



CONCESSIONAIRES WILL HAVE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WORKERS OF THE SATELLITE CASINOS THAT WILL EVENTUALLY CLOSE

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FOUR GAMING OPS SEEKING MOP135M IN COMPENSATION FROM LEVO CHAN, DEFENDANTS

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LATE CHINESE LEADER JIANG HAILED IN MEMORIAL SERVICE

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AP PHOTO



Afghan girls will be allowed to take their high school graduation exams this week, an official and documents from the Taliban government indicated yesterday even though they have been banned from classrooms since the former insurgents took over the country last year. According to two documents from the Taliban ministry of education, obtained by The Associated Press, the decision applies to 31 out of Afghanistan's 34 provinces where the winter school break starts in late December.

AP PHOTO



Iranian authorities sentenced five people to death for allegedly killing an officer affiliated with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard, state media said yesterday. Eleven others received lengthy prison sentences. The 13 men and three minors had been charged with killing Ruhollah Ajamian, an official from the Basij, a paramilitary volunteer branch of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard, according to the report from IRNA, Iran's state news agency.

AP PHOTO



Ukraine In a new display of defiance from Kyiv, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy traveled to an eastern city near the front line yesterday, while Russia reported that strategic sites inside the country were hit by drone attacks for a second day. A fire broke out at an airport in Russia's southern Kursk region that borders Ukraine after a drone hit the facility, the region's governor said. In a second incident, an industrial plant 80 kilometers from the Ukrainian border was also targeted by drones, Russian independent media reported, apparently missing a fuel depot at the site.

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HK's former stock market chief Charles Li was given the green light to start an asset exchange in Macau - a platform that 'connects China's micro economy with global capital'

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TRIP.COM

AIM TO ATTRACT MAINLAND TOURISTS REMAINS DESPITE 'UNSTABLE POLICY'

LYNZY VALLES

THE Macau SAR's "unstable" Covid-19 policy has deterred mainland Chinese travelers from visiting, making it an "unpopular" destination for mainland visitors, according to China's giant global travel service provider, Trip.com.

Macau's adherence to zero-Covid has led the city to impose strict border restrictions and partial lockdowns when new cases arise, leading to downturn in tourist arrivals, particularly during the largest outbreak that started in mid-June.

Speaking at the Trip.com's 2022 Global Partner Summit in Macau, Edison Chen, general manager of Destination Marketing at the Trip.com Group, said that although there were instabilities in the city's policy, the key direction remains to attract more mainland tourists to Macau.

"[Over] the last few years, I understand the policy was not very stable but [there are now] more flights from mainland China to Macau [since the resumption of eVisas in November]," said Chen in reply to the Times' query.

"The key direction between mainland China and Macau is [that] we definitely want to encourage mainland travelers to come to Macau. One of the key reasons is that the Macau government has [...] provided a good policy to make sure travelers are



safe," the executive added.

In the city's previous "Macao Weeks" mainland China, one of the aims has been to promote Macau as a safe and high-quality destination.

In line with this, the international one-stop tourism service company believes that large summits, which are slated to be held in the SAR, will encourage mainland travelers to see that despite cross-border requirements, it is worthwhile to visit the city.

"We just want to send out this message through this event that Macau is still a safe place to tra-

vel and it welcomes you to come," said Chen.

Over the past several days, China was seen to be easing some of the world's most stringent anti-virus controls and authorities have said that new variants are weaker.

However, they have yet to say when they might end the "zero-Covid" strategy that confines people to their homes and has sparked protests.

For Chen, the zero-Covid policy has eased significantly compared to two years ago, as can be seen through measure such as the increased number of interna-

tional flights and relatively lower airfare prices.

"Different countries have different policies towards Covid because [...] it's also about the situations of the countries. I believe whatever policy we apply now is the best solution according to China," Chen noted.

"Of course, definitely, this policy will have different impacts for the public, there is no doubt," he added.

Meanwhile, health experts and economists warn it will be mid-2023 and possibly 2024 before vaccination rates are high enou-

gh and hospitals are prepared to handle a possible surge in infections.

"China is not ready for a fast reopening yet," Morgan Stanley economists said in a report on Monday, adding, "We expect lingering containment measures. ... Restrictions could still tighten dynamically in lower-tier cities should hospitalizations surge."

TRIP.COM SUMMIT ATTRACTS OVER 1,000 PARTICIPANTS

Trip.com Group's 2022 Global Partner Summit in Macau attracted over 1,000 participants Friday.

As a sponsor of the summit for two consecutive years, the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) hopes to leverage the influential large-scale conference to promote the city's diverse tourism resources and strengths as a MICE destination among mainland and overseas industry professionals.

Themed "Journey into the Future Together – explore the return of international travel markets," the summit features a main forum and several sub forums about business travel, accommodation, air ticketing and marketing, as well as a roundtable forum and an award ceremony.

The Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong, attended the main forum and remarked in his speech that the summit had gathered over 1,000 participants including tourism industry leaders from different countries and regions this year.

"It deeply bespeaks Macau's comprehensive ability to organize large-scale MICE events, as well as the city's image as a safe and quality destination," he said.

COURTS

Four gaming operators seeking MOP135m compensation from Levo Chan

FOUR gaming operators are seeking a combined MOP135 million in damages from former junket mogul Levo Chan as his trial in a local court began on Monday.

The former Tak Chun Group chairman's trial commenced earlier with testimonies which spoke to the group's side betting operations.

Four concessionaires including Wynn Macau, The Venetian, SJM and MGM are seeking damages from Chan and other defendants, claiming to have lost revenue due to Tak Chun allegedly allowing under-the-table betting at their VIP rooms.

Information from the Court of First Instance disclosed that Wynn Macau

is demanding MOP48.25 million, while the Venetian is claiming MOP46.99 million.

SJM is asking for MOP35.65 million and MGM MOP3.83 million.

The Macau government is also seeking MOP575 million in damages due to the amount of taxes it lost due to the under-the-table betting.

During the trial on Monday, it was said that between April 2014 and June 2020, a total rolling chip turnover reaching the value of MOP34.9 billion was generated.

It subsequently led to illegal income of MOP1.5 billion; equivalent to MOP570 million or more of tax lost from the government's financial perspective. LV

RENATO MARQUES



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For subscription and general issues:

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MGTO head hopes border restrictions can be lifted soon

RENATO MARQUES

MACAUI is ready to start receiving visitors from all locations and it is just waiting for the lifting of the border restrictions to put its plans into practice, the director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), Helena de Senna Fernandes said on Monday at the Legislative Assembly (AL).

Replying to several inquiries regarding tourism and economic diversification in the Monday evening session, Senna Fernandes said, "We hope that border restrictions can be lifted as soon as possible. On our side, we are already prepared to receive the visitors."

She also added that among the priorities of the MGTO is to find strategies to bring back tourists from Hong Kong and Taiwan.

"We think that these will be the first two locations that we can recover tourist markets. We hope and are waiting for the lifting of the border restrictions to Hong



Kong," she added.

As for the role of the new gaming concessions in boosting the tourism market recovery, Senna Fernandes noted that the new rules for gaming concessionaires in which there is a mandatory requirement for the development of non-gaming facilities will help

the government's bid to attract non-gaming tourists.

"This [the non-gaming venues] will be used to attract tourists to many cultural and entertainment activities, among others. It is still too early to talk about the specific content of the programs of these venues but we can say that the

content dedicated to tourists will be enriched," the official said.

Senna Fernandes was attempting to respond to several lawmakers, namely Si Ka Lon, who accused the government policies of being contradictory and disconnected from reality.

"People want to come but can-

not get a visa. We need to create convenience and commercial visas or others so people can come to visit Macau and invest in Macau. We don't have any policies to attract [foreign] investment," Si exclaimed.

Several lawmakers also expressed unhappiness that at the time of these replies, none of the high officials of the Economy and Finance sector were present at the government stand, leaving the task to the MGTO director, who they remarked, would "not be the adequate person to respond to such matters."

Earlier the government said that the MICE [meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions] sector would be provided next year with a platform for the development of the four industries on which the government wants to focus diversification efforts.

Officials said that in 2023, there are a total of seven major MICE events planned, including ones that will establish cooperation between Macau and Hengqin.

The same officials also said that the Macau International Trade and Investment Fair will be the main "engine" for boosting the four industries of Big Health, Modern Financial Services, high technology industries, and Tourism+.

GAMING

NEW CONCESSIONAIRES WILL HAVE TO REEMPLOY CLOSED SATELLITE CASINO WORKERS

RENATO MARQUES

THE new gaming concessionaires will have to take responsibility for the workers of the "satellite casinos" that will eventually close, the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong said during a plenary session at the Legislative Assembly.

The Secretary's comments were made in response to an inquiry by lawmaker Leong Sun Lok who expressed several concerns regarding the employment of casino workers in the new concessions.

"Regarding the so-called satellite casinos, the concessionaires that are in charge of those [venues] need to assume the responsibility for these workers and relocate them to other casinos [from the same concessionaire] if the satellites are closed," Lei said, adding, "The companies are well aware of these responsibilities. Corporate Social Responsibility from concessionaires will continue to be

LYNZY VALLES



our main goal for the upcoming 10 years because this will guarantee the job stability of residents."

The Secretary did not indicate whether he was currently aware of the number of satellite casinos which will close or continue to operate but said that, independently of this number, "if the workers of these casinos are employed by any of the six [concessionaires] that are going to obtain new licenses for the upcoming 10 years, they need to assume the responsibility

over giving them new job posts in their other venues."

The Secretary also reaffirmed that the new law introduces new rules, among which is the requirement that the concessionaires be subjected to regular inspections by the public services, in addition to a new sanctioning mechanism.

"In the future, the government will inspect the legal terms and the fulfillment of the promises stated during the public tender," Lei concluded.

CENTRAL LIBRARY COMPLETION DATE UNCERTAIN

RENATO MARQUES

THE Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong, said yesterday at the Legislative Assembly that there is not yet a concrete date for the completion of the new central library project.

The reply was to an inquiry on the topic by lawmaker Ron Lam who asked the Secretary if the library would be ready to open to the public by 2026.

"We need to wait for the decision of the ten-

der [for the construction]. Only later can we have a date for the conclusion," Ao Ieong said, adding, "It is not realistic to think that with the closing of the public tender for construction we can immediately have a real date for the conclusion but, at least [after this process is concluded] we can at least have a clearer idea about when the project will be finished."

The design of the new Central Library, to be built on the land plot currently occupied by the former Hotel Esto-

ril in Tap Seac, was attributed to a proposal submitted by the Dutch architecture firm Mecanoo almost two years ago. However, the tendering process for the construction has not yet concluded.

The Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), which is in charge of the project, said they expect that the construction could be undertaken within the previously announced estimated budget of MOP500 million.

At the same time, the former president of IC, Mok Ian Ian, also said that she hoped the library would be able to open its doors at the end of 2024 or at the start of 2025, dates that now are more likely to not be met.



GOV'T PREPARES PLAN TO RELAX PANDEMIC MEASURES

STAFF REPORTER

THE Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Elsie Ao Ieong U, yesterday said that as new variants have been reported to be weaker, Macau's policies will be unanimous with national policies and will gradually alleviate the pandemic prevention and control measures.

The Secretary was speaking on the sidelines of the plenary session yesterday.

Ao Ieong noted that there is more data showing that the majority of people infected by the Omicron variant are asymptomatic, noting that the government is constantly studying corresponding strategies.

China is easing some of the world's most stringent anti-virus controls and authorities say new variants are weaker. On Monday commuters in Beijing and at least 16 other cities were allowed to board buses and subways without a virus test in the previous 48 hours for the first time in months.

Further, according to Ao Ieong, given the gradual relaxation of national measures, "Macau will follow this pace."

Although there will continue to be cases in the community, the official guaranteed that the SAR government will respond to the pandemic with "defined plans."

GOV'T HOLDS GROUP MOURNING FOR FORMER PRESIDENT JIANG ZEMIN

ANTHONY LAM

THE local government hosted a group mourning event following the passing of former Chinese president Jiang Zemin at the Forum Macao Complex yesterday.

Images released by the government showed a large group of government officials and government committee members – over 260 people according to the government – gathered at the main hall of the complex to watch the live broadcast of the memorial ceremony held in Beijing.

At 10 a.m., the group observed a three-minute silence alongside other attendees to the service across the country.

Concurrently, public service officers, including but not limited to paramedics and police officers, observed the moment of silence at their respective posts.

Outside the north entrance of the complex, officers were pictured taking a moment



of silence alongside government vehicles, the horns of which were sounded for three whole minutes in commemoration of the former head of state. Ships owned by the government also had their horns sounded for three minutes.

The emergency alarms on the Guia Hill, the Taipa Grande, the Coloane Hill and the Security Forces Higher Institution were also sounded for the same duration of time.

Public broadcaster TDM

also aired the ceremony held in Beijing live on its television and radio channels.

As the government appealed to local groups and associations to watch the ceremony held in Beijing and observe the period of silence too, government allies such as the Macao Chamber of Commerce, the Macao Federation of Trade Unions, the General Federation of Neighborhood Associations, as well as the Hou Kong Middle School, held their respective sessions

to watch the ceremony, according to TDM News.

Flags have been flying at half-mast since the announcement of Jiang's passing.

FUNERAL COMMITTEE EXPRESSES GRATITUDE

Jiang Zemin's Funeral Committee issued an announcement yesterday expressing gratitude for the condolences received over Jiang's passing.

The No. 3 Announcement expressed "heartfelt gratitude toward the heads of state and government, parliaments, government departments, political parties, friendly organizations, and prominent figures from various circles."

As cited in a Xinhua report, compatriots in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan have sent "a large number of messages and letters of condolence, issued statements, made remarks and participated in memorial services to express their grief and profound sympathy."

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COLD WAR II

CHINA BLASTS US REPORT, REITERATES 'NO FIRST USE' NUKE POLICY

CHINA strictly adheres to its policy of no first use of nuclear weapons "at any time and under any circumstances," its Defense Ministry said yesterday in a scathing response to a U.S. report alleging a major buildup in Beijing's nuclear capabilities.

The Pentagon last week released an annual China security report that warned Beijing would likely have 1,500 nuclear warheads by 2035, and that it has provided no clarity on how it plans to use them.

That report "distorts China's national defense policy and military strategy, makes groundless speculation about China's military development and grossly interferes in China's internal affairs on the issue of Taiwan," ministry spokesperson Tan Kefei said in a statement.

Tan accused the U.S. of being the "biggest troublemaker and destroyer of world peace and stability," and repeated that Beijing has never renounced the use of force to conquer self-governing Taiwan, a U.S. ally that China considers part of its territory.

Tan did not directly address the report's allegations about a Chinese nuclear buildup, but blamed the U.S. for raising nuclear tensions, particularly with its plan to help Australia build a fleet of submarines powered by U.S. nuclear technology, which the French president has described as a "confrontation with China."

Australia has said it will not seek to arm the submarines with nuclear weapons. Tan also accu-



Visitors tour past military vehicles carrying the Dong Feng 41 and DF-17 ballistic missiles at an exhibition in Beijing, last October

sed the U.S. of having the world's largest nuclear arsenal, although that title is actually held by Russia, a close Chinese military, economic and diplomatic partner.

As of 2022, Russia possesses a total of 5,977 nuclear warheads compared to 5,428 in the U.S. inventory, according to the Federation of American Scientists. China currently has 350 nuclear warheads, according to the federation.

China has long adhered to what it calls a purely defensive national security strategy, including a claim that it will never be the first

to use nuclear weapons in a conflict. That stance has frequently been challenged at home and abroad, particularly if it comes to a confrontation over Taiwan.

"What needs to be emphasized is that China firmly pursues the nuclear strategy of self-defense and defense, always adheres to the policy of no first use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, and maintains its nuclear force at the minimum level required for national security," Tan said in the statement, which was posted on the ministry's website.

His remarks came days after U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the U.S. is at a pivotal point with China and will need military strength to ensure that American values, not Beijing's, set global norms in the 21st century.

Austin's speech Saturday at the Reagan National Defense Forum capped a week in which the Pentagon was squarely focused on China's rise and what that might mean for America's position in the world.

China "is the only country with both the will and, increasingly, the power to reshape its region and

the international order to suit its authoritarian preferences," Austin said. "So let me be clear: We will not let that happen."

Austin was on hand Friday for a dramatic nighttime rollout of the U.S. military's newest nuclear stealth bomber, the B-21 Raider, which is being designed to beat the quickly growing cyber, space and nuclear capabilities of Beijing.

The bomber is part of a major China-centric nuclear overhaul underway that the Congressional Budget Office has estimated will cost \$1.2 trillion through 2046.

Already-tense relations between Washington and Beijing soured even more in August when U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan. China responded by firing missiles over the island and holding wargames in what was seen as a rehearsal for a possible blockade of the island.

While the U.S. and Taiwan have no formal diplomatic relations in deference to Beijing, the U.S. maintains informal relations and defense ties with Taiwan, along with a policy of "strategic ambiguity" over whether the U.S. would respond militarily if the island were attacked.

Despite some moves to improve relations, China has shown an increasingly hard line on military affairs. Following a rare meeting last month between Austin and his Chinese counterpart, Wei Fenghe, the Chinese side issued a statement saying, "The responsibility for the current situation facing China-U.S. relations is on the U.S. side, not on the Chinese side."

In his remarks on Taiwan, Tan warned that, "The Chinese military has the confidence and capability to thwart any external interference and separatist plots for 'Taiwan independence' and realize the complete reunification of the motherland." **MDT/AP**

CYBERSECURITY

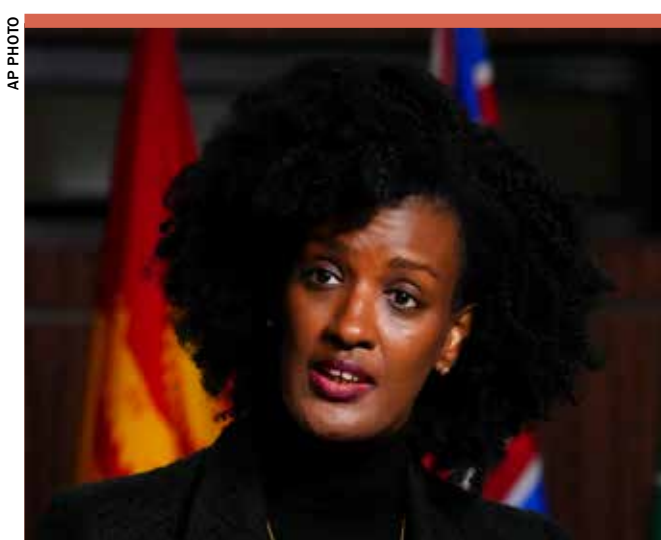
Amnesty International Canada says it was hacked by Chinese

ROB GILLIES, TORONTO

THE Canadian branch of Amnesty International said yesterday [Macau time] it was the target of a cyberattack "sponsored by China."

The human rights organization said it first detected the breach Oct. 5 and hired forensic investigators and cybersecurity experts to investigate.

Ketty Nivyabandi, Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada, said the searches in their systems were specifically and solely related to China and Hong Kong, as well as a few prominent Chinese activists. The hack left the organiza-



Ketty Nivyabandi, Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada

tion offline for nearly three weeks.

U.S. cybersecurity firm

Secureworks said there was no attempt to monetize the access, and "a threat group

sponsored or tasked by the Chinese state" was likely behind the attack because of the nature of the searches, the level of sophistication and the use of specific tools that are distinctive of China-sponsored actors.

Nivyabandi encouraged activists and journalists to update their cybersecurity protocols in light of it.

"As an organization advocating for human rights globally, we are very aware that we may be the target of state-sponsored attempts to disrupt or surveil our work. These will not intimidate us and the security and privacy of our activists, staff, donors, and stakeholders

remain our utmost priority," Nivyabandi said.

Amnesty is among organizations that support human rights activists and journalists targeted by state actors for surveillance. That includes confirming cases of activists' and journalists' cellphones being infected with Pegasus spyware, which turns the devices into real-time listening tools in addition to copying their contents.

In August, the cybersecurity firm Recorded Future listed Amnesty and the International Federation for Human Rights among organizations that "Chinese hackers were targeting

through password-stealing schemes designed to harvest credentials."

Amnesty has raised alarms about a system of internment camps in China that "swept up a million or more Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities," according to estimates by experts. China, which describes the camps as vocational training and education centers to combat extremism, says they have been closed. The government has never publicly said how many people passed through them.

China's embassy in Ottawa did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



In this image taken from video footage run by CCTV, attendees bow during a formal memorial for the late former Chinese President Jiang Zemin at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday

Late Chinese leader Jiang hailed in memorial service

CHINA'S leaders eulogized the late Jiang Zemin yesterday as a loyal Marxist-Leninist who oversaw their country's rapid economic rise while maintaining rigid Communist Party control over society.

President and current party leader Xi Jinping praised Jiang in an hour-long address at Beijing's Great Hall of the People as senior officials, military brass and rank-and-file soldiers stood at attention.

Xi emphasized Jiang's role in maintaining political stability in allusion to his sudden elevation to

top leader just ahead of the army's suppression of the 1989 student-led pro-democracy movement centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

"Comrade Jiang Zemin emphasized that our party is leading the people in a great struggle to build socialist modernization, and inevitably will encounter many complex situations," Xi said.

"The severe situation at home and abroad and the confrontation and struggle between different social systems and different ideological systems often test every member of our party," he said.

Jiang died at age 96, just days after China's largest street protests since 1989, which were driven by anger over draconian COVID-19 restrictions. Acting to quell the protests, authorities flooded the streets with security personnel and an unknown number of people have been detained.

Those attending yesterday's memorial observed three minutes of silence and trading was paused on the country's stock exchanges.

On Monday, state broadcaster CCTV showed Xi, his predecessor Hu Jintao and others bowing before Jiang's body laid out in a bed of flowers and evergreens and covered

in a party flag at a military hospital in Beijing. Jiang's body was sent for cremation at the Babaoshan Revolutionary Cemetery, where many Chinese leaders are interred.

Crowds stood silently as Jiang's glass-topped coffin was driven slowly to the cemetery amid high security, possibly as a safeguard against a recurrence of recent protests.

Jiang led China out of diplomatic isolation over the 1989 crackdown and supported economic reforms that spurred a decade of explosive growth. The economy has slowed as it matures and con-

fronts an aging population, trade sanctions, high unemployment and the fallout from lockdowns and other anti-COVID-19 restrictions imposed by Xi.

A trained engineer and former head of China's largest city, Shanghai, Jiang was president for a decade, and led the ruling Communist Party for 13 years until 2002. After taking over from reformist leader Deng Xiaoping, he oversaw the handover of Hong Kong from British rule in 1997 and Beijing's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001.

Jiang died of leukemia and multiple organ failure on Nov. 30 in Shanghai, state media reported. The party declared him a "great proletarian revolutionary" and "long-tested Communist fighter."

Hu's appearance was his first in public since Oct. 22, when he was unexpectedly guided off the stage during the closing ceremony of the national congress of the Communist Party.

No official explanation was given, and speculation over his abrupt departure has ranged from a health crisis to a signal of protest by the 79-year-old former leader against Xi, who has eliminated term limits on his position and appointed loyalists to all top positions.

In Macau and Hong Kong, officials, lawmakers and judges observed three minutes of silence yesterday morning.

The Hong Kong Stock Exchange did not halt trading but its external screens at Exchange Square downtown stopped showing data for three minutes. The Chinese Gold and Silver Exchange, also in Hong Kong, suspended trading briefly to mark the occasion.

An official memorial for Jiang drew large crowds over the weekend, mostly older Hong Kongers who credit him with overseeing a smooth transition from British to Chinese rule. The handover was made with a pledge by China that Hong Kong would maintain its own social, economic and legal systems for 50 years. **MDT/AP**

South Korean lawmakers raise concerns over Chinese voters

MEMBERS of South Korea's ruling conservative party have proposed a bill that would place tighter restrictions on the voting rights of foreign permanent residents in local elections, which they insist is necessary to protect the country's democracy from being undermined by Chinese voters.

Critics say the efforts to pass the bill could exacerbate racism and hatred toward Chinese people living in South Korea and would be a

step back in an increasingly multicultural society that needs to embrace immigration to make up for an aging and shrinking population.

People Power Party lawmaker Kweon Seong-dong, a close ally of President Yoon Suk Yeol, said yesterday it has become crucial to prevent the voting system from being exploited as a "maneuvering tool" by other governments. He said, without elaborating, that there's "significant" pu-

blic concern over the political influence of Chinese nationals, who accounted for nearly 100,000 of the 127,600 foreigners with voting rights as of March.

"Most of our citizens living overseas don't have voting rights (in the countries they live in)," Kweon said on Facebook. "(Voting) is obviously impossible in communist countries like China, and the United States and Britain are only giving voting rights to those with

citizenship," which means South Korea's voting laws go against the principle of reciprocity, he said.

Under current law, foreign nationals with at least three years of permanent residency are eligible to vote for mayors, governors, and local council members.

The bill, submitted by Kweon and 17 other members of his party, limits voting rights to foreigners who have lived in South Korea for at least five years

after becoming permanent residents and are from countries which, by treaty or similar agreements, also allow South Korean permanent residents to vote in their elections.

Kweon's office said it didn't know of any country that would fit that criteria. South Korea's National Election Commission said several nations — including Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Chile — allow foreigners to vote in local

elections if they had stayed there for a certain number of years.

"The number of foreign nationals staying in the country is increasing, and when their tendency to live concentrated in certain areas is combined with the characteristics of the local elections, there is high concern that the opinions of our people would be distorted," the lawmakers said in a statement describing why they drafted the bill. **MDT/AP**



Red carpet outside the venue of the EU Western Balkans Summit, in Tirana

PUTIN'S WAR

EU, Western Balkans to boost partnership

SAMUEL PETREQUIN &
LLAZAR SEMINI, TIRANA

EUROPEAN Union leaders and their Western Balkan counterparts worked to strengthen their partnership at a summit yesterday as Russia's war in Ukraine threatens to reshape the geopolitical balance in the region.

Even though their goal of joining the bloc remains a distant one, Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia were given concrete signs that their future is within the EU instead of mere promises of eventual membership.

European Council President Charles Michel, who jointly chaired the summit in Albania's capital Tirana, hailed it as a "symbolic meeting" that will cement their futures within Europe.

As proof of the bloc's commitment, Michel underscored EU energy support to the region in light of the war's impact on supplies and prices, as well as a mobile telephone roaming charges agreement.

"I am absolutely convinced that the future of our children will be safe and more prosperous with the Western Balkans within the EU, and we are working very

hard in order to make progress," he told reporters.

The EU last admitted a new member — Croatia, which is also part of the Balkans — in 2013.

But since Russia invaded Ukraine in February, EU officials have been repeating that stepping up the bloc's engagement with the six nations is more crucial than ever to maintaining Europe's security.

As Europe's relationship with Russia deteriorates further because of the war, tensions have also mounted in the Balkans and the EU wants to avoid other flashpoints close to its borders in a neighborhood that was torn by conflicts following the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

"The war is sending shockwaves, it affects everybody, and especially this region," the EU's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, said.

According to a draft of the declaration to be adopted at the summit, the EU will repeat "its full and unequivocal commitment to the European Union membership perspective of the Western Balkans" and call for an acceleration of accession talks with the incumbents.

In return, the EU expects full solidarity from its Western Balkans partners and

wants them fully aligned with its foreign policies.

That particular point has been problematic with Serbia, whose president, Aleksandar Vucic, claims he wants to take Serbia into the European Union but has cultivated ties with Russia.

Although Serbia's representatives voted in favor of various U.N. resolutions condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Vucic has refused to explicitly condemn Moscow. His country has not joined Western sanctions against Russia over the war.

"The Western Balkans have decided to embark on the European path, this is a two-way street," Borrell said. "And we also expect the region to deliver on key reforms, and certainly to show the will to embrace the European Union's ambition and spirit. Many do, but we see also hesitations."

European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen also warned of China's growing influence in the Western Balkans.

"We notice very clearly that the Ukraine war is not only Russia's cruel war against Ukraine, but also a question of whether autocracies and the law of the strongest will prevail. Or whether democracy and the rule of law will prevail," Von

der Leyen said. "And this struggle is also noticeable in the Western Balkans. Russia is trying to exert influence, China is trying to exert influence."

The EU remains the Western Balkans' main trade partner, accounting for over two-thirds of the region's total trade, according to the bloc's data.

"We are the closest partner and that is why the discussion is also about you having to decide which side you are on," the Commission president said.

Although the progress of the six nations toward EU membership had stalled recently, there has been some progress over the past few months.

This summer, the EU started membership negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia following years of delays. And Bosnia moved a small step closer on its path to joining the bloc when the commission advised member countries in October to grant it candidate status despite continuing criticism of the way the nation is run.

Kosovo has only started the first step and said it would apply for candidate status later this month.

"We need the EU to move from words to deeds," said Kosovo president Vjosa Osmani.

To help households and businesses weather the impact of Russia's war on energy and food security, the EU has earmarked one billion euros in grants to the Western Balkans, hoping the money will encourage double the investment.

Leaders also discussed migration issues that remains one of Europe's biggest concerns in light of the number of migrants trying to enter the bloc without authorization via the Western Balkans, notably through Serbia.

The EU's border agency Frontex said it had detected more than 22,300 attempted entries in October, nearly three times as many as a year ago. Around 500 Frontex officers are working along the EU's borders with Balkan nations but staff will soon be deployed inside the region itself.

One cause of the movements is that Serbia, which wants to join the EU, has not aligned its visa policies with the bloc. People from several countries requiring visas to enter the bloc arrive in Serbia without such paperwork then slip through. Many from Burundi, Tunisia, India, Cuba and Turkey enter the EU this way. **MDT/AP**

this day in history

1983 TOMCAT HALTS STEEPLEJACK



Chief chimney-toppler Fred Dibnah has been halted in his work after a ginger tomcat got to his latest assignment first.

Troublesome feline George has climbed a height of 160 ft (49 m) up an industrial chimney and is resisting attempts to bring him back down.

His escapade has stopped Lancashire based Mr Dibnah, 45, who has been the subject of several television documentaries.

An attempt by Mr Dibnah to reach the ginger feline failed when George climbed even higher.

An emergency meeting was called between the fire brigade, the RSPCA and Mr Dibnah to resolve the issue.

It was decided George should be left on the chimney in the hope a lonely night at such a height without food may encourage him to come down.

But Mr Dibnah is not impressed with the cat's antics because there is work to be done.

Mr Dibnah said: "If we leave it up there all night it might get so fed up and hungry that it might come down on its own."

"Failing that it is holding my job up. I have got a few hundred pounds at stake and I can not be held up with a cat."

He pledged to return to try to rescue George tomorrow if he still had not come down - this time perhaps armed with a sack.

Mr Dibnah won public acclaim after a local BBC Television broadcast included a news item showing him gilding and installing the topmost finial of Bolton Town Hall.

His new-found celebrity status was confirmed in 1979 when he was invited to take part in the making of an hour long television film series about people with unusual occupations.

The film Fred Dibnah - Steeplejack won two awards.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Mr Dibnah was held-up for 30 hours in total as a distressed George paced and cried at the top of the chimney resisting another attempt to be rescued by the steeplejack. Eventually an expert from Manchester coaxed him to the rim and then pulled him into a cage by the scruff of his neck. Mr Dibnah then climbed the chimney to collect the cage from the expert.

The steeplejack has carved out a career in broadcasting and has starred in 20 documentaries since his first appearance on television in 1979.

They have included his work as a steeplejack, the restoration of his steamroller and industrial archaeology programmes.

He died in November 2004 only weeks after filming his final series touring the UK on a traction engine.

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Don't be too quick to judge partners or those you work with. Someone is trying to pull the wool over your eyes, and if you're gullible, it may cost you.



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

Your intellectual charm will win hearts and bring opportunities that you least expect. Don't hesitate to visit someone who hasn't been well.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

The information that you gain can be used in every aspect of your life. Don't hold yourself back because you think you're too old. Do not let your mate annoy you; patience will be the key.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Romance can surface if you get into some of those fitness programs you've been putting off. Good day for romance. Refrain from overspending on entertainment or luxury items.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

Someone you work with could have a personal interest in you. Keep on your toes when dealing with others. The home environment will be unpredictable today.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

You're best to channel your energy into work. Opportunities to make financial gains will develop through your connections with other people.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

The experience will be good. You could overreact to emotional situations regarding your relationship. Travel will promote new romantic encounters.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

You may be out of sorts if you have been extravagant or have let children or friends take advantage of you financially. You can expect changes at your work place.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Drastic changes regarding your personal attitude are evident. Praise will be yours if you have been pursuing your goals. Your mind is on moneymaking ventures.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You will feel tired and rundown if you have allowed yourself to get into a financial mess. Look into ways to make your home more comfortable.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Overindulgence will mean poor health. Get involved in groups that can offer intellectual stimulation. Don't hesitate to come right out and ask for the pertinent information.

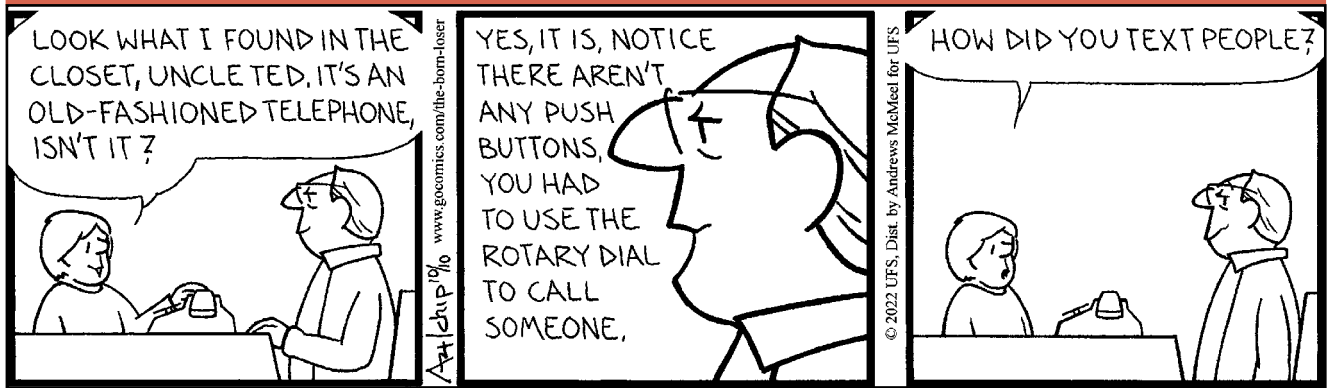


PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Don't let them blame you. Verbal abuse could lead to carelessness. You must try to help. Talk to someone you trust if you need advice about broaching the subject.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

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

EASY+

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	-6	5	cloudy
Changchun	-10	-2	fine
Chengdu	6	10	overcast
Chongqing	9	13	cloudy
Fuzhou	12	17	overcast
Guangzhou	10	20	cloudy
Guiyang	2	9	overcast
Haikou	16	20	cloudy
Hangzhou	3	12	rain
Harbin	-14	-5	fine
Hefei	0	10	overcast
Nanjing	1	13	cloudy
Shanghai	6	14	cloudy
Taipei	16	19	rain
Wuhan	4	9	overcast
Hong Kong	14	19	overcast

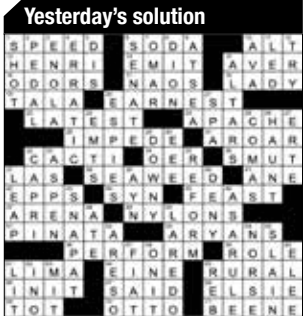
WORLD

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
Moscow	-10	-8	sunny
Frankfurt	0	6	overcast
Paris	1	6	overcast
London	-3	5	overcast
New York	9	14	showers

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Well-behaved; 5- Stalks; 10- H.S. exam; 14- Icicle site; 15- Senator Specter; 16- ___ breve; 17- Warm up; 18- First prime minister of India; 19- Picnic spoiler; 20- Island in central Indonesia; 22- Braggart; 24- Shakespearean contraction; 25- "The Morning Watch" author; 26- Turn upside down; 29- Liquid metallic element; 33- French wine valley; 34- Animal house; 36- Call on; 37- T.G.I.F. part; 38- Unordered; 39- "Respect for Acting" author Hagen; 40- Illustrative craft; 41- Contented sighs; 42- Flight segment; 44- Blind alley; 47- Fleeced; 48- Beatty Oscar film; 49- Debtor's note; 50- Adventurous expedition; 53- Agreement; 58- Not a dup.; 59- Courageous; 61- The eyes have it; 62- Poop; 63- Ring-tailed primate; 64- Work up lather; 65- High schooler; 66- Antagonist; 67- Terrible time?;

DOWN 1- Understands; 2- "Magnum, P.I." setting; 3- Track; 4- Dehydrate; 5- Most reasonable; 6- Very, in Versailles; 7- K-12; 8- Debussy's "La ___"; 9- Cozy room; 10- 3.26 light-years; 11- Hunk; 12- Inter ___; 13- Strong taste; 21- Metal filament; 23- ___ Lingus; 25- Wrong; 26- Greek epic poem; 27- ___ Dame; 28- Prospect; 30- Everyday; 31- Knot again; 32- Long; 34- Guides; 35- Bat wood; 38- Lower jaw; 42- Chimney residue; 43- Traveler; 45- Puff, for one; 46- Always, poetically; 47- Napa Valley sight; 50- And ___ goes; 51- "Judith" composer; 52- Flute; 53- Arrived; 54- Egg cell; 55- Get one's ducks in ___; 56- So long; 57- Cookbook amts.; 60- Cartoon Chihuahua;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency calls 999	Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
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	
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300	
IAM 28 387 333	
Tourism 28 333 000	
Airport 59 888 88	



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Kok Wui
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GAMING

WC BETTING DOWN IN LAS VEGAS BUT HIGHER THAN EXPECTED

MARK ANDERSON, LAS VEGAS

THE World Cup may be the globe's biggest sporting event, yet in the United States in the fall, it competes with a full sports betting calendar.

Las Vegas sportsbook directors weren't overly optimistic the betting would be higher than the 2018 World Cup, which was played in the more usual summer months in Russia. And, they were correct about the Qatar event.

Even in the U.S. in November and December, however, the World Cup still makes a notable impact, and it was larger than expected in Las Vegas, the hub of domestic sports betting.

Jay Kornegay, vice president of race and sports operations at Westgate Las Vegas, compared World Cup matches during a more typical time of the year being bet on the same level as NFL games. This year's are more comparable to college basketball.

"We knew going into this World Cup and it taking place during the fall and sharing that main stage with football, basketball and hockey was going to take some of that limelight away from the World Cup," Kornegay said. "Normally, it has the main stage all to itself in the summer. This year, it's different and it's definitely showing."

Adam Pullen, Caesars Sportsbook assistant director of trading,

AP PHOTO



said it's difficult to know exactly what the difference is between 2018 and 2022 largely because many more states have legalized sports betting. Just on sheer numbers, the betting handle nationally could be up, but how that translates by percentage per market is unknown.

"It's comparing apples to oranges, but at least we'll see how it does compare and how drastic a difference it is," Pullen said. "I've been pleased. I think soccer over the years keeps getting bigger and bigger."

Kornegay and Pullen said they expected the betting to increase as the knockout stage reaches its conclusion, even though the U.S.

was eliminated in the round of 16 and Mexico, another betting favorite, didn't get out of the group stage.

"I don't know if it will reach the height of past years, but we do anticipate the pickup in the next couple weeks," Kornegay said.

As for why the World Cup has overperformed expectations, Kornegay said the heavy media coverage has played a major role in getting American bettors excited.

The U.S. team playing well enough to advance out of the group stage, Kornegay and Pullen said, was another factor.

"It brings the casual fan in, the patriotic fan," Pullen said.

"If they know the U.S. is playing, then they're more likely to place a bet on another match. It's always good for the U.S. to be involved, but you have people who are dedicated followers of the sport and they're going to bet not only the World Cup, but after the World Cup is over they'll be back betting the Premier League, the German and Italian leagues."

Kornegay and Pullen said they haven't seen any kind of unusual bets that would garner headlines, but it's not like all bettors are limiting their wagers to \$100, either.

One bettor, Pullen said, put six figures on Iran to cover the half goal it was getting against the U.S. The U.S. won that group-stage

match 1-0.

"The business has changed so much," Pullen said. "Years ago, a six-figure bet jumps off the page. Now, they're just routine. We've taken a lot of six-figure bets on some of these matches, and it will only increase as we go along."

The group stage was littered with notable upsets, which usually is good news for bookmakers because the betting public often puts its money on favorites. Professionals tend to seek bargains with underdogs.

But the bookmakers also take a big-picture look at the tournament and not so much the individual matches.

"You had some teams that were upset early, and that's usually not good for the handle as some of the popular teams," Kornegay said. "But those teams still advanced. Like Argentina, one of the more popular teams, despite their first-round loss in group play, they advanced and look very good at this point."

Six of the eight quarterfinal teams have been decided. Spain plays Morocco and Portugal meets Switzerland to fill the other two slots. The final is Dec. 18.

Brazil is a +200 favorite to win the tournament, according to FanDuel, with France next at +490 and Argentina at +550.

"No one's a bigger fan of the underdog than me, but when it comes down to it, Brazil's going to drive betting handle not South Korea, or Spain's going to drive handle, not necessarily Morocco," Pullen said. "As the big teams progress and you get those mouth-watering quarterfinals, semifinals and the final matchup, that's going to drive handle more so than the upstart teams." **MDT/AP**

IN OTHER SPORTS...

Boxing powerhouse Cuba lets women boxers compete

MEGAN JANETSKY, HAVANA

LEGNIS Cala Massó carefully removes her necklace and smiles as her coach slides her bright red boxing gloves over her French tip nails.

The 31-year-old swings her wiry body into the ring and pounds her fellow boxer – also a young woman – with a series of punches, just as she's done countless times before.

Today is a day she's been waiting for since she started to box seven years ago.

Cuban officials announced yesterday [Macau time] that women boxers would be able to compete officially after decades of restrictions, though they didn't yet confirm if that would be

AP PHOTO



Boxer Giselle Bello Garcia, left, throws a punch at Ydameyls Moreno during a training session in Havana

taken to a professional level like it was with Cuban male boxers earlier this year.

Still, it sparked excitement in women like Cala Massó who have spent

years fighting to be recognized.

"Saying that boxing is not for Cuban women – that's always been the problem," she said, leaning on

the side of a blue boxing ring in downtown Havana. "Where we are now, we never thought we would get here."

Cuba is known worldwide for boxing, home to many legendary male boxers – among them Félix Savón, Teófilo Stevenson and Julio César La Cruz – and owner of a dozens of Olympic medals in the sport.

But the island has also sparked controversy by not allowing women to compete, despite permitting them to do so in other contact sports like taekwondo and wrestling.

Perhaps most notably in 2009, the former head coach of Cuba's men's team Pedro Roque told a group of journalists that "Cuban women are there to show their

beautiful faces, not to take punches."

It was a sentiment Cala Massó and other women who have embraced the sport have rejected as they've sought to change the rules.

Cala Massó began boxing in Havana with just one other women, spending long hours training despite being turned away by many coaches and boxing rings. With time, interest in boxing among women has only grown.

yesterday, officials with Cuba's National Institute for Sports, INDER, announced in a press conference that they would hold a competition of 42 women boxers in mid-December to choose 12 athletes for a women's team.

The team, they said, will compete in the Central American and Caribbean Games in El Salvador, their first international debut. The competition will be a first step toward the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. Women were first allowed to box in the Olympics in 2012.

Cala Massó, who now trains with five other women, hopes the decision means their community will only grow.

The announcement comes shortly after Cuban boxers made a comeback in May in Mexico, with male boxers competing professionally – and getting paid – for the first time since the communist government prohibited professional sports 60 years ago. **MDT/AP**

LAST 16

Croatia going deep again at finals after shootout win

STEVE DOUGLAS, AL WAKRAH

**JAPAN 1, CROATIA 1
(1-3 PENALTIES)**

CROATIA is going deep at another World Cup, and the team is taking the long route once again.

Goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic saved three penalty kicks in Croatia's 3-1 win over Japan in a shootout yesterday [Macau time], securing a return to the quarterfinals for the runner-up in the 2018 tournament. The match was tied at 1-1 after extra time.

On its surprising run to the final in Russia four years ago, Croatia needed extra time in each round in the knockout stage — and twice came through a penalty shootout.

"History keeps repeating itself," Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic said with a smile.

Livakovic was the backup goalkeeper to Danijel Subasic in 2018 but took center stage this time, diving to his left to keep out Japan's first penalty by Takumi Minamino, to his right to block Kaoru Mitoma's effort from the second penalty, and then again to his right to deny Maya Yoshida off the fourth.



Croatia's goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic stopped 3 penalties

That gave Mario Pasalic the chance to put away the clinching penalty. The substitute joined the rest of Croatia's jubilant players in heading right for Livakovic after hitting the back of the net.

"In Croatia, we do things this way," Livakovic said. "I continued the tradition."

The similarities with 2018 do

not stop there. Just like in every game in the knockout stage that year, Croatia fell behind to Japan when Daizen Maeda swept in a close-range finish in the 43rd.

Ivan Perisic equalized by meeting Dejan Lovren's cross from the right with a header into the bottom corner from near the penalty spot in the 57th.

Dalic said his team's ability to recover from losing positions "reflects the Croatian people," with a nod to a psyche the players forged growing up in a country ravaged by war as the former Yugoslavia broke up in the 1990s.

"We never give up ... We have been through so much pain and the players have great pride,"

Dalic said. "The whole of Croatia is supporting us and this is a way of giving them faith for a better tomorrow."

While Croatia — also a semifinalist in 1998 — prepares to take on Brazil in the quarterfinals, Japan exits a World Cup in the round of 16 for the fourth time, just like in 2002, 2010 and 2018. The Asian team also lost in a penalty shootout to Paraguay at that stage in 2010.

Asia is still waiting for a second team to advance beyond the last 16, after South Korea on home soil in 2002.

Japan made its mark in Qatar, though, beating Germany and Spain — two of the last three World Cup champions — in huge upsets in the group stage.

"The players showed a new era of Japanese football, I think," Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu said. "They should use this feeling of being upset and try to go further next time."

"We cannot be superheroes in one go. We have to improve step by step. But Japan is reaching a level where we can play on the world stage."

The result guarantees at least one more World Cup game for 37-year-old Croatia captain Luka Modric, one of the best midfielders of his generation. The 2018 world player of the year had a quiet game, save for one pass with the outside of his right foot that sent Perisic away for a shot on goal in the first half.

Modric was substituted in the first half of extra time and wasn't part of the shootout. **MDT/AP**

LAST 16

Brazil dancing again after big win at World Cup

TALES AZZONI, DOHA

BRAZIL 4, S.KOREA, 1

THE joy — and the dancing — are back for five-time champion Brazil at the World Cup.

The big win over South Korea yesterday [Macau time] secured Brazil a berth in the quarterfinals in Qatar. It also restored the team's confidence after a tumultuous start to the tournament in which the Seleção lost Neymar to injury and saw its unbeaten group-stage streak end in a defeat to Cameroon.

But Neymar returned in style, looking fully fit and scoring a goal in Brazil's 4-1 win at Stadium 974. Vinicius Júnior, Richarlison and Lucas Paquetá also scored, and after each goal the Brazilians broke out dance moves.



Brazil's Neymar (from right) celebrates with team mates Lucas Paqueta, Raphinha and Vinicius Junior after scoring his side's second goal

They had promised different celebrations for each goal in Qatar, and were at last able to use many of them, after a group-stage in which Brazil scored only three times. It lost 1-0 to

Cameroon in its last group game.

Even coach Tite got in on the act, joining Richarlison for his trademark "pigeon" celebration.

The coach and the

players got into a circle and put their hands on their hips and started moving their heads back and forth to imitate a pigeon, which is Richarlison's nickname.

After the match, Richar-

lison showed his dance to former Brazil star Ronaldo, teaching him the moves.

The Brazil players had already danced after Vinicius Júnior's first goal, when he, Neymar, Raphinha and Lucas Paquetá did a few moves together. It was similar after each goal.

All the dancing got some criticism from former Ireland player and commentator Roy Keane, who said the Brazilian players were "disrespecting the opposition," especially with the manager getting involved.

Tite defended his players. "It just means being happy because of the goal, the performance, the win..." he said.

"It's not about being disrespectful with the opponent."

Tite had joked with Richarlison before the match that if the player scored, he would dance with him to

celebrate.

He said the victory was important to restore the team's morale after the loss to Cameroon, and that having Neymar back was crucial for the squad's confidence.

"The team improved, there's nothing more I could ask from them," he said. "Neymar is our leader, the team knows that he is there and that he makes the difference. He makes the other players better."

Neymar missed two matches because of a right ankle injury sustained in the team's opening 2-0 win against Serbia. Brazil then defeated Switzerland 1-0 before falling to Cameroon in what was its first group-stage loss after 17 games, a streak that had dated to 1998.

Brazil, seeking its first World Cup title in two decades, will face 2018 runner-up Croatia in the quarterfinals on Friday. Brazil has made it to the quarterfinals in eighth straight World Cups. **MDT/AP**

OPINION

China Daily
Editorial, China Daily

**JIANG ZEMIN’S LEGACY
INSPIRATION FOR
NATION ON PATH TO
MODERNIZATION**

Jiang Zemin passed away in Shanghai on Nov 30 at the age of 96.

The profound outpouring of grief by the nation speaks volumes of the late leader’s great contribution to the Communist Party of China and the country.

Jiang was an outstanding leader who enjoyed high prestige. He was acknowledged as a great Marxist, a great proletarian revolutionary, statesman, military strategist and diplomat, a long-tested communist fighter and an outstanding leader of the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. He was the principal founder of the Theory of Three Represents and the core of the CPC’s third generation of central collective leadership.

That leadership defined building a socialist market economy as an objective of reform, and formulated and implemented a raft of principles, policies and major strategies. Under their leadership, the country dealt calmly with a series of breaking international events that concerned China’s sovereignty and security, overcame the difficulties and risks that cropped up in the political and economic spheres and those brought by natural disasters, and kept China’s reform, opening-up and socialist development drive moving forward in the right direction.

The great achievements of the Party and the country in the 13 years since the fourth plenary session of the 13th CPC Central Committee in 1989 were inseparable from Jiang’s practice of the art of political leadership as a Marxist statesman.

Jiang was far-sighted, and could make correct assessments of different situations. He always observed and reflected on issues taking into consideration the general trends of China and the world, as well as the overall work of the Party and the State, continuously advancing theoretical innovation and innovation in other fields.

Jiang valued practice and kept pace with the times. He always grasped the trends and opportunities of the times, summing up experience and sought new ways based on the vibrant practice of the Party and the people, thus advancing the work of the Party and the State in a down-to-earth yet enterprising manner.

Today, his fine character and noble manner are still educational and motivational for the Party and the country on the path to modernization.

Jiang’s death is an inestimable loss to the Party, the military and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups. But grief should be turned into strength, and Jiang’s legacy should be carried forward with concrete actions. The nation should rally around the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core with greater resolve and purpose, and adhere to the Party’s basic theory, basic line and basic policy to advance the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and strive in unity to realize the second centenary goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects.

**INDONESIA’S PARLIAMENT VOTES
TO BAN SEX OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE**

Indonesia’s Parliament unanimously passed a long-awaited revision of the country’s penal code yesterday that criminalizes sex outside of marriage for citizens as well as foreigners, prohibits promotion of contraception and bans defamation of the president and state institutions.

The amended code also expands an existing blasphemy law and maintains a five-year prison term for deviations from the central tenets of Indonesia’s six recognized religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism.

Citizens can face a 10-year prison term for associating with organizations that follow Marxist-Leninist ideology and a four-year sentence for spreading communism.

The code maintains the previous criminalization of abortion but adds exceptions for women with life-threatening medical conditions and for rape, provided that the fetus is less than 12 weeks old, in line with what is already provided in a 2004 Medical Practice Law.

Rights groups criticized some of the revisions as overly broad or vague and warned that adding them to the code could penalize normal activities and threaten freedom of expression and privacy rights.

However, some advocates hailed the passage as a victory for the country’s LGBTQ community. During fierce deliberation, lawmakers eventually agreed to remove an article proposed by Islamic groups that would have made gay sex illegal.

THE
BUZZ

AP PHOTO



Poinsettias

**FIVE PLANTS THAT SAY
‘HOLIDAY SEASON,’ AND
HOW TO CARE FOR THEM**

FIVE plants that say ‘holiday season,’ and how to care for them

Holiday horticulture tends to revolve around the same handful of plants. So if you don’t already have any or all of these five holiday plants, now is the time to get them:

PAPERWHITES

The bulbs of these daffodil family members are pre-chilled so they can be planted now and produce flowers in a month to six weeks. If you find them for sale, by all means buy as many as you can. The only caveat is that some family members may object to the unbelievably sweet smell of their blooms.

While you can grow these bulbs by siting their bases in just a bit of water, it is best to plant them in a shallow container of soil. They don’t need much water and will perform well if given the best light you have. If yours sprouts, you are guaranteed flowers, at least the first year. People usually toss them when they are finished, as they’re unlikely to flower again.

POINSETTIAS

Poinsettias, of course, are for sale in all manner of venues this time of year. Many of us buy them, keep them for the next few weeks and then toss them. The trick is to keep them alive for the holiday season.

This requires first bringing the plant home with a minimum exposure to cold air. If you live in a cold climate, consider warming the car before transporting them. Once home, the plants should not be exposed to drafts from doorways or windows. Place them where daytime temperatures are between 65 and 75 Fahrenheit, and with 60 as an ideal night temp.

Poinsettias should never sit in water, so if you want to keep the decorative foil that accompanies many of them, poke a hole in it to let water out.

CHRISTMAS TREES

These, too, are their own gardening activity. Make sure your tree is kept in plenty of water and pay the strictest attention to safety rules if you use lights. After Christmas, look for a place that will chip up and recycle your tree, or place it in a

back corner of your yard as cover for birds.

AMARYLLIS

These are the easiest and showiest bulbs you can buy, and they produce the largest flowers you are ever likely to grow. They are usually sold together with pot and soil, and all you need to do is ensure yours is planted so that 1/3 of the top of the bulb is above the soil line.

Keep the plant growing right through summer. Then put yours into a cool, dark location so it goes dormant, to be brought out again next holiday season for flowering.

CHRISTMAS CACTUS

Christmas cactuses, Schlumbergeras, are another great plant that blooms during the mid-winter holidays. They will live for dozens of holiday seasons (some are passed on from one generation to the next) and bloom each year if exposed to shortening days. Rooting cuttings is easy using just a leaf, so it is not uncommon for a clone of the same plant to be in more than one family member’s home. **MDT/AP**

Latvia has revoked the license of an independent Russian TV channel exiled in the Baltic country for, among other things, voicing support for the Russian military and including Crimea in its map of Russia, media authorities said yesterday. The decision by the Latvian National Electronic Mass Media Council was based on number of recent violations by TV Rain and the license was revoked on the grounds of a threat to national security and public order.

AP PHOTO



Polish President Andrzej Duda and the country’s defense minister yesterday took delivery of a first shipment of tanks and howitzers from South Korea, hailing the swift implementation of a deal signed in the summer in the face of the war in neighboring Ukraine. Duda and Mariusz Blaszczak were in the Polish Navy port of Gdynia, on the Baltic coast, to mark the arrival by sea of the first 10 Black Panther K2 tanks, along with 24 Thunder K9 howitzers, from a \$5.8 billion deal with Seoul.

NATO Finland must publicly declare that it’s lifting an arms embargo on Turkey to win Ankara’s approval for its membership to NATO, the Turkish foreign minister said yesterday. Mevlut Cavusoglu made the comments ahead of visit by Finland’s Defense Minister Antti Kaikkonen, who will be discussing his nation’s bid to join the military alliance with his Turkish counterpart Hulusi Akar on Thursday.

Vatican Pope Francis yesterday tightened control and oversight over Vatican-based foundations and associations in his latest effort to impose international standards of accounting and governance on Vatican offices and affiliated entities. A new law aims to bring the Holy See into further compliance with recommendations from the Council of Europe’s Moneyval committee, which in April 2021 flagged as problematic the lack of an overarching law governing the creation and administration of foundations registered in Vatican City.