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MACAU HOSTS EXPOS OF AUTOMOBILES, YACHTS, BUSINESS AIRCRAFT P4



AP PHOTO



Indonesia's president vowed yesterday not to let Southeast Asia become the front lines of a new Cold War amid increasing tensions between the United States and China, saying as his country took over the chairmanship of the influential Association of Southeast Asian Nations that it would not become "a proxy to any powers." Joko Widodo said the 10-nation bloc with a combined population of some 700 million people "must be a dignified region" and "uphold the values of humanity and democracy." More on p7

AP PHOTO



Israel's president officially tapped former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to form a government yesterday, opening the door for the likely return to power of the long-serving leader after a one-year hiatus. With Netanyahu comes what's expected to be Israel's most right-wing coalition ever. Elections earlier this month indicated a clear win for Netanyahu and his ultra-Orthodox and ultranationalist allies and ended the short-lived, ideologically-diverse government that had ousted him last year after Netanyahu's 12 consecutive years in power.

AP PHOTO

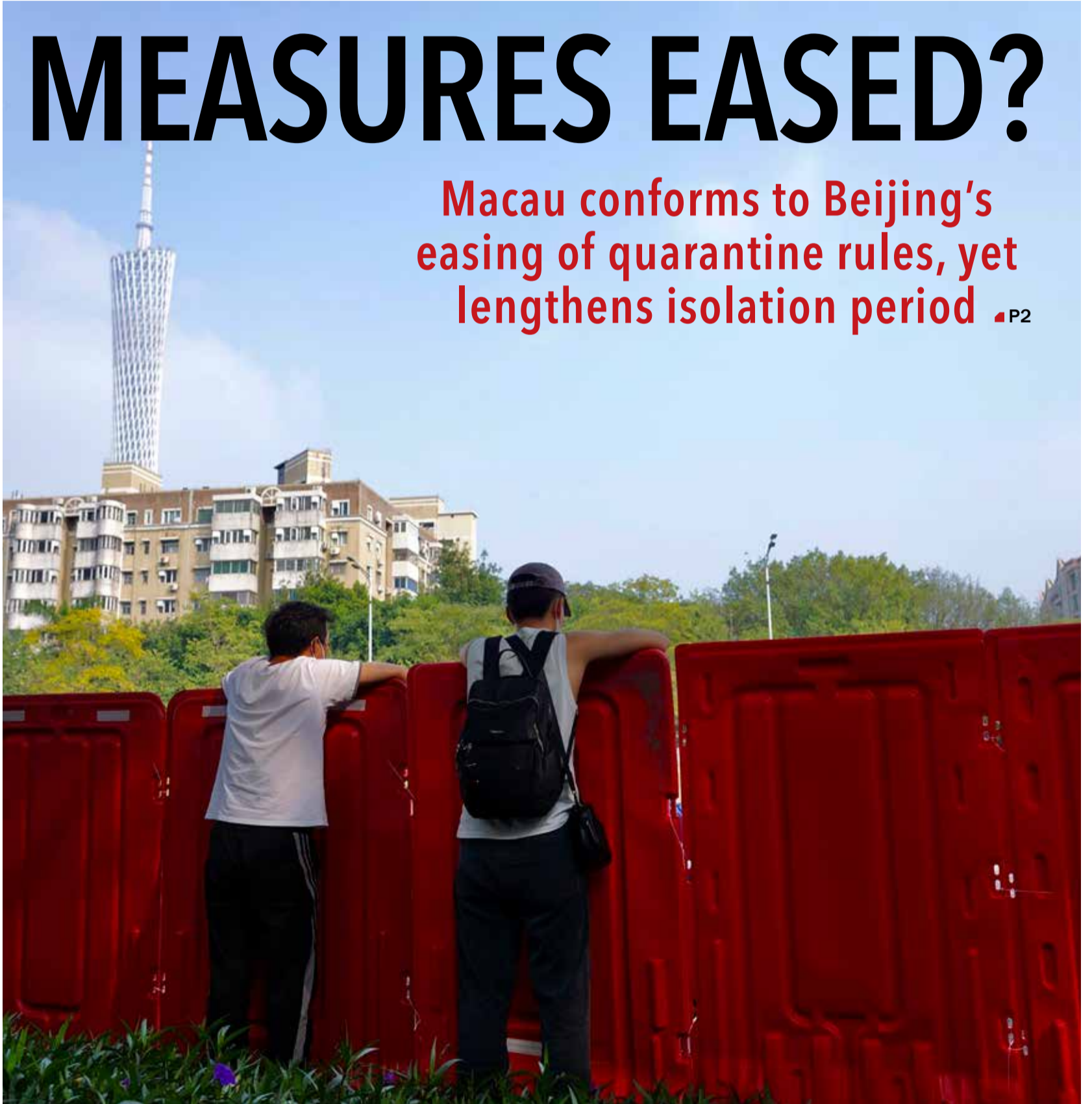


Germany Thousands of people demonstrated Saturday in the German city of Düsseldorf against Turkey's alleged use of chemical weapons in the Kurdish region and the international community's apparent apathy about the issue. The participants started at two separate locations before joining under the motto "Stop Chemical Warfare in Kurdistan!" Speakers criticized international governments for not doing more to address alleged war crimes that have been denied by Turkey.

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MEASURES EASED?

Macau conforms to Beijing's easing of quarantine rules, yet lengthens isolation period P2



AP PHOTO

TAOBAO 11.11 MPAY PAYMENT TRAFFIC SURGES 20-FOLD P3

RENATO MARQUES

GAMING INVESTMENT PLANS REACH MOP100B AMID RECOVERY UNCERTAINTIES P5





COVID-19

NEW 5+3 QUARANTINE RULE, EXTENDS ISOLATION PERIOD TO EIGHT DAYS

RENATO MARQUES

THE new quarantine rule commenced in Macau from midnight on Saturday (November 12) and effectively extends the isolation period of those arriving in Macau from Covid-19 risk areas from seven to eight days.

The announcement came just several hours after China eased its quarantine measure for incoming travelers.

The previous measure (7+3) allowed people to leave quarantine hotels after seven days of observation with a yellow code. This meant that despite accompanying precautionary measures, people could work and walk freely around the city. Conversely, under the new 5+3 rule, three days of health self-management need to be observed with a red health code, preventing people to work in or enter any public or private venue.

As the director of the Health Bureau (SSM), Alvis Lo, explained in a specially-arranged press conference on Friday afternoon, the aim is to ensure that, after leaving their quarantine hotels, people will continue to remain in confinement at home and only leave their homes to undergo the mandatory nucleic acid tests (NATs) during these three days.

Initially seen as an easing on Covid-19 prevention and control measures, in reality the guidelines force those who wish or need to return to Macau into almost complete isolation for eight days, which is one day more than before.

Visitors to Macau without a place of residence after the five days in quarantine will be forced to book another quarantine venue to undergo the three days of self-observation.

To cope with this new wave of residents and visitors whose Macau health codes will now be red, health authorities have adjusted the operations of 14 NAT stations. These include the former Macau Canidrome, the Taipa Stadium roundabout, University of Macau, Macau University of Science and Technology Stadium, Riviera Macau Bus Terminal, Jardim da Flora, Rua da Pérola Oriental leisure area, Trust Leisure Garden Terminal, Comendador Ho Yin Garden (Chinese Ethnic Sculpture Park), Hong Kung Temple Square, Seac Pai Van Health Post, Sam Ka, Travessa Central da Praia Grande (next to Grand Emperor Hotel) and the leisure area at Rua Oito do Bairro Iao Hon which, as of Saturday, includes a special lane for those with red health codes.

Another of the changes influenced by the new policy is that NATs conducted by those under a red code must be tested individually on a one sample per tube basis. This is reflected directly in the price for the tests done on the first, second and third day, which will

cost at least three times more than the previous price of 45 patacas per test.

Those leaving their homes to undergo a NAT will also be required to undergo a Rapid Antigen Test and upload the result to the reporting platform. If they do not, they will be prevented from ente-

CHINA EASES SOME QUARANTINE FOR TRAVELERS EVEN AS CASES RISE

TRAVELERS arriving in China will spend less time in quarantine under changes to sweeping anti-virus controls announced Friday to reduce disruptions to the economy and society.

The announcement came as an upsurge in COVID-19 cases prompted Beijing to close parks and impose other restrictions. The country reported 10,729 new cases, and more than 5 million people were confined to their homes in the southern manufacturing hub of Guangzhou and the western megacity of Chongqing.

With the bulk of Beijing's 21 million people undergoing near-daily testing, another 118 new cases were recorded in the sprawling city. Many city schools switched to online classes, hospitals restricted services and some shops and restaurants were shuttered with their staff taken to quarantine. Videos on social media showed people in some areas protesting or fighting with police and health workers.

Chinese leaders had promised on Thursday to respond to public frustration over the severe "zero-COVID" strategy that has confined millions to

their homes and severely disrupted the economy.

Incoming passengers will only be quarantined for five days — rather than the previous seven — at a designated location, followed by three days of isolation at their place of residence, according to a notice from the State Council, China's Cabinet.

It wasn't immediately clear when or where the rules would take effect and whether they would apply to foreigners and Chinese citizens alike.

Relaxed standards will also be applied to foreign businesspeople and athletes, in what appeared to be a gradual move toward normalization.

Airlines will no longer be threatened with a two-week suspension of flights if five or more passengers test positive, the regulations said, potentially providing a major expansion of seats on such flights that have shrunk in numbers and soared in price since restrictions were imposed in 2020.

Those flying to China will only need to show a single negative test for the virus within 48 hours of traveling, the rules said. Formerly, two tests within that time period were required. **MDT/AP**

ring the NAT stations. **TAXI DRIVERS MAY REFUSE PASSENGERS WITH RED CODES**

Those with a red health code will be authorized to drive private vehicles, be transported by friends or family, or take a taxi to travel between their homes or quarantine venues and the nucleic acid test station to comply with the new Covid-19 control measures.

Other than those means, other modes of public transport such as buses and the light rail are not allowed.

Taxi drivers may transport code red passengers; however, they may also refuse to do so and such refusal will not be illegal.

Taxi drivers who decide to take code red passengers must follow the health authorities' guidelines. They must not allow people with red codes to sit in the front passenger seat, must maintain adequate ventilation in the taxi, and everyone inside the taxi must wear a facemask at all times.

Payment should also be made through a contactless system (such as mobile payment) to avoid the exchange of cash between passengers and drivers.

After each trip involving passengers with a red code, the taxi driver must clean and disinfect the vehicle interior.

The rules also state that where possible, separators should be installed between the driver's compartment and the rear seats.

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PUBLIC HOUSING

Sandwich-class housing eligible for private sales after 16 years

ANTHONY LAM

PRIVATE sales of the proposed sandwich-class housing units will not be permitted within 16 years of the initial purchase, after which a land premium payment will apply.

The Executive Council (ExCo) has recently concluded its discussion on the proposed sandwich-class housing bill and held a press conference to announce further details.

The ExCo highlighted that a blackout or lock-up period of up to 16 years from the date of initial purchase will operate to prohibit the transfer of apartments. The length and conditions of the blackout period will be similar to those that apply to economic housing.

After the blackout period, owners who wish to dispose of their flats may either sell them back to the Housing Bureau (IH) or to private buyers.

It was also proposed that sandwich-class housing units

MACAU PHOTO AGENCY



may only be sold to permanent residents of Macau.

IH president Arnaldo Ernesto dos Santos explained that sandwich-class housing units will be priced at about 60% to 70% of the average price of private property within that neighborhood.

The value of the land premium payment will be the di-

ference between the average price of private housing and the price of each sandwich housing unit. For example, if the government offered a 30% discount on the sale of a particular unit, the owner will need to pay the government 30% of the apartment's resale price as land premium.

Land premium is a one-off

payment, meaning that subsequent sellers will not be subject to it.

The pricing of sandwich-class housing units is proposed to be determined by the Chief Executive.

The proposal to allow sandwich-class housing units to be sold to private buyers differs from the provision of economic

housing units, which states that the latter can only be sold back to the IH at their original purchase value.

Another difference in the criteria for economic housing relates to income range. Santos disclosed that the proposed income floor and ceiling will be 50% of and 10% higher than the income ceiling for economic housing.

Regarding other proposed eligibility criteria, a household applicant should be represented by a Macau permanent resident aged at least 18 years, or 23 years for individual applicants. Those who have bought any type of property within 10 years of making an application will be ineligible. Those who have previously had sandwich-class or economic housing units, or accessed a 4% mortgage interest subsidy, will also not be eligible.

He disclosed that once the Bill passes parliament, IH can immediately commence constructing the first housing estate. The bureau has selected land on Avenida Wai Long and opposite the southern tip of the Macau International Airport for the development. The suitability of the land for housing has been criticized, given its proximity to the trash incinerator and the airport.

The bill also includes provisions to punish false declarants.

69TH MACAU GRAND PRIX OFFICIALLY INAUGURATED, PUN HOPES TICKETS WILL SELL-OUT

RENATO MARQUES

THE 69th Macau Grand Prix officially kicked off on Saturday with an opening ceremony featuring many of the racers. The racing action will start Thursday morning.

The Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee (MGPOC) also kicked off the Car and Bike Show, a tradition that commenced several years back to showcase up close some of the racing machinery that will be present at the Guia Circuit.

The main attraction of this year's two-day event at Tap Seac Square was the return of the motorcycles to the Macau GP program, with many local fans attending to see the motorcycles and meet the riders.

As in previous years, cars from the event's six racing categories and some of the vehicles used by the organizers to ensure safety of the track were also displayed.

A booth featuring Grand



Prix-themed cultural and creative products for display and sale was also present on site.

On the sidelines of the opening ceremony, the coordinator of the MGPOC and president of the Sports Bureau, Pun Weng Kun, told the media that according to data collected late last week, approximately 50% of the tickets for the GP had already been sold or reserved.

Pun stated he believed that, as with previous years, tourists were more likely to purchase tickets on site upon arrival in Macau than purchase them in advance, due to the fear that conditions might change suddenly because of the pandemic. He said he believed that all the tickets would sell out over the weekend. The 69th Macau Grand Prix will be held from November 17 to 20.

TAOBAO

MPAY'S TRAFFIC PEAKED 20 TIMES OVER 11.11 PROMOS

MPAY has launched multiple promotional activities to coincide with China's biggest online shopping festival, known as Singles' Day, causing its online payment traffic to peak up to 20 times.

The promotions include imposing no handling fee for paying on Taobao (Macau, China) with MPay, and MOP30 off for every purchase of MOP 200 during Double Eleven. Additional discounts include RMB50 off for every RMB300 on Tmall (Macau, China) and RMB30 off for every RMB200 on Taobao (Macau, China).

MPay users can also use mCoin to exchange Taobao coupons, red packets, discount codes, payment coupons, cross-store discounts and other mul-



tiple offers, allowing Macau residents to participate in this e-commerce celebration.

Man Wong, COO of Macau Pass said that on November 10, peak traffic using MPay to make online payments increased nearly 20 times compared to normal baseline and that the "overall operation of the platform remained stable and

orderly."

MPay tapped into Taobao (Macau, China) to provide electronic payment services to its users since October 25. Residents in Macau and other registered users who are not mainland Chinese residents can now use MPay to make payments in Macau patacas directly when shopping online with Taobao. LV



SURVEY

50% OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVE PUBLIC OFFICIALS HAVE HIGH LEADERSHIP SKILLS

A survey conducted by the Macau Civil Servants Federation found that 50% of 1,838 respondents believe that public officials display advanced leadership skills in the creation and implementation of policies.

The study was conducted on members of the public and civil servants and was about the

work of public officials at the directors' level. The results concluded that 30% of respondents found their skills to be high while another 20% said they were very high.

In the same survey, some 10% of respondents considered the leadership of the same officials to be poor.

According to the Federation,

the purpose of the survey is to create an index for quality leadership within the public service to identify those with higher skills who could potentially serve as evaluators and mentors to others.

The same survey also highlighted that people would like to be consulted before the implementation of new policies. **RM**

AD

MACAU HOSTS EXPOS OF AUTOMOBILES, YACHTS, BUSINESS AIRCRAFT

An expo of automobiles opened Friday together with those of yachts and business aircraft in the city to showcase products made in dozens of countries and regions.

The exhibition of automobiles, the 12th of its kind in Macau, covered an area of 65,000 square meters, pooling together more than 200 carmakers and related businesses from over 20 countries and regions.

The exhibition of business aircraft covered an area of 24,000 square meters, bringing to the audiences large business aircraft made by Airbus for the first time.

Meanwhile, yachts of over 20

known brands from France, the United States, Italy, Finland, China and others were exhibited.

Vincent U, acting president of the Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute, said the exhibitions have grown into an influential one in the region over the years, helping improve Macau's image as a city of conventions and exhibitions.

U said the institute would continue making great efforts to facilitate the hosting of more conventions and exhibitions on trade and economy in Macau to help with its economic recovery. **MDT/XINHUA**



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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

GAMING

Investment plans reach MOP100 billion amid recovery uncertainties

LYNZY VALLES

THE investment plans of future gaming concessionaires cumulatively amount to a staggering MOP100 billion amid uncertainties surrounding the city's full border opening.

According to a TDM report, the gaming tender committee has summoned the seven bidders for "a new round of negotiations that have already entered the final phase."

The meetings (the details of which are undisclosed) are significant for the gaming operators as they battle to secure a 10-year concession.

Some incumbent gaming operators have expressed their satisfaction with the timetable for the tender process.



In an earnings call with analysts last month, president of Sands China, Wilfred Wong, said that good progress was being made and hoped that a further notice of next steps

would be provided towards the end of the month.

Melco expressed similar sentiments, describing the process as "transparent and smooth."

Last month, analysts at Cre-

dit Suisse (Hong Kong) suggested that the process was not as straightforward as operators hoped, noting that the government had asked bidders for more investment in non-gaming projects than expected.

The MOP100 billion investment comes at a time when several casino tables sit empty – even during the traditionally peak period – as the city adheres to a zero-Covid policy that imposes stricter border restrictions whenever new cases are detected.

With the crackdown on junkets – which formerly facilitated affluent gamblers who contribute to 43% of the sector's earnings – the return of the investment remains unlikely for now.

The committee includes three of Macau's five policy secretaries: Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong, and Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong U.

With the city's biggest gaming law overhaul, the Chief Executive has the power to decide not to award some or all of the concessions put out to tender.

The industry will face fresh concessions on January 1, 2023.

MUST WITNESSES LAUNCH OF SELF-DESIGNED SATELLITE

The Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) organized a live screening session on the launch of the Tianzhou 5 cargo spaceship, which, in this mission, carried the Macau Student Science Satellite I to space. The launch took place in Wenchang, Hainan Province. The satellite was designed by local youth representatives. MUST stressed that the main goal of the project is to instruct young people in Macau in the country's aeronautical technology and generate interest in science. Assistant professor Jiaming Ou at the MUST's State Key Laboratory of Lunar and Planetary Sciences presented details of the satellite at the session.

UM STUDENT RECEIVES AWARD IN GENETICS

A team of undergraduate students from the University of Macau's (UM) Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) has recently won a gold medal at the International Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM) competition for a research study on reducing acidity in the ocean. This is the fourth consecutive year that UM has won an award in this international competition and the third time that the university has won a gold medal. The UM team comprised 22 undergraduate students who developed a project to explore methods of slowing the acidification of the ocean. The project aimed to maintain the balance of marine ecology via the genetic modification of Escherichia coli (E. coli) to absorb hydrogen ions in the acidified water.

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CHINA'S XI, OUT OF COVID BUBBLE, FACES CHANGED WORLD AT G-20

KEN MORITSUGU, BEIJING

AFTER a lengthy absence from major international gatherings, Chinese leader Xi Jinping is leaving his country's COVID-19 bubble and venturing abroad this week into a dramatically changed world marked by rising confrontation.

Xi will attend the G-20 meeting of industrial and emerging market nations in Indonesia followed by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Thailand. He will meet individually with other leaders, including U.S. President Joe Biden today in their first in-person talks since Biden took office in January 2021.

The Chinese leader has relied mainly on speeches by video to deliver China's message at the U.N. and other forums since 2020. The period has seen a sharp deterioration in China's relations with the West over the COVID-19 pandemic, military threats against Taiwan and Beijing's support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

More broadly, China and the West are moving farther apart. The U.S. and Europe are looking at China more critically, with Germany blocking investment in its companies, while China's leaders have shown a determination to go their own route.

Bruce Dickson, a Chinese politics expert at George Washington University, described a "growing fear, concern and anxiety that China doesn't want to be a partner with other countries. It wants to push its own agenda regardless of the opposition to it."

More moderate voices in both Beijing and Washington advocating better relations are being pushed to the side. "It's really an effort of who can come up with the toughest policy to resist China's efforts," Dickson said.

After a state visit to neighboring Myanmar in January 2020, Xi stayed in mainland China for more than two years.

He emerged first on a brief visit to Hong Kong for the 25th anniversary of its return from British rule on July 1 and a short trip to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in September for a regional summit.

Xiong Zhiyong, an international relations professor at China Foreign Affairs University, expects Chinese leaders will make more trips abroad as the pandemic eases globally.



"The current international situation is overly complex and national leaders need to have an opportunity for discussion," he said. "Online exchanges are not enough. Meetings among leaders are important and irreplaceable."

Pakistan Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited Beijing to meet Xi earlier this month. But under China's "zero-COVID" policy, it remains difficult to travel into China, while domestic travel is restricted wherever a serious outbreak occurs.

Besides Biden, other leaders Xi will meet on this trip include Indonesian President Joko Widodo, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha, French President Emmanuel Macron, Senegalese President Macky Sall and Argentine President Alberto Fernández.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Friday that he would ask Xi to lift billions of dollars in trade barriers if they meet, while Biden said earlier this week he plans to discuss growing U.S.-China tensions over trade, the self-ruled island of Taiwan and China's relationship with Russia.

China has not condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and accused the U.S. and NATO of forcing Russia's hand. It also fired missiles over Taiwan and appeared to rehearse a military blockade of the island after U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited

Taiwan in August.

China also cut off talks with the U.S. on a raft of issues following Pelosi's trip including climate, an area where cooperation between the world's two largest emitters of greenhouse gases is crucial to efforts being discussed at ongoing U.N. climate talks in Egypt to limit the impact of climate change.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said Friday that "the U.S. needs to work together with China to

properly manage differences, advance mutually beneficial cooperation, avoid misunderstanding and miscalculation and bring China-U.S. relations back to the right track of sound and steady development."

Xi is making this trip after having consolidated his hold on power in China last month at a major meeting of the long-ruling Communist Party. He was given a third five-year term as leader and the top party bodies were packed with his loyalists, signaling his approach

ch to foreign and domestic policy will continue.

China's doubling of its defense budget over the past two decades and militarization of islands in the South China Sea have raised questions about its stated policy of a "peaceful rise." Southeast Asian neighbors have had to tread a thin line between maintaining relations with the U.S. and incurring China's wrath.

At the APEC meeting in Thailand, Xi will deliver a speech on China's proposals to deepen Asia-Pacific cooperation and promote regional and global economic growth, Zhao said.

He is also expected to tout his Global Development Initiative, a rebranding of his signature "Belt and Road Initiative," which has been criticized for saddling poor countries with massive debts and giving China potential control over crucial ports and other infrastructure from Southeast Asia to Europe.

Though Xi has all but eliminated domestic political challenges, he faces rising threats on the economic front.

China's growth has slumped under the pressure of strict anti-virus campaigns that have disrupted trade, travel and supply chains, along with a crackdown on massive debt in the real estate industry, which has been a driver of growth.

Dickson said the Xi-Biden meeting at the G-20 could help cool tensions. But, he added, "I've got to say right now that it's hard to see any willingness coming from either country to try and stabilize things and keep the downward spiral from continuing." **MDT/AP**

BIDEN TO MEET CHINA'S XI TODAY FOR TAIWAN, RUSSIA TALKS

PRESIDENT Joe Biden will meet today with President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of next week's Group of 20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia, a face-to-face meeting that comes amid increasingly strained U.S.-China relations, the White House announced Thursday.

It will be the first in-person meeting between the leaders of the world's two biggest economies since Biden became president in January 2021 and comes weeks after Xi was awarded a norm-breaking third, five-year term as the Chinese Communist Party leader during the party's national congress.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement the leaders will meet to "discuss efforts to maintain and deepen lines of communication between" the two countries and to "responsibly manage competition and work together where our interests align, especially on transnational challenges that affect the international community."

The White House has been working with Chinese officials over the last several weeks

to arrange the meeting. Biden on Wednesday told reporters that he intended to discuss with Xi growing tensions between Washington and Beijing over Taiwan, trade policies, Beijing's relationship with Russia and more.

"What I want to do with him when we talk is lay out what each of our red lines are and understand what he believes to be in the critical national interests of China, what I know to be the critical interests of the United States," Biden said. "And determine whether or not they conflict with one another."

The White House sought to downplay expectations for the meeting, telling reporters there was no joint communique or deliverables anticipated from the sit-down.

"I don't think you should look at this meeting as one in which there's going to be specific deliverables announced," White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said. "Rather the two leaders are going to give direction to their teams to work on a number of areas, both areas where we have differences and areas where we can work together." **MDT/AP**

ASEAN SUMMIT

Southeast Asian leaders: Region no proxy for any powers

DAVID RISING & SOPHENG
CHEANG, PHNOM PENH

INDONESIA'S president vowed yesterday not to let Southeast Asia become the front lines of a new Cold War amid increasing tensions between the United States and China, saying as his country took over the chairmanship of the influential Association of Southeast Asian Nations that it would not become "a proxy to any powers."

Joko Widodo said the 10-nation bloc with a combined population of some 700 million people "must be a dignified region" and "uphold the values of humanity and democracy" — principles that have been challenged by last year's military takeover in Myanmar and concerns about human rights in Cambodia.

"ASEAN must become a peaceful region and anchor for global stability, consistently uphold international law and not be a proxy to any powers," he said. "ASEAN should not let the current geopolitical dynamic turn into a new Cold War in our region."

As China has grown more assertive in the Asia-Pacific and pressed its claim to the self-governing democracy of Taiwan, the U.S. has pushed back, leading to increasing tensions.

Even as the ASEAN leaders met over the weekend in Phnom Penh, U.S. naval exercises with its partners in the so-called "Quad" group



Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, left, hands over the gavel to Indonesian President Joko Widodo during a transfer of ASEAN Chairmanship during the closing ceremonies of the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, yesterday

of nations — Australia, India and Japan — were underway in the Philippine Sea, east of Taiwan.

And on Saturday, China's military flew 36 fighter jets and bombers near Taiwan, ten of which flew across the median line in the Taiwan Strait that separates the island from the mainland, according to Taiwanese officials.

The flights come as part of Chinese President Xi Jinping's stepped up efforts to intimidate Taiwan by regularly flying fighter planes and bombers near the island and firing missiles into the sea around it.

In yesterday's East Asia Summit, which ran concurrently with the ASEAN meeting and included both the U.S. and China, U.S. President Joe Biden underscored that

freedom of navigation and overflight must be respected in the East China and South China seas and that all disputes must be resolved peacefully and according to international law, according to the White House.

Biden said the U.S. will compete vigorously with China while keeping lines of communication open and ensuring that competition does not veer into conflict, while reaffirming the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, the White House said.

The comments came just a day before a highly anticipated meeting between Biden and Xi at the Group of 20 summit in Bali.

At the opening of the East Asia Summit, Cambodian leader Hun

Sen called for unity, telling the gathering attended by Biden, Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that current global tensions have been taking a toll on everyone.

Without singling out any nation by name, Hun Sen said he hoped leaders would embrace a "spirit of togetherness in upholding open and inclusive multilateralism, pragmatism and mutual respect in addressing the existential and strategic challenges we all face."

"Many current challenges and tensions have been hindering our past hard-earned efforts to promote sustainable development and causing greater hardship to people's lives," he said.

The meetings also included the leaders of Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan and others.

Biden also raised human rights concerns in Cambodia. In a statement after the meeting with Hun Sen, the White House said Biden urged the prime minister — an authoritarian ruler in a nominally democratic nation — to "reopen civic and political space" before its 2023 elections.

Biden, according to the White House, also pushed Hun Sen to release activists including Theary Seng, a Cambodian-American lawyer who was convicted of treason. Biden also raised concerns about activities at Ream Naval Base, whose expansion Cambodian officials have described as a collaborative effort between it and China.

Another topic Biden focused on is Myanmar, where the military junta overthrew the civilian government in February 2021 and arrested its democratically elected leader, Aung San Suu Kyi. As he met with Hun Sen, Biden stressed that the U.S. was committed to the return of democracy in Myanmar, which had steadily headed toward a democratic form of governance before the coup.

Li Keqiang, meantime, told a meeting of ASEAN, China, Japan and South Korea that amid a "turbulent" global security situation, "unilateralism and protectionism are surging, economic and financial risks are rising, and global development is confronted with unprecedented challenges."

As major economies in East Asia, Li said the group needed to "stay committed to promoting peace, stability, development and prosperity in the region and beyond, and to improving the people's wellbeing." **MDT/AP**

POLITICS

Japan minister quits over execution remark, PM delays trip

MARI YAMAGUCHI,
TOKYO

JAPANESE Prime Minister Fumio Kishida delayed his departure for three upcoming summits in Southeast Asia on Friday to sack and replace his justice minister, who was widely criticized over a remark he made about capital punishment.

Justice Minister Yasuhiro Hanashi told reporters he submitted his resignation to Kishida on Friday, two days after he commented at a party meeting that his low-profile job only made the noon news when he used his "hanko" stamp to



Japanese Justice Minister Yasuhiro Hanashi bows at a parliamentary session at the Upper House in Tokyo, Friday

approve death penalties in the morning.

The remark quickly

sparked criticism from the opposition as well as within Kishida's governing

party, which is already mired in a controversy over its decades-long ties to the Unification Church, a South Korea-based religious group accused in Japan of improper recruitment and brainwashing of adherents into making huge donations.

At least two other members of Kishida's scandal-prone Cabinet are facing allegations of accounting irregularities.

"I carelessly used the term death penalty as an example" and made people and ministry officials "feel uncomfortable," Hanashi said. "I decided to resign to express my apology to the

people and my determination to restart my political career."

Japan has faced international criticism for continuing to use capital punishment and for its lack of transparency.

Hanashi said he had consulted with Kishida over the past two days about his possible resignation and was advised to do his best to apologize and explain.

"I apologize and retract my remark that faced media reports that created an impression that I was taking my responsibility lightly," he said Thursday. He made another apology on Friday and denied any

intention to resign.

But media reports later revealed that he had made similar remarks at other meetings over the past three months.

Kishida, who has a reputation as indecisive, denied that he took Hanashi's comments lightly.

He later told reporters that he accepted Hanashi's resignation because his "careless remark" damaged public trust in justice policies and could stall parliamentary discussions of key issues, including support for people with financial and family troubles caused by the Unification Church. **MDT/AP**

PUTIN'S WAR

Ukraine FM: Moscow playing 'hunger games' with world

DAVID RISING & SOPHENG CHEANG, PHNOM PENH

UKRAINE'S Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba pressed Southeast Asian countries for political and material support in his country's fight against Russia, while accusing Moscow on Saturday of playing "hunger games" with the world by holding up shipments of Ukrainian grain and other agricultural products.

Kuleba told reporters on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit that with a deal allowing Ukraine to export grain and fertilizer due to expire Nov. 19, the world needed to pressure Russia not to object to its extension, saying Ukrainian products were critical in Africa and Asia.

More than just continuing the deal, however, Kuleba accused Russian inspectors of "quiet sabotage," saying they were intentionally dragging their feet in allowing shipments through.

Not only does Russia have "to remain part of the initiative, it also has to instruct its inspectors to act in good faith and to avoid any measures, any steps, that create obstacles and hinder the export of Ukrainian agricultural goods to the global market," he said.

"Russia should — must — stop playing hunger games with the world."

Kuleba's country was invited to the ASEAN summit for the first time this year and signed a peace accord with the group of nations with a combined population of nearly 700 million people.

Many of the member nations have thus far been reserved in their stance toward the invasion, condemning the war but generally trying to avoid assigning blame. Eight of 10 ASEAN countries did vote in favor of the U.N. General Assembly resolution condemning Russian aggression, with Vietnam and Laos abstaining.

Kuleba said signing the accord with ASEAN was a strong message of support from the group, though added that "the litmus test is the ... voting in the U.N. General Assembly for resolu-



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, left, meets Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on the sidelines of ASEAN summit held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Saturday

tions related to Ukraine."

ASEAN is made up of Cambodia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Laos, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Brunei and Myanmar, though Myanmar's leaders are not being allowed to participate in the current meetings due to ongoing violence in the country and its lack of effort in implementing the group's peace plan following the 2021 military takeover.

Kuleba said he is using the opportunity of the Phnom Penh summit as "an Asian tour," meeting with ASEAN members and non-members like Australia to plead for more political support, material aid — like transformers and generators to repair those destroyed in the fighting — and improvements of food security and trade.

He spoke on the day U.S. President Joe Biden arrived at the talks, and met with Secretary of State Antony Blinken on the sidelines.

Blinken applauded Kuleba's efforts to keep drumming up assistance, assuring him that "support is strong around the world" for Ukraine.

Kuleba said it seemed "symbolic" that he had signed a strategic partnership with the U.S. exactly a year before the accord with ASEAN.

"This just demonstrates how far we have gone after consolidating our position as a country belonging to the West," Kuleba said, according to a copy of his remarks provided by the U.S. State

Department.

In his earlier press conference, Kuleba said he had hoped to meet with China's foreign minister but was told he would not be present. Kuleba added that Ukraine was maintaining a dialogue with China to push Beijing to "use its leverage on Russia to make them stop the war."

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was also on hand at the ASEAN meetings, and Kuleba said if Lavrov asked to meet him, he would be willing to consider the request but accused Russia thus far of using talks as a "smokescreen for its continued aggression on the ground."

"Ukraine will prevail, it's only a matter of time and the price," he said. "And yes, some gains are being achieved militarily, but some gains of Ukraine will be achieved diplomatically."

But, he said, in any talks the "territorial integrity of Ukraine is not something that can be discussed."

In brief opening remarks as he sat down to meet with ASEAN leaders, Biden said he was ready to discuss with them "Russia's brutal war against Ukraine and our efforts to address the war's global impacts, including in Southeast Asia."

Earlier, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he had made clear to summit participants that it was important to establish the conditions for re-establishing dialogue be-

tween Ukraine and Russia, and "progressively to start looking into a future where peace will prevail."

"Not any kind of peace," Guterres said. "Peace based on the values of the U.N. Charter and peace based on international law."

In other comments, Guterres said the world had failed Myanmar, and expressed hope ASEAN would be able to pressure the member state to comply with its plan for peace over the next year.

ASEAN leaders agreed on a plan Friday that largely puts the onus on Indonesia, when it takes over the group's rotating chair in 2023, to develop measurable indicators and a timeline for Myanmar to implement the so-called five-point consensus for peace.

Indonesia has been one of the ASEAN countries most outspoken about the need to do more to address the situation in Myanmar, and Guterres told reporters he felt "the Indonesian government will be able to push forward the agenda in a positive way."

The ASEAN decision announced Friday includes asking the U.N. and other "external partners" for assistance in supporting the group's efforts. Guterres said he hoped the U.N. special envoy for Myanmar, Noeleen Heyzer, would cooperate closely with her ASEAN counterpart to bring about an end to the "dramatic violations of human rights" in the country. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

2000 FUEL PROTESTERS RALLY FOR TAX CUT



Convoys of lorries and tractors have converged on the capitals of England and Scotland to mark the 60-day deadline for government action to cut fuel tax.

Both demonstrations passed off peacefully. The biggest was in London where protesters rallied in Hyde Park.

About 350 vehicles were stopped by police from entering the centre of the city.

Drivers parked their vehicles on the hard shoulder of the Westway on the outskirts of central London before making their way on foot to the demonstration.

In Edinburgh, about 150 vehicles from as far away as John O'Groats converged on Princes Street in the city centre at 1200 GMT.

Both rallies were much smaller than expected. Many dissenters appear to have been placated by Chancellor Gordon Brown's pre-Budget report last week, in which he made some concessions on fuel prices and road tax.

Police initially said marchers in London would be kept away from the Houses of Parliament.

But they agreed to allow People's Fuel Lobby representative Andrew Spence to Downing Street with a tractor, a lorry and five other protesters.

However, a spokesman for Prime Minister Tony Blair reiterated the government would not back down on fuel tax.

He said: "We have acknowledged repeatedly that the price of petrol is high and this causes particular problems, for example, for people in rural communities."

"We have done what we can, but to do more would be to start to jeopardise the extra investment the government is putting into public services."

Fuel tax activists have warned they will take action again next year if the government does not meet their demands.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The rallies in London and Edinburgh were the culmination of a two-month campaign to force government to reduce fuel prices. In September a lorry drivers' blockade of petrol refineries had disrupted deliveries and caused a nationwide shortage of fuel. "Go-slows" with hundreds of lorries travelling at low speeds along major roads also caused major disruption. The action was part of a European-wide protest which was spurred on by the success of French truckers in gaining big concessions on fuel taxes from their government.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19
 Sudden trips will take you by surprise. Keep your cash in your pocket and offer them sound advice rather than your financial assistance. You need some rest.

TAURUS
 Apr. 20-May. 20
 Don't be too eager to dismiss someone who works under you. Don't confront the situation if you don't feel you can keep your cool. Put your money into a safe place that will ensure a profit.

GEMINI
 May. 21-Jun. 21
 Don't sign up for too many extra activities or you'll have trouble fulfilling your obligations. Do not overspend on entertainment. You could find that children will be a handful.

CANCER
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22
 Don't bend to the pressure. Don't give up what you have until you can be certain just what it is you're getting. Seminars will provide you with knowledge and amusement.

LEO
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22
 Your courage and willpower will enable you to get rid of destructive habits as well. Stand up and propose your ideas, and you'll be surprised how many people will follow you.

VIRGO
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22
 Secret affairs will come back to haunt you. Your mate is going to want and need some attention. You must try to lay your cards on the table. Talk to your mate and tell them how you feel.

LIBRA
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22
 Jealous attitudes may lead you astray. Situations you can't change should be forgotten for the present. Don't let your partner put you down.

SCORPIO
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21
 Get them to pitch in, if you need help. Get out and enjoy some entertainment. Don't make any drastic changes or begin new projects today.

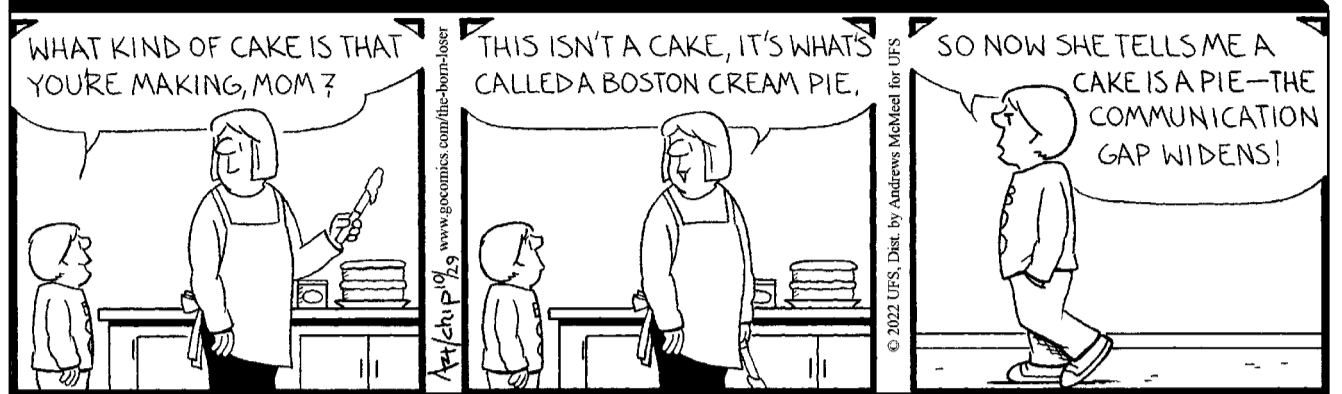
SAGITTARIUS
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21
 You may find yourself changing plans for some form of entertainment. Try not to overspend on friends or family. You may want to get involved in financial investments presented to you.

CAPRICORN
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19
 Travel will be favorable. Be careful to avoid wrong doings. Difficulties may be encountered while traveling in foreign countries. You could find that children will be a handful.

AQUARIUS
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18
 Your own small business on the side could ease your financial stress. Your ability to come up with good solutions for problems related to work will no doubt help you in getting a promotion.

PISCES
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20
 Use discretion in your dealings and refrain from making verbal promises of any kind. Take a look at yourself and prepare to make those changes you've been contemplating.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-1	12	fine
Changchun	-13	0	fine
Chengdu	10	15	cloudy
Chongqing	13	15	overcast
Fuzhou	19	24	cloudy
Guangzhou	19	28	cloudy
Guiyang	9	13	rain
Haikou	23	28	rain
Hangzhou	12	15	rain
Harbin	-7	2	fine
Hefei	7	10	rain
Nanjing	9	11	rain
Shanghai	11	15	rain
Taipei	21	22	overcast
Wuhan	8	11	rain
Hong Kong	21	23	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	-4	1	overcast
Frankfurt	6	11	overcast
Paris	8	14	rain
London	9	15	fog
New York	1	9	clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Hiding place; 6- T.G.I.F. part; 9- Like a ___ bricks; 14- Capital of Yemen; 15- Chiang ___-shek; 16- Declaim; 17- Made cheerful; 19- Nouveau ___; 20- Asian holiday; 21- Function; 22- Israel's Shimon; 23- Chew on; 25- Conger catcher; 26- Goober; 29- Stream of air; 31- Entirely; 32- Swallow greedily; 36- Dutch cheese, wrapped in red wax; 37- D.C. VIP; 38- Dynamic beginning; 40- Scoffed; 43- Keep possession of; 45- Turner and others; 46- Disinclined; 47- Put to shame; 50- Mid-month times; 51- Growl angrily; 52- Actress Olin; 54- Samuel's teacher; 57- Parts of hearts; 58- Elated; 61- Israeli desert region; 62- Back talk; 63- You ___ right!; 64- Designer Simpson; 65- High-pitched; 66- Warble;

DOWN 1- Army N.C.O.; 2- Story, often rooted in folklore; 3- Med school subj.; 4- Blue; 5- Possessed; 6- Tell me about it!; 7- Chinese weight; 8- Team; 9- Underwater missile; 10- Projecting window; 11- Mother-of-pearl; 12- Different; 13- Dues; 18- Muse of lyric poetry; 23- Garden figure; 24- Kernel; 25- Chang's twin; 26- Crusty treat; 27- Terminates; 28- ___ impasse; 29- Garden intruders; 30- Hotel offering overnight accommodation; 33- Gives a 9.8, say; 34- Stuff; 35- Goddess and sister of Ares in Greek mythology; 37- Establish; 39- Half and half?; 41- Shackle; 42- College cheer; 43- Radiolocation; 44- 12/24 or 12/31; 47- Chipped in; 48- Vessel; 49- Shakespearean sprite; 50- Bumbling; 51- Yemen's capital; 52- "Damn Yankees" role; 53- Devil's doing; 54- Gave the once-over; 55- ___-majesté; 56- Image of a deity; 59- Songbird; 60- Granada gold;

Friday's solution

BALI	ORION	TINA
ASIN	PENNE	ATIT
UTAH	UNCUT	ILKA
MIRACLE	SWOLLEN	
SEE	SOAF	
ACETONE	ERRATIC	
SATE	TRUNK	NULL
AMA	ART	RIA
BETA	OSIER	BIAS
GOSTIVE	REMINOS	
FAILURE	RAGDOLL	
LUNE	UNLIT	LEA
UNIT	SIEVE	NEED
ETTE	EDGED	GORY

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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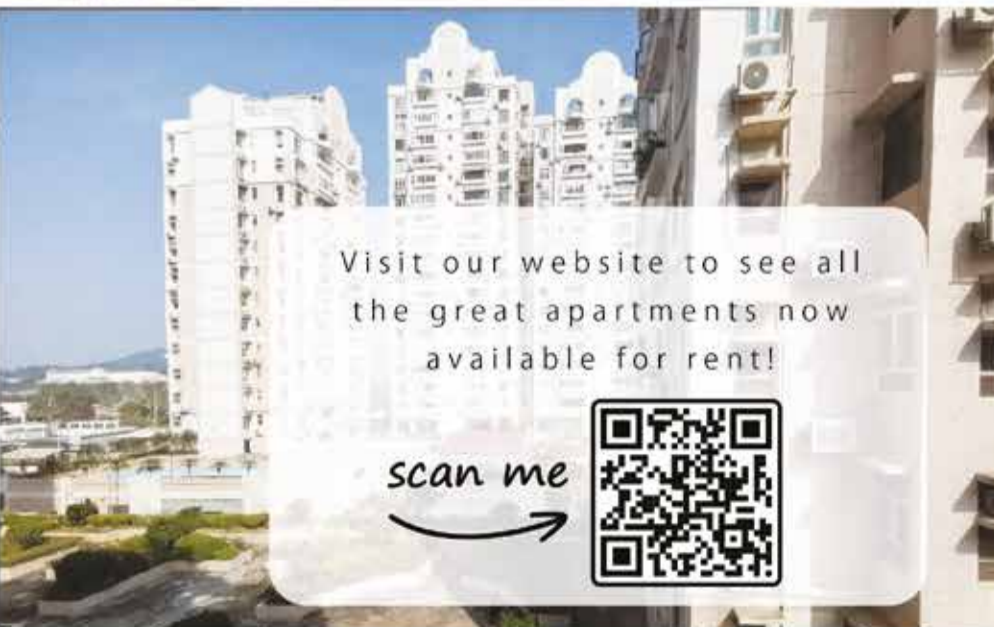
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Funds vanish at bankrupt crypto exchange FTX; probe underway

CATHY BUSSEWITZ, NEW YORK

COLLAPSED cryptocurrency trading firm FTX confirmed there was “unauthorized access” to its accounts, hours after the company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection Friday.

The embattled company's new CEO John Ray III said Saturday that FTX is switching off the ability to trade or withdraw funds and taking steps to secure customers' assets, according to a tweet by FTX's general counsel Ryne Miller. FTX is also coordinating with law enforcement and regulators, the company said.

Exactly how much money is involved is unclear, but analytics firm Elliptic estimated Saturday that \$477 million was missing from the exchange. Another \$186 million was moved out of FTX's accounts, but that may have been FTX moving assets to storage, said Elliptic's co-founder and chief scientist Tom Robinson.

A debate formed on social media about whether the exchange was hacked or a company insider had stolen funds, a possibility that cryptocurrency analysts couldn't rule out.

Until recently, FTX was one of the world's largest cryptocurrency exchanges. It was already



Signage for the FTX Arena, where the Miami Heat basketball team plays, is illuminated Saturday

short billions of dollars when it sought bankruptcy protection Friday and its former CEO and founder, Sam Bankman-Fried, resigned.

The company had valued its assets between \$10 billion to \$50 billion, and listed more than 130 affiliated companies around the world, according to its bankruptcy filing.

The unraveling of the once-

-giant exchange is sending shockwaves through the industry, with companies that backed FTX writing down investments and the prices of bitcoin and other digital currencies falling. Politicians and regulators are calling for stricter oversight of the unwieldy industry. Experts say the saga is still unfolding.

“We'll have to wait and see what the fallout is, but I think we

are going to see more dominoes falling and an awful lot of people stand to lose their money and their savings,” said Frances Coppola, an independent financial and economic commentator. “And that is just tragic, really.”

The timing and the extent of access that the assumed hacker appeared to achieve, siphoning money from multiple parts of the company, led Coppola and

other analysts to theorize that it could have been an inside job.

FTX said Saturday that it's moving as many digital assets as can be identified to a new “cold wallet custodian,” which is essentially a way of storing assets offline without allowing remote control.

“It does look as if the liquidators didn't act fast enough to stop some kind of siphoning off of funds from FTX after it filed for bankruptcy, and that's bad, but it just shows how complex this thing is,” Coppola said.

Initially, some people were hoping that perhaps all the missing funds were liquidators or bankruptcy administrators trying to move assets to a more secure spot. But it would be unusual for that to happen on a Friday night, said Molly White, cryptocurrency researcher and fellow with the Library Innovation Lab at Harvard University.

“It looked very different from what a liquidator might do if they were trying to secure the funds,” she said.

White also said there are signs of possible insider involvement. “It seems unlikely that someone who is not an insider could have pulled off such a massive hack with so much access to FTX systems.”

The collapse of FTX highlights the need for cryptocurrency to be regulated more like traditional finance, Coppola said.

“Crypto isn't in the very early stages anymore,” she said. “We've got ordinary people putting their life savings into it.” **MDT/AP**

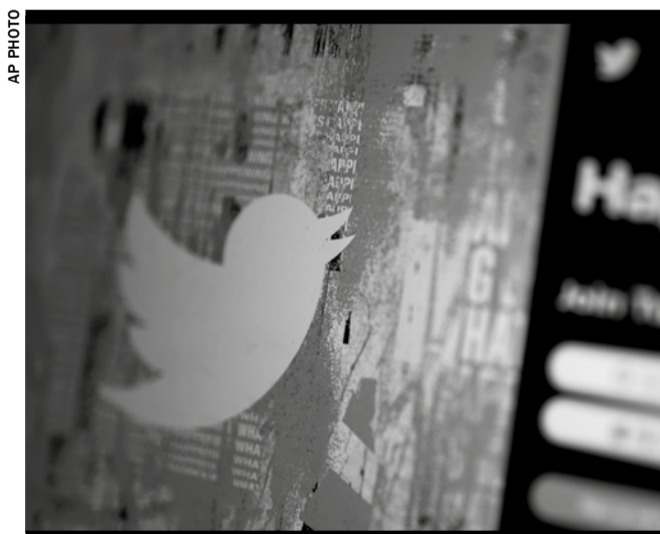
SOCIAL MEDIA

Twitter Blue signups unavailable after raft of fake accounts

BARBARA ORTUTAY
& MAE ANDERSON

TWITTER'S relaunched premium service — which grants blue-check “verification” labels to anyone willing to pay \$8 a month — was unavailable Friday after the social media platform was flooded by a wave of imposter accounts it itself had approved.

It's the latest whiplash-inducing change to the service where uncertainty has become the norm since billionaire Elon Musk took control two weeks ago. Prior to that, the blue check was granted to government entities, corporations, celebrities and journalists verified by the platform — precisely to prevent impersonation. Now, anyone can get one as long as they have a phone, a credit card and \$8 a month.



An imposter account posing as pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly & Co. and registered under the revamped Twitter Blue system tweeted that insulin was free, forcing the Indianapolis company to post an apology. Nintendo, Lockheed Martin, Musk's own companies Tesla and SpaceX

were also impersonated, as well as the accounts of various professional sports and political figures.

For advertisers who have put their business with Twitter on hold, the fake accounts could be the last straw: Musk's rocky run atop the platform — laying off half its workforce and

triggering high-profile departures — has raised questions about its survivability.

The impostors can cause big problems, even if they're taken down quickly.

They have created “overwhelming reputational risk for placing advertising investments on the platform,” said Lou Paskalis, longtime marketing and media executive and former Bank of America head of global media. Adding that with the fake “verified” brand accounts, “a picture emerges of a platform in disarray that no media professional would risk their career by continuing to make advertising investments on, and no governance apparatus or senior executive would condone if they did.”

Adding to the confusion, Twitter now has two categories of “blue checks,” and

they look identical. One includes the accounts verified before Musk took helm. It notes that “This account is verified because it's notable in government, news, entertainment, or another designated category.” The other notes that the account subscribes to Twitter Blue.

But as of midday Friday, Twitter Blue was not available for subscription.

On Thursday, Musk tweeted that “too many corrupt legacy Blue ‘verification’ checkmarks exist, so no choice but to remove legacy Blue in coming months.”

An email sent to Twitter's press address went unanswered. The company's communications department was gutted in the layoffs and Twitter has not responded to queries

from The Associated Press since Oct. 27 when Musk took the helm.

Thursday night, Twitter also once again began adding gray “official” labels to some prominent accounts. It had rolled out the labels earlier this week, only to kill them a few hours later.

They returned Thursday night, at least for some accounts — including Twitter's own, as well as big companies like Amazon, Nike and Coca-Cola, before many vanished again.

Celebrities also did not appear to be getting the “official” label.

Twitter is heavily dependent on ads and about 90% of its revenue comes from advertisers. But each change that Musk is rolling out — or rolling back — makes the site less appealing for big brands. **MDT/AP**

OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

CARBON MECHANISMS SHOULD SERVE EMISSIONS FIGHT

In 2009, in the Copenhagen Accord, the developed countries made a commitment to allocate \$100 billion annually by 2020 to help developing countries address the impacts of climate change.

That promise was rooted in the fact that they have historically been the largest greenhouse gas emitters, and it is a key part of the Paris Agreement, which is a legally binding international treaty.

Yet it is a commitment that has not been met.

According to fresh analysis by UK-based agency Carbon Brief, the United States, which is responsible for 52 percent of the historical emissions added to the atmosphere by the developed countries, should be paying \$39.9 billion of the pledged \$100 billion climate-finance. But it had only paid \$7.6 billion in 2020, the most recent year for which data is available.

And, in terms of real money, even less has been forthcoming, with most of the short-failed financial assistance provided being in the form of loans.

Of course, securing billions of dollars in international climate aid for developing countries through budget appropriations is a losing battle in the US Congress.

The just-concluded midterm elections show just how deeply divided the world's only superpower is and how the two sides differ with each other on all issues, including climate policies.

Which is why the Joe Biden administration is looking at other ways to raise the money.

On Wednesday, speaking at the COP 27 in Egypt, US climate envoy John Kerry unveiled a proposed carbon credit program aimed at mobilizing private capital to help the US shoulder its part of this obligation.

Announcing the snappily dubbed Energy Transition Accelerator in partnership with the Bezos Earth Fund and the Rockefeller Foundation, Kerry said that the goal is to "have this up and running no later than COP 28", which will be held in Dubai next year.

But the plan immediately met with criticism that the commitments made by governments should not be replaced by private offsetting and that the program will facilitate greenwashing.

As German State Secretary in the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development Jochen Flasbarth said, the practice of trading credits "can do wonderful work" in moving money where it is needed to cut emissions — especially for industries with very difficult technological barriers. But he said that such efforts and the US proposal "are different galaxies".

In other words, although it sounds like a plan, it probably isn't. The Energy Transition Accelerator may have been presented in all seriousness and in good faith, but as a practical means to help the US honor its climate obligations it's likely to be nothing more than a damp squib.

IRANIAN WHO INSPIRED 'THE TERMINAL' DIES AT PARIS AIRPORT

THE BUZZ

An Iranian man who lived for 18 years in Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport and whose saga loosely inspired the Steven Spielberg film "The Terminal" died Saturday in the airport that he long called home, officials said.

Mehran Karimi Nasserli died after a heart attack in the airport's Terminal 2F around midday. Police and a medical team treated him but were not able to save him, the official said.

Nasserli lived in the airport's Terminal 1 from 1988 until 2006, first in legal limbo because he lacked residency papers and later by apparent choice.

Nasserli was born in 1945 in Soleiman, a part of Iran then under British jurisdiction, to an Iranian father and a British mother. He left Iran to study in England in 1974. When he returned, he said, he was imprisoned for protesting against the shah and expelled without a passport.

He applied for political asylum in several countries in Europe. The UNHCR in Belgium gave him refugee credentials, but he said his briefcase containing the refugee certificate was stolen in a Paris train station.

French police later arrested him, but couldn't deport him anywhere because he had no official documents. He ended up at Charles de Gaulle in August 1988 and stayed.

AP PHOTO



A woman waits for a bus at a bus stop next to an advertisement for Tmall's Singles' Day sale in Beijing, last week

11.11

CHINA'S MUTED SINGLES' DAY SHOPPING FEST EXPECTS SLOW GROWTH

ZEN SOO, HONG KONG

CHINA'S biggest online shopping festival, known as Singles' Day, is typically an extravagant affair as Chinese e-commerce firms like Alibaba and JD.com ramp up marketing campaigns and engage top livestreamers to hawk everything from lipstick to furniture as they race to break sales records of previous years.

This year, however, the shopping festival is a much quieter event, with sales numbers expected to grow more slowly as consumers tighten their wallets amid an uncertain economy and the ongoing impact of COVID-19.

Singles' Day — also known as Double 11 as it falls on Nov. 11 annually — is typically closely watched as a barometer of consumption in China, as consumers collectively spend billions on online shopping platforms and merchants offer attractive discounts and promotions.

Following a government-led crackdown on China's technology industry last year, coupled with an economic slowdown and COVID-19 outbreaks, e-commerce companies have shifted their focus this year away from massive sales growth and high-profile

marketing campaigns.

"The Singles' Day market is more mature now and it's impossible to sustain high growth every year," said Xiaofeng Wang, principal analyst at market research firm Forrester.

A Bain & Co. report on Singles' Day this year found that 34% of consumers planned to spend less this year compared to 2021. Only 24% indicated that they would spend more.

"The epidemic has been impacting us for three years, so everyone has become more rational (in spending)," said Liu Hui, a consumer who works in the internet industry. "Unlike before, we are more worried about our future income, so we have to be more cautious."

Some shoppers, like consultant Anna Zhao, plan to stock up on necessities such as toiletries and health products at a discount.

"This year I feel kind of worried when spending money, but what I have bought are things I need and that would be used for quite a long time," said Zhao, adding that she purchased some makeup and skincare items for herself as well as supplements as gifts for loved ones.

Alibaba, China's biggest e-commerce player which runs the Taobao and

Tmall online shopping platforms, is also contending with rivals such as JD.com and Pinduoduo, as well as e-commerce offerings from short-video platforms like Douyin, as consumers spread out their purchases across platforms, the report found.

Notably missing from Alibaba's online festival this year is China's top e-commerce livestreamer Viya, who sold over \$1 billion in products during a livestream marathon last year.

Viya, whose real name is Huang Wei, vanished online after she was fined \$210 million for tax evasion late last year.

Another top livestreamer, Li Jiaqi, was also not prominently featured in Alibaba's marketing campaign this year after he was caught in a scandal when a cake shaped like a tank was featured on one of his livestreams on the eve of June 4, the anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident in Beijing.

The scandals around these online celebrities have prompted some brands to shift away from partnering with them.

This has led to a rising trend in using virtual influencers — hyperrealistic, computer-generated characters — to attract consumers. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Slovenians were voting in a presidential runoff yesterday that could elect the small European Union's country's first female head of state, as well as representing a test for the country's new liberal government. Liberal candidate Nataša Pirc Musar (pictured) was leading in the pre-election polls against conservative Anže Logar, although she trailed the former foreign minister in the first round of voting two weeks ago.

Albania Thousands of Albanian opposition supporters on Saturday protested the country's cost-of-living crisis, blaming it on the center-left government. Opposition supporters gathered in front of the main government building, shouting that Prime Minister Edi Rama of the ruling Socialist Party should resign.

AP PHOTO



Britain's Treasury chief warned of a coming spending crunch and tax increases for cash-strapped Britons as he bids to fill the "black hole" in the country's finances. Billing himself as a Scrooge figure ahead of Thursday's Autumn Statement, when he will update Parliament on the government's budget measures, Jeremy Hunt (pictured) said he was forced to make "very difficult decisions" in his attempt to curb inflation and put the economy back on an even keel.

AP PHOTO



Ethiopia Top military commanders from Ethiopia and its embattled Tigray region have agreed to allow unhindered humanitarian access to the region and form a joint disarmament committee following last week's truce. The commanders, who since last week have been meeting in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, signed an agreement Saturday that they said calls for disengagement from all forms of military activities.