

Severe illness and death can be effectively reduced

Book a COVID-19 vaccine appointment for your booster dose

Please scan QR code or visit website



<https://eservice.ssm.gov.mo/covidvacbook>

Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre



ARTYZEN GRAND LAPA MACAU 澳門雅辰酒店

DISCOVER Good Life Starts Here



GOV'T FORECASTED APPROXIMATELY 48,000 VISITORS PER DAY FOR THE UPCOMING LUNAR NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS

▲ P3

PJ, GUANGDONG POLICE BUST ALLEGED ILLEGAL ONLINE GAMBLING SCHEME

▲ P4

COURTS: LAWMAKERS VONG HIN FAI, CHUI SAI CHEONG AND CHUI SAI PENG NOT ALLOWED TO TESTIFY IN PUBLIC WORKS CASE

▲ P5



South Korean officials are considering creating a domestic fund to compensate Koreans who were enslaved by Japanese companies before the end of World War II, as they desperately try to repair relations with Tokyo that have deteriorated in recent years over historical grievances. The plan, revealed yesterday during a public hearing organized by Seoul's Foreign Ministry, was met with fierce criticism by victims and their legal representatives, who have demanded that the reparations come from Japan.

India convened a virtual summit of more than 100 developing countries yesterday to evolve a uniform strategy for a redress of their economic woes from the developed world with “the world in a state of crisis.” “It is difficult to predict how long this state of instability will last,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi told leaders of Bangladesh, Vietnam, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, Mongolia and other nations. Stressing that developing countries with three-fourths of humanity have the largest stakes in the future, he said.



Ukraine The fate of a devastated salt-mining town in eastern Ukraine hung in the balance yesterday [Macau time] in one of the bloodiest battles of Russia's invasion, while Ukraine's unflagging resistance and other challenges prompted Moscow to shake up its military leadership again. Russian forces used jets, mortars and rockets to bombard Soledar in an unrelenting assault. Soledar's fall, while unlikely a turning point in the nearly 11-month war, would be a prize for a Kremlin starved of good battlefield news in recent months.

ANTHONY LAM

AGAINST THE ODDS

Probability of another outbreak during CNY low; cash handout date unconfirmed

▲ P3



TRAVEL
AIRASIA RESUMES KL, BANGKOK ROUTES

▲ P3



TASTE OF EDESIA

▲ P11

REEMPLOYMENT OF BLUE CARD HOLDERS A DILEMMA FOR INTEGRATED RESORTS

LYNZY VALLES

THE hospitality sector may encounter difficulties reemploying non-resident workers to fill job-vacancies in the currently busy sector.

The sudden tourist influx amid the sector's staff shortage has created difficulties for the sector.

Although increased tourism has long been awaited, the surprise easing of border measures has caught hotels off guard.

However, it remains unclear when the labor shortage will be solved.

Non-resident workers were re-trenched three years ago at the start of the pandemic.

Pre-pandemic, non-local employees filled positions such as room attendants, servers and other F&B services, and quotas were issued to hire non-locals for these positions.

Due to the economic downturn, many companies, including integrated resorts, have not renewed employment contracts and have re-trenched workers.

From June to August 2022, the unemployment rate for local residents rose 5.5%, a record high since 2008.

"As zero-covid has suddenly been reversed and business im-

RENATO MARQUES



proves within weeks, alongside high covid numbers, employers are working hard to support the local community by driving recruitment efforts to hire local operational employees to do these jobs," Rutger Verschuren, vice-chairman of the Macau Hotel Association has said.

"Regretfully, few people have shown interest due to the physical nature of the work and the hours/days and modest pay," he added.

A new Macau labor law means the sector will face hurdles hiring non-resident workers because they must have their visas processed in their own countries before

coming to Macau.

The 2020-approved labor law for non-residents requires all unqualified and domestic workers from overseas to have an entry permit on arrival in Macau.

The same rules apply to blue-card holders already working in Macau, should they need or want to change employer.

This means they will be delayed in filling the job vacancies.

However, it does not end there. These companies must apply for new quotas at the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL) as former quotas have expired. It may take at least two weeks to complete the process.

"The quotas of the blue card holders who left during the pandemic have mostly been canceled since the quota was not been filled for several months, and so far, not many quotas have been reinstated, or are still in the process of being reinstated," Verschuren told the Times.

"From the moment a non-local passes the selection process until he/she can actually start work, it takes close to two months' to complete all administration processes. For non-quota blue card holders, it can take two to six months, depending on the job level and availability of the new employee and notice

period to resign their former job before coming to Macau," the hotelier said.

With daily visitor arrivals anticipated to be about 48,000 in the upcoming Chinese New Year that starts on Jan. 22, it is predicted the hotel industry will struggle to manage its resources, which may include overtime.

According to the hotelier, the hospitality industry is contending with a shortage of hands to cover three shifts per day including weekends and holidays to "clean rooms and washrooms as a priority, provide quality service in restaurants, carry luggage and assist guests during their stay, clean dishes, and cook."

The city's blue card system does not allow non-skilled labor to conduct any work other than that stated on the work permit. Therefore, assisting in other departments is not permitted.

Although they could employ locals part time, that would not solve the shortage of workers in the housekeeping department as the "local casual labor market is very limited and aged, and non-local students are not allowed to work as casual labor."

The Times sought a comment from DSAL but no reply was given by press time.

City's debut queer film fest to screen surprise movie

ANTHONY LAM

THE Macao International Queer Film Festival (MIQFF) is calling for participants to enter a lucky draw to win tickets to the preview of a surprise film next Friday.

To be held between Feb. 3 and 12 at the Emperor Cinemas in Lisboeta Macau, the film festival is the first of its kind in the city.

On its social media page, the organizer noted that a surprise film will be screened before the film festival period. Social media users are invited to make guesses about the surprise film based on the clues given to win tickets to the preview of the film. Those who want to



secure seats can complete an online form and make payments to obtain rights to entry.

The organizer's hints about the surprise film are that it is a short film in the Chinese language,

has garnered an accolade in 2022 and depicts the story of the relationship between a queer person

and their mother.

Apart from the surprise film, the festival will screen works picked from around the globe. For example, director Gus Van Sant's My Own Private Idaho will be screened. This film is respected as the landmark film of New Queer Cinema and it has topped many queer cinema lists as selected by renowned film reviewers. The film features River Phoenix and Keanu Reeves.

Several local works, including Next Door, Where the Luck Goes, I'm Here and A Story of Two Volleyballs Falling in Love, will also be celebrated by the film festival. The film Where the Luck Goes will see its world premiere at the festival.

Discussing the theme of the first edition of the film festival, the organizer said it is themed "Let's Get Beautiful Together Queen!", which shares the same acronym with the film festival itself.

On the question of why the city needs its own queer film festival, the organizer said queers have different stories to tell that should be told and heard. According to them, stories help us understand each other, and cinema makes stories visual.

"[The festival] could expand our minds out far, far away," the organizer said. "MIQFF hopes to connect society with film art, encourage more understanding from the public as an act against discrimination."

www.macaudailytimes.com.mo

REACHING OUT!

+25,000

Like us on facebook.com/mdtimes



MacauDaily 澳門每日時報
Times

DIRECTOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF_Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR_Lynzy Valles
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS_Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS_Alex Torrao, Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Grace Yu, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Jorge Costa Oliveira, Joseph Cheung, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Sérgio de Almeida Correia, Viviana Seguí DESIGNER_Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS_JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES_Associated Press, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua SECRETARY_Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

ADMINISTRATOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com
OFFICE MANAGER_Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com
ADDRESS_Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84
Advertisement_advertising@macaudailytimes.com
For subscription and general issues: general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

Ho Iat Seng sees small chance of another outbreak during CNY

ANTHONY LAM

WITH over 90% of the public vaccinated and about 70% having contracted SARS-CoV-2 over the past month, the Chief Executive does not expect another Covid-19 outbreak during Chinese New Year.

He was commenting yesterday afternoon on the sidelines of a government event.

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng admitted that there is no accurate figure of infection rates because many people have not uploaded their positive results to the government digital declaration platform.

Responding to the comment accusing the government of trading health for money, Ho said people are responsible for their own healthcare. Emphasizing that the purchase limits on medications will remain in place for a while longer, the head of the government has called for people to get vaccinated.

Discussing the availability of medical facilities, Ho pointed to the Cotai hospital, saying it is double the size of the current public hospital. There will also be experts from Beijing sharing their knowledge, he added.

According to earlier news releases, the Cotai hospital will only become operational during

RENATO MARQUES



the fourth quarter of this year.

When asked about when SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test stations will finish their mission, Ho said they would remain as some countries are requiring entrants from Macau produce negative test results.

ON THE ECONOMY

Ho said that for the time being, the government's estimate on this year's gross gambling revenue (GGR) will remain at MOP130 billion. The resumption of group tours depends on the Covid-19 situation on the

mainland.

Should Macau achieve a balanced budget at the end of this year, the government investment of MOP7,000 in the Central Provident Fund will be reinstated.

Echoing Ho's comment, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong said the estimated GGR is based on multifaceted evaluation and calculations. He pledged the appropriate work will be done in the attempt to reach this goal.

However, he refrained from saying whether the cash han-

dout will be issued at an earlier time this year. He said there are procedures that must be concluded and asked the public to be patient. "The money has been reserved [for this purpose]," he said.

Subsidized vocational training will remain as more time is needed for economic revival, the official explained.

COOPERATION ZONE ACCELERATION

The Chinese New Year reception was hosted yesterday by the Liaison Office of the Central

People's Government in the Macao Special Administrative Region. The Office invited the head of the government, all senior officials, the head of the judiciary, all lawmakers, and two former Chief Executives, among others.

During his speech, director Zheng Xinchong of the office said the major task for now is to accelerate the development of the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, "because the Zone will not only make new pathways that lead Macau to adequate economic diversification, but will also widen the horizon for innovative national development."

He said that "although the way is long, the destination will be reached with continuous progress and although the deeds are difficult, they will bear fruits," hinting that steps should continue.

In his speech, Ho expressed his hopes that the public will continue to work with the government in balancing Covid-19 control with economic development, so as to achieve social normalization as soon as possible.

He also said that in 2022, the government had achieved major accomplishments in Covid-19 prevention, while ensuring a certain level of economic activities.

Moreover, the review on the national security law is on track, new licenses for casino operations have been issued, the five-tier residential ladder has been implemented and the Hengqin development is progressing. The government would continue working on transport and infrastructure, he added.

TOURISM

MGTO expects 48,000 daily tourists over CNY

RENATO MARQUES

THE Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has forecast approximately 48,000 visitors per day for the upcoming Lunar New Year (CNY) Holidays.

The MGTO's acting director, Cheng Wai Tong, made the prediction yesterday on the sidelines of the presentation of the events included in the celebration of the CNY this year.

The series of activities include the return of the fireworks displays as well as the traditional CNY parade event on the third



and the seventh day in different locations of the city and comprising a total of 18 floats.

With a total budget of 26.9 million patacas, the MGTO promises to bring back the CNY festive feeling to Macau to welcome

the many visitors predicted.

Each of the three fireworks shows has been budgeted at around 1 million patacas with the three shows scheduled to have a total cost of 2.98 million patacas, according

to the MGTO.

As previously, on the first day of the new Lunar Year, Jan. 22, there will also be a golden dragon parade.

The events included in the CNY celebrations feature 1,000 performers divided into 24 performance teams from Macau, Hong Kong and the mainland.

The parade will go out on the roads of central Macau at 8 p.m. on Jan. 24.

The selling and lighting fireworks and firecrackers will also occur in two different locations, as in previous years. On the Peninsula side, the firecracker area is beside the bus parking lot on Zone B of the new landfills and in Taipa, on the land plot beside the Governador Nobre de Carvalho Bridge, also known as the land of the former "Ocean World" theme park.

TRAVEL

AIRASIA RESUMES FLIGHTS TO KL, BANGKOK IN FEBRUARY

AIRASIA'S flights to Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok are set to resume in February following the government's approval.

Last month, the Times reported that the international low-cost carrier is offering tickets on its website for flights between Macau and Kuala Lumpur departing on and after April 1.

However, the flights seemed to be resuming two months earlier following the easing of Covid restrictions on Jan. 8.

The route will operate three times a week to Kuala Lumpur and twice to Bangkok.

The Civil Aviation Authority has pledged to assist the recovery of the industry, which has long been in turmoil.

The resumption of the international flights to the two countries is an addition to the recently approved flights for Air Macau's Bangkok and Seoul routes.

Flights to mainland China have also increased amid the upcoming Chinese New Year holidays.

Meanwhile, Philippine Airlines is selling tickets on and after March 26 next year between Macau and Manila, at some MOP2,000 return. LV

MACAU, PORTUGUESE PASSPORTS PLACED 36TH, 6TH IN GLOBAL RANKING

MACAU and Portugal passports have recently been ranked 36th and 6th respectively in a report from global entity Henley & Partners.

The annual Henley Passport Ranking is based on the number of visa-free destinations to which a passport can take its users. Visa-free includes visa-on-arrival and electronic travel authorization (eTA).

The Macau passport is ranked one place lower than last year at 36th with 144 visa-free destinations. The number of visa-free destinations remains unchanged.

The Portuguese passport has 187 destinations not requiring a visa, making it the sixth most user-friendly passport. Both the number of visa-free destinations and the ranking are the same as last year.

By contrast, the Hong Kong passport has 171 visa-free destinations and is ranked 19th. The Chinese passport has 80 visa-free destinations and is ranked 66th.

The Philippine passport has 67 destinations visa-free, putting it in 78th place. The Indonesian passport is ranked 75 with 71 visa-free destinations. The Nepalese passport is ranked 103 with 38 visa-free destinations.

The index has existed for 18 years. It evaluates 199 different passports against 227 travel destinations. **AL**

CRIME

PJ AND GUANGDONG POLICE STOP ALLEGED ILLEGAL ONLINE GAMBLING SCHEME, 42 ARRESTED

RENATO MARQUES

IN a joint operation, the Judiciary Police (PJ) and Guangdong Province police authorities have stopped an alleged online illegal betting platform, the PJ announced yesterday morning in a special press conference.

In an operation conducted simultaneously in Macau and on the mainland, the two police forces detained 42 suspects allegedly linked to the organization, including two alleged ring leaders. Fifteen Macau residents were among those arrested.

The PJ believes the online gambling platform has been operating since 2017 and has involved approximately



RMB18.5 billion.

The PJ estimates the group has profited by at least RMB25 million since 2017.

The investigation has revealed that the group is comprised of local residents and mainland and Taiwan residents.

The group was operating from a NAPE district office building which was whe-

re the PJ conducted several searches and found the local suspects.

Police said the group has been operating multiple online gambling games and there may be more people and more money involved.

Preliminary investigations by both police parties show the alleged ring leader had allegedly transferred

illegal benefits to his wife's bank account.

Other alleged members transferred benefits from several mainland bank accounts to Macau in small amounts to avoid suspicion.

During the operation executed Wednesday at 16 different locations, the PJ seized cash amounting to HKD10.7 million, equipment and electronic devices.

In the mainland, the Guangdong police authorities are said to have arrested another 27 people, including two believed to be the scheme's ring leaders and masterminds.

The mainland operation included several cities in the Guangdong province and other undisclosed provinces.

AD

合夥人 PARTNERS:

官樂怡 Rui José da Cunha^o
山度士 Álvaro Rodrigues^o
馬天龍 Nuno Sardinha da Mata^o
趙魯 Zhao Lu^o
馬保安 João Nogueira Marques

大律師 ASSOCIATES:

高文軒 Adelino Correia^o
羅普齡 Zelina Rodrigues^{*}
馬潔冰 Maria João Marques
陶義德 António Isó de Azeredo
白穎怡 Iclia Berenguel
沈玲鳳 Mariana Afonso Esteves
馬秀文 Sofia Mendes Martins
飛嘉華 Carlos dos Santos Ferreira^o
莫永誠 Rui Velez de Moura
安東尼 António Manuel dos Santos
巴慧雅 Vera Bastos
歐文傑 Miguel Evaristo
陳芷喬 Joana Chan
顏曉蓉 Teresa Xiaorong Yan
諾瑪莉 Maria Noras
康靜雅 Viviana Hong
梁淑嵐 Ana Leon
黃瀚賢 Frederico Vong
吳靈鋒 Ng Teng Fong

實習律師 TRAINEE LAWYERS:

陳健雄 Eurico Chan
戴博晴 Tai Pok Cheng
吳佩愉 Ng Pui U
陳子健 Kimi Chan

法律專家 JURISTS:

斐彥德 Gonçalo Figueiredo
林思潔 Jessie Lin
羅成軒 José J. Rodrigues
楊詩婷 Si Teng leong
張偉鴻 Cheong Wai Hong
伍福賢 Domingos Ng
許栢桓 Rui Fernandes Brás



To protect the health and safety of our Clients and Staff, we continue implementing prevention measures at the office entrance, as recommended by the local Authorities.

為了保護客戶和員工的健康和安全，我們將繼續按照本地政府的建議在辦公室入口處實施預防措施。

A: Av. da Praia Grande 759, 3-5 Floors
Macau SAR, China
地址: 澳門南灣大馬路759號3-5樓
Tel: (853) 2837 2642 / 2837 2623
Office hours:
Mon-Thu: 9:30-13:00, 14:30-18:30
Fri: 9:30-13:00, 14:30-18:00
Sat: 9:00-13:00

WWW.CCADVOG.COM

律師事務所



C&C
LAWYERS
& NOTARIES
SINCE 1996

COURTS

Lawmakers not allowed to testify in Public Works case

RENATO MARQUES

THE lawmakers Vong Hin Fai, Chui Sai Cheong, and Chui Sai Peng will likely not be allowed to testify in court in the case involving two former directors of the former Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT), TDM has reported.

The Legislative Assembly (AL) has not authorized Vong to participate in yesterday's court session, where he was to have been a witness.

It is anticipated the same will happen to lawmakers Chui Sai Cheong and Chui Sai Peng who are, respectively, brother and cousin of the former Chief Executive (CE) Chui Sai On.



Vong Hin Fai

Chui Sai Peng

The three lawmakers joined the former CE as well as the former Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Lau Sio Io, and the current one, Raimundo do Rosário, on the growing list of those called to testify but who will not actually do so, as TDM had reported earlier.

Other witnesses have implicated the former CE, Chui Sai On, linking him to the approval of the construction project at Coloane Hill. The name of Chui Sai On was mentioned again last week at the trial when an employee of Sio Tak Hong (one of the businessmen who is also a defendant in the case), Iek Wai Chan, said the former CE had greenlighted the project.

At the time, Iek also said that in a meeting between Sio and the former CE, Chui Sai On would have said the project could proceed without a height restriction as it was in a "blank area" not covered by restrictions.

She also told the court that in this meeting the former Secretaries, Lau and Carion, were also present. The trial's main defendants, the two former DSSOPT directors, Jaime Carion and Li Canfeng, continued yesterday with the hearing of several staff members' testimony from the DSSOPT.

businessmen who is also a defendant in the case), Iek Wai Chan, said the former CE had greenlighted the project.

At the time, Iek also said that in a meeting between Sio and the former CE, Chui Sai On would have said the project could proceed without a height restriction as it was in a "blank area" not covered by restrictions.

She also told the court that in this meeting the former Secretaries, Lau and Carion, were also present.

The trial's main defendants, the two former DSSOPT directors, Jaime Carion and Li Canfeng, continued yesterday with the hearing of several staff members' testimony from the DSSOPT.

SAILINGS FROM MACAU FERRY TERMINAL TO RESUME JAN. 19

STAFF REPORTER

FERRY services between the Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal and Sheung Wan will resume operations Jan. 19, with about 10 round-trip sailings per day.

The resumption of services comes amid the easing of Covid measures in the region from Jan. 8, the same day the Taipa Ferry Terminal resumed sailings after three years of suspension.

"In addition, the Taipa Ferry Terminal plans to add night sailings in late January, and there will be no early morning ferries," statement from the Marine and Water Bureau read.

TurboJET has launched its service schedule, departing the peninsula terminal at 7:30 a.m., while the first sailing from Sheung Wan is at 8 a.m.

Night sailings are at 7:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. from Macau and 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. from Hong Kong.

Nearly three years ago, at midnight on February 4, 2020, ferry services between Macau and Hong Kong were suspended due to the pandemic-induced fall in tourism.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong residents are entitled to a buy-one-get-one-free offer in the form of free return ticket for use on another day upon purchase of a shuttle bus or ferry ticket to Macau between January 13 to March 31.

This promotion comes as the local tourism office tries to boost Hong Kong residents' arrival in Macau, partnering with several operators of Hong Kong - Macau transportation services.

In a statement, the Macao Government Tourism Office said the offer is to encourage visitors to stay overnight and longer in Macau.

AD

仁德 CENTRO MEDICO PEDDER
• 仁德醫療中心 •

We bring high quality of medical service to Macau

General Surgery : Dr. Fok Manson, Dr. Lai Cheuck Seen Edward, Dr. Lau Wing Kee Peter, Dr. Kwong Man, Dr. Nie Fu Zhong, Dr. U Chong San, Dr. Lei Chin Chong

Breast Surgery : Dr. Leong Iat Lun

Urology : Dr. Lo Kwong Yin Richard, Dr. Zhao Yun Qiao

Paediatric Surgery : Dr. Yeung Chung Kwong

Paediatrics : Dr. Zhang Zhiqin

Obstetrics & Gynaecology : Dr. Fong Kuan Io

Plastic & Aesthetic Surgery : Dr. Lam U Lin

Orthopaedic Surgery & Sports Medicine : Dr. Lam Kun Kuan

ENT : Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang


Cardiology : Dr. Jin Chun, Dr. Leong Man Kin

General Medicine : Dr. Ng Kam Hong, Dr. Lam Weng Chio

Dietitian : Chan Lai U Joey

Avenida da Praia Grande No 599, Edifício Comercial Rodrigues 14 e 15 Andar, em Macau
T. 2832 2298 / 2832 2229 Website: www.peddermacau.com
Opening Hours: Mon - Fri 10:00 - 19:00 Sat 10:00 - 14:00 Sun & PH closed

Enjoy the **Good Life**
Boa Vida Starts Here

Discover Now  T +853 2856 7888
Terms & conditions apply

ARTYZEN
GRAND LAPA MACAU
澳門雅辰酒店

DIPLOMACY

FM Qin on Africa visit sidesteps call for UN council seat

CHINA'S new foreign minister, Qin Gang, has sidestepped a new call by the African Union for permanent representation on the U.N. Security Council during his visit to Ethiopia.

Speaking at the opening of the Chinese-built headquarters of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, Qin instead emphasized China's partnership with Africa in security and economic development.

In a statement dated yesterday, China's Foreign Ministry quoted Qin as saying Beijing supports the African Union's "greater representation and voice at the UN Security Council and other international organizations," but made no direct reference to per-



Foreign Minister, Qin Gang, center, arrives at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa

manent representation.

African Union Commission Chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat told a joint news conference that Africa's lack of permanent representation on the Security Council is a "burning issue," considering

that most issues on the council agenda are related to African countries.

"It is unacceptable that others decide in the place of others. It is not fair. We need a new order at the international level which will

respect the interests of others," he said.

China is one of the council's five permanent members.

Qin, who was appointed in December, is on his first overseas visit as foreign minister and is be-

ginning a weeklong trip to Africa. He will also visit Gabon, Angola, Benin and Egypt.

China's foreign ministers for more than three decades have started their terms by visiting Africa, whose population as a continent rivals China's. China has invested heavily in infrastructure in African countries, including roads, railways and hospitals.

Qin rejected the idea that China is competing in Africa with the United States, which last month sought to reassert its influence with a U.S.-Africa summit in Washington.

"What Africa needs is solidarity and cooperation, not block competition. No one has the right to force African countries to take sides," Qin said.

The AU Commission chair said, "Africa refuses to be considered to be an arena of exchange of influence. ... We are open to cooperation and partnership with everybody, but our principles, our priorities and our interests have to be respected. The partnership we have with China is based on these principles." **MDT/AP**

ECONOMY

2022 auto sales rise 9.5% but growth weakening

CHINA'S auto sales rose 9.5% last year as electric vehicle purchases nearly doubled, but demand in the global industry's biggest market slumped in December, foreshadowing weaker growth this year, a trade group reported yesterday.

Sales of SUVs, sedans and minivans rose to 23.6 million, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. Total vehicle sales, including trucks and buses, edged up 2.1% to 26.9 million.

In December, sales fell 6.7% from a year earlier to 2.3 million as consumer spending weakened under pressure from anti-virus restrictions that kept millions of people at home and an economic slowdown caused by tighter controls on corporate debt. Total vehicle sales fell 8.4% to 2.6 million.

CAAC forecast steady growth this year but said annual sales mi-



ght rise only 3%.

The economy is rebounding following the ruling Communist Party's surprise decision to lift anti-virus controls on travel and business. But the recovery is expected to be rocky as China copes with a surge in infections and weakening U.S. and European demand for its exports.

Global automakers are looking to China to propel sales growth at a time when U.S. and European demand is flat to declining.

The World Bank and private sector fore-

casters have cut their outlooks for China's economic growth last year to as low as below 3%. The International Monetary Fund expects a recovery to 4.4% this year, but that still would be among the lowest levels of the past three decades.

Sales of gasoline-electric hybrids and pure electric vehicles rose 93.4% in 2022 to 6.9 million, according to CAAC. Sales of pure electrics were up 81.6% at 5.4 million vehicles while those of hybrids soared 160% to 1.5 million.

Sales of gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles tumbled 25.3% in December to 1.3 million.

China accounts for more than half of global EV sales. The ruling party subsidized the industry's launch to get an early lead in an emerging technology but has since shifted the financial burden to automakers by imposing sales quotas. They are investing billions of dollars in developing models that Chinese drivers will want to buy without subsidies and have formed partnerships to share the soaring costs.

EVs made up 25.6% of vehicle sales, CAAC said.

China's annual auto sales peaked in 2017 at 24.7 million but collapsed in 2020 to 20.2 million after dealerships closed as part of efforts to contain COVID-19. They have gradually recovered since then.

Sales of Chinese brands grew 22.8% in 2022 to 11.8 million, accounting for 49.9% of the market, according to CAAC. Sales rose 12.7% in December from a year earlier to 1.3 million. **MDT/AP**

TAIWAN

CHIPMAKER TSMC SAYS QUARTERLY PROFIT UP 78%

TAIWAN Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., the biggest contract manufacturer of processor chips for smartphones and other products, said yesterday its quarterly profit rose 78% over a year earlier but forecast weak demand this year.

Revenue for the final quarter of 2022 rose 42.8% over a year earlier to 625.5 billion New Taiwan dollars (\$20.6 billion), the company announced. Profit was 295.9 billion New Taiwan dollars (\$9.7 billion).

TSMC, headquartered in Hsinchu, Taiwan, makes processor chips for brands including Apple Inc. and Qualcomm Inc. Many of their products are assembled by factories in China, which has exposed TSMC to the possible impact of U.S.-Chinese tension over technology and security.

Fourth quarter sales suffered from "demand softness" as global economies weakened, TSMC's chief financial officer, Wendell Huang, said in a statement. Huang said the company expects further sales weakness during the first quarter of 2023.

Chipmakers are benefiting for demand for next-generation telecoms, high-perfor-

mance computing and chips for use in products from cars to medical devices.

TSMC announced plans last year to invest \$100 billion over the next three years in manufacturing and research and development.

Most semiconductors used in smartphones, medical equipment, computers and other products are made in Taiwan, South Korea and China.

That has prompted concern among American officials about reliance on supplies that might be disrupted by conflict between China and Taiwan. They are lobbying TSMC and other chipmakers to set up factories in the United States.

President Joe Biden last month visited a TSMC semiconductor production facility that is under construction in Phoenix. The company has announced plans to invest \$40 billion in Arizona.

TSMC announced plans last year to build its first chip factory in Japan. The company and Sony Corp. later said they would jointly invest \$7 billion in the facility.

TSMC also operates a chip factory in Camas, Washington, and design centers in San Jose, California, and Austin, Texas. **MDT/AP**

ADVERTORIAL

SANDS CHINA NEWS

Sands China Team Members and Community Members Celebrate Venetian 15th Anniversary with 4 Months of Activities

Sands China Ltd. recently wrapped up a four-month team member appreciation campaign, **V-Celebrate, V-Fun & V-Appreciate**, attracting over 7,000 participants across more than 200 activity sessions from August to December.

Sands' co-founder Dr. Miriam Adelson had helped kick off the series of exciting events by sending her best wishes in a video message to all team members, thanking them for their efforts in helping The Venetian Macao accomplish remarkable achievements.

In celebration of the **15th anniversary of The Venetian Macao**, Sands China held the series of activities to show the company's appreciation for team members, their families and friends, and community members for their support over the years – offering them a chance to join fun activities, win prizes, and enjoy quality family time together.

A **celebration carnival** in August and September at The Venetian Ballroom included screenings of the "Making of Venetian" documentary, games, handicraft workshops, and lucky draws. Sands China extended the invitation to over 20 organisations, including educational institutes, community associations, and medical groups.

A **Venetian experience for team members, family, and friends** offered 17 different activities for experiencing The Venetian's services and facilities, like a Cotai Strip limousine experience, tea time at the Presidential Suite, behind-the-scenes property tours, and parent-child culinary workshops.

Team member Wong Sam Mao said: "I really enjoyed the Venetian experiential activities the company designed for us during the 15th anniversary celebration... We even took a luxurious ride around the Cotai Strip! We had such a wonderful family time!"

A unique **Celebrity Experience at the Arena** in November gave team members a chance to perform on the same Cotai Arena stage where superstars like Katy Perry, Jacky Cheung, Jay Chou and hundreds of other stars have performed. Over 30 team members from 19 different departments passed their auditions and performed in front of an audience of over 1,100.

As Macao's first and still its most well-known integrated resort, The Venetian Macao has hosted 386 million visitors over the last 15 years.



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese (left) is greeted on his arrival at an airport in Port Moresby yesterday

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Australia finalizing new security pact with Pacific neighbor

NICK PERRY, WELLINGTON

THE leaders of Australia and neighboring Papua New Guinea said yesterday they are finalizing a new security treaty — a move that comes as a challenge to China's growing assertiveness in the region.

Last year, China signed its own security pact with the nearby Solomon Islands, raising alarm that it could lead to a military buildup in the South Pacific region.

Australia and PNG haven't released details of their planned new treaty, but Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he expected negotiations to conclude in April and the treaty to be signed in June.

Albanese said the treaty would be based on the deep trust between the two nations. The people of Papua New Guinea showed heroism and humanity during World War II battles, he said.

"In the years ahead, Australia and Papua New Guinea have a chance to honor our shared history of service in the cause of peace — by adding to it," Albanese said. "Deepening our defense ties and enhancing our national security cooperation, and achieving a swift conclusion to negotiations on a Bilateral Security Treaty."

Albanese's remarks were part of the first address to the Papua New Guinea Parliament by a foreign leader since the nation of 10 million gained independence in 1975.

"Australia and Papua New Guinea are the closest of neighbors, we are the greatest of friends," Albanese said.

Albanese said the treaty would work to address PNG's needs, including strengthening the justice system and resolving law-and-order challenges.

In response, PNG Prime Minister James Marape welcomed Albanese and said the two leaders would meet later Thursday to finetune their relationship, including "support for the law and justice sector, including police, military exchanges."

Marape said the safety of both countries was intertwined. He said Australia was more than just a bilateral partner and was a parent nation, because PNG had been under Australia's administration before gaining independence.

"One cannot talk about the Indo-Pacific without progressing the Papua New Guinea agenda because we are right in the heart and the center of this confluence, the Indo-Pacific confluence," Marape said. "In order for PNG to participate in a safer Indo-Pacific region, Papua New Guinea herself must be stronger economically."

Albanese said he wanted to enhance trade between the two countries "in everything from coffee and cocoa to fisheries and tourism," and to work with PNG on nation-building projects including upgrading ports, roads and digital infrastructure.

Later yesterday after the two leaders met, Albanese told reporters the discussions on the treaty had centered around increased defense cooperation and joint training of personnel, and the potential for joint operations. **MDT/AP**

USA

In Washington, 'classified' is synonymous with 'controversy'

CHRIS MEGERIAN,
WASHINGTON

HILLARY Clinton's presidential dreams were undermined by her use of a private email server that included classified information.

Donald Trump has risked criminal charges by refusing to return top-secret records to the government after leaving the White House.

And now misplaced files with classified markings could cause a political headache for President Joe Biden.

The three situations are far from equivalent. But taken together, they represent a remarkable stretch in which document management has been a recurring source of controversy at the highest levels of American politics.

For some, it's a warning about clumsiness or hubris when it comes to handling official secrets. For others, it's a reminder that the federal government has built an unwieldy — and perhaps unmanageable — system for storing and protecting classified information.

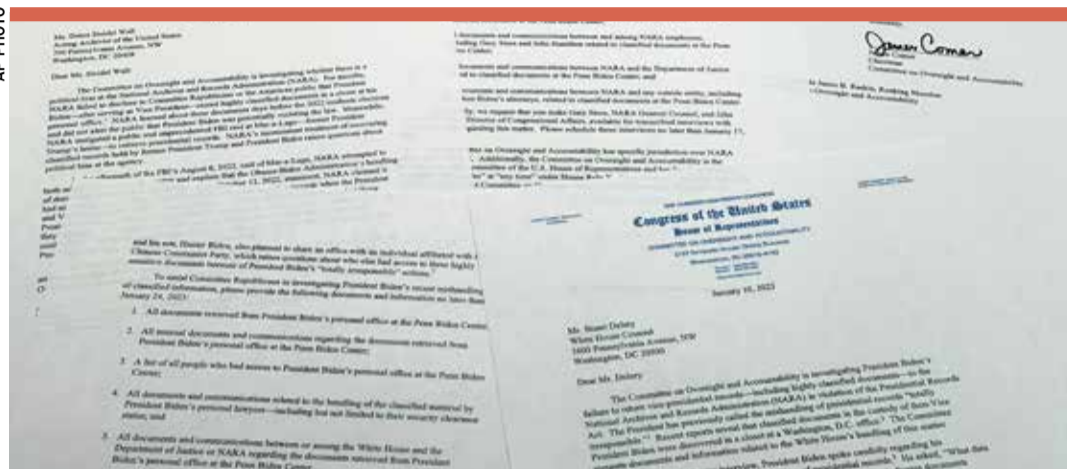
"Mistakes happen, and it's so easy to grab a stack of documents from your desk as you're leaving your office, and you don't realize there's a classified document among those files," said Mark Zaid, a lawyer who works on national security issues. "You just didn't hear about it, for whatever reason."

Now Americans are hearing about it all the time. Political talk shows have been clogged with conversations about which papers were stashed in which box in which closet. Voters are getting schooled in intelligence jargon like TS/SCI, HUMINT and damage assessments.

Clinton's email server was a dominant storyline of her presidential campaign, and the criminal investigation into Trump has clouded his hopes of returning to the White House. Republicans who recently took control of the House are now poised to examine Biden's own document practices as well, especially after a second batch of classified material was found.

"The American people are very well aware of issues involving classified documents in part because we've been talking about them for almost eight

AP PHOTO



Letters from House Oversight Committee chairman Rep. James Comer, R-Ky., to Debra Steidel Wall, archivist of the United States, and White House Counsel Stuart Delery

years," said Alex Conant, a Republican political consultant.

That's when a House Republican committee investigating the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, discovered that Clinton had used a private email account while serving as secretary of state. The revelation led to a federal investigation that didn't result in any charges, but 110 emails out of 30,000 that were turned over to the government were determined to have had classified information.

Trump, who pummeled Clinton over her handling of the emails, won the election and swiftly demonstrated carelessness with secrets. He memorably discussed sensitive intelligence with the Russian ambassador to the United States, leading to concerns that he may have jeopardized a source who helped foil terrorist plots.

After disputing the results of his election defeat, Trump left office in haphazard fashion, and he brought boxes of government documents with him to Mar-a-Lago, his Florida resort. Some of them were turned over to the National Archives, which is responsible for presidential records, but he refused to provide others.

Eventually the Justice Department, fearing that national security secrets were at risk, obtained a search warrant and found more top secret documents at the resort.

A special counsel was appointed to determine whether any criminal charges should be filed in the case or a separate investigation into Trump's attempts to cling to power on Jan. 6, 2021, when a mob of his supporters attacked the U.S. Capitol.

Larry Pfeiffer, a former intelligence official, said the situa-

tion with Trump's documents is far different than ones he encountered while working in government.

During the time that Pfeiffer was CIA chief of staff, classified files turned up in the wrong place in presidential libraries a handful of times, he said.

"It just happens," said Pfeiffer, now director of the Michael V. Hayden Center for Intelligence, Policy and International Security at George Mason University. "Mistakes get made, and stuff gets found."

He said that seems more likely to be the case regarding the documents with classified markings that were found at an office used by Biden at the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement after his term as vice president ended.

Biden's personal lawyers discovered the documents and contacted the White House counsel's office, and the National Archives picked up the records the next day.

The situation appears like "an average, run-of-the-mill mistake" that's "being handled in a by-the-book, textbook fashion," Pfeiffer said.

However, he said it would be wise for the government to review its practices for managing documents during transitions. It's been six years since Biden left the vice president's office, meaning classified records have been in the wrong place for a long time.

"That's not a good thing, no matter how anyone is playing it," he said.

In addition to the files that were found at the Penn Biden Center, more classified material was identified in another location, a person familiar with the matter said yesterday. It

was unclear when or where the documents were found. The person was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and requested anonymity.

Attorney General Merrick Garland asked a U.S. attorney to review the matter after the initial discovery, and House Republicans have said they will investigate as well.

Rep. James Comer, R-Ky., the new chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, sent a letter to the White House this week saying that his panel will be investigating Biden's "failure to return vice-presidential records — including highly classified documents."

"The Committee is concerned that President Biden has compromised sources and methods with his own mishandling of classified documents," Comer wrote.

Biden said this week he was surprised to learn about the documents, which were discovered in November but whose existence only became public this week. He said he didn't know what kind of information they contained, and he said his team "did what they should have done" when they were found.

Miller, a former Justice Department spokesman who worked for Biden's National Security Council last year, said it's unlikely that such an episode would have made the news if it wasn't for the concurrent Trump investigation.

"The Penn Biden Center would have turned this stuff in, it would have gone to the Archives, and that would have been the end of it," he said.

Miller said the situation is a reminder that "the government classifies way too many documents." MDT/AP

this day in history

1993 ALLIES BOMB IRAQ



American, British and French fighter jets have carried out a series of bombing raids over southern Iraq.

The Iraqis have repeatedly breached the "no-fly zone" set up after the Gulf War - which began almost two years ago - and made a number of military raids over the border into Kuwait.

The Gulf War Allies targeted missile sites and aircraft command and control bases.

The air raids took place early this evening, (1700 GMT) led by American stealth fighter bombers, based in Saudi Arabia.

Planes were also deployed from a US aircraft carrier in the Gulf, and British tornado bombers and French mirage jets joined the attack.

Initial reports suggest the mission was successful and there were no allied casualties.

The Iraqi ambassador to the UN, Nizar Hamdoun, has said the raids into Kuwait will stop.

White House spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, said: "The government of Iraq should understand that continued defiance of UN security council resolutions will not be tolerated."

He said if the cross-border raids continued, there would further attacks without warning.

The UK Prime Minister, John Major, called the action "limited and proportionate".

He said it would mean British planes could once again operate in safety in the no-fly zone.

The BBC's correspondent in Baghdad, Michael Macmillan, says the air raids are likely to strengthen support for Saddam Hussein.

Sanctions imposed since the Gulf War are biting hard and the Iraqi people support his defiance against the West.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The air raids against Iraq were not repeated. However, relations between the two sides remained tense.

In June, US forces launched a cruise missile attack on Iraqi intelligence headquarters in Al-Mansur district, Baghdad, in retaliation for the attempted assassination of US President, George Bush, in April.

In November 1994, Iraq formally accepted the demarcation of the border with Kuwait as laid down by the UN Security Council.

In March 2003 George Bush's son, George W., launched an attack on Iraq in spite of worldwide opposition to war.

Within a month, President Bush was claiming victory but there was no sign of the weapons of mass destruction he claimed he was trying to eliminate.

Saddam Hussein was captured in 2003 after several months in hiding, stood trial in an Iraqi court, was sentenced to death and was executed in December 2006.

Power was officially handed back to Iraq by the US on 28 June 2004.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19

It might be time to make a fresh start. You may have a tendency to put on weight. You will accomplish the most in the work environment today.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20

Personal changes will be to your benefit. Mingle with individuals who are established and can give you some serious insight into business and future trends.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21

Your partner could make you angry if they steal your thunder or embarrass you in front of others. You are best to move quickly and to get in good with the boss.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22

Family outings that aren't expensive will be enjoyable and help strengthen ties. Accept the inevitable and continue to do your job.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You may get some opposition. Someone you live with will get angry if you are neglecting your duties. Relatives will not agree with the way you are dealing with your personal problems.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Try making some changes to your appearance and your attitude that will reinforce just that. Travel will be on your mind, but you should be sure that you've got all your work up-to-date.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22

Be considerate and avoid being overly opinionated, or arguments will ensue. You will be looking for creative ways to make a little extra cash.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21

A long, quiet walk alone may help you sort out your thoughts. Your outgoing, aggressive nature will attract someone you've been eager to meet.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Most partner problems are a result of both people not living up to their promises. This may not be your day if you are overly melodramatic and unnerving everyone around you.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Your goals will be in reach if you direct your energy wisely. You can deal with large institutions or government agencies successfully today. Personal changes will be to your benefit.

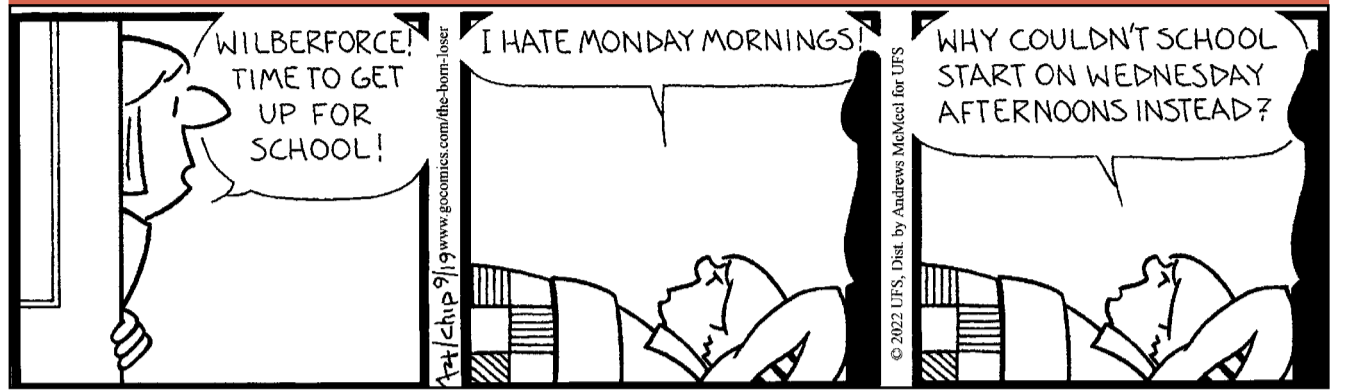
AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You will learn a great deal about yourself if you go somewhere secluded. Dealing with in-laws or relatives will not be in your best interest.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Don't be afraid to talk to close friends or relatives about pressing personal problems. Do not hesitate to help elders with legal documents that are too confusing for them.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

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

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

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	0	3	rain
Changchun	-10	3	cloudy
Chengdu	8	14	overcast
Chongqing	10	14	cloudy
Fuzhou	16	21	rain
Guangzhou	17	22	rain
Guiyang	12	22	fine
Haikou	20	27	cloudy
Hangzhou	8	16	rain
Harbin	-8	-7	fine
Hefei	7	15	rain
Nanjing	9	17	rain
Shanghai	13	16	rain
Taipei	16	23	cloudy
Wuhan	11	15	rain
Hong Kong	21	23	rain
WORLD			
Moscow	-5	-4	cloudy
Frankfurt	4	9	rain
Paris	7	11	overcast
London	6	10	cloudy
New York	0	13	cloudy

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Islamic chieftain; 5- Pig; 9- Clock face; 13- Domesticates; 15- Israeli round dance; 16- ___ want for Christmas...; 17- 1836 siege site; 18- Are you ___ out?; 19- Narrow inlets; 20- Metal, often used as a container; 21- Volcano shape; 23- Trattoria treats; 25- Adjutant; 26- Marquis ___; 27- Danced at Oktoberfest, perhaps; 30- Guido's high note; 31- Disney mermaid; 32- Deceitful; 37- Type of phone; 38- Port near Hong Kong; 40- Romance lang.; 41- Entirety; 43- Knowledge gained through meditation; 44- Boxer Laila; 45- Become more muscular; 47- Idle talk; 50- Soviet news service; 51- Floor covering; 52- Factual; 53- Part of HRH; 56- Verdi opera; 57- Bern's river; 59- Trick; 61- Husky burden; 62- Hwys.; 63- Rush; 64- Fictional Jane; 65- Tibetan oxen; 66- Apians;

DOWN 1- Coup d' ___; 2- Timbuktu's land; 3- Model married to David Bowie; 4- Sleep stage; 5- Directed a light; 6- Single; 7- Guadalajara gold; 8- Needlepoint; 9- "Our Gang" girl; 10- Greek epic poem; 11- Winged; 12- Actress Virna; 14- Church party; 22- Shelley's "___ to the West Wind"; 24- Son of Isaac and Rebekah; 25- Pack leader; 26- Boxer Oscar ___ Hoya; 27- Agreement; 28- Black-and-white cookie; 29- Rhythmic swing; 32- Slick; 33- Nasal cavity; 34- Let's just leave ___ that; 35- Turbine blade; 36- Dash; 38- Pertaining to war; 39- Take ___ from me; 42- Emit coherent light; 43- Son of Jacob and Rachel; 45- Emphasis; 46- 19th letter of the Greek alphabet; 47- Merrily; 48- Command; 49- One in a black suit; 51- Portfolio; 52- Arduous journey; 53- Fabled loser; 54- As to; 55- The ___ the limit!; 58- ___ glance; 60- Chafe;

Yesterday's solution

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

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	



It's prime time to **BUY & RENT!**

有關樓宇廣告詳情, 請向職員查詢
For more information on advertising laws, please speak to one of our representatives.

RENT

CONTACT US
& SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY!

hello@jmlproperty.com
www.jmlproperty.com

f jmlmacau @ jmlproperty

PROPERTY UNDER HKD\$4 MILLION!!

Soi Cheung
HKD 3,980,000 1 bed 1 bath

Nam Long
HKD 3,780,000 1 bed 1 bath

Vai Cheong
HKD 2,700,000 2 beds 1 bath

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

ADVERTORIAL

GREAT TIMES

Savor the Art of Living at MGM COTAI

MGM co-curated with Zhou Yi, the “Sugar King” of China to present the “Fondant Art Exhibition”, highlighting the most fragrant of the five flavors - sweetness with innovative edible art to elevate daily life's beautiful moments.



As a renowned fondant cake master with multiple international gold awards, Zhou is particularly skilled at carving ancient Chinese characters with fondant art that originated in the West. With a goal of letting the world see the beauty of the Orient, Zhou has stunned the world with his sophisticated masterpieces by integrating traditional culture with popular elements.

Located in the Infinite Harmony exhibition space at MGM COTAI, guests can find themselves surrounded by five beautiful fondant sculptures specifically created for MGM. They are infused with the historic Chinese dough-sculpting methods, as well as carving, painting, and tailoring craftsmanship. Each fondant sculpture is rich in cultural nuance and showcases customs that are deeply rooted in our daily lives. The works adopt bold and advanced suspension technique for the first time, elevating them to life-size heights for maximum visual impact. Additionally, the exhibition will also display Zhou's glamorous and trendy fondant art pieces of Chinese characters for a limited time.

The exhibition is available from 12pm to 8pm and it is entirely free! Discover the art of living and be awe in of the edible art only at MGM. For more information, please visit mgm.mo



AP PHOTO



Christian Bale as Augustus Landor (left) and Harry Melling as Edgar Allan Poe in a scene from “The Pale Blue Eye”

DRIVE IN

WHODUNIT ‘THE PALE BLUE EYE’ CHILLS AND SATISFIES

MARK KENNEDY,
MDT/AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

GRAB a jacket or a blanket before you watch Netflix's engrossing “The Pale Blue Eye.” I don't care if you're already in a warm place. You could be on the surface of the sun and still feel chilly watching it.

Set during an unrelenting winter in upstate New York in 1830, this frosty movie with snowy vistas, flickering candles and howling winds will get your teeth chattering. Even lovers romping in bed are fully clothed. The only thing to get the blood moving here is a spot of murder.

Actually, it's no mere killing that brings Augustus Landor, a retired New York City police constable with superior sleuthing skills, to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point on this winter in question. Yes, a cadet has died on campus, found hanging from a tree. But someone has also harvested his heart.

To crack the case, Landor, played with trademark taciturn intensity by Christian Bale sporting impressive facial hair, enlists the help of one of the cadets, who is an odd sort of military man. This is when things get weirder: The cadet is future famous macabre poet Edgar Allan Poe, who really did spend time at West Point, though not as an undercover detective.

“The man you're looking for is a poet,” Poe says, acted by an equally intense Harry Melling, who once played the bad guy Dudley Dursley in the “Harry Potter” franchise. Poe recognizes that a heart is just a muscle, but its symbolic value is crucial to cracking the case.

The title comes from a line in Poe's “The Tell-Tale Heart” and the source of this movie is a novel of the same name by Louis Bayard. Director and screenwriter Scott Cooper builds tension with a series of seemingly unconnected clues — a note fragment, a military

jacket missing a decoration, some animals disemboweled.

This is a film wonderfully grounded in its time and space, where you hear creaking wooden floorboards and owls hooting and darkness cloaks everything. You feel the 1830s and the greasy, unkempt hair and heavy woolen uniforms. At one point, apparently not cold enough, we visit an ice house.

The R-rated whodunit takes an unfortunate turn into the occult as our two heroes — a gruff, tragic-stricken detective and a romantic, hyper-intellectual poet — uncover each other's secrets. Poe falls for a classmate's sister — he gives his heart, get it? — and may be letting love blind him. But perhaps the detective is not telling us all we should know, either.

Aside from all the cold drama by pale people, there's also a little meta twist. We learn that the leaders of the military academy want the detective to solve this quickly

because they're catching heat from Congress. Look closely and see if you catch Pennsylvania Sen.-elect John Fetterman and his wife in cameos in a tavern. Much of the filming was done in their state.

There are also some talented folks in the cast that you might miss — Robert Duvall plays an expert in the occult, Gillian Anderson is a haughty matriarch, and Charlotte Gainsbourg plays a love interest for Landor. The ability to deploy this level of talent so quietly is almost cheeky.

The film has a few odd jumps and seemingly comes to a fiery conclusion — finally some warmth, good God — but it's a false ending. A much better one awaits, one that's unexpected and very, very satisfying. Stay to the end — as long as you're bundled up.

“The Pale Blue Eye,” a Netflix release, is rated R for “some violent content and bloody images.” Running time: 130 minutes.





TASTE OF EDESIA

Imperial Flair

IRENE SAM, MDT

CHINESE New Year is within the month of January. Traditionally, Cantonese cuisine is the first choice for this holiday season and **Imperial Court at MGM Macau** is one of Macau's

culinary crown jewel as it offers Cantonese fine dining traditions with a modern twist. Behind the kitchen, Chef Homan Tsui is responsible for a menu that exemplifies the very best classic Cantonese fare. With over 20 years of experience in the culinary industry,

he has worked at numerous reputable Chinese restaurants in Hong Kong, where he has honed his skills for the much sought-after Cantonese cuisine. Chef Tsui has also garnered numerous awards across different industry competitions.

The meal starts with the double boiled Braised Abalone and Shredded Chicken with Saffron Chicken Broth. It unleashes all the premium ingredient's nutrition into a bowl of nourishing soup. Another classic house specialty is Wok-fried French

Blue Lobster with Minced Pork, Black Bean and Garlic. The premium blue lobster is cooked with traditional Cantonese cooking combination of wok-fried technique with garlic and black beans. The dish is also served with creamy scrambled eggs that is elevated by the freshness coming from the lobster. There are also dishes with modern twists that entice the diner but stay true to the essence of the original. Crispy Skin Chicken with Flaxseed is Imperial Court's reinvention of a classic Canto-

nese dish. The chicken is air-dried for half a day, crisped up in hot oil and with the combination of nutritious flaxseed which makes the chicken even crisper than the traditional ones.

Imperial Court is both local and international true connoisseurs' favourite to classic and luxurious Cantonese cuisine. Private dining rooms offer guests the opportunity to share an intimate meal or celebration in glamour. It is a popular destination for family gatherings, perfect for Chinese New Year.

Macau Racing Tips

By Davy Chiu, MDT



THE KIANGSU 1500M TURF

2023-01-14|Sat|15:25

I am very confident that my pick last Saturday would go one better than his last race. Luck was not with **Top Mountain God** in his last race, he was so closed in fact if it was 1500M turf race he would have won. No worries, come this Saturday he could get his best chance to greet the judges at the winning post. Again his racing condition remain intact like his last time out. Sheng Tong Viva has the top weight and **Top Mountain God** only has the light weight to carry again he has the gift draw. **Top Mountain God** should have get on top of Sheng Top Viva. Again the favourite could be Sheng Tong Viva, we should see **Top Mountain God** get pass Sheng Tong Viva in the finish.

**Race 3 Horse no. 8 Top Mountain God Win & Place Bets.
Good Luck and Happy New Year to all our Readers**



OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**COUNTRY REMAINS
 'MAGNET' FOR
 WORLD BUSINESS**

No matter how far the small number of China-bashing politicians in the United States go in their efforts to besmirch China's optimized COVID-19 prevention and control policies, they are failing to dent global investors' confidence in and zeal for the Chinese market.

Many foreign business councils in China have expressed that their member enterprises are arranging the itineraries for senior executives' trips to China and rebooting relevant projects. Likewise, the executives of many of China's export enterprises have itineraries for business trips overseas.

The foreign business community has immunity to the China-bashers' lies about the world's second-largest economy. Foreign entrepreneurs recognize the Chinese economy's stability and scale provide a strong foundation for its long-term prospects, while its resilience and recovery capability ensure it has potential to tap in the near term. The government's consistent efforts to improve the domestic business environment and dock the domestic market systems with those of the world market give practical support to consolidate these.

In 2020, the amount of foreign investment utilized in China increased by 6.2 percent year-on-year. In 2021, the growth rate reached 14.9 percent, breaking the 1-trillion-yuan (\$148.1 billion) mark for the first time. And in the first 11 months of 2022, it had already exceeded the level of 2021, up 9.9 percent year-on-year. China's foreign trade surged 1.9 percent year-on-year in 2020 — the only major economy in the world that saw positive growth in trade that year — 21.4 percent in 2021, and 8.6 percent, despite the impacts of the pandemic, over the first eleven months of 2022. These figures demonstrate that the Chinese market has remained a magnet for foreign investment. Now that the pandemic prevention and control measures have been adjusted enabling economic operations to gain steam, China's foreign trade will see a robust rebound.

The many appeals of US enterprises for the US government to stop hindering their business operations highlight the extent to which the US political system has been poisoned by the toxicity of the China-bashers, if not how much the US economy and consumers are paying for that.

China's status as a global market, major investment destination and source, manufacturing base, logistics hub and increasingly influential creative center are by no means condescending gifts from the US but a result of its own comparative advantages, that will only be strengthened with its higher-level opening-up and development.

The future of the global economic recovery hinges upon the extent to which countries are willing to work together to dismantle trade and institutional barriers, maintain the stability of global supply chains, shorten negative lists, align their development strategies and coordinate their macro-policymaking, all of which China has been promoting.

**US INFLATION REPORT COULD SHOW
 ANOTHER MONTH OF COOLING PRICES**

**THE
 BUZZ**

The U.S. inflation report for December being released yesterday could provide another welcome sign that the worst bout of spiking prices in four decades is slowly weakening.

Or it could suggest that inflation remains persistent enough to require tougher action by the Federal Reserve.

Most economists foresee the more optimistic scenario: They think December marked another month in which inflation, though still uncomfortably high, continued to cool.

According to a survey by the data provider FactSet, analysts have predicted that consumer prices rose 6.5% in December

compared with a year earlier. That would be down from 7.1% in November and well below a 40-year high of 9.1% in June.

On a month-to-month basis, the economists think prices were flat in December.

Even more significant, a closely watched gauge of "core" prices — which excludes volatile energy and food costs — is expected to have risen just 0.3% from November to December and 5.7% from a year earlier. The Fed closely tracks core prices, which it sees as a more accurate indicator of future inflation, in setting its interest rate policies.



Nurses shout slogans and hold signs during a nursing strike outside Mount Sinai Hospital in New York

**STRIKING NEW YORK
 CITY NURSES REACH
 DEAL WITH HOSPITALS**

**JENNIFER PELTZ,
 NEW YORK**

TWO New York City hospitals have reached a tentative contract agreement with thousands of striking nurses that ends this week's walkout that disrupted patient care, officials announced yesterday.

The nurses, represented by the New York State Nurses Association, walked out early Monday after negotiations with management ran aground at Mount Sinai Hospital, in Manhattan, and Montefiore Medical Center, in the Bronx. Each has over 1,000 beds and 3,500 or more union nurses.

Nurses for both hospitals were to return to work yesterday, the union said.

The union has stressed staffing levels as a key concern, saying that nurses who labored through the grueling peak of the coronavirus pandemic are stretched far too thin because too many jobs are open. Nurses say they have had to work overtime, handle twice as many patients as they should, and skip meals and even bathroom breaks.

The agreements with both hospitals include

concrete, enforceable staffing ratios, the union said. The agreement with Montefiore also included what the union described as community health improvements and nurse-student partnerships to recruit local nurses from the Bronx.

"Through our unity and by putting it all on the line, we won enforceable safe staffing ratios at both Montefiore and Mount Sinai where nurses went on strike for patient care," NYSNA President Nancy Hagans said in a statement. "Today, we can return to work with our heads held high, knowing that our victory means safer care for our patients and more sustainable jobs for our profession."

The privately owned, nonprofit hospitals say they have been grappling with a widespread nursing shortage that was exacerbated by the pandemic.

"Our bargaining team has been working around the clock with NYSNA's leadership to come to an agreement," Montefiore said in a statement. "From the outset, we came to the table committed to bargaining in good faith and addressing the issues that were priorities for our

nursing staff."

The hospital said it focused on ensuring the nurses had "the best possible working environment, with significant wage and benefit enhancements" through the deal with the union.

"We know this strike impacted everyone — not just our nurses — and we were committed to coming to a resolution as soon as possible to minimize disruption to patient care," the hospital said.

Mount Sinai said in a statement it was pleased to have reached a tentative agreement and that the strike was over.

"Our proposed agreement is similar to those between NYSNA and eight other New York City hospitals. It is fair and responsible, and it puts patients first," Mount Sinai Health System said.

Several other private hospitals around the city reached deals with the union as the strike deadline loomed. The agreements included raises totaling 19% over three years.

Mount Sinai and Montefiore said before the strike that they had offered the same pay boosts. **MDT/AP**



USA South Korean solar panel maker said that it will invest more than \$2.5 billion to build factories in Georgia in what it says is the largest solar investment in American history. Qcells, a unit of Hanwha Solutions, projects it will supply about 30% of total U.S. solar panel demand by 2027, including making solar panel components usually manufactured outside the United States.



Peru Protests against Peruvian President Dina Boluarte's government that have left 48 people dead since they began a month ago spread through the south of the Andean country yesterday [Macau time] with new clashes reported in the tourist city of Cusco. Health officials in Cusco said 37 civilians and six police officers were injured after protesters tried to take over the city's airport, where many foreign tourists arrive to see sites including the nearby Incan citadel of Machu Picchu.



Czechia Populist billionaire Andrej Babis (pictured) leads a field of eight candidates hoping to succeed Milos Zeman in the largely ceremonial but prestigious post of the Czech president. Babis, a former prime minister, was recently acquitted in a fraud trial, boosting his chances of winning in the first round of the presidential election in voting this weekend.



Jeff Beck, a guitar virtuoso who pushed the boundaries of blues, jazz and rock 'n' roll, influencing generations of shredders along the way and becoming known as the guitar player's guitar player, has died. He was 78. Beck died Tuesday after "suddenly contracting bacterial meningitis," his representatives said in a statement released yesterday [Macau time]. The location was not immediately known.