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China A magnitude 6.1 earthquake damaged houses and killed at least one person in southwestern China yesterday, authorities and state media said. State broadcaster CCTV said one person died and six others were injured, including one seriously, in Baoxing county in Sichuan province. The quake struck at a depth of 17 kilometers in Lushan county, about 110 kilometers southwest of Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan, the China Earthquake Network Center said. The Sichuan fire department said some houses were damaged and more than 1,400 rescuers were headed to the area.

Israeli military said yesterday that dozens of its aircraft conducted a drill simulating airstrikes on long-range targets, a thinly veiled reference to a possible attack on regional rival Iran. The army said the exercise took place a day earlier over the Mediterranean and “involved long-range flight, aerial refueling and striking distant targets.” It provided no additional information. The announcement came as negotiators representing world powers and Iran have held months of talks in a bid to hash out a new agreement to rein in Tehran’s nuclear program, four years after a deal struck in 2015 collapsed after the Trump administration unilaterally withdrew.

AP PHOTO



Denmark's largest energy company said Russia cut off its gas supply yesterday because it refused to pay in rubles, the latest escalation over European energy amid the war in Ukraine. Russia previously halted natural gas supplies to Finland, Poland and Bulgaria for refusing a demand to pay in rubles. And on Tuesday, the tap was turned off to the Netherlands. Danish energy company Ørsted said it still expected to be able to serve its customers.

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THE ASIAN CANADIAN GAY ACTIVIST WHOSE THEORIES ON SEXUALITY WERE DECADES AHEAD OF THEIR TIME

LAURIE MARHOEFER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

HISTORIANS are rediscovering one of the most important LGBTQ activists of the early 20th Century – an Asian Canadian named Li Shiu Tong. You probably don't know the name, but he was at the center of the first wave of gay politics.

Much has been written about Li's older boyfriend, Magnus Hirschfeld. Hirschfeld was a closeted German doctor and sexologist who became famous in the 1930s as a defender of gay people. In books on Hirschfeld, Li is usually just a footnote.

But as I found in my research, Li was a sexologist and activist in his own right. And in my view, his ideas about sexuality speak to our moment better than his much more well-known boyfriend's do.

When Li died in Vancouver in 1993, his unpublished manuscript about sexuality was thrown in the trash. Luckily, it was rescued by a curious neighbor and eventually ended up in an archive. Since then, only a handful of people, myself included, have read it.

In its pages is a theory of LGBTQ people as the majority that would resonate with a lot of young people today.

STUDENT AND MENTOR

Born in 1907 in Hong Kong, Li was a 24-year-old studying medicine at a university in Shanghai when he met Hirschfeld. Hirschfeld, then 63 years old, had come to China to give public lectures about the science of sex. The year was 1931.

The Shanghai newspapers billed Hirschfeld as the world's foremost expert on sexuality. Li must have seen the papers, because he made sure to catch Hirschfeld's very first lecture. In medical school, Li had read all he could about homosexuality, then a very controversial topic. He had often encountered Hirschfeld's name, and he knew his reputation as a defender of homosexuals. Whether he suspected that the famous sexologist was gay is a mystery. Almost no one in the 1930s could afford to be out – it would have destroyed either man's career.

WELCOME IMAGES/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Li Shiu Tong (left) and Magnus Hirschfeld at the 1932 conference for the World League for Sexual Reform

The lecture that afternoon was hosted by a Chinese feminist club at a fancy, modern apartment building. When Hirschfeld finished speaking, Li came up and introduced himself. He offered to be his assistant. It was the beginning of a relationship that would profoundly shape gay history, as well as the rest of both of their lives.

With Li by his side, Hirschfeld spoke all over China. Li then accompanied Hirschfeld on a lecture tour around the world, traveling first class on ships to Indonesia, the Philippines, South Asia, Egypt and beyond.

In his lectures, Hirschfeld explained his influential model of homosexuality: It was a character trait that people were born with, a part of their nature. It was neither an illness nor a sin, and the persecution of homosexuality was unjust. He gave 178 lectures, plus radio interviews. His ideas reached hundreds of thousands of people.

This was the first time in world history that anyone told so many people that being gay was not

a bad thing and was, in fact, an inborn and natural condition.

A LOVE AFFAIR AND PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

On the world tour, the two fell in love, though to everyone else, they passed as teacher and student. Hirschfeld decided to make Li his successor. The plan was for Li to return to Berlin with him, train at his Institute for Sexual Science and carry on his research after his death.

Their shared dream was not to be. When they reached Europe, Hirschfeld realized he could never go back to his home in Berlin. Hitler was chancellor. The Nazis were after Hirschfeld because he was Jewish and because of his left-wing views on sexuality. He went into exile in France.

Li stayed by his side and helped him write a memoir of their travels.

It is a stunning departure from Hirschfeld's earlier work, which trades in racist thinking – containing, for example, the claim

that Black Americans had stunted brains.

In the book he wrote with Li's help, a different Hirschfeld emerges. The text denounces imperialism – for example, calling British rule in South Asia “one of the greatest political injustices in all of the world.” Hirschfeld even saw a link between gay rights and the struggle against imperialism: both grew out of an undeniable human yearning for freedom.

After Hirschfeld died in France in 1935, his will named Li, then a student at the University of Zurich, his intellectual heir.

Hirschfeld was the most famous defender of gay people the world had yet known. But when Li died in Vancouver in 1993, it seems no one realized his connection to gay rights.

LI'S VISION OF SEXUALITY REEMERGES

Yet Li's rediscovered manuscript shows he did become a sexologist, even though he never published his findings.

In his manuscript, Li tells how

after Hirschfeld died, he spent decades traveling the world, carrying on the research and taking detailed notes while living in Zurich, Hong Kong and then Vancouver.

The data he gathered would have startled Hirschfeld. 40% of people were bisexual, he wrote, 20% were homosexual and only 30% percent were heterosexual. (The last 10% were “other.”) Being trans was an important, beneficial part of the human experience, he added.

Hirschfeld thought bisexuals were scarce and that even homosexuals were only a minor slice of the population – a “sexual minority.” To Li, bisexuals plus homosexuals were the majority. It was lifelong heterosexuals who were rare – so rare, he wrote, that they “should be classified as an endangered species.” Li found same-sex desire to be even more common than had sexologist Alfred Kinsey, whose studies identified widespread bisexuality.

Recent polling finds LGBTQ-identifying people at lower percentages, but it also points to the numbers rising. According to a February 2022 Gallup poll, they've doubled over the last ten years. That same poll found that almost 21% of Gen Z Americans – people born between 1997 and 2003 – identify as LGBTQ.

Some critics have suggested that these numbers reflect a fad. That's the explanation given by the pollster whose very small survey found that about 40% of Gen Z respondents were LGBTQ.

Li's vision conveys a more likely explanation: Same-sex desire is a very common part of human experience across history. Like Hirschfeld argued, it is natural. Unlike what he thought, however, it is not unusual. When Li was a young man in the 1930s, there was a very strong pressure not to act on same-sex desires. As that pressure lessened across the 20th century, more and more people seem to have embraced LGBTQ identities.

Why didn't Li publish his work? I'm not sure. Perhaps he hesitated because his findings were so different from his mentor's. In my book, I investigate another possibility: how the racism in Hirschfeld's earlier work may have dissuaded Li from carrying on his legacy.

Yet Li's theory was ahead of his time. A queer Asian Canadian at the heart of early gay politics, a sexologist with an expansive view of queerness and transness, he is a gay hero worth rediscovering.

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GAMING

GGR down 68% y-o-y as casinos burn millions in cash daily

LYNZY VALLES

MACAU'S gaming industry is still suffering from a slump in revenues, registering a 68% year-on-year drop in its May income as casinos burn millions of dollars of cash each day.

Data from the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) shows that Macau's gross gaming revenue (GGR) dropped to MOP3.34 billion, the second worst figure since September 2020, the month when travel resumed for visitors from mainland China.

May's GGR is 25% better than April's, but was down 87% pre-pandemic figures in 2019.

The figure is also worse than the median analyst estimate of a 64% year-on-year decline and follows a 68% slump in April.

Estimates from Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs Group Inc shows that the industry, under turmoil, was burning an average of USD12 million a day during the first quarter of this year.

Brokerage firm Sanford C. Bernstein recently noted that SJM Holdings Ltd is suffering from a continual cash



bleed, warning that the gaming operator is in critical need of boosting its financial liquidity, in view of the losses the company is suffering.

The consultancy warned that continued delays in the refinancing of SJM's bank debts are raising concerns, recalling that management has indicated a standby loan facility of up to HKD5 billion from Sociedade de Turismo e Diver-

sões de Macau, S.A. (STDM).

According to analysts at Bernstein, in a worst-case scenario where revenue of each gaming operator drops down to zero, only SJM Holdings Ltd can survive between one to two-and-a-half years.

The Macau government, meanwhile, has been gracious to the sector as it looks to lower the GGR taxes by up to 5% if casinos are able to bring

in players from outside China.

But with the current closure of borders to foreign arrivals that have been in place since March 2020, such a goal has a long way to go.

The SAR government taxes casinos in Macau at 39% of their gaming revenue — which includes a direct tax of 35% and other types of taxes for social and welfare purposes.

Meanwhile, last month, China's National Immigration Administration has reconfirmed a strict Covid-19 border policy and restrictions on non-essential travel, a move that may further hinder arrivals, particularly of bettors, into the SAR.

The administration also 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.

Its government has also limited unnecessary outbound travel and tightened approval of entry and exit documents to deter the spread of Covid-19.

In April, visitor arrivals rose by 15.2% month-on-month to 606,841 in April, yet the figure still represents a year-on-year drop of 23.7%, following a 30% decline in March.



CE MEETS WITH NEW LIAISON OFFICE DIRECTOR

The Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng, met with the newly appointed director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the SAR, Zheng Xincong, at the Government Headquarters yesterday. Ho remarked that the number of tourists visiting Macau has dropped significantly due to changes in the mainland pandemic situation this year. The Macau economy is facing significant difficulties and pressures as a result. However, Ho hopes that recent improvements in the mainland situation will bring about favorable conditions for the SAR's economic recovery. Meanwhile, director Zheng Xincong emphasized that there has always been "close and good communication and cooperation between the Liaison Office and the SAR government, which must continue to be passed on," according to the Government Information Bureau.



KEVIN THOMPSON ELECTED TO AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

A Macau-based academic has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences as a new international honorary member in recognition of his outstanding achievements in performing arts. Kevin Thompson, master of Moon Chun Memorial College at the University of Macau (UM) joins the company of the academy's notable members — from its founders John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Alexander Hamilton among others, — with his election. Thompson has received multiple honorary awards for cultural leadership such as the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to the arts and to UK and Hong Kong cultural exchanges, and Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, for Arts, Education and Public Life, among others.

GP MUSEUM ATTRACTS OVER 50,000 VISITORS ON FIRST YEAR

The Macau Grand Prix Museum celebrated its one year anniversary yesterday, offering free entry to visitors. Between June 1, 2021 and May 31, 2022, a total of 50,079 people visited the museum, including 2,913 participants of the "Stay, Dine and See Macao" tour and 5,615 group visitors from schools and organizations. The local tourism bureau expanded the project of the Macau Grand Prix Museum to enrich the visitor experience with a broader variety of elements such as the debut of the 360-degree panoramic view and the new augmented reality (AR) view feature.

SSM warns of rising vape consumption among students

A study conducted by the Health Bureau (SSM) shows a 4% rate of e-cigarette consumption by students aged between 13 and 15, up 1.4 percentage points from 2.6% in 2015.

The rate is considerably higher than the percentage of traditional cigarette use (2.1%).

The study pointed out that the problem of prevalence and influence of electronic cigarettes should be highlighted.

The study also shows that 3.8% of students aged between 13 and 15 in Macau are traditional tobacco users, a decrease of 2.3 percentage points compared



to 2015 (6.1%). These figures show the apparent effectiveness of efforts to reduce tobacco consumption among adolescents.

ts, through integrated measures under the MPOWER Framework by the Macau SAR government, according to a statement issued by the SSM.

In a symposium, SSM director Alvis Lo said that government has revised and corrected the work carried out in the field of tobacco control, applying more up-to-date regulations, so that measures become more stringent.

For example, current measures include stricter inspections in places where smoking is prohibited, fines and restrictions on sales of tobacco and e-cigarette supervision, among

others.

With these actions, according to Lo, it has been possible to reduce the number of smokers in Macau.

Additionally, the rate of consumption of conventional cigarettes among those aged 15 and over gradually decreased from 16.6%, before the tobacco control law became operative, to 10.7% in 2019, which represents a relative reduction of 35.5%.

The World Health Organization celebrates "World No Tobacco Day" annually on May 31 to raise global awareness on the prevalence of tobacco and its fatal influence.

The SSM organized the "Symposium on the 10th Anniversary of the Implementation of the Tobacco Prevention and Control Law" to mark the day. LV

ANTHONY LAM

CRIME

TWO CHILDREN INJURED IN DOMESTIC ASSAULT CASES

TWO children have been put under medical care after allegedly facing domestic assault in two separate settings, the Judiciary Police announced yesterday.

Despite similarities in the assaults, different charges have been brought against the two suspects, the respective biological fathers of the children.

In the first case, the suspect, Hung, who reportedly works as a casino croupier and is 34 years old, has been accused of committing an act of domestic violence against his biological son.

As per announcement by the police, Hung instigated a marital separation with his wife last November. Their five-year-old son has since been under the care of the father. They lived together in the Patane District and the mother would pay regular visits to the residence.

Late night on May 25, after visiting her son and leaving the residence, the mother received a video from the father, depicting him slapping his son twice on the face.

The police said that it was suspected the father consumed alcohol after the mother left and believed that the mother had not been caring for their son. It was also suspected that the father was not happy about the son's complaints at the time.

Returning to the apartment and checking her son's wounds, the mother decided to report the assault to the police. With medical examiners finding the wounds matching the described acts of physical violence, the police commenced an investigation before pressing charges against the suspect.

In the other case, Kong, a 36-year-old male local commodity deliverer, was accused of committing physical assault. The same charge was brought against him.

Also on May 25, the public Conde de São Januário Hospital



reported that a seven-year-old child had sustained an injury to the Judiciary Police.

During investigations, the police were told that Kong had divorced his former wife several years before this incident. Kong had since lived with his son in an apartment. Since last September, Kong had been responsible for fetching his son from

school to home.

After school, the son either had classes with a tutor or the father would check his homework. In the latter scenario, when the father felt dissatisfied with the son's performance at school – either low academic grades or reports of undesirable conduct – the father would physically punish his son.

The punishments would include acts such as beating with coat hangers, slapping in the face and holding a water basin on top of the child's head.

The assault was discovered by the mother on May 24, when she helped the son to wash after school. Upon seeing the wounds, she was told about the violence by her son. The next day,

after speaking with the school's management, the mother decided to contact the police.

With medical examiners finding the wounds consistent with the definition of physical violence, the police commenced an investigation before bringing a charge against the suspect.

When questioned by the press about the different charges brought, a Judiciary Police spokesperson explained it was the result of thorough consideration by the Investigation Division of the police department.

BLACKMAIL WITH NUDE VIDEOS

A local student has reported that he was blackmailed by a self-reported Filipino woman with his nude videos for MOP30,000.

The 22-year-old student told the Judiciary Police that at 1 a.m. on May 26, he was taped by the woman on a popular social media platform. Later, the woman requested they engage in a nude chat, to which the boy agreed. They chatted for about five minutes.

After the chat, the boy got a video of his naked body from the woman, alongside a price tag of MOP30,000. Feeling that he was being blackmailed, he reported the case to the police without paying any money.

Meanwhile the Public Security Police Force disclosed that a Filipino domestic helper has been caught appropriating lost property.

The 48-year-old woman allegedly kept a cellphone that she picked up on May 27 on a bus ride from Macau to Taipa. The phone was reportedly lost by the complainant the same day.

From bus surveillance camera footages, the police identified the suspect and tracked her down with public surveillance camera footage.

She was arrested in her employer's place on Rua do Seng Tou in Taipa, while the phone was retrieved in her residence on Rua de Tomás Vieira in Macau.

CRIME

MP indicts five residents over involvement in MOP1.1b laundering



FIVE Macau residents who are currently detained over suspected cross-border money laundering that involves MOP1.1 billion patacas were accused of money laundering and criminal organisation crimes, according to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP).

In a statement, the cri-

mes are punishable between 10 to 12 years.

The MP explained that the criminal investigation judge has decided to "apply to three defendants coercive measure of pre-trial detention and coercive measures of providing a bond, periodic presentation and prohibition of absence from the MSAR to the other two defendants."

Last week, the Judiciary Police (PJ) said that the syndicate, involving 22 people, had been operating since October 2020 and had instructed several members to open 181

bank accounts in Hong Kong to receive and process electronic payments.

The bank accounts had also served to receive deposits of large sums of money from several countries.

Since July 2021, several members of the group were sent to Macau to withdraw money from ATMs using Hong Kong cards.

Around MOP1.1 billion were found in suspicious deposits. The group members withdrew around MOP358 million patacas in Macau and Hong Kong. LV

COVID-19

NAT validity extended to seven days

LYNZY VALLES

THE nucleic acid test (NAT) validity for individuals entering Macau from Guangdong Province has been extended from 72 hours to seven days from today, The Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre announced in a statement.

This comes after reaching an agreement on the Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism between Zhuhai and Macau.

Individuals entering Zhuhai-Macau checkpoints or by sea must hold proof of a negative COVID-19 nucleic acid test result within seven days after the date of sampling.

Non-Macau residents who fail to present such proof will be denied entry, whereas Macau residents will be required to undergo nucleic acid testing immediately.

For those who are travelling from Macau to Guangdong Province, the



validity period of the negative NAT result will remain at seven days. Other cross-boundary epidemic prevention requirements are unchanged.

In the same statement, the center calls on unvaccinated people or those who have not obtained their booster to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Speaking with Zhuhai Municipality president Huang Zhihao earlier this week, the Chief Executive

Ho Iat Seng said that he hopes that in the future, it will be possible to extend the NAT validity period further to boost the movement of visitors and economic activity between the two territories.

Huang said that currently, the work to prevent and control the pandemic is still the priority, and the collaboration in this matter between Zhuhai and Macau has been "very effective, with close com-

munication and cooperation."

He affirmed that Zhuhai will always keep in mind the original mission of promoting the development of Macau's economic diversification, according to the statement.

The CE has said that the joint prevention and control mechanism between Zhuhai and Macau continues to "play a positive role," ensuring that the work of prevention and control of the pandemic in the two territories achieves "remarkable results and the population of Macau lives in stability."

The CE disclosed that, currently, the daily average number of people crossing the border between Zhuhai and Macau stands at more than 300,000, and the results of the prevention and control of the pandemic were not easy to achieve.

He added that the two territories must improve and optimize their policies for the prevention and control of the pandemic.

Second court eases sentence on Kun lam Temple violators

THE Court of Second Instance (TSI) has decided to partially drop accusations, and so eased sentences on two convicted violators of the Kun lam Temple.

The temple is an officially recognized cultural heritage location. A lower court initially found the two convicted, identified as A and B by the court in a statement, guilty of violating provisions in the Penal Code.

A was found guilty of violating Article 207 Clause 2 Item c in conjunction with Articles 26 and 67 and was sentenced to a year and in prison with three years' probation. B was found guilty of violating Article 312 Clause 2 of the Penal Code in conjunction with Article 96 Clause 3 of the Cultural Heritage



Protection Law, as well as Article 207 Clause 2 Item c of the Penal Code. All accusations combined have resulted in three years and three months in prison for B.

After filing an appeal on the grounds of disagreement with the accusation using Article 207 Clause 2

Item c of the Penal Code, the second court ruled in favor of the duo over this particular argument.

The key reason supporting the overruling is that the second court agreed with the explanation given by the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) during the appeal.

According to the MP, pursuant to Article 207 Clause 1 of the Penal Code, "cultural properties" have their nature determined by another law. Meanwhile, cultural heritage in Macau is under the protection of the Cultural Heritage Protection Law, which has definitions of cultural heritage.

Nonetheless, despite references being different in Chinese, the Portuguese references in both laws are "património cultural" (cultural heritage in English), which the MP considered proof that both laws were referring to the same thing.

Based on this, the second court agreed that the accusation using Article 207 Clause 2 Item c of the Penal Code was inappropriate. As a result, the duo have had their sentences eased to six months in prison with two years' probation, and a year and three months in prison with three years' probation respectively. **AL**

ADVERTORIAL

GREAT TIMES

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COVID-19

SHANGHAI STARTS COMING BACK TO LIFE AS LOCKDOWN EASES

EMILY WANG FUJIYAMA,
SHANGHAI

Traffic, pedestrians and joggers reappeared on the streets of Shanghai yesterday as China's largest city began returning to normalcy amid the easing of a strict two-month COVID-19 lockdown that has drawn unusual protests over its heavy-handed implementation.

Shanghai's Communist Party committee, the city's most powerful political body, issued a letter online proclaiming the lockdown's success and thanking citizens for their "support and contributions." The move came amid a steady rollback in compulsory measures that have upended daily life for millions while severely disrupting the economy and global supply chains.

While defending President and Communist Party chief Xi Jinping's hardline "zero-COVID" policy, the country's leadership appears to be acknowledging the public backlash against measures seen as trampling already severely limited rights to privacy and participation in the workings of government.

In one such step, the Cabinet's Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism issued a letter Tuesday laying out rules banning "non-standard, simple and rude indoor disinfection" by mostly untrained teams in Shanghai and elsewhere that have left homes damaged and led to reports of property theft.

Full bus and subway service in Shanghai was being restored from yesterday, with rail connections to the rest of China to follow. Still, more than half

a million people in the city of 25 million remain under lockdown or in designated control zones because virus cases are still being detected.

The government says all restrictions will be gradually lifted, but local neighborhood committees still wield considerable power to implement sometimes conflicting and arbitrary policies. Negative PCR tests for COVID-19 taken within the previous 48 hours also remain standard in Shanghai, Beijing and elsewhere for permission to enter public venues.

That measure didn't deter people in Shanghai from gathering outside to eat and drink under the watch of police deployed to discourage large crowds from forming.

"With the lockdown lifting, I feel very happy. I feel today how I feel during Chinese New Year — that kind of mood and joy," said Wang Xiaowei, 34, who moved to Shanghai from the inland province of Guizhou just a week before the lockdown began.

Liu Ruilin, 18, said she wasn't sure her building's security guard would let her and others out on Tuesday night. The restriction ended exactly at midnight, she said.

"Then we said, 'Let's go to the Bund to have fun,'" she said in the city's historic riverside district. "We thought there wouldn't be too many people here, but we were surprised after coming over that a lot of people are here. I feel pretty good — quite excited."

Schools will partially reopen on a voluntary basis, and shopping malls, supermarkets, convenience stores and drug

stores will gradually reopen at no more than 75% of their total capacity. Cinemas and gyms will remain closed.

Health authorities yesterday reported just 15 new COVID-19 cases in Shanghai, down from a record high of around 20,000 daily cases in April.

A few malls and markets have reopened, and some residents have been given passes allowing them out for a few hours at a time.

The lockdown has prompted an exodus of Chinese and foreign residents, with crowds forming outside the city's Hongqiao Railway Station, where only some train services have resumed.

Even while the rest of the world has opened up, China has stuck to a "zero-COVID" strategy that requires lockdowns, mass testing and isolation at centralized facilities for anyone who is infected or has been in contact with someone who has tested positive.

The country's borders also remain largely closed and the government has upped requirements for the issuance of passports and permission to travel abroad.

At least half of foreign companies in Shanghai are waiting until next week to reopen while they put in place hygiene measures, said Bettina Schoen-Behanzin, a vice president of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China. As a precaution, many companies plan to have only half their workforce on site at a time.

"There is still quite some uncertainty and a scare that if there is a positive case in the office building or in your compound, you might be locked down

again," said Schoen-Behanzin, who works in Shanghai.

The strict restrictions in Shanghai, the country's commercial capital and home of the world's busiest port, dragged down Chinese economic activity and disrupted global manufacturing and trade.

Retail sales fell by a worse-than-forecast 11% in April from a year earlier, government data show. Auto sales fell by almost half from a year earlier, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

Private sector forecasters have cut their estimates for this year's economic growth to as low as 2%, well below the ruling Communist Party's target of 5.5%. Some expect output to shrink in the three months ending in June.

"The economy is really in a crisis," said Schoen-Behanzin.

The Port of Shanghai, the world's busiest, appears to be back to 80% to 85% of its normal operating capacity, according to Schoen-Behanzin. She cited data that said the port had a backlog of 260,000 cargo containers in April.

"The rest of the world will feel these delays probably (through) June or July," she said.

The city will likely see a "mass exodus" of foreign residents this summer, "especially families with small kids," Schoen-Behanzin said. She said about half of Shanghai's foreign residents had already left over the past two years.

"People are really fed up with these lockdowns," she said. "It's not safe, especially if you have small children." MDT/AP

DIPLOMACY WANG YI'S PACIFIC TOUR CONTINUES IN VANUATU

CHINA'S Foreign Minister Wang Yi arrived in Vanuatu yesterday for talks as he continued his regional island-hopping tour two days after failing to ink an ambitious deal with 10 South Pacific nations.

While Wang didn't manage to get consensus on the multilateral security and economic plan at a meeting in Fiji after several nations voiced concerns, he has been notching up smaller wins by signing bilateral agreements with many of the countries he's been visiting.

China and the Pacific countries haven't so far made the details of those deals public.

Wang arrived in Vanuatu from Tonga, where he signed a number of deals with Prime Minister Sioosi Sovaleni on everything from disaster management to a royal tomb improvement project.

His tour comes amid growing international concerns about Beijing's military ambitions and pursuit of natural resources in the region.

Speaking to reporters in Washington, U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price said the U.S. as well as its allies and partners in the Pacific had made clear their concerns about China's "opaque, shadowy deals."

Price said he'd seen reports of regional and international media being blocked or encountering significant obstacles when attempting to cover Wang's tour.

China says that cooperation between Beijing and the island nations has been expanding in a development that's welcomed by those countries and builds on a long tradition of China helping developing nations.

Wang's eight-nation tour continues through Saturday. In addition to Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu, Wang has visited the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Samoa. He also plans to visit Papua New Guinea and East Timor. MDT/AP

MYANMAR

Accusations fly after bombing kills one, injures nine

GRANT PECK, BANGKOK

MYANMAR'S military government and its opponents traded accusations over a bomb that exploded in the middle of the country's largest city, Yangon, killing one and wounding nine others.

Photos and videos of Tuesday's bombing that circulated on social media showing the bloodied victims sprawled on the sidewalk were a sharp reminder of the violence that has engulfed the country since the military seized power last year.

A story in yesterday's edition of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, a state-run newspaper, blamed the People's Defense Forces, the opposition movement's armed wing, but did not supply any evidence linking them to the blast.

It said the attack was made with a "handmade bomb planted by PDF terrorists at a bus stop" roughly one block from the Sule Pagoda, a city landmark. The blast occurred at 3:20 p.m. and a 30-year-old man died of wounds in his chest and abdomen, state media said.

A spokesperson for the self-styled National Unity Government, the main opposition body that loosely commands the PDF and its various local units, pinned the blame on the military



Four injured people can be seen lying on the pavement after an explosion at a bus stop in downtown Yangon

government.

"The brutal genocidal military has been carrying out senseless bombings and killings against its own civilian population across Myanmar," said a statement by Sasa, the NUG's Minister of International Cooperation.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since last year's army takeover seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, sparking widespread nonviolent protests that were quashed with lethal force by the army and poli-

ce. In turn, opponents of military rule took up arms and are now conducting an active insurgency in many parts of the country.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners says 1,876 civilians, mostly in cities and towns, have been killed by the security forces. Their figures do not generally include casualties of war in the countryside.

Yesterday, the international human rights organization Amnesty International accused Myanmar's military of carrying

out widespread atrocities in the eastern part of the country that constitute war crimes and probably crimes against humanity.

It charges in a report that civilians from the Karen and Karenni ethnic minorities have been the targets of unlawful killing, arbitrary detention and forcible displacement.

"The world's attention may have moved away from Myanmar since last year's coup, but civilians continue to pay a high price," Rawya Rageh, Amnesty's senior

crisis adviser, said in a news release.

The opposition NUG's Defense Ministry in a statement said the ruling military "have sought to place blame on ethnic resistance groups and revolutionary forces in similar incidents in the past."

Urban guerrillas are part of the resistance movement, carrying out targeted killings of people associated with the military and bombings of establishments with official ties. But PDF-affiliated groups in Yangon posted statements on their Facebook pages denying involvement in Tuesday's blast and accusing the military of staging a provocation.

The military government brands its opponents as terrorists in a bid to dent their widespread popularity. Yesterday's newspaper report said the PDF received "financial assistance to launch bombing attacks."

"They also committed bomb attacks using handmade bombs on public roads, streets, bus terminals and bus stops," it added.

Another fatal bombing occurred Tuesday at an education office in Naung Cho township in Shan State in eastern Myanmar, for which state media likewise blamed the PDF and the NUG.

The *Global New Light of Myanmar* said a headmistress died and six educational personnel and a civil servant were injured. The blast occurred as state schools were preparing for their seasonal reopening.

"Attacks on schools, teachers, and students have surged over the past year due to the conflict, leaving many of them scared to return to the classroom and, in some cases, with no schools left to attend," the group said. **MDT/AP**

AUSTRALIA

New government includes record 13 women ministers

AUSTRALIA'S new government sworn yesterday includes a record 13 women, including the first female Muslim to serve in the role and the second Indigenous person named Indigenous Affairs minister.

The ceremony conducted by Governor-General David Hurley in the capital, Canberra, came 11 days after new Prime Minister Anthony Albanese led the center-left Labor Party to an election victory over the incumbent conservatives.

"Proud to lead an inclusive government that is as diverse as Australia itself," Albanese wrote on Twitter. "Welcome to all these new Labor members."

Youth Minister Anne

Aly is Australia's first female Muslim minister, while Industry and Science Minister Ed Husic is the first Muslim to serve in Cabinet.

Linda Burney became the first woman, and only the second Indigenous person, to serve as Indigenous Affairs minister.

Albanese and Foreign Minister Penny Wong were sworn in early last week so they could fly to Tokyo for a summit with President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Of the 30 ministers appointed to the new government, nearly half are women. Women also hold a record 10 spots out of 23

in core Cabinet roles.

With some votes still to be counted from last month's election, the Labor Party has secured enough seats to hold an outright majority in the 150-seat House.

Albanese's Cabinet includes some new faces as well as some lawmakers who served in the previous Labor government that last held power nine years ago.

"We have an overflow of talent on our side of the parliament," Albanese said, adding that "it's the most experienced incoming Labor government in our history since federation."

Albanese has been getting support from an unusual source: British singer-

songwriter Billy Bragg.

Bragg wrote on Twitter that he'd awoken to find that "the new prime minister of Australia had quoted my lyrics in his first press conference."

Bragg went on to say he wasn't surprised as he's been friends with Albanese for more than 20 years after they met at a theater in Sydney and bonded over a shared love of music and compassionate politics.

"The challenges he faces are daunting and I don't envy him his success," Bragg wrote. "Some of us just sing about making the world a better place — he now has the responsibility of delivering on that promise." **MDT/AP**



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese (front center) poses with a group of women including 13 female government ministers after their swearing-in ceremony at Government House in Canberra

PUTIN'S WAR

Biden says US sending medium-range rocket systems to Ukraine

LOLITA C. BALDOR,
WASHINGTON

THE Biden administration says it will send Ukraine a small number of high-tech, medium-range rocket systems, a critical weapon that Ukrainian leaders have been begging for as they struggle to stall Russian progress in the Donbas region.

The rocket systems are part of a new \$700 million tranche of security assistance for Ukraine from the U.S. that will include helicopters, Javelin anti-tank weapon systems, tactical vehicles, spare parts and more, two senior administration officials said. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview the weapons package that will be formally unveiled today [Macau time].

The U.S. decision to provide the advance rocket systems tries to strike a balance between the desire to help Ukraine battle ferocious Russian artillery barrages while not providing arms that could allow Ukraine to hit targets deep inside Russia and trigger an escalation in the war.

In a guest essay published in The New York Times, President Joe Biden confirmed that he's decided to "provide the Ukrainians with more advanced rocket systems and munitions that will enable them to more precisely strike key targets on the battlefield in Ukraine."

Biden had said Monday that the U.S. would not send Ukraine "rocket systems that can strike into Russia." Any weapons system can shoot into Russia if it's close enough to the border. The aid package would send what the U.S. considers medium-range rockets — they generally can travel about 45 miles, the officials said.

The Ukrainians have assured U.S. officials that they will not fire rockets into Russian territory, according to the senior administration officials. One official noted that the advanced rocket systems will give Ukrainian forces greater precision in targeting Russian assets in-

AP PHOTO



In this file photo a launch truck fires the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) produced by Lockheed Martin, in combat training

side Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters yesterday that the U.S. is "deliberately and diligently pouring fuel on the fire." He added that the Kremlin doesn't trust Kyiv's assurances that the multiple rocket launch systems supplied by the U.S. will not be used to attack Russia.

"In order to trust (someone), you need to have experience with situations when such promises were kept. Regrettably, there is no such experience whatsoever," Peskov said. The expectation is that Ukraine could use the rockets in the eastern Donbas region, where they could both intercept Russian artillery and take out Russian positions in towns where fighting is intense, such as Sievierodonetsk.

Sieverodonetsk is important to Russian efforts to capture the Donbas before more Western arms arrive to bolster Ukraine's defense. The city, which is 90 miles (145 kilometers) south of the Russian border, is in an area that is the last pocket under Ukrainian government control in the Luhansk region of the Donbas.

Biden in his New York Times' essay added: "We are not encouraging or enabling Ukraine to strike beyond its borders. We do not want to prolong the war just to inflict pain on Russia."

It's the 11th package

approved so far and will be the first to tap the \$40 billion in security and economic assistance recently passed by Congress. The rocket systems would be part of Pentagon drawdown authority, so would involve taking weapons from U.S. inventory and getting them into Ukraine quickly. Ukrainian troops would also need training on the new systems, which could take at least a week or two.

Officials said the plan is to send Ukraine the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, which is mounted on a truck and can carry a container with six rockets. The system can launch a medium-range rocket, which is the current plan, but is also capable of firing a longer-range missile, the Army Tactical Missile System, which has a range of about 190 miles (300 kilometers) and is not part of the plan.

Since the war began in February, the U.S. and its allies have tried to walk a narrow line: send Ukraine weapons needed to fight off Russia, but stop short of providing aid that will inflame Russian President Vladimir Putin and trigger a broader conflict that could spill over into other parts of Europe.

Over time, however, the U.S. and allies have amped up the weaponry going into Ukraine, as the fight has shifted from Russia's broader campaign to take the capital, Kyiv, and other

areas, to more close-contact skirmishes for small pieces of land in the east and south.

To that end, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been pleading with the West to send multiple launch rocket systems to Ukraine as soon as possible to help stop Russia's destruction of towns in the Donbas. The rockets have a longer range than the howitzer artillery systems that the U.S. has provided Ukraine. They would allow Ukrainian forces to strike Russian troops from a distance outside the range of Russia's artillery systems.

"We are fighting for Ukraine to be provided with all the weapons needed to change the nature of the fighting and start moving faster and more confidently toward the expulsion of the occupiers," Zelenskyy said in a recent address.

Ukraine needs multiple launch rocket systems, said Philip Breedlove, a retired U.S. Air Force general who was NATO's top commander from 2013 to 2016.

"These are very important capabilities that we have not gotten them yet. And they not only need them, but they have been very vociferous in explaining they want them," said Breedlove. "We need to get serious about supplying this army so that it can do what the world is asking it to do: fight a world superpower alone on the battlefield." MDT/AP

this day in history

1953 QUEEN ELIZABETH TAKES CORONATION OATH



Queen Elizabeth II has been crowned at a coronation ceremony in Westminster Abbey in London.

In front of more than 8,000 guests, including prime ministers and heads of state from around the Commonwealth, she took the Coronation Oath and is now bound to serve her people and to maintain the laws of God.

After being handed the four symbols of authority - the orb, the sceptre, the rod of mercy and the royal ring of sapphire and rubies - the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Geoffrey Fisher, placed St Edward's Crown on her head to complete the ceremony.

A shout of "God Save the Queen" was heard and gun salutes were fired as crowds cheered.

The Archbishop and fellow bishops then paid homage to Queen Elizabeth II.

In a radio broadcast the Queen said: "Throughout all my life and with all my heart I shall strive to be worthy of your trust".

An estimated three million people lined the streets of London to catch a glimpse of the new monarch as she made her way to and from Buckingham Palace in the golden state coach.

The ceremony was watched by millions more around the world as the BBC set up their biggest ever outside broadcast to provide live coverage of the event on radio and television. Street parties were held throughout the UK as people crowded round television sets to watch the ceremony.

The crowds, some of whom had camped out overnight to ensure a prime position, were rewarded when the Queen and other members of her family, including the Queen Mother, appeared on the balcony at Buckingham Palace.

Despite the overcast weather conditions the RAF marked the occasion with a fly past down the Mall.

A fireworks display then lit up the skies above Victoria Embankment.

The Queen replaced her father, King George VI, as monarch following his death on 6 February 1952. After 16 years on the throne he passed away in his sleep and his 25-year-old daughter Elizabeth immediately became Queen.

The princess formally proclaimed herself Queen and Head of the Commonwealth and Defender of the Faith in February 1952 but the amount of planning and a wish for a sunny day for the occasion led to the long but excited wait for this day.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Over 20 million people watched the BBC coverage of the coronation. Many people crowded round neighbours' sets to watch television for the first time. The broadcast was made in 44 languages.

There was a shortage of professional coachmen to help transport dignitaries to Westminster Abbey in horse drawn carriages. Millionaire businessmen and country squires offered their services and on the day they dressed up as Buckingham Palace servants and helped take people to the ceremony.

Many commemorative souvenirs were produced to mark the occasion including a special set of four postage stamps.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Your ability to do detailed work will dazzle those who are less creative. Ignore colleagues who appear to be going in circles. You should sign up for creative courses. Concentrate on your work.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Make changes that will heighten your appeal. Arguing won't help. Observations will be far more productive.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

You can meet potential new mates if you socialize with friends. The battle continues. Changes regarding your image will bring you greater confidence.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You need an outlet that will not only stimulate you but also challenge your intelligence as well. Avoid getting too close to coworkers or employers. You will have to control the way you feel.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Channel your energy into projects that will enhance your home. Your irritability may drive your loved ones crazy. Deceit with coworkers is apparent.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

You won't have much time for your mate today. Don't be afraid to make a move if you aren't happy with your emotional situation. Don't settle for less than the best.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Don't neglect these problems; deal with them once and for all, then move on to more pleasurable tasks. You can get into self awareness groups or look into physical enhancement programs.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

It might be best to spend time fixing up your premises and making changes that will be appreciated. You may think gifts will win their heart, but it could add stress from lack of funds.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

If you take on too much, you will find yourself in martyrdom. Interaction with colleagues will only be upsetting. Delve a little deeper if you really want to know the score.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Don't let your jealousy be the reason for a decaying relationship. You may find that purchases or entertainment could be expensive. Relationships will be emotional today.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

People who try to persuade you to do things their way will annoy you. Take the initiative and go after your goals. Your doubt could lead to insecurity.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Emotionally you won't see things accurately. You may find yourself interested in more than one person. You will reap the rewards for your kind actions.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

2	3	5						
			6	1				
	8							
1	4						7	
			8	5	3			
7		1			6			
			3	8				

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	19	35	fine
Changchun	12	25	cloudy
Chengdu	22	30	cloudy
Chongqing	23	32	rain
Fuzhou	23	29	rain
Guangzhou	26	33	thunderstorms
Guiyang	19	27	rain
Haikou	26	34	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	22	29	rain
Harbin	9	23	cloudy
Hefei	19	33	fine
Nanjing	21	33	cloudy
Shanghai	21	30	fine
Taipei	25	28	rain
Wuhan	23	30	rain
Hong Kong	28	30	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	16	22	thunderstorm
Frankfurt	12	23	overcast
Paris	14	25	overcast
London	12	22	overcast
New York	18	28	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Part of an eye or camera; 5- Word that can precede hygiene, tradition and agreement; 9- Horse's gait; 13- Hilo hi; 15- "Star Trek" role; 16- Rampant; 17- Follows orders; 18- Hey, over here!; 19- Neighbor of Sask.; 20- Gal of song; 21- Paddock papa; 23- Small village; 25- Able was ____; 26- Made of cannabis; 27- Smokers receptacle; 30- Metal in Montana's motto; 31- Weaned pig; 32- Cobbler's nail; 37- Authenticating mark; 38- Driver's invitation; 40- Printed volume; 41- Science of classification; 43- Beetle Bailey's boss; 44- Reveal, in verse; 45- Lounges; 47- Give some slack; 50- Leg joint; 51- Wonder at; 52- Que ____?; 53- Ballet step; 56- HOMES part; 57- Expel gas or odor; 59- Live; 61- Stravinsky ballet; 62- Ditto; 63- Gossipmonger; 64- Addition column; 65- Celestial body; 66- Demonstrate;

DOWN 1- Neighbor of Cambodia; 2- Exile isle; 3- Christmas; 4- Bashful; 5- Feathered fisher; 6- Subterfuge; 7- Capp and Capone; 8- Like Wittenberg University in Ohio; 9- Chaplin persona; 10- Lunar valley; 11- Many times; 12- Milk source; 14- Declare; 22- Lyricist Gershwin; 24- Cupid; 25- Author Calvino; 26- Snake dancers; 27- Helper; Abbr.; 28- Queens stadium; 29- Put-on; 32- Engage in espionage; 33- Diminish; 34- Dullard; 35- Expensive seating area; 36- Supplements, with "out"; 38- Forlorn; 39- Foreboding; 42- Centrepiece of the human face; 43- Stable; 45- Hockey player, e.g.; 46- Dash lengths; 47- Big; 48- The Hunter; 49- Hot spots; 51- Crux; 52- Fine cotton; 53- Phom ____; 54- Singing voice; 55- Deli side; 58- Floor covering where the cat sat; 60- Basketball Hall of Famer Unseld;

Yesterday's solution

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

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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COLOANE 1 BED	HKD 9,300

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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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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

TRADE

CHINA'S RUSSIA DEALINGS IRK US, BUT DON'T BREACH SANCTIONS

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

CHINA'S support for Russia through oil and gas purchases is irking Washington and raising the risk of U.S. retaliation, foreign observers say, though they see no sign Beijing is helping Moscow evade sanctions over its war on Ukraine.

Beijing's importance as a lifeline to Russian President Vladimir Putin rose Monday after the 27-nation European Union, the main market for fossil fuels that supply most of Moscow's foreign income, agreed to stop oil purchases.

President Xi Jinping's government declared ahead of Russia's Feb. 24 attack that it had a "no limits" friendship with Moscow and has kept the West guessing about whether it might bail Putin out.

China rejects the sanctions as illegal because the United States, Europe and Japan cut off Russia from



AP PHOTO

their markets and the global banking system without working through the United Nations, where Beijing and Moscow have veto power.

The sanctions don't prohibit China, India or other countries from buying Russian oil and gas. But President Joe Biden has warned Xi of unspecified consequences if Beijing

helps Moscow evade sanctions. That leaves open the risk Chinese companies might be punished by losing access to valuable Western markets.

Beijing appears to be complying. But state-owned companies are buying more Russian oil and gas, which gives the Kremlin export income. They also

are potential investors in Russian energy projects as Western companies leave.

"The Biden administration will likely become increasingly exasperated at China's continued support for Russia," Neil Thomas of Eurasia Group said in an email.

That increases the likelihood of "unilateral moves to punish Beijing" and "allied coordination on economic security measures aimed at countering China," Thomas said.

The conflict adds to tension with Washington over Taiwan, Hong Kong, human rights, trade, technology and Beijing's strategic ambitions.

China poses the "most serious long-term challenge to the international order," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a May 26 speech.

Xi's government has tried to distance itself from Putin's war by calling for peace talks, but it avoids criticizing Moscow.

Other governments "must not harm China's legitimate interests in any way" in dealing with Ukraine, warned a foreign ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian.

Monday's decision by EU leaders will cut imports of Russian oil by 90%, according to the head of its executive branch, Ursula von der Leyen. European customers have been paying Russia as much as \$1 billion per day for oil, gas and coal.

Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, responded on Twitter: "Russia will find other importers."

Moscow is tiny as a trading partner for Beijing but an ally against what both resent as U.S. dominance in global affairs.

China sees Russian oil and gas as a way to diversify supplies for its energy-hungry economy. China bought 20% of last year's Russian crude exports, according to the International Energy Agency. The two sides announced a new 30-year gas contract on Feb. 4, three weeks ahead of Moscow's attack on Ukraine, that the state newspaper Global Times said will increase annual supplies to China by about 25%.

While the two are friendly, China is taking advantage of the situation to get cheaper energy and favorable business deals, said Maria Shagina of the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

"They would always capitalize on Russia's isolation," said Shagina. "But they would be very cautious not to violate sanctions outright."

On May 24, while Biden was visiting Tokyo, Russian and Chinese warplanes carried out "strategic air patrols" above the Sea of Japan, the East China Sea and the western Pacific. The Japanese government said bombers flew near Japan.

Biden warned Xi during a March 18 video meeting not to give Moscow military or economic aid.

Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said in March that Washington wouldn't tolerate China or any other country helping Moscow work around sanctions. The White House has criticized Beijing's "rhetorical support" for Putin.

Washington is "monitoring closely" Chinese dealings with Moscow, the American Embassy said in a written response to questions.

"We have not seen the provision of military equipment," it said. Asked about economic sanctions and possible violations, the embassy said it had nothing further.

After BP and ExxonMobil announced they were pulling out of Russian oil and gas projects, "there are rumors state-owned Chinese companies might step

in and acquire stakes," said Shagina.

China's imports from Russia rose 56.6% over a year earlier in April to \$8.9 billion, according to customs data. That helped Putin's government record a current account surplus, the broadest measure of trade, of \$96 billion for the four months ending in April.

Washington also is frustrated that India, the No. 3 global oil importer, is buying more from Russia to take advantage of low prices. The Biden administration is lobbying Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to stop.

In March, the U.S. government told Asian and European allies that American intelligence had determined China indicated to Russia it would be willing to provide military support for the campaign in Ukraine and financial help to limit the impact of sanctions.

Russia has been expelled from the global SWIFT network for bank transfers.

China's credit card processor, UnionPay, refused to work with Russian banks after Visa and MasterCard stopped serving them, the Russian news outlet RBC reported in April. It said UnionPay worried it might be hit by "secondary sanctions" and cut off from the Western-controlled global financial system.

China has blocked Russia's airlines from flying foreign-owned aircraft into Chinese airspace, the Russian news outlet RBK reported. Putin in March threw ownership of the planes into doubt by allowing them to be-registered in Russia to avoid being seized after the European leasing companies were barred from doing business with Russian carriers.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China didn't immediately respond to a request for confirmation and details.

China gave Moscow an economic lifeline following Western sanctions imposed over its 2014 seizure of Crimea from Ukraine.

Beijing agreed to buy Russian gas in a deal estimated to be worth up to \$400 billion over three decades. Moscow turned to Chinese state-owned companies to help pay for oil and gas development after Crimea-related sanctions cut off Western financing.

"The help will never come for free," Shagina said. **MDT/AP**

ONLY ONE EARTH | **WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2022** | **UN environment programme 50 1972-2022**

5 June 2022

The Green Committees of the University of St. Joseph (USJ) and the British Chamber of Commerce in Macao (Britcham) are excited to share an afternoon of activities and learning experiences to encourage awareness and environmental protection with this year's theme "Only One Earth". Event is free and open to the public.

Date : 5 June 2022 (SUN)
Venue : USJ Ilha Verde Campus, Macao
Time : 1400 - 1700

SCAN TO REGISTER

There will be food & beverages, educational and kids' activities, sustainable products, scheduled talks, green exhibits, etc throughout the event. Scan the code for event programme and register.

2:30pm Macau for Waste Reduction by Annie Lao
 3:15pm Microplastics: an overview of the environmental and health risks by Sara Cardoso
 4:00pm Mangroves as a source of conventional plastic degrading and bioplastic producing bacteria by Saidu Bashir
 4:30pm Spelling sprint activity by Sustaincia.org

Event organisers: **britcham** 澳門英商會, **UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH**

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FOOTBALL

Serie A champion Milan to be sold to RedBird for USD1.3B

DANIELLA MATAR, MILAN

SERIE A champion AC Milan is on the verge of being sold to American investment firm RedBird Capital Partners for 1.2 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) after the two parties signed a preliminary agreement.

Milan said yesterday that RedBird is expected to complete the purchase of the storied Italian club from fellow American firm Elliott Management by September, becoming the fourth owner of the team in five years.

"We are honored to be a part of AC Milan's illustrious history and are excited to play a role in the club's next chapter as it returns to its rightful place at the very top of Italian, European and world football," RedBird founder and managing partner Gerry Cardinale said.

Seven-time European champion Milan clinched its 19th Serie A title but its first in 11 years last month. The Rossoneri last won



the Champions League in 2007.

RedBird has a stake in Fenway Sports Group, which owns English Premier League club Liverpool.

U.S.-based hedge firm Elliott had owned Milan since 2018 after the club's former Chinese owner failed to repay part of a loan. For-

mer Italian premier Silvio Berlusconi controlled Milan for more than 30 years before selling to the Chinese group in 2017.

Milan had finished sixth a couple of months before Elliott took over. It was also embroiled in a case with UEFA over financial fair play breaches that later saw it vo-

luntarily withdraw from the 2019-2020 Europa League to avoid penalties.

"When Elliott acquired AC Milan in 2018, we inherited a club with a tremendous history, but with serious financial problems and a mediocre sporting performance," Elliott managing partner

Gordon Singer said. "Our plan was simple: to create financial stability, and to return AC Milan to where it belongs in European football. Today, I believe we have accomplished both.

"As we make this remarkable transition to AC Milan's next chapter, I want to express our deepest sense of humility, pride and above all gratitude for the experiences we have shared with each member of the AC Milan family."

Elliott, which will retain a minority stake in the club, had seemed set to sell Milan to a private equity firm based in Bahrain but the exclusive negotiations were ended recently after it failed to come to a commercial agreement with Investcorp.

That paved the way for RedBird to enter and Cardinale was pictured celebrating Milan's title triumph in front of the city's iconic cathedral in Piazza Duomo with thousands of fans,

"I want to thank Gordon Singer and the entire Elliott team for the tremendous work they have done over the last four years in rebuilding Milan and returning it to its rightful place at the top of Serie A," Cardinale said.

"RedBird's investment philosophy and track record in team ownership has shown that football clubs can be successful on the pitch and sustainable off it." **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily
Shen Dingli, China Daily



CHINA, US HAVE MUCH TO GAIN FROM HEALTHY COMPETITION

Delivering a speech at the George Washington University on May 26, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken reaffirmed the Joe Biden administration's "3C" policy toward China: cooperate, compete and contest. He also summed up Biden's approach to China with three words, "invest, align and compete".

Obviously, the Biden administration stresses "competition" in the US' strategy vis-à-vis China for the 2020s decade. This matches the current freezing reality of bilateral ties across the Pacific. China and the US are indeed competing for trade, investment, technology, innovation, influence and geostrategy, to name a few.

Blinken should be commended for including "cooperation" in the US' policy toward China. This indicates the ongoing political correction in the incumbent administration, differentiating it from that of the previous administration.

While US President Joe Biden has carried on much of the policy left by his predecessor Donald Trump, he has shown an intention to build guardrails to protect China-US competition, not to derail it.

There are many regional and global challenges: climate change, the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, Iran's position in resetting the nuclear deal, the COVID-19 pandemic, global fight on terrorism, not to mention the food and energy crises looming large on the horizon. To address each and every of them, the world needs China's participation and contribution.

Yet the list of competition seems longer: values, rights, fairness, rules, trade, market, supply chains, innovation, high-tech decoupling, geostrategic competition in Eastern Europe and the Indo-Pacific region, apart from outer space. In Blinken's vision, such a strategic competition has much to do with the survival of the post-World War II liberal world order.

China certainly has benefitted from the postwar order since launching reform and opening-up. Still, Beijing has to improve its external environment, especially in its neighborhood. For this purpose, Chinese leaders have reiterated that the door of China's opening-up will only open wider and wider.

The rule-based international order is not only applicable to China and few other countries, but also the rest of the world. As the key architect of such a system, the United States has equal obligation to follow the terms of the existing rule-based international order, primarily defined by the United Nations Charter.

It was the US that refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, and quit the Paris Agreement, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (Iran nuclear deal) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement. And although under the Biden administration, the US has rejoined the Paris climate accord and is considering getting back with Iran in the breached 2015 nuclear deal while working to build the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity, who knows whether it will not withdraw from them again.

Also, it was the US that aligned with China during World War II and helped reunite Taiwan with the motherland. But during the Korean War (1950-53), the then US president said the status of Taiwan was uncertain. [...]

But the US soon passed the "Taiwan Relations Act" and subsequently took its policy of "TRA plus three communiqués". In 1982, when the US signed the third communique with Beijing on arms sale to Taiwan, it also made "six assurances". The Trump administration was the first to uphold them openly, and now Biden defines his one-China policy as "TRA, three communiqués plus six assurances".

Despite that, the US is welcome to invest in China, and should lift the hurdles for China to invest in the US, because the more they invest, the more they would benefit from each other. And through competition, the two sides could improve the quality of their products and services and even conceive some cooperative investments, which could prevent other countries from aligning with one side or the other.

In short, we welcome healthy investment for constructive competition and the application of a rule-based order to all competitors.

[Abridged]

RUSSIA'S NAVALNY SAYS HE FACES NEW CRIMINAL CHARGES

Russia's opposition leader Alexei Navalny said that he is facing new criminal accusations that could extend his current nine-year prison term.

Navalny said on Instagram that an investigator visited him in prison to declare that the authorities have opened a new investigation against him on charges of "creating an extremist group to fan hatred against officials and oligarchs" and trying to stage unsanctioned rallies.

He added that the charges could keep him in prison for another 15 years if he's convicted.

Navalny, the most determined political foe of Russian President

Vladimir Putin, was arrested in January 2021 upon returning from Germany, where he had been recuperating from nerve-agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin, and handed a 2½-year sentence for a parole violation.

In March, Navalny was sentenced to nine years in prison on fraud and contempt of court charges he rejected as politically motivated, a move that signaled an attempt by the authorities to keep him behind bars for as long as possible.

The new sentence followed a year-long Kremlin crackdown on Navalny's supporters, other opposition activists and independent journalists in which authorities appear eager to stifle all dissent.

AP PHOTO



U.S. Marshalls escort John Hinckley Jr. as he returns to a marine base via helicopter in Quantico (Aug. 8, 1981)

HINCKLEY NEARS FULL FREEDOM 41 YEARS AFTER SHOOTING REAGAN

JESSICA GRESKO, WASHINGTON

A federal judge is set to preside over an important hearing for John Hinckley, the man who shot President Ronald Reagan in 1981 and is on the verge of being released from all remaining restrictive conditions.

U.S. District Court Judge Paul L. Friedman said in September that he would free Hinckley from restrictions on June 15 as long as Hinckley continued to do well. Officials say Hinckley has, and today's hearing, which Hinckley will not attend, is not expected to alter those plans.

Hinckley was confined to a mental hospital in Washington for more than two decades after a jury found him not guilty by reason of insanity in shooting Reagan. But starting in 2003 Friedman began allowing Hinckley to live for longer stretches in the community with requirements like attending therapy and restrictions on where he can travel. He's been living full-time in Virginia since 2016, though still under restrictions.

Those include: allowing officials access to his electronic devices, email and online accounts; being barred from traveling to places where he knows there will be someone protected by the Secret Service,

and giving three days' notice if he wants to travel more than 75 miles from his home in Virginia.

In July, Hinckley — who plays guitar and sings and has shared his music on a YouTube channel — plans to give a concert in Brooklyn, New York. Appearances in Connecticut and Chicago for what he has called the "John Hinckley Redemption Tour" have been cancelled.

The judge has said that Hinckley, who turned 67 Sunday, has displayed no symptoms of active mental illness, no violent behavior and no interest in weapons since 1983.

In a status report filed ahead of today's hearing, prosecutors wrote that health officials who have overseen Hinckley's treatment for years believe he "has recovered his sanity such that he does not present a danger to himself or others because of mental illness if unconditionally released" as planned.

Prosecutors had previously opposed ending restrictions, but they changed their position last year, saying they would agree to Hinckley's release from conditions if he continued to show mental stability and follow restrictions. Prosecutor Kacie Weston wrote in a court filing ahead of the hearing that "the Government has found no evidence to suggest

that Mr. Hinckley's unconditional release should not be granted" as the judge previously said he would.

Reagan recovered from the March 30, 1981, shooting, but his press secretary, James Brady, who died in 2014, was partially paralyzed as a result. Secret Service agent Timothy McCarthy and Washington police officer Thomas Delahanty were also wounded. Reagan died in 2004.

In the 2000s, Hinckley began, with the judge's approval, making visits to his parents' home in Williamsburg, Virginia. His father died in 2008, but in 2016 he was given permission to live with his mother full time. Still, he was required to attend individual and group therapy sessions, was barred from talking to the media and could only travel within a limited area. Secret Service would also periodically follow him.

Hinckley's mother died in 2021. He has since moved out of her home. In recent years, Hinckley has made money by selling items at an antique mall and by selling books online.

Hinckley has said on his YouTube channel that he has started a record label, Emporia Records, and that his first release will be a 14-song CD of his music. He also promotes his music on Twitter. MDT/AP

Ukraine Western nations promised more and more advanced arms to bolster Ukraine's defense as its troops battled a grinding Russian offensive that was closing in on capturing a key city in the east. Germany said it will supply Ukraine with modern anti-aircraft missiles and radar systems, and the U.S. will unveil a new weapons package later in the day that will include high-tech, medium-range rocket systems. The Kremlin spokesman told reporters that the U.S. is "pouring fuel on the fire." More on p8

AP PHOTO



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said yesterday he wants to join employers and labor unions in a "concerted action" to find ways of cushioning the effects of rising prices while preventing a spiral of inflation in Europe's biggest economy. An official estimate this week showed the country's annual inflation rate jumping to 7.9% in May, the highest rate since the winter of 1973-1974.

Portugal has sent 146 Marines to join a NATO force stationed in Lithuania as part of efforts to bolster the alliance's eastern flank in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The deployment includes divers specializing in deactivating mines and other explosive devices. Portugal's defense ministry said the aim of the mission is to "support high levels of readiness and discourage direct or indirect threats" against NATO members, especially in the Baltic Sea region. The detachment which departed yesterday is to remain in Lithuania for three months.

AP PHOTO



Spain Hundreds of taxi drivers protested yesterday in the streets of Madrid against what they claim is unfair competition from ride-hailing services. The drivers participated in a procession through the Spanish capital, protesting in their vehicles and on foot. A city government proposal to create new rules for ride-hailing services is set for a Thursday vote by the municipal assembly.