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COMMITTEE FOR THE GAMING TENDER BIDS IS SET TO MEET WITH THE SEVEN COMPANIES COMPETING FOR THE SIX CONCESSIONS FROM NEXT WEEK

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AP PHOTO



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is calling on every U.N. Security Council member to “send a clear message that these reckless nuclear threats must stop immediately.” Blinken is addressing a council session today [Macau time] about Russia’s war in Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin said earlier this week that his nuclear-armed country “certainly use all means available to us” if its territory is threatened and to defend the country and its people.

AP PHOTO



Iran Clashes between Iranian security forces and protesters angry over the death of a 22-year-old woman in police custody have killed at least nine people since the violence erupted over the weekend. The scope of Iran’s ongoing unrest, the worst in several years, still remains unclear as protesters in at least a dozen cities — venting anger over social repression and the country’s mounting crises — continue to encounter security and paramilitary forces.

AP PHOTO



Saudi Arabia said yesterday it will launch a training program with the goal of sending its own astronauts, including a woman, into space next year. The kingdom is actively promoting science and technology as part of its wide-ranging Vision 2030 plan to overhaul its economy and reduce its dependency on oil.

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NO CITY FOR OLD PEOPLE



Death of elderly siblings living together sparks concerns over Macau’s social support

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SUNCITY TRIAL

‘COLLABORATOR’ OF SUNCITY ADMITS TO ORGANIZING ILLEGAL BETTING

▲ P2



WORKERS UNION URGES GOV'T FOR ANOTHER ROUND OF MOP8,000 SUBSIDY

The Macau Federation of Trade Unions is proposing that the government include an additional MOP8,000 in the electronic consumption subsidy to be part of the second round of the MOP10 billion financial stimulus to combat the effects of the pandemic. The proposal came in the context of a meeting between the union and the Chief Executive yesterday. Questioned as to whether Ho Iat Seng agreed to the proposal, the association only noted that he did not indicate agreement, but the union pledged that they would continue to urge the government to issue another round of the consumption subsidy.

MACAU RAISES INTEREST RATES BASED ON FED RATE HIKE

The Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) yesterday raised the Base Rate of the Discount Window by 75 basis points to 3.50%. As the pataca is linked to the Hong Kong dollar, the movements of policy rates in Hong Kong and Macau should generally be consistent in order to maintain the effective operation of the linked exchange rate system. Hence, the AMCM followed the Hong Kong Monetary Authority in adjusting its Base Rate. Under the linked exchange rate system between the Hong Kong dollar and the US dollar, the related policy rate adjustment of Hong Kong was based on the policy action by the US Federal Reserve to raise the Federal funds rate target range by 75 basis points on September 21 (US time).

UM UNVEILS NATIONAL SCIENCE EDUCATION BASE

A certificate presentation and unveiling ceremony for the national science education base at the University of Macau (UM) was held on Wednesday. The base is the testament to the country's recognition of UM's efforts in science education. UM Rector Song Yonghua said that UM would further integrate its technological and human resources, leverage opportunities brought about by Sino-Lusophone cooperation in science education, and strengthen collaboration with science education platforms in China to nurture the science and innovation talent needed for the future development of Macau, the Greater Bay Area and China.

SUNCITY TRIAL

'COLLABORATOR' OF SUNCITY ADMITS TO ORGANIZING ILLEGAL BETTING

RENATO MARQUES

A former independent collaborator of Suncity that used to work as part of a "bate-ficha" business has admitted yesterday in court to organizing the illegal parallel betting system to which several defendants, including former junket mogul Alvin Chau, are being accused of related crimes.

Cheong Chi Kin – a name already mentioned several times by Chau, Celestino Ali (the fourth defendant), and others in the process – admitted today during questioning by the Public Prosecutor that he was the founder of several companies dedicated to organizing schemes of parallel betting in casino VIP rooms.

To the court, Cheong denied having ever been an employee or business partner at Suncity company, noting that he knew the company as well as Chau due to his long-term "bate-ficha" business, which only exists in Macau casinos and is characterized, among other things, by the acquisition and selling of non-transferable gaming chips (also called dead chips) to earn a commission.

In response to the questions of the prosecution, Cheong also revealed that it was he who approached Chau in approximately 2013 and asked him if he could refer some clients to his business, as he explained, "at the time the VIP rooms were often very crowded and even the concessionaires would often call on the rooms to 'send away' some people," Cheong said, noting that he offered to Chau to take some of these clients interested in playing on the parallel schemes "as a way to not let them get away to other VIP rooms."

Questioned also about whether his companies (at least three) dedicated to the illegal betting scheme shared resources with Suncity Group such as software and accounting staff, Cheong, once again, denied such a theory proposed by the prosecution, explaining that the software he was using to register the bets and communicate the transactions, among other functionalities, was acquired by

RENATO MARQUES



Ali, Chief of IT of Suncity, who supplied him OPSMAN - similar to the one in use by Suncity – for an amount of around 100,000 patacas.

Also confronted with the fact that Cheong was using three accountants from Suncity in his "side business," the fifth defendant in this court case said that they were performing work for him out of the company, having been referred to him by a friend at the time that his business was growing and he needed to find people to do such a job.

Cheong justified all these coincidences with Suncity staff members and his company as well as messages exchanged with Chau on the topic by reference to the fact that he "had many friends" in the company and would often seek opinions and advice from them as they were the market leaders and experts.

Another of the theories used by the prosecution to build the case against Chau, painting him as the "ring leader," is the fact that Cheong would refer to him as the "Boss" in many conversations and messages.

On the topic, Cheong told the court, "In Macau, almost all bate-fichas call Chau 'boss,'" noting that this is a respectful form

of address, taking into account his position and importance in the VIP gaming sector and not a company-related post.

The same defendant also admitted in the court hearing that only he had the competence to accept or refuse clients for the parallel betting scheme.

He also justified monthly reports sent to Chau that started during the pandemic period with reference to changes in the business and the fact that many people wanted to withdraw money from accounts, which was a concern for everyone, including the number of staff members who would be working on each VIP room. He stated that where the prosecution is seeing him "asking permission from Chau," he says that he was just "asking an opinion on the state of the operations."

Earlier in the session, Ali concluded giving answers to the different defense lawyers by reaffirming what he had stated on the previous day while being questioned by the public prosecutor. He said that he had arranged for the software (OPSMAN) by request of Cheong as he thought he was a "business partner" of Suncity and that Cheong was acting in that capacity.

Ali also refuted the accusation

that he had helped the company to hide information about illegal betting through the software applications, saying that he had no access to the source code and only the companies that supplied the software could perform such changes.

His defense lawyer, Pedro Leal, also hinted that information that was requested by the accounting and treasury of Suncity being deleted from the system could be referring to money loans and other confidential information from Suncity that should not pass to the government and namely to the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau.

The IT professional also said that although the OPSMAN is a similar software to "SUNPEOPLE," which is used by the Suncity Group, they are independent and have no links between them, also adding that the software's main purpose is to communicate information and not to register bets, as he had hinted on Wednesday.

He refuted the accusation of having joined this alleged secret society to grant himself benefits, saying that all his income comes from the wages for his work and other company bonuses that all higher officials had.

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COVID-19

While quarantine to linger, health official explains criteria for keeping policy

ANTHONY LAM

DESPITE quarantine measures being relaxed, or soon to be relaxed, in many places, Macau will tightly maintain its quarantine measures, a health official hinted at yesterday's weekly health press briefing.

Health official and public health doctor Leong Iek Hou pointed to people coming in from regions of higher risks. "We have recorded new imported cases on an everyday basis recently," she emphasized.

Macau's quarantine requirements depend on the strategy that the government desires to take against Covid-19, Leong explained in response to a question on whether it is correct to say that quarantine will remain as long as the disease has an incubation period.

She added that unless changes to certain factors – such as the existence of new and effective medications – occur, which will lower the burden on the city's healthcare services even if there are outbreaks, quarantine will likely linger for a noticeable period of time.

"If in the future we have strong enough confidence [on the aforementioned factors], we can then start discussing shortening or lifting quarantine," Leong concluded.

Her justification for the quarantine requirement is to identify risky people during the confinement period using SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid tests (NAT) as a tool, "so as to avoid them bringing the virus into our communities," the public health doctor said, adding that the city has no SARS-CoV-2 now as it is under "regular Covid-19 prevention mode."

She said if quarantine is significantly shortened or even lifted, "it will be quite certain that there are risks of community outbreaks."

"This is against our policies of preventing imports or relapses and 'dynamic Covid zero,'" she added.

She elaborated that data is being collected from various sources to consider whether adjustments to quarantine will be feasible.

Hong Kong recently announced that it was considering further relaxing its quarantine requirement, generally related to the length of quarantine. The neighboring city is contempla-



"If in the future we have strong enough confidence [on the aforementioned factors], we can then start discussing shortening or lifting quarantine."

LEONG IEK HOU
PUBLIC HEALTH DOCTOR

ting zero days of mandatory quarantine before seven days of health self-management.

On the question of the sources of the data the Health Bureau (SSM) was collecting to contemplate any changes to quarantine, Leong disclosed that the bureau would study data from "a multitude of places, such as mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau."

Factors that the SSM will consider include on which day an incoming person will have their infections detected.

"When the Delta variant prevailed, most entrants had their infections detected on the fourth or fifth days of entry," she recalled. "However, some infections were only detected on the eighth or ninth day."

She used this to justify the 10-day quarantine period in place at that time. Logically, she added, this is the reason why the quarantine period is now seven days.

"Therefore, we need more data to show us the modal days on which infections are detected," she continued to explain. "If most infections are detected within the first three days of arri-

val, we may see room to shorten quarantine in Macau."

Ma Chio Hong, division head at the Public Security Police Force (PSP), told the press conference, while responding to a question, that no news has been received so far as to extending the

NAT validity for travels between Macau and Zhuhai.

The validity period in action is 48 hours.

MGTO TO CONTINUE MACAU PROMOTION

Lau Fong Chi, department head for communications and external relations of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), emphasized that the bureau is constantly promoting Macau in mainland China.

At yesterday's briefing, the tourism official was questioned about the tourism regulator's outlook of tourism numbers during the upcoming October 1 holidays. October 1, being the National Day of the People's Republic of China,

equates to a week of holidays in mainland China.

The official admitted to the unstable Covid-19 condition in parts of the country, hindering residents' desire to conduct cross-provincial travels. Nonetheless, the official pledged that the bureau would remain as diligent as usual to promote Macau to mainland residents as a safe travel destination.

On the other hand, local flag-carrier Air Macau recently announced the resumption of flights to certain destinations and given the government's aim of attracting foreign tourists, the tourism official was also asked to comment on the matter.

Lau's main focus was not about initiatives to attract foreign tourists, but about the MGTO's effort in ensuring enough quarantine hotel rooms would be offered to people who want to return to or visit Macau.

Moving on, the tourism official emphasized that the MGTO has been constantly conducting online marketing campaigns. The bureau will consider the development of the situation to expand its marketing efforts.

"Although we cannot do an offline marketing campaign currently, we will retain our online efforts," Lau told the press conference.

In spite of entry permission being issued to citizens from 41 countries, quarantine-upon-arrival measures of up to seven days – excluding three more days of yellow health code, implying the person will not be accepted anywhere public – is still in place, unless people are entering from low-risk regions in mainland China.

TAIWAN TO GRADUALLY LIFT QUARANTINE-UPON-ARRIVAL NEXT MONTH

MEANWHILE, in Taiwan, the government yesterday announced several updates to Covid-19 measures and entry restrictions.

Taiwan's Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) announced yesterday that it will adjust the quarantine policy for arriving travelers in two phases. The first phase will start at 00:00 on September 29 – as per incoming flight's scheduled arrival time – the CECC will adopt the rule of one person per room for the first three days of quarantine.

In the second phase, based on developments in the COVID-19 situation, border controls will be relaxed by lifting quarantine and enforcing a seven-day self-initiated epidemic prevention measure, which is scheduled to take effect on October 13.

Despite the lifting of quarantine requirements, SARS-CoV-2 rapid antigen tests will be required after arrival.

At the same time, the government in Taiwan has also announced the lifting of the entry ban on some entrants from September 29.

Entry rights of nationalities who were allowed to enter Taiwan without a visa prior to the entry ban will be regained from the aforementioned date. They will not need prior approval for entry if they are entering for the purposes of engaging in activities that do not require permission, such as business, exhibitions, inspections, international exchanges, family visits, sightseeing, and social visits.

Prior to the border closure, Portuguese citizens were allowed to enter Taiwan visa-free.

Meanwhile, Macau residents will only be accepted for entry for the purposes of visiting relatives, attending funerals or conducting business activities.

The current entry restrictions in Taiwan were imposed on Jan. 1, 2021.

PASSING OF SINGLE-LIVING ELDERLY SIBLINGS SPARKS CONCERNS OVER SOCIAL SUPPORT

ANTHONY LAM

THE sequential demise of a pair of elderly siblings found Wednesday afternoon has generated contemplation about the effectiveness of existing local social care services.

At about 10:20 pm on Wednesday, the Judiciary Police (PJ) announced that two siblings living together and supporting each other were both found dead in their residence on Rua da Penha on the mid-level of the Penha Hill.

According to the PJ, the female was about 78 years old and the male about 74. The late brother was immobile and taken care of by the late sister. The PJ noted that the late sister passed away more than a month ago and the late brother "has [been dead] for some time."

The case was uncovered by a neighbor of the late siblings, who had not seen them for a significant period of time. Therefore, the neighbor contacted the police out of concern for them.

Upon arrival at the residential apartment located on the ground floor, rescuers from the Fire Services Bureau (CB) looked through a window and saw a body lying in a room. The rescuers then broke into the apartment and discovered the siblings dead in their respective rooms.



JOSH APPEL

PJ inspectors then conducted a preliminary investigation and discovered no indicators of concern or suspected criminality in the apartment or on the bodies.

Lawmaker Ron Lam described the incident as a tragedy. He first admitted to the Times that while much work has been done, a mechanism must be established in the future in respect of social welfare. He suggested that work be started on individual level, such as neighbors helping each other and the management committee

of each residential estate visiting elderly residents regularly.

In contrast to criticisms about people in Macau being cold, Lam revealed that many people are willing to help their neighbors; they just do not know how or where to start.

At the same time, the lawmaker also disclosed that many elderly residents did not know there were welfare payments and supports for which they could apply.

While the news was publicized, former lawmaker Sulu Sou

commented on his social media page that "each social tragedy is caused by human factors rather than simple coincidence."

In addition, the list of hashtags that the former lawmaker included were "heart-breaking", "double-elderly care policy", "not individual case" and "the government should explain what has gone wrong," among other hashtags.

Hashtags are used on social media by Macau users to highlight certain messages or comments.

Comments left by other social media users under Sou's post revealed other cases of unattended people in need. For example, a user wrote that they knew of an elderly person who lives alone, is nearly blind and has been living on the retirement funds of the elderly person's mother. The elderly person needed help from different friends each time a medical appointment came, but nobody – including medical staff and government officers – could offer any actual help.

Another user questioned why the multitude of problems that have lingered in the city were not solved in a timely manner. Other social media users questioned why the siblings were not under follow-up by social workers when they were alive.

Meanwhile, on her social media post, former lawmaker Agnes Lam suggested mutual care between neighbors. As she discussed the matter on the post and replied to a comment, she attributed part of the cause of the case to the lack of social support.

Despite her comments, two social media users questioned the possibility of caring for neighbors, based on the fact that many people have been living difficult lives over the past two-and-a-half years or so. Lam did not reply to their comments.

EDUCATION

Lawmaker calls on gov't to ensure high-quality education before promoting internationally

STAFF REPORTER

LAWMAKER Lei Chan LU has asked the government to ensure that the city's tertiary education is of high quality before promoting the sector internationally.

The request comes after the Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng announced in a Q&A session at the Legislative Assembly (AL) on August 10 that the tertiary education sector is aiming to gradually develop in the direction of marketization.

In the 2022 Policy Address, the government mentioned that public tertiary education institutions had actively extended the scope of student enrolment to gradually reduce the allocation of government funding.



Lawmaker Lei Chan U

This comes as universities have significantly increased tuition fees, yet also increased the enrolment rate. In an interpellation, Lei

pointed out that the development of the marketization for tertiary education may cause some issues as the teaching quality may not be sufficient.

Thus, he called on the government to improve the relevant policies to ensure the process of development of marketization for tertiary education is successful.

In reply, director Kong Chi Meng of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau said (DSEDJ) that in seeking to ensure the priority of local students and the quality of education in Macau's higher tertiary schools, the government will keep encouraging higher tertiary schools to "build a perfect and market-oriented operating mechanism."

He also explained that the government encourages universities to develop characteristic courses and career-oriented courses, and promote the development of academic, industrial and research sectors, improving the efficiency and flexibility of the financial and personnel systems of public institutions in a bid to promote higher education in the direction of marketization development.

Furthermore, the personnel of the three local public higher tertiary schools are not included in the number of civil servants. In response to the changes in the number of students and the development of academic and scientific research, all kinds of pro-

fessionals will be deployed to improve the sector's competitiveness as it seeks to recruit outstanding personnel.

The director also recalled that the University of Macau and Macau University of Science and Technology are ranked within the Top 300 in World University Rankings of Times Higher Education (THE). Further, there are eight bachelor's degree programs of the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies that obtained a 'TedQual' recognition from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) so far.

According to the restrictions of the tertiary education quality assessment system, the 10 local tertiary schools will have completed their first school quality certification by the end of 2025.

At present, two of them have been completed, and the DSEDJ will be prompting the remaining schools to complete the school quality certification.

NEW LICENSE

Gaming tender committee to meet with bidders for proposal discussions

LYNZY VALLES

THE committee for the gaming tender bids is set to meet with the seven companies competing for the six concessions from next week, when competitors present their proposals in the hopes of securing a slot, according to a report issued by TDM-Rádio Macau.

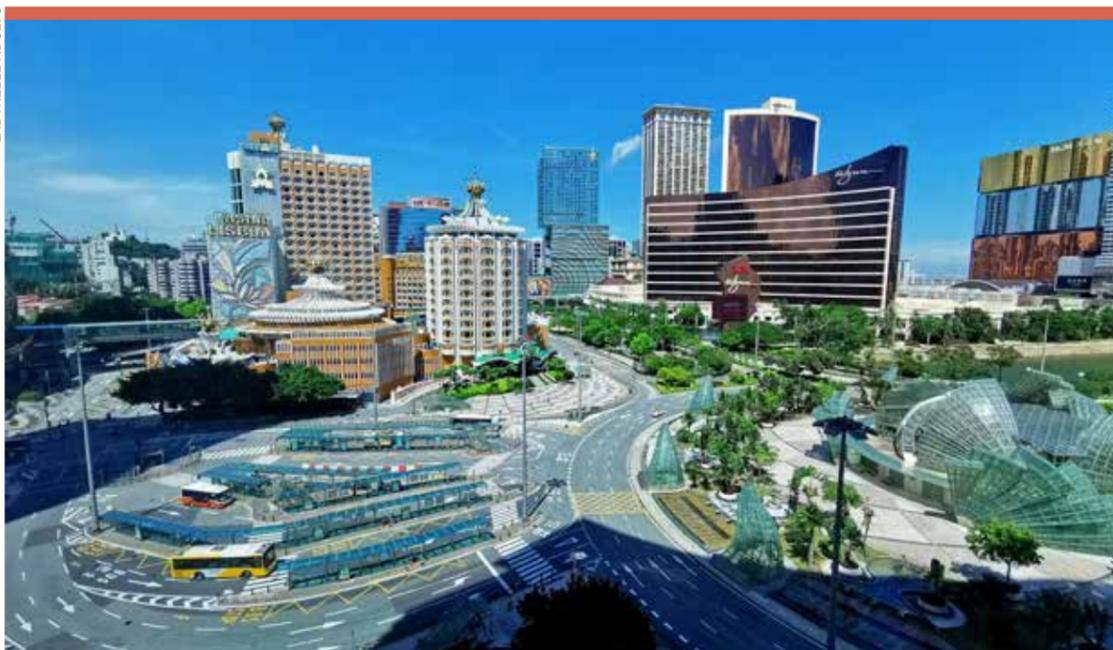
During this phase, the Gaming Concession Public Tender Committee, which was set up by the government in July to oversee the gaming concession tender, may call the hopeful bidders to meetings to discuss the conditions presented in the proposals.

The first phase is slated to start Monday and run until September 29, the media outlet reported.

The meetings next week will be a significant moment for the gaming operators as they battle to secure a 10-year concession.

Gaming operators submitted

LADYNELLE ADOLFO



their proposals from September 13 and 14, where the opening of bids took place on September 16 in the presence of representatives and local government authorities.

Six incumbent concessionaire holders were accepted immediately, while GMM Limited, a locally registered firm with links to the Malaysian gaming tycoon and chairman of Genting Group,

Lim Kok Thay, was accepted conditionally.

Last week, the seven hopefuls presented their proposals and explained what they intend to do in the 10-year con-

cession period.

The committee includes three of Macau's five policy secretaries: Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong, and Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong U.

With the city's biggest gaming law overhaul, the Chief Executive has the power to decide not to award all or some of the concessions put out to tender.

The industry will face fresh concessions on January 1, 2023.

According to the same media outlet, gaming scholar and former lawmaker Davis Fong expects that the awarding for the concessions will not take longer than two months, hinting at an announcement of the tender winners by November.

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

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BEIJING ENVOY VOWS 'FIGHT' OVER ALLEGED XINJIANG RIGHTS ABUSES

JAMEY KEATEN, GENEVA

AN envoy from China's Xinjiang province said yesterday that Chinese authorities are ready for a "fight" with "anti-China" critics in the West and elsewhere over allegations of rights abuses in the anti-extremism campaign against Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic groups in the region.

Xinjiang government spokesman Xu Guixiang said Chinese authorities won't be afraid if "anti-China forces" attempt to use the ongoing Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva to seek greater scrutiny of the situation in Xinjiang.

Xu has spoken repeatedly in defense of China's policies designed to fight violent extremism in Xinjiang. This week he is heading a delegation in Geneva to take the message to the rights office and diplomats at the 47-member state council, of which both China and the United States are currently members.

Some Western nations are trying to maintain international scrutiny of the rights situation through the council after the U.N. rights office issued a scathing new report last month that alleged "crimes against humanity" had taken place in Xinjiang in recent years. Such Western efforts could come through a draft resolution or other steps at the council.

"If some forces in the international community — or even



Mr. Xu
Xu Guixiang, director of the information office of Xinjiang autonomous region speaks during a Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva, yesterday

anti-China forces — make so-called 'Xinjiang-related motions' or so-called 'resolutions,' we won't be afraid," Xu said. "We will take countermeasures resolutely and fight."

Xu acknowledged, in a somewhat unusual admission: "Of course, the human rights situation in Xinjiang is in a process of further improving and making more efforts," before adding, "but there is no such thing as the massive violation of human rights as claimed by the Xinjiang report."

He said China is looking for "exchange, dialogue and cooperation" and hopes to "learn from the beneficial measures taken by other countries in the world" on human rights. But Xu also insisted unspecified "human rights

disasters" perpetrated by Western countries should be investigated, too.

In the waning minutes of her last day in office on Aug. 31, the office of Michelle Bachelet, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, issued a report accusing China of serious human rights violations against Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim ethnic groups. It called on the world community to give "urgent attention" to the situation in Xinjiang.

However, Beijing has vehemently condemned Bachelet's assessment. In its response to the U.N. rights agency, China's government attached a 131-page own report of the situation in Xinjiang. **MDT/AP**

COURTS

FORMER CHINESE JUSTICE MINISTER JAILED FOR CORRUPTION

A former Chinese justice minister was sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve on charges of taking bribes and helping criminals including his brother hide illegal activity, state TV reported yesterday.

Fu Zhenghua's conviction adds to a string of senior officials who have been punished for corruption in a long-running crackdown launched after President Xi Jinping took power in late 2012.

Fu, 67, pleaded guilty to abusing his powers in roles including minister and chief of police for



傅政华受贿 徇私枉法案一审宣判
In this image taken from video footage run by CCTV, former Chinese justice minister Fu Zhenghua is escorted by court police as he attends a court session in Changchun

the Chinese capital, Beijing, in 2005-21 to hide crimes by his brother

and others, China Central Television said on its website.

In return, Fu received money and property amounting to 117 million yuan (\$16.5 million), the official China Daily newspaper reported in July. Yesterday's report and earlier news accounts gave no details of what Fu's brother, Fu Weihua, was accused of doing.

Death sentences with a reprieve usually are commuted to long prison terms if the convict is deemed to have reformed.

Fu will be sentenced to life in prison without parole if his sentence is commuted, CCTV said. **MDT/AP**

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Chinese, Portuguese top diplomats 'committed to multilateralism'

CHINESE State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with his Portuguese counterpart, Joao Gomes Cravinho, yesterday [Macau time] on the sidelines of the ongoing 77th session of the UN General Assembly.

Noting that the Chinese people have friendly feelings towards the Portuguese people, Wang said the China-Portugal relationship has stood the test of the international landscape changes and achieved sound development on the basis of mutual understanding and mutual trust.

The two countries have advanced their practical cooperation while overcoming the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Wang said, adding that exports of Portuguese agricultural and food products to China are growing rapidly, and that cooperation between large companies from both sides and tripartite cooperation are progressing smoothly.

Both China and Portugal are committed to practicing true multilateralism, he said.

In the face of the turbulence and transformations in the international situation, China is willing to work with Portugal to jointly uphold the UN's core role in international affairs, and promote the cause of human peace, development and progress, he said.

Wang said Portugal, as an important EU member, has been playing a positive and constructive role in China-EU exchanges.

China, he said, expects mutual understanding, mutual appreciation, peaceful coexistence and mutually learning with European countries, including Portugal, as well as respect for each other's development path chosen on the basis of their respective historical and cultural legacy.

He also expressed the expecta-

tion that the EU side will take an objective, rational and impartial attitude, and hold on to the mainstream of China-EU cooperation, so as to yield win-win results.

For his part, Cravinho said friendly exchanges between Portugal and China have lasted for centuries, and bilateral practical cooperation in various fields has developed fast.

Portuguese companies have a strong interest in investing in China, he said.

China plays a critical role in addressing common challenges such as safeguarding peace and security, and tackling climate change, he said.

The Portuguese side appreciates China's positive role in international affairs, and stands ready to maintain high-level exchanges and promote strategic dialogues with the Chinese side, he said.

Portugal agrees on the diversity of civilizations, calling for enhancing mutual understanding through open and candid dialogue to create favorable atmosphere for Portugal-China and EU-China cooperation, he added.

The two sides spoke highly of the smooth handover of Macau through friendly negotiations between the countries, which created a cooperation highlight, and pledged to jointly increase support for the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries.

Calling the practice of "one country, two systems" in Macau effective, Cravinho said he expects Macau to continue to act as a bridge to facilitate Portugal-China cooperation.

The two sides also exchanged views on the Ukraine issue. Wang briefed China's basic position of promoting peace talks and the constructive role it has played.

MDT/XINHUA



Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi (right) meets with Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs Joao Gomes Cravinho on the sidelines of the ongoing 77th session of the UN General Assembly in New York

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

NORTH KOREA

Kim denies sending arms to Putin amid Ukraine war

NORTH Korea says it hasn't exported any weapons to Russia during the war in Ukraine and has no plans to do so, and said U.S. intelligence reports of weapons transfers were an attempt to tarnish North Korea's image.

In a state media report yesterday, an unnamed North Korean defense official told the U.S. to stop making "reckless remarks" and to "keep its mouth shut." Biden administration officials earlier this month confirmed a declassified U.S. intelligence assessment that Russia was in the process of purchasing arms from North Korea, including millions of artillery shells and rockets, as Moscow attempts to ease severe supply shortages in Ukraine worsened by U.S.-led export controls and sanctions.

The North Korean statement came weeks after Moscow described the U.S. intelligence finding as "fake."

North Korean arms exports to Russia would violate United Nations resolutions banning the country from importing or exporting weapons.

The North Korean official stressed that Pyongyang has never recognized the "unlawful" U.N. Security Council sanctions against the country "cooked up by the U.S. and its vassal forces." The official said the export and import of military equipment is a "lawful right peculiar to a sovereign state," according to an English translation of the statement published by the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

AP FILE PHOTO



"But we take this opportunity to make clear one thing. We have never exported weapons or ammunition to Russia before and we will not plan to export them," said the official, who was described as a vice director general of the National Defense Ministry's general equipment bureau.

"It is not sure from where the rumor originated which the U.S. is spreading, but it is aimed at tarnishing the DPRK's image," the official said, referring to the

country's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Facing sanctions and export controls, Russia in August bought Iranian-made drones that U.S. officials said had technical problems. Experts say North Korea, if willing, could become a major source of small arms, artillery and other ammunition for Russia, considering the compatibility of their defense systems based on Soviet roots.

North Korea has sought to tighten relations with Russia even as most of Europe and the West has pulled away, blaming the U.S. for the crisis and decrying the West's "hegemonic policy" as justifying military action by Russia in Ukraine to protect itself.

The North Korean government has even hinted it is interested in sending construction workers to help rebuild pro-Russia breakaway regions in Ukraine's east. In July, North Korea became

the only nation aside from Russia and Syria to recognize the independence of the territories, Donetsk and Luhansk.

North Korea also has used the war as a window to accelerate its own arms development, testing dozens of weapons including its first long-range missile since 2017, exploiting a divide in the U.N. Security Council, where Russia and China have blocked U.S. attempts to tighten sanctions on Pyongyang.

The North has punctuated its testing activity with repeated threats of nuclear conflict with Seoul and Washington. The latest was a law passed by Pyongyang's rubber-stamp parliament this month that further enshrined the country's status as a nuclear power and authorized the preemptive use of nuclear weapons over a broad range of scenarios where its leadership comes under threat.

Sung Kim, the Biden administration's special representative for North Korea, met with South Korean counterpart Kim Gunn in Seoul yesterday where they expressed "serious concern" over the North's escalating nuclear doctrine spelled out in the new law, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said.

The diplomats reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to defend South Korea in the event of a nuclear war with the full range of its military capabilities, including nuclear. The allies also maintained their months-old assessment that North Korea is gearing up to conduct its first nuclear test since 2017 and discussed "stern" countermeasures to such an action, the ministry said. **MDT/AP**

PHILIPPINES

Manila court rejects bid to declare rebels as terrorists

A Philippine court has dismissed a government petition to declare the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed guerrilla wing as a terrorist organization in a decision that officials vowed to appeal but was welcomed by activists who have long rejected the labeling of rebels as terrorists.

Manila regional trial court Judge Marlo Magdoza-Malagar's ruling, signed Wednesday, is a legal victory for activists and government critics and a setback for security officials, who have long accused left-wing organizations of covertly serving as legal fronts for the Maoist guerrillas.

The court asked the

government to fight the communist insurgency, one of Asia's longest, with "respect for the right to dissent, to due process and to the rule of law." It raised concerns over "red-tagging," or linking activists to insurgents, which it said was a "pernicious practice" that endangers government critics.

"While both rebellion and terrorism may involve the use of violence, the violence in rebellion is directed against government or any part thereof," the court said in the 135-page decision. "Rebels in a rebellion always target agents of the state such as the military or the police."

"Terrorism, on the other hand, is directed against

the civilian population with the intent to cause the latter extraordinary and widespread fear and panic," the court said.

Renato Reyes of Bayan, an alliance of left-wing groups, said, "labeling revolutionaries and those engaged in peace negotiations as 'terrorists' is wrong, counter-productive and undermines any possibility of a political settlement in the armed conflict."

Emmanuel Salamat, a retired marine general who heads a government task force helping oversee efforts to end the decades-long insurgency, told reporters that he was saddened by the court decision because the rebels have

committed acts of terrorism, including killings, for many decades.

"This is like disregarding the sacrifices of our troops, the front-liners in the field, our heroes who gave up their lives," he said. He cited the United States and other countries which have listed the rebel New People's Army as a terrorist organization.

Justice Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla said the government would appeal.

The court assessed nine separate deadly attacks and acts of violence, including the burning of a chapel and rural houses in a province, which government witnesses said were carried out by communist guerrillas in the country's

south from 2019 to 2020. But it questioned the witnesses' identification of the attackers as rebels based on their black combat uniforms and firearms.

The court also said that any fear the attacks may have sparked may have been confined to the communities where they occurred and did not reach the "widespread" and "extraordinary" panic of a terrorist strike described under Philippine law. "The nine incidents of atrocities fall within the category of small-time 'hit-and-run' attacks and sporadic acts of violence with no specified victims or targets," the court said. It said authorities failed to establish that the attacks were

committed to coerce the government to give in to a demand, a key element of terrorism as specified in the law.

The Maoist rebel force was established in 1969 with only about 60 armed fighters in the country's northern region but it gradually grew and spread across the country.

Battle setbacks, surrenders and infighting, however, have weakened the guerrilla group, which remains a key national security threat. The rebellion has left about 40,000 combatants and civilians dead and stunted economic development in provincial regions, where the military says a few thousand insurgents are still active. **MDT/AP**



Ukrainian soldiers, who were released in a prisoner exchange between Russia and Ukraine, smile close to Chernihiv

PUTIN'S WAR

Russian missile strikes keep hitting Ukraine as POW's swap underway

HANNA ARHIROVA,
ZAPORIZHZHIA

RUSSIAN and Ukrainian forces exchanged missile and artillery barrages yesterday as both sides refused to concede ground despite recent military setbacks for Moscow and the toll on the invaded country after almost seven months of war.

Russian missile strikes in the southern city of Zaporizhzhia left one person dead and five wounded, Ukrainian officials said. Officials in the separatist-controlled city of Donetsk said Ukrainian shelling killed at least six people.

While the hostilities continued, the two sides did manage to agree on a major prisoner swap. At the same time, Russian President Vladimir Putin began calling up reserve troops to supplement his forces in Ukraine.

Kyrylo Tymoshenko, the deputy of the Ukrainian president's office, said a hotel in Zaporizhzhia was struck and rescuers were trying to free people trapped in rubble.

The governor of the Zaporizhzhia region, Oleksandr Starukh, said Russian forces had targeted infrastructure and damaged apartment buildings. The region is one

of four where Moscow-installed officials plan to hold referendums starting Friday on becoming part of Russia, but the city itself is in Ukrainian hands.

The mayor of the separatist-controlled city of Donetsk, Alexei Kulemzin, said Ukrainian shelling hit a covered market and a minibus. Overnight, one person was killed during Russian shelling in Nikopol, across the river from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, according to the Dnipropetrovsk regional governor.

Just hours before yesterday's attacks, the high-profile prisoner swap saw the announcement of an exchange of 215 Ukrainian and foreign fighters — 200 of them for a single person, an ally of Putin's. Denis Pushilin, head of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, confirmed that the Putin ally, pro-Russian Ukrainian opposition leader Viktor Medvedchuk, was part of the swap.

Among the freed fighters were Ukrainian defenders of a steel plant in Mariupol during a long Russian siege, along with 10 foreigners, including five British citizens and two U.S. military veterans, who had fought with Ukrainian forces. Some of those freed had faced death sentences in

Russian-occupied areas.

A video on the BBC news website yesterday showed two of the released British men, Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner, speaking inside a plane.

"We just want to let everyone know that we're now out of the danger zone and we're on our way home to our families," Aslin said in the video, as Pinner added: "By the skin of our teeth."

The continuation of Russian missile attacks and beginning of a partial mobilization of Russians into the armed forces suggested the Kremlin was seeking to dispel any notion of weakness or waning determination to achieve its wartime aims in light of recent battlefield losses and other setbacks that undercut the aura of Russian military might.

Putin's order Wednesday of a partial mobilization of reservists to bolster his forces in Ukraine sparked rare protests in dozens of Russian cities and was derided in the West as an act of weakness and desperation. More than 1,300 Russians were arrested in the anti-war demonstrations, according to the independent Russian human rights group OVD-Info.

Putin's partial call-up was short on details, raising con-

cerns of a wider draft that sent some Russians scrambling to buy plane tickets to flee the country. One Russian man who arrived in the Armenian capital's airport with his 17-year-old son said he had made plans for such a scenario.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the mobilization was needed because Russia was "de facto facing all of NATO," a reference to the military aid and other support that alliance members have given Ukraine.

Speaking in New York, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock praised Russian anti-war protesters and added that no one inside the country can continue turning a blind eye to what's happening in Ukraine because "every Russian is now going to be at risk of being drafted into this war."

German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser went further, offering concrete support to deserters. She told the Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung that anyone who "courageously opposes Putin's regime and therefore puts himself in the greatest danger" can apply for asylum in Germany.

Ratcheting up tensions, a senior Kremlin official yesterday repeated Putin's threat to use nuclear weapons if Russian territory comes under attack.

Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of Russia's Security Council, said on his messaging app that strategic nuclear weapons are one of the options to safeguard Russian-controlled territories in eastern and southern Ukraine. The remark appeared to serve as a warning that Moscow could also target Ukraine's Western allies.

Pro-Moscow authorities in Ukraine's Russian-occupied regions are preparing to hold referendums on becoming part of Russia — a move that could allow Moscow to escalate the war. The votes start Friday and end next Tuesday in the Luhansk, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk regions.

Foreign leaders have called the votes illegitimate and nonbinding. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said they were a "sham" and "noise" to distract the public.

Russia's neighbors have been on edge about a possible threat from Russia, and one of them, Estonia, announced it is starting an exercise yesterday for nearly 2,900 reservists and volunteers, in an apparent counter to Moscow's announcement of a partial military mobilization. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1951 KING HAS LUNG OPERATION

Crowds have gathered outside Buckingham Palace for news of King George VI following an operation to remove part of his lung.

A bulletin on the King's health posted on the gates of Buckingham Palace this afternoon said "anxiety must remain for some days" but "his immediate post-operative condition is satisfactory".



The statement was signed by the five doctors who have attended the King and spent last night at the palace prior to the operation.

The decision to operate was taken on Friday after doctors noticed "structural changes" in the King's lung, which were giving cause for concern.

Nurses moved into the palace on Friday night and oxygen cylinders and other medical equipment arrived during the day yesterday.

The operation began at around 1000 today (Sunday) and took most of the morning.

The Queen was at the palace and she was the first to hear from the doctors how the King had withstood the surgery.

News of the King's condition was then telephoned to Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh at Clarence House and to Queen Mary and other members of the royal family at Marlborough House.

The King was apparently moved to the comfort of his own bedroom immediately after the operation. He is being attended by nursing staff round-the-clock.

The Princess and her husband spent more than an hour at the Palace this evening. Queen Mary had left after visiting for nearly an hour a little earlier. Princess Margaret flew in from Scotland to join her parents. She drove direct to the palace from London Airport.

Prince Charles and Princess Anne are the only members of the royal family remaining at Balmoral.

The Prime Minister Clement Attlee, who had also flown back to London from Scotland, has been kept informed of the King's progress at Number 10.

Special prayers are being said in churches throughout the country for the King's recovery.

Crowds gathered outside the palace and filed passed the railings where the bulletin on the King's health had been pinned. Police officers kept the crowd moving.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The King appointed five Counsellors of State, including the Queen and Princess Elizabeth to deal with matters requiring the Sovereign's approval during his illness.

But he never made a complete recovery and died in February 1952, when it was revealed he had been suffering from lung cancer.

He became King on the abdication of his elder brother, Edward VIII, to marry the divorcee Wallace Simpson.

George VI's refusal to leave Buckingham Palace during the years of World War II won him the respect of the British people.

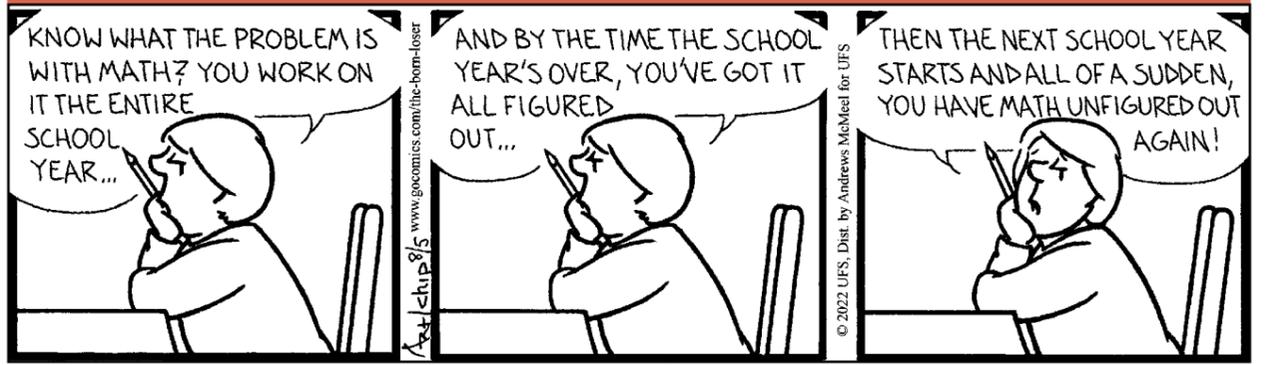
It is thought the traumatic times through which he led his country left him physically exhausted and contributed to his failing health and early death at the age of 56.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

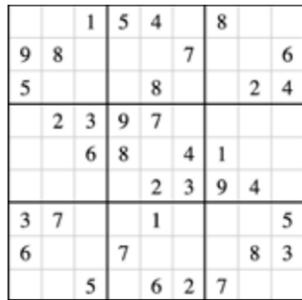
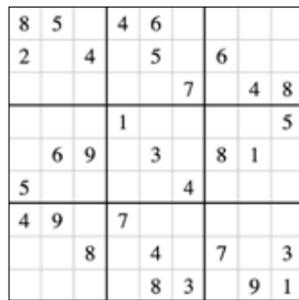
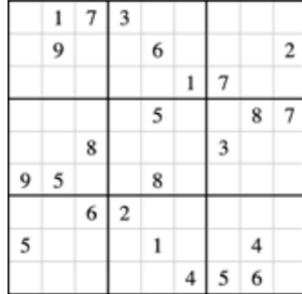
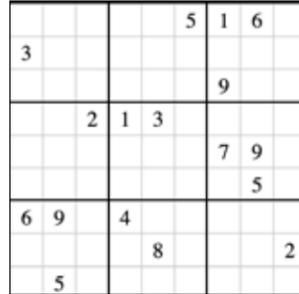
YOUR STARS

 ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 You'll stay out of trouble if you pick projects that will benefit the whole family. Having your own business is a good idea. Pamper yourself; the self esteem it brings you will be most gratifying.	 TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 You can meet a new romantic partner or secure the love connection you already have by going out and entertaining yourself. Put your thoughts into some trendy new ideas.
 GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Be sure to catch up on overdue correspondence and help those you love find solutions to their dilemmas. You need to spend some time with individuals who have more experience than you.	 CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Resist the temptation to gamble. Risks will not be profitable. You must try to help. Don't gossip. You can expect to experience delays or additional red tape if you deal with institutions.
 LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Travel will be fun and entertaining. Travel and educational pursuits may help alleviate the stress you have been feeling. Don't allow personal problems to conflict with professional duties.	 VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 You hard work and dedication will payoff, so stick to your guns and do your job well. You will do well in social settings, and new and interesting individuals may spark a romantic curiosity.
 LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Be aware that minor accidents or injury may prevail if you are preoccupied. Dead end projects could plague you. Make changes regarding your friendships.	 SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Take a look at the possibilities of starting a small part time business with friends or relatives. You can expect to experience delays or additional red tape if you deal with institutions.
 SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Don't allow your lover to take advantage of your good nature. You must make them stand on their own two feet regardless of how much you want to make things better for them.	 CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Don't try to get even without having all the facts. Go out shopping today. Romance will develop through work. Tempers could boil if someone you work with has not been pulling their weight.
 AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 You will have difficulties spreading yourself between your work and your home. Go out shopping today. You may want to get involved in financial investments presented to you.	 PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Sign up for tours or courses that will enlighten you. Your partner may blame you for everything. You may be overreacting to a situation at hand.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY 	EASY+ 
MEDIUM 	HARD 

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	13	24	fine
Changchun	11	16	rain
Chengdu	17	21	showers
Chongqing	19	21	rain
Fuzhou	25	32	cloudy
Guangzhou	24	34	cloudy
Guiyang	16	19	rain
Haikou	24	29	thunderstorms
Hangzhou	20	28	cloudy
Harbin	13	16	rain
Hefei	19	28	cloudy
Nanjing	19	26	cloudy
Shanghai	21	27	cloudy
Taipei	23	27	cloudy
Wuhan	19	26	cloudy
Hong Kong	28	32	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	8	14	cloudy
Frankfurt	9	19	overcast
Paris	13	22	cloudy
London	10	18	rain
New York	9	18	fine

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Former Russian rulers; 6- Terra ____; 11- Attorney's org.; 14- ... who lived in ____; 15- The Little Mermaid; 16- Armed conflict; 17- Attack on all sides; 18- Water vapor; 19- Prince Valiant's son; 20- Makes lace; 22- Buddy; 24- Spider's traps; 28- Crescent-shaped; 30- Concurs; 31- The devil; 32- Snow conveyances; 33- Having bristles; 37- French possessive; 38- Long hard seat; 39- Hot tub; 40- Institute; 43- Long-winded speech; 45- Feed on grass; 46- Governor; 47- Writer; 49- Entrails; 50- Country album?; 51- Golfer Aoki; 52- "Fancy that!"; 53- Fulcrum for an oar; 56- Gathers; 61- One-million link; 62- Coherent light beam; 63- Very, to Verdi; 64- ____ gloom of night...; 65- Give the slip; 66- Gravy, for one;

DOWN 1- Decorative flap on a garment; 2- Vane dir.; 3- Sighs of relief; 4- Fish eggs; 5- Lounges; 6- Play groups; 7- Table scraps; 8- Bind; 9- Leaves in a bag; 10- Annual reference book; 11- Anticipate; 12- Vessel; 13- Florence's river; 21- Bodybuilder's pride; 23- Long luxuriant hair; 24- Class of Indian society; 25- Leers at; 26- French port; 27- Tie the knot; 28- Gate fastener; 29- Mormon state of western USA; 31- Have a feeling; 33- Grab; 34- Bendable twig, usually of a willow tree; 35- Overturn; 36- Smelling ____; 38- Spill the beans; 41- Pearl Mosque city; 42- Stiff coarse hair; 43- Ladies of Spain; 44- Links org.; 46- Genetic messenger; 47- Pad user; 48- Lucid; 49- Grenoble's river; 50- Not "fer"; 51- ____ Three Lives; 54- Actor Linden; 55- Buckeyes' sch.; 57- Conductor ____-Pekka Salonen; 58- Tempe sch.; 59- Lobbying org.; 60- Sprechen ____ Deutsch?;

Yesterday's solution



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- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- Customs 28 559 944
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- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IAM 28 387 333
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DRIVE IN

A CLASSIC BATTLE EPIC IN 'THE WOMAN KING'

LINDSEY BAHR,
AP FILM WRITER

VIOLA Davis should have been leading armies this whole time.

In "The Woman King," the always regal Oscar-winner is a mass of muscle, battle wounds and world weariness as General Nanisca, the head of the Agojie, an all-female unit of warriors who protected the West African Kingdom of Dahomey in the 19th century. Directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood, who cannot be pigeonholed, the film is a throwback of sorts to the big, exciting, emotional warrior epics that used to be all too common at the multiplex, with the twist that it's women not men driving the action.

But unlike some recent cinematic depictions of armies not entirely comprised of men, they didn't have to look to fantasy or the comic books to make "The Woman King" — just a history that isn't widely taught. More people probably know the Dora Milaje than the Agojie, who actually inspired the "Black Panther" fighters.

It is powerful that they are not immortal like Wonder Woman. There's no condescending Aven-

AP PHOTO



Viola Davis (left) and John Boyega in a scene from "The Woman King."

gers-like battle moment. There are no superpowers or magic lassos of truth. The ropes here are just ropes, but deadly still. They also fight with machetes and, sometimes, fingernails, up against brutish men and often win. In other words, there's no tricks, Nanisca explains, just skill (and bruises and scars). There's a reason she's described by a young trainee as looking just like some

old woman.

Written by Dana Stevens, "The Woman King" is a classic "one last fight" tale with a grizzled war veteran in Davis, a new recruit in Nawi, and the one who takes her under her wing, Izogie.

The world of the "The Woman King" is no paradise though. It's 1823 and there is rape and rampant hatred of women. There are slavers and colonizers around.

The young trainee, Nawi, only arrives at the palace doorsteps after her father gives up on trying to marry her off to anyone who will take her, abusive or not. The women don't all get along, the king's brides look down at the soldiers. And Nanisca, too, looks at women's tears as a sign of weakness.

It's also a very Hollywood version of what may have happened as they prepare to go up against

the powerful Oyo empire, with some convenient reveals, a love interest, a slightly idealized king figure (in John Boyega) and an old score someone needs to settle. This is not, in other words, a history lesson about the Agojie, though it could perhaps inspire some to seek that out or even write their own. That there are few true surprises isn't necessarily a bad thing, either. The film is exactly what you need it to be: An exciting and emotionally true spectacle that required a heck of a fight to simply exist.

I'll stop short of saying that Prince-Bythewood should have been directing these all along too, however. If she'd started and stayed with action, we wouldn't have gotten "Love & Basketball" or "Beyond the Lights," and what kind of cinematic landscape would that be? But we should all be so lucky that she gets to do this too.

"The Woman King," a Sony/TriStar Release in theaters now, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for "sequences of strong violence, some disturbing material, thematic content, brief language and partial nudity." Running time: 134 minutes. ★★★☆☆

AD

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C&C
LAWYERS
& NOTARIES
SINCE 1996

TASTE OF EDESIA

Portuguese feast

IRENE SAM, MDT

THIS month, Mesa at The Karl Lagerfeld is launching a weekly Sunday Matiné featuring delicacies from the streets of Portugal to the shores of Macau. One could feast on a brunch menu for a unique cultural voyage with fruity Portuguese sangrias or free-flow of selected wines.

Sunday Matiné will take guests on a culinary adventure featuring a Portuguese-styled egg dish, in addition to ten Portuguese petiscos and five main courses. The petiscos offerings include Ostra, oyster in three flavors, Bulhão Pato, traditional clams in garlic and white wine sauce, and Lagosta, lobster mini burgers, to name a few. The five main course selections include Espetadas, grilled mix skewers, Frango Piri Piri, fried chicken drumstick with Mesa's Artisan Piri Piri Sauce, Costeletão Assado, roasted short rib, Arroz de Coentros, carolino rice with cabbage and coriander, and Broccolini Com Alho, sautéed broccolini with garlic, cream and chips.

After these amazing savory options, one can enjoy Mesa's assorted homemade desserts from the trolley service. A selection from Mesa's signature cocktail list inspired by Macau landmarks is also available for takeaway including Last Back Garden, Patron Saint, Intelligent Treasure, as well as the iconic Negroni.

Mesa offers an exquisite menu of contemporary Portuguese flavors manifesting the tradition, quality, authenticity, and farm-to-table philosophy of dining. Designed by fashion legend Karl Lagerfeld, Mesa's interior features a bold, blend of contemporary design and oriental inspiration. Mesa has recently been bestowed "Best Award of Excellence" of Wine Spectator 2022, marking an honorable result in the restaurant's opening year.



Macau Racing Tips

By Davy Chiu, MDT



THE CHEPSTOW 1510M SAND

2022-09-24|Sat|14:30

FORTUNE Ahead ran a big race towards the end of season carried big weight of 133 lb ; he fought on strongly to beat Danish Star in a very narrow margin. This Saturday under a different racing condition Fortune Ahead only has to shoulder 126 lb and has an inside draw of gate 3, if he can repeat his form in his last race he is good enough to oblige. His track work was very good and it caught the eyes of all track watchers, his work shows us that he is quite ready to run another big race for his connection this Saturday. Looking in this race Fortune Ahead clearly got the edge to win again. There are two horses in the field that may be a threat to Fortune Ahead ie Baby Shark and Still Be Friends, these two are also very good under the same racing condition, but I am confident Fortune Ahead can beat them both under CL Cheung for Stanley Chin.

Race 2 Horse no. 7 Fortune Ahead Win & Place bets



OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

UNITED NATIONS SHOULD SERVE AS VENUE FOR PROMOTING UNITY, NOT CONFRONTATION

Rather than coming to an end, the conflict in Ukraine seems set to escalate. Nobody can tell to what extent.

The gloomy prospects for the most devastating armed conflict in Europe since World War II have become more grim with US President Joe Biden saying at the 77th annual session of the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday: "Russia has shamelessly violated the core tenets of the United Nations", without showing any sign of self-reflection on the role of the United States in the process, or any intention of ending the US' proxy war at an early date. By doing so, he is encouraging US allies to continue to ramp up their weaponization of Ukraine.

As the fighting escalates and potentially broadens, the spillover effects will worsen, for vulnerable countries in particular.

With the United States and its allies planning harsher sanctions against Russia, aiming to finally enervate it, there will no doubt be a more prominent major-power standoff at the United Nations, particularly its Security Council, pushing the global governance regime into a more serious stalemate.

As a result, a host of daunting global challenges endangering the present-day world, from poverty and hunger to climate change, public health hazards and security threats, will fail to be addressed.

The situation has worsened to such a degree that UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned in his opening remarks at the high-level meeting of the 77th General Assembly that "Our world is in peril - and paralyzed" with countries "gridlocked in colossal global dysfunction".

The UN chief enumerated a number of present and future variables threatening humanity's future. But compared with the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the corresponding geopolitical tensions, climate concerns and the "forest of red flags" he cited regarding new and emerging technologies and the lack of progress on the UN development goals for 2030 will only be put on the back burner.

Those heads of state who showed up at the UN Headquarters voiced various grim concerns when it was their turn at the podium, presenting an unsettling collage of the world mired in troubles. There was a shared sense of urgency for trouble-shooting. But countries remain divided over how.

Considering countries and their leaders still largely take the UN to be the ultimate venue for discussing, if not solving, the world's problems, they should take advantage of the painful awareness of the global governance overseer's present paralysis and work together to make it work. If they allow the UN, especially its Security Council, to stay divided and member countries to continue to engage in debilitating geopolitical games, the post-war international governance structure will be rendered irrelevant, subjecting countries to the law of the jungle again.

There has been plenty of talk about UN reforms. But the more pressing need now is to first resurrect it from the de facto state of dysfunction.

For the UN to work, as Secretary-General Guterres appealed, countries must "work as one, as a coalition of the world, as united nations".

They can start by making concerted efforts to create the conditions and space for the Ukraine crisis to be resolved through dialogue and negotiation.

BANK OF ENGLAND RAISES RATES BUT AVOIDS BOLDER HIKE LIKE FED

THE BUZZ

The Bank of England raised its key interest rate yesterday by another half-percentage point to the highest level in 14 years, but despite facing inflation that outpaces other major economies, it avoided more aggressive hikes made by the U.S. Federal Reserve and other central banks.

It is the Bank of England's seventh straight move to increase borrowing costs as rising food and energy prices fuel a cost-of-living crisis that is considered the worst in a generation. Despite facing a slumping currency, tight labor market and inflation near

its highest level in four decades, officials held off on acting more boldly as they predicted a second consecutive drop in economic output this quarter, an informal definition of recession.

The bank matched its half-point increase last month — the biggest in 27 years — to bring its benchmark rate to 2.25%. The decision was delayed for a week as the United Kingdom mourned Queen Elizabeth II and comes after new Prime Minister Liz Truss' government unveiled a massive relief package aimed at helping consumers and businesses cope with skyrocketing energy bills.

PRADA, MAX MARA BACK TO PRE-PANDEMIC SPLENDOR IN MILAN

COLLEEN BARRY, MILAN

PRE-pandemic fashion delirium is back.

After several calm COVID-induced seasons, Milan Fashion Week is back to its pre-pandemic splendor: with crowded seating, gridlocked streets and sidewalks packed with fashion fans wanting a glimpse of stars and influencers.

After a lot of pandemic talk of how the fashion system needed to change -- that is, slow down -- few have been able to resist returning to the world as they knew it. This week's runway shows will close with the return of another Milan tradition: the Green Carpet Awards to recognize advances in sustainability.

PRADA EXPLORES CRUDE SILK

The latest collection by Miuccia Prada and Raf Simons explores the space between minimalism and decorations, with clean silhouettes and transparent materials.

The collection starts with form-fitting, slightly cropped bodysuits crafted from poplin shirting, in industrial colors like gray and ivory. They are worn under boxy jackets and longer opera coats, then finally, a loose-fitting dress in crude silk and pretty lace detailing, suggestive of a night dress.

"The clothes are about simplicity, with no unnecessary complication," Prada said in show notes. "Politically, theoretically, aesthetically, we are drawn to these notions again and again. The idea of directness."

The silhouette was simple. Dresses wrap around the body, as casually as a towel after a shower. Transparent, tissue-y overcoats gave a sense of lightness. Naive applique flowers decorate handbags and jackets, at times holding in place a trailing tail of fabric.



A model wears a creation as part of the Prada women's Spring Summer 2023 collection presented in Milan yesterday

Even with the feminine touches, androgyny underlined the collection, in particularly in the Prada uniform looks: jumpsuits, slim trousers and jackets. Shoes were snub-toed Mary Janes or loafers. Bags of the season included the Prada inverted triangle handbag and large shoppers in contrasting pink or lime.

"More than any other collection, this one is filled with different views. There's a mirror of cinema in the collection, of witnessing fragments of a larger whole," Simons said.

MAX MARA GETS LOST IN THOUGHT

The Max Mara silhouette for next season evokes feminine modernity, with voluminous mariner trousers and skirts that flair from snug at the hip into a cascading torrent of swishing movement. The volumes -- evident also in boxy jackets and oversized coats -- are balanced by shoulder-baring halters and crop tops.

Creative director Ian Griffiths said he took cues from 1930s female intellectuals on the French Riviera, citing Renee Perle, the muse and lover of photographer Jacques-Henri Lartigue, and architect Eileen Gray. There is a purposeful androgyny in the collection, with David Bowie in loose 1980s trousers appearing on Griffiths' mood board.

They are looks that invite contemplation, while offering unrestrained movement for a woman intent on intellectual pursuits.

Max Mara presented a neutral color for next season, in raw linen that can range from gray to khaki, which was set off by soothing, sun-faded shades of yellow, green and blue, creating a harmonious trio in a baggy overcoat over swimsuit combo, finished with a knit bathing cap.

Bags are large enough for a weekend getaway. Shoes are platform sandals. And hats feature oversized brims. MDT/AP



Lebanon's banks will remain closed indefinitely after rejecting a proposed government security plan, a senior official with the country's commercial banks association said yesterday, amid a wave of protests and heists targeting its failing financial system. The Association of Banks in Lebanon initially announced a three-day strike, after at least seven bank branches were stormed last week, where assailants demanded they withdraw their trapped savings.



Israel yesterday began administering doses of coronavirus vaccines tailored to fight the highly infectious omicron variant as its health authorities urged at-risk groups and those over 65 to get the shot. The rollout of the new vaccine follows Israel's world-leading drive to vaccinate its population early in 2021 and marks it out as one of the first countries to start distributing omicron-specific vaccines.

UK The government confirmed yesterday that it's lifting a ban on fracking in England, arguing that the move will help boost the country's energy security amid Russia's war in Ukraine. Prime Minister Liz Truss announced within days of taking office earlier this month that she would reverse a 2019 ban on hydraulic fracturing, a controversial technique used to extract oil and gas from shale rock.



French President Emmanuel Macron has called for a "massive acceleration" of renewable energy development in his country, including offshore wind farms and solar power, via a new plan that seeks to bring lagging France closer to the energy policies of its European neighbors. The move comes amid a major energy crisis in Europe aggravated by Russia's war in Ukraine. Macron wants France to gain more independence in terms of