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**AS MANY AS 509 OLD CYCLES HAVE BEEN PURCHASED IN RELATION TO THE SCHEME INTENDED TO ENCOURAGE MOTORCYCLE OWNERS REPLACE THEIR OLD PETROL MOTORBIKES WITH ELECTRICS**

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**COUTINHO'S PARTY WANTS MORE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM GOV'T TO RESIDENTS; QUARANTINE TO END**

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**CPC CONGRESS: NO MATTER WHO CLIMBS BEIJING'S RANKS, XI RULES**

P6 Analysis



AP PHOTO



**Myanmar** A court in military-ruled Myanmar convicted the country's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi on two more corruption charges yesterday, with two three-year sentences to be served concurrently, adding to previous convictions that now leave her with a 26-year total prison term, a legal official said. Suu Kyi, 77, has denied the allegations against her in this case, in which she was accused of receiving \$550,000 as a bribe from a tycoon convicted of drug trafficking. More on p7

AP PHOTO



**Russian** President Vladimir Putin said yesterday that Moscow is ready to resume gas supplies to Europe via a link of the Germany-bound Nord Stream 2 pipeline under the Baltic Sea — an offer quickly rejected by Berlin. German officials have said Russia halted supplies through the Nord Stream 1 as a political gambit and questioned why supplies through Nord Stream 2 would be any more reliable.

**Russian** missile attacks caused a crippled nuclear plant in Ukraine to lose all external power for the second time in five days, increasing the risk of a radiation disaster because electricity is needed to operate critical safety systems, Ukraine's state nuclear operator said yesterday. The Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant suffered a "blackout" when a missile damaged an electrical substation, leading to the emergency shutdown of the plant's last remaining outside power source, operator Energoatom reported.

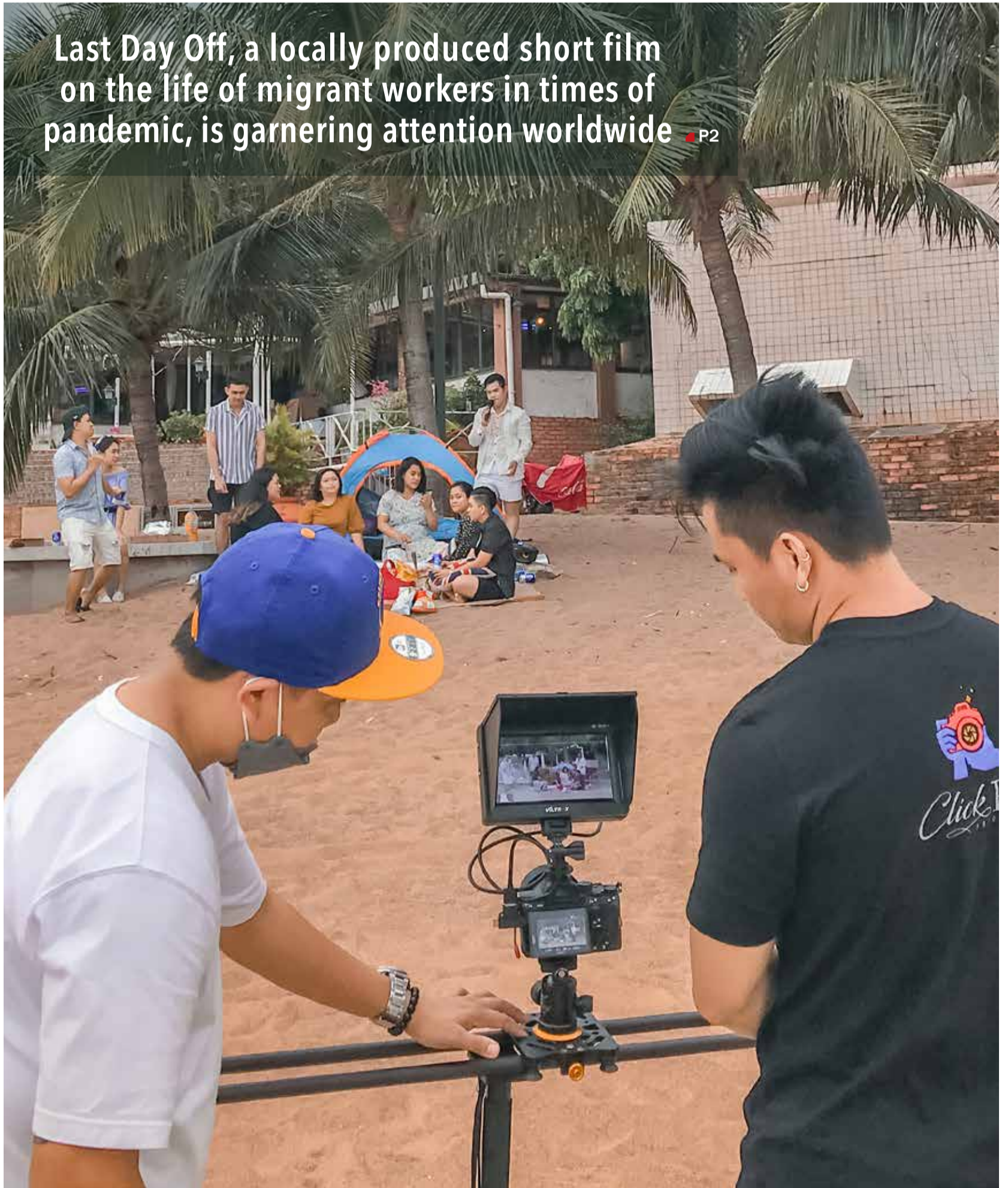
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MDT EXCLUSIVE

# NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

Last Day Off, a locally produced short film on the life of migrant workers in times of pandemic, is garnering attention worldwide

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Last Day Off director Mark Justine Aguillon (center)

LAST DAY OFF

# REALITY OF PANDEMIC-HIT MIGRANT WORKERS SHOWCASED IN FILM GARNERS ATTENTION WORLDWIDE

LYNZY VALLES

A locally produced short film that showcases the reality of migrant workers is hitting close to home, with the project's actors portraying the experiences well.

"The Last Day Off" shows how a significant number of workers have been affected by the pandemic in their own ways – particularly as foreigners in a city where limited support is available.

Produced by Click PH Production, the passion project has received global recognition and acceptance to numerous short-film festivals.

Currently, the locally produced film is an Official Selection at New York's International Film Festival Manhattan 2022, India's Mumba Short Film Festival 2022, UK's Lift Off Filmmaker Sessions Film Festival 2022, South Africa's Ekurhuleni International Film Festival 2022, Rainforest Indie Film Festival 2022 and in the upcoming Macau International Short Film Festival.

The short film is also an Official Selection in Italy's Roma Short Film Festival 2022 where the film's director Mark Justine Aguillon recently won Best Director award.

"The story was initially supposed to be along the lines of what

would happen if an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) left Macau for good, having saved enough amount money to start afresh back home," explained Aguillon to the Times.

"However, the story was reversed to: what if an OFW goes back home due to the economic fallout caused by the pandemic, leading to job losses."

Nearly a year in the making, Aguillon has integrated real-life stories portrayed by four characters at a time when financial struggles and hardship were looming in the lives of many workers.

The 30-minute film tells a story of four OFWs, each with different personalities and issues, alongside a landlady who serves as their source of guidance. All become family as they share their personal struggles caused by the pandemic.

"It is in that house where stories of grief, anxiety, loss and hope were shared," the director said.

Aguillon was seated in a barber's chair when he decided on one of the characters after hearing a story of a woman who had been on unpaid leave for several weeks, struggling to make ends meet in a city with a high-cost of living.

With no one to turn to, the real-life inspiration for this character engaged in sexual activity for money.

"The struggles of each individual had gotten to that point where that act was needed for them to keep up with daily expenses amid lockdown," the director lamented.

"I wanted to share the reality of different individuals who have each developed their own coping mechanisms, such as creating content for Tiktok just to try to overcome the anxiety, depression and hardship they were facing," Aguillon added.

Another real-life story was a couple who were using Macau as a stepping stone to migrate to Canada – a move that several dozens of Filipinos in Macau have undertaken during the pandemic.

Canada has become an attractive location for migrant Filipino workers in the city as they can bring their families with them easily, unlike in Macau where it is nearly impossible for blue-card holders.

"The Last Day Off" was shot from August to October 2021, followed by nearly a year of editing.

The film was shot amid the

pandemic crisis the city faced following new cases that were discovered in August 2021, which led to mass testing.

With Macau adhering to Beijing's zero-Covid policy, the city imposes lockdowns and mass testing if new cases are discovered, to deter the spread of the virus.

Due to these restrictions, shooting of the film faced delays as crew were required to comply with government pandemic measures.

"Alongside acquiring permits to shoot in public places, the films Click PH Production produces come from the members' own pockets," said Aguillon.

Click PH Production was formed by Aguillon in 2017, alongside three members. Currently, the group has some 45 members.

## NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

Participants of the film have expressed to the Times how being part of a community matters to individuals residing in a foreign land.

Macau is currently home to some 27,000 OFWs, a figure that had already plunged due to contracts that were not renewed due to business downturns.

Recent data from the Philippine Consulate General shows that its government has repatriated a total of 6,730 Filipinos over 32 flights since the onset of pandemic in early 2020.

"It's important as an OFW to be part of a community. You cannot survive alone, and I think that is one of the great lessons the film has portrayed. Everything feels better when you belong to a community," said Rez Rosal, one of the members of the group.

Questioned as to what the film tries to relay to its viewers, Eleazera Gabriel, one of the producers, remarked, "It's in this film that I came to deeply realize that nothing is permanent, so we should enjoy what we have now."

"The film also tells a lot about how several people are going through the same struggles and it is comforting to know that you are not alone," said a cast member, Mary Joy Moises.

Meanwhile, the character who played the landlady, Efleda Mendoza, said that the character also hits close to home as she is one of the leaders of a Filipino religious group.

"I knew their struggles and they are real. I have been a part of people's struggles and growth, so playing the role hits close to home. Without the faith that we have, it is difficult to keep up with the life we're living, especially now," she said.

Echoing the same sentiments, another cast member, Michael Fontanoza said, "The film has portrayed a lot of the negative experiences that we face but in the end, we had a common denominator, which is our Christian faith."

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# IC declines possibility of further restrictions on Guia Hill building

ANTHONY LAM

**N**o extra restrictions can be placed on the Guia Hill suspended construction project as UNESCO has approved the altered design, president Leong Wai Man of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) said yesterday.

She was asked on the sidelines of a press event about any possible further actions that the government would take on the real estate development that was suspended in 2008 after the sudden introduction of a height cap. The height cap was significantly lower than the originally approved height as well as the current height of the project.

Its current height is 81.32 meters above sea level, while it was originally allowed to reach a height of 126.12 meters above sea level. Meanwhile, the height cap for that area was set at 50 meters above sea level.

According to Leong, the IC has continually informed UNESCO, through the National Cultural Heritage Administration, about the condition and development of the private real estate project.

The bureau has followed a topical resolution made during the last UNESCO plenary session, according to Leong. It was earlier revealed at a press event



IC president Leong Wai Man

that UNESCO had given a green light to the project, provided that the exterior ornaments and decorations were trimmed down. This has allowed the building to retain its current height.

Leong suggested the press make an inquiry with the Land and Urban Construction Bureau (DSSCU) to discuss the progress of the project. She stressed that her bureau had approved the adjustments that the project de-

veloper proposed in response to the UNESCO resolution.

When questioned on the Chief Executive Dispatch, issued in 2008, which restricts the height of structures built within a radius of the Guia Lighthouse to 50 meters, the IC president hinted that the authority of a dispatch is usually not retrospective, unless otherwise or specifically stated.

She was also asked how this

exemption would not lead to further loopholes in the future that would eventually nullify the authority of the 2008 Chief Executive Dispatch.

She refrained from giving a definitive answer, but again suggested that the press approach the construction bureau. However, she added that the approval for the project had been granted before the 2008 dispatch had been issued. "The approved

height was even taller," she said. "The construction stopped right after the issuance of the Chief Executive Dispatch 83/2008."

About the virtual reality (VR) experience to be rolled out at the Ruins of St Paul's, which the IC earlier revealed, Leong said that the project will likely be ready at the end of the year. The experience will be located behind the façade of the Ruins.

VR goggles will be arranged for participants who will be brought back to the days when the Ruins were still a church. Both the exterior and the interior of the burnt church will be visualized and presented with VR technologies.

The IC president did not mention whether real-life experience sensors will be arranged so that participants will be able to feel the touch of materials of the destroyed church. Haptic suits are critical pieces of equipment in VR technologies.

On the artillery shell that was found at the Galaxy Macau resort construction site, Leong disclosed that the object is now held at the Macao Museum for further inspection. Afterwards, restoration or handling procedures will be determined based on the results of the inspection.

Judging from the diameter of the shell, its likely relation to the cannons found at the same site was slim, she added.

Leong also discussed the countdown show, which she believed would be possible this year. Although no definite details were available yesterday, she hinted that the bureau is reaching out to pop entertainers in mainland China and Hong Kong.

# Sino-Lusophone pictorial fair to debut at fourth Sino-Lusophone Festival

ANTHONY LAM

**A** Chinese and Portuguese Picture Book Fair will be premiered during the fourth Sino-Lusophone Cultural and Arts Festival, which will be held from October 28 to November 18.

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) held an outdoor program revelation ceremony for the festival yesterday afternoon, officially referred to as the 4th Encounter in Macao – Arts and Cultural Festival between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries.

The book fair will be held at the Carmo Hall in Taipa from October 28 to November 2, featuring over 500 picture books and children's books in different languages, but especially in



Chinese and Portuguese.

During the fair, two family reading sessions will be held per day for participants to learn more about the exquisitely illustrated

works of Macau, mainland China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

On October 29 and 30, talks and workshops related to picture books and

children's literature will be held at the Exhibitions Gallery of the Taipa Houses.

In addition to the pictorial fair, the festival will also highlight moving images.

On November 4, the opening film *In Search of Lost Time* directed by Derek Yee Tung Sing will be screened at Galaxy Cinemas. From November 5 to 18, around 30 outstanding film productions from China and Portuguese-speaking countries will be screened at Cinematheque.Passion.

Once again, the festival will be held concurrently with the Lusophonia Festival, an iconic Lusophone event in the city. This year, the latter festival will be held from October 28 to 30 at the Taipa Houses area to celebrate its silver jubilee, with Macanese culture being the focus. In fact, from this edition onwards, the festival will highlight one cultural characteristic from Portuguese-speaking countries or regions each year.

Participants at the Lusophonia will be able to get a glimpse of the cultures and lifestyles of Macanese, Angolan, Brazilian, Cape

Verdean, Guinea Bissau, Goa, Daman and Diu, Mozambican, Portuguese, Sao Tome and Principe and East Timor communities in Macau.

They will showcase their music, handicrafts, featured apparel and accessories, gastronomy and tourist information for visitors to experience the long-standing festive traditions and diverse folk cultures of these different regions.

The IC will also work together with the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM) to stage wine-tasting and cultural workshops during the festival.

Discussing the smaller budget this year, which is at about MOP7 million and about a million patacas smaller than the previous year, IC president Leong Wai Man explained that the reduced budget was related to the elements being different this year from those last year.

## MORTGAGE LOANS INCREASE EXPONENTIALLY IN AUGUST

Statistics released yesterday by the Monetary Authority of Macao show that new approvals of residential mortgage loans (RMLs) and commercial real estate loans (CRELs) both increased significantly in August 2022. According to the same release, the new RMLs approved by local banks rose by 116.9% month-to-month to MOP1.67 billion, while new CRELs advanced by 47.5% month-to-month to MOP2.05 billion. The monthly average of new RMLs approved between June and August 2022 was down by 1.9% from the previous period (May to July 2022), while the monthly average of new CRELs approved between June and August 2022 was down by 3.6% compared with the previous period. The outstanding balances of RMLs dropped whereas CRELs increased.

## AIR MACAU RESUMES FLIGHTS TO XIAMEN NEXT WEEK

The Macau flag airline - Air Macau - has announced it will resume flights routed between Macau and Xiamen from October 16 (Sunday). In a press statement, the airline announced the resumption of this route that had been suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic and consequent economic crisis. Now Air Macau says that it will resume operations of this route, in line with the promotion of Macau as a "World Centre of Tourism and Leisure and the diversification of the local economy." It is known that the port city, located in Fujian province on China's southeast coast across a strait from Taiwan, is one of the few regions from which tour groups have been allowed into Macau by the central government. According to the plan, the resumption of this type of traveling will take place early next month.

## FEMALE GOLDEN SNUB-NOSED MONKEY PASSES AWAY

The nine-year-old female golden snub-nosed monkey in Seac Pai Van Park passed away after suffering from decreased activity level and loss of appetite earlier this month. In addition to carrying out examinations and feeding it with medication, the veterinarians of the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) said it has consulted experts in mainland China and Hong Kong for treatment advice. However it passed away a few days ago. After autopsy, it was found that there were abnormal lesions in the gastrointestinal tract, lungs, uterus and other organs of the mother monkey. In 2020 and 2022, the monkey gave birth to two little golden snub-nosed monkeys

RENATO MARQUES



# NEW HOPE LAWMAKERS WANT MORE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM GOV'T TO RESIDENTS

RENATO MARQUES

**T**WO lawmakers from New Hope (Nova Esperança), a group linked with the Macau Civil Servants Association (ATFPM), believe that the financial support handed out so far by the government to the population is insufficient, and want the government to issue additional support of 15,000 patacas to all Macau residents next year, the lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho said during a press conference yesterday.

Coutinho and Che Sai Wang also called for the government to distribute an additional 7,000 patacas to older adults as compensation for the money that is ordinarily injected annually into the pension fund accounts, something that has not happened since 2020, as the funds are tied to the government accounts surplus.

These two proposals were discussed late last month when the lawmakers met the Chief Executive (CE), Ho Iat Seng to give their opinions on the Policy Address for 2023, Pereira Coutinho noted.

Among other proposals delivered to the CE, Pereira Coutinho said that a proposal to reduce the hotel quarantine period from seven days to three days has also been discussed, as well as other measures directed toward the gradual reopening of borders.

"We also proposed to the CE that the quarantine [on arrival] should be reduced from the current seven to three days to gradually open the city, as is happening in Hong Kong. This

is a very important matter, especially for the gaming industry that now has rules concerning the need to attract guests from foreign countries instead of those from the mainland or even Hong Kong. Additionally, we also proposed that the nucleic acid tests (NAT) that are mandatory for some working sectors, as well as border crossing, should be free of charge to ease the burden on families," he remarked.

Pereira Coutinho said that unemployment and support for the underprivileged will be among the priorities for the upcoming legislative year due to start next week.

Anticipating the works for the upcoming year at the Legislative Assembly (AL), he noted that six important laws are being discussed. He noted that the regime governing publicly owned companies is very important as it relates to a very significant share of the government's yearly expenses. However, this is kept almost in secrecy as such companies spend public money without any scrutiny from the public.

Pereira Coutinho noted another regime in the hands of lawmakers - the Urban Renewal Law - the relevance of which has become apparent because of significant delays.

"There are over 30,000 old buildings at the moment that need renovation or need to be completely rebuilt, but the law that regulates all this has not yet been finalized and published," the lawmaker said. He also noted that the AL only approved half of the gaming laws required

to be able to launch the tender.

He noted the second part of the gaming regulations that is related to the operations of the casinos "is directly related to the competitiveness of local gaming when facing the regional competition."

Another of the significant areas that he perceives as needing time and attention from the lawmakers is the so-called "Talents Regime," which aims to regulate the attraction of skilled professionals to Macau under a residency scheme. This new regime is intended to finally replace the troubled regimes operating under the Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM).

On this particular matter, Pereira Coutinho says he was concerned with the time taken to process applications as well as the number of cases still pending resolution at IPIM. Both are matters for which the government needs to find an acceptable solution.

## CIVIL SERVANTS STATUTE HAS SOME BIG ISSUES

The last of the laws to be addressed by the AL falls on the turf of the lawmakers themselves, and relates to the rights of civil servants.

Pereira Coutinho says that while there are several articles that present problems, there is one in particular that he will not accept and will fight to change.

This article states that the leadership can relocate civil servants to other services or duties if the need arises, independently of their position and career post.

On this topic, Pereira Coutinho said, "The leader can force any worker to do anything he wishes. This means that a highly qualified technician can be sent to 'sweep the streets' or something else. This breaches the whole hierarchy [of the public servants] and is damaging to the rights of workers. We will raise this matter at the plenary as soon as possible. It affects the dignity of the workers and will for sure create a lot of problems inside the public service," he concluded.

## OVER 30,000 REQUESTS PROCESSED, LAWMAKERS CLAIM

**LAWMAKERS** José Pereira Coutinho and Che Sai Wang said that in the past legislative year (October 16, 2021, to August 30, 2022), the headquarters of the ATFPM, which works as the legislators' office, has received a record of over 30,000 requests from the public, they said at a press conference. The lawmakers said that the past legislative year demanded a lot of hard work from all the staff to receive and process between 30 to

50 daily requests. According to Che, about two-thirds (20,000) were requests for information on topics related to the pandemic, layoffs, quarantines, and many others. The lawmakers also said a lot of requests had been received from civil servants, and in particular from the Security Forces, complaining of unfair treatment in regard to overtime and other matters related to pandemic outbreak control work.

# Over 500 old motorbikes collected: DSPA

ANTHONY LAM

As many as 509 old motorcycles have been collected as a result of the subsidy scheme for motorcycle replacement, the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) disclosed in its reply to a lawmaker inquiry.

In his written inquiry dated September 8, lawmaker Leong Hong Sai pointed out that an air quality gauge in Coloane had recorded an Air Quality Index at 188, which is categorized as "Bad." He emphasized that it was the poorest air quality recorded since January 1, 2021, when the weather bureau updated the Air Quality Index gauging mechanism.

The lawmaker cited the Macau Environmental Status Report 2021, stating that overall air quality in the city had improved between 2013 and 2021, but pollution by ozone would still be a pro-



blem across the Greater Bay Area. Meanwhile, transport is a major source of pollution in Macau.

As such, the lawmaker asked the DSPA several questions on the progress of the motorcycle replacement subsidy scheme, cremation facility upgrade and indus-

trial steamer exhausts.

In response, acting director Ip Kuong Lam of the DSPA disclosed that as of September 23, the motorcycle replacement scheme had received 721 applications. Besides receiving 509 old motorcycles for disposal, 364 new electric motor-

cycles have been purchased in relation to the scheme.

The scheme is intended to encourage motorcycle owners to phase out their old gasoline motorcycles and replace them with electric ones.

On the question regarding the cremation facility upgrade, Ip cited the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), stating that the exhaust from the upgraded facility will be evaluated based on the national standard of GB13801-2015 and the Hong Kong guidelines of BPM 12/2(2020). The IAM will hire professional third-party entities to monitor pollutant levels emitted from the upgraded facility. The manufacturer has also been requested to produce a detailed maintenance plan.

Ip pointed out that many operators of industrial steamers have opted for cleaner energy options for their steamers.

## GOV'T CALLS FOR QUICK ACTION TO REPLACE OLD DIESEL CARS

THE Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) has recently called on diesel car owners seeking new subsidized vehicles to apply quickly.

The government has launched the subsidy scheme for the replacement of old diesel vehicles. The scheme began on September 15 and applications will be accepted until March 15, 2023. As of yesterday, 47 applications have been received, of which 36 have been approved, the DSPA disclosed.

The DSPA reiterated that the scheme was launched to encourage owners of old diesel vehicles to replace their old vehicles, which are perceived as having greater risks of environmental pollution.

Eligible vehicles are those that were first registered on or before De-

cember 31, 2002. Their registrations must have been valid since then in order to be eligible. The DSPA added that existing old diesel vehicles that are re-registered on or after September 13, 2022 will not be eligible for the scheme.

A subsidy ranging between MOP25,000 and MOP115,000 will be issued to each qualified old diesel vehicle, depending on the vehicle type and specification.

Qualified car owners can apply to the "Environmental Protection and Energy Conservation Fund." Upon approval of the subsidy, the applicant must dispose of their used vehicles within 180 days and cancel the registration of their vehicles. Car owners are not required to buy a new car due to vehicle growth control measures. **AL**

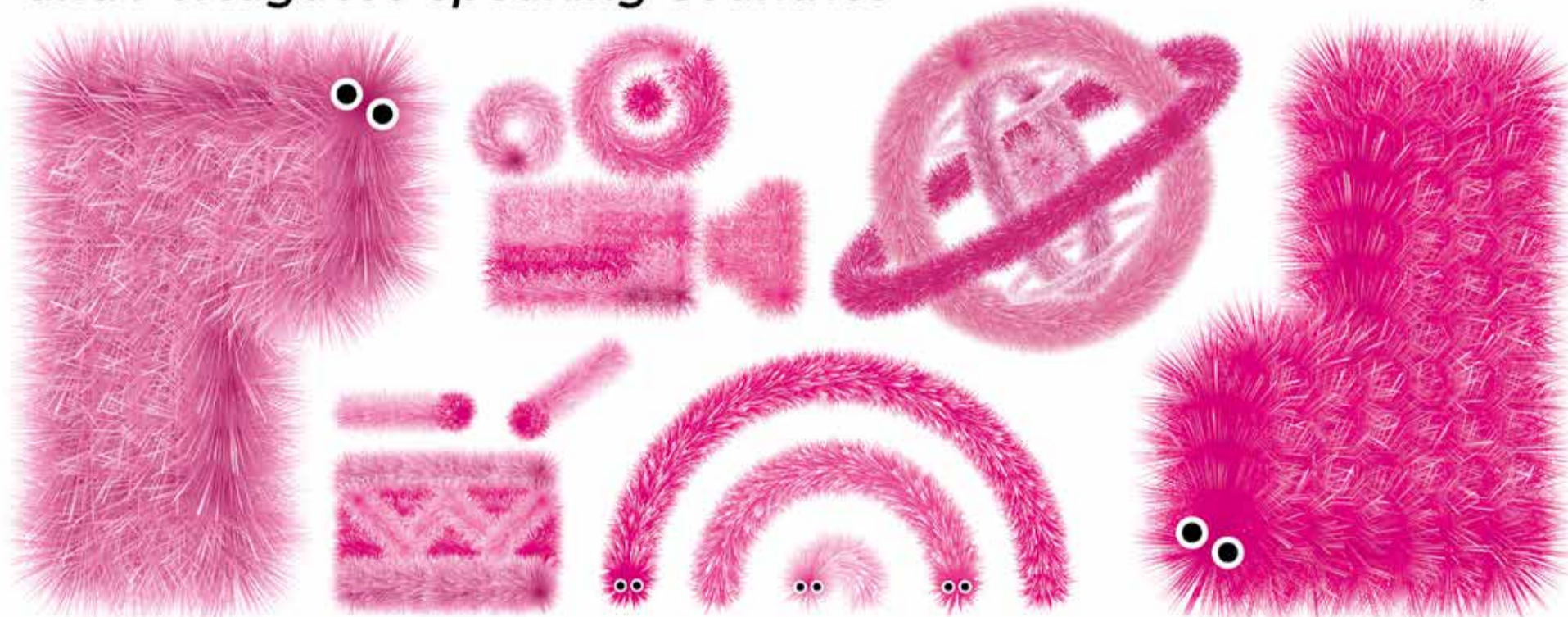
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A portrait of Chinese President Xi Jinping is displayed near the words that mean "I will put aside my own well-being for the good of my People" at the museum of the CPC in Beijing

ANALYSIS

# NO MATTER WHO CLIMBS BEIJING'S RANKS, XI RULES: OBSERVER

DAKE KANG, IN BEIJING  
& TED SHAFFREY

FOR decades, Ho Pin made accurate predictions about China's next leadership lineup — no small feat, given the black-box nature of Beijing politics.

But now, days before the opening on Sunday of China's most important political meeting in a decade, the New York-based journalist said there's little point, given the power amassed by leader Xi Jinping.

"It's not about who's going to be in the Standing Committee any longer," he said, referring to the handful of people who will be named to lead the ruling Communist Party for the next five years. "No matter who they are, they all have one thing in common: They all have to listen to Xi."

It's a sharp contrast from an earlier era, when jostling factions leaked salacious details to the foreign media, and a reflection of a consolidation of power that has swept away competitors and stifled internal dissent.

Ten years ago, scandal after scandal rocked Beijing's political establishment in the run-up to a Communist Party congress, the one that brought Xi to power.

Most damaging was the murder of a British businessman by the wife of Bo Xilai, a brash and

rising political star. Bo was expelled from the party and sentenced to life in prison for bribery and corruption.

The run-up to this party congress, by comparison, is hushed. Gone, Ho said, are the factions, and open political differences that once existed within China's one-party system.

"Chinese politics is entering a completely new stage," he said.

Even in the days of Chairman Mao Zedong, who founded communist China in 1949, there were competing factions. Politicians were purged, then rehabilitated, then purged again, as Mao encouraged factional struggle to enhance his own power.

After Mao's death, leader Deng Xiaoping loosened controls dramatically, sparking an economic boom and some liberalization. He also instituted term and age limits for party leaders, meant to prevent the rise of another strongman like Mao.

Under Xi, the party "has loosened age restrictions, stopped naming obvious successors to the Standing Committee, and scrapped term limits for China's presidency — paving the way for Xi to retain power for a third five-year term."

That has made it more difficult

to guess new appointments, Ho said. The previously formulaic rules of succession helped Ho forecast China's leadership lineup four times since 2002 by analyzing officials based on their age, education, work experience and relationship with other leaders.

Now, he said, China's new leaders are much more likely to be handpicked by Xi based on their competency and also loyalty, unconstrained by "past precedent and with little of the factional wheeling-and-dealing that used to take place."

## Contrary to many Western observers, Alfred Wu thinks 'Xi can be a great leader'

But former Hong Kong journalist Willy Lam and other analysts such as Derek Scissors at the American Enterprise Institute say Xi could still be forced to compromise and keep or promote people with different views on China's governance.

Reliable information on who might be appointed has become extremely hard to come by under the state's tightening grip, said Alfred Wu, a Singapore-based

professor who rubbed shoulders with China's leader decades ago as a journalist, when Xi was governor of Fujian province.

"It's very hard to have substantive conversations," he said of his former contacts. "They know it's not good to talk about politics."

Ho was born in China and got his start at a state-run broadcaster in the 1980s. When pro-democracy protests came to Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989, Ho was there, writing for a Hong Kong paper, with access to high level officials. He left days before

soldiers confronted the protesters, convinced that "bloodshed was inevitable."

After slipping across the border to Macau, Ho moved to Canada, then the United States, settling in Great Neck, a suburb of New York with a sizeable Chinese population.

After a stint working for a Taiwanese paper, he started a Chinese-language media group, Mingjing — which means "The Mirror" — that now runs news websites, magazines and bookstores in Taiwan and the U.S.

He mingles with sources and emigres in Chinese restaurants and at his office in Great Neck, which has shelves stacked with books and a picture of him with the Dalai Lama. At times, he of-

fers scathing criticism of the Communist Party, and said he has no plans to go back.

Despite that, Ho refers to China as his motherland, not America. His publications and YouTube channel are in Mandarin for a Chinese audience. In contrast to many dissident Chinese overseas, Ho often takes a dim view of American politics and blasts failures and flaws in the U.S. system just as he criticizes the Chinese government.

But the one thing Ho does appreciate about the U.S. is the freedom to speak openly.

Many of Ho's competitors in Chinese-language media overseas peddle conspiracy theories, driven by sheer opposition to Beijing. One, a journalist linked to the Falun Gong sect, spread rumors of a coup in China last month that turned out to be false.

Ho's media group, in contrast, is generally grounded in fact, though it is heavy on Chinese political gossip. He has made a prediction for who will make up China's next generation of leaders, but instead of making it public, he has set up a game that allows his audience to make predictions themselves — a way of keeping them engaged.

Ho is scathing about Xi's crackdown on press freedoms, and said that Beijing's stiff propaganda and assertive diplomacy have affected China's global reputation.

But contrary to many Western observers, he suggested "Xi can still be a great leader." If he plays his cards right, Ho said, Xi's iron rule could ultimately steer China away from collapse and avert the fate of the Soviet Union.

"It is very different from the China I imagined 30 years ago," he said, "but it isn't a simple reversion back to the Cultural Revolution, nor a move towards Western democracy."

Though some businesspeople and intellectuals dislike Xi, he still enjoys widespread support, Ho said. Many people have benefited from his programs to expand the social safety net, and agree with his nationalistic stance pitting China against the West.

Many Chinese have gone abroad, only to find that the West isn't all that great, he said. America's aging subways and struggling railways stand in stark contrast to China's gleaming new infrastructure. Chinese contrast the chaos of elections in the West, Ho said, with the stability under Xi's rule.

"The younger generation in China has a strong sense of national pride," he said. "That's a very strong foundation for Xi Jinping."

If the question of succession is not resolved, Ho said, "China could fall into chaos, as it did in the final years of Mao's rule. It's a question of how Xi's power is handed over, and who inherits it." MDT/AP

MYANMAR

# Graft convictions extend Aung Suu Kyi's prison term to 26 years

GRANT PECK, BANGKOK

**A** court in military-ruled Myanmar convicted the country's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi on two more corruption charges yesterday, with two three-year sentences to be served concurrently, adding to previous convictions that now leave her with a 26-year total prison term, a legal official said.

Suu Kyi, 77, was detained on Feb. 1, 2021, when the military seized power from her elected government. She has denied the allegations against her in this case, in which she was accused of receiving \$550,000 as a bribe from a tycoon convicted of drug trafficking.

Corruption cases comprise the biggest share of the many charges the military has brought against the 1991 Nobel Peace laureate. Suu Kyi has been charged with 12 counts in total under the anti-corruption act, with each count punishable by up to 15 years in prison and a fine.

Suu Kyi had already been sentenced to 23 years' imprisonment after being convicted of illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies, violating coronavirus restrictions, breaching the country's official secrets act, sedition, election fraud and five corruption charges.

Her supporters and independent analysts say the charges are politically motivated and an attempt to discredit her and legitimize the military's seizure of power while keeping her from taking part in the next election, which the military has promised in 2023.

In recent months, her trials have been held in a purpose-built courtroom in the main prison on the outskirts of the capital, Naypyitaw. She has not been seen or allowed to speak in public since she was arrested. Her lawyers, who had been a source of



information on the proceedings, have not been allowed to speak publicly on her behalf or about her trial since a gag order was placed on them last year.

In the case decided yesterday, Suu Kyi was accused of receiving a total of \$550,000 in 2019 and 2020 from Maung Weik, with separate payments being treated as two offenses.

Maung Weik, a construction magnate, had a close relationship with the army generals in power during a previous military-run government, and has headed two main companies during three decades in business: Maung Weik & Family Co. Ltd., specializing in the trading of metals and agricultural products, and Sae Paing Development Ltd., a real estate and construction company.

He was sentenced to 15 years in prison in 2008 for trafficking drugs but was released in 2014 under a semi-democratic transitional government led by former Gen. Thein Sein.

After his release from prison, Maung Weik returned to doing business with former generals and according to a 2017 report in *The Irrawaddy*, an online news magazine, became chairman of Mandalay Business Capital City Development, which was involved in urban development work.

Under Suu Kyi's government, Maung Weik won a major development project that included the

construction of houses, restaurants, hospitals, economic zones, a port and hotel zones in Myanmar's central Mandalay region.

He was reportedly interrogated by the army two weeks after its takeover, and shortly after that, in March 2021, military-controlled state television broadcast a video in which he claimed to have given cash payoffs to government ministers to help his businesses.

He said in his video that the money included \$100,000 provided to Suu Kyi in 2018 for a charitable foundation named after her mother, and another \$450,000 in payments in 2019 and 2020 for purposes he did not specify.

A state-controlled newspaper, the *Global New Light of Myanmar*, reported in February that Suu Kyi in her position as state counselor — the country's de facto chief executive — received \$550,000 in four installments in 2019-2020 "to facilitate the business activities of a private entrepreneur."

Suu Kyi's close colleague, Zaw Myint Maung, who served as a chief minister in the Mandalay region, was separately accused of receiving more than \$180,000 from Maung Weik and was convicted of corruption in June.

Yesterday's verdict sentencing Suu Kyi to two three-year sentences to be served concurrently was conveyed by a legal official

who insisted on anonymity for fear of being punished by the authorities.

He added that her lawyers are expected to file an appeal in the coming days.

In separate proceedings, Suu Kyi is still being tried together with the country's former president, Win Myint, on another five corruption charges in connection with permits granted to a Cabinet minister for the rental and purchase of a helicopter.

Suu Kyi has been the face of the opposition to military rule in Myanmar for more than three decades. The previous military government put her under house arrest in 1989, which continued on-and-off for 15 of the next 22 years.

Her National League for Democracy party initially came to power after winning the 2015 general election, ushering in a true civilian government for the first time since a 1962 military coup. However, democratic reforms were small and slow in coming, largely because the military retained substantial power and influence under the terms of a constitution it had enacted in 2008.

The National League for Democracy won a landslide victory again in the 2020 election, but its lawmakers were kept from taking their seats in Parliament by the army, which also arrested the party's top leaders. **MDT/AP**

ADVERTORIAL

## G R E A T T I M E S

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SPACE

# World's first space tourist signs up for flight around moon

MARCIA DUNN, CAPE CANAVERAL

**T**HE world's first space tourist wants to go back — only this time, he's signed up for a spin around the moon aboard Elon Musk's Starship.

For Dennis Tito, 82, it's a chance to relive the joy of his trip to the International Space Station, now that he's retired with time on his hands. He isn't interested in hopping on a 10-minute flight to the edge of space or repeating what he did 21 years ago. "Been there, done that."

His weeklong moonshot — its date to be determined and years in the future — will bring him within 125 miles of the lunar far side. He'll have company: his wife, Akiko, and 10 others willing to shell out big bucks for the ride.

Tito won't say how much he's paying; his Russian station flight cost \$20 million.

The couple recognize there's a lot of testing and development still ahead for Starship, a shiny, bullet-shaped behemoth that's yet to even attempt to reach space.

"We have to keep healthy for as many years as it's going to take for SpaceX to complete this vehicle," Tito said in an interview this week with The Associated Press. "I might be sitting in a rocking chair, not doing any good exercise, if it wasn't for this mission."

Tito is actually the second billionaire to make a Starship reservation for a flight around the moon. Japanese fashion tycoon Yusaku Maezawa announced in 2018 he was buying an entire flight



Dennis Tito and his wife, Akiko, at the company's Starship rocket base near Boca Chica, Texas

so he could take eight or so others with him, preferably artists. The two men both flew to the space station, from Kazakhstan atop Russian rockets, 20 years apart.

Tito kicked off space tourism in 2001, becoming the first person to pay his own way to space and antagonizing NASA in the process. The U.S. space agency didn't want a sightseer hanging around while the station was being built. But the Russian Space Agency needed the cash and, with the help of U.S.-based Space Adventures, launched a string of wealthy clients to the station through the 2000s and, just a year ago, Maezawa.

Well-heeled customers are sampling briefer tastes of space with Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin rocket company. Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic expects to take paying

passengers next year.

Starship has yet to launch atop a Super Heavy booster from the southern tip of Texas, near the Mexican border. At 394 feet and 17 million pounds of liftoff thrust, it's the biggest and most powerful rocket ever built. NASA already has contracted for a Starship to land its astronauts on the moon in 2025 or so, in the first lunar touchdown since Apollo.

Tito said the couple's contract with SpaceX, signed in August 2021 and announced Wednesday, includes an option for a flight within five years from now. Tito would be 87 by then and he wanted an out in case his health falters.

"But if I stayed in good health, I'd wait 10 years," he said.

Tito's wife, 57, said she needed no persuading. The Los Angeles residents are

both pilots and understand the risks. They share Musk's vision of a spacefaring future and believe a married couple flying together to the moon will inspire others to do the same.

Tito, who sold his investment company Wilshire Associates almost two years ago, said he doesn't feel guilty splurging on spaceflight versus spending the money here on Earth.

"We're retired and now it's time to reap the rewards of all the hard work," he said.

Tito expects he'll also shatter preconceived notions about age, much as John Glenn's space shuttle flight did in 1998. The first American to orbit the Earth still holds the record as the oldest person in orbit.

"He was only 77. He was just a young man," Tito said. "I might end up being 10 years older than him," **MDT/AP**

## Japan space agency rocket carrying eight satellites fails

**J**APAN'S space agency said a rocket carrying eight satellites failed just after liftoff yesterday and had to be aborted by a self-destruction command, in the country's first failed rocket launch in nearly 20 years.

The Epsilon-6 rocket was not in the right position to orbit around the Earth and

its flight had to be aborted less than seven minutes after takeoff from the Uchinoura Space Center in the southern Japanese prefecture of Kagoshima, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency President Hiroshi Yamakawa told an online news conference.

"We deeply apologize for

our failure to live up to the expectations" of local officials and those who were involved in the development of the satellites, Yamakawa said, pledging to assist in the investigation into the cause of the failure.

JAXA officials said the agency sent a self-destruction signal after deciding the

rocket was not able to fly safely and enter a planned orbit. JAXA said the rocket and payloads were believed to have fallen into the sea east of the Philippines.

The cause of the failure was still being investigated, the agency said.

The Epsilon rocket was carrying eight payloads, including two developed by a private company based in Fukuoka, another southern prefecture. It was the first time an Epsilon rocket carried commercially developed payloads. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1992 THOUSANDS OF MINERS TO LOSE THEIR JOBS [IN UK]



The government is planning to close a third of Britain's deep coal mines, with the loss of 31,000 jobs.

The President of the Board of Trade, Michael Heseltine, has announced up to 31 out of 50 remaining deep mines face closure.

Mr Heseltine promised an extra £1bn from the Treasury to meet the cost of redundancies and help mining communities.

Arthur Scargill, president of the National Union of Mineworkers urged miners to fight the government and called the layoffs a "savage, brutal act of vandalism".

Robin Cook, Labour's trade spokesman, said the cuts were a "bad decision" not only for the local communities but for tax payers and electricity consumers who would pick up the inevitable costs.

But any suggestion that the UK should follow Germany's lead in preserving its coalfields with extra subsidies was dismissed by Mr Heseltine.

Industry would not be made more competitive by "forcing costs on to them above the market price," he said.

Mr Heseltine said the decision was a necessity born out of the continuing economic recession and the demise of the Cold War, and intimated other industries such as shipbuilding might also suffer.

The cuts take effect immediately for six pits, which close at the end of the week, affecting 6,000 miners.

By March 1993 only 19 mines will be left, grouped in Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire areas, although a new mine is expected to open in 1994.

Miners tempted to answer Arthur Scargill's calls for militancy have been issued a stark warning.

Those taking any form of industrial action will lose redundancy entitlements worth up to £37,000.

Chairman of British Coal Neil Clarke has said the cuts would be "grievous", especially since productivity in the industry had more than doubled in the last six years.

But the decision was a consequence of the need to reduce coal output by a minimum of 25,000 million tonnes a year, he said.

Since the privatisation of the power industry in 1990, coal has been displaced by cheaper imports and the expansion in gas supplied electricity generators.

Gas stations are replacing coal stations run by the two major electricity generators National Power and Power Gen, and the new freedom of electricity boards to set up their own gas power stations.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

At its peak during World War II there were over one million miners working in 958 mines, which steadily declined after post-war nationalisation. The discovery of North Sea gas and increased imports saw consumption of domestic coal start to fall. Major pit closures led miners to a series of strikes.

The fall of the Conservative government in 1974 is widely attributed to the strength of the miners' unions and striking workforce.

In 1984/85 Mr Scargill led the miners in a year-long divisive and ultimately unsuccessful strike against the Thatcher government.

British Coal was privatised shortly after the 1992 cuts.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## YOUR STARS

**ARIES**  
Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Try to be patient and understanding. You must steer clear of overindulgent individuals. Do not allow colleagues to hinder your ambitions.

**TAURUS**  
Apr. 20-May. 20  
You will want to complain about the injustice that is going on. Try to iron out any friction over money with your mate or conflicts could prevail.

**GEMINI**  
May. 21-Jun. 21  
You should be able to tie up loose ends today. Minor fevers or infections will develop if you're over-stressed. Escapist tendencies may lead to overindulgence.

**CANCER**  
Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Help with your aspirations is likely, and profits could follow. Be cautious who you deal with financially. Try not to get into disputes that will lead to estrangements.

**LEO**  
Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
You can get phenomenal returns if you present your ideas to those who can back your interests. Efforts made to improve yourself will turn out to your satisfaction.

**VIRGO**  
Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Involve yourself in group endeavors. Disputes may start because of a lack of honesty. You could meet an interesting individual you'll want to get to know better.

**LIBRA**  
Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Take things slowly, especially for the sake of those you love. You will meet some interesting people if you attend promotional functions.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
If you can't get ahead in the company you're with, perhaps it's time to move on. You could find yourself having problems with coworkers and employers.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Unpleasant situations concerning family members will be unnerving. You will easily capture the interest of those you talk to. Responsibilities with respect to older relatives may be a burden.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Someone you work with may be emotional. Do not reveal personal information to those you feel may be untrustworthy. Escapist tendencies may lead to overindulgence.

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
You'll find travel or involvement in large groups gratifying. You will have a productive day if you organize yourself well at work.

**PISCES**  
Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
Don't get involved in other people's private doings. Try to keep a low profile. Use your innovative mind to surprise youngsters.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



## SUDOKU

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

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

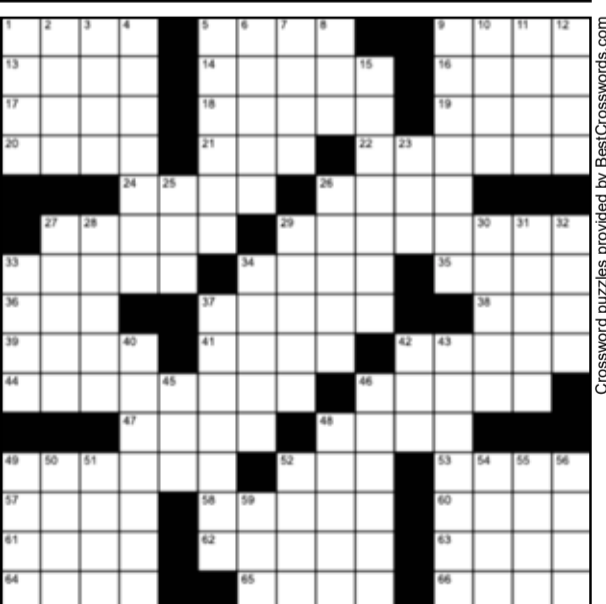
## WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	5	18	cloudy
Changchun	2	17	fine
Chengdu	13	16	overcast
Chongqing	17	23	cloudy
Fuzhou	18	25	overcast
Guangzhou	16	29	fine
Guiyang	11	16	overcast
Haikou	22	28	cloudy
Hangzhou	12	21	overcast
Harbin	3	15	cloudy
Hefei	8	21	cloudy
Nanjing	9	21	cloudy
Shanghai	15	21	cloudy
Taipei	20	22	rain
Wuhan	10	22	fine
Hong Kong	24	29	overcast
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	2	9	overcast
Frankfurt	12	16	rain
Paris	14	17	rain
London	10	16	rain
New York	13	20	rain

## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Smooth-talking; 5- \_\_\_-Ball; 9- Member of a great Peruvian people; 13- San \_\_\_ Italy; 14- Fidgety; 16- At hand; 17- Yonder; 18- Brief; 19- Spanish muralist; 20- Eye sore; 21- Suffix with glob; 22- Petrol units; 24- Move suddenly; 26- Tropical plant; 27- Future oak; 29- Friendly; 33- Picture border; 34- Poker declaration; 35- Poet Walter \_\_\_ Mare; 36- Ich bin \_\_\_ Berliner; 37- Tine; 38- Swiss river; 39- Dodge model; 41- "All The Way To \_\_\_", song by REM; 42- Outdo; 44- Shining; 46- Iota preceder; 47- Muscle quality; 48- Capital of the Ukraine; 49- Vigorous; 52- Roadhouse; 53- Nose out; 57- At all; 58- Result; 60- Zilch; 61- Clinton cabinet member Federico; 62- Gaucho's rope; 63- Orenburg's river; 64- Hurler Hershiser; 65- Observer; 66- Consumes;

DOWN 1- Fat, in France; 2- Remaining; 3- If \_\_\_ be so bold...; 4- Tedium; 5- Sixth planet; 6- Proposed, perhaps; 7- French 101 infinitive; 8- Lion tail?; 9- As an alternative; 10- \_\_\_-do-well; 11- Minister to; 12- Plastic or liberal, e.g.; 15- Shouting; 23- Summer Games org.; 25- Exist; 26- Acid type; 27- Prospero's servant; 28- Slender boat; 29- Encompassed about; 30- Lulu; 31- Beast of burden; 32- Tombstone lawman; 33- \_\_\_ shui; 34- Peace goddess; 37- Computer adjunct; 40- Word before beauty or bridge; 42- Common article; 43- Government income; 45- Cal. pages; 46- Musical ineptitude; 48- Coach Rockne; 49- Bank takeback; 50- Above, finished; 51- Nota \_\_\_; 52- \_\_\_ old chap!; 54- "David Copperfield" wife; 55- Little biter; 56- Electric fish; 59- Maiden name preceder;



## 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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**Hellene Gardens**  
HKD 6,800,000 3 beds 3 bath

**Marina Bay (Galaxy)**  
HKD 7,500/mth 1 bed 1 bath



SOCIAL MEDIA

# TIKTOK GOING BIG ON US E-COMMERCE? JOB LISTINGS OFFER CLUES

HALELUYA HADERO, NEW YORK

**T**IKTOK appears to be deepening its foray into e-commerce with plans to operate its own U.S. warehouses, the kind of packing and shipping facilities more associated with Amazon or Walmart than the social media platform best known for addictive short videos.

In the past two weeks, TikTok has posted several job listings on LinkedIn looking for candidates to help it develop and grow its "Fulfillment by TikTok Shop" in the U.S. to accommodate sellers using the app. According to the

listings, TikTok plans to provide warehousing, delivery and item return options to sellers.

A company spokesperson declined to comment on TikTok's e-commerce plans in the U.S.

But the U.S. job listings offer a window into a possible U.S. e-commerce expansion. In some listings, TikTok says it is looking for a candidate who can manage a free return program, plan how to move inventory from one warehouse or business to another, and develop its fulfillment service in the U.S. In another listing for a position in Seattle, the company refers to a global e-commerce team and a team member who

will be responsible for building a global warehousing network, signaling its plans could be much larger.

"The e-commerce industry has seen tremendous growth in recent years and has become a hotly contested space amongst leading Internet companies, and its future growth cannot be underestimated," the company wrote in the job listings. "With millions of loyal users globally, we believe TikTok is an ideal platform to deliver a brand new and better e-commerce experience to our users."

Axios first reported on the job postings.

Shopping on social media sites, known as social commerce, is a \$37 billion market in the U.S., led by Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, according to Insider Intelligence. ByteDance, the Beijing-based company that owns TikTok, already runs a thriving social media marketplace on Douyin, its twin video app for the Chinese market. The TikTok spokesperson said the company is focused on "providing merchants with a range of product features and delivery options" in places it currently has e-commerce programs, such as Southeast Asia and the United Kingdom.

Insider Intelligence projects about 23.7 million U.S. shoppers are expected to make at least one purchase through TikTok this year by using affiliated links or conducting a transaction on the platform itself.

Some of those sales are already having an effect. Communities such as #BookTok, a corner of TikTok devoted to literature and reading, has been credited with driving a spike in the sales of print romance books this year. To accommodate more purchases on its app, TikTok said last summer it would partner with the Canadian e-commerce company Shopify to allow users to buy items directly on the app.

TikTok has been intensifying competition with Meta and other rivals, luring younger users — as well as popular influencers — from YouTube, Facebook and Instagram. The site's bite-sized, entertaining clips are served up by an algorithm that often seems to know what people want before they do.

The results are difficult to ignore. In July, Meta posted its first revenue decline in history, due in part to competition from TikTok.

YouTube, meanwhile, recently said it would make the creators of short-form videos eligible to join its revenue-sharing program. Previously, YouTube only allowed revenue sharing for longer videos.

Compared to digital advertising, e-commerce is a tiny source of revenue for Meta, and will likely be for TikTok for the foreseeable future. At the same time, TikTok executives are likely looking to broaden the company's revenue sources beyond ads — a market dominated in the U.S. by Meta and Alphabet, which owns YouTube and Google.

Neil Saunders, managing director for GlobalData Retail, said TikTok's reach and influence are helping it become a powerful force in advertising and sales and building out that capability with warehouses and other facilities would enable it to offer a complete service.

"This would both be an additional revenue stream and would improve the quality of the shopping experience for consumers," Saunders said. But a serious move into warehousing would be an expensive undertaking, and TikTok would face established competitors in the likes of Amazon and Walmart.

"However, TikTok has a massive audience and a massive customer base, so it has more than enough demand for this to make sense," Saunders said. "Provided TikTok maintains its popularity it could pose a threat to incumbents and prove to be a highly disruptive force."

Others are taking a different tone.

"It's idiotic," said Wedbush analyst Michael Pachter. "They have no chance of competing and it is a complete waste of money and time." **MDT/AP**

AVIATION

# United Airlines starts early on summer 2023 plans for Europe

**B**UOYED by full planes across the Atlantic this summer, United Airlines is planning another increase in its summer service from the United States to Europe next year.

United said yesterday that it will resume seasonal flights from Newark, New Jersey, to Stockholm, which it dropped in 2019, and launch new summer service from Newark to Malaga, Spain. However, the airline will drop Bergen, Norway — one of nine routes it added this summer — after disappointing results.

In all, the airline expects



to increase passenger-carrying capacity across the Atlantic next summer by

up to 30% over pre-pandemic 2019. That increase includes United's previous

ly announced plan to resume flying to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, a

destination it abandoned in 2016.

United and other airlines have been forced to cancel some flights this year because of limits imposed by airports in London and Amsterdam, which are struggling with staffing shortages. Patrick Quayle, the airline's senior vice president of network planning, said that after talking with airport officials, United is confident it can operate the planned 2023 European schedule.

United, American Airlines and Delta Air Lines were boosted this summer by strong demand and high fares on flights to Europe, as Americans took advantage of fewer pandemic-related travel restrictions. Those international trips likely figured in American's move to raise its forecast of third-quarter revenue, al-

though the airline did not break out results by region.

Asia and the South Pacific have been slower to come back, although United has gradually added flights to Australia and other destinations. China, however, remains largely closed off to foreigners, with cities still imposing new lockdowns based on the smallest numbers of COVID-19 cases, and Japan just ended border restrictions that had been in place for more than two years.

Quayle said United "will just follow the government process" when China reopens, and will phase in the resumption of flights to Japan. With those "notable exceptions," he said, "everything else across the Pacific is going to be running full-steam this winter." **MDT/AP**

FOOTBALL

# PSG held at home by Benfica in Champions League

PSG 1, BENFICA 1

**P**ARIS Saint-Germain can still count on Kylian Mbappé despite rumors he wants to leave the club.

The World Cup winner scored his 31st Champions League goal for PSG to become the club's record scorer in the competition as the French champions drew 1-1 with Benfica yesterday [Macau time].

Mbappé scored from the penalty spot five minutes before the interval to put PSG in the lead. Joao Mario brought Benfica level with another penalty in the 62nd minute.

Mbappé thought for a moment he had sealed PSG's win and started celebrating in the 87th, but his spectacular volley into the roof of the net was disallowed for an offside position.

After Juventus lost 2-0 to Maccabi Haifa in the other game, PSG and Benfica are tied with eight points at the top of Group H. Juventus and Haifa have three points each.

All eyes were on Mbappé at the Parc des Princes after reports claiming the star wanted a way out emerged earlier in the day. The France forward looked relaxed and smiling before kickoff as he waited with his teammates before walking out to the field.

Once on the pitch, Mbappé produced his trademark acceleration and unsettled defenders with his dribbles, but struggled to be decisive.

PSG pushed hard toward the end of the first half and was rewarded with a penalty when Juan Bernat surged into the box and was fouled by Antonio Silva.

Mbappé took the kick and converted from the spot with a low shot that wrongfooted goalkeeper Odysseas Vlachodimos.

Benfica deployed the same strategy as last week in Portugal during their 1-1 draw, with an intense press from the start. PSG weathered the pressure quite well and managed to recover the ball quickly in an even start to the match



PSG's Kylian Mbappé (right) duels for the ball with Benfica's Antonio Silva during the match at the Parc des Princes stadium, in Paris

without chances.

With the injured Lionel Messi watching from the stands, Benfica had the first shot of the match in the 17th, with an effort from Gonçalo Ramos blocked by the defense. The visitors then kept pace with PSG until Silva's mistake.

PSG played cautiously in the second half and Benfica was dangerous from crosses.

The visitors got a penalty with 30 minutes left following a VAR check that confirmed that Marco Verratti fouled Rafa Silva just inside the box. João Mário converted it with a powerful shot down the middle.

### CITY STOPPED

With Haaland rested, 10-man City was held to a 0-0 draw at FC Copenhagen, a team languishing in the bottom half of the Danish league.

Copenhagen became the first team to stop City from scoring this season in a match overshadowed by early video-review decisions.

One of those VAR calls resulted in a red card for City left back Sergio Gomez in the 30th minute for pulling back Hákon Arnar Haraldsson as the last man, harming the visitors attacking ambitions at the atmospheric Parken Stadium.

Still, City leads Group

G with 10 points, followed by Borussia Dortmund (7), Sevilla (2) and Copenhagen (2).

City, like Madrid, has advanced with two rounds of matches still remaining in the group phase.

### BELLINGHAM'S CONSISTENCY

At 19, England midfielder Jude Bellingham has scored in all four of Dortmund's Champions League games this season.

Young players took center stage as Sevilla took the lead with a header from 20-year-old defender Tanguy Nianzou before Bellingham knocked in Thomas Meunier's low cross for a 1-1 draw.

Only Haaland (5 goals) and Mbappé (4) have scored more Champions League goals this season.

Bellingham also became the highest-scoring English teenager in a single Champions League season, overtaking Wayne Rooney's record of three goals in 2004-05.

### RUDIGER TO THE RESCUE

Antonio Rudiger had his face bloodied as he scored a stoppage-time equalizer for Madrid in a 1-1 draw with Shakhtar Donetsk.

Also, Timo Werner scored his first Champions League goal since returning to Leipzig to help se-

cure a 2-0 win at Celtic.

Madrid leads Group F with 10 points, followed by Leipzig (6), Shakhtar (5) and Celtic (1).

### SURGING CHELSEA

Chelsea was at the bottom of Group E but two straight victories over Serie A champion AC Milan

has seen it move into pole position to progress to the round of 16.

Chelsea moved to the top of the group on with a 2-0 win at Milan, which played most of the match with 10 men after former Blues defender Fikayo Tomori was sent off in the 18th minute after also giving away a penalty.

Jorginho converted the spot kick and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang doubled the visitors' advantage in the 34th.

Chelsea moved a point above Salzburg, which drew 1-1 at Dinamo Zagreb in the other Group E match. Milan and Dinamo are three points below Chelsea.

### JUVENTUS CRISIS

Juventus descended further into crisis and was left on the verge of elimination from the Champions League following a 2-0 loss at Maccabi Haifa that also included an injury to key winger Ángel Di María.

Omer Atzili scored two first-half goals as Haifa earned its first Champions League win in two decades.

Juventus was left third in Group H behind PSG and Benfica with two games to play. **MDT/AP**

AD



**BENFICA MACAU ACADEMY**  
澳門賓菲加體育學校



**FOOTBALL | BASKETBALL | DAILY TRAININGS**

**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Kang Bing, China Daily\*



**CHINA'S DRAMATIC RISE IN GLOBAL SPORTS ARENA**

As I worked as a sports journalist for my first 10 years with China Daily, I have closely followed how China has grown from a minor player in the international sports arena into a global sports power.

Despite its huge population, China was not much of a global force in sports until the 1980s. It was very good at table tennis, though. The first major international breakthrough for China came in 1981 when its women's volleyball team won the Women's Volleyball World Cup. Understandably, sports fans went crazy. Parades celebrating the victory were held on many university campuses, with some students shouting slogans such as "revitalizing China", which has since become the goal of the nation.

Boosted by the victory, China invested more of its limited resources in training athletes. The investment paid off, as China got its first Olympic gold medal in shooting in 1984. In all, Chinese athletes won 15 gold medals in the Los Angeles Olympics, setting the course to becoming a global sports power.

With China investing more resources in the sports sector thanks to the fast-paced economic development and winning world titles becoming normal for Chinese athletes, the government started encouraging ordinary citizens to play sports.

In 1995, the State Council, China's Cabinet, published the "Outline of National Fitness Program", promising to invest more resources to make sports facilities more easily accessible to the public. And Sports Lottery tickets were sold nationwide to raise funds for building and renovating sports facilities.

In 2011, the State Council began publishing five-year plans to implement the national fitness program, setting targets and measures to take the program forward. The 2021-25 plan, for instance, says that by 2025, 38.5 percent (compared with 37.2 percent in 2021) of China's population would take part in regular sports activities. It also promises to build more sports facilities so every citizen can reach the nearest sports/physical exercise venue within 15 minutes.

Regular sports activities mean playing sports or working out more than three times a week with more than half an hour a day of cardio exercise. And the fact that 37.2 percent of the population took part in regular sports activities in 2021 means about 500 million people made good use of the country's 3.71 million public sports facilities.

While the young may prefer to play on the 1 million basketball courts or 117,300 soccer fields, others use the running tracks (cumulatively 2,093,000-kilometer long) in the sports facilities and parks for doing physical exercise in their community or village squares.

Square dancing is popular among senior citizens, especially women. As night falls, almost all squares in cities and towns turn into dance floors where millions of middle-aged and elderly people practice square dancing accompanied by music. The activity is a popular hobby which also helps the elderly keep fit.

Marathon is another popular sports discipline. Before the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in 2020, China used to hold more than 1,800 marathons every year, compared with just 22 a decade ago. In 2019 alone, the marathons attracted 7.1 million participants.

Thanks to these developments, the sports industry's value increased to 2.74 trillion yuan (\$385.32 billion) in 2020. The 2021-25 national fitness plan's goal is to double that figure by the end of 2025.

As a sports journalist, I spilled a lot of ink describing the progress of competitions because TV was yet to become popular then and fans were eager to know the goings-on at sports events. Now that fans can watch live telecast of sports events on their mobile phones, sports writers are spending more time in digging up behind-the-scene stories of athletes.

Next, they may have to work harder to find the right angles to write about sports fans who today are not only interested in watching and talking about sports events but want to be part of them too. The age of sports is coming. [Abridged]

\*The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily.

**VENEZUELA, S. KOREA, AFGHANISTAN LOSE VOTE FOR UN RIGHTS BODY**

THE BUZZ

Venezuela, South Korea and Afghanistan lost contested races for seats on the top U.N. human rights body yesterday [Macau time] by the General Assembly, which faced criticism for electing countries like Vietnam and Sudan, which have been accused of having abysmal human rights records.

The 193-member assembly voted by secret ballot to fill 14 seats on the 47-member Human Rights Council. Seats are allocated to regions to ensure geographical representation, a rule that has regularly led to many regions putting forward uncontested slates — as Africa, Eastern Europe and Western nations did this year.

Human rights groups have long criticized this practice, saying it denies U.N. member nations any choice of countries on the council and virtually guarantees seats for some countries with poor rights records.

In this year's election, the most hotly watched race was in the Latin America and Caribbean regional group, where Chile, Costa Rica and Venezuela were vying for two seats. The result saw Chile get 144 votes, Costa Rica 134 and Venezuela 88.

Louis Charbonneau, U.N. director for Human Rights Watch, welcomed this week's result.



King Charles III feeds carrots to horses as he attends a reception to thank the community of Aberdeenshire for their organisation and support following the death of Queen Elizabeth II

**KING CHARLES III TO BE CROWNED MAY 6 NEXT YEAR, PALACE SAYS**

DANICA KIRKA, LONDON

**K**ING Charles III will be crowned at Westminster Abbey on May 6 in a ceremony that will embrace the past but look to the modern world after the 70-year reign of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

This week announcement from Buckingham Palace comes amid speculation that the coronation will be shorter and less extravagant than the three-hour ceremony that installed Elizabeth in 1953, in keeping with Charles' plans for a slimmed down monarchy. While the palace provided few details, British media reported that the guest list would be pared to 2,000 from 8,000.

Charles will be crowned in a solemn religious ceremony conducted by Justin Welby, the archbishop of Canterbury, the palace said in a statement. Camilla, the queen consort, will be crowned alongside her husband.

"The coronation will reflect the monarch's role today and look towards the future, while being rooted in longstanding traditions and pageantry," the palace said.

Charles will be anointed with holy oil before receiving the orb, scepter and

coronation ring. Camilla will also be anointed with holy oil and crowned, as was Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

The palace is planning the coronation, known as Operation Golden Orb, as Charles and his heir, Prince William, seek to demonstrate that the monarchy is still relevant in modern, multi-cultural Britain. While there was widespread respect for Elizabeth, as demonstrated by the tens of thousands of people who waited hours to file past her coffin, there is no guarantee that reverence will transfer to Charles.

Organizers should be shooting for a ceremony that's about an hour long, in line with last month's "immensely moving" funeral for the queen, said royal historian Robert Lacey, author of "Majesty: Elizabeth II and the House of Windsor."

"One has to remember, too, while all the reverence and gravity of the Queen's funeral was very much focused on tribute to her, a coronation is a tribute to an institution rather than a person, with whom quite a lot of thoughtful people in this country disagree," Lacey told the BBC.

While most of corona-

tion ceremony, which has changed little in the past 1,000 years, is expected to remain intact, some of the more fussy trappings of pomp and circumstance may be trimmed as Britain struggles with soaring inflation and the fallout from the war in Ukraine. The optics are important.

"The idea of this very opulent coronation coming on the back of a winter of austerity, cost-of-living crisis, but also, I think, a sense that having thousands of foreign dignitaries flying in on airplanes that guzzle oil and petrol or whatever they guzzle to the coronation of the environment-loving monarch — all of those things could chime very awkwardly," said Anna Whitelock, a professor of history of modern monarchy at City University London, told the BBC.

The ceremony traditionally takes place some months after the monarch's accession to the throne, providing time to mourn his predecessor and organize the event. Charles is expected to sign a proclamation formally declaring the date of the ceremony at a meeting of his senior advisers, known as the Privy Council, later this year. **MDT/AP**



**Belarus** Statements made this week by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko have reignited fears that his army could join Russian forces in Moscow's war against Ukraine, but the authoritarian leader appears reluctant to lend his troops to the effort, despite perceived pressure from Moscow. Russia has already used Belarus, its longtime and dependent ally, as a staging ground to send troops and missiles into Ukraine.



**Bosnia-Herzegovina** moved a small step closer to the European Union yesterday with the EU's executive advising member states to grant it candidate member status despite continuing criticism of the way the Balkan nation is run. The advice had been hotly anticipated in ethnically-divided Bosnia, which is lagging several other Balkan nations in being granted candidate status to become a member of the prosperous European club of 27 nations.



**Portugal** President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa (pictured) is scrambling to quell an outcry over his comments appearing to make light of revelations that more than 400 people were victims of child sex abuse by members of the Portuguese Catholic Church. A lay committee looking into historic child sex abuse in the church said it has so far compiled a list of 424 alleged victims dating back to 1950. Hundreds of priests, some deceased, are under suspicion.

**Senegal** A new liquefied natural gas project off Africa's western coast may only be 80% complete, but already the prospect of a new energy supplier has drawn visits from the leaders of Poland and Germany. The initial field near Senegal and Mauritania's coastlines is expected to contain about 15 trillion cubic feet of gas, five times more than what gas-dependent Germany used in all of 2019. But production isn't expected to start until the end of next year.