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“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

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**DUE TO THE HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, THE GOVERNMENT IS PROMOTING MEASURES TO HELP LOCAL RESIDENTS FIND JOBS**

**HO'S SON APPOINTMENT TO FDCT CRITICIZED, FUND DEFENDS DECISION**

**BEIJING REJECTS UN AGENCY REPORT ON UYGHUR RIGHTS IN XINJIANG**



**China-Russia** Russia yesterday launched weeklong war games with China and other nations in a show of growing defense cooperation between Moscow and Beijing as they both face tensions with the U.S. The maneuvers are also intended to demonstrate that Moscow has sufficient military might for massive drills even as its troops are engaged in military action in Ukraine. The exercise will be held until Sept. 7 at seven firing ranges in Russia's Far East and the Sea of Japan and involve more than 50,000 troops.



**Pakistani** health officials yesterday reported an outbreak of waterborne diseases in areas hit by recent record-breaking flooding, as authorities stepped up efforts to ensure the provision of clean drinking water to hundreds of thousands of people who lost their homes in the disaster. Diarrhea, skin diseases and eye infections are spreading at relief camps set up by the government across the country. Over 90,000 diarrhea cases were reported in the past 24 hours.



**Sri Lanka** The IMF announced yesterday it has reached a preliminary agreement to provide Sri Lanka with \$2.9 billion over four years to help it recover from its worst economic crisis. The arrangement will help restore financial and macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability as well as enable the country's growth potential, an IMF team visiting Sri Lanka said in a statement.

More on backpage

# AUGUST TO FORGET

**Gaming slumps continue in August as concessionaires prepare for bid**



**COVID-19**  
**BORDER REOPENING TO 41 COUNTRIES FOR ECONOMIC REASONS: GOV'T**

**TASTE OF EDESIA**



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# HO IAT SENG'S FDCT MEMBER DESIGNATION CRITICIZED, FUND DEFENDS DECISION

ANTHONY LAM

**L**AWMAKER José Pereira Coutinho has slammed Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng's act of appointing his son to the Science and Technology Development Fund (FDCT), but the fund defended the legality of the decision in a statement.

The appointment of Jason Ho Kin Tong, the son of the head of the government, was announced in an Executive Dispatch dated August 26. The designation took effect yesterday according to the same dispatch.

On the matter, the lawmaker made a post on his social media page to mock the decision, adding that Ho Hoi Kei, the daughter of Ho Iat Seng, was assigned to the Youth Affairs Committee on May 27, 2022 in the capacity of member of the Industrial Association of Macau. The daughter's appointment was effective June 10.

Coutinho dramatized the situation by imagining future appointments of the Ho grandchildren, nephews, cousins, etc. to different government bodies.

In addition to the alleged nepotism pointed out by Coutinho, neither appointment came with résumés that could act as support-



ing evidence of suitability or justification for the appointments.

Information available online shows that Jason Ho graduated from the University of Southern California in 2016 with a Master's Degree in engineering management. He is said to have founded Forte Inc. of Hangzhou in 2018.

The website of the Southern University of Science and Technology, meanwhile, published an interview with Jason Ho dated January 22 this year. Ho is referred to as the president of the Macau Technology General Association.

Coincidentally, the chief execu-

tive has suddenly referenced the emerging idea of the metaverse in his latest parliamentary speech. He said Macau should prepare for "Gaming Tourism 2.0", so as to realize the metaverse experience in combination with gaming, tourism and consumption.

Global businesses such as Nike, Adidas, Louis Vuitton and Gucci have reportedly been preparing or have commenced filing for patents in relation to selling merchandise on the metaverse. This merchandise does not come in a physical form and can only be circulated virtually.

## FDCT DEFENDS APPOINTMENT'S LEGALITY

The FDCT has issued a statement defending the decision to appoint Jason Ho Kin Tong to the FDCT, citing Executive Regulation No 14/2004, which is the Charter of the FDCT. Article 7 of the Charter provides that the Board of Trustees have seven to 11 members and is presided over by the Secretary for Economy and Finance.

"The other members must be residents of the Macao Special Administrative Region who are publicly recognized for their out-

standing achievements, prestige and ability in the field of technology and innovation," the fund added in the statement.

Trustees are to be appointed by the Chief Executive under the recommendation of the Secretary for Economy and Finance. The job is not paid, the fund emphasized.

The fund also emphasized that the appointment is completely legal, given the fact that there is no legal requirement to avoid conflicts of interest.

Furthermore, the fund highlighted that it had "sufficiently considered" the competence of the appointees before making recommendations to the president of the Board of Trustees.

Citing its own purpose, the FDCT notes in the statement that it is set to issue funds to projects that "will help to enhance the scientific research strength, innovation capability and competitiveness" of Macau. Meanwhile, the Board of Trustees is expected to monitor whether the fund is moving towards its purpose. The fund used this as justification to include more experienced and young entrepreneurs in its Board of Trustees.

## LABOR

# DSAL to hold career expo amid high unemployment rate

STAFF REPORTER

**T**HE Macau government is promoting measures to help local residents find employment due to the high unemployment rate.

Between January to March, the unemployment rate of local residents was 4.5%; in May-July 2022, it increased to 5.4%, which was the highest rate on record since 2008, according to the latest data disclosed by the government.

For this reason, the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) said it is continuing to cooperate with different industry institutes to provide

more job opportunities to local residents.

The bureau will hold the "Youth Career Expo in 2022" on October 8 to 9 at The Venetian Macao.

The expo will platform approximately 70 different types of job with over 1,000 places reserved for youth. These jobs include positions within the hotel industry, marketing, finance, network technology, and design.

There are also career counseling services for youth to assist in writing CVs and providing job enquiry services. During the two days of the expo,

lectures introducing the big-four industries will be included.

Also, DSAL will increase the thrice-monthly job-matching lectures to twice-weekly.

The industry job-matching sessions held in collaboration with Macao Federation of Trade Unions, starting in this month, will be increased to thrice-weekly instead of the twice-weekly as previously decided.

As at the end of August, a total of 38 job-matching sessions had been held, and were in relation to several different types of job.

As part of a plan to encourage employers to hire local unemployed residents during the pandemic, employers who maintained the original number of local employees within the period of June 1 to August 31 who then hired a local resident who had been unemployed for over 60 days is eligible to receive an allowance of MOP3,328 each month for six months (the total maximum allowance is MOP19,968). For example, an employer who hired two unemployed local residents may receive MOP6,656 each month, and so on.

LYNZY VALLES



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EASED RESTRICTIONS

# Border reopening to 41 countries for economic reasons

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE decision to reopen Macau's borders to visitors of 41 countries has not been solely based on a pandemic risk evaluation, but also relates to spending and perceptions of tourist capacity, the acting division head for health promotion at Health Bureau (SSM), Valerie Wong, said yesterday during the weekly briefing on the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center on the Covid-19 pandemic situation in Macau.

To an inquiry from the media on the topic, Wong explained that "factors such as economy and tourism were the basis of the decision, as well as the pandemic evolution worldwide," she said, adding, "We decided to allow people from these countries to enter Macau because these countries have a good economic situation and also because we know that we only have one route to enter Macau from the exterior currently (via Singapore) and passport holders of those 41 countries can also enter Hong Kong or Singapore, a condition that makes them less likely to become stranded in Macau in case something [pandemic-related] happens."

The same official also said that the local authorities have the intention of "gradually reopening to other countries too."

When also questioned about the fact that of the 41 countries, none were countries with which Macau had a significant relationship through migrant workers as well as close proximity, Wong noted that for the non-resident workers (TNR), there is a special

RENATO MARQUES



measure that allows them to exit, to visit family members or others, and then reenter Macau.

"For the time being, this system requires a pre-authorization, but we will monitor to determine whether [TNR] should be able to reenter without this pre-authorization in the future."

During the same press briefing, questions arose about how to attract these tourists from abroad while keeping the '7+3' quarantine requirement in force.

To such questions, Wong replied that the services have already made a big effort to significantly reduce waiting times associated with processing results of nucleic acid tests (NAT) and other procedures related to quarantines.

The official said that, nowadays, the average waiting time ranges between four to six hours, which, whilst not ideal, is already

a great advancement, she said.

As for the possibility of amending the '7+3' quarantine method, the official pointed out that Macau is following the instruc-

tions of the mainland while continuing to do a dynamic evaluation but, for the time being, there are no new developments to announce.

## COVID-19

### COST OF NAT LOWERED TO MOP45

**T**HE price of nucleic acid tests (NAT) for those who need to cross the border was reduced from 50 to 45 patacas yesterday.

The measure was announced by health authorities, who said the reduction in price was the result of constant negotiation with the private entities who perform the tests to attempt to gradually reduce the price for local consumers.

Questioned during the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center press briefing yesterday on the possibility of reducing the price even further as well as the individual NAT performed at quarantine hotels, the acting division head for health promotion at the Health Bureau (SSM), Valerie

Wong, said that regarding the cross-border NAT, the government will continue to negotiate with companies that conduct the sampling and analysis of the samples to see if the price can be further reduced.

As for the NAT in the quarantine hotel, and as other officials have previously mentioned, there is no margin to reduce the prices, as it is an individualized job that requires a lot of equipment, staff, and transportation, among others.

Early last month the same type of NAT had already seen a reduction from 55 to 50 patacas, following another reduction from 70 patacas that took place in early June. **RM**

## SCHOOLS RESUME WITHOUT MUCH TROUBLE

Yesterday's resumption of classes for most schools took place without much concern or trouble, the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) Secondary Education Division Chief, Leong I On, said during the briefing.

Leong noted that most of the cross-border students have been able to arrive without problems although occasional issues have been reported.

"Over 2,000 cross-border students have entered Macau [yesterday] as 60% of schools have resumed. There were a few cases of students [not making it] to school due to problems crossing the border but we are following up on that with the schools," Leong said, adding that the DSEDJ received the registration of around 4,000 students to be specially exempted from the daily quota imposed on border crossings between Macau and Zhuhai and an additional 3,000 for those accompanying students at the border crossing.

"We also noticed that there are some errors in the records so we are asking schools to certify that all data is correct so there are no problems later," he concluded.

STAFF REPORTER

## TOURISM

# Local tours extended to December

**D**UE to the popularity of "Stay, Dine and See Macao" activities, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has decided to extend the period of operation from August 31 to until the end of this year.

The MGTO hopes that this extension will encourage local residents to enjoy and experience the local tours and give more momentum to the tourism industry.

Meanwhile, authorities will launch more local activities to coincide with festival events to attract more

participants.

The 12 tour routes running from September to December have commenced. The types of activities include leisure, family, stimulating experiences and cultural art. Other tours will be promoted later, according to the authorities.

Authorities will add two special travel routes to coincide with the operation of the 10th Macao

International Travel (Industry) Expo that will run from September 23 to 25. Participants can access a special price of MOP28 to participate in the expo with other group members.

As of August 29, the activities had recorded a total of 128,392 participants. From these, a total of 26,235 people attended local tours, 92,157 people applied for hotel staycations.



EDUCATION

# DSEDJ: SCHOOLS WELCOMED BACK SOME 50,000 STUDENTS IN NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

STAFF REPORTER

**L**OCAL schools have resumed classes yesterday, welcoming some 50,000 students in the new academic year.

"Over 50 schools with a combined 50,000 students welcomed a new semester in Macau; most students completed a compulsory nucleic acid test (NAT) before attending school," the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) subdirector Wong Ka Ki said.

Before the start of the semester, authorities had met with schools and departments to discuss pandemic prevention measures to control the flow of students.

Wong expressed that around 16 schools reflected that some cross-border students could not return to school for several reasons. The authority asked schools to provide the specific number of relevant students; Wong believes that schools can make special arrangements to accommodate them.

According to official data, yesterday morning there were over 2,000 cross-border students returning to school via the Qingmao and Border Gate checkpoints.

Meanwhile, schools were well-prepared for the start of semester and set up special places for students to remove masks to drink water. They also set up separators on each table to avoid excessive contact in class.

"[The] school would like to strengthen student's foundation in their studies and carry out [...] counselling work in the first mon-



th of the new semester," said Lai Sai Kei, president of Keang Peng School.

Students who did not completed a NAT will not be allowed to enter the school, and students need to quarantine after attending school, Lai said.

"Some students did not complete the NAT result in time because they could not return to their usual place of residence, and some classes started in the afternoon," said president of Pui Ching Middle School Kou Kam Fai. He therefore did not anticipate any problems with the NAT arrangements in schools, as cited in a report issued by Macao Daily News.

On whether it is ideal to suspend classes under the normalization of the pandemic, Kou said

that it will be necessary to completely suspend classes if there are many positive cases with an unknown source. If there are only a few positive cases with a clear source, it can take more relaxed measures such as requiring students to complete a rapid antigen test (RAT) before attending school. "However, the authorities must prioritize the safety of students," Kou emphasized.

Moreover, Kou said that all teachers must receive the second dose of vaccinations. Those who have not must do NAT once a week.

As of last semester, approximately 85% of students aged between three and 11 were vaccinated, and 90% aged between 12 and 18. Authorities expressed that schools hope to provide vac-

inations to students.

All students and parents returning to school are required to present a negative NAT result taken within the last 72 hours, according to the pandemic prevent requirement for school published by the DSEDJ on August 26.

Authorities have also coordinated with the traffic department and Public Security Police Force (PSP) to divert traffic on the day.

Bus company TCM said it has increased bus frequency on bus routes to reduce the number of people on the new semester day; it will adjust the bus frequency according to the situation.

"[The] flow of people was not heavy on the day," said general manager of TCM Leong Mei Leng.

Only five schools started their

new semester yesterday; 11 schools chose to start the new semester today. Leong believes that the number of people will remain at the same level. Moreover, during the past two years, visitors in Macau gradually reduced in number. She believes the bus frequency could be sufficient.

Besides, Leong added that some mobile buses would be reserved for emergencies.

Another bus company, Transmac, intends to increase bus frequency by 12% during the period of students returning to school.

It added that they carried out maintenance on buses last week, so they would arrange over 40 additional buses. Also, they dispatched over 30 bus officers to stay at several bus stations for support.

## Cheoc Van pool closed 54% of season, reasons vary

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Cheoc Van Swimming Pool, a facility under the management and supervision of the Sports Bureau (ID), has been closed for over 54% of the 2022 bathing season, which started on May 1, the ID has confirmed in response to an inquiry from the Times.

"Since May 1, 2022, the Cheoc Van Swimming Pool has been closed for a total of 64 days," the ID said, explaining in further detail the reasons that led to the closure of the sports and leisure facility.

The problems started on June 11 when the pool was

closed for six days due to a "backflow of sewage that occurred due to blocked drainage," the ID said, adding that after that there was a closure ordered due to the Covid-19 outbreak that lasted from June 19 until August 1.

A few days later, on August 7, the ID again ordered the closure of the facility until August 18 as a result of the same backflow of sewage due to blocked drainage.

After being open for less than a week, the pool had to close again on August 25 and 26. This time, the ID said that the closing of the facility was related to "emergency repair work

and cleaning, required after the hit of typhoon [Ma-on]."

In the same written response to the Times, the ID noted that, in order to improve the use of sports facilities, the ID does regular checks, cleaning, and maintenance during the closure period of outdoor swimming pools every year.

The problems particularly noted with the Cheoc Van Swimming Pool drainage may have been related to the public drainage network, a situation that led the Bureau to inform the Municipal Affairs Bureau, who promptly performed works to solve the problem permanently.



# Gaming sector suffers from outbreak aftermath as slumps continue in August

LYNZY VALLES

**M**ACAU'S gross gaming revenue fell to MOP2.19 billion in August, a plunge of 50.7% year-on-year, as the city struggles with the aftermath of its largest outbreak yet that led to a new low in revenues in July.

Data from the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) shows a continuous decline since March due to outbreaks in the mainland, leading to lockdowns and strict border restrictions.

August's revenues are worse than the median analyst estimates of a 47.5% year-on-year decline, yet represent a surge of over five times from July, albeit from a low base of MOP398 million – the lowest in decades.

The casino sector suffered its worst month in July as gaming revenues tumbled 95% year-on-year in July due to the largest flare-up in Covid-19 cases the city has ever recorded from mid-June.

Although tourists are slowly returning to the city, with Macau even recording its highest daily arrivals on Saturday following the easing of restrictions on August 3, Bloomberg Intelligence analyst Angela Hanlee said in a note that visitor arrivals to Macau in the third quarter may return to only 10% of the pre-pandemic levels, implying that recovery will remain weak through September.

Casino operators have been bleeding millions of dollars every day amid the upcoming bids to renew their operating licenses.



The crackdown on junkets, which bring high-rollers to the city's casino floors, are expected to further hammer the already depressed sector, as well as the fact that gaming licenses are set to expire in December 31.

In the city's biggest gaming overhaul, the minimum annual gaming revenue generated by each gaming table should be MOP7 million.

The minimum cap for the annual gaming revenue generated by each gaming machine is set at MOP300,000.

According to the law, if concessionaires fail to meet minimum revenue requirements, a "special premium" will have to be

paid to the government to make up the difference between the actual and minimum amount.

Casino operators are seeking a bid to continue to operate in the region for the next 10 years, which they will submit to the government by September 14

## STOCKS RISE ONLY TO PLUNGE AGAIN

Casino shares rose following the announcement of the reopening of the borders to 41 foreign passport holders. Leading the rise on August 31 was Melco Resorts & Entertainment limited with 3.71% in the early trading, while Las Vegas Sands rose 3.71%. Wynn Resorts, MGM also rose

1.55% and 0.55% respectively, while Galaxy and SJM Holdings rose marginally to 1%.

However, shares retreated yesterday after the announcement of gaming revenues. Melco slid

4.63%, followed by Sands and MGM with negative 3.06% and 2.95%, respectively.

Galaxy also tumbled 2.49%, while SJM and Wynn slid 1.82% and 1.67%, respectively.

## MONTHLY GROSS GAMING REVENUE

	2022	2021	Variance
Jan	6,344	8,024	-20.9%
Feb	7,759	7,312	+6.1%
Mar	3,672	8,306	-55.8%
Apr	2,677	8,401	-68.1%
May	3,341	10,445	-68.0%
Jun	2,477	6,535	-62.1%
Jul	398	8,444	-95.3%
Aug	2,189	4,442	-50.7%

Unit: MOP million

## STIMULUS

# Gov't still mulling details of next MOP10b subsidies

**I**N reply to a lawmaker's enquiry, head of the Financial Services Bureau (DSF), Iong Kong Leong, has affirmed that the government is still gathering public opinion on the second MOP10 billion subsidy scheme.

The enquiry had been made by lawmaker Wong Kit Cheng.

Previously, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong announced plans to spend MOP20 billion on subsidies, of which the distribution of the first half has commenced. The second half, meanwhile, will include subsidies on a general basis, the secretary has ascertained.

Although funds have been successfully requested from the parliament, details on the MOP10 billion round of spending have not been made available. Given this fact, the DSF head could only assure Wong that details would be announced when available.

In his reply, he recapped about existing subsidies. For example, local businesses will have their water and power supply charges partially subsidized by the government, with ceilings set at MOP500 for water and MOP3,000 for power. The subsidies will be good for six months and the validity of the funds will last for 12 months, meaning that

unused funds can be used after the six-month issuance period.

On the other hand, the government has also instigated several loan or funding plans for which local businesses can apply. For example, the government will subsidize the interest on eligible business loans, as well as issuing subsidies to eligible businesses. Existing subsidy beneficiaries will also see their repayment terms extended.

A new bank loan capped at MOP5 million with subsidized interest up to 4% of the loan and for two years at maximum is also open for applications. **AL**



HUMAN RIGHTS

# BEIJING REJECTS UN REPORT ON UYGHUR ABUSES IN XINJIANG

KEN MORITSUGU  
& JAMEY KEATEN, BEIJING

CHINA has denounced a long-delayed U.N. report that was released over its protest and that says the government's arbitrary detention of Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim ethnic groups in the western region of Xinjiang may constitute crimes against humanity.

Human rights groups and the Japanese government welcomed the report, which had become caught up in a tug-of-war between China and others, who were critical of the delay and lobbying for its release.

The assessment released yesterday (Macau time) by the U.N. human rights office in Geneva concluded that China has committed serious human rights violations under its anti-terrorism and anti-extremism policies and calls for "urgent attention" from the U.N., the world community and China itself to address them.

The report largely corroborates earlier reporting by researchers, advocacy groups and the news media, while carefully steering away from estimates and other findings that cannot be definitively proven. It adds the weight of the U.N. to the conclusions, though China showed no sign of backing off its blanket denials and portraying the criticism as a politicized Western smear campaign.

In a sternly worded protest that the U.N. posted with its report, China's diplomatic mission in Geneva said it firmly opposed the



Residents watch a convoy of security personnel armed with batons and shields patrol through central Kashgar in Xinjiang (2017)

release of the U.N. assessment, which it said ignores human rights achievements made in Xinjiang and the damage caused by terrorism and extremism to the population.

"Based on the disinformation and lies fabricated by anti-China forces and out of presumption of guilt, the so-called 'assessment' distorts China's laws, wantonly smears and slanders China, and interferes in China's internal affairs," the protest read in part.

Japan was one of the first foreign governments to comment on the report, which was released early yesterday morning in Asia. Its top government spokesperson urged China to improve transparency and human rights condi-

tions in the Xinjiang region.

"Japan is highly concerned about human rights conditions in Xinjiang, and we believe that it is important that universal values such as freedom, basic human rights and rule of law are also guaranteed in China," Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said.

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International called on the U.N. and governments to set up an independent investigation into the human rights abuses.

"Never has it been so important for the U.N. system to stand up to Beijing, and to stand with victims," said John Fisher, the deputy director of global advocacy for the group.

The U.N. report made no men-

tion of genocide, which some countries, including the United States, have accused China of committing in Xinjiang.

The report was drawn in part from interviews with former detainees and others familiar with conditions at eight detention centers.

It said that descriptions of the detentions were marked by patterns of torture and other cruel and inhuman treatment and said that allegations of rape and other sexual violence appear credible.

"The extent of arbitrary and discriminatory detention of members of Uyghur and other predominantly Muslim groups ... in (the) context of restrictions and deprivation more generally of

fundamental rights ... may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity," the report said.

The rights office said it could not confirm estimates that a million or more people were detained in the internment camps in Xinjiang, but added it was "reasonable to conclude that a pattern of large-scale arbitrary detention occurred" at least between 2017 and 2019.

Beijing has closed many of the camps, which it called vocational training and education centers.

The U.N. assessment said that reports of sharp increases in arrests and lengthy prison sentences in the region strongly suggested a shift toward "formal incarceration instead of the use of the camps."

The report called on China to release all individuals arbitrarily detained and to clarify the whereabouts of those who have disappeared and whose families are seeking information about them.

That the report was released was in some ways as important as its contents.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said she received pressure from both sides to publish — or not publish — and resisted it all, while noting her experience with political squeeze during her two terms as president of Chile.

Her announcement in June that the report would be released by end of her 4-year term on Aug. 31 triggered a swell in back-channel campaigns — including letters from civil society, civilians and governments on both sides of the issue.

"To be perfectly honest, the politicization of these serious human rights issues by some states did not help," said Bachelet, who early on staked out a desire to cooperate with governments. **MDT/AP**

COVID-19

# Authorities lock down 21 million in Chengdu in outbreak

CHINESE authorities have locked down Chengdu, a southwestern city of 21 million people, following a spike in COVID-19 cases.

Residents have been ordered to stay home, and about 70% of the flights have been suspended to and from the city, which is a major transit hub in Sichuan province and a governmental and economic center.

The start of the new school term has been delayed, although public transport continues to operate and citizens are permitted to leave the city if they can show a special need.

Under the rules annou-

nced yesterday, just one member of each family who can show a negative virus test within the past 24 hours is allowed out per day to buy necessities.

No word was issued on when the lockdown would be lifted.

Similar measures have seen millions of people confined to their homes in the northeastern city of Dalian, as well as Shijiazhuang, the capital of Hebei province that borders the capital Beijing.

Chengdu has reported around 1,000 cases in the latest outbreak and no deaths from the latest round of domestic transmission, but

the extreme measures reflect China's rigid adherence to its "zero-COVID" policy that has exacted a major toll on the economy, with lockdowns, business closures and mass testing requirements.

China says the measures are necessary to prevent a wider spread of the virus, which was first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019. The fear of being caught in a lockdown situation or sent to a quarantine facility for even being in proximity with a person who tested positive has severely constrained people's work, consumption and travel habits. **MDT/AGENCIES**



AP PHOTO



South Korean Vice Defense Minister Shin Beomchul speaks during an interview at the Defense Ministry in Seoul yesterday

KOREAS

# China, Russia hold key to North's denuclearization: Seoul

HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

**C**HINA and Russia's reluctance to toughen U.N. sanctions on North Korea is "the biggest challenge" facing efforts to eliminate the North's nuclear arsenal, a top South Korean official said yesterday, as the North remains ready to conduct its first nuclear test in five years.

China and Russia, which both have close ties with North Korea and are locked in confrontations with the United States, already vetoed a U.S.-led attempt to slap fresh sanctions on North Korea over its missile tests this year. That raises worries North Korea would escape punishment even if it performs a bigger provocation like a nuclear test explosion, which is banned by U.N. resolutions.

"Even if North Korea conducts an additional nuclear test, there is a possibility no additional sanctions will be adopted at the U.N. Security Council because of the U.S.-China strategic rivalry and U.S.-Russia tension over the Ukraine war," South Korea's vice defense minister, Shin Beomchul, told The Associated Press during an interview. "I think that is the

biggest challenge to (efforts to resolve) the North Korean nuclear problem and an international anti-proliferation regime."

Shin sat for the interview ahead of the South Korea-hosted annual security forum that is to focus on cooperation on how to achieve North Korea's denuclearization and other regional issues. The Sept. 6-8 event, the first in-person gathering since 2019, is to draw senior defense officials and experts from more than 50 countries. North Korea has never participated in the Seoul Defense Dialogue since it began in 2012.

The forum comes four months after South Korea's new conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol took office with a vow to take firmer steps on North Korean provocation in conjunction with boosting the military alliance with the United States.

Yoon's North Korea policy has had little initial progress as Pyongyang recently bluntly rejected his offers to provide economic benefits in return for disarmament steps and threatened to use its nuclear weapons in potential

conflicts with South Korea and the United States. Some worry that Yoon's push to reinforce the U.S. alliance could trigger economic retaliations from China, South Korea's biggest trading partner.

Shin said the Seoul forum is designed to expand South Korea's diplomatic capacity in the face of a mix of complex regional security issues.

**"While geopolitical crisis factors [...] have grown, North Korea is also accelerating its development of nuclear weapons.**

SHIN BEOMCHUL  
S.KOREAN VICE DEFENSE MINISTER

"While geopolitical crisis factors like the Ukraine war and the U.S.-China strategic rivalry have grown, North Korea is also accelerating its development of nuclear weapons," he said. "Amid these security challenges, it would be mea-

ningful that we'll hold the Seoul Defense Dialogue to have comprehensive talks on developments in international politics, the North Korean nuclear threats and changes in international warfare and look for ways to respond to them."

Shin said North Korean leader Kim Jong Un would return to talks if he determines China and Russia would support efforts to impose new sanctions on North Korea when it carries out banned nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests.

"If we can have (Kim) believe that China and Russia would stop backing North Korea and reverse their positions and switch to additional sanctions when North Korea conducts an additional nuclear test and continues to launch an ICBM, I think North Korea can return to talks at anytime," Shin said.

Subsequently, he said South Korea must increase its diplomatic efforts to persuade China and Russia to speak with one voice with other countries on the North's nuclear program. Shin said China "holds the biggest key" to North Korean denuclearization, given

the North's economic dependence to it. Experts say China is North Korea's biggest aid benefactor and more than 90% of the North's trade goes through China.

For the past few months, South Korean and U.S. officials have said North Korea is ready to conduct its seventh nuclear test as part of its torrid run of weapons tests this year. Some observers say North Korea aims to enlarge its arsenal, win outside recognition as a legitimate nuclear power and call for the lifting of international sanctions on it.

It's unclear why North Korea hasn't yet conducted the test. Some analysts expect it after China's ruling Communist Party holds a congress next month, while others believe there's a technological reason it's delayed.

Shin said North Korea would want to perform the test without receiving international sanctions so as to obtain nuclear power status. He warned that a lack of a condemnation at the U.N. Security Council would prompt the North to believe it has moved a step closer toward becoming an acknowledged nuclear state.

In April, Kim Jong Un said North Korea could preemptively use his nuclear weapons if provoked. In June, he and other top North Korean officials approved additional operational duties at front-line army units, triggering concerns it has plans to deploy battlefield nuclear weapons targeting South Korea as the North had test-launched short-range, nuclear-capable missiles designed to attack South Korea.

Shin said South Korea is pushing to bolster its own missile defense, pre-emptive attack and massive retaliation capabilities in response to the North Korean nuclear threats. He said South Korea and the United States are to revive talks in mid-September on "extended deterrence," a term referring to U.S. commitment to defend its allies with a full range of military capability including nuclear.

Shin refused to provide detailed assessment on North Korea's nuclear arsenal. But he called North Korea's short-range ballistic missile capability "far more threatening" than its developmental hypersonic and cruise missiles. Shin said South Korea hasn't assessed that North Korea has acquired a reentry technology for its ICBMs, which is needed to return a nuclear warhead to the atmosphere from space so it can hit intended targets in mainland U.S.

"Nuclear states and countries considered as nuclear states in the world have repeatedly stressed they won't use their nuclear weapons. But North Korea is hinting at the use of its nuclear weapons," Shin said. "That reveals well North Korea's intentions of developing nuclear weapons for a strategic purpose of pressing South Korea and the international community." **MDT/AP**

PUTIN'S WAR

# It's back to school in Ukraine - but far from normal

HANNA ARHIROVA &  
YESICA FISCH, MYKHAILO-  
KOTSYUBYNSKE

**T**HE first day of school in Ukraine won't include children sharing memories of fun vacations with their families. Their stories are of surviving war. For many, their last day of school was the day before the Feb. 24 Russian invasion of their country.

At least 379 children have been killed since the war began, while the whereabouts of 223 others are unknown, according to Ukraine's General Prosecutors office. Another 7,013 children were among Ukrainians forcibly transferred to Russia from Russian-occupied areas.

Some children were forced to flee their hometowns to avoid bombardment, some spent weeks in basements. And while those in so-called "safe" regions sometimes managed to study online, classes were frequently interrupted by air raid sirens. Six months of war damaged 2,400 schools across the country, including 269 that were destroyed, according to Ukrainian officials.

"It does become kind of the new normal for children, which I think, as I said, (is) very concerning as well because that's not the way children should go through life, thinking that they are going to get attacked at any moment," UNICEF Executive Director Catherine M. Russell, told The Associated Press.

Civilian areas and schools continue to be hit, and children keep being killed. But after the first months of shock, 51% of schools in Ukraine, despite the risk, are reopening to in-person education, with an option to study online if the parents prefer.

Russell said she'd never before seen schools functioning entirely underground to protect students.

"You know, usually you have windows, you can see outside. These kids don't have that luxury and they are just, they are becoming accustomed to that lifestyle of having to be sheltered from possible attack and that's not, that's not what any child should have to face," she said.

But the safety of children remains the priority. Schools that don't have quick access to shelters or are located close to the borders with Belarus and Russia, or near active military zones will only have online study.

That's the case for the 7th graders in Mykhailo-Kotsyubynske,

AP PHOTO



Children play outside their Chernihiv School #21, which was bombed by Russian forces in March, in Chernihiv

just 20 miles (35 kilometers) from the Belarus border, who gathered at their badly damaged school Tuesday to pick up textbooks for studying online. While waiting, they played a version of "Truth or Lie," where players tried to guess whether their opponent's assertion about the number of missiles they saw from their window was true or false.

"We haven't seen each other for such a long time. You all have grown so much," said their teacher, Olena Serdiuk, standing in a corner of the classroom, where windows were covered with thick black polythene instead of glass.

Oleksii Lytvyn, 13, remembers very well the day Russian missiles hit the school twice. It was March 4, and he was in the school's bomb shelter with his family and dozens of other people.

Just minutes before the blast, he had been playing with a friend. After the loud explosion, the walls began shaking and he couldn't see anything but a huge cloud of dust. One person was killed, a woman who worked at the school.

"We were sleeping in the corridor, and there was a corpse of a dead person behind the wall," Oleksii recalled. His family stayed one more night before fleeing town, though they have since returned for the start of the school year.

Oleksii's classmates shared similar stories about that day and the monthlong Russian occupation of Mykhailo-Kotsyubynske that followed.

"When I'm at school, I think about the person who died in the debris. I feel deeply sorry for her," 12-year-old Mykola Krav-

chenko said.

Their school, the biggest in the area with 407 students from Mykhailo-Kotsyubynske and nearby villages, is still badly damaged. Debris fills the second floor, and the roof and heating system still need to be repaired — money the school doesn't have.

Even though they will be studying online, the students had to undergo security training Tuesday. Serdiuk told the class to follow her to the same bomb shelter where many survived the blast in March.

In the dimly lit shelter were water supplies and lines of long benches with labeled seats for each classroom. When the children took the seats assigned to their class, Serdiuk told them they had to go there whenever they heard a short bell ring.

She said many parents tell her their children are begging them to return to school, but for now that isn't allowed because of the danger of being so close to the Belarus border.

"Ukrainian children are acutely aware that the world is unstable and it could be a terrible place. That brings ... a loss of a basic sense of safety," said UNICEF spokesperson James Elder, adding that the uncertainty can impact their learning and emotional and social development.

Schools in the Kyiv, Lviv, and Chernivtsi regions are among those welcoming students back to classrooms yesterday. However, it's up to parents whether they send their children to school or opt for online education. The Kyiv and Lviv regions will host more than 7,300 displaced students who were forced to flee their hometowns and escape life

under constant fire, officials said.

Minister of Education Serhiy Shkarlet welcomed students and staff back as the new school year got underway.

"Today, we face a new important task — to ensure the acquisition of education in a safe environment and psychological stability," he said in a video posted on Telegram. "I wish for strength, perseverance and indomitability in the desire to be an educated nation!"

In Kramatorsk in the Donetsk region, there is no hope for schools to open their doors to students. The city has been under constant shelling since the beginning of the war.

In one city school, the first-grade classroom was all ready: tables, chairs, a clean blackboard, the alphabet and numbers hanging on the wall, and Ukrainian flags ready to be distributed to the kids. The only thing missing was the students.

Seated in the middle of the empty room was Oleksandr Novikov, 55, the school's director for 12 years and a teacher for more than 20.

"It is very depressing, it is very unpleasant to feel that you come to an empty school," he said. "There will be no children laughing at school, no one will be running here" when the school year begins.

While Ukraine tries to defend itself from the Russian invasion, Novikov dreams of better times.

"I would like a real first bell, a real meeting with children and teachers, a real lesson, when eyes look at you with inspiration, trust and a desire to hear something new, to learn something new."

"This is what I would like to see," he said. MDT/AP

## this day in history

### 1979 RIPPER SUSPECTED OF 12TH MURDER



Police have discovered the body of a young woman - thought to be the 12th victim of the "Yorkshire Ripper" - in an alleyway near the centre of Bradford.

The body had been hidden behind a low wall at the back of a terraced house in the city's university area.

Local streets have been sealed off as a detailed search of the area is made.

It is understood there are similarities to other attacks attributed to the Ripper, and detectives from Manchester and Yorkshire working on the case are at the scene.

Police say it is too early to make a connection with the 11 other victims of the Yorkshire Ripper, but the murderer has killed two others and attacked one more nearby.

Home Office pathologist Professor David Gee - who has dealt with all the other victims of the Ripper - is carrying out an examination of the body.

A tape-recorded message sent to police earlier in the year from a man claiming to be the Ripper, said that he would strike again in September or October.

Pressure is mounting on the police, who appear to be no closer to identifying the murderer since the killings began in 1975.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The young woman was Barbara Leach, a 20-year-old student. She was the Yorkshire Ripper's twelfth victim.

The tape turned out to be a hoax. The killer was arrested in 1980 after the murder of one more woman.

Peter Sutcliffe (pictured) was tried at the Old Bailey in 1981. He was found guilty of murdering 13 women and attempting to murder seven more.

He was sentenced to life imprisonment with the recommendation he serve a minimum of 30 years.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## YOUR STARS



### ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You will enjoy socializing and unusual forms of entertainment. Friends may not be completely honest with you. You may think gifts will win their heart, but it could add stress from lack of funds.



### TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Don't count on getting any help from those you live with. Deception and doubts may surround your involvement with friends and relatives. Take care of matters involving institutions or government agencies.



### GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Romance will unfold through business trips. Those you live with may be experiencing problems. Use your ingenuity to manipulate things to get what you want. Someone you live with will be impossible.



### CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Spend some quality time with the one you love. Your talents will shine at work. Make your intentions perfectly clear and find out exactly what is expected of you.



### LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Try to understand both sides of the issue before taking sides. Don't take offense at comments made by coworkers. You'll feel much better when your slate is clean again.



### VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Someone close to you will get upset easily if you are insensitive to their needs. Try not to allow superiors or those in a higher position to take advantage of you.



### LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Do not invest in ventures that only appear to be lucrative. You will have no trouble getting things to fall into place. Do your own thing. There might be a problem with a will or with an insurance policy.



### SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Put your efforts into making constructive improvements to your environment and to your state of mind. You can come up with solutions to the problems responsible for inefficiencies at work.



### SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Remember that no one can walk through your door if there's someone standing in the doorway. Emotional relationships will be plentiful if you attend group activities.



### CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Talk to someone with experience about budgets or consolidating debts. You may find yourself caught in the middle of an argument that has nothing to do with you. Deception is likely.



### AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Residential moves will be in your best interest. Try not to jump to conclusions. Your sensitive nature will allow others to read you well.

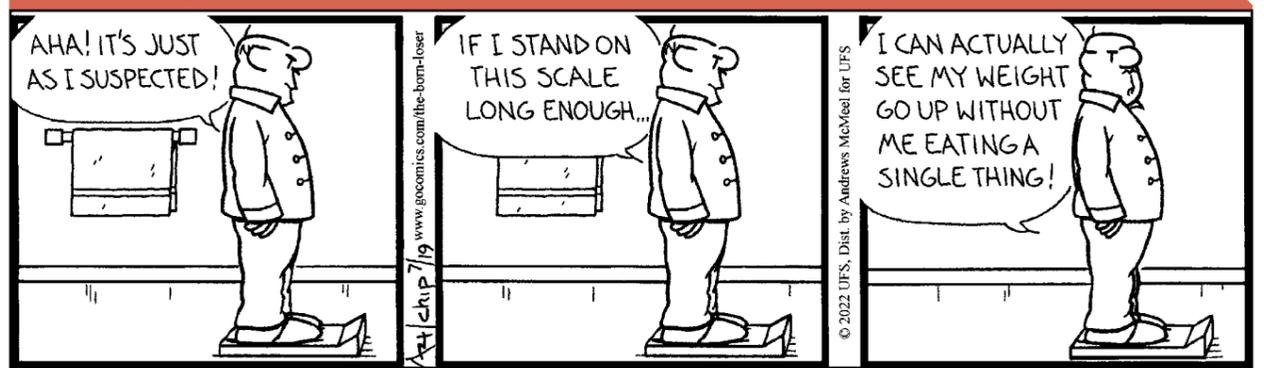


### PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Self-improvement projects will payoff in more ways than one. Visit someone who hasn't been feeling well lately. You can make money if you put your mind to it.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



## SUDOKU

### EASY

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

### EASY+

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

### MEDIUM

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

### HARD

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			5					
2 8	5			6				
	3							
6				1				
		2	7					
3								

## WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	15	28	fine
Changchun	11	25	fine
Chengdu	17	22	rain
Chongqing	19	27	rain
Fuzhou	25	35	cloudy
Guangzhou	25	35	fine
Guiyang	18	26	cloudy
Haikou	25	32	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	21	27	rain
Harbin	11	26	fine
Hefei	18	28	cloudy
Nanjing	19	28	cloudy
Shanghai	24	29	overcast
Taipei	25	29	rain
Wuhan	21	29	cloudy
Hong Kong	26	31	overcast
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	6	13	rain
Frankfurt	14	27	overcast
Paris	16	24	rain
London	16	26	overcast
New York	19	27	overcast

## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Biblical gift bearers; 5- Picnic spoiler; 9- Colorless; 13- Rice-\_\_\_; 15- Violist's clef; 16- Bausch & Lomb brand; 17- Botch; 18- Bad time in the Senate; 19- Sale sign; 20- Satisfied sound; 21- American space agency; 23- Opportune; 25- Fuzzy fruit; 26- Flowery; 27- Civilian; 30- Obtain, slangily; 31- Compensate; 32- Apportioned; 37- Sports' ground; 38- Heaps; 40- Routine; 41- Companion of a child; 43- Menu; 44- Computer key; 45- Silver-white divalent metal; 47- Fireside; 50- Pass over; 51- Good-natured ralley; 52- One of a matching pair; 53- Western Hemisphere org.; 56- One telling tales; 57- Gregory Peck role of 1956; 59- Small change; 61- Kofi \_\_\_ Annan; 62- Japanese soup; 63- Visit habitually; 64- Hastens; 65- Gross; 66- General \_\_\_ chicken;

DOWN 1- Baby's cry; 2- Horne solo; 3- Gee whiz!; 4- Neither Rep. nor Dem.; 5- Dried grape; 6- Pierce portrayer; 7- Suffix with meteor; 8- Nares; 9- Stage play; 10- Bowling alley button; 11- Old-womanish; 12- Actively engaged; 14- Remove an electron, say; 22- Admiration; 24- A big fan of; 25- Curled; 26- Stare; 27- Andy of the comics; 28- Romance lang.; 29- When said three times, a 1970 war movie; 32- Draft choice; 33- Stretch of land; 34- Actress Spelling; 35- Famous last words; 36- Consider; 38- Deli meat; 39- Restless desire; 42- Slight; 43- Settle (a matter) decisively; 45- Wrangler; 46- What \_\_\_ bid?; 47- Part of Hispaniola; 48- Related on the mother's side; 49- Gillette razors; 51- Ho-hum; 52- Assignment; 53- Responsibility; 54- \_\_\_ extra cost; 55- Fast fliers; 58- Sot's sound; 60- Devour;



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- 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
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DRIVE IN

# IN 'HONK FOR JESUS,' A MEGACHURCH MOCKUMENTARY

JAKE COYLE,  
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

**R**EGINA Hall and Sterling K. Brown give fully committed performances in "Honk for Jesus. Save Your Soul," so why does the film lack faith in itself?

"Honk for Jesus," Adamma Ebo's directorial debut based on her own short film, is centered on a pair ripe for parody: Pastor Lee-Curtis Childs (Brown) and his loyal wife, Trinitie (Hall), leaders of an Atlanta-area Southern Baptist megachurch called Wander to Greater Paths. It takes about half a minute to realize Childs' spiritual center is more designer label than Deuteronomy. Showing off their closets, Lee-Curtis gives thanks for being "blessed with some beautiful Prada."

After a quick montage of brighter days for Wander to Greater Paths, "Honk for Jesus" catches up with the pastor and his wife on the heels of a scandal that has emptied their congregation of 25,000. Their faces are still bright, though, as they welcome a documentary crew outside the church to chronicle their

AP PHOTO



Regina Hall (left) and Sterling K. Brown in "Honk for Jesus. Save Your Soul"

revival, leading up to an Easter reopening. When Lee-Curtis steps in chewing gum and Trinitie asks the camerawoman to edit around that, she gets no reply. "Oh, that's right," she says. "You're the fly-on-the-wall type."

The mockumentary has always been a dependable way to satirize not just a character or two but a subset of society. After what Christopher Guest did to the world of

dog shows and Rob Reiner did to rock bands, Ebo and her producer sister, Adanne Ebo, have aimed at the rich realm of megachurches, taking inspiration from a real 2010 scandal at Georgia's New Birth Missionary Baptist Church.

But the art of the mockumentary is a funny thing. It has to look unrehearsed and seem real while, often, being meticulously planned. "Honk for Jesus," though,

only gestures at a mockumentary structure, and often simply abandons the premise. Some scenes are staged with a film crew hovering around, while others — like one of the couple in bed at night — are simply filmed like a movie, with no excuse for the camera's presence.

There isn't much that seems natural or lifelike in "Honk for Jesus," including the church itself.

Such a large congregation would have a large staff and more devoted parishioners — the kind of cast of characters that someone like Armando Iannucci would have a lot of fun weaving throughout the film. But "Honk for Jesus" has an empty, airless chamber piece quality, sticking largely to small scenes around the edges of the church that mostly trade on Lee-Curtis and Trinitie's obvious hypocrisy.

But it's not often a bad move to give actors like Hall and Brown lots of room to play, and they certainly bring passion to their performances. They aren't given anywhere especially to go, though. Lee-Curtis' closeted homosexuality is played more for laughs than for empathy.

The film's keenest sense is how it draws nearer to Hall's Trinitie, as her confidence in her husband steadily wavers. "Honk for Jesus" in the end doesn't aim for anything like the madcap parody of, say, HBO's riotous "The Righteous Gemstones," but it may have been more successful if it took the approach of "The Eyes of Tammy Faye," and kept its camera glued to the first lady of the church.

**"Honk for Jesus. Save Your Soul," a Focus Features release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for language and some sexual content. Running time: 102 minutes. ★★☆☆**

AD

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TASTE OF EDESIA

# Exploring heritage

IRENE SAM, MDT

**T**HIS month, Grand Lisboa Palace Resort Macau showcases the cultural heritage of authentic Taishi dishes. Cantonese restaurant **Palace Garden** will present a Taishi Dinner Menu. Prepared by Chef Ken Chong, a disciple of Qing Dynasty's Master Jiang Taishi, a variety of classic Cantonese dishes are made through an ingenious interpretation of royal Cantonese cuisine that is on the verge of disappearing.

Chef Chong has carefully designed a Taishi Dinner Menu that embraces the spirit of "perseverance with tradition and innovation," promoting distinct features. The menu utilises Master Taishi's secret recipes, offering four rare Taishi dishes and three classic Cantonese dishes paired with special eight treasures Zhuangyuan tea, and can also be matched with a variety of wines selected by Grand Lisboa Palace's Head

Sommelier to create a unique gastronomy experience. The four Taishi dishes include the Classic Chicken Testes Pudding & Barbecued Pork Loin and Foie Gras, Soft-shell Turtle braised with Pomelo Skin in Duo Roes, Palace Garden's signature Premium Partridge Bisque, and Fish Maw and Pork Stomach sautéed with Olive Kernel.

Inspired by imperial gardens, Palace Garden's design, décor and art celebrate the magnificent Chinoiserie period of China's trade history. The main dining room is dominated by a beautiful mural of Suzhou silk embroidery on one side and the other etched with storied illustrations from "Dream of the Red Chamber" a gold-coloured glass wall. The five private dining rooms showcase a selection of beautiful scenery from royal gardens with furniture and tableware exquisitely designed in that theme, adding to the palatial-level dining occasion of the Taishi Dinner Menu.



AD

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**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**WASHINGTON'S LATEST ATTEMPT AT TECHNOLOGICAL HEGEMONY WILL PROMPT CHINA TO SHARPEN TOOLS**

Washington has intensified its efforts to put a speed limiter on China's technological capabilities. In its latest attempt to impose a "technological blockade" on China, it has informed Nvidia and Advanced Micro Devices that they cannot export their newest data-center graphics processing units to China without obtaining a license.

The latest architecture GPUs, namely Nvidia's A100 and H100 and AMD's MI250, are a key technology for advanced computing tasks such as image and speech recognition. They are designed to speed up machine deep learning, a key step in developing high-end artificial intelligence technologies and supporting cloud service platforms.

In once again "stretching the concept of national security", the Joe Biden administration is playing an old trick from 2015 when the US government blocked Intel from supplying high-end Xeon Phi processors to China's supercomputer builders. An embargo that only added impetus to the development of the Chinese mainland's processor industry.

The production of integrated circuits on the Chinese mainland grew by 33.3 percent in 2021 from 2020, while the whole year's sales exceeded 1 trillion yuan (\$144.96 billion) for the first time. The latest US move will only spur China to make greater efforts to develop its own chips and systems as it doesn't want its development of technology to be at the mercy of vendors controlled by the US government.

In an article published in The Washington Post after the Intel ban, Michael Hayden, former head of the US National Security Agency, said that the US had previously restricted the sale of high-end chips capable of millions of theoretical operations per second (MTOps) as it wanted an MTOps advantage, but it quickly became clear that such actions "were undermining the global competitiveness of the US computer industry" and that "the overall health of that industry was more important than any MTOps advantage against a specific target country".

It seems that in its eagerness to turn the screws on China, the Biden administration has failed to heed that lesson. Apart from reducing the revenue of the two companies, the latest restrictions are expected to have an impact on the development of their next generation technology. The US Securities and Exchange Commission has warned that the new license requirement may impact the development of Nvidia's Hopper accelerated computing platform, which reportedly delivers "an order of magnitude performance leap" over its predecessor.

It is simply make-believe for US politicians to expect China to give up the high-tech sector under their pressure. Intel was prohibited from exporting Xeon Phi to China as early as 2015, but Chinese scientists and researchers developed the Shenwei Taihu Light supercomputer that won four successive speed competitions from June 2016 to November 2017. It was not until they "learned" from the Chinese design that the US' Summit became the world's fastest computer in 2018.

There are gaps between China and the US in the high-tech sector, but they will shrink with China's efforts and the US' self-inflicted blowback on its own high-tech sector. China has already been working to create alternatives to various technologies for which the country has depended on the two companies. This move will only make it redouble its efforts to be self-reliant.

The Chinese government yesterday called on Washington to repeal its technology export curbs after chip designer Nvidia Corp. said a new product might be delayed and some work might be moved out of China.

The latest controls add to mounting U.S.-Chinese tension over technology and security. American officials say they need to limit the spread of technology that can be used to make weapons.

Nvidia said it was told Friday it needs a U.S. government license to export any product with performance equal to its A100 graphics processing chips or better to China, Hong Kong or Russia. It said buyers of the A100 and development of the newer H100 might be affected.

China's Commerce Ministry accused Washington of abusing export controls to limit semiconductor sales to China. It said trade curbs would disrupt supply chains and global economic recovery.

"China firmly opposes this," said a ministry spokesperson, Shu Jue-ting.

"The U.S. side should immediately stop its erroneous practices, treat companies from all countries equally, including from China, and do more to contribute to world economic stability."

U.S. officials increasingly worry about Chinese technology development as both a strategic threat and a potential challenge to American industrial leadership.

**MACRON VOWS TO PREVENT RUSSIA FROM WINNING WAR IN UKRAINE**

**FRENCH** President Emmanuel Macron yesterday pledged to keep up France's humanitarian, economic and military support to Ukraine and to bolster European unity as a way to pile pressure on Russia and prevent it from winning its war in that country.

"We cannot let Russia militarily win the war," Macron said in a speech to French ambassadors at the Elysee presidential palace.

He set the goal of enabling Ukraine to either win militarily or be put in a strong position to achieve "a negotiated peace."

"We must get prepared for a long war," Macron said, adding that this would involve tensions escalating over Ukraine's nuclear plants.

Macron said France strongly supported the mission of the International Atomic Energy Agency that arrived yesterday to the Zaporizhzhia plant to assess its safety. The French president suggested he would call his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin after the IAEA mission concludes.

Macron vowed to "keep talking" to Russia despite criticism from some countries, especially in eastern Europe, which defend a har-



dline stance against Moscow. "We must do everything to make a negotiated peace possible" when Russia and Ukraine will be ready to sit for talks, he said.

"We must not let Europe get divided" over the war in Ukraine and its consequences, Macron said, adding that the EU mustn't align itself with "warmongers" or allow countries from eastern Europe to act alone in support of Kyiv.

In a nearly two-hour speech meant to outline the goals of the French diplomacy in the upcoming year, Macron praised the views expressed by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz earlier this

week in Prague as "fully in line" with his own plea for a stronger, more independent and sovereign Europe.

Macron called on Europe to "defend" its freedoms and values and to "fight" for them.

He also urged French diplomats to push back more aggressively against misinformation, fake news and propaganda spread on social media.

Paris needs to use some communication tools to "break the Russian, Chinese or Turkish storytelling" and be able to "say when France is wrongly attacked, to say what France really did," he said. **MDT/AP**



**Russia** The Kremlin said yesterday that Russian President Vladimir Putin will not attend the weekend funeral of former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev but has paid tribute to him. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russian President Vladimir Putin visited a Moscow hospital where Mikhail Gorbachev's body is kept before Saturday's funeral.



**Ukraine** As the war in Ukraine stretches into its seventh month, North Korea is hinting at its interest in sending construction workers to help rebuild Russian-occupied territories in the country's east. The idea is openly endorsed by senior Russian officials and diplomats, who foresee a cheap and hard-working workforce that could be thrown into the "most arduous conditions," a term Russia's ambassador to North Korea used in a recent interview. More on p8

**Montenegro** A rapid deployment team of FBI cyber experts is heading to Montenegro to investigate a massive, coordinated attack on the tiny Balkan nation's government and its services, the country's Ministry of Internal Affairs announced. The announcement came as the government's main websites — including the ministries of defense, finance and interior — remained unreachable. Officials said they were offline "for security reasons."



**USA** Democrat Mary Peltola (pictured) won the special election for Alaska's only U.S. House seat, besting a field that included Republican Sarah Palin, who was seeking a political comeback in the state where she was once governor. Peltola, who is Yup'ik and turned 49 on Wednesday, will become the first Alaska Native to serve in the House and the first woman to hold the seat.

**THE DECISIVE MOMENT**

AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti



On the northern coast of Central Java, Indonesia, villages are hit hard as sea levels rise, one of many effects of climate change. Many homes have been "raised" with cement or dirt several times over in an effort by occupants to keep dry.