



FAOM: PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT OF LOCAL RESIDENTS AND IMPLEMENTING THE SECOND MOP10 BILLION SUBSIDY PLAN ARE AMONG THE MOST URGENT ISSUES

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MACAO INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL TO MAINLY RELY ON A REGIONAL CAST

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ZELENSKY VISITS RECENTLY RETAKEN, DEVASTATED CITY

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AP PHOTO



Japanese Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako will travel to Britain to attend Queen Elizabeth II's state funeral next week to pay respects to her, Japan's top government spokesperson said yesterday. Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said the Japanese government requested they accept the British royals' invitation to attend, considering the close relations between the two countries' royal families.

AP PHOTO



Beirut A woman accompanied by activists and brandishing what she said was a toy pistol broke into a Beirut bank branch yesterday, taking \$13,000 from her trapped savings. Sali Hafez told the local Al-Jadeed TV that she needed the money to fund her sister's cancer treatment. She said she had repeatedly visited the bank to ask for her money and was told she could only receive \$200 a month in Lebanese pounds. Hafez said the toy pistol belonged to her nephew.

AP PHOTO



European Union A top official unveiled a plan yesterday to cap the revenue of electricity producers that are making extraordinary profits because of the effects of Russia's war in Ukraine and climate change, saying the proposal could raise \$140 billion to help people hit by spiraling energy prices. It's one of several proposals aimed at containing an energy crisis in Europe that could lead to rolling blackouts, shuttered factories and a deep recession this winter. Others include slashing energy use and reforming the electricity market, which all need approval by the 27 EU countries.

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GO BIG OR GO HOME

Seven companies submit bid proposals in cardboard boxes on pallets as they vie for six gaming concessions P2



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**MOTORCYCLE NOT RULED OUT
GP TO TENTATIVELY RETURN
TO A FOUR-DAY EVENT**

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**CONDOLENCE SERVICE
LOCALS PAY RESPECT TO LATE
QUEEN ELIZABETH II**

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LYNZY VALLES

GAME ON

IT is either go big or go home for the seven hopeful bidders who submitted their gaming proposals to the government.

All proposals were submitted in medium to large cardboard boxes on pallets and labelled as original documents, along with copies.

By order of submission, the companies submitting bids were Wynn Resorts (Macau) Limited, Venetian Macau Limited, Melco Resorts (Macau) Limited, SJM Resorts Limited, MGM Grand Paradise Limited, Galaxy Casino Company Limited, and GMM Limited.

The latter is a new competitor to the current six gaming operators bidding to acquire a 10-year casino concession. Only six licenses will be approved.

GMM Limited is a locally registered firm that has links with Lim Kok Thay, a Malaysian gaming mogul and chairman of Genting Group (Genting) – a casinos, resorts and palm oil conglomerate with market capitalization of some MYR40 billion.

The group also runs casinos in Malaysia, Singapore, the U.S. and the U.K. under the Resorts World brand, with recent expansion into Egypt.

According to media reports on one of the representatives (surna-

SEVEN COMPANIES BID FOR NEW GAMING CONCESSIONS



Sands China executives with their bid proposals

med Chen) of GMM, Lim wanted to come to the city to take part in the bid submission but was unable to due to the pandemic.

Although bidders come from within the 41 foreign countries that can enter Macau, a seven-day hotel quarantine hurdle is still mandatory.

Chen believes that Genting has a certain degree of confidence in this bid for a Macau gaming concession, mentioning that the company assisted in the construction of ski resorts for the Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics held earlier this year.

In the city's biggest overhaul of

the gaming law, the government now requires bidders to submit proposals on future work that will be undertaken in the area of corporate social responsibility for them to be awarded a license. It can be understood that the government is relying on bidders for suggestions on corporate social responsibility.

Meanwhile, all six other gaming operators submitted their proposals by mid-afternoon yesterday, along with a deposit of at least MOP10 million at the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ).

Wynn Macau was the first to submit on Tuesday, a day earlier than the deadline specified in Executive Order 136/2022.

If granted a license, casino operators must maintain MOP5 billion in cash during the 10-year license period.

Las Vegas Sands, the parent company of Sands China, pledged that the company was dedicated to helping Macau meet its tourism and economic diversifi-

cation goals.

"Our goals have always been aligned with the government when it comes to developing the scale of amenities Macau needed to become a must-see international tourism destination. [...] Macau is still in the early stages of establishing itself as an international tourism destination and we believe we can continue to meaningfully contribute to that effort by expanding those important drivers of tourism," said Las Vegas Sands' and Sands China's chairman and CEO Robert G. Goldstein in a statement.

Francis Lui, Galaxy's deputy chairman who was present at the submission, told the press that the group remains confident the government will consider their bid, recalling the group's satisfactory performance over the past 20 years.

For Wynn, the gaming operator said that they have been prepared for these proposals for over a year.

Melco's proposals, meanwhile, reinforce the company's commitment to Macau and the further diversification of its economy, according to chairman and CEO Lawrence Ho.

The committee for the gaming concessions public tender will open the submitted bids on Friday.

LABOR

Lawmakers highlight unemployment rate dilemma, calling for improved workers' rights

STAFF REPORTER

PPROMOTING employment of local residents and implementing the second MOP10 billion subsidy plan without delay are among the most urgent issues that Macau government are expected to contend with.

Four lawmakers from the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM) – Ella Lei, Leong Sun Iok, Lam Lon Wai and Lei Chan U – held a joint press conference yesterday summarizing the Legislative Assembly's (AL) work on the first session of the seventh AL term.

Lei highlighted the need to attend to the increa-



sing numbers of currently unemployed local residents.

Recent data from the government shows that the unemployment rate of local residents for the period May to July in 2022 rose to 5.4%, a record high since 2008.

"We received many requests and enquiries from the public across different

industries. Many of these involve labor rights issues such as residents who were fired, suspended from their work, forced to take leave without pay, and subject to reduced wages or wages held in arrears," said the lawmaker.

Further, she said some residents complained about not receiving respon-

ses after submitting their job applications to companies, adding that wages across certain jobs were lower than the market rate despite higher selection requirements.

Moreover, some employers reportedly informed job seekers that they were hired in response to the Labour Affairs Bureau's

[job creation and maintenance] policies rather than to fulfil a genuine need. However, these job seekers were subsequently "dismissed without due cause within a short period after hiring them."

Lei suggested creating more jobs in suitable industries to hire local residents, highlighting the need to improve the success rate of job-matching sessions and reviewing the Labour Relations Law to improve policies on payments in arrears.

"Although job positions have decreased due to the economic recession, several industries still had positions to fill such as gaming, finance and catering. Therefore,

suitable job positions for local employees do exist," Lei added.

She then called on the government to supervise the employment of local residents by initiating more job-matching sessions to avoid fake job hiring practices and to give priority to hiring local employees.

In addition, many gaming employees were concerned about the public tender for the new gaming licenses. On this matter, Lei hopes the gaming companies will not lay off employees.

Lei said that the association also received many requests from lockdown areas (yellow-health code and red-health code area) during the pandemic. The lawmaker suggested the government improve pandemic prevention measures to help residents solve problems and navigate difficulties caused by the pandemic.

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SPORTS

GP to tentatively return to a four-day event, motorcycle return not ruled out

RENATO MARQUES

THE 69th Macau Grand Prix (GP) may return to its original four-day format (Thursday to Sunday) this November, the president of the Sports Bureau and coordinator of the Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee (MGPOC), Pun Weng Kun said yesterday on the sidelines of a Macao Sports Council meeting.

The same official also hinted at the possibility of the motorcycle race returning the event headliners after a two-year absence due to entry restrictions on foreign racers to Macau.

"Our plan [for this year's GP] is still the four-day event and we forecast that it will include seven [different] racing events. We hope that with a four-day event we can attract tourists to Macau to enjoy the whole event and stay for around six to seven days," Pun said.

Pun said that the return of the motorcycle race is not 100% confirmed, noting that the MGPOC is still negotiating the details for the return of this race.

"The organizing committee wants to have this race back and the racers also want to come," Pun said, suggesting that the main obstacles to the event's return had been addressed.

In a concurrent topic, Pun noted that the easing of restrictions on the entry of foreign nationals from 41 countries to Macau since the start of this month will allow

RENATO MARQUES



organizers to have better negotiating power when approaching foreign racers and other athletes who can potentially participate in other major events that will take place this year. These events will include the 3x3 Basketball, the Macau International Marathon and the World Table Tennis (WTT) event, among others.

"We know that some racers were available to undergo a qua-

rantine period of two weeks [in the past] so now with the 7+3 measure I think we have a better chance of negotiating with them," Pun said. Furthermore, "Our policies already allow the entry of foreigners, but we still need to follow the quarantine rules. If there are sportspeople who have already entered the mainland from other places, they can potentially enter Macau without quarantining ac-

cording to the rules. But we need to analyze these on a case-by-case basis. As a general rule, they need to undergo quarantine if they arrive from medium and high-risk areas. We need to follow these guidelines because our main principle while organizing these events is safety."

The coordinator of the GP committee also noted that all the committee members "are doing a

great job and trying their best to have quality events this year and ensure that high-level racers can make their return to the GP entry lists."

Due to the aforementioned restrictions, the format of the GP was reduced to three days (Friday to Sunday) over the past two years. The number of racing events was also reduced to five or six events resulted in two categories – that had previously been merged – being split to expand the racing action.

70TH 'SPECIAL' EDITION ALREADY IN PREPARATION

Questioned on the milestone of the 70th local Grand Prix slated to take place in 2023, Pun said that a 'special edition' is already being planned. However, at present there are no concrete ideas on what this event will include.

"There isn't a concrete idea yet but we are already planning and preparing this 70th edition. We are thinking that maybe we can have some different races using different types of vehicles," Pun said, adding, "We are already negotiating with different entities. We know that for this year, we cannot organize the three world cups [FIA World Touring Car Cup, FIA GT World Cup, and FIA Formula 3 World Cup]. We do not have much to announce at the moment but I can say that we are negotiating [for the return of these three racing events in 2023]."

ID president hopes sports can contribute more to economy

RENATO MARQUES

THE president of the Sports Bureau (ID) hopes that the sports sector can contribute in a greater way to local economic development, Pun Weng Kun said yesterday on the sidelines of a meeting of the Macao Sports Council.

Talking to the media after the meeting, Pun explained that despite the ongoing concern around the pandemic, he hoped that the organization of sports events locally would contribute to the recovery of the local economy.

"We trust that our events will attract many tourists, not just from the mainland

but also from Hong Kong and other countries and regions, and that this will contribute to the development of the local economy. We hope sports can contribute more to this," Pun also mentioned that in the latter part of the year, several events would move ahead and have an immediate effect.

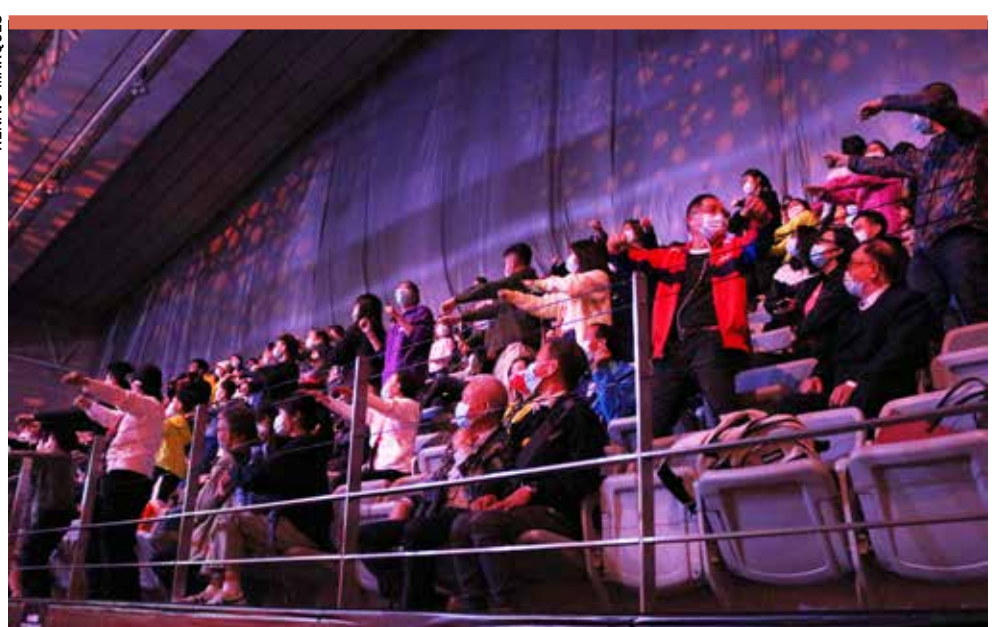
Referring to events such as the Macao International Marathon and the China Tennis Association (CTA) Tour Professional Finals (Macao) and National Tennis Championships, he said, "In December we have the marathon and also the finals of the national tennis championship that will

take place in Macau for the second time with the support of local sponsors." Pun noted that the series of events will start in October with the 3x3 Greater Bay Area Tour (for basketball). The finals will be hosted in Macau from October 10 to 16.

Other events will include the Macau Grand Prix, which will take place in November, and the World Table Tennis (WTT) Champions that will return after the 2021 first edition was hosted in early January this year, although the date for this is to be confirmed.

In addition to these events taking place in the last quarter (Q4) of this

RENATO MARQUES



year, Pun also said that other topics were discussed in the meeting. These were

related to the organization of the 15th National Games of China in 2025, which

Macau will co-host together with Hong Kong and the Guangdong province.

TWO-MONTH INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL WILL MAINLY RELY ON A REGIONAL CAST

ANTHONY LAM

THE 34th Macao International Music Festival (FIMM) will return, with eight out of ten items in its program featuring local casts.

This year's FIMM will be held from September 25 to October 29.

Local violinist Nina Wong and theatrical drama actor Wong Pak Hou will take part in two of the 10 shows. Nina Wong will work with pianist Xiyuan to present a concert titled "Bravo Macao!", while Wong Pak Hou will narrate another concert titled "Variations of Jade – the Journey of Tang Poetry."

The first concert will feature a repertoire of classics that consists of three sonatas and a solo violin piece by composers such as Johannes Brahms and Richard Strauss. Meanwhile, the latter concert will showcase pieces by John Alden Carpenter, Albert Roussel and Luo Zhongrong, among other composers, with bass-baritone Shenyang singing poems from the Tang Dynasty. Some works in the translated Chinese poetry collection 'Die chinesische Flöte' (The Chinese Flute) by German poet Hans Bethge, which inspired Mahler, Webern, Pende-



recki and many other composers, will be highlighted at this concert.

Celebrated Chinese conductor Zhang Guoyong and the Macao Chinese Orchestra will jointly present the violin concerto 'The Butterfly Lovers' with young violinist Wang Zhijong, retelling in musical form the antique Chinese romantic story depicting a striving woman who dressed as a boy so that she could study at school. There, she met the love of her life,

but the duo could not live happily ever after due to pre-existing marital arrangements. At the end of the story, both transform into butterflies and ascend to a shared life.

This year's festival will kick off with the symphonic play 'Peer Gynt' by Edvard Grieg, which will feature an interpretation through the performance of 22 characters by accomplished actor David Wang based on the script rewri-

ten by renowned music critic Yuan-Pu Chiao, as well as music jointly performed by conductor Zhang Jiemin, soprano Li Xintong, the Macao Orchestra and the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra Chorus.

Renowned conductor Long Yu and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra will join hands with erhu player Lu Yiwen and pianist Zee Zee to convey the boundless charm of music through reper-

toire featuring both Chinese and Western genres.

In "FIMM-tastic Music and Movie Night," recorded shows "Voz e Violão" by António Zambujo and "English Renaissance Polyphony – a survey" by The Tallis Scholars will be screened at the Amphitheatre of the Taipa Houses and St. Dominic's Church respectively, presenting Portuguese fado music and English sacred music on the big screen.

FIMM

Music festival highlights love and hope through 'Song of Tomorrow' theme

ANTHONY LAM

DESPITE its theme "Song of Tomorrow," this year's Macao International Music Festival (FIMM) in fact celebrates joy, love and hope, Deland Leong Wai Man, president of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), said yesterday.

Yesterday, the bureau held a press conference to reveal the line-up of this year's event. On the sidelines of the press conference, after announcing a program mostly concentrating on classical music, poems and hymns, the IC president was questioned by the Times as to where the elements of "tomorrow" lie in the program itself.

Recapping her speech at the ceremony, she defended the theme, stating that the festival this year is aimed at "gathering melodies of joy, love and hope to



IC president Deland Leong Wai Man

create a kaleidoscopic spiritual world for everyone" amid the "once-in-a-century pandemic."

She reiterated that there would be shows that refor-

mulate classical works and present them from a new perspective. In addition, many of the performers would be from younger generations, she said.

"We hope to present a multifaceted festival with classics," she concluded.

The program of this year's festival features a collection of orchestral classi-

cs, jazz and 16th century Christian hymns.

In previous years, the IC invited pop singers from Hong Kong to perform several concerts at the music festival to cater to fans of pop music, while expanding the scope of the musical offerings. For example, Hong Kong Cantopop star William So performed a single concert during the 31st FIMM.

When questioned about the absence of Canto pop and local pop musicians, she dismissed the suggestion that there was a lack of a local talent lineup in the program. She pointed out that the Macao Orchestra and the Macao Chinese Orchestra are also taking part.

The two orchestras, although recently semi-privatized and set to operate commercially, are managed by a company fully owned by the government. The IC president is the chairperson of the company board.

A local violinist and a theatrical actor will also take part in two of the 10 shows in the program, she added, while promising

that local pop musicians will be featured in other IC events and shows.

"The International Music Festival will focus on classical works," she said, without saying whether the festival had shifted focus.

She hinted that under the current Covid-19 control measures and restrictions on immigration, inviting foreign performers to the music festival was difficult. "We need to choose performers with a greater likelihood of being able to enter Macau during the festival," she said.

The IC has budgeted MOP13 million for this year's music festival.

When asked to comment on the Public Works Bureau's report on the collapse of the four-century-old city wall on Guia Hill, Leong pledged that the IC would learn from the incident and improve its work on preserving historical sites.

She did not give a direct answer as to whether IC had access to the full report. For the time being, only an abstract of the report is available to the public.

LONG LIVE THE KING

Residents pay respect to late Queen on first day of condolence service

ANTHONY LAM

A few dozen people signed the book of condolence yesterday for the late Queen Elizabeth II at the Morrison Chapel next to the Camões Garden.

Organized by the British Consulate General Hong Kong, the condolence book opened yesterday and will remain open today from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The Macau service was presided over by the British Honorary Consul in Macau, Glenn McCartney. The book of condolence will be sent to the Royal Family, according to McCartney.

There were some British citizens currently in Macau amongst those in attendance.

"I was born here in Macau, before moving to Hong Kong when I was very young," said Mr U, a British citizen who attended the service yesterday. "Then I started pursuing a career in both Hong Kong and the U.K."

He stated that this was the

ANTHONY LAM



reason behind his decision to pay tribute to the late Queen.

Mr Li, a Macau resident who was also present at the service, explained that he regarded the late Queen as a figurehead who had united the Commonweal-

th and pushed for world peace and the betterment of the environment, hinting that he had seen evidence of this first-hand through his travels to several Commonwealth nations.

Meanwhile, Ms Chan, also a

Macau resident, considered the late Queen a "respectable monarch."

"I think one of the most respectable aspects of the late Queen is that somehow she put her service higher than her fa-


mily," she said. "In addition, she was crowned very suddenly but she picked things up well, which I interpret as a quality of resilience."

She was the only one of the three interviewees who had not been to the U.K. She admitted that she had formed her impressions on the country on the basis of news reports and TV dramas.



For the time being, it is unclear if any government officials will be signing the book of condolence in their public capacity. However, Hong Kong Chief Secretary for Administration Eric Chan in the neighboring city has done so on behalf of the government there, according to Hong Kong media reports.

In the neighboring region, the death of Queen Elizabeth II has sparked a wave of nostalgia and renewed interest in British memorabilia in Hong Kong, which for 156 years had lived under the British crown until its return to China in 1997.





AD



HOLIDAY RENTAL HOUSES

Lugar das Letras  Casa de Gouvães 

The houses are set in the heart of the World Heritage Site of the Douro Valley and its famous winery landscape where the world's Ports are produced. Both restored relics overlooking the Rio Douro, these eight rooms houses have been blessed with gorgeous wooden floors, plush queen beds and marble baths; the best have dazzling river views. But it is the welcome that makes this place stand out from the crowd.



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Macao by 2033 - Setting Expectations

Presented by:
Prof. Glenn McCartney PhD, MBE

britcham Brews & Buzz - Thursday, 22 Sep 2022

In the 2.5 years backdrop of COVID-19 lockdowns, travel restrictions and plummeting gaming revenues, the casino concession retendering process is well underway - 14 September is the final day for accepting bids. The Macao authorities have put forward criteria to judge casino tenders and award new 10-year casino concessions. But how will all this play out in the bigger picture of Macao's future gaming revenue recovery, visitation mix and tourism position?



Prof. Glenn McCartney PhD, MBE is Associate Dean (Curriculum and Teaching) and Associate Professor in International Integrated Resort Management at the Faculty of Business Administration, University of Macau. He is also the British Honorary Consul in Macao, as well as a Founder and subsequent Honorary Member of Britcham.

Date: 22 Sep. 2022 (THU)
Time: 6:30 - 8:30 PM
Fee : Members - MOP280
Non-members - MOP380 (Includes standard drinks and pass around snacks)

Venue : Grand Ballroom III Level 2,
Grand Hyatt Macau

Advance booking necessary. Email info@britchammacao.org or call +853 6331 1124

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DIPLOMACY

XI VISITS KAZAKHSTAN AHEAD OF SUMMIT WITH PUTIN

CHINESE President Xi Jinping yesterday started his first foreign trip since the outbreak of the pandemic with a stop in Kazakhstan ahead of a summit with Russia's Vladimir Putin and other leaders of a Central Asian security group.

Wearing a blue suit and a face mask, Xi was met on the airport tarmac by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and an honor guard, all of whom wore masks.

Xi's trip underlines the importance Beijing places on asserting its role as a regional leader amid tension with Washington, Japan and India.

Tokayev's government said the two leaders would discuss energy and trade. Kazakhstan, a sparsely populated country of 19.4 million people and sprawling grasslands, is a major oil and gas producer. China is a leading customer.

Today, Xi is due to fly to Samarkand in neighboring Uzbekistan for a summit of the eight-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organization, led by China and Russia.

Beijing and Moscow see the SCO as a counterweight to U.S. alliances in East Asia.



Other SCO governments include India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Tajikistan. Observers include Iran and Afghanistan.

The Chinese leader is promoting a "Global Security Initiative" announced in April following the formation of the Quad by Washington, Japan, Australia

and India in response to Beijing's more assertive foreign policy. Xi has given few details, but U.S. officials complain it echoes Russian arguments in support of Moscow's attack on Ukraine.

Xi and Putin plan to hold a one-on-one meeting and discuss Ukraine, according to the Russian president's foreign policy

adviser Yuri Ushakov.

Kazakhstan is part of China's multibillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative to expand trade by building ports, railways and other infrastructure across an arc of dozens of countries from the South Pacific through Asia to the Middle East, Europe and Africa.

The initiative and China's eco-

nomics inroads into Central Asia have fueled unease in Russia, which sees the region as its sphere of influence. Kazakhstan and its neighbors are trying to attract Chinese investment without upsetting Moscow.

"This visit is extremely important," said Deputy Foreign Minister Roman Vassilenko this week ahead of Xi's arrival. "We certainly hope that it will advance political and economic and commercial relations with China."

Pope Francis was in Kazakhstan at the same time as Xi, but there was no indication they might meet. Aboard his flight, the pope was asked about a possible meeting and replied, "I don't have any news about this. But I am always ready to go to China."

Xi's trip — at a time when his government is urging the Chinese public to avoid foreign travel under its "zero-COVID" strategy — underlines the importance to the ruling Communist Party of asserting China's strategic ambitions.

Relations with Washington, Europe, Japan and India are strained by disputes over technology, security, human rights and territory.

The summit takes Xi abroad while the party prepares for an October congress at which he is expected to break with political tradition and try to award himself a third five-year term as leader. **MDT/AP**

ONLINE GAMING

China grants gaming license to NetEase, first since crackdown

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

CHINA'S second largest gaming firm NetEase has received its first online game license in over a year in a possible sign Beijing is gradually easing a crackdown on the industry.

The National Press and Publication Administration, which issues licenses for video games, on Tuesday published a list of approvals for 73 games, including a mobile game by NetEase called "All-Star Street Ball Party."

In August 2021, regulators stopped issuing gaming licenses as they tightened restrictions on the tech industry. They resumed approvals in April. Tencent, the country's biggest gaming company, has not gotten any games approved since then.

However, Nanjing Wangdian Technology, a subsidiary of Tencent, got a license for a health-education mobi-



Visitors prepare to put on a virtual reality headset in front of a digital map of China at a booth at the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) in Beijing on Sept. 3, 2022

le game called "Defense of Health." Tencent first unveiled plans to launch this game in May 2021. But such educational games typically are less lucrative than commercial mobile games.

In cracking down on the technology industry, Beijing implemented a raft of new regulations for online edu-

cation, e-commerce, online gaming and financial technology.

Online gaming time for minors was limited to just 3 hours a week on most weeks. Officials also said they would supervise and inspect online games more often to ensure that they comply with regulations. **MDT/AP**

WEATHER

TYPHOON MUIFA STRENGTHENS, HEADS FOR SHANGHAI ON CHINA COAST

A major typhoon gathered strength yesterday as it headed over open water toward the Chinese metropolis of Shanghai.

Heavy rain was reported in the city of more than 20 million people as Typhoon Muifa approached in the evening. The Hong Kong Observatory classified it as a severe typhoon with maximum sustained winds of 155 kilometers per hour.

All flights at Shanghai's two main airports were canceled and authorities were evacuating people from construction sites and other risky areas, according to Chinese media reports.

The typhoon had been expected to make landfall in the afternoon in Zhejiang province, but it shifted slightly eas-



tward, keeping it at sea and putting it on track for a direct hit on Shanghai.

All flights were canceled at Ningbo airport in Zhejiang and more than 11,000 fishing boats returned to port in the province, Chinese media said.

The requirement of a negative coronavirus test within 72 hou-

rs to enter buildings and other public areas in much of China was suspended in Ningbo, except at airports, train stations and highway entrances.

The storm's latest track would take it through Jiangsu and Shandong provinces along China's northeast coast after hitting Shanghai. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Yang Cheongsam, an investigation and coordination bureau director-general of the Personal Information Protection Commission speaks at the Government Complex in Seoul, South Korea, yesterday

South Korea fines Google, Meta over privacy violations

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

SOUTH Korea's privacy watchdog has fined Google and Meta a combined 100 billion won (\$72 million) for tracking consumers' online behavior without their consent and using their data for targeted advertisements.

South Korea's Personal Information and Protection Com-

mission said it fined Google 69.2 billion won (\$50 million) and Meta 30.8 billion won (\$22 million) after a meeting where officials agreed that the companies' business practices might cause "serious" privacy infringements.

The fines were the biggest ever penalties imposed by South Korea for privacy law violations, the commission said in a press release.

Both companies refuted the commission's findings and Meta indicated it could challenge its fine in court. The fines can be appealed through administrative lawsuits, which must be filed within 90 days after the companies are formally notified of the commission's decision.

According to the commission, Google and Meta, which operates Facebook and Instagram, di-

dn't clearly inform users or obtain their consent as they collected information about their online activities when they used other websites or services outside their own platforms. Such data was used to analyze their interests and create individually customized advertisements, the commission said.

The commission ordered the companies to provide an "easy and clear" process of consent gi-

ving people more control over whether to share information about what they do online.

"Google did not clearly inform consumers that it would collect and use their behavioral information about their use of other companies' (services) when they signed up," the commission said.

"Meta did not present the content of consent in way that could be easily seen by consumers when they signed up, and just included the content in their full data policy statement. It did not specifically inform consumers of the legally required notifications and did not obtain their consent."

The commission said the companies' practices seriously threatened privacy rights as more than 82% of South Koreans using Google and more than 98% using Meta have let the companies track their online activities.

Google, a search and email giant that also operates the YouTube video platform, disagreed with the commission's findings. It said in a statement that it has always demonstrated a commitment to "making ongoing updates that give users control and transparency." The company said it will review the commission's findings once it receives the fully written decision.

Meta said it will consider "all options," including seeking a court ruling.

"We are confident that we work with our clients in a legally compliant way that meets the processes required by local regulations," Meta said in an emailed statement. **MDT/AP**

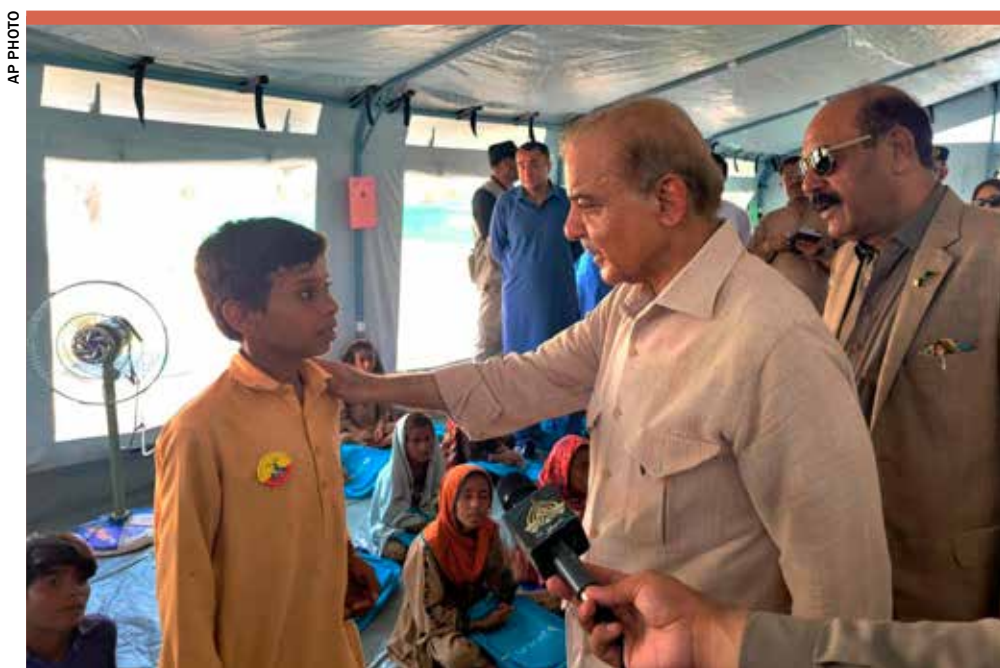
CLIMATE

Pakistani premier promises compensation for flood victims

PAKISTAN'S prime minister yesterday promised the country's homeless people that the government will ensure they are paid to rebuild and return to their lives after the country's worst-ever floods.

With winter is just weeks away, half a million people are living in camps after being displaced by the flood, which destroyed 1.7 million homes. So far, the government's priority has been to deliver food, tents and cash to the victims. The floods have killed 1,481 people since mid-June and affected 33 million.

"We will do our best to financially help you so that you can rebuild homes" and return to a normal life, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif told several families living in tents and makeshift homes in the town of Suhbatpur in Baluchistan. "Those



Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, second right, talks a student at a makeshift school inside a tent in the flood-hit area of Suhbatpur in Baluchistan, Pakistan

who lost homes and crops will get compensation from the government," he said in his televised comments.

Sharif also told dozens of

school children, who were studying in a tent with help from the U.N. children's agency UNICEF in the town of Suhbatpur, that they will

get a new school in the next two months.

"Pakistan never witnessed such huge climate-induced devastation," Sharif

told a gathering of lawyers in Islamabad yesterday. "It was painful to see inundated villages, towns and cities."

Even providing clean drinking water to flood-affected people has become a challenge, he said.

The floods have destroyed 70% of wheat, cotton and other crops in Pakistan. Initially, Pakistan estimated that the floods caused \$10 billion in damages, but now the government says the economic toll is far greater. The United Nations has urged the international community, especially those responsible for climate change, to send more help to Pakistan.

The monsoon rains have swept away entire villages, bridges and roads, leaving hundreds of thousands homeless. At one point, a third of the country's territory was inundated with water.

Multiple experts have blamed climate change for unprecedented rain-related damages in Pakistan.

Also Wednesday, Pakistan's minister for climate change, Sherry Rehman, told a gathering of lawmakers from the Asia Pacific in the capital, Islamabad that right now the entire world is facing a threat from climate change which, she said, "knows no border."

She called for reducing emissions to save other countries from the damage that her country is facing now.

Meanwhile, the first planeload of aid from Saudi Arabia arrived in Pakistan overnight.

So far, U.N. agencies and various countries, including the United States, have sent about 90 planeloads of aid. **MDT/AP**

PUTIN'S WAR

Ukraine's Zelenskyy visits recently retaken, devastated city

ELENA BECATOROS &
HANNA ARHIROVA, IZIUM

HIS hand on his heart, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy watched as his country's flag was hoisted yesterday above the recently recaptured city of Izium, a rare foray outside the capital that highlighted Moscow's embarrassing retreat in the face of a lightning Ukrainian counteroffensive.

Russian forces left the war-scarred city last week as Kyiv's soldiers pressed a stunning advance that has reclaimed large swaths of territory in the country's northeastern Kharkiv region.

As Zelenskyy looked on and sang the national anthem, the Ukrainian flag was raised in front of the burned-out city hall building in the largely devastated town, where apartment buildings are blackened by fire and pockmarked by artillery strikes. The center of one residential building had collapsed, a gaping hole and piles of rubble where homes used to be.

"The view is very shocking but it is not shocking for me," Zelenskyy said in brief comments to the press, "because we began to see the same pictures from Bucha, from the first de-occupied territories ... the same destroyed buildings, killed people."

After Russian forces withdrew from Bucha, on the outskirts of the capital of Kyiv, in the early weeks of the war, the bodies of civilians were found dumped in the streets, yards and mass graves. Many bore signs of torture. Moscow's recent rout in the northeast was its largest military defeat since that withdrawal from the Kyiv area.

Prosecutors said they have found six bodies with traces of torture in recently retaken villages in the Kharkiv region.

"We have a terrible picture of what the occupiers did. ... Such cities as Balakliia, Izium are standing in the same row as Bucha, Borodyanka, Irpin," said Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin, listing the names of places where the Ukrainians have alleged Russian forces committed atrocities.

Local authorities have made similar claims in other places formerly held by Russia, but it was not immedia-

AP PHOTO



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy takes part in a national flag-raising ceremony in the recently retaken city of Izium, Ukraine, yesterday

tely possible to verify their information. They have so far not provided evidence of atrocities on the scale that was seen in Bucha.

The head of the Kharkiv prosecutor's office, Oleksandr Filchakov, said bodies were found in Hrakove and Zaliznyche, villages around 60 kilometers southeast of Kharkiv.

He said investigators were also learning of residents being killed and buried by Russian troops in another retaken town, Balakliia.

On the northern outskirts of Izium, the remains of Russian tanks and vehicles lay shattered along the road.

Zelenskyy said that as Ukrainian soldiers retook villages, "the life comes back."

In the wake of the recent gains, a new front line has started to emerge along the Oskil River that largely traces the eastern edge of the Kharkiv region, a Washington-based think tank said yesterday.

"Russian troops are unlikely to be strong enough to prevent further Ukrainian advances along the entire Oskil River because they do not appear to be receiving reinforcements, and Ukrainian troops will likely be able to exploit this weakness to resume the counteroffensive across the Oskil if they choose," the Institute for the Study of War said.

The counteroffensive has also left more weapons in Ukrainian hands.

Russian forces likely left behind dozens of tanks, armored personnel carriers and other heavy weaponry as they fled Ukraine's advance in the east of the country, a Ukrainian think tank said yesterday.

The Center for Defense Strategies said one single Russian unit that was around Izium left behind more than three dozen T-80 tanks and about as many infantry fighting vehicles known by the acronym BMP. Another unit left behind 47 tanks and 27 armored vehicles.

The center said Russian forces tried to destroy some of the abandoned vehicles through artillery strikes as they fell back. Typically, armed forces destroy equipment left behind so their opponent can't use it.

However, the chaos of the Russian withdrawal apparently saw them leave untouched ammunition and weapons behind.

In other areas, Russia continued its attacks, causing the death toll to keep rising in a war that has dragged on for nearly seven months.

Russian shelling of seven Ukrainian regions over the past 24 hours killed at least seven civilians and wounded 22 more, Ukraine's presiden-

tial office reported yesterday morning.

Two people were killed and three wounded after Russia attacked Mykolaiv with S-300 missiles overnight, said regional Gov. Vitaliy Kim. Settlements near the front line in Mykolaiv region remain under constant fire.

The Nikopol area, which is across a river from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, was shelled three times during the night, but no injuries were immediately reported, said regional Gov. Valentyn Reznichenko. Nikopol city itself was shelled two times and left almost 3,000 families without electricity. Reznichenko said the electricity has been partially restored.

In the Luhansk region, where some of the Russian troops went after retreating from the Kharkiv region, mobile internet has been shut down, according to the region's governor Serhiy Haidai, and intense shelling of Ukrainian forces continues.

The fighting continued in the neighboring Donetsk region, where shelling killed five civilians and wounded 16 more. Together, Luhansk and Donetsk make up the Donbas.

"Every night in Donbas is restless. The civilians should leave the region. It's a matter of life and death," Donetsk governor Pavlo Kyrylenko said. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2000 UK FUEL PROTESTERS GO BACK HOME



The fuel protests which have paralysed Britain for seven days, causing a crisis in the NHS, emptying supermarkets shelves and closing schools, have ended.

The last major action was in Carmarthen, Wales, where a convoy of lorries paraded through the town centre to enthusiastic support from the public.

The protests ended with an ultimatum from truckers: they are demanding the government cut fuel duties within 60 days, or they will attempt to bring the country to its knees yet again.

But the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has hinted he will listen to the truckers' concerns - despite a firm statement at the beginning of the crisis he would not give into blockades and pickets.

It is expected to take up to 14 days for some areas of the country to recover completely, as only 26% of petrol stations have adequate supplies of fuel.

Many garages are still rationing, and others are limiting their supplies to emergency vehicles and medical personnel only.

But there has been little public irritation despite the long queues.

Mr Blair has ordered the formation of a new task force of oil executives and police officers to work out how to deal with any future demonstrations.

Home Secretary Jack Straw - who is to head the group - admitted the government had not been fully prepared for the events of the last week.

"We were not caught on the hop about the concerns - it is certainly the case, however, that the scale and escalation of the protest was something which was unexpected," he said.

But one truck driver, encouraged by the widespread public support of this protest, promised more chaos if fuel prices do not fall.

"We could have brought this country down - we've got them on the rack, let's keep them on the rack," he told colleagues.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, offered concessions to the fuel protestors in his pre-budget report in November 2000.

Fuel duty was frozen until 2002 and a cut of 3p per litre on ultra low sulphur petrol was announced.

It was not enough to appease many truck drivers and they embarked on another "go-slow" protest drive from north-east England to London.

But the convoy dwindled quickly and the protest never gathered as much support as it did in September.

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

This is not the day to be extravagant. Minor health problems may lower your vitality. Don't use emotional blackmail on someone you love.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

You have been going through a period of change that has caused problems for you with your loved ones. You may be experiencing emotional turmoil in regard to your mate.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Don't jump the gun; you may find yourself getting angry at the wrong person. Empty promises will cause upset. Don't exhaust yourself or minor health problems will set in.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You can meet friends who will let you know how valuable you are. You can dazzle members of the opposite sex with your quick wit and aggressive charm. Comfort is a necessity.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Abrupt action will cause difficulties with relatives. Enlist coworkers in order to get the job done on time. Your greatest enjoyment will come through social activities and pleasure trips.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Don't be afraid to confront situations concerning loved ones in order to solve any problems that may exist. Don't overdo it. You need to enjoy yourself.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

You may find that you can be the recipient of valuable information if you're willing to be a good listener. Talking to those you trust and respect will help you sort out any problems.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You will feel the limitations if you have been overdoing it. Be sure to take advantage of the opportunities that exist. You can sort out any differences you have in an amiable manner.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Put your efforts into being creative. You'll find it easy to charm members of the opposite sex today. Turn your present relationship around or start a new one.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Don't expect support from your mate. Losses are evident. You can expect opposition from family as well as colleagues. You can make money if you are wise in your choices.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

This is not the time to lend or borrow money or possessions. Be sure to get involved with those who can introduce you to unusual forms of entertainment.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You will be in the doghouse if you are being. You will have problems with coworkers if you are too extreme about doing things perfectly.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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		5	2				4	
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7	2			4				
		8		9		7		
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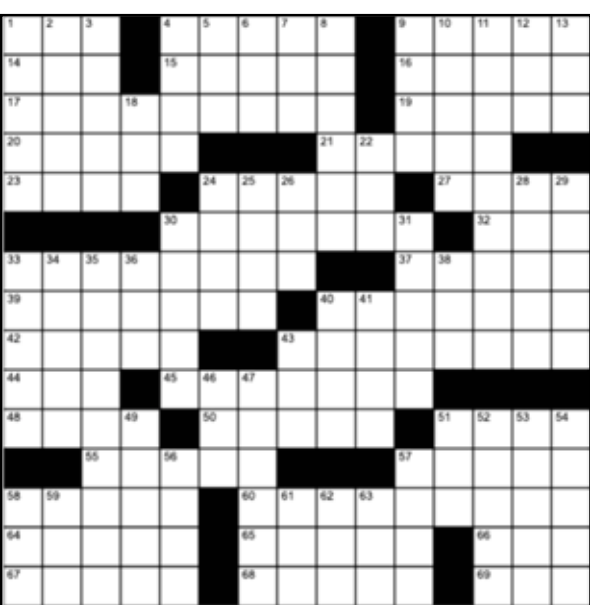
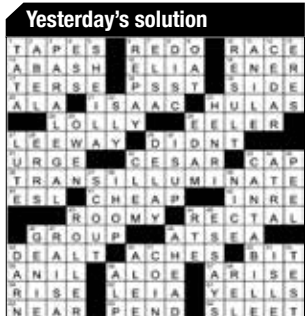
HARD

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	4							8
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			2			7		
						6	1	
			8				5	
7						2		
1								

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Ingot; 4- Swiftress; 9- Colorado resort; 14- Suffix with glob; 15- Without ___ in the world; 16- Ezio Pinza, for one; 17- Act of leaving; 19- Perform or portray; 20- Stage play; 21- Decoration; 23- It's used to walk the dog; 24- Trapshooting; 27- "Jake's Thing" author; 30- Domain; 32- Breast-supporting undergarment; 33- Victim of social injustice; 37- Siouan speakers; 39- Pragmatic person; 40- Strands; 42- Pesto herb; 43- Bunkum; 44- Court fig.; 45- Reasonable; 48- Flood survivor; 50- Worker's reward; 51- Chow; 55- Helicopter part; 57- Capital on the Red River; 58- Brought on; 60- See-sawing; 64- Lace tip; 65- Very hard mineral; 66- Religious sch.; 67- Holmes's creator; 68- Ascends; 69- Conductor ___-Pekka Salonen;

DOWN 1- Chum; 2- Olds model; 3- Settle a loan; 4- Poet Teasdale; 5- Agt.'s take; 6- Lac contents; 7- Drop the ball; 8- Judged; 9- In the sack; 10- Capital city of Yemen; 11- Breviary; 12- Computer key; 13- "As if!"; 18- Latin I verb; 22- DDE's command; 24- Caesar and others; 25- Gnarl; 26- Early bird?; 28- Peace goddess; 29- Impudent; 30- Shrimplike crustaceans; 31- Fable finale; 33- Living in a city; 34- Peachyl; 35- Cowardly; 36- Biblical high priest; 38- Rocky hilltop; 40- Apple products; 41- Caesar's wings; 43- DI doubled; 46- Metal in Montana's motto; 47- Device for holding up a stocking; 49- The Hilton, e.g.; 51- Musical ability; 52- Licorice-like flavor; 53- Shades; 54- 18th letter of the Greek alphabet; 56- Carry; 57- Attention getters; 58- Stripling; 59- Self-esteem; 61- U.K. record label; 62- Some MIT grads; 63- It's past due;



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

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NAM LONG 1 BED	HKD 8,500
COLOANE V. 1 BED	HKD 9,300
COLOANE V. 2 BEDS	HKD 10,500
COLOANE V. 2 BEDS	HKD10,000

FOR SALE

JADE GARDEN 4 BEDS	HKD15,380,000
NOVA TAIPA 4 BEDS	HKD12,880,000
BAI YUEN GRD. 3 BEDS	HKD12,800,000
MANHATTAN 3 BEDS	HKD12,980,000
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
NOVA PARK 2 BEDS	HKD10,800,000

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EU COURT LARGELY UPHOLDS USD4B GOOGLE ANDROID ANTITRUST FINE

KELVIN CHAN, LONDON

A top court largely rejected Google's appeal of a record European Union antitrust fine imposed for throttling competition and reducing consumer choice through the dominance of its mobile Android operating system. It marks another win for EU regulators taking a global lead in controlling the power of big tech companies.

The European Court of Justice's General Court mostly confirmed a 2018 decision by the EU's executive Commission to slap Google with a fine of more than 4 billion euros (\$3.99 billion).

"In order better to reflect the gravity and duration of the infringement," it's appropriate to give Google a fine of 4.125 billion euros, the court said. That's slightly lower than the original 4.34 billion euro penalty, with the court saying its reasoning differed "in certain respects" from the commission's.

"We are disappointed that the Court did not annul the decision in full," Google said in a statement. "Android has created more choice for everyone, not less, and supports thousands of successful

AP PHOTO



businesses in Europe and around the world."

The company has previously argued that free and open-source Android has resulted in low-cost phones and driven competition with its chief rival, Apple. Android is the most popular mobile operating system, beating even Apple's iOS.

The fine is one of three antitrust penalties totaling more than \$8 billion that the European Commission slapped on Google

between 2017 and 2019, putting the 27-nation bloc at the forefront of the global push to rein in tech giants.

Since then, the commission has widened its crackdown on digital giants with more antitrust investigations targeting Amazon, Apple and Facebook and sweeping new rules aimed at clamping down on the biggest digital companies. Tech companies are now facing tighter scrutiny around the world: Google also got hit with a

\$50 million fine yesterday by South Korean privacy watchdogs that also fined Facebook parent Meta \$22 million.

In its original decision, the European Commission said Google's practices restrict competition and reduce choices for consumers.

It determined that Google broke EU rules by requiring smartphone makers to take a bundle of Google apps if they wanted any at all and prevented them from selling devices with altered ver-

sions of Android.

The bundle contained 11 apps, including YouTube, Maps and Gmail, but regulators focused on the three that had the biggest market share: Google Search, Chrome and the company's Play Store for apps.

Google had made some changes after the original ruling to address the issues, such as giving European Android users a choice of browser and search app and charging device-makers to pre-install its apps.

EU consumer group BEUC, which argued for the commission's case in court hearings, said the decision "confirms that Europe's consumers must enjoy meaningful choice between search engines and browsers on their phones and tablets."

Google still has one more chance to appeal the decision — but only on points of law — to the EU Court of Justice, the bloc's highest court. It didn't say whether it would do so.

The company has already lost an appeal of its first EU antitrust penalty, which it's now appealing to the Court of Justice. The General Court last year also sided with the commission, upholding a 2.4 billion-euro fine issued in 2017 by regulators who decided that Google unfairly directed visitors to its comparison shopping service, Google Shopping, to the detriment of rivals. **MDT/AP**

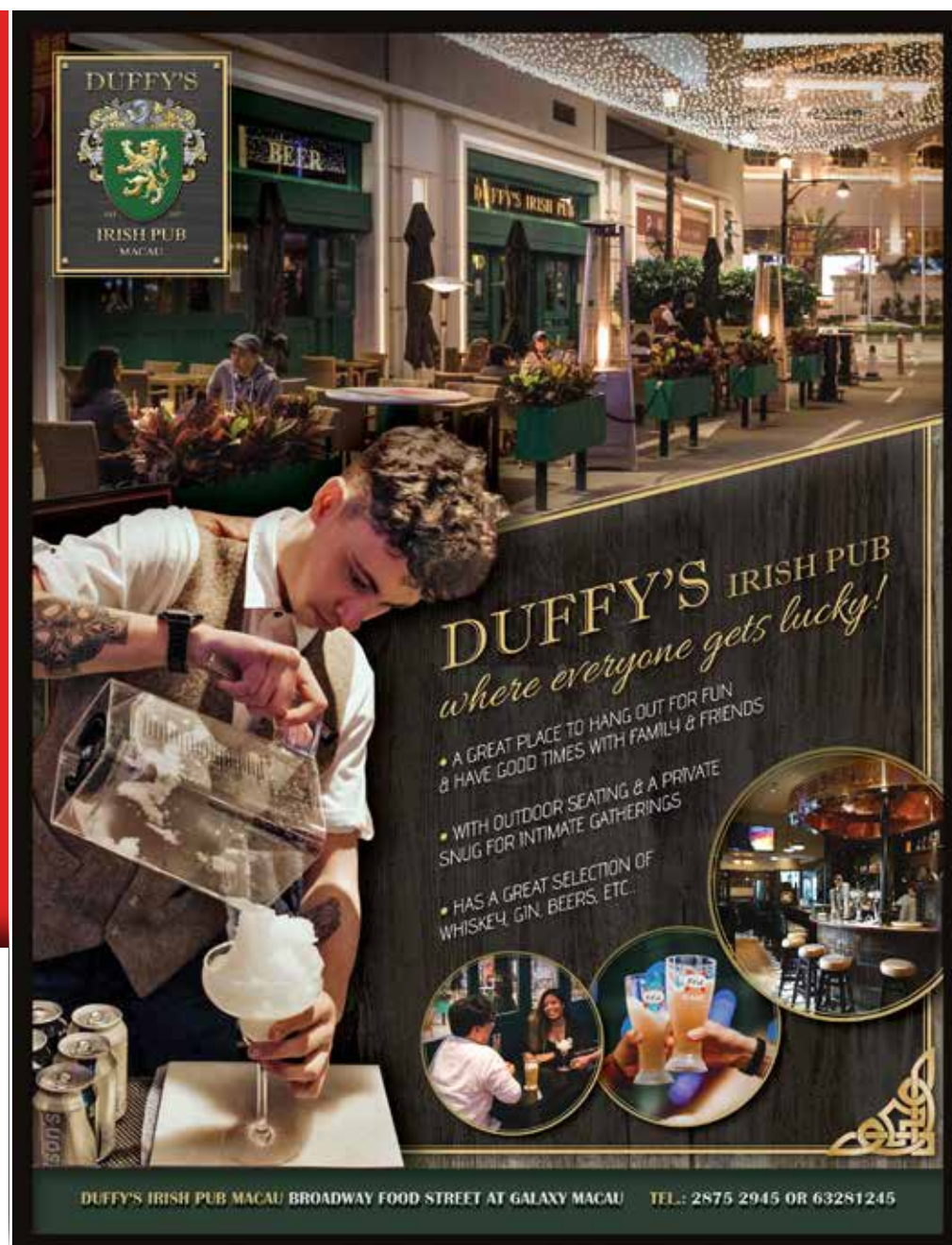
AD



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FOOTBALL | BASKETBALL | DAILY TRAININGS



FOOTBALL

Liverpool needs late goal to beat Ajax in Champions League

LIVERPOOL fans held their collective breath and diverted their eyes to the referee.

Had Joel Matip's 89th-minute header crossed the line for a goal to seal a crucial win, even at this early stage in the Champions League?

The match official looked at his watch, gave the signal and Anfield went wild.

With a late goal needing confirmation by goal-line technology, Liverpool beat Ajax 2-1 on Tuesday to claim its first points in this season's Champions League.

"I wasn't sure, to be honest," Matip said about his winner that ended his nine-year goal drought in the Champions League. "When I saw the referee (award it), the emotions came out."

It wasn't just the result that was huge for Liverpool. It was also the way the English team performed, a week after the humiliation of its 4-1 loss at Napoli in the opening



round of Group A games.

The pressing was better. The intensity was higher. Thiago Alcantara's display in central mid-

field in his first start of the season after injury was hugely encouraging, knitting the team together.

This was more like Liverpool,

even if the team wound up needing a last-gasp goal to see off the Dutch champions.

"Coming back from the horror show in Naples, it was important we showed a reaction," Liverpool defender Virgil van Dijk said. "It wasn't easy ... but it's something to work on."

Looking to make amends for that defeat in Italy which manager Jurgen Klopp described as the worst performance in his seven-year tenure, Liverpool started strongly and Mohamed Salah ended his run of seven Champions League games without a goal by putting the team ahead in the 17th.

Luis Diaz headed on a long clearance from goalkeeper Alisson Becker, Diogo Jota collected the ball and played the ball across to his right, and Salah took one touch to steady himself before shooting low inside the post.

Mohammed Kudus smashed a shot in off the underside of the

crossbar for the equalizer in the 27th after Ajax midfielder Edson Alvarez ran in behind Trent Alexander-Arnold and cut a cross back into the penalty area.

Liverpool was the better team for the majority of an end-to-end game but after substitute Darwin Nunez swept a shot wide and Salah hit a deflected effort against the post, it looked like it wasn't going to be the home team's night.

But after Matip's late intervention — he met an outswinging corner with a header that had just crossed the line before being cleared away by a covering Ajax player — Liverpool will head into back-to-back group games against Rangers after the international break in good heart.

"I think everyone understood we had to put in a completely different shift for the game," Klopp said. "We did that."

Ajax was coming off a 4-0 win over Rangers last week.

Before kickoff, there was a period of silence as a tribute to Queen Elizabeth II, who died last week at the age of 96. It was respectfully observed, except for a few random shouts that were quickly hushed.

It was Liverpool's first game since the queen's death. Players from both teams wore black armbands for the game. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

**INEXHAUSTIBLE
WELL OF
FRIENDSHIP
BETWEEN CHINA
AND KAZAKHSTAN**

President Xi Jinping's state visit to Kazakhstan on Wednesday on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries will usher in the next "30 golden years" of bilateral cooperation.

President Xi will also pay a state visit to Uzbekistan on Thursday and Friday, during which he will attend the 22nd meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Council of Heads of State in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

This is President Xi's first foreign trip in more than two years, and its timing is of profound significance. As the Foreign Ministry said, his trip represents China's most important head-of-state diplomatic event ahead of the upcoming 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

Thanks to the traditional friendly relations between the two countries, and the exemplary state-to-state relations they have established, Sino-Kazakhstan cooperation has increased significantly over the past 30 years and continually reached new heights.

Also of great significance, it was in Kazakhstan in 2013 that President Xi first proposed the Silk Road Economic Belt — in which, Kazakhstan is an indispensable link. The Belt is the overland component of the Belt and Road Initiative, the ocean connectivity route being the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Together they have become a global public good. As of July, 149 countries and 32 international organizations had signed cooperative documents with China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

China and Kazakhstan have rendered mutual support on issues concerning each other's core interests, supported the implementation of each other's development strategies, and jointly injected positivity into regional development.

The two countries should continue to actively cooperate within the framework of multilateral cooperation mechanisms, cultivate new sources of growth, and work closely with each other in bilateral and international contexts and in the United Nations, SCO and other multilateral mechanisms to boost growth, strengthen common security in the region, safeguard food, energy and other supply chains, and promote global governance reform.

As President Xi wrote in a signed article published in local Kazakhstan media on Tuesday, China is willing to continue to share its development achievements with Kazakhstan and its door of opening-up and friendly cooperation will always remain open to its largest neighbor in Central Asia.

**FINAL PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY FOR
PROCESSION OF QUEEN'S COFFIN**

Queen Elizabeth II's coffin left Buckingham Palace last night (Macau time) as it was taken amid somber pageantry on a horse-drawn gun carriage past crowds of mourners to the Houses of Parliament, where the late monarch will lie in state for four days.

Crowds began massing early along the flag-lined road outside the palace for the procession from the monarch's official London residence to the historic Westminster Hall at Parliament. King Charles III and other members of the royal family

will walk behind the coffin.

Thousands of people gathered on The Mall outside Buckingham Palace and along the banks of the River Thames hours before the coffin procession begins.

About a half-hour before the procession was due to start, the gun carriage passed through the palace's wrought iron gates.

London's Heathrow Airport halted flights that could disturbing the procession. British Airways canceled 16 flights as a result of the changes.

THE
BUZZ

SOCIAL MEDIA

**TIKTOK SEARCH
RESULTS RIDDLED WITH
MISINFORMATION: REPORT**

TIKTOK may be the platform of choice for catchy videos, but anyone using it to learn about COVID-19, climate change or Russia's invasion of Ukraine is likely to encounter misleading information, according to a research report published yesterday.

Researchers at NewsGuard searched for content about prominent news topics on TikTok and say they found that nearly 1 in 5 of the videos automatically suggested by the platform contained misinformation.

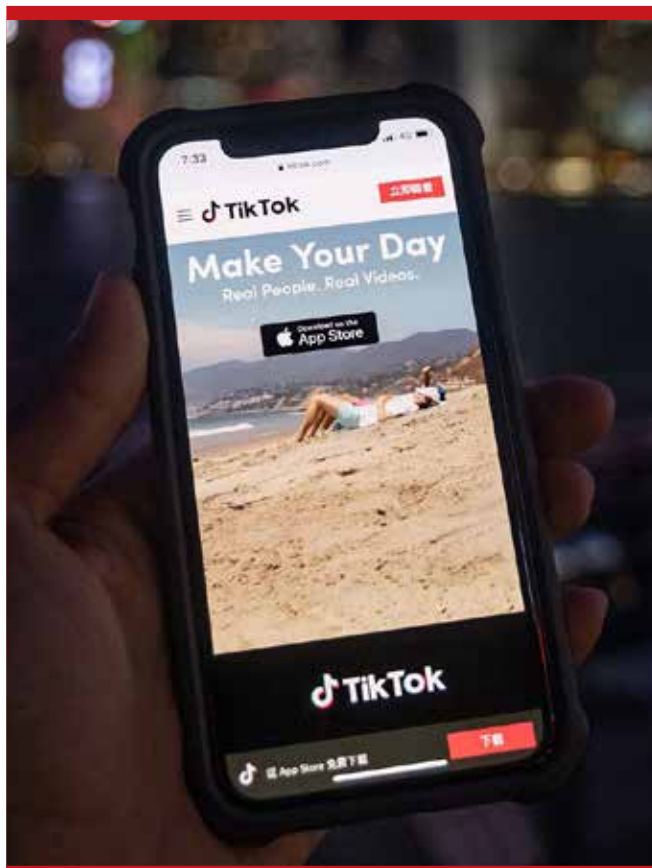
Searches for information about "mRNA vaccine," for instance, yielded five videos (out of the first 10) that contained misinformation, including baseless claims that the COVID-19 vaccine causes "permanent damage in children's critical organs."

Researchers looking for information about abortion, the 2020 election, the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, climate change or Russia's invasion of Ukraine on TikTok found similarly misleading videos scattered among more accurate clips.

The amount of misinformation — and the ease with which it can be found — is especially troubling given TikTok's popularity with young people, according to Steven Brill, founder of NewsGuard, a firm that monitors misinformation.

TikTok is the second most popular domain in the world, according to online performance and security company Cloudflare, exceeded only by Google.

Brill questioned whether ByteDance, the Chinese company that owns TikTok, is doing enough to stop misinformation or whether it deliberately allows misinformation to proliferate as a way to sow confusion in the U.S. and other Western democracies.



"It's either incompetence or it's something worse," Brill told The Associated Press.

TikTok released a statement in response to NewsGuard's report noting that its community guidelines prohibit harmful misinformation and that it works to promote authoritative content about important topics like COVID-19.

"We do not allow harmful misinformation, including medical misinformation, and we will remove it from the platform," the company said.

TikTok has taken other steps that it says are intended to direct users to trustworthy sources. This year, for example, the company created an election center to help U.S. voters find voting places or information about candidates.

The platform removed more than 102 million videos that violated its rules in the first quarter of 2022. Yet only a tiny percentage of those ran afoul of TikTok's rules against misinformation.

Researchers found that TikTok's own search tool

seems designed to steer users to false claims in some cases. When researchers typed the words "COVID vaccine" into the search tool, for instance, the tool suggested searches on key words including "COVID vaccine exposed" and "COVID vaccine injury."

When the same search was run on Google, however, that search engine suggested searches relating to more accurate information about vaccine clinics, the different types of vaccines and booster shots.

TikTok's rise in popularity has caught the attention of state officials and federal lawmakers, some of whom have expressed concerns about its data privacy and security.

The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee held a hearing yesterday on social media's impact on the nation's security. TikTok's chief operating officer, Vanessa Pappas, is set to testify alongside representatives from YouTube, Twitter and Meta, which owns Instagram and Facebook. **MDT/AP**

European Union

lawmakers yesterday adopted new legislation aimed at guaranteeing "decent" minimum wages for workers across the 27-nation bloc. Under the new law, member countries will have to guarantee "that their national minimum wages allow workers to lead a decent life, taking into account the cost of living and wider pay levels," the Parliament said.

NATO Amid an escalating war of words between Turkey and Greece over disputes in the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean, both countries came together Tuesday to participate in an annual NATO naval exercise. The neighbors and historic regional rivals are among 12 alliance members taking part in Dynamic Mariner-Mavi Balina 22 off Turkey's western coast.



German energy supplier Uniper said yesterday that it is exploring the possibility of the government acquiring a majority holding in the company as its losses mount, a jump from the roughly 30% stake that the state already has pledged to take. The government put together the rescue package in July after Russia's cuts to natural gas supplies forced Uniper to buy gas at far higher prices on the market to fulfill its supply contracts.



Kazakhstan Pope Francis told the Russian Orthodox hierarchy and other faith leaders yesterday that religion must never be used to justify the "evil" of war, and asked at an outdoor Mass in Kazakhstan, "How many deaths will it take?" for peace to prevail in Ukraine. An increasingly frail Francis made the appeal during his first full day in the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan, where he opened a global interfaith conference and ministered to the tiny Catholic community in the majority Muslim country.