turkey’s raising of its grievances has led to concerns in Washington and Brussels that other NATO members might also use the admission process as a way to wring concessions from allies, possibly complicating and delaying accession.



AP PHOTO

**ZIMBABWE URGES SALE
OF STOCKPILE OF SEIZED
ELEPHANT IVORY**

FARAI MUTSAKA, HARARE

ZIMBABWE is seeking international support to be allowed to sell its stockpile of seized ivory, saying the \$600 million it expects to earn is urgently needed for the conservation of its rapidly growing elephant population which it describes as “dangerous.”

Officials from the Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority showed ambassadors from European Union countries the stockpile of ivory tusks that have been seized from poachers and collected from elephants that have died.

The Zimbabwean officials appealed to the European Union and other countries to support the sale of ivory which has been banned since 1989 by CITES, the international body that monitors endangered species.

Zimbabwe has 163,000 tons of ivory and 67 tons of rhino horn, said Mangwanya.

Envoys from the Netherlands, Germany, France, Britain, Switzerland, Canada and the United States viewed the ivory tusks in heavily guarded vaults in Harare.

Swiss ambassador to Zimbabwe Niculin Jager, speaking on behalf of the envoys, emphasized the need to fight the poaching of elephants.

“Conservation and prevention of illegal wildlife trade is an international issue because of the involvement of criminal syndicates in illegal wildlife trade, hence there is need to strengthen international co-operation,” he said.

Later this month Zimbabwe will be hosting what it calls an “elephant summit” in which representatives of 14 African countries, as well as from China and Japan, will consider ways to manage the populations of the world’s largest land animal.

“We need assistance. These elephants are multiplying at a dangerous rate, 5% per annum,” the parks and wildlife agency’s director-general, Fulton Mangwanya, said during the tour.

Zimbabwe’s estimated 100,000 elephants are double the carrying capacity of its national parks. The overcrowded elephants are destroying the trees and shrubs that are vital for them and other wildlife, say parks officials.

Zimbabwe’s elephant population is getting so big that Mangwanya warned “it will be very difficult for us to do anything but culling which is opposed by everyone.”

Neighboring Botswana has the world’s largest elephant population with more than 130,000. Together Zimbabwe and Botswana have nearly 50% of the world’s elephants. The

two countries say they are struggling to cope with the booming numbers and are pressing to be allowed to sell their stockpiles of tusks seized from poachers or removed from dead elephants.

Other African countries, such as Kenya, insist that all ivory sales should be banned to discourage any international trade in ivory.

In addition to banning ivory sales, CITES in 2019 also imposed restrictions on the sales of wild elephants caught in Zimbabwe and Botswana, a move that pleased some conservationists but dismayed officials struggling to manage their overloaded parks.

There is a flourishing illegal trade in ivory in which international syndicates fund poachers to kill elephants and saw off their ivory tusks. The ivory is then smuggled overseas, where there is a demand for ivory for jewelry and trinkets.

Increased poaching and loss of habitat have made Africa’s elephant populations more endangered, the International Union for Conservation of Nature said last year.

Zimbabwe and Botswana say they are ill-equipped to deal with poachers without the money from ivory sales, especially because earnings from tourism have dwindled due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions since 2020. **MDT/AP**



AP PHOTO

Iran Schools and government offices closed in the Iranian capital yesterday and elsewhere in the country after yet another sandstorm blanketed Tehran, state TV reported. The report said the air quality was very poor and that the pollution from the dust was high. It was the third severe sandstorm in Iran since mid-April.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has thrown a spanner in the works of Sweden and Finland’s historic decisions to seek NATO membership, declaring that he cannot allow them to join due to their alleged support of Kurdish militants and other groups that Ankara says threaten its national security. Turkey’s approval is crucial because the military alliance makes its decisions by consensus. Any of its 30 member countries can veto a new member.



AP PHOTO

UK The British government dramatically escalated a fight with the European Union yesterday by saying it will pass a law to scrap parts of the trade treaty signed by the two sides less than two years ago. Britain says its move to change the legally binding treaty — an apparent breach of international law — is an insurance policy in case it can’t reach agreement with the bloc to end a long-running dispute over post-Brexit trade rules.



AP PHOTO

Spain The land borders between Spain and Morocco at Ceuta and Melilla, Spain’s North African enclave cities, have begun to reopen after being closed for just over two years because of the Covid-19 pandemic and later a diplomatic crisis between the two countries. Crossings have been initially limited to residents of Europe’s passport-free Schengen area and their family members, and will be expanded to cross-border workers by the end of the month.