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CITING THE RESUMPTION OF TOUR GROUPS, E-VISAS, THE MACAU ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION EXPECTS THE PROSPERITY INDEX TO INCREASE IN COMING MONTHS

P2

STATE MEDIA DEMANDS STRICT ADHERENCE TO 'ZERO-COVID'

P10

AS CLIMATE WARMS, A CHINA PLANNER ADVOCATES 'SPONGE CITIES'

P10-11



AP PHOTO



Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen said yesterday he has COVID-19 and is leaving the Group of 20 meetings in Bali, just days after hosting President Joe Biden and other world leaders for a summit in his country's capital. The diagnosis came as the heads of the G-20 leading economies and other nations began a two-day meeting on the Indonesian resort island. So far, no other participant developed symptoms.

AP PHOTO



Indonesia signed deals with international lenders and major nations yesterday that will bring billions of dollars in funding to help the country increase its use of renewable energy and reduce its reliance on coal. The \$20 billion agreement was announced on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit in Bali, Indonesia. Called a Just Energy Transition Partnership, or JETP, it is meant to help developing countries reduce their reliance on fossil fuels such as coal and gas that cause carbon emissions that contribute to climate change.

AP PHOTO



Pakistan's prime minister has ordered a review of the ban on the country's Oscar entry, the movie "Joyland," days after the measure was imposed, one of his advisers said. The movie, which features a love story between a married man and a transgender woman, is Pakistan's entry for next year's Academy Awards and was a prizewinner at this year's Cannes Film Festival.

More on backpage

10K CASH HANDOUT

NOTHING NEW ON THE POLICY FRONT

P3



GAMING
MOP100B INVESTMENT A 'NOOSE AROUND OPERATORS' NECKS': LEE

P4



DSAT APP'S NEW INTERFACE SHOWS REAL-TIME TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

The new interface of the Transport Bureau's (DSAT) traffic app will display real-time traffic information, but users will need to activate location detection on their devices. DSAT has overhauled the app, Macao Smart Go, and added additional functions, including bus, taxi and walking information, as well as real-time congestion and parking data. The app is different to DSAT's other public transport app, named DSAT. The app can detect a user's location and provide recommended routes and modes of transport. It will also provide data on nearby parking locations.

CLOSE CONTACT OF NEW CASE TESTS POSITIVE

The close contact of a recent Covid-19 case tested positive yesterday, health authorities have announced. The 22-year-old is related to the 21-year-old whose case was disclosed Monday and who had tested positive after his father suffered from a relapse. The new case tested negative twice Monday morning and afternoon. However, he tested positive yesterday. The government has assured that the most recent Covid cases will have no effect on upcoming events including the Grand Prix and the Macau Food Festival.



POLICY ADDRESS 2023

REDUCTION OF 40,000 TNRS DURING THE PANDEMIC HAS HELPED LOCALS, CE SAYS

RENATO MARQUES

THE reduction in the number of non-resident workers (TNRs) that occurred in the last three years, and which amounted to 40,000, has helped locals to be reemployed, the Chief Executive (CE) Ho Iat Seng, concluded yesterday during the press conference that followed the presentation of the Policy Address for 2023 (LAG23) at the Legislative Assembly.

The unemployment rate is currently 5.2% and the government is aware that many others are under-employed, the CE noted when questioned on the topic by several media representatives.

Still, the CE said that since there are currently around 100,000 TNRs in Macau, a reduction of about 40,000 had occurred. The CE said many job posts left by these workers allowed locals to be re-employed.

"We are very grateful to the citizens of Macau for replacing many jobs that were originally performed by foreign employees. Since 2020, we have adjusted more than 40,000 TNR job posts," Ho said, noting that although there is a high number of unemployed people, there are some 4,000 job posts available through the Macau One Account system.

"I hope everyone can go to interviews [and be reemployed]. This year we have matched more than 5,000 residents with different job positions, and we will continue to work hard for this."

Called to comment on the need to enforce strict quotas to ensure locals are prioritized in access to jobs, the CE refused to consider such a system. He said the mechanism of replacing TNR by local workers when they are available is working well. To enforce such a rigid system could lead to the bankruptcy of many small establishments, he added.

"We are adjusting the TNR numbers. This is happening smoothly. We do not need to have a rule. If we cut all TNRs this will affect the businesses. Small establishments such as local style food and beverage establishments that have just two or three TNRs may go immediately bankrupt if we cut them all," Ho replied, adding, "This cannot be done through a proportionality rule. This would be very difficult for all the local SMEs."

Group expects economy to gradually recover

ANTHONY LAM

CITING the resumption of mainland tour groups and travel endorsement e-applications, the Macau Economic Association expects the prosperity index to gradually increase in the coming months.

Despite the expectation, the association said the index will remain low at about 2.2 to 2.4 units.

The group said Macau had become more resilient against Covid-19 following the June 18 outbreak. It added that last

month, when sporadic cases were recorded, the infections were quickly controlled.

However, it warned society to remain vigilant as a three-year peak of infections was detected in Guangzhou.

Unsatisfactory factors include America's continuing inflation and interest rate hikes. Interest rates have reached their highest point since 2008, with six rises this year. Within 11 months, the Federal Reserve (Fed) has increased the rate by 3.75%.

Under the linked exchange rate system, the Hong Kong Interbank Offered Rate (HIBOR) in the past three months has remained over 3%. The group said the market expects the Fed to raise interest rates several more times before the trend reaches its peak.

Against this background, as of end-September, the non-performing loans ratio in Macau rose to 1.11%, a threefold rise year-on-year. The group expects the ratio to rise further in

the coming year.

The M2 money supply fell in September, dropping by 1.3% after remaining stable in the previous month. Casino operators' stock prices have also performed weakly. The group attributes the poor performance to a lack of investor confidence.

Although the determinants for the index improved after the June 18 outbreak, its performance was far from those before the Covid-19 pandemic, the group added.

The indices for September and November were 2.1 units and 2.2 units respectively.



ANTHONY LAM

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POLICY ADDRESS 2023

Cash handouts remain as gov't bids to revive the economy

RENATO MARQUES

THE Chief Executive (CE) yesterday presented the Policy Address for 2023 (LAG23) at the Legislative Assembly (AL), giving particular focus to the revitalization of the economy and continuing prevention and control of the pandemic.

Of particular interest to residents is the continuation of the government's Wealth Partaking Scheme, also called annual "cash handouts." The scheme will continue for all permanent and non-permanent residents as in previous years. Each permanent resident will receive 10,000 patacas while the non-permanent will receive

6,000 patacas. All other subsidies and support plans remain unchanged, including government support for water and electricity bills.

In a year where the closing of many companies and businesses has completely changed the focus from housing-related concerns to unemployment, little was presented to the gov-

ernment to tackle unemployment. The CE only advanced a new employer allowance scheme for the hiring of long-term unemployed residents.

The new scheme offers up to 19,968 patacas to employers who hire locals who have been unemployed for over 60 days. The full amount of the allowance will be paid in two

six-monthly amounts.

After noting there have been no changes to subsidies for the elderly, the government said it is preparing works for a daycare center at one of the public housing estates with a capacity to serve 240 people. It will also create a team dedicated to door-to-door care, similar to those currently run by private and non-governmental organizations.

SANDWICH-CLASS HOUSING

Public housing dedicated to the so-called "sandwich class" will not be ready for next year, Ho told the media in a press conference after the AL presentation. Ho was speaking about other measures of support for the population.

The CE said the new type of public housing to be built at the Avenida de Wai Long in Taipa is only in the first phase of design and conceptualization.

"At the Wai Long, we will be dedicating efforts to the first phase. We expect to build [in the future] 7,000 to 10,000 housing units [at this location]," he said, adding, "In 2023 we will dedicate our efforts in the design and concept [to launch this construction] before commencing any other projects [of the same type] in other locations," the CE remarked.

On public housing, the CE said he hoped to have some 5,000 housing units tendered next year so residents can begin their application processes. But this will not happen as quickly for the "sandwich-class housing," at least not in 2023.

Unemployment, Covid-19, and tourism – a difficult knot to untie



RENATO MARQUES

THE relationship between the local unemployment rate, Covid-19 prevention and control measures, and the entry of visitors to Macau is close, with the trilogy becoming a knot that is hard to untangle.

While the Chief Executive said all visitors are welcome to Macau, he also insisted Macau must maintain the dynamic zero-covid policy [from the central government].

In the 2023 Policy Address, he said he hoped that, with the experience gathered on the recent entry for foreign racers for the Macau Grand Prix event, Macau can receive more visitors from now on, namely those related to the MICE (Meetings,

Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) sector.

Hong Kong is "extremely important" to Macau and the border was never completely closed to the neighboring region, the CE said when asked by the Times about prospective policy changes on the entry to Macau by people coming from Hong Kong for 2023.

According to data disclosed by Ho, every day some 150 people arrive in Macau from Hong Kong. He said, most of these people use Macau not as a final destination but as a stop to being able to finally reach the mainland.

Continuing to address the topic, the CE noted local authorities might consider adjusting the quota for entry of people from Hong Kong but, to

fully reopen the border without limitations "we can only do this when we reach a situation of 0+0," that is, when quarantine measures are completely dropped.

Such a scenario does not seem to be on the CE's horizon, who noted the neighboring region has recently reported some 5,000 to 6,000 new Covid-19 infections daily.

Nonetheless, he said, "We hope that as soon as possible we can smooth these measures [referring to the 5+3 quarantine rule]," although refused to say more on when a new adjustment on quarantine rules might occur.

Today, the CE will return to the AL for a Q&A session with the lawmakers on the LAG23 presented yesterday.

RENATO MARQUES



SUNCITY TRIAL

DEFENCE ARGUES PROSECUTION PRESENTED WRONG DOCUMENTATION

ANTHONY LAM

At a court hearing about Suncity's alleged crime syndicate, the defense raised concerns about a mistake in a document the prosecution presented to the court.

Four Judiciary Police (PJ) inspectors testified as witnesses. Two investigated the alleged underground bank operations and an inspector on the computer server of the then Suncity Group.

It was alleged that Alvin Chau, boss of the then Suncity Group, disguised gambler Zhou Yongjun's side bets as his investments into the latter's project. An inspector, surnamed Leong, was asked by a lawyer representing Chau why the police had identified the documents as related to Zhou's alleged side bets, but not to a "Zhou Zhongge" as mentioned in a PJ report. The lawyer even said the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) typed "Zhou Zhongge".

In reply, the testifying police inspector suspected it was a typo, with a redundant Chinese character being entered to the document, meaning the inspector hinted it was "Zhou Zhong" instead of "Zhou Zhongge". The inspector stressed that when the PJ report was compiled, the police did not refer to MP documents.

The inspector said that when the police documents were made, the police cross-referenced data from their mainland counterparts,

which showed that Zhou Yongjun had visited Macau and gambled during the concerned period. The activities were also recorded in the books of the then Suncity.

The defense argued Zhou had not engaged in side-betting with Chau. During his testimony, Chau denied the accusation and said it was Pang Kesun, Defendant No 19, who was taking side bets from Zhou, citing Zhou's testimony. He said Zhou lost HKD320 million.

Chau also argued that figures

and account owners on the "YTA" documents presented as evidence did not match the actual figures and names on the withdrawal. He said the large number of 40,000 side betting records and amounts were "completely unrecognizable," with a 10,000-entry difference when compared with the data stored in Suncity's general records.

He said he wanted to verify the authenticity of the evidence presented, while asking the prosecution and the witnesses if they had compared and contrasted the records.

In response to a police report that there were more than 50,000 records involving side betting from Suncity's servers, Chau's lawyer asked if the inspector had found any other information besides the excel sheet.

The inspector responded he had analyzed the monitoring data and compared the general records. The inspector was then asked if there could be typos or mistakes in the calculation as the data had been manually inputted. In response, he believed that the odds were small given the large amounts.

The inspector also admitted that the compilation of certain evidential documents relied on transcripts taken by the mainland police, and he had not revisited the voice recordings which came from the wire-tapping of Chau's phone.

On the evidence allegedly proving Chau's control over side-betting companies, the inspector referred to documents showing Chau's ownership of "self-operated" side-betting companies and his "main camp."

GAMING

Analyst: MOP100b investment a 'noose around the operators' necks'

LYNZY VALLES

The reported MOP100 billion investment from casino-license bidders is considered unsurprising, despite the sector bleeding cash with no certainty on recovery.

With the embattled gaming sector suffering slumps – particularly this year where July recorded its worst gross gaming revenue in decades – the potential return over the next 10 years is unclear, particularly amid the industry-wide reshuffle.

Whether Macau's golden years will return is also unclear. Macau has been following Beijing's zero-Covid policy, which requires strict border restrictions and designated lockdowns



when new cases arise.

"With no clear direction forward, it would be very difficult indeed for the operators to calculate the poten-

tial return and payback period on their investments," Ben Lee, managing partner of IGamiX Management & Consulting, told the Times.

According to Lee, if the MOP100 billion investment occurs, the operators will be pressured to channel most of their investments

into non-gaming activities, particularly operating expenses, rather than capital expenditure.

"If true, this means the government would prefer operators to spend their money creating jobs rather than building bricks and mortar. It may be good for the employment figures but in the long run, it could be a noose around the operators' necks, as that cost will not be easily shed at the next downturn," he added.

Back in June, the government required bidders to present detailed plans for developing foreign tourism markets and boosting their corporate social responsibility efforts, as well as their non-gaming investments.

Authorities have also clarified that they will not grant new land for gaming facilities, and any new developments should be made in their existing facilities.

JPMorgan analyst DS Kim considers the repor-

ted investment to be in line with expectations.

He noted the MOP100 billion investment is reasonable as the amount is one-third of the some MOP280 billion of the incumbent concessionaires' investment during the pandemic.

"The reported investment commitment of USD1.9 billion to USD2.5 billion per operator – is very reasonable," said DS Kim.

"This is bang in line with what we had expected and probably better than what the market feared – we view these as incrementally positive developments, supporting our view that the license-renewal process will be smooth with no big negative surprises," he added.

The bidder that would be disadvantaged is Genting. It has no assets in the SAR, meaning it would have to acquire assets and commit to additional capital expenditure if it receives the concession.

The Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region

(TRANSLATED VERSION)

Highlights of Policy Address for the Fiscal Year 2023 of the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR)

Making progress jointly while ensuring stability

The MSAR Government will join hands with all people of Macao to fully seize the opportunities of national development; implement the preferential measures offered by the Central People's Government; and coordinate the work on epidemic prevention and control, and economic and social development, to improve people's livelihoods, while expediting adequate economic diversification and pragmatically promoting the development of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, to better integrate into overall national development.



1 Expediting economic recovery and boosting adequate economic diversification

- Expedite economic recovery and revitalisation, and implement the nation's preferential measures to quickly revive the integrated tourism and leisure industry;
- Increase investment in infrastructure, and expedite public infrastructure, public housing and various other construction projects;
- Support small and medium-sized enterprises to tide them over their difficulties, promote accredited shop brands with local characteristics, and boost community consumption;
- Launch measures on a timely basis, to stabilise the economy, promote recovery and safeguard employment;
- Adopt the "1+4" adequate diversification development strategy to enrich Macao's function as "One Centre", and promote the quality development of the integrated tourism and leisure industry;
- Seize the opportunity arising through the construction of the national-level regional medical centre to accelerate development of the big health industry;
- Develop a modern financial services industry, focusing on the bond market, wealth management, finance leasing, Renminbi clearing, private equities and green finance;
- Promote a system for cooperation between the industrial, academic and research and development sectors to gradually cultivate high-technology enterprises, and provide additional related support measures;
- Urge casino operators to fulfil their commitment to non-gaming projects, and develop exhibition and convention, commerce and trade, cultural and sports industries; and
- Cultivate local talents while importing talents in parallel.



2 Enhancing infrastructure construction and jointly build a liveable smart city

- Commence detailed planning for Outer Harbour Area-1, Outer Harbour Area-2, and Northern District-1;
- Expedite the construction of the fourth Macao-Taipa cross-harbour bridge, as well as the Seac Pai Van Line, the Hengqin Line and the East Line of the LRT;
- Accelerate smart city development, including by facilitating installation of fibre optic systems in all new buildings;
- Proactively implement the electric vehicle promotion plan, to help build a liveable and green Macao; and
- Upgrade municipal leisure facilities, and complete planning of sports parks for the public.



Major welfare measures for the fiscal year 2023

All Macao residents

Non-mandatory individual accounts of the Central Provident Fund

Start-up fund of 10,000 patacas (for eligible residents)

Wealth Partaking Scheme

10,000 patacas (permanent residents)
6,000 patacas (non-permanent residents)

Healthcare voucher

600 patacas per person (permanent residents)

Allowance for Macao residents to gain access to basic medical insurance in mainland China

Provide allowances to eligible Macao residents, up to 1,000 patacas per head, for joining personal medical insurance schemes in mainland China

Birth allowance

5,418 patacas (both parents may apply at the same time)

Continuing Education Programme (2020-2023)

Maximum 6,000 patacas (per eligible resident)

Electricity bill subsidy for residential units

200 patacas per month (each residential unit)

On-going water tariff subsidy

Water tariff subsidy for residential and general non-residential users

Bus fare concessions for members of the public

Fare concessions for people holding top-up cards, student cards, senior cards, disability cards approved by the Transport Bureau, or people using electronic payments approved by the Transport Bureau

Real estate tax (all real estates)

Deduction of first 3,500 patacas of tax (Macao residents)

Waiver of real estate stamp duty

First three million patacas of a residential unit's value (Macao permanent residents purchasing residential property for the first time)

Incentive for the increase of supply in the real estate rental market

Reduction of the property tax rate for leased properties to eight percent; property tax rate for non-leased properties remains at six percent

Disadvantaged families

Minimum subsistence index

4,350 patacas per one-person household

Financial assistance

- Continue disbursing 13 months of financial assistance per year
- Disburse an additional month of financial assistance to eligible families. (Financial assistance amounting from 4,350 patacas for one-person household per month to 20,270 patacas for eight-person household per month)

Special subsidy for three categories of disadvantaged families

- Learning activity subsidies: From 300 patacas to 750 patacas per month
- Medical subsidies: From 1,000 patacas to 1,200 patacas per month
- Subsidies for the disabled: From 750 patacas to 1,000 patacas per month

Special living allowance under the Social Inclusion Scheme

Each biannual disbursement ranging from 2,650 patacas for one-person households, to 10,100 patacas for eight-person households.

The income ceiling of the eligible households is 1.8 times the minimum subsistence index (households of single parents, the disabled and patients with chronic illness).

Short-term Food Assistance Programme

For a maximum of 10 weeks. The income ceiling of the eligible households is 1.8 times the minimum subsistence index.

Public housing tenants

Tenants whose income does not exceed the income ceiling are eligible for a rent waiver of up to 2,000 patacas per month.

Positive Life Programme

If a benefit recipient is re-employed, when assessing the household income of the family receiving financial assistance, the household is entitled to an income exemption of up to 6,530 patacas per month, for up to 18 months.

Community Employment Assistance Scheme

Participants of this scheme will receive a monthly subsidy of up to 2,000 patacas, subject to individual work situations.

The Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region

(TRANSLATED VERSION)

Highlights of Policy Address for the Fiscal Year 2023 of the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR)

Major welfare measures for the fiscal year 2023

The elderly

Old Age Allowance

9,000 patacas per year

Pension

3,740 patacas per month
(13-month disbursements per year)

Incentive for employment for senior citizens

The basic allowance for personal income tax is 198,000 patacas for elderly employees over 65 years of age.

New measures

- Plan to set up an elderly day-care centre within a public housing estate providing about 240 places.
- Establish a new team to provide home care and support services.



Students

Textbook allowance for non-tertiary education

- 3,550 patacas per school year (each secondary school student)
- 3,000 patacas per school year (each primary school student)
- 2,400 patacas per school year (each kindergarten pupil)

Tuition fee subsidies, meal allowance and stationery allowance for students from families with financial difficulties

- Tuition fee subsidies:**
 - Maximum 9,000 patacas per school year (each senior secondary school student)
 - Maximum 6,000 patacas per school year (each junior secondary school student)
 - Maximum 4,000 patacas per school year (each kindergarten pupil or primary school student)
- Meal allowance:**
 - 3,950 patacas per school year (for each kindergarten pupil or primary school student or secondary school student)
- Stationery allowance:**
 - 3,350 patacas per school year (each secondary school student)
 - 2,600 patacas per school year (each kindergarten pupil or primary school student)



Tuition fee subsidies and stationery allowance for Macao students studying in Guangdong Province

- Tuition fee subsidies:**
 - Maximum 6,000 patacas per school year (each primary or secondary school student)
 - Maximum 8,000 patacas (each kindergarten pupil)
- Stationery allowance:**
 - 1,700 patacas per school year (each secondary school student)
 - 1,450 patacas per school year (each primary school student)
 - 1,150 patacas per school year (each kindergarten pupil)

Stationery allowance for tertiary students

3,300 patacas (Macao residents)

New measures

Special measures to extend the repayment period or suspend repayment of tertiary education loans:

- Loan repayers whose tertiary education loan repayment period is from 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2023 will automatically be extended to 30 June 2024, and the remaining arrears will be apportioned for repayment during the extended period.
- Loan repayers who are unemployed due to the pandemic impact may apply for repayment suspension on or before 30 June 2023.

People with disabilities

Disability gratuity

9,000 patacas per year (ordinary)
18,000 patacas per year (special)

Employees with disabilities

Subsidised to minimum wage level

Employers hiring people with disabilities

A tax deduction of up to 5,000 patacas on profit tax or personal income tax per employee with disabilities.

Employment incentives

The personal income tax allowance for eligible employees with disabilities is 198,000 patacas.

Pilot Financial Support Scheme for the Acquisition of Assistive Equipment and Household Devices for the Disabled

Under the scheme, people with disabilities meeting the financial criteria may receive financial assistance of up to 30,000 patacas for acquiring assistive equipment or special household devices.

Carers Allowance Pilot Scheme

2,175 patacas per month

New measures

Increase 300 new places for rehabilitation services

Including early treatment for children with development disorders, day activity centre, vocational rehabilitation services, accommodation for persons in mental recovery, and day-care services for the hearing impaired.

Employed or people in need of jobs

Personal income tax deduction and tax rebate

30 percent reduction in personal income tax, with the basic allowance for personal income tax at 144,000 patacas for general employees; 60 percent rebate of personal income tax payable by each Macao resident for the year 2021, subject to a ceiling of 14,000 patacas.

Subsidised Training Scheme

- Eligible unemployed local residents and qualified tertiary graduates enrolled in the employment-oriented training programmes offered by the Government are entitled to a subsidy of up to 6,656 patacas, and employment referral and matching services upon completion of the training.
- For eligible local employees enrolled in the career-oriented training programmes provided by the Government, the employees or their employers are entitled to a subsidy of 5,000 patacas.

A temporary subsidy scheme to encourage employers to recruit unemployed local residents

Eligible employers, who retain the existing number of local employees, hiring each local resident who has been unemployed for 60 days or more, will be granted a one-off six-month salary subsidy up to 19,968 patacas.



Business owners and related persons

- Profit tax allowance will remain at 600,000 patacas.
- Waivers of all business taxes, hawkers licence fees, wet market stall rents, inspection and quarantine fees for live food, stamp duty on life or non-life insurance, and bank service charges, and stamp duty for auctions.
- Waivers of signboard taxes for businesses and exemption from tourism tax for restaurants.
- Waivers of stamp duty on entrance passes and tickets for performances, exhibitions and entertainment programmes.
- Waiver of profit tax on dividends and investment income from local bonds issued in Macao; and exemption of stamp duty for issuing, transaction or compensable transfer of such bonds.
- Profit tax waiver for Macao businesses for income or profits received in Portuguese-speaking countries.
- Enterprises can enjoy extra reduction in profit tax for eligible research and development expenditure.
- Waiver of investment fund monitoring charge.
- Waiver of rental charges for Macao Cultural Centre facilities for one year payable to the Cultural Affairs Bureau.
- Waiver of relevant licence fees and stamp duties for privately owned tuition centres payable to the Education and Youth Development Bureau during 2023.
- Waiver of relevant social facility licence fees and stamp duties payable to the Social Welfare Bureau during 2023.
- Waiver of licence fees, certificate fees and stamp duties for healthcare service providers payable to the Health Bureau during 2023.
- Waiver of licence fees, certificate fees or permit fees for pharmaceutical professionals and pharmaceutical business activities, and registration fees and related stamp duties for pharmaceutical product (western medicines), Chinese patent medicines, and natural medicines payable to the Pharmaceutical Administration Bureau during 2023.

The Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region

(TRANSLATED VERSION)

Highlights of Policy Address for the Fiscal Year 2023 of the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR)

3

Multiple measures to benefit people's well-being and improve social well-being and livelihoods

- Continue implementing the various welfare measures and temporary tax incentives as implemented during 2022, to ensure no reduction in resources for education, healthcare, livelihoods and social welfare;
- Safeguard employment priority for local citizens by continuing the "Subsidised Training Scheme" and online job matching; and flexibly adjust the numbers of non-resident workers in response to market conditions;
- Implement the policy vision of "a five-rung housing ladder" in an orderly manner; facilitate the construction of the Venceslau de Morais and New Urban Zone Area A public housing projects; launch a new round of applications for the Home-Ownership Scheme Housing; complete the research on the Avenida Wai Long sandwich class housing scheme and the related legal system; complete the project to construct housing for the elderly on schedule, and allocate suitable land via public tender for private buildings;
- Promote urban renewal and press ahead with construction of temporary housing;
- Care for the physical and mental health of residents and improve the quality of medical services;
- Strengthen services for the elderly and gradually promote smart care for the elderly; support women and children's affairs, and promote the introduction of family-friendly policies;
- Adequately expand the scale of tertiary education and the enrolment of students from different regions;
- Formulate plans to construct eight schools and one education centre in New Urban Zone Area A;
- Enhance youth development work in order to better integrate new generations into overall national development;
- Expedite the establishment of "One Base" and build various cultural exchange and cooperation platforms; and
- Actively partake in preparations for the 15th National Games of the People's Republic of China.

4

Furthering public administration reform to continuously improve governance capacity

- Effectively implement the principle of "patriots governing Macao";
- Clarify public departments' authorities and their obligations by optimising the distribution of functions, review and perform necessary reorganisation of project teams' functions under the government structure;
- Deepen e-governance development, and issue the next-generation Macao identity cards;
- Enhance internal management efficiency by reconstituting a centralised civil servant personnel management system, to establish an efficient, people-oriented civil service team;
- Coordinate the promotion of legislative work, and strengthen regional and international legal and judicial cooperation; and
- Maintain judicial independence, optimise integrity of administration and audit systems, and improve the legal system for supervision of public assets.

5

Unswervingly safeguarding national security and maintaining social stability

- Perfect the legal system for safeguarding national security, and fully support the National Security Affairs Adviser and National Security Technical Advisers with performing their duties in accordance with the law;
- Strengthen national security enforcement capabilities, and continue the publicity and education on the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, the Basic Law of the MSAR and the Law on Safeguarding National Security;
- Strengthen patriotic forces and fully leverage Macao's role in bridging patriotic communities;
- Strengthen policing with technology and enhance cyber security monitoring; and
- Promote civil protection reform, and implement the new version of the "Civil Protection Master Plan".

6

Firmly advancing the development of Hengqin to better integrate into national development

- Establish a legal rule system and mechanism for profound integration between Hengqin and Macao, and expedite the comprehensive legislative work of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin in stages;
- Expediently introduce supporting regulatory measures and tax policies for "tier-specific management";
- Facilitate the quality development of modern financial services, high and new technology, big health, exhibitions and conventions, commerce and trade;
- Implement the allotment of "Macao New Neighbourhood" housing units in Hengqin, and build livelihood support facilities; and
- Deepen the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area; actively participate in the "Belt and Road" initiative; and enhance Guangdong-Macao, Pan-Pearl River Delta, Beijing-Macao, Shanghai-Macao, and Sichuan-Macao cooperation.

7

Persevering in COVID-19 prevention and control, and building a robust disease prevention system

- Continue aligning with national disease prevention and control policies;
- Enhance epidemic prevention and control capabilities, and optimise the infectious disease prevention and control facilities;
- Optimise COVID-19 prevention contingency plans, and update epidemic prevention guidelines and recommendations; and
- Perfect regional joint prevention and control, to continue strengthening the epidemic prevention system.

(TRANSLATED VERSION)

Major Policies on Various Areas

Administration and Justice

In 2023, we shall uphold the administration directions of the Second Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the MSAR Government ("Second Five-Year Plan"), to serve the public and macro interests; stand up to difficulties and challenges; and continue implementing our tasks concerning administration and justice.

Public administration

- ▶ Review the disciplinary system for department heads and supervisors, and optimise the functions of project teams;
- ▶ Amend e-governance laws and regulations, and streamline departmental workflows and inter-departmental data sharing, to provide integrated services through the Macao One Account;
- ▶ Perfect the civil servant management system and consolidate team building, to establish an efficient and people-oriented civil service team;
- ▶ Perfect the Legislative Assembly electoral system, and implement the principle of "patriots governing Macao"; and
- ▶ Issue the next-generation Macao identity cards.

Legal affairs

- ▶ Strengthen legislative coordination and expedite legislation in major areas;
- ▶ Promote electronic registration for motor vehicles, civil matters, properties and businesses;
- ▶ Expedite the establishment of the legal system for the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, and strengthen regional and international legal and judicial cooperation; and
- ▶ Organise a series of events to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the promulgation of the Basic Law of the MSAR, and step up efforts to publicise the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Law on Safeguarding National Security.

Municipal services

- ▶ Expedite projects upgrading Fai Chi Koi Pumping Station and the Macao-Taipa water disposal system, to optimise the drainage network;
- ▶ Properly allocate land resources for building leisure facilities, and commence construction of the Hac Sa Youth Activity Experimental Camp and Phase II of South Shore Waterfront Green Promenade of the Macao peninsula;
- ▶ Safeguard cold-chain food safety and disease prevention, and normalise COVID-19 prevention and control;
- ▶ Introduce an integrated management service for public wet markets, and expedite work to improve the Almirante Lacerda Market and the Horta da Mitra Market; and
- ▶ Continue expanding community greenery and restoring forest areas.



Economy and Finance

Our goals for the economy and finance are to stabilise the economy; safeguard employment; care for people's livelihoods; promote industrial diversification; enhance the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises; and integrate into the overall national development plan.

Accelerate economic recovery

- ▶ Introduce vigorous fiscal policies to boost market vitality;
- ▶ Stabilise mainstream industries and proactively expand tourist bases, promote economic development through exports of tourism services, and attract customers for community consumption in all areas;
- ▶ Continue implementing several tax incentives and welfare measures; and
- ▶ Intensify efforts to support local employment, to safeguard labour rights.

Facilitate adequate economic diversification

- ▶ Continue optimising the financial market, and boost modern financial development supported by technology and innovation;
- ▶ Establish the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Technology Centre, to promote the transformation of technological innovations and research achievements;
- ▶ Expedite development of traditional Chinese medicine and other Macao-branded industries to boost value-added products;
- ▶ Foster a new business environment – "Industry + Convention" – to expand the industrial chain for the convention and exhibition industry, and elevate the international standards of convention events in Macao; and
- ▶ Continue improving the investment and business environment.

Establishment of "One Centre, One Platform, and One Base"

- ▶ Encourage the gaming industry to support business diversification, and ensure orderly, lawful and healthy development of the gaming industry;

- ▶ Expand international tourist sources, and continue fostering "Tourism+" crossover synergy to enrich the development of tourism and cultural industries; and
- ▶ Leverage the functions of the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Commercial and Trade Service Platform Complex, to strengthen economic and trade relations and establish a financial services platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.



Integrate into overall national development

- ▶ Promote Macao-Hengqin integration, and cooperation between high and new technology, traditional Chinese medicine and other industries;
- ▶ Actively partake in the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, focusing on tourism, the convention and exhibition industry, commercial and trade, and young entrepreneurship; and
- ▶ Participate in the "Belt and Road" initiative in multi-dimensional ways, and enhance regional cooperation.

Public Security

The public security authorities will enhance their sense of responsibility, mission and urgency in safeguarding national security, take precautionary measures by making full use of technology to improve forecasts and evaluation of all kinds of situations and responsive capability, with the aim of preventing and resolving security risks, combating illegal and criminal activities, fortifying the frontline of national security and safeguarding the stability and harmony of Macao.

National security

- ▶ Perfect the national security law enforcement system, and expedite legislation supporting national security; and
- ▶ Enhance public awareness of national security, and introduce innovative publicity and education on national security.

Law enforcement

- ▶ Formulate forward-looking law enforcement plans, to systematically prevent and combat illegal activities; and
- ▶ Deepen regional collaboration in policing, and reinforce regulation and supervision of dangerous goods.

Civil protection reform

- ▶ Fully implement civil protection plans, and heighten public awareness of preventing and overcoming disasters; and
- ▶ Deepen civil protection publicity, education and drills, and enhance cooperation between the Government and the public.

Disciplinary management

- ▶ Strengthen internal and external monitoring mechanisms, and foster teamwork and solidarity; and
- ▶ Develop diverse professional training to improve the quality of policing.

Strengthen the police force through technology

- ▶ Fully develop smart policing, to improve cyber security management; and
- ▶ Eliminate maritime surveillance blind spots, to enhance contingency capabilities.

Unity between the police and the public

- ▶ Optimise cyber community collaboration, to jointly build a safe community environment; and
- ▶ Expand crime prevention publicity channels, and enhance youth education on crime prevention.

Facilitate border crossing

- ▶ Develop an innovative border crossing system in Hengqin checkpoint, to provide more convenient services to the public; and
- ▶ Strengthen the Zhuhai-Macao joint prevention and control mechanism, and deepen regional cooperation at border checkpoints.

Correctional and rehabilitation services

- ▶ Improve prison administration, and implement the General Rules for Prison Officers; and
- ▶ Support rehabilitation through joint efforts, and prepare for prison relocation.

Financial intelligence

- ▶ Evaluate overall financial risks and formulate forward-looking strategies; and
- ▶ Collaborate with neighbouring regions on intelligence exchanges, to jointly combat financial crimes.



(TRANSLATED VERSION)

Major Policies on Various Areas

Social Affairs and Culture

In accordance with the Second Five-Year Plan, the Government will strike a balance between epidemic prevention and social and economic development; continue optimising livelihood-related work; safeguard public health; perfect talent cultivation, return and introduction mechanisms; facilitate industrial diversification; expedite the establishment of the Macao New Neighbourhood project in Hengqin; and foster external exchanges.

Improve people's livelihoods and enhance quality of life

- Effectively implement COVID-19 prevention and control;
- The Islands District Medical Complex is commencing operation in phases; a breast cancer risk assessment programme for women and a pilot scheme for outpatient services via video-conferencing for elderly homes will be introduced; and laws on tobacco and alcohol control will be enforced;
- Develop smart campus and teaching;
- Strengthen national security education, and introduce camps for comprehensively experiencing education;
- Consolidate the double-tier social security system, expand elderly and rehabilitation services, and optimise the Carers Allowance Pilot Scheme;
- Launch the Toddler Reading Reward Programme; and
- Promote digitisation of medical services, social security, education, and cultural and sports services.



Enhance support for the use of assistive equipment for persons with disabilities, to improve quality of life and care.

Improve business deployment and support industrial diversification

- Gradually introduce programmes for importing talented people;
- Perfect popular science education; and promote industry-academia-research development through research and development, incubation and patent applications;
- Perfect pharmaceutical evaluation and approval, and the medical institution licensing system, and establish an import approval system for small medical devices;
- Launch a historic building revitalisation subsidy scheme, and promote development of cultural, creative, film and television services;
- Leverage the synergy functions of cultural and sports events and festivals; and
- Implement preparation work for the 15th National Games, and strengthen cross-sector integration.

Strengthen regional cooperation and promote external exchanges

- Improve facilities and services to support livelihoods in the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, and implement training and assessment for the "One Examination, Three Accreditations" programme; and
- Promote external exchanges and cooperation in youth development, culture, sports and education.

Transport and Public Works

In accordance with the Second Five-Year Plan, policy implementation regarding transport and public works will be guided by the principle of serving the public's needs, while implementing various tasks in an orderly manner. As always, the Government will devote its greatest efforts to public housing, transport, environmental protection, urban planning, urban renewal and public infrastructure.

Urban planning

- Compile detailed planning for all districts in Macao, and complete the summary report on the consultation regarding the detailed planning of Eastern District-2; and
- Complete compilation of the drafts on marine zoning based on functions, and planning of maritime areas.

Public work investment

- Expedite construction of the fourth Macao-Taipa cross-harbour bridge;
- Expedite the construction of road networks and common pipelines in New Urban Zone Area A;
- Proceed with construction of the LRT system on schedule; and
- Expedite the construction of a rainwater pumping station and sewer project in the southern area of the Inner Harbour



The pedestrian system around Gula Hill.

Environmental protection

- Prohibit the import of non-degradable disposable plastic knives, forks and spoons;
- Expedite the construction of a sewage treatment plant on the Zhuhai-Macao Port Artificial Island of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, and the Coloane Sewage Treatment Plant upgrade project; and
- Expedite the construction of a recycling centre for organic resources.

Housing

- Expedite the construction of public housing lots in Venceslau de Morais and New Urban Zone Area A;
- Commence a new round of applications for Home-Ownership Scheme Housing;
- Complete the feasibility study on Sandwich Class Housing on Avenida Wai Long, and support the Legislative Assembly with its deliberations on the Legal System for Housing for the Sandwich Class; and
- Complete the senior citizens housing complex.

Transport

- Implement the Macao Road Traffic and Transport Planning Study (2021-2030); and
- Continue constructing the walking route network, to encourage green commuting, and expedite work on designing the skywalk project at Avenida do Nordeste of Area Preta.

Public utilities management

- Launch 5G services;
- Coordinate the public service concessionaires to develop "smart" operations;
- Support the construction of substations and a power network in New Urban Zone Area A; and
- Expand the coverage of the natural gas pipeline network on the Macao peninsula.

Commission Against Corruption

In 2023, the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) will continue focusing on realising the Second Five-Year Plan, and will align with the policy goals of the MSAR Government to implement anti-corruption work.

Strengthen anti-corruption investigation

- Implement anti-corruption work in a pragmatic manner, strengthen deployment of science and technology, and improve the standards of investigations; and
- Strengthen anti-corruption supervision related to epidemic prevention, and step up efforts to investigate cases that harm public interests.

Enhance transparency and optimise governance

- Promptly and appropriately announce the processes and results of investigations of complaints to the Ombudsman, to enhance transparency;
- Encourage administrative assertiveness, to help departments and agencies to adopt clear standpoints; and
- Continue implementing the "coordinated advice" and "looking back" mechanisms.

Promote integrity and foster culture

- Implement the "Integrity Management Plan - Innovation and Transmission", to help departments with strengthening corruption-free management;
- Focus on encouraging young people to take an active part in anti-corruption;
- Utilise partnerships with schools, public departments and private institutions to jointly develop appropriate initiatives on promoting integrity; and
- Combine online and offline events, and traditional and new media, and take advantage of the two integrity education bases, to organise diverse promotional activities that introduce integrity values to all sectors of society.

Review the laws and improve the legal system

- Expedite the amendments to the Organisational Law of the Commission Against Corruption of the Macao Special Administrative Region and relevant by-laws;
- Give opinions on perfecting the Legislative Assembly Election Law; and
- Analyse and review the laws on combatting bribery in the private sector.

Actively communicate and keep up-to-date

- Strengthen cooperation with relevant authorities in mainland China and Hong Kong, to jointly promote anti-corruption programmes in the Greater Bay Area;
- Actively support the country's participation in reviewing the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC); and
- Seize opportunities for external exchanges and training, to strengthen the professional standards of staff.

Commission of Audit

In 2023, the Commission of Audit (CA) will actively explore the development of a collaborative mechanism, audit project management, innovation in audit institutions, and application of auditing data; and closely follow the MSAR Government's policy objectives, focus on core areas and serve overall interests, adhere to pragmatic and truthful auditing, and strive to provide advice and recommendations on economical, rational, and effective use of public funds.

Ensuring timely commencement of audits

- Draw up the annual audit plan and contingency plan early in the year, to ensure proper implementation of related tasks; and
- Help departments to implement the provisions of the Budget Framework Law and its supplementary regulations, reveal problems in budget execution and management, and make recommendations for improving the system regarding the budget.

Accurately position performance audits and special audits

- In accordance with the development direction proposed by the CA in the Second Five-Year Plan, reveal hidden risks, promote improvement of people's livelihoods, and urge departments to tackle problems and take corrective actions as soon as possible; and
- Promote integrated use of audit results by government departments, public corporations, and autonomous funds.

Deepen data acquisition techniques

- In response to the trend towards development of technology-enhanced audit, enhance skills in applying audit data storage, processing and analysis.

Promote awareness of frugality

- Continue organising seminars and workshops on audit culture at different levels, for newly recruited and in-service civil servants, to encourage department staff to cherish resources and value efficiency.

Upgrade professional skills

- Strengthen internal training, and actively enrich the knowledge, skills and abilities required for auditing work.

Strengthen project management

- Adopt scientific methods to improve planning, organisation, direction, control and monitoring of audit projects, and facilitate efficient completion of high quality projects.

EMILY WANG FUJIYAMA,
BEIJING

ENVIRONMENT

As climate warms, a China planner

TO cushion the impact of extreme weather due to climate change, a Chinese landscape architect has been making the case for China and other countries to create so-called "sponge cities."

Yu Kongjian, who spoke to The Associated Press in Beijing, uses sweeping language to express his vision for cities that can withstand variable temperatures, drought and heavy rainfall. The challenges for implementing this vision at a time of ambitious economic development in China are multifold.

Yu criticizes much of Asia's modern infrastructure for being built on ideas imported from Europe, which he says are ill-fitted to the monsoon climate over much of the Asian continent. He points to recent floods that have wreaked havoc in many Asian cities, which he says are caused by this architectural mismatch.

"There's no resilience at all," Yu says of the concrete and steel infrastructure of major cities, and of using pipes and channels to funnel away water. "Those are useless, they will fail and continue to fail."

Instead, Yu proposes using natural resources, or "green infrastructure" to create water-resilient cities. It's part of a global shift among landscape design and civil engineering professionals toward working more in concert with the natural environment. By creating large spaces to hold water in city centers — such as parks and ponds — stormwater can be retained on site, helping prevent floods, he says. Sponge infrastructure also, in theory, offers ways for



A walkway goes through ponds and islets at the "Fish Tail" sponge park that's built on a former coal ash dump site in Nanchang in Jiangxi province

water to seep down and recharge groundwater for times of drought.

"The idea of a sponge city is to recover, give water more space," Yu said.

A turning point in China's awareness of climate change and urban adaptation came a decade ago, Yu said. A devastating flood hit the capital city of Beijing in July 2012.

Beijing's biggest downpour in 61 years overwhelmed drainage systems, swamped downtown underpasses and sent flash floods roiling through the city's outskirts. At least 77 people died.

Yu at the time sent a letter to

Beijing's party secretary, Guo Jinlong, calling for a change in how the government approaches city infrastructure. He continued to send letters to high-ranking officials and top leadership, including China's leader Xi Jinping.

At a government working conference the next year, China incorporated the idea of sponge cities as a national strategy, "giving full play to the absorption, storage and slow release of rainwater by ecological systems."

In 2014, the central government issued a directive: Recycle 70% of rainwater runoff in 20% of urban areas by 2020, and in 80% of

such areas by 2030.

The following year it launched 16 pilot sponge city projects, adding 14 more in 2016. Officials also said they would award 600 million yuan (83 million USD) each year for three years to municipal cities, 500 million to provincial capitals, and 400 million yuan to other cities.

The top-down mandate and subsidies spurred a boom in water-absorbing infrastructure, including in large cities including Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen.

Cities around the world are similarly trying to integrate "bioswales" along the sides of

roads, protect remaining marsh areas to absorb water, and increase the capture of roof rainwater.

AN EXPERIMENT UNDERWAY

In China, one demonstration park is located in the northeast corner of the city of Nanchang, southern China. In mid October, engineers were putting finishing touches on a lush, picturesque 126-acre park designed to cushion the impact of both floods and droughts.

Formerly a coal ash dump site, the "Fish Tail" sponge park is built in a low-lying section of the city and intended to regulate water for

PANDEMIC

State media demands strict adherence to 'zero-Covid'

CHINA'S ruling party called for strict adherence to the hard-line "zero-COVID" policy yesterday in an apparent attempt to guide public perceptions after regulations were eased slightly in places.

The People's Daily, the Communist Party's flagship newspaper, said in an editorial that China must "unswervingly implement" the policy that requires mass obligatory testing and places millions under lockdown to try to eliminate the coronavirus from the nation of 1.4 billion people and the world's second-largest economy.

That comes as China reported 17,772 new cases

over the previous 24 hours and follows slight changes to quarantine and other anti-virus restrictions announced last week to reduce cost and disruption.

The major provincial capital of Shijiazhuang just outside Beijing has also reopened free testing centers after just one day of closure. The move to require residents to pay for tests underscored the growing economic cost the policy is inflicting on local governments.

Beijing has also closed some testing sites in recent days, but was reopening many yesterday. While case numbers remain relatively low in the city of more than

21 million, a recent increase has led to some restaurants and other businesses being forced to close and villages that largely house blue-collar workers placed under lockdown.

Some lockdowns on residential compounds and entire city districts remain in place around China, including in parts of the crucial southern financial manufacturing hub of Guangzhou and other cities whose industrial bases are closely tied to global supply chains.

In the latest indication of the economic toll, Chinese consumer spending contracted in October and factory activity weakened, government data

showed. Retail sales sank 0.5% compared with a year ago, down from September's 2.5% expansion, as millions of people were confined to their homes.

Chinese economic growth rebounded to 3.9% over a year earlier in the three months ending in September from the first half's 2.2%, but economists say activity already was cooling. They have cut forecasts of annual growth to as low as 3%, which would be among the weakest in decades.

Local party officials are under immense pressure to curb new outbreaks, but directions from the central government have lately become harder to gauge. China appears to be cautiously attempting to join the rest of the world while refusing to drop policies in which the party and leader Xi Jinping have deeply invested their authority and reputation. **MDT/AP**

CRIME

POLICE SHOOT DEAD WOULD-BE BANK ROBBER, FREE HOSTAGE

POLICE in eastern China shot dead a would-be bank robber yesterday and freed the hostage he had taken, in a rare instance of violent crime in the tightly controlled country.

A notice on the social media account of the Tai'an city police department said yesterday's attempted robbery began around noon and ended with the suspect's death about an hour later after officers issued multiple warnings. No one else was harmed in the incident, the notice said.

It gave no further details about the suspect, whether he was armed or the name of the bank, saying the case

remained under investigation.

Such crimes are highly infrequent in China, whose ruling Communist Party maintains tight electronic surveillance over its citizens and bans private ownership of firearms. Strict measures taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have added to such controls by restricting movement around the country.

However, amid a slowing economy, protests have broken out among bilked depositors targeting banks they accuse of malfeasance, sparking swift and often violent responses from the authorities. **MDT/AP**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

advocates 'sponge cities'

AP PHOTO



Architect Yu Kongjian at his firm's office in Beijing

surrounding neighborhoods and business districts. The fly ash, a byproduct of coal combustion, was mixed with soil to create mini-islands in the lake that allow water to permeate. Fang said the mixture, held in place by plant roots, prevents the ash from flowing into the water. Whether it prevents the

release of toxic elements in the ash is an open question.

During dry periods, the water could be withdrawn, purified and used for plant irrigation.

Fang Yuan, an engineer at Yu's design institute, Turenscape, said the park serves as "an ecological aquarium," capable of retaining

1 million cubic meters of water during floods and means the water can be used, instead of just discharging it into the sewage system.

The park also serves as a habitat for plants and wildlife disrupted by extreme weather such as drought.

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

At times, the sponge city concept has been difficult to implement in China. Misallocation of funds, lack of expertise in sponge city planning, and other snags have doomed some projects.

In April, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development announced some cities had "insufficient awareness, inaccurate understanding, and unsystematic implementation of sponge city construction."

The notice also warned against using funds earmarked for sponge city construction for other general infrastructure projects, such as buildings and roads.

Those guidelines were issued after massive rainfall and catastrophic floods in the city of Zhengzhou killed 398 people last summer. Floodwater inundated a section of the city's subway, trapping hundreds of commuters. Rescuers flocked to the scene, but 14 people died in the subway disaster.

Notably, Zhengzhou was one of the pilot sponge cities, with a planned investment of 53.58 billion yuan (US \$7.4 billion). Some questioned whether sponge city projects work at all.

But an investigation by the State Council released in January, found that funds had been misspent. Only 32% of the 19.6 billion yuan that was invested went to what the government defined as

sponge city concepts.

"Even at the critical moment when the whole country mobilized forces to support Zhengzhou's rescue and disaster relief, they were still "building flower beds," the State Council report said.

Yu acknowledges there is an oversight problem. "Many of the cities just use it as propaganda — just to get a lot of money from the central government," but then invest the funds in other projects.

POYANG LAKE

While problems implementing absorptive cities are worked out, China's vulnerability to extreme weather is clear. A prolonged drought since July has dramatically shrunk China's biggest freshwater lake, Poyang.

In the village of Tangtou, on the lake's normally water-blessed northeast corner, residents scooped buckets of water from a village pond to tend their vegetables.

Since July, villagers say they've hardly seen any rainfall, let alone water in their corner of the lake.

"The whole lake was completely dry, and even the Yangtze River was dry," said 73-year-old Duan Yunzhen, as he scattered pond water onto his crops.

"We planted rice, cotton, sesame, and sweet potato — they are all suffering from drought," said 62-year-old Hong Zuhua. **MDT/AP**

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BALI SUMMIT

Biden to press G-20 to hold tough on Russia over Ukraine war

SEUNG MIN KIM,
ZEKE MILLER & ELAINE
KURTENBACH, NUSA DUA

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskyy joined U.S. President Joe Biden in trying to persuade other leaders of the world's largest economies to further isolate Russia diplomatically and economically over its invasion of Ukraine, despite a souring global financial outlook that has tested many nations' resolve.

The call to stand up to Russia and defend Ukraine's sovereignty in both symbolic and substantive ways came yesterday at the meetings of the Group of 20 summit in Indonesia.

Inflation and slowing economies are weighing on several of the countries that imposed penalties on Russia for starting the nine-month war. Higher costs for energy and food have destabilized business activity around the world, as much of Europe prepares to brave the winter without imports of Russian natural gas.

In opening the summit, Indonesian President Joko Widodo impressed on the gathering what's at stake.

"If the war does not end, it will be difficult for the world to move forward," Widodo said. "We should not divide the world into parts. We must not allow the world to fall into another cold war."

In a video address, Zelenskyy reiterated 10 conditions for ending the conflict that began in February, among them a complete withdrawal of Russian troops and full restoration of Ukrainian control of its territory.

"Ukraine should not be offered to conclude compromises with its conscience, sovereignty, territory and independence," he said. "Ukraine has always been a leader in peacekeeping efforts, and the world has witnessed it. And if Russia says that it supposedly wants to end this war, let it prove it with actions."

A senior U.S. administration official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss the summit, said yesterday that the summit's final communique will make clear that "most" of the nations condemn Russia's invasion



U.S. President Joe Biden (left) and Indonesia President Joko Widodo

in Ukraine and the toll it has taken on global food and energy supplies.

It's unclear how many nations would embrace the tough language or whether the document would refer to Russia's actions as a "war" — a phrase Moscow has sought to avoid, despite the devastating losses inflicted and sustained by its military.

The European Council president, Charles Michel, urged other global powers to intensify pressure on Russia over its war against Ukraine, including Moscow's biggest supporter, China. Michel said that the summit was crucial to stopping Moscow's push "to use food and energy as weapons."

Chinese President Xi Jinping said to the G-20 that the global economy should not on principle be weaponized.

"We must resolutely oppose the attempt to politicize food and energy issues or use them as tools and weapons," Xi said in translated remarks. "Unilateral sanctions must be removed, and restrictions on relevant scientific and technological cooperation must be lifted."

U.S. officials have said Biden's trip has demonstrated that countries large and small are willing to condemn Russian aggression. Russian President Vladimir Putin has

stayed away, sending his foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov. The Indonesian president invited Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to virtually address the G-20 summit, just days after Ukraine's foreign minister was invited to participate in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Cambodia, where it became the latest signatory to the group's treaty of amity and cooperation.

Chinese officials have largely refrained from public criticism of Russia's war, although Beijing has avoided direct support of the Russians, such as supplying arms. Biden said he and Chinese President Xi Jinping discussed Russia's aggression in a meeting Monday and "reaffirmed our shared belief" that the use or even the threat of nuclear weapons is "totally unacceptable" — a reference to Moscow's thinly veiled threats to use atomic weapons as its invasion of Ukraine has faltered.

The summit schedule does not include a "family photo" of leaders, which would avoid a potentially awkward moment of interaction with the Russian representative, Lavrov. It remained to be seen how Biden and U.S. allies would react when Lavrov is recognized to speak during the summit's closed sessions. Some Europeans have discussed potentially walking out of the meeting to

protest Russia's invasion.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said no one in the U.S. delegation had plans to meet with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, often known as MBS, after Biden accused Saudi Arabia of siding with Russia by leading the OPEC+ cartel to cut oil production last month in a bid to sustain the elevated energy prices that Russia uses to fund its war in Ukraine.

It also was not clear whether anyone from the U.S. delegation would meet with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi or other leaders whose cooperation is needed to secure a price cap on Russian oil to limit the profits Moscow uses to invest in its defense base.

The summit will be the first for two critical new partners in Biden's effort: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni.

Sunak, who took office last month after the disastrously short tenure of Liz Truss, has promised to continue his conservative predecessors' steadfast support for Ukraine. He and Biden are set to strategize during their meeting today on new ways to bolster Ukraine's defenses for the long haul.

Meloni has pledged to continue to provide arms and aid for Ukraine, but questions remain over her far-right coalition's commitment to stand up to Russia. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1976 BANK ROBBERS JAILED FOR 100 YEARS



Seven men who took part in an £8m bank robbery have received jail terms totalling nearly 100 years.

The raid at the Bank of America in Mayfair, London, last year is believed to be the world's biggest.

Passing sentence, Judge Alan King-Hamilton said he was determined the thieves would not enjoy the fruits of their haul, only £500,000 of which has been recovered.

"What has been concealed will remain salted away so far as you are concerned for a great many years.

"Whatever has happened to it, it will not be used for your benefit," Judge King-Hamilton said.

Key evidence in the trial came from Stuart Buckley, the "inside man" who turned police informant.

Buckley, who worked at the bank as an electrician, told officers the raid was the gang's second attempt.

They had previously tried unsuccessfully to drill through the bank vault's lock.

Buckley finally obtained the combination by hiding in the roof space above the vault door and peering through a hole in the ceiling as officials opened it.

Judge King-Hamilton passed the longest sentences on those considered to be the ringleaders.

Safe-cracker Leonard Wilde was sent to jail for 23 years and Peter Colson, 32, a used car dealer, for 21 years.

The judge also ordered criminal bankruptcy orders for £500,000 against both men.

Others in the gang were sentenced to periods ranging from 18 years for robbery to three years for receiving stolen goods.

However, the man said to have masterminded the crime appears to have escaped justice.

Frank Maple left Britain shortly after the robbery and is now believed to be in the African state of Morocco which has no extradition treaty with the UK.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Stuart Buckley, who was sentenced separately, received seven years for his part in the raid.

The Bank of America theft was small compared to a robbery in January the same year at the British Bank of the Middle East in Lebanon.

The thieves escaped with safe deposit boxes whose contents were valued at up to £22m (\$31m).

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You may have more people on your domestic scene than anticipated. You may find that doing odd jobs around the house will be successful and appreciated by loved ones.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Any financial limitations will probably have to be dealt with on your own. Keep your feelings to yourself if you want to avoid embarrassment. Hold on; your time will come.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
Don't be shy; show your abilities! Find out more, if you want to start your own business. Get involved in groups that can offer intellectual stimulation.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
You might be overly emotional when dealing with your partner. You can get a lot done if you get your hands on the right equipment.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
Try not to lose your cool, and make your point known. Don't let your personal dilemmas interfere with your goals. Travel for business or pleasure will be enlightening.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
Don't let children or elders put demands on your time. Romance may be likely if you travel. Take time to catch up on overdue correspondence.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Investments that deal with property will pay off but could cause conflict with some family members. You will have the discipline and fortitude to accomplish what you want today.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Your bankbook will suffer and your restrictions will put a damper on your relationship. Health problems may prevail if you don't take care of them immediately.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
If you've been under stress and worrying about older members of the family, it's time to come to terms with the situation. Changes in your domestic scene are evident.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
You can surprise members of your family, which in turn will bring you a pat on the back. You can enhance your reputation if you treat family and friends with respect and dignity.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Changes in your domestic scene are evident. Get into fitness programs to keep in shape. Your ambitious mood may not go over well with loved ones.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
You can make the most headway if you put in some overtime. Don't let your emotional upset interfere with your professional objectives.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	0	14	fine
Changchun	-6	4	fine
Chengdu	11	19	cloudy
Chongqing	12	17	overcast
Fuzhou	18	21	rain
Guangzhou	20	27	cloudy
Guiyang	8	15	overcast
Haikou	23	28	cloudy
Hangzhou	9	18	rain
Harbin	-8	4	fine
Hefei	4	14	overcast
Nanjing	5	16	rain
Shanghai	10	18	rain
Taipei	20	23	rain
Wuhan	6	15	rain
Hong Kong	23	25	overcast
WORLD			
Moscow	-6	-1	overcast
Frankfurt	6	12	rain
Paris	11	13	rain
London	9	12	rain
New York	2	10	rain

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Sidewalk eateries; 6- Gossip; 10- Thick slice; 14- Martini garnish; 15- Oklahoma Native; 16- Baja bread; 17- Puzzled; 18- Openings; 19- Ruler division; 20- Well, ___-di-dahl; 21- Brass wind instrument; 23- Passion; 24- Abrasive mineral; 26- Give it ___!; 27- Sharon's land; 29- Type of pitch; 31- Moore of "G.I. Jane"; 32- Female fox; 33- Primate with a short tail or no tail; 36- Typical instance; 40- Writer Rand; 41- Carries on; 42- Estimator's phrase; 43- Gives a 9.8, say; 44- Grownups; 46- Excelled; 48- Pontificate; 49- Stem; 50- Fabric of jeans; 52- NFL scores; 55- Handle roughly; 56- Dark purple; 57- Bandleader Shaw; 59- Mozart's "___ kleine Nachtmusik"; 60- "Magnum, P.I." setting; 61- Actress Davis; 62- ___acte; 63- Swill; 64- Everglades bird;

DOWN 1- Lumpy fuel; 2- Neighbor of Sask.; 3- Anglers; 4- 12/24 or 12/31; 5- Navy builder; 6- Pet term for man's best friend; 7- Romance lang.; 8- Thick cord; 9- French possessive; 10- Steeples; 11- Gives for a time; 12- Horse race venue in England; 13- 1922 Physics Nobel; 22- Modern address; 23- Ring; 25- Disfigure; 26- Novelist Waugh; 27- Notion; 28- Hot; 29- Uses a sieve; 30- Line of symmetry; 32- Grape plant; 33- Aerogram; 34- Pillar; 35- Seth's son; 37- Trick; 38- Overdue; 39- Advertise boastfully; 43- Wheel; 44- Onassis, to pals; 45- Injury; 46- Stigma; 47- Visit habitually; 48- Get the better of; 49- "Peter Pan" pirate; 50- Double; 51- Reflected sound; 53- Sup; 54- Chair; 56- Not neg.; 58- Rule, for short;

Yesterday's solution

A	G	A	S	C	A	R	D	S	I	A	N	A
M	A	L	I	E	N	E	R	O	E	L	A	L
E	M	I	T	S	O	N	A	R	E	A	R	P
N	A	T	O	S	N	O	W	B	E	R	R	Y
C	A	U	T	I	O	U	S	E	Z			
C	A	U	T	I	O	U	S	E	Z			
R	E	R	G	A	O	R	T	A	A	L	O	E
N	E	L	L	L	A	R	G	E	D	R	I	F
T	W	I	S	T	L	E	A	D	S	T	O	P
T	I	S	T	E	R	W	H	E	T	C	H	E
W	H	I	T	E	R	A	I	T	R	E	B	S
B	I	A	S	N	O	R	M	A	L	T	E	N
I	N	R	E	A	D	A	P	T	A	G	R	E
O	K	I	E	S	E	N	S	E	L	Y	R	E

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Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
PJ (Picket) 28 557 775	Electricity - Report 28 339 922
PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944	
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731	
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333	
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ECONOMY

CHINA CONSUMER, FACTORY ACTIVITY DOWN AS VIRUS CONTROLS RISE

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

CHINESE consumer spending contracted in October and factory activity weakened as anti-virus controls weighed on the economy.

Retail sales sank 0.5% compared with a year ago, down from September's 2.5% expansion, as millions of people were confined to their homes, government data showed yesterday. Growth in factory output decelerated to 5% from the previous month's 6.3%.

The performance was even weaker than expected by forecasters who said activity would cool as Chinese anti-virus controls and interest rate hikes by the U.S. Federal Reserve and other central banks weighed on global activity.

"November is shaping up to be even worse," said Zichun Huang of Capital Economics in a report.

Chinese economic growth rebounded to 3.9% over a year earlier

in the three months ending in September from the first half's 2.2%, but economists say activity already was cooling. They have cut forecasts of annual growth to as low as 3%, which would be among the weakest in decades.

October imports shrank 0.7% from a year earlier, down from the previous month's 0.3% expansion as consumer demand fell, according to customs data released earlier. Exports declined 0.3%, a reverse from September's 5.7% rise.

Business and consumer activity slumped in mid-2021 after the government tightened controls on use of debt by China's vast real estate industry, a major engine of growth. Housing sales and construction, which employs millions of people, plummeted.

President Xi Jinping's government has been trying to prop up growth without reviving a rise in corporate and household debt that Beijing worries is dangerously high.

Anti-virus controls were tightened in areas across China following an uptick in infections in mid-October. Apple Inc. warned deliveries of its new iPhone 14 model would be delayed after access to an industrial zone around its biggest factory was suspended due to outbreaks.

Beijing announced last week it would try to reduce the impact of its "zero-COVID" strategy, which aims to isolate every infected person, by shortening the quarantine for travelers arriving from abroad and making other changes.

However, authorities said they are sticking to a goal of trying to keep cases near zero at a time when other countries are relaxing controls and trying to live with the virus.

The new approach is "a bit of a gamble," Huang wrote. "It could result in greater spread of the virus, eventually triggering a more forceful response." MDT/AP

MEDIA

BOSTON GLOBE NAMES FIRST WOMAN TO SERVE AS PAPER'S EDITOR

THE Boston Globe named Nancy Barnes as its next editor yesterday [Macau time], elevating a woman to serve in the top job for the first time in the newspaper's 150-year history.

Barnes has worked as the chief news executive at NPR and has run major newspapers. She announced in September that she would be leaving NPR.

Barnes will be the paper's 13th editor.

Linda Henry, CEO of Boston Globe Media Partners said Barnes is "renowned for her commitment to high-quality journalism, her excellent leadership skills, and her passion for innovation."

"She not only brings the leadership experience of being the top editor of two different metro newspapers, but she also transitioned to running a digital and audio newsroom," Henry said.

Barnes will start on Feb.

1. She will follow Brian McGrory, who said in September that he would step down after 10 years as editor to become chair of the journalism department at Boston University.

Barnes, 61, joined NPR four years ago as senior vice president for news and editorial director.

She said in September that she would leave the network, citing a decision by NPR's chief executive officer to create a more senior position to oversee both news and programming.

Barnes served as senior vice president and executive editor of Hearst Corp.'s Houston Chronicle from 2013 to 2018. She also oversaw Hearst's San Antonio Express-News and the Beaumont Enterprise.

She further spent more than a decade at the Minneapolis Star Tribune, where she was named executive editor in 2007. MDT/AP



Nancy Barnes

CORPORATE BITS

The Manor, The St. Regis Bar receive accolade at 2022 China's Wine List of The Year



The Manor and The St. Regis Bar at The St. Regis Macao have been recognized for outstanding wine selections at the 2022 China's Wine List of The Year Awards, announced recently in Shanghai.

The Manor was awarded

2022 - Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan.

As custodian of this wining list, the awards were also announced for The Manor - China's 'Outstanding Sommelier' of the Year - Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, to David Duan; China's Outstanding

F&B Director/Manager/Owner of the Year - Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, to Marcus Van Der Meer; and Best Wine List - Macau, to The Manor.

China's Wine List of the Year also appraises winners of three award categories - the 'One Glass', 'Two Glasses' or 'Three Glasses' ranking in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, with The St. Regis Bar awarded 'Two Glasses'.

The Wine List of the Year Awards were established in 1994 to recognize and reward the best quality wine lists in hospitality, with China's Wine List of the Year Awards launched in 2012.

Wynn Palace wins 'Best Gourmet Hotel' award in Condé Nast Traveler



Condé Nast Traveler China has unveiled its 2022 Gold List, and Wynn Palace Cotai has become the only resort in China to earn the "Best Gourmet Hotel" award.

The coveted Condé Nast

Traveler Gold List honors hotels that exemplify the gold standard of service and hospitality.

The five award-winning restaurants at Wynn Palace are Wing Lei Palace, Sichuan

Moon, SW Steakhouse, Mizumi and Sushi Mizumi.

Beyond offering dining experiences, Wynn also frequently hosts global culinary events. For three years in 2018, 2019 and 2022, Wynn served as the official venue partner for the Asia's 50 Best Restaurants Awards Ceremonies, where renowned chefs and influential leaders in the food and beverage industry from across Asia gathered in Macau.

In recent years, Wynn has also hosted several engaging "Wynn Guest Chef Dining Series" events, where top chefs from China and around the world have been invited to host banquets and share their culinary expertise with the local food and beverage industry.

FOOTBALL

Ronaldo's Man United career looks over but who replaces him?

JAMES ROBSON,
MANCHESTER

CRISTIANO Ronaldo's explosive TV interview with Piers Morgan seems certain to end his Manchester United career.

It is hard to see a way back for the 37-year-old forward, who said he does not respect manager Erik ten Hag and feels "betrayed" by the club.

The question now is whether Ronaldo can secure a transfer in January after failing to leave for a Champions League club before the start of the season.

United was already planning for life without him before excerpts from his interview began circulating on Sunday night – but that process is likely to be speeded up after his latest public show of dissent.

Ten Hag already had to censure him for leaving a pre-season friendly early – and cut him from his squad last month when he refused to come on as a substitute against Tottenham.

Ronaldo displayed an element of contrition on social media later and held clear-the-air talks with Ten Hag before being welcomed back into the fold.

But these fresh comments threaten to be a final strike in terms of the Portugal World Cup forward's relationship with his manager.

"I don't have respect for him because he doesn't show respect for me," Ronaldo told the Piers Morgan Uncensored TV show. "If you don't have respect for me, I'm never gonna have respect for you."

Ronaldo also claims there is an attempt to push him out of the club.

That comes despite the five-time Ballon d'Or winner's own desire to leave earlier in the year.

Ten Hag was reluctant to let him go in pre-season, not least because of a lack of viable replacements either within his squad or on the market. And that problem remains going into January, when Uni-



AP PHOTO

ted's pursuit of a new center forward will be further complicated by the typically inflated prices during the midseason transfer window.

United's recruitment team would prefer to do their business at the end of the season – and Ten Hag was prepared to make Ronaldo part of his plans for the remainder of the campaign even after the incident against Tottenham.

The feeling at United on Sunday night was that Ronaldo's actions would not be allowed to detract from the positivity generated by Alejandro Garnacho's late winner in the 2-1 victory at Fulham.

Yet the opposite is true – and the former Real Madrid and Juventus forward's off-field behaviour has too often been an unwelcome distraction during Ten Hag's four months in charge.

The timing of the interview also ensures it will hang over the club while the Premier League pauses for the World Cup.

Morgan has refused to confirm when it was conducted, which only adds to the impression that it was a premeditated and stage-managed attempt to gain maximum impact.

"The club will consider its response after the

full facts have been established," United said on Monday. "Our focus remains on preparing for the second half of the season and continuing the momentum, belief and togetherness being built among the players, manager, staff and fans."

That statement, itself, suggest the club's hierarchy was caught by surprise.

The interview could also be interpreted as a message to potential suitors – and Ronaldo will have to hope more come forward than in pre-season.

His reputed salary of around £500,000-a-week (\$587,000) rules out the majority of clubs in Europe.

If Ronaldo's desire is still to play in the Champions League then the number of possible clubs shrinks further, with that competition now down to the last 16.

Another problem is his unconvincing form this season – with just three goals in 18 appearances.

A good World Cup could see interest in the veteran striker grow.

In terms of a replacement, the picture is hardly any clearer for United than it was during the last window.

Red Bull Salzburg striker

Benjamin Sesko was a serious consideration, but he signed a pre-contract with

RB Leipzig, while Darwin Nunez was another target before he joined Liverpool.

So small was the pool of potential forwards that United even explored the possibility of signing veteran Bologna striker Marko Arnautovic, which sparked a furious response from fans.

There is an acceptance among elite clubs that there are precious few emerging players of the profile of Manchester City's Erling Haaland.

That was underlined by Bayern Munich and Barcelona, who both signed strikers in their 30s as they pursued top-class goalscorers earlier this year.

Bayern signed 30-year-old Sadio Mane after selling 34-year-old Robert Lewandowski to Barcelona. Meanwhile, 34-year-old Karim Benzema continues to lead Real Madrid's attack.

Ten Hag hopes Anthony Martial can overcome the fitness issues that have disrupted his United career and is trying to help Marcus Rashford develop into a prolific scorer.

He may have to rely on that pair until the end of the season at the very least, with Ronaldo's comments surely signalling an acrimonious end to his time at Old Trafford. **MDT/AP**

AD

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OPINION

Multipolar World

Jorge Costa Oliveira



THE US DECOUPLING FROM CHINA

Globalization has relocated countless companies and vast capital to China. Many supply chains depend on Chinese companies, as we saw when medical and sanitary supplies were needed to combat the Covid pandemic. The economic growth of China and several emerging countries has not only lifted hundreds of millions of people out of misery and poverty, but has also created new markets for capital goods and advanced innovation and technology products produced in Western countries.

Despite the virtues of globalization, the economic revolution it caused has created discontent in various segments of the population, which has been ridden by reactionary and xenophobic sectors in major Western countries of which the election of Trump in the United States is the best example; riding on an ultranationalist and protectionist policy of returning companies (and jobs) that have relocated, reducing imports and dependence on foreign businesses.

All of this is embedded in a narrative of strengthening U.S. national interests, in particular its national security and military supremacy at the global level. When it was in power, the Trump administration gradually evolved from this initial narrative to what is called decoupling, that is, the greatest possible separation of the U.S. from China on all levels - a policy that has been reinforced by the Biden Administration and that is now generally accepted in the U.S. Congress.

After a period in which China's growth was seen as an excellent business opportunity for American companies and another new high potential market, there came the realization that China's global GDP would surpass that of the U.S. and that China's military power would also grow and rival that of the U.S., as well as its global influence. In short, the rise of China came to be seen as a threat to America's influence in the world.

On other levels, Chinese influence is not yet as visible, but it is nevertheless growing - from development financing to increasing the relevance of the renminbi as an international currency, from the creation of intellectual property rights to the production of relevant capital goods (cars, airplanes, advanced industrial equipment).

In order to maintain global hegemony, U.S. sovereign bodies have adopted a multi-faceted strategy of decoupling in regard to China. This is aimed at preventing access by relevant Chinese companies to: (i) the U.S. market, (ii) U.S. financial markets, and (iii) relevant technologies. In addition, they have stipulated (iv) a ban on any U.S. Person having a relationship with "Communist Chinese Military Companies" (CCMC) and, accordingly, (v) the blacklisting of Chinese companies, in particular the Entity List and those of the Departments of Defense, Commerce, and Treasury. The number of CCMCs rose from 130 in 2018 to 532 in 2022.

Although the volume of foreign trade between the two countries remains high (notwithstanding the tariff war started in 2018 by the U.S.), the American government will continue to enforce decoupling. The consequences for other global economic blocs are important and one must look closely at its implications for Europe.

[linkedin.com/in/jorgecostaoliveira](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jorgecostaoliveira)

CHINA, US CLIMATE ENVOYS TO 'MEET LATER' AT UN SUMMIT

THE BUZZ

U.S. climate envoy John Kerry indicated yesterday he'll be in talks with his Chinese counterpart at annual United Nations climate talks underway in Egypt, in the latest sign of improving relations between the world's top two polluters after a meeting between the two nations' leaders Monday.

When asked if he would be meeting with China's top climate official Xie Zhenhua, Kerry told The Associated Press that "I will meet with him sometime later," without being more specific. "We're able to talk, we'll see what happens," he said.

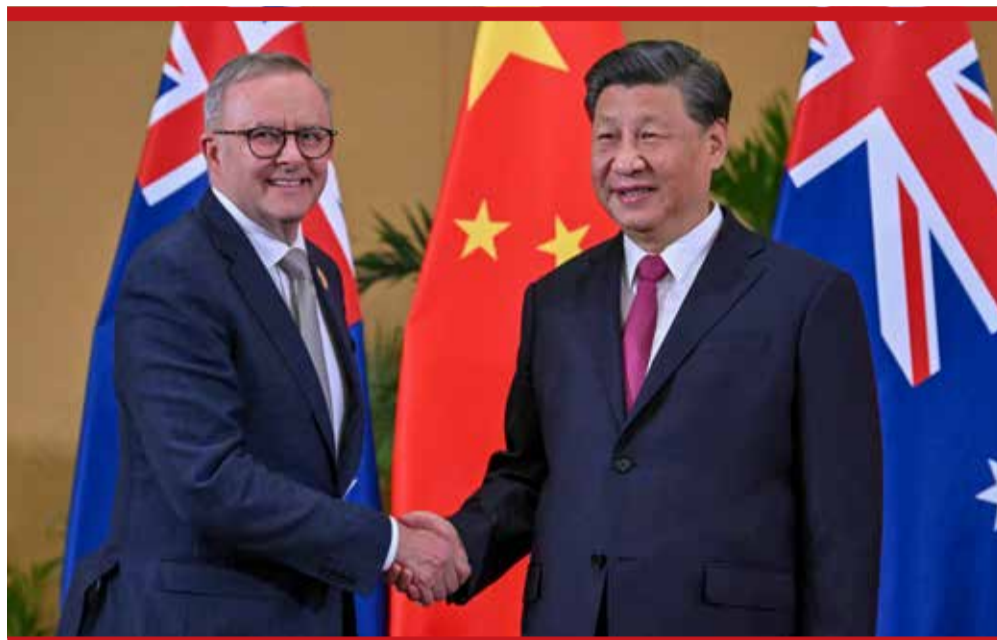
Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed a day earlier to resume cli-

mate change talks with the United States. Xi had put those contacts on hold three months earlier in retaliation for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip to Taiwan.

Also yesterday, Ugandan climate activist Vanessa Nakate slammed world leaders who persist in backing new fossil fuel projects despite science warnings that this will push temperatures across the planet to dangerous highs.

Ministers began arriving in Sharm el-Sheikh on Monday to provide a push for the meeting to clinch a substantial deal by its schedule close on Friday.

AP PHOTO



AUSTRALIAN PM RAISES TRADE 'BLOCKAGES' WITH PRESIDENT XI

NINIEK KARMINI & ROD MCGUIRK, NUSA DUA

AUSTRALIA'S Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he raised with President Xi Jinping yesterday his concerns about trade "blockages," but did not walk away from their first face-to-face talks with any promises that the \$13 billion barriers to Australian exports would be lifted.

The Australian government described the talks on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Indonesia as the first formal bilateral meeting between the two nations' leaders since 2016, when Xi met then-Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in the Chinese city of Hangzhou.

Bilateral relations plummeted since then over issues including Australia's ban on Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei's involvement in 5G networks, calls for an independent inquiry into the COVID-19 pandemic and new laws banning covert international interference in Australian politics.

Since the center-left Labor Party came to power in May after nine years of conservative rule, Albanese has been calling for China to lift a series of official and unofficial barriers to Australian exports inclu-

ding beef, wine, seafood, wood and coal that cost \$13 billion a year.

Albanese described his 30-minute meeting with Xi as "successful," "positive," "warm" and "constructive."

"I put forward Australia's position when it comes to the blockages in our trading relationship," Albanese told reporters on the resort island of Bali.

"It was a positive discussion. We put forward our position. It was not anticipated that a meeting such as that you get immediate declarations. I believe if people thought that would happen, then that was not realistic," Albanese added.

Xi told Albanese in his opening remarks at the meeting that bilateral relations had "encountered some difficulties" in recent years.

"We should improve, maintain and develop the relations between the two countries, which is in the fundamental interests of the two peoples and conducive to promoting the development of peace in the Asia-Pacific region and the world," Xi said.

Xi noted that Albanese had repeated since becoming prime minister that "China-Australia relations will be handled in a mature way."

"I attach great importance to your opinion," Xi said.

Albanese said the two leaders also discussed human rights in Xinjiang region, Chinese-born Australian citizens Yang Hengjun and Cheng Lei who are detained in China, climate change, self-ruled Taiwan and Australia's desire for Beijing to use its influence on Russia to prevent the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine.

Australia's deal with the United States and Britain announced last year to create an Australian submarine fleet powered with U.S. nuclear technology was not raised, Albanese said.

The Chinese People's Daily English-language newspaper reported last week that "signs of resetting bilateral ties have emerged" since Albanese's government came to power in May.

Beijing immediately lifted a ban on minister-to-minister contacts after the election.

Albanese said both leaders agreed yesterday that dialogue between their governments would continue.

Xi met Turnbull on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Hamburg, Germany, in 2017, but the Australian government considers their talks a year earlier were the last formal bilateral meeting between the two countries. **MDT/AP**

Israel's outgoing coalition has been the most diverse in the country's history, bringing a slew of progressive policies on the environment, LGBTQ issues and funding for the country's Arab minority. But now, even before it takes office, Israel's expected new coalition government — overwhelmingly male, religious and right-wing — is promising to roll back many of the achievements of its predecessor, prompting concern from activists and liberals over where their country is headed.



Ukraine Relatives embraced in the middle of the road.

They squeezed hands and choked back tears. Others sobbed outside their homes. All had yearned for this same moment — to be reunited with their loved ones after Russian troops withdrew from their villages in southern Ukraine. Many are seeing one another for the first time in months, after Moscow's latest retreat amid a Ukrainian counteroffensive that has retaken a pocket of territory wedged between the regional capitals of Kherson and Mykolaiv and the Black Sea.



USA Former President Donald Trump is preparing to launch his third campaign for the White House today [Macau time], looking to move on from disappointing midterm defeats and defy history amid signs that his grip on the Republican Party is waning.

Trump had hoped to use the GOP's expected gains in last week's elections as a springboard to vault himself to his party's nomination by locking in early support to keep potential challengers at bay. Instead, he now finds himself being blamed for backing a series of losing.

World's population is projected to hit an estimated 8 billion people today, according to a United Nations projection, with much of the growth coming from developing nations in Africa. Among them is Nigeria, where resources are already stretched to the limit. More than 15 million people in Lagos compete for everything from electricity to light their homes to spots on crowded buses, often for two-hour commutes each way in this sprawling megacity. Some Nigerian children set off for school as early as 5 a.m.