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US STEPS UP DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS WITH CHINA ON TAIWAN, RUSSIA

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AP PHOTO



Pakistan The World Bank said it will provide about \$2 billion in aid to Pakistan, ravaged by floods that have killed more than 1,600 people this year, the largest pledge of assistance so far. Unprecedented monsoon rains and flooding this year have also injured some 13,000 people across the country since mid-June. The floods have displaced millions and destroyed crops, half a million homes and thousands of kilometers of roads.

AP PHOTO



India's foreign minister laid out the country's plans for its turn at the G-20 presidency during his speech Saturday in front of the U.N. General Assembly. India assumes the mantle of the consortium of leading developed and developing nations in December. Subramanyam Jaishankar said India's approach would be "based on principles of mutual respect and national ownership with a commitment to sustainable development for all."

AP PHOTO



Iran's Foreign Ministry said yesterday it summoned Britain's ambassador to protest what it described as a hostile atmosphere created by London-based Farsi language media outlets. The move comes amid violent unrest in Iran triggered by the death of a young woman in police custody. The state-run IRNA news agency reported the ministry also summoned Norway's ambassador to Iran and strongly protested recent remarks by the president of the Norwegian parliament, Masud Gharahkhani. More on p8

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MOP8,000 cash per resident in new round of consumption subsidy

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PUBLIC WORKS

LRT TO EXTEND TO QINGMAO; AIRPORT TO SEE LONGER RUNWAY

ANTHONY LAM

A plot of land measuring at least 3,000 square meters next to the Border Gate and owned by the mainland will be leased to Macau to facilitate the connection of its city railway to the Qingmao Border Checkpoint.

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng announced the news at a press conference over the weekend.

Originally, the city's Light Rapid Transit's (LRT) East Line was to terminate at the Border Gate Checkpoint. However, the government suddenly announced the railway will be extended to Qingmao in Ilha Verde.

According to a source that cited local newspaper Macao Daily's report dated April 21, 2013, an official at the then Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) had first revealed that studies would be



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conducted to lengthen the LRT to Ilha Verde.

Focus had been on the LRT's West Line, which would connect Taipa with Barra through the Sai Van Bridge. Track assignments in the tube of the bridge were also altered, despite objections from the bridge's head designer, who cited

weight distribution as a key reason.

In the past couple of years, the focus has been on the East Line of the railway, which would connect Taipa with the New Urban Zone A through the fourth Macau-Taipa bridge now under construction.

The proposed extension will connect Zone A with Ilha Verde

through the Border Gate.

While explaining the project, Ho said the land lease is essential to connecting the railway to both the Border Gate and Qingmao. As Beijing has already given a green light to the land lease, a tender process will be opened near the end of the year. The design of the railway

will also be altered to align with the proposal.

The head of government, in addition, hinted that the future LRT Qingmao Station will be located on a currently vacant plot of land between the border building and Toi-S'an.

Alterations and land cleaning and reclamation will be necessary to realize the LRT East Line. The design and routing of the line will be put to focus-group consultation and presented at the parliament when it resumes.

The Macau International Airport (MIA), meanwhile, will need to be expanded to suit international travel needs, Ho added.

In fact, before the Covid-19 pandemic, the MIA Company Limited had revealed its plans to expand the facility. A video of computer renderings titled Promotional Video of "Macau International Airport Master Plan" – which depicts the envisioned design of the airport expansion – has been posted on YouTube.

Ho announced that the airport runway needs to be lengthened and the tarmac expanded, which was also included in the promotional video on YouTube.

CENTRAL GOV'T PLEDGES 'FULL SUPPORT' FOR SAR'S INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Vice Premier Han Zheng on Friday voiced full support for Macau accelerating its infrastructure construction and appropriately diversifying the economy.

Han, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and head of the Central Leading Group on Hong Kong and Macao Affairs, made the remarks at a video conference during which the Chief Executive of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR), Ho Iat Seng, reported on the SAR's current economic situation and other related work.

The central government fully recognizes the efforts the chief executive and the SAR government have made, and is giving Ma-



Chinese Vice Premier Han Zheng presides over a video conference in Beijing, last week

cau its full support in containing Covid-19, easing difficulties for businesses, improving people's livelihoods, and appropriately diversifying its economy, Han said.

Noting that it has been one year since the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin was officially put into operation, Han called on Macau to seize the important opportunity that the cooperation zone present-

and inject new impetus into the SAR's long-term economic development.

Guangdong and Macau should tap fully into their respective strengths, enhance their level of cooperation, and develop the cooperation zone into a new platform to boost Macau's appropriate economic diversification and a new space to facilitate the lives and employment of Macau residents, Han said.

MDT/XINHUA

TYPHOON TROPICAL CYCLONE NORU TO AFFECT MACAU

THE tropical cyclone Noru, located east of the Philippines, will enter the South China Sea today and gradually intensify, according to the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau. It is expected to move westward across the central part of the South China Sea, and will maintain a distance of about 700km south from Macau, moving generally towards Vietnam.

Coupled with the influence of the southward-moving northeast monsoon, the bureau warns that local winds will reach wind force 6 occasionally, starting from tomorrow, with occasional showers. Meanwhile, another low-pressure area will develop over the South China Sea later this week, with a possibility of developing into a



tropical cyclone.

In Hong Kong, its weather bureau expects that its direct threat to the territory is "not high." However, under the influence of the northeast monsoon, east to northeasterly winds will prevail in the territory tomorrow and Wednesday.

The powerful typhoon slammed into the northeastern Philippines yesterday and was barreling

across the main Luzon island toward the capital in a densely populated path where thousands have been evacuated to safety.

With sustained winds of 195 kilometers and gusts of up to 240 kph, it was expected to weaken slightly when it hits the Sierra Madre mountain range but will remain dangerously ferocious, forecasters in the country said. LV

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STIMULUS

Gov't to spend extra MOP6b in new round of consumption subsidy

ANTHONY LAM

ANOTHER round of consumption subsidy will be issued later this month as part of the second MOP10 billion stimulus the government has announced to combat the effect of the pandemic.

The government announced over the weekend that it would spend a further MOP5.92 billion on consumption subsidies.

Under the plan, all permanent or non-permanent local residents registered for the third-round consumption subsidies are eligible for the new consumption boosts. With no prior registration needed, MOP8,000 will be automatically paid into the bank accounts of eligible residents. The maximum amount to be used each day will be MOP300.

This second subsidy is commonly referred to as "the second MOP10-billion boost."

The government had not released details on the scheme despite the fact that parliament had approved the subsidy. The



government had only outlined the scheme as "having general subsidies included."

The new consumption subsidy will be available from October 28 this year to June 30 next year. The new funds will be deposited either after a recipient has used both the start-up and discount amounts of the current consumption subsidy, or when the current subsidy period ends, whichever occurs first.

Registration for the current phase of subsidy is open and will close after January 13, 2023. The validity period for use will end on February 28, 2023.

Unlike the current and previous consumption subsidies, the new subsidy will not be separated into start-up and discount amounts. The entire sum will be at the disposal of the registrants, meaning they will not need to use their own money to

enjoy the whole subsidy.

The scope of use will be identical to that of the current consumption subsidy.

Details of the new consumption subsidy were based on the plan's predecessors, Tai Kin Ip, director of the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED), said in a press conference.

He said 90% of previous consumption subsidy amounts were under MOP300. Furthermore, the current and the additional rounds of subsidies will have overlapping validities, "technically different caps cannot be set," Tai said.

With the government only intending to use about 60% of the MOP10 billion received from the parliament, Tai was asked where the remainder would go. Tai pledged the money would be saved in the government's account and admitted it may be used for disease control activities – such as citywide tests as well as resource procurement and mobilization – when there are future outbreaks.

INFLATION RATE INCREASES 1.13%

The Composite CPI for August this year (103.77) increased 1.13% year-on-year, data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) shows. The increment was attributed to domestic helpers' higher wages, and increased charges for eating out and electricity. Yet, the rise was partially offset by lower rentals for dwellings, falling charges for telecommunication services and reduced prices of pork. For the 12 months ended August this year, the average Composite CPI grew 1.07% from the previous period, and the price indices of household furnishings and services (+9.51%) and transport (+6.87%) showed notable growth.

AIR MACAU TO LAUNCH ROUTES TO VIETNAM AND JAPAN

Air Macau has announced it plans to resume weekly flights to Vietnam and Japan next month, a timely move as Macau eases restrictions to 41 foreign countries, including Japan, but not Vietnam. "It's the first time [...] Air Macau [has] resume[d] international flights since the start of the pandemic," the local flag carrier said in a statement. It added the move is a "breakthrough for Macau to restore connectivity with other countries." A weekly round-trip flight between Macau and Hanoi, Vietnam, will begin on October 12, while a weekly round-trip flight between Macau and Tokyo, Japan, will also begin on October 13. The airline also announced it will resume a weekly round-trip flight to Taipei starting November 1.

HENGQIN CHIMELONG HOTEL REOPENS AHEAD OF 7-DAY HOLIDAY

Chimelong Marine Science Hotel in Hengqin reopened September 20 ahead of the upcoming seven-day National Day holiday from Oct 1 to 7. Discounts and themed activities for Chimelong Membership Month will be available through September 28. The new holiday mode at the hotel integrates leisure, entertainment, culture and science popularization and services, and is expected to provide a better accommodation experience for visitors.

PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES GIVEN FINANCIAL SERVICE PLATFORM IN HENGQIN

The first financial service platform for Portuguese-speaking countries in China has been established by the China Construction Bank (CCB) in the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin. It will capitalize on Macau's advantages in connection with Portuguese-speaking countries to provide financial services and support for trade and investment, industrial and regional cooperation, cultural and scientific exchange between the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong enterprises as well as Portuguese-speaking countries. The platform focuses on matchmaking for cross-border commodities and Sino-Portuguese-speaking countries investment projects, related policies and information and financial services.

ZERO-COVID

Ho: Macau cannot 'lie flat and co-exist with Covid-19'

ANTHONY LAM

CHIEF Executive Ho Iat Seng has once again rejected the idea of co-existence with Covid-19 in Macau, despite it becoming a trend in more places around the world.

He attributed the impossibility to border normalization between Macau and mainland China. He warned that weakening Covid-19 prevention and control policies in Macau could affect the travel of people in Macau visiting mainland China.

Currently, people in Macau are not quarantined upon entry to the mainland.

Elaborating on the matter, he reiterated that Macau cannot "lie flat". The term is widely used in mainland China to



describe the attitude to reject societal pressures to overwork.

It was not the first time the head of the local government had generalized a media ques-

tion on co-existence with Covid-19 to the "lie-flat" attitude.

At the press conference, Ho rhetorically questioned the willingness of people in Macau

to be quarantined upon entry to mainland China, to prove mainland residents would not want to be quarantined when visiting Macau.

Neighboring Hong Kong will adopt the zero-day mandatory quarantine policy, boosting airfares and visits to airline websites nearly immediately upon announcement of the policy. In the past two years or so, Hong Kong and mainland China have not been under border normalization.

At a previous parliamentary session, Ho blamed the local tourism industry for over-focusing on the mainland market in the past two decades or so, before urging the industry to turn its focus to foreign visitors.

With quarantine-free travel being adopted in many places, mandatory quarantine is increasingly unattractive to international travelers. Macau currently only accepts foreigners from 41 countries and is implementing a seven-day mandatory quarantine period on all entrants from outside mainland China.

MAINLAND GROUP TOURS EXPECTED TO RETURN END-OCTOBER

ANTHONY LAM

THE return of group tours from mainland China can be expected as soon as late October, Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng, told a press conference over the weekend.

Also reinstated is the digital travel endorsement application.

Ho added the tours will restart gradually from the provinces of Guangdong, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Fujian and the municipality of Shanghai, with Guangdong being the frontier.

He was optimistic about attracting about 40,000 visitors to town daily after group tours resume.

To ensure full compliance with the Covid-zero policy, a circuit breaker and resumption mechanism will be initiated as group tours resume.

Ho emphasized that application procedures for travel endorsement differ between provinces, but the local government will continue negotiating with Beijing to further expand eligibility. The aim is to reinstate pre-Covid procedures across the country.

Justifying the resumption

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in only four provinces and one municipality, Ho said these locations have larger populations and stronger spending power, in addition to their control over the spread of Covid-19.

He hoped the policy adjustment would double the daily tourist arrival figures from the current 20,000, believing this will lead to a stable revival.

Elaborating on the circuit breaker and the resumption mechanism, Ho said that whenever Macau or the five areas has a "severe outbreak" of Covid-19, the circuit breaker will be automatically triggered and group tours from affected mainland jurisdictions will be suspended.

However, the resumption of tours can be reactivated auto-

matically when the condition stabilizes, usually determined by several days without new cases. Ho said about a month will be needed for preparations because negotiations and discussions are still required.

"Macau must be aligned with mainland China on Covid-19 control and prevention policies," Ho emphasized.

Asked about the probability of further extending SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test (NAT) validity for Macau-Zhuhai travel, Ho said negotiations with Zhuhai had been ongoing, but the constantly unstable Covid-19 conditions across the country had hindered the realization of the extension.


Ho disagreed with the suggestion that expecting 40,000 arrivals daily is too optimistic. He said that last year, the city had sometimes had over 30,000 arrivals per day, noting that grouped tours and electronic travel endorsement applications were still suspended.

At the same press conference, the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, said the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) had been releasing marketing campaigns to attract tourists to Macau.

He said the MGTO had already commenced planning preparations for attracting and receiving grouped tours with three local tourism associations.

In addition, he said, the MGTO has been promoting the city online in order to attract tourists. With new policies about to kick in, the bureau will conduct further offline promotions about the city in mainland China. He also reminded the local tourism industry to prepare well to provide quality services to incoming groups of tourists.

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CHEONG: RESUMPTION OF GROUP TRAVELS TO BOOST GAMING OPERATORS' INVESTMENT CONFIDENCE

LYNZY VALLES

AS Macau prepares to welcome the return of mainland tour groups from end-October, seven hopeful gaming concession bidders are likely to gain confidence from the move, which will bring an end to the tourism drought that has negatively impacted the economy.

According to André Cheong, Secretary for Administration and Justice, the SAR government is "confident that the concessionaires will bet on the future of Macau," following the resumption of organized tours and the issuing of electronic visas for visits to Macau, by November, as part of Beijing's "initiative to support Macau's economic diversification."

The issuance of group package tours to Macau and eVisas under the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) is shaping up to be a massive boost for the SAR's gaming

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and tourism operators, which have been negatively affected since the pandemic began in early 2020.

According to Cheong, the reinstatement will boost the gaming operators' confidence to continue investing in the SAR, admitting that it was natural for the bidders to have concerns about the possible return of investment to

the city.

The first group of tourists will hail from Shanghai and four Chinese provinces including Guangdong, after the central government greenlighted the move.

Authorities pledged Macau would still adhere to the zero-Covid policy, implying that if an outbreak occurs, the city will tighten restrictions.

Tourism sector hails reinstatement of China visas

STAFF REPORTER

LOCAL associations have expressed confidence and support as the central government greenlighted the resumption of group tours to Macau and mainland visas by the end of October.

"The decision [to resume tour groups to Macau and mainland visas in November] can improve the confidence of mainland residents to travel to Macau," said the Macau president of the Association of Returned Overseas Chinese Macau, Lao Nga Wong.

Lao said the resumption could increase tourist visits to Macau and also believes it could prompt an economic recovery in Macau. It was also good news for mainland tourism authorities as mainland residents could be allowed to travel to Macau.

Meanwhile, he expects the government will continue to



work towards the validity of the nucleic acid test (NAT) being changed to seven days.

"This measure benefits the employees in the leisure and tourism industries such as integrated resorts and hotels, travel agencies, conventions and exhibitions, tourism, catering and retail," said Macau Leisure Tourism Services Innovation Association president, Wong Fai.

Wong explained Macau is the only area exempt from qua-

rantine in mainland China. He believes the measures could help to attract more tourists to travel to Macau.

Wong hopes that the authorities could communicate with mainland authorities to implement the measures as soon as possible.

In the meantime, renewed group tours could help travel businesses such as tour guides, coach drivers and travel agencies affected by the pan-

demic outbreak.

The Industry and Commerce Association of Macau ZAPE president, Wu Tat Chong, said the implementation of the measures shows that Chinese authorities fully recognize the work of the Macau government and Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, and fully support its pandemic prevention work to improve residents' livelihoods and promote economic development in Macau.

NATIONAL DAY FIREWORKS TO BE HELD THIS SATURDAY

The Macau fireworks show celebrating the National days will be held on October 1 at 9 p.m., said Macao Government Tourism Office director, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes. The relevant equipment has been disinfected and the fireworks will be set up on the boat when it arrives in Macau. She said that due to the suspension of public activities on the mainland, this year's fireworks could not be held in cooperation with Hengqin authorities, according to the original plan. The authorities will monitor the current tropical cyclone Noru. Meanwhile, Senna Fernandes said gaming companies will participate in this year's event.

10TH TRAVEL EXPO ATTENDANCE EXCEEDS LAST YEAR'S EDITION

Over 24,000 people attended the last day of 10th Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo, demonstrating that the promotion of the expo had a positive impact, according to the Macao Government Tourism Office director, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes. With around 24,000 people, this year's expo attendance exceeded last year's. The live cloud broadcast reached around 2.7 million views, according to organizers and the number of online seminars reached 525 sessions and 29 contracted projects were successfully made. The 10th Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo took place at The Venetian Macao from September 23 to 25.

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U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi during the 77th United Nations General Assembly on Friday

US STEPS UP DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS WITH CHINA ON TAIWAN, RUSSIA

MATTHEW LEE, NEW YORK

The Biden administration on Friday ramped up its diplomatic efforts to press China to end provocative actions against Taiwan and warned it about any active support for Russia in its war against Ukraine.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken made both cases in a meeting with his Chinese counterpart on Friday in a meeting on the sidelines of the annual U.N. General Assembly in New York, according to U.S. officials. The session was one of the few that Blinken kept on his schedule after the death of his father on Thursday.

The officials wouldn't describe

the Chinese response, but said Foreign Minister Wang Yi was receptive to the messages and that the two men discussed the need "to maintain open lines of communication and responsibly manage the U.S.-China relationship, especially during times of tension."

The talks between Blinken and Wang come amid a period of intense tensions on both issues and ahead of an expected meeting in November between Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping. Biden's recent comments about Taiwan and China's tacit support for the war in Ukraine are just two of the latest irritants in relations between Washington and Beijing.

State Department spokesman Ned Price said Blinken had affirmed to Wang the administration's commitment to "maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait" despite Biden's assertion earlier this week that the U.S. would send troops to defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion.

China regards the self-governed island of Taiwan as its sovereign territory, has not ruled out force to reunify it with the mainland and has in recent months stepped up military activity in the area. That activity is at least partially in response to high-level U.S. congressional visits to Taipei, including by House Speaker

Nancy Pelosi, and stepped-up American arms sales.

Blinken "stressed that preserving peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is critical to regional and global security and prosperity," Price said in a statement. It added that the U.S. remains committed to its "one-China policy" which does not support Taiwanese independence.

On Russia, U.S. officials said Blinken underscored the damage that would be done to the Sino-U.S. relationship should Beijing take a more active role in supporting the war in Ukraine. U.S. officials have said they are cautiously optimistic about recent comments from Chinese leaders

about their concerns over the war and its consequences, and Blinken wanted to drive the point home.

Blinken "highlighted the implications if the PRC were to provide support to Moscow's invasion of a sovereign state," Price said in the statement.

The U.S.-China relationship has become increasingly fraught in recent years over multiple issues, including Chinese actions in the South China Sea and against Taiwan, and the handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

Nonetheless, Price said the U.S. continues to be "open to cooperating with the PRC where our interests intersect." One area the U.S. hopes to continue coordination is on climate change.

'EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE' WON'T BE TOLERATED

China underscored its commitment Saturday to its claim on Taiwan, telling assembled world leaders that anyone who gets in the way of its determination to reunify with the self-governing island would be "crushed by the wheels of history."

"Only when China is fully reunified can there be true peace across the Taiwan Strait," Wang Yi, China's foreign minister, said at the U.N. General Assembly. He said Beijing would "take the most forceful steps to oppose external interference."

"The PRC government is the sole government representing all of China," Wang said, referring to China's formal name, the People's Republic of China. "The one-China principle has become a basic norm in international relations."

He added: "Any move to obstruct China's reunification is bound to be crushed by the wheels of history." **MDT/AP**

COURT

Professor, NASA researcher pleads guilty in China ties case

JUAN A. LOZANO,
HOUSTON

NASA researcher and Texas A&M University professor pleaded guilty to charges related to hiding his ties to a university created by the Chinese government while accepting federal grant money.

Zhengdong Cheng pleaded guilty to two counts — violation of NASA regulations and falsifying official documents — during a hearing in Houston federal court on

Thursday.

Cheng's conviction was part of a program called the China Initiative, which was first started under the Trump administration. But in February, the Justice Department abandoned the program after complaints it chilled academic collaboration and contributed to anti-Asian bias. The department had also endured high-profile setbacks in individual prosecutions, resulting in the dismissal of multiple criminal cases against

academic researchers in the last year. The Justice Department said it planned to impose a higher bar for such prosecutions.

Cheng had originally been charged with wire fraud, conspiracy and false statements when he was arrested in August 2020. But he pleaded guilty to the new charges as part of an agreement with federal prosecutors.

U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen sentenced Cheng to the time he had already served during his

pretrial incarceration — about 13 months.

Cheng also agreed to pay restitution of \$86,876 and pay a fine of \$20,000.

Philip Hilder, Cheng's attorney said the professor was "relieved that this unfortunate chapter of his life is behind."

But Hilder was critical of the China Initiative program, saying while its original purpose was "to fight economic espionage ... that was not the case in his matter."

"The China Initiative

[...] has now been phased out as a Justice Department priority. The overall mission stays the same, to ferret out economic espionage, but the focus is to target wrongdoers by their deeds and not by their ethnicity," Hilder said.

Prosecutors accused Cheng, who was hired by Texas A&M in 2004, of concealing his work in China even as his team of researchers received nearly \$750,000 in grant money for space research.

NASA is restricted from using funds for any collaboration or coordination with China, Chinese institutions or any Chinese-owned company.

But, prosecutors say, Cheng violated those restrictions by maintaining multiple undisclosed associations with China, including serving as director of a soft matter institute at a technology university in Guangdong, China, that was established by China's Ministry of Education. **MDT/AP**

TYPHOON NORU

Powerful typhoon hits north Philippines, thousands evacuated

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

A powerful typhoon slammed into the northeastern Philippines yesterday and was barreling across the main Luzon island toward the capital in a densely populated path where thousands have been evacuated to safety.

Typhoon Noru hit the coastal town of Burdeos on Polillo Island in Quezon province shortly before nightfall.

With sustained winds of 195 kilometers and gusts of up to 240 kph, it was expected to weaken slightly when it hits the Sierra Madre mountain range but will remain dangerously ferocious, forecasters said.

"The typhoon is strong and we live by the sea," said Marilen Yubatan, who left her shanty in Manila with her two young daughters. "If we fall into the water, I don't know where I will end up with my children."

The typhoon gained considerable strength from a storm with sustained winds of 85 kph on Saturday into a super typhoon just 24 hours later in an "explosive intensification" over the open sea, Vicente Malano, who heads the



country's weather agency, told The Associated Press.

Thousands of villagers were evacuated — some forcibly — from the typhoon's path, as well as from mountainside villages prone to landslides and flash floods. Coastal communities could be hit by tidal surges as high as 3 meters (about 10 feet) in Quezon provin-

ce, including Polillo island and nearby Aurora province.

"The combined effects of storm surge and high waves breaking along the coast may cause life-threatening and damaging inundation or flooding," the weather agency warned.

In Manila's seaside slum district of Tondo, some residents left

their homes with bags of belongings and hurriedly walked to a nearby evacuation center as the sky darkened and rains started to fall.

Melchor Avenilla Jr., who heads Quezon's disaster-response office, said law enforcers were under orders to forcibly move people who refuse to leave their homes. "But

so far we've been able to do this by just appealing to people," Avenilla told AP by phone.

Several provinces and cities, including the densely populated capital Manila, suspended classes and government work Sunday and Monday. The typhoon's eye could pass about 40 to 50 kilometers from metropolitan Manila, "which is nearly a direct hit," Malano said.

Fishing boats and inter-island and cargo ferries were restricted to port as a precaution, the coast guard said, stranding cargo trucks and more than 2,500 passengers. More than 30 flights at Manila's airport, mostly bound for domestic destinations, were canceled.

The typhoon is forecast to sweep through the main Luzon Island overnight and into the South China Sea on Monday. It's on track to hit Vietnam later in the week still maintaining its powerful winds.

About 20 storms and typhoons batter the Philippines each year. The archipelago also lies in the "Pacific Ring of Fire," a region along most of the Pacific Ocean rim where many volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occur, making the Southeast Asian nation one of the world's most disaster-prone.

In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, one of the strongest recorded tropical cyclones in the world, left more than 7,300 people dead or missing, flattened entire villages, swept ships inland and displaced more than 5 million in the central Philippines — well to the south of Noru's path. **MDT/AP**

KOREAS

South Korea says North Korea test-fired missile toward sea

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

North Korea fired a short-range ballistic missile yesterday toward its eastern seas, extending a provocative streak in weapons testing as a U.S. aircraft carrier visits South Korea for joint military exercises in response to the North's growing nuclear threat.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missile launched from the western inland town of Taechon flew 600 kilometers cross-country on a maximum altitude of 60 kilometers before landing in waters off North Korea's eastern coast.

South Korea's presidential office said National Security Director Kim Sung-han called an emergency National Security Council meeting where members



People watch a news program showing a file image of a missile launch by North Korea at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, yesterday

denounced the launch as a clear violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions and accused the North of raising tensions in the region.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said the launch did not pose an "immediate threat to U.S. personnel

or territory, or to our allies," but still highlighted the destabilizing impact of North Korea's illicit nuclear weapons and missile programs.

The launch came as the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and its strike group arrived in South Korea for the

two countries' joint military exercises that aim to show their strength against growing North Korean threats.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said its nuclear envoy Kim Gunn held telephone calls with Sung Kim, U.S. President Joe Biden's special representative for North Korea, and Funakoshi Takehiro, director-general for Asian and Oceanian affairs at Japan's Foreign Ministry, to discuss trilateral cooperation in face of North Korean threats.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said in a statement Tokyo is "doing its utmost" to gather information on North Korea's launch and confirm the safety of ships and aircraft, although there were no immediate reports of damages.

The North Korean threat is also expected to be a key agenda when U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris visits South Korea next week after attending the state funeral in Tokyo of slain former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

North Korea has dialed up its testing activities to a record pace in 2022, testing more than 30 ballistic weapons, including its first intercontinental ballistic missiles since 2017. North Korea is exploiting a divide in the United Nations Security Council that deepened over Russia's war on Ukraine to speed up arms development.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has punctuated his weapons tests with repeated threats that the North would proactively use its nuclear weapons when

threatened, increasing security concerns for its conventionally armed rival South Korea.

The flight details announced by Seoul's military suggest that North Korea could have tested a nuclear-capable short-range weapon modeled after Russia's Iskander missiles, which travel at relatively low altitudes and are designed to be maneuverable in flight, making them harder to be intercepted by missile defenses.

Kim Dong-yub, a professor at Seoul's University of North Korean Studies, said it was notable that the missile flew 600 kilometers from its Taechon launch point — roughly the distance to South Korea's southern port Busan, where the Reagan arrived Friday. **MDT/AP**

PROTESTS

Iran summons UK and Norway ambassadors amid violent unrest

IRAN'S Foreign Ministry said Sunday it summoned Britain's ambassador to protest what it described as a hostile atmosphere created by London-based Farsi language media outlets. The move comes amid violent unrest in Iran triggered by the death of a young woman in police custody.

The state-run IRNA news agency reported the ministry also summoned Norway's ambassador to Iran and strongly protested recent remarks by the president of the Norwegian parliament, Masud Gharahkhani.

The death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in custody after being detained by Iranian morality police launched unrest across Iran's provinces and the capital of Tehran.

Protests over Amini's death have spread across at least 46 cities, towns and villages in Iran. State TV has suggested that at least 41 protesters and police have been killed since the protests began Sept. 17. An Associated Press count of official statements by authorities tallied at least 13 dead,



Protesters chant slogans during a protest over the death of a woman who was detained by the morality police, in downtown Tehran, Iran, last week

with more than 1,200 demonstrators arrested.

Running clashes between demonstrators and security forces have continued to erupt. A member of the Basij, a volunteer force with Iran's Guards, was killed by protesters last night in Tehran, semi-official Fars news agency reported Sunday. Another

Basij member, who was in a coma since Thursday after street clashes, died in Urmia, West Azerbaijan province on Sunday, IRNA reported.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry's website said it summoned Simon Shercliff, the U.K.'s ambassador to Iran, on Saturday and protested the hosting of critical Farsi-lan-

guage media outlets. The ministry alleges the news outlets have provoked disturbances and the spread of riots in Iran at the top of their programs.

Iran said it considers the news agencies' reporting to be interference in Iran's internal affairs and acts against its sovereignty.

The crisis in Iran began as a public outpouring of anger over the the death of Amini, who was arrested by the morality police in Tehran for allegedly wearing her Islamic headscarf too loosely. The police said she died of a heart attack and was not mistreated, but her family has cast doubt on that account.

Amini's death has sparked sharp condemnation from Western countries and the United Nations.

Pro-government rallies were also held on Sunday in several cities across Iran. Thousands attended a rally in the capital's Enghelab, or Revolution Square, waving Iranian flags. Some officials, including cabinet spokesman, Ali Bahadori Jahromi, attended to the rally in Tehran. MDT/AP

that has many members who would like to see the monarchy abolished.

Starmer said there was now "belief in a Labour government" among an electorate that is coping with soaring energy bills that have helped push inflation up to 9.9% while workers get only modest wage increases.

He pledged to reverse the income tax cut for the richest Britons and hit energy producers for a windfall tax on bumper profits. He also said his government would invest in green energy to speed the transition from fossil fuels.

Headlining the main speakers on the first day of the conference, Labour's deputy leader, Angela Rayner, accused the government of "lining the pockets of oil and gas executives, enriching bankers while families are starving."

Truss's government has rejected a windfall tax, while subsidizing energy bills for consumers and businesses. The subsidies are expected to cost taxpayers more than 150 billion pounds (\$166 billion). MDT/AP

this day in history

1984 UK AND CHINA AGREE HONG KONG HANDOVER



Britain and China have finalised an agreement which will end more than 150 years of UK rule in Hong Kong.

The proposal - which will hand control of the colony to China in 1997 - creates an "island of capitalism" within a communist state.

In a ceremony at the Great Hall of People in Beijing the document was initialed by the UK ambassador to China, Sir Richard Evans, and the head of the Chinese negotiating team, Zhou Nan.

The British Government has been asked to give its approval to the treaty which ends two years of hard bargaining between the countries.

Under the accord, the Chinese authorities have agreed Hong Kong will maintain a high degree of local autonomy and keep power over its social, economic and legal systems.

But China will gain control of the city's defence and foreign affairs.

Britain, which has controlled the island of Hong Kong almost uninterrupted since 1842, has also persuaded the Chinese to leave the colony untouched for 50 years and provide a plan for its future.

Sir Richard said the joint declaration was "the practical embodiment of the imaginative concept of one country, two systems".

The Governor of the island, Sir Edward Youde, flew straight back from the ceremony to address a special meeting of the Hong Kong Legislative Council about the agreement.

"It constitutes a blueprint for a new stage in Hong Kong's development - as such I commend it to this council and to the community at large," he said.

The British Government has set up an assessment office to gauge the public response to the White Paper.

But although the people of Hong Kong can technically reject the proposals, the declaration makes it clear any other agreement may not go so far to protect their interests.

Courtesy BBC News

UK

Labour conference starts with focus on 'immoral' tax cuts

BRTAIN'S opposition Labour Party opened its annual conference Sunday, with leaders attacking the "immoral" tax-cutting of the new Conservative government.

The event, this year taking place in the northern city of Liverpool, kicked off two days after the U.K government, under new Prime Minister Liz Truss, said it would scrap a 45% tax rate for Britain's highest earners and forge ahead with plans to boost growth.

The Labour Party has seized on the tax cut as a crux issue for hard-at-heel Britons who are struggling through the worst cost of living rise in decades. Labour leader Keir Starmer told supporters the conservative party had "shown its true colors" in providing tax relief for higher earners. They "make the rich richer and do nothing



Labour party leader Keir Starmer, right, leads tributes to Queen Elizabeth II as the national anthem is sung during the Labour Party Conference in Liverpool, yesterday

for working people," he said as he arrived at the conference.

Andy Burnham, the mayor of Manchester, one of the U.K's largest cities said the policy was "immoral".

Labour suffered a crushing defeat in the last general election in 2019 under previous leader Jeremy Corbyn and is

using this conference as a way of repositioning itself as a credible government in waiting.

At the opening of the conference, Labour members held a minute's silence in memory of Queen Elizabeth II and sang the national anthem — the first time it has been sung at the conference of the party

IN CONTEXT

The agreement was finally signed in December 1984.

Control of the colony was handed over to the Chinese at midnight on 1 July 1997 after a spectacular ceremony.

Prince Charles and Chris Patten - the twenty-eighth and final governor of Hong Kong - left the island on the Royal Yacht Britannia.

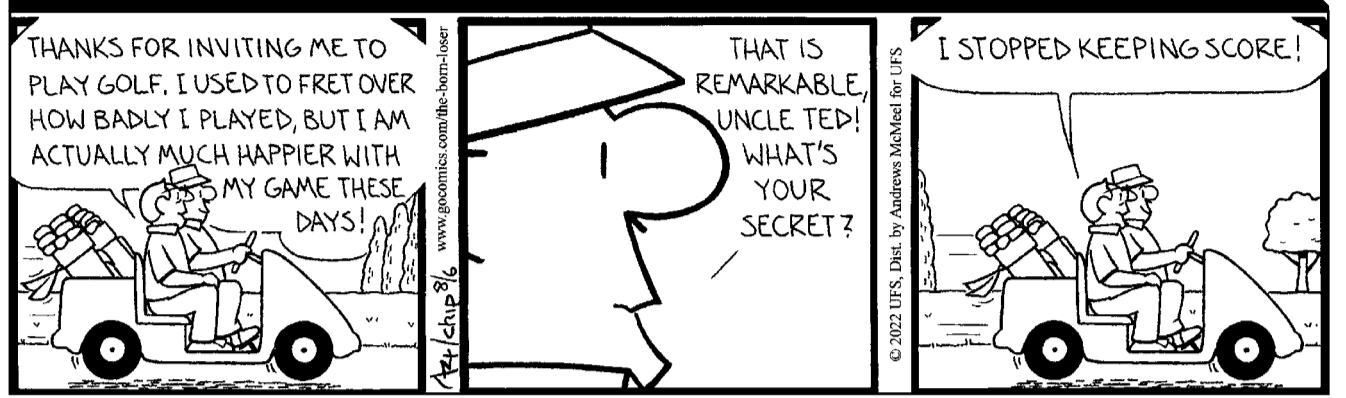
The Provisional Legislative Council, lead by Tung Chee-hwa and picked by Beijing, was sworn in almost immediately after the handover, replacing the previous elected body.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

<p>ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Be careful what you consume today. Look out for yourself today. Opportunities to get together with people in powerful positions could help you get ahead.</p>	<p>TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 You may find that female colleagues will be more help than you anticipated. Based on your excitement, serious-minded individuals will be more than interested in backing your ideas.</p>
<p>GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Minor health problems will cause setbacks if you haven't taken proper care of yourself. Don't spend too much on products that promise amazing cosmetic results.</p>	<p>CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 Go directly to the source if you want to know exactly what's been going on. Try to be considerate in your personal obligations. Don't forget to let your mate know how much you care.</p>
<p>LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 Don't make large purchases or investments. Opportunities to make advancements through good business sense are apparent. Romance may be better than you ever thought possible.</p>	<p>VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 Helping children may be rewarding and challenging. Alienation may be the result of a misunderstanding. Try to avoid serious discussions with loved ones.</p>
<p>LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 You will feel tired and rundown if you have allowed yourself to get into a financial mess. Things have been moving so quickly that you need to do something physical to release your tension.</p>	<p>SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Prove your worth; concentrate on getting the job done and steer clear of office politics and gossip. Pleasure trips will be a form of healing for your emotional state of mind.</p>
<p>SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 If they want help that's great, but if they try to take credit for your work, you will have to set them straight. Travel and educational pursuits may help alleviate the stress you have been feeling.</p>	<p>CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 You can expect your mate to get fed up and make the choices for you or back off completely. Try not to be too harsh with loved ones; there will always be two sides to an Issue.</p>
<p>AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Depression may be likely if you're away from home. Don't let your partner start any arguments. Passion should be redirected positively. Get busy putting your place in order.</p>	<p>PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 Be sure to take care of the needs of your immediate loved ones first. Don't let your partner start any arguments. Passion should be redirected positively. Don't settle for less than the best.</p>

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	13	28	fine
Changchun	10	23	fine
Chengdu	18	20	showers
Chongqing	18	24	overcast
Fuzhou	24	31	rain
Guangzhou	24	34	fine
Guiyang	14	25	overcast
Haikou	25	30	cloudy
Hangzhou	18	27	cloudy
Harbin	9	20	cloudy
Hefei	17	29	cloudy
Nanjing	19	27	cloudy
Shanghai	20	26	cloudy
Taipei	24	28	cloudy
Wuhan	16	28	cloudy
Hong Kong	26	31	fine
WORLD			
Moscow	3	11	rain
Frankfurt	9	16	rain
Paris	10	11	rain
London	9	14	rain
New York	14	24	overcast

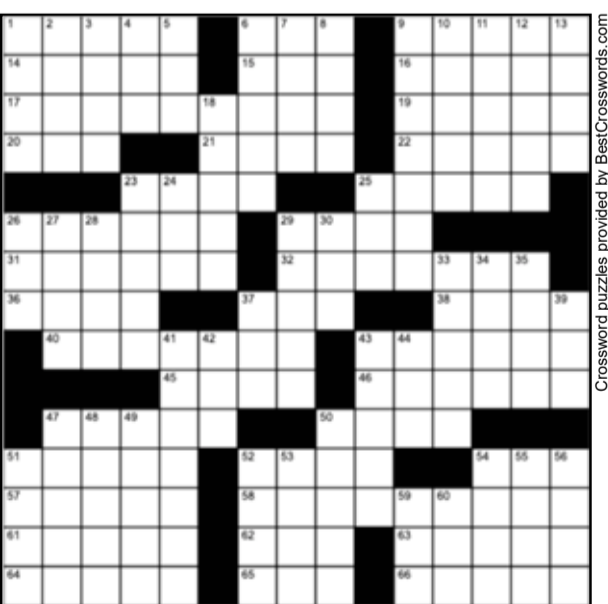
CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Compact; 6- Inlet; 9- Intertwine; 14- Lend ___; 15- "Aladdin" monkey; 16- Old cars, often; 17- Receptacle; 19- Singer Chris; 20- Wind dir.; 21- See ya!; 22- Pursue; 23- Blind as ___; 25- Lounge; 26- Thorough view; 29- Sly look; 31- Republic in S North America; 32- Eternal; 36- Doozy; 37- Finish first; 38- Hwys.; 40- King's staff; 43- Commendation; 45- NASA launch vehicle; 46- Student's second chance; 47- Ohio, e.g.; 50- Title; 51- Malice; 52- Get one's ducks in ___; 54- Mongrel dog; 57- Staggering; 58- Dhoti; 61- Juridical; 62- Mornings, for short; 63- "Stormy Weather" singer; 64- Outer coat of a seed; 65- 2004 biopic; 66- Sleep issue;

DOWN 1- Fresh-water fish; 2- Seth's son; 3- Branta sandvicensis; 4- Posed; 5- Historical period; 6- Charged; 7- Yeah, right!; 8- Mystique; 9- Three-cornered; 10- Chinese martial arts; 11- Stern with a bow; 12- Hiding place; 13- Small child; 18- Author Calvino; 23- Ablaze; 24- Tampa Bay player, for short; 25- Corporate VIP; 26- Comedian Philips; 27- Cravings; 28- Corp. VIP, briefly; 29- Retreats; 30- Still, in poetry; 33- Beside oneself; 34- End in ___ (draw); 35- Scottish loch, home to a monster!; 37- Minute; 39- What the sun does in the west; 41- Kneecap; 42- It's past due; 43- Shrimp; 44- "Everybody Hurts" band; 47- Carousal; 48- Supermodel Cheryl; 49- Bothered; 50- Blasting; 51- Cure, in a way; 52- Chemical used on trees; 53- Type of tomato; 54- Maize; 55- Magazine founder Eric; 56- Ostrichlike bird; 59- When doubled, a dance; 60- Chop off;

Friday's solution

T	R	A	R	S	C	O	T	T	A	A	B	A
A	S	H	O	E	A	R	I	E	L	A	R	I
R	E	S	E	T	S	T	E	A	M	A	R	N
T	A	T	A	T	A	M	I	G	O			
C	O	B	W	E	R	S	L	U	N	A	T	E
A	G	R	E	E	S	S	A	T	A	N		
S	L	E	D	S	S	E	T	A	C	E	O	U
T	E	S	R	E	N	C	H		S	P	A	
I	S	T	A	B	L	I	S	H	S	P	I	E
G	R	A	Z	E		T	R	E	G	E	N	T
S	C	R	I	B	E		I	N	N	A	R	D
A	T	L	A	S		I	S	A	O			
G	R	E		T	H	O	L	E		R	E	A
I	N	A		L	A	S	E	R		A	S	S
N	O	R		E	L	U	D	E		S	A	U



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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TENNIS

Roger Federer retires after teaming with Nadal in last match

HOWARD FENDRICH,
LONDON

THIS day, this match, had to come, of course, for Roger Federer, and for tennis, just as it inevitably must for every athlete in every sport.

Federer bid adieu Friday night with one last contest before he heads into retirement at age 41 after a superlative career that spanned nearly a quarter-century and included 20 Grand Slam titles and a statesman's role. He wrapped up his days as a professional player with a loss in doubles alongside his longtime rival Rafael Nadal for Team Europe in the Laver Cup against Frances Tiafoe and Jack Sock of Team World.

The truth is that the victors, the statistics and the score (OK, for the record it was 4-6, 7-6 (2), 11-9) did not matter, and were all so entirely beside the point. The occasion was, after all, about the farewell itself. Or, better, the farewells, plural: Federer's to tennis, to the fans, to his competitors and colleagues. And, naturally, each of those entities' farewells to Federer.

"It's been a perfect journey," Federer said. "I would do it all over again."

When the match and, with it, his time in professional tennis ended, Federer hugged Nadal, then Tiafoe and Sock. And then Federer began crying. There were plenty of tears to go around; Nadal wiped his own away, too.

"When Roger leaves the tour, an important part of my life is leaving, too," said Nadal, 36, who used the words "sad" and "unforgettable" to describe the occasion.

As cascades of clapping and yells of affection came from the stands, Federer put his hands on his hips, his chest heaving. Then he mouthed, "Thank you," while applauding right back toward the spectators who had chanted, "Let's go, Roger! Let's go!" during the concluding moments of a match that lasted more than two hours and ended at about 12:30 a.m.

"It's been a wonderful day. I told the guys I'm happy; I'm not sad," Federer said. "I enjoyed tying my shoes one more time. Everything was the last time."

The Swiss star announced last week that the three-day team event, which was founded by his management company, would be his final event before retirement, then made clear the doubles outing would be the last match. His surgically repaired right knee — the last of three operations came shortly after a loss in the Wimbledon quarterfinals in July 2021, which will go down as his official exit in singles — is in no shape to allow him to continue.

"For me, just personally, (it was) sad in the first moment, when I came to the conclusion it's the best decision," Federer said in an interview with The Associated Press this week about his emo-

tions when realizing it was time to go. "I kind of held it in at first, then fought it off. But I could feel the pain."

He had said he wanted this to feel more like a party than a funeral, and the crowd obliged, rising for a loud and lengthy standing ovation when Federer and Nadal — each wearing a white bandanna, blue shirt and white shorts — emerged together from a tunnel leading out to the black court for the last match on Day 1 at the O2 Arena. They remained on their feet for nearly 10 minutes, through the pre-match warmup, holding aloft phone cameras to capture the moment.

They came ready to roar for him, some with Swiss flags, some with homemade signs ("Idol Forever" read one), and they made themselves heard with a wall of sound when Federer delivered a forehand volley winner on the match's second point. Similar reactions arrived merely at the chair umpire's announcement before the third game of "Roger Federer to serve," and again when he closed that game with a 117 mph service winner.

"Obviously had 99.9% of the crowd against us. But it was super fun to just be a part of that match. I think we are going to be forever grateful to be a part of the GOAT's final match," Sock said, using the acronym for "Greatest of All-Time."

Doubles requires far less movement and court coverage, of cour-

se, so the stress on Federer's knee was limited Friday.

There were a couple of early forehands that sailed several feet too long. There also was a forehand that slid right between Sock and Tiafoe and seemed too good to be true — and, it turned out, was: The ball traveled through a gap below the net tape and so the point was taken away from Federer and Nadal.

Although this match amounted to, essentially, a glorified exhibition, all four doubles participants played as if they wanted to win. That was clear when Sock, a three-time major champion in doubles who is 29, leaped and screamed after one particularly terrific volley or when Tiafoe, 24, sent a couple of shots right at Federer and Nadal.

There were moments of levity. Federer and Nadal were able to laugh after a bit of confusion over which should go for a ball on a point they lost. After Nadal somehow flicked one back-to-the-net shot around the post, only for it to land barely wide, Tiafoe, a semifinalist at the U.S. Open, crossed over to extend a hand with congratulations for the effort.

In the first set, the older duo couldn't quite hear each other between points, so Federer trotted from the net back to the baseline to consult with Nadal, then pointed to his ear to signal what the issue was.

Before Federer began winning Grand Slam titles in 2003, the

men's mark for most major tennis championships was 14 by Pete Sampras. Federer blew past that, accumulating eight at Wimbledon, six at the Australian Open, five at the U.S. Open and one at the French Open, setting a new standard that Nadal, now with 22, and Novak Djokovic, with 21, equaled, then surpassed, as part of a golden era for the sport.

Surely, there are those who would have found it particularly apt to see Federer finish across the net from Nadal, often an on-court nemesis but eventually an off-court friend. Maybe it could have taken place about 15 miles away at Centre Court of the All England Club, say, or in Court Philippe Chatrier at Roland Garros, or Rod Laver Arena at Melbourne Park, or even Arthur Ashe Stadium, the centerpiece of the U.S. Open, the lone Grand Slam tournament at which they never faced off, somehow.

Perhaps they could have provided everyone with one final installment of a head-to-head matchup as memorable as any in the long history of their sport — or, indeed, any other.

Roger vs. Rafa — just one name apiece required — belongs up there with McEnroe vs. Borg (as it happens, the two Laver Cup team captains, John and Bjorn), Evert vs. Navratilova, Sampras vs. Agassi, Ali vs. Frazier, Magic vs. Bird, Brady vs. Manning, and so on.

Over the years, Federer and Nadal showed off individual greatness and compelling contrasts across their 40 matches, 14 at Grand Slam tournaments, nine in major finals: righty vs. lefty, attacker vs. grinder, seeming effortless vs. relentless intensity.

And yet, there was an unmistakable element of poetry with these two men who challenged each other and elevated each other performing as partners, slapping palms and sharing smiles.

The last hurrah came after a total of 103 career singles trophies and 1,251 wins in singles matches for Federer, both second only to Jimmy Connors in the Open era, which began in 1968.

At the height of his powers, Federer appeared in a record 10 consecutive Grand Slam finals, winning eight, from 2005-07. Extend that to 2010, and he reached 18 of 19 major finals.

More than those numbers, folks will remember the powerful forehand, the one-handed backhand, the flawless footwork, the spectacularly effective serve and eagerness to get to the net, the willingness to reinvent aspects of his game and — the part of which he's proudest — the unusual longevity. Beyond the elegance and effectiveness while wielding a racket, Federer's persona made him an ambassador for tennis, someone whose immense popularity helped attract fans. **MDT/AP**

OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

IRRESPONSIBLE TO SAY PANDEMIC IS OVER

The pandemic is by no means over. "We are still in the tunnel. We are just beginning to glimpse the light at the end of that tunnel," Director-General of the World Health Organization Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters on Thursday, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly.

The end "is still a long way off, and the tunnel is still dark, with many obstacles that could trip us up if we don't take care", the WHO chief cautioned.

Unlike US President Joe Biden, who had announced a few days earlier that the COVID-19 pandemic was over in the United States, the latter is not whitewashing the situation. His more realistic assessment should prompt the world to avoid complacency as it is too early and dangerous to drop our guard.

In its latest epidemiological update, the WHO said over 9,800 fatalities were reported last week, down 17 percent from a week earlier, while 3.2 million new cases were reported. The UN health agency has warned that the falling number of reported cases is deceptive, since many countries have cut back on testing and may not be detecting less serious cases.

Biden's chief medical adviser Anthony Fauci also warned that the world should not be too hasty in jumping to the same conclusion as Biden, warning "We are not where we need to be if we are going to quote 'live with the virus' because we know we are not going to be able to eliminate it, because it is highly transmissible and the immunity that's induced by vaccines or infection is also transient".

Such warnings are especially necessary as the pandemic fatigue that has settled in is prompting people to loosen their guard. It is particularly important for experts to tell the truth and political leaders to be sober-minded about the situation.

There is still a long way to go before vaccines and medicines are developed which can enable us to live with the virus.

No experts can be sure that there won't be a resurgence of the pandemic because of a new variant of the virus which may be highly transmissible and lethal. People need to be told to stay on their guard and try to avoid being infected by taking all the precautionary measures possible.

Responding to COVID-19 should have nothing to do with politics. It is irresponsible and immoral for politicians to politicize the pandemic. Rather, protecting people's lives should be the priority.

The CIA has revealed a model of Ayman al-Zawahri's safe house, used to brief President Joe Biden about the al-Qaida leader's whereabouts before the agency killed him in a drone strike in Afghanistan.

Shortly after al-Zawahri's death, White House officials released a photo showing Biden talking to CIA Director William Burns with a closed wooden box on the table in front of them. Now, the contents of the box — a model de-



picting a white-walled home with at least five stories and three partially obscured balconies — are on display at the CIA Museum inside the agency's Virginia headquarters.

The museum is closed to the public and access is generally limited to the agency's employees and guests. Most of the exhibits took years or decades to declassify. The al-Zawahri model home is the rare artifact that had been used by intelligence officers just weeks beforehand.

RUSSIA

POLICE ARREST HUNDREDS OF PROTESTORS; MASSIVE EXODUS IN MOTION

Russian police moved quickly Saturday to disperse peaceful protests against President Vladimir Putin's military mobilization order, arresting hundreds, including some children, in scores of cities across the vast country.

Police detained nearly 750 people, including over 370 in Moscow and some 150 in St. Petersburg, according to OVD-Info, an independent website that monitors political arrests in Russia. Some of the arrested individuals were minors, OVD-Info said.

The demonstrations followed protests that erupted within hours Wednesday after Putin, in a move to beef up his volunteer forces fighting in Ukraine, announced a call-up of experienced and skilled army reservists.

The Defense Ministry said about 300,000 people would be summoned to active duty, but the order left a door open to many more getting called into service. Most Russian men ages 18-65 are automatically counted as reservists.

On Saturday, police deployed in force in the cities where protests were scheduled by opposition group Vesna and supporters of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny. They moved quickly to arrest demonstrators, most of them young people, before they could hold protests.



In Moscow, a heavy contingent of police roamed a downtown area where a protest was planned under pouring rain and checked the IDs of passersby. Officers rounded up those they deemed suspicious and later distributed call-up summons to the men who were arrested.

A young woman climbed on a bench and shouted "We aren't cannon fodder!" before police took her away.

Police detained a man in a park just outside Red Square and whisked him away as others shouted "Shame!"

Before being rounded up in St. Petersburg, a small group of demonstrators managed to briefly march along the main Nevsky avenue shouting "Putin into the trenches!"

In the city of Novosibirsk in eastern Siberia, over 70 people were detained after singing an innocuous Soviet-era song praising peace.

People who tried to hold individual pickets that are allowed under Russian law also were detained.

The quick police action followed the dispersal of Wednesday's protests, when over 1,300 people were detained on Wednesday in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other cities.

Putin on Saturday signed a hastily approved bill that toughens the punishment for soldiers who disobey officers' orders, desert or surrender to the enemy.

Many Russian men bought up scarce and exorbitantly priced airline tickets out of the country as rumors swirled about a pending border closure. Thousands others fled by car, creating lines of traffic hours or even days long at some borders. The massive exodus underlined the unpopularity of the war and fueled public outrage. MDT/AP



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz arrived Saturday in Saudi Arabia for the first stop of a two-day, three-country visit to the Middle East aimed at striking new energy deals and forging fresh alliances amid the economic and geopolitical turmoil resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The German government has scrambled to wean Europe's biggest economy off Russian oil, coal and gas since coming to office last December.



Italians voted yesterday in an election that could move the country's politics sharply toward the right during a critical time for Europe, with war in Ukraine fueling skyrocketing energy bills and testing the West's resolve to stand united against Russian aggression. Turnout was equal to or slightly less than at the same time during Italy's last general election in 2018. The counting of paper ballots was expected to begin shortly after they close, with projections based on partial results coming today.



Canadian troops are being sent to assist the recovery from the devastation of storm Fiona, which swept away houses, stripped off roofs and knocked out power across the country's Atlantic provinces. After surging north from the Caribbean as a hurricane, Fiona came ashore before dawn Saturday as a post-tropical cyclone, battering Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Quebec with hurricane-strength winds, heavy rains and huge waves.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo



Final resting place. Surrounded by floral wreaths and bouquets, the new ledger stone was installed at the final resting place of Queen Elizabeth II.