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LAWMAKER JOSÉ PEREIRA COUTINHO IS CONCERNED WITH THE TREATMENT OF RETURNING RESIDENTS UPON THEIR ARRIVAL AT THE LOCAL AIRPORT

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NATIONAL SECURITY LAW: SECRETARY WONG SIO CHAK WARNS THAT FOREIGN INFLUENCES MAY IMPACT OR ALTER YOUNG RESIDENTS' NATIONAL IDENTITY RECOGNITION

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Pakistan International aid was reaching Pakistan yesterday, as the military and volunteers desperately tried to evacuate many thousands stranded by widespread flooding driven by “monster monsoons” that have claimed more than 1,000 lives this summer. Cargo planes from Turkey and the United Arab Emirates began the international rush to assist the impoverished nation, landing on Sunday in Islamabad carrying tents, food and other daily necessities.

Chinese authorities said yesterday that 28 people have been charged and 15 officials including police are being investigated for corruption two months after a brutal attack on several women in the northern city of Tangshan that sparked outrage and safety concerns. The investigation has gone beyond the actual attack to encompass broader allegations of criminal activity and police corruption in the area. In June, a group of men attacked four women in a barbecue restaurant, after one of the men had his advances rebuffed.



South Korean battery maker LG and Japanese automaker Honda are investing \$4.4 billion in a joint venture in the United States to produce batteries for Honda electric vehicles in the North American market, the two companies said. The plant's site is still undecided, but construction will begin in early 2023, with mass production of advanced lithium-ion battery cells to start by the end of 2025, they said.

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THINK TWICE

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PUBLIC WORKS
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CRIME
FOUR INJURED IN BLOODY FIGHT IN AREIA PRETA EATERY

▲ P4

PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN IN QINGDAO KICKS OFF SEPT. 8

As the first of the series this year, the Macao Week in Shandong-Qingdao will dazzle at Gate 5 of Olympic Sailing Centre in the Southern District of Qingdao from September 8 to 12. Engaging several local governmental entities, enterprises and commerce associations, the Macao Week in Shandong-Qingdao will be the seventh event of its kind following the previous Macao Weeks held in Beijing, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Shanghai, Chengdu and Chongqing. Several booths will be upgraded at the roadshow. Under the theme of "Colorful Macao," the zone "Journey to Explore Macao" will highlight the monthly city highlights from September to December.

NAT REQUIRED FOR DINING EVENTS OF OVER 300 PAX

The Health Bureau has announced the latest guidelines on dining gatherings, relaxing the limit on the number of people holding such gatherings. It states that public sector or government-funded parties can hold meal gatherings of fewer than 50 people, and only when necessary can host meal gatherings of 50 to 299 people, but cannot host meal gatherings of 300 or more people. For private gatherings, up to 299 people can gather, and if the number is 300 or more, staff and participants must have appropriate negative nucleic acid test certificates.

66 SCHOOLS TO COMMENCE ACADEMIC YEAR SEPT. 1 AND 2

A total of 66 primary and secondary schools will start school on the first two days of September in the new academic year. Government departments, along with two bus companies, have met to discuss the arrangements for the deployment of traffic and bus services for the new school year in a bid to increase and schedule bus frequency in a timely manner. The Transport Bureau said that among the 34 instances of road construction works, three projects need to be postponed to be completed after the start of school, and another 15 projects will continue to be carried out following the start of the school year as planned.



FOURTH BRIDGE TO BE COMPLETED Q1 2024

STAFF REPORTER

THE fourth bridge linking Macau and Taipa is projected to be completed in the first quarter of 2024, the Public Works Bureau (DSOP) announced yesterday.

The bridge includes seven engineering nodes, six of which have been completed.

With a budget of MOP5.2 billion, construction work on the

bridge started in March 2020, with around 40% completed to date, and it is projected to be fully completed in the first quarter of 2024.

The starting point of the bridge is the east of the Macau New Urban Zone A. The bridge then spans the artificial island of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau bridge port, crosses the Outer Harbour, and goes in the direction of Inner Harbour and New Urban Zone area E1.

The total length of the bridge is around 3,085 meters, of which the length of the cross-sea part is around 2.9 kilometers.

The main design of the bridge is eight two-way lanes, the two middle-lines being for motorcycle use only, with the other six lanes serving as normal car lanes.

The New Urban Zone and the bridge, one cloverleaf intersection at sea, connect the east of Zone A

and the artificial island, respectively; in Zone A, a road is reserved to link area A and area B; on the other side of the bridge, the elevated bridge of Taipa Grande's tunnel and road network of Pac On are connected to the structure.

As for the Taipa Grande's tunnel, the DSOP said that they are making designs for the purpose of opening up the tunnel.

The bridge also has a wind barrier, to achieve driving conditions for vehicles to go through the bridge safely when the Typhoon Signal No.8 is in effect.

Meanwhile, the bridge deck includes reserved water supply pipes, gas pipes, high-voltage cables, communications and other public facilities to meet the development needs of new urban areas on both sides (Macau and Taipa) of the strait.

As for the construction work of the Avenida Wai Nong connection, the DSOP has informed that the project is located at New Urban Zone area E. The main construction content such as building a bridge to connect Avenida Wai Nong and Taipa Ferry Terminal, the road network around Avenida Wai Nong and sewer renovation, involves around 44,500 square meters of the relevant covering areas. In order to cooperate with the construction work of road network, the connection will be divided into two stages.

Conditions offered to airport arrivals concern Pereira Coutinho

RENATO MARQUES

LAWMAKER José Pereira Coutinho is concerned with the treatment of returning residents of Macau upon their arrival at the local airport.

In a spoken inquiry delivered at the Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday afternoon in the period before the agenda, the lawmaker criticized the measures in force from health authorities, claiming that "residents are being punished for having traveled abroad."

The lawmaker classifies the conditions affecting returnees as "inhuman," noting that the announcements made by the Health Bureau of measures promising more



speed in the processing of nucleic acid tests and the transfer of the passengers to medical observation

hotels for quarantine are still not acceptable, claiming that, in some case, wait times are now even longer than before.

Among the many problems listed, Pereira Coutinho notes the many complaints presented by residents concerning "the chronic difficulties in reserving rooms for quarantine" as well as conditions that are faced by the residents on return, especially the elderly, pregnant women, people carrying young children and babies and those with disabilities. The lawmaker protested against the lack of support and help given

to those in need by the local authorities as well the lack of hygiene in the restrooms and the total absence of social distancing during the long hours of waiting.

The lawmaker also want the health authorities to review the regulations that provide that the underage residents must be quarantined together with their parents or tutors, a fact that, he claimed, in at least one case, caused the infection of two residents, daughters of another resident who had tested positive on arrival.

According to Pereira Coutinho, only the father was initially infected but the family of three was forced to share the same quarantine room, a situation that led to the contagion of the minors, aged 17 and nine years old.

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E-cigarettes banned in Macau, parallel trade feared

RENATO MARQUES

THE Legislative Assembly (AL) has passed, on its final reading, the amendments to the smoking law banning the import, sales, and transport into Macau of all types of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes).

The new law, which is yet to be published, will enter into force 90 days after its publication in the government's official gazette.

For the time being, the consumption of these types of products, which include all kinds of e-cigarettes, with or without nicotine as well as heated tobacco products, will be not forbidden, which means that all those people possessing these types of products can continue to use them even after the new law enters into force.

Such a fact generated most of the debate around the bill, with several lawmakers calling on the government to enforce stricter measures aiming at a full ban on consumption too.

On this topic, both the president of the First Standing Committee of the AL, Ella Lei, as well as the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong, explained



and reaffirmed the matter, stating that the legislative intent of the government to leave consumption out of the ban precisely aims to "give enough time for the users who still have stock of the products to be able to consume them," both said.

One lawmaker against the non-banning of consumption was Leong Sun Iok, who also expressed concerns over the problem of parallel trading. For the lawmaker, "leaving the loop open" will at-

tract more people to the illegal importation of these products.

"The government says that [there] should be only a small quantity of stock of these products in Macau, so why not add a prohibition after this stock is over?" Leong said, adding, "The acquisition of these products online or via postal parcels has always been a common way to get the product, how can we guarantee that this does not continue to happen and that there are no illi-

cit ways in place [...] to continue to supply to Macau?"

Also agreeing with the ideas expressed by Leong was Ron Lam, who called on the government to establish a transition period in the law, from which time consumption would automatically be banned.

On the government side, Secretary Ao Ieong noted the need to have a balanced law in line with society as, she recalled, "tobacco products consumption is not

banned in Macau, just limited," she said, adding that the government's intention is that people stop the consumption of their own initiative and will not move from e-cigarettes to regular cigarettes just because the former is prohibited.

As for a transition period, the Secretary noted the government aims to review this law every three years, hinting that, in the next revision, this could be considered following the idea of progressive enforcement of added restrictions.

"Every three years we are reviewing the law and, at that time, we will consider the possibilities of a ban and also increasing the price of tobacco and taxes on the products, among others," she said, adding that, at this moment, to enforce a measure that would directly affect the purse of the residents would "aggravate [...] economic pressure."

Reaffirming that there are no legal means to import these products, Ao Ieong also said that the government will reinforce inspections to avoid parallel trade.

Lawmaker Lam had also called for the reinforcement of inspections of cars for smoking while driving vehicles as well as calling for a ban of "smoking while walking on the streets."

On the last matter, Ao Ieong said that there are no conditions to establish in Macau smoking zones as they exist in other places due to the fact that most streets are very narrow.

LABOR

FAOM lawmakers call for clarity on support measures and salary claim mechanism

RENATO MARQUES

SEVERAL lawmakers linked to the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) have delivered spoken inquiries to the government at the Legislative Assembly (AL) yesterday, calling on the government to give clarity on the support measures to be established as well as a mechanism to facilitate claims of unpaid salaries by workers.

During the period before the agenda of AL's plenary session, lawmaker Lei Chan U opened the session by calling on the government to clarify how and when the MOP10 billion of "general support measures" to the whole population will be carried out.

The lawmaker accused



Ella Lei (left) and Lei Chan U

the government of presenting such a relief measure but then excusing themselves of developing the topic and presenting details on how the measure will

be enforced and reach the people, as well as when it may happen.

For Lei, such behavior on part of the government allows the creation of ru-

mors and speculation in society.

"I hope that the government will create and improve the mechanisms for the interpretation of

policies as well as for the consideration and evaluation of public opinion, so, when disclosing policies and measures, it can provide more detailed information to society to satisfy the right to information of the population and allow its awareness and debate, avoiding the emergence of social confusion due to asymmetric information," Lei said, adding, "The Chief Executive stated that the universal [for all residents] benefit measures will only be available by November or December. I hope that, during this period, the government will continue to listen to society's opinions, improve the measures articulating them with the economic recovery plan, and safeguard the livelihood and the employment of the

population."

In a separate inquiry, also delivered during the period before the agenda, Ella Lei noted that there is still a long way to go until workers can see their rights protected and guaranteed, namely regarding their wages.

Citing data from the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL), Ella Lei noted that, last year, there were a total of 1,758 labor-related conflicts solved by the DSAL, in which some 66% pertained to outstanding wages and dismissal, involving more than 2000 people.

The lawmaker said that even though the labor sector has on several occasions called for the amendment and creation of new laws to protect workers' rights, this has not yet happened, "a fact that creates great difficulties [for] effectively [re-solving] outstanding wages. A problem that the government continues to ignore and so [it] has not taken any step towards the review and improvement of these the laws," she concluded.

SMEs

RETAILERS ANTICIPATE UPCOMING REVENUE DOWNTURN AS SALES PLUNGE TO MOP13B IN Q2

THE value of retail sales decreased by 36.6% year-on-year to MOP13.14 billion in the second quarter of 2022 amid the Covid-19 cases reported in mid-June.

69.4% of the retailers anticipated a year-on-year decrease in sales volume in the third quarter of 2022 with the downturn of economic recovery in July – when the city went into a partial lockdown to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

The tourism and gaming sector during the month fell to a new low, dropping some 99% and 95% year-on-year, respectively, due to the largest flare-up in Covid-19 cases the city has ever recorded from mid-June.

29.0% of the interviewed retailers expected sales volumes to stay stable and only 1.6% forecast an increase, according to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

Meanwhile, 71.8% of the retailers predicted that the retail prices would remain steady year-on-year

in the third quarter, 19.3% foresaw a decrease and 8.9% expected an increase.

As compared with the second quarter of 2022, about 74.5% of the retailers envisaged sluggish business in the third quarter, whereas retailers expecting stable performance (20.6%) and those anticipating a favourable outlook (4.9%) together accounted for 25.5% of the total.

Meanwhile, in the second quarter, among the major retail trade activities, sales values of Department Stores (-55.5%), Adults' Clothing (-52.4%) and Watches, Clocks & Jewellery (-49.5%) showed a substantial year-on-year decline. Sales values of Supermarkets, meanwhile, (+15.9%) recorded growth.

The value of retail sales in the second quarter of 2022 shrank by 29.2% as compared with the revised figure (MOP18.56 billion) in the first quarter. **LV**



FOUR INJURED IN ARMED FIGHT IN AREIA PRETA EATERY

AT about 1 p.m. yesterday, a fight took place in an eatery located in Areia Preta District, resulting in four injured people, the Public Security Police Force (PSP) confirmed in a reply to an enquiry by the Times.

The PSP added that the case, due to its criminal nature, had been referred to the Judiciary Police (PJ) for investigation.

According to the PJ last night, the cause of the case was related to family and financial conflict. Five people were in a negotiation that later developed into a fight. Somebody from the group took out a knife and stabbed a victim.

There are two victims, aged 33 and 68 years, both local and injured. The remaining three, aged between 34 and 67 years, were identified as suspects.

The matter was first unearthed by video clips taken and posted online by pedestrians. A clip showed that a person was being strangled by the arm by another person. Meanwhile, two



older men were standing outside the eatery.

A picture showed a man lying on a stretcher in an unclear level of consciousness. Blood can be seen over his body.

All were sent to the public Conde de São Januário Hospital for treatment.

The owner of the eatery told the Macao Daily News that the four started fighting on the streets, but the ma-

ter suddenly developed and spilled into the shop.

Among the four, a local man, aged 34 years, was severely injured and had lost consciousness. He sustained massive bleeding from the left of his chest, as well as stab wounds to his left forearm and left index finger.

The remaining three injured were in stable condition despite needing medical attention. **AL**

STATS

HOTEL OCCUPANCY IN JULY DROPS TO 38% OWING TO PARTIAL LOCKDOWN

THE average occupancy rate of guest rooms in July dropped by 25.6 percentage points year-on-year to 38.1% owing to the lingering impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, according to data provided by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC).

The number of guests of hotel establishments in July declined by 55.6% year-on-year to 309,000, with Mainland guests (238,000) and local guests (51,000) falling by 57.1% and 52.1%, respectively. Meanwhile, guests' average length of stay rose by 0.4 night year-on-year to 2.1 nights due to the fact that many cross-border workers were living in the city amid the pandemic

outbreak to avoid quarantine upon arrival in Zhuhai.

Visitor arrivals in July drastically dropped by 98.8% year-on-year to 9,759 due to the city's partial lockdown in response to its largest outbreak since mid-June. The figure also represented a plunge of 97.4% month-on-month as the outbreak, the origins of which are unknown, brought the entire tourism sector to a halt.

In the first seven months of 2022, the average occupancy rate of guest rooms of hotel establishments decreased by 14.6 percentage points year-on-year to 37.7%. The number of guests declined by 27.9% year-on-year

to 2,937,000, whereas guests' average length of stay increased by 0.2 night to 1.9 nights.

In July, visitors joining local tours totalled 200, representing a decline of 96.2% year-on-year; the number of Macau residents purchasing outbound services (booking transport, accommodation and sightseeing tours) through travel agencies tumbled by 95.9% to 900.

In the first seven months of 2022, the number of local tour visitors decreased by 44.6% year-on-year to 18,000, while that of Macau residents purchasing outbound services through travel agencies plunged by 82.9% to 20,000. **LV**



Wynn Stands Together with the Community to Fight the Pandemic

THANKS to the efforts of all segments of society, whose members have been dedicated to their positions and fully supported the Macao SAR Government's pandemic prevention policies, Macao is now gradually returning to normal. As part of the local community, Wynn has always taken its social responsibilities into its own hands and during this period has worked closely in partnership with local groups to ensure the smooth and safe execution of all anti-pandemic measures.

PROVIDING VOLUNTEER SUPPORT DURING CITYWIDE NAT

As soon as the government announced the implementation of the mass nucleic acid testing (NAT) program, a volunteer team comprising staff from different departments was quickly formed. During the 14 rounds of citywide NAT, over 1,000 visits totaling around 7,500 service hours were provided by the Wynn Employee (WE) Volunteer Team to support anti-pandemic efforts duties, demonstrating their sincere commitment to aid the people of Macao whenever and wherever needed.

The WE Volunteers assisted at NAT stations located at the Mong Ha Sports Centre, Tap Seac Multi-sports Pavilion, Olympic Complex Stadium, and Keang Peng School (Secondary Section) from June 20 to July 31 and performed duties including triage, registration, crowd management, answering enquiries, and helping people with disabilities.

Linda Chen, President and Executive Director of Wynn Resorts (Macao) S.A., visited the NAT station at Keang Peng School



Wynn worked closely with the local community throughout the 14 rounds of citywide NAT, together contributing to the city's triumph over the outbreak



Wynn volunteers joined the frontline to support anti-pandemic duties at NAT stations

and experience firsthand the range of duties WE Volunteers assisted with on the frontline, offering her wholehearted approval of the volunteers' contributions. Director of Kiang Wu Hospital Ung Pui Kun, Principal of Keang Peng School Lai Sai Kei, and the NAT station supervisors also praised the WE Volunteers' remarkable efforts, which served to greatly encourage them and bolster their resolve.

JOINING THE FRONTLINE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

Under the scorching sun and amid soaring temperatures, WE Volunteers worked side-by-side with frontline staff. Despite becoming soaked in sweat from wearing full protective clothing, they persisted in their cause to safeguard the city without complaint, a true demonstration of the volunteer team's motto: "showing care, giving love, hel-

ping people and brightening the community", as well as their dedication to helping the community overcome this difficult time.

The WE Volunteers also expressed gratitude for the support from their own families, which enabled them to fully commit themselves to their efforts. Although the mission was more challenging than anything they had faced before, the vo-

lunteers were glad to serve the people of Macao and were encouraged every time they heard a member of the public say a simple "thank you."

CARING FOR TEAM MEMBERS' WELLBEING

Wynn consolidated the latest preventive guidelines every day and disseminated the information via its internal portal, ensuring team members remained updated in real time. Wynn also organized convenient NAT services and promptly arranged new temporary venues for on-duty team members to enjoy their meal breaks in a safe and comfortable environment. Varied menus that included vegetarian, seafood and meat options were provided for each of the three daily meals to boost team members' health and boost their spirits through an experience of Wynn's Forbes Five-Star services.

Furthermore, team members cheered each other on and wrote gratitude cards to everyone for remaining committed to their position and contributing to pandemic prevention and control.

AIDING UNDERPRIVILEGED GROUPS WITH GROCERY DONATIONS

In addition to supporting the government's fight against the pandemic, Wynn provided concrete support to Caritas Macau and donated relief packs that included 26 types of groceries such as noodles, canned foods, beverages and biscuits. These benefited jobless individuals stuck in the city during the outbreak, low-income individuals in urgent need of daily necessities, and the underemployed.

Through this initiative, Wynn sought to reduce the pressure they were experiencing in daily life by fulfilling their urgent needs and helping to tide them over in this difficult time by expressing a sense of love and care.



Wynn Volunteers reached out to assist people with special needs



Wynn team members cheered each other on and expressed gratitude to those involved in the fight against the pandemic



Wynn supported Caritas Macau and donated relief packs to the underprivileged

SECURITY SECRETARY BLAMES FOREIGN INFLUENCE FOR DISTORTED NATIONAL SECURITY MINDSET

ANTHONY LAM

SECRETARY for Security Wong Sio Chak has warned that foreign influences may impact or alter a person's national identity recognition.

He stressed that such an impact or alteration may be "unconsciously" planted, under the influence of foreign cultures when a person lives in a foreign place, especially when the Western world is "apparently" regarding China as enemy.

Elaborating on his own comment, the senior official imagined that local students may lose national identity recognition if they stay long enough outside.

"Some people may find their own country better after living abroad, while others may lose recognition and start hatred of their own country under foreign influences," Wong said.

At the same time, he called for educators to contemplate how to extend national security education for local students staying overseas, while admitting that the task would be difficult.

The comment was made at a consultation session on the



amendment on the National Security Law. The public consultation process for the law review is underway.

To prepare for this legislative review, the government has re-

iterated that Macau is prone to intense national security threats. When asked for evidence on the claim, Wong said the evidence is considered to be a national secret in status, which he does not

have the right to disclose.

At the same session, Wong also highlighted a "three-step staircase for cultural safety," which includes education, the media and culture, with education being the most important factor.

He also expressed that there would be a need for national security and related topics in the curricula at foundational and tertiary education levels, as well as in organizational training courses for associations.

More contemplation is required, he added, as to whether the addition to curricula should be mandated by legal means.

Wong also suggested that Macau people showing support or sympathy towards the series of protests in Hong Kong in 2019 was a result of external influences. He blamed people replicating in Macau certain actions that happened in Hong Kong for generating panic. As such, he called for the education sector to stay alert.

On the other hand, the matter as to whether daily communications would be monitored after the passing of the amended law was also raised in a consultation

session. It was also asked how the government would supervise and control communication tapping.

In response, Wong said that the local mechanism relies on judicial approval and supervision. Data collected by tapping must receive judicial approval in order to become evidence; otherwise, it will only be considered intelligence.

"The judge of law has discretion on accepting or declining to take intelligence as evidence," Wong said.

He assured that the tapping mechanism proposed in this legislative review will be aligned with the incumbent wiretapping law, which heavily relies on judicial approval and supervision.

Similar to his manner of speech in previous sessions related to the law review, Wong told people to not worry about being prosecuted unless they are not wholeheartedly patriotic.

"If you're not into jeopardizing national security, you need not worry," Wong said. "You need not worry if you're not concealing anything and are fully for the interests of [China]."

AD

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CHINESE THINK TANK

Virus curbs must change to help economy

JOE MCDONALD,
BEIJING

A Chinese think tank issued a rare public disagreement yesterday with the ruling Communist Party's severe "zero COVID" policy, saying curbs that shut down cities and disrupt trade, travel and industry must change to prevent an "economic stall."

The Anbound Research Center gave no details of possible changes but said President Xi Jinping's government needs to focus on shoring up sinking growth. It noted the United States, Europe and Japan are recovering economically after easing anti-disease curbs.

"Preventing the risk of economic stall should be the priority task," the think tank said in a report titled, "It's Time for China to Adjust Its Virus Control and Prevention Policies."

Even such mild public disagreement with official policy is almost unknown in a politically sensitive year when Xi, China's most powerful leader since at least the 1980s, is expected to try to extend his time in office.

The report, dated Sunday, was posted on the Anbound Research Center's accounts on the popu-

lar WeChat messaging platform and the Sina Weibo microblog service but was deleted from both on Monday afternoon.

The anti-virus curbs are widely expected to stay in place at least until after a Communist Party meeting in October and November at which Xi is likely to break with tradition and award himself a third five-year term as leader.

Economists warn that China needs to boost growth that sank to 2.5% over a year earlier in the first half of 2022, less than half the official annual target of 5.5%, after Shanghai and other industrial centers shut down starting in late March to fight virus outbreaks.

"China's economy is at risk of stalling" due to the "impact of epidemic prevention and control policies," the think tank said.

The economy also is under pressure from a plunge in real estate activity after Beijing tightened controls on the industry's use of debt.

Economists and public health experts have warned since mid-2021 that "zero COVID," which aims to keep the virus out of China by isolating every case, is unsustainable. Officials respond that they have no alternative becau-

se letting the virus spread would overwhelm Chinese hospitals.

A Shanghai physician with 3 million followers on social media, Zhang Wenhong, was shut down by official criticism and targeted by a plagiarism investigation in 2021 after he suggested China's strategy could change and the world "needs to learn how to coexist with the virus."

Founded in 1993, Anbound says it has served the Communist Party's Central Financial and Economic Leading Group and provided research to government agencies and financial institutions.

Its report gave no indication whether it might represent the thinking of officials who are unhappy with the soaring economic and human cost of "zero COVID."

China's policy has kept deaths and infection numbers low but led to a wave of business failures.

News reports say local governments are cutting public services and wages for civil servants to pay for virus testing and anti-disease measures.

The economic impact of repeated shutdowns of companies and neighborhoods is more severe than last year, the think tank said. It said that "free-

zing effect" might be even worse than when the outbreak began in 2020 and the whole economy shut down temporarily.

Yesterday, Shenzhen, a center for technology and finance that borders Hong Kong, announced a three-day closure of some residential areas to contain an outbreak and shut down the world's biggest electronics market.

Also yesterday, the government of Shenyang, the most populous city in the northeast, postponed the start of in-person classes this week for primary and high school students.

China needs to "focus on economic recovery and gradually integrate with the world," the Anbound report said.

Travel curbs keep out most foreign visitors. The government has stopped replacing passports that expire and has called on the public to avoid going abroad.

Last week, the U.S. government canceled 26 flights by Chinese airlines to China from the United States in a dispute over Beijing's anti-virus controls. China earlier forced American carriers to cancel the same number of flights after some passengers tested positive for the virus. **MDT/AP**

ADVERTORIAL

GREAT TIMES

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PUTIN'S WAR

IAEA to visit Ukraine nuclear plant amid renewed shelling

PAUL BYRNE, KYIV

THE U.N. nuclear watchdog yesterday injected a ray of hope in the standoff over the Zaporizhzhia atomic power plant at the heart of fighting in Ukraine by announcing that its mission of top experts "is now on its way" to the facility even as renewed shelling in the area highlighted fears of a catastrophe.

And even if both Ukraine and Russia welcomed the mission, both sides continued to accuse each other of stoking the conflict by shelling the wider region around the plant. Neither side's claims can be independently verified.

International Atomic Energy Agency Director-General Rafael Grossi has for months sought access to the Zaporizhzhia plant, Europe's biggest, which has been occupied by Russian forces and run by Ukrainian workers since the early days of the 6-month-old war.

His announcement came as Ukraine accused Russia of new rocket and artillery strikes at or near the plant, intensifying fears that the fighting could cause a massive radiation leak. The facility, which has six reactors, was already temporarily knocked offline under the barrage of shelling last week.

"The day has come," Grossi tweeted, adding that the Vienna-based IAEA's "Support and Assistance Mission ... is now on its way." It is slated to arrive later this week. Grossi didn't provide a more precise timeline or give further details beyond posting a picture of himself with 13 other experts.

Ukraine has alleged that Russia is essentially holding the plant hostage, storing weapons there and launching attacks from around it, while Moscow accuses Ukraine of recklessly firing on the facility.

Yesterday, Ukraine reported shelling in Nikopol, the city across the Dnieper river from the nuclear power plant, and said one person was killed and five



This satellite image from Planet Labs PBC shows the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant occupied by Russian forces, in Ukraine

others were wounded. In Enerhodar, just a few kilometers from the plant, the city's Ukrainian mayor, Dmytro Orlov, blamed Russian shelling for injuries to at least 10 residents.

"Apparently, (the Russians) have rehearsed their scenario ahead of the arrival of the IAEA mission," Orlov said on Telegram.

The U.N. agency tweeted that the mission would assess physical damage to the facility, "determine functionality of safety & security systems" and evaluate staff conditions, among other things.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said that it is "without an exaggeration, this mission will be the hardest in the history of IAEA."

"We expect from the mission a clear statement of facts, of violation of all nuclear, of nuclear safety protocols. We know that Russia is putting not only Ukraine, but also the entire world at threat at the risk of nuclear accident," Kuleba said in Stockholm.

In Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov accused Ukraine of shelling in and around the plant.

"We believe that all countries must raise pressure on the Ukrainian side to force it to stop threatening the European continent by shelling the territory of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and surround-

ing areas," he said.

Peskov noted that Russia will ensure security of the IAEA mission "in view of the constant threats linked to the relentless shelling by the Ukrainian side."

Ukraine's atomic energy agency has painted an ominous picture of the threat by issuing a map forecasting where radiation could spread from the Zaporizhzhia plant, which Russian forces have controlled since soon after the war began.

Attacks were also reported over the weekend both in Russian-controlled territory adjacent to the plant along the left bank of the Dnieper River and along the Ukraine-controlled right bank, including the cities of Nikopol and Marhanets, each about 10 kilometers (six miles) from the facility.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said Sunday that Ukrainian forces had attacked the plant twice over the past day, and that shells fell near buildings storing reactor fuel and radioactive waste.

"One projectile fell in the area of the sixth power unit, and the other five in front of the sixth unit pumping station, which provides cooling for this reactor," Konashenkov said, adding that radiation levels were normal. It wasn't possible to independently verify the accusations.

The IAEA reported Sun-

day that radiation levels were normal; two of the Zaporizhzhia plant's six reactors were operating and that while no complete assessment had yet been made, recent fighting had damaged a water pipeline that has been repaired since.

But in a war now in its seventh month, yesterday's solitary piece of good news could hardly break the overall gloom that darkens everything from front-line villages to global food supplies and the world economy.

The highest number of casualties -- eight civilians killed and seven wounded -- over the past 24 hours was reported in the eastern Donetsk region. The Russian forces carried out strikes on the cities of Sloviansk and Kostyantynivka overnight and Ukrainian governor of the region, Pavlo Kyrylenko, urged the remaining residents to evacuate immediately.

Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, was hit with cluster munitions, regional governor Oleh Syniehubov reported.

Ukraine's presidential office also reported heavy fighting and multiple Ukrainian strikes in the southern Kherson region, most of which is occupied by the Russians. Ukrainian forces have recently been carrying out strikes on ammunition depots and Russian military positions there. MDT/AP

this day in history

1980 POLISH WORKERS WIN TRADE UNION RIGHTS



Striking Polish workers have won a sweeping victory in a two-month battle with their Communist rulers for the right to independent trade unions and the right to strike.

The agreement means Poland becomes the first Eastern Bloc country formally to recognise an effective and independent trade union movement.

The strike leader, Lech Walesa, and deputy prime minister Mieczyslaw Jagielski will sign the deal ending industrial action at a ceremony in Gdansk tomorrow.

Under the terms of the deal, workers are also promised pay rises, better food supplies and improved social services.

The deal was announced to the crowds of shipyard workers who had gathered outside the talks in Gdansk to polite applause.

Their leader Mr Walesa received a rousing reception. He was hoisted onto the shoulders of cheering workers with his arms raised in triumph.

Today's agreement comes after a summer of industrial unrest in Poland and at the end of the latest 18-day stoppage which has affected hundreds of businesses along the northern coast, as well as key industrial areas in the south of the country.

Latest estimates said some 150,000 workers had downed tools and there were signs Warsaw was about to be paralysed by a general strike.

It was the most serious crisis threatening the government since the food-price riots that toppled party leader Wladyslaw Gomulka in 1970.

But this time the striking workers went far beyond demanding price reductions - they also demanded political change.

As well as the freedom to strike and free trade unions, they also wanted the abolition of censorship and freedom for all political prisoners.

The wave of industrial unrest began eight weeks ago with a series of scattered strikes protesting a sudden rise in meat prices, which had been kept artificially low by government subsidies.

When the government refused to back down over the price of meat, 16,000 employees of the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk walked off the job and seized control of the yard.

They were joined by other factory workers and between them managed to virtually shut down the country's major Baltic seaport.

Attempts to split the strikers by agreeing some concessions including a pay rise for the shipyard workers and the reinstatement of a militant colleague, Anna Walentinowicz, failed.

The industrial unrest continued to grow. The strikers established the "Interfactory Strike Committee" and quickly adopted Lech Walesa as their leader.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The deal for independent trade unions and the right to strike was signed the following day by Lech Walesa and Mieczyslaw Jagielski.

In September the first independent trade union, Solidarity, was formed under the leadership of Lech Walesa.

But the Polish regime imposed martial law in December 1981 and the union's leadership, including Mr Walesa, was imprisoned.

He was released in 1982 and awarded the Nobel peace prize in 1983.

Economic conditions worsened in Poland and the government was eventually forced to negotiate with Solidarity.

The result was partially free elections and a non-communist coalition government including Solidarity.

Mr Walesa became the elected president of Poland in 1990, a post he held until he was defeated in elections in 1995.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Your personal secrets may be revealed if you let coworkers in on your family dilemmas. Make changes to your living quarters that will please the whole family.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Spend some time with people who can shed some light on your personal situation. Travel could turn out to be more exciting than you imagined.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Don't neglect these problems; deal with them once and for all, then move on to more pleasurable tasks. You may have difficulties while traveling or problems dealing with close friends or relatives.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 You can expect to experience delays or additional red tape if you deal with institutions. You can bet that you'll draw attention to yourself. Don't jump too quickly regarding investments.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Your uncanny insight will help you make the right choices. Help children with important projects. Educational pursuits can bring interesting, helpful people.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Read some books on self awareness. Pleasure trips will ease the tension between you and your mate. Upgrading at this point is not a bad plan.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Talk to your emotional partner about your intentions. Attend to things that you should have done yesterday. You can enjoy your involvement in organizations that make charitable contributions.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Get involved in physical activities that will stimulate you. Be honest with yourself before getting involved with someone who is likely to lead you on. Be careful not to push your luck.

SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 Abstain from getting involved with married individuals. Secret affairs may only cause complications in your life. Take care of any pressing medical problems.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Don't overindulge in anyway. You are best to look into investments that will grow in value over an extended period of time. Loans will be attainable and legal matters easily taken care of.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 You can make progress professionally. If you can't trust someone, question the connection. You will be able to pick up on future trends if you keep your eyes peeled for unique ideas.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Entertainment could be pleasing if it is of an energetic nature. You may jump from the frying pan into the fire if you make a move today. Any financial limitations will probably have to be dealt with on your own.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

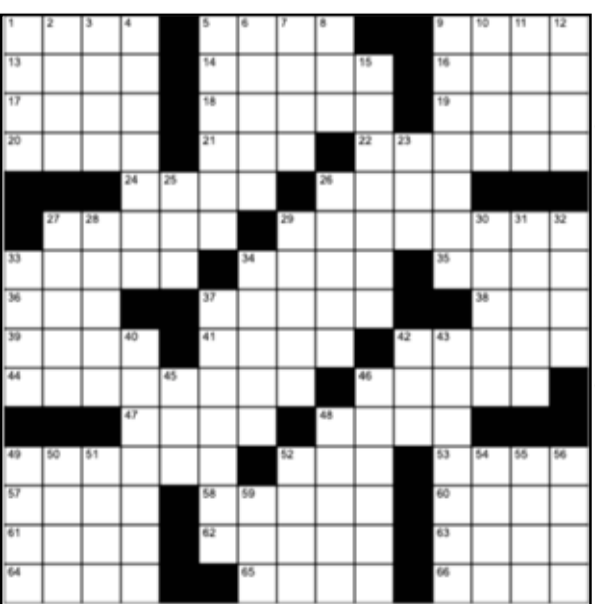
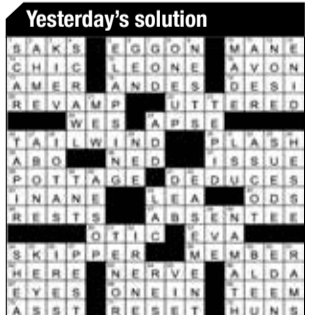
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	18	29	cloudy
Changchun	14	23	cloudy
Chengdu	20	24	showers
Chongqing	27	30	overcast
Fuzhou	27	37	cloudy
Guangzhou	26	34	thunderstorms
Guiyang	23	29	showers
Haikou	25	32	cloudy
Hangzhou	25	33	rain
Harbin	12	23	cloudy
Hefei	21	24	rain
Nanjing	24	28	showers
Shanghai	27	34	rain
Taipei	26	31	cloudy
Wuhan	20	26	overcast
Hong Kong	26	29	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	16	29	overcast
Frankfurt	17	29	overcast
Paris	16	27	cloudy
London	14	23	cloudy
New York	22	29	overcast

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Work like ___; 5- Burn the midnight oil, studying; 9- Patriot Nathan; 13- Run smoothly; 14- Corner; 16- Second hand, took advantage of; 17- Cube creator Rubik; 18- Chum; 19- All-male; 20- Chamber; 21- Never, in Nuremberg; 22- Sophisticated; 24- Fly catcher; 26- Lady of Sp.; 27- Glasses, briefly; 29- Make hostile; 33- Sip; 34- "Topaz" author; 35- Sugar substitute?; 36- Old verb ending; 37- Methuselah's father; 38- "ER" extras; 39- Narrow inlets; 41- Mont. neighbor; 42- Licorice-like flavor; 44- Johnny-come-lately; 46- Viscid; 47- Chemical used on trees; 48- Indonesian resort island; 49- Planks; 52- Cambodia's Lon ___; 53- Pack and send; 57- Soothe; 58- Frown; 60- Actress Skye; 61- Dies ___; 62- Rival of Helena; 63- Annika Sorenstam's org.; 64- Attention-getting sound; 65- Ethereal; 66- 365 days;

DOWN 1- Copycat; 2- Hard, in Havana; 3- Yes ___?; 4- Eyelet; 5- Intones; 6- Pardon; 7- French friend; 8- Russian fighter; 9- Married man; 10- Nick and Nora's pooch; 11- The Tower of Pisa does this; 12- Advantage; 15- Sustain with food; 23- Numbered rd.; 25- Frozen water; 26- Suave; 27- French composer Erik; 28- Balderdash!; 29- Bellowing; 30- Eagle's home; 31- Aromatic herb; 32- Limerick language; 33- Small gull; 34- Below; 37- All together; 40- Bright red color; 42- "You've got mail" co.; 43- Loudly; 45- Ancient; 46- Kitchen; 48- Arbor; 49- Radar screen element; 50- Sharer's pronoun; 51- Melodramatic cry; 52- Short letter; 54- Clinton's birthplace; 55- Actress Swenson; 56- Fleshy fruit; 59- Civil War units;



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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MANHATTAN 3 BEDS	HKD 12,980,000
HELLENE G. 4 BEDS	HKD 9,588,000
NAM LONG 1 BED	HKD 3,780,000
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TAIPA STUDIO 1 BED	HKD 3,980,000
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PHILANTHROPY

NEW UNITED WAY CEO WANTS LOCAL FOCUS AFTER TURBULENT YEARS

THALIA BEATY,
ALEXANDRIA (VA.)

ANGELA Williams' first year as United Way Worldwide's president and CEO has been marked with challenges: rising inflation, the war in Ukraine driving increased demand for charitable services, and the need to rebuild public trust in her organization.

As the first Black leader of United Way Worldwide, the former Air Force attorney and former head of Easterseals feels she is ready to lead the organization, once known for its blockbuster workplace giving fundraisers, into its next era.

"Being in situations over my lifetime where I have been the first or only woman or Black person and breaking what I call not just glass ceilings, but concrete ceilings and breaking through" has prepared her to deliver on this promise of more equitable services, Williams said.

She plans to bring this uniquely American institution's focus back to the communities, listening to individuals to shape solutions to their problems with the help of United Way's considerable resources. In 2020, the organization gave more than \$168 million in grants.

Williams has kept a low public profile in her first year, opting for a listening tour of United Way affiliates around the world and reexamining the organization's commitments and priorities.

"My vision for United Way Worldwide is to create equitable solutions in communities," Williams said, adding that people experiencing problems should have a voice in solving them.

AP PHOTO



United Way CEO Angela Williams

United Way's national 211 call line connecting people to services has seen an increase in requests in the last couple of months, with people needing help accessing food, paying their utility bills or rent, and finding housing, she said.

"I feel this real sense of urgency," Williams told The Associated Press in an interview. "Whether it's government, whether it's the nonprofit sector, whether it's philanthropy, foundations, individuals — we have to come together because there is so much pressing need."

Williams took over United Way Worldwide after three former employees accused it of tolerating a culture of sexism and misconduct and retaliating against them for speaking out.

An outside investigation commissioned by the organization found in February 2021 there was no evidence of "actionable harassment, discrimination, or re-

taliation." The three women who filed complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission told The Associated Press at the time that the law firm conducting the investigation had not contacted them. The organization's CEO Brian Gallagher resigned shortly after.

During the Second World War, local United Ways consolidated their hold over workplace giving, by allowing employees to donate a portion of their paycheck automatically to the organization. The United Way would then regrant the pooled funds to local human service nonprofits like the YMCA or Salvation Army.

The model initially served a number of constituencies. It consolidated charitable requests directed to corporations and created a new group of middle-class donors who felt positively about giving to organizations that supported others in the place they lived.

But starting in the 1970s, several forces challenged workplace giving and United Way's dominance as a distributor of large amounts of funding. The nature of work began to change, with the decline of large manufacturing employers and a transition to service work. That decline was compounded by growing social movements for civil rights, women's rights and the protection of the environment, for example, creating new communities that donors identified with and wanted to support.

"From that point on, the United Way has struggled to get as much money and to stay relevant as this kind of centralized, trusted entity between donors and the charitable recipients," said Emily Barman, a professor of sociology at Loyola University Chicago, who wrote a book about the organization.

To adapt, local United Ways, which pay membership dues to United Way Worldwide but

are incorporated as separate nonprofits, sought to reduce their overhead and many chose to fund a smaller number of key partners instead of giving smaller amounts to a larger number of nonprofits.

Laurie Paarlberg, who studies community foundations at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University, said affiliates also looked to governments and foundations for funding while others tried to establish endowments, solicit larger gifts from long-term donors and create giving circles around identities groups.

"The United Way has now been buffeted by a whole storm of connecting events that have influenced their role in their community, their revenue generation and then ultimately, their perceived legitimacy," Paarlberg said.

The maelstrom that Williams stepped into also includes a large outlay of cash initiated under her predecessor as part of a partnership with Salesforce to create a software product, Philanthropy Cloud. United Way Worldwide's tax filings show it paid more than \$40 million between 2017 and 2020 to the company and a related contractor.

The software, which United Way Worldwide had the exclusive right to resell, competes with other programs that allow employees to donate from their paycheck to the charity of their choice (not just United Way) and to find volunteer opportunities.

Asked whether she thought the investment was worth the cost, Williams said it was a good start but that technology was a means to an end and not a solution by itself.

"My team and I are in the process of reevaluating a number of investments as part of a larger effort to right the ship and ensure that United Way Worldwide is sustainable and impactful for years to come," Williams said. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Wynn participates in 'Experience Macao, Unlimited' roadshow



Wynn has participated in the first stop of the "Experience Macao, Unlimited" caravan roadshow organized by the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) at Aoyuan Plaza in Zhuhai from

August 28 to 29. The roadshow, which aims to boost tourism into Macau, covers all nine cities across the Greater Bay Area, starting with Zhuhai and continuing on to Zhongshan, Shen-

zhen, Guangzhou, Zhaoqing, Huizhou, Jiangmen, Foshan and Dongguan. In Zhuhai, Wynn interacted with residents and tourists through multiple online and offline promotional channels in an effort to bolster confidence in Macau tourism and attract more tourists from the Greater Bay Area.

Wynn said in a statement that it unveiled an array of enticing offers including benefits for those booking rooms at Wynn with travel agencies at the roadshow, who will receive a number of exclusive benefits including dining credits, suite upgrades, breakfast for two and more.

MUJI to open at The Venetian in December



Operated by MUJI Hong Kong, the first store in Macau will open at The Venetian Macao in December this year, tentatively. With a total floor

area of 21,000 square feet, the new store will be the largest retail store in the Hong Kong and Macau region. Based on MUJI's ideology

of "a simple, pleasant life", besides offering the most comprehensive merchandise assortment from the users' perspective, the new store will also feature a home living thematic display area.

As of May 2022, MUJI operates over 1,050 stores globally, including 490 stores in Japan and 565 stores outside Japan. MUJI started gaining a foothold in Hong Kong and Mainland China in 2001 and 2005, respectively.

The new store will feature a comprehensive merchandise assortment ranging from men/ladies/children's wear, household goods, food, to 'MUJI to GO' on-the-go essentials.

FOOTBALL

PSG drops points after draw with Monaco; Marseille wins

JEROME PUGMIRE, PARIS

PSG 1, MONACO 1

NEYMAR won and scored a penalty as Paris Saint-Germain rallied to draw 1-1 at home to Monaco and stay in first place in the French league yesterday [Macau time].

Neymar latched onto Lionel Messi's pass down the left and cut inside central defender Guillermo Maripan, who appeared to catch him with an outstretched leg.

The referee waved away PSG's penalty claims but then awarded the kick following a video review. Neymar used his usual staggered run-up to confuse goalkeeper Alexander Nuebel before casually guiding the ball inside the left post. It was Neymar's sixth goal in the league and eighth goal in five games overall.

PSG has 10 points and leads on goal difference from bitter rival Marseille and northern side Lens.



Monaco rode its luck at times but closed down PSG well early on, denying space to its famed attacking trio of Lionel Messi, Neymar and Kylian Mbappe, then

took the lead in the 20th. After recent signing Mohamed Camara tackled Messi near the halfway line, Russia midfielder Aleksandr Golovin sent a pass into

the path of German striker Kevin Volland, who held off central defender Presnel Kimpembe before striking a low shot into the bottom right corner.

PSG's strike force had netted 17 league goals in the three previous league games under new coach Christophe Galtier, but did not hit the target until Mbappe's tame shot in the 37th.

"They closed us down well," PSG captain Marquinhos said. "They stopped us bringing the ball out from the back."

PSG then struck the post twice in first-half injury time, with Messi's curler from 20 meters clipping the left upright and bouncing to Mbappe, who rushed his shot and hit the base of the right post.

Marquinhos conceded a clumsy corner right at the start of the second half and, minutes later, Monaco striker Wissam Ben Yedder went close with a lob for 12th-place Monaco after goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma rushed off his line.

Nuebel made a fine stop to deny Neymar in the 59th but was well beaten on his penalty.

Meanwhile, coach Igor Tudor's new-look Marseille is looking good as Alexis Sanchez scored twice and his team won 3-0 at southern rival Nice in an earlier game.

Nice recruited strongly, bringing in established Premier League players like goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel, midfielder Aaron Ramsey and forward Nicolas Pepe, but is still seeking a win and is in 18th place.

Marseille has made a strong start under Tudor, who is known as a disciplinarian and whose appointment was questioned by fans — especially when he left veteran playmaker Dimitri Payet out of the first three games.

But Tudor is winning the fans over with a high-octane brand of pressing soccer. He also said he'd give the 35-year-old Payet games. This time, he started him playing just behind Sanchez — a much-heralded signing from Italian champion Inter Milan.

The Chile forward grabbed his first goal in the 10th minute and, after former Arsenal fullback Nuno Tavares made it three goals in four games this season, Tavares combined with Payet to help set up Sanchez's second goal in the 42nd. **MDT/AP**

AD

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

WASHINGTON STILL WAGING COLD WAR IN SPACE

Regarding space exploration as an integral part of the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, China has always kept an open attitude to international cooperation and it is committed to using its aerospace technology and space research findings to serve the common good.

In contrast, the United States has never changed its zero-sum approach to space, and has never stopped militarizing it. The latest edition of the State of the Space Industrial Base report urges the United States to attract private investment to further its space endeavors, so that it can maintain its superiority in space technology.

Written by military and civilian officials from the US Space Force, the Defense Innovation Unit, the Department of the Air Force and the Air Force Research Laboratory — the contributors to the report speak volumes of the nature and purpose of the US' space cause — the report's main argument is that the US is in danger of lagging behind other countries in space and it raises an alarm about how fast China is developing its space missions.

Without providing any substantial evidence, Michael Brown, director of the Defense Innovation Unit, warned at an Atlantic Council forum convened to discuss the report on Wednesday that "China could surpass the US in space superiority if we don't increase our investment".

He urged the US to have a "national vision" for space investment and innovation to stay ahead of China. With this aim, the US set up the Space Force as an independent power paralleled with its air force, army and navy as early as 2019.

That the report says "China is making steady progress toward their goal of surpassing the US as the dominant space power by 2045" is a pure grasping at shadows. For China, the development of its aerospace industry is for peaceful purposes not an arms race.

That the arms race in space served as the last straw crippling the Soviet Union has reinforced the US' outdated thinking about space. The strategists in Washington behold dominance in space as a jewel in the crown of its hegemony, and they will never accept the fact that their concept is not only irresponsible but also dangerous.

Many solutions to common challenges confronting human beings, particularly global warming, might lie in the exploration of space. Countries should abandon the I-come-I-conquer-I-plant-a-flag model of space exploration and instead work together to advance human knowledge and space technologies, which may have practical benefits back on Earth.

It is a shame that the US is not only smearing China's space cause but also seeking to block its international cooperation by trying to coerce other countries not to collaborate with China and blacklisting Chinese entities. Space should not be a new front for the dog-eat-dog competition on Earth, or the new frontier for colonial expansionism.

Time will tell which country's space cause is on the right side of history.

Russia said yesterday it will launch sweeping military drills in the country's east that will involve forces from China — a show of increasingly close defense ties between Moscow and Beijing amid tensions with the West over the Kremlin's action in Ukraine.

The Russian Defense Ministry said that the Vostok 2022 (East 2022) exercise will be held Sept. 1-7 in various locations in Russia's Far East and the Sea of Japan and involve more than 50,000 troops, over 5,000 weapons units, including 140 aircraft and 60 warships.

The drills will be conducted at seven firing ranges in far eastern Russia and will engage troops from several ex-Soviet nations, China, India, Laos, Mongolia, Nicaragua and Syria.

The ministry said that units of Russian Airborne troops, long-range bombers and military cargo planes will take part in the drills along with other forces.

While first announcing the exercise last month, the Russian military emphasized that it's part of planned combat training that is continuing despite Moscow's military action in Ukraine. It hasn't disclosed the number of troops engaged in what the Kremlin calls the "special military operation" there.



AP PHOTO

People walk along the dry riverbed of the Jialing River, a tributary of the Yangtze, in Chongqing

CHINA'S DROUGHT-HIT AREAS GET RAIN, BRINGING FLOOD RISKS

MORE than 100,000 people have been moved to safer areas by yesterday as heavy rains brought flood risks to a region of southwest China that was devastated by a heatwave and drought for most of the summer.

Heavy rain was forecast for parts of Sichuan province and Chongqing city through at least today. Chongqing, a megacity built in a hilly area and that also oversees the surrounding mountains and countryside, issued a flash flood warning for both days.

The Sichuan emergency management administration said yesterday that 119,000 people have been evacuated. One village under the jurisdiction of Guangyuan city recorded 18.8 centimeters of rain, state broadcaster CCTV said. The city was one of two in Sichuan most affected by the drought.

A national level IV emergency response for floods, the lowest in a four-tier system, is in effect in Sichuan, Chongqing and neighboring Gansu and Shaanxi provinces to the north. The hard, sunbaked

soil left by the heatwave increases the risk of natural disasters when it rains, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

The shift in the weather brought some relief from the heat, and full power was restored to factories in Sichuan after two weeks of restrictions stemming from reduced hydropower output.

The rain should help farmers whose rice, spicy Sichuan peppers and other crops were withering during an extended drought that reduced community reservoirs to mostly cracked earth.

Temperatures topped 40 degrees Celsius in what meteorologists called the strongest heat wave in China since record-keeping began in 1961.

Power in Sichuan for commercial and industrial use "has been fully restored," CCTV said on its website. Household demand for air conditioning declined as temperatures moderated and the rainfall was starting to replenish hydroelectric reservoirs.

Hydropower generation in the province was

up 9.5% from its low point, the state broadcaster reported. Daily power use by households declined by 28% from a peak of 473 million to 340 million kilowatt hours, the report said, citing Zhao Hong, marketing director for State Grid's Sichuan subsidiary.

"The contradiction between power supply and demand in Sichuan will be basically resolved in the next three days," Zhao was quoted as saying.

The falling hydropower production prompted Sichuan utilities to step up the use of coal-fired power plants, temporarily setting back efforts to reduce carbon and other emissions.

The share of power in Sichuan that comes from coal has jumped to 25% from 10% with 67 generating stations running at full capacity, according to Caixin, a Chinese business news magazine.

Sichuan usually is seen as a clean power success story in China, getting 80% of its electricity from hydropower. **MDT/AGENCIES**



AP PHOTO

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called for a growing European Union to agree on a series of changes that would help it overcome internal divisions and stand up to external rivals such as Russia and China. In a wide-ranging speech at Charles University in Prague, Scholz said the EU must make itself "fit" for future enlargement from 27 to 30 — or even 36 — nations by taking more decisions by majority vote, rather than requiring unanimity on all issues.

Sweden An employee of an animal park in southwestern Sweden was gored to death by a large antelope, the attraction's owner said yesterday. Richard Berglund told reporters that he witnessed the incident involving an eland as he was helping the victim take the animals into stables after the park had closed. He didn't give details. "It was a friend... we're all grieving," Berglund said.



AP PHOTO

Iraq An influential Shiite cleric whose followers have been staging a sit-in outside Iraq's parliament announced his resignation from politics and the closure of his party offices yesterday. It is unclear how Muqtada al-Sadr's (pictured) latest announcement will affect an already unprecedented and destabilizing political crisis that has plagued Iraq since federal elections last year. His supporters are holding an ongoing sit-in outside the parliament building for over four weeks.

Space Fuel leaks and a possible crack discovered during final liftoff preparations threatened to postpone the launch of NASA's mighty new moon rocket yesterday on its shakedown flight with three test dummies aboard. As precious minutes ticked away, NASA repeatedly stopped and started the fueling of the Space Launch System rocket with nearly 1 million gallons of super-cold hydrogen and oxygen because of a leak. The fueling already was running nearly an hour late because of thunderstorms off Florida's Kennedy Space Center.