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AP PHOTO



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (pictured, left) reshuffled his Cabinet yesterday in an apparent bid to distance his administration from the conservative Unification Church over its ties to the assassinated leader Shinzo Abe and senior ruling party members. The reshuffle was the second in just 10 months since Kishida took office following the July election victory.

AP PHOTO



Sri Lankan government yesterday submitted to Parliament a constitutional amendment bill that would clip the powers of the president, a key demand of protesters calling for political reforms and solutions to the country's worst economic crisis. The bill, which would transfer some presidential powers into the hands of a constitutional council comprising lawmakers and respected non-political persons.

Russian authorities raided the home of a former state TV journalist who quit after making an on-air protest against Moscow's war in Ukraine, and launched a criminal case against her on the charge of spreading false information about the Russian armed forces. The case against Marina Ovsyannikova was launched under a law, enacted after the Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine, that penalizes statements against the military.

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BLUE'S EXODUS

8,700 non-resident workers left the city since January, pop stood at 677K end of June P5

BOBO WANG



MULAN
TYPHOON SWEEPS NEAR CITY, EDGES T8 MINIMUM



P3

CE: GOV'T IS WORKING HARD TO BRING VISITORS BACK, ASSIST ECONOMIC RECOVERY

RENATO MARQUES

The government is currently working hard to bring visitors back to Macau and thereby, assist recovery of the local economy, which has been severely damaged by the restrictions imposed on border entries as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. These sentiments were expressed by Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Sen, at the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday, in a session dedicated to Q&A with the lawmakers on the policy address of this year, as well as other pressing social issues.

In response to an inquiry from lawmaker Si Ka Lon, the CE said, "We were doing work on the economic recovery but a new outbreak [of Covid-19] came and we are back to square one. From August 3, we have reached the level of being considered a region of low risk for Covid-19 contagion and so the tourism, security, and economic services have resumed the hard work in this field, namely on how to attract more tourists to Macau. This is our first step [for economic recovery]," later adding, "We have not yet reached the goal of economic diversification so we will have to maintain our economy with what we have."

For this work of economic recovery with the resumption of tourism activities, the CE also said the government is being helped by the Macau flag airline company Air Macau and the travel agency Trip.com.

For the CE, the reason behind the low number of tourists in the last few years has to do with fear of being caught in the middle of an outbreak and unable to return home.

"Recently due to the [Covid-19] outbreaks, people fear to travel and visit Macau because they are afraid of not being able to return home and of being put into isolation or quarantine. So, at this stage everyone is afraid of visiting other cities," the CE said noting that the government is working on advertising Macau as a stable and safe city to visit.

Ho's response was to an inquiry from Song on the topic of the negotiations with first-tier cities on the Mainland for the issuing of the visas under the Individual Visit



Scheme. The CE also stated that all visitors are welcomed in Macau regardless from whichever city, province or area they are coming, noting that, for the government, there is no difference between first and second-tier cities.

For the CE, what is the most important is to ensure that Macau can keep a stable Covid-19 situation without major outbreaks similar to the island of Hainan which, according to the CE, is forcing some 80,000 tourists to remain in lockdown on the island.

STUDY ON ALLOWING FOREIGN VISITORS ENTRIES CONTINUES

Also addressing the topic of border restrictions that affect the entry of foreign visitors of all nationalities into Macau, the CE said that for the time being, Macau is only open to receiving visitors from Portugal, stating that a study is ongoing regarding the

possibility of expanding this program to allow the entry of visitors from other countries.

"We have not yet reached the goal of economic diversification so we will have to maintain our economy with what we have"

HO IAT SENG
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Nonetheless, Ho remarked that this "opening" would not be a complete one as these visitors would still have to pass through a period of quarantine in medical observation as per the policies of China.

"If other countries are willing to reach Macau, even with quarantine, we might consider this. In fact, we were doing this study already before June 18 but due to

the outbreak we had to suspend this task," he said.

Advances are also being made by Macao Government Tourism Office, according to the CE, to bring more visitors from the Western part of China.

OMICRON BA.5 IS NOT A SIMPLE COVID-19

Addressing how to prevent a new outbreak taking place, Ho said that this is not possible since the virus is unpredictable.

The CE also said that the Omicron variant BA.5 strain "is not just a simple Covid-19 [but a strain] that can pass from one generation to another," Ho said, adding that in all of China, Macau was the first place where this strain had been detected, but that it has now reached other places, including the island of Hainan.

Although admitting that the effects on people's health are not as serious for the vast majority, Ho

says, "We can't afford to do nothing about it and just ignore it."

GOV'T CALLS ALL UNEMPLOYED TO REGISTER AT DSAL

Questioned by several lawmakers on policies and measures to confront a growing unemployment rate and a potential further reduction of staff by casino concessionaires after the licenses tender is over, the CE called on all unemployed residents to register their situation at the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL).

According to the CE, the number of unemployed people is estimated to be around 15,000 but, only around 8,000 of these are cases known by DSAL.

"I ask all those unemployed to register their situation with DSAL so that the government can understand the real needs and provide help," the CE said, arguing that if local residents can take the job posts being currently occupied by non-resident workers, then the government will not have any problem in canceling all the existing blue cards.

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ANTHONY LAM



Cyclone Mulan sweeps near city, edges T8 minimum

ANTHONY LAM

TROPICAL Storm Mulan edged the threshold windspeed for Typhoon Signal No 8 and necessitated the signal to be issued for six hours.

At about 3 a.m. yesterday, the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) announced that

Signal No 8 would be issued at 7 a.m. It also warned about slight floods in low-lying parts of the city.

After five hours or so, the SMG announced that the signal would be replaced by Signal No 3, in consideration of the fact that the cyclone had made a landfall, and was weakening in terms of intensity, as well as departing from the

Macau vicinity.

With that said, Signal No 8 was issued for exactly six hours.

No major damage was caused by the cyclone, with two incidents reported, related to falling concrete pieces and unsecured objects. The government has not received any reports on injuries. Some hotels hoisted safety nets to protect glass from any fly-away

objects.

As many had to resume work after the lowering of Signal No 8, horn-honking from traffic jams could be heard in many residential areas across the city. Bus stops were also packed with prospective passengers trying to get to work.

Although the signal was lowered at 1 p.m., local banks decided

not to reopen in the afternoon.

The cyclone brought intermittent heavy rainfall to the city. As of 5 p.m. yesterday, the city recorded precipitation levels that ranged from 24.8 millimeters at the Ka-Ho gauge, to 50 millimeters at the Sewage Treatment Plant gauge.

In terms of wind, the SMG pointed out that it had recorded 10-minute average sustained windspeed reaching the threshold of Signal No 8, which is 63 km/h, at two of the 14 meteorological gauges across the city.

The two gauges installed on the Amizade Bridge recorded windspeeds up to 63 km/h and 64.1 km/h yesterday.

Elaborating on the cyclone, the SMG highlighted that the system had a relatively weak structure, which explains the intermittent sunshine yesterday. However, as of midday, the city recorded rain exceeding 30 millimeters.

Slight floods of 0.15-meter depth were recorded in the morning across the Inner Harbour District.

CE THANKS CIVIL PROTECTION TEAM'S DILIGENCE

During the duration of the Typhoon Signal No 8, the Civil Protection Operation Center was activated. As usual, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng visited the center and issued orders.

In addition, the head of the government expressed his appreciation on the team's hard work.

"Following last month's tropical cyclone and the past Covid-19 outbreak, here comes another cyclone," said Ho. "For your hard work, I express my appreciation."

Furthermore, Ho added that the civil protection structure is well-experienced in tropical cyclone situations and has contingencies for various conditions. He believed that the necessary work could be conducted with precision.

PLENARY

Lawmaker Pang wants more mainland students in local universities

RENATO MARQUES

UNIVERSITY students from the Mainland should come to Macau universities to study instead of going abroad to "non-friendly countries," lawmaker Pang Chuan said on Tuesday at the Legislative Assembly.

For the lawmaker and vice president of the Macau University of Science and Technology, Macau would be a better option for mainland Chinese students as many are cur-

rently studying in countries like Australia, the UK, and the USA.

"Currently over 100,000 students from mainland China are studying in Australia, over 200,000 in the UK, and some 300,000 in the United States. Instead of studying in countries that are not friendly, they can do it in Macau as we can welcome more mainland students to receive quality teaching and, at the same time, support Macau's social and economic development," Pang said

calling on the Chief Executive (CE) to negotiate with mainland authorities to allow more students to attend the local universities.

In his response, CE Ho Iat Seng noted that although he agrees, and has in the past three years encouraged the local universities to develop towards what he called the "Industrialization of the university sector," he said that the priority of the local universities, namely the public ones, should cater to local students, similar to access

to the job market.

"Not only jobs are reserved for locals, but vacancies in higher education institutions are also reserved for local students," he said, adding that the quota established for 2021 for the public universities may be increased from the maximum ceiling from 25% to 30% of non-local students, due to the expansion in the size of the institutions.

As for the private universities, they are already enjoying an increase from 50% to 60% of their quota



of non-local students from the 2018-2019 academic year.

Ho also agreed that students coming from the Mainland into Macau can also contribute to the deve-

lopment of tourism as well as other activity sectors, promising to keep close contact with central authorities on the possibility of expanding the market for tertiary education.

TOP COURT REFUSES REOLIAN'S APPLICATION FOR COMPENSATION

ANTHONY LAM

THE Court of Final Appeal has brought closure to a case in which a former bus service operator sued the government for compensation over the latter's decision.

The initial complainant is Reolian Public Transport Co. Due to its creditor position, Bank of China Ltd. was allowed to be the auxiliary entity in the legal procedure.

Complaints against the government have been overruled by the top court.

According to the court, in 2012, the then Chief Executive permitted a raise in the service fees per person paid to the then three bus operators. As the decision stirred up heated social debate, the head of the government instructed the Secretary for Transport and Public Works to review the procedures through which the service fees could be adjusted.

Later, the Secretary ordered the director of the Transport Bureau (DSAL) to demand bus operators to improve their services and im-



plement a quality assessment mechanism. Prior to this, no adjustments to service fees were allowed.

On April 10, 2013, adjustments to the fees were allowed on all bus operators but Reolian, in consideration of the latter being involved in unresolved complaints.

In response to the decision, the then bus operator filed a judicial

appeal against the government and its head, as well as the DSAT director. The complainants requested a difference in the service fees that it considered itself eligible for during the period from June 12, 2012 to May 31, 2013 – nearing MOP40 million, as well as the rights to receiving the service fees as deemed by a Chief Executive Dispatch.

Reolian was represented by its bankruptcy administrator.

As the judicial procedure rolled out, the Administrative Court first overruled a counter-complaint by the government. Meanwhile, it overruled the complaints filed against the government, accepting the Reolian's illegitimacy as a legitimate reason.

The complainants disagreed

with the court's view and thus filed for an appeal at the middle court, which overruled the point about the complainant's illegitimacy as justification. It returned the case to the Administrative Court for further procedures.

The government disagreed with the judgment and filed for an appeal at the top court. It was represented by the Public Prosecutions Office (MP).

During the procedure, the top court emphasized that the government, as a signatory in a business contract, has no right to terminate or alter on its own the contract in part or in full. It even pointed out that this right should not be confused with the legal provisions on single-side alteration to offerings.

The court also pointed out that the nature of the contract made between the government and bus operators was public service, in contrast to public tender, meaning that the government has the duty to oversee service quality.

At the same time, the court described the complainant as going back on their own words, citing the fact that before the freezing of the service fees, representatives from the then three bus operators met with the government and agreed on the decision.

Northern area district residents call gov't to treat sewage problem

STAFF REPORTER

RESIDENTS in the northern district are hopeful that the authorities will improve the water pollution of Areia Preta to avoid adverse effects to their health.

Recently residents living in the northern area reported to the government that the water was polluted off the coast of Areia Preta again, with a large amount of sewage and a strong odor.

The smell was temporary, but since the source of the pollution was unknown, residents were worried that the sewage may affect their health.

The vice president of Macao Federation of Trade Unions and committee of Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) Chio Lan Ieng and North District Community Services Advisory Council committee Leong Si Long visited the area and pointed out that the source of the



sewage is due to the drainage system.

"There is sewage discharge along the coast and a constant stench, so that whenever it rains, the situation is more serious and the stench is stronger," said Chio.

The same problem happened at the same location many years ago, when the authorities dealt with it and blocked the sources of the sewage and odor.

According to re-

search data published by the Environmental Protection Bureau, the main reason for the water problem along the Areia Preta is that the sewer system in the district is misconnected. There are also illegal pollution dumps from factories, resulting in the sewage flowing out through the rainwater discharge outlets in the district, which affects the water quality.

In 2015, the authorities carried out a sewa-

ge overflow pipe project on the seaside of Areia Preta to reduce the pressure on the water environment along the coast.

"Due to the impact of the reclamation project, the water flow in this area is almost non-existent, resulting in the formation of sludge deposits and the unpleasant odor," Chio added.

"Build a sewage treatment plant in different districts, so as to release the pressure of the existing sewage treatment plant in Areia Preta, and this would reduce the impact of the pollution for the residents," Leong suggested.

If indeed the sewage issue involves a problem with the gate of the sewage pump room, Chio and Leong hope the authorities can work towards preventing the sewage from being discharged when it rains.

COVID-19

INNER HARBOUR RESIDENTS TO UNDERGO NAT FOLLOWING POSITIVE CASE

STAFF REPORTER

RESIDENTS living or working in the Inner Harbour are required to undergo two nucleic acid tests (NAT) in three days, as they are now considered a key group. This comes after a positive case was detected yesterday morning.

According to the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre, the new Covid-19 positive case is a 73-year-old male Macau resident, and a crew member of a Hong Kong-Macao cargo ship.

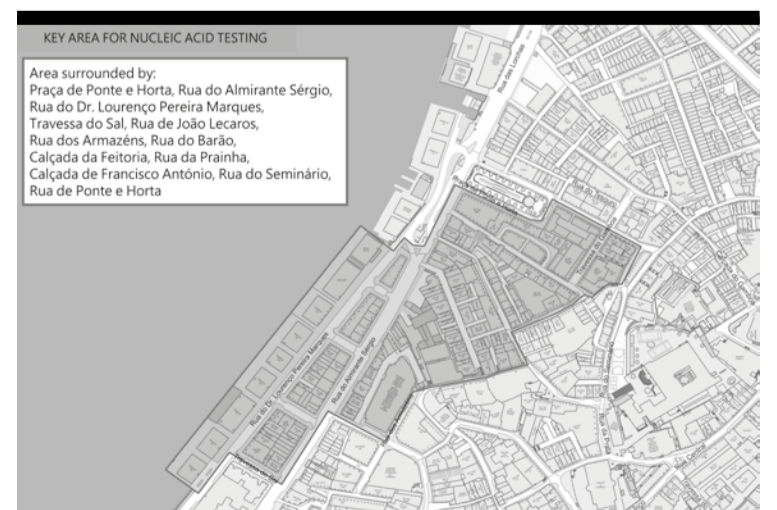
The case was confirmed by

a genetic test infected with the Omicron BA.2 variant.

The NAT results of the eight close contacts (including two housemates and six co-workers on the cargo ship) of the case, are all negative.

The key group also includes people who stayed at the Inner Harbour for more than half an hour from August 7.

The relevant people need to take their first NATs from 4 p.m. on August 10 to 11, and complete the second NAT by August 12. Those who do not complete the "three-day-two-test" will have their health code turn to yellow code on August 13.



GAMING

Wynn Resorts pledges to play part in attracting foreign bettors in reformed sector

LYNZY VALLES

CASINO operator Wynn Resorts has pledged to boost the concerted effort to diversify the city's market, according to an approved landmark casino bill that also targets attracting foreign players.

The biggest reform in over 20 years, the SAR government has updated the stipulations regarding the bidding process for casino licenses in Macau, which highlights corporate social responsibility and attracting non-Chinese bettors.

Speaking in an earnings call with analysts, Craig Billings, CEO of Wynn Resorts, recalled that it took Las Vegas some time before being able to attract international bettors, and that it was a concerted effort by both government and business operators.

According to US media reports, some 207,000 Chinese travelers visited the gambling hub in 2015, a figure that has nearly quadrupled since 2006.

"We understand and appreciate what Macau is trying to achieve, diversifying the market, both in terms of the geographic origin of visitors and their motivations to visit, is not a process that happens overnight," said Billings. "We were instrumental in leading that change here in Vegas, and we will, of course, continue to play our part in Macau's journey to do the same," the executive added.

To obtain a new license, casinos



are set to undergo processes of tough scrutiny with the new gaming law – which gives power to the Chief Executive to terminate a concession if it is considered a threat to national security or to the security of Macau.

Shedding light on its bid proposal that is underway, president of Wynn Macau, Ian Coughlan, said, "We have sought some minor clarifications and we're in a six-week process of crystallizing our responses, which will get submitted by all six operators on September 14."

"And then, we go into a period of negotiation. And I think, the government's intent is clearly before the end of the year to announce the successful operator," he said in the same earnings call.

The licenses of MGM Resorts, Las Vegas Sands, Wynn Resorts and three Chinese rivals that invested

billions of dollars in Macau expire in December, following an extension the operators applied for, costing them some MOP47 million.

Rules released in early July say any that want to operate over the next 10-year period face an added requirement to invest in "non-gaming projects."

Financial analysts expect the Americans to get licenses, but the government says bidding is open to anyone.

Meanwhile, Billings expressed confidence in the reshuffling of the operator's management team including Linda Chen's move into the role of president early next year, as Coughlan has decided to transition to a role as advisor to the company through 2023. "I have immense confidence in Linda, Frederic [Luvisutto] and Craig

[Fullalove] and know that they are the right team for the future. The authorities in Macau continue to advance the concession process according to the pre-established time line," said Billings.

"We are currently working through our response to the concession tender RFP (request for proposal). Longer term, we remain excited about the prospects for Macau with so much pent-up demand for travel and tourism in Asia," the executive added.

WYNN MACAU'S NET LOSS WIDENS

Wynn Macau's net loss has widened to USD270.6 million during the second quarter, compared to the previous quarter's USD188.5 million of losses.

With these losses, the gaming operator posted operating revenues of USD298.4 million.

"In Macau, while Covid-related travel restrictions continued to impact our results, we remain confident that the market will benefit from the return of visitation over time," said Billings.

Operating revenues from Wynn Palace were USD58.7 million for the second quarter of 2022, a decrease of USD211.7 million from USD270.4 million for the second quarter of 2021; while operating revenues from Wynn Macau were USD58.6 million for the second quarter of 2022, a decrease of USD125.4 million from USD184.0 million for the second quarter of 2021.

APPROVED MORTGAGE LOANS PLUNGE BY 20%

New residential mortgage loans (RMLs) approvals by Macau banks dropped by 19.8% month-to-month to MOP1.40 billion in June, while commercial real estate loans (CRELs) increased by 387.3% month-to-month to MOP12.91 billion. As for the outstanding balances, the outstanding value of RMLs fell by 0.3% month-to-month but rose by 0.1% from a year earlier to MOP158.6 billion, according to statistics provided by the Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM). The outstanding value of CRELs dropped by 1.1% month-to-month or 1.4% from a year earlier to MOP158.6 billion.

LATERAL SUPPORT WORKS BEGIN FOR LOT P HOUSING PROJECT

Macau Urban Renewal Limited (MUR) is pushing forward the temporary and home-swap housing project on Lot P in Areia Preta. The construction of the new pile foundation is "progressing well, pile foundation works have been completed in some areas, where excavation and lateral support (ELS) works have started," the firm said. The Lot P project began in the middle of last year, the existing pile caps and the existing pile foundation on the site have since then been removed and processed, and the project is progressing according to plan.

DEMOGRAPHICS

8,700 non-resident workers leave city since January

LYNZY VALLES

THE total population as at end-June 2022 decreased by 4,400 quarter-to-quarter to 677,300, mainly as a result of a drop in the number of non-resident workers living in Macau.

The number of blue-card holders have been decreasing for over nearly three years, due to the economic turn down caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, leading to lay-offs from companies.

Data from the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) shows that there were a to-

tal of 162,391 non-resident workers living in the city as of June.

However, when compared to the same period last year, the figure corresponds to a reduction of 9,870 people.

From January to June this year, 8,707 non-resident workers have made an exit from the SAR, a significant exodus recorded in just over six months.

Data from DSAL shows pre-pandemic, the number of migrant workers totaled 196,538 as at the end of 2019. However, that figure

plunged to 171,098 as at the end of 2021, recording a 12% decrease.

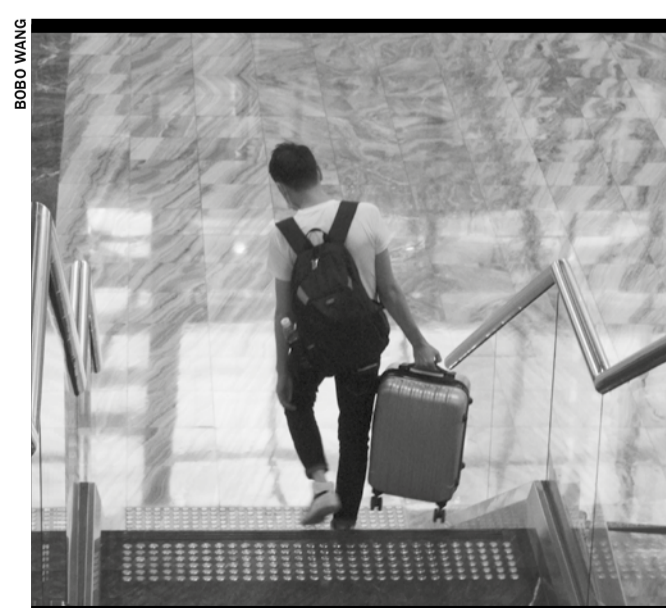
About 81% of the registered blue-card holders are under non-specialized categories. A large percentage are employed by the hotel and F&B sector (39,000), followed by the construction industry (29,000) and 24,000 domestic workers,

Workers from the mainland comprised about 111,000: some 26,000 are from the Philippines, followed by around 8,000 workers from Vietnam.

Also, as previously repor-

ted by the Times, a number of domestic workers have opted to go back home for good, with many deciding that not seeing their families for over two years is a big price to pay for a minimum wage.

Meanwhile, data from the Statistics and Census Service shows that in the second quarter of 2022, new arrivals from mainland China with one-way permits (493) and individuals newly granted right of abode (126) decreased by 127 and 89 respectively quarter-to-quarter.



UNEMPLOYMENT

YOUTH FACE BLEAK JOB MARKET AS COVID SLOWS EC

LIU Qian, job-hunting with a new master's degree, said two employers interviewed her and then said the positions had been eliminated. Others asked her to take lower pay.

She is one of 11 million new graduates desperate for work in a bleak job market as anti-virus controls force factories, restaurants and other employers to close. The survivors are cutting jobs and wages.

"Am I not worth it?" Liu asked. "From the moment I started looking for a job, I felt as if my future were smashed by a machine, and I don't know if I can piece it together."

Liu, 26, said some employers balked when she asked for a monthly salary of 8,000 yuan (\$1,200). The average graduate last year was paid the equivalent of 9,800 yuan (\$1,500) per month, according to Liepin, a job-hunting platform.

There were almost two graduates competing for every job opening in the three months ending in June, up from 1.4 the previous quarter, according to the China Institute for Employment Research and Zhaopin.com, another job-hunting website.

China's job drought echoes the struggles of young people worldwide to find work in depressed economies but is especially sensitive politically in a year when President Xi



Recent college graduate Liu Qian works on her laptop computer in the room she rents in an apartment in Beijing

Jinping is expected to try to extend his time in power.

Graduates often come from urban families who are the biggest winners from China's economic growth, an important source of political support. The ruling party needs them, especially those with technical training, to start their careers to propel industry development.

Luckily, a publishing house hired Liu in late July, two months after her graduation.

The official unemployment rate

in June for people aged 16 to 24 was almost 20%, compared with 5.5% for all ages. That is expected to rise once the latest graduates are taken into account.

Premier Li Keqiang, the top economic official and No. 2 in the ruling party, said in March the government hoped to generate 13 million new jobs this year but did not say how many might be lost to companies closing. Li said 16 million people were expected to be looking for work.

Li promised "pro-job policies"

including tax and fee cuts totaling 2.5 trillion yuan (\$400 billion) for employers.

One-third of companies surveyed between last March and this April said they plan to hire fewer fresh graduates, according to Liepin. It said 27%, most of them state-owned, would hire more and 18% had no plans to change course.

China's unusually severe approach towards COVID-19 has kept case numbers low, but the cost is soaring.

The economy shrank in the three months ending in June from with the previous quarter as factory activity and consumer spending plunged. The ruling party has stopped talking about being able to hit this year's official 5.5% growth target.

Repeated lockdowns that shut down factories and offices in Shanghai and other industrial centers for weeks at a time have disrupted the traditional labor market, said Zhang Chenggang of the Capital University of Economics and Business.

Companies are "slashing hiring needs" due to a "life-saving mindset," Zhang said.

"In the future, we will face the challenges of technology," he said. "Uncertainty in the labor market may even increase. So for university students, the most important thing is the ability to adapt."

Uncertainties loom over various industries. Internet companies are shedding jobs after the ruling party tightened control by launching data-security and anti-monopoly probes. Real estate is slumping after regulators cracked down on use of debt.

Tao Yinxue, a 2021 graduate, left an internship in an educational institute before graduating, worried over a government crackdown on the industry that has wiped out tens of thousands of jobs.

DIPLOMACY

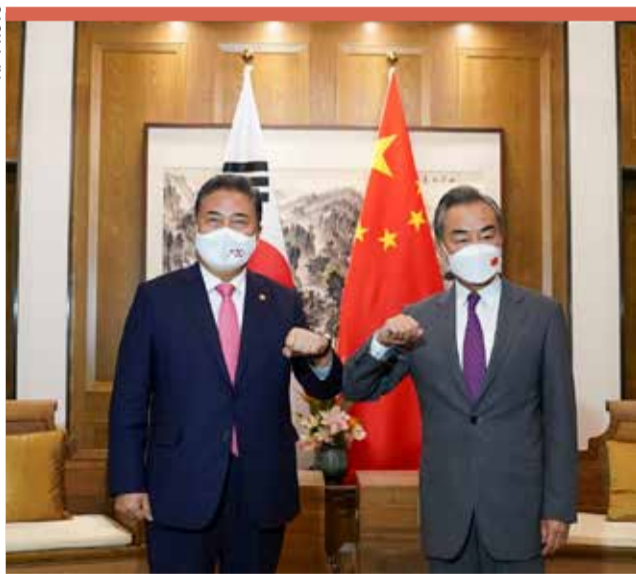
Top Chinese, South Korean diplomats pledge closer ties

THE top South Korean and Chinese diplomats pledged this week to develop closer relations and maintain stable industrial supply chains at a time of deepening rivalry between Beijing and Washington.

South Korea, a longtime U.S. ally, is struggling to strike a balance between Washington and the increasingly assertive foreign policy of Chinese President Xi Jinping's government. U.S.-Chinese conflict over Taiwan has added to complications for governments that want amicable ties with both sides.

Foreign Ministers Park Jin and Wang Yi, in separate statements from their meeting in the eastern Chinese city of Qingdao, called for the development of relations based on three decades of successful commercial ties.

Park's ministry said the countries agreed to increase



South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin, left, bumps elbows with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi prior to their meeting in Qingdao

high-level communication over supply chain issues, climate change cooperation and facilitating cultural exchanges. It said the countries agreed to pursue "two-plus-two" talks by vice ministerial-level officials of foreign affairs and defense within this year.

Park and Wang gave no indication they discussed tensions over last week's visit by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to self-ruled Taiwan, which the mainland's ruling Communist Party claims is Chinese territory.

China's state-run Xinhua

news agency said Wang and Park had an "in-depth exchange of views" over South Korea's deployment of the U.S. Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense system, or THAAD, and both expressed hope that the issue wouldn't become a "stumbling block" in relations.

Bilateral ties took a significant hit when South Korea installed its first THAAD battery in 2017 as Beijing retaliated by suspending Chinese group tours to South Korea and obliterating the China business of South Korean supermarket giant Lotte, which had provided land for the missile system. Yoon during his presidential campaign has called for additional deployment of THAAD to better protect capital Seoul from North Korean missile threats.

Park and Wang called for maintaining stable industry supply chains, a possible

reference to fears that Chinese technology policy and U.S. security controls might split the world into separate markets with incompatible standards and products, slowing innovation and raising costs.

Park expressed hope the two sides will increase cooperation based on "universal values and standards." He said they should overcome new challenges posed by a "great transition in international society" but gave no details.

Park appealed to Beijing to help persuade North Korea to return to talks on its nuclear weapons program, which he called an "unprecedented threat" to peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Park stressed that the U.N.-led international community should respond to major North Korean provocations with stern and unified measures and urged closer consul-

tation between Seoul and Beijing over the North's accelerating efforts to expand its arsenal, according to his ministry.

China and Russia recently vetoed U.S.-sponsored resolutions at the U.N. Security Council that would have increased sanctions on the North over some of its ballistic missile testing this year, underscoring division between the council's permanent members that deepened over Russia's war on Ukraine.

Wang's statement didn't mention the nuclear issue and gave no indication whether he said what Beijing might do. The South Korean Foreign Ministry said Wang told Park that China will continue to make possible efforts for peace in the Korean Peninsula.

Park also expressed hope that Xi, the Chinese leader, would visit South Korea. **MDT/AP**

STRAIT CRISIS

ECONOMY

In April, she quit a job at a financial company when she realized it was promoting virtual currencies, which is "actually not legal in our country."

"The students tend to seek stability," said Xing Zhenkai, a Liepin researcher.

Two out of five graduates surveyed want to work for state-owned enterprises that are viewed as safer and supported by the government, said Xing.

Tao is preparing to take the civil service exam for Anhui province, west of Shanghai, while looking for other jobs. She has sent more than 120 resumes and contacted nearly 2,000 possible employers online.

With less posts and more people looking for jobs, "companies can be more selective," Tao said. "They would prefer those with experience rather than a green hand like me."

Other graduates are putting off work, opting to stay in school or take exams for government jobs that might pay less than the private sector but offer more stability and social status, Zhang said.

Frustration over severe competition for government-backed jobs exploded into an online outcry when pop star Jackson Yee, also known as Yi Yangqianxi, appeared on the shortlist of candidate performers at the National Theater of China.

Chinese public on social media, including Yee's fans, questioned if he had abused his celebrity privilege in the recruitment process to get a position that's a bonus to him but would give other contenders a real break.

Yee denied getting special treatment but announced he would give up the position.

Anti-virus controls have shut down in-person job fairs and postponed civil service exams that lead to jobs for hundreds of thousands of people every year.

Fang Zhiyou, an accounting graduate in the central province of Hubei, said a delay for her civil service exam from March to July disrupted her job hunt. She is waiting to find out how she did.

"If not for the pandemic, my exam would not have been delayed and I would not have struggled for so long," said Fang. "I hate the pandemic forever."

Fang would rather work for the government but said she would accept a job doing accounting for a manufacturer.

Graduate numbers have surged following an initiative begun in 2019, ahead of the pandemic, to increase training for technical skills the government said were "urgently needed." More job seekers are expected to enter the labor market in the coming years.

"If I don't have a job this year, for sure it will become more difficult next year," Fang said. **MDT/AP**

Beijing reaffirms threat of military force to annex Taiwan

CHINA yesterday reaffirmed its threat to use military force to bring self-governing Taiwan under its control, amid threatening Chinese military exercises that have raised tensions between the sides to their highest level in years.

The statement issued by the Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office and its news department followed almost a week of missile firings and incursions into Taiwanese waters and airspace by Chinese warships and air force planes.

The actions have disrupted flights and shipping in a region crucial to global supply chains, prompting strong condemnation from the U.S., Japan and others.

An English-language version of the Chinese statement said Beijing would "work with the greatest sincerity and exert our utmost efforts to achieve peaceful reunification."

"But we will not renounce the use of force, and we reserve the option of taking all necessary measures. This is to guard against external interference and all separatist activities," the statement said.

"We will always be ready to respond with the use of force or other necessary means to interference by external forces or radical action by separatist elements. Our ultimate goal is to ensure the prospects of China's peaceful reunification and advance this process," it said.

China says the threatening moves were prompted by a visit to Taiwan last week by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, but Taiwan says such visits are routine and that China used that merely as a pretext to up its threats.

In an additional response to Pelosi's visit, China said it was cutting off dialogue on issues from maritime security to climate change with the U.S., Taiwan's chief military and political backer.

Taiwan's foreign minister warned Tuesday that the Chinese military drills reflect ambitions to control large swaths of the western Pacific, while Taipei conducted its own exercises to underscore its readiness to defend itself.

Beijing's strategy would include controlling the East and South China seas via the Taiwan Strait and imposing a blockade to prevent the U.S. and its allies from aiding Taiwan in the event of an attack, Joseph Wu told a news conference in Taipei.

Beijing has extended the ongoing exercises without announcing when they will end.

Through its maneuvers, China has pushed closer to Taiwan's borders and may be seeking to estab-



lish a new normal in which it could eventually control access to the island's ports and airspace.

The U.S., Taipei's main backer, has also shown itself to be willing to face down China's threats. Washington has no formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan in deference to Beijing, but is legally bound to ensure the island can defend itself and to treat all threats against it as matters of grave concern.

That leaves open the question of whether Washington would

dispatch forces if China attacked Taiwan. U.S. President Joe Biden has said repeatedly the U.S. is bound to do so — but staff members have quickly walked back those comments.

Beyond the geopolitical risks, an extended crisis in the Taiwan Strait — a significant thoroughfare for global trade — could have major implications for international supply chains at a time when the world is already facing disruptions and uncertainty in the wake of the

coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

In particular, Taiwan is a crucial provider of computer chips for the global economy, including China's high-tech sectors.

In response to the drills, Taiwan has put its forces on alert, but has so far refrained from taking active counter measures.

On Tuesday, its military held live-fire artillery drills in Pingtung County on its southeastern coast. **MDT/AP**

CHINESE ENVOY TELLS AUSTRALIA TO SHOW 'CAUTION' OVER TAIWAN

AUSTRALIA'S recent change of government was a chance to "reset" its troubled relationship with China, but the new administration must "handle the Taiwan question with caution," a Chinese envoy said yesterday.

Chinese Ambassador to Australia Xiao Qian said he was "surprised" that Australia had signed a statement with the United States and Japan that condemned China's firing of missiles into Japanese waters in response to U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan last week.

"We hope that the Australian side could take China-Australia relations with serious attitude. Take the 'One China' principle seriously, handle the Taiwan question with caution," Xiao told the National Press Club.

Xiao would not say when the live-fire military exercises near Taiwan might end. He said an announcement would be made at a "proper time."

China wanted a peaceful reunification with Taiwan, which Beijing considers a self-governing province, but Xiao did not rule out use of force.

"We can never rule out the option to use other means. So when necessary, when compelled, we are ready to use all necessary means," Xiao said. "As to

what does it mean by 'all necessary means?' You can use your imagination."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin this week said Australia had "wantonly criticized China's legitimate, justified and lawful measures to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Wang urged Australia to "stop interfering in China's internal affairs."

"In the past few years, China-Australia relations have experienced serious difficulties for reasons caused by the Australian side," Wang said.

Beijing has eased a ban on minister-to-minister contacts with Australia since Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's government was elected in May. The two countries' defense and foreign ministers have since had face-to-face meetings.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang wrote to congratulate Albanese on his election and Albanese had replied.

China would discuss with Australia whether conditions were right for a meeting between Albanese and Chinese President Xi Jinping in November when the leaders are in Indonesia for a Group of 20 summit. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Rising smoke can be seen from the beach at Saky after explosions were heard from the direction of a Russian military airbase near Novofedorivka, Crimea

Ukraine war must end with liberation of Crimea - Zelensky

SUSIE BLANN, KYIV

POWERFUL explosions rocked a Russian air base in Crimea and sent towering clouds of smoke over the landscape yesterday [Macau time] in what may mark an escalation of the war in Ukraine. At least one person was killed and several others were wounded, authorities said.

Russia's Defense Ministry denied the Saki base on the Black Sea had been shelled and said instead that munitions had blown up there. But Ukrainian social networks were abuzz with speculation that it was hit by Ukrainian-fired long-range missiles.

Videos posted on social networks showed sunbathers on nearby beaches fleeing as huge flames and pillars of smoke rose over the horizon from multiple points, accompanied by loud booms. Crimea Today News said on Telegram that witnesses reported fire on a runway and damage to nearby homes as a result of what it said were dozens of blasts.

Russia's state news agency Tass quoted an unidentified ministry source as saying the explosions' primary cause appeared to be a "violation of fire safety requirements." The ministry said no warplanes were damaged.

Ukraine's Defense Ministry said sarcastically on Facebook: "The Ministry of Defense of Ukraine cannot establish the cause of the fire, but once again recalls the rules of fire

safety and the prohibition of smoking in unspecified places."

A presidential adviser, Oleksiy Arestovych, said cryptically in his regular online interview that the blasts were caused either by a Ukrainian-made long-range weapon or were the work of partisans operating in Crimea.

During the war, Russia has reported numerous fires and explosions at munitions storage sites on its territory near the Ukrainian border, blaming some of them on Ukrainian strikes. Ukrainian authorities have mostly remained mum about the incidents.

If Ukrainian forces were, in fact, responsible for the blasts at the air base, it would be the first known major attack on a Russian military site on the Crimean Peninsula, which the Kremlin annexed in 2014. A smaller explosion last month at the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in the Crimean port of Sevastopol was blamed on Ukrainian saboteurs using a makeshift drone.

Russian warplanes have used the Saki base to strike areas in Ukraine's south on short notice.

One person was killed, said Crimea's regional leader, Sergei Aksyonov. Crimean health authorities said nine people were wounded, one of whom remained hospitalized. Others were treated for cuts from shards of glass and released.

Officials in Moscow have long warned Ukraine that

any attack on Crimea would trigger massive retaliation, including strikes on "decision-making centers" in Kyiv.

For his part, Ukraine's president vowed to retake Crimea from Russia.

"This Russian war against Ukraine and against all of free Europe began with Crimea and must end with Crimea — its liberation," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address. "Today it is impossible to say when this will happen. But we are constantly adding the necessary components to the formula for the liberation of Crimea."

Earlier, Ukrainian officials reported at least three Ukrainian civilians were killed and 23 wounded by Russian shelling in 24 hours, including an attack not far from the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

The Russians fired over 120 rockets at the town of Nikopol, across the Dnieper River from the plant, Dnipropetrovsk Gov. Valentyn Reznichenko said. Several apartment buildings and industrial sites were damaged, he said.

Ukraine and Russia have accused each other of shelling the power station, Europe's biggest nuclear plant, stoking international fears of a catastrophe.

The governor of the region where the plant is situated, Oleksandr Starukh, said that radiation levels were normal. But he warned that an accident could spread radiation whichever way the wind

blows, carrying it to Moscow and other Russian cities.

A Russian-installed official in the partially occupied Zaporizhzhia region said an air defense system at the plant would be reinforced in the aftermath of last week's shelling. Evgeny Balitsky, head of the Kremlin-backed administration, told Russian state TV that power lines and other damaged portions of the plant were restored.

The Ukrainians in recent weeks have been mounting counterattacks in Russian-occupied areas of southern Ukraine while trying to hold off the Kremlin's forces in the industrial Donbas region in the east.

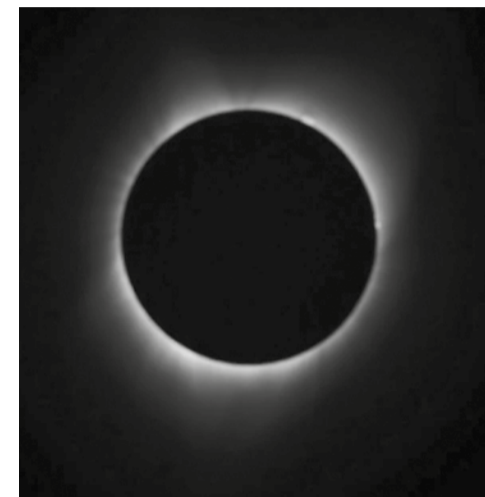
Also yesterday, a U.S. official said Iran has agreed to supply Russia with drones for use in the war in Ukraine. The official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive information, said "during the last several weeks, Russian officials conducted training in Iran as part of the agreement for UAV transfers from Iran to Russia."

The White House released satellite images in mid-July indicating that Russians had visited an Iranian airbase to see weapons-capable drones. But U.S. officials said later that month that they had seen no evidence yet of Iran supplying Russia with the drones.

Ukrainian officials this month said Iran has transferred drones to Russia and some have been used in combat. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1999 MILLIONS MARVEL AT TOTAL ECLIPSE



Up to 350 million people in Europe and Asia have witnessed the last total solar eclipse of the century.

The phenomenon began over the Atlantic, a few hundred miles east of Boston, North America.

The only part of mainland Britain to witness totality - the full blacking out of the sun by the moon - was Cornwall in south-west England.

Cloudy skies mean spectators there were unable to see the full effect, but the spectacle was still dramatic.

The temperature dropped and darkness fell in Falmouth at 1111 BST (1011 GMT).

TV astronomer Patrick Moore, watching in Falmouth, described it as a "strange, weird experience".

Hundreds of people who gathered on the Isles of Scilly were the first to witness the eclipse.

After Britain the eclipse was seen throughout Europe and Asia.

Across the Channel in northern France there were clear skies as there were in Munich, Germany.

But at the moment of totality, a torrential downpour spoiled the view.

The streets of Ramnicu Valcea, the south-central city in Romania - where totality could be seen the longest - were crammed with spectators.

In Egypt, Muslims shut themselves away on the orders of clerics but Jordan and Syria declared a national holiday.

Spectators in Pakistan and Bangladesh suffered the same fate as those in the UK, having their views obscured by clouds.

The eclipse will lead to greater scientific understanding, largely because its track across Europe and south Asia allowed astronomers many vantage points with clear skies.

During an eclipse scientist are able to measure the effect of the sun on the Earth's atmosphere and observe the violent magnetic storms in outer atmosphere of the sun - the corona.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The 1999 total eclipse was the first over mainland Britain since 1927 - the next will not be until 2090.

The first total solar eclipse of the 21st century took place on 21 June 2001.

It was visible from a much smaller area than the 1999 eclipse with the best views being in southern Africa.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You can make gains if you work in conjunction with others. You could do extremely well in competitive sports events. Spend time getting to know each other.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Be sure to take care of the needs of your immediate loved ones first. Involvement in groups of interest will bring you in touch with important individuals. New projects may lead you into a dead end.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Take a look at investment opportunities. Go out with friends or family. Take your time before making personal decisions. Your outgoing nature will surprise others today.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Get busy trying to make more money. You may be the recipient of false information. Plan a nice evening for two. Reevaluate your position and make decisions about your future goals.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Visit someone who hasn't been feeling well lately. The battle continues. Use your intellectual approach to get the best results. You can sort out any differences you have in an amiable manner.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

You will find good buys and you will lift your spirits. You can make money but not through harebrained schemes or gambling. Changes regarding your career direction will payoff handsomely.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Be careful not to take on other people's problems. You may find yourself in a financial bind. Your partner may blame you for everything. Extravagance will be a problem.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You may find yourself changing plans for some form of entertainment. Your emotional stability may influence the changes taking place in your personal life.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Try to keep ahead of the game. Find out more, if you want to start your own business. Take advantage of your attributes and lure the mate of your choice.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Travel for business or pleasure will be enlightening. Go out shopping today. Family members may want you at home, when your heart is telling you to spend time with someone you recently met.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You may find that someone you live with may be irritable; you're best to leave them alone. Your own small business on the side could ease your financial stress.

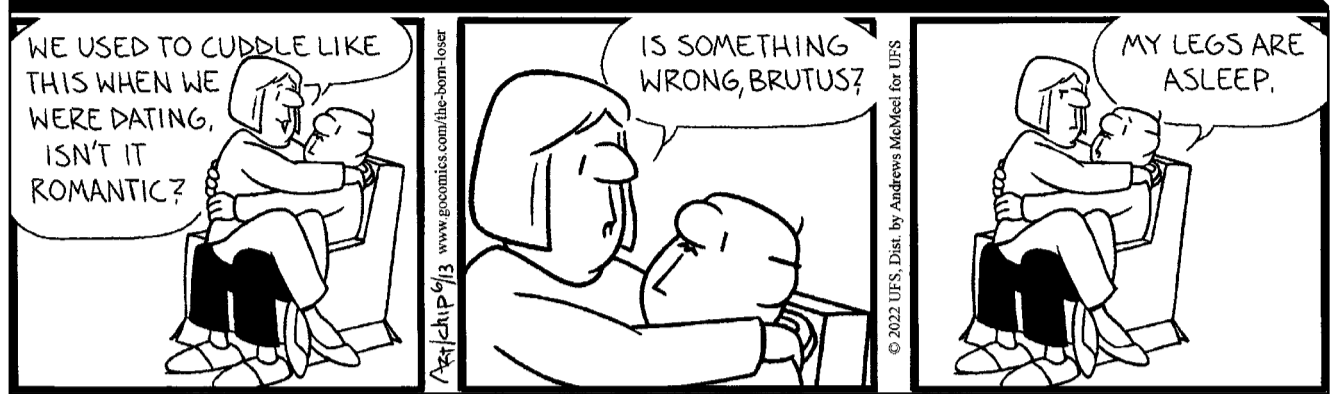


PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You will be drawn to individuals who can provide you with both intellectual conversation and physical passion. Deception may cause disputes you can do without.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

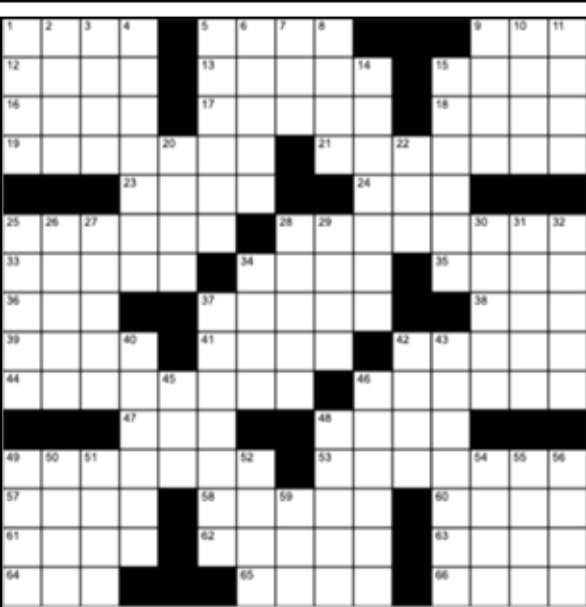
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	20	31	fine
Changchun	18	26	thunderstorms
Chengdu	25	37	overcast
Chongqing	33	41	fine
Fuzhou	27	38	fine
Guangzhou	25	31	rain
Guiyang	21	30	cloudy
Haikou	26	33	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	29	40	fine
Harbin	16	27	cloudy
Hefei	27	39	overcast
Nanjing	30	39	fine
Shanghai	29	40	overcast
Taipei	26	31	cloudy
Wuhan	29	39	fine
Hong Kong	26	27	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	13	26	fine
Frankfurt	17	32	overcast
Paris	19	33	fine
London	17	32	fine
New York	21	30	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Table d'___; 5- Assistant; 9- Ultimate; 12- Bear in the sky; 13- To make of brass; 15- London district; 16- Skin marking, often due to injury; 17- Weighted down; 18- Planetary revolution; 19- Protective helmet; 21- Citadel of Moscow; 23- Ceremony; 24- Long-sleeved linen vestment; 25- Ripe; 28- Not merely local; 33- Ignominy; 34- Can't stand; 35- Actress Olin; 36- Spanish title; 37- Off-the-wall; 38- Porcine pad; 39- Estimator's phrase; 41- Scottish Gaelic; 42- Chip maker; 44- Farewell, in Japan; 46- Potemkin setting; 47- Microwave; 48- Geographical expanse; 49- A deified mortal; 53- British rock group; 57- Abba of Israel; 58- Like Fran Drescher's voice; 60- Cork's place; 61- Boast; 62- Narrow openings; 63- Agitated state; 64- Male cat; 65- Of course!; 66- New Ager John;

DOWN 1- Quiet; 2- Killer whale; 3- Boris Godunov, for one; 4- Membrane in the ear canal; 5- Remove by melting; 6- Steamed; 7- Father; 8- O.T. book; 9- Christmas song; 10- Baht spender; 11- Word with French or English; 14- Livid; 15- Emblem; 20- Employ; 22- Biblical high priest; 25- Windows predecessor; 26- Now, in Nogales; 27- Aromatic herb; 28- Mikhail's wife; 29- French 101 verb; 30- Bird homes; 31- Pays to play; 32- 1972 Derek and the Dominos hit; 34- German Mister; 37- Instruments of offense; 40- Flowing gently; 42- Impression; 43- Most tidy; 45- Pester; 46- Threat finale; 48- Diminish; 49- It's owed; 50- Spanish river; 51- Yes, ___!; 52- Spanish surrealist; 54- ___ dancing is popular with cowboys; 55- Goddess and sister of Ares in Greek mythology; 56- Clockmaker Thomas; 59- Bro's sibling;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
- Fire department 28 572 222
- PJ (Open line) 993
- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- Customs 28 559 944
- S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IAM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
- Airport 59 888 88
- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
- Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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RENT

FOR RENT

- MANHATTAN | 4 BEDS HKD 18,800
- MANHATTAN | 3 BEDS HKD 17,500
- CHUN LEONG | 1 BEDS HKD 8,200
- BUCKINGHAM | 2 BEDS HKD 13,900
- HELLENE G. | 3 BEDS HKD 12,500
- NAM LONG | 1 BED HKD 8,500
- COLOANE V. | 1 BED HKD 9,300
- COLOANE V. | 2 BEDS HKD 10,500
- COLOANE V. | 2 BEDS HKD 10,000

FOR SALE

- JADE GARDEN | 4 BEDS HKD 15,380,000
- NOVA TAIPA | 4 BEDS HKD 12,880,000
- BAI YUEN GRD. | 3 BEDS HKD 12,800,000
- MANHATTAN | 3 BEDS HKD 12,980,000
- HELLENE G. | 4 BEDS HKD 9,588,000
- NAM LONG | 1 BED HKD 3,780,000
- HELLENE G. | 2 BEDS HKD 9,900,000
- TAIPA STUDIO | 1 BED HKD 3,980,000
- NOVA PARK | 2 BEDS HKD 10,800,000

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AVIATION

CATHAY PACIFIC LOSSES NARROW AS COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS EASE

HONG Kong airline Cathay Pacific Airways said yesterday that losses in the first half of the year narrowed as a relaxation in quarantine rules boosted passenger numbers.

But it cautioned that quarantine restrictions on its crew were limiting the airline's ability to increase flight capacity.

The company reported losses of about \$5 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$637 million) in the first six months, down from 7.57 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$964.5 million) in the same period last year.

Hong Kong relaxed strict quarantine rules from 14 to seven days in mandatory hotel quarantine earlier this year, and to just three days from Friday.

It still remains one of the few places in the world, together with mainland China, to require mandatory quarantine for inbound travelers. Such measures have limited recovery for Cathay and the city's tourism industry, as travelers opt for other destinations that have opened up completely.

Cathay's first-half revenue grew 17% to 18.6 billion Hong Kong dollars, driven largely by an increase in passengers following the easing of quarantine measures.

Passenger load factor — which measures how many passengers are taking up capacity — was about 59%, up from nearly 19% from the same period last year.

Cathay said that it aims to be operating at 65% of pre-COVID cargo capacity, and 25% of pre-COVID passenger capacity by December.

"In the short term, however, it



is quite clear that Hong Kong has fallen far behind other international aviation hubs, and that our regional competitors have recovered much faster from the disruptions caused by the global pandemic," Cathay Pacific Chairman Patrick Healy told a news conference Wednesday.

He also said that the city's quarantine requirements on crew

constrained its flight capacity.

"These ongoing constraints also restrict our ability to mount additional capacity despite growing demand," he said. "Once all COVID-related restrictions on air crew can be lifted, we will then progressively be able to increase both cargo and passenger capacity in the months that follow."

Cathay's shares in Hong Kong

were up 1% following its earnings release.

The city's airline is lagging behind competitors like Singapore Airlines, which last month reported a net profit of 370 million Singapore dollars (\$268.5 million). Singapore has lifted COVID-19 entry restrictions and does not require mandatory quarantine for tourists. **MDT/AP**

ECONOMY

GERMAN FINMIN PITCHES USD10B TAX CUT PLAN TO DAMPEN INFLATION

GERMANY'S finance minister said yesterday that the government plans to make tax cuts worth more than 10 billion euros (\$10.2 billion) to benefit broad sections of the population squeezed by high energy costs and inflation.

Finance Minister Christian Lindner said about 48 million people in Germany would profit from changes to the tax system that prevent them from being taxed more than their pay increases.

Child benefits will also be raised in the coming years, he said.

The plan was criticized by the Greens, who are part of a three-party governing coalition in Germany along with Lindner's pro-business Free Democrats and Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats.

Calculations show that people on higher incomes will see the biggest absolute gains from the proposed tax cuts, with those making more than 60,000 euros being about 470 euros better off, compared to the 115 euros that people earning 20,000 euros will save. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

MGM embraces city's heritage in mooncake box design



MGM embraces its hometown Macau this year in its mooncake gift box's design by collaborating with Lok Hei, a local artist who is also the Creator and Executive Producer of "Macao: Back to Common Roots Narrati-

ve Film."

Featuring several graphic illustrations of Macau's iconic historical sites depicted in the film, the design "spreads the warmest festive greetings with a sense of 'home'," according to a

statement issued by the gaming operator.

The design theme of MGM's mooncake gift box surrounds the strokes and brushes of Lok Hei featured in the film, which includes Penha Hill, A-Ma Temple, Ruins of St. Paul and other historical sites in the city.

White Lotus Seed Paste Mooncake with Double Yolk Gift Box, Mini Custard Mooncake Gift Box that includes six mini mooncakes with silky and rich egg custard centers, and Assorted Mini Mooncake Gift Box are available for purchase at Pastry Bar, Imperial Court, Square Eight at MGM Macau, as well as at Anytime, Hao Guo, Chún and Five Foot Road at MGM Cotai.

Churchill's Table presents London-themed mooncake gift boxes



The Londoner Macao's British-themed Churchill's Table is marking the key cultural event by launching two limited-edition mooncake gift boxes for the first time, featuring mooncakes packaged in designs inspired

by the famous London Eye Ferris wheel and classic red phone box.

Adopting a warm red and gold color scheme, Churchill's Table Assorted Mooncakes Box recreates the iconic London Eye

landmark.

The gift box contains six mini mooncakes in three flavors: the classic golden lotus seed paste with egg yolk, lava egg custard mooncake, and red bean paste with mandarin peel.

Guests can now purchase vouchers for the two limited-edition mooncake gift boxes at various locations across Sands Resorts Macao, including Churchill's Table Retail Shop, The Huaiyang Garden, Pin Yue Xuan, Jiang Nan by Jerome Leung and La Chine.

Mooncakes can be collected at Churchill's Table Retail Shop at The Londoner Macao from August 15 to September 10.

BASKETBALL

Bay Area Dragons complete roster with three players from Chinese league

THE Bay Area Dragons have added three stars from the Chinese Basketball Association to complete a roster that already contains former NBA players Andrew Nicholson and Myles Powell and the aptly named Big Liu for the inaugural season of the revamped East Asia Super League.

The Dragons on Wednesday confirmed Zhu Songwei, Ju Mingxin and Liu Xiaoyu have signed from the CBA, joining the new club which will be based in Manila for Season 1 of the EASL.

The eight-team league will launch in October and feature the winners and runners-up from the Japanese, South Korean and Philippines leagues as well as the Taiwanese champions and the Bay Area Dragons, who will also be playing in the Philippines league.

Zhu, a forward who played with Sichuan in the CBA and



Former NBA star Steve Nash media company is producing a documentary covering the inaugural season of the EASL

was the fourth overall pick in the 2020 CBA draft, said he's looking forward to the challenge with the Dragons and "being part of the new face of Chinese basketball."

Ju, a 10-year CBA veteran who

has spent the last three seasons with the Shanghai Sharks, said the lure was being part of "the first fully professional Chinese club to play internationally."

The Bay Area Dragons have recruited players from across

greater China.

"When we started building this team, we wanted to aim for a mixture of youth and experienced guys. Ju Mingxin is the perfect balance in this mix," Dragons head coach Brian Goorjian said. "His years of experience in the CBA will be a huge asset for our team, and he is also only 29 . . . He's stepping into his prime years as a player."

Goorjian, who coached Australia's national team to a bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics and has been a multiple coach of the year winner in Australia's National Basketball League, will also be reuniting with Liu Xiaoyu.

Liu won CBA championships with the Guangdong Southern Tigers and also played for the Shanghai Sharks and Beijing Ducks and represented China's national team.

"The Dragons are a one-of-a-kind team," he said. "I previously played under Coach Goor-

jian with Shanghai and I'm very excited to be back with him."

Liu Chuanxing, a 22-year-old, 2.25-meter (7-foot-5) center for China's national team, was among the first 10 players who signed for the Dragons after a brief stint in Australia, where he was widely known as Big Liu.

The Bay Area Dragons will play exhibitions later this month before joining the Philippine Basketball Association's Commissioner's Cup as a guest team.

Their first game in the EASL home-and-away season is scheduled for Oct. 12 against the PBA runners-up.

The pan-regional basketball league has started production on a reality series covering the inaugural season of the EASL.

South Korean film director John H. Lee will lead the project and work with executive producers Ezra Holland, director of CTRL Media owned by former NBA star Steve Nash. MDT/AP

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OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

SEMICONDUCTOR POWER
PLAY CHIP OFF THE OLD
BLOCK

United States President Joe Biden signed into law the CHIPS and Science Act, kick-starting the bid to reclaim US supremacy in semiconductor chips manufacturing.

Despite the US preaching of the free market worldwide, and emphasizing its fierce opposition to government interference in industrial policies, especially the use of government subsidies in other countries, the US has finally decided to make another exception of itself.

The name of the new legislation — Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors — highlights how the new legislation contravenes the free-market ethos the US constantly seeks to proselytize.

It sets a rare precedent in US industrial policy by earmarking \$52.7 billion to help expand semiconductor chip fabrication facilities in the US in the next five years. And this is only part of a \$280 billion law that also funds basic and applied research.

Self-contradictory and embarrassing as it is, what is annoying about the new US law to China and other countries and regions, though, is not just the US government's open embrace of what it has been crusading against, doing itself what it has attacked others for, but rather that the Act is not just an industrial policy, it's first and foremost an instrument to serve geopolitical purposes.

From the US Capitol to the White House, people have made no secret of the fact that the legislation is meant to suppress China's technological advancement. It prohibits companies that receive federal funding from expanding advanced chip manufacturing in China. To be specific, it prevents companies from expanding production of anything more advanced than 28-nanometer designs, a technology that is already more than a decade old. Private recipients are subject to a 10-year ban on expanding certain chip manufacturing in China. And it includes a special fund to help US telecommunications companies compete with the Chinese enterprise Huawei, and limit the scope of other telecommunications firms with China ties.

That geopolitical imperative ensured that the Act sailed relatively smoothly through both chambers of the US Congress, propelled as it was by the China-phobia that prevails in Washington's decision-making circles.

But what they aspire to is not only a costly undertaking, it will at the same time disrupt the industry and supply chains of the highly globalized industry and thus deal a heavy blow to the existing industry giants who are not shored in the US.

And while the US chip policy is defined primarily in terms of combating the "China threat" to US tech dominance, and China is indeed trying to accelerate the development of the sector, that bid has been triggered by such zero-sum moves by the US, which have prompted it to seek semiconductor self-sufficiency.

Meanwhile, because the central idea is cutting-edge technologies and capabilities in the field of semiconductor chips must be in the grip of the US, although companies on the Chinese mainland are the clear target of the new law, it will inflict conspicuous collateral damage on industrial giants in the Republic of Korea, Japan and China's Taiwan.

All in all, the law is good news for the shareholders of US chip companies but bad news for tech R&D.

ITALY'S FAR-RIGHT MELONI ON VOTE:
I'M NO DANGER TO DEMOCRACY

THE
BUZZ

Italy's far-right leader Giorgia Meloni, who is leading in opinion polls ahead of Sept. 25 parliamentary elections, insists she won't be a danger to democracy if she becomes premier, contending that the Italian political right has "unambiguously" condemned the legacy of fascism.

She also dismissed as "nonsense" concerns that if her Brothers of Italy party comes to power, making her Italy's first far-right premier, there would be a risk of an "anti-democratic drift" or "authoritarian turn," or that the country might exit the group of European nations using the euro currency.

Meloni made the comments in a message recorded in English, French and Spanish, and distributed yesterday by her campaign.

Meloni has railed against European Union bureaucracy for years as infringing on national sovereignty. But she blasted Wednesday as an "absurd narrative" that a center-right government — with her campaign allies League leader Matteo Salvini and former Premier Silvio Berlusconi — would jeopardize implementation of reforms needed to receive all of the 200 billion euros (dollars) earmarked for Italy in EU pandemic recovery funds.

STRANDED WHALE
EUTHANIZED AFTER REMOVAL
FROM FRENCH RIVER

A beluga whale that captured French hearts when it showed up in the Seine River had to be euthanized yesterday after it was successfully removed from the French waterway, authorities said.

A rescue team was preparing to transfer the whale to a saltwater pool in Normandy. The male marine mammal was first spotted in the Seine last week after having accidentally veered off its normal path to the Arctic.

During the rescue operation, the dangerously thin animal began to have breathing difficulties, and so experts decided the most humane thing to do was to euthanize the creature.

"During the journey, the veterinarians confirmed a worsening of its state, notably its respiratory activities, and at the same time noticed the animal was in pain, not breathing enough," Florence Ollivet Courtois, a French wild animal expert, said. "The suffering was obvious for the animal, so it was important to release its tension, and so we had to proceed to euthanize it."

Conservation group Sea Shepherd France said ve-



terinary exams after the beluga's removal from the river showed it has no digestive activity. Members of the organization had tried unsuccessfully since Friday to feed fish to the whale.

Courtois said the whale experienced distress after it was moved to a refrigerated truck and during the approximately 160-kilometer drive to the Normandy coast.

The whale was expected to spend several days recuperating in the saltwater pool in the northeastern French port town of Ouis-

treham before being towed out to sea.

The rescue team said ahead of time that the transfer carried a risk of the whale dying because of the stress involved in the process. However, the move was deemed necessary because the animal would not have been able to survive in much longer in the Seine's fresh water.

"The decision to euthanize the beluga was taken as it was too weakened to be put back into water," Guillaume Lericolais, the subprefect of France's Calvados region, said. MDT/AP



USA As President Joe Biden rattled off policy proposals in this year's State of the Union address, he hit an emotional note when talking about veterans who suffer from cancer after serving on military bases where toxic smoke billowed from burning trash. "One of those soldiers was my son Maj. Beau Biden," he said. The tragic death seven years ago makes a ceremony today, when Biden plans to sign legislation expanding federal health care for veterans.

USA Former President Donald Trump will be questioned under oath today [Macau time] in the New York attorney general's long-running civil investigation into his dealings as a real estate mogul, he confirmed in a post on his Truth Social account. Trump's testimony comes amid a flurry of legal activity surrounding him, taking place just days after FBI agents searched his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.



Germany Marine Gen. Michael Langley took over as the top U.S. commander for Africa yesterday [Macau time], heading U.S. military operations on a continent with some of the most active and dangerous insurgent groups and a relatively small Pentagon footprint. Langley, who made history on Saturday when he became the first African American in the Marine Corps to be promoted to four-star general, took over U.S. Africa Command in a ceremony at Kelley Barracks in Stuttgart, Germany.



Zimbabwe For the first time in his life, Gift Livingstone Sango, 65, (pictured), saw a painting by his father depicting Jesus as a Black man. The painting done by his late father in the 1940s is part of a historic exhibit, "The Stars are Bright," now at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe for the first time since the collection left the country over 70 years ago.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Yang Min/Xinhua



Autumn harvest. A villager spreading ears of corn to dry in Qianjiang District of southwest China's Chongqing. Sunday marks "Liqiu", or the beginning of autumn, the first day of autumn on the Chinese lunar calendar.