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AP PHOTO



**China** Investigators said that sparks from welding work appears to have been the cause of a fire that killed 38 people at a company dealing in chemicals and other industrial goods in Henan province. Two other people were injured in the blaze that tore through the building in the city of Anyang starting at 4:30 p.m. Monday. It took firefighters about 3 1/2 hours to bring the flames under control.

AP PHOTO



**Japan** A government-commissioned panel said in a report to PM Fumio Kishida that drastic defense buildup including the use of preemptive strike is "indispensable" to counter growing threats in the region. It called for the public's understanding to bear the financial burden for the defense of the country. Kishida's governing party wants to double Japan's current defense budget to about \$70 billion in the next five years.

AP PHOTO



**Philippines** Kamala Harris flew to a western island province at the edge of the South China Sea yesterday to amplify America's support to its treaty ally and underline U.S. interest in freedom of navigation in the disputed waters. A new confrontation erupted in the contested waterway ahead of her visit when the Philippine navy alleged a Chinese coast guard vessel had forcibly seized Chinese rocket debris as Filipino sailors were towing it to their island.

# ACCIDENTAL TOURISTS

**2,000 foreigners from mainland enjoy Macau tourism privileges, Helena S. Fernandes says** P3

AP PHOTO



**EARTHQUAKE**

## INDONESIAN RESCUERS SEARCH THROUGH RUBBLE; 268 DEAD

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# LAWMAKERS 'TRUST' GOV'T FORECAST FOR GGR

RENATO MARQUES

**L**AWMAKERS sitting on the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly (AL), where the 2023 Budget Law is being considered, believe that the government's forecast for a Gross Gaming Revenue (GGR) for 2023, estimated at 130 billion patacas, is possible, the chairman of the Committee, Chan Chak Mo said yesterday during a media briefing.

Questioned by the Times, Chan said that according to the government's forecast, "we are going to have a better year next year," he said, adding, "the government says that we might even reach a positive balance [on the government's accounts] at the end of the year."

Nonetheless, he admitted that the weight of the gaming industry and its results on the government budget outcome is crucial, noting, "if gaming does not recover it is going to be very difficult [to reach that estimated tax income from the government]."

In 2021, the GGR coming from local casinos was 86.86 billion patacas, a fact that resulted in a budget deficit that forced the government to turn to special financial reserves to balance the accounts.

This year and according to official figures from the Gaming

RENATO MARQUES



Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ), all months but February recorded further drops in GGR.

By the end of October, the accumulated GGR for 2022 stood at 35.72 billion patacas, that is,

-50.5% when compared to 2021, anticipating a very poor result for 2022. For reference, at the end of October 2020, the same figure was 45.87 billion patacas in a year that closed with just 60.44 billion patacas of GGR.

Still, the lawmakers are optimistic that it is possible to reach a recovery point next year.

### NEW YEAR, SAME BUDGET

At the press briefing at the AL yesterday morning, Chan admi-

tted that there is nothing new in next year's budget, noting that "since it is basically the same as this year, there are not many questions or matters to discuss," he said, advancing that the analysis of the draft by the committee will likely be a very brief one with the bill to be ready for final voting on the second week of December.

"We are going to sign the final opinion [from the committee] on December 7 so the bill can go to plenary for final voting. It needs to be approved as soon as possible and certainly before the end of the year, otherwise our salaries won't be paid on time," the chairman of the committee said, adding that there were not many opinions or questions from the lawmakers on the bill except for the number of new staff members for the public services and government-owned entities.

As for the PIDDA (Macau government's Investment and Development Expenditure Plan), Chan says to include 44 new projects mainly headed by the Land and Public Works Bureau, the Judiciary Police, and the Cultural Affairs Bureau, noting that most of them are pluriannual and, in some cases, extend until 2025. These projects include a total investment of some 2.8 billion patacas, which Chan said that the AL will closely oversee through the review committees.

# AL committee casts doubts over civil service staff numbers

RENATO MARQUES

**L**AWMAKERS at the Second Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly should be concerned about the projected number of new employees which the government is planning to hire for the public service and other government-owned entities, the chairman of the committee, lawmaker Chan Chak Mo said yesterday.

Lawmakers questioned the figure of 1,486 new staff members listed in the government's budget next year.

Admitting that the figure is currently a tentative one and that the final figure will depend on the results of

tenders and other factors, Chan nonetheless said that lawmakers expressed some concerns as only 527 current staff members plan to retire.

According to Chan, particular attention was paid to the six services and entities that are each recruiting over 50 new staff members next year.

At the top of this list is the University of Macau, which proposes to hire 160 new staff members, followed by the Macau Security Force, which also proposes some 154 new recruits. Next on the list is the Health Bureau (SSM) with 88, the Municipal Affairs Bureau with 59, the Education and Youth Development Bureau with 57, and the Macau Polyte-

chnic University with 54.

Among other questions, the Committee is asking the government whether the new 88 SSM recruits are related to the Islands Medical Complex.

Other questions are more general and related to policy, "as the lawmakers heard on several occasions from the Chief Executive, there is an intention to stabilize the number of civil servants and not to increase it," Chan explained.

In response to a media inquiry, he said that the government has been saying for years that they constantly struggle with the lack of manpower and find it difficult to fill positions.

He also noted that be-

RENATO MARQUES



sides the mentioned six entities that will hire more, "some services will reduce

[their numbers]," adding that the estimated figure of 36,258 civil servants at the

end of this year is also estimated to drop by "a couple of dozen" next year.

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# 2,000 foreigners from mainland enjoy Macau tourism privileges

ANTHONY LAM

**A**BOUT 2,000 foreigners residing in mainland China have booked hotel accommodation in Macau through campaigns cohosted by the local tourism board, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) revealed yesterday.

The MGTO director recapped that earlier this year, the Health Bureau (SSM) had recommenced granting certain foreigners permissions to visit Macau without the need for prior approval. In addition, foreigners who had not visited anywhere other than mainland China within a certain period of time have also been allowed to enter Macau from mainland China.

With that said, Senna Fernandes revealed that her bureau had



done some work in response to the changing situation. For example, she said, the air ticket and hotel privileges previously targeting only mainland Chinese residents had been widened to include non-Chinese residents on the mainland too.

The tourism official spoke on the sidelines of a press conferen-

ce yesterday late afternoon.

"Since then, we have seen an increase in searches on mainland search engines and travel platforms," Senna Fernandes said. "Over 20,000 people have claimed their coupons on these platforms."

Nonetheless, the number of tourists who actually visited Macau only amounted to approx-

imately one-tenth of coupons claimed. "Over 2,000 have used their coupons so far," Senna Fernandes disclosed, adding that she was happy with the feedback "because they have rekindled their interest in Macau."

She confirmed that these promotional efforts will continue as the feedback from non-Chinese mainland residents is "a good start."

Moreover, promotional campaigns targeting air tickets and hotel accommodations are ready and can easily be extended to foreign tourists, she revealed. As long as Covid-19 control measures are lifted, these campaigns will commence immediately.

In the meantime, Senna Fernandes also expressed confidence in Beijing resuming tour groups to Macau. She hinted that, with a promise made by Beijing, it is just a matter of time.

## VACCINES AGAINST OMICRON TO ARRIVE END OF MONTH

Vaccines against omicron variants BA.4 and BA.5 are expected to arrive in the SAR later this month, the government announced. These doses are produced by BioNTech and are intended for people aged 12 years or over. The vaccines are advised to be administered as a booster dose. Also, mRNA vaccines for children aged between six months and four years old will also arrive later this month. According to the Health Bureau, the new bivalent vaccine aims to tackle the current pandemic that is driven by omicron. China is currently facing multiple outbreaks driven by fast-spreading omicron variants.

## DSAL: SIX JOB-MATCHING SESSIONS WITH 300 JOB OFFERS

As the city's unemployment rate remains high due to economic fallout caused by Covid-19 restrictions, the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) is once again holding six job-matching sessions on November 24, 25 and 28, offering up to 300 jobs. Along with Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM), the six sessions will be for the high-end retail, fashion brand retail, security and catering sectors. Those interested can register on the DSAL website with registrations closing today. The sessions will be held at FAOM's headquarters

## WEATHER BUREAU WARNS OF RAINY DAYS

From today until Friday, the weather bureau has warned that there will be frequent showers, heavy occasionally with possible thunderstorms in Macau. The advice came as abroad cloud and rain bands associated with a high-level disturbance, is expected to affect the northern South China Sea and the Guangdong coastal area, in the next few days. The public is advised to check the latest weather information.

## CCCM RUNS COMPETITION FOR PHD RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP

The Macau Scientific and Cultural Center (CCCM), in Portugal, is running a competition to award five PhD Research Scholarships in any scientific area that develops knowledge of Europe-Asia Relations and Asian Studies. Scholarships will be funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) under the Collaboration Protocol for Financing the Multi-annual Plan of Research Scholarships for PhD Students, signed between FCT and CCCM. The tender closes at 5 p.m. on December 9.

## LIGHT UP MACAO

# MGTO to host upgraded lights show across city in December

ANTHONY LAM

**D**URING the festive month of December and edging into January, the MGTO will organize an upgraded version of the annual lights show, officially branded Light Up Macao 2022.

A press conference was held yesterday afternoon at the Carmo Fair in Taipa to announce the details.

The event features several properties of the six gambling concessionaires as partners for the first time, offering a new expansion of the venues included this year, while



communities continue to largely underpin the event.

The office once again works with several governmental departments, entities and the Livelihood Affairs Bureau of the Guangdong-Macao

In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin to forge this nocturnal event.

This year's event will have installations and shows at 28 locations in eight districts across the city, from northern Macau Peninsula to the heart

of the southernmost peninsula of Coloane. Some of the more famous locations are the Macao Science Center, the Nam Van Lake Aquatic Activities Centre, Rua do Cunha and the Chapel of St Francis Xavier.

There will be an array of light installations, interactive games, projection mapping shows and light decorations under different themes including "Immersion Metaverse", "World Heritage Aesthetics", "Instant Travel Nature", "Virtual & Reality Quantum", "Mystery Fiesta", "Romance Winter"

and "Leisure Space".

Four themed projection mapping shows will be presented from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., with the last show starting at 9:50 p.m. each night. Locations will include Largo dos Bombeiros in Taipa, Macao Science Center in ZAPE, the Chapel of St. Francis Xavier in Coloane and China Products Company at Largo do Pagode do Bazar.

Event-specific souvenirs and food items will also be for sale during the event period. The MGTO invites people to check-in on social media, in addition to playing special games online to garner prizes.

Senna Fernandes also said that her bureau is contemplating three firework displays during Lunar New Year.

## COVID-19

# CLEANING STAFF TESTS POSITIVE IN ZHUHAI

STAFF REPORTER

**Z**HUZHAI authorities have reported that a cleaner working in hotels has tested positive for Covid-19.

In a statement, the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Cen-

ter said that the 52-year-old male is a resident of Zhuhai city.

His NAT results on November 18, 19 and 20 returned negative results before he tested positive Monday.

According to preliminary epidemiological in-

vestigation, the worker commuted daily by bus to and from his home and workplace.

On November 20, he carried out cleaning work at the Lion Club located on the second floor of MGM Macau. On November 21, he performed clea-

ning work at the construction site of Phase 3A of the Galaxy Hotel.

Refurbishment works are still underway at the sites' interior, and accordingly these sites are not open to the public.

The center clarified that a detailed epidemio-

logical investigation is still ongoing.

Meanwhile, the sister of the 60-year-old tourist who tested positive during the weekend has tested positive as well.

The CT value shows an infection in the early stage, the center said.

"The risk of community transmission from this positive case is relatively low," the center reiterated.

# POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM ANOTHER CONCERN FOR LAWMAKERS

ANTHONY LAM

**S**ECRETARY for Administration and Justice André Cheong has assured lawmakers that the political accountability system is being implemented.

At his recent appearance at the parliament for policy questions, Cheong was questioned by lawmaker Ma Io Fong on the matter. Ma pointed out that there have been blueprints for a political accountability system for years now with no actual progress. No draft law, for example, has ever been submitted to the parliament.

By way of explanation, Cheong revealed that corresponding amendments and adjustments in the General Rules Governing Public Service Leaders would be orchestrated in parallel to the drafting of the disciplinary framework for senior public servants. Additionally, the provisions concerning breach



Typhoon Hato disaster where former Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau officials were held accountable for failing to exercise managerial responsibilities following public outcry

of professional conduct in the Penal Code will also be reviewed in the coming year. Recapping relevant references in last year's

Policy Address, Cheong reiterated that the political accountability system will cover three areas, namely the reviews of modes of authorization, reviews of breaches of professional conduct, as well as the compilation of a specific disciplinary system for senior public servants.

The senior official then highlighted that the government had already submitted a bill to amend certain parts of laws related to public service workers. The proposed amendment focuses on minimizing excessive bureaucratic approval procedures within the public service system.

He revealed that the disciplinary system specifically governing public service leaders was actually planned for this year. During the compilation process, however, the government discovered provisions in General Rules Governing Public Service Leaders that would conflict with the new bill. Therefore, the legislation process was postponed to next year.

Cheong stressed that the government took a pragmatic stand in terms of political accountability.

Both Fujian-related

Becky Song and academic-lawmaker Pang Chuan asked questions about the training for the cultivation of public service leaders. Song questioned the transparency of designating candidates, while Pang expressed concerns over its effectiveness.

Cheong revealed that in the past there were guidelines and requirements for the short-listing of candidates. The training courses, he stressed, were not of the simplistic and procedural kind. He believed that past candidates were not picked merely on the preferences of division heads.

Laws will be made when the talent database is established sufficient for the government to identify or appoint public service leaders solely from it.

While answering the questions, Cheong disclosed that future civil servants may be required to pledge allegiance to the People's Republic of China with an oath.

The senior official also revealed that there are two pay systems for civil servants being implemented in Hengqin. He was responding to a question from lawmaker

Leong Hong Sai with the General Neighborhood Association.

Cheong further explained that civil servants deployed from Macau to work in Hengqin will follow the remuneration system of the Macau public service. In contrast, Macau residents hired directly by the Hengqin administration will be subject to a specific salary structure determined by the administration.

## CHEONG CRITICIZED FOR REPETITIVE ROAD WORKS

Although not in charge of the transport and public works sector, Cheong was questioned about Macau's repetitive and uncoordinated road works. The Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM), which he heads, is the office responsible for licensing road works.

Bank worker and lawmaker Lo Choi In reiterated that Cheong had pledged to not repeat road works at the same location for a period of three years. Lo then referred to the fact that the city has been seeing road works in many locations, which inevitably causes severe traffic congestion. She then questioned the progress of the executive regulations governing road works about which the government had hinted.

The senior official admitted that no executive regulations governing road works were planned, but the government was contemplating practical tactics to achieve coordination.

Yet another computer system will be introduced to coordinate road works, Cheong added. The computer system will handle applications from companies or entities that wish to start road works. Cheong expects the mode to help achieve data transparency. Executive regulations will only be made if stronger legal grounds are required to enforce the system.

Cheong was also questioned by Lo's ally, Zheng Anting, for the lack of progress seen at the Red Market renovation site. Cheong hinted that he had no influence in the progress but promised to urge the builders to increase their pace.

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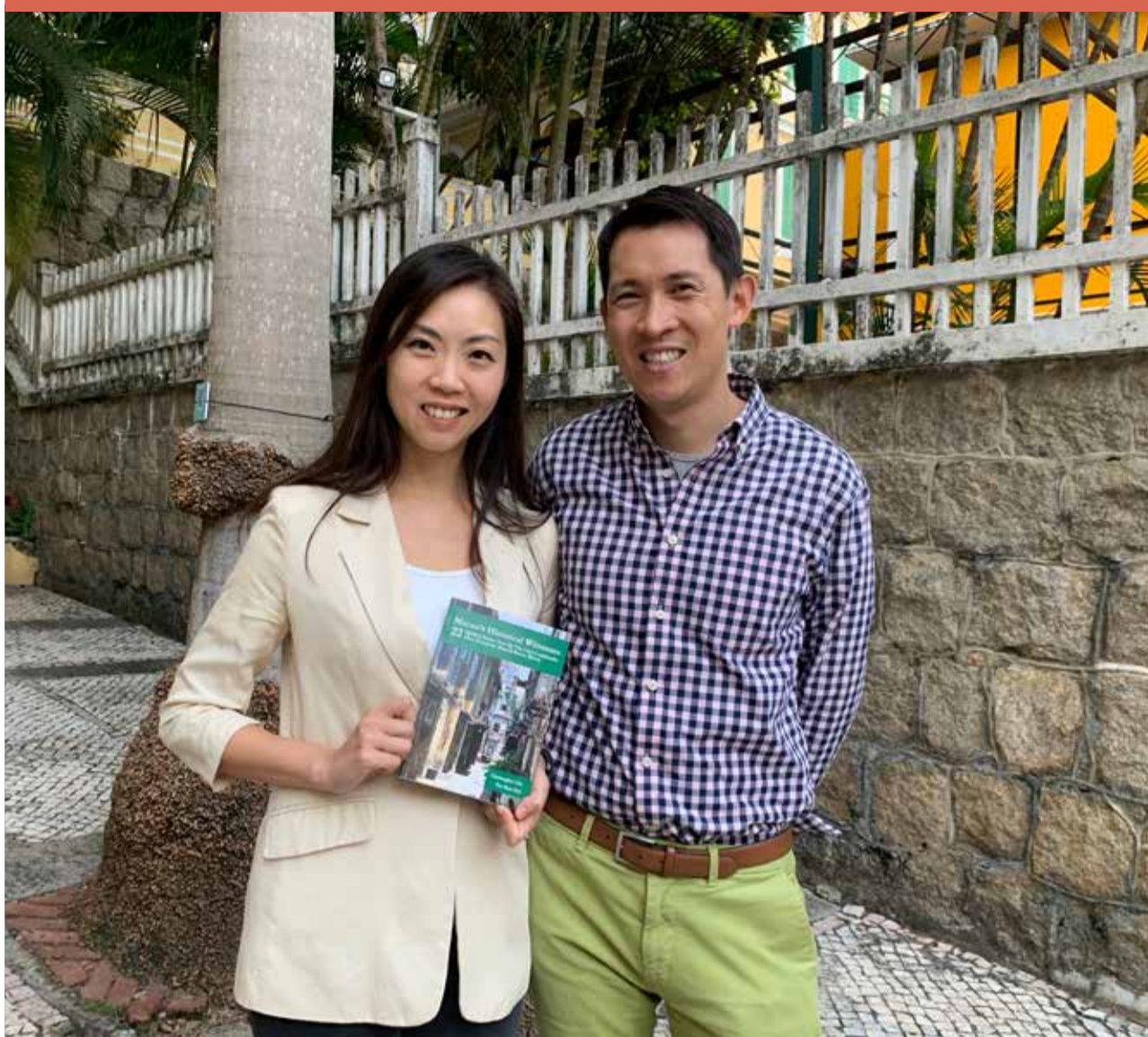
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LYNZY VALLES



Pui Man Hoi (left) and Christopher Chu

### MACAU'S HISTORICAL WITNESSES

# Historic landmarks retold to bolster city's identity

LYNZY VALLES

A book of stories about Macau's historic sites and landmarks has recently launched – a project that is considered to be a pandemic-born venture.

With Macau having over 20 monuments and urban squares woven into the heart of the city and listed as UNESCO sites, millions of visitors flocked to the city per year pre-pandemic.

Although guidebooks with information on the city's landmarks and their history already exist, authors of the new book have a different purpose: to describe when different views on the city collide, and how those impacts influence the current world.

Authors Christopher Chu and Pui Man Hoi recently launched “Ma-

cau's Historical Witnesses” – a book that consists of “22 Hidden Stories Seen By The City's Landmarks that Everyone Should Know About.”

Chu, who has worked in the finance sector in New York for over a decade, moved to Macau during the pandemic to avoid the city's strict border restrictions.

Speaking to the Times, Chu affirmed that the city's famous landmarks must be retold for people to further appreciate what Macau has to offer beyond being the “east meets west” city.

For the foreign author, Macau is much more than that, despite the city's identity often being lost in hackneyed descriptions.

“This [book] is not trying to retell history. We are hoping that it will help people forge a deeper relationship

with Macau and its landmarks. I think people will definitely appreciate [the city] more,” he said.

“I think when people describe Macau, people always describe it as the ‘east meets west’ city [...] but this can mean anything. How do you explain ‘east meets west’ when you only have 20 words [of description] for each landmark? You can look at something and not know what it is,” Chu added.

Macau has long been synonymous with gaming, short stays, as well as these UNESCO landmarks.

However, even among local residents, the history of these UNESCO-listed sites remains unknown.

“I think people have always had this connection but they don't really understand the [history]. That is why

we're putting this together,” the author added.

“Macau's Historical Witnesses” chapters begin with a summary of selected landmarks; each chapter is written as a standalone story. The authors have collected historic information about Camões Garden to St. Augustine's Church, Former Opium House to Taipa Village, among other unique landmarks.

Macau-born Pui, who co-authored the book, believes people living in Macau may have been made immune to an environment where such rich histories exist.

Although “east meets west” will always be a quick and the most common explanation of the city, Pui noted that each site has a different story to tell – stories that deserve to be told and known, especially among locals.

### ADVERTORIAL

# GREAT TIMES

Immerse in the Chinese Traditional Art at MGM Lion Dance Championship

BE aware of the sounds of drums, cymbals, and gongs that fill the air! Be alert with the dancers wobbling the lion's head and tail, eyelashes bat and blink, its enormous mouth opening and closing, climbing meters high poles this November!



Let's witness the tremendously competitive art of the Lingnan culture and be in awe of the Lion Dance prestige performance! MGM is once again thrilled to present The 9th “MGM Lion Dance Championship - Southern Lion Dance Invitational 2022” to showcase Chinese traditional art. The two-day event will be held on Nov 26 and 27, at MGM Theater of MGM COTAL. This year, the Championship features all the best troupes from 8 regions of China, giving their all during the competition with their finest costumes and performing acrobatic stunts, endurance, and creativity.



With troops of colorful lion dancers, drums and cymbals, there will be a Lion Dance Parade to usher in the Championship. A Chinese traditional theme will be woven through the parade route from the Spectacle to the Harmony, all the way to the Lion Lobby to MGM Theater, to deliver a strong sensation of Chinese traditions to all visitors as they step foot in MGM.



Experience the essence of the Lion Dance prestige performance filled with acrobatic performances and rhythmic drumming beats! The Championship is entirely free to enjoy. Come over to MGM Theater at MGM COTAL this November and meet the stunning troupes for the lion's roar! For more details, please visit [mgm.mo](http://mgm.mo)

ZERO-COVID

# ANTI-VIRUS CURBS SPUR FEARS OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

JOE MCDONALD, BEIJING

**A**NTI-VIRUS controls that are confining millions of Chinese families to their homes and shut shops and offices are spurring fears of further damage to already weak global business and trade.

The ruling Communist Party promised on Nov. 11 to reduce disruptions from its "zero-COVID" strategy by making controls more flexible. But the latest wave of outbreaks is challenging that, prompting major cities including Beijing to close off populous districts, shut stores and offices and order factories to isolate their workforces from outside contact.

Yesterday, the government reported 28,127 cases were found over the past 24 hours in areas throughout China, including 25,902 with no symptoms.

China's infection numbers are lower than those of the United States and other major countries. But the ruling party is sticking to "zero COVID," which calls for isolating every case, while other governments are relaxing travel and other controls and trying to live with the virus.

Global stock markets fell Monday as anxiety about China's controls added to unease about a Federal Reserve official's comment last week that already elevated U.S. interest rates might have to rise further than forecast to cool surging inflation.

AP PHOTO



Investors are "worried about falling demand as a result of a less mobile Chinese economy amid fears there will be more COVID-related lockdowns," Fawad Razaqada of StoneX said in a report.

China is the world's biggest trader and the top market for its Asian neighbors. Weakness in consumer or factory demand can hurt global producers of oil and other raw materials, computer chips and other industrial components, food and consumer goods. Restrictions that hamper activity at Chinese ports can disrupt global trade.

Economic growth rebounded to 3.9% over a year earlier in the three months ending in September, up from the first half's 2.2%. But activity already was starting to fall back.

Retail spending shrank by 0.5% from a year earlier in October, retreating from the previous month's 2.5% growth as cities re-imposed anti-virus controls. Imports fell 0.3% in a sign of anemic consumer demand, a reverse from September's 6.7% rise.

Chinese exports shrank by 0.7% in October after American and European consumer demand

was depressed by unusually large interest rate increases by the Fed and other central banks to cool inflation that is at multi-decade highs.

Guangdong province, an export-oriented manufacturing powerhouse that is the latest infection hot spot, recorded 9,022 new cases on Tuesday, or almost one-third of the national total. That included 8,241 without symptoms.

On Monday, the government of the provincial capital, Guangzhou, suspended access to its Baiyun district, home to some

3.7 million people, following outbreaks there.

Guangzhou announced plans last week to build quarantine facilities for nearly 250,000 people. It said 95,300 people from another district, Haizhu, were being moved to hospitals or quarantine.

The government of Shijiazhuang, a city of 11 million people southwest of Beijing, said factories that want to keep operating must impose "closed-loop management," the official term for employees living at their workplaces. That imposes extra costs for food and living space.

Businesspeople and economists see the changes in anti-virus controls as a step toward eventually lifting controls that isolate China from the rest of the world. But they say "zero COVID" might stay in place until as late as the second half of next year.

Entrepreneurs are pessimistic about the outlook despite government promises of less disruptive anti-virus measures, according to a survey by Peking University researchers and financial company Ant Group Ltd. It said a "confidence index" based on responses from 20,180 business owners fell to its lowest level since early 2021.

The ruling party needs to vaccinate millions of elderly people before it can lift controls that keep out most foreign visitors, economists and health experts say.

"We do not think the country is ready yet to open up," said Louis Loo of Oxford Economics in a report. "We expect the Chinese authorities will continue to fine-tune COVID controls over the coming months, moving toward a broader and more comprehensive reopening later." **MDT/AP**

FACE-TO-FACE

# US and Chinese defense chiefs meet amid strained relations

HENG SINITH, SIEM REAP

**T**HE defense chiefs of the United States and China held talks yesterday on the sidelines of a regional meeting in Cambodia to discuss strained bilateral relations and regional and global security issues, U.S. and Chinese officials said.

It was the second face-to-face meeting in six months between U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin II and Gen. Wei Fenghe, China's minister of national defense. It came just over a week after a meeting in Indonesia between U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping which was widely seen as an effort to ease tensions between the two superpowers over

AP PHOTO



Defense Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe walks out after a meeting with U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III in Siem Reap

trade and Taiwan.

Austin and Wei are in Siem Reap, Cambodia, attending a meeting of defense ministers from the Association of Southeast Asia Nations and other major countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

The United States,

Taiwan's most important ally, maintains a longstanding "one China" policy, which recognizes the government in Beijing but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei, and "strategic ambiguity" over whether the U.S. would respond militarily if the island

were attacked.

Biden said after meeting Xi that when it comes to China, the U.S. will "compete vigorously, but I'm not looking for conflict."

Pentagon Press Secretary Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder said Austin assured Wei of Biden's commitment to the "one China" policy.

Austin "underscored his opposition to unilateral changes to the status quo" and called on China to refrain from destabilizing actions toward Taiwan, Ryder said in a statement.

He also urged continuing talks on "reducing strategic risk, improving crisis communications, and enhancing operational safety," noting concerns over "dangerous behavior"

by Chinese military aircraft "that increases the risk of an accident."

In a news conference, Chinese Defense Ministry spokesperson Senior Col. Tan Kefei described yesterday's talks "as a concrete measure to implement the important consensus reached between Xi and Biden."

He said the meeting was "of great significance" for bringing China-U.S. relations "back to the track of healthy and stable development."

But an official statement issued by China's Defense Ministry quoted Wei as saying, "The responsibility for the current situation facing China-U.S. relations is on the U.S. side, not on the

Chinese side."

Wei said the issue of Taiwan was a "red line" over which China would brook no foreign interference. China's military "has the backbone, the determination, the confidence and the ability to resolutely safeguard the unity of the motherland," Wei said.

The Defense Ministry statement said the two sides also exchanged views over the South China Sea, Ukraine and the Korean Peninsula, without giving details. The U.S. statement said Austin discussed Russia's war against Ukraine and noted that both Washington and Beijing "oppose the use of nuclear weapons or threats to use them." **MDT/AP**

INDONESIA

# Quake death toll rises to 268; 151 still missing

**T**HE death toll from the earthquake that shook the Indonesian island of Java leapt to 268 yesterday as more bodies were found beneath collapsed buildings, and 151 people are still missing, the National Disaster Mitigation Agency said.

Agency head Suharyanto, who like many Indonesians only goes by one name, told reporters that another 1,083 people were injured in the 5.6 magnitude earthquake that hit Monday afternoon near the city of Cianjur.

The temblor sent terrified residents fleeing into the streets, some covered in blood and debris, and caused buildings around the rural area to collapse.

One woman told The Associated Press when the earthquake hit her home in Cianjur, the building started "shaking like it was dancing."

"I was crying and immediately grabbed my husband and children," said the woman, who gave her name only as Partinem. The house collapsed shortly after she escaped with her family.

In the village of Cijedil, northwest of Cianjur, the quake triggered a landslide that blocked streets and buried several houses, and there were reports that 25 people were still buried, said Henri Alfiandi, the chief of the National Search and Rescue Agency.

"We are maximizing operations at several points where it is suspected that there are still casualties. Our team is also trying to reach remote areas," he said. "For us, all victims are a priority, our goal is to find them and save lives by getting them evacuated as soon as possible and get medical help."

With hospitals already overwhelmed, patients lay on stretchers and cots in tents set up outside, with intravenous drips in their arms as they awaited further treatment.

Many of the dead were public school students who had finished their classes for the day and were taking extra lessons at Islamic schools when the buildings collapsed, West Java Gov. Ridwan Kamil said.

Initial rescue attempts were hampered by damaged roads and bridges and power blackouts, and a lack of heavy equipment to help move the heavy concrete rubble. By yesterday, power supplies and phone communications had begun to improve.

Operations were focused on about a dozen locations in Cianjur, where people are still believed trapped, said Endra Atmawidjaja, the public works and housing spokesperson.

"We are racing against time to rescue people," Atmawidjaja said, adding that seven excavators and 10 large trucks had been deployed from neighboring Bandung and Bogor cities to continue clearing trees and soil that blocked roads.

AP PHOTO



A man collects clothings from his damaged house following an earthquake in Cianjur, West Java, yesterday

Cargo trucks carrying food, tents, blankets and other supplies from Jakarta were arriving early yesterday in temporary shelters. Still, thousands spent the night in the open fearing aftershocks.

"Buildings were completely flattened," said Dwi Sarmadi, who works for an Islamic educational foundation in a neighboring district.

President Joko Widodo yesterday visited Cianjur to reassure people of the government's response in reaching those in need.

"On behalf of myself and on behalf of the government, I would like to express my deep condolences to the victims and their families in this Cianjur earthquake," he said after visiting survivors in shelters on a soccer field.

He pledged to rebuild infrastructure, including the main bridge connecting Cianjur to other cities, and to provide the government assistance up to 50 million rupiah (\$3,180) to each resident whose house was damaged.

Roughly 175,000 people live in Cianjur, part of a mountainous district of the same name with more than 2.5 million people. Known for their piety, the people of Cianjur live mostly in towns of one- and two-story buildings and in smaller homes in the surrounding countryside.

Kamil said that more than 13,000 people whose homes were heavily damaged were taken to evacuation centers. Outside the Cianjur Regional Hospital, hundreds waited for treatment.

"I was working inside my offi-

ce building. The building was not damaged, but as the quake shook very strongly, many things fell. My

leg was hit by heavy stuff," Sarmadi said.

He was waiting near a tent

outside the hospital after some overwhelmed clinics were unable to see him. Many people were coming in worse shape. "I really hope they can handle me soon," he said.

Hasan, a construction worker who, like many Indonesians uses one name, was also one of the survivors who was taken to the hospital.

"I fainted. It was very strong," Hasan recalled. "I saw my friends running to escape from the building. But it was too late to get out and I was hit by the wall."

The quake struck at a depth of 10 kilometers (6.2 miles). It also caused panic in the greater Jakarta area, about a three hour-drive away, where high-rises swayed and some people evacuated.

The country of more than 270 million people is frequently struck by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis because of its location on the arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin known as the "Ring of Fire."

In February, a magnitude 6.2 earthquake killed at least 25 people and injured more than 460 in West Sumatra province. In January 2021, a magnitude 6.2 earthquake killed more than 100 people and injured nearly 6,500 in West Sulawesi province.

A powerful Indian Ocean quake and tsunami in 2004 killed 230,000 people in a dozen countries, most of them in Indonesia. MDT/AP

AD

USA

# Taylor Swift ticket trouble could drive political engagement

BROOKE SCHULTZ

**S**OME of Taylor Swift's fans want you to know three things: They're not still 16, they have careers and resources and, right now, they're angry. That's a powerful political motivator, researchers say.

Look what Ticketmaster made them do.

It started last week Tuesday, when millions crowded a presale for Swift's long-awaited Eras Tour, resulting in crashes, prolonged waits and frantic purchases. By Thursday, Ticketmaster had canceled the general sale, citing insufficient remaining tickets and inciting a firestorm of outrage from fans. Swift herself said the ordeal "really pisses her off."

Ticketmaster apologized but the bad blood had already been sowed. And now fans — and politicians — have started acting on it.

U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez directed Swifties to where they could make U.S. Department of Justice complaints. Multiple state attorneys general — including in Pennsylvania and Tennessee, key states in Swift's origin story — have announced investigations.

Stephanie Aly, a New York-based professional who has worked on community organizing for progressive politics, for years has thought mobilizing fandoms for social progress could be beneficial.

"Fandoms are natural organizers," said the 33-year-old Swiftie. "If you find the right issues and you activate them and engage them then you can effect real change."

In 2020, for instance, K-pop fans organized to back the Black Lives Matter movement and sought to inflate registration for a Donald Trump rally. Aly and Swifties from different industries — law, public relations, cybersecurity and more — have joined forces to create Vigilante Legal, a group targeting Ticketmaster by creating email templates to petition attorneys general and providing antitrust information. Thousands have expressed interest in helping or learning more.

AP PHOTO



"The level of anger that you've just seen in the country around this issue is astounding," said Jean Sinzduk, associate director for the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University. "People are really sharing their feelings about that and building a movement about that online, which I really think is quite fascinating. It's certainly an opportunity to engage people politically. Whether it lasts is hard to say, but it certainly feels like a real opportunity."

In one way, said Sinzduk, this is giving Swift's large following of younger people a direct line to seeing how policy takes shape. It's also targeting a demographic that is seldom courted by politicians during election season.

"Nobody goes out and thinks, 'Let's target young women,'" said Gwen Nisbett, a University of North Texas professor who researches the intersection of political engagement and pop culture. "Be it about abortion or student loans, that age group is super mobilized and young women are super mobilized."

Fan culture and community has boosted that tendency toward mobilization. Nisbett was studying parasocial relationships — when fans have strong one-way relationships with celebrities — in 2018, when the previously apolitical Swift posted an endorse-

ment of Democratic candidates to social media. Nisbett found that while such posts may not determine fans' votes, they still led to the increased likelihood fans would look for more information about voting — and actually vote.

For the record: AP VoteCast, an extensive survey of the U.S. electorate, showed about a third of Tennessee voters in 2018 said they had a favorable opinion of Swift, and among them, a large majority — about 7 in 10 — backed Democrat Phil Bredesen in the Senate contest. That was in clear contrast to the roughly third of voters who had an unfavorable opinion of Swift and overwhelmingly backed Republican Marsha Blackburn.

For Swifties, the ire for Ticketmaster is not just about a ticket: "It's the fact that you can't participate in your community and your fandom and it's part of your identity," Nisbett said.

This isn't even the first time a fandom or an artist has targeted Ticketmaster. Pearl Jam took aim at the company in 1994, although the Justice Department ultimately declined to bring a case. More recently, Bruce Springsteen fans were enraged over high ticket costs because of the platform's dynamic pricing system.

"It's not just about getting vengeance for Swifties. It's not about getting an extra million Taylor Swift fans tickets, or all of us going to a

secret session," said Jordan Burger, 28, who is using his law background to help the cause. "It's about fundamental equality. And when you have a monopolist like that, it's just so representative of the class structure of a society where there isn't equality anymore, there isn't fairness."

The sheer power and size of Swift's fandom has spurred conversations about economic inequality, merely symbolized by Ticketmaster.

Aly noted that quite a few of the members of the group did get tickets; the issue is bigger than Ticketmaster, she said.

"We've gotten some feedback that, 'This is too big, let the government handle it.' Have you seen the U.S. government? The government only functions when the people push it to and when the people demand that it function and the people are involved," she said. "Even when something seems too big to fail or too powerful to fail, there are always enough of us to make a difference. Your involvement may be the thing that pushes it over the edge that forces the government to act."

Aly says many grown-up Swifties have 10-15 years' experience of being bullied for liking the singer — but what fans have in mind might be better than revenge.

"We have thick skin and nothing to lose, really," Aly said. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history



### 2002 RIOTS FORCE MISS WORLD OUT OF NIGERIA

The Miss World contest is moving to London from Nigeria after riots by Muslim youths opposed to the show left more than 100 people dead and 500 injured in the city of Kaduna.



The pageant's organisers said the show would be held in London on 7 December instead of the Nigerian capital, Abuja.

In Abuja, police say they have regained control of the streets after violent protests spread to the city over the plans to hold the contest there.

In a statement, the pageant organisers said the change of venue was in the "overall interests of Nigeria and the contestants".

Pageant publicist Stella Din added: "The show definitely will go on".

The contestants were under pressure to pull out of the event even before they arrived in Africa. Campaigners protesting against the death sentence imposed on a young Nigerian woman called Amina Lawal urged a boycott of Miss World.

On 22 March this year, the 31-year-old woman was sentenced to be stoned to death by an Islamic court in the northern state of Katsina for bearing a child out of wedlock after she was raped. Her lawyers are appealing the decision.

Kaduna - a city in the mainly Muslim state of Zamfara which has a large Christian minority - is now under curfew.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo went on television along with religious leaders to appeal for national calm, blaming a media report, not the contest itself, for the violence.

"It could happen at any time irresponsible journalism is committed against Islam," he said.

Trouble had been brewing since the arrival of the contestants earlier this month. Many Nigerian Muslims were incensed that the event, already an affront to their conservative ideas about feminine modesty, would be held during the holy month of Ramadan.

At first the protests were confined to angry statements by Islamic leaders and religious scholars.

Then on 16 November when ThisDay, a Nigerian daily, published an article written by 21-year-old journalist Isioma Daniel in which she suggested the Prophet Mohammed might have married one of the contestants.

Many Muslims were deeply offended, and on 20 November youths in Kaduna sacked and burned a local office of the newspaper. Two days ago the fighting degenerated into a vicious round of sectarian bloodletting, as rival gangs of Muslims and Christians burned places of worship and attacked each other.

Troops and police responded in force, and yesterday the Red Cross said about 100 had been killed with the streets of Kaduna scattered with bodies.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

The following day the 92 Miss World contestants arrived in England much to the relief of their family and friends.

They left behind them scenes of carnage in Nigeria - the final number of dead was 215.

Two days later the deputy governor of Zamfara announced the state government had passed a fatwa, or religious edict, on journalist Isioma Daniel in spite of numerous apologies made by ThisDay newspaper. She fled to the United States on 27 November and is still living in hiding even though the Nigerian government said it would not allow her to be harmed by any fatwa that was issued.

Miss World was moved to London and on 7 December Miss Turkey won the competition.

Amina Lawal won her appeal against the death sentence in September 2003.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## YOUR STARS

**ARIES** Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
Travel and family gatherings should be in order. Travel will turn out to be far more exciting than you imagined. Do your work at home, if you can.

**TAURUS** Apr. 20-May. 20  
Spend time with friends and relatives. You can continue to forge ahead if you make a few long distance calls pertinent to closing pending deals.

**GEMINI** May. 21-Jun. 21  
Avoid letting family get involved in your personal life. Spend some time with the one you love. Pleasure trips will be satisfying. Don't overspend on friends or children.

**CANCER** Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
Go on business trips if at all possible. You will be able to talk about emotional problems with your partner. You can make amends by taking them somewhere special.

**LEO** Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
Try to find another time to present work or ideas today. Don't be too quick to judge those you live with. In-laws may cause difficulties. Travel should be considered.

**VIRGO** Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
Complete those hobbies you started a long time ago. Deception is evident around you. Travel could include delays and other minor problems.

**LIBRA** Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
Concentrate on spending quality time with children and friends. Don't be too quick to let friends and relatives know what you're up to.

**SCORPIO** Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
Try not to allow superiors or those in a higher position to take advantage of you. Uncertainties about your living arrangements may be unnerving.

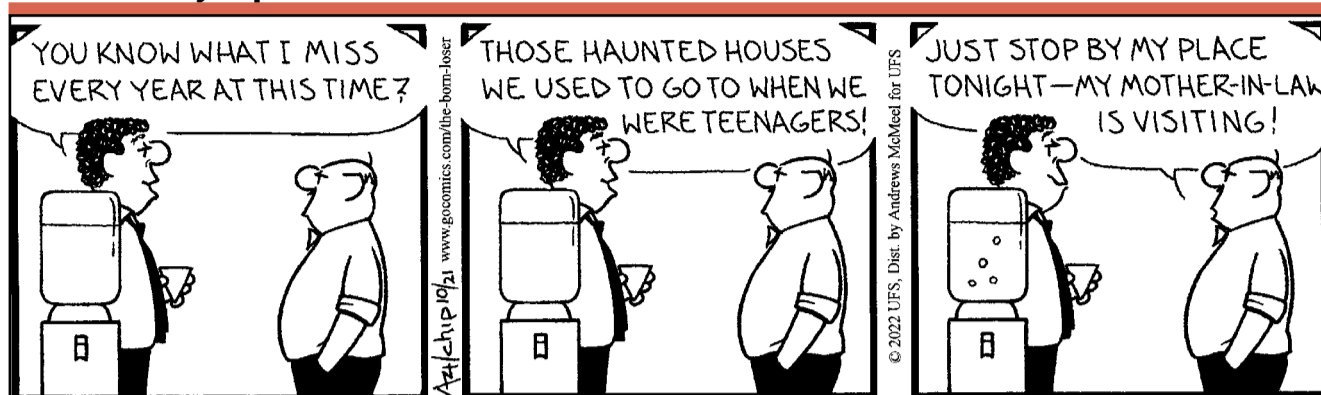
**SAGITTARIUS** Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
Try to keep your cool; you may be a tad frazzled by all the rushing around. Question your mate if you must. Creative endeavors will give you somewhat of an outlet.

**CAPRICORN** Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
Try not to let your emotions interfere with the completion of your work. You need to concentrate on your business ventures more than on your relationship today.

**AQUARIUS** Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
Deal with the needs of children. Misunderstandings could cause confusion and upset. Romantic opportunities may not be as they appear. Question your mate if you must.

**PISCES** Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
You should get into some of those creative hobbies that you always said you wanted to do. Your ability to stand out in a crowd will bring you the recognition you desire.

## The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



## SUDOKU

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

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

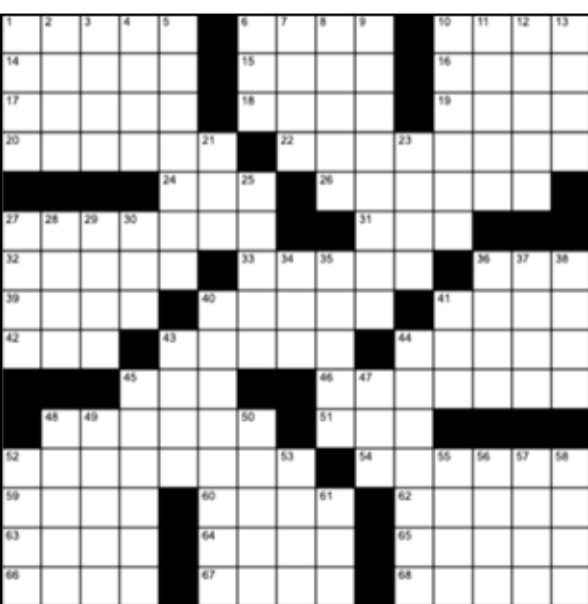
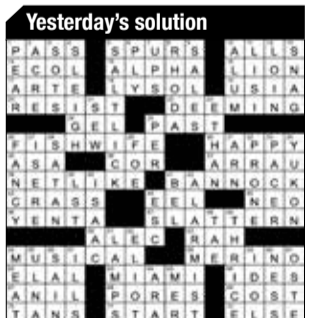
## WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	0	12	fine
Changchun	-4	4	cloudy
Chengdu	13	19	cloudy
Chongqing	14	17	rain
Fuzhou	19	22	overcast
Guangzhou	20	23	rain
Guiyang	9	16	overcast
Haikou	24	27	rain
Hangzhou	14	18	overcast
Harbin	-8	0	snow
Hefei	9	15	cloudy
Nanjing	11	16	cloudy
Shanghai	14	18	cloudy
Taipei	20	23	rain
Wuhan	9	18	fine
Hong Kong	21	23	rain
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	-4	1	snow
Frankfurt	6	10	rain
Paris	7	12	rain
London	7	11	rain
New York	2	12	fine

## CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Songwriters' org.; 6- Romance novelist Victoria; 10- Swabbies; 14- Brooks of country; 15- Got it; 16- Diamond stats; 17- \_\_\_ Gay; 18- Dash; 19- Bridge seat; 20- Replace the electrical conduits; 22- Performs surgery; 24- Qty.; 26- Strikes; 27- French hello; 31- Goddess of dawn in Greek mythology; 32- Belief involving sorcery; 33- Blessed \_\_\_; 36- CIO's partner; 39- Laugh loudly; 40- Distributed cards; 41- WWII battle site; 42- Asian holiday; 43- Unit of magnetic induction; 44- Behaved; 45- Mannerism; 46- Candidate; 48- Thoroughfare; 51- Twosome; 52- Kilo; 54- Idle; 59- Chow; 60- Fly; 62- Less healthy; 63- Came down to earth; 64- Novel ending; 65- Capture; 66- Driving aids; 67- Thought-provoking; 68- Behind time;

DOWN 1- Antiquing agent; 2- Having a sound mind; 3- Brag; 4- King of the Huns; 5- Ancient Egyptian king; 6- Hasten; 7- 1952 Winter Olympics setting; 8- Springs; 9- Pre-war apartment; 10- Picks up the check; 11- Diminish; 12- Ascends; 13- Fast fliers; 21- Large flightless bird; 23- Knee-slapper; 25- Woody inhabitants of forests; 27- Low-quality diamond; 28- It's blown among the reeds; 29- Tidy, without fault; 30- Cookie holder; 34- Batman after Michael; 35- Gnu cousin; 36- Env. notation; 37- Head for the hills; 38- Rich supply; 40- Dead; 41- Biol., e.g.; 43- Rail supports; 44- Person devoted to love; 45- Expects confidently; 47- Not at home; 48- Oil source; 49- Fields of comedy; 50- Govt. security; 52- Nipple; 53- Go out with; 55- Radius neighbor; 56- Chemical used on trees; 57- Square; 58- Low card; 61- Agent, briefly;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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



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**Nova Taipa**  
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**Kok Wui**  
HKD 7,800/mth 2 beds 1 bath

AD

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**M**ANY Canadian soccer fans have been waiting for this moment their entire lives.

Long an afterthought behind hockey in their home country, Canada's soccer team is back in the World Cup for the first time since 1986 and it opens today [Thursday, 03:00 against a daunting opponent: Belgium, a 2018 semifinalist and second in the FIFA rankings.

"We don't hope no more, we believe," Canada midfielder Jonathan Osorio said. "And we're very confident in ourselves."

Canada's only prior trip to soccer's showcase was a scoreless, three-loss performance 36 years ago against France, Hungary and the Soviet Union, with a squad that included Bob Lenarduzzi, Tino Lettieri and Branko Segota.

These Canadians are led by a new generation headed by Alphonso Davies, Jonathan David and Cyle Larin. They finished first in CONCACAF qualifying, a turnaround engineered by John Herdman. He coached the Canadian women to bronze medals in the 2012 and '16 Olympics, then switched to the men in 2018.

"I think in qualifying we played in a way where we were fearless and we want to do that on the biggest stage," midfielder Samuel Piette said. "We don't want to back down. We want to be on the front foot and go toe to toe with Belgium."

## MATCH OF THE DAY

## CANADA MEETS BELGIUM IN FIRST WC MATCH SINCE 1986



Canada forward Alphonso Davies, right, stretches his leg next to teammate Jonathan Osorio during practice at the World Cup in Doha

Part of a Group F that includes Croatia and Morocco, Belgium is in its seventh year under coach Roberto Martinez. The Red Devils finished third at the 2018 World Cup and lost to Italy in the quarterfinals of last year's European Championship.

Its core may be at or just past peak, with Kevin De Bruyne and Eden Hazard both 31, Romelu Lukaku 29 and Youri Tielemans

part of the next age group at 25.

"Belgium is a small country, you know? So we're very happy

that we have this kind of talent," defender Toby Alderweireld said. Herdman warns Belgium en-

ters with far more experience.

"When you're coming up against De Bruyne, Hazard, Lukaku and Thielemans, these players can smell and sense the inexperience in players and take advantage," Herdman said.

Davies, Canada's top player, is uncertain after straining his right hamstring while playing for Bayern Munich on Nov. 5.

"We want to show that we are a football nation, that we can compete with the best in the world," Osorio said. "We want to surprise people because I think people still see us as underdogs and things like this, and Canada and the World Cup, they should just be happy to be here. But that's not our mentality. We're here to compete — to compete at a high level."

Janny Sikazwe of Zambia will referee the match. During a January African Cup of Nations match in January, he blew his whistle to end the game after 85 minutes, then restart it and ended it after 89 minutes, 47 seconds, when about three minutes of injury time had been expected. **MDT/AP**

## TODAY'S MATCHES

	Date	Time	Home	Away	ODDS
Wed	Nov 23	18:00	Morocco	Croatia	H 4.2, D 3.4, A 2.16
Wed	Nov 23	21:00	Germany	Japan	H 1.5, D 4.9, A 7.5
Thu	Nov 24	00:00	Spain	Costa Rica	H 1.18, D 8.5, A 24
Thu	Nov 24	3:00	Belgium	Canada	H 1.54, D 4.5, A 6.75

## GROUP B

## Bale salvages draw for Wales against US

RONALD BLUM,  
AL RAYYAN

USA 1, WALES 1

**A** young United States team was nearing victory in its World Cup return. Then Walker Zimmerman needlessly plowed into Gareth Bale.

Bale converted the resulting penalty kick in the 82nd minute, giving Wales a 1-1 draw Monday night that left the Americans feeling frustrated and made their path to the knockout stage more precarious.

"You feel like you have the game and you're going to win the game," midfielder Brenden Aaronson said. "It's a punch in the face."

Tim Weah put the Americans ahead in the 36th minute off a pass from Christian Pulisic, scoring in front a crowd that included his father, former FIFA Player of the Year



Wales' Gareth Bale celebrates after scoring his side's goal from the penalty spot

and current Liberia President George Weah.

Back in the World Cup after missing the 2018 tournament, the United States had only to close out the final minutes. But Brennan Johnson made a throw-in that Aaron Ram-

sey cut back to Bale, who had his back to the goal near the penalty spot. Zimmerman's sliding tackle took out Bale's left leg, and Qatari referee Abdulrahman Al-Jassim pointed to the penalty spot.

"He probably just puts

his leg not for the ball but to try and get in the way of me hitting the ball," Zimmerman said. "So I kind of went through him and I think I still got the ball. But clever move — I wish I would have seen him out of the corner my eye."

Shooting in front of the Red Wall of supporters, Bale sent his kick past goalkeeper Matt Turner for his 41st goal in 109 international appearances, salvaging a point for Wales in its first World Cup match since 1958.

"Obviously, a difficult game," Bale said. "First half was not how we wanted to play and the United States played really well. We played quite poorly."

Next up for the United States is a high-profile matchup Friday against England, which opened with a 6-2 rout of Iran. Wales faces the Iranians.

The top two teams advance.

"It think it's pretty clear — a disappointing result

for us," Turner said.

Weah, just 22, was part of a new-look American team that is the tournament's second-youngest.

Yunus Musah, at 19 years, 358 days the youngest American to start a Cup match, started the move to Weah's goal when he headed the ball to Josh Sargent at the midfield stripe. Sargent dished off to Pulisic, who burst up the middle of the field. On his fourth touch Pulisic rolled the ball ahead to Weah, who timed his run perfectly to break in ahead of Neco Williams.

From near the penalty spot, Weah used the side of his right foot to poke the ball over the left thigh of sliding goalkeeper Wayne Hennessey for his fourth goal in 26 international appearances.

"It's a dream come true for every attacker, for every player to score in a World Cup," Weah said, "and I did that tonight in front of my fans, my teammates, my family."

In the 750th international U.S. match, the Americans started a U.S. Cup record 10 players from European clubs, with only

Zimmerman from Major League Soccer. DeAndre Yedlin, who entered in the 74th minute, was the only American with previous World Cup experience.

Sargent nearly put the Americans ahead in the 10th minute when he hit a post with a header from Antonee Robinson's cross.

After the U.S. dominated the first half with 66% possession, Wales switched to a three-man attack and had 67% in the first 15 minutes of the second. Ben Davies' header in the 64th minute was pushed over the crossbar by a leaping Turner.

The match was played in the Arabian desert west of Doha at rebuilt Ahmad bin Ali Stadium, lit in brilliant colors and featuring an exterior facade meant to replicate undulating sand dunes. The U.S. Soccer Federation sold about 3,300 tickets, and Secretary of State Anthony Blinken was on hand in the crowd of 43,418.

"The nerves were there," Pulisic said. "Now we have to figure out how to put that together for 90 minutes." **MDT/AP**

**ARGENTINA 1, SAUDI ARABIA 2**

**GROUP C**

**L**IONEL Messi stood with his hands on his hips near the center circle, looking stone-faced as Saudi Arabia's jubilant players ran in all directions around him after scoring one of the biggest World Cup upsets ever against Argentina.

The South American champion and one of the tournament favorites slumped to a 2-1 loss against Saudi Arabia yesterday, in a deflating start to Messi's quest to win the one major title that has eluded him.

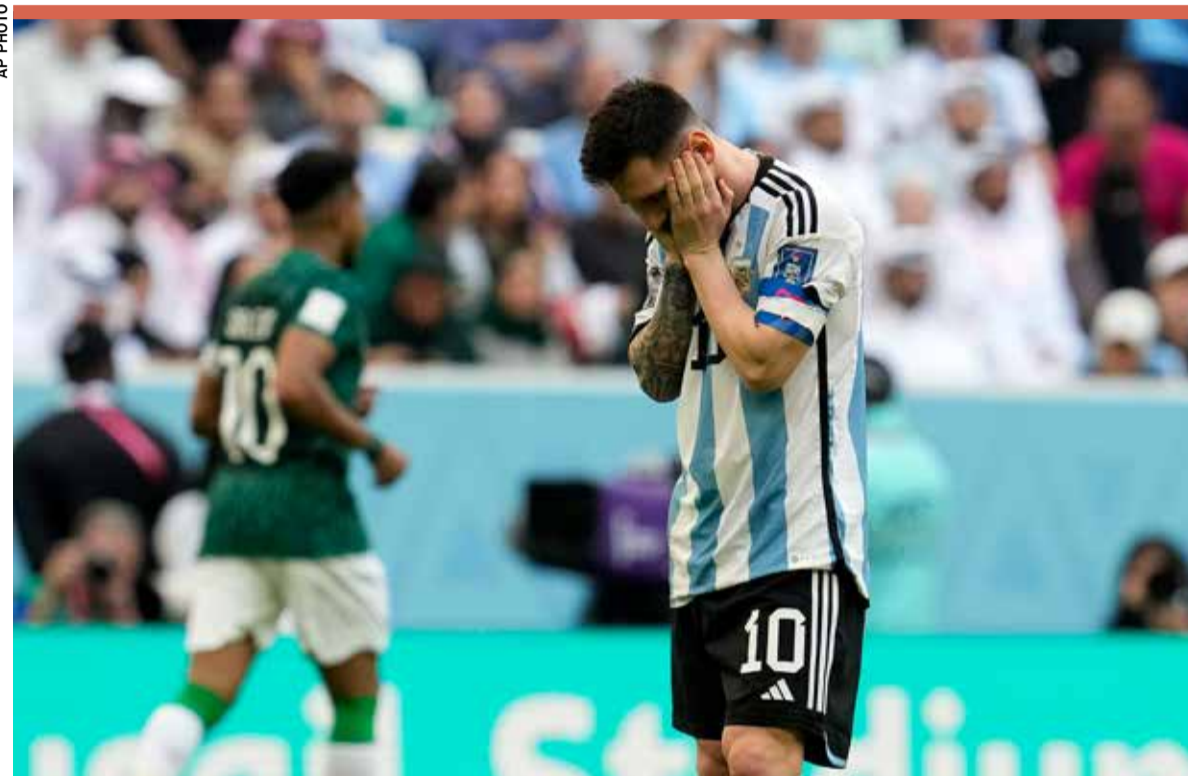
Saudi Arabia's comeback joins the list of other major World Cup upsets: Cameroon's 1-0 win over an Argentina team led by Diego Maradona in the opening game of the 1990 World Cup, Senegal's 1-0 victory over titleholder France 1-0 in the 2002 tournament opener or the United States beating England by the same score in 1950.

"Prior to the match we were anointed as favorites," Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said. "But this sort of stuff can happen in a World Cup."

Messi gave Argentina the lead in the 10th minute with a coolly dispatched penalty and the match had the makings of a routine win for the defending Copa America champion, which were on a 36-match unbeaten run.

Didn't turn out that way.

Goals by Saleh Alshehri and Salem Aldawsari in a five-minute span early in the second half gave the Saudis a landmark result in the first World Cup staged in the Middle East.



Argentina's Lionel Messi showing his disappointment after the match

The Saudis' previous biggest win was 1-0 over Belgium at the 1994 World Cup.

"All the stars aligned for us," Saudi Arabia's coach Herve Renard said. "We made history for Saudi football."

The 35-year-old Messi, playing in his fifth — and likely his final — World Cup for Argentina, scratched the side of his head and shook hands with a Saudi coaching staff member after the final whistle.

He walked toward the tunnel with a group of other Argentina players and looked despondent, an all-too-familiar scene for one of the best players ever who is yet to win soccer's ultimate prize.

"We screwed it up in the second half," Argentina striker Lautaro Martinez said. "Small details make a difference. We have to fix them."

The unlikely victory was sealed by a somersault by Aldaw-

sari, who brought down a high ball just inside the penalty area, spun Nahuel Molina with the

help of a ricochet, jinked past Leandro Paredes and drove a powerful shot to the far corner in the 53rd.

A stunned Messi watched as green-clad fans from Saudi Arabia, Qatar's neighbor, celebrated in disbelief in the stands. Saudi Arabia's substitutes swarmed onto the field.

Messi put Argentina ahead from the penalty spot after the video assistant referee told the referee to take a look at a jersey grab by Saud Abdulhamid on Paredes.

Saudi Arabia didn't have a shot on goal in the first half and looked like conceding more by playing with a high line that resulted in Argentina getting in behind in the Saudi defense with ease.

The 48th-minute equalizer came from Saudi Arabia's first attempt on target, with Alshehri finding the far corner with an angled finish that went through the legs of defender Cristian Romero and beyond the dive of goalkeeper Emi Martinez.

Goalkeeper Mohammed Alowais made two key saves late in the game to preserve the win.

Argentina plays Mexico in its second Group C match on Saturday. **MDT/AP**

**SCOREBOARD**

Group A	Qatar	0	2	<b>Ecuador</b>
Group A	Senegal	0	2	<b>Netherlands</b>
Group B	<b>England</b>	6	2	Iran
Group B	United States	1	1	Wales
Group C	Argentina	1	2	<b>Saudi Arabia</b>
Group C	Denmark	0	0	Tunisia

**GROUP A**

**Netherlands strikes late to beat Senegal**

GERALD IMRAY, DOHA

**SENEGAL 0, NETHERLANDS 2**

**L**OUIS van Gaal's gambles at both ends of the field paid off for the Netherlands.

Up front, Memphis Depay returned from injury as a second-half substitute to help spark the attack into life as the Netherlands scored two late goals to beat Senegal 2-0 yesterday [Macau time] at the World Cup.

At the back, Netherlands goalkeeper Andries Noppert pulled off three key saves to keep the African champions at bay after Van Gaal decided to give him his international debut in a key World Cup game and just two months after he was called into the national



Vincent Janssen of the Netherlands (left) fights for the ball with Senegal's Pape Abou Cisse

squad for the first time.

Cody Gakpo and substitute Davy Klaassen provided the late goals to ensure the Dutch team's winning start at its first World Cup appearance since 2014, when Van

Gaal was also coach.

Gakpo rose to glance a header in from a cross by Frenkie de Jong in the 84th minute with the team's first effort on target. Klaassen added a second right at the end

of eight minutes of stoppage time by slotting in after Senegal goalkeeper Edouard Mendy only weakly blocked a shot from Depay.

The orange-shirted Dutch fans had been subdued

until the late strikes as Senegal was the more energetic team. The Senegalese drums and chants were the dominant sound from the stands for much of the game.

But Senegal's main problem was predictable: Without injured forward Sadio Mane, it couldn't convert any of its chances.

"I think we gave everything and I think we deserved at least a point from this game," Senegal coach Aliou Cisse said. "But, of course, Sadio being missing is a problem for us."

Depay, who has only just recovered from a hamstring injury, was put on by Van Gaal with about 30 minutes to go after the veteran coach said the day before that he wasn't sure if the Barcelona forward was ready for action.

He decided to see if he was and Depay responded by playing parts in

both goals.

First, he linked up with De Jong near the edge of the area before the midfielder crossed to Gakpo for the first goal. Depay's run and shot deep in injury time led to the second goal for Klaassen — one of four substitutes in the match. It sealed a Dutch victory and a 16th game unbeaten for the Netherlands since the 71-year-old Van Gaal, the oldest coach at the World Cup, returned from retirement last year to lead his country for a third time.

The substitutions provided "the breakthrough," Van Gaal said. "Memphis was a big part of that."

Few people were talking about the Dutch coming into this World Cup, but their record is highly impressive under Van Gaal and they're now through what he had identified as their toughest test of the group stage. **MDT/AP**

**OPINION**

**China Daily**  
 Editorial, China Daily

**PEOPLE'S SUPPORT KEY TO PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

The guidance and work plans regarding nucleic acid tests, the demarcation of COVID-19 risk areas, home quarantine and medical observation issued by the State Council on Monday are meaningful supplements to the 20 directives for COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control that it released about 10 days ago.

While the directives are more principles and what to do, the latest guidance is more about how to do what should be done, and what should not be done. These documents and the actions that grassroots departments are expected to adhere to represent the country's latest response to the resurgence of the novel coronavirus in some places, with the situation in Beijing catching most attention.

Over the past two weeks, the capital has seen hundreds of new cases every day, about one-third of which have been reported outside of locked down communities where cases have already been confirmed. Different cities are applying different approaches to control the virus, although with the same objectives — people's health and lives are effectively protected while the influence of the prevention and control measures on socioeconomic activities is kept to a minimum.

In that sense, Beijing's timely and resolute response to the new outbreak is absolutely necessary as the increase in the number of cases has not yet reached its turning point, and some hidden transmission chains still exist in some places in the city, with seasonal flu and other respiratory infectious diseases that are more prevalent in winter aggravating the risk of the virus' transmission.

Most districts in Beijing have urged residents to reduce their mobility since the past weekend in a bid to cut the transmission chains as early as possible. The residents of Beijing have demonstrated their understanding and support for these actions by skipping all unnecessary outdoor activities. Their cooperation is essential to ensure the capital's effective containment of this wave of the virus in the shortest possible time.

Despite its huge population, more than that of almost all developed economies combined, and its relatively less-developed and unevenly distributed medical care resources, China has one of the lowest COVID-19 death rates in the world thanks to its scientific and people-centered virus control practices.

With the full support of residents, its strengths in medical and scientific resources and efficient grassroots governance system, it is believed that the capital, along with other hard-hit cities in this wave, such as Guangzhou, Guangdong province, will be able to swiftly contain the current resurgence of the virus, and economic activities and life will soon return to normal.

Australia's Parliament passed bilateral free trade agreements with India and Britain yesterday, leaving those partner nations to bring the deals into force.

The deals are crucial for Australia to diversify its exports from the troubled Chinese market to India and to Britain's need to forge new bilateral trade relations since it left the European Union.

The bills easily passed the House of Representatives on Monday and the Senate made them law yesterday.

The deals need to be ratified by the respective British and Indian parliaments before they take effect. Neither nation has yet

done that.

Trade Minister Don Farrell said India had demonstrated its commitment to the bilateral economic partnership through the quality of the deal struck.

"Closer economic ties with India are a critical component of the government's trade diversification strategy," Farrell said.

Farrell said the British deal was "crucial to boosting our growth."

Under the Australia-Britain deal, more than 99% of Australian goods exports will be duty free, including sheep meat, beef, dairy, sugar and wine.



AP PHOTO

**SIX APPLE DAILY STAFF PLEAD GUILTY TO COLLUSION IN HONG KONG**

**KANIS LEUNG, HONG KONG**

SIX former executives of a now-defunct Hong Kong pro-democracy newspaper yesterday pleaded guilty to a collusion charge under the National Security Law that has silenced and jailed most opposition voices in the southern Chinese territory.

The staff members of Apple Daily were arrested last year during a crackdown on dissent after Beijing imposed the security law in response to the widespread anti-government protests in 2019. They were charged with conspiracy to commit collusion with foreign forces to endanger national security.

The law criminalizes acts of succession, subversion, terrorism, and collusion with foreign forces. Its maximum penalty is life imprisonment. But the six were expected to receive lesser penalties because of their guilty pleas.

Publisher Cheung Kim-hung, associated publisher Chan Pui-man, Editor-in-Chief Ryan Law, Executive Editor-in-Chief Lam Man-chung, and editorial writers Fung Wai-

-kong and Yeung Ching-kee, admitted they had conspired with the newspaper's founder Jimmy Lai to call for an imposition of sanctions or blockade, or engage in other hostile activities against Hong Kong or China.

Prosecutors alleged three companies related to Apple Daily were also involved in the conspiracy from July 1, 2020 — the day after the National Security Law was introduced — to the day of the paper's last print edition, June 24, 2021.

They pointed to the publication's English version, alleging it was introduced by Lai for the purpose of asking foreign forces to impose sanctions or be hostile against Hong Kong or China. They said Lai was the mastermind of the conspiracy and the six acted to implement the plans. After the security law was enacted, the Apple Daily condemned the legislation as "evil law" and called for resistance, they added.

Lai and the three companies were expected to plead not guilty to their charge and their trial is scheduled to start Dec. 1. If convicted, Lai faces life

imprisonment. If the companies are convicted, they could be fined and the proceeds obtained from the crime confiscated.

After hearing their pleas and the prosecution's case, a High Court judge convicted the six. Their sentences would be handed down after Lai's trial.

Local journalists and former Apple Daily staff were among the spectators, with some waving at the defendants before and after the hearing.

Police took away hard drives and laptops as evidence in a raid at Apple Daily's offices in June 2021, sending shockwaves across the city's media. The arrests of top executives, editors and journalists at the paper, as well as the freezing of \$2.3 million worth of assets, led it to cease its operations. It sold a million copies of its final edition.

Separately, nine people were found guilty of rioting during a violent protest in October 2019 at another Hong Kong court yesterday. They were among the thousands of residents who were arrested for their roles in the widespread protests three years ago. MDT/AP



AP PHOTO

**North Korea** The daughter of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un who was recently seen in public for the first time at a missile launch site is his second child aged about 10. South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers yesterday, as speculation swirled about his motives for bringing her to the attention of the outside world. North Korea said that Kim observed the launch of the country's most powerful intercontinental ballistic missile - Hwasong-17 - the previous day with his wife Ri Sol Ju and their "beloved daughter."



AP PHOTO

**UAE** Dubai International Airport passenger numbers surpassed pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels in the third quarter of 2022, the airport's chief executive said, causing the airport to revise its annual forecast by another 1 million passengers. Paul Griffiths (pictured), who oversees the world's busiest airport, told AP the annual forecast at Dubai International, or DXB, is more than 64 million. The airport saw 18.5 million passengers in the third quarter of this year, up from 17.8 million during the first quarter of 2020 — prior to and at the dawn of the pandemic.



AP PHOTO

**OECD** Hobbled by high interest rates, punishing inflation and Russia's war against Ukraine, the world economy is expected to eke out only modest growth this year and to expand even more tepidly in 2023. That was the sobering forecast issued yesterday by the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. In the OECD's estimation, the world economy will grow just 3.1% this year, down sharply from a robust 5.9% in 2021. Next year, the OECD predicts, will be even worse: The international economy would expand only 2.2%.