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AP PHOTO



Hong Kong Walt Disney Co. has removed an episode from cartoon series The Simpsons that included a reference to “forced labor camps” in China from its streaming service in Hong Kong. The episode, “One Angry Lisa” from The Simpsons’ 34th season, was not available to stream on the Disney Plus streaming service in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory, according to checks by The Associated Press.

AP PHOTO



China-US Navy divers began pulling pieces of the downed Chinese spy balloon from the depths of the ocean floor yesterday [Macau time], using sophisticated reconnaissance drones dubbed the Kingfish and the Swordfish to locate the debris. After collecting all of the balloon’s white fabric and shell structure found floating on the surface, the Navy has now shifted to an all-underwater search for the remnants of the massive balloon that a U.S. fighter jet shot. More on p6

AP PHOTO



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un brought his daughter to visit troops to mark the 75th founding anniversary of the country’s army as he lauded the “irresistible might” of his nuclear-armed military, state media said yesterday. The visit came amid indications North Korea is preparing to stage a massive military parade in Pyongyang.

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Regulations promoting the Cooperation Zone in Hengqin seen as great leap toward economic diversification, integration

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NEW MACAU TAKES SHAPE

STROLLING ON SAN MA LO INITIATIVE MEETS WITH MIXED FEELINGS FROM LAWMAKERS

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AL PLENARY

'STROLLING ON ALMEIDA RIBEIRO' MEETS WITH MIXED REVIEWS FROM LAWMAKERS

RENATO MARQUES

STROLLING on Almeida Ribeiro, the event which was held twice over the Lunar New Year period and which transformed the Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro into a pedestrian-only, entertainment and leisure area, though lauded by many commentators, did not meet with universal approval from local legislators.

In a Legislative Assembly (AL) session, where the subject of tourism dominated the period before the agenda, several lawmakers criticized the event, raising concerns over traffic as well as fears of potential security risks.

Lawmaker Leong Sun Iok was one of those who, though noting some benefits in the initiative in enriching cultural and tourist experiences, think that the event, if repeated, might cause problems.

"Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro is an important artery, so the permanent implementation of the project in question could cause great pressure on traffic and affect the life and the commuting of residents in the area. Therefore, I do not recommend this street to be used as an exclusive area for pedestrians," Leong said, adding,

"There are other locations that can fulfill better this role or maybe we should restrict this project to be carried out only during major holidays, such as the golden week of Chinese New Year and National Day, minimizing its negative impacts."

Lawmaker Lo Choi In concurred with this view, highlighting the social impacts of the event, and noting that there are "many latent social costs, which include impacts on traffic and dislocation of the residents."

She called on the authorities to strengthen "communication and coordination between public services regarding the blocking of neighborhoods." She also called for more preparations in advance, such as finding temporary parking areas and expanding the bus network, among other considerations such as limiting the number of people allowed in a single location at the same time.

Lo also showed concerns over the lack of emergency lanes and other safety-related issues.

Ip Sio Kai shared the safety concerns, noting the "excess of people," and expressing fears of a stampede similar to the one that occurred last year in Seoul.

Lawmaker Ip also wants the government to develop a contingency plan that includes evacuation routes and signage to ensure the safety of residents and tourists.

On the other hand, many lawmakers, such as Chui Sai Peng and Ma Io Fong not only welcomed the event but expressed the desire to replicate it in other areas of the city adding educational elements, allowing tourists to learn about the history and significance of the locations.

Lawmaker Lo also proposed that the government make greater use of the Saint Lazarus neighborhood for such events, pointing out that the area has ample historical monuments and attractions. This would entail blocking streets, Lo explained, adding that altering the pedestrian access would also cause fewer impacts on the population.

According to the Cultural Affairs Bureau, the organizer of the event, the bureau is making a thorough review of the event before deciding whether the "Strolling on Almeida Ribeiro" could become a regular event in the future, noting that a decision is yet to be made.

2021 BUDGED FINALLY APPROVED

THE Legislative Assembly (AL) approved the final report on the 2021 Government Budget yesterday, passing it unanimously. Although all lawmakers voted in favor of the passage and final closure of the 2021 budget, some questions still remained.

Lawmaker Ron Lam criticized the lack of clarity concerning the government's justification of the use of money from the financial reserves.

He also criticized the government's method of balancing the Pension Fund (FP) account, since there was no transfer of funds from gaming taxes to this account. Lam also criticized the poor performance of the investments made with the

FP account money, and said that there was a lack of clarity around them.

In response, the Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lei Wai Nong said that the low return on investment seen in 2021 was not exclusive to Macau but a result of the worldwide economic crisis, adding that the investment is managed by professionals from the Monetary Authority of Macao and evaluated annually.

Lam also added that the method of allocating or endowing funds to the FP account from the reserves is not a "healthy system," and calls for more transparency concerning government investments with public funds from now on. **RM**



SI KA LON CALLS FOR NEW ROUND OF CONSUMPTION CARDS IN TOURIST 'LOW SEASON'

THE lawmaker Si Ka Lon has called yesterday at the Legislative Assembly for the government to reinstate the incentive scheme for local spending; the so-called consumption cards.

Si's statements were made in an intervention before the agenda of yesterday's session in which he asserted that continued financial support from the government is essential to support the economy through the tourist "low season." "Stimulating consumption plays an important role in

the context in which the provinces and cities are all betting on the development of the economy this year. According to economists from the mainland, insufficient demand in [local market] is a real challenge for the country's economic development," Si said. "With the arrival of the low season for tourism in Macau, the government must prepare well, ensuring the continuous increase in domestic demand and fostering economic growth with the recovery of tourism," he added. **RM**

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AL PLENARY

Unemployment still worries lawmakers

RENATO MARQUES

UNEMPLOYMENT and the protection of the jobs of local residents was, once again, under the spotlight, with several lawmakers addressing the plenary at the Legislative Assembly on this theme in the period before the agenda.

Representatives from the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM), Ella Lei and Lei Chan U hope that the authorities will take the opportunity of the surge in visitor numbers and the need for labor in several industries to promote the hiring and promotion of local residents.

The FAOM lawmakers feared that the sudden demand for workers in the different sectors would be used as a convenient excuse to hire non-local workers due to difficulties in finding and processing applications from local candidates.

"It is necessary to disseminate information on the distribution of vacancies, and hold job matching sessions for local candidates," Ella Lei said. "The government must also monitor the same types of work in the different sectors and companies, to find out whether local workers are still underemployed or taking unpaid leave, closely monitoring the current situation of the residents' employment



Lei Chan U

Ella Lei

José Pereira Coutinho

market," she added. On the same topic, Lei Chan U noted the need to balance the demand for labor, ensuring that residents are given priority access to employment. "During the pandemic, some non-resident workers (TNRs) left their jobs. Companies only kept the [minimum] necessary human resources. With the rapid recovery of the tourism sector, the

problem of the lack of labor arises, and there are already voices [in the community] asking for an increase in import quotas. If we compare with the pre-pandemic period, the unemployment and underemployment rate in Macau remains high.

According to the most recent data, which may be out of date, there are, respectively, 13,200 unemployed and

13,900 underemployed residents," he said. He called on the government not to allow a proliferation of new TNR quotas while a significant number of residents are still struggling. Digging deeper into the topic, lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho stated, "The recovery of the unemployment [rate] among young people is happening at a very slow pace due to the high number of non-resident and unskilled workers. [These workers] subject themselves to lower wages, rights and benefits compared to local workers, hampering the entry of Macau's young people into the labor market."

He also added that the fact that the government has not been recruiting young people for civil service posts is also contributing to the high youth unemployment rate. The same criticism applies to the gaming concessionaires, who also refrain from hiring them due to their lack of experience.

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MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

STAFF REPORTER

SPORTS

THE 2023 Sands China Macao International 10K will be held on Mar. 19 with a total of 10,000 places available in two categories: the 10K and the Fun Run.

The event's sponsor had already presented MOP8 million in February last year, though the event was canceled after a month due to Covid outbreaks in neighboring regions.

In a press conference held yesterday, a MOP8 million check was again presented to the Sports Bureau (ID) president Pun Weng Kun by Sands China president Wilfred Wong.

The Fun Run race will start at 7 a.m. and the 10K race at 7:30 a.m. at the Sai Van Lake Square. The 10K course runs along Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, Kun Iam Ecumenical Centre and Sai Van Bridge, with the finish located inside the Olympic Sport Centre Stadium.

7,000 places are available for the 10K race and 3,000 for the Fun Run. Registration for the 10K event will open at 9 a.m. Feb. 18, and registration for the Fun Run event will open at 9 a.m. on Feb. 19.

The total prize money for the race stands at around MOP 700,000. The winner of the 10K race will receive USD10,000.

SANDS' 10K RUN ON MAR. 19; MOP700,000 IN PRIZE MONEY



Meanwhile, speaking on the sidelines of the event, Pun explained that the increase in the 10K race quota from 6,000 to 7,000

was due to the popularity of the event, since the places in the 2021 race were quickly filled up. Questioned whether there

would be runners from the mainland, Pun replied, "The condition of the pandemic is stable and border crossings are unimpeded.

And we invited mainland runners, such as the Chinese Athletics Association and good runners from the Greater Bay Area, to Macau."

"We will also consider inviting some nonlocal runners to our event. Although the number may not be large, we will invite some non-local runners to participate in our 10K race," he added.

Pun also stressed that the bureau aims to make every major sports event an iconic major sports event in Macau.

"We want every event to be [remarkable]. For example, racing fans around the world remember the Grand Prix in November and the International Marathon in December. There are different events [to be remembered and participated] in different months," he added.

During the event, Sands China will bring its signature Streetmosphere performers to the course to entertain and cheer on the runners.

This year, the company is once again sponsoring the "FUNkiest Costume Award," awarding runners with the best costume.

"We hope that the Macau International 10K will become another of Macau's signature sports events, attracting enthusiasts from all over the world," said Wong.

AD

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THE ZONE

Regulations promoting Hengqin development to take effect Mar. 1

THE regulations for promoting the development of Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin will take effect from March 1, 2023, according to a press conference held by the Standing Committee of Guangdong's Provincial Congress yesterday. The regulations cover eight chapters and 66 articles on the system of administration of the Zone, its planning, construction and management, as well as its industrial development.

In order to accelerate Macau's adequate economic diversification, it detailed the development of various sectors, including science and technology research and development, high-end manufacturing, traditional Chinese medicine, cultural and tourism industries, conventions and exhibitions, commercial and trade industries and a modern finance industry.

Besides these, the plan focuses on the economic security of Macau residents, promotes the integrated development of Hengqin and Macau and ensures corresponding legal protections.

To align with Macau's public services and social security system, the regulations also introduce a series of measures on education, medical care, social services and transport, such as the "Macau New Neighborhood" project and schooling for children of Macau residents.

According to the authorities from the Standing Committee of Guangdong's Provincial Congress, the regulations enumerate



the responsibilities of the executive committee, and, as far as possible, delegate powers to allow the Zone to fully implement reforms and pursue development.

It will provide a more comprehensive and concrete legal basis for the administration and development of the Zone as well as support Guangdong and Macau in improving the new mechanism for mutual discussion, joint construction, joint administration and shared benefits.

"The new regulations aim to provide a strong legal underpinning to the development of the Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, promote long-term prosperity and stability in Macau, and better integrate Macau into the overall development of the coun-

try," according to Zhu Wei, deputy director-General of Guangdong Provincial Development and Reform Commission.

"Moving forward, the Cooperation Zone will introduce more supporting measures and policies in line with the regulations to boost the above-mentioned key industries," said Ng Chi Kin, deputy director of the Executive Committee of the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

SAR GOV'T WELCOMES REGULATIONS

The SAR government welcomed the promulgation of the regulations, adding that they provide a stronger legal basis for the effective implementation of goals

outlined in the Master Plan.

"It also bolsters efforts regarding Macau's adequate economic diversification, the construction of a new residential area for Macau people that is also convenient to work in, and in accelerating development of the Cooperation Zone as a high-standard and open system that integrates with Macau," according to a statement issued by the Government Information Bureau.

"The new regulation also helps to optimize the Cooperation Zone's new system of mutual discussion, joint construction, joint administration and shared benefits between Guangdong and Macau," the statement read. **MDT/NEWSGD**

APARTMENT PRICE INDEX FALLS IN 2022

In 2022, the overall average residential property price index fell by 4.8% year-on-year to 254.0, according to data from the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). The indices for existing residential units (271.5) and pre-sale residential units (298.0) dropped by 5.3% and 0.1% respectively, year-on-year. Realtor Centaline had already said that Macau has recorded the worst-ever residential sales in years, hitting a 40-year low in 2022. On average, there were only about 300 transactions per month in the first nine months, with the June 18 outbreak having the severest impact on the market.

UM HOLDS EXHIBITION IN HONOR OF HSING YUN

In tribute to the memory of Master Hsing Yun, honorary doctor of the University of Macau (UM) and founder of the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist order in Taiwan, the UM Library has launched the Exhibition of Master Hsing Yun's Works, which will remain in the library lobby until Mar.8. About 50 books written by Master Hsing Yun, including autographed copies and related videos will be on display at the exhibition. The items on display include the 'Complete Works of Venerable Master Hsing Yun', 'Humanistic Buddhism: Holding True to the Original Intents of Buddha (English edition)', 'Humanistic Buddhism: Journal, Arts, and Culture', and 'Humanistic Buddhism's 100 Paths to Happiness'.

Gov't earmarks MOP180m for group tours

STAFF REPORTER

THE government has reserved a budget of MOP 650 million to increase visitor numbers, of which MOP 180 million is for targeted group tours, including Mainland, Taiwan, and international visitors, Cheng Wai Tong, deputy director of the Macao Government Tourism Office said, as cited in a report issued by TDM.

The effect of the initiative will be first reviewed in March.

The rest of the budget will be spent on indi-



dual travel including cooperation with electronic business platforms, subsidies in aviation and international market and so on, stated Cheng.

According to the official, it has been one month since Macau relaxed its pandemic measures, and manpower in the aviation industry is still recovering. He said that the government had held discussions with Air Macau on increasing international flights to two to three flights per week, in order to allow international tourists to stay in Macau for a reasonable duration.

Concerning cooperation with Hong Kong, Cheng said that tourism-related departments and businesses will make ex-

ploratory trips to Macau when the two governments hold discussions as part of the Hong Kong-Macau joint tour to promote the two cities for the international tourism market.

China's resumption of outbound group tours following the change to its Covid-19 policies will be a strong boost to the global tourism industry and a benefit for the world, especially for economies that are dependent on tourism.

On Monday, China resumed outbound group travel to 20 countries,

including Thailand, the Maldives, the United Arab Emirates, Russia and New Zealand. Group tours between the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong and Macau also resumed.

During the Spring Festival holiday from Jan. 21 to 27, China saw nearly 2.9 million cross-border trips, up 120.5% year on year, and 308 million domestic trips, up 23.1% and back to 88.6% of the 2019 level for the same period.

The World Tourism Organization forecast that international tourist arrivals could reach 80% to 95% of pre-pandemic levels in 2023 (versus 63% in 2022), despite lingering global headwinds.

DIRE STRAIT

TAIWAN OPPOSITION LEADER IN CHINA AS BEIJING UPS PRESSURE

THE vice chair of Beijing-friendly opposition Nationalist Party from Taiwan was visiting China for meetings with officials and the local business community, drawing criticism from the self-governing island's ruling party.

Andrew Hsia's nine-day trip starting yesterday comes as China renews attacks on the ruling Democratic Progressive Party over its refusal to recognize Taiwan as a part of China.

Spokesperson for the Chinese Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office Zhu Fenglian accused the DPP of acting "out of selfish political interest" in seeking the island's formal independence with foreign support.

Tensions between China and Taiwan have increased following a stream of visits by foreign parliamentarians and others to the island, including a possible upcoming trip by U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy.

In August, China fired missiles and held threatening war games around Taiwan in response to a visit by then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who became the most senior U.S. official to visit Taiwan in 25 years.

Those actions "damage the Taiwan compatriots' interests and well-being, endangers their safety



Zhang Zhijun (right), then director of the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, meets with Andrew Hsia, the then cross-strait affairs chief of Taiwan, in Guangzhou (2015)

and security, and gradually push Taiwan to a dangerous stage," Zhu said, in a reference to China's threat to use force to recover what it considers Chinese territory.

The sides split amid civil war in 1949, and Taiwan has never been governed by China's ruling Communist Party.

Despite their close economic ties, China has refused all contact with Taiwan's government since Tsai Ing-wen first took office in 2016 over her refusal to recognize the concept of "one-China" embodied in an earlier agreement brokered by the Nationalists and mainland Communists known as

the "92 Consensus."

In contrast, Zhu said China welcomed Hsia's visit, saying Beijing is "willing to strengthen exchanges with the Nationalists, consolidate and enhance mutual trust, and deepen exchanges and cooperation in various fields on the common political foundation

of adhering to the '92 Consensus and opposing Taiwan independence."

The vast majority of Taiwan's 23 million people support the status quo of de-facto independence and Tsai says there is no need to make a formal declaration that would likely spark a military response from China.

Hsia plans to visit several major Chinese cities and meet with head of the Taiwan Affairs Office, Song Tao, the Nationalists said. His meetings with the business community will focus on restoring air and sea links between the sides that were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The DPP criticized the trip, saying Monday that it would lead to "unnecessary speculation" internationally, Taiwan's official Central News Agency reported.

Hsia should not sacrifice Taiwan's interests while "rushing to demonstrate loyalty to China," the DPP said.

The visit also comes amid a new downturn in relations between China and the U.S., Taiwan's chief backer, over the presence of a suspected Chinese spy balloon in American airspace.

The U.S. military shot down the unmanned airship on Saturday and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken canceled his visit to Beijing, prompting angry complaints from China over what it called an overreaction. China insists the object was a civilian balloon intended for meteorological research that had been blown off course. **MDT/AP**

ON AIR

As jets closed in on Chinese balloon, hobbyists were listening

THE extraordinary scene of U.S. fighter jets getting ready to strike a Chinese balloon had many people along the Carolina coast straining their necks and pointing their smartphones to the sky to capture the moment of impact.

But a group of aviation enthusiasts was, instead, intently scanning radio frequencies for the exchanges between the pilots who would follow as Huntress, NORAD's eastern air defense sector controller, tracked the exact distance as two Air Force F-22 fighter jets closed in on the target.

The pilots had to balance striking the balloon when it was at least six miles offshore — the distance NASA had advised the military allow to keep debris from falling on land



A U.S. Air Force pilot taking off in an F-22 Raptor at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., last Saturday

— with ensuring it was still in U.S. territorial airspace.

"Five miles offshore," Huntress advises in a transmission that was captured by aviation hobbyist Ken Harrell, in a recording that was authenticated by NORAD.

"Frank One is switches hot," the first F-22 reports.

The call sign "Frank" was given to both aircraft to honor 2nd Lt. Frank Luke, who earned the Medal of Honor in World War I for downing multiple balloons and aircraft.

"Frank Two is switches hot," the second F-22 radios in.

When Huntress calls out

that the balloon is exactly six nautical miles out, Frank One takes the shot.

"The balloon is completely destroyed!" radios an F-15 fighter jet that also took part in the mission, advising quickly that "there appears to be metal chaff clouds. ... It's definitely metal breaking apart."

This audio, which was first reported by The Drive, wasn't on the civilian radio frequencies that commercial pilots use. The Air Force pilots were communicating on an unencrypted military frequency that the North American Aerospace Defense Command uses to conduct missions to secure the eastern United States, under the control center named Huntress.

Aviation enthusiasts with the right radios scan for Huntress missions and other military flights as a hobby, calling out exercises.

Ken Harrell, a 68-year-old retiree from Summerville, South Carolina, is one of those enthusiasts. On Saturday, he recorded the exchange of the balloon shutdown.

NORAD confirmed the authenticity of the recording to The Associated Press in a statement.

When Harrell got started a few years ago, he said he "bought the right kind of scanner, put up, you know,

a decent antenna and a lot of software to connect to the scanner and just started listening." He said the scanner only cost about \$160 to get started.

On Saturday, he got a call from a fellow enthusiast who said Huntress was guiding F-22s in to hit what the Pentagon has said was a spy balloon and China has insisted was a civilian weather balloon.

"He says, get on the scanner, man! Huntress has been controlling the F-22 Raptors, you know for the balloon, they're gonna do it," Harrell said. "So I jump up, crank up everything, and started listening in."

When Harrell heard the pilots' and controller's voices, "I was excited," he said. "I've listened to a lot of other stuff — fighters practicing, intercept exercises, and that's cool, but when I first turned the scanner on and it went to my local Huntress frequency, it was pretty apparent: This was a mission. Boom." **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



ANALYSIS

US forces returning to Philippines to counter China threats

JIM GOMEZ, SUBIC BAY

ONCE-SECRET ammunition bunkers and barracks lay abandoned, empty and overrun by weeds — vestiges of American firepower in what used to be the United States' largest overseas naval base at Subic Bay in the northern Philippines.

But that may change in the near future.

The U.S. has been taking steps to rebuild its military might in the Philippines more than 30 years after the closure of its large bases in the country and reinforcing an arc of military alliances in Asia in a starkly different post-Cold War era when the perceived new regional threat is an increasingly belligerent China.

On Feb. 2, the longtime allies announced that rotating batches of American forces would be granted access to four more Philippine military camps aside from five other local bases, where U.S.-funded constructions have picked up pace to build barracks, warehouses and other buildings to accommodate a yet-unspecified but expectedly considerable number of visiting troops under a 2014 defense pact.

Manila-based political scientist Andrea Chloe Wong said the location of the Philippine camps would give the U.S. military the

presence it would need to be a "strong deterrent against Chinese aggression" in the South China Sea, where China, the Philippines and four other governments have had increasingly tense territorial rifts — as well as a potential Chinese invasion of Taiwan, which Beijing views as its own territory to be brought under Chinese control, by force if necessary.

Around the former U.S. Navy base in Subic, now a bustling commercial freeport and tourism destination northwest of Manila, news of the Philippine government's decision to allow an expanded American military presence rekindled memories of an era when thousands of U.S. sailors pumped money, life and hope into the neighboring city of Olongapo.

"Olongapo was like Las Vegas then," Filipino businessman AJ Saliba told The Associated Press in an interview in his foreign currency exchange and music shop along what used to be Olongapo's garish red-light strip.

"Noisy as early as noon with neon lights turned on and the Americans roaming around. Women were everywhere. Jeepney drivers, tricycles, restaurants, bars, hotels — everybody was making money — so if they will return, my God, you know, that'll be the best news," he said.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said during his visit in

Manila last week that Washington was not trying to reestablish permanent bases, but that the agreement to broaden its military presence under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement was "a big deal."

Visiting American military personnel could engage the Philippine military in larger joint combat-readiness trainings, provide help in responding rapidly to disasters and press efforts to help modernize Manila's armed forces, Austin and his Philippine counterpart Carlito Galvez Jr. said.

"This is part of our effort to modernize our alliance, and these efforts are especially important as the People's Republic of China continues to advance its illegitimate claims in the West Philippine Sea," Austin said at a news conference in Manila.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said the U.S. military's strengthening in the region was escalating tensions and risking peace and stability.

"Regional countries need to remain vigilant and avoid being coerced or used by the U.S.," Mao told reporters Feb. 2 at a briefing in Beijing.

Austin and Galvez did not reveal the four new locations where the Americans would be granted access and allowed to preposition weapons and other equipment. The Philippine de-

fense chief said local officials, where the Americans would stay, had to be consulted.

In November, then-Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Bartolome Bacarro disclosed that the sites included the strategic Subic Bay, where the Navy base was once a boon to the local economy. But two senior Philippine officials told the AP that Subic, where a Philippine navy camp is located, was not among the current list of sites where Washington has sought access for its forces, although they suggested that could change as talks were continuing. The two officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the issue publicly.

Subic freeport administrator Rolen Paulino said he has not been notified by the government that the former American naval base has been designated as a potential site for visiting U.S. forces.

A renewed U.S. military presence at Subic, however, would generate more jobs and raise additional freeport revenues at a crucial time when many Filipinos and businesses are still struggling to recover from two years of COVID-19 lockdowns and an economic recession wrought by coronavirus outbreaks, Paulino said.

"I see them as tourists," he said of the U.S. forces whose

presence could boost economic recovery.

About the size of Singapore, the former American Navy base at Subic with its deep harbors, a ship repair yard and huge warehouses had been used to support the U.S. war effort in Vietnam in the 1960s and '70s. It was shut down and transformed into a commercial freeport and recreational complex in 1992 after the Philippine Senate rejected an extension of U.S. lease.

A year earlier, the U.S. Air Force withdrew from Clark Air Base near Subic after nearby Mount Pinatubo roared back to life in the second-largest volcanic eruption of the 20th century and belched ash on the air base and outlying regions.

The American flag was lowered for the final time and the last batch of American sailors left Subic in November 1992, ending nearly a century of American military presence in the Philippines that began in 1898 when the U.S. seized the archipelago in a new colonial era after Spain held the Southeast Asian nation as a colony for more than three centuries. Washington granted independence on July 4, 1946, but maintained military bases and facilities, including Subic.

China's seizure in the mid-1990s of Mischief Reef, a coral outcrop within the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines that extends into the South China Sea, "provided the first hint that the allies may have been too quick to downgrade their relationship," said Greg Poling, director of the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative at the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The Philippine Constitution prohibits permanent basing of foreign troops in the country and their involvement in local combat but allows temporary visits by foreign troops under security pacts such as the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement and a 1998 Visiting Forces Agreement.

The 1998 agreement allowed a large number of American forces to be deployed in the southern Philippines to help provide combat training and intelligence to Filipino forces battling the then-al Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf group, which was blamed for deadly bombings and mass kidnappings for ransom, including three Americans — one of whom was beheaded and another shot and killed in a Philippine army rescue. The third survived.

There is still, however, domestic opposition to a U.S. presence in the Philippines, which left-wing groups have criticized as neo-colonialism, reinforced by the 2014 killing of a Filipina transgender woman by a U.S. Marine, Wong said. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



THE HORROR, THE HORROR

Turkey, Syria quake deaths pass 9,500; deadliest in decade

MEHMET GUZEL,
GAZIANTEP, TURKEY

THINLY stretched rescue teams worked through the night in Turkey and Syria, pulling more bodies from the rubble of thousands of buildings toppled by a catastrophic earthquake. The death toll rose Wednesday to more than 9,500, making the quake the deadliest in more than a decade.

That makes it the deadliest since a 2011 earthquake in Japan triggered a tsunami, killing nearly 20,000 people.

Amid calls for the government to send more help to the disaster zone, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was to travel to town of Pazarcik, the epicenter of the quake, and to the worst-hit province of Hatay yesterday.

Turkey now has some 60,000 aid personnel in the quake-hit zone, but with the devastation so widespread many are still waiting for help.

Nearly two days after the magnitude 7.8 quake struck southeastern Turkey and northern Syria, rescuers pulled a 3-year-old boy, Arif Kaan, from beneath the rubble of a collapsed apartment building in Kahramanmaras, a city not far from the epicenter.

With the boy's lower body trapped under slabs of concrete and twisted rebar, emergency crews lay a blanket over his tor-

so to protect him from below-freezing temperatures as they carefully cut the debris away from him, mindful of the possibility of triggering another collapse.

The boy's father, Ertugrul Kisi, who himself had been rescued earlier, sobbed as his son was pulled free and loaded into an ambulance.

"For now, the name of hope in Kahramanmaras is Arif Kaan," a Turkish television reporter proclaimed as the dramatic rescue was broadcast to the country.

A few hours later, rescuers pulled 10-year-old Betul Edis from the rubble of her home in the city of Adiyaman. Amid applause from onlookers, her grandfather kissed her and spoke softly to her as she was loaded on an ambulance.

But such stories were few more than two days after Monday's pre-dawn earthquake, which hit a huge area and brought down thousands of buildings, with frigid temperatures and ongoing aftershocks complicating rescue efforts.

Search teams from more than two dozen countries joined the Turkish emergency personnel, and aid pledges poured in.

But with devastation spread multiple several cities and towns — some isolated by Syria's ongoing conflict — voices crying from within mounds of rubble fell silent, and despair grew from those still waiting for help.

In Syria, the shaking toppled thousands of buildings and heaped more misery on a region wracked by the country's 12-year civil war and refugee crisis.

On Monday afternoon in a northwestern Syrian town, residents found a crying newborn still connected by the umbilical cord to her deceased mother. The baby was the only member of her family to survive a building collapse in the small town of Jindaris, relatives told The Associated Press.

Turkey is home to millions of refugees from the war. The affected area in Syria is divided between government-controlled territory and the country's last opposition-held enclave, where millions rely on humanitarian aid.

As many as 23 million people could be affected in the quake-hit region, according to Adelheid Marschang, a senior emergencies officer with the World Health Organization, who called it a "crisis on top of multiple crises."

Many survivors in Turkey have had to sleep in cars, outside or in government shelters.

"We don't have a tent, we don't have a heating stove, we don't have anything. Our children are in bad shape. We are all getting wet under the rain and our kids are out in the cold," Aysan Kurt, 27, told the AP. "We did not die from hunger or the earthquake, but we will die free-

zing from the cold."

Erdogan said 13 million of the country's 85 million people were affected, and he declared a state of emergency in 10 provinces. More than 8,000 people have been pulled from the debris in Turkey, and some 380,000 have taken refuge in government shelters or hotels, authorities said.

In Syria, aid efforts have been hampered by the ongoing war and the isolation of the rebel-held region along the border, which is surrounded by Russia-backed government forces. Syria itself is an international pariah under Western sanctions linked to the war.

The United Nations said it was "exploring all avenues" to get supplies to the rebel-held northwest.

In addition to the thousands killed in Turkey, another 37,011 have been injured.

The death toll in government-held areas of Syria has climbed to 812, with some 1,400 injured, according to the Health Ministry. At least 1,020 people have died in the rebel-held northwest, according to volunteer first responders known as the White Helms, with more than 2,300 injured.

The region sits on top of major fault lines and is frequently shaken by earthquakes. Some 18,000 were killed in similarly powerful earthquakes that hit northwest Turkey in 1999. **MDT/AP**

this day in history



1950 McCARTHY LAUNCHES ANTI-RED CRUSADE



United States Senator Joe McCarthy has accused more than 200 staff in the State Department of being members of the Communist Party.

He made the startling allegation in a public speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, saying the State Department was infested with communists and brandished a sheet of paper which purportedly contained the traitors' names.

Senator McCarthy told the Ohio county women's Republican Club that Secretary of State Dean Acheson knew the names of 205 people who were in his words still "working in and shaping the policy of the State Department".

His comments brought an immediate denial from Lincoln White, press officer at the State Department.

Mr White said: "If he is correctly quoted, his allegation that the Secretary of State has a list of 205 Communist Party members who are working and shaping policy in the State Department is entirely without foundation.

"We know of no Communist Party members in the department and if we find any they will be summarily dismissed. We did not furnish Senator McCarthy with any such list and we would be interested in seeing his list."

Senator McCarthy has made his claims against a background of growing anti-Communist feeling.

Alger Hiss, a former senior public servant, was convicted and jailed last month of perjury after being accused of being an accomplice to a self-confessed former member of an underground Communist network.

Senator McCarthy's speech also coincides with the collapse of the Kuomintang regime in China and the establishment there of a Communist government, adding to American fears about the global spread of Communism.

Mr McCarthy was defeated for the Republican nomination for the Senate in 1944 but two years later was able to win the Republican nomination away from veteran Senator, Robert La Follette.

In the election he beat his Democrat opponent after a campaign of continuous misrepresentation of Professor Howard McMurray as a Communist sympathiser.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Two days after this initial outburst, Senator Joe McCarthy wrote to President Harry Truman saying he had been able to compile a list of 57 Communists.

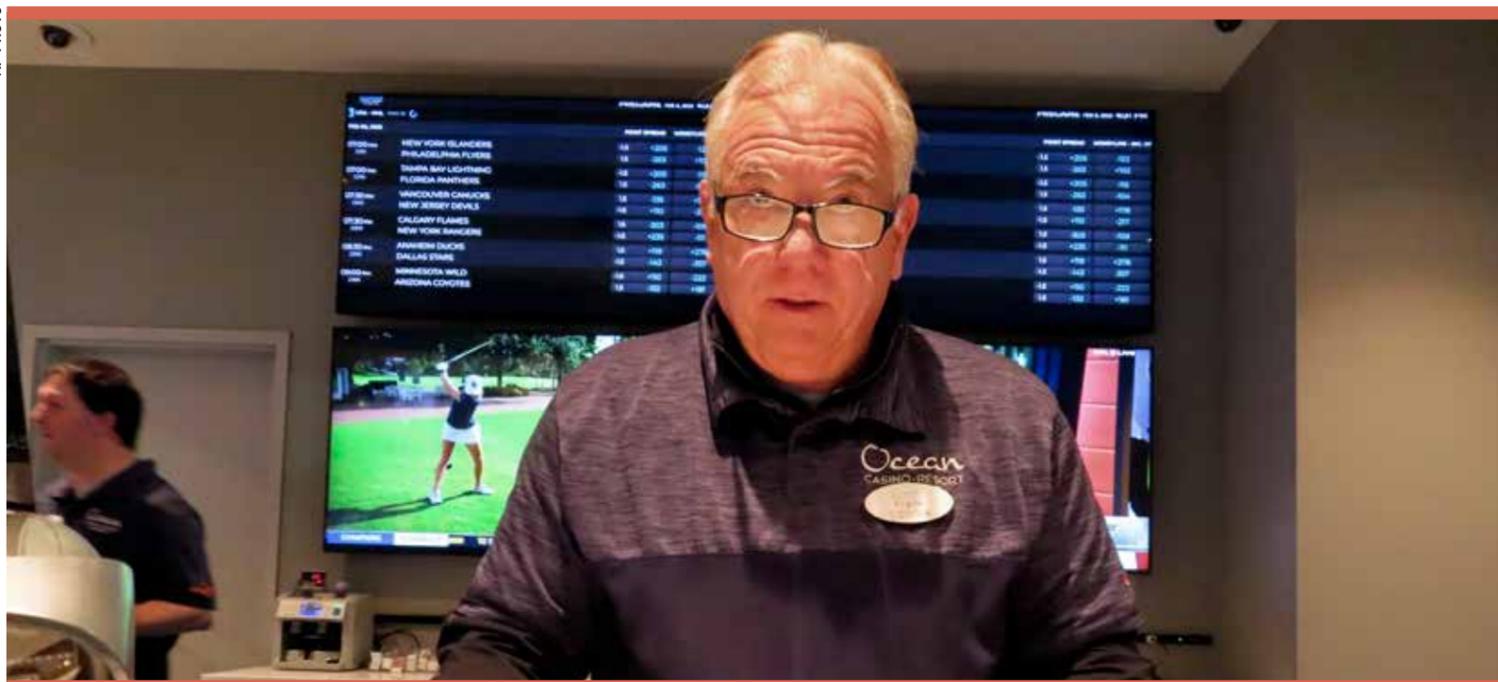
On 20 February he delivered a six hour speech to Congress in which he referred to 81 individuals - not by name but nevertheless identifiable - who he said were members of the Communist Party or loyal to it. By the time an investigating sub-committee was set up to look into his claims, his list of communists had dwindled to 10 names. He named Dr Owen Lattimore as "the top Russian espionage agent".

His claims were not substantiated, but many lost their jobs or reputations. He used a combination of intimidation and hearsay evidence to browbeat the accused. His Communist witch-hunt did win him popular support. At its height, 25 states passed legislation outlawing communist organisations.

The conviction in March 1951 of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg for passing atomic secrets to the Russians also helped fuel his campaign.

His downfall came when he turned his attentions to the US Army. His methods were finally exposed to the public during a televised cross-examination of army personnel following further unsubstantiated allegations. In 1954 he was censured by the Senate committee. His health declined through heavy drinking and he died in 1957.

AP PHOTO



SPORTS BETTING

SUPER BOWL GAMBLING SURGING AS STATES LEGALIZE IT? YOU BET

WAYNE PARRY,
ATLANTIC CITY (N.J.)

AS legal sports gambling proliferates, the number of Americans betting on the Super Bowl and the total amount they're wagering is surging — although most of the action is still off the books.

An estimated 1 in 5 American adults will make some sort of bet, laying out a whopping \$16 billion, or twice as much as last year, according to an industry trade group.

Even as legal gambling has spread to two-thirds of U.S. states, independent analysts say only about \$1 billion of the total being wagered on Sunday's game will happen through casinos, racetracks or com-

panies such as FanDuel and DraftKings, whose ads have become ubiquitous during sporting events.

The vast majority of people, in other words, are still betting with friends and family, participating in office pools or taking their chances with a bookie.

More than 50 million American adults are expected to bet on the national championship game between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Kansas City Chiefs, according to the American Gaming Association, whose estimates are based on a nationwide online survey of 2,199 adults. That's an increase of 61% from last year.

Experts in addiction say aggressive advertising is contributing to a rise in problem

gambling.

"As sports betting expands, the risk of gambling problems expands," said Keith Whyte, executive director of the National Council on Problem Gambling.

Thirty-three states, plus Washington, D.C., now offer legal sports betting, and more than half of all American adults live in one of those markets.

"Every year, the Super Bowl serves to highlight the benefits of legal sports betting," said Bill Miller, the gambling association's president and CEO. "Bettors are transitioning to the protections of the regulated market ... and legal operators are driving needed tax revenue to states across the country."

But legal sports betting still

represents just a small piece of the pie.

Eilers & Krejcik Gaming Research, an independent analytics firm in California, estimates that just over \$1 billion of this year's Super Bowl bets will be made legally. The leading states are: Nevada (\$155 million); New York (\$111 million); Pennsylvania (\$91 million); Ohio (\$85 million) and New Jersey (\$84 million.)

The research firm estimates 10% to 15% of that total would be wagered live after the game begins. Another 15% to 20% would come in the form of same-game parlays, or a combination of bets involving the same game, such as betting on the winner, the total points scored and how many passing

yards Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts will accumulate.

As legal sports betting grows, so too has concern about its effect on people with gambling problems.

The National Council on Problem Gambling has conducted nationwide surveys since 2018, when New Jersey won a U.S. Supreme Court case clearing the way for all 50 states to offer legal sports betting. They ask questions like, "Do you ever borrow money to gamble?"

Between 2018 and 2021, the number of people whose answers indicated they were at risk of a gambling problem increased by 30%, said Whyte, the council's executive director.

He added that the Super Bowl presents an opportunity to see how well responsible gambling messaging and campaigns by sports books and professional sports leagues are working.

Yesterday [Macau time], New Jersey gambling regulators unveiled new requirements for sports books to analyze the data they collect about their customers to look for evidence of problem gambling, and to take various steps to intervene with these customers when warranted.

"It is no coincidence that our announcement comes just a week ahead of one of the biggest days in sports wagering, serving as a reminder of how devastating a gambling addiction can be," New Jersey Attorney General Matthew Platkin said.

As of Tuesday, the Eagles were 1.5-point favorites over the Chiefs on FanDuel, the official odds provider to The Associated Press. Bettors are evenly split on who will win the game, according to the gaming industry association. **MDT/AP**

CORPORATE BITS

Melco achieves high standard of Occupational Safety and Health culture in 2022



In alignment with the Labour Affairs Bureau (DSAL), Melco Resorts & Entertainment has achieved a 99.5% completion rate in the government organized Hotel and Catering Safety Card Training Program with the

aim to strengthen safety awareness of employees across the industry.

Melco also achieved a reduction in the rate of employee injury frequency year on year.

In 2022, Melco continued

its efforts in promoting Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) across its properties through 300 internal training sessions and activities for over 12,000 colleague participants, the gaming operator said in a statement.

David Sisk, CEO – Macau Resorts of Melco, said, "The safety of our colleagues, guests and contractors is of paramount importance. [...] We are pleased that our targeted implementation of the OSH promotion and awareness activities in alignment with the DSAL were warmly received and supported by our colleagues."

Galaxy wins IGA's Sustainability Award



Galaxy Entertainment Group was recognized at the prestigious International Gaming Awards (IGA) for 13 consecutive years. The IGA award presen-

tation ceremony was held in London at the internationally recognized Savoy Hotel and is regarded as the "Oscars" of the gaming industry. This year,

GEG won the 'Sustainability Award' and was commended by the judges for its "strong commitment to contributing to and for building a sustainable future for the communities in which it operates and for future generations."

Francis Lui, vice chairman of GEG, said, "We are honoured to be once again recognized by the IGA and winning the prestigious 'Sustainability Award'. [...] GEG is firmly committed to operate a responsible business, integrating environmental and social factors into our strategic decisions and operational processes."

FOOTBALL

Man City case could join list of soccer's biggest scandals

MANCHESTER City is not the first high-profile soccer club to be caught up in a scandal.

The Premier League has accused City of breaching a host of financial regulations, and the club could face a range of punishments including a fine or a deduction of points.

As City mounts its defense, MDT takes a look at scandals that hit have Europe's leading leagues.

FRANCE

Marseille was the dominant club in France and a rising force in Europe under flamboyant club president Bernard Tapie.

Marseille was playing Valenciennes in the league just six days before facing AC Milan in the European Cup final, and three Valenciennes were approached with bribes to throw the game. Tapie was convicted of rigging the match and later jailed.

On May 20, 1993, defender Jacques Glassmann, forward Christophe Robert and winger Jorge Burruchaga were asked via middleman Jean-Jacques Eydelie — a former midfielder — to go easy.

Robert, who went off early in the game, and Burruchaga, a World Cup winner with Argentina in 1986, accepted the money.

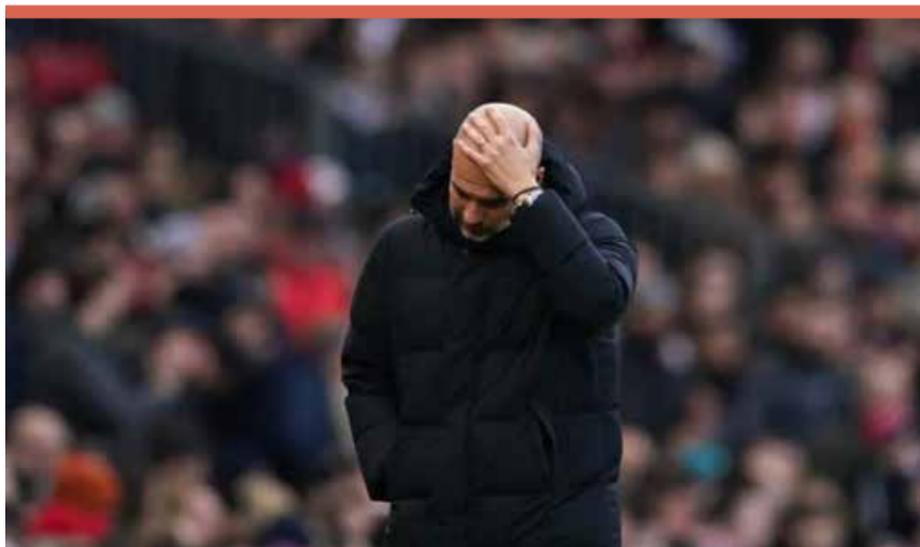
Glassmann refused and then blew the whistle on the plot. He was awarded the 1995 FIFA Fair Play Award.

Marseille beat Valenciennes and downed giant Milan 1-0 with a header from defender Basile Boli. Marseille remains the only French team to win the competition.

Prosecutors charged Eydelie, who confessed to arranging the phone conversation between Marseille general manager Jean-Pierre Bernès and the three players.

Robert's wife, meanwhile, was charged with conspiracy after an envelope containing 250,000 francs (then about \$43,000) was dug up from a back garden.

Marseille kept its Champions League title but wasn't allowed to defend it.



Manchester City's problems mount for manager Pep Guardiola

Marseille was stripped of its French league title, having won the previous four in a dominant era, and demoted to the second division.

Tapie, who died in 2021, was ordered to stand down and in 1997 he started an eight-month prison term.

Eydelie, Burruchaga, Robert were also sentenced to jail terms in a corruption scandal that sent shockwaves through French soccer. The club did not win the league again until 2010.

UEFA

European soccer's governing body has a hit-and-miss record punishing clubs suspected of cheating.

Clubs alleged to have fixed games for betting scams in the Champions League qualifying rounds and the Europa League have been banned from UEFA competitions for up to 10 seasons.

In higher-profile cases, Anderlecht and Manchester City won at the Court of Arbitration for Sport to overturn European bans of one and two seasons, respectively. City's case was regarding "Financial Fair Play" rules.

Anderlecht advanced to the 1984 UEFA Cup final by beating Nottingham Forest 3-0 after a two-goal loss in the first leg. In Brussels, a penalty awarded to Anderlecht and a disallowed stoppage-time goal for Forest raised suspicions.

In 1997, Belgian media and legal cases revealed Anderlecht's president admitted paying the Spanish

referee — who had since died in a car crash — 13 years earlier.

UEFA's executive committee imposed a one-season ban from European competitions. Anderlecht won its appeal in 1998 when CAS ruled UEFA did not follow its proper judicial process.

ITALY

Juventus again finds itself mired in scandal 17 years after one of the club's darkest moments.

The storied Italian club was hit last month with a 15-point penalty deduction for false accounting, while several of its former directors were handed bans from soccer activities. Former president Andrea Agnelli was banned for two years.

Agnelli and the entire board of directors had resigned in November following an investigation by Turin prosecutors.

At the start of the pandemic, Juventus said 23 players agreed to reduce their salary for four months to help the club through the crisis. But prosecutors claim the players gave up only one month's salary.

The move comes 17 years after the "Calciopoli" refereeing scandal that saw Juventus, a record 36-time Italian champion, demoted to Serie B and stripped of two Serie A titles. There were also points penalties for other clubs, including AC Milan and Lazio.

Italy great Paolo Rossi was banned for two years for his involvement in the

1980 betting scandal known as "Totonero" while he was at Perugia.

Rossi, who always professed his innocence, was bought by Juventus in 1981 and returned from his suspension at the end of the 1981-82 season — just in

time for the World Cup.

There he scored a hat trick against Brazil, two against Poland in the semi-final and the opening goal against West Germany to help Italy win the final.

Rossi was named player of the tournament and he also went on to win the Ballon d'Or that year.

SPAIN

In 2019, more than 40 people were accused of fixing the Spanish league game between Levante and Zaragoza at the end of the 2010-11 season. Among those acquitted was former Mexico coach Javier Aguirre, who now is with Mallorca. Two former Zaragoza officials were convicted of fraud and given a 15-month prison sentence.

A year later, a former director of Spanish club Osasuna said the team made payments to fix Spanish league results. The payments were allegedly made to try to keep Osasuna in the first division both in 2012-13 and 2013-14.

GERMANY

A soccer scandal in the shadow of the Cold War shook up the Bundesliga in

1965 and led to one of the worst-ever seasons by any top-division team.

West German club Hertha Berlin had a problem. Players didn't want to sign for a club based in West Berlin, half of a divided city that was surrounded by communist-run East Germany. Hertha solved that problem with secret extra payments to players and was relegated as punishment — though allegations persist that other clubs had similar schemes that went unpunished.

Political pressure for West Berlin to be represented in the Bundesliga led to woefully unprepared Tasmania Berlin being given a place just before the new season began. Tasmania scored just 15 goals all season, conceded 108 and held one game at the Olympiastadion with just 827 fans, meaning the huge arena was about 1% full.

Germany's biggest scandal in the last decade came when Bayern Munich president Uli Hoeness was sentenced to prison for large-scale tax evasion in 2014. He was re-elected as Bayern president in 2016 following his release. **MDT/AP**

AD



BENFICAMACAU
ACADEMY
澳門賓菲加體育學校



FOOTBALL

BASKETBALL

DAILY TRAININGS

OPINION

Multipolar World

Jorge Costa Oliveira



CHINA'S ECONOMY AND INVESTMENT IN 2023

Based on the assumption that by the end of Q1 2023, the zero-covid policy would be phased out in China, several relevant international banking groups (Goldman Sachs, J.P. Morgan, Morgan Stanley, Bank of America, Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank, HSBC) have made economic projections for 2023. The Chinese government has anticipated this, and despite the forecast of three successive waves of infection, the instructions are for economic activity to return to normal, including workers with covid to resume in-person work.

What consequences will this expedited schedule have on the recovery of the Chinese economy in 2023? According to a report issued at the end of September 2022, J.P. Morgan Asset Management forecasts that China's GDP growth will reach 5.4% in 2023. Other international financial institutions may make similarly optimistic forecasts regarding the evolution of the Chinese economy after the ongoing waves of infections. This would help offset the economic slowdown and recession in the US and Europe. But we are doubtful that there are grounds for optimism. Here, we shall analyze the issues regarding investment.

The main driver of investment in China, the real estate sector (for decades responsible for >25% of GDP), remains oversaturated. There is a large mismatch between the demand for homes to live in (550-750 million sqm/year) and the present annual supply of 1,240 million sqm (coming from a peak of 1,730 million sqm in June 2021) for residential purposes. In order to reach sustainable levels, construction will have to continue to contract at the current pace for another four to six quarters. That has been the policy of the Chinese government. Will it keep it up knowing that it slows economic growth in the short term?

The outlook for infrastructure investment is not looking good either. Provincial governments are under budgetary pressure due to declining revenues from land sales. Many local government finance vehicles (LGFVs) – the main mechanisms for executing infrastructure projects – are in the midst of a credit crunch, and defaults are expected in 2023. The central government has been pressuring provincial governments for additional infrastructure investments, from projects already approved by the central government. These constraints do not bode well for growth in this investment segment.

Finally, private sector investment is expected to falter, partly due to the problems created by the waves of covid infections, and partly due to uncertainty stemming from the government's posture toward the role of the private sector vs. public companies, recent restrictions in the technology sectors, and "common prosperity" policies. Exporting firms are expected to decrease their propensity for new investment, given the decline in international trade (from 5.5% in 2022 to between approximately 1.2% and 3.8% in 2023, according to the IMF).

There has also been a credit crunch in banks as a result of the pressure for better loan risk analysis.

In the pre-pandemic years, investment contributed between 2 and 4 percentage points per year to China's GDP growth. By 2023, it is not likely to return to these figures.

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IEA: ASIA SET TO USE HALF OF WORLD'S ELECTRICITY BY 2025

Asia will for the first time use half of the world's electricity by 2025, even as Africa continues to consume far less than its share of the global population, according to a new forecast released yesterday by the International Energy Agency.

Much of Asia's electricity use will be in China, a nation of 1.4 billion people whose share of global consumption will rise from a quarter in 2015 to a third by the middle of this decade, the Paris-based body said.

"China will be consuming more electricity than the European Union, United States and India combined," said Keisuke Sadamori, the IEA's director of energy markets and security.

By contrast, Africa — home to almost a fifth of world's nearly 8 billion inhabitants — will account for just 3% of global electricity consumption in 2025.

"This and the rapidly growing population mean there is still a massive need for increased electrification in Africa," said Sadamori.

The IEA's annual report predicts that nuclear power and renewables such as wind and solar will account for much of the growth in global electricity supply over the coming three years. This will prevent a significant rise in greenhouse gas emissions from the power sector, it said.

THE BUZZ

AP PHOTO



Chunks of ice break off the Perito Moreno Glacier, in Lake Argentina (2016)

STUDY

15 MILLION PEOPLE LIVE UNDER THREAT OF GLACIAL FLOODS

As glaciers melt and pour massive amounts of water into nearby lakes, 15 million people across the globe live under the threat of a sudden and deadly outburst flood, a new study finds.

More than half of those living in the shadow of the disaster called glacial lake outburst floods are in just four countries: India, Pakistan, Peru and China, according to a study in Tuesday's Nature Communications.

A second study, awaiting publication in a peer-reviewed journal, catalogs more than 150 glacial flood outbursts in history and recent times.

It's a threat Americans and Europeans rarely think about, but 1 million people live within just 6 miles of potentially unstable glacial-fed lakes, the study calculated.

One of the more devastating floods was in Peru in 1941 and it killed between 1,800 and 6,000 people. A 2020 glacial lake outburst flood in British Columbia, Canada, caused a tsunami of water about 330 feet (100 meters) high, but no

one was hurt.

A 2017 glacial outburst flood in Nepal, triggered by a landslide, was captured on video by German climbers. Alaska's Mendenhall glacier has had annual small glacial outburst floods in what the National Weather Service calls "suicide basin," since 2011, according to study lead author Caroline Taylor, a researcher at Newcastle University in the United Kingdom.

Heavy rains and a glacial lake outburst flood combined in 2013 in India to kill thousands of people. A 2021 deadly flood in India that was initially attributed to a glacial lake outburst wasn't caused by one, studies later found.

Scientists say so far it doesn't seem like climate change has made those floods more frequent, but as glaciers shrink with warming, the amount of water in the lakes grows, making them more dangerous in those rare situations when dams burst.

"We had glacier lake outburst floods in the past that have killed many many thousands of

people in a single catastrophic flooding event," said study co-author Tom Robinson, a disaster risk scientist at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. "And with climate change glaciers are melting so these lakes are getting bigger, potentially getting more unstable."

Dan Shugar, a geoscientist at the University of Calgary who wasn't part of the two studies, said much of the threat depends simply on how many people live in a glacial flood zone.

"In a warming world we certainly expect more and larger glacial lakes," Shugar said in an email. "But the threat that these lakes might pose critically depends on where people are living and what their vulnerabilities might be."

Robinson said what's different about his study is that it's the first to look at the climate, geography, population, vulnerability and all these factors to get "a good overview of where in the world is the most dangerous places" for all 1,089 glacial basins. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



Sri Lanka's president yesterday appealed for patience amid the country's worst economic crisis but promised brighter times ahead. President Ranil Wickremesinghe (left) said in a policy speech after inaugurating a new parliamentary session that he had been forced to make unpopular decisions to salvage the country's finances, including by implementing measures such as higher taxes.

AP PHOTO



USA President Joe Biden exhorted Congress to work with him to "finish the job" of rebuilding the economy and uniting the nation as he delivered a State of the Union address aimed at reassuring a country beset by pessimism and fraught political divisions. In his 73-minute speech, Biden sought to portray a nation dramatically improved from the one he took charge of two years ago. "Folks, the story of America is a story of progress and resilience. Of always moving forward. Of never, ever, giving up," Biden said.

AP PHOTO



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will visit Britain early today [Macau time], his first trip to the U.K. since Russia's invasion began nearly a year ago and only his second confirmed journey outside Ukraine during the war. The British government says Zelenskyy will hold talks with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, address Parliament and meet with U.K. military chiefs.

Belgian police detained 25 people this week as part of a human trafficking probe targeting an alleged criminal organization suspected of sending Chinese women to Europe and forcing them into prostitution, the federal prosecutor's office said. Police raided 26 places across Belgium, discovering 20 alleged victims, and one suspect was detained in Spain, the office said, with raids also taking place in the Spanish cities of Alicante and Barcelona.