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AP PHOTO



North Korea test-launched a suspected intercontinental ballistic missile and two shorter-range weapons toward its eastern waters yesterday, South Korea said, hours after President Joe Biden ended a trip to Asia where he reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to defend its allies in the face of the North's nuclear threat. The suspected ICBM didn't fly its full range. But if confirmed, it would still be North Korea's first test of an ICBM system in about two months amid stalled nuclear diplomacy with the United States.

AP PHOTO



India is restricting its sugar exports to 10 million tons in the current season to help maintain domestic availability and keep prices stable. The decision follows a similar measure for wheat and comes amid signs of tightening world supplies. India is the second-largest producer, after Brazil, and biggest consumer of sugar in the world, according to the All India Sugar Trade Association. It's the second-largest exporter of sugar. The export curbs are its first in six years.

AP PHOTO

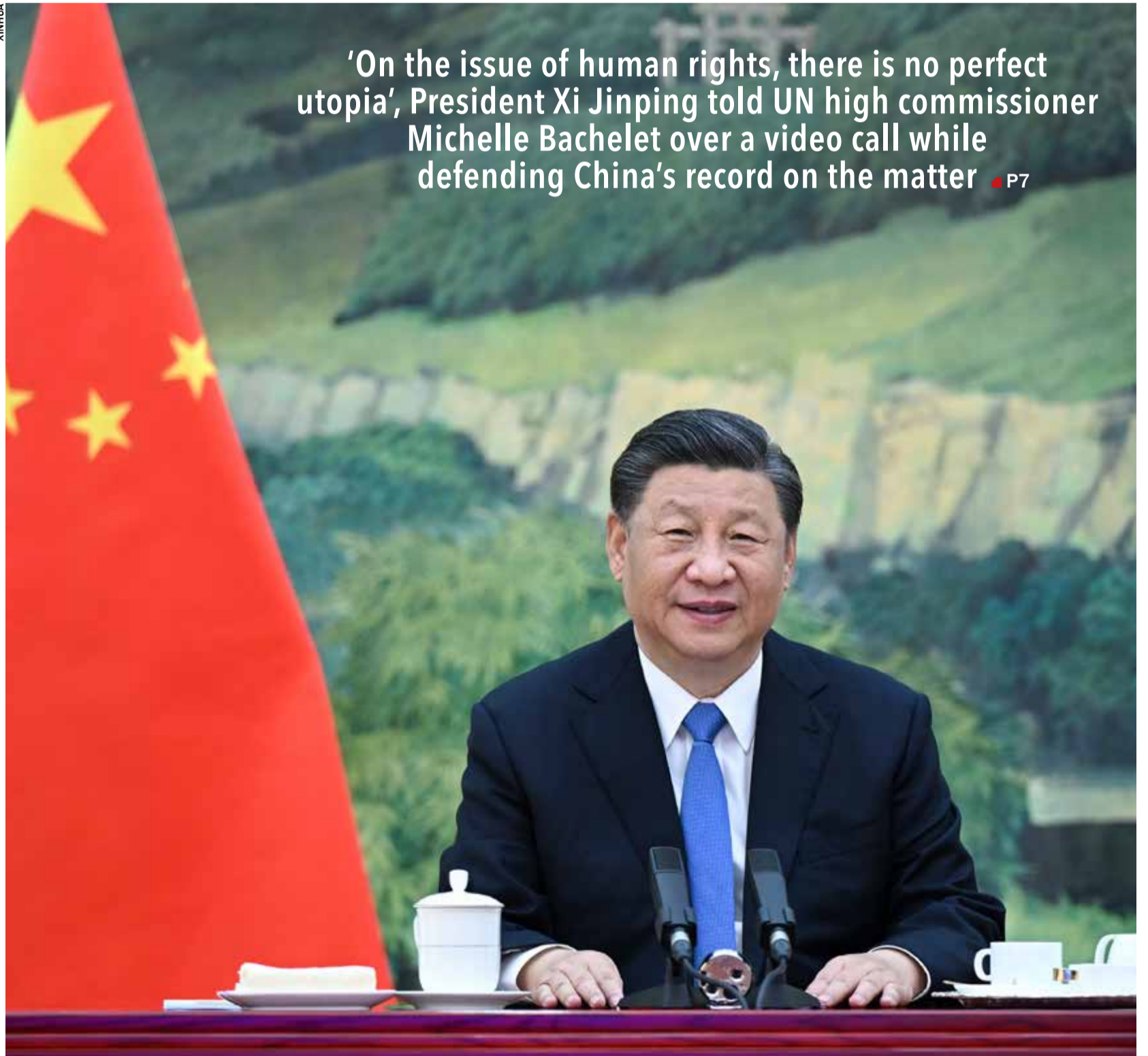


Pakistani police have fired tear gas and scuffled with stone-throwing supporters of defiant former Prime Minister Imran Khan as they gathered for planned marches yesterday toward central Islamabad for a rally he hopes will bring down the government and force early elections. The marches have raised fears of major violence between supporters of Khan — now Pakistan's top opposition leader — and security forces. The government of Khan's successor, Shabbaz Sharif, has banned the rally and warned Khan he could face arrest if he went ahead with the demonstrations.

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RIGHTS AND WRONGS

XINHUA



'On the issue of human rights, there is no perfect utopia', President Xi Jinping told UN high commissioner Michelle Bachelet over a video call while defending China's record on the matter P7

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ANTHONY LAM

AL PLENARY

BILL PROPOSES FOREIGN VET LICENSES BE CERTIFIED LOCALLY

THE Animal Clinical and Business Operations Law made its first appearance at the parliament's plenary session yesterday. The first reading of the bill raised several questions on various related topics.

The bill proposes that future veterinarians will need to hold at least a Bachelor's degree in the discipline and a license to practice in a jurisdiction outside of Macau, in order to apply for a license to work as a veterinarian in the city.

Secretary André Cheong for Administration and Justice indicated that during the first phase, perhaps licenses only from specific jurisdictions may be certified. At the same time, the bill also proposes to establish a licensing council to determine whether a vet meets the requirements.

On this matter, lawmaker Chan Iek Lap, who is a medical doctor, raised a question regarding the possibility of prospective veterinarians obtaining a license abroad. He took his own profession as example, saying that not all jurisdictions are willing to issue a license to non-local medical graduates.

Responding to the question, Dr Ng Sao Hong, veterinarian at the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), said that the mechanism for certifying external licenses was introduced after consideration of laws in other jurisdictions, such as Hong Kong. Ng added that obtaining an external license should be feasible. For example, she said, mainland China has a specific exam for veterinarians. Therefore, local residents should be in easy reach of the licensing system.

Furthermore, lawmaker Ma Io Fong was concerned with the proposal on conditional continuing education or training.

In reply to Ma's question, Cheong explained that considering veterinarian training programs are not widely available in Macau, the proposed legislation does not make the requirement mandatory.

Adding to Cheong's answer, Ng said that with IT advancing to a greater extent, future veterinarians may even have a wider choice of programs.

Continuing education or training will add points to license renewal, the officials added.

Lawmaker José Pereira Cou-

XINHUA



tinho questioned why clinical facilities are referred to as clinical venues in the bill. He considered this to be unprofessional.

In response, Cheong explained it would be a huge leap from no-law if different types of animal clinical facilities are separately legislated.

Several lawmakers also asked why the bill is still relying heavily on printed documentation when the government, in particular Cheong's sector, is promoting e-governance and procedures.

Cheong explained under the E-governance Law, certain procedures will be digitized but will not necessarily be legalized as part of the legislation or independently.

The future law will also govern animal service and beauty centers. In response to lawmakers' questions, Cheong stressed that beauty centers helping their clients feed their pets medications prescribed legally elsewhere will not be considered illegal. They will also be allowed to deworm animals as the medicine is either ready-for-use or prescribed by licensed veterinarians.

The legislation will be un-

likely to destabilize Macau's pet cityscape as Ng revealed that 80% of existing veterinary centers and animal service centers are on the bar. She added that the city now has 40 veterinarians working in the government and 54 in private practice, with one-third of the latter being non-local residents.

The figure of veterinarians in private practice is not 100% accurate because, as Ng explained, registration is currently on voluntary basis.

Cheong added that this bill, even if passed, will not have authority over animal or pet cafes. This is within another area of authority of the IAM, however. Moreover, the selling of food and pets in a single establishment is forbidden under competent laws, the senior official added.

The bill does not restrict the residency of future veterinarians to Macau.

After the lengthy debate on these topics, the bill was passed at the plenary with 29 votes in favor, no votes against and two votes abstention. The two abstaining votes were casted by Coutinho and his teammate Che Sai Wang.

After voting for the bill, Ron Lam made a voting declaration, justifying his position of supporting the bill as a step to more supervised medical services for animals. However, he added, the omission of several measures, such as the mandatory insertion of microchips and a ban on commercial animal breeding, make the bill less satisfactory. During his voting declaration, he called for the inclusion in the bill of several proposals, including mandatory chipping of animals, banning commercial breeding and more in-depth study on mandatory neutering of retained animals.

CHEONG: THE LEGISLATION HAS FOUR AIMS

In his introduction to the bill, Cheong highlighted four goals for the legislation, before elaborating on each.

The senior official said that the legislation is necessary so as to establish a system for registration, licensing and disciplinary supervision of veterinarians, as well as a veterinarian professional council.

For the time being, there is no official English name for the council.

In addition, the legislation will help clarify two types of venues, namely clinical venues and animal business venues. If the bill gets passed at the parliament, these venues will see their specific licensing and monitoring systems.

That said, venues will have their licenses suspended or even terminated if deemed necessary.

Furthermore, a system for disciplinary supervision and administrative punishments will also be set up. The bill proposes the mechanism for disciplinary procedures against veterinarians should they be alleged of committing clinical malpractices. Proposed punishments range from written warnings to the termination of licenses.

Concerning veterinarians who are already in practice before the expected promulgation of the law, buffer measures are proposed in the bill. This is also an aim of the legislation, according to Cheong.

He introduced that these veterinarians will be eligible to file for registration within a given period. The same will apply to animal business venues.

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AL PLENARY

Lawmakers urge for tighter measures over non-local workforce imports

ANTHONY LAM

SEVERAL lawmakers are calling for clearer contract cessation of non-local workforce at the parliament's plenary session yesterday.

26 lawmakers signed up to give pre-agenda speeches before the session.

During his speech, lawmaker Ron Lam pointed out that a lot of companies are in fact major non-local workforce employers, despite operating government tenders or contracts.

He used a cleaning company as an example. According to Lam, the company in question, which is the winner of a number of government service contracts, has 1,333 non-local workers in its pool.

He said that if the government required these companies to hire local workers for non-technical positions as well, at least 1,000 local workers could



Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) counters

be employed. It would also save a lot of time and resources for job-matching and subsidized training.

Meanwhile, lawmaker José Chui pointed out the fact that Macau is seeing skill-mismatch in the labor market. He called for the better categorization of these factors so as to simplify

things for both employers and employees.

Speaking on tourism and gambling topics but touching on employment problems, lawmaker Angela Leong made several suggestions to the government on boosting tourism, which should eventually help stabilize the em-

ployment market.

On this matter, while highlighting the appeal of various types of activities held in the attempt to attract tourists, the lawmaker also suggested that the government explore the possibilities of regional multiple-stop tours with mainland agencies.

Furthermore, cross-sector and cross-boundary tours would, in her opinion, also help develop MICE tourism. It would also help Macau live out its multifaceted positioning strategies.

She recapped Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng's request for the tourism industry to broaden the source market of Macau and not only focus on mainland Chinese tourists.

At the same time, lawmaker Becky Song expressed her hope that the government would provide more support to local people in financial and economic ways.

She first complimented the government for easing its position on "satellite casinos" – those that are not located within properties of any gambling concessionaire – which has already increased confidence in the community generally.

However, she pointed out that due to a variety of factors, prospects are still unclear. Therefore, she hoped the government would not only provide greater support, but also engage in further dialogue with casino operators.

Macau is seeing skill-mismatch in the labor market

AD

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TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT

SCHOLARS CONCERN OVER UM'S 'ABSORPTION INTO MAINLAND'

LYNZY VALLES

ACADEMICS have expressed concerns that Macau's public higher education institution conforms to the agenda to "accelerate Macau's absorption into mainland China." They are also apprehensive that the Chinese language has become the more dominant working language at the institution, despite English being the official language of instruction.

As cited in a report issued by the Times Higher Education, professors fear that the fast-paced changes reportedly occurring in at the University of Macau (UM) will compromise the mission of the university, which identifies itself as the bridge between the East and West.

Zhidong Hao, a professor emeritus of sociology at the university who has been in the US for four years, noted that "academic freedom was further eroded when the administration changed guard and the rectors are more likely to be recruited because of their pro-government credentials," as cited in the report.

According to the professor, the move echoes the "general political climate in mainland China and Hong Kong."

Back in 2018, rector of UM, Professor Yonghua Song, pledged when he was first appointed as rector that he would act in ac-



cordance with the principle of academic freedom, one of the university's core values.

Since that time, Song has dismissed old rumors regarding scholars being discouraged from discussing political issues, particularly regarding mainland China, saying that academic freedom is part of the charter of the UM, and that in any faculty, the university needs to abide by the charter which is the law of the university.

Meanwhile, Macau's border has been closed to foreign arrivals since March 2020, to slow the spread of Covid-19.

It was only recently that Macau started to relax its strict entry measures by launching a special entry scheme established by the government, to allow foreign teachers into Macau to meet the needs of local schools.

trative meetings that used to be held in English are now held in Chinese, which "automatically blocks international academics [from participating] unless they speak Chinese very well."

Another concern was the charge that staff were not always free to raise their opinions on university strategy, and that professors are allegedly resigned to "a lack of accountability for decisions concerning everything from promotion to teaching load distribution."

"There were outspoken people who were not promoted, so there was a sense that one would be rewarded if one would just passively sit in meetings and not ask questions of a more critical nature," the former professor said in the report.

Although the source has admitted that the public university did not interfere in his teaching materials nor his research when he was still at the UM, a current employee admitted that there are policies implemented by the university which are "are suddenly changed and applied retrospectively – something that happens with increasing frequency."

Rui Paulo da Silva Martins, UM vice rector for global affairs, told the Times Higher Education that the public institution is continuing to pursue global collaborations, adding that "internationalization has been a strong characteristic of UM."

In the report, according to a current employee who refused to be identified, foreign professors and postgraduates have allegedly been replaced by Chinese ones at "an accelerating rate" since the onset of the pandemic in 2020,

"The university now mirrors the city with its absence of foreigners," said the employee in the report.

"Although English is still the university's official language of instruction, Chinese has now become the dominant working language and the effort to remain multilingual has been forgotten against the background of the clear agenda to accelerate Macau's absorption into mainland China," the employee added.

Echoing the same sentiments, another academic who left the university during the pandemic recalled that several adminis-

OUTPATIENT CONSULTATIONS IN 2021 INCREASE 12.7% TO NEARLY 2M

LYNZY VALLES

HOSPITAL outpatient consultations increased by 12.7% year-on-year to 1,962,000, with those aged 15-24 up 23.6% to 139,000, according to data from the Health Bureau (SSM).

Consultations in Paediatrics/Neonatology (92,000) soared by 22.7%, while those in Dermatology (130,000), Otorhinolaryngology (97,000) and Chinese Medicine (215,000) went up by 15.7%, 13.2% and 12.8% respectively.

On the other hand, consultations in Gynecology/Obstetrics (90,000) dropped by 4.7%.

Number of inpatients grew by 7.5% to 58,000, and the average hospital stay rose by 0.1 day to 7.7 days. With a lengthened hospital stay, the occupancy rate of inpatient beds went up by 4.5 percentage points to 70.7%.

Emergency service recipients also rose by 13.8% year-on-year to 390,000; while surgical operations performed in 2021 went up by 5.2% to about 19,000 cases, of which Ophthalmology operations (3,357 cases) grew by 20.4%.

Meanwhile, a total of 1,370,000 doses of vaccines were administered at hospitals and primary health care establishments in 2021, an upsurge of 246.7% year-on-year.

Most of the vaccinations were inactivated Covid-19 vaccine (803,000 doses) and mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (171,000 doses).

A total of 8,624,000 nucleic acid tests for the novel coronavirus were conducted at hospitals and primary healthcare establishments in 2021.

According to the registration information of the SSM, there were 1,888 doctors and 2,742 nurses in Macau in 2021, a year-on-year growth of 5.5% and 6.8% respectively. The numbers of doctors and nurses per 1,000 head of population both went up by 0.2 to 2.8 and 4.0 respectively.



COMMUNICATIONS

Punishment possible if telecom operators decline to surrender requested data

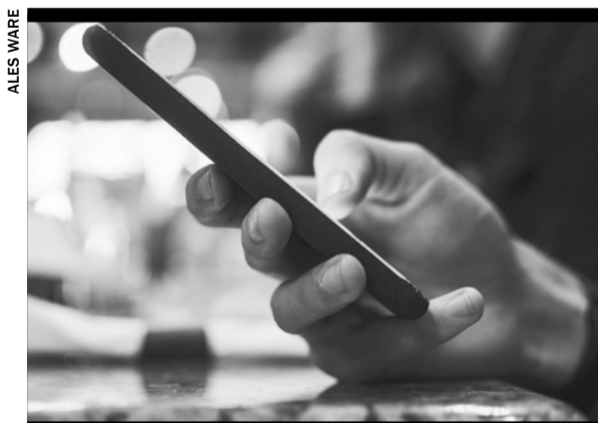
ANTHONY LAM

AS per a bill currently being discussed in parliament, future telecom operators may be punished if they fail to offer data on request by government agencies.

The First Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly recently held a meeting to continue its detailed review of the Bill for the Legal System Governing the Interception and Protection of Communications.

Government officials sat in at the meeting.

At the post-meeting press conference, in which



the officials did not participate, President of the committee Ella Lei emphasized the proposal regarding the obligation laid upon telecom operators to submit data.

The proposal, which is stated in Article 11 of the bill, stipulates that when criminal police agencies, such as Judiciary Police, "view or obtain data from the user databases of telecom

operators through data interconnection or any other means," the relevant operators will not have the right to decline or delay the submission, unless they have justifiable reasons.

Failure to comply with this provision, if passed by the parliament, will constitute an administrative violation.

At the same time, Lei also disclosed that the government had added a new proposal into the bill; if the bill is passed at the parliament, future competent agencies will be empowered take a step further and request

the data through the issuance of orders. In such a case, concerned telecom operators must surrender the data within a designated period.

Failure to offer up the data in a timely manner will constitute a criminal offence instead of an administrative violation.

Citing the government officials, Lei explained that the alteration was made based on the "importance of criminal investigations" and after studying other sources of legal references.

According to Lei, the bill proposes August 1 as the promulgation date.

CTM claims all 5G infrastructure ready, only waiting for licensing

RENATO MARQUES

THE local telecommunications company Companhia de Telecomunicações de Macau S.A.R.L. (CTM) has been ready to start providing 5G services in Macau for almost one year, members of the executive committee told the media yesterday during a media tour of CTM facilities and new developments.

According to the company's vice president of Legal & Regulatory, Aguinaldo Wahnnon, all the infrastructure to support the new network was concluded in June last year and since then has been waiting, for the licensing from the government in order to start operations.

Wahnnon also told the media that the telecom operator has already invested some 600 million patacas in infrastructure and is willing to invest a total of 3.6 billion patacas in the next five years in the expansion and update of the system.

During the presentation to the media on developments related to the 5G network, the vice president of Network Services, Declan Leong, noted that the regulatory delays from the government are causing Macau to lag behind many countries and regions, particularly in Asia, where 5G is already a reality.

According to Leong, Macau is already three years late in the launching of 5G in comparison with the mainland and South Korea, both of which started the service back in 2019, as well as Japan and the neighboring region of Hong Kong which both commenced 5G operations in 2020.

The same official added that Macau is not only late in implementation of the 5G service but is also the only place within the Greater Bay Area that does not have yet this service.



Vice president of Network Services, Declan Leong

Questioned by the media as to why is it taking so long to regulate the matter and issue licenses for the operation of 5G services, Wahnnon said, "I believe that others priorities might have stalled or delayed the government dealing with this, [...] obviously Covid[-19] contributed and also the ongoing changes in the gaming sector are a priority for the government. Last year they extended CTM's concession, which was important because it was absolutely essential for our continuous efforts in extending the optic fiber cable all over Macau, which is a necessary [condition] for this [for the 5G development] to happen."

Concerning fiber optics reach, Leong said that Macau is among a very small group of places in the world where fiber optics has full coverage, reaching every household.

"We are among very few places that have achieved this, just like Qatar and a few other places. Taking the example of Hong Kong, for instance, their optic fiber coverage is only around 80% currently," he said.

In his explanation of the 5G uses and characteristics, Leong noted that while people often focus their attention only on the added speed of the 5G network, many other aspects are even more relevant than speed.

"The 5G improvement is not just about speed and how fast it can be, it's also about the latency of data transfer that can improve a lot," he said, adding, "5G is not just about use by humans but it's mostly about use by machines," he remarked, adding, "if there is a

surgery being done remotely via the internet, we need to ensure that there is no delay between the movement of the surgeon in one place and the place where the patient is, otherwise this could be catastrophic, things [under 5G] need to be done in real-time." He also gave some examples of 5G application in vehicles, self-driving, and other autonomous or semi-autonomous machinery.

Another of the added functions of 5G was said to be security features allowing data exchange to be more secure and safer from external attacks or hacking.

The vice president for commercial, Ebel Cham, also noted that the 5G technology will enable companies, sectors and even the government to transmit information without passing through the servers of the service provider. These advantages of being both faster as well as more secure, are among the benefits that Cham said that CTM wants to be able to offer to the clients once the 5G service is in operation.

The media tour included a visit to the facilities including the 7x24 Network Management Center, Security Operation Center, and the International Tier-III CTM Data Center, located at the CTM Tele-centro building in Taipa.

CTM CALLS FOR FRIENDLY POLICIES REGARDING 5G FEES

QUESTIONED on requests made to the government by CTM and the status of the negotiations, Wahnnon said that the company hopes that the government decides on policies regarding 5G which are conducive to its development and expansion. "We hope the government is receptive to our calls. We know they are still studying the matter but we are hoping for a good [outcome], especially

in what concerns network spectrum fees and licensing fees. We can only hope they adopt friendly policies." The company also noted that the investment already made by CTM, even before the licensing, creates an asset, and a wide range of opportunities for other players who would not need to repeat the same investment, since CTM could provide access to the system.

DSI ADDS NEW FUNCTION TO 'MACAO ONE ACCOUNT'

Following the addition of the "My Photo" function, added to Macao One Account, starting from May 26, DSI will launch the SAR travel document application service on the mobile application. Resident Identity Card holders who are aged 18 or above can use the platform to lodge an application for the Macao SAR Passport, the Macao SAR Travel Permit and the Visit Permit for Residents of the Macao SAR to visit the Hong Kong SAR, either for themselves or on behalf of their underage children over 5 years old.

IAM EXTENDS WET MARKET'S SHUTTLE BUS SERVICE

The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) has decided to extend the free shuttle bus service between the temporary Almirante Lacerda Municipal Market and the Horta e Costa district until the end of July. To facilitate the renovation of the Red Market, the stall operators have moved to the temporary Almirante Lacerda Municipal so they can continue trading. At this stage, in consideration of the number of passengers, the daily service hours and frequency of shuttle bus service have been increased following consultation with the traffic management authorities. The shuttle buses operate daily from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

MUSICIANS COMPETITION SEES INCREASE OF REGISTRANTS

The 40th Macao Young Musicians Competition, which celebrates both Chinese and Western music, has attracted the registration of more than 1,000 participants. Registration has increased 60% compared to previous years, according to the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC). The competition will be held from July 23 to August 7 at the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (Mong-Ha Campus) and at the Macao Science Center, while the "Special Prizes Competition" is provisionally scheduled for 28 August; the venue will be announced in due course.

GUANGDONG, MACAU PRODUCTS FAIR TO BE HELD JULY 29

THE "2022 Guangdong & Macao Branded Products Fair" (2022 GMBPF) will be held from July 29 to July 31 at The Venetian Macao's Hall A with both online and in-person elements.

Eligible Macau SMEs (which have been registered with the Financial Services Bureau for at least one year; with at least 50% of the shares or the controlling interest of the

company owned by Macau residents) can participate in the fair this year at a special anti-pandemic price of MOP680.

Priority for participation will be given to enterprises with "made in Macau," "Macao brands" products, agents of products from Portuguese-speaking countries, enterprises of Macao Ideas--The Macao Products Display Centre and the Portuguese-

speaking Countries Food Products Exhibition Centre.

In addition to presenting Guangdong and Macau's products, business matching services will be "further strengthened, enhancing the level and content of the Fair and bringing into play the effect of industry linkage," according to organizers. The fair will still cover a range of industries including food

and beverage, gastronomy, big health, science and innovation, home appliances, daily essentials, cultural and creative industries, time-honored brands and "the Belt and Road" specialties.

Jointly organized by the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) and the Department of Commerce of Guangdong Province, companies interested in joining the fair

are welcome to register until June 2 at IPIM's application system online or submit applications in person.

The 2021 edition of the fair featured nearly 400 booths in November last year.

With the theme "smart living," combining shopping, leisure and entertainment across online and offline exhibitions, the event featured 351 exhibitors. LV

DIPLOMACY

CHINA WANTS 10 PACIFIC NATIONS TO ENDORSE SW

NICK PERRY, WELLINGTON

CHINA wants 10 small Pacific nations to endorse a sweeping agreement covering everything from security to fisheries in what one leader warns is a "game-changing" bid by Beijing to wrest control of the region.

A draft of the agreement obtained by The Associated Press shows that China wants to train Pacific police officers, team up on "traditional and non-traditional security" and expand law enforcement cooperation.

China also wants to jointly develop a marine plan for fisheries — which would include the Pacific's lucrative tuna catch — increase cooperation on running the region's internet networks, and set up cultural Confucius Institutes and classrooms. China also mentions the possibility of setting up a free trade area with the Pacific nations.

China's move comes as Foreign Minister Wang Yi and a 20-strong delegation begin a visit to the region this week.

Wang is visiting seven of the countries he hopes will endorse the "Common Development Vision" — the Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Papua New Guinea.

Wang is also holding virtual

meetings with the other three potential signatories — the Cook Islands, Niue and the Federated States of Micronesia. He is hoping the countries will endorse the pre-written agreement as part of a joint communique after a scheduled May 30 meeting in Fiji he is holding with the foreign ministers from each of the 10 countries.

Micronesia's President David Panuelo has written an eight-page letter to the leaders of other Pacific nations saying his nation won't be endorsing the plan.

Panuelo said in his letter, which the AP has obtained, that behind attractive words in the agreement like "equity" and "justice" are many worrying details.

Among other concerns, he said, is that the agreement opens the door for China to own and control the region's fisheries and communications infrastructure. He said China could intercept emails and listen in on phone calls.

Panuelo said in his letter that the agreement is "an intent to shift tho-

AP PHOTO



Spectators hold a Chinese flag as they watch a ceremony to mark the opening of Independence Drive Boulevard in Port M...

China has a long history of friendly relations with the South Pacific island countries.

WANG WENBIN
CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY

se of us with diplomatic relations with China very close to Beijing's orbit, intrinsically tying the whole of our economies and societies to them."

He warns the agreement would needlessly heighten geopolitical tensions and threaten regional stability.

In his letter, Panuelo said the Common Development Vision is "the single most game-changing proposed agreement in the Pacific in any of our lifetimes," and it "threatens to bring a new Cold War era at best, and a World War at worst."

Australia's government urges Beijing to remove trade barriers

ROD MCGUIRK,
CANBERRA

AUSTRALIA'S new government has urged China to lift trade sanctions if it wants to reset a bilateral relationship that plumbed new depths under the previous administration.

The Chinese premier's congratulatory letter to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on his election victory was widely seen as a relaxation of Beijing's two-year ban on high-level government contact with Australia. Premier Li Ke-qiang said China was ready to work with Australia to development the bilateral relationship.

But Albanese said it was China, not Australia, that had changed since his center-left Labor Party was last in power in 2013.

China has created a series of official and unofficial trade barriers in recent years to a range of Australian exports worth billions

AP PHOTO



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Foreign Minister Penny Wong, in the background

of dollars including coal, wine, barley, beef and seafood.

"It is China that has placed sanctions on Australia," Albanese told reporters Tuesday at a Tokyo summit that he attended with President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"There is no justification for doing that and that's why they should be removed," Albanese added.

Treasurer Jim Chalmers also called for China to immediately lift trade barriers between the free-trade partners.

"We would certainly like to see those sanctions and those tariffs lifted. They are

damaging our economy. They are making life harder for some of our employers and workers here in Australia and so obviously we would like to see those measures lifted," Chalmers said yesterday.

China has announced its Foreign Minister Wang Yi would soon tour the South Pacific in a 10-day trip.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong was expected to fly to Fiji today, a day after returning to Sydney from Japan as the new government hastens to counter Chinese influence in the South Pacific, The Australian newspaper reported. Wong's office did not immediately respond to a request for confirmation.

Before Albanese and Wong boarded a plane to return to Australia from Tokyo, he thanked Australian voters who, in Saturday's election, gave him the "extraordinary honor of representing Australia at important international forums."

"I will always act with integrity. I will always act with honesty in my dealings with other leaders and our friends and partners," Albanese said, in comments that could be aimed at his predecessor, Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

During a National Press

Club speech last week, Albanese blamed Morrison for damaging relationships with other countries.

He said Morrison misled the United States that Labor supported a secret plan to provide Australia with a fleet of submarines powered with U.S. nuclear technology. In fact, Albanese's party wasn't told of the plan until the day before it was announced in September.

Albanese also accused Morrison of leaking to the media personal text messages from Emmanuel Macron to discredit the French president's complaint that Australia had given no warning that a French submarine contract would be canceled. Macron also accused Morrison of lying to him, and French Ambassador Jean-Pierre Thebault described the leak as a warning to other world leaders that the Australian government could weaponize their private communications.

MDT/AP

KEEPING AGREEMENT



Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (2018)

Panuelo declined to comment on the letter or the proposed agreement.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said yesterday he didn't know about Panuelo's letter.

"But I don't agree at all with the argument that cooperation between China and the South Pacific island countries will trigger a new Cold War," he said.

He said that China "has a long history of friendly relations with the South Pacific island countries" and had long provided them economic and technical assistance without any political strings attached.

Like some other countries in the Pacific, Micronesia is finding itself increasingly caught between the competing interests of Washington and Beijing.

Micronesia has close ties to the U.S. through a Compact of Free Association. But it also has what Panuelo describes in his letter as a "Great Friendship" with China that he hopes will continue despite his opposition to the agreement.

The security aspects of the agreement will be particularly troubling to many in the region and beyond, especially after China signed a separate security pact with the Solomon Islands last month.

That pact has raised fears that China could send troops to the island nation or even establish a military base there, not far from Australia. The Solomon Islands and China say there are no plans for a base.

The May 30 meeting will be the second between Wang and the Pacific islands' foreign ministers after they held a virtual meeting last October.

Those who follow China's role in

the Pacific will be scrutinizing the wording of the draft agreement.

Among its provisions: "China will hold intermediate and high-level police training for Pacific Island countries."

The agreement says the countries will strengthen "cooperation in the fields of traditional and non-traditional security" and will "expand law enforcement cooperation, jointly combat transnational crime, and establish a dialog mechanism on law enforcement capacity and police cooperation."

The agreement would also see the nations "expand exchanges between governments, legislatures and political parties."

The draft agreement also stipulates that the Pacific countries "firmly abide" by the one-China principle, under which Taiwan, a self-ruled island democracy, is considered by Beijing to be part of China. It would also uphold the "non-interference" principle that China often cites as a deterrent to other nations speaking out about its human rights record.

The agreement says that China and the Pacific countries would jointly formulate a marine spatial plan "to optimize the layout of the marine economy, and develop and utilize marine resources rationally, so as to promote a sustainable development of blue economy."

China also promises more investment in the region by mobilizing private capital and encouraging "more competitive and reputable Chinese enterprises to participate in direct investment in Pacific Island countries."

China also promised to dispatch Chinese language consultants, teachers and volunteers to the islands.

The AP has also obtained a draft of a five-year action plan that's intended to sit alongside the Common Development Vision, which outlines a number of immediate incentives that China is offering to the Pacific nations.

In the action plan, China says it will fully implement 2,500 government scholarships through 2025.

"In 2022, China will hold the first training program for young diplomats from Pacific Island countries, depending on the pandemic situation," the draft plan states, adding that China will also hold seminars on governance and planning for the Pacific nations.

In the draft action plan, China says it will build criminal investigation laboratories as needed by the Pacific nations that can be used for fingerprint testing, forensic autopsies, and electronic forensics.

China also says it will also spend an additional \$2 million and send 200 medics to the islands to help fight COVID-19 and promote health, and promises to help the countries in their efforts to combat climate change. **MDT/AP**



President Xi Jinping (right) holds a virtual meeting with United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet yesterday

President Xi defends China's record to UN human rights chief

KEN MORITSUGU, BEIJING

CHINESE leader Xi Jinping defended China's record to the top U.N. human rights official yesterday, saying each nation should be allowed to find its own path based on its particular circumstances and criticizing those countries that lecture others on human rights and politicize the issue.

"Through long-term and persistent hard work, China has successfully embarked on a path of human rights development that conforms to the trend of the times and suits its own national conditions," Xi told U.N. human rights chief Michelle Bachelet in a video call, according to an online report by state broadcaster CCTV.

Bachelet is in the middle of a six-day visit to China that includes stops in Xinjiang, a remote northwestern region where the Chinese government has been accused of human rights violations against Uyghurs and other ethnic groups. Her trip has been criticized by the U.S. and others, who think that China will limit whom she can talk to, stage manage her trip and use it for propaganda purposes.

The CCTV report didn't mention Xinjiang or the Communist Party's alleged harsh treatment of dissidents and activists and

ethnic groups in Tibet and Inner Mongolia.

Xi laid out the long-ruling Communist Party's position on human rights, which argues that China should find its own path and not completely copy the models of other countries and rejects outside criticism as interference in its domestic affairs. It also says that bettering the lives of people is the most important human right for developing countries, and points to China's success in lifting people out of poverty.

"On the issue of human rights, there is no perfect utopia."

XI JINPING

"On the issue of human rights, there is no perfect 'utopia,'" he was quoted as saying. "We don't need 'masters' that dictate to other countries, let alone politicizing and turning the human rights issue into a tool, practicing double standards and interference in the internal affairs of other countries under the pretext of human rights."

Bachelet, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, said it had been valuable to have direct talks with Xi and senior Chinese officials on human rights issues and concerns in China and

globally, a tweet from her U.N. office said.

CCTV quoted Bachelet as telling Xi, "I admire China's efforts and achievements in eradicating poverty, protecting human rights and achieving economic and social development."

U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price said yesterday in Washington, D.C., that the United States does not expect China to allow the access Bachelet would need to get an unmanipulated view of the human rights situation in Xinjiang.

Bachelet started her trip in Guangzhou, where she met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and had a video conference with Du Hangwei, the vice minister of public security. Her itinerary also includes the cities of Kashgar and Urumqi, both in Xinjiang.

In a speech to students at the Institute for Human Rights at Guangzhou University, she noted that young people are influencing debate on issues such as equality, climate action and human rights and are holding governments and businesses accountable for their actions.

"A fundamental ingredient for youth to be able to play that role is an open civic space where they can voice their opinions and seek change," she said, according to a U.N. text of her speech. **MDT/AP**

USA

Gunman kills 19 children, two adults in Texas school rampage

ACACIA CORONADO
& JIM VERTUNO, UVALDE

AN 18-year-old gunman killed 19 children as he went from classroom to classroom at a Texas elementary school in a rampage that also left two adults dead, officials said, adding to a gruesome, yearslong series of mass killings at churches, schools and stores.

The attacker was killed by a Border Patrol agent who rushed into the school without waiting for backup, according to a law enforcement official.

The assault yesterday [Macau time] at Robb Elementary School in the heavily Latino town of Uvalde was the deadliest shooting at a U.S. school since a gunman killed 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut, in December 2012.

Hours after the attack, families were still awaiting word on their children. At the town civic center where some gathered, the silence was broken repeatedly by screams and wailing. "No! Please, no!" one man yelled as he embraced another man.

"My heart is broken today," said Hal Harrell, the school district superintendent. "We're a small community, and we're going to need your prayers to get through this."

Gov. Greg Abbott said one of the two adults killed was a teacher.

Adolfo Cruz, a 69-year-old air conditioning repairman, was still outside the school as the sun set, seeking word on his 10-year-old great-granddaughter, Eliajha Cruz Torres.

He drove to the scene after receiving a terrifying call from his daughter shortly following the first reports of the shooting. He said other relatives were at the hospital and the civic center.

Waiting, he said, was the heaviest moment of his life.

"I hope she is alive," Cruz said.

The attack was the latest grim moment for a country scarred by a string of massacres, coming just 10 days after a deadly, racist rampage at a Buffalo, New York, supermarket. And the prospects for any reform of the nation's gun regulations seemed as dim, if



A woman cries as she leaves the Uvalde Civic Center, in Texas

not dimmer, than in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook deaths.

But President Joe Biden appeared ready for a fight, calling for new gun restrictions in an address to the nation hours after the attack.

"As a nation we have to ask, when in God's name are we going to stand up to the gun lobby? When in God's name are we going to do what has to be done?" Biden asked. "Why are we willing to live with this carnage?"

It was not immediately clear how many people in all were wounded, but the school district's police chief, Pete Arredondo, said there were "several injuries."

Staff members in scrubs and devastated victims' relatives could be seen weeping as they walked out of Uvalde Memorial Hospital, which said 13 children were taken there. Another hospital reported a 66-year-old woman was in critical condition.

Officials did not immediately reveal a motive, but they identified the assailant as Salvador Ramos, a resident of the community about 85 miles west of San Antonio. Law enforcement officials said he acted alone.

Uvalde, home to about 16,000 people, is about 75 miles from the border with Mexico. Robb Elementary, which has nearly 600 students in second, third and fourth grades, is in a mostly residential neighborhood of modest homes.

The attack came as the school was counting down to the last days of the school year with a series of themed days. Tuesday was to be "Footloose and Fancy," with students

wearing nice outfits.

Ramos had hinted on social media that an attack could be coming, according to state Sen. Roland Gutierrez, who said he had been briefed by state police. He noted that the gunman "suggested the kids should watch out," and that he had bought two "assault weapons" after turning 18.

Before heading to the school, Ramos shot his grandmother, Gutierrez said.

Other officials said that the grandmother survived and was being treated, though her condition was not known.

Other officials said that the grandmother survived and was being treated, though her condition was not known.

Investigators believe Ramos posted photos on Instagram of two guns he used in the shooting, and they were examining whether he made statements online in the hours before the assault, a law enforcement official said.

Law enforcement officers were serving multiple search warrants yesterday and gathering telephone and other records, the official said. Investigators were also attempting to contact Ramos' relatives and were tracing the firearms.

The official could not discuss details of the investigation publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The attack began about 11:30 a.m., when the gunman crashed his car outside the school and ran into the building, according to Travis Conside, a spokesman for the Texas Department of Public Safety. A resident who heard the crash called 911, and two local police officers exchanged gunfire with the shooter.

Both officers were shot. It was not immediately clear where on the campus that confrontation occurred or how much time elapsed before more authorities arrived on the scene.

One Border Patrol agent who was working nearby when the shooting began rushed into the school without waiting for backup and shot and killed the gunman, who was behind a barricade, according to a law enforcement official speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk about it.

The agent was wounded but able to walk out of the school, the law enforcement official said.

Meanwhile, teams of Border Patrol agents raced to the school, including 10 to 15 members of a SWAT-like tactical and counterterrorism unit, said Jason Owens, a top regional official with the Border Patrol.

He said some area agents have children at Robb Elementary.

"It hit home for everybody," he said.

Condolences poured in from leaders around the world. Pope Francis pleaded that it was time say "enough" to the indiscriminate trade of weapons!" Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba of Ukraine, which is at war with Russia after Moscow invaded, said that his nation also knows "the pain of losing innocent young lives."

The tragedy in Uvalde was the deadliest school shooting in Texas history, and it added to a grim tally in the state, which has been the site of some of the deadliest shootings in the U.S. over the past five years. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1950 UK DRIVERS CHEER
END OF FUEL RATIONING



Long queues have appeared at garages this evening and motorists have torn their ration books into confetti after the government announced an end to petrol rationing.

The Minister of Fuel and Power, Philip Noel-Baker, told the House of Commons rationing would be abolished because two American companies had agreed a deal to supply oil in return for buying British goods.

"This is indeed VP [Victory for Petrol] day for the motor users' campaign," said a spokesman for three motoring organisations - the RAC, AA and Royal Scottish Automobile Club.

"The effect on the industrial, commercial and community life will be electric. Ration books now become as obsolete as the man with the red flag."

Under a deal agreed earlier this month, Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and the California Texas Oil Company will be paid in sterling and in turn they have agreed to invest the money in British equipment, services and oil tankers.

It is hoped the policy will attract more dollar-spending tourists - which may offset the amount of dollars paid for the new fuel supplies from America.

The government estimates an increase in fuel consumption of one million tons a year. About 430,000 tons of this will be supplied by the US firms. The rest will come from newly expanded refineries in Britain.

But the poor quality of petrol in this country will not improve until refineries - such as those at Southampton and Cheshire - have been completed, probably in 1952.

Discounted driving licences, known as half-rate licences - issued to drivers using basic petrol - will also be abolished.

The Treasury will benefit from £26m in revenue from full-rate licences, a new rate of petrol tax and savings on administration costs. More than 2,000 officials who run the rationing system will lose their jobs.

The practice of putting red dye in commercial petrol to curb black market sales will also stop.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Petrol rationing was first imposed at the onset of World War II in September 1939 and its continuation five years after the war ended was a hotly debated issue, especially during the 1950 general election campaign.

The Conservatives in opposition had long argued it was no longer necessary but Labour said the nation had a severe dollar shortage and could not afford to buy US supplies.

After the 1950 election - which saw Labour's majority slashed - the government realised the public would no longer tolerate rationing. Petrol rationing was reintroduced in January 1957 for five months during the Suez Crisis when Egypt and Syria blocked supplies.

It was almost brought back again during a world fuel crisis in 2000 when Opec squeezed supplies to stop fuel prices coming down.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Social get-together will bring you in contact with intelligent new friends. You should not be concerned with coworkers who insist on spreading rumors. Be prepared for an active but rewarding day.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Be careful not to get roped into uncertain joint financial deals. Sign up for seminars that will expand your business awareness. You'd be wise to control your spending so your debts don't get out of hand.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Try to be patient with their inability to accept your new beliefs. You can make financial deals, but it may be best if you're not using your own cash. You'll be dropping friends for no apparent reason.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Romantic relationships should stabilize. You may be looking through rose colored glasses. You are best to ask questions if you aren't certain about issues that are confronting you.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Your ability to deal with others will help you in getting the support you need. Communicate with relatives who may need advice in order to find solutions to their existing problems.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Make creative changes to your living quarters. You will get along well in social situations. Your ability to deal with others will help you in getting the support you need.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
You will have opportunities to advance, but you may have to be willing to make some changes and possibly a residential move. Don't settle for less than the best.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
You may not be happy if members of your family are not pulling their weight. Hide your cards and learn to say no. Don't divulge secret information.

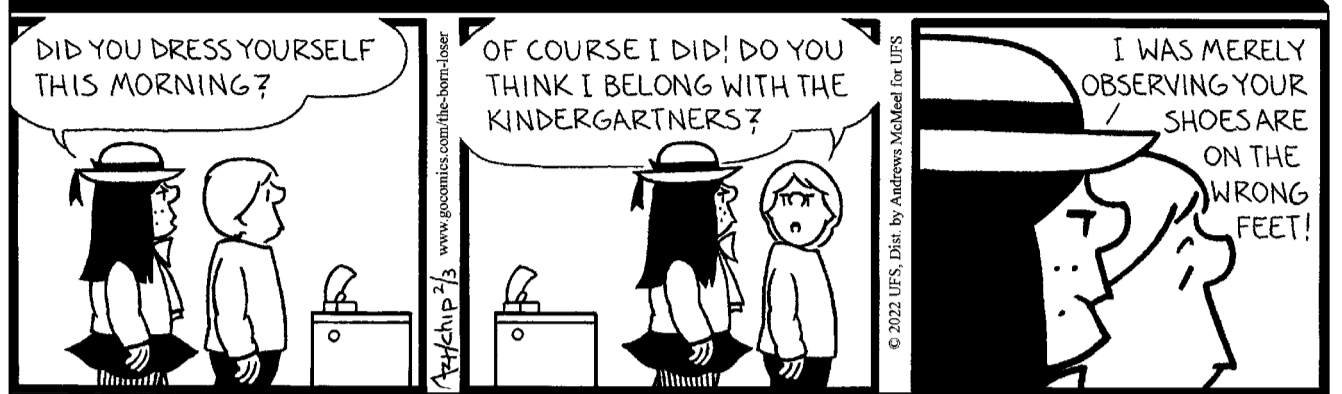
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Your greatest gains will come through your creative ideas. Weigh the pros and cons and make a decision that will change the conditions you've been living under.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Ideas may sound good, but be careful if people are just looking for handouts. You can make money through solid investment plans. You could find yourself having problems with coworkers and employers.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
You may be offered opportunities that will result in a higher earning potential. Travel and educational pursuits may help alleviate the stress you have been feeling.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Your sensitive, affectionate nature will capture the heart of anyone you are attracted to. Your passionate nature may make you jealous if your mate has been too busy to take care of your needs.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

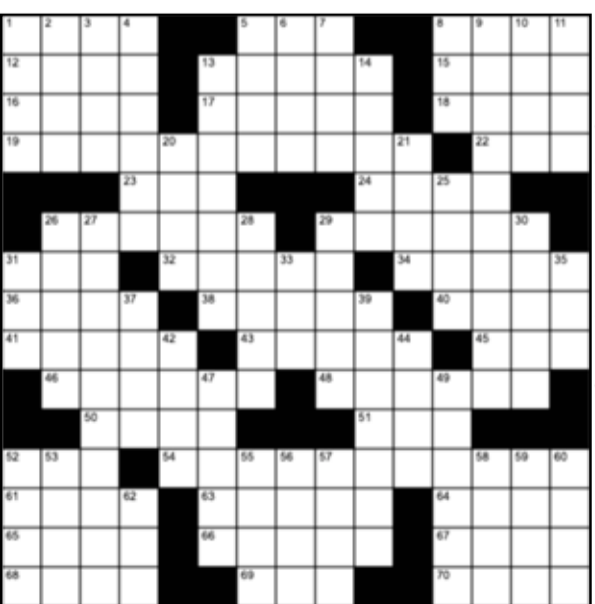
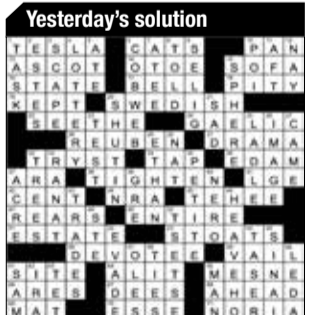
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	20	29	fine
Changchun	11	17	rain
Chengdu	20	24	rain
Chongqing	22	30	cloudy
Fuzhou	20	26	rain
Guangzhou	24	30	thunderstorms
Guiyang	17	24	cloudy
Haikou	26	31	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	19	29	cloudy
Harbin	11	19	thunderstorms
Hefei	18	31	cloudy
Nanjing	18	31	cloudy
Shanghai	18	25	overcast
Taipei	22	24	rain
Wuhan	20	30	fine
Hong Kong	28	26	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	11	21	showers
Frankfurt	13	23	overcast
Paris	12	23	overcast
London	12	22	overcast
New York	17	19	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Primates with short tails or no tail; 5- Small batteries; 8- Billiard implements; 12- Pluto's tail?; 13- Impressionist Edgar; 15- Not tricked by; 16- Air-filled rubber hoop, become fatigued; 17- One of Chekhov's "Three Sisters"; 18- Smithereens; 19- Pretend to be; 22- Salonga of "Miss Saigon"; 23- Man's best friend; 24- "The Time Machine" race; 26- Fine cloth; 29- Oblique; 31- ___X; 32- Adlai's running mate; 34- Specialized language; 36- Parentheses, essentially; 38- Melts; 40- Deodorant brand; 41- Chalice; 43- Whatsoever; 45- Upper limb; 46- Fall; 48- Teat; 50- Polo of "Meet the Parents"; 51- Links org.; 52- Wreath of flowers; 54- Tending to clear from guilt; 61- Golf club which can be numbered 1 to 9; 63- Beast of Borden; 64- Away from the wind; 65- Duct for smoke; 66- Radiolocation; 67- Injectable diazepam, in military lingo; 68- Exam used to measure aptitude or intelligence; 69- Hole number?; 70- Declare;

DOWN 1- Broadway opening; 2- Schoolmarmish; 3- Tombstone lawman; 4- Spirited horses; 5- Dynamic beginning; 6- Not "fer"; 7- Yemen's capital; 8- Corn holder; 9- Speak only one language; 10- Kitchen addition; 11- Cubs slugger Sammy; 13- Revulsion; 14- Satisfies; 20- Red flower; 21- Actress Raines; 25- Long objects used to row a boat; 26- ___ firma; 27- Injudicious; 28- One of the Allens; 29- Dam extending across the Nile; 30- Baseball manager Joe; 31- Joke; 33- Gobble up; 35- Pro ___; 37- Web locale; 39- Cinderella candidate; 42- Draw in; 44- Annika Sorenstam's org.; 47- Social; 49- Monetary unit of Macao; 52- Hoist; 53- Author ___ Stanley Gardner; 55- Thunder unit; 56- Meat-grading org.; 57- Yarn spinner; 58- Norwegian king; 59- Actress Russo; 60- Planetary revolution; 62- Can be used to catch fish or surf!



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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TAIPA 1 BED	HKD 7,900
MACAU 2 BEDS	HKD 9,300
TAIPA MARINA BAY 1 BED	HKD 8,500
HELLENE GARDENS 3 BEDS	HKD 13,500
TAIPA STUDIO	HKD 6,800
COLOANE 1 BED	HKD 9,300

FOR SALE UNDER HKD 5 MILLION

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TAIPA RENOVATED 2 BEDS	HKD 4,680,000
CENTRAL TAIPA 2-BEDS	HKD 4,380,000
TAIPA CUTE & COZY STUDIO	HKD 3,980,000
TAIPA STUDIO WITH BALCONY	HKD 3,780,000
TAIPA GREAT POTENTIAL 1-BED	HKD 3,480,000
CENTRAL MACAU 1 BED	HKD 2,850,000
MACAU PARKING VA LONG	HKD 1,600,000

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AP PHOTO



UMW President Cecil Roberts

ENERGY

ELECTRIC BATTERY MAKER, COAL UNION ANNOUNCE WEST VIRGINIA LABOR PACT

JOHN RABY, CHARLESTON (WVA.)

The energy startup SPARKZ said yesterday [Macau time] it has signed a memorandum of understanding with the nation's largest coal miners' union on a labor-management agreement for its planned electric battery factory in West Virginia.

The company and the United Mine Workers of America will partner to recruit and train dislocated miners to be the factory's first production workers. In March, the company said it would start construction this year on the plant that will employ at least 350 workers. The factory's location has yet to be announced.

"SPARKZ is proud to partner with the United Mine Workers of America to help West Virginia workers become part of the new energy economy, while re-engineering the battery supply chain do-

mestically," SPARKZ founder and CEO Sanjiv Malhotra said in a news release. "This partnership is a symbol of American innovation and American workers literally building our energy future together and fighting to end China's dominance of advanced batteries."

West Virginia has lost thousands of jobs in mining and other resource extraction industries in recent years. UMW President Cecil Roberts said the agreement "is a win-win for the laid-off coal miners who will work in this facility, their families and their communities."

Sen. Joe Manchin, a West Virginia Democrat, said the partnership "is proof that there is an important role" for the union in the nation's energy transition.

The factory will produce cobalt-free batteries, an effort to bring down the cost of U.S. lithium-ion battery production. The Democratic Republic of Congo has historically been the top producer of

cobalt worldwide, with most mines controlled by Chinese companies.

Earlier this month, U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm announced \$3.1 billion in funding to U.S. companies that make and recycle lithium-ion batteries.

In the statement, Granholm said her department is "thrilled to support the battery manufacturing industry and labor partners coming together to solve clean energy deployment challenges, like workforce development. Momentum is building as more companies see that partnering with labor is smart business strategy and key to accelerating an equitable clean energy transition."

SPARKZ, founded in 2019, is in the final stages of site selection, and will be announcing customer partnerships in the coming months. Its first markets will likely be in material-handling vehicles like forklifts, agricultural equipment and energy storage. **MDT/AP**

HOSPITALITY

AIRBNB ENDS RENTALS IN CHINA TO FOCUS ON OUTBOUND TOURISTS

AIRBNB Inc. will stop listing homes and experiences inside China this summer and instead focus its business in the country on serving Chinese tourists looking for lodgings abroad, a company official said on social media this week.

Airbnb began listings in China in 2016, but they have still accounted for only about 1% of company revenue in recent years.

The San Francisco-based company found the domestic Chinese business costly and complicated to run, and the pandemic has made matters worse.

There was little overlap between Airbnb's business inside China and catering to outbound travelers, which Airbnb hopes will limit the impact of suspending the domestic offerings.

Airbnb joins a series of foreign internet companies including Yahoo Inc. and eBay Inc. that pulled out of China after running into fierce local

competition and regulatory barriers.

"We have made the difficult decision to refocus our efforts in China on outbound travel and suspend our homes and Experiences of Hosts in China, starting from July 30, 2022," said the chief strategy officer of Airbnb China, Nathan Blecharczyk, in a statement on its social media account.

Landlords represented by Airbnb have had more than 25 million guest arrivals since 2016, according to Blecharczyk's statement.

The Chinese government has blocked foreign tourists from visiting since the pandemic hit in early 2020 and has told the Chinese public to avoid foreign travel that isn't essential for business or study.

International airlines and other travel companies that operate in China expect that borders will re-open and travel by Chinese citizens will pick up eventually, although the timing is unclear. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



CORPORATE BITS

teamLab SuperNature Macao Wins Gold Stevie Award



teamLab SuperNature Macao at The Venetian Macao has won the Gold Stevie® Award for Innovation in Media, Visual Communications & Entertainment at the ninth annual Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards. An online awards

ceremony will be held on June 29, 2022.

Located at The Venetian Macao's Cotai Expo, teamLab SuperNature Macao's exhibition spans over 5,000 square metres of labyrinthine floor space with impressive eight-

metre high ceilings, creating a 'body-immersive' art space where visitors redefine their perception of the boundaries between the self and the world. Sean McCreery, senior vice president of Resort Operations, Sands China Ltd., said: "Being recognised with a prestigious gold Stevie award is truly gratifying and encourages us to continue pushing the boundaries in entertainment and recreation with ever more creative products."

teamLab exhibitions have been included in "Top 10 Art Exhibitions" from 2015 until 2018 by leading design magazine designboom, and listed in "The World's Greatest Places 2019" by Time Magazine.

Mesa to celebrate Portugal Day



Grand Lisboa Palace Resort Macao announced a special celebration for the Day of Portugal which will take place next month at contemporary Por-

tuguese restaurant Mesa on June 12. This event is part of the "June - Month of Portugal in Macau SAR" celebrations and is organised by the Con-

sulate General of Portugal in Macau and Hong Kong, AICEP Portugal Group, Casa de Portugal Macao, Fundação Oriente and Instituto Português do Oriente (IPOR).

On the day of the event, Mesa at THE KARL LAGERFELD hotel tower, will offer guests a Portuguese experience from the live band, regional gastronomy, to beverages such as ginjinha in a chocolate cup.

Rearranged to showcase the delicious varieties of regional cuisines prepared by the culinary team, dishes include Rojões à Minhota - pork collar confit in pork fat with cumin, and Carapaus Alimados - mackerel cured with lemon and olive oil, among many more delicacies.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

GREG BEACHAM, LOS ANGELES

BOXING

Álvarez, Golovkin set third rivalry bout for September

CANELO Álvarez and Gennady Golovkin will complete their memorable fight trilogy in September.

Álvarez and Golovkin will resume their rivalry Sept. 17 after a four-year break, promoters Matchroom Boxing announced yesterday [Macau time]. Álvarez already said he intended to take the fight while speaking at his invitational golf tournament in Naucalpan, Mexico, on Monday.

The fighters met in 2017 and again in 2018 for two highly entertaining middleweight matchups. They fought to a split draw in the first bout, and Álvarez won a narrow majority decision in the second meeting.

The third fight will be a 168-pound super middleweight contest between the 40-year-old Golovkin (42-1-1, 37 KOs) and Álvarez (57-2-2, 39 KOs), who will turn 32 this summer. Álvarez is the undisputed world champion at 168 pounds, holding all four major titles.

"I feel very happy and proud to be able to give the best fights, and this fight won't be an exception," Álvarez said in a statement.

Álvarez announced earlier this year that he intended to fight Golovkin in the fall after taking on light heavyweight champion Dmitry Bivol in May. That plan was

AP PHOTO



Canelo Álvarez lands a punch against Gennady Golovkin in the 12th round during a middleweight title boxing match, Sept. 15, 2018, in Las Vegas

put into question after Bivol upset Álvarez by unanimous decision on May 7.

Bivol hoped to book a rematch with the biggest star in boxing after his breakthrough upset, but Álvarez ultimately decided to proceed with the most lucrative potential bout and the resumption of a remarkable rivalry.

The location for the third fight wasn't announced, but its scheduling on Mexican Independence Day weekend makes it likely to be held in Las Vegas. The fighters' first two meetings were on the same holiday weekend at T-Mobile Arena on the south end of the Las Vegas Strip, and both were sellouts.

The third bout is likely the richest fight currently possible in boxing, given both fighters' large fan bases and the entertaining nature of their rivalry to date. Golovkin and his fans believe the former middleweight kingpin won both of the first two fights, while Álvarez is in need of redemption after his shocking loss to Bivol.

In the fighters' first bout, most ringside observers thought Golovkin had done more than enough to beat Álvarez, who had previously lost only to Floyd Mayweather in his career. But while one judge favored Golovkin and another scored it a draw, judge Adalaide Byrd inexplicably called it 118-110 in favor of Álvarez, who was consistently outlanded by Golovkin throughout the bout.

Álvarez tested positive for the performance-enhancing drug clenbuterol between the first two fights, and his suspension meant the rematch was postponed from May to September. While many ringside observers again thought Golovkin had won, two judges favored the improved Álvarez 115-113, and the third scored it a draw.

Both fighters initially expressed interest in a third meeting for 2019, but the sides drifted apart while Golovkin dealt with management squabbles and Álvarez moved on to less daunting challenges. Álvarez spent 2021 collecting all four major titles at super middleweight.

Golovkin has fought only four times in four years since his loss to Álvarez, also breaking up with longtime trainer Abel Sanchez during that stretch. After he reclaimed two of his middleweight belts before the pandemic, Golovkin ended a 16-month ring absence in April by stopping Ryota Murata in Japan. **MDT/AP**

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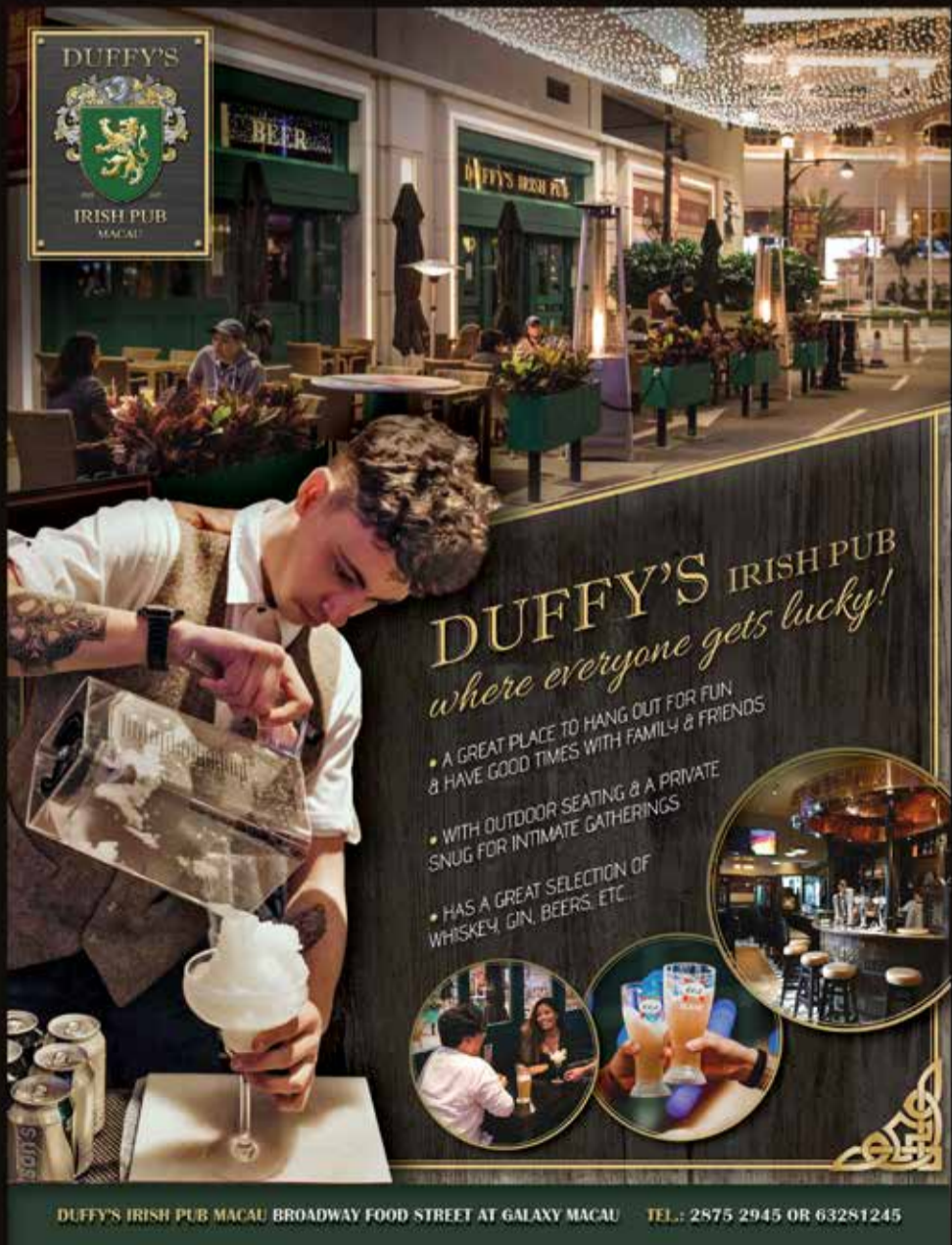
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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**TIMELY, TARGETED
 POLICY SUPPORT TO
 STABILIZE GROWTH**

Given the downward pressure on the economy and the mounting difficulties facing many market entities at the moment, as a result of the latest wave of the novel coronavirus as well as the increasingly complicated external environment, the policy support announced by the State Council is both timely and necessary.

Retail sales, a main gauge of consumption, fell 11.1 percent year-on-year in April, while the surveyed urban jobless rate rose to 6.1 percent, the highest reading since February 2020, according to the National Bureau of Statistics last week. All this makes achieving this year's targeted GDP growth of around 5.5 percent a challenging task.

Yet the government still has many policy tools it can employ to address the challenges — as reflected in the latest batch of support measures it has unveiled — mainly thanks to its long-held stance of refraining from using excessive money supply and mass stimulus to promote growth over the past few years. This has left room for targeted measures to be adopted at this critical time to promote economic and social development.

In all, a package of 33 measures was released at the recent executive meeting of China's Cabinet chaired by Premier Li Keqiang, mainly fiscal and related policies to keep the operation of market entities and employment stable, along with measures to stabilize industry and supply chains, keep logistics running smoothly and boost consumer spending. Li stressed that the policy measures should be swiftly rolled out wherever needed, in order to keep major economic indicators within the appropriate range and ensure stable overall economic performance.

"All localities and departments must have a stronger sense of urgency and work earnestly to ensure policy implementation," he said. The State Council will conduct accountability inspections on local governments' execution of policy measures to ensure they are fully implemented and tailored to the actual local situation.

The latest policy support focuses on "emergency relief", and is designed and introduced from the perspective of responding to the current downward pressure on the economy. More policy support is in the pipeline to respond to any new changes in the economic landscape, if necessary.

But it should be recognized that the difficulties that the economy now faces are temporary, and the fundamentals sustaining the country's steady and long-term economic growth remain unchanged. With the COVID-19 outbreaks in places such as Shanghai and Jilin province having been basically contained, and work and production gradually being resumed in an orderly way, there are enough reasons for people to have confidence that the performance of the Chinese economy will pick up in the months to come.

**PREMIER LI SAYS CHINA COULD STRUGGLE TO GROW
 ITS ECONOMY IN SECOND QUARTER: REPORTS**

**THE
 BUZZ**

China's premier Li Keqiang said the world's second-largest economy could struggle to record positive growth in the current quarter, urging officials to help companies resume production after Covid-19 lockdowns, the Financial Times has reported.

The comments by Li Keqiang, to tens of thousands of officials on an internal videocast yesterday, underscore the difficulties President Xi Jinping's administration will have in reaching its annual growth target of 5.5% while also battling Omicron outbreaks.

Zero-Covid policy has brought business activity to a halt in Shanghai as well as swaths of Beijing and dozens of smaller mu-

nicipalities.

"We will try to make sure the economy grows in the second quarter," Li said, according to a transcript that the Financial Times verified. "This is not a high target and a far cry from our 5.5%. But we have to do so."

For the first quarter of this year China recorded 4.8 per cent annual growth in gross domestic product.

A condensed version of the premier's comments, including his call to achieve "reasonable growth", was carried on Chinese state television's main evening news broadcast.



AP PHOTO

PUTIN'S WAR

**RUSSIAN ROCKETS HIT
 EASTERN UKRAINIAN
 TOWN OF POKROVSK**

**ELENA BECATOROS,
 POKROVSK**

THE Russian rocket strikes came early in the morning in the eastern Ukrainian town of Pokrovsk yesterday, shaking buildings, jolting people out of bed and sending chunks of concrete and jagged pieces of metal flying through the air.

One of the two rockets left a crater at least three meters deep, remnants of the projectile still smoldering as nearby residents picked through the debris of their homes, trying to salvage whatever they could.

A row of low terraced houses nearby suffered significant damage, with roofing tiles blown off, door frames ripped from the walls and pieces of brick, concrete and asphalt scattered on the ground.

Four civilians were wounded, said Pavlo Kyrlyenko, head of the Donetsk military administration. At least one of them suffered a head wound and was ferried to the local hospital by ambulance, blood seeping through the bandages and trickling down the side of his neck.

The strikes in Pokrovsk were among several over the past two days that have hit towns and villages as Russia pressed forward in its offensive in the Donbas,

Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland.

"There's no place left to live in, everything is smashed," said Viktoriya Kurbonova, a mother-of-two who lived in one of the terraced houses. The windows had been blown out by an earlier strike about a month ago, and they had replaced them with plastic sheeting. That, she said, probably saved their lives as at least there was no glass flying around.

She had been asleep when the strike hit, just meters from her house.

"There was a really big flash and a lot of dust," Kurbonova said, standing outside her home still in her pajamas, her legs and arms blackened by soot. Her 4-year-old son wandered around, clutching a toy train, while her 2-year-old daughter smiled in a stroller nearby.

"I was reaching for my child and I couldn't find him in the dust," she said. The boy had been sleeping in the same room as her, while her daughter had been in the next room with Kurbonova's mother. They were all shaken, but none were hurt.

Kyrlyenko said Russian strikes killed 12 civilians the previous day in the Donetsk region, and wounded another 10. Another strike on the city of Kramatorsk,

northeast of Pokrovsk, hit a multi-story building under construction, damaging it and blowing out windows in nearby buildings but causing no casualties.

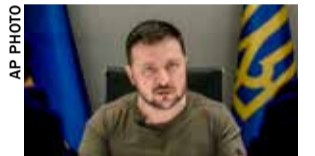
"Russians continue hitting the cities that are away from the front line," Kyrlyenko said on his Telegram channel. "They would like to kill as many civilians as possible and cause panic. That is why the only good choice is evacuation. Evacuation saves lives."

The governor of the neighboring Luhansk region, Serhiy Haidai, said at least six civilians had been killed and eight wounded over the past 24 hours in shelling in the town of Sieverodonetsk, at the heart of the Russian offensive in eastern Ukraine.

Russian forces have been attempting to encircle Sieverodonetsk and cut off Ukrainian forces there. Haidai accused the Russians of deliberately targeting shelters where civilians were hiding.

Moscow-backed separatists have fought Ukrainian forces in the Donbas for eight years and hold large swaths of territory. Sieverodonetsk and neighboring cities are the only part of the Donbas' Luhansk region still under Ukrainian government control. **MDT/AP**

Davos The World Economic Forum has unveiled an initiative to develop the metaverse, a virtual reality construct that many tech companies are betting will be the next big thing for the internet. The forum said yesterday that it will work with businesses, regulators, civil society and academic experts to help define and build the metaverse. The focus will be on governing the metaverse as well as how to create economic and societal value.



Ukraine's president said that Russia must pull back to its pre-war positions as a first step before diplomatic talks, a negotiating line that Moscow is unlikely to agree to anytime soon as it focuses its fire on key regions in the east three months into the war. Speaking by video link at this year's World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed a willingness to negotiate with Russian President Vladimir Putin directly, but stressed that Moscow needs to make clear it too is ready to "shift from the bloody war to diplomacy."

Germany A court yesterday sentenced a woman who posed as a doctor to life in prison for causing the deaths of several people she treated. Judges at the regional court in Kassel said the evidence showed the 51-year-old woman, whose name was not given, used a forged license to obtain employment as an anesthesiologist. The judges determined that three patients died as a result of treatment errors, while others suffered serious damage.



UK An investigation released yesterday blamed British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and other senior leaders for allowing boozy government parties that broke the U.K.'s COVID-19 lockdown rules, and while Johnson said he took "full responsibility" for the breach, he insisted he would not resign. Revelations that Johnson and his staff repeatedly flouted restrictions they imposed on the country in 2020 and 2021 have fueled outrage in Britain and led to calls from opponents for Johnson to step down over the scandal known as "partygate."