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“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’”

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AP PHOTO



India launched a rocket carrying 36 private internet satellites yesterday, stepping in to keep the orbital constellation growing after a monthslong interruption related to the war in Ukraine. The liftoff from southern India was the first launch for London-based OneWeb since breaking with the Russian Space Agency in March because of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

AP PHOTO



Saudi Arabia's powerful 37-year-old crown prince will not attend an upcoming summit in Algeria after his doctors advised him not to travel, the Algerian presidency said yesterday. Saudi Arabia offered no immediate acknowledgment of the comments by Algeria about the condition of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who has quickly risen to power under his 86-year-old father King Salman. Much of the focus on the Al Saud royal family in recent years has been on King Salman's health, with analysts suggesting Prince Mohammed could rule the OPEC-leading nation for decades after ascending to the throne.

AP PHOTO



Israel's Supreme Court yesterday threw out four legal challenges to a landmark maritime agreement between Israel and Lebanon, clearing a major hurdle for the deal that could mark a major breakthrough in relations between the two countries. The court did not immediately release its reasons for rejecting the challenges, which were submitted by an influential conservative policy group and an ultranationalist Israeli politician, among others.

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Alliance Française resumes operations with rebooted programs, director William Bascaule told the Times in an exclusive interview

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ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE RESUMES OPERATIONS WITH REBOOTED PROGRAMS

LYNZY VALLES

FOLLOWING a nine-month suspension amid pandemic woes, Alliance Française de Macao (AFM) has resumed operations with its first class set for early December.

AFM had announced its suspension in January without providing reasons.

Due to the pandemic, the association has suffered human and financial resource problems.

Border restrictions forbade the entry of foreign visitors, non-residents and tourists, making it difficult for educational institutions to hire instructors or teachers.

The problem was only alleviated in May this year when the government established a special entry scheme to allow foreign teachers into the SAR.

In an exclusive interview with the Times, AFM director William Bascaule remarked, "it has been nine very long months, with ups and downs, a period during which we fought to find solu-



tions and bounce back."

"AFM has been part of the community for more than 35 years. It was heartbreaking to suspend our activities," he added.

However, its budget and raising capital were among the main considerations before resuming operations, aside from recruitment of qualified French-speaking natives.

With the resumption of classes, Bascaule will launch the first programs himself. The recruitment of a second teacher

is planned for spring 2023 and a third by the end of the same year.

The director revealed the association has started the process of acquiring quotas to hire instructors.

Keeping his fingers crossed, he added that "the pandemic and this endless crisis management - which ended up becoming our new reality - taught me one thing: you play the cards you're dealt."

AFM will gradually restart all of its programs, following the

arrival of new teachers in Macau.

For now, the organization will be able to restart A1 classes for adults, starting December 5.

A2 classes for adults, and French discovery classes for children aged 5-6, will resume in the second stage immediately afterwards.

Credit courses in universities, extra-curriculum programs, and B1 level classes for adults will resume in September 2023, as well as a brand-new degree program for children aged 7-9 and 10-12.

On degrees, Bascaule said that with restrictions it is still impossible to propose the DELF/DALF, exams and diplomas of French language, in Macau for the time being.

"However, we will be able to propose the TEF exam as an alternative, which is similar to TOEFL/IELTS and will meet people's needs as well. The TEF certification is recognized internationally by a large number of organizations, institutions and universities," he said.

CULTURAL MISSION

Regarding the cultural aspect of our mission, and the promotion of "French flavor" events, "I am afraid we have to remain patient," said the director.

Logistically and financially, it is difficult for now to resume the group's most popular events such as the Baroque Music Festival or the First Film Festival Premier Plans d'Angers or its collaboration with the French May and French GourMay, the director noted.

"We did so much in the past with writers' meetings, roundtables, exhibitions, performances, masterclasses, lectures, etc. We have to rebuild everything when the time is right. That being said, we can restart some small-scale activities and social events, like a French ciné-club, diners or wine gatherings," he revealed.

However, the group will hold its traditional celebration of beaujolais wine on November 17, partnering with the French community and entities such as the Sofitel Macau, France Macau Chamber of Commerce (FMCC), Répertoire Culinaire and Paris Store.

TOURISM

September arrivals down 11% from 2021

RENATO MARQUES

TOTAL visitor arrivals for September this year amounted to 557,842. The figure is a drop of 11.3% year-on-year, the Statistics and Census Service notes.

The same statistics release has noted September figures show a significant recovery (+68.3%) when compared to August. August figures were affected by the government's so-called stabilization period during the first seven days of the June 18 Covid-19 outbreak, with Macau only resuming its "normal" prevention status from

August 8.

In September, the number of overnight visitors (280,270) was almost the same as the same-day visitors (277,572) with the first remaining stable (-0.3%) while the second suffered a significant drop (-20.3%) year-on-year.

Visitors' average length of stay increased slightly by 0.2 days year-on-year to 1.8 days.

This mostly accounts for overnight visitor stays (3.5 days) which increased 0.2 days, while the same-day visitors (0.2 days) increased marginally 0.1 days.

Mainland visitors fell

13.8% year-on-year to 502,668, with 188,148 visitors traveling under the Individual Visit Scheme. Visitors from the nine cities in the Greater Bay Area totaled 295,663, with 39.6% coming from the neighboring city of Zhuhai.

Even with border restrictions in force, 46,179 visitors (8.3%) arrived from Hong Kong and 6,615 (1.2%) from Taiwan.

In the first three quarters of this year, visitor arrivals fell 24.2% year-on-year to 4,364,105; same-day visitors (2,619,343) and overnight visitors (1,744,762) fell 8.2% and 39.9% respectively.

SPORTS

CHINA'S WANG, SUN CROWNED AT WTT CHAMPIONS

CHINESE paddlers Wang Chuqin, Sun Yingsha were crowned in the men's and women's singles finals at the World Table Tennis (WTT) Champions Macao 2022 yesterday.

Wang, 22, defeated world No. 1 Fan Zhendong to win the men's singles title in a close match going deep into the seventh game 11-5, 12-14, 12-10, 8-11, 11-1, 9-11, 11-8.

"Today's match was really intense. I feel really lucky in Macau because I have achieved good results here," said Wang, who won the postponed WTT Champions Macao 2021 China Stars in January this year.

On the women's side,



Wang Chuqin

world No. 1 Sun remained in charge throughout the final to take down compatriot Chen Xingtong 12-10, 11-8, 5-11, 11-6, 12-10

after a five-game battle. "We both played equally well today. Maybe I was a little luckier," Sun said. XINHUA

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XX CPC NATIONAL CONGRESS

CE pledges allegiance to new Chinese leadership

ANTHONY LAM

FOLLOWING the conclusion of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng yesterday stressed his “wholehearted support” to the new Chinese leadership in a statement.

In the statement, Ho said Xi Jinping will continue as General Secretary of the CPC, and listed the members of the Politburo Standing Committee. They appeared yesterday at a press conference.

Ho then cited Xi's speech made yesterday that noted that “the people [are our strongest] backing and [source of] confidence, and that we need to unyieldingly insist that all [is] for the people and all depends on the people.”

“Chinese-style modernization

is the result of long-term practice and exploration by the Communist Party of China and the Chinese people, and it is a great and arduous undertaking,” Ho went on to cite Xi as saying.

“Now, we are embarking on a new journey of building a modern socialist country in an all-around way with high spirits, marching towards the second centenary goal, and comprehensively promoting the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation with Chinese-style modernization,” Ho continued, recapping Xi's speech.

As the new Central Committee takes office, Ho has pledged allegiance to the leadership, saying the Macau government will be in full compliance with ‘One country, two systems’ and the directive of high autonomy for Macau, while implementing the principle of full governance of the Central

People's Government over Macau and “patriots governing Macau.”

“The Macau SAR government and all sectors of society will resolutely uphold the authority of the central leadership with President Xi Jinping at the core, fully implement Xi Jinping's Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for the New Era and continue to write a glorious chapter in the successful practice of ‘One country, two systems’ with Macau characteristics,” Ho pledged.

He added the government would “seriously adhere to” the spirits of the 20th CPC Congress as well as of Xi's speeches and instructions related to governance in Macau.

In another statement issued Saturday, Ho congratulated the conclusion of the 20th CPC Congress.

“Adherence to the aspira-



tions expressed at the 20th National Congress of the CPC will be a major task and top priority for the Macao SAR in its current and future work,” Ho said, while calling for further effort to put into practice decisions arising from the 20th CPC National Congress, in a bid to promote Macau's development in the new era.

“The MSAR Government would step up efforts to seize proactively opportunities arising from national development progress; implement diligently various works related to Macau; accelerate the integration of Macau into overall national development; and maintain the prosperity and long-term stability of Macau,” Ho pledged.

FINANCE

Gov't financial bill paves way for more types of banking institutions

ANTHONY LAM

A legislative bill to expand the number of permitted financial institutions in the city is on its way to the parliament, the Executive Council (ExCo) announced Friday.

Last Friday, the ExCo announced it had concluded discussions on the bill.

According to the ExCo, the bill focuses on five main areas. It aims to “[increase] the flexibility of the bank licensing system.” It proposes that room be made for future licenses of financial institutions “to fit with the development of the modern financial industry.” The concept of “banks with restricted businesses” will also be introduced.

Furthermore, “so as to promote the implementation and development of innovative technologies in the financial trade,” a provisional licensing system has been proposed for financial technology projects.

As the government has



boasted that Macau is the new bond exchange center, the bill will also simplify the procedure for launching the financial commodity.

The bill also proposes stricter surveillance over capital funding which occurs either without the approval from the Monetary Authority of Macao or through illegal channels. Financial institutions will be required to exercise tighter supervision.

For the time being, it is unclear if this will affect online crowd-funding.

Harsher punishments on the illegal acceptance of public savings have been proposed.

The ExCo has also concluded discussions on the executive regulations governing the Industrial and Commercial Development Fund. The administratively and financially autonomous fund will become a subsidiary of the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSEDT) and, hence, come under the supervision of the Secretary for Economy and Finance.

The scope of the fund's authority is determined by the public financial subsidy system of the Macau SAR executive regulations. Projects related to the development of the fishing industry, despi-

te links to industrial and commercial practices, will be put under the authority of a fishery development fund.

All existing approved funds will remain valid and effective, unless stopped, suspended or invalidated.

The executive regulations will take effect on the day following its promulgation.

The last bill for which the ExCo recently concluded discussions is related to the arbitration system for water leakage in buildings.

Water leakage inspection has been difficult because some inspections can only be conducted through private properties. The bill thus proposes an arbitration system that comes with a magistracy, which will have the authority to order suspected sources of leakage to comply with the inspections and investigations. The magistracy will be legally empowered to handle arguments about water leakage in buildings.

CPI

PRICES UP IN SEPTEMBER, EDUCATION EXPENSES GROW BY OVER 10%

RENATO MARQUES

THIS year's September consumer price index (CPI) has grown 1.12% year-on-year with the composite CPI scoring 103.97 points, the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) has noted.

The increment was attributed to higher wages for domestic helpers and tuition fees, rising charges for eating out, as well as increased prices of gasoline and fruits. The rise was partially offset by lower housing rentals and charges for telecommunication services, as well as reduced pork prices.

Among goods and services registering major hikes were the price indices of household furnishings and services and education which grew 13.17% and 10.12% respectively year-on-year.

Moving in the opposite direction was communication, which decreased 10.07% y-o-y.

Compared month-to-month, the composite CPI for September rose slightly (+0.19%) when compared with August.

Analysis of the last 12 months, ending in September this year, has shown the average composite CPI grew 1.09% from the previous period, with the price indices of household furnishings and services (+10.18%) and transport (+6.63%) showing the most growth.

In general, and taking into account the price reduction seen mostly on fresh food items, namely fish and seafood as well as fruits, the CPI remained relatively stable with an overall growth of around 1% year-on-year.



COURT

TUI SIDES WITH CREDITOR, VOIDING DEBTOR'S ATTEMPT TO PASS ASSETS

RENATO MARQUES

THE Court of Final Instance (TUI) has recently decided a case about unpaid debt that involved two companies and their legal representatives.

According to the Office of the president of the TUI, the debtors had transferred two Macau housing units to their underage son. Their intention was to remove these assets from their proprietary ownership and, therefore, prevent the properties from being used to repay their debts.

The case dates from 2017 when a company owned by the two people could not repay a RMB5 million debt contracted in 2014.

At the time, the deal was to repay the debt within seven days, at a 10% per year interest rate.

Since the debt was never repaid, by March 2017, the debtors had accumulated an extra RMB2.17 million in interest, on top of the original RMB5 million loan.

At this time the owners and legal representatives of the debtor had assumed liability of the company debt but, before that (in 2015) they had, through a public deed document, announced the transfer of two housing units to the couple's underage son.

Realizing they would be unable to force repayment of the debt, the creditor filed a case with the Court of First Instance (TJB). The case had sought to declare the transfer null and void and declare the purpose of



the transfer was to hide assets that could be used to repay the debt by putting them under the ownership of a minor.

The TJB dismissed the case having decided the actions were legal at the time. The creditor appealed to the Court of Second Instance, noting that, although the deeds were valid documents, the intention was not to transfer the properties to the son, but to remove the properties from the couple's assets so they could not

be used to repay debt.

After another appeal, this time from the debtors, the TUI finally concurred with the creditor's position and declared the deeds null and void. It explained that the existence of the public deeds, "only proves the declarations of the contracting parties, stated before the notary," adding, that this does not constitute "material proof of sincerity, veracity and validity of the statements issued by the parties" at that time.

LAND ORIGINALLY FOR CAR TIRE PARK RETURNS TO PUBLIC WORKS BUREAU

THE Land and Public Works Bureau (DSOP) will decide how the land originally reserved for a provisional car tire park will be used, Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong said last Friday.

Cheong believes the eventual decision will comply with relevant urban planning laws and procedures.

Several weeks ago, the government suddenly announced that plans for the car tire park – which was always intended to only be temporary – had been scrapped.

Instead, the entire land plot – formerly the location of cotton mills –



will be divided into three smaller plots of land, which will be used for commercial and residential purposes.

Although the plan has

sparked public debate and objections, the government has insisted it will demolish the former cotton mills.

The plan's opponents

have stressed the cotton mills' cultural value, because it captures Macau's manufacturing heyday and architectural wisdom and aesthetics. The government, in contrast, has said the presence of asbestos is the core reason for demolishing the structures.

Due to Covid-19 border restrictions, workers from Hong Kong did not want to come to Macau for the demolition, which is why the structure partially remains.

The land plot, diagonally opposite the southwestern tip of the Nova Mall in Taipa, has an area of about 19,000 square meters. **AL**

MICE

MIF closes with positive outcomes, prepares for '4+1' visitor arrivals

RENATO MARQUES

THE 27th Macao International Trade and Investment Fair (MIF), the Macao Franchise Exhibition 2022 (MFE) and the Exhibition of Products and Services of Portuguese Speaking Countries-Macao 2022 (PLPEX) ended positively on Saturday, organizers noted.

During the three concurrent events, over 700 commercial contacts were exchanged, with 350 exchanges occurring via the cloud, while live broadcasts attracted over 3.4 million viewers.

With a particular focus on promoting the development of four main industries and exploring the opportunities related to the so-called "four provinces, one city", the three side events promoted over three days over 50 thematic contact exchange sessions, forums, conferences, and exchange and presentation sessions, among other activities.

The contact exchange sessions, visits, and live broadcasts included technological elements such as virtual reality to add new ideas and inject dynamism to the events that had over 1,500 companies participating both online and offline.

Figures released by the organizers noted 1,047 exhibitors were on display at the venue while 1,264 participated in the online showroom.

The participating companies represented mainland China, Angola, Brazil, Mozambique, Portugal, Hong Kong, and Macau, and presented products and services covering areas such as health, technology, franchise

chains, intellectual property, Portuguese-speaking countries products, food, and catering, among others.

FOCUS ON FOUR INDUSTRIES

The three-sided event focused on promoting the development of four main industries, with the participation of 303 companies from these industries and 56 related thematic activities, to build a more diversified industrial base for Macau.

The subordinate exhibitions increased this year to three, namely the China Traditional Medicine and Health Brand Exhibition (Macao) 2022, with about 3,000 square meters of exhibition area, the China (Macao) International Cultural & Creative Industry Exhibition, with about 900 square meters of exhibition area, and Science and Technology Week 2022 and Innovation and Technology Results Exhibition, with about 3,200 square meters of exhibition area. In total, more than 250 exhibiting companies participated.

VISITORS FROM 'FOUR PROVINCES, ONE CITY'

During the three parallel events, four presentation activities and prospecting visits were carried out, aimed at "four provinces, one city."

The occasion was attended by 181 visiting companies from Guangdong, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Fujian and Shanghai and, according to organizers, served as a preparation for the resumption of tourist excursions and electronic visas for visitors to Macau from these regions that will kick off next month.





Sands China supplier thrives during pandemic

DURING these pandemic times, companies face economic challenges. Some may wait for crises to pass. However, some local SMEs have managed to find success despite the difficulties present.

Established in 2017, Source Trading Co., Ltd. (Source Trading) started its business by tailor-making gifts and gift box designs for customers. Later, as the scale of its business grew and the capabilities of its staff increased, the company expanded its product range to include daily hotel necessities such as towels and cleaning products, pandemic prevention supplies, and even event-planning services.

In 2018, Source Trading became one of Sands China's local suppliers. Their cooperation has continued to go smoothly, despite the Covid-19 pandemic. According to Source Trading, its revenue has increased by 20% year-on-year during the pandemic.

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 Chinese New Year (CNY) was around the corner. Factories and transportation fleets in the mainland were preparing for vacation. Source Trading received an urgent order from Sands China requesting disinfection products. "Despite the tight supply in the mainland, we finally found sources and delivered the products to Sands on the

eve of CNY," Suki Yang, marketing director of Source Trading, recalled.

Both parties still remember the critical time in June of this year, when the resurgence of the Covid-19 virus in Macau resulted in more than 1,800 new cases. In response, Sands China provided hotels for medical quarantine, which required the sourcing of a large amount of protective clothing, thermometers and other anti-epidemic items. Although the declaration procedures for cross-border logistics had been adjusted due to the pandemic, things remained pending and uncertain. Source Trading took the initiative to contact the customs authority and logistics companies to understand the new policies. As a result, they were able to complete the delivery in batches within three days. "The

SME even managed to supply rapid antigen test kits, KN95 masks and the highest level of protective clothing in response to our request," according to senior manager Gary Choi and officer Daniela Lei from the procurement and supply chain department of Sands China.

Sands China also speaks highly of the local SME's quick response. Choi and Lei said: "Source Trading operates very efficiently. It can quickly provide reasonable quotations, delivery schedules and other related information on products we need."

They also attribute its efficiency to streamlined staffing, lower administrative costs, and the high flexibility of small companies, which have advantages over large enterprises.

The outbreak of Covid-19 has

witnessed the business transformation of SMEs in response to the pandemic. According to Yang, there are specific reasons for the success of her company's transformation amid the economic crisis. The first is efficient communication; the SME maintains good contact with customers and manufacturers to ensure that final products meet requirements. Second is strict quality management; customized products must be consistent with the sample. For non-customized products, relevant qualification certificates are provided. Third is diversified procurement channels; procurement is not limited to specific regions, but expands to the whole country and overseas. And the final reason is flexibility and rapid response; the SME responds and adjusts quickly to meet customers' needs.

What has the SME gained from working with Sands China? Yang said the most significant benefit is that the business scope of her company is gradually diversifying.

"Without orders from large companies such as Sands China, it would be difficult to make a

change quickly."

Moreover, Yang added that Sands China's procurement system is easy to use, and the bidding process is open and transparent. "After confirming the receipt of goods, we receive payments on time, which is beneficial to the capital turnover of the enterprise," she said.

In response to Sands China's demand for high-quality and innovative products, Source Trading continues progressing and enhancing its competitiveness.

The pandemic has been a great challenge for Macau companies. However, due to the positive actions it has undertaken, Source Trading has survived the impact. Sands China suggests that more small and medium-sized enterprises should take the initiative to increase their competitiveness, such as by upgrading their products and network systems, expanding their procurement resources and business relationships, and so on. When the market resumes, they will have more substantial competitiveness to face challenges and take advantage of opportunities.



WORLD INSIGHTS

WHAT DOES THE 20TH CPC NATIONAL CONGRESS MEAN TO WORLD ECONOMY?

XINHUA REPORTERS, BEIJING

AT week-long 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), which concluded on Saturday in Beijing, a blueprint for China's future development has been mapped out.

As the world economy is facing a tough situation this year, with probably tougher prospects for the next, China's economic outlook carries global significance. Voicing their confidence in China's future growth, business communities worldwide believe that China's modernization stride and innovation-driven growth will inject more certainty into the global economy.

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS ALL

China will accelerate creating a new development pattern and pursue high-quality development, said Chinese President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, while delivering a report at the CPC congress.

"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," Xi said.

Deeply impressed by the remarks, Wichai Kinchong Choi, senior vice president of the leading Thai bank Kasikornbank, said he can see China's future development direction focus more on high-quality and sustainable development. "This is good news for Thailand and other neighboring countries," he said.

In the past few years, many Chinese high-tech enterprises have set up factories in Thailand, which is exactly what Thailand needs, he noted, saying that they have helped the Thai economy to transform and upgrade, and enhance its competitiveness.

Over the past decade, China's gross domestic product has come to account for 18.5 percent of the world economy. It has become a major trading partner for over 140 countries and regions, leading the world in total volume of trade in goods. Since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, China, which has managed to coordinate pandemic control and economic development, still maintains a stabilizer of the global supply and industrial chains, and is keeping driving the world

XINHUA



economic recovery.

Moreover, its development is not achieved at the expense of the environment. Instead, China is striving to make its development greener and more sustainable. In pursuit of harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature, the country has cut its carbon emission intensity by 34.4 percent over the past 10 years, and pledged to have CO2 emissions peak before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060.

In the eyes of Chenhong Huang, global executive vice president of the German multinational software company SAP SE and president of SAP Greater China, China's green development will profoundly change the global energy, environment and economic landscape.

"Chinese enterprises are using digital technology to make carbon emission data transparent and quantifiable, and promote a balance between green development and commercial development," Huang said.

Meanwhile, China renewing its commitment in the CPC congress report to promoting a high-standard opening-up also strikes a chord with the international business community. U.S. automaker Tesla's success in China speaks volume for Beijing's determination to further opening-up.

Thanks to the efforts of the Chinese government to facilitate foreign investment, Tesla became the first wholly foreign-owned auto enterprise in China, Vice President of Tesla Tao Lin said, adding that the U.S. company is seeking to further expand its presence in the Chinese market.

German heat exchanger company Kelvion (China) has started operations in China over 20 years ago. Cheng Wenwu, general manager of the company, said doing business in China is becoming easier.

Mentioning an effective market mechanism and a convenient and fast standardized administrative process in China, Cheng said the changes over the past years have lowered the costs of companies, facilitated market access and helped firms to adapt to international rules, benefiting the companies' operations.

CHINESE MODERNIZATION MEANS OPPORTUNITIES

Chinese modernization, a key term defining China's journey to national rejuvenation and another buzzword in the CPC report, has spurred a heated discussion in business communities both domestic and abroad.

It contains elements common to the modernization processes of all countries, but more importantly, it features the Chinese context. It is the modernization of a huge population, of common prosperity for all, of material and cultural-ethical advancement, of harmony between humanity and nature and of peaceful development.

For business leaders in many parts of the world, Chinese modernization means more opportunities.

Jose Antonio Hidalgo, former president of the Ecuador-China Chamber of Commerce, said Chinese modernization will generate a positive impact in the global context, especially for the agri-food sector of Ecuador.

"It is an opportunity for us because the middle-class consumers (in China) are going to need excellent quality agrifood and they are going to look for it in countries like ours," he said.

In 2021, China announced that after eight years of strenuous work between late 2012 and late 2020, the country had lifted the final 98.99 million impoverished rural residents living under the current poverty line out of po-

verty, and removed all 832 impoverished counties and 128,000 villages from the poverty list. Now the country boasts the world's biggest middle-income group -- 400 million people. That means huge potential for consumption.

Hamdi Al-Tabbaa, president of the Jordanian Businessmen Association, also sees opportunities in the Chinese path to modernization.

China's consistent efforts to improve people's living standards mean a significantly expanded middle-income group and upgraded consumption structure, which will offer more development opportunities for global enterprises, said Al-Tabbaa.

From initiating the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the New Development Bank to taking the lead in implementing the UN sustainable development agenda, China has always been sharing its development dividends with the rest of the world.

Woody Guo, senior vice president and managing director of Herbalife Nutrition in China, said the CPC report underlines the certainty of the Chinese market against the uncertainties of the global market, and makes foreign enterprises feel reassured about their development in China.

The Chinese modernization "will provide more chances and opportunities, not only from the growing of markets, but also from an employment point of view," said Sara Vermeulen-Anastasi, head of group communication at Swiss technology group Oerlikon. "We will be able to attract more engineers and have more choices of new technologies," Vermeulen-Anastasi said.

INNOVATION INSPIRES NEW MOMENTUM

While invigorating its economy, China has made innovation a top priority in its planning.

The country rose to 12th place on the Global Innovation Index 2021, up from 34th place in 2012, said the World Intellectual Property Organization. It ranked first among middle-income economies.

"We must regard science and technology as our primary productive force, talent as our primary resource, and innovation as our primary driver of growth," Xi said in the report.

"Everything is about innovation," said Stephen Perry, chairman of Britain's 48 Group Club. China is very forward-looking, as in every sector, China has the dynamic about "wanting to know where the world is going," he added.

Amid the innovation drive, the number of Chinese companies on the Fortune Global 500 list has grown. In 2021, 145 Chinese companies made it to the list, climbing from 95 in 2012 and increasing for 19 consecutive years.

In terms of telecommunication infrastructure, the country has built the world's largest 5G network, with a total of 1.43 million 5G base stations installed across the country by the end of 2021, accounting for over 60 percent of the world's total.

Backed by technological advancement, China has accelerated the construction of high-speed transportation networks. With the world's most developed high-speed rail network, China now has more than 40,000 km of high-speed rail lines in operation.

Oswaldo Navarro from Jalisco, an agriculture-producing state in Mexico, has purchased several pieces of agriculture and farming equipment from China.

He told Xinhua that the seed cleaning machine he imported from China has a daily capacity two to three times that of the equipment from other countries, saving much time and cost.

China's increased efforts in science and education will help turn scientific and technological achievements into productivity, said Navarro.

Hichem Chorfi, an Algerian businessman working for a consulting firm in industrial technology and innovation, said China shares advanced development models and achieves economic complementarity with other countries, improving the well-being of people in various countries through advanced technologies.

Chinese innovation will be featured in many important areas of human society in the future, he said. XINHUA

China keeps promoting building of human community with shared future: Xi

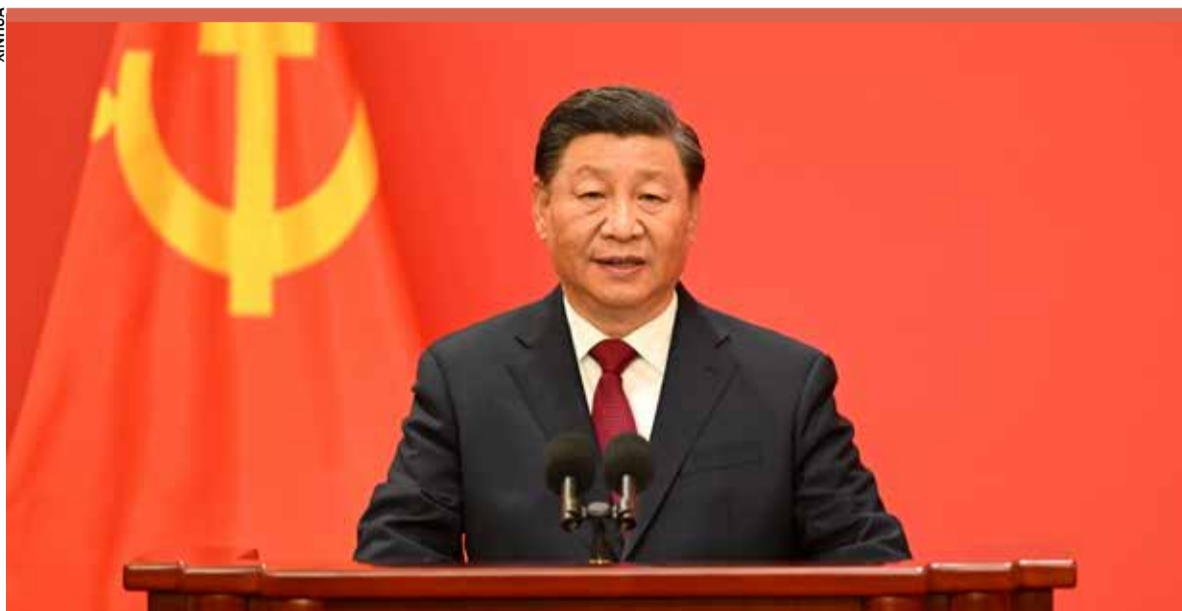
XINHUA REPORTERS, BEIJING

XI Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, yesterday expressed China's commitment to further promoting the building of a human community with a shared future.

"We will work with peoples of all other countries to champion humanity's shared values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom to safeguard global peace and promote global development, and keep promoting the building of a human community with a shared future," Xi said when meeting the press at the Great Hall of the People.

Stressing that the world is grappling with unprecedented challenges, Xi said the CPC has consistently called on the people of the world to grasp and shape the future and destiny of humanity.

"When all countries pursue the cause of common good, we can live in harmony, engage in cooperation for mutual benefit and join hands to create a brighter future for the world," he added.



Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee addresses the press at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China yesterday

ACTING FOR PEOPLE, RELYING ON PEOPLE

At the press briefing, at the Great Hall of the People, Xi also said the Party should always act for the people and rely on the people on the journey ahead.

The CPC will not be daunted by high winds, choppy waters or even dangerous storms, for the people will always have its back and give it confidence, Xi said.

"Taking their priorities as ours and acting on their wishes, we will continue the hard work

to turn their aspiration for a better life into a reality," Xi said.

He then stressed, that the Party should always press forward with "self-reform on the journey ahead."

"A political party can only become invincible if it remains committed to self-reform, even though it has had a glorious past," Xi made the remarks when meeting the press at the Great Hall of the People.

The revolutionary travails and tempering of the past century, and especially of the first

decade of the new era, have made the CPC stronger and more dynamic, Xi said.

Xi urged the CPC members to remain on high alert and stay sober-minded and prudent in the face of new challenges and tests on the journey ahead.

"We must make sure that our century-old Party, the biggest in the world, will become ever more vigorous through self-reform and continue to be the strong backbone that the Chinese people can lean at all times," Xi said.

Xi added that it was a congress of "holding the banner high, pooling the strength, and promoting solidarity and dedication."

CHINA TO OPEN WIDER TO THE WORLD

In a remark that will echoed strongly worldwide, Xi said that China "will open its door wider to the rest of the world."

"We'll be steadfast in deepening reform and opening up across the board, and in pursuing high-quality development," Xi said when meeting the press at the Great Hall of the People, noting that a prosperous China will create many more opportunities for the world.

Just as China cannot develop in isolation from the world, the world needs China for its development, Xi said.

Through over 40 years of relentless reform and opening up, China has created the twin miracles of fast economic growth and long-term social stability, he said.

The Chinese economy has great resilience and potential, Xi said. "Its strong fundamentals will not change, and it will remain on the positive trajectory over the long run." XINHUA

XINHUA REPORTERS, BEIJING

XI Jinping was elected general secretary of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) at the committee's first plenary session held on Sunday, according to a communique.

The session, presided over by Xi, was attended by 203 members of the 20th CPC Central Committee and 168 alternate members.

Xi was also named chairman of the CPC Central Military Commission at the session.

The members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee elected at the session are Xi Jinping, Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang and Li Xi.

Also elected were members of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee at the session, which endorsed the members of the CPC Central

POLITBURO

Xi Jinping elected general secretary of CPC Central Committee: Communique



Xi Jinping (center) and the other six members of the Politburo Standing Committee: Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang, Li Xi

Committee Secretariat nominated by the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee.

The session named the members of the Central Military Commission.

The session approved the secretary, deputy secretaries and members of the Standing Committee of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection

(CCDI) elected at the first plenary session of the 20th CCDI.

The members of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee (in the order of the number of strokes in their surnames):

Ding Xuexiang, Xi Jinping, Ma Xingrui, Wang Yi, Wang Huning, Yin Li, Shi Taifeng, Liu Guozhong, Li Xi, Li Qiang, Li Ganjie,

Li Shulei, Li Hongzhong, He Weidong, He Lifeng, Zhang Youxia, Zhang Guoqing, Chen Wenqing, Chen Jining, Chen Min'er, Zhao Leji, Yuan Jiajun, Huang Kunming, Cai Qi

The members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee:

Xi Jinping, Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi,

Ding Xuexiang, Li Xi
General secretary of the CPC Central Committee:

Xi Jinping
The members of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee:

Cai Qi, Shi Taifeng, Li Ganjie, Li Shulei, Chen Wenqing, Liu Jinguo, Wang Xiaohong

Chairman, vice chairmen and members of the

Central Military Commission:

Chairman: Xi Jinping
Vice chairmen: Zhang Youxia, He Weidong
Members: Li Shangfu, Liu Zhenli, Miao Hua, Zhang Shengmin

Secretary, deputy secretaries and members of the Standing Committee of the CCDI

Secretary: Li Xi
Deputy secretaries: Liu Jinguo, Zhang Shengmin, Xiao Pei, Yu Hongqiu (f.), Fu Kui, Sun Xinyang, Liu Xuexin, Zhang Fuhai

Members of the Standing Committee of the CCDI (in the order of the number of strokes in their surnames):

Wang Xiaoping (f.), Wang Aiwen, Wang Hongjin, Liu Jinguo, Liu Xuexin, Xu Luode, Sun Xinyang, Li Xi, Li Xinran (Manchu), Xiao Pei, Zhang Shengmin, Zhang Fuhai, Chen Guoqiang, Zhao Shiyong, Hou Kai, Yin Bai (Naxi), Yu Hongqiu (f.), Fu Kui, Mu Hongyu (f.) XINHUA

AP PHOTO



XINHUA



Xi Jinping (right) then secretary of the Ningde Prefecture Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), participates in farm work during his investigation in the countryside in 1988

TIMELINE

Chinese leader Xi Jinping's rise and rule

CHINESE President Xi Jinping, the son of a communist revolutionary leader, was a victim of the Cultural Revolution and a provincial chief during China's economic boom before ascending to the very top a decade ago. Yesterday, China's 69-year-old leader secured a widely expected third term as general secretary of the ruling Communist Party, paving the way for him to remain in power for at least five more years — and possibly longer. In his first decade in power, he tightened state control over the economy and society and promoted a more muscular foreign and defense policy, all while establishing himself as one of the most powerful leaders in China's modern history.

EARLY YEARS

June 15, 1953: Born in Beijing, the son of Xi Zhongxun, a senior Communist Party official and former guerrilla commander in the civil war that brought the communists to power in 1949.

1969-75: At the age of 15, Xi is among many educated urban youths sent to live and work in poor rural villages during the Cultural Revolution, a period of social upheaval launched by then-leader Mao Zedong.

1975-79: Returns to Beijing to study chemical engineering at prestigious Tsinghua University.

1979-82: Joins military as aide in Central Military Commission and Defense Ministry.

REGIONAL LEADER

1982-85: Assigned as deputy and then leader of the Communist Party in Zhengding county, south of Beijing in Hebei province.

1985: Begins 17-year stint in coastal Fujian province, a manufacturing hub, as vice mayor of the city of Xiamen.

1987: Marries Peng Liyuan, a popular singer in the People's Liberation Army's song and dance troupe. They have one daughter. An earlier marriage for Xi fell apart after three years.

2000-2002: Governor of Fujian province.

2002: Transferred to neighboring Zhejiang province, where he is appointed party chief, a post that outranks governor in the Chinese system.

March 2007: Appointed party chief of Shanghai but stays only a few months.

October 2007: Joins national leadership as one of nine members of the Politburo Standing Committee, the top leadership of the Communist Party.

March 2008: Named vice president of China.

August 2011: Xi hosts then-Vice President Joe Biden on the latter's visit to China, nearly a decade before Biden becomes U.S. president.

NATIONAL LEADER

November 2012: Replaces Chinese President Hu Jintao as general secretary of the Communist Party, the top party position.

March 2013: Starts first five-year term as president of China.

2013-2014: China begins reclaiming land in the South China Sea to build islands, some with runways and other infrastructure, pushing its territorial claims to disputed areas in the vital waterway.

2017: China launches a crackdown on the Uyghur and other predominantly Muslim ethnic radical groups in the Xinjiang region after extremist attacks. Mass detentions and human rights abuses draw international condemnation and accusations of genocide.

October 2017: The party enshrines his ideology, known as "Xi Jinping Thought," in its constitution as he starts a second five-year term as leader. This symbolically elevates him to Mao's level as a leader whose ideology is identified by his name.

March 2018: China's legislature abolishes a two-term limit on the presidency.

July 2018: The United States, under President Donald Trump, imposes tariffs on Chinese imports, starting a trade

war. China retaliates with tariffs on U.S. goods.

June-November 2019: Massive protests demanding greater democracy paralyze Hong Kong. Xi's government responds by imposing a national security law in mid-2020 that quashes dissent in the city.

January 2020: China locks down the city of Wuhan as a new virus sparks what will become the COVID-19 pandemic.

September 2020: Xi announces in a video speech to the U.N. General Assembly that China aims to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060.

December 2020: Authorities announce an anti-monopoly investigation into e-commerce giant Alibaba, the start of a crackdown on China's high-flying tech companies.

August 2022: China launches missiles and deploys warships and fighter jets in major military exercises around Taiwan following the visit of a senior U.S. lawmaker, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, to the self-governing island that China claims as its territory.

October 2022: Xi starts a third five-year term as Communist Party leader, breaking with recent precedent that limited leaders to two terms. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2003 END OF AN ERA FOR CONCORDE



The legendary supersonic aircraft, Concorde, has landed at the end of its last commercial passenger flight, amid emotional scenes at Heathrow airport.

The final transatlantic flight, ending 27 years of supersonic history, carried 100 celebrities from New York and touched down at 1605 BST.

As it did so, a huge cheer went up from the thousands of people gathered by the runway on a specially-built grandstand.

Two other Concorde flights had already landed a few minutes earlier, one carrying competition winners on a flight from Edinburgh, and the other completing a trip for invited guests around the Bay of Biscay.

All three aircraft taxied to the BA engineering base, the crews hanging out of the cockpit windows and waving Union Jacks to the crowds.

Actress Joan Collins, who has flown Concorde about 10 times and was on board the flight from New York, said the end of the era was "tragic".

"The first time I ever flew Concorde was a bit of a white knuckle ride.

"I am more used to it now, it's so wonderful to make the journey in three and a half hours," she said.

British Airways has decided to retire the famous aircraft because it is no longer profitable.

Concorde's running costs have been spiralling at a time when ticket sales were dwindling in the wake of a catastrophic crash near Paris Charles de Gaulle airport three years ago in which 113 people died.

British Airways chief executive officer Rod Eddington said there was a "mixture of sadness and celebration" about the retirement.

"It is a wonderful plane, an icon, but its time has come," he said. "It's an old plane - it doesn't look it - but it was designed in the 50s and built in the 60s."

The plane, which cost passengers £9,000 a ticket, reached 1.350mph (2,172 kph) and 60,000 feet (18,288 metres) over the Atlantic Ocean during its final flight.

BA and Air France, who worked jointly on developing the aircraft, made an announcement on the retirement in April. The French Concorde's final flight was in May.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Concorde was seen in the sky on other occasions over the next few months as the seven aircraft owned by British Airways flew to new homes around the world.

One flew to the Grantley Adams Airport in Barbados; another went to a museum in Seattle, while a third is at a floating exhibition in New York.

Others can be seen at Heathrow Airport, Manchester Airport, and Bristol's Filton Airport.

The last Concorde left by road, shipped to Scotland in April 2004 and put on display at the Museum of Flight near Edinburgh.

The French Concorde's have also gone to museums, in France, the US and Germany.

A massive auction of Concorde memorabilia was held in Paris in November 2003.

Lots included one of the trademark nose cones, which sold to an anonymous French bidder for nearly \$500,000.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 You will find good buys and you will lift your spirits. Raise your self esteem and your confidence if you want to get back into the mainstream again.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 You can help them more than they can help you. Your irritability will lead to family squabbles. Your social skills with people may be more than just helpful.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 You will be uncertain of your feelings. Residential moves are evident. Family trips or projects should be on your mind.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Physical limitations are possible if you aren't careful. You will not be able to contain your emotions today. Problems with ear, nose, or the throat are likely.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 You have a lot to offer. Consider the source before you believe what you hear. You will be in the mood for entertainment. Be careful not to exaggerate when interacting with your lover.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 You must follow your desires and dreams. Don't hold yourself back because you think you're too old. You can make it up to them later.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Your ability to charm others will bring added popularity. Look into real estate. Don't start a dispute unless you're prepared to accept irreversible results.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 You will have to check your cash flow before you decide to indulge in hobbies or entertainment that may be beyond your budget. New love connections can be made through group associations.

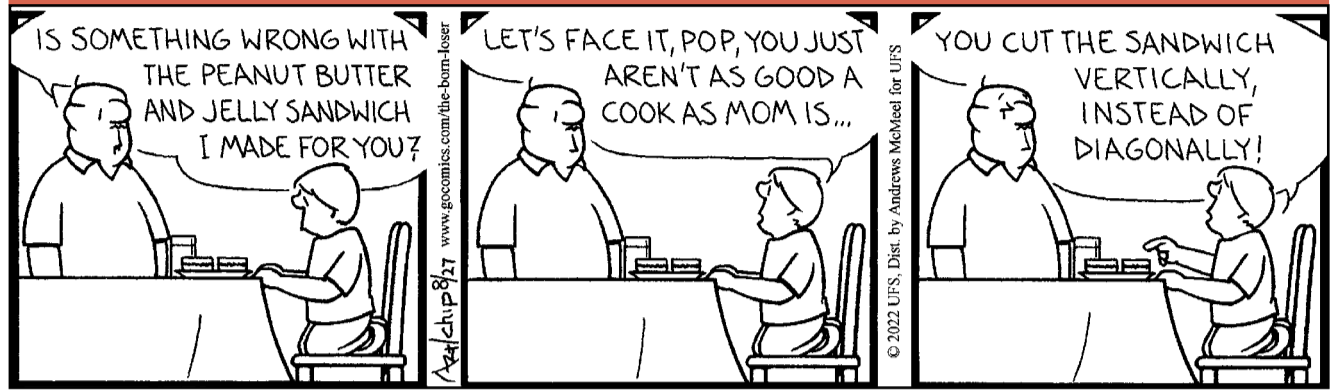
SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 You may jump from the frying pan into the fire if you make a move today. Travel may change your attitudes with regard to your philosophy. It might be time to shake a leg and do a personal makeover.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 You can make some money if you get involved in a conservative financial prospect that is presented to you. You may feel that someone at work is holding you back.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Today will be rather hectic on the domestic scene. Be careful while traveling. Try a barbecue or a day at the beach. Offers of joint ventures are likely.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 You will find that superiors may not see situations as you do. Don't give out any personal information that you don't want spread around. Involvement in groups will be favorable.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	4	20	fine
Changchun	-3	10	fine
Chengdu	18	21	rain
Chongqing	19	23	overcast
Fuzhou	19	25	cloudy
Guangzhou	20	31	fine
Guiyang	14	24	cloudy
Haikou	22	25	rain
Hangzhou	11	21	cloudy
Harbin	-3	9	fine
Hefei	9	23	cloudy
Nanjing	10	23	cloudy
Shanghai	14	21	fine
Taipei	20	22	overcast
Wuhan	13	25	cloudy
Hong Kong	9	12	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	-3	7	overcast
Frankfurt	12	19	thunderstorm
Paris	13	19	showers
London	11	16	showers
New York	16	17	showers

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Legal wrong; 5- A followers; 9- Legumes; 13- Impersonator; 14- Cheek cosmetic; 16- You ___?; 17- Alley; 18- Last Greek letter; 19- Let's just leave ___ that; 20- Skelton's Kadiddlehopper; 21- Hanoi holiday; 22- Perches; 24- Monetary unit of Thailand; 26- Scent; 27- Mends a shoe; 29- Strangle; 33- Does in; 34- Son of Isaac and Rebekah; 35- Mind; 36- It may be picked; 37- Teem; 38- Single unit; 39- Impression; 41- Metal filament; 42- Member of the dog family; 44- Belongs; 46- "Arabesque" actress; 47- Suspended; 48- Cried; 49- Birthplace of St. Francis; 52- Doo-wop syllable; 53- Wading bird; 57- "A Jug of Wine..." poet; 58- Killed; 60- Delhi wrap; 61- Sisters; 62- Visit habitually; 63- Oodles; 64- Coup d'___; 65- Muffin topper; 66- Pleasing;

DOWN 1- Apply powder to oneself; 2- Opaque gemstone; 3- Actor Auberjonois; 4- Tremulous; 5- Thin soups; 6- Celestial body; 7- Musical composition for two; 8- The fruit of a hen; 9- Before; 10- Before; 11- Med school subj.; 12- Cpls.' superiors; 15- Membrane in the ear canal; 23- "Hollywood Squares" win; 25- DDE opponent; 26- Chicago's airport; 27- Slip; 28- Western; 29- Former Russian rulers; 30- Steak order; 31- Russian revolutionary leader; 32- Checked out; 33- Barbershop sound; 34- "Dallas" family name; 37- Hoggish; 40- Eager; 42- Cruiser driver; 43- Craftsperson; 45- Hung neighbor; 46- Makeshift shelter; 48- Feeble peevish complaint; 49- Bang-up; 50- Brown-bag stuff; 51- Yemen's capital; 52- First king of Israel; 54- Indonesian holiday resort; 55- Camaro model; 56- Web locale; 59- ___-tzu;



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- 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
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FOR RENT

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FOOTBALL | EPL

Haaland's scoring streak leaves Guardiola speechless

JAMES ROBSON, MANCHESTER

MAN CITY 3, BRIGHTON 1

PEP Guardiola has coached arguably the greatest-ever soccer player in Lionel Messi, so it speaks volumes when he admits he has run out of words to describe Erling Haaland's start to life at Manchester City.

"My English language is not big enough," the City manager said after the Norway striker took his goal tally to 22 this season in a 3-1 win against Brighton in the Premier League yesterday [Macau time].

Haaland, who had failed to find the back of the net in last week's 1-0 loss to Liverpool, quickly got over that mini-drought with two first-half goals as the Premier League champion moved to within a point of leader Arsenal.

With 17 goals in the league, Haaland needs just six more to



Manchester City's Erling Haaland celebrates after scoring his side's second goal

equal the 23 goals that saw Mo Salah and Son Heung-min share the Golden Boot as last season's joint leading scorers.

"Erling has the quality," Guardiola said. "With big space he can do it, but with small space he can do it. This is the reality, it is fantastic."

Haaland's goals have come in

just 15 appearances in all competitions. He looked set to register his fourth hat trick of the season, with both goals coming before halftime.

He opened the scoring after 22 minutes when racing on to Ederson's long clearance. With Brighton goalkeeper Robert Sanchez stranded outside of his goal,

Haaland overpowered Adam Webster and rolled the ball into an empty net.

He got his and City's second two minutes before halftime after referee Craig Pawson reviewed a challenge from Lewis Dunk on Bernardo Silva and awarded a penalty.

Haaland stepped up and

powered a low shot past Sanchez, which was the club's 600th league goal under Guardiola.

Just as City fans might have been wondering how many goals their team would rack up in a latest rout, Brighton reduced the deficit.

Riyad Mahrez looked set to add to the home team's lead but his tame shot was saved by Sanchez, which allowed Brighton to break. Solly March laid the ball off to Leandro Trossard just outside the penalty box and he unleashed a low drive that beat Ederson at his near post in the 53rd.

Trossard could have equalized later when running through on goal – but his shot from a tight angle was saved.

Brighton paid the price for that missed opportunity when Kevin de Bruyne made it 3-1 in the 75th with a superb 25-yard shot that curled into the top corner.

While Guardiola has run out of superlatives for Haaland, he is still to be fully satisfied by De Bruyne this season.

"He is not playing at his top level, not yet," he said. "He made a fantastic goal, but he is not playing at his best. He knows, I don't have to tell him. His dynamic is still not perfect, I spoke with him.

"The goal is outstanding. Thanks to him we didn't suffer in the last 15-20 minutes." MDT/AP

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OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

JAPAN-AUSTRALIA MILITARY
COOPERATION SHOULD NOT
TARGET ANY THIRD PARTY

The current Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, elected in May, has generally shown a positive attitude toward his country's ties with China by taking action to correct his predecessor's wrongs. But upgrading Australia's bilateral security agreement with Japan is not in line with that positive trend.

The upgraded Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation that Albanese signed with visiting Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Perth covering military, intelligence and cybersecurity cooperation, is another move to strengthen security ties between the two countries. It follows the reciprocal access agreement that then Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison signed with Kishida in January, which removed obstacles to holding joint military exercises in either country.

Kishida said that the upgraded agreement had been developed under an "increasingly harsh strategic environment", and that it "will chart the direction of our security and defense cooperation in the next 10 years".

Expounding on this, the Associated Press said that the new bilateral security agreement reflects "the deteriorating security outlook for their region driven by China's increasing assertiveness".

But this is a harsh and prejudicial judgment arrived at by viewing the regional situation through the prism of Washington's "Indo-Pacific strategy".

It is not China's "assertiveness", but the United States' ambition to contain China's rise with the aid of its allies that has caused the "deteriorating security outlook for their region". It has made a series of moves aimed at getting its regional allies to more actively support its bid to maintain its hegemony in the region, notably bringing them into the fold of the transatlantic alliance.

In June, Australia and Japan, along with the Republic of Korea and New Zealand, participated in the NATO Summit in Madrid. Commenting on this new development, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said: "We have always believed that the development of relations between countries should be conducive to world peace and stability, and should not target or harm the interests of third parties. The Asia-Pacific region is not within the geographic scope of the North Atlantic. Countries and peoples in the Asia-Pacific region firmly oppose any words or deeds that introduce military blocs and provoke separatism and confrontation."

In his National Day speech on Aug 21, Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong warned that the geopolitical tensions between the United States and China are affecting the security situation in the Asia-Pacific region.

He said that, "Our region has enjoyed peace for a long time, and it is difficult for us to imagine that the situation will be different. But look at how the situation in Europe has deteriorated, how suddenly and quickly".

The risks of any misjudgments are clear, and the anxiety triggered by China's bilateral security cooperation agreement with the Solomon Islands shows how easy it is for suspicions and mistrust to lead to misinterpretations of intentions.

China has repeatedly stressed that it stands ready to work with Australia to properly manage differences, and steer the sound and steady development of bilateral relations.

On Sept 22, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, and the two agreed that the two sides would make joint efforts to develop a stable, mutually beneficial and productive relationship through candid communication and constructive exchanges on the basis of mutual respect.

Creating a favorable environment for the sound development of China-Australia relations would be in the interests of both countries and the region as a whole. Canberra should not let itself be swayed in the wrong direction by Washington.

As has been observed, "The Pacific is big enough to hold China and the US."

It is also big enough to hold China, the US, Japan, Australia and all the other countries in the region.

Salmon Rushdie's agent says the author has lost sight in one eye and the use of a hand as he recovers from an attack from a man who rushed the stage at an August literary event in western New York, according to a published report.

Literary agent Andrew Wylie told the Spanish language newspaper El Pais in an article published this weekend that Rushdie suffered three serious wounds to his neck and 15 more wounds to his chest and torso in the attack that took away sight in an eye and left

a hand incapacitated.

Rushdie, 75, spent years in hiding after Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a 1989 edict, a fatwa, calling for his death after publication of his novel "The Satanic Verses," which some Muslims consider blasphemous. Over the past two decades, Rushdie has traveled freely.

Hadi Matar, 24, of Fairview, New Jersey, has been incarcerated after pleading not guilty to attempted murder and assault in the Aug. 12 attack on Rushdie.

RUSSIAN WARPLANE FALLS
ON BUILDING IN SIBERIA;
TWO PILOTS DIE

A Russian warplane slammed into a residential building in the Siberian city of Irkutsk yesterday, killing both crewmembers, authorities said. It was the second time in less than a week that a combat jet crashed in a residential area in Russia.

The Irkutsk region's governor, Igor Kobzev, said the Su-30 fighter jet came down on a private, two-story building housing two families. He said that there were no casualties on the ground as the building's five residents were out at the moment of the crash.

He said the residents would be offered temporary accommodation and compensation.

The cause of the crash wasn't immediately known and an official probe has started. On Oct. 17, an Su-34 bomber crashed near an apartment building in the Sea of Azov port of Yeysk and exploded in a giant fireball, killing 15 and injuring another 19.

The crashes might reflect the growing strain that the fighting in Ukraine has put on the Russian air force.

The United Aircraft Corporation, a state-controlled conglomerate of Russian



Firefighters work at the scene after a warplane crashed into a residential area in Irkutsk, Russia, yesterday

aircraft-making plants, said in a statement that the plane in yesterday's incident came down during a training flight before its delivery to the air force. The jet carried no weapons during the flight.

Surveillance camera videos posted on Russian social networks showed the fighter in a nearly vertical dive and then exploding. Other videos showed the building engulfed by flames and firefighters deployed to extinguish the blaze.

Irkutsk, a major industrial center of more than 600,000 in eastern Siberia,

is home to an aircraft factory producing Su-30s, a supersonic twin-engine, two-seat fighter that has been a key component of the Russian air force. China, India and many other countries also use the planes.

The crash was the 11th reported noncombat crash of a Russian warplane since Moscow sent its troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24. Military experts have noted that as the number of Russian military flights increased sharply during the fighting, so did the number of crashes. MDT/AP



Iran's atomic energy agency alleged on Sunday that hackers acting on behalf of an unidentified foreign country broke into a subsidiary's network and had free access to its email system. An anonymous hacking group claimed responsibility for the attack on Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, demanding Tehran release political prisoners arrested in the recent nationwide protests. The group said it leaked 50 gigabytes of internal emails



Russia's military leadership has withdrawn its officers in the Russian-annexed city of Kherson across the Dnieper River in anticipation of an advance of Ukrainian troops, the Institute for the Study of War think tank said yesterday. To delay the Ukrainian counteroffensive as the Russians complete their retreat, Moscow has left newly mobilized, inexperienced forces on the other side of the wide river, it added.

Slovenia Voters in Slovenia yesterday cast ballots to elect a new president of the European Union nation, with three main contenders leading the race but no clear winner in sight. Though the presidency is largely ceremonial in Slovenia, the vote is still seen as a test for its liberal government amid a soaring crisis fueled by the war in Ukraine.



UK Former Treasury chief Rishi Sunak (pictured) was frontrunner yesterday in the Conservative Party's race to replace Liz Truss as prime minister, as he garnered the public support of over 100 Tory lawmakers to forge ahead of his two main rivals — ousted former Prime Minister Boris Johnson and ex-Cabinet minister Penny Mordaunt.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

AP Photo/Andy Wong



Former Chinese President Hu Jintao (standing at center) is escorted to leave the hall during the closing ceremony of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in Beijing, Saturday — because he was "not feeling well," according to Xinhua.