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A MAINLAND RESIDENT WAS DETAINED ON ALLEGATIONS REGARDING A CRYPTOCURRENCY INVESTMENT SCAM AMOUNTING TO HKD3 MILLION: PJ

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AP PHOTO



Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida announced plans yesterday to establish an infectious disease crisis management agency to better prepare for future pandemics. Kishida, marking the end of the current parliamentary session and weeks ahead of the July 10 national elections, said that Japan has managed to significantly slow Covid-19 infections, but it is still too early to "put our guards down." He said there's a need to "carefully walk to the path toward returning to ordinary lives" as Japan gradually resumes social and business activity as well as tourism.

AP PHOTO



Indonesian President Joko Widodo announced a Cabinet reshuffle yesterday, replacing key economic ministers amid a national cooking oil shortage and rising food prices. Widodo selected Zulkifli Hasan, the chairman of a political party that joined the ruling coalition last year, as Indonesia's new trade minister, replacing Muhammad Lutfi, who had been criticized for his handling of the cooking oil situation.

Israel A court yesterday found a Gaza aid worker guilty of several terrorism charges in a high-profile case in which his employer, independent auditors and the Australian government have said there is no evidence of wrongdoing. Mohammed el-Halabi, who was the Gaza director for the international Christian charity World Vision from 2014 until his arrest in 2016, was accused of diverting tens of millions of dollars to the Islamic militant group Hamas that rules the territory.

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RESHUFFLE, DEAL

Pandemic and junket crisis might have played a role in amended new gaming law which will be finally voted Tuesday P3



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VISUAL CHINA GROUP



STANLEY'S SECOND WIFE LUCINA LAAM PASSES AWAY

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CRIME

SERIES OF CRYPTO INVESTMENT SCAMS REPORTED TO POLICE

ANTHONY LAM

A mainland resident has been apprehended on allegations regarding a cryptocurrency investment scam amounting to HKD3 million, the Judiciary Police (PJ) announced yesterday.

The 35-year-old suspect, Wang, informed police that she works as an accountant, and is one member of a couple involved in the scam.

The case was first referred to the PJ from the Public Security Police Force (PSP) on February 7.

According to the police, the victim stated that a couple claiming to have insider knowledge on cryptocurrency speculation had shown the victim their investment records, allegedly revealing profits they had gained, in order to gain the victim's trust.

The victim was convinced and agreed to invest half a million Hong Kong dollars to purchase cryptocurrency. The investment



appeared to yield profits shortly afterwards. Seeing the gains, the victim transferred an additional HKD2.5 million in cash to the couple. The couple uncontactable at this point.

Realizing this was a scam, the victim reported the case to the

PSP. Both police authorities were told by the victim that the loss totaled HKD3 million.

PJ inspectors were able to identify the couple after conducting investigations and discovered that they had left Macau through the Hengqin Border

Checkpoint on February 7.

On June 10, the couple attempted to enter Macau again through the Border Gate, but were intercepted and apprehended by PSP officers at the border checkpoint. They declined to cooperate with the investiga-

tions following their arrest.

The police nevertheless pressed charges against the couple, as they considered the evidence on hand sufficient.

In another case, a male victim in his 50s came across a woman on social media on May 23. He was lured into investing in cryptocurrency after conversing with her for several days. The woman claimed that she would teach him to earn easy money from the investment.

The victim downloaded an investment app, registered as a member, and deposited a total of HKD1.02 million to three bank accounts in Hong Kong across four transactions.

He earned HKD150,000 from the supposed investments after several transactions. However, he became suspicious and considered the return to be too lucrative, and requested to withdraw the money as a result.

He was told to deposit HKD1.5 million to withdraw all his funds.

He refused to do so and attempted to negotiate with a customer service agent to no avail. The negotiations were unsuccessful because the investment platform stopped working and the woman disappeared.

Mong Ha green houses subject of experimental revival plans

THE collection of green houses in Mong Ha District will be the subject of experimentation in a government revival project, the Cultural Development Advisory Committee (CCDC) has recently announced.

It is expected that the project – officially referred to as the Historic Architecture Revival Plan 2022 – will kick off by the end of the year, president of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) and vice president of the CCDC, Leong Wai Man, said.

The current phase of the plan will concern the 10 green houses along Avenida do Colonel Mesquita.



Introducing details of the plan, Leong confirmed that there would not be many restrictions in place, and applicants would have greater flexibility to revive the buildings.

However, she emphasized that three houses must be devoted to arts and culture. The

remaining seven will be allowed to feature commercial and business elements, such as catering and sales.

Despite having fewer restrictions, the review process will nevertheless scrutinize the revitalization efforts proposed by applicants.

Initial kick-off sub-

sidies will be available but rent will be charged during operations.

In the second half of the year, IC will also revamp the outdoor area of the Navy Yard arts and culture space near Barra to allow for outdoor events and fairs in the future, the IC president added. AL

STANLEY HO'S SECOND WIFE LUCINA LAAM PASSES AWAY

THE second wife of the late gambling mogul Stanley Ho passed away from cancer at age 79 on June 11, according to Hong Kong media reports.

Lucina Laam King-ying had four daughters and a son, being the mother of businesspeople Pansy Ho, Daisy Ho and Lawrence Ho, along with Maisy Ho and Josie Ho.

Born in a military officer's family, Laam married Stanley Ho shortly after completing her studies at the age of 14, according to reports.

She was often seen participating in charity and social activities with the gaming tycoon.

It was said that of the four wives of Stanley Ho, she was the richest.

According to reports, Laam had been suffering from cancer for a long time and was resident in the Hong Kong



Sanatorium and Hospital for a year. Her condition deteriorated about a week ago and she was sent to the intensive care unit.

Her late brother was once president of the Macau Olympic Committee. LV

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For subscription and general issues:
general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd



New gaming law to be finally voted on Tuesday

RENATO MARQUES

THE Legislative Assembly (AL) will finally vote on the new law that will govern the local gaming industry's operations for the next decade, the president of the Second Standing Committee of the AL, Chan Chak Mo, announced yesterday.

Speaking after the committee's last meeting on the bill, Chan said that the final reading of the bill will most likely take place on Tuesday, June 21, in a plenary session that has yet to be officially scheduled.

Yesterday's meeting was dedicated to the reading of the final version of the bill as well as the signing of the final opinion from the committee's members that greenlighted the bill after intensive discussion over five months.

Questioned by the media on whether he thought this bill would achieve the consensus of all lawmakers on voting day, Chan said that he believes that the law will be approved, even if some lawmakers raise questions about particular details.

"If you ask me, I think that the law will be approved. I will certainly vote in favor and my [committee] Secretary (lawmaker Lam Lon Wai) will too. I think the law will receive the necessary votes to be approved even if not all articles are voted upon unanimously. There may still be questions to

be raised and the government must respond to these at the plenary," Chan said.

Chan listed a few key topics that were clarified by the Committee, such as the acknowledgment that in the new concessions tender there will be a maximum of six licenses to be attributed and no sub-concessions will be allowed.

The bill will have an enforcement period of up to 10 years with the possibility of an extension of up to three years.

It will be up to the Chief Executive (CE) to define the size of the industry delimiting the total number of permitted gaming machines and tables. Each of these machines and tables will have a minimum revenue ceiling that will be established by administrative order.

Also in the hands of the CE will be scrutineering over the managing companies signing contracts with the concessions. Gaming promoters (also called junkets) may only work for one concessionaire at a time and may only receive commissions for their services. They will not be permitted to receive shares of any profits or receipts generated.

Furthermore, the concessionaires will have a duty to supervise and inspect the junkets operating under their concessions.

Aiming to increase the reputation of the concessionaires, the inspection of their stakeholders will be reinforced and their

share capital has been exponentially raised from 500 million patacas to 5 billion patacas.

The bill also includes a ban on listing gaming concessionaires on the stock exchange and an added control over the shareholders of indirect interests in these companies, with stakeholders of one concessionaire not permitted to hold any shares over 5% of any of the parent companies related to a different concession.

TRANSITION LAW

Questioned by the Times if the Committee president believes that this law is equipped to last the upcoming 10 years be-

fore its official expiry, Chan said that he did not have a response, as, "there are many factors that can influence the inadequacy of a law. Right now we are still living in a pandemic situation and there is a war ongoing in Europe. We cannot anticipate what the future will bring. Maybe only a Nobel Prize winner in economics can answer that question," he said.

The question of whether this new gaming law represents a complete update from the one currently in force (and which has a duration of over 20 years) or, if it was merely a transitory law to smooth the path for even more restrictive laws on gaming activities in the future, was initially raised at the start of the process. However, this discussion was soon abandoned in favor of more pressing matters such as the survival of satellite casinos and the economic impacts of their closure.

SATELLITE CASINOS THE 'HOTTEST' TOPIC

The discussion over the situation of satellite casinos was highly topical during the Second Standing Committee discussions, Chan said in response to a media inquiry.

"The most controversial topic was the matter of the satellite casinos," Chan said. "Many lawmakers, including those who are not members of this committee, were very worried about this because of the potential impacts on the economy and employment. The government promoted many changes to the bill that concerned this aspect – even dropping some requirements on the ownership of the venues, among others. I think the feedback from society in general and this sector is now far more positive than it was in the original version of the bill."

PANDEMIC AND JUNKET CRISIS MIGHT HAVE PLAYED A ROLE IN THE NEW GAMING LAW

THE pandemic and surrounding economic crisis, as well as the junket scandal leading to the arrest of two of the major heads of the larger market players may have played a role in defining certain aspects of the new gaming law, the president of the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly said during a media briefing yesterday.

However, Chan said that while the current situation might have played some role in certain parts of the law, it was not the most important factor driving the amendments nor did it play a decisive role.

"Recent problems might have influenced the law revision somewhat, but I believe that other situations such as the problems with the VIP sector had a greater influence," he said.

"I think it is more the way we are looking to the future that had the most influence. National securi-

ty matters, for instance, have had an added relevance. Even without the pandemic, we would have to make this revision. Maybe without the pandemic it would have been easier," Chan remarked.

Chan explained that the overarching principles that guided the revision are clearly stated in Article 1-A of the bill. These mostly stem from the local government's experiences over the past 20 years.

Highlighting a few lines of relevance, Chan noted number 1, which provides that the gaming activities in casinos must safeguard national security, and number 4, which provides that the operation of games of chance in a casino must be free from criminal influence and that their operation must abide by mechanisms to combat the illegal flow of cross-border capital and comply with measures to prevent money laundering and terrorism. **RM**

WYNN MACAO TO RECEIVE USD500 MILLION FACILITY LOAN

Wynn Resorts will provide a facility loan of USD500 million with a maturity date of 14 months to subsidiary Wynn Macau Ltd (Wynn Macau). According to filing to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, the loan is made in a bid to support the group's "potential future working capital and other funding needs, if necessary." Furthermore, Wynn Resorts added that it is confident in the "long-term growth potential of Macau." As Macau's market continued to experience decreased visitor numbers during the first quarter (particularly in the second half of the quarter), Wynn Macau recorded a loss of USD98.3 million in the first three months of this year – 31% higher than the losses over the same period last year.

LITERATURE HOUSE TO OPEN IN Q3

The Cultural Affairs Bureau will open a literature house in the next quarter, president Leong Wai Man announced. Located near Tap Seac square, the Macau Literature House will provide a literary center and creative space for exhibitions and related events. The house will comprise an exhibition hall, reading room and multi-functional room. Leong hopes that the house will "have artistic and cultural elements in three of these villas and the remaining seven can have commercial elements such as restaurants, cafes or shops."

GOV'T TO EXTEND GAMING LICENSES JUN.23

The SAR government will formally sign a six-month license extension for casino operators on June 23, local broadcaster TDM reported. The signing has been an expected move ahead of license expirations June 26. The extension, to December 31, allows more time for the highly anticipated rebidding process. All six gaming operators have paid approximately MOP47 million to have their licenses extended.

GBA

MACAU ENTREPRENEURS' AMBITIONS IN GREATER BAY AREA AND BEYOND

AT an exhibition on smart life held in Macau, a spray disinfecting robot with "antennas" caught the eyes of many.

It is one of the several robots that can be booked online for free trial use offered by Star Speed Store, a technology firm founded in the Special Administrative Region (SAR) three years ago focusing on hotel room delivery robots.

Yao Jincheng, founder of the company, told Xinhua that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Star Speed Store had the opportunity to provide "non-contact" robot services, including temperature monitoring, disinfection and delivery, for Macau hotels designated as quarantine venues as well as businesses and government departments.

"We now plan to build a manufacturing base in Hengqin to deliver 'made in Macau' robots with Macau branding and intellectual property," Yao said, adding that the company also hopes to reach "Belt and Road" markets with the help of Macau's influences in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Portuguese-speaking countries.

In September last year, the Chinese central authorities issued a plan to build the Guangdong-Macao in-depth cooperation zone in Hengqin, Zhuhai, which is adjacent to Macau, making the island an important new growth point for Macau's economy.



Macau resident Ho Kok Tou founded Pachira, an artificial intelligence firm, in Hengqin at the end of 2019. In less than three years, the company has developed into a high-tech company with speech recognition, analysis, and synthesis as well as natural language processing as its core business.

"Macau enterprises should not just employ local residents or only do business in the Macau SAR," said Ho, whose company now employs around 200 people from across the country and distributes products in the Chinese mainland as well as the United States.

Aiming to become a leader in voice technology in the Guang-

dong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and beyond, Ho said Macau businesses must have core products and originality in order to venture further out into the world.

In 2017 a framework agreement was signed on the development of the bay area. In February 2019, the Chinese government issued the more specific Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. One of its major aims is to develop the area into an international innovation and technology hub.

Boardware Information System Limited, an information technology solutions company founded in

2010 in Macau, is the largest local internet security integrator in the SAR, providing long-term internet infrastructure construction, information security and cloud services for large-scale enterprises, banks and government agencies. It has also jointly established the State Key Laboratory of Internet of Things for Smart City with the University of Macau.

However, Chao Ka Chon, president of Boardware, said his company hit a bottleneck in Macau due to its limit in industrial diversification and market.

Back in 2014, Chao registered a company in Hengqin and started to transfer part of the internet security monitoring business there in 2017.

Having set up branches in the Hong Kong SAR and Guangzhou in the mainland, Chao aims the broad markets in the Greater Bay Area and even abroad.

"We can enter the mainland market via Hengqin," Chao said. "On the contrary, we can also export the mainland's top technologies and products overseas via Macau."

Chao suggested that young people in Macau go northbound to seek more opportunities in the country's development. "The Greater Bay Area is the most economically vigorous area in China," he said.

"The opportunities are limitless." XINHUA

Scholar: Elderly facilities need improvement as aging society grows

STAFF REPORTER

FORMER lawmaker Agnes Lam is suggesting that the government improve facilities for the elderly, given that the aging population has been increasing over the past several years.

According to the 2021 population census, the number of residents aged 65 years and above jumped by 6.35% from 12% in 2020 to 12.7% in 2021.

Since the 3.1% growth in 2011, residents aged 65 years and above shot up by 81.6% in 2021.

During a TDM talk show, the director of the Centre for Macau Studies (CMS) foresaw that Macau would see a continuous upward



trend in the aging society as the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) is set to release an updated census report in the second half of this year.

Lam echoed a report

issued by the Chinese University of Hong Kong back in 2019, which tackled the expected increase in demand for medical services by the elderly.

The scholar pointed out

that according to the census, the population of aging residents and children is gradually increasing, while the population of young people is decreasing. These results reflect the constant pressure on young people to take care of the elderly and children in the future.

The survey also showed that the population of Taipa has increased, but transportation and social facilities that give priority to the elderly are still not enough.

Meanwhile, Macau Social Security Society said that the census reflects the slowdown in the population growth rate in Macau, and the continuous reduction in household size, which may weaken the ability of the fa-

mily to support the elderly.

The State Council of the People's Republic of China has released a plan for the development of the country's elderly care services system during the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025) earlier this year, as part of its latest step to implement a national strategy to address an aging population.

The plan specifies major goals and tasks for the five-year period, including expanding the supply of elderly care services, improving health support mechanisms for the elderly, and advancing the innovative and integrated development of service models.

This comes after the latest census data showed that Chinese people aged 60 or above accounted for 18.7% of the country's total population in 2020, 5.44 percentage points higher than in 2010.

Sands China local SME supplier prioritizes bold innovation throughout the pandemic and beyond

ESTABLISHED in 2013, Case Station Advertising & Planning Co. Ltd has expanded its business capabilities from design and animation to building intellectual property (IP). In 2018, Case Station became one of Sands China's suppliers for publication design.

Founder and creative director Case Wong shared his story of growth from new graduate to entrepreneur: "I have been interested in painting since I was a child. After studying graphic design at university, I joined the design industry. After some years of industry experience, I set up Case Station, mainly focusing on the design of publications, animation, and 3D design and modeling."

Creating an IP has been a dream of Wong's, and he accomplished it two years after the company was established, when he launched the "Bucket King" IP, a self-owned brand created by the company. The Bucket King character is based on the image of a bucket, with sights and scenes of Macau serving as its setting. The humorous and exciting idea is popular with children. So far, there has been a series of derivative products, such as Bucket King picture books, toys and clothes.

In 2019, Case Station licensed the IP to a famous hotel in Sanya, Hainan province, to operate a Bucket-King-themed family playground and restaurant. In the past, the company has produced books, publications and planning activities for government departments and social service organizations. In 2018, Sands China planned to launch a book titled "10th Anniversary of Sands Cares Ambassador Program," commemorating the efforts and milestones of the group's continued dedication to corporate social res-



ponsibility and volunteerism. The Sands China team became aware of Case Station's publications for schools and government and noticed there were more elements and new styles, so they contacted the company. This led to the first project between the two parties and their partnership has endured ever since.

"The requirements for Sands' anniversary book were different from those they had done in the past. The client was expecting new elements and new styles," Wong recalled.

Candy Kan, senior manager of procurement and supply chain at Sands China, and manager Amy Yuen spoke highly of Case Station, noting that the company "is experienced and professional. Their design style is bold and innovative, which helps highlight the content of our book." Furthermore, Yuen appreciated that the SME was willing to actively communicate with and give suggestions to

clients. The cost-effective service from Case Station was another obvious advantage, according to both Candy and Amy.

Wong believes his company can understand trends and consumer demands in the market. "I used to work for a large design company in Shanghai, from which I learned about the local market and the advantages brought [about] by diversified opportunities and customer sources," he said.

Despite having a keen sense of the market, the entrepreneur admitted to having encountered many challenges at the beginning of his cooperation with Sands China. They had no knowledge of Sands' various procurement procedures, such as needing to list things like the total number of pages, design details, printing materials, and paper in their quotations. With help and communication from Sands China's departments, the SME was able

to complete its first quotation for Sands China.

Wong said: "The work mode of large enterprises is meticulous. For example, when making a proof copy for pre-check, other companies usually require one or two pages for format reference. To ensure no details will be overlooked, Sands China required the whole book to be reviewed before it was produced. Also, Sands China insists on using environmentally-friendly paper despite its higher cost. So, they're shouldering their social responsibilities and do care for the environment."

Case Station and its founder Case Wong appreciate Sands China's willingness to communicate more with SMEs and accept new attempts and different styles, given that his company is bold in creating and envisioning work. The meticulous working attitude of Sands China helped the local SME learn to "go one step further" in understanding the client's

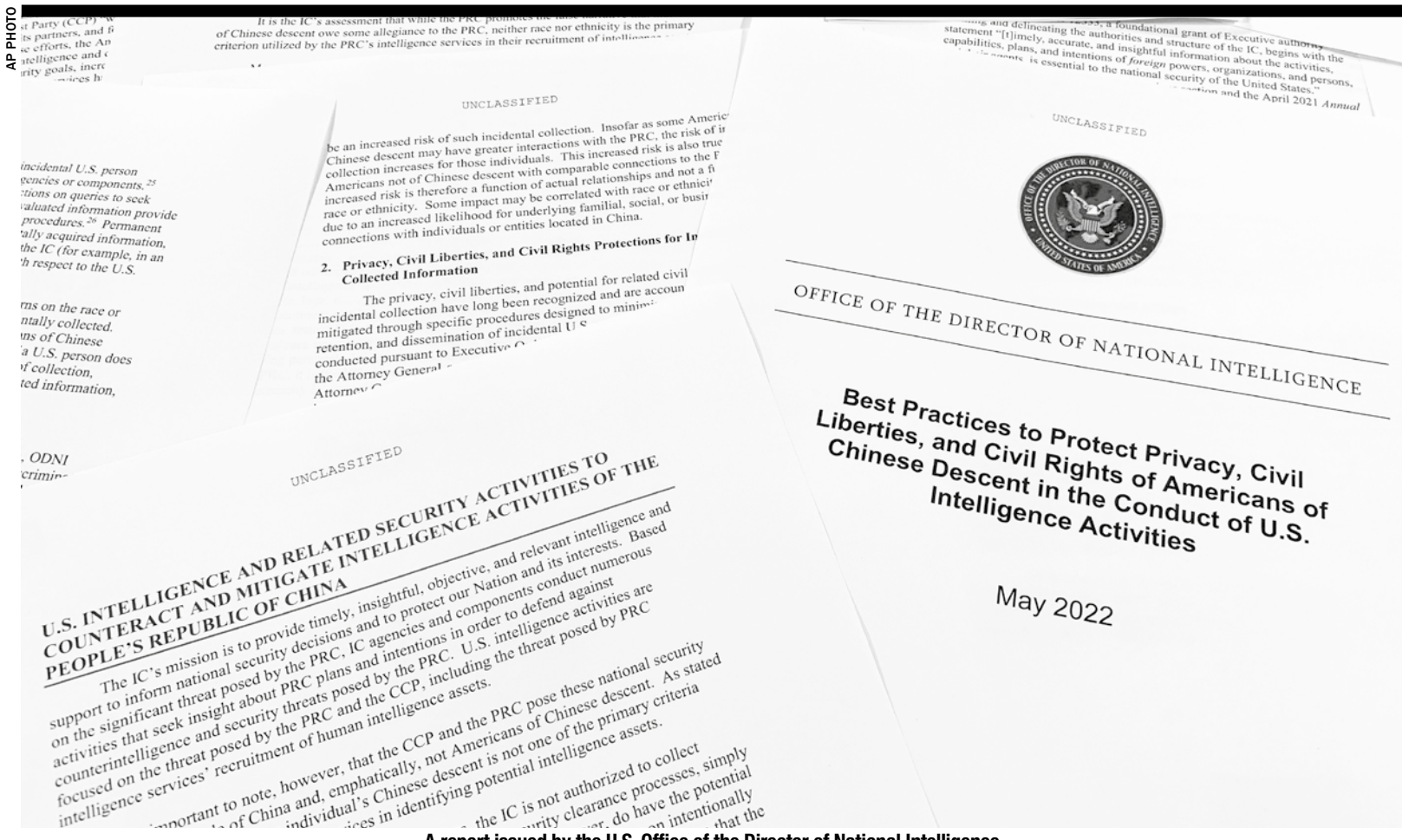
needs and reach a consensus.

Before the pandemic, Case Station's business mainly focused on graphic design and event planning. However, the events business was greatly affected by the pandemic. The SME has admitted that it faces budget pressures from human resources and operations. As a result, Wong plans to develop online and offline sales channels. His company will also further optimize the "Bucket King" project to promote the made-in-Macau IP in domestic and overseas markets.

Sands China's team said they will investigate whether more areas of cooperation could be developed, namely in gift design and event production. Sands China advises SMEs to actively seek collaboration by submitting company profiles, expertise, work experience and past work. The integrated resort operator will then be able to quickly reach out if there are any new and suitable projects.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



A report issued by the U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence

OVERSEAS CHINESE

SPY AGENCIES' FOCUS ON CHINA COULD SNARE CHINESE AMERICANS

NOMAAN MERCHANT & ERIC TUCKER, WASHINGTON

As U.S. intelligence agencies ramp up their efforts against China, top officials acknowledge they may also end up collecting more phone calls and emails from Chinese Americans, raising new concerns about spying affecting civil liberties.

A new report from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence makes several recommendations, including expanding unconscious bias training and reiterating internally that federal law bans targeting someone solely due to their ethnicity.

U.S. intelligence agencies are under constant pressure to better understand China's decision-making on issues including nuclear weapons, geopolitics and the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic — and have responded with new centers and programs focusing on Beijing. While there's bipartisan support for a tougher U.S. approach to China, civil rights groups and advocates are concerned about the disparate effect of enhanced surveillance on people of Chinese descent.

As one example, people who speak to relatives or contacts in China could be more likely to have their communications swept up, though intelligence agencies can't quantify how often due in part to civil liberties

concerns.

There's a long history of U.S. government discrimination against groups of citizens in the name of national security. Japanese Americans were forced into internment camps during World War II, Black leaders were spied upon during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and mosques were surveilled after the Sept. 11 attacks. Chinese Americans have faced discrimination going back to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the first law to explicitly ban immigration from a specific ethnic community.

Aryani Ong, co-founder of the advocacy group Asian American Federal Employees for Non-Discrimination, noted that people of Asian descent are sometimes "not fully trusted as loyal Americans." She said the report, published May 31, would be useful to conversations about what she described as the conflation of civil rights and national defense.

Ong and other advocates pointed to the Justice Department's "China Initiative," created to target economic espionage and hacking operations by Beijing. DOJ dropped the name of the program after it had come to be associated with faltering prosecutions of Asian American professors at U.S. college campuses.

"Often we hear responses that we cannot weaken our national security, as if protecting consti-

tutional rights of Asian Americans (is) contrary to our defense," said Ong, who is Indonesian and Chinese American.

But in trying to produce demographic data on the impact of surveillance, the intelligence agencies say there's a paradox: Examining the backgrounds of U.S. citizens whose data is collected requires more intrusion into those people's lives.

"To try to find out that type of information would require additional collection that would absolutely not be authorized because it isn't for the foreign intelligence purpose for which the intelligence community gets its authorities," Ben Huebner, the chief civil liberties officer for Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, said in an interview.

But, Huebner added, "I think the fact that we can't analytically get to those types of metrics doesn't mean that we get to sort of drop the ball on this."

One potential disparity highlighted by the report is what's known as "incidental collection."

In surveilling a foreign target, intelligence agencies can obtain the target's communications with a U.S. citizen who isn't under investigation. The agencies also collect phone calls or emails of U.S. citizens as they sweep for foreign communications.

The National Security Agency has vast powers to surveil

domestic and foreign communications, as revealed in part by documents leaked by Edward Snowden. Under NSA rules, two people have to sign off on putting any new foreign target under surveillance. The NSA masks the identities of U.S. citizens under federal law and intelligence guidelines and turns over potential domestic leads to the FBI.

The FBI can access some of the NSA's collection without a warrant. Civil rights advocates have long argued that searches under what's known as Section 702 disproportionately target minority communities.

The ODNI report notes that Chinese Americans "may be an increased risk of such incidental collection," as are Americans not of Chinese ancestry who have business or personal ties to China. The report recommends a review of artificial intelligence programs to ensure they "avoid perpetuating historical biases and discrimination." It also suggests agencies across the intelligence community expand unconscious bias training for people who handle information from incidental collection.

ODNI is also studying delays in granting security clearances and whether people of Chinese or Asian descent face longer or more invasive background investigations. While there is no publicly available data on clearances, some applicants from

minority communities have questioned whether they undergo extra scrutiny due to their race or ethnicity. According to the report, U.S. intelligence assesses that "neither race nor ethnicity is the primary criterion utilized by the PRC's intelligence services in their recruitment of intelligence assets."

Sen. Mark Warner, a Virginia Democrat who chairs the Senate Intelligence Committee, said in a statement that he welcomed the recommendations "to increase awareness of existing non-discrimination prohibitions and improve transparency around the security clearance process."

But Sen. Marco Rubio, a Florida Republican who is the committee's vice chairman, said requiring new training on unconscious bias and cultural competency was a distraction.

"The Chinese Communist Party likes nothing more than when we are distracted by divisive, internal politics," Rubio said in a statement.

The ODNI report highlights FBI training on race and ethnicity as a "best practice" in the intelligence community. In a statement, the FBI said that there was "no place for bias and prejudice in our communities" and that law enforcement "must work to eliminate these flawed beliefs in our agencies to best serve those we are sworn to protect. The FBI said its agents are trained in "obedience to the Constitution" and in "treating everyone with dignity, empathy and respect."

A senior NSA official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive intelligence matters, said the agency currently requires unconscious bias training for managers and hiring officials, but not all employees. The NSA does train intelligence analysts on rules that prohibit the collection of intelligence for suppressing dissent or disadvantaging people based on their race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, and is reviewing ODNI's recommendations.

The CIA late last year issued new instructions to officers discouraging the use of the word "Chinese" to describe China's government. The guidance suggests referring to the leadership as "China," "the People's Republic of China" or "PRC," or "Beijing," while using "Chinese" to refer to the people, language or culture.

"It's important to be clear that our concern is about the threat posed by the People's Republic of China, the PRC — not about the people of China, let alone fellow Americans of Chinese or Asian descent," CIA Director William Burns said in a recent speech at the Georgia Institute of Technology. "It is a profound mistake to conflate the two." **MDT/AP**

OVERSEAS CHINESE

Last Australian government lost Chinese votes: strategist

ROD MCGUIRK, CANBERRA

THE previous Australian government's stance against a more aggressive China drove away many Chinese-Australian voters at recent elections who considered the administration's language had licensed racism, a campaign strategist said yesterday.

Former Prime Minister Scott Morrison's conservative coalition government lost elections last month after almost a decade in power to the center-left Labor Party.

Labor's campaign director Paul Erickson yesterday blamed coalition rhetoric on China for significant vote swings toward Labor in electorates with large Chinese-Australian populations.

"The feedback that we got was that there was a view that the government's response to the more aggressive and assertive behavior of the Chinese Communist Party and the government in Beijing came across in the community actually at times as an attack on Chinese-Australians or rhetoric that licensed racism in the community," Erickson told the National Press Club.

Of Australia's population of 25 million, 1.2 million have Chinese ancestry, according to the most recent census.

Senior figures in the coalition government had argued that Beijing had wanted Labor to win the election because La-



Supporters cheer at an Australian Labor Party victory event

bor lawmakers were less likely to stand up for Australian interests against Chinese economic coercion.

A conservative lobby group Advance Australia had displayed ads on the sides of trucks during the election campaign that depicted Chinese President Xi Jinping casting a vote with the slogan: "CCP says vote Labor."

Morrison had labeled Labor's deputy leader Richard Marles "the Manchurian candidate," the title of a 1959 novel about the son of a prominent U.S. political family who is brainwashed by Chinese authorities to become an unwitting assassin.

Senior ministers also had pointed to China and the Solomon Islands announcing a security pact during the campaign as an

attempt to undermine the coalition's reelection chances.

Labor described the pact as Australia's worst foreign policy failure in the Pacific since World War II. New Foreign Minister Penny Wong will fly to the Solomons on Friday in an attempt to improve bilateral ties.

Former Defense Minister Peter Dutton, who since the election has replaced Morrison as leader of the conservative Liberal Party, argued during the campaign that pro-Labor communication on the Chinese social media platform WeChat was evidence that Beijing wanted the government to change.

Maree Ma, general manager of Vision Times, a leading Chinese-language Australian media outlet, said WeChat exchanges were more positive toward Labor

than they had been in the last election in 2019.

Ma told Australian Broadcasting Corp. a week before the election: "A lot of the articles are playing on how Labor will be more friendly towards China, which may or may not be the case in reality."

Ma said soured Sino-Australian relations and concerns over China's pact with the Solomons were not major election issues for Chinese-Australians.

"The vast majority of the Chinese community here doesn't really have much to do with the Chinese government and what they really care about is everything that the other English-speaking voters care about which is who can run the country better; it's about jobs, the economy," Ma said. **MDT/AP**

PMI FACTORY ACTIVITY REBOUNDS AS ANTI-VIRUS CURBS EASE

CHINA'S factory output rebounded in May, adding to a recovery from the latest COVID-induced economic slump after controls that shut down Shanghai and other industrial centers eased.

Industrial production rose 0.7% over a year earlier, recovering from April's 2.9% contraction, government data showed. Consumer spending edged up compared with April but was lower than a year ago.

The data suggest a "lockdown recovery got underway across most parts of the economy," said Sheana Yue of Capital Economics in a report.

China's case numbers in its latest wave of infections are low, but the ruling Communist Party's "zero-COVID" strategy that aims to isolate every person with the virus shut down most businesses in Shanghai starting in late March and suspended access or imposed other restrictions on other industrial cities. That fueled fears global manufacturing and trade might be disrupted.

Most factories, shops and other businesses in Shanghai, Beijing and other cities have been allowed to reopen but are expected to need weeks or months to return to normal activity.

Economists have cut forecasts of China's growth this year to as low as 2%, well below the ruling Communist Party's target of 5.5%. Some expect activity to shrink in the quarter ending in June before a gradual recovery begins. **MDT/AP**

STORM

Six dead in mainland as rain triggers landslides, house collapse



HEAVY rain in China has claimed six lives this week and forced the evacuation of some 200,000 people.

Five people died in southeastern China, according to state media reports: A house collapse took three lives in Fujian province on Tuesday, and two died Monday in a landslide caused by torrential rain in neighboring Jiangxi province.

One person died and three are missing in nor-

thern China after a vehicle fell into the water in mountain flooding from heavy rain in the Inner Mongolia region.

China regularly experiences seasonal rains and flooding during the summer, most frequently in central and southern areas.

Video on state broadcaster CCTV showed large parts of cities flooded in muddy waters. Rescue workers carried trapped people out of buildings on their backs in waist-

deep water in Guangdong province, also in the southeast.

The rain ended Wednesday in Jiangxi, but more precipitation is forecast for another week in Fujian, Jiangxi and Guangdong and the nearby Guangxi region. The National Meteorological Center said residents should prepare for floods and landslides as the soil is already saturated in those areas.

More than 110,000 people have been relocated in Jiangxi province, along with more than 80,000 in Fujian, state media reports said.

Seventeen people died last week in rain-related disasters in Guangxi and in Hunan province in central China. **MDT/AP**



PUTIN'S WAR

In Ukraine, mines take lives even after fighting moves on

JOHN LEICESTER & YURAS KARMANAU, MAKARIV

THE truck driver had the radio on, his daughter's stuffed toy keeping him company, and was bouncing his lumbering vehicle down one of the innumerable dirt tracks in Ukraine that are vital thoroughfares in the country's vast agricultural heartlands.

Then the right rear wheel hit a Soviet-era TM-62 anti-tank mine. The explosion blew Vadym Schvydchenko and his daughter's toy clean out of the cabin. The truck, and his livelihood, went up in flames.

Astoundingly, the 40-year-old escaped with just minor leg and head wounds. Others haven't been so lucky. Russia's war in Ukraine is spreading a deadly litter of mines, bombs and other explosives. They are killing civilians, disrupting planting, complicating the rebuilding of homes and villages, and will continue taking lives and limbs long after the fighting stops.

Often, blast victims are farmers and other rural workers with little choice but to use mined roads and plow mined fields, in a country relied on for grain and other crops that feed the world.

Schvydchenko said he'll steer clear of dirt tracks for the foreseeable future, although they're sometimes the only route to fields and rural settlements. Mushroom-picking in the woods has also lost its appeal to him.

"I'm afraid something like this can happen again," he said.

Ukraine is now one of the most mined countries in Europe. The east of the country, fought over with Russia-backed separatists since 2014, was already contaminated by mines even before the Feb. 24 invasion multiplied the scale and complexity of the dangers both there and elsewhere.

Ukraine's State Emergency Service said last week that 300,000 square kilometers (115,000 square miles) — the size of Arizona or Italy — need to be cleared. The



Unexploded shells and other weaponry lay beside a road near Makariv, on the outskirts of Kyiv

ongoing fighting will only expand the area.

The war's deadly remnants will "continue to be a hidden threat for many years to come," said Mairi Cunningham, who leads clearance efforts in Ukraine for The Halo Trust, a demining NGO that got \$4 million in U.S. government funding in May for its work in the country.

There's no complete government count of mine deaths since the invasion, but every week authorities have reported cases of civilians killed and wounded. Cunningham said her group has counted 52 civilian deaths and 65 injuries since February and "that's likely under-reported." The majority were from anti-tank mines, in agricultural areas, she said.

On a mobile app called "Demining Ukraine" that officials launched last month, people can send photos, video and the geolocation of explosive objects they come across, for subsequent removal. The app got more than 2,000 tip-offs in its first week.

The track where Schvydchenko had his brush with death is still used, despite now being marked with bright red warning signs bearing a white skull and crossbones. It scythes

through corn fields on the outskirts of Makariv — a once comely town west of Kyiv that bears the battle scars of Russia's failed assault on the capital in the war's early weeks.

Even with the Russian soldiers gone, danger lurks amid the surrounding poppy meadows, fields and woodlands. Deminers found another explosive charge — undetonated — just meters (feet) away from Schvydchenko's blown-up truck. On another track outside the nearby village of Andriivka, three people were killed in March by a mine that ripped open their minivan, spewing its cargo of food jars and tin cans now rusting in the dirt.

In a field close by, a tractor driver was wounded in May by an anti-tank mine that hurled the wreckage onto another mine, which also detonated. Halo Trust workers are now methodically scouring that site — where Russian troops dug foxholes — for any other devices.

Cunningham said the chaotic way the battle for Kyiv unfolded complicates the task of finding mines. Russian forces thrust toward the capital but were repelled by Ukrainian defenders.

"Often it was Russians

held an area, put some anti-vehicle mines nearby — a few in and around their position — and then left," she said. "It's scattered."

Mines are still being laid on the battlefields, now concentrated to the east and south where Russia has focused its offensive since its soldiers withdrew from around Kyiv and the north, badly bloodied.

A Ukrainian unit that buried TM-62 mines on a forest track in the eastern Donbas region this week, in holes scooped out with spades, told The Associated Press that the aim was to prevent Russian troops from advancing toward their trenches.

Russian booby-trapping has sometimes had no clear military rhyme or reason, Ukrainian officials say. In towns around Kyiv, explosive experts found devices in unpredictable places.

When Tetiana Kutsenko, 71, got back her home near Makariv that Russian troops had occupied, she found bloodstains and an apparent bullet hole on the bathroom floor and tripwires in her back yard.

The thin strands of copper wire had been rigged to explosive detonators.

"I'm afraid to go to the woods now," she said. "Now, I'm looking down every time I take a step." MDT/AP

this day in history

1963 SOVIETS LAUNCH FIRST WOMAN INTO SPACE



A former textile worker from the Soviet Union has become the first woman in space.

Lieutenant Valentina Tereshkova, 26, was the fifth Russian cosmonaut to go into the Earth's orbit when her spaceship Vostok VI was launched at 1230 Moscow time.

Moscow Television broadcast the first pictures of the elated blonde - code-named Seagull - ninety minutes later.

One of the main purposes of her mission is to attempt the first docking manoeuvre with another spaceship.

Colonel Valery Bykovsky was completing his 32nd orbit in the Vostok V - launched two days ago - when Lt Tereshkova hurtled into space from the secret Russian launch pad in Baikonur, central Asia.

At one time the two spacecrafts - which were in radio contact with each other as well as the ground - were only three miles apart, but they are reported to be drifting further apart.

Russian Prime Minister Nikita Khrushchev had a radio conversation with the female cosmonaut.

He congratulated her on her achievement and spoke of his "fatherly pride" for her.

By 2000 BST Ms Tereshkova had completed 23 circuits of the globe - one more than the longest-flying US spaceman, Gordon Cooper - at a distance of between 114 miles (183km) and 145 miles (232km) with an average 88.3 minutes for each orbit.

Thousands of jubilant women gathered in Red Square, Moscow, to celebrate the occasion.

A special issue of Soviet newspaper Pravda said Ms Tereshkova had dreamed of going into space as soon as she heard about the first man in space, Colonel Yuri Gagarin, in April 1961.

Ms Tereshkova - an amateur parachutist - joined the space programme last March.

Col Gagarin said she was popular with the other cosmonauts and their wives and described her "kind eyes and good-natured smile".

Russian scientists also hope to analyse the comparative effects of space travel on a man and a woman.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Lt Tereshkova and Col Bykovsky landed safely by parachute two days later in Kazakhstan, several hundred miles from where they had taken off.

Ms Tereshkova had completed 49 orbits of the Earth - 1,250,000 miles - in two days, 22 hours and fifty minutes.

Mr Bykovsky set a new record for time in space, completing 82 orbits - 2,060,000 miles - in four days, 23 hours and 54 minutes, 25 hours and 32 minutes longer than the previous record holder.

Ms Tereshkova was feted by the Soviet leadership and became active in the Communist Party. She never returned to space.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19
Family may not want to get involved but an entrepreneur will. If you address those in a position to grant you favors you should get the support you require.

TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20
Do not make rash decisions about your personal life. You must consider yourself for a change. You may be confused regarding your love life.

GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21
Don't be afraid to make additions to your house. You are best to stick to basics. Work on getting ahead by picking up added skills. You should be on the road.

CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Find out more, if you want to start your own business. You may become rundown if you take on too much. You must try to lay your cards on the table.

LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Your relationship appears to be stressed out and depleted. Don't make mountains out of molehills if you want to avoid conflict. Travel will be in your best interest.

VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Socializing or travel will lead to partnerships. You can make financial gains through investments and dealing with other people's money. Concentrate on work.

LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22
This will not be the day to start new business ventures or make drastic changes in your career. Opportunities to make advancements through good business sense are apparent.

SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Believe in yourself and so will those who count. Your partner could also use some time alone with you. Don't spend more than is necessary on travel or friends.

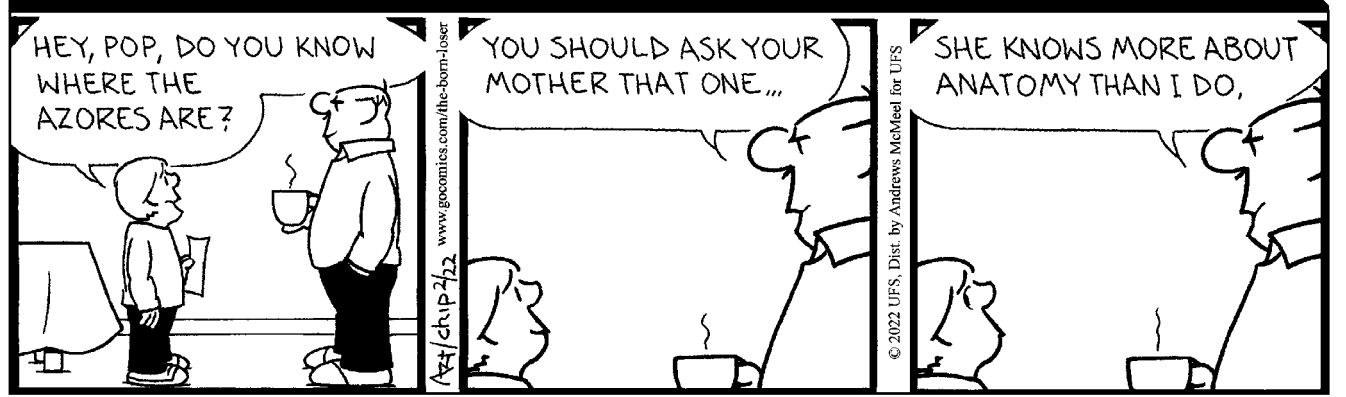
SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Get busy doing all those things at home that you have been putting off for so long. Dig deep to find out how costly a new venture will be before you sign on the dotted line.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19
You need to make your lover feel wanted, not like a piece of the furniture. Avoid any over indulgences. Take your time; do not make any decisions in haste.

AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18
You'll be able to discuss your ambitions with your mate. You may be fortunate while traveling. You will need to work diligently in order to accomplish even the smallest amount.

PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20
You will have an interest in foreigners and their cultures. Your changing philosophies may lead you into new circles and open doors that will give you a unique outlook on life.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	18	29	cloudy
Changchun	16	25	rain
Chengdu	20	29	cloudy
Chongqing	23	30	cloudy
Fuzhou	21	27	rain
Guangzhou	24	28	rain
Guiyang	17	24	overcast
Haikou	25	32	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	22	33	cloudy
Harbin	16	23	thunderstorms
Hefei	22	35	fine
Nanjing	22	35	cloudy
Shanghai	24	33	overcast
Taipei	22	27	rain
Wuhan	23	35	fine
Hong Hong	25	27	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	12	22	overcast
Frankfurt	14	29	overcast
Paris	18	31	overcast
London	16	28	overcast
New York	22	24	showers

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Bars legally; 7- Exist; 10- Low in pitch; 14- Strong cigar; 15- Blend; 16- Chills and fever; 17- Infuse; 18- Explosive sound; 19- Ready for plucking; 20- Limber; 23- Campaign tactic; 26- Noteworthy period; 27- Approaches; 28- Seemingly forever; 29- Nor. neighbor; 30- Bashful; 31- Cocktail; 33- Car club; 34- Young bear; 37- How was ___ know?; 38- Oui's opposite; 39- Building annex; 40- ___ glance; 41- Nine-digit ID; 42- Drag; 43- Necessary; 45- Krazy ___; 46- Bandleader Brown; 47- Able was ___; 48- Jordan's capital; 51- Anaconda; 52- Orgs.; 53- Responsibility; 56- Yes ___?; 57- Old California fort; 58- Blows one's top; 62- Phooey!; 63- Ring result; 64- Sell directly to the consumer; 65- Exclamation to express sorrow; 66- Novelist Rand; 67- Stylish;

DOWN 1- U.K. record label; 2- ___ Quentin; 3- NFL 6-pointers; 4- Survive longer; 5- Earlier; 6- Han ___ was a "Star Wars" character; 7- Current unit; 8- Spanish wine; 9- Public exhibition; 10- Fred Flintstone's best friend; 11- Heartburn; 12- Great; 13- Sows; 21- Work of one who stitches; 22- Breathe in; 23- Penultimate round; 24- Castle water pits; 25- Noted bankruptcy of 2001; 29- Muzzle; 30- Income source; 32- Upcountry; 33- Trojan War hero; 34- Sidewalk eateries; 35- Complete reversal; 36- Bundles; 44- Quarrel; 45- South African animal rug; 46- Capital of United Kingdom; 48- Greek marketplace; 49- Wall painting; 50- Devilfish; 51- Like a tree trunk or a yipping dog; 52- Broadcaster; 54- Mite; 55- Cattle group; 59- ___ de deux (ballet dance); 60- ___ the season...; 61- Foxy;



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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AD

TRADE & INVESTMENT

RUSSIA'S ECONOMIC FORUM TO BE FAR SMALLER BUT MOVES FORWARD

JIM HEINTZ, MOSCOW

ORGANIZERS of Russia's showpiece investment gathering are telling foreign participants to be sure to bring cash — not necessarily for making investments, but for spending money.

With Russia under wide sanctions after sending troops into Ukraine, most foreign bank cards don't work in the country. The advice for those at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, which starts today [Macau time] and runs through Saturday, is a quiet acknowledgment of the economic difficulties Russia faces as it tries to promote itself to international businesses.

The attendance list is another sign of Russia's uncertain economic prospects. As of early June, about 2,700 business representatives from 90 countries were expected to attend — far below the 13,500 participants from 140 countries reported last year.

Organizers did not provide a list of foreign businesses attending, but the program for the more than 100 panel discussions showed few speakers from outside Russia. Some were from China, and the trade minister of the United Arab Emirates is scheduled



The forum, often characterized as Russia's analogue of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, aims to portray the country as orderly and full of attractive opportunities for clever and adventurous investors. This year's program carries the theme to an extent that is overly optimistic for Russia's straitened circumstances.

Several sessions focus on developing Russia's tourist potential, despite the difficulty of foreigners even getting to the country amid flight bans by Western countries. Another session proclaims Russia as "The Land of Opportunity" but its introduction complains that "the policy of 'abolishing Russian culture' abroad, closing borders and interruption of banking services makes it difficult to choose Russia as a place to study or

work."

Less than four months after wide-ranging sanctions were imposed and hundreds of foreign companies pulled out of Russia, the full effect on the Russian economy is unclear.

Shuttered storefronts give Moscow's shopping malls a foreboding atmosphere, but officials claim Russian entrepreneurs can step in to revive the consumer economy — as shown over the weekend when a Russian tycoon opened the first of the restaurants he bought from McDonald's.

The ruble, after losing half its value in the early days of the Ukraine conflict, has strengthened to levels not seen in several years after Russia imposed strict financial measures like capital controls, a heartening image for Russians but possibly a long-term problem

making exports more expensive.

One of the most closely watched sessions at the forum is likely to be Thursday's panel on Russia's economic prospects featuring heavyweights including Finance Minister Anton Siluanov and Elvira Nabiullina, head of Russia's central bank.

Nabiullina so far has given ambiguous assessments, saying recently that "the effects of the sanctions are less acute than we feared ... but it is premature to say that the full effect of the sanctions has manifested itself."

One of the forum's most popular events won't be held: President Vladimir Putin's question-and-answer session with executives of major international news organizations. Instead, he will meet with the heads of Russian news media and "front-line reporters" from Russia's military operation in Ukraine, according to Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

Denis Pushilin, leader of the Ukrainian separatist Donetsk People's Republic, has announced he plans to attend the forum. A representative of the Taliban also is expected, although Russia formally designates the Taliban as a terrorist group. **MDT/AP**

F&B

No bartender required: Premixed Jack and Coke going on sale

COCA-COLA Co. said this week it's partnering with Brown-Forman Corp., the maker of Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey, to sell premixed cocktails. The canned Jack and Coke will be sold globally after a launch in Mexico late this year. A zero-sugar version will also be available.



"This relationship brings together two classic American icons to deliver consumers a taste experience they love in a way that is consistent, convenient, and portable," said Brown-Forman President and CEO Lawson Whiting.

The move comes amid strong global sales of ready-to-drink alcoholic blends, including hard seltzers like White Claw. Global consumption of ready-to-drink beverages jumped 26% in 2020 and 14% last year, according to IWSR Drinks Market Analysis, an alcohol market research firm. For comparison, global consumption of all alcohols was up 3%.

Louisville, Kentucky-based Brown-Forman has been making ready-to-drink cocktails since 1994, when it launched spiked lemonade, cola

and apple juice in Australia.

Atlanta-based Coca-Cola, by contrast, has been slower to add alcoholic drinks to its portfolio of 200 brands ever since selling off a California winery it owned in the early 1980s.

Coke launched Lemon-Dou, its first ready-to-drink alcoholic beverage, in 2018 in Japan. More recently, it has launched Topo Chico Hard Seltzer, Simply Spiked Lemonade and Fresca Mixed.

"We are strategically experimenting and learning in alcohol," said Khalil Younes, Coke's president of emerging categories. "We are excited about the opportunities, but we also know it will require effort and patience." **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Sands China bolsters disaster and pandemic prevention efforts



Supported by the Social Affairs Bureau, Sands China Ltd. is further bolstering its disaster and pandemic prevention programme in collaboration with Macau Red Cross.

The programme addresses the community's needs amid the fight against the pandemic, and aims to help enhance the city's precautionary measures before natural disasters like

typhoons and during emergency situations.

The company initiative comprises the packing and distribution of sanitisation and emergency response kits, and a social media campaign and free community seminar on emergency preparedness and epidemic prevention.

Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd., said: "In carrying out our corporate social responsibility, Sands China remains committed to helping Macao be prepared for known challenges like typhoons and the current pandemic, and for unpredictable difficulties like emergency situations."

MGM attains nine awards in vocational skills competition



MGM Golden Lion Team has attained nine distinguished honors, which are the highest in their categories, in the 4th Macao Integrated Tourism and Leisure Enterprises Vocational Skills Competition.

A total of 23 MGM team members from four different department participated in the competition.

The Golden Lion Team has received Champion Award in Chipping, and Special Gold Award in Game

Rules & Customer Service in the Gaming Vocational Skills Competition. In Hotel Integrated Service Vocational Skills Competition, the Team has attained Special Gold Award and became the winner of Best Service in Room Make Up & Design.

Co-organized by the Labour Affairs Bureau and the Macao Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM), Macao Integrated Tourism and Leisure Enterprises Vocational Skills Competition is divided into the three categories, which are gaming, hotel services, and gastronomy, integrating elements of vocational skills, occupational safety, and professional services.

FOOTBALL

With a record six teams, Asia resets goals for World Cup

JOHN DUERDEN, SEOUL

Australia's win over Peru in the intercontinental playoffs this week guaranteed an unprecedented six teams from the Asian confederation at the World Cup, giving the continent an opportunity to repeat the success of 2002 when it first staged soccer's marquee event.

South Korea reached the semifinals and Japan made it to the Round of 16 when they co-hosted the tournament in 2002, but Asia has under-performed in every edition since.

In the first World Cup in the Middle East, Europe, with 13, will be the only continent with more teams represented.

Qatar's hosting of the Nov. 21-Dec. 18 tournament has added to Asia's usual automatic four qualification spots filled by Saudi Arabia, Japan, Iran and South Korea.

"This is indeed Asia's time and there is no better way to under-



Australian players celebrate after winning in a penalty shoot-out against Peru

line this celebration than with the qualification of a record six teams at the FIFA World Cup for the first time in our history," Asian Football Confederation president Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa said. He's hoping 2022 will show a marked improvement

from Asia's performance in 2018.

With just over five months to go, signs are mixed.

Japan was shaping up as the best hope. A narrow 1-0 loss at home to Brazil on June 6 was sandwiched between 4-1 victories over Paraguay and Ghana. On

Tuesday, however, Hajime Moriyasu's men lost 3-0 at home to Tunisia.

Japan starts and ends Group E against Germany and Spain with the middle game against Costa Rica, which edged New Zealand yesterday for the last of the 32 spots in the draw for Qatar.

Saudi Arabia finished above Japan and Australia in qualifying but lost earlier this month to Colombia and Venezuela, two teams that did not qualify from South America. It leaves Saudi Arabia's opening Group C game against Argentina looking ominous.

Iran has to face England, the United States and Wales in Group B, but the team's only game since securing qualification was Algeria in Doha on Monday and ended in a 2-1 defeat. The team from Qatar, which has never appeared at the World Cup before, has not seen much international action at all.

The Australians have been up and down. After winning 11 straight qualifying games in the se-

cond round and start of the third round of Asian qualifying, the Socceroos registered just one victory in seven games to finish third in their group.

The Socceroos beat United Arab Emirates 2-1 in an Asian playoff last week. Six days later at the same stadium in Qatar on Monday, the Socceroos qualified for a fifth straight World Cup after edging Peru, the fifth-place team in South America, 5-4 on penalties.

The reward is a place in Group D and games against defending champion France, Tunisia and Denmark.

South Korea, appearing at a 10th successive World Cup, started its buildup with a heavy 5-1 loss to Brazil in Seoul on June 2. Results improved as the Taeguk Warriors beat Chile 2-0, drew 2-2 with Paraguay and then defeated Egypt 4-1.

The South Koreans, who beat Poland, Portugal, Italy and Spain on a remarkable run to the semifinals at home in 2002, will be playing in Group H against Uruguay, Portugal and Ghana in Qatar.

"The biggest positive to take is how the players reacted against Chile after the defeat against Brazil and how they fought back from 2-0 down against Paraguay," South Korea coach Paulo Bento said. "We still have work to do." MDT/AP

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**JAPAN'S GRAND VISION
 BASED ON US MIGHT**

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi took full advantage of the 19th Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore as a platform to boost Japan's diplomatic and security role in the region.

As the first Japanese prime minister in eight years to deliver a keynote speech at the Asia security conference, Kishida used his 40-minute speech to make thinly veiled criticisms of China, and made clear that Tokyo views hanging on the coattails of Washington's "Indo-Pacific strategy" as the means to counter China's influence in the region and advance its agenda of remilitarizing Japan.

Promising to fundamentally reinforce Japan's defense capabilities within the next five years and to secure a substantial increase of Japan's defense budget in order to do so, Kishida showed that his vision for peace is simply might makes right.

The vision he outlined, which he described as the vision of a rules-based free and open international order, is one in which the Japan-US alliance is the linchpin supported by other like-minded countries.

Based on Japan's long-held inferiority complex, which stems from the arrival of the US warships under the command of Commodore Matthew Perry that forced Japan to open up its ports to trade in 1853, it is a restatement of Japan's long-cherished dream of being accepted as a member of what it views as the global VIP club and its ambitions to play a bigger role politically, economically and even militarily in the region and beyond.

Viewing China as an obstacle to realizing those ambitions, in recent years, Japan's rightist-leaning politicians have eagerly jumped on board the bandwagon of the US' "Indo-Pacific strategy", echoing Washington's allegations of China's rules-breaking behavior as justification.

It was telling that saying Japan's vision of "a free and open Indo-Pacific" had broad support in the international community, Kishida listed the US, Australia, India, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the European Union. Of these, only the first three could be considered regional countries.

Tokyo's "Indo-Pacific" vision is its self-calculation that it can gain kudos by being Washington's lieutenant in Asia and is at odds with that of many countries in the region, which share the view aired by Indonesian Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto at the Singapore forum.

Acknowledging that Asian countries have disputes and differences, Subianto said that the region had found "an Asian way" to solve the challenges by striving to solve the differences in "an amicable and in a mutually beneficial way".

Saying that Indonesia values cooperation with all partners in the region, he urged other countries to "consider and respect" the national and rightful interests of China.

Both the US and Japan should heed such rational voices from the region as gunboats will not subject China to their will, and instead will only serve to destroy the consensus on the value of inclusive diversity that has made Asia the center of gravity of the ever-expanding global economy.

**JAPAN, AUSTRALIA TO EXPAND DEFENSE
 TIES FOR REGIONAL ORDER**

**THE
 BUZZ**

Japan and Australia's defense ministers yesterday vowed to step up their ties to support democratic values in the Indo-Pacific region and agreed to work more closely with Southeast Asia and the Pacific island nations where China is seeking to expand its influence.

Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles and his Japanese counterpart, Nobuo Kishi, said that region-wide cooperation is necessary to maintain and strengthen the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific, where there is growing fear that Russia's invasion of Ukraine may embolden China to increase its assertiveness.

The ministers' talks came just three days after they met in Singapore on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue security forum.

"It is clear that our region faces the most complex set of strategic circumstances we have had since the end of World War II and what the region does matters," Marles told a joint news conference in Tokyo.

Kishi said the two ministers shared their concerns about the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He said they remain strongly opposed to any unilateral change of status quo in the East and South China seas and reaffirmed their commitment to a mutual vision of "a free and open" international order of the seas.



President Xi Jinping (right) and Russian President Vladimir Putin during their meeting in Beijing last February

**XI TALKS WITH PUTIN
 OVER PHONE, INSISTS
 ON 'PROPER SETTLEMENT
 OF THE UKRAINE CRISIS'**

CHINESE President Xi Jinping yesterday held a phone conversation with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, where the two heads of state reiterated their views on the Ukraine issue, Xinhua reported.

Xi emphasized that China has always independently assessed the situation on the basis of the historical context and the merits of the issue, and actively promoted world peace and the stability of the global economic order.

According to the report, Xi said that all parties should push for "a proper settlement of the Ukraine crisis in a responsible manner," adding that China for this purpose will continue to play its due role.

During their conversation, Xi noted that since the beginning of this year, bilateral relations have maintained a sound development momentum in the face of global turbulence and transformations.

The economic and trade cooperation between the two countries has made steady progress, Xi said, adding that the Heihe-Blagoveshchensk cross-border highway bridge has opened to traffic, creating a new

channel connecting the two countries.

The Chinese side stands ready to work with the Russian side to push for steady and long-term development of practical bilateral cooperation, Xi said as quoted by Xinhua.

China is willing to work with Russia to continue supporting each other on their respective core interests concerning sovereignty and security, as well as on their major concerns, deepening their strategic coordination, and strengthening communication and coordination in such important international and regional organizations as the United Nations, the BRICS mechanism and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Xi said.

China is also willing to work with Russia to promote solidarity and cooperation among emerging market countries and developing nations, and push for the development of the international order and global governance towards a more just and reasonable direction, he added.

According to Xinhua, Putin said the Russian side sincerely congratulates China on its remarkable development achievements

under the strong leadership of Xi.

Since the start of the year, the practical cooperation between Russia and China has been developing steadily, he said, adding that Russia supports the Global Security Initiative proposed by the Chinese side, and opposes any force to interfere with China's internal affairs using so-called issues regarding Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Taiwan, among others, as an excuse.

He noted that Russia is ready to strengthen multilateral coordination with China so as to make constructive efforts in boosting multipolarization of the world, and establishing a more just and reasonable international order.

It was Xi's second phone call with Putin since Russia invaded Ukraine in late February, where he reiterated support for Russia's security concerns, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

The report of the conversation, which took place on Xi's 69th birthday, largely repeated China's prior comments on Russia including a call for Putin and other nations to work toward a solution to Ukraine's crisis. **MDT/AGENCIES**



Egypt, Israel and the European Union yesterday signed a deal to increase liquefied natural gas sales to EU countries, who aim to reduce their dependence on supplies from Russia as the war in Ukraine drags on. The deal, stamped in an upscale Cairo hotel, will see Israel send more gas via Egypt, which has facilities to liquify it for export by sea, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said.



NATO defense ministers attending a two-day meeting that started yesterday will discuss beefing up weapons supplies to Ukraine, and Sweden and Finland's applications to join the trans-Atlantic military alliance, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said. The meeting, less than two weeks before a summit of NATO leaders in Madrid, comes with Kyiv imploring the West to send more and heavier weapons to help fend off Russia's onslaught in eastern Ukraine.

Russia Ikea said yesterday that it is seeking new owners for its four factories in Russia and to liquidate its product inventory there because of the war in Ukraine. The world's biggest furniture brand already had suspended operations at its 17 Russian stores and paused exports and imports involving the country. It also paused operations in Belarus, which is a Russian ally.

Switzerland Twenty-five people have been treated for burns after walking on hot coal in northern Switzerland, according to police. Emergency services were alerted to injuries at a private event on the Au peninsula on Lake Zurich Tuesday evening. Zurich canton (state) police said in a statement. They said that 25 people were given medical treatment at the scene, and 13 of them were hospitalized with more severe injuries.