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GOV'T REMAINS OPTIMISTIC ON THE RESUMPTION OF MAINLAND GROUP TOURS TO MACAU DESPITE THE NEW COVID CASES DETECTED YESTERDAY

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SEOUL HORROR: S. KOREA IN SHOCK, GRIEF AS 153 DIE IN HALLOWEEN CROWD SURGE

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AP PHOTO



India will contribute half a million dollars to the United Nations' efforts to counter global terrorism as new and emerging technologies used by terror groups pose fresh threats to governments around the world, the foreign minister said this weekend. The money will go toward the U.N. Trust Fund for Counter Terrorism and will further strengthen the organization's fight against terrorism, S. Jaishankar said as he addressed a special meeting of the U.N. Counter Terrorism Committee in New Delhi.

AP PHOTO



Japan As the United States and Japan further strengthen their military alliance, they've turned to farmers markets to foster friendlier ties between American military bases and their Japanese neighbors. Yesterday, about 20 Okinawan farmers and vendors came to Camp Hansen, a Marine Corps base on the southern Japanese island of Okinawa, bringing locally grown spinach, pineapples, big lemons and other fresh vegetables and fruits that the U.S. embassy said attracted hundreds of customers.

AP PHOTO



Israel The military yesterday prepped the family home of a Palestinian gunman for demolition, a day after he killed an Israeli man near an Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank. Several people were also wounded in the shooting late Saturday. Dramatic security camera video showed the assailant firing his assault rifle outside a grocery before a security guard rammed him with his truck and pinned him to the ground.

More on backpage

ON A LOOP

The new Covid-19 cluster discovered yesterday triggered tightened measures as city doubles down on zero-Covid P3



INFRASTRUCTURE
BEIJING GREENLIGHTS LAND RECLAMATION FOR AIRPORT EXPANSION

RENATO MARQUES



LABOR
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AT 4% AS ECONOMIC TURMOIL CONTINUES

P4

**HOTEL SECTOR
EMPLOYEES DROP
BY OVER 2,800**

The total number of persons engaged in the hotel sector decreased by 2,846 to 40,141 in 2021, according to data released by the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). Sector revenue expanded 48.2% year-on-year to MOP19.32 billion in 2021; however, the figure represented a decline of 49.5% against 2019. Sector expenditure totaled MOP22.76 billion, up 1.7% year-on-year. The sector recorded a deficit of MOP3.46 billion, which has narrowed compared to 2020 (-MOP9.41 billion). Analyzed by classification, revenue of five-star hotels (MOP15.19 billion), four-star hotels (MOP2.43 billion) and three-star hotels (MOP1.61 billion) swelled 51.4%, 57.1% and 18.0% year-on-year respectively – albeit, from a low base.

**EXPORTS REACH
MOP1B IN SEPTEMBER**

Total merchandise exports amounted to MOP1 billion in September this year, up 2.8% year-on-year. The value of re-exports (MOP861 million) grew 11.1%, including casino-related re-exports, jumped 508.3%, while those of diamonds and diamond jewelry fell 55.4%. From January to September this year, the total value of merchandise exports increased 3% year-on-year to MOP10.13 billion, while re-exports (MOP8.61 billion) and domestic exports (MOP1.52 billion) rose 2.8% and 4.0% respectively. According to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC), external merchandise trade totaled MOP112.51 billion from January to September this year, down 8.4% compared with MOP122.85 billion a year earlier.

PUBLIC WORKS

BEIJING AUTHORIZES LAND RECLAMATION FOR AIRPORT EXPANSION

RENATO MARQUES

The central government has finally approved the land reclamation for the expansion of Macau International Airport's (MIA) capacity, local authorities have revealed.

The central government promised in September this year to enforce "favorable initiatives to accelerate recovery of Macau's tourism sector and advance local infrastructure projects," according to Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng. Ho said the project's approval comes as one of several new initiatives after the central government was briefed in a dedicated session about the latest economic situation in Macau.

The idea of expanding the MIA is not new. Since at least 2017, there has been news of talks and preparatory work aimed at such a goal, with the most crucial matter being the need to request authorization from Beijing authorities to build new landfills in areas adjacent to the current airport that would support expansion.

"The expansion of Macau International Airport and related land reclamation will broaden the development potential of the MSAR (Macau Special Ad-



ministrative Region). It is a step conducive to Macau's further alignment with the national development, and participation in the 'Belt and Road' initiative, reinforcing the basis for the city's economic recovery and adequate economic diversification," Ho said during a meeting with the deputy director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Huang Liuquan, in which he received the approval docu-

ment authorizing expansion of the MIA.

The authorization comes around one year after the MSAR government submitted a formal request to the central government for the airport expansion and related land reclamation in August 2021.

CAPACITY TO INCREASE TO 15 MILLION PASSENGERS/YEAR

When the expansion project concludes, the MIA's passenger

handling capacity will increase to 15 million passengers per year, the Civil Aviation Authority (AACM) said. The project will reclaim about 1.3 square kilometers of land and will be completed in phases.

The land reclamation project includes reclaiming the water areas between the runway and the two taxiways to expand the capacity of the apron where more aircraft stands and fast lanes for taxiing will be built; building an extension of the runway end safety areas to meet the new safety standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization while maintaining the present runway length; and creating a 95-meter-wide water channel between the runway and the apron.

The new superstructure will increase the capacity of the passenger terminal, the general aviation facilities and the runway, the AACM added.

The local aviation sector's governing body also said it is "confident that the enhancement of the airport infrastructure, the optimization of the terminal facilities, the gradual resumption of flight services and the expansion of the aviation network will offer more diversified services to both Macau residents and the travelers from the Pearl River Delta Region."

It added the initiative "has come in time to make way for the recovery of the aviation industry in the post-pandemic period, which will help the industry to better integrate into the Greater Bay Area development and attract more aviation sector professionals to come to Macau."

Macau group tours still on table despite new Covid cluster

ANTHONY LAM

The local government remains optimistic on the resumption of mainland group tours to Macau amid the discovery of four Covid-19 cases yesterday, according to SSM director and pulmonologist Alvis Lo.

In a press conference yesterday, he was questioned about whether the out-

break will affect the plan to resume mainland group tours to Macau, to which he said the forecast should still be bright judging from the effects of control measures as well as the scale, source and transmission route of infections

On the other hand, public relations official Lau Fong Chi at the Macao Government Tourism Office

(MGTO) said that the notice on resumption of excursions is still pending from the mainland government. Announcements will be made in due course, she added.

Lo also recapped his comments on the relapse of infections made near the end of the June 18 outbreak. He confirmed yesterday that the public should not be overly worried about

relapsing infections or outbreaks.

He highlighted that relapses will be inevitable and may even occur after mainland excursions resume.

Over the last several days, social media users have commented that the source of public worry is not Covid-19. Rather, it is the government's policies and measures that cause



such anxieties.

Lo was also asked if the Grand Prix, which will happen on the third weekend

of November, will be affected. He said that each decision will be made on a case-by-case basis.

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Times
DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR_Lynzy Valles
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai
NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS_Alex Torrão, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Seguí
DESIGNER_Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua
SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION
ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com
OFFICE MANAGER_Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com
ADDRESS_Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR
Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84
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ZERO-COVID

RAT tests rolled out as city logs four Covid-19 positives in a single day

ANTHONY LAM

As the city saw four new positive SARS-CoV-2 results yesterday, the Health Bureau (SSM) has triggered tighter measures, such as regular tests and shortened Covid-19 test validity, in response.

The government requires all people in Macau to conduct a rapid antigen test (RAT) each day from yesterday until November 1.

Failing to declare a valid RAT result will result in the health code of the test-taker being converted to yellow the following day. To regain a green code, the test-taker should upload a negative RAT result within the day. Otherwise, the yellow code will remain and can only be converted to green with a negative NAT result (which the test-taker must pay for out of pocket).

On the other hand, a positive RAT result declared on the platform will result in the test-taker's health code becoming red immediately. These test-takers should call an ambulance to deliver them to a NAT facility at the public hospital. All people in the same household should remain in the residence unless otherwise instructed by health personnel.



STEVE NOMAX

An incorrectly-declared result can be rectified immediately with a follow-up declaration of a negative result.

The Social Welfare Bureau announced that social service facilities will offer assistance to the elderly carrying out RATs until November 1.

Meanwhile, the SSM has also

immediately identified the buildings in which the four Covid-positive patients were located as a Red Zone. The buildings are Block I of Edifício Lai Va San Chun at Rua da Saúde n.º 43 and Block I of Edifício Arco Íris at Estrada dos Cavaleiros n.º 105.

The workplace of one of the patients, MGM Cotai, was immediately

put under lockdown until further notice after the confirmation of her infection. The activities of the casino, restaurants and shops were suspended, along with all activities that would attract the gathering of crowds. The hotel has also stopped taking incoming guests.

From now until November 1, all staff and hotel guests will be quarantined on site as a preliminary measure.

In the meantime, the government has also implemented certain measures applicable to people who have remained in the MGM Cotai casino for more than half an hour between October 27 and 29. These people should have seen their health codes converted to yellow. They are required to take a RAT each day and get a negative result before taking a SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test (NAT). They should take a NAT on October 30, 31, and November 1, 3 and 5. On November 6, they should regain their green health codes unless they test positive in any of the serial NATs.

If they have a positive RAT result, they, along with any cohabiting household members, should remain where they are, call for an ambulance and get sent to a centralized quarantine facility.

The detection of the new cases

has prompted the government to once again – after the June 18 outbreak – step up disease control measures. Several events set to be held yesterday, including but not limited to the Lusofonia Festival and the Macau Obstacle Challenge, were either cancelled or suspended.

NAT VALIDITY SHORTENED TO 24 HOURS

The validity period for NAT results obtained for border-crossings between Macau and Zhuhai has been shortened to 24 hours. For the time being, the change will be effective until 11:59pm on November 4. Should the Covid-19 situation improve, the validity period will be extended to 48 hours.

At yesterday's special health press conference, Public Security Police Force (PSP) officer Lei Tak Fai stressed that whether the situation improves will be determined by both governments in Macau and Zhuhai.

Key areas have also been drawn for special NATs between yesterday and Tuesday. The areas cover parts of Fai Chi Kei and Ilha Verde, as well as a sector of T'oi-san off from the Border Gate, a part of Areia Preta to the east of the Border Gate and part of Iao Hon.

ZERO-COVID

Gov't identifies new cases as imported

ANTHONY LAM

The Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center received a report from their Zhuhai counterparts Saturday night that a 43-year-old female Macau resident was found to have a common itinerary with a positive case in Zhuhai, at Shunda Express in Gongbei Port Underground Shopping Centre.

The SSM arranged sampling and medical observation for the woman, who then tested positive in the early hours today. She was sent to the Public Health Clinical Centre in Coloane for medical care.

In addition, the Macau government disclosed the 43-year-old, the previously recorded 66-year-old

patient, as well as another patient in Zhuhai were all logged as being present in the same place in Zhuhai.

Her two sons, aged 13, subsequently tested positive. They study at the Ilha Verde Secondary School of the Macau Commercial Association and tested positive yesterday. Their last tests that were conducted on October 27 yielded negative results. As of yesterday afternoon, their Cycle Threshold (CT) values were 29 and 32.

The woman tested negative in two tests conducted on October 24 and 26, and tested positive early morning yesterday. The SSM considers her infection to be in the early phases. She had a CT value of 17.5, and went to work at

the casino of MGM Cotai between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. on October 26, between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. on October 27, and between 7 a.m. and 11 a.m. on October 28.

The three people have been vaccinated.

A grandmother who lives with the two teenagers tested negative as of yesterday afternoon.

Their school will be closed for seven days, starting from yesterday. About 1,000 students and workers will have their health codes changed to yellow and receive five tests until then. They are encouraged to stay home.

For the time being, given the clear source of infection and route of transmission, the SSM did not see the need for citywide

school suspension.

Health Bureau (SSM) director and pulmonologist Alvis Lo reiterated in a press conference yesterday that his team will conduct a "dynamic evaluation" on the situation to determine the probability of a major outbreak or the need for tighter measures. He said for the time being, "overly stringent measures" are not necessary.

Meanwhile, the criteria to determine who in MGM Cotai requires quarantine is based on the shared footprints within the premises, SSM coordination and public health doctor Leong Iek Hou explained.

She was questioned on the matter as some employees within shops in the resort were allowed to leave yesterday. She de-



One of the key areas for NAT

fended this decision given that these workers did not use the back-of-house facilities in the resort or did not check into or out from work at similar times to the 43-year-old. As such, they were considered to present lower risks when compared with other MGM Cotai employees.

In a press statement past midnight, the Novel

Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center informed that another positive case related to the 43-year-old patient was discovered – the fourth case in the cluster.

The 34-year-old Macau resident lives in the Block I of Edifício Lai Va San Chun – a building classified as Red Zone yesterday.



LABOR

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AT 4% AS ECONOMIC TURMOIL CONTINUES

LYNZY VALLES

The general unemployment rate slightly decreased to 4% in the July to September period, while the unemployment rate of local residents stood at 5.2%, dropping slightly by 0.3 percentage points.

Total employment was 363,000 and employed residents totaled 280,000, up 100 and 1,700 respectively from the previous period.

The labor force living in Macau totaled 378,200 and the labor force participation rate was 68.9%.

The figures are still consi-

dered high as the city continues to suffer from economic fallout caused by the pandemic, with the government adhering to strict Covid-19 restrictions.

Data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) shows the underemployment rate held steady at 16.5%.

A recent survey titled "Gig work and young people in Macau in the digital age" shows most people agree a stable job brings more security than gig work.

The study concluded that 47% of people expressly said they were willing to accept non-permanent work (gig work) as their choice of job.

The number of those who are unemployed decreased by 1,100 from the previous period to 15,200. Among the unemployed searching for a new job, most were previously engaged in gaming and junket activities and in the construction sector.

Meanwhile, the proportion of new labor market entrants seeking their first job increased 1.1 percentage points to 13.1% of the total unemployed.

The number of the unemployed dropped 100 from the previous period to 62,500, with the majority working in gaming and junket activities, hotels, restaurants and similar activities and retail trade.

Median monthly employment earnings of the employed in the third quarter dropped MOP1,300 quarter-to-quarter to MOP14,000.

Lawmakers from the workers association have called on the government to enact additional and more effective measures to promote the employment and reemployment of local workers affected by the Covid-19 crisis.

E-VOUCHER

140,000 RESIDENTS GET 'LIFE SUPPORT SUBSIDY' ON THE FIRST DAY

RENATO MARQUES

ABOUT 140,000 residents received the latest round of government support via the "life support subsidy" on the first day the subsidy was distributed (Friday, October 28).

The subsidy grants 8,000 patacas per resident. It aims to assist residents facing difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. About two-thirds of recipients (108,627) received the subsidy via direct transfer into their mobile payment applications, while the other 31,019 received it via payments to their previously issued "consumption cards."

Eligible residents who have fully used the third round of electronic consumption benefits (below 10 patacas balance) can receive the 8,000 patacas. The benefits can be used up until June 30, 2023, and up to a maximum ceiling of 300 patacas per day.

Those who have not yet used the balances (including the initial amount and amount for immediate discount) from the third round will only be able to receive the support of the fourth round after their balances have been fully used (below 10 patacas balance).

Unlike the third round, this time the 8,000 patacas is deposited as one balance (without the immediate discount balance) and can be spent completely without the need to reload the spending balance to use the discount balance.

VONG HIN FAI TO RUN FOR LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION HEAD

LAWYER and lawmaker, Vong Hin Fai, will run for president of the Macau Lawyers Association (AAM), having submitted his candidacy for the upcoming elections in December.

Incumbent Jorge Neto Valente has announced he will not be running for a new term after leading the association for 23 years – from 1996 to 1999, and from 2002 to today.

Vong's candidacy includes Oriana Pun as secretary general and Alvaro Rodrigues – who is the only one currently part of AAM's executive arm, as cited in a report issued by TDM.

Vong is a senior partner, lawyer and private notary at Vong Hin Fai Lawyers & Private Notary and is an indirectly elected lawmaker in the Legislative Assembly.

In the 2020 election, Neto Valente's candidacy garnered 254 votes, while 18 votes were declared null and void. He was the only candidate that ran in the election. The 2018 election saw the most participation ever seen in the AAM election. He ran unopposed as the potential challenger Sérgio de Almeida Correia's candidacy was not formalized prior to the candidacy submission deadline.

Currently, there are 442 lawyers registered with the association. LV

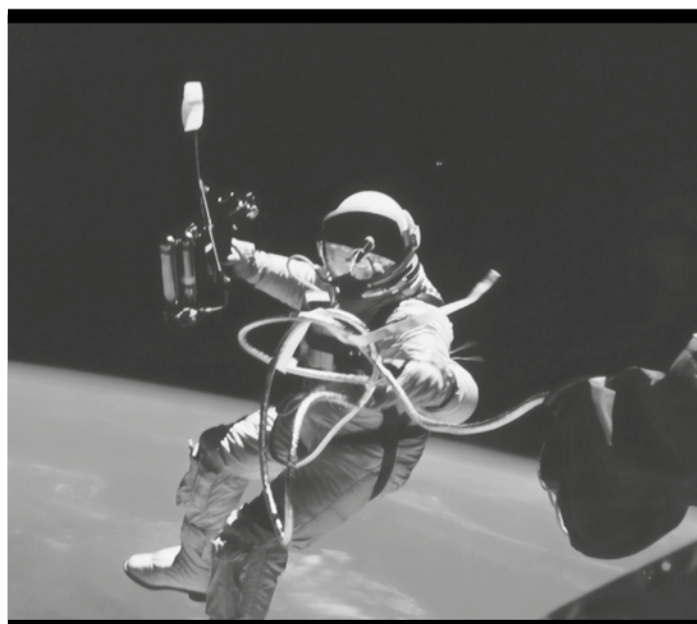
Some 50 scholars sign up for Chinese space missions

SOME 50 academics and scholars from Hong Kong and Macau have signed up for the first-ever opportunity to join the country's manned space missions.

Applications for payload specialists, a type of astronaut mainly responsible for conducting aerospace experiments and research, closed late last week in the HKSAR, following the earlier application deadline in the Macau SAR.

The recruitment drive was launched earlier this month, marking the first time the country had recruited candidates for payload specialists from the two SARs.

The Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau of the HKSAR government, which is in charge of the screening process in Hong



Kong, said it had received nearly 50 applications by Wednesday last week, many of which came from universities, research institutes and local companies.

The number of applican-

ts was considered desirable since there are strict requirements for payload specialists.

According to official announcements, the candidates must be Chinese nation-

nals aged between 30 and 45, with a doctoral degree in a relevant field and have at least three years of professional working experience in a relevant discipline. They also need to meet certain physical attributes.

Benny Zee, director of the Office of Research and Knowledge Transfer Services of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), told Xinhua that both the number of applicants from the CUHK and the diversity of their backgrounds were beyond his expectation.

"Hong Kong has a competitive edge in basic research, and the recruitment for payload specialists is very inspiring for the scientists as it gives them an opportunity to take part in national research projects," he said.

Earlier this month, at least four scholars from the University of Macau (UM) and the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) had reportedly signed up for the payload specialist selection. LV/XINHUA

CYBERSECURITY

Committee calls for reinforcement of measures against cyberattacks

RENATO MARQUES

THE Cybersecurity Committee has called for further attention to and reinforcement of existing measures to protect Macau and China against cyberattacks, according to committee members who deliberated at the only plenary meeting this year, which took place Friday.

Presided over by the Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng, the committee has reviewed the overall report for 2021 and discussed the current state of local cybersecurity and challenges and future initiatives in that area.

At the meeting, Ho remarked again that the global cybersecurity situation has become increasingly severe and that the international security landscape has entered a



new period of turbulence, with several hacking activities becoming more prevalent.

“Since last year, government agencies and private companies around the world have con-

tinued to be threatened by serious cyberattacks, further highlighting the need to maintain cyberse-

curity,” Ho said. He added that “maintaining cybersecurity is at the forefront of safeguarding national security and in the current complex internal and external security landscape.”

The CE also said all government departments must continuously strengthen awareness and the state of urgency, as well as establish a mechanism to prepare “for the worst-case-scenario.” In addition, he suggested that draft measures be put into practice to effectively protect network security in order to properly safeguard national sovereignty, security, and the development of the country’s interests.

At the same meeting, the committee’s vice chairman and Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, reviewed the

local government’s progress and achievements in “containing external threats,” “improving defense level” and “building a talent team” during the previous year.

Wong said the current network security awareness of all sectors of society has increased when compared to before the local Cybersecurity Law had been created, and the technical ability of cybersecurity maintenance staff has also increased.

The CE has also instructed the Macau Cybersecurity Incident Alert and Response Centre (CARIC) and the supervisory entities to diligently perform their duties and promote the development of cybersecurity in Macau. For this work to occur, it is necessary, on the one hand, to provide critical infrastructure operators with more technical guidance and support services that meet their needs, helping them to curb cyberattacks more efficiently; and, on the other hand, it is necessary to strengthen supervision to ensure that operators perform their obligations in accordance with the law.

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US-CHINA

BIDEN FACES 'UNPREDICTABLE' ERA WITH CHINA'S EMPOWERED XI

AAMER MADHANI,
WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Joe Biden's administration is taking stock of a newly empowered Xi Jinping as the Chinese president begins a third, norm-breaking five-year term as Communist Party leader. With U.S.-Chinese relations already fraught, concerns are growing in Washington that more difficult days may be ahead.

Xi has amassed a measure of power over China's ruling party unseen since Mao Zedong, the leader from 1949 until his death in 1976. Xi's consolidation of power comes as the United States has updated its defense and national security strategies to reflect that China is now America's most potent military and economic adversary.

Biden takes pride in having built rapport with Xi since first meeting him more than a decade ago, when they served as their countries' vice presidents. But Biden now faces, in Xi, a counterpart buoyed by a greater measure of power and determined to cement China's superpower status even while navigating strong economic and diplomatic headwinds.

"We're not back in the Mao era. Xi Jinping is not Mao," said Jude Blanchette, chair of China studies



at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "But we are definitely in new territory and unpredictable territory in terms of the stability and predictability of China's political system."

Biden and Xi are expected to hold talks on the sidelines of next month's Group of 20 summit in Indonesia, a long-anticipated meeting that would come after nearly two years of tense relations. The leaders are dug into winning the upper hand in a competition that both believe will determine which

country is the leading global economic and political force driving the next century.

"There's an awful lot of issues for us to talk to China about," said National Security Council spokesman John Kirby. He added that U.S. and Chinese officials have been working to arrange a meeting of the leaders, though one has yet to be confirmed. "Some issues are fairly contentious and some should be collaborative," Kirby said.

Biden and Xi traveled together

in the U.S. and China in 2011 and 2012, and they have held five phone or video calls since Biden became president in January 2021. But the U.S.-China relationship has become far more complicated since those getting-to-know-you talks over meals in Washington and on the Tibetan plateau a decade ago.

As president, Biden has repeatedly taken China to task for coercive trade practices, military provocations against self-ruled Taiwan and differences over Rus-

sia's prosecution of its war against Ukraine.

Xi's government has criticized the Biden administration's posture toward Taiwan — which Beijing looks eventually to unify with the communist mainland — as undermining China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Chinese president also has suggested that Washington wants to stifle Beijing's growing clout as it tries to overtake the U.S. as the world's largest economy.

"External attempts to suppress and contain China may escalate at any time," Xi warned in his address before the Communist Party congress. "We must therefore be more mindful of potential dangers, be prepared to deal with worst-case scenarios, and be ready to withstand high winds, choppy waters and even dangerous storms."

Dali Yang, a political scientist at the University of Chicago who researches Chinese politics, said there are some potentially stabilizing developments emerging in the relationship after months of rancor.

Two of China's best-known diplomats in Washington were elevated at the Communist Party meeting. Foreign Minister Wang Yi was selected for the Communist Party's Politburo, the policymaking body made up of the 24 most senior officials. China's ambassador to the U.S., Qin Gang, is joining its central committee. Their elevation should bring a measure of continuity to the U.S.-China relationship, Yang said. **MDT/AP**

ZERO-COVID

Shanghai district orders mass Covid-19 testing, lockdown

CHINA'S largest city of Shanghai is ordering mass testing Friday of all 1.3 million residents of its downtown Yangpu district and confining them to their homes at least until results are known.

China's largest city of Shanghai is ordering mass testing Friday of all 1.3 million residents of its downtown Yangpu district and confining them to their homes at least until results are known.

The demand is an echo of measures ordered over the summer that led to a two-month lockdown of the entire city of 25 million that devastated its economy, prompting food shortages and rare confrontations between residents and the authorities.

At the start of the lockdown, authorities said it would last just days but then kept extending the



deadline.

China has shown no sign of backing away from its hardline "zero-COVID" policy since a major congress of the ruling Communist Party concluded this week by awarding Xi Jinping a third five-year term in power and packed top bodies with his loyalists.

Many Chinese had hoped for a relaxation of the strict anti-COVID-19 proto-

cols, which remain in place even while much of the rest of the world has opened up. China's borders remain largely closed and arrivals must undergo a 10-day quarantine at a designated place.

Despite its costs, and the World Health Organization calling it unsustainable, China credits the strategy with keeping case numbers and deaths at a fraction of

those in other countries.

China on Friday reported a 1,337 new cases — most of them asymptomatic — and no new deaths. Shanghai reported 11 asymptomatic cases and Tibet had one confirmed case with symptoms and five asymptomatic cases. China says it has recorded a total of 258,660 cases and 5,226 deaths since the disease was first detected in

the central city of Wuhan in late 2019.

In a sign China's tough measures will be maintained in the long term, Shanghai plans to build a permanent quarantine center on an island in the Huangpu River that divides the financial hub, according to the business magazine Caixin.

The 1.6 billion yuan (\$221 million) project on Fuxing Island will expand existing facilities to create 3,009 isolation rooms and 3,250 beds, with construction expected to be completed in six months, Caixin said.

China's domestically developed vaccines are considered relatively ineffective and it has refused to approve foreign brands such as Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca and J&J.

Still, China wants more people to get booster shots

before it relaxes its restrictions. As of mid-October, 90% of Chinese were fully vaccinated and 57% had received a booster shot.

China has relied on domestically developed vaccines, primarily two inactivated vaccines that have proven effective in preventing death and serious disease but less so than the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines at stopping the spread of the disease.

Chinese authorities also have not mandated vaccination — entering an office building or other public places requires a negative COVID-19 test, not proof of vaccination. And the country's "zero-COVID" approach means that only a small proportion of the population has been infected and built immunity that way, compared to other places. **MDT/AP**

SEOUL HORROR

S. Korea in shock, grief as 153 die in Halloween crowd surge

KIM TONG-HYUNG
& HYUNG-JIN KIM, SEOUL

CONCERNED relatives raced to hospitals in search of their loved ones yesterday as South Korea mourned the deaths of more than 150 people, mostly in their 20s and 30s, who got trapped and crushed after a huge Halloween party crowd surged into a narrow alley in a nightlife district in Seoul.

Witnesses said the crowd surge Saturday night in the Itaewon area caused "a hell-like" chaos as people fell on each other "like dominoes." Some people were bleeding from their noses and mouths while being given CPR, witnesses said, while others clad in Halloween costumes continued to sing and dance nearby, possibly without knowing the severity of the situation.

"I still can't believe what has happened. It was like a hell," said Kim Mi Sung, an official at a nonprofit organization that promotes tourism in Itaewon.

Kim said she performed CPR on 10 people who were unconscious and nine of them were declared dead on the spot. Kim said the 10 were mostly women wearing witch outfits and other Halloween costumes.

The crowd surge is the country's worst disaster in years. As of last night, officials put the death toll at 153 and the number of injured people at 133. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety said the death count could further rise as 37 of the injured people were in



AP PHOTO

serious conditions.

Ninety-seven of the dead were women and 56 were men. More than 80% of the dead are in their 20s and 30s, but at least four were teenagers.

At least 20 of the dead are foreigners from China, Russia, Iran and elsewhere. There is one American among the dead, the Interior Ministry said in a release.

An estimated 100,000 people had gathered in Itaewon for the country's biggest outdoor Halloween festivities since the pandemic began. The South Korean government had eased COVID-19 restrictions in recent months.

Witnesses said the streets were so densely clogged with people and slow-moving vehicles that

it was practically impossible for emergency workers and ambulances to reach the alley near Hamilton Hotel swiftly.

Authorities said thousands of people have called or visited a nearby city office, reporting missing relatives and asking officials to confirm whether they were among those injured or dead after the crush.

The bodies of the dead were being kept at 42 hospitals in Seoul and nearby Gyeonggi province, according to Seoul City, which said it will instruct crematories to burn more bodies per day as part of plans to support funeral proceedings.

Around 100 businesses in the Hamilton Hotel area have agreed to shut down their shops throu-

gh today to reduce the number of partygoers who would come to the streets through Halloween day.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol declared a one-week national mourning period yesterday and ordered flags at government buildings and public offices to fly at half-staff. During a televised speech, Yoon said supporting the families of the victims, including their funeral preparations, and the treatment of the injured would be a top priority for his government.

He also called for officials to thoroughly investigate the cause of the accident and review the safety of other large cultural and entertainment events to ensure they proceed safely.

"This is really devastating. The tragedy and disaster that need not have happened took place in the heart of Seoul amid Halloween (celebrations)," Yoon said during the speech. "I feel heavy hearted and cannot contain my sadness as a president responsible for the people's lives and safety."

After the speech, Yoon visited the Itaewon alley where the disaster occurred. Local TV footage showed Yoon inspecting the alley filled with trash and being briefed by emergency officials.

It was not immediately clear what led the crowd to surge into the narrow, downhill alley. One survivor said many people fell and toppled one another "like dominoes" after they were pushed by others.

The survivor, surnamed Kim, said they were trapped for about an hour and a half before being rescued, as some people shouted "Help me!" and others were short of breath, according to the Seoul-based Hankyoreh newspaper.

Another survivor, Lee Chang-kyu, said he saw about five or six men push others before one or two began falling, according to the newspaper.

In an interview with news channel YTN, Hwang Min-hyeok, a visitor to Itaewon, said it was shocking to see rows of bodies near the hotel. He said emergency workers were initially overwhelmed, leaving pedestrians struggling to administer CPR to the injured lying on the streets. People wailed beside the bodies of their friends, he said.

A man in his 20s said he avoided being trampled by managing to get into a bar whose door was open in the alley, Yonhap news agency reported. A woman in her 20s surnamed Park told Yonhap that she and others were standing along the side of the alley while others caught in the middle of the alley had no escape. **MDT/AP**

NALGAE

Philippine storm victims feared tsunami, ran toward mudslide

JIM GOMEZ, MANILA

VICTIMS of a huge mudslide set off by a storm in a coastal Philippine village that had once been devastated by a killer tsunami mistakenly thought a tidal wave was coming and ran to higher ground where they were buried alive by the boulder-laden deluge, an official said yesterday.

At least 20 bodies, including those of children,

have been dug out by rescuers in the vast muddy mound that now covers much of Kusiong village in southern Maguindanao province, among the hardest-hit by Tropical Storm Nalgae, which blew out of the northwestern Philippines early yesterday.

Officials fear 80 to 100 more people, including entire families, may have been buried by the deluge or washed away by flash floods in Kusiong be-

tween Thursday night and early Friday, according to Naguib Sinarimbo, the interior minister for a Muslim autonomous region run by former separatist guerrillas.

Nalgae, which had vast rain clouds, left at least 73 people dead in eight provinces and one city in the Philippine archipelago, including in Kusiong, and a trail of destruction and flooding in one of the world's most disaster-

-prone countries.

The catastrophe in Kusiong, populated mostly by the Teduray ethnic minority group, was particularly tragic because its more than 2,000 villagers have carried out disaster-preparedness drills every year for decades to brace for a tsunami because of a deadly history. But they were not as prepared for the dangers that could come from Mount Minandar, where their village



AP PHOTO

lies at the foothills, Sinarimbo said.

About 20 typhoons and storms batter the Philippine archipelago each year. It is located on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," a

region along most of the Pacific Ocean rim where many volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occur, making the nation one of the world's most disaster-prone. **MDT/AP**

PUTIN'S WAR

Global concern on Russia's suspension of Ukraine grain deal

SAM MEDNICK, KYIV

U.S. President Joe Biden warned that global hunger could increase because of Russia's suspension of a U.N.-brokered deal to allow safe passage for ships carrying Ukrainian grain.

"It's really outrageous," said Biden speaking in Wilmington, Delaware, on Saturday. "There's no merit to what they're doing. The U.N. negotiated that deal and that should be the end of it."

Biden spoke hours after Russia announced it would immediately halt participation in the agreement, alleging that Ukraine staged a drone attack Saturday against Russia's Black Sea Fleet ships off the coast of occupied Crimea. Ukraine has denied the attack.

The grain initiative has allowed more than 9 million tons of grain in 397 ships to safely leave Ukrainian ports since it was signed in July. It was to be renewed in late November. The grain agreement has succeeded in bringing down global food prices, which have fallen by approx-



imately 15% from their peak in March, according to the United Nations.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the decision predictable and said Russia has been deliberately aggravating the food crisis since September. Currently, some 176 ships loaded with grain are prevented from sailing from Ukraine's ports, he said.

"This is food for more than 7 million consumers. ... Why is it that some handful of people somewhere in the

Kremlin can decide whether there will be food on the tables of people in Egypt or Bangladesh?" he said in his nightly address to the nation Saturday.

Russia's action is facing international condemnation. European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell urged Russia to reverse its decision, in a tweet Sunday. Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for the U.N. secretary general, said the world body is in touch with Russian authorities and it is vital all parties refrain

from any action that would impede the grain initiative.

Russia had been setting conditions to withdraw from the deal for some time, the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank said. Even if Ukraine did order the attack on Russia's Black Sea Fleet, it would have been proportionate to Russia's bombing campaign on Ukrainian civilian targets and infrastructure in recent weeks, it added.

Earlier this month, Moscow intensified its missile and drone strikes on Ukraine's power stations, waterworks and other key infrastructure, damaging 40% of Ukraine's electric system and forcing the government to implement rolling blackouts.

Russian attacks are continuing across the country.

In the past 24 hours, Russian missiles have killed at least five people and wounded nine, according to a statement from the office of the president. In fierce fighting in Ukraine's east, Russia is trying to capture the city of Bakhmut and several centers and villages in the area have been shelled. **MDT/AP**

investigation into the hack, and into the leak of the information to a newspaper.

"Was Liz Truss's phone hacked by Russia, was there a news blackout and if so why?" said Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesperson Layla Moran. "If it turns out this information was withheld from the public to protect Liz Truss' leadership bid, that would be unforgivable."

Labour Party law-and-order spokesperson Yvette Cooper said "the story raises issues around cybersecurity."

"It's why cybersecurity has to be taken so seriously by everyone across government, the role of hostile states," she told Sky News. "But also the allegations about whether a Cabinet minister has been using a personal phone for serious government business, and serious questions about why this information or this story has been leaked or briefed right now." **MDT/AP**



ussions about the Ukraine war with foreign officials, as well as private conversations between Truss and a political ally, former Treasury chief Kwasi Kwarteng.

The U.K. government spokesperson declined to

comment on security arrangements, but said it had "robust systems in place to protect against cyber threats," including regular security briefings for ministers.

Opposition parties demanded an independent

this day in history

1984 INDIAN PRIME MINISTER SHOT DEAD



Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, has been killed by assassins in New Delhi.

Mrs Gandhi was thought to have been walking through her gardens this morning when she was shot. She was taken to the All India Medical Hospital where she underwent an emergency operation to remove the bullets but died an hour and a half later.

Initial reports suggest the two attackers were guards at her home who were then shot by other security officers.

No exact motive is known but it is believed the pair were Sikh extremists acting in retaliation for the storming of the Sikh holy shrine of the Golden Temple in Amritsar in June.

Mrs Gandhi had been receiving death threats since the attack on the temple in which 1,000 people died.

The night before her death she told a political rally: "I don't mind if my life goes in the service of the nation. If I die today, every drop of my blood will invigorate the nation."

Security throughout the country has been stepped up. Roads to the hospital and the home of the prime minister have been sealed off and borders around Delhi have been closed.

The Indian cabinet has started an emergency meeting to choose a successor.

India's High Commissioner, Prakash Mehrotra, said: "Democracy is very deep rooted in our country and the country is prepared to face any situation. A meeting is being called in Delhi, it is usual that the number two man in the cabinet takes charge for the time being."

Mrs Gandhi first became prime minister in 1966 and again in 1980 and was praised for her battle against famine in rural areas.

Stan Orme from the Anglo Indian Parliamentary Association said: "It is a very terrible thing. She was a very impressive person, very strong-willed. It is a real tragedy."

Courtesy BBC News

BRITISH PARLIAMENT

UK politicians demand probe into Liz Truss phone hack claim

THE British government insisted yesterday it has robust cybersecurity for government officials, after a newspaper reported that former Prime Minister Liz Truss' phone was hacked while she was U.K. foreign minister.

The Mail yesterday said that the hack was discovered when Truss was running to become Conservative Party leader and prime minister in the summer. It said the security breach was kept secret by then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson and the head of the civil service.

The newspaper, citing unnamed sources, said Russian spies were suspected of the hack. It said the hackers gained access to sensitive information, including dis-

IN CONTEXT

Riots erupted across India following the murder of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, as Hindus took their revenge on Sikhs who were blamed for the assassination.

In the days following the death of the prime minister up to 1,000 people are thought to have died. The army were ordered to go into the cities and quell the violence.

Mrs Gandhi's son, Rajiv, was sworn in as her successor within hours of her death. He went on to win a landslide victory in the general election in December 1984.

On 6 January 1989, Satwant Singh and Kehar Singh were hanged for killing Mrs Gandhi. Balbir Singh was acquitted.

Rajiv Gandhi was himself assassinated by a suicide bomber on 21 May 1991.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Flashy Dubai will cash in on a World Cup a short flight away

JON GAMBRELL, DUBAI

THE FIFA World Cup may be bringing as many as 1.2 million fans to Qatar, but the nearby flashy emirate of Dubai is also looking to cash in on the major sports tournament taking place just a short flight away.

Some soccer fan clubs have already said they'll be commuting to Qatar during the cup on 45-minute flights from Dubai, the skyscraper-studded, beachfront city-state in the United Arab Emirates. Other fans plan to sleep on cruise ships or camp out in the desert amid a feverish rush for rooms in Doha.

Dubai's airlines, bars, restaurants, shopping malls and other attractions now hope to benefit, further boosting their rebounding tourism industry in the crucial fall and winter months after the blows delivered by the coronavirus pandemic.

"If you can't stay in Qatar, Dubai is the place you'd most like to go as a foreign tourist," said

AP PHOTO



James Swanston, a Middle East and North Africa expert at Capital Economics. "It's somewhere safe, somewhere more liberal in terms of Western norms. It's the most attractive destination."

Now home to the world's tallest building, cavernous malls — including one with an indoor ski slope — and thriving nightclub scene, Dubai has seen explosive growth fueled by its boom-an-

d-bust real estate market that's transformed the one-time pearling village over the last 20 years.

Its long-haul carrier Emirates helped make Dubai International Airport the busiest in the world for foreign travel and provides a steady stream of new visitors who stay for layovers or longer. And while still an autocratic sheikhdom like its other Gulf Arab neighbors, Dubai has a relatively

more-liberal view on drinking and nightlife.

In the lead-up to the tournament, concerns about hotel room space and high prices for the rooms available have trailed Qatar, which lacks hotel capacity for all teams, workers, volunteers and fans at the World Cup. So Doha has created camping and cabin sites, hiring cruise ships, and encouraging fans to stay in

neighboring countries and fly in for games.

Qatar has estimated it will have 45,000 hotel rooms for the tournament.

Surrounding nations, like Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, also suggest they could see a spike in visitors — even though Bahrain is the only among them that allows alcohol. Even Iran, months ago, suggested developing plans for World Cup tourists to stay on its Kish Island. Apparently, nothing came of the idea and now the Islamic Republic is gripped by nationwide protests.

Meanwhile, Dubai has over 140,000 hotel rooms, putting it easily into the top 10 destinations worldwide as far as available hotel rooms go, said Philip Wooller, a senior director at STR, a company that monitors the hotel industry. Dubai also offers price ranges greater than what Qatar can at the moment, given the demand, he said.

"I think Dubai is an incredibly eclectic city," Wooller said. "You can buy a room for \$100 or you can buy a room for \$5,000."

Still, he added, he expects "Qatar will be able to accommodate most of the fans coming to the World Cup (but) there will be a knock-on in Dubai."

Dubai appears fully poised to take advantage of the tournament. **MDT/AP**

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OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

COOPERATION
BENEFITS BOTH
GERMANY AND CHINA

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz will pay a formal visit to China on Friday at Premier Li Keqiang's invitation.

Short as it may be — reportedly no overnight stay is planned — the German chancellor's first China visit, also the first by any European Union leader since the pandemic started, will be closely watched as a bellwether for relations between the EU and China.

Considering the degree of interdependence that has developed over the decades between the Chinese and German economies, and Germany's recent pains over how to reevaluate and reposition ties with China in the context of a corresponding EU policy overhaul, Chancellor Scholz's visit carries very high stakes. After all, some in his government have displayed deep worries about their economy getting too close to that of China and too reliant on it. So much so that there have been growing calls from within the coalition government to "diversify" away from China and show "no more naivety" in dealing with China, which is putting pressure on the chancellor himself.

But no responsible leader can ignore the hard truth of economic reality. China has been Germany's biggest trading partner for years, with bilateral trade in goods nearing 246 billion euros (\$245.09 billion) last year. Contrary to what some Western critics seem to assume, Sino-German economic and trade ties have never been one-sidedly beneficial to either. With both economies conspicuously dependent on the international market and mutually complementary, the special closeness between them has been an outcome of normal market logic. Had the Chinese side "weaponized" trade, as some in the West clamor, there would not have been the sizable German business presence in China. That most German automakers have formed joint ventures with Chinese firms, and some have even increased investments amid the current political headwinds, attests not only to the appeal of the huge potential of the Chinese market, but also their confidence in cooperation.

Scholz will reportedly lead a delegation of senior executives from such German industry giants as Adidas, BASF, Bayer, BMW, Siemens and Volkswagen. There is no better way to build trust and dispel misgivings than face-to-face communication.

Volkswagen CEO Oliver Blume was correct in saying it is very important for the two countries to communicate, and listen to each other. That the German government just approved Chinese shipping company Cosco acquiring a stake in a container terminal at Hamburg Port despite internal pressure shows reason still prevails in Berlin's approach to relations with China. As a spokesperson of the German government said, "decoupling" from the Chinese economy isn't the right way to go.

LEBANON PRESIDENT LEAVES WITH
NO REPLACEMENT, CRISIS DEEPENS

President Michel Aoun left Lebanon's presidential palace yesterday, marking the end of his six-year term without a replacement, leaving the small nation in a political vacuum that is likely to worsen its historic economic meltdown.

As Aoun's term ends, the country is being run by a caretaker government after Prime Minister-designate Najib Mikati failed to form a new Cabinet following May 15 parliamentary



elections. Aoun and his supporters warn that such a government doesn't have full power to run the country, saying that weeks of "constitutional chaos" lay ahead.

In a speech outside the palace, Aoun told thousands of supporters that he has accepted the resignation of Mikati's government. The move is likely to further deprive the caretaker administration of legitimacy and worsen existing political tensions in the country.

THE
BUZZ

AP PHOTO



A bag distributed by Mars - the maker of Snickers and M&M's - for recycling candy wrappers is positioned between pumpkins in Ann Arbor, Mich., on October 19

HALLOWEEN

TRICK OR TRASH:
CANDY MAKERS GRAPPLE
WITH PLASTIC WASTE

DEE-ANN DURBIN

HALLOWEEN treats have a tricky problem: plastic packaging that's difficult to recycle.

As America loads up on an estimated 600 million pounds of candy for Halloween, a handful of companies are trying to make it easier to recycle all those wrappers. But they acknowledge their efforts are only making a small dent and say more fundamental changes are needed.

Since the beginning of October, Mars — the maker of Snickers and M&M's — has distributed 17,400 candy waste collection bags to U.S. consumers through its website and at community events. The bags can be filled with wrappers and packaging from any brand and mailed free to a specialty recycler in Illinois. That recycler, G2 Revolution, forms the packages into pellets and uses them to make waste bags for dogs.

The bags fit around 4 ounces of material; if all 17,400 are returned, that would equal more than 2 tons of recycled wrappers. But even then, the recycling program would still address just a fraction of the problem.

"What I'd like to see is this program actually goes away over time and we have a solution where it's no longer required and we're fully recyclable," said Tim LeBel, president of sales for Mars Wrigley U.S.

Mars is partnering with Lexington, Kentucky-based Rubicon Technologies, a consultant and software provider that connects companies and municipalities to recyclers. Since 2019, Rubicon has had its own program called Trick or Trash, which mails one free box to schools, businesses and community groups to collect candy wrappers for recycling. An additional box, or a box for personal use, is \$100; Rubicon says that covers the cost of making the box, shipping it both ways and recycling the wrappers. Rubicon expects to send out 5,000 boxes this year.

Mars and Rubicon won't say how much they're spending on their Halloween programs. Rubicon notes that it pays extra to UPS to offset the carbon emissions from shipping.

Plastic wrappers are ideal for candy for lots of reasons. They're cheap and lightweight, which cuts down on shipping costs, said Muhammad Rabnawaz, an associate profes-

sor in the school of packaging at Michigan State University. They're also easy to modify for different functions; some might have a coating so candy doesn't stick to them, for example.

But plastic wrappers are a challenge for recycling companies. They often contain a mix of materials, like foil, which must be separated. They're small and flimsy, making it easy for them to bypass typical sorting equipment. They have to be cleaned to remove grease, oil and other food waste. They're multi-colored, so when they're mixed together they come out as an unappealing brown.

Even when companies do go to the effort of recycling candy wrappers, they produce such a low-value plastic that it doesn't recoup the cost of recycling.

"It's got to be profitable. These guys aren't social workers," said Brandon Wright, a spokesman for the National Waste and Recycling Association, which represents waste management companies.

As a result, a lot of plastic packaging ends up getting thrown away. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, containers and packaging made up 21% of trash going into landfills in 2018. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Poland has chosen the U.S. government and Westinghouse to build the central European country's first nuclear power plant, part of an effort to burn less coal and gain greater energy independence. Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said late Friday on Twitter that Poland would use the "reliable, safe technology" of the Westinghouse Electric Company for the plant in Pomerania province near the Baltic Sea coast. The exact location remains to be identified.

AP PHOTO



Brazilians began voting yesterday morning in a polarizing presidential runoff election that pits an incumbent vowing to safeguard conservative Christian values against a former president promising to return the country to a more prosperous past. The runoff shaped up as a close contest between President Jair Bolsonaro and his political nemesis, former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Both are well-known, divisive political figures who stir passion as much as loathing.

AP PHOTO



Somalia Two car bombs exploded Saturday at a busy junction in Somalia's capital near key government offices, causing "scores of civilian casualties" including children, national police said. One hospital worker counted at least 30 bodies amid fears of possibly many more. The attack in Mogadishu occurred on a day when the president, prime minister and other senior officials were meeting to discuss expanded efforts to combat violent extremism.