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AP PHOTO



Russia Two men fired at soldiers on a Russian military firing range near Ukraine on Saturday, killing 11 and wounding 15 before being slain themselves, the Russian Defense Ministry said. The ministry said in a statement that the shooting took place in the Belgorod region in southwestern Russia that borders Ukraine. It said two men from an unnamed former Soviet republic fired on volunteer soldiers during target practice and were killed by return fire.

AP PHOTO



Ukraine Pro-Kremlin officials yesterday blamed Ukraine for a rocket attack that struck the mayor's office in a key Ukrainian city controlled by the separatists as Russia's war nears the eight-month mark. Meanwhile, Ukrainian officials said Russian rockets struck a city across from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, wounding six people.

AP PHOTO



Turkey Funerals for miners killed in a coal mine explosion in northern Turkey began Saturday as officials raised the death toll to at least 41 people. Desperate relatives had waited all night in the cold outside the state-owned Turkish Hard Coal Enterprise's mine in the town of Amasra, in the Black Sea coastal province of Bartın, hoping for news. There were 110 miners working several hundred meters below ground at the time of the explosion on Friday evening.

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AP PHOTO



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ANTHONY LAM

EXCO APPROVES DIGITAL CURRENCY USE

THE draft for the Currency Establishment and Issuance Legal System includes a direction to digitize the pataca and a proposal to adopt the digital currency as legal tender.

The draft law had been discussed at the Executive Council (ExCo) and the news was announced over the weekend at an ExCo press conference by its spokesperson, Secretary for Administration and Justice, André Cheong.

Following discussions at the ExCo, the draft law's text will be delivered to the parliament to go through legislative procedures.

In its statement, the ExCo stressed the digital currency will have the same status as traditional paper money and coins.

The ExCo added that special laws and regulations will be promulgated to support the law when it is passed.

Executive Regulations will determine the establishment of the currency, as well as the currency's denominations, types and features. Chief Executive Dispatches will authorize the amounts of the currency's first and subsequent issuances.

Current legal provisions state no business operator is obliged to accept more than 100 coins, regardless of their face value. The government used the opportunity of the draft law to propose the maximum number of patacas a business operator can refuse to accept be lowered to 50.

The government emphasized the necessity of the draft saying it



aligned with the development of electronic payment tools and the change of public mode of consumption.

A penalty clause has also been added to the draft law against refusal of legal tender; it proposes a fine from MOP1,000 to MOP10,000.

The sale of commemorative paper money will also be legalized if the draft law is passed.

The new law is the latest in legislation that governs the city's currency.

Before this draft law, the ExCo said, currency establishment

and issuance had been supervised and authorized by the Decree-Law No 7/95/M, promulgated January 1995. It is likely the law will replace the current Decree-Law, as in many other precedents.

CONTACTLESS REGISTRY FOR 50 PUBLIC CAR PARKS

At the same press conference, it was also announced that the ExCo had concluded discussions on the bill of the Public Parking Service System.

By the end of this year, 50 of the city's 56 government-owned or

commissioned car parks will be able to accept contactless entry and exit, Transport Bureau (DSAT) director Kelvin Lam Hin San said.

The ExCo spokesperson said the new bill is needed because the existing legal document is old: Executive Regulation No 35/2003 – Public Parking Service Regulations.

If passed at the parliament, the new law will amend the type of contract for the provision of public car park services. It will outline the rights and obligations of car park operators; regulate the use of public parking services; im-

prove supervision and penalty; simplify administrative procedures; and adjust mode of payment for parking fees.

In addition to the gradual change in mode of car park entry and exit, Lam also promised new car parks will be opened this year in the Central, Mong-Ha and Concórdia Industrial Park districts.

The bill also proposed supplementary Executive Regulations be promulgated to moderate tender bidding, direct negotiations, conditions for operations and use, as well as charging schedules.

New bill to identify drinks with 1.2% alcohol as alcoholic

THE Executive Council has also finished discussing a bill on alcoholic drinks for minors, which proposes that drinks with 1.2% of alcohol by volume be considered alcoholic and banned for minors in public places.

The bill proposes alcoholic drinks should not be sold, provided to or consumed by minors in public places. In addition, minors should not be hired or directed to sell or provide such drinks. They should also not be self-hi-

red to do so.

Specific labels will be distributed to sellers or providers of alcoholic drinks and should be posted conspicuously. Selling or providing alcoholic drinks to minors remotely, especially over the web or by post, is also banned in the bill.

The bill also proposes a penalty schedule that imposes a fine of MOP20,000 for violation of the aforementioned clauses.

It is proposed in the bill that parents or guardians should provide minors with

information and education on the health hazards caused by reckless consumption of alcoholic beverages. The public sector should disseminate relevant information to the public, and the Health Bureau (SSM) should provide treatment and rehabilitation for alcohol addicts.

The bill also proposes other administrative violations and additional penalties, criteria for non-prosecution, SSM monitoring measures, and the criteria for seizure of objects, al-

coholic beverages, alcoholic beverages vending machines or advertising media.

SSM director and pulmonologist, Alvis Lo Iek Long, was asked how the government would monitor sale and delivery of alcoholic drinks over the web or by post. He said the government would require websites or vendors to emphasize relevant regulations while contacting buyers. Buyers will also be required to declare their ages when purchasing alcoholic drinks online. **AL**



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XX CPC NATIONAL CONGRESS

Xi stresses upholding, improving policy of 'One country, two systems'

XI Jinping yesterday stressed upholding and improving the policy of 'One country, two systems'.

"The policy of 'One country, two systems' is a great innovation of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It has proven to be the best institutional arrangement for ensuring sustained prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and Macau after their return to the motherland," Xi said in a report at the opening session of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

"This policy must be adhered to over the long term," he said.

"We will fully, faithfully, and resolutely implement the policy of 'One country, two systems', under which the people of Hong Kong administer Hong Kong and the people of Macau administer Macau, both with a high degree of autonomy. We will remain committed to law-based governance in Hong Kong and Macau," Xi said.

"We will ensure that the central government exercises overall jurisdiction over the two regions. We will see that Hong Kong and Macau are administered by patriots," he said.

"We will support Hong Kong and Macau in growing their economies, improving their people's



lives, and resolving deep-seated issues and problems in economic and social development, and promote long-term prosperity and stability in the two special administrative regions," Xi said.

"We will support Hong Kong and Macau in better integrating themselves into China's overall development and playing a greater role in realizing national reju-

venation," he said.

"We will ensure both the central government's overall jurisdiction and a high degree of autonomy in the special administrative regions," according to the report.

The central authorities will uphold executive-led government in Hong Kong and Macau and support the chief executives and

governments of the two regions in exercising law-based administration, enhancing their overall governance and management capacity, and improving their judicial and legal systems, the report said.

"We will inspire more people in Hong Kong and Macau to love both the country and their own regions, be more patriotic, and forge a broader united front at

home and abroad in support of the 'One country, two systems'," it said.

"We will crack down hard on anti-China elements who attempt to create chaos in Hong Kong and Macau. We will take resolute action to prevent and stop interference in the affairs of Hong Kong and Macau by external forces," the report said. XINHUA

TRANSPORT

Jetfoil conservation group calls on gov't to resume sea routes

RENATO MARQUES

THE Jetfoil Conservation Concern Group has urged the governments of the two Special Administrative Regions (SARs) to resume the activity of the Hong Kong-Macau ferry routes, group leader Anderson Cheong told the Times.

According to Cheong, the group has written to the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau and the Transport and Logistics Bureau of the Hong Kong SAR government to suggest the bureaus "consider reopening both the Hong Kong-Macau Ferry Terminal and China Ferry Terminal for pre-departure quarantine, to cope with the rising number of travelers, to save the cross-border ferry



industry from the almost three-year halt and prepare for upcoming recovery."

In the same statement, the group noted the normal connection between Hong Kong, the mainland and Macau has been suspended for almost three years, which has resulted

in family separation and job loss for those working in the maritime transportation industry.

"Although there have been rumors or plans to reopen the borders between the two places [Hong Kong and Macau], this plan was never executed. Hong

Kong is now opened to the outside world but ironically, remains isolated from mainland and Macau despite their much closer relationship with Hong Kong." The group added that, among the many people and industries affected by the border restrictions

imposed, "the cross-border ferry industry was hit the hardest," leading to the ferry companies "to lay off many employees and scrap or sell a large number of ferries."

The group noted the new government from the neighboring region, led by the new Chief Executive John Lee, "has been delivering its promises to resume cross-border travel to both the mainland and foreign countries [as well as] removing quarantine of foreign inbound travelers [which] has won the hearts of global finance leaders."

The group added, "On the other hand, the pre-departure quarantine proposal, which means quarantine in Hong Kong to then enter the mainland,

is under preparation according to various reports. Currently, the number of travelers from Hong Kong to the mainland or Macau is limited by the quarantine facilities on both sides. It is widely believed that pre-departure quarantine would recover the travel to and from both destinations."

The group noted that airlines in the neighboring regions are resuming most of the flights and recruiting new staff and crew members due to the easing of restrictions. The group hopes the solution proposed could also help the ferry industry and provide a travel alternative for those residing in the three regions, helping the "society to walk one small step away from the epidemic."

ANTHONY LAM

COVID-19

SSM'S UPDATED QUARANTINE NOTICE SPARKS SOCIAL MEDIA DECRY

WHILE many are yearning for shorter quarantine for arrivals, the Health Bureau (SSM) has issued a "confusingly written" notice about the end of self-monitoring for arrivals who require quarantine.

Last Thursday evening, the SSM issued a notice in Chinese on the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre social media page to announce the cancellation of "the self-monitoring between the fourth and the seventh day after quarantine and of the SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid tests (NAT) on the fifth and the seventh day after quarantine."

The notice then said: "However, entrants are required to conduct health self-management for four consecutive days from the day of the cessation of quarantine and take NAT at any community NAT station every day therein."

The notice continued, "according to latest scientific data of Covid-19 patients, the centralized isolation

period for positive cases logged upon arrival or during quarantine has also been adjusted, from not shorter than the 10th day after arrival to the seventh day, as well as when they are no longer infectious."

In the post's comment section, a user said she had managed to understand all the Chinese characters independently but not when put together. Former lawmaker Sulu Sou jokingly apologized to all his Chinese teachers for the fact that he could not understand the Chinese notice. Another user asked if the SSM had used online translation tools to compile the notice.

Apart from questions from the public, the Times also filed an enquiry with the SSM, to which its spokesperson replied before the bureau issued another statement at

midnight to clarify the situation.

The SSM explained that, before the change, entrants were required to quarantine for seven days before conducting three days of health self-management and then four days of health self-monitoring.

The former equates to a yellow health code and the latter a green code, although gathering in crowds is not recommended during the four days.

After the change, which has already taken effect, arrivals will be released from quarantine after the period colloquially called "7+3". Nevertheless, they will need to take NAT for four consecutive days from the 10th day.

The mandatory quarantine remains seven-days in length.



GAMING LICENSE

AAEC letter no impact on gov't decision: JP Morgan

LYNZY VALLES

BROKERAGE JP Morgan Securities (Asia Pacific) has stated that the recent letter sent by Asian American Entertainment Corporation (AAEC) to the city's gaming commission for casino licenses is not related to the government's deliberations.

Last week, the AAEC wrote to the commission casting doubt on Sands China's financial capacity to bid for a concession amid the ongoing legal battle against its subsidiary, Venetian Macao SA, as cited in the letter seen by TDM.

Led by Taiwanese businessman Marshall Hao, the AAEC has been seeking compensation from the parent company of Sands China, Las Vegas Sands, of at least USD12 billion over claims it breached its contract in the 2001 gaming tender process.

The Court of First Instance has ruled in favor of LVS.

"We cannot speculate on the outcome of the lawsuit/appeal, but we reiterate that this [news] has nothing to do with what the government



thinks/says," wrote analyst DS Kim of the brokerage.

"This letter was sent by Asian American, who, as per the Macau court, has acted in bad faith and distorted the facts."

For the analysts, the group is "not worried about these headlines."

The Asian American has sent the letter amid the ongoing process for the fresh 10-year concession which the commission is currently reviewing.

Last month, all seven bidders submitted proposals in

medium to large cardboard boxes on pallets and labelled as original documents, along with copies.

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

The Times sought comment from Sands China and LVS but they declined to comment at this juncture.

The Gaming Inspection and Co-ordination Bureau (DICJ) and the Office of the Secretary for Economy and Finance did not reply to the Times' inquiries made last week.

GAMING SCHOLAR FORECASTS GGR TO ONLY RECOVER TO 70% OF 2019

RENATO MARQUES

LOCAL gross gaming revenue (GGR) will never return to the pre-pandemic levels and, at most, will only recover to 70% of 2019 levels, Professor Zheng Zhonglu, head of the Center for Gaming and Tourism Studies at Macao Polytechnic University, told the media at the Responsible Gaming Association's 10th anniversary celebration.

Zheng cited several studies showing Macau's gaming industry will only be able to recover 50% to 60% of the MOP292.46 billion reached in 2019. He noted,

"the more optimistic studies suggest a maximum of 70%." He said the industry, "will not be able to fully recover from the pandemic."

The most optimistic forecast would put local casinos' future GGR between MOP146 billion and MOP200 billion, figures like those reported 2009 to 2011.

Zheng noted the main cause has been the mainland authorities' crackdown on illegal gambling and stricter control measures on capital flow, rather than the pandemic itself.

The academic also anticipates that, consequently, the industry will need fewer casino

workers in the future, forecasting staff cuts may follow the fall in revenue forecasted, representing a potential staff cut of up to 50%.

Zheng said the issue is concerning and will demand a negotiated solution between the government and society to avoid a major unbalance.

Asked if this means the current concessionaires have too many workers, Zheng said the forecast does not aim to say there are too many casino workers now. He said it highlights that, in the future, the sector may need far fewer workers than previously thought.



Pandemic drives ambulance services work up in 2022

RENATO MARQUES

EXCEPT for fires that decreased slightly (-4.15%), the work of the Fire Services Bureau (CB) has increased significantly during the first nine months of this year, a statistics release shows.

In general, the CB was called to intervene in an additional 6,697 cases compared to the same period last year, which is an increase of 19.8%.

In the first three quarters of this year (January to September), alarms sounded at fire stations over 40,000 times, with most cases related to pandemic prevention and control work.

According to the CB, the number of ambulances leaving the fire stations was 33,760, an increase of 4,810 cases (16.6%) compared to the same period last year.

"After analysis, the causes of the increase [in ambulance requests] were mainly due to the need to transport a large number of suspected and con-



firmed cases [of Covid-19], due to the epidemic outbreak that took place in June this year," the CB said, adding that during that period they transported 6,368 suspected and confirmed cases, which involved 11,540 people.

If we exclude the pandemic work, the need for ambulances has decreased.

The CB also noted that, in total, during the first nine

months of this year, they transported 22,761 people with suspected or confirmed cases of Covid-19 infection in around 14,000 trips.

RESCUE OPERATIONS INCREASE 22%

In the same period, CB staff attended 1,472 rescue operations, 269 more (22.36%) than in the same period last year.

These operations included

helping injured and sick people, helping to open doors, and rescuing animals, among other tasks.

Special operations which included the deployment of staff and vehicles increased significantly (57.1%) when compared to last year. Most of the work included in this category related to inspections that required the deployment of personnel and vehicles.

MGTO CALLS FOR TROUPES FOR LUNAR NEW YEAR PARADE

The government is calling registered artistic troupes, schools, community organizations and institutions in Macau to join the Parade for Celebration of the Chinese New Year 2023. Applications are open from today until November 17. The Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) plans to stage the mega event "Parade for Celebration of the Chinese New Year 2023" on January 24 and 28, 2023. The event will feature a range of spectacular highlights such as the float parade, cultural and artistic performances as well as a float exhibition. The parade will start on Sai Van Lake Square, march along Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen until the destination at Macao Science Center.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES AT MOP210B

The preliminary estimate of the city's foreign exchange reserves amounted to MOP210.4 billion at the end of September 2022, according to data from the Monetary Authority of Macao. The reserves decreased 1.2% from the revised value of MOP212.9 billion for the previous month. The SAR's foreign exchange reserves at end-September 2022 represented 10 times the currency in circulation or 83.4% of pataca M2 at end-August 2022. The trade-weighted effective exchange rate index for the pataca rose 2.61 points month-to-month and 9.73 points year-on-year to 112.9 last month.

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Xi emphasizes Chinese path to moderniza

XINHUA REPORTERS, BEIJING

Xi Jinping delivered a report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) yesterday.

He started by saying that the five years since the 19th National Congress of the CPC have been "truly momentous and extraordinary."

The Party Central Committee has "pursued a strategy of national rejuvenation amid global changes of a magnitude not seen in a century, with major strategic plans made for advancing the cause of the Party and the country," Xi said.

Here are highlights of Xi's report, compiled by Xinhua reporters:

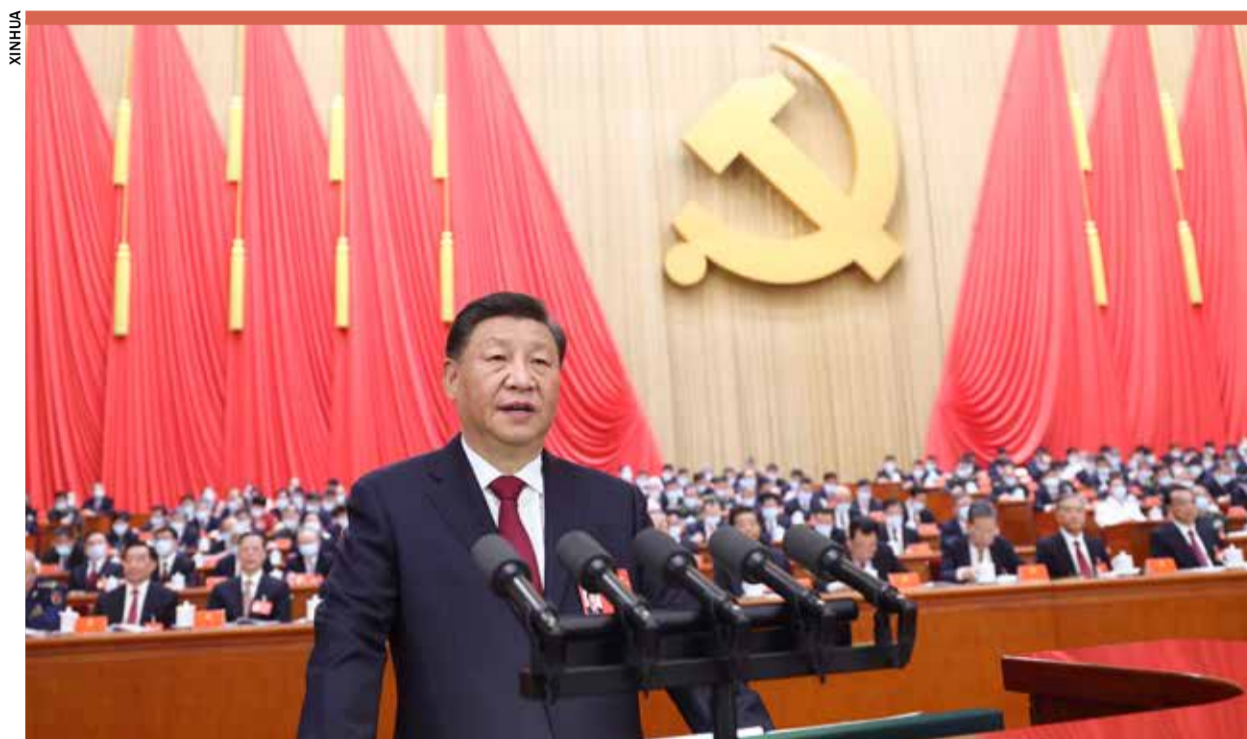
ACHIEVEMENTS OVER PAST DECADE

The CPC has taken China "on a new journey toward building a modern socialist country in all respects."

Under the leadership of the Party Central Committee, the entire Party, the military, and the Chinese people have been brought together to carry out a great struggle with many new features of the times.

OPENING NEW CHAPTERS IN ADAPTING MARXISM TO CHINESE CONTEXT

It is the solemn historic responsibility of today's Chinese Communis-



Xi Jinping delivers a report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) on behalf of the 19th CPC Central Committee at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing

ts to continue opening new chapters in adapting Marxism to the Chinese context and the needs of the times.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, with the courage to make theoretical explorations and innovations, the CPC has, from an entirely new perspective, deepened its understanding of the laws that underlie governance by a communist party, the development of socialism, and the evolution of human society.

CPC'S CENTRAL TASK ON THE NEW JOURNEY OF THE NEW ERA

From this day forward, the central task of the CPC will be to lead the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in a concerted effort to realize the Second Centenary Goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects and to advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernization.

The CPC aims to basically reali-

ze socialist modernization by 2035, and build China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful from 2035 through the middle of this century.

NEW DEVELOPMENT PATTERN AND HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

To build a modern socialist country in all respects, we must,

first and foremost, pursue high-quality development.

We must fully and faithfully apply the new development philosophy on all fronts, continue reforms to develop the socialist market economy, promote high-standard opening up, and accelerate efforts to foster a new pattern of development that is focused on the domestic economy and features positive interplay between domestic and international economic flows.

ROLE OF EDUCATION, SCI-TECH AND TALENT IN MODERNIZATION DRIVE

Education, science and technology, and human resources are the foundational and strategic pillars for building a modern socialist country in all respects.

We must regard science and technology as our primary productive force, talent as our primary resource, and innovation as our primary driver of growth.

WHOLE-PROCESS PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

Whole-process people's democracy is the defining feature of socialist democracy; it is democracy in its broadest, most genuine, and most effective form.

We will improve the system of institutions through which the people run the country.

XI REPORT

Whole-process people's democracy 'is democracy in its broadest, most genuine, most effective form'

Whole-process people's democracy is the defining feature of socialist democracy; it is democracy in its broadest, most genuine, and most effective form, Xi Jinping said yesterday.

"We will improve the system of institutions through which the people run the country," said Xi at the opening session of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

Xi said China will also encourage the people's orderly participation in political affairs and guarantee their ability to engage in democratic elections, consultations, decision-making, mana-



gement, and oversight in accordance with the law.

"We will inspire the people's motivation, initiative, and creativity, so as to consolidate and develop a lively, stable,

and united political atmosphere," he said.

Xi stressed the need to strengthen the institutions through which the people run the country, fully develop consulta-

tive democracy, actively develop democracy at the primary level, and consolidate and develop the broadest possible patriotic united front. XINHUA

TAIWAN QUESTION

CPC TO UNSWERVINGLY ADVANCE CAUSE OF NATIONAL REUNIFICATION

Xi Jinping said that the Communist Party of China (CPC) will implement its overall policy for resolving the Taiwan question in the new era, and unswervingly advance the cause of national reunification.

"Resolving the Taiwan question is a matter for the Chinese, a matter that must be resolved by the Chinese," said Xi at the opening session of the 20th CPC National Congress.

"We will continue to strive for peaceful reunification with the greatest sincerity and the utmost effort, but we will never promise to renounce the use of force, and we reserve the option of taking all measures necessary. This is directed solely at interference by outside forces and the few separatists seeking 'Taiwan

independence' and their separatist activities; it is by no means targeted at our Taiwan compatriots," he said.

Xi said that the wheels of history are rolling on toward China's reunification and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. "Complete reunification of our country must be realized, and it can, without doubt, be realized!"

"We have always shown respect and care for our Taiwan compatriots and worked to deliver benefits to them. We will continue to promote economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation across the Straits," Xi said.

"We will encourage people on both sides of the Straits to work together to promote Chinese culture and forge closer bonds," he said. XINHUA

tion as central task

RULE OF LAW

China must strive to build a modern socialist country in all respects under the rule of law.

The comprehensive advancement of law-based governance has been a profound revolution in China's governance. Law-based governance is important for the Party's success in governing and rejuvenating the country, for the wellbeing of the people, and for the long-term stability of the Party and the country.

BUILDING CULTURAL CONFIDENCE

To build a modern socialist country in all respects, we must develop a socialist culture with Chinese characteristics and be more confident in our culture.

In the efforts to turn China into a country with a strong socialist culture, the CPC will focus on upholding socialism with Chinese characteristics, rallying public support, fostering a new generation of young people, developing Chinese culture, and better presenting China to the world.

IMPROVING PEOPLE'S WELLBEING

Working for the people's wellbeing is an essential part of the Party's commitment to serving

the public good and exercising governance for the people.

The CPC will work hard to resolve the pressing difficulties and problems that concern the people most, improve the basic public service system to raise public service standards and make public services more balanced and accessible, so as to achieve solid progress in promoting common prosperity.

ADVANCING 'BEAUTIFUL CHINA INITIATIVE'

Respecting, adapting to, and protecting nature is essential for building China into a modern socialist country in all respects.

China will prioritize ecological protection, conserve resources and use them efficiently, and pursue green and low-carbon development.

SAFEGUARDING NATIONAL SECURITY, SOCIAL STABILITY

National security is the bedrock of national rejuvenation, and social stability is a prerequisite for building a strong and prosperous China.

The Party will take coordinated steps to ensure external and internal security, homeland and public security, traditional and non-traditional security, as well as its own security and common security.

MODERNIZING DEFENSE, MILITARY

Achieving the goals for the centenary of the People's Liberation Army in 2027 and more quickly elevating the people's armed forces to world-class standards are strategic tasks for building a modern socialist country in all respects.

The CPC will intensify troop training and enhance combat preparedness across the board, strengthen all-around military governance, and consolidate and enhance integrated national strategies and strategic capabilities.

'ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS' AND NATIONAL REUNIFICATION

The policy of "one country, two systems" is a great innovation of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It has proven to be the best institutional arrangement for ensuring sustained prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and Macao after their return to the motherland. (See p3)

The CPC will implement its overall policy for resolving the Taiwan question in the new era, and unswervingly advance the cause of national reunification.

PROMOTING GLOBAL COMMUNITY WITH SHARED FUTURE

China has always been committed to its foreign policy goals of upholding world peace and promoting common development.

China remains firm in pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace. It has always decided its position and policy on issues based on their own merits, and it has strived to uphold the basic norms governing international relations and safeguard international fairness and justice.

China stands firmly against all forms of hegemonism and power politics, the Cold War mentality, interference in other countries' internal affairs, and double standards.

FULL, RIGOROUS PARTY SELF-GOVERNANCE AN UNCEASING ENDEAVOR

As the largest Marxist governing party in the world, the CPC must always stay alert and determined to tackle the special challenges that a large party like the CPC faces, so as to maintain the people's support and consolidate its position as the long-term governing party.

The CPC must meet the overall requirements for Party building in the new era, improve the systems for exercising full and rigorous self-governance, and comprehensively advance its efforts to purify, improve, renew, and excel itself. XINHUA



GLOBAL CHANGES

CHINA DEDICATED 'TO PROMOTING HUMAN COMMUNITY WITH SHARED FUTURE'

CHINA is dedicated to promoting a human community with a shared future, Xi Jinping said at the opening session of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

China has always been committed to its foreign policy goals of upholding world peace and promoting common development, Xi said.

Stressing that human society faces unprecedented challenges, Xi called upon all countries to hold dear humanity's shared values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom, and promote mutual understanding and forge closer bonds with other peoples.

"Let us all join forces to meet all types of global challenges," Xi said.

China remains firm in pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace. It has always decided its position and policy on issues based on their own merits, and it has strived to uphold the basic norms governing international relations and safeguard international fairness and justice, Xi said.

China stands firmly against all forms of hegemonism and power politics, the Cold War mentality, interference in other countries' internal affairs, and double standards, Xi said.

Xi noted that China will never seek hegemony or engage in expansionism.

China adheres to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in pursuing friendship and cooperation with other countries. It is committed to promoting a new type of international relations, deepening and expanding global partnerships based on equality, openness, and cooperation, and broadening the convergence of interests with other countries, Xi said.

Guided by the principles of sincerity, real results, affinity, and good faith and with a commitment to the greater good and shared interests, China endeavors to strengthen solidarity and cooperation with other developing countries and safeguard the common interests of the developing world, Xi said.

China is committed to its fundamental national policy of opening to the outside world and pursues a mutually beneficial strategy of opening up. XINHUA

Xi stresses safeguarding national security, social stability

XI Jinping yesterday stressed modernizing China's national security system and capacity and safeguarding national security and social stability.

"National security is the bedrock of national rejuvenation, and social stability is a prerequisite for building a strong and prosperous China," said Xi.

"We must resolutely pursue a holistic approach to national security and promote national security in all areas and stages of the work of the Party and the country, so as to ensure national security and social stability," he said.

Xi said the CPC must take the people's security as its ultimate goal, political security as its fundamental task, economic security as its foundation, military, technological, cultural, and social security as important pillars, and international security as a support.

The Party will take coordi-



nated steps to ensure external and internal security, homeland and public security, traditional and non-traditional security, as well as its own security and common security. "We will both uphold national security and create the conditions for ensuring it," he said.

China will strengthen popular support for national security and social stability,

improve the mechanisms for the country's participation in global security governance, and advance the Peaceful China Initiative to a higher level, Xi said.

Xi said the CPC will improve the national security system, strengthen its capacity for safeguarding national security, enhance public safety governance, and improve the

social governance system.

China will ensure the security of food, energy, and resources as well as key industrial and supply chains, and protect the lawful rights and interests of Chinese citizens and legal entities overseas, he said.

Protection of personal information will be strengthened, Xi said. XINHUA

TECH

Musk has a 'super app' plan for Twitter. It's super vague

BARBARA ORTUTAY

ELON Musk has a penchant for the letter "X." He calls his son with the singer Grimes, whose actual name is a collection of letters and symbols, "X." He named the company he created to buy Twitter "X Holdings." His rocket company is, naturally, SpaceX.

Now he also apparently intends to morph Twitter into an "everything app" he calls X.

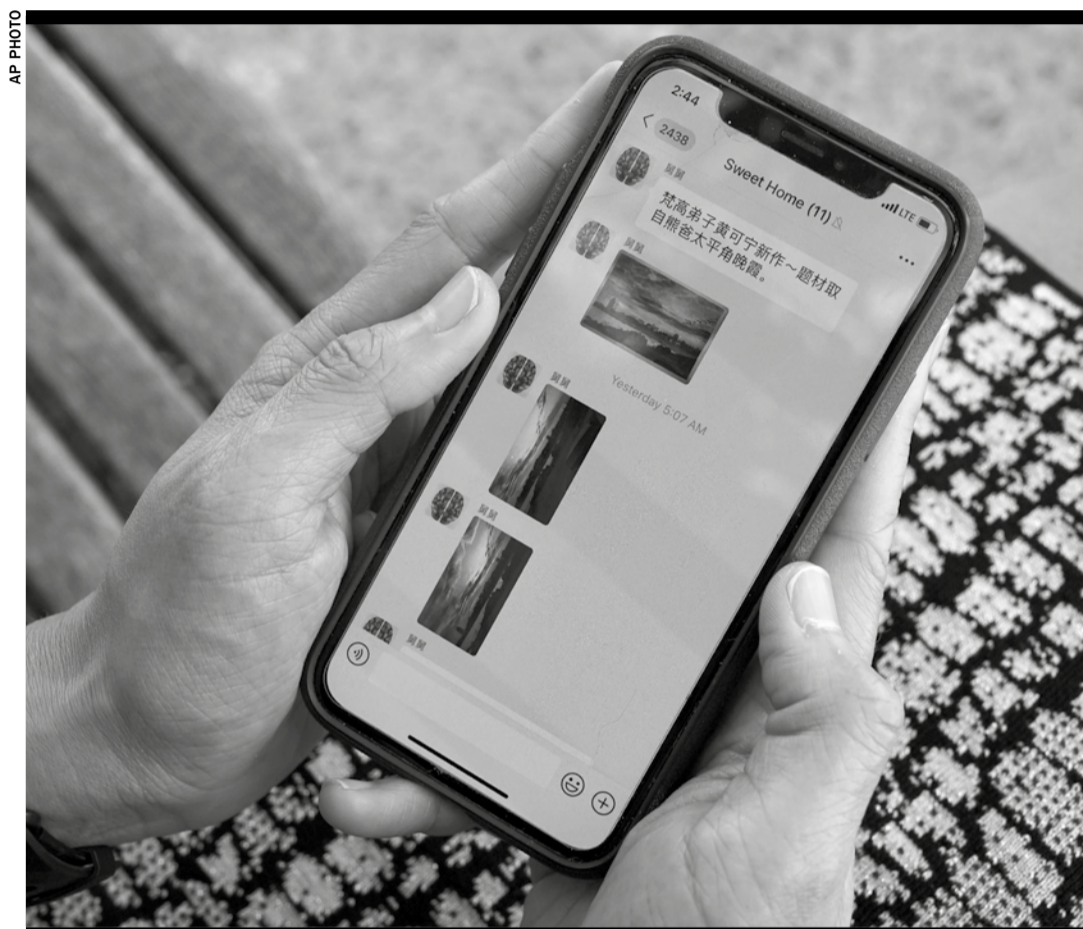
For months, the Tesla and SpaceX CEO has expressed interest in creating his own version of China's WeChat — a "super app" that does video chats, messaging, streaming and payments — for the rest of the world. At least, that is, once he's done buying Twitter after months of legal infighting over the \$44 billion purchase agreement he signed in April.

There are just a few obstacles. First is that a Musk-owned Twitter wouldn't be the only global company in pursuit of this goal, and in fact would probably be playing catch-up with its rivals. Next is the question of whether anyone really wants a Twitter-based everything app—or any other super app—to begin with.

Start with the competition and consumer demand. Facebook parent Meta has spent years trying to make its flagship platform a destination for everything online, adding payments, games, shopping and even dating features to its social network. So far, it's had little success; nearly all of its revenue still comes from advertising.

Google, Snap, TikTok, Uber and others have also tried to jump on the super app bandwagon, expanding their offerings in an effort to become indispensable to people as they go about their day. None have set the world on fire so far, not least because people already have a number of apps at their disposal to handle shopping, communicating and payments.

"Old habits are hard to break, and people in the U.S. are used to using different apps for different activities," said Jasmine Enberg,



principal analyst at Insider Intelligence. Enberg also notes that super apps would likely suck up more personal data at a time when trust in social platforms has deteriorated significantly.

Musk kicked off the latest round of speculation on Oct. 4, the day he reversed his attempts to get out of the deal and announced that he wanted to acquire Twitter after all. "Buying Twitter is an accelerant to creating X, the everything app," he tweeted without further explanation.

But he's provided at least a little more detail in the past. During Tesla's annual shareholder meeting in August, Musk told the crowd at a factory near Austin, Texas, that he thinks he's "got a good sense of where to point the engineering team with Twitter to make it radically better."

And he's dropped some strong hints that handling payments for goods and services would be a key part of the app. Musk said he has a "grand vision" for what X.com, an online bank he started early in his career that eventually became part of PayPal, could have been.

"Obviously that could be started from scratch, but I think Twitter would help accelerate that by three to five years," Musk said in August.

"So it's kind of something that I thought would be quite useful for a long time. I know what to do."

But it's not clear that WeChat's success in China means the same idea would translate for a U.S. or global audience. WeChat usage in almost universal in China, where most people never had a computer at home and skipped straight to going online by mobile phone.

Operated by tech giant Tencent Holding Ltd., the platform has made itself a one-stop shop for payments and other services and is starting to compete in entertainment. It is also a platform for health code apps the public is required to use prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

China has 1 billion internet users, and nearly all of them go online by mobile phone, according to the government-sanctioned China Internet Network Information Center. Only 33% use desktop computers at all — and mostly in addition to mobile phones. Tencent says WeChat had 1.3 billion users worldwide as of the end of June.

Tencent and its main Chinese competitor, e-commerce giant Alibaba Group, aim to make apps that offer so many services that users can't easily switch to ano-

ther app. They're not the only ones.

WeChat has added video calls and other message features as well as shopping, entertainment and other features. Government agencies use it to send out health, traffic and other announcements. WeChat's payment function, meanwhile, is so widely used that coffee shops, museums and some other businesses refuse cash and will take payment only through WeChat or the rival Ant app.

There is no comparable app in the U.S., despite tech companies' efforts.

It's worth remembering that Musk's grand visions don't always work out the way he appears to expect. Humans are nowhere near colonizing Mars and his promised fleet of robotaxis remains about as far from reality as the metaverse.

Twitter's user base is also tiny relative to those at its social-platform competitors. While Facebook, Instagram and TikTok all passed the 1 billion mark long ago, Twitter has about 240 million daily users.

"Musk would not only have to overcome the hurdle of convincing consumers to change how they behave online, but also that Twitter is the place to do it," Enberg said. MDT/AP

this day in history

1980 POPE WELCOMES QUEEN TO THE VATICAN



The Queen has made history after becoming the first British monarch to make a state visit to the Vatican.

Pope welcomed Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh, for what was described as a "warm and relaxed" encounter.

The Queen, dressed in a long black taffeta gown in line with Vatican protocol, arrived with the Duke at the Vatican in the rain at 1100 local time and took the lift up to the second floor.

Trumpets sounded and the royal procession moved slowly along the corridor into the Clementine Hall.

The Queen and the Duke were welcomed by John Paul II at the door of his private library.

The Queen then opened her speech with assurances of sincere friendship and good will.

She invited the Pope to her country in two years' time, but made clear this would not be a state visit but one "to the Roman Catholic community in Great Britain where some four million of my people are members of the Roman Catholic Church.

"We support the growing movement of unity between the Christian Churches throughout the world and we pray that your Holiness's visit to Britain may enable us all to see more clearly those truths which both unite and divide us in a new and constructive light."

In reply the Pope welcomed the opportunity of the forthcoming pastoral visit to the UK.

He said: "I render homage to the Christian history of your people, as well as to their cultural achievements.

"The ideals of freedom and democracy, anchored in your past remain challenges for every generation of upright citizens in your land."

They then held private talks and the Pope presented the Queen with a facsimile of the manuscript of Dante's Divine Comedy with its illustration of the Order of the Garter in the time of Edward IV.

In return she offered a book about Windsor Castle by St John Hope and two signed photographs.

After the talks, the Queen and Prince Philip walked out into the Clementine Hall and they went on to meet the Pope's Secretary of State, Cardinal Casaroli, at the home of the British Minister to the Holy See, Mark Heath.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The Queen's visit was seen as a big step towards forging relations with the Church Of England and the Roman Catholics.

In 1982 John Paul II was welcomed by Her Majesty two years later at Buckingham Palace during a historic visit to Great Britain.

The Pope visited the Vatican again in 2000 to mark the 20th anniversary of their first meeting. The Pope reinforced their close ties over the years when he said: "Relations between the United Kingdom and the Holy See have not always been untroubled; long years of common inheritance were followed by the sad years of division. "But in recent years there has emerged between us a cordiality more in keeping with the harmony of earlier times and more genuinely expressive of our common spiritual roots."

The Pope died at 2137 (1937 GMT) on Saturday 2 April 2005 after he failed to recover from a throat operation.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

<p>ARIES Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Ask others to help, or you may feel that a burden is weighing you down. Be careful while traveling. You may have difficulties with family members if you get involved in petty arguments.</p>	<p>TAURUS Apr. 20-May. 20 Arguments may flare up in your home. Focus on your own domestic problems. You can bet that you'll draw attention to yourself.</p>
<p>GEMINI May. 21-Jun. 21 Trips will be favorable for business as well as pleasure. Your mate needs extra attention and is feeling rather insecure when you're not in sight. Your support and concern will help.</p>	<p>CANCER Jun. 22-Jul. 22 You have a real need to be vocal. Your trendy style and unique way of doing things will entice new acquaintances. You can expect opposition from family as well as colleagues.</p>
<p>LEO Jul. 23-Aug. 22 You can make rewarding connections through the organized groups you associate with. Things are looking good for you, so open your eyes and get to it.</p>	<p>VIRGO Aug. 23-Sep. 22 Don't be too quick to judge partners or those you work with. You will be tempted to shop till you drop. Be quiet about your intentions or ideas that might bring added cash.</p>
<p>LIBRA Sep. 23-Oct. 22 Expect some flak. Curb your mood swings; they could result in loneliness. Do not yield to children or relatives when they really don't deserve it.</p>	<p>SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Try not to lend or borrow money or belongings today. Try to avoid functions that will bring you in contact with those you find difficult to get along with. You may find a rare antique today.</p>
<p>SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You'll be tempted to spend extravagantly today. You may have problems with those you live with. Try to communicate if you wish to help.</p>	<p>CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Reevaluate your position and make decisions about your future goals. Don't back down but don't ignite the situation. They will not be in the right frame of mind to put up with tactless comments.</p>
<p>AQUARIUS Jan. 20-Feb. 18 If you put your energy into physical outlets you will avoid confrontations. Your stability will aid you in getting support from your fellow workers. You must take care of health problems that have been lingering.</p>	<p>PISCES Feb. 19-Mar. 20 You may have a problem with coworkers if you try to tell them what to do. They won't pay you back and you'll be upset. Financial gains can be made.</p>

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

<p>EASY</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>2</td><td>7</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>2</td><td>6</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td></td><td>9</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>7</td><td>5</td><td></td><td></td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>5</td><td></td><td>8</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td></td><td>6</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>3</td><td></td><td>1</td><td>8</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>4</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>7</td><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>3</td></tr> </table>	3				2	7	4	4	8	2	6				5	1	4		9				1	7	5			6	9	5		8	3	4		2		6	4	5				3		1	8	2					3	5	4	9	1	7	4				3	<p>EASY+</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td>3</td><td>6</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>9</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>2</td><td>9</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>7</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>9</td><td>5</td><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>4</td><td></td><td>7</td><td></td><td></td><td>3</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td></td><td></td><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>3</td><td>8</td><td></td><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>8</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>4</td><td></td><td>8</td><td></td><td>1</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>8</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>5</td><td>7</td></tr> </table>	3	6					9	5		2	9				7			9	5	2						4		7			3	1	5			2				9	9	3	8		4						2	3	8					4		8		1			2	8					5	7
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WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	5	17	fine
Changchun	0	9	cloudy
Chengdu	14	24	fine
Chongqing	16	25	cloudy
Fuzhou	21	24	rain
Guangzhou	20	28	cloudy
Guiyang	14	21	cloudy
Haikou	23	28	cloudy
Hangzhou	15	22	overcast
Harbin	0	9	cloudy
Hefei	12	20	fine
Nanjing	14	20	cloudy
Shanghai	15	21	fine
Taipei	21	24	rain
Wuhan	14	22	fine
Hong Kong	22	31	cloudy
WORLD			
Moscow	6	9	rain
Frankfurt	14	24	overcast
Paris	15	19	rain
London	8	18	showers
New York	7	19	showers

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Cram; 6- Steamed; 11- Very skilled person; 14- Egyptian peninsula; 15- Challenges; 16- The last letter of the Hebrew alphabet; 17- Slender gulls; 18- Affect with folly; 20- Wind dir.; 21- Token taker; 23- Slip; 24- Edible plant product; 26- Sad poet; 28- Willows; 30- Of first importance; 31- Radii neighbors; 32- Fertile soils; 33- Back in time; 36- Sorry sort; 37- Panorama; 38- Hawaiian native dance; 39- J. Hancock?; 40- Oater prop; 41- Western; 42- Grocery lane; 43- Resounds; 44- Candidate; 47- Girder; 48- Sidestep, circumvent; 49- "Dancing Queen" group; 50- Bass, e.g.; 53- Recalls; 56- Eminent; 58- Prefix with athlete; 59- Coeur d'___; 60- O. Henry device; 61- Canonized Mile.; 62- Thermoplastic yarn; 63- Small change;

DOWN 1- Fast fliers; 2- Connections; 3- Coarse; 4- Devoted follower; 5- Split; 6- Dostoyevsky novel, with "The"; 7- Tirade; 8- Comics bark; 9- Afternoon social; 10- Values highly; 11- Maker of Pong; 12- The Younger and The Elder; 13- Tennis champ Chris; 19- Impulse to act; 22- Fleur-de-___; 25- Be a mother to; 26- Muse with a lyre; 27- Peru's capital; 28- Sharer's pronoun; 29- Garden pest; 30- Deputised group; 32- Cotton thread used for hosiery; 33- Robot; 34- Exultation; 35- Long objects used to row a boat; 37- Urn; 38- Gag reflex?; 40- Person who repairs telephone wires; 41- Like sea life; 42- Adjutant; 43- Decline; 44- Drat!; 45- Not concealed; 46- Jackie's predecessor; 47- Norwegian dramatist; 49- Florence's river; 51- Fast time; 52- Ice cream brand; 54- Journalist Nellie; 55- Grown elver; 57- Source of iron;

Friday's solution

B	I	N	D	C	A	P	E	S	S	A	I	D
A	C	A	R	A	D	O	R	E	P	M	A	
L	E	N	A	P	A	F	A	N	A	R	A	L
T	R	I	C	K	S	V	T	S	U	N	A	M
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S	T	E	P	F	R	O	T	H	O	N	A	N
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USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
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	



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

FOOTBALL | EPL

TOTTENHAM TOP EVERTON IN BEST TOP-FLIGHT START SINCE 1963

JAMES ROBSON

TOTTENHAM 2, EVERTON 0

THE Antonio Conte effect is truly taking hold at Tottenham.

A 2-0 win against Everton this weekend secured Tottenham's best start in the English Premier League era after 10 games.

Their 23 points moved Spurs level with second-placed Manchester City and represented their highest tally at this stage since 1963.

Spurs keep looking more like a genuine title contender, supported by their recent good record against City. Their first scheduled league meeting last month was postponed following the death of Queen Elizabeth II and Conte wasn't disappointed. Spurs are warming up nicely.

Pep Guardiola has led City's dominance of England and assembled arguably the most powerful squad in Europe but counterpart Conte is a proven winner himself at Juventus, Chelsea and Inter Milan.

That was always the fascinating aspect of his decision to accept the post at Tottenham, a team that



Tottenham's head coach Antonio Conte

hasn't won the English title since 1961 and counts the 2008 League Cup as its last trophy.

Mauricio Pochettino came close to ending that search for major silverware – reaching the Champions League final in 2018 – but the club's fortunes have unravelled since then.

Now Conte has provided new

energy and new hope. And as long as Harry Kane is fit.

Kane opened the scoring for Tottenham about an hour in after being brought down by Jordan Pickford in the box. It was the England international's 14th goal in his last 11 games against Everton.

Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg sealed the win late.

These are early days in the campaign, but Tottenham's consistency is already seeing it stand out as one of the teams that look most capable of threatening City, with the Conte factor pivotal.

Elsewhere, Leicester drew with Crystal Palace 0-0 at home and moved off the bottom of the table, Nottingham Forest fell to last after losing to Wolverhampton Wanderers 1-0, and Fulham and Bournemouth drew 2-2.

LEICESTER RISES

Leicester was no longer last in the league but the pressure was still on manager Brendan Rodgers to craft a recovery.

Television cameras focused on Leicester owner Aiyawatt Srivadhanaprabha, who looked unimpressed after the final while.

Fans inside King Power Stadium called for Rodgers to be fired, with one sign reading: "Time for action."

Rodgers revealed he held talks with Aiyawatt on Friday.

"They understand the difficulties there is going to be this year, in terms of us not being able to improve but he wants to

win," he said.

"I have had no indication of anything, but I understand football. It will never change — my feeling for him — if he had to make a change. That is the reality."

WOLVES LICKING LIPS

Wolverhampton was quick to gloat after winning its relegation scrap with Midlands rival Nottingham Forest.

Shortly after fulltime at Molineux, which saw the manager-less home team triumph 1-0 courtesy of Ruben Neves' second-half penalty, the club's official Twitter account posted a picture of a tree stump with an ax embedded in it. The caption read, "Playtime's over."

Victory lifted Wolves out of the relegation zone after only its second win.

Forest, sitting lost on goal difference, wasted a golden opportunity to share the points when Brennan Johnson's second-half penalty kick was saved by Jose Sa.

Remarkably, the Wolves goalkeeper has been playing with a broken wrist since the second round.

"Fair play to Jose for playing through that pain and showing courage to do that," Wolves interim manager Steve Davis said. "They all need to be that big person if we're going to turn our form around. I thought we took a big step towards that." MDT/AP

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OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**MULTILATERALISM
 LIGHTS THE WAY
 TO A BRIGHTER
 FUTURE FOR ALL**

At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is still raging in many parts of the world and humankind is facing a variety of grave global challenges and crises, such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict and its spillover effects, a possible global economic recession and the alarming acceleration of climate change, the world needs concerted actions more than ever before as no country can tide over the difficulties and turbulence alone.

But rather than the needed doubling down on multilateralism, some countries have taken protectionist and unilateralist stances.

The actions of a handful of Western nations are posing a grave threat to the world's postwar system and undermining efforts to reform the global governance system so that it is fairer and more fit for purpose.

The essence of multilateralism is that international affairs should be addressed through extensive consultation, rather than decided by one country or a few, and shared benefits and win-win results should be pursued through cooperation.

There do exist misunderstandings and differences between countries because of different cultures and histories, but these Western countries, led by the US, have rejected true multilateralism in favor of cliquism because they are clinging to a zerosum Cold War mindset.

As the world's largest developing country, China is a staunch supporter of multilateralism and it is steadfast in supporting the United Nations as the core institution for addressing international affairs.

Other multilateral platforms and mechanisms, such as the G20, can also play vital roles in world governance, but the UN is the most universal, representative and authoritative international organization, and to promote world peace, and address the pressing global and regional issues, it is imperative that the authority of the United Nations is shored up.

China seeks to safeguard the international order that is centered on the UN, and abides by the UN Charter which it views as the basic and universally recognized norms governing state-to-state relations.

Although a latecomer to the international community, China nonetheless has quickly grasped that multilateralism is to the benefit of all countries, including itself.

Over the past five decades, China has joined almost all the universal intergovernmental organizations, signed more than 600 international conventions, and earnestly fulfilled its international obligations.

As the world's second-largest economy, China has also promoted regional and global economic cooperation, joining hands with like-minded countries in the world to endorse globalization and free trade.

It has also become more proactive in multilateral agendas, and in providing global public goods such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Belt and Road Initiative.

Multilateralism was forged with the purpose of stopping war and building amicable ties. In an age fraught with crises and uncertainties, it is China's belief that multilateralism shines as a beacon that lights up humankind's way toward a peaceful, prosperous and shared future.

China firmly believes that multilateralism is the right direction for the progress of humankind, and it encourages other countries to adhere to that course.

A Sweden Democrats official was suspended by the far-right party for making degrading comments about Jewish teenage diarist Anne Frank.

In an Instagram posting that has now been deleted, Rebecka Fallenkvist called Anne "immoral" among other things, according to Swedish media.

Anne, who wrote a diary while in hiding in Amsterdam before she was captured, died at age 15 in Nazi Germany's Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in February 1945.

The posting by the head of television programming for the Sweden Democrats, prompted strong reactions from Jewish groups and Israeli Ambassador Ziv Nevo Kulman, who in a tweet said: "I

strongly condemn this despicable insult, disrespectful of the memory of Anne Frank."

His posting included what appeared to be a screenshot of Fallenkvist's Instagram post.

The Sweden Democrats' media director, Oskar Cavalli-Bjorkman, told the press yesterday [Macau time] that the party would take Fallenkvist's "insensitive and inappropriate" comments seriously and launch an internal investigation on the matter.

While it remained unclear what kind of point Fallenkvist wanted to make with her comments on Anne's diary, she sent later a text message to Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter saying she had been misinterpreted.

AP PHOTO



Handout photo issued by Just Stop Oil of two protesters who have thrown tinned soup at Vincent Van Gogh's famous 1888 work Sunflowers at the National Gallery in London last week

**ACTIVISTS IN UK COURT
 AFTER SOUP THROWN AT
 VAN GOGH PICTURE**

SYLVIA HUI, LONDON

THREE climate activists appeared in a London court this weekend on charges of criminal damage after protests including throwing soup over Vincent van Gogh's "Sunflowers" painting in the National Gallery.

Two women, age 20 and 21, were charged in relation to the soup-throwing protest on Friday, while a third was charged over paint sprayed on a rotating sign at the Metropolitan Police's headquarters in central London. The three women pleaded not guilty to criminal damage at Westminster Magistrates' Court during two brief hearings Saturday.

Demonstrators from climate change protest groups Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil, which wants the U.K. government to halt new oil and gas projects, staged a series of protests in London on Friday.

Just Stop Oil said activists dumped two cans of tomato soup over the Van Gogh oil painting, one of the Dutch artist's most iconic

works. The two protesters also glued themselves to the gallery wall.

Prosecutor Ola Oyedepo said the pair didn't harm the oil painting, which was covered by a glass protective case, but damage was caused to the frame.

Activists dumped two cans of tomato soup over the Van Gogh oil painting, one of the Dutch artist's most iconic works

The painting, one of several versions of "Sunflowers" that Van Gogh painted in the late 1880s, was cleaned and returned to its place in the National Gallery on Friday afternoon.

District judge Tan Irkam released the women on bail on condition that they don't have paint or adhesive substances on them in a public place.

Police said they made some 28 arrests in relation to Friday's protests, and 25 others were bailed pending further investigation. On Saturday, police arrested

a further 26 people after Just Stop Oil protesters blocked a major road in east London. Some demonstrators glued themselves to the road surface.

Just Stop Oil has drawn attention, and criticism, for their disruptive tactics, including targeting artworks in museums. In July, activists glued themselves to the frame of an early copy of Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper" at London's Royal Academy of Arts, and to John Constable's "The Hay Wain" in the National Gallery.

Activists have also blocked bridges and intersections across London during two weeks of protests against the U.K. government's approach to climate change.

The latest wave of demonstrations came as Prime Minister Liz Truss' Conservative government opened a new licensing round for oil and gas operations in the North Sea and reversed a 2019 ban on fracking in England. Environmentalists say the U.K. government was undermining the fight against climate change. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called for reforms of the European Union to make it fit for the admission of new countries as well as more military autonomy of the 27-country bloc. Speaking at the Congress of the Party of European Socialists in Berlin, Scholz advocated for gradually abolishing the principle of unanimity for decisions in foreign policy, but also in other areas such as tax policy.

AP PHOTO



France yesterday pledged air defense systems to protect Ukrainian cities against drone strikes, as well as an expanded training program for Ukrainian soldiers, as it seeks to puncture perceptions that French President Emmanuel Macron's government has lagged in supporting Ukraine militarily against the Russian invasion. Up to 2,000 Ukrainian soldiers will be embedded with military units in France, rotating through for several weeks of combat training, more specialized training in logistics and other needs, and training on equipment being supplied by France.

AP PHOTO



France Protesters demanding wage increases, greater taxation of windfall profits and other steps to lessen the bite of rising inflation are marching yesterday in Paris, heeding the call of left-wing parties and trade unionists hoping to crank up pressure on the government of French President Emmanuel Macron. The demonstration dovetails with wage strikes at fuel refineries and depots that have sparked chronic gasoline shortages, thumping motorists and putting Macron's centrist government on the defensive.