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**CHARITY TONG SIN TONG AWARDED THE GOLDEN LOTUS MEDAL, WHICH IS THE SECOND HIGHEST RECOGNITION IN MACAU, THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED**

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AP PHOTO



**North Korea** said yesterday it fired a test satellite in an important final-stage test for the development of its first spy satellite, a key military capability coveted by its leader Kim Jong Un along with other high-tech weapons systems. The North's official Korean Central News Agency also released low-resolution, black-and-white photos showing a space view of the South Korean capital and Incheon, a city just west of Seoul, in an apparent attempt to show the North is pushing to acquire a surveillance tool to monitor its rival.

AP PHOTO



**Malaysian** Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim cruised through a vote of confidence yesterday, cementing his leadership after a general election last month produced no clear winner. Anwar, whose coalition led the Nov. 19 election with 82 seats, subsequently formed a unity government with several smaller rival parties. But former Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's Malay-centric opposition alliance, which has 74 parliamentary seats, questioned his legitimacy.

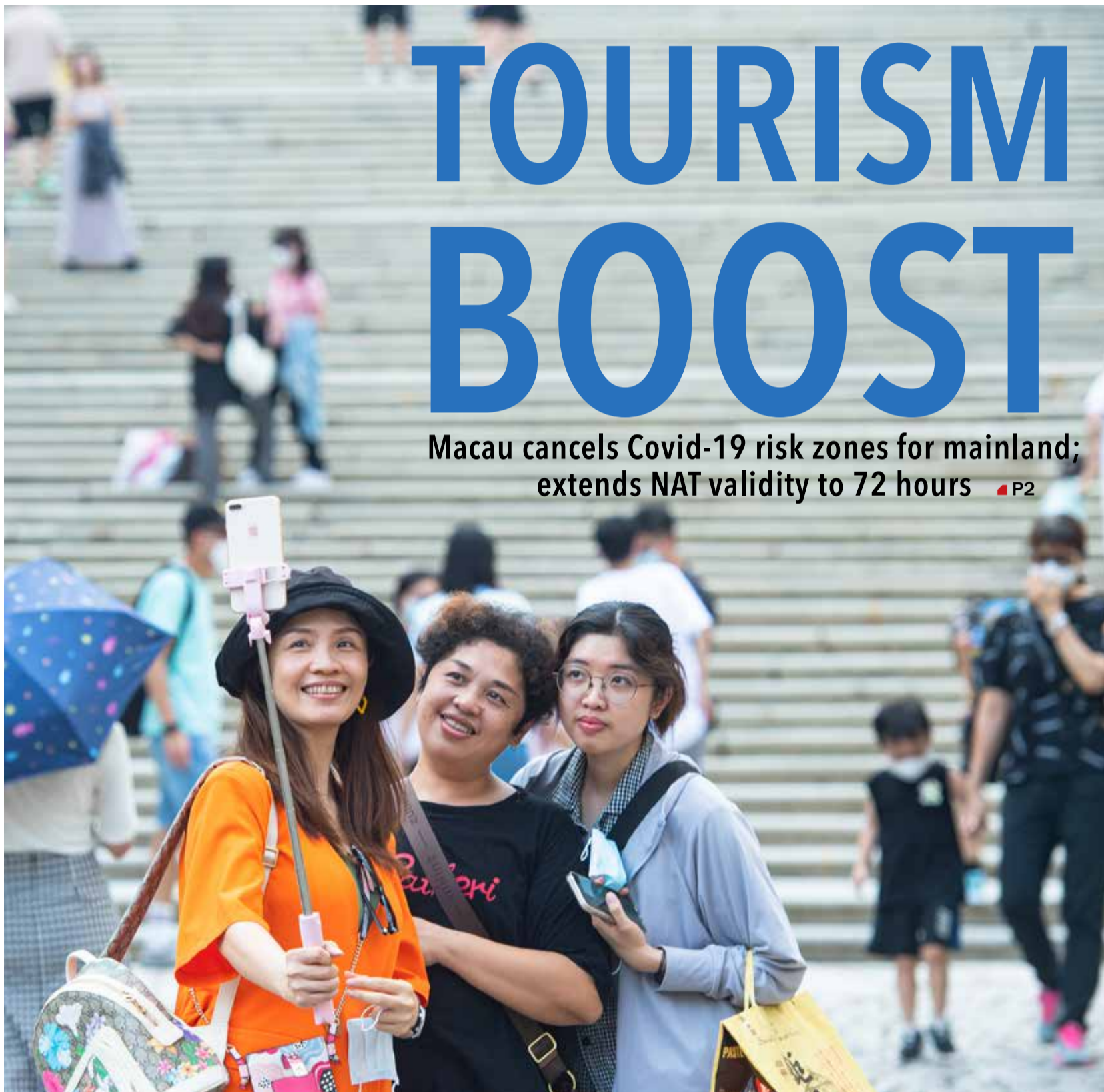
AP PHOTO



**Pakistan** Several Taliban detainees overpowered their guards at a counter-terrorism center in northwestern Pakistan overnight, snatching police weapons, taking hostages and seizing control of the facility, officials said. The incident erupted late Sunday and quickly evolved into a standoff. Pakistani officials later confirmed that one counter-terrorism officer was killed during the takeover.

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XINHUA



# TOURISM BOOST

Macau cancels Covid-19 risk zones for mainland; extends NAT validity to 72 hours P2

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**FOOD FESTIVAL**  
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### EVENTS TO CELEBRATE HANDOVER ANNIVERSARY

The Government announced a series of events in celebration of the 23rd anniversary of the establishment of the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR). From 9am to 2pm today, commemorative postmarking services will be offered at the main post office on the Senado Square. Commemorative envelopes to mark the anniversary will also be available for purchase, at 3 patacas each. A flag-raising ceremony will be held at the Golden Lotus Square at 8am tomorrow, which will be aired live by public broadcaster TDM. Some 1.5 hours later, an invitee-only reception will be held across from the Macau Tower.

### TSUNAMI WARNING SYSTEM TO BE ENACTED NEXT YEAR

A new tsunami warning signal system will be enacted on January 1, pursuant to the Chief Executive Dispatch No 224/2022. The system was made to better safeguard lives and properties of people in Macau, as explained by the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG). The bureau added that although Macau is not very much prone to the impact of tsunamis, quakes at the Manila Trench may cause tsunamis impacting the South China Sea if they are strong enough. The SMG warns that tsunamis may reach Macau from the Trench within three to four hours or less. The warnings will come in three colors, namely orange, red and black, each indicating different levels of threats.

### MAM OPENS EXHIBITION TO HIGHLIGHT CHINESE ARTIFACTS, CELEBRATE LUNAR NEW YEAR

An exhibition, titled Auspicious Beginning: Spring Festival Traditions in the Forbidden City, is on show from now until March 5, 2023, to simultaneously celebrate Chinese palatial artifacts and utensils, as well as the arrival of the Lunar Year of the Rabbit. It is jointly organized by the Palace Museum and the Macau Museum of Arts, which will host the event. Visitors can admire works such as the New Year's Painting, a masterpiece created by top figures of the time to celebrate the Chinese New Year, featuring painting and calligraphy by top scorers of the imperial examination Qian Weicheng and Yu Minzhong and inscriptions by Emperor Qianlong.

### GOV'T DEPLOYS PLANS AGAINST POTENTIAL FISHBOAT FIRE

As many fishing vessels will return to the Inner Harbour during the upcoming holidays, the government has deployed plans to guard against potential fires at the docks. The Marine and Water Bureau (DSAMA) pointed out that it has deployed guard ships to the Inner Harbour 24 hours a day, seven days a week. An extra vessel will be deployed to the location from January 16 to 26 to provide additional protection and surveillance. The government reminds boat owners that compliance to guidelines, maximum capacities and safety measures is critical to ensuring a safe docking area.

XINHUA



### BORDER

# MACAU CANCELS COVID-19 RISK ZONES FOR MAINLAND

STAFF REPORTER

**T**he government said yesterday that it will cancel its regulations on risk zones in mainland China starting from today. In addition, all arrivals into Macau via the mainland, including from overseas, need to show a negative Covid-19 test conducted within the last 72 hours, versus 48 hours previously, the government said.

For the time being, people coming to Macau from places other than Zhuhai are required to present negative NAT results to facilitate boarding of transportation, be that flight, ferry or coach/bus.

The validity for this type of NAT negative results has been extended to 72 hours, with the change taking effect from midnight today.

Meanwhile, those entering Macau from Zhuhai are required to present NAT negative results with the same duration of validity.

Another major change welcoming tourists for the upcoming holiday season is that all categorizations of "risky areas" in China will be abandoned. Chinese locations are now identified as low-risk areas or areas of regular Covid-19 prevention based on their respective situation.

In terms of vaccination, the government announced that elderly people and children aged between five and 11 years will be permitted to obtain mRNA vaccination without prior booking at the Seac Pai Van Health Centre in Coloane.

Order will be determined by ticket distribution and services will be offered on a first-come-first-served basis.

Service hours are from 8:30am to 12:30pm and from 14:30pm to 17:30pm, on Mondays to Fridays. There will be no service on public holidays.

In addition, vaccination

services will be provided at the Tap Seac Multisport Pavilion A from today. Although reservation is not mandatory, vaccine recipients with reservations will be prioritized.

Both the Sinopharm inactivated and the BioNTech mRNA vaccines will be provided at this station.

Service hours are from 10am to 6:30pm on all days.

### GOV'T TO ADD FOUR COVID-19 CLINICS

The government announced yesterday that four more Covid-19 outpatient clinics will be added to provide greater convenience.

From today, the former Bairro Norte Luso-Chinese Primary School, the Largo do Pagode do Bazar and the Camões Garden Square will house three new community clinics. Tomorrow, another clinic will be added to Travessa Central da Praia Grande, next to the Grand Empereur Hotel.

At the same time, more consultation rooms will be added to the clinics at the Leisure Area in Rua da Pérola Oriental and the Macao Stadium Roundabout.

Due to the soaring number of positive cases in Macau, the government will transform the Macao Dome to a major community Covid-19 treatment center. With a larger area, the treatment center will be able to accommodate more patients.

To make the treatment center more accessible to those not driving or unable to drive, existing shuttle bus lines will see additional stops and extended routes.

Social media users have widely reported that many of their friends have tested positive for the virus, but not all are symptomatic. The Health Bureau (SSM) has decided that those not taken for hospitalization would be considered asymptomatic.

Two male patients, aged 56 and 63 years, both with chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, tuberculosis, neural stroke and cancer, have passed away with Covid-19, the SSM announced yesterday.

The younger patient had received three doses of the Covid-19 jabs, while the elder had received none.

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# Congratulations

on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of  
the Establishment of Macau SAR

# 23



# ISLAMIC HEAD IN MACAU HOPES FOR MORE HALAL FOOD OPTIONS AMID TOURISM POSITIONING

ANTHONY LAM

**T**HE Islamic Akhund in Macau claims that the city does not have a wide and reliable option of halal food even after approximately 20 years of campaigns to increase tourism.

Macau has long had a history of intercultural and interreligious coexistence. The number of religious believers has grown gradually in the past two decades since the city's economy started soaring after the liberalization of the casino market.

The reason behind this rise is that local people have become wealthier and more able to afford domestic helpers. Migrant workers were also hired by local enterprises to "supplement" the local workforce.

Many of these workers are either from Muslim countries or believers living in non-Muslim countries. For example, the Philippines, often considered a Catholic country, has a significant population of Muslims. Singapore too, given its background and ties with Malaysia, also has a relatively large Muslim community.

Despite skyrocketing tourism prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and entry of migrant workers, the city's halal food offering is not sufficient. For example, in pre-Covid time, only the restaurant at the Grand Coloane Resort – used as a quarantine hotel from the early phase of the pandemic – expressly advertises its accreditation by an Islamic association and has obtained halal certification.



Imam Ding Shao Jie

On the other hand, the government has emphasized that the non-Chinese source market would be the city's target in the next ten years. Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng even highlighted at a parliament session that the tourism industry should stop excessively concentrating on the mainland as a major source market. Macau should start offering a wider array of tourism products, the head of the government added.

In addition, over the weekend, some resort operators have pledged that they would pitch to alternate markets such as Singapore and the Middle East, but have made no mention as to whether they would cater to these tourists' basic needs – dining – while in Macau.

When asked about this major inconvenience facing Muslims in Macau, the head of Islam in Ma-

cau, Imam Ding Shao Jie Mohammed Ramadhan, immediately pointed to food as the greatest challenge for Muslims.

Imam Ding assumed this position in 2018.

He highlighted that in mainland China, each major city has separate slaughterhouse catering to halal needs. However, in Macau, there is only one, non-halal slaughterhouse.

"Although cows are also slaughtered there, Muslims cannot eat this beef, for it is not slaughtered in the halal method," the Imam pointed out, adding that suggestions have been made to the slaughterhouse that halal practices be introduced, so meat processed will be edible to both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Usually, Muslims in Macau can only purchase halal food from frozen food sellers. "Nonetheless, the-

se sellers put all meat in the same freezer or fridge. Some sellers are not very familiar with halal requirements, so we usually rely on the halal accreditation stickers on the packaging," Imam Ding explained.

He said that when all the meat is put together, it can be difficult to find a halal piece of meat.

According to the Imam, in mainland China, besides Islamic associations, the government also plays a role in ensuring certain food meets halal requirements. Halal meat is slaughtered and sold separately. Outside of China, meanwhile, halal and non-halal meats are processed and sold separately to avoid contacts between the meat.

As such, Muslims in Macau usually rely on meat and meat products imported from New Zealand and Australia, Imam Ding revealed.

Furthermore, he disclosed that

many Muslim tourists, after arriving in Macau, would approach and ask the local Islamic Association where they could find halal restaurants in town.

"There were a few of these restaurants, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many of them have shut down," Imam Ding recalled. "It would be best if there was an accreditation system and we could ensure that the owners of these restaurants are Muslims, so that they know what the practices are like."

Muslims in Macau practice their religion at the Macau Islamic Mosque and Cemetery, which is described by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) as "[attesting to] Macao's claims to multicultural tolerance throughout the centuries, and historic proof of the Islamic link to the territory."

According to the same source, the mosque was constructed in the early 1980s and believed to have been built by Muslims serving with the Portuguese army recruited from regions such as Goa and Mumbai. The adjacent cemetery is another place of historic interest, and serves as the last resting place of several Parsi and Muslims of various origin.

The Islamic Association, which operates the mosque and cemetery, has been exploring the possibilities of expanding the venue, needed to accommodate the growing number of Muslims in Macau.

Further explaining the planned project, which has not yet been approved on a government level, Imam Ding said a larger mosque is needed, besides office space for daily administration, a hotel or hostel to accommodate visitors, and catering facilities.

Moreover, he said that visitors are welcome in the mosque and cemetery.

# Food festival in Cotai showcases Chinese Creative Cities of Gastronomy

**S**TAGED from now until December 26, the Crunch and Munch Fair in Macao - Fiesta for Five food festival will highlight the gastronomic elements from the five Chinese UNESCO Creative Cities of Gastronomy.

The five cities are Chengdu, Shunde, Yangzhou, Huai'an and Macau. The festival is being held at the Cotai Strip Park, which is otherwise known as Le Jardin.

A total of 106 booths are set up, combining gastronomy, culture and creativity, entertainment and tou-



risms, presenting the charm and style of the "City of Gastronomy".

These booths are divided into cities, and showcase highlighted food items

from all these cities, such as Lai Tang Ruan and Fuqi Feipian from Chengdu; Jun'an Steamed Pork and Rice-less Congee from Shunde; Yangzhou Fried Rice and Niu-

pi Candy from Yangzhou; as well as Kangong Meatballs and Hairy Crab from Huai'an.

Each evening will see a culinary exhibition by chefs

representing the five Creative Cities of Gastronomy. The dishes they make will be offered to the audience for free-of-charge tasting, so that they will be able to savor highlighted food items filled with the characteristics of the five cities.

The festival will also incorporate live entertainment and presentations.

From 6pm to 6:30pm every evening, the festival will see tourism pitching presentations by representatives from the five cities. Meanwhile, arts shows will also be staged for members of the audience to get a glimpse of the cultures of the five cities.

As the host city, Macau will highlight its role in Chinese-lusophone connectivity by presenting goods and foods with either, or

both Chinese and lusophone characteristics, such as canned sardines and packed bacalhau.

In addition a local vegetarian diner is also participating in the food festival, offering participants a wider range of choice.

China is the country with the greatest number of cities of gastronomy. The earliest listing was achieved in 2010 when the magical food offering in Chengdu delicacies was celebrated by UNESCO.

In 2014, the natural recipes in Shunde were highlighted, making it to the map. Macau is the third Chinese city to achieve the inscription, which happened in 2017. Two years later, Yangzhou obtained the accolade, before Huai'an received the honor in 2021. **AL**

# CONGRATULATIONS ON

## THE 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF

## THE MACAO SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION



**ECONOMIC BUREAU'S 'ENJOY TAIPA' ACTIVITIES SEE 80 MORE BUSINESSES PARTICIPATING**

The Enjoy Taipa business initiatives that aim at boosting retail and consumption hosted by the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED) has seen 80 additional participating businesses compared with the time when the event was first launched. These businesses operate catering, food retail and souvenir sales, among other operations. The DSED said that its digital survey had discovered that 80% of respondents had extended their visitation time and expanded their spending with the 80 businesses added to the atlas. The DSED has also enticed local businesses to take part in the updated light festival, mainly organized by the Macao Government Tourism Office.

**ALICLOUD DOWNTIME OBSTRUCTED OPERATIONS OF SEVERAL LOCAL SITES, APPS**

The AliCloud malfunction that took place on Sunday at the company's server station in Hong Kong has left several local websites unreachable and several apps unusable, according to an announcement by the Judiciary Police (PJ). A wide range of companies were affected by the downtime, such as the Monetary Authority of Macao, Galaxy Macau, Macau Lotus TV, the Macau Cement Plant, as well as food delivery app Aomi and MFood. Macao Daily News's mobile app was also affected, according to the police. The police did not disclose if external attacks were behind the system failure.

# 20 EXPERTS WORLDWIDE AT ONLINE CONFERENCE ON DIGITAL TEACHING AND SUSTAINABLE QUALITY

RENATO MARQUES

**T**HE Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) and the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) have jointly organized the "14th Higher Education International Conference" on Online Teaching and Sustainable Quality Assurance.

The 2-day online conference last week counted over 20 experts from the UK, Belgium, Russia, Philippines, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, China, Hong Kong, and Macau, who presented papers on the topics, the MPU said in a statement.

According to the organizers the online conference attracted 200 experts and Ph.D. candidates from all over the world.

During the conference, the Rector of MPU, Professor Im Sio Kei, said in a speech that "online teaching has rapidly developed into a mainstream teaching method around the



world, and that standards and requirements for quality assurance in higher education have changed accordingly."

The topic of online teaching has attracted added interest over the past few years due to the pandemic that "has brought us many lessons in adapting online and blended learning, and adapting to the use

of technological gadgets," as said Nar Bahadur Raika, the newly appointed president of APQN.

He said there is a need for "relearning, reskilling, and upskilling" which are now the hot topics in higher education.

Among the several experts sharing knowledge and findings, Douglas Blackstock, pre-

sident of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) presented on "Quality Assurance in the Changing World of Higher Education – A Perspective from Europe," stating that "quality is best advanced when institutions, students, and stakeholders collaborate in developing expectations and sharing effective practices."

Driven by the pandemic, the further integration of digital education into traditional approaches has changed the needs and expectations of students and staff. Trends in future European quality assurance frameworks are also beginning to move towards evidence-based, critical reflection and stakeholder consultation.

Executive Director of the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), Albert Chow, said the HKCAAVQ had conducted research and consultancy on the development of applied degrees in Hong Kong. The project will make recommendations on the policy support, incentives, and implementation details for further avocation and support of vocational and professional education and training development in Hong Kong in the years to come.

AD

# CONGRATULATIONS ON THE 23RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MACAO SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION



# CONGRATULATIONS ON THE 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MACAU SAR



JESUITS IN MACAU

# POPE FRANCIS PUTS MATTEO RICCI ON PATH TO SAINTHOOD: REPORT

**RECOGNIZING** that Matteo Ricci "lived the Christian virtues to a heroic degree," Pope Francis has officially put the famous 16th-century Italian Jesuit missionary to China on the path to sainthood, The America Magazine reported yesterday.

Last weekend, the Vatican announced that the pope has authorized Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, the prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for the Causes of the Saints, to promulgate a decree recognizing "the heroic virtues of the Servant of God, Matteo Ricci, a professed priest of the Society of Jesus, [who was] born at Macerata, Italy, on Oct. 6, 1552, and died in Peking [now Beijing], China, on May 11, 1610."

Father Ricci began his



missionary work in China in 1582 when he arrived in Macau, then a territory under Portuguese rule.

Once in Macau, Ricci studied the Chinese language and customs. It was the beginning of a long project that made him one of the first Western scholars

to master Chinese script and Classical Chinese. With Michele Ruggieri, he traveled to Guangdong's major cities, Canton and Zhaoqing (then the residence of the Viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi), seeking to establish a permanent Jesuit mission outside Macau.

It is thought that, during their time in Zhaoqing, Ricci and Ruggieri compiled a Portuguese-Chinese dictionary, the first in any European language, for which they developed a system for transcribing Chinese words in the Latin alphabet. The manuscript was misplaced in the Jesuit Archives in Rome, rediscovered only in 1934, and published only in 2001.

Father Ricci made history in 1601 by becoming the first European to enter China's Forbidden City in Beijing; the Wanli Emperor of China's Ming dynasty had invited him because of his knowledge of astronomy and calendrical science. Known as "Li Madou" to the Chinese, Father Ricci produced scholarly works in optics, astronomy, music, geography, geometry and numerous other fields.

Pope Francis is known to be inspired by Father Ricci, and the Holy See decree came on the pope's 86th birthday (Dec. 17). The Vatican's announcement is also an important one for the Catholic Church in China and its 12 million members. **MDT**

## TONG SIN TONG TO RECEIVE SAR'S SECOND HIGHEST RECOGNITION

**L**ocal association Tong Sin Tong will receive the Golden Lotus Medal, which is the second highest recognition in Macau, the government announced yesterday.

The highest-ranking award is the Grand Lotus Medal.

The list of this year's 26 medalists and awardees was released yesterday.

In the statement on the matter, it was revealed that Tong Sin Tong is the only medalist for the second highest recognition this year.

Following behind are the medalists for the Silver Lotus Medal, including Banco Nacional Ultramarino, S.A., Tai Fung Bank Ltd., Macau Red Cross, Lai Kin Hong.

Decorations of Honour, which is the official term for this accreditation, are for individuals or entities that have made outstanding contributions locally or outside to the image and reputation of the city, or that have made exceptional contributions in any field beneficial to the city's development.

Other accolades of the recognition system are medals of merit and for distinguished service, as well as honorific titles.

The awarding ceremony will take place on January 13, 2023. **AL**

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DIPLOMACY

# Australia's foreign minister to meet counterpart in Beijing

**A**USTRALIAN Foreign Minister Penny Wong said yesterday she will meet with her counterpart, Wang Yi, in Beijing this week as Australia and China mark 50 years of diplomatic relations.

China's Foreign Ministry said the visit will take place today and tomorrow and will include a new round of long-suspended China-Australia talks on foreign and strategic issues.

The trip signals a continued thaw in relations between the two nations since Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese won an election victory in May, replacing the more conservative Scott Morrison in the top role.

Albanese and Chinese President Xi Jinping met on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit last month in Bali, the first such formal meeting between the leaders of the two nations in six years.

Trade will be on the agenda

AP PHOTO



Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong

for Wong's meeting with Wang, as Australia continues its push for China to remove billions of dollars in sanctions which have been in place since 2020.

"China has grown to become one of the world's largest economies and Australia's largest trading partner," Albanese and Wong said in a joint statement. "Trade

between Australia and China, as well as strong people-to-people, cultural and business links have delivered significant benefits to both our countries."

Albanese and Wong said the trip came after the Chinese government invited Wong to meet with Wang and hold the sixth Australia-China Foreign and Strategic Dialogue, which was last held in 2018.

"Australia seeks a stable relationship with China; we will cooperate where we can, disagree where we must and engage in the national interest," Albanese and Wong said in their statement.

The visit comes after Wong and Wang earlier this year engaged in a tit-for-tat diplomatic rivalry in the Pacific as they island hopped on diplomatic visits following a failed bid by China to ink an ambitious multilateral deal with 10 South Pacific nations.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said Chi-

na hopes the visit will build on the momentum toward improved ties established at the Bali summit.

China hopes the two countries will "push bilateral relations back to the right track and achieve sustainable development," Mao said at a daily briefing.

Relations between the nations have been poor for years after China imposed trade barriers and refused high-level exchanges in response to Australia's enactment of rules targeting foreign interference in its domestic politics.

Australia and others have also sought to block Chinese inroads into the South Pacific, including Beijing's signing of a security agreement with the Solomon Islands that could result in China's stationing of troops and ships in the archipelago, which is less than 2,000 kilometers from Australia's coast.

In June, Australia said a Chinese fighter jet carried out dangerous maneuvers threatening the safety of one of its maritime surveillance planes over the South China Sea. China has also targeted Australian forces with lasers and sent surveillance ships to eavesdrop off the Australian coast as it seeks to assert its military influence in the Indo-Pacific region. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



The Varyag missile cruiser of Russia's Pacific Fleet sails off for joint naval drill planned by Russia and China

MILITARY

## CHINA, RUSSIA TO HOLD JOINT NAVAL DRILLS

**R**USSIAN warships set off yesterday to take part in a joint naval drills with China, an exercise that showcases increasingly close defense ties between the two countries as they face tensions with the United States.

The Russian Defense Ministry said the Varyag missile cruiser, the Marshal Shaposhnikov destroyer and two corvettes of Russia's Pacific Fleet would take part in maneuvers in the East Chi-

na Sea starting tomorrow.

The ministry said the Chinese navy planned to deploy several surface warships and a submarine for the exercise. Russian and Chinese aircraft will also take part in the drills, according to the ministry.

Moscow and Beijing have displayed their growing military cooperation in recent months.

In November, Tu-95 bombers of the Russian air force and Chinese H-6K

bombers flew joint patrols over the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea. As part of the drills, the Russian bombers landed in China for the first time, and the Chinese bombers flew to an air base in Russia.

In September, China sent more than 2,000 troops along with more than 300 military vehicles, 21 combat aircraft and three warships to take part in a sweeping joint exercise with Russia. The maneuvers marked the first time that China sent forces from three branches of its military to take part in a single Russian drill, in what was described as a show of the breadth and depth of China-Russia mutual trust.

Defense cooperation between Moscow and Beijing has grown stronger since Russian President Vladimir Putin sent his troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24.

China, which has declared a "no limits" friendship with Russia, has pointedly refused to criticize Moscow's actions, blaming the U.S. and NATO for provoking the Kremlin, and has blasted the punishing sanctions imposed on Russia.

Russia, in turn, has strongly backed China amid the tensions with the U.S. over Taiwan. **MDT/AP**

PANDEMIC

## TWO COVID-19 DEATHS REPORTED IN BEIJING AS VIRUS SURGES

**C**HINESE health authorities yesterday announced two additional COVID-19 deaths, both in the capital Beijing, that were the first reported in weeks and come during an expected surge of illnesses after the nation eased its strict "zero-COVID" approach.

China had not reported a death from COVID-19 since Dec. 4, even though unofficial reports of a new wave of cases are widespread.

With the latest reported deaths, the National Health Commission raised China's total to 5,237 deaths from COVID-19 in the past three years, out of 380,453 cases of illness — numbers that are much lower than in other major countries but also based on statistics and information-gathering methods that have come into question.

Chinese health authorities count only those who died directly from COVID-19, excluding people whose underlying conditions such as diabetes and heart disease were worsened by the virus.

AP PHOTO



In many other countries, guidelines stipulate that any death where the coronavirus is a factor or contributor is counted as a COVID-19-related death.

The announcement comes amid testimony from family members and people who work in the funeral business who did not want to be identified for fear of retribution saying deaths tied to COVID-19 were increasing.

China had long hailed its hardline "zero-CO-

VID" approach as keeping numbers of cases and deaths relatively low — comparing itself favorably to the U.S., where the death toll has topped 1.1 million.

Yet, the policy of lockdowns, travel restrictions, mandatory testing and quarantines placed China's society and the national economy under enormous stress, apparently convincing the ruling Communist Party to heed outside advice and alter its strategy. **MDT/AP**



Congratulations on  
the 23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of  
the Establishment  
of Macao SAR

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## HAWAII

# 11 people seriously injured amid turbulence flight

**S**EVERE turbulence rocked a flight from Phoenix to Honolulu yesterday [Macau time], seriously injuring 11 people in what an Hawaiian Airlines official called an isolated and unusual event.

Jon Snook, the airline's chief operating officer, said the airline hasn't experienced "an incident of this nature in recent history." The flight was full, carrying 278 passengers and 10 crew members, he said during an afternoon news conference.

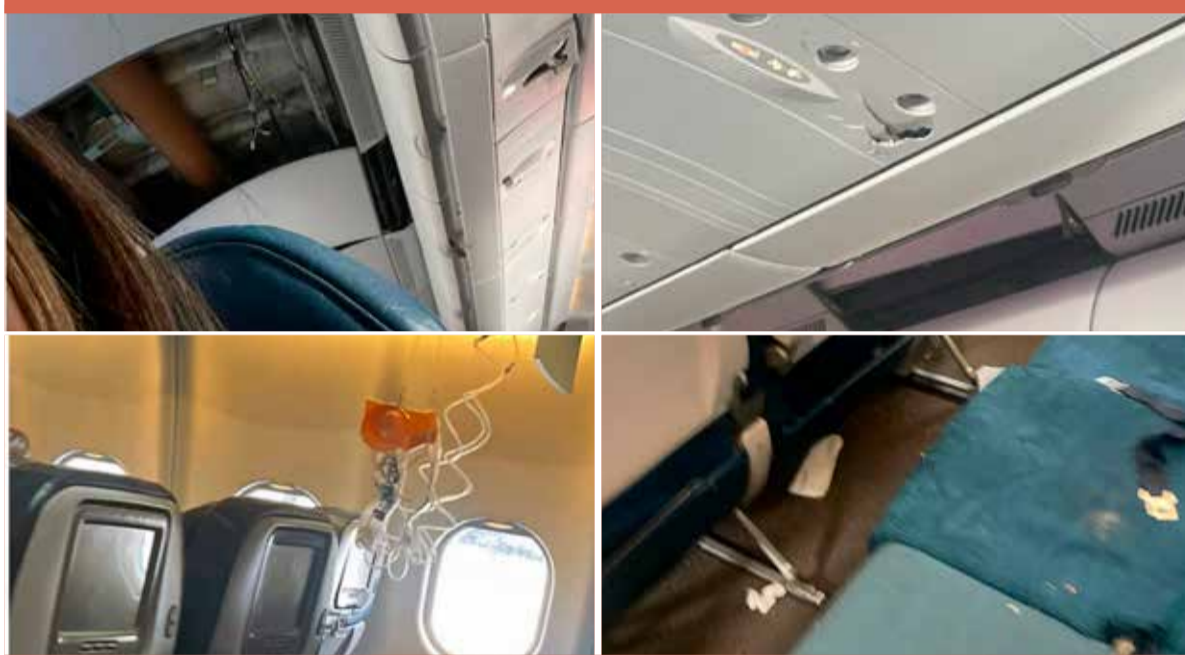
Jim Ireland, director of Honolulu Emergency Medical Services, said 20 people were taken to hospitals, including 11 people deemed to be in serious condition.

At least one person was reported to have been rendered unconscious but all patients were awake and talking when they arrived at hospitals, he said.

Patients suffered cuts, including to the head, as well as bumps and bruises. Some people were nauseous and vomited as a result of extreme motion, he said. Altogether 36 people received treatment.

"We are also very happy and we feel fortunate that there were not any deaths or other critical injuries. And we're also very hopeful that all will recover and make a full recovery," Ireland said.

AP PHOTO



Snook said three flight attendants were among those taken to hospitals.

Passenger Kaylee Reyes told Hawaii News Now that her mother had just sat down when the turbulence hit and did not have a chance to buckle her safety belt.

"She flew up and hit the ceiling," Reyes said.

Snook said there was some internal damage to the aircraft during the turbulence. The seatbelt sign was on at the time, though some of those injured weren't wearing them, he said.

Thomas Vaughan, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Honolulu, said there had been a weather advisory for thunderstorms that included Oahu and areas that would have included the flight path at the time of the incident.

The airline was aware of the weather forecast and the unstable air and weather conditions, but had no warning the particular patch of air where the turbulence occurred "was in any way dangerous," Snook said.

He didn't know how much al-

titude the plane lost during the turbulence, saying that would be part of an investigation involving the National Transportation Safety Board. The plane's flight data recorder would provide those details, he said.

The investigation would also address precisely what the passengers and crew were doing at the time, he said.

The Airbus A330-200 began its descent immediately after the turbulence and crew declared an emergency due to the number of injuries on board, he said. Air traf-

fic controllers gave the flight priority to land.

The aircraft will undergo a thorough inspection and maintenance, mostly to fix components in the cabin, Snook said.

Snook said he could only speculate whether some passengers hit their heads, but that was likely based on the injuries and the damage to cabin paneling.

"If you don't have your seatbelt on, you stay where you are as the aircraft goes down and that's how those injuries occur," Snook said.

The investigation will examine what other measures were taken, aside from turning on the fasten seatbelt sign, to ensure passengers were buckled in, he said.

In 2019, 37 passengers and flight crew members were injured when an Air Canada flight from Vancouver to Sydney hit intense turbulence about two hours past Hawaii. The Boeing 777-200 was diverted to Honolulu, where the injured received treatment. Thirty people were taken to hospitals and nine had serious injuries.

Over the Atlantic, a 2017 American Airlines flight from Athens hit severe turbulence along the New York coastline. Seven crew members and three passengers were injured.

Most people associate turbulence with heavy storms. But the most dangerous type is so-called clear-air turbulence. The wind-shear phenomenon can occur in wispy cirrus clouds or even clear air near thunderstorms, as differences in temperature and pressure create powerful currents of fast-moving air.

Planes can sail into clear-air turbulence without warning. **MDT/AP**

## THAILAND

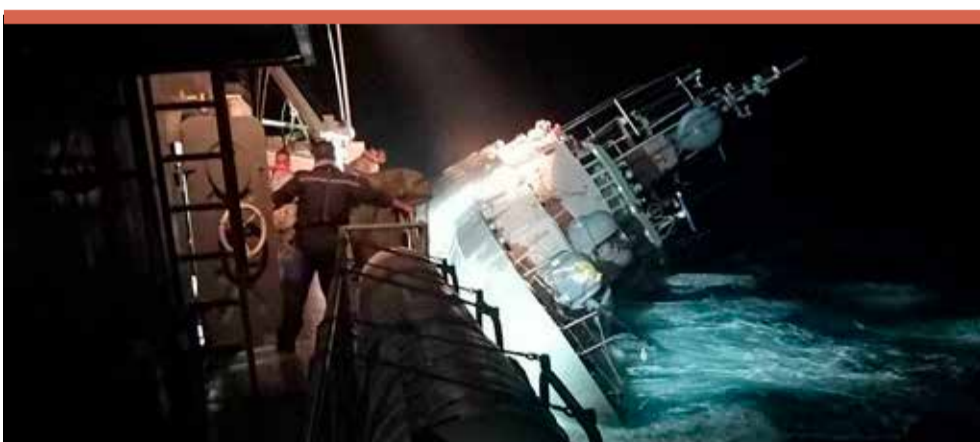
# Navy searching for 31 missing sailors after ship sank

**T**HAI navy ships and helicopters searched yesterday for more than 30 sailors still missing more than 17 hours after their warship sank in rough seas in the Gulf of Thailand.

As of Monday afternoon, 75 sailors from the HTMS Sukhothai corvette had been rescued and 31 were still missing, the navy said. The high waves that caused the accident had lessened since Sunday night's sinking, but were still high enough to endanger small boats, the navy said.

A rescued crew member interviewed by Thai PBS television said he had to float in the sea for three hours before he was rescued. He said the ship was buffeted by waves 3 meters high as it was sinking Sunday night,

AP PHOTO



The HTMS Sukhothai corvette warship lists off the coast of Prachuap Khiri Khan province, Sunday

complicating rescue efforts.

"The waves are still high and we cannot search for them from the horizontal line. We have to fly the helicopters and search for them from a bird's eye view instead," navy spokesman Adm. Pokkrong Monthaphalin told Thai PBS.

Eleven of the rescued sailors were being treated in a hospital. The navy denied a local media report that one death had been confirmed, saying the fatality was from an accident involving another boat.

Strong winds blew seawater onto the HTMS

Sukhothai and knocked out its electrical system Sunday evening, making control of the ship difficult. The navy dispatched three frigates and two helicopters with mobile pumping machines to try to assist the disabled ship by removing the seawater, but couldn't do so

because of the strong winds.

The loss of power allowed more seawater to flow into the vessel, causing it to list and sink.

Thailand's Meteorological Department had issued a weather advisory for the general area just a few hours before the accident, saying that waves in the Gulf of Thailand were expected to be 2-4 meters high with thundershowers. It suggested that all ships "proceed with caution" and warned small craft not to go to sea until Tuesday.

The Sukhothai was built in Tacoma, Washington, and commissioned in 1987. With a maximum displacement of 959 tons and a length of 76.8 meters (252 feet), it is about midsize for a corvette, a type of armed

vessel that typically is used for patrolling close offshore waters.

The warship had been on patrol 32 kilometers from the pier at Bangsaphan district in Prachuap Khiri Khan province. Pokkrong said the ship had been on a regular patrol to assist any fishing boats needing help.

"Our top priority now is to rescue all the sailors. We will plan to have the ship salvaged later," he said. The search was being conducted in a 16-square kilometer area around the site of the sinking.

While northern and central Thailand are seeing their coldest temperatures of the year, far southern Thailand has been experiencing storms and flooding in recent days. **MDT/AP**

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PUTIN'S WAR

# Night-time drone attack hits Kyiv as Russian

HANNA ARHIROVA &  
VASILISA STEPANENKO, KYIV

**M**ULTIPLE explosive drones attacked Ukraine's capital before dawn yesterday, local authorities reported, as Russian President Vladimir Putin prepared to visit ally Belarus, which provided the Kremlin's forces with a launch pad for Russia's invasion of Ukraine almost 10 months ago.

The drone attack came three days after what Ukrainian officials described as one of Russia's biggest assaults on Kyiv since the war started and as Moscow presses on with its effort to torment Ukraine from the air amid a broad battlefield stalemate.

Russia launched 23 self-exploding drones over Kyiv while the city slept, but Ukrainian forces shot down 18 of them, the Kyiv city administration said on Telegram. No major casualties were reported from the attack, although the Ukrainian president's office said the war killed at least three civilians and wounded 11 elsewhere in the country between Sunday and Monday.

The drone barrage caused emergency power outages in 11 central

and eastern regions of the country, including the capital region, authorities said.

yesterday was St. Nicholas Day, an occasion that marks the start of the Christmas holidays in Ukraine and is when children typically receive their first gifts hidden under pillows.

"This is how Russians congratulated our children on the holiday," Serhii Kruk, the head of Ukraine's State Emergency Service, wrote on Telegram, attaching photos of firefighters barely distinguished amid the flames of an infrastructure facility that got hit.

"In the night when everyone is waiting for a miracle, the terrorist country continues to terrorize the peaceful Ukrainian people," Ukraine's human rights chief, Dmytro Lubinets, said.

Bits of wreckage from the downed drones damaged a road in the central Solomianskyi district and broke windows in a multi-story building in the Shevchenkyvskyi district of Kyiv, city officials said.

One drone struck the home of Olha and Ivan Kobzarenko, ages 84 and 83, in the outskirts of the capital. Ivan sustained a head injury.

Their garage was completely

AP PHOTO



Thick smoke rises between apartment houses from a burning infrastructure project hit during a Russian drone night strike in Kyiv, yesterday

destroyed and their dog, Malysh, was killed. Olha, speaking in her bedroom where shattered glass and blood covered the floor, said the blast flung the front gate into the couple's house.

"I know that I am not alone," Olha said. "Everyone is suffering. Everyone."

Nina Sobol, a 59-year-old clerk working at one of the city's power companies, was on her way to work when the strikes happened. Like many of her colleagues, she waited

outside while emergency services inspected damage.

"I feel really anxious," she said. "Anxious because you never know at which moment there will be an incoming missile."

Authorities said a critical infrastructure point was also hit, without giving more details.

Although the capital appeared to be the main target of the latest Russian attack, the armed forces said other places in the country were also targeted.

Kyiv region Gov. Oleksii Kuleba said on Telegram that some infrastructure facilities were damaged across the Kyiv region, as well as private houses, and at least two people were injured.

Ukraine's air force said on Telegram that its personnel were able to destroy 30 of at least 35 self-exploding drones that Russia launched across the country from the eastern side of the Azov Sea on Ukraine's southeast coast. Russia is on the other side of the sea.

AD

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# leader heads to Belarus

The Ukrainian military has reported increasing success in shooting down incoming Russian missiles and explosive drones.

Moscow has targeted Ukraine's energy infrastructure, including in Kyiv, since October as part of a strategy to try to leave the country without heat and light during the bitterly cold winter. It has kept up that effort despite Western sanctions and the supply of Western air defense systems to Ukrainian forces.

On Friday, Ukraine's capital was attacked as part of a massive strike from Russia. Dozens of missiles were launched across the country, triggering widespread power outages. Four people, including a toddler, were killed when a Russian missile tore through an apartment building in the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih.

The spokesman for Russia's Defense Ministry reported that Russian air defenses shot down four U.S.-made HARM missiles over Russia's Belgorod region, which lies along Ukraine's northeast border near Kharkiv. The claim by Lt.-Gen. Igor Konashenkov couldn't be independently verified.

The U.S. has provided Ukraine with HARM missiles, which are lau-

nched by warplanes and intended to strike enemy radars.

Some 14,000 people in Belgorod were left without power as the result of Ukrainian shelling, the region's governor, Vyacheslav Gladkov, said on Telegram.

Putin was set to travel today [Macau time] to Belarus for talks with its authoritarian leader, Alexander Lukashenko, who allowed Russian forces to use Belarusian territory for invading Ukraine and has close defense links with Moscow.

It was to be a rare trip to Minsk by Putin, who usually receives Lukashenko at the Kremlin. Belarus is believed to have Soviet-era weapons stockpiles that could be useful for Moscow, while Lukashenko needs help with his country's ailing economy.

Analysts say the Kremlin might look again for some kind of Belarusian military support for its Ukraine operations. But the winter weather and Russia's depleted resources mean any attack probably won't come soon, according to the Institute for the Study of War, a think tank in Washington.

"The capacity of the Russian military, even reinforced by elements of the Belarusian armed forces,

to prepare and conduct effective large-scale mechanized offensive operations in the next few months remains questionable," the think tank said in an assessment published Sunday.

It also concluded that "it is unlikely that Lukashenko will commit the Belarusian military (which would also have to be re-equipped) to the invasion of Ukraine."

Meanwhile, warships from Russia's Pacific Fleet set off yesterday to take part in joint naval drills with China. The exercise follows a series of joint maneuvers that have highlighted growing military cooperation between Moscow and Beijing as they both face tensions with the United States.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the United States was treading on dangerous ground by getting involved in the war in Ukraine.

"This dangerous and shortsighted policy has put the U.S. and Russia on the brink of a direct confrontation," Zakharova said in a statement Monday. "Moscow is calling on Joe Biden's administration to soberly assess the situation and refrain from dangerous escalation." **MDT/AP**



## EUROPEAN UNION

### BRUSSELS ACCUSES META OF ANTITRUST BREACHES WITH CLASSIFIED ADS

**T**he European Union yesterday accused Facebook parent Meta of breaching the bloc's antitrust rules by distorting competition in the online classified ads business.

The bloc's executive commission said that it "takes issue" with the tech company tying its online classified ad business, Facebook Marketplace, to Facebook.

That means Facebook users automatically have access to Marketplace "whether they want it or not," the European Commission said.

The commission, the 27-nation bloc's top antitrust enforcer, said Meta also imposes unfair trading conditions on competing online classified ad companies that advertise their services on

Facebook or Instagram.

Meta didn't respond immediately to a request for comment.

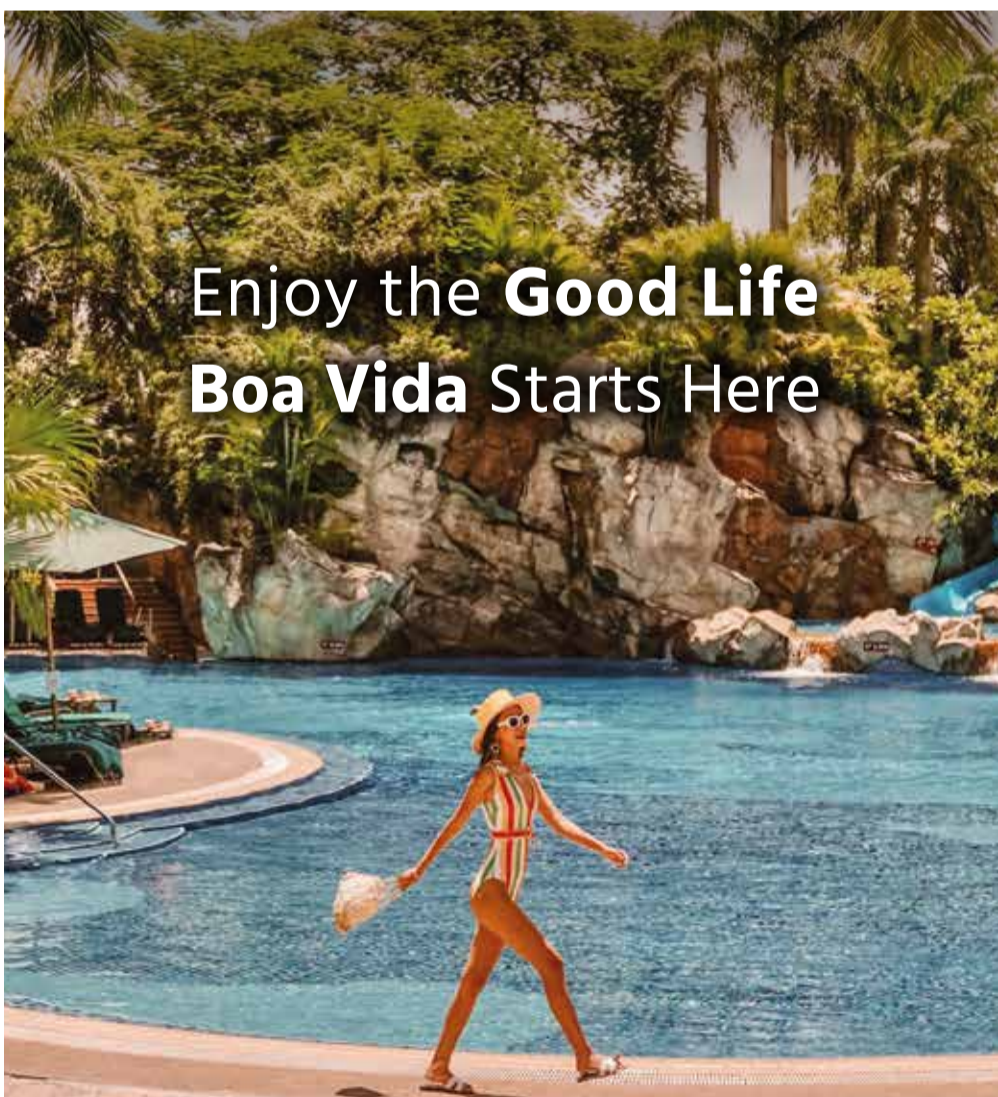
The EU's competition watchdog and its British counterpart last year opened twin investigations into the company's classified business.

If confirmed, the practices would be in breach of EU rules that prevent "abuse of a dominant market position."

The commission said it's preliminary finding is that Meta dominates the EU's social network market as well as the online display advertising on social media in the bloc's national markets.

Companies that breach EU antitrust rules can be hit with fines worth up to 10% of their annual global revenue. **MDT/AP**

AD



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AP PHOTO



Delegates take souvenir photos during a snowfall outside the convention centre at the COP15 UN conference on biodiversity in Montreal

COP15

# Historic biodiversity agreement reached at UN conference

MICHAEL CASEY,  
MONTREAL

**N**EGOTIATORS reached a historic deal at a U.N. biodiversity conference yesterday that would represent the most significant effort to protect the world's lands and oceans and provide critical financing to save biodiversity in the developing world.

The global framework comes on the day the United Nations Biodiversity Conference, or COP15, is set to end in Montreal. China, which holds the presidency at this conference, released a new draft on Sunday that gave the sometimes contentious talks much-needed momentum.

"We have in our hands a package which I think can guide us as we all work together to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and put biodiversity on the path to recovery for the benefit of all people in the world," Chinese Environment Minister Huang Runqiu told delegates before the package was adopted to rapturous applause just before dawn. "We can be truly proud."

The most significant part of the agreement is a commitment to protect 30% of land and water considered important for biodiversity by 2030, known as 30 by 30. Currently, 17% of terrestrial and 10% of marine areas are protected.

The draft also calls for raising \$200 billion by 2030 for biodiversity from a range of

sources and working to phase out or reform subsidies that could provide another \$500 billion for nature. As part of the financing package, the framework calls for increasing to at least \$20 billion annually by 2025 the money that goes to poor countries. That number would increase to \$30 billion each year by 2030.

"Many of us wanted more things in the text and more ambition but we got an ambitious package," Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change Steven Guilbeault said. "We have 30 by 30. Six months ago, who would have thought we could 30 by 30 in Montreal? We have an agreement to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, to work on restoration, to reduce the use of pesticides. This is tremendous progress."

Christophe Béchu, France's minister for ecological transition who headed its delegation, called it a "historic deal."

"It's not a small deal. It's a deal with very precise and quantified objectives on pesticides, on reduction of loss of species, on eliminating bad subsidies," he said. "We double until 2025 and triple 2030 the finance for biodiversity."

The ministers and government officials from about 190 countries have mostly agreed that protecting biodiversity has to be a priority, with many comparing those efforts to climate talks that wrapped up last month in

Egypt.

Climate change coupled with habitat loss, pollution and development have hammered the world's biodiversity, with one estimate in 2019 warning that a million plant and animal species face extinction within decades — a rate of loss 1,000 times greater than expected. Humans use about 50,000 wild species routinely, and 1 out of 5 people of the world's 8 billion population depend on those species for food and income, the report said.

But they struggled for nearly two weeks to agree on what that protection looks like and who will pay for it.

The financing has been among the most contentious issues, with delegates from 70 African, South American and Asian countries walking out of negotiations Wednesday. They returned several hours later.

Brazil, speaking for developing countries during the week, said in a statement that a new funding mechanism dedicated to biodiversity should be established and that developed countries provide \$100 billion annually in financial grants to emerging economies until 2030.

"All the elements are in there for a balance of unhappiness which is the secret to achieving agreement in U.N. bodies," Pierre du Plessis, a negotiator from Namibia who is helping coordinate the African group, told The Associated Press before the vote. "Everyone got a bit of

what they wanted, not necessarily everything they wanted."

Financing emerged late in the talks and risked derailing an agreement. Several African countries held up the final agreement for almost nine hours. They wanted the creation of a fund for biodiversity but agreed to the creation of one under the pre-existing Global Environmental Facility or GEF.

"Creating a fund under the GEF is the best way to obtain something immediate and efficient," Béchu said, adding that a completely new fund would have taken several years to establish and deprived developing countries of immediate cash for biodiversity.

Then as the agreement was about to be adopted, Congo stood up and said it opposed the deal because it didn't set up that special biodiversity fund to provide developing countries with \$100 billion by 2030.

Huang swept aside the opposition and the documents that make up the framework were adopted. The convention's legal expert ruled Congo never formally objected to the document. Several other African countries, including Cameroon and Uganda, sided to no avail with Congo and said they would lodge a complaint.

But even beyond the disputed vote, there were supporters of the framework who said it fell short in several areas. **MDT/AP**

## this day in history

### 1989 US FORCES OUST GENERAL NORIEGA



American troops have invaded Panama in a bid to oust dictator Manuel Noriega.

Around 200 civilians, 19 US soldiers and 59 Panamanian troops are believed to have died in the fighting after President George Bush sent forces into the Central American country at 0100 local time (0600 BST).

Bush ordered five task forces into the area, all of which encountered heavy resistance.

Up to 9,500 US troops joined more than 12,000 soldiers already based in Panama for the mission, entitled Operation Just Cause.

They destroyed General Noriega's headquarters but failed to capture the dictator.

There are unconfirmed reports that Noriega's forces have also taken several Americans hostage.

The US government is offering a \$1m (£600,000) reward for information leading to the general's capture.

President Bush wants him to stand trial in America on charges of drug trafficking.

He ordered the invasion after a series of recent attacks which culminated in the murder of an American soldier.

"General Noriega's reckless threats and attacks upon Americans in Panama created an imminent danger to the 35,000 American citizens in Panama. As President, I have no higher obligation than to safeguard the lives of American citizens," President Bush added.

"And that is why I directed our armed forces .. to bring General Noriega to justice in the United States. I contacted the bipartisan leadership of Congress last night and informed them of this decision."

A new government has been installed and Guillermo Endara, who won last May's election by a three to one margin but was later ousted by General Noriega, has been sworn in as president.

It is believed the dictator is hiding out in the Cuban or Nicaraguan embassy in Panama City.

Colin Powell, Chairman of the US joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon, said: "We will chase him and we will find him."

"He's demonstrated an incredible ability to survive catastrophe, but we shall see over time whether he survives this one."

International reaction to the invasion has been mixed.

It has drawn swift support from the British government with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher declaring: "The rule of democracy should be upheld."

But the Soviet Union condemned the action and accused Washington of gunboat politics.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

General Noriega was caught within a week after he was tracked down by US troops at a Vatican embassy.

He was brought to trial in Florida the following month where he was sentenced to 40 years in prison.

This was later reduced to 30 years by a US judge.

He has failed twice in attempts to secure an early release.

His most recent parole attempt was turned down back in 2000 after concerns were raised over the security risk his release could pose to the former US President, George Bush.

General Noriega is still wanted in Panama on charges of executing army officers in 1989.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
 You need to concentrate on the areas where you can make a difference. Finish projects that have been hanging over your head. Get busy trying to make more money.

**TAURUS**  
 Apr. 20-May. 20  
 Arguments may flare up in your home. Opportunities will come through behind the scenes activities. Beware of colleagues who don't have your best interests in mind.

**GEMINI**  
 May. 21-Jun. 21  
 Opportunities to meet new lovers will come through pleasure trips or social events. You may want to invest in something that will grow in value.

**CANCER**  
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
 Relatives will be happy that you dropped by. If you've been under stress and worrying about older members of the family, it's time to come to terms with the situation.

**LEO**  
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
 Make sure that you make reservations early. You will be in the doghouse if you are being. Don't rely on others to handle the workload.

**VIRGO**  
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
 You will reap the benefits if you put money into upgrading your residence. Abstain from getting involved with married individuals.

**LIBRA**  
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
 Do not lend money or belongings to friends. Your need to put great detail into everything you do may cause you to miss the overall picture.

**SCORPIO**  
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
 You must not let fellow workers take advantage of your fine talents. Don't hesitate to present your unique ideas. An older loved one may be having problems.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
 Be sure to spend time helping children with projects that are too difficult for them to accomplish alone. Be diplomatic but stem. Real estate should be lucrative for you.

**CAPRICORN**  
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
 Loss is evident if you don't consider all the angles. Don't make promises you can't keep. Ferret out information that will hold them responsible.

**AQUARIUS**  
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
 You will be popular with acquaintances; however, loved ones could feel left out and insecure. Travel could be in order. You must not make unnecessary changes today.

**PISCES**  
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
 Problems with colleagues are likely. You can pick up wonderful buys if you really look hard today. Problems with skin, bones, or teeth may mess up your schedule.

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

| EASY |   |   |   |   | EASY+ |   |   |   |   |   |   |
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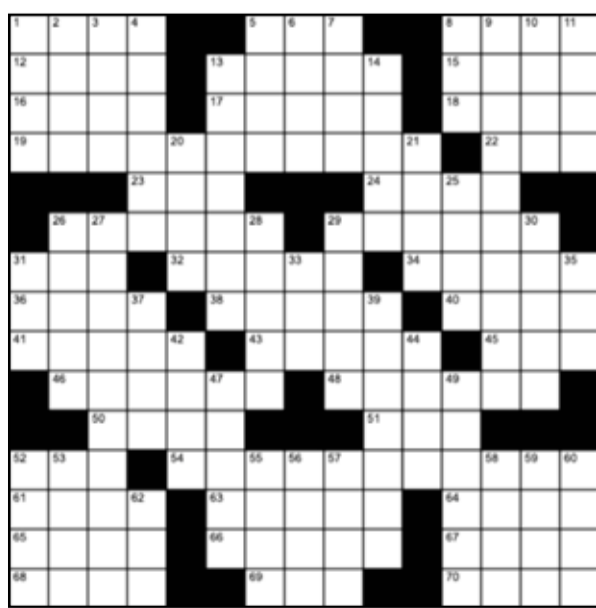
**WEATHER**

|              | MIN | MAX | CONDITION |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----------|
| <b>CHINA</b> |     |     |           |
| Beijing      | -10 | 2   | fine      |
| Changchun    | -21 | -12 | fine      |
| Chengdu      | 2   | 9   | overcast  |
| Chongqing    | 4   | 12  | cloudy    |
| Fuzhou       | 3   | 13  | fine      |
| Guangzhou    | 5   | 14  | fine      |
| Guiyang      | 2   | 13  | fine      |
| Haikou       | 11  | 17  | cloudy    |
| Hangzhou     | -2  | 9   | fine      |
| Harbin       | -25 | -14 | fine      |
| Hefei        | -4  | 10  | fine      |
| Nanjing      | -2  | 10  | fine      |
| Shanghai     | 0   | 9   | fine      |
| Taipei       | 9   | 15  | overcast  |
| Wuhan        | -5  | 13  | fine      |
| Hong Kong    | 13  | 17  | overcast  |
| <b>WORLD</b> |     |     |           |
| Moscow       | -14 | -7  | cloudy    |
| Frankfurt    | 5   | 8   | cloudy    |
| Paris        | 8   | 12  | rain      |
| London       | 5   | 13  | rain      |
| New York     | -3  | 5   | fine      |

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS** 1- Whence one may worship; 5- Writer LeShan; 8- Architect Mies van der \_\_\_; 12- Brief letter, paper money; 13- Affairs of honor; 15- Raised; 16- Horse's gait; 17- Angry; 18- Inwardly; 19- Pretend to be; 22- Capp and Capone; 23- Turf; 24- Streetcar; 26- Doze; 29- Dogwood; 31- Dip in liquid; 32- Broadcaster; 34- Egyptian peninsula; 36- Deal (with); 38- Taboos; 40- Old Fords; 41- Pertaining to the small intestine; 43- \_\_\_ Ark; 45- In the manner of; 46- Powerful; 48- Ignite; 50- Cross inscription; 51- Peebles or Long; 52- Oh yeah? \_\_\_ who?; 54- Quests; 61- Filament; 63- Red fluorescent dye; 64- Mont. neighbor; 65- \_\_\_ extra cost; 66- Sturm und \_\_\_; 67- Very small; 68- Wise men; 69- Sportage maker; 70- Votes for;

**DOWN** 1- Not pro; 2- Configuration; 3- Perched on; 4- Student's second chance; 5- Lira replacement; 6- Faculty head; 7- Neighbor of Sask.; 8- Slugger's stat; 9- Decorative; 10- Hades; 11- Ice cream brand; 13- Scorn; 14- Brief brawl; 20- Author Jaffe; 21- Slips up; 25- Natural blue dye; 26- Loses heat; 27- Tempting; 28- Tine; 29- Frog sound; 30- Big dipper; 31- School subj.; 33- Brian of Roxy Music; 35- This \_\_\_ stickup; 37- Acquire through work; 39- Gleaming; 42- Heart; 44- Irritated state; 47- Put the kibosh on; 49- Of delicate beauty; 52- Ersatz; 53- I could \_\_\_ horse; 55- Flesh of a hog; 56- Morales of "NYPD Blue"; 57- Actress Merrill; 58- "Garfield" canine; 59- "Peter Pan" dog; 60- The \_\_\_ the limit; 62- Louis XIV, e.g.;



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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AD

TECH

# TWITTER POLL CLOSES, USERS VOTE IN FAVOR OF MUSK EXIT AS CEO

MATT O'BRIEN

**M**ORE than half of 17.5 million users who responded to a poll that asked whether billionaire Elon Musk should step down as head of Twitter voted yes when the poll closed yesterday.

There was no immediate announcement from Twitter, or Musk, about whether that would happen, though he said that he would abide by the results.

Musk has clashed with some users on multiple fronts and on Sunday, he asked Twitter users to decide if he should stay in charge of the social media platform after acknowledging he made a mistake in launching new speech restrictions that banned mentions of rival social media websites.

In yet another significant policy change, Twitter had announced that users will no longer be able to link to Facebook, Instagram, Mastodon and other platforms the company described as "prohibited."

But that decision generated so much immediate criticism, including from past defenders of Twi-



ter's new billionaire owner, that Musk promised not to make any more major policy changes without an online survey of users.

The action to block competitors was Musk's latest attempt to crack down on certain speech after he shut down a Twitter account last week that was tracking the flights of his private jet.

The banned platforms included mainstream websites such as Facebook and Instagram, and upstart rivals Mastodon, Tribel, Nostr, Post and former President Donald

Trump's Truth Social. Twitter gave no explanation for why the blacklist included those seven websites but not others such as Parler, TikTok or LinkedIn.

Twitter had said it would at least temporarily suspend accounts that include the banned websites in their profile — a practice so widespread it would have been difficult to enforce the restrictions on Twitter's millions of users around the world. Not only links but attempts to bypass the ban by spelling out "instagram dot com" could have

led to a suspension, the company said.

A test case was the prominent venture capitalist Paul Graham, who in the past has praised Musk but on Sunday told his 1.5 million Twitter followers that this was the "last straw" and to find him on Mastodon. His Twitter account was promptly suspended, and soon after restored as Musk promised to reverse the policy implemented just hours earlier.

Musk said Twitter will still suspend some accounts according to

the policy but "only when that account's primary purpose is promotion of competitors."

Twitter previously took action to block links to Mastodon after its main Twitter account tweeted about the @ElonJet controversy last week. Mastodon has grown rapidly in recent weeks as an alternative for Twitter users who are unhappy with Musk's overhaul of Twitter since he bought the company for \$44 billion in late October and began restoring accounts that ran afoul of the previous Twitter leadership's rules against hateful conduct and other harms.

Musk permanently banned the @ElonJet account on Wednesday, then changed Twitter's rules to prohibit the sharing of another person's current location without their consent. He then took aim at journalists who were writing about the jet-tracking account, which can still be found on other social media sites, alleging that they were broadcasting "basically assassination coordinates."

He used that to justify Twitter's moves last week to suspend the accounts of numerous journalists who cover the social media platform and Musk, among them reporters working for The New York Times, Washington Post, CNN, Voice of America and other publications. Many of those accounts were restored following an online poll by Musk. **MDT/AP**

**AD**

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WORLD CUP REVIEW

# Best and worst of the tournament in Qatar

STEVE DOUGLAS, DOHA

**A**FTER 64 matches, 172 goals and one of the best finals in history, the 2022 World Cup is over.

Argentina is the champion for the third time after beating France in a penalty shootout. Lionel Messi finally has his hands on the golden trophy that had long eluded him.

Here's a look at some of the highlights of the tournament — and the low points:

## BEST PLAYER

Lionel Messi won the Golden Ball as the tournament's best player. He has never played better at a World Cup, scoring seven goals, providing three assists and being Argentina's star player in all seven of its matches. He has also made a record 26 appearances at the World Cup to break Lothar Matthaus' record. Messi definitively joins Pelé and Diego Maradona in the pantheon of soccer's greatest players.

## BIGGEST FLOP

Considering his name and profile, and the drama he had created by an explosive pre-tournament interview, Portugal superstar Cristiano Ronaldo could hardly have had a worse tournament. OK, he converted a penalty against Ghana to become the first man to score at five different World Cups, but nothing else went right for the player currently without a club. He tried — and failed — to claim a headed goal against Uruguay, showed a bad attitude after being substituted against South Korea to the annoyance of his coach, then was benched against Switzerland and Morocco in the knockout stage. He wept after Portugal's 1-0 loss to Morocco that ended his World Cup career, and finished the tournament with only the one goal.

## BEST GOAL

Brazil striker Richarlison had his back to the goal when he used one touch to flick the ball up in the air near the penalty spot, then spun around and leapt off the ground to deliver a spectacular acrobatic kick into the net. It sealed a 2-0 win over Serbia in the group stage and made Brazilians, briefly, forget about the injured Neymar.

## BEST SAVE

There were 20 seconds remaining of stoppage time in extra time in the final when France striker Randal Kolo Muani went clean through on Argenti-

na goalkeeper Emi Martinez. The win, the title, was there for France but Martinez stuck out his left leg to keep the ball out. It was a save as important as all of Messi's goals.

## BEST MATCH

Argentina was involved in the best two. First, the team's quarterfinal match against the Netherlands had it all — goals, gamesmanship, late drama through a goal in the 11th minute of stoppage time to make it 2-2, a penalty shootout, a World Cup-record 17 yellow cards and a red card after the whistle. There was even the sight of Lionel Messi breaking off from his post-match on-field interview to shout abuse at a Netherlands player: "What are you looking at, stupid?" Then came the final at the same Lusail Stadium, which might have just topped it.

## MOST DISAPPOINTING TEAM

Belgium arrived as the second-ranked team and with some of the most famous players in the world. They scored one goal, didn't get out of their group and coach Roberto Martinez left his role. Germany exiting from the group stage for the second straight World Cup is a close second.

## BEST MOMENT

It's a crowded field in a World Cup featuring so many upsets but nothing quite matches the moment the Netherlands blindsided Argentina with an audacious free kick in the 11th minute of second-half stoppage time of their wild quarterfinal game to take it to extra time. Instead of taking a shot from the edge of the area with virtually the last passage of play in the match, Teun Koopmeiners played a short pass into the middle of the area, Wout Weghorst took a touch and held off his marker before slotting home a finish on the stretch.

## BEST FANS

Morocco's for the noise, Argentina's for the pure passion, and Japan's for the way they tidy up after themselves.

## REVELATION

At 31, Antoine Griezmann reinvented himself as a midfield playmaker for France, having played as a forward for his entire career. He was one of the players of the tournament.

## BEST QUOTE

"I had the feeling that this was the one." — Lionel Messi after winning the World Cup for the first time. **MDT/AP**



Best player - Lionel Messi



Biggest flop - Cristiano Ronaldo



Best goal - Richarlison



Best save - Emi Martinez



Most disappointing team - Belgium



Revelation - Antoine Griezmann

**OPINION**

**Multipolar World**

Jorge Costa Oliveira



**ENERGY TRANSITION, WISHFUL THINKING, AND THE EROSION OF DEMOCRACY**

One of the greatest uncertainties we are facing today is the duration of the global energy sector's transition from fossil fuels – including oil, natural gas, and coal – to renewable energy sources such as wind and solar. This debate is overshadowed by the interests of oil companies in exploiting fossil fuels to the fullest extent possible and by the guilt complex of politicians that have governed developed countries in recent decades, who have often dismissed the need to combat climate change caused by the increasing levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

According to Vaclav Smil, one of the most reputable researchers and authorities on energy transitions, the major global energy transitions, from wood to coal, then to oil, and subsequently to gas, have each taken 50-60 years; there is no reason to believe that a shift to renewable energy will be faster.

Global energy demand has almost doubled in the last two decades. In countries where living standards have risen rapidly, like India and China, coal has been burned to produce more energy as governments connect people in rural towns and sprawling megacities to power grids for the first time. In developed countries where electricity has become cleaner, such as in the US and Europe, coal is being phased out by gas as the main source of energy.

Portugal is a good example, as one of the early adopters of renewable energy production, but even after 15 years solar and wind energy make up only 7.3% of the overall national energy supply. And hydroelectric production – accounting for 3.5% - has been decreasing. Natural gas (24%) is not replacing petroleum products, which remain the main source of energy (40-43%). And in many countries this will remain the case for a long time given the low disposable income, which will gradually contract the already low rate of electric vehicle (EV) sales.

The European Parliament has adopted measures such as prohibiting the sale of combustion vehicles from 2035. It is very likely that this target will be adjusted, as illustrated by the statements of VW's CEO warning of the unrealistic European targets for EVs. It is also almost certain that several other hyperbolic and unrealistic targets set in reports by the International Energy Agency (IEA) will need to be adjusted.

The commitment in the developed world to a swift energy transition is not being followed by the new emerging powers, such as India and China, for whom the priority is still the security of energy supply. The ongoing war in Ukraine and the uncertainty it has brought about have increased the number of Europeans and Americans who share this priority.

International data on the growth rate of renewable sources and energy storage show that the energy transition will take a long time to accomplish. According to Smil, one should expect that the transition will take several decades, possibly two generations. To sell tomorrows that sing along with wishful thinking bordering on magical thinking will prove costly in political credibility and contribute to the erosion of democracy.

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

"Avatar: The Way of Water" didn't make quite as big of a splash as many assumed it would, but James Cameron's big budget spectacle still helped breathe life into the box office this weekend. The sequel earned \$134 million from North American theaters and \$300.5 million internationally for a \$434.5 million global debut, according to studio estimates yesterday.

It tied with "The Batman" as the fourth highest domestic debut of the year, behind "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness" (\$187.4 million in May), "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever," (\$181 million in November) and "Thor: Love and Thunder" (\$144.2 million in July).

Expectations were enormous for "Avatar 2," which carried a reported price tag of over \$350 million.



Pope Francis is flanked by Jesuits' superior general Arturo Sosa Abascal

**JESUITS ASK VICTIMS TO COME FORWARD IN ARTIST ABUSE CASE**

NICOLE WINFIELD, VATICAN CITY

POPE Francis' Jesuit order yesterday [Macau time] asked any more victims to come forward with complaints against a famous Jesuit artist who was essentially let off the hook by the Vatican twice despite devastating testimony by women who said he sexually and spiritually abused them.

The Jesuits asked for new evidence against the Rev. Marko Ivan Rupnik, and offered a timeline about his case in an effort to tamp down the scandal.

The Slovenian priest is relatively unknown among rank-and-file Catholics but is well known in the hierarchy because he is one of the church's most sought-after artists. His mosaics decorate chapels, churches and basilicas around the globe.

The scandal exploded this past week after the Jesuits admitted he had been excommunicated for having committed one of the gravest crimes in the Catholic Church — using the confessional to absolve a woman with whom he had engaged in sexual activity.

He was declared excommunicated in May 2020, but the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith lifted the

excommunication later that month after he repented, an unusually quick turnaround for such a serious violation.

A year later, the same Congregation decided not to prosecute him for another allegation of spiritual and sexual abuse of a former nun, declaring the statute of limitations had expired. The Congregation, which routinely waives the statute of limitations, is headed by a Jesuit prefect, has a Jesuit sex crimes prosecutor and a former No. 2 who lived in Rupnik's Jesuit community.

The Congregation has not responded to requests for information about the case, which has exposed the Vatican's general refusal to consider spiritual and sexual abuse of adult women as a crime that must be punished. Rather, the Vatican has long considered such abuse a mere lapse of priestly chastity that can be forgiven, without considering the trauma it causes victims.

The Jesuit appeal came on the same day the Italian newspaper Domani published the most explosive testimony yet by the former nun who made the complaint in 2021. She detailed years of sexual abuse and spiritual manipulation by Rupnik and said she made repeated efforts

to turn him in only to face Jesuit and other superiors who routinely protected Rupnik at her expense.

"It was truly an abuse of conscience," said the nun, who was not identified but whose account was confirmed to The Associated Press by someone familiar with the case.

"His sexual obsession was not impromptu but was profoundly connected to his concept of art and his theological thinking. Father Marko started slowly and sweetly infiltrating my psychological and spiritual world, leveraging my uncertainties and fragility and using my relationship with God to push me into sexual experiences with him."

She said that her first complaint about his behavior dated from 1994 in Slovenia but that it was ignored as Rupnik's community — first in Slovenia, then in Rome — grew and gained an international following.

In the meantime, other sisters were similarly harmed, she said, describing the use of pornography, humiliation and multiple partners "in the image of the Trinity" in Rupnik's spiritual and sexual abuse.

The scandal has been accentuated by conflicting accounts given by the Jesuits. MDT/AP

Sweden's top court yesterday rejected an extradition request for a man wanted by Turkey, saying the Scandinavian country does not criminalize the act he is accused of committing. In a statement, the Swedish Supreme Court said there were "obstacles to extradition because it is a matter of so-called political crimes, i.e. crimes that are directed against the state and that are political in nature."



NATO Defense officials said yesterday that Germany is readying decades-old armored personnel carriers for a key NATO unit after the modern vehicles that should have been deployed suffered a mass breakdown. Germany is scheduled to take the rotating lead of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, or VJTF, on Jan. 1.



Vatican has defrocked an anti-abortion U.S. priest, Frank Pavone, for what it said were "blasphemous communications on social media" as well as "persistent disobedience" of his bishop who repeatedly told him to stop his partisan activism for Donald Trump. A letter to U.S. bishops from the Vatican ambassador to the U.S., Archbishop Christophe Pierre said that the decision against Pavone, who heads the anti-abortion group Priests for Life, had been taken Nov. 9, and that there was no chance for an appeal.

**HOLIDAY TIMES**

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will be back on the stands on Thursday December 22. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.